**Dear Friends,**

**It was so encouraging to have a packed church to support and welcome Ken Campbell at his licensing service on 6th October. The service was led by Bishop Colin, the Bishop of Dorchester who in his address said:**

**“ Ken, you come with a wealth of experience and skills as a minister, teacher, footballer - working in central Oxford, Lancashire and more recently up at Headington. God is a God of surprises and in this rural ministry I sense that God has some in store for you! I believe you will be warmly welcomed here and it’s enough to keep your eyes open, relate to people’s lives as best you can because God is always the God of fresh opportunities and glorious surprises”**

**Last month Martin French wrote about ‘New Beginnings’ and this is indeed a time of New Beginnings – for our church and community. We also see this as a time for thanksgiving, welcome and celebration.**

**A Time for Thanksgiving**

**We are so thankful that Ken Campbell has been called to serve here. We are very excited about the future as Ken gets to know you all and begins his ministry. We also offer our thanks to all of those who have worked so hard to see us through the interregnum. We have had wonderful support from Bishop Colin and his team, our great friend Revd Canon Richard Zair, our Area Dean and all the visiting priests who so willingly stepped in to ensure the seamless continuation of services, weddings, funerals and baptisms at St Laurence. Thank you all.**

**We are blessed with a very talented and hardworking team in our church who have worked tirelessly to ensure that our ministry both in the church and in the community has continued unabated. The worship team, pastoral team, youth team, communications and events team, finance team plus all those other special people who greet, read, lead prayer, play the organ, ring the bells, work in school, assist at communion, clean, mend and fix, arrange prayer space and flowers, run women’s breakfasts, tea and chat, community café and help to organise our accounts, as well as helping to raise much needed funds. We are so thankful to you all.**

**As Bishop Colin said on 6th October “We made it!”**

**A Time for Welcome**

**We warmly welcome Ken and Sallie Campbell and their children, Josh, Phoebe, Martha and Dan. We hope that they will all find many new friends in our community and be happy here. We are all looking forward to getting to know them better. We ask for God’s blessing on Ken’s ministry and his family at this time of new beginning for them.**

**A Time for Celebration**

**I know from my conversations with folk that St Laurence is a very special place for so many. We celebrate that we have such a vibrant and active church that reaches far into the community and which will, I firmly believe, continue to grow under Ken’s leadership, - worshipping, caring and sharing in the name and love of God. So, on your behalf I welcome Ken our new priest in charge and his family. Welcome and God bless you all.**

**Best wishes**

**Roger Mitty**

**Churchwarden**