

The Rector Writes....

When our days there were ended, we left and proceeded on our journey; and all of them, with wives and children, escorted us outside the city. There we knelt down on the beach and prayed.

Acts 21 : 5

September 16th 1620, precisely 400 years ago, 102 people set sail from Devon in the Mayflower to establish a new life and community for themselves in the recently discovered Americas.

As those people left Plymouth, investing everything they had and risking the lives of themselves and their families, many who observed thought they were foolish and doomed. And of course all suffered terrible privations, and many died, yet they did make landfall, and the rest, as they say, is history.

There are to be many celebrations and activities to commemorate those who left this county on that auspicious September day – www.Mayflower400UK.org lists many of these and the story of that epic journey. It is well worth checking out as the celebrations are planned for up to a year.

But why would those people risk everything to undertake such a risky journey ? There are of course many answers. For many it was ostensibly to escape persecution and to have religious freedom – yet once they arrived and established their colony they imposed their own religious orthodoxy and penalised any who did not conform. Yet many of the Pilgrim Fathers took that dramatic decision to travel for positive reasons – to seek a better life and opportunities in a land of promise.

Actually, many of the big decisions of life are taken for both negative and positive reasons. We talk about people who see the glass as half empty and those who see it as half full. The fact is that whenever we undertake a metaphorical journey, or take a decision, there will be challenges and opportunities. We must face them as best we can, and I have no doubt that the best way to begin any journey or new venture is to follow Paul's example and to metaphorically kneel on the beach and pray !

We are all facing new challenges at present and we could do much worse than to kneel and pray. It is how those Pilgrim Fathers began their journey and as a model it has much to offer.

Finally, we welcome Rev'd Nicky Davies to our churches as our new Team Vicar. She will be very visible working across the community and in all our churches. Do welcome her – and perhaps share a prayer as she begins her new journey with us.

With thoughts and prayers

Clive Sedgewick