

Lockdown worship showed our variety

Pam Marsden sampled various kinds of digital worship during the pandemic - and is grateful for the diversity offered by her parish

Who are you? I'm Pam Marsden, happily married to Joe, and I live in Alverstoke. I moved to the area in 1979 from my home in Yorkshire.

In my working life, I spent many years presenting live daily programmes for BBC Radio Solent (using my maiden name of Pam Gillard).

I interviewed guests from many churches and religions over the years. It gave opportunities for listeners to hear opinions and views they probably wouldn't have otherwise experienced and it was a happy time in my life.

What church are you part of? I joined St Mary's Church, Alverstoke, as soon as I arrived in the area. Now I'm retired, I'm taking on a little more, and am privileged to be on the PCC and also electoral roll officer.

I like to take an active positive role when I can and it's motivating to see the wonderful parish team in action.

Although I'm not a mum, I believe in supporting the development of young people and do this through Girlguiding. I've been a leader for nearly 50 years and enjoy seeing Rainbows, Brownies, Guides, Rangers and Young Leaders take an active part in services at St



Pam Marsden has been worshipping at St Mary's, Alverstoke, since 1979

Mary's, especially at Christmas.

Why did you start going there?

I've always gone to church, starting at Sunday School in my home city of Kingston-upon-Hull. I was pleased and proud to be confirmed alongside my mum, who sadly died very young.

When I moved to Gosport, it was a natural thing to join my local church at St Mary's, and it's an important part of life for me. The entire pastoral team are welcoming, helpful and caring, and I feel that I belong.

What do you love about your church?

We are blessed that there is truly something for everyone, of all ages. There's a wide variety of contemporary and traditional services at the three churches in the parish - St Mary's, St Francis' and St Faith's - for people to make their preferred choice.

Lockdown gave me an opportunity to try different services, both online and later in socially distanced services, and I shall continue to explore those on offer within the parish.

One particular online service during lockdown will stay with me: the Rev Andy Norris and his wife Libby led the morning service from the edge of the lake next to the rectory with an appropriate sermon. It was just the two of them, so peaceful and meaningful.

It reminded me that we're not constrained with our worship by four walls - with local church schools, a church sailing club and our community outreach and overseas partnerships, we certainly spread the good news wherever we can.