

# Keep it in the family

**Pam Dana** enjoys being part of a congregation that her own father led for many years

**Who are you?** Pam Dana, PCC member, safeguarding rep, lead pastoral visiting team and fundraiser team leader

**Which church are you part of?** St Blasius, Shanklin.

**Why did you start going there?** I first started going to this beautiful church when my father became rector of St Blasius Church in 1949. I was very young and part of the Sunday School.

My family returned to the church in 1980 when my father retired. When I retired from the health service in 2001, St Blasius was my chosen place of worship. So my reasons for attending are largely historical, but the churchmanship is just right for me - middle of the road.

**What do you love about your church?**

Our church is one big family, we all rub along together, supporting each other. We're also a friendly church, always welcoming any new faces.

I'm very pleased that our church is open from March to October. People remark in the visitors book what a lovely atmosphere there is in the church.

During choir practice one Wednesday, a couple came in to sit quietly. The lady told me she was sad as a very dear friend's funeral was taking place at home on the mainland, and we offered



**Pam Dana at St Blasius Church, Shanklin**

to sing a hymn for them - Abide With Me. She was so very grateful. I feel very humbled that we were able to help her on such a sad day.

Everyone is also interested in looking after our church, as it's such a lovely building. During May, when the rhododendrons are at their best, wedding couples come to have some of their photos taken at the church with the rhododendrons in the background.

We hold fund raising events throughout the year, mostly to raise money for the upkeep of the church. This year, for instance,

we've had a new lighting system and boiler installed. We also support our link church in Ghana - St Andrews in Techiman, the Children's Society and the Isle of Wight charity Ability Dogs 4 Young People.

I'm a member of our active branch of the Mothers' Union, and I'm in the choir - the only one, I think, that doesn't read music, so I have to sing soprano! Our choir leader/ director is very patient with me, and I enjoy the anthems we sing regularly in church.

I also enjoy the pastoral visiting. My father was a very good parish priest, visiting his congregation regularly, and I enjoy it as well, especially the people who are unable to come to church, mostly through poor health.

The caring side of my nature is partly inherited, but I've also worked in the health service all my life as a children's nurse, general nurse and midwife.

Fortunately, I have little to do as regards safeguarding, except encouraging people to do their training. I find the training sessions very informative.