

## David Balding

I first met David 7 or 8 years ago through a mutual friend who happened to also be a Franciscan tertiary. Shortly after that I happened to be sidesman at the Sunday Parish Communion when David and Jackie made their first visit. Our friendship grew from there to include their children Dan and Jess and my husband Ken.

After several months regularly worshipping at St Paul's David was delighted to be invited to become a Reader which was enthusiastically endorsed by the PCC. In due time, a number of us journeyed to the Cathedral at Guildford for his licensing and warmly welcomed his ministry in and around the parish. Until just a few months before his death he assisted at Parish Communion, preached regularly and had even led Evensong when his fellow Reader Kit was unwell.

At St Paul's David, with Jackie, regularly visited the ladies at the Royal Cambridge Home and often led the Wednesday afternoon services there. Another aspect of his involvement in the parish was "Messy Church" about which he was passionate. The second Tuesday of each month saw him, aided and abetted by helpers young and not so young, surrounded by between thirty and forty youngsters letting off steam, trying their hand at a variety of craft activities before settling down for the "God slot" followed by tea. Like with so many activities, the planning and preparations took up far more time than the delivery. David was always encouraging and supporting the many helpers as well as preparing his own contribution.

Being a Franciscan tertiary was an important part of David's life and shortly after his profession he was invited to take on the role of Local Group Convenor (leader). He regularly attended, and took active roles in both local group and Area meetings to which we very often travelled together. On those journeys conversations ranged across many and varied topics, including his earlier life in South Africa and episodes from his career and mine, our faith journeys and our families. For several years we were both members of the Guildford Area Team. At our six monthly team meetings David always had some lively suggestions, was respected for thinking "outside the box" and was mindful of the housebound and infirm. In 2012 he was thrilled to be selected as Area Minister; he regarded that as one of the most precious and important roles he had ever been asked to undertake. Sadly he was to hold that office for less than a year.

David was very much a family man and ever willing to share news of his children's activities, hopes and achievements. Pets too were an important part of the family, cats, dogs and rabbits all were cherished and sometimes admonished as when a puppy chewed the cover off his new diary. Hospitality was freely dispensed and their coffee pot seemed bottomless.

His life had not been an easy one and included a number of quite major setbacks but the courage and determination with which he faced his final illness was outstanding. He refused to be beaten by it, was committed to over coming it and somehow found the energy and strength to discharge his commitments and responsibilities until the last few weeks of his life. It was rare for him to miss a Sunday although latterly that did become much more challenging.

The pastoral aspects of all these various roles was something he took very seriously and his caring and compassionate ministry was much appreciated both in the parish and in the Franciscan family; he will be sorely missed by many many people; very evident from those who came to St Paul's for his Thanksgiving Service when the church was full to capacity.

Pax et bonum, David, and may your soul rest in peace and rise in glory.

*Mollie Kingham*