

## Rev. Mervyn Pedley Puleston, Chaplain 1986 - 1992



Before ordination I did my national service, serving in the Gold Coast (Ghana), followed by a course in hotel management before studying at Kings College London for a Bachelor of Divinity degree and an AKC\*. There I met and married Carole who had a degree in French and German.

I was ordained in the Oxford Diocese, Deacon in 1961 and Priested in 1962 to serve as curate in the parish of Great Marlow for three years. Then as Priest Missioner to The Church of the Holy Family and to Blackbird Leys Oxford for six years, sharing the work with a URC minister as part of

an early area of ecumenical experiment. Then became Team Rector of Kidlington and Hampton Poyle for 16 years.

In October 1986 I was appointed chaplain of Holy Trinity, Geneva. Our three children were delighted with the idea of skiing and sailing and being near Lake Annecy where Carole and I had worked as students in an international children's camp and spent many years of family holidays.

For the first 18 months we lived in the church flat, in Rue de Lyon, Geneva and then moved to the house in Versoix. This proved to be a useful and versatile building. Three students, including our organist, occupied the top floor and the rent they paid along with a diversity of paying guests made it no more expensive than the flat had been.

The house and garden were used for weekly meetings of the church council and committees, the Mother and Toddler group, the Laser group, the Sunday School picnic, parish barbeques, concerts and visiting choirs, wedding receptions. A lakeside gathering of members of the ANC\*\* was arranged by the Revd. Barney Pityana. After an idea by Alice Offord, a book and marmalade sale was held and the books were stored in the cellar.

When I arrived Fr. Sunipa Tevi was holding the fort and along with John and Peta Tracey had been exploring the needs of church people in the Nyon area. Subsequently we started holding afternoon services in the Temple de Gingins\*\*\*. Meanwhile, I continued the normal weekly pattern of services on Wednesdays, Fridays and Sundays where, gradually, we welcomed Anglicans from other countries and other continents. We also had an annual parish outing on Ascension Day to the Sisters of Bethlehem at the Voirons, where a bell, presented by the church, was christened by Sunipa.

I attended Ecumenical fellowship meetings with clergy from local Protestant and Catholic churches and Cursillo Group gatherings.

In 1991 I was diagnosed with non-Hodgkinson's lymphoma that was successfully treated with chemo and radio therapy. I was able to continue to work, and only needed a month off over Christmas and was able to resume duties in January. I would have stayed longer, but, on medical advice, it was decided that I should seek a less demanding post in the UK, and I then took up the post as Team Vicar in the parishes of Clifton Hampden, Culham and the Wittenhams until I retired in 2000 to Kidlington where I still take occasional services and sick communions.

I am delighted that I am still able to associate with Holy Trinity Geneva by joining in the online Wednesday and Sunday services.

\*AKC = Associate of Kings College, London.

\*\* ANC = African National Congress

\*\*\* <https://www.lacotechurch.ch/history/>