

Clergy Letter: 'Long may she reign'

It is probably a well-known fact that Queen Elizabeth has a very strong personal Christian faith.

In fact, in her first Christmas Broadcast following the death of her father, King George VI, in 1952 she included these words:

'Pray for me ... that God may give me wisdom and strength to carry out the solemn promises I shall be making, and that I may faithfully serve Him and you, all the days of my life.'

Her Christmas broadcasts to the Commonwealth are among the few speeches she writes herself. They frequently refer to Jesus Christ, the founder of Christianity, whose birth is celebrated at Christmas.

Alongside her official role as head of the Church of England, (her formal title is 'Defender of the Faith and Supreme Governor of the Church of England') the Queen often expresses her personal faith in Jesus Christ. As she said in her Christmas broadcast in December 2000: *'For me the teachings of Christ and my own personal accountability before God provide a framework in which I try to lead my life.'*

When Elizabeth was crowned Queen on 2 June 1953 at Westminster Abbey, London, the service was deeply symbolic of the Christian faith and the orb, sceptre, ring and crown used in the ceremony each included a cross to symbolise the rule of Jesus Christ over the world.

But, despite her connection to The Church of England, Elizabeth has always taken seriously her role as the serving monarch of ALL people in the UK and some countries abroad whether those people are Christian or of another faith or of no faith at all. Her example of service and dedication to everyone is a big part of her interpretation of the Christian faith.

Her words on the occasion of her 21st birthday in 1947, says it all:

"I declare before you all that my whole life whether it be long or short shall be devoted to your service and the service of our great imperial family to which we all belong".

Effingham with Little Bookham Parish are proud to be associated with the Queen through her formal role as head of the Church of England, but the parish system includes everyone whether they are regular church members or not. We are here to serve the people of Effingham and Little Bookham if, and when, they need us.

We are delighted to be marking the Queen's Platinum Jubilee in a number of ways.

Our week of celebrations will begin with a special:

- A '**Jubilee Effingham Market**' on Saturday 28th May. 10am – 2pm @ St Lawrence Church Hall

Throughout the following week, St. Lawrence and All Saints' Churches will display flowers, a brief history of Effingham and 'Portraits of the Queen' created by students from the Howard, Manor House and St Teresa's Schools.

On Saturday 4th June there will be:

- **'A Jubilee Service of Thanksgiving'** at 11.00am in St Lawrence Church, Effingham, to which all the community are invited.
- **'A Jubilee Royal Garden Party'**: 2.30 – 4pm @ The Jubilee Gardens opposite St Lawrence Church.
- The Service and Garden Party are offered in conjunction with members of Effingham Methodist and Our Lady of Sorrows churches.

Your Rector,

Reverend Mandy x