

Newsletter of the Smaller Churches in the Thames Valley Circuit

June – August 2012

Minister's Letter

As retirement approaches I look back at my eight years in the Thames Valley Circuit and reflect that I have been the minister of five of the six smaller churches - all except Burnham. The great advantage of being a smaller church is that everyone is known by name and is missed if absent from worship or meeting. Whether a church is large or small, folk tend to be creatures of habit and sit in the same place each time but in a larger congregation it can be difficult to spot the gaps. Also despite standing at the downstairs exit at Windsor, after my monthly morning service, I have never yet managed to shake hands and speak to everyone who has been present and I have found this difficult.

It seems to me that whatever the size of congregation there are the same anxieties about finding people to take on responsibilities and roles which are required for the organisation of the church. Smaller congregations may feel more vulnerable and worried about the future but perhaps that encourages more trust and reliance on God, which is healthy. I am all for efficiency and good management within the church but not at the expense of mission. As I said at the Circuit Leadership Team Meeting, and Andrew Baker shared at the Circuit Meeting, I am concerned that sometimes the focus is on getting more people in to church in order that they can take over jobs, rather than concentrating on sharing in God's mission within the communities in which we find ourselves.

An initiative like *Open the Book*, which seeks to enable Primary-School aged children to hear stories from the Bible at weekly assemblies is quite time consuming but somehow seems to energise those taking part. If the *Open the Book* team members come from different denominations then that has a positive ecumenical benefit as an effortless by-product. It is interesting to note that it is three of the smaller churches and a medium sized church in the circuit which have members taking part in *Open the Book* teams. Our Sunday Schools may be small or non-existent but there is this wonderful opportunity to act out Bible stories to perhaps two hundred or more children each week.

This will be my last letter for the smaller churches newsletter and so I thank you for all the care and encouragement you have given to Dave and to me. I have been blessed by sharing in Bible studies and fellowship meetings with some from all of the smaller churches. May God continue to bless you as you seek to follow Christ in the months and years ahead.

Yours sincerely



Barbara McIntivey

News from the Churches

COOKHAM RISE

For quite a few years now we've been confident at Cookham Rise that our twice-yearly children's workshops will be fully-booked, and indeed often over-subscribed. So to discover that only 5 children had booked for the Easter Happening on Thursday 5th April 2012 was a bit of a shock! In the end, there were 11 children and almost as many adults, and so instead of dividing into groups we did all our activities around one large table – Easter gardens, Easter baskets, chocolate Easter nests and a giant collage of the empty tomb! All this was preceded by the telling of the Passover story, seated in the Sanctuary on cushions, when some children were brave enough to try the matzos, herbs and charoseth (a.k.a. apple sauce!), and followed by an Easter egg hunt and a re-telling of the story of Good Friday, using the “props” from the Lenten Cross. Everyone had a good morning. Our next “event” will be another *Messy Church* session on 30th June.

The Anglican Church in Cookham has decided to concentrate on the Diamond Jubilee this summer and there will be a united service on the evening of 3rd June and a street party on 4th June. Feeling we needed to acknowledge the 2012 Olympics, Cookham Rise has decided to hold an *Olympics Holiday Club* from 13th – 16th August, and we are currently deciding which material we will use: it's at times like these that we realise we could really do with some younger people who are physically fitter and more able to lead boisterous games and sports!

We will, as usual, have a stall at the Scout Fair this year – a books and media stall, so if you have any books, CDs, DVDs, etc, you don't want, please pass them on. Not only is the Fair a good opportunity to raise some money, it also gives us the chance to make sure people know about the Methodist Church in Cookham.

Our monthly church lunches and coffee mornings will continue throughout the summer and in July and August we have booked two Sunday afternoon teas – giving more opportunity for food and fellowship for church members and friends and anyone in the village who would like to join us. Our Church Anniversary on 15th July will be special as Rev Barbara McIntivey will be the preacher and we will be saying goodbye to her over lunch. We will also, of course, be saying goodbye to our own minister, Rev Dr Mannie Jacob, this summer, and looking forward to being at the cutting edge of Circuit reorganisation from September!

Connie Jeffery



BURNHAM

Churches Together in Burnham is now up and running, with two representatives from Burnham Methodists. A fund-raising concert at the United Reform Church was held in Christian Aid Week, and we shall be participating in the Diamond Jubilee Service to be held at St Peter's Church on 2nd June.

The work of *The Well@ Lent Rise* continues to flourish. In addition to the Tuesday and Thursday after-school clubs, *Wake-up Wednesday* serves hot food freely to local schoolchildren waiting for the school buses, starting at 7 am. This is followed by *The Meeting Place* – the drop-in coffee and cakes (wonderful, all home-made) morning, from 9.30 to 11.30. All refreshments are free of charge.

The Children's Centre joins us every fortnight, with activities for the toddlers and opportunities for the Mums to have a chat. The occasional speakers are always interesting – the subjects are very varied – a recent one being from an intrepid mountain-climber whose work for charity is almost boundless! A quiet room is always available for anyone who requires quiet personal conversation with one of the leaders or volunteers. The premises are now being used on Friday evenings by a trained Christian Youth Worker as part of *The Well's* outreach to Lent Rise young people.



OLD WINDSOR

Our regular Tuesday coffee mornings continue to be well supported; many come regularly, others occasionally – all are welcome! There is a hum of conversation and laughter – sometimes louder than a hum!

Our Travellers' Tales series is always well supported. Our next one is on Thursday, 12th July at 2.30 pm in the hall. Mike and Betty Willcocks will be talking about Croatia. Their talk will be followed by tea, at the inclusive cost of £4. We welcome visitors from a number of the churches in the circuit as well as friends from the village.

The local First School has asked us to continue next year with *Open the Book* – we are so thrilled with the way it is being received by children, teachers and parents. As we walk through the village, we hear surreptitious whisperings “They’re in Open the Book!” – which is lovely to hear, as are the spontaneous comments made to us personally.

On 8th July, we have our last service with Barbara, at which David Alexander and Anne Haggarty will be commissioned as Worship Leaders. This will be followed by a buffet lunch at which we shall say our “thank-yous” and “good-byes” to Barbara and Dave.

ETON WICK

A short Eastertide Service, led by our Minister, followed the first fortnightly lunch on 11th April. This was very well supported. We hope to celebrate Harvest-time in a similar way in September.

A huge "thank you" to Laura Clack and her small band of helpers, who made the *Diamond Jubilee Quiz* and supper evening go like clockwork! Laura will be in action again on 3rd June. Tickets for *The Big Lunch* have sold out quickly.

On Saturday, 2nd June, our church will be supporting St John's (in the village) who are having a Jubilee Tea followed by *Songs of Praise*.

We welcome the Smaller Churches Support Group to Eton Wick on Thursday, 21st June, at 7.30pm.

In celebration of the imminent arrival of the Olympic Torch to Eton / Dorney Rowing Lake, there will be a *Table Top Olympic Competition* on Sunday, 8th July at 3.30 pm. Lots of fun and games and winners medals! Followed by refreshments. All welcome, with a special welcome for younger competitors.

Our Ladies Club *Garden Party* will be held in the Chapel Hall on 17th July. Over a number of years the weather has not been kind to them – and they're running out of pretty gardens too!

The Olympics start on Friday 27th July. Eton Wick is a restricted parking zone during the Olympics and Paralympics due to its close proximity to the Olympic Rowing site at Dorney. During these events parking in Eton Wick roads will be by official permit only or car owners will be heavily fined. The Church has secured a number of parking permits for preachers, church visitors, lunch club helpers, etc. On arrival a permit **must** be collected from the church and placed inside the windscreen of the vehicle. (The permit **must** be returned to the church when leaving the activity!)



WOODLANDS PARK

Woodlands Park Fun Day: Woodlands Park folk have joined in an initiative taken by Rev David Andrew, Vicar of White Waltham, to hold an *Open Crowd Festival* or "Fun Day" for the residents of Woodlands Park on Bank Holiday Monday, 4th June, on the green area in the centre of the housing estate. Others involved are representatives from the Residents Association and, hopefully, staff and parents from the local school. The event will be for all ages and will include activities for adults and children, and will be entirely free. The event is modelled on "community festivals" developed by Fusion International (more information on www.fusionyac.org/foundations). We believe that this is a real opportunity for the churches to work alongside the community and to be sharing a presence with the local folk.

Joint Events ... dates for your diary

- Thursday, 7th June
A Healing Service at 7.30 pm at Old Windsor Methodist Church.
- Saturday, 23rd June.
Strawberry Tea at St Mark's at 2.30 pm. Proceeds for missions. Entry £3
- Sunday, 22nd July.
Circuit Service at Hampshire Avenue at 6.30 pm. Circuit Farewell for Rev Dr Emmanuel Jacob and Rev Barbara McIntivey
- Sunday, 2nd September.
Circuit Service at Windsor at 6.30 pm. Circuit Welcome for our new members of staff and their families.

Please Support US!

If you can support the above circuit events or our activities and events listed under our individual churches, in any way, please do! Thank you!

Contact

This newsletter is edited by Anne Haggarty, the Secretary of the Smaller Churches Support Group. Please contact her with ideas and suggestions.

Editor's note

Our grateful thanks go to Barbara for the time and effort she has given to the Smaller Churches – both to the individual churches and through the Support Group. We wish her and Dave well and a happy retirement.

This is the last newsletter for this Church year. Thank you to all contributors, and – *please* – keep the contributions coming! You don't **have** to wait for my reminder!

Anne Haggarty