

Newsletter of the Smaller Churches in the Thames Valley Circuit

September – October 2013

Minister's Letter

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

Greetings to you!

As the new church year begins we are making plans for the smaller churches for the next few months. We look forward to the regular gatherings for healing services, singing some of the new songs together and finding opportunities to learn more what it means to be a follower of Jesus. The theme for the circuit this year is "Being a learning church" and we shall look for opportunities to learn as smaller churches.

I think many of us have enjoyed being outside for worship over some of the summer evenings – and we thank God for this sunny summer. At home Jill and I have eaten so many meals outside, talking sometimes late into the evening of family times. Gardens have been splendid – we went to Hampton Court and Chelsea this year! There has been much to enjoy.



There is of course always an uncertainty about the future – for ourselves, our families, the churches to which we belong and the world in which we live. The God with whom we have travelled this far will continue to be faithful – and provide the grace we need for every circumstance. The God of new beginnings is the God of Resurrection. We can face the future.

So we live in the Now, seizing this moment of this day – to live it to the full. Playing, working, serving, worshipping, reading, laughing, crying. In the light of the past, but not living in the past. Seeking wisdom to plan for the future, but not living in the future. Our mission is for the living – NOW. For that living, God is able.

I will travel with you as much as I can during this coming church year.

Grace and peace.

Andrew

News from the Churches

BURNHAM

Recently, seven caped and masked figures entered by ‘the pulpit door’ and confronted the morning congregation. Who were these visitors? No, calm down at the back there, they were none other than our Young Church members – Superheroes for the morning, about to delight the congregation (as always) with descriptions of the activities which had kept them busy for the last 45 minutes or so. It soon became apparent that glue had featured heavily in the mask-making and your correspondent (who was a participant in the activities) was mortified to find, when she subsequently held out her hands to receive Communion, that long strands of glue were adhering to them. Sorry, Sonia, was this a first?



Each week, our boys and girls hear a Bible story, and then have an activity – some requiring considerable use of materials and ingenuity. Many thanks to Paula and Della, who lead the group and are consistently helping our little ones to learn more about the love of God. Having said ‘little ones’, we are occasionally receiving some older children – this is wonderful, but please pray that other adults will come forward, willing to do the required training so that we can cater properly for the older ones.

The *Well@Lent Rise* has met informally during the summer break and has hosted an Adult Education Computer Course. Our indefatigable Quilting group continues to meet and has, among other things, made a most beautiful quilt for auction at *The Well Summer Ball*.

Looking to the future, we are working towards turning our front porch area (which is larger than you’d think) into a coffee bar. This will release valuable space within the Church itself, which will be well used.

We rejoice that the new friends who have joined us during the past year still frequently worship with us. Together with Sonia, we look forward to another season of work and worship both in Lent Rise and further afield.

Hilary Evans

The circuit is committed to supporting its “smaller churches”

Although with comparatively few members, each of these churches is very active, and all are strengthened by working together. These newsletters tell of some of their exciting, on-going work.

OLD WINDSOR

We have had a quiet summer in Old Windsor.

Once term finished at the local First School, we **then** heard – yes please – come back next term. So, shortly, we begin our third year. It seems no time at all since the group of nervous adults met inside the school, and presented the first story. Our enthusiasm, always strong, has grown, as has our confidence in acting out the stories. We welcome new recruits to our ecumenical team – all you really need is a desire to tell Bible stories to children. It's a help if you don't mind dressing-up – tea-towels on heads occur frequently! And of course, please bring your enthusiasm – it's catching! We are still known individually and collectively as "Open the Book", and this form of address causes smiles from other adults ... but WE like it!



Our popular series of *Travellers' Tales* continues. Our next one will be on Thursday, 10th October, at 2.30 pm, followed as usual by afternoon tea, total cost £4. This time we shall be taken on a trip up the coast of Norway with its fiords...

If you have an interesting story to tell about a holiday you have taken, and would be willing to share it with us, please contact David Alexander or Anne Haggarty.

COLNBROOK & POYLE UNITED CHURCH

The fellowship group which meets monthly on the first Tuesday afternoon of each month is thriving! Everyone is welcome – if you haven't attended, you don't know what you are missing!



We are looking forward especially to our meeting on 1st October. We shall enjoy our Harvest Lunch that day, and listen to a speaker from the Methodist Relief and Development Fund who is coming to talk about the work of the fund.

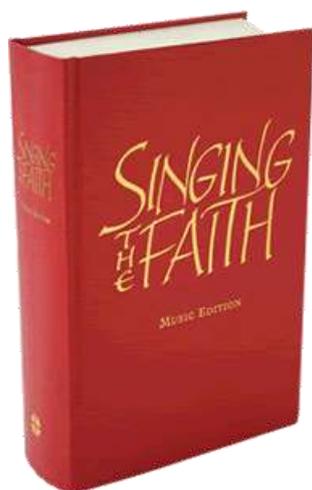
ETON WICK

Our *Big Lunch* on 7th July was enjoyed by over 40 members and friends, and we are eagerly awaiting the next one! We are very grateful to Laura and Jo who shoulder all the responsibility and produce a wonderful meal as well as arranging the seating plan to most people's satisfaction!

We were well represented at each of the Open Air Circuit Services, and were glad the weather was more seasonable at St Andrew's and St Mark's Crescent, where attendances were exceptionally good.

We haven't started the new Methodist year very well as six of our regular evening worshippers are away on holiday. Nevertheless we wish them all happiness and refreshment. The same sentiments apply to Philip and Laura who will be in Spain from mid-September. We shall miss them both.

It will be a pleasure for us to host a third session of *Singing the Faith* on Saturday, 7th September from 2.30 to 4 pm. Note that this time we will provide tea / coffee and biscuits!



The next meeting of *Methodist Women in Britain* will be held at Eton Wick on Wednesday, 11th September at 2.30 pm. If you would like to have lunch with us beforehand, you will be very welcome. Service starts at 12 noon.

Our chapel will be open from 11 am until 4 pm on Saturday, 14th September, to welcome participants in the *Historic Churches* ride-or-stride event, and we shall be decorating the chapel for Harvest Celebration in the afternoon. Our Harvest Supper will be preceded by a short service at 7.15 pm on Monday, 16th September. Proceeds from sale of produce, etc, will go to the Methodist Relief and Development Fund.

Our thanks to Janet Palmer and Keith Tildesley who have agreed to cover Vestry Steward's duties on 22nd September.

Daphne very much appreciated all the "get well" wishes and offers of help while "incapacitated". Thank you very much for your thoughtfulness.

COOKHAM RISE

Summer 2013 seems to have disappeared so quickly that I can't believe we are into the September - October issue of the Smaller Churches Newsletter already!

Cookham Rise has had a fairly busy summer. Coffee mornings and lunches have continued as usual. We have welcomed two people to the body of Christ at Cookham – Abbie-Gayle McCabe by confirmation and Harry Fincham (a great-grandson of a recently-deceased member) by baptism. We have also had two Sunday afternoon teas: the first was a bit of a non-event as it clashed with Meg Few's 100th birthday celebration at Ledgers Road, but the second on 11th August was well-attended by people from around the circuit, members and friends of the church and members from the Anglican churches in Cookham. Our Church Anniversary service on 7th July was led by Sid Barker and was followed by our Anniversary Lunch (three courses – hope people don't expect it every month!)

I suppose the most outstanding thing this summer was the decision by the Church Council on 3rd July to remove all the pews from the church and replace them with chairs. It was a brave and long-sighted decision, made in faith and based on the need to offer more informal worship and make the church the centre of the community at Cookham Rise. As I write we have sold two pews (contact me if you'd like one while they last!), consulted with an architect, looked again at types of chair and drawn up a project flowchart. I will keep you posted about our progress.



Looking forward to the Autumn we have another Messy Church session on 22nd September based on the parable of the sower, and on 5th October we are holding a Harvest Supper with, hopefully, a speaker from Water Aid (having raised such a large amount of money from our sponsored hymnathon we thought it would be good to hear about their work). Our Harvest Festival service on 6th October will be led by myself and Kathy Rickman and the theme will be *The Water of Life*.

Our next short Bible study course will take place weekly, for four weeks, from 2nd September onwards – no idea of the content as yet. This will give us a short break then before an Advent course beginning on 25th November.

Connie Jeffery

Joint Events ... dates for your diary

The next meeting of the Smaller Churches Group is on Thursday, 28th November, 7.30 pm at Burnham.

September

Tuesday, 3 rd	7.30 pm at St Andrew's	Inaugural meeting of <i>Thames Valley Voices</i>
Saturday, 7 th	2.30 pm at Eton Wick	<i>Singing the Faith</i>
Saturday, 28 th	from 4 pm at St Andrew's	Circuit 24 hours of Prayer , followed by:
Sunday, 29 th	6.30 pm at St Andrew's	Circuit Missions Service. Preacher: Rev Conrad Hicks

October

Tuesday, 1 st	12.15 pm at Colnbrook & Poyle	Fellowship Harvest Lunch & MRDF talk
Saturday, 5 th	Cookham Rise	Harvest Supper & Water Aid talk
Sunday, 6 th	6.30 pm at Eton Wick	Ladies' Club Anniversary
Thursday, 10 th	2.30 pm at Old Windsor	Traveller's Tales – Norwegian Fjords and North Cape
Sunday, 13 th	10 30 am & 6.30 pm at Eton Wick	Chapel Anniversary
Thursday, 17 th	7.30 pm at Eton Wick	Healing Service
Saturday, 19 th	c 5 pm at Burnham	MWiB Supper – raising money for MWiB project 4 Aurora (brain tumour research). Speaker: Jill Baker

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!

Please Support US!

Editor's note / Contact

My thanks to all contributors for this edition!

Stories, pictures, information for future editions will be much appreciated. Keep them coming!

Anne Haggarty