

Newsletter of the Smaller Churches in the Thames Valley Circuit

November – December 2014

Minister's Letter

Dear Sisters and Brothers who worship in the Smaller Churches in the Thames Valley,

Greetings to you. I wonder how things are going now that we are into the church year after the quiet time over the Summer? "Travelling in Hope" is the theme in the circuit for this year. Jill and I will be travelling in hope through the Methodist stationing system over the next few weeks, as the church seeks to discover where is the right place for us to live and work. The circuit stewards are seeking God's guidance as they look for a minister to come to St Andrew's and Hampshire Avenue in September 2015. All of us travel in hope – sometimes through the wilderness – seeking to be caught in the energy of God's love. We seek hope for our families and our communities. We seek hope for our churches. This seems to be a significant time in the life of our smaller churches as we consider a way to travel in the coming years.

There have been signs of hope, which we all celebrate. The work amongst children and young people, the care of elderly folks who are visited and fed, the love released in times of crisis. These are signs of hope as we travel on. The people of God who found themselves in exile in Babylon were urged by God through Jeremiah's letter to them not to despair, but to get well. In many ways the smaller is in exile – on the margins a presence and to see a future. As to despair, but to see the God of who raised Jesus from the dead, upside down starting with a



on with the business of living life churches resemble a church which sometimes, struggling to maintain we travel in hope we are urged not new beginnings at work: the God the God who turned a world motley crew of men and women.

It does mean that we learn to trust difficult decisions along the way. It may mean that we have to examine ourselves and ask how willing we are to be changed and be agents of change. It will mean a church which sees prayer and service at the heart of its life. I think we are up for this travelling business – because we have a Companion who travels with us.

this God as we are led to make any

Peace be the journey.

Andrew

Editor's note / Contact

My thanks to all contributors for this edition! This edition includes a picture from each Prayer Station of the six Smaller Churches, taken at the Circuit Prayer Safari on 18th / 19th October. For more pictures see the album on the Circuit Website.

The next edition will be coming out for the start of January. Please send in your contribution in good time ... including a picture!

Anne Haggarty

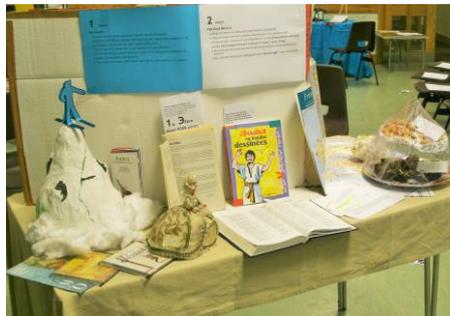
News from the Churches

BURNHAM

We have been delighted to welcome two new members into our fellowship at Burnham. Vivienne and Phil have been worshipping with us for some time now and their energy and enthusiasm have been not only a tonic but a challenge. At the same Church Council at which Phil and Vivienne's request for membership was unanimously agreed, a third member was also approved. She was away (in Paris!) when Rev Sonia welcomed Phil and Vivienne and we look forward to her 'Official' welcome next time Sonia is with us. Julia has also been with us for some time now, and her liveliness and expertise with the young ones is very encouraging.

This is written at a time when, in fact, we have had to say 'goodbye' to the two people who have worked so devotedly in our Sunday School and have had to move away for employment reasons. We do ask for prayer that the needs of our young Sunday School members will continue to be met. Thinking still of the young ones, we look forward to a baptism in November, a little boy whose older sister was baptised at Burnham just a few years ago. And still more news about our younger folk! Our 'Lent Risers' group for the very little ones continues to flourish on Tuesday mornings.

Rev Sonia is leading all-age worship which we all find very acceptable (don't ask – but it's the one who and sorts out my computer



on one Sunday each month, from the youngest to the oldest brings me tea in the mornings muddles).

At the time of writing we look Messy Church. Will report back next have got into a muddle, please for me!

forward to another session of time. Now Keith ... I seem to come and send this attachment

Hilary Evans

COLNBROOK & POYLE

On 5th October, our monthly fellowship meeting took the form of a Harvest Festival service. Ably led by our Minister, Margaret Dudley, complete with soup and a roll, followed by puddings. Soup I might add, made by Rev Margaret's own fair hand, and very tasty it was too! We had previously decided that all donations, as the Sunday before, would be donated to Slough Food Bank. A very worthy cause which our church has supported for the last eighteen months.



As you can see from the first photograph, our members exceeded all expectations for both the Sunday and fellowship collections. The total weight of goods was 53.4 Kgs. We even tried advertising in the window, for the neighbourhood to donate as well. Informing them that the church would be open to receive goods for the food bank after the service, or indeed welcoming them to join in the service and bring any gifts with them. Alas they decided to do neither, or merely walked by without giving the poster even a cursory look. One can only hope that those people who did read the poster but chose to ignore it, never need a food bank. In fact we all pray that one day soon, food banks will be a thing of the past.

At the same fellowship meeting we were very pleased to welcome a new member, Mrs Beryl Evans, into our church membership. Beryl has been an active member of our fellowship for some time now, so to be able to welcome her into full membership of the church was a blessing in every sense of the word.

Bob Quarterman

COOKHAM RISE

For Cookham Rise, Harvest this year took on a new meaning because of the success of the Cookham Community Allotment Project – a new project to enable people to discover the joys of gardening under the auspices of the church. We have two plots now on the Alfred Major Recreation Ground allotment site, and have been harvesting crops for a few months. So it seemed right that our Harvest Festival Service on 5th October should begin on the allotment, with a brief thanksgiving and a procession to the church carrying

vegetables. The service was led by who said that he had been involved Good Friday processions and but never a Harvest procession, and tradition! Some of the people who to the service too, and one, Alison the allotment nurtured the soil and was thanking God for the harvest The previous evening there was a people sat down to eat and rack



Kathy Rickman and Andrew Baker, with Palm Sunday processions, Christmas processions in the past that maybe it would become a had worked on the allotment came Pratt, spoke about how working on the soul. The theme of the service and sharing the harvest.

The Harvest Supper and Quiz and thirty their brains. The quiz was quite an easy one although the final round on “harvest” seemed to cause a few problems! The nugget of information that harvest mice are rarely found in Yorkshire was greeted by a quick wit with “that's because they eat 'em in Yorkshire”. Also, a tendency to argue with the questionmaster was discovered in certain church members!

Since the closure of Rainbow Preschool in July, we have been offering two Come & Play sessions for carers and under-fives every week. One is run by Janet and Sue on Tuesday mornings and the other by Kathy and me on Friday mornings. Kathy very bravely does cooking with some (usually) 2-3-year-olds on Fridays. She has now gone to Australia for three weeks and left me to cope with the cooking – help! The children really seem to appreciate being able to play outside with the large sandpit, slide and ride-on toys, and we are also using the church itself for singing-time and for some toys. We have booked a messy church session called Light in the Darkness for Hallowe'en and are reverting to a children's Christmas workshop for primary school-aged children on December 21st – (we had given these up because interest had tailed off, but have decided it is time to test the water again). Stand by with the glitter and glue!

We continue to have short-course Bible studies and in September/October studied four of the minor prophets – Amos, Hosea, Habakkuk and Malachi. A bit of a romp through which of necessity only skimmed the surface but nonetheless gave us a flavour of what they were about. For Advent we shall use the latest York Course which is called Jesus: the voice that makes us turn. These courses are highly recommended by us as they come with course booklets for all participants and a CD of contributors to listen to, which stimulates discussion.

In a very exciting development we have consulted an architect about moving the kitchen so that it would be accessible from both the hall and the church, with a view in the long-term of running a community café – something which is very dear to the hearts of some of us, who can envisage all sorts of other things growing out of it! Still very early days in our thinking and planning, but it's good that people are open to new ideas and willing to think outside the box. I suppose in a way both are sometimes easier for smaller churches where there is a closer-knit community and more chance to influence each other's thinking – maybe!

Connie Jeffery

ETON WICK

Well, now we know! We tried unsuccessfully to quiz Andrew about what was happening at Eton Wick on Sunday, 28th September. His response was "Come and See"! So we did! The outcome was three sessions of Godly Play, presented very expertly by Andrew, Kathy and Connie, followed by a Methodist Love-feast, all being very well enjoyed by all who came.

For those who couldn't be there or maybe are still "in the dark", there will be another opportunity to "Come and See" on Sunday 1st February 2015, 4 - 5.30 pm at Eton Wick (not a repeat performance) but everything else is under wraps at present!

The Ladies' Club had a very enjoyable dinner at the chapel, Webb and her small band of grateful. We also thank Eileen Austin for the delightful floral table decorations, mainly gathered from local hedgerows.



enjoyable dinner at the chapel, Webb and her small band of grateful. We also thank Eileen Austin for the delightful floral table decorations, mainly gathered

We record with great sadness the death of Violet (Vi) Cotton, one of our members, aged 93 years. As her cremation was to take place at Easthampstead Park, Rev Sonia of Commendation at Eton Wick, in our memories of Vi; the afternoon refreshments. Several of the family appreciated.

death of Violet (Vi) Cotton, one her cremation was to take place very kindly arranged a Service the course of which we shared concluded, naturally, with light joined us and were very

The major social event to come before Christmas is our traditional Carol and Mince Pie evening which will be on Tuesday, 9th December at 7.15 pm. We hope to be joined by Gareth Jones, a member of the London Welsh Choir who lives in the village. We hope the Circuit will support us on this occasion, when the proceeds will be donated to "Action for Children".

We wish all our friends in the Circuit – Peace and Joy at Christmas!

Daphne Hogg

OLD WINDSOR

We are going through a quiet time at Old Windsor. A number of our members have suffered or are suffering from ill-health, and although we aim to carry on as usual, we have been a bit stretched. However ...

Open the Book continues its happy rehearsals, and its presentations in school are much appreciated, if comments we hear as we go round the village are anything to go by!

Our Travellers' Tales occasional of people with interesting grows. A heartfelt "thank you" to talk, sorts out the room, provides equipment, ... and provides the



series continues, and the number experiences to share with us also everyone who "volunteers" to the tea afterwards, deals with the audience!

We have just completed our Testament, and this has been an Study. The series has provoked informed us, entertained us, and sent us away with a better understanding of how and why the New Testament is how it is. We shall use the follow-up sessions on the four Gospels (a little more depth for each). After that we are hoping to use another Windows into ...

study of Windows into the New interesting way of "doing" Bible questions, stimulated discussion,

Some members of Old Windsor belong to the Circuit choir – Thames Valley Voices. They will be taking part in the Christmas Peace service on Saturday, 20th December, 6 pm at Ledgers Road. This is a more reflective Christmas service.

For those who want the traditional carols and readings, we shall be holding our Carols by Candlelight Service at 7 pm on 24th December, and follow it with refreshments.

Anne Haggarty

Joint Events ... dates for your diary

The next meeting of the Smaller Churches Group is on Thursday, 5th February, 7.30 pm at Eton Wick Methodist Church.

December

Tuesday, 9 th	7.15 pm Eton Wick	Carol and Mince Pie evening
Saturday, 20 th	6 pm Ledgers Road	Christmas Peace
Wednesday, 24 th	7 pm Old Windsor	Carols by Candlelight Service

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!
