

Newsletter of the Smaller Churches in the Thames Valley Circuit

September 2011

Welcome to this first edition of the newsletter!

The Smaller Churches Support Group have started this with the aims of encouraging the Smaller Churches in their work, and also of informing the whole Circuit of what these churches are doing as they seek to ensure a continuing Christian presence and witness in their communities.

We hope you find it interesting

Minister's Letter

The picture-story offered to us by Jesus of an invitation to a banquet keeps coming back to me. God is an inviting God, issuing invitations to go on an adventure, offering opportunities, opening doors. We are invited to respond.

The "smaller churches" in the Thames Valley are being invited by God to look upwards and outwards and to recognise what God is seeking to have done in the communities in which we live. It has been a joy to sit in on meetings where "Pie and praise", "Come, taste and sing", "Messy church", "Retreat" have been planned and shared. It has been a privilege to share in Bible Study with groups from the smaller churches and to hear a recognition of the call to pray.

As we connect with this inviting God, we may discover that some of the things we have been doing could be done better or even be allowed to die, so that new ways of worship and mission may be born. Always travelling on...

As we look to increase the number of paid staff in the circuit, we see this as a time of hope, a time of possibilities, a time of opportunities. So we join together, praying for each other, connecting with the Source of hope and committing ourselves to being faithful to the God who continues to issue invitations.

Peace.

Andrew

News from the Smaller Churches

The six smaller churches in the Circuit are Burnham, Colnbrook & Poyle, Cookham Rise, Eton Wick, Old Windsor and Woodlands Park.

Here are the ideas, dreams and outreach from four of the Smaller Churches. If you can support our activities and events in any way, please do! Thank you!

Burnham

- Our premises have been redecorated, and are now very attractive. We have the prospect of a new letting.
- We are thinking of holding a *Messy Church*, though our plans are not yet very far forward.
- We are hoping that *The Well* project (which meets on our premises) will become much more of a joint project with our Anglican friends at Hitcham.
- The gifts from our Harvest Service will be going to *Slough Refugee Support*.



Cookham Rise

Here are some of the ideas and dreams that Cookham Rise is hoping to be involved in. Some, such as the prayer meeting and the notice boards, have started already:

- Beginning a new prayer meeting to pray for the new ventures - Mondays in the Vestry from 4.30 to 5.15 pm. It is a silent prayer meeting and anyone is welcome.
- Opening our (monthly) Sunday lunches to those who attend Elizabeth House, the day centre in Cookham.
- In the summer months having afternoon teas instead of lunches.
- Fixing the dates a year ahead for three *Messy Churches* and two *Children's Workshops*.
- Revamping the leaflets about the church with a view to delivering them in Cookham.
- Revamping the bookmarks we have already produced, and including suggestions for prayer.
- Thinking about the way we advertise things - buying a new notice board and reorganising the others.

One idea we had which may appeal to other churches, is that we're going to have a "cook-in" and fill the freezers of church members with food for church lunches(!) so that it's not so much work for individuals at the time. We were quite taken with the fun we could have as well with a "cook-in", and don't think there'll be any shortage of volunteers!

Eton Wick

Around 55 people attended our very successful *Come Taste and Sing* event on 26th June, which included sketches by young people from St Mark's Crescent.

Future Events

- **9th October.** Sharing a mini-coach with Burnham - to Westminster Central Hall for *The Big Sing* celebrating the renovation of their pipe organ. (More details available from Jo Webb.)
- **11th October.** Start of *Pie and Praise* season. We hope the speaker will be Rev Janet Binns, Diocesan Chaplain for Olympics and Paralympics.
- **6th November.** Hoping to meet with Windsor members at 6.30 pm for a Service of Remembrance for those who have died recently. Possibly reaching out to include the community too. Rev Barbara McIntivey is planned to lead this evening service at Eton Wick.



Old Windsor

- We are starting (ecumenically) *Open the Book*, going into the local First School. This is an exciting new venture for us.
- Also ecumenically, we hold regular *monthly services* at the Manor Care Home on a Sunday afternoon.
- Our series of *Travellers' Tales* continues on Thursday, 10th November at 2.30 pm in the Church Hall, with a Scottish theme. Cost: £4 including afternoon tea. Everyone welcome!
- Our next *Messy Church* will be on Sunday, 9th October, in the Church Hall.
- We have a *Harvest Supper* at 6 pm on Saturday, 17th September. Unfortunately, due to limited space, we have to restrict this to members and friends of the Church.
- Our new series of *Bible Studies* will begin on Tuesday, 13th September at 2.30 pm in the Church Hall. We are joined by friends from Colnbrook & Poyle, and also from other denominations.
- Parts of our building need some repair work for which we have to *raise funds*. We are discussing ways old and new of achieving this. Watch out for ways of supporting us!
- Don't forget that if you are in Old Windsor on a Tuesday morning, we are open for *coffee* and a chat between 10 am and noon, and we'd love to see you. The more the merrier ... and noisier!

Joint Events

Don't forget two events specifically for the Smaller Churches of the Circuit.

Saturday, 10th September, *Smaller Churches AwayDay* 10.15 am to 3.15 pm at Burnham Abbey.

What does the Gospel look like where you are?

*A day to reflect and seek ways forward led by Rev Malcolm R. White
from Burnham*

Cost £3.50. Please bring a packed lunch.

Details should be on your church notice board, and Connie Jeffery is the person to contact.

Saturday, 29th October, 4 pm at Eton Wick

SINGING the FAITH

Come, Taste and (New) Sing!

A chance to learn some of the hymns and songs in our new hymnbook.

The provisional programme is:

4 pm	Sing
4.30	A bring-and-share tea.
5 pm	Sing again
5.30 (approx)	Finish - in plenty of time for those wishing to go to the concert at Windsor!

For more information, contact Anne Haggarty or Connie Jeffery.

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