

Newsletter of the Smaller Churches in the Thames Valley Circuit

February – March 2012



Minister's Letter

Dear Friends

Visitors to worship or some other activity at a smaller church are sure of a warm welcome. There is no way that their presence can be missed as everyone knows everyone else and anyone new will be noticed. However, as in churches whatever their size, getting the welcome right is not always easy. It is good to think what it would be like to be a newcomer in your church, and provide details of books used and if an introit or vesper is sung and when the congregation usually stands or sits. Ideally a visitor is taken to sit with someone who can assist them discreetly as needed. There have been times I can see from the pulpit a newcomer unsure what to do with regular worshippers sitting all round not noticing.

Many times I have witnessed wonderful pastoral and practical caring for each other within small churches. It would seem that even when pastoral visitors are assigned a group of members and 'pastoral others' the whole church plays a caring role. I have also seen that sometimes because everyone is so well known to everyone else it results in information about the illness, absence from worship or problems of a member not being passed on to the minister. A minister with one or more smaller churches will not be present at worship every week and so needs to be kept informed. It also seems that smaller churches do not always cope with following up or keeping in touch with 'fringe' folk or occasional visitors very well, despite a real desire for church growth. Accurate and up to date records of members and 'pastoral others' and their contact details are essential for good, continuing pastoral ministry.

It might be worth following the example of larger churches which often produce a 'welcome' leaflet or card with information about the church and the opportunity for a newcomer to give contact details if he or she wishes. These are useful and need to be offered on the first visit by the door steward or someone else designated who will keep a supply ready to give out.

*We are the Body of Christ: each of us is a member of it.
There is one ministry of Christ: in this ministry we all share.
There different ways of serving God: it is the same Lord whom we serve.*

Methodist Worship Book, page 345

May God bless you in your ministry.

Yours sincerely

Barbara McIntivey

News from the Churches

Burnham

The congregation at Burnham recently listened to a challenging sermon on the subject of 'Complacency'. It was wide-ranging and certainly 'meat not milk', and a wake-up call to us all. We have several projects 'on the go' – looking at how best we can use our premises to serve our young people and finding ways to support *The Well at Lent Rise*. The first meeting of local lay representatives looking at ways of the Burnham churches working more closely together takes place in February, and we are looking forward to local Christians being given the opportunity to proclaim the Gospel from a more united standpoint. It is early days yet, and there will be much work to be done – but – watch this space!

Colnbrook and Poyle

Colnbrook and Poyle United Church recently had the misfortune of having their side fence blown down in the strong winds. The fence in question is some 20 metres in length and 1.8 metres high.

As this fence had been neglected for a number of years, owing to it being out of sight and therefore out of mind, it transpires that the whole fence is in need of replacing.

We intend to replace it with a stronger one, with concrete posts rather than wooden ones. This will mean that if any panels get damaged in future, the damaged one can be lifted out and easily replaced with a new one. Sadly this is going to cost some £2,000. Methodist Insurance informed us that we are not covered for storm damage. Therefore the whole amount has to come from our funds.

Why are we telling you this? Simple! Please check your insurance policies now, check just what you are and are not covered for, before you have to make a claim in the future and, secondly for all of you out there with fences, do not neglect to keep an eye on them and do treat them occasionally with a good quality preservative. Remember too that in our case the fence did not get a mention in the Quinquennial inspection.

Cookham Rise

“Bright Lights of Bethlehem”

On Thursday, 22nd December 2011, Cookham Rise held a children's workshop entitled *Bright Lights of Bethlehem*. Twenty-eight children between the ages of 5 and 11 took part, and there were various crafts to get involved with – table decorations, painting on candles and on glass jars, angel tree decorations, jam tarts and mince pies, Christmas cards and a *Bright Lights of Bethlehem* collage. Pictures had also been taken around the village to illustrate *Bright Lights of Cookham* – celebrating the birth of Jesus and being 'bright lights' is an ongoing activity! The children were all kept very busy. Talking to them about what they were doing and about the Christmas story was interesting and thought-provoking for the adults too – I was in charge of angels and had some very interesting conversations about angels today!

The session ended with a lunch of jacket potatoes with beans and/or cheese followed by jelly and ice-cream and we all went home to recover – until the next one at Easter!

Connie Jeffery

Other news from Cookham Rise

Connie writes that Cookham Rise has another *Messy Church* session on the morning of Saturday, 25th February – we think the theme will be the Wise and Foolish Builders – sounds like it could be mud pies and sandcastles! We will also have an Easter Children's Workshop on 5th April – no details yet.

Also we will be doing a Lent Course, but I'm not sure yet whether we will be doing our own or joining in with the ecumenical ones. Coffee mornings and church lunches continue on a once-a-month basis, with a prayer meeting every Monday and the Ladies Circle fortnightly.

One thing to report is that on Christmas Day there were 35 people in church! I wasn't one of them as I was ill, but that's certainly the most we've had for a while.

Eton Wick

Do you know your Royals? Come to our *Diamond Jubilee Quiz* at Eton Wick Methodist Church on Saturday, 21st April with Fish and Chip Supper £5. Proceeds to Action for Children. Lots of Fun. Starts at 6.30 pm. All welcome. Tickets will be on sale from 1st April. Please see Peter Morris and Daphne Hogg, or phone Laura Clack on 01753 852847 to book.

Join us at **Eton Wick Methodist Church on Sunday, 3rd June** for "*A Big Lunch*" to celebrate the Queen's Diamond Jubilee. Cost £5 Adults; under 12s £2.

This follows the morning service, which starts at 10.30 am. Alternatively, after your own morning service, come along and join the celebration for lunch served at 12.30 pm. Tickets will be on sale from 1st May from Peter Morris and Daphne Hogg, or phone Laura Clack on 01753 852847 to book. All welcome ... but book early!

Olympics ... coming to Dorney

Celebrate the arrival of the Olympic Torch at Dorney Rowing Lake by joining in the **Fun and Games** at **Eton Wick Methodist Church** for our *Table Top Olympics*. All ages welcome. How many medals can you win? This will be **on Sunday, 8th July** starting at 3.30 pm, and will be followed by a celebration tea and a church service. Please contact Peter Morris and Daphne Hogg, or phone Laura Clack on 01753 852847 to find out more about this event.



Old Windsor

A big thank you to Barbara for her most entertaining and enlightening *Traveller's Tale* about her walk to Santiago. We were delighted to have friends from all parts of the Circuit come and join us.

Future events

You are invited to any or all of our future events, and will be made most welcome.

- Our next event is a *Holy Beetle Drive*, on Saturday, 18th February, 3 pm - 5 pm. £4 including refreshments. All welcome.
- In March we shall be holding our Saturday *Brunches*. 5 Saturdays this year! A different theme each week! All welcome between 9 am and 11 am. All proceeds are for Missions.
- During Lent we shall be taking part in an ecumenical Bible Study series.
- Our Tuesday Coffee mornings (from 10 am to noon) continue to be well supported.

Anne Haggarty

Joint Events ... dates for your diary

Healing services will be held on

- Tuesday, 14th February, 7.30 pm at Burnham
- Tuesday, 20th March, 2.30 pm at Cookham Rise
- Tuesday, 24th April, 2.30 pm at Colnbrook & Poyle

Please Support US!

If you can support our activities and events 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.