

St Swithun's Church Newsletter

For information and inspiration

September 2010

Making a comeback

I have been thinking recently about the demise of the band Take That. It was 1996, and having achieved superstardom, a huge fan base (made up primarily of teenage girls!), numerous BRIT awards and dozens of number one hits, the band split up. I remember that there was a huge outcry, and even helplines created for distraught fans. But for many of us, it wasn't a surprise. Many of us had predicted the end when Robbie Williams had left the band a year earlier amid quite a significant amount of bad blood. Take That made a comeback in 2006 without Robbie, making those of us who were fans in the early years feel rather old as we bopped and sang along as before, but this time with bemused children looking on, and a few more grey hairs and wrinkles to our name!

And then on 15 July 2010 it was announced that Robbie was rejoining the group for a tour in 2011. Gary Barlow and Robbie Williams appeared on Chris Moyles' breakfast show on Radio 1 a few weeks ago, to talk about Robbie's new single, the band's reformation, and significantly the path to reconciliation. I was struck to hear them say "we met up to chat, he said sorry and I said sorry and we both meant it." The wrongs from the past had been forgiven

and they had made peace. And now, the future for the band looks rosy.

And I think this goes to emphasise the power of forgiveness. We have thought recently in church about the Lord's Prayer, and the forgiveness of God as illustrated in the parables of the lost sheep and the lost coin, but there is something transforming about our forgiveness of others. Forgiving someone who has wronged us, or caused hurt is not an easy thing to do, and yet I believe it brings peace and freedom. It may open up opportunities of a renewed relationship, or it may forever remain a private matter, but one that brings a harmony to life. The challenge for us is to allow the forgiveness and grace we have received from God, and offer it to others. The impact of doing just that, is great.

Em Coley



A Café for Kennington?

- **‘everyone could get to know one another and discuss different ideas and problems...newcomers wouldn’t feel so isolated’**
- **‘to socialise with friends - taking the travel issue away’**
- **‘there is certainly a need and desire and it would be very good for the community’**

No-one will have missed the growing popularity of café culture in our society. For most people a café is much more than just a place for coffee and cake – though it is important that these offerings are truly delicious! For many, a café is an important place to meet others – a place to stop in their daily routine, a place to rest, relax, be welcomed and meet familiar and new friends.

A group of local, coffee-loving residents, including a number of members of St Swithun’s church, have recently been

exploring the idea that Kennington should have a community café.

For Jesus, eating and drinking with others was a central part of his life and relationships. Since biblical times Christians have encouraged each other and reached out to those around them through the spiritual gift of hospitality (Hebrews 13v2, Romans 12v13). Starting a community café in Kennington could be a great way to ensure that there is a place of welcome and support in Kennington.

As an experiment, during August the group ran a small, open-air café alongside the KOA shop in the church grounds. A wide range of Kennington folk consumed fair-trade coffee and cake whilst enjoying each others’ company and expressing their views. The quotes above represent the many supportive comments expressed for this idea.

A number of groups expressed particular interest in a café:



- parents with young children, both meeting up during the day or after the school run
- the older generation, meeting friends
- teenagers, looking for a place where they felt welcomed to meet each other
- Other interest groups such as the health walks, looking for a place to socialise after an activity.

The group also asked people what the café space could be used for in addition to offering food and drink. A number of suggestions included social events, a play area, delicatessen, birthday parties, literary events, watching films, book swap, table football, art shows, local crafts, access to the Internet, and bingo,

As well as canvassing the views of the community, we raised £387 for KOA! Many thanks to all who helped us by running the café and baking delicious homemade cakes!

We will be carrying out further consultation with groups and individuals in Kennington, prior to preparing a business plan. We are also on the look-out for appropriate potential premises in the centre of Kennington.

Jane Hull

If you are interested in getting more involved with the café, or if you want to offer ideas or skills, then please contact Martin Morse:

E: martin@morseanalytics.com
T: 07747 828774

Pause for Prayer

'If you...know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him!' (Matthew 7 v 11)



Please pray...

- For energy and enthusiasm for everyone going back to school or college
- For excitement and inspiration as the idea of a community cafe gets off the ground
- For anyone in the community who is feeling lonely or isolated

Thank God for...

- The profusion of fruits in the hedgerows and allotment produce at this time of year
- Our community here in the village of Kennington
- The way he leads us through good times and bad

Harvest

This year we celebrate Harvest on **Sunday 3 October**.

The service will be a special celebration of God's goodness and entitled, "Everybody Welcome". As it suggests, the service is particularly aimed at visitors. The Diocese of Oxford has put together some material to be used as harvest invitations and posters, so do look out for those around the village and please consider who you would like to invite to come along.

Also on Sunday 3 October, at **6pm at St James the Great, Radley** we will have a three parishes Harvest Communion Celebration.

We will **decorate St Swithun's Church for our harvest service on Saturday 2 October** from 10am to 12 noon. If you would like to help, please come along in the morning to help decorate and/or bring fresh produce (and leave in the church) on Friday 1 October.

We are also organising a 'Harvest Hop' in the **evening on Saturday 2 October** – where there will be dinner and dancing to Jonny and the Jive Tones. Tickets are available from Mary and the Baggotts – it promises to be an evening not to be missed!



Charity Begins...

We all know about UNICEF and Christian Aid, but how many know about Church Action on Poverty (CAP)? It was founded in 1998 by four concerned Christians, and today it has emerged as a campaigning organisation supported by the leaders of all the major Christian Church groups. It aims to enable people in poverty in Britain today to develop more sustainable livelihoods; it has given them a voice and mobilised churches, together with others, to overcome poverty.

We have come a long way from the days of Tom and Barbara in 'The Good Life'. Today many families live on less than £10 per person a day, and this has to cover food, accommodation, transport, heating and electricity. Four million children live below the poverty level – this is one-third of all children in Britain. Poor children are low achievers and one-third of them are likely to end up with fewer than five A-C grades at GCSE.

The tabloids are only too willing to demonise the poor as lazy, feckless scroungers. These people at the bottom end of the scale are vulnerable individuals who have been scapegoats for too long. Church Action

on Poverty is concerned with the most marginalised families in Britain today – the unemployed, the sick, those in deep debt, asylum seekers and others.

We are all equal in God's eyes and as Christians it is our duty to speak up for the poor. Campaigns have been organised to press governments to help them and to reduce inequality, and they have had a great deal of success. 2010 is European Year for Combating Poverty and CAP has been chosen to run three campaigns to raise awareness.

This work needs money and this may not be quite the time to ask for it. There once was a circus strong man who ended his act by squeezing a lemon dry and then challenged anyone in the audience to do better. One day an elderly man stepped out from the audience, squeezed the lemon and got three more drops. The strong man was amazed and asked how he did it. Back came the the answer: 'It's easy, I have been a church treasurer for thirty years.' Why don't we all squeeze the lemon and help Church Action on Poverty. They need it and would be most grateful.

Gerry Bowen-Thomas



The wild-flower meadow in the church grounds (planted by the children) thrived over the summer

The High 5 Club



The High 5 Club took place in August and despite dubious weather forecasts the sun shone on Mary Dennett's garden and we all had a marvellous time. Twenty-two children from 3 to 9 years of age attended the two days from 10am to 2.30pm.

Each day's activities were around a theme. The first day we thought about reaching out; how Jesus reached out and did not always do as others expected. We played a game where we had to reach out to the person we were trying to catch, and another game like 'Simon Says', only you had to do the opposite. We also found things we had in common with each other in groups and everyone managed to find something in common with each other even if on one occasion it was that the children in the group were all playing the same game!! The children each decorated a hand to make the High 5 banner, and we made a paper people chain ranging from princesses to footballers.

Em (with Margaret Smith's acting assistance) told the story of Jesus healing the leper and the children listened well and thought about how they might have felt. They asked the leper (Margaret) questions such as how it felt to be away from family, how it felt to be healed and even if the bits that had dropped off came back! Everyone sat in the garden to enjoy their packed lunch. In the afternoon craft activities included decorating a picture frame in which a picture of the child was placed. The day ended with singing action songs with Sally and much laughter. Between all the

activities the children still had time to play in the garden.

The second day was equally packed with the theme around the story of the feeding of the five thousand. Em brought along her picnic bag full of fair trade goodies and the children thought about why fair trade is good. We also thought about what we really needed in our picnic and decided a lot of the things we could really do without. We thought about sharing and this also formed part of our games; we had a relay where the winning team shared their prize, and a treasure hunt where we shared out all the treasure at the end. The children did a number of cooking activities, icing biscuits and cakes, making bread, and creating fruit kebabs. At snack time everyone joined in with a big picnic where the food that had been made was shared. There was more great singing and dancing before the end of the day and goodbyes.

The days took a lot of planning, preparation and effort by lots of people. It was definitely worth it. The children had a great time and many parents have passed on their thanks. But apart from all the fun, it gave the children an opportunity to have a Christian experience and think about some important subjects. Despite some of the children being fairly young they listened to the stories and joined in with comments and questions. Despite there being a lot of children there was no grumpy behaviour and everyone played really well together. They shared gold chocolate coins, showed good understanding of thinking of others, and it was lovely to see children readily being like this with each other. As an adult I had a great time and I am sure all the children not only had a great time but also a really positive experience.

Lisa Scott-Russell



A little patch of earth. A quiet spot to reflect. A view that stops you in your tracks. Where do you encounter God through creation? During September the Diocese of Oxford will be running 'Inspired by Creation', A chance to share with others how creation inspires you.

Inspired by Creation will give you the opportunity to win prizes by entering a photograph and/or a poem/prayer that captures the place where you encounter God through creation.

Flyers are available at the back of church. For more information visit:
www.earthingfaith.org/inspired

Christian Aid Total

Thank you to everyone who gave to the Christian Aid appeal for the floods in Pakistan. We raised £350.

Something to Say?

Please send any contributions for the St Swithun's Church newsletter to the Editor, Jackie Smith.

We welcome text and/or pictures (in particular it would be good to build up a bank of pictures reflecting church life, so if you have any please do send them in).

Don't worry if writing isn't your thing – Jackie can help you with the right form of words.

Deadline for copy: 20 Oct 2010

Contact Details

Clergy:

Rev Em Coley 01865 735135;
emcoley@me.com

Rev Pam McKellen 01235 554739;
p.mckellen@btinternet.com

Newsletter Editor:

Jackie Smith 01865 326175;
jacquelinesmith0@gmail.com (note the zero!)

Church Wardens:

Isabel Baggott 730950

Gerry Bowen-Thomas 739356

Bill Hunwick 739311

Dates for Your Diary

Monday 20 September

8.00pm. PCC meeting in Church

Saturday 2 October

10.00am - 12noon. Decorating the Church for Harvest

7.30pm for 8.00pm. The Harvest Hop

Sunday 3 October

9.30am. Harvest Communion

6.00pm. Harvest Communion Celebration at St James the Great, Radley

Sunday 10 October

6.30pm. Kennington Churches Together Evening Prayer

Sunday 31 October

4.00pm. Party of Light

From the Editor

Recently I went to a day conference organised by Stillpoint, an Oxford-based project which aims to deepen spiritual practice. I went to hear Richard Rohr, a Franciscan Priest, talk about 'contemplation as an alternative consciousness'.

They are big words: what do they mean? Well, I think what he was trying to do was encourage us to see things more clearly; to practise breaking through the veil to the eternity that is always with us – the big picture beyond the little realities of daily life. We learnt 'how to see as the mystics see'.

One route to achieve this is to try and move beyond a position where we think things can only be true if we understand them. There are lots

of aspects of God and the spiritual realm that are impossible for our minds to comprehend. We often stumble upon this fact when troubling things happen in our lives.

I think it's makes us freer people if we can accept that we do not always have all the answers; we do not always need to be judging things and proving that we are right. Life, faith, and experience are full of paradoxes. Perhaps we would be more aware and peaceful people if we could learn to celebrate this creative tension that is part of being human.



Jackie Smith