

St Swithun's Church Newsletter

For information and inspiration

November 2011

Energy and enthusiasm

We spent half term in Brighton. It was the first time that I have visited this 'London by the sea' cosmopolitan town and I have to say I loved it.

The vibe in Brighton is energetic, the boutiques (perfect for Christmas shopping!) are original, and the view of the windswept beach is breathtaking. The fashion trends displayed by the hundreds of people traipsing the streets are fascinating, and conversation starters! I was mesmerised and energised.

Interestingly, however, my mum (who came with us on the holiday - hooray for grannies) did not like Brighton at all. She said it made her feel old.

All of this made me think about what is it that energises us? What makes us feel young at heart, what raises our interest, what excites and enthuses us?

It is helpful to be reminded of a passage in Isaiah where God offers life that satisfies desires and quenches thirst:

"Come, all you who are thirsty, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost. Why spend money on what is not bread, and your labour on what does not satisfy? Listen, listen to me, and eat what is good, and you will delight in the richest of fare. Give ear and come to me; listen, that you may live." (Isaiah 55:1-3)

As we enter this hectic season of expense and busyness I do hope that we will feel energised as a result of shopping, cooking, celebrating and so on... But may we also spend time in God's presence. May we know the life that he has for us, a life lived in unity with him, where thirsts and desires are satisfied. May we spend the time listening to God, delighting in all he has given us and ensuring that he is not simply an afterthought in our lives, rather someone whose presence pervades all we do, how we spend our time, our money, and ultimately our identity.

Em Coley



Student Placement



St Swithun's has been my home church since Lynne and I moved into Kennington in August, last year. However, from this October until June 2012 I will officially be on 'student placement'.

I'm in my final year of ordination training at Wycliffe Hall. One of the requirements of the Church of England for all trainees is that we undertake at least two working placements in churches. St Helen's in Abingdon welcomed me for five weeks on a full-time basis in the summer. Now Pam and Em have agreed to provide the opportunity of a few hours' work experience each week for the next few months.

The idea is that ordinands get practical experience of church life to run alongside academic studies. The plan is that I continue running with the things I'm already involved in, but I will take on more priestly-type tasks under Em's supervision. This may include leading services and preaching, plus whatever else emerges.

I am grateful to Pam, Em, the church wardens and the PCC for making the placement possible. I hope that it will be enriching for everyone and good preparation for me as I begin thinking about doing the job 'for real' from next summer in Birmingham.

Mike Harmon

Christian Basics Course

Got questions about your faith?

Wondering how to make sense of the Trinity?

Thinking about the Bible and how it fits together?

Or maybe you feel now is the time to do a refresher course on the faith you have held for decades!

We will be running a course in the Spring that looks at the basics of the Christian faith for anyone interested, and for anyone considering confirmation.

If you are interested (don't worry, this isn't a firm commitment) please let Em know.



You are all invited...

Em, Lee, Ellie and Jack are excited to invite you to Open House at the Vicarage on **23 December** from 5.00pm till 8.00pm. Join us for a glass of wine and some nibbles as we celebrate Christmas!

Pilgrimage: Bath to Wells

After the successful Salisbury to Christchurch pilgrimage in 2010, another is planned, this time from Bath Abbey to Wells, from 8-12 July 2012.

The route runs along the Kennet and Avon Canal, then passes through country rich in both natural and industrial archaeological interest, and on the Wednesday includes a spectacular descent into Wookey Hole off the Mendips, with breath-taking views.

Approximately 10 miles walking per day will be required from Monday 9 July to Wednesday 11 July, and only a short walk into Wells on the final day.

If anyone is interested in joining the walk, please contact either Gillian Cox 01865 735590, or Julia Kent 01865 739047 without delay, as accommodation needs to be booked at an early date. They can also provide more details of the itinerary, and likely costs, if required.

There will be a day outing to Bath on Sunday 8 July 2012, but there is no need for early booking for that!



Pause for Prayer

All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

2 Timothy 3:16-17



Let us give thanks for the gift of the Bible and pray for all who enable it to be studied, understood, and loved.

Almighty God, in your goodness you have given us the Scriptures to equip us for every kind of good deed.

We give thanks for all who translate the Bible, and pray that, through their work and skill, your word may go forth to the ends of the earth.

We give thanks for all who distribute the Scriptures, and pray that, through the written text, your people may be built up in faith and love.

We give thanks for all whose learning interprets the Scriptures, and pray for biblical scholars and theologians, that more light and truth may break forth from your word.

We give thanks for all preachers and teachers, and pray that, through the word proclaimed and shared, your Church may grow in holiness and discipleship.

We give thanks for all who read the Bible in public worship, for all study groups and training courses, and pray that, through the study of the Scriptures, your word may find a home in the hearts of your people.

Gracious Lord, grant to us that loving your holy word, we may adorn it with obedient and Christlike lives; to the glory of your name.

Amen.

Remembering



November is very much the month to remember. On All Saints day we remember those we loved and lost, and then on Remembrance day we remember the sacrifice of those who died in the pursuit of peace. After my dad died on 11 November 1998 I carried this poem around in my purse for years. It helped me express my feelings of longing and grief and regret, but it also reminded me that life still brings reasons to smile. As we spend time remembering this month, may we know God's comfort, presence, and hope for the future.

Em

*REMEMBER me when I am gone away,
Gone far away into the silent land;
When you can no more hold me by the
hand,
Nor I half turn to go, yet turning stay.
Remember me when no more day by day
You tell me of our future that you
plann'd:
Only remember me; you understand
It will be late to counsel then or pray.
Yet if you should forget me for a while
And afterwards remember, do not
grieve:
For if the darkness and corruption leave
A vestige of the thoughts that once I
had,
Better by far you should forget and
smile
Than that you should remember and be
sad.*

Christina Rosetti

Party of Light

The party of light was a great idea because:

1. Everyone found it really fun.
2. Instead of celebrating dark things we could celebrate light.

When we got to the church there were plenty of fun art activities to do like making pencil pots, stained glass windows and Chinese lanterns. I made a stained glass window and a Chinese lantern.

Then we had tea. There was a whole array of food from mini sausages to butterfly cakes. Next we had some games - there was a treasure hunt, apple bobbing and pairs but with chocolate under cups instead of cards.

The chocolate pairs was my favourite game! Everyone got two mini chocolate bars, two chocolate coins, an apple, a goody bag (in it was a party blower, a bouncy ball, another mini bar, bubbles and a glow stick) and a balloon with a tag that says 'Jesus loves you!'

*Rhainna Gibson (10)
pictured below with her cousin Ellie*



Dear Em,

Thank you very much for organising all of the brilliant things to do at the party.

I think it was one of the best parties ever.

Love Josh



Church grounds

On Saturday 26 November, I will co-ordinate the last garden working party of the year. We'll be preparing the area to the right of the entrance for sowing with Pictorial Meadow seeds next spring, and tidying the rockery.

Come along to the church grounds anytime between 8.30am and 1.00pm, even just an hour will help. We break for coffee (provided) around 11.00am. Please bring your own tools.

The grounds around our church are continuing to be developed in order to enhance the uplifting nature of the space, as well as enabling the area to be used for numerous and varied activities. Brian and Alison Peedell, on behalf of Kennington Horticultural Society have kindly donated and planted some spring bulbs. Crocus



bulbs have been planted in the rockery, and a drift of small species daffodils have been planted on the edge of the wilder area beneath the lime trees. They also plan to put some more small daffodils just in front of the wall at the entrance and possibly in the area to the left of the main gate, against the wall and beneath the trees here. We are grateful for their generosity.

Rosemary Hollinrake

Evening services in November and December	
6 November 6.00pm	The Bible and Music St James, Radley
13 November 6.30pm	6.30pm Holy Communion
20 November 6.30pm	Compline
27 November 6.30pm	Advent Carols (Churches Together)
4 December 6.00pm	Carols around the tree (followed by mulled wine and mince pies in Church)
11 December 4.00pm	Christingle
18 December 6.30pm	Carols by Candlelight
25 December	No evening service



John and Barbara Bayliss (left) and Gerry and Joan Bowen-Thomas (right) both celebrated their Diamond Wedding Anniversaries this year. Congratulations to both couples.

Raindrops

I help out with the Raindrops in Children's Church. Isn't it wonderful to see so many young families in Church and the amount of children in Children's Church too. Since I have been helping with the Raindrops I have found it a joy to join in with the fun and games they get up to. So that those who help like me can also enjoy more of the great sermons and worship, it would be wonderful to have some more volunteers. If you could help it could mean that everyone would only be on the rota once a month at the most. Can you help? If so come and talk to me or Em.

Rachel Smith

Homegroups

Thank you to the homegroups for their input into last Sunday's service.

If you are interested in joining either of the evening groups, please contact:

Martin Morse (Wednesday group)

326641

martin@morse.org.uk

Sam and Emma Partington (Thursday group)

327575

ejpartington@hotmail.co.uk

If you are interested in a daytime group, or would like to chat more generally about homegroups, please contact Em.

From the Editor

In September I went on a holistic retreat at the Abbey Sutton Courtenay. One activity involved wandering around the grounds and looking at the natural world to be found contained within the abbey's four acres. Underneath a tall old chestnut tree I found some shiny conkers peeping like jewels out of their ugly cases. It struck me that there is a time for everything; even the ugly prickly case is part of the design, and there is a particular moment when the beauty of the seed inside is destined to appear. We were encouraged to reflect on any kind of useful teaching we could draw from the 'text' of nature. I found myself thinking about the pattern of life which is made up of highs and lows; productive and fallow times; happiness and sadness. There is a certain comfort in the idea that there is a design behind this ebb and flow. Perhaps this is not a particularly profound insight and certainly not an original one, but it helped to instill in me a certain attitude of peacefulness.



Jacqueline Smith

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Dates for Your Diary

Saturday 12 November

10.00am-12.00 Craft Morning in Church
(4-11-year-olds)

Saturday 19 November

10.00am-12.00 Christmas Market,
Village Centre

Monday 21 November

8.00pm PCC Meeting in Church

Sunday 27 November

6.30pm Advent Carols (Churches
Together) at St Swithun's

Sunday 4 December

6.00pm Carols around the tree

Saturday 10 December

10.00am-12.00 Craft Morning in Church

Sunday 11 December

4.00pm Christingle

Sunday 18 December

6.30pm Carols by Candlelight

Saturday 24 December

4.00pm Crib Service

11.30pm Midnight Communion

Sunday 25 December

10.00am Christmas All Age Communion

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.

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