

The Old Church News

O P E N T O A L L - O P E N T O G O D

VICAR'S VOICE

I want to reflect for a moment upon "Transforming Church." Now what do we really think that this title means? And do we think that our Church (that is, of course, Us) needs or requires "Transforming"? The Oxford Dictionary defines "transform" as 1. to make a great change in the appearance or character of (as a caterpillar for example is transformed into a butterfly); 2. to change the voltage of (electric current); 3. to become transformed! I am not sure I wish to become electric voltage! But surely the Diocesan initiative of recent years does wish us to explore and seek transforming ourselves as Christian disciples and where we are in our places of worship. In other words, neither ourselves nor our church buildings and what we practice ought to be static, unchanging.

There is a saying isn't there that "familiarity breeds contempt" but then conquering familiarity surely is a conquest for ensuring commitment and stability in relationships. Couples know each other but there is always a place for being surprised by one another! Such encourages growth and permanence: a good marriage! Born out of Love of course. So, what of us in our place of worship? Where should we be transformed? Every parish is encouraged each year to focus upon three goals (and review them at the close of

each year).

In St Matthews these currently are nurturing our Christian faith by study (the Emmaus course), connecting with the community and increasing lay leadership in intercessory prayer, whilst at The Old Church they are opening the building more, updating the website, improving communications and re-organising the west end (including library). The Pastoral Care team here are working hard with baptism, wedding and funeral preparation and administration as well as be-friending and welcoming. All of which has gone on before. Perhaps nothing is as ever new.

However, none of us remains the same – Life's experiences form/transform. For each of us as followers of Jesus Christ, the guiding model on how we live and worship is How would God want us to be? and What would Jesus do in our place? Transforming, then, is in the here and now, with a sense of where we would wish ourselves (and our places of worship) to be: a resurrection people! Sharing that Good News beyond our brick walls, but welcoming others into those buildings! Provided, of course, we are courageous enough to recognize that what we are familiar with may not be meaningful to others. Are we then being Called to be courageous enough to change and transform ourselves?

PAST MONTH'S NEWS

September began with a bring and share Pimms party in the Vicarage garden. Fellowship and games were enjoyed by folk from Old Church, St Matthews and Holy Trinity. Brothers and sisters from the three parishes came together again to celebrate the 400th anniversary of the King James Bible in a service of Nine Readings and Hymns at The Old Church.

Discoverers journeyed to Amblecote in Stourbridge where they browsed traditional and contemporary glassware, handmade furniture

and soaps in the Ruskin Glass Centre.

The Table Top sale held in the Dorothy Parkes Centre attracted a large number of the community who purchased bargains from a variety of stalls and enjoyed the refreshments available.

The patronal festival of St Matthews saw Old Church sharing Sunday morning worship with the congregation at St Matthews. Following the service many of the congregation enjoyed a bring and share lunch.

Q.I.... "HARVEST"

- in Great Britain an unofficial religious festival
- of thanksgiving for the fruits of the earth
- after the ingathering of the harvest
- customary to decorate the church building with fruits, flowers and vegetables
- special hymns sung
- in medieval times, Lammas Day (August 1st) given for this thanksgiving and bread was made with the new wheat
- new bread blessed and distributed for communion
- this was revived by the Reverend Hawker at Morwenstow in Cornwall in 1843
- in the USA a prayer of thanksgiving for the fruits of the earth was made in the American Prayer Book of 1789 for Thanksgiving Day (observed on the fourth Thursday in November)

There is tremendous happiness in making others happy, despite our own situations. Shared grief is half the sorrow, but happiness when shared is doubled. If you want to feel rich, just count all the things you have that money can't buy. "Today is a gift, that's why it is called the present."



OCTOBER

- 2nd 10.00 am **Harvest Festival** at St Matthews with produce for Help the Aged
- 5th 2.30 pm **Light Reading** at the Sisters' house.
- 8th 6.30 pm **Harvest Supper and Talent Show** in the Dorothy Parkes Centre
- 9th 10.15 am **Harvest Festival** in The Old Church with non-perishable donations and goods for Brushstrokes' work with asylum seekers, refugees and others in need
- 9th 6.00 pm **Choral Holy Communion** at The Old Church (1662 service and celebration of the 1611 King James Bible) - singing rehearsal at 5.00 pm and service at 6.00 pm
- 12th **Annual General Meeting** for the Board of Directors at the Dorothy Parkes Centre
- 27th 2.30 pm **Praying** together in The Old Church
7.00 pm **Evening service of Compline**
- 30th **All Souls' services** in The Old Church at 3.00 pm and at 5.00 pm (candles lit for those who have died and for those bereaved)

ADVANCE NOTICE

Saturday 26th November
2.00 pm

Christmas Fair in the
Dorothy Parkes Centre

Nature Notes - Points to Ponder

Plant three rows of peas
Peace of mind
Peace of heart
Peace of soul

Plant four rows of squash
Squash gossip
Squash indifference
Squash gambling
Squash selfishness

Plant four rows of lettuce
Lettuce be faithful
Lettuce be kind
Lettuce be patient
Lettuce love one another

Completing the garden
we must have thyme
Thyme for each other
Thyme for family
Thyme for friends

Water the garden and
cultivate with love.
There is much fruit
in your garden
because
You reap what you sow.