

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

“Children are growing up ignorant of one of the most inspiring stories I know – the history of the United Kingdom,” said Michael Gove, the Education Minister, at last year’s Conservative Party Conference.

Whatever one’s view educationally on the matter of history teaching, such a debate mirrors that within the church about our approach to the teaching of the faith. Traditionalists argue for a coherent narrative of faith, whilst many others are disaffected by the promotion of a rather narrow and exclusive version of what it means to be a Christian (a particular story that requires obedience, explaining everything to us as long as we are willing to listen hard enough).

But of course the idea of narrative is only one way of speaking about faith. We have to allow religious texts to speak to us. The story of the death of Jesus on the cross and his resurrection speaks of liberation and the victory of non-violent love. We do not need to speak of it as “the turning point” or “the key chapter in the book,” for the death and resurrection of Christ is something to be lived. It is a life intimately concerned with trust and love, a life which is characterized by both vulnerability and compassion.

We do not need to condemn those who have heard a different story or dance to the tune of a different narrative; rather, we need to rejoice and

nurture our own faith on the basis of a personal encounter but in the fellowship and company of others, allowing God to speak to us and use us as He would will. We have “Good News” to proclaim, and to challenge and be challenged by the culture we live in: “Open to God, open to all” as our mission statement summarises.

PILGRIMAGE TO ST ALBANS

This is the oldest site of continuous Christian worship in Britain. It stands over the place where Alban, the first martyr, was buried after giving his life for his faith over 1700 years ago. The building's amazing mixture of architectural styles bears witness to the many centuries of its life, first as a monastic Abbey and now as a Cathedral.

23rd June: Coach departing from Holy Trinity at 8.00 am, returning 8.45 pm approx.

12.00 noon Eucharist Preacher Dr John Sentamu, Archbishop of York.

4.00 pm Evensong Preacher The Most Reverend Vincent Nichols, Archbishop of Westminster.

Cost: Adults £15.00, Under 16s £10.00

Contact Nigel to reserve seats before 30th April

LAST MONTH'S NEWS

March gave lots of opportunities to discuss and learn together: a good way of deepening both faith and friendship.

The Rt Rev'd Andrew Watson, Bishop of Aston was the guest speaker at a conference “Growing with God” for children’s leaders. Various workshops were available on the day giving practical and spiritual ideas to help children walk with God. Top tips suggested to **HANDLE** children well..... **H**onour them! **A**dvice them! **N**urture them! **D**isciple them! **L**isten to them! **E**ncourage them!

The ecumenical meetings at Holy Trinity on the theme of “I am the way” were a useful source of reflection for Lent.

A small group gathered in the Sisters’ house for a day of Bible Study and fellowship. The day included study of Galatians and Hebrews giving a deeper insight into the background and content of these books.

The Discoverers shared lunch together and Thrifties enjoyed an evening of fashion and fundraising in aid of Worth Unlimited (a local Youth Work Charity).

Q.I...“EASTER”

- the feast of the Resurrection of Christ raised from the dead
- emphasized by the preparation period of Lent, Passiontide and Holy Week
- “Alleluia” (Hebrew: “Praise ye Yah”) for Easter Joy!
- Resurrection appearances of Jesus: after the empty tomb (John 20:1-10) to Mary Magdalene in the garden (John 2:11-18), to two disciples on the road to Emmaus (Luke 24: 13-35), to the disciples in a room (John 20:19-21), to Thomas (John 20:24-29), on the shore of Galilee (John 21:1-14), on the mountain (Matthew 28:16-20) and to St Paul by light and voice (Acts 9)
- the derivation of the word “Easter” is uncertain: according to Bede, it is connected with an Anglo-Saxon spring goddess ‘Eostre’
- the date of the Christian feast of Easter has superseded an old pagan festival (as with Christmas)
- The date of Easter is determined by the Paschal Full Moon, its extreme limits being 21st March and 25th April
- the custom of exchanging “Easter eggs” is of ancient origin (empty because of the tomb and Jesus is not there - He is with us!)



APRIL

- 1st **Palm Sunday**, with procession at St Matthews 10 am & Old Church 10.15 am
- 5th **Maundy Thursday** 8.00 pm **Holy Communion with washing of feet/hands** in Old Church, followed by **Watch** (open until midnight)
- 6th **Good Friday** 10.00 am **Witness Walk** round Holy Trinity, for one hour; 12.00 noon **Stations of the Cross** in Old Church (for one hour); 2 pm **Praise and Liturgy of the Cross** at St Matthews, ending at 3.00 pm
- 8th **Easter Sunday** 10.00 am St Matthews 10.15 am The Old Church
- 15th 10.15 am **Baptism of Sofia Taylor** during the service at Old Church - please pray for Sofia, her family and godparents
- 21st **Weddings**: Keven and Kim (1.00 pm) Stephen and Karen (2.30 pm) and Stephen and Melissa (4.00 pm) - please pray for their day and marriage
- 26th 2.30 pm **Prayers** in Old Church 7.00 pm **Compline service** in Old Church

ADVANCE NOTICES

A Celebration of Arts and Crafts in Smethwick

at Holy Trinity Smethwick

with funds raised going to Christian Aid.

11/12/13 May 2012

11th May Church open for exhibitors to set up.

12th May Church open for viewing of exhibition

13th May at 10am special service with Christian Aid theme

See web site for details of how you can join in or call Mel King on 0121 558 3427 if you, your church, school, community group or individuals wish to exhibit their special skills or interests as part of this celebration of so much that is good in Smethwick.

3rd June **A special event to mark the Queen’s Diamond Jubilee** with all churches and faiths invited to share in its creation. Lunchtime onwards with a short ceremony on the grass facing the High Street outside Holy Trinity followed by a party! More details to follow!