

The Old Church News

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

VIEW FROM THE GALLERY

Sunday morning and the church is crammed full and there is a lot of cheerful chatter. The extended family and friends of a family who have brought a baby for baptism are here in large numbers representing several generations. The infant is the centre of attention. The church pews are great for confining children but not over comfortable.

From the gallery I'm able to watch the inner workings of the church organ as they disperse air to create musical notes. I also have a bird's eye view of the people in church. For many present this is not a common experience as the church service may well seem utterly confusing. However there is a lot of good will and there are moments of real quiet and a sense of celebration.

Nowadays fewer babies are baptised. Gone is the time when Sunday afternoons saw churches packed for the baptisms of six or even a dozen infants without any regular members of the congregation present. Gone also is the time when parents were mostly married. We cannot roll back to that time but different opportunities are emerging when parents ask for baptism. We are blessed with members who are willing to work with children within the church which also makes it easier for families to be in church. There is also the opportunity to discuss marriage and the Christian understanding of this. For many families

this is a very stressful time with high levels of unemployment and encouragement and support are vital.

On the Sunday mornings when baptisms take place we become a shop window for the church. The participation of those who lead in the service by providing music, leading the prayers, reading lessons and making people welcome all help to create an act of worship which people who are new will remember. Yes, we may all prefer our own undisturbed routines on a Sunday morning and our own time for spiritual reflection but the Christian message is one of God's love for everyone proclaimed in baptism. *Michael Goss*

Nigel writes: When my mother was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer one of my nephews (aged 25) took it upon himself to create a sponsorship idea (and "roped" in the boyfriends of his two younger sisters) - together all three of them walked the "two Tors walk" (from north Devon to Dorset, a distance of 117 miles) in 5 days for the charity raising over £1000. We of course are proud of them. But what adds to this is the reaction they encountered from perfect strangers. Every night they were offered, in pubs and others' homes, hospitality and food once their story had been shared. It is a "good news" story indeed and warms the heart. Bless the goodness that does exist in our world today.

LAST MONTH'S NEWS

Our journey through Easter continued as we celebrated the Baptism of Harrison Steele-Bird during a Sunday morning service followed at 12 noon by the Baptism of Dollie Brannigan. We remember Harrison, Dollie and their families in our prayers.

Archdeacon Hayward Osborne admitted Yvonne and Paul from Old Church; Hector and Bob of St Matthews, together with many others into the Office of Churchwarden at a service in St Luke's, Colmore Row. We pray for the Archdeacon and all Churchwardens in their responsibilities.

Ascension Day dawned with a 7.00 am service heralded by the bells. This was followed by breakfast at the Vicarage. Later that day the Discoverers were transported to the age of steam as they journeyed around the Chasewater Railway Museum. After fortifying themselves with lunch in a Toby Carvery in Cannock they continued their explorations with an interesting expedition to Chasewater Coalmine. The day concluded with a reflective tour around the German War Cemetery. Please contact Christine should you wish to join the Discoverers on June 21st for their next adventure to Halfpenny Green Winery.

Q.I... "ASCENSION"

- the withdrawal of Christ into Heaven as witnessed by the apostles
- St Luke deliberately combines two traditions current at the time he wrote (about 60 years after Jesus' death): Jesus ascended on the evening of Easter Day (Luke chapter 24 verses 50-51) and Jesus ascended at the end of a 40 day period, during which he appeared frequently to his disciples
- the Ascension marks the close of Eastertide and the exultation of Christ to the heavenly life
- Thus we are able to say "Jesus is Lord!"
- Jesus exercises power, he points to an ultimate transformation
- But he promised his Spirit (we celebrate this Gift at Pentecost)
- Christ, sitting at God's right hand, ruling as head over all things for the Church (and we responding to the Lord as witnessing disciples)
- One of the chief feasts of the Christian Calendar (a pity perhaps it is "hidden" away in the week-day!!)

Encouraging Words

Thou shalt not worry, for worry is the most unproductive of all human activities.

Thou shalt not be fearful, for most of the things we fear never come to pass.

Thou shalt not cross bridges before you get to them, for no one yet has succeeded in accomplishing this.

Thou shalt face each problem as it comes. You can handle only one at a time anyway.

Thou shalt not take problems to bed with you, for they make a poor bedfellow.

Thou shalt not borrow other people's problems. They can take better care of them than you can.

Thou shalt not try to relive yesterday; for good or ill, it is gone. Concentrate on what is happening in your life today.

Thou shalt count thy blessings, never overlooking the small ones, for a lot of small blessings add up to a big one.

Thou shalt be a good listener, for only when you listen do you hear ideas different from your own.

Thou shalt not become bogged down by frustration, for 90 percent of it is rooted in self-pity and will only interfere with positive action.



JUNE

- 2.00 pm **Wedding** in The Old Church of
2nd Matthew and Sarah (Please pray for them at the beginning of their marriage)
- 3rd **Trinity Sunday: Baptisms** of nine members of the Grice/Tipping families
- 3rd 3.00 pm **Garden Party** at the Vicarage for the Queen's Diamond Jubilee
- 5th 12 noon **Singers** join ASDA Cape Hill Celebrations for Queen's Diamond Jubilee
- 12th **Deanery Synod** meeting at Holy Trinity
- 17th **Baptisms** of Holly Marie Maddocks and Gary Elms
- 21st **Discoverers Trip** to Halfpenny Green Winery (see Christine Tanner for details)
- 28th 2.30 pm **Prayers** in Old Church
7.00 pm **Compline service** in Old Church

ADVANCE NOTICE

Sunday 8th July 6pm **Confirmation** at Christchurch Oldbury - Please pray for all those seeking and preparing to be confirmed.

Summer Fayre in the Vicarage Garden
Saturday 14th July at 2.00 pm

A Prayer for the Healing of Memories

O God of healing,
we bring to you our memories:
our memories of joyous and happy times,
but also our memories of painful times,
of wrongs done to us, and of wrongs we
have committed,
actions in need of forgiveness.
Send your Spirit
to dissolve the hurts we cling on to
and to transform us day by day
into the people you created us to be.
Through Jesus Christ,
who died and rose again,

Amen.