

THE OLD CHURCH NEWS

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

VOLUME 3 ISSUE 1

JULY 2012



VICAR'S VOICE

In 1720 Dorothy Parkes made her Last Will and Testament (she died in 1728). By her Will she left monies sufficient for her charitable trust to be set up, managed by trustees for a chapel to be built for services and prayers, a clergyman to be appointed to administer such and a school for girls to be established. In 1732 the chapel was built and consecrated (the pub next door built at the same time - but not provided for by her legacy – then called “The Hand in Providence”). About one hundred years later, through a private members’ bill in Parliament, the parish was created and the chapel became known as The Old Church (the pub changing names subsequently to take on The Old Chapel) and the school eventually becoming at the end of the twentieth-century, the Dorothy Parkes Community Centre. The Trustees, all volunteers, meet annually but administer the trust funds for the benefit of the building and fabric of the church, with the Vicar as an ex-officio member.

The church of St Matthews was built in 1855 as the population of Smethwick grew and the area changed from the village and rural (with Holy Trinity church having just been built on the High street) to the industrial upon the canal and railway networks.

LAST MONTH'S NEWS

June began with a joyous occasion when nine members of the Grice/Tipping families were baptised and welcomed into the church family during the Sunday morning service. Later that day rain forced the Old Church Garden party indoors where home-made sandwiches, savouries and cakes were shared as all celebrated the 60th anniversary of Queen Elizabeth's reign.

On Bank Holiday Tuesday a number of

The then Vicar of The Old Church, the Rev'd Edward Addenbrook, oversaw the work and its vision with the local Uniett family (meeting in the Blue Gates public house to plan it all!) and the building was built for £2,260.

In 2001 the three parochial church councils agreed to a Group ministry of the three distinct parishes with the hope that all three would meet regularly and share a vision for the area. Today we attempt to do so with occasional meeting together for worship (such as the Women's World Day of Prayer, the ecumenical Good Friday Walk of Witness and the Vigil of Easter Day dawn) as well as working together for projects such as the Food Bank.

We are not the first Christians on these sites. Each of the parishes in the Group have a history of prayer, worship, the sacraments and of mission and evangelism. But we, like our forbears, have a Christian faith to witness to and for which each of us are Called to share. None of us know our own futures but each of us have responded to God's Call and pray for His will to be done. Indeed we read and sing to the tune of “Here I am, send me!” There is a reason we meet in fellowship, wherever that may be, but that is because and only because we follow Christ.

the church family accepted the invitation to join in ASDA's celebrations of the Queen's Diamond Jubilee by singing hymns and patriotic songs in the Cape Hill store. Donations of cash and groceries for the Smethwick Food Bank were also collected.

Despite the inclement weather the Corpus Christi service and barbeque went ahead being hosted in the vicarage rather than the garden. Brothers and sisters from Holy Trinity, St Matthews and The Old Church gathered together and enjoyed an evening of food and fellowship.

Q.I..“CONFIRMATION”

- The rite by which the grace of the Holy Spirit is conveyed in a new or fuller way to those who have already received it in Baptism.
- It can convey a “character” upon the individual so that that person can only be confirmed the once.
- And by it, that person is then able to receive holy communion of bread and wine.
- An early example is when the apostles laid their hands upon the heads of those kneeling before them: see for example, Peter and John on the converts of Samaria (Book of Acts chapter 8 verses 14-17), or Paul on the disciples at Ephesus (Acts 19: 1-7).
- In the New Testament the “sealing with the spirit” occurs in 2 Corinthians 1.20 and Ephesians 1. 13 and 4.30).
- Washing with water, anointing with oil and the laying on of hands are all associated with initiation into the fullness of Christian life. Confirmation has become distinct from baptism (although as an adult it can be seen immediately afterwards). The Bishop confirms, extending his hands towards those to be confirmed and asks us to pray with him; “Almighty and ever-living God, you have given these your servants new birth in baptism by water and the Spirit, and have forgiven them all their sins. Let you Holy Spirit rest upon them: the Spirit of wisdom and understanding; the Spirit of counsel and inward strength; the Spirit of knowledge and true godliness; and let their delight be in the fear of the Lord. Amen.”
- The Bishop shall then confirm, by laying his hand upon each and saying; “Confirm O Lord your servant with your Holy Spirit. Amen.”
- And everyone then present as Christian witnesses prays for the newly-confirmed by saying “Defend O Lord these your servants with your heavenly grace, that they may continue yours for ever, and daily increase in your Holy Spirit more and more until they come to your everlasting Kingdom. Amen.”
- That of course is a continued prayer for each of us!
- (The next Confirmation service is to be held by Bishop Andrew at Christ Church in Oldbury on Sunday July 8th at 6pm. Please pray for all those preparing to be confirmed)



JULY

- 2nd **PCC** of and at St Matthews
- 4th 7.30 pm **PCC** of The Old Church meet at the Vicarage
- 5th **Annual meeting** of the Smethwick Chapelry trustees set up by Dorothy Parkes
- 7th **2pm Summer Fair** in the Vicarage garden **CANCELLED** (weather permitting)
- 8th 6.00 pm **Confirmation** service with first communions at Christ Church, Oldbury with Bishop Andrew
- 15th 12 noon **Baptism** of Tyler-Joe Harrington: pray for him, his parents and god-parents
- 21st 2.00 pm **Wedding** of Scott and Clare: please pray for them
- 22nd 3.00 pm Bishop David presides at **Thanks-giving Songs of Praise** at St Matthews at 3pm – everyone invited.
- 26th 2.30 pm **Prayers** in the Old Church (see Rosemary Guest for further details)
- 26th 7.00 pm **Compline**/Night prayer
- 28th 4.00 pm **Wedding** of Mark and Jenny: please pray for them

