

THE OLD CHURCH NEWS

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

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INTERREGNUM

What a word! The word itself is strange enough, but then the church is full of words that are strange to many people and need explanation. The word 'interregnum' means a gap in the normal running of an organization. For the church this means the absence of a vicar. We have been without a vicar for nearly a year but in a few weeks' time we shall have a vicar in the Reverend Debra Buckley. This will be a cause of rejoicing for the whole church and not least for those of us who have been 'minding the gap'. During this year and thanks to a lot of hard work by members and also visiting clergy our worshipping community has grown in membership. This may not be obvious to everyone because there is a varied pattern of attendances from Sunday to Sunday.

During this year there have been twenty-five baptisms, ten of whom were adults and also twelve adults were confirmed. Last Sunday [12th January] we gave thanks for the baptism of Jesus and the families of those who had had a baptism in this past year were invited to come along. Those who were confirmed were also present and the church

was encouragingly full. Christine Tanner and Wendy Fullerton explained and demonstrated what they do when visiting these families. Our thanks to them for doing this piece of work.

I was aware at the Christmas Crib service of a very packed church and this happened without much publicity. There is a very real sense of our church welcoming and caring for people. Our congregation is made up of people who have originated from many parts of the world. Every one has a part to play but it does take time to discover what this is. Sometimes we need to share our tears but we also need to share joy and laughter and set aside our anxiety and fears. Jesus carried a painful cross for us but he also brought healing and joy. We need to go out to others in our neighbourhood with hope in our hearts bringing his light to scatter the darkness that blights all our lives. The best way of doing this is not always obvious and our attempts may often be clumsy, but confidence comes when we accept his demands. Trust is not built without trial and error.

Michael Goss

PAST MONTH'S NEWS

Christmas was celebrated in our traditional manner with the Crib Service and Midnight Mass on Christmas Eve and Holy Communion on Christmas morning. These services were all well attended. The Feast of the Epiphany was marked by a special service of Readings and Hymns. The Baptism of Christ was the occasion when all families of those baptised at Old Church in the past year were invited to relight their baptismal candles.

An evening of hilarity and fun was enjoyed by some from Old Church at the Barlow Theatre, Langley. A performance of the ageless classical pantomime "Jack and

the Beanstalk" was superbly portrayed by the outstanding Oldbury Repertory Players.

The Discoverers held their annual planning meeting over a shared meal at the Dorothy Parkes' Centre. Outings for the coming year were agreed, the first being an afternoon concert in Birmingham. If you are interested in joining the Discoverers, for this and forthcoming events please see Joyce Jones, Christine Tanner or David Ingram.

A Sunday afternoon Service of Hymns and Poems of Praise in aid of the Red Cross and in memory of the late Mike Kalemkerian was attended by many of his friends.

WHO WILL DO IT ?

There was an important job to be done ~
Everybody was sure that Somebody could do it.
Anybody could have done it, but Nobody did it.
Somebody got angry about that because it was
Everybody's job !

Everybody thought Anybody could do it but
Nobody realised that Everybody wouldn't do it.
It ended up that Everybody blamed Somebody
when Nobody did what Anybody could have
done.

VISITING

FLOWER ARRANGING

CLEANING

GREETING

SERVING

SIDES PERSON

WELCOMING

MAKING COFFEE/TEA

FROM SISTERS STELLA, PHOEBE AND MARY JEN OF THE COMMUNITY OF ST MARY THE VIRGIN :

It is with much sadness that we will be
bringing to a close our corporate life in
Smethwick at the beginning of February. A
small group of sisters has lived and prayed
here since 1992. We have received an
immense amount in that time from the
friendships we have made, from those who
have ministered to us, from the projects and
pastoral links we have been involved in and
from our sharing in the life and worship of
the three Smethwick Anglican churches.

We are deeply grateful for all that has
nourished and enriched us. We will continue
to keep you in our prayers and will be
delighted to see you should you be able to
visit us at our convent in Wantage,
Oxfordshire. We wish you every blessing of
peace in this new year.



FEBRUARY

- 1st 9.30 - 4.15 pm Open Conference at
St Michael's Secondary School
**'Making Disciples in Mid-sized
Churches'** See Jeff Guest for details
- 8th 1.00 pm **Wedding** of Solomon and
Eleanor - please pray for them.
- 10th 2.30 pm **Light Reading Group** meet
at Mollie Heath's home
- 17th 7.30 pm **Institution** by the Bishop of
Aston & **Induction** by the Archdeacon
of Birmingham of the Reverend Debra
Buckley as Vicar of The Old Church.
- 20th **Discoverers' Outing** - see detail in
Past Month's News
- 28th 2.30 pm meet for **Prayers** in The Old
Church (see Rosemary for details)
- 28th 7.00 pm **Compline** in The Old Church
(see Wendy for further details)

THE KNOTS PRAYER

Dear God

Please untie the knots that are in
My mind, my heart and my life.
Remove the have nots, the can nots
And the do nots that I have in my mind.

Erase the will nots, may nots might nots
That may find a home in my heart.

Release me from the could nots, would nots
And should nots that obstruct my life.

And most of all, dear God,
I ask that you remove from my mind,
My heart and my life all of the 'am nots'
That I have allowed to hold me back,
Especially the thought that
I am not good enough.

Amen

Author known to God