

THE OLD CHURCH NEWS

OPEN TO ALL - OPEN TO GOD
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VICAR'S VOICE

By the time you read this we will have made our journey through the harrowing events of Holy Week and we will have shared in the blessings of the Easter feast. The feast we celebrate on Easter Sunday is, of course, just the beginning of the Easter season. This liturgical season is fifty days long, stretching from Easter Sunday all the way through to Pentecost and so, throughout the whole of May and just into June, we will be continuing to celebrate all that Easter means.

Easter is the rich season in which we flesh out what it means to be Easter people by delving into the mysteries of the resurrection and responding to God's call to be followers of Christ; to be God's hands and feet, God's faithful people in the world. In doing this, we cannot avoid the imperative to seek justice and pursue peace for all God's people; to feel the pain that God feels when people suffer needlessly and to know that, through Christ, we are intrinsically connected to our brothers and sister across the world.

This can be a daunting prospect to say the least! But organisations such as Christian Aid can help us individually, and as a church, to engage together in giving, acting and praying

In a myriad of different ways. Christian Aid week this year is from May 11th - May 17th and it focuses in particular, and unsurprisingly, on the impact of war.

We will all know through reading daily news papers, listening to the radio and watching the television that for a growing number of people across the world, the horror of war is a part of daily life. Christian Aid says that,

'Right now, fuelled by the devastating violence in both Syria and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the numbers of people driven from their homes by war is on the rise. It stands at 42 million people – an appalling statistic and a stain on the conscience of humanity. We can't turn our backs. We must act now'.

They invite us to join with them in sending the message to those who live in fear right now, that, 'you are not alone. We're with you, helping you to rebuild your lives, and working for peace'.

So, as we celebrate the Easter season together, let us remember that in following the way of Christ we can make a world of difference.

PAST MONTH'S NEWS

April saw the close of the Lent season. £225 was raised at the Lent Soup lunches for Christian Aid.

The dramatic events of Palm Sunday and Holy Week were commemorated with services on each day but particularly on the evening of Maundy Thursday and at midday on Good Friday. The celebrations of Easter day began with the Dawn Service of Light and later with a service of Holy Communion with baptisms.

Old Church's Annual parochial and general meetings saw the re-election of Yvonne and David as our churchwardens, and the election of two new Deanery Synod representatives and three new PCC members.

The Discoverers' monthly outing saw them "sent to Coventry". Some of the group toured the ruins of Coventry Cathedral whilst others visited the "new" cathedral and the neighbouring Holy Trinity church.

HOPE

Long ago, in the days of sailing ships, a terrible storm arose and a ship was lost in a deserted area. Only one crewman survived, washed up on a small uninhabited island. Each day he looked for a passing ship but saw nothing. Eventually he managed to build a crude hut, in which he stored the few things he had recovered from the wreck and those things he had made to help him. One day, as the sailor was returning from his daily search for food, he saw a large column of smoke. As he ran toward it, he saw his small hut in flames. All was lost.

Although slightly stunned, he quickly began to search the island for material to build a new hut. That night, he worked diligently to construct a better dwelling than that which he had before, and he remained **hopeful** that one day he would finally be discovered. He spent an almost sleepless night thinking of constructive ways in which to make his time on the island more comfortable. The next morning, he rose early and went down to the sea. There, to his amazement, he saw a ship lying offshore and a small boat rowing toward him.

When the once-marooned man met the ship's captain, he asked him how he had known to send help. The captain replied, "Why, we saw your smoke signal yesterday, but by the time we drew close the tide was against us, so we had to wait until now to come and get you."

Hope is that single ingredient which allows us to look forward to tomorrow and the positive opportunities it will bring.

Hope is the energy that arouses the mind to explore every possibility in time of challenges and adversity.

Hope is that extra push that keeps us going. It gives us the ability to carry on with our plans even though we feel discouraged or doubtful. Sometimes it may seem that things have taken a turn for the worst, but the hopeful heart believes that, "Better times are just around the corner."

When failure confronts you, when disappointment faces you, when disaster threatens you, the only hope you have is **hope**. For as long as you have **hope**, you will always feel a candle burning within you that will light the way to great possibilities.



MAY

- 11th **CHRISTIAN AID** week begins
- 21st 7.30 pm **PCC meeting** in the Dorothy Parkes' Centre
- 29th **ASCENSION DAY**
- 29th 2.30 pm meet for **Prayers** in The Old Church (see Rosemary for details)
- 29th 7.00 pm **Compline** in The Old Church (see Wendy for further details)
- 31st 3.00 pm **Wedding** of Andrew and Danielle

A PRAYER OF THOMAS MERTON

My Lord God, I have no idea where I am going. I do not see the road ahead of me. I cannot know for certain where it will end. Nor do I really know myself, and the fact that I think that I am following your will does not mean that I am actually doing so. But I believe that the desire to please you does in fact please you. And I hope I have that desire in all that I am doing. I hope that I will never do anything apart from that desire. And I know that if I do this you will lead me by the right road though I may know nothing about it. Therefore will I trust you always though I may seem to be lost and in the shadow of death. I will not fear, for you are ever with me, and you will never leave me to face my perils alone. Amen

For everything that was written in the past
was written to teach us,
so that through endurance and the
encouragement of the Scriptures we might
have hope.
Romans 15:4

Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful
in prayer.
Romans 12:12