

# 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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## VICAR'S VOICE

The autumn leaves that have fallen from the trees now surround us and, despite some periods of unusually warm weather during the autumn months, we have begun to experience the chill that marks the beginning of winter. The clocks have gone back, the days are markedly shorter, the birds are migrating and all of this signifies our move into November.

In the life of our church, November is the month for remembering and it holds, within it, a number of rituals and festivals to help us to remember the saints, those we have loved and lost and the victims of war.

In the lives of both the Jewish and Christian faiths remembrance is a spiritual discipline. But remembering, as many of us will know, is far from straightforward. Our memories are complex, fascinating, fragile and mysterious things that cannot be easily contained.

Evidence suggests, for example, that our memories cannot be confined to the past and the recollection of past events. It appears that our memories have just as much to do with the future, as they do the past, and some recent studies have shown the value of keeping the two intimately connected. Not least because, what we remember from the past can provide the foundation blocks on

which to build a strong bridge into the future.

In our church life this 'bridge' building is enacted every time we celebrate Holy Communion. As we do so we place ourselves on a 'bridge' from which we are able to look back to all that has gone before and, at the same time, look forward into an ever-new future. On that 'bridge' we place ourselves, alongside Christ and one another, at the centre of all that goes on in our lives and in the life of the world.

And on that 'bridge' we can recall the way those we have loved and lost have, and continue to, inform our lives; we can recall the unimaginable terror of war and envision a peace-filled future; we can recall the devastating consequences of poverty and envision a just future; we can recall the suffering of God's people and envision a future of healing and wholeness; and, on that 'bridge', we can recall also that which is good and life giving and still – yes still – envision, and let go into, an ever new future in God.

So, as we move into November, and its festivals of remembrance, let us allow our celebration of communion to help us to develop that age old discipline of remembering for the future.

## PAST MONTH'S NEWS

Gail Rogers conducted her final service at Old Church in a beautiful sung setting of the late evening office of Compline on the last Thursday evening of September.

The Old Church's accredited Lay Pastoral Team was re-commissioned for another five years by the Reverend Liz Howlett, the Bishop's Adviser for Adult Education and Training. To celebrate the event and to reflect the gospel for the day, *Matthew 22:1-14*, many joined in with the festive nature of the

day by wearing their best wedding clothes and hats. Cakes and sweets were then shared at the Dorothy Parkes' Centre.

The autumnal rains of early October led to the discovery that metal thieves had taken large amounts of lead from the church roof and had caused a great deal of damage. There has been a substantial ingress of water in many parts of the building. Preliminary repairs have now begun and we pray that the interior of the church has not suffered too extensively.

## ADVENT READING

Like Lent, Advent is a rich season in which we are invited into a deeper sense of the mystery of God through prayerful reflection. However, it can sometimes be difficult to engage with this amidst the glitz and the noise of the run-up to Christmas. But thankfully, there are some excellent books that can help us to take time out to explore the themes of Advent promise. Here are just four that, amongst others, will be available to buy in November through church.

### **Haphazard by Starlight: A poem a day from Advent to Epiphany compiled by Janet Morley (SPCK 2013)**

This book offers a poem each day, from Advent Sunday through to Epiphany, by a broad range of poets including Rowan Williams, Philip Larkin, Gillian Clarke, George Herbert, Emily Dickinson and William Blake. The poems are accompanied by insightful, and biblically sensitive, commentaries that help the reader to journey through this rich period. If you enjoy poetry, or would like to try something different, this is a gem of a book.

### **Preparing for Christmas by Fr. Richard Rohr (Franciscan Media Cincinnati, Ohio 2008)**

This book contains a series of daily readings for Advent. Each reading is accompanied by a short meditation and a question for personal reflection. Although it is small (quite literally), this book is packed with the deep insights and personal challenges we would associate with Rohr's spirituality.

### **Do nothing Christmas is coming: An Advent calendar with a difference by Stephen Cottrell (Church House Publishing 2008)**

This lighthearted fun, yet profound, book urges the reader to 'stop' for a moment each day in order to reflect on some of the demands placed upon us at this time of year. It probably isn't for those who want to prayerfully meditate on the strong themes of Advent. But its straightforward, often amusing, and very practical approach makes this book easy to use amongst all the business of the season.

### **The Meaning is in the waiting: the spirit of Advent by Paula Gooder (Canterbury Press, Norwich) 2008**

This book invites the reader to explore Advent's central theme of waiting. Paula Gooder offers a series of biblical reflections that explore, for example, why we need to wait, what it feels like to wait and what happens when we lose hope. It's a flexible read, lending itself to daily or weekly reading. If you are someone who struggles with waiting, this is an encouraging and hope-filled exploration.



## NOVEMBER

- 2nd **COMMEMORATION OF ALL SOULS**  
Services at 3.00 pm & 5.00 pm to remember departed loved ones
- 4th 7.30 pm **Lay Pastoral Ministry Team Meeting** at the Vicarage
- 8th 10.00 am - 2.00 pm **Church Clean-up**
- 8th 10.30 am **Messy Church** at Holy Trinity church (see advert below)
- 9th **REMEMBRANCE DAY**  
10.15 am Holy Communion & **Act of Remembrance**
- 10th 7.00 pm - 9.00 pm PCC meet at the Dorothy Parkes' Centre to set new **Transforming Church Targets**
- 15th **Bishop's Lay Conference**
- 19th 7.30 pm **PCC Meeting** at the DPC
- 27th 2.30 pm meet for **Prayers** in The Old Church (see Rosemary for details)
- 27th 7.00 pm **Compline** in The Old Church (see Wendy for further details)
- 29th 2.00 pm **CHRISTMAS FAYRE** at the Dorothy Parkes' Centre
- 30th **ADVENT SUNDAY**  
5.00 pm **Exploring the promise of Advent:** a candlelit service of reflection with hymns. All are welcome.

## MESSY CHURCH

- is for adults and children.
- uses hands-on activities to explore Bible stories, to reflect a God of creativity and to give people a chance to play together.
- reflects a God of unconditional love, providing an oasis of welcome and a safe space in which to thrive.
- is about hospitality, expressed most evidently by eating together – whether it's a plate of sandwiches to share, or sausage and mash.
- reflects a God of joy who wants his people to have life in all its fullness.