

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

'Gifts have been given well suited to each;
some to be prophets, to pastor and preach,
some, through the Gospel,
to challenge, convert and teach.
Called to his service are women and men
so that his body might ever again
witness through worship,
through deed and through word
to Christ our Lord.

(John L. Bell (b.1949) © 1997,2002 WGRG, Iona Community)

The words of this hymn, based on 1 Corinthians 12 v 1-11, speak about the variety of gifts we have been given and how they are all needed to build God's church.

This vision is certainly evident at Old Church. There are many people involved in so many ways. Indeed, so many that it's not possible to list them here. We have so much to be thankful for.

But as many of you may know, it's easy to find that we're undertaking the same tasks year on year. I think it's important, therefore, to regularly take some time out to prayerfully reflect on the contribution we make. And, the weeks that run up to the Annual Church Parochial Meeting is a good time to do this.

It's a good time to think about what we need for ourselves from church, right now, and to ask ourselves some questions about what gifts are being called out of us at this time. To ask ourselves whether what we are doing energises us, or whether it saps our energy and feels like a burden; whether we feel we want to take on something new, or to take something on for the first time; whether we have recognised gifts in other people, perhaps those who lack the confidence to put themselves forward; and to ask ourselves whether we feel called to take on a position of responsibility such as being a member of the PCC or becoming a Church Warden.

Our life and our faith is a journey that takes twists and turns and in which we are bound to encounter changes. God makes this journey with us and calls us to use different gifts at different points along the way.

This process of discernment is important for all of us and for the church as a whole. We can undertake it on our own and in the company of others. I pray that, if you choose to do this, it will be fruitful.

PAST MONTH'S NEWS

January has been a relatively quiet month at Old Church after the festivities of Christmas.

The PCC met on Wednesday 21st January and discussed the activities to be undertaken in 2015 and also the financial challenges that will have to be faced in the years ahead.

Our thanks are extended to Claire Hollocks who led a useful and enjoyable singing workshop on a Saturday morning. It was great fun and a confidence booster to some of us who normally confine our singing to the bathroom!

WHAT'S ON 2015

In the autumn last year we held two 'Big Conversations' about discipleship at which we generated a lot of ideas. These have been collated and put together in a 'What's On Programme' for 2015. This programme is now available in Old Church and, if you don't already have a copy, please take one with you. It is hoped that there will be something for everyone, so do put the dates of the things that interest you in your diaries. There will be more information available on specific events as we approach their start dates.

THE BOOK OF FORGIVING

I was drawn to read the Book of Forgiving after I heard Mpho Tutu speak at the Greenbelt Festival last year. This book has all the credentials for me. Forgiveness is something I am interested in and it is written by two people I greatly admire and respect - Bishop Tutu and his daughter Mpho. I have to say it exceeded my greatest expectations and has had a profound affect.

In the book they invite the reader to walk with them on the path of forgiveness and this is exactly how it felt to me. They share their personal stories, experiences of others who have inspired them and also what they have learnt from the process of forgiveness. They are passionate about how it can transform situations and restore relationships and I found this passion moving and contagious.

The book takes you through the journey of forgiveness involving four stages:- telling the story; naming the hurt; granting forgiveness and renewing or releasing the relationship. At the end of each chapter is a meditation, a ritual and an exercise giving the reader the opportunity to engage in their own forgiveness process if they so wish. Highly recommended.

Siân

The Book of Forgiving is a great book to read during Lent and it is the book being used for the Churches Together Lent Course this year. Unfortunately, it is not yet published in paperback. The lowest price at hardback is £11.99. If you would like to order a copy, please sign the sheet at the back of church.

STEWARDSHIP SUNDAY FEBRUARY 15TH 2015

The past decade has seen a dramatic change in the way the Church of England is financed, placing a much greater burden on parishes. Although, this isn't always an easy topic to think about, and to talk about, we need to see Christian Stewardship as an integral part of church life.

For this reason we have decided to hold an annual Stewardship Sunday. So in the morning service on February 15th we will be thinking realistically, and creatively, about the financial situation at Old Church and prayerfully discerning how to respond.



FEBRUARY

- 1st 3.00 pm-4.30 pm at Old Church - **The Oakville Singers** will perform a concert and, following this, will lead the singing at Evensong for Candlemas
- 7th 12 noon-2 pm at Birmingham Cathedral – **The Warley Deanery Pilgrimage.**
- 18th **Ash Wednesday** 7.00 pm at The Old Church – Service of Holy Communion with imposition of ashes.
- 25th 6pm-8 pm at Old Church – **Soul Space**
- 26h 2.30 pm meet for **Prayers** in The Old Church (see Rosemary for details)
- 26h at Holy Trinity Church – **Churches Together Lent Course** based on The Book of Forgiving by Desmond and Mpho Tutu. You can attend from 10.15am -12 noon or 7.30 pm-9.00 pm.

WARLEY DEANERY'S PILGRIMAGE TO BIRMINGHAM CATHEDRAL

St Philip's Cathedral celebrates the 300th anniversary of its construction this year and is marking this with a series of special events.

On Saturday February 7th the ten churches that make up the Warley Deanery will all be making a special pilgrimage to the Cathedral. We will meet there at 12.00 noon, then after a presentation by dance students, and worship, there will be a reflection by Bishop David, opportunity for discussion, picnic lunch (please bring own), and a tour of the Cathedral. It will end by 2pm. If you are interested in attending please sign the sheet at the back of church.

**Please come if you can – it would be great to have a number there from
The Old Church.**