

THE OLD CHURCH NEWS

OPEN TO ALL - OPEN TO GOD

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VICAR'S VOICE

A few years ago I attended a day workshop on creativity and spirituality. As part of this day, we were asked to take an orange and to spend time holding it, looking at it, smelling it, dissecting it and finally tasting it. Each of these stages was undertaken slowly and with great care.

We were being taught something about the discipline of 'attending' and 'looking carefully'. We were being discouraged from taking short cuts, from thinking that we knew everything about our orange just because it was a familiar piece of fruit. Instead we were being given the time and the space to look deeply and to observe every detail using senses, other than sight. To allow, even the most familiar of things to surprise us.

This simple exercise had a profound impact on me. It taught me that 'Attending' and 'looking carefully' at the natural world requires us to stop a while. But we live at a time, and in a part of the world, where this is increasingly difficult. Everything has speeded up - the quick and the instant are prized - our attention, more often than not, is drawn to our wristwatch, or to our mobile phone, or to our endless 'to do' lists. And most of us find ourselves moving so quickly from one thing to another, that the beautiful things around us

blur into one as we fly past on our way to somewhere else.

The month of June is a wonderful month in which to practice the spiritual discipline of 'attending'. It is a beautiful month in which nature could not be more abundant and in which the hours of the daylight are at their longest. As gardens and parkland bear witness, June displays a vast variety of wild and cultivated flowers, vibrant greenery, lush summer fruit and busy insects and birds.

When we stop to look, and attend carefully, we cannot escape the intricate beauty of creation. Nor can we fail to see before us the depth and breadth of God's love for the world. In attending to the created world we allow ourselves to be drawn into its wonder and its joy.

Barbara Brown Taylor has written a book called 'An Altar in the World'. In it she explores what it means to actively open ourselves up to the possibility of encountering God in the world in which we live, and move. If you, like me, need to practice the disciplines of making the time, and attending carefully, to nature in all of its beauty, then I would recommend this book as a summer read.

LAST MONTH'S NEWS

The church was open on Thursday 7th May to enable voters to have the opportunity to pray and reflect in a quiet environment before casting their votes in the parliamentary and local elections.

On 9th our ringers joined with others all over the country marking the 70th anniversary of VE Day by ringing our bells at 11am.

A parish walk took place on the following Sunday, when strollers enjoyed the delights of Sandwell Valley Park and Farm.

In church a specific collection raised £345 for the DEC Nepal Earthquake Relief Fund. We also had our annual campaign to raise funds for Christian Aid.

Ascension Day was celebrated with an evening service of Holy Communion with visitors from neighbouring Anglican churches. Old Church hosted the Archdeacon's Visitation for the Warley Deanery when Rosie Eynon and Yvonne Hadley took the oath of office as churchwardens.

THE VOLUNTEER'S PRAYER

Lord may you smile upon me
That I with an open heart give
My time and help my fellow man
By doing what I can, with love
Lord may you be pleased with me
And let me be aware
To not judge others
But to feel joy in giving care
Lord let me always know
That each little act of kindness
And the small tasks I do
Are acts of grand proportions
And are reflections of you
Thank you Lord for letting me have
In my heart, soul and mind
The wisdom and the knowledge
Of the power of being kind
And thank you for the opportunity
that I encounter every day
To give my smile or kind word
To empower another's way
For we are all linked to each other
And with your grace from heaven above
Guide me to follow your footsteps
And shine through my heart and life
Your love.



The Summer Fete is nearly upon us and once again we are asking for your help.

We need volunteers to help setting up, manning the stalls and clearing away after the event.

We need donations of the following:- cakes, jams, marmalade, anything that could be sold on the home produce stall, toys, books, DVDs, puzzles, unwanted gifts, good quality items for the fancy goods stall, bric-a-brac for the white elephant stall (no furniture or jumble items) thank you.



JUNE

- 4th 6.30 pm **Corpus Christi** outdoor service & BBQ in the Vicarage garden.
- 8th 15th 22nd & 29th **Pilgrim Course** at Old Church from 7.00 pm - 9.00 pm
- 24th 6.00 pm - 8.00 pm **Soul Space**
- 25th 2.30 pm meet for **Prayers** in The Old Church (see Rosemary for details)
- 27th 2.00 pm **Summer Fete** at the Dorothy Parkes' Centre



~ News flash ~

The Traidcraft Shop will be selling goods **twice** a month, on the 2nd and 4th Sundays, in the Dorothy Parkes' Centre after the morning church service.

Life is so busy these days. Work, family, shopping, keeping up with friends. We all need some quiet time in our lives; time to stop, to think, to reflect and to pray.

The Old Church offers an opportunity for you to stop and have this time out of the normal busy-ness of life on Tuesday afternoons between 2.00pm and 4.00pm

The church is open for you to find a quiet space for reflection and prayer or you may wish to bring along your knitting and join others for a lovely quiet afternoon.

Come along and enjoy this beautiful quiet space, open to all.

Our good works are like stones cast into the pool of time; though the stones themselves may disappear, their ripples extend to eternity.