

# THE OLD CHURCH NEWS

OPEN TO ALL - OPEN TO GOD

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## VICAR'S VOICE

We often forget that God has not created us generically. We are, in fact, a gloriously different, evolving and changing people and just as we bring a wide variety of gifts to our faith community so, too, do we bring a wide variety of preferences, longings and expectations to the worship we share together.

I guess some of us have watched the popular television show 'Songs of Praise'. Songs of Praise has been a primetime television show since 1961. It has had, over the years, a range of presenters, formats and locations but music still remains at the heart of the series.

The show has demonstrated, time and again, that the majority of us have particular hymns that resonate with us and that we enjoy telling, and hearing, the stories associated with them. So much so, that churches have organised their own 'Songs of Praise' events and these have proved to be as popular as the television show itself.

Of course, it isn't just our preference for certain hymns that is important to us, the same can be said about the various styles of worship and the familiar components of our services. If you were to undertake a survey at Old Church, for example, and were to ask people questions such as: What is your preferred style of

worship? and What part of the Sunday service do you feel draws you closest to God?, we would expect to collect a variety of responses. This is no bad thing; particular services and certain styles of worship, music and hymns will deepen our faith in different ways and at different times.

Over the past year, or so, a number of people have talked to me about the possibility of having some additional, and different, evening services. We already have a weekly service of Evening Prayer at 5pm on Sundays, other occasional Sunday evening services to mark special occasions and we have recently introduced Soul Space on the last Wednesday of each month. But there is the possibility of growing this further and so, after some discussion, the Ministry Team and the PCC have decided that it would be a good idea to introduce a new series of 5pm services which, on the whole, will take place on the second Sunday of each month.

To begin with, we have made plans for the next six months (see advert overleaf). We hope you will find these services nourishing. If you are able to attend, please give us feedback and add your suggestions to the list of possibilities.

## LAST MONTH'S NEWS

The past month has been relatively quiet at Old Church although we celebrated two "Holy Days" that occur during August - The Feast of the Transfiguration of our Lord and the commemoration of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

The latter sung service of Holy Communion was held on a Sunday evening in place of Evening Prayer. This is the first of a special series of services to be held at 5.00 pm, on the Second Sunday of the month.

Old Church was fortunate in being hosts to Happy Home Caminul Felix Romanian Children's Choir. They are part of an international project that places children, who would otherwise be on the streets or in state orphanages, with families.

Caminul Felix currently work in Romania, Thailand and Zimbabwe. Their performance included singing, stories and a short talk about the project. It was good to see the effects of Christian love in practice.

## NEW SUNDAY EVENING SERVICES 2015/2016

**September 13<sup>th</sup>:** A service of readings and hymns to celebrate Holy Cross Day.

**October 11<sup>th</sup>:** Sung Compline. This will be an opportunity to learn how to sing this beautiful service of night prayer.

**November 8<sup>th</sup>:** A service of prayer for justice and peace

**November 29<sup>th</sup>:** A Service for Advent

**December 20<sup>th</sup>:** Nine Lessons and Carols

**January 10<sup>th</sup>:** Holy Communion with prayers for healing.

**February 14<sup>th</sup>:** Taizé

## SAFE FAMILIES FOR CHILDREN NEEDS YOU

Safe Families for Children is a movement of the church to care for some of the most vulnerable members of our society, children whose parents are going through a hard time. It's a simple idea really...There are a number of ways we can help.

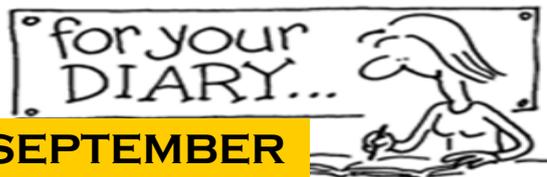
As '**Host Families**': these are trustworthy families who voluntarily open up their homes, without pay, taking children into their home for a little while, giving the parents in crisis much needed space to deal with the pressing issues. It's not fostering and it's not adoption, just simple kindness and yet it can make a world of difference.

As '**Family Friends**': friendly folk who befriend, mentor and support parents through their crisis, helping them get back on their feet and making the home stable for them and their children.

As '**Resource Friends**': Generous supporters able to provide useful items such as a cot or children's clothing, or have helpful skills such as cooking or gardening.

I am now an approved volunteer for Safe Families for Children. I am looking forward to being matched to a family as a 'family friend' in the near future. The training day was excellent. I learnt a lot about Safe Families for Children and got to meet other people from Sandwell who are volunteering. I'm thankful to the staff team for bringing this fantastic opportunity to Sandwell and hope you will consider joining me in providing hope to families in need.

*Julie Whittam-James*



## SEPTEMBER

- 6th **2.00 pm Sunday Stroll** - for further details speak to Paul Martin
- 13th 5.00 pm **Holy Cross Day** service of readings and hymns.
- 16th 2.00 pm **Ministry Team** meet at Vicarage
- 17th 6.30 pm **DPC Board Meeting** at the DPC
- 21st 7.30 pm **PCC meeting** at the DPC
- 22nd & 29th 7.00 pm **A Way into Prayer: finding God in all things** (venue tba)
- 24th 2.30 pm meet for **Prayers** in The Old Church (see Rosemary for details)
- 30th 6.00 pm - 8.00 pm **Soul Space**

## REFLECTION ON A 'QUIET DAY'

The sun is shining  
warm breeze blowing  
through the apple trees  
I'm not alone  
for nature is all around  
in this God's wonderful world.

Hark the birds are calling to me  
with their beautiful song  
while the bees are buzzing  
collecting nectar  
and beautiful butterflies flutter by  
in this God's wonderful world.

A moment of silence  
to reflect  
on all the wonders  
that I see  
in this God's wonderful world.

A dog barks in the distance  
and I can hear the traffic  
going by  
people go about their business  
in this God's wonderful world.

What a wonderful gift has  
been given me  
all these wonders I can see  
all the sounds that surround me  
in this God's wonderful world

I give thanks and praise  
for all the Lord has given  
my hopes, my fears He knows so well  
and still He loves me  
in this God's wonderful world.

*Christine Tanner*