

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

As we move into September, the summer draws to a close and signs of Autumn begin to transform the landscape. The summer holiday season, for those lucky enough to have one, is over and children and young people are returning to schools, colleges and universities.

At best, summer is the season that allows the space for relaxation and the re-charging of our 'batteries' so that we can pick up the regular pattern of our lives with renewed vigour. But for many people the summer is a difficult and challenging time, not least for families who are struggling to make ends meet.

Research carried out by the Trussell Trust revealed that 70% of families who experience financial difficulties, and have children in primary school education, have found the summer to be a really challenging time. Many who are forced to rely, at least in part, on food supplied by schools during term time have needed to turn to foodbanks for help during the summer break. Sadly, the research concluded that this problem is unlikely to improve in the foreseeable future.

These families are part of the estimated 8 million people in the UK who are faced with considerable financial difficulty. Many of whom are forced to take out high cost loans to cover the basic necessities such as food and

fuel, because they have little, if any, other option available. If we have not had direct experience of this ourselves, it's not hard to imagine the impact it has on people's sense of physical and mental wellbeing.

Earlier this year, in response to this growing problem, the Archbishop of Canterbury spoke out about the need create a more just financial system. The Just Finance Foundation (JFF) was tasked with work involved in carrying this out. According to the JFF the funds raised will, 'provide essential financial services in local communities. Trained volunteers will give people the skills they need and somewhere to turn to receive help, support and advice'.

The strap line for the Mustard Seed Appeal is 'A seed has been planted. Let's make it grow together.' And so churches across England have been asked to get involved in growing the work of the JFF by raising money in the lead up to Harvest. So this year at Old Church we will have a special collection at our Harvest Festival on October 9th and make our contribution to this important work. The Appeal website says:

'Let's make it a bumper harvest: get involved now and help us bring in a harvest that will change millions of lives'.

So let's play our part!

LAST MONTH'S NEWS

At the end of July, a small group from the congregation enjoyed a pleasant walk around Woodgate Valley Country Park. In one of Birmingham's green spaces this walk took us past an urban farm complex and along the side of the babbling Bourn Brook, which runs the length of the valley to the River Rea at Cannon Hill Park. We called into the visitor

centre at the end of the stroll and enjoyed tea and cakes in the cafe before returning to church for Evening Prayer.

One of the feast days in August is that of the Blessed Virgin Mary and this was celebrated with a Sunday evening service of Holy Communion and included hymns, readings and poetry as part of our worship.

JUSTICE MATTERS



This summer, Traidcraft is shouting loud and clear that justice matters.

It's why Traidcraft campaigns for all business to be fair. And it's why we're calling for British businesses to be prosecuted if they abuse or harm people abroad.

We're aiming to get 25,000 people to sign the Justice Matters petition to send a clear message to the British government

that we've had enough of British businesses abusing and exploiting people in developing countries, and getting away with it.

People who work for or even just live near the operations of some irresponsible British companies are suffering.

- Livelihoods are destroyed by toxic pollution.
- People are forced out of their homes to make way for new mines or plantations.
- Anyone who questions what is going on is threatened with violence.

We wouldn't find this acceptable – so why should they?

At the moment there is a gap in British law which means that it's almost impossible to prosecute big companies for causing serious harm abroad.

There have been 303 allegations of serious abuse by 127 British companies over the last ten years - but not one prosecution. That needs to change.

Traidcraft thinks justice matters in business.

If you agree, add your name to the Justice Matters petition in church.



SEPTEMBER

- 1st 7.30 pm **Lay Pastoral Ministry Team** meet at the Vicarage
- 3rd 3.00 pm **Marriage** of Edgar and Julie
- 7th 7.30 pm **PCC Meeting** at the DPC
- 10th 2.00 pm **Table Top Sale** in the DPC
- 11th **Fellowship Walk** in Sandwell Valley
Details from Paul or Jean Martin
- 11th 5.00 pm **Hymns and Readings for Holy Cross Day**
- 28th From 6.00 pm - 8.00 pm **Soul Space** in Old Church
- 29th 2.30 pm meet for **Prayers** in Old Church (see Rosemary for details)

The Traidcraft Prayer

Loving Father

Throughout your written Word
And through the life of Jesus Christ
Your living Word

We clearly see Your heart for Grace,
And Your passion for Justice.

We thank you that you love the poor
and the marginalised;

We recognise our own poverty before you;
We want to be filled to overflowing
With your love for the poor,
And your rejection of oppression
and exploitation.

We are your servants in this world;
This beautiful world, this corrupted world.

Thank you for the gifts you've given
each one of us,

Especially the gifts you've given to
farmers and artisans throughout the world.

Thank you for the world's resources,
and the possibilities of trade

Bless all those who work for Fair Trade;
As we seek to fight poverty through trade,

Use our work to further your
Kingdom of Grace and Justice;

In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Amen