

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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NOT THE VICAR'S VOICE

John Keats' description of autumn, as a 'Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness' (To Autumn), rich with images of vines and nuts and bees still at work, speaks romantically of an experience of life very different from our own. When Keats walked the English countryside in the autumn of 1819, he saw the wonders of the ripening harvest, the direction of life moving inevitably to death, and harvest as a means of surviving the inevitable cold of winter.

This is a life that I experience only in part. Globalisation, high-technology agriculture, and the luxury of an adequate income mean that I have little immediate contact with 'harvest'. Now the arrival of autumn has more to do with the dampness of the early mornings, the cool of the evenings and a concern whether the central heating pump has seized over the summer – even how often we can afford to run the central heating, given the rising costs of energy. Yet, at some level, we all understand, even if politicians and captains of industry appear not to, that, ultimately, all life depends on the cycles of the seasons, on life, growth, death and new life. 'As long as the earth endures, seed time and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night, shall not cease' (Genesis 8:22). We exploit and abuse God's creation at

our peril.

The end of summer and the beginning of autumn is just one indication of God at work. 'Harvest' is often used as a biblical metaphor, representing the work of God in the world. Psalm 126 talks of 'those who go out weeping, bearing the seed for sowing, shall come home with shouts of joy'. So seed time and harvest picture those who turn to Jesus, Jesus being both one with God, and the Saviour who will lift us to God's company. With God's grace, our own personal spring and summer reflect a spiritual growth, a widening awareness of God at work in the world - at work in us and glimpsed at work in those we come across in our human and needy lives.

All of which is perhaps a long introduction to the Harvest services on 9th October including a special service at 5.00 pm to celebrate Harvest and the wonders of God's created universe. It is also a way of reminding us that a part of the Christian call is to bring others to recognise Jesus working in their lives. Over the next months we at Old Church, together with others in the Diocese, will be turning our minds to *Growing the Church* both in numbers and in spiritual confidence, 'For we are God's servants, working together.' (1 Corinthians 3:9). Paul Martin

LAST MONTH'S NEWS

A quarter peal of Grandsire Doubles heralded the joyful occasion of Julie and Eddie's marriage on Saturday 3rd September. The wedding bells continued to ring out as the happy couple posed for photographs after the service.

The final "Fellowship Walk" of the year was a gentle stroll round the RSPB site in Sandwell Valley Country Park. The walkers were blessed with fine weather and a good show of

the avian life could be viewed from the hide overlooking the lake.

Holy Cross day was marked with a service of Readings and Hymns. It was good to welcome members of the congregations of Holy Trinity and St Matthew's churches to Old Church for the service.

A Table Top Sale held in the Dorothy Parkes' Centre was well attended and raised funds towards the upkeep of the church.

VISIT TO SINGERS HILL SYNAGOGUE

On Sunday 11th September a group of six adults and five children from Junior Church visited the Open Day at Singers Hill Synagogue.

Singers Hill Synagogue is home to the Birmingham Hebrew Congregation and has been the focal point for Jewish worship and community life in Birmingham for 159 years. It is the oldest and largest Victorian synagogue still in use for daily worship in the UK.

The group were warmly welcomed and Peter, one of the guides, showed them around the building pointing out interesting features and answering questions.

The synagogue is lit by large, elaborate chandeliers and 26 round headed, stained glass Hardman windows portraying scenes from the Old Testament with a small number commemorating the founding of the State of Israel and Jewish sufferings during World War II.

Of particular interest were the Scrolls of Scripture which are treated with much respect and ceremony and must be carried on the right hand shoulder to the podium to be read.

Thus this worthwhile enjoyable experience provided the group from Old Church with an insight into Jewish history, tradition, symbols and customs in this beautiful old synagogue.



OCTOBER

- 2nd **50th Anniversary celebration of Rev'd Michael Goss' ordination to the Priesthood**
- 8th 7.00 pm **Harvest Supper & Talent Show** in the Dorothy Parkes' Centre
- 9th 5.00 pm **Celebration of Harvest and the Wonders of God's Created Universe**
- 26th From 6.00 pm - 8.00 pm **Soul Space** in Old Church
- 27th 2.30 pm meet for **Prayers** in Old Church (see Rosemary for details)
- 29th 7.00 pm Fundraiser **Fashion Show & Clothes Sale** in the DPC
- 30th 3.00 pm & 5.00 pm **All Souls' Memorial Service**

The Old Church

I enter the church and find
it is full of light
with beautiful glass windows
colours full of light.

I enter the church and find
flowers rich in bloom
flowing round the room,
colours to delight.

I enter the church and find
it is filled with love,
a church full of love,
colours filled with light.

I have left the church and hear
beautiful sounds .. sounds,
peals of bells
sounding from above.

I have felt the love,
I have felt the light of
The Old Church.

Carolyn Percival