

THE OLD CHURCH NEWS

O P E N T O A L L - O P E N T O G O D

VOLUME 7 ISSUE 7 JANUARY 2017



VICAR'S VOICE

I would like to begin by wishing you a content and peaceful 2017.

The first month of the new year is an interesting one. There is so much that might lead us to want to be quiet and still; to find some calm following the end of the often frenzied month of December; to stay in the warm and to do as little as possible. Yet, statistics tell us that January is the month where people attempt to make more changes in their lives than at any other time of the year.

As one year ends and another begins, many of us set ourselves New Year's resolutions. In doing so, we make a promise to take on something that will improve our lives. The most popular themes for these promises relate to education, weight, money and relationships. But if we struggle to make a decision about what kind of resolution to make, there are a number of websites to help us, for example: '50 new Year's Resolutions and how to achieve them', 'Top ten healthiest New Year's resolutions' and '100 New Year's resolutions and how to stick with them'.

However, despite all the help available our success at keeping our resolutions is not great. A recent piece of research revealed that 39% of people in the 20's and only 14% of people over 50 keep to the promises they have made.

But the desire for new beginnings remains a strong driver within the human spirit. St. Benedict in his Rule for monasteries wrote "always we begin again." I guess this desire is at the centre of what puts us in touch with our deep longings for a more authentic and fulfilling way of life. And the approach of the first day of January seems to sharpen our awareness of this.

There is nothing at all wrong with attempting to fulfil this desire through making, and attempting to keep, New Year's resolutions. However, we need to take care that our resolutions are not merely a knee jerk reaction to what has gone before, for example, if we've eaten too much in December we resolve to go on a diet in January in order to rectify the situation.

It's important, instead, that we create the space to prayerfully listen to our deeper longings for renewal, new beginnings and, as yet, unexplored possibilities for our futures in, and through, the one who makes all things new. So, rather than working from a list of December's shortcomings, perhaps at the turning of this year we might seize the opportunity to really listen to our deeper selves and to allow what emerges to shape our futures, through the holiness and goodness that God sees in us and promises to us.

PAST MONTH'S NEWS

The Christmas Craft Fayre held at the end of November raised over £1100 for Church funds. The start of Advent was marked by a reflective candle lit service.

The Discoverers enjoyed a trip to a local carvery for a "Christmas" meal. Some of our young people enjoyed an outing to the Dovehouse Theatre in Solihull to see Youth On Stage's performance of Aladdin.

A small group of singers from Old Church spent an hour singing carols at ASDA Cape Hill and raised over £50 to be donated to Brushstrokes and Smethwick CAN.

A service of nine lessons and carols was held on the Sunday before Christmas. This was preceded by festive drinks and mince pies at the vicarage and a successful quarter peal of Grandsire doubles.

KNITTING FOR ADVENT



Knitting for Advent

A huge thank you to all of you who knitted baby blankets during Advent. These have now been parcelled up and are ready to go to three charities: Birmingham SANDS (still birth and neonatal death charity), Brushstrokes and Hand in Hand for Syria.



Knitting baby blankets at the vicarage



JANUARY

- 8th 5.00 pm **Service of readings and hymns for Epiphany**
- 23rd 7.00 pm **Lay Pastoral Ministry** team meeting at the vicarage
- 25th 135 **Children from Mary Webb School**, Shrewsbury will be visiting Old Church as part of their programme of visits to places of worship.
- 31st 7.30 pm **PCC meeting** at the DPC



Carol singing at ASDA Cape Hill

PEOPLE OR THINGS

People were created to be loved.
Things were created to be used.
The reason why the world is in chaos
is because things are being loved
and people are being used.

The Dalai Lama

Happy New Year
2017