

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

In June last year we put on the 'Old Church Festival'. I, amongst others, received some really positive and encouraging comments from many of the people who attended. But these comments weren't restricted to June last year, I've heard a lot of great feedback since and have recently been asked by a number of people, who came last year, whether we are having a festival again this year. It was great to be able to say 'Yes'.

In the light of the success of the 'Old Church Festival' in 2016, we decided we would put on a range of 'Festival Events' this year. These will include lunch time recitals, an open-mic night, performances by choirs and a local singer, an art exhibition and all of this with homemade cream teas being served throughout. If all of this isn't enough to plan, put on and enjoy, on Saturday July 1st we are also including in the festival activities, our annual 'Summer Extravaganza'.

This should be a great time of celebration and enjoyment for the Old Church family and for the community of which we are an integral part. But, of course, it will also demand a lot of hard work and commitment from many people. Whether it's designing and co-ordinating the programme, setting up for the events, greeting people when they come along to join us, cooking scones, serving refreshments, moving furniture or running

stalls (the list goes on...), many of us will be giving of our time and our energy to ensure the festival events run smoothly and that those who come along will have a great time.

But, as we learned last year, the 'Festival Events' will involve much more than undertaking all the physical demands required when putting on activities such as these. We need to also honour and keep in mind the primary aim that underpins what we are doing. The idea to have a festival in the first place was in response to the long held desire, of the people of Old Church, to open up the space for others to enjoy and to celebrate the rich community of which we are part. This too takes energy – it is all too easy to get caught up in the practical dimensions and miss the extraordinary moments of connection.

So June this year will, yet again, be a busy month but hopefully a rich and exciting one in the life of our church. If it's anything like last year, and we're not trying to duplicate it but to build on its success, it will be a time of blessing in ways we cannot yet imagine.

If any of us need a bit of rest and refreshment in the run up to the 'Festival Events', there's always the coach trip to Chester on June 10th!

PAST MONTH'S NEWS



← Nesa and Ahmad who had their marriage blessed at Old Church on May 13th

A small group of our intrepid hikers held their first Sunday afternoon walk of the year. It was a gentle stroll in beautiful sunshine around Sandwell

Valley Country Park through woods, farmland and by pools and streams. This was followed by Evening Prayer back in church at 5.00 pm. There are more walks planned for the year and it is hoped that a few more folk from our congregation might like to come along for a little light exercise and a chat about any subject under the sun.



Faithful Friends: White Poppy Project

In 1933 the Women's Co-operative Guild, whose motto is 'War is a crime against humanity', introduced the white poppy to symbolise a lasting commitment to peace.

As we approached Remembrance Sunday 2016, some of the women who attended the interfaith 'Women First' craft mornings expressed the desire to promote peace at a time of tension and conflict in the world and in our communities.

So in 2017, as a group of women crafters of different faiths, we are working together in the spirit of the Women's Co-operative Guild; we are making white poppies to promote peace'.

We need white knitted squares (approximately 12inches x 12inches) to make into felt for these poppies. If you are able to help us with this, please bring your knitted squares into church. For more information, about how to get involved, speak to Deb.

The Very Rev'd Jeffrey John (The Dean of St Albans)

is visiting Holy Trinity Church, Smethwick on Sunday June 11th. He will be presiding and preaching at the 10.00am service and then, following lunch, at 1.30pm he will be inaugurating a series of annual lectures. He will be speaking on 'Death and the Afterlife in the Bible and Church teaching'. You are welcome to attend any, or all, of this. If you wish to go to the lunch can you ring Jenny Cannings on 0121 565 5318.



JUNE

- 10th **Day Trip to Chester** - departing from Old Church at 8.00 am and from Chester at 5.00 pm for the return journey
- 11th 5.00 pm Service of **Hymns and Readings for Trinity**
- 15th Discoverers' outing to **Ludlow** (see Christine Tanner for details)
- 22nd 11.00 am Service at **Penmakers Court**
- 27th 7.30 pm **Deanery Synod** meeting
- 28th - 2nd July **Old Church Festival Events** (see publicity for details)



Join 'LoveYourNeighbour' for
The Great Get Together

inspired by Jo Cox

When: Saturday 17th June 11am - 12 noon

Where: Sandwell Valley County Park
(at the paddock near Sandwell Valley
Park Farm)

What: Free art activities and Special
Guests

If you'd like to, please stay on for a
bring-your-own picnic from 12noon.