

View from the Pew

Andrew Povey-Richards

Lent has now begun and the first of the Lent courses has already gone as I write. Even if you can't make it to the Methodist Hall each Monday, and I do recommend you try, please instead spend some quiet time at home in reflection. This may be guided by a book specifically about Lent, which helps you to understand it better.

We have to completely renew our Electoral Roll this year so that the new one is ready for our **Annual Parish Meeting on Sunday 14th April at 11:45 am**. In the next few weeks after the 10am service there will be people at the back of church handing out the new forms that need to be filled in, please take one away and complete it and return it by 24th March to either myself or Janet.

Holy week services are as follows:-

Thursday 28th – 8.00 pm Choral Communion and Stripping of the Altar.

Good Friday 29th 9.30am Family Service.

10.30am Open Air Service at Bircherley Green.

2pm an hour at the foot of the Cross.

Easter Eve 30th – 8pm – Easter Vigil

I would just like to reassure you that the faculty for the removal of pews in the north and south aisles is going ahead, but more slowly than I might have liked. There have been recent discussions about what we will do with the surplus pews. This has not been resolved yet but one possible option would be to convert some of them into choir music stands and this is being investigated. We have also decided not to remove them until after the Hertford Choral Society concert in June so they do not lose any seating. It is possible we may only remove 5 rows at first and then reconsider if we wish to take out any more.

The January Jolly seems a long while ago now, however the 70's theme brought forth a variety of costumes - thank you to all who made the effort to dress appropriately. A special thank you to Doug and Geoff who spent many hours locked ?? away rehearsing, and also to all who worked hard behind the scenes in the kitchen and in preparations. It was, as always, an evening of great fun and entertainment and this year was even better for me than last year.

Another big thank you to Malcolm Hollow and his Show Stoppers for the really excellent concert they put on to raise money for the fabric of the church. It was a great effort and we are very grateful for the £770 you raised.

I would also like to highlight the sterling work done by Don Graves in securing advertising for the Magazine. Despite the economic downturn causing us to lose several long-standing advertisers, Don has visited many businesses in and around the town over the last few weeks (as he does each year) and found replacements. It is likely that by the end he will have sold more 'space' than last year! The result is that, yet again, the Magazine will be a net contributor to our General Fund.

You may have seen on the weekly sheets we are trying to find new members who will join our regular giving scheme. At a recent meeting of the Finance committee we discussed a planned deficit in 2013 that is likely to be about the same as last year at about £5,500. This is just not sustainable and I would urge everyone to consider how we can reduce this significantly and also volunteer your services possibly to help.

Instead of our usual PCC meeting in January we had a discussion lead by John Kiddle from the Diocese and the discussion centred on our Mission Action Plan. One of the ideas that came out of it was that when there is a presence in church by anyone (who may be working eg cleaning or preparing food for Soundbites or similar), for a reasonable period of time, then the Church could be open to the public. I would be grateful for your thoughts on this. I think our building is locked for far too long.

This is my last View from the Pew as my 4 year term finishes at the Annual Meeting. It has been a privilege and pleasure to be your Churchwarden, I have enjoyed it immensely although it has been hard work at times. I thank you all for your help and support and particularly Kay!!. I know I have grown considerably as a Christian as the result of this experience and I am very grateful for that.

Love,

Andrew