

All Saints Alive

VICAR'S VIEWPOINT

Right where we are

Dear Friends,

"I am spiritual but I'm not religious" people frequently say to me. They are probably telling me that although they don't go to church they still sense that there is a depth to life beyond the physical. Some collect their wisdom from all religions and literature rather like making choices in a supermarket.

The problem is, although they know that there is more to life than meets the eye, some of the creeds and formality leaves them wondering and still searching, trying to find that hidden secret or treasure, longing for something to hold on to, almost physical in its tangibility! Of course this can happen for those of us who go to church too.

In the past, Christians spent a great deal of time and travelled to far-flung places on pilgrimage or to collect special holy treasures: relics of the saints or other holy things such as parts of the cross, art, and books. We still enjoy travelling to marvel at such things when we come across them in churches on the continent, art galleries and museums but are we aware of the treasures closer to home where we are now?

When it comes to this spiritual treasure we seem to spend quite a lot of our lives looking all over the place for the best spiritual treasure, perhaps spending hours launching requesting prayers into the heavens, travelling to special holy places and collecting small religious artefacts. Are we **all**, churchgoers and "spiritual people" alike, missing what is so much closer by, in our everyday lives and activities?

Is the reason we cannot see the true treasure because we fail to notice the 'X marks the spot', because we are too busy



standing on it, living with it and breathing it in! We don't need to go on lengthy expeditions, or buy expensive equipment, or have a superior aptitude or even need special company.

All we lack is the willingness to imagine and know that we have everything that we need for a true and deep spiritual life. This month we will be celebrating Pentecost, the coming of the Holy Spirit. (Whitsun in the Book of Common Prayer.) The disciples did not have to go anywhere to receive the Holy Spirit, did not have to have any special religious artefacts or even the right creeds, the Holy Spirit came to them. Where they were!

The Holy Spirit comes to each of us where we are, wherever we are. We need look no further! In our confirmation service which we are looking forward to on Wednesday June 7th at 7.30pm Bishop Paul will say: "*Confirm, O Lord, your servant with your Holy Spirit*", in other words, the Holy Spirit is already with us, even if we are new Christians.

If we can stay mindful of the moment, the place where we are, the breath that we take, as sacred, as Holy Spirit filled, then the feeling of longing will be over, as we cannot long for that which we already have!

Love,
Jo

Vicar's Report to APCM 2013

How wonderful it is to be part of the great family of All Saints! Thank you to you **all** for making it such a great place to be the parish priest. It is always difficult to work out who to name

particularly, so if I have missed people, I can only apologise!

My thanks go to:

- ✓ First, I would like to thank Andrew for all his tremendous and "24 – 7" work here at All Saints. He has served us so cheerfully, enthusiastically and without complaint! Andrew has always put enthusiasm, welcome and service at the heart of his role as Churchwarden. He retires this year from being Church warden and from work in the summer as he has reached a certain age and he intends to travel with Kay and spend more time following his beloved cricket; however, he has generously said that he will stay and serve on the PCC.
- ✓ To Kay, for all her brilliant, super-efficient work as my honorary personal assistant. For her work organising Prayers and Bears, baptisms and weddings.
- ✓ Janet and Colin Bird for the amazing work they do and for their loyalty and support as warden, lay reader, treasurer, so many hats worn in the parish, deanery and diocese!
- ✓ Geoff and Kath Oates for their great work with families and children with Family Services, Messy Church and Junior Church.
- ✓ Gerry and Renee for their support of all things All Saints.
- ✓ Martin Penny and Mary for commitment to the development of our music and our growth as a church. For Martin's work as Parish Administrator, setting up the brilliant new website, the envy of other churches, the magazine and sorting our many church bookings.
- ✓ Chris Benham for the wonderful Soundbites concerts.
- ✓ Megan Roworth for her cheerful and tactful role as hall administrator and Tony James for ensuring that St John's Hall is making a profit and to Gavin.
- ✓ Derek, as clerk of works and his team for keeping the buildings comfortably heated, maintained and our running costs as low as possible.
- ✓ Dorothy and the Flower Club for ensuring that the church flowers are always superb and Richard for continuing to work quietly in the background.
- ✓ Don and Rosemary for the extraordinary amount of work they both do especially behind the scenes.
- ✓ Janet Oldham for all her encouraging work, back and front of house.
- ✓ The Choir and Benedict Wilson, (congratulations to Ben on becoming DoM of Holy Trinity, Stratford on Avon) for their wholehearted contribution to the beauty of praise and worship.
- ✓ Linda Dye who cleans all the church linen so carefully and who works so often in the background of many of our church events.
- ✓ Helen Wright and her ministry of prayer and visiting, taking Holy Communion to the housebound and her work as Child Protection Officer.
- ✓ Marion and Gillian for their children's work.
- ✓ The great Family Service activities that Rosie Dean puts together.
- ✓ Tony and Sandra cleaning the brass and coffee.
- ✓ Malcolm and Judy for their work as stewardship organisers.
- ✓ To Charles Murkin for auditing our accounts.
- ✓ To those clean the church week after week.
- ✓ Those who make coffee.
- ✓ Those who welcome.
- ✓ To our bell ringers.
- ✓ Those who work with our young people.
- ✓ Brian Dilley working quietly back of house.
- ✓ Fiona and John for their tireless gifts of welcome and charity work.
- ✓ For members of the PCC and committee members and all the work they do for the life of All Saints.
- ✓ Our readers and intercessors who deepen our worship.
- ✓ The Vergers, sides-people and welcomers who make sure that

everyone is noticed and welcomed warmly.

- ✓ Thank you to you all for your visiting and pastoral care for members of All Saints and beyond, your love, generous support and prayers.
- ✓ Thank you all as it would not be a family without each one of you.

What a year it has been:

- record numbers attending services over Christmas and Easter! The welcome, worship, music and art, beauty and a deepening spirituality, all flourishing.
- Stewardship and generosity were high priorities, with great liberality shown in giving for the East Window repairs.
- We have enjoyed wonderful social events, such as the soiree in Janet and Colin's beautiful house and garden, Showstoppers, Doug's 60th
- The 'Come and Sing' Messiah, the 70's night, our welcome parties arranged by Andrew and Kay for newcomers and the Tea and Thanksgiving, arranged by Janet for our senior people. We have a flourishing confirmation group and the confirmation will be on June 5th 2013.
- We now have a wonderful and updated website.
- We have been welcomed into the Greater Churches Group of Churches.
- We are at last a Fairtrade Church.
- Good links continue to be built up with the Team, we had a fantastic Pentecost service with Dean Jeffrey John. Great links with Churches Together, with the Jubilee and Week of Prayer services held at All Saints and now Hertford has its own food bank. We enjoy excellent networks and opportunities to participate in civic events and school events, and as a result sometimes find that it is not easy to fit everything into the church's calendar!
- We continue to grow and develop, working to ensure that every member

of our church feels that they each have a vital part to play in participating in the work of sharing God's love.

- I very much look forward to another successful year ahead as we are joined on the Ministry Team by Martin Bird, who is exploring his vocation, and the Team Curate Ginni Dear, who comes in July.

Do you remember from childhood the idea of treasure maps? Perhaps influenced by Treasure Island where x marks the spot, well, here at All Saints' the church is that cross that marks the spot. The place where our true treasure is.

Christ leads us and here and now we find ourselves privileged to be part of the body of Christ and the communion of All Saints. We are enabled to see beyond ourselves as individuals and see the bigger picture and continue to share God's love by being caring in all our relationships and welcoming and open to all people.

Love Jo

All the APCM reports are available on our website. Click on 'Annual meetings' in the 'More info' tab or use the direct link: www.allsaintshertford.org/apcm.php



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