

All Saints Alive

VICAR'S VIEWPOINT

Keep working on the Tapestry of Faith

Dear friends,

During the summer St Leonard's hosted a wonderful art exhibition which included textile work by Elspeth Kemp: framed embroidered collages and some of her ecclesiastical vestments and altar frontals. Her embroideries are often inspired by her faith. Whilst looking at her work I realised that our own faith is rather like a richly textured embroidery with its many coloured threads and materials forming the work of art.

Our faith starts off, perhaps, with a plain coloured background material, possibly formed in our childhood, based on a simple construction, loosely woven, incorporating Bible stories, our own experiences within our family and from school and learned prayers. As we grow, some of these threads will be pulled, often at the time making us feel rather raw and disconcerted, as these events seem like gaps or holes, as pieces of the picture seem less relevant and or don't fit. But then, other threads and materials are added, as our experience of life and our relationships with God and other people form more deeply, producing a greater texture. Sometimes the feelings and colours fade, and pull apart. New ideas are sewn into our faith, some that work, others leading to changes and some that need to be removed, but all the experiences and feelings can be seen as adding to the fullness and the depth of our faith.

There can be times when our faith seems as though it is not getting anywhere, just as there are times in the creation of a piece of art when the artist may need to find new inspiration, but then times when everything comes together in an amazing way. If we look back to that first plain material faith, we



realise that it has to be added to and pieces removed for the depth and subtlety to form.

This Autumn, with its new term start, can be a great time to look at our faith afresh, join one of our new Bible Study groups, pick up Bible reading notes, or come to a service which you may not have been to for some time: Evensong at 6.30pm, our early Book of Common Prayer Holy Communion at 8.00am or the lovely midweek Choral Compline on Wednesdays at 7.15pm or our new short Choral Matins at 8.30 am on the second Sunday of the month. We will also be having a different service on the fourth Sunday evening of the month and this month it will be a healing service, with prayers for healing (healing in one's own life, for others, or the world), music and a reflection.

Let us learn to cherish the experiences that add to our faith tapestry and even those that remove allow worship, prayer, music, the company of others and the beauty of our flower festival next month to deepen our understanding of God, our spirituality and faith.

Love Jo

Holy Communion and Swine Flu

The Archbishops of Canterbury and York have strongly urged all Churches, during the swine flu pandemic, not to share the Chalice and not to share the Peace by shaking hands. They have suggested this as it would be very sad if people felt concerned about catching swine flu when they attend church, especially those who are most frail and those who may become very ill if they caught an infection. I am sure that, like me, you miss that all important feeling of togetherness but

once the risk dies down then we will once again be able to share the one cup and feel the warmth of human fellowship! The risk of catching any infection is really extremely low but, as the Archbishops point out, perceptions and fears need to be allayed and people need to feel reassured. Let us all pray that this pandemic dies down very soon and that people are not too badly affected by it.

Bible Studies start this Autumn

Are you interested in deepening your relationship with God and knowing more about the Bible? Do you sometimes wonder what it means or even wonder how passages written so long ago can still have meaning today? Do you long to ask questions or share your insights with others in a friendly atmosphere? By popular demand we are intending to have two opportunities for Bible Study: one for those who prefer to meet in the evenings and one for those who prefer a daytime meeting. They will last about one hour and will take place either in the meeting room or in people's houses if people are willing to host them. Please let me know if you are interested in joining us. The dates and times are being put together as we go to press! Denise Dilley also organises the daily Bible reading notes which really help us to understand the Bible, please let her know if you would like to be part of this scheme.

Communion for Children

The PCC were all in favour of children being welcomed to receive communion and also for the third Sunday of the month to become a Family Eucharist. We will be preparing to admit all children from the age of around 6 (all who would like to be part of this and with parent's permission and support) to communion on **Advent Sunday 29th November at 10.00am.**

To prepare for this, on **Sunday 13th September at 5.15 pm**, in St John's Hall, we will be holding a Parish Meeting with tea for everyone who would like to know more about it, as well as for parents and children.

We will learn more about the communion service at our 10 am Family Eucharist services:

September 20th: the meaning of the Bread and Wine

October 18th: Forgiveness and Praise (Confession, absolution and the Gloria)

November 15th: Holiness, and Mission (Sanctus, Blessing)

Junior Church will be learning more about Communion at their sessions in St John's Hall on the 2nd and 4th Sundays of the month and then we will have another get together of children and families on November 15th at 5.15pm in St John's Hall. If your child would like to be part of this learning process, or if you know of others who may like to join us, please let me know.

Chris Benham

It has been hard to say goodbye to Chris as he has been so inspirational, generous with his time and talent and ensured that the musical standard at All Saints' is very high. The final evensong that Chris conducted at All Saints included *Bairstow in D*, and *Blessed City, Heavnl'y Salem* also by Bairstow. The choir, inspired by Chris, sang wonderfully and it was a truly moving occasion. It was followed by a mini sound canapé given in his honour, including his great friends: Michael Frith, Brian Bromley, Natasha Page, Amy Ma and Ed Gaudencio. It finished with everyone singing "Jerusabenhams" and then drinks and canapés to honour Chris. A collection to say "thank you" raised a very generous £1200 which Chris would like to use to restore his grand piano and continuing organ lessons.

The choir went on to sing for a week at Bristol cathedral and when Doug and I popped down to see them for a couple of days I felt so proud of their fantastic talent. The cathedral clergy and many others commented on what a brilliant choir and musicians we have at All Saints', and so much of this is due to Chris. We will miss him but Martin Penny, our new Director of Music, will ensure that we build on his legacy of great music and we are delighted that Chris is going to continue to run Soundbites on Wednesdays.