

All Saints Alive

VICAR'S VIEWPOINT

Fluttering in the breeze

Dear Friends,

It's great to see such a riot of colours and festive bunting and flags. The celebrations will stretch throughout our summer, from the Jubilee to the Olympic torch to the Olympics and then Paralympics. These are times of celebration, getting together and cheering people on.

The fluttering bunting reminds me of all the prayer flags that I saw strung across the mountain ridges of the Himalayas and shrines in Tibet and Nepal. Each small flag symbolising a blessing prayer and each time it fluttered in the wind the blessing is renewed. Their primary colours; blue symbolising sky/space, green: air/wind, red: fire, white: water, and yellow: earth are believed to produce harmony through the balance of the five elements.



Traditionally, prayer flags are used to promote peace, compassion, strength, and wisdom. The flags don't carry prayers to gods, rather, they are mantras blown by the wind to spread the good will and compassion into all-pervading space, so prayer flags are thought to bring benefit to everyone.



The prayers of a flag are thought to become a permanent part of the universe as the images fade from exposure to the elements. Just as life moves on and is replaced by new life, Tibetans renew their hopes for the world by continually mounting new flags alongside the old. This act symbolises a welcoming of life's changes and recognises that all beings are part of a greater ongoing cycle of being.

The Church has just celebrated the Holy Spirit and continues to reflect on the Holy Spirit throughout Trinity. The Spirit is often seen in the Bible as being like the wind, the breath of God. At creation the *ruach* (Hebrew) the wind or breath of God moves over the water and at Pentecost the Spirit comes as a wind and *inspires* the disciples so that they become apostles sharing the good news of God's love.



As we see the fluttering of the bunting and brightly decorated flags perhaps we can reflect on them as they can remind us of the closeness of the presence of God, through his Holy Spirit, as the very air that we breathe in, the breeze that gently surrounds us and the wind that inspires us into life and action. They may also remind us of the cycle of prayer and blessing that continues throughout the day and night as we join with these prayers our own prayer for peace and compassion:

'Thy kingdom come, thy will be done!'

Looking ahead to September and a slight change to our pattern of worship.

On the third Sunday of the month, quite a few of us have had a wonderful time at Messy Church and are looking for a quiet reflective time at the end of a busy day. The service of Compline is a very special way in which we can be drawn into the presence of God. The service is led by a small adult choir with chant, reading and hymn(s). I do hope that you can join us at this wonderful service which lasts about half an hour.

We are also going to ensure that our very valuable and popular Healing service is held on a regular basis of once a term. This will often take place on the fifth Sunday of the month.

The pattern in the evenings at 6.30 pm on Sundays will now look like this:

- 1st Sunday Choral Communion
- 2nd Sunday Choral Evensong
- 3rd Sunday Choral Compline
- 4th Sunday Choral Evensong
- 5th Sunday A service of Prayer for Healing and Wholeness

I do hope that you will join us for these services. Don't hesitate to let me know any reflections that you may have on the worship at All Saints.

Love, Jo

New Prayer Group

Would you be interested in meeting in a relaxed, quiet atmosphere to pray for the needs of others? I have been responsible for similar groups in other churches, and invite you to join me in my home at 10.30am on the third Tuesday of the month.

There will be a short meditation or suitable reading at the beginning. Prayers will be said for personal, local, national and international needs and situations. The weekly notice sheet will be a guideline for prayer points, and any specific requests that have been made will be included. The

session will not last longer than an hour. You don't need to pray out loud except to say the "traditional" Lord's Prayer together. Just come with a prayerful attitude, an open heart and any prayer requests you may have.

The first meeting will be at 10.30am, Tuesday 19th June at 1 St John's Court, St. John's Street (opposite the Catholic Church.) If you come by car I suggest you use Tesco's car park as you would need a parking permit to park outside my flat. I am on the ground floor by the way. Anyone with time to spare can stay on for a cup of tea or coffee! I look forward to seeing you.

Helen Wright

The Produce Stall – a review.

This began about 20 years ago, when funds were needed for repairs to All Saints Church. After the initial fundraising we continued to run the stall. We agreed with the Vicar of the time that one third of our takings would go to All Saints, another third to a remote hospital in Nepal where Nick and Ros Henwood were working (Nick and Ros helped with the young people at All Saints while they were at the All Nations Christian College in Stanstead Abbots), and the final third would go to the schools in the Pipar Valley that we have visited over the years, and which Amy Ma describes in her article.

We have kept to our original plan of offering fresh garden produce when in season. All the fruit is unsprayed. We also offer home made jams and marmalade. Items that people need.

The stall, and money raised from John's illustrated talks was the springboard that led us to being founder trustees of a charity - The Friends of Aschiana (UK) - aimed at feeding and educating street children in Kabul, Afghanistan.

This year, our takings have been a total of £795, so each of the three recipients has had £265.