

# All Saints Alive

## VICAR'S VIEWPOINT



### *The faith to love*

One hour after my first grandchild was born I was able to see him and marvel. The experience renewed within me a sense of wonder, that God gives to parents "a share in the work and joy of creation" as the church puts it. He was so small, so lovely, so vulnerable – yes, rather like all newborn babies in those respects, yet he is especially dear to me. Happily, he is born into a loving family with reasonable resources, but innocent children can be born into so many challenging situations, and it is a poignant thought that our world does not always have respect for the innocence and fresh potential of a child.

As I write, my grandson has yet to be named, it is all so new. As Doug and I stood with Tom next to Roshni with their baby, we felt we wanted to give thanks; and Rosh's mother, a devout Hindu, asked us to say a blessing. With a certain Hospital Chaplain present, used to working in a multi-faith situation, the task fell to him. We prayed to the Lord of all Life, the Divine Creator, the given of this wonderful gift: we prayed that he will grow in faith and that his parents will be blessed in caring for him at all times, we prayed for other family members across this country and in other nations. There was a sense that this child belongs to the whole world, and of God's love embracing him and everyone.

The world is hard to make sense of sometimes. My grandson will need to live in a world that often feels complex and contradictory and come to terms with it.

You and I have to do this also, whatever our age, and we have so much information today about all that happens in the world

that we may well find that we are always trying to understand what is happening. We have wonderful events in life, the ability to communicate and explore, to take leisure – yet we hear of gunmen shooting innocent people, of the Ebola virus, uncertainty about our nation's economic and political future.

Is this what Alvin Tofler meant by Future Shock? That it is so hard to tell whether the human race is really making progress and the choice of how to feel, how to think, how to decide, how to live a responsible and fulfilling life is impossibly complex.

For believers, there is an alternative means of experiencing guidance and security, of maintaining hope and value. Believing in a Divine Creator means that we do have a purpose in life, which is serving God's loving ways. We are not just here to vaguely do whatever we can, but to worship and love, and true religion in all faiths loves other human beings.

As Christians, we have a Lord who lived out true love, and sacrificed himself for us, refusing to give in to or connive with the evil around us. Lent (beginning on 18<sup>th</sup> February) is a time for looking afresh at our life of faith and changing in response to God. "Turn from evil and be faithful to Christ".

How loving are we really? How faithful are we to the Gospel? Do we have a vision of all humanity held within the love of God, even if we fall short in our response? And when we think of our loved ones, young and old, what values will our way of living and being give to them?

For we need a strong faith to live well in this challenging and broken world, and we can embrace afresh that newness of life which God gives us when – as John's Gospel puts it - we are born again into God's Kingdom and will pray and work for it to come into human hearts and lives.

Love,  
Jo

## **Team Eucharist with Bishop Alan 18<sup>th</sup> January**

Bishop Alan was keen to meet people rather than pose for pictures. As you see from the following pictures (the mitre is just visible!) he achieved his aim. We hope to publish his sermon in full next month.



## **Ash Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> February**

Following on from the Team Eucharist, we are all invited to join with Saint Andrew's to mark the beginning of Lent at 8:00 pm.

Please do put this date in your diaries.

## **Lent Challenge**

As we go to press, final details are still to be published by the Diocesan team.

Please visit [www.livingthechallenge.org](http://www.livingthechallenge.org) nearer the beginning of Lent to sign up for regular prayers, text, tweets or just to get some ideas for your prayers during Lent.

## **Lent Lunches**

Once again, Churches Together in Hertford warmly invite you to support the Christian Aid Lent Lunches which will take place in the Quaker Room, every Wednesday in Lent, beginning on February 18th.

Coffee will be available from 11.00 and lunch (soup, sandwich, fruit and tea or coffee) will be served from 12.00 to 1.45. The cost of a lunch will be £4 this year.

This is a great opportunity to support the vital work of Christian Aid as well as meeting new people from other churches. Last year we were able to send £920 to Christian Aid and it would be wonderful to send over £1000 at a time when our donations are badly needed.