

All Saints Alive

VICAR'S VIEWPOINT



Raising the roof!

Dear Friends,

I am delighted to report that at the time of writing and since last month's Letter, half of the finance needed to Raise the Roof has been donated, and we are truly grateful for the generosity of many people.

Thank you so much. It makes me want to "raise the roof" with thankfulness.

The phrase "raise the roof" is about the idea of a great wave of rejoicing, of praise, highly appropriate for a church.

Obviously we wouldn't want the roof to be literally raised as it would become unsound, but empowering people to love and serve God is the central point of any church building and community. Our singing, praying and caring is not for our entertainment or for indulging our personal needs, but an offering of our lives to God "Raising the Roof" ultimately speaks of a higher purpose for our lives.

The collective worship which we share in church is taken out into daily life, as we go to serve God's purposes in our own lives, in our homes, at work, in the community and in our nation and world.

The vision of a higher purpose through knowing Jesus' undying love is vital if we are to live the way we are called as God's people.

Prayer is the bedrock of our relationship with God, whether in church or elsewhere.

It is a time for allowing ourselves to turn our thoughts to what really matters.

What sort of life am I living, am I living up to my ideals?

Do I treat others in the way a Christian should?

Do I encourage other people in faith?

And what about my concerns for the whole world around me, with the need for peace and stability, for justice, for understanding? We will have a chance to consider our feelings about prayer at the Bible Book Club, in church on the first Tuesday of May, and – as ever – anyone is welcome to join us to share insights.

There will be a week of prayer for evangelism in the week before Pentecost, that our churches may seek to present the wonder of Christ's love today as the first disciples did, and we hope you will share in the prayers and the proclamation. More details on page 2.

And next month we have the opportunity to vote in the Referendum, a very important vote for our nation and for Europe, and I would want to encourage all members of the church to vote – after prayer! - on this very important issue. There is a letter from Bishop Alan on page 9 and an invitation to an event organised by Hertfordshire Churches Together on page 8.

Keep on praying, keep on living the love of God.

Love, Jo

Thy Kingdom Come

This year, the Archbishops of Canterbury and York have encouraged us to join in a special season of prayer in the week leading up to Pentecost. You can find full details of their call to prayer on the website <http://thykingdom.co.uk/>

Here in our Deanery of Hertford & Ware, we have decided to respond by setting up a 24/7 prayer room in the chapel at St Andrew's Church in Hertford.

It will be open from Sunday 8th to Sunday 15th May, and we would encourage you to visit the chapel and pray for as long or short a period as you can manage.

There will be a calendar to sign up so that you can indicate when you would like to come, and we hope that individuals and groups will fill as many of the gaps in the week as possible.

The Archbishops are calling us to pray for three things:

- for all Christians to deepen their relationship with Jesus Christ
- for all of us to have confidence to share the Gospel
- for all to respond to the call of Jesus Christ to follow Him as disciples, to live out the Gospel and to seek God's Kingdom from day to day.

They go on to say:

At the heart of our prayers will be the words that Jesus Christ himself taught us - 'Thy kingdom come, thy will be done.'

It is impossible to overstate the life-transforming power of the Lord's Prayer. It is a prayer that is reassuring enough to be on the lips of the dying and yet dangerous enough to be banned in cinemas. It is famous enough to be spoken each day by billions in hundreds of languages and yet intimate enough to draw us ever closer into friendship with Jesus Christ. It is simple enough to be memorised by small children

and yet profound enough to sustain a whole lifetime of prayer. When we pray it with sincerity and with joy, there is no imagining the new ways in which God can use us to his glory.

Writing to all the Anglican church leaders in England, the Archbishops of Canterbury and York explain: 'Throughout history any movement of the Holy Spirit to draw increasing numbers of people to faith in Christ has always begun with prayer....

"Christ's love compels us" to offer ... hope, joy and salvation to others, that the world maybe transformed by God's love. In prayer we are reminded that the "God of mission has a Church, not the Church of Mission has a God". In prayer we are reminded that when we pray for new and renewed life in others, so it must first be sparked and kindled in us.'

The focus for our prayer during this time will be for "all Christians to deepen their relationship with Jesus, so that we may have confidence to share our faith, that all may respond to the call of Jesus Christ to follow Him."

