

View from the pew

Colin Bird

We may still be in the depths of winter but, as the nights begin drawing out, we have much to look forward to at All Saints as well as looking back on the uplifting services of the last couple of months.

We are now in the season of Lent which should be a time for thinking more clearly about what our faith really means to us. We know that Jesus and the early disciples gave up everything to spread the Good News. Whilst we may feel that giving something up for Lent helps us to concentrate more fully on the sacrifice that Jesus made for us (as well as perhaps being good for our health – see page 5!) we should also make sure that during Lent we make more time not only to study God's word but also to share it with others and think about ways in which we can serve God more actively.

Some of us have attended the Leading Your Church into Growth sessions, ably led by Revd. Nick Sharp. These concentrated on encouraging us to be a church actively engaging with the community and becoming a church which positively invites new people in, not just welcoming them when they turn up. This fits well with the output from the meeting we had with Bishop Michael, when he congratulated us on our connections in the community and urged us to make greater use of them to encourage new disciples.

We have our APCM at the end of April, so perhaps this is a good time for you to consider whether you would like to serve on the PCC. If you would like to know more about what that would be involved please feel free to speak to Jo, me or to Janet O. All Saints faces a number of strategic issues which the new PCC will need to get to grips with:-

- We are not paying our way – we spent in 2016 £10,000 more than we got in. It looks like we will have the same sort of deficit in 2017

- We are heavily reliant on too few people making sizeable donations
- We do not have sufficient money in our Fabric Fund to pay for any material works and we expect the Quinquennial to identify some necessary repairs
- Our Organ Fund is woefully short of what is needed to keep the organ in good repair

It is perhaps timely that a new network of churches called HeartEdge has recently been launched under the auspices of St Martins in the Fields. St Martins has been revolutionised over the last few years by bringing the building into community and commercial use, thus reducing the need for continual stewardship campaigns. They recognised that it is no longer possible to maintain our plant (i.e. mainly our buildings) by increasing the giving of the congregation. They believe the current model, which has served us well enough for the last 30 years, is no longer sustainable.

We know that the lack of funds in the past resulted in a period of poor maintenance which brought All Saints to its knees and very nearly forced its closure in the 1990's before the massive legacy from Reginald Cull arrived somewhat unexpectedly. It is the task of our leaders with the PCC to address these long term challenges, so that we do not end up in the same position a few years hence.

We have the largest community space in the area and need to make sure it is used effectively for the community, not just for worship – what HeartEdge call the Kingdom model. We hope to harness the experience of the networked churches to help us decide how to move All Saints forward in a sustainable way.

We have had some spectacular fund raising and social events over the last few years and it is important that we carry on with

enthusiasm, not only raising funds but also, and principally, sharing fellowship.

Following on from the January Jolly we have a **Coffee Morning plus stalls on 18th March** – contributions please, especially for the ever popular cake stall - and a **Parish Lunch** is being organised for **7th May** – more on this in April's edition. Other dates for your diary are:-

20th May – plant sale, stalls and refreshments

9th September – bike and hike, coffee morning

1st October – Harvest lunch

21st October- social event

25th November – Christmas Bazaar

Yours in Christ
Colin Bird

More About HeartEdge

**Rev Dr Sam Wells,
Vicar, St Martins-in-the-Fields**

The old benefactor model (which historically resourced the Church of England) and the stewardship model (for the last 40 years) of church sustainability are no longer working. This was the story at St Martin's in 1987 and the response was to grow a commercial wing, initially to resource activities, but which increasingly began to shape the life of the church that historically was (and is) marked by ministries of compassion.

This new model we call the Kingdom Model

The Kingdom Model

On the high street or in the market place, churches make for unusual spaces. Often busy – from community projects and the arts, to hospitality and social enterprise – they frequently engage a wide mix of people including those more used to feeling marginalised and excluded.

We think this blend of creative, commercial and community activity, working to include

all kinds of people, makes many churches essential places. In short, we think your parish church is a gem; a unique asset, local, a diverse congregation, engaging with culture, creating enterprise and finance, working for change, generating all kinds of experience and stories everyday.

Talk to anyone doing this work – from clergy and congregation to people in the community – and you'll hear stories; the challenge if things don't go to plan, the obstacles that blocked development and how these were resolved, alongside the exhilaration when things falls into place. Some have stuff – ideas, strategy and tactics – useful to others. Others want prayer and encouragement.

Bring those people together, and we think – with some effective facilitating – all kinds of progress happen. This is about ideas, encouragement, resources and solutions – stuff you give and lots you take away. This is HeartEdge!

HeartEdge supports churches in blending their mission around four key areas:

Congregation: Inclusive approaches to liturgy, worship and day-to-day communal life.

Commerce: Commercial activity and social enterprise generating finance, creatively extending and enhancing mission and ministry.

Culture: Art, music and ideas to re-imagine the Christian narrative for the present moment

Compassion: Models of outreach serving local need and addressing social justice.

HeartEdge provides opportunity for churches to:

- ✓ *Learn from each other:* Building a community of practice.
- ✓ *Celebrate achievement:* Validating a range of activities.
- ✓ *Plan the future:* Evolving new forms of cultural, commercial and community-based work.

You can find us on twitter @heartedge or www.facebook.com/theHeartEdge/ or more detail at <http://www.stmartin-in-the-fields.org/church/worship/partnerships/>