

# Newsletter of the Smaller Churches in the Thames Valley Circuit

September – October 2014

## Minister's Letter from Sonia

For the second time in two years, my family and I have found ourselves in the midst of boxes as we moved to the new manse in Cippenham. Most of the boxes are now empty but there are a couple that still lurk behind the living room sofa or next to our bed. Part of the reason for this is that we have many treasured possessions which have been given to us over the years. When we left Jamaica, over eleven years ago, we were each given a cup made from bamboo with our names carved on it. A picture of one of them is below:



When we received these bamboo cups we all felt that these were a beautiful reminder of our time in Jamaica and the friends that we had made there.

However, very soon after receiving these cups, it became apparent that the bamboo had not been properly dried before the cups were made and, as a result, the wood split making the cups unusable.

We have never drunk from these purpose, yet some of my family members still insist on carefully unpacking them each time we move manses.



cups; they are no longer fit for carefully packing up these cups and

As we begin a new Church year, are there customs within but no longer fulfil the tasks for which they were are programmes of mission or outreach, which were but now, no longer speak to this present generation.

our fellowships which we treasure originally intended? Perhaps there once suitable for our communities

On a recent visit to Ireland, we were told that one of the churches had closed its evening services after the numbers fell to no more than a handful. This particular church had had a new lease of life when scores of asylum seekers arrived in the Republic from the Democratic Republic of Congo and Angola. These people flocked to the evening service and made it their own with drums and African choruses. Over time, many settled and became Irish citizens. Still the evening service thrived – often outstripping the morning service in attendance. Then, as the new influx had families, evening service attendance became difficult with the demands of school. The church decided that it was best to put all its resources into the morning service. Ten years ago, the morning service numbered six elderly worshippers, today it has been revitalised with young families and the numbers keep growing. How user-friendly is the worship we offer? How 'fit for purpose' are the programmes we treasure?

Personally, I love the traditions of the church but I try not to become sentimental about hymnody or ways of working. Nothing can be as important as trying to speak the language of grace to this present age: to share the love of God in the communities we live today. As Charles Wesley wrote:

***To serve the present age,  
My calling to fulfil:  
O may it all my powers engage  
To do my Master's will!***

[658 Singing the Faith]

# News from the Churches

## **BURNHAM**

Yes. We. are. A. Messy. Church!!! No disrespect to our dear ‘cleaning lady’ who does her best to keep us clean and tidy. On 9th August, our first ‘stand-alone’ Messy Church took place on the theme of ‘The Prodigal Son.’ It was the summer holidays. In Burnham, families tend to go away once ‘Lighthouse’ is over. So much prayer had gone up for this venture that B.T. (Angels Department) found it necessary to install an extra line. Would anyone come? Yes, they did. We had over a dozen keen young people, accompanied by their enthusiastic adults.



A number of work stations gave everyone a chance to try out different activities and then we went into Church where Rev Sonia gave a very helpful reflection on our theme. Then it was time for tea – and what a tea! We think we probably ‘overdid’ it so this is Something to think about next time. Oh yes, we are really looking forward to a ‘next time.’

Early in August our morning worship was enhanced by a visit from about 20 young Koreans, visiting England under the auspices of WEC. This was an absolute joy. They sang for us, and with us – but the ice was finally melted away by the photo-call afterwards, much laughing, and bobbing about and demands for this one or that one to be in the picture. What a morning to remember.

By the time you read this the two “Art afternoons” run by the “Well at Lent Rise” and hosted by Burnham Methodist Church will have taken place, offering opportunities to try out different art techniques in a very relaxed environment. Judging by the “dry run” (dry by the way is not the right word) which recently took place, we may find ourselves with an A\* of Messy Church. Find out more in the next newsletter.

W.W.1 week end – A number of Church members and friends enjoyed the Commemorative Concert held in Burnham Park Hall on the Saturday evening. Sunday afternoon saw the Commemorative Service on the lawns around the War Memorial. A number of young people took part in the service, and a member of our church family was one of those who gave a reading.

We were seated under an oak tree, with the sun shining through on a glorious Summer Sunday.

So much on which to reflect -  
So much still to do.

Hilary Evans

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## **Editor’s note / Contact**

My thanks to all contributors for this edition!

The next edition will be coming out for the start of November. Please send in your contribution in good time ... including a picture!

Anne Haggarty

## COOKHAM RISE

It feels as though Cookham Rise is going through a period of transition at the moment, a process of dying and rising, a time of change and weighing-up and pondering, when we pause and consider what we are doing and where we are going, with God's help.

Rainbow Preschool closed at the end of the summer term after serving the families of Cookham and the surrounding areas for twenty-seven years. On Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> July there was afternoon tea followed by a brief time of thanksgiving for the life of the Preschool led by Andrew: the parable of the sower seemed a fitting story as we considered the many lives where seed has been sown over the years. And the children present enjoyed singing 'Our God is a great big God' too – twice! Past and present members of staff joined us along with families past and present and members of the church, and the present staff received a gift from the church of a floral jug and flower posy. It was a good afternoon.

Dying and rising. As Preschool closes, the Cookham Community Allotment Project seems to be taking off under the auspices of the church. People seem keen to go along and be involved, and the vegetables are flourishing: we had a notable church lunch at the beginning of August when all the vegetables came either from the community allotment or from the allotment of a church member. Maybe next year we will be into chutney and pickle-making!

Still dying and rising: the closure of Rainbow means that the premises are free during the day and we are thinking and praying about what this might mean for us and what opportunities it might present. On Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> August a group of us went to the Englefield Green Village Centre – a Methodist Church now used as a centre for outreach to the community where there is a café with toys for the children and where many groups meet. The Methodists now worship with the Anglicans and the Centre is run by a management committee under the auspices of the Methodist Church. We are not at the stage of ceasing to worship in our building at Cookham Rise, but there was food for thought about how church and hall could be used.



On Friday 25<sup>th</sup> July, the second day of the school holidays, we held a Messy Church session on the Feeding of the Five Thousand which attracted mainly under-5s and their Mums. Since then we have held three 'Stay and Play' sessions on Friday mornings, which have been much appreciated. We have also held another 'Stitch Up' when people meet to knit or crochet items for Sierra Leone – chat and refreshments provided.

Throughout July and into August we held a weekly Bible study – a series based on a book by Paula Gooder called 'A Way through the Wilderness' which looked at receiving God's comfort in times of anxiety and stress. Two more short Bible study courses are planned before the end of the year. We continue to meet on a Wednesday morning in the church at 8 am for thirty minutes of prayer followed by breakfast at Costa.

So some things continue as usual and other things are changing – we live in exciting times. Rosemary Wakelin has written a new hymn, which so far appears only on the Singing the Faith Plus website. One of the verses sums up our situation:

But as for you, dynamic, Pilgrim God,  
you do not linger on the path well trod,  
but ever lead your pilgrim people on  
to risk an unknown future with your Son.

Connie Jeffery

## ETON WICK

I think most of our congregation have now met the new Vicar, Rev La Stacey, who seems to be settling very happily into village life and has already visited a number of groups that meet here. She has promised to speak at our Ladies' Club as soon as it can be arranged, and we shall look forward to her visit and getting to know her better.



Living close to the Thames Path we were well placed to support Andrew and Tim Baker when they walked from Putney to Henley on 19<sup>th</sup> August (62 miles!) Although they had already been about twelve hours "on the move", they soon outstripped the pace of those who walked with them from Windsor Bridge, and a backward wave was all we got at Eton Wick! We can only congratulate them both on a wonderful achievement, and be thankful that the financial response as well as the goodwill of many is making the "suffering" worthwhile.

We would wish to thank Rev Gary Homewood and all those involved in the presentation of the World War One Lament on 3<sup>rd</sup> August at High Street (Maidenhead) for a most moving experience, the suffering and sacrifice in some ways closely paralleled with that other Death which brought our Freedom and Peace with God.

We met in St John's Church on the Monday, when the commemoration took the form of Compline of Remembrance, beginning with the lighting of candles.

Daphne Hogg

## OLD WINDSOR

After a quiet summer, we are now preparing for the new Church Year and all that it may bring.

We have our Harvest Festival service on 28<sup>th</sup> September, when Nicola Shaw will lead our worship. As we have done for the last few years, we are asking that our gifts are suitable for sending to the Churches together in Windsor project for the homeless.



We shall be returning to our local First School to present *Open the Book* – and we now are “back to the beginning”, having completed the three-year cycle. So, where better to start than with the Creation story? But ... can any of us remember how we did this, and what props we needed, and who did what? And there have been some changes within the team – several new members, several were unable to continue, and Barbara moved away. It wasn't until a few months later that we began to record what we needed, so there will be some head-scratching going on at our first rehearsal!

Our Bible Study series *Windows into the New Testament* will restart on Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> September, beginning with the session on Acts.

Our next *Traveller's Tales* will be on 23<sup>rd</sup> October at 2.30 pm when Gerald Sherriff will be telling us about Beautiful Britany [with a hint of a Pardon!]

Anne Haggarty

## COLNBROOK & POYLE

It was an absolute delight when Jennie and Bob Quarterman were wandering around Tesco in Slough, one evening in August and bumped into an Afro-Caribbean lady who we had not seen for a number of years. Doreen and her husband Sam, also in Tesco's, both used to attend Colnbrook and Poyle church, indeed their son Keith, (named after our own Keith Ayres), was baptised in our little church. Unfortunately Sam's company relocated him to Dartford, London, and we saw very little of them for a while and sadly for us his company then relocated him to Germany. Although we know that Sam, Doreen and their now three children, Keith, Samantha and little Joanna, pronounced Yoanna in German, are very happy over there and are learning the language very well.



We got together with the family the very next evening at Kath and Keith Ayres' house, where the children played with toys, while we adults caught up on the missing years. Cups of tea and cakes in abundance, and a little tot of something stronger for the men. Yes, just a little tot readers!

On Sunday the family arrived at our church, much to the surprise and pleasure of the congregation. Our folk made a great fuss of them, and despite the service ending a little early, we talked and shared news with them over tea and cakes again. We eventually left church a little later than usual. As a result of this get together, Sam and Doreen have decided to have Samantha and Yoanna, baptised at our church, and when they next visit Sam's brother who lives in Slough, they have promised to visit us again.

To have the two girls baptised in our church would be amazing, especially as it might possibly be Rev. Margaret's first baptism in our church. Praise the Lord!

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### **Joint Events ... dates for your diary**

The next meeting of the Smaller Churches Group is on Thursday, 16<sup>th</sup> October, 7.30 pm at Burnham Methodist Church

#### September

|                            |                              |                          |
|----------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Saturday, 13 <sup>th</sup> | 2.30-4 pm at Eton Wick       | <i>Singing the Faith</i> |
| Sunday, 28 <sup>th</sup>   | 4 pm to 5.30 pm at Eton Wick | <i>COME AND SEE</i>      |

A Smaller Churches event ... but what ??? ... Come and See !!!

#### October

|  |                            |   |
|--|----------------------------|---|
| Sat/Sun 18 <sup>th</sup> /19 <sup>th</sup> | Windsor                    | <b>World Prayer Safari</b>  |
|  |                            | Circuit Missions Weekend with a "Whitechapel Mission" Circuit Service |
| Thursday, 23 <sup>rd</sup>                 | 2.30 pm at Old Windsor     | <b>Traveller's Tales – Beautiful Britany</b>                          |
|  | [with a hint of a Pardon!] | Speaker: Mr Gerald Sherriff.  |

*If you can support the above circuit events or our activities and events listed under our individual churches, in any way, please do! Thank you!*