

Church Matters

The Parish Magazine of the Strettons : September 2011

Growing together in Faith, Hope & Love; sharing the Good News of Jesus with all.

A BUSY SUMMER

This month sees the biggest Church Matters since I took over as editor. At twenty pages it is probably as big as it can physically be, as, thanks to the new photocopier in the church office, five sheets of A4 can be folded and stapled automatically. Six, however, I suspect would be one too many.

The last few weeks have seen quite a few members of the church family away at both New Wine and Soul Survivor, enjoying the sun, enjoying each others company and enjoying God. Hopefully next month we'll hear back from some of those who went and find out what the experience was like.

With so many of the Church family away at the beginning of August and no children's work being offered, the All Age team decided to do two 'services from scratch' at the 11:05 on 7th and 14th. By all accounts these were a great success and involved the whole congregation in helping to put the services together.

They were a learning experience both for the congregation and

those involved in organising the services and the content.

The All Age team would love your feedback on the services; indeed on any All Age services. Ideas and criticism are always appreciated. Please pass on any comments to Robert Rayner, the Rector or any member of the leadership team.

Simon Cleaton

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HOW TO GIVE AND RECEIVE CRITICISM

They say everyone in the Strettons has an opinion! As Christian people, if that opinion is at all critical of someone else, if we believe in justice we shall want that opinion to be fair; if we value relationships, we shall want that criticism to be offered in love, if we believe in truth we shall want that opinion to be supported by evidence. Church leaders should be owed the respect of 1 Tim. 5:17-19 (proper evidence, fair treatment etc.) but damaging behaviour is to be dealt with firmly, so the health of the fellowship is preserved (v. 20).

The key to relationships was given by Jesus in Matt. 18: 15-. If someone comes to us with a complaint about somebody else, we should ask them if they have been to see the person concerned first and ask them not to come back to us until they have seen them. If they are not prepared to do so, maybe their complaint is lacking in truth, maybe they have some private agenda of their own, or they are trying to manipulate us, that they seem to want us to think less of that person, without sorting it out with them first. That is the way to restore harmony in relationships, and in our case, the church. The Scriptures have a lot to say about gossip, passing it on, even believing it! We are even held responsible if we choose to believe lies about others! One of the principles of

justice is giving the other person an opportunity to give their side of the story without the listeners having pre-judged ("prejudice") the matter.

I like the story of one of my law lecturers, who asked a student what he thought of an article he had read. The student replied with some strident criticisms. The lecturer then got on the phone, spoke to the author and said, "I have a student here who would like to speak with you about your article"! We should do the same whenever a talebearer comes to us! Proverbs 18:8; 26:20, 22:11:13; 20:19 etc. make challenging reading! Confession and putting right any wrong or unhelpful comments about others is the Lord's way of removing our guilt and restoring the harmony which he expects in our worship for that to be pleasing to Him (Matt. 5:23-).

Correction, in love, however, is a Scriptural practice. The truth should be spoken in love (Eph. 4:15), wanting the best for that person and their ministry; as in best business practice, the behaviour not the person should be criticised, it should be done gently (Gal.6: 1), and there should be specific guidance as to how the matter can be put right or it is not correction! As in Matt. 18, it should be done in private first, with appreciation of who that person is and what they are trying to do.

There is also a key point about when such delicate conversations take place. Some people think the moment before a service is the time

to have their say about something (!) – it should be dealt with well before that if we are to take communion in the right spirit and nothing we do should undermine the conduct of public worship. Nor, I would suggest, is the right time over church coffee or when there are newcomers or people in pastoral need around. My father once waited for a very long time for two shop assistants to finish their conversation before serving him. Having been in sales for much of his life, such behaviour considerably offended him so he made a point of taking his business elsewhere! The same can happen to churches if we let habitual complainers snatch away time better used to express God's compassion for the lost and broken.

Receiving correction or criticism can be difficult if one has put one's heart and soul into something. We should check our underlying motives, allowing that even if it is wide of the mark maybe there is some germ of truth to learn from, but we should not allow it to intimidate us from doing the will of God where someone has been challenged over something, or selfishly wants the church to be run their way without regard for its overall mission. Much harm has been done when unfair criticism has been received from some authority figure such as a parent or teacher, and as part of our inner healing we should go back to

the Scriptures to break the power of those lies and be set free. Our ministry team and clergy can help bring healing into these areas.

As John Truscott says in his paper on this (TN30 if anybody wants to get it off the web), in offering criticism, we should get problems out in the open, not do it unless we ourselves are prepared to take it, check our own motives and encourage and affirm the good points. Also we should offer support and help. It was the Pharisees who placed the burden of heavy expectation on others but did nothing to help! In receiving it we should take responsibility, not blame our team, and allow pride to be crucified. There has been a wonderful tribute to John Stott by Michael Lawson, former curate and now with a widely regarded teaching ministry, about his first sermon at All Souls', Langham Place. After it, John went up to him at the end, introduced himself, as he was no longer the Rector, and said kindly, "Let me help you next time. We can meet up." On doing so, John said, "You really did not understand the text did you!?" Michael commented, "He was so nice about it, and proceeded in the nicest fashion to explain what I had missed about the text." With warmth, humour and kindness he then helped Michael over many aspects of preaching.

A positive atmosphere in which there is an underlying acceptance of one another, where people are allowed to try things, fail sometimes, allow for imperfections etc. is vital for growth to take place and for us not to quench or grieve the Holy Spirit. It is also an opportunity for maturing because what we don't like in others is what we don't like in our selves (Matt. 7:1)!

The dominant principle in all this is what builds up one another, i.e. what builds up the body of Christ, the church. Would Jesus do what we are doing? What models the teaching and practice of Jesus and brings glory to Him?

Based on papers given by the diocese for training curates and "How to give and receive criticism" by John Truscott.

Richard Hill

Next month: How to give and receive praise!

LADIES NIGHT

It seems a long time ago now but a group of ladies, young & not so young, got together for an evening of fun and friendship. We had a great time making a variety of 'goodies'; stretched our grey matter in a Hollywood quiz and sampled some delicious home-made puddings. Putting that together with a laugh and a chat it made for a

good night. Hopefully this will be the first of many.

Ideas, anyone, of what you would like to do?

Please speak to Sarah Wildblood, Louise or Susanna Magowan if so.

LEY GARDENS

Communions have recommenced at Ley Gardens, the former Windsor Place, now moved behind Churchill Road. For the time being they will be on the 2nd Wednesday in each month, so the next one will be on Wednesday September 14th at 10am. All residents are welcome. Richard presides assisted by Suzan and Sheila.

Richard Hill

PRAYER MINISTRY

Please do make use of prayer ministry at 9:30 and 11:05 services, or see one of the clergy at any other service, for any kind of need however big or small. Prayer does make a difference, and folks are welcome to come and be filled with the Holy Spirit or to receive wisdom or discernment etc., as well as to pray for the physical needs for oneself or for a friend or relative. Please do contact the prayer ministry team and clergy during the week as well.



RUTH HASSALL IS LEAVING CPAS

We have very happy memories of Ruth Hassall's visit to us in the Parish Centre whilst St. Laurence's was closed for re-ordering, both for her addresses at the morning services, and the seminar on leadership she gave in the afternoon.

Those who follow CPAS (Church Pastoral Aid Society) will be aware of the current focus the society has for training all members of churches to be effective in sharing in Christian ministry, especially as numbers of stipendiary clergy fall. Ruth has taken a leading role in this focus with the project 'Growing Leaders' (currently being followed by our leadership team here) and was responsible for the production of the Youth Edition. So the WMG were very sad – and no doubt other CPAS supporters in the church will be – to read that financial constraints have led to her taking voluntary redundancy.

She writes:-

I just wanted to give you an update on things that are happening with me and CPAS. You may have heard that over the last couple of months CPAS have been undergoing a process of restructuring largely because of the current financial climate and as a result a number of

redundancies have had to be made. During the process I opted to take voluntary redundancy and will be officially leaving CPAS at the end of September, although I'm now on what I think is called gardening leave!

Thank you so much for all your support and prayers for me and my work, I have really appreciated your interest and support. Thank you too for your support of CPAS. I will make sure that you are kept in touch with the work that is going on there as your support is appreciated by more than just me!

With many thanks and best wishes.

Ruth x

The Anglican church can ill-afford to lose this input to equipping us for mission. The parish will continue to pray for and financially support CPAS, and no doubt in time we shall commit ourselves to supporting another member of the staff. But for now, do pray for Ruth – we shall continue to pray for her in our World Mission Intercessions for the time being – and for CPAS, that their strategic input to taking 'the Gospel to every man's door' will be adequately supported financially and in prayer by parishes throughout the UK.

Adele Grounds

INNER HEALING – WE ALL NEED IT!

Have you ever wondered how a person who has suffered immense pain including physical hardship or even abuse, can come to a place of inner healing which involves not just emotional but also psychological wholeness? I have been amazed at the testimonies I have come across over the years that I have been a Christian and this has led me to explore this phenomenon in a little more depth. I would not by any means profess to be an expert, but I do know the healing grace of God in my own life. Romans 8 verses 1-2 tells us 'There is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus... the law of the Spirit has set us free from the law of sin and death.'

Therefore, if we are to live in the reality of that promise, we need to seek God's healing in areas of our lives that are still stunted by past hurts or circumstances that are often not of our own doing. We are also clearly told in Matthew 7:3 'Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye?' We are encouraged to keep short accounts, to avoid judgement and keep our spiritual arteries clear of those things that cause a barrier between us and God.

During our time in Highley, Darren and I took part in two courses which I believe are fundamental in the area of healing, the first being the Freedom in Christ course and the second The Road to Maturity by Mary Pytches. Both provide the environment within which the process of inner healing and a deeper connection with the truth of who God says we are can begin to take place. As a result I believe we as individuals are more able to operate in the freedom that ultimately Christ died on the cross to win for us.

Galatians 5:1 tells us 'It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery.'

Sometimes those steps of moving towards being in a place of deeper healing and wholeness can seem to take forever but there is a lot to be said for the gift of hindsight. Often we can look back over a season in our lives and it's only with hindsight that we see how far we've progressed. Romans 12:2 talks about the transformative power of Christ renewing our minds. And that is the journey that each of us are on, being transformed into the likeness of Christ. My prayer for us is that we will know the transformative power of Christ to be a reality in our lives and through that

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we will be moved to take that love out to those around us.

We are planning to run Mary Pyches six week course, 'Road to Maturity', in September, to which everyone will be welcome with a special focus on those involved in prayer ministry. Please contact me if you are interested in finding out more.

Suzan Williams

"No one can be indwelt by the Spirit of God and keep that Spirit to himself, for where the Spirit is, He flows forth and where there is no flowing forth, He is not there".

Archbishop William Temple.



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GOD'S CREATION & HARVEST – DO THEY MATTER?



Within the last few years, a new frog has been discovered in Madagascar's forests; it's small, yellow, and covered with little red spots – perhaps it's got measles. Yet, does its existence matter to anyone at all – unless you're either another frog, or are the scientist who named it 'Boophis bottae'?

Similarly, does it matter that every year more and more people in Madagascar need food - and land on which to grow it – such as the forest areas, for which their government may be accepting bribes to allow illegal hardwood logging. And as agriculture gets harder, both in Madagascar and most other places, the biggest culprit to blame for that is we ourselves in the West - since we're finding it so hard to reduce our fuel consumption. Lastly, does it matter that I can't give you 200% proof of the claim in that last sentence?

'How to enjoy and care for God's Creation' – that's just one of many important 'world life-style' issues, according to St Laurence's group called 'Eighth Day'. Many questions are often simple to ask yet the answers are often complicated. We teach our children this but find ourselves adding that correct answers may even change over time; how awkward. Yet our God created and cares for all - even for frogs, but even more, for people.

And so, not only to Harvest, but also to 'Time for Creation' – the latter a Europe-wide initiative. This year, there are two special dates for services on these themes, September 11th and October 2nd. There will also be exhibitions permanently open in church for the three weeks between those dates, and prayer interest for the two Sundays in between as well.

But do these topics really matter? Yes of course they do – and especially to the millions whom God has created as our 'neighbours'. The above article has only been a taster. Perhaps my slightly trivial references to frogs have finally, as intended, got 'under your skin'; if so, just wait to find out what else the 'Eighth day' group and others have got in store for you during the next months!

Tim Oakley

BUILDING IN FAITH

How time flies! It is now over 12 months since Bp Alistair opened our newly re-ordered church. This followed 6 months of holding services in the Parish Centre whilst the building work was undertaken. The Service was a wonderful celebration of thanksgiving and praise for God's provision.

During the past 12 month period, our contractor has been dealing with the many minor snags and defects that have arisen. The Lighting Consultant has agreed with us that the lighting levels are patchy and too low. At his own expense, he is changing many of the luminaires to a higher intensity, and adjusting the uplighters to give a more even spread of reflected light. Experience has shown that the new lime plaster finish is dusty and marks clothing when brushed against. The Architect, together with the Contractor and Plaster Specialist, are investigating methods of overcoming the problem. A design fault has been identified with our lovely new chairs. The problem lies with the top joint of the chair back, which is weak. The Managing Director of Alpha Chairs, who supplied the chairs, has visited the church and seen for himself the problem. He has taken away some of the chairs for investigation and has promised to resolve the problem, to our complete satisfaction, as soon as a solution can be agreed.

In spite of these many niggles, we continue to praise God that the work was completed under budget, on time and that all the money has been raised through the kind generosity of so many. Churches in the Third World have also been blessed through our tithe.

At the PCC meeting in July, they agreed to commission the Architect to begin the long process of obtaining the approval for Phase 2. A new Entrance Foyer, providing Toilets, Tea/Coffee making facilities, Display areas and a Meeting Room would be constructed on the North side of the church. A greater link will be made with the Parish Centre by introducing a pathway between the 2 buildings and introducing traffic calming measures in Church Street. Approval will be required, not just from the local Planning and Conservation Officers, but also from the many Amenity Bodies and the Diocesan Advisory Committee (DAC) who all seek to maintain and enhance the inheritance and integrity of our lovely church building and the churchyard in which it sits. This process is likely to take between 18 months to 2 years. When complete it will enable the more detailed design to be commenced and costed. Please continue to pray for this project for 'Unless the Lord builds the house, it's builders labour in vain.'

Ps 127 v 1

John Hughes

GARAGE PRAISE BARBEQUE & FUN DAY

A marathon weekend but what a wonderfully blessed time was had by all. Our visiting band 'The Reign' gave us the opportunity to really meet with and worship God, and we heard testimonies from members of the band on Saturday evening and from one of our ex-Pathfinders, Hazel, on Sunday morning (see page 12).

It was great to see some of our young people from Elev8 group, for some it would have been a first experience of anything like it. Please pray that they will have taken away a positive attitude towards Christianity and will start seeking a relationship with Jesus.

There was a great feeling of excitement and celebration (despite the rain on Sunday) and several families come back to the fun day each year, so we must be doing something right!

Thank you to everyone who did their bit to make it success – you are too many to mention by name but you know who you are - may you be richly blessed.

The band have been booked already for next year so please put in your diaries – 14th & 15th July 2012

Sarah Wildblood

ALL SAINTS

We are pleased to be able to keep the church open throughout the day and the picturesque appearance of the church and a welcoming seat in the grounds continue to attract visitors. No doubt walkers are especially pleased to rest for a time and maybe even enjoy a picnic. This, despite our garden being far from at its best this year, with the building works which have been taking place (now virtually completed). To prompt and encourage visitors, as well as our regular congregation, a prayer request book has been placed in a prominent position. We trust it will be used by all who wish for support in their prayers and meditations, no matter what the nature of these, whether of thanksgiving or for help or guidance in time of trouble.

We are most pleased to report that Bishop Alistair has kindly agreed to dedicate the new building at the church at the 11:00am service of Holy Communion on 11th December.

The two organ recitals held in the church as part of the Arts Festival were well attended and enjoyed. It is hoped that now the church has the benefit of toilet and kitchen facilities, only made possible by legacy from the estate of Miss Ingram, more such events will be held in the church.

Hilary Bullock

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SHEPHERD OF THE HILLS, PHILIPPINES

Nathaniel and Ruth Mejica have been running the SOTH Home since taking over from Nathaniel's father in 2003. They came to this country earlier this month for a short visit to attend the wedding of Mark, one of their 'boys', now a trained nurse. Mark and his wife met in the Philippines when she was working as a teacher and will return there to work. Their wedding was an emotional time for Nathaniel and Ruth who sang at the ceremony to music recorded by the children at the SOTH school

Last year Ken and Julien Hathaway visited Nathaniel and Ruth on our behalf and subsequently became good friends. As a result, Ken invited them to stay. Although here for only one night, it was possible to fit in a brief, but very enjoyable, visit on August 11. Together with Doug and Adele Grounds and Barbara Birks we were interested to hear of the latest developments of the school at Zimbales. This is now complete and has been called the SOTH centre for Music, Arts and Sports. This is a preschool and elementary school and the children are divided into three groups for classes. In addition to the academic work it excels in the music and art (violin, guitar and singing), and we have been given photos to prove their artistic abilities.

The children are mostly rescued street children aged about 3 years and live

with committed Christian families with about five children to a family and brought up with strong Christian values. Each child is, from the very start, taught to become a leader and to help each other along the way. Judging from the photos this works, and they look so happy? Unusually, Nathaniel was asked to take responsibility for twins, Caleb and Joshua, straight from hospital. These two babies were very sick and unfortunately, at four months, Joshua died having had bacterial meningitis. Caleb survived, but had been born blind and the doctors gave no hope of his ever having sight. Caleb is now three years old and has been prayed for every day since his arrival. Last year there were definite signs that he was gaining sight and is now a happy little boy, running around, wearing his dark glasses and saying that his twin, Joshua, is with Jesus. Praise the Lord for his mercy.

The kids go on to secondary schools where they do well and are praised for their dedication to their work. It has been known for teachers to encourage other pupils, who are not so dedicated, to say "do it like the Shepherds do".

These children, who started life with nothing, now have self-worth, leadership qualities and employment opportunities and thank God and SOTH for all they have been given

Norma Brewer

HAZEL'S TESTIMONY

Hazel is a student who attends our church when she can. She writes...

None of my family are Christians, and up until a year ago I'd only ever been to Church for school services. But a series of things happened over the last few years that led to that changing, including becoming great friends with a Christian who helped me see how many things that had happened were linked with God, and encouraged me to pray and try to build a relationship with God. This caused me to make what I thought was my own decision to learn more and build a relationship with God.

I started going to Sussex University CU, where a newly made friend encouraged me to go to Church. And that's where I heard the gospel properly for the first time, and how can you not respond to that? And that's when everything started to fit into place, that moment of realisation that Jesus died for me, not just so that I could live this life but for an eternity in heaven too. Some may have seen me in floods of tears, it's what happens when you finally see, that for your entire life you've ignored the one person who always loves you, the only one you can truly depend upon and repenting for that. And so I started going to CU, my Church (CCK in Brighton), the Alpha course, a small group, weekends

away. You name it, I did it! And I started to learn and understand, especially with the help of newly found Christian friends.

Jesus has done amazing things for me, he's given my life a purpose, blessed me with gifts to help others, and so many other things, he's given me everything I'll ever need. He's shown me just how amazing he is, which is just one of the reasons I decided to get baptised in May, and am now a member of CCK playing a very active role in the Student Zone . I never thought I'd be able to get to this point, I never could have dreamed of how far I've come in a year. But He made it happen, he changed my life, and I don't ever want to go back to the life I had before.

YOUTH @ ST LAURENCES

We have come to the end of another school year and relationships are building well.

Youthzone (Sunday mornings) fluctuates with numbers but we have gained a couple of new members from Kidzone. They all seem to enjoy the comfort our newly decorated Youth Room gives (if you haven't seen it yet please come and look).

Prayer Point:

- Please pray that the group will begin to work together and

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support one another, that they will make a commitment to follow Jesus in their everyday lives.

Xzone (Wednesday in School) has a great committed core group. I never know how much they really take in but they keep coming back for more and asking questions. Most have no Church background but do know some of the bible stories from RE lessons.

Prayer Points:

- That God would continue to draw these young people into the group, for them to come with open hearts and minds.
- That the time changes to the school day won't affect the input we have.
- For the leaders Sarah, John & Suzan – that we can be sensitive to the young people's needs providing a safe and enjoyable place for them to explore the Christian faith.

Elev8 (Friday evenings) is our Youth club. Great fun and good for building relationships.



We have just celebrated the end of year with a trip to Mickey Miller's Playbarn, Craven Arms. Always a good venue and thoroughly enjoyed. There are changes happening in September, we will be dividing the young people into different age groups. This will allow for more appropriate activities and teaching and hopefully enable the groups to continue to grow.

Prayer Points:

- The young people will have had a restful and fun holiday and for them to be eager to return!
- The leaders will be reenergised and refreshed over the summer.
- The new times will be embraced well and the young people will enjoy the new sessions.
- For new helpers to come forward – they only need to offer for one of the times which are:

Years 7-9 (approx. 11-14yrs) 6.30-7.45pm

Years 10+ (15+) 8-9.15pm

We will have been and returned from our annual trip to Soul Survivor Conference by the time you read this. Please pray that Holly, Beth, Rachel & Ellie will have met with God in a new and vibrant way and that they will continue to grow in their faith and will be able to witness to others in their schools & colleges.

Thank you so much for your continued support.

Sarah Wildblood, Youth Worker

SEPTEMBER SERVICES

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St. Laurence's			St. Michael's			All Saints'	
	8:00am	9:30am	11:05am	6:00pm	10:30am	11:00am	3:00pm
4th Sept	<i>Holy Communion</i> (Common Worship – Order Two) Nancy Cleaton	<i>Holy Communion</i> (Common Worship) John Holden	All Age Team		<i>Morning Worship</i> Nancy Cleaton Suzan Williams		<i>Evening Prayer</i> (BCP) David Morris
11th Sept	<i>Holy Communion</i> (Common Worship – Order Two) Rector	<i>Holy Communion</i> (Common Worship) John Hughes Isabel Carter 8th Day Group	11:05 Special Isabel Carter 8th Day Group		<i>Holy Communion</i> (Common Worship) Rector	<i>Holy Communion</i> (Common Worship – Order Two) Nancy Cleaton Suzan Williams	
18th Sept	<i>Holy Communion</i> (Common Worship – Order Two) Rector	<i>Holy Communion</i> (Common Worship) Nancy Cleaton Rector	11:05 Special Rector		<i>Morning Worship</i> Suzan Williams	<i>Morning Prayer</i> (BCP) John Hughes	
25th Sept	<i>Holy Communion</i> (Common Worship – Order One) Rector	<i>Morning Worship</i> Suzan Williams Rector	11:05 Special with Communion John Hughes Rector	<i>Communion - Celebrating Wholeness and Healing</i> Nancy Cleaton Suzan Williams	<i>Holy Communion</i> (URC) Nancy Cleaton Suzan Williams	<i>Holy Communion</i> (Common Worship – Order Two) John Holden	

MEN'S GROUP

When the Men's Group heard of a new church plant in Mombasa, Kenya that was growing rapidly and in desperate need of a sound system, they decided to send £100 to pay for new microphones. The church leaders in Mombasa were so grateful and the following is a copy of some of their reply.

'We thank you so much for the money you sent for the purchase of microphones. May God bless all those who gave to this effort to provide microphones for the church. The microphones have now been purchased and will be presented to the church fellowship at the Service on 21st August 2011. May God bless you all'.

During the Autumn Term we shall be looking at the Letter to the Galatians. In it, Paul sorts out just what is a true Christian. Today, with an abundance of religious groups all calling themselves 'Christian' and all with different ideas about what that means, the message of Galatians is one we desperately need to hear. The Programme, to which all men, of any age, are warmly invited to come is as follows:-

AUTUMN PROGRAMME

- October 1st - Breakfast - Speaker - TBA

- October 8th - Open Forum - *The Christian's Response to Suffering*
- October 22nd - Gal. 1 & 2 - *Under Attack*
- Nov 5th - Gal 3 - *Curses, Blessings and Promises*
- Nov 19th - Gal 4 - *Freedom*
- (Nov 20th - *Persecuted Church Sunday - Men to be Involved*)
- Dec 3rd - Gal 5 & 6 - *Unnatural Acts - Two Ways to Live*
- Dec 17th - Breakfast - Guest Speaker

Breakfasts start at 8.00am. All other meetings start at 7.25 and are complete by 8.45.

John Hughes

STOP PRESS - HOLY COMMUNION TABLE

At the meeting held on Sunday afternoon 21st September. Rev John Holden presented 3 prototype examples of Communion Tables. There was almost universal agreement that the table on wheels which can be moved very easily was the preferred choice. Although only made out of re-claimed timber, it was agreed that this table would be used over the next few months to see how the model worked in practice. We are all most grateful to John for his skill and hard work in producing the examples for us to see. Do pass on to John any comments you have.

A GODLY MAN INDEED



John Stott died last month, in St Barnabas, the care home where he's spent the last few years. Here was a godly man indeed.

A friend to hundreds of thousands of people - through gracious word spoken eye to eye, through gracious word spoken from platforms, and through gracious word written in many books. But, in whatever context, John's words were clean with a joyous clarity, crafted in prayer, and offered back to the Spirit who shaped them for His purposes - for the honour of Jesus' name and the glory of the Father.

When John spoke, there was never any doubt whose messenger he was.

In even trying to encapsulate John's achievements and his character, it's hard to know with which to begin.

His extraordinary undertakings in biblical scholarship, in thought leadership, in growing a local church, in building up evangelicals in the Church of England, in reshaping international mission to include social action, in creating an international movement of evangelicals - all this make his graciousness, meekness and humility seem all the more remarkable. Similarly, his graciousness makes his achievements seem all the more extraordinary - how, from a human point of view, did such a gentle, kind man manage to help gather so many to fresh missional purpose and radical cooperation? Jesus, would be his answer, I'm sure.

John was one of the founders of the London Institute for Contemporary Christianity (LICC), its first Director and the President until his death. He saw the urgent need to enable Christians to integrate their faith with their whole life - at work as well as in the neighbourhood, in the lecture theatre as well as in the sanctuary. And he led and shaped LICC to develop and offer wisdom to Christians from all over the world and from all kinds of professional and ecclesiastical contexts. He maintained a vigorous interest in its work right up until his death.

John anticipated that some people might like to make a thanksgiving gift to support the causes that most

concerned him - LICC and the Langham Partnership International - and if you'd like to do that the please visit the LICC website at <http://www.licc.org.uk/>.

There is indeed so much about John to give thanks, and praise, to God for.

But this is also a time of grief for us, and for many, many people.

May the God of all comfort, grant you his comfort at this time.

Article adapted from Mark's tribute on the LICC website.

PSALMS

As we read the book of psalms, we will hear believers crying out to God from the depths of despair, and we will hear them singing to him in the heights of celebration. But whether despairing or rejoicing, we will always hear David and the other psalmists sharing their feelings with God with honesty and in many instances with courage. Because of this honesty, men and women throughout history, have come again and again, to the book of Psalms for comfort during times of struggle and distress. Together with the psalmists, they have risen from the depths of despair to a life changing friendship with God, releasing joy and praise for God's everlasting love and forgiveness.

The psalmists confess their sins, express their doubts and fears, ask God for help in times of trouble, and they praise and worship him. Why not write your own psalm, honestly confessing your feelings towards him? Try to finish your psalm with praise just as the psalmists sought to do.

At a particularly pressured, difficult and busy period in my life, I wrote the following psalm as honestly as I could.

My God, why does life seem so out of control? Why do I have so little time? Why do I allow you to be crowded out? I am like a man whose head is filled with the buzzing of wasps. I cannot sort out my priorities, but turn here and there like a caged animal. O God my real desire is to worship you. In my weakness temptation trips me up and I fall helplessly in it's trap. I cry to you for help but you stand in the distance and watch. Yet Lord, in all my distress, I know that you are with me. You have loved and guided me all through my life. In all the turmoil, your presence keeps me sane. I call to you and you hear my prayer. How sweet you are. O God, hear me now when I cry to you. Give me order in my heart and mind, sort out my life, take control of my time and protect me from the snares of the evil one. You are a great God, who cares so much for those who are yours. I

praise you O God. I worship your holy name.

If you are able to write a psalm, why not send it to the editor for publication, and in doing so bring comfort and support to other people.

John Hughes

GROWING LEADERS

The Leadership Team, consisting of myself, John Hughes, Nancy, Suzan, Valerie McCalla, Sarah Wildblood, Sarah Robinson, Sally Cooke and Robert Rayner, are doing the Growing Leaders course as a pilot this year. It should help us to increase and brush up on our leadership and teamwork and then the course will be available to others to create a culture in the parish where everyone seeks to fulfil all they can be "in Christ" and encourage everyone to exercise their God-given ministry in the church and in the world.

The 3 areas are: call, character and competence, but also including community, credibility, courage and chemistry. We are looking for intercessors to back up this project and already have 3. The course involves each person having a mentor and there being the same number of intercessors as there are people on the course, i.e. 9 for this one, so please see me if interested.

The book "Growing Leaders" by James Lawrence can be ordered through Elaine and one of our mission partners, Ruth Hassall, works on growing younger leaders. The future of the church and indeed how much it is able to grow depends on enabling leaders to be developed.

Richard Hill

BAPTISM ANNIVERSARIES FOR SEPTEMBER

Felicity Somerville
Patrick Howell
Flora Blackman
Nia Sudworth
Owyn Sudworth
Isaac Cleaton
Jayden Barratt



MEMORIAL BOOK

In August we gave thanks for lives of:

John Stanley Edwards	4/8/1982
Rosaleen Whately	4/8/2003
William Boss	14/8/1983
Mary Elaine Grounds	25/8/1994
William Leslie Hall	26/8/1988
Patrick Corbet De'Ath	26/8/2004
Gwendoline Littleford	31/8/1985
George Smith	31/8/2003
Olive Wilsher	31/8/2000

FUN AND GAMES

WEBSITE UPDATE

JONAH WORDSEARCH

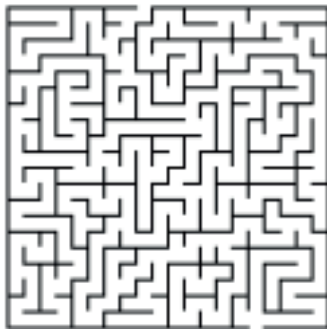
S H M P S X C D K G
 A S R T W I Y Q R K
 I I O D A Y P M P R
 L H T O L C K C A S
 O S S F L J P C H R
 R R N F O R G I V E
 S A N N W B O A T P
 W T A M E L A H W E
 R H B N D A S D Z N
 N I N E V E H R S T

BOAT
 JONAH
 REPENT
 SAILORS
 SWALLOWED
 WHALE

FORGIVE
 NINEVEH
 SACKCLOTH
 STORM
 TARSHISH

HELP SUZAN

Suzan has left her sermon notes at home. Can you help her find them?



Over the next few weeks I will be changing the way the What's On page and the events calendar work. Hopefully it will be easier to find out what is going on in our three churches both for regular attendees and visitors.

If you have any upcoming events don't forget to let me know so that I can put information about them up on the website and, if room, include them in Church Matters.

As always, any comments on the church website are appreciated.

Simon Cleaton

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Deadline:
 The deadline for submissions for the next edition of Church Matters is **Friday 18th September**. If possible, can all articles be be emailed to simon.cleaton@talk21.com preferably in the form of unformatted Word Documents. Alternatively, drop them in to the Parish Office as hard copies.

Note:
 The editor reserves the right to amend, curtail or expand, and to select appropriate headings and subsidiary headings, for all articles submitted for inclusion in Church Matters.

DATES OF INTEREST FOR SEPTEMBER

Date	Time	Event	Location
6th	2:30pm	Mothers Union Communion Service and enrolment	St. Laurence's
13th	2pm	Little Stretton Committee meeting	All Saints
14th	10am	Holy Communion	Ley Gardens (formerly Windsor Place)
14th	7:30pm	Henry Olunga	Shrewsbury Abbey
17th	3-8pm	Suzan Williams' open house	26 Churchill Road
19th	7pm	United Nations Association - Nuclear weapons and non-proliferation - Dr Price	Methodist Hall
25th		Back to Church Sunday	All Churches
29th	7:30pm	PCC Meeting	Parish Centre
30th	3pm	Evensong and Tea	St. Laurence's

Also on in September :

- Church Prayer meeting every Wednesday, 7:30pm Owen Room
- Holy Communion every Thursday, 11:30am at St. Laurence's
- Parents and Toddlers every Thursday, 10:00am, St. Laurence's
- Worship Choir every Wednesday, 7:30pm, Parish Centre

The weekly diary is viewable in Contact and please remember that details of all recurring events are also on the church website at www.strettonparish.org.uk.