

The land has yielded its harvest: God, our God has blessed us. Psalm 67:6

I have vivid childhood memories of harvest festivals at home in Herefordshire. The parish church was decorated with an abundance of flowers in autumnal colours alongside vast quantities of fruit and vegetables. I also remember the long procession of farmers and local people bringing with them various items to be placed before the altar: eggs, honey, a joint of meat, a fleece, garden produce, a sheaf of wheat and a loaf of bread. Such a festival reflects the intrinsic connection between God, humanity and the fruits of creation. Yet the gulf between the food we purchase and the methods of production is on the increase. The food we eat is not just a cause for thanksgiving, but raises questions of cost, genetic modification, agribusiness and international trade. October begins with our own harvest celebrations. It is a time when we praise God for the good things of creation. To participate in such acts of thanksgiving makes demands on us. It challenges prevailing attitudes to the environment, food production and our dependence upon, and even exploitation of, the labour of others. We are made mindful of the good and loving purposes of God and of our own calling to participation in bringing his kingdom to fruition. We realize the importance of even the smallest words and deeds in the context of God's love. We are drawn into the divine economy of gift: we give because we receive.

During the course of September, some of you will have attended or heard about *The Worlds We Live In*, a series of public dialogues at St. Paul's Cathedral. Over the course of four evenings Rowan Williams engaged with a variety of experts on the issues of public health, the environment, global economics and international governance. Such opportunities for discussion may not lead to a neat solution, but they do raise important questions about our individual and corporate responsibilities. As a Church we have to be prepared to confront such topics, drawing these concerns into the spiritual and ethical sphere of the Gospel.

Within the biblical tradition we find rich resources to help us to reflect upon justice, inclusion, sustainability and the use of resources. In the gospels, Jesus presents his bearers with a radical reordering of priorities and the use of resources. He tells them not to become preoccupied with what they are to eat, what they should wear, 'for life means more than food, and the body more than clothing' (*Luke 12*). Instead he tells them to set their hearts upon God's kingdom. John presents this challenge in a different way. He includes many references to spiritual nourishment and the implications of this for the Kingdom. Jesus is nourished by doing his father's will and completing his work (*John 4*), and he calls us to join with him in building a kingdom of justice and righteousness.

The festival of harvest highlights the reality of what we celebrate in the Eucharist week by week: the offering back to God the material gifts of creation and the

challenge of receiving them back transformed. To receive the gift of Christ in bread and wine enables us to begin to live life as a gift for others. We are to wrestle with the questions that arise from living in relation to God's love, exploring the way it changes us and challenges us. To grapple with that reality impacts upon our decision making and forces us to live differently in relation to the world we live in: locally, nationally and globally.

Elsewhere in *The Spire* you will find details about how to support the Upper Room in Hammersmith. By giving practical gifts we can contribute to vital work with the marginalised and vulnerable. A vision of the Kingdom of God is kept alive by small actions that witness to God's love and God's priorities. Such gestures require self-offering and humility on our part, grounded in praise of God. As Francis of Assisi wrote in *The Canticle of Brother Sun* 'Praise and Bless my Lord and give Him thanks, and serve Him with great humility'.

Julie Gittoes



**VCG invites you to: A Hannah Stanton Evening
at the Greenwood Centre from 6.30 pm on Thursday October 7th**

Introducing the Youth Café Bus Project. The Youth Café Bus will be there.

Panel: **Adrian Sumption**, Chair RCVYO, VCG Trustee
Dawn Christien, Project Manager, Youth Café Project
Mike Roe, Senior Youth Worker, Richmond Youth Service
Dele Ryder, Connections Manager, Richmond
Andy Elmore, Project Worker, Detached Drug Project

Timetable: 6.00 pm Welcome, drinks and nibbles
7.00 pm Presentation
7.45 - 8.15 pm Questions to panellists
8.15 - 9.00 pm Chance to mingle and talk with the panellist

For more details please contact Fiona Brennan 020 8941 3902 or speak to Margaret Taylor 8979 3961. There is no charge for attending, but donations will be invited.

**A wonderful opportunity to hear a Voice from the South
DEBT AND ITS IMPACT ON ZAMBIA
Thursday 28th October, 7.30 for 8.00 pm
St Mary's Church Hall, Church Street, Twickenham**

Charity is here as a guest of CAFOD and Jubilee Debt Campaign and is speaking at various venues across the country. We are very fortunate that she is coming to Twickenham, so do please go to hear what she has to say.

CROSSING THE DIVIDE

Pranish Rao and Mirza Khan have lived all their lives in the Old City of Hyderabad in India where the majority Muslim community lives cheek by jowl with their Hindu neighbours. The Old City has witnessed a series of Hindu/Muslim riots over the years, at great cost to human lives, and Pranish and Mirza have grown up harbouring mistrust and suspicion of each other's communities.

Through the Koshish Theatre group set up by Christian Aid's partner the Confederation of Voluntary Associations (COVA), Pranish and Mirza have crossed the divide and dispelled the mistrust and suspicion they lived with before. As members of Koshish they communicate messages of peace, respect and acceptance through the medium of street theatre. The friendship forged by Pranish and Mirza is testimony to the work for communal harmony that COVA is carrying out in the Old City of Hyderabad.

COVA focuses in particular on developing inter-faith relations and promoting communal harmony. Although Hyderabad has seen a great deal of communal violence over the years, it would be an over-simplification to attribute these tensions to purely religious reasons. Some of the contributing factors include the pressures of urbanisation, the lack of any real political will to change and the absence of a commitment to improve living and working conditions of the poor in the ever-mushrooming slums. This has become critical in the wake of 9/11 in India, with the rise of Hindu fundamentalism and violence. The shortage of livelihood opportunities has increased the inequalities between different communities and encouraged the exploitation of inter-communal divisions.

Through the activities of COVA, young people like Pranish and Mirza learn to respect each other's faiths, and realise that they are all human beings equal in the eyes of God. During the last holy month of Ramadan, Pranish fasted with Mirza in an act of solidarity and to pledge his friendship. Mirza says: 'We believe that messages of living in peace and harmony need to reach all parts of our community and beyond. People here are fundamentally happy to live together and we need to nurture this. Today's youth is tomorrow's future. Peace and harmony need to be internalised so that we can build a better future for us all'.

*Ramani Leathard, Communications Manager,
Asia, Middle East and Eastern Europe. See Christian Aid's website.*



SUNDAY NOVEMBER 7th in the Church Hall after the Family Service

MILK IN THE OIL CAN !

Many readers will remember that, 18 months ago, we managed to raise over £1K in the parish to send to Mpondasi school in Malawi. An ex-colleague of mine, Angela Mullens, who is working in Malindi as a missionary teacher with USPG at St Michael's Girls School, asked for our help to complete the building of a science laboratory for a local village secondary. The young, charismatic headteacher had worked wonders for the pupils and Angela felt that he deserved support when his promised funding failed to materialise.

Last summer I visited Angela in Malawi and was able to see the completed building for myself. Sadly the headteacher was no longer in post. Like so many in Malawi he had become too ill to continue teaching as a result of HIV (his wife had died a few months earlier, leaving him with 3 children) and had been moved to a desk job in the Ministry of Education in Lilongwe. His deputy had taken over and proudly showed us around the school site. He also was HIV positive and has since died.

Angela is now coming to end of her contract and looking forward to a change of scenery. In her latest email she gives a flavour of what life is like in the sixth poorest country in the world:

"Time is just flying. In 12 weeks time I will be on leave in England having completed over 3 years in Malawi. It's all change and directions north east of Malawi. From January 2005 I will be working in Tanzania in Tanga province at Hegongo Holy Cross Secondary School Private Bag Muheza. I am greatly looking forward to this new challenge and I am thrilled to be stationed in such a wonderful part of the world on the borders of Kenya and in close proximity to game parks and Kilimanjaro and in a region which has one of the highest degrees of biodiversity in the African continent as well as the wonders of Zanzibar and Dar es Salaam. Let's hope that I will have more time to explore than I have had in Malawi. Life has been almost non-stop since January. In April I again organised a 3-day rally for Sunday Schools at St Michael's. It was hard work but I feel quite fruitful though the worsening economic situation meant that children from two outstations were prevented from attending owing to lack of funds.

Things are becoming very expensive here and we are in some cases searching for food. Chickens are so small that they are pointless to buy. I'm told that the best chickens are being exported. One can never go to the shops and find things with certainty. There is no logic about what is missing, be it locally produced sugar or imported goods such as margarine or washing-up liquid. The 'cold' winter has sent the fish to the bottom of the lake so fish supplies too are causing serious food shortages which will become more acute by December.

A compensation of winter is being able to grow English peas - African peas are a bit strong - green beans and Chinese Cabbage. However it has

not been accomplished without difficulties. A perpetual visitor is a bachelor baboon, a nasty character! Snakes too have been visitors though in recent months they have not been seen. The monitor lizard - looks like a cut-off crocodile - is still around plus fruit bats. The colder weather has reduced the mosquito population but that will be back with a vengeance. With the lack of vegetation birds are more clearly visible - in particular cuckoos, sunbirds, hornbills and bulbuls.

I drive my vehicle around with fingers crossed that nothing serious will happen to it before I leave. However it is in reasonable condition. At least, it's better than a colleague's. He gave me a lift into Mangochi one day and en route said he would have to stop to check the wheel. It was a good job he did, for the wonky wheel was just about to sheer off being held on with one nut!

Safety is viewed so differently here. In fact, when I'm driving some Malawians and they direct me to go to various places, I have to consider carefully if it's safe. My view of safety and theirs is so different! Recently my worker said he would get some milk locally for tea for a meeting. There was a shortage of 'regular' milk. He arrived with a watery substance in an old diesel oil container. What could I do? I made him boil it and hoped for the best. Fortunately I don't take milk in tea and other people seem to be still alive!

In so many ways one has to help local people to understand new technology. My watchman who lives in quarters behind my house is quite adept now at changing light bulbs. He's never before had electricity. He also manages quite confidently to open and close the vehicle door and sits with pride as we drive off. He's just waiting for September 17th when he will be fitted with false teeth. These will be important to him as he is desperate to eat green maize and groundnuts again!

The elections held on May 20th were an example of how democracy can go wrong. Sadly for Malawi patterns seen in other African countries have been repeated here. The primary election in the village caused a bit of excitement when tear gas was used. The students of St Michael's panicked when they heard the shots fired on the field next to the school and they ran up my drive to hide behind my vehicle. An 'azungu' (foreigner) has some uses!

I now have exam papers to mark as term has ended. Holiday teaching starts on August 2nd with classes of 60+ ".

Postscript - I have since had some good news from Angela. The ex-head of Mpondasi school attended a retreat recently in Malindi with some of his former pupils. He is now receiving antiviral drugs and seems to be responding well.

Lesley Mortimer

We are expecting Angela to visit us at St James to preach about her work.

REPORT OF PCC MEETING 2 SEPTEMBER 2004

Arrangements for the Harvest Festival on 3 October were discussed and agreed. (The arrangements, services and our giving to the project "The Upper Room" are given in more detail on page 7 of this magazine).

The progress of the "Opening Our Doors" project was reported by the vicar. Problems had occurred which required our architect and the builders to reach an agreement. This would entail no extra cost to the parish, and although the delay was disappointing, the prospect of the new development and all that it would enable us to do was exciting.

Paul Peterken, the Parish Treasurer, reported on the present state of our accounts, our expected expenditure, and the deanery suggestion for the increase in our Common Fund contribution. We were asked to increase our 2004 Common Fund giving by 7% next year. This would make our 2005 contribution £60,000. In this context members of the Committee commented on the very helpful talk given by Mary Spredbury, the Diocesan Stewardship Adviser, at the last PCC meeting. There had been a serious and effective effort to reduce the diocesan expenditure; the PCC willingly agreed to help balance the books by increasing our Common Fund contribution by the suggested amount.

The previously formulated parish Mission Action Plan (MAP) 2004 - 2007 was discussed at some length. The plan is under three main headings: "Open for All", "Growing in Faith" and "Engaging with the World". Several specific activities had been suggested under each heading; some were already operating, some were awaiting the completion of "Opening Our Doors". It was hoped that all parishioners would become familiar with our MAP and its detail. It was up to PCC members to give it as much publicity as possible; more printed information would be made available for everyone to use.

The south aisle and chancel east windows were in urgent need of repair. Delay will result in further damage. A quotation had been received from a highly recommended church window renovator, Chapel Studios. Our Building Contingency fund can cover the cost, and subject to a faculty being granted the PCC agreed that the work should be started as soon as possible.

THE PEACE OF THE LORD

Peace, O you are elusive! I seek you everywhere but you run from me so fast that I am breathless in the chase. Why do you hide from me? Is it that I try too hard to find you and give up in despair? Sometimes I catch a glimpse of you in a loving face or hear you in a kind word - but where is your secret? I see Mary sitting in loving attentiveness at our Lord's feet and feel her peace. Martha, like me, fussing, misses the treasure. It is in love and obedience you are found - found as never before - the jewel in the crown. Your love for me is like the moonlight, lighting my path and dusting away the cobwebs of my heart. You tell me to love and obey. I try and find your peace invading every part of me until in silence I fall humbly at your feet.

Janet Jeffries

HARVEST FESTIVAL - SUNDAY 3 OCTOBER

Do join us at our Harvest Festival Services at 8 am and 11 am
(Please note the later time of the second service)

St James is collecting essential items for the **Upper Room** in north Hammersmith, a charity that provides a broad range of services for the homeless, vulnerable and socially disadvantaged of West London.

Please give generously, bringing your gift to church on Sunday 3 October (or before mid-October).

Foods with a past sell-by-date are not accepted. The charity prefers tinned food with at least 12 months remaining for consumption.

Tinned Foods: corned and minced beef, chicken, sausages,
 Salmon, pilchards and sardines
 tomatoes, peas, carrots, chick peas, potatoes, sweet corn
 soups of any kind
 fruit, custard

Dry Goods: sugar
 lentils and other pulses
 stock cubes

Jars: jams, marmalade, honey
 tomato ketchup, brown sauce
 pasta, pesto sauces

Toiletries: toothbrushes, toothpaste
 disposable razors
 soap, shampoo (travel size)
 stick deodorants
 body lotions

Clothing: new socks, trainers, men's and women's underpants

The Upper Room is run by a dedicated staff team and a loyal group of volunteers. It is always looking for new volunteers to help run the meal sessions, drive or navigate a delivery van, help with mailings or mentoring projects with young people or adults. Volunteers who can come regularly once a week or once a fortnight are especially welcome, but a regular commitment of as little as four hours a month is a big help. Call 020 8740 5688 if you can offer your time and energy.



COFFEE MORNING

Saturday 30 October at Elleray Hall Teddington
10 am - 12 noon
Christmas cards, calendars etc. Gifts, Christmas puddings,
local prints, books etc.
FREE coffee before 11 am. All welcome.

PILGRIMAGE

following St Ethelburga with WATCH (London)

on Saturday 9th October

Gather in the crypt of St Paul's Cathedral between 10.30 and 11.00 am

Walk through the historic heart of the City to St Ethelburga's, Bishopgate,
and then by train to Barking Abbey
where St Ethelburga was Abbess of a Double Monastery of men and women.

Lunch, visit the Abbey site. Pilgrimage Eucharist with Chelmsford WATCH.

Train back to Fenchurch Street Station, for visit, tea and Evensong
at All Hallows, Barking by the Tower. Depart 5.30 pm.

Details: Mary Johnston, Women And The Church (London). Tel: 020 8995 6427

ANOTHER RESPONSE TO **WHAT NEXT?** IN THE AUGUST SPIRE

May I add to Janet Jeffries' congratulations (September) to the five graduates, not just on their academic achievements, but their ability to write so disarmingly and openly about their feelings on going through an exciting rite of passage.

Through their eyes we experienced their transformation from apprehensive school leavers, fearful of the unknown, to the emergence of five rounded and mature individuals. We learnt of the anxieties in finding new friends and coping with the pressures of study, finances and living with others. A common theme was their sense of confidence and an open-minded optimism about the future; also their ability to mourn the passing of a time shared, free of responsibility and of having to make choices. How wonderful that they now have so much choice particularly in the opportunities that a 'gap' year can give. When I finished college we all went straight into the jobs expected of us. We were cushioned by grants, strict rules and parental expectations which left us pretty immature and far less confident by today's standards.

Thanks to you all for transforming the August (usually a dull month) Spire and please can we have next chapter in a year's time?

Marion Dewey



Congratulations to David and Jennifer Lloyd, who celebrated their Golden Wedding in September. Our warmest good wishes to the family and our prayers for Jennifer who is at present resting at home. It was good to welcome Rachele back in the church, visiting us from Saffron Walden.

Congratulations to Karen and Chris Saul on the birth of their daughter Amelia Grace.

Congratulations to Hall Severn, cruising past his four-score years under full sail.

All good wishes to Roma Bridges, now home again, convalescing after her recent accident.

We were sorry to hear that Romily Taylor had been in hospital with a suspected appendix problem and wish him a speedy recovery.

Our congratulations to all young examinees whatever their results. Exam times are not the easiest.

3rd HAMPTON HILL BROWNIES

For about twenty years Lesley Brough has brought to Brownies excitement, happiness and ideals for many hundreds of children in Hampton Hill. It has been a fulfilling and satisfying time, both for her and for 'her girls' and we would all like this tradition to continue. Can you do this? Do you know a friend to help you? - Lesley would tell you what pleasure and fulfilment being a Brownie Leader would bring! Please think hard and long about Lesley's cry for help. She writes:

"Running a Brownie Pack whilst being rewarding is considerably time consuming - if you are doing so on your own. However, with two or three of you, each responsible for a different aspect, it is possible. Vicky will continue for the next year but then will go on to help with Guides - so this leaves Brownies in a desperate situation. I was planning to take a back seat from Christmas but under the circumstances will help Vicky at least until the end of next school year. But then I WILL be stepping down and 3rd Hampton Hill Brownies WILL close - is this what you want after all these years? Don't you want your daughters to benefit from this wonderful opportunity? Couldn't you be part of a team to help run Brownies?

I have made several pleas through the Spire and I know you are not reading anything new - but have you thought about how I feel after giving up my time week in, week out, for nearly twenty years? It is so soul destroying for me to think that after all I have done there is NO ONE who is prepared to do the same, to continue all that is good about Guiding in Hampton Hill. This could be a wonderful opportunity for you!"

FROM THE AUGUST REGISTERS

BAPTISMS

- 8 Arthur Grant Kittelsen-Clifford, Hampton Hill
Archie Robin Sargent-Cook, Hampton Hill
15 Jonty James White, Teddington
Sian Constance Enmily Lester, Berkshire
22 Maximus Joseph Hanson, Teddington
29 Emma Francesca Bagge, Hampton Hill
Joseph Henry O'Leary, Hampton Hill

WEDDINGS

- 6 Benjamin Paul Gidlow and Hannah Louise Bardrick
7 Neil Richard Stephen Price and Alison Anne Burns
14 Paul White and Lauren Sandra Wall
22 Richard Henry Hanson and Mea Agostino
28 Stephen John Robert Lewis and Amanda Louise Bryant

FUNERALS

- 3 Doris Cooper, Surbiton 98
10 Vera Harvey, Shepherd's Bush 62
11 John Stroud, Teddington 87
12 Bernard North, Hampton Hill 96
19 Ella Gallagher, Hampton Hill 93
20 Gertrude Seal, Hampton Hill 86
27 Linda Costa, Hounslow 51

INTERMENT OF ASHES

- 27 July Arnold Whittles, Teddington 81

DATES TO NOTE FOR OCTOBER

- 2 Roving Supper
3 **Harvest Festival, 8.00 am and 11.00 am**
4 Francis of Assisi, founder of the Friars Minor
5 William Tyndale, translator and martyr, 1536
10 **18th Sunday after Trinity**
11 Ethelburga, Abbess of Barking 675
12 Elizabeth Fry, prison reformer, 1845
13 Edward the Confessor, King of England, 1066
15 Teresa of Avila, teacher, 1582
16 Nicholas Ridley, Bishop of London and martyr, 1555
17 **St Luke the Evangelist, 19th Sunday after Trinity**
24 **Last Sunday after Trinity**
26 Alfred the Great, King of West Saxons, 899
28 Simon and Jude, apostles
29 James Hannington, bishop and martyr in Uganda, 1885
31 **All Saints Sunday**