

The Spire

AUG / SEP 2010

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for life**
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Holiday on ice

One couple's love affair with France

The Spire

St James's Church
Registered Charity No 1129286

This Spire is produced nine times a year on behalf of the PCC of St James's Church.

We make no charge for this magazine but we hope that you will contribute towards the production costs, enabling us to expand our important outreach across the parish.

If you are a regular reader please consider making an annual donation. Cheques should be made payable to 'The PCC of St James' and sent to Spire Appeal c/o the Parish Office.

Thank you.

GET IN TOUCH

STORIES, FEATURES

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AROUND THE SPIRE

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NEXT ISSUE/COPY DEADLINE

The October issue is published on Sun 26 Sep. All copy must be with us by **Mon 6 September**.

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When you have finished with this magazine please recycle it.

WELCOME

Aug / Sep 2010



We are now in the middle of the summer holidays and at last we have had some real summer weather — long may it last for everyone on holiday over the next couple of months.

This edition has a French flavour to it, with a centrespread by **Val and Mike Butterfield** on their life in Les Gets. Elsewhere, we received some sad news about a real character from Hampton Hill's past. The full story is on Page 4. I am sure the many people who have lived in Hampton Hill over the years, as well as lots of children who are now grown up, will remember him, especially his appearances at church on Palm Sunday.

A big **thank you** to all those who have responded to our *Spire* Appeal. So far we have doubled last year's figure which is excellent in these difficult financial times and gives the committee encouragement that *The Spire* is being well-received. We hope you enjoy this **full colour** double issue.

Best wishes

Janet

Janet Nunn, Editor

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For the latest news: www.stjames-hamptonhill.org.uk

Services at St James's Church

Sundays

- 8am Holy Communion
- 9.30am Parish Communion

AUGUST

- 1 August - 9th Sunday after Trinity**
Ecclesiastes 1. 2. 12-14; 2.18-23
Colossians 3.1-11
Luke 12.13-21

8 August - 10th Sunday after Trinity

- Genesis 15.1-6
- Hebrews 11.1-3, 8-16
- Luke 12.32-40

15 August - 11th Sunday after Trinity Blessed Virgin Mary

- Isaiah 61.10-end
- Galatians 4.4-7
- Luke 1.46-55

22 August - 12th Sunday after Trinity

- Isaiah 58.9b-end
- Hebrews 12.18-end
- Luke 13.10-17

29 August - 13th Sunday after Trinity

- Proverbs 25.6-7
- Hebrews 13.1-8, 15-16
- Luke 14.1, 7-14

SEPTEMBER

5 September - 14th Sunday after Trinity

- Deuteronomy 30.15-end
- Philemon 1-21
- Luke 14.25-33

12 September - 15th Sunday after Trinity

- Exodus 32.7-14
- 1 Timothy 1.12-17
- Luke 15.1-10

19 September - 16th Sunday after Trinity

- Amos 8.4-7
- 1 Timothy 2.1-7
- Luke 16.1-13

26 September - 17th Sunday after Trinity

- Amos 6.1a, 4-7
- 1 Timothy 6.6-19
- Luke 16.19-end

1st Sunday in month

(not during Aug and Sep)
9.30am All-age Communion

Mondays-Fridays (not Tuesdays)

9.15am Morning Prayer

Tuesdays

9.30am Holy Communion

1st Wednesday in month

4 August / 1 September
7am Commuter Communion

1st Thursday in month

5 August / 2 September
2pm Holy Communion

OUR CLERGY



➔ VICAR

Revd Peter Vannozi

Peter was born in Hanwell in 1962, but owes his surname to his Italian great-grandfather who came from

Florence to the UK in the late 19th century.

☎ 020 8979 2069

✉ vicar@stjames-hamptonhill.org.uk

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➔ CURATE

Revd Debbie Oades

Debbie was born in Hull in 1963, ordained in 2006 and is a self-supporting minister.

☎ 01784 260498

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➔ BAPTISM AND WEDDING ENQUIRIES

These should be made in person in church on a Saturday morning from 10-10.30am.

PARISH OFFICE



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➔ CONTACTS

We have room only for selected contacts this issue. The full list is available online and will return in the October issue of *The Spire*.

THE LEADER COLUMN

THINK AFRESH ABOUT YOUR 'GIVING' WITH THIS SPIRITUAL FOOD FOR THOUGHT

For the common good



The state of the economy is at the forefront of many minds at this time. The Chancellor of the Exchequer has presented his emergency budget. Politicians agree that there will be painful results, but disagree about who will be worst affected. None of us is insulated from the current, tough economic conditions. We might wish to be protected from them, but we are not — and the 'we' includes the Church. It certainly applies to St. James's Church. St. James's relies entirely on the generosity of those who see it as their church together with income from the hire of the hall.

On Sunday 20 June we welcomed the **Revd. Mary Spredbury** to preach at the Parish Communion. Mary is the Finance Adviser for the churches in the care of the Bishop of Kensington, and in central London for churches in the Charing Cross Archdeaconry, predominantly the City of Westminster. Mary came to encourage St. James's Church members to consider their financial giving to their church. We are fortunate to have many generous supporters — and that includes all who have so far responded to the appeal to contribute to the cost of producing this magazine, for which many thanks. I reproduce below part of Mary's sermon — it offers practical, but spiritual, food for thought.

So often our giving gets stuck in a rut. We carry on giving what we've always given. When someone reminds us to think about it, we put it up; maybe by a few pounds. We don't often sit and really think afresh about our giving — we just start from where we are and put it up a bit. I want to encourage you to think afresh about your giving — to think both about what you have received and why you are giving.

Stewardship is not about how much money I give to the church or what jobs I do in church — stewardship is about how I live my life for God. It's about what I do with the whole of my time, the whole of my gifts and skills, the whole of my money — in fact the whole of my life.

Jesus made it very clear that our attitude to money and possessions was closely linked to our response to God, our commitment to Christ, our love of our neighbour and our spiritual state. He said: 'Where your treasure is there will your heart be also.' I don't think he was just referring to money — he was talking about what we value.



Peter Vannozzi

Our giving is a response to the love God has for each one of us and for his amazing generosity towards us. We are called to give out of what we have received in the knowledge that, as we sometimes say at Communion: 'All things come from you, and of your own do we give you.'

Regular giving is essential if the church is to budget and manage its resources properly. Regular giving is a sign of our commitment to God and his work here at St James's. The Common Fund is, I imagine, one of your largest items of expenditure, as in most churches. This is the amount you contribute towards mission and ministry in the Diocese of London through a common pot of money used primarily to pay for parish clergy and their housing.

Here at St James's you contribute to the Common Fund an amount in excess of your own costs and for that I and many others are truly grateful. This year it costs about £64,000 for a parish to have one clergy person and one house, together with their share of central costs.

For many parishes in the poorer parts of London, particularly the Stepney area which includes the boroughs of Hackney and Tower Hamlets — some of the most deprived boroughs in the country — it is simply impossible for them to come up with anything like this amount.

The Bishop of London and the diocesan senior staff are committed to the church remaining present in these difficult areas. The church is often a beacon of hope and a beacon of help in the form of the many community projects they are engaged in, from groups for carers and toddlers, to meals and social activities for the elderly and isolated, to shelter and assistance to the homeless.

Your generous giving to the Common Fund enables mission and ministry to take place in these areas, so thank you very much. Finally please think and pray about how much you are able to give to the mission and ministry here at St James's — please make the decision that is right for you so that God's work here in this place will continue to flourish as you grow closer to God.

The full text of Mary's sermon is on our [website](#). I do hope that all who see St. James's as their church will pray, reflect and respond, as they are able. With my thanks for your support.

IN THOUGHT AND PRAYER

Jesus spoke a great deal about money and its place. Here he comments very publicly on what he sees a particular woman doing:



Jesus sat down opposite the treasury, and watched the crowd putting money into the treasury. Many rich people put in large sums. A poor widow came and put in two small copper coins, which are worth a penny. Then he called his disciples and said to them, 'Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put in more than all those who are contributing to the treasury. For all of them have contributed out of their abundance; but she out of her poverty has put in everything she had, all she had to live on.'

Luke 12.41-44

Jesus is pointing out the sincerity and sacrifice involved in what the widow does. Here are some prayers to use as part of reflecting on our personal use of money.

About our stewardship

Lord Jesus Christ, you have taught us that we cannot love both God and money, and that all our possessions are a trust from you: teach us to be faithful stewards of our time, our talents, and our money, that we may help others extend your kingdom; for your name's sake. Amen.

About our possessions

O Lord, you have told us not to store up possessions for ourselves on earth: help us to understand that everything we possess is a gift from you - which you have given us to enjoy, but not to cling to. So help us to see the true value of things that we may be free to use them in the way that you want; for your name's sake. Amen.

A prayer of offering at Holy Communion based on the prayer of King David in 2 Chronicles 29.11 as gifts were offered by the people of Israel to build the Temple in Jerusalem. It is now often used when gifts are brought to the altar - bread, wine and money.

Yours, Lord, is the greatness, the power, the glory, the splendour and the majesty; for everything in heaven and on earth is yours. All things come from you, and of your own do we give you.

SYNOD AND WOMEN BISHOPS; YOUR HOLIDAYS

Farewell to Dudley, our four-legged friend

DUDLEY the donkey, formerly resident in Hampton Hill, has died in France two days short of his 35th birthday, a huge loss to his owners, Robin and Jo Parkin and their family.



Many will remember Dudley, who lived in Park Road next to St. James's churchyard, before emigrating with his family to rural south-west France, where he spent the last 13 years of his life in idyllic surroundings.

He figured prominently in Hampton Hill life for 20 years. Passing schoolchildren and those attending services at St. James's would offer the friendly ass carrots and Polo mints, all gratefully received over the garden fence.

When bored, Dudley would tow Robin to one of the local hosteleries, where he would join in the conversation and savour a bag of chips. He was recognised and welcomed by all on his parish ambles. Herds of deer would trail him round Bushy Park in puzzled fascination.

The highlight of his year was leading the Christmas parade, lapping up the applause. Only once did he nearly disgrace himself, thrusting his head into the Mayor of Richmond's car and sampling the chain of office of the lady mayoress who displayed a calm composure fitting her position. He stood outside St. James's Church every Palm Sunday, a palm cross in his harness, but not even a bribe of Polo mints would tempt him to lead the procession actually into the church.

In his last years, Dudley was afflicted by blindness, but a strong sense of smell and hearing enabled him to pick his way through the chickens, ducks, cats and dogs who shared his life. He also never lost his voice and his bray could be heard and recognised instantly by his French friends and English family. His memory will live on, on both sides of the Channel.



Electric hotplates and ovens take a long time to cool, so why not turn them off earlier so your food finishes cooking for free?

ECO TIP

Defection threat as women bishops approved

THE Church of England's ruling synod has approved the creation of women bishops despite threats by some traditionalists to break away.



Opponents at the meeting in York had sought exemptions from serving under women bishops and guaranteed access to a male alternative. These were rejected. Instead it will be up to the women to decide the identity of any bishop coming into their dioceses. They could also dictate the functions they carry out, but would have to consult a code of practice guiding them in their dealings with traditionalists.

Some 70 opponents have already met to discuss defecting to Rome. The Church's drafting group is now likely to draw up legislation which will bring in women bishops by 2014 at the earliest.

HOLIDAY If you are going on holiday to somewhere interesting and would like to write about it, our editor wants to hear from you! Don't forget to take your camera (digital photos only please).

REGISTERS FOR JUNE

Baptisms

20 Darcey Rose Kitty Owen, Hampton

27 Jemma Jasmine Slater, Hampton

Wedding Thanksgiving

12 Monique and Romilly Taylor

Funeral

22 Maisie Edith Honey, 85, Hampton Hill

Wish you were here...

Eighteen years ago **Mike and Val Butterfield** bought a ski apartment in the French Alps and so began their love affair with the area and its changing seasons

The start

Les Gets! 'Where's that?' we were asked. Oh, it's a village in the French Alps, not far from the Swiss border. It was December 1992 and we'd just bought a small ski apartment in Les Gets in the Haute Savoie.

At the time, none of our friends had heard of Les Gets. We only knew it because we had skied there and around the magnificent ski area connected to it. We were both working full time, but two years later had managed to get early retirement.

So there we were, able to make a dream come true, and spend our first ski season in the mountains.



Champagne on ice (from left): Beth, Pippa, Val, Mike, Laurie and David mark a double celebration

The village

Les Gets is a very picturesque mountain village with fabulous views of Mont Blanc. It lies just over an hour's drive east of Geneva. There are roughly 1000 local inhabitants, called Getois. In the ski season the numbers swell to tens of thousands and there are many visitors in the summer, too.

Three cheeses are made locally: Tomme de Savoie, Reblochon and Abondance. On Wednesday mornings, you can watch them being made. All the restaurants serve the renowned Savoyard dishes, such as Tartiflette (made from onion, potato, small pieces of bacon and Reblochon cheese) and Raclette (melted cheese served with potatoes in their skins and a variety of sliced meats).

In the village you can buy delicious bread and meat from the bakers and butchers. There are two small supermarkets, many sports and tourist shops, and a variety of cafes where you can sit out, enjoy the spectacular views and watch the passers-by. Unfortunately, there are no greengrocers' shops but Thursday is market day and you can get a wonderful range of fruit and vegetables there as well as flowers, cheese, meat, fish, clothes, toys and crockery.

In the old village stands the tall, grand Notre Dame des Gets church with its beautiful organ, glorious stained-glass windows and huge Egyptian tapestry.

The people

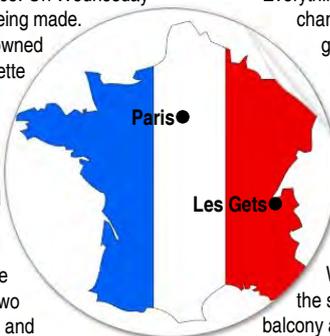
Skiing is by far the biggest earner for Les Gets. The Getois work incredibly hard in the ski season which lasts from December to April. When the season is

over, there is the big clear-up: the roads have to be made good, the buildings repaired and decorated, the skis, snowboards and boots cleaned and serviced, the lifts and cable cars checked, and so on.

Everything has to be prepared for the changeover to summer. It's hard to get to know the locals because they're either working from morning till night or they're repairing everything and going on their own holiday.

Over the years, we've got to know quite a few and here's something about just two of them.

When we were in Les Gets in the summer, someone on the balcony above leaned over and shouted 'cou, cou' twice. We looked up and our neighbours Roger and Nicole Beaumier introduced themselves.



A logging competition held near our apartment



Sara and Chris with Mont Blanc behind them

We then invited them to the 'Grand Opening of the Ski Locker' which Mike had equipped with shelves and hooks. We prepared nibbles and champagne and then tied a ribbon across the locker. Madame Beaumier was asked to cut the ribbon and declare the locker 'open'. Subsequently, we became great friends, visiting them for aperitifs and then they would come to us (never leaving till midnight!). We had many laughs, they helped us with our French and taught us many idioms.

The second person is a restaurateur, Jean Dura. In our first ski season in Les Gets we were in one of our favourite restaurants and said we planned to cycle from England to Les Gets the following summer. Jean Dura, said: 'If you cycle out, I'll give you a free meal.' So, having cycled the 1000 miles or so to Les Gets, using all the small roads, we arrived at the restaurant and said to Jean: 'We've cycled from England, where's our free meal?'

The restaurant was full, apart from two places saved for us. Jean gave a little speech about us and our trip, and then asked everyone to drink to us. Later, he sent photos and an article about us entitled '1600km for a meal' to the Portes de Soleil journal. He then invited us back and presented us with a framed picture of the article.

What do we do there?

People often wonder what we do in Les Gets. Our life there is very full. There are 400 miles of interconnected ski piste in the Portes de Soleil and much, much more than that of skiable off-piste, spread over eight French and four Swiss ski resorts. We've been in the area for 15 seasons now and know it very well. Visitors frequently ask us to take them on the Portes de Soleil tour, which can mean skiing in and out of eight of those villages in a day.

Until recently we broadcast the weather forecast over local radio to English-speaking people in the area. We'd rush into nearby Morzine at 7.45am, translate and record the forecast, add a few welcome messages or birthday greetings to people who'd just arrived, then get back home just in time to hear ourselves on the radio.

We've made many friends through skiing, some of whom live in France and many of whom come out on holiday. All our own family adore Les Gets and are frequent visitors. In 2008, to celebrate Mike's 70th birthday, and our daughter Sara's engagement to Chris, our daughter Pippa, together with her partner David, and children Beth and Laurie went up one of the nearby mountains and buried a bottle of champagne.

We were then taken up to find the treasure. The little twig marking the spot where the champagne was buried had unfortunately disappeared so finding

it took a lot of digging in the snow. Eventually there it was, and all of us except Laurie raised our glasses, saying 'To Mike, Sara and Chris.' Laurie said: 'Can I raise a green frog, instead?'

There are many people from the Hampton Hill area who ski regularly in Les Gets, including Charles and Susannah Nettleton and family, Coryn and Ian Robinson, and a group from Hampton Pool.

In the summer, we enjoy mountain biking and walking. We also helped at the World Mountain Bike Championships in 2004 and para-glided from the mountain opposite our apartment, over the trees, down into our village.

The Tour de France frequently comes through Les Gets or near it and every two years there's a very picturesque and colourful festival in Les Gets called 'Le Festival de la Musique Mécanique' during which men and women in traditional costume and with a huge variety of barrel organs and musical instruments line the little streets, playing and singing.

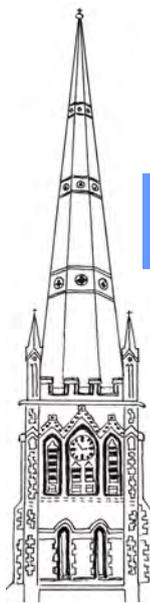
Why do we spend half the year in Les Gets?

Les Gets for us is fun, challenging, beautiful, a spiritual experience. We are moved by the silence of the snow, by the glorious flowers, by the magnificence and ever-changing nature of the mountains and cloud structures, by the snowflakes - each one of them stunningly beautiful and yet, incredibly, each one different.

We feel very privileged.



Bumping into the Nettletons in Les Gets



AROUND THE SPIRE

NEWS FROM HAMPTON HILL AND BEYOND

Our best wishes to five of our congregation

- We have news of five long-standing members of our congregation.
- **Betty Stewart** has moved to a Christian care home. Her new address is Shottermill House, Liphook Road, Haslemere, Surrey GU27 1NX. We understand she is settling in well and wish her every happiness in her new surroundings.
- **Vera Bannister** has moved from Hampton and is now in Sunbury Nursing Home where she can receive more care.
- **Margaret Leatherdale** has had a spell in Kingston Hospital and is now in respite care.
- Now that she is less mobile, we miss seeing **Jean Western** in church and send her out love.
- We are glad to hear that **Mary Metcalfe's** operation has been successful and hope to she will be able to return to church soon. We send our good wishes to them all.

St. James's Church was represented at **Hampton and Hampton Hill Carnival** for the first time this year, with an Adopt-a-Teddy stall. Lots of soft toys were kindly donated for prizes. We made a profit of £141 for church funds.



Carlisle and Hampton Hill Juniors perform

Congratulations to **Susannah Nettleton** and **Debbie Nunn** for helping **Carlisle School** to achieve a *Sing Up Silver Award* for putting singing at the heart of the school. Headteacher Claire McCann praised them for their fantastic work and enthusiasm and for motivating the children and staff. The school is now working towards the Gold Award.



Susannah also organised a **Song and Dance Extravaganza** in church at the end of June, involving both **Carlisle School** and **Hampton Hill Junior School**. This included ballet, contemporary dance, and maypole, ballroom and Scottish country dancing and renditions from *Bugsy Malone* and *Starlight Express*.





What is It?

- How observant are you? The pictures below show small parts of things in the church, some taken at an odd angle. What are they and where can you see them? The answers will appear in the October Spire.



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Revelations

A view of the wider world



Crime and Punishment

It is very heartening when a senior politician in a position of authority proposes a strategy which combines common sense, respect for human dignity – and to cap it all, money saving. At the end of June the justice secretary, Kenneth Clarke, made a speech to the Centre for Crime and Justice Studies in which he expressed his concern at the near doubling of the prison population from about 44,600 in 1993 to about 85,000 today, with a forecast of greater numbers to come. Clarke proposes reform as well as punishment, in particular remedial work rather than prison for minor offences. Though he risks the accusation of being soft on crime, he is a powerful advocate for a good cause.

Oil In Troubled Waters

On the 20 April, BP's Deepwater Horizon rig in the Gulf of Mexico suffered an explosion killing 11 workers, later rupturing the oil-pipe close to the 1,500m deep seabed. A jet of high-pressure crude oil began flowing uncontrollably from the pipe into the sea. It was initially thought to be 5,000 gallons per day, but this was an under-estimate. The disaster raises many problems beyond even the quite enormous ecological damage and engineering difficulties already encountered. It is hoped that the flow can be stopped in August, and the formidable task of ecological repair can start seriously. The glib phrase: 'lessons have been learnt' is almost an insult to the people and creatures whose lives have been taken or ruined by this disaster. In 1977 Red Adair, an almost uniquely skilled and experienced oil-well trouble-shooter, successfully capped a well after a blowout in the Ecofisk area of the North Sea. His subsequent safety recommendations have never been fully implemented anywhere. It is cheaper to take the risk – until the same lesson has to be learnt again.

Leadership in Aid

In one area we can truthfully say that the UK is one of the world leaders. We have met our promises of aid to sub-Saharan Africa, which were made at the Gleneagles Conference in 2005 by the eight nations concerned. The increase of 93% from a base of \$3.7bn over the five years compares well in its amount and increment with the record of all the other G8 countries, though perhaps all countries could do more.

Your Pie in the Sky

Food miles might be ecologically more acceptable if the ideas being developed by Boeing and Lockheed Martin for giant cargo-carrying airships are successful. They plan helium-filled airships capable of carrying twice the load of a cargo plane at a speed of about 125kph and cutting emissions by 90%. They would not require runways, just a mooring mast. Another interesting development is the solar-powered aircraft. A prototype of a plane which will store sufficient electricity by day to keep its motors running at night is due to be tested. One objective is a non-stop round-the-world flight. Perhaps we shall eventually see a combination of these two developments. Quietly and majestically over our gardens a giant sky-turtle will float, its carapace glistening with solar-cells. Perhaps, as its back-up bio-diesels give a little boost to the electrical system, we will savour the aroma of re-cycled chip-fat.

Dick Wilde

St James's Theatre Club

- Tuesday 10 August, 7.45pm, *The Country Girl* Richmond Theatre, The Green TW9 1QJ
- Martin Shaw and Jenny Seagrove take on the roles played by Bing Crosby and Grace Kelly in the Hollywood blockbuster. Our tickets £18 (saving £10)
- There are also discounted tickets available for:
- Tuesday 14 September *Morecambe* — a celebration of the extraordinary life of Britain's best loved comic Eric Morecambe. Our tickets £14 (saving £10)
- Tuesday 12 October *Crazy For You* — Gershwin's musical comedy. Our tickets £16.50 (saving £10)
- Tuesday 2 November *Spend Spend Spend!* — winner of 2009 TMA Awards for Best Musical, £16 (saving £10)
- To join us, please add your name to the lists on the church notice board or telephone Ria Beaumont 020 8943 4336. Transport can be arranged.

Initiatives of Change Greencoat Forum

- *God Doesn't Do Waste*. Tuesday 21 September, from 7.15-9pm, 24 Greencoat Place, London SW1P 1RD.
- Revd Dave Bookless, is from A Rocha — Portuguese for The Rock — an international Christian nature conservation organisation which operates in 18 countries. The title of his talk is taken from his latest book. It refers to ecological waste, but also the accumulation of life's experiences and how we as individuals handle them. There will be refreshments from 6.30pm.
- The talk is free, with a collection for expenses. Places are limited; to book telephone 020 7798 6000.

St James's visit to St Paul's Cathedral

- Saturday 2 October, from 2-6pm, St Paul's Churchyard, London EC4M 8AD
- Our trip to St Paul's follows a very enjoyable visit last year to Westminster Abbey. The visit is at the invitation of the Canon Pastor, Right Revd Michael Colclough. There will be a guided tour, tea and Evensong.
- We need to meet at West Door of the cathedral at 1.45pm. If you would like to come please add your name to the list on the board in church or contact the Parish Office (details are on page two).



Harvest Festival / Car-free Sunday

Sunday 3 October, from 11am, St James's Church

The All-Age Communion, with a full parade by our uniformed groups, will be held at 11am, followed by a bring-and-share lunch served in the hall. Wine and beer will also be available by donation.



This year we will be combining this with Car-free Sunday, a chance for us to spend one carefully prepared day without cars if we possibly can. We should reflect on the lessons of this experience and on what might be done next to build on these.

We will collect essential items for the Upper Room - a community charity that helps the socially disadvantaged in west London. Please bring toiletries and non-perishable food items to the Harvest Festival service, or before mid-October, making sure they are well within their 'best by' date. A flyer of suggested items will be in church in September.

All money/cheques donated on 3 October will go to the USPG Appeal for the Diocese of South West Tanganyika, a diocese close to our hearts whose bishop, John Simalenga, visited St James's in February. A super DVD explains far better than words what our giving will help to enable; copies will be available in August and September.

Mass Lobby of Parliament

Wednesday 20 October, 11am-4pm, The Houses of Parliament, London SW1A 0AA

A coalition of campaign groups, including Christian Aid, will lobby MPs about the importance of tackling world poverty, with particular reference to how climate change affects the poorest in the world. For more information telephone Catherine Gash on 020 8973 0563. Those travelling on the London Underground can use the District, Circle or Jubilee lines to get to Westminster station.



Cantanti Camerati Autumn Concert

Saturday 31 October, 7.30pm, Hampton Hill Playhouse, 90 High Street, Hampton Hill TW12 1NY

Musical director Geoffrey Bowyer conducts. Tickets from Albert's Music Shop, Twickenham, tel 020 8898 8020, or on the door.

Vicar's View



YOUR VOICE

WHY I CHOSE THE 'MIDDLE WAY' REVD ANTONY BALL

Together in faith...



Why not 'become a Catholic and have done with it?' This was the sarcastic retort of a fellow Congregationalist a few years ago, when I told her I was going to follow an academic course at a Roman Catholic College. I had already aroused her suspicions by going too frequently to Morning Prayer at St James's – fraternising with Anglicans is questionable enough, but this was surely going a step too far.

As a Congregationalist, I'm supposed to believe that each local church should be autonomous: independent and free to follow the guidance of the Holy Spirit, as discerned by all members of the church meeting prayerfully together each month. Worship should be untrammelled by creeds, bishops, priests, liturgies, rituals or any other human constructs.

It's a wonderful idea and has worked surprisingly well in hundreds of Congregational churches over the past 350 years. In my experience, however, it's curious how often the guidance of the Holy Spirit seems to be channelled either through a single individual, who just happens to have an exceptionally forceful personality, or through a small cabal of like-minded church members.

But what's the alternative? Never having been to a PCC meeting, I can only wonder whether a priest is as powerful as a pope, or as powerless as a pastor like me. The grass is bound to look greener, of course, but I suspect both priest and pastor enjoy more influence than power — and after thirty six years as pastor of the same church, I inevitably have some influence.

Mercifully I get no dictates from above (ecclesiastical, I mean, not spiritual) and the absence of such dictates enabled me to become a pastor while already a schoolmaster, and to learn largely 'on the job' without the imposition of formal training. Like Debbie, I'm a 'self-supporting minister' (such a nice way of saying unpaid) but I doubt I should have had the time or inclination or stamina to undergo all the rigorous training that she endured — and, I hope, enjoyed.

So I do thank God for leading me to be where and what and who I am — giving me opportunities for leading worship with, and offering pastoral care to (and receiving pastoral care from) a small fellowship of Christians who look to each other to detect the moving and guiding of the Holy Spirit in and through their lives. Our services of worship are simple and straightforward, and we rely on many visiting preachers

of various denominational hues (including Peter) to spare our congregation from having to listen to me twice every week, to relieve me of the responsibility of preparing two sermons for each Sunday and to enable me to join in worship from a pew rather than always lead it from a pulpit.

Our twice-fortnightly Bible-studies provide opportunities for us all to study the scriptures together, to learn from them and discuss them, to hear a variety of interpretations of them rather than just mine, and to work out how they should be applied in our daily lives. We are responsible for a Victorian building, the maintenance of which demands our attention, both financially and practically. It's the only pattern of Church life I have experienced, but I cannot imagine a more spiritually productive one.

Were I to 'become a Catholic and have done with it', I should doubtless find the dictates of an hierarchical, authoritarian priesthood irksome, and the whole concept of a magisterium baffling, but I'm equally sure that I should find the spirituality of the liturgy both inspiring and comforting. I should smile, at least inwardly, at the sight of all the elaborate vestments, not to mention the 'bells and smells', but I'm equally sure they would all add an extra, welcome dimension to my worship experience.

As it is, since taking early retirement from teaching sixteen years ago, I have found my own 'middle way' - worshipping at St James's most weekdays and at my Congregational Church on Sundays. I have been warmly welcomed by everyone I've encountered at St James's (including two vicars and three curates, so far), and find that starting each day with a shared act of worship, rather than just private prayer, helps me to focus the day more on God and less on myself and my own concerns. It puzzles me that so many people who share with me the luxury of retirement deprive themselves of the blessings of Morning Prayer at St James's.

■ Revd Antony Ball is Pastor of Isleworth Congregational Church, Twickenham Road, Isleworth TW7 7EU.



The story behind the hymn

Tell Out My Soul



**Tell out, my soul, the greatness of the Lord;
unnumbered blessings, give my spirit voice;
tender to me the promise of his word;
in God my Saviour shall my heart rejoice**

**Tell out, my soul, the greatness of his name:
make known his might, the deeds his arm has done;
his mercy sure, from age to age the same;
his holy name, the Lord, the Mighty One.**

**Tell out, my soul, the greatness of his might:
powers and dominions lay their glory by;
proud hearts and stubborn wills are put to flight,
the hungry fed, the humble lifted high.**

**Tell out, my soul, the glories of his word:
firm is his promise, and his mercy sure.
Tell out, my soul, the greatness of the Lord
to children's children and for evermore.**

The hymn *Tell out my soul* has become incredibly popular though the words were only written in 1962. The writer, Timothy Dudley-Smith, is a prolific writer of hymn lyrics. He served as Bishop of Thetford from 1981-91. *Tell out my soul* is a paraphrase of a scripture passage, Luke 1.46-55, which has been used in worship for most of the Church's history and in that context known as the *Magnificat*.

This word is the first in the Latin translation of the passage. The first line is variously translated: *My soul doth magnify the Lord* and *My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord* to give two examples. It is the exclamation of joy of the Blessed Virgin Mary when she goes to visit her cousin Elizabeth, both women being pregnant by God's action.

Dudley-Smith has produced words which can fit any act of worship while being true to the joy at what God has done expressed in the scriptural words. The hymn has a specific use in services which in some way make mention of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

It will be sung at St. James's on 15 August. This is the almost universal date for the principal celebration in the Christian year of the Blessed Virgin Mary. In the Roman Catholic Church, 15 August is the *Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary*; in Orthodox and other eastern churches, the *dormition* or *falling asleep* of Mary. In the Church of England and many other parts of the Anglican Communion, 15 August is simply Mary's day in the calendar.

At St. James's — and no doubt in many other churches — Mary's song will be sung in the form given to us by Timothy Dudley-Smith. The most commonly used tune is *Woodlands*, composed by Walter Greatorex in 1919 for another hymn, *Lift up your hearts*.