



The Spire

OCTOBER 2010

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church**
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The gift of life
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Sunday 3 October

Harvest Festival

11am service, followed by bring and share lunch

THE LEADER COLUMN

POST-WAR DEPRIVATION HAS BEEN REPLACED BY WASTEFULNESS ON A GRAND SCALE

Some food for thought



In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters. Then God said, "Let there be light" and there was light" (Gen 1; 1-3)

Out of a formless void of chaos came a created order of relationship, not just between things created, but also between the Creator and the created. Within this relationship, free-will emerges from the tree of knowledge and there is a daily choice to remain within the created order or to return to the chaos of pre-creation. Chaos is neither good nor evil, but is rather the unpredictable tension between the morally positive or negative choices humanity makes; these choices directing the creative or destructive forces either towards or away from what God declared as good. It is through humanity's interaction with chaos that we engage within God's desire for a restoration of creation, a restoration of the relationship between all things created and the Creator.

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As we celebrate Harvest, it can be difficult for us 'townies' to engage in the same way as previous generations for whom the agricultural seasons were more obvious. We are shielded from the seasons by the transportation of goods from around the world, making our weekly shopping list available all year. Even the nature of the gifts we bring forward at Harvest has changed. No longer do we give fresh, perishable items but longer-lasting dried goods and tins of food.

Yet, despite all our modern technologies, the levels of waste are shocking. The average family throws away 25-33% of all food purchased. Modern society's easy availability of food and low prices has made us wasteful. Affordable food in abundance is viewed as a right in the West due to post-war subsidies and modern farming techniques. Policies born of the chaos of post-war deprivation have not been rebalanced.

These policies in the West have over the years led to food



Debbie Oades

needs being met by the giant supermarket chains. In Britain the four biggest chains have some 4,000 stores, covering over 66 million sq ft, and accounting for 75% of spending on food.

We may well be able to feed more for less, but the costs are often hidden. Take, for example, my particular weakness - chocolate. The Ivory Coast and Ghana are responsible for 70% of all cocoa production, yet receive less than 5% of the value of a chocolate bar compared to 18% in the 1980s. At the same time the share going to manufacturers and retailers has risen from 56% to 70%, and 12% to 17% respectively.

The other hidden cost of such massive agricultural swathes of land is the irrigation, accounting for 70% of the world's water usage. We in the West manage this, yet thousands die around the world because of the lack of clean water.

In recent times we have seen many consumers change to both local and Fairtrade goods. The UK is now viewed as the ethical shopping capital of the world, with the Church being a large catalyst in a drive for fair trade. This has led to an impressive change in direction by many large retailers, although it was slow at first. However, there is no room for complacency. In the current economic climate the demand for cheap food could overshadow the flickering light of the moral and ethical market place. Once more it is the poorest and the weakest of society who will suffer the most.

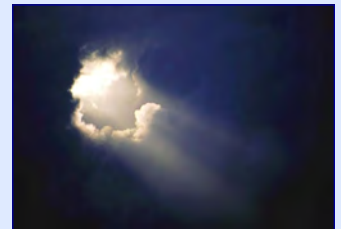
As Christians we are called to live in the right relationship with all creation and to be a light to all nations. We need to stand firm and encourage still more people to support organisations employing the most vulnerable in society and those working towards more local, sustainable and environmentally-friendly forms of food production. We need to monitor and challenge our own behaviour regarding food, before we challenge others. If we are throwing away food we need to rethink our needs and remember those who are dying every day for lack of what was just placed in the bin.

This is not me wanting you to experience a guilt trip this harvest, but rather have a prophetic awareness of each person's responsibility, because God's creation, of which we are part, is good.

As John Donne said, 'No man is an island, entire of itself... any man's death diminishes me... never send to know for whom the bell tolls, it tolls for thee.'

IN THOUGHT AND PRAYER

As many of you will be aware, St. James's parish has a link with and supports the hospital in Milo in the Diocese of South West Tanganyika. We were very fortunate to be visited by Rt Revd John Simalenga, Bishop of SW Tanganyika, earlier in the year. His diocese is the focus of this year's Harvest appeal by USPG, Anglicans in World Mission, and as part of our **Harvest Festival** we will be using some of their appeal resources. Here below is a prayer from these resources by Clare Amos; may I suggest it be part of our personal daily prayer during October.



A Harvest Lord's Prayer

Voice 1: Our Father in heaven,
Voice 2: Creator of good, may your fatherly care protect and sustain all people.
All: May your kingdom come.

Voice 1: Hallowed be your name.
Voice 2: Grant us the grace of honouring you through our love shown in practical action.
All: May your kingdom come.

Voice 1: Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven.
Voice 2: May your passion for righteousness and justice become the pattern of life on earth.
All: May your kingdom come.



Voice 1: Give us today our daily bread.
Voice 2: Help us to ensure that no child of God is hungry, and that there is enough for all to be fed.
All: May your kingdom come.

Voice 1: Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.
Voice 2: We recognise the human greed which contributes to human need.
All: May your kingdom come.

Voice 1: Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.
Voice 2: Challenge us to strive for change and transformation, for the vision of our world as you would have it be.
All: May your kingdom come.
For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours now and forever. Amen.

POVERTY AND PROMISES; NEW FAITH AT WORK GROUP

A new face behind the parish office desk

NICKIE JONES is our new administrator. She takes over from Kirstie Hird, who after three years has moved to a new, full-time post at Orleans School. We thank her for all her hard work, efficiency and commitment and wish her well in her new job. We are also very grateful to Janet Nunn, who retired from office duties at the end of August after 21 years. Janet started her voluntary work for the church when she retired from teaching secretarial subjects. She was Brian's secretary for 17 years and then provided cover for both Kirstie and Griselda Barrett before her. Many thanks to Janet for this devoted and largely unseen service to St. James's.



ECO TIP It is estimated that 14% of household water is wasted by leaks. Check your water meter when no one is using water in the house. A small drip can waste 20 gallons of water a day.

POVERTY The Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr Rowan Williams, is supporting a campaign to make the new coalition government keep its promise to developing countries. The Christian pressure group Micah Challenge wants 10 October to be 'a day of prayer and promise'. It's ten years since nations around the world promised to 'get serious about poverty' and Micah Challenge is also urging churches to lobby their MP. For more information to go www.micahchallenge.org.uk

Faith at Work — a group to explore experiences

What difference does our faith make to our daily lives, our daily work? What are the challenges we face, the tensions we feel? We want to start a group to explore these issues. Our work may be paid or unpaid, we may be facing redundancy, or having been 'let go', working from home, or retired. Can we support each other through these experiences? Our first meeting will be held on **Saturday 23 October from 9.15-10.15am in the Vestry**. Anyone is welcome and we will explore our future programme, and where we meet. Saturday 6 November, Alan Cammidge *The Faith of a Policeman*; Saturday 23 November Prof Rodney Taylor on *My Dilemmas in Healthcare*. This group is supported by Alan Cammidge, Jane Newman, Julian Reindorp, Rodney Taylor and Peter Vannozi.

REGISTERS FOR JULY/AUGUST

JULY	AUGUST
Baptisms	Baptisms
4 Angus William Fox Cowan, Teddington	1 Narayan William Davda Crawford, Hampton
4 Oliver Arthur Daniel Taylor, Hampton Hill	8 Ava Jean Muller, Teddington
Weddings	8 Darcy Rose Muller, Teddington
23 William Michael Vincent Berryman and Victoria Anne Cosic	15 Nuala Elizabeth Juno Jordan, Hampton Hill
30 Edward Alexander Newman and Lauren Mary Underwood	22 Leon Lester Beaton, Hampton Hill
Funerals	29 Matthew Simon James, Raynes Park
21 Yvonne Rosemary Allnutt, 81, Walton on Thames	29 Jensson Charles Darbon, Hampton
22 Josephine Patricia Crimmin, 89, East Wittering (formerly Hampton Hill)	Wedding
	27 Neil James Francis and Terri Jane Liston

Our help goes a long way

Ann Peterken explains how charitable giving at St James's continues year on year – a big help as charities feel the effects of the economic downturn

Good news often happens unseen and is typically not that easy to talk about, but I'll do my best.

Every year St James's sets aside several thousand pounds in its budget for charitable grants, which are sent out throughout the year. This is a very good way to do our giving, but not that visible. Special appeals — typically during Lent, Harvest and Advent — add to our annual giving.

In 2009 St James's gave almost £14,000, a wonderful amount for a community our size and a great help to our chosen charities. We're well on the way to repeating this in 2010, which is extremely important for charities in these difficult financial times.

Sometimes it can feel as though modernity and choice in the 'Christian West' have led people to devote their time, money and energy on things rather than relationships. Yet the heart of Christian mission is love of neighbour, be they near or far, and this can only come about through relationship. Our supported charities take relationship very seriously.

Close to home ...

As we bring our Harvest goods to church we know they will be gratefully received by the **Upper Room** in Hammersmith. This community charity serves about 20,000 meals to 700 socially excluded people every year and is open five days a week for an early supper, relying on the help of volunteers.

In Notting Hill, **Cara** (derived from the Gaelic word for *friend*) offers a unique blend of spiritual support and social welfare services for people living with HIV — a real community of friendship.

From its premises on Twickenham Green,

Welcare continues valuable work with parents and young children in need. It would welcome additional parish representatives in its Local Support Group, so don't hold back if this is something you could offer.

With its 20-plus years of experience, the **Church Urban Fund** knows that poverty can be eradicated only when people and local communities build the capacity to sustain long-term change. The Fund provides key financial support to help grassroots, community-based projects get started, often taking the risk of being 'first funder'.



Easter Sunday at the Upper Room. The charity serves 20,000 meals a year to excluded people.

... and further away St James's has always valued being part of the Church worldwide and through our links we gain much insight into life in other continents.

Our new Church Mission Society

partners David and Shelley Stokes, pictured above, will soon return to the Diocese of Northern Argentina to help with leadership training among the Wichi-speaking congregations. During their visit in September we heard how they have previously lived in Chile and Northern Argentina.

We continue to support the vital work of **St Luke's hospital** in Milo via USPG: Anglicans in World Mission. Medical officer Benaiah Kilwale and Dr Simeon Mbuligwe, together with all the staff, provide a much-needed service in a very remote area. They are pictured, below, with Bishop John Simalenga of the Diocese of South West Tanganyika.



The staff who work at St Luke's hospital



Child's play: Debbie on a recent visit to Jeel al-Amal School and Boys Home, founded by two Christian Palestinians in Bethany.

Thanks to the generosity of parishioners, over £4000 of additional money was sent to the hospital last year to pay for the training of two trainee nurses and a trainee pharmacist.

During **Christian Aid Week** in May many parishioners walk the local streets delivering and collecting envelopes from homes – part of our ongoing support for a charity that works with people, of all faiths and none, in around 50 countries, to combat poverty and injustice.

Several parishioners visited the **Jeel al-Amal (Generation of Hope) School and Boys Home** with Revd Debbie Oades in February. It was founded in 1972 by two Christian Palestinians in the village of Bethany to the east of Jerusalem. Today, there are more than 300 children in the primary school and 100 boys living in the Boys Home.

ALMA, the partnership link between the dioceses of London, Angola and Mozambique, is going from strength to strength.

Many London parishioners have experienced the warm hospitality and vibrant worship of the Anglican community in these two developing countries.

As well as supporting the general work of ALMA, St James's shares a link with **Santa Maria Madelena** in Pemba on the north-east coast. The photo, right, shows their priest, Revd Juliao Fenias, on a recent visit to Chimoio. He is with orphans and vulnerable children at a school that ALMA helps to support.

Not only money

Sometimes we can offer goods — and recycle too! This is well illustrated by Janet Nunn's fine efforts on behalf of **Tools with a Mission**. In 2009 over 382 separate projects working in Zambia, Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania, Nigeria, Rwanda and South Africa and Zimbabwe benefited from 19 containers of refurbished goods shipped from their headquarters in Ipswich.



In the picture, left, David Sayers and his helpers are loading another collection of unwanted sewing machines, gardening and DIY tools, bicycles, scissors, wool and fabrics from Janet's garage. Every contribution helps, so please call Janet on 020 8979 6325.

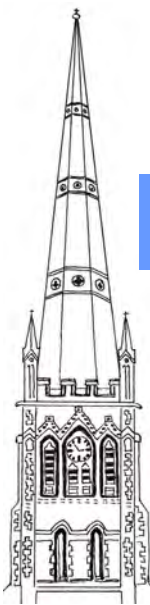
For more information

I hope this has given a flavour of how our charitable grants reach and encourage many people. The Witness and

Mission section of www.stjames-hamptonhill.org.uk has information on all the charities we support, with links to their informative websites.



Food for thought: all money donated on Harvest Sunday will go to the USPG Appeal for the Diocese of South West Tanganyika.



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AROUND THE SPIRE

NEWS FROM HAMPTON HILL AND BEYOND

New role for Brian as Anusha weds Peter

Our former vicar, **Brian**, has conducted very many weddings, but on 21 August he had a new role as father of the bride when **Anusha married Peter Hesketh**.



The ceremony was conducted by Anusha's godfather, Revd Mark Thomas; Revd Julie Gittoes led the intercessions; and Bishop Michael performed the blessing. Pictured, from left, are Brian and Ramani with Anusha and Peter after the ceremony in St Luke's Church, Chelsea.



■ **Michael Futter** has retired as a server at 8am Holy Communion. He first came to St. James's 71 years ago when his family moved to St. James's Avenue in March 1939. The vicar then was Revd Harvey and Michael has known four subsequent vicars: Rupert Brunt, Nicholas Chubb, Brian Leathard and Peter Vannozi. Michael joined the choir and subsequently became a server in 1946 after being confirmed. He was also a bell-ringer. After RAF service from 1950-55 and marriage in 1957, Michael worshipped at St. Mary's Hampton, but re-joined St. James's in the 1980s and took up serving again. We thank him for his many years in this role.

■ **Congratulations to our youngest organist, Harry Baker**, who has just started at Hampton School, having been awarded both music and academic scholarships. Harry, who was 13 in July, has been playing regularly for us for a year.



■ **The baptism of Oliver James Robinson**, son of Duncan and Helen, grandson of Coryn and Ian and great-grandson of Hal and Eila Severn on 5 September was a very happy occasion.

The baby and his parents live in Singapore so it is not often that the whole family can be together. Pictured are the four generations. Oliver's aunts, uncles and cousins were also present, so it was a real family gathering round the font given in memory of his great-great grandmother, Vivienne Prentice.



Exactly a week after Oliver's baptism, he had a new cousin: **Amelia**, daughter of Duncan's sister Caitlyn and her husband Rory.



All-age Communion

There are four parts to the All-age Communion:
We gather, We listen to God's Word, We share in Holy Communion, We go out to serve God.

3. We share in Holy Communion

- Sort the letters to make the sentences.



The (ECPAE)

God asks us to love each other as he (OSLVE) us. So we turn and greet each other in love and friendship. This greeting is shown by a (NHDA) clasp and by saying *Peace be with* (UYO).

The Preparation of the (ABTLE)

The gifts are brought through the body of the congregation up to the altar and at this point the altar is prepared for communion.



The Thanksgiving (YREPRA)

The (RSTEPI) gives thanks to God for his gifts and especially for the gift of his (NSO). He uses Jesus' own words at the Last Supper and prays for the coming of the Holy (PTSIR).

- Match the pictures with the descriptions.



When Jesus had the Last Supper he took some bread, broke it and shared it with the disciples.



He passed a cup of wine round the group.



He told them that he must die to save the world and they must always share the bread and wine to remember him.

- Put the lines of the song in the right order

We sing a song of praise:
Heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna, Hosanna, Hosanna in the highest.
God of power and might.
Holy, holy, holy Lord,





Revelations

A view of the wider world

Slow Progress

At the Anglican General Synod last July there was a deep divide between those Anglicans, like members of WATCH, who see the ordination of women to the office of Bishop as a natural development of the Church of England, and those like Anglo-Catholics and Evangelicals who strongly oppose it. Pope Benedict's offer of a place for disaffected Anglican clergy in the Roman Catholic Church remains open. If the Catholic church is prepared to accept and re-ordain married Anglican priests, there seems no logic in refusing to accept the marriage of Catholic priests, or the ordination of a married man. Catholic Women's Ordination, CWO, would like to go one step further and see women ordained priests in their church. Its members have been deeply saddened by the recent strong condemnation of this possibility by Pope Benedict. The tide of opinion seems to be on the side of both WATCH and CWO, but it is taking its time.

God and Science

Considerable publicity was generated recently by Professor Stephen Hawking's hypothesis that the laws of modern physics allow some conceptual nothingness, of no space and no time, quite spontaneously to produce the 'big bang', the origin of our universe. Hawking also postulates that an infinite number of universes, each with its own physical laws, could be produced without an identifiable creator. In due course these ideas may well be accepted as true with very little difficulty by those who believe in a transcendently powerful God, just as Copernicus's theory of the heliocentric solar system and Darwin's theory of evolution, both initially regarded as dangerous heresies, are now accepted without much question by most people. Religious belief comprehends, that is it includes, all science, but it does not depend on it for its truth. Newton modestly stated something to the effect that he felt like someone picking up pebbles on the seashore while the great ocean of truth lay before him. We have picked up a lot of very useful scientific pebbles since then, but these still have little relevance to Newton's ocean.

BST to GMT – a Problem Solved

On Sunday 31 October British Summer Time ends, and soon there will be the annual discussion about the virtues of its continuation into winter. There will be those who are sure that the earlier onset of evening darkness will be a hazard on the roads, and schoolchildren crossing the pavement to their mothers' waiting cars will be prey to all sorts of terrors. Come the end of March and another chorus of distress will come from farmers with educated cows which insist on being milked at the correct clock time, now BST, an hour earlier. The solution to this twice-yearly problem seems quite simple. We should change the clocks twice daily. We would start in the morning with Greenwich Mean Time, and after lunch, say at 14.10, change to BST, 15.10, so that we get an extra hour of evening daylight. Then next day at 01.10 the clocks will go back to BST again to give us all an extra hour in bed. Everyone should be satisfied.

Dick Wilde

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what's on



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.



We will be combining Harvest with Car-free Sunday, a chance for us to spend a day without cars if we can.

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 is in church.

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 DVD (copies in church) explains what our giving will help to enable.

Greencoat Forums

A Sparkle of Hope, Tuesday

12 October, from 7.15-9pm,

24 Greencoat Place, London SW1P 1RD.

When their teenage son Jimmy was murdered the day after his 16th birthday two years ago, Barry and Margaret Mizen set up the Jimmy Mizen Foundation in his memory. It aims to promote development of young people through supporting youth organisations and apprenticeship placements. Barry and Margaret will tell their moving story.

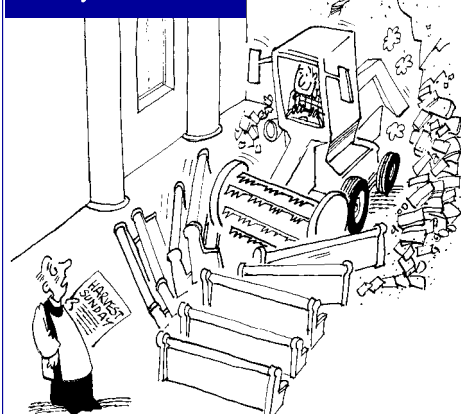


Capitalism Towards the Common Good — Regulation or Culture? Tuesday 12 October, from 7.15-9pm

Following the financial crisis, can banking and big corporations develop a culture of integrity and service to the common good? Speakers are Philippa Foster Back, Director of the Institute of Business Ethics; Paul Moore, former head of regulatory risk at Halifax Bank of Scotland; Nick Robins, author of *The Corporation that Changed the World*, and Roger Steare, author of *Ethicability*.

Refreshments from 6.30pm. The talks are free, with a collection for expenses. Places are limited. To book please telephone 020 7798 6000 or go to www.uk.iofc.org.

Vicar's View



I don't mean to sound ungrateful, but when I asked for something to represent farming...

St James's Theatre Club

Tuesday 12 October, 7.45pm, **Crazy For You**, Richmond Theatre, The Green TW9 1JQ

This musical is packed full of Gershwin classics, including *I Got Rhythm*, *Embraceable You*, *Nice Work If You Can Get It* and *Someone To Watch Over Me*. Our tickets £16.50 (saving £4.50) There are also discounted tickets available for Tuesday 2 November **Spend Spend Spend!** — winner of 2009 TMA Awards for Best Musical, £16 (saving £12). 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.

Family Opera Night

Saturday 16 October, 7pm, St James's Church

This concert will feature the Hampton Hill Community Choir. All local singers are welcome to join in and you don't need to have sung in a choir before or be able to read music. Joining the choir for an evening of well-known opera excerpts will be soloists and a professional band, Bacchanale. Conductor Miranda Ashe promises a 'dazzling evening of operatic favourites to inspire and entertain'. For more information email Susannah Nettleton at nettleton@blueyonder.co.uk.

Mass Lobby of Parliament

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

Christian Aid needs us to lobby MPs about the importance of tackling world poverty. A supporter event at Methodist Central Hall precedes the afternoon lobby. The speaker will be the civil rights leader, **Revd Jesse Jackson**. For more information telephone Catherine Gash on 020 8973 0563 or go to www.christianaid.org.uk.



One World Week 17-24 October / United Nations Day

Sunday 24 October, 4pm, Joint Service, Sacred Heart, Kingston Road, Teddington TW11 9JQ

One World Week is a charity that believes that when we come together collectively to learn about injustice and inequality, we can do something about it. Churches Together in Teddington are holding a joint service, called *Peacing Together One World*, reflecting on the UN's *International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-violence for the Children of the World*, which ends this year. More info from Elizabeth Hicks 020 8977 8406.



Cantanti Camerati Autumn Concert

Saturday 30 October, 7.30pm, Hampton Hill Playhouse, 90 High Street, Hampton Hill TW12 1NY

Tickets from Albert's Music Shop, Twickenham, telephone 020 8898 8020, or on the door.

Charity Christmas cards on sale

Sunday 31 October in church and Sunday 7 November, in the hall

Cards supporting various charities will be on sale after Parish Communion.



All Souls' Service

Sunday 31 October, 6pm, St James's Church

This is a service to remember friends and loved ones who have passed away. Everyone is welcome. Names may be added to a list in church for inclusion in the service.

A new life for three of us



Three years ago this month, I underwent a kidney transplant operation after suffering from a disease called Mesangioglobulonephritis (also known as Bright's Disease) for ten years. I was extremely fortunate to receive my new kidney from my wife Rachael as she was a good match in blood group and tissue type.

My mum, dad, brother and sister had been tested and ruled out for various reasons. A few close friends stepped forward too, but my wife Rachael insisted on being tested. I wasn't keen as, were she to be a match, this would be major surgery that could have affected our chances of having children.

The results came back. Rachael was an O blood group, the 'universal' blood group, able to give to any other group. Her tissue type, rather weirdly, was virtually identical to mine even though our family heritage is very different! Rachael also had a kidney scan and heart x-ray and we had our blood spun together to check for any antibodies. Everything scored highly and the hospital said we were a suitable match for transplant. We then deliberated whether

'We were ecstatic when we discovered Rachael was pregnant. She had extra antenatal appointments and the pregnancy was trouble-free'

to go ahead with the operation pretty quickly, or for me to go on dialysis first and Rachael to be a donor after children.

After various meetings with the transplant team and my health deteriorating rapidly, we finally decided to go ahead with the op as soon as a date was available. We learnt that so long as Rachael was monitored regularly during pregnancy and drank plenty of water there was no significant risk for her future pregnancy.

The operation took place on 17 October 2007 at St George's Hospital. We were up early on the ward and I was feeling anxious, not so much for me, but for Rachael. It was quite emotional saying goodbye to each other, but she was wheeled off with a smile and I knew that she was in safe hands. Rachael was taken down to the operating room an hour before me so that the kidney could be re-attached as quickly as possible. We were in the recovery room together, and whilst coming round from the anaesthetic we were able to give each other the thumbs up! I don't really remember a

great deal of the rest of the day, other than my entire family sitting by my bed and holding my hand. Rachael's family were also with us and the families flitted between the two of us as we were in separate parts of the renal ward.

The following few days in hospital were quite painful for me. Getting out of bed was really difficult. The physiotherapist came to help, but even small walks around the ward were hard work. I had never felt so weak.

I couldn't see the stitches because I had a huge dressing protecting the wound. However, I was really aware of a huge heavy kidney to the right of my stomach. If I'm really honest the sensation of having something new inside me wobbling around made me feel very nauseous in the very early days.

The thing that I found the most difficult was getting used to the anti-rejection medication. When I was discharged from hospital just four days after the transplant I was given a whole basket full of medication: a concoction of steroids, anti-rejection drugs, blood pressure tablets, cholesterol tablets, the list goes on. It took me hours to count out the 20 or so tablets I had to take at set intervals throughout the day. I was so concerned about this new regime I bought a digital watch that had three different alarms!

For the first week I had to be driven to the transplant clinic every day so they could check my kidney function for any sign of rejection. Over the coming weeks this became a few times a week. I had to rely on my Mum and mate Tim for lifts, but they never once complained.

Boredom was the other difficulty. The daytime television during my recovery soon became all too much for me and just one month after the op I decided to venture back to the office. By that time I was walking normally and all aches and pains were gone, but I was starting to suffer side effects from the medication, such as mood swings and shaky hands. Over time, I was able to counter these effects by tweaking the medication at my monthly check-ups.

We had to wait a whole year before trying for a family to enable Rachael's one remaining kidney to start growing to compensate. Needless to say we were ecstatic when we discovered Rachael was pregnant. She had extra antenatal appointments to check her kidney was working and the pregnancy was trouble-free. Our son William Michael Roy was born two years after the transplant and is now almost ten months old. We feel so lucky to have him and doubt he would be here without the kidney transplant.



Songs of Praise

The story behind the hymn

We Plough the Fields and Scatter



We plough the fields, and scatter
the good seed on the land,
but it is fed and watered
by God's almighty hand;
he sends the snow in winter,
the warmth to swell the grain,
the breezes and the sunshine,
and soft refreshing rain.

Refrain:

All good gifts around us
are sent from heaven above,
then thank the Lord, O thank the Lord
for all his love.

He only is the Maker
of all things near and far;
he paints the wayside flower,
he lights the evening star;
the winds and waves obey him,
by him the birds are fed;
much more to us, his children,
he gives our daily bread. **Refrain**

We thank thee, then, O Father,
for all things bright and good,
the seed time and the harvest,
our life, our health, our food;
Accept the gifts we offer,
for all thy love imparts,
and, what thou most desirest,
our humble, thankful hearts. **Refrain**

If a hymn can typify a festival in the Christian Year, then this one does so for Harvest Festival. It appears to be a good, Victorian hymn full of tradition and well expressed sentiments. In fact, the hymn's origins are German. It is the *Peasant's Song* from a sketch by Matthias Claudius in Paul Erdmann's *Fest* (Hamburg 1782) depicting a harvest thanksgiving in a north German farmhouse. Matthias heard the song being sung in the fields. The song was later translated into English, and published in two collections of hymns in the 1860s. It fitted well in the context of harvest thanksgiving in churches, which appears to have begun in Britain as recently as 1843.

The hymn recognises human effort, but acknowledges that any growth of crops is due to God. It is God who is the maker, not humanity. At a time when the failure of a harvest could lead to starvation on a large scale, the sentiments of the hymn ring true. They may do so still where people are reliant on agriculture for their daily living. In urban and suburban areas, those who sing the hymn can have in mind all those who produce what they eat even if they do not themselves lift a fork in a garden let alone a plough. 'We plough the fields...' When these words are sung, the 'we' can embrace those who work in the land still in this country, but those also in other countries, seeking to eke out a living, and looking for a fair price for their goods. If taken seriously, the hymn is a call to acknowledge God's provision which is not just for the wealthier countries of the world.