

All Saints Alive

VICAR'S VIEWPOINT

Take a Welcome Break!

Dear Friends,

The signs on the M25 and other motorway service stations invite us all to take a break from those long, long drives – or queues! The advertisements show refreshments, relaxation and an opportunity to stretch your legs and get some fresh air. We may well have just come back from holiday and feel refreshed and relaxed having had a welcome break away from work and home, but as soon as we return to our normal routines we find ourselves catching up on missed work, emails and other dull things and may even begin to see life as a bit of a treadmill!

This is just why we need that welcome break in our week by going to Church. A time to reflect and refocus, to recharge our spiritual batteries and to see the larger picture: God's world, God's creation, God's love, God's salvation. The liturgy of our communion service invites us all to open ourselves to the presence of God. We come to praise God in words, music and actions. As we begin to worship, we are reminded of God's loving welcome to us. The prayers of preparation and confession help us to look afresh at our lives, and when we focus on all that separates us from God and our neighbour, we receive the assurance that we are forgiven. The Bible readings and the sermon are there to keep us in touch with God's will, through hearing His word through history and a sensitive drawing together of its meaning in our present time. The Intercessions bring to God our deep feelings and concerns for our world and our community, and the need for healing of people and situations. The sacrament of Holy Communion reminds us of the loving sacrifice of Christ, and through the breaking and sharing of bread and the drinking of the wine we are brought into the very presence of God. After this wonderful



sharing we are sent out in the power of the Spirit to value and to share God's Love.

The music in our church can also lift us onto another plane, which is why we give it a prominent role. In worship it can transport us with its beauty. In a profound way the music of Soundbites, (our midweek concerts for everyone on Wednesday lunchtimes), and Compline every Wednesday evening also provide a valuable time set aside in the middle of the week, refreshing us and giving us that sense of eternity breaking through into the ordinary everyday life. Let us share this with our friends and people that we meet, inviting them to join us to see how it can make such a difference to return to that sense of God's loving and guiding presence.

A welcome break? Worship is - of course – far more than that. In taking us out of the ordinariness of life it can transform our routine with renewed purpose and a sense of calling, that wherever we are and whatever we are doing God's love is upholding us and can be shared in our way of living.

Need a welcome break? Come to our Services!

Love Jo

Meet our New Bishop on September 26th

Bishop Paul Bayes will join us at All Saints for our Parish Communion service at 10.00am, and he and Kate will stay to share lunch with us all afterwards in St John's Hall. Bishop Paul will have only just been welcomed as the new Bishop of Hertford, the day before, at St Alban's!

Sunday 26th September also is also Back to Church Sunday 2010. As the Church of England's Mission and Evangelism Advisor, Paul was instrumental in encouraging churches to take part in this campaign. This year the slogan is **"Success is one: success is one big church"**

The focus is on the personal invitation which we all, as individual church members, can offer to others. The idea is that each of us invites one friend to Church; they may have attended Church in the past or this may be their first time. This is a great opportunity because there will be other people who will be invited and it is also a chance to meet the new Bishop and hear what his vision is.

Back to Church Sunday raises a high media profile as tens of thousands of Christians offer this invitation at the same time.

Some churches put on special events for Back to Church Sunday. Others choose to continue with their regular services. Either way, the most important part of the day is to offer a warm and honest welcome to people and all of us can take part by inviting one person and participate in this gentle, encouraging form of mission.

Please participate in this by taking an invitation card and giving it to a friend to invite them to join us on September 26th.

Welcome

Would you like to join the Welcome Team at All Saints? We have new people in our congregation week by week and it is great to be able to offer them a warm welcome and someone to take them over to have coffee in St John's Hall. We will ask 2 or 3 people each week to wear welcoming ribbon badges and we are looking for caring and friendly people to help us to do this. Please see Jo or Janet if you feel that you may be able to be a welcomer once a month.

Harvest Thanksgiving: October 3rd

We will be collecting for the Bishop's Harvest Appeal, the Climate Justice Fund, and asking for cash and cheque donations rather than harvest produce. The initiative is called 'Faith

Moves Mountains' and it is the Church of England's national environmental fund in partnership with Tearfund. Speaking about the Climate Justice Fund, the Bishop Alan of St Albans said, "This year's Harvest Appeal, through the Anglican Church in Teso, will help farmers and families grow crops that can cope with the changing climatic conditions. Please support this work generously to bring justice and hope to the people of Teso."

It will be great to have some harvest produce during the week before to decorate the church and this can be auctioned off after the harvest Service and the money raised will also go to the Bishop's Harvest Appeal.

A Sabbatical for Jo in 2011

The Church encourages all clergy to take a sabbatical after ten years of full time ministry and the diocese have offered me a sabbatical next year. It is a great opportunity to reflect and develop ideas both professionally and personally, and part of this is taking the opportunity to travel and explore.

The PCC has therefore agreed that I can take three months off next year (at the time of writing this is possibly the three months after Easter). It is an exciting opportunity and I am very grateful to everyone for being so encouraging about this. I will keep everyone informed about my plans. I hope to reflect on what it is to live a God-Shaped Life, perhaps visiting Christians living out their faith in very different ways. It is marvellous to be able to say that I am confident that we will be able to cover this sabbatical with our own Ministerial Team at All Saints and our wider Hertford Team with a few guests too!

Curate

We may have the opportunity of having a team curate in July 2011 and he or she would work closely with us at All Saints. We are all prayerfully considering this together. This will have financial implications to us as parishes and we need to work out whether we can support a curate together. Please can you join us and pray about this step forward in ministry.