

# All Saints Alive

## VICAR'S VIEWPOINT

### Back to.....

Dear Friends,

"Back to School" has been the strapline which we have read in our shops since the beginning of the holidays in July.

I always feel that it is a bit much for children and teachers who have only just begun their holidays to be faced with "Back to School" in huge letters but the shops have stocked up on uniform, shoes, stationary, books and bags that they want to encourage us to buy so that we are well prepared, although, as a Mum I always bought trousers and shoes just at the end of the holidays as inevitably the children had grown even over just six weeks ( I blame the Dutch genes for the large size!).

However, the time has come now and it is back to school or back to work or back to reality for most of us in September.

'Back to.....' what does this mean for you? It seems to suggest a fresh start: the new term, planning, new books: a certain familiar routine: a sense of tradition and even comfort in the known, like returning home from holidays. 'East, West, home best (*Oost West Thuis Best*)' the brass plaque said on my Dutch grandmother's house.

There is also often that sense of hope and future in the phrase 'back to ....' as well, as we think of our resolutions such as 'this time I'll try harder', 'I will sort things out', 'I will turn over a new leaf'.

We can give this very real gift of hope, comfort, and fresh start to others as we all participate in the Church's Back to Church campaign. All of us know someone that we can invite to come with us to Church and experience afresh the love of God shared in



our worship. All of us can invite someone to this service on September 30<sup>th</sup> at 10.00am. It would be ideal to ask them face to face and hand them the invitation card which we will be giving out over the next few weeks but if we feel particularly shy then we can fill the card in and pop it through their letter box and ensure that we look out for them when they come on the Sunday.

This campaign will only work if we all participate in it and ensure that everyone feels welcomed and comfortable. It will be also be great if you have any suggestions about how we might ensure that Back to Church Sunday goes well.

The very idea of going back to Church can be profoundly meaningful for all of us whether we have been attending church for years or whether we are new. Back to God's love, to be reminded of God's forgiveness, to learn how to live our lives, to the words of the Bible, the traditions the uplifting music the friendly fellowship and back to the ultimate comfort of being at one with God through sacrament, prayer and praise.

**Back to Church Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> September.** I am looking forward to celebrating this together with you and your friends.

Love,  
Jo

## Chalice Assistants

I am delighted to announce that the Bishop of Hertford has given permission for Helen Wright and Ann Stephens Jones to be Chalice assistants at All Saints. The PCC recommended that Helen and Ann are

people whom we trust and feel are appropriate for this special privilege to be able to share in the distribution of the Bread and Wine in our Holy Communion Services.

The Bishop has also given permission for Helen to take the reserved sacrament to those who are house bound or in hospital and so she will join Jo and Janet in this role.

### The Kempe Window A Gift Day Sunday October 7<sup>th</sup>



One of the most striking features of All Saints is our wonderful East Window. It was created by the famous stained glass artist CE Kempe, with his trademark wheat sheaf found in one corner. Its theme is the Vine based on John 15: 5: *I am the true vine, you are the branches*. We see the Vine in the central pane with Christ crucified reigning in glory. The branches of the vine, spreading out from the cross, contain some of the saints.

Our quinquennial survey conducted by an architect earlier this year found that there



was a real danger of the window breaking up and collapsing and so we are having it reset, pane by pane and have had to have scaffolding on both sides, inside and outside the Church to enable the work people to complete this process.

As you can imagine this will be very expensive and we have had an estimate of about £7,000 - £8,000! Many of you have already kindly made donations towards the window but we still need to raise a considerable amount. We propose to have a gift day on Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> October. It is also Harvest Festival. After the service with its usual donations of food which will keep for Harlow Foodbank and cash donations for the Bishop of St Alban's Water Aid appeal, a table will be set up in Church to receive gifts for the Stained Glass restoration appeal at Coffee Time.

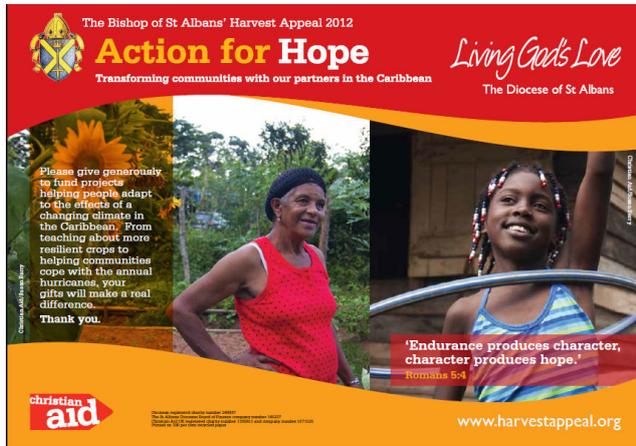
Your gifts can be gift aided if you are a tax payer by filling in the white envelopes. It would be marvellous if we could raise the money needed to p[ay for the repairs by the end of that day.

### Harvest Thanksgiving

Once again, on Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> October at our Harvest Festival the loose collection will be given to the Bishop of St Albans' Water Aid Appeal, a project run through Christian Aid to bring water and wells to villages that have no access to fresh water.

Donations of some fresh produce and packet or tinned food will be given to Harlow Foodbank our local outlet for those who find themselves in hard times financially and those who are homeless. (There is more information on page 7 of this edition).

# Bishop's Harvest Appeal 2012 – ACTION FOR HOPE



The project selected for the Bishop's Harvest Appeal this year is 'Action for Hope' seeking to equip communities in the Caribbean – particularly the Dominican Republic – to adapt their farming of crops and have in place emergency warning systems, because of the changing climate and annual hurricanes.

In the normal way, printed materials have been prepared for this project, together with further resources which you will find at our website: [www.harvestappeal.org](http://www.harvestappeal.org).

*God of the harvest, open our eyes to see the beauty and goodness of your creation, open our hearts to receive your gifts with gratitude, not greed, open our hands to give generously and cheerfully.*

*Please bless the people of the Dominican Republic that through the 2012 Harvest Appeal new crops will be planted and communities protected; in this time of changing climate may seeds of hope flower in abundance and joy*

## Confirmation

From September we will be holding two groups for those who would like to explore their faith more deeply and consider Confirmation. There will be one for the young people and one for those over twenty. These will take the form of study and discussion groups.

If you would like to join in or know of someone who is searching for faith please let me know and tell me the best times to meet up. Jo

## Exploring Prayer and Spirituality Day

There are accounts of the work and ministry of Angels throughout Bible and for many in our modern age that is where Angels remain – in history.

Having had Angels captured by the New Age spirituality that pervades society, this year's Exploring Prayer and Spirituality Day seeks to answer questions such as:

- o If God used angels in the past, are they still here now?
- o How do we understand and know Angels as part of Christian faith and practice today?
- o What can we learn from Angels about the message of faithfulness and hospitality.

With workshops rooted firmly in the Scriptures, in the worshipping life of the church and in the teachings of our forebears in faith, we are delighted to offer a range of Workshops to encourage exploration and delight in the calling that we should not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing that some have entertained angels without knowing it. (Hebrews 13:2)

We are delighted to be able to welcome The Reverend Canon Pam Wise MBE as our Keynote Speaker. Pam is Vicar of All Saint's South Oxhey and is known by many as 'the Vicar who wrote to the BBC'. Pam invited the BBC to bring Gareth Malone and The Choir series to the community of South Oxhey. The rest, as they say, is history!

We look forward to welcoming you.

*The members of the Prayer and Spirituality Resourcing Group*

