

Christ Church Information September 2000

**Revd Celia Thomson,
Christ Church Vicarage, 16 Copse Hill, London, SW20 0HG
020 8946 4491 / email: cthomson@dircon.co.uk**

Dear Friends,

Autumn is a time of new beginnings for anyone connected with schools, colleges or universities. My best wishes go to all children starting new schools, new classes or new courses, and with those young people leaving home for the first time. For parents too it can be an anxious time, wondering whether their children will be happy in the new situations that await them. But we can never stand still in life; God is always calling us forward to the future that awaits us.

In our autumn programme at Christ Church we have an opportunity for new beginnings in our prayer life during the Week of Accompanied Prayer 15-20 Oct. This can make a real difference to the lives of individuals and the parish as a whole, so I do encourage you to take part. Information is available in church. There will also be a Quiet Day on Saturday 11 November, another chance to take time out of busy lives to reflect on our relationship with God.

Congratulations are in order to all who have supported the Windmill Fund this year. We have now achieved our target of £5000 and in fact have raised an additional £700 or so. We are awaiting news of the windmill's completion before sending the final payment to Matabeleland. Thank you very much to everyone, especially the young people for their sponsored bike ride.

All best wishes

Celia Thomson

PEACE
BE TO
YOU.

Week of

ACCOMPANIED



Reflections on a Week of Accompanied Prayer

Earlier this year I was invited to be a Prayer Companion on a Week of Accompanied Prayer for the Churches Together in Epsom. It was a large ecumenical event and my first experience of this kind. I was very apprehensive, but I found my fears dissolving rapidly as soon as I arrived at the opening service, because there was such an air of fellowship and excitement, a real buzz!

Almost immediately the prayer companions and pilgrims bonded into a routine that was very supportive and friendly. As the week progressed people began to arrive earlier and stay later, and it became apparent that enjoyment and friendship were the order of the week.

Why do people commit time to a week of accompanied prayer? Firstly, the time commitment is not that arduous, fifteen minutes a day of prayer and then up to thirty minutes spent with ones prayer companion. Trying to keep the week as quiet as possible obviously enhances its benefits but this is not always possible. Some of the

PRAYER

reasons given by the Epsom pilgrims to their prayer companions were:

- 'I am hopeless at prayer, can you help?'*
- 'I think that I am a good Christian, but I would like to have a more personal relationship with God.'*
- 'I love my family but I need some time to myself.'*
- 'I want to believe in God but there is so much suffering in the world, how can I?'*
- 'There has to be more than this!'*
- 'I feel God is calling me.'*

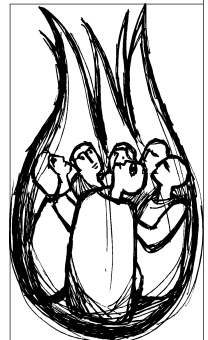


The prayer companions feel called by God to be with people where they are, to accompany them on their spiritual journey, together trying to find the road that is leading the pilgrim closer to an awareness of where God is in their lives. I believe for all prayer companions this is a privilege and extremely rewarding.



We are having a Week of Accompanied Prayer at Christ Church from the 15th – 20th October. Please come and be part of this rewarding experience. We need three things to happen to make it a success. The presence of the Holy Spirit, I am assured of this. Your presence, I pray for this. Your prayers, particularly if you are unable to participate personally.

With love in Christ.
Val Hancock



Harvest Meditation

Monica Brown

As I drove through Suffolk and Norfolk, the fields of wheat and barley seem to stretch for miles on either side of the road, as far as eye can see, waving fields of gold, and I thought of the grain to be harvested, not by hand but by huge machines clearing the fields in hours rather than days, and truly those fields were bare as I drove back a week later ... its beauty all gone but perhaps its usefulness was beginning?

The time of harvest is with us again, a time of wonder and thanksgiving for the goodness of God, but how things have changed over the years in the ways of sowing and reaping the fields! ... maybe our way of looking at things can change as well? I've been thinking of the parable of the sowing of the seed and its resultant harvesting which is one of the better known of all the stories that our Lord taught in Galilee.

We've all probably heard the parable before and been asked to ponder the question as to the kind of soil we will be for the seed of the gospel ... will we give it an enthusiastically shallow reception so that it withers through lack of depth ... will we allow the weeds and thorns of life to choke its growth ... or will we be receptive, letting it send its roots down deeply so that our soil yields a good harvest?

But ... suppose Jesus here is seeing us as the sower rather than the soil, and asking just how good we'd be at that? ... perhaps he is looking for partners in the risky business of casting seed in Gods kingdom? Yes, of course we'd like to spread the gospel if we thought it would do some good, but we're not sure there'd be much positive result ... people resist the gospel or distort it, they can be put off by us, amused or even angered ... a few respond, but most are just not interested.

Here Jesus tells a story about a farmer whose seed-sowing is rather a failure, with birds eating the seed, some falling on rocky ground, or amongst thorns. So much good seed is devoured, lost or strangled and, of course, Jesus knew about this first hand. In the gospels we will find

several accounts of resistance to Jesus' work ... even his own family came to take him away from it. He knows all about the unresponsiveness of individuals and institutions. He begins his story of planting seed with a triple failure.

But he ends with a wonder 'Other seed fell into good soil and brought forth grain growing, increasing, yielding thirty-fold, sixty-fold, a hundred-fold.' The seed that does find receptive soil will bring a very good harvest.

So what do we do? As followers of Jesus we don't despair of birds, rocks and stones or grumble about the weeds. None of this should distract us from spreading our words and deeds like seeds, for the value of our witness is not measured by our many failures, but by the wonderful surprise that will one day grow from some of the seed. So let us go out into his fields, certain of the wonder that God will finally produce.

BALES OF STRAW

The corn is cut

The grain gathered in,
Only the straw remains,
but nothing is wasted;
that also is a harvest.

Lord, make me careful to conserve
the diminishing resources
of this planet,
that I may not be wasteful,
when others have none.

Thank you, that through
the redeeming power of the Cross,
no experience in life,
not even frustration, hurt or pain,
are wasted, lost, or in vain.

All these I give to you,
that they may not be a waste,
but in you become harvest.





All Things Were Bright & Beautiful

As one of its events to celebrate the Millennium, Christ Church decided to hold a Summer Flower Festival. After much planning behind the scenes and thought by Elaine Chester and others, the 'Opening Day' finally arrived. From 9 am onwards, people from local churches and organisations, schools, and businesses arrived, bearing plant containers, stands, secateurs, oasis, and of course flowers - masses and masses of flowers - and greenery. There were also sacks of ivy from members of the congregation, which had to be sorted - whoever thought there could be so many different varieties? Two of the arrangements had been completed the day before, and the west porch struck a very Mediterranean note with its wonderful array of bamboo and other greenery, backed by hessian and decorated with dozens of lemons.



In every corner of the church, people were busily occupied assembling their displays, as well as those on steps

decorating the pillars with ivy. The theme was 'A Celebration of Christianity' and every aspect was covered, starting at the west door with Creation and leading, amongst others, into baptism, marriage, remembrance, the Eucharist, Easter with the Crucifixion, and the Resurrection, this commemorated on both altars.

The High Altar was very effective, decorated with foliage and lilies in military precision - all the same height.

One could not help thinking 'will everything be ready in time?' Of course it was. The church looked magnificent. At six o'clock, after a prayer by Celia, Roger Casale, our MP, declared the Flower Festival open, in front of a good number of the congregation. For the next two hours, and throughout Saturday and Sunday, a steady stream of people came to admire and appreciate the theme of each presentation and the thought that had gone into its interpretation. People who no longer lived locally returned and friendships were renewed, helped on the two afternoons by cups of tea and coffee, with scones, jam and

cream. We were delighted to welcome Archdeacon Nick Banes to our Sunday Eucharist, when he preached the sermon.

As someone said, 'Christ Church is a beautiful church, but today it looks even more so.' Throughout the weekend the sun appeared occasionally through the windows, bringing light and even more colour to the blooms. It is now a very happy memory but we are fortunate in having a keen photographer in our congregation, Farhad Hedayati, and his pictures have provided us with a record of the Flower Festival in an album, with full details beautifully written by Wendy Hamilton.

Although it was not primarily a fund-raising occasion, we did raise just over £700, some of which will go to church funds and some towards the Windmill 2000 project.

PHYLLIS BARRETT

Flower Festival
(A Celebration Of Christianity)



Windmill 2000

The Windmill Project
St Matthew's Filabusi
&
Christ Church
West Wimbledon

Target:
£5,000

Amount Raised:
£5,737

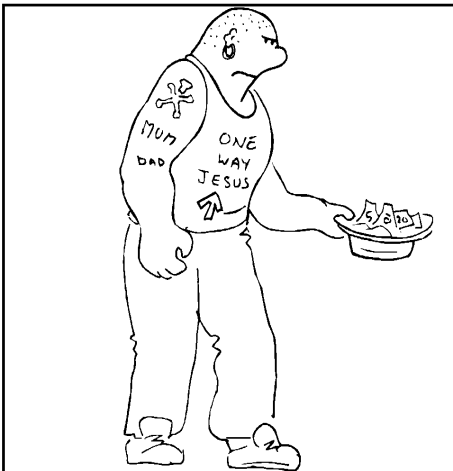
Thank you everyone
for your contributions.
This will make a real
difference to people's
lives in this small rural
community in Zimbabwe.
There will be some
photos of the completed
windmill in due course.

Gift Aid -

Too good to be true - a Gift from the Government to our church? Read on...

You may have heard about the new Gift Aid scheme to help charities. This scheme means that, since 6 April this year, charities can claim back tax on all donations from tax payers.

In the past, in order to qualify for tax relief it was necessary for a one-off gift to exceed £250 or a four year Deed of Covenant had to be entered into.



The collection always increased dramatically when John was sidesman

There were several disadvantages to Deeds of Covenants but the main one was that the relief was limited to the amount promised on the deed. This meant that if there was a special collection for a particular disaster or a fund raising project it was not possible to reclaim the tax on any of the contributions by taxpayers unless an individual donation exceeded £250.

The new system is much more flexible. The £250 minimum limit for Gift Aid donations has been removed and now all donations - large or small, regular or one-off, whatever the method of payment - qualify for tax relief.

All that is necessary for Christ Church to benefit from the new system is for tax payers to sign a Gift Aid Declaration and for all contributions to be traceable. This will be achieved if contributions are made by bankers order or by cheque or in cash in a numbered envelope.

Existing Deeds of Covenant will be effective until they expire, but once a Gift Aid Declaration has been signed then any additional contribution by a taxpayer will also be tax efficient.

Many of you have already signed a Declaration and we have already

A Gift from the Government to our church

It Costs nearly
£300 per day to
run Christ Church!

made our first claim for the repayment of tax and all without increased giving by the congregation.

If you think you qualify under the new scheme and would like to participate please contact Lynda Coleman.

Don't forget, there is no need to make a specific commitment and it won't cost you a penny extra but Christ Church will benefit by an extra 28% - that's £28 on every £100 given by taxpaying members of the congregation. Therefore a recent gift of £500 brought to the church £640

Here are two recent examples of how the new scheme can work: several generous donations to the Windmill Fund qualified for tax relief because the donors had made Gift Aid Declarations back-dated to 6 April and we were able to reclaim tax on much of the sponsorship for the children's bike ride in aid of the Windmill fund.

So, remember, if you are a taxpayer and you are about to make a donation to the church think - 'Have I given a Gift Aid Declaration and can this contribution be traced back to me?' Get to know your Christian Stewardship number (available from Lynda Coleman) and put your cash or cheque in one of the Gift Aid envelopes which will be available in church and write your name or number on the outside. That way, your confidentiality will be maintained and the Church can claim back the tax.

LYNDA COLEMAN



**Revd Tim's latest invention
collects the Offering**

FORTHCOMING

 **BARN DANCE**
Saturday 30 September
7:00-10:00 pm
£6 adults £3 children
Buffet Supper Provided

WEEK OF ACCOMPANIED PRAYER

Sunday 15 - Friday 20
October

QUIET DAY

led by Val Hancock
Saturday 11 November
Julie Billeart Centre

 **BOOK SALE with
CHRISTMAS
CAKES
and JAMS**

Autumn Course

The Modern Moral Maze

Six Wednesday Evenings

11 October, 1, 8, 15, 22, 29 November

8:00 pm Truman Room

Led by Ian Christie and Celia Thomson

- 11 October ~ *What Kind of Ethics?*
- 1 November ~ *The Beginning of Life*
- 8 November ~ *The End of Life*
- 15 November ~ *The Future of Life*
- 22 November ~ *Valuing the Environment*
- 29 November ~ *Globalisation & Ethics*



Christ Church Information



CHURCH DIARY October to December 2000

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| 30 Sep 7:00-10:00pm Barn Dance | 4 Nov 10:00am Commemoration of the Departed (All Souls) |
| 1 Oct 8:00pm PCC Meeting | 5 Nov <i>ALL SAINTS' SUNDAY</i> |
| 3 Oct 11:00am Holy Communion | 7 Nov 11:00am Holy Communion |
| 4 Oct 2:00pm Outing to Ham House | 8 Nov 8:00pm The Modern Moral Maze - The End of Life |
| 5 Oct 9:30am Holy Communion | 9 Nov 9:30am Holy Communion |
| 7 Oct 2:00pm Wedding of Sarah Clough and David Kemmitt | 11 Nov QUIET DAY led by Val Hancock, Julie Billeart Centre |
| 8 Oct Trinity 16 | 12 Nov The Third Sunday before Advent - Remembrance |
| 10 Oct 8:00pm Churches Together in West Wimbledon, St Saviour's | 15 Nov 8:00pm The Modern Moral Maze - The Future of Life |
| 11 Oct 8:00pm THE MODERN MORAL MAZE Autumn Course, Truman Room | 16 Nov 9:30am Holy Communion |
| 12 Oct 9:30am Holy Communion | 18 Nov 11:00am-3.30pm BOOK SALE with Christmas Cakes and Jams |
| 15 Oct Trinity 17 | 19 Nov The Second Sunday before Advent |
| 15-20 Oct WEEK OF ACCOMPANIED PRAYER | 22 Nov 8:00pm The Modern Moral Maze - Valuing the Environment |
| 19 Oct 9:30am Holy Communion | 25 Nov 2:30pm Wedding of Sandra Bristol and Richard Davey |
| 22 Oct Trinity 18 | 26 Nov <i>Christ the King</i> |
| 26 Oct 9:30am Holy Communion | 29 Nov 8:00pm The Modern Moral Maze - Globalisation and Ethics |
| 28 Oct WALK from St Paul's Cathedral to Southwark Cathedral | 30 Nov 9:30am Holy Communion St Andrew |
| 29 Oct Bible Sunday | |
| 1 Nov 8:00pm The Modern Moral Maze - The Beginning of Life | |
| 2 Nov 9:30am Holy Communion | |

