

THE CLARION

The Magazine of The Parish of St Mary The Boltons

5 October 2008

An Associate Vicar for St. Mary The Boltons

I'm delighted to announce that the Wardens and PCC have agreed to the appointment of an Associate Vicar for St. Mary's and that the Revd. Ruth Lampard will be taking up this position at the end of October.

The appointment of an Associate Vicar marks a new stage in the history of St. Mary's and comes at a time when we believe we should respond more fully to the needs our local community. These have arisen particularly since the merger with St. Jude's parish in 2006, an area which is substantially different from St. Mary's previous parish. There is also a need for more pastoral visiting by a member of the clergy, greater follow-up with our wedding couples and baptism families and more support for our work with the Sunday School and teenage children.

Until recently Ruth has been chaplain to the Bishop of Kensington, the Rt. Revd. Michael Colclough, a position which came to an end when the Bishop retired to become Canon Residentiary at St. Paul's Cathedral. Prior to that Ruth served as assistant curate of St. Lawrence, Eastcote and as assistant curate of St. Peter, Ealing; in both parishes she worked successfully with all age groups and initiated new projects.

Ruth did her theological training at Westcott House, Cambridge and trained and served as a solicitor before being accepted for ordination. In addition to being chaplain to the Bishop of Kensington, Ruth was the Area Adviser on Environmental Issues, and this remains an area of particular interest for her.

I am confident that Ruth will bring a wide range of experience and interests which will help us to expand our work both within our church community and the larger parish and I am very much looking forward to working with her.

While the Bishop of London and the Archdeacon of Middlesex (the archdeacon for the Kensington

Area) fully support Ruth's appointment, the diocese is not in a position to fund the post. The Wardens and PCC have therefore agreed that we at St. Mary's will fund it for a five year period. This presents us with a significant financial challenge but we believe we can meet it. We are already very grateful to some members of the parish who have made a substantial contribution to Ruth's first year stipend.

I believe that St. Mary's is about to enter a very exciting new chapter in her history. Yes, it will be challenging but I believe it will also be rewarding and fruitful and I am looking forward to the coming years.

We hope Ruth will be licensed at an evening service on Wednesday 29th October at St. Mary's. The date and time have still to be confirmed but please put the date in your diary. I hope many of you will attend and so give your support to Ruth and to St. Mary's.

Ginny Thomas

Thursday Lunch Club

The speaker on Thursday 9 October will be Pat Schleger, The title of the talk will be 'A life of graphic design'. Please put your name on the sign up sheet at the back of the church.

Update from Rose Wrigley

Dear friends at St Mary's,
I was amazed when I realised that it is already over a year since I last saw you all. In June this year I moved to the Lake District, where my husband George has taken a new job as vicar of the Langdale Valley near Ambleside. It's the first time he has been a vicar, as in our previous church in Hounslow he was doing his curacy training, and before that he taught in a school for many years. So there have been a lot of changes for us happening all at the same time.

What can I say? We have been made very welcome here and it rains a lot. Nearly everything seems different, which should not be surprising, I

suppose. The first difference I noticed was how fresh the air smells, and the second was how much slower the pace of life is - it is no use being in a hurry around here! The parish is very wide spread geographically, incorporating the whole valley which is about 8 miles long with a resident population of about 600 (that is not including visitors of whom there are very many).

The church has a core group of faithful, committed and enthusiastic members, and a wider group of interested supporters, and welcomes many visitors throughout the year. It celebrated its 150th anniversary of the building, on the very day that George was officially made vicar, and to celebrate that anniversary there is an interesting exhibition in the back of the church depicting the history of the last 150 years of life in the valley.

I would love to hear how you all are, and if anyone feels like writing it would be lovely to hear from you. My address is The Vicarage, Chapel Stile, Ambleside, Cumbria LA22 9JG.

With love and best wishes,
Rose

Behind the hymn

Dear Lord and Father of Mankind

By John Greenleaf Whittier

Dear Lord and Father of Mankind is a very beautiful devotional hymn by the Quaker poet John Greenleaf Whittier (1807-1892). As well as being a popular poet and hymn-writer, Whittier was a passionate anti-slavery activist, at a time when feelings ran high enough on both sides to precipitate the American Civil War; Whittier himself was burned out of his office in the anti-slavery centre in Philadelphia in 1838. Some of his poems and hymns survive. Of these, *Dear Lord and Father* is the most popular. It has a deceptive straightforwardness about it. It argues for simplicity, quietness, calm; perhaps especially in our busy and noisy world, it speaks powerfully of the need to be still and know that God is God. That was Whittier's intention, but it's not quite as simple as that. *Dear Lord* wasn't originally a hymn, but part of a longer poem, *The Brewing of Soma* — soma being a hallucinogenic drug used in ancient times to create a counterfeit spiritual experience. According to Whittier, As in the child-world's early year,
Each after age has striven
By music, incense, vigils drear,

And trance, to bring the skies more near,
Or lift men up to heaven!

In other words, we are still spiritually cheating; instead of listening to the still, small voice of calm, In sensual transports wild as vain
We brew in many a Christian fane (temple)
The heathen Soma still!

The language of the poem isn't very accessible now, but the hymn still speaks to us – and perhaps more clearly when we understand what the poet was really getting at. The Quaker tradition is to come before God in silence, and only to speak when there's something worth saying. Nowadays that's rare; we feel uncomfortable without music, and silence in worship is often awkward. Whittier says that that's not the way to bring God closer to us, or us to God. There is no need to create a mood, either with soft chords and gentle strumming or with loud praise music; that's like drinking soma, and we're still cheating.

In a way, it's ironic that we sing *Dear Lord and Father* at all! In fact, it does lend itself to prayerful meditation as well as congregational singing, perhaps with different people reading each verse and allowing space for quiet meditation in between.

When it's sung, it's usually to the tune Repton, by Hubert Parry. He wrote it in 1888 for his oratorio *Judith*, where it's the setting of a contralto aria, *Long since in Egypt's pleasant land*.
Mark Woods

Nonsuch Singers concert

**Southwark Cathedral
Friday 5 December 7.00pm**

BACH – CHRISTMAS ORATORIO *(parts 1-3 & 6)*

Rebecca Outram *soprano*
Andrew Radley *countertenor*
Thomas Hobbs *tenor*
Stuart MacIntyre *bass*
Canzona
Graham Caldbeck *conductor*

Tickets on sale at the door

Fairtrade

At the PCC meeting on the 18 September it was decided that we will no longer operate a monthly Fairtrade stall. It was felt that with the ready availability of Fairtrade products in most supermarkets, our time and effort could be best spent focused on other church activities. We will continue to support the Fairtrade fortnight and make sure all product used in church are Fairtrade

Why celebrate harvest?

We Plough The Fields and Scatter will be sung in our churches over the next few weeks – but why? After all, just 1.8% of the UK's workforce is employed in farming and we no longer have to bother preparing food as ready meals are shipped daily into our supermarkets and placed straight into our microwaves.

Harvest has traditionally been an opportunity to thank God for the crops and food that has been safely gathered in, ere the winter storms begin. As towns have grown in size, we have become more dependent on supermarkets and food is always in season, it seems rather quaint to praise God for 'all the richness of the field'.

And yet Jesus taught us to pray 'Give us this day our daily bread'. The recent floods across the UK reminded of how reliant we are on God for our provision – and how much of our green and pleasant land is used for farming.

Harvest isn't a new invention. It's something man has been doing for years: in Genesis 4, we learn of Cain and Abel's attempts to thank God for their crops. Moses gives thanks to God in Genesis 8 – and they are doing so partly because they knew that 'The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it' (Genesis 2:15).

In Deuteronomy 14 we learn about the concept of tithing, given to us by God. Although we now apply this to our finances, it could be part of our supermarket shop, spending an additional sum of money for those in your community who would welcome store cupboard staples.

In some ways the practice of giving food at harvest has now been relegated to watching the children in our fellowships bring tins to the front of the church during the first harvest hymn. This food, usually added to a display featuring a corncob loaf, is then distributed to the parish needy. In some fellowships it's been done away with altogether.

Perhaps this is a mistake, as all good gifts around us are sent from heaven above.

Another reason to celebrate harvest is education. Many charities run harvest appeals, offering information about their work to bring good harvests to the world's poor, but we also need to think about those children who think that food comes from the supermarket. Harvest is great opportunity for us to remind ourselves of the link between the working of the land and the food on our plates.

After all, for the fruits of his creation, thanks be to God.

Nonsuch Singers concert

St Martin-in-the-Fields Tuesday 21 October 7.30pm

Martin Cousin *piano*
Graham Caldbeck *conductor*

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St. Paul's Cathedral Education Department

Every year, St. Paul's welcomes over 25,000 school children and the Education Department exists to ensure they get the very best out of their visit. We urgently need more people to join our team of volunteer guides for school groups. If you are reasonably active and enjoy talking to children and young people, and are able to come to the Cathedral on one day a week, we would love to hear from you. Full training will be given!

For more information, please contact Laura Arends, the Head of Education on 0207 2468 353.

All volunteers will be expected to obtain an Enhanced Disclosure from the CRB.

**Contributions for the November Clarion
should be sent in to the church office by
24 October**