



## **LINK**

Oxford Diocesan Deaf Churches

Issue 37 – EASTER 2014

## Ministers Easter Letter

Dear Friends

When I entered St Bartholomew's Church Nettlebed the other morning, I was taken by surprise to see the light shining through the lovely stained glass East window. I thought wow! I could have stood and stared for ages, but life had to go on! The Easter message also makes us stop, and reflect, we then carry on with our lives with renewed hope.

This special window is shown on the front cover of our magazine, and was designed by John Piper.

There are three main lights. The central light shows the tree of life bearing 7 fruits. Seven was used by the early Christians as the number that stands for completeness and perfection. In the left light are the fishes, another symbol of the church, and the right light are the butterflies. The butterfly is a symbol appropriately of the resurrection.

Now, as I look out of my window I see a lavender border. After the wind, rain and cold – the plants are looking very damp and tired. I know though, in a few months these lavender plants will spring to life, and there will be loads of butterflies fluttering around them. A sight I love to see.

A bit like life. During the past year some of us have lost close family members and dear friends, the Easter butterfly brings us real hope. Not a hope like when we cross our fingers and hope something will happen. The hope I am talking about is real hope in the future, new life in Jesus, through the healing and life changing love of God, a deep and long lasting hope.

Just as the caterpillar changes into a butterfly, shrugging off the old, we too can live like the butterfly. It's not without pain, it may not be easy, but we are given strength to do so, through the death and resurrection of Jesus.

So, I am very much looking forward to our Easter Day service at St Bartholomew's church Nettlebed on 20<sup>th</sup> April at 3pm. Do come and join us, and share in our Easter Day celebration. Enjoy the butterflies when you see them, and remember what they remind us of – Christ is Risen! Alleluia.

Yours in Christ

**Roger**

## **Easter Services**

Maundy Thursday service 17<sup>th</sup> April, 7pm at Reading Deaf Centre

Good Friday, Stations of the Cross 18<sup>th</sup> April, 3pm at Oxford Deaf Centre

Easter Day 20<sup>th</sup> April, Holy Communion, 3pm at St Bartholomew's Church, High Street, Nettlebed, Oxon RG9 5DA



## **Women's World Day of Prayer**

St. Michael's Church, Spencers Wood, Reading

7<sup>th</sup> March 2014

### **"Streams in the Desert"**

This year the Service was prepared by the Christian women of Egypt and their theme was "Streams in the Desert". "The Lord says; I will pour water on the thirsty land and streams on the dry ground, I will pour my spirit upon your descendants and my blessing on your offspring."

The Bible Story being told, was "Jesus and the woman at the well" and took place in the form of a play with many ladies taking different parts. Sue Dyson played the part of a helper who accompanied Isis, an ancient Egyptian down the aisle. Sue had to place a blue scarf, representing the River Nile, on the table and later to pour water from a jug into a bowl representing streams of living water that Jesus was saying to the woman at the well.

The service was well attended and I know the organiser Elizabeth Joyes was delighted to have Sue taking part and also Revd Vera Hunt in the congregation. Many people afterwards said they had enjoyed watching the three of us signing the hymns. It would be lovely next year if many more deaf ladies could attend the service as part of the world wide women's day of prayer.



**Anna Knaggs**



### **LLM Update**

I am Chair of Reading Deaf Club Over Fifties Group and while I was training to be an LLM the group had been very interested in hearing about my training and encouraging me, so I asked them if they would like to see the result of my training by allowing me to hold a Service for them. They were really keen to give it a try, that was about 3 years ago and the Services, three or four a year, have continued. They are well attended by people from Reading, Guildford, Wokingham, Oxford and sometimes from other

places. People come and bring their sandwiches and spend the day signing with their friends.

Today, 18<sup>th</sup> March 2014, it was wonderful to share the Service with Tony Evans, who was my assistant leading the responses and signing the Lord's Prayer, Ken Dyson, our recently returned LLM, who gave a great sermon about Noah and his Ark and Sue Dyson who signed a hymn so beautifully. It was a wonderful sight to see the whole congregation joining in and signing of the hymns.

We hold our Services on a Tuesday, our club day, when it is easier for people to get there. Those who don't have their own transport are brought to the Centre by the Readibus and others come in their own cars, unlike on a Sunday when it is often difficult to get to church, either because of lack of transport, or it is the only day when we can see our families.

It would be great to see more people coming to join us, our Services are signed and it would be lovely if we could encourage people to take part, we have had some offers already. If you are interested and would like to know the dates of our Services please contact me either by email [annaknaggs@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:annaknaggs@yahoo.co.uk) or mobile 07947241201, or fax 0118 9885783.

**Anna Knaggs**



### **“The Verger”**

There is a story written many years ago by a man called Somerset Maugham called 'The Verger'. I think we can gain some Christian understanding from this tale.

The story goes like this: There was a verger employed at a rich and posh church in London. One day it is discovered that he had never learnt to read or write. The leaders of that church decided that it was wrong for an uneducated man to serve on the staff of so grand a church and he was asked to leave. The dismissed verger does not sulk. He was fortunate to have a gift with money and managed to build up a business which made a lot of money. Some years later, a local bank manager asks this now valued customer to sign some papers in connection to his investments and learns to his amazement the mans lack of education. The manager says: 'I wonder where you would be now if you could only have learnt to read to read and write.' 'I will tell you where I would be,' he replies, 'still acting as a verger at the local church.'

That verger was happily employed in what many would see as a rather cosy, undemanding job. Suddenly he found himself without a job. At first it must have seemed really difficult and upsetting. But our hero picks himself up, accepted the new situation and so tackled it and rose to the challenge and made a success of his life. It was a success much greater than any that would have come his way had he remained safely, if unadventurously in his vergers' house for the rest of his life.

In the events around Easter we think of Jesus, of how throughout his life his circumstances changed, and of how in obedience to God he met each change, and found good within those changes. Jesus could have remained a respected teacher in Nazareth if he wanted to. But that was not to be. He found himself instead throughout Galilee, proclaiming the Kingdom of God. Useful and fulfilling this work was, however the time arrived when he must go up to Jerusalem and allow himself to be arrested, tortured and killed. His life seemed to have ended in failure but, because Jesus believed that it was Gods will that had to be done, he had accepted each new challenge. Loss had turned to gain, defeat became triumph.

If the verger in the story had remained a verger he would not have achieved as much. If Jesus had remained a carpenter in Nazareth he would not have become a teacher and prophet; if he had not visited Jerusalem or had been less controversial when he arrived there he would not have been famous for his wisdom but never saviour of the world.

When we think about our lives we may want a quiet life, uneventful, healthy, happy and long. But few of us can escape anxiety and distress. We may not lose our jobs like the verger but there are plenty of other difficulties to overcome as the years pass. These changes can be sources of bitterness, or there can be opportunities somewhere within them. The victory of the cross was won by Jesus by the way in which he willingly and faithfully carried out Gods will for him. Whatever our pains and difficulties it is good to remember what Christ had to contend with and how he triumphed and what he accomplished.

**Ben Whitaker**



**Christmas Service at St. Georges Church,  
Britwell, Slough**

We were honoured to have the Revd Canon Professor Martyn Percy, from Ripon College, Cuddesdon, Oxford with us on this very special day when all our Deaf churches came together to celebrate Christmas.

In his sermon Revd Percy preached about this special picture which is below. Here is part of his sermon:

‘According to Luke’s gospel, Christ is born in Bethlehem because of the census that Emperor Augustus set in motion throughout the Roman controlled world. But in Pieter Bruegel the Elder’s ‘The Census in Bethlehem’ (painted around 1580) he sets the events leading up to the birth of Jesus in a busy Flemish village. His picture is filled with men, women, children and animals going about the common business of living. There must be more than two hundred figures in this village scene, going about their daily chores: no one sees anything unusual. In this winter scene, children skate and lob snowballs. Others warm themselves by stoves, and watch the world go by.

Bruegel's powerful painting somehow manages to unify the random bustle of what that original census must have been like. Bruegel wants us to enter into the village and orient ourselves as any other visitor would have done. When we get our bearings we notice that a crowd of people is collecting in the foreground to the left. Just inside some men sit at a table examining documents and making notes in a ledger. The villagers crowd around waiting to be examined.

Reading the painting from left to right we can't help noticing two large wooden O's made by the wheels of some hay wagons. Here the circle has been universally accepted as the symbol of eternity and everlasting existence. As the monogram for God it stands for both the perfection and eternity of God. Then we notice a young woman on a horse led by a man on foot. The woman is almost hidden by her heavy winter clothing. But we realize this is Mary. So here is Jesus – only he is hidden from our sight. He is yet to be born. He is present, yet not revealed. Here is the Advent hope. Bruegel's intention as an artist, who deliberately loses Mary and Joseph in the crowd, Mary's pregnancy concealed under a heavy winter coat seems to be saying we must actively look for Jesus.

**In Bruegel's picture, heaven has come to earth – but in disguise, hidden under a winter coat.'**



**Vera Hunt**

## Notices

### Faithful Departed

We remember before God the Souls of the Faithful Departed, and we pray especially for the souls of:-

Ann Eastman (Oxford)  
Robert Bradford (Reading)  
Hilda Goldney (Milton Keynes)

Almighty God, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ you have given to each of us the hope of eternal life. Renew us by the gift of your spirit and enable us to live in the new life of Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with us forever.

### Future Services

Rogation Service, Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> May, 3.30pm at St Michael's Church, Steeple Claydon, Bucks MK18 2QR – Please note time 3.30 NOT 3pm

Harvest Festival, Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> October, 3pm at St Andrew's Church, Dean Court, Botley, Oxon OX2 9DN – *Preacher: Dr Martin Gorrick, Archdeacon, Oxford*

Christmas Communion with Carols, Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> December, 3pm at St Mary's Church, Upper Bucklebury, Berks RG7 6PR – *Preacher: Rev Andrew Proud, Bishop of Reading*

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