

Church Drive January 2012



Monthly News from St Giles West Bridgford

In this edition...

The Curate Writes

Morning Prayer

Book Review

EcoCongregation Explained

From the Choir Vestry

Pictures from some of our Christmas Events

Latest News from the Boys' Brigade

St Giles' Directory

What's on this Month at St Giles



The Curate Writes

New year, new beginnings, and here I am impersonating Lee in Rector Writes... But do not fear, I have no New Year resolution to cut my hair and start wearing a woolly hat! Actually, I have no resolutions at all. No point, as, just like everyone else (unlike maybe you, dear reader), I never keep them. The list is too long to consider – less chocolate, more time off, less grumping, more praying... And less chocolate, more exercise invariably turns into more chocolate, less exercise as dreary January descends... Old habits die hard, and the old me beats the would-be ‘new me’ almost every time. Change is hard, and unfortunately doesn’t happen just because I wish it to happen. Even surface changes challenge us to change deeply ingrained patterns of life. Life is like spaghetti. Stuck together (clearly not al dente); pull on one thread of life and all kinds of other things come along with it. It’s messy. And so changing one thread rarely works. We need to address the whole package.

And addressing the whole package is a life-long task, I suspect. Beyond me, though maybe not beyond God. Which is why coming back to this point, again and again, every year, of thinking about the things we would like to change, of evaluating our lives, is probably a good thing. And obviously, the new beginning does not come out of nowhere. It rests on the new beginning that we remember, year after, in the Christmas season, of God’s new action in the world. It easy to get tired of the story, get tired of the seasons. We remember. We know the story. But we, human beings, are creatures of habit. Creatures who find it difficult to let go of our ways of being and welcome God’s transforming power. And so we need to be reminded, year after year, and to rest on the permanence and solidity of God’s story and God’s action in our lives, as individuals and as a community. God is always doing something new, challenging, transforming, healing; yet God is also always continuing the work he has begun, reliable, always a God of love, of care, of justice, of peace.

God promises that in Christ, we are a 'new creation'. 2 Corinthians 5:17, "So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new!" This is the whole package. A new creation. Entirely. But Scripture is realistic. This is about our status in Christ. It expresses what can be made possible. Yet embracing this new identity is difficult, and progressive. It is a work God accomplishes together with us, in combined effort, as we read in Philippians 2:12: "Therefore, my beloved... work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who is at work in you, enabling you both to will and to work for his good pleasure". God will work with us, patiently, over the years, over the seasons; change may happen dramatically at times, but often, it will happen slowly, through the drip feed of our walk with God, the teaching we hear, the Christians who walk alongside us. And through our own decisions. So it may be a good thing after all, to ask ourselves at the start of this new year, what is God doing among us? What is God doing in each of our lives? And start to give God permission, and space, to work in our midst.

As for me, I still don't think I can give up my cocoa addiction. But I can share the joy. Chocolate, anyone?

Isabelle Hamley

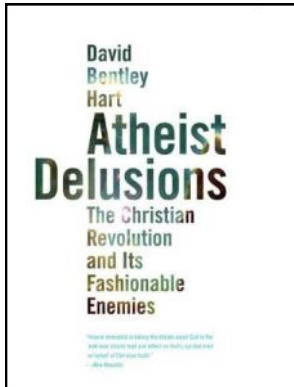
Morning Prayer

Our Morning Prayer service is a chance to start the day with God, with bible readings and prayers (that's what the back page of the Bulletin is all about), and time for open prayer too. The service lasts around 15 - 20 minutes.

For January, we are trying a new time for Morning Prayer - it will start at 9.15am - to give people with school children the opportunity to come straight after the school run - why not try it once (or more) a week?

Book Review

“Atheist Delusions” by David Bentley Hart



The majority of this demanding but exciting book is taken up with methodically demolishing, one by one, the popular myths that are peddled about the role of Christianity in human history. Such myths include the following: that ‘religion’ or, more precisely, Christianity, has been responsible for the most despicable atrocities ever to have stained the annals of time; that Christianity is always and everywhere opposed to ‘scientific truth’; that it was the Enlightenment that

rescued mankind from the yoke of Christian darkness, rekindling humanity’s moral and intellectual flames after centuries of obscurity under irrational faith; and so on. Several chapters begin with quotations from popular literature on Christian history which are then shown to be based on false assumptions, dubious historical sources, or downright ignorance.

However, Hart does not naively celebrate a Church that has only brought good into the world. What it comes down to most often is this: whether or not, throughout history, someone was a Christian or a pagan, by the sheer fact that he or she was also ‘human’ they were necessarily potential monsters. Supposed lovers of Christ were often just as susceptible to brutality as were their heathen counterparts, but not more so, and quite likely less so.

Where Christianity deserves credit, however, Hart gives it in abundance. Take the overarching celebration of the book, for example: the Christian Revolution. Unlike what he deems to be false revolutions that fundamentally change nothing, the Christian Revolution changed everything. Our consciences, that little voice in the mind demanding us to welcome strangers, to feed the hungry, and to heal the sick, is not something that has always existed. It has come to be through the slow, gradual, but ultimately tectonic,

shift in Western human morality that began with a Jewish political prisoner who was executed by an imperial regime, and who, three days later, was resurrected. Hart demonstrates time and again that, where a Christian community was present, the sick were tended to, orphans were cared for, the hungry fed, and the downtrodden uplifted.

Perhaps the most powerful chapters of the book are those concerning modern concepts of freedom and the fate of Christianity in the modern world. For Hart, to be entirely modern is to believe in nothing. Not just figuratively, but literally: to believe in nothingness itself. We are the great nihilists, placing our trust in an original absence underlying all of reality, a void in which all things are possible, from which arises no impediment to our wills, and before which we may consequently choose to make of ourselves what we will. We assume that there is no criterion by which to judge our choices that stands higher than the unquestioned good of free choice itself, and that therefore all judgment is an infringement upon our freedom. Thus, the current obsession with choice ('Choose your school!' 'Choose your hospital!') comes to sound a little more ominous than its civilised façade might admit.

If in one sense Christianity permeates everything we are, in another sense it is disappearing, and something new is gradually taking its place. And if that happens, he warns, the likes of Dawkins and Hitchens, even in their darkest hours, could not imagine what a West purged of all Christian presuppositions would look like. It is time, he notes, mournfully, that Christians prepare themselves once more for the desert.

Claire Barker

Eco Congregation Explained

In November, St Giles PCC accepted a proposal for the church to join up to “EcoCongregation” scheme.

EcoCongregation provides a framework to enthuse and equip churches to engage with the theology of creation, care for the earth and its people. EcoCongregation began as a Churches Together in Britain project, supported by the Keep Britain Tidy Campaign.

Recently, ARocha, the Christian environment group have assumed responsibility, and are to dovetail it with their partner churches scheme. ARocha, started by a Church of England vicar, run environmental projects in several countries which involve safeguarding habitats and often community development.

What will it involve?

This is a Practical programme, designed to look at all areas of church life, from worship to buildings to teaching to mission, and encourage us as a community to take the next steps in our relationship to God’s world. Various ‘modules’ consider different areas, and completion leads to an award.

There are resources for children’s work, worship, teaching; sermons and housegroups, things to “green” the church (e.g. light bulbs, energy supplier), and ideas to help people reconnect with God’s creation.

Why?

As human beings, embodied and grounded in creation, the issue of our place within, and relationship to God’s world threads itself throughout all areas of our lives and faith. The issues of justice and the land are often intertwined in the old testament. Care for creation was adopted by the Church of England in 1998, see “Shrinking the Footprint”, and fits alongside evangelism and social justice as part of discipleship.

Who is going to do it?

A core team of 8 people have championed the idea. We will work alongside others in the church as appropriate.

Is it going to be a lot of extra work?

It's more a case of doing the same amount of things differently, and reflecting consciously on our relationship to creation as God given and important in God's eyes.

How does this fit with the vision?

We see this as a holistic part of a church vision; it connects to the character of God, the theology of creation and the land as seen through the Old Testament, it offers an opportunity to engage and involve children and youth, and offers outreach possibilities to the wider community.

How much will it cost?

Working through the modules will require time and effort - but several modules will be feeding in ideas and resources to things where time and effort are already expended (e.g. ideas for children's work, sermon and house group material). It is likely to call for some capital expenditure (e.g. more efficient lightbulbs!) but this would lead to lower operating costs.

Outreach and synergy

This project has the potential for us to draw people in who may be on the fringes of church.

First stage?

We will start working through the "Church Checkup" module in January, which assesses where we are as a church in relation to environmental issues.

More info?

More info – see www.ecocongregation.org/englandwales

Who is involved?

Katie Conley, Adrian Cudmore, Isabelle Hamley, Paul Hamley, Barbara Parish, Michelle Darkin Price, Anna Rich, Marc Routledge.
- Please come and chat to one of us to find out more!

From the Choir Vestry

Well we've sung all the carols, exchanged all the presents, eaten all the mince pies and finished off the mulled wine, so Happy New Year of our Lord 2012.

As you would expect my theme is music and although the festive music has gone for another year we still need more voices in the church choir to continue with God's praises. We greatly appreciated those who joined us over Christmas and enjoyed a larger choir for the Advent Evensong and the Lessons and Carols. If you enjoyed taking part or listening to the music why not give it a try, even if you can't make every service your help at any time helps to lift the rest of us. No end of people have said that they enjoyed listening to the "choir", only with help can this enjoyment carry on.

We have many challenges to face this year and with your help we will still be here to face them and present next years Christmas music.

Many thanks to Andrew for his guidance and help-also for his confidence in us that "you can do it"!

Once again from Andrew and the choir-Happy New Year!

Pictures from some of our Christmas Events





8th Nottingham Boys' Brigade



November saw the Company Section District Table Tennis Competition and we had three Junior Company boys and four Seniors taking part. In the seniors, Niall Hughes, Reece Bensley

and Sam Salt all reached the semi-final stage. Niall defeated Sam and the reece lost to Daniel Brown of the 42nd in the other semi-final. The final saw an excellent game that went to five sets with Daniel beating Niall 11-9 in the final set. The Juniors were in a group of five and they played each other to decide the two finalists. In the final Nicholas Ford lost out to Ben Tragheim of the 42nd .

The final Competition in our hectic November was the Battalion Unihoc and there were nine teams competing and we joined with the 42nd to enter a team. Our team was in a group of four and we beat 38th 5-0, 32B 5-0 before losing 3-1 to the 32A. This was enough to qualify us for the semi-final where we were up against the 32C. This was a very close match and we were defeated 2-1 after sudden death extra time.

The boys from our Company were Reece Bensley, Joseph Kerry, Oliver Kerry and Stanley Hanson.

The 1st round of the National Table-Tennis Competition this year saw us playing the 32nd Nottingham. I'm afraid that on the night the 32nd were too strong for our team and we were whitewashed 9-0.

TEAM: Niall Hughes, Reece Bensley and Sam Salt

In the 3rd round of the National Chess Competition we were drawn at home to the 1st Chasetown and it was a very good match with the scores being tied at the end 4.5pts each. This meant the result was decided on count back to game 4 which we won thanks to Nicholas Ford. So we were through to the quarter-finals.

Keith Whitaker
Captain

St Giles' Directory

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| Rector | Lee Proudlove | Tel: 981 1112 rector@stgilesparish.com |
| Curate | Isabelle Hamley | Tel: 077300 10110 curate@stgilesparish.com |
| Church Wardens | Caroline Harper Richard Crawley | Tel: 914 5650 Tel: 981 3262 |
| Administrator | Karen Clingan | Tel: 07948 834 250 admin@stgilesparish.com |
| Youth Worker | Tom Devas | Tel: 07964 756559 youthworker@stgilesparish.com |
| Pastoral Care Co-ordinator | Daphne Carter | Tel: 974 3749 pastoral@stgilesparish.com |
| House Groups | Katie Conley | Tel: 914 3164 |
| Seniors | Johanna Langheld | Tel: 846 9461 |
| PCC Secretary | Adrian Cudmore | Tel: 981 3877 |
| PCC Treasurer | Eddie Pearce | Tel: 981 3580 treasurer@stgilesparish.com |
| Sacristan | Maureen Swann | Tel: 859 0975 moswann@googlemail.com |
| Dir. of Music | Andrew Rootham | Tel: 921 3081 |
| Junior Church | Sarah & Iain Moppett | Tel: 974 4442 |
| Sunbeams | Debbie Keown | Tel: 914 9684 |
| Toddler Group | Caroline Crew | Tel: 914 2465 |
| Wedding Co-ordinator | Caroline Harper | Tel: 914 5650 |
| Church Hall Lettings | Eileen Else | Tel: 923 4863 |
| Church Cleaning and Flower Rota | Helen Jarvis | Tel: 981 9947 |

Coming up @ St Giles in January

Monday 9th, 8.00pm

- First Priority Prayer Meeting in Church.
Come and make prayer your first priority. Everyone is welcome for a time of worship and prayer in church.

Tuesday 10th, 10.30am

- Seniors Coffee at Bradmore Garden Centre.

Saturday 14th, 2.00pm

- Auditions for Easter Drama in Church

Wednesday 18th, 12noon

- Soup and Rolls Lunch at the Rectory

Thursday 19th, 3.45pm

- Messy Church

Thursday 26th, 7.00pm

- Youth Night

Details of Sunday services and themes are listed on our Term Card, available in Church from Sunday 8th January

If you have an idea for an article for Church Drive, or an event you wish to advertise, please contact
Karen Clingan