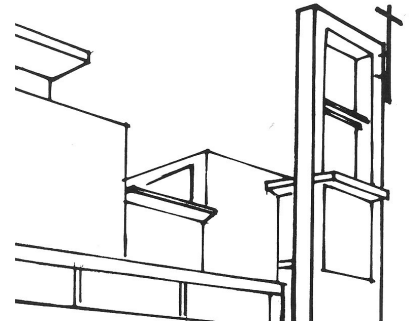


The Octagon



BAR HILL CHURCH NEWSLETTER

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Resurrection's Children - God is better than you are at resurrection

Recently I have been pondering the meaning of these words. My sense is that the writer intends us to reflect on where we place our hope in life: on ourselves and our own resources, or on the mercies and grace of God. Scanning your eye over many of the lifestyle magazines on the rack of a local supermarket, you can see many ways in which people are urged to take control of their lives, to find hope from despair, to set themselves free from problems of weight and relationship stresses or to become supremely fit and healthy. We live in the self-help generation. Every bookshop has vast areas devoted to self-help books or a section entitled 'Mind, Body and Spirit'. Your destiny is within your control. Your hopes can be realised if you only try hard enough. Anything is possible with dreams and hard work.

Resurrection: to bring back to life from the dead; to restore all that is broken and decayed. An Easter collect calls resurrection 'a recall to life, and a raising up to eternal joy'.

Maggie Dawn has commented that 'Easter faith was born in the darkness.' On the day after Jesus' crucifixion the disciples faced bleak despair. Nothing they could have done could have helped them out of their dark situation. True, they could have swapped stories about Jesus' life and what a great blessing he had been to them, but such stories would have seemed hollow because, with Jesus' death, hope had also died; hope for a new life together; hope for the restoration of Israel, set free from the domination of the Romans, free to live without fear and oppression. God's resurrection power was to come into that place of bleak despair and to transform it through the unthinkable and unbelievable – the raising of Jesus from the dead.

Over the next fifty days, Jesus appeared to his disciples many times. God's resurrection was not to be seen as the single act of raising Jesus from the dead. Rather it was a sign of a new reality. God's resurrection came at the cost of Jesus' darkness and sacrifice. Jesus' cross became the path to life. As Jesus spent time with the disciples, they began to understand this. When the Holy Spirit descended on them in Jerusalem, suddenly the news of this new life was spread to a much larger audience. The joyful news of death defeated was proclaimed by Peter to thousands gathered together. *This Jesus God raised up and of that all of us are witnesses.* (Acts 2.32).

It is a strong temptation to try to force our own resurrection, to hope that by trying hard we can create a kind of joyful paradise on earth. We must remember that true resurrection, supplied by God, was born in the darkness, the darkness of the cross. We will never be able to break the power of sin and death ourselves. No amount of money or effort can bring about new life.

Acts chapter 3 recalls an incident where Peter and John were going up to temple at the hour of prayer after the events of the resurrection and the coming of the Holy Spirit. A crippled beggar asked them for alms, and he fixed his attention on them, expecting to receive something from them. *"But Peter said, I have no silver and gold. But what I have, I give you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, stand up and walk."* God is better than us at resurrection.

Rev'd Ruth Adams

As servants of Christ we commit ourselves to worship, work and witness together in his name to establish his kingdom in our village and beyond"

The Church Art Group –A different Kind of Mission

Just a bunch of amateurs dabbling in the afternoon, or is the Art Group part of a mission shaped church? The majority of the members of the art group do not attend church and you might well have been very surprised by the enthusiasm which greeted Ruth's suggestion of a display in the worship hall. Everyone found inspiration in the theme of Easter. From old masters to symbols of life and death; from biblical themes to spring flowers, each worked to his or her own ability. Perhaps it was the stillness and spiritual feeling in the light, quiet room that made us work.

Often we choose to paint in silence but equally there are moments of hilarity. We always encourage one another and the standard of work has definitely improved. The group has held two exhibitions which raised hundreds of pounds for charity and we also support the Community Market now. But the important thing is having time just for ourselves and tea breaks are a time for sharing. We tell each other of the best of times – children's weddings and the birth of grandchildren, of stressful times – coping with old, infirm parents and the hardest times – life threatening illness and bereavement. We have even experienced the terminal illness and death of members. Some of us are Christians and privately pray, but we ask nothing of each other except that we paint. Yet so much more comes from it. Please remember that we are part of the mission shaped church.

Art group meets in the church at 1.30 pm on Wednesday afternoons. You are most welcome to come.

Jan Hewins

Poverty: Let's End It – Christian Aid Week 2010

Last year a record 57 collectors called at over 2,000 homes in Bar Hill in Christian Aid Week. Together they raised £3,029.91, an increase over the previous year and the highest total ever in the village. GiftAid declarations added another £391.61.

Because we have a large group of people to join in the collection, we are able to cover the whole village. Every envelope matters. Some contain parking tokens (once one held a false fingernail), but some have substantial cheques inside them, and those with just a few pence in them all help to make up the total. Many people welcome collectors with smiles and filled envelopes. A few along the way are unpleasant and some may hide from you – that's part of this particular service. We go into the streets in Christian Aid Week to show that we care about our brothers and sisters who have far less than we do, and that we don't just care but are willing to do something to help them.

Please join in the collection. If you have never done this before, don't dismiss it as not for you. Everyone aged 16 and above may take part, and we especially need young collectors. We are sure you care about those in need as much as older people do; please demonstrate that.

The week runs from 9 to 15 May. Contact John and Jenny Knight on 780745 or at rgp@barhillchurch.com to show that you want to help to end poverty.

Gareth Davies Jones

A father of 3 and working for BT managing some external collaborations seven years ago, Gareth had to make a difficult decision. A talented guitarist, he felt he should focus more of his time on developing his gifts in song-writing by becoming a professional musician. Eventually, he made the big step and started touring. Since then he has played on local/national radio and at venues across the country, including Celtic Connections, Hitchin Folk Club, Brighton Arena and the Greenbelt Festival.

Gareth is clear about his Christian faith, which is evident in his selection of songs that now span 5 albums. For instance, on his most recent album 'Water and Light', there is a song called 'Butterfly'. It's about travelling to London to march for an end to the debt burden of developing countries, and seeing a butterfly caught on the underground. We instinctively want to rescue it - from being trapped there; from the prospect of dying without ever seeing the sun and flowers again - and release it to do what it was created for. How strange that we can focus on the butterfly and overlook the plight of millions of humans who are trapped by the world economic system.

Gareth is influenced by musicians such as James Taylor and 'Waterboys' front man Mike Scott, whose song 'Bring 'em all in' he performs brilliantly. During his time at Newcastle Uni, Gareth and our own John Grummitt formed a busking band which played the streets of the city and various university venues. After graduating, they added a drummer and a pianist to form the Christian band Two Small Fish, touring the north east for a year and recording a CD. While touring the area recently, John & Sheena arranged a visit to Bar Hill to do a rather informal gig in Ruth's living room! Here he played 'Broken things' by Julie Miller, one of the songs used in a memorial service for those lost in the Omagh bombing. More details of Gareth and his future tour dates can be found at his website <http://www.headingwestmusic.com>.

Peter Smethurst

At the recent Annual Meeting **Mike Hewins** was appointed to the Church Council as Honorary Treasurer. Mike is well known in the church, having held a number of appointments in the past, notably as Chairman of the Church Meeting around 20 years ago and he chaired the Appeal Group and managed the financial problems that had arisen in the building of the new worship centre. There is, however, more to Mike than is generally known, as I realized when seeing him on Look East a few weeks ago, explaining something about NHS funding. It has become the custom recently for new Council members to tell us something about themselves, and Mike has kindly agreed to answer a few questions for us.

Tell us something about your origins, and what brought you to Bar Hill and to the church here? I was born in Sheffield, brought up a Roman Catholic, and became Church of England while at university. I 'gained' both a wife and a PhD in Chemistry in Birmingham, and welcomed the opportunity to become "ecumenical" when we moved to Bar Hill in 1972, just before the Octagon was built. I worked at Pye Unicam, part of Philips Electronic Industries. We still live in the same house and Jan and I keep the only Red Setters in the village and have done so for 38 years.

I thought you had retired Mike, so what was this about NHS funding? In 2006 I retired from the NHS where I managed large education contracts across the whole of East Anglia. Prior to that I worked in higher education for 5 or 6

years after leaving Philips. Strictly I haven't fully retired and still supervise MSc research students for the Open University.

When I retired I looked for new interests in voluntary work. I am trustee and treasurer for "Inspire; well being through arts", a Cambridge based charity working with young and old people with various disabilities. I am also President of Cambridgeshire LINK, an independent network of individuals and voluntary organisations who work together to improve local health and social care services, hence my appearances on TV and Radio Cambridge.

In addition to your financial skills, what else do you see yourself contributing to the Church Council? A concern for people and forward planning. In my management career I always took a broad view to stop individuals having too much influence. Jan says I am irritatingly good at seeing the other person's point of view. I hope the same skills will be useful to the Church Council.

What are your favourite leisure interests? Keeping Jan happy by helping in the garden and with the dogs, and Grand children are another favourite! My tastes in music are eclectic, ranging from early polyphonic music through to traditional jazz. Books are always about history. Jan says I should give up major DIY projects, but so far I haven't!

The Election

There is going to be a General Election soon. By the time you read this, we may even know the date! Here is help from two Christian agencies.

1. Will you vote?

In his introduction to CARE's new magazine, their Executive Chairman, Lyndon Bowring recalls how 10 years ago he wrote to supporters, urging them to resist the 'creeping apathy' shown by the low election turnout. If anything, the situation is worse now, with widespread disillusionment about Parliament and questions about politicians' integrity.

Premier Christian Radio has launched a PROMISE TO VOTE campaign and invites us all to sign up, to show to the Speaker and Members of the House of Commons that there is a significant Christian vote that needs to be acknowledged, that Christians care about matters of national importance, and wish to see 'a stronger and better country that reflects Christian values'. Premier is aiming to deliver 100,000 signatures to Parliament by the end of April. A form is on the church notice board – please consider signing it. You can find Premier on Digital Radio, on Freeview 725 and at www.premier.org.uk. Or go straight to www.promisetovote.com.

2. Why should we vote?

The Old Testament makes it clear that God is passionately concerned about injustice and the needs of the poor. Christian churches in Eastern Europe have been very influential in shaping the nature of their governments, yet we

seem quite indifferent to the shape of our governments in a way that's not the case in many other parts of the world. If voter apathy is set to continue, then Christians have a very real opportunity to influence our future governments, especially if we do our homework and resist the temptation to vote purely out of habit. That means looking beyond party labels at the policies actually on offer, and it may mean changing our own past voting loyalty. The question is, what is God's view of those policies?

3. Whom will you vote for?

CARE is a Christian organisation that keeps a very watchful eye on what goes on in Parliament. The spring issue of their magazine, Care Today, contains a special supplement, "Make the Cross Count". You can also find it online at www.makethecrosscount2010.net. It's incredibly stimulating and informative and will equip you to make a reasoned decision about how to vote. Some of the key issues it identifies are:

- human trafficking, and forced prostitution;
- the tide of family breakdown;
- euthanasia and assisted suicide
- stem cell research.

There's also a prayer booklet for daily use in the 4 weeks leading up to polling day and for the week after.

That's all assuming that you are going to vote, as part of your Christian citizenship, as a grateful response to the privilege of living in a free society and, in CARE's words, finding voting to be "a delight as well as a duty". See you there?
Pam Vendy

APRIL CHURCH SERVICES

Thursday 1st	8.00pm	Holy Communion <i>Maundy Thursday</i>
Friday 2nd	12.30 pm	Prayer around the cross <i>Good Friday</i>
Sunday 4th <i>Easter Day</i>	6.30 am 10.00 am	Dawn Service (<i>at Lolworth Church: meet 6.15 to walk over</i>) Holy Communion
Sunday 11th	8.00 am 10.00 am 3.00 pm 6.30 pm	Holy Communion Quaker Meeting Family Fun (for children up to year 2) Evening Prayer
Sunday 18th	10.00 am 6.30 pm	Holy Communion Evening Prayer
Sunday 25th	10.00 am 6.30 pm	All-age Worship Holy Communion
Wednesday 28th	10.00 am 6.30 pm	All Age Worship Holy Communion
There is also a Roman Catholic service on Saturday evenings at 6.00 pm		
People to contact:	The minister:	Rev Ruth Adams Tel: 01954 789369
	Church Centre Manager:	Tel/Fax: 01954 206120 (office hours Monday, Wednesday & Friday 9.30-10.30)

April Events

Weekly: Tuesdays at 7.30pm Prayer time
Wednesdays at 1.30 Art Group
Thursdays at 1pm Knit & Natter
Fridays at 7.50pm Music Group Practice

Tues 6th - Thurs 8th Holiday at Home
Saturday 10th Community Market in the Octagon
Saturday 24th Holiday at Home outing.

Small Groups

After Easter we shall be continuing with the course on Prayer, with 3 more sessions to go. These will commence the week beginning 12th April.

Wednesday Communion

This service takes place on the fourth Wednesday of every month at 10.00 am in the church. We use a simple communion service from one or other of the denominations involved in Bar Hill church and we sing a couple of well-known hymns.

It is a peaceful and satisfying service followed by a cup of tea or coffee. If you would like and are able to come you will be made very welcome.

Anne Pitman

Dawn Service

We are delighted to be sharing our dawn service with Lolworth this year. We will meet at 6:15 to walk over to Lolworth together and then come back to have breakfast in the Octagon after the service.

Items from the Annual Church Meeting, 16th March

Election of Church Council: Ian Spence (Chairman of Church Meeting), Di Gunton (Secretary), Mike Hewins (Treasurer), June Hinchliffe, Peter Smethurst, Irena Spence (members). For a one year trial there will be a finance committee, with Wendy Caton assisting the treasurer as book keeper. Richard Sharman agreed to stay on as Property Coordinator for six months beyond his 5-year term until a replacement can be found. A handy man, Steve, has been employed to help him so the workload should be lighter. Malcolm Cox gave his sixth and final treasurer's report. Following the appeal for a youth worker pledged giving increased by £18,000 over last year but donations and the offertory had fallen. Malcolm thanked Jenny Knight for her work with the Inland Revenue and the regular giving plan, and Ruth and Maggie for their support. Malcolm was presented with a plant as thanks from the church.

The Child Protection Statement was read out by the whole meeting. A policy for vulnerable adults is also being introduced and all Holiday at Home helpers were having a CRB check. The meeting approved Linda King as a new Child Protection Coordinator. This concluded the annual church meeting.

In the following ordinary church meeting, John Grummit explained the work that he and Sheena will be doing in Papua New Guinea. Emily Lewney reported that the street pastoral work has begun with a social gathering in Foxhollow, and meetings for Pheasant Rise to come soon. Ruth reported progress with the Memorial Garden and the youth worker appointment: one interviewee had been asked back to meet Ruth and Claire again and to lead a service for the youth group.



Editor: Bryon Bache. Contributions and letters for future editions to reach the editor by 20th of each month, Email to: bwb10@cam.ac.uk or Tel: 01954 780336. The Octagon is distributed freely around the village; if you would like a copy please contact Alwyn Keeves on 01954 781050. We encourage you to receive it by E-mail: register for this at the church's website www.barhillchurch.com. © 2010 Bar Hill Church. The Octagon is produced and published by Bar Hill Church. Unauthorised copying or reproduction is prohibited: permission from the editor.