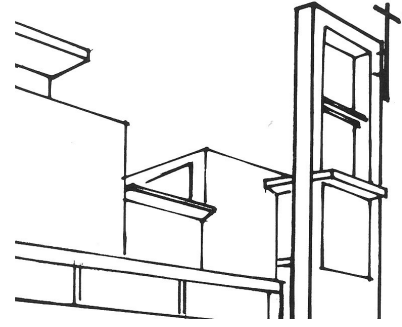


The Octagon



BAR HILL CHURCH NEWSLETTER

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The Adventure of Holiness

Talk of adventure takes my mind to tales of ‘derring do’ from Boy’s Own Annuals; with heroes undertaking great feats of bravery and succeeding in their goals against impossible odds. My thoughts also drift to those who participate in ‘adventure’ sports, where they battle their own strength and the elements to visit extreme places or to accomplish things never done before.

All of these things seem a long way away from a common notion of ‘holiness’ and ‘holy people’. Those participating in adventure are individuals engaging with the world in all its messiness and beauty. Holy people are often seen as those who distance themselves from the world, those who seek the refuge of monasteries and ‘holy huddles’ for protection from the storminess of ordinary life. Yet the call to be holy is a call for every human being. “*Be holy because I am holy*”, says God in Leviticus 11, and this call is far from a call to safety, but rather a call to participation in an adventure.

John Bunyan understood this when he wrote *The Pilgrim’s Progress from This World to That Which Is to Come*, or *Pilgrim’s Progress*, for short. His central character ‘Christian’ passes through many places which could easily come from an adventurer’s story book: “the Slough of Despond”, “Hill Difficulty”, “House Beautiful” and the “Enchanted Ground”. Those

who answer the call of God to “*be Holy because I am Holy*” enter a lifelong adventure where they are called to life in all its fullness, as it is truly meant to be lived. In the spirit of a true adventure the journey is not free from risks and challenges and it is in meeting those challenges that the adventurer is able to be transformed. Unlike the normal adventurer, however, the Christian must never rely on their own strength or preparations for the journey. Rather, they must concentrate on giving over their heart, soul, mind, body and strength to God and relying on the Holy Spirit for their energy and sustenance.

When Moses first encountered the holiness of God he was on a mountain top where he spotted a bush which was burning but yet was not being consumed. He knew then that he was in the presence of something extraordinary. As we progress along our own journey of holiness and are gradually transformed into something like the likeness of Christ, someone has suggested that we will actually become like “a burning bush that allows all the inhabitants of the earth to perceive the holiness of its God.” It is this final thing that makes our journey different. Often those participating in an adventure not only accomplish great things, but also win honour and glory for themselves. In our adventure we win honour and glory for God.

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”

*At the July Church Meeting, reported below, the vacancy for the Chairman of the Church Meeting was filled by the appointment of **Iain Spence** to the Church Council. We asked him to say a few words about himself, in answer to some leading questions.*

Irena and I came to Cambridge in 1986 for my job at the time, and we subsequently bought our first house in Stonefield, Bar Hill, in 1987. We were living just down the road from James Newcombe and he persuaded us to come to the Church when Daniel Cousins was preaching. This made me realize the error of my ways and I was confirmed shortly afterwards. We decided to move in 1988 but were gazumped on two houses in Bar Hill but eventually bought a house in Hardwick. We have moved subsequently but stayed in Hardwick.

We like the church in Bar Hill with the mixture of services and the message that we try to give out that there is one god and there should be one church. I think I would be naive to think we will achieve this in my lifetime but there is no reason why we should not provide a good example.

I was elected onto the Eldership, as it was then, some time ago in a time of need, and I believe I can bring calm and rational thought to the leadership, although how I will get on as

chairman at the meetings, I will leave you to judge. I just hope and pray that a change will bring back some degree of unity in the church.



During the day I am a Chartered Surveyor carrying out valuations and surveys on residential houses. I was made redundant last Christmas and have done a variety of bits and pieces since, while I consider my options. I believe my redundancy was fortunate in one way, as Irena had an operation on her leg at the same time and I was available to help her recover.

I have always looked up to our Olympic athletes such as Sebastian Coe and the swimmer Duncan Goodhue but have never had the talent to emulate them. We have a dog which likes to walk and we walk 5-9 miles a day to keep her happy, come rain or sunshine. I enjoy reading, especially historical fiction such as Bernard Cornwall's Sharp series where the books are based on true events and the author has developed a story round the event. I also have a keen interest in the Roman period of history because I lived in Lincoln as a teenager and was fascinated by the ruins around the city.

Church Meeting held on 7 July 2009

The atmosphere at the July Church Meeting was certainly lively. There was much eager participation from those present, and Di Gunton as acting chairperson found that her task called for considerable tact as well as alertness and background information. A more peaceful meeting would have been welcomed by many, but it is good that so many were concerned about issues raised and were paying full attention to the proceedings.

Ruth Adams in her report as minister outlined plans for the near future, highlighting among others events involving young children; and Jan Hewins as publicity coordinator made her first report since her authorisation, emphasising the need to communicate what the church does to the village.

The main business was consideration of the appointment of a youth worker. The meeting was told that pledges had been received for over 75% of the targeted sum of £20,000, and that the church had been invited to apply for grant aid by the Methodist Church. After lengthy discussion, the Church Council's proposal was carried. This was for the appointment of a youth worker for Bar Hill Church, to work with young people from both the church and the village, and to advertise the post when the remaining money is secured through further pledges or grants. It was agreed that fund-raising towards the target by young people would be encouraged.

The vacancy on the Church Council was filled by the authorisation of Iain Spence as Chairman of the Church Meeting.

Regular Giving

Over the last term home group members have been reminded of their financial responsibility in a series of visits from the RGP treasurer. Here is a summary of issues that were aired.

Where our money comes from Some people think our church has central funding that underpins our activities. That's not so. Our mission is powered by two major sources that we supply ourselves: prayer and money.

What money is needed for To fund our worship, education and buildings; to support the work of our sponsoring denominations – training and paying salaries/pensions of ordained/lay ministers, education in schools/colleges, helping churches in financial difficulty; funding mission in this country and overseas.

How what we give to sponsoring denominations is decided It is based on our membership. All members who do not contribute to our funds have to be paid for by their fellow-members who do.

What if we can't afford to give? God understands our financial position better than we do. Let's all look at what we spend and pray about what it is right for us to give. Everyone with their own income can afford something; remember the widow's mite.

Why people do not give regularly Two groups discussed this and decided that priorities are awry. It is a

concern that children are not encouraged to give, so they do not regard financial commitment to the church as applying to them. That will have an effect in future.

Few young people give regularly We are increasingly financially dependent on people who are retired or approaching retirement. For our mission to be effective in future we need the financial support of younger people.

Why the offertory is not promoted more The offertory is casual, it cannot be relied on, usually it is not tax effective, and usually the amounts given are relatively small. It is for people without their own income, for visitors and occasional attenders – we welcome them and must not expect them to make up for inadequacies in our giving.

People do not review as they should Many have not changed what they give for years, so its value is going down. That's fine if they have thought and prayed about it regularly and know it is right for their situation, but not if they have not considered it.

The outcome of the visits People have been made to think. In two groups encouraging discussion took place. Some people have increased their giving, and one or two have asked for standing orders. Misunderstandings have been aired.

To join the RGP or increase your regular giving, contact Jenny Knight, 780745 or rgp.barhillchurch.com.

“The Shack” discussion group July 15th

Recently, our house group hosted an open meeting for anyone wishing to raise issues or questions after reading “The Shack” by Wm Paul Young.

THE SHACK



A novel by
WILLIAM P. YOUNG
In collaboration with Wayne Jacobsen
and Brad Cummings

For those who are not familiar with the book, it aims, through fiction, to explore the “big” issues of Christianity that many struggle with, such as the purpose, shape and function of the Trinity, and God’s grace, mercy and judgement.

About ten of us met over coffee and cakes to share our thoughts. Whilst some struggled with the American style of writing, it does have the ability to explore issues such as forgiveness, redemption and personal relationship with God in a context that many can relate to as these are raised alongside the journey of a man as he goes through personal tragedy. This style seems to reach out particularly to non-Christians and many reported meaningful discussions that they had with those who have struggles with these questions.

If you have a copy of the book I would urge you to pass it on to a friend and invite them to share their thoughts with you or consider having a discussion group of your own.

Lesley Bennett.

AUGUST CHURCH SERVICES

Sunday 2nd	10.00 am	Holy Communion (Methodist)
Sunday 9th	8.00 am 10.00 am	Holy Communion Morning Worship
Sunday 16th	10.00 am	Holy Communion (URC)
Sunday 23rd	10.00 am	All-age Worship with Communion
Sunday 30th	10.00 am	Holy Communion

There will be no evening services during August

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 9.30-12.30)

Open Gardens 2009

Thank you to all who took part in Open Gardens on 5 July. Five gardens were prepared for inspection (some of the hosts and hostesses were assisted by friends in tidying up in advance). Several people helped on the day, dealing with admissions, teas, a competition, and sales of books, home-made jam and plants. Others supplied cakes and things to sell. Thanks to all those who turned their back on the excitement on their television screens that afternoon and came along to take part in a really enjoyable community event (and thanks to those who did not come, but sent donations). People from church – present and past – were strongly augmented by Friends of the Library (who presumably read library books rather than watching tennis), and members of the Women's Institute were also loyal supporters. Over £255 was raised for Botton Village in North Yorkshire, which provides homes and work for people who need support.

Open Gardens, now in its fourth year, serves a number of purposes in a single afternoon. An opportunity is provided for villagers to meet one another informally, garden advice is eagerly exchanged by enthusiasts, and money is raised for a worthwhile cause. All of us probably have charities that we support ourselves, and this kind of event is a way of doing something extra for them, not by asking for money but by providing value in exchange for what is contributed. The aim is for Open Gardens to be even more successful next year as an entertainment and a way of raising funds for others who are in need.

Going on holiday ?

God of the seas to you I pray:
Bless unto me this holiday.

From these wide seas give unto me
A larger heart of charity.

May these strong tides wash out my mind
From all that's bitter and unkind.

With the broad beat of seabird's wings
Lift up my soul to heavenly things.

By the far sight of hills untrod
Call me to undared ventures, God.

Grant that these holidays may be
Your holy days indeed to me.

Lilian Cox

Endpiece

Life is a gift. A unique expression of God's
love.

Sister Stan

