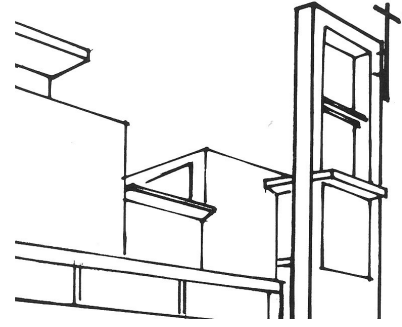


The Octagon



BAR HILL CHURCH NEWSLETTER

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REMEMBERING

A few days ago, my father sent me an email attachment with a scan of a picture of a young woman, who I worked out was his mother, and a copy of a letter that his brother had written to her around Christmas 1943. As near as we can make out, because the letter itself gives no clue being mostly about the eating of a delicious orange(!), my Great Uncle was writing from North Africa where he was in an artillery regiment. I remember my great uncle quite well, including him telling me about a tank that ran over his foot. My grandmother I remember less well, as she died when I was quite small.

Occasionally, when sitting reading or thinking in my office, my eye will drift over to a picture placed beside the office door. This picture is fairly grainy and is also a scan. It shows a very young baby a few weeks old and a man who looks almost at the end of his life. What is most striking about the picture is the expression that both of them have. They are gazing at each other, completely captured by the moment. This is a picture of myself and my great grandfather. The way my family tells it, I am very much like him. He too loved history and bought far too many books. They used to remember him, saying, it was a pity that you didn't get to know each other... Looking at that picture, I feel that in some very amazing way, I did.

Remembering is hugely important for me. I gain so much of my identity from my memories and from my family inheritance. I also gain great courage from many of the lives that have gone before me, with all their hopes and prayers. Of course, there are many sadnesses and stories of pain and difficulty. However I know that all of that, gathered together, helps to form me as I am now.

November is our month of remembrance. At the beginning of the month we think of all the saints, those who passed on the faith to us. We remember all souls, those we knew, but who have now died. On Remembrance Sunday we remember those who have died as a result of wars and conflicts across the world, with the words of Laurence Binyon:

*At the going down of the sun and in the morning
We will remember them.*

Each time we gather together for our shared communion meal we gather to remember. "This is my body" he said, "which is given for you. Do this in memory of me." Luke 22:19. We retell the stories of Jesus and the early church. We remember even more ancient words than that, in the Hebrew Scriptures. We gain courage, hope and insight from all those who have gone before us in faith. We know that all this gathered together, helps to form us as we are now. Yet, this remembering goes further. Tom Wright has commented that: "We who daily, weekly or however often come together to obey Jesus' command, to break bread and drink wine in his memory often find ourselves drawn into...salvation." In other words, in our faithfulness recounting the story, God draws us into his eternal story and we become transformed.

May God be with you in all your remembering; as you reflect on your life and family and all those who have gone before you, as you mourn the loss of loved ones and remember painful as well as joyful times. As we remember together, may we be drawn deeper into an understanding of grace and love and be more and more transformed into that which God is calling us to become as a people bearing his name.

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"

Why I support "Barnabas Fund"

Like many others I am sure, most days some literature plops through our letterbox from charities needing our support. All very good causes. But sadly, in my case, most get thrown into the recycle bin without a second glance.

Some years ago however I did happen to flip through the pamphlet of one such cry for help. Maybe I was having a coffee at the time of the post box's clatter and had chance to browse; I can't remember, but what I read in those few moments triggered a response in me.

It spoke of people who, like me, had come to accept Jesus as their Lord and Saviour and had given their lives to Him. It spoke of people, like me, who joined with other believers in worshipping Him and sharing their Faith with others. The difference for them was that in doing so, many lived in fear for their lives. Many had suffered at the hands of their family and had been rejected by their communities. Many had lost their livelihoods and had been tortured by the authorities.

I wondered about myself. What would I do in similar circumstances? The worst I have ever had to face is being questioned about my sanity at believing such nonsense. I do find it difficult speaking of my faith to those who know me well, even though I am sure that they would not disown me or torture me for

doing so. I have no fear of being thrown into prison for owning Christian literature or holding prayer times in my home. I felt challenged and ashamed of my own timidity in being seen to be Christian. I wondered how I would stand in similar situations. I also wondered what I could do to help my brothers and sisters who are suffering for being the same as me - a Christian.

Barnabas Fund helps and supports many such people in many countries throughout the world. In our own country Barnabas recently helped a British muslim convert who had bricks thrown through his windows, damage to his car, the empty property next door to his house set on fire and his wife and children taunted by local muslims, to move to a safe area.

As I support Barnabas fund they supply me with a very helpful bi-monthly prayer diary which gives a detailed prayer focus for each day. This helps me to respond to the call in Hebrews 13:3 "*remember those in prison as if you were their fellow prisoners and those who are ill-treated as if you yourselves are suffering*".

That is why I support Barnabas Fund.

Pat Muir

Editor's note: Do you, reader, have a favourite charity? Why not write to tell us about it?

The enthronement of a bishop

On Saturday afternoon, 10th October James Newcome became the 67th Bishop of Carlisle. That morning a group of us were given a tour of Rose Castle, the residence of the Bishop. It was a fascinating historical tour filled with stories of some previous bishops who have lived and worked serving God and being totally committed to the work and witness of our Saviour, and yet other bishops serving only their own designs and purposes.

At 2.00pm we sat in the cathedral while James and his family were beginning the ceremony at St Cuthbert's Church, a short walk through the centre of Carlisle. Since James is already well known in the diocese, more people wanted to attend the ceremony than could fit in to the cathedral (the second smallest in England) and so this was the first enthronement to start in a parish church and finish in the cathedral. It was a lovely symbol of his desire to be a

bishop for all the people of Cumbria.

During the walk from St Cuthbert's to the cathedral James and his entourage greeted the (sometimes puzzled!) citizens of Carlisle.

I found it very exciting that during his sermon James set out a vision for the whole of Cumbria to be an ecumenical area.

Please keep him and Alison in your prayers over the months ahead at the start of this new ministry.

Emily Lewney

James was minister here at Bar Hill from 1982 to 1994. During his ministry the church experienced considerable numerical growth, and he oversaw the building of the new church. James is greatly loved by those who know him.

Fit4Life

During the summer term and the first half of this autumn term the small groups worked through a course developed by the Baptist Church in Australia entitled Fit4Life. The course encouraged us to look carefully at the way in which we practise community, with the aim that we grow in our capacity to experience deep and healthy relationships.

The course was unlike any other that I have participated in in a church. It demanded a degree of honesty that I found at times uncomfortable and at times liberating. It proposed some genuinely useful tools to promote better listening to one another, a better understanding of the causes of personal anxiety or anger, and better ways to respond to conflict. Indeed, it helped me to recognise that conflict is something that arises naturally out of being in community with one another, rather than something to be shunned or regarded as unChristian. It left me no longer willing to settle for 'nice' as my experience of our church community, but also a little wary of the change that God might want to make in me if I am to contribute to a healthier way of being.

Richard Lewney

Visit by students from Oklahoma: 16 January 2010

Once again (is this the seventh or eighth time?) we are hosting a visit by students and staff from Oklahoma Baptist University as part of their study trip to Britain. The group (of 20) will be in Cambridge on Saturday 16 January, and we are looking for hosts who could provide dinner, bed and breakfast for that night. Those who have provided hospitality in the past have found it immensely enjoyable. The students typically describe it in their journals as the most important experience of the whole trip. Would you be willing and able to open your home and heart to one or two folk? If you are, please email emily.lewney@ntlworld.com or telephone us on 204433 (if possible, before we all get busy with Christmas stuff!).

Christmas Invitations

Once again every house in Bar Hill will receive an invitation to our Christmas time services. If you delivered some last year or would like to help for the first time this year, please let me know. The more helpers we have the easier the work.

Contact me at jan.hewins@ntlworld.com or publicity@barhillchurch.org tel 201495.

Thank you

Jan Hewins

O come, O come Immanuel

What is your reaction to Christmas?
Panic – how will I fit everything in?
Indifference – the Christmas story is very familiar.

Whatever your reaction we hope that the Advent series we're planning for Small Groups will prove to be an oasis for you whether it is an opportunity to discover something new, or a refreshing break in a hectic schedule.

Each of the 4 meetings in November and December will look at the main characters in the Christmas story and how God met with them, and while there will be opportunity for sharing the approach will be fairly reflective rather than too much discussion.

As with last term there will be groups on 4 nights a week and during the daytime so if anyone else would like to join a group please speak to Pam or Barry.

An Evening with Marty Haugen Tuesday 20th October

Marty Haugen visited us again! We were invited to come to meet the composer, sing his songs old and new, and share his insights and vast experience on music and liturgy.

Tuesday night, I, with a few others from our church went to the Marty Haugen evening. It was very interesting. It seemed to surprise Marty that there was a good mix of folk there from various church backgrounds, not just the Catholic one. Marty's ability to talk into the differences and across the divides, showing us that we are all one was so very much appreciated. He was witty too. I could have listened to him for a lot longer.

The evening consisted of a chance to learn and sing through a number of Marty's songs. These are in the style of taking liturgy and putting it to music covering all the seasons of the Christian year. Having been brought up in a Church of England setting as a child, I was very familiar with this style of music but what was refreshing was his melodies and harmonies. They were beautiful and lively, notes and intonation of music reflecting the words. I thought it was also wonderful that Marty spent time with us explaining where he started from in developing a new liturgical song, using early church history and art in his PowerPoint presentation.

Although I am no fan of liturgy and that style of worship, I was still able to appreciate it for the gift it gives us in expressing our love for God and our understanding of what He has done for us. I look forward to some of these sung liturgies being infiltrated to our own morning worship from time to time.

Heather Smethurst

