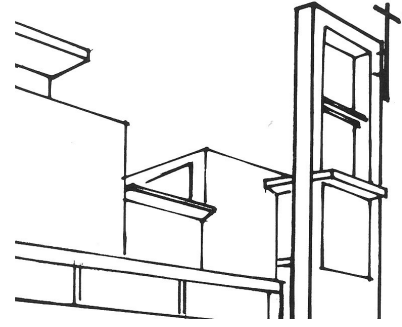


# The Octagon



BAR HILL CHURCH NEWSLETTER

ISSUE 329: SEPTEMBER 2009

## *Daring to Leap*

Yesterday I spent an afternoon with Simon Hudson at the Zip wire he has constructed at Lee Abbey. The wire stretches 130m through a wooded gorge and is 50 metres off the ground. There is quite a climb through the forest to get up there, and the surrounding trees make it impossible to see the view. Once you climb on the platform and are attached to the wire with your harness firmly strapped on, you are asked to let go of the ledge and dangle over the edge of the gorge: "Don't worry – I'm holding you," the instructor says. All sorts of levels of trust are involved. I trusted Simon because I know him and he had explained to me about how he had built the wire and all of the safety checks involved. I trusted the member of staff who put me in the harness, that they had attached all the straps firmly. I trusted the instructor who said that he would hold me, and at the end of the wire I trusted Simon again, as he was operating the brake. In fact, for someone dangling 50 metres in the air over a gorge I felt remarkably safe.

Of course, the whole point of the set up was the journey across the gorge. Once started, it only takes forty seconds, but they are fantastic seconds. Suddenly you are faced with a startlingly beautiful view of the cliffs, the rocks and the sea. Some people bring cameras with them to capture the view and there are some YouTube videos where people have obviously strapped their cameras to their chests. However good these pictures, however, nothing can quite capture the feeling of travelling across. Each person must dare to leap for themselves.

There is a mythological story of a man who fell from a cliff. He found himself hanging on to a little sapling on the side of the vertical slope, a sapling which was bending and breaking under his weight. Desperate for help, he called out, "Hello, is there anybody out there, I need some help...?" It is said that a voice from heaven answered him – "Don't worry, I am here, I will catch you when you fall..." At this, the man paused, thought for a moment and then

said – "Is there anybody else out there?"

I think that taking a leap of faith is much more like going on the Zip wire at Lee Abbey than it is like the mythological story, although we may sometimes feel that it is indeed more like the story! We know who we are relying on when we jump. We are held by God for every step of the way in our journey. We have the testimony of others who have taken leaps of faith before us, both in scripture and in the lives of fellow believers today to confirm this. We also know that this leap promises to lead us into "life in its fullness" rather than merely being a possible escape from a terrifying death.

At the end of the Zip wire, as well as being met by the person operating the brake, the jumper is greeted by shouts of encouragement from all the other participants. Anyone, of any age or ability can make the journey. Only they alone can choose to set off, but they come home to a great crowd of people clapping them and cheering them on. Our faith journey is never a solitary one. Only we can choose to take an initial leap, no one else can do that for us, but the community of faith will always be there, cheering us on the way, encouraging us and listening to the stories of our experiences. In this way, no one is ever a Christian by themselves.

Whatever is your leap of faith at the moment, whether it is choosing to step out and give your life to God for the first or for the hundredth time, can I encourage you to take the leap, knowing who you are putting your trust in and relying on us, as your community of faith, to be there in your journey, cheering and encouraging you on.

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"***

## Holiday Club 2009

For one week at the end of July, 75 children, 20 teenagers and 30 adults came together to learn about the 'Good News Explosion' that occurred in the book of Acts.

Having not been involved in Holiday Club for the past two summers, I had forgotten what a great atmosphere surrounds the whole week. The preparations go on for months beforehand, the week itself contains its share of stresses and upsets, and it's certainly exhausting, but there is a real sense that we are working as a team and that God is right there in the centre. Everyone has an important part to play, whether it's helping in a group, leading the craft, doing the refreshments.....and it's brilliant to see the young people and adults learning more about their giftings and using them, as well as seeing the children having a great time.

One of the highlights for me this year was seeing some children who have had a really difficult year in school being able to come somewhere where God's love is demonstrated to them in practical ways, and seeing them begin to respond to that. I hope that they will continue to come to Holiday Club in the future,

and that as they see how they are accepted and loved they will want to know more about our God who accepts and loves everyone.

When I asked some of the children what was their favourite part of Holiday Club there were the obvious choices such as the drama, cooking, the treasure hunt, but there were also many who chose the songs. Two of the favourites this year were 'I am a C' which talks about being a Christian and having Jesus in your heart; and 'Shine' which talks about God filling us with his Spirit so that he can send us to be a witness to the world. Both of these reflected the theme of the week as we learnt how the Holy Spirit empowered the apostles to spread the good news of Jesus: news that as we know is still spreading today.

Holiday Club is a chance to share that news, not only with the children who attend but also with their families as we chat with them at the post-trip meal on Wednesday or at the service on the Friday evening, or maybe as they just begin to wonder why such a large number of people are willing to give up a week of holiday to spend time with their kids. Our prayer is that we will shine with the light of God living in us - God worked powerfully in the book of Acts and he still works powerfully today.

Sarah Lewney

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## The Bar Hill Church website

<http://barhillchurch.org.uk> or <http://barhillchurch.com>

How will the outside world view Bar Hill Church?

How can we improve our internal communication? A small group of us has debated these issues for several months. We aimed to make the site bright and cheerful, warm and welcoming and easy to navigate around. And finally the Church website has been rebuilt from scratch.

Stay informed of activities and events that take place - from Under-ones to Knit-and-Natter. Read about the history of the Church and what events are planned in the near future. View slideshows of Holiday Club 2009, or listen to recent sermons. The website is there for you to use.

You can also use the "contacts" page to e-mail anyone with responsibilities in the Church. (In fact we can set up a Church e-mail address for any Church member.) Both the Octagon and the weekly newsletter can be e-mailed to you. (This will not only

pay for the cost of the Church website over the year, but also save the Church even more money.) It will be possible in the future to set up on-line booking, for example for hiring of the Church, or for taking part in Holiday Club.

However, the website is only as valuable as the use that you make of it. Firstly, send in your articles, news, reports and digital photographs. The site will be as up-to-date as you make it. If there is something not on the website that you would like to see, then tell us.

Secondly, use the website to stay abreast of what is happening in the Church. Check the news and events pages, find out what other groups are doing in the Church and use this to guide your prayer.

www =

who we worship why we worship where we worship

Bob Chappell

## 2009

This year was my first year going to New Wine. As the sun rose during the long journey down to Somerset I grew very excited about what the week had in store. We arrived at the site about 9.30 am, and even though the sun was shining the vast amount of mud made it clear that there had previously been a lot of rain. In high spirits we smiled, put on our wellies and started putting up tents – some more successfully than others, but we got there in the end. The weather didn't stay sunny for long and we were soon getting out our umbrellas ready to embark on a very wet next few days. Emergency tents were put up for those who had been flooded out of their tents by the end of the week.

Despite the grey weather the mood of camp was the very opposite. People, young and old, were embracing the uplifting and insightful conferences. These included talks on social justice and ethics, spiritual growth, mission and much more! Between talks there were eating and shopping facilities, which for young shoppers like me was a nice plus. The food court consisted of a range of meals which seemed to have something for everyone, not to mention a never-ending line of hot chocolates to keep us warm.

Wednesday brought us a day of rest, not that many got a chance to rest. The sun was finally beginning to show itself again when the youth packed their bags and headed out to a water park and then the beach. Some chose to head to Street to carry out some more shopping. A couple took this day to 'Step Out' in to the community of Glastonbury, which I hear was a successful and satisfying day out. I, however, along with a few others, took advantage of a quiet campsite and the longed for sunshine, and sat outside reading.

Personally, my favourite part of New Wine was the evening celebration services. There was a line up of good speakers mixed in with some amazing worship and prayer. It gave everyone time to be still and worship God, the thing that had brought us all together. At times these services included healing, which touched members of our church as well as giving us a chance to heal others.

The whole group really connected well, building on old friendships along with making new ones. The youth group spent a lot of time discussing how they can take and spread their new found passion. It was very exciting to hear all the ideas they were coming up with for worship time, going out to help the community and working on a stronger relationship with our church itself. A lot of praying was spent on Bar Hill and we all left feeling very upbeat about things to come. So watch this space!

Overall, I can't deny that it was a wonderful week. And as we drove away from the now not-so-muddy site it was almost sad. The week gives people a chance to renew their relationship with God or even start one completely. The weather didn't stop us getting all we could from the week, learning and worshipping as much as we wanted. I do miss New Wine and what it had to offer, and am already excited about next years. However, I do believe that we have taken from the week what God intended and that his work has only just begun.

Hannah Peacock

*Thanks Hannah, its good to hear what an inspiration it was for you all to be at New Wine, but I wonder if any of those who were there could share with us some specific message from God that has helped them, or could help us in our church? - Editor*

## Water - the stuff of life



*Make Life Flow - Help people get clean water and good sanitation*

*You use the loo without thinking. Without checking, you know you're a stone's throw from a tap. And without doubt, you know that poor sanitation or dirty water is unlikely to kill you. But for millions of people these essentials are just plain missing.*

*You may think we are 'fearfully and wonderfully made', but Stidia, 13, says 'actually, I'm just fearful'. Stidia is familiar with fear, for every*

*morning she has to walk down the mountain to a spring for water. She's beaten, intimidated by older boys and threatened with rape. But Stidia's local church in Uganda is speaking out and acting. Rainwater tanks are being built, sanitation is improving, people are flocking to church, and Stidia's life is changing....*

*Log on to [www.tearfund.org/makelifeflow](http://www.tearfund.org/makelifeflow) for more details.*

## SEPTEMBER CHURCH SERVICES

Sunday 6th	10.00 am 6.30 pm	Holy Communion ( <i>Anglican</i> ) The NEWS (New Evening Worship Service)
Sunday 13th	8.00 am 10.00 am 3.00 pm 6.30 pm	Holy Communion Quaker Meeting Family Fun (particularly appropriate for pre-school children) Evening Worship
Sunday 20th	10.00 am 6.30 pm 7.30 pm	Holy Communion ( <i>Baptist</i> ) Evening Prayer Youth Worship
Wednesday 23rd	10.00 am	Holy Communion
Sunday 27th	10.00 am 6.30 pm	All-age Worship <i>Harvest Festival</i> Holy Communion
There is also a Roman Catholic service on Saturday evenings at 6.00 pm		
<b>People to contact:</b>	The minister: Rev Ruth Adams Church Centre Manager: Helen Cook (office hours Monday, Wednesday & Friday 9.30-12.30)	Tel: 01954 789369 Tel/Fax: 01954 206120

### September Church Meeting

Over the last few months we have been talking about becoming a "Mission Shaped" church, about being a church which shows love of God and our neighbour in everything that we do. At our next church meeting on Wednesday 23rd September we will have a chance to look at the different areas of church life and review whether we are mission shaped in them. We can celebrate the things we are already doing well and see what we could do differently. Out of this we can bring forward a vision for church life in the next year.

I look forward to seeing you there and hearing your ideas for our church's future.  
Rev'd Ruth Adams

### Fit 4 Life

This autumn sees the last three sessions in the Fit4Life Course. The first will be held in individual groups and will be on the theme of "Listening to God." Your group leader will be contacting you about the time and date of this session. The remaining two sessions will be held in the Church together on 30 September and 15 October, both at 7:30pm. We will be gathering feedback on ideas that have emerged from studying the material and also deciding how we can put into practice some of the things learned. The small groups will continue after half term with an Advent Course.

### Music and Entertainment Evening



**Saturday 12 September**  
**starting at 7pm in the**  
**church.**



This is totally free and for all ages, with a buffet in the interval.

Any money raised will be split between the Vellore educational project in South India, and the Bar Hill Scout Hut as they are in desperate need of a new one.

Anyone who wants to perform is welcome to, and should contact me, Adam or John.

Ann Duce and Diana Wilkins are doing the buffet and would appreciate any help/offers of dishes.

Louise Rush

*'I would maintain that thanks are the highest form of thought; and that gratitude is happiness doubled by wonder' - G K Chesterton (1874-1936)*

*'If the only prayer you say in your entire life is "thank you" that would suffice' - Meister Eckhart (13th century mystic)*

