



**St Michael and All Angels
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Diana Glover

REFLECTION

Fling Wide the Gates

One of the things I love doing early in the morning is to open the doors of the church. Several of us take turns to do this every day of the week. As I open wide the two outer doors and the two inner doors I find myself inwardly singing “fling wide the gates”. It’s like opening up a shop in company with many other shopkeepers in Sycamore Road - we’re all in the process of making our buildings welcoming, inviting and accessible.

If you read the visitor’s book in the entrance to the church you will see how many people appreciate that open door, which they may come across by accident or by design. People enjoy the space simply to sit, to light a candle or to have a cup of coffee at Wheeler Coffee Pot.

It’s equally important that we have that outer door open throughout worship on a Sunday morning. Have you ever decided to go to a church service and, arriving a bit late, been confronted with a shut door that you have to open, not knowing what’s on the other side and whether your entrance will be visible to everyone inside? An open door during a church service allows those arriving late, or for the first time, to feel welcome as they make that, often difficult, step across the threshold. It also allows those passing by to see that worship is going on. As a parish church we have to remember that St Michael’s is ‘their’ church.

Even more importantly, open doors remind us of our call to mission. At the end of each Eucharist we are sent out with these words: “Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.” We come to church in order to go out and be the church in our community. The open doors during a service and from 8 am to 5.30 pm each day remind us to look outwards and to find and share God’s love within our community. God is indeed “Beyond Church” (to quote Sheila Cassidy who gave the Millennium Lecture at St Michael’s in September) because God is much bigger than church. Let’s fling wide the gates and celebrate that reality.

Our Vision Statement

As a Christian community, we seek to engage with the world around us and to be a place of welcome and acceptance for all on a journey to God – believers, doubters and those who are seeking.

My Other Community

Pippa Soundy writes about her other 'curacy', with Church Mission Society in Oxford, where she works for the other half of the week

Many of you will know that my curacy is shared between St Michael's and the Church Mission Society's Oxford-based community. I spend Wednesday and Thursday each week in Oxford, where I have another training 'incumbent', Canon Chris Neal. Sometimes I feel like a child whose parents are separated and whose week is split between two homes, but Chris and Diana have been marvellous in their co-operation and occasionally we all get together as a family, which is great!

I work within the Community Facilitation team of CMS, helping to develop patterns of Christian discipleship and service with the spread-out membership of about 2,600. Most members are in the UK, with about 80 working in various other parts of the world. CMS has recently become an officially acknowledged Community of the Church of

England, akin to a missional order, which is why, for the first time, ordained ministry can be exercised within CMS. The transition from a missionary-sending agency, supported by prayer and funds from the UK, to a network of globally-minded people giving and receiving in mission, has led to changes in organisation, funding and staffing requirements, and I currently spend quite a lot of time trying to support and encourage people through these changes.

CMS members belong to local Christian communities of all shapes and sizes and I'm looking forward to learning from both my communities (CMS and SMC!) how to share God's love in the rapidly-changing world of the 21st Century. If you are interested in knowing more about CMS I would be delighted to talk to you or to welcome you for lunch in Oxford one day!

Where are we going?

Members of both Sunday congregations, together with some of those who attend mid-week services, came together to talk about 'Where are we going?' on a Sunday morning in September. An open forum enabled members of the church community to discuss concerns about the lack of younger people in the church on a Sunday at 10am and the sustainability of the voluntary support needed to run the current level of activity. It was a very positive discussion with a range of ideas put forward. These will now be referred back to the PCC for further discussion. There is still time to make your views known before this happens. Please speak to a member of the clergy or one of the churchwardens.

"The nursing team are supported by a huge team of volunteers who attend to every need, knowing when and how to talk to patients and their families. The relationship between me, my family and the staff and volunteers is a crucial part of the care here.

"'Hospice care' is proactive too, meaning people can keep their independence for longer. I've been taught to keep my muscles in my legs working whilst in bed and the physios have been monitoring it every day to ensure I keep comfortable. Four or five days ago I couldn't even contemplate going home but each day I have been helped to walk up a few stairs at a time and today I managed 22 steps!"

Three days after giving this interview Lord Lyell returned home.

Former Government Minister Cared for at Hospice of St Francis

Extracts from the Hospice Newsletter

Lord Lyell, former Attorney-General, has endured major surgery and many treatments following the diagnosis of colon cancer 12 years ago. He arrived at the Hospice feeling very unwell with pneumonia. He says: "'Hospice care' is about the breadth of care undertaken to improve someone's whole being, their emotional morale as well as their physical

symptoms. The kind, attentive nursing care of St Francis ensures a sense of well-being, with careful monitoring of my condition. The attention to detail is extraordinary – the doctors have great insight into how to manage someone's condition with just the right regime of medicine and holistic care to make life that bit more comfortable.

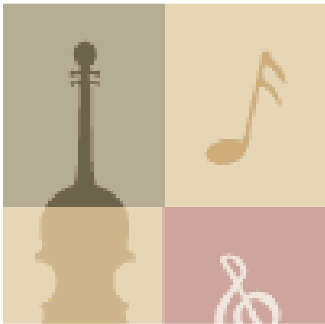
Our Persecuted Church Family in AFGHANISTAN



Hidden in the shadow of the ongoing warring conflict in Afghanistan, the situation for Afghan Christians is becoming dramatically more severe, with Afghan media and politicians calling in June for the death of converts from Islam, and urging ordinary Afghans to find and denounce those who have left Islam.

Many Afghan Christians have fled the country and in exile are calling upon Christians around the world to speak out against the arrests, torture and persecution of believers, and the threat of execution.

Pray for God's hand of protection on all converts, and for their steadfastness in the faith and wisdom in their daily lives amongst those who would denounce them if their faith is revealed.



Concert in aid of Workaid

**October 16.
7.30 pm**

There will be a concert of choral and recorder music at St. Michael's at 7.30 pm on Saturday, October 16. Called *Viva la musica*, it will be raising money for Workaid.

The performers will be a small chamber choir called the Consort, and a recorder group called the Galliard Recorder Band. The Consort will sing pieces ranging from mediaeval times right up to today, some sacred and

some secular. The Galliard band will play a group of early pieces in the first half with some more modern pieces in the second.

Entry will be by programme, priced £8 for adults and £2 for under 18s. They will be available from Brian Hall, the Parish Office (726680), or at the door.

Like father, like son

Sam Ndimbo, whose work in Liuli, Tanzania, we support each Lent, tells us that his son, Titus, who is planning to follow in father's footsteps and become a doctor, came 2nd in his class of 40. "I am really very proud of him", says Sam.

Another son, Patrick, has a degree in computer science and his brother Gregory is in the final year of an MSc in Finance. The youngest, Bonaventura is taking a degree in Administration.

Sam himself, though now retired from St Anne's hospital, continues to work as hard as ever in his clinic. It is good to have contact, through him, with this poor and remote region of Tanzania.



Sustaining Our Sacred Centre

This month's article on this theme is by
Ken Prideaux-Brune

As many of you know my 'sacred space' is a small chapel in the loft of a tall, white 18th century house in Belgium. It contains two tall floor-standing candle holders that were once part of a four-poster bed. The altar is an old, scarred carpenter's bench, found in a shed in the garden and brought here for the worship of Jesus the Carpenter. There's a strange chair, with a large rounded back that folds over to convert it into a chair. It was given in memory of a lance-corporal in the Pioneer Corps who was baptised and confirmed in this chapel in August 1917 and was killed just about a week later, carrying a gas cylinder up to the front line of the Ypres Salient, some 10 miles away. The chair/table was made by his pals in his unit and placed in this chapel because they knew how much it had come to mean to him in his last weeks of life. He was one of many who made their last Communion in that Upper Room which is, in the words of the military historian Richard Holmes, "heavy with the presence of the thousands who knelt here to pray that their cup might pass". There is an extraordinary sense of being surrounded by a great cloud of witnesses.

Over the front door of the house hangs a sign that reads:

"Everyman's Club – 1915 - ?". And the house was indeed for everyone, officers *and* other ranks. That would be unusual in today's army but in 1915 it was totally mind-blowing. As a result people met each other across all the barriers that would have kept them apart in civilian life and many unlikely friendships were made. One of those who knew the house during the First World War committed himself, should he survive, to entertain young Germans in his home every summer, a rather splendid, if in the long run futile, response. Even in August 1939, with war imminent, he lived out that commitment and entertained a couple of Luftwaffe pilots. The German embassy had to phone him and say: "Can we have our pilots back please".

Many, perhaps most, of those who came to the house for a cup of tea or a sing-song round the piano never penetrated up the steep stairs to the chapel but they were nonetheless aware that the house was trying to follow in the footsteps of Jesus, the Jesus who chose to live his life, not with the pious and holy but with the disreputable and the despised, the Jesus whose openness, whose inclusiveness, profoundly shocked the good religious people of his day. And the church throughout the ages has found it very difficult to come to terms with that inclusiveness. The childishness of

those who can't cope with the idea that women are called to the priesthood and the callous treatment of Jeffrey John, are current examples that make me despair of the Church of England. I sometimes wish there was a way in which I could resign from it while remaining a member of St Michael's!

The message from my sacred space is that the faith is not about belief in a set of incomprehensible dogmas but, above all else, it's about human relationships. The remarkable diversity of human beings is not a problem to be coped with but the source of the richness of human life.

Churches Together Vision Day

Churches Together in Buckinghamshire will be holding their annual 'Vision Day' at the Christian Centre in Wendover on Saturday October 16, from 9.30 am to 1.30 pm. The speaker will be the General Secretary of Churches Together in Britain and Ireland.

**Saturday October 16
9.30 am – 1.30 pm**



**St Michael and All Angels
Amersham-on-the-Hill**

DIARY

October 2010

Regular Weekly Activities		
Sundays	8 am	Said Eucharist
	10 am	Sung Eucharist
Mondays	8.30 – 8.55 am	Morning Prayer. Lady Chapel.
Tuesdays	8.30 – 8.55 am	Morning Prayer. Lady Chapel.
	10.30 am	Said Eucharist. Lady Chapel
Wednesdays	8.30 – 8.55 am	Morning Prayer. Lady Chapel.
	7.00 – 8.15 pm	Choir Practice
Thursdays	8.30 – 8.55 am	Morning Prayer. Lady Chapel.
Fridays	8.30 – 8.55 am	Morning Prayer. Lady Chapel
Saturdays	8.30 – 8.55 am	Morning Prayer. Lady Chapel.
Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays, Fridays.		10 am – 12 noon. Wheeler Coffee Pot. Wheeler Room.

The Church is usually open each morning from 8 am for anyone who wishes to meditate or spend time in quiet.

Other Activities in October			
Saturday	Oct	2	<i>Saturday Slot.</i> Harvest. Lady Chapel. 3 pm
Sunday	Oct	3	HARVEST FESTIVAL. Collection for <i>Send a Cow</i>.
Tuesday	Oct	5	Bible Study. Lady Chapel. 11.30 am
			LUNCH BREAK. Picturing the Sacred. Free Church. 1.10 pm.
Wednesday	Oct	6	<i>Praise & Play</i> Lady Chapel. 10.30 am.
			Extended Quiet Healing. Lady Chapel. 4 pm – 6 pm
Friday	Oct	8	PARISH RETREAT (to Sunday Oct 10)
Saturday	Oct	9	Bric-a-brac sale. Forecourt. 9.30 am – 12.30 pm
Sunday	Oct	10	19th Sunday after Trinity. 2gether.
			Harvest hymns & Communion. Free Church. 6 pm
Tuesday	Oct	12	LUNCH BREAK Alison Woodnutt. Free Church. 1.10 pm
Wednesday	Oct	13	Tuesday Club visit to Cambridge (David Beattie – 725333)
			<i>Praise & Play Plus.</i> Lady Chapel. 3.45 pm
Saturday	Oct	16	<i>Viva la musica</i> concert in aid of Workaid. 7.30 pm
Sunday	Oct	17	20th Sunday after Trinity. (DVD on Sustaining the Sacred Centre)
			Junior Drama Group – Dance Workshop. Hall. 2.30 pm
Tuesday	Oct	19	LUNCH BREAK Challoner’s Boys in Recital. Free Church. 1.10 pm
Wednesday	Oct	20	<i>Praise & Play</i> Lady Chapel. 10.30 am.
Sunday	Oct	24	Bible Sunday. Healing offered at 10 am.
Tuesday	Oct	26	LUNCH BREAK. Song recital. Free Church. 1.10 pm
Sunday	Oct	31	All Saints Sunday. Lighting of candles in memory of loved ones.

Our next issue . . .
 Our next issue will appear on **Sunday October 31**. Please get your contributions to us by **Sunday October 17**.