

ASH-CUM-RIDLEY AND NEW ASH GREEN

CHURCH NEWS

OCTOBER 2007

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My dear friends,

All is safely gathered in.

Well, in one sense it is. We have had just enough dry weather to see the farmers harvesting their fields, and many folk have had almost too much fruit on their trees. The rabbits, mice, squirrels, pheasants, caterpillars and blight have even left US a good harvest and the Rectory freezer is totally full. It is, at times, easy to notice all of the things that we have not got and forget the things we have, to grumble at life's shortcomings rather than appreciating, and saying 'thank you' for all that we have. This applies to family and friends as well as to our relationship with God.

It is very easy when we look around us to choose who to compare ourselves with. One of the joys of statistics, as I suggested last month, is that you can prove almost anything with them depending upon the yardstick you use! Our harvest has, indeed been good - and a very great deal better than many folk have gathered in. Floods and foot-and-mouth in this country, and floods, tempest and severe droughts in many parts of the world have led to chronic shortages of even staple foodstuffs like wheat. We have little to grumble about when we look at the plight of so many others.

Harvest - the harvest of the land, and the harvest of our lives. We have so much, we have received so much. Let us show our gratitude to God, to family and to neighbour by using the words 'thank you' much more often. We have so much, we have received so much. Rather than continually asking for more what about thinking of those around us who have so much less to be thankful for?

Think (and pray) about it,

Yours very sincerely

John A Peal

SERVICES AT ST. PETER & ST. PAUL'S ASH

<u>Time</u>	<u>Type of Service</u>	<u>When</u>
8.00	Holy Communion	Every Sunday in month
10.10	Junior Church meets in Ash Village Hall, age 3 and over	2nd, 3rd, 4th & 5th Sundays during term time
10.30	Family Worship	First Sunday in the month
10.30	Family Eucharist	2nd, 3rd, 4th & 5th Sundays

SERVICES AT ST. PETER'S RIDLEY

<u>Time</u>	<u>Type of Service</u>	<u>When</u>
9.15	Parish Communion	Every Sunday in the month
6.30	Evening Prayer	Second Sunday in the month only

diary dates

Full details can also be found on the website.

- Oct. 1st Open to Question
3rd Social Committee Meeting
7th Ash Harvest and Harvest Lunch
9th Ash P.C.C.
16th St. Luke's Supper and service at Ash Church. 7.15 for 7.30 p.m.
Rev Lynda Cooke, Mental Health Chaplain, will be our speaker.

FROM THE REGISTERS

HOLY BAPTISM

- Aug. 26th James Daniel Jack Lim (Ridley Church)
Sep. 2nd Beatrice Maud Juliet Scott

HOLY MATRIMONY

- Sep. 1st Matthew James Pink & Leanne Jane Collinge
15th Stephen Roy Hadfield & Janice Barbara Parsons
22nd Julian Arthur Walker & Jillian Jameson Stewart

FUNERALS

- Aug. 31st Edgar (Ted) George Greengrass aged 87
Sep. 3rd Nellie Grant aged 85

May they rest in peace.

ASH P.C.C. QUIET DAY

Several Members of Ash PCC and Ministry Team had a quiet afternoon at West Malling on September 16th led by Alison and Jacquie. We looked at Prayer and also the idea from the Epistle of James that faith and works are inseparable. We also spent time looking at the way the church Council works - trying to free ourselves up to be able to spend more time on more important matters than nuts and bolts. A lovely day weather-wise helping to prepare for the Parish Weekend.

ST PAUL'S CHURCH, MARLBOROUGH, ZIMBABWE

If you followed the ITV New and Five News during the week of September 17th- 21st you will have seen the reports on the deteriorating situation in Zimbabwe and the Prime Minister's hope to do something about it, both with the UN and also with the EU.

One report from Tearfund reads as follows:

Zimbabwe's second largest city, Bulawayo, is facing severe water shortages leading to people accessing dangerous supplies to survive. The city, which has a population of more than 700,000, has been struggling with virtually no water for the past month.

It is predicted that the fourth of five dams supplying the city will run out completely this month and Tearfund's partners in the region fear that people from poor communities will suffer the most.

Many are already having to source unclean water sources that could lead to a spread of diseases such as cholera if the situation continues. Thousands are being forced to use the ground around their homes as toilets, adding to the risk of disease spreading.

The lack of water is the result of disputes between national and local government on water supply, vandalism and recent drought in the region. There have been reports in the Zimbabwean media that the government would not be intervening in the crisis and letters calling for action over the lack of water have not been answered.

Tearfund is working with its partner churches in Bulawayo to provide 5000-litre water tanks to be placed at twenty churches in the western suburbs one of the worst affected areas. The churches in Bulawayo are calling for government action to resolve the crisis as soon as possible.

Zimbabwe's precarious survival:

(Part of a BBC report By Sue Lloyd-Roberts from Harare)

With the Zimbabwean economy in ruins, it is the people leaving the country who are helping those who have remained to survive.

For a country which is in a state of economic collapse, there is a surprising amount of movement in Zimbabwe today.

Drive through the darkened streets of Harare at night - for there is no electricity - and you see hundreds of people walking purposefully at two and three o'clock in the morning.

They are the few who need to get to work - only one in five of the adult population still has a job.

They take up their positions on street corners waiting for a passing car or pick-up truck.

There is no petrol, and regular bus services are already a distant memory.

"I sometimes wait four or five hours to get to work," said one office worker.

Once one of the richest countries in Africa, Zimbabwe, has become a barrow, bucket, and bag economy."

But even the bosses don't complain."

Everyone in Zimbabwe understands life is difficult.

Bread queues: A couple of hours later, as dawn breaks over the capital, many people - the mothers and unemployed - start forming long, silent queues that wind around entire blocks of the city.

There is a rumour that bread could be arriving in the city today.

Five hours later, people are still waiting.

Policemen arrive, apparently helpfully supervising the queue and giving a surreal air of normality to the city scene.

"They just pretend," said one man in the queue with five children at home to feed.

"They get the first news if a lorry is on its way with bread, sugar, or mealie meal and they jump to the top of the queue and loot the food."

You see people walking for miles, wheeling barrows, buckets on their heads, and plastic bags in hand.

Like the "bag ladies" in the former Soviet Union, they are always on the ready just in case something turns up. But it seldom does.

Medical horror: People are starving. The evidence is in the hospitals where tiny, wizened babies lie dying in their cots while their mothers look on helplessly.

One mother cradles a child who is losing her hair and her skin, a sign of the most advanced form of Kwashiorka or vitamin deficiency.

It is certainly the first time I have seen this condition in 20 years of reporting on the developing world.

"Zimbabwe once offered the most comprehensive medical service in Africa," a doctor explains:

"It is now becoming a textbook case of medical horror."

Many children arrive with grandmothers.

Grandmother or child-headed families are a growing social phenomenon in Zimbabwe today, often the result of the Aids epidemic.

In other cases - if parents still have the energy and the means - they flee abroad to look for food and to send back money.

Zimbabweans have long since given up hope that the South African leader - Thabo Mbeki - will put pressure on his old friend, Robert Mugabe, to reform.

And as for Robert Mugabe, an opposition politician in Harare says: "This makes him a very, very happy dictator.

"He gets rid of his opponents and they in turn send back money to their families in Zimbabwe and that keeps things ticking over."

Anyone expecting a swift conclusion to Zimbabwe's agony will be disappointed.

Thanks to the ingenuity and tolerance of people still in the country and the remittances sent back by those who have left, Zimbabwe's death throes could last a long time yet.

From Our Own Correspondent was broadcast on Saturday 8 September, 2007 at 1130 BST on BBC Radio 4.

Story from BBC NEWS:

http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/1/hi/programmes/from_our_own_correspondent/6982183.stm

Published: 2007/09/08 11:13:23 GMT

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Our prayers are still, therefore, requested for St Paul's, the Church in Zimbabwe and the people of Zimbabwe.

WEALTH AND GIVING

Following our recent Bible readings and sermons, based on these, especially by Jacque and Lawrie and bearing in mind the reading from 1 Timothy chapter 6 on the 30th September here are some facts about wealth and giving to charity.

- The wealthiest 10% of households are most *likely* to give and will give the *biggest gifts*.
- This giving represents 0.8% of all household incomes.
- Lower income groups especially among single parents makes giving harder.
- However the poorest families will give around 3.2% of income to charity.
- Payroll giving remains static for 2007.
- Gift Aid giving rose by 17% in 2007.
- The largest charitable gift ever made was by Warren Buffet, the US billionaire investor, who said he would donate \$37bn [£20bn] to the Bill Gates charitable foundation. This dwarfs the annual budget of the UN currently at \$12bn.
- Medical research charities receive the highest share of giving at 19% [Latest figures 2005/6]
- Religious charities receive the second highest share of giving at 16% - 3% up on the previous year. [Latest figures 2005/6]
- The High Level donors [giving more than £100 per month] contribute 66% of the total given to religious charities
- A high proportion of High Level Donors support religious charities – 39% compared to 12% of all donors and also over seas causes – 42% compared to 20% of all donors.

A recent survey of public attitudes towards giving showed that

- 48% thought charities should make giving easier
- 46% want to see more efficient and ethical giving
- 43% felt comfortable giving on line
- 40% felt giving should be more enjoyable!

Direct debits to charities are on the increase.

[Acknowledgements: Stewardship, Charity Trends 2007, NVCO and CAF]

A Report Everyone should try to Read!

Following Lawrie Townson's sermon on the 30th September the recommended reading can be found at:

www.churchsurvey.co.uk.

It's been read so far by an estimated 16, 000 church communities.

And it's free! So you can down load it rather than buy it!

COVENANTING CHURCH MEETING: 26th September 2007

The meeting was hosted by Rev. David Johnstone at Longfield Vicarage, and was well attended with representatives from all the Covenanting Churches.

Forthcoming events and plans:

20th October 2007 “One World Supper”, 7.30 p.m. at Our Lady of Hartley School. Rev. Richard Worssam will be presenting an illustrated talk on Tanzania, and it is hoped that Ash Church Choir and a Folk Group will be providing musical entertainment. Oxfam will be selling “Fair Trade Goods”.

This has always been a very enjoyable event and everyone is very welcome to attend – invite your friends!

Please bring a plate of finger food to share and your own glass and crockery. Drinks will be available (donations welcome).

Please book your place by phone to Carol Yarrow (705345) or All Saints Parish Office (703819).

17th January 2008 “Week of Christian Unity”, service to be held at St Mary Magdalene Church Longfield at 8.00 p.m. followed by refreshments in the Church Hall.

Discussion is taking place on the content for the next Lent Courses and will be formalised in the New Year.

A Pulpit Exchange has been planned for April 20th 2008 between all the Leaders of the Covenanting Church Group.

Next year there is a nationwide ecumenical event called HOPE '08 and there will be further discussion at the next meeting to consider how the Group will contribute to this event. If you would like more information the web site is: www.hope08.com

The Covenanting Groups next planned meetings are:

January 9th 2008 - Hartley, All Saints Centre

May 7th - The Rectory Ash

Sept.24th - The Vicarage Longfield

If anyone in the Congregation would like to contribute ideas for the development of the Covenanting Group, or would like to join the committee, please contact John, Shirley, or Susan.

Susan Hughesdon

Junior Church Activity Page

E	A	B	E	A	N	S	S	H	E
B	R	E	A	D	R	E	A	T	P
Y	V	I	S	N	L	N	T	W	O
S	E	E	D	P	K	N	O	U	T
E	S	Q	P	S	N	R	R	T	A
P	T	A	E	U	R	O	R	I	T
A	E	B	T	R	M	C	A	U	O
R	H	G	U	O	L	P	C	R	E
G	U	M	D	B	E	M	K	F	O
E	W	J	K	A	M	I	M	I	P
E	F	A	R	M	E	R	I	L	N

There are 20 words associated with Harvest Festival in this table.

How many can you find ?

Here are the words to help you:

HARVEST	GRAPES
PEAS	POTATO
BREAD	CORN
APPLES	SEED
PUMPKIN	CARROT
MARROW	NUT
THANKS	BEANS
PLOUGH	FARMER
PEAR	WATER
RIPE	FRUIT

Competition

Draw a picture of Harvest a win a prize. Uses pencils, felt pens, paints - whatever you like to use.

All entries will win a prize and there will also be a prize awarded to the overall winner.

Please bring your entries to Junior Church or Church by Sunday 21st October.

Don't forget your name & telephone number on the back.

All entries will be displayed in church.