

Newsletter for June 2010

The Rector writes

LOOKING BACK TO MAY.....

Much has been written about the outcome of the **General Election**, and the resulting coalition government; but rather less about the **local election** which saw the demise of Respect in all but one ward (ours!) and the (to my mind disastrous) vote to have an elected Mayor of Tower Hamlets. It will be interesting to see if we really do get a more grown-up form of politics in this land: it's early days, but there are some hopeful signs.

It was good to welcome staff, pupils and a few 'alumni' to **Raines' School Founders Day** on 7 May, when the customary wreath was laid on his monument, to mark the contribution of this 18th century brewer to education provision in our area. If you don't know about him, see <<http://www.stgite.org.uk/raine.html>> The pupils who came were more focused than in previous years. Unfortunately, though, the school no longer has a paid chaplain - the Revd Brian Ralph, also Rector of St Barnabas, Bethnal Green, has found it too much to do justice to this demanding role. Proper chaplaincy provision in our church secondary schools is but one of the issues that we need to watch out for as government education policies unfold. Attitudes to church schools is one of the fault lines between Tories and Lib Dems.

Thanks to all who contributed envelopes for **Christian Aid Week** - and who support their work throughout the year. Their practice of working in partnership with trusted local church groups in areas of need means that aid gets through to communities on the ground and makes a real difference - unlike some other programmes, including government initiatives, where outside involvement can actually serve to make matters worse.

David Rushton was licensed as lead chaplain for Bart's and the London on 12 May: Olive was there with our good wishes for his demanding ministry, as cutbacks impact on many areas of hospital life, including chaplaincy provision, and he has since attended our deanery chapter meeting. It's good to know that he will have as a colleague Tuulia Castledine, a Finnish Lutheran pastor whose ministry is recognised under the Porvoo Agreement between the Anglican churches of the British isles and the Nordic and Baltic churches. I have experienced Porvoo at first hand through my time as a locum chaplain in Finland, and some of you will be aware of my enthusiasm for that country!

Ascension Day drew a faithful congregation who shared in worship, and refreshments after the service. On **Pentecost** Sunday we had a good attendance including a number of visitors for a lively service. Because we were so diverse, it felt quite like the gathering described in Acts when people of many traditions and cultures were united in a common experience of the Holy Spirit.

At the **Parochial Church Council** meeting on 11 May officers for the coming year were re-appointed: Edith Wyeth as vice-chair (in case the Rector is run over by a bus!), and also as Gift Aid Secretary; Susan Crocker as secretary; Richard Powell as Treasurer; Wendy Ramanoop as Electoral Roll Officer; and Alex Nelson as our representative for Churches Together in Stepney & Wapping. Terry Bennett, headteacher of St Paul's School, was co-opted as a member, to keep our valued links with our school alive. The Church Council has much to deal with, and we are grateful to all those who give their time to this important work.

The second **concert** in our current series on 16 May featured violinist Christopher White (whose restoration of one of our pianos made these concerts possible), accompanied by his wife Melanie Reinhard, playing a stimulating programme of music by Mozart, Prokofiev and Franck. The audience was modest but very appreciative.

Edith's grand-daughter Ruth recently stayed for a time in **Banff** during her Canadian travels with her boyfriend, and were warmly welcomed by George Belcher, Rector of St George-in-the-Pines, with whom we have a link following his visit here last year - see their website <<http://www.stgeorgesinthepines.org/>>

...AND AHEAD TO JUNE

Our **Children's Group** leaders recently met to plan for the future, in the capable hands of our warden Alex, for whose committed enthusiasm we are so grateful. Because numbers of children and leaders are currently down, it was agreed that Children's Church would meet twice a month, on the 2nd and 4th Sundays in school term time (though with flexibility around festivals, and the availability of children and

leaders on particular Sundays). The first Sunday of each month will continue to be an all-age service, and we will make appropriate provision for other Sundays when children are present throughout. We are grateful to John and Margaret for their work with the group - both of them have led some really good and creative sessions.

Michael Lynch is currently spending some time with us, as a prospective ordinand, at the suggestion of our well-beloved Jeremy Crossley, who among other things is the director of ordinands for the Two Cities area. Michael worships at St Anne Soho and All Saints Margaret Street; a former teacher, he currently works for British Airways - whose current staffing issues affect his availability, Michael already feels welcomed by our congregation!

Elsbeth Wilkes is leaving us, after a dozen or more years as our organist. She is moving to Reading - too far to commute! We shall miss her greatly, for her ability to play anything at sight, for her carefully-chosen piano pieces during communion, for getting together a choir for festivals and more recently for the concert series she has arranged with Canon Geoffrey White. Her last concert will be on Sunday 13 June at 5pm, with Elspeth's own trio (soprano, clarinet and piano) playing works by Schubert, Britten and Argento - a fitting valediction.. Her last Sunday will be on 11 July, and we have decided to have a parish barbecue after the service rather than the following week (which is our anniversary of consecration) - more details of this in due course.

SENIOR STAFF

For many months now both our area bishop and archdeacon have been out of action. Archdeacon Lyle has been battling first with major surgery and then with cancer treatment, and Bishop Stephen was caring for his wife through harrowing treatment until her death, which has left him at a very low ebb. Both have now decided not to return to their ministries here, and Bishop Richard has begun the process of appointing their successors. There will be a service to express our appreciation for both of them at St John Hackney on Tuesday 6 July at 7.30pm.

Recently departed

We extend our sympathy to the families of **Daphne Rosario** and **Reginald Carpel**, who died recently.