

# NEWSLETTER FOR MAY 2013

## Ascension and Pentecost

Following St Luke's timetable, we keep the 40th day of Eastertide as Ascension Day, and the 50th as the Day of Pentecost (Whitsunday), when the Easter season ends and the Easter candle returns to its place by the font. For St John, the resurrection and ascension of Christ are not separate - indeed, for him the 'lifting up' of Christ on the cross, paraded for all the world to see, was the supreme moment of his glorification. This insight - mystical rather than chronological - is a good one, but it is also good to have a 'gear change' in the Easter season, with a day centred on the kingly reign of Christ, as Lord of all creation, interceding for us at the right hand of the Father and sending us out to all the world in mission. The readings and prayers of the following ten days focus on the promise of the Holy Spirit to equip that mission. Of course, to pray 'Come, Holy Spirit' does not imply that God's Spirit is ever absent from our world, but it is a call to wait upon God in patience and prayer, to discover what God would have us be and do. For urban Christians like ourselves, the words of the risen Lord to his disciples are especially important: *I am sending upon you what my Father promised; so stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high* (Luke 24.49).

We will be hearing more about what it means to commit ourselves to our city and its welfare in the new diocesan challenge **Capital Vision 2020**, to be launched on 6 June at St Paul's Cathedral (when churchwardens are admitted). 2020 is a date, but 20/20 is also the term for 'visual acuity' - the measure of normal sight, which the church needs to cultivate....

As last year, on **Ascension Day** we invite all who come to the service at 7.30pm to join us afterwards for a trip to a local curry house.

## Hot Potato Sundays

For some time we have been trying to identify a good way of offering our congregation the opportunity for nurture through bible study and discussion on a regular basis, and the Worship and Nurture Committee has come up with the idea of a monthly 'Hot Potato Sunday' after the morning service. We'll be discussing the readings of the day, and any topical issues related to our faith that you'd like to raise, and a simple lunch of baked potatoes will follow. The first of these will be on 12 May, with Christian Aid as a possible theme - see below. Do come!

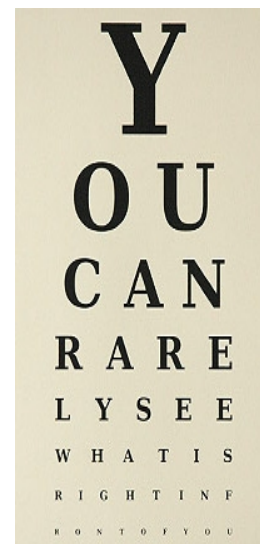
## Tuesday Eucharist

This will re-commence on 14 May, in the hope that the bad weather is behind us and that those who welcome a short, quiet service in the middle of the day will venture out.

## Annual Vestry and Parochial Church Meetings

We met after the service on Sunday 28 April, and re-appointed Alex Nelson and Allan Ramanoop as our churchwardens for the coming year, thanking them for all they have done over the last few years and hope to achieve in future, and assuring them that, although we have disappled the six-year rule, we do not expect them to continue in office indefinitely! We also appointed Margaret Coulter as deputy warden (an 'unofficial' role). We then appointed six members of the Parochial Church Council (leaving three vacancies that can be filled in due course), so that its membership will be:

- ▶ Rector, Jan Ainsworth (*ox officio* - clergy licensed to the parish)
- ▶ Wardens
- ▶ Michael Page (*Deanery Synod representative, appointed for three years*)
- ▶ Richard Powell, Philip Hogan, Rowena Loverance, Margaret Coulter, Annadale Ramanoop & Diana Woodbridge



(We also normally co-opt the headteacher of St Paul's School)

The new **Electoral Roll** has 60 members (52 of which live outside the parish - though in many cases only just).

We approved the **annual report** (which will shortly be on our website) and received the **annual accounts** for 2012 - copies of both will be available on request.

The wardens reported on the **fabric and the 'goods and ornaments'** of the church; Michael Page on the **Deanery Synod**; and we had a useful discussion about things that have been good in the past year and ideas for making us more effective in the future, thinking particularly about our **provision for young people**. An encouraging meeting!

### **Christian Aid Week, 12-18 May - Bite back at hunger**

This year's service materials, on which we shall be drawing, focus on the scandal of hunger in a world of plenty, with stories from Bolivia, Kenya and Zimbabwe. Christian Aid comments: *One in eight of God's people go to bed hungry each night. This is neither inevitable nor necessary. There is enough for everyone to eat and have their fill, if only enough people care and persuade governments to make the changes that are needed. It was Jesus' desire that everyone should eat and have enough.* Envelopes will be available in church. More details [here](#).

### **Marathon & Patronal Festival**

The sun shone, and we had a great team serving refreshments to the spectators (with 'new recruits' Colin, Ed and Della). Paul and Hannah's cakes sold out just when the lull in trade came, as the runners returned in force on the return stretch; Michael beetled off on a Boris bike to get more supplies of bottled water. The result was a tremendous total of £450 for Richard House, including some generous donations from bypassers. Bill Wright, clerk of our school governors, was one of the runners (for [Sea Change](#)); sadly at the last minute doctors advised Andy Rider, our area dean, not to run.

And the sun shone again for St George's Day and our 'mini garden party'. We had stalls and games, and a good influx of children and parents from school as their drumming team came to perform (their first outdoor engagement) - splendid! When the bells started, we shifted to the rotunda for pre-service drinks and nibbles, and enjoyed the service, with further participation from school and a challenging sermon from Bishop Graeme Knowles who explained the reality of wearing heavy armour and being winched onto a carthorse: if you fall off you're a goner. The 'whole armour of God', by contrast, helps us when we are down. Our thanks to Alex and Susan for co-ordinating the day, and to all who helped make it a success.

### **School news**

We can now report officially that our recent Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools ('Section 48'), which looks at our effectiveness as a church school, judged us 'outstanding' in all four areas - distinctive Christian character, collective worship, religious education, and leadership and management. This affirmation confirmed our own self-assessment, which is part of the process, that we are being faithful to the principles of our foundation, and all staff - and pupils too, for they are great ambassadors for their school - are to be congratulated.

The full report will shortly be available on the school website. The summary says

#### ***The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St Paul's as a C of E school are outstanding***

*St Paul's constantly reviews its nature as a Christian school in a largely Muslim community. While it respects the sensitivities of the community, the school derives its strength from Christian principles, which are explicit in its vision and ethos. The school achieves impressive levels of achievement and progress for all groups of learners. Teaching and assessment in religious education are outstanding overall. Due to outstanding support for their moral and spiritual development, learners show high levels of care and respect for each other.*

## And finally...

¶ To add to the many who come and photograph the church (including a group who took pictures for the Venice Biennale last year - the exhibition will be on display at Somerset House from 14 May - and are now working on a book about Hawksmoor and his churches) we have a number whose cameras are pointed upwards, hoping to get shots of the falcon and tiercel whose chicks are expected imminently.

¶ See issue 956 of *East End Life* ([here](#) on our website) for a full-page article about the building of our church, and about St George as a 'global citizen', honoured around the world and by various faiths, and not the figure of narrow nationalism that some would make him. John Rennie's historical pieces are always worth reading!

¶ Two performances of Puccini's *La Bohème* are planned for late May - details to follow.

¶ Our condolences to Jan Ainsworth's family on the death of her father Paul Brych, at the age of 92. Although an Anglican churchwarden in later life, he conspicuously exemplified his Polish Lutheran heritage in a life of courteous service, always putting others first.