

Rector's *ramblings*

February 2009 Number 6

Parish Weekend 2008

The feedback from the Parish Weekend in November has been overwhelmingly positive, and we are very grateful to Mark Barker and his team for leading the weekend for us so well. We are also grateful to all those who helped in many different ways with organising the weekend - it would be unfair to name individuals, but you know who you are! The talks from the weekend are available on the All Saints website, and are well worth a listen.



Many people commented that they had met with God in a new way over the weekend and that the teaching and ministry had led them on in their walk with God. It certainly helped me to re-focus on what is really important in the Christian life, and in the life of the Church. Our sermon series in January/February from the books of Nehemiah and James have come directly from my reflections on the weekend - that we need to be about the business of co-operating with God in building the Body of Christ here at All Saints, and that we need to have tools for everyday living with Jesus as our centre.

The prayer of Sir Francis Drake that Mark shared with us over the weekend has remained a source of inspiration and challenge to me in the ensuing weeks - there is a copy displayed on the noticeboard, and it

can also be found on the All Saints website. One of the lines in the prayer which particularly challenges me is this: *Disturb us, Lord, when we are too well pleased with ourselves, when our dreams have come true because we have dreamed too little, when we arrived safely because we sailed too close to the shore.*

It is very easy to talk about stepping out in faith, about trusting God for direction and provision, about taking risks for the sake of the Kingdom, but it can be really hard to put those words into practice. My hope and prayer is that, as we go forward into 2009, a year full of challenges undreamed of this time last year, we will put our trust in God's leading and resources, seek him in prayer, and be bold for the sake of the Gospel in Milton.

Children's and Youth Worker

You will be aware that the Children's and Youth Worker post is on a fixed-term contract, originally for two years, and extended for a further year to September 2009. I am sure you will agree that Chris Farmer is doing a great job and I and the PCC are very grateful for his dedicated and cheerful work on behalf of our children and young people.

When this post was begun, it was always the intention to keep it under regular review in the light of experience and changing circumstances. The PCC is currently considering what should be done when the post comes to an end in September. No decision has yet been made, but it is likely that some changes will be needed to best serve the current needs of the children and young people in our Church and community. In particular, it is clear that we need to put more resources into our work with young children and their families. Exactly how this will happen is still under discussion, but I wanted to inform you now, so that you can be praying that the PCC will hear God's voice clearly as to the right way forward for our work in this area. I also want to reassure you

that Chris is fully aware and supportive of these discussions; he too wants only the best for our children and young people.

If you have any comments or suggestions to make about the future shape of our work with children and young people, I would be delighted to hear from you as soon as possible (by e-mail or a note left in the Office or put through my door). A working party will be developing detailed proposals to put to the PCC meeting on 11th March, when a final decision will be made. **Please do keep this important matter in your prayers.**

New Network Launched!

The churches at All Saints Milton, All Saints Newmarket, and Christ Church Moreton Hall (Bury St Edmunds) are joining together to create a new local New Wine network - New Wine Mid Anglia. The launch service took place at All Saints Newmarket on Sunday 25th January, with John Coles, Director of New Wine, as the speaker, with inspiring testimony from members of the small team who came with him, worship from a band made up of Newmarket and Milton musicians, and prayer ministry with many coming forward to receive God's healing touch. It was a great evening, and the next event will be a celebration service here at Milton at 7.00pm on Sunday 10th May. Please put the date in your diary now and keep an eye on the new website for more events: www.newwinemidanglia.org.uk



Prayer before services

Please be aware that the service leader, preacher and worship band are likely to be praying together before our main Sunday services (from 10.15am and 6.45pm) so please don't be offended if they don't want to talk to you at those times.



There's always time to talk afterwards! If you have notices for the service these should ideally be sent to the Church Office before Thursday lunchtime, or, if genuinely urgent, notified to the service leader before 10.15am or 6.45pm.

Friday Prayers

The three hardy souls who regularly meet in Church to pray on Friday at 7.00am would love to have more company! It's almost light by the time we finish, and

the Church is nice and warm - above all, it is good to make a sacrifice now and then to show God that we're serious about prayer. Think of it as fasting from a bit of sleep. The Friday evening prayer session also has plenty of room - don't worry that you won't get a seat! See you next Friday?

Advance Notice

The Annual Parochial Church Meeting (the Church's AGM) will be held on Sunday 29th March in the context of the 10.30am Morning Service. This is an important meeting, so please plan to be there, and if you are someone who provides a report, Abi will be after you soon!

Refreshments Rota - a plea!

I am very surprised at how difficult it is to get enough people to sign up to be on the refreshments rota, especially for the 10.30am service. This is a really straightforward thing to do - simply turning up before the service to set things up, and making some teas and coffees, and serving them with a smile. You get first pick of the biscuits(!), and a smile and a 'thank you' from those you're serving. What could be better? I'd like to record my thanks to all those who do faithfully serve us after the service, and particularly to those who have stepped in at the last minute recently when there has been no-one on the rota.

This is a really important part of our ministry of welcome and hospitality, and it would be a real pity if people were put off coming because, having been invited to go through for coffee, there isn't any. **Please consider this plea - it's got to the pleading stage - and perhaps get together with one or two others to make up a team, and put yourself on the rota.** I'd do it myself, but I think it's more important that I'm available to speak with people after the service! Maybe home groups could follow the lead of others, and sign up for some vacant slots as a group - serving together is a great way to deepen fellowship. I'll leave it with you...

Pastoral Care

A reminder that if you know of anyone who would welcome a visit from a member of the Clergy or one of our Lay Pastors, or if a Church member is ill or in hospital, please pass the details to the Church Office. Of course, if there is an urgent pastoral need, please contact either me or Eleanor Williams directly.

With every blessing,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'David'.