



# THE LOOP

October 2009

## LORD OF THE HARVEST

THIS EDITION OF THE LOOP WILL COME TO YOU AS OUR PARISH HAS CELEBRATED HARVEST. THERE ARE TWO FOCUSES OF LIFE THAT WE READ OF IN THE OLD TESTAMENT - ONE OF THE CITY DWELLER AND THE OTHER OF THE AGRICULTURAL WORKER. WE ARE PRIVILEGED IN THE ISLE OF DOGS TO HAVE THOSE TWO PERSPECTIVES - HAVING CANARY WHARF ON OUR DOORSTEP BUT EQUALLY THE MUDCHUTE WITH ITS ANIMALS AND GREEN SPACES. OUR HARVEST CELEBRATION NEEDS TO REFLECT BOTH THESE IDENTITIES BECAUSE HARVEST IS, AT ITS ROOT, A TIME OF THANKING GOD FOR ALL THAT WE ARE AND ALL THAT WE HAVE.

OUR WAY OF CELEBRATING HARVEST IS, AS IN MOST CHURCHES, VERY TRADITIONAL – LOTS OF FLOWERS AND VEGETABLES, PERHAPS SOME TINS IF A CHURCH HAS A PARISH PANTRY, WHICH WE DO. WE NEED TO VISUALISE THE OTHER GIFTS THAT WE OFFER BACK TO GOD: AS THE HARVEST GIFTS ARE BROUGHT FORWARD WE NEED TO TRANSLATE THEM INTO THE SKILLS WE HAVE TO DO OUR WORK, THE NETWORKS OF PEOPLE THAT WE WORK WITH, THE EFFECTIVENESS OF WHAT WE DO. AND THIS APPLIES WHETHER WE ARE A TEACHER, A NURSE, AN INVESTMENT BANKER OR A CAR MECHANIC.

THE HARVEST PERIOD IS TO BE ENJOYED – IT IS SUCH A LOVELY TIME OF YEAR!

We are planning to publish The Loop every first Sunday of the month along with the Parish diary which also comes out at that time

## Berlin 2009

In September, 26 members of the Christchurch and St Luke's congregation spent the weekend strengthening our partnership with our sister church in Berlin. The theme "Exclusion and walls between communities" was chosen by Sophien church to explore the 20 years since the "Peaceful Revolution" when the wall between East and West Berlin was opened for unrestricted travel.

We were greeted with immense warmth and hospitality which continued through the weekend. On the Saturday morning we were treated to a walking tour of the area immediately around the Sophienkirche. Carston showed us architectural and historical gems that are not in the Lonely Planet guide to Berlin. We were especially lucky to be shown a recently uncovered elegant reception room above a dance hall. As the upstairs room had been untouched for nearly a century, its' decaying elegance gave us an insight into how Berliners partied in the 1920's.

On Saturday evening, we were addressed by a member of the congregation who talked about the role of the church in overcoming exclusion both in the past, present and future. Fr Tom talked in response about the St Luke's project, and people talked movingly about their individual experience of welcome by the church. Everyone was invited to write a line about their experiences, and Heike and I will collect those together and make it available in our planning for the return trip next year.

On Sunday, the service at Elizabeth church was very moving, and Fr Tom preached in German! The prayers and hymns were a mixture of English and German.

After the service, we were taken to another one of the churches in the parish called Zionkirche. We were privileged to be present at the opening of an exhibition about an 'underground' library on environmental issues in the GDR, which was based in the church. We met 2 of the activists who ran the library and were arrested for their ideals by the STASI. Fortunately, they were released after a concerted campaign and vigil drew the attention of the western press.

Late on that day we were shown an exhibition about "the Peaceful Revolution" in Alexanderplatz. Berliners are proud of how the divide between East and West was overcome, but think that the term "the Wall coming down" sounds too passive. We were pleased to see photographs of 2 of the people we met during the weekend in the exhibition.

A feature of the weekend was the evening prayers that we shared on Saturday, Sunday and before departure. The new minister in the parish in Berlin, Christina Maria, led the services in a very spiritual way. She read passages from Dietrich Bonhoeffer and Martin Luther King, both of whom had worked or preached in the parish.

We want to continue the theme of exclusion when the Berliners come to us next year. We will start planning that visit soon, so expect to be approached by me for planning and fund raising ideas! In order to reciprocate the level of engagement and hospitality we experienced in Berlin, we think we will need to have a dedicated fund to "Save a Berliner!" Andrew – for a generous donation to the fund, I'll keep your secret!

Luise thanks everyone who participated.

## Theological Students' Promise

This comes from the Newsletter of Alma, our Diocesan link with Mozambique and Angola. It's an example of a promise to God, a tradition that goes back to John Wesley and even further. Perhaps we could all formulate a similar promise for ourselves.

"We, the students who finished the theological training course, in the presence of God and of His Church, accept that today marks the start of a new responsibility that we have in this great Body of Christ (His Church); in obedience to the command of the Lord Jesus Christ for the spiritual and numerical growth of His church.

Also, we promise to be faithful, honest and fair in the work of our God.

It is with great honour and joy that we give these promises to the Church of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Great is the one who called us in the way of the cross, the God of Israel who did not stop until everything was achieved in the right time. In exactly the right time.

In times of joy we worship God

In times of difficulty we look to God

In times of pain we trust God

For every time in life, we thank God. Thanks be to God"

Luanda, 14<sup>th</sup> February 2009

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## The Stepney Area Clergy Conference 28<sup>th</sup> September – 1<sup>st</sup> October 2009

Fr. Tom Pyke, Fr. Tom Keighley and Revd Amanda Keighley have been away at the Stepney Area Conference at Ditchingham in Norfolk. The theme of the Conference, led by Bishop Stephen Oliver, was "Leadership" looked at from a range of perspectives including: Leadership and Gender, growing Christian Leaders and, intriguingly, the Undefined Leader. Bible studies were provided for us by Richard Burbridge of King's College, London – one of the bible studies was one that Richard wrote for the Lambeth Conference last year. The highlight of the Conference was the Olivier Mythodrama. This was a workshop looking at issues of sustaining leadership through participation in Shakespeare's "As You Like It". This was very fresh, original and thought provoking. Wonderful worship was prepared and led for us by John Burniston from Islington Deanery.

These times of sharing across the Stepney area are very precious and our three Clergy felt that they had refreshed their sense of being part of something bigger than simply the parish.

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## **FIVE MARKS OF MISSION GROUPS**

By now we are used to our Five Marks of Mission Groups at Christ Church and St Luke's. They are meant to encourage aspects of the Parish's life that ensure our health as a missionary group of Christians together. In putting together the Parish Mission Action Plan for 2008/2010, the Strategy Group (a sub-committee of the PCC) decided that in the coming years our Mission Action Plan should be given an overall theme and that theme could be one of the Five Marks of Mission. So for the year beginning at the Annual Parochial Church Meeting in 2010 the theme for the year will be "to teach, baptise and nurture new believers." The Parish will be helped to think about this theme and the goals that arise from it by the Faith and Nurture Group led by Phil Elliott.

This theme has been chosen because we need to put into place a baptism policy for our two churches which gives those who bring children for baptism the best possible preparation and follow up. So we are looking at questions like how do we help Godparents be Godparents in more than name – how do we help them communicate the Christian faith to the children who have been baptised? How do we ensure in the years that follow that we keep in touch with each child and each family and welcome the children to Sunday School? How do we put into practice the churches teaching that baptism should be at the main Sunday Service when baptism parties are often very large indeed?

A good theme for a year of the church's life needs many ways of being communicated and I would like to challenge our congregations to think about ways in which our theme of teaching, baptising and nurturing could be communicated perhaps through visual things, perhaps through music. Perhaps in other ways in our churches.

Please do give it some thought.

Let me introduce myself. My name's Lynn Collier and I work within the church 10 hours a week where I take care of the office and, hopefully, make life a little easier for Tom! The role is extremely varied and, on a practical level, consists of answering the phone, dealing with post and correspondence, maintaining up to date diaries, taking minutes, arranging meetings and ordering office supplies. On a personal level I also meet and greet people who come into the Church. They may wish to look around or are simply curious about the history of the Church. Others may have memories of the Church as young children and some people just want to talk. I hope keeping the Church doors open while I am here will encourage more people to come in.

Please feel free to say hello if I am here.

## Winter Fair: 28<sup>th</sup> November 11-3pm

Joyce Webb is in charge and she would like to encourage you to make preserves and pickles and cakes. There will be a bottle stall, a raffle and a tombola - plus the opportunity to sell other craftwork and nice presents as a way of preparing for Christmas.

### **Baptisms in September**

Alys Frances Shankland  
Alfie Mark Barter  
Milly Ebho  
Riley Osemudiahmen Ebho  
Darcie Jessie Giles

*"Fight valiantly under the banner of Christ against sin, the world and the devil and continue Christ's faithful soldier and servant to the end of your lives"*

### **Deaths in September**

Jomo Lapidon Thomas  
Bertie Evans  
Charlie Parker  
Alfred Williams

*"Rest eternal grant unto them O Lord, and let light perpetual shine upon them"*

### **BACK TO CHURCH SUNDAY**

This was the third time that the Parish celebrated Back To Church Sunday – this year we have aligned ourselves with the rest of the churches in Britain (not just Anglican) marking this day in September. Bishop Stephen led an inspiring joint service at Christ Church at 11am and preached movingly about Zacchaeus and coming to faith. For many of us, the abiding memory will be of Bishop Stephen leaning on his staff conducting us as we sang Amazing Grace.

The barbecue afterwards, in the space by the crypt door, was very busy and crowded and many people had the opportunity to speak for the first time and make new friends. Six people were recruited for the Alpha Course beginning later this month and in the afternoon the focus moved to St Luke's where Philip Elliot led a moving Hymns and Cakes event. Finally, the day was rounded off with Evening Prayer led by James Hughesdon. The service at Christ Church attracted 97 adults and 19 children – a remarkable increase in numbers of an ordinary Sunday and indeed on our Back To Church Sundays of recent years. A very big vote of thanks to everyone who contributed whether it was in bringing a friend to the service or in preparing food for the barbecue or in the many small ways that preparations were done.

### **Praying for people**

*In Christ Church and St Luke's there are green forms for you to fill in if you wish to have a prayer said for yourself or someone else*