



st swithun's

bathford

GROW CARE SERVE SHARE

**CHURCH FAMILY NEWS**

**AUGUST 2013**

You were probably reading the last church family news surrounded by snow. Now I'm writing this edition in a heat wave, but it may have all changed by the time this is read!

We live in changing times. The Church of England is waking up to this and continues to find change hard. We see this clearly at national level with the ongoing debates over women bishops and changes in marriage laws.

Fortunately not all change is bad news and this newsletter is really to keep you informed of some of the positive changes and good news that will help us to move forward in our ongoing mission to share the good news of Jesus both in Bathford and beyond.

Top of the list must be the arrival of Barbara McLaughlin our new church administrator, whose quiet, practical efficiency is already making a difference to the running of church day-to-day. Barbara works Monday and Wednesday mornings and Thursday afternoons. A new office has been created in the Holmes room which has created an effective and pleasant working environment. Do feel welcome to call in and see Barbara with any queries or help you may need. The Holmes room will continue to be used as a crèche on a Sunday morning and with the installation of a storage heater this should make this a cosy space for little ones.

In order to help initially fund our administrator and develop an office space we applied for a grant to the Diocesan Fund for Church Growth. The fund body was excited by what we are trying to do as a church and could see that an administrator would facilitate our desire to be effective in our mission by better co-ordination of activities, better publicity of events and releasing mine and others time from administrative tasks. They have therefore given us a grant for £10,000 which will be spread over 3 years to help us on our way with funding this post. We are of course delighted by this and encouraged that the diocese has faith in our vision for the future.

A truly exciting end to the summer term came with the announcement of the appointment of a youth worker for St Swithun's to help us to grow and develop the church's work and care for young people in the village. Ryan Dunn has just completed a three-year training degree and has just the skills and qualities we hoped for in a youth worker. Ryan also works part-time for Mencap and will be working initially for 12 hours per week for St Swithun's. Bath Youth for Christ will work in partnership with us to mentor Ryan and support us. Our volunteers have done an outstanding job over many years to grow and develop youth work in this parish and more recently to start our highly successful youth club. This provides a

great foundation for Ryan to work from and we hope the volunteers will continue to work alongside Ryan with our young people.

Much has been going on behind the scenes with the South Aisle project to make this a more versatile area as part of the ongoing plans to update our church for today's mission. We hope to complete the project during the Autumn half term when new flooring and chairs will be installed. We would like to invite members of the congregation to consider donating a chair or indeed part of a chair. As a guide, each chair will cost £50. We will record all donations in a commemoration book to be kept with church records. If you would like to give a chair in memory of somebody or even ask relatives to give you one for a birthday/anniversary gift there will be a record of it and you will be able to record a simple message. There will be a sign up list at the back of church for all who would like to donate.

As well as change, maintenance of such an old building and site has to be continually on the agenda. After a year of raising funds, we now have enough for a canopy to be erected over the St Swithun effigy in the churchyard. We hope that this will help to maintain this ancient artefact. John Smart hopes to do this work over the summer. As ever we are grateful to John and the fabric team for all their efforts and we are grateful to Michael Craine for taking over leadership of this team.

We continue to experience God's blessings on us in Bathford. We do not know quite what our future relationship will be with our neighbouring parishes but we do know the more limited resources in churches means that we need to work closer together, share more and partner together more for the sake of the gospel. To this end both Bathampton and Bathford parishes will seek to make Batheaston's new House for Duty vicar, the Rev'd Isobel Rathbone welcome and supported when she arrives in September.

May I thank you all for all that you continue to be and to do. Please pray for Barbara and Ryan, our new administrator and youth worker respectively, as they settle into their roles and continue to pray for our church as we seek together to grow, care, serve and share the good news of Jesus in Bathford and beyond.

With love and prayers

Jane