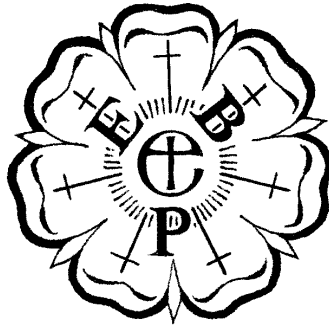


**East Bristol
Partnership Quarterly
Newsletter
Spring 2009**



Partnership Steering Group Changes Name

From henceforth what was formerly known as the EBP Steering Group will now be known as the EBP Forum. It was felt that this new name sounded less provisional than the term 'Steering Group', befitting a Partnership which has been established for a few years now.

The Standing Committee, which met in between Steering Group meetings, has now been disbanded, and instead small working parties will get together to deal with particular issues as they arise. These working parties will consist of at least one ordained and one lay person from the Forum, however up to four others from outside of the Forum maybe join a working party if they have a special interest in or expertise to do with the issue at hand.

The Forum will include all the Partnership Priests, the Coordinator, and 2 elected members of each church's PCC. The Forum will meet 6 times a year, including the EBP AGM on 8th July of this year.

Uganda Visit

From 4th – 17th May visitors from our partner diocese in Uganda will be visiting Bristol. Susan has asked whether anyone might be able to help put up the Revd. Romans Serunjogi for one or two nights during his stay. If so, please contact Mark.

Andre Leaving

As most of you will already know Andre will be leaving the EBP later this year to carry on his good work in South Bristol, and spread the word about the Ecumenical Kirchentag. There will be a Farewell Service for him at St Aidan's on Sunday 17th May at 6.30pm.

Pioneer Minister

In May this year the EBP will welcome Nick Adams as our new pioneer minister (curate), with Keith as his training incumbent. Nick and his wife Helen will be living in or close to the EBP area. With an extensive theatrical background Nick will be undertaking to put on a cycle of Mystery Plays during his time in the EBP. More details to follow.

Dawn Mass on Easter Sunday

This year the EBP will be pioneering a Dawn Mass on Easter Sunday, gathering at All Saints at 4.30 for 5am!, lighting a fire and processing into Church. Sure to be an enchanting experience if you can get up in time!

East Bristol Music School

The East Bristol Music School, directed by Keith, continues to go from strength to strength, meeting on Saturday mornings during term time in the hall at St Matthias & Dr Bells School. 'Mini Music Makers' for 3-5 year olds meet at 9am, 'Hippos' for primary school aged children at 10am, and a New/Non-Singers choir for teenagers and adults at 11am. New members always welcome!

Secondary Schools in East Bristol

Susan is in the process of establishing links with secondary schools in East Bristol. She has arranged to be available at the Brunel Academy in Speedwell

on a Wednesday lunchtime and to do some assemblies there. She hopes to be there for discussion and asking questions, for sensitive listening, and as a resource for staff and students of all faiths or none.

Licensing of Jo Selman

Following the postponement of the last licensing service due to the snow, Jo Selman will now be licensed as a Lay Minister in the diocese on Saturday 4th April at 10.30am in the Cathedral. All are welcome to come and show their support.

Please continue to watch the EBP website www.eastbristol.org.uk for details of upcoming events, especially the 'calendar' page. If you have any items of news for the Summer newsletter or the monthly calendars, please contact Mark at info@eastbristol.org.uk / 0117 9586412 or c/o St Mary's Church, Manor Road, Fishponds, Bristol, BS16 2JB.

An epistle from Mary Barratt, director of Network Counselling in Henbury, North Bristol.

I would like to ask you for your support during the coming year. Our counselling service is in great demand and we are working hard to meet the need and reduce the waiting time for people who seek our help. However, the 'credit crunch' is beginning to have an effect and we are receiving an increasing number of enquiries for counselling. For many people who contact us there is nowhere else to go in times of distress and hardship - the market rate for counselling is around £40 per hour and this is not an option for the majority of people.

Network asks for a donation towards the cost of counselling sessions and the average contribution rate we receive is around £10 per hour. We therefore rely heavily on other donations and fundraising to make up the difference and cover our costs in providing the service. As redundancies begin to affect people's lives in Bristol and the surrounding areas, we are aware that the

demand on our service will become even greater and the average contribution rate we receive will continue to fall.

Our mission is "... to offer a counselling service that is of the highest professional standard and which bears witness to the love of God in Christ. We aim to provide a counselling service that is affordable to all".

I do hope you will feel able to support our work in the coming year. Please ask your church community to remember us in their prayers in these difficult times, and to consider offering Network some financial support in the year ahead. If you are already supporting us you will be aware how much we depend on and value your ongoing commitment and generosity and we thank you.

Mary Barrett, Director, Network Counselling & Training, College Park Drive, Henbury Road, BRISTOL, BS10 7QD, Tel: (0117) 9507271 Fax: (0117) 9507272, info@network.org.uk, www.network.org.uk, Registered Charity No 292801

Service of Thanksgiving
by Anne Claar

On the 8th of March 2009 at 10.00 am in All Saints Church, Grove Road, Fishponds we had a thanksgiving service for the birth of all our three children Susannah, Reuben and Johan. In the same service we also celebrated the birth of Layla Webb. The service was led by The Rev'd. Douglas Holt the canon theologian in this diocese. After the service there was a bring and share lunch in the hall (with bouncy castle), which the children greatly enjoyed.

I can imagine that some might think it strange that we have not baptised our children and I would like to explain this a little bit. I believe very deeply in the

wonderful sacrament that infant baptism is. It is a powerful symbol of God saying 'yes' to us before we can say 'yes' to God. It is a beautiful sign of how the community carries our faith when we cannot do that for ourselves (the bible story that belongs to that idea is the four friends who bring the lame man to Jesus and Jesus forgives the sins of the lame man when he sees the faith of his friends!). Infant baptism also acknowledges that we grow up in a certain faith and that although we can later choose to follow or not, that choice might not be as free as it seems. And this is why at the same time I also believe very deeply in the wonderful sacrament that adult baptism is. In the baptism of an adult there is more emphasis on the personal commitment to Jesus and the personal choice of a certain church denomination. I rejoice in the diversity that the Church of England allows. For different families and different children different approaches and emphases will be best. I was baptised when I was fifteen and that was a very special experience. For me it was really good that my parents allowed me to choose my own time and church to be baptised in and that is something I would like to offer my children as well.

Anne Claar

on behalf of Keith and Anne Claar.

A report on Fishponds Churches Together Prayer and Praise Evening, held in the week of Prayer for Christian Unity

by Karl Stewart, All Saints

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christian Unity,

I first write about the event held at All Saints in January, it was a tremendous celebration and one I'm sure that would have not only been repeated across Bristol, but across the whole country.

I found it a wonderful feeling to be there amongst it all, not just the from the point of view of it being just another service, but also the feeling of such life in all that were there. We can sometimes and I don't say forget, but become comfortable in our own little places of faith, practice and the relationships we have with those we see Sunday by Sunday. I have on several occasions been to the sort of services we had in the week of Christian Unity, and found each

to be different as I continue my explorations outside of what I usually practice at All Saints. This I learnt some time ago, but was reminded by that very service was that, we all regardless of our faith and practice, and wherever we are on the journey, we all have a place with God and each other. Christian unity is not just a one-week celebration, but it's a daily and lifelong celebration.

I look forward to our next celebration of prayer and praise we have, where we will be united with our fellow Brothers and Sisters in Christ.

And secondly a brief note on the Home Groups.

I have been amazed at the amount of people who have attended the Home Groups. It seems to be something that means so much to people outside of church and turned into what we can still call church. The great thing is, and we hoped this would happen, is the growth of the group. It has grown so much it has been placed in two homes. At this point I on behalf of the hosts invite and welcome you to join us either on a Monday at the home of Sarah and Ian Webb, 18 Parnell Road, Fishponds, or on a Tuesday at the home of Mark and Dianne Simms, 53 Stonebridge Park, Fishponds. So if you would like to see something different from wherever you are across our seven parishes, we would love to see you and welcome you cordially.

It's great to be not only in one place with God, but in all places. We are a united and holy people.

Yours in and with God.

Karl Stewart

Psalms for Today!

By Trevor Denley

Below is the output of an evening service held at St Aidan's – 'Worship through the Psalms'. This is one of a series of services in our Alternative Worship programme that originated from our 'Outside In' week.

We listened to the Psalms in a wide variety of presentations, read them and discussed their relevance for today. The culmination of the evening was

writing our own Psalm. Using a technique borrowed from Revd. Celia Jones, I asked each person to copy the first lines from a Psalm of their choice, then write the next line themselves based on their own feelings. Then they were asked to fold the paper over, leaving only their own line revealed. They were then asked to pass the paper to the person on their right and repeat the exercise, and so on until the paper came back.

The outcome is below, very moving and very uplifting. Long live the Psalms!

Psalms of the moment

God is our refuge and strength; an ever-present help in trouble;
 He is always by my side,
 Prompting me to discern his 'still small voice',
 Shout the news from the hilltops - give me clarity of vision;
 Let me feel the strength of your love,
 Give me courage to do your will.
 I will dwell in your house forever.

O Lord you have searched me and you know me.
 You hold my hand in times of trouble.
 You are my comfort and strength,
 You are there in times of need.
 Help us to know when we are in need, and what our need is.
 You are the all-provider.

God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble.
 Sometimes I find it difficult to realise you are there Lord!
 Times are hard to accept, but you are there.
 When we call you answer our prayer,
 You answer all my prayers,
 Help me to discern what your answer is.
 Why, O Lord, do you stand far off? Why do you hide yourself in times of trouble?
 My heart was broken, I stood alone.
 He is with me forever.

O God you know me and I sometimes miss what you intend me to be.
I preserve to seek understanding, from understanding comes knowledge.

God is our refuge and strength, we shall never want.
O Lord I thank you for your creation and preservation, and it is good to
acknowledge your goodness.
Your goodness shines through the clouds of evil,
Your light banishes Satan from us.
Never think of evil, only good.

Why, O Lord, do you stand far off? Why do you hide yourself in times of
trouble?

Why, O Lord, do I stand far off? Why do I hide from you in the noise and the
strength of my own heart and mind?

Come close and stand by me, find me, comfort me.

I need your strength in all I do, I need your love to share with all.

I need your love to share with all.

Nothing will shake me, I'll always be happy.

There are times when I feel doubt and hopelessness, so speak to me O Lord
in my stillness.

God is our refuge and our strength, an ever-present help in trouble.

He is our rock when we are on shifting sands.

He is our sense when we have lost our senses. He is ever with us when we
are in trouble.

When I was alone and weeping I sensed your presence with me,
It lifted up my spirits.

By the rivers of Babylon we sat and wept when we remembered Zion.

How we cried for you our Lord. You gave us strength,

That we can only recognise when we acknowledge our weakness.

Give us strength to overcome our fears and weaknesses – insight can be a
terrible thing.

We know that you always walk with us, and will hear us when we call.