



# East Bristol Partnership Winter Newsletter January 2011

## **Vacancy Review Process**

Over the last few months George Rendell from the diocesan Vacancy Leadership Development team has been reviewing documents sent in by the church wardens with a view to compiling a report about the vacancy for a partnership priest left by Revd. Susan Allman. A deanery group will then review this report and from thence decide if the vacancy can be filled and if so, in what way. Watch this space!

## **Neighbourhood Partnership Meetings**

Denis Wise from the Bristol City Council Development Team has been in touch with a list of dates for neighbourhood partnership meetings. Our East Bristol Partnership area roughly coincides with 6 council wards, which are Eastville, Frome Vale, Hillfields, Greater Fishponds, St George East and St George West. There are 4 meetings a year in each ward, which give people from the local communities the chance to meet with local councillors, council workers, and representatives from other organisations such as the police and local community organisations and charities, and to have a say or find out more about what's going on the local area. The schedule for these meetings can be found at the back of church or on the partnership website.

## **Susan's Licensing in Titchfield**

On Monday 15<sup>th</sup> November 2010 about 25 people from the partnership travelled down to Titchfield in Hampshire to attend Revd. Susan Allman's licensing service as priest in charge there. A coach was provided by Steven's of Soundwell, and the cost came in a £15 per person. The journey there and back went very smoothly, and they were back in Bristol before midnight. The hospitality provided by the people of St Peter's, Titchfield was said to be first rate, and people seemed to really enjoy the service. Hopefully this won't be the last time we can get enough people together from across the partnership to fill a coach.

## **'The Chocolate Choir'**

Sheila Melot is a trainee lay minister from St Bartholomew's church in St Andrew's, who was here on placement in the partnership during the

Autumn of 2010. She has recently published her first book entitled 'The Chocolate Choir' - a collection of short stories for 7-11 year olds. The book was inspired by Sheila's experience of running the Junior Choir at St Bartholomew's, and it's very entertaining, even if you're not in the target age group! If you'd like to obtain a copy please send a cheque for £4.99 made out to 'Sheila Melot' to 47 Windsor Road, Bristol BS6 5BW.

### **Youth Activities at All Saints**

The Otters Youth Group meets on Tuesday evenings in All Saints Link Room from 7 - 8.30pm. Any young people between 10 and 17 years welcome. The group meets for fun and fellowship - and food seems to feature quite often... The evening begins with a discussion, moves into an activity and ends with prayer for each other and those in need. This term we'll be thinking about Jesus' early years as a refugee in Egypt, examining our relationships, learning what it is like to be disabled and celebrating Easter. We'll also be trying our hand at glass painting, pancake making, clay modelling and watching our backs at Laser Quest. The programme for the Spring Term will tell you more about what we get up to (<http://www.eastbristol.org.uk/ypcommunity.html>) or you can contact Helen Adams (9659792) for more information. We look forward to seeing you.

### **Crisis Centre Ministries**

In September 2010 Jonathan Swithenbank from Crisis Centre Ministries came to talk to us in the partnership about the work this Christian run charity does to support the homeless and those with addiction problems in Bristol. Since our meeting they have expanded from their location on City Road in St Paul's to a new drop-in centre on Stapleton Road in Easton, and they're looking for volunteers to train with them and get involved. If you interested please contact Jonathan on 07901 336136.

### **Kingswood Street Pastors**

Revd. Andy Mason from Holy Trinity Kingswood is looking for volunteers to train to become Street Pastors. The initiative involves going out onto the streets of Kingswood on a Friday and Saturday night from 11pm - 3am, and being a praying presence and showing Christ's love in practical ways to the many people who are about and hurting in some way at that time. If you're interested in getting involved please contact Andy on 0117 9603195.

### **New Year Epistle**

*From Revd. Keith Thomasson*

Dear Readers,

It is a pleasure to wish you all every blessing in 2011. As we move into a new year of serving God in East Bristol I wanted to reflect on some things I have learned by those who passed through our communities in the Autumn of 2010 as part of their preparation for Licensed Lay Ministry in the diocese.

Janet, Sheila and Peter visited various churches (but not all) and activities as guests and combined this with research about the area and have each brought various views as to how we are doing. They fed this back at an evening of reflection in late November. It was an enjoyable evening and really useful for people on the outside to be able share what they can see. There was much affirmation of who we are and what we do as part of God's people in East Bristol.

For example, they found welcome and interaction with new comers good at All Saints and St Michael's and an excellent T service at St John's. The beauty of St Mary's was a real highlight as was the interaction with the community by the people of S Aidan's. Sheila spent most of her time at S Aidan's and her feedback is forming part of the PCC's and Ministry Leadership Team's core thinking for 2011. All these things are really welcome and something we can feel reassured and affirmed by.

Peter, Janet and Sheila were invited to make comments that might help shape our thinking in terms of developing our mission work. For example: welcome was not always a priority in some churches; on the whole the churches are offering a similar 'product' at a similar time on most Sundays; we are struggling to maintain fully despite real commitment the range of plant (which is often underdeveloped) that we have ie the number of churches; there is scope to develop further the spirituality of those more mature in years. Many of these things may not be new to us but it is helpful to have them stated. Any response to these helpful observations should be a shared response rather than thinking 'this is something extra for a certain person or group to undertake'. In fact many of these ideas recur each year following our having guests on placement. To provide a scriptural perspective it is worthwhile you knowing that I am writing this in December when thinking about the relationship between Mary and Elizabeth: both expectant mothers and unexpectedly so. I read and reread Luke's account of their interaction and consider how we are developing our cross-generational relationships within the churches and within the communities of East Bristol. From the feedback I wonder whether we can take something from the work and thinking about the spirituality of children (from Rebecca Nye) and apply it more widely, touching on many of the items highlighted above.

This is my contextualised take on what Nye writes. She uses SPIRIT as a framework for her thinking on how we develop the spirituality of children.

'S': We should look to create *space* that has a 'wow' factor that gives a real sense of 'God is here!'. To do this we could de-clutter worship space, (temporarily and where appropriate with permission) remove chairs or pews not used and create space for free movement and perhaps develop a prayer area with a tree/loom/candles/artistic materials/pebbles and water.

'P': is for *process*-we are in it for the long term resourcing people through hospitality, prayer, bible reading and study/reflection and building relationship. This is a basic necessary diet for healthy growth.

'I': is for *imagination*. Using our imagination in response to Jesus' stories and to stories from the Hebrew bible (Old Testament). Asking questions about faith and looking for answers that are open. It is about all of us developing our talents and having them welcomed and used in God's service.

'R': is for *relationship*. We are all to be known by name, across the generations. And following Jesus' teaching the children are to be at the centre (not in the corner).

'I': is for *intimacy*, a going deeper with God and one another, safely of course. We may do this by opening ourselves to his Spirit and working each day and draw inspiration from the scriptures and reading our stories of life into this rich resource. (I will happily share this with anyone who asks).

'T': is for *trust*, trusting God and each other more. Saying 'I think this'; talking well and directly with others and coming out of comfort zones and friendship to sensibly trust both those we have known for years and those who are new. A good start is spending four minutes with those you don't know at all or well following a service before speaking with your closer friends. (In All Saints this has been called 'speed dating' although I am not sure where the speed element comes in, but some people are doing it and it is making a positive difference).

I offer this to you at a time of starting afresh and ask that you consider it alongside personal resolutions for the new year and as you plan and pray for your mission and service this new year.

Best wishes

Keith 0117 965 7740.