



The Ship

St Jude's Church, Englefield Green Newsletter

Anglicans and Methodists working together

Number 137

November 2021

Harvest Thanksgiving

We are grateful to everyone who helped to decorate St Jude's for our October Harvest Celebration. We would like to thank Homebase (Staines) for donating plants, Waitrose (Egham) for donating food items and all who contributed non-perishable food items. All food items have been taken to the Runnymede Food bank. Thank you to Geoff Chew who continues to collect and to deliver our regular donations to the Food Bank.

AV Appeal

The sound system in St Jude's has recently been upgraded in preparation for the installation of our own visual equipment. Once again, we owe especial gratitude to those who have generously supported our appeal. Thanks to you all we have almost reached our target and we hope to be in a position to progress this project in the near future.

Knitting Update

(although not so much nattering!)

Our Saturday "Knit and Natter" Group has been unable to meet since the beginning of the pandemic. However, fingers have not been still. We have received an update from Pat Summers on progress over these last months.

"During lockdown a lot of us have been very busy knitting items for 'Revive and Thrive', a charity which sends tools and knitted items to areas abroad where there is a need for them. Earlier this week, we delivered a car load to Mytchett Baptist Church which forwards these items. We were able to pass on 38 blankets, 81 hats, 80 jumpers, 30 teddies and a box of tools. These were gratefully received and will be sent abroad with their next consignment. Can I please encourage all our knitters to keep on knitting!!!"

We owe a "thank you" to all our knitters for their sterling work. We are also very grateful to both Pat and Brian Summers for ensuring that knitted goods are collected regularly and delivered to Mytchett. We are grateful also to Di Fone who, whilst no longer living in Englefield Green, is still extremely supportive and involved in the work of the group. Thank you everyone for such an amazing contribution on behalf of us all.

Memories

I have reflected recently on the appeal of the acclaimed TV production "The Repair Shop". Such is its popularity that it has been elevated from daytime to primetime TV. Its format is deceptively simple. Participants bring to the team of expert craftsmen an object that holds a special place in their lives but which has been damaged or otherwise fallen prey to age and disrepair. The workmanship which goes into restoring these treasured possessions to their former glory is breathtaking in its skill. The patience and devotion shown by every individual working on the project are extraordinary. So too is their delight when the owner sees the magnificent transformation that has resulted from such loving labour. It is hard to watch the length of the programme without the occasional "teary" moment. Even I find it so.

But I wonder if there is something else which resonates so very deeply with us? Every item brought through the wide doors of the Repair Shop has a story. It may be a story of happily remembered times such as an idyllic childhood, now long gone. It may be a story of loss; even on one occasion the loss of an infant child, on another the loss of a father. Whatever the story, there seems to be in the restoration of a beloved possession a reconnection with memory in a way that brings both joy and peace. There is a sense of healing, of balance regained, even of hope renewed.

Perhaps that is what we need from the month of remembrance which November has become. The memories of war and multiple losses are painful beyond words. It is perhaps only in honouring the sacrifice of those who have died that we can make our own peace with all they relinquished for our sakes. With the passing years, the closest and most precious and vivid memories of the men and women who went out to war, grow fewer. But the connections are still there and with every recent conflict fresh connections grow.

November gives us space for all our memories. It begins with All Souls' Day, honouring the dead of every generation: those whose lives were lost in the service of others; those who battled with painful illness; those who lingered long; those who left us suddenly and without warning; those who tasted life only briefly, those whose years were remarkable for their length as well as their achievement.

On the 7th November this year I shall have the privilege of joining Father Chris Spain, of the Church of Our Lady of the Assumption, Englefield Green as we bless the graves of loved ones laid to rest in Englefield Green Cemetery. Please join us at Englefield Green Cemetery at 3pm as we acknowledge our memory, our loss and God's presence in our pain.

On 14th November we celebrate Armistice Day with simple, profound ceremonies of Remembrance across the village. We share those unique moments when silence falls. And in these challenging times, as we honour those who have died in battle, we cannot but remember those who have in much more recent months, given their lives in the battle with COVID 19. My heart goes out still, in a way that I cannot adequately put into words, to those of you who have lost your very dearest to this cruel and random virus. I believe God's heart breaks with yours.

On the night before he died Jesus shared a simple, yet profound, supper with his friends. As he broke bread with his disciples, and passed among them a cup of wine, he told them: "Do this in remembrance of me". Today for Christians everywhere the bread and the wine of communion still symbolise Jesus' broken body and outpoured blood. They reconnect us with his suffering and his death. In the regular sharing of them we find healing, forgiveness and peace. We understand afresh Jesus' words, so often quoted on Armistice Day: "Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends" (John 15:13).

At the cross of Jesus, as at almost every human loss, love and sorrow meet. As we come to him, broken perhaps by the often hidden fractures of separation and grief, we pray that we may find in him, the master craftsman of our souls, renewal, healing, peace and even joy.

Judith Allford

