

# Ploughshare August/September 1999

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## From the Curate Judith Henderson –Curate at St Peter's

**Dear Friends...**

It is a delight to be writing especially in a time when there is so much change in the air. Some developments are already accomplished; Petra now a priest; the interior at St Thomas' settling into being; discussions well underway about the future of St John's; and St Peter's building work will have begun by the time you read this.

St Peter's are moving temporarily into another church and worshipping at another time. This has made me think hard and long about the nature of 'church'. Yes - we do need familiarity and tradition, but much more than that we need the right time and place to express our worship, based on Jesus as our foundation. Realising that we are the living stones which make up the place where the Holy Spirit holds sway, we need to be able to incorporate each one into our fellowship.

On a broader front devolution has brought a very different local government suitable to Scotland and Wales. There have been representations that each region should have its own parliament. A parliament for the Peak?!

Each church in the parish has a distinctive community which they serve and St Thomas' and St John's have the opportunity to have different morning services to help people to be in the 'right' place for their needs at their particular stage of life and learning; we try at St Peter's to have something for everyone at our one morning service.

Evening services offer the opportunity to have more variety: at St Thomas' special services for young people and a different style of music; St Peter's go back in time and use the Book of Common Prayer for evensong and monthly communion. We are really blessed by the rich variety available to us in the parish. Can any organisation provide exactly what is needed to reach each group within it? Within the Parish we continue to try and are learning.

Love is the bond that we have in whichever group we belong to. Love for Jesus and love for our fellow believers and seekers. Love always demands sacrifice: we only have to read St Paul's first letter to the Corinthians chapter 13 to realise the high standards we are set. Love can help us to set aside our own particular (sometimes selfish) desires.

"Love never fails"

**Judith Henderson**

## Petra's Ordination Service

*"Send down the Holy Spirit upon your servant Petra for the office and work of a priest in your church"*

This ordination prayer was offered for the very first time in St Thomas' on Saturday 3 July. It was an historic occasion.

The Bishop of Repton, the Rt. Revd. David Hawtin, was visiting us for the first time, and it was his first ordination. There were two candidates, Lee Townend from Buxton, who hails from Dronfield, and our own Petra Owen.

There was a fine blend of the formal and the informal, summed up in a letter sent by a visitor "Thank you for such a dignified yet homely service. I still feel lively and smiley inside." Philip Herrick was in tremendous form on the organ with the voluntary and opening hymn; most of the sung items were accompanied by our wonderful Youth Band who were applauded at the end.

A "home team" including cross and candle bearers, clergy, Readers, teenagers and children made their way to the back to greet the candidates and then the Bishop.

Then as the service unfolded, there was solemnity and dignity. The scriptures were read (one beautifully by Lee's 13 year old son Joe), Petra and Lee made solemn declarations. Andy Broom led us in prayer, the candidates had hands laid on them by the Bishop (and many priests) and then were given bibles, chalices and patens to symbolise their ministries of word and sacrament.

There was a simple Eucharist. Petra and Lee distributed the bread as the band played amazingly sensitively. When all had received they built up to a crescendo, as we all sang

*"My Jesus, my Saviour  
Lord, there is none like you ...  
Shout to the Lord, all the earth, let us sing  
Power and majesty, praise to the King..."*

Rather like a wedding, photos followed and then the buffet beautifully laid on by St Thomas' folk. The sun shone and we could greet and eat outside and everybody seemed to be "lively and smiley inside".

God is good in so many ways, not least in giving us Petra and the privilege of witnessing her ordination at St Thomas'.

**Christopher Frith**

## **'Little Fishes' Celebrate**

'Little Fishes', our group at St John's for pre-school children, was 100 months old on 16 June! There was a real sense of excitement and anticipation as forty 'little fishes' gathered to celebrate the occasion. The children, accompanied by parents, grand-parents and minders, were joined by many well wishers - including a generous sprinkling of clergymen and a group of friends from Old Brampton's 'Little Lambs'.

As usual there was plenty to look at – 'fishy' candles, a tank of goldfish cards from friends who couldn't make it, 100th Birthday balloons, and a wonderful cake with fish swimming all over it! After singing the 'Little Fishes Song' with gusto the children were introduced to the ideas of 'fishing' and 'celebration' before hearing the story of the miraculous catch of fish.

A 'fish' search followed and, once caught, the fish were pasted onto a large collage to illustrate the story. Singing and band were enjoyed by all, including an enthusiastic and energetic offering of '*Jesus' love is very wonderful!*'

Then it was time to be quiet as the children sat on their 'prayer rug' to say 'Thank you' to Jesus for all the good things He gives us day by day. The activities finished with everyone holding hands and saying the 'Little Fishes Prayer', and then the children (and adults!) got down to the serious business of eating the cake and having a play.

The afternoon was also an opportunity to say a very big 'Thank you' to **Sheila Turner**, who has decided it is time to pass the responsibility for 'fishing' to a new angler. A book, filled with greetings from 'Little Fishes' present and past, was given to Sheila, along with gifts which included a garden seat and a tub of colourful summer flowers. The greetings from the children included 'God and I are thinking of you today' and 'Thank you for being the best fish of all' - a fitting tribute to Sheila's dedicated work over the past 100 months. We shall all miss Sheila very much.

**Carol Woodward**

## **A Passage from India**

***Dina Tintean writes:***

Hi everyone! I am keeping my promise to keep you updated about my mission work. I arrived home safely with my sister Nuta. All my friends were so excited to see me and to share with them about my visit to England.

God answered my prayer more quickly than expected to visit India. An opportunity came a few days before I left Chesterfield. Tina Stacey, a former member of St Thomas' Church, now living in Birmingham, had been praying for a companion to be with her on a mission to India. I was a blessed person.

Through your generosity this was made possible, through the mission fund and a Romanian evening at St Thomas', which was well attended. Thank you so much for blessing me.

I had a wonderful trip, three weeks in all. The first week I spent in the Himalayas, which made me feel chosen by the Lord.

The following week I spent in Delhi, working with a Christian organisation "Youth with a Mission". I was involved in social work, which led me personally to support a lady who had been involved in a hit and run accident. She was seriously injured and left to die in the street. She had a large hole in her head and her right arm was very swollen. We thought at first that she was already dead. The workers from the mission where I was and myself took her to a doctor who helped her to get to hospital. In a country like India people do not have the means help others so people die without any chance to survive. I also had many opportunities to share about Jesus with Hindu people.

the final week I was with Tina in Jaipur, in Rajasthan, which is called the pink city. We had many opportunities during this time to share in the churches and many homes, which we visited.

I really thank God for this wonderful opportunity to introduce me to the mission field. I really feel that I will be returning to this needy country where there are so many possibilities to do many things for God.

Thank you again for supporting me in prayer and financial needs. Due to a lot of Christian persecution at the present time I am now unable to go as planned with Oasis Trust in July. I trust that God will open another door in his perfect timing.

About my work in Basarabi, I have been truly blessed. Lots of supplies have arrived to help me set up a kindergarten age 3-6. I am also teaching the young people from our church about ethics.

Pamela is just leaving for England with Valentina Pruteanu, 17 years old from our town of Basarabi. So you will hear more about this when Pamela returns. We had many supplies on this journey to help our people. We are very, very thankful to God for this. Please pray for the mission work for Hope for Eastern Europe. It is doing wonderful blessed work over here in Romania, especially in the remote regions, where people are very poor and under-nourished.

May God bless you all

**Dina**

## **Face to Face with Stephan Woodward**

Stephen has been a member at St John's for 12 years. He retired as a head teacher two years ago, and has recently become the new Warden at St John's.

*Stephen, looking back, what have been the significant steps in your journey of faith?*

I was brought up in a Christian home and the beliefs and attitudes of my Mum and Dad were - and still are - a very real influence on me. Carol and I had a close association with Bolsover Parish Church in our younger days, and that meant a lot to us.

In the early years of our marriage I drifted off course, sort of wandered into the desert, I have to say that it was Carol's example, commitment and faith that brought me back 'on track'. God's support in difficult circumstances, both in the family and at Church; a bond of Christian friendship with Alan Lowe of the Church Army, and a number of wonderful Spring Harvest celebrations have all been significant in my journey with God.

Some real friends at St John's and St Thomas', our brilliant CYFA group, and a life-changing visit to the Holy Land, led by Sister Susan, a lovely and very special Catholic nun, have also served to help me on my way. Oh, and the clergy have contributed a bit too!

*Your retirement must have brought many changes for you. How have you adjusted to these?*

I have always believed that education is of vital importance, but being a primary head for 20 years eventually took its toll. I miss the children, and I miss the day-to-day contact with colleagues and parents. I miss the 'buzz' of school life. I do not miss the systems, the target setting, the testing, the competition and the constant pressure of trying to balance the budget. The financial implications for us as a family are enormous and I am having to learn to trust God about this.

I have taken. up crown green bowling - and I do still have contact with schools through my consultancy work and through the assemblies we do for Samaritan's Purse. Family and Church are very important elements in my life, so I am rarely left with nothing to do. And if I am, I can always rely on Carol and Andy to find something to occupy me!

*Now you face the challenge of being Warden, how do you see the role?*

I talked long and hard with God - and with Carol and Andy - before accepting the challenge, (so I was up against a formidable team from the start!) I feel sure that, despite my own reservations, it is what God wants me to do at this time. And who could refuse the opportunity to work alongside Mavis? I see the Warden's role as one of service - to God, and His Church, to the congregation and to the community. There are the chairs to sort out, the kneelers to arrange, the candles to light, the curate to keep in order . . . . . but in essence I believe the job is about looking after God's church and His people - and there can be no greater privilege.

*St John's has seen a lot of growth and change recently, what has encouraged you most?*

I love St John's and I love the people. We all have our human strengths and our human frailties - and we have certainly had our ups and downs over the years. At this time I am greatly encouraged by new faces, new beginnings, new life and growth, and by a genuine desire to seek God's will and find new and better ways of doing things. There is a refreshing spirit of reconciliation, unity and openness which can take St John's forward to the Millennium with confidence. The whole concept of a 'Missionary Congregation' encourages all of us to reach out to others wherever we are - and not to wait for them to come to us. This after all is the Great Commission.

*You have a particular concern for World Mission, why do you believe it should have a prominent place in Church life?*

In the parable of the Sheep and the Goats Jesus made it clear that we shall not be judged by our status, our situation or our material possessions, but by our response to the world's poor. I believe that it is now our Christian responsibility to reach out with compassion to those on the edges of society, those who are hurting in the world. I also believe that faith without social action is no faith at all, and a church without social action is no church at all. I am so glad that St John's has a heart for the poor. As a result of our involvement in World Mission, Carol and I have met some wonderful people whose lives are an example and a challenge to us.

*You and Carol are especially involved with Samaritan's Purse and Operation Christmas Child, what has that meant to you?*

It means a garage full of cuddly toys. It means a loft full of 'fillers'. It means lots of telephone calls, lots of hassle and lots of fun. A ten year-old Romanian girl wrote, 'Thank you for being the friend I never knew I had'. A tiny withdrawn six year-old from Mickley, who had scarcely spoken a word since starting school a year before, answered one of my questions by saying of a shoebox, 'I think it will light up their smiles'. Such is the power of a shoebox. The Head Teacher cried. Children capture the essence of the vision, and it is our privilege to be involved in something as powerful as Operation Christmas Child - to be part of a chain which passes a gift of love hand to hand from one individual to another far away. It is the number 1 which is important, for each shoebox can make a difference. This year we hope to build an even bigger mountain of them.

Jesus said: (Matthew 25:40)

*'I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.'*

For me education is all about helping children to think for themselves and to feel for others, and this vision underpins the ethos and rationale of Samaritans Purse and Operation Christmas Child. If you would like to be a 'Good Samaritan', please don't hesitate to get in touch. It will soon be Christmas! Our number is in the book.

## Hope for Eastern Europe

A very warm thank you to everyone in the wonderful name of Jesus for the tremendous response we have received towards our mission journeys to Romania.

As I write this newsletter we are just one week away from our summer mission. It's hard to believe that this work began five years ago from a prayer to reach a leper community on the border of the Black Sea.

Since that very first faith led journey, God has helped our team to reach many people with the love of Jesus.

As we continue to look to God and allow Him to lead and guide us we are experiencing wonderful answers to prayer. The new challenges God is giving us are quite exciting. The journey to the gypsies in Tinca, West of Ordea linked with Cross Street Baptist Church proved to be quite an eye-opener. I was especially moved and challenged by their desperate plight. Most of the homes I visited were hovels and they urgently need our prayers and help to survive another winter. We are planning to return in November to give them hope and encouragement. We are hoping to take lots of dried foods, good quality shoes, toiletries, educational supplies, baby supplies, gifts for Christmas, bedding and new knitted items.

Our team will be visiting an orphanage this journey in Isaccea. This is a special school for 156 children, age range 7-18 years. They are in desperate need of our love and help especially for food.

We also need educational supplies and sports equipment to stimulate and motivate them.

**Pamela Gratton**

## Touchstone Community Support -Progress Report

Touchstone is now an ILM provider, which means that in practice we have created 10 new job opportunities in response to specific needs within our community. The "Intermediate Labour Market" is aimed at providing a package of full-waged; work/training opportunities over a 12 month period. This will greatly enhance the individuals' employment potential; leading to permanent jobs. Funding is obtained from the Employment Service's "New Deal" programme combined with grants from the European Social Fund.

In order to deliver this package Touchstone staff have had to work very hard over the last twelve months preparing funding applications, negotiating contracts and developing the work, training and support programmes. This whole exercise has meant Touchstone `moving up a gear' in terms of achieving a professional approach, dealing with the many responsibilities involved and building new partnerships. We are the only ILM provider in the Chesterfield area and we have secured funding for another year to enable us to provide at least a further 20 places. In addition to the new jobs created, this funding drawn in from outside benefits the local economy.

The needs of the long-term unemployed who do not qualify for ILM mainly because they receive disability benefits - are met by volunteers who are working with disadvantaged groups in the community, mainly gardening and decorating. We are now in a position to strengthen the support we offer this group and it is very encouraging that many are taking up training opportunities in their own time.

Touchstone is not in the business of taking business away from others; consequently all these jobs are created by new projects in response to identified needs in our community. "Touchstone" at Ringwood Hall Brimington is a good example where we are restoring a Victorian terraced garden which will not only grow organic produce no GM crops here - but also provide a valuable resource for the local community. This 3 year project is funded in the main by Landfill Trusts, who in turn obtain their funding from Landfill Tax. Further projects include replanting the banks of the restored Chesterfield canal and a furniture recycling scheme, the latter desperately needed by rehoused people on benefits. Your opportunity to donate unwanted furniture!

Touchstone remains committed to its Christian principle of service to the needs of those disadvantaged by unemployment in our community and we greatly value our close association with the churches in Chesterfield. In a recent visit the Bishop of Repton the Rt Revd David Hawtin expressed his appreciation and support for all that we have achieved. Please regard this as part of **your church mission work in the community** by giving practical or financial support.

**Adrian Marsden-Jones (Chairman)**