

THANK YOU

A grand total of £1089.17 was raised through **Open Gardens** for the fabric funds of our two churches. Thank you to all who visited and gave, all who opened their lovely gardens, and all who helped in any way. It was well worth the effort!

Tony Tibbenham, Diocesan Clerk of Works writes: "Can you thank your Parish members for the valuable contribution which made all the difference to **welcome Neil** to his new home." We add our thanks too.

New to our services?

- * WELCOME: We provide a variety of worship:
 - Traditional at 8am alternating St Mary's & All Saints.
 - Informal weekly worship at 10am at All Saints, N. Wootton.
 - Traditional weekly worship at 10am at St Mary's, S. Wootton.
 - Informal Café Church 1st & 3rd Sundays in S Wootton Village Hall.
 - * After our 10am services you are warmly invited to stay for a cup of tea or coffee.
 - * Take a free copy of "News & Views", or "Saints Alive" or "Contact" magazine from the porch to find out more about the church.
- About Communion**
- * We welcome to take Communion communicant members of all denominations.
 - * *If you do not wish to take the bread and wine* you are welcome to come to the rail and receive a blessing. Simply keep your hands down.
 - * *If you have an infection* you are invited to take Communion by intinction, namely to keep the wafer until the wine reaches you then to dip it in the wine before eating it, so taking the bread and wine together.
- New to the Church of England?**
- * Take a free copy of "Understanding the Church of England" from the porch.

Want to know more about the Faith?

- * Take a free copy of "What is a Christian Anyway?" from the porch.
 - * Ask the service leader about the Alpha Course - an excellent introduction to the real meaning of Christianity.
 - * Ask about joining a house group.
- Need facilities for children?**
- * We provide groups and other activities for children at All Saints (North Wootton) and in South Wootton Village Hall (opposite St Mary's).
- Need prayer (including for healing)?**
- * Ask the service leader.
 - * Pin a request on the Prayer Board.
 - * Phone the Rector to go on the Confidential Prayer Chain list.
- Surfing the Net?**
- * See churchinthewoottons.net - the church website, for a wide range of information and have your say on the Rector's Blog.
- Deaf or Hard of Hearing?**
- * Special service 2.30pm St Mary's 4th Sunday of the month.
- Need pastoral help?**
- * Phone 671381.
- Want a christening/confirmation/wedding?**
- * Ring 671381 for information about preparation, including our Marriage Preparation Course.

CLERGY: Rector: Tony Higton 671381 tony@higton.info; **Assistants:** David Tate 672474 davidtate@allsts.freeseerve.co.uk; Linda Ashby 672893 linda_ashby@tiscali.co.uk

READERS: Patricia Higton 671381; Tony Kendall 631539

ADMINISTRATOR: Patricia Higton 671381 patricia@churchinthewoottons.org

Parish website: www.churchinthewoottons.net;

Rector's Holy Land Conflict website: www.prayerforpeace.org.uk

The Church in the Woottons: One Church – Five Congregations

PEWS NEWS

Sunday 22 June 2008 – Trinity 5

THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK:

The Church of England is a remarkable institution. It has persecuted those (like the Wesleys) at the forefront of major new movements of the Holy Spirit and then, later, embraced those new movements. It has survived huge crises of faith and surges of secularism over centuries.

In addition to its worship and church services it also is the largest voluntary organisation in the country. According to the recent church report *Moral, But No Compass – Government, Church and the Future of Welfare*, "50,000 churchgoers are regularly involved in church-based or church-backed social action, such as helping the poor, elderly or disabled." They run "post offices, cafes, doctors' surgeries, asylum rights centres, homeless outreach and bereavement counselling, job creation and economic regeneration programmes, eco initiatives and youth clubs, peace networks and third world solidarity groups." They are also involved in "Christian social innovations in housing, addiction, family support and anti-poverty campaigning."

Yet, says the report, the Government shows "a significant lack of understanding of, or interest in, the Church of England's current or potential contribution in the public sphere." It is "positively excluding people of faith." Its "conscious focus on minority communities was being achieved, to the relative exclusion of the Christian church and hundreds of other charities."

The report states that: "Three separate government departments admitted to possessing no evidence based on the Christian churches, despite one having proactively commissioned new research to underpin its faith-based agenda." It comments: "Based on our interviews with politicians, government officials and people in the faith communities themselves, we can only conclude that the absence of a 'churches' evidence base is grounded in a judgement that churches are not worthy to have even a modest role in government schemes. Such a judgement contrasts strongly with public declarations by Ministers that all of civil society is welcome to the public service reform table and that the government's agenda is for all faiths rather than for a few."

The Charity Commission, which oversees all British charities (non-profit organisations) comes in for serious criticism. In 2007 the Commission expressed an interest in faith based charities which advance religion and began a dialogue which "excluded the two largest religious groupings in the country, the Church of England and the Roman Catholic Church!" It claimed there were around 25,000 faith-based charities but it ignored the Church of England's 16,000 parishes!

One researcher concluded the Commission underestimated the number of faith-based charities by 62.5%. Researchers for the report discovered that the Bishop of Guildford's Foundation, Church Action on Poverty, Methodist Homes for the Aged, several →

This Week (22nd to 28th June)

Mon	23rd	7.30 pm	51 The Birches	Housegroup 1
Tue	24th	10.30 am	36 The Birches	Housegroup 2
		7.00 pm	Rectory	Standing Committee
Thu	26th	7.30 pm	Half Acre	Housegroup 3
Sat	28th	9.30 am	Rectory	No Hour of Prayer
		11.00 am	Cathedral	Neil McLeod Ordination as Deacon
		3.00 pm	Cathedral	Lizzie Shipp Ordination as Priest

→ Catholic children's societies, the St Vincent de Paul Society and even Islamic Relief, would not count as a faith-based organisation for the Charity Commission because they did not expressly state 'advancing religion' in its objects.

Finally, the report calls for the appointment of a Minister for Religion and a new dialogue with the government. It concluded: "Only if such a fresh conversation emerges will the government manage to steer its faith-based policies back on course, and the Church step forward once again with a new confidence for the times. Only then will the government truly recover a convincing moral direction and its badly needed compass."

I congratulate the authors of the report on highlighting the growing secularisation and antagonism to Christianity in certain influential circles in Britain and for pricking the bubble of this government's professed commitment to the importance of religion. It is wrong for the government to major only on minority religions, or those groups which might harbour extremists. Religion is more important than that, as is the rich Christian heritage of this country. Most people in this country call themselves Christians and hold some Christian beliefs. Democratic considerations require the government to take that seriously. The church should not seek status and privilege for its own sake. But without a strong Christian influence this country will continue its social and moral decline.

However, the church must put its own house in order and not rely on some mythical panacea of government support. We need to regain our basic spirituality: to emphasise prayer and the supernatural power of God, to affirm the gospel wholeheartedly and to deal with serious hypocrisy and ill-discipline within our ranks. The weakness of our leadership in these matters – at national or local level – makes us a laughing stock. These are the priorities which must be addressed by the church. Then we shall be fit to partner secular authorities in addressing the social and moral problems of our society effectively and without losing our distinctiveness.

Church Meeting about the Diocesan "Committed to Growth" Initiative

Wednesday July 16th at 7.00pm
In St Mary's

NEXT SUNDAY (29th June)

Trinity 6

8.00 am	St Mary's	Said Eucharist
10.00 am	St Mary's	Sung Eucharist
10.00 am	All Saints'	Sunday at 10: Holy Communion
6.00 pm	St Mary's	Special Evening Service & Welcome
7.00 pm	SW Village Hall	Welcome Buffet

Our Welcome to Neil McLeod

as our new full-time, stipendiary curate

Saturday June 28th

11.00 am Neil's Ordination in Norwich Cathedral – all welcome

Sunday June 29th

8.00 am	Neil at Holy Communion (St Mary's)
10.00 am	Neil at Sunday at 10 (All Saints')
6.00 pm	Special Evening Service & Welcome (St Mary's)
7.00 pm	Welcome Buffet (South Wootton Village Hall)

Come and give Neil a Woottons Welcome!

TOPICS FOR PRIVATE PRAYER THIS WEEK

THE COMMITTED TO GROWTH PRAYER written by the Bishop of Norwich.

Eternal God, in your Son Jesus Christ you reveal your love for the world, and by the grace of the Holy Spirit you give us the strength to share his mission to this Diocese: help us to grow in proclaiming your good news, drawing others to know you, serving our communities, promoting justice and peace and sustaining the well-being of the life of the earth; through the same Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

GIVE THANKS:

1. For God's blessings on our services last Sunday and on St Mary's PCC .
2. That Neil has safely moved in to the Curate's house..

PRAY

1. For us to be able to pay our full expenses as a Benefice.
2. For N Wootton school children visiting All Saints on Tuesday morning.
3. For the Standing Committee on Tuesday evening.
4. For the Mothers' Union meeting in Swaffham on Wednesday.
5. For the Rector taking the S Wootton 1st School assembly on Wednesday.
6. For Neil on his Ordination Retreat Wednesday-Saturday, Ordination on Saturday and welcome next Sunday.
7. For Lizzie Shipp being ordained priest and for individuals facing illness.