

SEPTEMBER

Bedford Area

**ON SAFARI**

**Fun Weekend**

Saturday 5 August for 5 to 12 year olds

at Thomas Johnson Lower School Lidlington  
Morning 10.15am (registration) to 12.30pm  
Afternoon 1.30pm to 3.30pm

Sunday 6 August at 12.15pm for Show & Tell followed by free Family BBQ

With Crafts, Dramas, Songs, Games and more  
All Sessions are free of charge

For further information or registration form contact Jean:  
Tel: 01525 405730 E-mail: [j.peall@talktalk.net](mailto:j.peall@talktalk.net)

**Luton Area**

Sunday 6 August Welcome service for Revd Julia Bradshaw, new Methodist Superintendent at St Margaret's Methodist Church Luton

**Note from the Treasurer**

Thank you to all treasurers who have sent their CT or LEP subscription for 2009. If you have not yet done so, please send your cheque (made payable to Bedfordshire Ecumenical Committee) to my home address:

32 Wheathouse Close Bedford MK41 8JX.

Please enclose the name and address of the treasurer of your CT or LEP.

Thank you

Peter Ormerod

**FEEDBACK PLEASE**

to Jocelyn Harper Tel: 01234 406969 E-mail: [jos.harpy@ntlworld.com](mailto:jos.harpy@ntlworld.com)



CHURCHES TOGETHER IN BEDFORDSHIRE

**TOGETHER**



Please copy and distribute widely

SUMMER 2009

**Editorial**

I trust you were happy to receive the last Newsletter in electronic form and were able to copy and use it among the contacts at your individual churches. To those who received it by snail mail, please let me know if you are able to receive it by email.

Thank you to all who have sent in material for this edition, I have endeavoured to use most of the items received.

Personally, I am feeling particularly 'ruthless' as I write this but I know Ruth had put in place arrangements for those Groups who needed ongoing support in each particular situation.

I will aim to send the next Newsletter in the autumn and would need material by 30 September to cover the period to the end of December.

Please let me have feedback on this copy.

Thank you

Jocelyn Harper

**From Bishop Richard**

At the Forum in May, I undertook to continue in the Chair of BEC until May 2010. Though I had completed my 3 years, it seemed best to do another year in the light of a number of circumstances.

First, since Ruth Bottoms resigned from the post of County Ecumenical Development Officer in April, it seemed that there should be some continuity in the leadership of the Committee.

Secondly, we are in the midst of a review of the structures and finances of BEC (slightly stalled at present due to pressures in my diary in view of the vacancy in the See of St. Albans). That review is also looking at the role of the CEDO, and considering whether there might be other ways of covering our need to service the ecumenical processes in our county.

In the meantime, we are (and I especially am) much indebted to Jocelyn Harper for her administrative efficiency in keeping the BEC show on the road.

In the end, what matters most is what we are doing *locally* and *together* to fulfil our common call to serve the kingdom of God.

## ECUMENICAL STUDY DAY

### *What the Spirit is Saying to the Church*

Well over a hundred clergy, readers and others from several denominations in Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire gathered for another Ecumenical Study Day at the University of Hertfordshire on June 17<sup>th</sup>. **Major Gerald Peacock** of the Salvation Army welcomed us, led us in Opening Worship and introduced the speakers on the theme 'What the Spirit is saying to the Church'.

The first speaker, **the Revd Dr Joel Edwards**, for many years Director of the Evangelical Alliance and now International Director of Micah Challenge, spoke about the place of Faith in the Public Sphere. He said we are called not to fight for self-interest, but to defend our faith in a secular world; to fight for the rights of others and for justice; to recognize the reality of the many Faiths now present in Britain and to develop relations with people of other faiths; and to give hope to the world, proclaiming the gospel of forgiveness in an era of unhealthy cynicism and healthy spiritual enquiry.

**Professor Grace Davie**, from the University of Exeter, is a leading authority on the Sociology of Religion. She reminded us that Britain is part of secular modern Europe, while 'the rest of the world is as furiously religious as ever' (Peter Berger). She added that among her students religious knowledge is pretty low, but religious interest is pretty high. She said that we should take the following factors into account in looking at our situation, since you will never solve a problem by defining it wrongly.

- x **Our Judaeo-Christian cultural heritage**, from calendars to sky-lines, which is both a problem and a gift. But the advantage of a weak State Church is that it can protect other faith groups and be influential without being exclusive, excluding or threatening.
- x **Vicarious Religion** performed by an active minority on behalf of those who are 'believers without belonging' and put 'Christian' on census forms etc.
- x **A shift from Obligation to Consumption** - we go to church because we choose to, not because we have to do so. Who gains? (a) Charismatic and Evangelical Churches who offer a warm welcome, a good experience of belonging, firm teaching and good web-sites; (b) Cathedrals and City Centre Churches, who offer to both active and passive worshippers as well as to pilgrims and visitors a good experience of world-class music, good preaching and liturgy. Life is less easy today for liberal and social gospel churches.

## DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

### JULY

#### Bedford Area

Saturday 18 July Inter Faith Cricket Match from 11.00am in Bedford Park Bedford and Luton Councils of Faiths vs Imams and Clergy from Leicester This will be a day of Family Fun

Contact details: Revd Jay MacLeod 01234 290393

E-mail: [jaymacleod@mac.com](mailto:jaymacleod@mac.com)

#### Luton Area

Sunday 19 July Revd David Vale's final Sunday morning service  
at Wigmore Church

### AUGUST

#### Bedford Area

Monday to Friday 10 - 14 August  
Churches Together in Harrold and Carlton invite all 5 -11 year olds to  
Roll up! Roll up!  
Come to the Circus Holiday Club!  
10.00am to midday in Carlton Village Hall.  
With games, songs, Bible stories, drama, crafts, activities.  
Friday 6.00pm Big Top Celebration, followed by a barbecue.

Sunday 16 August 10.00am  
Churches Together in Harrold and Carlton with Odell  
United Songs of Praise at St Mary's Church, Carlton.

#### Luton Area

Sunday 30 August 11.00am Revd John Steele's final service at St Ninian's URC. This will be a joint service of the five URC churches in Luton and Dunstable.

Your Minister, Pastor, Vicar, Priest, even Bishop, might think this title is especially for them: **Christian Juggler!**

Steve the Juggler works with Christian organisations to actively share God's message through the arts of juggling and circus skills. Steve can do a slot in a church service, or, perform at fetes and similar events. He is CRB checked. Contact details: Tel: 01933 356 364 Mobile: 07792 0123 95  
E-mail: [steve@jugglingworld.biz](mailto:steve@jugglingworld.biz) (Steve Thomson)

**Greater than Gold by Roger Jones**, the story of Mary Jones and her Bible and the beginning of The Bible Society.

Amphill and District Churches Together Choir will be performing this work in March and May 2010. It will be at Amphill Methodist Church but others in the area are invited to be a host venue for this.

Available dates: March 21 27 28 May 8 9 15

If you are interested please contact their Musical Director:

Angie Woodcraft Tel: 07906 509950

E-mail: [angiewoodcraft@ntlworld.com](mailto:angiewoodcraft@ntlworld.com)

**UHDPLORIDROYLJKWJ** An evening with Graham Kendrick at the Corn Exchange, Bedford at 7.30pm on Monday 21 December 2009.

Tickets: £12.50 in advance (on sale now) or £15 on the night.

Help is needed for stewarding and selling CDs. You can also volunteer to join the choir being formed locally.

For tickets and more details contact:

Brian Addington Tel: 01234 216 080 E-mail: [b.addington@btinternet.com](mailto:b.addington@btinternet.com)

**.LQYBUNRDIUHEHDGSRUWVWUJH**

**Moulton Park, Northampton**

A Christian run venue in Northampton, catering for groups of up to 150 for residential and day conferences.

Currently offering FREE MEETING ROOMS for church or charity day events booked and taken up until the 31<sup>st</sup> August 2009, the only condition is that you purchase one of our buffet meals at our standard charge, prices range from £6.30 to £12.50 per head, tea and coffee breaks are included.

REDUCED RATES for late availability residential bookings

You can find full details of all our current special offers on our web site [www.actioncentres.co.uk/kings-park](http://www.actioncentres.co.uk/kings-park)

To book your event or for further information about these amazing offers please contact Phil or Harriet on 01604 493111/797908

E-mail: [kingspark@actioncentres.co.uk](mailto:kingspark@actioncentres.co.uk)

- x **New Arrivals**, who should be welcomed not least for bringing new life to the religious scene in Britain, from Afro-Caribbean Churches in post-secular London to Islam, which has worked as a catalyst bringing religion back to the public agenda. We should be confident, not fearful, provide accurate information and promote personal contacts.
- x **The Future** - the actively religious will work on a market model, so set out your stall, you have a lot to offer, including Christian Art, Development Issues, Liturgy, and experiential worship.

**Fr Mark Woodruff**, the Roman Catholic Secretary of the Society for Ecumenical Studies, described the Economic Crisis and the Ecological Crisis as signs of a Spiritual Crisis. Our focus should be on the Church in the World, through, for instance, the Commissioning of lay Christians who are teachers, social workers and so on, as well as those who are lay Readers or Liturgical or Pastoral Ministers. We should emphasise mercy, compassion and forgiveness in the context of the Criminal Justice System, instead of just shame and retribution and punishment. Above all, the churches should create sacred spaces in which people can find opportunities for worship and inspiration.

**The Revd Dr Andrew Prasad**, Moderator of the United Reformed Church's Thames North Province, made some Final Observations and led us in Closing Prayers.

**Revd Dr Colin Davey**, Consultant to Bedfordshire Ecumenical Committee

### **Annual Forum 14 May 2009**

Another successful Forum was held this year when the Revd Dr David Cornick gave the message. He spoke of the ecumenical vision and encouraged us to continue in the work already begun, to learn from each other's experiences and to work together in the projects that are proving to be successful.

We each belong to Christ and we belong to each other.

We broke for discussion followed by a time of questions for the speaker.

We are grateful to Canon Denis McSweeney and the friends at the Sacred Heart Catholic Church in Flitwick, for their hospitality.

Please make a note of the date for next year's Forum:

7.30pm Wednesday 12 May 2010 at the same venue.

It would be great to see more of you next time

### **Celebrations for Pentecost**

Many churches and groups held special services for Pentecost and two have sent in details.

The Shalom Group celebration was held at Our Lady of Ransom RC Church in Kempston when folk from All Saints in Queens Park and Queens Park Free Church (Moravian), St James, Biddenham, Church of the Transfiguration, Kempston, All Saints, Kempston, The Holy Child and St Joseph, Bedford, joined together for afternoon tea followed by Evening Prayer at 4.30pm. The preacher was Father Seamus Keenan (Parish Priest). This was also a time to bid 'Farewell' to Father Ben Griffiths who is moving to a new parish.

Churches Together in Harrold and Carlton with Odell held an Open Air Service in the park, attended by around 80 people. The singing was led by the Wellingborough Music Group and Mike O'Meara gave the message.

White doves were released, as a symbol of the Holy Spirit working among us and the afternoon ended with a picnic.

### **Dogs at Work**

Just when you thought the Vicar of Dibley had stolen the show, along comes the Vicar of Harrold and Carlton, with a Service for Pets with particular emphasis on the wonderful work carried out by Canine Partners.

Dogs outnumbered other animals at the Churches Together in Harrold and Carlton Pet Service held at St Peter's Church Harrold on Sunday 14th June. Lorraine Lotan, supported by her colleagues, gave an excellent talk and demonstration of the work of Canine Partners in training dogs to help people with disabilities. The dogs showed how they could take clothes out of a washing machine, pick up their lead, and take off a person's hat! The service included part of the creation story, songs and prayers and each pet received a blessing.