

NEWSLETTER for FEBRUARY 2010

The Archbishop of Canterbury's visit

Wednesday 20 January was a red-letter day for our church, with the Archbishop of Canterbury coming to preside and preach at a eucharist to mark the point, 150 years ago, when the aggression of the Ritualism Riots reached its highest point. He arrived with his two of his staff - his chaplain Anthony Ball, and the Secretary for Anglican Communion Affairs, Joanna Udal, who is an old friend of St George's. Although he is the leader of the worldwide Anglican Communion, he wears his office lightly (which increases his dignity): he talked naturally and happily with everyone (especially the children) before and after the service, and led our worship with prayerful reverence that made us all aware of the presence of God's glory.

In his sermon (delivered without notes! - it is being transcribed for his website) he spoke of how in the 19th century many people did not expect worship to challenge or transform them, which is why they resented those whose innovations aimed to lift people to the heavenly places. Using the three readings chosen for the occasion, he stressed that we in our day must be transformed by our encounter with God, in worship and daily life.

Music was provided by the accomplished Lambeth Singers (a group of staff and former staff from Church House Westminster), including anthems, a psalm, and descants to the hymns, and by the children of St Paul's School, who sang *Make me a channel of your peace*, with Abigail as soloist and teacher John Boutflower providing stylish accompaniment (they were nervous, but it didn't show).

Nearly all the members of our congregation were present, together with many visitors, who all commented on the warmth of welcome and the quality of refreshments after the service - for both of which we have something of a reputation! Many thanks to all who worked so hard, getting church ready and organising the catering: a real team effort.

As he left, the Archbishop said how much he had enjoyed himself with us. Such visits, where he can relax and be himself, are important to him in the face of all the unjust public criticism he receives.

Copies of the order of service are available at church, or on the parish website, where there is a page of pictures and links to press reports. There is a brief feature and photo on the London diocesan website at http://www.london.anglican.org/NewsShow_12942

The next event marking the riots will be on **Thursday 18 March** at 7.30pm, when a team of church historians - Professor John Wolffe of the Open University, the Revd Dr Jeremy Morris, Dean of Trinity Hall Cambridge, and Dr Dominic Janes of Birbeck College - will be telling and discussing the story of what happened and why, with a time for questions when we can ask about its significance for us today. And on **Easter Day** we mark the gift of Rector Bryan King's chalice and vestments by his son to Dunedin Cathedral in New Zealand, where they are following our programme with interest.

Haiti

When the poorest country in the continent, with a history of unstable government that has shamefully exploited the people, slum housing built in unstable places, and virtually none of the infrastructure needed to cope with a crisis, suffers a huge earthquake, the international community must respond, with short and longer-term (ten years at least) help that honours the dignity of its people. There are some positive signs of such a response, with both governments and individuals contributing generously, as well as some real problems of co-ordinating the ongoing relief effort. Media attention has already moved on to the 'next thing', but we must continue to remember the victims.

From the collection at the Archbishop's visit (above) and our most recent concert (below) we have sent £432 (quite a bit of it Gift-Aided) for Haiti, via Christian Aid.

Come to the Cabaret

The pre-Christmas concert, postponed because of illness, was rescheduled for 24 January, and was a fabulous programme of cabaret songs, some familiar, others new to most of us, sung with great panache by Elizabeth Powell accompanied by our director of music Elspeth Wilkes (and some of the accompaniments are very tricky indeed). There were works by Britten, Walton (on East London themes), Gershwin, Flanders and Swann (a bravura performance) and of course Elspeth's beloved Poulenc (watch out for her on *Mastermind* on 5 March, when his music is her special subject). The comment was rightly made that a concert of this quality deserved an audience ten times the size.

We are planning another series of Sunday concerts for the coming months - details in due course.

Ash Wednesday and Lent

Our preoccupation with the Archbishop's visit has meant that we haven't yet finalised our programme for Lent, so there will be a separate flyer for this in the next week or two. On Ash Wednesday, 17 February, the eucharist (with imposition of ashes) will be at 7.30pm. To prepare for Lent, all are invited to drop in at the Rectory the previous evening (Shrove Tuesday) any time between 6.30pm and 8.30pm for pancakes - proceeds for Christian Aid.

And then they came for me:

Remembering the World of Anne Frank

To mark Holocaust Memorial Day on 27 January, a performance was given two days earlier at the Brady Arts Centre of the multimedia play by James Still, which has been widely performed in and by schools and elsewhere in the USA and this country. It combines video footage of two survivors, Ed Silverberg, who was Anne Frank's first and perhaps only boyfriend) and now lives in the USA, and Eva Schloss, who was the same age as Anne, lived in same apartment block in Amsterdam and whose family, like the Franks, were betrayed and arrested. Eva and her mother ended up at the women's camp at Auschwitz; after the war, her mother married Anne Frank's father Otto. It was a profoundly moving experience, with a strong cast; and afterwards Eva, who has been active in 'holocaust education' for many years, was present to answer questions, which she did with great clarity and dignity. (The play's title comes from the well-known poem usually attributed to the German

Confessing Christian pastor Martin Niemöller:

*First they came for the communists, and I did not speak out - because I was not a communist;
Then they came for the trade unionists, and I did not speak out - because I was not a trade
unionist;*

*Then they came for the Jews, and I did not speak out - because I was not a Jew;
Then they came for me - and there was no one left to speak out.*

For our prayers

On 14 January **Burton (Bert) Edward Mountain** died suddenly at home, at the age of 86 - his funeral was on 29 January at the City of London Crematorium. Bert and Lil were members of our congregation (he was last at church several months ago) and they were confirmed at St George's by Bishop John Sentamu, when he was Bishop of Stepney: a photo of this had pride of place at their home. Lil will miss him greatly, after a marriage of nearly 58 years, but has good support from her daughters and neighbours, and can be assured of our support and prayers too. We also offer our prayers to Robin, Yvonne and Katie on the death of Robin's father **Roy Guess** died on 6 January at the age of 89, following a longish period of incapacity; his funeral was at Higham on 27 January.

Nora Solomon, widow of Fr Alex Solomon (Rector 1958-78), and now 95, had a stroke on 4 January. She is making slow progress in hospital and is likely to be moving to a nursing home soon. Some of us visited her in Worthing last year. We hold her in our prayers, and also Peggy and Ros who care for her.

Charity Registration

Until this year, all parish churches were deemed to be charities, but were not separately registered with the Charity Commission. This has now changed, in the interest of greater accountability, and we are now registered as 'St George-in-the-East PCC' with the charity number 1133761, which in future will appear on all official correspondence.