Living Stones

Shirley Holder writes:

Recently on holiday in Rome I visited the Forum. It is a very thought-provoking place, with fine columns standing proudly and the layout of temples still visible in the pattern of stones on the ground. We were particularly struck by the magnificent arch of Titus, with its frieze depicting the removal of the treasure from the Temple in Jerusalem – the Menorah carried proudly above the heads of the processing Roman victors. Yet, while all the stones just lying about and the many partial walls and columns may be of interest to archaeologists, they mean little to most tourists.

The strength of a building relies upon each stone being in place to support the stones around it. If even one stone is removed the whole structure is weakened. And this is true not just of the physical church, but of the spiritual church.

St Peter wrote this: 'like living stones, let yourselves be built into a spiritual house' (1 Peter 2.5). Each of us living stones is to let ourselves be built alongside others into a spiritual house, where God, the Master-builder, can dwell.

St Jerome, was most impressive because, although its frescoes are very faded, it still stands strongly, supporting the basilica above.

Alone, a stone might be useful as a doorstop, but alongside others it can be part of a building. God means us to be knit together, to worship together and to be a witness for him by our togetherness. Western society today is pervaded by radical individualism,
each person trying to create their own identity. But as Archbishop Justin stated after finding out who his real father was, “My identity is founded in who I am in Christ”. It is together in Christ that we are ‘built into a spiritual house, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ’ as Peter goes on to say.

Together you and I are being built into a spiritual house, whose cornerstone is Christ, and it is together that God can use us. If even one stone is missing, then the whole structure is weakened. May I urge us all to play a full part in the life of our church, committing to regular worship, serving on one or more of the many teams and committees that are needed to make our life and witness effective, and valuing every one of the other living stones called by God to be built alongside us?

Members of the PCC

2016-17

Chair/Vicar
Canon Dr John Binns

Vice Chair
Arvan Pritchard

Associate Vicars
Peter Hayler
Devin McLachlan

Churchwardens
Joye Rosenstiel
Margaret Johnston

Treasurer
Vacant; Patrick Brooke as Chair of Finance Committee with Graham Day, covering.

Secretary
Sarah de Mas

Minutes
Jennifer Houghton

Director of Music Sam Hayes

Deanery Synod Representatives
Tom Culver
Margaret Ingram
Arvan Pritchard

Licensed Lay Ministers
David Girling
Shirley Holder

Elected
Patrick Brooke
Ed Cearns
Graham Day
Sarah de Mas
Karen Lim
Anne Lindley
Veronica McDouall
Clare Redfern
Gina Vivian-Neal
Kate Willetts

GSM Committees

2016-17

PCC: As above
Parish Administrator: Kate Phizacklea
Finance: Patrick Brooke
Gift-Aid: Stella Weeds
Safe-guarding: Veronica McDouall
Emma Dunn
Newsletter: Sarah de Mas
Website: Kate Phizacklea & Devin McLachlan
Electoral Roll Officer: Anne Lindley
Parish Communications: Kate Phizaklea
Stewardship: Anne Lindley
Property: Gina Vivian-Neal
Wider Concerns: Margaret Johnston
Worship: David Girling
Pastoral Policy: John Binns
Children & Youth: John Binns
A Brief Summary

This has been a fast-moving year with new opportunities, successes and some sadness. Early in the year we said goodbye to two exceptional and valued colleagues, Revd Annabel Shilson-Thomas and Head Verger Stewart Hall. Warm tributes were paid to both at their respective leaving parties, but their departures left a big hole. Along with their many and varied contributions they had provided care, support and pastoral warmth to many.

Later, we were delighted to appoint Revd Devin McLachlan to a part-time post; he brings a wide range of experience and skills, and some different approaches to church life, not least his suggestion to provide “Ashes 2 Go” outside the church on Ash Wednesday. At Michaelhouse Erica Bowler came to us on a placement and she was joined by Hannah Hupfield, an Anglican priest living in Cambridge.

Michaelhouse continues the tradition of special evening services exploring seasons of the church’s year in words and music. There’ve been some Monday lunchtime talks and the Ark experimental Eucharist for young children and their carers remains a high point. Children’s Church gives us regular contact with around 200 children.

The four ministries – Great St Mary’s, Michaelhouse, Chaplaincy to University Staff and Heritage are all continually working on developing new ways of reaching out, and a new Communications Group is much involved. There is a new Facebook page entitled Great St Mary’s the University Church Cambridge, the website is being re-designed and both GSM and Michaelhouse produce regular newsletters.

All these ministries reach out to large numbers of people around the university and city. At the centre of these approaches to sharing the gospel is a worshipping Eucharistic community. It continues to be richly resourced by sides-persons, servers, intercessors, readers, communion administrators, coffee makers, flower arrangers and more. The choir plays a central role. It is the faithfulness and generosity of all these which creates the worshipping and spiritual life of the community, which in turn enables the mission of Great St Mary’s.

Following the completion of the Development project we only have the final part of the Diocesan loan to pay (£50,000), but we have increased revenue from visitors and church lettings; a Stewardship campaign also brought increased income thus income exceeds expenditure for the first time in years. The major financial challenge now is the repair of the South Aisle Roof. We are most grateful to all those have given so generously throughout the year.
EUCHARISTIC LIVING
The Pastoral Legacy of Michael Mayne

A talk by Joel Huffstetler
Thursday, 12th May at 6 pm

It was said of the Very Revd Michael Mayne that he would have been an actor if he had not been a priest. He was ordained in 1958 and following a stint as Head of Religious Programmes at the BBC, he became Vicar of Gt St Mary’s between 1979-1986, leaving us to become Dean of Westminster. He died in Salisbury in 2006. Here at Gt St Mary’s he is remembered for his outstanding preaching gifts and for his pastoral ministry that was “deep, prayerful and compassionate” and for bringing together the College chaplains to work on the pastoral difficulties they shared.

The Revd Dr Joel Huffstetler is Rector of St Luke’s Episcopal Church in Cleveland, Tennessee. He is author of Gratitude and Grace on Michael Mayne’s writing.

WHAT CHRISTIANS BELIEVE

A Series of Discussions
Led by the Clergy of GSM

15 May: What is faith?
29 May: Who is God?
5 June: What did Jesus do?
19 June: What is the Holy Spirit?

11am Sundays at Michaelhouse

REFERENDUM HUSTINGS
Centre of Cambridge Churches’ Forum
Speakers from the Leave and Remain campaigns chaired by Lord Wilson of Dinton

Sunday, 5 June 2016
8.00pm
St Columba’s Church, Downing Street
Questions may be submitted in advance to Nigel Uden on minister@urc.candf.org
Alex Ledsham writes:

On a slightly fresh morning in February, everyone was waiting, bags packed, bright and early at 7am on Queens’ Road: it could only be one thing; choir tour was once again upon us! The air was one of excitement, off we were headed, up the M6, stopping on the way for breakfast. One of us (*ahem* me) in particular, especially looking forward to a fry-up! We were on our way (via a well-thought-of detour, courtesy of Dr Frank Dean) to Liverpool.

We were singing the services in the fabulous Metropolitan Cathedral (“Paddy’s Wigwam” as it is sometimes known) for four days, and we were very lucky to have the Organ Scholar of the Cathedral playing for us. It was such a pleasure not only to sing in the Roman Catholic cathedral, but also to give a recital in the breathtakingly fabulous (not to mention gargantuan in proportion!) Anglican Cathedral, just down the road. The excitement was palpable. The acoustic of both Cathedrals was marvellous, and although the format of the services at the Metropolitan was new to many people, everyone rose to the challenge admirably, with some people (adults and choristers alike) brave enough to volunteer for solo singing at various points. But it was not all about the singing.

There was an excursion across the Mersey which proved to be a somewhat wet and blustery one, but with entertainment in the form of flocks of greedy seagulls, eager for the bread being thrown by members of the choir, amid gales of laughter. We had a very enjoyable trip to the Museum of Liverpool, which houses, among other things, a model of what the Metropolitan Cathedral was originally designed to look like.

Our Youth Hostel provided much needed sustenance in the form of packed lunches, and an evening meal on two of the nights. All good things must come to an end. After breakfast in the hostel on the final day, we headed homewards, stopping off for an hour or so at Crosby beach, to have a paddle and admire the famous barnacle-covered Anthony Gormley sculptures. And so, another fabulous choir tour comes to an end.

A huge thanks to Sam Hayes, our fabulous Director of Music, and to Emma Dunn, our very hard-working Music Administrator, who have once again organised an amazing choir tour; here’s to the next one!
We in the Bible Study Group are discussing Romans and thought that others might be interested in some thoughts about it.

In his *The Complete Bible Handbook* Cambridge scholar John Bowker writes: ‘Romans is the most important letter written by Paul, and perhaps the most important letter ever written by a Christian. It provides a fundamental statement of Christian thought, and became the basis of influential restatements of theology throughout Christian history.’

Its themes cover both Christian doctrine, including justification by faith through God’s grace, and Christian conduct, emphasising the centrality of love. It is a fine exposition of Christian theology and has greatly influenced the thought and philosophy of the West. At the Reformation it provided the chief expression for the new spirit of religion.

Romans is a theological treatise. In his other letters, Paul deals with some immediate problem or responds to questions. In contrast, in Romans Paul distils the very essence of his own faith and belief. Romans was written from Corinth, probably in 58 CE, to a Christian community that had been based in Rome for ten years or more, but it surveys the will of God for all humanity: Jew and Gentile.

Paul deals with an ever-recurring problem. In the Roman Church there were two parties. One, a legalistic party, believed that various rules must be obeyed relating to abstaining from certain foods and drinks, observing special days and ceremonies. Paul sees this as being weak in faith, because it accorded too much importance to external things and lacked the freedom that the Spirit offers. The other, a liberal party, regarded itself to be free from such regulations and blessed with the gifts of the Spirit. Paul regarded them as possibly stronger in faith but in danger of lacking discipline. One of Paul’s chief concerns is to bring together all Christian people of all shades of faith and practice, for the healthy flourishing of the whole Church.

Chapter 16 raises an interesting issue. Paul sends greetings to 24 people, mentioned by name. How can this be in a Church he has never visited? Scholars do not all agree on this, but perhaps Paul went out of his way to establish contact with members of Churches he had not yet visited. Many scholars believe that Romans was circulated in two versions: one for Rome, the other for circulation among other Churches. Romans was such a fine expression of the mind of Paul, that it needed to be widely shared.
It isn’t possible to live in Brussels for a long time without becoming aware of how insular British attitudes to the Continent are. We often only seem to want access: to be in, but not of, the European project. To be constantly questioning our involvement. Can we really not do better than criticising from the side-lines? This climate of scepticism is now leading to a referendum. But the constant questioning and scepticism has itself reduced British influence, which makes negotiating the changes that we would apparently need to stay in the Union all the harder.

Considered positively, the forthcoming referendum offers the citizens of the UK a once in a generation opportunity to vote on a specific issue, with constitutional implications. This is not something we are used to doing in the UK. So it lays a responsibility on our Church to support its members and the nation to frame the debate within an ethical perspective. As a bishop of the church, my role is not to offer political solutions, still less to tell people how to vote, but to offer Christian insight.

Together with the Church of Scotland we aim to promote serious and well-informed debate on our blog “Reimagining Europe - a space for Christian reflection and debate on Britain’s future relationship with Europe.’ It has entries both for and against the European Union.

Historically, the Church’s House of Bishops encouraged our people to see the origins of the EU in post-war neighbourliness and togetherness, or what Roman Catholic social teaching calls “solidarity”. In its foundation, European co-operation embodied values such as forgiveness, peace-making, reconciliation, togetherness and neighbourliness, which Christians, and indeed all people of goodwill should be able to recognise as praiseworthy.

In 2015 we live in a new context. Our current era is marked not by recovery from violent conflict but shared experience of global economic interdependence. The relevant question today might be how far the EU succeeds in bringing people together to share the fruits of economic prosperity – the extent to which those founding values of forgiveness, reconciliation and neighbourliness are manifest in present day dealings across European countries.

Although the EU is not perfect, if it did not exist then something like it would have to be re-invented. But when we are debating Europe, I want the debate not just to be about whether we are better off in or out. I want it to be concerned with whether or not today’s EU is still up to engendering those founding values of reconciliation, peace-making, neighbourliness and solidarity.

See: http://www.euractiv.com/section/uk-europe/opinion/the-uk-s-eu-debate-we-must-do-better/ for the full statement
DIARY MAY 2016
GREAT ST MARYS AND MICHAELHOUSE

Free Lunchtime Recitals in May
3 Imogen Ridge, Harp
10 Madelaine Jones, Piano and Cello
20 Bangor Ladies Choir
31 University of Maine Singers

What Christians Believe
Four sessions exploring what the Christian faith teaches and how it can help us to live well.
15 May: What is faith?
29 May: Who is God?
5 June: What did Jesus do?
19 June: What is the Holy Spirit?
11 am on Sundays at Michaelhouse

Services in May
Mondays
9.15am (GSM) Holy Communion
Tuesdays
9.15am (MH) Morning Prayer
10.30am (MH) Ark
Wednesdays
9.00am (MHFH) Morning Prayer
11.00am (GSM) Holy Communion
1.00pm (MHFH) Holy Communion
Thursdays
9.15am (GSM) Morning Prayer

Sunday 1 May
University Sermon - preached by Professor Robin Kirkpatrick, Fellow of Robinson College.

Thursday 5 May, Ascension Day
7.45am Singing from the top of the tower, followed by bring-and-share breakfast.

Thursday 12 May
Eucharistic Living, the Pastoral Legacy of Michael Mayne, a talk by Joel Huffstetler

Sunday 22 May
University Sermon– preached by Rt Revd Dr Bill Musk, Area Bishop for N. Africa and Rector of St Georges Anglican Church, Tunis

Visit our website at: www.gsm.cam.ac.uk  Newsletter Editor: Sarah de Mas sarahdemas48@gmail.com; 01223 561 131
The Editor reserves the right to edit submissions; if revisions required are major, they' will be run by the author prior to publication.