October 2016

Swiftly fly the years

Revd Dr Peter Hayler writes:

As we approach October and the beginning of a new academical year, the music in my heart is not the irrepressibly optimistic ‘Gaudeamus Igitur’ (as featured the finale of Brahms’ Academic Festival Overture, Opus 80), but rather the wistful or even slightly doleful strain of ‘Sunrise, sunset,’ from Fiddler on the Roof. The year ahead will witness some important endings or, rather, completions of terms of office. The Registrary, Dr Jonathan Nicholls, will be retiring in December; the Vice-Chancellor, Sir Leszek Borysiewicz will complete the seventh and final year of his office; and, as Chaplain to University Staff, I am entering the final year of my contract. As ‘The University Church’, we pray constantly for the University; please continue to keep this vigil, with these particular changes in focus, and do ask for a copy of the parish prayer diary if this will help.

On a more domestic note, this October will be the month when my youngest will leave home to begin her own Higher Education. I won’t be alone in this: there are other parents of choristers at Great St Mary’s whose ‘little ones’ are ‘flying the nest’ this year. It’s tough! Places at table, bedrooms, and couches in front of the television will feel empty, becalmed, and even bereft. ‘Empty nest syndrome’ is a name that has been given to this particular collection of losses; it can be a real challenge to busy households that suddenly become markedly less busy. Parents’ roles change, sometimes dramatically. Priorities are adjusted. Sometimes a challenging, or even frightening void opens up. Do, please, pray and reach out to families that are making this transition.

Back to Fiddler on the Roof and ‘Swiftly fly the years’… one of the main characters is Tevye, the Father, a role immortalised by Topol and the song ‘If I were a rich man’. His struggle is this: that as his children grow up, get married, and leave home, so society moves on, more quickly than he can keep pace with. From time to time he lets out the heart-rending cry “Tradition!” Why so? In Alasdair MacIntyre’s milestone work on virtue ethics, tradition is carefully defined as “an historically extended, socially embodied argument, and an argument precisely in part about the goods which constitute that tradition” (After Virtue 3rd ed, 2007, p. 222). Significantly, there is nothing here to invite nostalgia. Traditions are dynamic, forever being forged in the busy nexus of practice, and in dialogue: dialogue that helps us to

Contd overleaf...
pursue our good purposes, and God’s good purposes too.

So, whether it’s family life, or Higher Education, or the life of Great St Mary’s, or all of them, we seek to move forward prayerfully and faithfully, not changing for the sake of it, but when it’s appropriate for our life today and our calling to serve the future. Thus we seek to align our love and our will with the purposes of God as… ‘Swiftly fly the years’.

What can an “Eco-group” do for GSM?

by Clare Redfern

Imagine if, as described in the Psalms, we could hear the trees singing for joy, the fields exulting, the rivers clapping their hands and the heavens declaring the Glory of God. This may be poetic licence on the psalmists’ part, or perhaps not? Don’t you ever feel a sense of blissful transcendence, of spiritual connection, when walking in the countryside, sitting in a peaceful garden, looking up at mountaintops or the night sky? It’s not that surprising; God fills Heaven and Earth and we are part of that Creation which is sustained by God’s spirit. Celebrating that connection, and all it implies could be the focus of an “Eco-group” at GSM.

We are living in a critical time for the environment. Habitats are being destroyed, the climate is changing with devastating results and the whole global community is challenged with changing the way it uses Earth’s resources. As individuals we might feel powerless and overwhelmed by these problems, but within a group and as a church community, I believe we can make a difference and even be enriched and encouraged in the process. The way that we live and the impact our society makes on the environment are both moral and spiritual issues, as the Pope, in his Encyclical, and more recently the Archbishop of Canterbury reminded us. It is part of our calling as Christians to treasure “our common home” to be good stewards, and reflect on our place in it.

So perhaps like me, you’ve tried to make changes and found how challenging it is. As a group we could explore ways in which, as a church community as well as individuals, we might lessen our impacts. We worship in an ancient building that requires much heating and lighting - how can we effectively “green” the building? Perhaps switching to a clean electricity supplier could be a start? We could talk to local councillors about improving public transport - on Sunday especially. Perhaps vegetable growers would like to share a church allotment?

“A Rocha” have recently produced an updated EcoChurch programme, which is
being encouraged by the Bishop’s Environment Group; but we can think about this together, and decide whether to pursue it. For more information on A Rocha, please visit arocha.org.uk or arocha.org/en. A monthly meeting starting in November will provide the opportunity to talk and plan some interesting things, always accompanied by delicious cake (I promise). Everyone is invited to join in at any time: I’m sure there is a wealth of enthusiasm, knowledge and ideas at GSM on all sorts of topics, from mending bikes and bee-keeping to green theology, political lobbying and technological innovations. I hope that everyone will get involved in some way so that caring for Creation becomes integral to the life of GSM – so much so that an Ecogroup will become irrelevant.

Also appointed was Dorota Mederska as Verger.
◊ Gratitude was expressed for the exceptional staff contribution over the summer: Dorota, Helen Long, Aiden Shilson-Thomas, Sam Cross, Donna Hayler
◊ It was noted that, following a review, the congregation had voiced a wish to retain the Eucharist at 09:30 and had supported plans to consider changes to the layout of the East end of the church
◊ Sunday choral Evensongs would be held in Gt St Mary’s rather than Michaelhouse
◊ The PCC noted plans for the future of the Chaplaincy to the university which are currently under consideration within the University and which will provide a more inclusive, multi-faith service
◊ It was noted that new Ordinands will be arriving shortly and it is hoped that they will be carefully matched to the mission of GSM and Michaelhouse.

PCC Meeting 27/09/16
A Summary
◊ It was agreed to consider an offer made by EE to pay GSM £6300 pa in exchange for placing an invisible mobile phone mast in the bell chamber
◊ The PCC would look into the viability of seeking a loan to cover the cost of urgent roof repairs
◊ It was noted that scaffolding would be erected end September to carry out essential work to decking in the tower. The tower would remain partially open to visitors
◊ The PCC was pleased to note that a new organist, Benedict Todd, had been appointed.

Michaelhouse: A grant application had been submitted to the Ely Diocesan Growth Fund for a part-time pioneer chaplain who would combine faith and arts with liturgy at its core
◊ It was agreed that Coffee should continue to be served in Michaelhouse following the Eucharist as part of our Ministry
◊ It was agreed to progress plans for building work to be carried out on the Chancel floor to improve the heating and also safety. It was noted that a Faculty would be required.
◊ The PCC wished to congratulate Selwyn Image on his appointment as a Companion of the French Legion d’Honneur.
DIARY OCTOBER 2016

GREAT ST MARYS AND MICHAELHOUSE

LUNCHTIME RECITALS 1pm at GSM

TUESDAY 4 OCTOBER
Emmanuel Bach Violin Recital

TUESDAY 11 OCTOBER
Andrew Tessman Organ Recital

TUESDAY 18 OCTOBER
Michael Overbury Organ Recital

THURSDAY 20 OCTOBER
Gorcum Boys Choir (Holland)

TUESDAY 25 OCTOBER
David Rice Organ Recital

SERVICES IN OCTOBER

Mondays
9.15am (GSM) Holy Communion

Tuesdays
9.15am (MH) Morning Prayer
10.30am (MH) Ark

Wednesdays
9.00am (MHFH) Morning Prayer
1.00pm (MHFH) Holy Communion

Thursdays
9.15am (GSM) Morning Prayer
1.05pm (MH) Holy Communion

EVENTS AND SPECIAL SERVICES IN OCTOBER

SUNDAY 9 OCTOBER
Blessing of the Animals 11.15am GSM

SUNDAY 16 OCTOBER
Stewardship Sunday with John Preston, National Stewardship Officer at 9.30am
University Sermon with Professor Tina Beattie at 11.15am

SUNDAY 23 OCTOBER
Festival of Ideas Evensong with Dan Barnes-Davies at 5.30pm

SUNDAY 30 OCTOBER
Special All Saints Evensong at 5.30pm

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.