

VERSE OF 2012

Praise the LORD, all you nations; extol him, all you peoples!
For great is his love towards us, and the faithfulness of the LORD
endures for ever. *Psalms 117 (NIV)*

Dear Friends,

Several of you have been kind enough to say that you like seeing the Vicarage couple leading services together, so hopefully you will like the following joint effort as well. No resemblance to the actual proportion of word-use within our marriage ought to be suspected for one moment.

Can I start by thanking everyone who contributed so much to a wonderful Easter at our churches, and to our Annual Meeting. Please pray for new PCC members as they discover the part they can play.

As you pick up this magazine, the **Twin Spires May Festival (4th to 7th May)** is probably almost upon us. I hope you're looking forward to this very special chance to come together and enjoy our flower arrangers' artistry, a bit of music, 'all the fun of the fete' (BBQ, bouncy castle, stalls, games etc.) on Monday, one another's company, and, through all of it, the love of our Creator God. Do tell your friends and neighbours too! The more the merrier, and any chance to build bridges and make new friends.

Julian

This summer seems to be one when a lot of celebrations are being planned. There is the Queen's Diamond Jubilee with its double Bank Holiday, and then the Olympics, although I suppose how much celebration that involves probably depends on the performance of our athletes! Many of us will be hoping for sunshine for these events, while being aware of the need for substantial amounts of rainfall to refill our depleted reservoirs. And the people of St. John's and St. Boniface are certainly hoping for fine weather for the weekend of the 4th – 7th May for our **May Festival**.

So what is the Christian perspective on all of this? There are a host of detailed answers to that question, such as the responsibility to pray for rain as well as for sunshine, gratitude for the example of Queen Elizabeth and her increasing readiness to bear witness to her Christian faith, the hope that the Olympics will not become an excuse for relaxing the Sunday Trading laws permanently, and so on. But I think there is also a link with the two major Christian festivals we celebrate this May.

Our Lord Jesus, when he lived on this earth as a man, seems to have been delighted to be thoroughly involved in the celebrations going on around him. He was in Jerusalem for at least three Passovers, turned water into wine at a wedding in Cana, and was a guest at various dinner parties. My impression from reading the gospels is that he relished being where people were, talking to them, sharing their joys and sorrows, and always taking every opportunity to reveal more about his heavenly Father to those he met. Surely we as his followers should do likewise, though making sure that, like he did, we make time to withdraw to the solitary place with our Father so that he may strengthen us to do his work. And of course, there are places we shouldn't go, company we shouldn't keep, things we shouldn't be involved with, though quite which these are will be up to each one of us to work out for ourselves.

We celebrate **Ascension** on **17th May** (*see service details*), remembering the day Jesus returned to heaven after his death and resurrection. The fact that Jesus has returned to heaven has various implications for us, not least that there is now a human being enthroned in heaven. He is there, representing humanity, at the very heart of the heavenly realms. What greater sign of the commitment of God to human concerns could there ever be? And if he is thus committed so should we be committed to being involved in the concerns and celebrations going on around us.

But there is a problem: Jesus, praying for his followers, said "I have given them your word, and the world has hated them, for they are not of the world any more than I am of the world." It's hard living as a follower of Jesus in a world determined to go its own way. Let us thank God that he has sent us 'another helper' to be with us, to show us how to live his way. I'm referring, of course, to the Holy Spirit, the least-remembered Person of the Holy Trinity, whose coming upon the first Christians we will be celebrating on **Pentecost** Sunday, which this year falls on **May 27th**.

May I end (as Julian began) by encouraging you to come and enjoy our Twin Spires **May Festival (!)**, and then also to join with us in our services to celebrate Ascension Day and Pentecost, that we might pray together for God's help as we seek to bear witness to our faith in the celebrations going on around us this summer.

Helen