

What's happening in the life of St Andrew's and St Bartholomew's

“Uncle Johnny, You're old, fat and boring.”

Thus saith my adorable niece when she was about 25 (and I was only 42!). Still, she had a point, I suppose. Certainly, the older I get I sympathise with her sentiments, although I am trying not to be as fat or as boring. So, what I am saying next, especially if you are under 40, may seem to be coming from a grumpy old man. You may be right, but let me rant a little.

I love modern technology. I love mobiles, computers, facetime, twitter, wifi, emails, texts, tweets and emojis. To sit in our dining room and talk the other day to Jon and Jancie Hills in Texas on facetime through our mobile phones was wonderful, amazing and extraordinary. What a gift!

However, it seems to me that we can communicate today better, faster, easier and in more variety but it comes at the cost of relationship. I don't know the exact figures, but psychologists have worked out that in communicating the words used are only 5% of the communication. About 25% is in tone of voice, and 75% is in body language. So emails, texts, tweets, facebook etc are very poor methods of communication, even dangerously misleading. Comments thrown out into the ether on the spur of the moment are often interpreted by the receiver completely wrongly. Alternatively, in some cases, these bite-sized communications are fully intended to be as poisonous as they look. In which case, they are the preferred method of cowards who don't have the courage to say it face to face.

Now here's an interesting verse. 3 John 13-14:

'I have much to write to you, but I do not want to do so with pen and ink. I hope to see you soon, and we can talk face to face.'

For 'pen and ink' read 'text, Facebook, tweet, Instagram etc.' Such wisdom from 2000 years ago which still has huge relevance.

Whilst we are on the subject, a question. Does the ease of communication mean that we are less able to deal with our emotions? A person feels sad so splurges their emotions on social media. There is no waiting to see if one still feels sad tomorrow, or even make attempts to master that emotion. Just get it out there and dump it on the electronic world. What does that do to our children? Are they learning to cope with the vicissitudes of life? What if their Facebook friends seem to be leading the perfect life and they aren't? Who is helping the next generation to master the effects of social media? Are we relating better

with all this technology or are we finding it more difficult to talk to each other?

You see, I told you I was old, fat and boring. So, listen to Jesus: *'Simply let your 'Yes' be 'Yes' and your 'No' be 'No'; anything beyond this comes from the Evil One.'* Matthew 5.37. In other words, let our communication be trustworthy and true. Listen to Paul: *'Instead, speaking the truth in love...'* Ephesians 4.15. Love must govern all our communication in whatever form it takes.

Jonathan

OUR CHURCH

'UP' - 'IN' - 'OUT' 5 YEAR PLAN IN ACTION

MISSION WEEKEND

Our annual mission weekend was once again an incredible reminder of what God is doing through his people, all around the world as well as here in our own area. Emma Worrall (from Open Doors) kicked off the weekend with a superb presentation on the Persecuted Church at women's breakfast. That theme continued in the Sunday morning talks, and the many stories we heard of our Christian brothers and sisters around the world facing heartbreakingly difficult situations, was a reminder of our bonds of unity - that in Christ we are a family, and when one member suffers, we all suffer with them.

An incredible diversity of Ministries

The mission fair was outstanding, highlighting an incredible diversity of ministries (with more than 20 of our partners represented), and giving everyone at St Andrew's an opportunity to get to know them 'up close and personal'. The Christian Motorcyclists Association, with several of their bikes on display, was

certainly one of the highlights - as were the displays of our newer partners, like 'The Producers' (with Julian Myran's fascinating array of woodworking tools) & Eco-Church; and the great videos from the Warners and Shulis.

Thank you for supporting our Mission Weekend

A huge thank you to all those who set up a table or display - it really was a fabulous experience, and the courtyard-marquee added a unique dimension as well. Special thanks to Claire Power-Browne for all her work behind the scenes, and to all the mission team members. I'm thrilled to report that the generous giving of St Andrew's members has already (very nearly) reached the goal we had set out for 2017! We are so grateful. Thank you everyone.

Opportunity – The Mission Team is losing a couple of its members very soon, and we'd love to welcome a couple of new people onto the team. Could that be you? A great opportunity to get involved. Please contact Dan Button.



**INTREPID TEAM NEEDED FOR
FANTASTIC ADVENTURE...**

ON Monday 1st May 2017 we welcomed over 1,000 people into the heart of our church buildings, life and community. THANK YOU SOOOO MUCH to everyone who contributed to Party in the Parish, it was amazing! YOU are amazing!

It's time to start planning for next year and it's time to build a great team to take this event forward to its next incarnation.

Are YOU passionate about our community? Are YOU excited to see what Jesus is doing at all times and in all places? Would YOU be willing to help build a new team for this fun, strategic, missional, community event?

The foundation stones are well laid; we just need YOU and YOUR VISION for God's work in our community.

Come on in, the water's lovely!

Please talk to Ben or any of the church leadership to get involved.

ROMANIA REFLECTION

Going to Romania, knowing about the poverty there and something of the situation we were going to be working in, I expected to come back feeling guilty; or ashamed of what I have that they don't, and their situation. However, we were met by such welcoming, beautiful people who were obviously so blessed by God despite their situation.

Throughout the week we did work renovating an old Communist building to be used for volunteers and workshops; painting and fitting stairs etc. We visited the nursery in the village Zizine, and did some work with 11 year olds from the Integration Centre at FAST.

Despite the challenges of the language barrier, which could be frustrating at times, it was interesting finding other ways to communicate with the children, and learning some Romanian! We also explored Brasov, and some of the places nearby, such as Bran castle and Rasnov fort, both of which were amazing.

It was great to get to know Daniel, Ema, their family and some of the team working at FAST – it is clear that they are gateways for God's plans. The work they are doing is so important in not only helping the Roma people directly, but also enabling them to work on their own homes, which is so valuable and such a blessing to them. I feel it is such a worthwhile cause to support, and although humbling at times it was so much fun, and so inspiring in lots of different ways.

Abby Button



In April we discovered how Longfield's differs from conventional hospices. They help people find ways of living with life limiting illness; providing wellbeing courses, art therapies, counselling, and support which enables people to stay at home. Having no in-patient beds means they can reach more people and help them to have more control over their lives.



Later in the month Helen Wilson's talk about her literacy and translation mission work in Cote d'Ivoire and Cameroon covered, among other things, the need to understand cultural aspects when learning, and then teaching, native-tongue languages. There were some interesting and funny anecdotes. She'll be repeating her talk in the autumn so you'll have another chance to hear her then.

Our Lent Blessings raised £150 for MU's Overseas Fund, and many items for GARAS and Gloucestershire Bundles. A big thank you to those who made donations.

Our June events are, as always, open to everyone.

Tuesday 20th June at 7.30pm
Experiences in Romania
 Find out about the experience our youth had with FAST this Easter

Thursday 22nd June
Strawberry Tea

at 2.30 pm in the
 Church Hall
 to raise funds for the Big Summer Appeal

Tickets £4.00
 from committee members and coffee shop

Fun tea
'quiz'

Raffle

A date for your diary:

We're having a Summer Special event for all ages on Wednesday 2nd August - a coffee morning and sandwich/soup lunch with children's craft activities and baby safe 'play' area, plus stalls and a raffle to raise funds for AFIA and the MU Sudan relief fund. More details next month.

Janet Ross

WHERE THE SHOEBOXES WENT...

277 SHOEBOXES TO BELARUS...

Last Christmas 277 boxes of gifts were donated from St Andrew's to the Operation Christmas Child Shoebox Appeal. The boxes we sent, along with all those which passed through the new Gloucester processing centre (almost 7000), went to desperately needy children in Belarus. A journey of three days by lorry!

I am pleased to be able to share with you a couple of shoebox stories from Belarus, to give you a flavour of how valuable these shoeboxes are and what they mean to the children who receive them.

I'm sure you will agree that it is both humbling and yet heart-warming to learn how a box of small gifts can bring some joy and hope into the desperately sad lives of needy children. As someone recently summed it up to me, a Christmas shoebox is, in effect, "love in a box".

In total 883,647 shoeboxes of gifts were sent by Operation Christmas Child (a Samaritan's Purse initiative) from the UK to 17 countries in Africa, Eastern Europe, Central Asia and the Middle East.

To all those who made a box, sponsored a box, donated cash, knitted hats and handbags or made drawstring bags – a heartfelt thank you once more!

We will be launching our 2017 appeal in October. Please look out for information nearer the time. If you have not yet taken part in the shoebox appeal, please resolve to support us this year. There are many more children like Natasha, Elvira, Erina and Anna who will receive no gifts at all this coming Christmas unless we

are able to send enough boxes.

With love,
Margaret Riddick



Sisters Natasha and Elvira were taken into care when a neighbour raised concerns about the girls' welfare. When the social centre gained access to

the house they found the girls with no heating and very little food or clothes. They are now well cared for and love the company of the other children they now live with. The girls said they hope to be fostered soon. In all the excitement of looking through their shoeboxes, their gifts became all mixed up, but they said it did not matter as they were going to share everything anyway!



Erina and Anna were found abandoned in their home. By the time the authorities discovered

them they were emaciated and starving. They were taken to a Social Centre in an area of Belarus to be cared for, and it was here that they received an Operation Christmas Child shoebox. They both loved their shoebox gifts and said, "We hope lots of other boys and girls have as much fun as we will have."

WORSHIP FOR JUNE 17

All services will be at St Andrew's unless otherwise stated

4th June Pentecost (Hothorpe Weekend)

9:00am Holy Communion @ St.Andrew

10:30am NO SERVICE

6pm Evening Prayer @ St.Bartholomew

7pm FUEL

11th June Trinity Sunday

9:00am Holy Communion

10.30am Morning Worship

11am Matins@ St.Bartholomew

7pm Confirmation FUEL +Robert

18th June Trinity 1

9am Holy Communion

10.30am Morning worship

7pm FUEL

25th June Trinity 2

9:00am Holy Communion

10:30am Morning Worship

4pm Baptisms @ Ingram's Pool

6pm Holy Communion @ St.Bartholomew

2nd July Trinity 3

9:00am Holy Communion @ St.Andrew

10.30am All Age Communion

6pm Evening Prayer @ St.Bartholomew

7pm FUEL

Weekday Services

9:00 am Monday to Friday in the Quiet Room - Morning Prayer

10:00 am every Thursday in the Quiet Room – Holy Communion

USEFUL CONTACTS

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