

## LEDBURY DEANERY SYNOD -27<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER 2008

We had a lively, upbeat and uplifting Deanery Synod meeting at Wellington Heath last night! *How can Deanery Synod be described as lively, upbeat and uplifting?* Apart from getting through the business in ten minutes!!! (*Which we did - thanks to Ian Beer's skilful leadership in the Chair, his supporting officers, and delegates!*)

**Well, God is moving in this place!** *So that has to be lively, upbeat and uplifting!* Starting with our worship... Revd Howard Mayall led a short service to begin with, and remarked that where we were in Wellington Heath was the centre of the Universe! Jest aside, this was to remind us that God's work starts *within us* - and *spreads out* - I guess like the proverbial ripples from a droplet of water - and for that moment of praise and dedication - and the rest of the evening's business lifting up for discussion God's work in our Deanery - in our churches and outreach - and reflected in our own lives... we **were** the centre of the universe. God's work reaches out in our everyday encounters with all those we meet - at work, rest and play... and at church... and in these places we *are* the centre of the universe when we show God's love in our lives. Thankfully, God is with us as we tackle some of the big issues of our time...

Play... exploring... being like children for God...

Seriously, we need to work out what we are going to do about the children! Helping children come to know the love of God in their lives is their birthright.

Sadly, the numbers of families and children who have learned that the **love of God**, or **faith**, *can be for them* is dwindling. Drip... drip... dripping... away... **And as stewards of God's care in our parishes we need to think what are we going to do about it** - what is **appropriate for us in our situation**. None of us want to see our churches threatened with closure when the last of our dedicated but elderly souls have slipped into the next world, and we all feel concerned that the next generation - possibly even the last two or three - are increasing separated from exposure or opportunities to learn about Him going about their everyday lives. Exposure, *not* doctrination... Opportunities to absorb faith, learn more, come to an active decision... *Can we help everyone see God in the story of what's going on around them? Can we be open to the children themselves, to learn more from our young people who so readily accept God if we let them, through giving them enough links in their lives?*

Our provision of church schools in the Deanery is splendid - five out of seven Primary Schools are church linked - and the other two (Ledbury and Ashperton - County Primaries) - **actively welcome** input from local churches. We have links with our high school, at John Masefield, and there are two Independent schools - at the Elms and the Downs, in Colwall. But alone, our clergy are **s-t-r-e-t-c-h-e-d** beyond capacity... and the call is for us **all** to play our part... beginning with **prayer**... and expanding into opportunities for **active ministry**... *We need to think hard about what we can do* - each **one** of us and in our **PCCs** - to help bring our neighbours into the knowledge and love of God, give *them* the opportunities we *all* need to nurture and develop faith.

**So, this is it, a rallying call for mission!**

How many children and young people in your area? What provision do you have locally - in school, church, children's groups, Brownies, Guides, Cubs, Scouts...?

? Do we see 'them' as a nuisance in church?

A character on *The Archers* yesterday, said... 'DIY? - *'Don't Involve Yourself...!'*  
Do we really believe this of ourselves, our church, our schools or our PCCs?

### MONEY...MONEY...MONEY...

Hate to be vulgar! But sometimes a bit of money can help! God calls us to be active stewards of his money! Thankfully, there is some money available for outreach in our Diocese - and thanks to the work of Revd Paul and his team, we are going to put in a bid for some to help us with **training** and **resources** to equip us to be better help in schools, our local communities and in church. As team vicar, Revd Paul takes a caring, but professional, businesslike approach to outreach based on faith and twenty years working with young people - eighteen in ministry. His presentation to Synod last night was enthusiastic and encouraging, leading to a BIG decision to take ministry and mission onto a new level in our Deanery and put in a sensible BID for some of what's available from the Diocesan pot. Those of you unable to be at the meeting last night will not be left out in the cold - this is a call to everyone to go out enthusiastically in **shared ministry** - developing what might be called peripatetic ministry teams to go into our local schools and develop links across and within our parishes. We are strengthened by our Parish network. Let us use it to God's advantage. *All that it takes for bad things to get a grip is for good to do nothing...* Come! Let us be Active in his Word.

So... celebrate all that is happening in our parishes... for there is a lot that is wonderful and good - and embrace the future with hope... and plan for active ministry... In winter, our buildings can seem very cold and un-welcoming - let's go for 'critical mass' - a crowd attracts others - and generates a lot of warmth!

Next year... **2009... is International Year of the Child**.  
What are your hopes and dreams for the future?

### Help needed in strengthening parish networks...

*prayer... service... parish magazines.....*And a personal plea... **please** can we all **remember** to send **Mike Vockins**, our **Rural Dean**, copies of everything happening in our parishes? Starting with our parish magazines? We won't **all know** what's happening if we don't all share - and I wonder if this could be stretched to sending **each church** a copy of the Parish Mag from each **group** in the Deanery so we can help raise the profile of Deanery as a whole? We are not alone in our parishes - let's share the good news! Everyone's Parish Magazines are wonderful - **please share**. And if you want something to have a mention in our **prayer diary** started in the Hop churches group but spreading... please get in touch with me - Debbie Davies - Canon Frome 01531 670840  
[peteanddebdavies@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:peteanddebdavies@tiscali.co.uk)

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God is love: his the care, tending each, ev'rywhere!

God is love, all is there! Jesus came to show him, that mankind might know him!

*Sing aloud, loud, loud! Sing aloud, loud, loud!*

*God is good! God is truth! God is beauty! Praise him!*

169 Hymns Old and New