

Vicar's Notes

As the Christian Giving Scheme continues to grow quietly, and the idea of giving a definite proportion of one's income takes firmer root, certain problems and questions arise. Some people ask: "Will you accept in the scheme a cheque for the whole year? It is much less bother." After a good deal of thought we have decided not to do this, except in special circumstances. In the case of invalids, or infirm and elderly people, or those who live far outside this parish but still regard St. James's as their mother-church and in gratitude desire to continue to support its work, we feel the rule of weekly giving could rightly be modified and such people regarded as in the scheme. But others who could give weekly if they wanted but prefer not to do so will have their gifts entered under the heading of "Donations" in the church accounts. We are grateful for this financial interest and support, but would like it to be spiritual as well.

THE WEEKLY REMEMBRANCE

An important feature of Christian Giving is the **weekly** act of gratitude to God and the **weekly** remembrance of the Church and its work. The trouble and inconvenience involved in getting our money together each week, putting it in the envelope and bringing it to church, are all part and parcel of an action which has sacrificial and sacramental significance. It would be much easier to dash off a cheque, get the matter over and done with, and not have to bother about it again for another twelve months, but to do so would be to rob the whole act of much of its spiritual value and blessing. The weekly thinking, thanking, remembering and offering is of the utmost importance, and as this becomes an established habit in our lives, so token giving—or "tipping God," as they call it in America—will become increasingly impossible.

"CHURCH ILLUSTRATED"

It is rather surprising that only six of us in this parish take this monthly Church magazine. It has now established itself as a first-rate production of the "Picture Post" standard. It has a vast range of interesting articles and pictures, and it costs only 6d. a month. If

you wish us to obtain a regular monthly copy for you, please let Mr. Smith or myself know. In the February issue, now before me, there are, amongst other features, illustrated articles on Coventry Cathedral; that persistent but pernicious sect known as Jehovah's Witnesses; the work of a Guild Church in the City of London; "How much do you owe to God?" an article of special interest to us in this parish, as it deals with the question of what should be our standard of giving to God's work in Church and community, and gives the latest news of the modern tithing movement which is revolutionising Church life in the U.S.A. Yes—it is a stimulating sixpennyworth!

NOT IN THE NEWS

When you come to think of it, there is a good deal of quiet work that goes on in this neighbourhood which never gets into the news. Four years ago our church took the initiative in founding the Old People's Welfare Committee. It has had its ups and downs, of course, and in the last two weeks has certainly got into the news with a vengeance in a rather disturbing way. And yet the greater and more important part of what it does never gets into the news at all, because it is so unspectacular and unsensational. There is the steady, regular visiting of old people in their homes or in hospital—one member of the Committee (who is also incidentally a member of our P.C.C.) visited weekly for many months an old lady in hospital ten miles away, and also looked after all her domestic and financial affairs until she died—and other members have also quietly done similar things. There are street-wardens, constantly on the look out to help in cases of sickness or other emergency, and responsible for many acts of kindness which bring brightness into lonely lives. It would be a great pity if such useful but unnoticed work should suffer because of the great prominence that has been given to other less happy items of greater news-value.

Then there is the Hampton Council of Churches, of which I have the honour to be Chairman this year, with Mr. Forrow doing the donkey-work as Secretary. Some of its activities have received public notice

and Press comment; indeed, it is news when there is "Standing-room only" in churches these days, as happened at the united service held in the Methodist Church last month. But the most significant items are the most intangible and difficult to describe, such as the quiet growth in understanding and fellowship between Christians of different traditions and outlooks, and the increasing desire amongst us for unity according to the will and wisdom of God, and not just as we think best. I commend to your attention the article "Straws in the Wind" by last year's Chairman, Mr. Yeomans, later in this issue.

LENTEN ARRANGEMENTS

In former years we have tried various plans for helping people to make a profitable use of Lent, such as mid-week services in church, study-groups at the Vicarage or Wayside, "refresher" Confirmation courses, and so on. The support for these has often been very meagre and sometimes non-existent, seeming to show that we were providing something that did not meet a need. This year we have decided to discuss the matter at the February Parish Meeting, and take action in accordance with the decisions there reached. Mr. Bishop is prepared to set aside one evening a week to lead a service or a discussion-group, while I am occupied with Confirmation classes which should by then be meeting regularly (if you are thinking of being confirmed this year, and have not yet given me your name, please do so without delay). As another help to making good use of Lent, the Young People's Fellowship are hoping to arrange a book-stall in church with a large selection of inexpensive books and pamphlets.

OTHER FUTURE EVENTS

The Shrove Tuesday Parish Party is an innovation here, though I recall very jolly ones in other parishes, and see no reason why ours should not be the same. Some of us will not be able to be present owing

to commitments with regard to the morality play "Everyman" which is to be presented in our church on Ash Wednesday, after Compline at 8.0 p.m., and in the Teddington Methodist Church on the following evening. This quaint old play is still full of freshness and force, and if we make allowances for the medieval stress on works rather than faith and law rather than grace, the message that comes through is one that time cannot stale.

There will be no ordinary Parish Meeting in March, as on the 12th there is the Annual Parochial Church Meeting, when we expect all who are concerned with the work of the Church in this parish to be present. But do make sure that your name is on the Electoral Roll ("Electric" Roll as I have often heard it called, but it can't be electric when many people whose names are there never take more than a passive interest, and the names of those who take an active interest never appear!). Your name is entitled to be there if you are 17 years of age or over, a baptized member of the Church of England, and a regular worshipper in our church whether you live in the parish or not. After February 16th the revision of the Roll will be over, and no more names may be added until after the Annual Meeting.

We are hoping to have our usual date at Laurel Dene this year, the first Saturday in July, but to use it more as a social gathering and garden-party rather than a money-making effort. A small committee has been formed to discuss ways and means, and we shall await their plans with interest.

Our clock is a friend to all, and we all miss it when its bells no longer chime or its hands cease to mark the time. It is badly in need of overhaul, and an appeal is shortly going out to all parishioners, except those who have joined the Christian Giving Scheme, to ask for their contributions towards the cost of this. We expect with confidence a good response.

AROUND THE SPIRE

being notes and news about
people, activities & organisations

THE YOUNG WIVES' GROUP

On January 29th we had the privilege of a visit from Mrs. Garrington, known to most of you as the Rev.

Elsie Chamberlain of the B.B.C.

She chose as her subject "The Bible—Alive or Dead?" There is no doubt at all that her talk was very

much alive and we had an inspiring evening which, judging from the subsequent discussion, gave some of us a "new look" to the Bible and its relevance to our day.

We were pleased to welcome to this meeting friends from our own parish and from Y.W. Groups in neighbouring parishes—one Group coming from as far as St. Stephen's East Twickenham.

Mrs. Ford was in the chair and Mrs. Dunkerley and Mrs. Melville were responsible for refreshments.

We were sorry that we had so few books to help the number of mothers who were inquiring for them, but we intend to make this good at a later meeting when we will have a special display on this subject.

We are sorry that the dates announced for our discussion groups have had to be altered: one coincided with the Annual Parochial Meeting and the other with an M.U. film evening. There seems no way in which we could have avoided this, but the P.C.C. is now arranging to have a calendar of events put up in the church so that club secretaries can check their dates with another on this before making their fixtures.

At our next meeting in February tickets will be available for the outing on March 10th to the Ideal Home Exhibition.

THE SCOUT GROUP

I think the Pack will agree our Christmas Party this year was one of the best ever. I would like to thank all those parents who so generously contributed cakes, also the various entertainers: the Senior Cubs who performed a small play, "Dobbin Does It Again"; Geoffrey Harding, a young magician whose performance was most enthusiastically received by the Cubs and Parents alike; also Roy Frampton and his Skiffle Group.

Dates to Remember:

Sat., Feb. 22nd: Rummage Sale, Parish Hall, 2.30 p.m.

Tues., March 4th: Bingo Drive, Parish Hall, 8 p.m.

Wed., March 5th: Annual General Meeting, Parish Hall, 8 p.m.

OFFERINGS IN CHURCH

January, 1956 (5 weeks):

F.W.O.	£15	4	2
Collections	£30	17	4

Total	£46	1	6
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Weekly Average	£9	4	4
January, 1957 (4 weeks):					
F.W.O.	£22	12	5
Collections	£25	13	5
Total	£48	5	10

Weekly Average	£12	1	5
January, 1958 (4 weeks):					
Christian Giving					
Scheme	£70	13	5		
Money on Plates	£16	19	7
Total	£87	13	0

Weekly Average	£21	18	4
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SOME DATES TO NOTE

Feb. 11.—8.0 p.m. Parish Meeting (W).

Feb. 12.—8.0 p.m. Films: "Christ is at work in Africa" (St. Mary's Hall, Twickenham).

Feb. 18.—7.45 p.m. Shrove Tuesday Parish Party (H).

Feb. 19.—Ash Wednesday.
7.15 and 10.30 a.m. Holy Communion.

8.0 p.m. Short Evening Service, followed by presentation of the Morality Play "Everyman," sponsored by the Hampton Council of Churches.

Feb. 21.—Women's World Day of Prayer.

8.0 p.m. Women's Service in Congregational Church.

24.—St. Matthias.
9.0 a.m. Holy Communion.

Feb. 26.—8.0 p.m. Young Wives' Group (H).

Feb. 27.—8.0 p.m. Church Council (W).

March 4.—8.0 p.m. Prayer Group (W).

March 7.—7.30 p.m. Magazines should be ready (V).

March 12.—8.0 p.m. Annual Parochial Church Meeting (H).

All whose names are on the Electoral Roll are asked to attend.

March 16.—2.30 p.m. Mothering Sunday Service: Collection for Dr. Barnardo's Homes.

March 19.—7.30 p.m. Film Evening sponsored by the Mothers' Union (H).

N.B.—Confirmation Classes will meet as arranged, and Lenten Study-Groups as decided at the Parish Meeting on February 11th.

BAPTISMS

Jan. 26.—Andrew Donald Roy Mitchell, 20, High Street.

BURIALS AND CREMATION

Jan. 22.—Amelia Julia Clara Higgins, 217, High Street, aged 63 years (at S.W. Middx. Crematorium).

„ 27.—Ellen Annie Mason, 2, Railway Cottages, Hampton, aged 90 years.

„ 27.—Annie Sophia Cawte, 32, Park Road, aged 79 yrs.

FROM BEYOND THE SPIRE

STRAWS IN THE WIND

(Reprinted by permission from the Teddington Methodist Circuit Magazine.)

What shocks overseas observers when they look at the churches in Britain is the **apathy** towards our divisions—a temper which has found expression recently in the columns of this magazine. Perhaps it is that the frequently quoted simile of the churches being like regiments in an army has blinded us to the fact that an army does have **one** Commander and that regiments in the line do not act in total disregard of others.

The tangled and strained history of the churches in England does tend to make it difficult for neighbouring churches which confess the One Lord to come together. But there is some movement in this Circuit which resulted in the formation of the Hampton Council of Churches in 1956. How does it start? Firstly by the ministers themselves meeting and desiring closer co-operation. This began at Hampton during the war years with joint factory visitation by Anglican and Congregational ministers, and with a long standing arrangement of joint Christmas Day services between us and the Congregationalists.

But a mumble* of ministers is never enough. The local congregations must meet, and this has come about with the formation of the H.C.C. which consists of three Anglican Churches, one Congregational and us within the geographical limits of Hampton and Hampton Hill.

What does this Council do? Firstly it meets quarterly. That is an event in itself. It plans ways and means of joint witness and is an open and recognised channel of communication between the Churches. From the first the Council has felt that the best way of proceeding is in joint worship and waiting upon God. This resulted during the first

year in a series of united services in each of the five Churches. In the second year we have advanced to the point of holding the united services in the distinctive form of worship of each Church in turn. So as we go the rounds the second time we are discovering in worship the treasures of traditions other than our own.

Secondly, there has been joint practical Christian witness. The sight of five congregations processing through empty streets to an open air service in Carlisle Park on Good Friday has caused comment in Hampton salons and evidences to the determined virility of the Churches. The Council also took part in the nation-wide Christian Aid Week by holding a public film show, which was, however, poorly attended. Most recently the Council has noted the prominent lack of Protestant religious newspapers in Hampton and Hampton Hill Public Libraries and has obtained permission to make up what is lacking by supplying for one year the *British Weekly*, *Church Times* and *Christian World*.

The Council is young and is still feeling its way and it is not easy to assess or even define success in this field, but let it be noted that in a time of social disintegration there is a movement within the churches to close the ranks and show a unity to the world.

At Sunbury, too, we, together with the Anglican and Congregationalists have come together this summer to inaugurate a local branch of the *British and Foreign Bible Society*. This joint action in a common cause may well lead to closer working together in the future.

Not headline news. Not ecclesiastical globe-trotting, but straws in the wind. God's wind.

M.Y.H.

* Mumble.—A collective noun, used in conjunction with a cackle of congregations.