

BEYOND THE PARISH PUMP

The April issue of 'The Spire' was the last one - at any rate for this year - in which an inset will appear. Our inset has been valuable in many ways, and particularly in taking our thoughts further afield than our own doorsteps, alerting us to wider issues and concerns, and making us more fully aware of what the Holy Spirit is doing in the church and the world today. The loss of it will be a sad one which we shall be unable to compensate for from our own local resources and with a limited number of pages at our disposal in this magazine. More than ever we need to be informed Christians, and also to be in a position to learn from the experiences and discoveries of others.

Fortunately a new quarterly magazine is about to appear which will do far more than replace the loss of our inset if we avail ourselves of it. It is called CHRISTIAN, and has a very strong Editorial Board and Advisory Committee behind it. It will deal with the topics that concern all forward-looking Christians today, including Christian Thought and its application to the problems of the 'seventies; Social Action; Meditation and Prayer - exploring new ways such as those Sister Audrey opened up for us; Healing - and there is growing realisation today of the healing powers in the Christian faith, and of the role of the local church in the ministry of healing; Celebration - as congregations and parishes have come alive, there have been new discoveries in ways of joyful worship; Revival - for the past hundred years the church's chief failing has been its refusal to use the tremendous power lying to hand, but at last a break-through is beginning to be made, as in the parish of the Holy Redeemer, Houston, and many more; the Presence of God - more and more people want to experience this, and the assurance is growing that we can; Holidays - accounts of the various places at which Christians can go on holiday together; Christian Centres - where Christians can meet for meals, study, talk, recreation, music; the Other Dimension - the ways in which Christianity adds a new dimension to life. The magazine will also welcome reports of new developments and projects in parishes, so that we can learn from and help one another.

It should be ordered from the Institute of Christian Studies, 7 Margaret Street, London W1N 8JQ. The subscription for 4 copies, post free, is £2.30, which may seem high, but is less than the cost of one good book - and one way of meeting it would be for several people to club together and share the magazine and its cost between them.

ANNUAL CHURCH MEETING: SOME HIGHLIGHTS

Fifty-one people showed enough interest in parish affairs to attend and re-elect Messrs. G.I. Robinson and L. Rockliffe Churchwardens. One of the pearls of information which the Vicar usually strews before us on these occasions was that it was in the 13th Century that Churchwardens were given legal powers as "Bishop's Officers, Trustees of the Church's Goods and Guardians of Parochial Morals". Mr. Brunt alluded to this last

prerogative when sternly warning those present who might not be on the Electoral Roll NOT TO Vote after the 'Meeting of Parishioners' was over - or else!

As to the vexed question of THE ELECTORAL ROLL - eleven new names had been added this year bringing the numbers up to 170. This is not representative of the active participants in the life of St. James - the number 250 had been hoped for. Why IS it that people are so shy of affirming their allegiance? If YOU know you are a regular worshipper and are not on the Roll, DO take steps to remedy this, urged the Vicar, and enable us to have the representation we merit at the Deanery Synod. At the moment we are entitled to two only and Mrs. M. Orton and Mr. A. Taylor were re-elected.

It is foreseen that in the future Church Councils, through the Synod, will be increasingly involved in "outside affairs" and the Committees will have more responsibility in settling those of "the parish pump".

Mr. Brunt's private researches had shown, contrary to the general trend COMMUNICANT NUMBERS were slowly rising at St. James's. For instance the average attendance at the Parish Communion on an ordinary non-festival Sunday, is now over 70, of whom 50 are communicants, with another 7 at 8.00 a.m. By comparison at Evensong there were on average about 22 cassocks (Vicar, Reader and Choristers) to about twenty congregation scattered about the nave. Is Evensong really meaningful to any but the faithful few?

St. James's is conscious that the Church does not exist for the sake of the faithful, the already converted, and a team for Contact and Welcome are studying, with the Reverend J. Cranswick, methods of "non-aggressive EVANGELISM" to embrace those who proffer signs of inquiry or searching. The team is beginning by trying to understand what this work involves and whether it is what Jesus is calling its individual members to do. Do YOU want to join them? - contact the Vicar or Brother Jim if you do.

Our FINANCIAL SITUATION is healthy. Although owing to moving and death Stewardship numbers had fallen from 152 at the beginning of 1972 to 136 at present more was being given by fewer people. As a result of modified tax there was a 20p loss on every £1 covenanted and a recent letter had shown covenanters how they could increase their covenants with no increased hardship to themselves and considerable benefit to the Church. The expected deficit was not nearly so large as anticipated owing partly to The Repair and Maintenance FUND of £1,000 (Good Stewardship, this) and increasing income of about £1,000 which resulted from last year's Stewardship Renewal Scheme and also the increased income tax rebates on covenanted income. The two enormous projects, namely the Tower and Spire overhaul and repair and the Rebuilding of the Organ were complete and the major part of the bills paid. The Clock, out of commission for so long owing to the theft of two of its hands by unthinking vandals, is going again and it is anticipated that the resultant large bill will be met by Insurance.

Apparently St. James's Credit is good at Bedford Square. We are

regarded (vide the Treasurer) as a business-like Parish and considered a worthy recipient for a loan if requested. This is borne out by the fact that, small as our numbers are, we figure fifth or sixth out of the 15 Deanery parishes in our quota assessment which is based on our financial strength. We pay our quota in full. We are a going - nay, an advancing concern!

TIME-WISE and TALENT-WISE perusal of the Report will show that our Committees are full of skills and abilities. Everyone has talent and each single member of the Congregation ought to be using his or hers in at least one job other than worship.

WANTED Sunday School Helpers. (Miss Western and Miss Stewart have been slogging away faithfully for over twenty years!) Sometimes they spend about ten hours a week preparing for classes. Perhaps YOU can help them? We need several new members for the MAGAZINE COMMITTEE. Mr. Brunt suggested that perhaps there is enough talent for us to be able to produce our own Magazine in the future and do without the expense of printers. (Is this YOU? Contact the Vicar or he may be producing the Magazine solo next month!)

We save £100 per annum on CHURCH CLEANING by the use of voluntary help. We need three people every Friday for ½ hour each and not, as at present, one or two for many hours. How are YOU with a duster and metal polish? (A friendly job this, with the opportunity of making friends).

Have YOU got an old fur coat? The Bellringers are getting blistered hands and want to renew the fur on the ropes. (STOP PRESS: 3 have now been received, and the ringers say thank-you: no more now needed!)

The Archdeacon, as well as commending our business acumen, considered us a talented parish. Don't let your Talent stay hidden.

Our PROPERTIES are in excellent repair. The committee, a knowledgeable, hardworking lot - we're extremely well served - meet every six weeks. They are always planning. ? Toilets and a small kitchen in the Church, ? bringing the Baptistry to the front of the church, ? a small side-chapel for small friendly services, ? using the recent Beckett Bequest to instal electric winding for the gigantic and heavy mechanism of the Clock (Massive weights have to be wound up by hand every two days. Bill Robinson grafically illustrated this agonising performance by standing on a chair - either mounted thus or standing it is a back-breaking performance. He ought to know, he and the Vicar have been doing it for long enough and now Vernon Bridges and Paul Brown have undertaken to exercise their muscles in like manner).

Altogether a stimulating meeting. Next year be sure to come along and hear for yourself. Every year on reading the Highlights people say; Why didn't they tell us so and so, why did they bore us with so and so? Well, there is a remedy. Join the Magazine Committee and report the Annual Church Meeting as it should be reported.

M.O.

HOLY WEEK AND EASTER

Palm Sunday, April 15, the first day of Holy Week, and, instead of Evensong, the augmented choir gave a really grand rendering of "Olivet to Calvary". Some of the soloists were regular choir members, and other soloists from among the congregation came in as well to make their distinctive and beautiful contributions. It was very good indeed to recognise past members of the choir who had returned to help in this most impressive sequence of Passion music. Both solos and choruses were sung with tremendous sincerity and had obviously been practised most assiduously. Many congratulations on a most enjoyable and inspiring evening of worship; it was a memorable beginning to Holy Week.

On Wednesday, April 18, the members of the Mothers' Union arranged an austerity lunch at Wayside. The event was well attended, much enjoyed, and it was a very good lunch. I'm sure that all appreciated the delicious soup, bread, biscuits and cheese and coffee. Perhaps it should have been more austere, but how very nice that it wasn't! £16.10p was raised for Christian Aid.

On Maundy Thursday our friends from the United Reformed Church joined us in the service of Holy Communion, Series 3, at 7.30 in the evening. It was a lovely service and there was a large congregation. Immediately after it the play "King of Sorrows", from the sequence "Man Born to be King" by Dorothy Sayers, was read by members of the congregation. In this particular play Jesus and the two bandits carry their crosses up the hill to Golgotha; the crowd mocks and jeers; the Jews look on; the Romans come to sight-see; Jesus is nailed to the cross, and suffers, and the little group of women prevail on the soldiers to let them through to the foot of the cross. After the death it is the gentile centurion who names Him Son of God. It is a gripping description of the crucifixion, and the readers did very well. After the playreading there were a few minutes of silence, and then we sang "O Sacred Head Surrounded". We ended the evening with hot-cross buns and coffee in the church, and much happy chat.

There was a children's service at 10.00 a.m. on Good Friday, and this was followed by the 3-hour service from 12 noon to 3 p.m. Members of a Lent study group, which had been meeting to study St. Mark's Gospel, divided the 3 hours between them, and talked about various aspects of the Gospel culminating in the Passion. The readings which accompanied each address were read by members of the study group; we also had a moving rendering of the negro spiritual "Were you there when they crucified my Lord?" The whole 3 hours was very varied, and seemed a valuable innovation. At the end of it (a prompt 3 p.m.) we rushed down to take part in the procession (3.15) up Hampton Hill High Street, from the United Reformed Church to the open-air service (3.30) on the pavement outside the Supermarket. There could have been more people attending this service of witness, and let us hope there will be next year.

On the Saturday the church was most beautifully decorated. We are so fortunate in our flower-arrangers, and it was wonderful to see such a profusion of flowers after the bleakness of Lent. At the Easter services

on the Sunday, a very rainy Easter Day, the Easter joy was abundantly apparant. There was a good turn-out for the Family Service at 9.30, and a packed Wayside afterwards for Parish Breakfast.

In the evening of Easter Day Evensong was followed by the last play in the "Man Born to be King" series, "The King comes to His Own". This was quieter and less dramatic than the crucifixion play, but it was beautifully read and very moving. Among other scenes the play gave the discovery of the empty tomb by the women, and the hasty patching together by the Jewish authorities of a story to try to account for the disappearance of the body. The resurrection appearances of Jesus, 4 actual appearances and 2 related, ended with Peter's three-fold affirmation of his love for his Lord. We ended the evening very fittingly with the hymn:

Thine be the glory, risen, conquering Son,
Endless is the victory thou o'er death hast won.

It had been a memorable Holy Week and had been a whole-hearted, corporate parish offering led throughout by our Vicar.

H.M.S.

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"THE SPIRE" COVER

Readers will notice the new Cover Picture of our Parish Church of St. James's and appreciate the new view of the building, showing its long aisle and very fine Spire set among well grown trees. Our thanks for this "new look" to our magazine are due to Hampton Hill Studios, one of our advertisers, who specially took this photograph - a gift we very much appreciate.

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HAMPTON HILL OLD PEOPLE'S WELFARE COMMITTEE

We are taking 35 elderly people to Butlins' Holiday Camp at Bognor in September. If you are a resident of Hampton Hill and would like to go, please give your name to Mrs. Oliver, The Cottage, Hampton Road, Hampton Hill. Age: over 60 (women); over 65 (men).

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SOME DATES TO NOTE

(For dates to the end of May, refer to April issue)

- June
2 10.00 a.m. Coach leaves church for parish outing to Windsor Castle and Safari Park. Tickets: £1.10 (adults), 80p (children under 15), inclusive of lunch; 3.00 p.m. Old People's Party (Hall).
- 3 - 10 Festival of New Forms of Worship: 50 events in 10 different centres (for details see notice-board in church).

Some Dates to Note cont/.....

June

- 3 6.45 p.m. United Service in our church, followed by refreshments. The Reverend Peter Mundy of Hampton Methodist Church will preach.
- 7 The Bishop of London's Farewell: 5.30 p.m. Diocesan Eucharist in St. Paul's Cathedral at which the Bishop will preside, followed by refreshments. The Deanery Synod may be arranging transport from our area: details later.
- 9 The Bishop of London's Farewell: The Bishop will travel along the river from one end of his diocese to the other, making stops at various landing-places. We are asked to greet him at Tough Brothers' Pier, Teddington, at 3.00 p.m.
- 10 WHITSUNDAY: All non-pledged offerings for the work of leprosy relief through LEPRO.
- 11 7.30 a.m. Holy Communion.
- 12 7.30 a.m. Holy Communion; 8.00 p.m. Tuesday Club (W).
- 19 SAINT BARNABAS THE APOSTLE: Holy Communion at 7.30 a.m.
- 21 8.00 p.m. St. James's 'At Home' to members of the Hampton Methodist Church (Vicarage Garden).

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BAPTISMS

April

- 15 Emma Collingwood, 76 Pigeon Lane.
William Rupert Rashleigh, 1 Vincent Row.

BURIAL

April

- 18 Fredrick Charles Durnford, 1 Pine Court, Tudor Road, Hampton,
aged 88 years.