



St Columba Church  
changing lives

# ST. COLUMBA INFORMER

May 2014

## Refreshing Iona...

On the first Sunday of each month, we hold an evening service at St Columba in the style of the Iona Community. Some, like me, have never been to Iona, but appreciate the peaceful, inclusive nature of this worship. For others, it reminds them of their own visits to the



island off the west coast of Scotland, and happy times spent in the Community on retreat.

Iona is a tiny and beautiful Hebridean island, where in 563AD the Irish monk Columba established a monastic settlement. From there, Columba and other monks travelled to evangelise large parts of Scotland and the north of England, and the monastery became an important centre of European Christianity. In the Middle Ages it became the site of a Benedictine abbey, and over the centuries it has attracted many thousands of people on their own pilgrim journeys.

This month we have refreshed the Iona service, with the intention of bringing our simple act of worship more in line with the aims of the Iona Community. Founded in 1938, in Glasgow and Iona, the community is a dispersed Christian ecumenical community working for peace and social justice, rebuilding of community and the renewal of worship. They are an ecumenical Christian group of men and women from different walks of life and different

traditions in the Church. Ecumenical means promoting unity or cooperation between Christians of different denominations.



The community is engaged together, and with people of goodwill across the world, in acting, reflecting and praying for justice, peace and the integrity of creation. One of the aims is to transform society to be inclusive in every way, modeling themselves on Jesus who came to heal outsiders and those on the fringes of society. In doing so, that inclusivity has to be demonstrated in the community itself.

Members of the community commit to the following five-fold rule of life:

- ❖ Daily prayer and Bible-reading
- ❖ Sharing and accounting for the use of resources, including money
- ❖ Planning and accounting for the use of their time
- ❖ Action for justice and peace in society
- ❖ Meeting with and accounting to each other.

Our worship over the coming months will reflect this commitment to justice, peace and being radically inclusive. The first service, on Sunday May 4<sup>th</sup>, focuses on mental wellbeing, and subjects coming up include peace, diversity and our responsibility towards creation. We look forward to seeing you at St Columba Church at 6.30pm on first Sundays: May 4<sup>th</sup>, June 1<sup>st</sup> and July 6<sup>th</sup>.

### **Winchester Quiristers Concert**

Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> May 2014, 7pm, St Peter and St Paul Church, Hambledon. The Quiristers are giving a concert to help raise funds for St Peter and St Paul Church – tickets are £15 (to include a glass of wine and canapés) and must be booked in advance. Contact Sarah Wigley on Tel: 023 9263 2779 or e-mail: [sarah@sarahwigley.co.uk](mailto:sarah@sarahwigley.co.uk)

*Ruth, on behalf of the Iona team*



## St Columba May Fair and Plant Stall – May 17<sup>th</sup>



With Spring now well on the way and summer beckoning it must be time to get down to some gardening or just spend some time Outside on a lovely (sunny?) after-

noon in good company, with books & gifts to browse, plants to buy & traditional games such as skittles to have a go at.

We do hope you and your friends can be at St Columba on Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> May between 11 and 3pm to share in the fun. As always there'll be the chance to

sit and have a cuppa and chat, and hopefully lots of yummy cakes. You might try your luck on the Tombola or your skill in catching a duck ..... There may even be a Bouncy Castle – but sorry only for the children!

The keen gardeners among us are busy potting on and labelling so that you can take a little of our gardens home with you. Come and see what horticultural treasures you can find and at bargain prices too – usually with growing advice thrown in for free.

As always anyone is very welcome to volunteer to help with a stall or game - just let me know, and any contributions for the stalls can be left at the back of Church or collected if that helps. All proceeds will go towards the St Columba Development Fund.

We can't guarantee the sun but I hope that in the long tradition of St Columba we can guarantee a sociable occasion for all the community. So don't keep it to yourselves – tell your neighbours and friends and see you there. **Jane Whiteley**

*(PS the rain won't stop us we'll just move inside so don't let it put you off either – plants love and need the water so we must too!)*  
**Jane can be contacted on 01329 668388**

### **Beaulieu Fundraiser for Historic Churches Trust**

Sat 14<sup>th</sup> June 6.30-8.30pm, Palace House, Beaulieu. Champagne reception and a chance to look around the grounds. Good disabled access. Elegant dress, £40/person.

Info/booking through: Meryl Balchin. 01794 308427 or [grants@hict.org.uk](mailto:grants@hict.org.uk)

## Catisfield Changes



**Catisfield Village was the original home of St Columba Church.** It was established in 1891 as an offshoot of Holy Trinity and housed in a corrugated iron building – the ‘tin tabernacle’ - on land purchased from the Limes Estate.

In 1963 St Columba moved to its present site on Hillson Drive and the tin tabernacle was sold to the Downs family who had by now taken over the Limes estate. The tin tabernacle became a private members club, The 106 Club and the estate now included the Catisfield Wine Stores, a small super-store and the Limes public house. The tin tabernacle was finally demolished in 1992.

The whole site had become quite run down and in need of redevelopment. Last year planning permission was granted for 31

houses and a care home. Some of the houses will be on the site of old St Columba church. Development is now well underway to the relief of the local community.



Given the site’s association with St Columba and to set it fair for the future the Rev’d Ruth Schofield attended the site with representatives of the local community.

In a simple ceremony she offered prayers for the past and the people who had lived and worked there, for the present – the workers building the new houses and for the future – the people who will live in the new homes.

*John and Judy Ekins*



World Concern Committee –



## Christian Aid Week 11th - 17th May

The theme for this year's Christian Aid Week is  
**"Fear less"**

**War tears lives apart. It leaves people broken, brutalised, grief-stricken and afraid.** In some of the toughest places in the world, Christian Aid is helping people caught up in conflicts to get the basics: medical care, water, food, shelter. We keep people safe and help heal their emotional scars, providing the expert support they need to deal with their traumatic experiences.

When the fighting stops, we are still there, helping communities walk the long road to recovery - from building homes where families can feel safe, to making sure people who have lost everything can earn a living again. And we work to tackle the causes, not just the consequences, of conflict. By coming together this Christian Aid Week we can help give people across the world a life free from fear.

**War tears lives apart. You can help put them back together by:**

1. Making a contribution by using the Envelopes in the pews.
2. Helping with the House To House Collection
3. Offering to man the Christian Aid stall in the Shopping Precinct for a couple of hours between 10am and 4pm Monday to Friday

**Your Local Contacts are:-**

**St C Maurice Shergold 01329 288916 / HT Kath Lancey 01329 310138**



**Find us on facebook!**  
**StColumbaChurchFareham.facebook**

## Be Still (P. S. Keep on running!)

'Be still for the power of the Lord is moving in this place' is a line from one of my favourite hymns. Although there wasn't much 'stillness' at the London Marathon, the power of the Lord was certainly present. Being there is a spiritual and emotional experience for runners and supporters alike, as the Kingdom of God touches our world. The love we were reflecting on during our Holy Week meditations is evident at the London Marathon - no matter where you look!



Thirty eight thousand runners - all running for a vast number of charities, with more than a million generous people sponsoring them.....

Over two hundred thousand supporters lining the route, cheering on loved ones & complete strangers alike with enthusiasm, genuine care & affection...

Over a hundred thousand volunteers acting as stewards, providing first aid (you would not believe how welcome the sight a tub of Vaseline is at 18 miles 😊) & all those manning the drinks stations holding out

bottles of water and Lucozade as the runners pass by. Despite having to work really hard passing out well over a quarter of a million bottles the people at the drinks station still managed every time to provide words of encouragement and a smile as well as a bottle.....

There were also so many 'ordinary' people along the route holding out bowls of sweets or cut up oranges for the runners, doing their bit to help. Despite the pain it was an honour and a privilege to be part of this.

If you despair about how uncaring our world appears to be and want to see the power of the Holy Spirit in action I recommend you go along to the London Marathon sometime. You will certainly see him in action and you never know you might be inspired to take part one day!

*Ed's note: Keith completed the course in 4 hrs 37 mins – congratulations Keith. Sponsor money can be handed to Keith directly, or to the Wardens, or Rachel Abbey. Thank you in advance.*



# APCM Report

**Thank you** to those of you who made it to the APCM on Monday 28<sup>th</sup> April. Here's a snap shot of what happened for those who weren't able to be there:



## **Election Results:**

- **Church Wardens:** Jane Whiteley and Jim Palmer (Sheila Holliday and Daphne Armstrong were re-elected as Wardens at HT)
- **PCC:** Elected/re-elected - Nigel Sturt, Maurice Shergold, Rowena Plamer, Helen McCarthy and Rachel Abbey. Our thanks to Ann Easton and Tricia King who stood down this year. Elected / re-elected for HT: Sarah Bourner, Sheila Clark, Steve Ellis, Angela Foley, Sally Martin. Standing down: Emma Bourner and Donna Irving.
- **Deanery Synod:** Jane Whiteley, Rachel Abbey, Sue Craft, George Ringrow.

A resolution was passed to reduce the elected membership to fourteen from next year (seven per church) in line with Church Representation Rules.

**Electoral Roll:** 291 members this year (269 members in 2013).

**PCC Report:** Apart from the business conducted during the year, Judi Bushell reported on changes made to PCC meetings which ensure a spiritual element is included at each meeting, and more discussion takes place in small groups so that decisions can be made by consensus rather than by voting.

**Finances:** Andrew Bushell was able to report that our general fund (which pays for the parish day to day expenses) showed a surplus last year of £9,558. A huge thank you to all those who responded to the stewardship campaign.

**Deanery Synod:** Rev Susan Allman (St Peter's, Titchfield) took over as Area Dean. The synod looked at training needs, the Diocesan budget, collaborative working between parishes / denominations / clergy and laity / neighbouring deaneries and called for the maintenance of Vicarages to be improved!

**Safeguarding:** Sheila Taylor stood down from the role of Safeguarding Officer at HT, with Sue Craft stepping into the role. Jayne Dent continues at StC's SO. Clergy, Reader and Wardens have all attended Safeguarding training this year

### **Fabric Report (St Columba):**

- *Vestments*: some are in need of replacement / repair
- *Fabric Gains*: altar frontal / lectern fall / exterior noticeboard / Columba logo on external doors. *Fabric losses*: Two fir trees fell during the winter gales, damaging two ornamental trees which also had to be felled.
- *Maintenance*: New hall kitchen installed, car park levelled, with drains and gutters investigated
- *St Columba Development*: Work on-going!

### **Rev Sally Davenport's comments:**

- Relationship building continues in the parish through: The Hub, St Columba Academy, weddings, baptisms and funerals.
- Some things have been 'let go' of this year (Sun morning study group, Growing old Gracefully (revised format), parish administrator), whilst new activities have taken their place (St C Academy Breakfast Club, cross-parish Exploring Faith courses, contemplative prayer group, PraiseMakers)
- Vocations are thriving: Richard Wharton (Reader-in-training), Steve Dent (Deacon-in-training), Vicky Williams (at theological college), Garry Roberts (curate) arrives in June, and Keith Wickert beginning to work in other churches around the Deanery.
- Travelling as pilgrims is hard work (get up early, pack your bags & go to the next destination), not a five day holiday by the pool! Engaging with God, engaging with others & engaging with new ways of doing things are challenges for us all!
- Dorothy Jempson, standing down after many years of service as pastoral co-ordinator received a vote of thanks. Sarah Bourner steps into the role.

### **Rev Ruth Schofield's comments:**

- Last year was StC's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary – a jubilee year with its sense of being freed to look forward!
- Two tea parties were held; Kate Macfarlane was employed as community worker one day/week (Breakfast Club + links with uniform organisations).
- Nicola Samuel employed as manager of the Hub three days a week – 'Friends of the Hub' now set up as a group, and we have committed ourselves to the next three years of the lease.

**Any Other Business:** The World Concern Committee would love to see others becoming involved. If you're interested in finding out more about it, please speak to Jim Palmer or Maurice Shergold.

# Services at St Columba during May

Prayer during the week – Tues & Thurs at the Hub – 9.15am

## 4<sup>th</sup> May – 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Easter

- 8am - Said Communion;
- 10am - All Age Morning Worship
- 6.30pm - Iona service



## 11<sup>th</sup> May – Christian Aid Week

- 8am - Said Communion
- 10am - Family Communion *with Columba Kids*

## 18<sup>th</sup> May – 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter

- 8am - Said Communion
- 10am – Family Communion – *with Columba Kids*

## 25<sup>th</sup> May – 6<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter

- 8am - Said Communion
- 10am – Family Communion – *with Columba Kids*

## 29<sup>th</sup> May (Thursday) – Ascension Day

7.30pm – Service at St Peter’s, Titchfield

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# Diocesan Pilgrimage to the Holy Land 2015



**Bishop Christopher is leading a pilgrimage to the Holy Land from 4-11<sup>th</sup> March 2015,** travelling from the place of Jesus’ birth to the place of his death and resurrection. The cost is £1,490 (full board). More information is available on the Diocesan website, or from Rachel Abbey

## Year's Mind for May

|                  |   |
|------------------|---|
| 1 <sup>st</sup>  | Kathleen Cox  |
| 2 <sup>nd</sup>  | Jenny Dobie, Stella Jacklin, Michael Mills  |
| 3 <sup>rd</sup>  | Herbert Rogers  |
| 4 <sup>th</sup>  | Olive Budd,   |
| 5 <sup>th</sup>  |   |
| 6 <sup>th</sup>  | Walter Brown, Dorothy Callaway, Iris Farrar, Frederick Giles, Sandra Lennon         |
| 7 <sup>th</sup>  | Mary Coward, Jessie Kirkpatrick   |
| 8 <sup>th</sup>  | Edna Ball   |
| 9 <sup>th</sup>  | Marjorie Baker, Eileen Clear  |
| 10 <sup>th</sup> | Peggy Lawes, John Morley, Roy Tate  |
| 11 <sup>th</sup> | Ted Mayell  |
| 12 <sup>th</sup> | John Few, Florence Tee  |
| 13 <sup>th</sup> | Gwen Briddon, Madge Chapman, Vic Snelgar, Margaret Tomkins                          |
| 14 <sup>th</sup> | Walter Rossiter   |
| 15 <sup>th</sup> | Arthur Bushell, Ted Dennis, Peter Ellis, Brenda O'Leary                             |
| 16 <sup>th</sup> | Peter Evans   |
| 17 <sup>th</sup> | Cline Humphrey, Vera Saunders, Peral Walden   |
| 18 <sup>th</sup> | Geoffrey Rust   |
| 19 <sup>th</sup> | Cedric Porteous, Liz Salmon   |
| 20 <sup>th</sup> | Virginia Cross, Leonard Hansford, June Shaw   |
| 21 <sup>st</sup> | Jack Bryan, John Burrige, Frederick Cane, Margaret Collins, Les Kirby, Eileen White |
| 22 <sup>nd</sup> | Laurie Farr, Kathleen Few, Sydney George, Ernest Holland, Bobby Woodcock            |
| 23 <sup>rd</sup> | George Huggins, Marjorie Jones, Gladys Parson, Joan Smith                           |
| 24 <sup>th</sup> | Stella Casey, William Dunwell, Ron Knight   |
| 25 <sup>th</sup> |   |
| 26 <sup>th</sup> | Lilian Ings, Winifred Jupp, Wendy Kirkbride   |
| 27 <sup>th</sup> |   |
| 28 <sup>th</sup> | Bill Churcher, David Northey, Herbert Stockwell                                     |
| 29 <sup>th</sup> | Esme Bennett, Fred Miller, Howard Saunders  |
| 30 <sup>th</sup> | Mary Evans, Elizabeth Ginn, Mary Pickup   |
| 31 <sup>st</sup> | Rene Corbin, Gladys Evans, Keith Stratford  |



## Steve Dent Behind Bars?

**Some might say that prison is the best place for me and I think that they may be right! Let me explain why...**

Many of you will know that I'm training at STETS in Salisbury for ordination in the Church of England. Unlike most of the people that I am training alongside, I felt called to serve God and the church as a Distinctive Deacon. This means that when I finish that part of my training in June 2015, much of my time will be spent working in the community on church related work.



As part of the training course, we were asked to find a placement that will stretch our 'comfort zone' and be something that will be life giving. I opted to spend six weeks in Winchester Prison, part time, observing the work of the prison chaplaincy team. As part of the experience, I will also be worshipping at the prison on Sundays, which means that I won't be able to attend St Columba during this time.

My objective whilst I am there is to try and understand in what ways God is present and active in such a place. At the end of the experience I have to write a report which is to include information such as ethnography. I am yet to find out exactly what this is and I have a book sat on my desk awaiting to enlighten me, all 150 pages of it.

My work with people who are homeless and those who come to the food bank has helped me to better appreciate what life can be like for people who find themselves on the edge of society. I am hoping that my experience in the prison will do the same. I am particularly interested to find out what opportunities exist to enable people there to reform and, perhaps more importantly, transform their lives.

My placement is from the 13<sup>th</sup> May until the 23<sup>rd</sup> June (if they let me back out) and I would really value your prayers for me during this time. Thank you.

Love and God's blessing,  
*Steve Dent*

## Around the Diocese

### Want to developing your skills to support others in distress?

If you'd like to develop your skills in communicating with those who are worried or distressed, the Sage and Thyme foundation level workshop might be for you. Mon 9<sup>th</sup> June, 9.30-12.30 at the Rowans Hospice, Purbrook. Contact [grace.ellert@rowanshospice.co.uk](mailto:grace.ellert@rowanshospice.co.uk) Tel 023 9223 8535



### Diocesan Budget Meeting

If you want to be involved in the consultation process for the Diocesan budget for 2015, an open meeting, at which the Bishop will be present, is being held on 11<sup>th</sup> September at St. John's, Shedfield. 7-9pm



**Spirituality Exploration Day** – Why not set aside a day to explore new perspectives on God, take a deep breath and allow God's peace to flow into your life? Chris Prior-Jones and Max Millett lead 'Stations of the Resurrection' on Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> May 10am-3.30pm. Contact Clare Jones Tel: 02392 899 678 or email [clare.jones@portsmouth.anglican.org](mailto:clare.jones@portsmouth.anglican.org) to book.

### **Conflict and Consolation**

29<sup>th</sup> October 2014

A quiet day reflecting on the life and works of Geoffrey Studdert Kennedy – otherwise known as 'Woodbine Willie' (poet and Chaplain during the First World War). Penhurst Retreat Centre, Nr Battle, East Sussex. £25  
Tel: 01424 892088.  
E-mail [info@penhurst.org.uk](mailto:info@penhurst.org.uk);  
[www.penhurst.org.uk](http://www.penhurst.org.uk).



# World Concern – External Giving

Our Treasurer, Andrew Bushell, has confirmed the amounts to be given to our various nominated charities as shown below:



| <b>Worldwide</b>            |   | £   |
|-----------------------------|---|-----|
| Water Aid                   | Clean water for impoverished people       | 442 |
| Mission Aviation Fellows' p | Airborne medical support in Africa        | 353 |
| Leprosy Mission             | Support for those with Leprosy            | 353 |
| SOMA                        | Support for Christian missionaries abroad | 353 |
| Open Doors                  | Supporting oppressed Christian Churches   | 265 |
| Release International       | Working with persecuted churches          | 265 |
| Mercy Ships                 | Healthcare & Mission                      | 353 |
| Canadian Church             | Arctic Diocese                            | 265 |
| The Kintampo Project        | Mental health in Ghana                    | 353 |

| <b>National</b>               |  | £   |
|-------------------------------|--|-----|
| World Development Movement    | Campaigning against poverty                          | 442 |
| Age UK                        | Political lobbying and practical support for elderly | 353 |
| Church Urban Fund             | Funding for relief of poverty in UK                  | 442 |
| Shooting Star Chase           | Children's hospice group                             | 353 |
| Christians Against Poverty UK | Helping people to manage budgets                     | 353 |
| British Hen Welfare Trust     | Animal welfare & education                           | 265 |
| De Paul UK                    | Working with homeless young people                   | 353 |

| <b>Local</b>       |   | £     |
|--------------------|---|-------|
| Cedar Oak          | Pregnancy counselling for the young       | 442   |
| Fareham Family Aid | Women's refuge                            | 353   |
| AFFECT             | Families & friends of convicted prisoners | 265   |
| Fareham Fairtrade  |   | 177   |
| Whiteley Church    |   | 1,300 |

## Easter Reflections

A really lovely weekend started on Good Friday morning, with Margaret greeting us at The Hub by handing out hot cross buns. The place was buzzing with the Nutty Knitters, St Columba congregation *en mass* and several acquaintances! I got my usual special treatment from Jayne, who spoils me by warming the milk for my coffee (have I just told a secret?!).



Eventually we dragged ourselves away to go home and spend the rest of the day with family. Saturday dawned bright, and I tagged along with Andy to the Church - he had been invited to help with the flower arrangements for Easter. I was only a spectator, on the basis that I have three thumbs when it comes to floral art, but I had a wonderful morning just watching, & playing with Noah's Ark & a delightful little girl called Suzy. Jane soon set Andy to work, and the ladies started on the wall arrangements. Well done Reba and Co, they looked beautiful.

Jane busied herself with the arrangement in the coffee area, and Shirley set up the altar, ironing the altar cloth *in situ*. Beryl was dashing about everywhere, and still found time to make us coffee and biscuits. I know!! I hadn't done anything to earn my refreshments, but nevertheless I enjoyed them. Ann was arranging the altar flowers, and I thought Andy had disappeared somewhere, but there he was, on his knees near the altar putting flowers under the candles.

Peggy started to move all the chairs into place ready for Sunday service, and as soon as he was free Andy helped her. Meanwhile I was 'observing' and could feel this little article coming into my head... Even with a good size work force it took all morning, so well done ladies, your efforts are appreciated.

The flowers were all beautiful and scent from the Jonquils was gorgeous.

When we came out into the sunshine I was struck by the sight of the many dandelions on the rough ground near the car park lifting their golden heads towards the sun. I got to thinking about how they survive in adverse conditions, so why don't we hold them in high esteem, rather than calling them weeds? I never understood that as a child, and I still don't. Is it just me?



Despite the cold, wet weather the Easter day service was especially enjoyable (thank you Ruth and Steve), and afterwards we did our first shift as volunteers at ‘Lunch on Sunday’ for the homeless, held at the youth club in Fareham. A record number of guests tucked into chicken cobbler, potato wedges, mixed veg, apple crumble and custard under the guidance of Rowena. There was also a giant Easter egg for them to share, (courtesy of Katrina), chocolate brownies, cheese and bread rolls, teas, coffees and cokes. Whilst Jane, Jayne, Rowena, Katrina and Andy were busy in the kitchen, Steve signed everyone in, I played the role of listening ear and chatting. There was a lovely atmosphere, and everything is free for the guests, with several taking food away with them for later. What a wonderful enterprise it is.

There were so many people involved in the Easter preparations that if I’ve not mentioned you, no offence is intended, I think you are all truly wonderful people and I look forward to developing long term friendships with you all. Amen to that. *ET*.

*Ed’s Note: There is always room for more volunteers for the St Columba ‘Lunch on Sunday’ team. Duties come up about once every eight weeks – please speak to Rowena Palmer if you’d like to find out more.*

## St. Columba Leadership Team

| Area of Oversight | Member’s Name           | Contact Tel. Number            |
|-------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Worship & Prayer  | } Revd Ruth Schofield { | 01329 842300 /<br>07738 858909 |
| Discipleship      |                         |                                |
| Pastoral Care     | Mike King               | 01329 238194                   |
| Fabric & Finance  | Jane Whiteley           | 01329 668388                   |
| Fellowship        | Margaret Handley        | 01329 608817                   |
| Outreach          | Jim Palmer              | 01329 289568                   |
| Administration    | Rachel Abbey            | 01329 318690                   |

**Thank you to all our contributors this month. We would love to hear from you – want to reply? Want to share something that’s struck you, or tell us about something you’re involved in?** Articles for the next edition of the Informer (available 1<sup>st</sup> June) are very welcome – 500 words or less. Please forward them to Rachel Abbey - hard copy deadline Mon 26<sup>th</sup> May, electronic copy deadline Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> May to [rachel.abbey@ntlworld.com](mailto:rachel.abbey@ntlworld.com) - Thank you.

## Turning The Stone Over and Doorways of Grace.



**Sometimes an image stays with you**, working away as you examine it from different angles – a bit like turning over an interesting stone in your hand...

The image that I have carried with me from Easter was unexpected, as it involves the unpleasant business of animal sacrifice carried out as part of the first Passover (Exodus 12)! I had always seen the blood of the lambs being daubed on the doorposts as a sort of protective ‘talisman’ to prevent the angry angel of God from striking down the first borns of the household. But as I turned the ‘stone’ over in my mind

I began to see it differently. Rather than the blood being on doorposts to appease an angry God, I began to see it instead as a sign of the household’s willingness to accept God’s grace and kingship over them. It was a ‘yes’ to freedom in living God’s way...

Some of you will know that I come from a background where Communion was not available every Sunday (and rarely during the time I spent in a rural Methodist chapel), and because of this I find significant connection with God in places other than in bread and wine. Whilst my placement in a high church for three months enabled me appreciate the extremely important central role Communion plays for others, I found some of the anglo-catholic celebrations of Communion extraordinarily uncomfortable places to be... I admit to struggling with some of the concepts of Communion, and I don’t think I’m alone in my discomfort.

However, as I’ve continued to turn over the image of doorposts daubed with sacrificial blood in the couple of weeks since Easter, it’s enabled me to change my perspective on receiving Communion. I had a very vivid image during the last service of the bread and wine being daubed on doorposts – of my heart rather than my home! In this re-viewing, the bread and wine have become indications of whether I am willing to accept God’s grace and Lordship in my life. Just as Christ knocks on the door and invites me to his table, so I too play my part by accepting the bread and wine offered, and as I do so, I ensure that the door of my heart is open in invitation to Him once again to be Lord of my life.

RA