

LPA 19 Advent Newsletter 2009

This is the LPA team's second Newsletter for the start of a new year in the life of the Church. The team has now been working together for two years and has become increasingly aware of the richness of life in our three parishes. We have come to recognise the value of our diversity and the content of this Newsletter reflects some of the many varied activities in which the parishes demonstrate their commitment to Catholic life. We have worshipped together locally, as well as with the Diocese in Liverpool Cathedral to celebrate, with dignity, splendour and great spirituality, the end of the year of Saint Paul.

The next local pastoral event is the.....

ADVENT RECONCILIATION SERVICE
on SUNDAY EVENING, DECEMBER 13TH
AT 7.30 PM
ST. ANN'S CHURCH,
VICARAGE AVENUE, CHEADLE HULME
followed by refreshments in the Parish Room

Last year's activities at Christ Church Heald Green.

Summary

The year 2009 has witnessed a considerable amount of activity within the parish, socially, spiritually and with maintenance work being carried out on the Church Hall and the Church itself. The parish also celebrated its 50th Anniversary.

Activities

Our Lenten preparation was accompanied by a series of talks and studies on C S Lewis' book 'The lion the Witch and the Wardrobe'. This was well supported during the 5 weeks by approximately 10/12 individuals from Heald Green Churches Together. The meetings took place in the Church Hall.

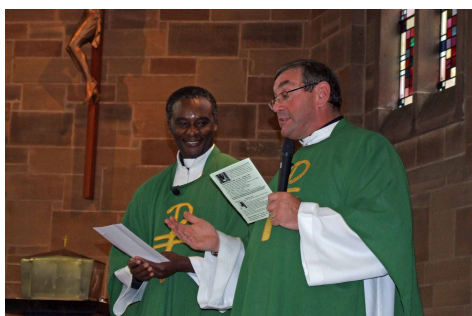
Pilgrimages were undertaken to Lourdes in August and to Knock in Ireland in June.

To celebrate our 50th anniversary a parish meal was shared at the Hallmark Hotel in Handforth on Sunday August 30th and was enjoyed by approximately 130 parishioners. This was after the 11 a.m. Mass where Bishop Brian celebrated.

On September 26th a Harvest Meal was shared in the newly upgraded and decorated Church Hall. The hall was filled to capacity with some 80 parishioners and a wonderful meal and social occasion was enjoyed by all present.



During the latter part of August the Church Hall was upgraded with new heaters and with the kitchen being extended and some minor structural alterations to the body of the hall. This was followed by a team of parishioners undertaking both the internal and exterior decoration.



In October the exterior of the Church together with the Presbytery was redecorated.

A weekend visit was received in October from Father Maningi, Parish Priest in our twinned parish of Uchira in Tanzania. During his visit he celebrated and preached at all three Masses. He was presented with cheques and monies

amounting to approximately £3000 being the result of various activities undertaken during the past year. During the year also the parish re-launched its web site and this has attempted to record all of the events listed above.
www.christchurchhg.co.uk

[St Chads](#) *Longen folk to goon on pilgrimages*

So wrote Geoffrey Chaucer in the 14th century, or as we say at St. Chad's: *folk do long to go on pilgrimage*. Perhaps that makes you think of the annual pilgrimage to Lourdes, especially as we have two flourishing Lourdes Youth Groups in the LPA. At St. Chad's we like to do mini-pilgrimages as well, which all helps to build up the community and strengthen friendships.

It all started in 2007 when St. Chad's SVP had a few days in Paris to visit the Church of St. Vincent de Paul where his relics are enshrined above the altar. We also went to the Convent in the Rue do Bac which is the headquarters of the Sisters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul, where, incidentally, Our Lady is said to have appeared to St. Catherine Labouré. And yes, we went up the Eiffel Tower and did a few touristy things. We mustn't let pilgrimages be too serious!

We were a little less ambitious in 2008. All we managed then was a trip to Cheadle – not our Cheadle, but the other one in Staffordshire. It is home to a magnificent gem of a church, built by the famous Victorian architect, Augustus Pugin. He and his son were responsible for many churches in the 19th century including our Cathedral in Shrewsbury.

This year we have had two pilgrimages. First of all a group went to Nevers where the body of St. Bernadette rests in its glass coffin. Nevers is only two hours by train from Paris so we were able to add some sightseeing and sampling French cuisine.

More recently we went to Lichfield. This was the biggest outing so far in terms of numbers – 43 of us including Fr. Paul and group from Christ Church. Why Lichfield? I hear you ask. Well St. Chad was the first Bishop of Lichfield, and until the Reformation, Cheadle was in that diocese. There is nothing left of Chad's cathedral or his shrine, but it was nevertheless a pilgrimage to our roots. The clergy and staff of the Cathedral made us extremely welcome when we joined them for Choral Evensong.

Where next? We are thinking of Chester. Would you like to come?

Fr. John

[St Ann's](#)

As with our partner-parishes, St Ann's is a busy combination of community building and spiritual growth through prayer and practice; all of which leads to lots of social activities, in which our LPA colleagues are all welcome to participate.

In our social life, a recent, successful table-top sale in aid of the Little Way Group provided funds for yet another bungalow for an otherwise homeless family in India. The SVP society and the Justice and Peace group reach out to the most disadvantaged. The Lourdes Group supports our young people in prayerful and practical ways to help the diocesan pilgrims. Fund-raising events feature strongly in the very varied programme of our longest established organisation, the Catholic Women's League but, like the other initiatives there is also time just to be together and enjoy each other's company. Parish Meals and our (very) Active Retirement Group are typical of such opportunities and an invitation is always there for LPA friends to join in any of the activities, be it going on walks, playing bridge, creative writing classes, visiting theatres and concerts, learning basic IT skills or Yoga classes.

On January 15th the parish will celebrate the creative and artistic talents of our parishioners and the pupils and students in our schools and colleges in an exhibition of paintings, sculptures and performing arts. Please come and share it with us.

Of our spiritual life, however, perhaps the most distinctive feature of our parish is the practice of Perpetual Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. Started many years ago by Fr. Bob Abbott, a rota of watchers continues his wish of constant prayer which starts at the end of the 10.00 a.m. Mass until 7.30p.m. each weekday during the school year. The church is always open and there is always at least one parishioner there "watching and praying".

As Advent arrives, any LPA member looking to find an hour of peaceful recollection and respite in the midst of the pre-Christmas frenzy will find it at St. Ann's. Please join us.

Fr. Chris