

COR Newsletter – 15 April 2008

Dear all,

Last Sunday

We had the pleasure of welcoming a group of people from the charity "children in distress" to our worship which pushed our already good congregation into the 70+ range. and a Sunday school of 13 children. We ran out of hymnbooks again of course, but I'd rather have that problem than having no-one to sing from them. The singing this morning was brilliant by the way - very uplifting. John Barker, our reader was having a well earned break in the mountains - see item below - but will be back next week.

Next Sunday

Holy Communion at 10am as usual. Claire and I will be with our sister congregation **in Sofia** but more importantly for parents, Frans, our **Sunday school teacher** has let me know that he is on holiday for the next two Sundays. I have spoken to John and we will at least offer **crèche facilities** in the kitchen area while Frans is away. There will be play dough, things to colour and Duplo (what do you mean - that sounds more exciting than the service!). Children only I'm afraid, accompanied by a parent. Our popular **Sunday school** will be back in action at the 4th May service.

Last Wednesday

Our new Church council had its first meeting. Here is the full list of members. HMA Robin Barnett (ex officio), Nancy Rice (ex-officio), me, John Barker, our new treasurer Christian Dickson (ex-officio), Lillah Houghton and Nicholas Hammond - our church wardens, Andrew Littauer, Dieter Stanzeleit, Alison Mutler, Frans van der Ent, Irvin Dyer, Mark Percival, Andrew Pearce, Sarah Wilmslow and Johanna Soper.

Advance warning!

On the first Sunday of the month we hold our popular produce sale of course and so there are usually more people in church than anyway.. Well this next first Sunday, the **4th May** we are also going to be joined by **30 American Episcopalians** led by Fr. Nicholas Porter on pilgrimage to Romania. So we will be full to bursting. Everyone please note - we will need a lot **more produce** to sell - home cooked or home produced please - and some more help serving coffee after the service. Thank you.

The Great British Garden Party

This next great fundraising event will be held on the **27th June** as you already know. For those who are new and want to gain a flavour of this event you can click on our website <http://www.churchoftheresurrection.eu> and click on the "picture gallery". Jo has put the pictures in a **brand new format** which I think is great. You click on the picture, it comes into the foreground, and everything else fades into the background - brilliant! Jo would appreciate people **trying it**, to make sure it works on all our different formats. This is vital because as you know, in March we had over 700 separate hits from over 500 different computers - so we can't afford to have something that doesn't work. While on the website also check out John's e3xcellent Blog on button "COR Blog". There are some fantastic pictures of his past weekend including mud volcanoes, monasteries, vineyards, and information on the pension he stayed it if

you fancy it. A timely reminder of what a beautiful country we live in - Romania is not just Bucharest!!

Looking for an Apartment

As announced on Sunday Mark Percival, church council member and stalwart of this church is looking for a new apartment to rent. He is willing to pay 500 Euros a month and can provide six months rent in advance. If you have anywhere or know anywhere suitable either let Mark know directly on Sundays or contact him via myself by email or phone and I'll pass the information on or put you in touch directly.

Chaplaincy car

As you know, CMS (Ireland) were keen to have their grant to us be used to buy a chaplaincy car - one large enough to comfortably transport me to Sofia and give me the flexibility to open up new areas in Bulgaria. Well a suitable car has been identified and the legalities are being processed and the good news is that I will be using it to drive to Sofia for the first time this weekend. It is a Skoda Octavia 1.9 Diesel.

This does mean of course that my present car - a four year old Dacia Solenza, 89000 km is for sale. I want to sell this quickly so am very flexible on price. I think this would make an excellent second car - ideal for Bucharest. It always starts first time and is a good runner. Being a Dacia - parts are cheap and easily available. Make me an offer!!

Thought for the day

What does success look like when applied to Christianity and churches?

By worldly criteria, a full church should be the mark of a successful church on its own. In which case, just recently we could be justified in calling our church successful. Another way of measuring success would be in financial sustainability.

While we still have a way to go we are more successful now than in the past.

But consider how Jesus would want to measure the success or otherwise of our church. What criteria would He use?

Numbers of people and financial sustainability are good things but I venture to say that he would use a slightly different yardstick. He would want to know if the barriers between rich and poor, Romanian and ex-pat, black and white, men and women, high and low church, various cliques, modernists and traditionalists - everything that seeks to divide us had been broken down to be replaced by a *common identity* as a child of God - that we are "One body".

He would want to know if you are at peace with yourself, others and God. He would want to know if the love we have, genuinely spills over from our private and corporate lives in how we love, help and support others. He would want to know if the fruit of the Spirit - love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self control are growing in your life and the corporate life of the church.

These are the criteria that Jesus would use to judge whether we are successful or not. We have to have the people of course, we have to have the money too, but *the point* - the consequence - of both of them is that the good news of Jesus lives in each and every one of us and bears fruit in our lives. If that is Jesus' criteria of success we should add them to our own list as well. Prayer and corporate worship in word and sacrament are the bedrocks of how we nurture the Spirit of God to grow in our lives. One of my training vicars used to say that we are not called to be successful,

just faithful. From my understanding of the Bible I think that is incomplete. The whole tenor of the Bible from the Hebrew scriptures to the New Testament is that God's word must *bear fruit* in the lives of His children. We need to grow together to be not just hearers of the word but doers of the word. When that happens in a church, and I believe *that is* happening in our church - *that* is success!

The Prayer for Today is a post communion prayer for the peace of the world

*God our Father
your Son is our peace
and his cross the sign of reconciliation:
help us, who share the broken bread,
to bring together what is scattered
and to bind up what is wounded,
that Christ may bring in the everlasting kingdom of his peace;
who is alive and reigns, now and forever.
Amen.*

Love and peace

Martin