

staff and parents were celebrating with banners, balloons and lollies. This afternoon we had a Celebration Service in the church which was really well supported by friends, family and members of the church community.



The whole campaign has been a fantastic team effort and I would like to take this opportunity to say a big THANK YOU to everyone who has supported us over the last 3 months. Particular mention should go to Mrs Sarah Hudson, Chairman of the Governors, who has been both energetic and dignified in her campaign. Mr. John Simmonds (Kent Cabinet Member for Education) specifically commented on the positive nature of our campaign and in the end this won the day.

Congratulations to everyone – long may this special little school last!

Alison

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Note: The KCC proposal and the Governing Body’s response to it can be accessed via a link from the school website at

www.st-lawrence-sevenoaks.kent.sch.uk

Ed

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Catholics In Las Vegas

This may come as a surprise to those of you not living in Las Vegas, but there are more Catholic churches there than casinos. Not surprisingly, some worshippers at Sunday services will give casino chips rather than cash when the basket is passed.

Since they get chips from so many different casinos, the churches have devised a method to collect the offerings. The churches send all their collected chips to a nearby Franciscan Monastery for sorting and then the chips are taken to the casinos of origin and cashed in. This is done by the chip monks!!!

From the Vicar

For many of us, August is a month when we think about holidays – either the one we have had (OK, I shall be company with those back at base, working, while others jet off), or savouring the one major extended family event of the year. So here are some of my holiday thoughts:-

Can I begin by suggesting a holiday has much to do with “www”? Firstly, it ought to be freedom from the tyranny of Work and always-on-line-communications (epitomised for some by the World-Wide-Web). No e-mails, no business, not even any thought of it. A holiday should be a time of difference. There is almost nothing routine that is so important that it must be with you for a week or a fortnight.

More positively, a holiday should be about three other “W”s:-

Worship: What are you going to do about worship of God while you are away? The word holiday comes from “holy-day”, which is inextricably linked with God and his designs. So please look out a local church, if one exists – but then do check the door carefully and don’t make the mistake we did of looking at an out-of-date noticeboard! Grrrrr! (Must check our own notice-boards!). If there’s no church, take a pocket Bible and read something new. Above all, worship God in the natural surroundings you will enjoy.

What are you going to do/be during your holiday? (For us it was another “W”, Walking – lots of it.) For a holiday is about recreation, or re-creation if you prefer. Part of that is getting plenty of sleep, and generally recharging exhausted limbs and mind – but that won’t be complete with just eating, drinking, lazing and sunning. Is there somewhere new to be visited? - maybe a fabulous museum? We remember years ago visiting the “Oetzzi” museum in Bolzano with its amazing display of that preserved over 5,000 year old man – and all that they discovered about his life-style.

And lastly, have a Wonderful time – in all senses of the word. Time to wonder at those on holiday with you (sitting in a café watching the world go about its business, or time to wonder at and with your companions). Time perhaps to wonder at who *you* are – and where you are going! (On my last holiday I started to read Bill Bryson’s “A Short History of Nearly Everything” – a slow read, because there’s a lot in it – but the book begins with a thought of what a miracle You are – how all those umpteen billions of atoms just happened to be together at the right time, place – otherwise you wouldn’t be you.

Happy holiday – or at least thanks for a past one, or dreaming of the future one.

With all blessings,

Michael

Fear Factor (or The Vicar Wore Trainers)

I don't watch the TV series but on Thursday 15 June, I could have been a candidate. Michael issued an open invitation at the Sunday service to a short ceremony to bless the new stone cross that was being positioned on one end of the chancel roof. I assumed that Michael would shimmy up the scaffolding while the rest of us supported from below.

Attired in summer cottons and insubstantial, leather-soled sandals, I didn't expect to be invited up to the top of the scaffolding, with the intrepid few, to witness, at close range, the baptism of this cross. I don't have a fear of heights, but my knees wobble slightly and I get a little light-headed when my feet aren't planted firmly on the ground. And ladders aren't my favourite mode of transport.

However, if Wayne Rooney is ready to kick for England again after his injury, surely I could support my weight on my healed metatarsal for my trip to the heavens.

I donned a hard hat and climbed to the first level, following in the confident footsteps of Michael in trainers and Elspeth and Tony, both in sensible footwear. Gretel and Rosemary elected to watch from terra firma.

Taking a deep breath, I slowly ascended the second, longer and steeper ladder to the level of the top of the roof. The platform was small, but there was enough space for us to stand while Michael blessed the new cross and I said a short prayer (silently) for our safe descent.

My prayer was answered. And I can tell my children that I have rested my hand flat on the top of the new cross. It will seem more impressive when the scaffolding comes down and I can see exactly how high we stood on that beautiful June afternoon.

Alison Glennie

Recycle your Printer and Toner Cartridges

Through Christian Aid's Recycling appeal, your used printer cartridges could give children in the Dominican Republic an education free from prejudice.



Relations between Haitian immigrants and the population of the Dominican Republic are increasingly fraught and sometimes violent.

But the 'Little School' with funding from Christian Aid, is helping children from both countries to overcome the discrimination that exists in their

warmth, compassion, and a wish to help others. Jill's circle of friends and family near and far will have many rich memories to call on: we have all lost a very special person.

D.G.R.

News from our School - 1

"Hip, hip, hooray! Our school will stay" read the banner outside the school at the news that St Lawrence School is, after all, *NOT* to be closed! A brilliant and great result – though it will have been a close and difficult decision. So, well done everyone who helped convince Kent County Council that outstanding schools such as ours should not be the ones to be closed - if some indeed have to be closed - and that the school is sustainable for the foreseeable future. In particular we are so grateful to our MP Michael Fallon, and our District Councillor Nick Chard for their forthright support- but equally the school wants to thank everyone who contributed to the very honourably conducted campaign by writing their individual and heartfelt letters. We are told that over 460 such letters were received by the Area Education Office, who will now know that there is indeed a St Lawrence Community.

I have been asked if, in the end some good came out of the consultation – "Yes, our school's achievements are now far better well known – but on balance the consultation has not been good: – it has cost the school, and particularly our Headteacher Alison and Chairman of Governors Sarah, dearly in terms of many, many concerned and late nights of working." And of course the building of the extension to the shelter (the school plans a proper-sized hall) has had to be postponed beyond the natural summer holiday window of opportunity.

As I write, our hearts also go out to other schools for whom the news has not been so happy. But let that not detract from our local thanksgiving - the school has just held its celebratory service in church. Thank you, one and all!

Michael Vice-Chairman of Governors

News from our School - 2

Anyone passing the school today should be in no doubt about the fact that we are celebrating something! A slightly closer investigation would reveal the reason for the celebration – confirmation from KCC that they do not plan to close us!!

I received confirmation of this news late yesterday and today the children,

Jill Mary Weston - died 27 May 2006

Jill died so suddenly and unexpectedly a few weeks ago that it is still unbelievable that she won't be hurrying down the lane on her busy activities, calling at the door with the Parish Magazine, or reminding us all of the next vital meeting we should be attending. Jill was involved in so many aspects of neighbourhood and community life and was widely known, loved and respected by all whose lives she touched.

As a dear friend and neighbour of 45 or so years, a host of memories come flooding back. The Weston family arrived in a flurry of action and activity and a lively quartet of red-haired, auburn-haired, or blond-haired children. As for Jill's hair, it hung in a thick long corn-gold plait down her back - except for formal occasions when it was piled amazingly on the crown of her head, until one shattering morning when she came round to display her new short shingle! Her wonderful hair remains unforgettable, but a "bob" was time-saving in her busy life, with four young children at school, a horse, dogs, a husband away much of the time in Nauru, and an elderly mother whose life Jill made possible firstly at Brasted and then at Rockdale (where Jill served on the committee) with daily visits bearing homemade meals-on-wheels. And later, she became an Open University Tutor for some years, a time both she and her pupils greatly enjoyed. She always spent much time and energy on her great joy, her garden, which became a lovely testimonial to her artistic nature

Jill's faith was central to her life, enshrined in the words of the St James' Bible and the Book of Common Prayer, and also in the Taizé services of meditation and chanting, but she said that modern translations failed to nourish her soul. She was a great seeker after truth. She was a great admirer of another such seeker, Karen Armstrong, whose books were always at hand and gave Jill much food for thought. Jill's faith was reflected in her concern for others: for her husband Q and family, for her neighbours, and for all creatures great and small. One night, awakened by piteous bleatings, she donned dressing gown and gumboots and rescued a lamb entangled in a field below. On every summer evening she would manually remove the slugs which devoured her precious vegetables rather than poison them with slugbait - but history is vague as to the slugs' next feeding ground. The welfare of her immediate neighbours was a constant concern, for whom she would drive, shop, listen to their problems, and give unstinting support and comfort. Her "causes" were vital to her, from Amnesty, Animal Welfare, the Church Fetes, Compassion in World Farming, her local community, the inviolability of the Green Belt, Neighbourhood Watch, the Village Hall, and much else, all inspired by

communities. 'At this school there is education without prejudice,' says Milagros Capellan, head teacher of the 'Little School' in the town of Los Platanitos in the Dominican republic.

'The relationship between the Haitians and Dominicans has improved,' she says. 'But there is still much to do!'

Christian Aid receives £1 for each reusable cartridge, which could pay for two exercise books for children at the Little School.

So please don't throw away your empty cartridges. (Inkjet cartridges that work in Hewlett Packard, Dell, Lex or Canon printers can be accepted, but unfortunately Epson cartridges cannot be recycled.) There is a box at the back of St Lawrence's for both inkjet and laser toner cartridges. Thank you.

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From the Registers at St Lawrence's

9 July Holy Baptism of Elsie Olea Southern, infant daughter of Richard and Yvette. We wish Elsie every blessing in her new life in Christ



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Some Prayer Topics for this month

- Those who will be **on holiday** for part of the month – may they return safe and refreshed.
- **The builders** as they complete the major restoration work on our chancel and vestry

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Update on Restoration of the Chancel

At the time of writing (mid-July), our contracted builders are waiting for delivery of the re-made dormer windows for the chancel. (We understand that there has had to be a switch to a different subcontracted joinery company because their original choice had indicated an even greater delay.) Otherwise, the woodwork for the chancel roof is complete – as is that for the vestry roof. Trial cleaning of the chancel walls has also been undertaken –the full cleaning cannot, obviously, begin until the roof is fully complete. *Michael*

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Stranger in the House

A few months before I was born, my Dad met a stranger who was new to our small Tennessee town. From the beginning, Dad was fascinated with this enchanting newcomer and soon invited him to live with our family. The stranger was quickly accepted and was around to welcome me into the world a few months later.

As I grew up, I never questioned his place in my family. In my young mind, he had a special niche. My parents were complementary instructors: Mom taught me the word of God, and Dad taught me to obey it. But the stranger He was our storyteller. He would keep us spellbound for hours on end with adventures, mysteries and comedies.

If I wanted to know anything about politics, history or science, he always knew the answers about the past, understood the present and even seemed able to predict the future! He took my family to the first major league ball game. He made me laugh, and he made me cry. The stranger never stopped talking, but Dad didn't seem to mind. Sometimes, Mom would get up quietly while the rest of us were shushing each other to listen to what he had to say, and she would go to her room and read her books (I wonder now if she ever prayed for the stranger to leave.) Dad ruled our household with certain moral convictions, but the stranger never felt obligated to honour them. Profanity, for example, as not allowed in our home . . . not from us, our friends or any visitors. Our longtime visitor, however, got away with four-letter words that burned my ears and made my dad squirm and my mother blush. My Dad was a teetotaler who didn't permit alcohol in the home, not even for cooking. But the stranger encouraged us to try it on a regular basis. He made cigarettes look cool, cigars manly and pipes distinguished. He talked freely (much too freely!) about sex. His comments were sometimes blatant, sometimes suggestive, and generally embarrassing.

I now know that my early concepts about relationships were influenced strongly by the stranger. Time after time, he opposed the values of my parents, yet he was seldom rebuked . . . and NEVER asked to leave.

More than fifty years have passed since the stranger moved in with our family. He has blended right in and is not nearly as fascinating as he was at first. Still, if you were to walk into my parent's den today, you would still find him sitting over in his corner, waiting for someone to listen to him talk and watch him draw his pictures.

His name? . . . We just called him, "TV." He now has a younger sister. Her name is "Computer."

Contributed

Mobile Etiquette

Recent research by a major mobile phone company into mobile etiquette reveals that over 60% of British workers consider themselves victims of colleagues' bad mobile phone habits. Come on people! Show some restraint! Well, if you are guilty of upsetting your co-workers with loud personal conversations in the office or odious ring tones, here are the tablets brought by that phone company down from Mount Sinai:

- 1) Thou shalt ensure thy mobile phone is off or on silent mode during meetings.
- 2) Thou shalt not answer calls or send texts or emails unless it is strictly necessary.
- 3) Thou shalt turn on thy 'Out of Office' to alert those e-mailing thee that thou wilt be in a meeting and unable to respond immediately.
- 4) Thou shalt let the participants know at the outset if thou art expecting an essential call during a meeting. When thou receivest the call, discreetly excuse thyself from the room.
- 5) Thou shalt leave thy laptop closed during meetings.
- 6) Thou shalt never stop in the middle of a conversation to answer thy mobile.
- 7) Thou shalt make thy ring tone distinctive, but not annoying.
- 8) Thou shalt lock thy keypad to avoid accidentally making calls.
- 9) Thou shalt change thy phone setting so that the keys don't bleep when thou art texting.
- 10) Thou shalt not leave thy mobile device on the table in vibrate mode.

We acknowledge our thanks to a recent in-flight magazine, one of whose articles we have adapted for parish purposes.

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Good News?

A large two-engine train was crossing the country. After it had gone some distance, one of the engines broke down. "No problem," the engineer thought and carried on at half power. Further down the line the second engine came to a standstill. The engineer announced to the passengers: "Ladies and gentlemen, some good news and some bad news. The bad news is that both engines have failed and we shall be stuck for some time. The good news is that you decided to take the train today, and not fly."

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