

***Parish Magazine of  
St Giles' &  
St Margaret's, Oxford***



***Theme: Being an Anglican***

***February 2008***

***Free***

## The United Benefice of St Giles and SS Philip & James with St Margaret

<http://www.st-giles-church.org>

<http://www.parishes.oxford.anglican.org/oxford-stmargaret/>

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The parish magazine aims to provide an opportunity for us to exchange ideas and to share our experience of the Christian life. Publication date is noted below. Please send the editor articles, drawings, book reviews, or parish news. The editor is especially grateful for material which has no particular sell-by date and for copy sent by email attachment.

*Recommended length of articles:* invited articles max 1,100 words (3 pages); all other contributions max 700 words (2 pages).

***Deadline for submissions for March issue:***  
***Wednesday, 27 February, 5pm (for distribution Sunday, 2 March).***

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give myself the choice of travelling by plane I am effectively doing this. If I believe in justice, I need to stop now, and inspire others to do so too. And when I struggle with the “why me – everyone else is still doing it so why can’t I?” the Bible is full of much greater sufferings carried out for the greater good. I’m not great on suffering and sacrifice, but I do find help in the experience of prayer. It really does seem to help, even though, just like getting on a train, there is no tangible link between the act of prayer and things changing.

I do believe things change if we really want them to. I want to be part of the generation that turns round climate change, that starts to undo the injustices of the last fifty years and the damage already embedded in our climate system. There is so much work to do to achieve this – but stopping flying is a step that we can all take. I want our children to have real reason to be proud of us, rather than suffering the effects of our neglect. The first step starts here.

To find out more from two members of our benefice:

- *“How to live a low-carbon life”* Chris Goodall, Earthscan
- *“All creation groaning: a theological approach to climate change”*  
Paula Clifford, Christian Aid

## ***Both our Hearts***

*By Kai Brodersen*

“Abendmahlsgemeinschaft” is one of those compound words which English readers will find typically German. “Abendmahl” is the Holy Communion, and “Gemeinschaft” is Community, so the word means “communion-community” and refers to the fact that both the Protestant (Lutheran) church we belong to, and serve in the PCC, at home in Germany, and the Anglican church we belong to in the UK, share the Holy Communion with each other. After all, both originate, in the reformations’ conviction that - as article 19 of the 39 article in the Book of Common Prayer so succinctly puts it - *“the Church of Jerusalem,*

*Alexandria, and Antioch, have erred; so also the Church of Rome hath erred, not only in their living and manner of Ceremonies, but also in matters of Faith”.*

So how does the Anglican church relate to a German Protestant and his family coming the Britain and enjoying “Abendmahlsgemeinschaft” over the years in the Chapel of St John’s College Oxford (1979/80, 1983/84, and again now), Newcastle Cathedral (2000/01), Saint Andrews St Andrews (2001/02 - a Scottish Episcopal church recommended by a friend as providing the least dramatic ‘culture shock’ for a continental Protestant), Royal Holloway Chapel (2006/07), and now in St Giles? Given so many years in Britain, and given the “Abendmahlsgemeinschaft” and the shared “matters of Faith” (which were formally acknowledged between the churches in the Meissen Declaration of 1991), it is increasingly difficult for me to take an “outside” perspective. But it is fair to say that for us what makes Anglicanism most special is, indeed, in the manner of Ceremonies.

Ringling the changes is a unique way to call the faithful to the services, and as we can hear the St Giles bells from the house we live in, we are privileged to hear them frequently! There are church bells in our home church, but they do the “Geläut” type of ‘chaotic’ ringing, powered by a motor, St John’s has a single small bell, and our Scottish church had no bells at all. *So thank you, bellringers, for your beautiful invitation to the Services to St Giles!*

Singing in the choir has been a constant feature of the Ceremonies for me, and now for Rufus, our youngest son. There is no tradition of singing (as opposed to speaking) the Psalms, the Mag and the Nunc and other Canticles, and the Responses in our German church; the church choir will rehearse weekly, but enhance only a handful of services over the year, with often rather long pieces, or parts of a Bach cantata. In St John’s and St Giles, however, the choir is active every week, and the singing constitutes a substantial part of the liturgy. The choir also constitutes more often than not a substantial part of the congregation. It

is sometimes said that “the choir outnumbers the faithful”, but in fact, of course, the choir is very much part of the faithful; we pray together before and after the actual service, we share in the worship, and we will have heard, over the years, a large number readings, and sermons, and taken regular communion. Singing in St Giles is a special pleasure, as Cynthia Hall succeeds in encouraging the “boys and gents” to achieve an impressive standard, and to making us very much feel a part of the St Giles church community.

Praying the confession and the collects during Evensong, finally, has been a very special joy for us ever since we first came to the UK. It immediately puts us in an ancient tradition when we compare our movements to those of “lost sheep”, and ask the Lord to “defend us from all perils and dangers of this night”. And it always rings true when we state in every single evensong that “we have left undone those things which we ought to have done, and we have done those things which we ought not to have done, and there is no health in us”, the “miserable offenders”. Should I ever suffer from losing my memory, I would like the text of the second collect to be read to me. It took me (and still takes some readers or singers) some time to work out the English, as it does, contrary to what you read or hear, not refer to “both our hearts” - though this is somehow close to what we feel as both continental Protestants, and ‘honorary’ Anglicans! In fact, is a rather Latin-esque, and beautiful, cascade of parts embedded into each other (consisting of “both ... and also”, “by thee we ... may pass”, and “being defended”). By now, this collect must be deeply embedded in the most stable parts of my brain - so please read it to me, should the time come:

“O God, from whom all holy desires, all good counsels, and all just works do proceed; give unto thy servants that peace which the world cannot give; that both our hearts may be set to obey thy commandments, and also that by thee, we being defended from the fear of our enemies may pass our time in rest and quietness; through the merits of Jesus Christ our Saviour. *Amen.*”