



Ramseys and Upwood Churches

Children and Families Termly Newsletter



Spring 2023

Welcome to my second newsletter, as a roundup of all that took place in the Spring term regarding children and families within the benefice of Ramsey, Ramsey St Mary's and Upwood.

Services leading to Easter

What a busy yet wonderful build-up we had during Holy Week in services across the different churches in Ramsey. We were taken through the whole range of emotions leading to the joy of Easter Sunday. Here are a few of the events:

On Palm Sunday, we had a visit from the Bishop and Barry the donkey, taking us on a procession through the Abbey gates towards church. Barry even tried to make his way into church!

On Maunday Thursday, candles were lit, church-goers feet were washed and the altar was stripped.

On Good Friday, we took a walk of witness across Ramsey. We then held an outdoor service, where the cross was dressed with symbols from the events of Good Friday. These were then replaced by beautiful bunches of spring flowers brought along by the congregation.

On Easter Saturday, there was an Easter egg hunt at St Mary's church, which told the Easter story with clues and a prize at the end. There was also an Easter garden service at St Peter's church, where the congregation took part in building up the Easter story.

On Easter morning, we held a 5am vigil at end of Ramsey Rural Museum. We watched the sun come up, listened to readings from the Old Testament, used our senses to build up a picture of the Easter message and shared in a breakfast to warm us up at the end. We also had three Easter services across the benefice to celebrate the joy of Jesus being risen.



Fen Church

We have now taken part in three Fen Church sessions and they have been a wonderful way of getting close to God in His creation. We held one in March where we meditated on seeds and planted them. We also made our own seed bombs. We hope that these will promote more wild flowers and, in turn, more local wildlife.

Our next Fen Church is planned for Sunday 11th June at 3pm, where we are hoping to fly kites! Look out for posters in the church porch, in the Bulletin and on our United Benefice of Ramseys and Upwood facebook page.



Pancake party

We had a great deal of fun when we organised a Pancake Party in St Thomas a Becket on Shrove Tuesday. It was wonderful to open the doors of church to almost 30 children. We played games, designed our own pancakes and ate pancakes with a vast choice of toppings! Everyone left with big smiles and a bit more knowledge about the meaning behind Shrove Tuesday. 😊



Easter Cracked

It was a delight to spend time in a couple of our local schools, acting out the Easter story, making Easter gardens and enjoying the fun of Easter egg hunts. I love the fact that the children are starting to know who I am and we are seeing more of them come to other activities in church. We are also definitely



seeing more children and families in church services, which is wonderful!



Easter holiday club

Thanks to an amazingly committed and enthusiastic team of volunteers, we ran our first Holiday Club during the Easter holiday. Thirty children signed up and we had such fun learning about:

- Who Jesus is;
- What he did and said;
- What happened to him.

The holiday club was hugely successful – we had lots of positive feedback from parents and the children (and adults) left smiling each morning.

We are now inspired to hold a Holiday Club in the Summer holidays. Watch out for more information next half term. 😊



Other work in schools

It has been a real privilege to spend time in the local primary schools this term. In one school, Rev Iain and I went to talk to key-stage-two about being a Christian. The children had such thought-provoking questions for us and they listened really attentively to what we had to say.

The Open the Book team are continuing to do a wonderful job of bringing the Bible to the children in all the benefice primary schools with their brilliant acting and storytelling. Their monthly visits are great to watch or be a part of and the children have listened so well. Well done OtB team! 😊

Toddler Time

Toddler Time continues to be a hugely successful way to engage with pre-school children and their parents. The team who run the Monday morning club (9.30–10.30), are so creative and the children (and adults) have so much fun. What a blessing to have such an amazing team! 😊

Welcoming children at all church services

It has been a delight to see new families coming to church services. We have also had lots of Baptism celebrations, which has been such a joy. For each service, there is always an activity for children, and adults, to do during the service. These often link with the sermon, or the readings and can be done in the children's area or can be taken back to the pews.

If you bring children to church, please do not feel that your child has to sit silently during services. This is not realistic and is not how children learn. We want our families to feel welcome and we love to hear the hubbub of children. Jesus put children at the centre and so do we at St Thomas, St Peter's and St Mary's.

Looking ahead to the Summer term, we are looking forward to providing pastoral and RE curriculum support at Abbey College. We are also looking to invite Year-6 pupils in the Benefice to church to support them in their preparation for secondary school. We are planning to run a Summer holiday club. Finally, we are starting an after-school club in the Scout Hut in Ramsey on Mondays, 4–5pm. We are really looking forward to welcoming new children to this.

Warmest wishes from Hayley 😊

Hayley@ramseysandupwood.org 07828057050