

**Letter from the Vicar - May 2010**  
**View from the Vicarage**

**PENTECOST ALL TOGETHER**  
**(Compatibility Mode)**

One thing all of our politicians seem to agree on is that our society is losing its sense of social cohesion — or to put it in plain English; our Communities are dying. Blame for this condition is given to many different sources and social changes, but whatever the cause it is true to say that our Communities are struggling. People no longer make friends, on the whole, in their villages and towns but at the gym, or at work, or on-line, or among people with similar interests. We are often described as a 'Network society'.

This isn't true to the same degree in our villages here — I am constantly bowled over by the enthusiasm our villages have to be together and to do things together. I find myself moved by the care and concern shown for neighbours and friends and the way that these village communities gather together around the sick, the bereaved and all those in need.

The Church is called to be community too — the reason I applied for the job of Vicar to this place was, initially, because of the name — we are a Mission Community. A group of Parishes united in proclaiming our faith, and sharing in the Mission of God, seeking to be Christ's body in this part of East Devon.

May sees the greatest celebration of what it means to be Church community — the Feast of Pentecost, or Whitsun as it is traditionally known. This is the Birthday of the Church, the celebration of the first day that we see people being added en masse to the people of God through the proclamation of the Gospel, the Good News of Jesus Christ.

If we look at the account of that first Pentecost in Acts Chapter two we see the phrase 'when they were all together in one place.' It was the unity of the disciples that brought about that special touch of God's Holy Spirit which 'kick started' the life and ministry of the Church. Despite the diversity of the crowd, God spoke to them all in a way they understood and three thousand were added to the Church that day.

This is why we will meet as a Mission Community on the festival of Pentecost, and why it will be a celebration and Morning Worship service. I believe that we need to be 'all together in one place' and hope that this service will be a place of celebration and of love — I also believe that we should invite those who are perhaps less involved in our Churches to share in our celebrations on that day — having communion does, by default, exclude a good number of people from our villages. We will celebrate Holy Communion on that day, but it will be at 8.30 am and all those who wish to receive bread and wine on that Sunday are invited to come and share in that service. But for the rest of us can I encourage you to follow the early Church, make that journey, arrange a lift (or offer one) so that we can gather together and celebrate our unity in Christ Jesus and we can ask again for God's Holy Spirit to Inspire, Conspire and enflame that we might be one in Christ and share His life with the world.

**Alastair**