

each other and the Christmas story shows God moving his people from fear to joy and trust. Do not be afraid says the angel.

Do not be afraid says God to you tonight. Yes he understands and affirms your fears but he wants to lift them from you and from all people. He wants to lift fear from the people of Fallujah and the people of Darfur and Palestine, and the people of Tel Aviv who face suicide bombers. He wants to lift the fear from those people who have nothing left and face only death, and he calls on the powerful in the world to co-operate with him; to put your arms around the world this Christmastime.

He wants to lift our fears too. Where they are irrational he says face them and see them for what they are; to those who are frightened of death he says that this baby whose birth we celebrate today grew up to experience and to conquer death for you, he has been there and waits to embrace you after it all. Where our fears result from our own sin he says 'face them, confess them and receive my forgiveness;' where they arise from the words or actions of other people he says 'God is with you, be strong in yourself and in the knowledge of my love for you.'

And as a sign of his desire to remove our fear he comes to us today in the most unthreatening of forms. How can you be frightened of this baby?

Take a moment to look at the fear of the world. Call to mind the Fallujahs and the Darfurs; call to mind the dying and the lost; call to mind those elemental fears which lurk deep inside you, face them and then lay them aside. Rest in him tonight and allow him to lift them from you. Do not be afraid, I bring you good news, your prayer has been heard, God is gracious to you.

*Michael Camp*

## **The Driscoll-Sandford Fund**

The Sandford Bursary was set up in 1976 in memory of Lily Sandford to enable young Christians to 'extend and share their experience of Christian life in the fellowship and service of others.' The "Driscoll Easter Youth Award" was set up in 1987 "to encourage inspiration and offer support to young dedicated Christians furthering their experience in a progressive environment or manner".

Since these two funds were set up a number of young members of our congregation have benefited from small grants which have helped with trips abroad for missionary or educational endeavours in the context of the Church. Most recently Rachel Camp received a contribution to the cost of her part in the Diocesan trip to the USA and you'll probably recall her talk about the trip when she returned.

Now the PCC has amalgamated the two funds into the new "Driscoll-Sandford Fund" with the Vicar and Churchwardens as trustees. The purpose of the Fund is to give financial support to young members of the congregation who plan, or plan to take part in a mission or educational project beyond the Parish, in a way which will broaden their experience and nurture their faith.

The new fund's first two grants have been made to Matthew Newman who is doing a gap year project working with the Delhi Brotherhood looking after street children in India; and Simon Camp who will be going on a school trip to Kenya during which they will be helping to build a village school.

All young members of our congregation are entitled to help from the Driscoll-Sandford Fund. Anyone who wants to apply for a grant should do so by writing a letter to the Vicar and Churchwardens explaining what they're going to do and how much its going to cost.