

## **Remembering the Church's story as a New Year begins**

The story of the Church over the past 2,000 years is as complex and exciting as the Old Testament stories. People learn about God, turn away from God, and come back to God. There are mysteries, wars, divisions, heroes and heroines, romance, horror and drama. Theologians write millions of words to explain scripture.

It is a story that takes us from Pentecost and the age of Apostles through the Church fathers such as St Ignatius, the Creeds and all the debates around them, right up to the time of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Billy Graham and Mother Teresa. St Augustine of Hippo is part of it; so are Thomas Aquinas, Luther and Calvin, Michelangelo and John Milton.

So also are the crusades, the Inquisition, the Reformation, the division between Eastern and Western churches, and the translation of the Bible into 1,900 languages. Humanity evolves, Christianity evolves. For Church history is a story in itself, telling the tale of humanity's path towards God and all stumblings and wrong turnings taken along the way. Each century could be a chapter where we meet different characters and hear how they moved the story along.

It is a story without an ending, only a number of beginnings. It mirrors the development of human spirituality. Throughout, the written words of scripture, of hymns and liturgy emerge, as do church rules, guidance, beliefs and promises, and the spoken words of prayer, preaching and the Eucharist.

Once upon a time: over the past months we have explored ways in which story captures our imagination and nurtures our faith. And we ourselves are an ongoing part of that story of God's love for the world, shown to us in Jesus the Christ. In following him as disciples, we continue to live that story today.

*by Elizabeth Goodridge and Ian Hearsley*

**Do not squander time, for it is the stuff of which life is made.**

Benjamin Franklin

## **Youth Council meets**

The Church of England Youth Council has held its first meeting. The weekend event was attended by members from across the country who discussed a range of subjects. Members received a welcoming message from the Archbishop of Canterbury. CEYC is a platform for young people in the Church of England. More information at <http://www.ceyc.org/>

**A church is a hospital for sinners, not a museum for saints.**

Anon