

Bromley Welcare

Bromley Welcare is a social work agency offering advice and support to families in need in the three deaneries of Bromley, Beckenham and Orpington. It is housed in our parish and so BPC has always felt a special responsibility for its welfare.

The families with whom it is concerned have difficult and varied problems for which they need support. These may include physical or mental health problems, abuse by an ex-partner, difficulties in obtaining benefit, those for whom English is not their first languages and many others. Although poverty is not usually the chief problem it is always a factor.

The staff at Welcare are well-qualified social workers with past experience of work with children and families. They do a wonderful, though often distressing job and are often able to help the parent so that the child is not taken into care. The work is entirely confidential and the Executive Committee, who are appointed by the churches to manage the organisation, does not know details of the cases.

The Executive Committee has lay and clerical representatives from all three deaneries and they appoint the Honorary Secretary and Honorary Treasurer. The Archdeacon of Bromley appoints the Chairman (I was in the chair for years until 1999). In addition there is a committee composed of representatives of all the parishes which meets regularly for up to date reports on what is happening and who initiate and help to organise fund raising.

Financially, Welcare is firstly dependant on yearly contributions from the parishes plus extra contributions from fundraising efforts. All the parishes and the deaneries contribute apart from Christ Church, Bromley. The larger contribution however comes from Bromley Council with whom Welcare has a service level agreement. Under this the council in effect purchases the services of some of Welcare's staff, because as they once told me; "It is providing a service which the council could not easily provide itself," and is therefore of great value to them. Unfortunately in recent times the council's contribution has not been sufficient as it has not kept pace with the increase in salaries paid to the Welcare staff, whose pay is linked to council employee equivalents. In addition the sizable donations by a few charities have dried up for various reasons. Thus, although for the year 2003/4 finances are expected to break even, the future is bleak.

I have referred to payments by charities, which are drying up. It is a fact that although a number of charities exist to help in this field (e.g. BBC Children in Need, The Diana Fund and others less well known) they will contribute only to new projects, they will not contribute to existing work. While I was Chairman, the BBC Children in Need charity gave us the funds set up a parenting project in Orpington, which is still going strong though the BBC funding has ceased. Other projects are organised by Welcare staff when funds permit but there is obviously little point starting bigger projects with all the added demands on staff just in order to get funds for them. The core fund is what keeps Welcare going and this is where the money is needed.

BPC readers may ask how they can help the invaluable work being done by Welcare. The first answer is by becoming a friend of Bromley Welcare. For a minimum annual subscription of £5 they receive a regular newsletter, the opportunity to attend social/fundraising events and the satisfaction of helping those who through no fault of their own have very difficult lives.

They can also organise their own fundraising efforts such as coffee mornings or sponsored activities.

To finish let me say that Bromley Welcare is a wonderful organisation of which the Anglican Church in the Diocese should be justly proud.

Vera Harvey

**Satan subtracts and divides.
God multiplies and multiplies**

Sunday School

The scripture passages for the Sundays following Pentecost allow us to experience alternating themes of God's majesty and deep significance of ordinary human life. The overall image for this season is *Circle Dance*. This image shows dancers with linked hands in the figure of eight, this in turn represents the mathematical symbol for infinity. We are invited to join the activity of the reign of God in our midst and reflect on the dancers symbolising God's infinite generosity and our desire to respond.

Throughout the season we encounter hands in a variety of ways: offering praise, reaching out to include, opening to receive, taking risks, offering healing, acting in hope, clasping in solidarity, inviting and including and joining the dance. The actions of individuals and the choices they make all point to God's activity in our midst and the stirrings of the Spirit that embolden us to live in Faith and Hope.

Seasons of the Spirit - Pentecost 1

Laughter is God's sunshine.

The Bible in fifty words

God made
Adam bit
Noah arked
Abraham split
Joseph ruled
Jacob fooled
Bush talked
Moses balked
Pharaoh plagued
People walked
Sea divided
Tablets guided
Promise landed
Saul freaked

David peaked
Prophets warned
Jesus born
God walked
Love talked
Anger crucified
Hope died
Love rose
Spirit flamed
Word spread
God remained.

Anon

