



Damon Draisey at the 'Ethos' service at St Nicholas, North End

Using senses aids worship

IT'S not what you might expect to find in church on a Sunday night.

The floor is covered with old newspapers, tin cans and crisp wrappers, and there are images projected on all four walls. Ambient music is playing as people arrive and sit quietly in the four corners of the room, next to candles, plants and carved wooden geese.

This is 'Ethos', which happens every two months at St Nicholas' Church in North End. The alternative worship experience uses all the senses to help worshippers engage with God.

This service is called 'Breathe' and tackles what we've done to God's creation. Worshippers hold out their palms to be marked with a sign of God's presence. Then they watch footage showing the devastation humankind has done to our environment.

Then they're invited to clear away the rubbish, to reveal a cross taped to the church floor. The leaders then invite worshippers to bring the symbols representing the four elements – earth, air, fire and water – to the cross to symbol-

ise our commitment to conserving God's earth. The leaders then intertwine lengths of ribbon between the worshippers to show how we are all part of a network – and that what each of us does affects the others.

The service uses words from 19th century Native American leader Chief Seattle: *"This we all know: All things are connected like the blood that unites us. We did not weave the web of life. We are merely a strand in it. Whatever we do to the web, we do to ourselves."*

The service was previewed at St Nicholas Church in July before it was taken to the Greenbelt Christian Festival at the end of August. It was only the fourth Ethos to be held, as the concept was only dreamt up at the start of 2009. The Rev Bev Robertson, team vicar, organises Ethos alongside Damon Draisey from St Nicholas, Dennis Hounsell from St Peter and St Paul, Wymering, and Leonie Warnick, from St Mary's, Fratton.

"We had a vision to give people something different from what happens on Sunday mornings," said Dennis. "We wanted it to be modern and contemporary. The first one was

more like a series of prayer stations, but we've developed it now so that you are led through it. Next year, we hope to take it to other parishes if they are interested in hosting it."

Participant Lez Ward, who doesn't usually go to church, said: "It does give a different way of looking into the spiritual side of things. The Ethos services relate to today's world, and the music and visual aids help you to marshal your thoughts on the issue."

Emily Kennar, from St Mark's, North End, said: "I enjoy it, because it's peaceful and beautiful, and I love the meditative side of things. It also connects you to God in a different way, using all your senses, and I like the use of music and words on the screens."

And Diana Clark, from St Nicholas, said: "I've been to all four, and they've been different, but beautiful in different ways. There's a lovely atmosphere, and each one has touched me. We do get some people who don't normally come to church, and I think they can feel the presence of God."

The next Ethos services will be on September 6 and November 1, both at 7.30pm. For more details, see <http://ethos-altworship.blogspot.com>.

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Hanging up my apron!

AFTER 37 years of cooking for the masses I am about to hang up my apron.

From that very first (and nearly disastrous) supper party for fellow students at theological college to the lunch for the ordinands last July, I have loved it all!

The fun has been to get the medium right – from Christmas mince pies for the choir in Guildford to plates of pasta for hungry students when Kenneth was a university chaplain. And of course there was always the challenge of the unannounced guest.

Cooking had to be raised to new heights when we moved here. Our hospitality has had to be more formal and therefore predictable. Feeding the ordinands when they have been on retreat here has been a privilege, but for obvious reasons we have not done as much enter-



taining recently.

In a rather over-zealous clear out at the beginning of the year, when we first knew we had to downsize, I threw out all my records of how many meals for invited guests I have cooked in the last 14 years, so I cannot give you an exact number. But working out a likely figure it came out at roughly 5,000!

This number conjures up

the last word

by Sarah Stevenson
the bishop's wife

another meal on a hillside in Galilee and although there has been nothing miraculous about my cooking it has all been done as part of my ministry for the gospel. I shall miss it, and you, more than I can say!

On reflection, I do not think I will really hang up my apron, I shall just cook on a smaller scale. At Bishops Grove it takes 15 paces from my cooker to the fridge, and in our retirement house it takes two. I can feel myself getting excited already. I must go and prepare for those unannounced guests.