The Green Spire

The Parish Magazine of

St Andrew, Orford with Longford

###### March 2016

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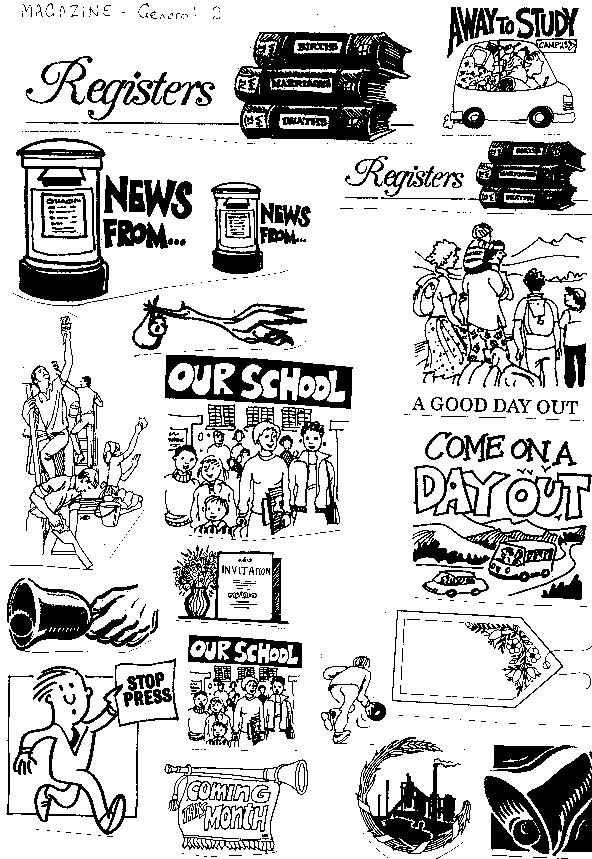
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The *Green Spire* is published monthly. Copies are 35p per month, or £3.50 for a year’s subscription – normally payable in January. Enquiries about advertisements welcome.

School News



It was a delight to see the whole school in church for Ash Wednesday. This is the first time they have joined us for the 10.30am service though they have hosted their own services in the past. This year, all the children were invited to receive ‘ash’ as part of the service. Despite the service lasting about 40 minutes, they took a full part and there was a real buzz in school when they returned. We look forward to other joint services – the next will probably be held on Ascension Day.

Our rolling programme of refurbishment took another step forward with the redecoration of several smaller teaching areas and the staff room during the half-term holiday. The aim is to completely redecorate over the next year or two. Areas that have been done, such as the Hall, look so much brighter and must be a better environment for the children and staff to work in.

Year 6 are working really hard towards their SATs exams in May. There is a sense of determination that anything is possible. This next half-term is really important. After the Easter holidays, it’s only a matter of a few weeks before they take the tests. Year 6 is not alone in working hard. Children come into school from 8.40 and they have some work waiting their arrival! They happily start the day in a calm and focused way.

We are having a big push to reduce absenteeism, even though it’s much less than in many comparable schools. The children have been asked to help and have come up with some innovative ideas. Clearly, if the children are not in school, they cannot learn.

On March 3rd, we will be taking part in World Book Day and a range of activities have been organised around one of two authors. The younger children will be looking at Julia Donaldson’s books which include *The Gruffalo*, *Monkey Puzzle* and *The Smartest Giant.* The Junior classes have chosen to work on Roald Dahl’s works such as *The Twits* and *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*. If you happen to see Charlie Bucket passing your window on the Thursday morning, don’t worry – it probably is him!

From the Vicar:

At the time of writing this letter, we are almost exactly half way through Lent. Next weekend will be the Fourth Sunday in Lent, better known as Mothering Sunday, and that is the middle Sunday of seven. It used to be known as ‘Refreshment Sunday’ to give the faithful a brief respite from the rigours of Lent!

During Lent, we have once again been walking the Way of the Cross each Friday evening. Stopping off at ‘Stations’ along the way, we have thought and prayed about the Jesus’ journey from his arrest in the garden to his crucifixion and burial.

The pattern is quite simple. We are told what happened at this point (station) and then listen to a short meditation. There is a prayer and then a verse of a hymn as we move on to the next station.

Over the years, many meditations have been written to help the pilgrim understand what is happening at that moment. Most of the meditations describe something of what Jesus experienced at that point, betrayal, loss, fear, isolation ... before those thoughts are put in the context of our own lives.

Different meditations speak to each one of us in different ways. What passes over one person’s head might have a profound impact on the next. This happened to me this week – the profound effect, that is!

We were using a set of meditations by an American Jesuit priest. At the fourth station, when Jesus meets his mother, Fr Neary begins,

“He didn't really 'meet' her - she was there; and not by chance. She wanted to be with her Son even though it would be the cruellest moment of her life...”

It then goes on to remind us that there will be times in all our lives when the easy option would be to walk past someone who was suffering without giving them the time of day. It might be someone in hospital, or someone who is ill, or someone who is in prison. Yet if we love someone, that love shows itself in not walking past; in stopping to nurse someone who is ill or visit the person in prison. It won’t always be easy, for us or for them, but that simple act of loving kindness can make a huge difference.

It started me thinking about suffering in more general terms. Suffering has always been one of the most challenging subjects for the Church and for practising Christians and many great theologians have tried to come up with an understanding of suffering which holds up to the reality of suffering that so many people face at some time in their lives.

The example of Job is often used to explain suffering yet there is something about it which is hard to comprehend. Why do good people suffer, and why does God allow suffering are just two forms of the question that has tested even the most gifted teacher of the faith. In essence, God says to Job and his three friends that if he can’t understand how God does things in his creation, then he can’t possibly understand suffering.

Maybe we will never fully understand suffering, but this Station, the moment when Mary comes out of the crowd to support her son at his hour of need, points to a way that we can help others who are suffering by stepping out of the crowd to help them. Neary says,

“We visit in times of trouble from love: visits of love, stations of love.”

The people of St Benedict’s Church recently held a meeting with a representative of the Borough Council to consider how the Church might help asylum seekers and migrants who have travelled to this country, and particularly those who find themselves in Warrington. It was said that it could well be as few as five families who find themselves living in Warrington but there are things that will make a real difference to people who are often traumatised from the effects of all that has happened to them in their own country, and again as they have travelled across Europe to get here.

Some of the things they might need include food and the basics of setting up home for what is essentially the ‘first time’. Befriending is just as important, and so is help to learn English. These are simple ways in which we can step out of the crowd and offer support to families who are suffering at this time.

There will be other people we know, too, who might find themselves facing illness, loneliness or loss in their lives. The challenge of the fourth station is to find ways that we can stand beside them and help them confront their fears and overcome their suffering. They won’t be able to do it alone, but with a friend to walk with them, they will find a way through it. Mothering Sunday might just prompt us to follow Mary’s example of being there, no matter what the cost.

Michael Raynor

What’s on in March...

Thursday 3rd 1.00pm Bible Fun study group meets at the vicarage (please note earlier starting time)

Friday 4th 6.30pm Stations of the Cross

**Sunday 6th The Fourth Sunday of Lent (Mothering Sunday)**

**10.00am Sung Eucharist**

Tuesday 8th 2.00pmOpen invitation to Afternoon Tea and visit school (please Notice Board page in this magazine for further details)

Wednesday 9th 9.30am Resources Committee meets in school

12 noon Deanery Chapter meeting here at St Andrew’s

Thursday 10th 1.30pm Bible Fun study group meets at the vicarage

8.00pm Thursday Ladies' Club meets at the vicarage

Friday 11th 6.30pm Stations of the Cross

**Sunday 13th The Fifth Sunday of Lent (Passion Sunday)**

**10.00am Sung Eucharist**

Tuesday 15th 8.00pm PCC meeting in church

Thursday 17th 10.30am Eucharist with Year4 in church

1.30pm Bible Fun study group meets at the vicarage

7.00pm Accent Music Hub concert in church

Friday 18th 2.00pm Afternoon Tea with children from Year 1 and their parents in the Hall.

6.30pm Stations of the Cross

**Sunday 20th The Sixth Sunday of Lent (Palm Sunday)**

**10.00am Sung Eucharist**

Monday 21st 7.00pm Eucharist with Devotional Address

Tuesday 22nd 7.00pm Stations of the Cross within the Eucharist

Wednesday 23rd 7.00pm Eucharist with Devotional Address

Thursday 24th **Maundy Thursday**

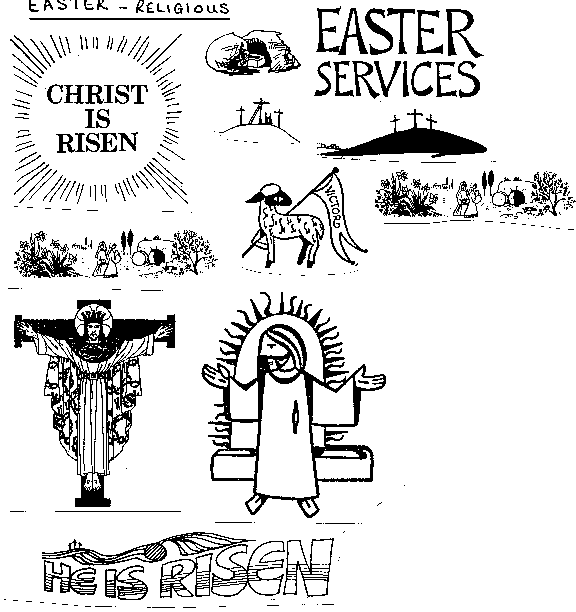
10.30am Eucharist for Maundy Thursday

7.00pm Sung Eucharist, Stripping of the Altars and Watch before the Blessed Sacrament till 11.45pm.

11.45pm Compline

**Good Friday** 2.00pm Liturgy of the Day

**Holy Saturday** 8.00pm Easter Vigil and lighting of the first fire of Easter



**Sunday 27th Easter Day**

**10.00am Festal Eucharist of the Resurrection**

Thursday 31st 8.00pm Thursday Ladies' Club meets at the vicarage (transferred from Maundy Thursday)

Friday 1st April 9.15am School Easter service in church

**Sunday 3rd The Second Sunday of Easter**

**April 10.00am Sung Eucharist**

There are regular weekly celebrations of the Eucharist (Holy Communion) on Wednesday evening at 7.00pm and Thursday morning at 10.30am. Celebrations on Saint’s Days are published on the Sunday sheet. All are welcome.

Who’s on in March…

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 2016 | sides-people | reader | intercessor | offertory |
| 6 Mar  Lent 4 | B. Boscoe  B. Glover | F. Greatorex | M. Brown | M Ellison  Lucia |
| 13 Mar  Lent 5 | I. Appleton  M. Harrington | M. Harrington | F. Greatorex | K. Rowan  P. Smith |
| 20 Mar  Palm Sun | J. Devereux  M. Ellison | O. Vowles | N. Lee | J. Blyth  L. Giblin |
| 24 Mar  Maun Th | Volunteers please | Lucia | D. Kirk | Volunteers please |
| 25 Mar  Good Fri | Volunteers please | W. Forster | M. Harrington |  |
| 26 Mar  Holy Sat | Volunteers please | On the night! |  |  |
| 27 Mar  Easter Day | L. Giblin  P. Smith | M. Brown | Sunday School | B. Boscoe  B. Glover |
| 3 Apr  Easter 2 | F. Greatorex  O. Vowles | A. Gorman | J. Raynor | C. Worrall  R. Worrall |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **2016** | **Sunday School** | **Counting collections** |
| 6 Mar |  | B. Boscoe / B. Glover |
| 13 Mar |  | Awaiting APCM |
| 20 Mar |  | I. Appleton / M. Ellison |
| 27 Mar |  | V. Carter / J. Raynor |
| 3 Apr |  | B. Boscoe / B. Glover |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **2016** | **Tea Rota** | **Read on Weds Eve** | **Hall Cleaning** |
| 6 Mar | B. Boscoe / B. Glover | Fr Michael (9 Mar) | C. Worrall |
| 13 Mar | F. Greatorex / L. Giblin | N. Lee (16 Mar) | Fr Michael |
| 20 Mar | M. Harrington / Lucia | D. Kirk (23 Mar) | J. Devereux |
| 27 Mar | B. Boscoe / B. Glover | Fr Michael (30 Mar) | C. Worrall |
| 3 Apr | M. Ellison / P. Smith | N. Lee (6 Apr) | Fr Michael |

Jesus meets his mother

The vicar’s letter mentions Fr Donal Neary’s reflection on the moment when Mary steps out of the crowd to comfort her son. Here is that meditation in full:

He didn't really 'meet' her - she was there;

and not by chance.

She wanted to be with her Son

even though it would be the cruellest moment of her life.

She didn't have to be there;

just like a parent doesn't have to be in the hospital all night with a child;

just like the child doesn't have to be with the parent who is ill;

just like the sister doesn't have to visit the brother in prison.

We visit in times of trouble from love:

visits of love, stations of love.

He didn't have to stop either;

it would be enough just to go on,

just to think of himself and get this over and done with.

Knowing his mother was suffering so much —

this was one of the cruellest moments so far.

He didn't have to stop,

just like the man on the way home to the comfort of family

doesn't have to stop and help on the soup-run,

or the student on the way to a first-class degree

didn't have to stop and help the weaker one.

They both suffered so much,

she for him, and he for us.

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The Annual Parochial Meeting

... will be held in church on Sunday 17th April following the Sung Eucharist at 10.00am.

There is a temptation to feel that the meeting is just a bit of red tape and of no real consequence. However, it is an opportunity to hear what has happened over the past twelve months and to set the agenda for the coming year.

An annual report is always prepared for the meeting and copies are available afterwards if you are unable to attend. At the meeting, much of the content is spelled out and there are chances to ask questions. The report also contains the accounts (a draft set of accounts, subject to audit, can be seen on the church notice board) which are normally adopted (or amended and adopted) by the Annual Meeting.

At the first part of the meeting, the Vestry Meeting, two church wardens are elected to serve for twelve months. Wardens are bishops’ officers, and as such, are responsible to the diocesan bishop. They have certain powers and responsibilities concerning the church buildings and the conduct of the life of the church.

At the meeting, a new Parochial Church Council will also be elected. Members of the PCC are trustees who again have certain responsibilities (as a body rather than individually) with respect to the assets and management of the church.

Please make every effort to attend the meeting. It usually lasts about forty minutes so the roast dinner won’t be spoiled!

St Andrew’s Charity Shop

every Wednesday

from 10.00am to 3.00pm in the Hall

Drop-in for tea and toast.

Carer’s advice desk on second Wednesday

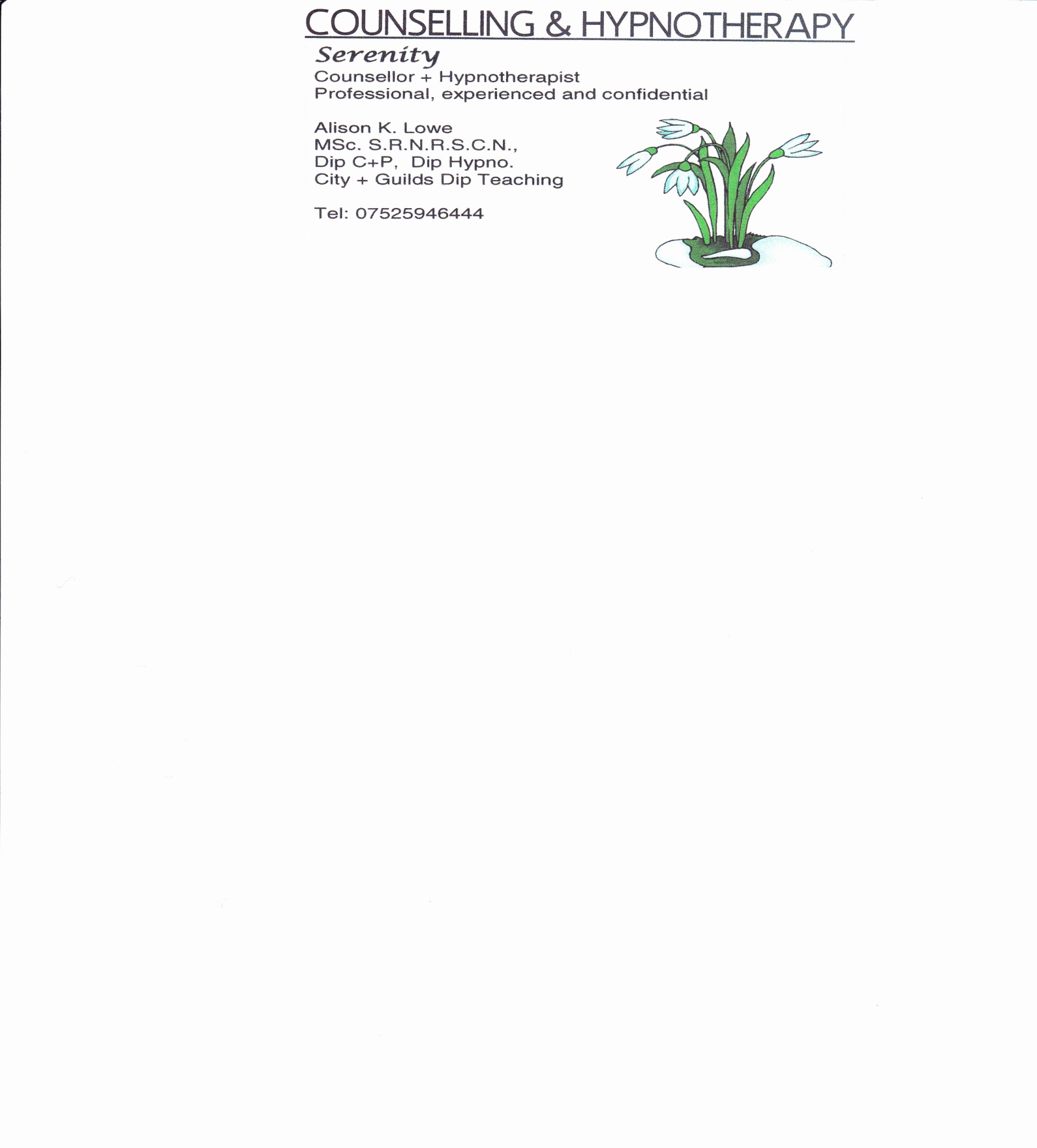
Coming soon ... in School

Many thanks to everyone who supported us with Messy Church in early February. Numbers might have been a little down on previous events but there was an enthusiasm which more than made up for it. Some of the activities were really creative, including the ‘relief cross’. The children stuck a masking tape cross on card and then drew people around it in charcoal. Having softened the charcoal, they removed the tape to reveal a brilliant-white cross, a reminder of the effect that Jesus’ death had on humanity. The whole event led us seamlessly into Ash Wednesday the following week.

There are THREE events coming up this term that shouldn’t be missed. On **8th March at 2pm**, there will be an opportunity to visit school. You are invited to a walk-around to meet children and staff and see the freshly decorated and improved building, to watch Fr Michael try his hand at story-telling (though it’s debatable whether that is an attraction or not!) and stay for afternoon tea. We hope lots of people will come along. It would help if you’d let Fr Michael know if you are planning to come along.

On Friday **18th March at 2pm,** we are inviting parents from Year 1 to join us in the Hall to see some photos of their children at work and come and meet ‘the Church’. We would value your help – more details nearer the time.

On the final day of the spring term, the children from Reception and Year 5 will lead their very own Easter Service in church on **Friday 1st April at 9.15am** and would love to see as many people from church as possible.



Around the Deanery

There have been a number of changes in the Deanery recently. [The Deanery of Warrington consists of the Anglican churches in Warrington East which is Padgate, Woolston and Birchwood; Warrington West which comprises Westbrook, Great Sankey and Penketh; the Town Centre and Orford]. Although deanery originally meant ten churches, we currently have thirteen and a fresh expression at The Forge in Chapelford.

Beginning at the top, we have a new Archdeacon of Warrington and St Helens, the Venerable Roger Preece whom some of you will have met recently when he came to worship with us at the end of February. Roger’s responsibilities include the traditional (legal) ones together with helping parishes fulfil the Church Growth Agenda.

The Reverend Tracy McLaughlin was licensed last month to the Church of the Resurrection at Cinnamon Brow (an ecumenical church shared with St Bridget’s Roman Catholic congregation). She is part of the Warrington East Team under the direction of the recently licensed Team Rector, the Reverend Neil Shaw. Neil, incidentally, announced his engagement recently to Miss Phillipa Hunt and we wish them well.

The Reverend Shirley Cowan has been appointed as vicar of St Ann, Warrington and Holy Trinity in the town centre. Shirley will be licensed on Sunday 3rd April at Holy Trinity.

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Growth Planning Framework 3 - update

Growth is not just the concern of the vicar or even the PCC (Parochial Church Council); it is something we are all called to participate in. Over the past twelve months or so, we have been delighted to welcome a number of new people and look forward to meeting others.

There are two things we can do to encourage other people to join us: we can invite them to come along with us, and we can give them a warm welcome when they join us.

At the last meeting of the PCC, we considered the Bishop’s Framework and came up with a number of ideas that might facilitate growth. At the next meeting, the PCC will review progress but we thought everyone should know what’s happening. If there’s an area you would like to help with, please mention it to Fr Michael.

1. The welcome leaflets have been drafted and will be circulated initially to the PCC. Our intention is to give a leaflet to every visitor, whether it be on Sunday mornings or at baptisms and weddings. The leaflet will include a slip requesting a follow-up visit.
2. We continue to enjoy a good relationship with school and there are regular visits to church and school. What we need now are more people from church to take part when the children come to church and when there are things going on in school. The last Messy Church was well supported and we hope that church members will take the opportunity to come to afternoon tea on the 8th and have a look round school. A visit to the cathedral’s cafe-style church is planned shortly. Fr Michael did his first ‘story-telling’ session recently.
3. The library in church is being used though we hope it will grow in popularity in the coming months. The Bible Fun group has met a couple of times in Lent and will continue till Holy Week.
4. Confirmation preparation is underway in school and will begin in the parish this month. The Ash Wednesday service went well and will probably determine the format for occasions when school families join us on Sunday morning.
5. The distribution of Holy Communion at home will be shared with other licensed members of the church`. A small group of visitors will be established and trained over the summer months.
6. The Christian Aid project will take place at the end of this term and we hope to invite Year 5 children into church later in the spring, possibly to coincide with Christian Aid Week. We have also invited a speaker from Christian Aid

This Lent, you could help save a life.

*This year’s Lent Appeal will help the work of United Society (formerly USPG) in Brazil. Lent boxes and envelopes are still available at the back of church. The following article explains the challenge they face:*

During the coming months, in the run-up to the Olympics, the eyes of the world will be on the beautiful country of Brazil.

But while there is much excitement about the upcoming games and what this means for the future of the nation, in reality Brazil’s young people have a dark cloud cast over their future.

Every day, young people face the risk of being trafficked, shot or killed. And the violence and uncertainty continues to grow.

* In Brazil, 2,000 children are murdered each year.
* Approximately 8 million children in Brazil are at risk of exploitation.
* A million children in Brazil are trapped in forms of slave labour (statistics: Operation World).

Us is supporting the church in Brazil as it responds to these issues.

Among other interventions, the church is helping to raise awareness of risks so children are less susceptible to exploitation. And the church is teaching children how best to protect themselves from predators who might target them.

Ruth de Barros (left in picture), a project co-ordinator in the Anglican Diocese of the Amazon, has worked with Us since 1992. She explains:

 'Every day we work with children at risk in the city of Belem and the area of Terra Firme. This is a violent area notorious for street crime, corruption and prostitution. Sadly, rather than protecting the public, in many circumstances the police themselves are helping to perpetrate this violence.

'All of this means that many ordinary families in Brazil are at constant risk of attack. Last year, I was involved in four carjackings. But we keep praying and campaigning for goodness, truth and justice. As Desmond Tutu says: "If you are neutral in situations of injustice, you have chosen the side of the oppressor."

'But there is hope for the future. In the Diocese of Amazon, we are sharing the love of God with the boys and girls we meet.

'While our concern grows, so does our determination to see an end to the violence, trafficking and exploitation.

'When I think about the young people caught up in the violence in Brazil, I also call to mind the boys and girls we serve. I know that the power of God’s love and purpose is making a difference to the way young people see their future. This is a central tenet of our work as we seek to give our children and young people a hope in Christ and His gospel that will help to protect them from the inside out.'

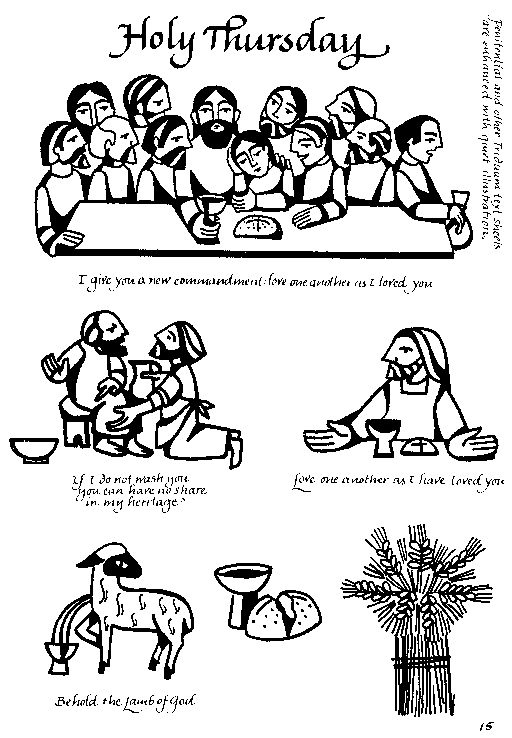
During Lent, I’d like to invite you to consider supporting Us as we partner with the church around the world to help combat such issues as human trafficking.

Our vision – both in Brazil and around the world – is to see individuals and communities enjoying life in all its fullness.

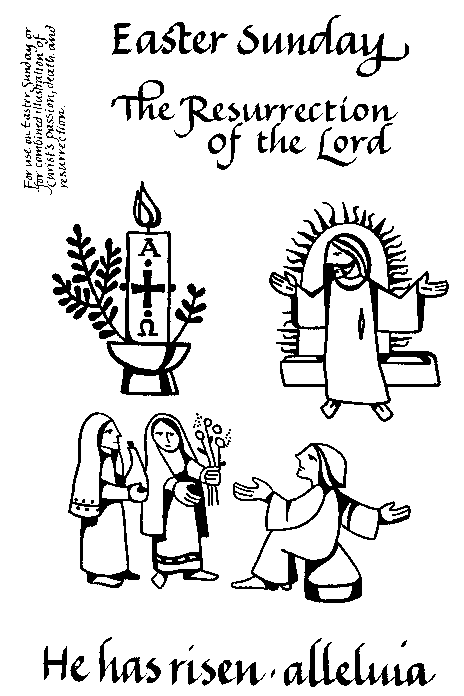
Holy Week and Easter services

Holy week begins with **Palm Sunday**. Breaking with tradition, our Sunday service will begin in the Hall at 10.00am with the Blessing of the Palms and the Palm Sunday gospel. We will process across to church for the rest of the service which will include the dramatic reading of the Passion – this year it will be according to Luke’s gospel.

On **Monday** and **Wednesday evenings at 7.00pm**, there will be a celebration of the Eucharist and Devotional Address and on **Tuesday**, the Eucharist will be preceded by Stations of the Cross. (There will not be an ecumenical service this year as all our attention is to be focused on the week leading up to Pentecost in May).

**Maundy Thursday** (7.00pm) is a very special day in the Church as we participate in the Lord’s Supper gathered round the main altar, just as the disciples gathered with Jesus in the Upper Room. After the service and stripping of the altars, there will be the opportunity for silent prayer and reflection before the Blessed Sacrament in the Lady Chapel. The Watch, as it is called, will end with Compline just before midnight.

The Liturgy of the Day at 2.00pm on **Good Friday** represents a reflective time when we consider the cross – including the victory our Lord won on this day. The service includes both the veneration of the cross and reception of the reserved sacrament for those who wish to receive.



On **Easter Eve** (at 8.00pm and still in relative darkness), we light the first fire of Easter and from that, the Easter candle. We hold a vigil waiting for the risen Lord, which takes place in a glorious burst of colour and music when we celebrate the Resurrection on **Easter morning at 10.00am**.

Holy Week is a very special time – possibly the most important week in the whole Christian calendar – and we look forward to sharing it together.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Donations of Easter lilies  As is our tradition, donations towards the cost of Easter lilies are invited in memory of individuals or loved ones. Please pass your donation to Jenny Raynor with a note clearly stating whether they are in memory and the name(s) of the people to be remembered. Thank you |  |

Clocks go forward

Don’t forget to put your clock forward one hour before going to bed on Saturday 26th March.

School Easter Service

You are invited to the service to be held in church on Friday 1st April at 9.15. School services arereally well presented and your support will be appreciated.

Young people’s concert

The Accent Music Hub returns to St Andrew’s this month to stage a concert of musical talent from across the Borough. Various school groups and soloists will perform on Thursday 17th March, starting at 7.00pm. Previous concerts have been a real hit and you are invited again this time. Tickets will be on sale on the door.

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Snippets from the Church Times

*Prayers on the Move* is an imaginative idea being tested in London. Short prayers are to be displayed on buses and the Tube. “The hope is that reading a simple prayer in the anonymity of the Tube or the bus will give people the opportunity to listen to the Spirit’s inner voice” said the Bishop of London. A similar scheme is to be launched in Newcastle.

The archbishops are hoping that churches up and down the land will take part in a week of prayer for evangelism in the week leading up to Pentecost. It is the idea of a task group, vice-chaired by the Bishop of Liverpool, and called *Thy Kingdom Come*. For several years, the Orford Churches have used this week to pray for unity and the scene is set to include prayers for the growth of the Church.

Evangelism and Growth figure highly in the *Church Times*. Engaging with the local community in ever more imaginative ways, Malmesbury Abbey in Wiltshire opened its doors again to the skateboarding community over the half-term holiday. “It’s encouraged a serving attitude in the congregation” said the curate, the Rev John Monaghan. There’s a soft-play area for toddlers and there are 80 year old volunteers who talk with the skaters between runs. Hexham Abbey hosts ‘free-running’ and Doncaster Minster is busily developing Streetdance. St Wulfram’s in Grantham have an ice-rink and Christmas tree festival in the days leading up to Christmas.

In a letter to the *Church Times*, members of the Ordinands’ Association (those in training for ordination to the priesthood) wrote to express their thanks on behalf of the recipients of grants from the Train-A-Priest Fund (which we have supported in recent years). “At a time when many continue to feel financial pressures, ordinands from across the Church of England are very grateful for the magnanimous gestures of kindness from all who have supported the fund over the past year.”

Some surprising figures from the National Churches Trust suggest that three out of five people visited a religious building during the previous year for various reasons, ranging from worship to tourism. The survey also indicates that a friendly welcome, and toilet facilities, were two of the best ways to get people to visit a church.

A thousand Teddies for Cancer

is a project which our Scout Group is currently working on.

At the end of last year, Ann Moran (wife of Derek, the Group’s Chairman) died of cancer. This was a devastating blow, both to her family and to the Group for whom she had worked tirelessly; and to all of us at St Andrew’s who had got to know her and love her.

The Scouts (actually scouts, cubs and beavers, along with all the leaders) determined to raise money for Macmillan Cancer Care that provides Macmillan nurses to care for those with cancer and their families, in memory of Ann. The idea of ***A Thousand Teddies for Cancer*** was floated and quickly adopted by everyone as a project worthy of Ann.

Since then, thanks to the Warrington Guardian, we have been given a collection point at the Tesco extra on Winwick Road which has proved enormously popular. On some days, the cage has been emptied three times. Apex Storage has kindly contributed a container to sort all the teddies until they are sold. Scouts, families and friends have also contributed, and there are some places that we’ve not even asked yet.

Teddies (and other stuffed toys) are arriving every day. Thanks to the Guardian, internet and Facebook, the support is country-wide. (At one point, we thought we had been offered bears from Australia, though it turned out that the person who contacted us was now living locally but had kept her Australian email address!)

Our intention is to sell them off soon. We are still looking for a shop or stall in a good location with lots of passers-by. If you know of anywhere we might try, we’d love to hear from you. We were hoping to start selling them in time for Easter but until we find the right place, we can’t make any firm plans.

Among the many teddies we have been given, there are two hand-knitted teddy bears that we have called Mac and Millie and they underwrite our motto:

***“Macmillan nurses, help when cancer is too much to bear”***

Teddies can be delivered to St Andrew’s church, Hall or vicarage, or to the collection point just inside the doors at the Tesco extra.



**Christian Aid Week: the week we love every neighbour**

Picture a young mother of four. Her husband has left. She has no land. No assets. No savings. And the only work she can get is backbreaking manual labour for as little as 74p a day. Her home has been flooded several times, and last August it flooded again. This is Morsheda. She’s our neighbour, and she desperately needs our help.

**From 15-21 May, our church will join with more than 20,000 others across the country for the sake of people like Morsheda.** Across the UK and Ireland we will deliver 7 million envelopes to our local neighbours to raise money for our global neighbours in need. It’s an opportunity to reach out to our community, and to make sure some of the world’s poorest people have enough to eat and a safe place to live.

**A Home Safety Package from Christian Aid could raise Morsheda’s home on an earth plinth, safe from the flood plain, and give her resources to invest in things like farm animals, seeds and a composting kit – giving her the tools she needs to build a better future. A new chance at life for Morsheda costs as little as £250.**

Let’s make this year’s Christian Aid Week a huge success.

We hope to have a speaker from Christian Aid to tell us about some of the amazing things they do with our support. We intend taking part in the **Big Brekkie** and other fund-raising events. We hope everyone will be part of it.

Thoughts on Lent

by Michael Ramsey

Michael Ramsey was Archbishop of Canterbury and prolific spiritual writer. Here are two short passages that may help us this Lent:

Towards Easter

An Easter faith which is true is always a faith which includes the wounds of Calvary. When Christ was raised from the dead, it did not mean that the Cross was left behind. Far from it. The risen Christ is always the Christ who was once crucified. Cross and Resurrection go together.

Christian imagery and Christian art have portrayed this through the centuries. We recall pictures of the Crucifixion which show the kingly triumph, the majestic peace already breaking through the scene of death. We recall pictures of the risen Jesus which show the marks of of sacrifice never effaced, and carried into the risen glory. And the art and the imagery convey deep truth. We can never know the risen Jesus and never serve him unless we face the reality of the Cross.

We must still repent of the sins which wound him, as our sins always do. We must still find him in those who suffer as we go and serve him in them. Never can the notes of Calvary fade from the Church’s songs of victory.

The Anticipation

But already – and this is the joy of Christianity – already there are anticipations of heaven set within our present existence.

Every prayer is an anticipation of heaven – for what is prayer essentially? It is the soul of the creature lifting itself up to touch with the Creator.

So too, every act of selfless love between man and man is an anticipation of heaven where love will rule in perfection. For when you confess your sins, and seek absolution you are acknowledging that you are nothing, nobody but a sinner, and God is all and has the glory. It is just that acknowledgement by the penitent that makes the very act of penitence an anticipation of heaven.

That is why the Lord says that the angels are rejoicing when we truly confess our sins.

As I see it …by Church Mouse

“BOOKS, BOOKS, BOOKS” grumbled Grandpa Mouse. “This Hall is turning into the National Library.”

“Stop complaining,” replied Granny Mouse, “books are wonderful. They have helped people to learn all sorts of exciting things. You know, when I was young...”

“Uh-oh” whispered one of the mouselings to his sister sitting next to him, “are you sitting comfortably? We could be here for a while!”

“When I was young,” she said, knowing exactly what that cheeky young thing had said, even though she couldn’t hear the exact words, “when I was young, we didn’t have many books, but we did get free libraries and everyone could enjoy them. They learned so much and finished up with a really good education. Books opened up the world to people (and mice) long before computers and “t’internet”.

“We love books,” squeaked one of the mouselings. “We have lots of books at St Andrew’s School, and hardly one of them has been chewed. Even the Reception children love to sit down and listen to the stories and look at the pictures, and we mice join in (as long as Mrs Gorman doesn’t spot us.”

At that moment, my wife Millicent came in, clutching a pile of what looked like old rags.

“What are you doing?” I asked, innocently.

“It’s World Book Day next week, and the mouselings have got to dress up as characters from their favourite story” she told me.

“Well,” said Grandpa Mouse, “that shouldn’t be too difficult. “Get yourself a recorder and they can be the rats for the Pied Piper of Hamlyn!”

It’s not often that Millicent is other than calm, but this time she really got steamed up. I quickly realised what the phrase “losing your rag” meant when she threw down the pile of clothes she’d been carrying.

“That’s it!” she shouted. Everywhere went horribly quiet. “You have rubbished books and reading once too often. I’m not going to prepare another bite for you until you have read to all the mouselings to stop them getting bored while I fit their costumes.”

For the first time in my life, I wondered whether big families were a mistake; after all, you know I’ve got a big family and the thought of reading to them all made me feel quite strange.

Later that night, Grandpa Mouse yawned. “I think I’ll have an early night; I’ve worked really hard today”

As he set off for bed, Millicent couldn’t resist a parting remark. “Don’t stay awake too late reading,” she said, and then ducked as grandpa Mouse threw his slippers at her!

**Churchmouse**

News of the 33rd

A recent Cubs section newsletter shows that there’s plenty going on at present. Four members took part in a craft competition and made a good showing.

Among this year’s projects is the World Challenge Badge. The aim is to give the children a wider perspective of Scouting that embraces other parts of the world. For Chinese New Year last month, the children created dragon heads and researched the animal which dominates the year they were born.

At another meeting, the Cubs were treated to a talk about hedgehogs and looking after them. This might seem unusual in an urban setting but we often see one or two foraging on the lawns around church, particularly in the late summer. They seem to come off the school field and the field beyond.

Two Beavers are completing their transition to Cubs, a process which helps them gently move from one section to the next. One difference is that Beavers do not normally camp overnight, though a sleepover is planned for the spring, whereas Cubs can and do take part in weekend camps.

A highlight of 2016 is that the Cub movement officially celebrates its Centenary this year. Various activities are planned locally, at District level and nationally. The Wildest Birthday Ever Cub Camp will be held at Capesthorne Hall in May.

The Presentation evening takes place on 18th March and a fund-raising quiz will be held on Saturday 9th April. Tickets will be available shortly.

Praying for the world-wide Church

 Sunday by Sunday (and day by day), Anglicans around the world take it in turn to pray for one another, following a two year cycle. In our worship in church, we join with fellow Anglicans in praying for the people of those dioceses. Here are the Churches and dioceses that will be mentioned on the Sundays in March:

**Sunday 6th March: The Church of England**



It seems slightly odd to be writing about the Church of England to which we belong. Yet we are part of the Anglican Communion and Archbishop Justin Welby the leader of both the Church of England and the Anglican Communion. How well do we know the Church in this country?

There are two provinces, Canterbury and York. Of the forty-two dioceses, just twelve are in the Province of York and the rest are part of Canterbury. The southern dioceses are those south of a line roughly from the Humber estuary to just south of Chester. Surprisingly, the first diocese was that of Sodor and Man (Isle of Man) founded in 447, nearly a century before Canterbury.

Like many Churches around the world, as we have seen previously, the Church of England if declining in attendance and is urgently trying to reverse the trend. General Synod, the governing body of the C of E, has commissioned a number of task forces to address the problem under the collective banner of “Reform and Renewal” and received ‘half-way’ reports at their meeting in February. [These will be reported elsewhere in *Green Spire*].

**Sunday 13th March: The Diocese of Hong Kong Sheng Kung Hui**

Sheng Kung Hui literally means "Holy Catholic Church" in Chinese. It was the Chinese name used in the Church since mid-nineteenth century when the British Anglican and the American Episcopalian missionaries first came to China. The same Chinese characters [which denote ‘Holy Cathoilc Church’] are also used in the Anglican Church of Korea, the Nippon Sei Ko Kai in Japan and other Chinese Anglican and Episcopal churches in the region.



Hong Kong Sheng Kung Hui now constitutes 3 dioceses (including The Diocese of Hong Kong Island, The Diocese of Eastern Kowloon, The Diocese of Western Kowloon) and 1 missionary area (Missionary Area of Macau). At present, the Archbishop and Primate of the Province of Hong Kong Sheng Kung Hui is The Most Revd. Dr. Paul Kwong; the Bishop of Eastern Kowloon is The Rt. Revd Timothy Kwok; and the Bishop of Western Kowloon is The Rt. Revd Andrew Chan.

Thanks to the blessing and guidance of the Heavenly Father, the ministry of the Church continues to flourish in the areas of Evangelism, Pastoral Work, Education and Social Services, so the Love of Jesus is witnessed and shared in the local community, as the Bible said, "And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth."

**Sunday 20th March: The Diocese of Jerusalem**

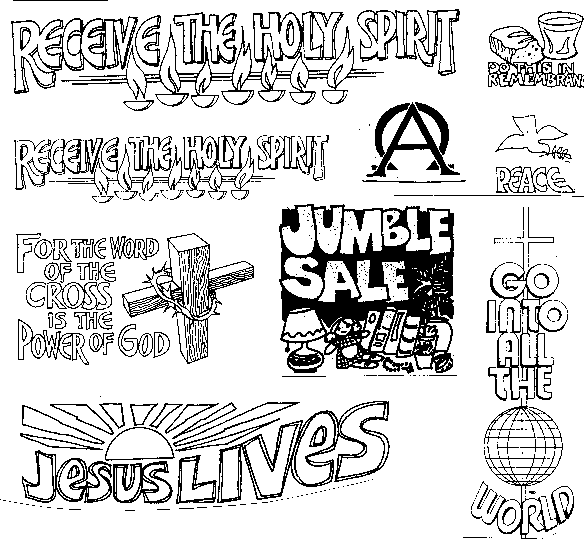
The Diocese of Jerusalem was formed in 1841 following work by the Church Missionary Society. In time, the Bishop of Jerusalem was appointed Archbishop of the region, which included Lebanon, Syria and Jordan. The diocese of Jerusalem in now one of four dioceses in the Province of Jerusalem and the Middle East.

The diocese of Jerusalem has twenty-seven parishes and about thirty clergy serving around 7,000 people. There are also 30 institutions (presumably hospitals, colleges and schools) across the region it serves and employs about 1,500 people. There are 6,400 students and 200 hospital beds in its care.

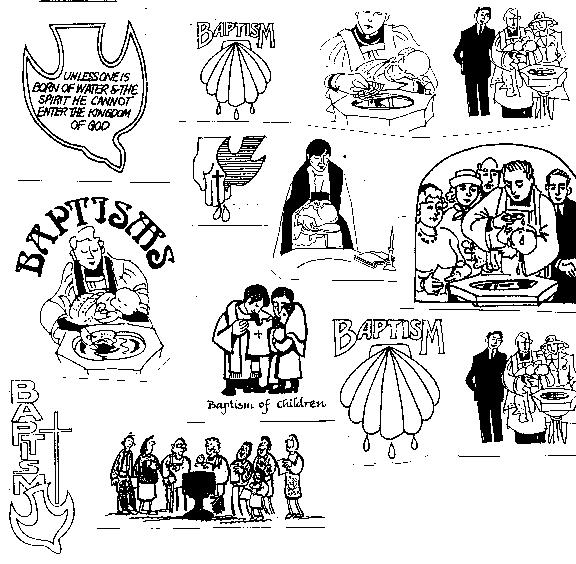
The outreach of the diocese is quite staggering. Emanating from St George the Martyr cathedral in central Jerusalem, the diocese runs a number of pilgrim guesthouses where pilgrims from around the world can stay during their visit to the Holy Land. Bishop Dawani, the present diocesan bishop, called the first conference for women in 2007 to explore ways in which their ministry might develop. It has become a bi-annual event. They run a ‘kids4peace’ ministry and have good working relationships with other world faiths also centred on Jerusalem. There are summer camps for young people and the diocese is actively encouraging vocations in young people.

The website says, “The Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem is engaged in a ministry of Faith in Action in an interfaith region, spreading a message of mutual respect and cooperation through its many institutions, working to bring peace and reconciliation to this conflict torn region.”

**On Easter Day (27th March this year in most parts of the world wide Christian Church)**

Christians around the world celebrate the resurrection of our Lord and join as one in thanking God for the miracle of new life that comes through Jesus Christ. No one Church or diocese is picked out as the focus for prayer; each and every one are part of the one body, the glorious Church of God.

**From the Registers**

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**Holy Baptism:**

7th February Skylar Lillie Weaver

21st February Ruby Mae Wilde

**Funerals:**

19th February Andrew Paul Bennett

**Communicants and Collections:**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **2016** | **Sunday**  **Communicants** | **Midweek**  **Communicants** | **Loose**  **Collections £** | **Planned**  **Giving £** |
| 7th Feb | 30 | 8 | 35.00 | 328.83 |
| 14th Feb | 40 | 53 | 60.73 | 172.00 |
| 21st Feb | 33 | 5 | 2.00 | 139.91 |
| 28th Feb | 40 | 12 | 124.77 | 131.88 |

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**onations**

We would like to thank everyone who has made a gift or donation to our various funds recently. Our special thanks go to:

##### General Fund

* Initial Giving – thank you for those extra envelopes
* Jenny Raynor

Flower Fund

* Flowers for Mothering Sunday from Renee Hollingsworth

Winners of the Phoenix Club Draw

**Sunday 28th February**

First prize: 114 Dot Miller

Second prize: 130 D. Crozier

Third prize: 149 J Raynor

*Elle and Esse*

Hair and Beauty Lodge

Unisex Hair Salon

**LYNETTE and SUE**

Lodge Lane, Bewsey

Warrington

Tel: 01925 232282

Waste not, want not

Granny Mouse doesn’t waste a crumb at the best of times, and certainly not in Lent! In fact, she always has a few breadcrumbs handy in case of emergencies. The kind ladies who make the toast for the Drop-In on Wednesday always save the toast crumbs and pass them on to Granny Mouse, though Grandad Mouse gets a bit grumpy at times and complains when his favourite pudding has black bits in it!

Here is one of his favourites: it’s a steamed lemon pudding:

100g (4oz) breadcrumbs

100g (4oz) self-raising flour

100g (4oz) margarine

175 g (6oz) sugar

Juice, and finely grated peel, of one lemon

2 eggs, beaten

Cream together the sugar and margarine; then mix in the breadcrumbs, flour, lemon juice and peel. Stir in the beaten eggs. Pour the mixture into a buttered basin, cover with buttered greaseproof paper and tie down. Steam for 1 ½ hours and serve with custard.

**Prayer Intentions for March**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  |  |  |  |
| Tue | 1st | Buttermere Avenue | Those with mental illnesses |
| Wed | 2nd | Grasmere Avenue | Calm in Korea |
| Thu | 3rd | Petworth Avenue | Our servers |
| Fri | 4th | Sinclair Avenue | St Elphin, Warrington |
| Sat | 5th | Lancing Avenue | Our MP and Local Councillors |
|  |  |  |  |
| Sun | 6th | **The Fourth Sunday of Lent (Mothering Sunday)** | |
| Mon | 7th | Keswick Crescent | Samaritans and ChildLine |
| Tue | 8th | Marron Avenue | Home Care staff working locally |
| Wed | 9th | Dean Crescent | Nepal |
| Thu | 10th | Cleveland Road | Our Cathedral |
| Fri | 11th | Kentmere Place | St James, Westbrook |
| Sat | 12th | Poole Avenue | Professional drivers |
|  |  |  |  |
| Sun | 13th | **The Fifth Sunday of Lent (Passion Sunday)** | |
| Mon | 14th | Seaford Place | Christian Aid |
| Tue | 15th | Armour Avenue | The Diocese of Virginia |
| Wed | 16th | Cartmel Avenue | Taiwan |
| Thu | 17th | Densham Avenue | Moriting School in South Africa |
| Fri | 18th | Newton Road | St Philip, Westbrook |
| Sat | 19th | Ulverston Avenue | Journalists |
|  |  |  |  |
| Sun | 20th | **The Sixth Sunday of Lent (Palm Sunday)** | |
| Mon | 21st | St Stephen's Avenue | Jews and Christians working together |
| Tue | 22nd | Hunter Avenue | Peace in the Middle East |
| Wed | 23rd | Thirlmere Avenue | The gift of love |
| Thu | 24th | Chiltern Place | Those who are searching for faith |
| Fri | 25th | Crowe Avenue | All who suffer in our world |
| Sat | 26th | Hastings Avenue | Those who have been bereaved |
|  |  |  |  |
| Sun | 27th | **Easter Day** | |
| Mon | 28th | Toll Bar Place | United Society |
| Tue | 29th | Grisedale Avenue | Those training for ministry |
| Wed | 30th | Cotswold Place | Syria |
| Thu | 31st | Howson Road | Our Area Dean, Stephen |
|  |  |  |  |