

Dear Friends

Lent

Lent begins on 1st March with Ash Wednesday and two services of Communion with Ashing at 11am and 7.30pm. These services are an opportunity to begin Lent in a reflective and honest look at who we are before God as we hold together our identity as beloved children, created in God's image, who nevertheless find ourselves caught up in sinful action and thought on a daily basis. We are held to look into through and beyond the cross of Jesus. As we are marked by the cross, we are marked both by the judgement and the love of God and offered a new way forward. I hope as many as possible will want to engage with these services. When it comes to the Ashing itself, it is not compulsory, but many find it very moving. This year in Lent it is the intention to offer everyone the opportunity to delve deeper into the Gospel passages for the Sunday during the week following. There will be leaflets available with the reading and some associated questions. These will be designed so that there is a question for each day, Monday to Saturday. The leaflets will be able to be used individually or in small groups and, at the time of writing, it is still hoped to provide some small group opportunities. The main thrust of the passages is Encounters with Jesus and hopefully this will enable us all to think and reflect, singly or severally, on our own encounter with him.

A reflection for each of us this Lent as we prepare to encounter Jesus.

What am I holding?

What am I holding?

Nothing, yet everything

In my hands is held

The whole of my life, the moments of certainty, faith alight vision teeming

The moments of confusion, of unclarity, of fear

In my hands is held the smallest thing,

The tiniest thing

And yet the thing which holds and represents all things.

What am I holding in my hands

The best and worst of myself

Desire to serve

And also a wish sometimes to be noticed.

In my hands is held the feeblest thing

The intention to love

The desire to be all that I could become,

And the fear that holds me back.

But whose hands are holding mine,

Taking the weariness, and the excitement

Caressing, anointing

Massaging, reinvigorating and making my hands able?

If my hands are held,

Then maybe my hands can do the necessary holding

And small and weak as they may be

Can be what they are called to be.

Aspects of life at St Faith and St Laurence

Morning prayer – is normally said Monday to Thursday and Saturday at 8.15 am in the Lady Chapel. We use Common Worship Daily Prayer, all are welcome to come and join in.

Reflections A chance to meet together over a cuppa and reflect on the Gospel reading for the previous Sunday. A group meets on Mondays from 1.45-3pm Venues are listed in the Programme of the month.

Task Groups – The church has a number of task groups enabling areas of church life. These are listed in the magazine with the contact details of the chairs. If you would like to be a part of a groups please contact the relevant chair or Priscilla. All are welcome to join.

Stay and Play meets on Thursday between 9.30 and 11am in the Hall to give a chance for people with young children to meet and the children to play. All are welcome. Cost £1.50 per family.

Sunday Club meets on the first and third Sundays of each month except during the holidays. We hold an extra Sunday Club on days when there is a baptism. All are welcome to join in hearing and experiencing a Bible Story and learning together about what it means for our daily lives.

Messy Church takes place on the first Saturday of each month, most months. A chance for children and parents/ carers to have an informal time of worship, and discovering about a Bible story through song, craft, listening, cooking and so much more. Dates are published in advance and all are welcome to come along.

Planned Giving helps people make giving regular. You decide how much you can afford to give. You can join the envelope scheme weekly or monthly or pay by Standing Order or annually by cheque. Income tax payers are asked to Gift Aid their giving, so the Church can reclaim the tax on their donations at no extra cost to the donors. For details, contact Jackie Taylor or Brenda Stott

Call in for Coffee time together over a cuppa on a Wednesday morning from 10.30 -12.00. if needed we can arrange for someone to collect you and then take you home. Please ring Pauline Sitford (427 7005). If you are passing, do call in, or bring a friend, all are welcome.

We support **Recycling**. We have boxes at the back of the church where you can leave batteries and printer ink cartridges to be recycled. We have a special collection on the first Sunday of every month when we collect ALUMINIUM cans and foil which can be sold and the money raised is donated to our Mission Partners in Chile (through USPG) We also have envelopes for recycling mobile phones again supporting USPG. Pauline Sitford (427 7005).

Nabil Costa, Chief Executive of LSESD said in his Christmas letter “The number of people affected by the Syria crisis is incredible. The people are in desperate need of unconditional love. A ray of hope! Basic needs too. Through MERATH we are committed to continue our support of vulnerable families as a reflection of God's love for them..

A partner working in Aleppo said “We cannot expect to solve all the problems but what is important is that we do something!”.

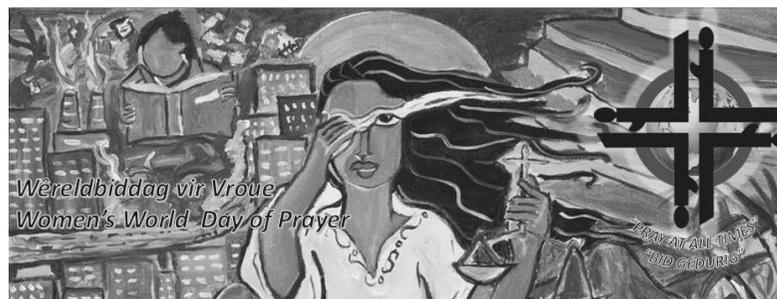
Please can we through our prayers and our giving 'do something'!

MERATH means Middle East Revive and Thrive.

(Compiled with material from LSESD and the Gibson's Newsletters)

Women's World Day of Prayer

Friday 3rd March 1.45pm at Harborne Baptist Church



"Am I Being Unfair to You?"

This year the service has been prepared by the women of the Republic of the Philippines. Filipino women are brave and resourceful. The Philippine Constitution provides for equal rights, yet in practice Filipino women are discriminated against and treated as subordinates in the home, in the church and in society. Look out for the poster in church. This is a Churches Together in Harborne service and I am looking for two or three people to read at the service: there will be a rehearsal at Harborne Baptist Church at 12 noon on the day.

If you would like to take part please speak to me **Celia Wilkie** (427 3304).

Refugees in Lebanon and Syria - Our Lent Appeal.

Audrey and Colin Gibson our CMS link Mission Partners work with the Lebanese Society for Education and Social Development (LSESD), a large Baptist Organisation in Beirut with a School, a Theological Seminary, a Publishing House and a Community Development Section (MERATH). MERATH includes the Children and Youth ministry, Special Educational Needs and Relief & Development work. 'Relief' has become an urgent priority due to the increasing needs of the growing numbers of Syrian and Iraqi refugees in Lebanon, Also the large numbers of displaced Syrian families, **refugees in their own country!**

All the local churches have come together with MERATH to help refugee households make it through the winter. With night time temperatures as low as -10 degrees winter assistance has never been more needed. Families continue to come in from Syria constantly and often arrive with nothing. In the first 3 months this winter (Oct. - Dec.) MERATH and it's church partners have distributed 6,000 blankets, 3,000 mattresses, 365 stoves and heaters and 1,330 fuel vouchers and food assistance to families in need. Food aid was also given to over 4,000 families displaced within Syria

Hadi and his wife, Salam fled to Lebanon three years ago and now have two very young children. They live in a small room on a property in a small town in North Lebanon. Before the war Hadi was a farmer and owned his house in Syria, now completely destroyed. In winter there is no work but the family need food and medicine as the children are often sick. They also need milk and nappies for the children and Hadi says, "I buy everything on credit from the store owners. When the summer comes and I can work again I will start to pay it off" The only assistance the family have had is through the church and the work of MERATH. They have been glad of blankets and mattresses and fuel vouchers for the stove. Hadi's deepest hope is that there will be peace in Syria so they can return home and rebuild their lives.

In Syria the local churches with support from MERATH are providing safe places for children to play and receive psychosocial support. (Even in Aleppo!) In Lebanon educators are trained in Child Protection and children receive education through non-formal education programmes.

Part of Colin's work is to support the Children and Youth Ministry which is helping refugee children by running a number of three day camps throughout the year with plenty of activities to give the children some fun and enjoyment as well as times of prayer and worship. They run weekly follow up events too in order to keep in touch and support the children's needs.

Home Communion We have a team of lay people trained and able to bring Home Communion usually on a monthly basis. This is for those who are unable to come to church long term. If the situation is more temporary for example after an operation you can also receive communion, usually from Priscilla. In either case please contact Priscilla.

Traidcraft

Traidcraft sells a range of fairly traded food, cards, clothes and accessories. We use Traidcraft tea and coffee and everything we buy helps fight poverty and supports our church. You can order seasonal gifts through the church at Christmas time when catalogues will be available. Any questions, please ask Ruth Jeavons or Bronwen Jones.

'easyfundraising'

Next time you shop online, think of St Faith and St Laurence and raise free donations with 3,000+ retailers:

<https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/stfaithandstlaurence>

Gridiron Club is a friendship group for men and women. It meets monthly, usually on the third Tuesday, at 7.30 pm in the Committee Room. There are talks, outings and social events which are open to all.

Women's Fellowship meets on the first Monday of the month from March to December. Meetings are held in the Committee Room 7.30 for 8pm. We have talks on a variety of subjects. See Programme of the Month for details.

Prayer Ministry Team

Prayer ministry is offered during the 10am Communion on Sundays. People can receive prayer for themselves or for any situation that is important to them. It takes place in the Lady Chapel during the distribution of communion.

Service with no name

This takes place on the first Thursday in the month in church at 7.30pm.

Foodbank

We collect food for the Quinton and Oldbury Foodbank. There is a box in church and food can be placed there at any time. The list of things that are needed is in church and in the hall. Food is distributed from St Boniface Church on Wednesdays and Paul and Barney's place on Fridays. Vouchers are required to receive food.

Choir and Music.

Choir Practice takes place weekly, normally on Thursdays 6-7pm. Anyone interested in singing in the choir should contact Simon Palmer, Organist & Choirmaster. (Contact details on page cover) We also like to encourage instrumentalists to perform in church, either in services or in concerts.

General Synod

As I write this I have just returned from General Synod which was an extremely busy four days. Much of the Media Reporting will have focussed and will continue to focus on the issues we were looking at on the Wednesday afternoon when we debated a report from the House of Bishops. GS2055 Marriage and Same Sex Relationships after the Shared Conversations. The report, which I mentioned in my sermon on 5th February, was felt by many to miss out some important voices,. Those from the LGBTIQA+ community felt their voices had by and large not been heard and many others felt that the report did not reflect on the process of the shared conversations which have been taking place over the last three years. Originally we were to have only 90 minutes to debate a “take note” motion on the report, but, after some requests for longer, the agenda was adapted and an extra 45 minutes found.

The debate itself, whatever you may have read in the papers, was for the most part, gracious, and careful. People were listening hard and many were speaking about flaws that they saw in the report. These flaws were not perceived only by one wing of the church. People of very diverse views on the issues around sexuality all found cause for disquiet and were able to articulate them. I had hoped to speak, but was not called, there were at least 160 people who wanted to speak and even with extended time only about 35 were able to! Many speakers who declared themselves in favour of taking note also brought trenchant criticisms of the report. A take note motion, we were constantly reminded, is not signifying agreement to the whole content but acknowledging the existence of the report.

There was therefore some pressure to take note so that the situation could move on a stage. In the end the vote to take note of the report was put to the test. A vote by houses was called for and the voting was as follows
In the house of Bishops For 43, Against , Abstentions 0 (but the one vote against was from a bishop who pressed the wrong button on his console and didn't change it in time)

In the House of Clergy For 93, Against 100, Abstentions 2

In the House of Laity For 106, Against 83, Abstentions 4

The Take note motion therefore fell because it had been voted down by the House of Clergy. I am happy to declare, and it will be a matter of public record, that i was one of those who voted against the motion. If anyone wishes to question me on this I am happy to engage.

The Archbishops have announced a new way forward from this situation and are seeking a wider level of input and discussion before a new report is produced. We await this with prayerful hopefulness that a new way forward may be found. Please continue to hold the Bishops and Synod in your prayers.

There was much else that happened at Synod,.

Lots of questions asked of Bishops and committee chairs on issues from pensions to sexuality, from Mission to politics, from Bishops' houses to the environment
Addresses from the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Secretary General of the Anglican Communion. Farewell to the First Estates Commissioner Andreas Whittam Smith and to the Bishop of London.

BOOKS FOR LENT



Let Me Go There –the Spirit of Lent

Paula Gooder, Canterbury Press.

Best-selling author Paula Gooder continues her popular series on the seasons of the Christian year with this daily companion for the six weeks of Lent, leading readers deeper into the spirit of the season and opening up the scriptures that are read in churches during this period.

She begins with an introduction to the season of Lent and its characteristic themes, exploring how to use it as a time for spiritual growth. In forty short sections suitable for daily reading, Paula then reflects on a theme associated with the season, including: Wilderness, Journey, Fasting, Taking up your cross, Discipleship, Prayer, and Temptation.

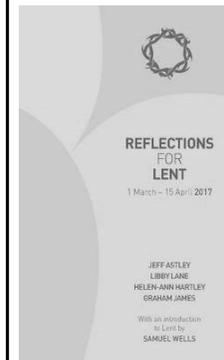
Reflections for Lent 2017

By Jeff Astley, Libby Lane, Helen-Ann Hartley, CUP.

This book is designed to enhance your spiritual journey through the forty days from Ash Wednesday to Holy Saturday (1 March -15 April 2017).

Covering Monday to Saturday each week, it offers reflections on readings from the Common Worship Lectionary, written by some of today's leading spiritual and theological writers.

Each day includes: Full lectionary details for Morning Prayer, a reflection on one of the Bible readings, and a Collect for the day. This volume is ideal for individuals and groups seeking Lectionary-based reflections for use during Lent and Holy Week.



A Concert of Sacred Choral Music



The Stained Glass Windows of
St Faith & St Laurence Parish Church

A concert of sacred choral music for
the 80th anniversary
of the church



We celebrate the beautiful stained glass windows of
St Faith and St Laurence Church,
using texts and pictures from the windows
to include music both new and familiar

Greater Love by John Ireland

Psalm 23 by John Rutter

Magnificat in C by Charles Villiers Stanford

Listen, sweet dove by Grayston Ives

7.30 pm, 18th March 2017

St Faith & St Laurence Parish Church, Harborne

St Faith and St Laurence Choir
with

St Peter's Choir, West House School Chamber Choir, and friends

Conductor – Simon Palmer

Organist – David Griffiths

Collection for Church Hall Roof Fund

A debate on the 500th Anniversary of the Reformation

A new suffragan see for Leicester Diocese.

An important debate on Fixed odds betting terminals seeking to reduce the amounts that can be staked.

Various bits of legislation tidying up and simplifying some of the ways we work as a church.

Amended Canons (Church Laws) on what can be worn at services of worship and on funeral provision for those who have committed suicide.

A motion suggesting the removal of Banns of marriage and their replacement by different preliminaries to marriage was rejected.

A very important report on lay leadership and influence in the church and the world was debated and heartily approved.

There was also loads of worship and prayer and fringe meeting to suit all tastes.

There is never a dull moment.

Priscilla

Junk Easter

Following the pilot project Junk Nativity, Junk Easter will take place in Woodhouse Primary Academy on March 15th, 22nd and 29th with a presentation in Church on April 5th. Please pray for the project and look out for practical ways in which to support it.

APCM – advance notice

The APCM this year will take place on Tuesday 25th April. There will be elections to Deanery Synod this year as well as to the PCC. It is important to note that Deanery Synod members vote for Diocesan and General Synod members and I believe that it will be the tranche of reps elected this year who will elect our diocesan House of Laity reps for the General Synod for 2020. Notices about elections and the revision of the electoral roll will be placed in late March, early April.

Christian Aid Week : 14th-20th May

Christian Aid Week began 60 years ago to support what the work the churches of Britain and Ireland were doing with refugees in Europe.

Today the needs of refugees and other groups of disadvantaged people still require compassion and practical help. Your support financially and in collecting for Christian Aid Week is of vital importance. As a guide to your prayers and reflections during Lent, the Christian Aid Leaflet "Count Your Blessings 2017" will be distributed in church during the first Sunday in Lent.

"When I needed a neighbour were you there?"

Please keep these dates in your diary.

Judith and Geoff Bennett

Imagination

Ash Wednesday this year falls on March 1st which is also St David's Day. The last time this happened was in 1995. David is special to the Welsh, and was known as Dewi in Welsh. He is remembered for travelling throughout Wales taking the gospel to the people. A Welsh poet-priest, David James Jones wrote this poem where he's imagining that the saints of the church from throughout the centuries, are still with us, going about their work of evangelising Wales.

I have seen Dewi going from shire to shire like the gipsy of God.
With the gospel and the altar in his caravan;
He came to us in the colleges and schools
To show us the purpose of learning.
He went down into the pit with the coal miners
And shone his lamp on the coal face.
He put on the goggles of the steel worker, and the short grey overall.
And showed the Christian being purified like metal in the furnace.
He brought the factory people into his disreputable Church.
He carried the Church everywhere
Like a body with life and mind and will,
And he did small things and great.
He brought the Church into our homes,
Put the holy vessels on the kitchen table
With bread from the pantry and wine from the cellar,
And he stood behind the table like a tramp
So as not to hide from us the wonder of the sacrifice.

I think that there's great wonder, and great beauty, in this poet's work of imagination: he puts into our minds pictures of the great saint visiting us in our workplaces, our schools and our homes. Comforting, inspiring, pictures. Thank God for the imagination of the poet.

The season of Lent invites us all to use our imaginations. It starts, of course with Jesus. When Jesus went into the desert by himself, he had to struggle with both his body and his mind. There he was fasting: which focussed his attention on his physical body; and there he was in prayer: which was all about his spiritual preparation and his mental strength. The gospels tell the story of the struggle Jesus faced in the temptations of both body and mind.

The fast in the desert would have severely tested Jesus' body and would have been a distraction to his mind which he had to get past. Without discipline, denying his body what it wanted, he could not hope to carry out God's will which would include pain, suffering and death.

BURNS NIGHT



Forty three people enjoyed a wonderful evening. We had a great meal and great music from a group led by James Griffiths.

The Haggis was addressed by Revd Dr John White and we toasted Robbie Burns and proceeded with our meal.

It was such a good night that I must thank every one from the Socials Task Group and friends who worked so hard during the day, preparing the meal; they really deserved our grateful thanks.

We held a raffle, and having told everyone that all money raised would go to the Church Hall Roof Repair Fund, people were very generous which all helped us to raise and pay into the fund £274.91.

Many thanks to all who came, and from the many reports we heard everyone really enjoyed the evening.

Len Myers

CHURCHWOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP.

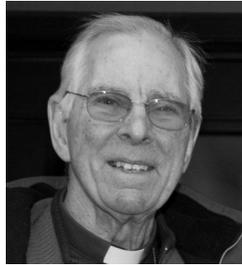
The Fellowship's year begins on Monday, 6th March at 7.45pm in the Committee Room with a talk on The Escape of Charles 1 by Roger Pendrill.

There is a copy of the 2017 programme on the Notice Board in the Church Hall for any lady who is interested. If you would like to come along and 'give us try' we should be very pleased to see you. We always have tea/coffee and biscuits after the talk and the meeting finishes around 9.15pm.

Helen Hayward.
422 5724.



The Rt Revd Michael Whinney, former Bishop of Aston.



We are very sad to hear of the death of Bishop Michael who died on Friday 3 February, aged 86, in the care of friends and family after a short illness. There will be a private funeral and a memorial service will be announced in due course.

Michael was a well-loved bishop who made a great contribution to the Church of England here in Birmingham as Bishop of Aston (1982-1985) after fruitful ministry in Rainham, Bermondsey and as Archdeacon of Southwark. In 1985 he moved to take the role of Bishop of Southwell before returning to Birmingham three years later due to ill health. After a sabbatical year in the Diocese, he became a stipendiary assistant bishop where his passion for mission, his approachability and his care of the clergy were highly valued. During the period between the departure of Archbishop Sentamu and the arrival of Bishop David, the Archbishop of Canterbury asked Michael to lead the Diocese and his ministry during that time was deeply appreciated.

Bishop Michael spoke proudly of his family heritage as the great-great-grandson of Charles Dickens from whom he gained one of his middle names. In retirement he served as honorary assistant bishop in Birmingham and Bishop Mark Santer, who is a close friend of the family, said of Michael, "I valued him greatly as a friend and colleague." We remember in our prayers Michael's wife Veronica and their three children at this difficult time.

May Michael rest in peace and rise in glory.

Church of England, Birmingham.

Bishop Michael came to our church on several occasions, but the one most remembered was a confirmation service. But this was no ordinary confirmation service. It took place here at St. Faith's on Sunday December 9th, 1990 following a night of heavy snow. Bishop Michael lived in Moseley, and as he couldn't drive through the snow, he hitched a lift on a JCB tractor carrying his robes and his crosier. When he eventually arrived, he told the congregation that he was determined not to let the ten candidates down, and the service went ahead as planned.

The prayer in the desert was a way of testing his complete faith in God, his spiritual oneness with the Father and the strength of his mental determination and obedience to his Father. In fighting the temptations put before him Jesus used his imagination. The devil was trying to make him imagine one thing about himself - but Jesus worked hard to imagine something other.

The devil presents him with visions of power: Jesus can give in to his body's demands for food by commanding stones to become bread; he can test his own divinity by demanding God save him if he recklessly endangers his life; he can turn aside from God's will and give in to temptation. Each time the devil tries to make Jesus imagine himself giving in to his very enticing temptations, all of Jesus' imagination and mental strength focuses on God as he replaces the devil's vision of himself with God's vision of who he is.

As I said earlier, the season of Lent invites us all to use our imaginations. Who would we be, if we saw ourselves through the eyes of the creator? How would our world look if we saw it God's way? It takes some doing, being imaginative like this. It takes faith. Faith like Noah's. What faith Noah must have had, looking out from the deck of his creaking little ark, to imagine that the drowning world he could see before his eyes had a bright future - and that would God put him and his descendents and the living creatures with him, at the centre of a new world of promise.

Being imaginative takes faith. Faith like Jesus, able to stay in the wilderness for forty days, tempted by Satan; with the wild beasts. The angels waited on him, and helped Jesus to imagine a future in which he would be able to go out among the people and tell them, 'The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news.'

Remember Jesus telling his followers that the key to belonging to his kingdom is to become like little children. Maybe that's because he knew that children are very good at using their imaginations: dreaming up new possibilities for themselves, creating new worlds, because they have faith in what's in their minds.

Yet even when our imagination fails, and everything seems hopeless, God is still there; there is no state so desperate that God will abandon us. When we can't see clearly into the future then we need to realise that we need the support of others; and when life seems dark for others then we need to be a source of hope and inspiration for them.

The season of Lent invites us all to use our imaginations. What could we do to bring light into someone else's darkness? Who can we ask to bring light into ours?

Peter Stokes

It's a prayer cop



The world's oldest police force - founded in 1285 -has a confession to make: for the past 80 years its eight officers have not had the legal right to arrest anyone. But this spring York Minster's police will be given the same powers as every bobby on the beat.

As they patrol the beautiful 13th-century cathedral, home of the largest expanse of medieval stained glass in the world, the constables will be allowed to carry a baton and apprehend anyone thought to be committing an offence.

The cathedral's private force -the British equivalent of the Vatican's Swiss Guard - will wear blue police uniforms and have undergone the same training as regular officers. Anyone they arrest within the cathedral precincts will be handed over to the regular police.

Only five cathedrals in Britain have their own police but the York Liberty Constables - to give them their ancient title - have the longest and most fascinating history of all. The scale of their beat is remarkable: York Minster is the second-largest Gothic cathedral in Northern Europe and the central tower is large enough to fit the Leaning Tower of Pisa inside. Work on just one end of the building has taken 16 miles of scaffolding.

The value of what the constables protect is staggering too. The Great East Window is the single largest medieval stained-glass window in the country and is described as the British equivalent of the Sistine Chapel in Rome. In all, the Minster holds 60 per cent of England's medieval stained glass.

With its centuries-old history the Minster Police was a forerunner of the modern police force established by Sir Robert Peel in 1829. New officers were sworn in as constables until the 1930s when the practice ceased. However, despite not having the power of arrest for 80 years the Minster Police continued to play a vital role in safeguarding the cathedral and its treasures.

On the night of July 9, 1984, lightning struck the roof, starting a fire that caused millions of pounds worth of damage. Only the speed of a constable in raising the alarm helped prevent far worse destruction.

Fire struck the Minster again on New Year's Eve in 2009. Once again a constable on patrol discovered the blaze, which had started in the stone yard where the precious Great East Window was being stored during restoration work. The Minster constables helped firemen to move the window's priceless panels to safety.

Only seven cathedrals around the world have their own police force: York Minster, Liverpool's Anglican cathedral, Canterbury, Hereford and Chester cathedrals, St Peter's Basilica in Rome and Washington's National cathedral in the US. In the Vatican the Swiss Guard is responsible for the safety of the Pope and the security of the Apostolic Palace.

Chris Roycroft-Davis

O'er each continent and island



Awhile ago I heard a lovely programme on the radio. In short, the presenter recalled his grandmother telling him that Spring moves north at walking pace, and so he decided to test this out. He left Bournemouth as the first daffodils began to bloom and walked north in the hope that he would enjoy daffodils all the way to John O'Groats.

Depending upon how fast you walk, quite steadily in this case, his grandmother was more or less right! Spring moves north at the rate of 16 miles per day plus an extra day for each 100 ft above sea level. What a delightful notion - enjoying daffodils all the way from Bournemouth to John O'Groats!

One of my favourite hymns is '*The day thou gavest Lord is ended*'. There is not space here to quote the hymn, but it expresses the sentiment that, as the world turns, 'o'er each continent and island', there is always someone somewhere beginning the day with a hymn of praise; there is always someone somewhere saying their midday prayers, there is always someone somewhere saying Compline.

I find that a powerful image, particularly because for 21 years I worked for the mission agency USPG and so knew and could visualise acquaintances in many corners of the world. As with the daffodils, there is a wave of prayer and praise which, in theory anyway, one could follow around the world.

So often today regular worship can be neglected. There is always something more urgent to do; busy lives mean that Sunday is the only day for a bit of family time or indeed the only day to catch up with household chores. Giving time for worship is difficult and I fully understand and appreciate that. But worship is never-the-less important.

It is the one thing we can offer to God that is of our very self. Sometimes at church we say 'All things come from you O God and of your own do we give you.' The blessings we have, even the gifts and talents we offer others, come from God. What we can offer God from deep within ourselves is worship.

Furthermore, scripture reminds of the duty of worship. 'Ascribe to the Lord the glory due his name... Come before him. Worship the Lord in holy splendour'.

However, if you have not managed to say your prayers yet today, don't worry too much. Someone in the world will be saying them for you. And if you have not seen any daffodils yet, don't worry. Someone else will have done and you know they are coming, albeit at walking pace.

Geoffrey Lowson



Funeral at the Crematorium

30th January Mary Abbott

Funeral in Church

21st February Denise Roberts

FACTS AND FIGURES

Week Beginning	Communicants	Loose Plate £	Planned Giving £	Gift Aid £
Jan 22	66	36.91	184.50	55.00
Jan 29	77	43.20	359.28	5.00
Feb 5	76	66.43	523.54	15.00
Feb 12	34	30.24	359.00	10.00
Standing Orders			1520.00	21.42



David and Anita Tippin thank all of their friends at St Faith and St Laurence for the warm wishes, cards, and beautiful flowers as they celebrated their Golden Wedding Anniversary.

Prayer of the month

LENT

This year Lent begins on March 1st. Lent, which comes from the Teutonic (Germanic) word for springtime, can be viewed as a spiritual spring cleaning: a time for making a spiritual inventory and then cleaning out those things which hinder our corporate and personal relationships with Jesus Christ and our service to him.

Since early days Christians have observed with great devotion the time of our Lord's passion and resurrection and prepared for this by a season of penitence and fasting, self-denial and ultimately Christian growth. By carefully keeping these days of Lent, Christians take to heart the call to repentance and the assurance of forgiveness proclaimed in the gospel, and so grow in faith and in devotion to our Lord.

Dr Deidre Homer, a Methodist preacher reflects on the need for Christians to undertake their own self-giving - responding to God's activity in the world by acting on behalf of those around us and this is one of her prayers for Lent. So I invite you to respond to this call to action as we begin our Lenten journey.

Call to Action

**The Israelite prophet Micah said:
 "What does the Lord require of you?
 Only to act justly, love mercy and to walk humbly with your God."
 God of mercy and source of justice,
 pour on your people such love and compassion that
 we cannot remain silent,
 we cannot tolerate injustice and poverty.
 As your grace fills our hearts
 so may we be stirred into action
 to demonstrate your love for all the world
 and for all creatures that live and move on this earth.**

Sally Griffiths

PROGRAMME FOR MARCH

Wed 1	10.30 am	Call in for Coffee	Committee Room
	11.00 am	Holy Communion <i>Joel 2.1-2, 12-17; John 8.1-11</i>	Lady Chapel
	7.30 pm	Ash Wednesday Eucharist <i>Readings as at 11 am</i>	Church
Thu 2	9.30 am	Stay and Play	Hall
	6.00 pm	Choir Practice	Church
	7.30 pm	Service with no name	Church
Fri 3	1.45 pm	Women's World Day of Prayer	Harborne Baptist
Sat 4	10.30 am	Messy Church	Hall

SUN 5	LENT 1		
	8.00 am	Holy Communion <i>Genesis 2.15-17; 3.1-7; Romans 5.12-19; Matthew 4.1-11</i>	
	10.00 am	Family Communion <i>Readings as at 8 am</i>	
	6.30 pm	Evensong <i>Psalm 50</i> <i>Deuteronomy 4.4-9, 16-25; Luke 15.1-10</i>	

Mon 6	1.45 pm	Reflections	143, Balden Road
Tue 7	8.00 pm	Team Meeting	
Wed 8	10.30 am	Call in for Coffee	Committee Room
	11.00 am	Holy Communion <i>Jonah 3; Luke 11.29-32</i>	Lady Chapel
	7.30 pm	3 D Course	Committee Room
Thu 9	9.30 am	Stay and Play	Hall
	6.00 pm	Choir Practice	Church
	7.30 pm	FGP Task Group	

SUN 12	LENT 2		
	8.00 am	Holy Communion <i>Genesis 12.1-4a</i> <i>Romans 4.1-5, 13-17; John 3.1-17</i>	
	10.00 am	Morning Praise <i>John 3.1-17</i>	
	6.30 pm	Sung Eucharist <i>Readings as at 8 am</i>	

Mon 13	1.45 pm	Reflections	143, Balden Road
Tue 14	10.30 am	Queen Mother Gardens Service	
	7.45 pm	PCC Meeting	Committee Room

Wed 15	10.30 am	Call in for Coffee	Committee Room
	11.00 am	Holy Communion <i>Jeremiah 18.18-20; Matthew 20.17-28</i>	Lady Chapel
	3.30 pm	Junk Easter	
	7.30 pm	3 D Course	Committee Room
Thu 16	9.30 am	Stay and Play	Hall
	6.00 pm	Choir Practice	Church
Sat 18	10.30 pm	Marriage Preparation	
	7.30 pm	Choir Concert	Church

SUN 19	LENT 3		
	8.00 am	Holy Communion <i>Exodus 17.1-7</i> <i>Romans 5.1-11; John 4.5-42</i>	
	10.00 am	Family Communion <i>Readings as at 8 am</i>	
	6.30 pm	Evensong <i>Psalm 40</i> <i>Joshua 1.1-9; Ephesians 6.10-20</i>	
Mon 20	1.45 pm	Reflections	143, Balden Road
Wed 22	10.30 am	Call in for Coffee	Committee Room
	11.00 am	Holy Communion <i>Deuteronomy 4.1, 5-9; Matthew 5.17-19</i>	Lady Chapel
	3.30 pm	Junk Easter	
	7.30 pm	3 D Course	Committee Room

Thu 23	9.30 am	Stay and Play	Hall
	6.00 pm	Choir Practice	Church

Sat 25	10.30 am	Diocesan Synod plus Conference	
SUN 26	LENT 4 - MOTHERING SUNDAY		
	8.00 am	Holy Communion <i>Exodus 2.1-10</i> <i>Colossians 3.12-17; John 19.25-27</i>	
	10.00 am	Family Communion <i>Readings as at 8 am</i>	
	6.30 pm	Evensong <i>Psalm 31</i> <i>Micah 7; James 5</i>	

Mon 27	1.45 pm	Reflections	143, Balden Road
Tue 28	2.00 pm	William Lench Court Service	
Wed 29	10.30 am	Call in for Coffee	Committee Room
	11.00 am	Holy Communion <i>Isaiah 49.8-15; John 5.17-30</i>	Lady Chapel
	3.30 pm	Junk Easter	

	7.30 pm	3 D Course	Committee Room
Thu 30	9.30 am	Stay and Play	Hall
	6.00 pm	Choir Practice	Church
Sat 1	10.30 am	Messy Church	Hall