

St Swithun's Church Newsletter

For information and inspiration

Love Life, Live Lent

The season of Lent can bring a mixture of emotions. On the one hand it is a time of eager anticipation for Easter; a time of celebration and rejoicing. On the other it is a season that leads us to think seriously and soberly about the way in which we live our lives. Traditionally, we are encouraged to enter into this season of Lent through self-denial and abstinence, but a campaign which started in 2006 entitled 'Love Life, Live Lent' provides a slightly different angle. It is a programme that encourages people to do something different every day in Lent, starting on Ash Wednesday.

'Love Life Live Lent is a new way of marking Lent. Instead of giving up chocolate or going on a detox, it encourages people to undertake a simple act of generosity each day. The actions are small and fun to do, but make a real difference in homes, families and communities.'

This is a helpful shift in emphasis away from some of the wallowing and self-flagellation that can happen in the run up to Easter, and it encourages a

broader embracing of the world and its needs. The archbishops have said this about the programme:

'Our world can be a difficult and fearful place. It's all too easy to feel we are powerless to make a difference. But the truth is, with God's help we can change the world for good a little bit each day. Each of us can be the change we want to see in the world.'

A focus on changing the world for the better seems entirely fitting as we spend time thinking about the death and resurrection of the man who came to proclaim good news to the poor, to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners (Isaiah 61:1). We can be motivated by the hope for a better world, and if we can bring change to our small part of the world by differences in things we do or say, then what better way to spend the Lenten season.

Em Coley

For more information on the Love Life Live Lent campaign visit www.livelent.net



A Day in the Life of Barbara Boyne

My day starts between 7.15 and 7.30am. On dark mornings it is more of an effort to prise myself out of bed! I have to be up at a reasonable time, though, as my neighbour will start wondering if all is well if my curtains remain closed after **about 8.30am! In any case, I'm a 'morning person'. I enjoy the early part of the day. I find I'm more energetic** then, especially as the days lengthen.

The radio goes on when I come down. I **make my coffee (I don't like drinks in bed). Then it's a look through the paper** while listening to the radio. Radio is a **constant companion, when I'm in** – mainly Radio 4, often Radio 3 or Classic FM when I tire of the spoken word.

The week usually has a regular pattern to it. Monday is Kennington Health Walks day. A good walk and lots of chatter – a very sociable morning, new friends have been made.

When the weather is good we often do the river walks. This is always lovely in the spring, especially coming after a **hard winter. Tuesday is a 'transport' day** when I take a dear lady of 96 to have her hair done – she loves going, and often meets friends there. On Wednesday I meet my sisters-in-law in Oxford for coffee and a natter. We put the world to rights before going on our way. Thursday is often the mid-week service and on alternate Fridays is another regular transport day.

The in-between Friday is blank – I can do exactly what I want then. I enjoy that, especially as the gardening season starts. I love my garden. I find gardening relaxing and calming. I often

pray in the garden and thank God for the beauty I see around me.

The evenings are cosy times – curtains drawn, lights on. After an evening meal I read a good book or watch interesting television programmes. My son in the US has recently given me a gadget (WDTVLive!!). On it he has loaded masses of entertainment, including years of the growing up of my two grandchildren there. It is fascinating and wonderful to see the transformation from babyhood to the lovely teenagers they are now.

Then between 10.00 and 10.30pm it's bedtime (with a book). That's when I say my prayers, thanking God for the day. I pray for my family and friends and especially for my dear son-in-law, Rick. He has come through major trauma and is recovering well. I pray too, for all who are facing difficulties, wherever they are in the world. I thank God for all his goodness. I consider myself very blessed.



St James, St Leonard and St Swithun Prayer Shawl Ministry

What is a Prayer Shawl Ministry? Care and the love of knitting (and crochet) have been combined into a prayerful ministry that reaches out to those in need of comfort and solace. Many blessings are knitted into every shawl. The knitter begins each shawl with prayers for the recipient. Intentions are continued throughout the creation of the shawl. When the shawl is completed it is blessed.

A Prayer Shawl Ministry is being started in our three churches, so that we can provide shawls for those in need and for the clergy to have available. At the same time the spiritual life of the makers is tremendously enhanced.

The initial meeting will be on Wednesday 16 March 2011, 7.30pm in the Church Room at **St James's**. **Dates, times and location of future meetings will be decided at this initial meeting.**

Please come if you are interested. **If you can't knit or crochet but are interested you can learn!**

For more details or if you can't make the date but would like to be involved contact Chris Wright:

01235 79967

cawright2010@talktalk.net

Pause for Prayer

**'Let the children come to me
and do not hinder them, for the
Kingdom of Heaven belongs to
such as these.'**

Matt 19:14



Giving thanks for:

- The children in our three **Children's church groups:** Raindrops, Lightning and Freewave
- **The wonderful growth we've seen in our children's ministry** over the last year
- The energy, enthusiasm and **commitment of our Children's Church leaders**, for their care for the children and dedication to the children's journey of faith

And praying:

- **That we might model Christ's** welcome to and affirmation of children in the work we do at **St Swithun's**
- That we would avoid marginalising our young people or underestimate their thinking, praying, serving and sharing abilities
- For those children on the fringes of church – that they **would be drawn by Christ's** love and enthusiasm for them
- That we would all know the love of the family of this church, whether parents/ children/grandparents/aunts/ uncles/friends/neighbours/ brothers/sisters, that we would be drawn together as one.

Tabard Singers

The Tabard Singers, a London chamber choir, will be giving a concert at the parish church of St James the Great, Radley on Saturday 2 April 2011 at 7.00pm.

Programme to include pieces by Tallis, Byrd, Stanford and Rutter, and the world première of Missa Brevis by Chris Handley (one of their basses).

No tickets required – collection in aid of church funds.

Tell all your friends!

Mon Choisy

As from Sunday 6 March, those authorised to distribute the wine at Communion will be visiting Mon Choisy to take Communion to those residents of the home who would like to receive it. This is a monthly commitment, in addition to the Prayer and Praise Parties that happen on the third Sunday of the month. I am very grateful to all those who have agreed to help out with this.

Em Coley

24-7 Prayer Event in Cumnor

Over the weekend of 11-13 March we are holding our fifth 24-7 prayer event. 24-7 prayer is a national organization promoting sacred spaces through creative prayer.

Each year the young people in our youth groups transform the youth rooms into an **Aladdin's Cave** of creative ideas using materials like balloons, paints, fishing nets, sand, seeds and washing lines – ever thought you could pray like that?

The idea is that people sign up for an **hour's slot over the weekend** and come to the payer room to take part in the activities or simply take a look around. (

We would like to invite you to come and join us! If you would like to take a slot, **let us know**. It's certainly not just for young people – we have people aged

from 5 to 85 taking part each year!

The people who have been in the past love this event and we are sure you will **too**. It's **prayer, but not like you've** experienced it before!

Ruth Hulse
Cumnor Parish Youth Worker
07733 323290

'All the family came and all the family stayed – age 7 up – because our hearts and minds were opened and moved'

'Inspiring, challenging, encouraging, thought provoking, exciting, transforming.'

'It was wonderful to be in God's presence'

'I never knew prayer could be like this, I felt so close to God'



Lent Course

This year in Lent we will once again be joining with the Catholic and Methodist Churches in Kennington for a Lent course. Home groups will be temporarily suspended as we will meet as Churches Together for a five week course.

The topic this year is entitled 'Pray as You Can (Not as You Can't)', and we will consider the following methods of praying in a workshop-style format:

- 17 March: Coming into Prayer (Father Paul)
- 24 March: Intercessory Prayer (Em)
- 31 March: Imaginative Contemplative Prayer (Father Paul)
- 7 April: Praying with the Psalms (Em)
- 14 April: Praying with Music and Art (Rosemary Davies)

The sessions will be held at the Good Shepherd Church from 8.00pm until 9.00pm. Do come if you can.



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Something to Say?

Please send any contributions for **the St Swithun's Church newsletter** to the Editor, Jackie Smith. We welcome text and/or pictures (in particular it would be good to build up a bank of pictures reflecting church life, so if you have any please do send them in).

Don't worry if writing isn't your thing – Jackie can help you with the right form of words.

Deadline for copy: 20 March

The Real Easter Egg

Now that Lent is about to begin, Easter cannot be far away. The shops have been full of Easter eggs for some time now, in fact since soon after Christmas! But this year you have the opportunity to buy a Real Easter Egg. This egg is not only made from Fairtrade chocolate but it is the very first egg to bear the real message of Easter. I hope that you will want to give one of these eggs to your children, grandchildren, godchildren and anyone whom you want to remind about the great Easter message of the Resurrection, the real reason why we celebrate Easter.



The eggs are available from Brenda Groth (tel: 739229) from 6 March. They cost just £3.95 each, which includes donations to Baby Lifeline, a charity supporting new mothers and new-born babies in the UK; and to Traidcraft exchange, a development charity helping third-world producers get a fair price for their goods.

See Brenda to order your Real Easter Eggs now!!

Giving



At the last PCC meeting, a resolution was passed that we would give a **proportion of the Church's income** to charitable causes. We agreed, in the first instance, to give £1000 this year and have agreed to give £500 to Viva and £500 to Gatehouse. We wanted to support one local project and one international project and to have links with both so we could support the organisations in prayer as well. The following articles provide information on both these charities.

Gatehouse

Did you know that our church, as part of a rota which includes the Methodist Church and the Roman Catholic Church in Kennington, has been supplying five loaves and five large cakes to the people at Gatehouse for 19 years? Gatehouse is a drop-in cafe for homeless people in

central Oxford. Back in 1992, at an ecumenical Lent study course, we looked at how we could meet the needs of those around us, and this is what has developed from those meetings.

This year our dates for supplying this food are: 20 March, 24 July, and 27 November. Please put these dates in your diary and if you can help, by making a cake or a sandwiched loaf, or by providing transport to deliver them, please respond when you see an appeal in the pew sheet.

This will be the last year that we will be **delivering to the St Michael's Street premises**, as Gatehouse has finally been **given a year's notice**. We have been asked to pray that a suitable replacement building can be found so that this important service might continue to be available to those who need it.

If you have ideas about a replacement premises, or would just like to know more about this charity, look them up on their very good website: www.gatehouse.org, and please hold them all in your prayers.

Margaret Smith





A year after finishing my degree here in Oxford, I had a ‘throw-down-your-nets-and-follow-me’ experience. Like the first disciples, I was neither expecting the encounter, nor anything that followed. Seventeen years later it is hard to express even a little of what has resulted from the emergence of ‘Viva’.

Through a resolute passion to see local Christians co-operate to address the huge issues that afflict children around the world, Viva’s dynamic international team have seen extraordinary results that have touched the lives of hundreds of thousands of children and tens of thousands of Christian workers who care for them.

May I take this opportunity to thank St Swithun’s PCC for choosing Viva as one of its two more formalised charitable causes.

I will endeavour to keep you up-to-date with news from Viva, either verbally, through this newsletter, or via a display in the church porch.

Martin Hull



Craft Mornings

Over the last year we have held a number of seasonal craft mornings. These have been well attended by children in the village and the opportunity for a bit of time off has been much appreciated by the parents.

We are considering the possibility of doing this on a regular basis on the second Saturday of every month.

Mary Dennett has agreed to oversee the operation (acting as ideas guru, and supplies manager where necessary), but we will need two teams of five people to make this a workable and sustainable project.

We all lead busy lives, but I would be enormously grateful if you would consider committing one Saturday morning every two months to enable this to happen.

The contact with the children and the space for the parents is an important part of our outreach as a church, but is only possible with your help. Please speak to me or to Mary if you would like to volunteer, or if you would like more information. Thank you.

Em Coley

Children's Church



Here some of the helpers tell us about the three groups that make up children's church.

Raindrops

What do we do at 'Raindrops'? Well, we run with them and after them chasing balloons, throwing balls, building towers, posting and emptying bricks and Noah's Ark animals...who needs the gym when you can spend an hour with Raindrops on the move. We also have lovely times of cuddles and song singing. We hope to develop opportunities to play percussion and sing, to explore sensory play and to tell short stories.

Rachel Smith

Lightning

Lightning Children's Group has up to 12 children, between ages 4 and 9. Mainly, we have fun. We play games, share what is happening in our lives, learn how to pray, listen to Bible stories, sing songs, but mostly we make things. We learn how much we are loved by Jesus, and also how to care for one another.

Things we have done this past year include welly throwing on St Swithun's Day, sowing meadow flower seeds, making thankyou rosettes for our parents, learning how to pray Wow prayers, Thank you prayers, Help prayers and Sorry prayers.

When we finish, we come into church so that we can tell the grown-ups what we have learned at the end of the service.

Hopefully we will soon have a dressing up box, so we can play acting out some Bible stories. Also, we will have badges too.

It is lovely when we have extra children joining us, who happen to be visiting for the day. New children are always welcome.

Rosey Hollinrake

Freewave

Freewave is a group for young people between the ages of 10 and 15 which meets twice a month to eat, drink hot chocolate, play games, chat about stuff and see how God fits into all of that. It's informal and is a place to relax and be.

Lee Coley



Dates for your Diary

Sunday 6 March

4.30pm. Fairtrade Tea party in Church Hall

6.30pm. Refresh

Wednesday 9 March

7.00pm. Ash Wednesday Service at Radley

Thursday 10 March

10.30am. Penitential service at St Swithun's

Thursday 17 March

8.00pm. Lent Course starts at Good Shepherd Church

Sunday 20 March

11.00am. APCM

Monday 21 March

8.00pm. PCC meeting

Thursday 24 March

8.00pm. Lent Course

Saturday 26 March

11.00am. Jumble Sale in Village Centre

Tuesday 29 March

9.00am–3.00pm. Experience Easter in **Church for St Swithun's School**

Saturday 2 April

10.00am–12noon. Mothering Sunday Crafts

Sunday 3 April

6.30pm. Refresh

Friday 22 April, Good Friday

10.30am. Services starting at St Swithun's

Sunday 24 April, Easter Day

9.30am. Celebration Service

From the Editor

If like me you grew up with the Good News Bible you will be familiar with the illustrations by Annie Vallotton. One of my favourites has always been the one showing people helping to carry one another's burdens (Gal 6v2).

In the last couple of weeks I have noticed several ways in which people have supported me (providing an unexpected bowl of soup; dropping a

thoughtful card through the letterbox; chopping some wood; and fixing my bike brakes).

It's not as though becoming a Christian means suddenly not having any burdens. It's just that we find ourselves in a whole line of people helping to carry them. I hope this cheers you as much as it does me.

Jackie Smith



Many thanks to Lee's firm, Lee, Bolton Monier Williams, who have kindly printed this free of charge