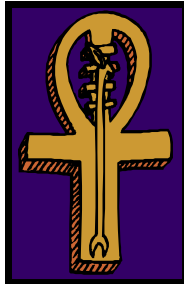


The Parish Magazine of Whitchurch-on-Thames and Whitchurch Hill



January 2005

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Dear friends in Christ,



Firstly, let me wish everyone a very healthy and happy New Year: I hope you came safely through the Christmas celebrations with your digestion and your family intact, and are rested and relaxed, and looking forward to whatever the coming year brings by way of challenges and opportunities.

It certainly looks like being a busy and exciting year for the parish. For example, on 9th January we shall be celebrating Plough Sunday with a special service of Blessing The Plough (courtesy of Sally and Peter Woolhouse) up the hill at St John's, and later in the year we shall keep Sea Sunday with a special riverside service on the second Sunday in July.

For some time I have been keen to explore ways of integrating our 'Sunday' Christian faith with our working lives during the rest of the week, so I am very pleased to say that we shall have three guest preachers on "God At Work" on first Sundays in early 2005. On 6th February our visitor will be Mr Grant Mottram the new Head of Whitchurch School: on 6th March, Mrs Elise Hoadley, a staff nurse at Sue Ryder Care Nettlebed, and on 1st May the Revd Nick Parish, Diocesan Adviser on Mission to Work and Economic Life.

The 'occasional' or pastoral offices (baptisms, weddings and funerals) are an important part of our ministry to the wider community, and this year I would like to introduce three special events to help us keep in touch with the families we have served in this way. So on February 13th, for example, we shall have a Celebration of Love and Marriage for St Valentine's Day, to which all couples who have been married in St Mary's or St John's in the past two years will be invited. (Of course all couples in the parish are equally welcome to join that celebration.)

On June 26th, we shall have a Celebration of Baptism for St John the Baptist's Day, to which all families who have had children baptized in the past two years will be invited (and everyone ever baptized in our two churches is included in the invitation.)

And on 30th October, there will be a Commemoration of the Faithful Departed for All Souls' Day, particularly for families who have lost loved ones in the past two years.

This year it's the turn of St Mary's to celebrate the Patronal Festival with a weekend of special events, and this will take place on 10th and 11th September around the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin, and hopefully we shall be able to put on another successful Fireworks Spectacular at about the same time.

Add to these events the annual Team Service at the summer Steam Rally, our traditional Harvest celebrations and regular Pets Service in the autumn, and there is plenty to look forward to, and I hope something for everyone, in the year ahead.

During the recent Advent season we were thinking about expectation: living with the hope and the promise that God is within us and among us, interested and involved in our lives, and providing the strength and resources we need to develop and grow.

With all of this planned new activity it is so very important that we remember to clear a space in our busy lives, to be still before God, submit our ideas and plans to Him, and be attentive to His voice and His will for our future as the Christian community in this parish.

The annual Lent Course offers us one such opportunity for quiet reflection. Easter falls early in 2005, so by the end of this month we shall be almost into Lent, and this year's Lent Course will run on five consecutive Wednesday evenings from 16th February to 16th March inclusive. More details in the next magazine.

Then, more power to your elbow in 2005. And, "God speed the plough!"

Yours in Christ Jesus,



PARISH REGISTERS FOR DECEMBER

Funerals:

Mr Esslemont Steel of Hillside, Hardwick Road, Memorial Service at St Mary's on 10th December

Mr Graham Wallace of Blewbury, Funeral at St John's on 21st December.)

Rest eternal grant unto them, O Lord, let light perpetual shine upon them. AMEN

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JANUARY DATES FOR YOUR DIARY.

- Sun 2nd The Epiphany: Visiting minister at Parish Communion,
Revd Angela Linton
- Sun 9th Plough Sunday. Special liturgy with Blessing The Plough at
St John's, 10am. Visiting minister Revd Kevin Davies.
- Tue 11th Team Council meeting 8pm at Checkendon Rectory
- Sat 15th Licensing of The Revd. Canon Martyn Griffiths as Rector of Henley
- Tue 18^t Week of Prayer for Christian Unity begins
- Sun 23rd, Visiting minister at 8 and 10 am, Revd Angela Linton
Christian Unity Service in Pangbourne
- Tue 25th, PCC meeting 8pm.
- Sun 30th Candlemas / Presentation: Team Family Service
at Checkendon 1030 am
- Sun 30th Private baptism service at St Mary's 2pm:
Revd. Canon Brian Shenton

FRIENDS OF ST. JOHN'S

Thank you to everyone who supported the Friends of St. John's Raffle at the Christmas Fair in December at the Goring Heath Parish Hall, Whitchurch Hill.

The Winner of the Hamper was Nick Elsome who lives in Manor Road, Whitchurch-on-Thames.

Jo Adams, Chairman

Reaching out to Immigrants in Europe

Over the past two months we have printed an paper by Dr. Graham Hutt on his work with Migrants and Refugees

To round off this series we are printing copies of some Emails sent to his parents during his travels in pursuit of his work.

All of the very personal parts have been omitted

Ed.

Sent: 27 June 2004 11:33

Subject: Malta

Dear Dad,

Once again I am in Malta. Anne came back over a few days ago having been in Spain with Ghada. It is really hot here, over 100 degrees and very humid.

Malta is changing rapidly now. After years of being in a hole after the 1980's when a prime minister Don Mintof got rid of all the British military facilities and the island lost totally its only industry: that of servicing warships. It built a tourist industry from the dregs of the British charter companies, bringing over hoards of lager louts from Manchester and Birmingham to fill cheap hotel beds and to get money back into the government. The roads could not cope and are the worst I know of anywhere in the world. There is not enough water to supply the hotels. Now it is in the EU, it can tap into funds from the EU to get new roads and water desalination plants.

We are in a new marina in Vittoriosa, right in the place where our warships used to tie up near Fort St. Angelo. I remember being in this exact spot in HMS Cleopatra.

I have basically finished the work in Italy and have now mapped out where all the migrants are and their language groups. I am now arranging for different organisations to get humanitarian aid to them as well as provide bibles to those who want them. I have been asked to do a presentation at the Vatican to the Bishops Conference in September. This follows a report I gave there recently. We are leaving for a small island called Lampedusa in a day or two. This island belongs to Italy and is tiny. The population is 4000 people, but they have around 18,000 migrant refugees there. These are mostly Libyans and Moroccans who go there in small boats hoping to get to Europe. The Italian government used to take them to mainland Italy, but because of political pressure and the fact that the flow continues, they will no longer do this. It is a catastrophe for the island and its people as well as for the migrants. I have been asked to take a look and make recommendations. The island is really only a rock, two or three miles long half way between Malta and Tunisia.

After that, we sail to Tunisia and then to Algeria to revisit friends and colleagues there. I am updating the nautical pilot as I go because the publishers have sold out and need another edition by the end of the year. I am really not looking forward to Algeria, although Tunisia is friendly and the people hospitable.

I am hoping to be back home in Spain by September. It has been a whole year already away from home working in Italy and Greece, with only a week at home for Christmas.

It has been a hard year and I don't think I can take off like that again. Too old for that and getting tired. We are hoping that Mark will come over at the end of July and help me sail back to Spain, as Anne can only stay for another three weeks because of Ghada, who is in college still.

Sent: 09 July 2004 16:38

Subject: FRIN

Dear Dad,

I did not hear back from you after my last mail went out.

We are now in El Kantaoui, half way up the Tunisian east coast. Tomorrow we depart for the island of Pantalleria, just south of Sicily. This group of islands is also covered in my book so I have to check for changes.

I received an email from the Royal Institute, saying that I have been awarded a Fellowship of the Royal Institute of Navigation. This is in recognition of my work in North Africa to make it safer and more easily navigated by seafarers. My work on the pilot is what I would have done anyway for my own benefit. It is good that others can and have also benefited from the work.

Sent: 14 July 2004 12:35

Subject: Tunisia

Thanks for your email. It has been a lot of hassle getting email in Tunisia. Much worse than it used to be. The authorities are blocking digital personal communications in an attempt presumably to stifle anything they cannot control or monitor. There is no problem in using the info I give in the parish magazine so long as any of my specific activities in North Africa are not detailed, apart from my secular work on the pilot book revision and work with migrants. I have a big problem over the project I started years ago in Spain, to give Arabic New Testaments to any North Africans traveling back from their work in Europe to North Africa, which most do every year.

Over three million return to the Maghreb from Europe each year). It has been recognized as one of the most successful projects ever started in the Arab world and has, as a result, got me into trouble. You may have read in the news that the some weeks ago the Spanish police raided an apartment occupied by North African terrorists in Madrid.

continued on page 12

GIVE US A BREAK . . .

. . . is the name of a Charity run by the Youth Hostels Association. It supports disadvantaged young people by enabling them to spend weekends in a Youth Hostel in the countryside as part of an organised group, something they would not otherwise have the opportunity to do.

Why, you may ask, do you need to know this? Because I will be undertaking a 'Charity Challenge' for *Give Us A Break*, walking, for one week in April, along the Great Wall of China, in memory of my late husband Peter. Needless to say I have been walking, running and climbing flights of steps to make sure my knees can cope with the challenge!

I will be paying most of my own costs for the actual trip, but am seeking sponsorship for the Charity itself. If you feel able to support me in any way, I would be very grateful. Thank you very much!

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Children's Page

NEW YEAR. NEW WORLD

As we start a new year, I want to begin writing poems for you about good stories in the first part of the Bible – the Old Testament. So as the first for this New Year, we're going to start with the very first story in the Bible – the story of how God made the world.

Everywhere was dark and gloomy
Water sloshing all around
No light, no life, no earth, no meaning
Darkness thick, without a sound

God said, 'Let the day be full of brightness
But we'll leave the dark for night.'
When it happened God was well pleased,
For the day was a lovely sight

Then God said, 'Let sky appear now.
And I want dry ground to show.'
So earth and sea were separated,
And God said 'That's good, I know.'

But the world was very empty,
So God clothed the earth with grass
Trees and bushes, flowers, herbs and mosses
'It's good – what I have brought to pass.

Next he put the stars in heaven,
And the moon to shine at night.
And the bright sun for the daytime
'Yes, my world is a lovely sight!'

'Let's have fishes in the water,
Birds to fly across the sky
Animals –both wild and tame kinds
Big and small and brave and shy.'

'Oh it's good, this world I've made now,'
And God hugged himself with glee.
'But this world needs something extra,
Something that is more like me!'

So God made a man and woman
They would be his special friends
They would care for his creation
That's how God world making ends!

The Bible tells us that God made people 'in his image' – like him.
We can talk to God and tell him things. (We call it praying). And we
can look at the wonderful world he's made and thank him for it. (We
call it worship). And we can care for this world and look after it as
best we can. (We call that worship too!)

Geraldine Witcher

OXFORDSHIRE HISTORIC CHURCHES TRUST RIDE OR STRIDE

Thanks to everyone who supported this year's Ride or Stride. Four riders entered, Nick Elsome, Anthea Laing, Harvey and myself. Together we raised £350.00 half of which comes to our two churches and the other half goes to the Trust who give grants to Churches in Oxfordshire of which we have been a recipient in the past.

It is a very enjoyable day and even though I have not been on a bike for 20 years it all comes back to you. I hope that next year we will see a few more people join us and perhaps we can make more of an occasion of this worthwhile event.

Jo Adams

Whitchurch Hill W. I.

On December 14th, our members had a very delicious Christmas lunch and a recital by Mrs. Janet Pound

The meal of game pie, chicken pie, vegetables, followed by cold sweets was enjoyed by everyone. The raffle was won by Mrs. Susan Whyman and the end of the party was celebrated by some delightful music, and a Christmas medley of songs from the musicals in which everyone participated.

Our next meeting is on January 18th and has a talk by Heather Baker called 'My life!'

NB. The cheque presented to the Air Ambulance was monies raised by the Plant Stall (Whitchurch Hill), and not the W.I. As reported in previous notes on the outing to the Air Ambulance Station at White Waltham.

Mrs. Ann Bradley

Continued from page 7

The occupants blew themselves up and several people were killed. The police later found a hit list in the rubble and my name was on it for my work to distribute Arabic Scriptures to North Africans. They had got the information from internet sources

We are storm bound in Kelibia right now. This is a small Phoenician port on the north east coast of Tunisia, just south of Cap Bon. It is always windy here, but has been blowing 40 knots and more from the northwest over the past two days. Since we need to go that direction, I am awaiting a wind shift before setting off for the Bay of Tunis. It is actually quite cool here due to the wind. Around 26 or 26 degrees only. We needed a blanket last night! It is apparently well over 40 degrees in Tunis, so Anne will be melting there. She wants to get back to the UK in any case, as Ghada returns from Spain next week. She will be in the UK for at least a month and probably longer, trying to get Ghada settled into a new educational situation. She says she will call you when she arrives. I wonder if you have yet disposed of the old car?

I need to pass through the UK in September - to receive the membership award of the Royal Cruising Club - then in October to receive the ceremonial award of my FRIN membership in London. I am wondering what sort of dress they are expecting. I guess a black bow tie for the dinners. This will be new to me. Apart from the Christmas Spanish dinners, my dinner suit does not get worn at all.

Love Graham

Purley Horticultural Society

A.G.M

This will take place on Wednesday, 16th February, 2005 commencing at 7.45 p.m. in Purley Memorial Hall. After the official business has been completed, Mr. David Penny will give a talk on "Changes in gardening in the last 50 years".

Snowdrop Walk

Welford Park (between Boxford and Great Shefford) will be open on Tuesdays, Wednesdays & Thursdays (11 a.m. - 5 p.m.) and Sundays (2 p.m. - 5 p.m.) from 1st - 28th February.
Contact 01488 608478 for more information.

Trading

The Shed is now closed and will re-open on Saturday, 5th February, 2005 when your annual membership for the Society can be renewed. Seed potato forms should be returned to Bob Hawkins as soon as possible. If anyone else would like seed potatoes, please contact Bob for an order form or the Trading Shed when it re-opens. Bird seed may also be purchased from Alex Stott on 941 9186 (e-mail: vastott@aol.com) or Bob Hawkins on 982 2949 whilst the Shed is closed.

Finally, a very happy new year to everyone and good gardening in 2005.

Marion Dabbs

Tel: 942 2349

HOUSE FOR DUTY? WHAT'S THAT?

At the last PCC meeting, a request was made to provide some information in the next parish magazine about the arrangements now in place for ministry in the parish of Whitchurch.

The last full-time stipendiary Rector of Whitchurch was of course The Revd Richard Hughes who retired in the year 2000. There was then a vacancy or 'interregnum' for several years, with no priest licensed to the parish, but with Sunday services taken by The Revd Peter Jefford coming over from Oxford.

Our present parish priest, The Revd Dr Peter Steddon, was appointed at Easter 2003 on a 'house for duty' basis. This simply means that he lives rent-free in a parsonage house and in return provides an unpaid ministry on 2 days per week, plus Sunday services. On the other days in the week he is permitted to do other part-time 'day jobs' to earn money to live on.

So Peter is not available in the parish every day: his normal days for parish ministry are Tuesday and Wednesday mornings, all day Fridays, and of course Sundays. He is glad to visit parishioners at home (by invitation) or in hospital, and a 'phone call is the best way to arrange this. If you encounter his answering machine, please leave a message and he will return your call as soon as he is next available. An alternative way to make contact is through one of the churchwardens, whose numbers are given in the magazine

Peter's weekly day off is Saturday, when he is normally only available if there is an emergency (such as a wedding!).

Whitchurch became part of the Langtree Team Ministry in August 2003, and one of the advantages of this arrangement is that there are five team priests available to the parish, rather than one.

The legal incumbent of Whitchurch is now the Team Rector, Kevin Davies, who is based at Checkendon Rectory.

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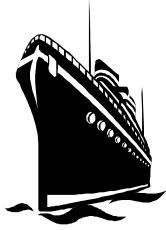
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0118 984 1473

Churchwardens:

Paul Witcher, Shepherds Close, Whitchurch-on-Thames
0118 984 4959
Jo Adams, Windings, Goring Heath Road, Whitchurch Hill
0118 984 3362

Vergers:

St Mary's Alan Matthews 984 4489
St John's Pat Turner 984 4200

Honorary Secretary:

Claire Drazin, Coombe Cottage, Whitchurch-on-Thames

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Honorary Treasurer:

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0118 984 4838

Assistant Treasurer:

Tony Voysey, Mow Cop, High Street.
0118 984 3946

Captain of the Bellringers:

Stephanie May, 0118 957 2596

Editor, Parish Magazine

Sue Matthews, Ashdown, Duchess Close
0118 984 4489 or email: suematt@waitrose.com

Team Rector:

Reverend Kevin Davies
The Rectory, Checkendon, RG8 0SR
01491 680252
www.langtree.org

Services for.... January

2nd January—Epiphany

St. John's	8 am	Holy Communion
St. Mary's	10 am	Parish Communion
St. Mary's	4 pm	Family Service

9th January, First Sunday of Epiphany

St. Mary's	8 am	Holy Communion
St. John's	10 am	Parish Communion Rev. Kevin Davis
St. Mary's	6 pm	Evening Prayer

16 January, Second Sunday of Epiphany

St. John's	8 am	Holy communion
St. Mary's	10 am	Parish Communion
Eastfield House	11.30 am	Holy Communion

23rd January, Third Sunday of Epiphany

St. Mary's	8 am	Holy Communion Rev. Angela Linton
St. John's	10 am	Parish Communion Rev. Angela Linton
St. Mary's	6 pm	Evening Prayer

30th January, Candlemas

10.30 am—Team Service at Checkendon

6th February, Sunday next before Lent

St. John's	8 am	Holy Communion
St. Mary's	10 am	Parish Communion