

marriages of:

12 December 2009: Darran Garnham and Laura Stones

22 December 2009: Richard Clarke and Laura Roberts

Funerals – *We remember with thanksgiving the lives of:*

27 November 2009: Erica Frost

7 January: Lea Thynne

9 January: Jean Beckett

The Five Christmas Services

Were celebrated by over 1,500 people. We are so privileged to be able to take part in such a joyous Christmas which started with the service of Nine Lessons and Carols. It was indeed a cold winter's night when our Church lights were dimmed as the simple clear words of "Once in Royal David's City" floated out across the expectant worshippers; they rose to take part in the much loved, age-old tradition of singing and hearing the Christmas message. An enlarged choir was supported by an orchestra and the organ. Vicar Joe sang a fine solo from the carol "Three Kings from Persian Lands Afar" before sending "All Ye Faithful" on their way with a Christmas blessing ringing in their ears.

The Crib services' focus is, of course, on the children. The service is always a particular treat on Christmas Eve and this year was certainly no exception. The Christmas story was told to a packed church through word, song and some favourite carols. The story's chapters – Mary and Joseph, The Birth of Jesus and The Shepherd were followed by the bringing of each of the Wise Men crib figures to the accompaniment of "We Three Kings of Orient Are". The whole Christmas story came alive as the lights were dimmed, the crib blessed and surrounded by children with Vicar Joe reminding us that the young parishioners' proximity to the crib symbolises their proximity to God.

Packed congregations celebrated the very moving, traditional Midnight and Christmas Day services. Very many thanks go to so many people who contributed to our Christmas celebrations – the choir, orchestra, organists, for all the inspirational music; the readers; the flower arrangers with their beautiful decorations; our Vicar Joe for his leadership. A special thank you goes to our verger, Cyril Shaw, for his dedication throughout the year to St Mary with St Alban.

Colin Davies, James Dixon, Veronica Baker

For full reports on all the services please go to www.stmarywithstalban.org

NEWSLETTER FEBRUARY 2010



StMARYwithStALBAN
PARISH CHURCH of TEDDINGTON



'Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return.'

I suspect you may be thinking that this is rather a morbid thought to begin a newsletter. These words are said as people receive the sign of the cross in ash on their forehead on Ash Wednesday. It is a solemn act that marks the beginning of the solemn season of Lent.

But solemn shouldn't be confused with morbid. For a number of years I've enjoyed inviting children at church schools to come to church on Ash Wednesday and receive the imposition of ashes. Staff and parents have initially had reservations about children making sense of such a solemn act and receiving it in a reverential manner, suspecting that they will either recoil or giggle or smear the mark off as soon as possible. With careful explanation and the setting of the right mood, none of this has happened. Instead the children have received the ash with a wonderful sense of respect and appreciation, proudly wearing the mark on their foreheads for the rest of the day. And there has been no sense of morbidity.

Children are rarely anxious about their mortality. 'Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return' is for them simply an affirmation that life is a gift to be enjoyed while you have it. Not that they would necessarily rationalise it like that. This is just their natural, unconscious approach to life. And it is an approach that we adults should try and recapture.

Lent should not be solemn in a morbid sense. Whatever you decide to give up or take on, it should be done to enhance your appreciation of all that we have to be grateful for. Don't let it

increase your anxiety or intensify a feeling of unhappiness. The point is to do things that increase your awareness of life as a gift to be enjoyed. It should be solemn because it is reminding yourself of what's important, not what's punishing.

Unfortunately, Ash Wednesday this year falls in the half-term holiday so we can't do a special school service. But there will be two services on **Ash Wednesday, February 17th**, both with **Holy Communion and the Imposition of Ashes: 9.30am** for those free in the day-time and **8pm** for those who work or prefer an evening service.

This is followed by a **Lent Course on the next five Wednesdays, starting on 24th February, from 10.30am–12 noon** in the Mina Hogan Room, the Parish Hall. The topic will be the first Holy Week; what the gospels really teach about Jesus during his final days in Jerusalem, based on the book *The Last Week* by Marcus Borg and John Dominic Crossan. The format will provide time for learning, time for discussion, and time for silent prayer. Everyone is welcome to attend even if you cannot make all five sessions.

Finally, the fourth Wednesday on **March 17th will be expanded into a Quiet Day at St Michael's Convent, Ham Common from**

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10am-4pm. This is again open to everyone, regardless of attendance at the Lent Course. It will be led by one of the sisters. Cost is £5 plus packed lunch. Please book via the Parish Office, 020 8943 2262.

May you have a holy and refreshing Lent.

Joe Moffatt

PS I noticed *The Times* celebrating their 225th Anniversary at the beginning of the year. John Walter, the original proprietor-editor, lived at The Grove in Teddington and is buried in a vault in our church. His memorial plaque on the north wall reads: 'His afflicted Family have to deplore the loss of an indulgent and affectionate Parent, whose Charitable hand was ever ready to relieve the distressed'. Quiet a nice epitaph to aspire to, I thought!

Fairtrade: 100 cups of tea with friends

The Fairtrade Movement's annual Fortnight runs this year from 22nd February to 7th March. The theme for 2010 is The Big SWAP when we are all asked to swap to buying and using fairly traded goods – be it bananas, coffee, cotton, sugar, dried fruit, tea, whatever. Each and every swap by each and every consumer makes a real, and in some cases life-saving, difference to producers and farmers in the developing world. It is easy to do and the effects are great.

The Fairtrade premium we pay is vital for farmers. It goes towards clinics, schools, marketing advice, emergency funding after production setbacks; it is the difference between nervous subsistence and secure employment, between exploitation and a healthy future.

We are marking Fairtrade Fortnight with a Big Swap Tea Party on Sunday 7th March in the Parish Hall from 2.30-4.30pm when we aim to register 100 people to commit to SWAP.



- ✓ Everyone is invited – indeed it would be a good opportunity to bring an elderly or housebound friend or neighbour.
- ✓ The Guides, who this year celebrate their centenary, will be hosting the occasion as part of their Adventure 100 Challenge and serving Fairtrade tea and cakes and biscuits made with fairly traded ingredients.
- ✓ There will be a small (voluntary) charge to cover costs: the aim is not to raise money but awareness and to encourage everyone to SWAP to fairly traded products whenever possible.
- ✓ There will be a Traidcraft stall selling fairly traded foodstuffs.
- ✓ No tickets are needed but a phone call during the week before to Kathy Gold would be appreciated for catering purposes.

Please spread the word, bring a friend, and come along to the Parish Hall for a fairly traded cuppa and a cake on the afternoon of Sunday 7th March.

*Susan Jacobs 8943 0503
Traidcraft Rep
Kathy Gold 8977 8668
Guide Leader*

St Mary with St Alban's X factor

Do you like singing, acting, dancing or playing a musical instrument? Then the brand new St Mary with St Alban Music and Fun Group needs you!

With an idea of getting people together from church, and also bringing in new people, we plan to put on a show in May. We want to include all ages, novices or experienced players and, of course, in addition to performers we also need help back stage and front of house. We particularly need someone to play the piano for us and who would perhaps be able to take on the task of Director of Music. If there is sufficient interest we plan a more ambitious project for the autumn,

possibly a modern version of Gilbert and Sullivan's *Trial by Jury*.

If you are interested, please contact Esther Hammond either on 020 8977 5844, email drama@stmarywithstalban.org or add your name to the form at the back of the church.

First meeting: **9th February at 8pm in the Mina Hogan Room, Parish Hall – Do join us!**

Margaret Squire

Pastoral Visiting Course

Do you feel you would like to:

- Develop listening skills
- Help to support the bereaved
- Provide follow-up to Baptism
- Be part of a support team working with the Vicar, Joe Moffatt, to sustain and support our growing church family?

IF SO on **April 24 and May 15** we will have two training days during which Judy and John Barrett will help us to evaluate and develop

the skills we need to set up an effective Parish Visitors programme.

Judy and John have worked with many parishes in the Diocese and have a wide experience of parish needs and a practical approach to training and empowering church members to form their own team.

Venue: The Parish Hall. Time: 10.00am-4pm. Fee: £10.00

Please bring packed lunch; hot drinks will be available.

Interested? Please contact Sheila Cooper either on 020 8977 7206 or email pastoralcare@stmarywithstalban.org

Parish Registers

Holy Baptisms - *We welcome into Christ's Church:*

10 January: Marshall Chester, son of Charlie Chester and Mandy Williams

Weddings – *We wish every blessing on the*

Diary for February

<i>SERVICES –</i>	<i>Sundays: Holy Communion (Prayer Book) at 8.00am Family Communion and Sunday School at 9.45am Wednesdays: Holy Communion at 9.30am Weekdays (except Mondays): Morning Prayer at 9.00am, Evening Prayer at 5pm</i>
Wednesday 3 rd	First Wednesday Club in Mina Hogan Room at 12.30-2pm Topic: Finding out about Islam
Thursday 4 th	PCC Meeting in Mina Hogan Room at 7.45pm
Sunday 7 th	Education Sunday Family Service with Parade at 9.45am
Tuesday 9 th	St Mary with St Alban's X Factor in Mina Hogan Room at 8.00pm
Sunday 14 th	Sunday before Lent
Wednesday 17 th	Ash Wednesday Holy Communion with Ashing at 9.30am and 8.00pm
Sunday 21 st	First Sunday of Lent
Tuesday 23 rd	Baptism preparation in Mina Hogan Room at 8.00pm
Wednesday 24 th	Lent Group (first of five Wednesdays) in Mina Hogan Room at 10.30am-12noon
Sunday 28 th	Second Sunday of Lent Baptisms at 12noon