

Exploring the Christian Faith

A new Study Course, *Exploring the Christian Faith*, started on Thursday evenings last September, ably led by Caroline Halmshaw. We decided to study St Mark's Gospel in depth, taking one chapter for each session. This was because we believed that St Mark wrote a Gospel that was relatively clear, up front and to the point. The group has been quite small but that has allowed for a fascinating exchange of ideas and made us think about new aspects of our faith. We have all found that listening to other members of the group has made us think about our own beliefs and discover all sorts of new aspects of the Gospel story. There have been some lively discussions (and even disagreements!) about Jesus and his life on earth. So far, we have studied the first 9 chapters of Mark, but we are now taking a break in order to explore in depth some very controversial questions including: Is it OK to come to church and not believe? Has the Church detonated its credibility over women bishops? Is Jesus the only way? What about other religions? How can the church help me to grow in faith? Joe Moffatt has joined us to help with these difficult questions, and we have had considerably

more people in the group. This has again led to some really lively discussions and once again, listening to other people's ideas has been most interesting and stimulating. As Easter approaches, we plan to return to our study of Mark and the remaining 7 chapters. Anyone wishing to join us to explore the Christian faith in a relaxed and supportive atmosphere would be most welcome, and in the first instance should make contact with Caroline on 07803 007533.

Peter Stevens

A Taste of Africa

Saturday 16th March, 7.00pm,
in St Mary's Parish Hall

Please join us and our friends from
St Peter & St Paul, Teddington
and St James, Hampton Hill for an

African themed supper

in aid of our joint ALMA Lent Appeal.

Tickets: £10 each
(to include two course supper and
glass of wine/beer)
from the parish office.

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StMARYwithStALBAN PARISH CHURCH of TEDDINGTON



Vicar's Viewpoint

Four years ago we introduced a **Dawn Service on Easter Day**. This has proven to be very popular, no doubt helped by the offer of a cooked breakfast and bucks fizz. If we're honest, our 6.30am start time hasn't always been early enough to catch the sunrise, especially in years when we've had a late Easter. But this year Easter is early and also coincides with the clocks going forward an hour. This should ensure a particularly dramatic Dawn Service as we'll be starting in darkness and experiencing the actual sunrise (if it's not too cloudy) as we celebrate the Resurrection.

This is the highpoint in the church year. But first there is some walking to be done. Just as the view from the top of a mountain is all the more amazing when you've walked through deep vales to get there, so is Easter all the more special when you've 'walked with Christ' through the events of Holy Week. This obviously involves some mental 'walking' as we call to mind such events as the Last Supper and the Crucifixion. But it also involves two actual walks which are both significant.

The first is the **procession we make on Palm Sunday** following a donkey from our Parish Hall around Udney Hall Gardens through the churchyard and into the church. This recalls Jesus' dramatic entry into Jerusalem as he was hailed by enthusiastic crowds waving palm branches. So we wave our palm crosses and sense a similar anticipation of the events that are about to unfold.

The second is the **procession we make on Good Friday**. Gone is the exuberance of Palm Sunday. This is a silent and sombre procession following a wooden cross up the High Street to join processions from other churches across Teddington as we converge on the Green outside the Methodist Church. There we stand together at the foot of a large wooden cross for a short service to reflect on

this most poignant moment.

I really believe that the act of walking together in these two processions can be as significant as all the music and readings and worship of Holy Week. This is because we relate to this story as much on an emotional and physical level as on an intellectual one. And a truly spiritual experience involves all three.

So can I encourage you to join us on both Palm Sunday and Good Friday? Both start at 10am from the Parish Hall. Both are for adults and children alike.

I would also like to commend the **reflections that follow on Good Friday**. A family-friendly service at 12 noon leads into a children's workshop in the hall, making Easter gardens and crafts. Then there is a quieter service at 1pm with addresses given by Rev Stella Halmshaw, a recently retired parish priest, and Caroline Halmshaw, her daughter and a member of our congregation. This culminates in the **Sung Liturgy** at 2pm during which there is an invitation to venerate the cross by coming forward to touch it. Another poignant walk in the dark vale of Christ's passion. May it lead us to a **joyful Easter** summit.

Many blessings

Joe

Christingle at Candlemas

The Christingle Service is a wonderful experience for the children of our parish. They take over the running of the service. Lucy and Lily acted as sidesmen giving out leaflets, a Guide and a Scout read the lessons, our Youth Group took the prayers of intercession, and more volunteers collected the envelopes and tubes of coins saved by the children over the past weeks. We saw a film about the work of the Children's Society, after which, using two family groups, Joe illustrated how much we depend on our



parents, grandparents, great grandparents, aunts and uncles. They share our joys and sorrows. The Children's Society takes over when those support groups fail. When it was formed, over one hundred years ago, it was to support orphans. Now it works with teenagers, supports broken families and links up with other child support agencies and the police. As we lit the Christingle candle, we remembered Jesus is the



Some of the 200 Christingle oranges

Light of the World. We sang the Christingle song, the oranges were given out, the candles lit (carefully organised by the parents). We sang *Kum Baya* holding high the candles in the darkened church. After the blessing, over to the church hall for tea and the Brownies' homemade cakes. Thanks to all who helped, especially the "orange team", and to those who generously contributed to the collection which raised £425 for the Children's Society. *Joyce Skerrett*

Electoral Roll Review – 2013

Every six years we are required to compile a new Church Electoral Roll. This is a list of all our members who either live in the parish or who have habitually attended worship here in the past six months. The list is very helpful for our ongoing ministry, and the statistics from parish electoral rolls also help the diocese and national church to calculate church attendance (and in London at least, report the good news of church growth).

During the period leading up to our Annual Parochial Church Meeting on April 30th, we will be compiling a new Roll. We would like the names of all those who worship at St Mary with St Alban to be on it. When the renewal process begins, everyone's name is removed from the old Roll, which is cancelled, and everyone is required to fill in a fresh application form to have their names entered on the new Roll. Current members will automatically be issued with application forms, which should be returned to me either in church or via the parish office, by Sunday April 7th at the latest. New members can obtain application forms from the church or parish office.

Joining the Electoral Roll is a way of saying that one not only belongs and is committed to the Church here in Teddington, but also to the Church as a whole.

June Hill, Electoral Roll Officer

Traherne Poetry Group

Dr Gerry Gregory, (gerrygregory38@aol.com), will be running a reading group to introduce people to the writings of Thomas Traherne. A six week course is planned on Thursday afternoons 2.00-3.30pm, April 11th – May 16th. A short meeting for those interested will be held on **Sunday March 3rd at 11.30am** in the Mina Hogan Room. Open to all: no previous knowledge required. A perfect way of preparing for our Parish Pilgrimage to Hereford (in the footsteps of Traherne) in May.

Lent in St Mary's Sunday School

Lent arrived early at Sunday School, on the Sunday before Ash Wednesday, when the children made Priest's House collection boxes

to take home as part of our Parish Lent Appeal. Each week we will be blowing out one more candle on the Lenten wreath, and on 3rd March, the whole Sunday School will come together to create a Lent banner to be displayed in church. Lent will culminate in our Good Friday workshop which as usual takes place during the service, when we will be telling the Easter story, and getting involved in all sorts of activities from baking to card-making.

New children always welcome. For more information please contact Cathy Randall on 07712 598721 or crr1@btinternet.com

Parish Registers

Baptisms – *We welcome into Christ's Church:*
27th January: Lydia Valerie, daughter of Kostadin & Dominique Kolimechkov; Romilly Vera Rose, daughter of Georgia Doran
3rd February: Isabel Daisy, daughter of Paul & Emma Scullion; Matthew James, son of Richard & Sally Porter
10th February: Lottie Rose, daughter of James & Heidi Briscoe

Funeral – *We remember with thanksgiving the life of:*

8th February: Jacqueline Humphries (64)

Diary for March

SERVICES – *Sundays:* Holy Communion (Prayer Book) at 8.00am
Morning Worship (30 minutes) at 9.00am
Parish Communion (with Sunday School) at 10.00am
Wednesdays: Holy Communion at 9.30am
Monday-Friday: Morning Prayer at 9.00am, Evening Prayer at 5pm

Sunday 3rd **Lent 3.**
Traherne Group meeting, Mina Hogan room, 11.30am
Baptism, 12 noon

Wednesday 6th Morning Lent discussion group, Mina Hogan room, 10.30am-12noon

Thursday 7th Evening Lent discussion group, ring Caroline (07803 007533) for venue, 8pm
Silent Prayer in church, 8.30pm

Sunday 10th **Mothering Sunday.**
Parade service followed by Traidcraft sale in hall, 10am.
Youth Group in Hall, 6.30pm

Tuesday, 12th Plain & Pearl Knitting, Mina Hogan room, 7.30pm

Wednesday 13th Morning Lent discussion group, Mina Hogan room, 10.30am-12noon

Thursday 14th Parish pub lunch, Anglers, 12.30pm
Evening Lent discussion group, 8pm

Saturday 16th Children's tour of the Church, 10am
A Taste of Africa, in hall, 7pm (see back page)

Sunday 17th **Passion Sunday.**
Baptism, 12noon.
Choral Evensong, 6.30pm

Tuesday 19th Tea Club, Mina Hogan room, 3pm
PCC meeting, Mina Hogan room, 7.45pm

Wednesday 20th Morning Lent Discussion group, Mina Hogan room, 10.30am-12noon

Thursday 21st Evening Lent Discussion group, 8pm

Sunday 24th **Palm Sunday.** Start of Holy Week: *see insert for details of all services*
Ecumenical Service of Music, Prayer and Reflections with choirs from all Teddington Churches, Sacred Heart R.C. Church, 4pm

Sunday 31st **Easter Day**

Looking ahead

Wed, 3rd April 12.30-2pm, Topic for First Wednesday Club: *Is it possible to teach "character"?*