

THE CLARION

The Magazine of The Parish of St Mary The Boltons

FEBRUARY 2009

Counting down to Lent: preparing to prepare

With the exception of the first Sunday, the Sundays in February are designated in the church calendar as 'Sundays before Lent'. This designation gives us due notice that Lent is not far away and reminds us that it's time to start thinking about how we might observe a holy Lent, that time of preparation for Easter. Easter is the highpoint of the church's year and the more we prepare ourselves to celebrate it, the more meaningful and the more joyful our Easter celebrations become.

Traditionally, Lent observances include prayer and self-examination, fasting and self-denial, reading and meditating on God's word. These observances are to encourage us to look at our lives and to adjust them so that we may live more appropriately in response to God's love for us and for the whole of creation.

In his Advent Pastoral Letter last year, the Bishop of London suggested that in these difficult economic times – which have become a good deal more difficult since he wrote his letter – we needed fresh emphasis and practice on the classical – or as they are known in the Christian tradition – the cardinal virtues; justice, prudence, courage and moderation. With this in mind, our Lent programme will examine these virtues, as well as the Christian/biblical virtues of faith, hope and love (charity). Each of the Sunday sermons in Lent, with the exception of Mothering Sunday, will be based on one of the virtues, which will then be discussed at the Lent discussion groups that this year will be held on Wednesdays, following the evening Eucharist, and on Thursday mornings. Details of these groups can be found on page 2.

I hope as many of you as possible will attend one of the groups so that together we may make the most of this time of preparation and be ready to celebrate Easter with great joy. Our discussion will also give us an opportunity to see if we agree with the Bishop of London's thoughts!

Ginny Thomas

The Earls Court Community Project: an update

The ECP is one of the beneficiaries of the St. Mary's charity budget. It is one of four London-based groups whose main aim is to offer safe forms of help and sanctuary to unfortunate and often lonely people.

This group meets three times a week in St. Jude's church, where both men and women can seek advice with problems such as debt, addiction, relationships. etc.

The men meet on Mondays and Wednesdays from 2-4pm: the numbers vary from 10-30 and volunteers serve soup and cake or similar refreshments. There is a real sense of fellowship.

Women meet in a basement room at the back of the church. The numbers tend to be smaller and the needs are less diverse. Volunteers organize various types of occupational therapy (they were making calendars last week) and a light lunch is offered to all the attendees. Several of these ladies have been attending for many years and are a source of friendship and help to some very lonely unhappy souls.

The most immediate problem for the ECCP is to find an alternative venue for their meetings a.s.a.p. As work on converting the church to a theological college will begin in the summer so there is a real sense of urgency.

Watch this space.....

Helen Trafford

Our Christmas Outreach

A big thank you to all who have given so generously to cover all our expenses for our Boxing Day meal.

Also thank you to the helpers who worked so stalwartly with the preparation and cooking. Well done to you all. We provided over 200 meals for the Earl's Court Project.

We must not forget our January contribution for the West London Homeless Churches. We were able to provide a meal for 57 people through your generosity.

A big thank you to Joanna and her helpers.

Margarete Geier

Shrove Tuesday 24 March

Please join us for pancakes at the Vicarage from 7.30pm-9.00pm. Please put your name on the list at the back of the church.

February Clarion: Lent Reading

Why Go to Church? The Drama of the Eucharist by Timothy Radcliffe, Continuum, 2008, £9.99, ISBN 978 0 8264 9956 1.

Timothy Radcliffe was asked by the Archbishop of Canterbury to write this year's Lent Book, he said he had a book waiting to be written on the Eucharist, a follow-up to his prize-winning *What is the point of being a Christian?* He asked if this could be it. As a result we have a rich exploration of how the Eucharist works at a deep level in our lives of faith, in good times and times of crises. This is a timely and engaging book that renews and deepens our understanding of the Eucharist. It also connects with our Lent Course; the three underlying themes are faith, hope and love.

Reconciling One and All: God's Gift to the World by Brian Castle, SPCK, 2008, £9.99 ISBN 978 0 281 050 6

This book deals with reconciliation between humanity and God, not as an academic matter, but at the heart of the Christian faith, and a process much needed both by individuals and by communities and nations today. Brian Castle is the Bishop of Tonbridge and his exploration weaves together scripture, analysis and personal stories from contemporary conflicts across the world to explore this complex subject. If you would like to reflect on the challenge to work for reconciliation with a prayerful, thoughtful guide, this is a very helpful, hopeful book. Suggestions for individual reflection/prayer on our own experiences are given.

Love Life, Live Lent: Family Book Church House Publishing, 2008, £4.99, ISBN 978 0715141823

This lively book contains 40 simple actions to do throughout Lent. Each week contains six actions, covering: Home and Family, Community, School/College/Work, Global, Green and Sabbath. This is an ideal way to help you celebrate Lent and Easter together at home.

There are copies of all these books at the back of Church for you to look at; please do not take them away!

Ruth Lampard

Women's World Day of Prayer

This year the Women's World Day of Prayer will be held on Friday 6 March at 11.00am at Chelsea Old Church, 2 Old Church Street, London SW3 (by the Embankment).

The Service has been prepared by the Christian women of Papua New Guinea and the theme they have chosen is: 'In Christ there are many members, but One Body'.

The Service should last approximately one hour and is followed by light refreshments.

Anne Swift

St Mary The Boltons Lent Course 2009: The Virtues

Prudence

Wednesday 4 March: 7.00pm Eucharist followed by 7.45pm Lent Course

Thursday 5 March: 10.30 to 12 noon at Margarete Geier's

Justice

Wednesday 11 March: 7.00pm Eucharist followed by 7.45pm Lent Course

Thursday 12 March: 10.30 to 12 noon at Margarete Geier's

Courage

Wednesday 18 March: 7.00pm Eucharist followed by 7.45pm Lent Course

Thursday 19 March: 10.30 to 12 noon at Margarete Geier's

Moderation

Wednesday 25 March: 7.00pm Eucharist followed by 7.45pm Lent Course

Thursday 26 March: 10.30 to 12 noon at Margarete Geier's

Faith, Hope and Love

Wednesday 1 April: 7.00pm Eucharist followed by 7.45pm Lent Course

Thursday 2 April: 10.30 to 12 noon at Margarete Geier's

Please let the parish office know if you would like to come or sign up on the sheet at the back of Church.

Stewardship Campaign

Every three years we hold a Stewardship Campaign. The aim of this campaign is to gain the commitments of time, talents and funds that St Mary's needs to continue to be a lively place of worship and fellowship. The 2009 campaign will run for three weeks from April 26th. We will use this time to explore both the theological and practical issues of becoming involved with and committed to

St Mary's. There will be plenty of opportunity to seek answers, challenge approaches and reflect on what more you might be able to do at this time. Further information about events will be published in the next issue of the Clarion. If you have any suggestions or feel able to help with the organization please contact John McVeigh via the church office. Also please pray for the members of the organizing committee that they run a campaign that meets and is sensitive to everyone in our community's needs.

A Christian Service in Turkey

For several years my husband Philip and I have been lucky enough to have enjoyed magical holidays in Side, on the so-called 'Emerald Coast' of Southern Turkey. During every visit we promised ourselves to attend a Christian service in this country where 99.8% of the population are Muslims (70% Sunni and 29% Alevites) and only 0.2% are Christians. But invariably we were seduced by sun, sand and a warm sea, tennis, long walks, and good food which together lead to total rest and relaxation.

This year, however, in the last week of November everything turned out differently. On one of the rare rainy days, I met Joy in our hotel cafe where she was openly reading the bible, preparing notes for the study program for her house-group back in Manchester. We started chatting and soon we both revealed that we were committed Christians. Joy said that she and her husband Alan would be pleased to come with us to a Christian service if I could locate one. Now it was up to me to spring into action.

I approached the English tour representative and enquired about the nearest Christian church. This drew a blank. I then got in touch with the Turkish hotel guest relations' girl Fatima. Eventually, with the help of Fatima (who wanted to know if the UK was England), the internet, and the British Consulate in Antalya, I finally managed to get more details.

With our new friends Joy and Alan we hired a taxi for the one hour drive from Side to Antalya. The conversation with our Turkish taxi driver was rather patchy. He spoke no English but knew as many words in German (50), as I know in Turkish. It was soon evident that he had never taken anyone to an apparently obscure church in Antalya. After at least seven stops asking for directions, our taxi driver found the old town and the gated entrance, flanked by two policemen with rifles, which lead to St. Paul's Union Church. After quizzing our driver for the purpose of our visit, the policeman lifted the barrier and we entered an extremely narrow street.

St. Paul's is better known as the 'Cultural Centre'. From the outside it was not obvious that the old Turkish

house is a Christian church. At the narrow entrance was a small gate-house with a warden. At the front door of the stone cottage-type house we were asked in English if we were Protestant or Catholic because the Catholic mass was held nearby but the Protestant service upstairs. There were about 40 people in the small, simply furnished single room. Phil Thomas, a Welshman, welcomed everyone, particularly newcomers, warmly. Then we said prayers and sang hymns, which were accompanied by an excellent, enthusiastic young male piano player who lead the singing with gusto, and a superb, young female flautist.

The Rev. James Bultema from the Presbyterian Church (USA) gave an inspiring sermon on Luke Ch. 21, vv. 25-36. Towards the end of the sermon, at about 11:50 a.m. we heard the loud (taped?) call of prayer in Arabic from the nearby mosque. The service closed with prayers of intercession and various announcements.

We regretted that there was no social gathering afterwards. Apparently this happens only during the week when St. Paul's operates a coffee shop and library.

After the service I managed to pick up a small colourful leaflet in which Pastor Bultema describes St. Paul's mission: 'Cooperating for the good of Antalya and the glory of God. We are here to serve both our city and our Deity, both our neighbour and our Saviour.'

It seems to me that Turkey has a massive tourist industry (in 2007 about 27 million visitors) who are predominantly Christians. The main problem appears to be hotels not passing on any Christian literature and the apathy of Christian tourists (including many long-stay visitors), in enquiring about or attending a church service.

Because of this, the St. Paul's team is still looking for a venue to hold Easter and Christmas services in Antalya. They have given up holding services in Belek, 30km east of Antalya) where three years ago Turkish Prime Minister Erdogan opened a mosque, a synagogue and a Christian church in the 'Garden of Tolerance' with a great fanfare.

Joy, Alan, Philip and I agreed that we had witnessed courage, joy, humility and love by Pastor James Bultema and his small dedicated congregation. It is heartening to know that they are building bridges between the Christian and Muslim community in Antalya.

What did this visit teach me personally? I am glad that the Holy Spirit dragged me out of my inertia. It also made me aware how lucky we are in England

to have the freedom to worship in the Christian or, in fact, any religious faith. It also made me aware that, particularly when we are on holiday, we have even more reason to thank God. The best way to do this is with other Christians at a Christian service.

I look forward to visit St. Paul's in Antalya (God willing) again next year.

Anne Swift

Thursday Lunch Club

Ruth Lampard was the speaker at the lunch on 11 December, an opportunity to learn more about her background and views on life under the simple heading 'People, the Sea and my Life'.

Ruth told us about formative people and experiences in her life, in particular about growing up in the diverse and lively multi-cultural Leicester of the 1980s. A key experience was of an eight month family sea journey when she was 11 years old – a life on the open wave is not free from adventure! On her return, she started going to Church and was confirmed.

Ruth was again involved in the 'talk' on 15 January, introducing the Rev Ian Phelps, who was supported by Michael Fisher in presenting a programme of music from the 1920's and 1930's. This featured such memorable items as 'In the Mood' by Glenn Miller, 'Run Rabbit Run' by Max Bygraves, the Bands of Sid Lawrence and Victor Sylvester, Joseph Seale on the theatre organ, the Duke Ellington quartet -- and an air-raid siren!

These lunches continue to attract about 30 – 35 people, and there is room for more. If any reader would like to suggest a speaker and/or topic for one of these occasions please contact June Brudenell (020 7352 7815) or Ann Tait (020 7352 5127). There is also the opportunity to attend a Eucharist service at 11.45 before the lunch which starts at 12.30.

Arthur Tait.

The next Thursday Lunch Club

Lucy Wilson will be explaining the work she carries out with the charity Mojawamoja (which means going ahead/straight forward in Swahili).

This is one of the charities we at St. Mary's are supporting this year. The lunch will be on Thursday 12 February at the usual time of 12.30pm and will follow the monthly Thursday Eucharist at 11.45pm.

If you would like to attend please put your name on the sign up sheet at back of the church.

Sunday School News.

We had a lovely thank you letter from Alex in Uganda after Christmas.

If you read the last 'Clarionette', you will know that before Christmas we were able to send funds to support his family together with a contribution to the general 'Compassion' Christmas fund, which ensures that all of their children receive a gift at Christmas.

We also sent Alex an Advent calendar and the funds for 'Compassion' to buy a small gift for his Birthday which was on 1 January. Alex is now 10 years old.

His letter included some beautiful coloured drawings, over which he had obviously taken a great deal of care.

This is his letter, written down for him:

'Alex says, he is very happy to write to you. He asks that how are you?

He says that for him, he is fine, his mother, brothers and sisters love you.

Alex says at home it is raining and that they have planted maize and beans.

He asks what kind of crops do you grow?

He says he loves school. He says his best subject is social studies. He says thank you for writing to him and for sending him good photographs and stickers. He says he was happy.

Alex says there are many children in his village. He says he fetches water to his mother. He says he plays football with his friends afterwards. School is half a kilometre from home. Alex says he has never seen snow. He says sometimes it is hot and other times it is cold. He says God bless you.'

This letter was written down for Alex by Prudence Aiima.

The children are realising that their lives are very different to Alex's life, and I think on Sunday we all felt that we would have liked to plant maize, but we could only come up with a few tomato plants and felt the poorer for it!

Thank you for your continued support and interest in the Sunday School.

Jane Dass

As the minutes of the recent PCC meeting hopefully demonstrate, St. Mary's is truly a church where there is something for everyone to be involved in.

Jack Dunn

Back to school

Last year, my wife and I were motivated by our good friends Ann and Arthur Tait, of St Mary's, to help out a little as volunteers at St Cuthbert's with St Matthias' Primary School in Earls Court. Now, after some time there, I can say it has been quite an experience! My wife reads with the Reception class, 4 – 5-year olds, and I coach reading with 6, 8 or 9-year olds.

The first surprise is that being a State school I rather expected a grim cash-starved place, but no; of course nowadays there are no neatly-ranged desks before a blackboard, but tables arranged in varying formations, a huge computerised whiteboard, lots and lots of books, and much teaching and information equipment of all sorts. Imaginative displays and creative work stimulating the eyes are everywhere, but everywhere.

The second, and greatest, surprise is that this particular school has a huge immigrant intake for reasons I don't bother with, though I wish I had time to find out all the, no doubt dramatic, circumstances of their arrival here. This makes for occasional communication difficulties, as though they all speak good English (miraculously), they often don't hear English at home, let alone have books and encouragement to read. So I often feel I'm teaching 'Britishness' as well as reading. For instance the other day a girl had chosen to read about Charles II hiding in the oak tree from the Roundheads – and she was from Mongolia! So I had to give a summary of our Civil War before we started. Other children come from places such as India, Bangladesh, Italy, Arabia, Albania, Somalia, and one this week from the Philippines, but via Lebanon, where she spoke Arabic. No wonder the list of first names of 'my' class is: Aleksei, Mohammed G., Chloe, Mahmoud, Iris, Jasmine, Tilal, Jesse, Zainab, Walid, Gezar, Stewart, Sari, Ronaldo, Mohammed Z., Tasmin, Mahdie, Maha, Mohammed S., Khadra, Sarah, Amaar, Dani, Jay, Christian (!), Abas, Kerim, and Malag. Yet they are rehearsing a Carol Concert at present (December), and in theory it's a C. of E. school. I haven't asked how all this is sorted out, as it isn't my immediate concern.

Not surprisingly, given the children's very varied backgrounds, I have to assess their reading ability very quickly in the 15 minutes or so I have with each of my four in an hour, as I take them aside for a bit of one-to-one, which must be, I am assured, very valuable in their present lives. Some read fairly well, and even with a bit of expression, some others have hardly got beyond following the words with a finger. But considering their

often extraordinary mixed-up backgrounds one realises how clever they generally are. I find much of my time is taken up with defining words and expressions that are new to them. It's surprisingly difficult, finding simple words the children understand. I was stuck the other day, for instance, with 'solemn' – no, not really sad, but 'grave', but what does grave mean, and so on. I often fall back on pulling faces! But I do so admire the dedication, concentration and expertise of the 'proper' teachers.

A couple of anecdotes to finish with, to illustrate how rewarding and charming it often is. Last week, one of my 8-year olds, noting my white beard, asked how old I was. When I replied '79' she said, 'then you'll soon be 80!', with incredulity that anyone could last that long. And when I took over from my wife on one occasion in Reception, and was introduced to the Class as 'Clare's husband', I was immediately hugged by all the nearest ones. Later, as I read to them, a 5-year old girl was fascinated by the veins on the back of my hand, so I explained a bit about blood supply. She then looked me very closely in the face and said, 'are you Old?'

So, much of the coaching is fun, as well as testing for oneself.

Paul Williamson

Smaller charities to which donations were made in 2008

Last November the PCC approved the names of the organisations to which donations would be made as part of our ongoing commitment to charitable giving. Under the framework introduced last year, parishioners had been asked to make suggestions and from the 17 projects nominated and the other requests that are regularly received in the Parish Office, the Charities Committee made recommendations to the PCC. The Committee was looking for proposals where our funds could make a difference, in unfashionable and unattractive areas, supporting people on the margins of society and where there would be an opportunity for learning. We also aimed to keep a broad balance between local (Kensington Area projects) and international ones.

The two main beneficiaries will be the Earl's Court Community Project, and Al Ahli Hospital in Gaza, and we aim to have regular updates in future about developments in these two projects. In this article there are some brief details about the other projects that received smaller donations, together totalling £5,000. Local projects received a total of £2250:

Earls Courts Community Trust £500

The Earl's Court Community Festival is a community celebration that aims to bring together the diverse populations of the Earl's Court area. It promotes a shared sense of belonging in the community through the planning and delivery of arts and social events in the local area. The Earl's Court Community Trust was established as an independent charity in September 2008.

The Pathfinder Fellowship: £1,000

A small Anglican society established to help young people (in many cases far from home) to live together in a Christian environment in a place where they can deepen their faith through practical community living. This donation will help to reduce debt taken on to install a fire alarm system and other improvements to meet Health and Safety requirements. The community is based in Bickersteth House in W8.

UpperRoom: £500

A church based organisation in W12 with various strands of activity including 'feeding the community in need', serving 30,000 meals a year to homeless and disadvantaged people and distributing food. UpperRoom4Kids, is a breakfast club for children on the White City Estate, UR4Jobs is a job club for migrant workers and UR4Art offers free art classes as a way of building self respect and direction. They are also starting to work on prison visits and community integration.

St Cuthbert' with St Matthias School: £250

This is the primary school on Warwick Road where a group of people from St Mary's regularly assist with reading. According to the June 2008 Ofsted report, 90% of pupils learn English as an additional language and 15% of them are from refugee families. Despite these challenges and the fact that the school experiences a high level of pupil turnover, the school was graded 2: Good. This donation should be for allocation at the discretion of the school head.

International projects received a total of £2750:

Mojakwoja: £1,000

A new UK charity aiming to work widely in Tanzania and southern Africa. Current support will be restricted to Shining Star School and Tia Ni Nog Orphanage in Moshi, Tanzania. Funds will go towards their immediate needs: school rent, school fees, food and a medication room. Lucy Wilson, who founded this small charity, will talk more about its work at the Thursday lunch on 12th February.

Zane: £500

A UK charity that works in Zimbabwe. Registered aims are to provide food and medicine for WW2 veterans and widows, clients of the Prison Fellowship, those involved in Operation Clean Up and Aids suffers and orphans in Zimbabwe. Has support among Zimbabweans living in the UK.

Compassion UK: up to £250

This is the organisation through which the Sunday School supports their sponsored child Alex and his family and relevant projects, and was included to ensure that St Mary's promises could be met

Franciscan Aid: £500

The charitable trust of the Society of St Francis, the Anglican Franciscans, whose aim is to relieve poverty and advance education of deprived people from the developing world whose needs may not be covered by other agencies and those with whom the Franciscans are in contact and whose needs are known. In recent years support has been given to projects in Africa, Middle East, and South East Asia. The Society also has a base in Papua New Guinea but the funds will go to where ever there is the greatest need.

Prisoners Abroad: £500

Cares for Britons held overseas, by alleviating isolation and deprivation regardless of guilt or innocence. Assists families and friends in the UK and assists individuals to build a crime-free life on return to the UK.

Leo Fraser-Mackenzie

February's Year mind

Edward Lidderdale
Peter Hamilton-Davies
Robert Priest
Thomas Spicer
Anthony Clives
Storm Larkins
Thomas Barclay
Anjoli Fernando-Kleinsorge
Simon Perkins
Lily Dwight
Lynette Hopper
Gary Marsfield
Derek Priest
Iris Warwick
Madeline Habgood
Kinbarra Morse

Contributions for the March Clarion should be sent in to the church office by 20 February.