



Reflections

Fiona
Hall

March begins with St David's Day, and all those with a Welsh gene will know it is celebrated by wearing a daffodil or leek. And coming from an island that grows daffodils and

has fields and fields of golden blooms reflecting the joy and hope of the coming spring to anyone passing by I liked this story I heard many years ago one St David's Day.

The daffodil begins its life by pushing up through the soil with its bloom pointing straight up to the sun. As the flower opens up it then begins to bend over and

tracks the sun round all day reflecting its light, until evening when, as the sun goes down, it closes up.

It is suggested that Christians should do the same, by begin each day spending a few moments looking to the Son of God and then following his guidance during their day, reflecting his love until, as evening comes they can rest. (Except of course, those going to Lent Groups or work)!

As you go around Dorchester and see the many daffodils beginning to burst forth perhaps you can use them as a reminder of how we each reflect God's love to the world.



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ST GEORGE'S FORDINGTON

MESSENGER



Church Correspondent: Margaret Morrissey 250366

Margaret
Morrissey

Vicar Fiona's main message this month is on page 3, however a PS:

On Palm Sunday we will be hosting a donkey so please bring your walking boots, and a carrot would be good. You can then use your boots again to join us on **29th March at 1.30pm** for a Good Friday Walk with reflections starting from St George's Church to St Andrew's West Stafford (arriving approx 3pm).

Happenings at St George's

March 7th – there will be a special peal of bells at 2.30 to celebrate the hundreds to birthday of Canon Brookes.

March 10th – Mothering Sunday – a special visit from Manor Park School choir.

March 24th – Palm Sunday – A special visit by a donkey kindly lent by Melanie Rush from Weymouth beach.

March 31st – Easter Sunday – remember clocks spring forward one hour.

Altar flowers in February

Given by:

–Yvonne Lee and family for Lily Kingham (Yvonne's Nan) on what would have been her 99th birthday at the end of January

–Viv Ford for her husband Ben Ford for his birthday on 20th

–Ann Harris in memory of her husband Percy. Ann also arranged her flowers.

Ernie Coombs

Jill Coombs and family would like to thank everyone for the incredible help and support they provided for Ernie – helping him to church every Sunday, to many meetings and especially to Richard Sylvester for taking Ernie to choir practice every Friday. There was a beautiful service in St George's to say goodbye to Ernie and again thanks to so many for coming.

[Just to keep up the tradition I did manage to add an E to Coombs in the last magazine and know I would have been in real trouble from him.]

Pancake Party



The ladies of the Thursday Group promised a party on Shrove Tuesday, Susan Press generously offered to make pancakes and supported by Val Scrivener, despite all effort of Rev Richard Press, the said lady's husband, aided and abetted by another husband Patrick Morrissey, the team produced a good few dozen delicious pancakes.

Susan & Val cooked, Richard filled and Patrick was the goffer!! They had us in stitches of laughter. The whole team led by Margaret Walters provided a wonderful afternoon with not one pancake hitting the floor. Still not sure what Richard's blue surgical gloves added to the event but he enjoyed it.



"They want to know whether they contain horse."

Life is poor without a smile

Hereafter

The preacher came to call the other day. He said at my age I should be thinking of the hereafter.

I told him, "Oh, I do it all the time. No matter where I am—in the bedroom, upstairs, in the kitchen, or down in the basement—I ask myself, 'Now, what am I here after?'"

Supermarket Sweep

A woman in a supermarket was following a grandfather and his badly behaved 3-year-old grandson. It's obvious to her that he has his hands full, with the child screaming for sweets in the sweet aisle, cookies in the cookie aisle, and for fruit, cereal and soda in the other aisles.

Meanwhile, Granddad is working his way around, saying in a controlled voice, "Easy, William, we won't be long, easy, boy." Another outburst, and she hears the granddad calmly say, "It's okay, William, just a couple more minutes and we'll be out of here. Hang in there, boy."

At the checkout, the little terror is throwing items out of the cart, and Granddad says again in a controlled voice, "William, William, relax buddy, don't get upset. We'll be home in five minutes; stay cool, William."

Very impressed, the woman goes outside where the grandfather is loading his groceries and the boy into the car. She said to the elderly gentleman, "It's none of my business, but you were amazing in there. I don't know how you did it. That whole time, you kept your composure, and no matter how loud and disruptive he got, you just calmly kept saying things would be okay. William is very lucky to have you as his grandpa."

"Thanks," said the grandfather, "but I'm William. The little brat's name is Kevin."

Texting Fun

Wife texts husband on a cold winter morning: "Windows frozen."

Husband texts back: "Pour some lukewarm water over it."

Wife texts back 5 minutes later: "Computer's completely not working now."

Grandma's Half Term Holiday

Half term week was much anticipated by the grandchildren and their grandmother, I was looking forward to having the children whilst their parents were away working.

Monday was super — we terrorised Poundland, with four smalls with a wheelie trolley each, flying round the store in a line putting fear in every older lady's heart and some younger ones too, as they had no chance of moving quickly to avoid the onslaught.

Gould's for lunch — to be fair they were good, well until it was time to leave and Frank's coat was nowhere to be seen. The girls serving looked around and then the

children searched under all the dress racks, you can imagine the assistants' joy! On the ground floor we asked if it had been handed in, they phoned upstairs and yes, he had moved seats a few times and the lady who picked it up did not realise it was ours.

Enough, home we went after visiting the Building Society for them to deposit their savings. That night as I put the children's savings books away there were only three, panic! I rang the Halifax helpline, which was no help, and spent all night waking up imagining the account was being emptied.

In the Halifax by 9 a.m. — oh yes, smiled the counter man, he left it on the shelf — if you had not come in by Friday I would have posted it!! At that point made a note to stay in for the rest of the week, also to keep my bank account with Barclay's.

It Brought Tears to my Eyes

I was talking on the phone to our eldest granddaughter, fourteen year old Juliette, who lives in Brisbane, Australia, about their forthcoming visit to the UK.

I was saying to her, that as I made up her bed, I thought of the numerous times she had occupied that bed up until the time when she was eight and had emigrated, and that I always had to say her prayer with her once she was in bed.

Juliette replied that she could remember all that very clearly, and that whenever the prayer that starts "Our Father" is said it's my voice she hears. It brought tears to my eyes!

Rosemary Skevington

The News Hound—The Vicar's Dog

I've been told that March is the month when you're supposed to see mad March hares, but I certainly didn't see any in Reading. Perhaps I might see some in Dorchester as I've given up on hunting haggi, well for this year anyway!



All this talk of hares reminds me of the tale of the tortoise and the hare having a race. The hare was so busy rushing around that he took his eye off the goal and lost the race. The tortoise kept his eye on the finishing post, and even though he was slower, he won.

It reminds me of the old song — *Run the straight race through God's good grace, lift up thine eyes, and seek his face; life with its way before us lies, Christ is the path and Christ the prize.*

St Mary the Virgin The Open Door



A Pilgrimage of Departure

Robert
Potter

Our Rector, Harold certainly had a glorious conclusion to his ministry with us. Travelling around the Benefices on the Friday involved visiting our nine churches and at each, prayers, readings and discussions concerning our Faith, were held. We also managed to sing our hymns unaccompanied and the volume which rang out was quite amazing. We were reminded that we are called to follow Christ and respond to his call.

On Saturday evening a change of tempo and culture saw **seventy people attend 'The Last Supper' at St Mary's hall** when presentations were made to Harold and Carol. The delicious hot meal and mouth-watering puddings mixed with some very original entertainment ensured a very happy evening for all, brilliantly organised.

Sunday was wet!! Sunday was very wet, however it did not deter almost three hundred people from attending **Harold's last service. Once again the family Benefices were well represented.** The moving service smoothly followed our Christian journey through life. The Eucharist, concelebrated by several of our priests, was moving and deeply spiritual. The full Church received their communion quietly and thoughtfully, aided by a quiet and gentle anthem by the very large choir. The Commission and **The Pilgrim's Blessing concluded with the affirmation that 'This is God's World and we will serve God in it'.**

During the last few days Harold has stressed that his departure is not about himself but about us journeying on. He constantly reminded us that we are called to follow Christ and respond to his call. His last sermon reflected this message. But Harold is central to our journey. The legacy which he has left us, which has been thoughtfully crafted over the last 5 ½ years, has given us confidence and cohesion to move forward in Christ. He had already helped us and prepared us for the next stage of our journey. He has worked hard to achieve harmony of spirit within the Benefice, for us to build on, in a very meaningful way. His work is now finished, but all the care, love and principles for which he stands, remain – a true Christian legacy.

We have been truly blessed in having such a dedicated

couple within our midst and they will be sorely missed. We wish them both a long, happy and fulfilling retirement as they start on their new journey in life.

Holy Week

PALM SUNDAY 24th March

8.00 am Mass

9.45 am Procession of Palms and Sung Eucharist

TUESDAY 26th March

7.30 pm Penitential Mass - in preparation for our Easter Communions

MAUNDY THURSDAY 28th March

7.30 pm Mass of the Last Supper with procession to the altar of repose and the watch until 12 midnight

The Celebrant and Preacher will be

The Bishop of Salisbury

The Right Reverend Nicholas Holtam

(Please make every effort to attend as we welcome the Bishop to St Mary's)

GOOD FRIDAY 29th March

9.30 am The Ecumenical Walk of Witness will begin at St Mary's

1.00 pm Reflections on the 'Suffering Servant'

2.00 pm 'The Way of the Cross' including

The Veneration of the Cross and Holy Communion

HOLY SATURDAY 30th March

The Easter Vigil

A Benefice service at 8.00 pm

Ceremony of Lights and Vigil Service

EASTER DAY 31st March

6.30 am Dawn Service at Maiden Castle

8.00 am Mass

9.45 am Festival Eucharist for Easter and Easter Egg hunt for the children

6 pm Healing Service with Communion

Taizé

Sunday 3rd March – TAIZÉ service at 6pm. A quiet reflective service that centres on peace and reconciliation.

St Mary the Virgin



The Senior Club will meet on Monday 18th March in the Hall in Alexandra Rd from 2.30pm – 4pm when our speaker will be Richard Baker on “Victorian Dorchester”. New members and visitors welcome.

Sanctuary Lamp Candles

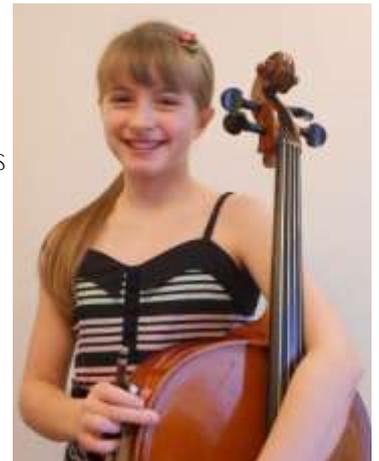
- 3rd Given by Cyril Trevis in memory of his wife Joan whose birthday was on 2nd March
- 10th Given by Adrian Downton in memory of his father Leonard whose birthday was on the 8th
- 17th Given by Ellie Stephens in thanksgiving for her grandson Sam whose birthday is the 16th
- 24th Given by Diana Barber in memory of her mother whose years mind falls on the 21st March, also by Evelyn Toogood in memory of her husband Maurice whose years mind falls on 21st March
- 31st Given by Betty Batten in memory of her husband Gerald whose years mind falls on 31st March.

Contact

During the Interregnum please let the Clergy or Church Wardens know if anyone is in hospital or who would like a visit.

Music at St Mary's

Hannah McFarlane, a member of the serving team at St Mary's, will be one of the soloists performing in the Dorset Chamber Orchestra's "Music for Youth: Encore!" concert on Saturday March 9th at 7:00 pm in St Mary's Church. Hannah performed with the orchestra in 2011 as their youngest ever soloist and has been invited back to play her 'cello in this Gala concert. The orchestra, as in all previous "Music for Youth" concerts, will be joined by their patron, Martin Clunes, who will be reading from the writings of Shakespeare and others. For further details of this concert, see page 4.



BENEFACT NEWS



Services for Holy Week across the Benefice

Monday 25th March

- 8am Silence until 8.15am Morning Prayer St Peter's
- 7.30pm Compline and Talk at St George's (David Bowen)
- 7.30pm Lection Eucharist at St Mary's (Revd J Lacy-Smith)

Tuesday 26th March

- 8am Morning Prayer at St Peter's as above
- 7.30pm Compline at St George's as above
- 7.30pm Penitential Mass at St Mary's (Revd R Bassett)

Wednesday 27th March

- 8am Morning Prayer at St Peter's as above
- 7.30pm Compline at St George's as above

Maundy Thursday 28th March

- 8am Morning Prayer at St Peter's as above
- 10am Said Eucharist at St Peter's with stripping of altars
- 10am Holy Communion at St George's
- 2pm Reading of St Mark's Gospel at St George's
- 7pm Compline at St Peter's (followed by opportunity for silence at altar of repose)
- 7.30pm Maundy Thursday Mass at St Mary's with Bishop Nicholas
- 7.30pm Holy Communion at St Andrew's

Good Friday

- 10am Ecumenical walk of witness in the morning – see posters in church/pews news
- 12-3 The Three Hours at St Peter's (Silence-Reflection-Liturgy of the Last Hour)
- 1pm Meditation at St Mary's followed by 2pm Way of the Cross Good Friday Liturgy
- 1.30pm Walk from St George's to West-Stafford
- 2pm Children's Service at St George's

Saturday 30th March

- 8pm Easter bonfire and Vigil service at St Mary's

Farewell to Harold

Our days with Harold will soon be over
And we shall be quite Rector-less
To him we sing our song of sorrow
And offer up our thankfulness.

We thank him that our church unsleeping
Was blessed as Harold has given much
And numbers of choir and servers and people
Have flourished under his gentle touch.

Behind each powerful leader and teacher
Is one supporting with love and care
So Carol, we tell you we're glad and so grateful
In all of his doings you always been there.

We hope that his time spent with us was not
labour
But pleasures treasured from day to day
We note that right after his great farewell
service
He seems in a hurry to be on his way

So be it Lord our Rector shall ever
With helmet, gloves and two wheeled machine
Drive into retirement with thoughts
gastronomic
With coffee and wine –of these things he doth
dream

And o'er each continent and Island
As Harold travels round and about
We hope that his driving is always quite legal
He's left the police and no longer has clout

So farewell to Harold, our friend and our
mentor
We pray your days will be free from fear
You take on your journey our love and best
wishes
And the knowledge that you're always welcome
back here.

Allen Knott

EASTER SUNDAY, 31ST MARCH – Main Services

St Mary's – 9:45am Festival Eucharist
St Andrew's – 10am Parish Communion

St George's – 10:15am Holy Communion
St Peter's – 10:30am Sung Eucharist

David
Bowen

At the end of last year, the first results of the 2011 Census were published. Much was made of the fact that the number of people identifying themselves as Christians had declined by 11% since the 2001 Census. How do we understand those figures? Do they mean that Christianity is on its way out? Are the Churches in terminal decline? I think the detail in the Census results need a careful examination.

In West Dorset (the figures by parish and ward will not be available for a few months), 65.3% of respondents declared themselves to be Christian. That's almost two people in three. A quarter, exactly 25%, said they had "No Religion". That figure is much higher than the previous Census result. But I don't think that says that far more people are non-believers and far fewer are believers.

In the previous Census, the question about religion came right after the question about ethnicity. It seems likely that many people in 2001 understood the questions as joined. I suspect that many people said they were Christian meaning that they were White British; members of a society that was based on Christian values. This time the questions about religion and ethnicity were separated. I believe that in the this Census we have seen a more accurate description of our Country in this respect.

What then did people who declared themselves as having "No Religion" actually mean? In West Dorset only 56

people, 0.1%, said they were atheists and a further 91 people, also 0.1%, said they were agnostic. So it seems to me that the overwhelming majority of those replying "No Religion" probably meant that they did not practice any religion: that they did not go to church or pray or perform other religious duties. That does not mean that they have no belief. It means that they do nothing about it.

So what might we conclude? Very few people do not believe in the existence of God. Many people, who believe God exists, do nothing about it and do not identify themselves with any religious group. Most people in our communities identify themselves as Christian. Yet, as we look round our churches we can hardly fail to notice that generally they are not there.

Most of the people we meet everyday are Christians who do not come to church or believers in God who do not find anything satisfying in church. That's a great challenge to the Church as a whole, to the leadership of our churches and, especially, to everyone who does express their faith in the worship and life of the Church.

The Census demands that we all reassess how we communicate our faith, because we have not been doing it very well so far. It requires us all to ask ourselves, "What should I be doing? What should I be saying? How should I be showing what I believe?" If we ask the questions, we might, if we wait for them, get the answers from God. Wouldn't that be a surprise!

St George's Goldmine

Allen Knott, Licensed Lay Minister, started the Goldmine as he felt St. George's Church might like to act as a Good Neighbour. This he thought was a practical way of both being, and showing the people of Dorchester, that we are Christians. He called it 'The Goldmine' not just because we give out money but because we meet in Christian Fellowship, all have a great evening together, and are home by 10pm. There is no committee, bank account, or meetings other than when we eat. These things are gold indeed!

Once every couple of months people come together at The Walnut Grove restaurant to partake of the delicious food and venue, to eat, chat and listen. A whole list of local organisations have visited the Goldmine to explain the work they do and what any money collected will be used for. Allen is known to many in the town, a man who is full of fun and absolute goodness and caring for others—one of the town's unsung heroes. He never asked for thanks or praise — however many organisations have been



overwhelmed with the generosity of the Goldmine diners, none of which would have happened without the work Allen, along with Walnut Grove, puts into the evening.

All are welcome on a first come gets a place basis — some from St George's, some from St Andrew's, and some just friends who want to help and enjoy a pleasant evening with good company and some fun. Anyone who knows Allen will know these things go hand in hand when he is around.

The latest evening was for Orthona, when Tony Jaques came to speak about the retreat family holidays they provide. Jean Lang, a Deputy Lieutenant of Dorset, joined the meeting and spoke briefly about her role supporting the Lord Lieutenant.

Others have included Poverty Action, Rootes, Womens Refuge, and the Cold Cot Appeal, to allow bereaved parents to have their baby close to them for longer. Altogether there have been 20 groups attend, and over £5,000 has been donated.

David
Lang

On Easter Sunday Christians everywhere will proclaim: “On the third day He rose again”. Two days earlier they will have commemorated Christ’s death on the cross. Our belief in these momentous events, which form the basis of our Christian faith, is rooted in the four gospels which although they differ in detail and in some points of substance give us a broadly coherent account of Christ’s arrest, trial, condemnation, crucifixion and resurrection. But what none of the gospels mentions is what happened to Christ during the intervening period.

Christ died on the cross on what we know as Good Friday. Later in the day Joseph of Arimetha obtained Pilate’s consent to take Christ’s body which he then placed in a tomb. John recounts that Joseph was assisted by Nicodemus, another secret disciple, the one who first came to Christ by night.

The gospel story now moves to the day after the Sabbath, the first day of the week. By our reckoning this was in fact the second day following the crucifixion but taking Good Friday as the first day Easter Sunday would have been the third day. None of the gospels actually asserts that Christ rose from the dead on this day (although that can be inferred from Matthew’s account) merely that it was very early in the morning of that day that the disciples discovered that Christ in human bodily form lived although the Ascension was still some time away.

Christ had himself given indications that he would rise from the dead after three days and both the Apostle’s and the Nicene creeds contain statements that it was on the third day that this occurred. But although there may be some uncertainty about the precise moment of Christ’s resurrection the gospels are clear that Christ died on the cross, was entombed and shortly afterwards rose from the dead.

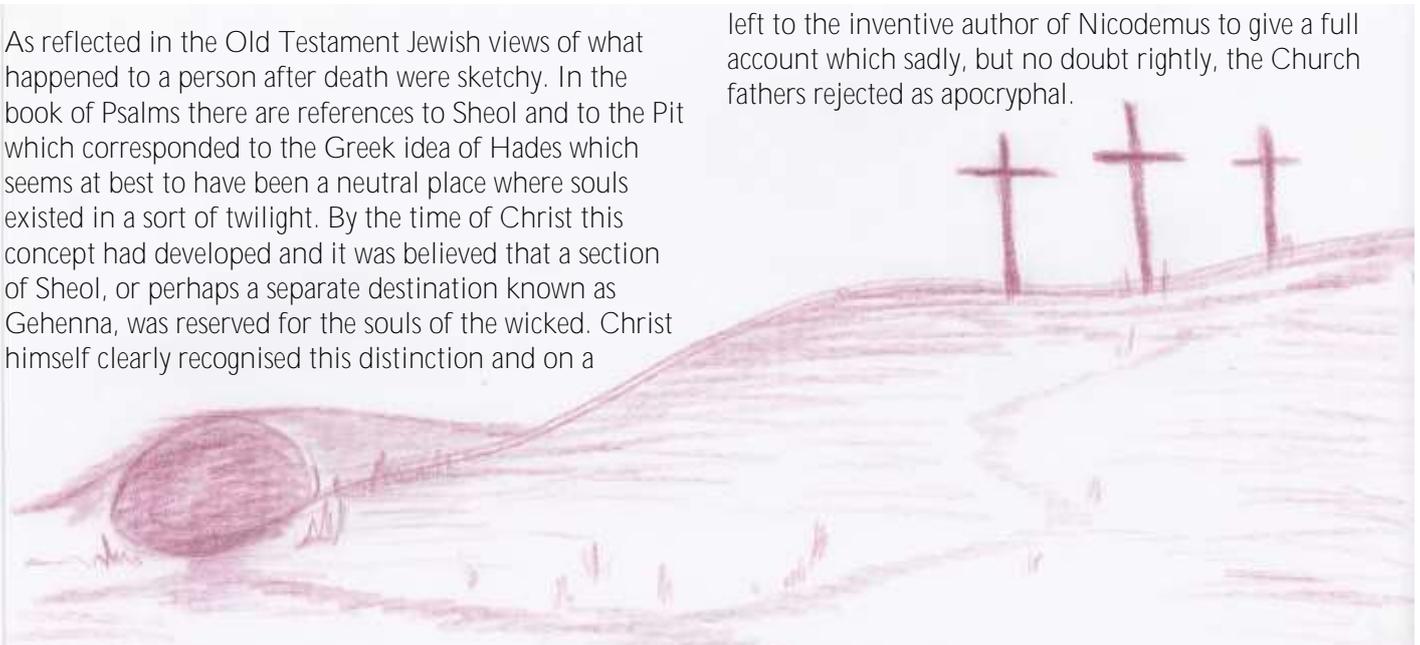
As reflected in the Old Testament Jewish views of what happened to a person after death were sketchy. In the book of Psalms there are references to Sheol and to the Pit which corresponded to the Greek idea of Hades which seems at best to have been a neutral place where souls existed in a sort of twilight. By the time of Christ this concept had developed and it was believed that a section of Sheol, or perhaps a separate destination known as Gehenna, was reserved for the souls of the wicked. Christ himself clearly recognised this distinction and on a

number of occasions warned of the danger of hell fire.

So if Christ died in the human sense it is reasonable to consider what happened to his soul before he rose again. According to the Apostles’ creed “...He descended into hell.” In the now more familiar Nicene creed there is no such reference. These creeds as we have them today developed over a long period and the names given to both are misleading. The Apostles’ creed dates from the eighth century but the idea of the descent into hell first occurs in a creed of much earlier date.

There are, however, other gospels and one of these, the gospel of Nicodemus, gives us a colourful and detailed account of Christ’s descent into hell. In brief the outcome was that Christ vanquished Satan and set free large numbers of imprisoned souls starting with Adam and working right up to John the Baptist. These souls were led to paradise where they were handed over to the keeping of the archangel Michael. Here they met Enoch and Elijah who had never experienced death being simply taken up into heaven and in a nice finishing touch they are joined by a man carrying a cross who had the appearance of a robber. He was, of course, the “good” thief crucified with Christ who figures in Luke’s account and to whom Christ made the promise “Today you will be with me in Paradise”.

In medieval times the story of Christ’s descent into hell became a popular one and resulted, for example, in the Middle English poem The Harrowing of Hell and provided subject matter for the Mystery Plays. The concept was satisfactory because not only did it account for what happened on Saturday but it also neatly dealt with a theological problem, namely how did those great Old Testament heroes such as Abraham and Moses attain salvation having died before Christ? Matthew in his gospel hints at events of this sort when he refers to saints coming out of their tombs at the time of Christ’s death but it was left to the inventive author of Nicodemus to give a full account which sadly, but no doubt rightly, the Church fathers rejected as apocryphal.



ST PETER'S

High West Street • Dorchester

Vicar: *The Revd Vicky Thurtell* 268767
Churchwardens: *Mr Brian Hellin* 268844
and *Mr Mike Nisbett* 260983



For your diary

Friday 1st March
10:30am Women's World Day of Prayer
Service at St Peter's followed by
12noon Lent Lunch

Sunday 3rd March — LENT 3
9am BCP Communion
10:30am Sung Eucharist
Rt Revd Dr Edward Condry Bishop of Ramsbury

Sunday 10th March — Mothering Sunday
9am Said Communion
10:30am Sung Eucharist

Sunday 17th March — St Patrick
10:30am Sung Eucharist
Thomas Hardye Chapel Choir
Mass setting – Schubert in G
6.30pm Sung Evensong

Sunday 24th March — Palm Sunday
9am BCP Communion
10:30am Sung Eucharist
12noon Church AGM

Maundy Thursday 28th March
10am Said Eucharist with stripping of altars
7pm Compline

Good Friday 29th March
12–1 Silence
1–2pm Reflection on Isaiah 53 with music
2–3pm Liturgy of Last Hour
St Peter's Choir

Easter Sunday 31st March
10:30am Sung Eucharist

Lent, Holy Week and Easter

Details of services for Lent, Holy Week and Easter across the Benefice may be found elsewhere in this magazine.

Church AGM – Palm Sunday

The Annual Church Meeting will take place on Sunday 24th March at noon, in church after the election of Churchwardens.

There is one vacancy on Church Council this year and two vacancies for the PCC (Dorchester with West Stafford joint Council). PCC members also sit on Church Council, so you would expect in the region of 9 meetings per year. Nominations papers are now available on the church noticeboards.

Alison Whiting

As many of you know, Alison is training for Ordination and is now half way through the course, based at Salisbury and here at St Peter's. From April until June she will be away from her church-base to do a placement elsewhere.

Alison writes: *"The aim is to gain experience in an unfamiliar context. I've chosen St Ann's (a large psychiatric hospital nr Poole) which includes elderly care, eating disorders unit and forensic. I've expressed a particular interest in the forensic wards. I chose this placement because I have an interest in Chaplaincy, mental health and the healing ministry.*

The hospital is in a beautiful area, next to Sandbanks, full of pine trees and near to the sea! The module aims include: appreciating the context's vitality and dynamics, using the tools of social scientific enquiry and theological reflection, identify and articulate possibilities for transformation, become more aware of any resulting personal and ministerial development.

Other ordinands' placements include exotic things like a peace and reconciliation centre in Bethlehem, someone else is going to Egypt and other people to other amazing places abroad. I'm more than happy with St Ann's though as it will take me out of my comfort zone and familiar context, and this area of mental health is of particular interest to me."

All the best to you for this, Alison!

Tony
Wheeler

This article is about conversion, especially the overwhelming type like St Paul had. Not every Christian gets one of these but lots do and they are astonishing, are they not. Mine arrived

when I was little because I was terrified at the time and needed help. I was totally astonished by God. He was so enormous and he loved me so much. He filled every square inch of the room I was in and held me so safely.

“You are mine now” God told me, “And I will never let you go.” Nor has he. Isn’t that kind of him!

“I’m like a peach in jelly,” I thought, being young, and fond of peaches in jelly.

I haven’t always been a good peach, and have often had to tell him that I am sorry. “You really are a twit, sometimes,” says God, but he never gives up on me. I think he is lovely. I have given my guardian angel a hard time too, especially when I fell out of an aeroplane. I call him Fred, I don’t know why. I hope it is not being too disrespectful to angels. Incidentally, have you ever seen an angel or a vision? I didn’t see Fred when I fell out of the plane. I was too busy getting my breath back.

How has your faith been for you? I thought I would just mention my religious experience and ask how it has been for you. I would love to hear if you feel like telling me.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTION. Are you OK if you haven’t had a conversion?

ANSWER. How do you know you haven’t? You have had a conversion I expect, but of a different kind. For some people it hits like a hammer, they are surprised by joy, for others it comes gradually over years. Neither kind is better or worse than the other. It is just that God treats everybody differently.

And another thing that people worry about. Jesus said – Go into all the world and pass on the good news about me to everybody.

“Have I been remiss?” people enquire. “I have never converted anybody.”

Nor you have. Nor have I. Nor even did John the Baptist. It is God’s job to convert people. How could we surprise anyone by joy? That needs God’s joy as brought to us by Jesus. We can answer people who ask questions, of course. But mostly we do our bit towards spreading the faith by the way we treat people. Because God has helped us, we want to help others. So, wherever we treat somebody as a real person, not being aggressive or condemnatory, but listening to them, wanting the best for them, and helping where we can – there we show a little of the love of Our Lord. The rest is up to God and the person concerned.

St Andrew's Church West Stafford

Church Correspondent: Revd Jane Culliford



For your Diary

- 3rd March 10am Parish Communion
8th March 12noon -1.30pm Lent Lunch in the Village Hall
9th March 10 am Making posies for Mothering Sunday in church
10th March 9am Holy Communion
10am Mothering Sunday Family Service
17th March 10am Parish Communion
24th March 10am Palm Sunday Parish Communion with Procession and dramatised Gospel reading
28th March 7.30pm Maundy Thursday Holy Communion
29th March 1.30pm Good Friday Walk with reflections starting from St George's Church to St Andrew's West Stafford (arriving approx 3pm)
31st March 10am Easter Parish Communion

On Good Friday there will be a walk with readings and reflections, this year leaving St George's Church at 1.30pm and walking via Grey's bridge across the fields to arrive at West Stafford for a short service and tea and hot cross buns.

Easter

Having had no flowers in church during Lent we look forward to celebrating Christ's Resurrection at Easter with the church beautifully decorated once more. An Easter Garden made with help from the children will be on one window ledge. Donations towards the cost of flowers will be gratefully received by the treasurer or wardens.

Under the Weather

Whether the wind has come from the North, South, East or West it has seemed to bring rain for most of the past year. The rain has meant the rivers are swollen, the ground is saturated and there has been flooding, leading to the West Stafford by-pass being closed for considerable periods of time. The consequence of this has been a huge increase in traffic through the village, most noticeably the heavy quarry lorries.

Maybe because of the changeable weather the weathervane on top of the tower of the church is in poor condition and would really make anyone feel under the weather if it fell on their head. It is only when your attention is drawn to it that you realise that the weathervane is quite a feature of the church, so sometime soon the scaffolding will go up to restore the weathervane to a proper upright position and to its former glory. Perhaps it is too much to hope that it can then point to better weather!

Lent

A simple Lent Lunch will be held in the Village Hall on Friday 8th March from 12noon–1.30. All from the Benefice and beyond are welcome. Come to enjoy friendship and fellowship while you eat and donate the usual cost of your lunch for the work of Christian Aid.

Mothering Sunday

On Mothering Sunday at 10am there will be a service suitable for all the family. As usual posies will be assembled the previous morning and at the service will be distributed to give thanks for all those who give mothering care and love, not only to those who are mothers. Then, if the weather is suitable we shall circle the church as a way of embracing and giving thanks for our mother church, an ancient custom known as 'clipping' the church.

Holy Week

On Maundy Thursday at 7.30pm there will be a service of Holy Communion to which those from St George's Church are also invited.

Annual Meeting

The Annual meeting of St Andrew's Church Council will be held on the Sunday after Easter, 'Low Sunday' 7th April, immediately after the 10am service.

Thoughts on Caring for Grandchildren

Margaret
Morrissey

Looking through my files I found this article I wrote for the Guardian a few years ago. As readers often ask about my grandchildren I hope you appreciate me sharing it with you.

Caring for grandchildren is hard but probably the most rewarding thing you will ever do so don't let it be spoilt by misunderstandings. Sit down with the parents and make your rules and share your diaries, if you don't have one invent one. Obviously you will have to work round the parents work time and school but make sure they know when you will be busy, out or away. If you do this at the beginning of every month everyone can be more flexible, programme time in for pampering yourself and plan outings in advance. Accepting there will be emergency times which you will make changes for, stick to the times you need space, it may come as a shock to parents and grandchildren that Grandma enjoys the pictures and quite likes a meal out and shame on shame a drink. Families tend to forget that even though the outside has grown old you are still the same age as them inside and all the things that matter to them matter to you, the only person to make them understand this is you, you will be surprised how quickly they get used to the idea you are not always available, sometimes you have to be a little cruel to be kind.

Leading a busy life and caring for five young grandchildren is often hard work but joy upon joy. Every second is new and every second raises a question. When granddaughter **number one watched the Queen Mother's funeral with me** some years ago I spent time explaining she had died and gone to Jesus in heaven. This was accepted for a while until a tiny voice said "Grandma when you have had enough of heaven how do you get back?" and "Grandma I know you are old but can you wait for me to die don't **leave me behind**" – smile and tears in two seconds.

Grandchildren make us realise how little we know. She was not content to leave it and looking at the coffin asked, "If the Queen Mother is with Jesus who is in that box". I suddenly realised how little I know. Perhaps the nicest thing she ever said to me as we were playing one day was

"Grandma when you grow up what do you want to be?" Having been to numerous radio studios and sat almost gagged whilst I broadcast far and wide for my job I wondered what she thought I did.

The hardest part of being a grandparent is remembering that's your role and you are not the mother, as I have my grandchildren often it is easy to slip into the role I know so well of mother, I have to constantly remind myself it is not what I want the children to eat, wear, and do it is what the parents want and I must allow them to raise their



children in their way, often a very hard pill to swallow but to do anything different puts pressure on the children who struggle to please their parents and to please you. Likewise never criticise anything parents have done, said or bought in front of the children. You may want to strangle their parents on a daily basis but the children worship them especially when they are not around. My daughter complains her children get away with things she never did, possibly true as you get older everything is more precious including time. The urgency of youth is gone and if the children make a mess baking so what the place will clean. If the pansies are deadhead prematurely does it matter, the joy of the one year old bringing you a bunch of "heads" is worth losing all the flowers in garden, whereas your children would have been in trouble. None of us know how far down the road of life we will be allowed to travel with our grandchildren. Every second, every word and every deed is to be treasured and remember all the **expensive toys in the world are never as good as grandma's bedcover over two upturned chairs – best tent ever.**

One of the things I did especially when the children were young was to take films of them during the day it enables the parents not only to see they are being cared for and are happy but capture first steps, words and some naughtiness, but don't fall into the trap of showing them too happy or you will be hated for the fact they don't want to go home and prefer to be at grandmas, all of which is not true. If they cry when they are left, parents worry – **if they don't cry they are jealous.** Accept the fact you will never win, but **it's wonderful and a privilege, so enjoy and be happy.**

Holy Humour

There are only two kinds of people in the world. There are those who wake up in the morning and say, "Good morning, Lord," and there are those who wake up in the morning and say, "Good Lord, it's morning."

A minister parked his car in a no-parking zone in a large city because he was short of time and couldn't find a space with a meter. Then he put a note under the windshield wiper that read: "I have circled the block 10 times. If I don't park here, I'll miss my appointment. Forgive us our trespasses." When he returned, he found a citation from a police officer along with this note "I've circled this block for 10 years. If I don't give you a ticket I'll lose my job. Lead us not into temptation."

While driving in Pennsylvania, a family caught up to an Amish carriage. The owner of the carriage obviously had a sense of humour, because attached to the back was a hand printed sign... "Energy efficient vehicle: Runs on oats and grass. Caution: Do not step in exhaust."





CHURCHES TOGETHER DORCHESTER

Compiled by
Val Potter
264416

Poverty and Homelessness

Val
Potter

Margaret Barker, of Dorchester Poverty Action Group, writes:

The first week of February marked national *Action Week*, for thinking about issues of poverty and homelessness. The theme was to try and stem the current fashion for blaming those in need, stigmatising people needing state support as an under-class to be despised. Many of us are old enough to know where such dangerous thinking can lead. We have forgotten the national compassion that created the welfare system. We may have forgotten to be ashamed when we see someone homeless.

From the local point of view, Dorchester Poverty Action Group:

- Does not condemn politicians for trying to control the welfare budget, nor for recognising that there have been increasing numbers of people who *are* able to hold a paid job but need help to believe in their ability.
- Is dismayed by the callous cutting off of benefits, sometimes for weeks at a time, for whole families. This has been one of the main reasons for seeking our financial help over the past year.
- Is seeing the desperation of people who cannot afford their rent now being faced with eviction. There have been several such local people in the past week.
- Is despairing at the failure to acknowledge that for some people, paid work is never going to be an option and everyone with disability, regardless of their problems, is being put through the stress of changing benefits, with a pretence that there are, out there, jobs for everyone.
- Is saddened that this same group of vulnerable people – those with so little voice because they may be unlikely to vote – have lost most of their option for positive activities because their day-centres, whether state-run or private, cannot continue with no income.

Please pray with us the prayer from *Action Week*:

Forgive us for pointing the finger of accusation and casting the stones of blame.

With justice and compassion, may we work together to draw the line.

Jesus writes in the sand - holding back the stones of our culture of blame

Jesus writes in the sand - giving space for forgiveness and a chance to move on

Jesus writes in the sand - marking a welcome to all and the hope of transformation – for me... and for you.

Money Leaflets

A new updated Debt Advice leaflet has been produced by the Poverty Action Group. It brings together details of organisations and agencies who can help anyone who is in debt or would benefit from advice and support about money matters. It lists a wide range of local services from Age UK Dorchester to SW Illegal Money Lending Team (a hotline for help about loan sharks), the Foodbank and Samaritans. It should be available in churches, GP surgeries, council and social service offices, CAB, Credit Union and other places where people may find it useful. If you can think of anywhere you think it should go where you can't see it already, please contact the Poverty Action Group members for copies.

Good Friday

The Good Friday Walk of Witness will have a fresh look this year, with input from more young people. Join us if you can at 9.30am on 29th March at St Mary's Church. Look out for further details later.

Quiet Space

It was good to have an afternoon for trustees and companions to get together and to give our heartfelt thanks and very best wishes to Harold Stephens for chairing the trustees and helping to ensure the project came to fruition. We are now looking for someone to take on the role of Chair of the trustees. We are delighted that the Family Church has returned to the group of sponsoring churches. The garden structural work is now complete and spring should see planting work so this summer people will finally be able to enjoy the peaceful surroundings of the original vision for the Quiet Space.

Churches Together

Churches Together in Dorset is going back to what the county Forum gatherings were originally intended for: to share ideas and activities to encourage and inspire local groups of Churches Together. We are going to North Dorset on 14th March, 10.30 to 12.30 to St John's Church, Enmore Green, Shaftesbury. We shall hear what the Churches are doing Together in Shaftesbury, Gillingham, Sturminster Newton and Blandford. Do come along to hear about the wide range of activity and maybe to tell them about what we are doing here in Dorchester. A light lunch is provided as well. Ring me, Val Potter on 01305 264416 and maybe we can arrange lifts.

In the Churches Together section of November's Parish Magazine there was an interesting review of some local charities which operate in Dorchester. It did not include Dorchester Relief in Need Charity – not surprisingly, really, as that charity **doesn't operate under the Churches Together in Dorchester umbrella**. It is, however, church based and it does cover similar ground to that covered by the Poverty Action Group.

Dorchester Relief in Need Charity was set up in 1973 when the Parish of Dorchester was formed. Until 1973 the town had 3 separate parishes (Holy Trinity, All Saints and St Peter's) with St George's in Fordington and St Mary's in West Fordington. Each of the three town centre churches had its own charities set up during the 19th century by benevolent, affluent patrons. The Ashley and Pope families were prominent in this and they established a variety of funds to provide, for example, coal and **clothing to those in need**. As time went by people's needs changed but there remained a number of families and individuals who needed (and still need) financial help so when the parish was reorganized the opportunity was taken to modernize the provisions of the charity. It can, and does, provide money for a wide range of services and goods where there is real need.

The trust funds are administered by a small group of trustees (2 from each of the Dorchester churches) with the rector as ex-officio chairman. Applications have to be through an agency such as medical practices, social services, the CAB and so on and the beneficiaries of grants must live in the ecclesiastical parish of Dorchester. Only rarely do we get applications from

the churches and I wonder whether they are as aware as they **should be of the charity's existence**.

The level of poverty in Dorchester is well hidden and not widely appreciated but there are many families and individuals who scrape by on a weekly basis but who are quite unable to cope with sudden and unexpected expenses. This and other charities exist to provide relief in times of need.

Robert Potter (Clerk & treasurer)

The Rector in his page on the history of the First World War (November issue), says that many modern historians doubt the quality of the leadership of the British and allied forces and that **"little" was achieved by it all. This was the first major conflict** that had the use of modern weapons, as we know them today. This resulted in confused and often very poor tactics on both sides. Military leaders were often at a loss to know how to deal with complex situations. However, as the war progressed so tactics improved. General Herbert Plummer, amongst others, proved to be an able and successful tactician.

Had unconditional surrender been adopted by the allies in 1918, the Germans would have been forced to accept defeat and thus the Second World War might have been avoided. As it was, Germany never believed that it had been truly overcome in 1918.

At least the British and allied intervention in 1914, and all that followed, prevented the horrifying spectacle of the jackboot marching down Whitehall, possibly led by Cpl Adolf Hitler.

Revd Derek Parry

“Canst thou by searching find out God ”

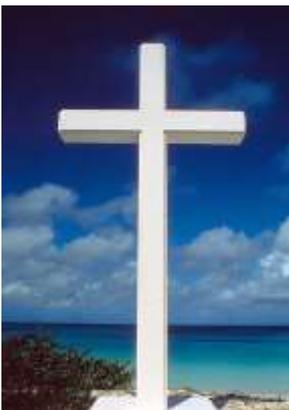
Jean
Lang

Writing a review of a book written by someone you know is probably asking for trouble – but when Jane Shuttleworth said that she was writing a book on Dostoevsky that is just what I did!

Dostoevsky was born in 1821. He chose not to stay in the army after his father’s death and followed a literary career. In 1849 he was arrested for his part in an underground political movement and faced the firing squad, but was reprieved and spent four years doing hard labour in Siberia. He married twice, the second time to his stenographer, who organised his life for him and weaned him away from his gambling, and by the 1870s he was comfortably off in St Petersburg enjoying increasing fame. He died in 1881.

Jane’s book, “Dostoevsky’s Russians”, has as its purpose “to share the pleasures of reading Dostoevsky and to allow his Russians to guide us together, writer and readers through the cultural, religious, historical and biographical context of his novels.” Does she succeed? – well, for me, not entirely. I have read very little Dostoevsky – “Crime and Punishment” many years ago and part of “The Brothers Karamazov”, but although Jane presents her book as a “down-to-earth introductory guide”, without more knowledge than I had, it is a struggle. She says that she does not want to tell the story of the novels and certainly not the end because that would spoil it for the reader, but without a clear framework in which to place the characters her discussion of them is sometimes hard to follow. I would have welcomed a brief introduction (in italics, if necessary, so it could be skipped) précising the main storyline, so that I had a better framework into which to place the individuals she writes of.

What does come over is Jane’s love for and enthusiasm about Dostoevsky, Russia and the Russian people, and that is infectious. She obviously greatly enjoyed her time there, and she wants her readers to appreciate Dostoevsky and his



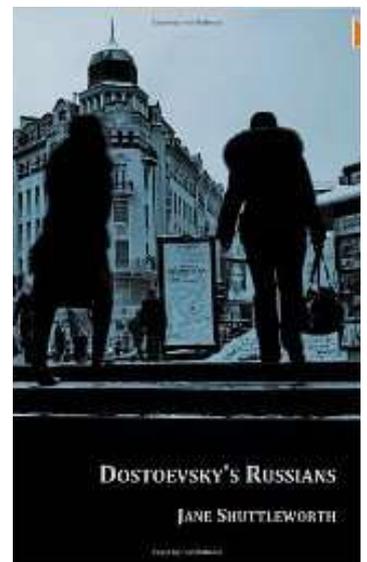
country as she does.

Dostoevsky’s Christian faith was important to him, and a large number of his books are written within the framework of Christian doctrine. Although once he re-found his faith, after his time in Siberia, he never lost it and his characters frequently play out the doubts of the thinking believer. Jane takes a series of his major characters and looks at them through a discussion of what they bring to the novels which they inhabit and how Dostoevsky’s own beliefs and background feed into them. She also brings in her own experiences since discovering Dostoevsky when aged 17, and she ends with a personal epilogue which I will leave to the reader to assess.

The book (aside from its contents) is in itself interesting. It is self-published through Amazon. Amazon makes its site available and will for a small fee assemble a book to be checked for spacing, notes etc. so that the published article looks professional. It is then possible not only to buy it for e-reading but also as a “proper” book. However the process does not include proof reading and the numerous small spelling errors are an irritant.

Whilst I had some reservations about this book, to those who already know and love Dostoevsky, as Jane does, it provides a worthwhile exploration of the relationship between writer and the characters created. As for its aim to get people to read Dostoevsky I have at least promised myself to re-read “Crime and Punishment” and may even get to finish “The Brothers Karamazov”!

Dostoevsky’s Russians
By Jane Shuttleworth
(Amazon)



Editor’s Comment

Officially, Spring begins on 20th of March and ends on 20th June – let’s hope the weather understands this. We look forward to the great church festival of Easter, so may the sunshine and daffodils dance as we celebrate, putting the long dark wet winter behind us.