

Revd Canon Thomas Woodhouse

February 2016

Dear Friends,

If there is anything good about getting old it is that you grow in wisdom! The accumulative result of a lifetime of experiences mean you have knowledge that can be shared. Wisdom, as a tool of faith, is about knowing your place before God and Lent is the opportunity to think about our relationship with God.

Many of us live quite dislocated lives in relation to God! We search for God but he has already found us! We are restless for God but he is there before us! We believe ourselves to be searching for a God who has saved us, we are restless for a God who has found us!! I don't like being unsettled but I know there is value in sticking with the emotion it invokes rather than just becoming annoyed at the inconvenience!

Lent is an opportunity to stay with the emotion of a suffering Christ and addressing some of the challenges of being a Christian in the 21st Century. Not having ready answers to every question is challenging but wisdom is about having the heart and mind of God, not offering endless sound bites.

The light of Christ now exchanged for Lenten abstinence, is a light that brings new epiphanies that reshape our understanding, confound our reason and bring deeper transformation. For worshipping communities the way we express our wisdom is through our commitment to Jesus Christ, by caring for one another and then being a Christian presence in the world.



Please submit copy for next issue by 18th of the month to the Editor at morrisseyobe@googlemail.com

On Tuesday 5th April 2016 The Revd Claire McClelland will be Instituted and Licensed as a Team Vicar in the Dorchester and the Winterbournes Team Ministry. Claire will be the resident priest at St Peter's Church and will have responsibility for St Peter's Church and helping us to continue to develop the Anglican presence on Poundbury.

At the moment we are working with Claire to prepare the house on Herrington Road for the family to move into during March. I will be meeting with Claire to offer support and encouragement as she transitions from her work in the Parish of Charminster to the Dorchester and Winterbournes Team. Please pray for Claire, Sam, Hannah, Esther and Ayla.

During Lent the churches of the team will be holding their AGMs and APCMs, important gatherings when we reflect on the past year. We will give thanks to God for His presence in our lives and in the life of His Church. We have much to be thankful for in 2015 and speaking personally, thank you for the support and encouragement you have shown me.

I am thrilled that Claire joins in our conversations during the Easter Season! Across the whole nine worshipping communities that form our team we will begin new tasks; explore new possibilities for mission and continue to grow the Kingdom of God in Dorchester and the Winterbournes. These are exciting times and we are looking forward to embracing the future.

As ever

The Revd Canon Thomas Woodhouse
Team Rector

Cover picture courtesy of Richard Budd
Richard@RichardBudd.co.uk

Editor

Margaret Morrissey OBE
9 Hessary St, Poundbury
Dorchester DT1 3SF
01305 250366
morrisseyobe@googlemail.com

Printer

Printed by Parish Mag Printers
01722 324733
www.pariשמagprinters.co.uk

Advertising Manager

Liz Green
7 Sydenham Way
Dorchester DT1 1DN
greenliz@hotmail.co.uk

Dorchester Noticeboard

Tuesday 2 February

St Peter's MU meet at 2.15pm in St. Peter's Church Hall. Details 250808.

Wednesday 3 February

Dorcas MU Bible Study group meet at 10am at 28 Victoria Road. Walking with Gospel Women – Mary and the child Jesus. Matthew 2:1-23, Luke 2:51-52. Details 260259.

Tuesday afternoon group

3rd February 2.15 pm at St. Peter's Church

Wave of Prayer - Celebration of Faith

Friday 5 – Sunday 7 February

Salisbury Diocese MU Wave of Prayer

Wednesday 17 February

Dorcas MU Bible Study group meet at 10am at 10 Weatherbury Way. Beatitudes – Living Openly. Matthew 5: 3-4. Details 260259.

Wednesday 2 March

Dorcas MU Bible Study group meet at 10am at 4 Kingsbere Crescent. The Promise of Easter – a reflection for Lent. Exodus 3: 1-6. Details 260259.

St Aldhelm Church and Community Hall

School Drive, Crossways, Dorchester, Dorset DT2 8WR.

March 7th Salisbury Cathedral Choir who will be performing a 75-minute concert at St Aldhelm's. We are honoured that after a number of years this highly acclaimed choir has managed to include a visit to Crossways in its occasional engagements away from Salisbury.

The concert will commence at 7.30 pm.

Adults £10.00 children under 16 £5.00.

Ladies Breakfast

Will be held on Saturday 20th February

9.30am Carluccios in Dorchester

All most welcome Maureen Shaw

A date for your Lent Diary

There will be a Quiet Day to be held on Saturday March 19th at the Quiet Space.

More information in next month's magazine, or phone 01305 261673 or 561747.

COMPTON VALENCE SNOW DROPS

VILLAGE HALL LUNCHEAS 7TEAS

Monday 1st - Friday 12th February

2016

COME and WALK/DRIVE through our beautiful village and see the stunning white drifts of snowdrops.

OPEN (WEATHER PERMITTING)

10.30am -3.30 pm Daily

If possible please ring Pippa James 01305 889338 or Tessa Russell 01308 482 227 to book so we can cater accordingly

Dorchester Benefice LENT COURSE

An INTRODUCTION TO CHRISTIAN MEDITATION

You are invited to a six week course at the Quiet Space, Poundbury, Dorchester on Monday evenings starting on Monday 8th February from 7pm – 8pm. This introductory course provides an opportunity to Experience the practice of Christian Meditation, to learn about its origins and to discover its relevance as a form of prayer for the contemporary world.

For more information and to book your place please contact –Rosemary Bassett – 01305 262615 or

Anita Finnigan - 01305 259032

Dorset Meditators – (Affiliated to the World Community for Christian Meditation in the UK)



Churches Together in Dorchester

The Church and the Environment

Thurs Feb 11th

7.30 pm

in the Dorford Centre

Top o' Town

Speaker

The Bishop of Salisbury

The Church of England's spokesman on the environment

Dorchester Noticeboard

Film Nights In Lent

'Treasures of Snow' is the title of a children's story written by Patricia St John. It is set in the mountains of Switzerland and is a powerful portrayal of a variety of human emotions and the importance of faith at times of crisis. It raises issues such as injury and healing; rejection and revenge; confession and forgiveness; repentance and acceptance; sacrifice and friendship; fear and faith; alienation and reconciliation. The study will be held on 3 of 4 Wednesday evenings at 5 Hardy Close, Martinstown from 7.30-9.00 starting on the 17th February.

New Craft Group

A craft group will be starting on Monday 25 January 2-4pm in the undercroft of St Mary's church hall. This group will run on Monday afternoons except the 3rd Monday of the month when the Monday Club meet. Just bring along anything you are doing. Knitting, sewing, painting, drawing, etc. and come and have a cuppa and natter. Contact Cynthia Fry on 01305 260062 for further details.

The Thursday Group

The Thursday Group meets on the second Thursday of most months in St. George's Church Hall to hear speakers on a range of topics, followed by refreshments and time to talk to friends or make new ones

For further information please contact Vernon Moffet 259755

On Thursday February 11th speaker is Wendy Hilton of TWAM – Tools With a Mission, to tell us about the ingenious work of this Christian Charity, which collects hand tools to be refurbished by volunteers and then sent out to Africa and Asia. there to earn their own living.

On February 9th Shrove Tuesday Pancake Party from 3.00 to 4.30 pm .charge is £1.50, including a Pancake and a cup of tea. Extras at 50p each.

Growth Out Of Discussion (GOOD)

The Last Week – What the Gospels really teach about Jesus' final days in Jerusalem (Marcus Borg and John Crossan) led by Eileen McLean
Wednesday 2nd March in St Peter's Church Large Hall, 7.00pm to 9.00pm

Gardeners Question Time

in aid of The Children's Society

Wednesday February 24th 2016. George's Church Hall, Dorchester at 7.30 p.m.

The panel will consist of local gardening experts .

Simon Goldsack Holme for Garden Wareham

Roy Hayward DC show judge

Nigel Hewish Kingston Maurwood

Tickets £8 to include coffee/tea and refreshments are on sale at The Gilded Teapot in Hardye Arcade . Dorothy Maggs (01305 262436) or Audrey Litson (01305 262668).

Tasty Valentine's Day treats on sale for Christian Aid

The Valentine's coffee morning will take place on Saturday 13 February, running from 10am-12 noon. There will be cakes, biscuits, coffee, marmalades and jams to buy along with a book and Traidcraft stall. If you can, bake a cake or some biscuits for this event. If you can help please deliver cakes to the United Church on Friday afternoon (after 3.30pm) or Saturday morning with proposed prices. More information is available from Tony McDougal (Tel: 01305 260 227) or tonymcdougal@icloud.com

ABBAYFIELD HOUSE DORCHESTER

52 Prince of Wales Road
Dorchester
Dorset
DT1 1PP

Abbeyfield House offers supported sheltered housing for the over 55's We provide residents the privacy of their own accommodation combined with the companionship of others and nutritious home cooked meals prepared daily.

Professional staff on hand to provide emergency assistance through a call alarm system.

No cooking bills or repair worries.
Contact us on 01305 263894

St George's Church

Fordington, Dorchester – Rev Fiona Hall



Weekday services

Every Thurs 10am Holy Communion and coffee
Sunday services see inside cover

Amy's Antics

Have you ever had a bad hair day? If so you will be able to sympathise with me as I'm walking around looking a little bit like a monk, with a large bald patch on the centre of my head. And no, it isn't because I've been up to mischief again!

The vets needed to shave my fur so they could remove some warts and a lump, so now I'm covered in little bald patches, most of which I can cover up with a jumper, but not my head.

It was very unpleasant having the warts, they were very itchy and used to really irritate me. It was also really horrible having them removed, I had to miss my breakfast and have an anaesthetic so I was really groggy and sore for a few days.

But now, I'm back to full bounce, and soon, when the fur grows back I'll look good again as well as feel great. And I wonder if Lent is a bit like this, when Christians let Jesus check out the lumps and irritating bits in their lives and remove them, even if it hurts a bit. But take courage, Jesus is just as skilled and gentle as the vets, and soon Jesus will, 'sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, so that he might present the church to himself in splendour, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish.' (Ephesians 5:27)

If so, it's no wonder everyone celebrates at Easter, a church full of people with all their spiritual lumps, irritants and bald patches gone, wow!

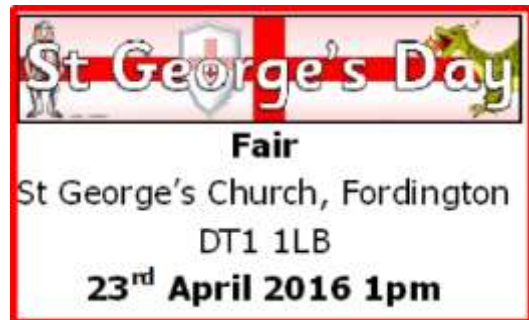
Dates for your Diary March

Tues 1st	Lent Lunch in the Hall	12-1.30
Fri 4th	Fordington Fishes	1:30 - 3
Sat 5th	Coffee and Company	10-12
Sun 6th	Mothering Sunday	10:15

(Book of Common prayer communion)

On Christmas Day twenty six of us met in St George's Hall to enjoy an excellent Christmas Lunch prepared by many willing helpers. We had an enjoyable and happy time. The turkey was kindly donated by Nigel Clark of Little Angus Butchers, Grimstone and we are very grateful to him and to others who made various donations.

We unintentionally made a profit of £100 which we have donated to the Joseph Weld Hospice.
Val Scriven



Poetry in Lent

Tuesday 23rd February in St George's Hall at 2.30pm.

Bring a poem or two, maybe reflecting the season; whether modern or a classic or one you have written, to read aloud followed by a time of reflection and response. Please bring copies if possible. Those who just wish to listen also welcome. The afternoon will finish with a short form of Evening Prayer.

Dates For Your Diary February

Tues 2nd Munch Bunch Lunch Club Manor Park School
Fri 5th 12th & 19th Fordington Fishes baby and toddlers 1:30 - 3
(in the Hall behind the Church)
Sat 6th Coffee and Company in Church 10-12
Tues 9th Pancake Party in the Hall TBA
Wed 10th Ash Wednesday Service with ashing 10am
Thurs 11th Thursday Group in the Hall
Wed 24th AGM 7.30pm

Star Wars and the Lord's Prayer

Star Wars movies, from 1977 to the present, dramatise the conflict between good and evil, drawing on themes from various religions and locating fictional events in an imaginary galaxy “long ago and far away”. Star Wars feature alien creatures, robots and the now famous Jedi who represent good versus the Sith who are evil. An omni-present energy, known as the “Force” is said to bind the galaxy together.

Some people are so hooked on star Wars that a number actually declare their religion to be Jedi. 176,623 people in England and Wales did that on their 2011 Census forms.



So when the latest in the Star Wars pop-culture series was scheduled for screening just before Christmas last year, it offered an ideal opportunity to remind cinema audiences of the importance of prayer in the real world, by drawing their attention to a brand new website www.justpray.co.uk

A one minute advertisement was made by the Church of England, with a wide range of people simply saying or singing the words of the Lords Prayer, leading to the website. The video was paid for by the All Churches Trust and approved by the British Board of Film Classification. The company selling the cinema advertising space, Digital Cinema Media, actually said they would give a discount of 55% on their standard advertising rate. Months later, with no explanation for their change of mind, they issued rules which would exclude religious advertising on the grounds that it might offend. News of this went round the world. Within days, more than a million people had seen the video on YouTube and the Just Pray and other websites.

Director of Communications for the Archbishop's Council for the Church of England, the Revd Arun Arora, said: “The Church of England is absolutely full of people like me who make mistakes, but who have a change of heart or who are led to repentance and forgiveness. I hope the next step would be for the people who run DCM, Odeon, Vue and Cine-world, to show the strength of leadership to recognise they've made a mistake, have a change of heart and reconsider their decision.”

Unknown opponents then attempted to bring down the website and fill it with spam messages. They failed. So in spite of everything, people who want to pray can still learn the “Our Father” by visiting www.justpray.co.uk

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vlUXh4mx4gl>



St Mary the Virgin

Church Correspondent Robert Potter

St Mary's Easter Garden 2016

Growing in Holiness Together

During the weeks of Lent we shall be growing our Easter Garden. It serves as a focus for our prayers during Lent and through Holy Week; on Easter Day it is blessed.

The Easter Garden will be the result of a 'growing' programme run throughout Lent, which will involve as many of the worshipping community as possible. We are inviting you to take on the challenge of growing something for the Easter Garden, linking the daily care of the plant(s) to daily prayer and bible readings. (*The prayer and Bible readings will be available in Church*)

Friends in church have been working to propagate plants, these will be handed out on Sunday 7th February 2016. It then becomes your responsibility to care for the plant(s) and return them to church at the end of Lent for inclusion in the Easter Garden. (*A timetable is set out below*)

Our young people might like to grow cress; another idea is pineapple and carrot tops in saucers of water; and someone else is going to grow parsley.

We are relaxed about what people offer and not everything needs to be home-grown. We shall be looking for some larger houseplants and flowering plants, these may well be bought and then cared for at home for a few weeks before coming into church.

Timetable for growing the Easter Garden

Sunday 7th February 2016

The plants start to be given out with prayers and bible readings.

Sunday 14th February 2016

The Lady Chapel Easter Garden begins to take shape.

Sunday 21st February 2016 Rocks and stones are added.

Sunday 28th February 2016 The cave tomb and stony path.

Sunday 6th March 2016 Mothering Sunday

Sunday 13th March 2016 Golgotha is set up.

Palm Sunday, 20th March 2016 The garden is brought together as we are brought together.



Holy Monday, Holy Tuesday and Holy Wednesday
During these three days people are invited to bring their plants to the Easter Garden in St Mary's. Stop for a moment as you offer the plant you have nurtured and cared for during Lent and offer your own personal prayers to God. There will be people around during these days placing the plants and preparing the garden.

Maundy Thursday 24th March 2016

We wait and watch with Jesus in Gethsemane.

Good Friday 25th March 2016 The garden lies untouched.

Easter 26th and 27th March 2016

The garden is blessed. From Easter Day until Sunday 3rd April 2016 the Easter Garden remains a focus of prayer and devotion. People are encouraged to take their plant(s) away after the 3rd April and continue to nurture them. TMBW

A Tale of Two Candlesticks – small candlestick

At the back of St Mary's, by the font, stands an ornate paschal candlestick. It came from Athelhampton House and it was repaired and regilded in 2001 but it remains a delicate structure. It does need to be moved from time to time – it stands near the pulpit sometimes – and if it is moved without considerable care some of the small decorative pieces get broken. Early last summer Fred Sefton-Smith died and was the first person to be laid to rest in the new interment area. Fred was a kind and loyal gentleman and he had been a loyal, long-serving member of our church for 50 years. He sang in the choir as boy and man until facial surgery damaged nerves. He was a churchwarden from 1979 - 83 and he looked after the hall (the bookings and the maintenance) for 22 years. Fred was one of those stalwart members who kept the church going through a number of incumbencies and when ill-health overcame him he was sorely missed. His family wanted to give something to St Mary's to commemorate Fred's life and service here. It was suggested to them that a new paschal candlestick would be welcome and this was agreed. A simple, easily moved model in keeping with the more modern furniture in the nave altar area was agreed on and an appropriate plaque was designed. The candle stick was dedicated in the presence of some of Fred's family on Sunday 31st January. The old, ornate candlestick will remain by the font and the new, more modern one will stand near the screen, meaning no more moving to suit the church's seasons. We are very grateful to Fred's family for this generous gift.

Robert Potter

Church Cleaning group will meet on Thursday 25th February from 10am – 12oclock. Coffee & Doughnuts available. Rosemary Bassett

The Contemplative prayer group meets each Wednesday at 5pm Blessed Sacrament Chapel and at the Quiet Space at 7.30pm on 11th & 25th February

Harvest 2016!

St Mary's Page cont'd

The Harvest Festival is a time when we give thanks for the gifts of God's creation; for the fruits of the earth and for the part that humans play in making such a harvest possible: co-operation between the human and the natural. This year we are seeking to focus our harvest thanksgiving at St Mary's on celebrating things 'Made in Dorchester'. In 2016 we would like to engage with food based-businesses in Dorchester: butchers, bakers, chocolatiers, purveyors of cereals! If the idea works, we can think about inviting those who use Dorchester as their manufacturing base to get involved in 2017! To mount an exhibition over a weekend will take a lot of organising and can only be achieved by a team of people. At this stage we are discussing the feasibility of such an event! If you would like to join in the conversation come along to The Rectory on Wednesday 2nd March 2016 at 7pm and help shape our thinking.

Thomas

Church Committee

Individual church councils are now more correctly referred to as church committees and ours meets 6 times a year. The Minutes of each meeting are put into a folder at the back of the church for anyone who is interested to read. The November meeting dealt with a lot of routine business but then members listened to David Illingworth, our church architect for the past 11 years, as he went through the main points of his latest 5-yearly survey of the fabric. Much has been done in the past 5 years but a lot of work lies ahead of us if we are to keep our building watertight, safe and attractive. This will be very costly and large sums of money will have to be raised. Item 11 of the Minutes gives more information.

The January meeting looked back at our Advent & Christmas services and forward to what the rector is proposing for Lent & Easter. There were the usual reports with opportunities to discuss what is going on. Robert Potter

YP@D News

YP@D continues to meet on Sunday evenings during the school term. Last term our big project was Remembrance Man statue which was displayed in St Peter's & St Mary's. This term and the summer term are busy for the YP@Ders who are all sitting exams. They are feeling the stress, but know they will enjoy the challenge of 6th Form and University. With this in mind the programme will be deliberately low key.

(An anonymous, amusing poem which you may strike a chord with some.)

There's nothing at all the matter with me
I really feel healthy, as healthy can be.

I have arthritis in both of my knees,
And then when I talk, I talk with a wheeze.

My pulse is quite weak and my blood is so thin,
But I'm awfully well for the shape that I'm in.

I have arch supports for both of my feet
Which means I can just about walk down the street.

Sleep I find difficult, night after night,
But gladly by morning I find I'm alright.

My memory is failing, my head's in a spin,
But I'm awfully well for the shape that I'm in.

How do I know that my youth is all spent?
Well, my 'get up and go' has got up and went.

But I really don't mind when I think of the fun
And all of the wild things my 'get up' has done.

Old age is golden I've oft heard it said,
But I'm sometimes unsure as I get into bed.

With my 'ears' in the drawer, my teeth in the cup,
My 'eyes' on the table until I wake up
As sleep overtakes me I say to myself,
"Is there anything more I could lay on the shelf?"

Then I get up each morning, get rid of the nits
And pick up the paper and read the 'Obits';
If my name isn't in there, I know I'm not dead,.

So I give God my thanks and go back to bed.



Easter Cards

We are hoping to deliver an Easter card to all our neighbours in Victoria Park, If anyone feels able to help with the delivery I would be very grateful. This time we are going to deliver on Saturday 12th March, meeting at the Rectory at 2pm finishing there with tea afterwards.. If you cannot make that day but are still happy to help contact Kath Joslin 268803

The Irish Eskimo
Tony Wheeler



I don't have it now but as a 12 year old in the 1930's I had quite a distinctive accent - an Irish brogue, acquired from friends in Liverpool where we lived at the time. My father was a parish priest and I went to a boys' public school in the city. My school had somehow got invited to take part in a big event being held in the city hall about Christian missionaries throughout the British Empire, and I unwittingly ended up stealing the show. As an example of the native people converted to Christianity by the Missionary Society, they had got hold of a very authentic looking Eskimo costume complete with fur hat and needed a suitable candidate to wear it.

As luck or fate would have it, one boy was just the right size to fit the costume - me!

I was drilled in the ways of the Eskimo people by one of the older boys and given some lines to learn, then I was packed off to the City Hall in full Eskimo costume to be a living exhibit at the missionary event. I remember being in a small room and people coming in to see and hear about the Eskimo and his life. More and more people were crowding in to the room to see me - astonished that here was a real Eskimo with a distinctive Irish brogue.

The sixth former who was supposed to stay with me and do most of the talking had disappeared to the pub to see his girlfriend. The people flocking to see me were by now convinced that I actually was an Eskimo, here in Liverpool, and I'm ashamed to say that I was happy to go along with it and even to improve on it. The collecting tin I was holding was getting heavier and heavier, not just with coins but with large quantities of notes stuffed into it - and before the war, a £1 note was a fair bit of money. At the same time, the fur costume was beginning to take its toll on me. Inside it I was getting, very very hot and sweaty.



Eventually, with organisers becoming increasingly worried that the Eskimo was going to disappear with the large amount of cash he had collected, my father was summoned to assure them that I really was an honest boy who would not dream of stealing their collection. After meeting hundreds of the well to do folk of Liverpool, and to my huge relief, I was finally taken home where I could shed the costume and jump into a warm bath.

And that was the last time I have ever been an Eskimo.

Defence Minister explains how the Church of England can help the Armed Forces

Church of England parishes have a vital role to play in helping support the Armed Forces, veterans and their families. This was made clear at a recent event at Lambeth Palace to promote the Armed Forces Covenant.

Defence Minister Earl Howe spoke of the "enormous" support given by the Church of England to the Armed Forces with clergy acting as "Good Samaritans" to local service and veterans families.

"With your vast grass roots knowledge of the local community, your understanding of the needs of local Armed Forces men and women, you are undoubtedly the people best placed to identify the gaps in provision and to help plug them," he told the conference.

Last year the Armed Forces Corporate Covenant was signed by the Archbishops of Canterbury and York, committing the Church of England to recognise and care for Armed Forces personnel, veterans and families.

This includes a call for diocesan and local networks to support the Armed Forces community, and for churches to use their local knowledge to be alert to need and aware of access to the Covenant Fund.



<http://www.archbishopofcanterbury.org/articles.php/5494/archbishops-pledge-churches-support-for-armed-forces-community>

Benefice News

CONFIRMATION 2016

Our Team Confirmation classes will take place during April and May this year with the confirmation in the Cathedral on Saturday 14th May 2016 at 6.30pm.

The All Age Confirmation Classes will involve bread making, watching a film and wall climbing: these translate into three themes – Belonging, Believing and Behaving. The dates will be Saturdays the 9th, 16th 23rd April and Saturday 7th May – from 4pm until 6pm.

Candidates need to be aged 10 years or over and there is no limit of the over!! The aim of the three classes is to enjoy one another's company (across a spectrum of ages), continue to engage with the issues and questions of faith, come to the Confirmation Service enthusiastic to grow as a Christian and disciple of Jesus Christ. If you are interested ring me on 01305 267944 or ask someone in your church.

Thomas Woodhouse, Fiona Hall, Jane Culliford, Jean Saddington and Jo Haine

Lent 2016

The Programme

ASH WEDNESDAY, 10th February 2016
10.30am Holy Communion with Ashing, St George's Church, Fordington
7.00pm Imposition of Ashes, Martinstown Church
7.00pm Choral Compline with Ashing, St Peter's Church, High West Street
7.30pm Solemn Eucharist with Ashing, St Mary's Church, Edward Road

LENT LUNCHESES

Fridays at 12.30pm throughout Lent, Martinstown Village Hall in support of Dorchester Poverty Action
Friday 26th February 2016 in St Mary's
12 Noon to 1.30pm
Tuesday 1st March 2016 in St George's
12 Noon to 1.30pm
Friday 11th March 2016 in West Stafford Village Hall
12 Noon to 1.30pm

More lunches may be advertised later...

Mothering Sunday, 6th March 2016
See local notices or the Team website

LENT COURSES and EVENTS

The Psalms – **Prayers for Today's Church.** (A York Course written by Bishop Stephen Cottrell)
More detail of the course content can be found at www.Yorkcourses.co.uk.

In St Andrew's Church, West Stafford

2.30pm with time for refreshments during the afternoon and Evensong at 4.30pm for those who can stay...

Wednesday 24th February

Wednesday 2nd March

Wednesday 16th March

With two to follow after Easter

In Martinstown Rectory

10.30am until 12 Noon...

Thursday 18th 25th February

Thursday 3rd 10th 17th March

Migration and Movement

(US (formerly USPG))

A study course that looks at the issue of migration and the movement of people.

Wednesday 17th & 24th February

Wednesday 2nd 9th 16th March 7.30pm until 9.00pm in the Quiet Space, Poundbury

Introductory Course on

Christian Meditation

Led by Rosemary Bassett and Anita Finnigan this course will be in the Quiet Space on the following Mondays, starting at 7pm and finishing at 8pm.

Monday 8th February 15th 22nd & 29th February

Monday 7th & 14th March

Stations of the Cross

In St Mary's Church, Edward Road at 6pm.

Tuesday 16th 23rd February

Tuesday 1st 8th 15th March

Film Nights

'Treasures of Snow' is the title of a children's story written by Patricia St John. It is set in the mountains of Switzerland and is a powerful portrayal of a variety of human emotions and the importance of faith at times of crisis. The study will be held on 3 of 4 Wednesday evenings at 5 Hardy Close, Martinstown from 7.30-9.00 starting on the 17th February.

We have tried to cover as many activities as possible! However please continue to check our website www.dorchesteranglican.info, the magazine, Pews News or ring the Team Office

01305 250719

Incarnation to Resurrection Study Course —Teresa Stewart Sykes

Have you ever wanted time to pause and think about the foundational theology of our faith? A small group of us have been meeting together to explore the key themes in the story of salvation from the incarnation to the resurrection. We have been exploring passages from the Bible on each of these themes and viewing them through the eyes of Christian writers as an aid to our understanding. Our first meeting in December examined ideas of the Incarnation. In our second session we explored the theology of “Revelation” together. Revelation occurs when an individual who looks at something in the same way as anyone else but sees or knows it in a different way, sees an extra dimension, sees the divine present and manifest. How does this process work? Faith is the starting point for Revelation. Faith is the striving of the individual to understand his/her place in the universe; it is an existential exploration of self and of the wider being within which the self has existence. However revelation is more than faith. Revelation is not an uncovering of God by us, but is a gift from God and occurs when God provides the light to show Himself, and to show ourselves in relationship to Him. In Revelation, Humanity and the Divine meet and mingle in cognitive and emotional understanding. Think of Moses and the Burning Bush, Elijah on the Mountain, or Mary and the Angel Gabriel.

Question for reflection:

If revelation is so personal, how can we ever share our understanding meaningfully with others?

John 20:11-18 In the John resurrection narratives the focus is on an individual’s experience of the resurrection. We read of Mary, Peter and Thomas’ encounters with the Risen Christ, each story highlighting John’s emphasis on the believer’s personal relationship with the Risen Jesus. The most interesting feature of Mary’s story is her lack of recognition until Jesus uses her name. This very tender personal calling reminds us of the Good Shepherd calling His own by name, and His own knowing the sound of His voice. We can see here that for Mary the revelation of the Risen Lord is a personal confrontation arising from a deep personal relationship.

Question for reflection:

Is an individual’s revelatory relationship with God more important than the Church community’s relationship with God? George Herbert: “Love bade me welcome”-Love bade me welcome. Yet my soul drew back Guilty of dust and sin. But quick-eyed Love, observing me grow slack . From my first entrance in, Drew nearer to me, sweetly questioning, If I lacked any thing. A guest, I answered, worthy to be here. Love said, You shall be he. I the unkind, ungrateful? Ah my dear I cannot look on thee. Love took my hand, and smiling did reply, Who made the eyes but I? Truth Lord, but I have marred them: let my shame Go where it doth deserve. And know you not, says Love, who bore the blame? My dear, then I will serve You must sit down, says Love, and taste my meat: So I did sit and eat.

Questions for reflection:

What does this poem tell you about Revelation?



“I’m enrolling in seminary college so I can learn about miracles, like how to pay off my student loans.”

**For those I may have wronged,
I ask for forgiveness.
For those that I have helped,
I wish I could have done more.
For those I could not help,
I ask for understanding.
For those who have helped me,
I am grateful for all you did.**

St Peter's Church – Marj Snape

Weekday services

Mon, Thur 9:00am Morning Prayer Hardy Chapel (15 min)

Thur 10:00am Said Eucharist with coffee afterwards in the hall – open for 'drop in' until 1pm
Thur 12:00pm Midday Prayer in church (5mins)



What's happening during the Vacancy?

The Revd Claire McClelland has been appointed as new Team Vicar and will be licensed on Tuesday 5th April 2016. Her first services will be on Sunday 10th April.

Claire says "I am very happy to be joining St Peter's and the Dorchester team and look forward to meeting you all in due course. Dorchester is a place we love already and I am excited about being part of the town's life in a new way.



My husband Sam and girls Hannah, Esther and Ayla and I send you love and prayers for all that 2016 will bring."

The Churchwardens are delighted with Claire's appointment and we very much look forward to working with her.

Dates for Your Diary :

Tuesday 2nd February 7.00pm, Taize Service for Candlemass led by Revd Eileen MacLean.

Wednesday 10th February 7.00pm Choral Compline with Ashing.

Thursday 3rd March Commissioning of new Lay Pastoral Assistants, Jill Bryant and Ginny Farmiloe. Evening service. Venue tbc. Bee Cooke for more details 753750

Message from Revd Anita Thorne.

Thank you to all those who bought my books "God Talk" and "Digby come Out". I have now sold out on them. The donation on each book sold, of £1 per book, amounted to £122. I have sent this to the Treasurer for the Dorchester Benefice

St Peter's Church Hall Many of you may not realise that our lovely hall is available for hire for meetings, social gatherings, exercise classes. It is a flexible, adaptable space suitable especially for small groups, with kitchen facilities if needed, and in a handy town centre location. Details about rates and making bookings please to the Churchwardens or Jill Bryant, bookings262502 email jill.bryant@hotmail.com

THANK YOU Margaret Stephenson would like to thank St Peter's Mothers Union for the lovely engraved M.U. vase given on her retirement as leader of the group and for the kind remarks of Brian Hellin church warden

The Monastic Life

As you may have gathered I am fond of retreats, and regard them as an essential part of my spiritual life. I was fortunate last month, as part of the course that I am doing, to spend a few quiet days at Douai Abbey, Berkshire which is a Benedictine Monastery. Although it is close to both the A4 and M4 it is in a beautiful and peaceful location and the Abbey Church, completed in the twentieth century is a stunning building. There are real monks in Black Habits and the Offices sung at 4 points in the day including Vespers in Latin. It is a truly holy place.

Whilst there I read a little about St Benedict and his rule. There was and is a lot of common sense in it given that it was written in the 6th century. I particularly liked the section about food and drink which says that half a bottle of wine a day should be sufficient! Of course the brothers now are much more abstinent but it was beautiful to share meals in silence with them whilst one of them read from a text – it felt mediaeval.

When we visit such places it is tempting to consider renouncing the world for the cloister and there may be times in our spiritual lives when commitment and devotion are such that we feel called to do just that, but for the majority of us that is not practical or perhaps even necessary?

Perhaps this whole world and life experience is our cloister, our monastery. We can commit to living a spiritual life that includes time for prayer and worship, time for community and fellowship, time for work and practical tasks, time for service and care of others, and time for fun and celebration. It does not mean that we have to give up our families and friends, our work and all that we enjoy, and all that it means to be fully human. Nonetheless we are approaching the season of Lent and a period of renunciation and discipline. As we consider what we might forego or commit to during Lent then perhaps we can be inspired by the discipline and renunciation of those men and women who across the ages, since the time of St Benedict have committed to life in religious houses and orders.

"Let us open our eyes to the light that comes from God, and our ears to the voice from that which every day calls out...."
Rule of St Benedict Prologue. Marj Snape

New Bishop for Sherborne

The Ven Karen Gorham, currently Archdeacon of Buckingham, is to be the 36th Bishop of Sherborne and the 9th in modern times. The Bishop of Sherborne works in the Diocese of Salisbury with responsibility mainly for parishes in Dorset.



Karen said, “It has been a real privilege to serve the church in Buckinghamshire and work in the Diocese of Oxford. I now look forward to getting to know the people and places of Dorset, an area I have loved since childhood holidays.”

Bishop Nicholas added, “Karen has experience and brings gifts to help us with Renewing Hope: Pray, Serve, Grow. I think St Aldhelm would be pleased with her appointment, the first woman to the See of Sherborne which he founded. She emerged as the right person for this post from a company of excellent men and women considered equally.”

She served her title at Northallerton with Kirby Sigston in the Diocese of York from 1995 to 1999. She was ordained priest in 1996 and in 1999 went on to become Priest-in-Charge of St Paul’s, Maidstone in the Diocese of Canterbury. During this time she was also Assistant Director of Ordinands and Area Dean of Maidstone. In 2006 she became an Honorary Canon of Canterbury Cathedral. She took up her current role as Archdeacon of Buckingham in 2007. Karen has been a member of the Church of England General Synod for twelve years, and for the last two has served as a member of the Panel of Chairs.

In her words :

“My own story began at the age of twelve, when, having grown up in a Christian home, I volunteered to sharpen pencils for the junior Sunday school at Christ Church, Billericay. It was something I could do, and God honoured that by gradually giving me the ability to do all sorts of other things I never thought possible. These varied from teaching and eventually leading the Sunday School to ministry in the North of England; from leaving school at 18 with some typing skills to becoming an administrator; and from being someone who picked up various responsibilities in a parish to becoming an Archdeacon.

“Though I almost always felt inadequate for the task before me, I always found God in Christ there too. It’s with that same trepidation that I prepare for the next task as Bishop of Sherborne, confident that the God of the past and present will have exciting things in store for the future.

“I have always given myself wholeheartedly to God’s call on my life, to go wherever he calls me and as someone who has not married, over the years I’ve discovered the importance of friendship. Knowing the support of others throughout life is vital for us all, and in all the places I have lived and served I have been sustained through some particular friendships, people with whom I go on being able to share the joys and sorrows of day to day life with as well as hobbies and interests.

“There are many creative things going on in the diocese of Salisbury, and I am looking forward to joining a talented team and seeing how we can further encourage and equip the church to be all that God wants it to be.

“I am also keen to get to know those who live in the conurbations, seaside towns, highways and byways of Dorset who might be seeking and searching, in need of support or help, to see where we as Christians can make connections, to ensure that God’s love, hope and grace is shared abundantly. In the wider diocese I will have responsibility for lay ministry and chaplains, two areas vital to the Church’s ministry in the 21st century, and I also look forward to seeing how that work can continue to thrive through support, encouragement and training.

“There is much for me to learn. Please pray for me as I embark on this next stage of my journey.”

Karen’s consecration will take place on 24 February at Westminster Abbey before she joins the Diocese formally in March.

Following our successful Striding for Dorchester's Historic Churches in September, Tessa and I decided that, as we'd enjoyed the day so much, we'd keep up the momentum by carrying-on walking when time and weather permitted. Having persuaded our husbands to drop us off at the beginning of our first walk and with the promise of meeting them at 12 noon at a local village pub for a light and congratulatory lunch, we set off full of the joys of life.

We chattered away, enjoying the countryside and stopping for a while to admire some beautiful young calves as we walked through a farmyard. We were about half-way into our walk, negotiating an uphill track, when we heard the sound of a heavy tractor approaching from behind and duly stepped off the path onto the grass verge to leave room for it to pass. As the tractor approached we became aware of a very unpleasant odour and hardly had time to say "Ugh – what's that awful smell?" before the tractor was passing, splattering us with some of its load! Open mouthed with surprise and horror we looked at each other wondering what to do.

The tractor was nearly out of sight apparently unaware of what had happened. We tried wiping the mess from our clothes with some dock leaves without much success so being British we did the only thing we could – we laughed, then we had a cup of coffee with a square of chocolate (brought by thoughtful Tessa) and decided that we'd keep calm and carry-on hoping that the mess would dry on the way and smell less potent!

We enjoyed the remainder of our walk, and fortunately for them, did not see or pass any other walkers on the way, arriving at the same time as our husbands at the Pub – we'd rung them to say we'd be 20 minutes late but not telling them the reason. When they got out of the car we started explaining our state and what had happened when a gentleman came up and said, "I'm sorry but the Pub is closed on Mondays!"

We're looking forward to our next walk.

Tessa Bullick and Julie Moffet, St George's. (Ps 126. Then was our mouth filled with laughter)

St Andrew's Church

West Stafford

Church Correspondent: Revd Jane Culliford



For Sunday services see inside front cover

Annual Meeting

St Andrew's Annual Church meeting will be held on Sunday 21st February at 11.15 following the 10am Parish Communion. This is an opportunity to hear reports of all that has taken place at St Andrew's over the past year and to nominate churchwardens and members of the Church committee.

Christmas Tree

St Andrew's Church entered a tree in St George's Christmas Tree Festival based on the carol 'In the bleak winter' with many of the decorations made by those attending the Coffee and Chat at the end of November. The tree was then taken back to St Andrew's and looked very good in the space created at the back of the church



This tree was only displayed over Christmas but there is another tree which is on display throughout the year – a Prayer Tree

Prayer Tree



Since a Prayer Tree was put at the front of the church last year, it has been well used by those who attend church regularly and also by visitors who write prayers and hang them on the tree like leaves. These prayers are then included at Sunday services and at Wednesday Evening Prayer .

Lent course

This year during Lent there will be 3 sessions of the **York course 'Psalms'** which will be held in church using the space at the back near to the servery. Each session which begins at 2.30pm is complete in itself and will finish with refreshments and for those able to stay, Evening Prayer follows at 4.30pm. The first session is on Wednesday 24th February and is titled '*Know that the Lord is God (Psalm 100)*'. The second and third sessions are on March 2nd '*Out of the depths have I cried (Psalm 130)*' and March 16th '*How long O Lord (Psalm 13)*'. Two further sessions will take place after Easter.

Coffee and Chat

The next Coffee and Chat morning to be held in church will be on Saturday 27th February from 10-12noon everyone welcome –there is no charge
Next month's Coffee and Chat will be held on Saturday 19th March.

St Simon & St Jude

URSULA NORMAN



It seems a bit déjà vue still to be talking about Christmas in February, but the Parish of Monkton and Herrington for the last few years has had a growing number of families with children coming to live here. This was reflected by a record number of children attending our Crib and Christmas tree decking service in December. Very sensitively taken by the Curate Jo Haine, 13 children listened to the Christmas story and carefully placed the principal characters in and around the stable, and then covered the tree with baubles. Afterwards, parents and grandparents chatted over their cups of coffee whilst the young explored every nook and cranny of the Church enjoying themselves, very much at home amongst the pews.

The reason I have referred back to Christmas and what has become this Church's ministry to the children of this Parish, is because with Lent so early in the year, Mothering Sunday will soon be upon us – and so we are already planning with Thomas, our Rector, a child-orientated Communion Service on March 6th. Traditional of course with seasonal posies for all the Mums, but hopefully an occasion that will bring home the difference between the commonly used expression "Mothers' Day" and the more appropriate "Mothering Sunday".

Refugee Crisis If you wish to give, information can be found at www.gov.uk/government/news/syria-refugees-what-you-can-do-to-help-2. Above all please pray . Beryl Cooke

ART CLASS STARTS SOON!

ABSOLUTE BEGINNERS TO IMPROVERS WILL LOVE THIS COURSE!

GREAT NEWS for all our readers looking for something fun to do over the next few months! Our current class is full but we are now taking enquiries for our next part-time Art Class, which starts soon. This is a new 14 week part-time art class (once a week for 3 hours).

This fun course is a great way to meet new friends and develop new skills.



Absolute Beginners to Improvers - Just Like You!

The course is designed to be fun for absolute beginners who have never picked up a brush before through to Improvers.

Step-by-Step Guidance

We adapt to each student's needs and give them all the guidance and help they need to develop their artistic skills. The curriculum is fun, comprehensive and interesting. Over the course we will explore four different media; pencil drawing & sketching, oil pastel painting and techniques, painting and blending with water colours and acrylics. Step by step tuition in the basic techniques and secrets needed to create beautiful pieces of art.

Still Life to Landscapes

By the end of the course, students have created a minimum of 8 pieces of their very own original art they can enjoy forever, from simple still life and flower studies to beautiful countryside landscape scenes.

Young at Heart

This course is a brilliant way to learn new skills you will be able to enjoy forever. It is also a great way of meeting new friends and to have a fun experience you will always remember and cherish! It is open to adults of all ages.

Meet New Friends, Learn New Skills

This part time course is over 3 months, so will give you plenty of time to master your new hobby.

Limited Places

To maintain a high standard to our classes and the tuition you will receive, classes are kept to small numbers – so places available are limited! We recommend that if you are interested you call us now for details.

FOR INFORMATION ON DATES, COURSE FEES AND BOOKINGS, CALL NOW ON 01747 828 296

Bring out your inner artist
BEGINNERS TO IMPROVERS

YOUR NEW ART CLASS

PART-TIME 14 WEEK COURSE
3 HOUR CLASSES ONCE A WEEK

Step by step lessons suitable for absolute beginners or improvers. Acquire the skills you need to produce paintings you can be proud of!



**WEYMOUTH AVENUE PAVILION
DORCHESTER**

**STARTS SOON • LIMITED SPACES
CALL NOW FOR DETAILS
01747 828296**

LEARN NEW SKILLS MEET NEW FRIENDS
AND CREATE ORIGINAL WORKS OF ART

CHURCHES TOGETHER DORCHESTER

Compiled by
Val Potter

Why Climate Change Matters

Recent correspondence to the Echo suggests that not all Christians are convinced that Climate Change is relevant to us as Christians. The Bishop of Salisbury, Rt Revd Nicholas Holtam is the Anglican lead on environmental issues and he will explain why we all need to take the issues more seriously as it is our responsibility to care for creation for its own sake as well as to address Climate Change for the disproportionate effects it is having on some of the poorest people in the world. He will speak at the Dorford Centre on 11 February, 7.30pm. All are welcome to his talk and the following informal discussion.

The Quiet Space

It was good to see the near life-size Nativity scene in the garden over Christmas. It was an excellent community project as the figures were made by the young people of **Future Roots**, at the new community facility, the Men's Shed.

Now is the opportunity to examine our lives and activities and to take stock for the coming year. The Quiet Space is an ideal place for thinking about things so do visit and enjoy the peace there any week day 10.00-4.00pm inside or just the garden at the weekends. We also need a few more people to come along as Companions for a few hours a month to enjoy the quiet and to be available to offer a smiling welcome and friendly word to visitors if they want it. A couple of hours a month is absolutely fine. Do ring me (264416) if you might be interested or come along to the tea we are holding for Trustees and current Companions on Tuesday 2nd February at 4.00pm for an hour or so.

Hardship Survey

A survey is being undertaken by the Poverty Action Group in order to create a Directory which lists all of the organisations which are able to help those in need in West Dorset. The aim is to include all organisations and bodies large and small and to compile a general Directory. A steering group is taking the project forward and a Council Grant of £2,500 has been made to pay someone to do some of the research work involved. If you are involved in any relevant group and receive a request for information please do reply as it will be an extremely useful resource if we can make it as comprehensive as possible.

Council Challenged on Renewable Energy
The Churches' Ecology Group had a stall in South Street on a Saturday before the Paris international Climate Change conference to tell people what it was about and to invite them to sign a petition asking the County Council to take a stronger lead, particularly with renewable energy, to ensure that Dorset meets its agreed targets. This is more challenging now that Navitus Bay Wind Farm is not going ahead. A good meeting was held with the Leader of the County Council and ongoing links were made with the Environmental directorate.

The Fruits of the Spirit

Churches Together have been holding monthly short times of quiet reflection at the Quiet Space. It was agreed to continue with them in 2016 on the third Friday of each month at 9.00am. These times of prayer and quiet reflection are an opportunity for the people from the worshipping and praying communities of Dorchester to **be together in God's presence. The theme for the year is the fruits of the Spirit, taken from Gal. 5:22-23. The next gathering is on 19th February with the theme of 'Joy'.** Reflection is for half an hour and people are very welcome to stay for coffee afterwards, as time permits!

New Pastor

Revd Kevin Dudman has been confirmed as the permanent pastor of the River of Life Church at a service on 30th January. He has been acting as temporary pastor since Catherine Dearlove left.

Chaplaincy

The town centre shops appreciate the friendly visits from the 6 lay chaplains from 4 different churches. One new chaplain is shadowing one of the pairs and we are hoping to recruit a few more to extend the service beyond South Street, perhaps into Brewery Square or Trinity Street. If you might be interested in this valuable service to the shops in the town centre do get in touch with me, Val Potter (264416) or Chris Warren who delivers the training days (459454).

Editor's page — Margaret Morrissey

Happy start to New Year — a letter from the British Library who are insisting on receiving copies 1 – 210 of Benefice Magazine. After third letter this has to happen so wish me luck on my search.

As ever Christmas was a joy with the children. After Black Friday the shops were out of stock of some popular toys so I decided to resort to eBay. No one explained to me once you have bid on an item unless you are outbid you cannot cancel it. I ended up with three dolls, two dolls wardrobes and a dozen outfits for requested “Designer Doll”, Fenella was thrilled so were the others as they had to have same amount of presents: lesson learnt.

Rocco continues to amuses us. The day after Boxing Day he rushed down stairs clutching his eye, visions of casualty visit loomed until he inspected his Father's eye and realised we all have a black spot (pupil) his comment went like this: “Thank goodness we all have one” and collapsed in relief. How he managed to arrive at 10 and not notice I do not know.

He gave me a lovely present of a little pink dish and plate. When I thanked him, as it is something I really will use and appreciate he said, “That's good I bought it for Mum but Daddy said she will not use that rubbish!!!” You can imagine his father's embarrassment especially as his Mother quite liked it.

Like every New Year this year will bring changes some to the Magazine and some for the Editor. Hence Grandma's page has gone. Sigh of relief I know, but you may still hear about my little ones, although not all so small anymore. One will leave for University in September. I was reminded of her first ever line to say in a Nativity play “So they all had a party in heaven”. Let's hope we all do one day.

In April I will be relinquishing my post as PCC Secretary, after some years decided it was time for change. I am now a member of Deanery and Diocesan Synod and Bishops Council in Salisbury. It is early days but I am finding it extremely interesting and very fulfilling. I am enjoying getting to know the Cathedral more each time I visit. The service of Darkness to Light I attended in December was so beautiful and moving I do recommend a visit next December.

The magazine has a number of functions to fill giving you messages from the Rector and the clergy, information on the local churches and their many and interesting services and events.

It provides local information and wider stories of interest often written by local people. Also I hope it makes you smile and forget your worries and aches and pains, so here goes for this month.

Time for a Smile



A church was plagued with pigeons settling on the roof and causing an awful mess. The church leaders discussed several plans to rid the church of the birds, all to no avail. Someone then came up with a brilliant solution. They created an ingenious method of catching the birds in a trap, took them out one by one, baptised them and made them members of the church and now they only come back at Christmas and Easter.

.....

One morning the vicar's wife woke up with a start. Her husband asked what was the matter. She told him, “I just had a dream that you gave me an expensive pearl necklace for Valentine's day. What do you think it means?” “You'll know tonight,” said the vicar confidently. Later that evening, he arrived home with a small package and gave it to his wife. Delighted, she opened it, only to find a book entitled “The Meaning of Dreams.”

.....

An active young curate decided that they should stop calling their toilet the ‘John’ and instead they would call it the ‘Jim.’ She said it would make her feel much better if she could say, “I go to the Jim, first thing every morning.”

(And here is a useless bit of trivia: There are references to flushing toilets going back to around 2600 BC, but it is thought that Sir John Harrington first introduced the flushing toilet to Britain, which is why the flushing toilet today is often also called a “John”.)

.....

Political leaders

“Don't worry about your son, he is set to become a great politician”, the teacher said. The parents were delighted and asked how she could tell. “Well, he can say more things that sound well and mean nothing at all than anyone else in the class.”

.....

I have found the best way to give advice to your children is to find out what they want and then advise them to do it.

A Gap In Time Jeanette Winterson

2016 marks the 400th anniversary of the death of William Shakespeare and throughout the year there are celebrations and performances to mark and remember his genius.



Shakespeare

The Vintage imprint of the Hogarth Press has asked writers to reimagine Shakespeare's plays for a 21st century audience, changing them from play to prose.

We are to look forward to Shakespeare retold by amongst others Margaret Atwood, Ann Tyler and Howard Jacobson. First underway is Jeanette Winterson with "A Gap in Time" a "cover version" for "The Winter's Tale".

The original was probably written in or around 1611 and is one of Shakespeare's difficult later comedies. Set in Sicilia and Bohemia (but a Bohemia with a coast) it is probably best known for the stage direction "Exit, pursued by a bear". It spans 16 years starting at the Court of Leontes and his pregnant queen Hermione who are enjoying a visit from the ruler of Bohemia, Polixenes. Polixenes is a childhood friend of Leontes and has been staying at the Court for many months. Whilst refusing to extend his stay at Leontes' request he defers to Hermione. Leontes turns from enjoyment to murderous jealousy in the course of a speech, imprisons his innocent Queen and threatens death to Polixenes.

The Queen gives birth and the child is taken to be cast onto the shores of Bohemia. The oracle pronounces the Queen innocent and Leontes (overcome by remorse) hears that his Queen has died. 16 years pass and the

daughter (Perdita) grows up as the adopted child of a shepherd, she is found by Polixenes' son, father and daughter are reunited and Hermione is restored to life.

Jeanette Winterson has transformed the story to the present day basing it in London and the United States. The two old friends are Leo (a hedge fund manager) and Xeno (a video game designer). MiMi (Leo's wife and a chanteuse) gives birth to a daughter who Leo convinces himself (on no evidence) is Xeno's and bribes his gardener to get rid of.

She is taken to the United States but, before she can be taken into an orphanage, she is found and rescued by Shep and his son Clo who bring her up as their own. Sixteen years on Perdita finds her way back to the UK with her boyfriend, becomes Leo's intern and finds herself at a concert at which MiMi sings uniting her daughter and ex-husband.

Jeanette Winterson manages to tell a different story to Shakespeare while keeping all the essential elements of the play. All her characters have rich back stories which anchor them clearly in a time and place and the interplay between them all is grounded in reality.

"The Winter's Tale" is a play about forgiveness, a play about that which is lost being found, about repentance and regeneration. "The Gap of Time" is the same and Jeanette Winterson (once you get over the somewhat lurid sex and colourful language) writes a beautiful story which echoes Shakespeare without being Shakespeare. As the first in the series she has set the bar high for her successors.

