



ST GILES HORSPATH PARISH MAGAZINE

March 2009

Dear Friends,

Over the last few months some of our Parochial Parish Councils have been reconsidering the role of our churches within their communities and it has enabled us to reflect on just how loved our church buildings are. For many of us the church is the focus of the village; pubs may close, shops may no longer be viable but our churches stand as they always have. They testify to the many generations who were born, lived and died in our villages, a heritage of history which murmurs of ages past. I was touched to see the churchyards transformed over the Christmas period, as wreaths and flowers gradually appeared on graves and slowly filled a sea of stone with life and love. Many of our churches are open, offering a sacred space, a place put aside in our busy lives for anyone to enter into and find something of the stillness of God. It has been important rediscovering together just how special our church buildings are to us. But the church is more than a building, however valued and supported that building may be.

At a conference I went to, Mary Saunders, the diocesan advisor on the upkeep of churches, described a visit she made to a stately home in Northamptonshire. It was owned by the National Trust and as usual was maintained to the high standard we have come to expect. She described the pleasure she had going round its unfussy rooms, admiring the tapestries and imagining the comfort a family would have experienced living there. She was enjoying her visit until she went to see the church which was also part of the property. As soon as she stepped inside its stark, well maintained walls she had to walk out again, for the church was no longer being used for what it was made. It had lost its soul and meaning.

Our churches are indeed special places but only because of the people who pray in them: that small minority in our villages who week by week go and bring the needs of the world and the village before God, those who share in the love feast of the Lord and sing to his glory. Our churches are only made beautiful places of sanctuary by those who lovingly clean them, fill them with flowers, dress their altars, look to their daily upkeep and give them life.

In March and April annual meetings will be held across our team where you can hear all that the people of God have been doing over the last year and where those nameless people who make our church buildings places we love will be honoured. As well as looking to the

past it is then that we also look to the future and ask once again what is our role. All are very welcome, not only to the annual meeting, but also to be part of your church. It would be a tragedy if our village churches became just historic empty lifeless shells where 'the dead must bury themselves'.

Emma

CHURCH SERVICES IN MARCH

- 1st (First Sunday in Lent)
11.00 a.m. Family Communion
- 8th (Second Sunday in Lent)
8.00 a.m. Holy Communion
11.00 a.m. United Service with the Methodists
- 15th (Third Sunday in Lent)
11.00 a.m. Family Service
- 22nd (Mothering Sunday)
11.00 a.m. Family Communion
- 29th (Fifth Sunday in Lent)
11.00 a.m. Cluster Service at St Giles, Horspath

Women's World Day of Prayer on Friday, 6th March at 2.00 p.m. at Wheatley URC. All are welcome to this interdenominational service prepared by women of Papua New Guinea.

Messy Church - on Sunday, 8th March from 3.00 to 4.30 p.m. in the Methodist Chapel in Horspath. For anyone who is under 18 or a child at heart, it is a must. This time we are looking at Noah.

Tea at Hogwarts. If you would like to join our visit to Christ Church, followed by tea in the hall costing £3 on Sunday, 15th March at 3.00 p.m., then please do phone Emma on 362381.

Parish Register

Funeral 29th January Russell Yeates

FLOWER ROTA FOR MARCH

Sundays

1st Lent I	Nell Gray Penny Mercer	8th Lent II	Nesta Long Friends of Horspath Churches
15th Lent III	Brian & Carol Lowe	22nd Lent IV	Barbara Lewis
29th Lent V	Muriel Walker	There will be no flowers in the Church during Lent	

Lent Courses 2009

Faith, Hope and Love Lent course. This year the five week Lent course will be following the York course entitled Faith, Hope and Love which focuses on 1 Corinthians 13. In order for as many people to be involved as possible, groups will be convening in the homes of people across the three parishes at different times during the week, beginning the week of March 1st, so please do sign up to one of them at the back of church. The course will end with a service of prayer and meditation in the Methodist Chapel on Tuesday of Holy Week in order to reflect on the past weeks and prepare us for Holy Week.

Ways into the Bible. On Sunday evenings at 6 p.m. from 1st March to 5th April there will be a series of Lent talks held at Dorchester Abbey on 'Ways into the Bible' given by a variety of speakers including Canon David Winter, the Bishop of Oxford and Canon Professor Martyn Percy. See the leaflet at the back of church for full details.

Christianity and the Arts. The Churches in Headington, including our Methodist brethren, are holding a series of five talks during Lent on Christianity and the Arts in Lime Walk Methodist Church Hall, New High Street, Headington at 7.30 p.m. on Tuesdays. Talks and speakers vary from 'Passion in Film' with Robert Ellis to 'Music, Society and Faith' given by our own Jonathan Arnold. For a fuller programme see the list at the back of church.

Why Go To Church? If you would rather curl up with a good book this Lent then the Archbishop's recommendation is 'Why Go to Church' by Timothy Radcliffe.

HORSPATH SENIOR RESIDENTS' CLUB

Wednesday, 4th March: A talk by Alan Copeland on Cotswold Curiosities. 2.00 p.m. in the village hall.

Wednesday, 18th March: Annual General Meeting. If you are 55 or over, come and join us. Annual subscription is £5.00. 2.00 p.m. in the village hall.

Wednesday, 1st April: Martin Harris will tell us of his journey by helicopter to the Russian Arctic. 2.00 p.m. in the village hall.

- Sheila Dandridge

Church of England Children's Society Boxes

Thanks to the generosity of box holders and the many kind donations given to Father Christmas on his Christmas Eve visit to Horspath, the sum of £624.15 has been sent to the Children's Society. Your support of this charity is greatly appreciated.

- Muriel Walker

HORSPATH GARDENING CLUB

Horspath Gardening Club usually meets on the second Tuesday of every month, in Horspath Methodist Church, at 8.00 p.m. We welcome everybody so come and enjoy an interesting talk, followed by refreshments and a time to catch up on all the gardening news! The next event is:

Tuesday, 10th March. Vegetables, Pests and Diseases - a return visit from Ali Quantrell, a very experienced vegetable grower from the Oxford Botanic Gardens. A talk with plenty of time for questions.

April. Because of Easter there will not be a meeting until May - please note the change of date.

Tuesday, 19th May - a visit to St John's College with Head Gardener, Philip Sheffort - meet at 6.15 p.m. in the village hall.

There will be a charge to cover the costs of visiting speakers and the hire of the hall. For further information contact Sheila Frankum on 872793.

A Saint in Horspath?

You may well have read in the press recently that the Vatican is seriously considering elevating Cardinal John Henry Newman to the sainthood. This great Victorian churchman has long been revered as a contender for such an honour within the Roman Catholic Church, following his conversion to that faith while at Littlemore in 1845.

What, you may ask, has this to do with Horspath? The answer lies in the fact that this famous man once lived in our village, when he was the Vicar of St Mary the Virgin (the University Church) in the High Street of Oxford. At that time he was an Anglican priest who so soon was to inspire the Oxford Movement and change forever the nature of the English Church. In 1829 Newman brought his mother, Jemima, and three of his sisters from Nuneham Courtenay to live in a rented cottage in Horspath for about a year. At this time he was also a Fellow of Oriel College, Oxford and would ride here and back on many occasions - his diary mentions frequent visits to our village, and he wrote:

"My home party has been delighted with the place".

At the end of 1829 his *home party* moved back to Nuneham Courtenay, and finally to Rose Hill, when Newman resigned his post at St Mary's in 1843, removing himself to Littlemore before joining the Catholic faith there two years later. He died in 1890 and it is strange to think that a saint will have had a personal and happy connection with Horspath.

- Brian Lowe