



# ST. LEONARD'S CHURCH

## FRANKLEY, B32 4BL



All Welcome!



## CHURCH NEWS – FEBRUARY 2019



### REVD. JANE WRITES:

### PROMOTING PRAYER IN OUR SCHOOLS

A friend of Rory's has asked if I would respond to a newspaper article called, "Ban all things Pious and Prayerful in our Schools, "which is about proposals from a group of academics and the Humanists to ban the saying of prayers and singing of hymns in state schools, because it directs pupils to particular faiths.

A pamphlet by the Philosophy of Education Society of Great Britain says, "Students should decide for themselves what kind of life to live, rather than being told they are duty bound to follow a specific religion."

Freedom of speech and expression, providing it isn't offensive to others is one of the values of British democracy. Deciding for ourselves, therefore sounds just and a way of giving respect and dignity to those who think differently to ourselves

Since our society is multicultural society with a plurality of religious belief and practice and Islam looks set to be the predominant faith in Birmingham in the near future, surely, the secular agenda holds, it is wrong to inflict Christianity on those who already have strong beliefs.

Some believe using prayers and singing hymns is a vestige and tool of imperialism and colonialism, harking back to a time when the British Empire reigned supreme in India and what is now Pakistan, and swathes of Africa. They see Christian assemblies as a tool of keeping Christianity dominant.

Promoting Christianity in our schools, some argue will only heighten our divisions, leading to unrest.

Others, including Christians, believe that their own experience of assemblies as a child was awful and lacking in any purpose that they thought worthwhile. Singing hymns, they found embarrassing and they couldn't say Amen to the prayers from the bottom of their hearts. They were put off Christianity and going to Church as a result.

Christian prayer and singing of hymns in school is a minefield, which some Christian countries, such as the USA avoid by not allowing Christian assemblies in schools. I would argue that they have replaced Christianity with another religion, as each morning; the children swear allegiance to the state and flag.

Despite, what appear to be legitimate and loving reasons as to why we should not have prayer and the singing of hymns in schools, I believe Christian assemblies are important, and should always include prayer and reflection.

I have a bias. I am a Christian. I believe that Jesus is the Son of God who died on the cross, rose from the dead and is alive. The humanist society also has a bias. They believe that Christianity is untrue and that there is no god and no afterlife. Their reasons for not wanting prayer and hymn singing in school is therefore not for any of the reasons above. It is because they believe we are misleading our children with false teaching and therefore singing hymns and praying is for them, illogical.

We all have a bias, a belief and practice which have been shaped by the culture and country we live in, by our families, friends and community, by our schooling and by our

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personal experiences, including our experience of God. None of us have been totally free to decide for ourselves what we believe.

Humanists have adopted wedding, funeral and naming ceremonies which are similar in many ways to our Christian ones, which include reflection, but are without prayers. Their ethos is not necessarily threatening to those of us who worship in a faith tradition. They deserve to be given respect and to be allowed in state schools to give their opinion in Religious Education lessons.

Some of the new atheists, which are closely aligned to humanism such as, Richard Dawkins, push their ideas with evangelical fervour. In his book "The God Delusion" he is offensive against religion.

Dawkins sees religion as subverting science, fostering fanaticism, encouraging bigotry against homosexuals, and influencing society in other negative ways. Dawkins regards religion as a "divisive force" and as a "label for in-group/out-group enmity and vendetta".

He is most outraged about the teaching of religion in schools, which he considers to be an indoctrination process. He equates the religious teaching of children by parents and teachers in faith schools to a form of mental abuse.

When atheism has replaced Christianity or religion, as they did during the last century; when revolutions have occurred, as we have seen in the communist revolutions of China and the USSR or in the German autocracy of the third Reich, attempts have been made to abolish all religion. Christians, along with other minorities have been persecuted. New hymns and mantras have been introduced, either worshipping the State or the leaders of the regime.

Abolishing Christian worship in school has not set people free. It has deprived children of knowledge and the tools to explore faith options for themselves. Instead of celebrating diversity and cultural difference, a secular identity has been made dominant.

Whilst we have a diversity of faith schools in Birmingham, Christian, Muslim, Jewish and Sikh, where parents can choose to send their children, our state schools, and our Church of England schools, include children and teachers worshipping from different religious traditions along with children living in a culture in which God does not feature and is not talked about at all. Within this context, children should have the opportunity to watch or experience for themselves worship from many traditions.

If I am conducting a Christian act of worship in school, I can invite pupils to respond with Amen if they wish to and respect the diverse traditions from which pupils come. Most Muslim parents would prefer some form of Christian worship to no worship at all.

As a former teacher I cringe at some of the assemblies that were inflicted upon my pupils by Christians, and of some of the assemblies I inflicted upon schools.

In one school I taught at, the head made the whole school sing "in Christ there is no East or West" until they sung it loud enough because of their poor behaviour towards visiting Christians to the school.

In another school I taught at, which was predominantly Islamic, a group made up of Christians from the Sparkbrook area came in once a term and tried to convert pupils to Christianity.

Christian prayer is still legally protected as a result of the 1944 Education Act.

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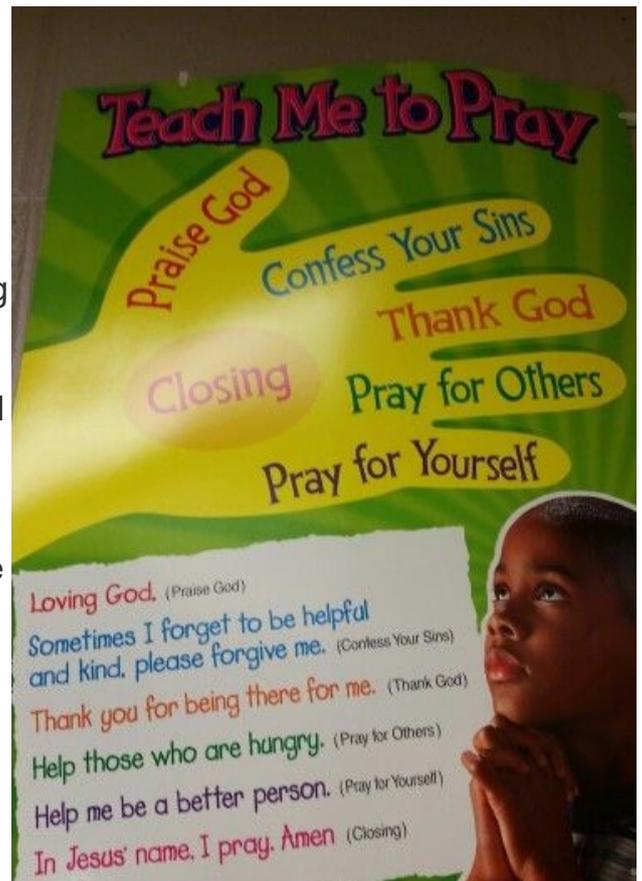
However every assembly is no longer required to be Christian, providing the majority are. Few schools can or do meet the current legislative requirement for a daily act of collective worship, partly because there isn't space and often staff are unable or unwilling to lead a collective worship session.

I believe that prayer and hymn singing adds to what our children experience in schools. While we continue to be a British monarchy with the Church of England playing an important part in our governance, assemblies should reflect this. No child should be forced to say Amen or join in, and no member of staff should be forced to do anything which is against their conscience. However, it is important that they are present and respectful. It is also important, that we as Christians are respectful to those of other beliefs. Christian assemblies at their best are inclusive, and offer those of other faiths opportunities sometimes to share and pray their prayers. If necessary, Christian hymns can be backed up by music tracks and performances.

The latest initiative in Holly Hill School and in Reaside Academy, two of the schools in our parish is to offer prayer spaces in which the children, with the help of prompts and suggestions can pray in their own way. In Holly Hill School, a group of Christians act out a Bible story each week in an "Open the Book" assembly. There is much that is good going on.

Christian assemblies can give pupils an opportunity to decide what they themselves believe. No worship deprives pupils of this.

May God help me and all those who have the privilege of conducting Christian assemblies in school show us how to conduct them well.



### A CHILD'S PLEA

In this world I need to know God

If you will tell me about Him, He will tell me more.

If you will talk to Him, He will speak to me

If you will read me His word, He will reveal himself to me.

If Jesus lives in your heart, He will draw me into His ~

Where I will see this world through His eyes ~ And not be afraid. (Author unknown)

'Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.'

Proverbs 22:6 KJV



## **SOME NOTABLE DATES IN THE CHURCH CALENDAR THIS MONTH:**

2<sup>nd</sup> THE PRESENTATION OF CHRIST IN THE TEMPLE (CANDLEMAS)

6<sup>th</sup> The Accession of Queen Elizabeth II

14<sup>th</sup> Valentine, Martyr of Rome, c269

27<sup>th</sup> George Herbert, Priest, Poet, 1633

## **FROM THE REGISTERS: FUNERALS:**

9<sup>th</sup> January: Drusilla Biddle; Service in church followed by committal at Brandwood End cemetery

17<sup>th</sup> January: John Nelson; Service in Church followed by committal in our churchyard

18<sup>th</sup> January: Kevin Wyndham Rees; Service in church followed by committal in Quinton cemetery

## **FRIENDSHIP GROUP:**

**PLEASE NOTE THAT THE FRIENDSHIP IS GROUP SUSPENDED UNTIL SPRING.**

## **CHURCH FLOWERS:**

Pat Bowyer will be moving away soon, probably this month, and Jacqui will take over as Captain of the flower arranging team. If you would like to join the team who do so much to beautify our lovely church, please put your name on the list at the back of the church, or contact Jacqui. If anyone would like flowers for a particular date to mark a special occasion, (cost £20), please contact Jacqui:- Phone: 0121 421 3584; Mobile: 0779 0211641

**DONATIONS OF FLOWERS/GREENERY AND/OR MONEY FOR FLOWERS ARE ALWAYS WELCOME!**

Thank you so much, Pat, for everything you have done for us over the years. God bless you and Colin and we wish you well with your move and in your new home.

**CHURCH CLEANING** \*More volunteers needed, please!\* Rota at back of the church. Thanks to all who work so hard to keep our church clean and tidy.

**GARDENING TEAM:** A huge thank you to Head Gardener Jon and his band of merry men & women for all your hard work and efforts to maintain the churchyard & gardens in good order. Well done, you've done a great job!

Although winter is now upon us, there are still jobs to do, so if you do feel the urge to help, please do shout up!

## **W.I. MEETINGS:**

These meetings take place in the Church Hall at 7.30 p.m. on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of the month. All are welcome and feel free to bring a friend! If any of the WI members would like to provide further information of the local WI activities, please do so and I will gladly include it.

## **BUILDING FUND**



Our Church & Hall have repairs that need urgent attention and for which insufficient funds are available. Donations, large or small, are desperately needed, PLEASE, and a Building Fund has been launched to raise as much as we can, as quickly as we can. A collection bucket is available in church, or, if you wish to help with a larger amount, I'm sure the Wardens, Treasurer and/or Jane would be delighted to help you with this! Thank you.

**2 Corinthians 9:7<sup>ESV</sup> Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.**



The  
Season  
of  
Lent



## **A MESSAGE FROM JANE ABOUT LENT:**

Easter is late this year, so Ash Wednesday is on 6<sup>th</sup> March.  
There will be a service at St Leonard's at 10.am and at other times within our group of churches. Look out for the evening time.

**Lent groups will begin on the following Tuesday and Wednesday and carry on until Easter Day**

**There will be two on Tuesdays.**

One at St Steven's, Rednal at 10.30 in the morning

**One at St Leonard's at 7.30 in the evening**

There will be one on Wednesday at 7.00 pm at St. Chad's, Rubery

**It would be lovely if the one in Frankley could meet in a home on the Frankley estate.  
If this is impossible, we will meet in our hall.**

The material we are using in all the groups is produced by the Ecumenical Council of Churches and is called "The Majesty of God."

It can be downloaded online from <https://ctbi.org.uk/lent/>



## **LENT LUNCHES/COFFEE MORNINGS**

Lent will soon be here (Ash Wednesday is on 6<sup>th</sup> March) so perhaps you will consider holding or helping with a Coffee Morning/Evening or Saturday Lunch to raise funds for The Local Food Bank & The Homeless.

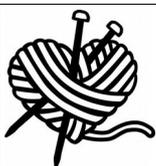
If you would like to hold an event in the church hall, please check with Jacqui to ensure that the hall is free on your preferred date.

Please do your best to attend these fund raising events, not just to raise much needed funds for worthy causes but to support the kindly folks giving of their time and efforts to put on these opportunities so we may spend sociable time together. THANK YOU!

**'GIVE, AND IT SHALL BE GIVEN UNTO YOU; A GOOD MEASURE, PRESSED DOWN, AND SHAKEN TOGETHER, AND RUNNING OVER, WILL BE Poured INTO YOUR LAP. FOR WITH THE MEASURE YOU USE, IT WILL BE MEASURED TO YOU.'** LUKE 6:38

## **ST. LEONARD'S CHURCH DIARIES**

**BERYL STILL HAS SOME AVAILABLE  
@ £1 EACH.**



## **KNITTING NEEDLES~ FREE!**

**Gay still has a selection of used knitting needles she's giving away.**

If anybody would like them, please contact Jill in the first instance.

Email: [jill-collins@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:jill-collins@blueyonder.co.uk) or Mobile: 07527867297

## **HOME FOR GOOD 7 FEBRUARY 2019 7:00 P.M. - 9:00 P.M. @ Birmingham Cathedral**

Home for Good is a charity, with a vision to find a home for every vulnerable child in the UK who needs one. Every 15 minutes a child in the UK comes into care. We believe the church is well placed to provide safe, loving homes for these children, so we want to **honour** those who are already fostering or adopting, **equip** those who are supporting and **inspire** more people to open their homes to a vulnerable child.

Birmingham Cathedral is hosting Home for Good on the evening of Thursday 7th February 2019 from 7pm, to **honour, equip and inspire** all who come along. Krish Kandiah and Bishop David Urquhart will be speaking, and we will be sharing recent stories from around the West Midlands, all set in the context of worship and thanksgiving for what God has been doing.

**If you are a foster carer or adopter, or are interested in the work of Home for Good, we would love to see you there.**

Numbers are limited, so please reserve your free place via:

<https://www.homeforgood.org.uk/events/celebration-west-midlands>

Contact: Kath Johnson via Email [kath.johnson@homeforgood.org.uk](mailto:kath.johnson@homeforgood.org.uk)

## **BIRMINGHAM CITY MISSION'S SPONSORED SLEEPOUT**

**Friday 15th February 2019 8pm to 6am**

**@ BCM HQ Car park, The Clock Tower, 2 Langdon Street, Birmingham B9 4BP.**

To raise funds for Birmingham City Mission's work with homeless people and to raise awareness of what it is really like to sleep rough.

## **WOMEN'S WORLD DAY OF PRAYER FRIDAY 1<sup>ST</sup> MARCH 2019**

(From Churches Together England website)

### **INFORMED PRAYER, PRAYERFUL ACTION**

Women's World Day of Prayer is a worldwide movement of Christian women who come together to observe a common day of prayer held on the first Friday in March each year, and who, in many countries, have a continuing relationship in prayer and service. Through Women's World Day of Prayer women are encouraged to become aware of their talents and use them in the service of the wider community.

The Day of Prayer begins as dawn breaks over the islands of Tonga in the Pacific and continues across each continent until the last Services of this special day are held back in the Pacific on the islands of Samoa, circling the world in prayer for about 36 hours.

Why not make a note in YOUR diary as we would like YOU to join with us on the first Friday of March, with Christians from over 170 countries and islands, uniting together in praise, worship and in prayer. Women's World Day of Prayer includes Christian women from Protestant, Roman Catholic and Orthodox churches.



## **SHROVE TUESDAY, 5<sup>th</sup> MARCH 2019**

**PANCAKES IN THE CHURCH HALL @ 5 pm**



Jacqui will once again be slaving over a hot stove (my mother's favourite saying!) in order to provide us with the opportunity to scoff pancakes and enjoy a natter with friends while raising a bob or two for the Hall's Heating coffers.

**DO COME ALONG, PLEASE!**



# LENT LUNCHES



**SATURDAYS 16<sup>th</sup> MARCH & 6<sup>th</sup> APRIL**

**12 TIL 2 PM**

**BREAD ROLLS, DELICIOUS HOME MADE SOUPS**



**ST. LEONARD'S CHURCH HALL**  
***RAISING FUNDS FOR THE LOCAL***  
***FOOD BANK & THE HOMELESS***  
***ALL ARE WELCOME!***



Birmingham has never seen anything like this before!

## **THE BIRMINGHAM PASSION PLAY 2019**

**Start: 16th April 2019 @ 12:00 am**

**End: 18th April 2019 @ 12:00 am**

The Birmingham Passion Play 2019 is coming to the City.

Involving more than a hundred community actors alongside Saltmine Theatre Company, multiple choirs and dynamic live music, Birmingham Passion Play 2019 is by the city, for the city.

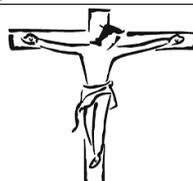
This unique contemporary retelling of the extraordinary Easter story will process from Grand Central to St Philip's Cathedral, on 16th, 17th and 18th April 2019.

With participation and collaboration we want to recruit volunteers for the community cast, choir, musicians and stewards along with sponsorship from churches, organisations and businesses.

Everyone is welcome.

For more information: <https://www.saltminetrust.org.uk/index.php/birminghampassionplay>

*Event organiser: Saltmine Trust*



## PAUSE FOR THOUGHT

1) **Wreckers or Builders?** (Article that follows is by Ken Weliever, The Preacherman )

### The Wreckers

I watched them tearing a building down  
A gang of men in a busy town.  
With a ho-heave-ho and a lusty yell,  
They swung a beam and a sidewall fell.  
I asked the foreman "Are these men skilled,  
As the men you'd hire if you had to build?"  
He gave a laugh and said, "No indeed!  
Just common labour is all I need.  
I can easily wreck in a day to two  
What builders have taken a year to do."  
And I thought to myself as I went my way,  
Which of these two roles have I tried to play?  
Am I a builder who works with care,  
Measuring life by the rule and square?  
Am I shaping my deeds by a well-made plan,  
Patiently doing the best I can?  
Or am I a wrecker who walks the town,  
Content with the labour of tearing down?



Carmelo Benvenga (1913 – 1989)

Wreckers in life are good at discouraging. Depressing. Demoralizing. Depreciating. And destroying. They know how to ruin friendships. Wreck homes. And undermine peace and unity in the Lord's church. Sometimes it's a subtle word. Maybe it's an overt action. Juicy gossip. An unfounded charge. Or just a critical spirit that finds fault with everything. And everyone.

The attitude and actions of the wrecker is opposed to all the good, godly and Biblical. God desires that we be builders.

Builders in life are skilled at encouraging. Edifying. Educating. Enlightening. Energizing. And Elevating. They know how to bring a smile to your face. Lift your spirit. Warm your heart. Put a spring in your step. Their friendships are closer. Their homes are happier. And brethren are build up by their very presence. They know how to say a good word. Offer a helping hand. And sow seeds of faith, hope and love.

Christians are collectively characterized as "the house of God", "the building of God," and the "Temple of God." Peter says we like "living stones, are being built up a spiritual house" (1Pet.2:5). Jesus Christ is the foundation. But He is building up the church one stone at a time. And we are workers together with God in the building process.

The Bible teaches that the role of preachers, pastors and teachers is to equip Christians to do ministry "for the edifying of the body of Christ" (Eph. 4:12). When that occurs Paul says it results in the "effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love" (Eph. 4:16).

Edification was both the cause and the effect of the spiritual growth and success of the first century churches. Luke writes, "Then the churches throughout all Judea, Galilee, and Samaria had peace and were edified. And walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, they were multiplied" (Acts 9:31).

Building up and edifying should be the desire and work of every Christian. It was Paul's inspired plea to first century churches. "Therefore let us pursue the things which make for peace and the things by which one may edify another," he admonished the church at Rome (Rom.14:19). To the Thessalonians he penned, "Therefore comfort each other and edify one another, just as you also are doing. (1Thess. 5:11). And to the Corinthian church he simply said, "Let all things be done for edification" (1 Cor 14:26).

***What about you? And me? It's a fair question to ask: "Am I a builder or a wrecker?"***

## **2) Rights, Opportunities and Realizations (From United Business Service Inc.)**

Lawrence Appley writing in Management News, published by AMA, on the popular subject of "rights," says there are distinct differences between "rights," "opportunities" and "realization." In a democratic society the existence of the right to own a home or fly to the moon does not obligate the society to see that everyone does actually own a home or fly to the moon. Opportunities are created, earned or provided. If an individual doesn't take advantage of an opportunity, he has no justified reason to expect the same results as one who takes advantage of the same opportunity. The right to an education does not guarantee an educated person. The opportunity must be created, but the education must be earned by individual effort. He concludes by saying, "A right does not and never will guarantee a result. People must continue to fight for "rights," be alert to "opportunities" and work for desired results.

The six most important words: ***I admit I made a mistake.***

The five most important words: ***You did a good job.***

The four most important words: ***What is your opinion?***

The three most important words: ***If you please.***

The two most important words: ***Thank you***

The one most important word: ***We***

The least important word: ***I***

## **3) "A SMILE IS THE LIGHTING SYSTEM OF THE FACE AND THE HEATING SYSTEM OF THE HEART." ~ Anonymous (Isn't that lovely? I must smile more often!))**

### **CHUCKLES:**

#### More Actual Answers to Sixth Grade History Tests:

1. Later, the Pilgrims crossed the ocean, and this was called Pilgrim's Progress. The winter of 1620 was a hard one for the settlers. Many died and many babies were born. Captain John Smith was responsible for all this.
2. One of the causes for the Revolutionary War was the English put tacks in their tea. Also, the colonists would send their parcels through the post without stamps. Finally the colonists won the War and no longer pay for taxis.
3. Delegates from the original 13 states formed the Contented Congress. Thomas Jefferson, a Virgin, and Benjamin Franklin were two singers of the Declaration of Independence. Franklin discovered electricity by rubbing two cats backwards and declared, "A horse divided against itself cannot stand." Franklin died in 1790 and is still dead.
4. Soon the Constitution of the United States was adopted to secure domestic hostility. Under the constitution the people enjoyed the right to keep bare arms.
5. Abraham Lincoln became America's greatest Precedent. Lincoln's mother died in infancy, and he was born in a log cabin which he built with his own hands. Abraham Lincoln freed slaves by signing the Emasculation Proclamation. On the night of April 14, 1865, Lincoln went to the theatre and got shot in his seat by one of the actors in a moving picture show. The believed assassin was John Wilkes Booth, a supposedly insane actor. This ruined Booth's career.
6. Meanwhile in Europe, the enlightenment was a reasonable time. Voltaire invented electricity and also wrote a book called Candy. Gravity was invented by Issac Walton. It is chiefly noticeable in the autumn when apples are falling off the trees.
7. Johan Bach wrote a great many musical compositions and had a large number of children. In between he practiced on an old spinster which he kept in his attic. Bach died from 1750 to the present. Bach was the most famous composer in the world and so was Handel. Handel was half German half Italian and half English.  
He was very large.
8. Beethoven wrote music even though he was deaf. He was so deaf he wrote loud music. He took long walks in the forest even when everyone was calling for him. Beethoven expired in 1827 and later died for this.
9. The French Revolution was accomplished before it happened and catapulted into Napoleon. Napoleon wanted an heir to inherit his power, but since Josephine was a baroness, she couldn't have any children.
10. The sun never set on the British Empire because the British Empire is in the East and the sun sets in the West. Queen Victoria was the longest queen. She sat on a thorn for 63 years. She was a moral woman who practice virtue. Her death was the final event which ended her reign.

## THOSE IN NEED OF PRAYER

**Please continue to pray for our many members who have been recently bereaved or who are ill at present, whether at home or in hospital.**

**Remember especially our dear friend, Gladys, in St. Mary's Hospice as I write this.**

Please know that you are in our hearts, thoughts and prayers.

May God Bless, strengthen and comfort you all.

## CHURCH HALL FOR HIRE – VERY REASONABLE RATES!

The hall is suitable for all sorts of events and gatherings after christenings, weddings, funerals etc. It has an excellent, fully equipped kitchen and is fully accessible for people with mobility problems. It has a disabled toilet which also has baby changing facilities. Seating about sixty it would suit a medium size reception at a sit-down meal. There is ample parking adjacent to the hall.

The hall is currently available Monday to Saturday (& very occasional Sundays) for regular meetings or occasional users. The cost of hiring the hall is £10 per hour plus £5 for heating.

For enquiries or to hire the hall, please contact Jacqui 0121 421 3584 Mobile: 0779 0211641

## RE: CHURCH NEWS:

*Thank you to those who have contributed towards the cost of printing the Church News, your generosity is both appreciated and necessary to cover costs. Bless you all.*

If you wish to receive a copy via email and don't already do so, please email a request to me at: [jillcollins@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:jillcollins@blueyonder.co.uk)

Contributions of articles etc. for the News can be: Left in church for me; posted to me (address in Church Directory), emailed to: [jillcollins@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:jillcollins@blueyonder.co.uk) or, you may wish to text or phone my mobile: 07527867297.

*However, if phoning, please note that at times I am unable to respond to phone calls but if you leave a message, I will return your call as soon as I can. I will also gladly phone you back if calls to mobiles are not included in your phone package.*

***\*Please send any items for inclusion in February Church News by 22<sup>nd</sup> February at the latest. Thank you for your consideration.\****

## ST. LEONARD'S CHURCH CONTACTS:

### Priest-In-Charge:

Revd. Jane Platt – Mobile: 0774 8693408

### Church Wardens:

Jacqui Jones – Phone: 0121 421 3584; Mobile: 0779 0211641

Peter Razzell – Mob: 0779 2916179; Email: [peterrazzell@virginmedia.com](mailto:peterrazzell@virginmedia.com)

Happy Valentine's Day.....

And Here's A Valentine's Card For Us All

