

St Thomas' Church and Community Project - Garretts Green

April Newsletter



I wonder what the image and words above mean to you ?

Christians all around the world believe and trust in one God; Father, Son and Holy Spirit and that eternal life is offered through Jesus's death and resurrection. This belief and trust is called faith. The Christian faith is not a human invention; there are signs of God's existence and handiwork all around and somehow God comes to make himself known to us. Yes, it's a bit of mystery isn't it? But countless ordinary people throughout the ages and around the world have experienced the presence of the Holy Spirit in their lives.

In Jesus, God has walked this earth before us, and with Jesus as a companion and guide we can travel through life differently, setting our sights on God's kingdom of justice and peace; and our journey home to God becomes more meaningful and joyful, and the world a better place. Living in the current age, surely we need this more than ever.

If you would like to explore more then come and talk to us. As the new Archbishop of Canterbury Sarah Mullaly said in her installation "We are here to listen." God can take anything about our human nature that feels broken and dead and make it new. God promises the impossible and makes it possible through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. That's what we celebrate on Easter Sunday. Jesus is Risen, Hallelujah!

April church services

If you want to discover more, come and join us any Sunday morning or at any of our community activities throughout the week.

Sunday 5th April - we celebrate Easter at 10.00 a.m. with a service of Holy Communion followed by an Easter egg hunt in church for the children. The Church of South India meet in the afternoon.

Sunday 12th April 10.00 a.m. service of Morning Worship with a focus on creation and the environment

Sunday 19th April 10.00 a.m. a service with Holy Communion. The Church of South India meet in the afternoon.

Sunday 26th April 10.00 a.m. a service of Morning Worship

Sunday 3rd May 10.00 a.m. a service with Holy Communion. Infant baptism at 12.00 and The Church of South India meet in the afternoon.

Children are always welcome and there is the opportunity for them to leave the main service for their own age-appropriate activities. And don't worry if you arrive a bit late or need to leave before the end.

Christian Outreach

Worship, prayer, teaching and Christian fellowship doesn't just happen in church on Sunday mornings, the church is active out in the community throughout the week.

Children's club with fun and games, crafts, cooking, activities, challenges and bible stories on Mondays from 4.00 till 5.30 and youth club 5.45 till 7.15

Young Adults discipleship group - Monday evenings from 7.30 till 8.30

A church service Heartlands at 2.00 p.m. on Wednesday 8th and 22nd

Pastoral visits at West Hall Court every other Thursday morning and at Heartlands Care Home on Friday afternoons.

Godly Play at Oasis Blakenhale Juniors on alternate Tuesdays - Christian teaching with classes from years 3 and 4

On Thursday 16th April Gossey Lane reception class will be visiting and on Thursday 30th May our monthly Open the Book assembly at Oasis Blakenhale Infants School.

Foodbank Update

The foodbank is open on Wednesday mornings from 10.00 till 11.00 p.m. and we have a wonderful team of volunteers from the church and community. We are very busy serving on average 25 people a week with food to feed around 60 people. With high demand all donations are very welcome; if you can provide occasional tins of beans, spaghetti, soup, vegetables etc please leave them in the collection tray at the back of the church or in the hall entrance. We now also provide fresh fruit and vegetables and there are usually some left after our Foodbank session so please help yourselves rather than letting them go waste. A small donation is welcome.

If you have any spare shopping bags, we will be very grateful for them and we are happy to re-use plastic carrier bags you may have. Please leave them in the donation boxes.

Thank you to everyone.

Fifty Plus Thursdays at St Thomas'

On Thursdays we welcome people aged 50 plus to any or all of our various activities.

9.30 - 10.30 Floor Yoga

11-11.30 Chair Yoga

11.30 - 1.00 p.m. Coffee & Chat

1.00 - 3.00 join in a range of activities or just sit and chat. We have been serving soup through the winter but this will stop now that the weather is warmer so bring a packed lunch and stay and eat with us. Drinks and biscuits are available.

There is also a Social Work drop-in surgery on the third Thursday of the month. Also we have books, puzzles and other resources to share, see the trolley in the hall, donate, borrow- recycle by returning and we will donate to a charity shop once they have done the rounds!

Active Fridays - crafts, gardening, line dancing or bring your own activity such as knitting; come and see what's going on. Or speak to Sam Ellgood.

Tesco "Stronger Starts" Keep Voting!

The closing date has been extended to the end of April so please keep voting in every time you shop in Tesco. Pick up a blue disc and vote for our stay and play group that runs here on Monday mornings

First in the vote, will receive up to £1,500, up to £1000 for second and £500 for third. The money will be spent on toys and resources for the pre-school children to use at Little Angels.

You get a token every time you shop; even if you buy just one item. You can vote at the following stores.

Sheldon Superstore B26 3DY (Coventry Road)

Yardley Extra B26 1AD (The Swan)

Olton Express B92 7HS

Shirley Hobs Moat Express B92 8JJ

Please share this with you family, friends and neighbours. Thank You

Tea and Cake



Who doesn't love a slice of homemade cake?
Join us in the church on Saturday 18th April and help
raise money for Marie Curie.

Bedding Plant Sale

Manor House Lane Allotments

Every Saturday and Sunday throughout May (whilst stocks last)

Open from 10.30 till 3.00 p.m. Tea and coffee available

A tray of 6 plants - £3.00

Single assorted plants - £1.00

Everyone welcome

Community Experience Day at Digbeth in the Field

Monday May 4th 12.00 till 4.00

Chance to experience various groups who meet there.

A challenge from our Parish Environmental Officer

The 29th April is International 'Stop Food Waste Day'.

It's a day for us to think about the food we waste, not just in our own homes, but in the supermarkets and in agriculture and also what is wasted in developed countries around the world. It's a day for us to think about the millions of people around the world who don't have enough to eat, while we are throwing useable food into the bin. It's a day for us to find ways to reduce food waste.

It's estimated that a family of 4 in the UK wastes about 7.3kg or £20 of *edible* food every week. For the UK that's about 4.4 million tonnes a year, a massive quantity of food. Agriculture food wastes about 3.6 million tonnes of food and Supermarkets waste about 280,000 tonnes annually. A total of 8.3 million tonnes a year. It's a scandal and the environmental impact is huge.

Here is a list of 10 tips you could use to help you reduce food waste in your home:

1. **MAKE A LIST.** A family of four loses around £1000 a year by wasting food. Plan ahead by making a list and only buying what you know you'll use.
2. **MAKE MEAL PLANNING SIMPLE.** Avoid wasting food by seeing what needs to be used up before you go shopping. Think of a meal to make with those items, check your cupboards for the rest of the ingredients and add missing items to the shopping list.
3. **LEARN THE ART OF FREEZING.** Each of us throws away about 95kgs of food each year. Get into the habit of freezing leftovers, bread, vegetables and fruit, instead of throwing them in the bin – after you have reduced what you buy in List item 1.
4. **STOP FOOD SPOILING.** Wasting a pound of beef is equivalent to running the shower for just over 6 hours. The longer meat is left out at room temperature, the quicker it will spoil. Always shop for meat, poultry and seafood last and go straight home and put it away.
5. **REVIVE YOUR VEGGIES.** A quick soak in cold water for 5-30 minutes can revive wilted veggies. Even if they can't be restored to their former glory, some veggies you intended to eat raw in your salad can still shine in a cooked dish.
6. **OVERCOOKED ISN'T OVER FOR GOOD.** Overcooked vegetables can always be transformed into soups or sauces. Just blend them with stock, milk, or cream. Vegetables like broccoli, carrots, cauliflower and potatoes are excellent for this.
7. **LESS AIR MEANS LESS FREEZER BURN.** Freezer burn happens when food oxidizes in the freezer. For instance, if you can't eat a whole loaf of bread at once, slice it up and pop it in the freezer, remembering to always squeeze any excess air from plastic bags and containers. Freezer burn is harmless but it can affect taste.
8. **DON'T BE BANANAS.** Browning or spotted bananas are okay to eat. Bruised parts of bananas may be easily cut away or used and very brown bananas and frozen bananas are great for baking quick breads, muffins, or cakes.

9. BEST-BEFORE AND USE-BY ARE NOT THE SAME. Use-by dates are there for food safety. After this date food may not be safe to eat. Best-before dates are more to do with food quality. After this date, taste, texture or appearance may be affected, but it should still be safe to use.
10. USE IT UP. 90% of us throw away food too soon. If you have food in your fridge that's approaching the use-by date, get it used up before using something with a longer date. If your lettuce is wilted it doesn't mean you need to throw it away. Cook it into a soup and freeze it.

Thank you

Linda Nugent (Deanery and Parish Environmental Champion)

Prayer Requests and Prayer Pointers

- Pray for all those who are currently unwell, receiving treatment, recovering from illness or surgery and those in residential care. Please include Ray receiving treatment for an eye condition, for Margaret recovering from hip surgery and Ann Barnes in Moseley Hall, for Joyce Greaves, Lijino from Church of South India recovering from emergency open heart surgery, for Tom one of the Oasis holiday club play workers who collapsed playing football.
- For those who work in nursing and caring roles in hospitals, residential homes and at home.
- For those who are recently bereaved, continuing to remember the Twelftree family.
- For those with families affected by the troubles in the Middle East.
- For world leaders striving to negotiate peace.
- For our congregation to continue to grow in faith and numbers.
- For our work in local care homes and at Oasis Blakenhale School.
- For Revd Paul Bracher and Bishop Esther travelling to Mallawi.
- For yourself and your own family and friends.

Items and articles for this newsletter are always welcome.

For the May Newsletter please send your articles and items of interest to Revd Sue Round
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