



Dear Friends

As we continue to think about our desire to see the church grow and develop in many ways a few interesting statistics.

When surveyed 67% of adults said they knew a practicing Christian.

When surveyed 70% of active Christians said that they knew someone who they could invite to church or a church event. But 85% of those were unlikely to follow through. (The source of these stats is a talk I was present at in London on February 8<sup>th</sup>)

I wonder why, so often it's about being afraid of the reaction we might get if we suggest going to church. It has become so private for some people that the thought of talking religion has become almost taboo. Actually most people will not be offended by an invitation (after all they can always say no and it doesn't have to destroy your relationship.)

So why not think now and pray during Lent for people you might invite to come along for our Easter services. Festivals are a great way in for people. They are times when people often feel a desire to go to Church even if only because they think it's the "done thing". So let's capitalise on that and realise that it is a great way to introduce people to the worship of the Church Community.

If everyone asked one person to join them in church on Easter Day and if even only a third of those came it would be an outstanding and wonderful thing.

So pray now. Pray first to know whom you could ask.

Pray second for a good chance to invite.

Pray third (and actually most importantly) for that person that they might, in whatever situation they are in, find the grace and the love of God.

And don't be afraid. And if you can't do it, it's ok. Pray for everyone else.

**Priscilla**

## Aspects of life at St Faith and St Laurence

**Morning Prayer** – is normally said Monday to Thursday and Saturday at 8.15 am in the Lady Chapel. We use Common Worship Daily Prayer, all are welcome to come and join in.

**Task Groups** – The church has a number of task groups enabling areas of church life. These are listed in the magazine with the contact details of the chairs. If you would like to be a part of a groups please contact the relevant chair or Priscilla. All are welcome to join.

**Stay and Play** meets on Thursday between 9.30 and 11am in the Hall to give a chance for people with young children to meet and the children to play. All are welcome. Cost £1.50 per family.

**Sunday Club** meets on the first, third and fourth Sundays of each month except during the holidays. We hold an extra Sunday Club on days when there is a baptism. All are welcome to join in hearing and experiencing a Bible Story and learning together about what it means for our daily lives.

**Messy Church** takes place on the first Saturday of each month, most months. A chance for children and parents/ carers to have an informal time of worship, and discovering about a Bible story through song, craft, listening, cooking and so much more. Dates are published in advance and all are welcome to come along.

**Planned Giving** helps people make giving regular. You decide how much you can afford to give. You can join the envelope scheme weekly or monthly or pay by Standing Order or annually by cheque. Income tax payers are asked to Gift Aid their giving, so the Church can reclaim the tax on their donations at no extra cost to the donors. For details, contact Jackie Taylor.

**The Parish Giving Scheme** is another way that you can give at no extra cost to yourself. It reduces paperwork and increases cash flow for us. Details are available from Geoff Bennett or Priscilla.

We support **Recycling**. We have a special collection on the first Sunday of every month when we collect ALUMINIUM cans and foil which can be sold and the money raised is donated to our Mission Partners in Chile (through USPG) Local supermarkets have battery recycling facilities in this area. Pauline Sitford (427 7005).

**Home Communion** We have a team of lay people trained and able to bring Home Communion usually on a monthly basis. This is for those who are unable to come to church long term. If the situation is more temporary for example after an operation you can also receive communion, usually from Priscilla. In either case please contact Priscilla.

### **Traidcraft**

Traidcraft sells a range of fairly traded food, cards, clothes and accessories. We use Traidcraft tea and coffee and everything we buy helps fight poverty and supports our church. You can order seasonal gifts through the church at Christmas time when catalogues will be available. Any questions, please ask Ruth Jeavons or Bronwen Jones.

### **'easyfundraising'**

Next time you shop online, think of St Faith and St Laurence and raise free donations with 3,000+ retailers:

<https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/stfaithandstlaurence>

**Women's Fellowship** meets on the first Monday of the month from March to December. Meetings are held in the Committee Room at 7.45pm. We have talks on a variety of subjects. See Programme of the Month for details.

### **Prayer Ministry Team**

Prayer ministry is offered during the 10am Communion on Sundays. People can receive prayer for themselves or for any situation that is important to them. It takes place in the Lady Chapel during the distribution of communion.

### **Foodbank**

We collect food for the Quinton and Oldbury Foodbank. There is a box in church and food can be placed there at any time. The list of things that are needed is in church and in the hall. Food is distributed from St Boniface Church on Wednesdays and Paul and Barney's place on Fridays. Vouchers are required to receive food.

### **Choir and Music.**

Choir Practice takes place weekly, normally on Thursdays 6-7pm. Anyone interested in singing in the choir should contact Simon Palmer, Organist & Choirmaster. (Contact details on page cover) We also like to encourage instrumentalists to perform in church, either in services or in concerts.

**Call in for Coffee** time together over a cuppa on a Wednesday morning from 10.30 -12.00. if needed we can arrange for someone to collect you and then take you home. Please ring Pauline Sitford (427 7005). If you are passing, do call in, or bring a friend, all are welcome.

## PCC Report

Much of what went on at PCC can be found elsewhere in the magazine  
A few headlines.

The PCC discussed the document about the Diocesan Strategy “People and Places”. A number of questions were asked and answered and the idea floated that the PCC (or as many as can) could go to a diocesan meeting for PCCs on People and Places on May 18<sup>th</sup>.

Financially we are getting some income back on stream and have decided to pay £10,000 of Common Fund for January and February. We are aiming to pay the minimum of £48,760 as a first priority and hoping to pay off the “debt” of the last two months of 2018. After that we may be able to consider whether we can respond to the request for generosity and to help those less fortunate than ourselves by means of a “gift”. Anyone with any questions on this please see Priscilla

We looked at what will be happening in Lent (please see elsewhere)

In terms of the Hall roof we are hoping to go out to tender to establish the actual costs rather than the indicative costs thus far obtained. We look forward to welcoming most of our Hall users back towards the end of February

We looked at arrangements towards the APCM (see the timeline elsewhere)

A new pattern of PCC meetings has been proposed to cut down on the number Meetings will be in May June September, November January and March. We will try this out, reserving the right to call an extra one if needed. We hope this will enable us to be more efficient and sharper.

We received reports from the Finance and General Purposes group, The Socials Group (Information elsewhere in the magazine) and from Education and Worship. There is a mind to merge the Education and Worship Task Groups as there is considerable overlap of work between the two.

Priscilla has been asked if sometime in the Summer months we might host a production of Roger Jones’ From Pharaoh to Freedom. We have agreed in principle

St John’s church are going to be without a building for approximately a year from sometime this year. This all sounds a little vague, but it is because they are working towards a £5 million building project of their own. They are therefore seeking hospitality from different places and have asked if we might be able to accommodate them for their Thursday morning midweek communion. The PCC are happy to offer the hand of hospitality. There are details over timing etc to be worked out, but it is likely that this will happen at some point later this year.

Any question do please ask.

**Priscilla**

## The APCM (Annual Parochial Church Meeting)

The APCM will take place on 30<sup>th</sup> April at 7.30pm in the Church.

All whose names are on the Electoral Roll are warmly invited to attend. Please note this year is the year we start the roll again from scratch so everyone will need to fill in a new form for this purpose.

The meeting is preceded by the Annual Vestry meeting to elect churchwardens at which anyone who lives in the parish is also able to attend and vote.

Technically these are separate meetings, but for the ease of publicising the set of meetings begins at 7.30 and they run on one from the other.

The time line is as follows

### Timeline for APCM 2019

This year is the six yearly complete rewriting of the electoral roll. This means that the timeline for this part of the process is different to usual

Please would all those who need to produce reports note the deadline for getting material to Gill for collation.

### Electoral Roll

Notices about the roll go up	17 <sup>th</sup> February
For two weeks every service people are told about this. Letters can be sent out to those who will not hear otherwise	
End of this period	3 <sup>rd</sup> March
Roll is revised over the next weeks closing	13 <sup>th</sup> April
New roll on display from	14 <sup>th</sup> April

### APCM

Approval of Accounts at PCC	12 <sup>th</sup> March
Reports to Gill Hubble for Collation of Annual Report	7 <sup>th</sup> April
Boards up for elections	14 <sup>th</sup> April
Official notices for APCM	14 <sup>th</sup> April
Reports available in church	15 <sup>th</sup> April
APCM	30 <sup>th</sup> April

### Elections

2016-2019	David Arkell, Peter Thomson able to stand again	
2017-2020	Perumal Anandakumar, Geoff Bennett, Natika Hamilton	1 vacancy
2018-2021	Ruth Jeavons	3 vacancies
Deanery Synod 2017-2020	Gill Hubble, Alan Jones, Pauline Sitford, Chris Terry	
Co-opted	George Reeves, Laurie Deimel (able to stand for election)	
So 4 vacancies for 2019-2021 plus 4 casual vacancies to be filled		
<i>Ex officio members</i> Priscilla White, Churchwardens, Readers		

## Lent at St Faith and St Laurence

*Much of this information can also be found on leaflets available for all.  
The leaflet also includes all the Holy Week information*

**Ash Wednesday** Lent begins on Ash Wednesday (6<sup>th</sup> March)

There will be Communion Services at 11am (said) and 7.30pm (with music). Both services will include the option of being “Ashed” that is to have a cross marked on your forehead in Ash which has been made out of old Palm crosses. This is not compulsory but all are welcome to join in.

**Our Lent Course** This will be on **Thursdays at 7.30pm** in the Lady Chapel and we will be following the Leading Your Church into Growth course which offers us ways to think about the church and ourselves. The themes are as follows.

The **Sunday** worship will tie in with these themes

Please do come along and add your insights so we can all grow together.

7<sup>th</sup> March            Our Focus    Committing ourselves to growth

14<sup>th</sup> March           Our plan     Developing a strategy of growth and doing it

21<sup>st</sup> March           Our Culture   Developing a Community of invitation welcome and hospitality

28<sup>th</sup> March           Our calling   Telling our story and helping people meet Jesus

4<sup>th</sup> April                Our Journey Growing and going deeper as followers of Jesus

11<sup>th</sup> April                Our Heart    Developing worship that helps the church to grow

**Tuesdays 12<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup>, 26<sup>th</sup> March, 2<sup>nd</sup> 9<sup>th</sup> April**

Each Tuesday in Lent there will be a simple service of Lent Night Prayer in the Lady Chapel at 7.30pm. These will be led by people, following a basic format, but allowing for flexibility of approach.

**Messy Church in (and around) Lent**

Messy Church will take place on 2<sup>nd</sup> March (just before Lent begins) and 6<sup>th</sup> April. Messy Church is a chance for families to come together and join in activities and prayer around a story or Bible theme. It runs from 10.30-12noon on the first Saturday of the month.

## Prayer of the month

International Women's Day is a worldwide event that celebrates women's achievements – from the political to the social – while calling for sex equality. It has been observed since the early 1900s and is now recognised each year on March 8th. It is not affiliated with any one group, but brings together governments, women's organisations, corporations and charities. The day is marked around the world with arts performances, talks, rallies, networking events, conferences and marches. Each year there is a different theme at the centre of the day. The International Women's Day 2019 campaign theme of #BalanceforBetter is a call-to-action for driving sex equality across the world. Women's Day is still celebrated all these years later because the original aim – to achieve full sex equality for all women – has still not been realised. A gender pay gap persists across the globe and women are still not present in equal numbers in business or politics. Figures show that globally, women's education and healthcare are still worse than that of men and violence against women and girls is still a global epidemic. Below is a prayer to celebrate and empower women:

Dear Sisters, I pray that love will rise in you and through you. I pray you would wrestle with your own story until you own it, body and soul, and have learned how to make it sing.

I pray that you would be a woman who celebrates other women. I pray you will be surrounded by women who know what it is to love and to champion and to celebrate, by women who are dreamers and schemers. I pray for spiritual midwives in your life, women who will breathe alongside you as you are giving birth to the new you over and over again. I pray that you may join hands in the rising. I pray that the women of your lineage of faith will inspire you. May you know their stories in scripture and in history and in your own circles: may you be curious about other women and amplify their influence. May you learn and challenge and grow. May you reclaim curiosity and wisdom and knowledge. I pray for opportunities to do the work you love to do and I pray for equal pay when you do it!

We call out the sins of violence, rape, abuse, torture, against all women. No more. May you be a woman who is safe, a woman who does not fear, a woman who builds safety and security for other women, too.

We call out the economic injustices, the educational inequalities, the maternal mortality, toxic patriarchy, movements designed to baptise inequality in sacred language, the forced prostitution, the sex trafficking, all of the countless ways that the image of God in women is abused and mistreated and broken or diminished. May we work to call these things out and to dismantle them from our world ... and from our own hearts.

(Concluded over page)

I pray that the places where this world has broken you, where evil has left its mark, where you have felt abandoned and broken and hurt, where you are in pain would become a wellspring of healing and wholeness for you. I pray for the desert to bloom with flowers. I pray for the dry parched earth to be filled with cleansing rain and healing waters. I pray for your healing, sister, and I pray for your wholeness.

Right from Pentecost, the Church has known that the mistreatment and dehumanisation or devaluing of women was not and never would be part of God's plan and purpose, so may you be moved to act for justice in both big and small ways in your life. May you find your place in the big story of redemption, rescue, and renewal that God is weaving together. I pray for you to remember the big story of women in the world and to pay attention to their voices, to elevate and empower and affirm them as worthy and valuable just as you are worthy and valuable. I pray that you would remember the truth of who you are. That you would know you are valuable and you are loved – not because of what you do or what you say or what you accomplish, not because of how men perceive you or desire you, not because of how you look or dress, not because of your income, not because you are (or are not) a mother – but simply because you, Sister, were made in the image of God. Sisters, you have been called to the spirit-filled life, so may you live out the ways of Jesus into every corner of your womanhood, always with an eye on who is alongside of you, ahead of you, and coming up behind you. May you know how deeply you are loved by God. May you pay attention to your anger and to your joy. Your calling is hiding somewhere at that intersection. I pray you would be a friend to the poor, to the oppressed, to the marginalised. Stop waiting for permission, Sister: it's time. I pray you would rise up with your gifts and your words, your passion and your insight, your skill and your brain, your perspective and your history, in the fullness of God. I pray against the temptations of silence and despair and numb anger: I pray that you would run the race that is set before you, that you would flourish in your lane while cheering on every other runner alongside of you. I pray that you would look fear in the face and speak up anyway. I pray that you would look hopelessness in the face and be the voice declaring the hope of the Lord for the redemption and rescue and renewal of all things. I pray for you when you are tired and discouraged, when you feel futile and small and ridiculous, when it is tempting to shrink back and give up, I pray for rest, I pray for renewal, I pray for faith, for fearlessness, for boldness, for new courage, for new vision, for new life to come to you in ways that surprise you and bless you.

And now rest in the knowledge that your life was God given. Stop holding your breath, hiding your gifts, ducking your head, dulling your roar, distracting your soul, stilling your hands, quieting your voice, and satiating your hunger with the lesser things of this world. You are set apart for the daily work of liberation and love. It's in the name of Jesus that we send you out to live your life. Rise up, Sister! Amen. **Vicky Miller, Reader.**

## WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP



Our 2019 programme starts on Monday, 4th March in the Committee Room at 7.45pm with a talk by Amanda Hulme on Sister Dora. I hope all members have their new programme and, if there is any lady who would like to come along to give us a try, she will be made very welcome. We are a friendly group and we always have hot drinks and biscuits after the talk when there will be time to chat and get to know each other.

I'm looking forward to seeing you all on the 4th March.

**Helen Hayward -Chair.**

## FRIENDSHIP CIRCLE

### COFFEE MORNING

on Saturday, 23rd March 10.30am-12noon

in St. Faith & St. Laurence Church Hall

Coffee/Tea and Toasted Teacake - £3.00

Various stalls and Tombola

Proceeds to the Church Hall Roof Fund



## FACTS AND FIGURES

Week Beginning	Communicants	Loose Plate £	Planned Giving £	Gift Aid £
Jan 20	80	137.64	162.00	25.00
Jan 27	69	85.86	733.00	15.00
Feb 4	74	75.41	85.00	11.20
Feb 10	33	71.14	179.42	10.00
<b>Standing Orders</b>				
<b>Parish Giving</b>				

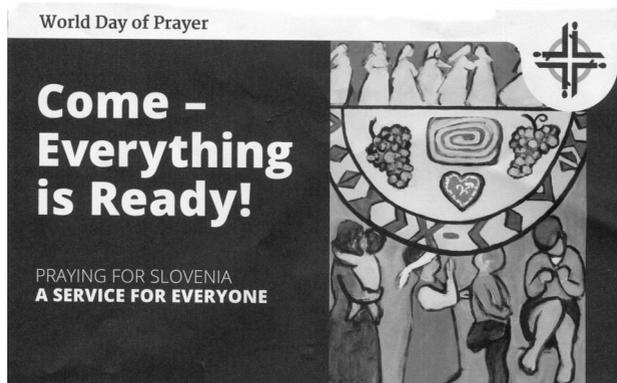
### Jenny Tomlinson announced as new Archdeacon of Birmingham



The Bishop of Birmingham is excited to announce the appointment of a new Archdeacon of Birmingham. Reverend Canon Jenny Tomlinson, currently Mission and Ministry Adviser for the Colchester Episcopal Area, will take up the post from May 2019.

*Bishop David says, "I am elated that Canon Jenny Tomlinson is to be the next Archdeacon of Birmingham. She joins us in Church of England Birmingham at an exciting time of development as we seek to grow churches at the heart of every community. Jenny's experience of Parish Development will be particularly relevant as she takes up her new role."*

## World Day of Prayer : Friday 1st March : 7.00pm



This year's service, which has been compiled by the women of Slovenia, will be hosted by St Mary's RC Church. All are welcome.

Formerly known as the Women's World Day of Prayer, the day has been re-named the World Day of Prayer. This reflects the inclusive nature of today's society and the service is open to all, men and women, young and old.

I hope that St Faith & St Laurence Church will be well represented as we join in the "great wave of prayer encircling the globe" which starts at sunrise in Samoa and passes through 120 countries before ending in Samoa 38 hours later.

What a wonderful concept!

**Brenda Stott**

### **SOCIALS TASK GROUP EVENTS 2019-2020**

The Socials Task Group have provisionally arranged for the following events to be held during this year and early 2020.

- |                            |   |
|----------------------------|---|
| MARCH 3 <sup>rd</sup> :    | SPRING DRAW   |
| MAY:                       | TEDDY BEARS PICNIC (for children baptised during the last 18 months), Sunday Club, Uniformed Groups and Messy Church members) |
| JUNE 22 <sup>nd</sup> :    | JOINT AFTERNOON TEA PARTY with the FRIENDSHIP GROUP   |
| AUGUST:                    | SUMMER BUFFET   |
| OCTOBER 13 <sup>th</sup> : | HARVEST LUNCH   |
| DECEMBER 7 <sup>th</sup> : | CHRISTMAS EVENT with MESSY CHURCH   |
| JANUARY 2020               | BURNS NIGHT SUPPER  |

## PROGRAMME FOR MARCH

Fri	1	7.00 pm	World Day of Prayer Service	St Mary's
Sat	2	10.30 am	Messy Church	Hall
<b>SUN 3 SUNDAY BEFORE LENT</b>				
		8.00 am	Holy Communion <i>Exodus 34.29-35; 2 Corinthians 3.12-4.2; Luke 9.28-36</i>	
		10.00 am	Family Communion <i>Readings as at 8am</i>	
		6.30 pm	Evensong <i>Psalm 89 Exodus 3.1-6; John 12.27-36a</i>	
Mon	4	7.45 pm	Women's Fellowship	Committee Room
Wed	6	10.30 am	Call in for Coffee	Committee Room
<b>ASH WEDNESDAY</b>				
		11.00 am	Holy Communion <i>Joel 2.1-2, 12-17; John 8.1-11</i>	Lady Chapel
		7.30 pm	Sung Eucharist <i>Readings as at 11am</i>	Church
Thu	7	9.30 am	Stay and Play	Hall
		6.00 pm	Choir Practice	Church
		7.30 pm	Lent Course	Lady Chapel
<b>SUN 10 LENT I</b>				
		8.00 am	Holy Communion <i>Deuteronomy 26.1-11; Romans 10.8b-13; Luke 4.1-13</i>	
		10.00 am	Morning Praise	
		6.30 pm	Sung Eucharist with Healing Prayer <i>Readings as at 8am</i>	
Tue	12	7.15 pm	PCC Meeting	Committee Room
		7.30 pm	Night Prayer for Lent	Lady Chapel
Wed	13	10.30 am	Call in for Coffee	Committee Room
		11.00 am	Holy Communion <i>Jonah 3 ; Luke 11.29-32</i>	Lady Chapel
		7.15 pm	Deanery Synod	
Thu	14	9.30 am	Stay and Play	Hall
		6.00 pm	Choir Practice	Church
		7.30 pm	Lent Course	Lady Chapel
Sat	16	9.30 am	Marriage Preparation Morning	Committee Room

**SUN 17      LENT 2**

8.00 am      Holy Communion *Genesis 15.1-12, 17-18; Philippians 3.17-4.1; Luke 13.31-35*

10.00 am      Family Communion  
*Readings as at 8am*

6.30 pm      Evensong    Psalm 119.161-176  
*Genesis 17.1-7, 15-16; Romans 11.13-24*

Tue 19      10.30 am      Queen Mother Gardens Service

2.00 pm      William Lench Court Service

7.30 pm      Night Prayer for Lent

*Lady Chapel*

Wed 20      10.30 am      Call in for Coffee

*Committee Room*

11.00 am      Holy Communion  
*Jeremiah 18.18-20; Matthew 20.17-28*

*Lady Chapel*

7.30 pm      Team Meeting

*Vicarage*

Thu 21      9.30 am      Stay and Play

*Hall*

6.00 pm      Choir Practice

*Church*

7.30 pm      Lent Course

*Lady Chapel*

**SUN 24      LENT 3**

8.00 am      Holy Communion *Isaiah 55.1-9; 1 Corinthians 10.1-13; Luke 13.1-9*

10.00 am      Family Communion  
*Readings as at 8am*

6.30 pm      Evensong    Psalm 26  
*Deuteronomy 6.4-9; John 17.1a, 11b-19*

Tue 26      7.30 pm      Night Prayer for Lent

*Lady Chapel*

Wed 27      10.30 am      Call in for Coffee

*Committee Room*

11.00 am      Holy Communion  
*Deuteronomy 4.1, 5-9; Matthew 5.17-19*

*Lady Chapel*

7.30 pm      Safeguarding Team Meeting

*Vicarage*

Thu 28      9.30 am      Stay and Play

*Hall*

6.00 pm      Choir Practice

*Church*

7.30 pm      Lent Course

*Lady Chapel*

**SUN 31      LENT 4      MOTHERING SUNDAY**

8.00 am      Holy Communion *Exodus 2.1-10; Colossians 3.12-17; Luke 2.33-35*

10.00 am      Family Communion  
*Readings as at 8am*

6.30 pm      Evensong    Psalm 30  
*Isaiah 40.27-41.13; 2 Timothy 4.1-18*

## Walk on the wild side



Do you like wild places? One of my favourites is Dartmoor, with the stark, rugged, awesome rocks of Haytor and the flat, wind-blown heights of the moor. It brings us closer to nature, walking among the wild ponies in driving rain; it helps put life in perspective, standing above the grim granite blocks of Dartmoor Prison with the distant lights of Plymouth and the sea beyond.

In our over-cultivated lives, we need some wilderness experience to enlarge our sense of ourselves and our place in creation. Would it surprise you to hear me say that Lent is a season which invites us to go to our 'wild place'; to go wild on God's earth?

Two main themes of Lent are death and repentance. But they are not only about where we will spend eternity. They are equally about how we will spend our lives here and now. *We are dust*, Ash Wednesday reminds us. We are of the earth; and we live on the earth; with all God's creatures on his wild earth. So if we give ourselves to prayer and study this Lent, if we turn our hearts to heaven, let us not be surprised to find God inviting us to become *earthed* again. By putting to death those things which contain us, hold us in, constrain us, by turning again to a God who will release and enliven us, invigorate our lives in the here-and-now.

God invites us to *earth* ourselves by going wild with Jesus - the pioneering wild man. He first waded out into the middle of the Jordan river to be baptised by John, who was then immediately driven by the Spirit out into the wilderness, and "was in the wilderness for forty days, tempted by Satan; ... was with the wild beasts; and the angels waited on him."

No party, no knees-up, no family reunion, for Jesus following his baptism. Instead the humbling, invigorating, experience of taking his place alongside the rest of God's creatures, out in the wild world, and in that challenging situation to 'wrestle and fight and pray' and in doing so, to enlarge his sense of himself and his place in God's creation.

This willingness to walk on the wild side marked the whole of Jesus' life and ministry. This refugee child, who with his parents escaping a genocidal king spent his early years wandering in exile; this precocious pre-teen who gave the slip to his parents on their way back from Jerusalem.

He spent three wild days in the temple courts, sitting among the teachers, listening to them, asking them questions, expanding his understanding of himself and his place in God's creation; Jesus - whose whole adult ministry could be summarised as a wild mission to 'comfort the afflicted and afflict the comfortable'.

Lent invites us to renew our walk with Jesus - our walk on the wild side. A term which has come into our language recently is *Rewilding*. It comes from the conservation movement and describes the large-scale restoration of ecosystems so that nature can take care of itself.

Rewilding occurs where artificial processes are replaced with natural processes and missing species are returned to the land, allowing them to shape the landscape and its habitats. The Rewilding Britain website says that the aim of rewilding is 'to let nature fully recover while providing communities with new opportunities. It brings an abundance of life back to the land – more animal and bird life, more trees and plant life, more opportunities for human life to flourish.'

Rewilding is not without controversy, particularly in farming communities, but the concept, I'd say, is a Lenten one. We might be open to the suggestion that going through Lent allowing God to reshape and reform us into the people he truly intends us to be: is us *rewilding ourselves*.

The wilderness can be a place of grace. This is what we find when we step out of our comfort zone to take a deliberate walk on the wild side, with God. In the BBC documentary *The Vicar's Life* last year, a Herefordshire vicar Ruth Hulse discovered that a local training centre for young people who have struggled in mainstream education, was threatened with closure due to funding problems. Ruth resolved to increase the support it received from the church. So, an elderly member of Ruth's congregation, recently widowed Rita, stepped out of her comfort zone to take a walk on the wild side, into a loud and lively youth centre, becoming a mentor of a young apprentice Keegan; a gifted woodworker who needed Rita's help to learn to read and write. It became a rich relationship deeply rewarding to both of them.

We know that when we go into wild places angels attend us - just as they attended Jesus in the wilderness. Like Noah, with Jesus, we have a role to play in redeeming creation, and creation is waiting for us to do something about it.

Let this be our Lenten call, to join Jesus out there, to join him on his walk on the wild side.

Peter Stokes

## EXPERIENCES OF GRIEF

My name is Laurie Deimel, I attend this Church. You may or may not know my Dad suddenly died on 5 July 2017. He was 67 years young.

He was a retired Vicar. He worked at Studley Parish Church, Warwickshire alongside other churches at the Parish at Mappleborough Green, Morton Bagot as well as Oldberrow, prior moving to a parish with even more churches, near to Escomb in County Durham.

He'd a heart condition, though no one predicted he would die despite him not being well. I want to share some of what I've experienced since my Dad died.

Death can be the final healing. Yes, but it is very difficult to understand how my Dad can go from preaching as a retired Minister on Father's Day in June 2017 to being not alive in this world, 5 July 2017. Further, although he was not well the night before he died, hours later my Mam told me he could help me when he was better. ( This was how sudden his passing occurred).

Death can be a healing though in my opinion this does not help the friends as well as relatives if death is sudden. There is no good way to die though at least if you know in advance you could possibly prepare though it is difficult to prepare regarding any death.

Death can be the final healing. Examples which may help you understand this strange idea are : My Dad feared travelling at sea or air, but after he died I visioned or sensed my Dad as a sailor. I sensed or visioned my Dad flying through the sky on his own. Other things I experienced relating to death include : The Birmingham City F. C. song " Keep right on to the end of the road, Let your heart be strong " I relate to my Dad.

I sense my Dad at the allotment or grass area opposite Harborne Academy near The Green Man Pub ( where I've eaten with my Mam when she visited) This is a source of comfort, as it is on my journey to work. Further, my Dad loved gardening. Although he never went to this allotment, he would have loved to go there. Whilst he misses us now at the same way as we miss him, he would love the fact I find comfort as I sense him in that area. I sense him speaking words of blessing towards me when I pass that place sometimes. I've sometimes stopped there to be near that place.

Death as well as grief can affect people at different ways. I remember talking at my Dad's funeral at Stanhope in County Durham, near where he lived. I gave a tribute, but I don't remember giving the same tribute at Studley Parish Church where there was a Memorial Service, even though I did give a tribute there.

I cope with his dying though it is difficult to believe. There is no such thing in my opinion as " closure ". My Dad dying simply put , is the weirdest thing ever in my experience. My Dad dying can mean in my mind my own death is a little bit closer. He planned his own funeral which as he may've written is " a deeply Christian thing to do ". He wrote about this I believe in his church's Parish Magazine, as he lost both his parents quite close together. If there is a Funeral Service Plan this can help the family.

Death, although very weird, very sad, very much something we try to avoid, should be something as Christians we can look forward to as was Jesus' Resurrection. Death is not the end of our Christian life. I am not at all saying I've this all sorted, though death is surely central to our Christian life. Jesus' Resurrection was only after he died. This does not take away the sadness of my Dad dying though I believe one day I will see him again. What a catching up this glorious meeting will be ! What a hug we will share ! What a celebration meal there will be on that glorious day! I believe I will see my brother as well who died as a baby as he'd Cystic Fibrosis. As he sadly died before I was born I've not seen him.

I hope, though you can appreciate today this is all we've got in this world. My wish in writing this, is that it can help someone face the horrible reality of death with hope. In conclusion, my Dad dying so suddenly should put all other moans in their proper perspective, although he would understand life goes on.

God Bless you all, **Laurie**

***A thought for Lent***

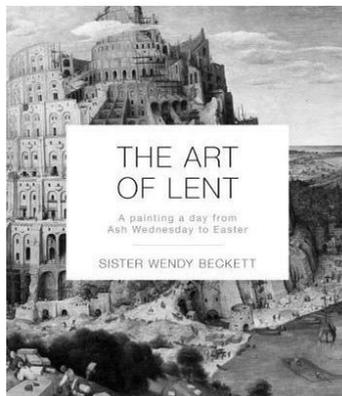
Fast from criticism, and feast on praise;  
Fast from self-pity, and feast on joy;  
Fast from ill-temper, and feast on peace;  
Fast from resentment, and feast on contentment;  
Fast from pride, and feast on humility;  
Fast from selfishness, and feast on service;  
Fast from fear, and feast on faith.

## INTERCESSIONS - PRAYERS FOR AND BY THE PEOPLE

Intercessions play an important role in our worship. They are prayers made to God on behalf of something or someone in need. They are said aloud by one person as a representative of everyone present. At the end of each prayer, the leader will say a phrase eg *“Lord in your Mercy”* (the bidding) and the congregation express their consent and agreement with the prayer by saying another phrase eg *“Receive our prayer”* (the response). The prayers can be led either by the ministry team or by the congregation.

At our 10am service, we have a strong tradition of congregation lead intercessions. This is a small team of people and we would like to increase the numbers of people involved. There is no lower or upper age limit, only a willingness to take part in this vital section of the worship. You would be expected to provide the prayers, but training and guidance will be provided. There are lots of resources available within the team, in books and on the internet, so you do not have to create from scratch!

If you are interested or would like to discuss what is involved, please contact **Priscilla or Caroline Mosley**.



### **The Art Of Lent: A Painting A Day From Ash Wednesday To Easter**

This delightful book describes and interprets a series of paintings for each day of Lent. Artists often address subjects that our culture seeks to avoid, and Sister Wendy's brilliant and perceptive reflections will help you to read these paintings with a more discerning eye, and encounter deeper levels of spiritual meaning than may at first appear.

## LENT

Truly dust we are, and to dust we shall return;  
and truly yours we are, and to you we shall return.  
Help this to be a time of turning round and beginning again.  
Through the forty days of Lent, help us to follow you  
and to find you: in the discipline of praying  
and in the drudgery of caring –  
in whatever we deny ourselves,  
and whatever we set ourselves to learn or do.

Help us to discover you  
in our loneliness and in community,  
in our emptiness and our fulfilment,  
in our sadness and our laughter.  
Help us to find you when we ourselves are lost.  
Help us to follow you on the journey to Jerusalem  
to the waving palms of the people's hope,  
to their rejection, to the cross and empty tomb.  
Help us to perceive new growth amid the ashes of the old.  
Help us, carrying your cross, to be signs of your Kingdom.  
Amen

**Jan Sutch Pickard**

## Straplines

Ever more people today have the means to live, but no meaning to live for.  
(Viktor Frankl)

The ability to listen is seldom taught, yet it requires a deep spiritual change. It means that the other person has to matter to us as much as we matter about ourselves.

It seems the average person's idea of a good sermon is one that goes over the head and hits a neighbour.

When it comes to mission work overseas, money can narrow the gap, but only people can bridge it.



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Harborne Fundraising Group's

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***For more information, please contact:***

***0121 427 2450***

***or email: [stmaryshospicequiz@gmail.com](mailto:stmaryshospicequiz@gmail.com)***

**For more information, please contact Julia Reid.**

## Bishop's Comment: Feast and Famine



BBC TV 'News at Ten' in January led on the possibility of a shortage of fresh vegetables in the UK. Uncertainty of this kind can lead to a build up of anxiety and even fear. Human response to the threat of the unknown may be naturally defensive or even narrowly self interested.

The thousands of people who St Mark tells us came out to a deserted area to see and hear Jesus of Nazareth were less cautious. Late in the day, without food, they were about to be sent away to buy supplies. This pragmatic solution proposed by Jesus' disciples was overturned abruptly. 'You give them something to eat' he said. (Mark 6:37) There was then a continuing debate about the impossibility of such a huge task.

At which point Lord Jesus showed them how to see and act from a completely different perspective.

Taking what was available he transformed two fish and five loaves into enough for all.

Away from their familiar setting, everyone was offered essential life-giving food.

Read the whole of Mark chapter 6 to note the contrast with Herod's profligate banquet for his powerful allies, and its lethal consequences for Jesus' cousin.

In our national and Church life this is a time to depend on the grace of Lord Jesus Christ, to recognise what he is already providing to sustain body and soul and to renew our commitment to sharing that abundance with all our neighbours and fellow citizens.

*+ David Birmingham*

The deadline for material for the next

PARISH MAGAZINE is

SUNDAY MARCH 24th



# St Faith and St Laurence Church Hall



Stay  
& play!



Thursday Mornings 9.30-11am  
Re-starting on March 7th