

ST FRANCIS OF ASSISI
TERRIERS

LENT PROJECT 2008

R-U-SAFE?

[Details inside]

Parish Magazine

50p

FEBRUARY 2008

www.terrierschurch.org.uk

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Get in training

In this year of the Beijing Olympics, it's worth remembering that St Paul famously compared the Christian life to the training regime of an athlete. Corinth was the home of the Isthmian Games, held every other year from the beginning of the 6th century BC until they were suppressed by the Roman emperor Theodosius I nearly a thousand years later. While the Isthmian Games didn't have quite the prestige of those held in Olympia or Delphi, they were the most popular among the ancient athletics competitions, not least because of the accessibility of Corinth by comparison with the sites of the other major games, and because of the city's reputation as the pleasure capital of the Greek world.

So, it is small wonder that St Paul, writing to the Christian community in Corinth, should include this reference to one of the most important aspects of the city's life:

"Do you not know that in a race the runners all compete, but only one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may win it. Athletes exercise self-control in all things; they do it to receive a perishable garland, but we an imperishable one. So I do not run aimlessly, nor do I box as though beating the air; but I punish my body and enslave it, so that after proclaiming to others I myself should not be disqualified." (1 Corinthians 9:24-27)

So, as athletes go into strict training in the weeks before an important competition, I invite you to join me this Lent in a programme of training in preparation for Holy Week and Easter. As an athlete's training has traditionally included exercise, skill-development and diet, so, traditionally, the Lenten training programme for Christians has included these elements:

- 1 Self-examination and repentance
- 2 Prayer
- 3 Fasting and self-denial
- 4 Almsgiving
- 5 Reading and meditating on God's word

This year there are opportunities for us, both as a community and as individuals, to practise all of these. On the community

level, our Lent course this year will focus on The Lord's Prayer (see Val Evans's article elsewhere in this issue). Our Lent project will aim to raise both money for **R-U-Safe?** and awareness of the vulnerability of the young, especially young women, in our town. In addition, there will be opportunities for reflection and prayer through the monthly Julian Meeting, at the Prayer Book Communion on Wednesday mornings and through the meditative night prayer which will take place in church each Friday after choir practice.

I encourage you to make the fullest possible use of these opportunities. I also encourage you to take Lent seriously at home, whether on your own or in the family setting. One way of taking seriously the Lenten call to self-examination and repentance is to set aside time each day for a review of the day and an honest accounting before God of the things which have gone well and the times when we have failed him. There are books and websites which offer help with this. The writings of Gerard Hughes and Anthony de Mello have helped many. A recent blog by Tony Campolo on the "God's Politics" website also offers useful ideas.*

Try, too, to set aside time for serious prayer each day – and not just prayer as a shopping-list of needs (whether our own or the world's), but as a loving attentiveness to God, being still in his presence, like the French peasant who sat each day before the crucifix in church and, when asked by the parish priest what he was doing, answered simply "I look at him and he looks at me and we're happy". Some may be able to spend time in church on weekdays, whether on a regular or an occasional basis. The building is open from the time of Morning Prayer (7.30 a.m. except Wednesdays) until Evening Prayer (usually 5.30 p.m.). If you don't make it in time for either of those, it's still possible to slip in for a short act of "Prayer in the Day" (copies of which are available on the prayer desk). Those who prefer to pray at home may like to try using a simple scheme for morning and evening prayer, Bishop John Pritchard suggests some possibilities in his book, "Beginning Again".

Fasting is also a part of Lent that I invite you to take seriously, both as a spiritual discipline and as a way of supporting our

Lent project. Those who give up a favourite indulgence (be it chocolate, alcohol, tobacco, or whatever) might consider donating, if they don't already, the money they save to **R-U-Safe?** Others may be ready to forego one meal or more each week and give the cost to our good cause. In a society where over-consumption is increasingly the norm, it is also good to rediscover the value of going without – and to show solidarity with the millions around the world who have no option but to go hungry. Christians who practise the discipline of fasting are also better able to relate to their Muslim neighbours and to remind them how much, despite our theological differences, we share in the practice of the spiritual life.

Almsgiving – the call to generous giving in response to the needs of others – has been a thread running through this letter, so I won't say any more here, except to flag up what Jesus has to say on the subject, particularly in the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 6). It's also encouraging to read St Paul's words in his second letter to the Christians of Corinth (chapters 8 and 9).

Finally (assuming you've reached this far in a much lengthier than usual "Vicar's Letter"), I hope that I don't need to encourage my readers to daily Bible reading and reflection. As the record of God's conversation with his people over a millennium and more (a conversation of which we, another two millennia later, are still part), and as the principal witness to God's mighty acts, culminating in the work of Jesus reconciling the world through his death on the cross. As you tune into that conversation, be prepared to be elated and humbled, puzzled and shocked, horrified and amused (the Old Testament, in particular, contains some wonderful Jewish jokes). Be prepared to argue, and to listen. Think about what you are reading and what it meant to its first readers or hearers. Think about what it means to you.

Give yourself a thorough spiritual work-out this Lent. Get into training in preparation for Easter.

Tony Dickinson

* The URL is <http://blog.beliefnet.com/godspolitics/2008/01/a-cure-for-burnouts-by-tony-ca.html>

MAGAZINE SUBSCRIPTION

Subscriptions are now due for 2008. You will find a form near the back of this issue. If you haven't taken out a subscription before, would you like to consider one now? I will be happy to answer any of your questions, either in church or on 524491. Thank you.

June Findlow

LENT PROJECT 2008 [1]

R-U-Safe?

Child sexual exploitation is a hidden form of sexual abuse which, as such, is difficult to define. A child or young person's experience of sexual exploitation can range from the informal exchange of sexual acts for a roof over their head, money, gifts, cigarettes or drugs to the more recognised area of prostitution where sexual exploitation takes place in massage parlours or on the street. The effects of sexual exploitation can be devastating, physically, mentally and emotionally.

R-U-Safe? works with Buckinghamshire young women under 18 who are being, or who are at risk of becoming sexually exploited. Often the only agency that they are willing to access, the service is working with some of the most vulnerable young women in the county. Originally set up as 'Bucks Young Women's Service' in September 2006, it is jointly funded by Barnardos, Addaction and Buckinghamshire County Council. The service was developed in response to recommendations from a scoping exercise conducted by Barnardos as a result of concerns arising over issues of sexual exploitation within the County. Using a non-judgemental, befriending and holistic approach, we offer our clients a combination of individual sessions and targeted prevention work with the aim of raising their self esteem and feelings of self worth, raising their awareness of risky and unhealthy relationships and raising their aspirations regarding their future.

Together with the sexual exploitation service, we also work with Thames Valley Police to offer a Missing Service; here we offer different levels of intervention to girls who have run away, thus helping prevent them from becoming vulnerable to sexual exploitation.

Along with direct client work, **R-U-Safe?** also carries out training events and presentations to a variety of local agencies, resulting in good local awareness and commitment to helping young women to escape from sexual exploitation.

While there is no 'typical' client, the one thing our young women have in common is the fact that they all have a multitude of difficult, complex and often dangerous issues to deal with. We try to be a supporting, positive influence in their life and help them to help themselves in achieving a safe and happy future.

Michelle Kukielka, Service manager. January '08

LENT PROJECT 2008 [2]

The PC Trainer is back!

Training for those terrified and confused by using their PC

By popular demand, I will once again offer a personalised training service for home computer users as a fund-raising venture for this year's Lent Project. The idea is that I will give you an hour of help with the use of your computer in return for a £25 contribution to the Lent Project.

This will be tailored to the individual, using your own computer, so I will help with what concerns you most. For example:

- 1 Do you keep losing track of your documents? I can

show you how to find them and to organise them so you won't lose them again.

- 2 Are you snowed under with digital photographs? Do you wonder how you can improve pictures, enlarge them, or select parts of them? I can show you some simple ways to organise and manipulate them.
- 3 Do you wonder how to 'surf the internet', or do you get lost when you try? I can help you enter and make good use of the exciting world of the web.
- 4 Are you confused by email? Have you wanted to be able to send documents and digital photos to your family and friends, but have not known how to do it? I'll give you a hand to get you going.

These are just a few suggestions, but the idea is that I will try to help with what you want. I would be pleased to talk to you and find out if I can help, so do get in touch if you want more information – there's no such thing as a dumb question!

Telephone: (01494) 526346

Email: pctrainer@terrierschurch.org.uk

Please note that this is meant to be training with using the computer and your software applications – I cannot sort out technical problems with your computer hardware and set-up, nor provide a virus-clearing service. If in doubt, ask.

Tim Edmonds

CHRISTIANS TOGETHER FOR CLIMATE CHANGE

A one day conference at Greyfriars Church Reading to help Christians respond effectively to the challenge of climate change through action and prayer. Speakers include

Bishop John

9.30am—4pm on 16 February

Pre-registration essential. £5, bring your own lunch

Contact: Helen.Keeley@Oxford.Anglican.org

01865 218214

LENT COURSE
'The Lord's Prayer'

Praying it, Meaning it, Living it

We are looking forward to following this York course during five weeks of Lent. Booklets for everyone taking part, and a CD featuring Dr. David Hope, Canon Margaret Sentamu [the wife of the Archbishop of York], Bishop Kenneth Stevenson, Dr. David Wilkinson and Dr. Elaine Storkey in discussion.

We are planning two house-groups to begin on the 13th and 14th February:

Wednesday evenings, 8.00pm at 72 Totteridge Drive [Val Evans tel: 531023]

Thursday mornings, 10.30am at Stoneways, 32 Amersham Road, [Dennis and Jean Mayger tel: 523372]

This will be the fifth York Course we have followed, and those taking part have found the courses very stimulating both from the subject matter and the discussion it provokes.

Other groups can be set up if there is sufficient demand. There is a list for people to sign on the church notice board, but do ring me if you would like to know more. This is not just for the 'regulars' - all are welcome. But let me know numbers soon so I can get the booklets in time.

Val Evans

CONTEMPLATIVE FIRE

Saturday 2 February, Ely Cathedral. 'I wonder...Exploring the Contemplative Dynamic'

Friday 22 February, 21 March, 25 April, Friends Meeting House, Berkhamsted 7.45-9.15 'Drum 'n Chant'

Saturday 1 March, St Andrew, Holborn, 10 for 10.15am, a walk to St Paul's [whatever the weather], 'Hidden in the City', the pilgrimage will conclude at 2pm

For more details: www.contemplativefire.org

PRAYING THE PARISH

Among members of our congregation in particular need we pray for:

Mary & Joyce Bennett, Gaynor Chambers, Eileen Chapman, Sheila Charlton, Linda Courtney, Ida Davies, Barbara Holloway, Val Jones, Elizabeth Lampson, Gwen Liverpool, Hazel Noakes, Jean Pooley, Shelagh Sheppard, Honey Tyllyer, Jill White, Diane Young and her family.

Among others for whom our prayers have been asked:

Vince Amer, Pat Baldock, Sue Bocking, Wendy Brown, Jenny Butterfield, Roy Coombe, Rachel Crampton, John Edmonds-Seal, Stuart Evans, Nikki Ferguson, Julie Free, Phyllis Fudge, Michael Fudge, Adam Gill, Norah Glennon, Olive Harvey and her family, Vera Holmes, Brian L'Anson, Patrick McNally, John Maybury, Bettina Michels and her family, Rhiannon Nicholls, Angela Norton, Marie Norton, Paresh Pankhania, Robert Phillis, Marcia Powell, Jan Relf, Billy Rolls, Reginald Simmons, Irene Solomon, Ann Stephenson, Jo Streeter, Rhiannon Streeter.



INTRODUCTION TO PREACHING

15 March at the Church Centre, Flackwell Heath, 10am-4pm
£18, early booking essential, bring your own lunch.

For more details contact the Vicar, Rev Chris Bull, 9 Chapel Road, Flackwell Heath, High Wycombe. HP10 9AA

This course is designed for those beginning to preach

Tutor: The Rev Dr Keith Beech Grúneberg

Diocesan Director of Studies

FLOWER LIST 2008

Thank you everyone who has kept the church beautiful with flowers during 2007. Here is the new rota, if you cannot do your designated date, please let me know.

Mollie Braisher

January 12 Joyce Dowsett, 26 Eleanor Curtis

February 9,16,23 Lent

March 1 Mothering Sunday, 15 Palm Sunday, 22 Easter—Everyone

April 5 Brenda Puddephatt, 12 Janet Banks, 19 Mary Amor

May 3 Sylvia Dean, 10 Pentecost, Pam Hancock, 24 June Findlow

June 7 Norah Franklin, 21 Val Jones

July 5 Janet West, 19 Mary Amor

August 2 Hazel Noakes, 16 Chris Bradbury, 30 Val Evans

September

October 11 Patronal Festival, 25 June Findlow

November 8 Remembrance, 22 Hazel Noakes, 29 Advent

December 6 Advent, 13 Advent, 20 Christmas Flowers

THANK YOU...

To Sally Brocklehurst for her lecture on Christina Rossetti before Christmas, including shedding light on my favourite carol 'In the Bleak Midwinter'. I shall never see those words with the same eyes again! Sally was marvellous, well read and passionate about her subject. More afternoon lectures please.

Congratulations to Hugh and Sally on their marriage on St Cecilia's Day. In their letter to Tony and the congregation they mention 'The love that surrounded us from our Church Family was almost tangible'. Sorry I missed it as I was in South Africa.

Eileen Chapman

CALENDAR FOR FEBRUARY 2008

Dates for your Diary

The diary is also available on the parish website

www.terrierschurch.org.uk

where it is regularly updated with additions and changes

Sunday, 3rd February – Presentation of Christ in the Temple

8.00 a.m. - Holy Communion (BCP)

10.00 a.m. - Parish Communion (all-age service) with procession of candles

Tuesday, 5th February (Shrove Tuesday)

7.30 p.m. – Lent Project Pancake Party and Quiz Night

Wednesday, 6th February – Ash Wednesday

10.00 a.m. – Holy Communion (BCP)

1.30 p.m. – Skylarks

8.00 p.m. - Parish Communion
(imposition of ashes at both services)

Friday, 8th February

8.30 p.m. - Meditation & Night Prayer

Sunday, 10th February – Lent 1

8.00 a.m. – Holy Communion

10.00 a.m. – Parish Communion

****DEADLINE FOR CONTRIBUTIONS TO
THE MARCH MAGAZINE****

Wednesday, 13th February

10.00 a.m. – Holy Communion (BCP)

1.30 p.m. – Skylarks

Friday, 15th February

8.30 p.m. Meditation & Night Prayer

Sunday, 17th February – Lent 2

8.00 a.m. – Holy Communion

10.00 a.m. – Parish Communion including
Prayer for Healing

12.00 noon – Lunch Club

Wednesday, 20th February

10.00 a.m. – Holy Communion

Friday, 22nd February

8.30 p.m. Meditation & Night Prayer

Sunday, 24th February – Lent 3

8.00 a.m. – Holy Communion

10.00 a.m. – Parish Communion

Preacher: *Pfarrer* Steffen Weishaupt

Wednesday, 27th February (George Herbert)

10.00 a.m. – Holy Communion (BCP)

1.30 p.m. – Skylarks

8.00 p.m. – PCC Standing Committee
(26 Adam Close)

Friday, 29th February

8.30 p.m. Meditation & Night Prayer

On Wednesdays in February we celebrate:
George Herbert, priest and poet (27th)

We welcome into God's Church by Baptism
On 27th January
Struan John Kerr Stevens

STEFFEN WEISHAUPT

Steffen Weishaupt, our preacher on 24 February, is a minister of the Protestant Church in the Rhineland and is based in Trier. His home church was originally part of the palace of the Emperor Constantine the Great.

Since April 2007 he has been on the staff of Christ Church Cathedral as part of a scheme which allows newly-ordained clergy of the Protestant Church in Germany [EKD] to spend a year working abroad. As a minister of the EKD Steffen can preach and lead non-Eucharistic worship in the Church of England, as permitted by the Meissen Agreement between the two Churches. He cannot, however preside at an Anglican Communion service.

READINGS FOR FEBRUARY 2008

Sunday, 3rd February Presentation of Christ in the Temple

8.00 a.m. Holy Communion (BCP - AD)

10.00 a.m. Parish Communion (AD)

Malachi 3:1-5

Luke 2:22-40

Wednesday, 6th February Ash Wednesday

10.00 a.m. Holy Communion (BCP - AD)

8.00 p.m. Parish Communion (AD)

Isaiah 58:1-12

2 Corinthians 5:20-6:10

John 8:1-11

Sunday, 10th February Lent 1

8.00 a.m. Holy Communion (AD)

10.00 a.m. Parish Communion (AD)

Genesis 2:15-17, 3:1-7

Romans 5:12-19

(Matthew 4:1-11)

Sunday, 17th February Lent 2

8.00 a.m. Holy Communion (AD)

10.00 a.m. Parish Communion (AD) with prayer for healing

Romans 4:1-5, 13-17

(John 3:1-17)

Sunday, 24th February Lent 3

8.00 a.m. Holy Communion (AD)

10.00 a.m. Parish Communion (President: AD.

Preacher: Steffen Weishaupt)

Exodus 17:1-7

Romans 5:1-11

(John 4:5-42)



A VISIT TO THE WHITECHAPEL MISSION

As many of you will already know St Francis supports the work of The Whitechapel Mission in East London. Our Harvest Festival donations of toiletries, breakfast foods and clothes have been sent to them for a number of years. Thus it was with considerable interest and excitement that a small group visited the Mission on a cold Saturday in November. Ten adults and one child met at High Wycombe station for the journey to Whitechapel. A few of the group had been before, but for most of us it was our first visit. When we emerged from Whitechapel Tube Station we were met by a vibrant market selling Indian saris and exotic fruit and vegetables amongst other things. This area of London has one of the largest Bangladeshi communities in the country.

We were met by Tony Miller at the entrance to the Mission and shown up to the large modern chapel, where we were given a welcome cup of tea or coffee. The Mission was originally on the other side of the road and was founded in 1876 and called The Working Lads' Institute. It has cared for the poor and homeless of London regardless of race or religion in their struggle against hunger, poverty, disease, prejudice and exclusion since then. It moved to its present site in the late seventies when the original site was purchased by London Transport. There has been a place of worship on this site for centuries, but the present building was purpose built for the Mission, although it has undergone a number of alterations to make it more appropriate for present day needs.

Over our coffee Tony told us about the work of the Mission, saying that the chapel is used for all sorts of meetings as well as worship and that he and his wife, Sue, were married there. He explained that the Mission is about inclusion, showing people who have been excluded that they have value, that there are people who care and want them around. It is the only place to obtain a cooked breakfast in the City or East End and is open weekends, Bank Holidays, Christmas and Easter. Most other hostels close down over Christmas at the request of Crisis at Christmas, but the Mission

prefers to stay open to serve its regular users, not all of whom are able to go to the Crisis centre.

The mission is open from 6am until 11am seven days a week. It provides hot breakfasts, showers, laundry, clothing, pastoral care, befriending, hairdressing, a chiropodist and an optician. They also have trained staff to offer advice and help with night shelter, hostels, benefits, identification documents, form filling, debt counselling, entitlement, finding appropriate help, life skills and basic numeracy and literacy.

Over the years the type of people using the Mission has changed. It used to be older white men, many with an alcohol problem, who needed help, but more recently the age of users has fallen. They are still mainly white men, but there are now some homeless East Europeans, and a growing number of younger women, many of whom are involved in street prostitution. A large proportion of the younger men are ex-servicemen who find it difficult to adapt to civilian life and have few family members to help.

Tony explained that the Mission is wholly funded by charitable donations and fundraising schemes. It is supported by around 300 churches. Although originally founded as a Methodist Mission, the majority of churches now supporting them are Anglican. Some churches also send volunteers to help, which is greatly appreciated. He explained that they have no wish to accept official funding as that always comes with strings attached and they wish to retain their independence. A number of other local hostels who accepted state funding have been forced to close when the official grant was withdrawn and they found that they had lost their original benefactors.

No-one is turned away and one of the first things the Mission does is to give the person an address, so that they can claim benefit, an e-mail address and an answer phone number where they can pick up messages each morning to help them apply for work. The Mission's main aim now is to try to find permanent homes, rather than hostel accommodation, and jobs for as many people as possible and they

have had considerable success with both over the last year.

Help is also offered to those wanting to overcome alcohol and substance abuse. Others are helped to obtain a birth certificate, which are filed at the Mission for safe-keeping. Although they are in the middle of a Bangladeshi area only a few of their clients are from the community. Those who do seek help have been shunned by their family and the mosque and are amazed to find a Christian organisation ready to welcome them with no questions asked about race or religion.

We were then given a tour of the building starting with the immaculate stainless steel kitchen and spotless dining room. A breakfast menu was on display and a small charge is made, as some people refuse the food if it is seen as charity, though nobody goes hungry, and it also cuts down on waste as they only pay for what they can eat. No alcohol or drugs are allowed on the premises. If someone refuses to leave his drink outside he is refused admission and told to come back the next day. There is a small paid staff and a huge number of volunteers who run the Mission.

Downstairs the cellars of the building are like an Aladdin's cave. There were dozens of black bags filled with donated clothing waiting to be sorted, which, Tony said, would last them about two weeks. Large teams of volunteers sort the clothes and put them onto carefully labelled shelves by garment and size. There were rails of trousers, shirts and jackets all labelled by size and hung with their hangers in the same direction so that they can be quickly lifted off the rails in the mornings when the rush is on and taken upstairs. The majority of the clothing donated is from larger older men and women, but the need is actually for smaller clothes for the increased number of younger people these days.

They do receive donations from various businesses and have a regular supply of shower gel and other toiletries, but are always in need of toothbrushes, toothpaste and razors. An overlocking sewing machine has been a recent purchase which enables them to cut up the large number of bath towels donated into smaller handtowels

which they find more serviceable - a surprise to most of us. They feed and clothe more than 150 people every day. Many of the clothes removed have to be destroyed each day as they are so badly soiled. They also give out blankets and sleeping bags to those sleeping rough. It was a lot for us to take in and digest - the amount of work that goes on at the Mission is truly staggering.

We were then invited to have lunch of bread and soup with Tony and Sue and chatted to them about their life there. They have a flat on the top floor of the building so are always "on call". There is also a flat which is let and a guest room for anyone who wishes to stay overnight. Tony and Sue are certainly an unusual and dedicated couple to devote so much of their life to the Mission. They have three children who must find it difficult to have friends in the local area, and who have long train journeys to school each day. The whole family must be admired for giving so much of their time to the Mission.

Sue also talked enthusiastically about an afternoon session she has set up exclusively for women, where they can chat and make each other up (hence Val's appeal for unwanted makeup) in a safe atmosphere and in an attempt to restore some of their self-esteem and confidence. Many of these girls have gone into prostitution at a very young age. They have sex with large numbers of men every night at £5 a time and some even have their father as their pimp - a situation most of us find impossible to comprehend.

After lunch we went for a walk around the area, passing the huge East London Mosque, which is opposite a large Salvation Army hostel. This has to take the homeless from more "touristy" areas of London and consequently there are insufficient beds for local homeless people. We walked down Brick Lane with its many restaurants and along Fournier Street which still has its original Huguenot silk weavers' houses—some of which are being restored—to Spitalfield Market, which is also undergoing restoration and gentrification to appeal to the young city workers around the Liverpool Street station area. Tony pointed out that this is where

many of the prostitutes work as it is now quite a popular activity among the young city workers to experience an illicit thrill with these street girls. On our way back to Mission we passed the Toynbee Centre, where John Profumo devoted his life after his fall from grace, and the large Crisis at Christmas offices.

We bade farewell to Tony and thanked him for a wonderful and thought-provoking day. We certainly had a lot to think and talk about on our journey home. If you would like to know more about the Whitechapel Mission, they have a very good website—www.whitechapel.org.uk. Please also save your unwanted clothing, blankets etc. for this year's Harvest Festival as you bear in mind that the Mission's running costs are now £600,000 per year, an increase from just £6,000 in 1995.

Janet Banks

LIGHTHOUSE 2008

The dates for Lighthouse 2008 are Monday 28 July to Friday 1st August.

It's never too early to start collecting:

1. Clear lids of the pump-type toothpaste or spray deodorant
2. Rounded tops of roll-on deodorant (coloured or clear)
3. Plastic microwave pudding bowls (individual size i.e. very small)
4. Ferrero Rocher clear plastic chocolate boxes.

Many thanks

RICHARD PETERS

On behalf of Lighthouse Administration Team

SERVICE OF CONFIRMATION

To call it a Confirmation Service held on 9 December, is to belittle it! It was a Service of Baptism, Confirmation, Renewal of Baptismal vows and Holy Communion. It was a wonderful Service, really inspiring, and yet very personal, I hope that the candidates felt the same, it was lovely, and a very real privilege to share their special day. Bishop Alan was a wonderful president, and his sermon really 'hit the spot', especially the bit about an awkward relative—haven't we all got one of those? It was a prayerful and thought provoking Service. For those who were unable to be present the St Francis 's candidates' stories follow, as printed in the service booklet.

Kelly Anderson. My journey into Christianity started out as needing a sense of belonging when Alan and I settled into our house in Mayhew Crescent. As time went on, negative things began to happen, including the death of the 'chief' of my family, my dear Aunt Molly. There was no illness, and it was very sudden. I needed answers and God was the one I turned to. Illness now has plagued my nearest and dearest and with the help and love of God, and support of people in church, I am finding the confidence to be strong.

Aaron Carey. I was not christened as a baby. My family are all blessed in the church. Now I am very excited about being baptised and the thought of being closer to God. I enjoy the lessons which help me to look at my days very clearly and to practise what I have learnt so I can get a little more happier with myself as God will be happy too. I enjoy my friends at church and the teachers because they help me to understand about what God has said.

Jerome Carey. As a baby I was not christened but went to church. I have studied the Word of the Lord and received a certificate of dedication. Now I am excited to be baptised, to be joined with God to guide me in my path in life. My church school teaches good practices. I love the Church as it teaches me about God and a positive way of life. Taking Holy Communion makes me feel so much closer to God. I want to be blessed in my journey,

learn all that I can and make friends in this holy circle.

Annette Dawes. I was baptised as a baby and confirmed as a teenager. I am renewing my promises because I love God and his Son Jesus. I love being in church with God's people and learning to pray. Communion bring me closer to God and helps me to be strong.

Aleysha Drewitt. I was baptised by my great-grandmother. I didn't go regularly to church but at about five I went to *Lighthouse* which led me back. I wanted to find out more. My granny then started bringing me to St Francis Church and Sunday School. For a couple of years now I have felt that I want to take my faith further by being confirmed.

Matthew Forbes. Being confirmed means that I believe in God because God loves us and he made us. I also believe in Jesus because he died on the cross. I have been baptised when I was a little baby.

Isaac Nahoor. My journey leading up to confirmation and baptism has been very enlightening and I have learnt many new things about the Bible, God and prayer and worship with help from the confirmation group. I think that it has taught me how to lead a good Christian life using the Bible and God's guidance as I enter confirmation.

Justin Nailard. My parents influenced me on the journey of learning about Christianity and community—both were very much involved in voluntary work. We were not a church-going family. I lost my Dad two years ago and find time to reflect on one's own life is important—often through what Dad achieved and taught me. In this period of reflection and through the confirmation process I have found a little more energy to achieve more balance and focus.

Karolyn Nailard. My family were church-goers. I attended Sunday School in Hillingdon with my younger sister till the age of twelve—then came away from the Church. Since getting married, we have been coming to church as a family. I enjoy time to reflect and feel that it is now time to be confirmed.

Rachael Pope. I have been going to church regularly from a young age and faith has always played an important part in my life. I am greatly influenced by my parents and grandparents who have brought me up to recognise that spirituality is very important in everyone's lives. This and much more has led me to want to be confirmed and grow as a Christian.

Lucy West. I was christened as a baby and have come to church with my family since then. However, it was through helping at *Lighthouse* for the past four summers that I really found God. I love watching God's work among children each day and spreading God's love within the community. So I decided this year that would be confirmed and take the next step in my Christian journey.

I'm sure you'll all agree that these stories are inspiring, and how marvellous that two of the young people were able to make their next step of faith through *Lighthouse*.

Eileen Chapman

ALL SAINTS BLACKHEATH

Seeing Tim's photograph of All Saints Blackheath in last month's magazine reminded me that I used to worship there in the 1950s, while I lived at the Royal Air Force station at nearby Kidbrooke. I'm afraid it was not a very welcoming place, no tea and coffee in the church hall after the morning service, and when I moved away early in 1957, I could not recall anyone speaking to me after any services which I had attended in the previous three years. However, later that year, I had occasion to go to a service there and was surprised to find that a member of the congregation came up to me after the service, asking where I had been, because they had missed me! A less happy memory of the church and its vicar was when the vicar was arrested for shoplifting a trivial item. The story appeared in the national press, and the vicar offered his resignation from the living, but I don't know whether it was accepted by the Bishop.

Roy Morris

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Accessibility at Terriers Church

Sidesmen are on duty at the main church services to welcome you.

Please ask for assistance if you need it.



There is a car park at the church. Although no designated disabled parking spaces are available, those with accessibility difficulties are welcome to park in the area adjacent to the church doors.



Access is down steps. A lift is available at the left-hand entrance.



There is a hearing loop in church.



A large-print version of the service book is available.



The toilet in church is reached only via steep stairs. A disabled toilet is normally available in the church hall



POST SCRIPT

There were so many good contributions this month, that I have had to put in additional pages. Well done everybody, keep the articles coming.

Eileen Chapman

Celebrating Epiphany

We did Epiphany well this year. At the morning service the three kings [or wise men], played by Laura Gee, Sonia and Rozanne Hasan, with Amy Gee bearing the Gospel, processed around the church bearing the gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. At the crib they put in the figures of the wise men, who had been lurking by the statue of St. Francis, complete with camel. [These figures had been brought progressively nearer to the crib each Sunday after Christmas]. The kings presented their gifts with the words explaining their significance: gold for Jesus our King, incense for the prayers of his people, and myrrh to bring healing to all. Then it was time for Laura to read from the Old Testament and Amy to read the Gospel - a delight to hear them read so well.

In the afternoon it was time for the Epiphany Party, with numbers up from last year. The three kings played by Aaron and Jerome Carey and Laura Gee followed the star, Rozanne Hasan, to the house of Joseph [Aleysha Drewitt] and Mary [Beatrice Dickinson], as we all sang 'We three kings'. They presented their gifts, saying their words clearly, and then the story was told of the angel appearing to the wise men to warn them not to return to Herod, whilst another angel warned Joseph to take Mary and Jesus to Egypt until it was safe to return to Nazareth. The children performed their parts very well.

This was followed by a number of party games - passing the parcel, statues, musical chairs - good old favourites, with Tony leading us in the action song 'Father Abraham' - all going down very well. It was fun to see some of the youngest boys taking turns to nurse the baby Jesus and tuck him up in the manger while the older children

were playing their games! Refreshments followed, crisps, Paddy Martin's star biscuits, and rather too many sweeties!

A big thank-you to all who came to help, and it was good to have a chance to chat with the parents while their children were enjoying themselves. Perhaps there will be even more children next year!

Val Evans

Bishop John's visit to the Wycombe Deanery

When John Pritchard took up his post as Bishop of Oxford in June 2007 he undertook to visit all of the deaneries in the diocese during his first year of office. He spent the day visiting churches and projects in the Wycombe Deanery on the 15th January and he now has just three more deaneries to go, making twenty-seven in all [I think]. How's that for stamina!

On a rainy evening on Thursday 15th we gathered at the newly re-ordered church of St. Peter's, Loudwater to hear what Bishop John had to say to us.

He was so inspiring - if only you could have been there! These are just a few snippets:

To be effective the church must be made up of Christians living authentic Jesus shaped lives. The quality of the church/parish community should be of generous hospitality - open to change. We need to engage with the poor and marginalised, 'getting our hands dirty with a pure heart'. Taking to heart Archbishop William Temple's injunction that the Church is the only institution which exists for the benefit of those outside it. Christians should be people of passion - don't be 'the bland leading the bland'. The kingdom of God is a healed creation. And, in all the changes and chances of our world, he quoted Herbert Butterfield, 'Hold fast to Christ and to the rest be totally uncommitted'. For a better understanding of the thinking of our bishop, read his books, 'How to

explain your Faith' and 'Beginning Again', I think they are both on our bookstall.

I went home from this meeting full of hope for the future of the Church.

Val Evans

A LETTER FROM BISHOP JOHN

Muslim Call to Prayer in Central Oxford Mosque

You may have seen a certain amount of media coverage of my support for the Muslims at Oxford's Central Mosque being able, under certain conditions, to broadcast their call to prayer, and I thought it best to write to you and let you know what I said and why, in case you get any come-back.

- 1 I spoke to the Oxford Times in the context of the debate over the Bishop of Rochester's comments on 'no-go' areas in Britain. I had been at the House of Bishops that week and there was agreement that this was not our experience, whether in Leicester, Bradford, Birmingham or Blackburn. I believe there are areas in most towns and cities where people might sometimes feel unsafe, but the fault-line is not religious faith, nor are they 'no-go' areas. I also reported the bishops' speaking of good inter-faith relations developing in all parts of the country.
- 2 I said I was happy with the call to prayer as long as practical issues could be ironed out, such as the frequency of the call, the volume of it, and whether a trial period would be advisable. I gather that the Imam is going to propose only issuing the call to Friday prayers, and at a moderated volume.
- 3 I said that faith is an important factor in the lives of 80% of the world's population and a public expression of that faith is both natural and reasonable, and that it's good that we should be reminded of the faithfulness of many members of our community. (It might even encourage Christians to take prayer more seriously!) I said that part of living in a civilised society is respecting our diversity,

even if aspects of it are not to our taste or belief.

- 4 What I also said in the interview, but wasn't reported, was that I want to see similar respectful hospitality to Christians in Muslim lands, and I fear that isn't always the case. We need to keep pressing the point about reciprocity.

What is my thinking behind all this? In a short telephone interview there isn't much time for a nuanced discussion of the issues. I understand the hesitations of many and could easily compile a list of them myself, but I think the gospel imperatives of hospitality and friendship are the most important principles to follow. What I seek to reflect in my dealings with people of other faiths is the generosity and hospitality of God as he invites us to sit and eat in his kingdom. These principles seem to me to be a much better place from which to share my faith than confrontation and exclusion. In my sermon at my Inauguration I quoted Archbishop Sentamu who often says when meeting people of other faiths: 'I greet you in the name of Jesus, who to you is a prophet and to me is a saviour.'

It's important to say that I have no doubt about the uniqueness of Christ, and I want to share my faith with anyone who's interested, including Muslims, but I want to do it in a way that is genuinely Christian in style and reflects the way of Christ with me.

There is a major issue lying behind this kaffuffle. The way Christians and Muslims manage to relate to each other is vital for the future of our world order. If we get it wrong and alienate the moderate majority of Muslims we risk reaping the whirlwind. It's vital that we wrest the initiative away from extremists.

I hope this explains the background to the media interest. I believe we all need to hold fast to Christ, but to develop the best inter-faith relationships we can.

Yours in Christ

+John