

Looking Backwards and Forwards

We begin this month of February with a joyful celebration of one of the principal feasts of the Church's year: the Presentation of Christ in the temple, more popularly known as Candlemas. It's always good when the days are still rather dark and cold to have cause to celebrate. This feast marks the end of the forty days of Christmastide since we celebrated Jesus' birth and recalls when Mary and Joseph brought the child Jesus to the Temple in Jerusalem to be presented before the Lord.

Candlemas includes several themes of presentation, purification, meeting and light. The Christ-child, even in His infancy, is recognised as the light of this world.

The feast is a turning point in the Church's year, when we take one last look back at the joy of Christmas before we turn to look ahead towards Lent fast approaching and the journey with Jesus to Jerusalem and the cross. Moments in the Church's year such as Candlemas can sometimes reflect and coincide with our own inner journey. I find that I too am now approaching a turning-point. My three-year curacy in Cowley draws to an end later this year on St James Day (25th July).



Sr. Margaret Anne

Chronicle

Ministry of Healing

Healing Services:

St Francis Church

Tuesday 10th February 7.00 pm

St James Church

Tuesday 17th February

7.30 pm

The ministry of healing is available at St James' Church every Sunday during the 10 o'clock service. Please go to St Luke's Chapel after you have received Communion where members of the Healing Team will be available to listen and to pray in complete confidence.



GUARD YOUR SPIRIT

The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy.

John 10:10

You can put bars on your windows, a security system in your car, a video camera in your business and your prized possessions in a sealed vault, but what are you doing to protect the most valuable possession you have – your spirit?

Job said: "...the breath of the Almighty hath given me life." (Job 33:4) When God breathed his Spirit into you, you became 'spiritually alive', now you have the ability to love him, serve him and bring pleasure to him. (Rev 4:11) That's what the thief is after: the part of God that's in you! To get at it, he'll attack your body. He'll also war against your mind and try to control you through fear. He'll even attack you through others.

When God breathed into Adam, he became alive, knew who he was and what he was called to do. Until you recognise that God has given you your life and made you for a specific purpose, others can breathe on you their identity and their agenda. That's dangerous, for whoever can define you can also control you.

You say, 'How can I protect myself?' The answer is to live and walk in the presence of God. David cried: 'For you are my safe refuge, a fortress where my enemies cannot reach me. Let me live forever in Your sanctuary, safe beneath the shelter of Your wings!' (Psalm 61:3,4) When you're there, the thief will not be able to touch you or anything you've got.

Sundays @ Six at St James

The first Sunday of the month at 6 o'clock

February 1 st	Evening Praise
March 7 th	Waiting on the Word
April 4 th	The Way of the Cross
May 2 nd	The Easter Experience
June 6 th	Exploring the Trinity



Baptism and Confirmation Service

with Bishop Richard

St James Church
Thursday 12th February
7.30 pm



Please pray for **Libby Lowe** being Baptised and Confirmed and for **Pat Chambers** being Confirmed.

LENT AT ST JAMES

ASH WEDNESDAY - 25TH FEBRUARY

9.30am Holy Eucharist
7.00pm Sung Eucharist

both services include the Imposition of Ashes

TUESDAY LENT EUCHARIST & LUNCH



Tuesdays at 12 o'clock beginning on March 2nd. The Eucharist is followed by a simple lunch of soup, bread & cheese, fruit, tea or coffee in Church. Proceeds will go to USPG - serving overseas missions.



LENT COURSE - TOUGH TALK

We are living in world beset by many uncertainties and fears. This year's Lent Course "Tough Talk" looks at those hard sayings of Jesus with the help of Bishop Tom Wright, Steve Chalke, Fr Gerard Hughes SJ, and Professor Frances Young

Please speak with Mark for further details

SNOWDROP WEEKENDS

St James' Church
14th/15th 21st/22nd February

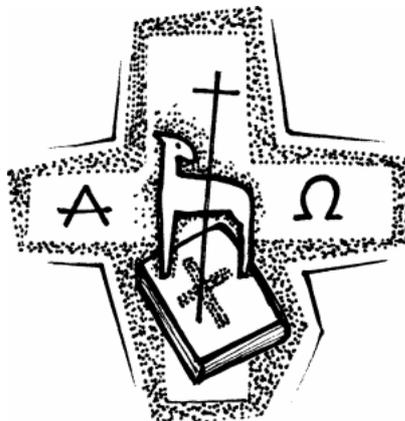
Saturday 10.30 am - 4.30 pm
Sunday 2.30 - 4.30 pm



We are inviting people to see the wonderful display of snowdrops and aconites in the churchyard. If you've got time - drop in and bring a friend

Morning Prayer & Breakfast

St Francis Church
Saturday Mornings
9.15 am
all welcome



CANDLEMAS

In bygone centuries, Christians said their last farewells to the Christmas season on Candlemas, 2 February. This is exactly 40 days after Christmas Day itself. Nowadays many churches celebrate it on the nearest Sunday.

In New Testament times 40 days old was an important age for a baby boy: it was when they made their first 'public appearance'. Mary, like all good Jewish mothers, went to the Temple with Jesus, her first male child - to "present him to the Lord". At the same time, she, as a new mother, was 'purified'. Thus we have the Festival of the Presentation of Christ in the Temple.

So where does the Candlemas bit come in? Jesus is described in the New Testament as the Light of the World, and early Christians developed the tradition of lighting many candles in celebration of this day. The Church also fell into the custom of blessing the year's supply of candles for the church on this day - hence the name, Candlemas.

The story of how Candlemas began can be found in Luke 2:22-40. Simeon's great declaration of faith and recognition of who Jesus was is of course found in the Nunc Dimittis, which is embedded in the Office of Evening Prayer in the West. But in medieval times, the Nunc Dimittis was mostly used just on this day, during the distribution of candles before the Eucharist. Only gradually did it win a place in the daily prayer life of the Church.





Rosanne interviews Choy Lai

Choy is an unassuming person who describes himself as "somewhere in the middle". In the middle of a big family certainly, in the middle of a group of people with whom he works maybe, but not, I venture to suggest in anyway a "in the middle" sort of character. See what you think.

He is the first person I have interviewed to be born and grow up in Malaysia and the first one to be brought up by a full time nanny. One of ten children ("somewhere in the middle") his mother worked in telecommunications and his father had his own haulage business. Their household included his grandmother and was looked after by a maid, a cook and nanny. His parents both spoke English as well as their native Chinese, so little Choy was sent to an English mission school. He has always had a hearing problem, which he believes made him a middle-of-the-road pupil.

It was in 1963 that Malaysia gained independence and Choy, now growing up became politically aware of great changes. It was time for him to choose a career, so his father introduced him to a Chinese tycoon, who

had bought up vast rubber plantations from the British. It was planned that the young man should train as a plantation manager. As he rode round the estates in a sleek Rolls Royce, it all seemed fixed. But no, Choy did not fancy life in rural jungle areas. He had been brought up in an urban environment and besides he was determined to be independent. His sister who is a Franciscan sister in a priory in Surrey suggested that her brother should come to London and sent him an application form for a job she thought would suit him. So after a visit to the Malaysia High Commission for help and advice he applied to work as a laboratory technician at Whipps Cross hospital in the East End of London. He lived in a hostel and spent long hours in studying alongside his training. Once qualified as a clinical physiological measurement technician he moved to Guy's Hospital also in London. He found the work he did there on the intensive care ward particularly satisfying as he had more contact with the patients. After a broken personal relationship he cut loose and decided to take a new direction.

A move to Southampton resulted in two very happy years working in a boat-building yard. He found that, though the training and work was hard he had developed a love for boats and the sea. Whilst living on the south coast he enrolled in a degree course at Portsmouth University, reading geology. He was obviously at a crossroad at that time because after a year he began to wonder where such a degree might lead. Having decided that employment with the giant mining and oil companies was not for him and that teaching opportunities were limited, he cut loose again, moved back to London and found a job as a porter in a 4 star hotel.

In 1978 he felt he ought to give geology another try and applied to Oxford Brookes University. Again it didn't work out. Instead his skills in clinical technology took him to the J.R. Hospital where he has worked for over 20 years.

He lives a bachelor life, sharing a house and following his interests and career. He talked a little about several young ladies he has met along the way, describing his relationships as water under

the bridge. He has not given up the idea of meeting a soul mate, though she would have to be a practicable person. Choy declares impracticability as one of his traits. (I wonder how boat building fits in with this?!). He keeps fit by cycling, swimming and walking with the Intersociety walking club. After a few years worshipping at St Aldates he found his way to St James, where he is just beginning to feel "at home". He has plans for his future within the Christian faith and none of these strike me as anything like "somewhere in the middle".

How would you describe yourself as a child?

Introverted, quiet, quite frail, always wondering why.

Do you have any memories of childhood you will never forget?

One year my brother, sister and I went to school by rickshaw. I was the last one to be dropped off. One of my classmates got into a row with a rickshaw puller and stabbed him with some scissors. My brother and I would swim the river, which was quite polluted, and we hunted for special a fern tip for my mother. It was a cooking delicacy.

Has God been part of your life since childhood?

I believe he has but I wasn't aware of it. I spent four years

with the Quakers in London. When I came to Oxford I found St Aldates and wanted to be more involved. One day I was considering my position at Brookes and questioning my relationship with God. I turned up at Canon Michael Green's door, his wife came out and then Canon Green. After a brief chat he offered to train me for baptism. I was baptised by the Archbishop of York. After about another seven years I was confirmed at St Andrew's, Linton Road.

What do you consider good about modern society?

Working in a hospital I know medical developments are good. The NHS and welfare state are positive and precious things. Coming from a country where there is nothing like that you appreciate them more.

What disappoints you about life today?

Commercialisation. I'm not against having good things around you, but pressurised hard selling to make people feel they need all the luxuries to appear successful is wrong.

What do you like to do in your leisure time?

Walking, swimming reading – mainly non-fiction, quite a lot of theological works.

What makes you laugh?

Myself really. I laugh at myself more than anything else. I also enjoy a play on words.

Do you have ambitions for the future?

Hopefully to be a servant of the Church – perhaps go into the ministry.

How about your plans for ten years time?

I want to use my ministry and long experience and understanding of two different cultures. As the church is so white, middle-class Anglo Saxon, I feel God is calling me into a breach between the indigenous English and ethnic minorities.

If you could change something in a spectacular way what would it be?

People should not be afraid to take risks within their Christian faith. So they should face the challenge of the rapidly changing world, myself included.



Lent at St Francis

Ash Wednesday - 25th February

9.30am Holy Eucharist

7.00pm Sung Eucharist

both services include the Imposition of Ashes



A Course for Lent

Tough Talk

This year's Lent Course "Tough Talk" looks at those hard sayings of Jesus with the help of Bishop Tom Wright, Steve Chalke, Fr Gerard Hughes SJ, and Professor Frances Young

If you would like to come to a group, contact Fr John or Mark.

Services during Lent

these will all take place in church - Sundays - **Stations of the Cross** at 5.30 pm, followed by **Quiet Prayer** before the Cross until 6.45 pm.

Morning Prayer on Saturdays continues at 9.15 am followed by breakfast.

As we keep the important season of Lent, why not join in one of these times of prayer and devotion? - if you can't come to church, you could always set aside one of these times for prayer at home.

SAINT POLYCARP C. 69 – C.155 - 23RD FEBRUARY

Polycarp was one of the most important Christians in Roman Asia in the mid-2nd century, because of his link between the time of the Apostles and the earliest Christian Fathers. This disciple of John the Apostle became bishop of Smyrna and defended orthodox Christian belief against the heresies of Marcion and Valentinus, the most influential of the Gnostics. Irenaeus of Lyons, who as a boy had known Polycarp, praised his gravity, holiness and majesty of countenance.



Near the end of his long life, Polycarp paid a visit to Rome to discuss with the bishop there the possibility of agreeing a uniform date of celebrating Easter. When they found they could not agree, they amicably agreed to differ, and parted in good faith.

Polycarp returned to Smyrna, where a riot broke out at a pagan festival. The crowd suddenly turned on the Christians, whom they called 'atheists'. Polycarp was on a farm nearby, neither provoking nor fleeing martyrdom. When his captors arrived, he invited them to eat a meal, while he prayed alone for an hour.

Then calmly, he agreed to go with them to his interrogation.

All the pagans' threats and promises did nothing to shake Polycarp. When ordered to execrate Christ, Polycarp gave this dignified reply: "For 86 years I have been his servant and He has never done me wrong; how can I blaspheme my king who saved me?... I am a Christian: if you wish to study the Christian doctrine, choose a day and you will hear it."

The crowd were outraged, and cried first for the lions and then for Polycarp to be burnt at the stake. He was bound, but an official killed him with his sword before his body was burnt. Later, grieving Christians collected his bones and buried them. They also wrote an account of his trial and martyrdom, which is the earliest authentic example of its kind.

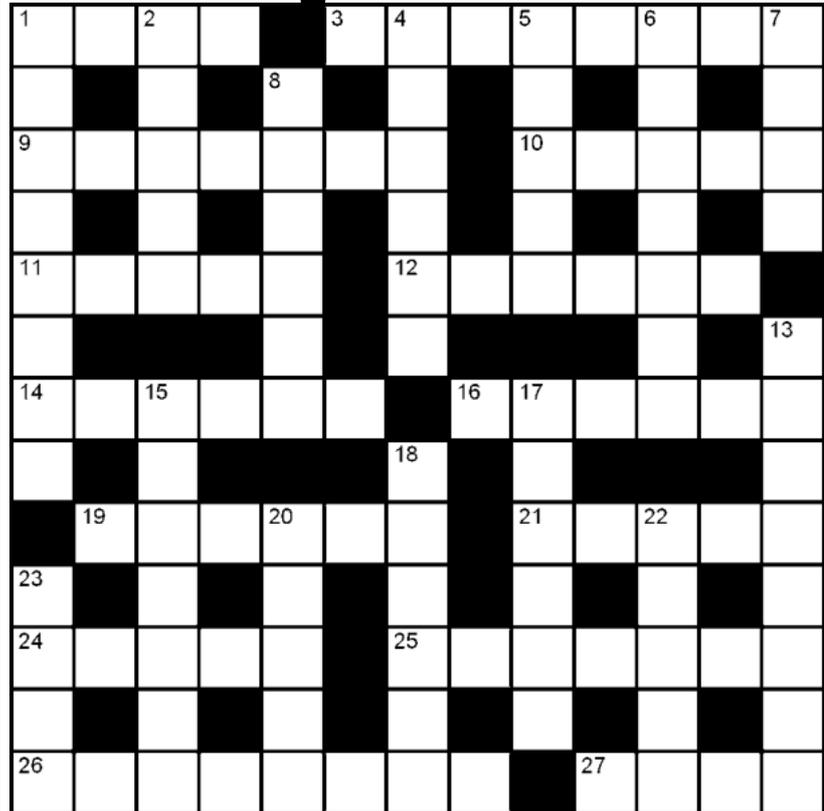
In England there are no ancient and only a few modern churches dedicated to this deeply courageous saint of the Christian Church.



The enforced withdrawal of Jeffrey John from the post of Bishop of Reading left many in the Church of England concerned for the inclusive nature of Anglicanism and questioning what they can do to help re-affirm it.

The Inclusive Church movement was launched to provide a voice for parishes and individuals to reclaim the Church's essentially inclusive and progressive nature. Every voice counts, and if you are interested in registering your support, please visit the website www.inclusivechurch.net or speak to Mark.

February's Crossword



CLUES

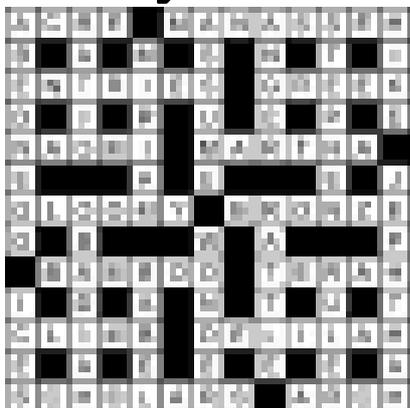
Across

- 1 Informal body of friends (4)
- 3 One of the three young men cast into the furnace (8)
- 9 Searching (7)
- 10 Unhappy or worried (5)
- 11 The twig the dove returned to Noah in the Ark (5)
- 12 For a short time (6)
- 14 Possessing (6)
- 16 Doubting Apostle (6)
- 19 Longest prophetic book of the Old Testament (6)
- 21 Tower built by the descendants of Noah (5)
- 24 Additional (5)
- 25 Refined and tasteful (7)
- 26 Prediction (8)
- 27 Woody grass (4)

Down

- 1 Another name for Calvary (8)
- 2 Ruth's mother-in-law (5)
- 4 Book of the Old Testament Written about 520 BC (6)
- 5 Flour mixture (5)
- 6 The third son of King David (7)
- 7 Has (4)
- 8 The hero of Israel that defeated the Midianites (6)
- 13 Set apart (8)
- 15 One who visits (7)
- 17 Language of the Old Testament (6)
- 18 Bed linen (6)
- 20 Son of Abraham and Sarah (5)
- 22 Attribute responsibility to (5)
- 23 Turn over pages (4)

January's Solution



Sunday Services

ST JAMES' CHURCH, BEAUCHAMP LANE

8.00 am	Holy Communion
10.00 am	Sung Eucharist (<i>exc 2nd Sunday</i>) All Age Eucharist (<i>2nd Sunday</i>)
6.00 pm	Evening Service [<i>1st Sunday of the month</i>]

ST FRANCIS' CHURCH, HOLLOW WAY

8.00 am	Holy Eucharist
10.30 am	Parish Eucharist [<i>Family Eucharist - 2nd Sunday of the month</i>]

Mid-Week Services & Meetings

Monday	9.00 am	Morning Prayer – <i>St James</i>
	5.00 pm	Evening Prayer – <i>St James</i>
Tuesday	9.00 am	Morning Prayer – <i>St James</i>
	5.00 pm	Evening Prayer – <i>St Francis</i>
	8.00 pm	St Francis Discussion Group – <i>4 Long Close</i>
Wednesday	9.00 am	Morning Prayer – <i>St Francis</i>
	9.30 am	Eucharist – <i>St Francis</i>
	10.10 am	Mothers and Toddlers – <i>St Francis</i>
	12.00 pm	St James Prayer Group – <i>13 Clive Road</i>
	5.00 pm	Evening Prayer – <i>St James</i>
Thursday	9.00 am	Morning Prayer – <i>St James</i>
	9.30 am	Eucharist - followed by coffee – <i>St James</i>
	11.00 am	St Francis Prayer Group
	5.00 pm	Evening Prayer – <i>St Francis</i>
	7.00 pm	Eucharist – <i>St Francis</i>
Friday	9.00 am	Morning Prayer – <i>St Francis</i>
	5.00 pm	Evening Prayer – <i>St James</i>
	7.00 pm	Friday Club – <i>alt Fridays at St Francis</i>
Saturday	9.15 am	Morning Prayer & Breakfast – <i>St Francis</i>

Arrangements for Baptisms, Banns of Marriage, Weddings, Confessions and Home Communion can be made with any of the clergy.

Days Off

Stephen has Friday off; Fr John and Mark have Mondays. Except in emergency, please try and respect these days of rest. Sr Margaret Anne works within the parish on Tuesdays, Thursdays and on alternate Sundays .

Parish Directory

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Eric Uren
Tel: 770696

CHURCHWARDENS:

Gwen Ranklin
Tel: 451417
Norah Shallow
Tel: 765199

DEPUTY WARDENS:

Rosanne Butler
Tel: 453257
Helen Doling
Tel: 779626