

Never alone

Many older people still remember the words quoted by King George VI in one his Christmas broadcasts during the Second World War: 'I said to the man at the gate of the year, "Give me a light that I may go forth into the unknown." And the man replied, "Put your hand into the hand of God. That shall be to you better than a light, safer than a known way."'

As we begin another year a number of things may be going through our minds. We may be grateful that we have got through the past year with all its difficulties and are hoping that 2006 will be kinder to us. Others may be facing the coming year with fear and trepidation. Increasing age, real health concerns, family and relationship strains make us uneasy and even fearful of what may lie ahead.

January is always a difficult month with its dark cold days yet our Christmas celebrations have reminded us that with the birth of Jesus comes the life which is the light of all people – a light which shines even in the

darkness, and the darkness cannot overcome it.

Whatever we may be facing in the coming months, we are assured that we are never alone. The Lord God accompanies us on our journey wherever it may take us. We read in the scriptures that though the floods rise, we shall not be overwhelmed and though we walk through fire we shall not be consumed. We are

told that we are precious in the sight of the Lord and that he will never desert us.

As we cross the threshold of another year, we place our hand into the hand of God in quiet confidence that we never walk alone. He is there to support us and strengthen us whatever comes our way.

With my love and best wishes for the year ahead.



Handwritten signature of Steve.

Chronicle

Ministry of Healing

note earlier time of 7.00 pm

Healing Services:

Thursday 5th January

St Francis Church

Thursday 9th February

St James Church



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.

GOD'S FRAGRANCE – DO PEOPLE CATCH A WHIFF OF IT ON YOU?

'and the house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume.' John 12.3

A story runs of how a lady was having tea outside a tea shop late one afternoon, when she became aware of a pleasant scent filling the air. She asked the waiter the source of the scent and was told that it came from the people passing by. He explained to her that they worked in a perfume factory down the street and were on their way home. When they left the factory they carried with them the fragrance that had permeated their clothes during their day's work.

As the perfume workers leave the factory full of the fragrance of where they have been, so we, as we leave our churches and chapels and wherever we spend time with God, are meant to carry the perfume of his presence with us. We are called to spread everywhere the fragrance of the knowledge of him (2 Corinthians 2.4). If we allow ourselves in worship to be permeated with Christ's love and the sweetness of his presence, then we will be able to take the Jesus in us out into the world.

CONFIRMATION SERVICE

Bishop Richard will be presiding at a service of Confirmation on Sunday 26th February at 10 o'clock in Saint James Church.

Beth and Stephen will leading a preparation group for youngsters (aged about 9 upwards) during January and February. If anyone from St Francis or St James Church is interested in joining this group, please speak with Beth or Stephen.

Similarly if there are any adults who would like to be Confirmed at this service, please have a word with Stephen or Lorne.



TUESDAY LUNCH

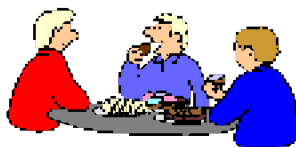
CLUB

Every Tuesday 12.30 pm

St James Church Centre

Soup, freshly made sandwiches, homemade cakes, hot and cold drinks - all at very modest prices.

Come along and enjoy the company.



THE BASKET AND THE BIBLE

The story is told of an old man who lived on a farm in the mountains with his young grandson. Each morning, Grandfather was up early sitting at the kitchen table reading from his old worn-out Bible.

One day the grandson asked, "Grandfather, I try to read the Bible just like you but I don't understand it, and what I do understand I forget as soon as I close the book. What good does reading the Bible do?"

The Grandfather turned from putting coal in the stove and said, "Take this coal basket down to the river and bring back a basket of water." The boy did as he was told, even though all the water leaked out before he could get back to the house. The grandfather laughed and said, "You will have to move a little faster next time," and sent him back to the river with the basket to try again.

This time the boy ran faster, but again the basket was empty before he returned home. Out of breath, he told his grandfather that it was "impossible to carry water in a

basket," and he went to get a bucket instead. The old man said, "I don't want a bucket of water; I want a basket of water. You can do this. You're just not trying hard enough," and he

went out the door to watch the boy try again.

At this point, the boy knew it was impossible, but he wanted to show his grandfather that even if he ran as fast as he could, the water would leak out before he got far at all. The boy scooped the water and ran hard, but when he reached his grandfather the basket was again empty. Out of breath, he said, "See, it's useless!"

"So you think it is useless?" the old man said. "Look at the basket." The boy looked at the basket and for the first time he realized that the basket looked different. Instead of a dirty old coal basket, it was clean. "Son, that's what happens when you read the Bible. You might not understand or remember everything, but when you read it, it will change you from the inside out."



Happy Birthday, SPAM

2006 marks the 70th birthday of SPAM – the much-loved canned luncheon meat which took the world by storm in the 1930s and 40s.

It was back in 1936 that an American company, Geo A Hormel, of Minnesota first created the tasty blend of chopped pork and ham. Having got the recipe and the canning process right, they had a problem: what should they call this new 'meat'?

It's said that the son of Geo Hormel, Jay Hormel, held a New Year's party for the purpose of naming his 'baby'. Guests were entitled to one drink for each name they came up with and, for the winner, a prize of \$100. The host said afterwards: 'by the fourth drink, people began to show some imagination'.

The names suggested are now lost in the mists of history, but the name SPAM was put forward by the brother of the Hormel vice-president – and approved immediately. It was catchy enough for everyone to remember, and perfectly summed up the contents of shoulder of pork and ham!

And so SPAM was introduced to America in 1937, and to Britain in 1941. It was an immediate hit – it was such an inexpensive meat that even poor families could afford it. SPAM even featured on the first ever singing TV advert, to the tune of My Bonnie Lies Over the Ocean..

SPAM was highly nutritious and could be used cold in sandwiches and salads, or hot in stews, pies and omelettes. The 'meat miracle' as it was known, even helped Russia when Germany invaded. Nikita Khrushchev once said: 'Without SPAM, we would not have been able to feed our army.'

Today SPAM is still popular and sold in 50 countries throughout the world, with sales still growing. There are even SPAM fan clubs in both the USA and UK.





Rosanne interviews Margaret Craig

Each time I interview a person for *The Chronicle* it is always a case of 'your place or mine?' when we make a date for the appointment. I have been privileged to be invited into many pleasant homes in Cowley, but I don't think I could have found one, which exuded the spirit of Christmas more than Margaret and Doug's in December. Scented candles, a seasonal CD for background music, potted cyclamen and poinsettias and Madeline's bedtime story all summed up a lovely, cosy, Christmassy atmosphere. Once Madeline and her brother Cameron had been safely seen up to bed Margaret and I got down to business.

I found myself talking to a very busy person. It soon became clear that busy would describe her life ever since she was quite a small girl. When I explain that she is the oldest of a family of nine and was expected to be fully involved in helping her mother with the youngest siblings you will see what I mean. She was born in Texas, U.S.A. in Del Rio, a small place near the Mexican border, entirely due to the fact that her father, an air force doctor, was stationed at the air base there. Her parents had met whilst they were both in the U.S.A.F. Her mother was a nurse who gave up her career when her first baby was on the way. Postings to various bases – California, back to Texas and later Nebraska meant that Margaret saw a lot of America in her early years. She remembers with delight the Nebraskan

winters with deep snow and sledges. Just as winters should be. By the time the family moved to Alabama several brothers and sisters were on the scene. Margaret declares that she didn't care much for babies at the time as she found herself chief cook and bottle washer and the younger kids wrecked her toys. She was however the apple of her father's eye and she did learn to ice skate in Alabama, so it wasn't all hard going.

Her first small school was situated on "the base" in Colorado. She was there for three years and found the whole experience great except for the little plaid pinafore dresses which were the school uniform. They were too thick to wear in the very hot summers and not thick enough to keep out the extreme winter chill. She learnt to ride her first bike in Colorado. At the age of nine, by now at school in Alabama she became aware of the unrest within the black population. It was 1969 and the civil rights movement was at its strongest. She remembers being conscious of the appalling poor buildings of the black state schools compared with the fine facilities at her own school. However it was at this point that her father, by now a colonel, was posted to the tropical island of Puerto Rico. Her parents loved the sunshine, but she missed real winters. Her home was always full of friends (her parents loved to entertain) and she told me about the 'open house' that they all enjoyed each New Year's

Day when anyone could drop in from mid-day to midnight. The table was laden with food and there were family games and fun. The children had a wonderful time.

It was when she was about eight that she realised that art, particularly painting was her first love. A friend of the family painted her mother's portrait and as it developed, the little girl watched fascinated. After a short time in junior high school in New Jersey, the next posting brought the family to Upper Heyford in England. For a short while they lived on the base but soon moved to a farmhouse in Marsh Gibbon "in the middle of nowhere", where the children fast approaching their teenage years could play their music, make as much noise as they liked and generally feel free. Sixteen-year-old Margaret soon tasted English education in Bicester and it would seem that she didn't understand it and it certainly didn't understand her. I asked about the countless moves to new schools, which punctuated her childhood. Although she described herself as a resilient girl she confessed



that she hated the whole process of starting at a school where she knew no one.

At Bicester her art got "swept under the carpet" and for A Levels she took biology, physics and maths. Then came the matter of a career. She took all sorts of "temping" jobs at first, found it all thoroughly mindless and needed to get out of a rut. Her brother had begun an art foundation course and this idea appealed. She applied but turned up for the interview totally unprepared and was rejected. Devastated she returned to America to work as a nanny. This was a great success so she did a similar job in Oxford on her return. At this time she met a girl called Sasha, related to her employer, who suggested she might try for an Open University degree course. She studied history of art and English literature. After graduation in 1991 she decided to do post-graduate teacher training. Since then she has gained a Master of Arts degree and now teaches history of art at Radley College.

They write songs about meeting handsome strangers across a crowded room, don't they? Well that's exactly how Margaret met Doug (by the way she pronounces his name Doog). A friend invited her to a birthday party to which her reaction was pretty negative. She went though and when Doug made his way across to her she could hardly believe it. The ensuing relationship had its hiccups but it certainly proved to be love at first sight and inevitably the wedding took place in a little village church near her parent's home. After a short while the couple bought their home in Annesley Road. Margaret was by now teaching.

Their first child, Cameron was born in 1995 and Madeline arrived 4 years later. Her attitude to babies changed completely with the birth of her son.

Having moved in to the Iffley area she and Doug decided to try their local church for Sunday worship. The welcome there was far from warm, so they tried St James and found just what they were seeking.

How would you describe yourself as a small child?

Talkative, rambunctious, polite, helpful, bright as a button but a little imp.

Have you any childhood memories you'd like to share?

The best times as a family growing up in Colorado. Dad would take leave and we'd take tents up into the Rocky Mountains to camp. I'd swim in the snowmelt water till I was blue!! There was loads of wild life. Bears came around, chipmunks would take peanuts, and we'd pick wild strawberries. Once dad filmed a baby deer being born.

Has God been part of your life since childhood?

Yes, all my life. I felt really close to Him always, I talked to Him a lot as a teenager. He's my Comforting Presence.

What do you consider to be the best part of modern life?

Technology has given us so much. The internet has made my job infinitely easier. Access to the wider world is for everyone.

What disappoints you about life today?

The misuse of technology. We have so much access to a wide range of goods. There are people who have so much but some who don't have anything. Poverty is still rife.

If you could change something spectacularly what would it be?

To have my job just as it is, but without having to do marking. I'd like to just let my pupils enjoy their art.

How do you spend your leisure time?

Madeline and I like to do arts and crafts. I read out of term time. We take the children swimming and walking.

What makes you laugh?

Sending silly emails and jokes. Fooling around at work or home.

Do you have a hero or heroine?

My Dad.

Do you have any plans for the future?

I hope the children will achieve success and that they marry as happily as my parents and as Doug and me.

Sign in an old parish church porch to reassure any visitors: In this church many are cold, but few are frozen.



START 2006 WITH A LAUGH!!!!

Bertha Belch, a missionary from Africa, will be speaking tonight at Calvary Methodist. Come hear Bertha Belch all the way from Africa.

The Fasting & Prayer Conference includes meals.

The sermon this morning: "Jesus Walks on the Water." The sermon tonight: "Searching for Jesus."

Ladies, don't forget the jumble sale. It's a chance to get rid of those things not worth keeping around the house. Don't forget your husbands.

The peacemaking meeting scheduled for today has been cancelled due to a conflict.

Remember in prayer the many who are sick of our community.

Smile at someone who is hard to love. Say "Hell" to someone who doesn't care much about you.

Don't let worry kill you off - let the Church help.

Miss Charlene Mason sang "I will not pass this way again," giving obvious pleasure to the congregation.

For those of you who have children and don't know it, we have a nursery downstairs.

Next Thursday there will be tryouts for the choir. They need all the help they can get.

Barbara remains in the hospital and needs blood donors for more transfusions. She is also having trouble sleeping and requests tapes of Pastor Jack's sermons.

The Rector will preach his farewell message after which the choir will sing: Break Forth Into Joy."

Irving Benson and Jessie Carter were married last Saturday in the church. So ends a friendship that began in their school days.

Eight new choir robes are currently needed due to the addition of several new members and to the deterioration of some older ones.

Scouts are saving aluminium cans, bottles and other items to be recycled. Proceeds will be used to cripple children.

Please place your donation in the envelope along with the deceased person you want remembered.

The church will host an evening of fine dining, super entertainment and gracious hostility

Church supper Sunday at 5:00 PM - prayer and medication to follow.

The ladies of the Church have cast off clothing of every kind. They maybe seen in the basement on Friday afternoon.



Wine Tasting Evening

7.30 pm

Friday 27th January

St James Church Centre



A fun evening presented by

Frank Butler

Cowley wine connoisseur

Tickets £4 inc wine and nibbles
from Rosanne Butler

This evening at 7 PM there will be a hymn singing in the park across from the Church.

Bring a blanket and come prepared to sin.

The Low Self-Esteem Support Group will meet Thursday at 7 PM. Please use the back door.

The school will be presenting Shakespeare's Hamlet in the Church basement Friday at 7 PM. The congregation is invited to attend this tragedy.

Weight Watchers will meet at 7pm at the Baptist Church. Please use large double door at the side entrance.

**WHAT'S ON AT
ST FRANCIS CHURCH**



Friends of St Francis
2.30 pm 2nd & 4th Tuesdays in the month

Toddler Group
Mondays at 10.00 am

Toddler Service
Tuesdays at 10.00 am

Tea Break
1st Wednesday at 2.30 pm

Rainbows & Brownie Guides
Wednesdays

Beavers, Cubs & Scouts
Thursdays

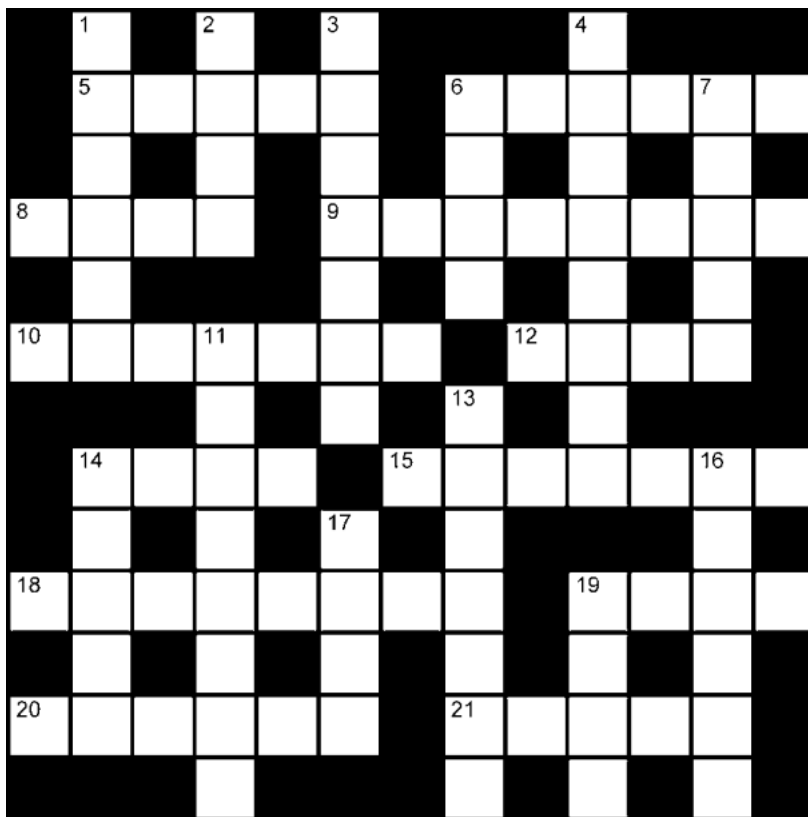
Friday Club for youngsters
alternate Fridays

for your diary:

January 10th
Lunch at Fair View Inn

January 24th
Friends of St Francis
Epiphany Service and Tea
with visitors from other churches

January's Crossword



Across

- 5 An upward movement (5)
- 6 Glorify (6)
- 8 After the expected time (4)
- 9 Deciduous tree yielding edible nuts (8)
- 10 Periods of the year (7)
- 12 Lofty (4)
- 14 Entomb (4)
- 15 Bringing up (7)
- 18 A natural source of water (8)
- 19 A Tibetan or Mongolian priest (4)
- 20 Have faith or confidence in (6)
- 21 Rock (5)

Down

- 1 Expression (6)
- 2 Confront (4)
- 3 Protestant laymen who assist the minister (7)
- 4 Replacement for Judas (8)
- 6 A composition in verse (4)
- 7 In a southern direction (5)
- 11 A person that is unknown (8)
- 13 Sincere (7)
- 14 Lacking funds (5)
- 16 Count (6)
- 17 A group of people (4)
- 19 Courageous animal (4)

December'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>)
1.00 pm	Cowley Asian Christian Fellowship

ST FRANCIS' CHURCH, HOLLOW WAY

10.30 am	Parish Eucharist <i>[Family Eucharist - 2nd Sunday of the month]</i>
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Mid-Week Services & Meetings

Monday	9.00 am	Morning Prayer – <i>St James</i>
	10.00 am	Toddler Group – <i>St Francis</i>
	2.30 pm	Parish Mothers' Union - <i>St James (3rd Mon)</i>
	5.00 pm	Evening Prayer – <i>St James</i>
Tuesday	9.00 am	Morning Prayer – <i>St James</i>
	10.00 am	Seashells Parent & Baby Club - <i>St James</i>
	10.00 am	Toddler Service – <i>St Francis</i>
	12.00 pm	Eucharist - <i>St James</i>
	12.30 pm	Drop-In Lunch - <i>St James</i>
	2.30 pm	Friends of St Francis - <i>St Francis (2nd & 4th)</i>
5.00 pm	Evening Prayer – <i>St James</i>	
Wednesday	9.00 am	Morning Prayer – <i>St James</i>
	2.30 pm	Tea Break - <i>St Francis (1st Wed)</i>
	5.00 pm	Evening Prayer – <i>St James</i>
Thursday	9.00 am	Morning Prayer – <i>St James</i>
	11.00 am	St Francis Prayer Group
	5.00 pm	Evening Prayer – <i>St James</i>
	7.00 pm	Eucharist - <i>St Francis</i>
Friday	9.00 am	Morning Prayer – <i>St James</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>

Day Off

Stephen has Friday off, Except in emergency, please try and respect this day of rest. Lorne can be contacted in the evenings and at weekends.

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