

Parish Directory

THE PARISH CHURCH OF ST JAMES

Team Rector:
The Revd Stephen Hartley,
Cowley Rectory,
Beauchamp Lane
Tel: 747680

Team Curate:
The Revd Vernon Orr
Benson Cottage,
Beauchamp Lane
Tel: 779666

Licensed Lay Minister:
Eric Uren
Tel: 770696

ST FRANCIS CHURCH, HOLLOW WAY
Team Vicar:
Fr John Tomlinson,
St Francis' Vicarage,
2 Meyseys Close
Tel: 748915

Associate Priest:
Fr Peter Stanway
22 Colleywood
Kennington
Tel: 739342

COWLEY ASIAN FELLOWSHIP
Fr Wazir Chand
Tel: 714160

CHURCHWARDENS:
Gwen Rankin
Tel: 451417
John Shreeve
Tel: 717987

Deputy Wardens:
Rosanne Butler
Tel: 453257
Pat Chung
Tel: 767124

HALL BOOKINGS OFFICER:
773620
weekdays only

Sunday Services

ST JAMES' CHURCH, BEAUCHAMP LANE

8.00 am Holy Communion
10.00 am Sung Eucharist
6.00 pm Evening Praise
[1st Sunday of the month]

ST FRANCIS' CHURCH, HOLLOW WAY

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

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 James</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>
	10.30 am	Pram Service – <i>St James</i>
	5.00 pm	Evening Prayer – <i>St Francis</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>
	7.30 pm	St James Prayer Group – <i>Benson Cottage</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	9.00 am	Morning Prayer – <i>St James</i>
	9.15 am	Morning Prayer & Breakfast – <i>St Francis</i>
	9.30 am	Eucharist – <i>St James</i>

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

Days Off

Fr John, and Vernon have Monday as their day off; Stephen and Fr Peter have Friday off. Except in emergency, please try and respect these days of rest.

August 2000

The Silent Witness

I must have visited France at least half a dozen times over the years. The first occasion was during the steam age and I well remember rattling and panting through the countryside of Normandy en route to my destination many miles away.

About fifteen years ago I revisited this region on a cycling holiday, being much leaner and fitter in those days. I intended to travel about thirty miles per day, and finding that I could manage this by lunchtime, I found myself sharing in the soporific French midday and early afternoon when the truckers and others crowd into the 'relais routiers' and savour their food and wine.

This left the rest of the afternoon and evening for sightseeing, and I always seemed to be visiting cathedrals, some of them in smallish towns and in varying states of repair. I was amazed at how many of them there were, and some fine examples of medieval architecture, giving a glimpse of a world long past, when Princes, Bishops and Abbots ruled unchallenged in their glorious stone citadels, and when the serfs they governed were hardly better off than slaves.

Nevertheless in spite of the harsh and brutal life lived by many in medieval times, France among other European countries like Italy and Spain produced many notable saints. One of the best known to us in England is Joan of Arc, the 'Maid of Orleans' an uneducated peasant girl. Her short and tragic life was none the less devout and courageous. Falsely accused of witchcraft she was burned in the market place at Rouen, and it was not until four hundred and fifty years later that she received her recognition and was canonised.

There is a whole world to discover and at which to be amazed amongst these

medieval structures and remains, of a people living in a world very different to our own, but amongst them some whose lives reflected a heroism and a glory that can still move us to wonder. Their love of God was single minded, and the stones and carvings that they looked upon so many years ago adorning these magnificent cathedrals and abbeys bear silent witness to some remarkable men and women who walked this earth before us.



Fr. Peter

The monthly magazine of the Cowley Team Ministry

Chronicle

Ride and Stride – September 9th

This year the sponsored bike ride will take place on Saturday 9th September only the name has been changed to Ride and Stride to emphasise that those who can't (or don't want to) cycle can walk instead. We have taken part in these events for a number of years now and raised hundreds of pounds towards parish funds. If you possibly can, do take part either as a participant, a sponsor or a greeter at St Francis's or St James' churches.



Sponsor forms are in church. The organisers have suggested that greeters could be sponsored and there are forms for that too! Let's see if we can beat our record this year, the most we raised as a parish was in 1998 when we raised over £450. By the way, I tend already, to call it a Hike and Bike day so please forgive me if I say the wrong thing when talking about it! To phone me if you want further information - 453257.

Many thanks, Rosanne



Healing Service

Tuesday 22nd August

7.30 pm .

St James Church

Receive Jesus'
promise of healing
through personal prayer



Sunday Evening Praise

Worship, teaching,
prayer ministry
in an informal setting.
**Sunday 3rd Sep-
tember
6 o'clock**



Confirmation Service

with Bishop Richard

St Francis Church

Sunday 17th September 10.30am

Please pray for members of our church family
preparing for Confirmation -

Sharon Merry

Jane Phipps

Tracy Toohey

Come Holy Spirit - and lighten with celestial fire.



Pushing Against the Rock

A little boy was playing in his sandbox. He had with him his box of cars, but in the process of creating roads and tunnels in the soft sand, he discovered a large rock in the middle of the sandbox.

The boy dug around the rock, and with a great struggle pushed and nudged the rock across the sandbox by using his feet. (He was a very small boy and the rock was very large.)

When the boy got the rock to the edge of the sandbox however, he found that he couldn't roll it up and over the little wall. Determined, the little boy shoved, pushed, and pried, but every time he thought he had made some progress, the rock tipped and then fell back into the sandbox. Finally he burst into tears of frustration.

All this time the boy's father watched from his living room window as the drama unfolded. At the moment the tears fell, a large shadow fell across the boy and the sandbox. It was the boy's father. Gently but firmly he said, "Son, why didn't you use all the strength that you had available?"

Defeated, the boy sobbed back, "But I did, Daddy, I did! I used all the strength that I had!"

"No, son," corrected the father kindly. "You didn't use all the strength you had." You didn't ask me." With that the father reached down, picked up the rock, and removed it from the sandbox.

Do you have 'rocks' in your life that need to be removed? Are you discovering that you don't have what it takes to lift them? There is One who is always available to us and willing to give us the strength we need.

Sadly, many people who have been Christians for years are trying to do everything themselves and only turning to God as a last resort. God wants to be your first resort. When you are DOWN to nothing.... God is UP to something!!



Alpha Initiative 2000

This Autumn there is to be another national Alpha campaign, encouraging people to "explore the meaning of life" in a Christian context and St James will again be taking part. Over a million British people have now done Alpha and many of us have found it a friendly and not pressurised way to explore big questions and deepen our faith.

Someone has said that churchgoers and non churchgoers have at least one thing in common - they both hate evangelism! Alpha is different however so would you please start to think and pray about who **you could invite to come with you** to the following two events.



1. Inviting Cowley to a Free Meal

At 7 pm on Tuesday 26th September in the Cowley Parish Halls, in Between Towns Road. A two course meal and coffee, a chance to hear a couple of local people tell their stories, plus details of the forthcoming Alpha courses in Cowley. Finish by 9 o'clock.

This is part of the UK-wide 'invitation to supper' which will be advertised extensively from 1st September.

2. Alpha Oxford launch Presentation at the Apollo Theatre

Alpha at the Apollo! On Thursday 5th October TV's Diane Louise Jordan will host the launch of Oxfordshire's Alpha Courses at the Apollo Theatre, George Street, Oxford at 7.30 pm. This exciting evening will include Nicky Gumbel speaking on 'Christianity: Boring, Untrue or Irrelevant?', live music and entertainment.

Tickets £3 each sign up quickly at back of church.

We are hoping and praying that people invited to 1 and 2 above (as well as others we invite who cannot attend) then want to start an Alpha Course.

3. Alpha Courses at St James

This year we are planning Alpha courses in homes starting week commencing Monday 9th October.

People can come to just one evening and see if they like it. We are planning an evening course on Tuesdays, 7pm at Benson Cottage, Beauchamp Lane. Plus a lunch/early afternoon course. If we get enough people we might also run one on another lunchtime in someone's home.

Other dates for your diaries:

- **United Oxford Alpha Prayer Celebration** - St Clement's Church Thursday 14th September at 7-30 pm. Please come as we unite to ask the Holy Spirit to move in Oxfordshire this Autumn.
- **Alpha Team Training on Saturday 16th September** at Wycliffe Hall, 54 Banbury Road, Oxford from 9am-1pm. Watch Nicky Gumbel Team Training Video with an opportunity for questions and answers. Everyone welcome though we cannot promise everyone will be on the team as we don't want to outnumber guests at the Alpha courses themselves! The training will be good experience for working in small groups and praying for people.
- Trip to **Holy Trinity Brompton** Evening Service on **Sunday 17th September**, using own cars, leaving Cowley in the afternoon and home by 10 pm ish.

As last year we will need lots of help in September delivering leaflets, putting up posters, planning menus, etc. Offers of help gratefully received. Any queries or questions to Vernon on 779666.

The Changing Soul of Britain

The 'soul' of Britain has changed a lot - even in the last 20 years. A recent national survey on organised religion found it seriously in decline, with previous belief systems eroding rapidly. No wonder moral attitudes are in flux. So what do the people living all around you believe these days?

Some statistics:

Denominations: In 1937, 78% of the population belonged to a denomination. Only 48% of us do in 2000. In 1957, 55% of us were C of E; now only 25% of us are.

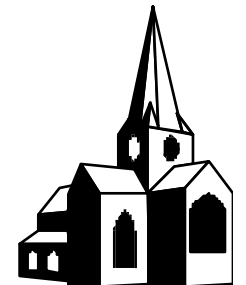
Spiritual, not religious: More people (31%) see themselves as 'spiritual' than 'religious' (27%) these days. This reflects our lack of interest in religious belonging. Instead, we favour individualism and egocentricity. It is much more 'comfortable' to sit loosely on spirituality than to align oneself with a particular religion or community of faith. "Religious belonging implies obligations; personal spirituality does not," observes the Rev Dr Francis Bridger, principal of Trinity College, Bristol.

Believing much less anchored in Scripture: Nowadays 'to believe' means anything from assent to a set of proposition (like the Creeds) to vague acceptance that something or someone means something special.

So what is truth? These days, who knows? Dr Bridger points out that now there is a much greater uncertainty about truth. "It is no longer seen as objectively given, but as subjectively *felt*. We each construct our own truth. It is to be found inside us. We make and remake it to suit our 'needs'. And we keep on remaking it until we feel 'comfortable' with the result.

The outcome? Losing our certainty has left us with a deep-seated confusion, as competing beliefs struggle for their respective market shares. "For a person to believe in something today is to enter a religious supermarket," says Dr Bridger. "Product upon product leaps out from the shelves, each commending itself as the one to satisfy your soul. Little wonder then that a bare nine per cent of the population think they have the only path to God and that 66 per cent believe that all religions lead to God or that God can be found outside organised religions altogether."

People still use Christian language to articulate their spirituality, because it has after all been the dominant cultural force in western societies for more than a millennium. Its thought forms are deeply ingrained... but what will happen to the generation now being born who have only a tenuous hold on these residual thought forms? Christian leaders are warning the Church that Christianity must break out of its "self-absorbed ghetto" and engage with contemporary culture.



Rosanne interviews



We have, this month, a lady who views herself as a very private person and is more than happy to be so. Even as a small child growing up in Shropshire she describes herself as a solitary child. At the age of seven her ambition was to become a nun.

Her parents moved to Bearley, in Warwickshire, where she attended the village school. Wandering the woods and fields and helping to care for her four younger brothers and sisters made for a

busy country childhood. Here we need to add Sharon's love of music which has been, and continues to be, a major force in her life. As a child she learnt the recorder and wanted to learn the violin but was told that she was too young. So she turned her attention to the piano. A new piano was out of the question but her mother found an old instrument in a local sale, she also discovered that the local piano teacher, Mrs Suttie, would give lessons. Sharon was thrilled and practised her pieces willingly alongside her homework! She holds her memories of Mrs Suttie with great affection, grateful for her support and encouragement which carried her through to Grade 7 piano forte.

After a spell in the Methodist Sunday School she joined the village church choir. The organist's wife, Gwen, took an interest in her music. She gave her pieces of music from her husband, some quite advanced, which Sharon loved to tackle. Gwen became a real friend even, later on, making the bridesmaids dresses for Sharon's wedding.

At about the time when she was studying for her A-level exams, the Reverend Stephen Hartley became Vicar of the village. After a Patronal festival service and party, Sharon, as a member of the choir, was helping with the washing up in the vicarage kitchen. She removed a rather pretty ring she had been wearing and accidentally left it behind on the windowsill. The story now takes on a Cinderella quality. The highly eligible young Vicar sought the owner of the ring. She turned out to be an attractive teenager in his own Church choir and yes..... (!) we know the rest.

Sharon did her nursing training at The Central Psychiatric Hospital in Warwick. Initially she had planned to become a midwife but circumstances led her into psychiatric nursing which she pursued for two years. At the age of 20 she married Stephen and became the Vicar's wife in the same parish where she had grown up. Life was not easy. Here was the same girl who had once attended Brownies in the Old Vicarage sharing parish life in a lovely new home with all the world looking on.

It was time to move on after four years in Snitterfield and Bearley. Their next parish was Exhall, near Coventry, where, on their first Pentecost Sunday, their eldest daughter, Elizabeth, was born. William arrived 19 months later and then Catherine a year later still. While all three children were still very young, Stephen was called to serve at Tilehurst in Reading. After eight very happy years there they arrived in Beauchamp Lane, Cowley.

Sharon says that with so much to think about from day-to-day she hasn't time to be a political person. She has been a foster-mum to 17 children, looking and caring for each one. With a busy husband, a family, a Rectory with a large garden, endless phone calls and other parish demands, I don't think we're surprised (are we?) about the "non-political" comment.

Was there one particular person who had a strong influence in your early life?

No, two, my music teacher and our organist's wife, Gwen.

Can you remember an incident in your early life which held special significance for you?

Among us all my religious experiences, I remember that when I was about twelve I went to a Roman Catholic renewal service in the Cotswolds. It was an interdenominational service and it gave me a sense of the love of God on a more intimate level than ever before.

For what sort of child were you?

Quiet, solitary, self-contained.

Has your Faith been with you since childhood or did you find it later in life?

It has always been there. My mother was a member of the Pentecostal Church and I think I just "inherited" it. My godfather was a very spiritual person.

Sharon!

Which period of your adult life has given you the most satisfaction?

Now, I think. My family is all around me. I have three lovely, healthy, children with all that the happiness that they bring. Katie and Mark are also very precious to me and to God.

Are there any aspects of modern life which you dislike?

Crime. I just find it debilitating for those at the receiving end of it. Those who are the victims are so very hurt.

What is best about life today?

The amazing advances in medicine. It is all in the very early stages but I do like the possibility of a eradicating disease through gene therapy.

How to use like to spend your leisure time?

Sessions at the gym, reading (at the moment childhood development works as I am studying for an NVQ in the care of children and young people), cross-stitch, baking, and, my escape, keeping on top of the garden.

What makes you laugh?

I have a dry sense of humour. I love a play on words and also has some of the absurd things people unwittingly say.

If you had a holy or magic wand what would you change?

I would like people to respect each other more. Basically mutual respect is the answer to so many aspects of life.

If you were not doing what you are doing now what would the alternative be?

I'd either be a nun, a midwife, or a professional musician!

What do you hope to be doing in 10 years' time?

I find that dangerous ground because over the years I have found that it is God who has plans for me. I'm sure I shall still be the Rector's wife, assisting in parish ministry, and, when the children are older, have more time to make cups of tea and cucumber sandwiches! (*Apologies to any feminists!!!*)

