

Celebrating the Light

With Candlemas on 2nd February (but kept the following Sunday) we reach the end of the Incarnation Season. Or at least those of us who didn't start Christmas in October and collapse on St Stephen's Day do! While the commercialised majority have already started the great Season of Languish which lasts until the long weeks of Barbecue Time, we have kept our Cribs in Church and continued to celebrate the Epiphany, the Baptism and now the Presentation of Christ in the Temple . The Liturgical year is wonderful at Festivals, opportunities to rejoice and party, without having to win a competition or spend a fortune. The old name, Candlemas, reminds us of the special cause for joy in this last celebration of Christ's infancy: that he is "*a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and for glory to thy people Israel*". Jesus is brought to the Temple (Luke 2, 22-39) and offered as the first-born for priestly service by his parents, who are also performing the ritual thanksgiving for the purification of the mother (or parents, as Luke has it) after childbirth. (the feast is also known as the Purification of the

BVM). His arrival is welcomed by the pious, elderly Simeon and Anna in Simeon's words beginning, "*Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace,*" the Nunc Dimittis of Evensong. So we see the parts played by three generations in the proclamation of the Word, in the life and mission of Christ's body, the Church: the Infant Jesus himself rejuvenating the world, the parents faithfully leading and preparing him, and the old, who recognise the Truth in their wisdom and point to the way ahead. As the Holy Family is thus extended, we are presented with an image of the family that is the whole Church, where all are valued, indeed essential. We see also that the Holy Spirit acting in Simeon brings not the comfort of complacency but a hunger for God's saving peace. We pray that the Holy Spirit will likewise energise those who are being presented at the 'temple' for confirmation this month, and that He will fortify and enthuse the whole parish as we look towards the presentation of our new Rector.

Lorne

Chronicle



From the Registers

Funerals

18 December	Percy Small
2 January	Isabelle Mary O'Leary
4 January	Kenneth Hounslow

Baptisms:

14 January	Callum Shane Leech
21 January	Tia Curtis-Clarke
21 January	Jay Harley Keen

Confirmation:

There will be a confirmation service on the 18th of February.



SNOWDROPS

FLOWERS + REFRESHMENTS IN CHURCH

Saturday 10th February 10am-4pm

Sunday 11th February 2pm-4pm

Saturday 17th February 10am-4pm

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

Parish Lenten Day on 3 March at St Francis

The Churches Together in Cowley are putting up an exhibition depicting the Stations of the Cross in the Templar's Square Shopping Centre. The churches have been given large canvases on which to paint one of the stations of the cross and these will be hung in the Centre on Palm Sunday. A worship service will follow and the paintings will be on display throughout Holy Week.

On Saturday, 3 March, from 10.00-3.00 there will be a Parish Day to worship and pray together, get to know one another better and to produce our two paintings: Jesus' taking up the cross and Jesus being stripped of his garments. Please set aside the day to join in and do let Beth know if you would like to be part of the planning this event!

House groups during Lent.

The home groups in the parish will meet weekly to take part in a York Course for Lent.

The courses are well-structured and very stimulating. The group listens to a CD which contains the comments of a number of contributors from across denominations and traditions within the church. After listening, there is a chance for discussion and prayer. This year, the course is called, "Learning from Wilberforce: Building a Better World". For more info see www.yorkcourses.co.uk or talk to someone who has been in a Lent group before! Anyone is welcome to join in.

Howard Thornton : **New Team Rector**

"I am very pleased to announce that the Revd Howard Thornton has been appointed as Team Rector of Cowley. Howard is at present Chaplain to the University of Bedfordshire at Luton and before that was curate of St Mary's Luton. Before being ordained he had a career in Canada as a writer and presenter on CBC Television. He and his wife, Carol, and their family will be moving to Cowley in the summer and Howard will be instituted in the parish in July. Please pray with thanks to God for his guidance and provision and for Howard and his family as they prepare to move to Oxford."

Julian Hubbard : Archdeacon of Oxford

The Healing Ministry

We have an active lay healing team in the Parish, we offer prayer healing services, usually on the first Thursday of each month alternately at St James' and St Francis' churches. These are peaceful, prayerful services highly valued by those who attend. No one is obliged to do anything, some people receive healing prayers where they are seated, the more active come up to the altar. Others sit and pray and meditate during this ministry. The services last about an hour.

The whole process is absolutely confidential, we are all totally unshockable, the healing can be for body, mind or spirit or can be on behalf of another person. If no one comes into the chapel then the two team members pray for anyone or any situation that they know needs God's intervention. We do not practise 'faith healing', we do not have instant, dramatic cures or screaming, collapsing people, it is God's healing, delivered gently and quietly.

In St James' church we offer the opportunity of healing prayers each Sunday (10am) during Communion. Two members of the team go into St Luke's chapel - St Luke was a doctor so it is appropriate - and anyone who wishes enters the chapel after taking Communion or just walks to the chapel.

The spiritual gift of healing is given by God. We are very aware that we are passing on the healing of the Lord and are not healers ourselves. The prayer minister is transmitting God's healing to the supplicant.

Una Dean



The next healing service is at St James on 1st March at 7pm

Rosanne Interviews Chris Cole

Not once, not twice, but quite often I have heard the question, 'Who works up there?' or 'Who are they?' or 'What do they do?' meaning the folk who occupy the two small office up the stairs in St James Church Centre. I think that this month's article will provide interesting answers to those and several more questions.

Chris Cole, director of Fellowship and Reconciliation, was more than pleased when I approached him for an interview. We chatted in his office (at the top of the stairs) over mugs of tea, mainly about the amazing work done by FOR throughout the world and how he became associated with it. I also managed to persuade this very modest man to talk a little about himself. First, however, let me introduce the members of staff who work in a small office space across the landing. They are: Martha Beale, in charge of education and campaigns; Andy Treiner, international projects manager; Margaret Paton, administrator; and Maud Grainger who is with them for a year supporting their West Papua project (more about that later). Next I must explain a little about FOR.

Our Church Centre is the

association's present home in the UK. It is a totally Christian and spiritual organisation with links in over 40 countries throughout the world. In order to give more details of their work I can do no better than to quote from their own publicity:

The FOR is an international spiritually-based movement of people who, from the basis of a belief in the power of love and truth to create justice and restore community, commit themselves to active non-violence as a way of life as a means of personal, social, economic and political transformation.

The FOR began in 1914 when, on the brink of war, a German and an Englishman parted company on Cologne station with the words 'We are one in Christ and can never be at war.' Inspired by the pledge, about 130 Christians of all denominations

In other words they seek to tell the world about the many conflicts between nations and factions within a single country, to raise awareness of the causes of these conflicts and to support peace-makers wherever their work takes them. The name of one of their trustees, Norman Kember, will, I'm sure, be familiar to many

as the man who, some time ago, was held hostage in Iraq. Chris told me of his gratitude to the Iraqi mediator who was so instrumental in Mr Kember's release.

Of course their work costs money and as a registered charity, raising funds to support their various projects is a major concern. Earlier I mentioned West Papua where, I was told, that small peace-loving country is seeking to gain separation from Indonesia. To do this takes time and much patience and it is high on FOR's agenda. Their work in Israel and Palestine is vital to the stability of the Middle East as we are well aware from the news we hear from those countries. In Zimbabwe FOR peacemakers are working, particularly with very young boys to prevent their recruitment into the army. In the Sudan there is a huge task ahead to support those who have survived the recent violence so that its recurrence may be prevented. In fact the work is endless.

And how did they come to find our small Church Centre? Well, their original premises were in Northamptonshire but it was decided that Oxford would be a more central location so Chris contacted various

churches in our area. Fr Stephen felt that we might have something to offer them. Even before the Centre had been completed the two men met and the move was agreed. Although Chris and his whole staff feel very welcome they are looking out for something larger in this area. Not only would they like more office space but they want to take their extensive library out of storage.

Chris himself is a London boy, born and raised in Balham. One of a family of three he was brought up in the Roman Catholic faith and attended both Catholic primary and secondary schools. When I questioned him about those school days he grinned and told me he reckons he 'got away' with quite a lot by sitting out of the teacher's gaze at the back of the class! He did enjoy English lessons, though, and developed an intense awareness of his faith. This led him to join CAFOD while still young. As a teenager he became involved in Amnesty International and actively supported the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament going on marches and taking part in the protests. He says that he is still amazed by the committed Christians who are inspired to give everything to prevent violence and the proliferation of arms. Early in his twenties he began working for FOR in their accounts department.

One ploy which he has used was to become a shareholder of BAE Systems, the UK's largest supplier of arms and equipment around the world. This gave him the right to attend their AGM and question the Board about their ethics and policies. One answer he got from the chairman which shocked him (and, I hope, the rest of us) was [when you join us] ... 'you leave your conscience at the door'.

Chris has made himself more than a nuisance on quite a few occasions in order to intervene in the use of arms for violence to the point where he has been arrested and even spent several months in prison, so committed is he to his faith and his cause. He met his wife Valerie through FOR and they have three children, Beth (8), Claire (6) and Jonathan (4), and whom he describes as delightful. They have settled in Cowley now and are very happy here. Valerie is a teacher of children with special needs. Soon after they were married Chris felt he needed to study at university. He gained a place at Missionary Institute in Mill Hill, London, where he took and passed his MA examination in theology.

He was keen to discuss more about the work of FOR. He sees the way forward as working with other faiths; Oxford is the ideal city to

make personal contacts with these. He and Martha work with students in the Young Peacemakers Network, talk to students, schools, churches and convene conferences. He finds that many businesses are willing to meet him and invest in FOR. So, I wondered why hasn't he been to talk in our two churches?

With a smile he answered, 'Any time'.

How would you describe yourself as a child?

Bookish, I suppose, and with a strong sense of fair play.

Have you got a significant childhood memory you'd like to share?

Oh yes. There was a ban on football in our school playground because of a broken window. So after a while a group of us asked the Headmaster if we could play football again and he said 'yes'. Off we went to play but another teacher who had not heard that the ban had been lifted caught us and, despite our protests, marched us to the Head's office. 'I caught these boys playing football and they said that you had lifted the ban, is that true?' he said. 'No', said the Head. We were aghast that someone in authority could deny the truth like that. It had a huge impact on me.

Has God been part of your life since childhood?

Yes, very much so. I was

brought up as a Christian. In my early teens I went through a couple of years questioning, but by 25 I was firmly committed.

In modern society is there anything thatangers or disappoints you?

Very much. Recently the dismissal of Christian faith, such as: if you only grow up, all the problems will disappear. There is a growing suspicion of religious faith. Also the persistence of our arms trade.

Is there anything about life in the 21st century that you find positive or encouraging?

I think the internet is fantastic. We can communicate

with people all around the world.

Do you have a treasured possession?

A very good friend of ours made us, for our wedding, a beautiful calligraphy of a quotation from Corinthians:

'Eye has not seen nor ear heard what God has prepared for those who love'

Do you have a hero or heroine, past or present?

Franz Jägerstätter – a German who refused to fight for Hitler because of his conscience. He was martyred for his faith.

How do you like to spend your leisure time?

With the family – and reading good modern novels. Oh yes and music (pop), I'm a real Radio 2 fan.

What makes you laugh?

Some of the things the children say – they're just a delight.

Do you have ambitions for the future?

Both Valerie and I feel we've come home. We love this part of Oxford so I'd like to continue with the work I'm doing (if they'll have me!)

For more information about the Fellowship of Reconciliation, please see their website: www.for.org.uk

Spring holiday to Portland Bill

There will be a meeting in St James Church Centre to pay the balance of our monies for our stay at the Heights at Portland on Monday 5 March at 7.00 pm. Jim, our coach driver, hopes to be with us. New legislation require the cheques to be made out to: **St James outings savings fund**

Happy new year to you all – see you in March!

Much love to you all

Barbara and Brian
3 Hurst Bourne Avenue
Highcliffe, Dorset
BH2 34R Tel: 01425
280156



I knelt to pray but not for long,
I had too much to do.
I had to hurry and get to work
For bills would soon be due.
So I knelt and said a hurried prayer,
And jumped up off my knees.
My Christian duty was now done
My soul could rest at ease.....
All day long I had no time
To spread a word of cheer
No time to speak of Christ to
friends,
They'd laugh at me I'd fear.
No time, no time, too much to do,
That was my constant cry,
No time to give to souls in need
But at last the time, the time to die.
I went before the Lord,
I came, I stood with downcast eyes.
For in his hands God! held a book;
It was the book of life.
God looked into his book and said
"Your name I cannot find
I once was going to write it down...
But never found the time"

The late Mr Percy Small

On Sunday 10 December 2006 we heard the sad news that Percy had died the evening before in hospital after suffering a stroke the week before. Christine, Simon and Jonathan were at his side. On Monday 18 December his funeral took place in St James Church to celebrate Percy's long life, for all he had achieved and for the love and care he had given to his late wife, Maud and his daughter Christine, grandsons Simon and Jonathan, their wives Stephanie and Emma and two great grandchildren, Grace and Ayden.

I felt very privileged to be invited by Christine to give a tribute at the service to Percy, and I now quote some of the tribute I shared with his family, friends and colleagues at the celebration of life service for Percy.

Percy was a man with a deep-rooted faith and was a member of St James Church family for over 50 years; he mainly attended the 8.00 am Sunday service. He was a quiet gentleman and all who knew him were touched by his courteous, wise and generous nature. He was a member of the Thursday home group, often after quiet and deep thought he would ask challenging questions and give us new insights in our discussions. He loved reading poetry and his Bible which he did daily and was very knowledgeable. He would recall his time when he was a choirboy at his local church in Buckinghamshire where he grew up.

From the age of 19 years Percy worked in the Zoology department of the University of Oxford for 47 years and rose to the post of chief technician and was awarded an honorary MA on his retirement for his dedicated work. This was a memorable day which included his family. They had lunch with the Vice Chancellor at Hertford College and the award ceremony took place at the Sheldonian.

He was exempt from joining the armed services until 1943 when he joined the Royal medical corps and served in Belgium, France and Germany. He was away from home when Christine was born and did not see her until she was 3.5 years old. Christine remembers asking her mother who this strange man was who arrived at their home with a rucksack on his back.

Christine recalled his television appearance and the excitement the family felt waiting to watch him. He was assisting a scientist from the Zoology department in a scientific programme. Alas, they were disappointed when they only saw Percy's hands on the screen.

Percy was a very caring man. He nursed his wife Maud at home for 7 years with Alzheimer's before she died; they had a long and happy marriage and celebrated their golden wedding in 1989.

We offer our condolences to Christine and her family who said a sad farewell to a loving husband, father, grandfather and great grandfather. Percy's pride and joy was watching his two grandsons Simon and Jonathan grow up, get married to Stephanie and Emma and welcome the arrival of his two great grandchildren Grace and Ayden.

We who knew Percy, both at St James and friends and neighbours, have lost a unique and respected friend.

Gwen M. Ranklin

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>)

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 – <i>Church Centre</i>
	10.00 am	Toddler Service – <i>St Francis</i>
	12.00 pm	Eucharist – <i>St James</i>
	12.30 pm	Tuesday Lunch Club – <i>St James</i>
	2.30 pm	Friends of <i>St Francis</i> – <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>
Saturday	9.15 am	Morning Prayer & Breakfast – <i>St Francis</i>

Day Off

Lorne and Michael can be contacted in the evenings and at weekends. Beth can be contacted during the day as well.

PARISH DIRECTORY

TEAM RECTOR (DESIGNATE):

Revd Howard Thornton

TEAM CURATES:

The Revd Lorne Denny

35 Stapleton Road

Headington

Tel: 768009

email: Irdenny

@btinternet.com

The Revd Beth Spence,
45 Mill Lane, Marston

Tel: 249665

email: beth.spence

@ntlworld.com

The Revd Dr Michael
Spence,

45 Mill Lane, Marston

Tel: 249665

michael.spence

@law.ox.ac.uk

NON-STIPENDIARY MINISTER:

Rev Canon Mark Oxbrow 13

Annesley Road Oxford OX4

4JH 01865 461953

markoxbrow@aol.com

LICENSED LAY MINISTER:

Eric Uren

Tel: 770696

CHURCHWARDEN:

Norah Shallow

Tel: 765199

DEPUTY WARDENS:

Margaret Martin

Tel: 718532

Pat Chung

Tel: 773792