

Waiting for a light

A long time ago I was exploring a cave in the Rocky Mountains of Alberta with my best friend. We had entered the first cave that was 30 or 40 feet in height and 20 feet across. The light from outside illuminated a large ice stalagmite in the centre of the cave. When some other explorers came down through a narrow “hallway” into our cave they told us of other caves further on and showed us the way. My friend and I clambered up and squeezed through the narrow chute to the next cave and were delighted to find another area, even larger, strewn with boulders and interesting rock formations. Not long after we got into the cave our light went out. Everything was darkness. It was a darkness you could feel. It shut you in and made you realise you were trapped.

“What are we going to do?”

“All we can do is wait for someone else to come. Without a light we’ll never find our way out.”

And so we sat, waiting. After a while – 10 minutes at most – someone came and helped us on our way. We were so glad to see them.

Light and the life of Christ are closely tied. When the ancient Simeon sees the baby Jesus, he holds him in his arms and says that here is the one born to be “a light for revelation to the Gentiles.” (Luke 2:32) After Jesus has been tempted in the wilderness and is about to begin his ministry, the words of the prophet remind us, “the people who sat in darkness

have seen a great light, and for those who sat in the region of the shadow of death, light has dawned.”

At the Easter Vigil, Confirmation and Baptism service (7:00 pm at St James Church, Saturday 11 April) we will dramatically relive that moment when light and hope returned to the world, when Jesus rose and defeated death. Jesus had died on the cross; the disciples thought that all was lost; then suddenly on Easter morning, when the women returned from the empty tomb, the greatest news in all history began to spread. Jesus is alive. He’s alive. Because he lives, you and I can know forgiveness and a real life worth living. I hope you will come and support those being baptised and confirmed at the Easter Vigil.

In our country, we face darkness and uncertainty. Each day there is news of the growing economic crisis. We hear of the ways in which 200 years of damage to the earth is building up and significantly affecting life on earth. In our personal lives we might face sickness, frailty, or family problems.

But there is hope. The Light has come into the world. Through prayer and fellowship we can support and encourage one another. We can know the power of God in our lives. And we can offer to those who don’t have it, the hope that comes through knowing the risen Lord.

Howard

Chronicle

April 2009

Editors' Letter

Dear Readers,

Although it will still be Lent when you receive your April Chronicle, we hope it is not too soon for Carol and me to wish you all a wonderfully joyous Easter. We know that this past winter brought its problems, with slippery surfaces causing accidents, cold and 'flu bugs whizzing around, and problems getting about, but as I write, the spring has arrived. The blossom on the trees looks more gorgeous than ever, there are daffodils in the gardens and baby lambs in the fields, and the sun feels much warmer. Hooray!

Congratulations to our friend Brian Tidy on completing an amazing fifty-five years of dedicated service as the organist at St James. When he had reached fifty years both the Oxford Mail and The Door remarked that he must hold a record, certainly in our area. Yet he's gone on to add yet more years to his tally. Many, many thanks, Brian.

I promised last month to let you know how the parish Snowdrop Festival went, despite the snow, Darwin Day, and the closing of

Beauchamp Lane by the gas company. Well, when I tell you that from donations and the sale of church guide booklets and cars, we made the magnificent sum of £117.12 you will see how successful it all was. But let us not count success purely in monetary terms. Visitors came from far and wide, and commented on how beautifully the church is kept, the lovely flowers, the friendly welcome, and the gorgeous home-made cakes. The Children from St James' school gave a hand-bell concert, bringing with them a host of families and friends. Brian (who else?) gave an organ recital, and visitors loved it. It's impossible to thank everyone individually, so to all those who did so much to help this year, please accept a big "Thank you!"

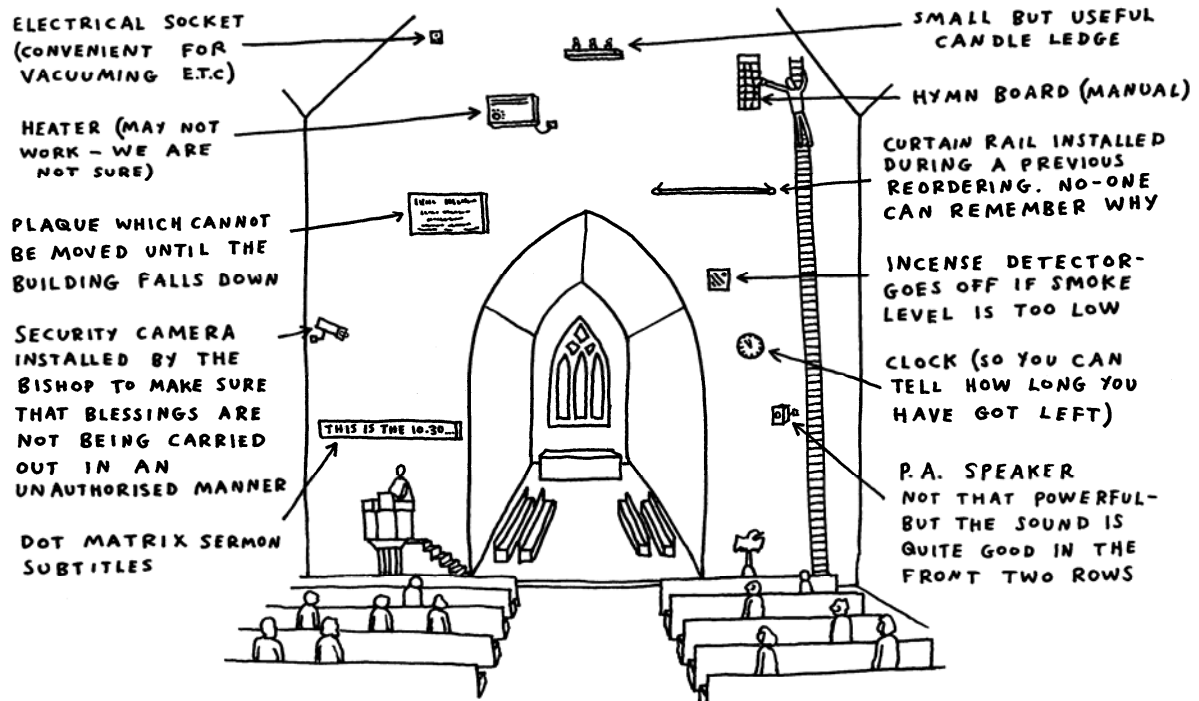
Finally, could I recommend that you read your magazine carefully this month as there are lots of things going on in our amazing parish, and you won't want to miss a thing!

God bless.

Rosanne and Carol

FIXTURES AND FITTINGS

THAT YOU MAY HAVE OBSERVED DURING THE SERVICES



CartoonChurch.com

This CartoonChurch.com cartoon originally appeared in the Church Times and is taken from 'The Dave Walker Guide to the Church',

God in my life

Being the sort of young and enthusiastic Christian that I am, one might expect that my prayer-life and relationship with God are pretty good. I currently work for the Anglican churches in Cowley and Littlemore, and will begin training for the priesthood in September. My daily routine is centred around a rhythm of services and prayer as much as it is the more world demands of work and domestic necessities. Despite all of this, I have recently felt as though my relationship with God has grown dull – not often do I feel the sparks fly and the celestial lights shine when I pray!

Obviously it would be very unusual indeed if my life-long relationship with God was nothing less than a constant high. Like all relationships, one's relationship with God will have its highs and lows – times of great joy and closeness, and unremarkable times when one may feel distant or even forgotten.

This Lent, however, I have had a personal break-through that promises to snap me out of my current spiritual lull. The break-through is simple... Jesus was a human-being! Yes, Jesus was fully God (I don't want to take anything away from that) and fully human; he was born of a woman, he was raised by a human family and he struggled and suffered like any other human-being might.

What is significant about this Lent for me is that I have rediscovered this human side to God (Jesus) that is all too easily forgotten. I prayed around the story of Jesus' time in the wilderness, during which Satan tried to tempt him to fall under his influence. I used art work as an aid to my prayer and tried to better understand and to get to know the character of Jesus. This grand realisation, however, was grand only in its modesty. As

I looked into the eyes of Jesus (figuratively speaking) I saw not the awesome power of God, not the majestic glory of the King of Heaven and Creator of all. Instead, I saw Jesus alone in the wilderness, tired of his ordeal, depressed and downhearted.

Jesus is not just a distant heavenly miracle-working monarch who made a short trip to earth some 2000 years ago; Jesus and I feel the same feelings – joy and sadness, confidence and doubt. By the end of Lent I hope from this to have developed a renewed and closer relationship with Jesus. Jesus Christ is not merely a judge, or a safety net in case it all goes wrong; He is our companion as we walk through this life and he knows what it is to live as we live. Jesus walks alongside us and knows our high and lows not just from an academic understanding, but from his own personal experience.

Myles Owen

Dear Editors,

Having just read the Chronicle I was dismayed to find that the information given for Holy Week and Easter contain certain misconceptions which one might find in a secular newspaper. I do not expect them to be expressed in a church publication.

The most important Sunday in the year is given special recognition and called Easter Day. This is the beginning of the season of Easter. Easter Saturday this year is on April 18th. Saturday, April 11th is Holy Saturday, the day between Good Friday and Easter Day.

Yours sincerely,
Thelma Telling

Editors' response: Thank you for pointing this out, Thelma. These terms came about for a reason and it's important that clarity is maintained. I hope that we won't let this error slip through again!

ROSANNE INTERVIEWS

Joy Harbison

Each month as I interview a personality for the Chronicle I count it a pleasure and a privilege to do so. I hope this comes over in the finished articles. This month I was especially delighted to interview Joy as she and I are contemporaries. “So what?” you may ask. Well, she and I are close to each other in age; we both grew up in the Oxfordshire countryside, attended small village schools, were teenagers during the ‘50s, married within a year of each other and each gave birth to a first baby daughter in the same year. In fact those same daughters were in the same class at secondary school. So “Memory Lane” had nothing on us and we had a high old time swapping reminiscences the other afternoon.

You only have to think of her name to realise the happiness she brought to her parents when she was born. Joy is the eldest of a family of four. Her home was a cottage in Cuddesdon village. Her father worked in farming and her mother was a housekeeper at the theological college. Her mum and dad were fully involved in the life of the village church. Mum played the organ and dad served on the PCC for many years. Joy’s love of instrumental music certainly harks back to those early days. She began her schooling in the tiny two-teacher village school and she has many tales of those years, mainly happy ones. By the time she was eight a new baby had been born into the family, her brother, Michael. Later came sister Val-

erie and around the time that Joy was leaving school to make her way in the world baby brother Robin was born. They are still a close and mutually supportive family.

For some reason she can’t explain Joy, as a child, had a fear of all things medical and clinical. The school dentist was a nightmare and the regular visit of the school nurse (“Nitty Norah”) filled her with panic – more of that later. However, she loved and respected her head teacher who travelled each day to school on a bus from Dorchester to a bus-stop two miles outside Cuddesdon. The indomitable lady then walked in all weathers and in the dark of winter to the village, taught her class for a full day and made the return journey each evening.

At eleven it was Joy and her peers who had a long walk to secondary school in Garsington. She reckons it was at least two miles each way across the field paths and lanes. It was during these daily walks that she learned to appreciate the changing seasons in the countryside. Secondary school lessons covered the basic subjects plus needlework and cookery for the girls. A love of sewing has remained with her. One of her hobbies is tapestry work. Very importantly, cookery lessons taught simple dishes and good baking.

Her teenage years were happy too. Cuddesdon College had tennis courts within its grounds which were made available to local youngsters so

on many a summer evening she and her friends would take advantage of this. There was a youth club in the village hall and of course there was the Saturday evening bus to the cinema in Oxford. The one and only bus home left Gloucester Green at 10 pm sharp so one often had to miss the last few minutes of a long film (wondering how it ended) and there was never time for a “canoodle” in a doorway with a boyfriend – just imagine the walk home if you missed the last bus! The local village dances were another source of great fun.

On leaving secondary school Joy studied at the Oxford and County Secretarial School in Beaumont Street. During her two-year course she learned shorthand and typing and she told me how grateful she still is to her hard-working mum who managed to afford the fees so that she would have the skills needed to find a good job. This she did, aged sixteen, when she went to work in the office of the Pressed Steel sales department. She recalls that her wages were £3, £1 going to Mum for her keep and most of the rest saved in the Trustee Savings bank.

Whilst working at Pressed Steel Joy met John, her first real boyfriend. He worked in the traffic office. For some reason (!) his job required him to bring telex messages to the sales office quite frequently. Their courtship following their first date to the cinema lasted

four years. Last year they celebrated their golden wedding anniversary. Their first married home was a caravan in Botley where, though life was quite tough, they were very happy. It was so cold in winter their water would freeze. There was no electricity so ironing was done with a flat iron and their music came from a wind-up gramophone. But they had lovely neighbours, had parties, and it was great fun. They continued to cycle each day to work in Cowley.

John is a pianist and for many years played with the Manhattan Dance Band for local dances. He eventually became the band leader. Joy enjoyed the dances but once their daughter, Sally-Ann, was born, each New Year's Eve she would have to see the year in alone because John and his band were in demand. It took thirty years before they could celebrate the New Year together.

After a few years they had saved up enough for a deposit on the house in Lytton Road where they still live. Andrew, their son, was born and apart from a little part-time job, Joy became a full-time mum. It was at this time that she began to worship at St James church and also at John Bunyan Baptist Church where she is still a member of their ladies' group. To her delight both Sally-Ann and Andrew developed a love of music and played with the Jubilee Brass Band as children. Andrew continues to follow the band despite his busy life running a large decorating firm. Sally-Ann emigrated to New Zealand after university, where she married and has presented Joy and John with three grand-

children. They are proud of the fact that their daughter is a world authority on DNA analysis. Of course they miss her but modern technology helps them to keep in touch. They also have the great consolation of having Andrew and his family nearby.

These days Joy is busier than ever with her fellowship at John Bunyan, helping here with the church cleaning, and making her tapestries. When our lovely Seashells toddler group was in jeopardy, until May Morgan came forward to take the helm, it was Joy who volunteered to keep things ticking over. For which many mums, dads and carers, to say nothing of the toddlers, are very grateful.

How would you describe yourself as a small child?

Very nervous. I was always outdoors, round the fields, swimming in the local river with a gang of friends. Of course I was expected to help mum with household things.

Do you have a memory of childhood you'll never forget?

When the school nurse visited I used to ask to go out to the toilet. I would jump the wall and run across the road to home. Mum, of course, marched me back. It's funny but I hated everything to do with nurses, doctors and hospitals.

Has God always been part of your life?

Yes, definitely, even as a tiny child. We were all brought up that way.

What do you think of mod-

ern society?

I think compared to children today we were happier then. They have too much and don't appreciate things. As older people we have a better standard living that our parents and grandparents.

What disappoints you about life today?

Vandalism and the diabolical language young people use.

What do you like to do in your spare time?

I go to my tapestry group. I attend the Donnington ladies group and Women's Institute once a month. I do church cleaning. And then there's sport on TV. I especially love watching tennis and football.

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

When my children were young.

Do you have a very special, treasured possession?

My prayer book, which I received at school when I was about nine or ten.

If you could change something in the world, what would it be?

I would love the medical world to find a cure for all kinds of cancer. And to have Sally-Ann and her family closer.

Do you have plans for the future?

To take another trip to New Zealand, and hopefully in about ten years time to move to a small bungalow with a much smaller garden.

KEEPING IN TOUCH

Spring is a time for us to do all those extra sprucing-up tasks that the sun highlights as it shines through the windows. Suddenly you see corners that need a bit more attention, rugs that need an extra shake or even a shampoo, cushion covers that could do with a wash, picture frames that need a kindly duster. With the best will in the world, even if our elderly house-bound friends have a weekly cleaner, these are often more tasks than can be fit into the normal schedule.

I know it's tricky to mention these little areas (depending how well you know the elderly person you visit) but it might be just what they have been waiting for. I'll leave it to you how best to deal with it, but a bit of spring-cleaning does us all a power of good, and it might bring some extra sunshine into someone's life. Now, over to you!

Also, a cheerful Easter greetings-card popped through the letter box will be a reminder that you want to keep in touch.

A Devotional Performance at St Francis Church

At St Francis Church we are blessed to have some very talented musicians. On Wednesday, 8 April, two singers and five instrumentalists will present a devotional performance of the medieval "Stabat Mater" set by Giovanni Battista Pergolesi. Hannah Seward, formerly the organist at St Francis, will pay a return visit to be organist for the evening.

You might think you're not familiar with the work, but you may have heard it, or parts of it, from movie scores (even the sci-fi THX 1138.) More modern performances have ranged from traditional to jazz improvisations and even hip-hop.

The Stabat Mater is a Latin hymn possibly written about 1300 but certainly well known by the end of the century. It is based on Simeon's prophecy to Christ's mother, Mary, that a sword would pierce her soul.

The text represents the kind of religious poetry then popular in Italy. The opening expresses a deep compassion for Mary as she sees her son suffer on the cross. The poet prays to Mary that he might share her grief and suffer with Jesus for as long as he lives, and asks her to pray for him. It closes with him praying that by the Cross he may be granted a place in paradise.

The Pergolesi setting of the Stabat Mater was written in about 1735 and became the most frequently published single work of the 1700s.

This devotional performance will include music and prayers, and is expected to last for about an hour. We hope you can join us, and make the Stabat Mater part of your final week of Lent.

Easter Eve at St Francis

Easter Eve at St Francis will begin at 8:30 in the church's Altar of Repose. This part of the service may include music and a reading of Psalm 119. The Easter Vigil will begin at 10:00 in the Upper Room, with prayer, readings and psalms/canticles. At midnight when Sunday begins, the liturgical colours will be changed in the church. Fasting and prayer will continue.

At dawn, preparations will begin for the Service of Light, and when the sun rises (time of sunrise for this day is 6:13) the service will begin.

This part of St Francis Church's Easter commemoration will finish with breakfast at 8:30.

Saint of the Month St George

April 23 is the day people commemorate St George, the patron saint of England, by wearing in their button-hole a red rose, the national flower.

“Not a lot of people know that;” only one in five actually. And more than a quarter of England’s people don’t know who is their patron saint is, despite the fact that it has been St George since the 14th century or perhaps even earlier.

Depictions of our patron saint show a knight carrying a shield with a red cross or a banner with a red cross, usually seated on a horse, and almost always he’s killing a dragon.

But who was he, and what did he do to be made a saint? There is virtually nothing about St George that is known for certain. If he in fact was a real person (and some dispute even this,) so many myths and stories have sprung up that nothing can be taken as fact.

Everything about Saint George is dubious, so the information below should be taken as mythical rather than real. It is thought that he was born in what is now Turkey in the third century, to Christian parents. After his father’s death, he moved with his mother to Palestine, and eventually became a Roman soldier. Emperor Diocletian was torturing and killing Christians, and in about 303 AD George, in protest, resigned his post of Tribune. He was put in prison and tortured, but remained true to his Christian faith until the end of his days, which came soon, by beheading, at Lydda in Palestine. It is said that the emperor’s wife was so impressed by his faith that she also became a Christian, and found her husband was no more merciful to his relations when she too was executed.

Richard the Lionheart took up the emblem of St George, a red cross on a white background, and it came with him to England in the 12th century. His soldiers wore it on their tunics.

St George was adopted as the patron saint of many countries and cities, and more recently, of the Scouts. He is also invoked by farmers and workers in the fields, horse riders and saddle-makers, archers, cavalry, chivalry and soldiers

Locally, Dragon Hill just below the White Horse at Uffington is purported to be the place where St George slew the dragon. The dragon’s blood is said to have fallen on a particular piece of ground, where now no grass will grow.

Ding-dong merrily on high!

I know it's not the time for Christmas carols but just you wait till Christmas comes this year, and listen out for the chimes ringing out from the tower of the parish church! What a brilliant response we have had to our request for trainee bell-ringers: some people who have been longing for years to "have a go," and some who are a little more tentative but are willing to try. We have more than enough for training to begin. The first lessons are already underway.

If, however, you are still wondering whether to try your hand, you will be most welcome. Don't be shy; you will be made very welcome. It won't be perfect to begin with (nothing ever is) but will practice it will come. We have yet to determine which evening will be made our regular practice, but further information will be available soon.

I did wonder whether I ought to warn the folks who live in the immediate vicinity of the church that their peace may be disturbed for a few weeks. But no, they are going to be the lucky ones when our peal of bells rings out in harmony.

This month our branch has several interesting items to report.

First, we are pleased to say that as a result of our annual bring-and-buy sale in January we have been able to support the national "Make a Mother's Day" campaign. This encourages members to give ethically to families in situations of deprivation throughout the world, thus giving help and hope to countless mothers. Simple items like mosquito nets head a list which includes a goat to provide fresh milk. We have sent funding for a "birthing pack" for a mother who would otherwise have nothing with which to care for herself and her new baby. Our small offering is accompanied by our prayers that she and the little one will thrive.

Last year we held a "Big Brew" afternoon in support of Fairtrade and the work of Worldwide Mothers' Union. Unusually for us, though it was not a disaster, it was not in any way a success. This year we are trying something different. After our St George's Day lunch (more of that in a moment) 23 are asking for a minimum donation of 50p for coffee and Fairtrade chocolate to round out the meal. We are sure that all who attend will be happy to support this.

Now to the lunch – this will be our third venture to celebrate our patron saint, and it will be held in the Church Centre on Monday, 20th April at 12:30 pm. For a cost of £2, a two-course lunch will be served. Visitors are most welcome. Our speaker will be the Mothers' Union literature representative who will bring items such as greeting cards for sale.

If you wish to attend the lunch, please inform Pat Chung at St Francis or Rosanne Butler at St James before 17th April. And just for fun, we ask guests to wear something red.

Another forthcoming fund-raising event that you might like to note in your diary is our "Wine, Cheese and Poetry" evening on Saturday, 16th May. We are repeating this by popular request. More details in next month's Chronicle.

It sounds as though our meetings are inclined to be somewhat frivolous – not so! Our Lent meeting, in March, was a quiet, contemplative afternoon.

Mothers' Union News

Favourite Things

Friends who take the time to call,
a door that's open wide to all.
A room that holds the morning sun,
and laughter when the day is done.
The joy that each day brings.
These are my favourite things.

Annual and other Parish Meetings

This year the Annual Parish Council Meeting, when we hear about the progress within the Parish of Cowley over the last 12 months, will take a slightly different form. It will be held after morning services on Sunday, 19th April at 12:30 pm in the Church Centre. A buffet lunch will be available to be taken alongside the business of the meeting. This means, of course, that you won't have to rush away to prepare a meal.

On the following Sunday 26th April, our Church Committee meetings will be conducted in a similar way. St Francis' will be held in the church, and St James' in the Church Centre.

Do try to attend these meetings if you can. There will be elections of church wardens, members of the PCC, Deanery Synod representatives and Church Committee members. We also get to hear and ask questions about parish affairs and finances. The running of the parish depends on the goodwill of some wonderfully willing volunteers, and it is encouraging for them to see the support of other members of our congregations.

Wanted: plant pots, growers, helpers and buyers!

We're having a Plant Sale at St James Church Centre on Saturday, 16 May, from 10 am until 1:30 pm. Also on offer we'll also have refreshments, cakes, jams and preserves, books and gardening tools. The proceeds will aid Parish funds.

Please let me know if you're interested in growing plants for the sale. Remember, people will be looking for bedding plants, herbaceous perennials, indoor plants, and all sorts of vegetables and salads – tomatoes, peppers, chillies, lettuce, herbs, pumpkins, squashes, courgettes, beans, cabbages, sweetcorn, etc.

There will be sign-up lists in the two churches where you can sign up to help on the day. We'll need people to sell, make cakes, set up, serve refreshments, man the stalls and clear away. My particular plea is for all those unused pots hanging around in your greenhouse, garden or shed! We growers can recycle them and fill them with plants for sale.

Tell your neighbours and friends – or better still, bring them along and make a day of it.

Contact Joan Coleman, 95 Crescent Road, telephone 777865, or email ojcoleman@btinternet.com

Thank you.

Joan

Friends of St Francis

The Friends of St Francis meet in St. Francis Church at 2.30 in the afternoon, on the second and fourth Tuesday of the month. We have a short prayer meeting during which each person says a very short prayer if they wish (there's no pressure on those who want to remain quiet.)

We then study a bible reading. This is led by Molly Oliver or Diana Pope and most members of the group take an active part in the wide-ranging discussions. We finish with prayer.

Then comes the time to share news, have some tea and gossip. We share the tea money with the Cameroons project that Thelma supports, and our flower fund for giving flowers to those who are not well. We do have men at the meetings, so don't be shy. We would be really pleased to have other people join us. We started as a house group that became too big. It will take rather a lot more people to make us too big for the space at St Francis – so come along!

Diana Pope.

From the Parish Register

Baptisms

8 March 2009
Ashlea Higham
Mabel Instone
Joseph Morgan

Weddings

14 March Kimberly Beedles
and Stephen Davies

21 March
Diane Martin and Gershom
Miles Whiteman

Funerals

4 March - Esther Hooper
16 March - Joan Treffler

Russian Almond Easter Cake

5 egg whites
pinch of salt
3 oz sugar
6 oz ground almonds
½ tablespoon grated orange rind
1 tablespoon orange liqueur
2 ounces flaked almonds

Preheat the oven to 375F, 190C, Gas Mark 5. Line a shallow 8-inch cake tin with non-stick silicone paper.

Beat egg whites and salt to meringue texture (soft peaks.) Add sugar very gradually, whisking between each addition. Then whisk to form stiff peaks. With metal spoon fold in ground almonds, orange rind and liqueur. Pour mixture into prepared cake tin and sprinkle almonds on top. Bake for about 30 minutes until a skewer inserted in the centre comes away clean.

Allow to cool a little, and then remove from tin. Peel off paper. Serve with whipped cream. I must admit I've never tried this recipe but I really must have a go. Doesn't it sound gorgeous? – **Roseanne**

Milk Bottle Top Recycling Thelma

Telling at St Francis is beginning a new fund-raising venture, collecting plastic milk bottle tops to recycle them for charity. The tops must be clean – that is, washed and free from any inserts or labels. A collection point will be available in each of the churches, where you can put your milk bottle tops. The tops will be used to make plastic slides and other garden toys for children – and to make more

EASTER STORY COOKIES

To be made in the evening on Holy Saturday

4 ounces whole pecans
1 teaspoon vinegar
3 egg whites
pinch salt
7 ounces sugar

Preheat oven to 300 degrees. (This is important – don't wait until you're half done with the recipe!)

Place pecans in the plastic bag and let children beat them with the wooden spoon to break into small pieces. Explain that after Jesus was arrested, He was beaten by the Roman soldiers. (Read John 19:1-3)

Let each child smell the vinegar. Put 1 teaspoon vinegar into mixing bowl. Explain that when Jesus was thirsty on the cross, He was given vinegar to drink. (Read John 19:28-30)

Add egg whites to vinegar. Eggs represent life. Explain that Jesus gave his life to give us life. (Read John 10:10-11)

Sprinkle a little salt into each child's hand. Let them taste it and brush the rest into the bowl. Explain that this represents the salty tears shed by Jesus' followers, and the bitterness of our own sin. (Read Luke 23:27)

So far, the ingredients are not very appetizing. Add

7 ounces sugar. Explain that the sweetest part of the story is that Jesus died because He loves us. He wants us to know and belong to Him. (Read Ps. 34:8 and John 3:16)

Beat with a mixer on high speed for 12 to 15 minutes until stiff peaks form. Explain that the colour white represents that in God's eyes, those whose sins have been cleansed by Jesus are pure. (Read Isa. 1:18 and John 3:1-3)

Fold in broken nuts. Drop by teaspoonfuls onto a cookie tray covered in greaseproof paper. Explain that each mound represents the rocky tomb where Jesus' body lay. (Read Matt. 27:57-60)

Put the cookie sheet in the oven, close the door and turn **OFF** the oven. Give each child a piece of tape and seal the oven door. Explain that Jesus' tomb was sealed. (Read Matt. 27:65-66)

GO TO BED! Explain that they may feel sad to leave the cookies in the oven overnight. Jesus' followers were in despair when the tomb was sealed. (Read John 16:20 and 22)

On Easter morning, open the oven and give everyone a cookie. Notice the cracked surface and take a bite. The cookies are hollow! On the first Easter, Jesus' followers were amazed to find the tomb open and empty.

CLEANING PRAYERS

Monday – Wash Day

Lord, help me wash away my selfishness and vanity, so I may serve You with perfect humility through the week ahead.

Tuesday – Ironing Day

Dear Lord, help me iron out all the wrinkles of prejudice I have collected through the years so that I may see beauty in others.

Wednesday – Mending Day

O God, help me mend my ways so I will not set a bad example for others.

Thursday – Cleaning Day

Lord Jesus, help me to dust away the many faults I have been hiding in the secret corners of my heart.

Friday – Shopping Day

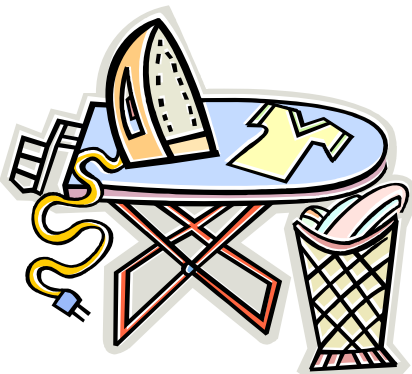
O God, give me the grace to shop wisely so I may obtain eternal happiness for myself and all others in need of love.

Saturday – Cooking Day

Help me, my Saviour, to prepare a big batch of Christian love and serve it with the clean, sweet bread of human kindness.

Sunday – The Lord's Day

O God, I have prepared my house for You. Please come into my heart so I may spend the day and the rest of my life in your presence.



The Stone across the Tomb

The story ends, no, begins, with a stone across
A tomb filled with sorrow and incredible loss.
A stone as smooth and plain and white
As the sheet of paper on which I write.

Or was it dark, a sombre granite grey,
The one they chose at the end of that day?
Or honey-coloured, yet hard and icy cold
Like the limestone hewn from a distant, lonely wold?
And what might be chiselled on its face to explain
A story not of loss but unfathomable gain?

Begin with a resurrection of mystical power.
Continue with doubt, grief, then hope begins to flower;
Forgiveness, charges of tasks needed to be fulfilled;
Ascension, gazing heavenward on a far lofty hill.
And so the story on the stone is written longer
Of persecution, execution, tenacity and faith still stronger,
Of brotherhood stirred by the breath of God's love,
Of generations of saints that evil could not move.

The tombstone we see now in our mind's repose
Is one written bold and large with the deeds of those
Who have carried the message of love and peace
From that first Easter Day till time shall cease.

Rosanne Butler

We all had a hand in it

A testimony in three voices
i. "My cousin was dealt a winning hand this morning.

They chanted the syllables of our blackened name and gave him an amnesty he did not deserve. His lips curled in a sneer, but I saw him shudder."

ii. "I asked a young man if he knew the prisoner. He seemed to take offence although I was only making conversation. He pushed me aside. 'I do not.'

Over the noise of the crowd, birds began to stir in the trees and a rooster crowed."

iii. "I took the man's right arm. It was muscular and brown with dust except where each hair sprang from the skin in a tiny circle of sweat.

He stretched out all his fingers, then curled them closed. The tendons of his inner forearm stood in high relief as if to make a way for the tenancy of the long square spike I held in my left hand."

Carol Thornton

Sunday Services

ST JAMES' CHURCH, BEAUCHAMP LANE

8.00 am Holy Communion
10.00 am Sung Eucharist
"Church at the Centre" every fourth Sunday
Also Sunday Lunch : every second Sunday

ST FRANCIS' CHURCH, HOLLOW WAY

10.30 am Parish Eucharist

Mid-Week Services & Meetings

Monday	8.00 am	Morning Prayer – <i>St James</i>
	2.30 pm	Parish Mothers' Union – <i>St James (3rd Mon)</i>
	5.30 pm	Evening Prayer – <i>St James</i>
Tuesday	8.00 am	Morning Prayer – <i>St James</i>
	10.00 am	Seashells Toddler Group : <i>St James</i>
	12.00 pm	Eucharist – <i>St James</i>
	12.30 pm	Tuesday Lunch Club – <i>St James</i>
	2.30 pm	Friends of St Francis – <i>St Francis (2nd & 4th)</i>
	5.30 pm	Evening Prayer – <i>St James</i>
Wednesday	8.00 am	Morning Prayer – <i>St James</i>
	5.30 pm	Evening Prayer – <i>St James</i>
Thursday	8.00 am	Morning Prayer – <i>St James</i>
	5.30 pm	Evening Prayer – <i>St James</i>
	7.00 pm	Eucharist – <i>St Francis</i>
Friday	8.00 am	Morning Prayer – <i>St James</i>
	5.30 pm	Evening Prayer – <i>St James</i>

Easter Blessing

May the Lord bless you this Easter time:
Bless you with faith, guard you in doubt;
Bless you with hope, uplift you in despair;
Bless you with love, keep you from fear;
Bless you with peace, calm you in trouble;
Bless you with mercy, help you forgive;
Bless you with joy, comfort you in sorrow.
So your heart may rejoice in the Risen Lord.
Amen.

The Parish of Cowley office in St James Church Centre is open :

Tuesdays 1-3:30 pm,
Fridays 9-3:30 pm,
and by appointment.

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Ministry Team Telephone:
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parishofcowley@hotmail.co.uk

Team Rector

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Cowley Rectory
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Oxford OX4 3LF
Howard has Friday as his day off.

Team Vicar

Revd Susannah Reide
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Susannah has Monday as her day off.

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