

Communications

Something happened in the Thornton household last week: an old dog learning new tricks. Over a year ago I registered on *Facebook*, having been told that it was a great way to keep in touch with people. You can “talk” with your friends, tell them what’s going on in your life, and hear about theirs. That sounded good but it was a bit more complicated than I expected and I never really made a go of it.

However, having my name listed as a member meant other people who recognised my name sent me emails to tell me they wanted to be included on my list of “friends,” so that once they were confirmed we would be able to contact each other easily.

A few days ago my son David helped me log on to *Facebook*, and confirmed those people who’d requested to be added. I now have 61 Facebook Friends and more in the works. I can view pictures of Friends, I can give them a *poke* (a reminder that I’m still around), send a message, or discover mutual friends we might have. It all seems quite good and reminds me how communications have evolved.

Years ago one of my ancestors was a “Pony Express” rider and carried letters from one city to another as quickly as was possible by a man riding a good horse. The British pioneered the Royal Mail and an amazingly quick and efficient letter delivery system.

I was looking at some mementoes from my parents’ wedding. The way to communicate quickly then was with a telegram. Or you could telephone, but only if you had enough money. Now calls to our family in Canada cost next to nothing. Better still, we use Skype and a webcam to talk and see each other live over the internet, for free.

If you want to get a message to a large audience, a newspaper editorial

or article works well; radio or television are faster, and now there are internet broadcasts to a potentially world-wide audience.

The best communications convince the heart and the mind. They change lives, give wisdom, and open minds. The ultimate communicator is God – who has written his message in the sky, in Creation, in our hearts and minds. God communicates with us through his word in the Bible, through the Prophets, through prose, poetry, analogy, historical record, stories and truthful statements of his love for us and his concern for all humankind.

And He came in the person of Jesus Christ, and walked and taught and laughed and cried with us. He was the greatest Teacher who ever lived, and his prayers were the greatest ever spoken. His disciples knew him as the “Living Word” and no word has ever communicated more effectively. When he died and rose again, he promised the gift of God the Holy Spirit, who came to open our hearts and minds to the reality of God’s presence in our lives.

Today the Holy Spirit continues God’s work of communicating with us. There is power in God’s communication: power to change our lives, to help us become everything God intended us to be. Jesus said, “My sheep listen to my voice and I know them and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, no one will snatch them from my hand” (John 10:27).

How wonderful it was to see two adults baptised and four confirmed into the family of God at our Holy Saturday Service. It is a sign of God at work, communicating in the world today his message of love and hope.

Howard

Chronicle

May 2009

St James Church Annual Congregational Meeting

held in St James Church Centre – Sunday 26 April 2009 – 12:30

I. Howard welcomed everyone to the meeting and conducted opening prayers.

2.30 members were in attendance. Apologies: June Smith.

Minutes of the Annual Congregational meeting 2008

Regrettably, these could not be traced; it is feared that none were taken.

Election of members of St James Church Committee

Nominations were received for :

	Proposed	Seconded
Margaret Martin	Lesley Williams	Chris Woodman
Rosanne Butler	Lesley Williams	Margaret Martin
Trudy Jones	Margaret Martin	Chris Woodman
Beverley Hughes	Rosanne Butler	Rose Neale
Doug Treadwell	Gwen Fancutt	Francis Chandler
Dave Stanley	John Goodwin	Dave Stanley
Joy Harbison	Erme Clarke	Chris Woodman

They were unanimously elected, en bloc.

In addition, elected members of the PCC serve on the Church Committee

Gerald Ives	Church Warden
Joan Coleman	Parish Treasurer
Una Dean	Deanery Synod Representative
Chris Woodman	Deanery Synod Representative
Lesley Williams	
Nathan Phillips	
Choy Lai	
Clare Edwards	

Election of Deputy Church Warden

Margaret Martin was unanimously elected and applauded for her long term faithful work for St James.

There was a **request for volunteer 'Assistant Deputy Wardens'** to learn the trade during the coming year.

Thanks were recorded to Alan Howell – Chief Sidesperson – for his cheerfully accomplished role in coordinating the service rota.

Church Centre report Chris Woodman

The garden is now well established. Profuse thanks again expressed to John & Catherine Gawne-Cain. Doug Treadwell has taken on the task of coordinating its maintenance.

There have been hiccups with the heating system & with cleaning; both hopefully solved in the short term.

St James and the Parish have held some great and happy functions.

Ideas are welcomed for future events & for long-term and one-off lettings, to increase income.

Unanimous thanks were voiced to CW for her management of the centre & the catering team – and thanks to all of them, too.

Rector's report

Richard Chand's Anglican Asian Church may join us – a service at 1.00 in Church, followed by refreshments and fellowship in the Church Centre; arrangements have yet to be finalised.

Members were encouraged to speak to Howard or PCC/Church Committee members if

Elections

The following people were elected at the Annual Parochial Church Meeting on Sunday 19 April 2009

Members of the PCC

Jenny Bushell
Joan Coleman
Clare Edwards
Patrick Gilday
Choi Lai
Nathan Phillips
Lesley Williams

Deanery Synod Representatives

Pat Chung
Una Dean
Diana Pope
Christine Woodman

Wardens

Gerald Ives
Norah Shallow

they had any concerns/questions which should be raised at meetings.

Further thanks to the Chronicle team: Rosanne Butler, Carol Thornton, Philip Hind.

The Parish Office & administrative team are establishing routines: Howard, Elaine and Susannah.

Church @ The Centre on the fourth Sunday of the month is established and successfully reaching new families.

The third PCC Vision morning will be on Saturday 23 May. It should result in an outreach plan for the Parish.

St James Patronal festival will be celebrated on Saturday 25 July, hopefully to include a party for J & C G-C, who will return from their new home for it.

Any other business: comments, questions

UD told us about receiving positive feedback on the welcome received at St James by participants on the Ride & Stride

CU all money raised at church events should be given to a Christian Organisation/charity, rather than other good causes **ACTION** : this will be taken to the PCC

MM thanks recorded to Howard for his leadership and coping with such a steep learning curve

GF please would all readers/preachers speak into the microphone

CU will the t-loop ever work properly? It needs expensive professional attention, for which we must budget or seek contributions

CU can money be donated to the CEF instead of carrying food to church? Bank account details will be supplied in the Chronicle &/or speak to Margaret Weller

Date of next Annual Congregational Meeting: To be confirmed

The meeting closed at 1.30 pm with the Grace.

Letter from the Editors

Dear Readers,

What an exciting, action-packed month we in the parish have in store, to say nothing of the eventful April that has just gone. In our last letter we wished you all a joyous Easter, and we think we can confidently say that for most of us it was. Our services were glorious, our churches were beautifully decorated, and we sang the lovely Easter hymns with gusto. We certainly know how to rejoice.

Talking of singing with gusto, we are delighted to report that the Cowley Proms, so very successful last year, are scheduled for 26th September 2009. As in last year's concert, some "Last Night" traditional songs will be included and the first half, though different, will be no less exciting. Tickets will be on sale in July, so watch out for them.

We have at last, we hope, reached a solution for the escalating cost of producing your parish magazine. How would you like to reserve your own copy (with your name at the top) month by month for a whole year? This is how it will work. For all ten copies – remember there are double issues in July and December – we are asking just £3 (30p per copy) to be paid in August to your church distributor. Stella Atkins at St Francis and May Morgan at St James have agreed to collect the subs. Each month, from September, your copy will be in church for you and those people confined to home will have theirs delivered. We will run this scheme for a year to see how it works, in the hope that parish funds will not have to suffer through the popularity of the Chronicle.

Finally, you will, we're sure, be delighted to hear that twelve would-be campanologists are now learning to ring the bells in St James – Wonderful. It just shows what can happen when an idea is launched in our parish magazine. Any suggestions for what next? See you at the plant sale!

God bless.

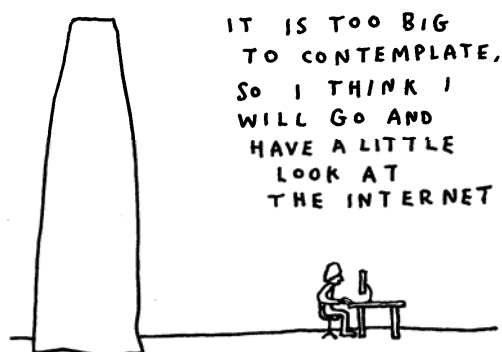
Rosanne and Carol

Roll up for the Bumper Spring Plant Sale!

Our parish treasurer, Joan Coleman, has given me the challenge to get every one of you, your friends, relations and neighbours to pack into the Church Centre on Saturday, 16th May between 10 am and 1:30 pm to buy loads of things you probably don't realise yet that you want. Or maybe you do! How will you be able to resist the huge selection of excellent plants to grace your gardens, tubs, and window boxes?

But there's more – much more. On sale will be gorgeous home-made preserves, nearly new items, some excellent garden tools, and a wide range of books. Refreshments will be available to enjoy at the sale, and there will be cakes to buy and take home. So do come along!

Joan would like to hear from anyone prepared to help with setting up tables, serving, or tidying up on the day. She lives at 95 Crescent Road, and her telephone number is 770 865.



CartoonChurch.com

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

Mothers' Union News St George; India; and Wine, cheese and poems

Our monthly meeting for April took the shape of a lunch party for members and friends, to celebrate our patron saint, St George. This is the third consecutive year that we have held our St George's Day lunch so it is becoming something of a tradition. The two-course lunch followed by coffee and chocolates was enjoyed by 25 members and guests. The diocesan literature representative, Valerie Flook, brought booklets, greetings cards and other Mothers' Union material and also joined us for lunch.

The May meeting will take place on May 18th with a talk on Northern India.

On Saturday, 16th May, our branch will hold another wine, cheese, and poems evening. This is in response to the enthusiastic comments following a similar event last year. The evening will begin at 7 pm, and is open to all who enjoy poetry accompanied by a good glass of wine (or two!) and supper. The cost of the evening will be £5 if you don't bring a poem, but only £3 if you do. If you do not wish to read out your chosen poem, why not bring along a friend to read it for you? If you are a poet yourself, do bring one of your own creations. We had some marvellous compositions at our last evening, and look forward to another lively and interesting event.

This is a poem written by Gertrude Wood, a lady Howard knew in Canada. She and her friend Violet Copeland published a little volume entitled "Wood Violets" when Gertrude was in her 100th year. It included this poem. (Johnny-jump-ups are another name for violets.)

Queen May

The birds were singing their merriest lay.
Then quickly came in lovely May
To be crowned the Queen of Spring that day.
Dressed in a leafy pale green gown
She came for a flower to form her crown.
Peonies blushed in the dewy dawn
And dandelions flecked the green of the lawn.
At the foot of the tree smiled Johnny-jump-ups
And tulips were flaunting their colourful cups.
A breeze that was tossing the daffodils
Set lilacs dancing in wild quadrilles.
Each flower blossom seemed a gem
But May, while smiling at all of them,
Chose violets for her diadem.

Saint of the Month Bede

One of the saints who are remembered this month is the Venerable Bede, who is now commemorated on 25 May. In about 672/3, around the time England had become Christianised, Bede was born on the lands of the monastery of St Peter and St Paul at Wearmouth and Jarrow, in Northumbria. We don't know much about his family background. The name probably derives from the Old English *bēd*, or prayer. If this was the name given him as a baby, it may mean that from his birth, his family had planned on his entering the clergy. When he was only seven years old, he was entrusted to the care of Benedict Bishop, who had founded the monastery, and he spent the rest of his life there, with a few visits outside. When he was 19 he was ordained deacon, and made a priest at 30.

The monastery at Jarrow had an excellent library and was renowned as a centre of learning. Bede corresponded with scholars, bishops, and abbots throughout the country who were sources of further information.

Of himself Bede wrote, "I have devoted my energies to a study of the Scriptures, observing monastic discipline, and singing the daily services in church; study, teaching, and writing have always been my delight." Indeed he became known as the most learned man of his day. He was careful always to record the sources of his information, making his writings more reliable than many others. Bishop Boniface wrote that by his scriptural commentary, he "shone forth as a lantern in the church."

Bede is best known for his *Historia ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum* (History of the English People). It is a history of Britain to AD729, including how the Celtic peoples were converted to Christianity up to the third century, the invasion of the Anglo-Saxon invasion of the fifth and sixth centuries, and their conversion by Celtic and Roman missionaries. The work is still our primary source for understanding the beginnings of the English people and the advent of Christianity. His commentaries on the Pentateuch and other books of the bible were influential. He was the first person to write scholarly works in the English language, and translated the Gospel of John into Old English, completing it on the day of his death.

He was also an influential author writing of the natural world, mathematics, music, astronomy, and grammar. His work on time influenced the church in its task of calculating the date of Easter. His use of something similar to *anno Domini* was influential in the AD dating system becoming widespread in western Europe. He wrote homilies, and hymns and other verse.

Bede died of natural causes, in his cell at the monastery on Ascension Day in the year 735. He was buried at Jarrow, but his remains are now in Durham Cathedral.

On 13th November 1899 Pope Leo XIII declared Bede a Doctor of the Church, the only person from Britain to achieve this designation. His feast day was designated as 27 May, but it has since been moved to 25 May.

Rosanne Explores the Emmaus Centre

This month my interview has taken a very different turn but as most of my readers know I'm never one to sink into a rut. So be prepared for an article with a three-fold thrust: a philosophy, a building and an interview with one of the people who work there.

This all began with a chat with the Archdeacon at Susannah's welcoming party at St Francis. He and I got into a conversation about the Chronicle, and as a trustee of Emmaus Oxford he suggested that my readers would like to learn more about it. Having waited several months for the phone call he promised me (well, I guess he is a busy chap) Carol and I discussed the possibility of my taking the initiative and walking through the Emmaus Centre's front door.

Before I go any further I'd better explain where the centre is located. Next door to the United Reformed Church, opposite the police station, a building has been growing throughout the winter. Because it was hidden behind huge hoardings with a couple of flags flying, for one, have been most intrigued to see what would eventually emerge. About a month ago all was revealed and the entrance emerged, graced with the poshest cycle rack in Cowley. The front garden has been landscaped and it all looks very smart.

So it was with some trepidation that I mounted the steps and was about to ring the bell when the door flew open and a young man greeted me with a big smile. His name is Steve and he agreed to meet me a few days later.

As the history of the Emmaus movement is outlined separately, I will tell you about what is happening here in Cowley. First Steve explained about the people who live there. To become a Companion, as the residents are called, requires an interview with the Community Leader who makes it clear from the outset that the Centre is not a hostel but a home. Initially each person must sign off from social benefits and become self-supporting. This usually means working for an Emmaus project. Naturally this is a huge challenge for those who have lived on the streets or in hostels for the homeless and have relied on a weekly benefit, so much so that some just walk away.

However for the eight Companions now living there, it has been a chance to start a new life, which is just what each of them was looking for. Eventually the Centre will offer a home to 24 people. The main project that employs them is a second-hand furniture superstore in Westlands Drive on the Northway Estate. This is run by Carl who used to

manage the OCVA Furniture Recycling Project. This has now been transferred to Emmaus. The concept is superb – the store receives donations of unwanted, reusable furniture, electrical appliances and other household items from anywhere in Oxfordshire. These are then restored or mended and sold to the general public at very reasonable prices, with reductions for those on benefits. From what I can gather there is a huge warehouse full of excellent items for sale. This is where the Companions come in, as they learn skills in furniture restoration, maintenance electrical goods, and driving the vans, all for a regular wage. Without the store many of these items would be taken to landfill sites.

Emmaus has an allotment where several of the Companions have begun to grow their own produce. There is also the hope that as the number of residents grows, local firms and businesses will offer employment.

The Centre is a lovely building with a large, well-equipped kitchen, dining room, laundry, TV room, games room and library. Each person who lives there has his own en-suite bedroom. Apart from an evening meal cooked by a volunteer lady and one of the Companions, each resident looks after himself. The cleaning and laundry, all

breakfasts and lunches, even tidying up and planting the back garden, are their responsibility. In other words, the Centre is indeed a home, designed to give each person a chance to make a new start in life, no matter how long it takes.

The building is a shell furnished from the second-hand store. It feels lovely and new but rather empty. The games room has a half-size second-hand snooker table and a few chess sets. They are looking for some suitable board games to make the room more inviting.

There is a TV lounge with a television set and sofas, but no cushions, no pictures on the walls, and only the odd lonely pot plant. The library is a room in the roof with nothing in it. They are about to install bookshelves but have not a single book. I asked Steve what kind of books would be welcome, and he told me that several of the residents have academic degrees, so history, biographies, and such would be suitable, alongside some good novels. Every part of the house is spotlessly clean and cared-for. I expect you might already be thinking, "I've got _____ that might be useful." I know I am, and I have already designated some surplus items to donate.

Emmaus Oxford is not without its supporters. Terry Waite, President of Emmaus UK, came to the site last March to dig for the

first foundations (with a bulldozer of course!) and in June Camilla Parker-Bowles will come to officially open the Centre. One of its trustees is our own Archdeacon. However I have a feeling that the warm kindly people of our parish might want to be supporters too.

Finally, what of Steve James, who showed me round? Well, he seems tailor-made for his position as Community Leader. For over a decade he has worked in hostels for the homeless, mainly in Oxford. About seven years ago he moved to Reading to do similar work. He has a personal philosophy that the way to help people turn around their broken lives and gain self-respect is through employment. When he heard about this post, he was sure it would be right for him. His interview was rigorous, involving amongst other things a day of observation. As a member of staff he has a variety of responsibilities including the security of the building. House rules completely ban the use of drugs. The Companions may

invite visitors to their home; there is even a visitors' guest suite where friends or family members can stay at weekends. Obviously there is a close check on visitors in order to keep the Centre safe.

It is clear that Steve has an easy relationship with those who live and work there; at least that was my impression as we walked round. I found the whole experience remarkable and quite unexpected. As I shook hands to say goodbye, I promised that I would ask our readers if anyone has any unwanted fishing tackle, as a couple of Companions have expressed an interest in angling, and he is keen to help them get started. Any offers?

If you would like to contact the Emmaus Centre, their phone number is 01865 402073 (or just ring their door-bell like I did!)

To contact the Second-hand Superstore, ring 763698 between 9:30 am and 3:30 pm, Monday through Friday, or email furniture@emmausoxford.org.

History of Emmaus

The first Emmaus Community was founded in 1949 by the Abbé Pierre, Father Henri-Antoine Groues, a former member of the French Resistance. As an MP, he fought to provide homes for those living on the streets of Paris. One night, Georges, a homeless man, tried to commit suicide in the Seine. He had been released after 20 years in prison and found his family unable to cope with his reappearance.

When he was brought to the Abbé Pierre, he was not just offered a place to sleep. The Abbé told Georges about the homeless mothers who needed help. Would he join in

his mission to help them? Georges became the first Emmaus Companion. He helped build temporary homes for those in need, first in the priest's own garden and then wherever land could be obtained. Later Georges said, "Whatever else he might have given me...I'd still have tried to kill myself. What I was missing...was something to live for."

In 1951 Abbé Pierre resigned as an MP to devote himself to fighting poverty and homelessness. Without his salary to pay for the 18 men of the community, the former MP put on his cassock and medals and toured the restaurants of Paris, asking for donations. But the Companions were outraged. They said that begging compromised their self-respect. So to raise the money they needed, they collected things people no

longer needed and sold them on. The concept was born: Companions who run self-supporting businesses, with the profits going to those in greater need.

In the brutal winter of 1954, angered by needless deaths, Abbé Pierre appealed to the nation. The public responded and support flooded in. Across France, Emmaus communities opened. As the Abbé spread the word, communities were established in Europe, Africa, the Far East and South America.

In 1990 the UK's first Emmaus Community opened near Cambridge. They continue to be established here, based on the founding principles of acceptance, sharing, self-respect, and working for others in greater need.

The Parish of Cowley Helping the Poorest of the Poor. **Christian Aid Week – 10-16**

For more than sixty years Christian Aid has provided relief to those hit by disaster, helped people help to themselves out of poverty, and spoken out against injustice.

Christian Aid is driven by the gospel of good news to the poor. It is inspired by the vision of a new earth where all people can live in justice, peace and plenty. They are passionate about, and experienced at, helping people in need.

60 years on and the world isn't getting any fairer. Children in Gaza are going to schools pockmarked with bullet holes. Parents are selling their daughters in marriage to earn the money so the family can survive a drought in Afghanistan. Life expectancy for women in Zimbabwe is now just 34 years – yet just a decade ago it was 65. The income of some multinational companies exceeds that of entire countries.

So the work of Christian Aid hasn't stopped. They plan to carry on tackling the causes of poverty. They want to support local organisations that deliver real, practical change. Christian Aid aims to work to free the world from poverty and injustice now – not just in the future.

The Parish of Cowley has a long tradition of supporting the work of Christian Aid. Christian Aid Week is 10-16 May. Please get involved with our campaign. We'll be going door to door giving information and asking for money for Christian Aid. It's our chance to do something to help poor people throughout the world – it's an opportunity for each of us to make a difference in the lives of people who are hungry, without hope or help. Please do something to help those who have so little.

News from Church Cowley St James Primary School

In Church Cowley St James Primary School we had a visitor whose name is John Daniels. He is a poet who talked about and showed us some poems that he had written and translated from French into English. Mrs. Watt, the teacher who booked him, said that it was good that a retired man is still enjoying poems and helping children to enjoy his poetry too. The poems were fables, because they were about animals and they had a moral. Here is a fable he translated from French. The children really loved it. **Jamie**

The Eagle and the Rabbits

One day an eagle stood on a rock
watching some rabbits playing around,
running and jumping up and down.
The eagles stared at them, then spoke:

*How silly you are! How feeble and small
with your bobbing tails
and floppy ears
and twitching noses
and rabbit fears.*

*You run away
or play all day
and live underground
and dive down your holes
at the slightest sound.*

*You're no example
to mankind at all.*

*Whoever heard of a flag with a rabbit on it?
Or a rabbit-badge on a soldier's bonnet?*

*The rabbit's a symbol, I'm sorry to say
of cowardice and running away.*

*While an eagle (and he lifted up his beak__
is as powerful as you are weak.*

He rustled his feathers and spread his claws.
I rule the sky and make the laws.

*Look at the nations that have adopted me
as their effigy –*

*Imperial Rome had eagles as their sign
and Prussian helmets an eagle design.*

And Russia (when the Czar was there)

a two-headed eagle and a bear.

And America to this day

has a bald-headed eagle to show the way.

I embody all that's strong.

It matters not whether right or wrong.

The rabbits listened, then ran away.

They had thought of another game to play.

But not long after the eagle's oration
came a drastic change in the situation.

The eagles began to disappear
from the rocks and mountains and air.

Some were hunted, some lost their land
as towns and cities began to expand.

Pollution came and choked the air.

The eagles became exceedingly rare,
while the homely rabbits, though still afraid,
jumped and played

and spread their families far and wide
through the countryside.

So you see, although the bunny

didn't appear on helmets or flags or money,

his race survived

and stayed alive.

So it's possible to be a rabbit for peace
and still increase,

when the eagles of war

soar no more.

John Daniel

from *Animal Fables*

Cowley Local History Society

On 17th May at 8:00 pm the Cowley Local History Society will host an illustrated talk by Henrietta Leyser entitled, "Edward the Confessor and Westminster Abbey." The meeting will be held at the United Reformed Church, Temple Road, and the cost is £3. A membership to the society can be had for £12 (concessions £10) and is available at the

