



Church and Village

News from St Mary's Church

Issue 4 - Feb/Mar/Apr 2020

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A Message from the Vicar.

Wow, wasn't that fast: 2019 and Christmas have finished and now it's a new year and a new decade! All of a sudden we are in Epiphany taken from the Greek 'epiphaneia' which means manifestation – the experience of sudden and complete realisation. I have had these but they are rare. For us in the church it is a period that coincides with the arrival of the Magi to visit Jesus in the stable. It is the time of revelation that Jesus is indeed the Son of God – and our Saviour. Jesus the King prophesised in the Old Testament, and made incarnate as a cosmic game changer – Jesus our Christ as our Lord. The feast of Epiphany is celebrated on 6th January – it is also the twelfth and last day of Christmas. So that's where we are in – Epiphany.

Recently I've been doing some thinking. This follows something said to me in a pub by a wedding photographer. He told me that he loved his job: it was brilliant and exciting, a service to a couple and a community. Without thinking, I glibly replied that I find wedding photographers rather nauseous – I explained that it didn't seem to matter how reasonable I was about letting photographers get on with their business, somehow they always seemed to want to complicate my business, the



business of marrying the couple. My comments of course weren't very thoughtful, to a wedding photographer – but to his credit he tried to defend his position by telling me that weddings were why I was there, that weddings kept me in business. This isn't even nearly true, and it's funny that this bloke viewed me like that.

This idea about business is interesting though. I asked him to elaborate. I asked him to define business, what did he mean exactly by business? I think the photographer thought I was just one of those cranky Vicar types who needs to get a life. But this idea of church being business is rather misinformed and sad. But it's a good question: what is St Mary's business, and why is the church here in this place?

Luckily, thinking about that question I had an Epiphany – because I do know, really I have always known, what my and the business of any church is. It is to proclaim and witness to the life changing, destiny changing Gospel of Jesus Christ. I am here to do this, you are here to do this, our church is most definitely here to do this – wherever, whenever and however and by whatever means it has at its disposal. When we stop doing this we will no longer be here.

I realise that this isn't always a popular business to be in, especially in this day and age – it can make you a little tedious to those who don't want to be constantly reminded that Christmas, for instance, is actually about the business of Jesus.

Jesus, the greatest human being to have ever lived, and Jesus who as the Son of God came to Earth to proclaim His Father's favour to all those who believe in Him. This is my business. This is the business of anyone calling themselves a Christian. This is the business of all of us.

Matthew 11.15 and 28 – 30 Jesus said to them 'Whoever has ears let them hear. Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.' Listen, all you who have ears – Jesus Christ is Lord!

Church Heating

Now that we have a fully working heating system, a big thank you has to go to all those involved in the heating project over the last few years, especially to Gordon Wenham and James Mossop as my predecessors as chair of the Estates Committee. We are especially grateful to all those who have so generously supported the project both financially and practically. Lastly, thank you to Tradecraft Construction Ltd., who completed the work with very little disruption to the church and kept everything tidy along the way – no mean feat considering that some of the dust pre-dated me!

Colin Revell, Church Warden & Estates Committee Chair.

Servers and Acolytes

Question: What is the difference between a server and an acolyte?

Well, although the labels are often used interchangeably, a server assists the priest at the altar while an acolyte is a torch or candle bearer. We were very pleased to welcome two new acolytes, Etti and Seb, in January – they performed their duties confidently for the first time on the 12th and we trust that, as they become more familiar with the role, they will become servers assisting the priest at the altar during the Eucharist.

St Mary's has always been blessed with a band of loyal servers and acolytes who have carried out their special ministry of faithfully supporting the clergy during services.

Their numbers, however, have decreased in recent years and we would love to recruit some more to join Etti, Seb and the other servers.

If you would like to volunteer, or merely find out more about what is involved, please contact Derrick (tel: 525742), Hilda (tel: 511706) or speak to Jean or Colin, the churchwardens, after any service.



Cheltenham Street Pastors



In December 2019 Cheltenham Street Pastors celebrated their 10th year of Street Pastoring in Cheltenham, welcoming members of the public to view our 'Safe Space', a converted horsebox that was funded in part by one of our own congregation. When Street Pastors are on duty, we use this as a refuge for vulnerable people – it is a place of safety where we offer a listening ear and any other support that they might need. The three Street Pastors from St Mary's (Heather, Melanie and Diana) spent the afternoon meeting and greeting the public, working alongside the Rev Sir Les Isaac OBE, the founder of Street Pastors in the UK. This special day continued at Cambray Baptist Church where a Service of Thanksgiving was held. Many dignitaries joined us for the service, including the Bishop of Gloucester, the Lord Lieutenant, the High Sheriff of our county, the Mayor of Cheltenham, Alex Chalk MP and Police Commissioner Martin Surl. Les Isaac gave an entertaining address entitled 'The virtues of being a sinner' and ten new Street Pastors were welcomed. If anyone reading this article would like to know more about Cheltenham Street Pastors or about our team of Prayer Pastors, please contact Heather Anderson-Paine (email: cbtcheltenham@hotmail.co.uk) or leave a note for her in the pigeonholes inside the church.



Regular Events and Services

Sunday Services	8:00am Holy Communion (said) 10:00am All Age Worship with Communion 2nd February, 1st March, 5th April 10:00am Parish Communion 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th Sundays 6:30pm Choral Evensong	Church
Monday to Friday	9:00am Morning Prayer 5:30pm Evening Prayer	Church
Tuesday	7:30pm Bell Ringers' Practice	Church Tower
Wednesdays in term time	12:00noon Open the Book	CKJS
Thursdays in term time	12:00noon Open the Book	Glenfall School
Thursday	10:15am Little Fishes - a service for pre-schoolers and their carers 11:00am Holy Communion (CW Order 2)	Church
Friday	9:30am Church Flowers 2:00pm Happy Circle 7:00pm Choir Practice	Church Parish Centre Church
3rd Saturday each month	9:30am Churchyard clear up from March to October	St Mary's churchyard

For more information about any of the above events, or for other services and events at St Mary's Church, please see the parish website at [www.stmarysck.org.uk /WP/church-life/calendar](http://www.stmarysck.org.uk/WP/church-life/calendar) or contact the Parish Office (see back cover for details).

Dates for the Diary



2nd Feb	Presentation of Christ in the Temple (Candlemas) 8:00am Holy Communion (CW Order 2) 10:00am All Age Service with Communion – Air Training Corps Sunday 6:30pm Full Choral Evensong	Church
9th Feb	3rd Sunday before Lent – Usual services	Church
16th Feb	2nd Sunday before Lent – Usual services	Church
23rd Feb	Sunday next before Lent – Usual services	Church
25th Feb	10:00am – 12:00noon Pancake and Coffee Morning in the Parish Centre	Parish Centre
26th Feb	Ash Wednesday 8:00am Holy Communion with Imposition of Ashes 7:30pm Sung Eucharist with Imposition of Ashes	Church
28th Feb	7:00pm Lent Course – Introduction	Parish Centre
1st Mar	1st Sunday of Lent (also St David's Day) 8:00am – Holy Communion (CW Order 2) 10:00am – All Age Service with Communion 6:30pm – Choral Evensong	Church
22nd Mar	Mothering Sunday 8:00am – Holy Communion (CW Order 2) 10:00am – All Age Service with Communion 6:30pm – Choral Evensong	Church
29th Mar	5th Sunday of Lent (Passiontide begins) – Usual services	Church
2nd, 9th, 16th, 23rd, 30th March	7:30pm Lent Course Sessions in the Parish Centre starting at	Parish Centre

5th Apr	Palm Sunday 8:00am – Holy Communion (CW Order 2) 9:45am – Palm Procession from Shopping Precinct to St Mary’s followed by 10:00am – All Age Service with Communion 6:30pm – Music and Readings for Palm Sunday	Church
6th Apr	Monday in Holy Week 7:30pm Stations of the Cross	Church
7th Apr	Tuesday in Holy Week 7:30pm – Celebrating the Seder (Passover)	Church
8th Apr	Wednesday in Holy Week 7:30pm – Taizé Service	Church
9th Apr	Maundy Thursday 11:00am – Holy Communion 7:30pm – Maundy Mass with washing of feet	Church
11th Apr	Good Friday 9:15am – Good Friday Liturgy 12:00noon – Three Hour Devotion	Church
12th Apr	Easter Day 6:15am – Dawn Service	Vicarage Garden
12th Apr	Easter Day 8:00am Holy Communion (CW Order 2) 10:00am Parish Communion 6:30pm Full Choral Evensong	Church

Churchyard Cleanups will take place monthly from Sat 21st March and then every third Saturday, we meet at the church from 9am to 12 midday. All are welcome! **The Holy Dusters** need help with the regular cleaning of the church on alternate Saturdays. The next meeting is 8th February at 9am and all are welcome.

Lent Course

This year we will be following 'The Long Road to Heaven' a Lent Course based on the film "The Way" starring Martin Sheen. It explores Christian understandings of salvation and follows the journey of Martin Sheen, playing a bereaved father, and a group of pilgrims he meets as they walk the Way of St James to Santiago de Compostela. As they travel together each member of the group experiences some form of inner transformation. The course examines Biblical accounts and images of salvation – past, present and future. During the five sessions we explore the questions: What are we saved from? What are we saved for? Who can be saved? What do we have to do to be saved? How are we saved?

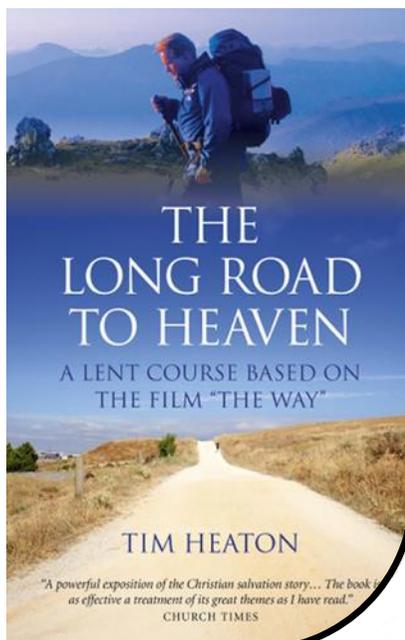
The course book 'The Long Road to Heaven' is written by Tim Heaton – cost £7.99 but cheaper copies, both new and used may be purchased online. The Kindle edition costs £4.79. Sign-up sheets are available in St Mary's.

Course Dates:

7:00 pm Friday, 28th February:
showing of the film 'The Way'
starring Martin Sheen

7:30pm Mondays 2nd, 9th, 16th,
23rd and 30th Meetings in the
Parish Centre

2:30pm Wednesdays 4th, 11th, 18th,
25th March and 1st April: at
6 Sappercombe Lane



St Mary's Parish Pilgrimage to Oberammergau

The Oberammergau Passion Play has been taking place periodically in a village in Austria since the seventeenth Century. In modern times, a re-enactment of the Passion narrative has been staged every ten years. Over 1000 villagers (including children) take part on an open-air stage with the Bavarian Alps as a backdrop. More villagers are involved in back stage support and cast members host pilgrims who attend from all round the world.

A group of 42 will be leaving Charlton Kings on 10th June to make the pilgrimage to Austria for a week, taking in the



Passion Play. This is the largest pilgrimage group we've had for some years. Our pilgrimage includes a planned walk along part of the Santiago de Compostela en route to Spain, which will remind many of us of the pilgrimage walks led by the late Bishop Michael through our diocese. Our visit to Oberammergau is fully booked but there are vacancies with other parishes through McCabe (see their website). A more traditional pilgrimage to the Holy Land is being organised by the Gloucester Diocese in September, and this can be booked directly with McCabe.

What is Eco Church?

The Eco Church award scheme was set up by a Christian conservation charity for churches that want to demonstrate that the gospel is good news for God's earth. *'The Eco Church vision is to create a vast network of churches across England & Wales as local centres of creation care in the community – shining beacons of hope for a brighter environmental future.'*

The Litter-Pick – Saturday 7th December 2019 10am – 12 noon

One point in the Eco Church survey related to church members participating in a community clean-up project. This was the inspiration for the litter-pick that took place in the precinct, the morning after the Christmas event, with some work done in Grange Field and St Mary's churchyard too..

Equipment was provided by Councillor Rob Reid and we were also able to use the parish council conference room for a refreshment break. It was a lot of fun! Fifteen volunteers came and managed to collect a large bag of rubbish between them. Photographs posted on Facebook drew positive comments – some said they would like to take part in future litter-picks.

The outreach opportunities provided by environmental projects give non-threatening ways for non-churchgoers to engage with the church.' Archbishop Rowan Williams – at the Eco Church launch in 2015.





Autumn Lecturers – A message from the Curate; Autumn Lectures. It was a great pleasure for St Mary's to hold its annual autumn lecture series where we welcomed four different chaplains to speak about their ministries. As a follow up to one of the

lectures, Graham and I went down to visit The Mission to Seafarers in Bristol docks. This proved to be a truly eye opening day. We learned much about how this organisation ministers at 200 ports in more than fifty countries, to more than 1.5 million crew members from all over the world who spend their lives travelling around the globe on freight ships.

What particularly struck me was the insular nature of the lives of those working on ships, and the fleeting and transient nature of their contact with the wider world. A normal stop over at port lasts less than twenty – four hours, during which they will unload and re-load and endeavour to be back at sea as quickly as possible: port charges for a large vessel will run into the tens of thousands of pounds for each day they are docked. As you can imagine, the ship owners put pressure on the ship's crew to be at sea again as soon as possible. Responding to this particular set of circumstances reminded me of a passage in 2 Kings 4:9 – 10 'Behold now, I know that this is a holy man of God who is continually passing our way. Let us make a small room on the roof with walls and put there for him a bed, a table, a chair, and a lamp, so that whenever he comes to us, he can go in there.' Making the transient traveller welcome each time they pass by is a Christian response.

The chaplains' facility at the port went some way further than a simple table, chair and lamp. The port authorities, understanding that ship workers need pastoral assistance and

care, provided a spacious area which the mission could use. They were delighted that a charitable mission provide this care for them. They are able to provide basic provisions including clothing and food, and significantly also Wi-Fi which means they can contact their families for free. They also have a small chapel which holds services for those who will have spent weeks at sea with no particular contact with others of their faith. In a society that currently seems to struggle with welcoming people of other nationalities into our country, this missional response echoes the words of Leviticus 19:34: 'When a stranger sojourns with you in your land, you shall not do him wrong. You shall treat the stranger who sojourns with you as the native among you, and you shall love him as yourself.'

Ship workers are often from countries where employment conditions and employment rights are significantly below that of the developed world, and abuses are common. The chaplains work closely with local authorities to ensure ship workers are treated reasonably and paid appropriately. Their intervention has seen ships held in port until workers are fairly treated, again following Christian principles. Proverbs 31:8 – 9: 'Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, or the rights of all who are destitute. Speak up and judge fairly; defend the rights of the poor and needy.'

It was a delight to be hosted for the day by The Mission to Seafarers: it proved to be both enlightening and inspiring. Seeing God at work in a busy, industrial environment amongst a multi cultural group of sojourners was a privilege and pleasure.



Christmas Events



The first of these was held on the afternoon of 6th December in the precinct (goods were also sold on the following Sunday). It was an opportunity to talk to the many families who attend the event. Many thanks to all who supported our stand by supplying, buying or selling preserves, knitted goods and Christmas goodies. Just under £400 was raised for Church funds.

Members of the Mothers' Union enjoyed a delicious Christmas meal at The Merryfellow Inn in December. At their January meeting, a Corporate Communion service led by Graham and Adrian, a new member was enrolled. We are always ready to welcome to our meetings anyone who wants to see if they would like to join this worldwide Christian organisation.

Mothers' Union has been supporting families for over 140 years and is part of an international charity with over 4 million members in eighty-four countries. Our members work at grassroots level around the world bringing hope and practical support to millions of people every year through our parenting, literacy and community development programmes and as part of the volunteer base of local churches. At a central level MU have, through the years campaigned at local, national and international levels to bring real change for



family life, women's and girls' rights and the protection of children. In Gloucestershire we have thirty-nine branches across nine deaneries and about 1,000 members working towards the Mothers' Union vision to strengthen and preserve family life and marriage by our Christian faith through practical action.

You don't have to be a mother (or even a woman) to be part of this inclusive organisation. If you would like to find out more please contact Brenda Davitt on 01242 230951.



An apology

At St Mary's we have always kept the church open every day between 9:00am and 6:00pm. Sadly, due to mischievous and bad behaviour by certain young people who have been using the church as a playground and treating it with a marked lack of respect, we are having to review opening times. Unless a formal service such as a funeral is taking place, St Mary's will now be locked on weekdays at 3:00pm and reopened shortly before Evening Prayer is said at 5:30pm. We are considering what to do about weekend opening but it may be necessary to lock the church early on those days also. This decision has not been taken lightly and it is with great sadness that we feel we have to take action, especially since we know how many people value being able to pop into St Mary's at odd times for a few minutes' quiet reflection and prayer. We do apologise to all those who, seeking some quiet space, find St Mary's unexpectedly locked, but hope that you will understand why we feel we have to take this step.

Baptisms, Weddings, and Funerals

during November, December and January

Baptisms – Bobbi Evans

Weddings –

Funerals – Jean Goffe, Marlene Francis,
Constance Tudor-Palmer, Anthony Whitmore

Father of all, we pray to you for those recently deceased. Grant to them eternal rest. Let light perpetual shine upon them. May their souls and the souls of all the departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace and rise in glory.



Fridays at Six—Wedding and Baptism Enquiries

If you wish to enquire about or book a wedding or a baptism, please come to St Mary's Parish Office on the first floor of the Parish Centre, New Street, Charlton Kings, GL53 8JJ, on any Friday evening between 6:00 and 6:30 pm in order to meet the Vicar and complete the preliminary paperwork.



St Mary's Church is located in the centre of Charlton Kings within the triangle formed by Horsefair Street, Church Street and New Street.

Contacting us:

The Parish Office is located within the Parish Centre on New Street. Telephone: **01242 224883** and please leave a message clearly stating your name and a return phone number and we will respond as soon as possible.

Alternatively, email your enquiry to **po@stmarysck.org.uk**