

St Mary's News

February 2022



Includes

Living God's Love – the Revd Tony Rindl

Bringing stillness into our daily rhythm – the Revd Josh Brocklesby

Desmond Tutu – Cath Da Costa

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Vaccination – Current Affairs Connect Group

.... and much more!

Living God's Love

I hope you will take time to read this letter where I want to introduce what we are planning for Lent and also to touch briefly on where we have got to on the Mission Action Plan.

I came across the following statement from a church website: Churches hand on tradition not by imitating or conserving what they have done before, but by sharing their experience with those who do not know it and accepting the same gift from other Christians in return.

It is now over ten years ago since Bishop Alan set the challenge of Living God's Love where we would seek to Go Deeper with God, To Transform Communities and Make New Disciples. It has been an exciting journey but perhaps one of mixed success. Living God's Love so that God's Kingdom may grow in our world. Contained within that is the vision that we might see flourishing Christ-centred communities, inspiring people of all ages and backgrounds to discover God and grow in their relationship with him and respond to his transforming love through serving others.



We are a wonderfully diverse congregation at St. Mary's, and we benefit from Christians coming from many different backgrounds and traditions and experiences of God. One recent example would be the service where we looked back over the life of Archbishop Desmond Tutu. The service was led by Cath, who herself is a fellow South African, and where Clinton preached, and members of his family also helped lead worship. In fact, all those who took part were African or of African heritage. Everything about the service was inspirational, the songs, the words of the service, the prayers, the sermon all invited us to go deeper with God and to respond to God's living Word. Clinton suggested we respond in five different ways, in repentance, in joy, obedience, good works and in our worship.

It was a good reminder that we belong to a worldwide church, one that is rich in different traditions and styles of worship. We have our own history and our own traditions and our own way of doing things, at St. Mary's, a place we call our spiritual home and where we feel comfortable to

worship God amongst friends that we see as our extended church family. Our worship has evolved over time and will no doubt continue to evolve. We know what we like, and what we are prepared to put up with, and what we dislike and sometimes like the other Sunday we are confronted with something different, which hopefully provides a refreshing change.

We are beginning to recognise through our Encounter service on the first Sunday of the month that different approaches to worship can lead to fresh insights and discoveries about God. Sometimes those different approaches have taken on a contemporary feel and at other times we have gone back to older traditions. We may feel quite challenged by not knowing quite what to expect but on the whole, we have been pleasantly surprised by what we have experienced.

Over the course of Lent, which begins in March, we will be experimenting with many different forms of worship, some will be familiar and some not so familiar. There is no hidden agenda or attempt to change our normal pattern of worship. I am a great believer that worship in a church simply evolves over time. This programme we are offering is simply an imaginative way in which we might collectively prepare for Easter and see Lent as a time of spiritual renewal. In our connect groups or a chat with friends over coffee we can simply ask questions like what did we enjoy about that service, and what bits were not so helpful and why? Did anything warm our hearts and draw us closer to God or did something jar? And most importantly what did we learn from the experience, about ourselves and about God. I am rather excited about what we might discover. I am also excited about Easter. I really am hoping this year we can celebrate without the constraints of Covid. We will have to wait and see, but however we worship and celebrate what lies at the very heart of our faith we will do so because we are Living God's Love.

At the end of February, the PCC will be meeting together with other members of the congregation to form working parties to take forward our Mission Action Plan. Much prayer and discernment has already gone into this process, and we have identified that our priorities are focussed on

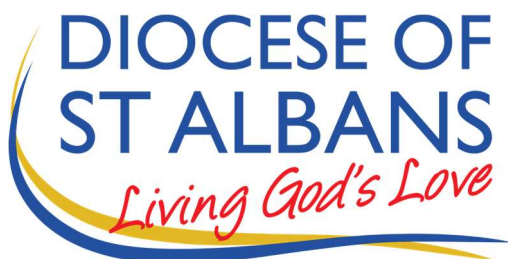


Parish, Profile, and Partnership. We know in our Parish something like 75% of the adult population is under the age of 45. We know we have to raise our Profile if we are going to be effective in serving our community and draw others into our church family. We also know that if we truly want to transform the community around us and see our town centre flourish then we need to discover how we might work in Partnership with other churches, faith groups and organisations that share our vision and heart for Watford. At the same time, we know that we have to play our part in saving our Planet, and whilst this is an obvious priority we recognise our approach to everything we do should be determined by our concern for the environment. Bringing our MAP together is an extension of what we are already doing and runs alongside all the other important aspects of church life, shaping and informing the direction of travel.

There is much for us to reflect upon over the coming weeks leading up to Easter and beyond, questions at a personal level and matters concerning the church. As we continue to take our faith seriously in living God's love, let's do so with a sense of joy and excitement, and with an open mind ready to learn and discover new things.



Revd Tony Rindl



Bringing stillness into our daily rhythm

Be still, and know that I am God.

This line from Psalm 46 has stayed with me this year. Indeed, some of you may have heard me speak about this at our Wednesday Communion service or on our Thought for the Day series online. There is something special about stillness, about taking time to be still. In fact, it appears to be so special that it is linked in the Psalm to giving us an understanding of God, it is linked to knowing God.

There are echoes of this theme in the story of God's revelation to Elijah. God was not in all the loud active things. He was not in the wind, nor was he in the earthquake, nor was he in the fire. Instead, he was in the still small voice. Life can be busy and hectic. We can rush from one thing to another, trying to fill our time with lots of different things. But within the activity we can miss things, perhaps even miss God.

I've been challenged this year by the rhythm Jesus seemed to have. He managed to incorporate times of stillness even within days which seemed full of activity. I mentioned in my Thought for the Day that this pattern and rhythm, of times of stillness and great activity, reminds me of Mo, my Dog. He is still, either sleeping or resting, for large parts of the day. He knows how to be still, and he seems to enjoy it. Or at least he seems to be completely content and at peace when he is.



But then he also knows how to be active! In fact, his times of activity are, I think, enhanced because of the stillness he has had before. His times of play, his curiosity on walks, mean when he is active, he appreciates everything, all the new smells and sights, he takes it all in. Where I might be walking and missing much, he is a hive of activity, darting from one place to another, investigating, exploring, experiencing. While I might feel tired just watching him sprint after a ball, which I've thrown for him

to fetch, he comes back every time eager to go again with an apparently boundless energy! He loves his times of being active.

And yet after it, he is happy to curl up again content and still. Now I'm not saying Mo is the perfect example for us. He is almost certainly far from it, and I can give you a million reasons why. But I do think there is something in that rhythm of times of stillness and times of activity that enhances our lives, our experiences, and ultimately our faith.

I think our modern culture has made stillness into something we feel guilty over. To be still is viewed as doing nothing, viewed as wasting time. We might even think of stillness as a form of procrastination from the job at hand. But it's none of those things if we spend it with God. Instead, it can be an act of worship, of deepening our faith. It is a time, when we can as the psalmist said know God, recognise God.



So, we should not feel guilt over stillness! Quite the opposite as I think we need to seek it out. But on the other hand, we should not indulge too much in it. Stillness needs to become part of our daily rhythm alongside activity. Just as we cannot be doing all the time, we must also not be still all the time. We need to seek balance between the two, as in that balance we might find that not only do we, like Mo, fully appreciate and experience our times of activity but we might also find we are able to recognise God more, to know God more in our daily lives.

When we have recognised God in the stillness, I think we are better at recognising God at other times too. Seeing God in the smile of another, in the kindness of an individual, in the content of a conversation. So, I encourage you to sit with the words “Be still and know that I am God” and find God in the stillness. Think about your daily rhythm and look to Jesus as our example to see that perhaps the best way of being busy and making the most of life is to ensure you have also taken time to be still and know God.

God bless,

Josh





DESMOND MPIILO TUTU (1931-2021)

“What does the Lord require of you but to pursue justice, to love kindness and to walk humbly with your God?” (Micah 6:8).

A friend has a quote up on her wall – it is by Mark Twain: "Dance like nobody's watching; love like you've never been hurt. Sing like nobody's listening; live like it's heaven on earth." For some reason when I think about Desmond Tutu, this quote springs to mind. There is much that could and has been said about this remarkable man – a man who himself has come up with many an inspiring and thought-provoking quote, but as I prepared the service for the 23rd January I was struck with that deep question: What can we learn from Desmond Tutu, as Christians, about living authentically?

Archbishop Desmond Tutu was a remarkable man – someone who did not let anything hold him back - not his short stature when he took up rugby as a high school student, nor his family's poverty when he pursued his studies post school, nor the colour of his skin in a country that at the time was intensely racist. Usually with famous people one points to what they achieved – and there is so very much that Tutu did achieve in his life: the first black South African Anglican Archbishop of Cape Town and Primate of the Anglican Church of Southern Africa; he became world famous for being not just an opponent of the apartheid in South Africa and helping to lead the movement that ended the brutal regime of white minority rule in South Africa but as a vocal activist for racial justice and LGBTQ rights around the world; once apartheid ended, he chaired South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission which sought to help deal with what happened under apartheid and thereby bring healing and peace to the

country; he wrote many books; and all this work received recognition through a range of prizes such the Nobel Peace Prize in 1984, the Albert Schweitzer Prize for Humanitarianism, and the Magubela Prize for Liberty in 1986. One only has to read what other world leaders had to say about him at his passing to get a sense of just how remarkable he truly was:

President Cyril Ramaphosa: “Desmond Tutu was a patriot without equal; a leader of principle and pragmatism who gave meaning to the biblical insight that faith without works is dead.”

The Nelson Mandela Foundation: “He was larger than life, and for so many in South Africa and around the world his life has been a blessing. His contributions to struggles against injustice, locally and globally, are matched only by the depth of his thinking about the making of liberatory futures for human societies.”

Former US President Barack Obama, who called Tutu a “mentor, a friend, and a moral compass”: “Archbishop Tutu was grounded in the struggle for liberation and justice in his own country, but also concerned with injustice everywhere. He never lost his impish sense of humour and willingness to find humanity in his adversaries.”

Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby called Tutu: “a prophet and priest, a man of words and action – one who embodied the hope and joy that were the foundations of his life...Even in our profound sorrow we give thanks for a life so well lived,”

In all of this, one gets the sense that this was not just a man who was striving for greatness – rather we witnessed a man of deep, true, passionate faith living God’s love out in all that he did with every fibre of his being. He was no do-gooder appeasing his Christian conscience – what he did often cost him dearly. Rather we see faith-driven authenticity at work – he did what we are all called to do, to be “as Christ to all we meet”. Maybe Thano Makgoba, the current archbishop of Cape Town, expresses what I am trying to say more clearly: “Desmond Tutu’s legacy is moral strength, moral courage, and clarity...He felt with the people. In public and alone, he cried because he felt people’s pain. And he laughed – no, not just laughed, he cackled with delight when he shared their joy.”

Tutu could only do this from a strong foundation of knowing and accepting who he was. At the funeral of black consciousness activist Steve Biko, Tutu stated that Black Consciousness was “a movement by which God,

sought to awaken in the black person a sense of his intrinsic value and worth as a child of God". Tutu did not hold with the perverse, dehumanising messages of worthlessness his country tried to instil in him, but held rather to that truth, which each of us can hold to, that each and every one of us is 'God's masterpiece' (Ephesians 2:10), we are 'fearfully and wonderfully made' (Psalm 139:14), and as God's children we are 'heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ' (Romans 8:4-17). Much as espoused in Twain's quote above, Tutu refused to be anything other than fully the person God made him to be living his faith out as he felt God was calling him to do - always fighting for justice, he never lost his hope or joy but rather was a great visionary who could see a healed Rainbow Nation in the smouldering embers of hatred, trauma and grief; unafraid to stand up and tell God's truth whether in the face of white supremacists or in front of a rally of thousands of angry protesters; his love transformed the people he met whether political leaders or those living in townships; a man to whom prayer came as naturally as speaking and who allowed it to undergird, guide and prompt all that he did - he often spoke of doing things because of a 'divine nudge'; a man who defied police bursting into Cape Town Cathedral by dancing down the aisle.

The thing about living one's life authentically is that it is contagious and over time and through relationships can transform lives. Tutu learnt the value of this from Trevor Huddleston - a white priest who, as a young Tutu witnessed, once doffed his hat in greeting to Tutu's mother - it was a kindness that shocked the young boy and taught him that the "impossible was possible". Over time Tutu would get to know Huddleston better - a friendship which would be very formative to Tutu and would eventually lead to him too one day becoming a priest. In a similar way, Tutu would go on to mentor and nurture a man by the name of Nelson Mandela from a path as revolutionary and rightfully vengeful instead into a true leader who stood for forgiveness, truth and reconciliation and together they would help transform and heal a nation.

Cath Da Costa



PCC Report – January

Meeting on 17th January – by Zoom

The following report briefly covers some of the matters considered at the meeting.

Finances Peter Dean summarised the end-December position. Although giving had been around 5% higher than had been budgeted at the start of the year, expenditure had exceeded income with the end-year deficit in the General Fund being some £33000, somewhat lower than the original forecast but still a substantial sum. This had reduced the General Fund reserves to near the figure set by our reserves policy, which itself followed guidance from the Charity Commission. He went on to present the forecast for 2022 which was similar to previous years in that expected income would not meet likely expenditure, the estimated deficit being some £32000. Clearly, this was not consistent with having adequate General Fund reserves. It was suggested that we might make representations to the diocese over the level of our Parish Share (ie our annual payment to the diocese, forecast to be £100,000 in 2022), which seemed out of line when compared with that of other churches. The Deanery had been asked to examine the distribution of Parish Shares. It was observed that there seemed little scope for reducing other expenditure if we were to maintain our worship and general presence in the town at the current level.

The Council agreed that since members had not had enough time to consider the figures in the forecast in detail, further discussion would be deferred until the February meeting. Members would before then examine the forecast closely and bring forward proposals both for increasing income and, to the extent that it was possible, bringing expenditure into line.

Buildings There was general praise for the new curtains and blinds in the Church Centre. Tilly Elliot was thanked for identifying the material and the supplier and arranging everything. Roger Courtney noted that the windows in the Church Centre had been painted prior to the curtains being fitted. He informed the Council that a grant of £5000 had been secured for

replacing the failed floodlights. The plans for the installation of children's toilets had received Building Regulations approval but the diocese had raised some issues and he would be responding to them.

Mission Action Plan The Vicar said that he intended initial consideration of the Mission Action Plan to be an Away Day on 26th February. While not proposed as a MAP theme, he wished the discussion to examine Purpose also. The session would not be confined to PCC members; details and invitations would follow. He hoped that it would be possible to produce the MAP by early summer.

Vicar's report Tony commended all those involved in Christmas services and noted that the service on 12th December organised in conjunction with the Hospital Chaplaincy had been attended by around 70 people. This could become an annual event. He had participated in discussion of a Covenant between Herts County Council and faith groups but thought that it would be more practical to start with a covenant between the council and one faith or denomination, perhaps focussing on a theme such as climate change.

Roger Courtney

Did you enjoy Youth Group / Sunday School?

Zacchaeus



My favourite bit about Sunday School & Youth Group was not surprisingly the singing. In the song about Zaccheus I always hoped to be chosen so I could stand on a chair and was disappointed if instead I was chosen to be Jesus who just had a speaking part! I expect in reality what kept me at Youth group was that I enjoyed meeting my friends.



Sadly, at Sunday School at St Mary's now, on some weeks only 1 or 2 children are in attendance, more frequently of course since Covid but this is not the whole story. This is despite the fact that we do fun things like wrapping each other in loo roll to play Lazarus, hiding in a tent in the desert, playing games and eating toast. This is hard both for our kids and the leaders who really want to pass on the Good News about Jesus and spend a lot of time prayerfully considering how to do this.

Of course, there are many ways for young people to connect with God in addition to Sunday School. We didn't have Bible apps, social media, websites or even digital radio. Cath goes into schools, links up with church families particularly if they are new or not been around a while and she and other groups do fun things such as running the youth group for refugees.

In recent weeks God has challenged me to pray for our young people and to ask the church to do the same. I am sure we would love our church to be full of young people and the internet and social media to be full of great Christian content that appealed to the next generation. God knows how this should happen best and our own young people will have their thoughts about it.

I would like to encourage us as a church to pray.

Ask God what the church can do and pray for the future Children's Worker, ask God what you personally could do.

Pray for those involved in youth and children's work particularly Cath and most important regularly commit to pray for those children and young people you know. Pray for their day-to-day needs and concerns and pray for them to know the Lord and introduce others to Him.

If you are young ask God to show you wisdom as to how to reach your generation and if you ever feel discouraged, remember the church is praying for you....



Jenny L

Current Affairs **Connect Group**

VACCINATION – Mandatory or Voluntary

In December, the Prime Minister called for a national debate on whether vaccinations against Covid should be mandatory or remain voluntary. So last month the Current Affairs Group discussed *Vaccination: Mandatory or voluntary?*

We considered the balance between our Christian responsibility to love our neighbour and our right for us, rather than the state, to determine what happens to our own body. Although we had different views about whether vaccination should be mandatory or not for British citizens, we agreed that as Christians we had a duty to get vaccinated as an act of love for our neighbour.

Note: Covid statistics quoted below were the latest available at the time of writing, from the period mid-November and mid-December.

Background

The issue of mandatory vaccination isn't new. The Vaccination Act of 1853 required parents to vaccinate their children against smallpox with fines for non-compliance. It was introduced amid vaccine scepticism and rioting. However, two-thirds of babies were inoculated against the deadly disease by the 1860s, and mortality rates were slashed.

That law was scrapped in 1947. Governments have since pursued a policy of optional vaccination, encouraging uptake through education and persuasion.

Prior to the pandemic, vaccine scepticism significantly reduced vaccination take up for such diseases as mumps, measles and rubella. Such scepticism is present in many western countries, including Britain.

Last year, in the first case of its kind, the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg (not the EU Court) heard the case of *Vavříčka v. the Czech Republic*. Prior to the pandemic, the Czech authorities fined Pavel Vavříčka for refusing to vaccinate his children for tetanus, hepatitis B and polio. The Court found that the public health interest in achieving herd immunity from contagious diseases outweighed the individual right to privacy under Article 8 of the Convention of Human Rights. The Court also found that Czech law had made sufficient provision to exempt people for medical or religious reasons.

Western governments are increasingly considering or actually passing legislation to make vaccination against Covid compulsory, especially for health and care workers, because a significant hard core of their populations remains unvaccinated, putting strain on their health services. These laws have been met with protests and resistance.

Johnson's government has not yet passed laws to make Covid vaccination compulsory, except for its NHS staff, health and social care workers and certain volunteers in England who must be vaccinated by 1 April unless medically exempt. If they refuse, they will be redeployed or even sacked. In principle, this is not new since staff have been required as a matter of NHS policy (but not law) to have the Hepatitis B vaccine for many years. Some 6% of NHS staff remain unvaxed for Covid - down from 8%.

Although some 9 out of 10 adults in Britain have Covid antibodies, many remain unvaccinated as the following statistics show:

- actual vaccine take up has been lowest in London where nearly a third have not had a single dose (higher among Londoners aged 18-24).
- overall in the UK around 10% (6.4 million people) have not had a single dose.
- 42% of hospitalisations are of people who have not had a single dose.

- take-up tends to be lower in poorer areas than in better off areas, lower in some ethnic groups rather than others, and lower among young men than young women.

The unvaxxed have been categorised by one NHS expert as:

- the intenders who intend to get vaccinated but need encouragement to do so;
- the worried who have concerns about the vaccine because for example, they are pregnant or are from an ethnic or religious minority and need a conversation with a trusted intermediary such as their GP; and
- the disengaged who are against vaccines and won't get vaccinated unless required to do so e.g. for clubbing or to go on holiday.

Supporters of mandatory vaccination argue that vaccination is an act of social responsibility that ensures that people reduce the risk that both themselves, and those they come into contact with, are likely to suffer from severe illness and assists in halting the spread of the virus. They argue that the compulsory wearing of seat belts, public smoking ban and ban on drink driving have all been accepted although resisted by a minority at the time.

Critics cite creeping state authoritarianism and consider that it has no right to determine what happens to the body of an individual. They tend to distrust the authority or its assurances that the vaccines are safe, citing e.g. past experiments on minorities. The more extreme follow conspiracy theories and even form anti-vax militia groups such as Alpha Men Assemble whose members have talked openly of 'hitting' vaccine centres and schools. Other critics consider that making vaccines compulsory is counter productive and encourages further resistance. They fear that in the NHS, for example, it could result in mass resignations at a time in which it is already significantly understaffed.

The issue is therefore whether the rights of society or the rights of the individual should prevail. For Christians, the question is the extent to which our concerns about the State taking greater powers to

itself, like the monstrous empires in Scripture (Daniel 7; Revelation 17), trump our responsibility to love our neighbour (Leviticus 19.18; Mark 12.3).

Reflections

The majority felt that there is a strong principle in scripture that mankind is made in the image of God with freedom to decide (Genesis 1.26-28; 2.15-17) and there should be a high threshold before the state overturns this. People have a right to determine whether or not something is injected into their body, especially as the Covid vaccines have not been around long enough to be proven safe. However, if they exercise that right, they should also exercise their responsibility to keep others safe by not mixing with them. Higher levels of vaccination should be encouraged by persuasion rather than enforcement. The intenders and worried could be persuaded along the lines suggested by the NHS expert above. Some even felt that as Covid seems to have peaked and become less severe for many - at least for now - the argument for compulsory vaccination might well have passed its 'sell by' date.

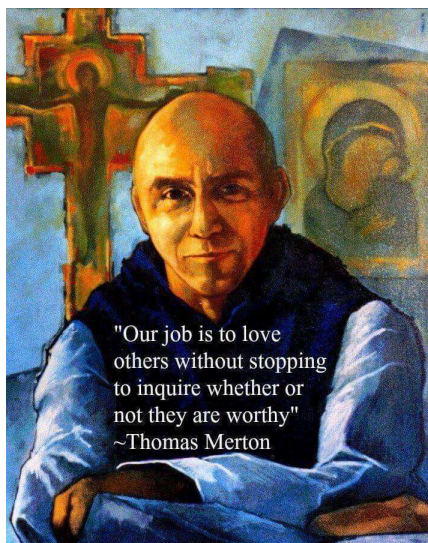
However, a minority supported mandatory vaccination with medical exceptions. Most people have been willingly vaccinated. While some of the unvaccinated might yet be persuaded, there remains a hard core of refuseniks who could infect others and overwhelm the NHS. It is the duty of the state to act for the good of the whole nation (Romans 13.1-7), indeed of the world. The omicron variant might be less severe for now but Covid remains a serious threat. Without vaccination on a global scale, further - possibly severe - variants might arise. Compelling a small hard core to get vaccinated is in line with the principle laid down by the great libertarian John Stuart Mill: "The only purpose for which power can be rightfully exercised over any member of a civilised community, against his will, is to prevent harm to others."

All of us supported mandatory vaccination for front line health and care staff, given their particular responsibility for patients and their greater risk of exposure to Covid.

All of us agreed that Christians should be vaccinated, unless they fall under a medical exemption. The basis for this is love for our neighbour – protecting others and the NHS. Jesus showed us that love is self-sacrificial (John 15.13). The pandemic gives us a unique opportunity to show our Christian love for the nation and to take up our cross (Matthew 16.24-26) by setting aside our rights, our suspicions of the state and our fears of needles or side effects for the sake of others. Indeed, the cross might be seen as Jesus offering up his body to the Roman state for the good of the world (Matthew 24.32-55). If Jesus can take nails for us, surely we can take a needle for him?

We next meet at 8.00pm on 11th February to discuss 'Is it time to cancel 'cancel culture'?'

The Current Affairs Connect Group



Love your neighbour as Jesus taught us



Who are my neighbours? They include all the farmers who produce our food.

Dr Martin Luther King used to say that by breakfast time we owed our thanks to half of the world: coffee or tea from Africa, South America, India or Sri Lanka, sugar from the Caribbean, Africa or UK, cereals from Canada, USA or UK, fruit juice

from Europe, Africa, etc.

As much as 50% of our food comes from small scale farmers around the World and sadly many of them are ripped off, are exploited and live with their families in poverty.

It is great to know that nearly 2 million farmers are members of the Fairtrade system and receive fair prices for their produce. Their co-operatives receive the Fairtrade Premium on top of this and can improve production methods, going organic, building better storage facilities and improving infrastructure around their villages.

But too many farmers are ripped off, exploited by large multinational buyers who pay very low prices and are only interested in shareholder profits. It is good to know that the Fairtrade system lifts members out of poverty and provides health-care, education and sustainability.

So, remembering who our neighbours are, please look for the Fairtrade Mark when shopping! This guarantees producers receive a fair wage and they can regularly put food on their families' tables and send their children to school or college.

Fairtrade Champion Albert Tucker, from Watford, will be speaking at the 10.30am Service at St Mary's on Sunday 27th February in Fairtrade Fortnight. Albert, while CEO of TWIN (Third World Information Network) helped to set up Café Direct, Divine Chocolate and Oké Smoothies. These are Fairtrade Companies. He also brought Karma Kola, Gingerella and Lemony soft drinks to UK, which are on sale in Waitrose. Albert is a Director of Liberation, a Fairtrade nut company.

Watford
Fairtrade

**FAIRTRADE
FORTNIGHT**

2022

Quiz Night

Sat 19 Feb, 7.15pm

SAVE THE DATE

VENUE

St Luke's WD17 3EG

£5 per person
Tables of 6

Register with Fran Davies

Send an E-mail to

0frandavies@gmail.com

or

Send a message to

07909904872



£5 per person | Tables of 6

Bring your own drinks and nibbles

World Day of Prayer



The Watford Service will take place this year at Beechen Grove Baptist Church in Clarendon Road at 2pm on **Friday 4th March**.

Prayer services will be held across the world on this same day.

The theme for 2022 is taken from the Book of Jeremiah:

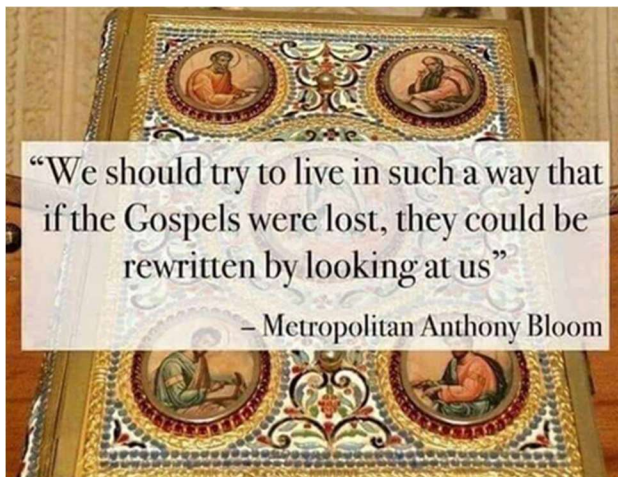
“I KNOW THE PLANS I HAVE FOR YOU”

A Bible Study on this theme will take place at Beechen Grove Church at 2.00pm on **Monday 7th February**. It will be led by Stephanie Grant.

It would be good if you were able to come as I feel it will lead us into the service in March. (Those who attended Josh’s Bible Study last year were enthused by his approach.) All are invited to attend.

Further details from Rosemary Clemas

PS As things are uncertain at the moment, it might be necessary to hold the Bible Study on Zoom. There will be notice of this.



How Bad are Bananas?

The carbon footprint of everything

A book review

It's modest. Diligent. A manifest. Modern living. With many surprises, enjoyable for that alone. And an excellent index. You can read it for five minutes or just open it at random.

A decade on from its first publication, a new edition of *How Bad are Bananas? The Carbon Footprint of Everything* by Mike Berners-Lee is available (Profile Books ISBN: 9781788163811 - price £9.99).



It was a ground-breaking book in 2009 when most of us were hearing the phrase 'carbon footprint' for the first time. Since information on carbon emissions was then scant, Berners-Lee set out to inform us what things in everyday life have significant footprints (eg aviation, heating, swimming pools) and what things make very little difference (eg bananas, naturally packaged!).

This new edition updates all the figures and introduces many areas that have become a regular part of modern life - Twitter, the Cloud, Bitcoin, electric bikes and cars, even space tourism. Berners-Lee runs a considered eye over each area and gives us the figures to manage and reduce our own carbon footprint, as well as to lobby our companies, businesses and government. His findings, presented in clear and entertaining prose, are often surprising. It's an invaluable and entertaining guide that shows just what effect everything has on carbon emissions, from a Google search to a plastic bag, from a flight to a volcano.

Berners-Lee helpfully groups items for comparison, such as travelling 100 miles in three contrasting cars or using disposable or reusable nappies. He starts with examples of less than 10 grams (a pint of tap water, an email, drying your hands) and ends with examples of billions of tonnes (wildfires, wars).

This book is science - applicable, unpolitical and universal. Indeed, it's essential reading if we are to address the ambitious targets set at COP 26 by 2030 and to better inform our daily choices.

For the cost of less than half a day's heating of St Mary's, we have several copies available to loan to you. Please ask Andy Roby (email: andyroby2001@yahoo.com) or Marcus Jones (email: ttekcos@aol.com). The Current Affairs Connect Group will be discussing *How bad are bananas?* at 8.00pm on 11th March. Whether you dip into it or read it from cover to cover, come and join in the debate!

James Fielding

Language Café

We are looking to start a language café at St. Mary's, initially once a month, potentially on a Tuesday, around midday in the Church Centre to tie in with the drop-in organised by Watford and Three Rivers Refugee Partnership. Are you able to help?

Over the past couple of years, we have felt that there are many - through Centre Club (our toddler group), St Mary's Preschool, and our links with the Women's Centre - who would benefit from a basic level conversation group.

The idea is that the group would be run in a café setting with a structured session during which only English would be spoken, and which would develop vocabulary and inspire more confidence in speaking but also that there would be time factored in for people to just meet and develop friendships, gain information, etc. The café would last around an hour and a half.

We are looking for people to help:

- set up
- serve coffees, teas, etc
- potentially produce cakes and baked goods
- mingle and converse with those attending
- run the English enrichment session
- an offshoot of this could be to run a creche in the Preschool area next to the café and, should this go ahead, we would be looking for volunteers with a DBS check.

Who's Who at St Mary's

Vicar

The Revd Tony Rindl | 01923 225189 / 07792 505480
tony.rindl@gmail.com

Curate

The Revd Joshua Brocklesby | 07764 738596
jbrocklesby.stmaryswatford@gmail.com

Churchwardens

Alison Saunders | 01923 244390
Peter Dean | 07876 154387

Children & Families Worker

Cath Da Costa | 07961 564385
familyworker.stmaryswatford@gmail.com

Facilities Manager

stmarysfacilitiesmanager@gmail.com

Church Office

office@stmaryswatford.org
St Mary's Church, Church Street,
Watford WD18 0EG
01923 225189

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Services

The Church is open each week

on Mondays and Fridays
between 9.30am and 12.30pm
and on Wednesdays and Saturdays
between 12.00noon and 2.00pm

Sunday

9.00am Holy Communion (said) in church
on 1st, 3rd & 5th Sunday only each month;
10.30am Morning Service in church and via Zoom
every Sunday;
5.30pm Encounter in church and via Facebook Live
on 1st Sunday of month only
(preceded at 5.00pm with refreshments)

Wednesday

12.30pm Holy Communion in church

Monday to Friday

9.30am Morning Prayer via Zoom

(for Zoom links please contact Church Office)

Please keep up to date with what is on offer
via our Facebook page
or the website www.stmaryswatford.org