

St. Mary's News

March 2017



ST MARY'S
Growing in the heart of Watford

BELONGING AND BELIEVING

During my recent visit to Australia I attended an evening service at St Hill's (Hillary's) church in Melbourne. It is a very progressive church with a number of services on a Sunday. The evening service was targeting largely teenagers and young adults. The youth pastor who took the service was focussing on small groups, home groups, or Connect groups as they call them, which is considered the backbone of their church. I later took the following from their website.

Connect Groups have a threefold purpose of

1. **Connecting to God** through bible study and prayer
2. **Connecting to one another** through fellowship, mutual pastoral care, and community building, and
3. **Connecting to the World** as the group encourages missional engagement together and as individuals, as they go about their daily lives.

Perhaps not surprisingly the youth pastor preached on Acts 2: 43-27 *Awe came upon everyone, because many wonders and signs were being done by the apostles. All who believed were together and had all things in common; they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need. Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having the goodwill of all the people. And day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.*

I guess there are many ways in which this passage can be interpreted but suffice to say it opens up the important connection between belonging and believing. Part of believing in Jesus Christ is recognising that an integral part of his mission was to establish the church (Ekklesia). The Greek word Ekklesia means company, fellowship, assembly, gathering, community. In other words, the believer the person called to be a follower of Jesus Christ is also called into fellowship with other believers.

The Acts passage clearly suggests that such fellowship is far more than just turning up on a Sunday and attending a public act of worship. It is about belonging to a radical community where living as people of faith is actively put into practice.

I like the idea of being more connected to God, and to one another and to the world as being a priority for us all. I think it is vital looking ahead to the refurbishment of the church later on this year. Let's be clear there will be a lot of disruption and during this time of upheaval it is vital that we are connected to God and to one another and to the world and stick together and get through this and learn to worship and live in our new surroundings.

Clearly Lent provides an opportunity for us to develop this process. Perhaps in future years I may be more prescriptive as to how you might observe Lent. For now, I want to simply say Lent is a gift. It is a special time where we can draw deeper to God at a personal level. The word Lent is a shortened form of the Old English word *lenten*, meaning "spring season". We might also understand this in terms of moving from winter to spring and the days lengthening and witnessing the green shoots of new life. Beginning with Ash Wednesday, Lent is a time to come to God with a penitent heart where we can journey through the next six weeks to Holy Week, Good Friday and the joy of Easter Sunday, and all that lies at the heart of our Christian faith.

There is no set formula as to how to observe Lent, many of course choose a course of abstinence from chocolate, or alcohol, or television or in modern times Facebook or Twitter. This of course can be a fruitful thing, provided it is approached in a positive way and is motivated with a genuine desire to move closer to God. It seems in recent times that there has been a move more towards doing something creative rather than abstinence and self-denial. Again it is something I would encourage and Jayne Fish's reflections on Ash Wednesday of developing the art of kindness is worth considering. Moving kindness from random acts to something that is routinely part of who we are so that as a city on a hill cannot be hidden so the light of Christ that we reflect is clear to all.

I think the essence of Lent can be summarised in the following words which form part of the Communion prayer for Lent *"Through fasting, prayer and acts of service you bring us back to your generous heart. Through study of your holy word you open our eyes to your presence in the world and free our hands to welcome others into the radiant splendour of your love"*

I have already mentioned the importance of not just connecting with God but with one another and with the world. One of the main reasons for visiting Australia was to see my good friend and former colleague, Melusi. You may recall he came to my installation four years ago. Working together all those years ago formed a good friendship. Yet it is more than friendship as we led worship together, prayed together, supported each other through difficult times, covered each other's backs we are more like brothers than friends. It is all about that relationship through Christ. Two very ordinary people from two different continents finding ourselves in a third continent, where Melusi now lives, and the joy of reuniting and leading worship together again.

When we talk about being connected to God, and to one another it is through Christ, it is through fellowship, mutual pastoral care, and community building. Connecting with the world is exactly the same. I recently read David Smith's book *Liberating the Gospel*, a real must for those of us who are concerned about the way world is going and what the Church's response should be. In the book, and building on the work of Tom Wright, David argues that so often we read the Gospel with 19th century eyes and 16th century questions whereas what we should be doing is reading the Gospel with 1st century eyes and 21st century questions. The call of Jesus in 1st century Palestine was to form radical communities and to live lives in such a way that God's timeless Word is fulfilled. We see this of course fulfilled in the life of Christ, the empty grave and new beginnings. Is St. Mary's a radical community? Do we live lives whereby God's word is fulfilled? I have a feeling the next few months are going to be an exciting time for St. Mary's where the building might not be the only thing that is refurbished.

Revd Tony Rindl
Vicar of St Mary's

PCC REPORT-MEETING on 6th FEBRUARY

The Council considered again the post of Children and Families Worker in the light of further advice from Jayne Fish. With a part-time appointment not attracting any applicants, and a view that the church had to invest in the growth and nurturing of future members, the Council agreed that we should seek to make a full-time appointment. However, there was still much that could and should be undertaken by members of the congregation and it was agreed a forthcoming meeting of the Worship for All team would be open to anyone with an interest in children's work, so that a wider view of needs and opportunities could be taken. This was a development initiative of the church, and funding for the post would be a priority alongside future investment in the church and its facilities.

Roger Courtney updated the Council on the refurbishment programme, making reference to the more extended information that had appeared in St Mary's News. We were hopeful of further grants from trusts and had responded to further questions from the Chancellor. A shortlist of contractors had been selected and tender documents would be issued shortly. The responses would give us a firm basis for assessing the funding position. He emphasised the need for as many people as possible to assist with the clearing of the church and adjacent areas, in support of the Church Refurbishment Group and drew attention to the sample chairs in the church, inviting members of the Council to give their views and to encourage others to do the same.

Other matters included:

- The Council confirmed the 2017 budget on the basis of the provisional budget presented at the November meeting.
- Chris Carter noted that the report that would accompany the 2016 accounts would follow the format prescribed by the Charities Commission and would therefore be much shorter than previous Annual Reports.

- The Vicar commented that Jacky Faria had shown herself to be very efficient, and was dealing with a great deal of business in her two days a week, He recognised that there were needs still to be met but these should be considered after the present arrangements had been in operation for a period.
- The IT system in the office was now working much more effectively and the Council expressed its appreciation to Peter Dean for the great deal of work that he had put into it.
- The Vicar commented that the Christmas period had brought many highlights and the refurbished church would bring greater opportunities for developing initiatives such as the Christmas Tree Festival.

The Council recorded its appreciation of Tony's input to all the arrangements for Graham Taylor's funeral - the largest publicity event in the history of the church - and offered their best wishes for his trip to Australia.

The minutes of the meeting on 21st November 2016 are on the notice board in the Church Centre.

Roger Courtney

Who's who

Vicar: Rev Tony Rindl (225189/ 0779250 5480) tony.rindl@stmaryswatford@gmail.com

Churchwardens: Alison Saunders (244390) Ash David (0753870 7148)

Office: Jacky Faria (225189) jacky.stmaryswatford@gmail.com

Contact details: St Mary's Church, Church Street, Watford, WD18 0EG

Bishop of St Albans on ending of child asylum admissions

The Bishop of St Albans didn't get the chance to respond to the Government statement in the House of Lords announcing an end to child asylum admissions under the Dubs amendment.

Here's what he'd **planned** to say:

"My Lords, I join with many in this House, and indeed many of my colleagues on these benches, in expressing my disappointment and anger at the Government's decision to end asylum admissions for vulnerable unaccompanied children under the Dubs scheme. 350 children does not come close to fulfilling the spirit of the agreement that this House believed was being reached when the Government accepted Lord Dubs' amendment to the Immigration Bill. If local councils say they cannot cope with more children, that is because they are not being provided with adequate resources to do so. Rather than ending admissions under the scheme, HMG should be looking at how it can better support local authorities to take on unaccompanied asylum-seeking children over the next financial year.

"While I welcome all the Government is doing to support people in the refugee camps, Britain cannot and should not be seen to be turning its back on its obligations to the most vulnerable and needy. Does the Baroness, the Minister agree that this sends out the wrong message about our international priorities, and will she urge the Government to reconsider its position?"



Marriage and Same Sex Relationships after the Shared Conversations

Last Friday the House of Bishops published a report *Marriage and Same Sex Relationships after the Shared Conversations*. This comes after a two year process of talking and listening which involved many people from this diocese, sometimes at great personal cost. I want to thank all those who have shared honestly about themselves during this period and urge them and all members of our diocese to continue in this process.

The report argues for a 'fresh tone and culture of welcome and support for lesbian and gay people, for those who experience same sex attraction, and for their families'. I want to underline my longing that all the churches, chaplaincies and church schools within the Diocese of St Albans should be places where all people are welcomed, respected and honoured.

To that end, I hope that everyone will read carefully the entire document, rather than respond to some of the reports which have been written about it. I am aware that this may be a challenge for some sections of the church who are feeling disappointed, but if we are to be truly part of the 'one, holy catholic and apostolic church' we need to find ways to walk together, even when there are differences of opinion.

The report will now be debated at *General Synod* in the second week of February, which will enable Synod members to reflect together. Following this, the House of Bishops will begin work on a new teaching document on marriage and relationships (paragraphs 34-35), which the Bishops feel should "affirm the place of lesbian and gay people in the life of the Church, making their voices heard both with the document and in the life of the Church" amongst other things. There will also be further guidance for clergy in their ministry (paragraphs 36-43) and guidance on questions to clergy and ordinands (paragraphs 44-55).

Please pray for the bishops and other members of *General Synod* that we may continue to walk together, being led by the Holy Spirit and seeking the 'mind of Christ'.

+Alan St Albans, +Richard Bedford and +Michael Hertford

PRAYER for MISSION 2017

5.00 in the Church Centre. Tea and Cake provided.

Although we have a particular focus each month on one of our mission partners, we always include news and prayer for our other mission interests. **All are welcome!**

April 30	Christian Aid
May 21	Church Pastoral Aid Society (CPAS)
June 25	Mission Paraguay / CMS in Argentina (Andrew Leake)
July 30	Sandy and Kirsten Russell
August 27	Watford Schools Trust
September 24	Watford Town Centre Chaplaincy
October 29	Keith and Joyce Wood (OMF Diaspora Ministry Team based in Manchester)
November 26	Watford Missions including "Watford Alive" and Christmas events.



NEWS FROM OUR MISSION PARTNERS

KAPTEINTJIES PRE-SCHOOL IN BONNIEVALE, SOUTH AFRICA

Here is the latest news from Augusta Brandt. In the ten years or so that St Mary's has been associated with Kapteintjies we have seen the work grow and the children blossom. It has become a centre of excellence and Sue-Allen (Augusta's eldest daughter) recently won a prize for being one of the most outstanding teachers in the Western Cape Province.

A group of eight of us will be travelling out to Bonnievale at the end of October/early November to join in with their 25th anniversary celebrations.

Augusta writes.....

Dear St Mary's

This is the most exciting news ever; I am already starting to plan.....Here at Kapteintjies we started the year with many financial challenges. We are still struggling but it is still one of the best feelings to walk into the centre and see how staff is just excellent and how they come up with new ideas and creativity. The children are just blooming and we are so privileged to be able to sow into their lives. I did an art program at the beginning of the year where the approach is to focus on maths, science

and art by using music, art activities, visual arts and so much more. I just love to go out there to learn more.

Sue-Allen and I are also part of a small group from Bonnievale that are becoming mentors to do parenting training. This is funded by the Rotary Foundation - our travelling and accommodation is sponsored by them as well as all the teaching materials. The only challenge we are currently facing is the transport. With the petrol price hikes we struggle to get by and the training puts extra pressure but the changes in parents and children are worth it.

We also started with an Aftercare programme - we currently have 15 children, most of them old Kapteintjies Learners. The sad thing is that they are really struggling at main school and we hope that this programme will help them.

We are really short staffed at the moment but we have a matriculant (*sixth former/Year 13 student*) who offered to help them as part of her community work. Something she can put on her CV and she also plan to study teaching next year.

My work as National chairperson for early Childhood development is still very new and I start officially on the 27 February 2017 in Pretoria. At the moment between Kapteintjies, being the provincial chair for ECD and the national chair too, I sometimes feel burned out. I am also busy organising the conference where the new provincial team will be elected so hopefully by end of March I can breathe again. The main goals for this

year will be to advocate and lobby the government even more for salaries for ECD practitioners. We have a new ECD policy now the first time in South Africa but we know we will have to keep on making our voices heard. We also will lobby against the benchmark for salaries. At the moment they give a subsidy to the pre-school if the parents combined income is less than R3000 (£184) per month. With the new minimum wage for farm workers it puts them above that benchmark which means schools like Kapteintjies cannot access that grant. They have cut our subsidy for the new financial year by R5000.00 (£305) because of that and although some parents are above that some don't earn enough to pay high fees. So my task will be to fight this on a higher level.

For the past 7 years I have given my all in the Province and we have reached now on a provincial level what I wanted to see. Unfortunately it will take much more work and time on a national level. Although we are challenged in so many ways we still count our blessings. For me it is walking into Kapteintjies and hearing them calling out my name, singing when they say 'Morning Miss Augusta', sometimes its late afternoon and they still do it every time they see me. Another blessing is the little disabled girl we now have at the centre. She cannot walk or speak but will laugh that you start laughing. She lives on a farm 20 km away from the centre but how do you say no to a mother begging you to help her child?

These are the moments I remember when times are hard and I feel like giving up; these little faces lighting up when they see me. And that is why I will speak up until the world will listen and change the systems that are

preventing our children from getting an early childhood education. They have the right to education that is stated in our bill of rights but so often it is not accessible to them.

And if I start on this subject I will write a book. So for now I hope that's enough news.

Thank you so much for St Mary's that are always there for us. Carrying us in your prayers is what lifts us up so many times.

Lots and lots of love

Augusta x

FAIRTRADE

The Fairtrade foundation have suggested to mark Fairtrade Fortnight (27th Feb - 12th March) we make pancakes with Fairtrade fillings such as bananas, sugar and chocolate.

Wed 8 March 12.30 pm West Herts College, Hempstead Road, Watford WD17 3EZ

Fairtrade Lunch available - phone to Book on 01923 812464.
Inclusive price £9.

Sat 11 March 7.30 pm St Luke's Church, Langley Way, WD17 3EG

Fairtrade QUIZ night with Fairtrade Prizes and Raffle. Entry £5, students £3.50

11 - 12 March Watford High Street
Watford BID Weekender



"THE WISDOM HOUSE LIVE"



"The Wisdom House-live" is coming to The Hilton Watford WD25 8HA on Tuesday 14th March. The evening is led by Rob Parsons of Care for the Family. It promises to be entertaining, challenging and inspiring.

Door open 6.45 for 7.30 start, finishing at 10 pm.

Tickets from £4 - £6.

www.careforthefamily.org.uk/wisdomhouselive or call 02920 810800.

THE CHURCH DEVELOPMENT FUND CAN YOU HELP US 'GET OVER THE LINE'?

Hello Everybody. This is the year when it's all going to happen. We are so close to the finishing line in a marathon fundraising effort that has brought us to within a few thousand pounds of our target. God has shown us extraordinary generosity through his people at St Mary's Church, demonstrating as they have, their love of His church and from additional funding given by various trusts. A BIG THANK YOU TO ALL. Please don't give up on us now. We're nearly there. We will be giving out information on timing and other arrangements very soon. We are in the process of finalising our plans to ensure that St Mary's is an inspirational place of worship for the 21st century,

So are you in a position and able to help get us over that finishing line?

One or two of you have already said that they have been unable to help us to this point but still wish to give us a donation, as they say there is no time like the present and know would be a great time, as very soon we will begin work and start to pay the bills.

Any donation at this stage will make such a difference.

With grateful thanks.

David Brown



CHURCH REFURBISHMENT

-are you sitting comfortably?

We have always said that the principal aim of the refurbishment is to create a church which is better suited for worship in the 21st century. The replacement of the pews by chairs, with all the flexibility that they will offer, is a central element in that.

We are coming to the time when we have to make a decision on exactly which type of chair we will have. The PCC has discussed the subject a number of times over the years and we have of course received advice from different sources. On many grounds - durability, ease of maintenance, suitability with church architecture, etc. - the preferred choice is a metal-framed chair with wooden seat and back. This type of chair is widely used in churches and cathedrals. It can be re-arranged easily and takes up little room when stacked, and has proved to be long-lasting, with surfaces that are easily cleaned.

But of course, there are different designs from different manufactures, and so we need to decide on which we should purchase. This is where the views of the congregation are very important.

There are samples of possible chairs at the front of the nave. Each is labelled with a letter and there are comment forms and a box for receiving comments. Do take the opportunity to sit on them and then record your preference and your comments. If possible, sit on one for a service, rather than just a few minutes. They vary in price but it is much more important to purchase the chair that seems right for the majority of people.

As the commercial world says: 'Your views are important to us'. So please let the PCC have them.

If you have any questions, do please ask David Brown or me and we will do our best to answer them.

Roger Courtney

WHAT'S HAPPENING TO THE PEWS?



With the church refurbishment work scheduled to begin immediately after Easter, perhaps this is a question you have been asking. Many of the decorative carved ends will be re-used in and around the church for various purposes. However, it is anticipated that there will be a limited number of pews available for sale. These will be offered in the first instance to members of the congregation on a first come first served basis - a unique opportunity to own a piece of St. Mary's history! We have been advised that pews could be made to any length (up to 10') with a selling price of approximately £350 - £450.

It is also possible that some of the wood from the pews could be used to make smaller commemorative items which might better suit your available space and budget! The following items have been suggested so far: mirrors; chopping boards / serving platters; crosses; bespoke furniture. This is not an exhaustive list - you may have some other original ideas.

Further details will be available in due course, but it is not too early to register your interest, especially if you might consider purchasing a pew. Please speak to me or leave me a note in the church office.

Alison Saunders

WHICH CHAIR? HAVE YOUR SAY!



Have you taken the opportunity yet to try the four chairs that are in the church waiting for you to sit on and to write your comments? The time is coming when we will have to make a decision and so we really do want to know your opinions. If possible sit on one during a whole service rather than just for a minute or two. Inevitably no one chair will suit everyone, but this is your opportunity to say which one you would prefer so please make use of the comment slips to let us know.

Seating in a church has to be robust in order to give a lifetime of service and therefore this type of chair is not cheap - each chair is likely to cost in the region of £175 - £200. So they are a significant item in the overall budget. Are you willing to sponsor a chair? If so David Brown or I would like to hear from you.

Alison Saunders

MUSIC at ST MARY'S



Lunchtime Concerts

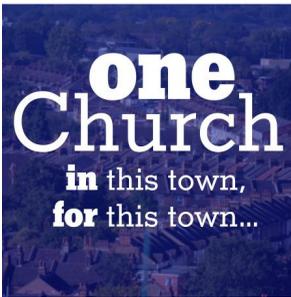
January — March 2017

Tuesdays 1.00 pm - 2.00 pm

Refreshments from 12 midday

- | | |
|-----------------|--|
| 7 Mar | Harrow Apollo Male Choir |
| 14 Mar | Bruce Boardman Trio |
| 21 Mar | Simon Hayes Piano Recital |
| 28 Mar | Soundproof |
| 4 April | Nina Cook and Simon Hayes Recital |
| 11 April | Easter Week Meditational Concert |

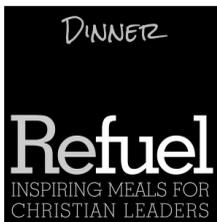
We're very grateful for your much needed donations towards the running expenses of St Mary's Lunchtime Concerts such as PRS costs and, from time to time, expenses given to young musicians who have travelled some distance to entertain us with their skills.....,so we'd like to encourage you, our greatly valued audience, to continue to give as generously as you have done.....



- **Date:** 11/03/2017 8:30 AM - 10:10 AM
- **Venue:** Woodside Community Church

Refuel events are 'inspiring meals for Christian Leaders' - Town-wide monthly meal events to include leaders, partners, staff and leadership teams with a view to enjoy food and fellowship together.

You can expect warm hospitality, good fellowship, testimony-sharing and inspirational talks to equip and encourage leaders.



- **Date:** 06/04/2017 7:30 PM - 9:30 PM
- **Venue:** Woodside Community Church

Refuel events are 'inspiring meals for Christian Leaders' - Town-wide monthly meal events to include leaders, partners, staff and leadership teams with a view to enjoy food and fellowship together.

You can expect warm hospitality, good fellowship, testimony-sharing and inspirational talks to equip and encourage |

THE NEXT TIME YOU FEEL LIKE GOD CAN'T USE YOU, JUST REMEMBER.....

Noah was a drunk
Abraham was too old
Isaac was a daydreamer
Jacob was a liar
...Leah was ugly
Joseph was abused
Moses had a stuttering problem
Gideon was afraid
Samson had long hair and was a womanizer
Jeremiah and Timothy were too young
David had an affair and was a murderer
Elijah was suicidal
Isaiah preached naked
Jonah ran from God
Naomi was a widow
Job went bankrupt
Peter denied Christ
The Disciples fell asleep while praying
Martha worried about everything
The Samaritan woman was divorced, more than once
Zaccheus was too small
Paul was too religious
Timothy had an ulcer..AND
Lazarus was dead!
And Don't forget
Jesus Helped them all!!!!

What's on at St Mary's

<i>Monday:</i> Monday Fellowship	Weekly 2pm in the Church Centre
<i>Tuesday:</i> Centre Club:	Weekly from 9.30am in the Church Centre
Lunchtime concert:	Weekly 1-2pm
Prayer Meeting:	6.30am in the Vestry See notice sheets for dates
<i>Wednesday:</i> Wednesday Fellowship:	Weekly 2.30pm in the Church Centre
Prayer Meeting:	8.00pm in the Church See notice sheets for dates
<i>Friday:</i> Morning coffee:	Weekly 9.45am-12pm in the Church Centre
<i>Saturday:</i> Morning coffee:	Weekly 10.00am-12pm in the Church Centre
St Mary's Runners:	Weekly 8.30am (6 Cassiobury Drive)

Home groups are open to all and meet at various times during the week, meeting both in the Church Centre and in people's homes. If you are interested in joining a Home Group or Prayer Group please contact the church office. (01923 225189 office@stmaryswatford.org.uk) Charity No. 1132880

Services

5 March: 10.30am Holy Communion
6.30pm Evening Worship

12 March: 8.00am Holy Communion
10.30am Morning Worship
6.30 pm Evening Worship with Holy Communion

19 March: 10.30am Worship for All
6.30pm Holy Communion

26 March: 8.00am Holy Communion
10.30am Morning Worship-Mothering Sunday
6.30 pm Evening Worship and Café Church

Mid-Week service of Holy Communion, Wednesday at 12.30pm

Children's Groups and Crèche meet every Sunday morning except the third Sunday of the month.