

SPIRIT. A word that is used in many senses. The ninth meaning in my dictionary is the first some people would give it - a distilled extract! It is the only meaning which refers to a thing which people can touch or see or feel - or drink. All the other meanings refer to something hidden or invisible, such as ghost, or a person's nature, or soul, or a person's mind or feelings, and similar ideas.

Perhaps it is for this reason that the Christian Festival of Pentecost or Whitsunday is the least well understood of all the major events in the Church's year. For the Christian puts the emphasis on the things of God which are unseen and not able to be touched or felt or seen. And to the majority of men and women this is difficult, if not daft. For what is real that we cannot see or touch or feel? It is a question that has exercised every generation from the beginning of time and men have had little success in grappling with the idea.

The paradox is that mankind has on the one hand insisted that all that exists is what we can see and on the other hand has strained to express what we can understand with our minds and hearts, what we can feel but not prove. Ronald Knox wrote a short verse in reply to some one who protested that nothing was real which he could not see:

Sir, your astonishment's odd.

I am always about in the Quad (a college courtyard)

And that's why this tree
will continue to be,

Since observed by yours faithfully, God.

At Pentecost the Apostles and Disciples were joyfully aware that the Spirit of God was with them. It gave them courage, love, power. There can be no gain saying they were changed. So we give thanks for their experience which enabled them to proclaim the Good News which we can now share. We celebrate the Festival this year on 18th May and in the evening we have a special presentation in Drama form at 6.30 pm. Come and join in.

Nicholas Chubb

GOOD FRIDAY

Keeping Good Friday has always been a puzzle to Christians. Is it a Festival, or a holiday - Holy Day, or a day for misery and abstinence? Should one work normally or not? Over the centuries all these have been tried in various places. The first record of anything special happening was an account written in the 4th century by a nun called Etheria. She made a pilgrimage to Jerusalem and other parts of the Holy Land and recorded some of the things she saw. One was a service which was almost entirely of readings from the scriptures, during which those attending were invited to hear the Passion narrative read in all the Gospel versions.

From this have sprung all kinds of ideas, many of them incorporating a version of the waiting by the cross, inviting the participants to feel they are with the original crowds at Calvary.

Here at St. James's we had a wonderful children's service in which much of the excitement of the occasion as well as the sadness was captured. Pam Atkinson and her helpers ensured that about 50 children and their parents knew what it was all about. The story of Holy Week was simply re-told. Then came the excitement of decorating the Easter Garden with flowers and finally some Hot Cross Buns reminding all of the origins of this delicacy. At noon a congregation of about 25 gathered to wait prayerfully and expectantly. During the next 3 hours hymns were sung, an Old English Poem called the 'Dream of the Rood' and the Passion stories were read, prayers based on the incidents were said. All was focussed on a large stark cross in a church stripped bare of all furnishings. During the time people came and went as they could. Some stayed for the whole period. At the end some 45 people returned home having waited and watched and prayed, with new insights as to what Good Friday was all about.

Nicholas Chubb

EASTER COMMUNION

Only a rich man knows this sight I see
Of begging hand. How fortunate is he! -
Poor at his gate and plenty to confer
- But happier am I, Christ's Almoner.

Ah, have you seen a leafy tree, above
Whose branches hovers the uncertain dove?
Then every leaf breathes, "Come and rest you here!"
- So plead these outstretched hands to Jesus near.

See how they beg! - the cleanly and the stained,
The ringless, ringed, ease-smooth and labour-grained:
Whatever they have done or left undone
Or yet shall do, they ask this Gift each one!

Hands! O dumb pleaders for this deathless boon,
Ye stretch so often for life's empty moon,
So rare its gold-begetting Sun ye plead! -
Yet He is here your gift, and all your need!

K.T.S. 1944

Reproduced by kind permission of Mrs Anne Street.

The author of this poem, Kenneth Street, was Vicar of the Lincolnshire parishes of St. Mary & All Saints, Kirkby Underwood, and St. James, Aslackby, from 1961 until his retirement in 1983 52 years after his ordination as a priest. He died last year, aged 80.

On our occasional visits to Aslackby, he would delight in showing me and discussing features of the medieval church building, and it was after taking part in the Patronal Festival Service one year that he gave us a copy of the St. James's hymn which he had written, and which is now in our own yellow hymn book.

Kenneth was also the author of some of the prayers in the A.S.B.

It is hoped shortly to publish an anthology "Poems of two Lincolnshire Villages".

Jack Gostling

GOOD FRIDAY UNITED SERVICE

A procession of witness would have definitely been a mis-nomer for the three people who made their way on Good Friday from St. James's to the United Reformed Church. However, some other Churches did process with their Cross or Crucifix and the Church was pretty well full when the service began. The service consisted of readings from St. Matthew's Gospel, read by people from various churches, telling the story of the Crucifixion. Hymns and prayers were interspersed between the readings, and gradually the feeling that we were all one in Jesus Christ came over us.

When the service was over, coffee was served in the Hall for all those who wanted to stay. It was a pity that more people from St. James's did not attend this Ecumenical Service but sandwiched as it was between the Children's Service at ten and the three hours at twelve made it rather difficult for many people. However, it was a very worthwhile experiment and one I hope that will be repeated.

Helen Taylor

HIGH MASS OF THE EASTER VIGIL

My work in a psychiatric hospital has broadened my outlook in many spheres and has brought me in touch with different traditions. I work closely with the Hospital Chaplain and he invited me to go with him to the High Mass of the Easter Vigil at All Saints, Margaret Street, near Oxford Circus, a well known Anglican Church with an Anglo-Catholic tradition.

The entire celebration of the Easter Vigil takes place at night starting on Easter Eve and ending before daybreak on Easter Day. Our service began at 10 pm and ended at 12.30 am.

As we entered the church we were given candles with the order of service. We began with the Liturgy of the Word similar to that used in our own church on Easter Eve. The six readings and collects related to the prophecy leading to the acceptance of the Messiah. The church was in semi-darkness, and the priest explained that this part of the service was a time of watching and listening. Between each reading there were periods of silence for meditation.

Then followed a brief service of light. There was a procession through the

church to the courtyard, all the lights in the church were switched off and we waited in darkness for the lighting of the New Fire, symbolising that from the fire springs the New Life of Christ. The Paschal Candle was lit from the fire and gradually all the lights and candles in the church, including our own, were lit. The Paschal Candle was lifted high and the Proclamation of Easter began. The priest sang the words "Christ our Light" and we responded with "Thanks be to God". This signified the personalising of God coming close to us in Christ.

The third part of the service was the Liturgy of the Baptism which began with the Litany of the Saints and was followed by a procession to the font. The priest blessed the water, signifying its sanctification for God's purpose of redeeming man. We relit our candles and renewed our Baptismal vows, as we do at our service at St. James's. The procession, preceded by the Paschal Candle, moved through the church to the altar and water was sprinkled on the congregation.

The last part of the service was the celebration of the Eucharist symbolising the whole church being called to the table which the Lord had prepared for his people through his death and resurrection.

This was my first experience of an Easter Vigil. I must confess it seemed a little long and I was glad of the welcoming cup of soup outside in the courtyard as we left the church! I shall remember the beautiful music of Haydn's Mariazellermesse, the singing of the Easter hymns with a full choir and the wonderful feeling of worshipping in a church packed with people of all ages and types, who were not afraid to show their devotion to Christ.

Betty Stewart

FACE TO FACE WITH GIDEON

Through Hannah Stanton's contacts with USPG St. James's has become associated over the past five years or so with Milo Mission Hospital in Tanzania and its medical superintendent Gideon Mhagama. Milo is run, without a single doctor, with the barest equipment and finances in a country very hard hit economically in recent years, particularly from the high cost of oil before the dramatic fall in its price. The petrol for the motorbike we bought for Milo hospital has been costing as much as £ 7 a gallon. Despite this the bike has been used by Gideon's staff to reach those parts around Milo that others cannot reach, to make urgent deliveries of medicines, and to call on sick patients who cannot get to the hospital.

Recently we had an opportunity to meet Gideon again in Hannah's house, and what an exuberant personality he continues to be! As he munched his way through a plate of delicious looking risotto (a testimony to Hannah's culinary prowess) Gideon brought the hospital to life for us with his stories and photographs. Slowly but surely the hospital complex is being completed, even though the buildings are very primitive due to the scarcity of resources. Yet they were spotlessly clean, kept that way by Gideon's

small and cheerful staff. But the real problem was the cost of equipment, with medicines and surgical dressings prohibitively expensive (much had to be imported from Kenya since there was no surgical gauze plant in Tanzania). Purchasing trips to Dar es Salaam had to be carefully planned with the petrol the price it was.

In one important respect Milo is self supporting - milk. There was one delightful photograph of the hospital's small herd of African cows donated by other English well-wishers.

At the end of the evening we all felt very involved with this loving Christian community so far yet so close to our hearts. Gideon and Milo will be much in the thoughts of St. James's in the months ahead.

Roger Bucknell

WHAT ON EARTH IS THE CHURCH FOR?

This brilliant, and ever-relevant question, seemed to be most appropriate to the Lent Groups as the members studied the course week by week. Various reactions have been filtering through and the questionnaires have been sent off for analysis with the thousands of others completed throughout the country.

First though a word of thanks to those who acted as hosts and to those who acted as leaders. Without them we should have been struggling indeed. Flicking through the forms before they went, to see if there were any obvious pointers to the way people here were thinking three attitudes appeared to be fairly clear. First, almost everyone seemed to think that the church existed primarily to worship God; secondly a fair number were plainly confused by the traditional form of words (described in session 2) such as "we are justified through faith in Christ" and "Christ redeemed us from slavery to sin", which attempt to describe what God has achieved for us; thirdly a significant number thought that "speaking out on matters of social and political justice" should not be done, (although a significant number also thought this was absolutely essential).

This impression has been gained by looking at the ticks on the extreme left and right of the questionnaires. I believe that some thought there ought to be a "right" answer for each question. This is not so. What was being attempted was an exploration into current thinking and ideas. When all the papers are analysed (and we are promised a report by the autumn) we should have a much clearer idea of what a substantial proportion of Christian people in this country are thinking in 1986. This will enable church leaders, both nationally and locally, to know how better to help people grow in their faith and knowledge. This is a continuing process. If any of our groups would like to continue during the summer then why not try and meet together once a fortnight until the holidays? We are fellow pilgrims together, and pilgrims make progress.

THE MINISTRY OF HEALING

As some of you will now know, some of us from St. James's went to a Healing Seminar at St. Stephen's Church, East Twickenham earlier this year. The teaching was given by Rick Williams, and the worship was conducted by his wife Lulu. The teaching was recorded and, after consultation with Nicholas, it has been decided to hold four meetings at 8 pm on Wednesdays 14th and 28th May, and 11th and 25th June. We propose to listen to the tapes and discuss this type of ministry. A fifth meeting will be held on the 9th July when we hope to have someone from St. Stephen's to help us develop this important ministry. The meetings will be held in Wayside. Please come and let us learn together.

Don Rawlins

MEDITATION

"Kneel down and at all times pray for God's Grace that it be sufficient for your needs, that through God's abiding grace your weaknesses of body and frustration or darkness of mind shall be transmuted by the power of God which is made perfect in weakness. Then it shall come to pass that where before you were weak you shall recognise in that weakness, strength. Prayer that springs from need is always answered. Sometimes that which is needed is supplied; sometimes strength and wisdom is given so that the need is no longer experienced; sometimes grace sufficient to live with the need, neither granted or eradicated, is given and acceptance of hardship or suffering is learned and the knowledge of the God-given strength over weakness and suffering is a crown of glory."

M.O. from Writings, 19.8.75

A MESSAGE OF HOPE

I have always believed most strongly that our deepest experiences of God - active in our lives should be shared freely amongst His Church, that is, the people.

Recently my dearly loved husband died. Watching him dying, I experienced a tremendous mix of emotions. Firstly, I felt a great anger at the obscenity of death - an insult which I do not believe our loving God desired or willed for us.

This was followed by a vivid and totally new realisation of the enormity of what Christ overcame for us! It is possible to know this, with the intellect, and yet not have experienced it within one's soul.

My experience and my message is, that in the worst messes of life, Christ is right in there with you!

Many who read this could have told me that already! However, many more will not yet have passed through this particular loss. I believe that we can, in the Church build each other up tremendously through the sharing of

real experiences and the convictions which are born out of them. I have felt very devastated by the sense of loss, but never have I felt deserted.

In so many ways has God sustained me; in the love and concern, and the practical help so freely given to me by many in this Church, but also in a very direct way which is difficult to describe, but most surely experienced. On the day of Norman's funeral - early in the morning - I felt strongly led to look in a book, "Enfolded in Love", from the Revelations of Divine Love by Julian of Norwich. Here I read "The cause of all this pain is sin. But all shall be well, and all shall be well, and all manner of thing shall be well". It was as though in the simplicity and truth of these words, God was saying, "this is why - but - all shall be well"! What a consolation! How amazingly the Lord feeds us the strength we need at the precise moment it is required. With God nothing - but nothing, is wasted. From a tear-off calendar a friend gave me a reading for the day on which Norman died. Appropriately it said: - "He died upon a cross to make it crystal clear that He took responsibility for our wrongdoing; that He, the Lord of life, accepted death - that ultimate separation from God of which physical death is the sacrament - in order to deliver us from it for ever". Let us encourage one another with these realities! Thanks be to God who giveth us the victory!

Bea Page

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3rd HAMPTON HILL SCOUT GROUP NEWS Mike Childs (977 5041)

CUB INVESTITURE; Just before Easter, Geoffrey and two of his friends, Grahame Hook and Robert Francis, were invested into the 3rd Hampton Hill Cub Pack. This was performed by Yvonne Childs, Akela, in the presence of the Assistant District Commissioner and many Cub families. The boys all looked very smart, spoke up well and were not nervous. There was also an Award presented to Nathan Pearse for Endeavour.

Families were encouraged to stay for the whole meeting: we all enjoyed the ceremonies and the games, and generally being a "fly on the wall" at a normal Cub evening. Later there were refreshments and a general information talk by Akela about the Cubs and forthcoming events. The A.D.C. commented that never had she seen so much parental interest at a Cub meeting. The evening finished in the usual Cub fashion and we all returned home very happy and proud.

Debbie and John Nunn

P.S. Nathan raised £28 towards the £115 donated to the Spastic Society. This Endeavour project was initiated by Brown Pack with a little help from other sections.

The Troop recently gained 3rd place at the Annual District First-Aid

Competition while the Venture Unit did very well with 2 teams coming 3rd and 7th at the Annual District Midnight Hike Contest.

BARN DANCE - Parish Hall - Saturday 31st May - 8 to 11 pm

TICKETS: £ 3.50 898 9609 Refreshments

Come and dance or just sit and watch - it's a friendly evening

"50 CLUB DRAW" (April to September season)

**April winners £ 15 Debbie Nunn, 20 Embleton Walk, Hampton
 £ 6 Marilyn Coles, 183 High Street, Hampton Hill**

**New Entrants: Become a Supporter's Club member and join in the monthly fun.
All proceeds to Scout Group Funds. £ 6 for six months. Phone 979 3529.**

IN BRIEF

AUSTERITY LUNCH raised £ 55 for Christian Aid.

MAGAZINE APPEAL latest figure £ 512.

STAMPS - STAMPS - STAMPS

Many charitable organisations these days collect stamps to re-sell in order to raise money for their particular work, the Children's Society and Teddington Hospital among them. However at the recent Christian Resources Exhibition we came across a new use for stamps - Evangelism. The "Stamps for Evangelism" has been in existence for twenty years and in that time has raised £55,000 for missionary work at home and abroad and handled ninety million stamps. Everyone has stamps - a box will be put at the back of the church for people to put their stamps in and every so often we will sort them out to send off to one of the above mentioned charities. The margin of paper around the stamp should ideally be about a quarter of an inch. Damaged stamps, those used for receipts, any with writing on them or with missing perforations are not suitable. Post Cards, whether they have been through the post or not are also unusable, but leave the stamps on them. Green Shield stamps are also welcome. This is such an easy way of raising money; let's see if we can fill our box quickly. If anyone is interested in sorting or washing stamps for the "Stamps for Evangelism" please get in touch with me.

Helen Taylor

AROUND THE SPIRE

First this month we have news of two new babies, a boy and a girl. James Michael Hudgell arrived on 1st March, the son of Sue (nee Brown) and Dick. Then on Mothering Sunday, 9th March, a daughter was born to Sue and Derrick

Skelton, Meghan Louise. Sue is the eldest daughter of Tony and Margaret Lawrance. We send them all our love and best wishes. Baby Michael David Severn was baptised on Sunday 13th April and we welcome this new member of our congregation.

Dick and Mary Wilde's daughter Susan was recently married at St. Francis de Sales Church, and it was by all accounts a very happy occasion despite the thundery weather. We send Susan and her new husband our congratulations.

Another young couple who suffered a serious setback to their marriage recently were finally married at St. James's on 29th March, three weeks later than planned. A few days before their wedding was due to take place, they were out in Kingston in the evening when the bridegroom Clive James and his best man were set upon and both were stabbed and suffered punctured lungs, necessitating hospital treatment. Fortunately both made good recoveries and we wish Sally and Clive every happiness after such a worrying time.

Ron Bridges has also been in hospital recently with lung problems but is now home again and seems to be rapidly returning to normal. He was very touched by all the letters, cards, flowers, visitors and good wishes he received while he was ill and thanks everyone very much.

Eileen Newman, whose husband Tom died recently also wishes to thank all those people who have supported her in any way during this difficult time. May we always remember in our prayers those who have recently lost their partners, there are so many adjustments to be made and loneliness can become a problem.

Very soon we shall be saying goodbye to three ladies who have become very much a feature of St. James's in their own quiet way and who will be much missed. Misses Laurie and Merlin Brown and their sister Mrs. Coral Macarthy are moving to Southampton to be nearer their remaining family. At present Coral is in hospital but hopes to be home very soon; we wish them well in their new home. We shall miss them.

MRS VIVIEN PRENTICE

For years Mrs Vivien Prentice has delighted us with her lovely singing voice, and her dignity and cheerfulness in the choir. We have loved seeing her and hearing her.

Latterly, however, she has begun to have eye trouble and is becoming unable to see the words and notes of the music clearly. So sorry that you feel that you must leave the choir, dear Vivien, but how very good it will be to have you in the congregation.

And a big thank you for all you have done for us: the great, great

grandmother of one of our staunchest church families at St. James's; and an older member of our church who has helped us all in her forthrightness, her faithfulness and trust in her Lord and Saviour. Thank you Vivien for giving us so much.

Hannah Stanton

FROM THE REGISTERS

Baptisms

April	13	Michael David Severn	104 Broad Lane
	20	Nicola Claire Shields	34 River Way

Marriage

March 29 Clive Ian James and Sally Ann Stairs

Funerals

March	20	Alice Edith Underdown	Laurel Dene	aged 83
	20	Iris Louisa Maude Garrod	33 Taylor Close	aged 66
	25	Sidney Alfred Richards	210 Uxbridge Road	aged 71
	26	Stanley Charles Collins	67 Connaught Road	aged 84

DATES TO NOTE

May 3 10.00 Churchyard Working Party
5 Parish Ramble
6 10.30 Magazine Committee
20.00 P.C.C.
7 14.30 M.U. Janet Robinson on The Quakers
20.00 Good News Group
8 ASCENSION DAY
20.00 Parish Communion with Liturgical Dance
11 16.30 United Service for Christian Aid Week at All Saints' Hampton
16 19.30 Scout Group A.G.M.
18 PENTECOST
18.30 Drama by Covenant Players
20 20.00 Properties Committee
21 20.00 Good News Group
22 20.00 Liturgical Committee
June 3 M.U. Diocesan Festival at St. Paul's
4 14.30 M.U. Outing to Ham Convent
20.00 Good News Group
7 10.00 Churchyard Working Party
16 20.00 Hampton Council of Churches
18 20.00 Good News Group
28 Parish Outing to Brixworth
July 2 14.30 M.U. Garden Party