

The articles by Ruth Mills in our two last issues of the Spire have received fairly wide attention. Some of you will have seen the Surrey Comet on 2nd January in which the front page article on Aids and the Chalice was prompted by her thoughts on the subject. Ruth's letter which we split into two articles was the only response we have received to the challenge to people to say what they thought was important for them in the Christian Faith. Perhaps some of you have written your own thoughts down somewhere, but did not want to see them in print in any form. Be that as it may, we hope to continue exploring our Faith during Lent with another set of Lent House Groups. Last year we followed the Radio Course 'What on earth is the Church for?' and many found it very helpful. They realised they were not the only searchers, the only people who had what might be considered as conflicting views, the only Christians who might be worried that their ideas were somehow 'against' "official" teaching. As a result many felt heartened and I think most of those who took part enjoyed the exercise.

This Lent we hope similar groups will meet again to discuss the Faith of Christians. The P.C.C. has chosen a book by Richard Harries to be the centre of discussion. It is called 'Being a Christian'. Many of you will know Richard Harries from his talks on the Radio where he has the reputation of being an interesting and thought provoking broadcaster. Amongst other things he is known as an advocate of the Nuclear Deterrent. He has recently been appointed Bishop of Oxford, which means that his influence in the Church at large is likely to be considerable for some time yet. In recent years he has been Dean of King's College London. Jean Western is ordering copies of the book at £1.95 each and will I hope be able to get as many as we need. It has chapters on the central issues of belief written in a clear and lucid style. At the end of each chapter there are four questions for discussion in groups. These should enable us all to chip in to the conversation. After last year's experience I hope nobody will feel inhibited from joining in and taking part. You may feel you want to do nothing but listen in to others' talking, if you feel very shy or self-conscious. But I hope that the majority will want to make some sort of contribution. You may find that what you think is a stupid comment or question is just what someone else is longing to voice but does not have the courage to express. In due course there will be a list in the Church inviting you to put your name down so that we can plan.

I usually comment on some aspect of the Church's Calendar which occurs in the current month. February has only one major Festival, the Presentation of Christ in the Temple, which in the Middle Ages and in popular parlance was commonly called Candlemass. In the Prayer Book of 1662 it was also 'commonly called The Purification of Saint Mary the Virgin'. However we designate its title it reminds us of the journey that Mary and Joseph made to the Temple in accordance with Jewish Law to offer their first-born son to the Lord. It is both an act of natural piety and also an act of self-giving. Mary and Joseph must have left the Temple wondering what on earth they had let themselves in for and it would not have been surprising if they had been filled with anxiety. Perhaps that is what we often feel when we make our offerings of ourselves to God in whatever way we do it. But Mary and Joseph discovered that their trust was not misplaced. When the testing times came they were given the strength to cope.

## DANCING BEFORE THE LORD & JOINING HANDS IN FELLOWSHIP

At St. James's we are not used to hearing Spanish and Italian in church. But when a group of youngsters from the large scale visitation to London organised by the Taizé Community came to Hampton Hill this is what happened. Everything that Nicholas said in his simple address of welcome and comment on the significance of the Taizé phenomenon received an immediate double translation into Spanish and Italian.

It is a marvellous sign of hope in our age that so many young Christians of every denomination from all over Europe and the world (we had Canadians with us at St. James's too) should have been so enthusiastically attracted by the Taizé idea. The new Church of the future will be very different from the old one, with much of the stuffiness and stiffness gone. The Taizé visit gave us an insight into the new Christian fellowship which is growing among the younger generation.

At St. James's the Taizé youngsters for their part saw an aspect of church life which they had not been likely to have encountered before, in the beautiful liturgical dancing which a group of St. James's ladies have been cultivating for some time, reviving the ancient custom of the Israelites of dancing before the Lord and portraying aspects of our faith and life in a revealing new light.

Several items related to worship were presented by our Liturgical Dancers with appropriate musical accompaniment, or rather mutual musical interpretation, culminating in a formation of the Cross which included members of the congregation. Candles added the symbolism of light, and this tableau was eventually transformed into a dancing procession round the church, taking in the whole congregation who joined hands and exchanged the Peace as a climax. Truly a demonstration of real Christian fellowship transcending the boundaries of nationality, religion and language.

*Gordon & Jean Wilson*

## CHRISTINGLE SERVICE - 4th January

The Christingle Service is a delightful one and very well suited to the Informal Service, since both its supported charity and its participants are children. It is also one of the nicest ways I can think of to start the New Year.

For me it gave an opportunity to explain more clearly to Ben (2½) the principle of gift and received gift, since this is an integral part of the service. He was aware of the "giving" at Christmas and had certainly grasped the purpose of the visit of the three Kings to the baby Jesus; but it is very difficult to teach children that Christmas is about giving, and not, as it must seem to them, devoted to receiving, especially when the lion's share of presents from friends and relations is theirs.

His face was a delight as he held his Christingle and it fell only briefly as the candle was extinguished (having been pleaded with not to blow it out himself when he first received it!), but the sense of involvement and ceremony was obviously very powerful since he didn't want to spoil it by eating the sweets and fruit and wanted more when it was all over.

*Jane Wilde*

## CAROL SINGING

On the Tuesday before Christmas about forty intrepid singers braved the cold to wish the Parish "Happy Christmas". A good time was had by all. As we were not collecting and knocking on the door we had a slight problem to overcome the double glazing and TV sets but people did seem pleased to see us.

At the end of the evening we trooped back to Wayside for mince pies, sausage rolls and coffee with a "little something" extra. My thanks to all those who came, the ladies who did the cooking, to Olive Hayward for keeping us in time and pitch and to Ron Bridges for the coffee additive.

*Paul Revis*

## CRIB SERVICE

The traditional Crib Service was held as usual on Christmas Eve at 4 pm. This is always a well-attended service and this one was no exception.

Nicholas welcomed us all warmly and assured the grown-ups that they should not worry about any noise or movement (within reason!) made by their youngsters. Indeed, as if to test us all, there was quite a bit of wandering around and vocal participation by the children, but no one worried: it is, after all, part and parcel of that service.

The Christmas Story was read from the bible by Andrew Chubb. This was interspersed with some well-known carols, including "We Three Kings" - the individual verses sung by three sections of the congregation.

Following the prayers, we were all invited to go to the front of the church to see the stable at close quarters. Everyone was very impressed and hopefully went on their way with the Christmas story and spirit fresh and alive in their minds.

*Debbie Nunn*

## M.U. PARTY

The Mothers Union held their Christmas Party this year on Wednesday 7th January at the Parish Hall in School Road. Each member could invite one or more friends and this suggestion was gladly adopted as there were about 65 ladies present plus the Vicar.

We started with a game of jumbled "cut up" Christmas cards which we had to re-assemble in order to make the original card. The winner was she who "reformed" the most cards and would receive a small prize. Mrs. Joyce Jackson re-assembled 10 cards and Mrs. Margery Orton produced 9 cards. The Ladies Choir then sang a few songs which, as usual, we all enjoyed. After this, Chrissie Hockley gave us an amusing recitation, so much enjoyed that we were sorry she had not an encore to give us.

By this time, we were all looking forward to a "cuppa", so tea was served with scones, sausage rolls, cake and mince pies. Carols followed and the party was about over and all agreed it had been a pleasant afternoon.

*Hettie Burgess*

## QUINQUENNIAL INSPECTION OF THE CHURCH

Every five years we have to have, by law, an inspection of the fabric of the church building by a qualified surveyor. We are fortunate in London because the Diocese pays the fees for the Inspection (in most other places the parish has to foot the bill). As a result we know what things have to be attended to as a matter of urgency, as a matter of second priority, and as a matter of what it would be good to achieve to avoid trouble in the future. We have just received our architect's report and you will be sorry to hear that all is not well with the building, despite the many hours of effort put into 'routine maintenance' by a dedicated core of people headed by Jack Gostling and the members of the Properties Committee. (It is sometimes said of Victorian Churches that they were designed to last about 100 years, and they are now showing their age). Basically the problem is damp which is showing itself in various traditional ways. There are problems on the roof and with the drains. Unexciting but true. And the horrible reality is that unless we spend some money on improving them matters can only get worse. Then some of the stonework and brickwork needs close attention and in some cases replacing. Some of the windows are precarious where they have warped or the ties have rusted through. The lich-gate into Park Road is in a parlous state. We pride ourselves justly on the care we take of the building. However we shall have to brace ourselves for the fact that before very long we may have to find some substantial sums of money which we have not at present got. When the financial implications are known we shall publish the figures. The P.C.C. has not at the time of writing had an opportunity to discuss the matter in detail since the Report only arrived in December.

## CCG NEW YEAR PARTY

On New Years Day I was invited to a Party given by the Community Care Group. I was escorted by car to All Saints Church Hall, Hampton by a kind lady Mrs. Joyce Doughty. This is the third year CCG have done this, for the lonely, elderly and housebound. In all 90 people were catered for, the dinner was a delicious meat pie, the pastry melted in one's mouth, vegetables and for pudding a large slice of gateaux. There were 60 people in the hall, which the Rev. Vanstone gave not making any charge. Volunteers also took a meal to those who were housebound. The cost of everything is covered by Sue and Abe of the Jolly Gardeners from their collecting jar. These kind people are interested in the elderly people's welfare.

Going back to the hall which was beautifully decorated with pictures of the 12 days of Christmas and reindeer, the tables were nicely laid with paper Christmas cloths and each person had a cracker. We had coffee and were entertained by the Sapphire Group. There was some singing, Betty Feltham played some carols on the piano and Chrissie Hockley did a monologue about Red Riding Hood whose rescuer was Winston Churchill. The party ended with Old Lang Syne. The CCG Volunteers then gave everybody a box of matchmakers chocolates and we were taken safely home by the volunteer drivers.

I would like to end thanking all the kind people who care and gave up their time during this busy time. Also how good it was to see two young men giving time from their holiday. Well done Martin Jordan and Anthony Martin.

*Violet Clark*

PRAYER 'n' PRAISE

## A PRAISE ROCK

CELEBRATION

using modern songs and music

EVERY SUNDAY 8 p.m. in Church

*Musicians who would like to participate on a regular or occasional basis are most welcome (Tel: 979 4858 for details).*

### FACING BEREAVEMENT

In a recent issue of the Mothers Union magazine Home & Family, Sister Shirley Papworth of the Church Army describes two (fictional) families with teenage children who each lose a parent through death. In one case bereavement comes totally unexpected through a traffic accident, in the other after a long terminal illness. She shows how for obvious reasons one family is much better prepared for the sad event and its consequences, and uses the story to prompt some questions which we should all face. By kind permission of the Mothers Union we can here reproduce a section of the article:

"How prepared are you for your husband's death? Have you prepared him to be a widower? May I suggest you think through this check-list, and then discuss it with your husband and family?

**SPIRITUAL** Have we talked about 'What happens if I die?' Do they know what kind of funeral service I want? How I want my body committed to God? Do I know their wishes?

**MEDICAL** Do they know under what circumstances I want the life-support machine turned off? Do they know if I have bequeathed my body for research, or donated my eyes, kidneys, or any other organ for transplant purposes? Have they told me what they want?

**LEGAL** Have I made a will? Have I seen a solicitor for this purpose (beware of home-made wills). Have I consulted the children and my relatives about who could be their guardians should both their parents die?

**FINANCIAL** Do I know what insurances have been taken out, and where to find the policies? Do I know what debts we have? What provision has been made if I cannot keep up mortgage repayments? Do I have a small reserve of money somewhere, e.g. in a Building Society, to tide me over until the will is proved?

**PRACTICAL** Can we both drive the car? Do we both know how to alter the central heating time-clock, turn off the mains, wire a plug, iron a garment (not our own), cook Sunday lunch, sew on a button?

I could go on asking questions like these, but my purpose is to persuade you to question each other. To prepare the whole family to cope with premature death. This may sound very morbid, but our Lord gave us a pattern to follow in this too. Our Lord warned his disciples that his death was imminent (Mark 10, 33f). When he tried to discuss his

death with them, they backed away. They denied that death could come to him. How like so many of us!

Can we not take courage from his example and so cope with the task of preparing those whom we love to face death?"

In this article Sister Shirley does not deal with the emotional problems of bereavement. We welcome this opportunity to point out that the Deanery recently ran a training course on bereavement counselling. Several of the helpers at the Wayside Monday Centre took part. They found it a useful reminder of how to be a helpful listener for a bereaved person.

## GOD'S PROMISES - 9

Paul teaches us (Romans 9:8) that Abraham believed God's promise that he would father a vast nation although both he and Sarah were of an age that made this beyond the bounds of human possibility and credibility. Abraham was sure that the promise of God would be proved and justified (Heb. 11:1). All true, trusting, believing Christians are, according to Paul, heirs, "children born through God's promises".

The word PROMISES occurs again and again in both the old and new Testaments but somehow our minds don't recognise them as such and so we do not absorb them and trust them. We don't in other words "read, mark, learn and inwardly digest them". Paul says "this people ... their ears are dull and their eyes closed ... otherwise their eyes might see and their hearts understand and then they might turn again (the true meaning of repentance) and I would heal them;" not only their bodies but save and restore their souls.

"The word is near you, it is upon your lips and in your heart". IS IT? If on your lips is the confession 'Jesus is Lord' and in your hearts the faith that God raised Him from the dead, then you will find salvation. For the faith that leads to righteousness is in the heart and the confession that leads to salvation is upon the lips.

**BUT** the Good News had to be, and has to be spread, and even then "not all respond". Isaiah says, and Paul repeats "Lord, who has received your message?" Faith is awakened and kept alive by knowing and cherishing the message which comes through the Word of Christ. How well do we know, in depth, the Word, follow the teachings and instructions of our God as the Gospel Truth they are, and then rest and act in His promises?

Paul teaches us that to do this we must offer our very selves to Jesus, a living, dedicated sacrifice, making time for Him in our lives and letting Him thus transform them. Phillips translation of Romans 12:2 says "Don't let the world around you squeeze you into its own mould". We have to let Jesus re-make and re-mould us. "Let your minds be re-made and your whole nature transformed then you will be able to discern the will of God and know what is good, acceptable and perfect". It is a promise.

Christ's first disciples truly believed in Him; in His teachings and His promises and did mighty things in His name. Claiming His promises as rightful heirs to them, and resting in them in trusting faith and letting Christ re-make them and transform their whole nature according to His Word (which is still with US) they were able to carry on His Ministry. In the power of the Holy Spirit

(which is still with US) they preached the Gospel wherever they went and they healed the sick according to His instructions (which are also still with US). All over the world today Christ's disciples are doing the same in a massive, growing revival of the preaching and healing Ministry. Do you know about it, have you read about it - do you want to?

Not only the ordained clergy, but simple humble, everyday people are re-discovering the powerful truth of their transforming Saviour's Word. Just as Peter carried God's promise "Jesus Christ cures you" to Aeneas and Aeneas was cured, so people in our age and on our very doorsteps are more and more studying the promises to which all Christians are heirs if they will but value their inheritance, and are more and more giving their minds to them and are finding increasingly that belief and trust works. Ordinary people are becoming increasingly channels for the giving and receiving of Christ's healing grace to those who will accept it and who, both hearing and seeing, believe.

Everything belongs to us Paul tells us "the world, life and death, the present and the future ... all belong to you ... yet you belong to Christ and Christ to God. We must be regarded as Christ's underlings and as stewards of the secrets (or mysteries) of God. Well then, stewards are expected to show themselves trustworthy".

What a thought! How far are we trustworthy stewards of the Word and secrets of God? Do we just keep them in wraps and covers and mothballs and give them an occasional cursory glance or do we realise our treasures, treat them as the mainspring of our lives and see that they are put to good use for ourselves and for our fellow men. Do we let them pay dividends tenfold, fifty fold, a hundred fold, to our well-being and to Christ's honour and glory? Do we really believe that the Kingdom of God is not just a matter of talk but of power and that in the climate of Christ The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand?

*Margery Orton*

## **A HEALING SEMINAR**

In November of last year I attended a one day healing seminar at St. Stephen's Church in East Twickenham. The day was a Saturday which enabled an attendance of more than one hundred persons to participate in this occasion in which the reality of the healing power is the focus. This seminar was led by the Reverend Rick Williams and his team of helpers from St. Stephen's Church where the Healing Ministry has for some years been a strong feature of parish life.

The seminar was a four fold event consisting of three sections establishing the Biblical basis of healing and its authority in the Life and Ministry of Our Lord. Rick Williams gave a splendid commentary on these three sections which were entitled "The Authority and Power to Heal", "Physical Healing" and "Healing the Démonized". These three sections were divided by intervals for refreshments and the day was concluded with a Celebration of Worship in which was included the Ministry of Healing.

I am sure that everybody who attended this memorable occasion will appreciate the challenge of many insights into healing and its application to ourselves and other people. These insights include our recognition of our call to faith and not to fear in our lives here and now. Healing provides the means by

which fear is transformed into faith. Such healing is real in a world which has real problems both for society and for ourselves.

I commend everybody to enquire further into the Ministry of Healing. Its setting at both the seminar at St. Stephen's and in the "Music and Ministry" service at St. James's provides an intellectual and devotional stimulus to our worship in which healing is present and granted to individuals by the Holy Spirit.

*David Dore*

## THE CHRISTMAS TREE

There are several versions of the story of how we came by the tradition of using pine trees for Christmas Trees. One of the most attractive is connected with Boniface who has been described in all seriousness as 'the greatest Englishman'. (His original English name was Winfrith which means 'friend of peace'). Boniface was born in 680 AD and after a period as a monk at Nursling near Southampton went to what is now Germany and spent the rest of his life preaching the gospel to those who had never yet heard of Jesus. His influence on the Europe of his time was enormous and he quite frequently was in collision with the rulers of various countries telling them that their behaviour left much to be desired! He was determined to eradicate superstition and idolatry and on one occasion he found some people worshipping an oak tree which was sacred. He took an axe and cut it down. The people expected Boniface to be struck down by the god of the sacred oak. Nothing happened. Then Boniface noticed growing in the crack of the dead oak a fir tree sapling. At once he seized on the illustration of an evergreen springing from dead wood and likened the Resurrection of Jesus to the life of the tree whose leaves did not die.

Another story tells us that Martin Luther, father of the 16th century Reformation, is credited with the idea of the first Christmas tree. Seeing the beauty of the evergreen trees in the winter, he decided to cut one of the trees down and take it home. There the Christmas tree stood while all was bleak around. Here was life, in the midst of barrenness. Beauty against drab surroundings. Martin Luther had six children whom he loved dearly. He used the tree to remind them of the coming of the Son of God to bring eternal life into a world of sin and death. He explained that the tree, which is green in winter, is like our faith in Christ, which stays green, even in sorrow. It stays alive even in the midst of despair. Then he put candles on the tree. Perhaps it was the beginning of Christmas decorations. We don't know. But Martin Luther put the candles on the tree to remind us of the star which led the Wise Men to Christ. That Christmas season, when he brought in the tree, he taught his children a carol he had written. The English words are:

*Good news from heaven the angels bring  
Glad tidings to the earth they sing.  
To us this day a child is born  
To crown us with the joy of heaven.*

So remember the custom of Martin Luther and his family. They looked on the tree as a symbol of God's everlasting hope which anyone can have through Jesus Christ, the only saviour of the world.

*Luther story by courtesy Home and Family magazine of the Mothers Union*



## **SOCIAL COMMITTEE - BARN DANCE**

The Social Committee have booked a Barn Dance for Saturday 7th March, 7.30 pm. Tickets are on sale now. The caller will be Julia, who delighted us with her panache before. Her skill is bound to ensure that a good time will be had by everybody. Inviting food should be an added attraction.

*Margaret Revis*

## **AROUND THE SPIRE**

Congratulations to Wendy Baker on becoming the proud grandmother of a beautiful little girl called Laura. We wish the whole family all the best.

Father Tom Stanton has come back to London to have a hip operation. We hear that he is doing very well and our best wishes go to him for a speedy recovery.

We also hope sincerely that Ron Bridges will soon be back among us fully recovered. He is currently convalescing at home after an operation. Our warmest wishes to both Ron and Roma.

## **3rd HAMPTON HILL SCOUT GROUP**

### **VALENTINE'S TABLE SALE**

**Saturday 21st February, Church Hall**

This increasingly popular event will open to the public at 10.00 am; setting up is from 09.30 am. Hire of a table costs only £5. Sell from it what you want, either as a group for your charity or as an individual "do you own thing". Why not run a game? Be original! Spend a fun day with your friends and forget the chill winds of winter. Refreshments. Ring Roger on 979 3529 to reserve a place.

## **DEANERY MUSIC DAY**

On February 14th the Hampton Deanery Lay Training Committee is sponsoring a day exploring different kinds of Church Music with the accent on participation. The leader is Christopher Walker who is an Anglican in charge of Music at Clifton Roman Catholic Cathedral. It is hoped we shall have about 200 people present. The charge will be £1 per head. If you have a portable musical instrument to bring so much the better. Also bring a packed lunch - drinks will be provided. If possible let us know beforehand if you intend to come. If you can't just come. Christopher Walker believes that almost everyone can contribute something; **IT IS NOT FOR THE MUSICAL ELITE ONLY.** New ideas will be there in plenty.

---

*In 1985 it was estimated there were 952,000 Muslims in the UK; at least 150,000 more than the combined total of Methodists and Baptists!*

## FROM THE REGISTERS

### Baptism

January 11th Jade Natasha Cambridge 9 Rutland Lodge, Teddington

### Wedding

December 20th Katrina Patrizia Cole and Peter Thompson

### Funerals

December	23rd	Sidney Edward Tolfree	28 Pidgeon Lane	aged 88
January	6th	Arthur Henry Fern	182 Uxbridge Road	aged 89
	9th	Jane Agnes Crumpton	4 Fairlight	aged 80

## DATES TO NOTE

February	1	Epiphany 4		
	2	Presentation of Christ in the Temple		
	4	Good News Group		
	8	Epiphany 5		
	10	20.00	Properties Committee (151 Uxbridge Road)	
	11	20.00	Music and Healing Ministry	
	12	20.00	Stewardship Steering Committee	
	14	10.30	Deanery Music Day at All Hallows	
	15		9th Sunday before Easter	
	18	20.00	Good News Group	
March	3	20.00	P.C.C.	
	4	20.00	Parish Communion for Ash Wednesday	
	7	19.30	Barn Dance	
	8		6th Sunday before Easter	
	11	20.00	Music and Ministry of Healing	
April	2	20.00	Annual Parochial Church Meeting	

---

*You are smart if you only believe half of what you hear. You are downright brilliant when you know which half.*