

At the meeting of the Area Synod on February 7th, the Bishop of Kensington spoke about the Bishops' Report which would be debated in the next meeting of the General Synod. The key matter concerned the ordination of women to the priesthood. There has been much written about the subject at all levels in the Church. What has often confused people is that they have failed to realise all the implications which such a step would make; one is that if women were to be admitted to the priesthood then it would be theological nonsense to deny women the possibility of becoming bishops and the conflict in many people is between reason and emotion. This can never be resolved because the two are not alternatives. (So far as present male clergy are concerned there is also the matter of feeling threatened). For some it is possible to think of women priests but not of women bishops. On 22nd March a large number of women will be ordained Deacon. These women are already deaconesses. There has been much confusion in many people's minds as to the difference. According to Church Law a Deaconess is a member of the laity; when she is a Deacon a woman will be a member of the clergy. So the debate centres round whether all this is a matter of changing the nature of the ministry of the church or whether we are involved in developing the ministry in a natural way. You and I are not in the position where we can do a great deal to alter the decisions which will be taken, but we ought not to sweep the whole matter under the carpet for that reason. Christians do believe in the effectiveness of prayer. So all of us must make this a matter of our own personal prayer. Here in Hampton Hill we may think it does not concern us. But it is known the Bishop of London is against the ordaining of women to the priesthood and there must be local repercussions. Read all you can about the matter when it is reported in the press, take an interest, and pray.

You will read elsewhere in this copy of the Spire an article from Jack Gostling about our forthcoming Stewardship Renewal Campaign. Do please read it and consider where you stand. There will be more about this in the April Spire. Some may say that it is all really a drag and an irrelevance. Others may say 'haven't we got it right after all these years?' Others again may feel threatened or feel that we can never beat the system. However it is clear to me that we all have to go through the process of regular reassessment of what we consider to be valuable and worthwhile. Lent is a good time to start this reassessment. The Stewardship Campaign will enable us to firm up our own ideas of just what we consider is worth spending money on.

Nicholas Chubb

LENT GROUPS

As mentioned last month we are basing our Lent Discussion Groups on the book by Richard Harries "Being a Christian". We shall not be able to cover all of it during Lent but select some of the subjects such as 'How do we know God is real?', 'Who is Jesus', 'Life Everlasting', 'How to pray', 'Following Christ', 'Love and Politics'. There is also a chapter on Suffering and another on the Meaning of the Eucharist. It will be up to each group to decide what it wants to talk about, how best to make use of the material. Jean Western has some copies in Church. If you want to get your own copy elsewhere the book is published by Mowbray's and costs £1.95. There is a list in the Church on which you can

put your name. I hope as many people will take part this year as took part in the groups last year.

As this is going to press I have received notice of a Lent Course on BBC Radio London on Sunday evenings 9 - 9.30 pm. It is based on a paper called 'It's for You', which has been produced as a follow-up to the Faith in the City Report. There will be some copies in Church. Additional copies can be bought from Church House Bookshop, 31 Great Smith Street.

A VISITOR FROM KESTON COLLEGE

Those of us who live in the West and who are able to practise our Christian faith without let or hindrance find it difficult to imagine what life must be like for people who cannot do these things without risking trouble for themselves and their families.

On Sunday evening, at the Prayer & Praise service on 1st February, Roland Bryan from Keston College, told us about some of the difficulties faced by Christians in Communist and Marxist countries. Keston College, in Kent, monitors activities appertaining to Christians behind the Iron Curtain and in other places where the government is unsympathetic to Christianity. In most of these countries to be a Christian means no promotion at work, and no work at all in some sectors such as teaching. The children of Christian families have a hard time being ridiculed and generally bullied in schools. Nevertheless the Churches are full and people are still seeking the Good News of Jesus, Orthodox, Baptists and Pentecostals alike. The people who suffer most are those who seek to question, teach and inform others and Mr. Bryan gave the example of Alexander Ogorodnikov, a well thought of young film director who became a Christian and is now in prison for trying to bring people to Christ. (He was not among those dissidents released in early February.) Some of them are committed to mental hospitals but no one knows how many or for how long they have to endure this indignity.

May we remember these our fellow Christians by praying for them and by doing all we can to see that the work of Keston continues.

Helan Taylor

OUTING SATURDAY 17th JANUARY 1987

While Britain was in the grip of one of the coldest winters ever recorded, St. James's Church had a coach outing to see "Joseph and the Amazing Technicoloured Dream Coat". We had all donned our warmest clothes and trudged through the snow to our meeting place outside the Church. Good fortune was on our side. The coach arrived on time and we were all soon warm again, and reached the Royalty Theatre with half an hour to spare, for excellent refreshments in the bar.

The show was quite spectacular, and we were all entranced from the very first moment. The music was loud, but very catchy and the singing delightful. In some ways the production was like Piccadilly Circus, with all the flashing lights, the movement of people, and all the beautiful colours.

The story of Joseph was brought up to date. The Pharaoh being Elvis

Presley. When a real live donkey was led onto the stage he was cheered. He had been on the television news that week, due to the difficulty of reaching the theatre each day, through the snow drifts. The ending was very moving and Joseph's cloak really beautiful. We all left the theatre full of praise for such an enjoyable afternoon. I would like to thank David Lloyd for arranging the outing so well for us. May there be many more.

Pat Mitchell

PRAY NOW - PAY LATER?

It doesn't matter if you haven't got the money - use your credit card!

Today's society exists largely on borrowed money. 'Buy now, afford it later' is the message. And when the interest mounts, you can always borrow more - thus are people enabled and encouraged to live beyond their means.

What about us, the parish and people of St. James?

We have good, solid resources, substantial buildings, a dedicated staff of Priest and lay readers, and a lively congregational family, not over large, but faithfully committed to the maintenance and constant renewal of our faith and our resources.

Surely we are capable of managing our finances without running into debt?

Perhaps we should look at what it costs to have our own parish church and our own parish Priest, remembering also that we are part of a greater, Wider Church.

Take our own church first. Main running costs are lighting, heating, insurance, altar expenses, organist, Vicar's expenses and the maintenance and repair of the building and its contents. We also give regularly to a number of charities, (the Wider Church), about £2500 per year, say 10% of our total income.

How do we pay for our Priest? In London, the employment and housing costs of the clergy are met by the Diocese, which then sends the parishes bills averaging about two-thirds of those costs in the shape of their Common Fund Assessments or C.F.A. (Averaging, because some parishes are in poor areas: our Assessment reflects the full cost of employing Nicholas, perhaps even a modest subsidy towards poorer parishes - the Wider Church again. Mainly, however, these are subsidized through the Church Commissioners and the Diocese meeting the remaining one third of ministry costs.). Incidentally, 90% of the common fund goes to pay and house the clergy.

So our money goes out under two main headings; direct running expenses and charities which are largely under our control, and the C.F.A., which isn't. In fact it has gone up steeply over recent years due to inflation, loss of investment income, and long overdue improvements in clergy salaries and retirement provisions. Some approximate figures from recent Accounts:-

	COSTS TO BE MET		Total	INCOME SHORTFALL	
	C.F.A.	Other (Incl. Charities)			
1984	12000	9750	21750	18950	2800
1985	16800	8950	25750	21150	4600
1986*	18150	8250	26400	23600	2800
1987	17950	?	?	?	?
*Unaudited					
					Cumulative shortfall £10,200

How did we balance the books? Partly by using reserves, but also by defaulting on the C.F.A. where the deficit now amounts to £5000.

Obviously, then, we haven't been paying our way, and we need to raise our income **significantly**, even to support ourselves, let alone the Wider Church.

In addition overdue repairs to our church building are now urgently recommended in the Quinquennial Survey. Pending firm estimates, these could cost at least £15,000 over the next three to five years. **Overall, we should be looking for an income of at least £30,000.**

Our Treasurer doesn't have a St. James's credit card ("Ecclesiastical Express? Thank you, that'll do nicely, sir!) to draw on, but the next best, or possibly even better, is our Stewardship Scheme.

Essentially, a credit card is a guarantee by the Bank that the funds will be there when the bills are presented: your Stewardship pledges are an equally effective assurance of income from which we can plan to meet our bills. About 80% of our present income is thus guaranteed by our committed people: truly an example of "putting your money where your mouth is!".

In the past, when we have brought our needs to the Parish, the response has not been lacking. But it has been 8 years since our last full campaign, and in the interval we have suffered losses by deaths and removals, by inflation, and possibly also, by a loss of impetus.

So the P.C.C. has agreed that we shall, aided by the Diocese, carry out a Stewardship Renewal and Development Campaign from 26th April to 31st May this year. A Steering Committee is working on the details, and there will be more information in coming weeks.

Jack Gostling

IMPORTANT DON'T MISS IT IMPORTANT DON'T MISS IT IMPORTANT

ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING

Thursday 2nd April, 1987

8.00pm

Parish Hall, School Road

Up to date reports on all aspects of our Church's life.

Election of new PCC and Churchwardens.

(Ron Bridges has reached the end of his term of office and has to stand down)

AIR YOUR VIEWS

EXERCISE YOUR RIGHT TO VOTE

COME AND LISTEN

GOD'S PROMISES - 10

"God not only raised our Lord Jesus from the dead, he will raise us by His power do you know that your bodies are limbs and organs of Christ?" "They that wait on the Lord shall increase their strength." Many of us, in times of trouble, have found this promise a true one; we have prayed for strength and comfort for ourselves and for others, and others have prayed for us and our prayers have been granted. The ideal is that we should "wait on the Lord at all times and in all places with prayer, praise and thanksgiving". If we could but come near to achieving this ideal in the right spirit how different we should be, raised up by the power of our Lord, our entire selves, bodies, minds and spirits growing to full Christian maturity in His likeness.

If we are faithful we are told "God keeps faith, He will not allow you to be tested above your powers but when the test comes he will enable you to sustain it".

"Christ Jesus is the YES pronounced upon God's promises, every one of them". We can't begin to understand what lies in these words until we know what He has promised and realise them to be promises.

"When anyone is united to Christ there is a new world". Christ has told us "Behold, I make all things new". Perhaps we are not united with Him enough - united with Him by the reading and knowledge of His Word, united through prayer, through worship and the constant desire to be true followers of His Way so that we may come to the full wealth of conviction which understanding brings and grasp God's secret. "That secret lies in Christ Himself, in Him lie hidden all God's treasures of wisdom and knowledge and new life."

Life is hard, and at times threatens to overcome us, but what a comfort it is when, accustomed to being united to a constant companion, we find that His grace, freely given, is all we need and that His power does come to its full strength in our utter weakness. Paul knew the truth of this and has passed His Lord's promise on to us to comfort and strengthen us. He talks of the followers of The Way as being sons (and daughters) of God in union with Christ Jesus, "baptised into union with Him you have all put on Christ as a garment." A good and true man told me once that if, for some pressing reason, there was a day when he could not have his usual times of quiet study and prayer and worship "he felt undressed." I am sure he was conscious of the passage from Galatians just quoted. He knew from his experience of faithfully putting himself in God's way and seeking His presence, a little of what it means to be able to rest in His promises. "The Lord is near, have no anxiety but in everything make your requests known to God in prayer, in petition with thanksgiving, then the peace of God, which is beyond our utmost understanding will keep guard over your hearts and thoughts in Christ Jesus."

WORLD VISION WATER AID DAY

An organisation whose work we have supported in the past, namely World Vision, are promoting a day of fasting on March 28th. The money we normally spend on food for that day is to be donated to them to finance water projects in Africa. It is hard for us to imagine life without running water and if we can, we then wonder how other people manage, perhaps walking miles to get water and then it is heavily contaminated; no wonder the children die.

In the past we have raised money to buy Ag Packs, that is packs of seeds and tools to help farmers in Africa re-start after the draught. Crops and people must have water, now is the time to help them achieve this. Remember March 28th!

WOMEN'S WORLD DAY OF PRAYER

The services this year are held on Friday 6th March, at 2.30 and 8 pm, at the United Reformed Church, High Street, Hampton Hill. The speaker in the afternoon will be Mrs. Angela Walton, who was until recently Nursing Director at the Princess Alice Hospice in Esher, and in the evening Mrs. Pat Verge from the United Reformed Church in Kingston will speak. This is the centenary year of the Women's World Day of Prayer. Perhaps we should make a special effort to attend our local services.

CLERGY MARRIAGES

ITV Programme Encounter - "Great Expectations", Sunday 1st February 2pm

Did you watch this programme which dealt with the constant stresses and strains imposed on clergy marriages by a very special way of life and its often sacrificial demands and obligations? It was very disturbing viewing, bringing before the public a problem which is growing all the time as the divorce rate in clergy marriages rises and wives and husbands break down under the strain and children suffer. Listening to their difficulties and the seemingly quite inadequate help and guidance available to them made one ask "Is there anything congregations can do to ease the strain and are we guilty of expecting the impossible from our clergy families?" - Let us hear from you.

THE PERFECT PASTOR

Results of a computerized survey indicate that the perfect pastor preaches exactly 15 minutes. The pastor condemns sin but never embarrasses anyone, and works from 8 am until midnight and is also the janitor.

The pastor makes \$60 a week, wears good clothes, drives a new car, and give \$50 a week to the poor. The pastor is 28 years old, has been preaching for 25 years, is wonderfully gentle and pleasing to the eye, loves to work with teen-agers and spends countless hours with senior citizens. He makes 15 calls daily on parish families, shut-ins, and hospital patients, and is always in the office when needed.

If your pastor does not measure up, simply send this letter to six other parishes that are tired of their pastors, too. Then bundle up your pastor and send to the church at the top of the list. In one week you will receive 1,643 pastors. One of them should be perfect.

"SAMSON - A FORETASTE"

On Saturday 4 April, Teddington Choral Society will give a performance of Handel's "Samson" in the chapel of St. Mary's College, Waldegrave Road, Teddington, with soloists from the English National Opera and full orchestra.

Handel is reported to have thought this work to be superior even to "Messiah", and at about 2½ hours duration the full work is of similar grandeur.

A representative choir from the Society will give a run through of excerpts, mainly choruses in our church on Sunday 29th March at 6.30pm in place of Evensong.

The choir conductor, Geoffrey Bowyer, will play the organ and the direction of these excerpts will be by its Assistant Musical Director and accompanist, Pamela Phillips.

As in previous years, any monies put in the offertory plate will go to the Teddington Hospital Memorial Fund.

Jack Gostling

ST. JAMES'S NURSERY SCHOOL

At 9.30 am on Monday 4th March, 1957 the doors of St. James's Parish Hall were opened and a dozen little children walked in, slightly apprehensively perhaps, to start their very first day at school. St. James's Nursery School was open for the first time, and for six guineas a term plus 10/6 enrolment fee these children were about to be offered their first experience of playing and learning with other children in a different environment from home.

For these children and for their parents and teachers, an exciting new chapter had begun; the culmination of five months' unremitting work by a few people fired with enthusiasm and a determination to provide the very best for the children in the community. It had all begun in October 1956 with a series of talks given by Miss Beatrix Tudor-Hart, a child psychologist, to the St. James's Young Wives group. Out of these talks came an appreciation of the importance of nursery education, with the opportunities it afforded for creative play and mixing with other children; also a realisation that there was no such provision in the area. Encouraged by Miss Tudor-Hart and Mrs. Brunt, the vicar's wife, a small group of Young Wives decided to fill the need themselves.

Reading the correspondence that is carefully kept in the Nursery School 'archive' one can still get a sense of their excitement for the venture. A committee was set up and went straight into action, undaunted by the many obstacles in its way; one committee member complained afterwards of "literally miles of red tape". "Many people said we were mad" remembers Mrs. Molly Saunders, a founder-member of the committee and its treasurer for eleven years, "But we said, 'we're not, and we'll show you!'".

Permission having finally been granted, the next task was to equip the school. Mrs. Saunders recalls that their first aim was modest in the extreme; to get enough in the account for one term's rent of the hall and half a term's wages! Some toys and equipment in good condition were donated; jumble sales

yielded other useful items and yet more were home-made. Fathers cut down old tables and chairs to nursery size and a group of mothers persuaded the Church council to provide materials and pay them £10 to decorate the hall themselves. Baby baths were borrowed for sand and water play and the school was provided with dough, clay and paints. An architect father supplied old blueprints for painting and drawing. Novel fund-raising events were devised, including a Pie Party, to which all kinds of pies were brought, both savoury and sweet. Mrs. Saunders remembers the vicar being served with a helping of bacon and egg pie topped with a generous dollop of whipped cream - "he never said anything". Finally, Mrs. Nichols was appointed as teacher at the weekly salary of £3. 15s. 6d. plus free attendance for her son. Soon afterwards she was joined by Mrs. Cox as her assistant.

St. James's Nursery School was a great success from the outset and in the first year the number of pupils doubled. Even the most reluctant children were drawn out of their shell by the gentle, unpressurised approach favoured by the school and its teachers. They remember particularly a little boy who took three weeks to be tempted to give up "putting himself to bed" on two chairs in the kitchen every day in favour of playing with the other children! Articles appeared in the local papers and the school even attracted national attention with an article in the Observer newspaper and an interview on Woman's Hour. Housewife magazine produced a feature article with photographs; the author was deeply impressed by her visit, seeing "children in a good nursery school, lively yet self-disciplined, eager yet un-tense, playing yet working, developing individually yet learning to work together". Many similar community groups, encouraged by the success of the Hampton Hill venture, sought guidance from Jenifer White and her committee. Mrs. White advised them:

"There has to be real co-operation in a venture of this kind. And I don't mean merely passive co-operation. Everyone must be ready to give work, time and energy. It's been hard going, but because our school has built up gradually on a sound foundation, I feel confident it will continue long after all our own children have grown out of the nursery stage".

How right she was. A second generation of children now learns and plays each weekday morning in the church hall. On March 4th the children will be having a party - complete with cake and thirty candles! - to celebrate the achievement of this supremely successful community project. On Saturday May 9th the school's 30th Anniversary Fete, to be held in the church hall, will combine celebration with a major fund-raising event; non profit-making then as now, the school operates on a shoestring budget. Specialist equipment such as the expensive safety mats needed for use with climbing apparatus cannot be contrived at home, even by the most resourceful parents!

St. James's Nursery School is proud of its pioneering past and still looks into the future with confidence and - thankfully - an unchanged educational philosophy. We wish the school many more Happy Birthdays!.

Jane Newman

SCOUT GROUP NEWS

At the Informal Service on 1st February a very pleasing little ceremony took place. After the usual parade of all the Colours, Mark Mulberry took the new Union Jack to the Chancel where it was blessed by Nicholas. It was then laid on the Altar where it remained until the end of the service. A donation was left to the Scout Group by the late Dorothy Casey and there is an engraving on the flag to her memory.

50 CLUB:

Winners for February: £15 - No. 16, Freda Moses; £6 - No. 18, George Carr-Hill. New supporters welcome - £6 for 6 months.

BARN DANCE

Saturday 21st March 7.30 - 11.00 pm

Food Dancing Raffle

Adults £1.75 - Children under 14 £1.25

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).

TOGETHER IN PRAYER - with the Children's Society

For many years the Parish of St. James' has supported the work done by the Children's Society. About thirty families have collecting boxes and each year for about twenty years we have had a Christingle Service, one of the first churches to do so.

But the Children's Society is very conscious of its roots, so as well as money they seek our support in prayer. "Together in Prayer" is a new initiative being launched by the Society to make people more aware of their work and to help them by praying for it. A pack of resource information is available so that we may be better informed- so if anyone is interested, please contact me and I will give them more details. Meanwhile here are a few facts:

"In 1985, 600,000 children were living below the poverty line. That means 1 in every 20 children comes from a poor family. In 1984 an estimated 7,036 were physically abused. In that year 126 people were found guilty of cruelty or neglect. In 1984, 4,110 children under 18 were reported to the police as missing. In 1984, 149,000 under 16 had parents who were divorcing".

In all of these areas the Society is working positively, in a unique project with under-age runaways, for example, the Society has set up a safe house where youngsters can come, be looked after in safety, and have help in sorting out their futures.

For all these children and for the work of the Children's Society prayer is essential.

Helen Taylor

AROUND THE SPIRE

For some time we had been praying for Garry Severn, Hal Severn's brother. Garry died of a brain tumour at the end of January. We send our love and condolences to Heather, his wife, and her family, and also to Hal and Eila.

Our Churchwarden, Ron Bridges, is continuing to make progress after his lung operation and is gradually to be seen among us once more we are pleased to say.

Our very best wishes go to Alison Loyd, the wife of our Advertising and Distribution Manager, Alwyn. After an operation she has made a good start on the road to recovery and we wish her steady progress.

The baby daughter of Jane and Richard Newman was christened Lucy Anne Emily at the informal service recently. We wish the new baby, Ben's sister, and all the family well and welcome them into the life of the Church.

It was very nice to see Brenda and Ray Oliver in church on 8th February. The "whizz kid of Hampton Hill", as she was called at the Old People's Welfare Party that Saturday, was back for a short visit, and we were pleased to hear that in her new home she is now as busy with Brownies etc. as ever she was in Hampton Hill. Ray has become a churchwarden and is looking forward to being licensed to administer the chalice.

FROM THE REGISTERS

Baptisms

February	1st	Lucy Anne Emily Newman	16 School Road
	8th	Richard Brooks Jarvis	90 St. James's Avenue
	15th	Nadine Usha Rajan	31, St. James's Road
		Laura France Hide	16 Lindsay Road
		Stephanie Jade Russell	64 Rectory Grove

Funerals

February	4th	Garry Michael Severn	9 Buckingham Close	aged 58
	6th	Dorothy Violet Webb	16 Fairlight	aged 74