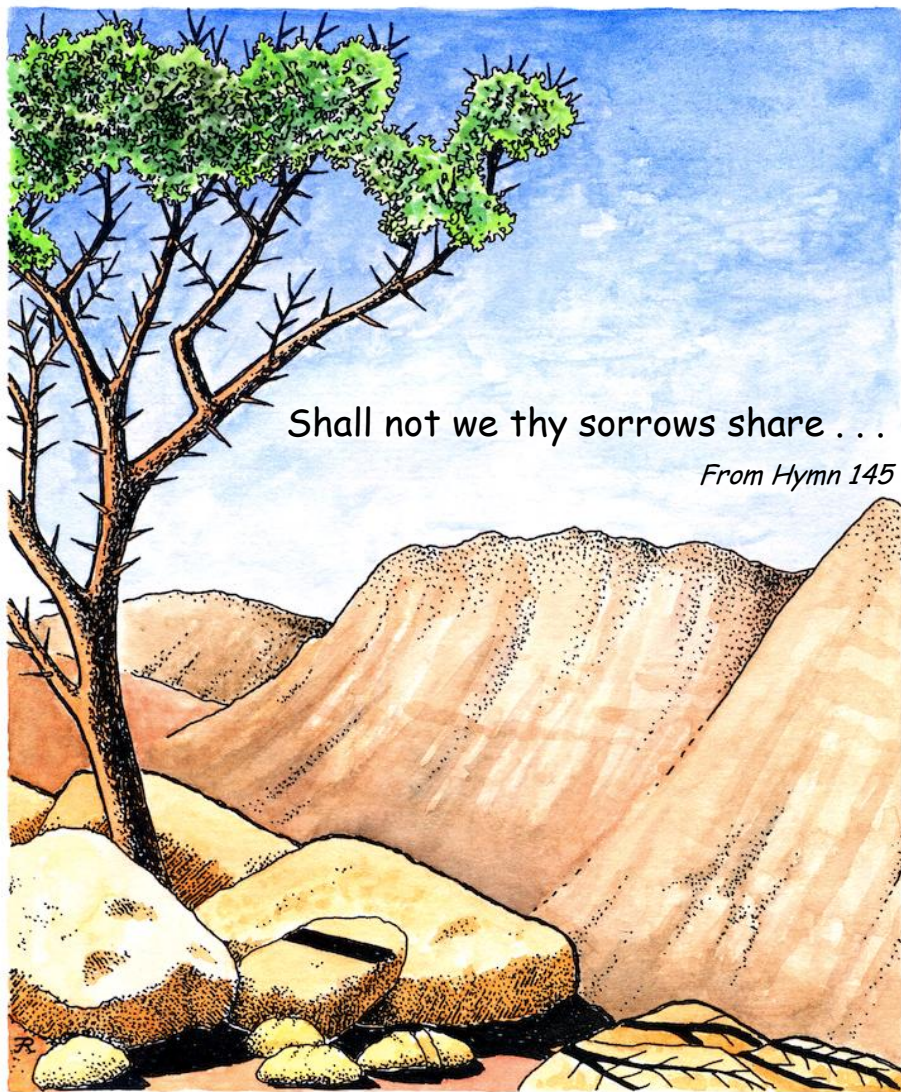


ST. MARTIN'S MONTHLY

February 2016

50p



*Turn to pages 6 and 7
for information of our Lenten programme*

St Martin's Church, Hale Gardens, London W3 9SQ

(Registered charity no. 1132976)

www.stmartinswestacton.co.uk

Email: stmartins@stmartinswestacton.com

The Vicar	The Rev'd Dr Nicholas Henderson (also Surrogate and Chaplain to Acton Care Centre) 020 8992 2333
SSM Assistant Priest	The Rev'd Brandy Pearson (c/o Parish Office)
Permission to Officiate	The Rev'd Robert Pearson
Commissioned Lay Minister to Japanese Anglican Church UK	Mrs Yuki Johnson (07572 324107) yukifunakawa@btinternet.com
Parish Administrator (weekdays: 9.30am – 1.30pm)	Parish Office, rear of Church Hall, Hale Gardens, W3 9SQ 020 8992 2333
Reader	Dr Margaret Jones (020 8997 1418)
Reader Emeritus	Mrs Lynne Armstrong (020 8992 8341)
Commissioned Lay Minister	Mrs Jacqueline Nicholls (c/o Parish Office)
Churchwardens	Mrs Liza Ambridge (020 8992 3029) Mr Jeremy Thorpe-Woods
Deputy Churchwarden	Mr John Wilson (c/o Parish Office)
Director of Music	Mr Kenneth Bartram (c/o Parish Office)
Magazine Editor	Clive Davis (clive.a.g.davis@btinternet.com)

The Vicar is available for consultation and enquiries by appointment.
Please ring the Parish Office.

Articles for the next month's magazine should be sent to
Clive Davis (email: clive.a.g.davis@btinternet.com)

They should reach the Editor by 16th February.

The March magazine will be on sale by 28th February

February fill dyke



Benjamin Williams Leader 1831 – 1923

This famous Victorian landscape, February Fill Dyke was greeted with lukewarm reviews when it was first exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1881. With later showings in Manchester for the Royal Jubilee Exhibition, it became very popular. The scene is actually a November evening after rain.

The title is taken from an old country rhyme:

'February fill the dyke,
Be it black or be it white;
But if it be white,
It's the better to like.

Indisputably and thus far the winter has been a strange one excessively wet, stormy and lacking in any significant frost it has been as gloomy as Leader's painting.

In times long past this would have suited the season into which we are now moving. Lent begins early in this year with Ash Wednesday on 10th February - Easter Day will be on Sunday 27th March.

Lent was an austere time of fasting and preparation and matched perfectly what would have been a dark and cold season before Spring. Today things are rather different when in a largely urban environment the distinction between the seasons is less evident and the relentless turning of the economic grindstone is never ending.

That's not to say that the season of Lent is without its virtues and it still has a role in preparing us to mark again the good news of Easter. Here at St Martin's we have three new groups to help us in this process. These are the Lenten Prayer and Spirituality Group, the

Reflections Group and the monthly 'On message' Group all three of which are on the website and elsewhere in the magazine.

But if we are preparing and if we can take time to set aside to be reflective what exactly are we doing? In fact this question is unanswerable as we move at this point into a subjective world where needs are individual and not corporate. That is why Christianity, at least in the form in which we experience it, lays stress on a personal relationship with God through Jesus Christ. This is an on-going work in progress as times and circumstances change and they change us with and we with them.

It is often said that the old saying 'February Fill Dyke' is actually an invocation rather than a statement of fact. Notwithstanding that we have had too much rain this year farmers used to hope for a 'good' February because so often the month did not run as hoped.

This seems to me to be a good metaphor for life as it is lived and as this happens to be a leap year we've got an extra day on Monday 29th to think about it!

Nicholas



NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN

Revision of the Church Electoral Roll

will begin on Tuesday 1st March 2016

ending on Thursday 31st March 2016

Electoral Rolls forms are available from the Parish Office
or can be found at the back of the church.

At a **meeting of parishioners** in the Church Hall on

Sunday, 24th April 2016 at 11.15am

for the purpose of electing Churchwardens.

The **Annual Parochial Church Meeting** will take place in the
Church Hall on **Sunday, 24th April 2016 at 11.15am**

for the election of twelve parochial representatives
to serve on the Parochial Church Council.



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Lent and Easter 2016

Tuesday 9th February.

'Drop in' Shrove Tuesday Pancake Party in the Vicarage 6pm - 8pm

Ash Wednesday 10th February

There will be services at 11am and 8pm

The Sermon Themes at the Sunday 10am Parish Communion:

14th February: The love of God?

21st February: Why is there so much injustice in the world?

28th February: What are we supposed to do about other faiths?

13th March: The meaning of life?

Lent Prayer Workshops

Tuesday Afternoons in the Parish Room: 2 – 3.30pm

An hour of teaching and discussion with ½ hour of silence for prayer.

Led by the Rev'd Brandy Pearson.

February 16th Prayer and Scripture

February 23rd Prayer and Imagination

March 1st Prayers and the Senses

March 8th Prayer and the Natural World

March 16th Prayer and the News

Mothering Sunday 6th March

10am: All-age service for Mothering Sunday

Palm Sunday 20th March

10am Parish Communion with Procession of palms

Maundy Thursday 24th March

8pm: The Last Supper

Good Friday 25th March

10am: Children's Service

12noon: Stations of the Cross

Easter Eve 26th March

6pm: The Easter Fire Ceremony

Easter Sunday 27th March

8am: Holy Communion

10am: Easter Parish Communion

Followed by the Annual Egg Rolling Competition

6.30pm: Festal Evensong

This Lent I am leading workshops on prayer. At the moment, there are sessions on Tuesday afternoons, but I am most willing to hold another group on Tuesday evenings for people busy during the day. Come and talk to me if this interests you.

Busyness is one reason people find it hard to take time to pray. There is always something else to be done, as Martha found:

"Jesus entered a certain village, where a woman named Martha welcomed him into her home. She had a sister named Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet and listened to what he was saying. But Martha was distracted by her many tasks; so she came to him and asked, 'Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to do all the work by myself? Tell her then to help me.' But the Lord answered her, 'Martha, Martha, you are worried and distracted by many things; there is need of only one thing. Mary has chosen the better part, which will not be taken away from her.'" Luke 10:38-42

Prayer is that *"one thing"*, but it is hard to make prayer a priority. We can all be sidetracked by *"many tasks"*. It helps me, that at my ordination, I made a promise to pray every day – it pushes prayer up my list of priorities. Nevertheless, it is not always easy.

However, this is not the only problem. Prayer is about encountering God and many of us find that scary – we believe there must be a right way to pray, and that if we get it wrong, we will somehow get in trouble with God.

"We today yearn for prayer and hide from prayer. We are attracted to it and repelled by it. We believe prayer is something we should do, even something we want to do; but it seems as if a chasm stands between us and actually praying. We experience the agony of prayerlessness." Richard Foster in "Prayer - finding the heart's true home"

If you go into a religious book shop, there are whole walls of books on prayer and spirituality. I think this reflects the great desire people have for a prayerful life, but reading about prayer is no substitute for actually praying and our workshops will not just be about teaching and discussion, but include time for prayer.

Prayer is at the heart of a lively church community and at the heart of a living faith. So come along and take part.

Brandy Pearson

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The Programme for this coming Spring

Lectures take place at **8pm on Thursdays** in the Parish Room
(entrance via Parish Office, to rear of Church Hall)



Matthew, Mark, Luke and John Spirituality in the four Gospels. 18th February

The Rev'd Georgiana Heskins has a BD and Mth in Biblical Studies from King's College, London and trained for ministry at Westcott House in Cambridge. She is an Honorary Minor Canon of Southwark Cathedral, currently ministering in the parish of St John the Evangelist, Waterloo. She has worked on the Ignation Spiritual Direction Course based at the London Spiritual Centre and is currently completing a Post Graduate Diploma.



How to 'read' the English Country Church. 17th March

The Rev'd Dr. Nicholas Henderson tells us how cultural, religious and social changes over the centuries have shaped our churches in stone, wood, glass and art.



The Christian on the psychoanalyst's couch – reflection on religion and psychology. 21st April

The Rev'd Dr. Keven Hall studied the natural sciences in New Zealand, theology in NZ and the UK, and Jungian psychology in the UK. He has worked in research, as a priest, including at St. Martin's and All Saints, Ealing Common. He works at present in private practice as a Jungian psychoanalyst in London Bridge.

Please visit our website for further details:
www.stmartinswestacton.co.uk



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(Terms apply – please speak to our office).

The Reflections Group

This meets in members homes to discuss a topic to do with faith and discipleship on a weekday evening. We are currently working on an anthology of "Visions of Love". This gives about three pages of quotations on a whole series of topics. We spend the first ten minutes or so reading the section on the chosen topic and then discuss. We are starting with the theme of "Discipleship".



They start at 8pm and are led by John Beastall.

The forthcoming dates are:
February 11th, February 25th and March 10th.

The details of the venue of each meeting are available from the Parish Office.



PCC meetings



Prayers are led by PCC members at each meeting which also ends with Compline the late night prayer service again led by members. Below is a prayer composed by Liza Ambridge and used by Emma Stehlin.

Pre-meeting prayer: "All-knowing God, please bless us all with ears to listen and eyes to see... May we hear what each person is saying to us, may we both discern what You are saying to them, and may we see Your hand in the words they speak, the opinions they hold and the contribution they make to our discussions. Give us each the wisdom to know when to speak, when to be silent and when to pray. Holy Spirit, guide us in this PCC meeting, for Your glory and for our good. Amen."

Last month's Baptism

Tommi McMullan was christened on Sunday 10th January. Here he is with his godparents and mother.



And from last month's Epiphany Carol Service . . .



Members of the congregation enjoy mulled wine (lemonade for the juniors!) and mince pies after the Epiphany Carol service on Sunday evening 3rd January.



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Late Christmas 2015 photos . . .

From the Acton Care Centre.



Ken Bartram as organist, The Rev'd Brandy Pearson as Assistant Priest, Marie Nugent Voluntary Services Organiser and the Vicar at the Annual Acton Care Centre Carol Service held on Wednesday 23rd December.

From the Wednesday morning Coffee Club.



Coffee Club eve of Christmas Eve Party & on the eve of Christmas Eve.

And it is goodbye to the Christmas Tree.



The Christmas tree team put last year's tree to a dignified rest in the churchyard for later disposal on Ealing Common.

A letter from Alyson Barnett-Cowan:

729 Annette St
Toronto, ON
Canada M6S 2E3

Advent, 2015

Dear Family and Friends:

Well, what a difference a year makes. This time last year I wrote you that Bruce had been suffering from a non-life-threatening illness. Not so, as most of you now know. When we returned to Canada from England in December last year he was diagnosed with throat cancer, from which he died on July 1, this year – Canada Day.

It is very difficult to put into words what this year has been like. In February Bruce underwent heavy duty radiation. That was the coldest month on record here in Toronto and every weekday we made the trip to the hospital through ice and snow, sometimes leaving as early as 6 am. The treatments left him very tired, but he stayed positive, and indeed the radiation was successful in getting rid of the original tumour on his tonsil. But by the end of May we learned that the cancer had spread irreparably, and we made the decision to move to palliative care. After a week of this at home, and then a week at the wonderful Kensington Hospice, he died peacefully.

Not, however, without a trip to Victoria in April to see our youngest, Francesca, graduate with great prestige from the Canadian Centre for the Performing Arts. It was a delight to see her end-of-term production and to meet her colleagues and teachers. Theatre is definitely her calling!

Bruce was also able to celebrate Mother's Day with his mother and our children, and Father's Day with Michael and family in Waterloo on the Saturday, and then brunch with Francesca, Catherine and Hyun Suk and Hyun Suk's mother and sister from Seoul.

I am so very grateful to so many of you who have written with your condolences, and especially to those who helped Bruce in his last months. St Martin's parish in London, and St Martin's parish in Toronto, carried us through this terrible year, and I really could not have come through with any sanity intact if it weren't for you.

You also probably know that I retired this year. Officially I retired as Director for Unity Faith and Order at the Anglican Communion Office at the end of January, but then I stayed on as Interim Secretary General half-time until the end of June, at which point a successor to Kenneth Kearon was appointed: Archbishop Josiah Iduwo-Fearon from Nigeria. Travelling to London a week a month to see staff and meet with the Archbishop of Canterbury, I mostly managed the job from the cafeteria of the Princess Margaret Hospital while Bruce was having treatments. A surreal experience.

But now I am really retired – and living out the old saying that one is just as busy afterwards. I have a voluntary position as President of the Canadian Council of Churches. My duties include presiding at meetings of the Governing Board (representatives of the 25 member churches) twice a year, and at the Executive Committee, and representing the Council in various fora. To date I have attended the triennial meeting of the United Church of Canada in Newfoundland, and the annual plenary of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops in Cornwall (Ontario). In the coming year I hope to visit the leaders of all the member churches, which will take me as far west as Winnipeg.

Meanwhile, on the family front, the very excellent news is that Catherine and Hyun Suk welcomed their first child, Diana Barnett-Cowan Choi, on July 11. Francesca and I were in the next room while Catherine delivered and we were thrilled to meet the latest addition. She is growing well and is already helping her parents at the Hanji Paper and Gift stores! The stores are doing exceptionally well. Francesca, while still hoping to get a job in theatre, is working for her sister at the stores.

Michael continues to teach and do research in the kinesiology department at the University of Waterloo. Ryan has been taking some time off work to enjoy the children. Quinn (7) is active with swimming, Brownies and piano. Ewan and Caelan (5) also swim, attend Beavers, and take kung fu and gymnastics respectively. It's a busy household!

Bruce's mother, Donna, moved this year to a seniors' residence, and I have been helping her adjust to her new digs. She is facing a number of health issues but has made friends in the building and keeps a cheerful outlook.

My family is very much looking forward to the end of this year. I know that there will be new possibilities, and that God's grace does abound even through loss. That sounds cliché, but it's true that there have been moments of grace in the midst of all this, not least through your care and friendship.

Have a wonderful and happy Christmas, and may 2016 be a truly new and fulfilling year.

Alyson



Diana at 5 months



Grandma with Diana, Caelan, Quinn and Ewan
on the twins' 5th birthday

Brigitta Snodgrass R.I.P.

We are very sorry to hear of the death of Brigitta Snodgrass, wife of the late Nick Snodgrass. For many years they were formerly members of St Martin's Church and will be missed by all who remember them with affection.

Nicholas



'Yalda night'

Our Iranian group held a special celebration in the Hall on Monday 21st December the shortest day of the year. A traditional Iranian celebration called 'Yalda night'.



Yalda, which means birth, is a Syriac word imported into the Persian language. It is also referred to as Shab-e Chelleh, a celebration of winter solstice on December 21st - the last night of autumn and the longest night of the year.



On this night, family members get together. Dried nuts, watermelon and pomegranate are served, prayers to God are offered, as well classic poetry and songs.

Although its origins were in ancient Zoroastrianism the festival is celebrated like Christmas as a family get together.

Junior Church Rota for February

7 th February	Transfiguration	Shelley and Ellen
14 th February	First Sunday in Lent	to be confirmed
21 st February	Second Sunday in Lent	to be confirmed
28 th February	Third Sunday in Lent	Tara and Jackie

Congratulations!

Congratulations to Ken Bartram's eldest son David. David has been awarded an OBE for services to education.



ON MESSAGE FOR JANUARY.

Every Sunday at St Martin's as in many churches we recite the Creed together, but what do we understand by it and does it remain useful at the beginning of the twenty-first century? This was the question the On Message group tackled on the 10th January.

We all agreed that it was a complex subject that demanded a lot of thought, but in our discussion we found a number of ways that we could approach it. Is the creed a focus of unity for Christians? As one of our group reminded us the early church had a simple creed expressed in the statement 'Jesus is Lord.' Is that enough to unite us? And we agreed that assent to a group of statements or adherence to a law cannot be a substitute for a commitment in practice to love and care for our sisters and brothers. Faith is proclaimed and made real in the things we do, something which is clear in the teachings of Jesus. "God is love", and it is in loving that we make real the presence of God in our world.

Our other question raised the issue of the authority of bishops especially for lay people who had not made any vows of obedience. The Anglican idea that we base our faith on scripture, tradition but also on our own consciences and ability to reason was felt to be important here. We are called to be adults in faith as well as in fact.

Maybe this raises questions for you, so why not pop them in the box at the back of the church and come along to the next meeting.

Rob Pearson.

Congratulations on Richard Bartlett's new appointment.



Richard Bartlett was the Assistant Priest at All Saints Church when St Martin's and All Saints were held in plurality. After leaving All Saints, he spent a few years as Priest in the Anglican Church in Brazil. In 2005 Richard and his family returned to the UK and he was appointed to Holy Trinity, Northwood. A few weeks ago (January 24th, 2016) Richard left Holy Trinity to start a new challenge.

He has been appointed Director for Mission Engagement with the Anglican Mission Agency 'The United Society'. *Us*, as it is known, is the new name for USPG. He begins this new chapter in this month.

He hopes to remain living in that area so the children can continue their schooling where they are. He says: "Please pray for us as we begin to make this transition".



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Attacks on Kenya Christians on the increase

Release International has charted a 'worrying' increase in attacks against Christians in Kenya, as Al-Shabaab militants seek to infiltrate the country. So says Paul Robinson of Release International, which supports persecuted Christians around the world. A recent fact-finding visit by Release recorded increasing attacks against churches by Islamist gunmen based in Somalia, who are affiliated to al-Qaeda. There are also disturbing signs of hard-line intolerance towards Muslims who change their religion.

Attacks against churches in this Christian majority country are increasing. In the last few months Islamist extremists set fire to two church buildings in Tiribe near Mombasa. Pastor Mutuku of Faith Victory Church says his congregation now meets in a tent.

Release International is urging the Kenyan government to do all it can to step up security. Release says: 'Muslim leaders must take urgent steps to counter the radicalisation of their youth.'

Last April, al-Shabaab attacked a predominately Christian college in north-east Kenya, killing 150. The terrorist group became notorious after attacking the Westgate shopping Mall in Nairobi in September 2013, killing at least 67 people. The Kenyan government has sent troops to Somalia, where al-Shabaab is based, and has raided mosques in Kenya to counter the growing radicalisation.

Through its international network of missions Release International serves persecuted Christians in more than 30 countries around the world.



Church Flower Rota for February

22 nd January – 3 rd February	Bryony Franklin
5 th February – 17 th February	Jackie Nicholls
19 th February – 2 nd March	Angela North

Please call the next person on the list to remind them it is their turn once your fortnight is over. Don't forget to water your flowers every 3-4 days. Many thanks.

Camilla

St Martin's, West Acton, London



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Usual Sunday Services

8am: Holy Communion

10am: Parish Communion

6.30pm: Evensong

Our Junior Church meets in the Church Hall at 10am
except when there is a Family Service.

The next Family Service will be on March 6th.

The 'On-Message' Group meets every second Sunday of the month.

Over coffee the group discusses various issues for Christians.

The next meeting will be February 14th at 11.15am

Our Youth Group meets every Tuesday at 7pm
in the Parish Room (rear of Church Hall)

Japanese Anglican Church UK

meets every third Sunday of the month:

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