

Englefield Parish News

February - March 2018



The Parish of St Mark's, Englefield

Resident Priest

The Reverend Nicholas Wynne-Jones nwwj@stmarksenglefield.org.uk
St Mark's House, Englefield, Reading RG7 5EP 0118 9303595

Priest-in-charge of the Benefice revd.ann.templeman@holyltrinitytheale.org.uk
The Reverend Ann Templeman 0118 9302759

Churchwardens churchwardens@stmarksenglefield.org.uk
Victoria Fishburn 0118 9302497
Peter Haig 0118 9302416

Child Protection Officer
Susannah McBain 07772 425133

Parochial Church Council

Secretary office@stmarksenglefield.org.uk
Penny Savage 0118 9410808
Treasurer treasurer@stmarksenglefield.org.uk
Ron Marillier 0118 9305152
Electoral Roll Officer susan.smith.ufton@gmail.com
Sue Smith 0118 98333258

Parish Council

Chairman edward.crookes@englefield.co.uk
Edward Crookes 0118 9302504
Clerk ajuliaives@btinternet.com
Julia Ives 01635 248411

St Mark's Church website: www.stmarksenglefield.org.uk
Englefield Parish Council website: www.englefieldpc.org.uk

Front cover: A view of St Mark's Church.

Englefield Parish News is published every two months and is now distributed free to all households in the parish of Englefield. Contributions are welcome and can be emailed to catherinehaig@gmail.com or handed in to Nick Wynne-Jones or to the Village Stores by the 20th of the preceding month.

From St Mark's House

Dear friends

“Our language has created the word ‘loneliness’ to express the pain of being alone ... the word ‘solitude’ to express the glory of being alone.” (*Paul Tillich*)

The pain of being alone is recognised in the appointment of a Minister for Loneliness and, as Theresa May observed in announcing this, “For far too many people, loneliness is the sad reality of modern life”. The paradox is that in our most inter-connected society people are estranged. Loneliness is a problem for millions, regardless of age, and has grown with the changes in our patterns of living, communicating and family life. It is possible to be with people yet still feel lonely - perhaps the hardest form of loneliness. The Italian hotel brochure states with unintentional irony: “This hotel is renowned for its peace and solitude. In fact, crowds from all over the world flock here to enjoy its solitude.”

Whereas loneliness is a passive situation, often arising from our circumstances, solitude is an active decision - being alone without being lonely. Lent is that time when we remember Jesus’ solitude in the wilderness as he embarked upon the road to the Cross. The sense of loneliness we experience is often, at heart, an expression of longing for an intimacy that only God can satisfy. This is one reason why Jesus regularly withdrew into the desert: to have time with his heavenly Father. If he needed that time with God, how much more do we. If anyone could say they understood loneliness, it was him: no one on earth could put an arm around him and say, “I know exactly what you’re going through”. At that time his comfort, in warning his disciples, was to say “you will be scattered, each to your own home. You will leave me all alone. Yet I am not alone, for my Father is with me.” (John 16:32)

But then that comfort was torn from him in that terrible cry from the Cross, “My God, why have you forsaken me?” (Matthew 27:46). Jesus doesn’t just understand our loneliness; there he was destroying it. Because he was ‘God-forsaken’ as he bore our sins, we are no longer estranged from God, but members of God’s family through faith. To us the risen Christ says, “I am with you always.” “Where a people prays, there is the church; and where the church is; there is never loneliness,” said Dietrich Bonhoeffer, a German pastor imprisoned and finally executed by the Nazis for resistance to Hitler. He wrote from prison of the agony of loneliness and the answer he found that strengthened him to the end:

Who am I? They mock me, these lonely questions of mine.

Whoever I am, Thou knowest, O God, I am Thine!

In His family

Nick and Harriet

Diary: February - March

Saturday 3 rd February	The Village Artisan Food Market , Beenham Village Hall, RG7 5NN, 10am till 12 noon Bingo at the Social Club, 8pm
Sunday 4 th February	Holy Communion , 10.30 at St Mark's
Monday 5 th February	Fish and Chips supper at the Social Club, 8pm, <i>please pre-book with Tony by Friday 2nd (07802 479952)</i>
Sunday 11 th February	Holy Communion , 10.30 at St Mark's
Tuesday 13 th February	Shrove Tuesday Darts, Games Social 8pm at the Social Club
Weds 14 th February	Ash Wednesday - Holy Communion, 7.30pm at St Mark's, to mark the start of Lent
Sunday 18 th February	Holy Communion , 10.30 at St Mark's
Sunday 25 th February	Holy Communion , 10.30 at St Mark's
Tuesday 27 th February	Berkshire Churches Trust lecture , Long Gallery, Englefield House, 7pm, details page 12
Friday 2 nd March	Women's World Day of Prayer - service at St Mark's at 10.30am
Saturday 3 rd March	The Village Artisan Food Market , Beenham Village Hall, RG7 5NN, 10am till 12 noon Bingo at the Social Club, 8pm
Sunday 4 th March	Holy Communion , 10.30 at St Mark's
Monday 5 th March	Fish and Chips supper at the Social Club, 8pm, <i>please pre-book with Tony by Friday 2nd (07802 479952)</i>
Sunday 11 th March	Mothering Sunday - family service with posies of flowers for mums, 10.30 at St Mark's
Monday 12 th March	PCC meeting , 6.30pm in the Social Club
Tuesday 13 th March	Darts, Games Social at the Social Club, 8pm
Sunday 18 th March	Holy Communion , 10.30 at St Mark's
Sunday 25 th March	Palm Sunday - service 10.30 at St Mark's (see page 13 for more details)
Thursday 29 th March	Maundy Thursday - Holy Communion, 7.30pm at St Mark's
Friday 30 th March	Good Friday - An Hour at the Cross, 2pm - 3pm at St Mark's
Sunday 1 st April	Easter Sunday - family service with Holy Communion , 10.30 at St Mark's, followed by an Easter egg hunt (see page 13 for details)

Mondays 5th and 19th February and 5th and 19th March

Time to Pray in the Englefield Chapel - an opportunity to meet for half an hour for quiet reflection and prayer - from 6pm till 6.30pm, usually on the 1st and 3rd Mondays of every month. All welcome.

Congratulations

To Eleanor Keene and Nicholas Boddy, son of Dee and Adrian, married in Cambridge on Sunday 31st December.

To Mark and Rowena Tolley, daughter of Linda and Roger Price, who were married on Saturday 6th January.

To Victoria Fishburn on being appointed a Deputy Lieutenant of Berkshire.

Wednesday coffee mornings

The weekly coffee mornings have restarted at the Village Tea Rooms. There will be coffee and tea and home-make biscuits and a friendly welcome every Wednesday morning from 10am till 11am.

RIP

Ivy Sexton, formerly of Theale, who died on 14th December and whose funeral service was held at Holy Trinity Church on Thursday 4th January.

Baptism

Orla Venetia Stanley, daughter of Olly and Honor and granddaughter of Dudley and Victoria Fishburn, baptised at St Mark's on Sunday 7th January.

Thank you

On behalf of Support Nepal UK may I take this opportunity to thank all of you who gave so generously to this cause. Nepal has been hit with earthquakes and landslips and although we cannot change the course of events, your gifts of clothes and toys will make a difference for some of the people affected in Nepal. Thank you.

Liz Reeves



Christmas Tea Party at St Mark's

A chilly December afternoon did nothing to dampen spirits at the St Mark's Christmas Tea Party. Now in its third year and firmly established on the St Mark's calendar, the area

around the font was temporarily converted into a Christmas cafe. Candles flickered and trays of delicious sandwiches and an array of cakes, biscuits and mince pies delighted party-goers who sang carols with gusto and happily swapped stories of Englefield Christmases past and present. A special thank you to Elizabeth Benyon for the delicious sandwiches and to Harriet Wynne-Jones for playing so beautifully and for chairing the Christmas quiz. Thank you too to everyone who so generously made food, served tea and washed up, making the tea party such a success.

Melanie Townsend

All God's creation is very good!

This is the title of this year's [Women's World Day of Prayer](#) service which has been prepared by the women of Suriname.

This year we are hosting the service at St Mark's Church on **Friday 2nd March** at 10.30am. We do hope many of you will come to support this lovely service which is shared around the globe throughout the day. Although written by women it is a service for everyone and all will be welcome. Refreshments are served afterwards.

Dinah Perkins

Electoral Roll

The Electoral Roll is the basic list in every parish of all those entitled to vote at the Annual Parochial Church Council meeting. Those entitled to have their names on this roll have to be 16 years of age or more and they must reside in the relevant parish or be regular worshippers in the church whose roll they wish to join.

Every year we check that the information on the roll is correct. Revision of the roll will take place between 18 March and 3 April and then for the next two weeks,

leading up to the Annual Parochial Church Council Meeting on 23 April, the roll will be available to view in church. Please check that your details are correct. If you are not on the roll and would like to be added kindly ask for a form.

Sue Smith, Electoral Roll Officer

Christmas giving

This year it was decided to divide the offerings from the various Christmas services at St Mark's between:

- Alana House which cares for vulnerable women and their families in Reading and West Berkshire, as part of [Parents and Children Together](#) (PACT).
- [Christmas Angels](#), the Church Army project in the UK providing food and accommodation for the homeless, working in difficult and challenging situations to transform lives and communities.
- The Bible Society's [Refugee Trauma Relief Programme](#) in the Middle East, which in addition to meeting the physical needs of refugees, seeks to bring healing and hope to those suffering from the horrors of war and persecution.

The amount given by the congregation came to £2,279.23. As a result, the Church was able to make gifts to these three worthy charities of £800 each. Thank you for your generosity.

Ron Marillier, St Mark's Treasurer

A new Minister for Sulhamstead

The Reverend John Paton was licensed as Priest in Charge at an evening service at St Mary's Sulhamstead Abbots on Tuesday 12th December. The service was led by the Bishop of Reading and was attended by other local clergy and parishioners. Originally from Devonshire, John worked for many years in the legal office of HM Customs and Excise until in his late 30s he went forward for ordination, training at St Stephen's House in Oxford. He became Succentor in the Cathedral at Southwark and chaplain to medical students at Guy's, St Thomas' and King's College Hospitals, before moving on to be parish priest at St Mark's Purley. For the last ten years he has been back in Oxford as Precentor of Christ Church. During the licensing service he was formally welcomed to the Benefice by representatives from local schools and Scout groups, as well as the patrons, members of the PCC and the Deanery.

A new start at the Five A Day

West Berkshire resident of 40 years, Yvonne Redgrave has taken over from Pam Goddard who founded the Five A Day Market Garden initiative in 2009.



After obtaining a Masters in Sustainability and Responsibility, Yvonne became a Five a Day

volunteer 4 years ago because the themes of local sustainable food, environmental education and a responsible social enterprise matched her interests. 'Then in 2017 I was considering retirement from my corporate career when Pam announced she was leaving so I jumped at the opportunity as I felt I could re-use the skills I have developed in my working life to extend the garden's impact in the local and wider West Berkshire community.'

'Pam built Five a Day up from scratch over the last 8 years and my job is to build on that and make it even more of a success,' says Yvonne. 'I want to expand the number of groups we can support with the therapeutic environment of the garden and look to work with older children on sustainability issues.'

Five a Day has over 25 volunteers who maintain the garden and support the courses - but they are always looking for more lovely volunteers. And of course, you can buy the organic fruit, veg and flowers they grow at the Englefield Garden Centre or by popping by the garden on Wednesday and Fridays. All the funds raised this way are used to maintain the garden and subsidise the courses for isolated and vulnerable adults. For more info visit the website fiveaday.org.uk.

Save the date!

The date for the 2018 **Englefield Flower Show and School Fête** is **Saturday 14th July**. Please put the date in your diary and we hope that this will help people plan ahead for entries in the craft and garden categories. Any potential volunteers or new committee members would be very welcome to contact me on mapostles@gmail.com or 07551 981587.

Mark Postles, Chairman

Springtime at the Garden Centre

It's that time of year where we can get a real mix of weather. One minute it can be glorious sun then there can be driving wind, rain with a bitter chill in the air, but it is time to start thinking about your vegetable plots. This year we have over 30 varieties of loose potatoes to choose from, this is a first for us. We also have asparagus, onions and lots of great varieties of seed too. For those of you who like those fabulous blooms in your garden it's now time to plant those summer bulbs for that fantastic colour. We will also have a great range of gifts for Mother's Day, so why not pop in and say hi to the team, or follow us on Facebook or Twitter.

Austin Crabbe, Manager

Calling new bell ringers!

One hundred years on from the Armistice, on **Sunday 11th November** this year, bells will ring out in unison from churches and cathedrals all across the country. It is hoped to recruit 1,400 ringers to represent the 1,400 bell ringers who fell in the Great War. St Mark's tower needs more ringers to take part in this event and is looking to train up some new recruits. Please come along on any Tuesday evening from 7pm till 8pm or before the Sunday service to find out more, or contact Janine Alston on 0118 9302427.

From Theale Medical Centre

Dr James Bywater will be retiring from the practice on 31st March 2018. Dr Bywater has been with the practice for around 33 years and now feels it is time to fully retire. All Dr Bywater's patients will be shared between existing GPs and you will be notified of who your newly allocated GP will be. I am sure you will all join me in wishing Dr Bywater all the best for the future.

Congratulations to Dr Arek Hassy who was nominated for a Health Heros 2017 award, a great achievement and well-deserved.

Amy Kerr, Senior Administrator

News from the School

We have had a successful start to the term and after a lovely Christmas break the children are all settled and back into the swing of school life.

At the end of last term we had a packed calendar with our Reception, Year 1 and 2 children performing their Nativity play 'Prickly Hay' to their families and the local community, a whole school trip to the Watermill Theatre to see 'The Borrowers' and of course various Christmas celebrations including our Christmas Fayre with a visit from Father Christmas no less! Our Choir also took part in the Swings and Smiles Carol Concert and the Carol Service both at St Mark's church, where they sang beautifully.

We have a busy term coming up with Maths competitions, cross country races, a Tag Rugby Tournament and an infant trip to Rushall Farm. We will also be taking part in World Book Week later in March, where the children will be celebrating literature and poetry and of course dressing as their favourite book characters. Finally, some children from Year 1 and 2 took part in a local schools Football Tournament in January and placed second overall, we were all extremely proud of them and their silver medals.

Claire Bushnell, School Secretary



Training for ordination

This is the second of two articles by young people connected with St Mark's who are currently training for ordination.

This month, Phillip Young writes about his spiritual journey. He is married to Ann Stone's granddaughter, Louise. He is studying at Ridley Hall and they live just outside Cambridge.



I am originally from Melbourne, Australia. While raised in a church-going family, I wandered away from Christian things before having a life-changing encounter with the Lord in my last few years at school. After university, I moved to London where I worked in finance for over ten years while actively serving in local parishes around London. At one of these parishes I met Louise, the granddaughter of St Mark's parishioner Annie Stone. She grew up in Norfolk. Although she can never remember a time when she didn't trust in Jesus, she counts her time at university, where she met a warm and loving group of Christians her own age, as a huge encouragement in her Christian walk. When Louise moved to London to begin working in the law, she became part of a wonderfully encouraging parish in the City where we met and, ultimately, married. Once we were married, we set up home in Clapham and were part of a parish in Bayswater. In January 2016, we welcomed a little boy in to our family - Edward, known as Teddy.

I began a process of discernment within the Church of England in 2014 to explore a sense of calling to ordained ministry and was thrilled when the Church confirmed that sense I had felt for many years. We moved to a small village just outside Cambridge in September 2017 in preparation for two years of training for ordained ministry. We are excited about what the Lord has in store for us and very grateful for any prayer support we receive.

Phillip Young

Rural crime update from the Police

Reports of rural crime in the Thames Valley increased by 5% between October 2016 and September 2017. I would like to reassure members of our rural communities of my commitment to investigating reports of rural crime. We rely on information from our local communities and take such reports very seriously. Incidents are robustly investigated by our local policing teams who have dedicated Rural Crime and Wildlife Officers based across the Thames Valley.

Rural crime can take many different forms including burglary, robbery, theft, criminal damage, fly tipping, poaching and hare coursing. There are often fewer witnesses to rural crimes and greater opportunities for criminals to target isolated properties and businesses. The impact of these crimes can also be greater, with people feeling more vulnerable due to their remote location.

You can reduce the risk of becoming a victim of rural crime by taking a few simple steps including keeping the boundaries of your land and property well-maintained and secure; fitting strong locks to sheds, garages and outbuildings, checking security equipment regularly to ensure it is working properly, locking equipment away in a secure building when it's not in use and security marking your tools and equipment.

For more information visit the Rural Crime page on the Thames Valley Police website at: <https://www.thamesvalley.police.uk/advice/protecting-your-business/rural-crime/>. You can receive the latest rural crime news from Thames Valley Police and their partners directly to your phone or inbox by signing up to CountryWatch at: <http://www.thamesvalleycountrywatch.co.uk/>

Assistant Chief Constable Nikki Ross

The telephone number for Thames Valley Police is 01865 841148; the non emergency number is 101 and the Crime Stoppers number is 0800 555111.

You can also report a non-emergency crime or incident here:

<https://www.thamesvalley.police.uk/contact-us/report-crime-or-incident/>.



News from Rushall Farm



Bob always cleared the tail corn from the cleaner for us during harvest to feed his chickens. The reward was a home-reared turkey delivered just before Christmas.

One year he arrived slightly forlorn with news that he hadn't had time to do the necessary. It was no problem, and Sainsburys was still open. He came again in January, and as we chatted he assured me that the turkey was still on his to-do list. Right in the middle of lambing he was a welcome visitor and a chance to sit and have a cup of tea and some sensible chat, with no reference to sheep. In the course of our conversation he declared, 'Your turkey has started laying eggs'. Maybe that is what spurred us on to buy six female turkey poults at the end of July. They grew fast and well, one of them winning best young female at the Newbury Show.

As the weeks have progressed, three, including the one mentioned, are very obviously male, and spend most of their time responding in panic to anything untoward. It is quite spectacular. Their wings go out just grazing the ground, body feathers become puffed out with tail all erect. Their faces become incandescent blue and red, the snood elongates beyond all expectation and there is lots of 'Gobble, gobble', more or less in unison. Meanwhile the females continue to busy themselves feeding and will start laying eggs, incubating them and rearing their chicks.

At the Oxford Farming Conference a gathering of farmers heard from Michael Gove that they will be receiving the same level of subsidy for 5 years after Brexit. Currently they receive half of their total income from these payments and two-thirds of the £3 billion received annually is paid per acre. The government intentions were to radically change the EU payment system. They want to move away from subsidy for 'apparent inefficiency' to public money for public good. I am not sure why producing food in humane and healthy ways isn't for the public good? However, future emphasis is to be directed towards planting woodland, providing new habitats, increasing bio-diversity, contributing to water quality and turning cultivated land to wildflower meadows, and food isn't mentioned. Best start planting the garden. But it might all be gobble, gobble!

John Bishop

Winter rain needed in the South East

It may seem surprising to be writing about drought in January. However the Environment Agency has recently expressed concerns about a second dry winter in our area. So far, we have not received sufficient rainfall to recharge ground-water and refill some water supply reservoirs – this is relevant to everyone including Englefield where much of the parish relies on the Estate's private water supply but also mains water users too. Everyone has a part to play in the wise use of water - even in the winter. If we all save a little bit of water now this may help avoid restrictions in the summer. Advice is available from various bodies including the Environment Agency and www.waterwise.org.uk.

Berkshire Churches Trust lecture

Following the success of our previous two lectures at Englefield, we are delighted to announce the third in the Long Gallery at Englefield House on Tuesday 27th February, 7pm. The Venerable David Meara will speak on *Brasses, Bells and Smells: Victorian and Edwardian Clergy and their Memorials*. David was vicar of Basildon, Aldworth and Ashampstead from 1982-1994, before becoming Rector of St Bride's Church, Fleet Street, and Archdeacon of London. He is a past President of the Monumental Brass Society, a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries, and has written extensively on church monuments and memorial brasses. He is now retired and living near Oxford.

*Peter Durrant, Chairman [Berkshire Churches Trust](#)
Tickets £12.50, available from liz.betteridge@ntlworld.com*

Holy Trinity Charity Dinner

Holy Trinity Church in Theale is holding a Charity Dinner on Saturday 3rd March at the Holiday Inn in Padworth, 7pm for 7.30pm, and all are warmly invited. Tickets are £30 from Rev Ann Templeman, anntempleman@live.co.uk.

The following day there is a Guest Service at 10.30am at Holy Trinity when the speaker will be the Rev Andrew Wingfield Digby, sometime chaplain to the English cricket team and to the British team in three Olympic Games.

Holy Week

at St Mark's Church Englefield

PALM SUNDAY 25 MARCH

10.30am

Holy Communion Service
with children's activities:
donkey procession & Easter Garden



MAUNDY THURSDAY 29 MARCH

7.30pm

Commemoration of the Last Supper

GOOD FRIDAY 30 MARCH

2.00pm

'An Hour at the Cross'

*Time for reflection with readings, hymns
and prayer*



EASTER DAY SUNDAY 1 APRIL

10.30am

Family Communion
with Easter Egg hunt



Date	Sidesmen	Old Testament	New Testament	Gospel
February 4 th 2 nd Sunday before Lent	Diane Graham Linda Price		Melanie Townsend Colossians 1:15-20	Richard Benyon John 1:1-14
February 11 th Sunday before Lent	Richard and Sue Smith	Ann Stone 2 Kings 2:1-12	Aldo Guiducci 2 Corinthians 4:3-6	Dee Boddy Mark 9:2-9
February 14 th 7.30pm Ash Wednesday	Harriet Wynne- Jones	Harriet Wynne- Jones Isaiah 58:1-12	Dinah Perkins 2 Corinthians 5:20b- 6:10	Nick Wynne-Jones Matthew 6:1-6; 16-21
February 18 th 1 st Sunday of Lent	Ian and Penny Savage	Linda Price Genesis 9:8-17	Melanie Townsend 1 Peter 3:18-end	Harriet Wynne-Jones Mark 1:9-15
February 25 th 2 nd Sunday of Lent	Peter and Denny Hollands	Gloria Sleep Genesis 17:1- 7;15-16	Mike Kimber Romans 4:13-end	Peter Haig Mark 8:31-end
March 4 th 3 rd Sunday of Lent	Doris Edwards Diane Graham	BCP	Stephanie Gibbons 1 Cor 1:18-25	Ron Marillier John 2:13-22
March 11 th Mothering Sunday	David and Stephanie Gibbons	Penny Savage Exodus 2:1-10	Carole Ford Ephesians 2:1-10	Elizabeth Benyon John 3:14-21
March 18 th 5 th Sunday of Lent	Terry and Dinah Perkins	Miles Edgar Jer 31:31-34	Mike Kimber Hebrews 5:5-10	Torquil MJ John 12:20-33
March 25 th Palm Sunday	Liz Marillier Gloria Sleep	Paula Fenwick Isaiah 52:7-10	Victoria Fishburn Hebrews 1:1-12	Peter Haig John 1:1-14
March 29 th 7.30pm Maundy Thursday	Penny Savage	Penny Savage Ex 12:1-4; 11-14	Ian Savage 1 Cor 11: 23-26	Harriet Wynne-Jones John 13:1-17; 31b-35
March 30 th 2pm Good Friday		Saffy O'Sullivan Is 52:13-end 53	Ronan O'Sullivan Hebrews 10:16-25	Nick Wynne-Jones John 18:1-end 19
April 1 st Easter Sunday	Richard and Sue Smith	BCP	Carol Boulter Galatians 4:4-7	Richard Benyon Luke 2:15-21
April 8 th 2 nd Sunday of Easter	Doris Edwards Diane Graham	Linda Price Acts 4:32-35	David Gibbons Ephesians 3:1-12	Dee Boddy Matthew 2:1-12
April 15 th 3 rd Sunday of Easter	David and Stephanie Gibbons	Ian Savage 1 Samuel 3:1-10	Denny Hollands Revelation 5:1-10	Stephanie Gibbons John 1:43-end

If you are unavailable for any duty on the rota, please try to find a swap, or otherwise contact Saffy O'Sullivan on 0118 9302731 or on the website, www.stmarksinglefield.org.uk/rota/ or in the church porch. Please let Penny Savage know if you have any requests. Saffy O'Sullivan will include your request on the following Sunday.

Intercessions	Sacristan	Administrators	Sunday Club	Cleaners
BCP	Penny Norris	Dinah Perkins Melanie Townsend	Penny Savage Sara Guiducci	Carole Ford Sue Wetthey
Melanie Townsend	Denny Hollands	Torquill MJ Penny Savage	Tiffany Ebrey Alice Johnson	Doris Edwards Dinah Perkins
	Dinah Perkins	Dinah Perkins		
Penny Savage	Dinah Perkins	Terry Perkins Peter Haig	Liz McKean Gillian Pinkhardt	Carole Ford Sue Wetthey
Richard Benyon	Penny Savage	Gill Barton Torquill MJ	Carolyn Ahanchian Denny Hollands	John and Liz McKean
BCP	Dee Boddy	Carol Boulter Denny Hollands	Susannah McBain Sara Guiducci	Paula Fenwick Linda Price
Stephanie Gibbons	Catherine Haig	Dinah Perkins Melanie Townsend	Melissa Bennett Liz Reeves	Gill Barton Diane Graham
Carol Boulter	Penny Norris	Denny Hollands Peter Haig	Zoe Benyon Catherine Haig	Elizabeth Benyon Harriet Wynne-Jones
Catherine Haig	Dinah Perkins	Carol Boulter Terry Perkins	Penny Savage Alice Johnson	Melanie Townsend
	Penny Savage	Penny Savage		
BCP	Penny Savage	Dinah Perkins Torquill MJ	Sara Guiducci Gillian Pinkhardt	Doris Edwards Dinah Perkins
Victoria Fishburn	Catherine Haig	Saffy O'Sullivan Melanie Townsend	Tiffany Ebrey Sara Guiducci	Paula Fenwick Linda Price
Dinah Perkins	Denny Hollands	Peter Haig Torquill MJ	Susannah McBain Denny Hollands	Gill Barton Diane Graham

1491 825996 or 07799 060949. For diary planning for future Sundays, an up-to-date rota can always be found
e any notices for the pew sheet or announcements to be made in church. For prayer requests, please contact Dinah

Bradfield YFC

Our members enjoyed a raucous run up to the Christmas period with an evening trampolining, activities for National Parliament Week, our annual panto visit to the Corn Exchange to see Beauty and the Beast and the Christmas party. 2018 has started with a competitive bang with the County Public Speaking event. We were able to put together a fabulous group of junior members, some experienced and some trying their hand for the very first time. Both teams really pulled out the stops and were placed first and second. In the Junior Speaking competition, we entered three teams who deservedly came first, second and third. All of the winners will now represent Berkshire in the Area competitions.



Bradfield YFC meets on a Wednesday evening. To find out more contact Club Leader Sonia Walters sonia.walters2@btinternet.com or find Bradfield Young Farmers on Facebook.

Concert at Aldworth

Tenor Max Fane with Richard Ingrams on the piano and Ross Montgomery on the clarinet are in concert at St Mary's Aldworth on Saturday 10th February at 7pm. They will be performing works by Schubert and a selection of chamber music. Tickets £15 from 01635 578936 or 578239 allenmaurice5@gmail.com.


A Concert in aid of **Newbury Riding for the Disabled**

READING MALE VOICE CHOIR




**HAMPSTEAD NORREYS
VILLAGE HALL**
Newbury Hill, RG18 0TR
7.30pm 10 February, 2018

with Guest Artist
Serena Kay
Mezzo-soprano



Clive Waterman
Musical Director



Alexander Turner
Dep. Musical Director

Tickets £15
including a glass of wine
from Mary Iliffe
iliffe.mary@gmail.com
01635 578 791
info@newburyrda.co.uk

In aid of
Newbury RDA
Newbury Riding for the Disabled
Charity Number: 1121113

Sunday Club colouring page



Mothering Sunday is on Sunday 11th March this year. You can colour in this picture as a gift. Come along to the service at St Mark's where there will be real posies of flowers for all mums. Don't forget it's Shrove Tuesday - Pancake Day - on Tuesday 13th February. And see page 13 for details of all the Easter services at St Mark's

Christians in the Middle East

This the second of two articles from Col Richard Sandy who was the speaker at St Mark's on Remembrance Sunday last year. He was British Defence Attache in Jordan and on retirement became Middle East Team Leader for [Military Ministries International](#) (MMI). He also serves on the Global Council of the United Bible Societies.



Following his visit, part of St Mark's Christmas giving went to support the Bible Society's Refugee Trauma Relief Programme.

As the Middle East Team Leader with MMI and Board member of the British and Foreign Bible Society I have travelled regularly to many countries in the Middle East and met with Arab Christians. As a result of the regional conflicts many Christian families have been forced or felt compelled to leave their home country, yet there are still many Christians remaining in the lands where the Christian faith had its beginnings. Whilst in general many Middle East countries permit Christians to worship in approved churches, they do not have the same freedoms we enjoy in the UK.

Here are the stories of two families which illustrate some of the difficulties Christians face today in the Middle East. Jamal (not his real name), who before the recent conflicts in the country was an officer in the Syrian Air Force, is a committed Christian and felt strongly that God wished him and his family to remain in Damascus when fighting erupted following the so-called Arab Spring. Jamal and his family offered their home and food to Christian and Muslim families whose homes had been destroyed in other parts of Syria. Through their church, which continues to function despite the conflict, alternative accommodation was eventually provided for most of these refugee families.

Jamal is married with four children, all of whom initially remained with him in Damascus. The eldest daughter is married with two sons. When the daughter's husband was called up to serve in the Syrian Army, it was something as a Christian he did not feel able to do. To refuse would mean being placed in jail, with no certainty he would survive. As a result he decided to leave the country and made his way, following what became the accepted 'refugee route' through Turkey, across the sea to Greece and is now registered with the UN as a refugee in the Netherlands. He has spent the last two and a half years trying to get his wife and family to join him in the Netherlands, so far without success. Jamal's youngest son (18 years) was forced by the conflict to end his university studies with the prospect that he would be called up to serve in the Army. Consequently,

he too has made his way out of the country. His journey has taken him to Brazil as a certified UN refugee, where he has managed to achieve a place at a university there. Jamal does not know when or whether he will ever meet with his son again, although modern communications enables him at least to have regular internet communication.

In Erbil, Northern Iraq, there are many Christian families living as refugees in and around the city having been forced to flee their homes originally in Baghdad, following persecution by Shia Muslim groups, and then from Qaraqosh following persecution by so-called IS. These families have nothing other than the possessions they could cram into the suitcases they were able to carry with them. Most are being cared for by refugee agencies and also with help from other Christian charities, including the local Bible Society. One of the families I met, whose father, a committed Christian, was a senior civil servant in Baghdad under Saddam Hussein, is unable to get a job. However, his youngest daughter, Amal (22), has found employment working as an assistant in the office of the Bible Society in Erbil.

The Bible Society in Erbil provides help to many refugee families, irrespective of their faith. One Muslim family helped was Ibrahim, his wife and four daughters, who had been forced by IS to leave their home in Mosul. When they arrived in Erbil they received a package of aid from the Bible Society, which contained food and basic essentials for living, and also a Bible and scripture materials. Ibrahim began to read the Bible and ask questions of the local Bible Society staff and reached the point where he decided to convert to Christianity – a major step for a Muslim. When I met him several months later, his wife and children had also converted to Christianity. Ibrahim said the main difference it had made to him and his family is they now have hope, where previously they had none. Their home had been destroyed, they had nothing other than the few things they were able to carry with them, Ibrahim had no prospect of getting a job and providing for his family but now he believes God is sovereign and will take care of him and his family.

I return from my visits to the region feeling very humble. The faith of these Christians is very real and they continue to hold to their faith even though to do so brings considerable difficulty, even danger, to them and their family.

Richard Sandy

(Note: names in this article have been changed to protect identities)

Thoughts for the week

These reflections are just some of the short commentaries that are compiled by Aldo Guiducci each week on the readings in church. They are all available, week by week, on the pew sheets and on the church website.

‘...They bowed down and worshipped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh’ (Matthew 2: 11)

The three gifts of the Magi are well known to those who know the nativity story. Perhaps less well known is what they actually were and what the giving of them meant. Gold is probably the most familiar (and easiest to understand) – an expensive metal in both the society of the day and in our own, gold is the gift fit for a king. The king in baby clothes was there before them. Frankincense was a costly, aromatic resin in constant use by the priests in the temple; this gift points to Jesus as the ultimate priest, who would in time bring final reconciliation between God and human beings. Myrrh was a natural gum or resin used to embalm the dead. The man born to be king was the man born to die. In these three gifts we see who he is, what he came to do, and what it would cost him. If we have truly understood the gospel then, like the wise men, we must surely bow in wonder before a God who could love us that much!

'Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God' (Romans 15: 7)

The amazing truth of the gospel is that it dissolves barriers. The call of Christ is made to all people, without distinction. In this passage Paul quotes from four separate books of the Old Testament to show that God's purpose from the outset was to bring hope to Jews and Gentiles alike. His words to the church in Rome are just as important for us today. We are called to accept all those who trust in Jesus for their salvation, regardless of their ethnicity, education, background or denomination. Though we may well hold different views on a variety of subjects, if we are both trusting in Jesus as Lord, we are to accept one another as brothers and sisters in God's family. For the church in Rome, the potential stumbling block was race: Jew or Gentile. What is it for us, and do we see how Paul's words apply to us today?

'[Jesus] has become a high priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek' (Hebrews 6 v20b)

Melchizedek is a mysterious figure who appears in Genesis 14. Unlike all the other major figures in the book of Genesis, Melchizedek is presented without a genealogy. Melchizedek brokered peace between Abraham and the king of Sodom, and brought out bread and wine. Abraham, who was the great-grandfather of Levi (from whom the Levitical priesthood comes), gave a tithe to Melchizedek; this showed that Melchizedek was superior to Abraham (and Levi, and therefore the Old Testament priesthood). The writer of Hebrews explains how Melchizedek foreshadows Jesus. Jesus' genealogy is also unique (being born of a virgin by the Holy Spirit); he is the great high priest who is superior to the Old Testament priesthood; he brokers peace between us and God through his perfect sacrifice on the cross, rendering the old priesthood and sacrificial system obsolete; and the bread and wine of the communion service point to that sacrifice through which we can be totally forgiven and receive God's mercy.

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