

**ST ANDREW'S CHURCH OF ENGLAND
HANDSWORTH, BIRMINGHAM**



**THE MESSENGER
PARISH MAGAZINE
FEBRUARY - MARCH 2021**

St Andrew's Clergy

The Church is currently in Interregnum

Enquiries – 0121 551 2097 or email vicar@standrews-handsworth.org.uk

Asst Priest – Father John Austen

Church Wardens – Elaine Powell – 07486 013679

Carl Hart – 07967 410155

Lay Readers

Carole Sami – 07447 889657

Alison Thorne

Valerie Powell (Child Protection and Vulnerable Adult Representative)

Stuart Jeffs (Director of Music)

Services

The Church is currently closed for communal worship. There are services available via internet link and these are advertised on the following

Church Website <https://www.standrews-handsworth.org.uk>

Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/groups/StAndrews.Handsworth>

Twitter @StAndrewCE_HW

St Andrew's WhatsApp Group – if you wish to join please contact Carl Hart 07967 410155, Valerie Powell 07540 890068 or Stuart Jeffs 07910 484505

St Andrew's PCC

Carl Hart- Church Warden

Elaine Powell- Church Warden

Nora Pottinger - Deputy Church Warden

Leonora Dore - Secretary

Richard Paton-Devine – Treasurer

Mary Bairstow

Chris Baker

Rose Blair

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John Emmins

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Stuart Jeffs

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Letter From The Clergy

Last week, a Chinese Christian friend emailed me from China and said how difficult faith is for him at the moment. So many people are suffering through Covid all around the world: why doesn't God do something about it? Does God really exist?

There's no quick easy answer – people have puzzled for centuries about the question *If God is good, why is there so much suffering?* Read the Bible – the psalms, the Book of Job. People then and now wrestle with the question. Perhaps you do too.

My friend's English is not perfect (and my Chinese is limited to polite comments over the chopsticks!) but I tried to reply along these lines:

Our faith is centred on Jesus, who shared in our suffering world. In his time too, the world had plenty of suffering, and his share of it was about rejection, betrayal and crucifixion.

I always come back to Jesus, to the man on the way to the cross. We know that all is not well in the world, but at least God is here in it, here with us.

We don't have an argument that solves the problem of a cruel world - but we have a story. The story of the man Jesus whom God gave us to share our life, to share the worst that can happen to us. And Jesus walks with us, putting his arm around us, and his friendship doesn't depend on us being holy, or sinless. His friendship is without limit, without conditions.

There may be times when it seems too hard to believe in God. But then there are times - perhaps on our socially distanced walks, perhaps with people we love, perhaps joining in with a service on Zoom or on the radio, when we are reminded of what it feels like to believe.

Sometimes, I visit a beautiful clifftop by the sea in the north of England. From there, I can look out and see a tiny island - only three or four kilometres away. It has a lighthouse with white walls shining in the sun. But other

days, I go on the clifftop and I can't see the island at all, because of a sea mist. I only know it is there because I've seen it before. And I know I will see it again in the future.

Believing in God can sometimes be like that. It may be hard today to believe that there is a God - but we can try to remember that we did know God before, and trust that we shall know and find him again.

God's love for us goes on every day, every year, whatever doubts we have, whatever we do. The story of our lives goes on, with all the mistakes, all the stuff that is unGodly, all the consequences of our actions. God doesn't take away all the bad stuff that has happened. But he can take from us - take over from us - the guilt and fear, so that we can start again in hope. So that we are freed to try again - yes, and fail again. Tragedy can somehow be turned to good - which is what happened on the cross.

Fr John

Happy New Year!

Another year and we have been blessed
2020 has sure put us all through the test
Sadness, sorrow, pain and fear
People we lost, family and friends dear
It is easy to say a new year now begins
But we need to remember Christ
Who forgives us our sins
To forget and carry on just as we are
To think there is change and we all will get far
We need to remember a new year gives us a chance

To all seek our Lord and
Ask for grace and mercy in advance
God gave us the day and he gave us the night
He also made man so we wouldn't lose sight
Of all of the things he has done to show us his love
He now looks down upon us from heaven above
So yes it's a new year 2021 begins
Let us all try to be more Christ like
In the way we do things
And give thanks to our God for
This New Year and what it will hopefully bring



Valerie Powell

Poetry Emotions

I would like to thank all who took part in the St Andrew's Macmillan Coffee Morning or made a donation. We raised £155 for Macmillan Nurses.

Chris Baker

This prayer was used at the service "In Thanksgiving and Hope" on New Years Day.

A Prayer for the New Year

May the Lord make my New Year a happy one....
Not by shielding me from sorrow and pain, but by
strengthening me to bear it if it comes.
Not by making my path easy, but by making me sturdy
enough
To tread any path.
Not by taking hardships from me, but by taking all
cowardice
And fear from my heart as I meet hardships.
Not by granting me unbroken sunshine, but by keeping
my
Face bright even in the shadows.
Not by making my life always pleasant, but by showing
me
Where I am needed most and by making me zealous
to be
There and to help.....

c/o **Chris Baker**

DATES FOR FEBRUARY/MARCH 2021

18th February – 1st April Lent Course via Zoom. The sessions are for an hour, hosted by Val Powell, Alison Thorne and Stuart Jeffs.

To sign up for the course, please email Stuart (stuartj-music@standrews-handsworth.org.uk) or Val (valpowell52@gmail.com)

1st March – St David's Day

14th March – Mother's Day

17th March – St Patrick's Day

25 March - Annunciation day

28 March – Palm Sunday



Giving to St Andrew's Church

Usually, we can give our offering in church when the plate comes round. But not recently. No services, no collections, no plate! But St Andrew's still has to pay all the bills (insurance alone for the church building and community centre adds up to £168 every week!).

So here's an update on how you can continue giving your offering to the church.

Weekly envelopes. If you already use them, a new set will be delivered to you before the end of February. If you would like to start having a set, let us know. We can arrange for someone to collect them from your house every month if you are not at church.

The Parish Giving Scheme allows you to make a Direct Debit each month from your bank account. Very helpful for St Andrew's - regular income, with no cash to count and take to the bank! And the Scheme automatically collects Gift Aid for the parish. You are in control – you can stop it at any time.

A great new system allows anyone to give their church offering via our website. Details here:

<https://standrews-handsworth.org.uk/donations/> It means that you can make a donation from home, whenever you want to, and the church can claim Gift Aid.

You can also give to St Andrew's while you are shopping online! See '*EasyFundRaising*' Online Shopping website. From Argos to Amazon – loads of retailers give us a small donation when you spend with them.

Can you include St Andrew's in your will? That's what Janice Bissell did – and it's a real help. At the moment, you may not be able to give as much as you would like to, but leaving a legacy to St Andrew's after you have gone will help the church into the future.

You can ask Fr John for all the details on any of this. 0121 554 8882 johnausten151@hotmail.co.uk

Fr John

GOODBYE AND BEST WISHES TO ROSE



Rose Blair (Kelly) has been a member of St Andrew's Church for about 40 years. Rose was St Andrew's second female Churchwarden. She was a member of the Choir, and the PCC, to name just some of Rose's work with St Andrew's. Sadly, Rose will be leaving Handsworth this month (February) to live nearer to her daughter in Solihull. Rose will be truly missed at St Andrew's. We send our love and prayers to you Rose. I hope you will be able to visit us from time to time.

Eileen Lawrence

Message from Rose – *I will still be able to visit as much as possible. Blessings to all my Sisters and Brothers at St Andrew's Church.*



The Story of the Sparrows

A little boy was crying for his room was dark and dim
And he was so afraid to be alone.
His understanding daddy said “Remember if you will,
That you can never ever be alone.
For God once told the little sparrows
I shall watch over everything you do
And I am sure if he watches little sparrows
He is bound to be watching over you.
For when the crowds all gathered near Him
He said “Let the little children come to me”
And they sat around and clambered on his knee.
So if you are feeling sad and lonely
And you think all the world has forgotten you
Remember the story of the sparrows
And the Lord who is watching over you
Always watching over you.

**Submitted by Jan Fleming. This is a song that
Jan learned when she was a child.**

A Word or Two

There are few more momentous words in the whole of the Bible than God's words to Abraham, "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you." Maybe we have all marvelled at Abraham's faithful obedience in packing up and setting off to he knew not where, knowing neither why nor how. We may wonder too how Sarah received the news. "What, again? How much packing is that going to involve? What do you mean, you've had a message? I haven't had a message. What if I don't want to move?" Or perhaps she was just as responsive and obedient as Abraham.

The words in Hebrew that are reflected in our Bible as "go" are much richer, and bear consideration. God says, "Lek leka", which cannot be idiomatically translated. The phrase is made memorable by its repeated syllable, like a rhyme but at the beginning instead of the end of the words. The first Lek just means walk, go and is comfortably rendered into English. It is the Leka that is hidden from us by our translation. It means "for you". "Go, for you." God is telling Abraham that his journey will prove to be in his, Abraham's, interest. That all shall be well, and all manner

of thing shall be well. That his travail, all his leaving behind the familiar and braving the unknown, is safe in God's hands. It is a promise as great as those that follow; that he will bless Abraham, that Abraham will be the father of a great nation and that all the families of the earth will in him be blessed. God will be with Abraham as he journeys. "Get up, uproot yourself, set off into the wilderness – it's for your own good. Go – it's for you".

When Jesus says to his disciples "Follow me", it is a similar very brief phrase. Equally he means them to make a journey, to leave all that they have hitherto known and abandon the familiar. I would say, launch out into the deep – but of course as fishermen, launching out into the deep was in fact a familiar event. Implied also is it is for their own good. Follow me and I will be with you. Be with me and I will be with you. He might have added I will bless you and make of you a great nation – a vast worldwide church – and all the nations of the earth will be blessed in you.

The wilderness is difficult. It isn't what you are used to. It is the essence of what you are not used to. But get up and go – put your hand into the hand of God.

That shall be to you better than light and safer than a known way. There was the old joke about urging someone on, “Where’s your get-up-and-go?” and the pathetic answer, “It got up and went.” If we are disciples we need to be sure our get-up-and-go doesn’t get up and leave us. A certain spiritual energy is called for in discipleship.

The phrase *Do not be afraid” ring like a chorus throughout the Bible. In the Psalms, that we say at Compline : “You will not fear the terror of the night, or the arrow that flies by day”. And in Isaiah the beloved words “Thus says the Lord: Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine.” And in the mouth of Jesus in the gospel, when he stills the storm, when he walks on the water, when he tells the disciples to meet his risen self in Galilee. Do not be afraid. Four words in modern English – but two in the King James Version – “Fear not”. And in Greek and in Hebrew and the Aramaic Jesus spoke just two words. And by a grammatical quirk in both Greek and Hebrew the particular form of words refers not to a once off as in English “Don’t say that!” but to a once and for all prohibition – don’t ever be afraid. Don’t live a fearful life-style. Don’t let fear rule your life. Two words to live by.

At the Last Supper Jesus says, “Take, eat” – another tiny phrase full of rich promise. The bread and the wine begin a journey, more spiritual than physical. Jesus through his body and blood comes to dwell within us. You are what you eat.

We can pray that each time we receive communion we become a little more him. Dwell in me and I will dwell in you. You cannot achieve anything, bear fruit, unless you abide in me. If you abide in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit. You abide in me by following my commandments. My father loves me because I keep his commandments, and if you keep my commandments I will love you. So, do what he says; “Take eat”, “Follow me”, “Do not be afraid”, “Go” - make a journey, knowing that all will be well because God is right beside you.

Let God have a word or two in your ear.

c/o Alison Thorne

1st March: St David (Dewi Sant), guiding the Welsh through turbulent times

On 1st March Wales celebrates its patron saint, David - or, in Welsh, Dewi or Dafydd. He is revered wherever Welsh people have settled. As with most figures from the so-called 'Dark Ages' (he lived in the sixth century), reliable details about his life are scarce, but there are enough for us to form a picture of a formidably austere, disciplined and charismatic leader, who led the Church in Wales through turbulent years and fought tenaciously for the faith.

It's likely that David was strengthened in his ministry by time spent in Ireland, where the Church was stronger and more confident. Early records tell of a meeting of Irish church leaders with three 'Britons', as they were described, among them 'bishop David'. His mother, Non, is also celebrated as a saint in Wales, where a number of churches are dedicated in her name.

That he founded a monastery at Menevia, in Pembrokeshire, seems beyond doubt. It later became the site of St David's cathedral and the settlement which is now the smallest city in the United Kingdom. From Menevia David embarked on preaching and teaching missions across Wales, and probably beyond. His eloquence was legendary.

At a famous Synod of the Church, held at a Carmarthenshire village called Brefi, he preached passionately

against the Arian heresy - indeed, so passionately that he was (according to some accounts) immediately named as archbishop of Wales. The village is now known as Llandewi Brefi - *brefi* in Welsh is a hillock, and legend claims that it appeared miraculously in order to provide the eloquent bishop with a pulpit.

His monks avoided wine and beer, drinking only water. Indeed, he and they lived lives of rigorous austerity and constant prayer, in the manner of the Desert Fathers of the Eastern Church. The date of David's death is disputed - either 589 or 601. It wasn't until the 12th century that he was generally accepted as the patron saint of Wales, and pilgrimages to St David's were highly regarded in the following centuries - including two made by English kings, William I and Henry II.

It's traditional for Welsh people to wear daffodils on St David's Day (*Gwyl Dewi Sant* in Welsh) - but there seems no particular reason for it, beyond the fact that they tend to make their early Spring appearance round about his day - oh, and they look nice!

c/o Parish Pump'

Coronavirus near Easter: still a good time to pause, pray and remember

When the UK death toll for coronavirus recently reached 100,000, the Archbishops of Canterbury and York issued a call to the nation. They asked everyone to pause and remember the victims of Covid-19. The victims and their families were ‘known to God and cherished by God’.

Perhaps, as we approach Easter, we should consider stopping again and remembering again the terrible cost of the pandemic.

In their open letter, Archbishops Justin Welby and Stephen Cottrell had insisted that death does not have “the last word”, and the Christian faith promises that one day “every tear will be wiped away”.

God, they wrote, knows grief and suffering and “shares in the weight of our sadness”.

Turning to the wider impact of the pandemic, the loneliness, anxiety and economic hardship, they then invited people to “cast their fears on God”.

The archbishops said: “We write to you in consolation, but also in encouragement, and ultimately in the hope of Jesus Christ. The God who comes to us in Jesus knew grief and suffering Himself. On the cross,

Jesus shares the weight of our sadness.”

“Most of all, we have hope because God raised Jesus from the dead. This is the Christian hope that we will be celebrating at Easter. We live in the hope that we will share in His resurrection. Death doesn’t have the last word. In God’s kingdom, every tear will be wiped away.

“Please be assured of our prayers. Please join us.”

It is expected that the Church of England will hold services of remembrance for those who have died and thanksgiving for all those who have cared for them when it is possible to do so.

c/o Parish Pump



'One Year On'

It was just over a year ago that the WHO discussed the coronavirus that was starting to spread around the world. None of us could have foreseen the devastating effect on our world, with over 80 million people infected and nearly two million deaths. How has the pandemic challenged our faith, as we look back over the last year?

Firstly, it has forced us to face up to the **reality of our situation**. We cannot underestimate the health, social and economic effects of the virus on our lives, churches and communities. We have learned how to do church online, but the future shape of church life is uncertain!

As the apostle Paul writes: *'We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed. We always carry around in our body the death of Jesus'* (2 Cor 4:8-10).

The pandemic has challenged so much of what we take for granted, but also demonstrated that God is alongside to help us in these circumstances.

Secondly, alongside the fear and uncertainty of this year, we have also learned to find **new faith and hope in Jesus**. The experience of Jesus' death and His resurrection provides a pattern for us in facing the future: '

so that His life may also be revealed in our mortal body. So then, death is at work in us, but life is at work in you.' (2 Cor 4:10-12).

During the season of Lent, as we anticipate the events at Easter, it's good to focus on the promise of sharing in the death and resurrection of Jesus. As we consider our present struggles, are we ready to surrender them to Jesus? May the hope of Easter Day take us forward into the coming year.

c/o Parish Pump



Stress and depression for home-schooling parents

Parents are under enormous pressure just now, as they seek to juggle the demands of work, home-schooling, and of meeting their children's emotional needs.

A recent Oxford University study has found that parents of primary school-aged children between 5 and 10 years old are suffering high levels of stress because they are concerned about their children's behaviour, and their emotional and social development.

On the other hand, parents of secondary school children, aged 11 or older, report more symptoms of depression. More than four in ten of such parents report deep concern about their children's education and future career opportunities.

c/o Parish Pump



Green Pastures – the charity that finds homes for the homeless

Here is a story that went on to change many lives:

‘There was a knock at the door. Pete slowly opened his front door, and the stranger standing before him said in a quiet voice, “Please sir, do you have a bed for the night? I’m homeless.”’

Those words, spoken 20 years ago, stirred such compassion in Pete Cunningham’s heart that it moved him to action. Together with a church member, Vicki Woodley, a small pension was cashed in and Vicki re-mortgaged to put a deposit on two flats to house two homeless people, and Green Pastures was born.

The vision grew greater than they ever imagined.

20 years later, Green Pastures provides homes and support for over 1,100 people across the county, and is growing rapidly. The passion to release the Church to eradicate homelessness burns brightly. In partnership with churches and charities, Green Pastures makes real change in the desperate situations in which many find themselves.

Investors are paid up to 5% to house the homeless.

Green Pastures buy property for churches and charities so that they can reach out and house the homeless in their area. They provide all the paperwork, expertise and ongoing support to operate successful supported housing projects. Green Pastures is a national Christian social enterprise that releases the Church to end homelessness.

The enormous changes in towns and individual lives can be seen everywhere. Residents of partner, The Greenhouse Project, Plymouth, have experienced the faith of the support workers in their Green Pastures home to encounter Jesus through genuine caring relationship.

One resident commented, “When I met the guys at The Greenhouse and saw how they love Jesus and the way that they were living for God, that appealed to me, and that helped me get back to faith, that helped me get back into recovery.”

For how Green Pastures can help you, go to www.greenpastures.net or call 0300 365 4500.

c/o Parish Pump

A PRAYER

One day

One time

One race

One mind

One goal

Let's achieve

One aim

Let's believe

Let us change

Let's unite

Let us try

Let's not cry!

Let us pray

Let us hope

As a world

We can cope

Let's give thanks

We can change

In the time that remains

Amen.

Valerie Powell

Wordsearch for February

February opens with Candlemas – the naming of Jesus in the temple. Simeon and Anna praised God to see the promised Messiah, sent by a loving God to save his people. February also celebrates the love between a man and woman: Valentine cards and romance abound. ‘Love’ as in social compassion is also remembered: Fair Trade fortnight, Holocaust Memorial Day, World Leprosy Day, and National Nest Box Week.... Love is truly needed by everyone!

Naming
Christ
Candlemas
Simeon
Anna
temple
love
Valentine
romance
Matthias
Fairtrade
Fortnight
coffee
bananas
chocolate
justice

poverty
marriage
Holocaust

nest box
wedding
leprosy

N N E S T B O X A R E C L
L F L A W E D D I N G T E
T O P M A T T H I A S T G
C O M E D A R T R I A F A
O G E L A H N O R L O C I
F Y T D R E M H O R B S R
F S P N L A C C T A E V R
E O O A N G O N N C G A A
E R V C E H I A I N L N M
L P E E C G N T I D N A I
O E R E H A S M N A N D N
V L T T S U A C O L O H A
E O Y D J N O E M I S A S

Wordsearch for March

Life is full of ups and downs: after blessings, hard times often follow. They are not meant to destroy us but to help us grow spiritually by deepening our faith and dependence on God. The Holy Spirit led Jesus into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil – to give Him the opportunity to stand fast against the enemy. The devil’s temptations were based on half-truths, which Jesus rejected by standing firm on the whole truth of Scripture. The truth sets us free!

Holy
Spirit
Jordan
Wilderness
Tempted

World
Glory
Me
Jerusalem
Temple

Authority
Worship
Serve
Pinnacle
Stone

Devil
Fasted
Hungry
If
Bread

Foot
Bear
Test

Angels
Strike
Temptation

Alone
Kingdom

S T E J Y Y B D T A O M J
T E H O L Y E E B R E A D
R M E R R T L D A L O N E
I P C D S C L L A R M S T
K T K A A R I S Y O E P S
E A F N O V U T D T I I Y
G T N W E R I G D H B R R
W I L D E R N E S S G I T
P O F J O I T R D N L T E
T N E H K P O S U O O V S
L E T E M W O H W O R V T
I U T E M P L E F E Y E T
A L T A N G E L S T O N E

NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

I hope you are all keeping well. I am sorry the magazine is late this month, unfortunately I have been unwell. I have received feedback that the printed version of the magazine is too small. Printing will return to the usual printer when things get back to normal. Carl Hart currently, kindly prints the magazine which is extremely helpful. I have made the font larger so hopefully this version will have a bigger print. I hope you have a reflective Lent period with renewed growth.

Bible verses for Lent

*For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. **Matthew 6:21***

*Show me your ways, Lord, teach me your paths.
Guide me in your truth and teach me, for you are God
my Saviour, and my hope is in you all day long. **Psalm
25: 4 – 5.***



‘For there is always light, if only we’re brave enough to see it. If only we’re brave enough to be it.’

Amanda Gorman

The youngest Inaugural Poet in US History

GOD IS
MY ROCK
IN WHOM
I TAKE
REFUGE

Psalm 18:2

**ST ANDREW'S CHURCH,
HANDSWORTH**