

Open Space

SAINT STEPHENS SOUNDWELL

MARCH 2010

This IS Church – but not as you know it..

AS YOU know, from 11th April we will be launching a new Sunday morning programme at St Stephens:

8.00am Prayer Book Communion

9.30am Parish Communion

11.00am 'No Limits'

(10.00 - 12.30 Café Central: *in the Hall*)

Many church members are now working towards a successful start to this new programme.

Teams are thinking about how to ensure the best possible sung service of Holy Communion can happen in one hour at 9.30am every Sunday.

Others are planning the launch of the all new 'Café Central'. Still others are working hard to develop a whole new style of worship for the 'No Limits' hour at 11am.

The vision for this is driven by our need to continue to grow St Stephens:

► We need to grow our church because costs go up every year. Our giving in 2010 will need to increase by around £8000.

There are two ways to achieve that:

(1) We can all give 12% more and become more faith based in our giving by learning to tithe our personal income, or (2) we can bring 12% more people in who will give as faithfully and generously as we do.

My prayer is that we all learn to tithe AND we grow our numbers!

► We need to grow our church to guarantee its future in an uncertain world. The Church of England is facing dramatic changes in the way that it recognises and funds its ministries.

There are no guarantees of stipendiary appointments any more. So our church needs to grow much stronger in members and leadership to guarantee its future.

► Most of all we need to grow our church to be a place where lives are seen to be changed by the Good News of Jesus.

Jesus calls us all to be salt and light in our community, making a difference for the poor and marginalised.

Continuing to be a growing church will mean we can do that better.

So our vision is to create a Sunday programme that fills the whole morning.

We want people to come in for those things they love and stay for longer if they wish.

It will be for all ages. It will encompass both our cherished traditions and some of the latest interactive technology. We will be using the whole building and even take the Café outdoors (weather permitting).

We will seek to be salt, light, hope and joy at the heart of our community through all we share in the service of our God.

Will you help us achieve that? Talk to me, Sandy or Liz soon!

PLEASE remember our **GIFT DAY** on Saturday, 6th March in Church.

Please prayerfully and generously support our fund raising to repair the church building and complete our centenary improvements.

IAN WILLS, VICAR



VOLUME 2 Issue 2

Mission Partners with St Stephens:

Bristol City Centre Soup Run
Bristol/Uganda Link
Christian aid
Emmaus
Fair Trade
Frenchay Hospital Chaplaincy
Volunteers
Soundwell Community Trust
Stop the Traffik
International Justice Mission

We will hear more of these partners in future issues of Open Space

Open Space is usually published on the first Sunday of the month.

If you would like to publish something then please give it to: David Packe or post to 76 Snowdon Road, Fishponds BS16 2EJ or send an email to david.packe@btinternet.com. to arrive mid month preceding.

Thank You.

This IS Church – but not as you know it



What is Lent?

LENT is a Festival in the Christian calendar. In the past it has been a long, strict religious fast where people gave up all rich food. The day before Lent begins is known as 'Shrove Tuesday' (popularly known as 'Pancake Day'!)

Lent is a period for Christians to prepare for the the Christian festival known as Easter, by thinking of things they have done wrong. It is a time for spring-cleaning lives, as well as homes.

The Christian church no longer imposes a strict fast. Lent is a time when some Christians try to overcome their own faults because they believe that it was man's sin which led Jesus to be crucified.

They try to follow the example set by Jesus when he was in the desert, giving up luxuries and practising self-discipline. Also they try to give extra time to pray so that they can really let God into their lives.

Many churches hold special Lent services. In some towns the churches of different denominations join together in groups to discuss and share their Christian faith.

Lent is a moveable feast, meaning the date changes from year to year, and begins with 'Ash Wednesday' and lasts for six and a half weeks.

Why is it called Lent?

Lent was originally known by the Latin term 'quadragesima' which translated means the fortieth. This relates to the fortieth day before Easter and the forty days of fasting to come.

It was during the Middle Ages, when sermons were no longer given in Latin that the English term 'Lent' was adopted. This in turn is derived from the Germanic name for Spring 'Lencten' and the Anglo-Saxon name for March 'Lenc'. 'Lencten' comes from the Germanic root for 'length' as Spring is the time of year when the days 'lengthen', or daylight gets longer.

Lent traditionally falls within the period of Spring each year and the forty days are traditionally marked by fasting, prayer and acts of penance.

Three traditional practices observed during lent are **prayer** (justice towards God), **fasting** (justice towards self), and **almsgiving** (justice towards neighbour).

In more recent times during Lent, people forgo something they enjoy, do something new that will bring them closer to God, and donate time or money to charities.

Saint Stephens, has a GIFT DAY on Saturday 6 March.

YOUR generosity will assist with improvements to the fabric of our Church Building.

If making a donation enclose your cash or cheque in an envelope marked GIFT DAY.

What is Easter?

WHAT is it you associate with Easter? Well for the children, it is probably fluffy chicks, cuddly rabbits, chocolate eggs and egg hunts, hot cross buns?

For adults, is it Good Friday and Easter Sunday. For women, does it mean a new hat?

The Bible sources do not mention any of these things, nor Easter. There was however, the feast of unleavened bread, and the Passover.

Early Christians kept the Passover, not Easter.

So where does the word Easter originate?

Well, a similar festival appears to have been found in 2,000 BC amongst the Babylonians, who honored the resurrection of their god, Tammuz, who was brought back from the underworld by a female personage, Ishtar. Ishtar was actually pronounced 'Easter'.

In Phoenecia, she was known as Astarte; in Greece, Eostre (related to the Greek word Eos: 'dawn'), and in Germany, Ostara (from the German for Ost or 'east' which is the direction of dawn).

Or how about the celebration as it has come to us through the Anglo-Saxon fertility rites of the goddess Eostre. This appears to be the same festival, separated only by time and culture.

The Roman church replaced Passover with Easter, moving the pagan Feast of Tammuz to early spring, 'Christianizing' it. Lent moved with it.

The Council of Nicea in 325AD decided for all, the matter of Easter versus Passover:

The Fathers decreed:

- (1) that all Christians should observe Easter on the same day,
- (2) that Jewish customs should not be followed, and
- (3) that the practice of the West, of Egypt, and of other Churches should remain in force, to celebrate Easter on the Sunday following the first full moon after the vernal equinox".

Which is why Easter is always on a slightly different date each year, beginning on a Friday.

Research by DAVID PACKE

FAIRTRADE FORTNIGHT February 22 to March 7

THE theme of this year's Fairtrade fortnight is 'THE BIG SWAP', where you are encouraged to swap your usual stuff for fairtrade stuff.

If the idea of buying foodbulk seems a little daunting, why not club together with friends, neighbours or family and share the fair trade benefits!

Visit the stall in Church Hall on the first Sunday of the month or as advertised.

Mission Partnership Report on IJM

Case study: Peter's Freedom

Peter, who is mentally handicapped, was arrested in 2008 on trumped up charges of robbery with violence, after he found a discarded coat on the roadside. The coat had been dumped there by robbers who had burgled the home of a 76-year-old man.

Peter, was seen wearing the coat, so police arrested him for robbery with violence, a non-bailable offense which carries a death penalty if found guilty.

Peter was in jail for a year before the case was brought to the attention of IJM's Kenya legal team, who contested the case for three months, in an effort to secure the freedom of this wrongly imprisoned man.

Justice came on 31 December 2009, when Peter was finally acquitted of all charges. After 16 months in Nairobi's Industrial Remand Prison, 42-year-old Peter began 2010 as a free man.

For IJM's Director of Operations in Africa, Philip Langford, it's a victory with deep significance: "I am so proud that our team demonstrated to all those watching – the magistrate, the courtroom spectators and the officials who abused their power – that Peter's life is precious and absolutely worth the fight. (For the full story see <http://www.ijm.org/articles/caseworkbulletin>).

Case Study: Protecting Children in Haiti

A recent IJM Press release notes that an estimated 40,000 to 60,000 children have been killed, orphaned or separated from families as a result of the January 12th earthquake.

Breakdown of rule of law across the country has left children vulnerable to human rights abuses, including human trafficking.

Disturbing reports have surfaced of scams targeting Haitian Americans trying to transport relatives from the island, along with scattered reports of the disappearance of children from hospitals across the country."

IJM is calling on the international community to immediately implement measures to protect children at risk from trafficking risks and other forms of abuse in Haiti. "We are grateful to the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), and other groups working on the ground to implement serious measures to prevent a devastating wave of human trafficking," says Gary Haugen, president and CEO of IJM.

Bishops' Letter for 2010

Bishops, Mike & Lee, have written to all PCCs:

Dear friends,

AS 2010 begins, we wanted to write to all the parishes in the Diocese to set out our hopes not only for the year ahead but also for the coming decade.

The communities in which we live – indeed our country and world – face great challenges at this moment of history: economic distress, environmental concern and increasing secularism are some of the big themes. At such a time as this, the good news of the Kingdom of God can be more compelling than ever.

In the Diocese of Bristol, we are committed to meeting these challenges with the potential of genuine, Christ-centred community. At the start of this new decade, our goal as a Diocese remains the same: to create communities of wholeness with Christ at the centre and to help those communities as they grow in commitment to God, partnership with others within and beyond the Church, influence in our world and numbers of those following Christ.

However, 2010 also ushers in a new phase in the life of the Diocese as 'Releasing the Energy', the Diocesan Strategy for 2010 to 2015, begins its life. This means changes in how parishes and other parts of the Diocese are equipped and challenged in their mission: an increased focus on supporting and developing leaders; more responsibility and decision making being entrusted to deaneries so decisions are made more locally; and a phased change in how parishes are asked to resource the mission of the Diocese as a whole financially.

We support these changes because we believe that they will better equip the Church of today to grow and help bring in the Kingdom of God in years ahead. We hope you too will embrace and feel the benefit of these changes.

As we pray for you in this new year, please pray for us.

Yours in Christ, Rt Revd **Mike Hill**, *Bishop of Bristol*,
Rt Revd **Dr Lee Rayfield**, *Bishop of Swindon*

In every dustbin there's a daffodil

WHEN I was 21 I cannot recall that I had any philosophy worth talking about, but since then I've adopted a lot of markers along the way.

It will get dark tonight and light tomorrow and nothing we can do will alter that.

In every dustbin there's a daffodil. What I mean is, don't go thrashing around among the rubbish to the extent of missing the brightness in front of your eyes.

There are two choices; to walk with your head up or your head down.

If you choose the latter course you may pick up the penny on the pavement, but that outlook is limited and you miss a heck of a lot! Lift your head up and you can see the sun by day or the stars by night...

JACKIE SHEPPARD

PRAYER DAY 17 March in Church

THE THEME for this Prayer Day is: 'Offering ourselves to God' using the writings of St Paul found in Romans 12.

It is suggested that you use a prayer and meditation method of study of the scripture which is to:

- Read the Bible text, and ponder it.
- Ask God prayerfully, to speak appropriately to you through the text.
- Wait on God, with the text in mind, to receive whatever thoughts come to you through the text, and
- Step out in faith to act on these thoughts. (Feel free to check out any thoughts you have with a Prayer Team member if you need clarification on the results of this process).

A help sheet is available at the rear of Church which sets out some questions and challenges for you to work on as you pray this scripture.

MARCH CYCLE OF PRAYER

Wc 1st	See & Know	Graham & Jean Lewis, Doris Lisk Kristine & Ian Lockwood, Jean Lowrie, Edward & Karen Lyle, Colin & Sally Lynes, Gerald Marshall	Church Road Cogan Road Colston Close
Wc 8th	Church Musicians	Joyce Mays, Sylvia McCall, Dawn McLaughlan & Mark Atterton Rowena Meaden Julia, Jim & Beth Merrifield	Colston Street Cotswold View Cranham Close
Wc 15th	Our Church Home Groups	Ted & Margaret Milkins, Carol Millard Sharon Mitchell, Andrea Monks Leonard & Josie Morris, Edna Morse Claire Mountford & Gary Rothwell	Crispin Way Crossfield Road Crown Road
Wc2 2nd	Young people's uniformed organisations in the Parish	Jackie Mountford, Blanche Neck Dave Newton, Audrey Nichols Gill Ogborne, David & Suzanne Packe David & Janet Parker	Crownleaze Deerhurst Deerswood
Wc 29th	Ladies Group	Pam Partridge, Wayne & Rosie Pearce Dave, Liz & Hannah Perry Martin & Sally Perry, Tony & Trish Phipps	Eastleigh Close Eastleigh Road Elmore

MARCH DIARY

03 Wednesday	10.15am 07.30pm	Holy Communion Marriage Preparation
05 Friday	09.30am 07.30pm	Stations of the Cross 2, Short Services in Lent Women's World Day of Prayer
06 Saturday	10am-4pm	St Stephen's GIFT DAY
07 Sunday (Lent 3)	08.00am 10.30am 03.00pm 06.30pm	Holy Communion (Prayer Book) All age Family Communion <i>Luke 13: 1-9</i> TEA SERVICE Common Worship Communion
10 Wednesday	10.15am	Holy Communion
11 Thursday	08.00pm	Ladies' Group AGM
13 Saturday	09.30am	DAD & ME (for dads and their children)
14 Sunday (Mothering Sunday)	08.00am 10.30am 06.30pm	Holy Communion (Prayer Book) Parade Service Evening Prayer
17 Wednesday	09.00am 10.15am	DAY OF PRAYER. Till 5.30pm Holy Communion
19 Friday	09.30am	Stations of the Cross 3, Short Services in Lent
21 Sunday (Passion Sunday)	08.00am 10.30am 06.30pm	Holy Communion (Prayer Book) All age Family Communion <i>John 12:1-8</i> HEART Evening
23 Tuesday	07.30pm	PCC Meeting
24 Wednesday	10.15am	Holy Communion
26 Friday	09.30am	Stations of the Cross 4, Short Service in Lent
28 Sunday (Palm Sunday)	08.00am 10.30am 06.30pm	Holy Communion (Prayer Book) All age Family Communion <i>Luke 19:28-40</i> Evening Prayer
30 Tuesday	09.30am	Junior School Easter Service
31 Wednesday	10.15am	Holy Communion

APRIL PREVIEW

01 MAUNDY Thursday	07.30pm 09.30am	Holy Communion (Prayer Book) Junior School Easter Service
02 GOOD FRIDAY		Look out for Easter Service Schedule
04 EASTER SUNDAY		Ditto

FROM THE REGISTERS FOR JANUARY/FEBRUARY

WE will update this section of Baptisms, Marriages, Funerals in our next issue of Open Space.

Thank You

ENID HARRIS has led the team of flower arrangers at St. Stephens for many years.

Even though infirmity has made it increasingly difficult for Enid to get to church on Sundays she has continued faithfully to organise the flowers year by year. More recently Gwen Beek has taken a lead and new members have joined the team. So now Enid has told me she feels it is time to hand on her last responsibilities.

I am very grateful to Enid for the quiet and faithful way she has done this work for us all, and I believe I speak for everyone in thanking you for all you have done for St. Stephen's, and praying God's blessing on you for the future. IAN

Open Space is available 'on-line' each month. Just go to the church website and on the home page click on the link to a PDF document which will download for you to read and or print off as you wish. In colour too!

BLOGGERS

YOU CAN JOIN the St Stephens BLOG and leave your feedback and comments or you can chat to us on Facebook. To get there, just click the links on our website home page: www.saintstephensoundwell.org

SAINT STEPHEN SOUNDWELL

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