

ST. JAMES' FINCHAMPSTEAD

Volume 3 Issue 18

MESSAGE FROM THE RECTOR

Easter 2009



A Prayer for Peace of Heart and Mind

*'God, give me grace to accept with
Serenity the things that cannot be changed,
Courage to change the things which should be changed,
and the Wisdom to distinguish the one from the other.
Living one day at a time;
enjoying one moment at a time;
accepting hardship as a pathway to peace;
taking, as Jesus did, this sinful world as it is, not as I would have it;
trusting that You will make all things right, if I surrender to Your will,
so that I may be reasonably happy in this life,
and supremely happy with You forever in the next. Amen'*

This original version of the famous Serenity Prayer is one which can be very sustaining in difficult times, and I commend it to you for regular use. Challenges and hardships come in all shapes and sizes - from family feuds to sudden illness, from economic crisis to the grief of bereavement. Life seems to be full of upheaval; indeed it sometimes seems to be the norm and we can't control it -even if we have some measure of control of our responses to it.

In it all, we frequently find ourselves worrying about so many things, and although we know it is true that "*worry does not prevent the troubles of tomorrow, it only robs today of its strength*", we cannot help it.

The antidote to worry is, as Saint Paul says, prayer. With great insight he proclaims, "*Do not worry about anything, instead pray about everything; and the peace of God which passes all understanding will guard your hearts and minds.*" In other words prayer can lead to peace of heart and mind, almost bypassing our troubled understanding. May this extended Serenity Prayer of the German theologian Reinhold Niebuhr be one that enables you to access this peace of God's Spirit.

Conservation Update

At the end of December, the PCC had to take the decision to delay the start of the conservation work, due to an unforeseen escalation in costs. Subsequently, the advice from the Diocese, English Heri-

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tage and our architect is that we would be very wise to take advantage of the delay, and include the re-tiling of the nave and north chapel roof in our conservation work. We are currently moving as fast as we can to re-draw the specification and then we will go out to re-tender. There is every prospect that we will be able to start the work in the summer, but above all we are committed and determined to get "the right job at the right price" for St James'.

Science and Religion at St James': The Big Bang and Evolution!

In order to do justice to the bicentenary of the birth of Charles Darwin, St James' had a Science and Religion Fortnight in February, and we were fortunate to engage two eminent speakers to give lectures. Over 100 free tickets were taken up for each occasion. This turnout in itself is indicative of the fascination with the subject, and the importance of it for intelligent and credible faith in the 21st century, to which we are committed at St James'.

Martin Rogers, Director of the Oxford-based Science and Religion in Schools Project in a powerful argument that evolution is obviously compatible with Christianity, gave a fascinating insight into how short a time human life has existed on planet earth. To illustrate the point, he referred to a book by Denis Alexander 'Creation or Evolution – Do we have to choose?'

"In it he describes how, if we look at the history of the earth as if it were a 24 hour clock starting at zero with the present time as midnight, then, simple forms of life would be appearing at 2.40am, single cell organisms flourishing by 5.20am. But single celled creatures with nuclei do not appear until around lunch time (a very long gap), multi cell organisms about 8.15pm. At 9.10pm, in an amazing 3 minutes, a great diversity of phyla appear (the Cambrian explosion). At 9.58pm the mass extinction of the Devonian period takes place and at 10.11pm reptiles appear, followed by the earliest mammals and dinosaurs at 10.50pm, and the first birds at 11.15pm. Just two minutes before midnight hominids start to appear and just 3 seconds before midnight humans make their entry. Recorded human history is one fifth of a second. The blinking of an eye! It puts things in perspective."

Professor Russell Stannard OBE, of the Open University, is a world renowned physicist as well as being a lay preacher in the Church of England for the past 42 years! He took us on a remarkable journey into the wonders of the Big Bang and the fine tuning of the universe which has brought forth and continues to sustain life. To get us started he gave us some mind-boggling statistics;

So let me begin with a brief resumé of what the universe is like and how it originated: The Sun is a ball of fire. It is large enough to swallow up one million earths. It is but a medium-sized star, much like the others. Stars are gathered into great swirling whirlpools called galaxies. Ours is called the Milky Way Galaxy. It contains 100 000 million stars. There are other galaxies besides our own - some 100 000 million of them spread out over

vast tracts of space. So, how many stars are there altogether? Suppose we were to take a tiny grain of sand to represent each of these stars - each of these suns - how much sand would we need? A bucket full? A barrow load? A truck load? No. We would need enough to make a sand castle 5 miles long by 5 miles wide by 5 miles high.

These extracts are merely tasters! The full text of both these lectures can be found on the St James' website, and I commend them to you for further thought and study, as we seek to make sense of our existence on this tiny planet in the remote regions of our home, the Milky Way. Rev Richard



for children up to 11yrs

Sunday Club is an opportunity for children to learn more about the Christian faith and what it means to be a follower of Jesus.

Our groups - Gems (0-2yrs), Pebbles (3yrs-Reception), Rocks (yrs 1,2 & 3) and Boulders (yrs 4, 5 & 6) meet in **St James' Church Centre on Sunday mornings** from 10.45 – 12.10 (2nd, 4th and 5th Sundays of the month during term-time). New members are always welcome to join us.

Each week we focus on a story or theme from the Bible using material appropriate to each age group. Stories, craft, games, drama and discussion provide an opportunity for children to find out more about the Christian faith and its relevance to them. This term we have been hearing more about the life of Jesus, looking towards the events of Easter. Next term we will begin by exploring part of the Old Testament with stories about Abraham and Isaac.

Dates: 8th Mar, 29th Mar, 26th Apr, 10th May, 24th May, 31st May, 14th June, 28th June, 12th July

We are currently hoping to recruit additional leaders and helpers for our Sunday Club team. To find out more please contact Janet Clements on 0118-9328679 (Sunday Club Coordinator)

MISSION

Christmas was very busy again this year with quite a substantial amount raised for charities. On the 4 Christingle Services held in Church on Christmas Eve, an amount of £1730.00 was collected for the Children's Society. The carol singing at the Sports Club later that evening as well as Midnight Mass and 3 Christmas Day Services saw a further £1994.00 donated for the Pre-school Project at St. Matthew's. There was a further £310.00 for Christian Aid for their vital work in DR Congo from the Christmas Card tree. It is heart warming to see, even in these difficult financial times for so many of us, that people are still being generous to these worthy Charities. In May it will be Christian Aid Week where we hope there will be the same generosity as in previous years. Gill Myall

SOCIAL AND FUND RAISING COMMITTEE NEWS:

On 16th November after both the 9.30 and 11.00 services we held what has now become our annual "Bring and Buy Sale" of cakes, books, new toiletries, gifts etc. All profits were for the Conservation Fund and we are pleased to say we made £144.

Voces8 gave us a wonderful concert on 2nd December with profits of £1,221 going to the Conservation Fund. The evening started with the concert in Church followed by drinks and nibbles in the Manor House. The concert was extremely well attended and at one point we had a waiting list for tickets!! Very many thanks to Voces8 for their generous time and talents and we wish them every success with their new CD, "Evensong".

The Christmas Hamper Raffle was very successful once again, especially for Carolyn – hope you enjoyed all the goodies!! Profit of £326 was made for the Conservation Fund.

The Christmas Concert on 17th December was well supported and the Working Party and Baptism Visitors provided their usual amusing entertainment, but also many thanks to everyone who performed. Much mulled wine and mince pies were consumed and a profit of £257 went into general church funds.

We were also kept busy just before Christmas supporting most of the Christmas services, serving refreshments after Nine Lessons and Carols and the 4 Christingle services on Christmas Eve.

Dates for your diaries with more details nearer the time:

March	Possible Social Evening – still to be confirmed
9 th April	Maundy Thursday Bring and Share Supper
10 th April	Hot Cross Buns after morning service
25 th April	St. George's Day Supper with Quiz
2 nd May	Jumble Sale at California Ratepayers Hall
	Please start turning out your cupboards, ladies make room for your new Spring and Summer outfits!!
16 th May	Trio Treats – Classical Concert with refreshments
20 th June	Choir Concert with buffet
12 th July	Church Barbeque after the 11am Service

Saturday 4th July – Church Fete

Our Church Fete in Finchampstead Memorial Park this year is one week earlier than usual, on Saturday 4th July. Closer to the date we will be asking for your assistance with running or helping on a stall or assisting with a game etc. but for now we are seeking your support for sponsorship. If you run your own business, or have contact with a company or business, who you think would be willing to sponsor us, even in a small way by offering a raffle prize; we would be delighted to hear from you, please call the Church Office on 0118 973 0133 if you can help, many thanks. **Sue Sampson**

CHURCH CONSERVATION - Funding Appeal:

We have received donations, sponsorships and grants of **£535,281** towards the Church Conservation Project. This is a total figure which includes pledges and anticipated Gift Aid reclamations up to the end of 2009 and also the anticipated interest on the account. It also includes the very generous Grant of **£15,000** allocated to us by the Parish Council.

This is an amazing amount of money so generously given and surpasses all expectations and hopes that we might have had some 2 years ago when we started fund raising for our conservation project works. As with all projects of this kind there are always so many financial unknowns and we have had our fair share together with the rising costs of materials and the Euro currency, etc, going in the wrong direction for us all!!

The bad news is that we still need to continue with our fund raising and there are a number of events throughout 2009 which will be supporting the project.

We know that English Heritage are minded to support, in part, some of the roof repair costs that we now believe should be an early integral part of the project and we are awaiting with bated breath what the estimated overall cost of this might be.

Very many thanks to all for the help and support in the fund raising activities themselves and, in particular, huge thanks to all our very generous contributors.

Ed Sampson & the Fund Raising Team.

CHURCH YARD TRUST

These are the three St John graves cleaned, mended and leveled recently to compliment the conservation of the church. Also 15 other graves were secured, leveled or straightened for safety or aesthetics. Richard G. Owen.



FLEDGELINGS BABY AND TODDLER GROUP is an informal and very friendly Mother and Toddler Group which meets in the Church Centre at 1.45 to 4pm every term-time Tuesday. We have plenty of toys for all pre-school age babies and children, storytime with music and songs and craft every week. All the children have drinks and biscuits and all the adults are served tea or coffee (and I stress you don't have to make your own cup of tea!) and have lots of opportunity to chat and make friends.

Last term we said goodbye to Kate Meads, who retired from the committee after several years of industrious work! We are extremely grateful to Kate for all the effort she put into Fledgelings, and we wish her luck with her current and future ventures. She has said she'll come back to visit us in a few months to serve coffee as an honorary member of the Mothers' Union, and we'll hold her to that!

Dates for your Diary

March 31st – Easter Service and Easter Egg Hunt. The children all look forward to this occasion as the reward for finding and decorating a cardboard egg is a real chocolate egg! Please turn up at the usual time.



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Nativity and Christmas Party

The Fledgelings children all looked fabulous in their costumes and did a brilliant job of re-enacting the Christmas Nativity. They really got into their parts, with a lot of help from Rev. Richard of course. Afterwards we went over to the Church Centre for the Christmas party, and as always the Mothers' Union did us proud with a fantastic spread. After some classic Christmas songs Father Christmas himself joined us with 2 enormous sacks of



presents! The children were beside themselves with excitement and I think everybody went home having had a lovely afternoon. Please have a look at the pictures on our Fledgelings noticeboard above the fireplace in the Church Centre. Thanks go to the committee for all their hard work organising the event, to Emmie Bidston for playing the piano for our Christmas carols, and of course to Rev. Richard for leading the service. The Christmas Raffle succeeded in raising in excess of £80 for the Mothers' Union's chosen charity and thanks go to Ali Clarke for organising the raffle and the excellent prizes.
Karen Remmington

TRADCRAFT

As the global economy continues to dominate the news, Traidcraft has received many expressions of concern about how our producers are faring in this changing economic climate. I hope the responses below, extracts from a letter from Paul Chandler the CEO, help to answer some of these questions.

How is the global recession affecting fair trade producers?

This downturn is affecting every part of the world, and as consumers buy fewer products so producers find their incomes directly reduced as the orders being placed by fair trade organisations in the developed world grow smaller. **Unlike the UK, where most of us spend less than 15% of our incomes on essentials like food, many developing world producers have to spend 60 or 70% of their money on basic nutrition** – so any fall in income is a serious challenge. Our producers have already been struggling to cope with rising commodity and fuel prices and the credit crunch means that many of them have seen their access to finance restricted. And whilst many in the UK are feeling threatened by the prospect of job losses and falling incomes, I often remind myself how fortunate we are to live in a society where there are financial safety nets, free healthcare and free education which are just not available to billions of workers in the developing world and their children.

How is Traidcraft itself faring?

Like so many businesses we find the current conditions very challenging. Although market research shows that people are very committed to continuing to buy fair trade products, we are inevitably affected by people pulling back on their general levels of expenditure. The weakness of sterling is a further challenge for us, increasing the cost of the goods we buy, which are usually priced in US dollars or Euros.

How can Traidcraft respond to these challenges?

We are doing all we can to protect our fair trade producers. We are very pleased that so far this year we have been able to increase the overall volume of our fair trade purchases, protecting the livelihoods of our suppliers. **Our practice of making advance payments when we place orders is also increasingly vital in the credit crunch (and is sometimes not part of the package offered by commercial competitors).**

To make this possible in the face of declining sales volumes, we are having to make lots of economies. In the last nine months we have reduced our UK costs by 8%. However there are limits to how much we can cut whilst still supporting our Fair Traders and our producers, and so we must find ways of achieving improved sales – attracting more Fair Traders, helping existing Fair Traders to sell more, and identifying new partners willing to work with us in extending the availability of fair trade products in the mainstream.

What about Traidcraft's charitable work overseas?

As you might expect, donations from the general public to our charity, Traidcraft Exchange, are also being affected by the recession, and we are more than 20% behind where we planned to be this year. As a relatively small charity, we are particularly vulnerable to volatility in the level of donations. **This is particularly frustrating, because ironically this year we have been awarded exceptional levels of funding from grant-making bodies – like the European Union and Comic Relief.** Our success indicates recognition of the effectiveness of our overseas programmes and advocacy work which benefits producers of tea, cotton, honey and other small businesses in the developing world. But the big funders never provide the money needed to cover the full

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March

- 8th** **2nd Sunday of Lent**
 8am Holy Communion [CW]
 9.30am Matins
 10.45am Sunday Club
 11am Parish Communion
 6.30pm CTC Lent service
 at Holy Ghost, Crowthorne
 7pm Youth Group [CC]
- 9th** 6pm Handbells practice [CC]
 7.45 for 8pm PCC Meeting
- 10th** 10am Tuesday Working Party
 1.45pm Fledgelings [CC]
 5pm Young People's Confirmation Group
 [CC]
 8pm Lent Lecture 2 – Speaker –
 Rev Dr Ali Marshall [CC] – coffee from
 7.45pm
- 11th** 10am Midweek Communion
- 12th** 9.45am Morning Housegroup at
 216B Nine Mile Ride
 2pm Mothers' Union Meeting [CC]
- 15th** **3rd Sunday of Lent**
 8am Holy Communion BCP
 9.30am Family Service
 11am Parish Communion
 2 - 4pm Adult Confirmation Group [CC]
 6.30pm CTC Lent service at
 Crowthorne Methodist Church
 7pm Youth Group [CC]
- 16th** 6pm Handbells practice [CC]
- 17th** 10am Tuesday Working Party
 10.45am CTC Coffee Morning at
 Crowthorne Methodist Church in
 aid of the Corrymeela Community in Ireland.
- 1.45pm Fledgelings [CC]
 5pm Young People's
 Confirmation Group [CC]
 8pm Lent Lecture 3 – speaker –
 Rev Richard Warden (TBC) [CC]
 coffee from 7.45pm
- 18th** 10am Midweek Communion
- 22nd** **Mothering Sunday**
 8am Holy Communion CW
 9.30am Extra Family Service
 11am Parish Communion
 6.30pm CTC Lent Youth service at
 St John's Crowthorne
 7pm Youth Group (TBC) [CC]
 6pm Handbell Practice [CC]
- 23rd** 10am Tuesday Working Party
 1.45pm Fledgelings
 5pm Young People's Confirmation
 Group [CC]
- 24th** 8pm Lent Lecture 4 – speaker-
 Andrew Bosley [CC]
 coffee from 7.45pm
- 25th** 10am Midweek Communion
- 26th** 9.45am Morning Housegroup at
 216B Nine Mile Ride
- 28th** 8.45am Ladies Breakfast [CC]
- 29th** **5th Sunday of Lent** (please
 remember, clocks change)
 8am Holy Communion BCP
 9.30am Extra Matins
 10.45am Sunday Club [CC]
 11am Parish Communion
 6pm Taizé service
 7pm CTC Lent Service at
 Edgbarrow School
 7pm Youth Group (Contrast) [CC]



- 30th 6pm Handbells practice[CC]
8pm 'Face to Face with Jesus' –
coffee from 7.45pm [CC]
- 31st 10am Tuesday Working Party
1.45pm Fledgelings
5pm Young People's Confirmation
Group
Lent Lecture 5 – speaker -
Rev Richard Warden [CC] coffee from
7.45pm
- April**
- 1st 10am Midweek Communion
- 5th **Palm Sunday**
8am Holy Communion BCP
9.30am Family Service
11am Assemble in CC for Blessing &
Procession of Palms, then Church
Family Communion in Church
6pm Annual Church Meeting [CC]
- 6th 6pm Handbell practice [CC]
7pm CTC Agape meal at
Crowthorne Methodist Church
- 7th 10am Tuesday Working Party
- 8th Midweek Communion
- 9th **Maundy Thursday**
2pm Mothers' Union Meeting -
members sharing favourite
Easter readings [CC]
7pm Bring & Share supper [CC],
followed by
9pm Holy Communion and
10pm – 11pm Vigil
- 10th **Good Friday**
10am Family Service followed
by hot cross buns
2pm Service of Meditation –
the last hour at the cross.
- 11th **Easter Saturday**
10am Decorating the church
10.30pm Youth vigil
- 12th **Easter Sunday**
6am Dawn service of Light
followed by breakfast in CC
8am Holy Communion BCP
9.30am Family Service
followed by Easter Egg Hunt
11am Parish Communion
- 13th 6pm Handbell Practice [CC]
- 14th 10am Working Party
- 15th NO Midweek Eucharist
- 19th **Second Sunday of Easter**
8am Holy Communion BCP
9.30am Family Service
11am Parish Communion
- 20th 6pm Handbells practice [CC]
- 21st 10am Tuesday Working Party
1.45pm Fledgelings [CC]
5pm Young People's
Confirmation Group [CC]
- 22nd 10am Midweek Communion
- 23rd 9.45am Morning Housegroup at
216B Nine Mile Ride
- 25th 7.30pm St George's Supper &
Quiz*[CC]
- 26th **Third Sunday of Easter**
8am Holy Communion CW
9.30am Matins
10.45am Sunday Club
11am Parish Communion
7pm Youth Group [CC]
- 27th 6pm Handbells [CC]



- 28th 10am Tuesday Working Party
1.45pm Fledgelings [CC]
5pm Young People's Confirmation Group [CC]
8pm 'What's it all about? Course (coffee 7.45pm)[CC]
- 29th 10am Midweek Communion
2.30pm Churchyard Trust Tea at the Sports Club
- May**
- 2nd 2.30pm Jumble sale at California Ratepayers Hall in aid of Conservation Fund
- 3rd **4th Sunday of Easter**
8am Holy Communion BCP
9.30am Family service
11am Church Family Communion
6pm Evensong
7pm Youth Group [CC]
- 4th 6pm Handbell Practice [CC]
- 5th 10am Tuesday Working Party
1.45pm Fledgelings [CC]
5pm Young People's Confirmation Group [CC]
8pm Course: 'What's it all out?' (coffee 7.45pm)[CC]
- 6th 10am Midweek Communion
- 7th 8pm Evening Housegroup at 216B Nine Mile Ride
- 10th **5th Sunday of Easter**
Start of Christian Aid Week
8am Holy Communion CW
9.30am Matins
10.45am Sunday Club [CC]
11am Parish Communion
2-4pm Adult Confirmation Group [CC]
- 6pm Three Churches in Finchampstead Praying Together at St Mary & St John's Parish Centre: leader – Rev Richard. All welcome.
7pm Youth Group [CC]
- 11th 6pm Handbells practice [CC]
- 12th 10am Tuesday Working Party
1.45pm Fledgelings [CC]
5pm Young People's Confirmation Group [CC]
8pm Course: 'What's it all about?' (coffee 7.45pm)[CC]
- 13th 10am Midweek Communion
- 14th 9.45am Morning Housegroup at 216B Nine Mile Ride
2pm Mothers' Union Meeting [CC]
Speaker Jackie Miles on the MU holiday scheme, 'Away from it all'.
- 16th 8.45am Ladies Breakfast[CC]
7.30pm Trio Treats Classical Concert* [CC]
- 17th **6th Sunday of Easter**
8am Holy Communion BCP
9.30am Family Service
11am Parish Communion
7pm Youth Group [CC]
- 18th 6pm Handbells practice[CC]
7.45 for 8pm PCC Meeting [CC]
- 19th 10am Tuesday Working Party
1.45pm Fledgelings [CC]
8pm Course: 'What's it all about?' (coffee 7.45pm)[CC]
- 20th 10am Midweek Communion
- 21st **Ascension Day**
9am School Service
7.45pm Confirmation Service at All Saints', Wokingham

**24th 7th Sunday of Easter**

8am Holy Communion CW

9.30am Matins

10.45am Sunday Club [CC]

11am Parish Communion

25th 6pm Handbells Practice [CC]**26th 10am Tuesday Working Party**

NO Fledgelings

27th 10am Midweek Communion**31st Day of Pentecost – wear red,****orange or yellow to church**

8am Holy Communion BCP

10.45am Sunday Club

11am Parish Communion

6pm Taizé service

Some Forthcoming Dates**11th June Evening Mothers' Union Meeting for whole Deanery [CC]****20th June Choir Concert with buffet*****4th July Church Fete [Memorial Park]****12th July Church Family BBQ*****26th July St James' Day Celebrations - Tower open and teas 2 – 5pm****4th Oct Harvest Festival Harvest Lunch****10th Oct Harvest Supper***

[BCP=Book of Common Prayer CW=Common Worship, Contemporary Language CC=Church Centre CTC=Churches Together in Crowthorne *=ticket needed-ring office for details 0118 9730133]

Happy Easter to all our readers

ST JAMES' FINCHAMPSTEAD BELLRINGERS

We were expecting the New Year to see a temporary silencing of the bells but the delay to the renovations has meant that we have been able to give Ray and Elizabeth more time to practise ringing at their home tower. They have not yet been put off by the coldness of the tower as a small heater and the vigorous exercise keep us warm. We are not sure whether the clumps of ladybirds by the windows are frozen solid or just hibernating.

We practise on Wednesdays from 7.45pm – 9pm and would love to welcome more ringers – both novice and experienced. Do come along and join us. (feel free to give me a ring first if you prefer as we occasionally have to cancel a practice)

Patricia Amos - Tower Contact 0118 973 3747

MUSIC AT ST JAMES'

Monday morning, 17th November 2008 seems such a long time ago now ! "What's he rabbiting on about a dull and depressing Monday morning in November for, and what could it possibly have to do with music at St James'?", I hear you ask. Well, quite a lot actually. Early on that Monday morning, while some of you were still busy under your duvets, Senior Choir stalwart and Matins enthusiast Andrew Powell and I were battling through the Sandhurst traffic to keep an early morning appointment in the bowels of Guildford Cathedral. The occasion, as most of you will now be aware, was Andrew's RSCM Gold Award examination, for which the examiner was Katherine Diennes-Williams, the Cathedral Organist. The Gold Award is the top award available from the Royal School of Church Music (RSCM) – to which our Choir is affiliated – and replaces the former "St Nicolas" award. I have to say that it has been a great pleasure and an even greater privilege to help Andrew prepare for this exam. He worked steadily at it for the best part of a year, sometimes attending preparation sessions in church as early as 8-00 in the morning. I'm delighted to say that his hard work paid off and he passed with an excellent pass mark. Could I say here that another candidate (who I know from one of my previous churches) was taking the Gold Award exam on the same day, and scored about 12 marks more than Andrew. And this person just happens to be a music graduate, which makes me think that Andrew did very well indeed !! It's worth noting that, although the exam involved the singing of several prepared items, a fair percentage of the marks awarded were for some quite demanding sight-reading and rehearsal of service music with the examiner together with written work researched and prepared beforehand by Andrew, including performance notes, musical history and a short choral-based service for Epiphany which Andrew had to devise himself. Maybe we could use this service at St James' some time in the future. But for now, CONGRATULATIONS, ANDREW – you're a great credit to the Choir and to our wider Church family at St James' – WELL DONE. A month later. Christmas was upon us, beginning with the Finchampstead Society's Christmas Party and the St James' Christmas Concert, both in the Memorial Hall. Christmas activities in church began on Saturday 20th December with the Wedding of Louise Worrell (a member of our senior choir) to Robert Rance on the day before the Carol Service. This wonderful occasion had promised to be one of the most "musical" weddings ever seen at St James', and so it was. Louise entered the church to the strains of an unusual choral arrangement of the Pachelbel Canon and other choral music included "O holy night" by Adolphe Adam and John Rutter's "The Lord bless you and keep you". The following day saw the Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols and I'm pretty sure we set a definite precedent at that Service. In the soprano section of the choir was the newly-married Louise Rance (formerly Louise Worrell) and in the congregation was her new husband and many members of the family. Now, that's what I call dedication !!

Next up was the usual Christingle making session followed by Carol singing in the village. It was good to be able to spend some time at Warren Lodge singing not to, but WITH some of the very vocally gifted residents there. Watch out choir, there could be a takeover on the way !!

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mothers
union



Christian care for
families worldwide

We all enjoyed our Christmas celebrations and were delighted to receive a card signed by our Mothers' Union friends at St Matthew's Kimberley.

Our Epiphany Gift donations amounted to a marvellous total of £326, including gift aid. This will be added to the £187 collected at our Carol Service and donated to St Matthew's Saturday pre school project. Very many thanks to everyone for their support and generosity.

Our first date for March will be "The Women's World Day of Prayer," 2pm at St Mary and St John Parish Centre. March 12th will be our branch meeting when Capt. John Richards will speak on our theme "The Cost of Relationship".

We will be supporting the "Make a Mother's Day" for Mothering Sunday on March 22nd. Maybe this year you could give an ethical gift to a mum or "in memory" of a mother? Money raised will help families in tough circumstances through the Mothers' Union Overseas Fund. Please take a catalogue from church and send 'your order' before March 13th.

We celebrate Lady Day on March 25th, the Deanery Service will be at 2pm at St John's Crowthorne - the Rev. Canon Trevor Walt will conduct the service.

Our meeting in April will be on Maundy Thursday April 9th, when all members are invited to bring readings and poems ~ always an entertaining afternoon.

We will be hearing about the Mothers' Union charity "Away From it All," at our May 14th meeting when Jackie Miles will speak to us. We regularly raise funds for this project, which enables disadvantaged families to enjoy a short holiday.

Diary Dates

Friday March 6th 2pm Women's World Day of Prayer ~ St Mary & St John Parish Centre.

Thursday March 12th 2pm Branch Meeting ~ Church Centre.

(Fri. March 13th Closing date for "Make a Mother's Day," orders)

Weds March 18th - 10am Corporate Communion.

Weds March 25th 2pm Lady Day Service ~ St John's Crowthorne.

Thurs April 9th 2pm Branch Meeting ~ Church Centre.

Weds April 22nd 10am Corporate Communion.

Thurs May 14th 2pm Branch Meeting ~ Church Centre.

Weds May 20th - 10am Corporate Communion.

Everyone is most welcome at our meetings and services. Sarah Owen, Branch Leader.

CHURCHES IN FINCHAMPSTEAD PRAYING TOGETHER- Sunday May 10th 6pm

Three times a year people from St James', St Mary & St John's and Finchampstead Baptist Church get together to pray for our community and our world. The next session will be at St Mary & St John's Parish Centre on May 10th which is at the start of Christian Aid Week. Please do consider joining this time to show our solidarity as Christians. Rev Richard will be leading the session.

HOUSEGROUPS ARE RECYCLING

One of the best, if not the best, of the Bible studies we have done as a group was Alistair Begg's study of Ruth. Our longstanding members often refer to it and some of our new members would like to see it, so the morning group members are taking a break from their academic review of Apologetics, to revisit the *Book of Ruth*. This is a wonderful story of God's providential dealings in the lives of Ruth, Naomi and Boaz and the way it all points forward in the scheme of redemptive history to the Lord Jesus.

Alistair Begg is one of the Keswick Convention's most popular speakers. He is a native of Scotland, and has been the Senior Pastor of Parkside Church in Cleveland Ohio, since September 1983. Alistair is a daily speaker on the national radio programme *Truth for Life*, which is broadcast on over 220 stations, and he has written several books. In 2010 he is scheduled to return to Keswick, where he is sure to receive a great welcome.

After John Wyatt's riveting talks on *Matters of Life and Death* at the morning group, we will repeat this for the evening group. John is Professor of Neonatal Paediatrics at University College London. He has been a frequent contributor to political, media and academic debates on controversial ethical issues, and his best selling book *Matters of Life and Death* is published by InterVarsity Press.

John begins his lecture by stating: "I haven't got a set of slick and easy answers for difficult problems. I genuinely don't think there are any easy answers, but I do want to suggest some ways of thinking about these topics which I hope will be helpful".

If you missed our previous presentation of Prof. Wyatt's talks, this is your opportunity to hear him for yourself.

The Morning Group meets on the 2nd and 4th Thursday at 9.45 a.m.

12 Mar 'Science at the end of life' by
John Wyatt

26 Mar 'The Trinity and Apologetics'
by *L. T. Jeyachandran*

02-16 Apr Easter holidays.

23 Apr Ruth 1: 1-5 by *Alistair Begg*

30 Apr Housegroups' Annual Outing

14 May Ruth 1: 6-22 by *Alistair Begg*

28 May Schools' Half-Term Holiday –
No meeting.

11 Jun Ruth 2:1-23 by *Alistair Begg*

The Evening Group meets on the 1st and 3rd Thursday at 8 p.m.

Lent began on 25 Feb; the Evening Group does not normally meet in Lent to allow the members to attend the Lent Lectures at St James'.

02-16 Apr Easter holidays

30 Apr Housegroups' Annual Outing

07 May 'Matters of life and death' by
John Wyatt

21 May Confirmation Service at All
Saints Church, Wokingham

04 Jun 'Science at the beginning of
life' by *John Wyatt*

Most of these meetings will be held in our home at 216B Nine Mile Ride. For more information telephone us (*Tel: 0118 973 2592*), or the Church Office (*Tel: 0118 973 0133*). A friendly welcome awaits you if you would like to attend the evening group meetings. There is now a waiting list for membership of the Morning Housegroup. *Audrey and Francis Moore*

ST JAMES' FINCHAMPSTEAD HANDBELL TEAM

The ringers enjoyed their Christmas break after a hectic 2008 and began gently with an annual HRGB Birthday Rally at Aldershot. 'Take it From Here 2009' commenced with the ringing events for the elderly already in place for the next few months. A concert with the church school and the handbell team was planned in February to raise funds for the Parkinson's Disease Society.

A week on week improvement and the continuing commitment from the ringers themselves has seen an immense difference in the style of music their ability now allows them to enjoy and play. A group will be attending the National Rally in Cirencester in April -a weekend of enjoyment, learning new techniques, expanding their knowledge and furthering their art of handbell ringing.

We are currently recruiting (all age) so if you are interested in joining us please do come along on Monday evenings 6pm onwards.

Cotton gloves are all that is needed. Ability to read music is helpful but not essential. A warm welcome, and the help needed, is available as our latest youth recruit, Elizabeth Hayden, found out. She is now looking forward to joining the team for a 'Bells & Percussion Day' in March and a 'Birthday Rally' in May. Meg Hostler

A chuckle is good for the soul! Some bloopers.

Ladies don't forget the rummage sale. It's a chance to get rid of those things not worth keeping around the house. Bring your husbands.

At the evening service tonight, the sermon topic will be "What Is Hell?" Come early and listen to our choir practise. [Editor's note— Not of course 'St. James' choir'!]

Low Self Esteem Support Group will meet Thursday 7pm. Please use the back door.

Weight Watchers will meet at 6pm at the First Presbyterian Church. Please use the double doors.

(Music from page 13)

Then began the Christmas Marathon – four Christingles, Midnight, and Christmas morning. I'd like to take this opportunity of thanking Matt Sampson and Sue Edwards for their help at the piano and the organ with three of the Christingles and to Matt for playing at the Sports Club on Christmas Eve and the 9-30 Eucharist in church on Christmas Day.

I have been told it was suggested by many people that the Choir's "performance" over this last Christmas was their best ever. (I'm not sure about the word "performance" but I know what they meant.) As it would be totally wrong for me to say that I'm inclined to agree with them, I would like to simply add my voice to theirs and say a big thank you to the Choir for their hard work and professionalism, not only over Christmas but during the rest of the year. It's a great privilege to direct such a committed group of singers. In turn, I'm sure the Choir will join with me in saying a word of thanks to Revd Richard, Revd John and to our wonderful congregation, the majority of whom are so supportive of the choir. I know we do this for God but it's good to know that we have such positive earthly support as well. THANK YOU. Andrew Bosley

ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING – SUNDAY APRIL 5TH AT 6PM

Once again church members have an opportunity to gather for this statutory meeting - or rather, meetings. The first is the **Vestry Meeting** to elect (re-elect) two churchwardens. At the **Annual Parochial Church Meeting** which follows there will be the opportunity formally to accept the examined accounts for 2008 as well as reports from all our groups and committees. The meeting then elects 4 representatives to the Parochial Church Council, for those whose 3 year terms are now ending. The meeting also approves the list of people who will be sidespeople for the next year.

The meeting is open to all those on the **Church Electoral Roll**, which is now being revised in readiness for the meeting. If you have been attending St James' regularly (at least once a month) for 6 months, please make sure you are eligible to attend the meeting and vote, by filling in one of the lilac Electoral Roll application forms in the church porch or Church Centre. Our new Electoral Roll Officer, Sarah Booth, will be pleased to receive your form **by March 18th** or to help if you have any questions. (If you are already on the Electoral Roll there is no need to re-apply.)

ADULTS CONSIDERING CONFIRMATION

The 'Confirmation Classes' for adults this year will be in two sessions, 15th March and 10th May from 2pm to 4pm in the Church Centre. The Confirmation service will then be at All Saints Church Wokingham on Thursday 21st May in the evening. If you are interested in attending or would like more information, please contact the Church Office. (0118 9730133)

Search for a new Deanery Lay Chair

St James' Church is part of Sonning Deanery which is in the Diocese of Oxford. We have elected lay representatives on to the Deanery Synod and our clergy are on the Deanery Synod too. In the Church of England this is the next layer of 'government' above the parish and the Deanery Synod has responsibilities towards the parishes to support & encourage and also check that certain legal requirements are being fulfilled. The Area Dean, at present Rev David Hodgson of All Saints Wokingham, is the ordained person who leads the Deanery and there should also be a Lay Chair (i.e. not a priest) to share the duties. Since Judith Scott finished her term of office, a successor has not yet been found and the Area Dean has sent out an appeal to find a new Lay Chair. This person should be an enthusiastic worker with a view of supporting 'the church' beyond a single parish. It is not a position for the faint-hearted but it is an incredibly vital role in the running of the Deanery. There is a detailed Job Description which I will be pleased to give to anyone who might like to consider the role. It may be that you have past experience of Deanery Synod or PCC and now have some time which you could offer.

Please contact me by phone or email at the Church Office. Carolyn Fox, PCC Secretary.

More bloopers

The Associate Minister unveiled the church's new campaign slogan last Sunday: "I Upped My Pledge—Up Yours"

To Ethiopia with the Bible Society

It's strange to discover that Christianity reached Ethiopia many years before it reached Britain. In fact as the British Isles were entering a period in the 6th century from which very little survives the liturgy of the Ethiopian Orthodox church was being codified and has remained unchanged from then until now.



So while Ethiopia is desperately, almost unbelievably, poor in material things, it has a depth and continuity of Christian tradition that we can't match.

I had the great privilege and excitement of spending 10 days in Ethiopia in January this year. I was one of a group organised by the Bible Society in the UK and hosted by the Bible Society of Ethiopia. The aim was to get a bet-

ter understanding of how the Bible is translated in a country with 80 languages; how it is distributed when the road system is poor; and how the Gospel message is proclaimed where 50% of the population can't read. Funding work in these challenging conditions is a major objective of the UK Bible Society.

Among other things we visited a prison where the Bible Society was handing out Bibles and Bible portions and attended services in the two prison chapels (Orthodox and Pentecostal) in opposite corners of the large yard where the 1800 prisoners spend most of their time. We saw two contrasting hospitals – one private and one public – which brought home to us the enormous dedication of the qualified doctors and nurses who stay in their own country when they could be earning perhaps 100 times as much in the West. After that our tendency to moan about the NHS seems grossly misplaced.

We visited two projects for HIV/AIDS sufferers and heard stories of how they had been ostracised from society and lost their jobs and homes, and of how they are trying to support their families right on the margins of society. One of these projects arose as a result of the Bible Society's *Good Samaritan* project, a training programme about HIV/AIDS based on Biblical teaching. The other was run by one of the Addis Ababa Pentecostal churches as an outreach programme to the 3000 people living in makeshift homes on a mountain outside the city. They wouldn't take us to this community because of the current prevalence of TB there. On top of everything else.

I had never been to Africa before and my eyes were well and truly opened. Although we didn't visit the rural areas away from the capital where people live at subsistence level, we did get

some sense both of the scale of the need in the country and of the extraordinary vision that some of the Christian leaders have. Just as Addis Ababa is the headquarters of the African Union, so they believe that God is leading them to bring the gospel of Jesus Christ not only to Ethiopia but to the whole of Africa.

There was so much new to see and so much to learn that I have hardly



started to digest it fully. I have never had any doubts about the importance of making the Bible available to everyone in their own language. But I now understand a little better why it is so difficult in many countries, and how important is the work of Bible Societies around the world. If anyone feels as I do about the centrality of the Bible to their own faith and might wish to make a contribution to Bible Society's worldwide work, I will happily let you have details. You can almost certainly expect to hear more from me on the subject as the implications of the trip sink in. In the short term I'll be giving one of our Lent lectures. Rev John

(Traidcraft from page 8)

project costs – they require us to raise additional funding from the general public. So just at the time when our charitable activity should be growing, our ability to unlock these major grants and deliver benefits to hundreds of thousands more poor producers around the world is being undermined. More donations would enable us to release the funds we have raised from grant-making organisations this year. But at the moment even our ability to continue to deliver our existing work is starting to come under threat from the lack of public donations.

What can I do to help?

Please continue to share the message of the importance of buying from Traidcraft during these difficult economic times. Extra sales really help the security of our producers.

Please also consider donating to Traidcraft Exchange. And as always, we would be grateful for your prayer support; please pray for Traidcraft but even more importantly for our producers and all those who benefit from our overseas project programmes.

The economic downturn is affecting all of us, and impacts on people around the world. Now is the time when we need to work together to protect the weakest and most vulnerable. We are grateful for your support in enabling us to continue going the extra mile for all those who can benefit from fairer trade.

PRIEST-IN-CHARGE: REV. RICHARD WARDEN, THE RECTORY, THE VILLAGE,
FINCHAMPSTEAD 0118 973 2102

ASSOCIATE PRIEST: REV. JOHN EDWARDS, GREEN HEDGES, 25 ST JOHN'S ST.
CROWTHORNE 01344 774586

LICENSED LAY MINISTER: DR KEITH ATTON

CHURCH WARDENS: RICHARD PEAT, 14, GERRING RD, ARBORFIELD
0118 9760402

NICKY ALDER, 65 READING ROAD, FINCHAMPSTEAD
0118 9734904

ALL ENQUIRIES FOR BAPTISMS AND WEDDINGS, ETC SHOULD BE MADE TO:
THE CHURCH OFFICE, THE MANOR HOUSE, CHURCH LANE, FINCHAMPSTEAD. RG40 4LU.
Email; office@stjames.finchampstead.co.uk

OFFICE HOURS; OPEN FROM 10.00AM TO 12.00 MONDAY TO FRIDAY.
TEL / FAX NO: 0118 973 0133

CONTRAST

We have enjoyed a very busy and lively autumn term at St James' Youth Group. We performed a successful Christmas Play before Christmas, at the Church Centre where most of our young people took part. We do have plans for next Christmas to do a Pantomime! Watch out!

We are about 15-20 young people aged 11+ (from secondary school) meeting up at the Church Centre 7pm – 8.30pm every Sunday evening during term time. We have a topic every session, play games, munch tuck and discuss the big issues. Sometimes we do "outings" such as swimming, bowling or lazer quest.

We had Trevor Walt from Broadmoor hospital visiting us in January and also Amethyst who talked to us about drugs and alcohol.

We welcome new members any time. Our group has a Christian ethos.

Since the conservation work has been postponed, we are hoping to go ahead with our traditional Easter Vigil on Easter Saturday.

If you would like more information call Cathy on 0118 9730707 or email at Catherine.clayton@btinternet.com

