

# St Peter's Parish Chest February 2014

Parish Office: 020 8997 3655

e-mail: [admin@stpeterealing.org.uk](mailto:admin@stpeterealing.org.uk) [www.stpeterealing.org.uk](http://www.stpeterealing.org.uk)

A monthly bulletin of all that is accomplished by and within our church's community

**Suggested Contribution 30p**

## Letter from the Vicar

I object to the 'fight the flab' articles and features in papers and magazines that come out at the beginning of the year. There was one I saw in the supermarket the other day that suggested the reader could have a flat tummy in 3 weeks. I guess this assumes you don't have a life and can spend your entire time doing sit ups and squat thrusts (I'm not sure what that is but it sounds energetic). I object because they present to normal, ordinary Joe Public an impossible image to live up to, "you too could look like this". The response is "no I couldn't" because I am too busy; actually, more likely, in my case at least, because I couldn't be bothered. They set a target too high for me and I can't even bear the idea of setting out on the journey the dieticians and exercise gurus suggest. They have set too high a bar and I am just not going there. It is a shame because I probably could gain something from their insight and I probably should do something about my waistline.

It's a new year and I am sure many of us are full of hopes and dreams of a 'new you'. May be you are thinking of self-improvement (it is never too late) or being better organised, or looking after yourself a little better. Perhaps you'd like to see friends more often or you'll try to 'tweet' less, as suggested by one national newspaper editor.

Wanting to improve yourself is always a good thing. To strive and grow as a person prevents stagnation and break down. We can become a bit manic about it, as in those magazine articles, but if we keep a sense of proportion we can be a better us.

This is of course true in our spiritual lives too. Examining ourselves and our relationship with God, thinking realistically about where we are in our relationship with God and how we would like to grow closer to God or be a better Christian in our homes or work place or school ground has got to be a good thing. We can take church membership and faith/relationship with God for granted. We can get flabby in our following of Jesus.

Lent is soon to arrive when we can give ourselves a spiritual work out and detox. At St Peter's there is quite a variety of possibilities this year to see how best we can help and encourage you to share in Lent. We encourage you to think about what you can realistically commit to and use that as a way of exploring your spiritual life and journey, use it to look at your relationship with God and to ask how you might be able to come closer to God.

Don't try and overdo it; pace yourself whilst doing that little extra to stretch yourself. Use the programme and time to come closer to God and renew your relationship with God, so that, come Easter and our celebrations of the resurrection feast you will know God that little better and be better prepared to praise and glorify God's name.

## Lent Programme 2014

### Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> March - Ash Wednesday

Lent begins with the Mass of Ashing at 8pm.

### Lent Groups:

We are then offering two Lent Groups entitled, '**Pilgrimage in Daily Life**'.

The first begins on **Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> March**, 7.30pm at 23 Mount Park Road.

The second begins **Monday 10<sup>th</sup> March**, 2pm at the Vicarage.

We are also offering a chance for prayer before the working day with a **prayer breakfast** at 7.00am every Tuesday through Lent beginning on **Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> March**, in the Lady Chapel

Starting on **12<sup>th</sup> March the Wednesday Mass** through Lent will begin with Stations of the Cross and will provide a meditative walk with Jesus. All of which will lead us up to Holy Week and the glorious celebrations of Easter.

A list will be available in church soon for you to sign up so that we can gauge interest and numbers in good time.

**Fr David**

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## Candlemas



Hope and light in the dark time of the year

As always we go to press at *The Parish Chest* before we can report on the undoubted fun enjoyed by all and the success of the Candlemas Barn Dance and Supper. This year it was held on **Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> February** and was a great way to cheer up and stay warm and dry in readiness to celebrate again the Feast of Candlemas. *Full report next month*

## "A Sonnet for Candlemas"

They came, as called, according to the Law.  
Though they were poor and had to keep things simple,  
They moved in grace, in quietness, in awe,  
For God was coming with them to His temple.  
Amidst the outer court's commercial bustle  
They'd waited hours, enduring shouts and shoves,  
Buyers and sellers, sensing one more hustle,  
Had made a killing on the two young doves.  
They come at last with us to Candlemas  
And keep the day the prophecies came true  
We glimpse with them, amidst our busyness,  
The peace that Simeon and Anna knew.  
For Candlemas still keeps His kindled light,  
Against the dark our Saviour's face is bright.

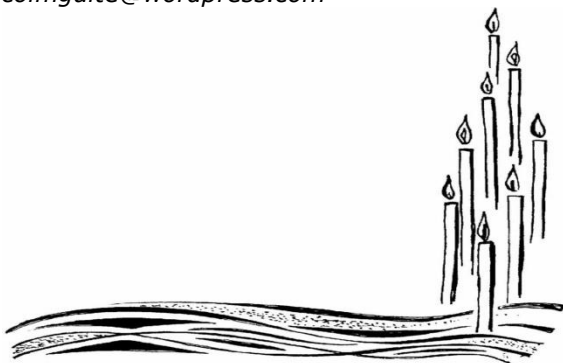
**Malcolm Guite** is chaplain of Girton College, Cambridge and he writes poetry reflecting the seasons of the Church year. He describes here some of the thoughts that led to his writing his Candlemas sonnet:

"Though the 12 days of Christmas ended at Twelfth Night and Epiphany, there is another sense in which this season, in which we reflect on the great mystery of God in Christ as an infant, continues until February 2nd, the Feast of the Presentation of Christ in the Temple.

This feast came to be called by the shorter and more beautiful name of Candlemas because the day it celebrates, recorded in Luke 2:22-40, is the day the old man Simeon took the baby in his arms and recognised him as 'A Light to lighten the Gentiles and the glory of thy people Israel.' It became the custom of the church to light a central candle and bring it to the altar to represent the Christ-light, and also on the occasion of this feast to bless all the 'lights' or candles in the church, praying that all who saw that outward and visible light would remember also and be blessed by the inner light of Christ 'who lightens everyone who comes into the world.'

It had always been prophesied that God would one day come into the Temple that human beings had built for him, though Solomon, who built the first temple had said 'even the Heavens are too small to hold you much less this temple I have built'. Candlemas is the day we realise that eternity can come into time and touch us in the form of a tiny child, that God appears at last in His Temple, not as a transcendent overlord, but as a vulnerable pilgrim, coming in His Love to walk the road of life along side us."

To read more poems and reflections please visit [malcolmguite@wordpress.com](mailto:malcolmguite@wordpress.com)



## New Beginnings



Cuthbert – "Bertie" – shining at his baptism

The Gospel readings in Epiphany focus on how Jesus is revealed to the world as God's Son. We began by hearing of the wise men bringing their gifts and then continued by recalling Jesus's baptism and beginning of his earthly ministry. It was very appropriate during this season then to celebrate with the Pridgeon family the baptism of Cuthbert Hugh- "Bertie" - on **Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> January**.

Young Bertie was very well-supported as he began this first step on the Christian journey. His aunt, the Reverend Lindsay Yates, was our preacher and she then performed the baptism of her little nephew. Lindsay spoke very powerfully about the lifelong process of "getting to know you", both getting to know each other in our human relationships and getting to know God.

The family support was also shown musically as other members of Bertie's family sang "Bethlehem Down" during the service. (See David Blumlein's notes on this piece in the January *Parish Chest*.)

As Alex and Alex with the newly baptized Bertie and his beautiful big sister Beatrice led us out in light, we felt with them the joy of new life and the hope of good things in store.

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## Getting to know each other...

One important way of getting to know each other here at St Peter's is to be a member of our Welcoming Team. It is so much more than offering newcomers a hymn book; it is the first experience of the true warmth of the welcome we offer to all who come here. To find out more about Welcoming please come to the **Welcomers' Meeting TODAY at 11.30am** in the Lady Chapel.



A young welcomer at work last year...

## Two Bethlehems?

This is the question posed by Harold Stringer in his article on the situation faced by Palestinian Christians in Bethlehem today.



"A Palestinian shepherd boy watches his flocks near the illegal Jewish settlement of Har Homa, near Bethlehem."  
Photo by UPI/Debbie Hill

### Harold Stringer writes:

Recently an inspiring talk at Heythrop College made the contrast disturbingly clear: there's one Bethlehem we imagine from St Luke and our much-loved carols – all expectant stillness, the silent night of the *Magnum Mysterium*; and there's also the noisy, bustling town of today, struggling to carry on normal life despite all the odds, facing anxiety, unemployment, austerity and oppression.

Zoughbi Zoughbi is Director of a centre for conflict resolution/transformation and restorative justice called Wi'am, Arabic for *agape*, Christ-like love. He told of its a brave attempt to help people cope with the constant frustrations and injustices of life, and even to bring some faint glimpse of hope.

A few of the facts he gave us: there are now more Palestinian Christians in the USA than in the Holy Land, and the percentage of Christians has gone down from 21% in 1948 to just over 1% and still decreasing. In the Bethlehem area there are still some 60 thousand, but they're now outnumbered by 90 thousand Israeli settlers – illegal, but supported by the government. 87% of the land is now under Israeli control, and the last area of productive ground near the town is under threat. Settlements and the separation wall almost surround Bethlehem, making it feel like a prison.

In this context Wi'am is about more than conflict and reconciliation. It aims to be a base for peace-making, community development, personal empowerment and support – practical, emotional and spiritual. It does important work with children, not only with recreational and educational activities, but helping children cope with trauma. They may have suffered violence themselves, or seen their parents humiliated at checkpoints or attacked in their fields by settlers, or had armed troops burst into their home at night.

In all their varied work, including campaigning to end the occupation and entrenched racism, Wi'am insist on non-violence: they see it as a positive weapon which 'cuts without wounding, a sword that heals' (Martin Luther King). I got a strong sense that

Israel's real security would come from building not walls, but bridges. Zoughbi himself puts it: 'We do not want you to be pro-Palestinian or pro-Israeli, we need you to be pro-justice and work for the liberation of all people.'

Yet he expressed disappointment in Western churches' lack of response to the appeal by leading Palestinian Christians known as the Kairos Palestine Document, *A Moment of Truth*. An illuminating and balanced comment on it, produced by an ecumenical group on Iona and called *A Time for Action* merits study and action, especially in this UN Year of Solidarity with the Palestinian People (anyone even heard of that?). The plight of Syrians is far more desperate, but absolutely no one can see what feasibly could be done about that. By contrast, our churches, governments, businesses, individuals, consumers really could influence the Israel-Palestine mess, just as they did with the South African one. It's not fair on the Pope to leave it all to his coming visit!

*The film 'The Stones Cry Out - the story of Palestinian Christians' is to be shown on Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> February (afternoon) at St Winifred's, Kew/Richmond. Look out for details.*

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## Lent Giving

Although a late Easter this year means that Lent will not start until next month, now is a good time to begin to think about how we are to mark this penitential season in our own lives. Fr David has outlined the various opportunities offered at St Peter's this year for prayer and reflection but there are also more practical ways of engaging with Lent.

One of the ways we do this is by raising money for a specific charity through the Lent Box scheme. These little boxes that we take home gradually get filled (hopefully!) with what we are able to put in them over the Lent period. They are then offered at Easter as a part of our celebration of this great Feast.

This year's Lent Appeal will be in aid of the Bishop of London's Mission Fund and ALMA.

### The Bishop of London writes:

ALMA links the dioceses of Angola, London and Mozambique together in a partnership. Our past work together has helped to build new schools, to transform the lives of children, to provide clean drinking water, to train men and women for ministry and to improve transportation around the colossal dioceses of Angola, Lebombo and Niassa.

Since 2004 the Bishop of London's Mission Fund has supported mission work throughout our Diocese, aimed at reaching 'beyond the walls of the church' to increase its mission work in areas of social need as well as keeping pace with the needs of the growing church in London. We aim to raise £60,000 in this year's appeal - that's less than £1 per person on the electoral rolls of the churches within the Diocese.

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Do look out for the Lent boxes and more information about the work of the Bishop of London's Mission Fund and the work of ALMA later on this month.



## Music Notes

### David Blumlein writes:

On hearing the carol "King Herod and the Cock" on Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> January some members of the congregation were justifiably surprised to note the music was the work of Sir William Walton. The words are unusual to say the least, the cock getting up off a roasting dish to crow and thus confirm to Herod the news of the birth of Jesus! The verses were collected by Cecil Sharp from a Mrs Plumb in Worcestershire in 1911 and the story was also to be found in the ballad of St Stephen and has been traced back to c.1200.

Sir William Walton (1902-1983) is normally associated with orchestral works. His "Façade Suite", accompanying Edith Sitwell's poems, was an early piece incorporating popular-style tunes and syncopated rhythms. He went on to write two symphonies and a dramatic cantata "Belshazzar's Feast". His Overture "Portsmouth Point" and March "Crown Imperial" are still to be heard, the latter written for the coronation of King George VI in 1937. Although a boy chorister at Christ Church Cathedral, Oxford, he composed little for the church - I will single out a superb unaccompanied anthem "A Litany", a setting of the words "Drop, drop slow tears" - and he did write a *Te Deum* for the Queen's coronation.

"King Herod and the Cock" is a pleasant flowing tune with some delicious harmonies among the parts.

I submitted to Mark James a little known setting of Bishop Heber's very familiar Epiphany hymn "Brightest and best", which the choir sang on Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> January. It is a delightful tune from the pen of the great Dr Samuel Sebastian Wesley (1810 -1876), our foremost church composer of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. It dates from 1864 during the time that he was Organist at Winchester Cathedral, the third of his cathedral posts.

The tune is appropriately called "Epiphany" and is to be found in the 1924 edition of "Hymns Ancient and Modern".

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Mark James, our busy and talented Director of Music

## Thank you for the music!

Now seems an appropriate moment to offer our thanks to Mark James, our Director of Music for the true feast of music he and the choir have shared with us this Christmas and Epiphany season. Not only has Mark led us in our weekly and festival services he has also instituted a very popular and high calibre series of organ recitals\* here at St Peter's.

As many of you will know Mark's very busy "day job" is as a teacher in North London. This combined with living in the City makes his commitment to all he is involved with us here in W5 especially appreciated.

Most recently Mark and some of the St Peter's choir took part in the final service for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity held at Ealing Abbey on the evening of **Friday 24<sup>th</sup> January 2014**. The choir sang Byrd's *Ave Verum Corpus* and Mark, who kindly sent the picture below, notes that, "We were the only choir in attendance this year and I'm told in recent years. We have been invited for next year! "



Singing for unity: St Peter's at Ealing Abbey

Our thanks too, of course, to our wonderful choir who give their time and gifts so generously and faithfully week by week. On a personal note, as editor, I would like to take this opportunity to thank David Blumlein for his beautifully crafted accounts of some of the musical "gems" we hear at St Peter's.

**\*NB: Tuesday 29<sup>th</sup> April 2014** Richard Pinel, Organist of St George's Chapel, Windsor in concert at St Peter's at 7pm. FREE admission, with big screen projection and refreshments. (There will be a retiring collection.)

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## Year's Mind

2 February	Richard Doe (2005)
4 February	Emily Caterer (1974)
9 February	Donald Gordon (1995)
17 February	Keith Hall (2005)
	Lionel Paget (2009)
18 February	Joan Price (2008)
19 February	Bernard Smith (1958)
25 February	Albert Dale (1991)

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Please send articles for the March issue to [speatfield@aol.com](mailto:speatfield@aol.com) by **Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> February**.