



ST PETER'S NEWSLETTER



DECEMBER 2016

LETTER FROM THE VICAR

What do you make of the Incarnation?

Each day, after morning and evening prayer, we ring the Angelus, a prayer focusing on the incarnation of Jesus using the words of the Annunciation (Luke 1.26-38); Gabriel proclaims, "Hail Mary full of grace the Lord is with you." Mary replies, "Behold the hand maid of the Lord". The context of the Angelus though is expressed in the concluding prayer:

"We beseech you, O Lord, to pour you grace into our hearts;
That as we have known the incarnation of your Son Jesus Christ
By the message of an angel,
So by his cross and passion
We may be brought to the glory of his resurrection;
Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen"

We can get caught in the Anglican confusion surrounding Mary whilst forgetting the aim of the prayer, to tie together the 'witness' of the incarnation, of God becoming human for the salvation of the world. The witness made first in the young Nazarene woman who responds to God's call and the dramatic Easter story of Jesus' arrest, trial, crucifixion and resurrection. Without this incarnational witness there is no basis for faith and no understanding of the depth of God's love for us, the cost of grace that is offered to us. Christmas will soon be here. A time of great celebration, a birthday party for Jesus. A gathering of family and friends, giving of gifts and chilling after the busy-ness of work or the home (well...after lunch anyway!). We are celebrating because of this incarnational gift.

It is a lovely story; it is an amazing event when God came to earth to be as one of us; to love and laugh and cry with us, to understand our needs, our weaknesses and our strengths. Only then could God, our creator show himself to be fully our redeemer in a deep and personal manner. The Torah, the Prophets and the Patriarchs point towards this salvation brought about by a simple story of a child born to ordinary parents; whose death and resurrection would reveal the love of God to the world.

The Angelus holds this in tension for us. Holds before us, each time we recite it, the reality of the incarnational promise revealed in scriptures, in the person of Mary and the carnal reality of the cross, the salvation of the world. This is what we celebrate on the crisp and clear morning when the bells ring out and laughter is shared. This is our Christmas present, one given to all the world.

I wish you every blessing of this festive season, may the incarnate God, Father Son and Holy Spirit be born anew in your hearts this Christmastide.

Happy Christmas,

Fr David

BEST FEET FORWARD GROUP VISIT TO BURNHAM BEECHES

On Saturday 15th of October a group of intrepid walkers set off for a walk at Burnham Beeches led by Fr David.

There were twelve of us in total plus three dogs although we don't all appear on the photographs as three did part of the walk.



It was a lovely dry day to walk in the woods and we saw a deer and some wild ponies which meant the dogs being on lead in certain areas. The trees were magnificent and just beginning to turn to their autumn colours. We passed a number of natural ponds reflecting the dappled sun light yet full of lilies and rushes. Lunch was partaken at The Blackwood Arms, some of the group out in the garden and others indoors, but all enjoying the hospitality and excellent food and company.

Fr Michael

FROM OUR DIRECTOR OF MUSIC

On Sunday 13th November, Remembrance, we were joined for the second year by talented undergraduate Royal College of Music trumpeter, Jack Wilson. Although studying at the RCM, Jack travelled from his parental home in Milton Keynes that morning, leaving promptly after for a rehearsal in Nottingham!



In addition to giving very musical performances of the last post, reveille, and Gordon Jacob's National Anthem fanfare, we had a voluntary with a difference. In place of a piece for solo organ, we heard the Aria, The Trumpet Shall Sound, from Handel's Messiah with Tim Salisbury as bass soloist, plus trumpet and organ. If you would like to sponsor a student musician for a special occasion, in memory of a loved one, or simply to enhance our music and worship at St. Peter's, Mark would love to hear from you in person or on: mark.james@rcm.ac.uk 07837788940.

Mark James

STEWARDSHIP 2016

Our Stewardship Programme 2016 may seem an awful long time ago (especially as we are knocking on the door of Christmas) but it is worth keeping in mind one of the key themes of Stewardship; that it is an ongoing part of the life of faith. Many of us completed pledge cards offering our time, skills and money for the ministry of God in our parish. The purpose of the card is three-fold. Firstly, it allows us, in taking a piece of card, writing down our intentions and placing it on a plate which is presented at the altar, to make a tangible commitment to God. Secondly, it makes using our offerings of time and talent

easier. Your intentions can be passed on to the right person so your offering of skills and time can become a reality. Thirdly, the financial offering you pledge helps the Finance Team plan the budget for the coming year. If they have a good idea of what money has been promised they can plan or trim the budget accordingly.

If you have not yet filled in a Pledge Card or have simply forgotten it is not too late. You can fill in a card and pop it in the collection bag on any Sunday. If you don't have a card and would like one, please ask Fr David or Linda Foster. We can help.

On a similar note if you have made your pledge, if appropriate please make sure you complete a renewed standing order form – or make the appropriate changes on line.

Thank you.

The Finance Team



CHRISTMAS 2016

The Great Festival will soon be here and you are very welcome to come and share in the celebrations at St Peters:

Advent 4: Sunday 18 th December	17.30	Carols by Candlelight
Christmas Eve: Saturday 24 th December	15.30	Christingle Service
	23.30	Midnight Mass
Christmas Day: Sunday 25 th December	10.00	Christmas Day Mass

Come and join us.



SPINACH AND RICOTTA TORTILLA

150g potatoes sliced; 250g spinach (or chard); olive oil; 1 sliced onion; 4 medium eggs; 100g ricotta cheese; a dash or two skimmed milk; mixed salad to serve.

1. Cook the potatoes until tender. Microwave the spinach to wilt it (you can also do this in a frying pan with a little garlic and olive oil). Squeeze out excess water and roughly chop
2. Heat oil in frying pan and cook the onion until soft. Add the tender spuds and stir together.
3. Beat the eggs, ricotta, milk and spinach together. Pour into the pan, mixing to combine and cook gently for 4 minutes.
4. Place pan under a preheated grill until golden (c. 3-4 mins). Allow to cool slightly, slip out of the pan, slice and serve with mixed leaves.
- 5.

GARDENING IN DECEMBER...IS THERE ANY?

Top 10 tips from the RHS

- 1 Check your winter protection structures are still securely in place
- 2 Check that greenhouse heaters are working
- 3 Insulate outdoor taps and prevent ponds from freezing
- 4 Prune open-grown apples and pears (but not those trained against walls)
- 5 Prune acers, birches and vines before Christmas to avoid bleeding
- 6 Harvest leeks, parsnips, winter cabbage, sprouts and remaining root crops
- 7 Deciduous trees and shrubs can still be planted and transplanted
- 8 Take hardwood cuttings
- 9 Keep mice away from stored produce
- 10 Reduce watering of houseplants



You would have thought now would be a good time to ignore the garden and spend time with seed catalogues, your feet up and a nice mug of steaming tea. However, there are quite a few things you could be doing, other than Christmas shopping.

This is when I plant my alliums, my garlic, shallots and onions. The weather around is relatively mild and if you have good, well-draining soil they will get a good head start. I plant my garlic in tubs (actually, an old tin bath and a trug with broken handles). When sowing garlic don't treat them like onions where the head is left proud of the soil. Push the garlic cloves well in, about half an inch deep, making sure your soil has been well fertilised with a prepared allium fertiliser or at least some good garden compost. I love growing garlic and shallots; as winter becomes tedious you can look out and see sprouts of green. By June/July with a little looking after you end up with good garlic. I tend to find if I have prepared the soil well and well positioned the tubs (not too cold, with sunshine) I can get enough garlic from two or three bulbs to last a year of cooking. I tried elephant garlic last year. It looked dramatic with huge bulbs and really big cloves but I wasn't struck on the flavour, it tends to be quite subtle.

Another job you could be doing is preparing your tools for the coming spring. Pots should be washed each year to prevent transference of disease. Warm soapy water with a little disinfectant will do the trick. You could also be cleaning spade blades, oiling clippers and shearers and even cleaning out the shed in readiness.

Don't forget your pest control friends the birds either. Feeders should be regularly washed to prevent disease transfer and kept topped up with energy giving seed and peanuts. Look after the birds and they will help keep the bugs down.

Finally, this is a good time to prune fruit trees and autumn raspberries (mine have just finished and were yum!). You might even get in a grass cutting session, though not when there is frost. Don't completely tidy up the garden. Friendly bugs will be sleeping in leaf mould and long grass. A bit of untidiness helps.