

NEWSLETTER FOR MARCH 2011

Lent - and Confirmation

March sees the start of Lent, and details of our programme are at the end of this letter. A particular focus this year is support for those whom we shall be presenting as confirmation candidates on Easter Eve at St Paul's Cathedral, at the most thrilling service of the year. You still have time to 'enrol' as a member of this group, but to do so you need to speak urgently to the Rector.

An additional resource for Lent & Holy Week - when we tell the story of Moses and the 'great escape' from Egypt (thrown into focus this year by that nation's political turmoil) - is a 20-minute DVD *Missing Moses*, produced by the London Exodus project with contributions from Jewish and Christian speakers, including our Bishop, and John Simpson in news reporter mode; you can view it at <<http://www.missingmoses.org/>> See what you make of it!

Annual Vestry & Parochial Church Meetings

Because of the date of Easter, and the Marathon, this year's annual meeting is a bit earlier than usual, on Sunday 10 April, and we are incorporating it into our Lenten programme, with a parish lunch. We are busy preparing the accounts and annual report. Linked to this is the annual revision of the church **Electoral Roll**, which will close on 20 March, with the revised roll on display the following week. If you are not already on the roll - and if you regard St George-in-the-East as 'your' church you should be - or if your details have changed, please collect a form from church.

Womens' World Day of Prayer

On Friday 4 March at 1pm, women (and maybe a few men?) from various local churches will gather at St Dunstan Stepney for this year's service, which has been prepared by women from Chile under the title *How many loaves have you?*

Eduction Sunday, 20 February

We were privileged to have Jan as our preacher, fresh from Radio 4's Sunday programme on RE, and earlier in the week an extended debate on 'faith schools'. She told us something of the astonishing energy of the National Society in establishing huge numbers of schools throughout the land, long before the state woke up to its responsibilities: this year marks its bicentenary, and being its General Secretary is part of her job. In the current climate, where everything is open to change, the challenges remain, to show how church schools continue to serve local communities (especially in deprived areas), committed to the Christian-based human values on which our society depends.

Cherishing our community

The campaign for **King Edward Park** continues apace - including a community event on the Tuesday of half-term, at which Sottyten Sen (the Bengali folksong, dance and drama group that rehearses in our church) performed - see more at <www.savekemp.com> If you want a 'Healthy Borough' walk, pick up details in church of *Walk a Mile... around Shadwell*, one of a series of 12 walks devised by 'Walk East' - including the park.

Some of us learnt more about UK Power Networks (aka EDF)'s plans for **Wellclose Square**: at this stage, a shaft to connect to an underground high-voltage cable route, but in the longer term a sub-station, which as this is a conservation area will be resisted by the local authority as well as by local groups.

Looking ahead

Mothering Sunday (let's use its proper title rather than Mothers' Day, please, to make the historic links with 'mother church') is on 3 April - daffodils, and special prayers for mothers living and departed, as usual!

Palm Sunday clashes this year with the Marathon, so we have decided to take the liturgically unusual step of ending our 9am service with the palm procession around the church, as an act of witness to the gathering crowds - to whom we will then serve refreshments.

The consensus on **St George's Day**, given its clash this year first with Easter and then with the extended royal wedding weekend, was that we should not keep him waiting, and go ahead with a low-key patronal festival on Sunday 1 May; more ambitious plans, for Andrew Motion's 'civic liturgy', labyrinths, and so on, may happen later!

We know that our church was blitzed in May 1941 (the little picture in church actually gets the month wrong), though the actual date is not clear. We will mark its **70th anniversary** on Sunday 22 May.

We have now mapped out possible social events - barbecue, trip, quiz night and so on - for the rest of the year - watch this space.....

Congregational News

Please pray for **Rodney**, who has not been with us for several months and is in a dark state; for **Olive**, who has also been housebound for some time but is hoping to return soon as her mobility is now improving; for **Michael Saward**, now at Mile End Hospital and hopefully receiving physiotherapy for his leg injury; and for **Edith**, who has been in and out of hospital but remains as determined as ever.

Congratulations to **Annadale** on a 'significant birthday', celebrated in true family style with a great party which brought siblings from the USA, Spain and Holland - it was good to see many of them in church the following day.

Genti and Vivien, married here recently, have had an unexpected move, for family and other reasons, to north London; we shall miss them, but wish them well, and hope to keep in touch. Good wishes to **Gary and Claire**, to be married here this month.

~ ~ ~ LENT 2011 ~ ~ ~

This year we aim to keep Lent, individually and together, as

- a time for God and for each other - prayer and penitence, fasting and feasting
- a time to support candidates preparing for baptism and confirmation
- a time to support our Lenten charities

So this is what we have planned:



ASH WEDNESDAY, 9 March

We launch our Lent programme with a simple shared meal of soup and pancakes (transferred from Shrove Tuesday!) at 7pm in and around the kitchen in church, followed by the Eucharist (with blessing and imposition of ashes), at which Lent books, providing daily readings and reflection, will be introduced and distributed.

There is no charge for the meal or the books, but to help us assess numbers tickets will be available from 27 February - and contributions towards the cost will be welcome!

The book we have chosen is Bishop Tom Wright's *Lent for Everyone*. Using the same book - in whatever way best fits your circumstances - will unite us during the week. But there are plenty of other good Lent books available.....



SUNDAYS IN LENT

Lent began as a time for joining in solidarity with those preparing for baptism and confirmation at Easter, and each Sunday we shall keep the tradition of presenting to our candidates to be confirmed at the Easter Vigil at St Paul's Cathedral four 'marks' of the Christian faith - the Summary of the Law, the Creed, the Beatitudes and the Lord's Prayer. (Mothering Sunday comes in between, on 3 April.)



SHARING HOSPITALITY

Several of us plan to invite members of the congregation to a meal in our homes, at which we can discuss our Lenten journey, and get to know each other better.



GENEROUS GIVING

As in previous years, during Lent we shall be supporting WaterAid (labels for 'jars of change' will be available) and the diocesan Lent appeal for our partner churches in Angola and Mozambique (ALMA), which this year is called 'Training God's People', helping resource a rapidly-growing church (for example, congregations, parishes, church members, priests, catechists, and Mothers' Union membership in the diocese of Niassa has almost doubled in size in the last five years). Supporting literature for both causes will be available in church, with links on our website.



DOING GOD'S BUSINESS

Our modest programme ends appropriately with a 'bring and share' meal following our Annual Parochial Meeting on Sunday 10 April, in the crypt. Although we should try to avoid 'busyness' in Lent, it is right that we should bring our stewardship of this parish into the season.