

NEWSLETTER FOR MARCH 2010

Lent, Holy Week and Easter

Lent is now well under way. As you'll know if you've seen the separate flyer, our project for these weeks is to discover, by whatever means we can, something about our local neighbours of other Christian traditions and of other world faiths.

Members of the congregation have been asked to have conversations with neighbours and friends, and if possible to visit their places of worship, and to come on Sundays with some thoughts to share.

On 28 February we will reflect on the Roman Catholic and Orthodox traditions; on 7 March on nonconformist and free church traditions; and on 21 March on what we have discovered about other faith traditions. We'll be joined on that day by the author Leslie Musoko, who will speak briefly after the service about his latest book *ELI*, which as he explains follows the journey of the hero Cephas as he discards his past and travels to Saudi Arabia in pursuit of his inheritance. *Things are not as they appear to be for Cephas, as he soon discovers. He is at the fringes of uncertainty in his personal life and relationship. Broken and despondent, camaraderie and his faith in God are his only hope for survival in the Kingdom. His Christian faith is put to the test in a vibrant Muslim community compounded by the instability of the war in the Middle East. However his odyssey into the Kingdom is only the beginning of a mysterious path that is waiting to be unraveled.*

Our all-age service in March is on **Mothering Sunday**, 14 March. During Lent we are supporting Water Aid (with a bucket for loose change) and ALMA, our diocesan link with Angola and Mozambique, whose Lent project focuses on work with schools and young people (for which Gift Aid envelopes are available). Full details for Holy Week (Palm Sunday to Easter) will be on a separate flyer.

Ritualism Riots

The Archbishop's sermon, from his visit on 20 January, is now on his website at <<http://www.archbishopofcanterbury.org/2748>>

On 18 March we have the next event in our programme marking the 150th anniversary of the Riots - see the enclosed flyer. Please support this, and tell others about it; it should be an informative and enjoyable evening (and we will be offering refreshments afterwards). On Easter Day we will remember Bryan King, the Rector at the centre of the Riots, on the anniversary of the gift by his son of his historic vestments (once stained by rotten eggs) and chalice to Dunedin Cathedral in New Zealand.

Two musical events at All Saints Poplar

On Saturday 20 March there will be a 'come and sing' performance of Stainer's Crucifixion at 7pm (admission free). Any singers who wish to be part of this need to attend the rehearsal at 4pm (with 'note-bashing' from 2pm), and let the organisers know. The following week, on Saturday 27 March at 7.30pm, the London Dockland Singers will perform Schubert's Mass in G and Brahms' German Requiem. Tickets for this are £12 (£9 concessions).

Participatory government in Tower Hamlets

Each year residents of each of the eight local area partnerships in our borough have the opportunity to attend a public event - 'You Decide' - and vote on some aspects of Council spending for the coming months, choosing from a menu of possibilities. The event for our area (LAP4) is on Monday 1 March, at Mulberry School, from 6-9pm. Unfortunately this clashes with our church council meeting, but it would be good if members of our congregation were represented around the table.

There is also a proposal, on which we will be invited to vote when the General Election comes around, to have an elected Mayor of Tower Hamlets - a kind of mini-Boris (or Ken, if you prefer). This is proving controversial, both on principle (will it be more, or less, democratic?) and because of speculation about who might be the likely office-holder. As Christians, we need to involve ourselves with such issues, and vote with care.

Two sad deaths

On 25 February **Hilary Oliver**, wife of Stephen Bishop of Stepney, died after a long and brave battle with cancer. Bishop Stephen, of course, is heartbroken - they were childhood sweethearts and had been married over 40 years - but is deeply grateful for the prayers and support of all the churches in the area for which he is responsible. We shall continue to uphold him in our prayers while he remains on compassionate leave, and give thanks for Hilary's life.

(At the same time Lyle Dennan, our archdeacon, has begun chemotherapy, so our patch is currently without its two senior clergy, but other staff, including the area deans, are sharing many of their routine responsibilities.)

Last month we reported that **Nora Solomon**, widow of Fr Alex Solomon (Rector 1958-78), had suffered a stroke. Nora died on 6 February, and some of us attended her funeral in Worthing a fortnight later. An extract of the address at her funeral follows. We hold in our prayers her niece Ros and lifelong friend Peggy, who helped to care for her.

The homily given at the Eucharist of Thanksgiving and Requiem for Nora Solomon on Friday 19 February 2009 by The Revd Gordon Spencer

...Nora was born in Cambridge in 1915 while her father was an army chaplain in France. The family moved back to Newfoundland in 1919 - where the Facey family originated - when her father became Principal of Queen's Theological College. Nora grew up in St. Johns with her lifelong friend Bet (who died two weeks before Nora), both of them going to school at Bishop Spencer College. During the 1930s Nora came to England with her parents and studied catering at Reading University, and throughout the Second World War, managed the restaurant at the Girl Guide Headquarters, (where they entertained the Queen and other dignitaries). Her father was, at that time, Vicar of St. James the Less, Pimlico, and Nora lived with her parents.

She met Alex through her cousin Ted. Ted and Alex were great friends at St Augustine's, Canterbury, where they were studying for the priesthood. Nora and Alex became engaged while Alex was curate at St. Giles, Camberwell. In 1942 Alex was called back to India to take up a parish there, followed by the

Chaplaincy of Victoria and Dow Hill Schools near Darjeeling in the Himalayas. Nora was unable to join him until the end of the war and then very bravely traveled out to India by ship, all by herself, in 1945. As soon as she arrived in Calcutta, they were married in St. Paul's Cathedral. They spent eight happy years in the schools near Darjeeling, where Nora actively supported Alex in his ministry, until Indian independence forced their move back to England. They lived at Fletton with her sister and brother in law, Gertrude and James Rees for a year, and then Alex was made priest in charge of St Nicholas Perivale.

In 1958 they were sent to St George in the East in Stepney, where they were not only instrumental in the rebuilding of the bombed church, but also in building up the congregation, and they were there until Alex retired in 1979, when they came to Worthing and of course to this Church where Nora's brother in law was then Rector. Later Alex was the curate here for a year during the incumbency of the subsequent Rector, Fr Wilkie Denford, and then Fr Alex continued his much valued ministry as an assistant priest. As many of us here at St. Andrew's well know, they both played an active part in the life of this church.....

It is appropriate that today we come to receive the sacrament of Holy Communion at this nave altar, for this altar was given in memory of Fr Alex and also of Fr Harold Carr. In an article in the parish magazine in October 1979. Fr Alex wrote this:

Our visits to our parish church are meant to increase our awareness of the Divine Presence in the manner and name of our Lord. Above all it is in the practice of meeting at the appointed place where Bread and Wine are administered in the sacred mystery of Holy Communion, that the members of Christ's Body receive an incomparable gift; it is a rich experience of becoming one with Christ in the silence of the Sacrament.

Having known Nora for many years I am sure that those words written by her husband express her own faith as indeed do both the readings that we have heard which speak of the Christian Hope of the resurrection from the dead. So in this requiem we express our hope, indeed our confidence that Nora is no longer separated from her beloved husband but united with him and with Christ the Lord, within the love of God. Amen.

With acknowledgements for source material from Ros, Nell and Peggy.

HandyVan

is a national service offered by Age UK (formerly Help the Aged and Age Concern), funded by the Home Office Safer Homes Fund. It is free to anyone over 60 with less than £20k personal savings, and offers full home security and safety checks, and minor repairs. Contact 0845 026 1055 or <handyvan@helptheaged.org.uk>