

Newsletter for MAY 2014

Chocolate chickens, and the real thing

Those of us (an increasing number at St George-in-the-East) who are dedicated Lidl shoppers were intrigued to be offered our Easter chocolate in the form of a hen sitting on her eggs - with an informative item on Easter symbolism in their current magazine. This is at least slightly nearer the message of Christ's resurrection than fluffy bunnies. *How often I have desired to gather your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings*, says Jesus (Matthew 23.37), providing a maternal image of divine love reflected in two of the daily prayer canticles in *Common Worship* - '[A Song of Anselm](#)', which begins *Jesus, like a mother you gather your people to you*; and Julian of Norwich's '[Song of True Motherhood](#)', which includes the words *Our true mother, Jesus, bears us for joy and endless life*. These make a good corrective to the patriarchal language of much of scripture. The egg is an obvious symbol of new life; but think also about the broody hen that makes this possible!



If you want to see some real broody hens - and indeed fluffy bunnies and ducks (mostly rare breeds) - you can visit the 'secret' [organic garden](#) around Winterton House, on Deancross Street by Watney Market, where, as well as growing a profusion of vegetables and flowers in a quasi-mediterranean setting, volunteers maintain an animal enclosure; sales of plants, eggs and young animals keep it going.

Well worth visiting: open every Sunday morning (unfortunately, clashing with church).

Fifty years young, and annual church meetings

Our service on 27 March marked the 'first instalment' of our celebration of the 50th anniversary of the re-consecration of the church on 26 April 1964, after seventeen years in the shed known as 'St George-in-the-Ruins'. We had a few people present who remember those days and the launch of the 'new' church (including Edith's daughter Jenefer Spells, and [Paul and Carole Chance](#)), and spoke about them. We will continue this theme as part of our traditional barbecue celebration in July of the original consecration 285 years ago.



Our annual meetings were a fitting response to the events of 1964, as we remembered past worshippers in living memory, and committed ourselves to the future. **Alex Nelson** and **Allan Ramanoop** were re-appointed as churchwardens; **Phil Hogan** and **John Neyman** as our two Deanery Synod representatives; and **Mark Griffiths**, **Annadale Ramanoop**, **Diana Woodbridge**, **Rowena Lovernace** and **Margaret Coulter** were elected as Parochial Church Councillors. This leaves some vacancies, which we hope to fill. More news next month, when the new PCC has met, about our officers and committees.



Christian Aid Week 11-17 May

Frances Reynolds, local area Christian Aid rep (and churchwarden at St Mary Bow) met local clergy recently, and was glad to learn that we are a 'Christian Aid parish', supporting financially the work of the major ecumenical aid and development agency of the British

churches, and using its resources in our worship. We shall be doing this on 11 May, sharing stories from South Sudan, Colombia and Iraq, and thinking of other war-torn regions - Syria, the Democratic Republic of the Congo - being helped by Christian Aid. To whet your appetite, here are some Sudanese proverbs, on which our order of service will be based:

*Only many hands will move the rock.
Every time the bowl is not safe.
He who has a little belila [a wheat berry and milk porridge] can join the feast
Termites have gnawed rocks, so anyone will be happy if he dares courageously.
If you can walk, you can dance. If you can talk, you can sing.*

Sangerstevne Concert - 11 May

Philip Norman, who runs the excellent website that provides us with organist cover - and has played himself for us on a number of occasions - also runs an annual international choral festival, *Sangerstevne* (a Norwegian term for a gathering of choirs), which brings together choirs from around Europe for a weekend in May. This year we are hosting one of the concerts, with three interesting choirs - [Turbelles Performing Arts](#) (Ilford), [Veda Slovena Bulgarian Choir](#) (London) and [Coro Polifonico Cita di Sennori](#) (Sardinia). It's at 2.30pm, is free (retiring collection), and will be lively and enjoyable: do come! Flyers with more detail available in church (though the choir details have changed since this was published).



Diocesan Synod (women bishops) - 15 May

After years of hivering, General Synod legislation to enable the consecration of women as bishops is being fast-tracked - not least because of the bad press produced by the procrastinations - and as part of the process every diocesan synod is being consulted. London's special meeting to consider the proposals is on 15 May, at 6pm at All Souls Langham Place, and the Rector will be present to vote in favour. (Non-members are welcome to attend.) Despite London's claims to lead the way in 'being church' (as they say in Rev and elsewhere), we have been one of the few 'iffy' dioceses on this issue, but the expectation is that we will at last endorse the proposals. An [Australian woman bishop](#) was present at the Maundy Thursday service at St Paul's Cathedral, but sadly had to sit with the priests rather than the bishops, so was unable to renew her episcopal vows with them.

May Fair - 17 May

They all came at once - St George's Day, the Annual Meeting, and the 50th anniversary of the re-consecration of the church on 26 April 1964! We knew we couldn't do full justice to them at the time, so that's one reason why we'll be holding a 'mini' May Fair, on Saturday 17 May, from 3pm-5pm, with stalls, games, refreshments, and we hope that the sun will shine and that you'll join us then. More details will be circulated nearer the time.



Election Day - 22 May

There has been quite a bit of media attention to Tower Hamlets' forthcoming mayoral election! If you're a resident, make sure you cast your vote in the election of mayor, councillors, and MEP. This is a Christian duty, if we are to be responsible citizens. Not all Christians live in democracies: this 'least bad' form of government comes from the Greek world, but is referenced with approval in scripture. The 'white stone' of Revelation 2.17 is how you registered a 'yes' vote, by tossing a white (rather than a black, for 'no') pebble into an urn - hence 'casting' a vote, and hence God's great 'yes' to us in Jesus, with a great bong! Think of those in other lands who queue for hours to exercise their hard-won privilege of voting...

Ascension Day - 29 May

Pentecost, literally 'fifty days', marks the end of the Easter season. But on the 40th day comes a 'change of gear', with Ascension Day, after which the focus shifts to the promise and gifts of the Holy Spirit, through whom Jesus, though taken from the sight of his disciples, remains with us for all eternity. Keeping this day as a festival (the timing is specific to St Luke, in Acts 1.3) has lapsed in many churches, but we will gather then for a celebration, and then go off to enjoy a curry together.



Lent giving: Water Aid and ALMA

For some years now during Lent we have supported two causes: [Water Aid](#), a practical and efficient charity that tackles access for all to clean and pure water supplies, in the face of what, shamefully, has become more and more a lever of political power; and [ALMA](#), our diocesan link with the churches of Angola and Mozambique, which this year seeks to raise £60,000 for a project 'Helping Children be Children' - another area where basic human rights are under threat. It's not too late to contribute to either or both of these; we will be sending our contributions in a few weeks' time.