

St Peter's Church

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Sunday Services: 11.15am Parish Eucharist and Sunday School
[Children start in church, returning at
Communion to receive a blessing]
6 - 7pm PrayerSpace

Weekday Services:

Monday-Friday : 5.00pm Evening Prayer
Thursday: 10.30am Holy Communion

Baptisms, Weddings, Funerals by arrangement with Father Paul.

Magazine material to be sent to judy.east@blueyonder.co.uk or given to
Father Paul, please

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* from *Parish Pump*

DIARY FOR FEBRUARY & MARCH

Thursday 3rd 10.30am Holy Communion
11.15am Coffee and Croissants
6.45pm Belsize Community Choir

Sunday 6th February – 5th before Lent

11.15am Parish Eucharist
6 – 7pm PrayerSpace

Monday 7th 7.30pm St Saviour's Monday Group: Film Evening on Hildegard of Bingen. Details page 9

Wednesday 9th 8.00pm Hampstead Christian Study Centre at Hampstead Parish Church. Details page 11

Thursday 10th 10.30am Holy Communion
11.15am Coffee and Croissants
6.45pm Belsize Community Choir

Sunday 13th February – 4th before Lent

11.15am Parish Eucharist *Address by Dwayne Engh – Music Director and Prospective Ordinand*
6 – 7pm PrayerSpace

Monday 14th 7.30pm St Saviour's Monday Group: John Donne. Details page 9

Tuesday 15th 8.00pm PCC Meeting - Studios

Wednesday 16th 8.00pm Hampstead Christian Study Centre at Hampstead Parish Church. Details page 11

Thursday 17th 10.30am Holy Communion
11.15am Coffee and Croissants
6.45pm Belsize Community Choir

Sunday 20th February – 3rd before Lent

11.15am Parish Eucharist
6 – 7pm PrayerSpace

Monday 21st 7.30pm St Saviour's Monday Group. Karen Armstrong on St Paul. Details page 9

Wednesday 23rd 8.00pm Hampstead Christian Study Centre at Hampstead Parish Church. Details page 11

Thursday 24th 10.30am Holy Communion
11.15am Coffee and Croissants
6.45pm Belsize Community Choir

Saturday 36th 1.30pm Wedding of Matthew Ball and Emma Kelly

Sunday 27th February – 2nd before Lent

11.15am Parish Eucharist *Celebrant & Preacher, The Revd Mark Speeks*
6 – 7pm PrayerSpace

Monday 28th Fairtrade Fortnight begins

7.30pm St Saviour's Monday Group. The Book of Revelation. Details page 9



MARCH

Wednesday 2nd 8.00pm Hampstead Christian Study Centre at Hampstead Parish Church. Details page 11

Thursday 3rd 10.30am Holy Communion
11.15am Coffee and Croissants
6.45pm Belsize Community Choir

Friday 4th 7.30pm Women's World Day of Prayer service at Lumen, 88 Tavistock Place, WC1

Sunday 6th – next before Lent

11.15am Parish Eucharist
6 – 7pm PrayerSpace

Monday 7th 7.30pm St Saviour's : Lent Course begins. Details page 10

Tuesday 8th 8.00pm Lent Course - 'Great Events : Deep Meanings'*. Details page 10

Wednesday 9th Ash Wednesday

- 1.15pm Holy Communion (said) and Imposition of Ashes – St Saviour's
- 8.00pm Sung Eucharist and Imposition of Ashes – St Peter's

- Thursday 10th
- 10.30am Holy Communion
 - 11.15am Coffee and Croissants
 - 6.45pm Belsize Community Choir

Sunday 13th - Lent 1

- 11.15am Parish Eucharist
- 6 – 7pm PrayerSpace

Monday 14th *No Lent or Monday Group at St Saviour's – transferred to Tuesday*

- Tuesday 15th Lent Course, 'Great Events – Deep Meanings' Pt.2 :
- 7.30pm St Saviours,
 - 8.00pm St Peter's Studios

- Thursday 17th
- 10.30am Holy Communion
 - 11.15am Coffee and Croissants
 - 6.45pm Belsize Community Choir

Saturday 19th *Joseph of Nazareth*

Sunday 20th March - Lent 2

- 11.15am Parish Eucharist
- 6 – 7pm PrayerSpace

- Monday 21st 7.30pm Lent Course, 'Great Events – Deep Meanings' Pt 3: St Saviour's

- Tuesday 22nd 8.00pm Lent Course, 'Great Events – Deep Meanings' Pt 3: St Peter's Studios

- Thursday 24th
- 10.30am Holy Communion
 - 11.15am Coffee and Croissants
 - 6.45pm Belsize Community Choir



Friday 25th *Annunciation of Our Lord to the BVM*



Saturday 26th

Quiet Day at St Saviour's, led by The Revd. Ann Coleman – details tba

Sunday 27th - Lent 3

- 11.15am Parish Eucharist *Celebrant & Preacher, The Revd. Mark Speaks*
- 6 – 7pm PrayerSpace

Monday 28th

- 7.30pm Lent Course. 'Great Events – Deep Meanings' Pt 4: at St Saviour's

- Tuesday 29th 8.00pm Lent Course, 'Great Events – Deep Meanings' Pt 4: at St Peter's Studios

- Thursday 31st
- 10.30am Holy Communion
 - 11.15am Coffee and Croissants
 - 6.45pm Belsize Community Choir

Sunday 3rd April - Lent 4 / Mothering Sunday

- 11.15am Parish Eucharist
- 6 – 7pm PrayerSpace

The way children see it....

What do you think your mum and dad have in common?

Both don't want any more kids. - Lori, age 8

How can a stranger tell if two people are married?

You might have to guess, based on whether they seem to be yelling at the same kids. - Derrick, age 8

Father Paul writes.....

Watch the occasional short video clips - or read the token paragraphs - devoted to ecclesiastical matters in the news media, and you may think that the Church of England is falling apart, rife with disaffected priests and retired bishops who want to leave it because of the move towards the consecration of Women Bishops – not to speak of other trends within the Anglican Communion, of liberal and inclusive attitudes towards the gay community.

Come to St Peter's, however, and you'll find no such preoccupation. Long before my time here, St Peter's has quietly gone about its life and mission as an inclusive church, seeking to preach 'Jesus Christ... the same yesterday and today and forever' (*Hebrews 13:8*), whilst not straight-jacketed by the transient mores and social conventions of any particular time and culture.

As to those who have conspicuously left for the Roman Catholic Church in recent weeks, I pray that they will be happy and fulfilled, and wish them God's blessing. Such things actually go on all the time; as a parish priest I have had the privilege of admitting into the Church of England people from the Roman Catholic, and other Christian denominations, who have simply come to feel more 'at home' worshipping as Anglicans. So life goes on, and I believe we are in pretty good shape!

Staying 'in good shape' is something many of us, by tradition, try to cultivate in the season of Lent. It's not necessarily vain and narcissistic to look after our bodies in Lent, as having fitter, leaner bodies can energise us and give us greater focus and concentration mentally and spiritually – making us more whole. Equally, we stay in shape spiritually by delving deeper into our faith, and devoting time to increasing our knowledge and understanding of it – as well as to the obvious practices of prayer and church attendance.

As an antidote to some of the shallow news coverage of 'divisions' in the church – which leave the average person scratching their head, wondering why 'these Christians' can't get worked up about something

'more relevant' - it seems good that at St Peter's we should have, this Lent, a Course that offers the chance to celebrate and discuss the main Christian Festivals and their meaning today. It's being offered at different days and times at St Saviour's church as well, and I hope it will appeal equally to those 'coming fresh' who would like a better working knowledge of the Christian Liturgical Year, as to those seasoned churchgoers who are ready to think again about these Holy Days, and possibly shed some old ideas. 'Great Events – Deep Meanings' starts in the week of Ash Wednesday (9th March) and you can read about it further into this issue.

With the New Year firmly under-way, 'staying in good shape' is a challenge, as the memory of the Christmas and New Year break recedes, and everyday troubles and stresses can once again drag us down. May Lent allow you the space for renewal and discovery!

Paul Nicholson

Encountering Jesus

Sermon preached on Epiphany 2

Isaiah 49:1-7; John 1:29-42

'The Lord called me before I was born, while I was in my mother's womb he named me. He made my mouth like a sharp sword, in the shadow of his hand he hid me; he made me a polished arrow, in his quiver he hid me away. And he said to me, 'You are my servant...in whom I will be glorified.'

I was once presented with this passage from Isaiah – which we also heard as part of our first reading today – while on a retreat, by a nun who had been assigned to me as a spiritual director while I was there. Sister Alison (that was her name) left me for a while, with the task of reflecting on the passage and applying it entirely to myself, noting how it made me feel. As I was about to enter full-time ministry in the Church, I remember being

deeply encouraged by Isaiah's words, and feeling myself strongly affirmed.

Was this too fanciful; was it presumptuous, even? After all, even 'Israel', the Lord's servant who's actually being addressed in the passage, responds by saying, 'I have laboured in vain, I have spent my strength for nothing and vanity', seeming to express a sense of futility and unworthiness. But he goes on: 'yet surely my cause is with the Lord. And my reward with my God.' You can see why this 'Servant Song' of Isaiah found fresh layers of interpretation by the first Christians, who saw Jesus fitting perfectly the qualities it describes, and so, why it continues today to inspire many of us in our Christian vision; especially as Israel is spoken of as being given as 'a light to the nations'. The theme of mission and calling is one that seems to spring out of many of the set readings in this season of Epiphany, and it's one that we see played out in the passage from Matthew's Gospel I just read.

After John the Baptist testifies to his conviction that Jesus is the Son of God, we see a kind of relay race begin to unfold. Two of John's disciples hear what John says, and they start following Jesus at a distance. When asked by Jesus "What are you looking for" they say almost anything, just to get into conversation with him: "where are you staying?". This leads to his invitation "Come and see". From their encounter with Jesus, Andrew naturally wants to share his discovery with Simon his brother, and so a kind of chain of continuing relationships with Jesus is started. It's a chain that continues with you and me today.

Perhaps because the Gospel is printed for us now in black and white, it's too easy for us to imagine continuing this chain using words only, as if we were just playing 'tag' with mere information, as if those first disciples had simply said: 'Psst! We've found the true Messiah – pass it on'. Some Christians still imagine that simplistic verbal testimony is the real business, whereas it can do a lot of damage. I remember cringing at the behaviour of some members of my University's Christian Union, when I was a student, because they took no account of the complexity of different people's beliefs and doubts, and they turned many people off

Christianity by their insensitivity. The comedian, Jasper Carrot, is all too accurate, I fear, when he jokes that if you want to clear a room, or rid yourself of a boring guest at a party, all you need to do is put on a seraphic smile and ask "have you heard the good news about Jesus?" That just won't do any more, if indeed it ever did. Similarly, I don't believe it will do only to present Jesus as a great Teacher, whose ideas just need to be expressed in more up-to-date language.

And yet, Epiphany – this period of concentration on God's glory - makes it clear that we are all (whether we're ordained or not) called to be 'a light to enlighten others', to reveal God's glory in the world. How are we to do this?

The first important thing to realise is that the Gospel isn't primarily about *words*. This is why you can't just reduce it to a digest of the teaching of Jesus. Before anything else, it's an encounter with a living Person. Only by first **encountering Jesus himself** can we (the Church) form his body here and now. Listen to how Archbishop Rowan Williams expresses this:-

If the risen Jesus is not an idea or an image but a living person, we meet him in the persons he has touched, the persons who, whatever their individual failings and fears, have been equipped to take responsibility for his tangible presence in the world.

The medium for this living experience of Jesus is what has been traditionally understood as The Holy Spirit – the gift which makes Jesus real to us in the here and now. It's only this authentic experience of God through his Spirit – the Spirit of Jesus - that can equip us to make him real to others. At the end of John's Gospel, after the resurrection, Jesus is reported as breathing on his disciples, and saying "Receive my Spirit". In Rowan Williams' words, this gift to the church

sets up a chain of human contact coming down to our own day, a chain of voices and faces in which Jesus is active...Contact with human beings who have received the breath of Jesus' life is contact with Jesus, as specific human beings pass on the mystery

of God to each other across the ages. To meet a Christian in whom this spirit is working is to be contemporary with Jesus.

So may we all pray that, as in Isaiah's servant, God's Spirit might empower us and equip us truly to be his servants, in whom he may be glorified.

Paul Nicholson

THE MONDAY GROUP



7.30pm in St Saviour's Choir Vestry

- 7th February** Film Evening: Hildegard von Bingen
N.B. Meet this evening at 6 Provost Road for a 7.30 p.m. start
- 14th February** Mary Shakeshaft: John Donne
- 21st February** Sandra Tait: Karen Armstrong's view of the life of St. Paul
- 28th February** Charles Aylwin: A look at the Book of Revelation

GREAT EVENTS – DEEP MEANINGS

This year's Lent Course examines in turn, over 6 weeks, the most important days and Seasons of the Christian Calendar:

- 1) Christmas**
- 2) Ash Wednesday**
- 3) Palm Sunday**
- 4) Good Friday**
- 5) Easter**
- 6) Pentecost ('Whitsun')**

It will be held at two separate venues and times:

St Saviour's Church, Eton Road on Mondays* at 7.30pm, starting 7th March

St Peter's Studios, Belsize Square on Tuesdays at 8pm, starting 8th March
***except for Week 2 when the session is on Tuesday 15th at 7.30pm**

This 'York Course' is written by John Young, with contributions by others including scientist and priest, Professor John Polkinghorne, and former Archbishop of York, Dr David Hope. Each session comprises a recorded presentation to listen to, and other material to prompt general discussion. Groups will be led by Paul Nicholson and Sandra Tait

Why not use this opportunity through Lent to become more informed about these landmarks in each Christian Year, deepen the understanding you already have, and share questions and experience with others?

George Herbert died on 27 February 1633. In Celebrating the Saints* Robert Atwell says of him:

“Born in 1593 into the aristocratic Pembroke family, George Herbert went up to Cambridge in 1616, eventually becoming a Fellow of Trinity College. At the age of twenty five he became Public Orator in the University and then a Member of Parliament, apparently destined for a life at court. To everyone’s surprise he decided to be ordained and, after spending a time with his friend Nicholas Ferrar at Little Gidding, he was made deacon in 1626. He married in 1629, was priested in 1630 and given the care of souls of the parish of Bemerton, near Salisbury, where he spent the rest of his short life. He wrote prolifically, his hymns still being popular throughout the English-speaking world. His treatise *The Country Parson* on the priestly life, and his poetry, especially *The Temple*, earned Herbert a leading place in English literature. He never neglected the care of the souls of Bemerton, however, and encouraged attendance at the weekday recitation of the daily office, calling to mind the words of his hymn ‘Seven whole days not one in seven, I will praise thee’.”

* Celebrating the Saints and its companion volume Celebrating the Seasons, both by Robert Atwell, formerly Vicar of St Mary’s, Primrose Hill, are published by Canterbury Press and available on Amazon at a variety of prices from £16 - £30

Lent

Welcome dear feast of Lent: who loves not thee,
He loves not Temperance, or Authority,
But is composed of passion.
The Scriptures bid us fast; the Church says, now:
Give to your Mother, what you would allow
To every Corporation.

It 's true, we cannot reach Christ's fortieth day;
Yet to go part of that religious way,
Is better than to rest:

We cannot reach our Savior's purity;
Yet are bid, Be holy ev'n as he.
In both let 's do our best.

Who goes in the way which Christ has gone,
Is much more sure to meet with him, than one
Who travels the by-ways:
Perhaps my God, though he be far before,
May turn, and take me by the hand, and more
May strengthen my decays.

Yet Lord instruct us to improve our fast
By starving sin and taking such repast
As may our faults control:
That ev'ry man may revel at his door,
Not in his parlor; banqueting the poor,
And among those his soul.

George Herbert [from *The Temple*: the 1st day of Lent]

Dementia care wing opens at Manorhead

The Church of England Pensions Board has opened a new dementia care ward, The Allan Bridgewater Wing, at its Manorhead Care Home in Hindhead, Surrey. This extension to the home's existing facilities provides a seven-bed dementia care unit, the first at any of the Board's homes. A main purpose is to make it easier for couples to remain together after the onset of dementia.

For more details: www.cofe.anglican.org/about/cepb/housing.

Methodists in Haiti

The Revd Tom Quennet is the partnership coordinator for the Americas and Caribbean in the Methodist Church. He visited Haiti soon after the earthquake. Last autumn he retraced his steps to see what progress had

been made. He writes:

“It looked as if a lot had taken place, but I could well imagine that for Haitians it must seem as if progress has been slow and very painful. Demolition of unsafe properties has taken place and rubble is being cleared; repairs to business that escaped the worst of January have been completed and new coats of paint have been applied.

“Only a few hundred yards from the airport, I was confronted by the informal tent settlements that had been erected by desperate people shortly after the earthquake. The ‘new’ look they had in February had been replaced by nine months’ worth of dust, the effects of weather and the bleaching of the sun. Some people had begun to use corrugated iron and wood and plastic and almost anything else to add to their little spaces. I couldn’t help but think what I thought many times in February: “This is a nightmare for years to come! When will you save the people, O God of mercy? When?” But then, all around me, despair at what had not happened gave way to signs of hope.

“The children in their immaculately clean uniforms going to school; the thousands of micro businesses on every inch of the roadside; the tap-taps (Haitian form of public transport) with their biblical references; the determined faces of Haitians getting on with living. This is a people that not even the worst forces of nature are going to cower down so as to give up, lay down and die. This is a resilient and resistant people.

“Much had been done and much remained to be done. Yet for many there was a home where previously there was none and a place to plant a flower and a fruit tree and to begin to hope.

“I left with an assurance and belief in the durability and tenacity of the Haitian spirit. A spirit carries you with it in search of justice, peace, faith and hope ... and Haitians’ unconquerable minds.”

How long is your weekend - really?

When do you really unwind and begin to enjoy your weekend? And when do you begin to ‘rev up’ again? A recent study has found that it takes most of us 19 hours to wind down, so that it is not until 12.38pm on Saturday that we are really ‘into’ the weekend.

Sadly, only just over 24 hours later, at 3.55pm on Sunday, many of us start tensing up for the week ahead. Half of the 4,000 workers questioned said that their work commitments affected their families’ lives, leaving more than half of them ‘too tired’ on a regular basis to enjoy their weekends. Long working hours, long commutes home, and work emails at home, all conspire to damage people’s life-work balance. Premier Inn, the hotel chain that conducted the survey, found that four in ten of us feel that we would never get our work done if we stuck to our stated work hours.

The answer may be to sleep in

If you’re very tired do make an effort to get a lie-in this weekend. Research has found that an extra dose of sleep for just one night can replenish your brain power, alertness and attention span. The research was carried out at the University of Pennsylvania. Psalm 127:2 gently reminds us: “In vain you rise early and stay up late, toiling for food to eat – for he grants sleep to those he loves.”



BOOK REVIEWS FOR LENT

Way of Passionate Humility

The Archbishop of Canterbury's Lent Book 2011

By Stephen Cherry, Continuum, £9.99

In our celebrity-obsessed culture, humility is unfashionable and too often dismissed or confused with the cringeing, false humility of Uriah Heep. Here the author shows that, when genuine humility is energised by real passion, fresh and exciting light is shone on the challenge of following Jesus Christ today and humility is rediscovered as a healthy, life-giving and community-building virtue.

Stories and concrete examples as well as allusions to fiction, poetry and art engage the reader's imagination; and big theological ideas are articulated in a highly accessible way. The emphasis on learning from challenging experiences and on very practical application makes this a 'theology travel book', for Lent and well beyond. It powerfully synthesises values and practices which are often disconnected.

Stephen Cherry is Director of Ministerial Development and Parish Support for Durham diocese, a Residentiary Canon of Durham Cathedral and a former Chaplain of King's College, Cambridge. He has degrees in Theology and Psychology, and a PhD on the theology and practice of forgiveness. He is an experienced parish priest and a member of all the national Anglican adult learning and professional development networks, as well as of the Receptive Ecumenism (international Roman Catholic and ecumenical) project

My First Bible Stories - Changing Pictures

By Juliet David, Candle Books £6.99

Lift the flap on each page and watch as the sliding picture transforms! Featuring six popular Bible stories with simple text that young children can easily understand. Each page has an illustrated prompt to cue the reader when to change from 'before' to 'after' scene, enabling the child to take part in the storytelling. Warmly illustrated by Pauline Siewert. Contents: Noah, Moses and the Red Sea, David and Goliath, Big Catch, Jairus' Daughter, Loaves and Fishes

Reflections for Lent: 9 March - 23 April 2011

By Jeff Astley, Christopher Herbert and Ann Lewin, Church House Publishing, £3.99

Reflections for Daily Prayer are the only Bible notes to follow the Common Worship Lectionary. Covering Monday to Saturday each week, they are ideal for use with churches collectively and make an excellent companion for anyone who wants to read insightful, thought-provoking daily reflections from respected Christian authors.

For each day of the period covered (excluding Sundays) this volume offers: Full Lectionary details for Morning Prayer; A reflection on one of the Bible readings; A Collect for the day.

It is ideal for individuals and groups seeking Lectionary-based reflections for use during Lent and Holy Week, or for anyone wishing to try Reflections for Daily Prayer before committing to a year's worth of material.

Feast + Fast – food for Lent and Easter

By Christina Rees, Darton Longman and Todd, £8.99

As Lent approaches you may be wondering how best to mark it. Traditionally a period of abstinence, should we deny ourselves luxuries such as chocolate or alcohol? Or should we do something positive, and if so what? How best can we nurture our bodies and souls through this important period in the year?

In this new and original book, Christina Rees takes us on a spiritual and culinary exploration of the Christian traditions around fasting and feasting in Lent and Easter. Divided into sections for breakfast, lunch and dinner, Christina examines the significance of each and includes recipes for quick but satisfying meals through the forty days of Lent, leading up to an Easter feast to savour, rich in symbolism and style.

A cookery book with spiritual wisdom thrown in, Feast + Fast offers simple and delicious food for thought this Lent.