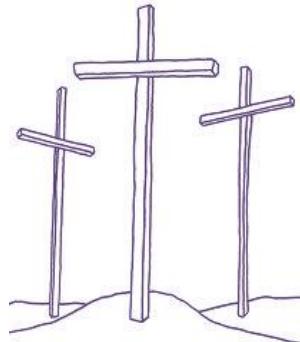


NEWSLINK



**St Faith's Church, Great Crosby
Parish Magazine
April 2015**

Worship at Saint Faith's



SUNDAY SERVICES

- 11.00 am SUNG EUCHARIST and Children's Church
Holy Baptism by arrangement
6.30 pm 1st Sunday Evensong (traditional)
3rd Sunday Evensong (modern) and Benediction

WEEKDAY SERVICES in April and May

The Daily Office

Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday: 9.00am: Morning Prayer
Tuesday: 6.30pm: Evening Prayer; **Thursday:** 8.00am: Morning Prayer
Friday: 6.00pm: Evening Prayer; **Saturday:** 9.30am: Morning Prayer

The Holy Eucharist

Tuesday: 7.00pm; **Friday:** 6.30pm

Services for Holy Week and Easter – see details on page 9

Please see the weekly online bulletin for full details and any variations.

SACRAMENT OF PENANCE AND RECONCILIATION

The Clergy are available by appointment to hear confessions or to talk about any matter in confidence. The Sacrament of Reconciliation is always available in preparation for Christmas and Easter and at other advertised times.

HOME VISITS to the sick and housebound and those in hospital

If you, or someone you know, are unable to get to church and would like to receive Holy Communion at home, the Eucharistic Ministers are happy to undertake this - please call 928 3342/07976 901389 to arrange this, or to arrange a visit to someone in hospital or at home.

IN A PASTORAL EMERGENCY

Please telephone as for home visits, or a member of the ministry team.



From the Ministry Team

April 2015

Easter is very much in keeping with the mystery of newness of life, which comes in the springtime of the year. An atmosphere of freshness radiates on Easter morning as the church joyfully proclaims the good news that Jesus has broken the chains of death and has risen triumphant from the grave. The dawn is breaking over the hills of Palestine as the grief-stricken women make their way to the tomb to anoint the body with spices. We can sense their shock and surprise on seeing the stone rolled away, the guards stretched out, the body missing and an angel greeting them with the news that he is not there, he has risen. Their arrival at the burial site brings them to the threshold of an experience with undreamt of possibilities that they would never have dared to imagine. The women are the first messengers of Christ's resurrection. Their hearts are filled with wonder and excitement at the event as they hasten to tell disciples of the extraordinary happening. Before very long the whole community is buzzing with news that Jesus has risen from the dead and that his life has ended in victory and not in defeat. Nothing will ever be the same again.

We live in an imperfect world of unattained ideals and broken promises and we sometimes feel fenced in by evil and crushed by personal sinfulness. Yet in spite of our frustrated hopes, there is something within us that yearns for the best, that longs for true freedom, real happiness and lasting peace. We want to be assured that there is a meaning to life, a reason for our existence and a purpose to the pain and suffering we have to endure. The resurrection which is at the heart of the Christian faith provides answers to our questioning. It announces to a tormented world that God absorbs all human sin and defeats it with love. Christ's rising from the dead proclaims that Calvary was not just a hill where a life full of promise has ended by violent men. It was Christ's altar of sacrifice where he offered his life for the sins of humankind. God who created us has no intention of standing idly by to watch us self-destruct. We have a destiny to fulfil, and as a resurrection people we are invited to open ourselves to the Easter life that God offers us with all its hopes and possibilities. The Easter message has no relevance of meaning if Christ has not risen from the dead and our hearts are still in bondage because we are still locked in the tombs of our own sinfulness. Rolling away the stones that imprison us so that, we can come forth bright and powerful into the light of the risen Christ, involves an effort on our part. It means committing anew the bits and pieces of our fragmented lives to the vision Christ has opened up for us. We are called to proclaim the good news that the deepest truth is to be found in hope and not in despair, in life not in death, and that light will triumph

over darkness. Once we carry the spirit of Easter in our hearts, we add an extra dimension to our humdrum lives.

The whole mystery of Easter is about the overwhelming love of God being offered to every person. All peoples are God's concern and come under his care. Everyone without exception has access to God's forgiveness in Jesus' name. There is eternal life for all who come to him. We are the communicators of this joyful message, which is much in keeping with the mystery of new life bursting out in the springtime of the year. The job in hand is to announce to those who are in the darkness of despair that there is a dawn of hope. Our belief in the God who makes all things new must influence our whole lives and show itself in the way we treat one another, our family and friends and people who are unknown to us. We are present in the world in a new way when we affirm life, thirst for justice and strive for peace. Easter encourages us to set our hearts on what is above and not to neglect the deep realities by which alone we truly live. At Eastertide we pray God to let joy fill our hearts and to give us the grace to bear witness to the resurrection which brings new life to the world.

With my love and prayers and every blessing,

Fr Dennis



Joyful News for Jackie

Congratulations and prayers to our Reader, Jackie Parry, who has been recommended for ordination training. Jackie will begin her training in the autumn and we will continue to keep her in our prayers as she continues her journey. She writes below.

A few weeks ago I attended the Bishops Advisory Panel (BAP) at Shallowford House, just outside Stafford: a beautiful old house surrounded by lovely countryside and well kept gardens, oh yes and a high speed rail link running 20 feet from the door all night long, but that simply added to the experience! The rooms were nice, plenty of space, warm and comfortable beds. I had a lovely view of the garden and chapel from my window, at which I would sit, during the occasional quiet times, for some quiet prayer and reflection. I really enjoyed all the worship in the chapel and particularly the closing service where there was a brilliant homily.

There were 14 candidates and 6 advisors and we were divided into 2 groups, with a 'secretary' presiding over it all and ensuring everything ran smoothly, which indeed it did, and she was on hand to help and support the candidates and assessors if required. Everyone was lovely, and there was a real sense of camaraderie as we were

all on the same path, although many had been on very different journeys. The warmth of the other candidates made the process a real pleasure, we were all rooting for each other and had a good laugh each evening in the bar. This was a time to chat, relax and generally de-stress.

It was encouraging to see so many people who had felt called by God and were pursuing their vocation. Even though there was a possibility that some might not be recommended for training at this time, we all agreed that we had, throughout the process and journey, grown closer to God and learnt a lot about ourselves. For us all, our time at BAP was the culmination of years of thinking, praying and exploring a growing sense of calling to the priesthood. A very humbling and exceptional experience, and one that I am grateful to have been given the opportunity to have.

This week I met with Rev David Parry, who is the Diocesan Director for Ordinands, to discuss the report on me which the assessors had completed following BAP. It was a good and honest report, and quite amazing how the assessors get to know your personality, strengths and weaknesses, and vocation.

I'm delighted to say that I have been given a conditional recommendation for training. This means that the panel have agreed that God is calling me to the priesthood, but they would like me to do some extra study and a placement at another church first, prior to training this September. They feel this will help to prepare me better for training at All Saints College, and I agree that this is a very wise decision. I don't have all of the details yet, but it's very exciting, and I can't wait to start!

To say that I'm delighted would be an understatement and yes, I admit to dancing around the lounge when I was given the news! It has been a long journey getting to this point, but I thank God for sticking with me and giving me the patience and strength I needed. And now, on to the next part of the journey.....

With my love and prayers,

Jackie

Services Support Group



Our March speaker, Mr Dave Smith of Sefton Veterans Project, gave a very interesting insight into the problems that can arise when service personnel leave the Armed Forces and enter 'Civvy Street', which they find is so different from the life that they have been used to possibly for many years, and although they thought that they would be very able to cope, they frequently can't.

Dave had had a long and varied Army career which had included two years undercover in Northern Ireland at the height of the troubles, which must have been very nerve racking experience. The camaraderie within the forces is very strong with all service personnel looking out for each other, helping them sort problems whatever they may be, usually done over a drink which then became something that they became reliant upon and Dave did just that. So when he left the Army and the support of his colleagues was no longer there he hit rock bottom, so low that he even considered taking his own life. He was fortunate that he had help to get his life back on track, confront his problem and seek help and now he helps others and finds it very rewarding, helping others who are experiencing just what he had and he can now give them back their respect and their life.

Sefton Vets also help the families of servicemen and women, the mums, dads, brothers sisters who also suffer when their loved ones are in dangerous situations, just as our little group has been doing, the Veterans support them too. They have also helped veterans get medals due to them, get better living accommodation and most importantly make sure that ex servicemen of any age do not feel isolated by arranging home visits and social gatherings some at The Beaconsfield Centre in the old Seaforth library. They hold weekly "NAAFI" breaks on Wednesday mornings so I'll go along to join them very soon and will let you know how it went.

As I mentioned at the APCM, I've been in touch with Padre Simon Farmer, who is in Sierra Leone with the Ebola victims and he has told me of the plight of the orphans there, so I have arranged a fund raising event for him in the form of a cake sale and the monies raised will go straight to him so that he can use it to purchase food on site. I'll keep you all informed as to how much we raise.

I also recently watched a very moving programme about 3 Young War Widows whose husbands were all killed in Afghanistan. Two had small children and how hard it is to explain to the children, 1 who wasn't born when her daddy was killed, and how difficult it is for them to understand. To help her and other children in the same position understand, one of the widows started a charity "Scotties Little Soldiers" and of course it helped her too and also to find a purpose in life. My first thought when starting Service Families was to help both the families as well as the soldiers, and I thought that later in the year we could do another fund raiser this time for "Scotties Little Soldiers" and as soon as I have details I will let you know, so as I am always saying "watch this space"!

Eunice Little



The Resurrection

I was the one who waited in the garden
Doubting the morning and the early light.
I watched the mist lift off its own soft burden,
Permitting not believing my own sight.
If there were sudden noises I dismissed
Them as a trick of sound, a sleight of hand.
Not by a natural joy could I be blessed
Or trust a thing I could not understand.
Maybe I was a shadow thrown by one
Who, weeping, came to lift away the stone.
Or was I but the path on which the sun,
Too heavy for itself, was loosed and thrown?
I heard the voices and the recognition
And love like kisses heard behind thin walls.
Were they my tears which fell, a real contrition?
Or simply April with its waterfalls?
It was by negatives I learned my place.
The garden went on growing and I sensed
A sudden breeze that blew across my face.
Despair returned, but now it danced, it danced.

Elizabeth Jennings



From the Registers: Figure it Out

Readers sharing this writer's obsession with the minutiae of the entries in St Faith's service registers over the years will doubtless (!) recall the suspiciously high total of communicants for Anno Domini 1940. Mr Schofield, or one of his minions, has helpfully pencilled in totals at the top of each page and at the year's end, with the latter registered as no fewer than 7,565. This unlikely high figure prompted closer investigation. It soon transpired that on two occasions, the pencilled page totals were at variance with the actual total of the daily logged communicants. One page exaggerated by some 150, and a second by a staggering 1,760. Other errant additions may exist.

Obsession has its limits, and I cannot claim to have checked every page over the months and years, but what seems certain is that the total for 1940 should have read

more like 5,655 – a far more realistic figure, given the general decline in attendances, and marking a drop from 1939's figure of 6,026.

There is surely no suggestion of malpractice here: probably just carelessness. It simply prompts, not for the first time, the reflection that errors can so easily harden into history.

Wake up at the back there! 1941 rolls onward into light. Mr Schofield starts the year with three celebrations of the Circumcision (cutting short rather than enlarging, one might say) before the faithful record of services, attendances, collections, but few other comments resumes. Ex-curate David Ford returns for the day on Epiphany III.

While weekday attendances are almost invariably fully recorded, gaps begin to appear in Sunday number logging. A sample of the fully-detailed figures for Lent 1 gives 82 for the early communion, 157 attending the sung eucharist, and 104 at evensong – this latter showing that days of large evening turnouts are over, even allowing for the war. Preachers turn up during Lent: B.P.Robin, Gerald E Jones, Walter E. Harston Morris, A. Norman Ellis, V. Spencer Ellis, C.F. Russell (was he the Headmaster of Merchant Taylors?) to name but a few. And Albert Liverpool preaches to the women on a Thursday afternoon, with no record of how many women he addressed.

J.S. and E.O.B are the home team: R.R.H. (curate Robert Honner) disappears unheralded from February 1st. They are joined by Douglas Cestr (i.e. the Bishop of Chester) for a weekday women's service, and by Albert Liverpool for a confirmation on Palm Sunday afternoon, with 408 in church. No figures are recorded for Good Friday attendances, but Easter Day communicants total 307, and attendances 788.

On May 1st the name of J.F. (Joe French) Parker is writ in red as celebrant; he takes two further services but then is seen no more, apart from two appearances in late August. On Tuesday May 6th minuscule writing states: 'Priest 15 mins late: No congregation'. Thereafter the even tenor of daily worship continues, although still with intermittent omissions of Sunday attendance figures, mostly for evensong. Maurice B.S.Godfrey returns and boldly signs in for a couple of services in mid-July.

The Patronal Festival on October 6 th, a Monday, sees no more than 42 communicants over three morning services. Basil Oddie, S.S.M., J Howard Foy, H.S.Warrington and Sidney Singer are among visitors in the closing months of 1941. November 23rd is written up as Mayor's Sunday, with Alderman H.Y.Bramham in attendance. No attendance recorded, but the collection, a whopping £37.3.3 for Waterloo and Bootle Hospitals suggests a good attendance and deep pockets. At Advent III, the collection is earmarked for 'Russian Red X'.

Christmas Eve (labelled only as 'Vigil') sees only one service and 6 present. The Day itself sees 231 communicants and 304 attending over two services. 175 of them are at the 9.30 am Sung Eucharist, which is followed by the equally unusual time of 4 pm for evensong.

The pencilled total for 1941 is 5,411: an acceptable figure this time and a predictable point on the gently declining graph line.

Hastening through the early months of 1942, we pause to note the unusual logging of '48 present' for a Sunday afternoon children's service. Palm Sunday is subtitled National Day of Prayer and has a healthy 264 at the 10.45 Sung Eucharist and 169 at evensong. Prayers seem at least on this occasion to have been answered.

What looks to be Thomas Elsam (as far as I can make out - surely not Elsan?) delivers daily addresses in Holy Week; Easter Day sees 508 in church and 297 communicants. Festal Evensong is held but no numbers appended. 'M. and O. Oliver' (who they?) take three weekday children's services soon after. Trinity 1 sees an amazing 158 at Matins; undoubtedly a bifocals problem from the numberless Sung Eucharist below!

A sample from Trinity 6 shows 451 in church that day, but just 87 communicants. A further sample of Trinity XIV has 306 and 35 respectively. H.M.Luft preaches at evensong on September 13th. John Brierley, one-time vicar, returns at Harvest Thanksgiving: for that Sunday there are a healthy 501 in the pews, but still only 40 communicants: the gap seems constant if not widening.

The 1942 Patronal saw three morning celebrations with 49 communicants between them. On the following Sunday (within the Octave) the memorably-named Archdeacon Twitchett of Liverpool preached at Festal Evensong: it was at the odd time of 3.30 pm, presumably to meet the Archdiaconal timetable. There were but 110 to hear him give forth.

The initials of E.O.B. (Eric Olaf Beard) appear for the last time, without the traditional signing out, on November 6th. J.S. soldiers on alone for most of the rest of the year, although Sidney Singer, who had appeared, possibly on trial, on one occasion in late November, signs in full time on 21st December: he is self-evidently a time-served priest who will share the continuing burden of daily eucharists. These are now invariably at 8.00 am, and the 3.30 pm Sunday evensong is also a regular feature.

Christmas Day has 231 communicants and 361 attendees: slightly up on the previous year. The year ends in a flurry of red ink and a pencilled (and again accurate-seeming) yearly communicant total of 5,578 – a small but significant increase on 1941.



Chris Price

Holy Week and Easter 2015

Palm Sunday: 29/3/15

9.30am: Morning Prayer

11am Blessing of Palms, Procession and Liturgy of Palm Sunday

Monday 30/3/15

9am Morning Prayer

Diocesan Eucharist and Blessing of Oils – Liverpool Cathedral 10-30am

7pm Evening Prayer

8pm Stations of the Cross and Eucharist



Tuesday 31/3/15

9am Morning Prayer

7pm Evening Prayer

8pm Eucharist

Wednesday 1/4/15

9am Morning Prayer

7pm Eucharist – afterwards the Sacrament of Reconciliation will be available to those who find it helpful as part of their preparation for Easter

9.15pm Compline

The Paschal Triduum

Maundy Thursday 2/4/15

9am Morning Prayer

8pm: Eucharist of the Institution of the Lord's Supper, Stripping of the Altar and Watch till midnight

Good Friday 3/4/15

10am: Morning Prayer

11am: Churches Together in Waterloo Act of Witness – Crosby Civic Hall Car Park

1-30pm: Solemn Liturgy of Good Friday and Ante-Communion

Holy Saturday 4/4/15

8pm: Easter Vigil and First Eucharist of Easter

Easter Day 5/4/15

9.30am: Morning Prayer

11am: Easter Morning Eucharist and Blessing of the Easter Garden

6.30pm: Festal Evensong



Bishop Paul's Easter Message

Don't you hate knowing the end of a film before you have had the chance to see it for yourself? Having the clever twist, the final act, the big reveal known to us can change the way we approach and perceive the story. But of course that's how we see the Easter story today. As the drama of Holy Week unfolds; as we see the storm gather around Jesus. We witness the biased and corrupt trial proceedings. We are horrified by the cruel and brutal punishment being meted out. And yet at all times in the back of our minds we have the knowledge of the resurrection.

This is one story that is enhanced by the knowledge of the final twist. For to only have part of the picture, an incomplete story, means we are left in a state of fear and paralysis. The liberating knowledge that God can conquer all things that transforms the story, gives us all the strength and encouragement to tackle what we face in our lives.

In the immediate aftermath of Jesus' death the disciples themselves had no idea how the story would end. They were disillusioned and confused, running scared and in disarray. But the knowledge of the resurrection and power of the Holy Spirit enabled them to form themselves into a group equipped and empowered to spread the Gospel throughout the known world – to turn that world upside down.

There are many times in each of our lives when we might wish we know the end of a particular story or of a situation we're facing. When we could have the certainty that the decisions we will make will be right, just and see our work crowned with glory. But sadly so often we can feel in the Saturday shadow of the cross, looking back to defeat rather than forward towards hope.

Sadder still is the large numbers we encounter who have no idea that hope is even possible - who haven't heard what God can do. Who haven't experienced his life-enhancing life-transforming love. It is to them we, as a church wanting to make a bigger difference, are reaching.

In every parish and every community in our diocese that sense of hope can be offered in the work we do – pastoral care, feeding the poor, speaking about the way our society should be led and should be shaped. What these things have in common is hope. Hope for the poor, hope for the lonely, hope for the vulnerable, hope for the scared.

We are empowered to make that difference because we know the story. We know it ends with the promise of the Spirit and the hope of eternal life. We can be difference-makers because we are part of the story. And we know how it ends.



RIP Dennis Dewsbury

Funeral address: 11th March 2015

The writer of the letter to the Romans is clear that life is not always easy; and that it can at times be hard and difficult. And there was struggle in Dennis' life, especially the loss of his beloved Joan a few years ago; and there was struggle in his final illness; struggle that he faced with courage, determination, a degree of stubbornness, and a wonderful streak of gallows humour! But the writer of Romans is also clear that, whilst pain and struggle are a very real part of life, they do not have the last word; so we are also here to give thanks for Dennis' life, for all we received from him and all that we shared with him.

Dennis was originally from Seaforth; and, like lots of people from hereabouts, the sea gave him his working life – for a shipping company. And it was here that he met his beloved Joan, his soulmate for over 40 years. On their fortieth anniversary, Joan wanted to renew their marriage vows, but Dennis wanted to go on a coach tour of Spain; Joan said that, all their married life, Dennis had given her what she wanted and it was now his turn. So off they went. Unbeknown to Joan, Dennis had managed to track down an Anglican church in Spain on the itinerary, so one day – when she thought she was getting dragged round yet another church for a look, the Vicar was waiting for them, and the renewal of vows happened, with two friends they'd made from the tour looking on.

Dennis and Joan loved to travel – but for Dennis, it was never about just going – he did his research, tried to learn a bit of the local language, and was always well informed well in advance about cultural sensitivities – what needed covering up, why and when!

Dennis knew all about love; most of all, for his family; and he had a huge gift for friendship too – and quickly became much loved at St Faith's. And he loved justice; always passionately fighting for the underdog, always wanting to do the right thing. And this became real, practical public service: a school governor at Waterloo Primary, even attending their carol service here at St Faith's in December, by which time he was already very ill.

And his black humour never faltered either – towards the end, he wondered if he'd live to see the end of the DFS Sale!

The writer of Romans, then, is clear that hardship and difficulty never have the last word; and they didn't in Dennis' life. For what came first in his life was love – for his family, his friends, for justice. And what has the first, last and always word is the relentless, committed love of God. Those who live in love live in God and God in them – throughout our earthly lives, and beyond. In Dennis' faithful commitment to his family, in his loyalty to his friends, in his love of justice, in his courage, his determination, his gallows humour and sense of fun, we see a reflection of the faithful

God, who never lets us go – even in the face of death itself. The resurrection hope is the hope that our humanity is not finally defined by death, but by life – eternal life in all its fullness, in the relentless love of God, a love from which nothing – things past, things present, things to come, powers, heights or depths, life in all its joys and sorrows, and death itself – can ever separate us.

It was standing room only at Thornton for the funeral of another much-loved member of our church family. Sue's eloquent address, much of which is reproduced above, paid tribute to a man whom we shall all miss greatly. We entered to the signature tune from 'The Vicar of Dibley' a favourite of Dennis's, and a telling, at his request, of one of the marvellous end-of-episode irreverent jokes from that endearing series. If you want to know which one, ask someone who was there – it may well have been a first for the crematorium!

As a footnote, it was also the editor's birthday. Returning home he picked up his post with eager anticipation, only to find that atop the pile of cards was an envelope with the bold logo: 'Campaign for Dignity in Dying'. He almost turned round and went back...

My Roots in St Faith's



This is the first of what we hope will be many stories of men and women whose vocation to the priesthood began at St Faith's. The 'roll of honour' (some 32 so far identified!) may be accessed on the church website from the front page.

I may be one of the first women priests with my roots in St Faith's. I began coming to St Faith's with my parents and baby brother just after the Second World War ended. I must have been about 3 years old and my Sunday School teacher was called Mona (*Turner, ed.*). I had been baptised in the URC church during the war because Mersey Road Methodist Church had been bombed, this was where my grandparents worshipped. My father Gordon Bennett taught bible study groups at St Faiths and was a server. When my brother was about 7 he was asked to be a boat boy to hold the incense container. There was a problem finding a small surplice for him. Father William Hassall was the dynamic and encouraging priest at that time.

I asked to be confirmed when I was about 11 and this preparation was brought forward because my grandfather was terminally ill and wanted to see me confirmed. I had classes with the young curate and with Miss Henderson, a retired missionary. At my confirmation I felt I was being called to do something connected with the church in the future. I read books about women being called to the religious life in convents but eventually decided to apply for a Church Teacher Training College called St Katharine's in Tottenham. I worked in church primary schools and was married at St Faith's in 1965.



The Parish Lunch 2015

On Sunday March 1st the traditional annual parish feast produced the traditional good food, good drink – and good company





Too many cooks certainly didn't spoil the broth – they produced a fine three-course repast – and of course there was the usual raffle, to keep Eunice occupied folding up the tickets...





Mothering Sunday 2015

Two weeks later, on Sunday March 15th, we enjoyed the colourful ceremonial of Mothering Sunday. The traditional posies of daffodils were given out to children young and old for their mothers, and the young people of our uniformed organisations took a full part in the service.





Special features of the service were the giving of a bouquet to retiring Brownie Guider Mary McFadyen, and the handing out of sweets to the appreciative congregation



Many years later I felt called again, this time to serve in the church as a priest. As women priests did not yet exist in the church I prayed about this for some years, did a small amount of lay reader training in the parish of Widcombe in Bath and went to a vocations conference. Then everything moved swiftly: I went to the selection conference and to Salisbury Theological College on the distance learning course as I was working part time in Further Education. I had retrained to teach Literacy Skills to adults in the Bath College and in the community. I was ordained in 1996 as a Deacon and in 1997 as a Priest. I was asked to take full responsibility for the parish of Widcombe in 1998 as a non-stipendiary Priest, with two churches and several schools. It was a low church parish with one church having traditional services and the other contemporary services. I could not be licensed properly until arrangements had been put in place for the medical retirement of the sick incumbent. Our house became the vicarage with an allowance from the church commissioners whilst the long process of selling an old vicarage and buying a new one took place. There were several unusual factors, I didn't have the usual period as a curate and I served in the parish where I had been an active church member for 20 years. I was formally licensed in 2000 and retired in 2005. Two non-stipendiary priests followed me but very unusually the parish now has a full time priest again. One of the church buildings has always been shared with a German speaking Lutheran congregation. We did community events in my time with the local Orthodox church and some quiet days together, they now rent one of the churches in the morning and there is a Anglican Contemporary service in the evening.

I now work in retirement at St Michael's in Bath city centre which is open seven days a week and am a chaplain at Bath Abbey. I belong to a number of Art groups and Craft groups where I have a pastoral ministry and have even done a wedding and a funeral from this area of activity outside the church.

Patricia Betts (nee Bennett)



Diary of a Postulant Reader

I'm having two weeks away from study centres but that doesn't mean I can stop studying, my fellow students and I are on half term, we have been given a lot reading to do particularly on the Old Testament which we started studying three weeks ago. I have become quite familiar with this part of the Bible because we read it each day at the offices, that is morning and evening prayers, so it is really interesting to study it in more depth. We are expected to cover all of the Old Testament this term as well as studying theological reflection and exegesis which is quite confusing until the penny drops, a light bulb moment, then it all becomes clear but then just to confuse us even more there are several different ways of doing it, somebody told us that a theological

reflection was something that nobody could tell you how it works but they will tell you when you get it wrong, how do they know? I am still enjoying it and find it very stimulating. I do look forward to warmer weather, going out at night in the dark and cold is a bit of struggle and on that note I need to go and pack my bag, we are off to Tenerife on Monday and although half my baggage allowance is taken up by books, one only needs light clothes when the temperature is about 20 degrees centigrade and it is easier to read whilst basking in the sunshine. I will be giving a sermon when I return and then on Palm Sunday I will be leaving you to go on placement, you will still see me around from time to time and I do appreciate all the support and love I get and the genuine interest people show in what I am doing. I have actually retired now from social services, it's quite strange and I have to learn to adjust, it feels as if I have forgotten something and then I remember I don't work anymore. I am going to buy a cassock this week, Gareth is paying: he wants to buy my first one. I have an assignment to finish now so until the next time, love and prayers,

Brenda Cottarel



Vicar's Report: APCM 2015

Take heart, get up, for he is calling you. (Mark 10.49)

Those words from Mark's Gospel occur in the story of Bartimaeus, the blind man Jesus heals – take heart, get up, for he is calling you. And they were the words that came to me as I began to reflect on this year.

Just a year ago, relatively speaking the 'new girl,' I spoke about what had been a difficult year with the spiritual and relational troubles of 2013. Well, I still feel like the 'new girl,' relatively speaking – though not quite so new-minted and just out of my cellophane – and 2014 has been different; in fact, a year of building.

It's been quite literally a year of building, as we've responded, with commitment, energy, imagination and generosity to the need to repair our roof, following two incidents of lead theft. That's not something we'd have looked for or wished on ourselves – and I well remember the sinking feeling when I learned, one Friday afternoon in October, that the second incident had happened; but we have gone some way to addressing the issues of a 120-year-old roof, issues we may well have had to face in the coming decade anyway.

So this year has, in its own way, also been challenging; people are still at different places in processing and reflecting on the events of 2013. It was a brutal and difficult experience for everyone. But look at it we must, as Christians – not in the sense of worrying away at it, like a dog with an old bone, but in the sense of learning what it means anew in terms of our Christian story – the story we are living now, in Lent, of passion, suffering, and crucifixion, all the way to the glorious Easter morning of

Resurrection and redemption. We, the Church – are an Easter people; but we cannot be an Easter people without Lent, the Passion and Good Friday. Some of you had more than enough of Good Friday I know; but do not forget that part of our call is to see everything – everything – in the light of the Resurrection – a Resurrection that was not about being right, or about revenge on those who did the most horrendous wrong – but about God’s relentless committed love for all humanity in Christ – even for those who crucified him. A challenge, yes – but a challenge in the light of the faith and hope that, wherever we are in processing our own feelings, God’s grace is sufficient, and the past can be reimagined, the present transformed, and the future hoped for.

And, in October, the Episcopal Visitation was lifted – it is now only we who have the responsibility to – well, take heart, get up – and respond to God’s call.

So – take heart and get up! But perhaps the trickiest of all is discerning, carefully and prayerfully that to which we are called. This is never easy or straightforward – as R S Thomas writes in *Pilgrimages*, it can often seem that ‘He is such a fast God, always before us, and leaving as we arrive.’

We don’t discern vocation alone – my hope this year is that the PCC, the various officers, but also all of you, as God’s Holy People, have a role to play in discerning what God is calling us to here at St Faith’s – and more about that as the year unfolds.

However, there are some directions of travel, I think, beginning to emerge;

One is – well, this Holy House. Our building has much to commend it – it has a real sense of the presence of God, of being a house of prayer; it is big enough to host concerts and events and serve our community – and it has a very forgiving acoustic musically. Like all 120 year old buildings though, it has a habit of springing nasty surprises on us – so we need to be proactive in thinking both about how to maintain it to a high standard, and about making it a space in which God is worshipped and all humanity welcome for another 120 years.

The Waterloo Group Council has had its first meeting, and those present felt it was very positive. It was born of the conviction that the Anglican Churches in Waterloo – whatever differences we have in terms of churchmanship, and whatever our history with one another, deeply belong to one another – quite simply, by dint of geography, God has given us one another, and we need to discern how best to use that gift – after all, it is being properly ‘holy, catholic and apostolic’ to belong to one another in this way.

And thirdly, what, distinctively, are we, as God’s Holy People being called to at St Faith’s. You’ve probably heard me say, with a twinkle, that the catholic revival in the Church of England is about to happen. Well, it’s only half in jest; I believe with all my might that the Church and the World have never needed Catholic witness as much as they do now. It is characterised by friendship, but critical friendship, with the

world; with the search for holiness, with Christian life expressed as our way of belonging to one another, with a cherishing of spiritual rhythms in daily life, with an openness to the whole of the Christian tradition, and above all, with a costly reconciliation between our faith and society and culture. And I believe with all my might that St Faith's calling is in discovering anew and showing forth in our live what Catholic witness means in these parts.

Needless to say – that's the most challenging of the lot! But let me say it again – you are not, on the whole, shrinking violets, and on the whole, you like a challenge. What I would say though is that the discernment of this vocation is as much about prayer, reflection, and careful thought, as it is about action; St Faith's are great do-ers, great activists; part of the calling now is to bring that gift into harmony with prayer and reflection. And to trust that, whilst our stumbling efforts to discern that to which we are being called are met with the grace of God – with encouragement, hope and committed love, more than we can imagine.

So – take heart, get up, he is calling you!



‘Great is your faithfulness’

Chris Price

Whenever I have doubts about the Established Church, they are at least temporarily stilled by big Anglican state occasions. In a long line from Churchill's funeral, through royal weddings and remembrance services to the present day, our cathedrals and their staff have been star performers in great spectacles to stir the imagination and move the emotions.

Catching by chance the Afghanistan commemoration service the other morning, I was soon hooked once again and watched until the last march-past after the service had faded into the distance. And, as ever, the ritual, the pageantry, the music and the movements were faultless and inspiring. As one who, many years ago, was cynical about such occasions in general and the band-standing of our armed forces in particular, reinforced by the experience of National Service, I have been progressively won over by such great occasions and am now, it must be said, a sucker for such spectacles.

This one was in St Paul's, and it was attended by the great and the good and the serried ranks of the service and their families. Archbishop Welby, still clearly buoyed up in eloquence and style by his fruitful years as Dean of our very own cathedral (!) spoke thoughtfully, wisely and very much to the occasion. His address, as indeed the tenor of the whole service, was in no way triumphalist: instead he paid powerful tribute to the unswerving faithfulness of those who had fought, and of course in all too many cases perished, for the freedom of that far country, as well as those at home who supported them and perhaps now mourn them.

There was much to take in. Rarely can so much top brass have been gathered in one place. There was enough ‘scrambled egg’ on the serried ranks of tunics to stock a NAAFI canteen, and more than enough precious metal hanging beneath all the ribbons to clear the national deficit. The measured and beautiful singing of the choir, the splendour of Wren’s architectural masterpiece, the assembled ranks of the Royal family, the presence of Moslems, Sikhs, Jews (and doubtless many I missed), the dignity of the bereaved and the warmth of the applause outside for all those taking part in the worship and the march-pasts – these will linger long in the memory. As a seamless joint venture by the Church, the armed forces and the BBC, it is hard to see how it could have been bettered. Whatever one’s take on the Afghanistan campaign, it must surely be agreed that we do this sort of thing superlatively well.

I would of course never maintain that commemorations such as this can in any way justify the long and painful conflict which gave rise to it. And many would maintain that there is no such thing as a just war. But it does seem that Afghanistan is greatly the better for the military support it received. And if the surely inexcusable savagery and barbarity of fundamentalist jihadists, whether Taliban, Boko Haram or the infamous ISIS are to be countered and reined in, it will be through the faithfulness and courage of men and women like those who were proudly on show at St Paul’s, and whom our church and state rightly honoured.

A final, more general, thought. It’s a curious fact that, while church congregations are shrinking, cathedral visitor numbers are climbing, and it can be argued that the appetite in our nation for spectacle, ritual and pomp and circumstance in general is also on the increase. As society seems to get more fragmented and organisations struggle for members, it could well be that such grand occasions and places are to some degree filling the gap. Philip Larkin, in his profound poem ‘Church Going’, predicts the death of regular church worship, but acknowledges that there will always be something compelling about sacred spaces. Let the poet have the final word.

A serious house on serious earth it is,
In whose blent air all our compulsions meet,
Are recognized, and robed as destinies.
And that much never can be obsolete,
Since someone will forever be surprising
A hunger in himself to be more serious,
And gravitating with it to this ground,
Which, he once heard, was proper to grow wise in,
If only that so many dead lie round.



Resurrection

At this season, more than any other,
They step forward from the darkness,
Thronging the margins of the mind.
Silently they rise up from the grave of memory:
Some who have left their mark on this place and on us
Long-past worshippers congregating again,
A parent mourned, a friend lost to the dark;
Others known only to their God:
Taken in their multitudes before their time
By man's inhumanity to man.
Their faces haunt us, their presence as real
As the heavy clustered lilies given in their memory,
Before they slip away into the shadows,
Back to the borders of oblivion.
But their death is only a beginning
And our lamenting will have an end
In the certain hope of the resurrection,
The new fire, the fanfare of faith,
When the past and the present come once more together
And all things are made whole again in God.

Surely ...

Chris Price



The Ship of Fools Anchors at St Faith's

By now, most readers will have heard of the unannounced visit of a **Mystery Worshipper** from the 'Ship of Fools' community. They describe themselves as the 'online magazine of Christian unrest, and are best known for their habit of sending incognito reporters to churches and publishing their findings. You can read about them on the link from the front page of our website. A study of some of their other reports, including local churches and cathedrals on Merseyside!) reveal quite a lot of unflattering, even scathing comments, and we can be quietly pleased at the highly favourable report reproduced below. By the way, 'Gregory the Grate' (sic) was a lady: Rick and I and others alluded to in her report can with hindsight recall her visit, and are only pleased that we are able to demonstrate our invariable friendly welcome to worshippers, mysterious or otherwise.

The building: A Victorian Gothic dark red brick building adorned with flying buttresses, a circular bell tower, and a green copper steeple. The imposing interior is flooded with natural light from the clear glazed east window and clerestory. The wide, lofty nave is graced by a finely carved and delicately decorated oak screen. There were seven sanctuary lamps gently swinging. A gold triptych reredos depicts the four evangelists and Jesus on the Cross with Our Lady and St John. The blue carpeted Lady chapel features a "little house" style tabernacle for the reserved Sacrament and a statue known as the Rabbit Madonna, after the rabbits nestled at the Virgin's feet. This is the work of a nun named Mother Maribel, whose carvings can be found in many churches and cathedrals, including St Paul's. (Rabbits are sometimes seen as representing the Virgin Birth – scholars as far back as Aristotle have known that rabbits can conceive while pregnant, a phenomenon known as superfoetation, thus making it seem that they can bear offspring without having had intercourse.) Interestingly, Mother Maribel's statue depicts the infant Jesus with only four toes on one foot and a normal complement of toes on the other.

The church: Here is a church that seems to play a big part in the community. There is a multiplicity of things going on: concerts, socials (e.g. pancake party and girls' nights out), parish lunches, support groups – you name it. They call their building repair fund "Raise the Roof." St Faith's has always had a colourful history for its high-church shenanigans. Tram conductors have been known to call out, "Change here for Rome!" at the stop just outside the church. A gentleman boarding the bus with me after the service said, "Been to St Faith's, have you? I'm RC myself, and they're more Catholic than we are!"

The neighbourhood: This is a vibrant area indeed! It is densely populated, with streets of terraced houses, Victorian semis, shops, and dentist and doctors surgeries. The local railway station at Waterloo bears commuters in and out of the city. The pleasing Victoria Park has tennis courts and a bowling green. As a youth, Robert Runcie (Archbishop of Canterbury from 1980 to 1991) was educated at Merchant Taylor's Public School over the road from St Faith's, the church he and his sister attended. Runcie is depicted in one of the church's stained glass windows. Nearby is Nazareth House, a retirement home run by the Poor Sisters of Nazareth. The Plaza Cinema, saved from demolition and now privately run, shows the latest films. The church stands in its own grounds on the corner of Crosby Road North and Kingsway, next to Tesco Extra (also open on Sundays).

The cast: The Revd Dr Susan J. Lucas, vicar ("Who'd have thought it? A woman vicar in there!" exclaimed the gentleman on the bus) was the celebrant and preacher. There were two servers sporting crimson cassocks and cream-coloured cottas.

The date & time: Sunday Next Before Lent: 15 February 2015, 11.00am.

What was the name of the service? Eucharist and Holy Baptism.

How full was the building? Just over half full.

Did anyone welcome you personally? I was greeted by a smiling lady handing out the books. A gentleman was keen to show me round. A couple of people in the baptism party said hello. Indeed, I was welcomed throughout, over and over. A small girl in her Sunday best (little pink and red frilly frock) ran up to me and put her arms around my legs. "I like you!" she said.

Was your pew comfortable? I didn't really notice at first – I was too busy juggling my papers and dropping things, but overall it was OK. It could have done with a pew runner or padded cushion.

How would you describe the pre-service atmosphere? When I arrived, the choir were tuning up in the vestry, running through the music. The after-service coffee was being got ready. I could smell charcoals being lighted somewhere off-stage. The organist was warming up. Not many were engaged in chatter; it was the quietest pre-service atmosphere I have experienced for some time. As I sat there, I felt quite relaxed and looking forward to the service. The joyful shriek of a baby announced the arrival of the baptism candidate!

What were the exact opening words of the service? "Good morning, everyone, and welcome to church this morning."

What books did the congregation use during the service? Printed order of service with green cover for the eucharist; separate printed order of service for baptism. I forgot to make a note of which hymn book it was; it had a red cover. We were also given a pew sheet and a printed handout giving details of Lent services and activities.

What musical instruments were played? Pipe organ, expertly played. A choir of six ladies and three men were robed in black cassocks and white surplices.

Did anything distract you? Great clouds of thick smoke with a pleasing aroma billowed across the nave. A shaft of sunlight filtered in through the stained glass and through the incense, lighting up the altar. Nice effect, but distracting.

Was the worship stiff-upper-lip, happy clappy, or what?

Liberal Anglo-Catholic. The baby was anointed with holy oils. The hymns were traditional: "We have a Gospel to proclaim", "Be Thou my vision", and so on.

Exactly how long was the sermon? 7 minutes.

On a scale of 1-10, how good was the preacher? 8 – The vicar didn't use notes and was concise and to the point – no waffling! She captured our imaginations.

In a nutshell, what was the sermon about? Being washed whiter than snow in baptism. She asked if we remembered the washing powder that was advertised in the old days as "adding bright bright brightness." The child (she said) would be whiter than the brightest white after the baptism. The baby's name is Austin, a shortening of the name Augustine – a great saint of Canterbury and doctor of the church.

Which part of the service was like being in heaven?

At 12 noon, time stood still momentarily as the Angelus rang out over Great Crosby.

And which part was like being in... er... the other place?

I am a fan of incense – I like it. On this occasion, however, the incense was burning in a shallow dish on the nave altar steps. From my vantage point in the nave I espied the server

topping up the vessel with extra charcoal and several spoons of incense grains. You could have sent smoke signals! It was so thick, obliterating the proceedings and making the celebrant cough.

What happened when you hung around after the service looking lost? It was somebody's birthday and we sang "Happy Birthday" just before the service finished. We were invited to share with the cake and the usual refreshments. Iade my way to the back as per the invitation from a lady (one of the churchwardens) and a man.

How would you describe the after-service coffee? Fair Trade tea and coffee in china mugs decorated with a picture of St Faith's Church in blue. I had a cup of coffee (black, no sugar), a piece of birthday cake, and a piece of light fruit cake. It was all very tasty. Biscuits were also available. Various people came and chatted with me.. I didn't know them from Adam, but they were hospitable and welcoming. The lady vicar spoke to me too. She is tall and slim, with a merry face and dangly silver earrings. She looks at you keenly and listens to what you say.

How would you feel about making this church your regular (where 10 = ecstatic, 0 = terminal)?

8 – St Faith's is a very welcoming church. I liked the friendliness and the easy-going nature of its people.

Did the service make you feel glad to be a Christian?

Yes, definitely. I really felt part of St Faith's that morning, and I would gladly join their church. Smoke signals, birthday cake and baptism, all in one go!

What one thing will you remember about all this in seven days' time?

The way the sunlight lit up all the smoke.

Mystery Worshipper: Gregory the Grate.



The Centurion

What is it now? More trouble?
Another Jew? I might have known it
.These Jews, they buzz around the tail of trouble
Like lascivious flies. Do they think we're here
Because we love them? Is it their climate
That holds us here? Why, think, Marcellus -
By God, just dream of it. Today in Rome,
Less than two thousand thirsty miles away,
Fountains and squares and shadowed colonnades,
Men with smooth chins and girls that sometimes wash.
Well, who is it? ... I see.

Another to be taken to the bonehill.
They're coming now. Just listen to them! -
You'd think they had a dozen there at least.
My sword, Marcellus. I'll be back to dinner,
Unless this fellow's a reluctant dier
Who loves the world too well.

Halt! Stop that shouting. Why is he dressed like that?
(His robes are purple. On his head
A hedge-crown. Where the thorns are driven
Berries of blood leap up ...) 'My orders differ.
Remove that crown - at once - return his clothes.
Kingship can wait until his throne is ready.

Till then, safe conduct. Hold your lines -
Especially that to the windward: I've no fondness
For foreign spittle. Hold them. March...'
Halt! Here's the place. Set down the cross.
You three attend to it. And remember, Marcus,
The blows are struck, the nails are driven
For Roman law and Roman order,
Not for your private satisfaction.
Set to work.'

(The grass is bare, sand-coloured : the hill
Quivers with heat.) 'What? As you please.
Seamless? Then dice for it.' (The sun
Is brutal in this land, metallic.
It works for death, not life.) 'Well, is it done?
Now nail the board above: 'King of the Jews.'
That turns the mockery on them. Watch them wince
At the superscription. Look, their faces!
Hate. Which man is hated most,
Myself or him? He'll serve for both:
They know their limitations. They know,
Greek, Jew or Roman, there is one command,
One only. What's his name? -
He takes it quietly. From Nazareth?
I know it well. Who would exchange it
For this sad city, and become
The food of flies? Marcus, there!
Give him some wine: he won't last long.'
That strain of wrist, the arm's tension
And scarecrow hang of chest. Ah, well,
Poor devil, he's got decent eyes.



Clive Sansom

Parish Directory and Church Organisations



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Mrs Lynda Dixon, 928 7330

SACRISTAN

Mrs Judith Moizer, 1 Valley Close, Crosby. L23 9TL. 931 5587

SENIOR SERVER

Ms Emily Skinner, 1 Valley Close, Crosby. L23 9TL. 931 5587

CHILDREN'S CHURCH

Sunday 11.00 am in the Church Hall. Angie Price: 924 1938

VULNERABLE ADULTS OFFICER

Mr Gareth Griffiths, 6 Lawton Road, Waterloo. L22 9QL. 928 4275

CHILD PROTECTION OFFICER

Mrs Linda Nye, 23 Bonnington Avenue, Crosby. L23 7YJ. 924 2813

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