

Newslink



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

December 2014/January 2015

Worship at Saint Faith's



SUNDAY SERVICES

11.00 am SUNG EUCHARIST and Children's Church
Holy Baptism by arrangement

WEEKDAY SERVICES

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

Please see the weekly online bulletin for 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.



(and January)

From the Ministry Team : December 2014

There is, in an art gallery in the city of Bruges in Belgium, an unusual painting of a nativity scene by the 15th century Flemish artist, Rogier Van der Weyden.

His picture differs from traditional nativity paintings, in that Mary's hair is not covered but hangs loosely and naturally on her shoulders, and she's dressed in the richly coloured brocade and velvet of a wealthy merchant's wife. She nurses the child, not in a stable, but in what appears to be the entrance hall of a beautifully proportioned house, and she sits not on a bed of straw, but enthroned under a canopy embroidered in red and gold. With her is not St Joseph but St Luke, who kneels a few feet away painting her portrait.

Beyond the carved pillars of the entrance hall and the patio which surrounds it, the artist has painted a detailed landscape. A river flows outside the house and attractive brick buildings line the bank. On the horizon, there are hills and fields. In fact, in this painting, the artist has given us a vivid picture of 15th century life – the clothes people are wearing, the architecture and furniture of their houses and the street scenes outside reflect the atmosphere of a busy medieval city.

There is a tradition that St Luke, who appears in this painting, was both an artist and a scholarly historian with a great desire not only to record the life of Jesus but also to interpret its meaning. Here, in this picture, St Luke is obviously depicted as a skilful artist, for he is executing a portrait of Mary which truly reflects the appearance of the woman who sits in front of him. He was also, according to St Paul, "a physician" or doctor and the artist has given St Luke a remarkably compassionate facial expression. He really does look as if he is a man who would have had a deep concern for the sick and suffering.

Quite apart from all these interesting artistic details, the picture is full of theological significance. Here, in this elegant house in the arms of Mary is no ordinary child but God made man. His birth is set not in the Jewish city of Jerusalem, but in a Gentile town which reflects the life style of a much later age. Why does the artist do this? He is doubtless attempting to explain what St Luke proclaims in his Gospel, that Christ came to save everyone, rich and poor, Jew and Gentile of every generation – past, present and future. The Gospel which St Luke was writing also appears, on a desk behind the saint.

Outside the house, beyond the pillars, the busy world continues its ceaseless activity. Birds perch on the turret of a bridge, people walk up and down the streets, women collect water from the river and two figures stand immediately outside the house with their backs turned on the portrait painter. They show no interest in the child and his mother. Leaning over the wall of this bridge, the couple look down on the river and the man points at two ships on the horizon. Perhaps he and his wife are waiting for news of distant relatives or wondering what treasures the ships are bringing from foreign parts. Everyone in that city, except St Luke, seems unaware of what has happened in their midst, a birth which would change the world. Had the couple on the bridge looked up instead of down they would have seen a vision of angels in the distant sky, but wrapped up in their own concerns, they place their hopes in material things. Only St Luke is aware and therefore anxious to record that, within the house, the most important event in history has taken place.

Quite obviously, the details in this painting certainly do not follow very closely the biblical accounts of Jesus's birth. For the artist, it is the meaning of the event which is all important – in the words of the late Cardinal Hulme: “The great and awesome God became man”. Van der Weyden is not content with the theological views he has expressed through the scene inside the house. He also demonstrates with his artistic talent through the detail in the landscape outside, the implications of God becoming man. Living the life of an ordinary man, Jesus had to endure and accept rejection. People, even his own people the Jews, like the couple in the painting, turned their backs on him. They were unwilling to accept that he was the Jewish Messiah and the Son of God.

Both St Luke and his Gospel and Van der Weyden in his painting show that they were well aware that rejection, although difficult for us to understand, was part of God's plan. Without the cross, there would have been no resurrection.

In this beautiful picture therefore, the artist has attempted to explain the true meaning of Christmas or the mystery of the Incarnation. He sees the Christ-child through the eyes of St Luke, who with great compassion for all sorts and conditions of men, wrote his Gospel to show that the child to whom Mary gave birth was indeed “the Saviour who is Christ the Lord” and “of whose Kingdom there will be no end”.

A Joyful and Blessed Christmastide and a Very Happy New Year.

Fr Dennis

The picture is reproduced on the centre pages of this issue. Ed.



‘Past put behind us, for the future take us.’

On Sunday 16th November, I was in a position to give the congregation two pieces of really good news. One concerned the roof – on which there is an update elsewhere in this magazine, and the other concerned the Episcopal Visitation. Basically, the Visitation is over. The formal legal notice ending the Visitation went up on the Notice Board on the

Feast of Christ the King. Below is Bishop Richard's statement, read out in this Church, in St Mary's, and in the other two Waterloo Churches, Christ Church and St John's, on 16th November:

Bishop Richard's response to the to the Visitation at St Faith's, initiated just over a year ago, was to appoint Rev Sue Lucas as interim Priest in Charge at St Faith's for 18 months and for Rev Simon Tibbs to remain as Priest in Charge of St Mary's for the time being. He also required that the deanery undertook to consider pastoral re-organisation in the area.

The bishop has decided that the formal extension of the Visitation by Rt Rev Stephen Lowe should now be brought to an end. The requirements of Bishop Richard's response will still continue to be implemented. Moreover because the process for considering pastoral re-organisation is taking longer than expected, he is prepared to allow the present situation to continue beyond the 18 months, with a conclusion required by February 2016. This is on the understanding that the process for achieving the right pastoral scheme will be addressed energetically and urgently.

Whilst this IS good news, as the words from the hymn 'Lord, for the years,' with which I've headed this article, says, in fact – now begins the challenge.

The first aspect of that challenge is how we put the past behind us. I do need to comment on it as little. I know that there are still people here who are smarting from the events of last year, and from the Episcopal Visitation. I have always been willing, but I now explicitly make the offer, to hear out, one to one, anyone who still feels they have things they want to say. Bishop Stephen Lowe has offered to hear out the PCC, in direct response to a criticism I put to him that 'he's never been back.' The PCC are still deliberating if this would be helpful or not, but the offer is there.

I would also say gently, but firmly, that all feelings are acceptable, but not all actions. We cannot be holy, catholic and apostolic in separation from the Diocese, and that means the Diocesan hierarchy – and that includes our Archbishops and Bishops. Whatever we feel personally, as the Body of Christ we recognise the historic orders of Bishops, Priests and Deacons and our long-term good is only possible in relation to the Holy Catholic Church throughout the world, expressed in the way we belong to the Liverpool Diocese and Bootle Deanery. Bishops – as you know only too well – are not perfect. But neither are we! We all, including me, inhabit our roles – as Bishops, Priests and Deacons, as disciples of Christ, which is the first calling for all of us, of course – as the very flawed human beings that we are. We are all imperfect; we are all part of fallen humanity *and at the same time*, we are also – all of us, including those we resent and despise – made in the image of God, and called to inhabit our particular offices as best we can, sometimes in difficult circumstances. We might not be able to let go of resentment and despising easily or quickly – we probably shouldn't – cheap grace is no grace, and cheap forgiveness is no forgiveness. But we *are* called to follow the Crucified One, and we can begin by praying for those we resent and despise – and for ourselves, that we are not consumed by our anger and hurt. It is part of our Christian calling constantly, and honestly, to reassess the past, and so transform the present and move into God's future.

The other aspect of the challenge is the shape of the future into which God is calling us. The Bishop's statement makes it clear that we need now to grasp the nettle of the shape of ministry and mission in this area in a way that is sustainable into the future. That is, we, and the other three churches in Waterloo now need to begin to think in a more positive and focused way about pastoral reorganisation. The point about the Visitation being lifted is we enter these discussions on a level playing field with the other Churches. There are four churches within a square mile of one another, near enough – the boundaries in places are difficult to discern, and the overlaps in terms of our mission, ministry and pastoral care are enormous. The settlement here for a long time has been that there are two stipendiary posts in this area of the Deanery, and almost every combination of United Benefice possible has been tried – with varying degrees of success. The words 'pastoral reorganisation' do cause people in churches to be fearful – because we can be protective of our territory, and there is a temptation to jump to conclusions too quickly, and usually gloomily – often, either, 'they're going to close our church' or, 'we're going to lose our vicar.' But that isn't what it's about, fundamentally, and it certainly isn't where we start. Each Church hereabouts has something to offer the whole, in terms of strengths and things it can offer, and each too is vulnerable, again in distinctive ways. So if there are ways we can belong together that enable each Church to flourish, and which mitigates the vulnerabilities, well, that is part of what it means to belong to the Body of Christ.

My own view is that the four Waterloo Churches would all best be served by some species of Waterloo Team Ministry. It is in a way stating the obvious, but central to a Team Ministry ... is a Ministry Team. Between the four Churches, we have, at the moment 3 stipendiary clergy (but with a settlement of two), 4 retired clergy still in active ministry, 7 lay readers, a reader emeritus, and a reader in training. It ought to be possible to run 4 churches between us! It doesn't have to be, indeed shouldn't, just be the stipendiary clergy carrying these tasks – so how do we best enable all those with ministerial oversight, to be mutually supportive of one another, in a way that they can lead and enable mission, be ministers of Word and Sacrament, and offer the best possible pastoral care sustainably, that is, to exercise their vocations sustainably, collegially, in mutuality, and creatively, for the sake of all God's people?

As a first stage in this, I have proposed to our PCC, which they accepted unanimously, the formation of a Waterloo Group Council. The other clergy in Waterloo are also putting it to their PCCs, and they are hopeful of a positive response. In fact, the Waterloo Churches have been a legal Group since 1980, but it has had almost no impact on the way the Churches have run for the 34 years of its existence. So let's begin with what we have already, at least formally! It is a way of getting everyone round the table, and working together for the future God is calling us into. Note that, Bishop Richard here has exercised his episcopacy in a very positive way – by asking us, as Christian adults, to work out with one another something that has a fighting chance of working. It isn't that something is being imposed on us, but that we have been asked to address the questions ourselves. Let me say, I am always hopeful when people get together and pray for God's will to be done! Sometimes, new things can emerge that no one had ever thought of before. Sometimes, more obvious and ordinary things seem more possible. If we can get something workable on the table, I am confident that the Bishops' role will be to get the legal process underway that will bring our decisions into reality.

The exact make-up of this council is to be decided, but I am very much in favour of Wardens, and some PCC representatives from each church, but also at least one person who is a 'person in the pews' – i.e. with no other particular office, as well as the Ministry Teams being involved. The stipendiary clergy will act as a kind of standing committee for this council, and once we have finalized the make-up of it, the PCC will meet either in ordinary or extraordinary session, to choose its representatives. I envisage a first Group Council meeting will be a half or full 'Away Day' in early 2015. The task of this council is to report with a working document of a pastoral scheme by the summer of 2015, with the aim that the right pastoral scheme can be implemented by February 2016, to which time, as you know, my post has been extended.

There will shortly be an open meeting (likely to be after a Sunday service) for you to air issues and to raise any questions. If we have a date for the first Group Council Meeting, the congregation will also need to elect its representative(s). If the date of the first meeting is before or very soon after the next scheduled PCC (21st January), the PCC will also meet in extraordinary session immediately afterwards, with just one item of business, to elect its representatives.

Sue



The Ebola Crisis

Where can I go then from your Spirit, where can I flee from your presence? If I climb up to heaven you are there, if I make the grave my bed, you are there also.

A couple of weeks ago an Ebola outreach worker called Rosetta visited a house in Waterloo, Sierra Leone. There she discovered a four month old baby girl, barely alive, whose parents had both died from Ebola. No-one had dared touch or feed the baby for fear of infection. Rosetta called in the local medical team, but they arrived too late to save the baby. In telling this story I may have already said too much, too much about the horror and fear of Ebola, and of the distrust and disruption of human relationships it is leaving in its wake. To try to say anything seems almost offensive in a situation where words are so inadequate.

And yet that suffering community, and we at home in comfortable Crosby, can't avoid the questions. Why is this happening? Why all this needless suffering? And if we are people of faith – where is God? Maybe there aren't any answers. But if we can have a go at exploring some of the questions we may come to a deeper understanding of God's relationship with us, his children. Our faith is in an incarnate God, one who leaves deep imprints of his love on the world he created, and for which his Son died.

So, where to start? Surely with our gut reactions to such an appalling disease and its wholesale destruction of individuals and communities. We know from our own experience that when faced with great loss, bitter loss, it is natural to be angry and to look for someone to blame – and why not blame God, because isn't he supposed to be in charge? Or we may have more complex feelings – of remorse and regret. All of these emotions come tumbling

out when human beings are *in extremis*. We find them expressed time and time again in the Psalms, all of them wonderful examples of that most honest form of prayer – the cry from the heart. The Psalms tell us that it's OK to be honest to God – he can take it! And they also tell us that God can use even our worst fears and insecurities as a starting point for a deeper relationship with him - indeed there can be no deeper way of knowing God than through our utter, child-like, dependency upon him and his love.

If I'm honest with myself, as I look at the images of Ebola orphans standing abandoned at the roadside, some of them barely old enough to walk, I'm tempted to despair. And I hear the voices of C.S. Lewis's demons hissing in my ear, the voices of Screwtape and Wormwood saying 'There is no God'. Yet in God's very absence there is salvation, and confusion for Screwtape and Slubgob and the rest. It is when God isn't there that our need for him is greatest – 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?'

But the question remains – why doesn't our supposedly just and powerful God *do* something to stop the suffering and the dying? This was the question put in a powerful TV play called 'God on trial' written by Frank Cottrell Boyce. In it a group of Jewish men in a Nazi concentration camp hold a mock trial in which God is accused of abandoning the Jewish people to the horrors of the holocaust. They never reach a verdict; but the next day as they are taken out to the gas chambers they cover their heads and recite their prayers, their covenant relationship with Yahweh unbroken. 'The Lord has given, the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord'.

Maybe we are asking the wrong question. Perhaps we should ask 'why don't *we* do something? In the words of St. Teresa of Avila 'Christ has no hands, no feet on earth but ours'. Perhaps it is not God who is unjust, but we ourselves. We must ask ourselves why poor countries like Sierra Leone stay poor, why our international trade barriers are stacked against them, why multinational companies are plundering their natural resources. We might also ask why Western governments and 'Big Pharma' waited for 38 years after the first emergence of Ebola before trying to develop a vaccine. The virus lives in harmony with its animal reservoirs and only when it spills over into the human population does it create such havoc. A vaccine would restore a biological balance in nature's economy.

The Old Testament prophets were, quite rightly, always banging on about society's obligation to the poor and vulnerable. It is not so much that God punishes us for our greed, it is rather that greed poisons both the economy of nature, and the economy of human relationships, so that we also become tainted and damaged. And this is true whatever the threat, be it from poverty, or pestilence, or climate change.

Christians I believe should be doubly motivated in our bias to the poor. Our Lord's person, life and teaching all embody the Kingdom values of justice and peace. But there is an even greater urgency which Jesus conveys to us in his story of the sheep and the goats. In his Incarnation Jesus becomes one with suffering humanity, and it is to him that we owe our duty of care. If we fail in that duty we have the words of Jesus ringing in our ears: 'I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was sick and you didn't visit me'. Of

course there are times, often the most difficult of times, when our moral obligations are totally thwarted, and we find ourselves able to do nothing, nothing at all. Sometimes it has felt like that during the Ebola crisis. And then we have to set aside our instinct to *do* something for the suffering, and learn instead how to be there with them: just as Mary and John stood at the foot of the cross, and loved, and wept, and prayed.

One of the most inspiring aspects of the response to the Ebola outbreak is the courage and vision of so many people, both within West Africa and internationally, of all faiths and of none, who are giving their time and money, and in many cases risking their lives. It is as if the Holy Spirit were weaving through the sombre tapestry of pestilence a single golden thread of resurrection, to give us all strength and hope and purpose. And yet, as it was for Mary and John, so it is for all who wait and pray and suffer: the deliverance of Easter Day has yet to dawn. Meanwhile all we can do is to stay with the people of West Africa, at the foot of the cross. For wherever the dying Christ is lifted up, there God is, for ever bringing reconciliation to the world.

**Where can I go then from your Spirit, where can I flee from your presence?
If I climb up to heaven you are there, if I make the grave my bed, you are there also.**

Fred Nye

Worship in Advent and at Christmastide

Sunday 30th November 2014:

11.00am: Family Eucharist and Toy Service – start of Christmas Tree Festival

6.00pm: Churches Together in Waterloo Advent Carol Service

Sunday 7th December 2014: Second Sunday of Advent

11.00am: Parish Eucharist

6.30pm: An Advent Meditation featuring St Faith's Choir and Mostly Madrigals

Sunday 14th December 2014: Third Sunday of Advent

11.00am: Parish Eucharist

6.30pm: Advent Evensong and Benediction

Sunday 21st December 2014: Fourth Sunday of Advent

11.00am: Parish Eucharist

6.30pm: Service of Nine Lessons and Carols

Wednesday 24th December 2014: Christmas Eve

4.00pm: Christingle

11.00pm: Carols; 11.30pm: First Eucharist of Christmas

Thursday 25th December 2014: Christmas Day

11.00am: Eucharist of Christmas Morning

Friday 26th and Saturday 27th December:

11.00am: Eucharist



Sunday 28th December: The Holy Innocents

11.00am: Parish Eucharist

Thursday 1st January 2015: The Naming and Circumcision of Jesus

12 Noon: Eucharist and Renewal of Covenant

Diary of a Postulant Reader

The first report from the front line by one of our esteemed churchwardens, who is on her way to even higher things.

Two months since I started Reader training, my timetable is quite hectic because I am still working part time with Social Services: they are not too keen to let me go just yet. Every Tuesday evening I go to St James' House, at the cathedral, and have lectures from 7 - 9.30ish (usually later) and 8 times a year I attend a full day session (8 - 5) at the campus of Chester University, in Warrington. It doesn't sound much, but the amount of reading, studying and assignments to be written, takes up a lot of time, especially as I have had to master new I.T skills quite alien to me, for instance 'uploading Moodle' This is still a mystery to me and I hold my breath each time I do it until I see it has been done and I get the 'accepted' message. 'Moodle?' I hear you say: well, if anybody knows can you tell me? (Answers on a postcard to Ed. Please!)

I am in a class of about 22 people, trainee Readers and Ordinands. Sorry to be a bit vague, no it's not old age, the regular group is consistent but we are joined by Readers and Ordinands from other areas who may be re-doing a module, or have missed it in their own area, or need to do a module to gain credits towards a degree. I am now officially on placement at St Faith's until Palm Sunday, so perhaps you will hear me preach, if so be gentle with me, I am a sermon virgin (can I say that?) The thought of preaching excites and terrifies me, at times I wake up at 4am in a sweat after a vivid unwelcome dream and wonder why I'm doing this. I am looking forward to working at other churches with different traditions; the diversity of the Anglican Church is wide.

I know why I am doing this. God called, I listened and acted as I was told. I am in a very happy place with this. I am enjoying meeting new people, training and growing together in faith.

Thank you for your kind words of support. Until next time, Love and Prayers

Brenda Cottarel

November 2014





Roof Update

On Wednesday 12th November, we were in a position to make a resolution, passed unanimously, to proceed with repairs to the North Roof. This is because the numbers do now stack up, and we can afford both to repair the roof, and to maintain our commitment, as an Anglican Church, to support ministry and mission through Parish Share. This is because the finance for the roof comes from the astonishingly generous offer of an interest-free loan of £20,000 from a member of the congregation who wishes to remain anonymous. The Parish needs the discipline of repaying the loan, but as it is repaid, a proportion of it will be tithed back to the Parish as planned giving. The PCC unanimously accepted this offer, and proposed a Vote of Thanks to the anonymous congregation member.

With the help of the Archdeacon, the Interim Order (i.e. the legal permission for the work to be done) is now in place, and it will start on Tuesday 25th November.

Sue

100 club winners: 9/11/14

1	150	184	Corinne Hedgecock
2	100	139	John Chapman
3	50	146	Avis Port



In Memoriam

A report from our Services Family Support Group

There were two celebrations taking place on Wednesday November 5th: in actual fact there were four, but more of that later. The first one was rather obvious - Bonfire Night. The second was really more of a commemoration than a celebration, but the two complemented each other very nicely, but definitely without either knowing it or it being planned.

The commemoration was our Services Family Support Group tribute to the Acts of Remembrance held respectively on Sunday 9th November and Tuesday 11th November the actual day for Remembrance. It was an Act of Remembrance not only for the Centenary of WW1 but for all the conflicts there have been since 1914-1918 war - the 1939-45 war, Korea, Borneo, Malaya, Northern Ireland, Aden, Suez, Cyprus, Falklands, Gulf 1&2, Bosnia, Kenya, Palestine, Afghanistan... These are not all that have taken place in this time and for the ones I have missed I apologise. It was for all those who gave the ultimate sacrifice, their lives, and also those whose lives have been changed forever by injury, and this is not only servicemen and women, but also their families.

Padre George Perera had put together a very moving service with prayers, readings, poems, hymns and interesting facts; for instance on 5th November 1914 the 1st Battle of Ypres was taking place, it had started at the end of October and lasted until late November. All this was helped by the use of candles and some 'props' to add a wonderful atmosphere. These included the draping of the British Legion Standard across the altar, a very old picture of a WW1 soldier with his arms around his horse, this being flanked by The British Legion's 2014 appeal poster of a little girl asking for the country to remember her daddy, a soldier. Our thanks to Dave Quinn of Crosby branch of the British Legion for lending us these and for joining with us. And of course a Poppy Wreath, so necessary and very poignant.

So what was the connection between our Remembrance service and Bonfire Night? The sound and sight of rockets being set off, fireworks sounding like 'rapid fire', bright flashes and thunderous bangs that could be heard over our hymns, prayers and poems were all, with a little imagination, able to bring home how the constant noise must have been deafening as well unbelievable to those at the front, albeit what we heard could not compare with what those young soldiers were hearing 24/7, but they couldn't 'switch off' at 9pm as we did when the firework parties came to an end.

This all dovetailed beautifully with the service of Remembrance on Sunday 9th November, which was led by Rev Sue and featured the draping of the Legion Standard across the pulpit, the reading of the St Faith's Roll of Honour, possibly for the first time, the very moving solo trumpet playing after the two minutes' silence and finally the laying of the Poppy Wreath at the altar, all making St Faith's Act of Remembrance a truly moving and meaningful occasion.

On a personal note, I have been to both the War Cemetery at Tyne Cot and Ypres for the 8pm daily service, two deeply moving places that again help bring home the huge loss of so many young lives when you see this lists of names and row upon row of head-stones so beautifully cared for, you cannot forget the price that was paid and not wish to remember them.

Now the other two celebrations - these were two very special birthdays: Irene Taylor (4/11) and Angie Price (7/11), both admitting to being 21+! Naturally they couldn't pass unmarked, so a small buffet, with cake, was enjoyed by all, with also a big 'thank you' for the scones and shortbread they have supplied for the refreshments each month!

Our next meeting is on Wednesday 3rd December and is part of the Christmas Tree Festival. It is our Carol Service with Military Band, a great evening, so please mark the date in your diaries and join with us: 7.30pm start, but get there early for a good seat! See you then.

Eunice Little





How Many Bentleys?

To the avid genealogist there are many sources of records now available ‘online’ and many of these have now been digitised to permit easier and swifter access and research. One of the very best is ‘Ancestry’, which contains a wealth of information drawn from official records of birth, marriage and death and census data. Other sites include online newspapers and ‘familysearch’ run by the Church of Latter Day Saints.

A brief conversation with Reverend Sue following the recent remembrance day service got me thinking about the men of the parish who fell during the two world wars and who they were. Thus began many hours of online research. This research led to an intriguing puzzle about our second vicar – more particularly his name. The Reverend Harold B. Bentley-Smith, or Harold Bentley Bentley-Smith to give him his full title (and quite a mouthful) is recorded as the second vicar of St. Faith’s. Indeed the commemorative board at the rear of church needs two lines to fit his name in!

The Reverend Harold Bentley Bentley-Smith began his short incumbency in 1915, ending in 1918, a period encompassing much of the First World War. His name occurs in several local newspaper articles of the time. It is a well-known fact, and recorded, that he introduced many controversial changes during his time at St. Faith’s, much to the annoyance of some elements of the congregation. It is not the intention of this article to reflect on his ministry, as this has already been well documented and commented upon in several histories of St. Faith’s over the years.

Harold Bentley Smith, (as he was born) was the son of the Reverend Frederick Smith and his second wife, Juliette Gleadow. He was born on the 17th December 1877 in Aston Brook, Warwickshire, where his father was vicar of St. Mary’s. In the 1891 census he is recorded as living with his parents and siblings in the vicarage of St. Mary’s, Aston Brook, age 13.

It is somewhat difficult to establish how many siblings Harold had, as his father was twice married and birth records, unlike today, did not have to specify the mother’s maiden name. However, it would seem that his father’s first marriage produced four half siblings, the second marriage producing a further three siblings. By 1901, Harold, with his father, mother and older sister had moved to the more pleasant countryside setting of All Saint’s church in Church Lench. Harold is recorded as a student undergraduate of Cambridge.

According to records of Cambridge alumni, HBS was on the staff of the Evesham Journal before taking up his place at Cambridge. He entered as an undergraduate in 1898, gaining his B.A. in 1901. He was ordained deacon (Manchester) in 1902 and became curate of St Alban, Cheetwood, a suburb of Manchester. Between 1902 to 1905, HBS gained a curacy of St. Paul’s, Edinburgh. It was in 1905 that we encounter the first significant event. Harold Bentley Smith is reported as having changed his name to Harold Bentley Bentley-Smith. What precipitated this change of name is unclear, nor do we know when this occurred and whether it was prior to his move to Edinburgh. He undertook further curacies before becoming vicar of East Coatham. In 1915, he exchanged the living with the Reverend Thomas Howe Baxter, becoming the second vicar of St. Faith’s.

The Liverpool Daily Post and Mercury of 1915 enthusiastically records the incoming vicar as “being a skilful organiser, an eloquent preacher, and an energetic and tireless worker”; we are also told that he is a keen Freemason and was formerly a journalist.

A further report from the same paper of October 1915, drew parallels between his new parish and that that he had left in Yorkshire; “Mr Bentley-Smith can be counted as an important auxiliary to the numerous societies which make the sailor and his dependents their especial care”. His first sermon was greeted with optimism; the vicar “struck a sympathetic note which will be far-reaching”.

However, the period of his incumbency was to be difficult. George Houldin, writing in his history of St. Faith’s stated; “The Rev. Herbert (sic) Bentley Smith was obviously unfamiliar with the Churchmanship of the Liverpool Diocese”.

Over the period of his incumbency at St. Faith’s there were several local press reports that confirm a somewhat troubled time.

In 1916, the Liverpool Daily Post and Mercury reported a “breeze” at the vestry meeting of the same year, (I guess a ‘breeze’ is just short of a storm!). Accusations were made of the vicar’s alleged use of the ‘confession’, in papers that had been handed to confirmation candidates; (the confession was the subject of much controversy in mid 19th century Church of England and resulted in a number of infamous court cases. Indeed, St. Agnes’ Church was embroiled in this very matter in the 1890’s).

The matter was discussed at some length; “the vicar agreed that he would not issue any form that the Bishop of Liverpool regarded as contrary to the Church of England. He also challenged anyone to prove that he had ever gone beyond what the Prayer-Book allowed”.

By 1918, there were “several breezes at the vestry meeting”, so reported the Liverpool Echo of April 1st, under a heading, “Crosby Meeting in Disorder”. The paper reported the anger and frustration felt by those present at the vestry meeting, partly at the absence of the vicar (now using the title of Harold Bentley Bentley) and the reluctance of the Rev. T. R. Musgrave (curate of St. Faith’s officiating as chairman), to give a satisfactory explanation as to why the vicar wasn’t there.

One member expressed disgust and claimed that the church had neglected the soldiers of the parish serving in the war; “It was deplorable that a large church like St. Faith’s should do nothing”. The meeting was evidently full of much bickering and ill-feeling and the Echo in a dramatically titled subheading, “The Final Scene”, stated that “the meeting ended in disorder”.

We must remember that there were several significant events that occurred in Harold Bentley Smith’s life around this time; his mother died in 1914; the first of his two daughters was born the same year. In the spring of 1917 his second daughter was born and later that year his father died. All of this was happening against the backdrop of WWI and the devastation that that wrought and the many local men in the parish that were lost.

A legal notice appeared in the Liverpool Daily Post and Mercury in December 1917 concerning Harold Bentley-Smith. This was to change his name again by deed poll. From

henceforth, Harold Bentley Bentley-Smith would be simply known as Harold Bentley Bentley. Why he chose to do this is unclear. Many people who changed their name during WWI did so to hide their Germanic roots, anglicising their name to avoid persecution. Given the life-changing events taking place at home, at war and in his personal life, it might be evidence that his behaviour marked a decline into some form of nervous breakdown.

Further evidence of the vicar's state of health occurred in a short article entitled "Vicar To The Front" published in the Liverpool Echo in April 1918. It stated that the Rev. H.B Bentley (as he was now known) had written to the Bishop tendering his resignation due to ill health and prolonged absence. The article further stated that "He has volunteered to go to the front, and it is stated that he is to work in the Church Army Huts".

George Houldin wrote in his history of St. Faith's: "early in 1918 Mr. Bentley-Smith's health (never too good) broke down and for nine months the whole burden of shepherding the parish fell upon the Rev. T. R. Musgrave, the curate. Great as was the work of this truly faithful priest, the congregation appeared to lose heart and became dispirited. Added to this, came Mr. Bentley-Smith's resignation, and for the next five or six months the parish was without a Vicar".

Thankfully, the Rev. Harold Bentley Bentley eventually recovered, although it would be 1923 before he became Vicar of All Souls, Hastings, later securing other positions as a minister around the country. The Reverend Harold Bentley Bentley-Smith died in Gloucester on the 27th October 1964, his name recorded at death as being Harold Bentley Bentley.

John Woodley

From the Registers 1937-1939



Resuming the relentless trawling through our church registers

Your archivist begins with a confession: he has just spotted, back in February 1936, an important marginal note. The services on 9th and 12th of that month are marked '**Requiem of Howard Douglas Horsfall - Founder**'. An era had come to an end.

The pattern of daily and Sunday services is, as we have come to expect, faithfully maintained in 1937 at St Faith's, with J.S. assisted by M.B.S.G. and D.F. On Passion Sunday there were 80 at the altar rail for the 8.00 am Communion, and as many as 124 in the pews – a far cry from the later pattern when only communicants (and increasingly few of these) would turn up at this early hour. There were 233 at the Sung Eucharist, with just the celebrant receiving the sacrament – again a world removed from present day practice. There were 142 for the afternoon children's service, and 201 to hear R.A.Rostron preach at evensong. Ernest R. Bell took Wednesday Compline and D.Railton Thursday's women's service.



**Nativity scene by the 15th century Flemish artist, Rogier Van der Weyden
Read Fr Dennis's commentary on page 3**

'Hunger for Justice'

The Walk of Witness
by members of Churches
Together in Waterloo.

See Kathy Zimak's article
on page 21. They set out
from St Faith's and are
later seen outside Waterloo
Primary School



'We will remember them'

Members of our Forces
Family Support Group
seen in the Chapel of
the Cross on November
5th. See Eunice Little's
article on page 10





Left: A light in the darkness: the British Legion display on November 5th.

*Below: **Birthday Girls:** Rosie (left) and Eunice (right) flanking birthday celebrants Irene and Angie (details on page 10)*



For the Fallen

On Remembrance Sunday, Churchwarden Rick Walker reads out the names of St Faith's men who fell in two world wars are read out. See the article on page 23



Robert Elcum Horsfall

Our founder's son is seen laying our foundation stone in 1898, and in army uniform in the Great War. He died in 1917.



'Gently, Bentley'

The intriguing story of the various names of the second vicar of St Faith's is told on page 12



On Palm Sunday afternoon the pattern is broken for 'Sacred Cantata' performed for 103 people. For the first three days of Holy Week John Bebb provides an 8 pm Compline and address; this is replaced by 'Preparation' on Maundy Thursday. On Good Friday evening there were 167 to hear Stainer's 'Crucifixion'. Easter day totalled 777 attendances and 378 communicants.

Wednesday 7th April sees a 'requiem for Joanna Brierley', Canon Brierley's mother. Soon after, April 21st is celebrated as 'Feast of Dedication'. The next event of note is the Sunday after Ascension - Coronation Sunday: evensong is brought forward to make room for a Service of Dedication. Coronation Day itself, the following Wednesday, saw an impressive 218 monarchists present at an 8 am Sung Eucharist.

After these heady excitements, things settle down again. The vicar's shaky writing is replaced from late June to early August by Mr Godfrey's firm hand: as the only priest he takes a long run of eucharists - actually some 40 in 30 odd days. We also see the first reference to the 'Guild of S Faith' on 30th June.

JS returns as scribe from early August. Quiet weeks follow, with only the unusual labelling of a Monday morning 10.30 am eucharist as 'Vigil'. Later W. L. Mark Way and J. Howard Foy make return visits in early September. On September 21st ('St Matthew A.&M.') the 10.30 am Eucharist is 'Rev D. Ford's first Celebration' - he had been ordained priest the previous day. A few days later, both John Brierley and Mark Way were present. The marginal note explains all: 'Dedication of windows in memory of Joanne and John Michael Brierley (Canon Brierley's mother and son: she had died on 4th April and he, aged only ten, on 3rd February). Three days later, true to the traditions of the register, Maurice B. S. Godfrey signs in full prior to departing the parish. St Faith's Day, a weekday, was marked as usual, as were All Saints and All Souls, with Vespers of the Dead and Requiems. The eve of St Andrew was a Day of Continuous Intercession for Church Abroad'. G.S.Howarth, a new curate and evidently already priested, signed in on December 21st. On Christmas Eve, there was Festal Evensong with Blessing of the Crib, followed by 312 in church for the midnight Sung Eucharist (still not 'Mass!') Boxing Day (St Stephen) featured a 3 pm Scholars' Toy Service (153 scholars) and soon after the year ended with a recorded 6904 total communicants: an impressive figure, but about 100 down on the totals for the two preceding years.

Turning a few pages into 1938, we see the somewhat shaky signature of W.A.S.Kennedy (Woodbine Willie again) on midweek Women's Service duty on March 17th His place the following Sunday is filled by the flowery signature of J G MacManaway. On Tuesday 5th April there were 238 present for a Confirmation. The presiding cleric was W.F.Wentworth Sheilds. Wikipedia tells us that he was an Australian bishop, having risen through the ranks from being Archdeacon of Wagga Wagga. How splendid!

Palm Sunday saw 'Evensong + Cantata': Holy Week addresses were by Aidan Elliot There were in total 1,116 folk in the pews on Easter Day, then, on Easter III, an unusual entry for an organ recital in the evening. There was another on Trinity Sunday, likewise unattributed.

Corpus Christi is again well celebrated as a red letter day (there is a plethora of such red lettering at this stage in the story of our registers, not all for significant occasions). Not in red, but a notable day nonetheless, is June 19th, the first Sunday after Trinity, when the Bishop of Nyasaland presides at the Sung Eucharist over some 425 souls for ‘Dedication of Window in Memory of Herbert William Cockett’, who had succumbed to illness while working in the mission field. There was, as usual, just the one communicant: probably the biggest ever discrepancy in the history of our church.

J.S.’s initials are missing for the month of July – holiday or ill health, one wonders. Things are quiet during the summer and into the autumn. It is ‘wet and stormy’ on the Eve of St Faith’s Day. A rare attribution tells us that D.N.Spifford, preaching at Festal Evensong in the Octave of St Faith, is in fact Rector of Walton. A few weeks later Bishop Wentworth Shields (this is indeed how he spells his own name) preaches again..

A closer look at the attendances for the four Sundays in November tells us that the 8 am Communion averages 93, the 1045 Sung Eucharist 208, the Children at 3 pm 124 and evensong 178 (this latter now regularly below the morning numbers). And so to Christmas, with 695 bottoms on seats overall, and the tail end of 1938, with the year’s pencilled total of communicants given as 6539 (down from 6904).

And so to the fateful year of 1939. Nothing in the early months breaks the even tenor of the pattern of worship at our church: until on Ash Wednesday David Ford signs in in full – a sure sign that he is about to depart for pastures new. He is almost immediately succeeded by W.W.Honner who, as Bob Honner, was known to several present-day members of our church – a sure sign that we are passing from history to memory. Soon Basil Oddie, SSM, and Bishop J.G.Kemphorne pay visits on the same day; the former is to reappear on several other Lenten occasions, on one of them alongside the now very familiar figure of ‘Woodbine Willie’.

We have to pause somewhere – and where better than on Thursday, March 30th, when the bold scrawl of William Sodor and Man takes the women’s service. The very next entry reads Confirmation: Albert Liverpool. But what looks like a rare episcopal procession is an illusion. The date for Albert is in fact listed as the previous Tuesday, 28th. Did Mr Schofield forget to log the service down in its proper calendar sequence? If so, how did he get the Bishop back two days later to sign retrospectively. Of such trivia is your archivist’s day made up. Time for World War Two...?

Chris Price

Meet our New Bishop



Last Saturday, several representatives from St Faith’s were in the vast congregation as Paul Bayes was consecrated as the 8th Bishop of Liverpool.

Various processions – of clergy, readers, staff and clergy from the Diocese of St Albans, and guests, including civic representatives, ecumenical representatives, and those of other

faiths, entered the Cathedral. Some people remarked that they hadn't realized the Diocese had so many clergy, though I'm not sure if the sight of us altogether is edifying or not!

Just before 3pm, the new Bishop knocked three times on the great West Door of the Cathedral with the ivory mallet used by Edward VII when he laid the foundation stone of the Cathedral in 1904. The liturgy began, movingly, with the new Bishop moving alone, and dressed simply in an alb, through the Central Space of the Cathedral. Gradually, as the liturgy proceeded, he received the symbols of his Office, finally receiving, from Bishop Richard via Archdeacon Peter, the Pastoral Staff laid down by Bishop James at his Farewell Service. He preached a sermon with the evocative, Eucharistic image of a table, made by a poor man, a carpenter, at which all people are invited to sit and eat, with echoes, of course, of George Herbert's poem *Love*. You can watch the inauguration and listen to the sermon here:

http://www.liverpoolcathedral.org.uk/407/section.aspx/406/the_installation_of_bishop_paul_bayes

Bishop Paul is originally from Bradford in Yorkshire. His father was a churchwarden, and his life as a boy and young teenager in the late 1950s and 1960s was centred around Sunday School, church choir and youth group. In his late teens, like so many others, he decided all this church business was a bit of a waste of time, and in his university years, explored a whole range of other spiritual and political options before re-encountering Jesus Christ, and once again embracing the Christian faith he thought he had left behind. Soon after, he committed himself to serving God within the ministry of the Church. He trained for ministry at Queen's Birmingham, a pioneering ecumenical foundation, which involved an exchange with the Roman Catholic Oscott College, led by their then Vice-Principal, Patrick Kelly, later, of course, to become Archbishop of Liverpool.

Paul has been married to Kate, whom he met at university, since 1976. He was ordained in 1979, serving his curacy in Whitley Bay, Tyneside, then moving to London as a University Chaplain. He was for a time national chair of Christian CND, and, even as he is committed to the growth and flourishing of the church, sees this as intimately bound up with struggling for justice and peace. After five years in London, Paul and Kate moved to High Wycombe, where Paul served first as Team Vicar then as Team Rector. By this time, they had three children – Honour, Sam and Philippa, and in 1995, the family moved to Totton, on the edge of Southampton, where Paul served as Team Rector. After a decade there, Paul moved to London again to work for the Archbishops' Council as Evangelism Advisor. Here, Paul enabled a creative conversation between work on 'emerging church,' and more traditional church life in working with, for example, the national Weddings Project and evangelistic initiatives such as Back to Church Sunday.

In 2010, Paul moved to St Albans as Bishop of Hertford, where of course, he was known to some of our own clerical alumni, Nicholas Anderson, Lucy Davis and Neil Kelley, all of whom now serve in his former episcopal area!

Sue



How to Know if You are Growing Old

Everything hurts, and what doesn't hurt, doesn't work.
You feel like the day after the night before, and you haven't been anywhere.
Your address book contains lots of crossings out and names ending in M.D.
You get out of breath playing cards.
Your children begin to look middle aged.
You join a health club — and don't go.
You know all the answers but no one asks you the questions.
You look forward to a dull evening.
You need glasses to find your glasses.
You turn out the lights for economy, not for romantic reasons.
You sit in a rocking chair and can't get it going.
Your knees buckle but your belt won't.
If you manage to bend down you find yourself wondering what else to pick up
now you're down there.
Your back goes out more than you do.
You have too much room in the house and not enough in the medicine chest.
You sink your teeth in a slice of meat and they stay there.
You can remember 1940 but not yesterday, or even this morning.
And finally



You wonder why more people aren't using this size print.

With thanks to Sister Charity, C.H.N., late of the Chester Diocesan Retreat House, for supplying this entertainment!

Laugh Along with Saint Faith

Her legends portray her as a patron who could turn against those who only gave small donations to her church at Conques.

Her popular hagiography, 'liber miraculorum sancte fidis', attributed to the churchman Bernard of Angers (composed between ca 1013 and after 1020), calls miracles associated with Faith *joca*—Latin for 'tricks' or 'jokes', the kind that 'the inhabitants of the place call Sainte Foy's jokes, which is the way peasants understand such things.' One such joke was the following story: a local castellan holds on to a ring that his dying wife had promised to the saint. The castellan, whose name is Austrin, uses the ring, however, to wed his second wife. Saint Faith causes the finger of the second wife to swell up in unbearable pain. Austrin and his new wife visit the saint's shrine, and on the third night, 'when the sorrowful woman happened to blow her nose, the ring flew off without hurting her fingers, just as if it had been hurled from the strongest siege engine, and gave a sharp crack on the pavement at a great distance.'

(I guess it's the way you tell it! Ed.)

Table Sales Dates 2015

February 21st
March 21st
April 18th
May 16th

June 20th
September 19th
October 17th
October 17th



Please support these valuable fund-raising efforts – and help to keep the roof on!

Ruth Winder

My Ministry

Where to begin?

Well, I've been a Christian ever since I can remember. Even though all my family were staunch atheists, I have always been aware of God in my life. I've worshipped here at St Faiths for 30 years, so I think I rather like the place! I love the catholic tradition; the beauty of the liturgy, the spirituality, the acknowledgement and importance given to the sacraments is what sustains and nourishes me. I admit though, that I also enjoy the occasional alternative worship, but my preference has always been that of Anglo Catholicism.

As you know, I was lucky enough to have a placement in the cathedral for three months, and during this I became very aware of the variety of ways in which we can worship our Lord. I was struck by the realisation also that, it doesn't need to be either one or the other, but that these different forms of worship can be held alongside each other. The important factor is that we come together, in the presence of the Holy Spirit, to worship God.

For me personally, the beauty and spirituality of the Anglo-catholic tradition and worship is where I feel most at home; with prayer and the Eucharist, the body and blood of Jesus Christ, being the central force of worship. It is what sustains, helps and guides me. Prayer is incredibly important to me also, and I truly believe that God is with us at all times. When we pray we have a special, personal, relationship with Him, and I believe that prayer can bring us tremendous comfort and strength.

With this in mind a few years ago, a Christian work colleague and I set up a prayer group in work. Initially we met once a fortnight, but due to request it is now held weekly, during the lunch-break, for 20 minutes. The prayer meeting wasn't necessarily Christian, but multi-faith in order to welcome people of all faiths and none. However, as the weeks went on, it became very obvious that the only people who attended were Christian and so it became a Christian prayer group, rather than multi-faith, but everyone, whether Christian or not, are still welcome to join us for prayer and quiet reflection.

On the morning of the prayer meeting, I send out an email to regular attendees, as a little reminder as it is very easy to get caught up in the ‘busyness’ of work, and also the members can arrange their work pattern so that they are able to attend. There is also a poster permanently displayed on the prayer room door so that anyone, staff, patients or visitor, who pass by or visit the prayer room, are aware that there is a weekly prayer meeting and they are welcome to come along.

We alternate at leading in prayer and are fairly flexible in our approach to worship, because we don’t know who, or how many, might turn up on the day. Occasionally a patient might call in and not speak at all, but simply sit quietly and listen as we pray. And some members of staff might call in as they may have been having a particularly stressful morning and felt that they needed this quiet time to help give them strength and/or comfort, as they continued with their work. Sometimes there might only be one of us there, but prayers are still said for our patients and staff.

I recall one particular day a lady asked if she could join us in prayer. She explained that her newborn baby daughter had been very sick, and had been having some major tests to rule out a serious condition. That week she had been told the test results had come back negative and her baby daughter was getting better, and she wanted to give thanks for the excellent news. She named her daughter Grace, because, she told us, it was by the grace of God that her prayers had been answered. It was a very moving experience to sit and pray with her, giving thanks for the happy news.

For about two years I was a volunteer chaplain at Aintree Hospitals. My role was mainly of visiting patients, and occasionally staff, who had requested to receive Holy Communion. Often they simply wanted to chat, but sometimes the patient would be too poorly to take communion, so I would sit with them, maybe hold their hand, and pray quietly. Being with people when they are at their most vulnerable is a very humbling experience, and I believe that simply by ‘being there’ for someone can help bring great comfort and support. I am often moved when someone asks, even when they proclaim not to have any faith, if I will pray for them and sometimes with them. This is surely God’s loving Holy Spirit moving within them and bringing comfort and peace.

A little closer to home, as part of my Reader ministry, I have been very involved in visiting baptism families and helping them to prepare for their child’s baptism. It’s a great privilege to be part of this, and I have to say the visits are rarely the same, and I’m sometimes taken aback by the very deep theological questions I’m asked, which I believe, highlights the fact that there are many people who are inquisitive, possibly spiritual, and eager to learn more about Christianity. Perhaps a seed of faith has been planted, and requires a little nurturing to help it grow.

Reader ministry is a blessing to me. Not only am I privileged to share my faith with others through preaching and teaching, but it has also helped my faith and spirituality to grow and deepen. I often say that a person’s journey in faith has a tendency to be rather like a roller-coaster with many twists and turns and up’s and downs. But the awareness of the presence of God, the ability to be able to minister to others, to share the love of God, is a very

humbling and worthwhile experience. Throughout my Reader ministry and during my time as a chaplaincy volunteer at Aintree hospitals, I have often been humbled at people's faith in God, and challenged by those who have no faith at all.

For a long time now I have felt God calling me to ordination. I have occasionally tried to ignore it, but the sense of calling continued to get stronger to the extent I could not ignore it any longer. I discussed this with Fr Neil about three years ago and he suggested I pursued this further, which I did and have been part of the discernment process since then. This involves meeting with various people who will discern my vocation. For the past year I have met with an Assistant Diocesan Director of Ordinands, Fr Philip, in order to delve deeper into my vocation and discernment and he now feels that I am ready to meet with the Bishop and the Diocesan Director of Ordinands who, following review of references and feedback from Fr Philip, will discern whether or not they are able to sponsor me on to the next phase of the process. If so, then I will be asked to attend the Bishops Advisory Panel (BAP) for further discernment. If I am successful with this, then I will then be able to start training for ordination.

I have an interest in chaplaincy, particularly hospital and educational and, if I am able to, I would like to explore this ministry further. It is indeed a privilege to be with people during difficult and vulnerable times, bringing some comfort whilst praying with them, sharing in the holy sacraments, and in the realisation that God is with them at all times.

I also believe that young people today are in need of spiritual guidance and support. Bringing God into their life, raising awareness of His never ending love, and helping to nurture their faith at an early age, I believe, would help the youth of today become better adults for tomorrow. Both these areas of chaplaincy are something which I would like to explore further.

Jackie Parry



Hunger for Justice

Campaigning with Christian Aid for action on Climate Change

As mentioned in the November *Newslink*, members of Churches Together in Waterloo took part in a walk of witness to demonstrate our Christian responsibility for our world and the dangers of climate change.

In Victoria Park surrounded by the wonderful autumn colours we have seen this year, we gave thanks for the diversity of Creation **At Pineapple greengrocers** in St John's Road we prayed for all who produce our food especially those who are not protected by Fairtrade or whose livelihood is threatened by climate change. **At Waterloo Primary School** we prayed for our children, grandchildren and great-grand children, who will pay the price and count the cost of the climate change that we have helped to bring about. We prayed for future generations who will live in a more hostile environment than we have

known. **At the Shell petrol station** we prayed for those who are affected by overexploitation of the earth's resources and our misuse of energy supplies. **At Park House** we stood by the lake and thought of those who are threatened by drought and by floods. **Finally we prayed in St Mary's churchyard** before a welcome cup of tea and a special service of Evensong.

Many thanks to Fred Nye for the thoughtful prayers we used, to St Mary's congregation for their warm hospitality. and to all from the churches of Crosby who supported the walk.

Christmas Tree Tales



As we look forward to another successful Christmas Tree Festival this Advent, the stories behind the many charities represented are truly inspirational. Here are just two of them – trees sponsored by our own local churches.

ABCD BETHLEHEM (Action around Bethlehem Children with Disability)

Churches Together in Waterloo have chosen a Christian charity for their tree which could not be more appropriate to the Christmas story. **ABCD Bethlehem** is dedicated to improving the quality of life for those children and young adults who suffer from physical, mental and psychological disabilities in the Greater Bethlehem Area of the West Bank and in the Gaza Strip. Even though there is much hatred and distrust in this troubled area, there is also hope. ABCD has set up seven day centres so that it can help 300 children with medical and educational needs. At the centre children are taught in small groups and workers from the centre visit their families to help them cope with the children's special needs. ABCD continues to help the disabled people after they are of school age, by assisting them with training projects in computer design, watch repairs, picture framing and sponsoring some students to study for degrees at Bethlehem University. ABCD also aims to support and train local Palestinians in professional medical skills so that they can help their community.

NOT EVERY CHILD BORN IN A STABLE SURVIVES....

But thanks to Christian Aid many more will!

Good news! This Christmas the UK Government will double every pound donated for mothers and children at our **Christian Aid tree** so more lives can be saved. At Christmas, we celebrate the hopes of humanity focused on a tiny baby. He was born to a young mother with nowhere but a stable to welcome him into the world. A joyful night. The night a child was born who would change the course of history. But not every child born in a stable survives.

Together we can spare mothers the anguish of losing a child, and make sure more babies never have to lose their mothers. The moving stories of mothers in Kenya who are being

helped by Christian Aid partners will be told by the materials around our tree. There we can offer a quiet prayer of thanks for the Good News offered to many women today just as it was two thousand years ago to Mary, Mother of our Lord.

Kathleen Zimak



Advent Reflections on the Holy Land

A series of films, Bible study, discussion and prayer on the theme of the contemporary situation in the land of our Lord's birth and ministry

Alongside their support for the Holy Land charity ABCD Bethlehem, Churches Together in Waterloo have arranged a series of meetings which are designed to provide an opportunity to study the complexities of the situation in Israel and the Occupied Territories and to pray for a just solution in the light of the Gospel.

Details are given below. Further details of venues and times may be found on St Faith's website or from Kathleen Zimak on 0151 286 2117.

Each session is complete in itself - there is no need to attend all.

- Week 1 **BETHLEHEM : Breaking down the barriers.** Advent Theme: Hope
Tuesday evening or Wednesday afternoon Dec 2nd or 3rd
Sunday December 7th **Advent Vigil at St Helen's Church 2.30 p.m.**
- Week 2 **KAIROS PALESTINE: An appeal for Justice.** Advent Theme: Peace
Tuesday evening or Wednesday afternoon December 9th or 10th
- Week 3 **THE MAGNIFICAT: A time for Action.** Advent Theme: Love
Tuesday evening or Wednesday afternoon December 16th or 17th.
- Palestinian goods will be available at all these events.

We Will Remember Them

One of the photographs on the centre pages of this issue show Rick Walker reading out on Remembrance Sunday last the names of 30 men from St Faith's who died in two world wars. They are written on a roll of honour, normally kept in the Chapel of the cross, but for the service placed before the nave altar. Following this moving innovation, the editor and his doughty research assistant John Woodley have been unearthing information about these heroic men, and a dedicated page is now uploaded to the church website. Future editions will fill out the unfolding story, but a few facts may whet the appetite.

We knew, of course, about our founder Douglas Horsfall's son Robert Elcum Horsfall, in
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whose name our chancel screen is dedicated. See photos of him on our centre pages as a boy laying our foundation stone and as a soldier. Among new discoveries is the fact that Lindsay Davies, who died in World War I, was, before he enlisted, studying for the priesthood at Worksop Theological College. Had he returned from the war, he would have been one of the many men – and, lately, laus deo, women – from St Faith's to have gone into the ministry at some stage. The editor now feels that a further piece of research in the archives would be more than worthwhile. His impression is that, in his half century at St Faith's, there have been relatively few years when there has not been someone connected with our church in ordination training, so the list could be a long, and inspiring, one. And, just recently, we discovered that the Kenneth McCulloch in the list is none other than the father of Nigel McCulloch, distinguished old boy of St Faith's and until his retirement an adornment to the episcopacy.

The Atheists' Favourite Vicar

Pop star turned broadcaster - and priest - Richard Coles tells Sally Saunders about sex; drugs and rock'n'roll



The Reverend Richard Coles's diary must look a bit different from that of most vicars in the shires. On the day we meet, it reads something like this: 10am: junior school harvest festival. 2pm: interview and photo shoot. 8pm: book launch party at the Ministry of Sound in London. But then, Rev Coles is not like most clergy.

His claims to fame are fast becoming too numerous to mention: Eighties pop star (in *The Communards*); long-time radio broadcaster; the inspiration for the BBC sitcom *Rev*; part of the gay group portrayed in the latest Brit-hit *Pride*; popular guest on the likes of *QI* and *Have I Got News for You*... the list, it seems, is endless. The best description is his own: "The atheist's favourite vicar", although I don't know what that really says about me," he says darkly.

I am meeting Rev Coles in his "man shed" in the garden to discuss his autobiography, *Fathomless Riches*, or *How I Went from Pop to Pulpit*, which was released this week. It is a book that is sure to raise a few eyebrows in the church, I suggest. "For a clerical memoir, there's a lot of sex and drugs and rock and roll," he admits.

Quite. The book does not pull a single punch. The memoir proper begins with an unlikely encounter with a naked man in a lay-by on Christmas Day, and goes on to detail the ups and downs of life as a gay man in the Eighties and Nineties. It's not for the faint-hearted, and has already ruffled a few feathers. Rev Coles does not want to offend ("If anyone is upset by it, I can only apologise"), but it seems he has a greater purpose, and rather than titillating, he wants to inspire. The preface to the book discusses St Paul's Damascene conversion, with Rev Coles later recounting his own

epiphany, and subsequent devotion of his life to God. This, he says, is the reason for his complete openness, and warts-and-all discussion of his past. "Religious people see it as a confessional in the tradition of St Augustine, and although I would hasten to say I am not comparing myself with St Augustine, I wonder if I can make this look not completely implausible," he says. This is important to him, to show people his journey, the depths as well as the heights he had hit, and make it still look "possible" to have faith.

He is unflinching in his portrayal of his drug use and casual sex, and equally honest in describing the horrors of losing friend after friend to Aids when the disease first swept the homosexual community. He sees frightening parallels with today. "I think it's a bit like Ebola: something terrible but far away that doesn't really affect 'people like us'. But then, certainly with HIV and Aids, it did affect people like us. It was very near. Going back to it now I think lots of it has been buried because it was such a catastrophe."

One of the darkest aspects of the autobiography is when Rev Coles describes how he lied to friends, claiming that he was HIV positive, after a row with then-bandmate Jimmy Somerville. The Communards split up shortly afterwards but it took Rev Coles years before he admitted his deception.

However, the disease did shine one tiny ray of light. After years of not speaking to Somerville ("In a band there's so much tension, it's a bit like an ex-husband, too much water under the bridge") the pair were reunited by the loss of a friend. 'We realigned when we lost an ex-flatmate of Jimmy's, and have stayed in touch ever since. He's coming tonight, actually." Tonight being the book launch party at nightclub Ministry of Sound. "I just couldn't resist it," he says, smiling.

He seems to love the .lightly incongruous nature of the event, but then in his career it's nothing new. "I find myself with a curious double ministry," he says. "I have my parish here, where I am the vicar, but because of the wonders of having been famous, and having this platform, I have another kind of ministry as well.

"In the church I am very accountable, to the parish and the deanery; in the media thing I am not really accountable, I am out there on my own as a sort of busy, recognised religious person.

"I feel like I am a missionary of the 1880s going on the Zambezi getting darker and darker and further away from home and I am thinking, how am I going to stay here?"

"I spend much of my time in a broadly liberal secular world but I don't belong to it, I belong somewhere else. There is a tension there." But Rev Coles is prepared to put up with tension to get his voice heard. "I think that Christians should have confidence, we have always been part of the mainstream conversation, and if we don't join in often what you hear gets hectoring and mad, just people on the margins. "I think of the

peace and comfort with which the Church of England has long fitted into the mainstream of people's lives, and I would like it to be there still." He has his own ways of fitting into this "mainstream conversation". Many people know him as the presenter of Radio 4's *Saturday Live*, or as a guest on TV panel shows, particularly *QI*, where he has a foil in Stephen Fry. "Like me he has one foot in a very traditional world, one foot in a very radical world," says Rev Coles. "It's a little bit awkward sometimes actually, I feel very much like the poor man's Stephen Fry." One difference is the two men's opposing stances on religion, although Rev Coles says this sometimes slips his mind. "There's something of the archdeacon about Stephen," he says, smiling. "Sometimes when we get into a deeper discussion I imagine we are both canons of Barchester cathedral."

So is a cathedral where his ambitions lie now? Has he got designs on a bishop's hat? "I don't have any ambitions," he says. "I am looking forward to retiring, or at least having more time. When I was young I wanted more stuff, now I am older, I want more time. "There is a place I love in the west of Scotland, we go there every year. I want to be there walking the dogs on the beach with David (his civil partner, with whom he has a celibate relationship).

"I want to walk around looking at stuff." It is not surprising he wants to walk, rather than sit: Rev Coles is so busy with a "million jobs" as a vicar and a broadcaster that he seems to be in perpetual motion. Does he know why? "I am pained by a sense that I do nothing with my life. I have a real terror of being called to account by God at the end of my days and Him saying, 'What have you done with what I gave you?'"

"I don't fear Him telling me off for being naughty, but I have always felt that I have not done enough." With such motivation, don't expect Richard Coles to disappear any time soon.

Typo Time

At the end the reader says
This is the Gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you, O Chris



From a recent service booklet. The editor is humbly grateful, knowing not what he has done to merit such public praise.

P.S.

This is probably the weightiest edition of *Newslink* for many years; many thanks to all who have filled its pages. Apologies to any who have been squeezed out, and for the lack of poems, as well as a shortage of seasonal items. Monthly editions will resume, of course with the February issue; meanwhile the editor wishes all readers in print and online a blessed Christmas and a very happy 2015. For the past, thanks: to the future...**YES!**

Parish Directory and Church Organisations



VICAR

The Revd Dr Susan J. Lucas, The Vicarage, Milton Road, Waterloo, L22 3XA
Tel 0151 928 3342; 07976 901389. Email revsue85@icloud.com

PARISH OFFICE

32 Brooklands Avenue, L22 3XZ . 0151 928 9913

Parish Administrator: Wendy Trussell; email: sfsmparishoffice@btinternet.com

ASSISTANT PRIESTS

Fr. Dennis Smith, 16 Fir Road, Waterloo. L22 4QL. 928 5065

Revd Denise McDougall, 27 Mayfair Avenue, Crosby L23 2TL. 924 8870

READERS

Mrs Jacqueline Parry, 21 Grosvenor Avenue, Crosby. L23 0SB. 928 0726

Miss Paula O'Shaughnessy, 30 Curzon Rd, L22 0NL. 286 2764 / 075823 19440

READER EMERITUS

Dr Fred Nye, 23 Bonnington Ave, Crosby L23 7YJ Tel 924 2813

CHURCHWARDENS

Ms Brenda Cottarel, 6 Lawton Road, Waterloo. L22 9QL. 928 4275

Mr Rick Walker, 17, Mayfair Avenue, Crosby. L23 2TL. 924 6267

ASSISTANT CHURCH WARDENS

Mr Bill Dagnall, 14 Duddingston Ave, Crosby. L23 0SH. 928 4997

Mrs Christine Spence, 52 Molyneux Road, Waterloo. L22 4QZ. 284 9325

TREASURER

Mr David Jones, 65 Dunbar Road, Birkdale, Southport PR8 4RJ. 01704 567782

PCC SECRETARY

Mrs Lillie Wilmot, Flat 7, 3 Bramhall Rd, Waterloo L23 3XA. 920 5563

DIRECTOR OF MUSIC

Mr Robert Woods, robertwoods1986@hotmail.co.uk. 07847 251315

GIFT AID SECRETARY

Mr Rick Walker, 17 Mayfair Avenue, Crosby. L23 3TL. 924 6267

TUESDAY OFFICE HOUR: 6.30 – 7.30 pm (wedding and banns bookings)

Mrs Lynda Dixon, 928 7330

SACRISTAN

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

ASSISTANT SACRISTAN

Mr Mark Farrell

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

VULNERABLE ADULTS OFFICER

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

WEDDINGS, BANS OF MARRIAGE AND BAPTISM BOOKINGS

St Faith’s Vicarage 928 3342

BEAVER SCOUTS

Thursday 5.00 – 6.15 pm Mike Carr 293 3416

CUB SCOUTS

Thursday 6.30 – 8.00 pm. Mike Carr 293 3416

SCOUTS

Thursday 8.00 - 9.30 pm. Mike Carr 293 3416

RAINBOWS

Monday 4.45 - 5.45 pm. Geraldine Forshaw 928 5204

BROWNIE GUIDES

Monday 6.00 - 7.30 pm. Mary McFadyen 284 0104

CHOIR PRACTICE

Friday 7.30 pm - 8.45 pm.

MAGAZINE EDITOR and WEBSITE MANAGER

Chris Price, 17 Queens Road, Crosby. L23 5TP. 924 1938



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THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND



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Christmas Tree Festival

Our sixth annual Christmas Tree Festival will be held once more at St. Faith's Church, Great Crosby. We will be open at various times between

**SUNDAY 30th NOVEMBER and
SATURDAY 6th DECEMBER, 2014**

Charities, churches and local businesses are again joining to create a spectacular scene, with 40 decorated, lit trees on show for your enjoyment. An opportunity to donate to your favourite charities and enjoy the very special atmosphere.

Admission is **FREE**, so come as often as you like and enjoy a warm welcome, admire the trees and stay for a chat with friends and visitors over coffee, lunch or afternoon tea, and browse around the stalls selling cakes, preserves, gifts and craft items. Throughout the week there will be entertainment by school and community choirs, concerts and visits from local schools.

OPENING TIMES

Sunday 30	1.00 pm to 4.00 pm (concert by Indigo Vibe choir at 2.00pm) 6.30 pm Advent Service (Churches Together in Waterloo)
Monday 1	12 noon to 5.00 pm (St John's School choir, 1.15 pm)
Tuesday 2	12 noon to 5.00 pm
Wednesday 3	12 noon to 5.00 pm (Stanfield School choir, 1.30 pm) 7.00 pm to 9.00 pm (carol singing with military band, 7.30 pm)
Thursday 4	12 noon to 5.00 pm (Merchant Taylors' Junior choir, 1.15 pm)
Friday 5	12 noon to 5.00 pm
Saturday 6	10.00 am to 4.00 pm (Merchant Taylors' jazz group, 12 noon)

*New this year... the story of 'The Snowman' in words and music.
Performed at lunchtime on Monday, and from Wednesday – Saturday*