

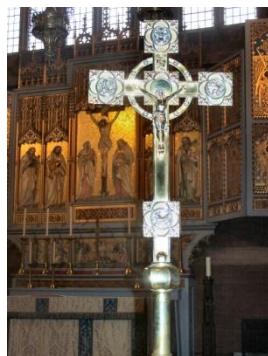
Saint Faith's Church Great Crosby



Parish Magazine

FEBRUARY 2012

Worship at Saint Faith's



SUNDAYS

11.00am SOLEMN MASS and Children's Church

1.00pm Holy Baptism (2nd Sunday)

6.00pm Evening Service and Benediction (1st Sunday & as announced)

On 'Fifth Sundays' there is one joint Eucharist for both congregations followed by a shared lunch – please consult the Diary of Events, website or notices for details

WEEKDAY MASSES

Monday 10.30am, **Tuesday** 9.30am, **Wednesday** 10.30am (*1662 Book of Common Prayer in S. Mary's*), **Thursday** 9.30am (*Holy Days only*), **Friday** 6.30pm, **Saturday** 12noon (*or Midday Prayer, as announced*)

THE DIVINE OFFICE (The Prayer of the Church)

Morning Prayer: 9.00am daily (except Thursday)

Evening Prayer: 6.00pm daily (except Thursday)

Night Prayer: 9.15pm Saturday (Vigil of the Resurrection)

Please consult the weekly sheets for any variation in times for the Daily Office

SACRAMENT OF PENANCE AND RECONCILIATION

Fr. Neil and Revd. Denise 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.

ANOINTING OF THE SICK AND DYING

Please contact Fr. Neil at any time, day or night, if someone is ill and requires the ministry of a priest.

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, or be visited in hospital or at home, please ring the Vicarage or another member of the Ministry Team. We are always happy to make home or hospital visits to the sick and housebound so please call us to arrange this.

FEBRUARIE



From the Ministry Team

After the celebrations of the birth of the messiah, our church calendar now brings us to the season of Lent. I love Christmas and its joyous celebrations, but it seems that as soon as we end our worship in the beautiful Candlemass Service, then I'm very aware that the more sombre, soul-searching time of Lent is very near.

Lent is the period of six weeks, or 40 days (not including Sundays) leading up to Easter, and is the most important festival in the Christian calendar. It is the season of soul-searching and repentance, a time for reflection and taking stock of our life, and that of the world around us. More commonly, Lent is considered by many to be the time of fasting, of giving up physical things that we most enjoy. Therefore most people, understandably, view Lent as a miserable time. But it doesn't necessarily need to be like this, but more as a time to reflect upon life, to ensure that we find time to focus on God and on our Christian values. It gives us the opportunity to spend time to find peace with God and real meaning in life.

Lent originated in the very earliest days of the Church as a preparatory time for Easter, when the faithful rededicated themselves and when converts were instructed in the faith and prepared for baptism. During the 40 days of Lent, we recall the time when Jesus went into the desert to fast and pray before beginning his work for God. During this time Jesus was tempted several times by Satan, but was able to resist. By observing the forty days of Lent, we imitate Jesus' withdrawal into the wilderness for forty days and also try to resist the temptation of earthly things.

An interesting fact is that the number 40 is a special number in the Bible. It signifies preparation for something special:

- ❖ The rain lasted for 40 days in the mighty flood - Noah
- ❖ Moses stayed on the Mount Sinai forty days (Ex 24:18)

- ❖ Jonah gave the people of Ninevah forty days to repent (Jon 3:4)
- ❖ Jesus, before starting his ministry, spent forty days in the desert in prayer and fasting (Matt 4:2)

Why are Sundays not counted in the 40 days?

St Luke's Gospel says:

'Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the desert, where for forty days he was tempted by the devil. He ate nothing during those days, and at the end of them he was hungry.'

Historically, the earliest fasts of Lent tended to be very strict, allowing one meal a day, and even then meats, eggs, and other indulgences were forbidden. The Eastern Churches follow this today. Now, in the Western Church, only Ash Wednesday and Good Friday are undertaken as strict fast days, but Fridays are set aside for abstinence from meat. Sundays are not a part of the Lenten fast, because Sunday is always a feast of the resurrection. However, the Sundays of Lent are still a part of the Lenten liturgical season in the Western Church, and the worship services tend to be more simple and austere than normal. They lack the Gloria, and the joyous "alleluias" of the Easter season. The Western liturgical colour of Lent is violet, symbolizing royalty and penitence. Like Sundays, other major solemnities, such as St. Joseph and the Annunciation, take precedence over Lenten observances in the Church calendar. These days provide a break from the Lenten fast. However, at least in the current Western Church, Lent nearly always trumps the observances of minor feast days. Too many festivals take away from the simple and penitential spirit of the Lenten season. Certain devotions and liturgies have developed during the Lenten season, including (in the West), the Stations of the Cross.

These days, modern Christians may not always consider fasting to be as important as it had been in the past. For many, in the busy world today, fasting is not practical and so, for some, a more modern approach has been viewed as acceptable Lenten practice. For example, giving up something you particularly enjoy, such as alcohol, chocolate or, (in my case) biscuits, for 40 days is considered an acceptable practice rather than periods of full fasting. Even this abstinence can be difficult to undertake, as the temptations to break the "mini-fast" can be hard to resist! There are other ways to undertake Lenten practice though. For example, in a busy lifestyle, I usually try to set aside extra time to "be with God", to focus on him, by reading the scriptures, by prayer, and by reading a book focussing on Lent. This helps me to become more aware of myself as a Christian, and how I should live my life as a follower of Christ. Being observant of Lent is not just about giving something up which you enjoy, it's about ensuring that you spend some quality time with God, about looking within yourself and at your life as a Christian, it's about cleansing our minds and our bodies, it's about living a life of love in the knowledge that we are blessed to have a loving and forgiving God in our lives, giving thanks for the good things in our life, and it's about understanding that we have hope in the future, that the world will be a better place, with God in everyone's life, and giving hope in the future.



A life worth living
A Loving life
A life of hope
A prayerful life
A generous life
A life for all

With my love and prayers,

Jackie

CANDLEMASS AT SAINT FAITH'S

Thursday 2nd February at 8pm

Solemn Eucharist and Procession of Light

Preacher: Fr. Paul Ormrod (St. Peter's, Formby)

Music: Messe de Minuit – Charpentier

followed by refreshments and *Candlemass Cake!*



Holy Days in February

2 February - The Presentation of Christ in the Temple (Candlemas)

This day marks the completion of forty days since the birth of Jesus, when Mary and Joseph took the child to the Temple in Jerusalem. The requirement in Levitical law was for Mary to be 'cleansed', the completion of her purification following the birth of a male child. Until that day, she could touch no holy thing nor enter the sanctuary. Yet on seeing the holy family, Simeon praised God and acclaimed the infant as 'the light to enlighten the nations' and the prophet Anna gave thanks and proclaimed him her Redeemer. The image of Christ as the Light has led to the celebration of light countering darkness, with candles often taking a central place in the observance.

10 February - Scholastica, Abbess of Plombariola



Scholastica is a more shadowy figure than her famous brother, St Benedict. She too was born at Nursia, central Italy, around the year 480. At an early age she chose to consecrate herself to God, but probably continued to live at home. Only after Benedict moved to Monte Cassino did she settle at Plombariola nearby, joining or maybe founding a nunnery under his direction. As abbess she sought to follow his Rule, and met him each year at a house near his monastery where they would praise God together and discuss spiritual matters. She died in about the year 543. Benedict had a vision of her soul rising up to heaven and, collecting her body, he had her buried in the tomb prepared for himself. Scholastica soon became a figure for veneration by all nuns who followed Benedict's Rule.

14 February - Cyril & Methodius



Cyril and his older brother Methodius were born in Thessalonica, both developing in their youth the ability to speak several languages, including Slavonic, a language not yet written down, at least in an alphabet understood by others. Cyril created the Slavonic alphabet and set about translating the Scriptures and other liturgical texts into the language. They established the church in Moravia, but in so doing entered into the controversy between indigenous and centralised religious practices and worship. Cyril died on this day in the year 869, whilst the brothers were in Rome, there to obtain papal approval for their evangelistic work. Methodius returned to Moravia as archbishop, where he completed the translation of the Bible and continued the missionary work. He died in the year 885. Today they are revered in both Christian East and West and, as such, are seen as patron saints of ecumenism between these two great branches of Christendom.

23 February - Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna



Honoured as one of the first Christian martyrs, Polycarp had been Bishop of Smyrna on the Adriatic coast of Asia Minor for over forty years when the persecution of Christians began. He was arrested and given the option to renounce his faith and so save his life. His response was: 'I have been Christ's servant for eighty-six years and he has done me no harm. Can I now blaspheme my King and my Saviour?' He was immediately burnt at the stake. His remains were gathered together and buried outside the city; thus began the practice of celebrating the eucharist over his burial place on the anniversary of his death, a practice which also grew over the martyrs' tombs in the Roman catacombs. Polycarp died in the year 155.



Kind Hearts and Charity Events



When, after a prolonged ‘holiday’, the St. Faith’s Mission Group re-convened last December, we reviewed the church’s charitable giving.

It is now many years since St. Faith’s gave away any of its corporate funds to charities or other good causes. We have relied instead on a network of committed church members who, by giving in cash or kind, and by donating their time, have ensured that the vital Christian duty to ‘give alms’ has been maintained. Currently we are struggling as a church to make ends meet, and we are about to embark on another Stewardship campaign. Although at the moment we are understandably pre-occupied with the cash needs of our own church and Deanery, the Mission Group felt that there was therefore all the more reason to celebrate and encourage the charitable work done by church members, acting independently or in groups.

The quiet contribution of these ‘kind hearts’ can sometimes go unnoticed. When we came to list some of the good causes that our church members support we were surprised by their number and variety:

The Children’s Society

Christian Aid

The Christmas Tree Festival

The Waterloo Partnership

Support Our Soldiers

Medic Malawi

Traidcraft

Advent Toy Service

Woodlands Hospice

Regular activities occur throughout the year. For example, there is a monthly service and social gathering in support of members of the armed services and their families; refreshments are sold at the CSO orchestral concerts in aid of Medic Malawi – and so the list goes on.

Another way to appreciate the amount of work that these generous people put into ‘outreach’ is to construct a calendar of charitable fundraising events and appeals. A typical year has looked something like this:

Ash Wednesday: Baked bean supper

Lent: Christian Aid self-denial appeal

May: Christian Aid Week

August: Parish barbecue

Harvest Festival: Christian Aid Harvest appeal

September: Autumn fundraising event

October: Charity Sunday lunch

Advent: **Christian Aid self-denial appeal**
Waterloo Partnership ‘Christmas Gift’ scheme
Quiz night
Toy service appeal
Christmas Tree Festival
Waterloo Partnership bag packing

Christmas: **Christingle Service (Children’s Society)**

There are of course many other unlisted charitable activities going on, to which individual church members devote their time and effort.

We should indeed be very grateful to all these ‘kind hearts’ in our congregation, and encourage them with our support, our prayers, and our money. They are the unsung heroines of St. Faith’s (and I say ‘heroines’ advisedly as they are mostly women!), who are often the self-same people who can be found conscientiously fundraising for the church. Without them many good causes - and also the spiritual life of St. Faith’s - would be much the poorer.

Fred Nye

Put it This Way

Chris Price



Thanks to a fellow church magazine editor, who clearly shares a taste for the trivial and obscure, I have discovered <http://www.anagramfun.com/>. Fellow web-crawlers will recognise this as a website address — one which, just for the fun of it, rearranges names, or indeed any word or words, into anagrams: thousands and thousands of them.

A recent wet afternoon saw me feeding in such phrases as **S(ain)t Faith’s Church** (with and without **Crosby**), **(Fr) Neil (G...) Kelley** and, of course, **Chris(topher) (D) Price**. If you, too, have nothing better to do, enjoy this list of bizarre and occasionally appropriate anagrams, before, if so inclined and equipped, feeding in your own words.

Church Anagrams: this scarf hutch ... scratch fish hut .. ah hunt rich fascist (let me know when you identify him and we’ll touch him for a few quid) ... tin hut arch (a nice thought) ... huh, fit thin carcass ... huh, frantic ass itch (sorry about that one) ... shifty rich hub ... fishy church abstraction ... and (my favourite, I think) sacrosanct fishy rib hutch.

Vicar Anagrams: Go feel, kill greenery (don't tell the flower ladies!) ... lily leg knee ... ken ill elegy ... elk eel groin elegy ... like one yellor egg ... leer fleeing gory elk and (most surreal of all?) fiery leg knell.

The Editor: chic hips reporter (rather fetching, I thought) ... rip porch heretic (most unfair, that one) ... hi crotch, perspire (well, I ask you!) .. or he chic stripper (no comment) and ... cries chirp! After which, it's time to sign off ...

Rich Heir Prospect (I should be so lucky)



Parish Weekend at Noddfa

Have you been to Parceval Hall near Skipton for a parish weekend? If you have, and you have enjoyed it, then you might enjoy the parish weekend this Autumn.

A Parish Weekend in the beautiful and peaceful centre – Noddfa - situated in North Wales, is planned for **Friday 12th - Sunday 14th October 2012**. You can read more about the place and see pictures at www.noddfa.org.uk

Noddfa is a Welsh word meaning haven or refuge - a place of peace and welcome a place where you can regain energy. It is the name of the centre run by the sisters of the Sacred Heart of Mary in Penmaenmawr, on the North Wales coast.

Fr. Colin Oxenforth will lead the weekend which will include liturgy, Bible study, space for personal prayer, a free Saturday afternoon and a less-serious 'after dinner talk' and, needless to say, plenty of time to socialise..!

Noddfa is well situated for visiting the spectacular Snowdonia National Park, the historic town of Conwy and its castle, the seaside town of Llandudno, Anglesey and many more places of interest.

At Noddfa there is not just one garden, but many different gardens joined harmoniously into an oasis of peace in the middle of a bustling world. Near the house are the more formal gardens with flower beds, lawns and tree-shaded paths. Behind the buildings are shrub gardens that blend naturally into the woodland that spreads away towards the mountain. On the edge of the woodland there are vegetable gardens, that supply some of the food for the house, and an orchard.



There is a limit of 25 (or a few more if couples come along) for this so please let Geoff Dunn know (0151 928 9913/sfsmparishoffice@btinternet.com) as soon as possible if you are interested. The cost is likely to be in the region of £50 per person per night (full board) plus the travel costs.

The Prayer Tree



One of the trees that adorned our church during the December Christmas Tree Festival (and yes, we are having it again this December!) was unadorned, and simply labelled The Prayer Tree. Visitors were invited to write a prayer and hang it on the tree and, by the end of the week, it was filled to overflowing. Below are just some of the petitions left by those, young and old, who used our church not just as a pretty pre-Christmas place but as a house of prayer.

- Dear Lord, thankyou for my beautiful family. We miss you my lovely Daddy – watch over Mummy and our family, keep us safe
- I pray for children who arn't as lucky as I am and they have a lovely Christmas... To God, please watch over my Grandad who died and my Great uncle who also died. Amen.
- I pray for my Grandad to get better and hopfully he will be able to talk Armen..
- Dear God please let my brother James see Christmas without pain
- Please pray for the people who don't get to spend Christmas like we do or get preasents like we do and please let it snow on Christmas day thank you
- Lord we thank you for life. Protect and comfort all women, children and young men who are trafficked.
- I love you God

- Dear god this is a wish that I want to tell you here it goes I wish that Jesus grose up strong and has a great life forever and ever
- Dear God, I will be good boy and never be checky I'll do what my mum says
- To Grandpa I hoap you feel alright in heaven with out me love you so much
- I hope that my granddad will get better as he has a bad case of memory loss. Please help him remember
- Could you say a prayer for my cousin Arthur who is dying Lord
- I pray for my dog to have a happy life!!
- God please help my nanna Mai and Anti Marey and my god-mother because they are fab people
- Pray for my friends and family hope they have a lovely Christmas. I pray that my Grandpa stays strong and healthy for many years to come
- Dear God, I hope that you are looking after my great nanny Anne in heaven
- Dear God, I pray that poverty and hunger will stop everywhere. I pray that you will keep me and my family safe. Also can I get my Xbox. AMEN.

The Stewardship Hymn?

We are, of course, in the middle of a long-planned stewardship visiting campaign as we seek to close the gap between income and expenditure in 2012. The verses below, parodying a well-known C of E hymn, may serve as a musical and poetic background to accompany the campaign...

The church's main foundation
Is cheques and cash in hand,
That flow from celebrations
Enjoyed throughout the land;
But Treasurers are watching
The books with eagle eye,
Praying for some donation
That saves the spire on high!

Beset by bills from masons,
And parish shares that soar,
The old iron safe of plenty
Stands empty on the floor;
We cannot sell the silver,
The Diocese decrees,
And so the church of history
Is dying by degrees.



Unless we pay the piper,
The tune will not be played,
And come the interregnum,
No new appointment made,
Despite our protestations
Of numbers few and frail,
We must produce our Quota,
The Diocesan Grail.

Despite these sorts of pressures,
The faithful few hang on,
And scrape each ancient barrel
Till all resource is gone,
Then with the windows shuttered,
The doors locked fast and barred,
The House of God lies empty,
Ending this brief charade.

But buildings are not vital
For the true faith to win,
And from a deep conviction
Love turns us from our sin;
So if the Church of England
Loses its ancient past,
We might regain the balance
And find the truth at last.



Sunday 19th February - The Sunday before Lent



**1.00 pm - Pre-Lent Lunch
in the Church Hall**

**Tickets only £8.00! (Bring your own drink)
All profits to much-needed church funds!**



The Naming of Jesus

***A Sermon preached by Fr. Neil on the Feast of the Naming of Jesus
(1st January, 2012)***

Today's liturgy focuses on the sanctity of Our Lord's name. For many, Jesus or Christ is yet another swear-word in what is probably a fairly short vocabulary. I remember saying to a member of my family years ago that I'd be grateful if they opted for the short four-letter word, beginning with F, rather than take the Lord's name in vain. When I said it was less offensive they were puzzled!

But for many, the name Christ, or Jesus, is just that. A word to shock or express a negative feeling or experience. Invocation of the Holy Family is not really any better.... "Jesus, Mary and Joseph!"

As today's Communion hymn puts it:

***How sweet the name of Jesus sounds in a believer's ear!
It soothes his sorrows, heals his wounds, and drives away his fear.***

The Christ means the anointed one, the Messiah. This description of the saviour is foretold in the Hebrew Scriptures. And in the Gospels the angel says, you must call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins. The naming of Jesus is customary (8 days after his birth he is circumcised and named) in much the same way as some of our generation bring young children to baptism, and some remember the custom of the churching of women a generation or so ago.

But what of the name of Jesus? What does that name mean to you? How do we use that name? Do we use it with reverence and awe? Is it, at times, simply another expletive? Well, some of us at times feel the need for the odd expletive. There are plenty to choose from.

Many Anglicans would not consider it 'high church' at all, to bow the head at the name of Jesus in the Creed. Many of us automatically do it. That is what we were taught at an early age. It is one way that we physically show and express our respect for the Holy Name. But that name is holy at all times, not just when it comes in the creed. In our hymns and our prayers, it should be quite natural for us to bow the head at the name of Jesus. I fear it is something which has fallen out of fashion. As a mark of respect and worship, it must be restored.

In today's offertory hymn we sing words of St. Paul, telling us that "at the name of Jesus, every knee shall bow". It is this apostolic teaching that is at the root of the practice of genuflection, or bowing the knee, when passing near the place where the Blessed Sacrament is reserved. At the presence of Jesus, every knee shall bow. It is a mark of respect which should be no different to a mark of request which we should give were a member of the Royal Family to be present. And if we can bend the knee at a human monarch, how much more respect ought we to pay to the King of Kings and Lord of Lords?

Respect for the Holy Name of Jesus and a physical gesture at the Sacramental presence of Christ, together with a bow at the mention of the Holy Name are ways in which we demonstrate our love for our Lord, both to the Lord Himself and to those around us. If those of us who claim to love the Lord cannot express a real respect for the Holy Name and a desire to cherish it, what hope have we of the world around us taking the Lord's name seriously? Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain....

That is the message of today's feast. But another overriding theme of today is of course a new start and new beginning. Yes, it is only the start of a calendar year, but it is a time when people make resolutions – usually to do away with the things we have enjoyed over Christmas! People sign up to worship the gods of health clubs and horrid diets – to shed a few pounds and get in better shape. And that's just the clergy!

"I do think New Year's resolutions can't technically be expected to begin on New Year's Day, don't you? Since, because it's an extension of New Year's Eve, smokers are already on a smoking roll and cannot be expected to stop abruptly on the stroke of midnight with so much nicotine in the system. Also dieting on New Year's Day isn't a good idea as you can't eat rationally but really need to be free to consume whatever is necessary, moment by moment, in order to ease your hangover. I think it would be much more sensible if resolutions began generally on January the second." So speaks the writer of Bridget Jones's Diary!

Our new year's resolutions remind us that part of our pilgrimage in life will always be to strive to do better. Even the practically perfect amongst us have a little way to go...

G. K. Chesterton said that “The object of a New Year is not that we should have a new year. It is that we should have a new soul.” The start of a new year is a helpful time to re-commit ourselves and assess our priorities.

***Jesus! my Shepherd, Brother, friend, my Prophet, Priest and King
my Lord, my Life, my Way, my End, accept the praise I bring.***

Jesus is many things to us. Our forthcoming stewardship campaigns will be a God-given opportunity for us in the United Benefice to demonstrate to the community around us just how much the Lord and the Church mean to us.

We stand at the gate of another new year very conscious of what has gone wrong in the year that has passed. But conscious, too, of the opportunities and potential ahead of us. There will always be someone for whom the past year has been an *annus horribilis*. We come to the Altar today knowing our weakness, knowing the coldness of our hearts sometimes, but longing for our Lord to warm us with his love.

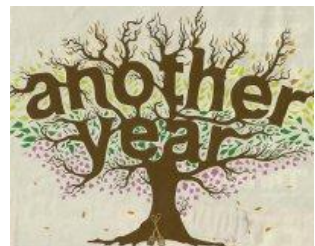
Whether your Christmas has been Merry or not, whether 2012 will be a Happy Year, which is what most of us wish for each other today, or whether 2012 will be the same mix of ups and downs, joys and sorrows, we pray that it will be a year where the Lord’s name may be hallowed and praised and that it may be a year in which we realise the blessings we are given when we stretch out our hands towards the Lord.

"For last year's words belong to last year's language And next year's words await another voice. And to make an end is to make a beginning."

T.S. Eliot, "Little Gidding"

A Hymn for a New Year

O Christ the same through all our story’s pages,
Our loves and hopes, our failures and our fears;
Eternal Lord, the King of all the ages,
Unchanging still, amid the passing years:
O living Word, the source of all creation,
Who spread the skies, and set the stars ablaze,
O Christ the same, who wrought our whole salvation,
We bring our thanks for all our yesterdays.



O Christ the same, the Son of Mary, sharing
Our inmost thoughts, the secrets none can hide,
Still as of old upon your body bearing
The marks of love, in triumph glorified:
O Son of Man, who stooped to us from heaven,
O Prince of life, in all your saving power,
O Christ the same, to whom our hearts are given,
We bring our thanks for this the present hour.

O Christ the same, secure within whose keeping
Our lives and loves, our days and years remain,
Our work and rest, our waking and our sleeping,
Our calm and storm, our pleasure and our pain:
O Lord of love, for all our joys and sorrows,
For all our hopes, when earth shall fade and flee,
O Christ the same, for all our brief tomorrows,
We bring our thanks for all that is to be.



Magazine Matters

Chris Price

Once upon a time, when our congregation was larger, and finances were a bit easier, *Newslink* had a print run of 370 copies per month, of which about 100 were posted out to readers across the country. This rather impressive figure represented the highest point in a circulation which had risen from probably about 100 copies half a century ago (which is when your editor first became involved with this magazine!).

Throughout all this time, the magazine was, as far as I am aware, distributed free of charge (and postage free) to all who attended St Faith's or were part of its postal network - unlike the majority of church publications. The church subsidised the magazine as part of our mission and outreach, and the favourable terms by which your editor used (and continues to use) the facilities at his Image Press at Merchant Taylors' kept the costs down to a reasonable level.

But then came the developing crisis in our church finances, and the urgent need to look at ways of increasing income and reducing expenditure, and the reluctant decision was made to start charging for what you are reading (unless you're doing so online, of course!). This is the second issue to be sold at 75p a copy, and, over past months, our gallant band of magazine distributors has been asking 'customers' to pay an annual subscription or to transfer to the free electronic version. At the same time,

Fr Dennis – who sends some copies out by post to his contacts – and I have asked most of those on our lists to do the same.

We are grateful to those in both categories who have paid – or agreed to pay – for *Newslink* or have had their email addresses added to the database of registered online readers. To date we have banked around £600, with more promised. But those paying up are by no means an overwhelming majority. Only a relatively small number of those who have enjoyed a free magazine posted to them over the years have opted, despite several polite requests and reminders in the last few months, to subscribe – and those who have not replied may not be reading this article! The same is true for many of the ‘fringe’ members of our home readership who have until now been having their magazines delivered through their doors and who have likewise not responded to requests and missives (even stamped addressed envelopes in some cases!). It has been borne in upon us that we have for many years probably been spending time, money and effort keeping in touch with folk who had little interest in being kept in touch – and who will also possibly not be reading this article.

It’s a free country, of course, and the up side of these developments is a significant saving of resources to the church and all involved with the magazine’s creation and distribution. At the time of writing, I am expecting a drop of more than 100 copies in the print run; this, coupled with the reduced size of our congregation, will mean that in future we will probably produce fewer than 170 magazines, of which fewer than 40 will need a stamp. To this can be added the list of online readers who get a monthly group mailing from me when the magazine is uploaded: there are currently about 40 of these, as well as others who just go online unprompted... a small step towards the vision of the paperless society...

It only remains to thank contributors and distributors past and present for their support and efforts, and hope that those still with us will feel that they are getting value for their 75p. I would thank those who have opted out, whether by choice or through inertia, for their readership over the years - but of course, they won’t be reading this anyway...

Poems for Candlemas

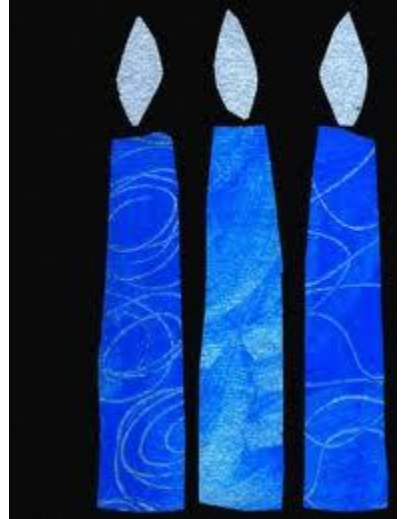
Yes, take the greenery away
That smiled to welcome Christmas Day,
Untwine the drooping ivy spray.
The holly leaves are dusty all,
Whose glossy darkness robed the wall,
And one by one the berries fall.

Take down the yew, for with a touch
The leaflets drop, as wearied much
With light and song, unused to such.
Poor evergreens! Why proudly claim
The glory of your lovely name,
So soon meet only for the flame?

Another Christmas Day will show
Another green and scarlet glow,
A fresh array of mistletoe.
And this new beauty, arch or crown,
Will stiffen, gather dust, grow brown,
And in its turn be taken down.

Tonight the walls will seem so bare!
Ah, well! look out, look up, for there
The Christmas stars are always fair.
They will be shining just as clear
Another and another year,
O'er all our darkened hemisphere.

So Christmas mirth has fled fast,
The songs of time can never last,
And all is buried with the past.
But Christmas love and joy and peace
Shall never fade and never cease,
Of God's goodwill the rich increase.



Feast of the Presentation

Catering, busy ladies group
yet another pot of soup;
scalloped spuds, of course the ham,
women chattering in the hall
kitchen clattering pot and pan
were You really here at all?

Didn't see You at the door
(We'd make a place, for several more)
To the church You came, perhaps
windows sealed, airless must
silent narthex, nave and apse,
altar, credence, decked with dust;

dead flies sills, buzzed out, death's stare;
Did you come and no one there?
Did we leave You in the lurch,
Your holy apostolic church?
You didn't try the parish hall?
That's where you'd have found us all.

Fr. Harold Macdonald



A Reflection for Candlemass

Of all the stories of homage paid to the baby Jesus, that of Anna and Simeon in the temple, which we read about in the second chapter of Luke's Gospel, is perhaps the most neglected and the most valuable: neglected because it lacks the romantic atmosphere of the shepherds and the wise men; valuable because we needn't cut through the fog of romance surrounding the celebrations of the birth of Jesus to get to its essential meaning.

We must first notice the purpose of Mary and Joseph's visit to the temple. Several needs were fulfilled by this journey: to have Jesus circumcised; to give him his name; to make Mary's purity offering, and to present Jesus to God. It was while they were doing these things that the truth about Jesus was realized by an old man and an old woman who met him in the temple.

There is something ironic about the scrupulosity for the Law shown by Mary and Joseph. Here was one who would overthrow the Jewish Law's claim upon generations of God's children. And yet he too as a baby was made subject to that law. Although Mary was chosen to be the mother of Jesus, it did not mean that she or Joseph knew who Jesus really was; in fact they showed surprise at Simeon's prophecy: "The child's father and mother were full of wonder at what was being said to him". There was even something mechanical about the name-giving: "He was given the name Jesus, the name given by the angel before he was conceived". There was little recognition as yet by Mary and Joseph of the meaning of the name: "God saves".

There was even an irony about the fact of their presentation of Jesus to God. Jesus had in fact been presented to them. He was God's gift to them. By fulfilling the requirements of the Law they hoped to earn and keep God's favour, as they had been taught. But the child in their arms was the sign of God's favour to them before they could do anything to justify themselves in God's sight. This is a reassurance to us. If Mary and Joseph, his earthly parents, didn't understand about Jesus, then knowing the truth about him doesn't depend upon whether we lived in those days or not, whether

we visit the Holy Land or not, whether we're Jewish, Gentile, English, African or what you will. We don't have to be any particular kind of person to know for ourselves: "Jesus saves". Mary and Joseph had no greater privileges than you or I because they nursed his physical body. Our privileges are all the greater because we live after the events of his birth, life, death, resurrection and ascension.

Two people met Jesus in the Temple. Both of them were old. One of them, Simeon, was near to death, though his exact age is not given. The other Anna, was eighty-four. These two people belonged to a class of Jew known as the "quiet in the land". They were not members of any particular sect or order. Strictly speaking they were outcasts according to the Law as represented by the Pharisees. Their simple piety was the backbone of Israel's faith, which they shared in common with Mary and Joseph and the shepherds. Why did Jesus choose to reveal himself to people like these? It was certainly not because they were faithful adherents of the Law. This they were, of course. Simeon is described as "upright and devout"; Anna "never left the temple". Like all Jews of that time, they believed that the Messiah would come only if all the provisions of the law were fulfilled. You had to show God that you were worthy before he would act graciously towards you. It is significant that when they did meet Jesus, the encounter seemed almost a coincidence; there was something almost casual about it. He came not when they were beating their breasts in prayer but just as they were walking in. Simeon, we are told, "guided by the Spirit, came into the temple". Anna was "coming up at that very moment". It was almost as if God was saying to them: "You thought you had to screw yourself up hard to please me before I was good to you. All these years you've been trying to placate me with your prayers and fasting. When you had reached the right degree of piety, then you thought I would come to you. How wrong you are! I choose my own moment to come. That moment is not when you are strained and tense with fear 'saying your prayers' – I come when you are relaxed and walking round not thinking of anything in particular, when you're not even thinking particularly of me. Then I choose to show myself to you."

Have we, I wonder, really thought of God like that ourselves? Or have we been trying to please him all these years with our churchgoing and strained efforts to say our prayers and please the clergy? How unnecessary! God comes when we are relaxed, not worrying about his good opinion of us but simply being ourselves. Much of our religious devotion is impelled by a conscience which is a projection upon God of our fear of being rejected by Him. Ultimately it is a projection upon God of the worst aspects of our relationships with our human parents. Not all our feelings about God are of this order, but there are enough of them to make the "practice of religion" a very cold and servile thing at times.

There were other things in Simeon and Anna which enabled them to recognise Jesus when he came. Here are just some of them in brief.

There was the patience of Simeon. Although we don't know his age it is obvious that he was very old. It seemed that there would have been a long gap between the promise of the Messiah and the fulfilment of that promise for Simeon: "This day, Master, thou

givest thy servant his discharge in peace; now thy promise is fulfilled". Along with this patience there went a trust in a God who was faithful. Simeon counsels us to patience in those times when God seems to delay his coming.

There was Simeon's trust in God's guidance. "Guided by the Spirit he came into the temple". His belief was in a God who acted and who actually had control of his destiny. So much of our impatience is due to the idea that God is asleep all the time, when in fact he is guiding us at every moment.

Simeon also believed that he would see Christ for himself: "For I have seen with my own eyes the deliverance which thou hast made ready in full view of all the nations". God actually bypassed the official exponents of the Jewish faith in order to grant a direct encounter with Christ to the aged Simeon. There are no limits on God's side to this encounter apart from our own resistance to it.

Simeon had breadth of vision which embraced the gentiles as well as the Jews: "A light that will be revelation to the heathen, and glory to thy people Israel." Again Simeon set not limits to God's saving activity.

And so Simeon met the infant Christ. And God spoke to him. Simeon saw with penetrating insight, even more than did Mary and Joseph, what would happen to Jews, and also what Jesus would do to those whom he met. He would be rejected for revealing the truth to men about themselves and their own estrangement from God: "This child is destined to be a sign which men reject; and you too shall be pierced to the heart. Many in Israel will stand or fall because of him, and thus the secret thoughts of many will be laid bare".

This was always to be Jesus' way. He saw the things in people which they tried to hide from themselves. We always tend to hate the people most who know and speak the truth about us. Jesus literally brought out the worst in people. He called out the devils of anxiety, fear, jealousy and frustration within them. For many it was too much. The rigidly self-righteous Jews who were trying to base their acceptance with God upon their own merit sought to destroy him; they were the ones who "fell". But others, the tax-collectors, prostitutes and "sinners", found in him their salvation. Jesus showed them the truth about themselves as well, but they faced up to these things and in the process were set free. These were the fallen ones who "rose", picked up by Jesus' strong grasp and set on their feet. This is true for us as well. As we look at the Cross to which our fear and frustration and envy and hatred nailed him, we need to recognise them as the very things lurking there in our own hearts. Then we need to realize too that we are not rejected, because of these things. Christ was raised from the dead and came back to the very men who thought they had destroyed him. And in being raised himself, he raised them to their feet. This is what we mean when we talk about Christ saving a man. He saves us by revealing to the truth about ourselves. This is his judgement of us, the revealing of our secret thoughts which can be a painful experience. It is always painful when the masks are taken away from us, the props on

which we've based our self-esteem. To some this can be as painful as a crucifixion – many run away from the experience altogether. All our days we are in flight in some measure from Christ's scrutiny of us in our inmost being. But to those who stand their ground with Christ beside them there is given a rising again, a rising to self-knowledge, a realization that their deepest fears have not been fulfilled, that God knows the worst about them and loves and accepts them still to the uttermost.

That brings true peace, the peace which comes from being set free from the worst by a Saviour who calls out the worst in us and shows us that it is utterly powerless to separate us from his love.

Mary too had to learn that lesson: "You too shall be pierced to the heart". She would endure the pain of seeing her son crucified. But this pain was no different in quality from the pain every mother has to undergo at seeing her children growing away from her. Mary was basically a lonely woman who tried to make Jesus stay with her. She couldn't do that, as she was reminded by Jesus on many an occasion: as a boy in the temple, during the wedding feast at Cana, and even upon the Cross itself. Every mother has this lesson to learn. So many children grow up maimed in personality because of a mother who has been too possessive. In Mary is seen the type of every mother wrestling with this temptation. Mary could not have Jesus on terms any different from anybody else. She too had to recognize the truth about her possessiveness and be set free from it.

So in this story which we record in the Feast of Candlemass we see foreshadowed the whole drama of Jesus' life and ministry. Christ came to those who had no claim upon him but their need, the "quiet in the land", like Anna and Simeon. Still he comes today in precisely the same way to us who have nothing to offer him but our need of him. Christ came to reveal the truth about ourselves and thus set us free from our worst bondage to ourselves. This can be painful as the Cross was painful and as Mary herself was to learn. But this is the only way for us who are followers of a Christ who suffered the Cross. It is the only way leading to the peace which passes all understanding, the peace which we covet both for ourselves and for others.

Then we too at last will be able to die in peace saying with Simeon: "This day, master, thou givest thy servant his discharge in peace; now thy promise is fulfilled".

Fr Dennis

The 100+ Club

January 2012 draw



1	32	Ken Bramwell	2	139	John Chapman
3	187	Edna McGovern	4	65	Margaret Taylor

Believe it or not....

'Toddlers banned from making their own gestures as they sing Twinkle Twinkle ' in case it offends deaf people'

Generations of children have grown up singing along and performing actions to the nursery rhyme favourite Twinkle Twinkle Little Star. But one toddler group has been told not to make the twinkling 'star' sign with their hands for fear it could offend the deaf.

Parents were told that the sign – which resembles a diamond shape when made with forefingers and thumbs – is used in official sign language to represent female genitalia. The decision was made after staff attended a sign language course and were made aware that the one they were using had potential to cause offence. However there are currently no deaf children or parents who attend the Sure Start toddler group, in Acomb, North Yorkshire.

Yesterday mothers criticised the 'politically correct' decision. One said: 'These are innocent little children just making a sign to show a star. No one would give it a second thought.' Another added: 'It is good that kids are aware of other people's methods of communication but has anyone actually asked a deaf person if they take offence to it?'

John Midgley, co-founder of the Campaign Against Political Correctness, said the teachers needed to 'grow up'. He added: 'This is a ridiculous example of political correctness where adults are trying to put their views into the minds of children who would not have known there was anything wrong with what they are doing.'

Daily Telegraph

In Memoriam: John Taylor

Words spoken by Fr Dennis Smith on Sunday, January 8th, 2012

“Today in this celebration of the Feats of the Epiphany, we dedicate a plaque, which can be seen in the choirstalls beneath the organ. It marks our recognition of the generosity of our dear departed brother-in-Christ, John Francis Cardew Taylor, whose Requiem Mass and Commemoration took place on Christmas Eve, 2004.

John, as many of you will know, was a faithful and greatly loved member of this community of Faith and is remembered with much affection by us all. The legacy he

bequeathed to St Faith's was very substantial and generous and enabled a great deal of vital work to be done to the church fabric.

And so, as we give thanks to Almighty God for the life, witness and friendship of John, we dedicate the plaque with our love and prayers."

"The Royal Variety Show"

This has been postponed to a later date. Watch this space...!

Keeping Lent at St Faith's



Ash Wednesday – 22nd February

9am Morning Prayer and Litany (SF)

10.30am Eucharist with Hymns (SM)

5pm Evening Prayer (SF)

8pm Solemn Eucharist with imposition of ashes (SF)

followed by baked bean supper

Friday evenings in Lent (beginning 26 February)

6.30pm Stations of the Cross and Eucharist in S. Faith's



**Sunday evenings in Lent (beginning on 26th Feb)
at 6pm in St. Faith's:**

A series of sermons on "spiritual renewal" given by ordinands from the College of the Resurrection, Mirfield.



Suggested reading for Lent

Being part of the Passion: "The Nail" – Stephen Cottrell

This Lent book offers imaginative reflections on Christ's crucifixion. Each of the seven chapters is focused on a different key character, who describes his or her experience of the Passion. The nails used to crucify Christ are used as a jumping off point for their reflections.

Each character considers the questions, 'who killed Christ' and 'who was responsible?' Each chapter includes a Biblical passage, a meditative hymn, a reflection from the point of view of the character, and a short prayer.

The book finishes with practical suggestions on how it can be used as a Lent study course. It is ideal for individual reflection or group study, and can also readily be adapted for use as a Good Friday liturgy.

'Love Unknown' by Ruth Burrows: The Archbishop of Canterbury's Lent Book 2012

Ruth Burrows is the author of numerous best-selling books, including *Essence of Prayer*. This new book is the result of a commission to write the Archbishop of Canterbury's Lent Book for 2012. In it she distils the wisdom and experience gained from her life as a Carmelite nun into a vigorous, compelling presentation of what it means to be a Christian.

Ruth Burrows believes that many people, even regular churchgoers, miss the true meaning and joy of Christianity. God longs for us to know him as our Saviour, so that he can bring us to share in his own Trinitarian life and love. Burrows traces how God reveals himself to us through our personal lives, particularly our experiences of weakness and failure; through history and the natural world; through the scriptures; and above all, through his beloved Son Jesus. Encountering the living God revealed in Jesus Christ challenges us to face our own truth, and sets us free to receive the boundless love, the joy, fulfilment, and holiness, for which we were made.

‘On Retreat: A Lenten Journey’ – Andrew Walker The Mowbray Lent Book 2012

Retreats are increasingly popular but the classic 8-day version is nowadays too daunting or too expensive for most. Here is a resource for both first-timers and the more experienced: a journey of personal prayer to be made over the period of one Lent, slowly integrating formal prayer times and the routine activities of daily living into a deeper encounter with God.

The material is equally suitable for the reader at home, or for groups, or can be adapted to a residential retreat (either self-guided or directed). Effective use of prayer time is explored, with the emphasis on practical suggestions and ideas including scripture and poetry, meditation, contemplation, journalling and intercession.

A 'prayer journey' through Lent, increasingly involving the whole person, opens up a world of spiritual possibilities by encouraging a deeper relationship with God and a reconnection with daily living, reinvigorated and hopeful.

All books can be ordered via the Liverpool Cathedral bookshop (0151 702 7255).

Lent: A Time of Turning Round

Truly dust we are, and to dust we shall return;
and truly yours we are, and to you we shall return.
Help this to be a time of turning round and beginning again.
Through the forty days of Lent, help us to follow you
and to find you: in the discipline of praying
and in the drudgery of caring –
in whatever we deny ourselves,
and whatever we set ourselves to learn or do.



Help us to discover you
in our loneliness and in community,
in our emptiness and our fulfilment,
in our sadness and our laughter.

Help us to find you when we ourselves are lost.
Help us to follow you on the journey to Jerusalem
to the waving palms of the people's hope,
to their rejection, to the cross and empty tomb.
Help us to perceive new growth amid the ashes of the old.
Help us, carrying your cross, to be signs of your Kingdom.

Amen

Jan Sutch Pickard
(*'Eggs and Ashes'*)



When the song of the angels is stilled,
When the star in the sky is gone,
When the kings and princes are home,
When the shepherds are back with their flock,
The work of Christmas begins:
To find the lost,
To heal the broken,
To feed the hungry
To release the prisoners,
To rebuild the nations,
To bring peace among people,
To make music in the heart.

'Christ has many services to be done; some are easy, others are difficult; some bring honour, others bring reproach; some are suitable to our natural instincts and material interests, others are contrary to both. In some we may please Christ and please ourselves, in others we cannot please Christ except by denying ourselves. Yet the power to do all these things is given us in Christ who strengthens us.'

From the liturgy of the Baptism of the Lord

The Parish Directory and Church Organisations



VICAR

Fr. Neil Kelley, The Vicarage, Milton Road, Waterloo. L22 4RE
928 3342; fax 920 2901

ASSISTANT PRIESTS

Revd Denise McDougall, 27 Mayfair Avenue, Crosby. L23 2TL. 924 8870
Canon Peter Goodrich, 16 Hillside Avenue, Ormskirk, L39 5TD. 01695 573285
Fr. Dennis Smith, 16 Fir Road, Waterloo. L22 4QL. 928 5065

READERS

Dr Fred Nye, 23 Bonnington Avenue, Crosby. L23 7YJ. 924 2813
Mrs Jacqueline Parry, 21 Grosvenor Avenue, Crosby. L23 0SB. 928 0726
Mrs Cynthia Johnson, 30 Willow House, Maple Close, Seaforth, L21 4LY. 286 8155

CHURCH WARDENS

Mrs Margaret Houghton, 16 Grosvenor Avenue, Crosby. L23 0SB. 928 0548
Mrs Maureen Madden, 37 Abbotsford Gardens, Crosby. L23 3AP. 924 2154

DEPUTY CHURCH WARDENS

Mrs Christine Spence, 52 Molyneux Road, Waterloo. L22 4QZ. 284 9325
Ms Brenda Cottarel, 6 Lawton Road, Waterloo. L22 9QL. 928 4275

TREASURER

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

PCC SECRETARY

Mrs Lillie Wilmot, Flat 7, 3 Bramhall Road, Waterloo. L22 3XA. 920 5563

PARISH OFFICE MANAGER

Mr Geoff Dunn 32 Brooklands Avenue, L22 3XZ . Tel & fax: 0151 928 9913
Email: sfsmparishoffice@btinternet.com

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, c/o the Vicarage. 928 7330

BAPTISM BOOKINGS

Mrs Joyce Green, 14 Winchester Avenue, Waterloo, L22 2AT. 931 4240

SACRISTANS

Mr Leo Appleton, 23 Newborough Avenue, Crosby. L23 3TU. 07969 513087

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

CHILD PROTECTION OFFICER

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

CHURCH CENTRE

1, Warren Court, Warren Road, Blundellsands

UNITED BENEFICE MEN'S FELLOWSHIP

James Roderick 474 6162

CUB SCOUTS

Tuesday 6.30 - 7.45 pm. Adam Jones 07841 125589

Thursday 6.30 - 7.45 pm. Mike Carr 293 3416

SCOUTS

Tuesday 8.00 - 9.30 pm. George McInnes 924 3624

RAINBOWS

Monday 4.45 - 5.45 pm. Geraldine Forshaw 928 5204

BROWNIE GUIDES

Monday 6.00 - 7.30 pm. Sue Walsh 920 0318; Mary McFadyen 284 0104

CHOIR PRACTICE

Friday 7.15 pm - 8.30 pm.

MAGAZINE EDITOR and WEBSITE MANAGER

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

The March *'Newslink'* will be distributed on or before **Sunday, February 19th.**

Copy by **Sunday, February 5th**, please - but all contributions are welcome at any time.

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THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND



Diocese of
Liverpool