



The Grapevine



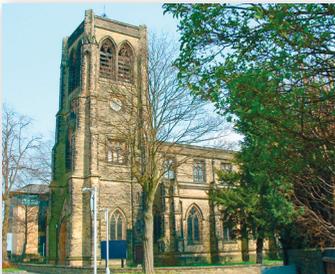
A S H
W E D N E S D A Y

10TH FEBRUARY

February 2016

50p

THE PARISH MAGAZINE OF CHRIST CHURCH, WEST DIDSBURY;
ST. CHRISTOPHER'S WITHINGTON & ST. PAUL'S WITHINGTON



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Worship

SUNDAY SERVICES

9am **Eucharist**
10.30am **Eucharist** or **Morning Prayer** (see inset sheet for weekly details)

WEEKDAY SERVICES

9.30am **Morning Prayer** (Church open at 9am for quiet prayer)
Monday & Wednesday: Christ Church / Tuesday & Thursday: St Christopher's
7.30pm **Eucharist** (Thursdays at Christ Church)

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Worship

SUNDAY SERVICES

- 8.30am **Holy Communion** (BCP)
- 10.30am **Parish Eucharist**
- 5.00 pm **Evening Prayer / Choral Evensong / L'Arche Evening Prayer**
(last Sunday of month)

WEEKDAY SERVICES

- 6.30pm **Holy Communion** Every Thursday

Curate's Letter

Revd Mark Hewerdine writes

February 2016

At the dinner table this evening my daughter, Lydia, asked, "Daddy: what's your favourite season?" "A great question", I thought, and to buy time to think I threw the question back at her. "Autumn", she said without hesitation, "because I love seeing the leaves change colour."

In that brief exchange I was reminded of the awe and wonder, the ability to pause and take in the beauty of this world which my daughter - at seven years old - still exhibits so naturally and unpretentiously. In contrast, I find many days can pass without me pausing and looking long enough to appreciate the beauty and grandeur of the world we call home.

The shift from autumn to winter, however, showed us recently another side to what we call the "natural world": the sheer power, the relentless brute force of the elements and their potential to wreak havoc on our usually well-ordered lives.

I'm sure many of us were troubled by the scenes of flooding in the North of England, and many of us would have known someone directly affected even if we weren't ourselves. Our prayers remain, I'm sure, with those affected, and with those who toil to find ways to mitigate such events in the future.

The beauty and the brute force are both reminders - if we allow them to be - that this world is not of our making, we are not the sole force behind its shaping, and we are far smaller within it than we always like to think.

The scriptures hold up both the beauty and the power as indications of the work of God: both awe-inspiring and at times wild and dangerous to us.

But beyond stepping back in wonder, or being anxious or terrified at the potential destructiveness of the elements, what should our posture, our outlook be towards the material world God has given us as a home?

A group from St Paul's, Christ Church and St Cuthbert's explored that question and others related to it during December, reflecting on Pope Francis' encyclical "Laudato Si". His encyclical is a substantial work of

theology about creation and a call to all people to demonstrate a renewed care for this planet. My hope is that our discussions will continue this year and will lead to concrete, if tentative, action.

Daffodils in December and a strangely warm Christmas were hints that all is not as stable and certain in the natural world as we might like. However we interpret these events close to home, there is plenty of evidence from around the world of the impact of climate change. So too is there heartbreaking evidence on every continent of the failure of humanity to properly care for the earth as a gift from God. Instead, exploitation and careless polluting have characterised humanity's attitude to the earth over the past decades. We do have an effect on the earth - an effect which can have grave consequences - but we have also been charged by God to be faithful stewards, partners with God, in enabling it to flourish.

When we take them time to appreciate the beauty of the world we must surely pause to ask how we can best preserve and value it. When we see the power of the natural world, we ought also to pause and consider whether we have been humble enough in our evaluation of our place and role within it.

“Sister earth, along with all the abandoned of our world, is crying out, pleading that we take another course”, writes Pope Francis.

As I sit writing on a chilly, dark January evening, my heart longs for the Spring to come quickly, as I yearn for signs of new life - and they will surely come, as hints of the endless creativity of our God.

But I pray to that we would all experience a deep yearning to care passionately for this wonderful home we have: for the sake of those in a most precarious position within it, but also in thankfulness to God for the wonders he has created.

May God bless you this month,

Mark

What We Got Up to: St Paul's

Pam Hall: St Paul's

Writing this in January, I look back to mention the lovely New Year's Eve singalong that we enjoyed sharing with l'Arche. Some familiar faces returned to support the music with their solo performances, which lent an added poignancy to the final singing of Auld Lang Syne. On a less exalted note, who will ever forget the sight of our Stephen in full drag as Dame Edna Everage?

Our Christmas tree has gone, but our Wise Men remained, as we moved into the season of Epiphany.

Our PCC reconvened on the 10th, with a full agenda, ably addressed by our own wise men and women. (Well, we do our best!) A warm welcome to new member Philip Webb. Details of significant decisions made will appear in next month's column.

The choir returned from their Christmas break, but sadly we are still some way short of the sum needed for the expected new robes. An additional collection was taken up for this after the New Year's Eve concert.

St Paul's celebrates its 175th anniversary this year. The first of what will be several events to mark this date took place on the 23rd January (close enough to seem appropriate, to the Feast of the Conversion of St Paul, on the 25th) with an anniversary dinner held at Chancellors in Fallowfield where a varied menu with wine was served to happy diners.

No Book Group was held in January, but on the 2nd Feb. (about when you may be reading this) we shall meet at Bill and Gisela's home to read *The Testament of Mary*, by Colm Toibin, an award-winning Irish author. Anyone still pondering their New Year's Resolution could do worse than allow it to light upon this lively, thoughtful group.

St Paul's people wish a happy, fruitful New Year to their neighbours at Christ Church and St Christopher's!

FR⊕M †HE REGIS†ERS

Funerals 'We gave thanks to God for the life of'
6th January 2016 **Alma Welsh** (83)

What We Got Up to: Christ Church & St Christopher's

Rev'd Anne & Jean Weaving

We welcomed 200 children to Christ Church and St. Christopher's over the Christmas period – many thanks to all who helped.

We went Carol Singing in Clyde Court, Monet Lodge, Le Bas House and Holmfield. Thanks to the Tamil Christian Fellowship Youth Group who helped us out.

There was more cleaning and mopping up to be done at Christ Church, but the church is getting back to 'normal'. We look forward to the final phase of the

work beginning soon.

Many thanks to everyone who helped make Christmas such a special time this year, and to all who helped decorate our churches.

We began collecting goods for the Silent Auction, which will be held at Christ Church hall on the 20th February. Now is the time to get rid of all those unwanted presents! Bring them to church or leave behind the 'green door'. Tickets available soon.

LENT GROUPS

Following on from the success of last year's Ecumenical Lent Groups, it's been decided to have groups again this year. We are hoping to have afternoon and evening groups and will be using Alister McGrath's "The Journey – A Pilgrim in the Land of the Spirit". Anne will be co-ordinating this... more details soon

Quiet Weekend at the Monastery of Our Lady of Hynning – 2016

The dates for the 2016 weekend are Friday 23rd to Sunday 25th September.

Further details will be available soon. If you would like to book a place please e-mail Barbra Malone – barbra.malone@live.co.uk

CMS Link Letter No 5: Part 1

Weis Landheer, Rwanda

Hospitality: There is a time for everything – a time to host and a time to be a guest. At the moment I am enjoying the hospitality of my parents and of many friends, and strangers who have become friends, during the visits to my link churches. I am very grateful for the generosity of those who have welcomed me in, offered me a glimpse into their life, allowed me the opportunity to share my story and to feel part of their fellowship. Thank God that once we become part of his family all around the world we will find people who welcome us and make us feel at home! However, I must confess that coming on “home leave” has also made me realise that if you have lived for a while in a different part of the world, you are unsure about what to call home, It is something that can make you sad, but I am comforted by the thought that we are all wandering pilgrims on this earth or like Jim Reeves used to sing, “*This world is not my home*”.

My home leave happens to coincide with a large wave of refugees flowing across Europe which immediately challenges countries, the church and individuals. What is the right way to respond? A lot depends on our world view and interpretation of “hospitality”. Isn’t it ironic that people who originated in other parts of the world have integrated so well into our society that today they consider Europe their continent and want to close borders?

If you are a Christian who takes the

instructions of the Bible seriously, I’m afraid you cannot really opt out of hospitality. You will find that you have to receive and treat both guests and strangers in a warm, friendly and generous way. In Leviticus 19:33–34, God tells the Israelites: “*When a foreigner resides among you in your land, do not mistreat them. The foreigner residing among you must be treated as your native-born. Love them as yourself, for you were foreigners in Egypt. I am the Lord your God.*” Romans 12:13 says: “*Share with the Lord’s people who are in need. Practice hospitality.*”

And in 1 Peter 4, when Peter talks about the end times being near, he urges people to be alert and pray and to love each other; following this, the next most important thing is to: “*Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling.*” I have to smile at the “without grumbling” bit as I realise that my experiences in Gahini have taught me so much about continuously being ready to receive guests but I still need to learn more and to be able to do it without grumbling.

Have you ever been overwhelmed by the way someone offered you hospitality? Was that person from the same social and cultural background as you? My most humbling experiences have been with people in Uganda and Rwanda who welcomed me into their homes and treated me better than they would treat themselves. No matter whether I came expectedly or unexpectedly, I was cheerfully

received as an honourable guest. They would not just share a meal with me but slaughtered their only chicken and served me a feast. They gave me the best bed in the house and happily slept on the floor. They had so little, but gave me everything and more. They challenged the ways I had been receiving guests and changed me. Never again will I be able to host someone on an air mattress and sleep in my own comfortable bed without feeling guilty.

How grateful I am for being given the opportunity to have my own household in Gahini and to practice hospitality! In fact, what I have been missing most during my home leave is a place that I can call my own where I can host others. I miss the open door, people walking in who are always different from the people who have promised to come, sitting around the table listening to other people's stories, playing games, singing songs, preparing meals together with as many people as we can possibly fit into the little kitchen, enjoying food together and being able to call the neighbour to come and eat what we can't finish ourselves, a mixture of laughter, joy, shared sorrows, words of encouragement and prayers before our guests return to their homes. I miss "giving the guests a push" and accompanying them halfway home on their journey while making plans to meet again and exchanging words of gratitude and greetings to people in other homes and families. I think it is easier for me to host than to be a guest, to give than to receive.

With which situation do you feel most

comfortable? When you are the host or when you are the guest? In which situation do you think you give the most? Jesus gave us many examples of being the guest and the host, sometimes shifting between the two like in the story of the disciples that he met on the road to Emmaus. He gives as much in both roles, sharing everything that he has and ultimately giving his life. My experiences in East Africa have taught me that by making the effort of moving into the world of others, by coming to work with them or paying them a visit at home, I honour them. If you decide to visit someone, don't think of yourself as a bother but as a facilitator of friendship and fellowship! A nice illustration can be found on YouTube if you search for "lonely homeless man."

(there is more to this final letter from Weis to follow in later months)



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CRAFT AFTERNOON

Sunday 28th February 2016 2pm- 4pm
In the Parish Hall

As part of our 175th Anniversary Celebrations everyone is invited to join us for a crafty afternoon making “stained glass” tea light holders – one as a gift for Mothering Sunday and one to use at our candlelit procession into the Churchyard on Holy Saturday (26th March).

Everyone is welcome – adults and children.

All materials will be provided and refreshments will be available.

Please come along – and spread the word!

LENT @ St Paul's: Details of Lent courses will be in the newsletter

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Saint of the month

Barbra Malone (Christ Church & St Christopher's)

Anskar, Apostle of the North, Missionary, Archbishop: 3 February

A native of Picardy, Anskar was a monk of Corbie near Amiens who, after the conversion of the King of Denmark to Christianity, went to Schleswig and attempted to start a Christian school there. He was expelled by the locals but went on to Sweden, where he is reputed to have built the first Christian church. In 832 he was consecrated Bishop of Hamburg and sixteen years later became Archbishop of Bremen. He returned to Denmark to convert the King of Jutland. He preached widely throughout Scandinavia and was much-loved for his work with the poor and in mitigating the slave trade. He is the patron saint of Denmark. He died in the year 865.



Collect

*God of grace and might,
who sent your servant Anskar
to spread the gospel to the Nordic peoples:
raise up, we pray in our generation
messengers of your good news and heralds of your kingdom
that the world may come to know
the immeasurable riches of our Saviour Jesus Christ,
who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.*

How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of the messenger who announces peace, who brings good news, who announces salvation, who says to Zion, "Your God reigns." Listen! Your sentinels lift up their voices, together they sing for joy; for in plain sight they see the return of the Lord to Zion. Break forth together into singing, you ruins of Jerusalem; for the Lord has comforted his people, he has redeemed Jerusalem. The Lord has bared his holy arm before the eyes of all the nations; and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God. (*Isaiah 52. 7-10*)

Jesus called the twelve and began to send them out two by two, and gave them authority over the unclean spirits. He ordered them to take nothing for their journey except a staff; no bread, no bag, no money in their belts; but to wear sandals and not to put on two tunics. He said to them, "Whenever you enter a house, stay there until you leave the place. If any place will not welcome you and they refuse to hear you, as you leave, shake off the dust that is on your feet as a testimony against them." So they went out and proclaimed that all should repent. They cast out many demons, and anointed with oil many who were sick and cured them. (*Mark 6. 7-13*)

Source: Exciting Holiness, collects and readings for the Festivals and Lesser Festivals of the Church of England, Canterbury Press, 1997

Goodbye, and Thank You All

I would like to take this opportunity to say a big 'thank you' to all whom have made my time as Editor of firstly, St Paul's and, latterly, the combined magazine, so much fun and a worthwhile way of expending time and energy.

There would be no magazine without readers, so my first thanks are to you and for all the encouragement you have given over the years.

A big thank you has to go to all who have contributed articles and jokes over the years. A Bishop is reported to have said of St Paul's, 'It is unusual to find a parish which writes'. Well done you lot!

Many thanks also to our Advertisers who have stood by us with their financial contribution and didn't murmur at all when we doubled the rates overnight with the merger.

I would also like to thank the people from Christ Church especially, but not excluding anyone, Jill Evans who will continue to share the editing and who is a good person to work with and Rev'd Anne whose smile saw me through many a hiccup.

And a big thank you to Richard Lowe who is not just the Musical Director at Christ Church (which is just one of his many hats) but he is also the person who took on the heavy duty of producing the final magazine each month and who has delighted us with his choices of illustrations.

May God bless you all for the future, yours, Trish Ruddock

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