

G O D M A N C H E S T E R P A R I S H N E W S

Ministry Team letter

Ally writes:

I wonder if you've ever longed to be dependent on someone? These days society tends to encourage us to strive for independence: married couples increasingly have separate bank accounts, and more and more people are setting up their own businesses because their experience is that it's better to be your own boss than to work for someone else. Even if we're not the next Alan Sugar or Richard Branson, many of us would recognise in ourselves a certain pride at not admitting our weaknesses, not asking for help even when we need it, and hating to feel dependent on others.

But dependence on the care of others isn't necessarily a bad thing. In a very real sense, we all are dependent upon each other – the ideal of self-sufficiency depicted in 'The Good Life' is, for the vast majority of people in this country, something they would neither want nor be able to achieve! The groceries we buy come from all over the world, and it has taken literally hundreds of people to get them from the tree or the ground via the exporters and importers, the factories, the wholesalers and the supermarkets to get them into our kitchen cupboards. This is a very good time of year to reflect on this process, because 6 to 19 March is Fairtrade Fortnight (see later in the magazine for more details), and although we may sometimes feel that the poorest people of the world are dependent on us for their survival, we are also dependent on them for some of the food and other products that we often take for granted.

This dependency on each other is also something more personal: as human beings, we have a responsibility to be attentive to the needs of others, so that they may never have to reach the point of asking for help, because we will already have offered it: this applies just as much to our neighbours in Godmanchester as it does across the continents in our attitude towards third-world farmers.

But this is also a good time of year to reflect on our dependence on God. The season of Lent, which starts on 1 March this year, and runs through to Easter, is a time when Christians remember not only the temptations of Jesus in the wilderness, but also the forty years that the people of God spent in the wilderness many hundreds of years before. While the Israelites were wandering in that barren wasteland, with no way of growing their own food, God provided them 'manna from heaven' (probably a sort of fast-growing edible mushroom) every morning – enough food for the day ahead. But if they tried to keep the manna overnight, it went rotten! This taught them a very important lesson: that they could trust God absolutely and that they were, really and truly, dependent on his love and his grace.

Lent has traditionally been a time when people give up things – whether it's chocolate or something more unusual. The idea of this is not just to lose a few pounds (though I am hoping to do that, too!), but to get rid of a few of the 'props' that make us feel we are doing OK on our own, so that we are then free to realise that independence isn't all it's cracked up

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to be, and that God longs for us to depend on him.

Yours in Christ,
Ally Barrett

Interregnum Update

By the time you read this you will probably have heard that Revd Andrew McKearney, our recently appointed priest-in-charge, has after all decided not to accept the post at Godmanchester. The following letter from Mr McKearney was read out by one of the churchwardens at all church services on Sunday 12 February.

Dear Parishioners,

I was honoured when Bishop Anthony invited me to be your next parish priest. Initially I thought that this would be right, but last month I wrote to Bishop Anthony to withdraw my acceptance of this parish. I apologise for the considerable upheaval this will have caused the parish and I am very sorry indeed that it means that your interregnum will be prolonged further. However, I think it is better to make this decision and face the problems that it will cause, rather than go ahead with the deep reservations that I found I had.

I had two reservations. My first reservation concerned my diocesan role, which is very close to my heart, and how much I would have to squeeze that part of my ministry to give the necessary time and attention to my new ministry as your parish priest. I was aware of this reservation at interview and when I

weighed it in the balance I decided that I wanted very much to come to Godmanchester, and was willing to face the consequences in terms of my diocesan role. However, my second reservation concerned the vicarage, and this only became apparent when I was able to look thoroughly over the vicarage in the new year. I met the diocesan surveyor on 25 January and very quickly concluded that for me there were simply too many things wrong with the vicarage for it to be my home and place of work as your parish priest.

Thank you for the very warm welcome that Sarah and I received from your churchwardens, the members of the ministry team and all those others whom we met from the parish in the course of the last few months. While this confirmed to me that you were indeed a lovely, vibrant parish it has made my decision all the more painful and difficult to make.

I pray for you as you continue to look for your next parish priest.

With every blessing,

Andrew McKearney

From the churchwardens:

It is, of course, a huge disappointment that Andrew will not be coming to Godmanchester, but we feel very positive about the future of the parish and are keen to move forward with the process of finding a new Priest-in-charge.

Penny Jones and Trevor Weedon

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Prayer of the month

O holy Spirit, giver of light and life,
Impart to us thoughts higher than our own
thoughts and prayers better than our own
prayers and powers beyond our own
powers, that we may spend and be spent
in the ways of love and goodness, after
the perfect image of our Lord Jesus
Christ. Amen.

Evelyn Underhill

Lent Sermon Series: 'As our Saviour taught us'

Sundays at 6.30 pm, during Evensong

This year our Lent sermon series will explore the Lord's Prayer, taking one line each week.

5 March (Pat Saunders) 'Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name'

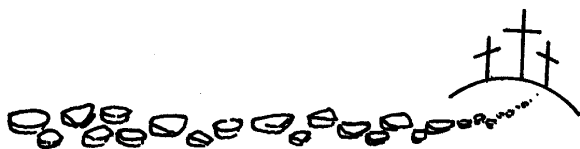
12 March (Jerry Craddock) 'Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven'

19 March (Paul Sibley) 'Give us this day our daily bread'

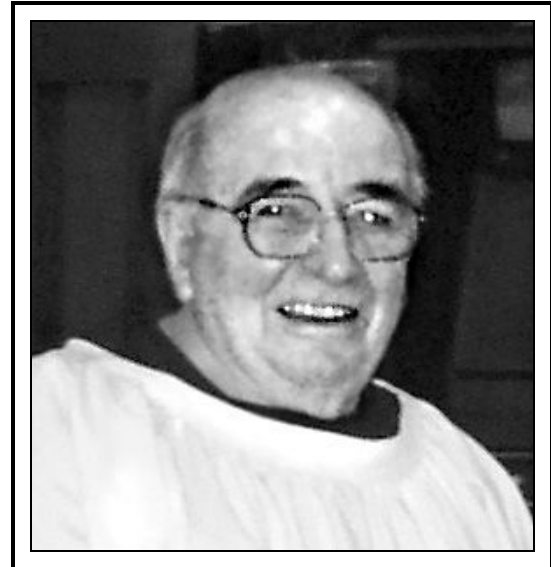
26 March (Revd Michael Ward) 'And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us'

2 April (Ally Barrett) 'And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil'

Why not come to the whole series and get a fresh perspective on the prayer that Jesus himself taught us?



Maurice Pettit 1920 – 2006



Maurice died at Primrose Hill nursing home in Huntingdon on 30 January 2006 after a long illness, and his funeral took place on 9 February. A fortnight later, on 22 February, his ashes were interred in the churchyard ashes plot that Maurice himself had created. Maurice's long-standing friend Ken Negus writes from New Zealand, where he and Daphne are on holiday:

I first knew Maurice when we sometimes played together as young boys. I lived in London Street and Maurice in New Street and we were often together at his cousin Geoff Kirby's house, midway, in Pipers Lane. Like Maurice, I joined the Church choir when I was nine; it consisted of men and boys and I was number 18 when I joined. The choirmaster was a Mr Oglesby who had a

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shop in West Street, one of thirty or so in Godmanchester, which at that time had only 2500 residents. When Revd Francis came he was a keen musician and took charge of us boys. He raised our standard of singing by having us practise three times a week! He also raised our pay to 2s.6d. a quarter for juniors, 4s.6d. for most of us and 6s.6d. for 'top boys'. We were fined for absenteeism or misbehaviour.

Maurice was a bit older and he got to be one of the top boys before I did. Our voices then were very similar and often when a solo was required we would both sing it together; no one outside the choir knew there were two of us. Maurice's father Horace had a very deep bass voice and sat behind us on the organ side. He would often clip the ear of any of us who were talking during the sermon. When Maurice's voice broke he graduated to sing bass like his father, whilst I sang alto, although we both finished up singing tenor. I remember two of our elders, Messrs Herbert and Thompson, telling us they had been in the choir for fifty years and we thought that was awesome, not thinking that he and I would easily exceed that length of time. Daphne and I were very sorry to have missed the funeral, but we were there in spirit and are sure he

has joined those 'angel voices ever singing'.

Maurice was born on 11 May 1920 at 14 East Chadley Lane, the middle child of Horace and Nellie (née Searle) Pettit. The family later moved to 'Wyndene', the house standing at the junction of New Street and St Ann's Lane. Maurice attended Queen Elizabeth School – he later became a governor – and is remembered for diving into the frozen-over river to save a schoolmate, although Maurice always claimed he delayed lest anyone else wanted to go first! His bravery earned him a Royal Humane Society certificate. After school Maurice joined his father's nursery and market garden business in Park Lane. Horace and Maurice worked together for many years, and a familiar sight was Horace cycling down Post Street on an overloaded bicycle indicating that he wanted to turn right into Park Lane by sticking out his right leg. Maurice had two sisters, Edna and Roma – both school teachers – and they survive him.

During the Second World War Maurice served in the Far East with the RAF, although at some point he must have been stationed in Blackpool for that is where he met Edith Sutcliffe, and they were subsequently married at Shaw Road Methodist Church, South Shore, Blackpool on 8 April 1948. They made a most handsome couple. At their golden wedding anniversary celebrations in 1998, one of our choir ladies, looking at their wedding photographs, commented to Edith 'I'm not surprised you fell for him – he's so good looking.' 'So what went wrong?' was Edith's reply. Edith joined

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Maurice in the family business, working in the glasshouses, and helping on the market stalls at Huntingdon, St Ives and St Neots. Edith's parents later moved down from Blackpool to be near their daughter, and bought a bungalow at 6, Almond Close, across the road from Mary and Peter Summers.

Maurice, with Edith at his side, led an exceedingly active life. Together they played bowls, tennis, badminton and golf. They were members of St Neots Golf Club where Edith once played a hole in one, something Maurice never did. Edith is very proud of that! Maurice was also a more than an able skier, quickly progressing beyond the beginners' classes, and for many years he was a regular member of both Godmanchester Cricket Club and Godmanchester Rovers Football Club. Maurice's maternal grandfather Frederick Searle (1924 and 1925), his father Horace (1944 and 1945) and Horace's cousin Allen (1926) were all mayors of Godmanchester, and their names can be seen on the roll of honour in the Town Council Chamber. Allen Pettit died while still in office. Maurice was approached to become a town councillor himself but never showed any interest.

For fifteen years, Maurice was churchwarden, serving six years with Penny Looker, seven with Derek Shepherd and two with Nigel Pithey. He took this role very seriously, and was described by one of his fellow wardens as 'very strait-laced'. As a warden Maurice did sterling work, much of it unnoticed. Frequently on winter Sunday mornings he would be up at 3 am, pulling his trousers

over his pyjamas to stoke the church's solid fuel boiler. After his term of office he continued to work for the church, not least in the churchyard, where he was responsible for sowing, and then tending, the ashes plot. It is now legendary that Maurice served the choir for 73 years (1930 – 2003), but in the early days he was also a bellringer, cutting it so fine as he moved from one activity to another that eventually Revd Ronnie Edwards instructed him to choose between the ropes and the robes. But it wasn't just the bells that were ringing in Maurice's ears – so was the sound advice given to him by senior bellringers. 'When you enter the bell chamber, if you put your head into a space, make sure there's a space to put it in first!'

It was, however, for his services in the choir that we remember him most. He loved the old hymns and psalms but was not afraid to learn and appreciate more modern ones. In 2003 he finally hung up his surplice, and was given a retirement party by his fellow choristers, and some splendid publicity in the local newspapers. In 2000, at an earlier celebration, a special song was written – 'Seventy years in the choir' – sung to the tune Cwm Rhondda, and in recognition of the hard time Maurice sometimes gave the choirmaster at Friday night practices one of the verses ran:

*We salute you Maurice dear
And your idiosyncratic ways;
Without your grump, and regular
moaning,
Friday nights would not be the
same.*

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On hearing the song, Maurice melted, and as so often on these occasions when his achievements were publicly recognised, a much softer and more emotional side to his character was revealed. He was, after all, a velvet fist in an iron glove.

Maurice and Edith retired in 1980 when Maurice was sixty, and, wishing to stay in Godmanchester, attempted to buy the bungalow at 35 St Ann's Lane that backs onto the bowling green. When this purchase fell through they moved to a bungalow on Honey Hill in Fenstanton. They came across the 'for sale' board by chance and, having made no appointment with the estate agent to view the property, Maurice naturally suggested that Edith be the one to go and knock on the front door.... This became their retirement home, and they ticked off their years together by counting the arms on the monkey-puzzle tree in the front garden.

There can be no finer tribute to Maurice than the large number of people from many walks of life who came to his Requiem Mass, sung by a full choir. They will all have had special memories of a friend, not least of his twinkling eyes and puckish smile.

Written high above the organ loft of Shaw Road Methodist Church in Blackpool are the words 'Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness'. These words will not have been lost on Maurice as he led his young bride down the aisle. For in a life that lasted almost 86 years he has done practically nothing else. In so many capacities he has served his family, his God, his church and his fourteen vicars, all with honour, true endeavour and

lasting commitment. In the future, it will be difficult to sing the hymn for which these are the opening lines without thinking of Maurice Pettit.

Peter Irving

Additional material and photograph supplied by Ken Diffey, Alan Groves, Peter Irving, Rebecca McKie, Jim Searle and Derek Shepherd.

Mothers' Union

At the February meeting, Sylvia Watson and Jeanne Day came to talk about the work of the Outreach Unit of the Mothers' Union. It was very good to hear about all the work that goes on in many other countries around the world. The aim is to support and encourage family life by empowering people to take control of their lives and well-being. To help achieve this goal the Action and Outreach Unit supports and runs projects at home and abroad that are designed to give families the confidence and practical skills they will need throughout their lives. After the presentation we played a game that reinforced the idea of a worldwide web of support. The meeting finished with a meditation. We all went home with much food for thought.

At the March meeting The Revd Ally Barrett will lead a 'Meditation for Lent'.

Jean Morgan

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Wives' Group

At the request of our speaker, Wives' Group held their monthly meeting a week early in February – and we were delighted to welcome two husbands! We were also especially delighted to welcome Maggie Gillett, who came to talk about her role as a puppy walker for the Guide Dogs for the Blind Association (GDBA), our Charity of the Year for 2006. Maggie was accompanied by her daughter, Stephanie, and her 11-month-old puppy, Lyric, who stole the show!

Puppy walkers are volunteers for the GDBA, a charitable organisation which was founded some 75 years ago. It costs about £10 per day to feed and train a dog and the GDBA meets all food and vets' bills whilst puppies and dogs are undergoing training. There are currently about 5,000 guide dogs in service; their working life lasts for seven years and some 1,000 puppies are bred every year for training purposes.

Lyric went to live with Maggie and her husband at the age of six weeks and his training started immediately. For instance, puppies are trained to use the toilet before they go out and, whilst they soon learn to associate the blowing of a whistle with food, they must not be given 'titbits', as they will have to sit quietly under a table while their blind owner visits a café or restaurant. It wasn't long before Lyric was visiting a variety of environments – shops, schools, hospitals, using public transport, etc. During the time with Maggie and her family, a trainer from the

GDBA visited on a regular basis to assess progress.

Maggie confessed to feeling a little sad, as Lyric's training has gone so well that the time has come for him to move on. Later this week he will go to London, where he will spend twelve weeks in more specialised training. And provided he passes that successfully, he will then spend a further twelve weeks in training designed to suit him to his eventual owner. Dogs who do not pass the very intensive GDBA tests often end up as disabled dogs, hearing dogs or police dogs.

And it's not just the dogs who need training! Both the volunteer puppy walkers and the eventual owners need to learn how to handle dogs. Before a trained guide dog is left with his eventual owner (in what is known as a 'unit'), they will live together in a hotel for a month and will just spend weekends together in the owner's home – always under the close supervision of a member of the GDBA.

This was a most enjoyable evening and our thanks again to Maggie, Stephanie and Lyric for coming along. Next month we look forward to welcoming Caroline Jones, who will be telling us something of the many musicals in which she has appeared and also singing a selection of songs from some of them. The meeting will be held at 8.00 pm on 14 March and all are welcome.

Kate Robinson

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Men's Social Group

The Men's Social Group rather belatedly marked the start of 2006 with a supper at Fawcett Towers, the home of our chairman. The good food was complemented by the excellence of the conversation, which covered a wide range of topics. There was great excitement when the chairman revealed that the model rocket on the dining table had a miniature camera in its nose cone and when fired into space could take a picture of the ground from about 200 feet. Our imaginations ran riot for a while and there was much discussion about where and when the Men's Social Group could begin their exploration of space; in the end the best suggestion seemed to be a test firing in the churchyard. Although the various conversations often turned to how things used to be done in the past, we did manage for most of the evening to avoid sounding like a group of grumpy old men! Thank you, Andrew and Mary, for your generous hospitality and for a convivial evening, which was much enjoyed by all present.

We are down to earth for our March meeting, which will be the AGM, to be held in the Church Hall at 7.30 pm on Tuesday, 7 March.

Peter Dawe

Charity of the Month

Mashambanzou Care Trust, Zimbabwe

Aids is one of the most serious problems confronting Africa today, and one of the

major diseases highlighted in the United Nations' 'Millennium Development Goals' – an ambitious set of targets intended to halve world poverty by 2015.

Mashambanzou Care Trust in Zimbabwe – supported by St Mary's for a number of years – is an inter-denominational, non-profit organisation that offers comfort and reassurance to people living with AIDS and their family members. Zimbabwe has the highest level of infection in the whole world. Millions of adults are infected and hundreds of thousands of children have been orphaned as a result. AIDS could potentially wipe out an entire generation.

Mashambanzou works in a number of areas including youth education and health care and also looks after children orphaned as a result of AIDS. It serves the poorest and the weakest in Harare, capital of Zimbabwe, who would not otherwise be in a position to secure medical treatment. Please give generously – a little of our money can make a vast amount of difference.

Dilys Ward

Lent Groups 2006

As usual, those who wish to are invited to come together for discussion and fellowship during Lent this year. We plan to have one evening group meeting at the Quaker Centre from 7.45 pm until 9.30 pm on Mondays (beginning 6 March) and one daytime group meeting at 59 London Road from 1.30 pm until 3.00 pm on Wednesdays (beginning 8 March). Each group will meet for five sessions. The

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theme for this year's discussions is 'Called to live' – an exploration of the idea that vocation is not just for a select few, and that God has a purpose for each of us.

In the daytime group we are going to experiment with a format that allows pre-school children to stay with us while we meet (this has worked well in the Foundations Group). Since the final session is after the school term has finished, we will lay on alternative entertainment for any school-age children who need to come along on that day.

Ally Barrett

This month's cover

Lawrence reminds us that we have another of our Healing Services in church on 1 April.

Fairtrade Fortnight: 6-19 March 2006

Fairtrade fortnight is an opportunity to remind ourselves, and those around us, about fair trade and what it means. Around 5 million producers in some of the poorest countries of the world now benefit from the fairtrade scheme: basics such as education for their children, medical care, and safer working conditions, are no longer out of reach for these people, but there is much still to be done to enable more of the world's poorest people to trade their way out of poverty for ever.

Buying Fairtrade products is a commitment that most people can make to challenge some of the inequalities that sadly still exist in our world. Here are some ideas:

- * Ask your supermarket what Fairtrade products they sell – the more people who ask, the more the supermarkets will realise that the Fairtrade brand is good for them, too.
- * Decide on a particular product or set of products (eg tea and coffee, chocolate, bananas, tinned pineapple etc) and resolve always to buy Fairtrade brands.
- * Tell your friends about the Fairtrade products you enjoy, and encourage them to give it a try.
- * Consider buying birthday and Christmas gifts from the Traidcraft catalogue or website.
- * Support the St Mary's Youth Group Fairtrade stall – this runs in the church hall after the 9.45 service on approximately two Sundays per month.
- * Check out www.fairtrade.org.uk for more ideas.

Remember, you are what you eat, so eat Fairtrade!

All-Age Worship at St Mary's

Our provision for children continues to go from strength to strength, and all children are welcome to come along to children's church, which meets in the church hall during the 9.45 am Sunday Eucharist (during term time). Most children prefer to be in children's church, where they do activities and receive Christian teaching appropriate to their age, rather than stay in church with their parents. We also have

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a regular All-Age Eucharist at 9.45 am (approximately once a month), which is more informal, and more accessible to all ages. There is also a monthly 'Grassroots' informal service at 11.30 am, in which most of our baptisms take place. Here are the dates of the All-Age Eucharist and Grassroots services over the next few months:

All-Age Eucharist (9.45 am)

5 March, 9 April (Palm Sunday), 21 May, 25 June.

Grassroots (11.30 am)

12 March

(no service in April, because of Easter)

14 May

11 June

Ally Barrett (Tel. 450852)

The service for Advent Sunday 2005

Last year, Felicity White, one of our younger members of the church choir, became the first chorister in the Ely diocese to receive the Dean's Award, the Bishop's Award and the Bishop's Senior Award in successive years. The awards are to test a chorister's musical training and are linked to the Voice for Life scheme. Here Felicity fills in the background to a project associated with her Bishop's Senior Award examination.

The service for Advent Sunday, 'From Darkness to Light', was produced as part of a portfolio for my Bishop's Senior Award, along with a piece I had composed, and two prepared anthems which I had to perform. The Bishop's

Senior Award is one taken by choristers over 16, or choristers who have already completed the Dean's and Bishop's Awards, and encourages a high standard of performance, sight-reading and liturgical understanding. I later found out that I was the first chorister in the area to have taken the three awards in consecutive years, something which I had not known when applying to take the award, thankfully, as I imagine it would have made me much more nervous!

When I wrote my service, it was late January (2005) and Advent seemed far away. I hadn't thought that my service would be used, seeing it a little like an essay for school. However, the vicar at the time, Peter Moger, suggested that I put it forward, and so in August, I offered it to Ally Barrett, our curate. A month or so later, Mr Diffey, the choirmaster, told me that they would be doing my service for Advent Sunday, as there had been a gradual drop in numbers in recent years, and the time seemed ripe to move back to the previous format of the Advent Carol Service. Preparations were duly made, and I looked forward to the day of the service.

I had chosen Advent Sunday for its significance in the year, and also for the wonderful music of Advent. As a change from previous years, the theme of the service was From Darkness to Light, using candles and a progression from west to east. I tried to show the symbolism of the move from the darkness of the west (the setting sun) to the light of the east (where the sun rises) in the increase of light as the procession moved down the aisle. It was also intended to

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symbolise that Christ was the Light of the World, using appropriate readings and music, and I thought that the service went very well, with a good congregation. I very much enjoyed hearing the choir sing the hymns and anthems that I had picked, and it was wonderful to see something I had written come to life in this way. I am very grateful to the choir, Mr Diffey, and Ally Barrett for all their hard work in producing it, and of course to Peter Moger who helped me write it.

Felicity White

A further view from the pew

The best material in any of the arts does not 'date'. *The Book of Common Prayer* is a fine example: beautiful and majestic prose that eclipses the anodyne parodies designed to ease the contemporary soul into worship. When I was three years old, my mother would take me to Evensong at Carlisle Cathedral. Although I could not have understood the words, the experience has remained a lifelong inspiration. My mother realised that there was rather more to meaningful religious devotion than cheerful familiarity.

John Dillistone

Organist, St Mary's Church
Godmanchester, 1976 - 1986

What we do in church...

In recent magazines there was some thought-provoking correspondence in connection with the letters from Lewis Stretch and Trevor Weedon about the way we worship in church, and why we do

things the way we do. The ministry team would like to offer our own thoughts to the discussion.

In a way, Thomas Cranmer, who wrote most of the material in the *Book of Common Prayer*, back in the sixteenth century, was facing similar challenges to those we face now. Not everyone involved in the church saw eye to eye about how the services should be, and the prayer book that we ended up with is in many ways a compromise that tried to accommodate as many people's views as possible, while retaining a single-book approach, *Common Worship*, which is the current modern-language worship resource, is also addressing the need to accommodate as many different situations as possible, but instead of giving us one single unchanging service, it has given us lots of different options so that we can respond to our own local situation and make appropriate choices when it comes to such issues as the level of congregational participation in the service and the images that are used to talk about God. It gives us more Eucharistic prayers, more canticles, more suggestions for ways of coming to know God through worship. It's not surprising that the *Book of Common Prayer* and *Common Worship* came up with different solutions to the problem: in the sixteenth century, most people were illiterate, so if they were to participate in the services they had to do so from memory, so it made sense to limit the amount of material. These days not only can most people read, but advances in technology mean that we can easily and cheaply produce orders of service for different occasions, making it relatively easy for people to follow the services

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even if the actual text varies from week to week within the established structure.

One of the great strengths of the parish church here in Godmanchester is that our worship is eclectic. We hope that there is something for everyone. Our largest service in terms of numbers attending is the monthly All-Age Eucharist, which attracts over 150 people. With the music provided by the all-age instrumental group and keyboard as well as by the choir and organ, an accessible talk in place of the sermon, and as much participation by the congregation as possible, this is one of our noisier services! 'Grassroots' is also a noisy service – taking place once a month at 11.30 am, it is a shorter service in which most of our baptisms take place; baptism families are often pleasantly surprised by the way that Grassroots presents the gospel in an accessible way, with an easy informal style and music to match. At the other end of the spectrum, Evensong from the *Book of Common Prayer* takes place each Sunday at 6.30pm, enabling the congregation to enjoy sung psalms, canticles and prayers, all in the beauty of Thomas Cranmer's superlative sixteenth-century English prose.

All these services, and the others that we've not mentioned, contribute something to the worshipping life of the church, and each of us will probably find that we have particular affinities with one service rather than another. A service that works for those who have been Christians all their lives may be quite different from one provided for those who are young in faith; we do still offer baptism at the 9.45 Eucharist, and many of those who

worship regularly at that service do wish to bring their children to baptism then, whereas Grassroots was designed for families for whom even a modern English Eucharist seemed foreign. Different times of year also make different demands: this last Christmas over one thousand people came through the church doors on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day alone, and many of those who enjoyed the children's nativity service or the nine lessons and carols might have felt at sea had they come to midnight communion, and vice versa. We are blessed that we have the resources to be able to offer such a rich variety of worship, and that our life as a community of faith is flourishing in so many ways.

Finally, it's worth saying that the divide between 'traditional' and 'modern' can sometimes be a misleading one: the tradition of the church has been formed over the centuries, as each generation adds its own wisdom, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. *Common Worship* incorporates material derived from the *Book of Common Prayer* as well as material which is far older, and, in the Eucharist, follows a much older pattern. If we consider tradition to be something static, then we do it a disservice; tradition is a living thing, constantly developing. One of the things we are called to do is respond to the situation in which we find ourselves. We want to help as many people as possible to come to know God, to love him and to worship him. Some of the solutions we find to this challenge will stand the test of time and form the 'traditions' of tomorrow; others are of the moment. All the time we, as a ministry team, are looking critically at the worship

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of the church: are we getting the balance right between services of different styles? Are the services meeting the needs of those who come to them? Is there anything we could do better? Are there people who don't currently come to church because there isn't a service that they can relate to, and what can we do to remedy this? Are there aspects of our worship that were once important but are no longer helpful? Those in the Church of England 'head office' are asking the same questions, as they seek to provide us with worship material that works.

Part of the way we try to answer these questions is by asking people what their experience of coming to the church has been, getting the 'view from the pew' as it were, and by asking those who don't come to church what might make them want to come and join us here. So please do come and talk to any member of the ministry team if you have constructive criticism or comments on any aspect of the worshipping life of the church.

Worship is the community of faith meeting God to praise him, to hear his word, to pray to him for our own needs and the needs of the world, to receive the grace he offers us, and to be inspired to go out into the world to do his work. Our mission is that everyone who seeks God might find him, and that if they seek him in church, our worship, our welcome, and our life together might witness to him and reveal his glory in the world.

Ally Barrett

Book review

Gays and the future of Anglicanism
– *Andrew Linzey and Richard Kirker*
(Eds.)

O Books, 2005 (ISBN 1 905047 38 X)

Some years ago, the Church of England decided to ordain women. There was some resistance. A few PCCs decided to have nothing to do with women's ministry and to opt out of the care of their diocesan bishops. Instead they have 'flying bishops' – bishops who themselves think that only male priests are 'real' priests. St Ives is such a parish; but they are courteous to those who disagree with them, and join the rest of us in as many events as they can.

The Church is now struggling not with sex, but with sexuality. The struggle will not affect us much locally but will do so nationally. The Anglican Communion is a loose federation of churches worldwide, and the different and autonomous churches are held together not legally, but by what one might call 'bonds of affection'. Historically, the network arose from our colonial aspirations: when we conquered other countries, we took our national church with us. Whatever happened to the colonies, we still think that the churches owe a duty to Christ to be a unity.

The gay issue will not isolate just a few parishes within each diocese. It looks likely to split whole Provinces. (A Province is the area over which an Archbishop presides). The Provinces in South Africa and Asia apparently want to

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expel the Church in the USA and Canada because those Provinces welcome homosexual and lesbian people, not only as lay people but also as clergy. We can live on the edge of all that, but it affects us in principle. There are gay clergy in the Church of England, and the old policy of 'don't ask; don't tell' is wearing thin. We have had to live with one of our most able clergy being prevented from becoming Bishop of Reading by a vociferous minority who hate gays.

Gays and the Future of Anglicanism is one of many books that discuss the gay issue, and a copy of it will be found in our church library. Despite having been written by a group of heavyweight theologians, this one is quite readable. Despite the fact that the book is a response to the Windsor Report, you don't need to have read that for the book to make sense. (The Windsor Report was written on behalf of the Primates in an attempt to reduce the strains felt by the Anglican Communion; in fact, it may make matters worse.)

The editors have divided the book into four parts: Authority, Communion, Diversity and Justice, and each part includes at least one quite outstanding chapter. Only one made me flinch a little. I really do commend the book to anyone who is concerned about the future of Anglicanism. But, for all the books, the problem seems to me to reduce to one simple question.

A small minority of the church's membership consists of people who are gay. The evidence is that our sexuality is determined in the womb and is therefore

not under our control: people do not choose to be gay any more than I chose to be heterosexual. There is another small minority in the church who feel, and express, a quite visceral hatred of the first group. That hatred is under their control. The question is: which of the two groups stands most in danger of an adverse judgement?

Jeremy Craddock

January PCC Meeting

Minutes in full of all PCC meetings are displayed at the back of the church. Here are some key points from the January meeting.

Finance Committee.

* On behalf of the Committee, Colin Thirlwall presented a report for the year January to December 2005. Highlighted in the report were the following:

* Routine income and expenditure account shows a deficit of £4,743 for the past two months, and £15,749 for the whole year.

* Non-regular income and expenditure for the year 2005 shows a surplus of £21,210.

* Overall balance. For the year 2005 our total income exceeded expenditure by £5,461. However, over £5000 was donated for specific items (Bell tower, Strategic Fund), and the bill for the north aisle roof was not presented until January 2006, creating a deficit of £3,500, subsequently reduced to £2,500 following a donation of £1,000 from the Friends of St Mary's.

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* The report concludes that the parish needs to engage in some effective fundraising if it wants to provide more than minimal maintenance for the church building.

Fabric Committee

* Work is in hand to re-cover the shed roofs in the vicarage garden, and the autumn clean-up in and around the church yard would now take place in the spring.

* Work on the north aisle roof has been completed.

* Repairs to the west door, following the break-in, have been completed, and the alarm system for the mower shed is now in working order.

* Both the hall and the church have incurred recent heavy expenditure for repairs to gas and electric heaters (hall), and electrical work associated with the church organ. Together with the relevant test carried out by the National Inspection Council the total expenditure came to £929.

Other items

Michaelmas Group. Penny Jones announced the forthcoming Lent Art Group day for families.

The Annual Parochial Meeting for 2006 will take place on Sunday 23 April.

Ken Diffey announced that he will be delaying his retirement by twelve months. It was agreed that finding a replacement must be actioned soon, funds as allocated for payment of the organist should be ring-fenced and Ken will ensure deputies

are provided in his absence and that as Organist and Choirmaster he will retain his place on the PCC.

Peter Irving

Maunder's 'Olivet to Calvary'

On Saturday 18 March at 7.30 pm about 100 singers from choirs in the area are joining forces in our church for a performance of J.M.Maunder's 'Olivet to Calvary'. The programme will also include 'The Litany of the Thorns', a short meditation on suffering and salvation compiled by Professor John Harper, the current Director-General of the Royal School of Church Music.

The concert will be conducted by Ken Diffey and Sam Barrett will be at the organ. The soloists will be Stuart Reeves from Kimbolton and Tony Burnley from Brampton.

Tickets at £6 (£5 for senior citizens, children free) will be available at the door on the night, but to ensure good seats advance booking may be made in the porch after the 9.45 service each Sunday or by contacting Ken Diffey at 1 The Maltings, Godmanchester, Cambs. PE28 2JR (Tel.01480 4588:
e-mail: diffey@gmchester.fsnet.co.uk)



G O D M A N C H E S T E R P A R I S H N E W S

Night Fright

- Are you all non-smokers?
- Are you aware of the dangers of smoking in bed?
- Are matches and lighters kept out of children's reach?

EVERY 3 DAYS SOMEONE DIES FROM A FIRE CAUSED BY A CIGARETTE.

- Can all occupiers leave the property unaided?
- Is everyone in the house under 60 years of age?

THE OVER 60s ARE AT GREATER RISK OF BEING KILLED IN A HOUSE FIRE.

- If you have an open fire, does it have a guard around it?
- If you use a gas or paraffin heater, is it in a well-ventilated area?
- If you have an electric blanket, has it been serviced?
- Is the blanket stored with few folds and nothing on top?
- Is the blanket free from wear or scorch marks?

YOU ARE MORE LIKELY TO BE KILLED IN A FIRE AT NIGHT.

- Does your electricity consumer unit contain MCB (mains circuit breaker) and RCD (residual current device)?
- Are all your plugs, light fittings and sockets in good working order?

- Are heat sources secured and kept away from furniture and soft furnishings?

What's your night-time routine?

SWITCH ON!

**SWITCH IT OFF,
TURN IT OFF,
UNPLUG IT,
PUT IT OUT!**

A FIRE DOESN'T HAVE TO KILL YOU TO TAKE YOUR LIFE.

FIT A SMOKE ALARM

If you would like further information on any of the issues above, fire safety in the home or would like a Fire Service vehicle to attend a community event or group, please contact:

Huntingdon District office on 01480 52567 or visit www.cambsfire.gov.uk.

St David's Day +

1 March is St David's Day, and it's time for the Welsh to wear daffodils or leeks. Shakespeare called this custom 'an honourable tradition begun upon an honourable request' – but nobody knows the reason. Why should anyone have ever 'requested' that the Welsh wear leeks or daffodils to honour their patron saint? It's a mystery!

We do know that David – or Dafydd – of Pembrokeshire was a monk and bishop of the 6th century. In the 12th century he was

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made patron saint of Wales and he has the honour of being the only Welsh saint to be canonised and made into a cult figure in the western church.

In art, St David is usually depicted in episcopal vestments, standing on a mound with a dove at his shoulder, in memory of his share in an important Synod for the Welsh Church, the Synod of Brevi.

Life on the sofa +

A typical day for a typical man involves sleeping for eight and a half hours, watching television or a DVD for three hours, and playing sport for just 18 minutes.

A typical woman will sleep for eight hours and 45 minutes – ten minutes longer than men. But she will watch 30 minutes less of television a day (making supper?), and do just 11 minutes of sport.

So says research from recent National Statistics. It has also found that 25 per cent of men and women are obese. That compares to just 13 per cent of men and 16 per cent of women in 1993.

It's a funny old world +

Funny how we set our clocks to arise at 6.00 am so we can be at work by 8.00 am but on Sundays we can't make church for 11.00 am to praise the one who gave us the jobs.

Funny how we call God our Father and Jesus our brother, but find it hard to introduce them to the rest of our family.

Funny how much difficulty some have learning the Gospel well enough to tell others, but how simple it is to understand and explain the latest gossip about someone else.

Funny how small our sins seem, but how big 'their' sins are.

Funny how we demand justice for others, but expect mercy from God for ourselves.

Funny how we can't think of anything to say when we pray, but don't have any difficulty thinking of things to talk about to a friend.

Funny how we are so quick to take directions from a total stranger when we are lost, but are hesitant to take God's direction for our lives.

Funny how people want God to answer their prayers, but refuse to listen to his counsel.

Funny how we sing about heaven, but live only for today.

Funny how people think they are going to heaven but don't think there is a hell.

Funny how it is okay to blame God for evil and suffering in the world, but it is not necessary to thank him for what is good and pleasant.

GODMANCHESTER PARISH NEWS

Funny how when something goes wrong, we cry, 'Lord, why me?' but when something goes right, we think, 'Hey, it must be me!'

Oh wait...maybe all this isn't so 'funny' after all.

+ Items taken from the Parish Pump Church News Service

And finally ...

After a very long and boring sermon the parishioners filed out of the church saying nothing to the preacher. Towards the end of the line was a thoughtful person who always commented on the sermons. 'Pastor, today your sermon reminded me of the peace and love of God.'

The pastor was thrilled. 'Nobody has ever said anything like that about my preaching before. Tell me why?'

'Because it endured for ever.'

The Registers

Funerals

31 January Rose Murphy
9 February Maurice Pettit

Baptisms

12 February Helen Georgina Lily Hailstone

The Lectionary

1 March **Ash Wednesday**
Isaiah 58:1-12; 2 Corinthians 5:20b-6:10; Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21

5 March **Lent 1**
Genesis 9:8-17; Mark 1:9-15

12 March **Lent 2**
Genesis 17:1-7, 15-16; Mark 8:31-38

19 March **Lent 3**
Exodus 20:1-17, John 2:13-22

26 March **Lent 4 – Mothering Sunday**
Numbers 21:4-9; Colossians 3:12-17; Luke 2:33-35

Dates for your Diary

GODMANCHESTER PARISH NEWS

March

Wed	1		Ash Wednesday
		9.15 am	Holy Communion (St Anne's School)
		7.30 pm	Holy Communion with imposition of ashes (in church)
Thu	2	9.30 am	St Mary's 0s-5s (Comrades' Club)
		9.45 am	Holy Communion
Fri	3	7.15 pm	Choir Practice (adults from 7.30 pm) – including rehearsal for Lent Concert
Sun	5	8.00 am	Holy Communion
		9.45 am	All-Age Eucharist
		6.30 pm	Sung Eucharist
		6.45 pm	Youth Group
Mon	6	1.30 pm	Stepping Stones for under-5s (Baptist Church Centre)
		7.45 pm	Evening Lent Group (1) (Quaker Centre)
Tue	7	2.15 pm	Mothers' Union Lent Meditation (Queen Elizabeth School)
		7.30 pm	Fabric Committee (Vestry)
		7.30 pm	Men's Social Group AGM (Church Hall)
Wed	8	1.30 pm	Daytime Lent Group (1) (59 London Road)
		7.30 pm	Bellringing Practice
Thu	9	9.30 am	St Mary's 0s-5s (Comrades' Club)
		9.45 am	Holy Communion
Fri	10	7.15 pm	Choir Practice (adults from 7.30 pm) rehearsal for Lent Concert
Sun	12	8.00 am	Holy Communion
		9.45 am	Sung Eucharist
			Children's Church and Vestry Group
		11.30 am	Grassroots with Holy Baptism
		6.30 pm	Sung Evensong
		6.45 pm	Youth Group
Mon	13	1.30 pm	Stepping Stones for under-5s (Baptist Church Centre)
		7.45 pm	Evening Lent Group (2) (Quaker Centre)
Tue	14	8.00 pm	Wives' Group (Church Hall)
Wed	15	11.00 am	Holy Communion by Extension (Woodley Court)
		1.30 pm	Daytime Lent Group (2) (59 London Road)
Thu	16	9.30 am	St Mary's 0s-5s (Comrades' Club)
		9.45 am	Holy Communion
		10.30 am	Holy Communion (Oak Tree Court)
		7.30 pm	Prayer Group (36 Old Court Hall)
		7.30 pm	Marriage Preparation by Relate (Huntingdon Methodist Church)
Fri	17	7.15 pm	Choir Practice (adults from 7.30)
Sat	18	9.30 am	Rehearsal for confirmation service
		7.30 pm	Lent Choral Concert: <i>Olivet to Calvary</i> and <i>Litany of the Thorns</i>

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Sun	19	8.00 am	Holy Communion
		9.45 am	Sung Eucharist
			Children's Church and Vestry Group
		11.15 am	Confirmation and Baptism Service with the Bishop of Ely
		6.30 pm	Sung Evensong
		6.45 pm	Youth Group (preparation for Mothering Sunday)
Mon	20	1.30 pm	Stepping Stones for under-5s (Baptist Church Centre)
		7.45 pm	Evening Lent Group (3) (Quaker Centre)
Tue	21	7.30 pm	PCC (church hall)
Wed	22	9.45 am	Holy Communion (McCartney House)
		1.30 pm	Daytime Lent Group (3) (59 London Road)
		7.30 pm	Bellringers' Practice
Thu	23	9.30 am	St Mary's 0s-5s (Comrades' Club)
		9.45 am	Holy Communion
Fri	24	7.15 pm	Choir Practice (adults from 7.30)
Sat	25	10.00 am	Flower Guild AGM (in church)
		2.00 pm	Marriage of Adrian Lee and Laura Haywood
		3.30 pm	Children's Church Mardi Gras party
Sun	26		Mothering Sunday
		8.00 am	Holy Communion
		9.45 am	Sung Eucharist – presentation by Youth Group and Vestry Group
			Children's Church
			Followed by the annual pancake race in aid of Christian Aid and East Anglian Children's Hospice
		6.30 pm	Sung Evensong
			No Youth Group
Mon	27	1.30 pm	Stepping Stones (Baptist Church Centre)
		7.45 pm	Evening Lent Group (4) (Quaker Centre)
Wed	29	1.30 pm	Daytime Lent Group (4) (59 London Road)
Thu	30	9.30 am	St Mary's 0s-5s (Comrades' Club)
		9.45 am	Holy Communion

The Editorial Committee meeting for the April magazine will be held on Sunday, 19 March. Would you please ensure that material is with one of the following by that date:

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