

The Vicar's Letter

Dear Friends,

'February fill-dyke': an old nickname for the second month of the year. I've always assumed that the name was given more or less in gratitude, because of the blessing that full ditches and dykes and a wet end to winter would bring to the growing seasons of spring and summer. (If I'm wrong, I'd be glad if someone would set me straight.) However, as I write these words in the middle of January, the river is running high, muddy and fast, and the Rec and Port Holme are under water, with more rain threatened. In the west of England and elsewhere, people are once again facing an excess of water that might prove anything but a blessing.

In the book of Genesis, water is the primordial chaos over which the Spirit of God broods, and out of which God brings the order of creation. We can see in this story how something of the ambivalent power of water was recognised by the ancient Jews in the very first words of the Bible. In order to create the earth, God separates this water into two – one part becomes a kind of reservoir in the heavens, held up by the vault of the sky, through which some falls as rain, and the other part becomes the oceans and also forms a subterranean sea underlying the whole of the earth. In the story of Noah and the ark, it is often overlooked that the floods that covered the earth came not only from rain – 'the windows of the sky were opened,' thus letting through all that water above the heavens – but also arose because 'all the springs of the great abyss broke through' (the waters under the earth). Thus the world had the potential to collapse back into a watery ruin at any time, and was only kept from destruction by the active power of God.

For the Jews, and for several other cultures of the ancient Near East, floods were symbols of the forces of chaos. For the ancient Egyptians, however, the annual flooding of the Nile was the source of all their prosperity as it fertilised the rich agricultural plains. The floods were the very basis of their civilization. Water is mysteriously the source of all life and of the depths that can drown empires. But in any case, a flood is by definition something entirely beyond human control. Watching the waters of the Ouse rising gradually over the meadows these past few days – and as they do so ensuring that the unique environment of Port Holme is preserved – I have felt strangely grateful to be reminded that in our settled existence we still remain subject to the forces of nature. Some peoples need no reminding – the Dutch have won their land from the sea at great cost and never let up their guard against it, and the Japanese always face the awesome power of typhoons, earthquakes, volcanoes and occasionally *tsunami*. For many of us in the west, much of the time, the stability of our habitat seems something we can take for granted. But it is an illusion, as people in Tewkesbury and elsewhere know very well, and as many more may if sea-levels really do rise greatly. No-one who has experienced a really harmful flood, or any other natural disaster, is likely to give thanks for the suffering it brings, but if we learn from

such events to think of our lives as transient, and to live in thankfulness for each moment of well-being, we shall have taken from them perhaps the only benefit we can. As we pray for those who suffer from an excess – or lack – of water, we can thank God for all the times and places where people have enough but not too much.

We come from water. All land creatures are descended from some unimaginable ancestors aeons ago who first left the oceans to try their luck on *terra firma*. The human embryo as it grows floats in the amniotic fluid of its mother's womb, and the developing lungs breathe no air but practise on the waters of this miniature ocean. Christians pass through the waters of baptism in a symbolic death and resurrection, and so receive the promise of God that life is not, ultimately, something that awaits the whim of arbitrary and uncontrollable forces but is drawn back to Him who first brought life out of the depths. 'Never again shall the waters become a flood to destroy all living creatures,' God said to Noah. Floods do still claim lives and always will, but the voice of God to all ages declares that His purposes for us and for the whole of creation are indeed, as He said at the beginning, very good.

With love,

David

This month's cover

If a picture's worth a thousand words, then we need look no further where John Middlemiss is concerned! Not only is he pictured alongside a model of a traction engine, but he's also in party mood. One of the most memorable occasions he attended was on 11 June 1972, when he came to the rescue of Doris and John Anderson by using *Busy Bee* in their back garden to power up the lights for their chemist shop's 21st birthday party! Many thanks to the Middlemiss family for permission to use the photograph; and to Colin Thirlwall for reproducing it in full colour on the front of the magazine.

Mothers' Union

At the January meeting David Busk talked to us about life in Japan. He had brought with him many things illustrating the Japanese way of life. Few of us knew how big Japan is, believing it to be about the size of the British Isles when in fact it is much bigger. We were able to look at a very large banner that was painted in bright colours with pictures of very fierce looking warriors. This was the Busk family banner and it had their crest on it at the top, written in Japanese characters. David also told us about the history of Christianity in Japan. It started in the middle ages but then was forbidden and all Christians had to worship in secret. They could not have any obvious Christian artefacts for fear of being found out, so they used a particular Buddha as

the Virgin Mary and if anyone questioned it they could say that the statue was a Buddha. We could all have gone on listening for much longer but unfortunately time ran out. We hope that David will come again sometime and tell us more.

At the next meeting on February 5 Kay Coe will give a talk entitled 'Blind Faith', which is the story of Helen Keller.

Jean Morgan

Wives' Group

The first meeting of 2008 saw us welcoming representatives from our charity of the year, the Leonard Cheshire Home at Brampton (The Manor). Billie Smith has worked at The Manor for eighteen years, the last five as Activities and Volunteer Coordinator. Billie was accompanied by her husband Steve, and two residents, Robert and Davey.

The Manor opened in 1991; it was the first Leonard Cheshire Home purpose-built for younger residents, although residents aged over 55 do not have to leave. It houses twenty residents (currently fourteen male and six female) – each of whom has their own en-suite room – and there is one respite care bed that can be hired via the Social Services Department.

Billie told us a little of the history of the Leonard Cheshire Foundation (as it was originally called). Leonard Cheshire was a household name after World War II; during his legendary career with the RAF

he succeeded Guy Gibson as Commander of 617 (the Dambusters) Squadron and was awarded the Distinguished Service Order, the Distinguished Flying Cross and eventually the Victoria Cross. After the War he opened a home for disabled ex-servicemen and their families as a halfway house between military and civilian lives. This mushroomed over the years into what is now the UK's leading provider of support services to disabled people. The charity has recently been re-launched as 'Leonard Cheshire Disability' and has an international presence with homes in fifty five countries

Robert then told us how he came to be at The Manor. He trained as a butcher and was living in Peterborough when he had a motorcycle accident eighteen years ago which left him paralysed from the neck down. He started going to The Manor for respite care and eventually moved in permanently twelve years ago. Davey moved in nine months ago and is Robert's next-door neighbour. That is how the residents think of The Manor – it is their home. They spoke warmly of the relationship between the staff and the residents; I don't think I was the only one at the meeting to sense the genuine affection and care that they all have for one another.

Part of Billie's job is to look after the volunteers who help at The Manor: they range in age from 14-year-old schoolchildren to a very sprightly 98-year-old and the time they are able to offer varies, but it is all invaluable and sincerely appreciated by both staff and residents alike. There are forty-five regular volunteers and twenty-seven

permanent staff who are kept very busy! If you would like to learn more about The Manor, please do give them a ring. We are certainly looking forward to meeting Billie and the others again in December.

Our next meeting is scheduled for 12 February. The speaker will be Pat Wells-Johnson and the talk is entitled *Taoist Tai Chi for Health and Relaxation*. All are welcome.

Kate Robinson

Men's Social Group

The date of the next Men's Social Group event will be Wednesday, 13 February (note change of date), when we will be attending a Public Open Night at the Cambridge University Institute of Astronomy, Madingley Road, Cambridge. We plan to leave School Hill car park at 6.30 pm. Details from Andrew Fawcett – Tel. 458383.

Peter Dawe

Charity of the Month

I have a particular interest in this month's charity because I was born and brought up in Belfast. Corrymeela (which means 'Hill of Harmony') operates from Ballycastle in County Antrim – an area I am familiar with from childhood.

Corrymeela was founded in 1965 to help bridge the divide between different factions in Northern Ireland. The charity is partly political and partly religious and

it seems that Northern Irish sectarianism may be costing the state as much as £1.5 billion a year. Corrymeela is expecting 2008 to be a difficult financial year for its own work.

Ireland was one of the earliest centres of Christian learning, and therefore part of the Roman Church. Medieval English kings saw the country as a resource and moved troops and nobles in, plus lesser folk to see to their needs. Elizabeth I encouraged an influx of lowland Scots (protestants), who took over land that belonged to the indigenous population, often treated the indigenous population cruelly and suppressed their religion.

England ruled Ireland from then until, in 1932, the Free State of Eire was created (with Eamon de Valera as PM); and Northern Ireland remained in the hands of the British. Not unreasonably, in my view, the descendents of the original occupants want their country back. We can imagine what it would be like if the Spanish had won the war in the time of Elizabeth I: laws and police would be Spanish, but the place names would be English. You got just that feeling in the 1960s when Ulster was still under direct rule from Westminster, but places had names like Ballymena and Ballygally.

The 'Troubles' began in the 1960s and, when Jerry and I went over to see my parents, there were no-go areas, the sound of gunfire and the sight of major fires. As one might have foreseen, Westminster attempts to bring peace by force were a failure. Happily, wiser counsels (represented by John Major and then by Tony Blair, along with American help)

brought about devolved government, which includes both Protestants (who think of themselves as British) and Catholics (who think of themselves as Irish). The system is still shaky – it could hardly be otherwise when people like Ian Paisley are influential – but at least it is there.

At ground level the old hatreds still emerge – as when small catholic children were abused and threatened, as they went to school, by their protestant adult neighbours. Corrymeela exists (and needs funds) to promote understanding at the level of neighbours. They run courses, discussions and holidays. Children from both sides are encouraged to begin with hectic physical challenges and then to discover that folk from neither side have horns and tails. The issues that face the children are precisely those that face the leaders and politicians of the Province. Maybe the adults have something to learn from the children – maybe in Israel and Afghanistan too.

Jenny Craddock

Changes to Editorial Committee

The Editorial Committee is delighted to welcome Claire Hurd into the team. Her work with Children's Church and Youth Group means she will bring a youthful perspective to the *Parish News* and we look forward to having her with us.

Meal with a Movie 2

Returning to the Church Hall on Saturday, 9 February, is another opportunity to enjoy a meal prepared by Gillian Bathurst Hoile, and a full length feature film presented by the Oundle Cinema outreach team. At the request of the PCC, proceeds from the evening are earmarked for the new sound system in church.

'The Prestige' (2006), directed by Christopher Nolan, is an end-of-the-century period piece following the fortunes of rival magicians, Robert Angier and Alfred Borden, who are obsessed with creating the best stage illusions, their competitive one-upmanship having tragic results. There are twists and turns aplenty, and the audience is kept guessing right to the very end. The cast stars Christopher Bale (Borden), Hugh Jackman (Angier), David Bowie, Michael Caine, Scarlett Johansson, Piper Perabo, Andy Surkis and Rebecca Hall. Certificate 12A, the film is suitable for all the family.

Meal : 6pm (£6)

Film: 7.30pm (£4)

The last chance to buy tickets at church will be after the 9.45 service on Sunday 3 February. Tickets for the meal and film must be purchased in advance. Tickets for the film only can be purchased on the night. Donations for the raffle would be greatly appreciated.

Contacts for further information: John and Gillian Bathurst Hoile: 01480 465442 or Liz and Peter Irving: 01480 382144.

Dr John Middlemiss

Dr Middlemiss died on 27 November 2007. At their father's memorial service on 17 December, his daughter Ann and son Willem paid tributes to his life as a father, a doctor and a steam preservationist. In a further tribute, written for the Parish News, Tony Sursham remembers the contribution made by Dr Middlemiss to the town of Godmanchester itself.

I had the pleasure of being acquainted with John Middlemiss over nearly forty years when I came from London to work and live in Godmanchester, and became one of his 'panel' patients, with his surgery at the end of my street, Earning Street.

Prominent in his consulting room was a fine drawing of a large steam-driven roundabout. Stationary and road-driven steam engines were his great hobby, and he enlisted his first wife Maria and all their children, from an early age, in running his own engine for which he built a special shed in West Street. They all, when young and then as older children, took part in the Gala Week procession, mounted on, and driving and feeding, the hungry engine through the streets.

Another love and concern he shared with Maria, after becoming a Town Councillor in 1982, were the old buildings and streets of the town and their preservation and enhancement. They arranged for the positioning of the two cast iron signs to the Town – one on the side of Riverside Mill at the south end of the stone bridge; the other in St Neots Road – and the

fingerpost at the junction of Old Court Hall and West Street, which he saw through frequent vandalism and repair. He was a colourful Honorary Mace Bearer to the Town Council for many years, and he himself fabricated and polished the wooden box for the mace.

The long running saga of Tudor Farm in Earning Street was the story of how John and Maria initially, and later the Huntingdonshire District Council and East Shires Preservation Trust, saved this splendid Tudor farmhouse (which had stood empty for ten years) from demolition and later arson, and carefully restored it to be sold as two fine houses. With the help of the Civic Society and the Town Council, John constantly badgered HDC to do something about it, both for the sake of the town's visual character, and its own beauty.

After Maria's death, we all rejoiced when John re-married the charming Elizabeth in a colourful ceremony in St Mary's Church, and celebrated afterwards in the White Hart, which their son had himself, as its proprietor and landlord, given a new lease of life.

John showed many kindnesses and was always willing to listen and take action when people asked for his help.

Tony Sursham

Dr John Middlemiss – a footnote

Readers may like to be reminded of +how Dr Middlemiss came to be in Godmanchester. In the early 1950s the town had but a single surgery, the GP being Dr

John Hynes. He ran the practice single-handed from Fox House, now the home of Mr and Mrs Turner-Cain at the south end of Post Street opposite the vicarage. Dr Hynes' receptionist was his wife Tori, and when Dr and Mrs Hynes took their fortnight's holiday, Dr Hynes' father stepped in as locum. Eventually Dr Hynes took a partner, Dr Pugh, who was here for six months. When Dr Pugh departed, Dr Hynes took another partner, Dr R.D. France, who lived at 25 West Street. Dr France eventually set up his own practice in Clyde Yard. It was Dr France's practice that Dr Middlemiss took over in 1968 when he came down from Bellingham, in Northumberland, with his first wife Maria, five children and his traction engine *Busy Bee*. The Middlemisses also moved into Dr France's house in West Street, and the GP surgery, which Dr Middlemiss continued to run as a single practice, moved from Clyde Yard to 24 Earning Street, the house that stands at right angles to the road. On his retirement in 1985 Dr Middlemiss sold his practice to Dr Gupta. The Roman Gate surgery in Godmanchester was set up in 1982 by Dr Rushton as a branch surgery of the Charles Hicks' practice in Huntingdon. In 1952, long before he arrived in Godmanchester, Dr Middlemiss was a founder member of the Royal College of General Practitioners, and one thing of which he was particularly proud was the gold medal he received from the College in 2002.

With Lent in mind

Whatever else is, or is not true, this one thing is certain – man is not what he was meant to be. *G.K.Chesterton*

Volunteers urgently required

Can you spare 1-2 hours per month? Do you enjoy meeting and helping people within the community? If so, Huntingdonshire Society for the Blind would be very keen to hear from you.

The Society has more than 500 members throughout Huntingdonshire who are either blind or partially sighted and who need help with visiting or transport. If you would like to learn more about volunteering for the Society please contact Erika Brown, Volunteer Coordinator on 01480 453438.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Hope for 2008? Yes!

At the stroke of midnight on New Year's Eve, thousands of people in York Minster, and in cathedrals and churches around the country were praying together, for a deeper relationship with God, but above all, for a year of hope and revival in the church in the UK.

Hope '08 is a project which seeks to unite all the different Christian denominations in the country (over 100 church organisations to date) and people of all ages to 'do it more, and do it better': that is to think carefully about what has worked, and what has not, in terms of church outreach, and expand these things in general schemes and specific events throughout the year.

The idea has its foundation in 'Festival Manchester' (Manchester) and 'Soul in

the City' (London); short seasons when young people (in particular, but not exclusively) worked to spread their faith sensitively and to be actively loving in local communities in different urban centres. Thus meals were prepared in old people's centres, graffiti was cleaned, litter was picked up and work done with the homeless and drug addicts. Above all, churches were thrown open. In a short piece on 'Songs of Praise' aired just prior to New Year, a young lady called Jenny from Manchester, who is a single mum with four children, spoke of how 'Festival Manchester' had affected her life. She told of her children begging her to walk into a church that was festooned outside with balloons and welcome signs, and was filled inside with the music of a carnival. She has since become a Christian, and says, 'God means everything to me now' and that it is important that churches have welcome signs because, 'People don't know you can go in.'

Last year Andy Hawthorne, Mike Pillavachi and others decided, after prayer and reflection, to throw caution to the wind and launch a year-long and country-wide scheme on the same theme. They designated 2007 as 'a year of preparation' with a particular focus on prayer. By the year's end over one thousand small groups were meeting across the country to pray and plan together for 2008. I was so encouraged to hear Mr Hawthorne tell us of 350 pastors in Kenya who gathered together of their own initiative with no knowledge of Hope '08 plans, to pray and fast for a week for the UK. At the end of the week they sent a missive to several British church leaders, in which they

declared that, '2007 is the year of preparation, and 2008 will be the year of revival in the UK.'

New Year's Eve was the country-wide launch night for Hope '08, and there were official regional launches in six cathedrals and over thirty churches, and many more unofficial events. In the four and half hour service at the Minster we danced, sang and listened, but above all, prayed.

It struck me again and again that 'Hope' is about the church being Christ-like; being gently, but persistently and relentlessly loving, in 'deed and word', (another catch phrase), and spreading light thereby. After all, this must be what the church is 'for', (people are bored, confused, or angered by hearing what we are, or are not, against). What better way is there to live?

In York there is a tradition for people to gather outside the Minster at New Year and wait for the great bells, silenced from 8 o'clock, to ring again. As we silently prayed we heard crowds gathering, with shouts, cheers; and fireworks exploded after the chimes. It was just Britain being British. At the close of the service we were launched into crowds of drunk and loud people – some grinning, others very lost. It seemed appropriate, somehow. This is all about reaching out into the world as it really is and 'being' Jesus.

But it wasn't all silence inside the cathedral. At 00:05 there was lots of hugging and shouting and the band yFriday closed their set for the evening with a song written specially for Hope '08. The Gothic rafters and gargoyles

reverberated as we jumped around under flashing lights shouting, 'One Hope, One Love, One God!

This was a very good start for a year of local initiatives. What, I wonder, are we planning for Huntingdon and Godmanchester?

Hannah Caroe

Changes in key contacts

Church Hall: After many years of loyal service as our Bookings Secretary for the Church Hall, Joan Adams has now retired. Barbara Thirlwall (tel.01480 457018) has taken on responsibility for all bookings of the Church Hall.

Press and Publicity: This post, which has been vacant for some time, has now been taken over by John Thackray (tel. 01480 420007). Please don't hesitate to give John a ring if you know of anything going on in the church (or town) that deserves to be more widely known.

Why you must make a Will. And why you must keep it up to date.

I feel very strongly that people should make wills and should keep them under regular review. Why? You can make sure you benefit those who you want to benefit, you can ensure that the right people are there to look after your estate and your family, and you can minimise the tax bill. I can assure you, it saves a lot of headaches and heartaches for those left behind. I would also recommend that you take advice when completing a will. It will cost you money at the time but, in

terms of the costs, time and hassle it will save in the future; I think it is the right thing to do.

What happens if you do not make a will? Your property will pass under the laws of intestacy. These were written a long time ago and, quite frankly, take no account of the real world. Your surviving spouse or civil partner may have to share your estate with your children or, if you have no children, with your parents or brothers and sisters. Your widower or widow is unlikely to be very happy to be told that he or she will have to move out of the family home and sell it, and divide the proceeds of sale with his or her mother-in-law! If your children take a share, they will be entitled to this at the age of 18, which, at least in my view, is probably not the best age to get a potentially large sum of money. If you live with a partner and are not married or in a civil partnership, your surviving partner gets nothing.

If you do not make a will, you will not be able to appoint executors who are the people who administer your estate, make sure that any tax is paid and divide the estate up among the heirs. Without a will those entitled on intestacy may take on this job and they may not be the best people to do this. I advise people with young children that any will should also include an appointment of guardians. If you do not provide for this in your will, your children could end up living with and being brought up by, in your opinion, the wrong person.

What do you look at when making a will? You need to identify what property will

or will not pass under the will. Not all your property will pass under your will. Certain types of jointly owned property will pass to the surviving owner automatically. For example, if you co-own a house with your husband or wife as joint tenants, on your death your share of the house will pass to your surviving co-owner and not under your will.

The key things to think about.

Executors – who is going to administer your estate? I would suggest at least one family member – your husband or wife and, depending on the complexity of your estate, a professional executor – a lawyer or accountant. It is not absolutely necessary to appoint a professional executor as the executors can always seek legal advice for themselves. I would always recommend you appoint two executors and, perhaps, consider identifying a third in the event that one of the other two cannot act.

Gifts – who is to get what and when?

Personal items, such as jewellery or cars can be identified in the will as specific gifts. Alternatively the will can include a generic gift of such property with a request that the executors distribute it in accordance with a letter of wishes. This means that you do not need to identify all items in the will and you can change the letter of wishes from time to time (as you change your mind or your car, perhaps) without having to go through the hassle and formalities necessary to amend the will.

You can include specific gifts in the will but you must keep this under review. I once administered an estate for a widow

who lived in sheltered accommodation. In her will she divided up her estate in what she thought would be equal shares between her daughter and her son. In her will she gave her house to her daughter and the rest of her estate to her son. At her death she had sold the house so the daughter got nothing and the son scooped the pool. The daughter was not very impressed.

At your death your estate will be subject to inheritance tax. The first, currently £300,000 is taxed at 0% (we call this the nil rate band for obvious reasons). The balance is taxable at 40% unless it passes to your spouse or civil partner. In this case the spouse exemption will apply unless your surviving spouse is not UK domiciled. The government has recently changed the rules so that if you do not use up the whole of your nil rate band, the balance can be transferred to your surviving spouse or civil partner to set against his or her estate. Prior to the change of the rules we would always recommend that your will included a gift of the nil rate band to a trust under which your spouse could benefit with only the excess passing outright to the surviving spouse or to a trust for his or her benefit. This was to avoid paying an unnecessary 40% on the unused nil rate band – tax of £120,000. This is no longer necessary for tax purposes, but there may be other reasons (for example to take advantage of special reliefs where you own agricultural or business property) why you should still look at carving out a gift of the nil rate band, and you should seek expert advice on this.

Gifts to your spouse or civil partner can be outright or on trusts for their benefit. The latter ensures that your will controls where the property goes on the death of the survivor rather than it passing under the survivor's will.

Gifts to children – you should consider at what age you would want the children to inherit. There are different tax implications depending on the type of trust that is used and again, expert advice is recommended.

After you have made your will, it is important that you review it regularly (at least every five years) and, in particular, after any significant changes in your life, for example, getting married or entering into a civil partnership (this would automatically revoke the old will), getting separated, divorced or having a civil partnership dissolved, or having children. If you die when the provisions of your will are no longer appropriate, the law as it currently stands allows your beneficiaries to vary it so that legacies can be redirected, perhaps for reasons of equality or for tax planning purposes. However, varying a will can involve considerable expense and is only possible if all beneficiaries who are adversely affected agree to it. Also, the law may change so that it is no longer possible to vary a will without tax disadvantages. It is therefore preferable for you to keep your will up to date.

Other issues you should think about are:

It may be that you would like to have specific funeral arrangements or that you want your body to be donated to medical

research, or that you want to be an organ donor. You can set out in your will how you would like your body to be dealt with after your death. However, for practical reasons, you should not rely on your will to inform people of these wishes. You should put them down in a separate letter and inform your next-of-kin before you die so that immediate action can be taken on your death. If relevant, you should also carry, and register, an organ donor card and comply with the necessary formalities for leaving your body to medical research.

You may have taken out life insurance or pension policies under which death benefits could arise. If these benefits have not been put into trust, they will form part of your estate on death and may be subject to tax. However, in most cases this can be avoided if you put the death benefits into trust. At the same time as drafting your will, you should review your policies to see whether death benefits have been written into trust.

At the same time as drawing up a will, you should consider whether to draw up a lasting power of attorney ('LPA'). An LPA is a document that appoints an 'attorney' to make decisions on a person's behalf, and is usually intended to be used should the person become mentally incapable. An LPA can be made at any time whilst the person has mental capacity, but it does not have legal standing until it is registered with the Office of the Public Guardian. There are two types of LPA: you can appoint an attorney to make decisions about how your money is spent and about the way your property and affairs are managed

and you can appoint an attorney to make decisions about your healthcare and welfare. This could include decisions to refuse or consent to treatment on your behalf. The attorney can only make personal welfare decisions when you lack the capacity to make the decisions yourself.

Samantha Leigh-Smith (Solicitor)

JOHN DILLISTONE
will give
AN ORGAN RECITAL
in
ALL SAINTS' CHURCH,
HUNTINGDON
on
SATURDAY 9 FEBRUARY AT
7.30 PM
Admission £5 (concessions £4)

November PCC Meeting

Minutes in full of PCC meetings are displayed on the south door notice-board. Here are some key points from the November meeting:

Matters arising:

West Door Path: Godmanchester Town Council were minded to help us with the cost of relaying this path.

Ministry News: Regular services have started at The Chestnuts – first Wednesday in the month at 11.00am. Ministry Team has discussed Healing Services and suggest that they be held on

quarterly basis on first Sunday of month at 11.30am. First Healing Service is planned for 3 March.

Parish Meetings

Parish Praise Service: Parish meeting was very encouraging and there was a good enough mandate of those responding (more than two-thirds) to go ahead with the new Service.

Children and Communion: Parish Meeting arranged for 25 November. A Discussion Paper would be available to take away and ponder. Following the meeting, responses will be gathered before the next PCC and it will be for the PCC to decide whether or not to ask the Bishop for permission to admit children to Communion at St Mary's, as laid down in Diocesan guidelines.

Finance Committee:

Balance of regular income against expenditure to date shows a deficit of £9,035. Because of size of deficit, £5,000 has had to be transferred from reserves. The lack of sufficient regular income indicates a need for more people to replace those who have moved on. Ministry Share for 2007 has been paid in full. £5,434 has been claimed from Inland Revenue as Gift Aid.

Fabric Committee:

Heating: Current problem is being dealt with by our boiler service contractor (EMS Ltd).

Churchyard: Volunteers have carried out the Autumn Clear-up. Further work to clear gutters/gulleys and trim trees will be required in the New Year.

Development of Tower and North-west Corner: Awaiting elevation drawings and sketches from the Architect.

Communications Committee:

Postcards now available for sale:

'Literature' slot in the south door wall box could be used to receive sale proceeds.

Photographic Display: It is proposed to prepare a new display which will cover Gala Day to Harvest Festival projecting the life of the Church today.

Deanery Synod

900 Years Celebration: The Diocese will be celebrating 900 years of existence in 2009. Each parish is being asked to think about how they can participate in special events, including providing a parish flower display for the Cathedral and, for the longer term, each parish is encouraged to develop a Mission Action Plan focussing on furthering the Mission of the Church.

2008 Ministry Share: Deanery Synod approved the 2008 Ministry Share. This entails a 4.7% increase on the 2007 Share for all parishes in the Deanery. Our 2008 Ministry Share is £56,563.

Worship Group

Vestry Group: This was set up for youngsters too old for Children's Church but who might benefit from their own time and space during the sermon. It is felt that the need for this group has run its course as there is no demand. However, if things changed it could be revived. PCC agreed that the Vestry Group be formally suspended.

Eucharistic Service on alternate months not having Parish Praise Service (ie Feb 24, Apr 27, Jun 22, Aug 24 and Oct 26)

Without calling it an All-Age Eucharist, it is felt that the Eucharist on above dates could be a little more child friendly with Children's Church and/or Youth Group contributing to the worship. If children are permitted to take Communion, it will be important for them to be involved in the service. The Worship Group felt that, for these alternate months, it should be possible to find ways of including the children for half of the service. Those receiving Communion would need to be present during the Eucharistic Prayer.

Any other business

£2,300 had been raised by **The Boyan Concert**. As the UK Government had doubled the cost of visas to enter the country, the decision had been made to give more of the funds raised to the Choir. £500 had been retained for Church funds.

The Parish Diary for 2008 is on the Church Website with a version for printing off.

Trevor Weedon

And finally

What a big difference there is between giving advice and lending a hand. As Lent approaches, perhaps we should be looking to do something extra rather than giving something up.

Forthcoming National Bus Pass Scheme

The Government's 2006 Budget statement announced a new national Concessionary Bus Travel Scheme would be introduced in April 2008. The scheme will allow eligible residents (over 60s and people with certain disabilities) to use their bus pass after 9.30 am until the last bus runs, from Monday to Friday, and all day on weekends and Bank Holidays in any part of England for the first time.

Everyone will need to reapply for a new bus pass. To receive your new bus pass on time, complete an application form today. Contact your District Council for more information.

The Registers

Funerals

4 January	Eric Meats
7 January	Florence Pattle
9 January	Rose Mortlock
14 January	Dick Clark
29 January	Joan Bottley

The Lectionary

3 Feb	Candlemas Malachi 3:1-5; Hebrews 2:14-end; Luke 2:22-40
6 Feb	Ash Wednesday Isaiah 56:1-12; 2 Corinthians 5:20b-6:10; Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21
10 Feb	Lent 1 Genesis 2:15-17, 3:1-7; Matthew 4:1-11
17 Feb	Lent 2 Genesis 12:1-4a; Romans 4:1-5, 13-17; John 3:1-17
24 Feb	Lent 3 Exodus 17:1-7; Romans 5:1-11; John 4:5-42

Dates for your diary

February

Fri	1	7.30 pm	Choir Practice	Church Hall
Sun	3	Candlemas		
		8.00 am	Holy Communion	
		9.45 am	Sung Eucharist	
		6.30 pm	Sung Evensong	
		6.45 pm	Youth Group - Spymaster	Bar Hill

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

Mon	4	1.30 pm	Stepping Stones	Baptist Church Centre
		7.30 pm	Churches Together Meeting	Church Hall
Tue	5	2.00 pm	Mothers' Union	QE School
Wed	6	Ash Wednesday		
		9.15 am	Holy Communion	St Anne's School
		11.00 am	Holy Communion	Chestnuts
		7.30 pm	Sung Eucharist & Ashes	
Thu	7	9.45 am	Holy Communion	
		10.00 am	St Mary's 0s – 5s	Comrades' Club
Fri	8	7.30 pm	Choir Practice	Church Hall
Sat	9	6.00 pm	Supper & (7.30 pm) Film	Church Hall
Sun	10	8.00 am	Holy Communion	
		9.45 am	Sung Eucharist	
		11.30 am	Grassroots	
		6.30 pm	Sung Evensong	
Mon	11	1.30 pm	No Stepping Stones (Half Term)	
		8.00 pm	Worship Group	10 East Chadley Lane
Tue	12	8.00 pm	Wives' Club	Church Hall
Wed	13	10.30 am	Holy Communion	Oak Tree Court
		3.30 pm	Pastoral Team Meeting	Vicarage
		7.00 pm	Men's Social Group (6.30 Queen Ann's School Car Park)	Institute of Astronomy
Thu	14	9.45 am	Holy Communion	
		10.00 am	St Mary's 0s – 5s	Comrades' Club
		8.00 pm	Evening Lent Group	Quaker Centre
Fri	15	1.30 pm	Afternoon Lent Group	Vicarage
		7.30 pm	Choir Practice	Church Hall
		8.00 pm	Fauré Requiem Rehearsal	Church Hall
Sat	16		Choir Directors' Training Day	St Mary's, Ely
Sun	17	8.00 am	Holy Communion	
		9.45 am	Sung Eucharist	
		6.30 pm	Sung Evensong	
Mon	18	1.30 pm	Stepping Stones	Baptist Church Centre
		7.30 pm	Fabric Committee Meeting	Vestry
Tue	19	7.30 pm	PCC Meeting	Church Hall
Wed	20	11.00 am	Holy Communion	Woodley Court
		7.30 pm	Healing Group meeting	Vicarage
Thu	21	9.45 am	Holy Communion	
		10.00 am	St Mary's 0s – 5s	Comrades' Club
		7.30 pm	Prayer Group	32 The Chestnuts
		8.00 pm	Evening Lent Group	Quaker Centre

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

Fri	22	1.30 pm	Afternoon Lent Group	Vicarage
		7.30 pm	Choir Practice	Church Hall
		8.00 pm	Fauré Requiem Rehearsal	Church Hall
Sun	24	8.00 am	Holy Communion	
		9.45 am	Sung Eucharist	
		12.00 noon	Late Winter Lunch	Church Hall
		6.30 pm	Sung Evensong	
		6.45 pm	Youth Group – games & film making	Church Hall
Mon	25	1.30 pm	Stepping Stones	Baptist Church Centre
		2.00-3.00 pm	Japanese Choir arrives	
		3.30-5.00 pm	Japanese Choir Rehearsal	Church
Tue	26	4.30 pm	Japanese Choir Tea	QE School
		5.30-7.00 pm	Japanese Choir Rehearsal	Church
		7.30 pm	Sung Evensong in Japanese Informal Japanese Choir Concert	
Wed	27	9.15 am	Japanese Choir	St Anne's School
		9.45 am	Holy Communion	McCartney House
Thu	28	9.45 am	Holy Communion	
		10.00 am	St Mary's 0s – 5s	Comrades' Club
Fri	29	8.00 pm	Evening Lent Group	Quaker Centre
		1.30 pm	Afternoon Lent Group	Vicarage
		7.30 pm	Choir Practice	Church Hall
		8.00 pm	Fauré Requiem Rehearsal	Church Hall

The Editorial Committee meeting for the March magazine will be held on **Sunday, 17 February**. Would you please ensure that material is with one of the following by that date and if possible not later than **Friday, 15 February**.

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