

St John's Church

serving Stanborough, Lemsford, Cromer Hyde



Parish Magazine

February/March 2015 £1



Cover picture: detail from The Temptation of Christ, Ary Scheffer 1854.
Christmas Day Service (page 5); Five of the best (page 11)



February 2015

I

1st February Presentation of Christ

8am BCP Holy Communion - Led by Rev'd Susan Stilwell
11am BCP Morning Prayer - Led by Ian Douglas

8th February 2nd Sunday before Lent

8am BCP Holy Communion - Led by Rev'd Susan Marsh
11am Parish Communion - Led by Rev'd Julia Boothby

18th February Ash Wednesday

8pm Team Service at St Marys, North Mymms

15th February Sunday before Lent

8am BCP Holy Communion - Led by Rev'd Susan Stilwell
11am All-age/Family Service - led by Mary Douglas

22nd February Lent 1

8am BCP Morning Prayer - Led by John Marks
11am Parish Communion - Led by Rev'd Susan Stilwell

*** *Morning Prayer 10 am every Wednesday ******

Readings (*preacher reads the gospel at Parish Communion*)

1st Psalm 24: 1- 10; Malachi 3: 1-5; Luke 2: 22-40

8th Colossians 1: 15-20; John 1: 1-14

15th 2 Corinthians 4: 3-6; Mark 9: 2-9

22nd 1 Peter 3: 18-22; Mark 1: 9-15

Please note that Sue Stilwell's Day Off is Friday. Thank you

Coffee after 11am Services.

1st Lent 2

8am BCP Holy Communion - Led by Rev'd Susan Stilwell
11am BCP Morning Prayer - Led by John Barnard

8th Lent 3

8am BCP Holy Communion - Led by Rev'd Susan Marsh
11am Parish Communion - Led by Rev'd Ron Ingamels

15th Mother's Day

8am BCP Holy Communion - Led by Rev'd Susan Stilwell
11am Mother's Day All age Service - Led by Susan Stilwell

22nd Lent 5

8am BCP Morning Prayer - led by John Marks/Pat Wood
11am Parish Communion - led by Rev'd Martin King

29th Palm Sunday

8am BCP Holy Communion - Led by Rev'd Susan Stilwell
11am Procession and Passion Service with Parish Communion -
Led by Rev'd Susan Stilwell

*** *Morning Prayer 10 am every Wednesday* *****

Readings (preacher reads the gospel at Parish Communion)

1st Psalm 22: 23-31; Genesis 17: 1-7, 15-16; Mark 8: 31-38

8th 1 Corinthians 1:18-25; John 2: 13-22

15th March - Mothering Sunday

Readings for Mothering Sunday

22nd Hebrews 5: 5-10; John 12: 20-33

29th Liturgy of the Passion

Please note that Sue Stilwell's Day Off is Friday. Thank you

Coffee after 11am Services. Sunday Club at 11am save Family Service

Dear Friends,

It seems only a short time ago that we were celebrating Christmas - such a joyous time - amidst the inevitable busyness and the bustle preparing for the 'big day'. For us at St Johns our doors were opened wide for many Christmas services - a place of welcome for both familiar and new faces as we all came together to celebrate Christ's birth... despite the heating breaking down on Christmas Eve! I've not been to a Midnight Mass before where you're handed a service booklet along with a blanket to wrap around your knees! But there you go...



And here we are again, looking towards Lent and Easter! This year the first Sunday of Lent is 22nd February and Easter Sunday on 5th April. In the same way the season of Advent offers us a time for preparation for a significant event in the church, so does Lent. Lent prepares us for the events of Holy Week - Jesus' triumphant journey into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, the sharing of the Last Supper on Maundy Thursday, the crucifixion of Jesus on Good Friday and the glorious events of Easter Day as we celebrate Jesus' rising and victory over death! Alleluia!

Do take this time for your own personal preparation as you reflect on your faith and life. We are currently planning five Lent evenings to hear from members of our congregation about the way in which they live out their faith in different aspects of their lives - at home, at work and in mission. These evenings are for EVERYONE... and will held on the Thursday evenings during Lent. I hope that they will offer new insights as we share together what it means to live out our faith. More details in the magazine.

On Easter Day, as in the early days of the Church, new Christians were often baptised and so we hope that people will also come forward to be baptised here at St Johns. Baptism is a symbol of new life in Christ and is especially important on Easter Day when we celebrate the resurrection of Jesus Christ. If you would like to 'take the plunge' please do speak with me - it will be a wonderful occasion. As will be the Confirmation Service planned on **Sunday 10th May 2015 at 6.30pm at St Mary's North Mymms**. We already have a small group of people offering themselves for Confirmation - so again - be God's guest! If you feel that God is calling you to either Baptism or Confirmation - then let Him lead you towards the font.... and let your faith grow...

With God's blessing,

Sue Stilwell, Assistant Curate

Bishop Stephen Venner has been conducting a study of the Bishop's Hatfield Team. The start of this was set out in the previous edition of our magazine. He has now completed his discussions with various members of the Team and produced some draft proposals. These focus mostly on a strategy for our Team ministry. They have been presented to the Rector, myself and the churchwardens of the five parishes. The next stage is for him to finalise his draft and present it to Bishop Alan. When he has approved it, we expect Bishop Alan will direct us to the subsequent steps for implementation which involve a parish profile, job description and the usual application process. Hopefully by the time our next magazine is due, we will be able to report some significant progress.

Ian Douglas PCC Chairman

Would you like to dedicate the flowers in the church to a loved one? On a dozen occasions per year the flowers placed in church could be recorded, by way of a simple message published in the parish magazine, as being *in memory of* ... A £20 contribution is suggested to commemorate the occasion, to be shared equally between the Flower Fund and the church's general funds. Do speak to a Churchwarden.

EASTER SERVICES AT ST JOHNS LEMSFORD for your diary

Palm Sunday - Sunday 29th March at 11am

Procession, Passion reading and Communion

Maundy Thursday - 2nd April at 7.30pm

Last Supper meal with service at St Michaels Church, Birchwood

Good Friday - 3rd April from 11am to 1pm

Join us at any time for a service of reflection, readings, music and prayer

Easter Day - 5th April at 11am

Parish Communion for all the family with Baptisms

Easter Pilgrimage to St Albans Abbey

Monday 6th April - see page 10

Baptisms

14th December, **Alexa Newton**; congratulations!

Shoebox Sunday

The local organiser has written to **Mary Douglas**, to thank us for our contribution. "3977 boxes were sent from our local Warehouse in Colney Heath, of which 1404 went to Zimbabwe, Ukraine, Romania or Bosnia and 2573 went to Kyrgyzstan or Bosnia. We look forward to achieving a target of at least 4000 in 2015 with your help."

Freda Smith

Sadly passed away on 13th January. She worshipped here until widowed when she moved to be near her son **Warren**. She fell ill with pneumonia and did not recover. Her Funeral will be on Tuesday 3rd February at the West Herts Crematorium, Garston, Watford, at 1.40 followed by refreshments at Harpenden golf Club, Redbourn Lane from 3 pm. **Edward Cardale** is conducting the Service. Warren invites anyone who knew his Mother to join in celebrating her life.

Ron Ingamells took the Service on January 25th, and will do so again on 8th March. It is good to see him back with us. *Pictures inside back cover.*

Visit by Ware U3A

25 November 2014

A U3A Church group of about 18, formed in 2008, visit a different church each month. **Barbara Taylor** gave a talk on the history of our church. The group were most appreciative: 'this is the most beautiful church I have ever visited' 'everything is in such good condition, it looks as if it has just been decorated.' 'I can't believe it is so clean, there isn't even a spec of dust on the altar frontal'. Thank you to all concerned in our church's maintenance and especially to **Jackie and Brian** who made the coffee. Thank you too to our visitors for a generous donation.

Lemsford Local History

Group lemsfordhistory.co.uk will hold their next meeting in the Church Annexe on **Thursday 5th March 7.30pm**. Everyone is very welcome to hear **Peter Shirley** talk about Ayot St Peter.

Christmas Day Video

A first for St John's—thanks to **Yvette Berman** a video of the centrepiece of this Service led by **Sue** in her Santa pullover can be seen on <http://youtu.be/F8woPyPX7xI>. It is great!!!

Parish Magazine copy date for the next issue: **22 March**

Lent—a time for study and reflection

Lent is a season for self-examination in preparation for Easter. It starts on Ash Wednesday. Here are a few ideas for you to follow:

1. St Johns Church LENT PROGRAMME

A series of five Thursday evenings in the Church Annexe starting at 7.45pm. Come and hear how members of our congregation live out their faith in their daily lives, work, mission and service.

Starts on **Thursday 26th February** - look out for more details in News letter.

2. St Albans Diocese 'Live the Challenge'

A really simple way to reflect on bible texts during Lent. When signed up, you will receive, each day – by email or text:

- a verse from the Bible
- a brief introduction
- a thought for reflection
- a challenge to act

See: <http://www.stalbans.anglican.org/faith/live-the-challenge/>

3. Books to borrow from the church library

At the beginning of February - there will be books to borrow from our church library - on a table at the back of church. Please take a book - but please enter the loan in the book and please return to us when you have finished the book - thank you!

Other recommended texts:

Reflections for Lent 2015 - - Crisp, wise and concise notes for the period 18th February to 4th April - Church House Publishing.

Love Life, Live Lent for Kids! 40 simple child friendly actions for Lent -Church House publishing only £1.50.

This Risen Existence - The Spirit of Easter - by Paula Gooder. Canterbury Press - available on line.

If you'd like advice please let Sue Stilwell know!

A Lenten jar

I always have nice things that I'd like to do, but never seem to make time to get to: write a letter to a friend, visit a lonely person, call a distant friend. At the beginning of Lent, I write down 40 plus tasks, one per little slip of paper, and toss them in a jar. Then, each morning of Lent, I pull one out and do the task written there. It teaches me that I like surprise and variety in my Lenten practices. For me, this is a simple way to concentrate on the disciplines of giving alms and doing good for others. KC

Dialling into God

Instead of listening to music or talk radio in my car, I decided to take that time for prayer and to listen to God. At first, it was a difficult transition; the silence was deafening. But soon, I began to enjoy the quiet time. I prayed for people who I knew needed my prayers. I prayed for my family and myself. I also thanked God for my many blessings. I found that I became much more calm and peaceful during this time. This reflective time grounded and centred me to do my best. SJ

A note a day

Each day of Lent, through prayer, a name surfaces of a person who has had an impact on my life in some way. I then take the time to write a handwritten note to that person. I have been amazed at the people that have surfaced: from a teacher; to a cousin; to a priest; to a student who had written me a note after a presentation I gave at her school. I send the notes without the expectation of a response. Yet, I have received several emails and notes stating how much it meant to the person. Life is too short — we see that with Jesus—but, we have the opportunity to share our thoughts with those who have made an impact (some don't even know it, until they receive the note). This embodies the idea of Lent: prayer—praying for a specific person each day; fasting—fasting from negative thoughts; and almsgiving—sending a note with affirmations is a great gift to give. PH

Some two thousand years ago in the occupied Middle East, a small group of men and women gathered in a closed room in a packed city to pray together. They had just witnessed the most extraordinary events in human history – the death of the Son of God at the hands of the Roman authorities and the religious elite, his resurrection from the dead some three days later, and his ascension into heaven forty days after that. The Bible tells us there were just 120 of them. They were wanted people, associated with a man who had challenged every belief and principle of society, who had asserted that anyone could know God and that he and he alone was the way to God. They were the church!

Church tradition has moved on a long way since then, but Christians still meet together, to share the good news of Jesus, to pray, to read the Bible, to eat together and enjoy each other's company, and to support those in need. At St John's we have always offered lots of different ways for Christians to meet, drawing on different traditions and experiences. Since September we've added another regular service, **Café Church!**

We have no formal service, it's just an informal get-together, and in the 21st century the 'eat' takes the form of a cup of tea and some cake! We also spend a lot of time just talking about our lives and the things that are important to us! We welcome anyone and everyone, you don't need any previous experience of church or any great knowledge, just come and join us, listen, talk, ask questions, and share... oh, and enjoy the cakes!



Café Church meets **on the second and fourth Sundays** of the month between **5.00 and 6.30 p.m.** in St John's Church **Annexe**. For more information contact **Jo Brooks** joholifield@gmail.com

Happy New Year to everyone! As usual the build up to Christmas was very busy again this year. Not only was there much hard work and effort put in by both pupils and staff for our traditional Infant Nativity, which was delightfully presented by the children, but also for the wonderful effort from our LSA who organise and support so many lovely activities around Christmas. And of course the usual curriculum learning was going on right to the end of term across all classes!

This year the LSA decided to try out a new event and organised a Ladies' Pamper and Gift Evening which attracted many of the school Mums and their friends. It was a really successful evening and I am sure will be on the calendar again for next year.

We also had a focus on the art of Matisse in the last half of the Autumn term and Kirsty Humphries led all the classes in creating a truly inspiring back drop for our Values display in the main hall as well as some individual art work that is displayed around the school.

Before the final run up to Christmas we had another of our Wonder Days which saw all the children in the school having the opportunity to experience an amazing inflatable Science Dome in St John's School hall, where they witnessed 3D galaxies and other wonderful images –good learning and a great time was had by all.

Our music teacher Mrs Nolan runs the school choir each week and during the Autumn term the children worked towards singing for our elderly friends at Stanborough Lodge. This is always a very special event in our calendar, which the children and residents at the Lodge enjoy.

Thank you to Reverend Sue who led our school Carol Service in church just before the end of term. Our youngest children helped tell the wonderful story of Jesus' birth and created a moving tableau at the front of the church to really remind us of the true meaning of Christmas.

The School Council and House Captains have been busy already this Spring term and have organised a book swap to 'recycle' well-loved stories and to encourage reading for pleasure as well as organising a St Johns Bake Off to take place at the end of January. With our value of Courage this month and all the renewed activity after Christmas, we are definitely fighting off the January blues at St John's!

Mandy Evans Headteacher



2nd Saturday in the month at 10.30am, a one hour walk and coffee break, for people who live or work in Lemsford, Stanborough and Cromer Hyde, or attend Lemsford church.
Suitable for the family or dog walkers, all ages!

Saturday 14th February Brocket walk
meet by The Ramblers opposite the Sun at 10.30am,
Lemsford church is also open during the morning.

Saturday 14th March Stanborough Lakes
meet at the Sailing Club Cafe at 10.30 am, walk round both lakes.

***** Easter Monday Pilgrimage April 6th** walk to St Albans
a) meet at St Michaels, Birchwood, Hatfield, 10am for breakfast,
leaving at 11am - lunch stop at the Scout Hut
Or b) meet at Lemsford 10.30am to walk to St Albans
Or c) catch a bus and meet at St Albans Abbey 12 noon - by the gate to the Park, walk across the Park, past The Fighting Cocks, and leisurely walk round the Lakes.

The Service for Pilgrims at the Abbey 2pm. Please queue at the gate to the Abbey beforehand, before going into the service.
Dogs and push chairs are welcome.
Cars or bus for the return trip - arriving home about 4pm.

Future Saturday Morning Walks
May 9th, June 13th, July 11th, August 8th, September 12th,
October 10th, November 14th 2015



More details June Copping Hatfield1357@Outlook.com

People in the Church - *The Palmer family*

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Ian and I met in 1990 and married in St Johns in 1997, chosen for its beauty and being in the middle of our birth parishes. I enjoyed a variety of jobs working with children in my teens, and then settled in retail, taking on various area roles. Ian worked for BAe in Hatfield, and when it closed managed to get into the satellite industry, currently working for Airbus in Stevenage. Before children he enjoyed many years as a special constable (yes even back then the Fete drew us in!)



We settled in Hatfield to start a family, I left retail to became a childminder, and have seen a good number of children grow in my care over the last 13 years. We became members of St Eth's in Old Hatfield, where our two eldest daughters, India and Rhia were Christened. We transferred to St John's when the children joined the School. India 14, enjoys being a member of our choir, and also plays the piano. Rhia is 12 likes guitar lessons, and is currently learning to bell ring here with me, doing slightly better with no previous experience! They are both studying well at Bishops Girls School. I always wanted a large family, (*pictured inside front cover*) so we went on to have our three younger children, Darcey, Blake and Fearne. Twins at the end gave us a very large surprise and huge challenge, but what a joy! We have truly been blessed. Darcey, our first son, is 8. He is into sports and is a cub. Blake and Fearne, are coming up for their 7th birthdays; Fearne enjoys ballet and tap lessons, begrudgingly participates in swimming lessons and is a keen Rainbow. Blake likes football, swimming and is a Beaver.

In my free time (ha ha! I here you cry), I enjoy gardening, making jams and chutneys for the fete, a year-long hobby, swimming, bell ringing (coming back to me now) and finding more time to meet friends for coffee. Ian enjoys running and gardening, and home brewing.

Favourite hymn for myself is *Morning has broken*, takes me back to my childhood. Ian's is *Jerusalem*, both sung at our wedding.

High-lights of the last few years are: the birth of our children all born at home; watching India sing Evensong at the Abbey, family holidays in the south of France and Tenerife, the Christenings of Darcey, Fearne and Blake, (one of Edward's last Services), and oh so selfishly an amazing 2 day break to Champneys in Tring in December.

Looking forward to: being Confirmed in May; extending our property - we need more bedrooms; a trip to Parliament with India and Rhia; and finally - another successful fete.

Emily Palmer

The Focolare is an international Movement that seeks to bring about a united world through putting the words of the Gospel into practice in daily life. The movement is officially called 'The Work of Mary' but commonly known as 'The Focolare', a nick-name which means 'fireplace' in Italian, because it is a source of warmth and light.



The Movement started in Trent, Italy with a small group of catholic women during the second world war. In 1943, a 23 year-old girl, Chiara Lubich heard the call from God: "Give yourself totally to me." On 7 December she consecrated her life to Him for ever. She didn't have the slightest intention of founding anything: she was simply 'marrying God.'

In the following months Chiara drew many young women to her, some of whom wanted to follow her path. But meanwhile the war was waging in Trent, bringing ruin, misery, and death. The girls were in the habit of meeting in the air-raid shelters during air attacks. Their desire was strong to be together and to discover new ways of being Christian, of putting the Gospel into practice. Chiara would later say. 'The lesson that God was offering to us through the circumstances around us was quite clear: Everything is vanity of vanities, everything passes away. But, contemporaneously, God placed a question in my heart, which was for all of us. And He also provided the answer: 'But could there be an ideal that doesn't die, that no bomb can crumble and to which we can give ourselves?' Yes: God. We decided to make God the ideal of our life.' Their love for their neighbours inspired others and the movement spread to local communities, to other countries, people of other denominations and faiths, and people of conviction.

The Focolare attracts people from all backgrounds and they are involved in many different ways. Some people, called 'Focolarini' dedicate their lives to the spirituality of unity and they live in a community called a 'Focolare House'. Others focus on bringing unity to their places of work, parishes or communities. Whilst many are involved in inter-religious dialogue or charitable work. There are many children and young people involved, inspired to live the words of the gospel.

The first Focolare House was opened in the UK in Liverpool in 1963. The Movement developed steadily, and there are now Focolare houses in London, Liverpool, Leeds and Glasgow. As well as local meetings and activities, the annual 'Mariapolis' gatherings help people of all ages and backgrounds to keep in contact. A magazine and publishing house, New City, was also established.

A remarkable year for the movement was 1977, when the Chiara came to London to receive the Templeton Prize for Progress in Religion. There were 700 people in the Guildhall, and the vision of so many people united inspired Chiara to say of London, “They say that this is the most cynical city in the world, yet it could become its most spiritual.” Since then, Chiara launched ‘Bridging London’ a project to actively pursue dialogue and unity between the diverse people of London. In 1986 many Christian leaders, leaders of other faith communities, and civic dignitaries were present at the opening of the ‘Centre for Unity’ on Parkway, Welwyn Garden City (pictured opposite). The Centre is a focus for the movement’s activities in Britain. Just like the ‘little towns’ in Loppiano, Switzerland, and Rome, the Centre is integrated within the local community. It hosts events and has a particular vocation to foster ecumenical and interfaith dialogue.

The Movement recently bought 39 Lemsford Village, not far from St John’s, and have turned it into a Focolare House. One of the residents joined the Carol singing round the village in December.



Word of Life Group

**You are warmly invited to the
'Word of Life' Group**

Thursday 19th February 2015 at 3pm

at the Focolare House at 39 Lemsford Village.

'Welcome one another, therefore, just as Christ has welcomed you'

A time to share together friendship and fellowship as we explore a short Bible verse. The emphasis is on *how* we live the Word of God rather than in-depth bible study. So why not come along for an hour or so and share a cup of tea and cake together! More information—please contact Sue Stilwell 0143871 6338 or Sarah Finch (Focolare house) 01707 376780.

The Bishop of St Albans's New Year Message

Among the many events that will take place this year will be the general election on 7th May. Later on we will celebrate the 800th anniversary of the sealing of Magna Carta. This was a landmark event which has led to our modern democracy in the Western world. Nowadays we are all aware of our rights, enshrined in the laws of our land. However, these rights come with responsibilities. How can I contribute to our common life? Am I willing to obey the very laws which guarantee us our freedoms? What sort of society do we want to be?

All over Europe, there is a dissatisfaction with our political systems. We can all see their problems. But, compare our situation with Syria, in the grip of civil war. Or the tragedy which is unfolding as IS kills and rapes everyone in its path. It's a reminder just how fortunate we are in Britain.

However, democracy is a fragile institution. It will only survive and thrive if we are active citizens and engage in the political process. We have to enter into debates about our future. We have to make a contribution to our local community. We have to talk to politicians and above all, we have to vote in the general election. For those of us who are Christians it also means praying for our leaders, our nation and committing ourselves to contribute to the common good.

Recent press reports suggest that young people might be crucial to the outcome of the next election. My prayer is that they will also engage in the political debate. We need to help them realize that it is to a large extent up to them what their own political future will be. If you know a young person, encourage them to vote, this year and in every election in the future. If you are a young person, take your own future in your hands. Don't put it in someone else's.

But politics can't solve everything. It's people who do that; ordinary people who get stuck into the issues and opportunities of our local communities. *My hope for 2015 is that we will draw on the deep Christian roots of our nation and work together to become a more tolerant and a more generous nation.*

+Alan St Albans



**Loving God,
Sometimes my heart turns in every direction
except towards you.
Help me to turn my heart toward you,
to gaze upon you in trust
and to seek your kingdom with all of my heart.
Soften my hardened heart so that I might love others
as a way to glorify and worship you.
Grant me this with the ever-present guidance of your spirit.**

Creighton University

And finally

A man walks into a bar, orders three pints of beer and sits in the back of the room, drinking a sip out of each pint in turn. When he has finished all three, he orders three more. The publican says, "You know, a pint goes flat after a while; it would taste better if you bought one at a time."



The man replies, "I have two brothers living abroad, one in America, the other in Australia. When they left home, we promised that we'd drink this way to remember the days we all drank together."

The publican admits that this is a nice custom, and leaves it there. The man becomes a regular in the bar and always drinks the same way: he orders three pints and drinks them by taking sips from each in turn.

One day, he comes in and orders only two pints. All the other regulars in the bar notice and fall silent. When he comes back to the bar for the second round, the bartender says, "I don't want to intrude on your grief, but I wanted to offer my condolences on your great loss."

The man looks confused for a moment, then laughs. "Oh no," he says. "Everyone is fine. It's ME- I've given up alcohol for Lent."

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Pictures taken during Ron Ingamell's visit on January 25th.

