

St Peter's Eaton Square Parish Magazine



February and March 2023



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From Fr Jonathan



Dear friends

Candlemas

As this edition of the magazine goes to press the Church is celebrating the great festival of light of the Presentation of Christ in the Temple or Candlemas. The festival properly falls on 02 February, forty days after Christmas Day and commemorates the visit of the Holy Family to the Temple so that their first-born could be presented to the Lord, consecrated for his whole life to come. It was a custom required by the Jewish law and Mary and Joseph were keen that this requirement should be fulfilled.

The Revd Jacqui writes more about Candlemas later in this magazine and its significance as a pivotal point in the Church's year. Rather like the Roman God Janus, Candlemas has two faces: one which looks back to the light of the incarnation of the Word at Christmas and forward to the light of the Cross and all that we shall remember during Lent, during Holy Week and especially during the light and love of the great three days of the Paschal Triduum of Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and the Easter Vigil.

Lent

Twenty days after Candlemas this year we celebrate the beginning of the season of Lent on Ash Wednesday (22 February). Ash Wednesday is one of the principal holy days of the Church year when everyone should do their very best to be at the Holy Eucharist in Church and to receive the imposition of ashes as an outward sign of our inward penitence and a desire to live more faithfully after the manner of Christ. In order to accommodate a range of lifestyles and circumstances we have three

celebrations of the Eucharist that day – said services at 8 am and 12.30 pm and a Choral Eucharist at 7 pm. There is also a School Eucharist in Church at 2 pm.

The origins of Lent began as the final period of preparation for baptism and confirmation in the great liturgy of Holy Saturday and through which people who had fallen away from the church or who had lapsed could be restored to its fellowship. Before long, it was realised that the whole Christian community could benefit from an annual period of reflection, preparation and growth leading up to the celebration of the Paschal mystery – and so Lent began. Our Quiet Day on Saturday 18 March at St Botolph's, Bishopsgate will have devotional addresses on the liturgies of the great three days and I will write more about them in the next edition of this magazine.

Images of Lent

There are two abiding images of Lent in the Christian tradition. The first is the desert into which Jesus goes for forty days and forty nights, the account of which we hear on the first Sunday in Lent. It's in the desert that we see ourselves, exactly as we are, stripped of all pretence and re-learn our complete and utter dependence on God, who is the source and origin of all life and love.

The second image is from the old English word from which we derive the term "Lent" meaning the "lengthening of days" or the "springtime of the year". In our part of the world at least Lent coincides with the spring when new growth and new life is starting to emerge from the darkness and cold of the ground. All around us bulbs are beginning to spring to life bringing colour to the world - such as the snowdrops in the front cover of this magazine. In the same way, Lent is a time for new growth in our spiritual lives which will bear fruit for the whole of our lives ahead.

Elsewhere in this magazine you will find further details of our Lent programme, including the study of the Archbishop of Canterbury's Lent Book 2023 by Bishop Emma Ineson (newly appointed Bishop of Kensington). The book does not have the most immediately propitious title of "Failure", but it is an interesting and compelling exploration of the reality of our lives as seen in the mystery of the cross (seen as failure in the eyes of the world) and in Christ's Passover from death to life at Easter. There will be a Zoom version of this course on Monday evenings at 7 pm and an in-person course on Wednesday mornings at 9.15 am.

Stations of the Cross

The traditional devotion of the fourteen Stations of the Cross which trace Christ's final journey from his trial before Pontius Pilate to his being laid in the sepulchre is something which I gather we have not done for a while at St Peter's. During Stations, as the name suggests, we pause briefly at each point of the journey and have brief devotions and prayers at each one. One weekly devotion will be based on beautiful words composed over the years, including one week those of the English mystic, Julian of Norwich. You are warmly invited to join us for these on Thursday evenings at 7 pm on 02, 09, 16 and 30 March. Do speak to any of the ministry team if you would like to know more about this traditional Lenten devotion beforehand.

Daily Eucharist

At the beginning of Advent we reintroduced the daily celebration of the Holy Eucharist at 1230, as well as the celebration on Wednesdays at 0800. It might be that, for you, a Lenten devotion might simply involve attending one of these simple, said and meditative services at the apse altar. We'd love to see you if you can join us for any of these.

Living in Love and Faith

For the past six years the Church of England has been involved in a course of study and reflection called "Living in Love and Faith" as the Church has grappled with issues of identity, sexuality, relationships, and marriage. Each Diocese has had a steering group for this study, and I have served on the steering group for the Diocese of London. There is a five-week course, based on videos and discussion of the wide range of views on these key issues. We did this course in my former parish of Emmanuel, West Hampstead and we also undertook it as a Zoom Course across the Deanery of Camden, where I served as Area Dean. Even though the time for sending in responses to the course ended before I started here at St Peter's, I would be very happy to run the course in the coming months if people would like to do it?

I am sure you will have seen in the press and wider media that in recent months the House and College of Bishops has been reviewing the responses to this six-year study and will be presenting to the General Synod which meets in early February a draft book of Prayers of Love and Faith. Such is the breadth of tradition in the Church of England that, for many, these prayers do not go far enough, whilst for others they go too far.

The Bishops are not at this stage proposing the solemnisation of same-sex marriages in Church, but they are commending prayers which may be

used in parishes which wish to do so at various key points in a relationship, including after civil partnerships and civil marriages. They will also be replacing the contentious 1991 “Issues in Human Sexuality” with new pastoral guidelines. We must pray for the House and College of Bishops and the General Synod in the weeks and months ahead and for the gift of discernment of the Holy Spirit.

Here at St Peter’s, we belong to the umbrella group Inclusive Church which seeks for the Church to be a more inclusive and welcoming place to all. I hope and pray that St Peter’s will continue to be bright beacon of light and hope and of God’s unconditional love for all for many years to come, as it has already been for many years.

With my warmest good wishes and prayers, as ever,

R Jonathan



**This Church is an
Inclusive Church**

We believe in inclusive Church - a church which celebrates and affirms every person and does not discriminate. We will continue to challenge the church where it continues to discriminate against people on grounds of disability, economic power, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, learning disability, mental health, neurodiversity, or sexuality.

We believe in a Church which welcomes and serves all people in the name of Jesus Christ; which is scripturally faithful; which seeks to proclaim the Gospel afresh for each generation; and which, in the power of the Holy Spirit, allows all people to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Jesus Christ.

www.inclusive-church.org

From The Revd. Julie



As I sit down to write this letter, we are entering the last week of Epiphany. And, as we head towards Lent and into the Holy Week it is a time to reflect upon and embrace the promise of hope. For the season ahead is all about waiting in anticipation of hope, the hope of new life, the hope of resurrection.

We have learned much this year as a society and as a church about waiting. We are waiting for change, for signs of new life in the midst of continued uncertainty. And it could be that our experience of these past few years helps us capture its meaning, to gain a fuller picture of the hope of the Incarnation and the hope of new life.

Last week we held an Epiphany service in School. We sang hymns and said prayers, and we talked about what it means that Jesus, the light of the world, has come as our servant. Two of the children were dressed in costumes: one with a royal crown, and jewels and golden robes. The other child had a simple head scarf and a shepherd's crook. I asked the children to point out the difference between the two. After a long pause a small girl at the back pointed to the person in simple dress and said: 'This one is Jesus because he is the poor one. And, as often is the case, this child had it right: if Jesus has come in power as the Son of God, then he shows this in the power of his humility.

I think we would all agree that Jesus was not concerned with social standing. He wasn't after political gain or economic status. He was, on the other hand, out to challenge common misconceptions about God, and to overturn anyone's idea that God's kingdom is anything to do with earthly

power. And this is where our hope today is firmly rooted. And hope is sometimes seen most clearly in the midst of the darkness.

The darkness of destruction and violence cannot be hidden. We cannot make the evil in our world go away by pretending it does not exist. Darkness can only be overcome when it is exposed to the light. Athanasius, a theologian of the early church, put it this way: 'Jesus became one of us in darkness – so that we might become like him in the light.'

But what, you may ask, is our hope? What exactly are we hoping for and how will we know when we find it? We hope for peace. We hope for economic stability. We hope for good health. Each of these hopes are right and good but, as people of faith, let's think more deeply about the source of our hope. For Incarnation of Jesus, God becoming one of us, is the foundation of our hope. Put simply, we have hope because God is with us through both the pain and suffering of life. And God is with us as we are brought out of despair into joy. And as we look closely, we may catch glimmers of hope and joy all around us.

It has been lovely having Fr Jonathan with us as Vicar of St Peter's these past six months. It has been a time of change and we are beginning to see signs of growth. It is my hope that we will continue to deepen in love for and appreciation of each person's distinctive contribution to make the love of Christ known in our community. And, as we walk together through our journey of faith these next months, through Lent, Holy Week and into the season of Easter let's remember the hope we have and share in Christ. Here in the unknown, here in the midst of the darkness and light, God is near to us. For even in the deepest darkness, the Spirit of light is truly in our midst. And this changes our lives forever.

Revd. Julie

Candlemas 2nd February



The Feast of Candlemas marks the end of the Christmas season. It is also known as the feast of the Presentation of Christ in the Temple, and this title explains why it is the end of Christmas: according to Jewish law, forty days after the birth of a child, the parents would take him to the temple for the rites of purification and to offer a sacrifice. It was the last rite performed by a couple with a new-born and so completed that part of the baby's life, and so it completes Jesus' birth story too. Traditionally, we should keep our cribs up until this day, even if we choose not to keep our Christmas trees.

In the gospel story of this day, the old and devout Simeon is in the temple when Mary and Joseph arrive with Jesus. Simeon believed he would not die before seeing the Messiah, and on seeing Jesus realised that this was indeed the child for whom he was waiting. He praised God in the words we know as the Nunc Dimittis (Luke 2: 29-32) which refer to the baby as a "Light to lighten the gentiles" From this – the idea that Jesus is the light which enlightens all people, who came into the world to dispel sin and darkness – there grew a link to candles, and since as early as the seventh century candles for use in church throughout the year have been blessed on this day – hence the name Candlemas.

Snowdrops were gathered at Candlemas to decorate Churches in this country before the Reformation. They were symbols of purity, and so connected to the rite of purification that Mary observed by going to the temple. However, beware, it was considered unlucky to pick snowdrops before Candlemas!

So, this Candlemas, why not light a candle and tell your children the story of Jesus' presentation and the joy of old Simeon at seeing him. You might like to use the Nunc Dimittis before saying the Lord's Prayer together around your candle. And keep your eye out for snowdrops – Candlemas Bells – although check the date before you pick them!

The Revd. Jacqui Miller



From the magazine for February 1943

The Lost Sense of Wonder

One way or another we do seem to have lost some of the amazement with which men of olden time contemplated the being of God. Nor is this true only of that often-maligned person we call the-man-in-the-street; the man who belongs to the Church, whether regular in attendance or the one who only attends occasionally – he too may regard his religious exercises without much reference to the numinous. I apologise for that modern technical word of theology, but there is no true alternative. A sentence may serve instead: it is that he looks on an act of public worship as so many hymns, so many prayers and a sermon, and never once catches a glimpse of the glory which is behind it all, around it all and within it all. His private devotions too consist in reading so many verses of Scripture, and the repetition of a given number of sentences requesting help for himself, loved ones and the world, - with not a single emotion of ecstasy or, as a line of the hymn has it, of ‘wonder, love and praise’. When this is missing it is not strange that acts of private and public worship come to be thought negligible or at best duties which seem to have little correspondence with real life.

COMMENT: ‘Abba Lot went to see Abba Joseph and said: "Abba, as much as I am able I practice a small rule, a little fasting, some prayer and meditation, and remain quiet, and as much as possible I keep my thoughts clean. What else should I do?" Then the old man stood up and stretched out his hands toward heaven, and his fingers became like ten torches of flame. And he said: "Why not be turned into fire?"' The balance between the daily faithfulness that is the prerequisite of the Christian life and the openness to the disturbing presence of God is a hard one. **Valerie Smith**

From the magazine for March 1943

St Peter's Schools

The schools are now open under the headship of Mr Greenlaw. There are at present about 50 children attending. We hope the number will rapidly rise. Please make it widely known that the Schools are now open. Mr Brook is giving religious instruction at the School and Mr Meadows is showing a series of five travel films provided by the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel.



COMMENT

The reopening of the School had in fact been announced in the magazine for February 1943 as taking place on 8 February when it was said that Mr Warner, the previous Head, would be returning. Mr Warner could have been in post only a limited time as it was only in December 1938 that the long-serving Mr Brewer had retired. Like two thirds of the schools in London, St Peter's School had closed when the evacuation of urban children at the beginning of the war took place. Restarting was no easy task. Although by the end of the 1943 the numbers attending had risen to 108, panic arising from further attacks on London in the summer of 1944 had led to the numbers falling again to 15 and the whole project had to be relaunched. We are indebted to another Head, Mr H.J. Blackwell who served between 1944 and 1945 for a summary of how this reconstruction happened. The children who came had received varying degrees of education, and the upheaval of evacuation, compounded by the general wartime disruption, made the intake anything but typical. Growth went by fits and starts but by the end of 1945 there were 184 pupils and a continuing upward trend of admissions. Mr Blackwell in his relatively short time had introduced a fully musical daily act of worship in which all the children took a part, managed to restock the school with books, pictures and equipment and overseen the introduction of swimming lessons and various cultural activities. The church and school were able to celebrate Christmas 1945 with a splendid tea and entertainment for the children aged at that point from 5-14.

Valerie Smith

St Polycarp Feast Day February 23



St Polycarp Feast Day February 23. Bishop and martyr. Died 155AD. He was a disciple of the apostle John.

St Nicholas Owen Feast Day March 22



St Nicholas Owen Feast Day March 22. Principal builder of priest holes for hiding English Catholics during the reigns of Elizabeth 1 and James1.

Saints of the Saxon kingdom of Northumbria

In the course of 2023, the regular column which takes a saint whose feast day falls within the period of publication will work through a number of the most significant early saints produced by the church in Anglo-Saxon England. A unifying theme, among others, will be that all of these saints lived and worked in the Saxon kingdom of Northumbria, arguably the most significant of the pre-Conquest kingdoms, both politically and culturally. The extent of Anglo-Saxon Northumbria ranged from the Humber estuary to what is now the Lothian region of Scotland. Although its political fortunes waxed and waned, it was an essential component of all of the power struggles of sixth, seventh and eighth century England. Two of the most important religious literary artefacts of the Dark Ages – the Lindisfarne Gospels, and the Codex Amiatinus, were both produced in the monastery of Monkwearmouth-Jarrow, as was the foundation document of modern English history, Bede's *Historia Ecclesiastica Gentis Anglorum* (Ecclesiastical History of the English People). Northumbria was also the territory in which two versions of Christianity, Celtic and Roman, encountered each other, co-existing for a while, but with the ultimate dominance going to the Roman variety.

The history of Anglo-Saxon Northumbria is one in which saints feature at least as prominently as monarchs and nobles. Faith was at the centre of life. Anyone who has read Bede's *Historia* will be aware of how important faith was to people in all social classes. It is impossible not to be touched by Bede's description of the lives of saints from the generations before him, and the effect they had both in their own time, and in Bede's own day. I hope that we will all be able to learn something from the lives of these saints as we use their feast days as signposts through the year in our magazine issues for 2023.

We will start, in the current issue, with St Cuthbert. We will then move on to St Wilfrid of York in the April/May issue, to St Oswald in the June/July issue, then St Aidan of Lindisfarne in the August/September issue and culminate with St Hilda of Whitby in the October/November issue. Anyone interested in discovering more about the Northumbrian saints, and the context in which they worked and lived, could do worse than reading Bede's *Historia*. For a more modern account, a monograph by Paul Frodsham entitled "Cuthbert and the Northumbrian Saints" was published in 2009, and gives very helpful background on the cultural, political and historical contexts of Anglo-Saxon Northumbria.

St Cuthbert



St Cuthbert (c635-687) was perhaps of a noble family and born in what are now the Scottish Borders in the mid-630s, some ten years after the conversion of King Edwin of Northumbria to Christianity in 627, which was slowly followed by that of the rest of his people. The politics of the kingdom were violent, and there were later episodes of pagan rule; spreading understanding of Christianity through the kingdom was a task that lasted throughout

Cuthbert's lifetime. Edwin had been baptised by Paulinus of York, an Italian who had come with the Gregorian mission from Rome, but his successor Oswald also invited Irish monks from Iona to found the monastery at Lindisfarne where Cuthbert was to spend much of his life. This happened in around 635, about the time Cuthbert was born.

The tension between the Roman and Celtic traditions, often exacerbated by Cuthbert's near-contemporary St Wilfrid, an intransigent and quarrelsome supporter of Roman ways (of whom we shall learn more in the next issue of the magazine), was to be a major feature of Cuthbert's lifetime. Cuthbert himself, though educated in the Celtic tradition, followed his mentor Eata in accepting the Roman forms without apparent difficulty after the Synod of Whitby in 664. The earliest biographies concentrate on the many miracles that accompanied even his early life, but he was evidently indefatigable as a travelling priest in spreading the Christian message to remote villages, and well able to impress royalty and nobility. Unlike Wilfrid, his style of life was austere, and when he was able to, he lived the life of a hermit, though still receiving many visitors.

In Cuthbert's time the Anglo-Saxon Kingdom of Northumbria included, in modern terms, northern England as well as parts of south-eastern Scotland on an intermittent and fluid basis as far north as the Firth of Forth. Cuthbert may have been from the area of Dunbar at the mouth of the Firth of Forth in modern-day Scotland, though some histories of his life record that he was fostered as a child near Melrose. Fostering is possibly a sign of noble birth, as are references to his riding a horse when young. One night while still a boy, employed as a shepherd, he had a vision of the soul of Aidan being carried to heaven by angels, and later found out that Aidan had died that very night. At some point he joined the very new monastery at Melrose, under the prior Boisil. Saint Cuthbert may (according to Irish genealogies) have been a second cousin of King Aldfrith of Northumbria, which may have been the reason for his later proposal that Aldfrith should be crowned as monarch.

Cuthbert's reputation for piety, diligence, and obedience grew throughout his life. When the king founded a new monastery at Ripon, Cuthbert became its *praepositus hospitum* (guest master) under Eata. When Wilfrid was given the monastery, Eata and Cuthbert returned to Melrose. Illness struck the monastery in Melrose in 664 and, while Cuthbert recovered, the prior died and Cuthbert was made prior in his place. He spent much time among the people, ministering to their spiritual needs, carrying out missionary journeys, preaching, and performing miracles.

Cuthbert retired in 676, moved by a desire for the contemplative life. With his abbot's leave, he moved to a spot generally identified with St. Cuthbert's Island near Lindisfarne. Shortly afterwards, Cuthbert removed to Inner Farne Island off the Northumbrian coast, where he gave himself up to a life of great austerity. At first he received visitors, but later he confined himself to his cell and opened his window only to give his blessing.

In 684, Cuthbert was elected Bishop of Hexham, at a synod at Twyford (believed to be present-day Alnmouth), but was reluctant to leave his retirement and take up his charge; it was only after a visit from a large group, including the king (at this time Ecgrith), that he agreed to return and take up the duties of bishop, but as Bishop of Lindisfarne, swapping with Eata, who went to Hexham instead. He was consecrated at York by Archbishop Theodore and six bishops on 26 March 685. After Christmas, 686, however, he returned to his cell on Inner Farne Island (two miles from Bamburgh, Northumberland), which was where he eventually died on 20 March 687 AD, after a painful illness. He was buried at Lindisfarne the same day, and after long journeys escaping the Danes his remains chose (according to legend) to settle at Durham, causing the foundation of the city and of Durham Cathedral. His tomb is still marked in that cathedral's crypt.

Cuthbert's cult had appealed to the converted Danes who had augmented the Anglo-Saxon population of Northumbria, and was subsequently also adopted by the Normans when they took over England following the Conquest. Cuthbert's shrine at Durham Cathedral was a major pilgrimage site throughout the Middle Ages, until stripped by Henry VIII's commissioners during the Dissolution of the Monasteries.

Cuthbert is venerated as a saint by Catholic, Anglican and Orthodox Christians. His feast day is on 20 March (though some Anglican churches celebrate it on other dates).

Richard Carter

Searching for St Peter



In the December/January magazine, we set about looking for images of our patron saint, St Peter, when we are out and about, to help us think about his place in the story of Jesus and in God's heavenly kingdom. We already have a good statue of him in Church of course.

This painting of St Peter is by the Flemish artist, Peter Paul Rubens. It was painted around 1616 as an altarpiece for a church in Brussels in Belgium. It hangs in the Wallace Collection, one of London's best kept secrets, ten minutes' walk north of Selfridges. (It was Father Alan who shared the secret with us.) The painting shows two Bible stories in one. There is the one is from St John's Gospel when Jesus asked Peter "Feed my Sheep." There are some actual sheep on the right. The other story is from St Matthew's Gospel about Jesus's promise to give Peter the Keys to the Kingdom of Heaven. There are the two Keys in Jesus's right hand. This wonderful painting by Rubens is called Christ's Charge to Peter. There is more to read about it on the Wallace Collection website, or better still see it for yourself. The Wallace Collection has free entry to the permanent collection of which this is part.

David Stanley

Persecuted Christians

Article courtesy of **Open Doors**

Where to Christians risk the most for following Christ? Why are Christians persecuted? How do I pray for my persecuted brother and sisters? What are the latest trends in persecution around the world?

The answers to these questions – and many more – are found every year in the annual Open Doors World Watch List.

Released every January, the Open Doors World Watch List ranks the countries where Christians risk the most to follow Christ. Now in its 30th year, the list uses extensive, on-the-ground research to ensure you are equipped with reliable and accurate information to pray and speak out for our persecuted family.

Because the World Watch List is more than a set of data or a collection of statistics – important though that information is. It's about real people. It's about our brothers and sisters.

The World Watch List offers a unique window into the world of the persecuted church, a world where violence against Christians is growing, where digital surveillance is holding an evermore suffocating grip on freedom of belief and worship, and where following Jesus and sharing the gospel is increasingly dangerous.

STANDING ALONGSIDE THE RISK-TAKERS

The World Watch list also offers you an opportunity to stand alongside Christians who risked everything to follow Christ.

“I found it so helpful to learn a lot about the persecuted church worldwide. I prayed one day at a time for each of the countries”

This year, your free resources focus particularly on the theme of risk. Here in the UK and Ireland most of us don't risk much by being a Christian – and perhaps we don't often take big risks in sharing our faith. But from North Korea to Nigeria, from India to Indonesia, from Syria to Sudan, Christians risk losing their freedom, even their lives, for following Jesus.

What gives them the courage to carry on? One of the most important factors is knowing that they are part of the worldwide family of believers. So please use the World Watch List and your World Watch List resources as a way to bless and support our persecuted church family, and to raise awareness of what they experience. It's a great way to learn from the courageous faith of the persecuted church. But more than that, it's an opportunity to stand alongside those who risk everything for Jesus.

In conversation with one of our Parishioners

Ekanem Peers

Ekanem is a member of St Peter's currently on the PCC. She first discovered St Peter's when she was working on the night shift of a nearby five-star hotel, among other things taking international calls from people who had not checked the time in England. Looking for a church that had a Eucharist early enough on Sunday for her to go straight there after her shift finished, she found the 8.15am Holy Communion. This service is a long-standing part of St Peter's worship pattern, but it is a small and, in some ways, atypical service. So, both at church and at work she was part of a small team or group. One of the few positive outcomes of the lockdown period was that she was able to watch the other services online and get a somewhat broader idea of the worship. When the church reopened, she was able after a time to make the Choral Eucharist the service she normally attended. She found it friendly and welcoming and now as well as being "still learning" on the PCC she is Secretary of the associated but separate Pimlico St Peter Trust.

Before her period at the hotel, she had spent seven years in Lagos in Nigeria where she opened a bookshop specialising in architectural design, something of a niche area, and greatly enjoyed travelling between England to buy some of the books needed and Nigeria to sell them. She returned to England for family reasons and turned to the hospitality sector for employment as they were keen to recruit staff and the shifts fitted in with her caring responsibilities. More recently she has begun working with the Housing Department of Westminster City Council, on Victoria St, still in the parish, focusing on repairs.

In her spare time she enjoys walking, preferring to go out with a rambling group when she can, to compensate for a faulty sense of direction – an impediment with which I greatly sympathise. Before moving to her present address, she was conveniently located for the North Downs with their many pleasant opportunities for walking. As well as that she enjoys dressmaking, making blouses and dresses for herself, slowly but with a sense of satisfaction from producing neat, well-made articles. As a result of her time in the hospitality sector where she rubbed shoulders with foreigners with fluent English, she decided to improve her French and is working on it.

She would very much like to have a dog, but that will probably have to wait for retirement! But definitely something to look forward to.

Valerie Smith

A Moveable Feast

(Or Why Easter Changes Dates Every Year)

In 2022, Easter Sunday fell on 17 April. This year it is 9 April. And next year it moves to 31 March. So why does the date of Easter leap about from year to year?

It has to do with the moon, the Council of Nicaea and Pope Gregory XIII.

Historically, the Hebrew calendar was lunar, and their months and holidays were calculated by the 28-day cycle of the moon. Passover fell on the 15th of the month Nisan, on the first night of the full moon following the spring equinox.

The West — and most of the world — uses a 365.25-day solar calendar, which is the number of days it takes the earth to circle the sun. Divide 365 days by 28 days and you get a bit more than 13. Which means that the full moon lands on a different day in each of our 12 Western non-lunar months.

Early Christians logically calculated their celebration of Christ's resurrection by the Passover dates until the Council of Nicaea in 325CE made a critical theological change. They decided that Easter should be separated from Passover, as Christ's sacrifice and resurrection were the fulfilment of Passover. The old had passed away. The Council decreed that Easter would henceforth fall on the day of Christ's resurrection, Sunday, following the first full moon — the paschal full moon — that appeared on or after the vernal equinox.

Then in 1583, Pope Gregory XIII set 21 March as the vernal equinox in the ecclesiastical calendar. An approximation of the date of the Paschal full moon was set, as well, though it can vary as much as two days from the day of the actual full moon, with dates ranging from March 21 to April 18. Easter Sunday can fall on any Sunday between 22 March and 25 April — a Moveable Feast.

Nancy Wood

In church, what and why?

Lent vestments



Towards the end of February, the colour of the vestments worn by the priest and of the falls that cover the lecterns changes from the green immediately preceding to purple. This is because purple, or violet, is the colour of penance and Lent is a penitential season in which we examine our lives, reflect on our faith, and practise some special discipline all in preparation for the joy of Easter. The symbols on the vestments and falls remind us of the suffering and death of Christ. The cross is there of course, and the crown of thorns, but perhaps the most striking motif is that of the passionflower with its purple Lenten colouring. On the flower, the three top stigma represent the nails of the crucifixion, the five stamens represent Christ's five wounds, the inner corona represents the crown of thorns and the petals represent the apostles; since there are ten petals this cannot refer to all the apostles so it has been variously suggested that the petals represent the ten apostles who ran away when Jesus was arrested (Judas is excluded because he was not there, and John because he returned to stand at the foot of the cross) or that they represent ten faithful apostles. These vestments are worn until the beginning of Holy Week in April, except for one week. Keep an eye open and see what week that is and ask a few questions about why there is this change.

Valerie Smith

Obituary

Philippa Couttie of Downe

RIP Philippa Couttie

We are sad to announce the death of Philippa, Baroness Couttie of Downe whose funeral was held at St Peter's on the 11th of January. Philippa was a long-term member of our local community and the St Peter's congregation. She began attending the church in the 1990's and, after her marriage in 2002, she began to attend church with her husband, Stephen. Their children Angus and Genevieve were christened here in



2006. Philippa particularly loved the tranquillity of the Sung Eucharist and the beauty of the choral music. And Philippa's funeral reflected this aspect of her spirituality.

Philippa represented Belgravia & Knightsbridge on Westminster council and rose to become leader of the council in 2012. In 2016 she was nominated for a life peerage by David Cameron. Philippa was very proud of her career and even prouder of her family. She loved and cherished her children, husband, extended family and friends. She was greatly missed at St Peter's. 'May she rest in peace and rise in glory.'

*In memory of the Revd. Giles Hunt
who died 24th November 2022*

When my family started attending St. Peter's some fifty years ago, the priest-vicar was Giles Hunt. It was a curious arrangement under which St. Peter's was to become a diocesan centre and the Archdeacon of Middlesex was to be the vicar. Giles was responsible for the pastoral care of the parish. He was with us for five years before leaving to become vicar of Barkway in Hertfordshire.

Giles made a deep personal impression on many people. In those days when it was easier for parish priests to meet people in their homes, his visits were greatly appreciated. He was Catholic-minded, believing in the centrality of the Eucharist, and his deep sincerity together with his sympathy and compassion made a lasting impression. He christened my younger son and daughter.

While at St. Peter's Giles married Priscilla. On retirement they moved to a cottage on the beautiful Norfolk coast where Giles took up sailing to add to his joy and skill in riding. He also was the author of several books including the writing of an authorised biography of Bishop Launcelot Fleming to whom he was chaplain for many years. Late in life he was blessed with the birth of his granddaughter and grandson.

I am among the very many people whom Giles and Priscilla welcomed into their home, and I am indeed grateful for a long friendship.

Phoebe Hilary

Readings for February & March

<p>5 Feb 23 3rd before Lent Isaiah 58: 1–9a 1 Corinthians 2: 1–12 Matthew 5: 13–20</p>	<p>5 March 23 Lent 2 Genesis 12: 1–4a Romans 4: 1-5, 13-17 John 3: 1–17</p>
<p>12 Feb 23 2nd before Lent Genesis 1: 1–2: 3 Romans 8: 18–25 Matthew 6: 25–34</p>	<p>12 March 23 Lent 3 Exodus 17: 1–7 Romans 5: 1-11 John 4: 5–42</p>
<p>19 Feb 23 Sunday next before Lent Exodus 24: 12–end 2 Peter 1: 16-21 Matthew 17: 1–9</p>	<p>19 March 23 Lent 4 Mothering Sunday Exodus 2:1-10 2 Corinthians 1: 3-7 John 19:25b-27</p>
<p>26 February 23 Lent 1 Genesis 2:15-17& 3:1-7 Romans 5: 12-19 Matthew 4: 1–11</p>	<p>26 March 23 Lent 5 Ezekiel 37: 1–14 Romans 8: 6-11 John 11: 1–45</p>

Calendar for February

We 1		
Th 2	Presentation of Christ in the Temple	All parents
Fr 3	<i>Anskar, archbishop, missionary, 865</i>	The Church in Denmark
Sa 4		Alcoholics Anonymous
Su 5	Third Sunday before Lent	The parish and people
Mo 6	<i>Saint Paul Miki and Martyrs of Japan, 1597</i>	Those persecuted for their faith
Tu 7		Westminster City School
We 8		Anglican Catholic Future - ACF
Th 9		Grey Coat Hospital School
Fr 10	<i>Scholastica, abbess c 543</i>	Edgware Abbey
Sa 11		Victoria Business Improvement District and the Arc Project
Su 12	Second Sunday before Lent	The parish and people
Mo 13		Belgravia Residents' Association
Tu 14	<i>SS. Cyril and Methodius, 869 and 885 co-patrons of Europe</i>	Europe
We 15	<i>Sigrid, bishop, Apostle of Sweden, 1045</i>	The Church of Sweden
Th 16		Eaton House, School
Fr 17	<i>Janani Luwum, archbishop, martyr, 1977</i>	The Church in Uganda

Calendar for February (cont.)

Sa 18		St Michael's. Chester Square
Su 19	Sunday next before Lent	The parish and people
Mo 20		Francis Holland School
Tu 21	<i>Shrove Tuesday</i>	A sense of penitence in our faith
We 22	Ash Wednesday	For grace to keep Lent faithfully
Th 23	<i>Polycarp, bishop, martyr, c. 155</i>	+Sarah, our Bishop
Fr 24		Archdeacon Luke
Sa 25		Archdeacon Adam
Sun 26	First Sunday of Lent	The parish and people
Mo 27	George Herbert, priest, 1633	Parish priests
Tu 28		Our parish Lent group

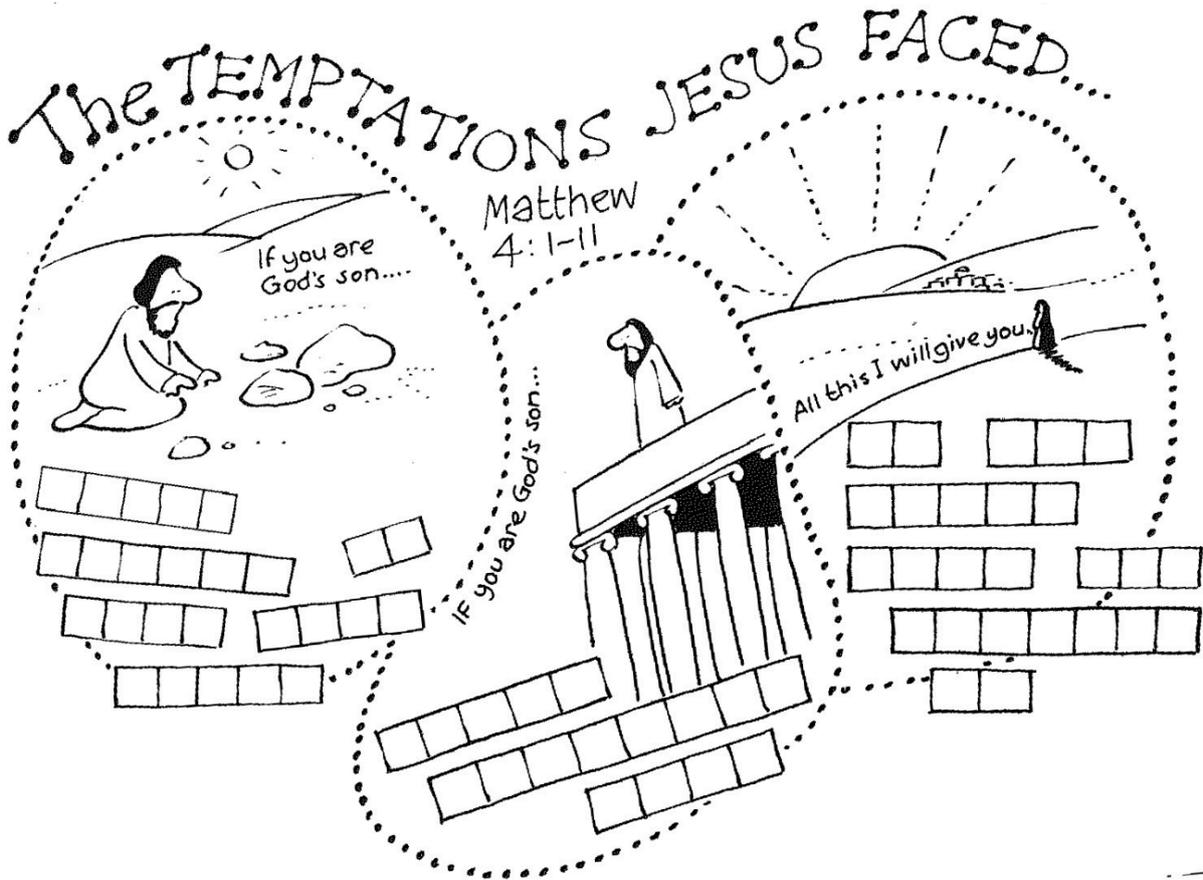
Calendar for March

We 1	<i>David, bishop, patron of Wales, c 601</i> <i>Ember Day</i>	The Church and people of Wales
Th 2	<i>Chad, bishop, missionary, 672</i>	Vocations to the religious life
Fr 3	<i>Ember Day</i>	Theological Colleges and Courses
Sa 4	<i>Ember Day</i>	Ordinands
Su 5	Second Sunday of Lent	The parish and people
Mo 6		The Society of Martha and Mary, Sheldon, Devon
Tu 7	<i>Perpetua, Felicity & companions,</i> <i>martyrs, 203</i>	Modern day martyrs
We 8	<i>Edward King, bishop, 1910</i>	Cuddesdon College, Oxford
Th 9		Victoria Station
Fr 10		Victoria Coach Station
Sa 11		St Paul's, Knightsbridge
Su 12	Third Sunday of Lent	The parish and people
Mo13		St Mary's, Bourne Street
Tu14		St Barnabas', Pimlico
We 15		The Royal Mews
Th 16		The Cleveland Hospital
Fr 17	<i>Patrick, bishop, missionary of Ireland, c 460</i>	The Church and people of Ireland

Calendar for March (cont.)

Sa 18	<i>Cyril of Alexandria, bishop, teacher of the faith, 386</i>	Theologians
Su 19	Fourth Sunday in Lent Mothering Sunday	The parish and people
Mo 20	Joseph of Nazareth, transferred	Fathers
Tu 21	<i>Thomas Cranmer, archbishop, Reformation martyr, 1556</i>	Liturgists
We 22		Westminster Cathedral
Th 23		Westminster Abbey
Fr 24	<i>Walter Hilton, mystic, 1396</i>	Spiritual directors
Sa 25	Annunciation of Our Lord to the Blessed Virgin Mary	The Shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham
Sun 26	Fifth Sunday of Lent Passion Sunday	The parish and people
Mo 27		Metropolitan Police Scotland Yard
Tu 28		London Ambulance Service
We 29		London Fire Brigade
Th 30		Westminster (St Margaret) Deanery
Fr 31	<i>John Donne, priest, poet, 1631</i>	St Paul's Cathedral

Children's Page



Recipe



As forced rhubarb will be available shortly, here is a delicious recipe for Rhubarb cake!

Ingredients

- 300 g rhubarb
- Juice of ½ lemon
- 165 g self-raising flour
- 175 g unsalted butter, softened, plus extra for greasing
- 175 g caster sugar
- 3 large free-range eggs
- 2 tsp vanilla extract

Topping

- 25 g unsalted butter
- 2 tbsp self-raising flour
- 1 tbsp caster sugar
- 2 tsp ground ginger
- 1 tbsp icing sugar, to dust
- 4 tbsp crème fraîche, to serve
- 2 tbsp clear honey, to serve

Method

Preheat the oven to 180°C/gas mark 4. Grease a 23cm square cake tin and line with baking parchment.

Trim the rhubarb and chop into 3cm pieces. Place in a bowl with the lemon juice. In a separate bowl, beat together the flour, butter, sugar, eggs and vanilla extract. Fold in half the rhubarb and spoon the mixture into the bottom of the tin, spreading it out with a spatula. Scatter over the remaining rhubarb.

For the topping, rub the butter into the flour, then stir in the sugar and ginger. Sprinkle over the cake mixture and bake for 40-50 minutes. Leave to cool for 10 minutes, then remove from the tin. Dust with icing sugar, then slice into squares. Serve warm or cold with crème fraiche, drizzled with honey.

Our Common Life

<p>Vicar The Rev'd Jonathan Kester 07539 332408 020 72354242</p>	<p>Parish Administrator Sheila Matthews 020 72354482 admin@stpetereatonsquare.co.uk</p>
<p>Priest Missioner The Rev'd Julie Khovacs 07540 418623</p>	<p>Book-Keeper Susan Redwin 020 72354482 finance@stpetereatonsquare.co.uk</p>
<p>Licensed Lay Minister Dr Judith Richardson 07907 459693</p>	<p>Director of Music Andrew John Smith 07545 009607 Acjsmith45@hotmail.co.uk</p>
<p>Honorary Assistant Priests The Rev'd Jacqui Miller The Rev'd Simon Walsh</p>	<p>Deputy Director of Music Andrew Sackett andrewjsackett@gmail.com</p>
<p>Churchwardens Richard Carter 07973667252 Samantha Singlehurst 07930 826475</p>	<p>Groundsman Chris Reynolds</p>
<p>Hon Treasurer John Hilary jhilary@gmail.com</p>	<p>Resources Committee Richard Carter</p>
<p>P.C.C. Secretary Valerie Smith Vasmith440@gmail.com</p>	<p>Worship Committee Fr Jonathan Kester</p>
<p>Electoral Roll Officer Sarah Armstrong Sarahanne.hasker@gmail.com</p>	<p>Formation Group Convenor: Fr Jonathan Kester</p>
<p>Verger Callum Shaw 07365002204 verger@stpetereatonsquare.co.uk</p>	<p>Transformation Group Convenor: Revd. Julie Khovacs</p>

Our Common Life

Standing Committee Chair: Sammie Singlehurst	Communications Group Valerie Smith
Hospitality Co-Ordinator Raana Khatabakhsh	Safeguarding Officer Vivien Reed
Parish Magazine Editor Phoebe Hilary	Children's Advocate Sammie Singlehurst
Library Sam Atkins	Bible Reading Fellowship Please contact Parish Office for more information
P.C.C. Members Sarah Armstrong Samantha Atkins Richard Carter Deborah Chapman Annabel Clark Mark Dowsett Mary Drummond Jane Frances Jim Glen John Hilary Michael Johnson Julia Jordon Lee Marshall David Payne Ekenem Peers Alex Porter Judith Richardson Kay Simon Valerie Smith Nancy Wood	Deanery Synod Richard Carter 020 76414230 Jim Glen 020 78211809 Judith Richardson* 020 3268 0055 Valerie Smith 020 78349251 Nancy Wood 07900 493491 *Also Diocesan Synod
	School Headteacher Jane Carrington 020 76414230
	Lay Eucharistic Ministers <i>Note that all our LEM licenses expired in February, New licenses are being arranged; the following license only has been renewed to tide us over until then.</i> Callum Shaw 07365 002204
School Governors Foundation PCC Rev'd Jonathan Kester (Ex Officio) Jim Glen Judith Richardson Rev'd Julie Khovacs	



The Westminster Food Bank needs donations more than ever!

There are ways we can continue to help the most vulnerable in our society... Please bring in your non-perishable food for the Foodbank. Contact Rev'd Julie for information on where to leave donations. Our volunteers will deliver them to the Food Bank promptly. Financial support is also appreciated.

I was hungry, and you fed me...
(Matt 25.35)

The Westminster Foodbank is based at Westminster Chapel and provides three days' - worth of nutritionally balanced (non-perishable) food to residents in the Borough of Westminster experiencing financial crisis, through a voucher scheme. It is part of a nationwide network of Foodbanks.

**ST PETER'S
EATON SQUARE
LENT QUIET DAY**



**SERVICE,
SACRIFICE &
SALVATION**

**SATURDAY
18TH
MARCH
10 AM – 4 PM**

**ST BOTOLPH'S WITHOUT
BISHOPSGATE, IN THE CITY**

COST £10

**Coffee, tea and a hot lunch will be
provided**

CONTACT REVD JULIE IF INTERESTED



**ST PETER'S
EATON SQUARE**

Shrove Tuesday Pancake Party

Tuesday 21st February

3:30 - 7:00 pm

In the Church Parish Hall

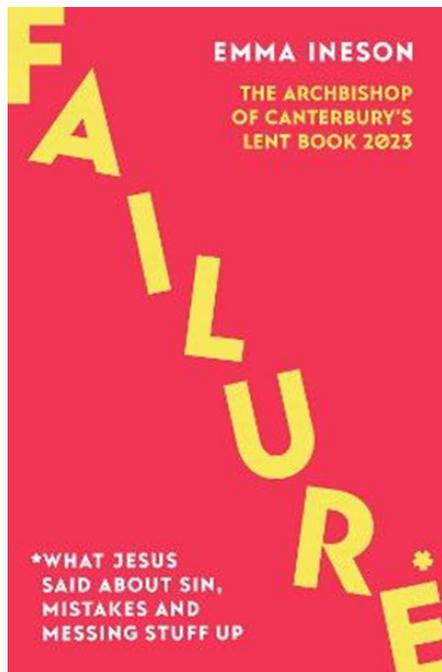
**All are very welcome and
encouraged to attend!**

Contact Revd Julie for information



ST PETER'S EATON SQUARE LENT COURSE 2023

An exploration of the Archbishop of
Canterbury's Lent Book:



*Failure:
What Jesus Said
about Sin,
Mistakes and
Messing up Stuff*

By Emma Ineson

**MONDAYS 7 PM
ON ZOOM**

WEDNESDAYS 9.15 AM IN CHURCH

Begins the week of the 27th of February

Contact Fr Jonathan or Revd Julie for information

ST PETER'S EATON SQUARE

Ash Wednesday 22nd Feb



Service Times

- | | |
|-----------------|--|
| 8.00 am | Eucharist with the
Imposition of Ashes |
| 12.30 pm | Eucharist with the
Imposition of Ashes |
| 7.00 pm | Choral Eucharist with the
Imposition of Ashes,
sermon and choir |

ST PETER'S EATON SQUARE

SERVICE TIMES:

Sunday Morning Services

BCP Holy Communion	08:15
Family Eucharist at	09:45
Sung Eucharist with our world-class choir	11:15

Weekday Eucharist

Monday to Friday	12.30
<i>Also Wednesday</i>	08.00

Morning prayer: Monday - Friday at 08:00am (Excluding Wednesday)

Evening prayer: Monday - Friday at 5.00pm

We are open for private prayer Monday – Friday 8.00am – 5.00pm