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Members and friends of St Mary's Monthly Missive March 2020

Visit us online at www.stmaryscomberton.org

Hearing

At the risk of being too personal I recently went to the doctors to get my ears syringed. (Although I hear the lucky few can have them hoovered these days). For the weeks before this I had been saying 'pardon' far more than usual to the increasing irritation of those around me.

Hearing is a key metaphor in the gospel. Moses heard the voice of God from the burning bush. Jeremiah heard the word of the Lord. John the Baptist was a 'voice' crying out in the wilderness. And Jesus, the very Word of God, came to 'proclaim' that the Kingdom of God had drawn near.

I kicked off our current sermon series 'Holy Habits', by talking about how we read the scriptures to 'find the Word in the words'. We want to hear the voice of God, through these words on the page. Sue then spoke of the importance of silence in our spiritual lives, for silence leaves space for us to hear God's whispers.

'How beautiful are the feet of those who preach good news, for how can anyone be saved unless they have heard.' So Paul writes in Romans, picking up bits from Isaiah 51.

We do not have to be able to physically hear at all of course in order to "hear" the message of the gospel. But the simple fact is that most churches still rely heavily (too heavily?) on the word as it is 'heard' – in prayer and praise, in scripture, in preaching and in the liturgy.

It is therefore vitally important that we do all we can to continue to improve the volume and quality of the sound system in church to ensure everyone can hear as well as possible. To this end, John Crang and David Royce have been tasked by the PCC to begin a process of updating our sound system and are currently trialling some pillar speakers (which you can see in church).

The cost of this is only £60 per speaker and we hope we can do the fitting ourselves. A memorial gift has also been offered to help cover the costs.

If these work well we will apply for a faculty to fasten them onto the faces of the pillars that point at 45-degrees towards the pews. The current mix of speakers would then be removed. We hope this will provide better sound and will be far more discrete (ie look better) than the current set up. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

With much love,

David

Worship Singing Group - Thursday 26th March

There will be a singing group at 56 Barrons Way on Thursday 26th March at 7.30pm, to start singing at 7.45pm and to finish at about 9.20pm. We will be singing some of the hymns and songs that will be used on Sundays over the next month or two, particularly the new and less familiar ones. Light refreshments are available. We usually have a short reflection at the beginning and an opportunity for prayer. New people are always welcome.



PCC meeting

Draft minutes are now pinned up in church rather than waiting 2 months for the approved minutes to be published. The PCC will meet on 9th March. Please note the new date for **APCM ~ 3rd May**



Advance diary date



St Mary's Easter Coffee Morning – Saturday April 4th in the Village Hall

Can you help?

Can you bake a cake?

Can you donate an Easter Egg for the tombola?

Please see Margaret Edwards if you can...

How about doing something
different this Lent....



St Mary's Soup Café
Saturday March 14th
12 noon until 1.30pm.
St Mary's Church

Come and enjoy
a wide variety of soup
& homemade bread...
Teas, Coffee & Chat

Free entry and donations to charity

Supporting
Christian Aid's
Lent Appeal &
NewDay United





Here's a little bit about one of the Charities we are supporting with our Lent Soup Café.

NewDay is run by a team of people in South Africa and Manchester, including a Lynn Swart, a good friend of Chris Westgarth's. They have a number of projects but their overarching aim can be summed as this 'We are motivated to bring **hope, help and healing** to the people of Africa by the words of Jesus; *'I came so they can have real and eternal life, more and better life than they ever dreamed of.'* – John 10:10 (MSG).

Their projects are:

HLUMA AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAMME

Hluma is a safe place for school children to be together, learn life skills and receive some 1-2-1 tutoring in reading, comprehension and maths. We have 43 children and teenagers attending each week currently, with an age range of 9 to 15 years.

COMPUTER LEARNING CENTRE

The NewDay United computer learning centre is designed and located in order to engage hard to reach communities. These are communities that wouldn't otherwise take up the opportunity to develop their IT skills to a meaningful level for the marketplace.

ROBOTICS

Robotics has been identified as a key skill for employment and a fun way for learners to learn maths and science in a practical way. We give weekly classes in collaboration with Futurelabs (a South African robotics business)

SEWING ENTERPRISE

In 2017, 10 sewing machines and fabric were donated to a group of women in Tambo Village, Cape Town. This has enabled them to set up training and a blossoming social enterprise selling various crafts and beautiful fabric products that they have made.

HOLISTIC HEALTH

NewDay United believe in holistic health strategies – which includes complete physical, mental, social and spiritual wellbeing and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.

WORK 4 A LIVING

Work For A Living (W4AL) is a 12 day job readiness course. The aims of this intensive course are to invest in people by sharing the job and entrepreneurial skills they need to support themselves and their families.

The Anglican Church Worldwide...and climate change...

The Anglican Church in the Province of the Indian Ocean recognises the urgent need to mitigate the effects of climate change, stating emphatically that it is 'our duty to protect God's creation'. Fisheries and marine tourism are the pillars of the Seychelles' economy. While it is important that those activities continue along with sand mining and oil exploration in order to support the livelihoods of the Seychellois people, it is also important that these activities are carried out in a sustainable way. USPG Partners with the Province of the Indian Ocean in supporting the implementation of the Indian strategic plan, which covers protection of the environment. In 2014, the island nation developed a marine spatial plan that covers its entire marine territory and holds a large mandate from marine protection to sustainable economic growth. The Seychelles has committed 30% of its 1.35 million km² of waters to marine protection by 2020, ten years ahead of the United Nations 2030 target for sustainable development goal number 14 known as the 'life below water' goal. Most of the work has already been accomplished, with only for some 4% left for the Seychelles to reach the deadline.



Here's a thought... When shopping, remember every 'thing' comes from somewhere, and was made by someone. What is its story? What materials have been used? What were the conditions in which it was made? How far has it travelled? What part of creation has been affected by its production? Minimise our impact, maximise our purchase.

George Herbert, whose life and death is remembered in the Church calendar on February 27th

George Herbert's life was framed by the season of Lent. He was born in Elizabethan Wales during Lent 1593. His marriage to the clever, beautiful Jane Danvers took place during the Lent of 1629.

Four years later he died on a Friday during the week before Lent began, amidst the weeping of Jane and the three nieces who lived with them in the parsonage at Bemerton. Only one of his poems is titled 'Lent'. In it he extols 'abstinence' and reminds his flock: 'The Scriptures bid us fast; the church says now.' But his poetry is full of the Lenten themes of sin, repentance, humility, submission, discipline, denial, along with confession, gratitude, and his frequent remedy of sighs and groans: 'I sent a sigh to seek thee out / deep drawn in pain.'

Lent

Welcome dear feast of Lent: who loves not thee,
He loves not Temperance, or Authority,
But is composed of passion.
The Scriptures bid us fast;
the Church says, now:
Give to your Mother, what you would allow
To every Corporation.

It 's true, we cannot reach Christ's fortieth day;
Yet to go part of that religious way,
Is better than to rest:
We cannot reach our Saviour's purity;
Yet are bid, Be holy ev'n as he.
In both let 's do our best.

Who goes in the way which Christ has gone,
Is much more sure to meet with him, than one
Who travels the by-ways:
Perhaps my God, though he be far before,
May turn, and take me by the hand, and more
May strengthen my decays.

Yet Lord instruct us to improve our fast
By starving sin and taking such repast
As may our faults control:
That ev'ry man may revel at his door,
Not in his parlour; banqueting the poor,
And among those his soul.

Did you know?

- George Herbert's poems and hymns were not published until after his death.
- He entrusted his work to his good friend of Nicholas Farrar of Little Gidding
- He was a fellow of Trinity College
- A member of parliament before being called to the priesthood
- He was noted for unfailing care for his parishioners, taking communion to them, providing food and clothing for those in need...He was described as 'a most glorious saint and seer'

A collect: Our God and King,
who called your servant
George Herbert from the
pursuit of worldly honours to
be a pastor of souls, a poet,
and a priest in your temple:
Give us grace, we pray,
joyfully to perform the tasks
you give us to do, knowing
that nothing is menial or
common that is done for your
sake ... Amen.

prayer

- As we travel on...through Lent...may our eyes be fixed on Jesus, may we realise afresh the power of what Jesus did for us through the cross
- May we draw closer to you, may we be generous with our time, our hospitality and our finances
- For the emerging signs of spring and the beauty of your creation, thanks be to God
- We thank you that you are a faithful God, you care for us beyond our comprehension, help us to give our worries and cares to you
- We pray for people known to us who need your love, your comfort, your healing, your peace, your strength
- Lord, we pray for all whose lives have been turned upside down by recent storms, natural disasters...we pray for help in whatever form is needed
- Pray for couples planning to get married at St Mary's
- Lord, you have said we are salt and light...as we look to reach out more into the community, may we be ready to give an answer for the hope that we have, may we not shy away from our calling to be salt and light
- We pray for the outbreak of COVID-19, for people who are suffering, for those mourning and for scientists trying to create a vaccine...
- For our Queen and Royal family, may they know your guidance, your protection, your strength and your peace
- We pray for our armed forces... may they know your protection and your strength and your support as they risk their lives for our freedom

The chancel is available after the service for quiet prayer and contemplation

***St Mary's is open during the week for prayer or a moment of quiet.
The north door is on an automatic opening system***



Sunday 1st March

9.30 am ~ Holy Communion

6.30 pm ~ Lordsbridge Team Evensong at Dry Drayton Church

Sunday 8th March

8.00 am ~ Holy Communion (BCP)

9.30 am ~ Holy Communion

Saturday 14th March

12 noon - 1.30pm ~ Soup Café at St Mary's

Sunday 15th March

9.30 am ~ Holy Communion

Sunday 22nd March

8.00 am ~ Holy Communion (BCP)

9.30 am ~ Mothering Sunday

Thursday 26th March

2.30 pm ~ Oasis Teas (in the Village Hall)

7.30pm ~ Worship Singing Group

Saturday 28th March

9.00 am ~ Selah (in the Village Hall)

Sunday 29th March

8.30 am ~ Holy Communion (BCP) at Toft Church

10.30 am ~ Lordsbridge Team Celebration at Haslingfield Church

Morning Prayer is said every Tuesday at 9.30am

Home groups meet on Wednesday and Thursday evening and Thursday morning.

4/5 March, 18/19 March...

www.stmaryscomberton.org

Please send through contributions for the February edition of 4m
to Chris Westgarth, by 18th March, thank you.
Email: chris.westgarth1@btinternet.com

