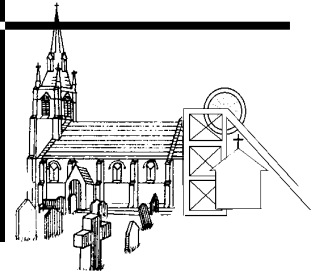


# OUR COMMUNITY



## THE MOST DANGEROUS PARISH *APRIL 2007* IN THE WORLD

30P

Over the Easter period we are planning to take an additional collection to support St George's, Baghdad. Canon Andrew White, formerly International Director at Coventry Cathedral, is parish priest there and had appealed to churches in Coventry Diocese. Here he describes life in his church:

Surely it is the most dangerous parish in the world. In the past month we have had over 110 people killed in our road of Haifa Street. 30 bodies were recently hanged on the lamp-posts outside of our Church. But people still flock to worship their God. We have learnt that when everything is gone, Jesus is all we have left.

**ST GEORGE'S BAGHDAD** continues to grow as an all-Iraqi Church amidst escalating crisis and tragedy. It is the only growing church now in Baghdad; this in itself is seen as a problem. The reality is that one of the main reasons people start coming to the church is because things are so

dangerous that they can not travel distances. We have therefore continued to arrange several buses to church each Sunday. Many of the men in the church have been killed. The Church is therefore predominantly women and children. Despite the continued violence, the church has continued to grow and now has over 1200 members.

### Relief

A huge amount of relief is now given from the church. This amounts to over \$8,000 per month. This includes supporting the families that have lost their fathers, providing food and clothing.

### Programme

The Church has a very full programme with events happening at the church on a daily basis. Apart from three

*(Continued on page 3)*

### Church Wall damaged

As you go past the church you may notice that a section of the front wall has been demolished.

On Friday 23rd March around 10pm there was an accident where a driver swerved to avoid an animal crossing the road and lost control of his vehicle, hitting the wall. Thankfully the occupants of the car only suffered minor bruising.

Work will be carried out to make the wall safe, but it may take some time for the wall to be rebuilt as it is likely to need specialist stonemasonry work.

*Every  
blessing  
God has  
for man  
is in  
and through  
Jesus Christ.  
A Lindsay Glegg*

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*...I don't care how many kilowatts it produces...  
you haven't got planning permission!!*

# ST. THOMAS' CHURCH CALENDAR

## April

### Sunday 1st - Palm Sunday

9am Holy Communion and hymns. Peter Walker  
10.30am Palm Sunday Parade. Peter Walker

### HOLYWEEK

#### Monday 2nd

7.30pm Service led by the Monday evening group

#### Tuesday 3rd

2pm Service led by the Tuesday afternoon group

#### Wednesday 4th

7.30pm Service led by the Wednesday evening group

#### Thursday 5th

7.30pm at Keresley Village Communion Church, 'Last Supper' Holy Communion. Peter and Ruth Walker

#### Friday 6th - Good Friday

10-12noon Childrens Activity morning  
2-3pm Quiet Hour. Peter Walker

#### Sunday 8th - EASTER DAY

9am Holy Communion. Peter Walker. Preach: Karen Mottram  
10.30am Family Communion. Peter Walker  
6pm Youth Service. Steve Medley, Karen Mottram and Stella Bailey

### Sunday 15th

9am Holy Communion and Hymns. Margaret Sedgewick

10.30am Family Worship. Pete Hudson

### Monday 15th

Schools Summer Term starts

### Sunday 22nd

9am Holy Communion. Ruth Walker

10.30am Holy Communion. Peter Walker. Followed by Annual Parish Meeting

### Tuesday 24th

8-8.45pm Prayers for St Thomas'. Galilee Room

### Sunday 29th

9am Holy Communion. Peter Walker

10.30am Holy Communion. Peter Walker. Preach: Karen Mottram.

## May

### Sunday 6th

9am Holy Communion and hymns. Ruth Walker. Preach: Stella Bailey  
10.30am Parade Service. Peter Walker

### Daily Prayer

8.30am Monday, Wednesday and Friday at St Thomas' church, Tuesday at Keresley Village Community Church.

## CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

### Sunday Morning Activities at St. Thomas'

10.30am (during term time)

1st Sunday Family Service in Church

2nd Sunday 3-11s, Sunday School in Galilee Room, 11+, Pathfinders in the Church Hall. All join the service around 11.25am

3rd Sunday All ages start in Church

4th & 5th 3-11s, Sunday School in Galilee Room, 11+, Pathfinders in the Church Hall. All join the service around 11.25am

This pattern may change occasionally for special services.

## Youth Essence

Monday evenings, 7.30pm, Galilee Room

## Thursday at St T's

For 5-11 years  
Meets in the Galilee  
On Thursdays  
From 5.30pm to 6.30pm



**Praise Pack**  
worship band for  
8s (Year 4) to 13s (Year 8)  
meets on Tuesdays,  
6pm-7pm, in the  
Galilee Room.  
With Steve Medley, Dawn Lia,  
Heather and Pete Hudson.

### First Steps . . . with Jesus

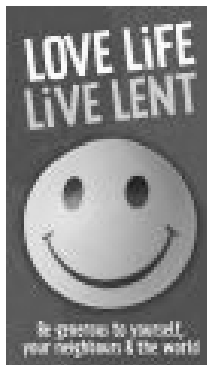
For babies and pre-school children  
with their parents and carers

Meets in the Galilee Room, weekly  
in term time

Mondays 1.30-2.30pm

## Love Life Live Lent

If you have not had a chance to read this little book from Birmingham Diocese during Lent, here are the final seven of the '50 actions to help you be a better neighbour.'



### Week 7, beginning 2nd April

#### Action 43

Learn some British sign language

#### Action 44

Talk to someone of a different culture

#### Action 45

Say hello to a police officer

#### Action 46

Write to your MP to express concern about the destitution of asylum seekers

#### Action 47 - Good Friday 6th April

Spend 5 minutes in silence at 12 noon.

#### Action 48

Chat to a call centre worker

#### Action 49 - Easter Day 8th April

Celebrate Easter. Share a story about what happened in Lent

#### Action 50

Be a Good Samaritan

## Annual Parish Meeting

The Electoral Roll has been renewed, now the time is here for the Annual Parish Meeting. This will be held on Sunday 22nd April after the 10.30am morning service.

A Bishop speaking about the 'Water of Life' asked the younger members of the congregation where their drinking water came from. A little boy jumped up and quickly said: "From the Lord my Pump."



(Continued from page 1) Most Dangerous Parish

services a week the Church also has a very active Mothers Union that meets three times a week, an Alpha Course and an active children's Church. As all of our children have now had their schools destroyed, none of them go to school. We are therefore looking at ways to hold regular school at Church.

### Funding

The Funding of the Church has had to increase dramatically. This has been due to inflation of 77% and a 25% fall in the value of the dollar against the Iraqi Dinar. The Diocese is giving the Church \$5000 every month. The monthly budget of the Church excluding relief is now \$6700 per month. As already stated, the monthly relief figure is in the region of \$8,000. This funding comes from three sources: Churches and Chaplaincies in the Diocese of Cyprus and the Gulf, Anglican Parishes in the UK and a variety of Churches and individuals in the USA, many of these are non ECUSA churches. In addition to the support of the Anglican Church in Iraq we are also helping other established churches in Iraq, including the Chaldean, Syrian Catholic and Syrian Orthodox communities.

### Effect of Violence

The violence is now so terrible and things are so awful. It is very difficult to practically continue the programme but the trust of the people in our Lord is quite outstanding. Worship is incredible and faith outstanding. The fact is that attacks on Christians have increased but these attacks are nothing compared to the attacks on Shia and Sunni Muslims. The reality is that everybody is suffering now in Iraq. Everybody in Iraq is now targeted. Everybody is at risk.

The Church in Baghdad is indeed a remarkable example to the Church of Christ. Every day they take up their cross and follow Jesus

We have wonderful people and I love them all. They are so grateful to the Churches in England for their help in our chaos and tragedy. We will not stop serving the Prince of Peace and we invite you to join with us in our service of God in this difficult place.

Canon Andrew White

## The Lord is my shepherd

A Sunday school teacher decided to have her young class memorise one of the most quoted passages in the Bible, Psalm 23. She gave the youngsters a month to learn the Psalm, but little Charles did not find it easy to memorise much of anything.

On the day that the children were scheduled to recite Psalm 23 in front of the congregation, Charles stepped up to the microphone and began proudly, "The Lord is my Shepherd...." He knew that much, but the rest of the Psalm suddenly deserted him. So he concluded bravely: "... and that's all I need to know."

## How does the Cross affect me?

I know that Jesus Christ died 'for' me. But what does that mean?

Someone says: 'Would you go shopping for me?' They hope that you will go instead of them. If you don't go, they will have to! It's the principle of substitution, or – in the case of the Cross – 'penal substitution', as the Bible students term it. Someone else has endured sin's penalty in my place. That person has become my substitute.

In football, to send on a substitute sounds like a 'second best'. Not so at the Cross. Nothing that God provides is second best. Jesus Christ, who is God in human form, had no sin of his own; consequently, he was the only person qualified to take upon himself the penalty of separation from God, which is spiritual death (Romans 6:23).

Christ came 'to give his life as a ransom for (or instead of) many' (Mark 10:45). This principle of substitution is the underlying reality. He died instead of me. This works out in different ways:

1. The Cross means penalty paid. The theological word here is REDEMPTION (Ephesians 1:7). It's the language of the slave market. A price, Christ's 'blood', has been paid for us (1 Peter 1:18,19). Always in Scripture, the word 'blood' – when it is separated from the body – refers to death. So, by his

death, Christ became 'a curse for us'; delivering us from the curse of the law (Galatians 3:13).

2. The Cross means wrath averted. The word now is PROPITIATION. It's the language of the Temple – and of sacrificial offering. God's holy antagonism to human rebellion brings us all under judgment. The story of the Bible is of God intercepting his own judgement, in the Person of his Son.

3. The Cross means righteousness exchanged. Now the word is JUSTIFICATION, and it's the language of the law courts. How, despite my sin, can I be treated as though I had never sinned? Only by Christ taking my place at the Cross, and being treated as the sinner – so that his righteousness can be freely accredited to me. It is an amazing truth completely unique to the Bible.

4. The Cross means relationship restored. Now it's RECONCILIATION – the language of the family. (Romans 5:9-11). It is illustrated in Jesus' parable of the prodigal son (Luke 15: 11- 24). But our reconciliation required that Christ be 'made sin for us' (2 Corinthians 5:19-21). Only by the Cross is it possible for us to be adopted back into the family of God as his sons and daughters.

Four wonderful effects of the Cross. The rock principle behind them all is 'substitution'.

## Easter celebrations in Central America

*This is the day that the LORD has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it.' Psalm 118:24*

We celebrate Easter with Christians all over the world this month. We come together to rejoice in Christ's resurrection.

In Guatemala many people make a shrine in their homes during Lent. On Good Friday they cover it with a black cloth to show their sorrow at Jesus' death: on Easter Sunday they uncover it and pray together as a family in celebration of his resurrection.

Throughout Central America streets are decorated with very elaborate pictures made of coloured sawdust. The beautiful 'carpets' are left undisturbed until a procession, led by the priest, has walked over it. The procession consists of penitents carrying heavy floats with scenes from the Stations of the Cross. Once the floats are carried back into the church, the congregation follows to take part in a mass.

In the UK and Ireland churches which have been without flowers and decorations through Lent are carefully adorned with fresh arrangements to symbolise the new life that God offers us.

Eggs are an ancient symbol of Easter. Russia and the Ukraine are particularly famous for elaborately decorated eggs, but people in countries as far away as Brazil also mark Easter by exchanging eggs, a

symbol of new life and the rich food of celebration following the Lenten fast.

At Easter, people all around the world rejoice that God raised Jesus to life, conquering death and despair. Resurrection informs the heart of the work we do at Christian Aid. We believe that God offers new life to everyone. We believe that God has given us the opportunity to live, providing us with a world where there is enough to sustain everyone and where no one need go short. We believe that life can be found in the midst of death.

As we celebrate the joy of the Easter mystery, perhaps we might think about what new life means in our world. Could your church hold its Easter Day collection in aid of Christian Aid's East African emergency appeal? Eleven million people are facing desperate food and water shortages there and action needs to be taken quickly to avert a region-wide catastrophe.

As Christ's church – his body on earth – we are called to play our part in the miracle of life. Without courage and bravery and a hunger and thirst for justice and life in all its fullness, death will triumph. But we all have the means to participate in sharing new life with our neighbours and in doing so, can make the joy of Easter an ongoing reality that is infinitely worth celebrating.

## The Abolition of Slavery

### The Clapham Sect

When the Abolition of Slavery Bill was finally victorious in the House of Commons, London, on 25 March 1807, much of the credit was due to the vision and determination and perseverance of William Wilberforce. But Wilberforce could not have succeeded without the help and support of a number of talented and dedicated Christians. This second article in our series of three will highlight some of Wilberforce's colleagues.

This remarkable group of men and women were known as the Clapham Sect because they all worshipped at Holy Trinity Church, Clapham, London. The Rector was the **Revd John Venn** (1759-1813), an ardent evangelical, one of the founders of the Church Missionary Society and chaplain to the Clapham Sect.

**Henry Thornton** (1760-1815) was the son of a distinguished Yorkshire family and was both a banker and a Member of Parliament. His house in Clapham was the home and headquarters of the Clapham Sect.

**Thomas Clarkson** (1760-1846), an outstanding classical scholar, was a tireless campaigner, a patient and careful collector of evidence, and used his time to organise committees and disseminate anti-slavery literature across the land.

**Granville Sharpe** (1735-1813), a self-taught scholar, was the senior member of the Sect and successful in bringing about, in 1772, the High Court ruling that when a slave sets foot in Britain, he is immediately a free man.

**Hannah More** (1745-1833) was the outstanding woman in the Clapham Sect. She was a campaigner for women's education, a very successful novelist, a prominent convert to evangelical Christianity and a strong supporter of the newly-formed British and Foreign Bible Society (now the Bible Society).

These were some of the evangelical men and women who wrote, travelled, lobbied parliament, organised committees, published statistics and eye-witness accounts of the horrific cruelty and debauchery that was part and parcel of the slave trade in the British Empire. In the words of Hebrews 11:32, 'time would fail to tell' of other members of the Clapham Sect: Thomas Babington, Edward Eliot, Charles Grant, Zachary Macaulay, James Stephen, Lord Teignmouth, and others.

What is most memorable about these good men and women is how their faith led them to social action, to political campaigning, to fact-finding missions, to writing pamphlets, to prayer and preaching – all in an effort to rid the British Empire of the villainy of slavery. They not only loved God, they loved their neighbour as well – and 'neighbour' included the black men, women and children

transported across the world's oceans and sold into life-long slavery. Theirs indeed was consecrated co-operation and their vision, prayer and work was rewarded in the Abolition Bill of March 1807.

The next, and final article, will focus on William Wilberforce, but we must not forget that Wilberforce succeeded because as well as having the Lord with him, he also had the support and perseverance and dedicated talents of the most remarkable congregation in England – the Clapham Sect.

*Dr H B McGonigle is Senior Lecturer in Historical Theology, Church History and Wesley Studies in Nazarene Theological College, Manchester, England.*

### The challenge of an ageing population

Have you noticed how upbeat the advertisements aimed at elderly people are? People portrayed in them are usually all smiles, as if contemplating their next Saga cruise. Of course, retirement means more leisure time and can be pleasant. But it can also be a time of loss; loss of power, loss of dignity and, often, loss of home.

In the years ahead there could be problems for those who are not well-off and for the taxpayers who will have to contribute to the care of a growing elderly population. Several recent reports on this challenge advocate changes not only in funding of elderly care, but in retirement patterns and the mind-sets of care agencies.

Research has uncovered much evidence of inadequate care and lack of respect for older people. Derek Wanless, in his report for the King's Fund, underscored the fact that we are not only living longer – perhaps good in itself – but that the number of years spent with disability or ill-health is also increasing. The number of sick or disabled older citizens is expected to rise in the next decade from 51 to 69 per cent.

To meet their needs the proportion of national income spent on social care will need to almost double, from 1.1 per cent to 2 per cent. Wanless wants to remove means-testing of access to care and relieve those of moderate income from being forced to sell their homes to meet care costs.

Then there was the Turner report, which proposes changes in the retirement age and to pension levels.

This all adds up to a huge political issue. Those of us who have a sense of social justice may wish to encourage our MPs to move at least some of these proposals forward. We must support the voluntary agencies seeking to bring about change.

Churches may feel a need to re-assess their systems of pastoral care. Individuals can also help by fostering positive attitudes towards disability.

## KERESLEY VILLAGE COMMUNITY CHURCH SERVICES

### April

#### **Sunday 1st Palm Sunday**

10.00am Family Service. Ruth Walker

#### **Holy Week**

Service at St Thomas on Monday and Wednesday at 7.30pm; Service at St Thomas on Tuesday at 2pm

#### **Thursday 5th, Maundy Thursday**

7.30pm Last Supper Holy Communion. Ruth and Peter Walker

#### **Friday 6th**

10.30am Childrens Activity leading to service at 11.45am with parents too.

2pm Quiet hour at St Thomas' Peter Walker

#### **Sunday 8th - Easter Day**

10.30am Holy Communion. Ruth Walker

#### **Sunday 15th**

10.30am Morning Worship. Les Warner

6pm Evening Worship. Mary Coles. Preach: Peter Walker

#### **Sunday 22nd**

10.30am Holy communion. Ruth Walker. Annual Meeting after service

#### **Sunday 29th**

10.30am Methodist Holy Communion. Jenny Dyer

### May

#### **Sunday 6th**

10.30am Family Service. Ruth Walker

#### **Regular Meetings**

**"Children's Club" Mondays Trailblazers 5-6pm**

**Tuesday mornings 9.30-10.30am First Steps for babies and pre-school children with their parents and carers, during term time**

**Wednesday 7.30-9pm - 'Drop-in' Centre for teenagers**

**Mondays and Thursdays 9.30-11.30am**

**Coffee mornings** The Church is open for anyone to drop in for a drink and a chat.



The major challenges of climate change and rising debt...and where God fits in

### Climate change - We can't blame

#### God for it

The publication in January of the European Commission's report on climate change makes clear the seriousness of the situation, and the drastic nature of measures needed to halt change, if not to reverse it. Where does that leave the community of faith? Are we to blame God for deserting us in our hour of prosperity? Are we, like Job's friends and neighbours, to say "curse God, and die?"

Or are we to recognise that, however unpalatable this may seem, it is our actions and our collective lifestyle that have brought about this situation? Fifty years ago the average British citizen travelled five miles a day; now he or she travels 29 miles, and nine of that is overseas air travel. Fifty years ago the average home contained two or three electric motors, a vacuum cleaner, a fridge and perhaps a washing machine; count how many there are your home today

Yet we should not be dismayed. The years of crisis are often the landmarks of faith: the exodus, the exile, the persecutions under Nero, the European holocaust of the Jews, all of these have led people of faith towards new understandings of the God who is redeemer as well as creator, who is with us no matter what. So will climate change and our response to it, given sufficient prayer and dedication.

Like Noah in Genesis 9 we have been given responsibility for the earth and for managing its fruitfulness; like Moses in Leviticus 25 we have the task of allowing years for the land to rest. But we have widely ignored these ecological covenants, and we are now paying the price for squandering God's gifts. Yet if this crisis enables us to focus on using his gifts simply but well, it will be worth the problems of change.

### Switch it off for love!

There's a bit in the Bible (Galatians 5) that talks about the personality traits that can be evidence of God's spirit in our lives. It's remarkable how applicable it can be to the environmental crisis our world is embarking upon. Each "fruit of the spirit" is an ecological virtue; if humanity were really to live according to these characteristics, we would necessarily be living in harmony with the rest of creation.

The first one is "love". We are asked to love others as ourselves. Should this love be restricted to those in our own families or village or should it include those who live in a different country, be of a different race or creed, or even live in the future?

If we want to have an inclusive, "big-picture" love, then we have got to look at our life-styles. Because the lives and livelihoods of people in the future are being endangered by our very way of life. Our energy-profligacy is releasing too much carbon dioxide into the atmosphere and threatening to disrupt the earth's life-support system - its climate.

But we can live in a way that is loving towards others, our children and our world by reducing the energy we use and therefore the carbon dioxide we emit.

#### **April Top Tip - Switch it off!**

Use the OFF switch on the TV or DVD when you've finished with it, turn off computers and printers, unplug mobile phone chargers and switch set top boxes and broad band thingamajigs off at the wall. If you want to pick and choose what to turn off just feel how much heat things generates when they're on standby - if it's hot it means its wasting energy, and your money! Leaving things on standby uses about 6% of the energy the appliance uses when running, and nationally, overall, a whole nuclear power station!

## FROM THE PARISH REGISTER

### THANKSGIVINGS

4th March  
 Logan Callendar, Ebony Callendar  
 Baptism  
 25th February  
 Roko-Jay Lovell-Freemantle  
 Matthew Howarth

### CREMATIONS

12th March  
 Barbara Ann Robbins (73) Cottage Farm Road

### BURIAL

19th March  
 Barbara Winnett (74) Keresley Wood  
 Funeral at All Saints, burial at Allesley Woodland Cemetery

### ASHES INTERRED

23rd February  
 Ida Lilian May Marriot

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### PILATE

*John 18:28 -19:16*

*Soft, my hands,  
 A governor's hands,  
 Soft, yet stained with the washing,  
 The washing that history freeze-frames.*

*It wasn't my fault,  
 They chose - though I offered them  
 One way out after another.  
 I tried to release him,  
 But the crowds were against me,  
 Against him, who had done no wrong,  
 Who spoke only of Kingdom truth.*

*"What is truth?"*

*I looked into the face of Jesus -  
 And I washed my hands.  
 I washed my hands of him.*

*Now all I see are his hands,  
 Roughened with the work of the world,  
 Pierced and bleeding,  
 Reaching out, washing clean  
 All who will trust and receive him  
 Who suffered under Pontius Pilate.*

*Daphne Kitching*

## People Like Us - Saul

**S**aul was Israel's first king, who started off well but ended up being rejected by God (1 Samuel 15:10). The final straw came when he failed to totally destroy the Amalekites as God had commanded (vs 3). What does this incident tell us of Saul's mistakes and how we can avoid them?

### Total Obedience

Saul's action brought grief to both Samuel and God. When Samuel challenged him, Saul was full of excuses. He blamed his soldiers for sparing the best of the animals (vs.15) and believed that he was carrying out God's instructions. Like Saul, God holds us accountable for our actions, especially when we ignore his instructions.

In what ways do we fail to put God's word into practice?

### Who's honour?

When Samuel arrived, Saul was setting up a memorial to himself (vs. 12), admitting later that he was afraid of what people thought about him (vs. 24). Saul had lost a genuine desire to serve God becoming more concerned about his own reputation and status. We often face the choice of either looking good before others or honouring God.

When do we find it challenging to honour God before others?

### Obedience not sacrifice

Saul argued that it was better to sacrifice the saved animals than to destroy them. However, Samuel reminded him that sacrifice was a symbol of the people's commitment to love and obey God, 'to obey is better than sacrifice' (vs. 22). For us attendance at services can never be used to offset behaviour or attitudes in the rest of life are offensive to God.

How do we make sacrifice an alternative to obedience?

Remember Jesus' words, 'Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven' (Matthew 7:21).

- • • • •
- **Regular Activities in the Church Hall** •
- *NB the Church Hall is not usually available for late night Discos* •
- Preschool Playgroup Mondays to Fridays, 9am - 11.30am •
- and 12.30pm - 3pm •
- 13th Brownies Mondays, 6.00 - 7.30pm •
- 41st Cubs Mondays, 6.45 - 8.30pm (in Scout Hut) •
- 41st Scouts Tuesdays, 7.00 - 9.00pm (in Scout Hut) •
- 9th Brownies Wednesdays, 6.00 - 7.30pm •
- 9th Guides Thursdays, 6.30 - 8.30pm •
- 41st Beavers Fridays, 6.00 - 7.30pm (for 6-8 year olds, •
- in Scout Hut) •
- • • • •