

CHURCH NEWS

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2007

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My dear friends,

I blame Mark myself. I received socks for Christmas from two different people, as did Jacquie. Mind you she even got a sock for her mobile 'phone! How did your Christmas go? I trust that you got all that you wanted. The difficulty with being disappointed with what we get is that it can colour our thoughts about everything else. To my great shame I can only remember one present I received for my 21st. A box from an uncle had me intrigued – but, when I opened it, I found inside a birthday card like an old musical box, which played the tune 'happy birthday' when opened. Not I fear what I had expected for a 21st. How often one disappointment or slight colours our perceptions. How easy to hold a grudge against someone for some small thing that happened long ago, or to dislike our daughter's new boyfriend for all the wrong reasons. Mind you we do the same in worship. Why do we need to change the tunes or even the words of hymns? Perhaps the answer to this is that our Grandparents doubtless complained in the same way. Musical tastes and language change, and I suppose that we must move with them – willingly or not!

We have just started a new year. Perhaps I should suggest to myself a resolution to try always to say thank-you **AND** mean it, and alongside that to resolve to appreciate that others who have different tastes to mine are entitled to them.

Where does Mark fit into all of this you may ask? We are blessed in church with a wonderful group of young people who really did us proud this Christmas. The young folk ran our two Christmas Christingle services wonderfully. At one point they found a Christmas present from God to everybody. Mark decided that it was probably socks. When they opened it though they found a large banner with the name of Jesus on it. God's present to each and every one of us was not socks but His Son. Now that free gift was some present.

Happy New Year,

Yours very sincerely,

John A Peal

SERVICES AT ST. PETER & ST. PAUL'S ASH

<u>Time</u>	<u>Type of Service</u>	<u>When</u>
8.00	Holy Communion	Every Sunday in month
10.10	Junior Church meets in Ash Village Hall, age 3 and over	2nd, 3rd, 4th & 5th Sundays during term time
10.30	Family Worship	First Sunday in the month
10.30	Family Eucharist	2nd, 3rd, 4th & 5th Sundays

SERVICES AT ST. PETER'S RIDLEY

<u>Time</u>	<u>Type of Service</u>	<u>When</u>
9.15	Parish Communion	Every Sunday in the month
6.30	Evening Prayer	Second Sunday in the month only

diary dates

Full details can also be found on the website.

Jan.	9 th	Ash P.C.C.		8.00 p.m.
	10 th	Covenanting Churches committee meeting		8.00 p.m.
	18 th	Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. United service at Hartley Roman Catholic Church		8.00 p.m.
	28 th	Prayers for healing at the Communion Service		10.30 a.m.
	30 th	Ash P.C.C. Standing Committee		
Feb.	5 th	Fete Meeting	- 5 Manor Forstal	8.00 p.m.
	6 th	Services Rota Meeting		7.00 p.m.
		Ministry Team Meeting		8.00 p.m.
	13 th	Prayer Meeting	- The Rectory	7.15 p.m.
		Ash P.C.C. (after prayer meeting)	- The Rectory	8.00 p.m.
	18 th	Pancake Party	- Youth Centre	details later
	21 st	Ash Wednesday Service		8.00 p.m.
	25 th	Prayers for healing at the Communion Service		10.30 a.m.
	27 th	Ash P.C.C. Standing Committee		

FROM THE REGISTERS

FUNERALS.

Dec.	12 th	Florence Mary Amura	aged	83
	19 th	Jean Mary Stewart	aged	80
Jan.	11 th	Joyce Barbara Goodwin	aged	96

May They Rest in Peace

CONTRIBUTION FROM THE RINGERS

Well, we managed it, just, to turn out ringers for every Sunday 10 o'clock service and for all the usual celebrations. We are grateful to those who removed themselves repeatedly from warm comfortable homes and their families to come and help and ring. We're also grateful to their families for lending us their ringers at this busy time of year.

We simply need more ringers to spread the ~~burden~~ joy. We are also very dependent on ringers from outside the parish, many of whom are too far away to walk even if they chose to. Please come and at least have a pull in the hope that some of you can learn to ring, but be warned, it's more addictive than sudoku. Practice is Saturday 9 to 11 am and is of a drop in nature. Nobody makes every practice or every service and that is not expected. The more of us there are, the easier it is to put a band together allowing for families and other commitments. If incapacity means you cannot consider tower bells, this year we would like to start a hand bell choir. We have the bells, all 18 of them, but we need the ringers!

A happy, and hopefully hand bell shaped, New Year to you all from all those in the tower – you know where to find us....

Cheers **John and Gabrielle**

ZIMBABWE

Please continue to pray in your own prayers and in our Church Intercessions for Our link Parish of St Paul's Marlborough, Zimbabwe

St Paul's continues to celebrate under its new Rector - Father Barnabas; who is described in these terms: *"our new priest seems to be a good person, a good priest and a good sport. He has a happy family and makes friends easily, while making it clear he has a mind of his own ... he preaches well and does his job conscientiously."*

As someone wrote about Zimbabwe - *good people are scarce!*

Things in Zimbabwe continue to deteriorate and a recent report from Tearfund has this aim in view:

As living standards decline in Zimbabwe, Tearfund is calling on the European Union (EU) to renew targeted sanctions. These sanctions freeze assets held in the EU by President Mugabe and his associates and stop them from travelling to the EU.

The EU issued the sanctions, which also include an arms embargo, in 2002. They were in response to the human rights atrocities being committed by Mugabe and his government and followed the 2002 elections which were neither free nor fair. The EU has reissued these bans each year since.

In February, the EU will discuss whether or not to reissue these sanctions in 2007. Some countries in the EU reportedly want to drop the bans so they can hold trade talks in Europe with the African Union (AU). Under the current ruling, Mugabe would be unable to attend but the AU will only take part if all its members are able to go.

A new survey, compiled by Zimbabwe's public service and social welfare ministry, states that living standards have declined by 150 per cent in the last ten years. For example, the number of people without access to clean water has risen by 48 per cent since 1996. Inflation is the highest in the world and Zimbabwe is now the country with the highest number of orphans.

Tearfund believes that to drop these bans now, at a time when the state of the country continues to worsen, would let Mugabe believe that the EU approves of what he is doing to Zimbabwe. Our campaign is in conjunction with Action for Southern Africa (ACTSA), a campaigning body which tries to influence British and European policies affecting southern Africa.

Please pray that the EU will continue to uphold the restrictions on Mugabe and his associates. Pray also that this joint campaign will be an encouragement to the people of Zimbabwe as they realise that they have not been forgotten by the rest of the world.

To make a really practical gesture go to www.tearfund.org/campaigning and take part in this political exercise on behalf of the people of Zimbabwe - it just means spending a few minutes writing a letter to your MEP! [Who?!]

Worth doing! With a computer – it's easy!

DONATIONS

Pauline and Dennis Bailey's Bring & Buy raised a total of £470. Thank you to them once again for their generosity and for opening their home to us.

The Flower evening organised by Fay and Christine gave us a total of £170. Thank you everybody and especially Fay for all the hard work. £40 of this was added to the proceeds of my open week for Tracey and made a grand total of £260 which I sent to the Lions Hospice in Northfleet. The rest was given to church funds.

Our trip to Trafalgar Square was very enjoyable and we made it on time! Our bucket collection raised a brilliant £204.28 for the Ellenor Hospice. (It was all down to Bryan's charm with the ladies).

Ann Aves

CHRISTINGLE

This was as usual very popular and the oranges were again kindly donated by Robert and Helen Cornwell from Meopham. Our grateful thanks to them for this.

SOCIAL COMMITTEE

This is not a real 'committee'; nobody is elected to do anything. Anyone who is available and has a little time to spare helps with social events. We have the occasional meeting (again any members of the church can attend) to put forward suggestions for fund raising. We desperately need more helpers to lighten the load. Please lend a hand if you can and give your name to Marion.

Saturday March 17th Beetle Drive to be held in Ash Village Hall.

Saturday April 21st we are holding another Barn Dance in New Ash Green Village Hall **7.30 p.m.** Dancing to the music of 'Pilgrims Way' Further details to follow.

A POSTSCRIPT TO LAWRIE TOWNSON'S SERMON - Sunday 14th January

Celebrate - Equip - Evangelise

The second reading for The Second Sunday of Epiphany is taken from St Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians' 12 v 1 - 11.

Here are listed the gifts of the Holy Spirit - which should be apparent, perhaps, in *every* church community!

As it is the start of a new year - perhaps we should celebrate with an **audit** of our gifts? Have we experienced these gifts for ourselves. When? *If not*. Why? Read Chapter 12 v 28 through to chapter 13. Can we identify with these gifts?

Now try Romans chapter 12 - where do you and I fit into these gifts of the Spirit?

Try not to be modest but get a piece of paper and list down your gifts for the church and what you do for the parish church. **Try auditing your skills!**

I believe, perhaps, if we did this and joined them all together we would see God's Holy Spirit working in a wondrous and powerful way within our community. If we *cannot* see this picture why not?

We **Celebrate** our gifts [God's **Equipment**] to **Evangelise!**

Having completed your audit - perhaps through prayer you might be empowered to receive and develop what you have now, even more? Have you thought of **authorised ministry** within our church: Evangelist, Reader or Pastoral Assistant. Or, perhaps authorisation can be an excuse or mean a convenient way to 'pass the buck' to those who are 'good' at these things?!

Celebrate - Equip – Evangelise

PREPARATION OF A NEW ELECTORAL ROLL

Notice is hereby given that under the Church Representation Rules a new Church Electoral Roll is being prepared. All persons who wish to have their names entered on the new Roll, **whether their names are entered on the present Roll or not**, are requested to apply for enrolment not later than Tuesday 27 March 2007. The new Roll will come into operation on Saturday 7 April.

The new Roll shall be published for not less than 14 days. Forms of application for enrolment can be obtained from the Church Electoral Roll Officer, Carol Clark. In order to be entitled to attend the annual parochial church meeting (on Tuesday 24 April) and to take part in its proceedings, forms of application for enrolment must be returned by the earlier of the two dates given above.

Under the Church Representation Rules any persons are entitled to have their names entered on the roll if they -

- (i) are baptized and aged 16 or over;
- (ii) have signed a form of application for enrolment;

and either

(iii) are members of the Church of England or of any Church in communion with the Church of England being resident in the parish or (not being resident in the parish) having habitually attended public worship in the parish during the six months prior to the application for enrolment;

or;

(iv) are members in good standing of a Church (not in communion with the Church of England) which subscribes to the doctrine of the Holy Trinity declaring themselves to be also members of the Church of England and having habitually attended public worship in the parish during the period of six months prior to enrolment.

Any error discovered in the Roll should at once be reported to the Church Electoral Roll Officer.