

Christmas 2004

Gridiron

The Magazine of Saint Laurence's Church, Upton.



From the Editor:

Dear Friends,

The first Sunday in December is our Dedication and Gift Day, as well as being the Second Sunday in Advent. We shall be collecting for funds to re-order our church. Although I realise this is an expensive time of year, I hope you'll be able to give generously. If you pay tax, don't forget to Gift Aid it.

As I mentioned in the notices recently, the DCC has suggested that instead of us all writing cards to lots of friends at St Laurence's, we each write one card to everyone and pin it up on the notice board, then give the money we would have spent on cards to a charity. It may not seem a huge amount, but it all adds up.

Next year is likely to be a very difficult one financially, but also a year of opportunity and blessing. This issue contains articles from Janet and Marie looking forwards. Let's all pray for God's guidance as we move into 2005.

May I wish you a peaceful and blessed Christmas and a very happy New Year.

Yours in Christ,

Dave



DECEMBER SERVICES

Sun 5th Dec 11.00am Dedication Festival & Gift Day
Holy Communion

Sat 11th Dec TBA Decorating of church and tree.
Making Christingles.

Sun 12th Dec 11.00am Christingles – Service of the Word
1.00pm Church Christmas Lunch

Sun 19th Dec 11.00am Holy Communion & Baptism
4.00pm Carol Service

Fri 24th Dec 6.00pm Crib Service

Sat 25th Dec 10.00am Christmas Day Communion

Sun 26th Dec 11.00am Holy Communion

Do you have a vision for St Laurence's Church?

If not perhaps you would like to consider these words by Bob and Debby Gass and Ruth Gass Halliday who writes "the Word for Today".

"Where there is no vision, the people perish...". Proverbs 29:18.

Nobody can give you a vision, but here's how to find yours: (1) Look within you. What do you feel passionate about? Paul said, "I am compelled to preach. Woe to me if I do not..." (1 Corinthians 9:16 NIV) (2) Look behind you. What have you learned? Built into every experience is the wisdom needed to fulfil your destiny. What does your past tell you about your future? (3) Look around you. God never calls us alone. He always calls others to stand with us. Who belongs in your vision? (4) Look ahead of you. Helen Keller said, "The only thing that's worse than being blind is having sight but no vision". Moses 'saw' the promised Land 40 years ago before he ever entered it. Visionaries stand on mountaintops; that's why their goals are called 'visions' (5) Look above you. Jeremiah writes, "...they speak a vision of their own heart, not from the mouth of the Lord" (Jeremiah 23:16 NKJ). We are called "according to His purpose," not according to: (a) the need (b) the fact that the door is open (c) or that our talent will be appreciated and well rewarded. Our vision must fulfil our God-ordained destiny, nothing else (6) Look beside you. What resources are available to you, like books, tapes, conferences or instructors? If your vision is not bigger than you, it's not of God. And the greater it is, the more resources it will require.

Janet Booker

Looking Forwards

It's hard to believe that we are just entering the advent season. This year seems to have flown by!

In many respects it's been a hard year for many of us. We started the year knowing we had a tough job on our hands. We had to adjust and drop our budget, we were struggling to get enough money even to pay the bills. We also knew we had a need for serious money to go towards restoration and upkeep of our beautiful building.

This year we have done more, given more, tried harder and grown closer, but as always we will always need more.

We may all feel we have reached our limits on what we can give or what we can do, and although I feel sure God can give us more; more strength; more resolve; more spirit, we still need to ask.

It's perhaps also true that if we have reached a point where we feel unable to give more, then we should look at other ways to bring what we need.

If each couple, family or individual encouraged one new person to join our congregation, we would grow, and our obligations would then not feel so great or our burdens so heavy.

As Christians we should always be flexible, and looking for ongoing challenges, so we could encourage and challenge each other to bring new life, new people and new experiences into our building, creating a new heart within our community as well as ourselves.

As this year draws to a close and we concentrate on the birth of our Lord, let us give thanks and praise for the year we have had, and pray for a rebirth of our Christian spirit and Christian giving.

Yours in Christ,

Marie Bryant

The Night Before Jesus

'Twas the night before Jesus came and all through the house,
Not a creature was praying, not one in the house.
Their Bibles were lain on the shelf without care,
In hopes that Jesus would not come there.

The children were dressing to crawl into bed,
Not once ever kneeling or bowing a head.
And Mum in her rocker with baby on her lap
Was watching the late show while I took a nap.

When out of the East there arose such a clatter,
I sprang to my feet to see what was the matter.
Away to the window I flew like a flash,
Tore open the shutters and threw up the sash!

When what to my wondering eyes should appear
But angels proclaiming that Jesus was here.
With a light like the sun sending forth a bright ray,
I knew in a moment this must be The Day!

The light of His face made me cover my head,
It was Jesus! Returning, just like He had said.
And though I possessed worldly wisdom and wealth,
I cried when I saw Him in spite of myself.

In the Book of Life which He held in His hand,
Was written the name of every saved man.
He spoke not a word as He searched for my name,
When He said "It's not here" my head hung in shame.

The people whose names had been written with love
He gathered to take to His Father above.
With those who were ready He rose without a sound,
While all the rest were left standing around.

I fell to my knees, but it was too late,
I had waited too long and this sealed my fate.
I stood and I cried as they rose out of sight;
Oh, if only I had been ready tonight.

In the words of this poem the meaning is clear;
The coming of Jesus is drawing near.
There's only one life and when comes the last call
We'll find that the Bible was true after all!

Submitted by Andrea Dean

**Parish Quiet Day at Burnham Abbey
Saturday, 6th November 2004**

It was a cold dull day with drizzling rain when we all met up at the Abbey in time to join the Sisters for the 9.30am Eucharist to start our day. We then went to our room for teas and coffees. I wasn't quite sure what to expect from the day but was looking forward to some quality time to set aside with God.

The theme was "The Kingdom of God" and David and Henriët had worked hard on the organisation and preparation for the day. We were supplied with very useful handouts, scrap books, pens and pencils etc., and a huge range of reference books to look through and/or read during the day. There was also a photocopier for our use so that we could copy any of the articles or pictures that inspired us and put them into our individual scrapbooks.

During the day there were 3 one-hourly sessions set aside for 'quiet time', and we also joined the Sisters again before lunch for a short service.

It was a most enjoyable, thought provoking and spiritual day, and a privilege to spend time with the Sisters. I really got a lot out of the day and have continued to add things to my scrapbook since. It has encouraged me to make more time to sit and contemplate and spend time with God.

Andrea Dean

The British

Take some Picts, Celts and Silures
And let them settle,
Then overrun them with Roman conquerors.

Remove the Romans after approximately 400 years
Add lots of Norman French to some
Angles, Saxons, Jutes and Vikings, then stir vigorously.

Mix some hot Chileans, cool Jamaicans, Dominicans,
Trinidadians and Bajans with some Ethiopians, Chinese,
Vietnamese and Sudanese.

Then take a blend of Somalians, Sri Lankans, Nigerians
And Pakistanis,
Combine with some Guyanese
And turn up the heat.

Sprinkle some fresh Indians, Malaysians, Bosnians,
Iraqis and Bangladeshis together with some
Afgans, Spanish, Turkish, Kurdish, Japanese
And Palestinians
Then add to the melting pot.

Leave the ingredients to simmer.
As they mix and blend allow their languages to flourish
Binding them together with English.

Allow time to be cool.

Add some unity, understanding and respect for the future,
Serve with justice
And enjoy.

Note: All the ingredients are equally important.

Treating one ingredient better than another will leave a bitter unpleasant taste.

Warning: An unequal spread of justice will damage the people and cause pain. Give justice and equality to all.

(P.S. Serves 60 million people)

Benjamin Zephaniah
From "Wicked World"

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Celtic Benediction

Deep peace of the Running Wave to you.

Deep peace of the Flowing Air to you.

Deep peace of the Quiet Earth to you.

Deep peace of the Shining Stars to you.

Deep peace of the Son of Peace to you.

Submitted by Gloria Thompson

**MOTHERS' UNION – UPTON-CUM-CHALVEY SLOUGH BRANCH
PROGRAMME FOR 2005**

All are open meetings

Morning meetings: 3rd Wednesday of the month at St Laurence's.

Doors open 10.30am, Service at 10.40am, Talk at 11pm, Coffee 12noon approx., followed by a light lunch.

Afternoon meetings: 2nd Wednesday of the month at St Peter's 3pm.

Meeting followed by tea.

Evening meetings: 1st Tuesday of every month at St Laurence's,

7.30pm, followed by supper, beginning on 6th January.

Prayer Group: Last Wednesday of the month at 8pm; Winter months at St Laurence's, Summer months at St Mary's.

No meeting in December

Wanted: Stamps

Mons is collecting used postage stamps which can be sold to raise money for good causes. If you can collect some, Barbara or I would be pleased to receive them on Mons' behalf.

Dave Kill

NEXT MONTH'S GRIDIRON

The next Gridiron will be the February 2005 issue. Please let me have any articles by **Sunday January 16th** at the latest!

Dave

Saint Laurence's Church
Upton Court Road, Slough

| | | |
|------------------------|---------------------------|--------------|
| Revd Dr David Miell | (Team Rector – St Mary's) | 01753 529988 |
| Revd Derek West | (Team Vicar – St Peter's) | 01753 520725 |
| Revd Henriët Oostr | (Associate Minister) | 01753 531267 |
| Revd Allen Walker | (Community Chaplain) | 01753 770149 |
| District Churchwarden: | Marie Bryant | 01753 551717 |
| District Churchwarden: | David Kill | 01628 776856 |
| Church Secretary: | Julie James | 01753 532425 |
| Church Treasurer: | Janet Booker | 01628 824006 |
| Organist: | Keith Bosley | 01753 525249 |
| Mothers' Union: | Barbara Hillier | 01753 527768 |
| Editor of Gridiron: | David Kill | 01628 776856 |

Address of Gridiron Correspondence:

David Kill,
49, Pinkneys Road
Maidenhead
Berks
SL6 5DX

E-mail: d.kill@saint-laurence.org

St Laurence's Church is part of the Anglican parish of upton-cum-Chalvey, which also includes St Mary's and St Peter's.

Web-site: saint-laurence.org