

Easter 2005

Gridiron

The Magazine of Saint Laurence's Church, Upton.



He is risen indeed! Alleluia!

From the Editor:

Dear Friends,

Don't forget Mothering Sunday on 6th March. Mum's tend to be taken for granted for most of the year, so they deserve some attention (and flowers) on this special day. We'll have all-age worship with a children's presentation that day.

During Holy Week this year, there will be three varieties of Stations of the Cross: an interactive 3D experience at St Laurence's on Monday, slides from the Via Dolorosa Project at St Mary's on Tuesday and a traditional setting on Wednesday at St Peter's. Regrettably, I'll be away at a conference and will miss all three, but will be back for our Agape Meal on Maundy Thursday.

Gridiron is now available on the St Laurence Internet site, thanks to Ben James, who has worked hard to create what is now a comprehensive and valuable channel of communication. Well done and thank you, Ben!

Looking some way ahead, we need to know in advance who could help with distributing and collecting envelopes during Christian Aid Week, which runs from 15th to 21st May. Please tell Marie or me if you can help.

I wish you a peaceful and inspiring Easter.

Yours in Christ,

Dave


EASTER SERVICES & EVENTS

20th March	Palm Sunday: 9.30am	Blessing of Palms (SL), then procession to SM
21st March	8.00pm	Stations of the Cross (SL)
22nd March	8.00pm	Stations of the Cross (SM)
23rd March	8.00pm	Stations of the Cross (SP)
24th March	7.00pm	Maundy Thursday: Agape Meal (SL)
25th March	Good Friday: 9.30am 9.30am 11.30am 5.30pm	Good Friday Liturgy (SM) Good Friday Liturgy (SP) Gather outside Queensmere for Act of Witness and procession to St Ethelbert's Church. Evening Prayer (SM)
27th March	Easter Sunday: 11.00am	Easter Family Communion (SL)



SERVICES AT ST LAURENCE'S

1 st Sunday:	8.00am Holy Communion (BCP) 11.00am Family Service
2 nd Sunday:	11.00am Sung Communion
3 rd Sunday:	9.45am Children's Service 11.00am Sung Communion
4 th Sunday:	11.00am Sung Communion
Thursdays:	10.00am Holy Communion



Sri Lanka – Choosing to Hope

'Many people are ridden with guilt and feel responsible for not being able to save or protect their young children or elderly dependants.' (Revd Ebenezer Joseph, Sri Lanka).

On 26 December, 2004, an unexpected disaster of unprecedented scale hit Asia. The UK and world media have been full of images of the devastating impact of the tsunami. The disaster and its effects have been overwhelming. In Sri Lanka alone, over 20,000 people have died and more than a million people are homeless.

The immediate needs are seemingly insurmountable, with emergency relief needed to feed and shelter thousands of families whose homes and livelihoods have been destroyed. The long-term needs for rebuilding communities and infrastructures are also overwhelming. In addition, the traumatic effects of grief, guilt and shock are evident in many individuals. The Revd Ebenezer Joseph, General Secretary of Christian Aid's partner, the National Christian Council of Sri Lanka (NCCSL) says 'Addressing this issue is going to be an immense task over the next few months as people begin to rebuild their lives.'

The NCCSL is helping to support people through both practical and counselling work. Alongside their emergency relief work to provide food, shelter and medical teams with supplies, they are using trained counsellors and briefed volunteers to help those traumatised by what they have seen and experienced.

The problems are undoubtedly overwhelming, but so too is the response. Divided communities have united in working together for those affected. Ethnic and religious differences have become secondary concerns as churches, mosques and both Buddhist and Hindu temples co-ordinate emergency relief distribution.

The courage of these communities in the midst of so much pain can be glimpsed in their choice to persevere and not to be overwhelmed into inaction. It is a staggering example of what can be achieved when people work together to help those in need. It is also an unprecedented challenge to

respond together to the needs we see in so many poor communities around the world.

Where is God's steadfast love?

'For the mountains may depart and the hills be removed, but my steadfast love shall not depart from you. And my covenant of peace shall not be removed, says the Lord, who has compassion on you.'
Isaiah 54:10

This verse speaks of God's promise of faithfulness to us; an unshakable compassion and steadfast love, in which we are urged to trust. However, the biggest challenges to our faith are unexpected change and suffering.

Where is God's steadfast love at times when the earth is indeed moving and people face the kind of devastation caused by the tsunami disaster on Boxing Day? What relevance can a covenant of peace possibly have in the midst of so much destruction?

Our most consistent response to disasters of this scale is to ask the question: Why? But perhaps the more pertinent question is: How? How can God's love be demonstrated in the midst of such suffering?

God's steadfast love is revealed through the actions of people who respond out of compassion to the needs of those affected. We can express peace to war-torn countries and hope to nations struggling to survive; whole nations can offer hope.

As we look around the world, the turmoil seems comparable to what Isaiah describes. We see new problems every day, but very little seems to be resolved. Overwhelmed, we can retreat into our Western lifestyles of comfort, defence and escapist entertainment. But the kind of love talked about in Isaiah is consistent and continuous. It does not change in the light of what happens, nor is it overwhelmed. By fixing our eyes on God's unconditional love for us, we can learn to respond; we can be part of the solution.

Lent provides us with an opportunity to put aside materialism and its distractions, to deny ourselves some of our luxuries, and to consider the

contrast between our lifestyles and those of the poorest communities in the world. This Lent, let's commit ourselves again to being God's tools for expressing steadfast love and compassion to those in need.

From the Christian Aid website.

**A Few Thoughts for Good Friday
From Ira D. Sankey**

"He was wounded for our transgressions" Isaiah 53

O Christ, what burdens bowed Thy head!
Our load was laid on Thee;
Thou stoodest in the sinner's stead,
Didst bear all ill for me.
A Victim led, Thy blood was shed!
Now there's no load for me,
Death and the curse were in our cup;
O Christ, 'twas full for Thee!
But Thou has drained the last dark drop,
'Tis empty now for me;
That bitter cup, love drunk it up,
Now blessing's draught for me.
Jehovah lifted up His rod,
O Christ, it fell on Thee!
Thou wast sore stricken of Thy God;
There's not one stroke for me.
Thy tears, Thy blood, beneath it flowed;
Thy bruising healeth me.
The tempest's awful voice was heard;
O Christ it broke on Thee!

Thy open bosom was my ward,
It braved the storm for me.
Thy form was scarred, Thy visage marred;
Now cloudless peace for me.
Jehovah bade his sword awake,
O Christ, it woke 'gainst Thee!
Thy blood the flaming blade must slake,
Thy heart its sheath must be,
All for my sake, my peace to make;
Now sleeps that sword for me.
For me, Lord Jesus, Thou hast died,
And I have died in Thee;
Thou'rt risen – my bonds are all untied;
And now Thou live'st in me;
When purified, made white and tried,
Thy Glory then for me.

Mons

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

Helping Foxes?

In last year's Easter issue of Gridiron, I wrote about the death from cancer of our Golden Retriever, Pippa. I'm sorry to have to report another death in our family. Our much-loved rabbit, Blackers (he was black and I was a Brian Johnston fan), was killed by a fox in our garden in the middle of the morning of 15th February. We hope his end was quick and painless – I believe foxes are efficient killers. Blackers, who was almost nine years old, had enjoyed the freedom of our garden during daylight hours for many years and it was a great shock to hear of his death from Felicity, who returned home to find him dead. She was distraught and felt guilty for not being around to help him. She told me that our male cat, Basil, sat by Blackers' body for some time, seemingly standing guard. They had often played together and enjoyed something of a love-hate relationship.

It has since become apparent that we have a big fox problem in our area and I've seen foxes in our garden several times in the evening and in a neighbour's garden in the morning. I'm told that four or five wander the streets at night in a group. Unfortunately, some of our neighbours are feeding them. They mean well, but they aren't doing the foxes, or our pets, any favours. With more food the foxes are more likely to reproduce, so we'll have even more hungry and mangy foxes than we have now, who associate gardens with food. In addition, over-enthusiastic bird feeding by others has caused an increase in the rat population, which also increases the foxes' food supply.

I'm actually a fox supporter, and find them infinitely more attractive than those people who would hunt them with hounds. My view is that people who enjoy this "sport" need help. However, we should remember that foxes are wild animals, not pets, and we would be better off if they kept away from our streets and gardens. I've contacted our local paper to suggest an article on the problem and was pleased to find some interest. We'll see if they pursue it.

I buried Blackers in the garden with Pippa's ashes, so that they lie together, as they had often done in life.

Dave Kill

God's Promise

He promised me He never would leave us,
Never, no never alone,
He taught us to love one another
And harvest the kindness we've sown.
He showed us the strength of the spirit
And all that our faith can achieve,
He promised the comfort of healing,
If only we trust and believe.
He told us of life everlasting,
For us, and for those we have known,
He promised He never would leave us,
Never, no never alone.

Iris Hesselden

**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.

Tue 1 Mar Neil Mullins: Feed the Children

Wed 16 Mar Bert Leonard: Talk of Lent

Wed 20 Apr Holy Communion & AGM

Tue 3 May Joan Jenks: Medical Bygones

Wed 18 May Fishermen's Mission

NEXT MONTH'S GRIDIRON

Please let me have any articles for the April issue by **Sunday 13th March** at the latest!

Dave

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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