

Parish Diary February 2019



Team Spirit News Sheet

February 2019

1st	10am-12pm	Community Coffee Morning	St A
	2pm	Priory Ladies	Priory Hall
2nd	9am	DCT Prayers	URC Ed St
4th	12.30pm	Eucharist followed by a soup and sandwich lunch	St F
	7.45pm	DCC	St P
5th	2pm	Priory's Little Angels	St P
	7.30pm	DCC	St A
6th	7.30pm	DCC	St F
8th	9.15am	St Augustine's Acad Service	St A
	10am	Ashton St Peter Service	St P
11th	2pm	St Fremund's Ladies	St F
15th	10am-12pm	Community Coffee Morning	St A
	2pm	Priory Ladies	Priory Hall
16th	10am	Coffee Morning	St P
18th	3pm	61 Group	61 Gr Nor Rd
24th	2.15pm	Priory Ramblers	Beacon Car Park
25th	1pm	St Fremund's Ladies	St F
		50th celebrations with buffet lunch	
25th	7.45pm	PCC	St K
26th	7.45pm	St Augustine's Ladies Guild	St A

Priory Monthly Events

February

4th 10am - noon, U3A History Group at Luton Road Methodists, Medieval Miscellany of Dunstable Characters. Hugh Garrod

11th 2pm, St Fremund's Ladies Group at St. Fremund's, Priory Church post-Reformation. Hugh Garrod

16th 10 – 12 Coffee morning

24th 2.15pm Ramble, around the Gorhambury Estate, just outside St Albans.

Dunstable Churches Together—Lent Courses 2019

The course planned is 'Hooked on Christ' which is based on the film 'Hook'.

See poster in churches for further details of dates and venues.

Dear Friends....

*'Three kings from Persian lands afar
To Jordan follow the pointing star:
And this the quest of the travellers three,
Where the new-born King of the Jews may be.
Full royal gifts they bear for the King;
Gold, incense, myrrh are their offering.'*

I am writing this letter on the Feast of the Epiphany, with my mind seemingly unable to disentangle itself from Peter Cornelius' lovely carol *The Three Kings*, which has been running through it continuously since Classic FM reminded me of it a couple of days ago. The story of the kings or wise men is found only in the Gospel according to St. Matthew, and, as with much of the gospel story, not least the birth narratives, fact has become so inextricably interwoven with legend and tradition, that it is impossible to discover what historical truth, if any, actually lies behind it. There are some who regard the story as fanciful – a piece of mythology probably composed by the author himself, while others take it as largely or entirely factual. However that may be, it is a very ancient story, coming down to us right from the early Church itself, and conveying to us something of how they saw Jesus and his purposes, and of their understanding of the universality of the redemptive work of Christ – that it is for all people, of every age and background and race and colour and creed.

For myself, I have no difficulty with accepting the concept of the universality of Christ, but I must admit that Christian claims of exclusivity do present me with a major problem. I simply cannot believe that the God whose nature and purpose I find most clearly revealed in the life, death, and - resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth would choose deliberately to exclude from the compass of that redemptive work all who happen not to have responded to him in their lifetime through that one particular strand of revelation, central though it may be for the Christian, and especially when the accident of birth for whatever reason – chronological, geographical, or cultural – had never really afforded them opportunity. There are times when I feel somewhat embarrassed by the arrogant ease with which the Western mind can distort and even pervert the Eastern roots of our faith, apparently oblivious to the fact that so many of the world's great religions – Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, Sikhism – all find their origins in the East, where faith often seems to spring more readily from the heart than from the head. Strangely enough, I find that those gifts which St. Matthew tells us that the wise men offered to the infant Jesus actually offer me one particular way of understanding and interpreting this concept of the universality of Christ. Traditionally, those three gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh have been held symbolically to represent the kingship, deity, and sacrificial death of Christ, and for me they enshrine three great qualities essential to salvation, whatever we understand by that, qualities which should characterise the life of the Church of this and every age.

I like to think of gold, that most precious of metals, as representing that most precious of all gifts – the gift of love: the love that encourages, the love that supports, the love that guides, the love that affords security, the love that actively seeks the highest good. Next, for our frankincense, I want to think in terms of holiness: the holiness of a community of honesty and integrity, a community which continually examines its motives in the light of Christ, a community ever seeking to purify and refine itself, and so a community in whom all who come to seek our Lord within its fellowship may have confidence and trust. Finally there comes myrrh – the myrrh of self-sacrifice: the self-sacrifice of a community of true humility, a community ready to forgive and which goes on giving in the face of rejection, a community ever prepared to suffer hardship and to carry pain in the service of God's kingdom, a community committed to living out the belief that new life lies on the far side of every death.

I would want to say that wherever those treasures of love, holiness, and humble self-sacrifice are encountered (in whatever faith or none), that is an encounter with the God whom Christians find revealed most fully in the person of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and, while I believe them to be qualities which should characterise the life of the Church as a whole, they are qualities to which we should all be aspiring as individuals as well. To offer those gifts to his world in his name is to offer them to our Lord himself:

*'Thou child of man – lo, to Bethlehem
The kings are travelling – travel with them!
The star of mercy, the star of grace,
Shall lead thy heart to its resting-place.
Gold, incense, myrrh thou canst not bring;
Offer thy heart to the infant King,
Offer thy heart!'*

Terry Beaumont

From St Augustine's

St. Augustine's Academy Christingle

On the 8th January members of St. Augustine's Church went into the school to help children make and understand their Christingles. Both children and adults enjoyed this time together. Thanks have been received from the school and to Ricky for leading the service on the following day.

Forthcoming events:

Saturday 2nd March is the date for our very popular Race Night. It starts at 7.30pm and costs £7.50 per person which includes a hot meal – please bring your own drink and glasses. The Race Night is a fun event and we show 5 or 6 horse races. Bets are limited to 50p so no fortunes are won or lost!

We also have a raffle to add even more excitement to the evening.

Funerals

Beryl Chandler
Marion Anderson
Richard White
Arthur Louis Samsa



From St Fremund's

SOME MEMORIES OF ST. FREMUND'S CHURCH LADIES GROUP

In early 1969 we had our first meeting in the Scout Hall on Brewers Hill Road organised by Grace Knowles (which we shared with some mice!) when, if my memory serves me right, we played Bingo. We then moved to the School Hall in Westfield Road where we stayed for many years. While there we often entertained the group ourselves with our own Concert Party, firstly with It Ain't Half Hot Mum and then Blankety Blank (when we had Miss Piggy, Margaret Thatcher, Zsa Zsa Gabor and even our own Terry Wogan!) We performed our Pantomime – Cinderella (written by Jean Richards) when our Vicar then (Luke Lee) arranged for the congregation to show off their talents in a concert held in the Polish Church Hall. In the mid-80s we moved again when our own Church Hall was built and we are still here to-day. We performed Cinderella again and also a few Concerts. Can we ever forget 'We're a Couple of Swells', 'Sisters', 'Grandmas', 'You need Feet' (instead of hands!) and 'Albert and the Lion'? We had our wonderful 3-course Christmas Dinners catered by our friend Lorraine. (We actually cooked the first one ourselves.)

Every year we have held our Church Services at Easter, Harvest and Christmas. We have had speakers on many subjects, demonstrations and fun nights, and outings (evening mystery tours) and now full days-out (e.g. Bourton-on-the-Water, Southend and Clacton) We have organised Tombola Stalls for every Church Fayre to help with Church fundraising. Now that we are getting older we have decided to meet in the afternoons and this seems to have increased our membership.

Now here we are celebrating our 50th Anniversary – who would have thought it when we started off all those years ago? Those of us who were there at the start are extremely proud of what we have achieved. Fifty years of wonderful friendship to celebrate.

Claire Maxwell

From St Katherine's

We do apologise for the cancelling of our Christmas Bazaar, which happened in response to a broken boiler with complex repairs on the week of the bazaar, and laid us low for a number of weeks during Advent. However, "all things worked together for good", and in worship, we found we did not mind being squeezed into a chapel adjacent to the hall. Fellowship flowered amidst the convector heaters, and our Team Ministers and Rev Heather increased the warmth leading our worship. We are very grateful to John Hassall who spent many hours at the church co-ordinating with plumbers and hall users during this time, We do apologise to those who were inconvenienced by then a second date on the 19th January for the bazaar, and hastily cancelled because of the weather.

We now look forward to a new date which simply must take place, this time a Spring Bazaar on 9th March. So do patiently watch this space.....