

Brookfield News

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True Fasting

This month sees the beginning of Lent, the 40 days of preparation running up to Easter. Although fasting is one of the neglected disciplines associated with this period, it occupies an important place in the Christian life.

Jesus began his earthly ministry with fasting in the wilderness for 40 days and he also taught his disciples to fast (i.e. not if but when), 'when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, so that it will not be obvious to others that you are fasting, but only to your Father, who is unseen; and your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.' (Matthew 6:17/18). We don't fast to manipu-

late God into doing what we want or to impress others. It is not a command, but a choice we have to make to develop our relationship with God.

What is fasting? Fasting is voluntarily abstaining from food etc. to focus on God and give time for prayer. Prayer and fasting usually go hand in hand, as together they glorify God. 'So we fasted and petitioned our God about this, and he answered our prayer.' (Ezra 6:23).

What are the benefits of fasting? Fasting gives us space to humbly focus on God for his strength, provision, and wisdom and results in a more intimate relationship with Christ. As Isaiah points out,

it's not self-centred, but part of our care for the poor: 'Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen: to lose the chains of injustice and untie the cords of the yoke, to set the oppressed free and break every yoke?' (Isaiah 58:6). Fasting enables the Holy Spirit to reveal our true spiritual condition, leading to brokenness, repentance, and a transformed life, with a heart more attentive to God.

How do we fast? Most commonly fasting involves missing one or two meals as part of a day for seeking God. Of course, some can't abstain from food for medical reasons. Fasting might also include refraining from TV, alcohol, sex (cf 1 Corinthians 7:1-5) or whatever

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Services

Sundays

11.00am Sung Eucharist

"Sunday Supplement" the children's activity takes place every Sunday in the sacristy during the service

Weekday Services

Said Eucharist

Tuesday 7.30pm

Wednesday 9.30am

Friday 7.30am

Saints' & Holy Days

Sunday 1st February The Presentation of Christ in the Temple (Candlemas)

11.00am Choral Mass and procession

Wednesday 18th February Ash Wednesday

9.30am Said Mass with imposition of Ashes

7.30pm Sung Mass with Imposition of Ashes

Clergy Day off: Fr. Guy is off duty on Monday but don't hesitate to call him in emergencies.

The Vicar is usually available in the Vicarage, 85 Dartmouth Park Road, from 8:00pm until 9:00pm on Tuesdays for the purpose of interviews, arranging Baptisms, reading of Banns and Weddings etc. he is also available to hear confessions then or by appointment.

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may be getting in the way of us being fully focused on God.

'Jesus takes it for granted that his disciples will observe the pious custom of fasting. Strict exercise of self-control is an essential feature of the Christian's life. Such customs have only one purpose - to make the disciples more ready and cheerful to accomplish those things which God would have done.' (Dietrich Bonhoeffer)

Little Teapot

Our new curate had young children and they insisted he choose for his screensaver a picture of a dancing teapot, playing the children's song 'I'm a Little Teapot'. When the earnest young HR officer for the diocese came to call, she sent back a message to the bishop: "The curate may be suffering from an identity disorder."

First Woman Bishop arrives in the Church of England

The Rt Revd Libby Lane became the first woman to be consecrated as a bishop in the Church of England on Monday, January 26. At a York Minster service presided over by the Most Revd Dr John Sentamu, Archbishop of York, Libby became the 8th Bishop of Stockport, a suffragan (assistant) bishop in the Diocese of Chester.

Speaking at Stockport Town Hall, when her appointment was first announced on 17 December, 2014, Libby Lane said: "I am grateful for, though somewhat daunted by, the confidence placed in me by the Diocese of Chester. This is unexpected and very exciting. I am very conscious of all those who have gone before me, women and men, who for decades have looked forward to this moment. But most of all I am thankful to God.

"The Church of England is called to serve all the people of this country and, being present in every community, we communicate our faith best when our lives build up the lives of others, especially the most

vulnerable. I am excited by the possibilities and challenges ahead."

Libby Lane was ordained priest in 1994 and served a number of roles in the North of England. She served her curacy in Blackburn Diocese and, in York Diocese, served as a hospital chaplain and as a chaplain in further education. Moving to the Diocese of Chester, Libby served as a team vicar in Stockport before becoming Vicar of St Peter's Hale and St Elizabeth's Ashley, in 2007.

In 2013, Libby was elected by the North-West dioceses as one of the first eight clergy women to sit as Participant Observers in the House of Bishops of the Church of England. She also served as Family Life Officer in York and as Chester's Assistant Diocesan Director of Ordinands, advising and supporting people thinking about ministry in the Church of England. January 2010 saw her take on the role of Dean of Women in Ministry in Chester Diocese.

When the new Bishop of Stockport

was announced, the Archbishop of York predicted that Libby would "exercise her episcopal ministry with joy, prayerfulness, and trust in God."

The Archbishop of Canterbury, the Most Revd Justin Welby, said: "Her Christ-centred life, calmness and clear determination to serve the church and the community make her a wonderful choice."

The Bishop of Chester, the Rt. Revd Dr Peter Forster, who led the nomination process, confirmed: "As the first woman bishop in the Church of England she will face many challenges as well as enjoying many opportunities to be an ambassador for Jesus Christ. I have no doubt that she has the gifts and determination to be an outstanding bishop."

Bishop Libby succeeded the Rt. Revd Robert Atwell, now the Bishop of Exeter. Her husband, George, with whom she was ordained in 1994, is Coordinating Chaplain at Manchester Airport. They have two grown up children. Between episcopal duties, the Rt Rev Libby Lane hopes to continue learning the saxophone, supporting Manchester United and doing cryptic crosswords.

Time for closer Anglican-Methodist unity

The CofE is being encouraged to "face head on" the task of closer Anglican-Methodist unity as Synod recently endorsed recommendations made in a report on the covenant between the two Churches.

The report, presented to November's group of General Synod sessions jointly by the Bishop of Coventry, Christopher Cocksworth

and Peter Howdle, Methodist Co-Chair of the Joint Implementation Commission, made specific recommendations supporting the ongoing work between the two Churches. The Archbishop of York welcomed the call to unity for mission in the subsequent debate, saying: "We need to be more committed to joyous evangelism where the gospel is being preached... Could we resolve it [unity between

the Churches] so we can get on with the most important job: the re-evangelisation of England?"

Synod voted overwhelmingly to support the motion and the recommendations of the report.

I know I am getting old but this is the third time we have been here in years I have been ordained. Will it get any further this time?

Amid the winds and the waves of life

By Gemma Curran.

Shortly before dawn Jesus went out to them, walking on the lake... 'Lord, if it's you,' Peter replied, 'tell me to come to you on the water.' 'Come,' he said. Then Peter got down out of the boat, walked on the water and came towards Jesus. But when he saw the wind, he was afraid and, beginning to sink, cried out, 'Lord, save me!' Immediately Jesus reached out his hand and caught him. 'You of little faith,' he said, 'why did you doubt?' Matthew 14:25-31

If you could have any superpower, what would it be? Unfortunately, this story isn't evidence that Jesus is in the habit of handing out superpowers. So, what can we learn from this account? Like most of our modern superhero stories, this incident is less about the superpower on display and more about what the characters learn about

themselves and others.

Most significantly of all, the first thing Peter sees is Jesus doing what God alone can do. In Scripture, power over the wind and waves is always attributed to God. Jesus' feat of walking on water is more than just a clever trick. It's further evidence of his authority – an authority which enables Peter himself to walk on water. Even more remarkably, we can trust that the power of Christ residing in us through his Spirit will enable us to walk through life's storms without fear.

The second thing Peter learns is that he can't do it himself. He began to walk towards Jesus, "but when he saw the wind, he was afraid and, beginning to sink, cried out, 'Lord, save me!'" Peter was aware of the wind and the waves in his peripheral vision when he climbed out of the boat. But when he stopped

focusing on Jesus and allowed his vision to be filled with the storm, he began to sink.

Few of us will ever find ourselves in a boat surrounded by a storm, but we regularly weather metaphorical storms. The storms around us might be powered by financial difficulty, impossible deadlines at work, family strife, unstable health, relationship breakdown. But when we find ourselves in a storm, what do we do? Do we allow the wind and waves to fill our vision and overwhelm us, or do we keep focusing on Jesus? Do we trust that, if we begin to sink, he will reach out and catch us?

The one we look to is the Lord, who not only directs the winds and waves but also death and life, the only one who can save us – and carry us through the storms of today.

Gemma Curran works with The London Institute for Contemporary Christianity.

First Bible book in TMBritain's second language

Luke's Gospel is now available in Mirpuri - the language spoken by one million people all around the UK. Mirpuri is the language of the hearts and spirits of the majority of Britain's Pakistanis.

'I felt goose-bumps, a feeling of warmth as I heard the story of God in my mother tongue,' enthused Karim.

Peter Smithers of Word of Life, explains that: 'With an estimated one million speakers in the UK, Mirpuri is probably spoken more widely than Welsh - making it

Britain's second language. I'm delighted that, having been ignored for so long, and after years of prayer and hard work, part of the Bible is finally available.'

Mirpuri (sometimes called Pahari) is an unwritten language, so the translators had to take an innovative route to make this gospel accessible. It is not a printed book, but a set of 3 DVDs! These feature the extended version of the 'Jesus' film, with a Mirpuri narration of the text of the gospel.

The Revd Canon Phil Rawlings, Church of England inter-faith

officer in Oldham and director of Manchester Centre for the Study of Christianity and Islam, said:"Our country puzzles about how to respond to home-grown religious fanaticism. Will the church take up the challenge to share the alternative – the way of Jesus so relevantly portrayed in St Luke's gospel in Mirpuri?"

The gospels are distributed by Word of Life - a ministry dedicated to providing Scripture materials to share with those who would not normally read the Bible. They can be obtained from www.word-of-life.org or email research@word.org.uk.

“Dear Friends...”

From the Vicars Desk

With lent coming fairly early this year we have been planning what we will be doing in recent weeks. As usual we shall have joint study groups with All Hallows and these will be on Thursday nights this year beginning on Thursday 19th February. While I realise that this is the night after Ash Wednesday, it will mean that our five sessions will finish before we get to Holy Week with all its extra services.

Last year we used the new Church of England resource called Pilgrim and looked at the Beatitudes. I think its true to say that we all found it quite challenging. So this year we will use another of the study guides entitled Church and Kingdom. Each session has a video introduction (I hope this year to be able to screen them on my TV rather than the laptop) and then lots of material to help us think through the issues raised. I do hope that many of you will try to make at least some of the sessions. I know committing to every week is not easy or possible for some, but with the booklet its possible to miss the odd week and easily catch up. There will be a Mass at 7.30 and the meeting at 8.00pm. It will last just an hour with coffee at the end.

If you have not been to our study groups before do try and make this a priority for this Lent and use the season to try to understand more of our faith and how to work it out day by day.

Many of you will remember the visit of Fr. Philip North as preacher a couple of years ago for our Patronal Festival. On 2nd of February in

York Minster he will be consecrated as Bishop of Burnley, a suffragan of the Diocese of Blackburn. Blackburn works rather differently to London in that it is not split into Episcopal Areas so he will be working through the diocese.

Fr. Philip came to Camden Town as Team Rector in 2008 to follow Fr. Nicholas Wheeler. Over the succeeding years he has worked tirelessly in the parish and deanery to promote mission and ministry amongst the poor and deprived. He has also been very active in supporting the two church schools in the Parish and has been Chair of Governors of St Michaels.

He has been a member of the General Synod of the church over recent years and there too the concerns of mission and the poor have been his major focus. He will be a great loss to the deanery and dioceses but we wish him well in his new ministry in the Diocese of Blackburn where his skills in mission will be well used.

We have already seen the beginnings of the election campaign with pronouncements by all the major parties in the press and on TV of their electoral promises. Frankly I take all of them with a pinch of salt! Especially this year as the pundits tell us that we are unlikely to have a single party in government. While in some ways I think that this, though a new phenomena in our country, has not been a bad thing over the last five years it does mean that all election promises will be open to question when parties have to compromise

in order to create a coalition.

With the fact that we will inevitably have a new MP in this constituency with the retirement of Frank Dobson I wonder if there is an appetite to request a hustings meeting either in the Church or Hall depending on the number we might expect? We will need to get this organised in the next few weeks if we are to get all the candidates together. So please do let me know your feelings and I will act accordingly.

And to return to where I started please don't forget to put Ash Wednesday in your diaries on March 18th when there will be the usual two masses at 9.30am and 7.30pm. Incidentally I do apologise for the Church Diaries, they have no Sunday names and saints days are not given. Sadly we were not offered a diary this year with any of these items included. I will however try to ensure that next years are more useful!

With best wishes for a holy and prayerful Lent.

Your Parish Priest

100 Club Winners

Draw for December 2014

1st prize: Caroline Deys

2nd prize: Corriane

3rd prize: Rosie Price Timmins

4th prize: Mary (The Boston)

Congratulations to you all and thanks for your support each month.

If you would like to purchase a number in this monthly draw please do make inquiries of the Mr Mark Williams.

The strange story of the Chaplain's Pennant in the Royal Navy

During the Dutch Wars in the 17th Century, when the English and Dutch fleets were engaged in a series of battles in the English Channel, both fleets were commanded by devoutly religious officers; Admiral Blake for the English and Admiral Tromp for the Dutch. They both ensured that every ship's company, before battle commenced, paused for prayers before the mast-head at the start of each day. The worry was that one side would steal an advantage over the other.

A solution was found when the two Admirals agreed that in both fleets the English and Dutch national flags would be sewn together and raised and lowered simultaneously at the start and finish of masthead prayers. A century later, when

Rear-Admiral Richard Kempenfelt devised a signalling system with flags for the Royal Navy, a Church (or Chaplain's) Pennant was created. Continuing the experience from the Dutch Wars, the Cross of St. George and the Dutch Tri-Colour were combined in a single pennant. During divine service or a burial at sea the pennant was to be flown from the Starboard outer yardarm. By this time peace had been established between the English and the Dutch, so the pennant was now a more positive symbol of reconciliation. It has remained the Church Pennant in the Royal Navy to this day.

Every time the Church Pennant is raised, during ship's company prayers, the pennant is, in one sense, an uncomfortable reminder

of the ambiguity of war, on sea or on land. Many on both sides of a conflict devoutly pray that God will give them victory, assuming God is on their side. Can God be on both sides at once?

Jesus has shown us where God is. He is alongside anyone caught up in the turmoil and agony of life's experience, redeeming us by his love, whichever side we are on, deserving or not. Like the woman being stoned by self-righteous Pharisees for being caught in the act of adultery; Jesus rescued her by his redeeming love. And God's love redeems in every human conflict. Enemies become allies. This is what the Royal Navy's Church Pennant ultimately came to demonstrate.

We're busy ignoring the biggest refugee crisis in modern times^o

The present turmoil in the Middle East has produced the worst refugee crisis since the end of the Second World War – but in spite of the huge numbers involved, we are in danger of forgetting all about them.

That's the view of Jeremy Moody, CEO of Embrace the Middle East, (Formally The Bible Lands Society) a Christian charity tackling poverty and injustice in the Middle East. Writing in his blog, Moody explains: "The Reuters news agency suggests that the number of displaced Syrians and Iraqis is now equivalent to the population of London. In fact, it is much worse. Greater London has a population of just over eight million. A closer analogy would be the combined

populations of England's three biggest urban areas – London, Birmingham and Manchester."

Embrace is asking for funds to support local Christians throughout the Middle East to provide food, healthcare and education to refugees of all faiths and backgrounds trying to rebuild shattered homes and lives. The recent deaths of two Syrian babies from cold in a Lebanese border town highlights the appalling conditions faced by hundreds of thousands.

Moody believes that, despite the desperate situation for the 20 million refugees struggling to survive in the Middle East today, there are signs of hope. "The region's small Christian communities are

responding to the needs of refugees with a generosity of spirit and an abundance of compassion which is humbling, especially when one considers all the other pressures on Middle East Christians," he said. "The Anglican Diocese's Refuge Egypt project in Cairo, the Middle East Council of Churches' work among refugees in Gaza and the West Bank and the assistance offered by Lebanese Baptists and Catholics to Syrian refugees – these are just some of the incredible projects deserving of our help."

Seen in a church pew-sheet:

For those of you who have children and don't know it, we have a crèche downstairs.

Shepherding God's Flock ± what does it take to make it work?

'In the same way, you who are younger must accept the authority of the elders. And all of you must clothe yourselves with humility in your dealings with one another, for "God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble". Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, so that he may exalt you in due time. Cast all your anxiety on him, because he cares for you.' (1 Peter 5:5-7)

Shepherding God's flock involves more than just good shepherds; it also involves the right kind of followers. Although there's the possibility that Peter is speaking to a group of younger people who were serving as apprentices to the elders, it is also likely that those "who are younger," in principle includes all who are not elders. Those who are not called to be elders are called to be followers. 'Follower' is not a demeaning label, but in order

for Christian leaders to effectively shepherd God's flock, there must also be the right kind of followers, who accept authority.

Ministers can find it awkward to proclaim any authority as a pastor/elder, and of course spiritual authority does not reside within a special position of privilege and power. Rather, the authority of the minister/elders is in a God-given position of servant leadership. They do not 'rule' as power-wielding dictators, but serve as caring under-shepherds who desire God's best for his people and God's mission to be accomplished through his church.

Peter adds the essential point of putting on humility. Humble dependence on God's grace is the key to this last statement in the text, where Peter speaks about getting rid of anxiety. Those in leadership

know that their greatest anxiety is often over their own weakness and failure, when their leadership can rightly be questioned, or when they face huge and seemingly overwhelming challenges or obstacles within the church.

We all need to remember that the one who asks us to cast our anxieties on him is also the Chief Shepherd, the one Calvin says is "really the pastor." God doesn't need perfect men and women to be his elders, ministers and members of his flock. Just the willing. Good followers in a church are those who prayerfully support the church leaders, and whose main aim is to serve God and their fellow Christians in any way that they can. St Paul summed it up as: 'Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others. (Philippians 2:3,4)

Go-ahead for major church credit union

Fair returns to savers, fair interest rates on loans and the aspiration to be a flagship credit union are among the aims of the Churches' Mutual Credit Union Ltd (CMCU) which has recently received formal authorisation from the regulatory authorities. CMCU plans to begin to offer its services from February 2015.

CMCU has been formed for and with the help of the Church of England, the Methodist Church of Great Britain, the Church of Scotland, the Scottish Episcopal Church and the Church in Wales. It is expected that, in due course, it should become a significant financial resource to the church and individuals throughout England, Wales and Scotland. It is hoped that CMCU will enable "a

virtuous re-cycling of money within the church community, through a combined portfolio of savings and loan products."

At first, churches and individuals (notably ordained ministers, licensed lay ministers, elders, employees and trustees of churches and church charities and the charities themselves) will be able to become members and benefit from the financial products. It is estimated that at least 60,000 individuals plus churches and church charities will be eligible to join CMCU. This will enable savings and provide loans to individuals for essential items and to churches for mission projects and equipment. The Financial Services Compensation Scheme covers deposits up to £85,000.

CMCU plans to offer a range of loan products which will be a major funding stream for the dividend that will be paid on savings products such as ISAs, instant access and regular (monthly) savings accounts. These products will include a competitive car loan scheme.

Once the credit union has built up an established track record, it is intended that CMCU will be open to all church members and extend its denominational base. CMCU aspires to become an example of best practice in the sector and aid the Church's involvement in a critical area of national life for renewal and transformation.

Phileas ± brave bishop/martyr of Egypt

When did you first encounter Christianity? If it was an adult, then Phileas is a saint for you. His life shows that Truth matters, whenever you encounter it, but is also a warning that you need to count the cost of becoming a Christian.

Phileas was a rich man living in Egypt at the end of the third century, when he first met Christians. Highly educated, he did not convert quickly, but instead studied their Gospels, and also at least part of the New Testament. Only then did he conclude that Jesus was indeed the Son of God.

It was good that Phileas had done his research and was firm in his faith, because after his conversion, events came thick and fast. In those pressured times, the Church

hadn't the luxury of long training programmes for leaders, and so Phileas was chosen to be bishop of his city in the Thebaid, a desert region of ancient Egypt.

Sadly, the new bishop hardly ever had a chance to pastor his flock. Soon after his consecration at Alexandria in 303, Phileas was arrested under the edicts of the Roman emperor Diocletian. He spent the next three years in prison, deeply moved by the willing martyrdoms of other Christians around him. Finally, in 306, it was Phileas' turn. He faced the questioning of the prefect, Culcianus, who could not fathom why such a previously wealthy man had thrown his life away to follow some (long dead?) carpenter from Galilee.

Phileas' strength now was that he really knew what the Bible said. And so when questioned about Jesus's divinity, he replied that "... he performed the works of God in power and actuality... he cleansed lepers, made the blind see, the deaf hear, the lame walk, the dumb speak, he drove demons from his creatures at a command; he cured paralytics, raised the dead to life, and performed many other signs and wonders."

Still Culcianus urged him to save his life, by sacrificing to the gods. Phileas again had a biblical answer ready. Paraphrasing St Paul, he said that the sacrifices which God requires are "a pure heart, a spotless soul and spiritual perceptions which lead to deeds of piety and justice..." Pressed one final time, he replied "I have reflected many times, and this is my decision." And so he was led out and beheaded.

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On the peculiarities of ordination candidates

The Rectory
St. James the Least

My dear Nephew Darren

I was quite happy to see the young person from your church whom you are encouraging to get ordained – even though we did not entirely see eye to eye.

When I answered the door to someone dressed in T-shirt, jeans and trainers, I naturally assumed he was the gardener; it was only after I had given him the wheelbarrow and shown him where the spades were, that I found out who he really was. His assurance that this is how Jesus would dress, were he to visit in person again, jarred somewhat. I think that a three-piece suit and stout pair of brogues would be far more likely. We agreed to differ.

I moved on to ask him about the Sunday Services he attended and was interested to hear that he was a church musician. Wanting to know if he sang tenor or bass, or even played the organ, he told me that he was the drummer in the worship band and provided backing vocals. I felt obliged to comment that I was not sure how that would fit in with Mattins, but he told me that he had never heard of that Service and only attended Mega Rock Praise. Since I suspected it would not have been written by Cranmer, we moved on.

I had hoped we may have been on safer ground when I asked him whether he preferred early perpendicular or Victorian gothic, but as he had apparently only ever worshipped in your converted cinema, he was unable to offer any

opinion. His reaction to my offer to show him round our late Norman church, prompted him to tell me that he believed all churches should be closed and people should gather in each other's homes, like the early Christians.

In a last despairing attempt to find common ground I asked him if he had ever preached. He was slightly apologetic to admit that he had done so very rarely, as he found it took such a long time to write an hour-long sermon. When I mentioned that I did not think I had ever exceeded eight minutes in my entire life, he gave me such a look of withering astonishment that with heroic Christian charity, I did not beat him over the head with the Bible he was carrying.

Your loving uncle,

Eustace

Children's Society welcomes support for local welfare assistance

The Children's Society has warmly greeted the Government's recent announcement that it is retaining £130m funding for local welfare assistance schemes. "We feel proud of the significant part our campaigners played in persuading ministers to drop plans to cut all funding. There is no clearer sign that when we campaign together, we can create major change."

This news means 1.2 million vulnerable households who were on the verge of losing this emergency support will still get help. As a Children's Society's spokesperson explains: "It is now up to councils to keep in place these local schemes and ensure they remain open to all families who face an emergency. We will continue to fight to protect this vital safety net."

Cathedrals offer place of peace and prayer in busy lives, reveal new stats

The number of people attending midweek services at cathedrals has doubled in the past 10 years, according to recent figures from the Church of England's Research and Statistics department. One of the factors attributed is the need for a place of peace in increasingly busy lives.

Midweek attendance at cathedrals was 7,500 in 2003, rising to 15,000 in 2013 (compared to 12,400 in 2012). As the Dean of Lichfield, Adrian Dorber, explains, "At the weekend you've got commitments with children doing sport, shopping, household maintenance – life's run at the double these days ... Taking out half an hour or an hour every week is much more negotiable."

Anecdote to Evidence research published last year showed that the highest motivating factors for Cathedral attendance were peace and contemplation, worship and music and friendly atmosphere.

The Dean of York Minster, Vivienne Faull, commented: "If I take a Eucharist at 12.30 in the middle of the week in the nave of York Minster, there'll be a lot of people who just slide in from the side. It's not so much about anonymity, there's the feeling there's a journey you can travel which doesn't require huge steps – it just requires one little step."

Stephen Lake, Dean of Gloucester Cathedral, said: "Patterns of church attendance are different now. Cathedrals are uniquely placed to be providing greater opportunities for worship and that includes during the week."

How can you be competent when it comes to prayer?

One day Jesus was praying in a certain place. When he finished, one of his disciples said to him, 'Lord, teach us to pray, just as John taught his disciples.' He said to them, 'When you pray, say: "Father, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come."' Luke 11:1-2

More often than we would care to admit, our desired objective in prayer is to 'get what we ask for'. If this doesn't happen, we might think that prayer hasn't worked, that its results are, at best, arbitrary, or that we are just not a competent pray-er and so best leave it to those who are! Yet, as P.T. Forsyth points out in *The Soul of Prayer*, 'if we got all we asked for we should

soon come to treat Him as a convenience, or the request as a magic. The reason of much bewilderment about prayer is that we are less occupied about faith in God than about faith in prayer.'

The only way to learn how to pray is to pray. And God, through his Spirit, teaches us to pray. Through relationship with God, we come into alignment with his will, which leads to believing declaration, petition or action.

First and foremost, prayer is the primary way we relate to and communicate with God. Without communication we can only know about someone. Prayerlessness amounts to a rejection of the loving

relationship the Father offers.

Then, as we spend time in God's presence, our heart and mind become aligned with his. We begin to see God, ourselves, and the people and situations we're concerned about from God's perspective. Our hearts 'tune in' to his as we pray, causing us to feel his compassion, sense his pleasure, or mourn with him for our workplaces.

Having aligned ourselves with God's perspective we pray, 'Your kingdom come, your will be done' (Matthew 6:10) with increased understanding and conviction. We may also be given direction as to how to act or speak.

Bev Shepherd works with The London Institute for Contemporary Christianity

Church Commissioners named as second most UK charitable donor

The Church Commissioners have welcomed the recent news that they are the UK's second most charitable giver in the publication of City AM's list of the World's top 20 donors.

The list named the Church Commissioners as the eighth highest donor in the world – and second in the UK - giving £207.84m in charitable donations to support the Church of England. The total giving, which supports the Church's ministry around the country, is highlighted in the Commissioners Annual Report for 2013, which announced that the performance of the investment fund exceeded its target of RPI +5% per annum, returning 15.9% during the year.

Andrew Brown, Secretary to the Church Commissioners said that the news "confirms our commitment to resourcing the ministry and mission of the Church... Our giving seeks to put money behind church-led effective programmes which support local communities across the country."

The Annual Report features a range of Commissioners funded projects including:

- Former hair stylist Revd Ben Norton has an Archdeaconry brief in York Diocese for pioneering work among young people building on earlier work on a major housing estate. He is also volunteering a day a week in the local hairdressing salon.

- Liverpool Cathedral is committed to offering a variety of styles of worship that are accessible to all. The Zone 2 all-age, café-style service meets every Sunday at the same time as the traditional Choral Eucharist.

- The Tolladine Mission in Worcester is based in an area with pockets of multiple deprivation. The missionaries live in the area and their work includes a garden project for young people with learning and/or behavioural difficulties and work in local schools, along with opportunities to explore the Christian faith.

Hymns and Readings

1st February Candlemas

Readings Malachi 3: 1-5
Psalm 24
Hebrews 2 14-end
Luke 2: 22-40
Hymns 30 Of the fathers heart
44 Faithful vigil ended
156 See how thew age long
157 Hail to the Lord who comes

Sidesperson: Monica Sarpong
Readers: Nicky Pittam, Stephen Nicoll
Intercessions: Bill Saunders

8th February 2nd Sunday before Lent

Readings Proverbs 8: 1 & 22-31
Psalm Psalm 104 : 26-end
Colossians 1: 15-20
John 1: 1-14
Hymns 358 Father of Heaven whose love
profound
Seek ye first the kingdom of God
26 Lord of beauty thine the
377 Immortal invisible

Sidesperson: Rob Nesbitt
Readers: Ruth Godwin, Nick Bethune
Intercessions: Carol Kenning

15th February Sunday next before Lent

Readings: 2 Kings 2: 1-12
Psalm: 50: 1-6
2 Corinthians 4: 3-6
Mark 9: 2-9
Hymns 234 Christ whose glory fills the skies
Be still for the presence of the Lord
373 How shall I sing that majesty
494 Christ is the worlds true light

Sidesperson: Nick Bethune
Readers: Jenny Kauntze, Rob Nesbitt
Intercessions: Lucy Boyd

18th February Ash Wednesday

Readings: Joel 2: 1-2 & 12-17
Psalm: 51
2 Corinthians 5: 20b- 6: 10
Matthew 6: 1-6 & 16-21
Hymns 67 Forty days and forty nights
425 O love how deep how broad how high
70 Lord Jesus think on me
76 Take up thy cross

Sidesperson: Bill Saunders
Readers: Joe McKenzie, Carol Kenning
Intercessions: Nicky Pittam

22nd February Lent 1

Readings Genesis 9: 8-17
Psalm 25: 1-9
1 Peter 3: 18-end
Mark 1: 9-15
Hymns Litany in procession
70 Lord Jesus think on me
67 Forty days and forty nights
66 Christian dost thou see them

Sidesperson: Janet O'Carroll
Readers: Mark Williams, Denise Sealy
Intercessions: Ian MacGregor

Archbishop of Canterbury joins world faith leaders in pledge to end modern slavery

The Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, recently joined world Christian, Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist and Jewish leaders in Rome to sign a historic declaration to end modern slavery.

The Global Freedom Network – which launched with backing from Archbishop Justin and Pope Francis in March 2014 – brought together faith leaders in a commitment to eradicate modern slavery by 2020 “throughout our world and for all time.”

The Joint Declaration of Religious Leaders against Modern Slavery defines modern slavery as human trafficking, forced labour and prostitution, organ trafficking, and “any relationship that fails to respect the fundamental conviction that all people are equal and have the same freedom and dignity.”

Seen in a church pewsheet:

Next Friday the church will host an evening of fine dining, super entertainment and gracious hospitality. Do come along!

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For your prayers

1st Twisden Road
8th Wesleyan Place
15th Woodsome Road
22nd York Rise

17th Janani Luwum
18th Ash Wednesday
22nd Lent 1
23rd St Polycarp

SAINTS & HOLY DAYS

1st **Presentation of Christ in the Temple. Candlemas**
3rd St Anskar
6th Martyrs of Japan
8th **Second Sunday before Lent**
10th St. Scholastica
14th Ss Cyril and Methodius
15th **Sunday next before Lent**