

# Brookfield News

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## The Way I See It: FIVE GOOD THINGS ABOUT LENT by David Winter

**I**n case you're thinking at this time of the year that Lent is (as one writer recently described it) 'all purple and prohibitions', here are five good things about it.

1 It only lasts 40 days. Fasts, by their very nature, can't last forever, but Lent has a very manageable forty days. (If you're thinking at six weeks and a bit it's longer than that, see Item 2)). New Year Resolutions simply stretch off into some impossibly distant horizon, but our Lenten attempts at discipline (chocolate, cigarettes, daily prayers, being kind to the cat) have an end date to them.

2. Sundays in Lent are 'as oases'. Sunday is never a day of fasting, but a weekly celebration of the resurrection of Jesus. So - and this

is official! - Sundays don't count in Lent.

3. A bit of self-denial is better than a lot of self-indulgence. We live in a very self-indulgent society. Just for forty days it's no bad thing to deny ourselves something that is a minor luxury or a bit of self-pampering - especially if it saves some money which could go to people in the world who have no 'little luxuries'.

4. It's a journey towards Easter. Lent goes somewhere, and that somewhere is the empty tomb of Easter morning. It's daffodils in the churchyard and new life all around us.

5. The days get longer. The English word for this season is the only one

that has no religious significance at all. 'Lent' is simply an abbreviation of the Old English word 'Lenten', which means 'lengthen'. On these islands, where weather is always a major topic of conversation, it's not surprising that what people noted about the days of Lent was that they got longer - no more of those ghastly dark tea-times. But the 'lengthening' is all part of Item 4, really - moving towards new life. (Sadly, Items 4 and 5 don't apply in Australia and New Zealand. Doubtless they have compensations.)

Given those five splendidly positive things about Lent, which covers the whole of March this year, I trust readers will approach its rigours with joyful hearts.

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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 15th March Mothering Sunday

11.00am Family Mass

Sunday 29th March Palm Sunday

10.45 Blessing & distribution of Palms in the Church Hall & Procession to Church

Monday Tuesday and Wednesday in Holy Week

7.30pm Said Mass with Address

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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## Helping youngsters learn good financial habits

The Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, has welcomed the announcement that the government will fund a pilot programme to help children develop good financial habits at a young age by setting up savings clubs in primary schools in partnership with credit unions.

Research indicates that children develop their attitudes towards money long before they reach secondary school age, with the Money Advice Service suggesting that most children have formed their financial habits by the age of seven. The 'LifeSavers' project, which is led by the Archbishop of Canterbury's Task Group on Responsible Credit and Savings, will seek to equip children with good financial habits by educating them about the benefits of saving at an early age. It will also introduce children to credit unions, which play a key role in providing financial services to more than a million customers across Britain. The project will pilot in six schools before rolling out to up to 100 schools over the next four years, benefitting up to 30,000 pupils.

Find out more about the Archbishop's initiative to create a fairer financial system at:

# Resourcing the Future, and Task Groups reports released

The Church of England has published two further papers as part of the “reform and renewal” programme for discussion at the February meeting of the General Synod.

Canon Dr John Spence, Chair of the Finance Committee of the Archbishops’ Council, who chaired the task group said: “We are here to help every parish, deanery and diocese achieve its goals. The totality of the reports published this week represent a coordinated response to a proven and vital need....the need to respond to those dioceses who have asked for us to help inject other expertise on strategy to help turn their ambitious plans to reality.”

In a summary of its recommendations the report “proposes a fundamental shift: removing the current formula systems which provide mechanical, ineffective subsidy and replacing them with investment focused on fulfilling dioceses’ strategic plans for growth, and with a strong bias towards the poor.”

The report also notes that “The Church as a whole needs greater ‘institutional agility’ – its legal structures and its ministry and resource patterns need to be more flexible to respond to its mission challenges. The National Church Institutions need to develop a more effective partnership with dioceses. The dioceses’ aspirations to grow and have more leaders are likely to require significant new investment.”

Describing the origins of the work of the group Canon Spence writes

“We started with all the research findings contained in the Anecdote to Evidence book published a year ago. That pointed to a declining and ageing Church of England population. Projecting the findings forward made us see the real threat to the presence of our Church, not only in every community but in large parts of rural and urban England.

Each of us has a personal Christian mission to help the Word of the Risen Christ reach out. In other words, we need to change this trend and start securing growth – not just in some places as at present, but with a more uniform pattern across the country.”

The second paper recently released is from Andreas Whittam Smith, the First Estates Commissioner. Entitled ‘Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it’, the paper addresses the questions of funding for the reforms proposed by the “reform and renewal” agenda of the task group reports and papers. The paper also reflects on the history of the Church Commissioners funding of the mission and ministry of the Church and what lessons can be learned at a time when increased levels of funding may be sought.

Introducing the paper Andreas Whittam Smith said: “Rightly the Commissioners are the go-to body for any Church institution that is seeking additional funding. To provide a basis for responding to requests, the Commissioners have for twenty years relied upon the advice of their actuaries. Each year the actuaries calculate how much can safely be distributed after pay-

ing pensions and meeting statutory duties. The test is that this amount would still leave the endowment in a position to preserve its real value through time....

“The question now arising is whether this admirable rule can apply when the membership of the Church is shrinking. One doesn’t want to arrive in a situation when a small Church of England has a huge endowment. Our successors might then wonder why we hadn’t used our financial strength to arrest the decline when there was still time. This is precisely the issue that is now up for debate.”

Reflecting on the next steps Andreas comments: “However, before the Commissioners can make a final decision whether we should ‘over-distribute’ given our other pressing commitments and, if so, with what safeguards, we wish to know what is the opinion of Synod as expressed in next month’s debates. Indeed, without synodical support, we should not go forward.”

## Expensive boat

A vicar was planning an Easter pilgrimage to the Holy Land, and was aghast when he found it would cost him £50 an hour to rent a boat on the Sea of Galilee. He protested to the travel agent that the cost was ridiculous. “That might be true,” replied the travel agent, “but you have to take into account that the Sea of Galilee is water on which our Lord himself walked.”

“Well, at £50 an hour for a boat, I am not surprised!”

## Let the Psalms lead you through Lent<sup>o</sup>

**B**lessed is the one who does not walk in step with the wicked or stand in the way that sinners take or sit in the company of mockers, but whose delight is in the law of the LORD, and who meditates on his law day and night. Psalm 1:1-2

Praise the LORD. Praise God in his sanctuary; praise him in his mighty heavens. Praise him for his acts of power; praise him for his surpassing greatness... Let everything that has breath praise the LORD. Praise the LORD. Psalm 150:1-2, 6

The book of Psalms opens with a promise that the Lord watches over the way of the righteous, those in covenant relationship with him, those who delight in his instruction and live by it. Readers take this call and its assurance with them into the rest of the book.

Then, as Psalm 1 provides an intro-

duction, so Psalms 146-150 seem to form a conclusion to the book, with psalms of praise, culminating in the unfettered adoration of God in Psalm 150. In that sense, the Psalms are – as Old Testament scholar Walter Brueggemann puts it – ‘bounded by obedience and praise’.

And the sequence could well be important. Loving obedience initiates praise, praise is the culmination of obedience. Only those who begin in Psalm 1 can honestly end in Psalm 150. We don't stay in Psalm 1 – that's only the beginning – but nor do we rush too quickly to Psalm 150 – praising the Lord without taking account of his loving demand on our lives. Our adoration of God is bound up with our observation of his revealed will. Obedience is embedded in worship. The whole Psalter witnesses to a movement from piety to praise.

Of course, that move is not without its struggles! The world doesn't always seem to go the way Psalm 1 suggests it should – with the righteous prospering and the wicked getting their comeuppance. We get to Psalm 150 in the end, but we don't do so unscathed. Nor does Psalm 150 necessarily obliterate the despair and doubt, fear and failure that have been expressed along the way. It's precisely in the ‘stuff of life’ that we discover our ultimate purpose in glorifying and enjoying God forever.

The psalms take account of the reality of sin and suffering and shame and setbacks, and they do so with brutal honesty; they also testify to moments when God works to bring us through those periods and renews our hope. And through it all, we come to understand that God doesn't just exist safely at either end of the Psalter, but is found in the middle as well, in the midst of suffering and hope, in the midst of a life bound by obedience and praise.

## 100 Club Winners

Draw for February 2015

1st prize: Helen Nesbitt

2nd prize: Trudy Tabone

3rd prize: Pat C/o The Centurion

4th prize: Stephen Nicol

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.

**Oh dear here we go again Fr Guy just can't resist getting on the stage at our annual visit to the Pantomime. And Ian MacGregor (the Musical Director) just delights in setting him up!**



# “Dear Friends...”

## From the Vicars Desk

As we get into Lent once again it is easy to get caught up in the outward things of giving up this and that, attending an extra service or the Lent Groups, and forget that the most urgent thing for all of us is to grow our relationship with God our Father.

Last week we began our look at the Church and Kingdom part of the Pilgrim study guides. One of the most crucial points that came out of the first session was the whole concept of a rule of life. Now that sounds very involved and demanding, but in fact it needs to be tailored to our personal circumstances. A mum with a hectic family life will be able to give far less time to prayer and reading than an older retired person, but that does not mean that it should be any the less planned and structured. For some we discovered evenings were best, to reflect on the events of the day and place them before the Lord. Others found early morning best with the least distractions, and for others it was a time when they were walking to the tube, sitting on the bus or doing the housework when concentration was not required and the mind could be turned to God. In fact of course prayer should be part of our everyday experience as we go through the day offering up prayers in each situation that we face, for and about the people with whom we interact.

It is that continual intercourse with God that turns us from ordinary folk into the people of God, marked out as holy because we

have peace with him who sustains and upholds us day by day and hour by hour. So perhaps the most important thing we could do this Lent is to look at our rule of life and refresh it so that it is fit for purpose in our present situation.

In the next few weeks we have a number of annual house keeping tasks to complete. These begin with the renewal of our Electoral Roll. This year we do not have to start from scratch, but we do need to ensure that our roll is up to date. Over the last year we have seen a number of comings and goings, so there will be a number of new names to be added to the roll and some taken off. Then on April 19th we will be holding our Annual Parochial Meeting when we will present all the reports to the assembled members and elect our Churchwardens for the year and one third of our PCC. This year we also elect our Deanery Synod members. St Mary's has two who are in office for three years. This is particularly important this year as they are the electorate for the elections for the Diocesan Synod, the governing body of our Diocese and the General Synod of the Church. Both these elections will take place during the summer and autumn.

Your PCC received in January the draft accounts for the year ended on 31st December. Nicky our Treasurer is a wonder worker, as by Friday 9th January she had given me the first draft! I am pleased to say that they showed a fairly healthy balance at the end of the

year which has enabled us to put a little into reserve towards the very large sums that we expect to spend on the walls of the east end of the church and improvements in the church hall.

As you will see from this issue of the Magazine we have purchased a new printer for the parish. Back in November we were warned that spares for our old machine, some nine years old were becoming scarce and would not be guaranteed for much longer. We were offered a very favourable deal which has halved the price of black and white copies and give us the option of colour as well. We will have to be careful using the colour facility, but we hope that the reduced cost of black and white will enable us to have some colour usage at no extra cost.

When Nicky was preparing the budget however what she was not able to anticipate was the £5,500 we have just spent on upgrading some of the electrics in the church. During January it became apparent that there was an electrical problem with the heating which was fairly simple to correct. However the electrician was unable to complete the work without the replacement of the main input board for the church electrics as the existing one no longer matched current regulations. We therefore had to go ahead and replace the three phase distribution unit in the Vestry or have all the electrics turned off! It just shows how important it is to have a good level of reserves.

Your Parish Priest

## Anybody there?!

This month - on the 15th, actually - is the thirtieth anniversary of the very first registered .com domain name. Only 30 years! The cultural revolution has been swift and overwhelming. All our lives (whether we like it or not) are now lived in the light of the mighty .com. Nothing works (planes, trains, the electricity, the supermarkets, banks and trading) without it, and those 'domain names' are now part of most people's everyday lives. And all in 30 years.

There's no doubt that the digital revolution has brought benefits. For most people, email is a boon and blessing (apart from the deluge of unwanted messages, of course). With regard to them, I rather liked the order of service for a wedding recently which printed out the Lord's Prayer but rendered the last

petition as 'deliver us from email'.

Millions of people enjoy Facebook and Twitter, and the internet has undoubtedly helped to tear down the world-wide iron curtains of censorship and news manipulation. Millions of people shop online, and churches and charities are keen to join in the plea to google their domain name and explore the wonders on offer.

There are, however, drawbacks, of which people of my generation are perhaps more aware than those who have grown up in the last thirty or forty years.

The one that has struck me recently is the dearth of contact. I had a request recently to be a Facebook 'Friend' of someone I didn't know. I looked on his page and found he had 1,400 'Friends'. That's not friendship, that's stamp collecting. It's sadly possible for the screen, the I-pad or the smartphone to sub-

stitute for actual contact a kind of fantasy electronic world. As we've seen, that world can often be cruel and unthinking.

It is a fact of modern life that people and organisations can hide behind a .com privacy. It is a revealing experience to go to the web-site of British Telecom - a telephone company, when all is said and done - and try to find a telephone number to ring and actually speak to a human being. It's there, true, but hidden away like a shameful secret. They clearly don't want you to phone them. Go to 'Frequently Asked Questions' (never the one I've got).

The banks now offer a 'contactless' credit card. What I'm afraid of is a 'contactless' society, a vast hub of digital messages flying about, but never a smile or a human touch. Ten minutes chat over the garden fence is surely worth a couple of hours on Facebook.

## The Queen brings Maundy Money to South Yorkshire - for first time in 900 years

The Queen will distribute the Royal Maundy money at Sheffield Cathedral in April. This is the first time in over 900 years that this State Occasion has taken place in South Yorkshire.

She will be welcomed to the city's Church of England cathedral by a congregation of over 1,000 representatives from churches in South Yorkshire and organisations from the whole County. The Queen will then personally distribute a gift of Maundy Money to 178 individuals over the age of 70, in recognition of their service to the church and community.

According to ancient tradition,

the number of recipients and the amount of money are directly related to the Sovereign's age. Therefore, as Her Majesty is 89 years old, 89 men and 89 women will receive 89 pence in specially minted Maundy Money, together with a further gift, in two specially made leather purses. The money is specially struck by the Royal Mint for this service, and includes 3 pence pieces—which apparently are legal tender!

## Obesity is such a financial weight

Here is a sobering thought: obesity is a greater burden on the UK's economy than armed violence, war

and terrorism. It costs the country nearly £47 billion a year. That means it has the second-largest economic impact on the UK, behind smoking. Obesity generates an annual loss equivalent to three per cent of GDP.

The study was done by the McKinsey Global Institute, which warned that in the UK, government efforts to tackle the problem were "too fragmented to be effective." Meanwhile, more than 2.1 billion people around the world - or nearly 30 per cent of the global population - are overweight or obese, with the figure likely to rise to almost half of the world's population by 2030.

## A Surprising Event

*'Fools! For I also had my hour; One far fierce hour and sweet: There was a shout about my ears, And palms before my feet.'* (from *The Donkey* by G.K. Chesterton).

**T**he donkey in the Palm Sunday story highlights some of the surprises in this familiar story. Jesus rode into Jerusalem on the back of a young donkey to the adulation of the crowd, 'Many people spread their cloaks on the road, while others spread branches they had cut in the fields. Those who went ahead and those who followed shouted, 'Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!'" (Mark 11: 8/9).

At the end of the passage, surprisingly we are told that the crowd disappeared and Jesus left Jerusalem with just the twelve. If Jesus

was truly the Messiah, why didn't the crowds follow him everywhere? Secondly, there was no evident opposition from the authorities. When Jesus was put on trial, this event was not used in evidence against him. Alongside the crowd, they failed to understand the significance of what Jesus had done. Also the story finishes in a surprising way. After Jesus entered the temple, He looked around and went home (Mk 11:11)!

In Mark's account it is clear that Jesus was the only one who really understood what was happening. He knew where the donkey was and what the people would say to the disciples (Mark 11:1-6). He also knew why he was going to Jerusalem, 'We are going up to Jerusalem and the Son of Man will be delivered over to the chief priests and the teachers of the law. They will condemn him to death and will

hand him over to the Gentiles, who will mock him and spit on him, flog him and kill him. Three days later he will rise.' (Mk 10:33/34).

So what can we learn from this story? Firstly, we don't necessarily understand all that is going on in our situation! Jesus told the disciples on a number of occasions that He would die, yet they didn't get it. He knows what He is doing in our lives and we can trust our circumstances to Him.

Secondly, we know that Palm Sunday is only the beginning of the story! A week later Jesus rose from the dead on Easter Day! During dark and difficult times, because of Jesus' cross and resurrection, we know that He shares in the experience of our pain. Jesus also offers us the hope of a secure future, as we share his resurrection life.

## No more superhero Mums!

**A** few years ago, I realised that I was living with a sinister alter-ego. I first discovered her when my children were small. The transition from young-adult life to motherhood had brought many challenges, but as the dust settled, I began to craft a working model of how best to do this mothering thing. My first baby grew into a toddler and I began to break into my stride. My second baby was an easy baby, and I think it was at about this point that 'Alpha Mother' began to emerge.

Alpha-Mother could do things. You need forty cupcakes for the reception class? Not a problem. Want some sleep solutions for your nocturnal infant? In a heartbeat. Alpha-Mother rocked up to toddler groups; she attended school

meetings. Alpha-Mother had ideas and theories. She was competent. Her home looked nice, she maintained a calm exterior, and enjoyed dining out on stories of her happy, functioning family.

But Alpha-Mother was also a pain. She annoyed people. She once reduced a friend to tears of anxiety and incompetence with her superiority. She could be nice enough on the outside, but she couldn't keep people close. Clever, together and consummately strong, she peddled fear and inadequacy and worked hard to keep her many plates spinning.

Alpha-Mother wanted to grow, and had she done so I suspect she would have slowly suffocated those closest to her. Instead, she is dying.

(I would like to say she is dead and buried, but she still occasionally rears her head in a melodramatic death throee.)

The problem with Alpha-Mother was that she was utterly unaware of her need of a Saviour. She was entirely self-made; a construct defined by her capacity to project success.

Alpha-Mother and those like her are born when we attempt to botch and patch together for ourselves an identity which will mask our most vulnerable places, instead of turning over our brokenness to the restorative hands of the King of Love. What reckless stupidity!

We have in Jesus a Saviour who came not for the healthy, but for *turn to page 11 col 2*

## SS Perpetua and Felicitas ± joyful martyrs of Africa:7th March

This story could come straight out of modern Africa. Perpetua was a young married woman of 22 who had recently become a Christian. But the authorities had forbidden any new conversions, and soon she and some other catechumens were arrested and sentenced to death. This was not under Islamic State, nor Boko Haram, but under the emperor Septimius Severus in Carthage, in the year 203.

Imprisoned with Perpetua was a pregnant slave, Felicitas, and seven men.

Perpetua's family were frantic with worry for her, so she sent a message to reassure them: "My prison became a palace for me,

and I would rather have been there than anywhere else." As the days passed Perpetua devoted herself to prayer, and experienced various visions depicting the spiritual battle storming around her.



Soon Felicitas gave birth to a girl in the prison, and she and Perpetua enjoyed a last agape meal together. On the day of the Games they left the prison for the amphitheatre 'joyfully as though they were on their way to heaven'. Perpetua sang a hymn

of praise as animals were prepared for killing the prisoners: leopards and bears for the men, and a maddened heifer for the women. The

heifer did not succeed in killing them, and after the young women exchanged one final kiss of peace, Perpetua herself guided the gladiator's knife to her throat: "It was as though so great a woman...could not be despatched unless she herself were willing."

Perpetua and Felicitas's joyful witness and unflinching courage went on to inspire many other early Christian martyrs. Down the centuries, the feast day of Perpetua and Felicitas became widely observed. In 1907 an inscription in their honour was discovered at Carthage in the Basilica Majorum, where they had been buried centuries before. Their memory still lives on: eight episodes of Perpetua's life are represented on a 14th century altar frontal at Barcelona.

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# Grandma

*Grandma is eighty-eight years old and still drives her own car. She writes a letter to her Grand-daughter:*

Dear Grand-daughter,

The other day I went up to our local Christian book store and saw a 'Honk if you love Jesus' bumper sticker ..



I was feeling particularly sassy that day because I had just come from a thrilling choir performance, followed by a thunderous prayer meeting..

So, I bought the sticker and put it on my bumper.

Boy, am I glad I did; what an uplifting experience that followed.

I was stopped at a red light at a busy intersection, just lost in thought about the Lord and how good he is, and I didn't notice that the light had changed.

It is a good thing someone else loves Jesus because if he hadn't

honked, I'd never have noticed.

I found that lots of people love Jesus!

While I was sitting there, the guy behind started honking like crazy, and then he leaned out of his window and screamed, 'For the love of God!'

'Go! Go! Go! Jesus Christ, GO!'

What an exuberant cheerleader he was for Jesus!

Everyone started honking!

I just leaned out my window and started waving and smiling at all those loving people.

I even honked my horn a few times to share in the love!

There must have been a man from Florida back there because I heard him yelling something about a sunny beach.

I saw another guy waving in a funny way with only his middle finger stuck up in the air.

I asked my young teenage grandson in the back seat what that meant.

He said it was probably a Hawaiian good luck sign or something.

Well, I have never met anyone from Hawaii, so I leaned out the window and gave him the good luck sign right back.

My grandson burst out laughing.

Why even he was enjoying this

religious experience!!

A couple of the people were so caught up in the joy of the moment that they got out of their cars and started walking towards me.

I bet they wanted to pray or ask what church I attended, but this is when I noticed the light had changed.

So, grinning, I waved at all my brothers and sisters, and drove on through the intersection.

I noticed that I was the only car that got through the intersection before the light changed again and felt kind of sad that I had to leave them after all the love we had shared.

So I slowed the car down, leaned out the window and gave them all the Hawaiian good luck sign one last time as I drove away. Praise the Lord for such wonderful folks!!

Will write again soon,  
Love, Grandma

## **Bishop of Carlisle sets out arguments against assisted suicide**

The Church of England's opposition to a change in the law on assisted suicide remains

"absolutely clear," the Bishop of Carlisle says. Writing in a blog for The Huffington Post,

Bishop James Newcome, who is lead bishop on health care issues, said there is a "fundamental responsibility" to care for and protect the most vulnerable, including elderly people at risk of abuse. He added that many disability charities are "deeply concerned" about  
*turn to page 11 col 2*

# The story behind ° Dear Lord and Father of mankind

Dear Lord and Father of mankind,  
forgive our foolish ways!  
Reclothe us in our rightful mind;  
in purer lives thy service find,  
in deeper reverence, praise.  
In simple trust like theirs who heard  
beside the Syrian sea  
the gracious calling of the Lord,  
let us, like them, without a word,  
rise up and follow thee.  
...Drop thy still dews of quietness,  
till all our strivings cease;  
take from our souls the strain and stress,  
and let our ordered lives confess  
the beauty of thy peace.

**T**his is the nation's second favourite hymn, according to a poll taken by the BBC Songs of Praise programme in 2013. But it did not originate in the UK, nor did it begin life as a hymn. It began in the USA, as part of a poem about a drug-induced religious frenzy.

## 'Developing Discipleship' paper released by CofE

The Church of England has published a paper on 'Developing Discipleship'. It was released in time for discussion at the recent February meeting of the General Synod.

The Bishop of Sheffield, Steven Croft, explains: "Discipleship is right at the centre of who we're called to be as the people of God.... the aim of the paper is to start a new conversation about Christian discipleship right across the Church of England and to deepen that conversation."

Reflecting on a vision for the Church in discipleship, Bishop

John Greenleaf Whittier had been born in Haverhill, Massachusetts in 1807. His family were part of a pious Quaker community, and so the young John had grown up in an atmosphere of reverence, of waiting upon God in prayerful silence. Whittier wanted to be a poet, but his father directed him to journalism instead, in order to be sure his son could earn a living. Obediently, Whittier took up his pen and began to write for the papers. He was soon engaged in the fight against slavery, which he called the 'national crime'. He was frequently abused and criticized for his stand, and found his solace in turning to his first love, poetry.

In 1872 he wrote a 17 verse 'hymn-poem' called 'The Brewing of Soma'. It was an attempt to depict the futile ways in which mankind tries to engage with God. The story line is of priests of the Vedic religion (close to Hinduism) brewing soma, a sacred ritual drink with

Steven says: "The Church is called to be and to become a community of missionary disciples. Discipleship is not just about learning, it's also about service and being equipped for God's service in the world as Christ sends us out. And growing the Church is about making disciples in obedience to Jesus' commission in Matthew 28. Serving the common good is about equipping every Christian disciple to make a difference, in the wider world, in their workplace, in their family, in their community, so that the Church as a whole is a blessing to God's world and a channel of His grace and love."

hallucinogenic properties. The priests are hoping that Soma will give them an experience of the divine, but instead they simply get drunk. This failure is then compared to some Christians' use of "music, incense, vigils drear, And trance, to bring the skies more near, Or lift men up to heaven!" But all their effort is in vain. It is mere intoxicated folly.

And so the poem runs for 11 verses. Then, in verse 12, the whole scene changes, and we are not using props any longer, but simply looking into the loving face of the God of the Bible. We come to Him in penitence, and are met with grace and love. We encounter Jesus, and follow Him in obedience. The result is peace, stillness, and eternal life.

The poem became the hymn in 1884, when Garrett Horder took the poem's final five verses and made them the hymn we love today. Here in the UK we sing it to the tune 'Repton', by C Hubert H Parry.

The paper proposes ten marks of developing disciples, described in the paper as "very much provisional and work in progress." These ten marks of a diocese committed to developing disciples have been drawn together by staff of the Education Division, MPA and the Ministry Division using research on current good practice from across the dioceses in 2013.

Dioceses will be invited to further develop and explore them as a contribution to good practice. In addition, individuals will have an opportunity to comment on the paper in a specially created online forum at: [www.churchofengland.org/discipleshipreport](http://www.churchofengland.org/discipleshipreport)

# Hymns and Readings

## 1st March Lent 2

Readings Genesis 17: 1-7 & 15-16

Psalm 22  
Romans 4: 13-end  
Mark 8: 31-end

Hymns 238 New every morning is the love  
64 Be thou my guardian and my guide  
76 Take up thy cross  
476 Ye servants of God

Sidesperson: Mark Williams

Readers: Stephen Nicoll, Ruth Godwin

Intercessions: Bill Saunders

## 8th March Lent 3

Readings Exodus 20: 1-17

Psalm 19  
1 Corinthians 1: 18-25  
John 2: 13-22

Hymns 74 O for a heart to praise my God  
407 Lord thy word abideth  
333 All my hope on God is founded  
339 Be thou my vision

Sidesperson: Bill Saunders

Readers: Nick Bethune, Jenny Kauntze

Intercessions: Carol Kenning

## 15th March Lent 4 Mothering Sunday

Readings: 1 Samuel 1: 20-28

Psalm: 34  
Colossians 3: 12-17  
John 19: 25-27

Hymns 239 Lord of all hopefulness  
387 Jesus good above all other  
185 Sing we of the blessed mother  
413 Now thank we all our God

Sidesperson: Elizabeth Oyedemi

Readers: Rob Nesbitt, Joe McKenzie

Intercessions: Nicky Pittam

## 22nd March Lent 5 Passion Sunday

Readings: Jeremiah 31: 31-34

Psalm: 51  
Hebrews 5: 5-10  
John 12: 20 -33

Hymns 94 We sing the praise of him who died  
84 It is a thing most wonderful  
383 Jesu lover of my soul  
662 Theres a wideness in Gods mercy

Sideperson: Monica Sarpong

Readers: Carol Kenning, Mark Williams

Intercessions: Ian MacGregor

## 29th March Palm Sunday

Readings Isaiah 50: 4-9

Psalm 31: 9-16  
Philippians 2: 5-11  
Mark 14: 1-15:end

Hymns 509 All Glory laud and honour  
510 Ride on ride on  
79 The royal banners forward go  
86 My song is love unknown  
Lift high the cross

Sidesperson: Rob Nesbitt

Readers: Denise Sealy Joe McKenzie

Intercessions: Bill Saunders

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the sick. He came to shine his life-giving, radiant light into those secret corners of our lives. Jesus does not need his followers to live like superheroes, leaping tall buildings in a single bound, living lives that make onlookers gasp with their many talents and plate-spinning capabilities. Jesus loves each of us as we are. We are told in Romans 8 that, "Nothing can separate us from the love of God." This love is entirely free and unearned, it is a love that sees us as we are and loves us anyway. This is great news! In the presence of God we can all see our superhero identities for the empty-shells they really are, as we allow God's transforming love to remodel us from the inside out.

By Joy French. Her recent book, with Anna France-Williams, is 'Ordinary Mum, Extraordinary Mission: how can a busy mum be part of Gods' mission when she

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the potential implications of Lord Falconer's Assisted Suicide Bill.

In his blog Bishop James commented: "A huge number of amendments have been proposed for the Bill. Some have already been debated, and it has been agreed that assisted suicide should be a matter for the courts rather than the medical profession to determine. This helps - but from the Church of England's point of view does not make assisted suicide itself more acceptable. Our position remains absolutely clear. As a matter of principle we are opposed to assisted suicide, and in favour of retaining the current law together with the guidelines issued by a former DPP?"

# Parish Priest

**Vicar**

**Prebendary Guy Pope**

The Vicarage

85 Dartmouth Park Road

LONDON NW5 1SL

020 7267 5941 Mobile 07770 693435

e-mail guypope@blueyonder.co.uk

## Church Officers at St. Mary, Brookfield, Dartmouth Park Road NW5

### Churchwardens

**Ms. Jenny Kauntze**

13 Mary Webster House  
55 Dartmouth Pk Hill NW5 1JD  
020 7267 0355

**Mr. Peter Dann**

101 Chetwynd Road  
NW5 1DA  
020 7267 2504

**PCC Secretary**

Mr. Bill Saunders  
23 Monnery Road  
N19 5SA  
020 7503 1422

**Stewardship  
Recorder**

Ms. Jenny Kauntze  
13 Mary Webster House  
55 Dartmouth Pk Hill  
NW5 1JD

**Parish Treasurer &  
Reader**

Miss N. Pittam  
62 Croftdown Road  
NW5 1EN

**Brookfield News  
Editor**

The Vicar

### Staff

**Director of Music St. Mary's**

Mr. James Hearn MMus, FRCO, ARCM.  
59a Barrington Road  
SW9 7JH

**Church Hall**

Mrs. C Kenning  
Flat 1 Church Hall  
York Rise NW5 1SB  
020 7485 9026

**Reader & Children's Advocate**

Dr. Caroline Deys  
20a Brookfield Park  
NW5 1ER  
020 7485 3110

## For your prayers

### PRAYER CALENDAR FOR MONTH OF MARCH 2015

1st Those who live outside the parish  
and worship at St Mary's  
8th Bellgate Mews  
15th Boscastle Road  
22nd Chetwynd Road  
29th Churchill Road

### SAINTS & HOLY DAYS

**1st Lent 2**  
2nd St Chad  
7th St Perpetua and her companions

**8th Lent 3**  
**15th Lent 4 Mothering Sunday**  
17th St Patrick  
18th St Cyril of Jerusalem  
19th St Joseph  
20th St Cuthbert  
**22nd Lent 5 Passion Sunday**  
24th Oscar Romero  
**25th Annunciation of our Lord**  
**29th Palm Sunday**  
30th Monday in Holy Week  
31st Tuesday in Holy Week