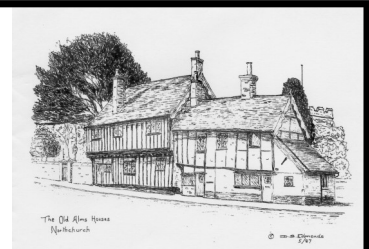


St Mary's Northchurch Newsletter



Parish Room Bookings:
Emily Millar
Mobile: 07929934367

February 2018

Church enquiries to:
Revd Jonathan Gordon
01442 871547
revjagordon@googlemail.com

Solitude and Loneliness

In May this year Terry Waite is booked to come give the Berkhamsted Deanery Lecture and over the Christmas break I was reading his book on Solitude. He spent nearly five years as a hostage and much of this time was spent in solitary confinement. The book describes people who live in inhospitable and remote places, such as the Northern Territories of Australia and records his conversations with them on how they cope without regular human contact. The people he describes are by the nature of their life choices independent minded. A common theme in the conversations that he records is the ability of people to dig deep and find inner resources. The concluding chapters describe his own reflections about his time as a hostage.

The Christian faith has generally been something that is communal. Yet, there has always been a tradition of those who have sought solitude. The early monks or "desert fathers" in the 3rd and 4th Century are a good example. My favourite is St Simeon who managed to spend 37 years living on a platform at the top of a pillar. In the Gospels Jesus goes alone into the

wilderness before he starts preaching around the communities of Galilee. These forty days mark the period of Lent that begins on February 14th. By contrast there is a great deal of discussion at the moment about the problem of loneliness and the impact it can have on a person's mental and physical health. Maybe the difference between solitude and loneliness is that solitude is a choice whereas loneliness is a sense of isolation that can leave you feeling that you are invisible and that no-one cares about you or notices your existence. A recent survey suggested that in the United Kingdom there are high numbers of people who experience social isolation.

It has been observed by researchers that what can help with the feeling of isolation is when we can place our lives within the context of a greater story. I've found that one of the gifts of the church is not only social relationships and friendship, but even in the vast mystery of time and the universe there is a deep faith perspective that at the heart of everything is a loving God and that we are ultimately not alone. As we move into the season of Lent this is a theme that we will be exploring and everyone is very welcome to come along to the services taking place.

Rev Jonathan Gordon

Delivery People Needed
Top of Darrs Lane (above the single track part of the road)
Ring Valerie Clark on 862613 if you can help.

Wednesday 14th February
Ash Wednesday
There will be a Service of Holy Communion
at 7.30pm.

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The Gift of Grace and Peace

For many years I have read the greetings with which Paul, Peter and John begin their letters to the early churches. I took these greetings as merely welcoming starts to the letters, following a normal convention of those days. The most usual form of the greetings is 'The grace and peace of God and the Lord Jesus Christ be with you all'.

There are small variations in these opening welcomes - such as adding the term 'mercy' to 'grace and peace'. This welcoming start also refers in one case to a 'heritage' that God and the Lord Jesus has given to those whom God and Jesus have made their own. On another occasion the spirit is said to awaken this awareness, and that it is given without limits to the believers. A fairly complete list of these opening welcomes is as follows:

1Corinthians1v1-3, 2Corinthians1v2, Galatians1v3, Philippians1v2, Colossians1v2 and v6, Ephesians1v2, 1Timothy1v2, 2Timothy1v1, Titus1v4, Philemon1v3, 1Peter1v2, 2Peter1v2, 1John1v8.

With further reflection I have come to see that these greetings are not just following the conventional way of writing in those days. The writers are telling the Christian hearers that God and the Lord Jesus Christ are giving them a living force. The words are not just a welcome - they are words that do something, namely that henceforth their lives and the letters of these apostles are a living power which God and the Lord Jesus Christ give to the believers. This may seem a bit obvious, but it was not so to me until I read these greetings as having power to unite the love of God in the Father and the Son within the people to whom the apostles wrote.

It still works, and you may receive the power from the Father and the Son and rejoice in it.

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A few months after the start of the war, William enlisted in the Royal Horse Artillery. In 1916, he took part in the Battle of the Somme and was wounded and returned to England to recover. On his return to France, William joined 'Z' battery. The following year his battery supported the Canadians during the capture of Vimy Ridge and later took part in the Third Battle of Ypres where his battery regularly fired an average of 450 rounds each day. The following November, William's battery supported the massive tank attack on the German lines near Cambrai. Although the attack was a success, the British failed to consolidate their victory and slowly the Germans regained the territory they had lost.

On 19th December, having discovered their location, German artillery opened fire on William's battery using a mixture of high explosive and gas shells. It is likely that William was one of those serious injured during this attack. He was admitted to an American-run hospital at Étaples where he made slow progress, but on 2nd February 1918, he finally succumbed to his injuries, aged 25. William is buried in an extension to the Étretat village churchyard on the French coast.

The Monday Club

For more information please contact: Joan Downhill on 865821 or Barbara Lloyd on 865059.

Northchurch and Berkhamsted U3A

We meet at Northchurch Social Centre, Bell Lane on the first or second Tuesday of the month between 10am and 12 noon. The meetings include a visiting speaker and refreshments. It is an ideal opportunity for retired or semi-retired people to join in various activities, learn new skills, outings and making new friends.

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Parking Outside Northchurch Tesco and Shops

Northchurch residents will have noticed that Herts Highways have been working on the road outside the shops. We are trying to sort out the difficulties residents have when visiting there. Perhaps it would be sensible to explain the reasons behind the work.

The area of parking immediately in front of the shops, and the four spaces in front of the flower bed are for 30 minutes only. This is long enough for the average visit and so there should be a good turnaround of spaces provided the occupants stick to the system. The areas are not for long term parking, nor for commercial vehicles to stay overnight.

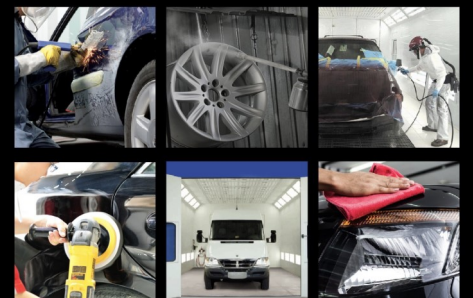
Highways erected three concrete bollards alongside the road to the rear of the shops so that it is obvious that cars should not park on the pavement. There is a very good reason for this: the elderly who walk up from Springwood have a footpath up the slight hill at the end of which there are double yellow lines. Hopefully this enables those with sticks and trolleys to get across to the shop easily. However on reaching the other side they have to go up towards the road at the rear of the shops to get on the pavement. This gets very difficult if cars park exactly on that corner, partially on the pavement. That is why there are double yellow lines there.

The Parish Council is trying hard to sort out the parking problem here, and provided residents stick to the rules laid out, the problem should ease. So, please, everyone, give a bit of consideration to exactly where you leave your vehicle.

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News from PHAKAMISA in South Africa

DEVOTIONS: Devotions still play a special role for our care givers when we praise and worship together. The care givers also get a chance to make their prayer requests and the group pray together. The word of God is being shared amongst them. Prayer requests are usually around family conflicts, poverty within the families, sicknesses, grandchildren, unemployment and drug abuse, death of family members and many more. The care givers believe very strongly in the Phakamisa prayers, this is usually noticed when they give feedback during the devotions. Gogo Ndlovu shared the following: “My daughter was accused of copying during an exam. She was then told that they won’t mark her paper and it was her final exam paper. What was most painful was, when she went to write the exam her brothers’ body was coming home as his funeral was going to be held the next day.” She was in tears when she was sharing that. Mrs Ndlovu came back after some time sharing that Phakamisa prayers were heard by God. She was dancing and singing worshipping the Lord. “My daughter was found not guilty and she passed her exams. She graduated in September and she’s now employed in our local school as teacher.” During devotions the care givers will stand up and say that Phakamisa devotions keep them going as they believe that their prayers will always be answered.

HEALTHY LIVING: Physical training keeps our care givers healthy. They also like the exercise class in the morning. One care giver once said to us: “Thank you so much director for organising the gym for us, it keeps us very fit. You won’t believe that during the days that I am not here at Phakamisa I walk every day at home. I go to the sports ground and walk five times around and now I have been joined by other gogos (old ladies) in my neighbourhood.”

THURSDAY IN BLACK: Thursday in black is one of our awareness raising events. It is the awareness against domestic violence. We usually do this awareness on our last Thursday before the end of our first term. The care givers like this celebration so much that they now invite their friends and neighbours as well. We had about 500 people who participated in this event this year. We invited guest speakers to address the issue of: Cancer awareness, Rape, HIV/AIDS and Kidney Failure. It was good to hear from one male member Mr Shabalala challenging Phakamisa to reach out to the communities as well. He said “Thank you for inviting us to this awareness raising event. I think it’s high time that Phakamisa do this event in our communities not only within the Phakamisa premises. Many people will be saved by this information shared here”.

ECD GRADUATIONS Child Minder – The Child Minder course is our six months training course that started in January. One Hundred and twenty teachers graduated from the Child Minder course in June. The graduation went very well and for them it is a big achievement. It was very interesting to speak to one of the teacher’s husband during the graduation day. He said: “This feels like an achievement for myself. At least even if I die now I know that my wife has something that cannot be taken away from her, that will assist her in the future. Thank you Phakamisa for this reasonable cost for training, and she will definitely come again for the one year EduCare Supervisor course of which thirty supervisors were trained this year.

WOMEN’S DAY CELEBRATION: We had a high tea party for the care givers to end our celebrations for women’s month. Our dress code was headwrap and any bright colours as we were also celebrating and welcoming Spring. The theme of the day was FILL-UP MY CUP. This idea came from observing and listening during our devotions. I found that most of our care givers have forgotten about themselves and are carrying so much pain, hurt and anger. Different speakers were invited addressing different topics, reminding our caregivers that they are special and that they also play a very important role within their families and the communities they live in, even if they feel unrecognized. I have never seen the caregivers so happy. The feedback received was very positive. One care giver said: “I thank God for allowing me to attend today. I feel light as if I was no longer carrying a heavy load on my back. May God bless you all at Phakamisa and grant you more wisdom in everything you do. This event was really meant for me.” The topics covered that day were- You are a woman of virtue; You are a phenomenal woman; Dealing with invisible wounds and Indeed, you are a woman of worth.

WANDERING SCHOOLS: Our wandering schools have been renovated and toilets have been built for the children. The children that are five years old will be graduating at the end of November. This will be the first graduation in Phakamisa for our Wandering schools. The idea of the graduation came from the caregivers of the children, and this shows the relationship that Phakamisa has with the community that it serves.

ACCREDITED COURSE: Our Level 4 that we started this year is doing very well. More teachers have approached our offices wanting to be enrolled at Phakamisa next year. Phakamisa has received more recognition from other sectors as well. It felt so good to hear that our teachers are getting some assistance as they are attending Phakamisa ECD (Early Childhood Development) training. Our teacher Sylva Cele from Molweni area came to the office and informed us of the following; “My crèche was damaged by the floods and I went to approach some people from disaster management for assistance and they asked me to bring a letter from Phakamisa that I am a student.” We wrote a letter for her and she came back very happy to tell us that her crèche will be fixed as she has received a confirmation letter from the municipality. Her words: I am so grateful to a friend that introduced me to Phakamisa. Phakamisa make things happen for us.

SKILLS DEVELOPMENT: Our focus is on income generating whereby the caregivers are trained in skills that will assist them in generating some sort of income. The beadwork group has started to do more traditional necklaces and bangles which has been well supported and given more exposure to Phakamisa. The sewing group learnt to make school shirts and trousers. Cooking- The caregivers in this class have been trained in making home-made custard and jelly powder. They have also been trained to make home-made juice using fresh fruits.

CONCLUSION: I would like to thank everyone for the support that is continually given to us. Without you Phakamisa couldn’t have been seen or acknowledged in the communities. May God richly bless you.

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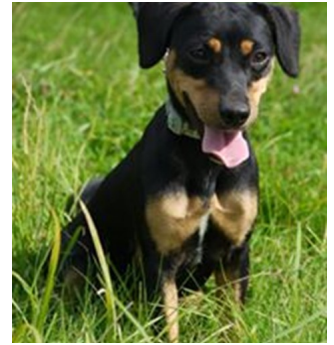
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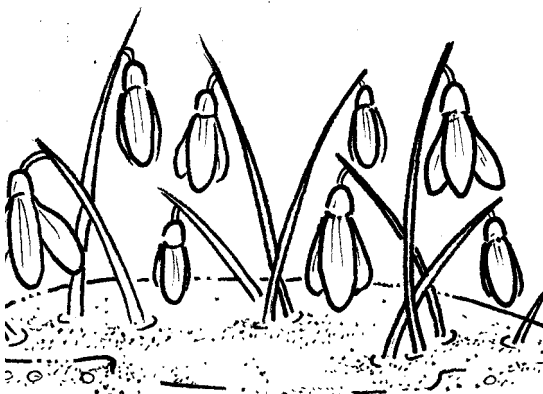
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Sunday & Lent Services at St Mary's

4th February *Second before Lent*

8.00am Holy Communion (BCP)
10.00am Parish Eucharist
6.00pm Evening Prayer at St Bart's

11th February *Sunday before Lent*

8.00am Holy Communion (BCP)
10.00am All Age Service
6.00pm Evening Prayer

14th February *Ash Wednesday*

7.30pm Holy Communion

18th February *Lent 1*

8.00am Holy Communion (BCP)
10.00am Parish Eucharist
6.00pm Taize Service
A quiet meditation service with chants and silence for Lenten reflections. Tea/coffee and cake to be served afterwards. All welcome.



25th February *Lent 2*

8.00am Holy Communion (BCP)
10.00am Parish Eucharist
6.00pm Evening Prayer

News from Terry Douris, County Councillor

I cannot let this moment pass without paying tribute to Cllr Alan Fantham who sadly lost his fight against illness on 1st January. Alan was one of those special characters who cared deeply for the area in which he lived that he contributed so much to the area during his life. I was reminded recently of the cricket matches between Northchurch and Radlett where there was real competition and Alan was at the heart of it. Locally, he held me and my predecessors to account and I well remember having to defend Hertfordshire County Council against Alan's challenge. He will be missed, and my condolences go to Allison.

We are currently consulting on the future of the Library Service across Hertfordshire and a paper for this came to the Education Libraries and Localism Panel in November to look at ways in which the library service can contribute to council savings whilst at the same time protecting the existing service and seizing opportunities to develop the public offer of the libraries. The first step in the consideration of the options was the launch on Monday 8th January of the consultation in which we will be gathering the views of our customers and staff alike. The consultation is available at www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/libraryconsultation will run until 18th February. The government is keen to offer library services the opportunity to look at new and different ways to deliver this important service and in December I attended a seminar in Nottingham at which several other library services told us how they had taken these opportunities up.

Hertfordshire Music Service is regarded as one of the best in the country and one of the highlights is the Schools Gala Concert at the Royal Albert Hall. This is a wonderful event with so many schools taking part in those historic surroundings that have played host to such a range of events over the years. This is not the only event that the music service puts on and you can find out more by visiting www.hertsmusicservice.org.uk

Don't forget you can always contact me on 01442 402273 or by email at terry.douris@hertfordshire.gov.uk

Contacts for the Newsletter

Distribution to Valerie Clark, 862613.

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All advertisements must be paid for before they can be published. Copy date is 15th of each month.



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