

# St Mary's Northchurch Newsletter



Parish Room Bookings:  
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Church enquiries to:  
Revd Jonathan Gordon  
01442 871547  
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## February 2020

## *Join us on the faith journey*

Over the Christmas and Epiphany period we have had a very impressive star hanging in church. It was made by one of the Sunday Club team and has provided a great backdrop to the services through Christmas and January. The star is part of the Christmas story and the journey of the kings to Bethlehem, but it also a symbol of direction and hope. There is a famous saying, "It is only when it is dark that you can see the stars," and in uncertain times that makes a great deal of sense.

In the school assemblies over the last few weeks we have been thinking of the night sky and the wonder of the stars. The problem of light pollution makes it difficult to appreciate the sky in its full glory, but there are places where astrologers of all ages go and take their telescopes and on a clear night observe the wonders of the solar system. The theme in the assemblies has been to try and slow down and observe what is around us. In the weeks leading up to Ash Wednesday (February 26<sup>th</sup>) some of the readings that we hear in church focus on the beauty of God's creation and, periodically taking in the night sky, I find a helpful way of thinking about the extraordinary miracle of existence.

Over the centuries people have looked upwards and pondered on what all this might mean. The magi saw a star and believed that a special king had been born. The readings in church describe the miracle of how the God who creates the mosaic of the universe can still care about each small part of the tapestry. Conversely, some have looked at the sky and concluded that it is vast, but indifferent and life is essentially meaningless.

If you do think about these questions then please do consider coming along to the next **Alpha Course** at St Mary's that will be starting in February. There will be posters on the noticeboard at church that will give the

details. It is open to everyone and a meal is provided. We listen to a talk on DVD and then there is time for discussion. Wherever you are on the faith journey you will be very welcome.

Rev Jonathan Gordon

Do you like good food and interesting conversation?

Are you curious about faith?



Why not try Alpha?

**Alpha is a** chance to explore life and the Christian faith in a friendly, open and informal environment. We are running Alpha over 10 weeks, starting Wednesday February 12<sup>th</sup>, with a break over Easter. We will share a meal, watch a talk and discuss the issues it raises about Christianity, life, meaning...

RSVPs and enquiries to Rev Jonathan Gordon  
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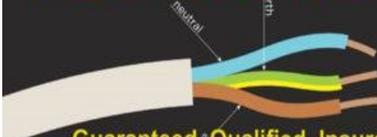
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## This Month in 1945 ...

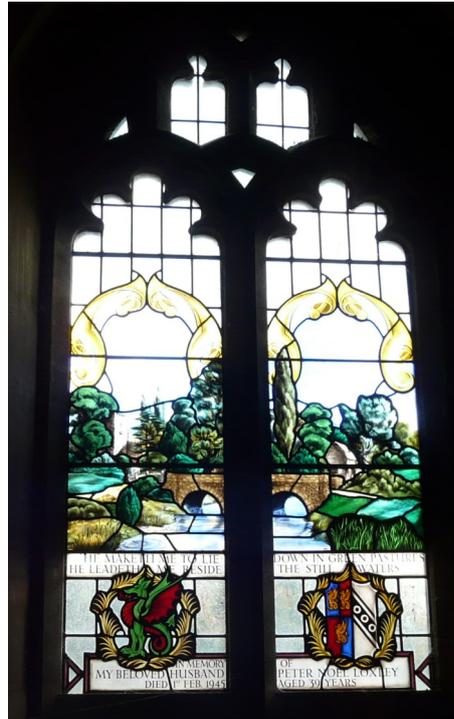
On 1<sup>st</sup> February 1945, a British transport aircraft ditched in the sea off an island in the Mediterranean. One of the passengers killed on board the aircraft was 39-year-old senior Foreign Office diplomat, Peter Loxley, the owner of Norcott Court in Dudswell. Four years earlier, Loxley had overseen the events following Rudolph Hess's unexpected arrival in Great Britain and was the senior liaison officer between the Foreign Office and the Intelligence Service, MI6.

Loxley was travelling to Yalta bringing 'Top Secret' documents with him for use during the conference between Churchill, Roosevelt and Stalin. Because of the distance involved, the flight included an overnight stop at an airbase near Naples. Fog initially prevented Loxley's aircraft taking off from England and when it cleared the aircraft developed an electrical fault. With no replacement immediately available, Loxley and the other the passengers were transferred to RAF Lyneham, where another aircraft was made available.

Another delay whilst the passengers had breakfast meant that it was unlikely that the aircraft would reach Naples before dark. The flight across France to the Mediterranean went smoothly and

regular readings from navigation beacons kept the plane on course. However, approaching Naples, the aircraft ran into severe weather with dark storm clouds which caused the aircraft's navigation system to fail. Not being able to make out the Italian coastline, and not wanting to reduce height so close to the mountains near Naples, the pilot changed course for Malta where the plane could refuel and resume its flight the following morning. Unfortunately, the navigation problems continued and with fuel running out the pilot was forced to ditch the aircraft in the sea close to some inhabited islands. Sadly, all the passengers were killed when the aircraft broke in two on hitting the water.

After the war Peter Loxley's widow, Lavender, moved to Dudswell with her two children. Becoming heavily involved in local life, including Northchurch Parish Council and the PCC at St Mary's, Lavender commissioned the stained-glass window in the south transept that is dedicated to her late husband.



Richard North

## World Day of Prayer: "Rise, take your mat and walk"

Women, men and children of all ages are called to 'Rise, take your mat and walk' to join this day of prayer. Women of Zimbabwe have prepared this year's service and they encourage us all to reflect on the difficulties and unrest that have plagued their country over many years. They share the challenges they have met and the hopes they have for the future. They encourage us to 'Rise, take your mat and walk' with them as they continue their often turbulent journey towards full reconciliation.

World Day of Prayer is an international inter-church organisation which enables us to hear the thoughts of women from all parts of the world: their hopes, concerns and prayers. The preparation for the day is vast. An international committee is based in New York and there are national committees in each participating country. Regional conferences meet to consider the service and then local groups make their plans. Finally, at a **Northchurch Baptist Church on Friday 6 March 2020**, people will gather to celebrate the service prepared by the women of Zimbabwe.

The Day of Prayer is celebrated in over 170 countries. It begins in Samoa and prayer in native languages travels throughout the world --- through Asia, Africa, the Middle East, Europe and the Americas - before finishing in American Samoa more than 36 hours later. **Come and join us if you can!**



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## News from PHAKAMISA: JUNE to SEPTEMBER 2019

*A note from the Editor: Phakamisa is a charity in South Africa that works with adults and children from poor communities who are living with HIV. It is one of the charities supported by St Mary's Church Northchurch. <http://www.phakamisa.org/>*

Greetings in the name of Jesus Christ Amen. As we are nearing the end of the year, we cannot help but stand in awe of God's faithfulness in every season. The faith that our staff embodied and the love of God that continuously surrounds us has brought us this far. We thank God for His mercies that endures forever.

### Devotions

As Phakamisa, we build everything on the solid foundation of Jesus Christ and we continue to start our day, every day with the usual morning devotions. Our care givers continue to pray together and share their testimonies as well. Devotions to them are still one of the important aspects in their lives. You find that when they are sharing or commenting, they say" ***I ran all the way as I didn't want to miss the devotions. I'm always looking forward to hear the word of God and praying***"

During our devotions, we sometimes get some good feedback about the organisation from the care givers. The other day gogo Ncwaba from Lindelani area shared the following:

***"I just want to thank Phakamisa for the skills that they teach us. Last week I was approached by our counsellor with some of our community leaders. They told me that they have heard through the grapevine that I make nice beadwork, and they asked if I can teach other community members to do it, and they will pay me. Surprised as I was, we talked and negotiated. They then asked me if I had any certificates and with a big smile, I showed them my Phakamisa beadwork certificate and they were very pleased. I also referred them to come visit Phakamisa to see the beautiful work that is done here. I am very happy, and my children and grandchildren are very excited about this. I love Phakamisa nothing can separate me with it"***

### Early Childhood Development

We are grateful that we were able to enroll students in our Child Minder course and Edu Care and Supervisor course to uplift them. Seventy-five crèche teachers graduated from the Child Minder course in June (that is our six months' course), and twenty crèche supervisors also received their certificates in the supervisor course. It is always fulfilling when we receive a positive feedback about our training courses. One of the teachers in the Child Minder graduation said, when receiving her certificate:

***" I have been waiting for this certificate for a long time. I approached one crèche for a job, and I told them that I was studying at Phakamisa finishing in June. They said once I get the certificate, I must come see them. My life is going to change, I promise you"***

At Phakamisa we really believe in making a difference in changing lives.

### Wandering Schools (Orphans and Vulnerable Children)

Thank you to the Thompson Travelers Group who donated some breakfast meals for our children. As from July our orphans in our wandering schools have started to eat warm cooked porridge every morning. The smiles that we see in those little faces when enjoying their meals are so adorable. One of the care givers asked one of our teachers what they put in the porridge at school as her grandchild doesn't want to eat the porridge anymore at home! We would like to also thank the volunteers in the community who assisted the Wandering School teachers with cooking.

### Gender Based Violence Awareness Raising

#### Blow a whistle campaign

In light of the recent events surrounding gender-based violence, the Xenophobic attacks, the femicide in South Africa, and specifically after the case of Ayakha Jiyane and her three siblings who were brutally murdered by their father; our Organization saw it fitting and most necessary to drive a campaign that would stand together alongside other initiatives in the country and raise awareness on ,this social epidemic. We had a march with our male care givers and male friends who joined us during the day. Our objective with this campaign was to raise awareness of gender-based violence in and around the Pinetown community, and also to show that we are part of the struggle and to plead with people to stop abuse. The campaign was successful, and we were grateful to receive the support of the Pinetown Methodist Church Superintendent Rev. Sangweni, who joined us during the day and led the march. We were also happy to receive positive response from the people and cars that were passing-by. When distributing the pamphlets on Gender based violence one of the males said to me ***"mama(mother) I would like to apologies on behalf of the men, not all of us are abusers. Some of us are saying NOT IN OUR NAME"*** that small discussion meant a lot to us as women at the march.

When we came back, we lit the big candle and our small candles to respect and to pay tribute to all the victims of abuse. Rev. Sangweni led us in this session of candle lighting. He pleaded that the candles be lit first by any members of our volunteering staff who may have been victims of gender-based violence. This was a very touching and emotional moment for the women, many were in tears, however this session ended on a very powerful and uplifting prayer. De-briefing and counselling sessions were then done with all of the victims, and we had a good closure with regards to this event.

In closing I would like to thank each and every one who has played a part, in any capacity that has enabled us to make a difference into our disadvantaged communities. God bless you all.

## Smoke gets in our eyes

We are in Sydney, Australia, where there is only one subject for discussion: the bush fires sweeping New South Wales and Queensland. With no significant rain hereabouts for well over a year, water is being rationed and fires are raging. I had plans to take a train trip up country. Not possible. Trains have been suspended. The fires are everywhere.

Last year Scott Morrison unexpectedly won an election here by opposing action on climate change. His neat slogans are now confronted with a stark reality.

Yet today's newspaper headline seemed to deny the issue: *Stop the lies: Bush fires are not caused by coal burn.*

As a statement, the headline is true. If Australia stopped burning coal tomorrow, not a single bush fire would be put out as a result.

The problem is that it confuses the immediate crisis with the longer-term pattern. To control climate change needs a

whole range of changes across the world. If a rich country like Australia won't take painful action to limit its coal burn, what should we expect poor countries to do? If no-one acts, things will get worse.

In church this morning, we read about Jesus' question to his disciples: 'Who do you say that I am?' Peter took the plunge: 'You are the Messiah.' Yet he was quickly in trouble. That necessary step was not sufficient. To achieve results, it would have to be followed through, first by Jesus, then by his disciples. Peter did not yet see its consequences over the long term.

Slogans may mark a necessary decision. But they can also deceive. Changes of direction have to be carried through in sustained practice. If we are to see clearly what is needed to effect lasting change, we should not let the smoke get into our eyes.

David White

## Northchurch WI Reunion and 100th anniversary celebration

Northchurch W.I. celebrate 100 years in February and I am wondering if there is anybody out there who has been a member in the past (obviously not 100 years ago lol) but no longer comes to the Group.

If this applies to you, or someone you know, please contact the President, Marilyn Hill, on 07843 125592.

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## Sunday Services at St Mary's



### 2nd February *Candlemas*

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

### 9th February *Third before Lent*

8.00am Holy Communion (BCP)  
10.00am All-Age Service

### 16th February *Second before Lent*

8.00am Holy Communion (BCP)  
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### 23rd February *Sunday before Lent*

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