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St Mary's Northchurch Newsletter

May 2019



Church enquiries to:
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01442 871547
revjagordon@googlemail.com

A place where we can come together

After three months of scaffolding and building work the roof on St Mary's has been replaced and at the end of April there was a Service of Thanksgiving in the church. There has been a range of fund-raising initiatives over the last year to help raise the funds and thank you to everyone who has been involved and contributed. By way of contrast as we were thinking of the final stages of the project there was a huge fire at the Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris and news media has carried the images of the destruction and also the plans to rebuild.

The reports from Paris have generated a wide-ranging discussion about the purpose of churches and cathedrals. They are expensive. A new visitors centre is being opened at St Albans Cathedral and when you go in there is a sign saying that the cathedral costs £5000 per day to run or £1,825,000 per year. Within days of the fire in Paris hundreds of thousands of Euros had been pledged to the rebuilding of Notre Dame and the French president, Emmanuel Macron, said in an address that he wanted the cathedral to be rebuilt within five years and be "more beautiful than before." I was able to listen to an interview with Archbishop John Sentamu who was asked about whether this type of expenditure was justified in an age of hunger. He replied that every faith needs a home that can provide hospitality and it was not either or in terms of responding to human need. There was money to feed the hungry and provide beautiful spaces of worship. The problem was human greed.

Likewise, there are a variety of perspectives on what would be the attitude of Jesus to buildings. He did say that the Jerusalem Temple would be destroyed, yet he also went into synagogues and taught the people. Likewise, people say you don't need to go to church to worship and God can be found anywhere, whether that be in people or

in nature, and to emphasise the point, most of Jesus' teaching was done outdoors. As in all things in life there are a variety of responses. Yet, I'm really glad that we have repaired the roof at St Mary's and we continue to care for it for future generations. It is one of the oldest churches in Hertfordshire. It is a church that contains links to past generations and is the place where significant moments in the community's life have taken place. Inside are memorials and graffiti that go back over 300 years. Although it has roots in the past it is also focused on providing a welcome to people now. Church life is about community and friendship. It is focused on providing welcome and support. It is quite possibly true that God does not need buildings, but we are not God, and I think it is a good thing to have a place where we can come together and call home.

Rev Jonathan Gordon

The Berkhamsted Deanery Lecture **will be given this year by Revd Lucy Winkett**

Topic: Good news or Fake news? A Christian perspective on broadcasting in echo chambers and filter bubbles, facing the challenge of a 24 hour news cycle.

The lecture will start at **7.45pm in St Mary's Northchurch on Thursday May 23rd** and light refreshments will be provided.

Lucy Winkett is Rector of St James's Church Piccadilly and a regular broadcaster on radios 4 and 3.

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Fire at Notre Dame

It would be hard to be unmoved by the fire at Notre Dame. The seat of the archbishop of Paris, it is a symbol of Paris, the scene of great historic events, adorned by great treasures of art. Only a few weeks ago, I attended a service there.

The fire set me thinking about other great centres of worship that had been destroyed down the years.

Two of these were Coventry cathedral, destroyed in 1940 and the beautiful Frauenkirche in Dresden, destroyed in 1945. The damage to buildings was as nothing to the concurrent loss of human life. There are countless other examples.

One of the marvels of the ancient world was Herod's Temple in Jerusalem. Yet the disciples' comments on its magnificence met with an icy response from Jesus. "You see all these, do you not? Truly I say to you, there will not be left here one stone upon another, that will not be thrown down." (Matthew 24:1-2, also in Mark and Luke.)

Jesus' words were directed at the corruption of Temple worship and at the obsessive nationalism of many of his Jewish contemporaries, which the Temple symbolised.

Indeed, the Temple was destroyed by the Romans in 70 CE.

Great church buildings are less important than those who use them. The church is the people and its buildings are only worthy if they help those people to enter into and to share the love of God.

The last time I was in Notre Dame, I was one of a crowd of worshippers, watched by an even larger crowd of tourists while the service carried on. I felt that the love experienced by the worshippers also touched many onlookers.

Coventry cathedral and the Frauenkirche, rebuilt, were able to inspire new dimensions of worship.

President Macron has said that Notre Dame must be rebuilt. It, too, must find new ways to serve. God is not worshipped in museums, but in living, evolving, communities. Let us pray that a renewed Notre Dame will inspire such a community.

David White

An ordinary birthday..... Or was it!!

It wasn't a 'new nought' or even a 'five'. Eight people were invited to the 'party'. Perhaps 10.30 am might be considered unusual for a birthday gathering But bellringers will cheerfully ring in the morning!

It was on THE day that Margaret rang the Treble at St Mary's to a quarter peal of Grandsire Triples with her husband David conducting. You know by now that a 'bell conductor' doesn't stand and wave a baton at the band! David rang the Six (there were 2 other bells a bit heavier than his) so not only did he have to ring the 'pattern' for the method, but also to remember to call 'bob' or 'single' at the right moments so that no sequence of bells was ever repeated in the 47 minutes from start to finish.

There is a particular sequence of calls that David uses a lot, but on this occasion he chose a different composition. Down in the church, I was hearing an excellent standard of ringing (the bells sounding evenly) and wondered whether my imagination was running away with me as the ringing sounded more musical than usual. After their successful quarter, David explained to me over coffee and cake that this new composition made musical combinations of bells occur quite frequently. I wasn't the only one who thought the bells had sounded well. Mary lives within earshot of the bells and opens her window so she can hear them better and we compared notes on Sunday morning.

Margaret plus invitations to eight people – but only eight bells? I had been invited because I have keys to the church and the tower! But it was a pleasure to welcome ringing friends on this special day in late March.

PS Did you wonder about the single bell tolling at 7.00 pm on Maundy Thursday? That was part of our nation's gesture of solidarity with France over the damage by fire to Notre Dame. I hope you will have enjoyed the bells early on Easter morning as well as for the usual services. Your local ringers marked St George's Day with a spell of ringing in the evening.

Valerie Clark, Tower Captain

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St Mary's Church Fete: Saturday 6th July 2019

We need your help!

Arrangements for our summer fete are well underway – all the old favourites such as the Hemel Hempstead Band, the BBQ and the bottle stall as well as a few recent additions like the Tug O' War. Like last year, it will run from 12.30pm to 4pm and this year will raise money for Claire Hodgson's charity in the Dominican Republic (GO MAD), People Not Borders and our St Mary's Roof Fund. Please make a note of the date in your diaries now and encourage your family and friends to come along for a great family day out.

The committee organising the fete would be grateful for your help collecting items for the fete, and with offers to help on the day. Items we are looking for include:

- Donations of **bottles** (all kinds – but in date and full please). Please leave these in the relevant box in the South Transept. If you need help transporting the bottles please let Sue Jukes (sue.jukes1@gmail.com) know or drop them off to her at: 70 Bridgewater Road, Berkhamsted, HP4 1JB.
- **Tombola prizes/Gifts and Toiletries Stall** items – new, good quality items are needed for both the tombola and gift stall. Please leave these in the relevant box in the South Transept. This year we are hoping to hold a Princess Lucky Dip so we would love donations of new small prizes that we can use for this.
- **Raffle prizes** – if you have a good contact who might give us a raffle prize, please either let Margit know or better still, ask your contact yourself. We have a letter you can use – just email Margit (margit@eu.gameplaneurope.com)
- **Children's toys** – we are looking for good quality and clean unused or second-hand children's toys, books and games. Please no soft toys this year as we have lots left over from last year that we can use. Please either drop off in the box at church or contact Margit who can arrange someone to collect them.
- Empty **jam jars** with lids for the Brownies stall.
- Items for the **Nearly New Stall** – please put small good quality second-hand items in the box at the

back of church. If it's a bigger item, please contact David Sayers on clareanddave@btinternet.com who will advise you what to do. Please can we urge you only to donate good quality items – it's a lot of work to dispose of items that are not suitable to sell.

- Good quality second hand **Books**. Please put these in the box at the back of church. If you have a lot and need help transporting them please contact Andrew Dobbie on andrew@gameplaneurope.com
- **Plants** and garden items - Please either bring these along on the day, or let Vanessa 01442 879646 or Diane 01442 875543 know and they will let you know what to do.
- **Cakes** – these are needed for both the cake stall and the Refreshments – these can be home-made or shop bought. Please let Linda Slim (theslims@btinternet.com) know what you can provide and bring on the day.

Do you live on a prominent road and if so, would you be prepared to have an **Estate Agent board** in your front garden to advertise the fete. Please let Jonathan know – revjagordon@gmail.com

Offer to help on the day – if you aren't already involved, and can spare some time either the day before to set up or on the day itself to help on a stall, please email Linda Slim. We are particular on the lookout for people to help on the Friday morning to help erect gazebos.

Lastly, please keep collecting your **Woods vouchers** and putting them in the box at the back of church – we get a £25 gift voucher for every £100 of receipts.

Thank you for your help – we can make this a great fete with your help. Please just catch any one of us at church if you want to talk about anything to do with the fete or email margit@gameplaneurope.com

Margit, Evelyn, Rachel, Heather, Sue, Margaret, Bill, Nick, David, Penny, Jonathan, and Linda S and Linda L (also known as the Fete Committee) xxx



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Northchurch's best kept secret

The café in Northchurch located where the butchers once was, has had a complete refit.

Now known as Café Bon Soirée, the outside is recognisable by its fresh, bright light green colour and contrasting dark grey border.

The inside is bright and inviting with a contemporary feel to it. A large blackboard displays a selection of food and drink items. There are three dark grey pendants hanging in the window shining onto the marble, which is original from the butcher's days. There are two more pendants hanging over two tables which can easily be turned into a larger table seating eight, ideal for a book club / walkers or cyclist breakfast or lunch get together. The large food counter has now gone to make way for a long table seating up to six people.

The back area which used to be the kitchen has been dramatically transformed. Upon entering, there is a smaller food counter filled with freshly filled baguettes, our popular quiche, salads and great cakes. There is also a display wall, housing a selection of artisanal food items to buy from Daylesford Farm, including free range eggs, honey comb, chutneys, jams and loose teas as well as the popular Chiltern rape seed oils.

This new kitchen area also has a table for four in front of the window with elegant plantation shutters to add to the ambiance. This table is ideal for privacy if you're having a meeting, and has already earned the title of "chef's table".

From here, the door opens on to an outside small courtyard area, which leads to the toilets. All in all, the café feels so much bigger now and has seating for 26.

We now serve a new roasted blend coffee. This has received really good feedback from customers that have already ventured in to try out the new Café Bon Soirée.

We also have a good selection of wines which are already selling with lunch.

Opening times 8am – 4pm Monday to Saturday

Sunday brunch 10am – 2pm where you can treat yourself to a Bloody Mary or a glass of prosecco.

We are looking to open the café in the evenings starting in September on a Thursday, Friday and Saturday, offering a small menu designed by our team of on-site chefs who cater for the private jet business also located on the premises.

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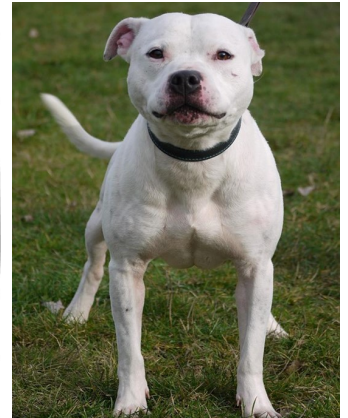
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Sunday Services at St Mary's



5th May *Third Sunday of Easter*

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

12th May *Fourth Sunday of Easter*

8.00am Holy Communion
10.00am All-Age Worship

19th May *Fifth Sunday of Easter*

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

26th May *Sixth Sunday of Easter*

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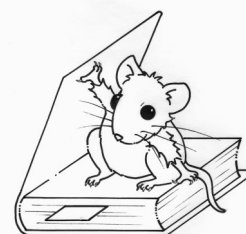
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Quiz Night

In aid of People Not Borders

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