

What's happening in the life of St Andrew's and St Bartholomew's

Welcomed in to the courts of the King

Hospitality is a key theme throughout the Bible. It was a significant part of Jesus's practice too. He regularly broke bread (Mark 6: 41), ate with others (John 12:2) and generally hung around food (John 21: 7-14).

One of the books I really enjoyed during my time in college (and there weren't many!) was 'The Theology of Food' by a Dominican named Angel Mendez-Montoya. He says "*To share bread is to share God*". In this coming New Year we will have some great opportunities to share bread and share God with others. Opening our hearts and homes and inviting people to table with us is an extraordinarily powerful thing. It says, 'You are welcome', 'You are worthy', 'You are valued', 'You are cared for', 'You are loved'. Telling one another that we have worth and are valued is the very heart of the Gospel. Being fed and sharing together speaks biblical love too. So what are we waiting for?

Three dates for your diary:

Saturday 28th January: Newcomer's welcome drinks and nibbles at the Lillie's.

A great opportunity to meet new people and find out more about our church community, children welcome. 16.00 -18.00

Sunday 29th January: Hospitality Sunday, opening our homes and sharing lunch together.

We are looking for host families and people who want to be hosted.

Monday 1st May – Bank Holiday: Party in the Parish.

A fantastic opportunity to open the doors of our churches and celebrate the Love of Jesus with our wider community. Lots of fun activities, food, flowers, music, worship, Christian arts festival and more.

An army of willing volunteers is needed; talk to Ben, Clare Corley, or Chris Porter.

Here's to a great 2017 and the many opportunities we have to share in the hospitality of Jesus. Dive on in, it's going to be great!

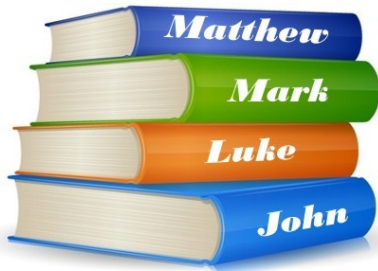
Your Curate

Ben

OUR CHURCH

'UP' - 'IN' - 'OUT' 5 YEAR PLAN IN ACTION

EVENING THEOLOGY SCHOOL OPENS IN JANUARY



For all those who have been dismayed about the unfairness of holding Theology School on a Monday morning, there's good news ahead! We'll be starting an evening Theology School in January. This will be entirely different from the Monday morning one, and will run for only 7 weeks, **every Wednesday evening from 11th January to 22nd February.**

We will be doing an in-depth study of the 4 Gospels using a comparative 'Harmony of the Gospels' approach. By looking at all 4 Gospels together, seeing the various cultural and theological perspectives which guided each gospel writer – alongside the unity of the whole composite picture of Jesus' life and work – we will gain amazing new insights into what the gospels reveal about Jesus' message and methods, life and death.

ALSO – Theology evenings will then continue through Lent, but the topics will be stand-alone sessions relating specifically to Lent & Easter topics – Jesus' passion, death, and resurrection.

If interested, **please contact Dan Button:**
danielbutton2011@gmail.com

FOUR DAYS OF SILENCE

This October, I had the privilege of my second four day silent retreat – run by the Spirituality Network for Gloucestershire (www.snfglos.org.uk). This is why I did it...

During the busyness of life, with work, people, noise, all vying for attention, I find it hard to listen to the still, calm voice of God; and yet it is His voice that brings me life and sustains me.

Calming down requires a different focus – noticing the detail in nature, playing with paint, walking, just being. Then through Bible passages, prayer, thinking about the personal message in the Bible and being able to talk this through with a Spiritual Director for 45 minutes once a day, it is possible to hear the God of the universe meeting with me. Even me! I found that if I make the space and time to spend with God, He is always going to show up. We just need to stop and listen. Why on earth wouldn't you want to spend time with the one who knows you the best, loves you unconditionally and knows what you need?

I have never found it a lonely experience. With God present, 8 other retreatants, 3 Spiritual Guides and some amazing nuns next door, there is companionship in the silence and humour at mealtimes that can bring a big grin and (mostly) silent hilarity to the situation.

I would really encourage anyone to try it. Feel free to ask me about it, but most of all, speak to God about it....

Ursula Mitchell



Thanks to all who supported the **16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence** last month. Hopefully the friendship bands and crosses you took home will be a good prayer reminder throughout the year.

MU nationally continues to lobby governments through the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women to address this issue, and members campaign worldwide for awareness and change. Literacy, financial education, and awareness programmes all help women become more economically empowered which helps them gain respect from husbands and communities which in turn reduces violence towards them. On a day to day basis members worldwide quietly get on with enabling families and communities transform their lives.

All are welcome at our **January meetings:**

Tuesday 17th at 7.30pm
Holy Ground - shoes and stories
from Christians around the world
Paul Hobbs

Thursday 26th at 2.30pm
Lorraine Roe's testimony
"Lifelong awareness of God's goodness"

Janet Ross

GROWING OLD GRACEFULLY

Forsake me not, O God, in my old age, when I am grey headed, that I may tell future generations of your strength and might. Psalm 71:18

A grey-haired member of our congregation found and enjoyed this anonymous prayer...

Lord, you know better than I know myself that I am growing older, and will some day be old. Keep me from getting talkative, and particularly from the fatal habit of thinking that I must say something on every subject and on every occasion. Release me from craving to straighten out everybody's affairs.

Keep my mind from the recital of endless details- give me wings to come to the point. Seal my lips on my own aches and pains -they are increasing, and my love of rehearsing them is becoming sweeter as the years go by. Help me to listen to other people's tales of woe with patience.

Teach me the glorious lesson that occasionally I may be mistaken. Keep me reasonably sweet. I do not want to be a saint - some of them are so hard to live with- but a sour old woman is one of the crowning works of the devil.

Make me thoughtful, but not moody; helpful, but not bossy. With my vast store of wisdom it seems a pity not to use it all, but you know, Lord, that I want a few friends at the end.

SAMARA'S AID APPEAL

It is hard to believe that as you read this in January 2017 InTouch, it will be only just a year since news of the work of Samara's Aid reached Churchdown. Following two appeal collections it was inspiring to hear Samara talk of her story when she came to speak at the end of November and spread the news of her work further afield.



Sarah Stanton with Samara Levy

People came from Tewkesbury, Cheltenham, Stroud, Gloucester and beyond. After the talk, there was a real buzz of conversation as people visited the stalls showing ways to get involved with sending 'aid' – gifts of love, hope and encouragement; aren't those teddies shown below just that! The chat and buzz and incentive to stay on, on a dark November evening was no doubt helped along by the opportunity to savour the wonderful Syrian food provided by Dalal; a real treat.

So, what next? Well, it is really where God leads the individual and the group. To receive Samara's emails and Facebook updates* about what is happening on the ground with the medical provision provided by Dr A and his teams, whilst difficult reading, is opportunity to pray into the situation and of course, there is still opportunity to respond financially to this.

Regarding clothing appeals, we are not running one at St Andrew's this time around but our friends in The Seven Towers Benefice are running an Appeal. Please **see the details of this appeal on the opposite page** and please note that **Norton Church** (just off A38 towards Tewks) **is not huge so cannot store clothes. They (and we, as we will help on the weekend of 21/22 Jan) receive and sort clothes and other items all in one weekend.** The beautiful items made by the **Knitting Group** will also be boxed up and taken to the hub in Somerset with the other aid. Please read info carefully...

*Facebook page Samaras Aid Appeal Prayer Group

*website www.samarasaidappeal.org

Debbie Bevan, Sarah Stanton and Sarah Smith



HOW YOU CAN HELP

We need as many people as possible to collect really **good quality clothes** (and other items on the list below), between now and **21st and 22nd January** when Norton Church will be open to receive, sort and pack all donations 10.15am - 5.00pm on both days.

The people samarasaidapeal are helping may be desperate but they have dignity and do not have any choice about what they are given. We however, have a choice about what we send! So, our donations must be a message of **encouragement and hope** and a real blessing to the people receiving them.

This is what is needed:

- WINTER AND MID SEASON CLOTHES**, new and used – adult, child & baby
- COATS, HATS AND SNOWEAR**, new and used – adult, child & baby
- NEW UNDERWEAR** only (no used), with tags or in packaging
- SOCKS AND SHOES** (polished) No summer shoes, in immaculate condition
- BOOTS AND WELLY BOOTS**, clean
- BLANKETS, DUVETS, SLEEPING BAGS, SHEETS** only if like new
- WHEELCHAIRS, ZIMMER FRAMES** and **CRUTCHES, MOSES BASKETS** and **BABY BEDDING**
- NAPPIES, SANITARY** and incontinence pads
- CARE PACKS** for mothers and babies
www.samarasaidapeal.org/care-packs

Please remember this very important guidance:

Everything should be in excellent condition!

Please please wash clothes, blankets and bedding and clean and polish shoes - thank you

Please make sure the zips work and buttons and poppers are intact

Please make sure everything is stain free with no holes

Please mark your donations as new or used

Please indicate if they are for women, men, girls or boys If you are not sure, assume “if in doubt, leave it out”.

Shipping is expensive too!

If you are able, please enclose a donation towards the shipping costs. As a guide, each box costs about £5 to send. Please put the donation in an envelope with your donation of clothes.

**Please deliver items to Norton Church
(A38 Tewkesbury Road)
on either 21st or 22nd Jan 2017
10.15am – 5.00pm**

Please call Simon Trapnell (from The Seven Towers Benefice) on 07774 803177 if you need further information, you want to collect but can't deliver on 21st or 22nd January or would like to help sort and pack



www.samarasaidapeal.org

WORSHIP FOR JANUARY 17

All services will be at St Andrew's unless otherwise stated

1st January **First Sunday of Christmas**
10:30am All Age Communion
3.30pm Evening Prayer @ St.Bartholomew

8th January **Epiphany 1**
9:00am Holy Communion
10.30am Morning Worship
11am Matins@ St.Bartholomew
7pm FUEL

15th January **Epiphany 2**
9:00am Holy Communion
10:30am Morning Worship
7pm FUEL

22nd January **Epiphany 3**
9:00am Holy Communion
10:30am Morning Worship
3.30pm Holy Communion @ St.Bartholomew
5pm Churches Together @ St.Johns
7pm FUEL

29th January **Epiphany 4**
9:00am Holy Communion
10:30am Morning Worship
7pm FUEL

5th February **5th Sunday before Lent**
9:00am Holy Communion
10:30am All Age Communion
3.30pm Evening Prayer @ St.Bartholomew
7pm FUEL

Weekday Services

9:00 am Monday to Friday in the Quiet Room - Morning Prayer
10:00 am every Thursday in the Quiet Room – Holy Communion

USEFUL CONTACTS

The Vicar
Jonathan Perkin
01452-548437

Associate Minister
Clodagh Ingram
07583-754960

Curate
Ben Lillie
01452-540610

Theology Pastor
Dan Button
01452-549271

Children's Worker & Reader
Alison Summerskill
01452-862737

Youth Pastor
Jay Niblett 07772-412318

Youth Intern
Daisy Cordery

Creative Pastor
Rhiannon Davies 07960-853314

Churchwardens
Nigel Oakes
01452-857455
Kevin Sadler
07821-368590

Administrators
Lorraine Yates
Chris Porter
01452-712154

Treasurer
Rachel Limbrick

Assistant Treasurers
Alice Oakes, Di Rowe
01452-712154

PCC Secretary
Enid Castle
01452-712946

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Office Hours
Monday-Friday
9.30—12.30 pm