

It seems that ever since Noah was a lad, or at least Henry VIII was around, people have been predicting the end of the Church of England. It hasn't happened and I don't think it ever will; but I do hope the church - and within that the Church of England - will keep on developing, changing, deepening its life, while interpreting anew the truth it finds in the Gospel, the Good News about Jesus. The debate about Women Priests, Synods, Homosexuality, Divorce, the authority of bishops, is a sign of the church doing just that.

At the very heart of the christian quarter in the old City of Jerusalem is the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, or, as the Eastern Churches call it, the Church of the Resurrection. It bears witness to the presumed site of Christ's death and resurrection, but it also bears witness to divisions and disputes within the church. Six competing church traditions have demarcated bits of the building so that they can jog along, each going their separate ways - liturgies and services clashing with each other with amazing abandon. One group of monks - the Ethiopians, have been confined to the roof - but given the babble and chaos inside the church, maybe they are more winners than losers.

But this fragmentation at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre is more than just a symbol of the church. I think that it can also be a potent symbol of our life. We all find ourselves putting different parts of our life into different boxes. But life just isn't like that - the messy bits have a habit of spilling over, out of the neat compartments to which we assign them. We have boxes for work, family, leisure, church, relationships, finance and so on. Maybe we can only cope with the complex messiness of living by attempting to get things straight and in manageable compartments.

Those who tricked, betrayed, tried, punished and crucified Jesus of Nazareth tried the same thing. They sought neat categories to rid themselves of this brash, charismatic, Northerner who paid scant regard to the neat compartments of orderly life - not mixing religion and pleasure, keeping social and religious divisions in place, sacred and secular. They tried to attack him on religious grounds as a blasphemer, on political grounds as a trouble maker, but the only way he was, literally, nailed down was through human betrayal, treachery, apathy and short-term convenience.

And yet even the stone compartment of the tomb cannot contain God's boundless re-creative, self-sacrificing love.

Easter - from Maundy Thursday to Easter Day - shouts aloud that nothing can resist God. Why do we keep trying to control the God of life and death and new life - to fit into our neat box?

Think on these words written about the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem - perhaps they speak to us in Hampton Hill:

Is this place holy
Because you walked here,
died here,
were raised right here
to bring us life -
or because, in this time, in this world
of trouble and longing and hope
you are alive?
Is this a holy place
because several true churches
have come to fight and worship here,
each hanging separate lamps to burn
for your divided glory?
Or is this land, like all lands, holy,
where people pray, and work,
raise babies and seek justice,
and expect a future?

Do please, join us at any of our services over Holy Week and Easter.

Brian Leathard



Christian Aid celebrates its fiftieth anniversary this year. The Flower Festival on 30th September and 1st October in our church is to raise funds for Christian Aid and to celebrate its fiftieth anniversary. As mentioned last month, contributions will be needed nearer the time to purchase the flowers which are necessary to enable the festival to be mounted.

AUSTERITY LUNCH

Saturday 8th April, 12 noon to 2 pm

Church Hall

**In aid of Charities supported by St. James's
Offers of home-made soup to Maggie Revis (979 4858)**

Do come - all very welcome

Holy Week and Easter

Palm Sunday 9 April	8.00 am Holy Communion 9.30 am Parish Communion with Procession of Palms 6.30 pm Music and Readings for Passiontide 9.00 pm Music for Reflection and Compline
Monday 10 April	9.15 am Morning Prayer 9.00 pm Music for Reflection and Compline
Tuesday 11 April	9.15 am Morning Prayer 9.30 am Holy Communion 9.00 pm Music for Reflection and Compline
Wednesday 12 April	9.15 am Morning Prayer 9.00 pm Music for Reflection and Compline
Maundy Thursday 13 April	9.15 am Morning Prayer 7.30 pm Hot Cross Buns and Coffee 8.00 pm Parish Communion and Commemoration of the Last Supper



Good Friday 14 April	9.15 am Morning Prayer 11.00 am United Service of Witness outside Sainsbury's, Hampton Nurserylands 12.00 noon to 3 pm Three Hours Devotion
Easter Eve 15 April	9.15 am Morning Prayer 8.00 pm The Easter Liturgy - Lighting of New Fire
Easter Day 16 April	8.00 am Holy Communion 9.30 am Parish Communion 6.30 pm Easter Hymns of Praise

A House for All People?

The Chairman of Women's World Day of Prayer, Rose Rivers, writes in her 1995 letter that the warm-hearted, hospitable, and caring people of Ghana ask us to pray with them in seeking God's power to restore broken relationships within the family and community, so that we may live together in His World in Harmony and peace.

The women of Ghana have reminded us that we are members of one household. The Earth is a House for all People.

But is it? What prevents us from really allowing the Earth to be a house - a protective home for all People, One Family?

Do our preconceptions get in the way of rational thought? I would like to share briefly with you a personal experience. First of all, a revelation. I am black (in case you had not noticed!). Yes, it is an obvious fact and I cannot prevent you from seeing it. But does that immediately make you feel that you know things about me?

About 16 years ago I was expecting my first baby and, as those of you who have experienced it know, it involves a great deal of hanging around waiting to be poked and prodded by various trainee midwives and doctors. After many months, I was told 'the Consultant will see you today'. His examination took a few seconds, then to my surprise he commented that 'my affliction' was a common problem to 'people of my hue' but that it might clear up of its own accord after the baby was born. Consternation was joined by confusion when he pointed at my stomach, but the important man was off to prod another hapless mother-to-be and had no time to explain. My confusion turned to amusement when I looked in the mirror and realised that the spots that had led him to his diagnosis were caused by the pattern of my trouser material stretched tautly over my expanded stomach!

Why do we look for the differences and not see the similarities? When we think of Africa, what do we so often imagine? Wars, famine, misery, queues of hungry people begging for help, children dying. We see darkness, we see wretched people. And where are the African women? They are at the bottom of the heap. The lowest of the low - downtrodden and without hope.

Surely, Africa is totally different from the Western World - particularly for women.

Look at the other picture. The woman who is a high court judge, the woman who is a cabinet minister, the woman who chairs the board of a major hospital, the woman who owns a chain of shops selling natural beauty products.

You may put names to some of these examples. Justice Butler Schloss, Anita Roddick, Virginia Bottomley. But you would be wrong. I refer to Ghana and other parts of West Africa. There are women in all these roles and many others. There are the women who bring up their children, sometimes singlehandedly. The women who support their husbands in their careers. Women who are confident, strong, and happy. Women with economic power, political power, intellectual power.

We cannot trivialise the problems of Africa - the hungry, the war victims or the illiterate, to name a few. But we must not allow our preconceptions to damn the place to eternal failure. We cannot highlight the differences yet ignore the similarities. We cannot see

the failures but ignore the successes and miss the learning points. The extended family, for example, remains a successful social support structure in Ghana. The old are not cast aside and forgotten. In the Western World the extended family has largely broken down, and now even the nuclear family is threatened.

But to return to preconceptions - and I hasten to say there are a number of preconceptions in West Africa about the Western World - if our preconceptions prevent us from seeing the simplest of things, how they must get in the way when Nation communicates with Nation.

How can the 'Earth be a House for All People' if the people are not prepared to work with each other and be tolerant of each other?

Africa has had and does have its problems, and as we have heard this evening, has had good reason to be glad of those people who have acted with charitable minds. But we have also been reminded that the Ghanaian people have dignity and courage, and have shown love for others.

I thank God that people all over the world respond to appeals for help and I thank God for the people here who give so much of their time and money - but I have a further prayer. I pray that we can all get past our preconceptions and find commonalities with other people - that we can rely on the intelligence of people who look different from us and give them the greatest help of all - the help that will enable them to help themselves. Most of all I pray that as St. Peter said in Acts of the Apostles chapter 10 v.34 'I really understand now, that to God every person is the same'. Perhaps when we can all think in that way the Earth will truly be a House for ALL People.

Claire Ighodaro

Extracted from her talk for the Women's World Day of Prayer

The Gate of Perfection

Many people representing various creeds and different parts of the world filled the church on Sunday 26th February for the afternoon talk by Rabbi Albert Friedlander in memory of Hannah Stanton.

Rabbi Friedlander recalled Hannah's great strength and persistence in pursuing the cause of justice and peace, her great ability to encourage people of all faiths to work together and to stand firm against oppression, as she herself did.

'Peace', he said, should be thought of as a verb, not just a noun. It was something which had to be done. The main enemy of peace was apathy.

Hannah's life was a splendid example of doing.

After the talk, at which a collection was made for the Hannah Stanton Memorial Fund, it was announced that that Fund now stood at around £2,000. This Trust Fund would be used to make grants of about £100 each to help people to pursue peace studies or other peace work.

The Church Choir

At its February meeting, I asked the P.C.C. to discuss the question of our choir, and if possible, to define its role, particularly in relation to the Parish Communion.

Back in the sixties when Parish Communion was inaugurated as our chief act of Sunday worship, a pivotal factor was the introduction of the portable altar table, and its position beside the pulpit, this bringing closer together the Celebrant and the congregation. It was decided that a robed choir would be inappropriate, and possibly detrimental, to this new format, which sought to involve all members of the congregation.



At that time, we had a fairly well attended Evensong, so that our choir, then boasting many children in its ranks, was able to continue and maintain St. James's tradition of choral music.

Sadly, Evensong has long since fallen victim to competing attractions, and the provision of the apron stage, while bringing the table nearer to the congregation, thereby increases its distance from the choir stalls.

It is against this background that I ask the question 'Is there a role for a choir in the Parish Communion?'

The P.C.C. is itself divided on this issue, between (and I risk oversimplification) those on the one hand who say that by separating out the singers, we risk undermining the strength of our congregational singing and our sense of unity: and those on the other who say that a well-rehearsed choir could deeply enrich and beautify this central act of worship without causing such losses.

The P.C.C. has agreed that it needs to find out the views and wishes of the congregation. To help in informing those views, a trial will be introduced over the coming months.

Initially, we shall have a robed choir in the chancel on one Sunday in each month. On other Sundays, we may experiment with grouping the singers in other locations, including the back row of pews, during all or part of the services.

We hope to devise simple forms of questionnaire to be available to you at each of these trials, so that you can record your opinions while they are fresh in your minds, and we would want to collect them from you, perhaps in the Hall, after the services.

The important thing is that the P.C.C. shall have feedback which is as relevant and objective as can be managed - but above all, that your views, and its decisions, should be informed by our Christian love for each other.

***Biographical Note:** A child chorister from the age of 7 to 15 years, I have sung with St. James's Choir for something over 25 years, and hope I may usefully do so for a few years yet to come.*

Jack Gostling

***Editor's Note:** We look forward to receiving the views of you our readers on all aspects of this issue. For example, do we really want a choir? Should we seek to recruit child choristers? Contributions welcome.*

APCM

APCM

**ANNUAL
PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING**

Sunday 30th April

11 am

Church Hall

Followed by Shared Lunch

**Do Come to take your part in appointing Churchwardens,
electing the Parochial Church Council, hearing about
our church and its needs and activities,
and putting your questions.**

Local Clergy News

Peter Bestley, Curate at All Saints, Hampton, has been appointed as Chaplain at West Middlesex Hospital, in succession to John Congdon who has held the post for some years. Congratulations Peter and we wish you all the best in your new job.

David Vanstone, Vicar of All Saints, Hampton, is now out of hospital after having minor surgery, and Robin Rogers, Vicar of St. Mary's, Hampton, is undergoing a further course of chemotherapy. We hope they will both make good progress.

Fr. Jo Scully has retired after being the priest at St. Theodore's Roman Catholic Church in Hampton for many years, and we extend a warm welcome to the new priest, Fr. Bernard Boylan. Also, at St. Francis de Sale's, Hampton Hill, Fr. Sunny Paul has temporarily replaced Fr. Martin Griffin.

City Churches Walk

Thursday and Friday 27th and 28th April.

£5 per person.

Information from the Vicar.

Visit the Unknown and Unvisited Parish Churches
of the City of London as well as the famous.



The H.H.A. Buffet Party this year - at 7 pm on Saturday 29th April at the Greenwood Centre, School Road - is to celebrate the coming of the theatre to the High Street in Hampton Hill. Members of the 'Out and About' group of the Teddington Theatre Club will provide an entertainment of songs, poems and dialogues on the theme 'Friends and Neighbours'.

Tickets £6.50, including supper, from Joan Catt (979 9475), Dorothy Weston (979 6673) or Joyce Doughty (979 2839). A bar will be available, and a voluntary collection will be made for the Teddington Theatre Club.

Around the Spire

What's the collective noun for a number of babies - a rush of babies, a babble of babies or even perhaps a murmur of babies? Whatever it is, St. James's has it - no less than four babies have arrived in the last few weeks, either directly to members of the congregation or as grandchildren of them.

Margaret and David Taylor's daughter-in-law, Amanda gave birth to a son, James Collin on 3rd March. This was rather sooner than expected but all are well. Nick and Amanda already have twins of sixteen months so they will have their hands full. Pip and Anne Rowett became grandparents for the first time when their son Christopher's wife Gilly gave birth to a daughter, Rebecca Gillian, on 28th February, and Ann Collins' daughter Fiona has had a baby son, Leo Michael. All are well. Our Sunday School teacher, Lou Coaker-Basdell, had a beautiful daughter, Alice, on 14th February. They have made several appearances in church and brother Jo is quite enchanted with the new arrival. Jane Ethell recently had a baby boy George Simon, a brother for Jack who has also made his debut in church. It's lovely to see so many young families in the church, the future is with them, as ever. Congratulations to all these families, much love, and hope that the babies continue to flourish.

On Sunday 12th March, baby Joshua Daniel Clarke was Christened. His grandfather was the preacher, and the words of the anthem 'A Gaelic blessing' were ones that we should all like to echo:

Deep peace of the running wave to you,
Deep peace of the flowing air to you
Deep peace of the quiet earth to you
Deep peace of the shining stars to you
Deep peace of the gentle night to you
Moon and stars pour their healing light on you
Deep peace of Christ the Light of the World to you
Deep peace of Christ to you.

Several of our members have been in hospital either briefly or for longer periods and are now home - Mary Metcalfe, John Rainbow, Ruth Gostling, Eva Ross and Dorothy Edmonds. Prill Hinckley and Hettie Burgess are still unwell. Please remember all who are sick in your prayers, and we send our love and best wishes to them all.

Just as we go to print, we have heard the tragic news of the sudden death in hospital of John Denton. He had been looking forward to starting a new job in a week or two. Our deep sympathy goes to Jill and their son Richard at this extremely sorrowful time. Both John and Jill were tireless workers for the Royal National Lifeboat Institution.

Another very sad recent death is that of Neil Silver at the age of 21 years. He was a pupil at Hampton Hill Junior School and one of our cubs.

St. Paul's Cathedral

Do not forget that if you are proposing to visit St. Paul's Cathedral, passes may be borrowed from the Vicar to enable parishioners and their families and friends to be admitted free of charge. Charges are now normally made to put the cathedral finances on a sounder footing, and even visitors with passes may still have to pay to visit the Galleries.



From the Registers - February

Baptism

14 Evelyn Pignatari Flat 4, Abbotsford, 11 Seymour Road,
Hampton Wick

Marriage

25 John Alan Bryant and Emma Preskett

Funerals

10	Monica Joan Lockyer	29 St. James's Road	Aged 69
15	Ruth Annie Lacey	22 Uxbridge Road	Aged 94
16	James Edward Morris	Flat 5, Broadmead, 48 Broad Lane	Aged 89
	Winifred May Roberts	St. Mary's House, Hampton	Aged 81
17	John William Randall	47 Deacons Walk	Aged 72
24	Ronald (Jimmy) Dukes	9 Fitzwygram Close	Aged 79

Dates to Note

Apr.	2	21.00	Compline	
	3	14.00	Editorial Board, 19 St. James's Road	
	4	18.00	'What I like about Brownies', Open Meeting of our Brownie Group, Church Hall	
	5	14.30	Women's Forum, Monica Heaford - Meditation, Church Hall	
	7	07.00	Dawn Eucharist	
	8	12.00 to 14.00	Austerity Lunch, Church Hall	
		19.30	Choral Concert by Teddington Choral Society, Church	
	9		Palm Sunday	
		21.00	Compline	} See earlier page for full arrangements
	14		Good Friday	
	15		Easter Eve	} for Holy Week and Easter
	16		Easter Day	
	19	20.00	Women's Forum, Holy Land video, Church Hall	
	25		St. Mark the Evangelist	
	27/28		City Churches Walk	
	29	19.00	HHA Buffet Party, Greenwood Centre	
	30	11.00	Annual Parochial Church Meeting , Church Hall, followed by Shared Lunch	

Advance Notices

May	1		St. Philip and St. James, Apostles	
	3	14.30	Women's Forum, Vivienne Prentice - Ambulance Driving in 1914/18 War, Church Hall	
	9	14.00	Editorial Board, 19 St. James's Road	
	14		Christian Aid Week starts	
	20		Beating the Bounds of the Parish	
	15		St. Matthias the Apostle	
	17	14.30	Women's Forum, Ramani Leathard - Christian Aid, Church Hall	
	25		Ascension Day	
		20.00	Parish Communion	

COPY DATE FOR MAY ISSUE: 9 APRIL