

In the greyness of February you can't beat the tonic of the new James Bond Film *Tomorrow Never Dies*. This is cool stuff. Sheer fantasy. Ninety minutes of escapism. Classic goodies and baddies (we are good, they are bad), chivalrous gents and beautiful ladies, derring-do, exquisite car chases and helicopter chases, close shaves and incredible escapes. As always in James Bond, the goodies win through and we all sleep easier in our beds. It is magnificent - especially if you go to our local multi-screen on Tuesday - discount day!

Yet at the same time we know that it is sheer fantasy. We know the outcome before the film begins to roll. Of course James Bond will win. Now we stand looking towards another Lent, another forty days replicating the 'forty days' of Jesus in the Wilderness. We know the consequences because we look back through the lens of our Easter faith. But what about us? Can we be so sure that we will have courage, wisdom and patience to stay the course and win a growing in commitment and a deepening of our relationship with God and our neighbour?

Lent begins with Ash Wednesday on 25<sup>th</sup> February 1998. We will mark it at St. James's with Parish Communion at 8.00 p.m., to which you are welcome. During that service we do indeed use ash, to remind us of our own mortality, to remind us of the cross as self-sacrifice being the way of life Jesus took, the way of life for us to follow.

In many countries Carnival or Mardi Gras precedes Lent. Carnival means literally, Goodbye to Meat (came and vale), for it is classically the time to give things up. Indeed if we look at the biblical 'forty days', Jesus also begins by giving up things, but look at just what those things are. He overcomes the temptation to turn stones into bread when hungry, he overcomes the temptation to take power in order to achieve influence, and overcomes the temptation to comfort and safety by relying on the protection of 'the angels'. Jesus gives up satisfying himself, he rejects the way of power and turns aside from the path of safety and comfort - all echoing the nature of his birth and foreshadowing the ending of his life.

By all means give up the sweets and the sugar, the meat, the dry sherry if it makes life a little emptier for you for a while. But whilst doing so perhaps we could also clear our minds to ask the more pertinent questions. What are the stones we are tempted to turn into bread? Which are our needs and desires which we satisfy first, and can we put a new priority on them, taking on board first the needs of others? Where are we tempted to resort to power and influence to defend ourselves or assert authority - at work, in the family, at church? And in which parts of life do we take the easy route, to ensure our comfort and safety?

So yes, let's give up something for Lent - give up the ways we assert power, our seeking after self-righteousness, the ways we crave comfort rather than risk. But, unlike James Bond, there's no guarantee of the outcome this side of the Kingdom! Have a holy Lent!

## JUBILEE 2000

I hope many of you will have read Brian's lead article on the Jubilee 2000 campaign in last month's magazine and my first article last December. I expect you will also have seen the display in church and the petition form that is available for all to sign. The aim of the campaign is to put pressure on the governments of the lending nations (the G7 countries) to cancel the backlog of unpayable debts of the most impoverished nations by the start of the new millennium. The word unpayable is very important as this is not a campaign that is asking for the impossible.

How can you help? Be sure to sign the petition that will remain in church throughout the next couple of years. And please take petition forms out into your places of work and fellowship and encourage your colleagues, friends and family to sign. There is plenty of time, but the sooner we get started on collecting signatures, the better we will do. All completed petition forms (fifty signatures on a double sided form) should be returned to Brian or to me, so that we can keep a tally of how well we do here at St. James. But there is also an address at the bottom of the form if necessary.

I will have lots more information as the campaign progresses, but here are three important dates to note, especially the first one:

- **Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> February 1998**

The London Jubilee 2000 Group (which I belong to) is holding an event for all churches in the London Diocese, with the prime aim of giving people a good basic knowledge of the debt issue. There will be plenty of time for questions. I hope that many of you will come along. The venue is St. Martin the Fields Church, Trafalgar Square, from 10 a.m. until 2 p.m.

- **13 - 15<sup>th</sup> March 1998**

A Debt Campaign Training Weekend is being run by Christian Aid at Chigwell Convent, Woodford Green, Essex. The aim is to train those who feel committed to the debt issue, so that they can take an active part in motivating others. Please call me if you are interested.

- **Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> May 1998**

Supporters will descend on Birmingham where the G7 Summit is being held. A human chain will be formed between the venues of the Summit meetings and the Jubilee 2000 petition will be presented (with as many signatures as there are by then). This should be a very worthwhile day and transport will be arranged. So please note the date.

*Ann Peterken 0181 891 5862*

A thought for 1998

*"The Church exists by mission as  
fire exists by burning."*

Emil Brunner

## BE MY VALENTINE



SATURDAY 14<sup>th</sup> FEBRUARY AT 7.30 PM

light entertainment from **Phillida & Alpin**  
(voice and guitar)

and comic recitations from **Stuart Ward**

Quiz with prizes - refreshments will be served.

Proceeds to **Welcare** - single parent families

**TICKETS £4 IN ADVANCE FROM STUART ON 979 4906  
OR IN CHURCH**

## LENT GROUPS

Lent Groups this year will start on Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> March and are being organised by *Churches Together in Hampton*. The course chosen is "Hope in the Time of Change." If you would like to take part please sign the list in Church, indicating which day and time is best for you. If you feel able to host or lead a group, please see Brian as soon as possible.

It had been hoped to use the *London Bridges* Lent course this year, but it was felt to be too Anglican for such an ecumenical group. However, the three Anglican Churches - St. James's, All Saints and St. Mary's - plan to use the course in the Autumn in combined house groups.

The Women's Forum are holding a

### *Dinner Party*

*on Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> February at 8.00 pm  
in the Church Hall*



There will be a three course meal and an

after dinner speaker

all for **£5.00**

*by ticket only in advance from Wendy Baker on 979 3654*

# CONTAGIOUS CHRISTIANITY COURSE

led by Rev David McDougall -  
the Bishop of Kensington's Advisor in Evangelism  
at 8.00 p.m.  
Holy Trinity Church, Hounslow

Cost: £2.50 each session or £8.00 for all 4

26 February	Why Become a Contagious Christian?
5 March	Orthodox Christianity in the UN-Orthodox Place
12 March	Learning to Communicate Clearly
19 March	Building Bridges to Faith

**Contact Name:** For further details: Rev John McGinley on 0181 570 3066  
*This stimulating course is being run in the Hounslow Deanery, following a successful run in the Hampton Deanery last November. Well recommended.*

## Report from the PCC - CHILDREN IN CHURCH

On 7<sup>th</sup> January, an open meeting of the PCC explored the issue of "children in church", which has been the subject of much discussion in these pages and at the Parish Weekend in November.

Brian began with a brainstorming session of what was important to us in our worship - love, unity in diversity, fellowship, welcome, passing the peace, music - just a flavour of what came out. We then split into four groups and were asked to discuss what was a turn on and a turn off for ages 0-5, 5-18, 18-50 and 50+, when worshipping in church. This demonstrated the enormous complexity and diversity of our congregation which covers ages 0-90, and showed that age is not necessarily a determinant as to what is successful.

The meeting was then opened up by Brian asking, how are we achieving what is important in our worship for all the age groups in our congregation? At baptism we say:

*"We welcome you into the Lord's family. We are members together of the body of Christ; we are children of the same heavenly Father; we are inheritors together of the Kingdom of God. We welcome you."*

Are we fulfilling what we say?

We heard from many parents of young children present, who worship at St. James's because they have felt welcomed. They said that the children's corner was a big factor in encouraging them to come. There was an overwhelming desire for us all to worship together as the family of Christ. However, it was recognised that there was little that could be done to keep a 0-4 year old quiet for over an hour, and that some practical steps should be taken to try to enable all to worship as they wish.

## Suggestions included:

- A creche.
- Children coming in for the beginning of the service, then going out until, say, the offertory or the communion (this particularly for the Sunday School children).
- Children to be encouraged to be in the pews with their parents (we should recognise that children are also capable of spirituality and can take part).
- Parents with small children to come in to church later, say after the sermon.
- To have a focus in the service particularly for young children, so that they feel part of what is going on.
- To improve facilities in the north aisle by extending the sound system, putting up a hymn board etc., to help those who sit there feel included in the service.
- To put another area in the south aisle where children/families can sit, so that they are not all in one place.
- To take out the pews and carpet the whole church so that the area can be used flexibly and/or to turn the chairs in the north aisle at an angle facing into the body of the church.
- To clearly let parents know that they are welcome to sit anywhere in church, and that it is perfectly acceptable to take their children out of the service for a time if they are disruptive or need a break.
- To teach unchurched parents how to make use of the resources we have, and to show them how they can help their children to worship.

It became obvious that there is no easy solution to the problem of noise. Our children are today's church as much as we are, and we need to find ways of including them. However, it was also recognised that noise is distracting to many people during worship, and that old people particularly find it difficult to concentrate and hear what is going on if there is background noise. It was pointed out that it is not wrong for us to have different expectations of children's behaviour in church than at school or at home, nor is it not impossible for children to learn that church is both a place for quiet and stillness and a place for joyful noise.

It is surely something to be treasured that our congregation can have such an open and frank discussion. Let's pray that we can learn much from our experience and work together to be more tolerant of the huge variety of needs we have.



## ADVENT COLLECTIONS

The toys we collected for Welcare were received with great pleasure by Welcare staff in the Richmond and Hounslow offices. Many thanks to everyone who contributed.

Special collections during Advent and Christmas have enabled the following donations:

<i>Children's Society (Christingle Service)</i>	£240
<i>Bishop's Discretionary Fund (2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday in Advent)</i>	£100
<i>SPEAR Single Person's Emergency Accommodation in Richmond</i>	£200
<i>Christian Aid</i>	£200

*Ann Peterken*

## AT CHURCH IN THE GAMBIA

In mid-December we took a week's holiday in the Gambia, and as soon as we arrived, in the tropical heat, at our hotel and saw in the garden the Christmas "grotto" with thick cotton-wool snow, a very large reindeer and fat and jovial Santa Claus under the exuberantly flowering jacaranda tree, I knew that the Gambia would offer us a definitely different holiday experience.

We arrived on Friday December 12<sup>th</sup>, and spend Saturday enjoying the sunshine, the tumbling Atlantic breakers on the beach, the brightly-coloured birds in the gardens, and the general African ambience. On Sunday, the third in Advent, we went to the Anglican Church in Serrekunda, the largest town in the country four or five miles away. The town has two or three tarmac roads, but all others are dusty dirt streets, lined with small dark shops where just about everything is for sale - and the streets are full of people buying goods of every kind. Because there are far, far more pedestrians than cars, the streets are animated and noisy and full of activity. The markets are open every day for the purchases of the day, often carried home on the head.

So, as we drove through the streets of Serrekunda in our taxi, whilst the driver searched for the Church, we felt very foreign. Sunday in Serrekunda is definitely not like Sunday in Hampton Hill! The Church, Christ Church, in a very busy street used to be a tin chapel, but now has been enlarged. When we arrived there were few people, but the congregation grew as the service progressed. The singing was powerful and it was interesting to compare the two renderings of "Lo, He comes with clouds descending", one in St. James's on Advent Two and one in Serrekunda on Advent Three. Here we were in a simple, third-world church in the tropics, surrounded by reverent, wonderfully dressed Africans and we were all singing the Wesley hymn again, with fervour and enjoyment. The Eucharist service followed, of course, the same pattern, though interrupted, perhaps enhanced, by a half hour session of choruses with clapping and lots of repetition. Then it was back to the long Victorian hymns with many versus, accompanied by a very old organ which resembled not at all,

either in sound or playing, the instrument to which we are accustomed at St. James's.

The sermon, by a visiting priest, was also long, the notices interesting, children came and went from the adjacent Sunday School, the three or four members of the robed choir made their contribution, and the service lasted for about two hours. Some of the women in the congregation wore the most beautiful African dresses and head-cloths, especially the handsome lady in pink and white who took the collections and seemed to be what David described as "the queen bee". Was she the church warden?

We left the church feeling that we had shared what was obviously an important part of the lives of the local Christians. They were very polite to us, nobody asked questions and they seemed to assume that although we were a different colour, the Christianity and the church-going were common to all.

Because the Gambia was British for so long (founded as it was on the slave trade), English is the first or second language for most people and so it is easy to converse, exchange ideas and discuss dissimilar life-styles. Especially we appreciated this at Christ Church where we were able to join in the service as easily as if we had been England. But we were not, indeed, in England and one glance around the church together with the heat, crowds and noise as we emerged into the mid-day sun-shine all reinforced this. We were at home in the church but very much abroad in the Gambia!

*Margaret Taylor*

## **UNEMPLOYMENT SUNDAY - 22ND FEBRUARY 1998**

Unemployment and the Future of Work is the theme of the recent Council of Churches in Britain and Ireland (CCBI) Report, produced with the endorsement of all the major denominations in the UK and Ireland under the Chairmanship of Bishop David Sheppard. Grounded in Christian belief about the dignity of human work and the supreme importance of both justice and compassion, it is a theme which challenges the defeatism of those who say that good work for everyone is a thing of the past, and the complacency of those who seem not to care.

*"Underneath the subjects of Unemployment and the Future of Work lie despair, waste of God-given talents, contempt, hiding the eyes from the pain of brothers and sisters." (Bishop David Sheppard)*

*"When people at the bottom of society's heap are treated with dignity and respect, their spiritual needs start to be addressed." (Tear Fund UK Action)*

**Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> February** will be a day of prayer to focus on unemployment and the future of work. We are invited to join in prayer and reflection on this issue, and will do so in our intercessions that day.

Please remember this issue in your own prayers too.





*The Holly in the windy hedge and round the Manor House the yew, will soon be stripped to deck the ledge, the altar, font and arch and pew, so that the villagers can say "The Church looks nice," on Christmas Day.*

*(John Betjeman)*

The church looked lovely over Christmas; thanks to all those who gave their time to decorate it and who donated flowers and greenery. Though this is a labour of love, it was particularly worthwhile as there were record attendances at all our services at Christmas.

It was also wonderful at the start of a new year to welcome Jeanette and Andrew Lawson back on a visit from Morocco, with Jessica and Oliver, for the baptism of baby Abigail.

It is good to see that Dennis Leatherdale is up and about again. And we are also glad to welcome David Bonner home from hospital at last. We continue to pray for Hal Severn's sister, Valerie who is very ill, and we keep in our thoughts and prayers Pip and Ann Rowett, both of them suffering from ill-health and feeling deeply the death of Pip's father, the Rev. Bill Rowett, whom many will remember from his occasional visits to St. James's to officiate at eucharistic services. Our prayers are extended to Mary French in her recent bereavements and finally we remember Bill Withers, for many years a near neighbour of the church in St. James's Avenue, whose recent sudden death was a great shock; Barbara has our sympathy and love.

Roy Brooks' ashes were interred in the Church Yard on Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> January. The kneelers bought with Catherine Jones's bequest are now in use in Church. The old ones are in boxes in the entrance way to the hall. Please help yourselves. Janet Nunn suggests using those with plastic covers for gardening - so, as Brian wittily puts it, you can pray as you prune!!

WHAT DID THE VICAR SAY when He SAW  
GREENFLY on HIS ROSES?  
LET US spray!

*Oliver Craig, aged 6*

# FROM THE DECEMBER REGISTERS

## Baptisms

- 7 Josephine Mary Baker, 51 Kings Road, Teddington  
14 Leanne Kirsty Smith, 13 Cardinals Walk, Hampton  
21 Shanera Lisa Mhando, 19a Windmill Road

## Funerals

- 4 Helen Mary Butlin, Woodbines Nursing Home, Kingston 90  
4 Roy Brooks, 81 Park Road, Hampton Hill 81  
11 Holly Champion, 24 Uxbridge Road 80  
17 Doreen Margaret Lloyd, formerly of Albert Road 64

## DATES TO NOTE IN FEBRUARY

- 1 The Presentation of Christ in the Temple  
9.30 Informal Service  
3 Saints and Martyrs of Europe  
4 2.30 Women's Forum: A Week in the Life of a Vicar - Guess Who?  
8.00 Deanery Synod - St. Philip and St. James, Whitton  
6 The Queen's Accession 1952  
8 Education Sunday  
9.30 Parish Communion - Preacher: Lesley Mortimer, Millennium Officer, London Diocesan Board for Schools  
10 8.00 Meeting to launch Millennium Kneelers Project - Church Hall  
14 St. Valentine  
7.30 A concert of music and poetry hosted by Stuart Ward - Church Hall. Proceeds to Richmond Welcare's work with lone parents.  
18 7.30 for 8.00 Women's Forum Dinner Party  
21 Saints and Martyrs of Africa  
23 Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna, Martyr 155  
24 Shrove Tuesday  
25 Ash Wednesday  
8.00 Parish Communion with Imposition of Ashes  
26 5.30 Triennial Inspection by the Archdeacon of Middlesex  
8.00 PCC with the Archdeacon  
27 George Herbert, Priest, Pastor and Poet 1633  
28 Jubilee 2000 - A campaigning celebration for the Diocese of London. 10.00 to 2.00 St. Martin in the Fields. All Welcome.

**COPY DATE FOR MARCH MAGAZINE: 13<sup>th</sup> FEBRUARY**