



# Notes from the Riverbank

The newsletter for St Thomas of Canterbury Church in Goring,  
St Mary's Church in Streatley and St Andrew's Church in South Stoke

March 2015 – 16th edition

- All enquiries 01491 875651 or [stthomasmaryandrew@gmail.com](mailto:stthomasmaryandrew@gmail.com)



Price per printed copy

## ● Welcome to the sixteenth edition of "Notes from the Riverbank."

All contributions should be sent to Toria, the editor, by the 17<sup>th</sup> of each month at the usual email address [webcontent.thomandmary@gmail.com](mailto:webcontent.thomandmary@gmail.com). The on-line versions of the calendars are maintained by Glenn Cooke using the same email address. Bookings for the church or Canterbury Room should be made by contacting the UB Parish Secretary Jenny Hall at [jandjh2@btinternet.com](mailto:jandjh2@btinternet.com). We aim to produce the on-line and printed versions of each issue by the 25<sup>th</sup> of each month.

## ● Pastoral letter: Making Lent meaningful



I wonder how many times you've been asked "What are you giving up for Lent?" My reply in recent years has been simply "Nothing." There was a time when I would give up chocolate but, to be honest, although it may have had some health benefits, it did nothing for my spiritual well-being. The problem, I realise now, lay in my attitude. I behaved as if the mere act of giving something up for six weeks would somehow make me more holy, but of course, it didn't. If anything, it made me far too pleased with myself for having lasted until Easter Sunday!

So how should we approach Lent? Our vicar, Paul, at the Ash Wednesday service, gave us the analogy of "spring-cleaning." We are all aware that our homes can, over time, accumulate dust and dirt in inaccessible corners and behind heavy furniture, necessitating a blitz from time to time and some deep cleaning. We are not always quite so conscious of the fact that our minds and hearts can harbour attitudes and thought patterns which, when exposed to the light, are seen to be undesirable and need to be swept out. We can also slip into bad habits without really noticing. Lent is a good time to undertake some mental and spiritual spring-cleaning.

To do this effectively we need to seek the help of the Holy Spirit, who can reveal to us those areas of our lives which need special attention. Otherwise, we might be tempted to ignore some problems which we don't want to acknowledge because doing so might be painful. As we pray for guidance, we may find that 'giving up' certain things can be helpful. But for those who of us who feel that our sins are predominantly ones of omission, instead of giving up something for Lent, this might well be the time to start doing something we have neglected to do in the past.

Whichever course of action you decide is best for you, the important thing is your attitude. Between now and Easter is Holy Week. We can't avoid it. We can't get to Easter any other way. Easter is meaningless without Good Friday. It is our sinfulness

which put Jesus on the Cross. No amount of 'spring cleaning' can make us right with God. Jesus did that, by taking the punishment we deserved and dying instead of us.

The reason why Christians seek to clean up their act in Lent is the same reason why Jesus washed his disciples' feet at the last supper. The disciples were already saved, but they were not yet perfect. Christians are people who have turned away from sin and been forgiven, but each one is a work in progress, gradually being perfected by the Holy Spirit. Observing Lent can make us more aware of this and prepare us for remembering what Christ did for us, so that we can truly and enthusiastically rejoice at Easter because we already share in his resurrection life.



Judith Aguda, Licensed Lay Minister

## ● Stewardship Renewal



At 10.30am on Sunday 1st March, at a United Benefice service in St Thomas', Goring we will launch a period of "Stewardship Renewal" for each of the parishes in the benefice. This will culminate in a "Gift Day" in each of the churches a fortnight later on Sunday 15th March.

I have been asked why we don't refer to this as an "appeal." The word "stewardship" reminds us that our generous God entrusts us with all sorts of things to manage well – or to be good stewards of: time, abilities, income and wealth. One of our Anglican liturgies reminds us of this so well when it quotes 1 Chronicles 29 v.14: "*all things come from you, O God, and of your own do we give you.*"

Each of the churches anticipates a significant deficit in 2015 and so every church member is asked to consider how we use all that God entrusts to our management and especially to review our financial giving in the light of God's wonderful generosity to us. Some who are not members of the church may also wish to contribute to the cost of ministry in these villages, and we are so grateful.

Every church member (electoral roll member) should receive a letter from the Vicar and Wardens on Sunday, 1st March. If you don't receive a letter and would like to, you will find envelopes marked "Stewardship" in each of the churches until Gift Day on Sunday 15th March. Each envelope will include a "response form."

Do please consider before our generous God, what he calls you to give to the work of building his Kingdom in these villages. It would be wonderful to be able to face the next year in the knowledge that we can concentrate on what matters most, without being distracted by a need to raise additional funds.

I send this with my gratitude for your love and support.

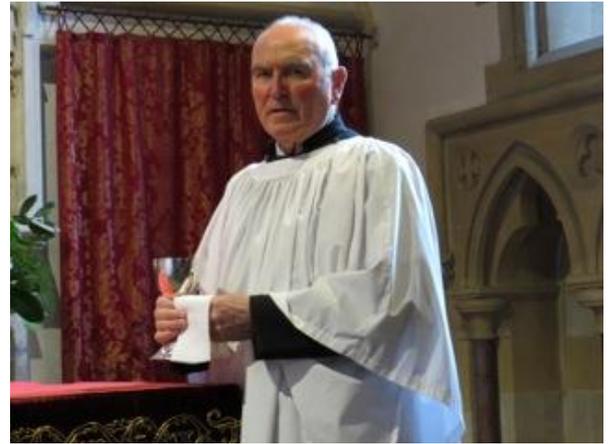
In Christ,



Paul

## ● It started more than 60 years ago!

It was a chance remark by Adrian Turner that made us realise how long he had been an altar server. He is always very helpful and encouraging to all of us who decide to take on the role of serving, assuaging our nerves and concerns regarding getting it wrong!



As well as wanting to give him a small gift to acknowledge his commitment to St. Mary's at the combined Communion Service at St Andrew's in February, we thought it would be interesting to hear about Adrian's time as a server and asked him to write a short account.

I was born in Sunningdale in Trinity Crescent, a stone's throw from Holy Trinity Church. My mother took my siblings and me to church most Sundays. There were no other activities available like today, and no TV. I joined the choir when I was eight and sang in the choir at Matins and the Evensong services. In 1948 I took the Whitsun Farthings\* to Christchurch Cathedral in Oxford with the Reverend Raymond Webster in his Austin 7, stopping at Dorchester Abbey for a picnic. I started serving in about 1950 after I was confirmed. I was on duty at Holy Communion at 08:00 as well as attending the morning and evening services. Another server was Alan Stevens who still lives in Sunningdale and has continued to serve at Holy Trinity on a regular basis.

After taking my O- and A-levels at Windsor County Boys' Grammar school, I joined the Royal Air Force where I trained as an Air Radar Fitter. On demob in 1958 I got a job with the British Tabulating Machine Company in Luton. I attended church in Luton but never volunteered to serve because my job as a Computer Support Engineer meant that I was on constant standby and couldn't guarantee my availability for services.

After getting married I lived in Dunstable, Hitchin and Alsager, Cheshire with Sara and our three children. It was not until I got a job in Reading in 1978, when we moved to Goring-on-Thames, that I resumed serving duties. This was as a result of Leighton Thomas visiting our house the day after we moved in when I was "poached" to attend St Mary's Streatley rather than St Thomas' in Goring. At that time there were many "crossovers" in the congregation at St Mary's. Despite the changes of priest over the 36 years we have lived in Goring I have continued to attend Streatley Church because I like the Prayer Book services, the layout of the pews nave and side aisles, and the formality of services which have been the same for hundreds of years.

\*Whitsun Farthings: Offerings formerly made to the mother church at Whitsun/Pentecost. The Encyclopaedia Perthensis 1816 says: WHITSUN FARTHINGS otherwise called 'Smoke Farthings' - a compolition for offerings, which were anciently made in Whitsun-week by every man in England, who occupied a house with a chimney to the cathedral church of the diocese in which he lived.

## ● Church Housing Trust



All over the country, homeless people are finding help and accommodation provided by Riverside English Churches Housing Group, a social housing association supported by the Church Housing Trust. They are given health checks, advice on housing and on employment, and, in many cases, the chance to learn new skills, such as cooking, which will be needed when they are able to move on to independent living.

CHT also supports two accommodation schemes, in Aldershot and Catterick, which are meeting the needs of ex-service men and women having problems adapting to civilian life, whether because of mental or physical ill-health, or finding themselves homeless. Please give generously to the special collection this month.

 Norma Bryant

### ● Gifts for the Churches In Reading Drop-In Centre

 During Lent there will be a basket at the back of St. Mary's church so that we can send gifts to CIRDIC. Due to the increasing number of homeless people the need is greater than ever. Tins of meat, fish or hearty soups are top of the Wish List as well as warm socks, gloves and scarves. There will be a list of other suggested gifts by the basket. THANK YOU.  
<http://www.cirdic.org.uk/>

 Tina Farr

### ● A Lent Prayer from the community at Taize

You might like to pray this prayer each day of Lent to help you to focus on Lent being a journey of drawing closer to God in anticipation for celebrating the resurrection and gift of new and eternal life, at Easter.

On the road towards Easter, we would like to follow your light, Christ Jesus. Even with only a little faith, we would like to listen to you when you say to us: "Turn to God and trust in the Gospel."

 Rev Paul Boughton



Goring Chamber Choir presents:

## "East meets West"



7:45pm Saturday 25th April 2015  
Douai Abbey, Woolhampton

Music by Tchaikovsky, Rakhmaninov, Grechaninov and others from the Orthodox tradition (Tavener and Pärt) together with Canadian composer Eleanor Daley's Requiem.  
Conducted by Frances Brewitt-Taylor.

Tickets £12 (concessions £10), students £5, from the Corn Exchange in Newbury, Inspiration in Goring, from a choir member, at the door or [www.cornexchangenew.com](http://www.cornexchangenew.com).

 Graeme Pearce