

REFLECTIONS

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St John-at-Hackney Church Magazine

March 2009

FROM THE RECTOR

Rev'd Rob Wickham



Dear Friends,
Do you ever ponder to yourself about how fragile and precious life is? Just the other day, I went to visit two hospitals on various pastoral matters. The first hospital I visited

was the Royal London, and amongst all the busyness of the place, I sat with a man who had "met" with an accident. He was covered in bruises and cuts, and I was told that he was quite severely brain damaged. He lay there with little movement, but he occasionally pointed his one open eye in my direction. I did not know whether he knew who I was or not, but I prayed, knowing that Jesus was there in the midst of it all.

I then went, quite unexpectedly, to Homerton Hospital. This time, to visit a baby born some 2 months premature. This little life lay there in an incubator, tiny yet full of movement, and obviously just beginning an incredible journey - yet so fragile in the process at just over 2 pounds in weight.

Our lives are precious, and our bodies matter. We are vulnerable and fragile, and yet capable of all sorts of actions both good and bad, for which we must learn to be accountable and responsible.

This Lent, we will be journeying towards Jesus who died on a cross. Like some visits to hospital, Jesus' death is shocking and bloody, but we know from the cross that Jesus is in the midst of all our hurt, pain and vulnerabilities.

In the light of this, may we grasp the Lent theme of "saying sorry" in the assurance of forgiveness.

LENT- Saying Sorry

In Lent we will be exploring the theme of Saying Sorry. We will be thinking about saying sorry to God, saying sorry to those closest to us, and saying sorry within communities. We will also think about the flip side of saying sorry: **forgiveness**. What does it mean for us to forgive, and what does it mean for us to know that God forgives us? The theme will be picked up in our sermons, our bible studies, our

children's work and in a number of special events. Read on for more details!

Sunday mornings

With the theme of Saying Sorry, we have invited a number of speakers and preachers for the 10am services:

8th March: Lincoln Harvey, Doctrine Lecturer at the SEITE Ordination Course.

15 March: Fr William Taylor, Formerly of the London Centre for Reconciliation and Peace.

22 March: Members of church will speak for Mothering Sunday.

Holy Week preacher: Fr Stephen Ferns, Senior Selection Secretary in the Ministry Division of the Archbishops' Council of the Church of England.

We hope that they will bring new insights as we grapple with saying sorry.

STATIONS OF THE CROSS

Each Sunday night at 6.30pm we shall have the opportunity to walk with Jesus as he journeys towards the cross. This is a very ancient, moving and powerful devotion. Please do join in the pilgrimage.

Then on **Good Friday**, we shall be walking the way of the cross through Hackney at 12noon.

THE SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION

Our personal ability to say sorry before Jesus is an important part of our Lent journey. Hearing the words of personal forgiveness can be one of the most wonderful ways of experiencing joy and the resurrection. Fr Rob or Fr David are available throughout Lent to hear your confessions. Please don't be shy. Call 020 8985 5374 for an appointment.

DIRECTOR of MUSIC

Jack Bicker

I was absolutely delighted to have been appointed the new Director of Music at St John-at-Hackney at the end of January. After seeing Fr. Rob's advertisement for a temporary organist way back in October, I'd only ever intended to be your organist for three short months. That was before I met Fr. Rob and the rest of the team here at St. John's, and was struck by the utterly jaw-dropping sense of energy and vision that's being generated for our Christian and wider communities here in Hackney. Exciting things are happening at St John's, and I jumped at the chance to contribute in any way I could.

Being a church musician is a very varied job. Music functions like any other work of art in a church building, be it a stained glass window, religious stonework, an oil painting, or even the beautifully arranged flowers that quietly decorate our church every week. In their beauty and in their otherness, all of these things encourage us to be more aware of the presence of the Holy Spirit. In a recent homily, Fr. Rob talked about the transfiguration, when Jesus radiantly appears in all "his sovereign majesty", clothed in dazzling white alongside the prophets Moses and Elijah. Jesus' divinity, his authority and "true glory" are revealed in that utterly awesome moment of transfigured splendour. We, as church artists and musicians, try to recreate that moment in everything we do, however feebly or inadequate any human attempt at this might be. It's our purpose to capture and present the tenets of our faith, to bring alive the scriptures and communicate them in a way that speaks to Christ's many different peoples, in many different ways.

Four years playing the organ as a student in Oxford, as well as conducting early-music choirs, has given me a good grounding in the music of traditional Anglican worship. However, my work as a music teacher, and in community projects with young people across the East End, also means that I'm just as happy providing less formal music opportunities for our young people AND our adults.

The music in our church is for you, whatever your musical taste. It's there to help you contemplate your faith. It aims to help you experience the presence of God here, today in Hackney. So get involved and help us to



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FAIRTRADE
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IMPAIRED VISION?

We have LARGE PRINT versions of Hymn Books, Psalms and Service Sheets

Website: www.stjohn-at-hackneychurch.co.uk

Editor: 020 8533 1720; seabrook@mac.com

make our music what you need it to be!!!

Our theme throughout Lent is that of Saying Sorry, and our music programme aims to reflect this. Our musical themes centre around our journeying towards Christ's Resurrection singing the contemplative Taize chant *Wait for the Lord, His Day in Near*. At the same time our choir and church band will sing music that acknowledges our inevitable need to ask for God's forgiveness. There will be many different ways for you to take part whatever your musical skills, so be bold and use music as part of your Lenten journey in 2009.

SPECIAL PEOPLE!

Phyllis Manning

Of course we are all special and unique. The good news is that some very special people have recently joined the Cub Scout pack.

"My son was born deaf - can he join the Cubs?" This stunning question was recently asked of the Cub Scout Leader. The Scout and Guide Associations have a clear policy of inclusion. Activities, training and tests can all be adapted as necessary, so we knew where we stood, but of course we had to think about it.

The last time a born deaf boy came into the pack the leaders spent some time learning sign language, before he joined us. When David arrived HE did not know it! However, he was exceptionally quick at lip reading and picking up facial and other signals. When we took him to big Scouting events he was certainly on the ball! For instance an aerial runway was on offer (very popular; hence queues). David went to head of the queue and would not be turned away - he got more turns than some others! I believe he later became a Civil Engineer. Of course it was a wonderful time for the other Cub Scouts, who learned a great deal about their brother Cub and his like. Now legislation is catching up with this need.

Our newest Special Need Cub Scout (in a wheelchair) has only just joined us, along with his twin brother. We also have a Cub Scout with Asperger's Syndrome.

In church there are people with Special Needs - so we have a ramp for easier access and microphones to enhance hearing. It is interesting to note that Jesus accepted everyone. Today, as then, some are cured.

It is up to us to make sure that ALL are included.

We are all certainly Special People.

CHURCH KEYS - URGENT

Reminder to everyone who has keys to any part of the church - please contact our Parish Administrator, Emily Ovenden as follows:

Tel: 07947 792 869 ext. 222

Email: pastjohn@hotmail.co.uk

MOTHERING SUNDAY

Helen Wickham

Make a Mother's Day - Sunday 22nd March Fed up giving flowers and chocolates for Mothering Sunday? Why not choose an ethical gift this year to make your mum smile!

'Make a mother's day' is the ethical gift campaign of the Mothers' Union for Mothering Sunday. When you give a mum or carer a Mothering Sunday gift (or buy a gift 'in memory' of a mum) you help a family in tough circumstances through Mothers' Union.

What is available?

Mothers' Union makes a startling difference to families in the UK and across the world and gifts include funding parenting classes, financing self-sufficiency through poultry or gardening projects and providing hand-washing facilities and latrines. Prices range from £6 to £150 so there is something to suit every pocket.

What will I receive?

Unless you request "no card", you will be sent a "Mothering Sunday" card with details of the provision of the gift you chose. If you have ordered a card "In Memory", you will receive an exclusive card which says, "In memory of a special mother, Mothering Sunday 2009", also with details of your chosen "In Memory" gift.

All orders received by Friday 13th March 2009 will be posted out no later than Tuesday 17th March. This will allow you time to post your gift card to your chosen recipient.

How to order

To find out more, or to order your gifts go to: www.makeamothersday.org

Telephone: 020 7222 5533

Post: Mothers' Union Mothering Sunday Campaign

Mary Sumner House

24 Tufton Street, London SW1P 3RB

CHRISTIANS and JEWS

Reminder

Full details were printed in our February issue of *Reflections*.



Two events in the CCJ spring programme:

Sunday 8th March, 7.30pm Ajax House, Stamford Hill a symposium

on the practice and

significance of pilgrimage in the three Abrahamic faiths.

Thursday 2nd April, 6pm St Ignatius' Church, South Tottenham

The ritual features of a Seder (the Jewish ceremonial Passover meal) and its links with Our Lord's Last Supper, will be explained. If you are interested in attending either of these events please speak to Peter or Beryl. All will be very welcome.

PASTORAL CARE at St JOHN'S

Mary Ofori



The members of St John's Branch of the Mothers' Union are delighted to take on the role of pastoral care and hospitality in our church. We aspire to bring Christ's hope and love to those who are unwell,

need a chat or an errand carried out, and mothers who need babysitting help.

Therefore, if you know of anyone wishing for a visit or a telephone call from us, please contact Mercy Moss, the Branch Leader; any of our willing volunteers - Peter Cofie, John Geach and Phyllis Manning - or myself.

Thankyou and stay blessed.

FAIRTRADE FORTNIGHT

Jane Hutchinson



23 February – 8 March 2009

Last year, St John's became a Fairtrade Church, one of about 4000 in the UK. One of the responsibilities of this status is that we have to promote Fairtrade Fortnight and so, on

February 22, the eve of Fairtrade Fortnight, Poppy Pickard came to St John's and gave us an update on Fairtrade and the work of Traidcraft. She reminded us what the benefits of having Fairtrade status are for poor producers in the developing world. These benefits include fair prices for their products, extra income for community development, equitable and safe working conditions and a greater respect for the environment.

Between 2006 and 2007 Fairtrade sales rose in the UK by 72% from £286 million to £493 million with, for example, a 24% increase in sales of tea & coffee and a 230% increase in sales of bananas. She encouraged us to continue to buy produce with the Fairtrade logo on it in these difficult economic times. Fairtrade producers spend a far higher proportion of their income (60-70%) on basic nutrition compared to people in the UK (15%) and this proportion will increase if we buy less of their produce.

There are some hidden complexities to the issue of Fairtrade which Poppy illustrated by telling a 'Tale of two T-shirts.' Traidcraft sells T-shirts with the Fairtrade logo and this certifies not only the organic cotton from which they are made but also the manufacturing process. In comparison the Fairtrade logo on the T-shirts that Marks & Spencer sell only refers to the organic cotton from which they are made and not the manufacturing stages. For this reason she encouraged us to continue to buy as much stuff as possible through Traidcraft plc itself where the benefits for poor producers are far greater.

One of the charities that St John's recently agreed to give a donation to is Traidcraft Exchange, the charitable arm of Traidcraft plc. This charity manages projects that help poor producers to develop their businesses, improve access to markets locally, regionally and internationally and engage in trade. Tea is the most consumed drink in the world after water and is the basis for the livelihood of millions of workers and farmers. Traidcraft Exchange is helping tea producers in India to improve business practices so they are less vulnerable to price changes. This includes learning better negotiation skills with others in the supply chain and improving their growing practices.

Poppy finished with a plea to us all to continue buying from and supporting our own Traidcraft stall at St John's.

For more information please see www.traidcraft.org.uk or www.fairtrade.org.uk

On behalf of St John's I receive a regular email update from the Fairtrade Foundation - please let me know by email if you would like to receive a copy of this.

YOUR HACKNEY

Alison Barnes

I am a researcher at London College of Communication, University of the Arts and I am currently developing an art project based in Hackney. Hackney gets a lot of press and this can affect how people think and feel about the area. This project is designed to learn about Hackney from people who live or work there, and find ways of showing other people what life there is really like. I am writing to see if any members of your church would like to take part.

Taking part is designed to be simple and fun. Participants will receive a pack with a disposable camera, a series of postcards with questions, a journey and activity log, a memory/story sheet and a recipe sheet. Each item asks a simple question, for example, *What is the best thing about Your Hackney?* Using the camera, particular photographs are asked for, such as *What is your favourite view in Your Hackney?* All materials are provided, and participants will not incur any costs. The pack is designed to be fun to use and the questions asked have no wrong answers! What is important are the thoughts and opinions of participants. When items are completed they should be sent back to the London College of Communication using the envelopes and stamps provided.

After the materials have been sent back participants will be contacted with a view to an interview that will enable them to talk in more detail about their photographs and answers. If at this stage participants do not wish to be interviewed that is fine, they can withdraw at any time.

Basic personal details will be required from each participant, but these details will

be confidential - only researchers working on the project will have access to the original data.

Materials generated through the project will be used in art and design projects that will hopefully be exhibited late 2010. All participants will receive an invitation to the exhibition. The materials may also be used in a written thesis and for further research projects at a later date.

If anyone is interested in taking part, I will meet with them personally to discuss the research project and the pack of tasks, ensuring they are clear about what is involved and asking them to sign a participant consent form.

Contact details:

Alison Barnes
School of Graphic Design, LCC
University of the Arts, London
Email: yourhackney@hotmail.com

Tel: 07944 029 059.

NIGHT SHELTER

Fr David Evans



Many thanks to all who continue to help with the Night Shelter at St John's on Wednesday nights and Thursday mornings. Thanks to your great efforts, we've had a remarkably smooth ride so far, and our guests

have been offered lovely, thoughtful hospitality. It's good to know, too, that we're part of a wider community of 18 churches across Hackney. In the month of January, our 18 churches working in partnership with Thames Reach helped 22 homeless guests of the night shelter into longer-term accommodation. That's something we can all be proud of.

EXTRA NOTICES from our PARISH OFFICE

Tuesday lunches in Lent

On Tuesdays in Lent (March 3, 10, 17, 24, 31) St Johns will be offering a free lunch to any of our friends or neighbours over the age of 55 in return for a donation to the Diocese of London's Lent Appeal, which is raising money for clean water in Angola and Mozambique. It's an opportunity to celebrate the senior members of our community, to get to know each other better, to keep warm and for us as a church to reach out to others and show them a bit of what St John's is about. See also separate notes from the People & Prayer group. If you'd like to help shop, cook, set up or wash up, please contact Fr David on 020 7241-2720.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

If you wish to comment on anything in *Reflections*, please do write to the address or email shown elsewhere in this edition.

Film showing of *Chocolat*

Hurdman Hall

Friday 13th March @ 7:00 pm

Like her ancestors, Vianne Rocher obeys the north wind, drifting across the country as it blows. In the winter of 1959, the clever wind leads her to a tranquil French village, where she and her daughter Anouk open a small chocolaterie. The store imbues both wonder and angst within the classical villagers as it opens during the forty days of Lent.

The film will be followed by a discussion in which we will draw out the theme of saying sorry.

Good childhood in Hackney

Discipleship Day on Saturday 21st March will be asking *What is a good childhood in Hackney?* There will be a range of speakers from the Children's Society, from the Learning Trust Exclusion Unit and from our own children. There will be thought provoking discussion, fun, and an opportunity to shape our family support at St John-at-Hackney. We begin with prayer at 10am, and end with the Eucharist at 3pm.

Rock on Simon Peter

Saturday 4th April 7:30pm

The church will be transformed into a theatre set for a humorous and poignant telling of the Gospel as seen through the eyes of Peter, one of Jesus' closest companions. Its 18 songs include a mix of rock, pop, music hall and ballads.

Tickets: £10, £7 (cons) £5 (under 15).

Contact Emily: Tel 020 8985 5374 (Ext 222)

Email: pastjohn@hotmail.co.uk

Children and Youth Working Party

To complement the St John-at-Hackney Project, we are beginning this month a new Working Party that will meet on the first Sunday of each month. This group, chaired by Vastiana Belfon, will look at our developing children's provision, and help us to plan for the future. If you care for our children and youth work, please be part of this new group.

STEWARDSHIP

Audrey Seabrook



There are still a few boxes of envelopes for 2009 awaiting your collection. Inside the front of your new box you will find a slip of paper with a tax question for you. To keep our records up to date, you must return

this to me ASAP. If you have not found a box with your name on it, or wish to join the Stewardship Scheme please speak to me. You should all now stop using the blue envelopes from 2008. This year's envelopes are yellow. If you were a member in 2008, please also look for a brown envelope with your name on it. When using your envelopes, it is not necessary to write your name on it.

NOTICES for our YOUNGER CHURCH MEMBERS

Family Fun preparation for Mothering Sunday

Saturday 21st March, 11am-3pm.
Come along and make a lovely present for your Mum. Any age, all welcome. Children under 5 must be accompanied by a responsible adult.

Family Cookers' Club

Saturday 4th April
With a focus on baking cakes, breads and biscuits, this month's *Dish Of The Day* will be *Fish Cakes!* Family Cooker's Club @ St John-at-Hackney Kitchen.

Film Fest sessions in Holy Week

On 7, 8 and 9th April the Lent Film Fest takes place at **St Luke's** from 1-4pm. Then on 10th April, there will be a Good Friday Film Fest Special 1:30-3pm @ **St John-at-Hackney Church**.

Family Easter preparation

Saturday 11th April, 11am-3pm
Come along a make an Easter bonnet and paint your Easter eggs!

INTRODUCING THE HOLY WEEK HOLIDAY CLUB:

Are we cool?

What are you sorry for?
How can I say sorry?

What are you not sorry for?

Join Adrenalin Dance in a playful exploration of "being sorry.....or not".

We will move, play, write and draw in three sessions.

Time: 10am -12pm
Dates: Mon 6th April
Tues 7th April
Weds 8th April

Age group 8-14. FREE!
Numbers are limited so please contact Toyin to book:

Tel: 020 8985 5374 Ext. 226

Email: stjohnsstlukesyouthworker@hotmail.co.uk

A VISIT TO BELGIUM

Audrey Seabrook

I was one of six parishioners who travelled by Eurostar on Friday 6 February to visit our previous churchwarden Christian, now living in Brussels. Half of the party slept on the floor of Christian's flat, while 3 of us girls languished in a hotel. As you can see there is very little space here to give a blow by blow account of our 2 days. We walked

a lot; went to Bruges on Saturday; visited museums galore and 'wowed' over the Michaelangelo statue of Our Lady in the Bruges church of that name; ate down-to-earth food like rabbit stewed with prunes and braised pig's trotters, alongside delicious Belgian beer. We visited all the Sunday markets in Brussels and enjoyed one of the many chocolate shops, where I managed to fall down the stairs!!! Can't take me anywhere!

STAFF and VOLUNTEERS at ST JOHN-at-HACKNEY

Rector The Rev'd Rob Wickham
T: 020 8985 5374 Ext. 221 E: rectorofhackney@aol.com

Curate The Rev'd David Evans
T: 020 8985 5374 Ext. 223
T: 020 7241 2720 E: davidjjevans@mac.com

Reader Emeritus Mrs Barbara Scott Wollaston E: babscotwoll@ntlworld.com

Parish Admin. Miss Emily Ovenden
T: 020 8985 5374 Ext. 222 E: pastjohn@hotmail.co.uk

Children and Youth Co-ordinator
Miss Toyin Ajidele
T: 020 8985 5374 Ext. 226
T: (m) 07960 493768
E: stjohnsstlukesyouthworker@hotmail.co.uk

Interim Music Leader
Community Development Worker
Chair: People and Prayer
Chair: Operation and Finance
Chair: Develop't & Communication
Cleaner
Tower Captain
Artist in Residence
Mothers' Union Leader (Designate)
Placement Student

Mr Jack Bicker
Mr David Hazeldine
The Rev'd David Evans
Ms Jayne Bailey
Mrs Laura Tomlinson
Ms Hazel Pantou
Mr Stephen Jakeman
Mr Andrew Coombes
Mrs Mercy Moss
Miss Karen Campbell

Deadline for contributions
for March issue is
Sunday 22 February to
seabrook@mac.com

PHOTOGRAPHS for REFLECTIONS or WEBSITE

Please remember if taking photographs to send by email for use in *Reflections* or on our website, you should select a small file size.

PARISH DIARY

For Services see the weekly Sunday notice sheet

Sundays 9am Choir practice
Mondays 7.30pm Bellringers practice
SCOUTS and GUIDES meet regularly at their headquarters
The Den, in the Old Rectory Drive
activities for boys and girls from age 6 years
Contact Jim or Judy Phillips
Tel: 020 8985 9397;
Email: phillips_james1@sky.com

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Editor: 020 8533 1720; seabrook@mac.com