

ST JOHN the Evangelist, Cambridge e-news, February 2019
Listening, Learning, Transforming



Dear Friends

I write to you in mid-winter! It may not be snowing, but all of us need encouragement and the prospect of brighter days ahead, as well as spiritual anchor points.

Candlemas. On 3rd February we celebrated Candlemas – the Presentation of Christ in the Temple – and lit candles, reflecting on how we allow the light of Christ to shine through us. It was a fitting culmination of the Epiphany season. I preached on my hopes for St John's this year, including our spiritual nurture, welcome to newcomers, vision of community engagement, pastoral support to young & old, participation in the 'big issues', and the opportunities of 'partnership for missional church'. All avenues, I argued, for letting Jesus' light shine out. Above all, it's about every church member letting the light of Jesus shine out in everyday life.

Lent 2019. This year Easter is late, 21st April, and therefore we have a long wait until the start of Lent – that annual 40 day period of essential spiritual preparation. However, it is timely to tell you about our plans for Lent, in order for you to make the most of it. In terms of Lent courses, we will be using Ely Diocese's 'Your Call: Following the Way of Life this Lent'. This draws on Biblical texts, themes in Christian spirituality, and practical steps. It includes: the Call to Holiness, the Call to Listen, the Call to Witness, the Call to Love, the Call to Christ. Existing Home Groups, including the Tuesday Bible Study Group, will use the materials, and we will also create new groups. Sign up in Church, or let James know. The groups will be at 7.30pm on five Wednesdays from 13th March, and (if necessary) on Tuesdays from 12th March. Our Ash Wednesday service, including the imposition of ashes, sung by Homerton College, is on 6th March at 7.30pm. Compline will also be held weekly, during Lent, on Thursdays at 8.30pm, at St John's.

Electoral Roll and APCM. 2019 is a year when our Church Electoral Roll is being generated afresh. The old Roll will be discontinued. The deadline for joining the new Roll is 3rd March. Please do collect a form from the back of St John's (if you are 16 or above, baptised and a regular worshipper or local resident), and leave completed forms in the 'R' pigeon-hole. This is an important sign of belonging and of the spiritual health of our Parish. This year our Annual Parochial Church Meeting will be after Parish Communion on Sunday 24th March. This is your opportunity to hear reports of the past year, elect Churchwardens and PCC Officers. Please do consider whether you would like to join our PCC, at a time when some exciting challenges are being debated. Nomination forms at the back of church.

Partnership for Missional Church. This project continues to develop, under the leadership of Kate Dove and the Steering team. Some of us attended an exciting training day at Ely on 2nd February. So far we have completed our initial research, including congregational timeline, listening interviews and a 'Listening Portfolio'. All of this will help inform discernment of our future in mission. The next stage of our work is a series of Community interviews, as well as discerning our particular gifts (as a congregation, within our local context). There will be another Congregational exercise on 5th May,

and we want to begin engaging, more specifically, with our wider community and expanding the conversation. It's all about mission, and how we can better serve Christ in others. It is with this in mind, therefore, that I intend to initiate a mid-year 'Prayer for Mission' exercise, in order that we can all join together in seeking God's will for our future mission at St John's. Watch this space...

Enlarging our Tent Project. As reported in Parish Voice, the EOT project will finally come to fruition, over the next few months, following successful grant applications, with work projected to continue from 25th February until the end of June or early July. The EOT project team is working hard with the preparations, including liaison with existing user groups and the congregation, in order to cause minimum disruption. We are pleased to report that a limited number of 6 parking spaces have been made available at Homerton College on a Sunday morning, first come first serve. Also allied to EOT, a new Community Group is being convened, to explore and facilitate community use of the renewed facilities, from July 2019. Whatever debates there have been on the style and scale of the project, we are lucky to have got this far and received such widespread support, and this is a unique opportunity to enhance the way we work with our local community, in the service of others. Please pray that all will go well with the building works. Any questions or concerns should be addressed directly to the Project Chair, Roger Lilley, on holbrook@ntlworld.com

Other parish news:

- We are mid-way through an exciting enquirers and **Christian explorers' course**, led by Chris Campbell and Dan Talmage, 'Pudding and Puzzling'. It meets on Wednesdays at 7.30pm.
- **Ely Anglican Cursillo** held a Quiet Day at St John's on 26th January, 'Learning to Pray', with over 50 people present, including members of our congregation. It was an up-lifting and Spirit-filled time. James will hold further St John's Quiet Days, this year – to be announced.
- As indicated previously, on 13th January **Anne Rigby** was commissioned as a pastoral ALM, to be involved especially in Baptism ministry, and Chris baptized Ava Slade. A Messy Epiphany was also held on 12th January. The next Messy Church, for Lent, is on 9th March.
- During 15th-17th January, James attended the conclusion of his **Clergy Leadership Training** course, at Canterbury Cathedral. It was an inspired time of learning, study and reflection. He hopes the fruits will be seen, over time, in his leadership at St John's!
- At present, one member of our congregation, Roger Lilley, is on **Pilgrimage to the Holy Land**, with the Bishop of Ely, and others from the Diocese, including Petra Shakeshaft. We look forward to hearing all about it. On 16th February at 7.30pm, Paul Shakeshaft is giving an illustrated talk at St John's on 'The Flight into Egypt', part of our regular fundraising.
- Our weekly Choral Evensong with the **Charter Choir of Homerton College**, every Tuesday at 6.30pm during term-time, is well underway. All welcome, to enjoy this special service.
- There will be a course for any baptized children who wish to be **Admitted to Communion**, during Lent; further details from Chris Campbell.
- The **Funeral of John Guy**, from our congregation, will take place at the Cemetery Chapel on Newmarket Road on 15th February at 1pm. Our prayers are with Jean and her family.

Please be assured of our prayers, not least for those suffering from sickness or anxiety at this time.

With best wishes

James & Chris

St John's Vicarage, 9 Luard Road, Cambridge. CB2 8PJ
James' email jshakespeare@btinternet.com Chris' email chris@revcc.uk
St John's website www.stjohntheevangelistcambridge.org