

Concerts & Drama

St Peter's Church, Berkhamstead.

Concert by Bridgewater Sinfonia on **Saturday 11th March** at 7.30pm. Programme includes works by Beethoven and Brahms. Tickets £15 in advance, £16 on door U18's free. Enquiries 01442 873205 or visit www.bridgewater-sinfonia.org.uk.

Bedford Modern School, Manton

Lane Bedford Concert of songs from Gilbert & Sullivan comic operas by The Wandering Minstrels on **Saturday 18th March** at 7.30pm. In aid of Primrose cars appeal. Tickets £12.50 inc interval drink, from www.bedfordhospitalcharity.org.uk or call 01234 781200.

Riding Lights Passion Play 'Crosslight' for Lent

Performances have already been arranged at the following venues:

Redbourn Village Hall, Redbourn - 23rd March, 7.30pm. Contact Tim on 01582 622530 or tim@stmarysredbourn.org for tickets.

The Charis Centre, Bishops Stortford - 24th March. Contact 01279 461231 for info. Visit: www.rtc.org/crosslight for info.

St Leonards Church, Stagsden.

Durufé Requiem - Come and Sing event to be led by Ian Smith on **Saturday 1st April**. Doors open at 2pm, rehearsal from 2.30pm. Non singers are invited to the performance at 5.30pm. Cost: £7.00 for singers and audience. All proceeds in aid of St Owen's Bromham building fund. Please register in advance with David Butler: (01234) 407351 d.e.butler@ntlworld.com. Scores may be collected in advance by arrangement.

Carillon Chamber Choir will perform Heinrich Schütz's Matthew Passion in 2 local churches as part of the keeping of Lent. Retiring collections only. Dates: **Sunday 2 April at 6.30 pm in St John's Church, Harpenden. AL5 1DJ** **Wednesday April 5th at 7.30pm in St. Mary's Church, Welwyn. AL6 9LX**

For more information please ring 01582 832312 or visit www.carillonchambershoir.org.

St Albans Cathedral. 'The Devil's Passion' a play written and performed by award winning playwright Justin Butcher, directed by Guy Masterson. **Thursday 6th April**, 7.30pm. Tickets : £15 / £12. Bookings: www.stalbanscathedral.org / 01727 890290. See poster in the ebundle notices.

All Saints Church, Queens Road

Hertford SG13 8AE. The Summer season of Soundbites commences on **Wednesday April 26th** with Adrian Oldland - Piano. Thereafter weekly concerts until end July. Soup, baked potatoes, rolls etc from 12:15 Concert at 13:00. Full details at www.allsaintshertford.org/concerts.php

Open Days & Festivals

St. Mary's Church, Ashwell. Quilt Festival will be held on **Saturday 11th March** (10-4pm) and **Sunday 12th March** (12.30-4pm). Handmade quilted items for sale and home-made refreshments. £4 entry/U16s free.

Ickleford Open Gardens - **Sunday, 25th June, 2017** from 12noon until 5pm. A chance to visit several beautiful gardens, including Hitchin, Lavender, Pimms on the Lawn at Jennings Funeral Directors, and lunches and teas in the village hall. Free limousine available around the village. The church will be open. Admission £4 per person. Proceeds in aid of St. Katharine's New Building Fund and Room-for-All.

Talks & Courses

All Saints Church, Queen's Park, Bedford MK40 4PQ. Lent @ All Saints - a series of 4 talks under the heading 'Spirituality in the Community'. **Wednesday March 8th**, 7.30pm, **Wednesday March 15th** 2pm, **Wednesday March 29th** 7.30pm and **Wednesday April 5th** at 7.30pm. See poster in the ebundle for details.

Equipping God's People

Mission Action Planning Workshop - Luton 15th March. St Hugh's, Lewsey, LU4 0ND (9.30-1pm)

- Workshop covers:
 - Exploring vision for mission
 - Identifying mission opportunities & community engagement;
 - Effective action & progress monitoring.

Parish Giving Scheme (PGS) Coffee, cake and all you wanted to know about the Parish Giving Scheme

It is now over a year since the launch of the Parish Giving Scheme in diocese of St Albans, and we now have over 60 parishes registered, and have distributed 5500 packs to parishes.

If you have not yet registered for the scheme and want to know more, why not come along and hear all about the benefits of the scheme and why you should join? You will also have a chance to hear from some of those who are already in the scheme and learn what has worked for them and the benefits they have enjoyed and ask any questions you may have.

Date: **19th April 2017**
Time: **9.45 - 12:00 noon. Please arrive at 9.45 for a coffee and cake and a 10am start.**
Venue: **Board Room, Holywell Lodge**

For course dates and bookings, see: www.stalbans.anglican.org/ministry/find-a-course/
Contact: **Kathryn McNamara**
pdadmin@stalbands.anglican.org
01727 818151

See poster in ebundle notices for details.

'#Ashes to Go' this Lent?

There is much more to the beginning of Lent than ashes, such as making time for study and worship with a community of faith, for the support of others and of the great traditions of faith in the work of repentance and renewal, but ashes are an ancient sign of penitence. From the Middle Ages it became the custom to begin Lent by being marked in ash with the sign of the cross. The reminder that "we are dust and to dust we will return," puts our attention on the creative power of God, and on God's ability to heal the brokenness in our lives when we offer that brokenness to God.

ASHES TO GO took the ashing out of the church and on to the street. Fr Neil Kelley, Rector of Bushey (pictured right, with a commuter) turned out from 6 to 7 am at Bushey station on Ash Wednesday morning, to offer ashes to commuters. Encouragingly, some thirty people took up this offer and Fr Neil described it as an amazing experience, taking the church to people and finding them wanting to receive ministry.

Share your stories of Ash Wednesday on social media using the hashtags **#AshesToGo #AshWednesday** or **#AshTag**.



Easter competition launched for Schools and Churches

The folk behind the Real Easter Egg have launched a competition for Schools, Sunday Schools and Messy Churches, with a prize of £250 for the winner and runner-up prizes of £150 for second placed entries. The winners will each also receive a Special Edition Real Easter Egg.

The Challenge

The Real Easter Egg is all about sharing the Easter story so the challenge is to draw what happened, according to the Bible, on Easter Sunday.

Entry Details

All entries must be completed on A4 paper. On the back of each entry it needs to have the name of child, age, school or church and a contact number. Entries should be sent to MCC Basement Suite, 11a Eagle Brow, Lymington, Hampshire, WA13 0LP and must arrive by 5pm on Friday 17th March 2017. The competition is open to all children but limited to one entry per person.

See www.realeasteregg.co.uk/comp for full details.



The Discipline of Love

Last autumn I was delighted to be invited to speak to the Sunday meeting of the Christian Union at the school where I was a pupil. Now well over a century old, it has been run for all those years by Old Boys of the School and has been a huge influence for good in the lives of many. I am one of several of my generation who went forward for Ordination. I received so much from those who showed me what it was to follow Christ, to know his love, and to come to his cross.

The recent news of the horrific abuse inflicted on some of those schoolboys who went to the Iweme Minster camps was deeply saddening. The Archbishop of Canterbury issued an 'unreserved and unequivocal' apology*. It reminded me of several contemporaries at university for whom those camps had been formative, and who must now feel deeply let down. It angers me that it casts a slight of uncertainty on all those good people who work faithfully and safely with young people. Above all it draws concern and compassion for those who were abused.

At the heart of these sorry events in my view, was one man's corrupted and perverted understanding of discipline, that is neither Christian nor legal.

The season of Lent, those forty days of fasting and preparation that match the forty days of our Lord in the wilderness, and which prepare us for Holy Week and Easter, invites us to develop our personal disciplines of prayer and discipleship. Rooted in love, not punishment, those will be very different understandings of discipline. They will be a part of our seeking to become more like Christ. It is St Paul's analogy of the athlete (1 Corinthians 9:24-27) who trains so that they might better seek the prize.

It is those spiritual disciplines of meditation, prayer, fasting, study, simplicity, solitude, submission, service, confession,

worship, guidance and celebration explored by Richard Foster in his 1980 classic 'Celebration of Discipline'; an exploration of the path to spiritual growth. A personal discipline that Richard Foster emphasises is not just for the spiritual elite but is for each of us in our daily lives. 'We must not be led to believe that the Disciplines are for spiritual giants and hence beyond our reach Far from it. God intends the Disciplines of the spiritual life to be for ordinary human beings.'

This Lent let us attend to our relationship with God; use the opportunities for prayer and study; and take up offers like that from the Abbey to undergo a spiritual MOT (and if your church isn't offering something like that, why not ask your Vicar to review your spiritual life with you?) Let us seek to be more like Christ; to live under the true discipline that is love.

+ Richard Bedford

bishopbedford@stalbans.anglican.org

*<http://www.archbishopofcanterbury.org/articles.php/6833/statement-on-behalf-of-the-archbishop-of-canterbury>

Three Bishops respond following General Synod Debate

Our bishops have issued a joint statement following the General Synod debate on "Same Sex Relationships after the Shared Conversations," which can be read on the diocesan website: <https://www.stalbans.anglican.org/three-bishops-responnd-synod-sexuality-debate/>



Clergy Appointments

Laura Hewitt, presently Team Rector in Billingham Team Ministry, Durham Diocese and New Wine Regional Director North East and Yorkshire, is to become Vicar of St James' Church, New Barnet.

David Kesterton, presently Priest-in-Charge at All Saints with St Peter, Luton, is to become Incumbent of the same.

Steven Marsh, presently Curate in the benefice of Crofton Parish, Stubbington in Portsmouth Diocese, is to become Team Vicar in Ouzel Valley Team Ministry.

Keith Murphy, presently Interim Minister in Cheshunt Team Ministry is to become Associate Minister for Church Planting, Evangelism and Discipleship in the Forde Valley Mission Community (Estover & Egguckland) in Exeter Diocese.

Peter (Pete) Orton, presently Assistant Minister in the benefice of St Paul's, St Aidan's and St Modwen's, Burton upon Trent and Christian Spiritual Development Officer for Burton YMCA in Lichfield Diocese is to become Sacramental Pioneer Minister (Priest-in-Charge) at All Saints Church, Pin Green.

Timothy (Tim) Seago presently Priest-in-Charge in the benefice of Totteridge, has been appointed as Vicar of the same.

Obituaries

It is with sadness that we announce the death of **David Williams**, Reader with PIO at All Saints Croxley Green.

Christian Aid also have the Count Your Blessings & Lent Lunches resources here: www.christianaid.org.uk/lent-easter/lent-calendar

Lent & Easter Resources

Diocesan Lent Course
Our three bishops, the Dean and The Director of Ministry have put together a Lent course based on the Living God's Love values, generosity, joy, imagination and courage. It can be used either by individuals or small groups, during Lent or at any time of year.
www.stalbans.anglican.org/faith/lent-course-2017

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We encourage you to participate in this **Lent Challenge**, which will also give great preparation for our prayer initiative later this year (in May/June) Thy Kingdom Come. Sign up at: www.stalbans.anglican.org/faith/live-the-challenge/

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Reflections for Lent is designed to enhance your spiritual journey through the forty days from Ash Wednesday to Holy Saturday covering Monday to Saturday each week. It offers reflections on readings from the Common Worship Lectionary, written by some of today's leading spiritual and theological writers. Visit: www.chpublishing.co.uk/books/9781781400043/reflections-for-lent-2017

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All of Jesus' teaching came down to two basic commandments - love God and love your neighbour. **Live Lent with Christian Aid** offers a simple daily reflection and a practical suggestion for living out Jesus' commandments, and is illustrated with beautiful images of Christian Aid's work around the world. Visit www.chpublishing.co.uk/features/live-lent-with-christian-aid

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What was an Obama faith adviser doing in Luton?

Michael Wear served President Obama in the White House Office of Faith Based and Community Initiatives and was also Director of 'The Faith Vote for President Obama'. He and his wife Melissa came to Luton for a day to learn about the Church of England's contribution in multicultural communities among people of different faiths, the church's experience in relationship with a large Muslim community and about work challenging the presence of the far right. The Wears soaked up a large amount of information, experience and understanding in a short time, to inform their thinking about the place of faith in public life and the issues facing Muslims as well as the place given to them in the US after the election of President Trump.

Over the course of the day, led by Bishop Richard and hosted at St Mary's and at All Saints, Bury Park, the Wears met some of the key people involved in cohesion work in Luton and in the diocese, heard about examples of civic leadership, particularly by the Church of England and met some Muslim partners there. They also had a chance to experience Luton on the ground walking through Bury Park.

Peter Adams, who works in Mediation, Peacebuilding & Community Relations at St Mary's, spoke about peacemaking and engagement with both community and police in coping with demonstrations from far-right parties. The Revd David Jonathan (Johnny) spoke about the work of 'Grassroots' and 'Near Neighbours' building relationships between faith communities and Ryad Khodabocus from the Luton Council of Faiths talked about the role of signs and symbols of peace such as the Luton Peace Walk. Bishop Richard talked about the role of the Bishop as a civic leader, how people often speak of Church of England Bishops as 'our Bishop': "This provides them with the opportunity to play the role of Convenor, Broker, Faith Representative, and Offerer of Hospitality," he said. He also mentioned the value of 'reconciliation' being one of Archbishop Justin's priorities and the Queen's Diamond Jubilee statement about the Church of England having a role in making space for all faiths in the country.

The final part of the day was an opportunity to hear first hand from Police Officers working in Bedfordshire Police's unique community cohesion unit, Muslim leaders, and the Town Centre Chaplaincy.

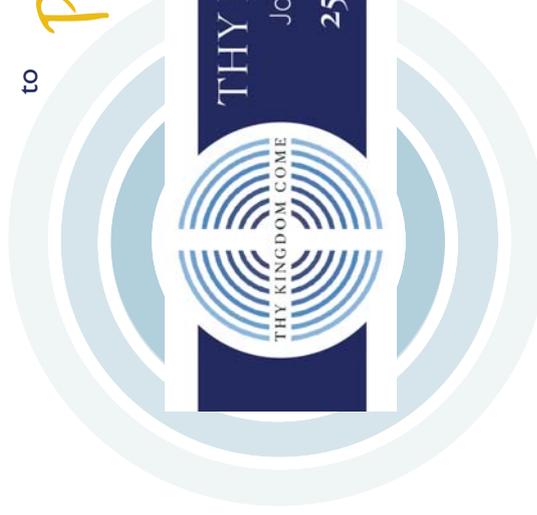
Peter Adams, reflecting on the day, said: "In our global village, with internet connecting our lives together, understanding each other's lives and challenges is so important to us. What President Trump does or says



in the USA can have an impact on the streets of Luton within minutes. Conversely we know events in Luton are regularly portrayed in US media, mostly negatively. It was therefore a great joy to be able to share good news from our Luton story with such eager listeners with a big audience of their own."

Pray your own way, that people come to know Jesus Christ

From **Ascension** to **Pentecost**



You can now download a leaflet from the ebundle telling you all about how to join in with a wave of prayer between Ascension Day and Pentecost, for people to come to know Jesus Christ.

In 2016, there was an overwhelming response not just in this country but around the world.

The two Archbishops' vision for this year is that 80% of Church of England churches and cathedrals will take part.

There are four simple ways to take part in Thy Kingdom Come:

Ascension Day

Hold a breakfast prayer event.

Pledge2Pray

Sign up on www.thykingdomcome.global to receive

information and to be prompted when new resources are available. There is already a good selection of material online, include a home pack which includes bright ideas for families to pray together at home.

Five@Five

Pray for five people to come to know Christ each day at 5pm. Remind yourself by knotting a shoelace or other item five times and wearing it round your wrist.

Beacon Event

There is a Beacon event being planned for Pentecost Sunday 4th June in St Albans Cathedral. Watch out for details and come and join in.

Thy Kingdom Come: it's not an Anglican thing, it's a Christian thing!

Celebrating a special relationship - parents and godparents



Godparents' Sunday is an innovation that sets apart a Sunday to celebrate and pray for the special relationship families have with Godparents. Archbishops' Council looking at parents' real experiences and expectations around the baptism of their child. One of the biggest findings of the research was that godparents really, really matter to families. Godparents are part of family life for all the years ahead, a relationship that will last into adulthood and beyond.

In 2017, Godparents' Sunday will take place on **30th April** with resources made available to help create a great day of welcome and celebration, but you can celebrate the role of godparents at any time of year if you wish. Setting apart a Sunday is a great opportunity to share with families and ask for God's blessing on godparents and their godchildren everywhere.

Follow Godparents' Sunday on Twitter (@CofE_CSH) and Facebook for new posts and videos.

There's a range of resources online to help celebrate Godparents' Sunday and support them in their task throughout the year. These are available through the Church Print Hub and cover:

- Posters, invitations and ideas to extend the widest possible welcome for Godparents Sunday.
- Liturgy, hymns, prayers, activities and lots more to help you create a really welcoming and special service for godparents and godchildren.
- Information on just how important to families godparents are
- Prayer resources for godparents to take away

See <https://churchsupporthub.org/baptisms/occasions-for-follow-up/godparents-sunday-30-april-2017/>

Now that's what I call a pilgrimage!

In 2013, a young member of St John's, Boxmoor, walked the Camino Santiago de Compostela from Puy's en Velay in France to Santiago, some 1600 km. It wasn't long enough for her (!), so this year Amélie Lecouche is planning to walk from Canterbury to Rome, along the Via Francigena, another pilgrim route. She is looking for companions: while she will walk all 2000 km of it, they don't have to and can join for two-week stints. It will take from June to late August, at which point Amélie hopes to start her first job after finishing a degree in chemical engineering.

Amélie says: "My last pilgrimage was definitely a huge moment of maturation and spiritual growth. I was exposed to people who had chosen a huge variety of paths in life. I learnt to accept myself more: who am I exactly, and to be comfortable with that, flaws and all. I also learned how to reach out to others - and appreciated how building bridges across language barriers and differences in experiences can be very enriching. As pilgrims we constantly helped and supported one another with advice and encouragement, as well as sharing meals and stories. I hope that this next pilgrimage will allow me to reconnect with the basic things in life: appreciating that all you need to be happy is love, a place to sleep and dry socks! It is amazing to not have any fear of what is coming tomorrow. I hope that by removing all of my usual daily distractions I will be able to reflect on more important and more spiritual things."

Amélie can be contacted on AmelietoRome@outlook.com



Behind the scenes of Alban, Britain's First Saint

The Alban, Britain's First Saint project at St Albans Cathedral has begun with the ground being broken for an archaeological dig on the site of the new welcome centre. With the first stage of the dig completed, not too many outward signs are visible, but behind the scenes there's continual activity, driving forward this transformational project.

The dig has made some interesting initial discoveries about what is currently known as the Monk's Graveyard, but which we now learn is a parishioners' burial place dating back to about 1550. There will be a further dig to find what remains of a far earlier building on the site. Needless to say, the burials will be disturbed as little as possible. You can follow the progress of the project blog: <https://albanbritainsfirstsaint.wordpress.com> where there is an interview with Professor Martin Biddle, Cathedral Archaeologist, about the dig.

