

Advent Course

Eighteen people took part in the Advent Discussion Group that met three times in December. Each session focused on a different prayer. In week one, Christabel Davies led the group exploring and rediscovering the *General Thanksgiving*; then Barbara Carthew reminded us of the profound meaning and poetry of St Teresa of Avila's *Bookmark*. Finally, Joyce Skerrett accompanied us as we contemplated the timelessness and relevance of Karl Niebuhr's *Serenity prayer*, written in 1925.

After the discussion, we were invited to spend a time of silent meditation on each prayer, we listened to carefully chosen music and one week we sang a Taizé chant in Spanish. The three leaders had chosen prayers that had personal and deep meaning for them. The way they lovingly shared this with us all made for a most rewarding experience, for which we are very grateful.

Hilary Adamson

St Mary's Lunch Club

St Mary's Lunch Club meets every **third** Thursday of the month at the Anglers, Broom Road at 12.30pm. The next meeting is on 17th February. Everyone is welcome, whether a member of the church or not. For details and/or help with transport, contact Margaret Squire on 8977 3362.

Vicar:	The Rev Joe Moffatt, Parish Office, St Mary's Parish Hall, Langham Road, Teddington. TW11 9HF (8977 2767), e-mail: vicar@stmarywithstalban.org
Parish Administrator	Debbie Taylor-Osborne, Parish Office (8943 2262)
& Hall Bookings:	e-mail: parishhall@stmarywithstalban.org
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Sunday School:	sundayschool@stmarywithstalban.org
Director of Music:	Harold Lester (8878 0021)
Church School:	St Mary's and St Peter's, Somerset Road, Teddington Headteacher John Logan (8943 0476)
Newsletter Editors:	Susan Jacobs (8943 0503), Melanie Woodcock (07810 800 561) and Julia Hornsby (07904 966 777)
Parish Website:	www.stmarywithstalban.org

Supper Talk

Biblical Heroes: St Peter

Tuesday 8th February 7.30-9.30pm

In the Parish Hall

Talk by the Revd Joe Moffatt followed by discussion over a hearty supper

£8 per head – pay on the night

Contact parish office to reserve a place

Coming Soon:

New Church Mice Group, starting in March.

Parents and toddlers, Fridays 1.00 – 3.00 pm in the Church Hall.

Parish Registers

Holy Baptisms – *We welcome into Christ's Church:*

16 January – Benjamin Thomas, son of Nicola and Robert Williams

Funerals – *We remember with thanksgiving the lives of:*

Dec 9th – Justine Bellord, aged 83

Dec 30th – Henry Doe, aged 70

Jan 6th – Lynne Hill, aged 55

Jan 11th – Joan Neave, aged 79

Jan 24th – Hugh Goldie, aged 91

NEWSLETTER FEBRUARY 2011

Thomas Traherne: a Spirituality For Our Times



(Thomas Traherne from the East stained glass window)

Saturday 12th March 2011, 10am-5pm

Evening Concert at 6pm, featuring Finzi's *Dies Natalis*, an evocative setting of Traherne poetry

at St Mary with St Alban.

An exciting one-day conference exploring the relevance of this unique 17th-century English Mystic for our times.

Key speakers include the Bishop of London and Denise Inge, a leading Traherne scholar.

For more information and to book please see www.stmarywithstalban.org

Christmas 2010

As Christina Rossetti eloquently wrote in her poem *Mid-winter* "Snow had fallen, snow on snow, snow on snow" and "earth stood hard as iron and water like a stone". Despite treacherous pavements and a vicious flu virus, hundreds and hundreds of us flocked to church to celebrate our Lord's Nativity. The **Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols** was a joyous service – the enlarged choir, accompanied by our own special orchestra,



StMARYwithStALBAN PARISH CHURCH of TEDDINGTON

led the congregation in a wonderful selection of traditional carols. It began with the familiar but touching first verse of *Once in Royal David's City* movingly sung by Olivia Worth and ended with a roof raising *Hark! The herald angels sing*. In between the readers clearly declaimed the Christmas message. Afterwards the Hall resounded to fun and fellowship over mulled wine and mince pies.

In the afternoon of **Christmas Eve**, the two **Crib** services were standing room only affairs, buzzing with over 500 people. The Vicar lit the final Advent candle to welcome in Christmas, and throughout the service the congregation heartily sang a selection of favourite Christmas carols. Baby Jesus, who had been lying in the manger on the chancel step, was carried over by a six year old boy called Luke and placed in the crib amongst Mary, Joseph and the other Christmas "characters". The atmospheric services conveyed the true spirit of Christmas – happiness and goodwill.

Later the same evening, another packed church gathered for the **Midnight Mass** – whether it is because this service takes place after dark, or because of the special significance of the date, the atmosphere was suffused with peace, quiet and prayerful anticipation. Rosamund McDowell preached thoughtfully on how we shouldn't be duped by today's cosy representations of that first nativity – it was after all in a grubby outhouse, after dark, and surrounded by strangers that Our Lord was born.

On **Christmas morning**, there was another full church for the 9.45am family Eucharist. The Vicar had fun with the children who showed him some of their new Christmas presents. Then he asked them to help him unwrap and set up his Christmas present – a

set of hand knitted crib figures, amusingly called 'knitivity'. This wonderful gift was produced by a team of knitters Liz Rigge, Anthea Bryan, Christine Miller and Lesley Alexander.



The feeling of love and friendship was tangible during all the services, the building looked lovely with candles, flowers, decorated tree and of course our splendid stable scene and crib figures. The sidesmen worked efficiently to find seats and carol sheets for everyone and Joe's careful preparation and fun personality meant it was a week of wonderful worship and praise. *Susan Jacobs*

Vicar's Viewpoint

When I arrived in this parish 18 months ago, I asked members of the church council what it was that attracted them to St. Mary's. One of the answers was that it was 'normal C of E'. Not, I hope, in the sense of boring old Church of England. But in the sense of a traditional parish church offering familiar Anglican worship, with an openness and inclusivity that is very much part of the Anglican tradition.

Christmas attendances were encouraging – about 1,500 people came to the four services – and suggest that lots of local residents still identify in some way with 'normal C of E'.

As we develop as a church we need to stay in touch with all that is good about 'normal C of E'. In doing so, it is no bad thing to be reminded of the origins of this tradition. You only need a passing knowledge of history to know that the Church of England came out of the Reformation in the 16th century. But a sense of what was 'normal C of E' only began to emerge in the 17th century.

A critical factor in establishing a broad church which could accommodate and hold together a wide range of views was the King James Bible

of 1611. This was the first English translation of the Bible to gain almost universal authority and it will rightly be celebrated this year during its 400th anniversary. It quite literally gave us a common language and a common heritage, with verses and cadences that still resonate in our culture today. There is a local connection, since the project was first conceived at a conference in Hampton Court, called by King James very early in his reign in 1604. Lobbied by opposing puritans and bishops, he proposed a new common translation that would command consensus and establish a sense of normality in the Church of England.

This wasn't to happen overnight, however. Religious tensions broke out into civil war in the 1640s. Another key publication was required when peace was restored and a new religious settlement was needed: the 1662 Book of Common Prayer. This gave the church a common form of worship and a 'normality' that it desperately needed. And having seen the horrors of civil war, most churchmen were keen to stick to it and promote the peace.

This included Thomas Traherne, the poet and spiritual writer, who is buried in our church and who is increasingly admired. So much so, that we are hosting a high-profile conference on March 12th, focusing on the relevance of Traherne's spirituality for our times. The Bishop of London will give the key address in the morning. Seminars led by leading Traherne scholars will follow in the afternoon at St Mary's University College. Then it's back to the church for a special concert featuring Gerald Finzi's *Dies Natalis*, a setting of verses by Traherne for solo tenor and string orchestra. The programme will also include pieces by Elgar and Holst, making this a real treat for lovers of early 20th century English music. Local residents are welcome to come to any part of the day.

'Normal C of E' may not be the most exciting way of describing a church. But it stands for a hard-fought way of doing religion that evolved out of exceptionally difficult circumstances. And it has an essential inclusivity about it that is needed now as much as ever.

Joe Moffatt

X-tingle Sunday School Performance

Whilst everyone sat in excited anticipation of the Sunday School's performance of The X-tingle Factor, the evening began with the melodious sound of the handbells ringing out from the balcony. The wonderful, entertaining service included both the discerning and kind panel of judges; Hannah Cole, David Cowell, James Walsh and Katie Minogue. Cole delivered an amusing review of all the contestants including; guitar-strumming, rapping shepherds, exotic kings and beautiful angels. The whole cast did a truly splendid job, the judges were very much 'in character' and the audience willingly participated in booing and cheering King Herod as well as tunefully joining in singing Christmas Carols.

Afterwards, the Christingle oranges were distributed to all the children and the service ended with a beautiful, candlelit rendition of

Away in a Manger followed by mince pies and tea for all. It really was a super, festive occasion and Sam, in particular, should be congratulated for both writing and directing this fun and impressive production.

This year the collection in aid of the Children's Society raised £285.00. *Julia Hornsby*



The Christingle candlelit singing of 'Away in a manger'

Diary for February

<i>SERVICES</i>	–	<i>Sundays:</i>	<i>Holy Communion (Prayer Book) at 8.00am</i> <i>Family Communion and Sunday School at 9.45am</i>
		<i>Wednesdays:</i>	<i>Holy Communion at 9.30am</i>
		<i>Weekdays (except Mondays):</i>	<i>Morning Prayer at 9.00am, Evening Prayer at 5pm</i>
Wednesday 2 nd		First Wednesday Club, Mina Hogan room	12.30-2.00pm Topic: <i>Blame Culture</i>
Thursday 3 rd		PCC in the Mina Hogan Room	7.45pm
Sunday 6 th		Education Sunday	All-age Eucharist and Parade Service at 9.45am followed by Traidcraft Stall
Tuesday 8 th		Supper Talk in the Hall at 7.30pm	<i>Biblical Heroes: St Peter</i> , led by Joe Moffatt
Sunday 13 th		4 th Sunday before Lent	Baptism at 12 noon Youth Group in the Hall 6.30-8pm
Tuesday 15 th		Tea Club in the Mina Hogan Room	2.30-4.30pm
Thursday 17 th		Pub Lunch at the Anglers at 12.30pm	
Sunday 20 th		3 rd Sunday before Lent	Family Communion with Baptism at 9.45am Baptisms at 12 noon
21 st –25 th		No Morning Prayer or Evening Prayer	
Wednesday 23 rd		Holy Communion at 9.30am	
Sunday 27 th		2 nd Sunday before Lent	