

Sunday Services across the Team

All events in our Team are currently cancelled in line with the national guidelines for all churches across the country issued by the Church of England.

St. Bartholomew's Church will be open for a service each Sunday at 11:00am Guidelines about face coverings / distancing / signing in etc. will all still apply.

OFFICE HOUR HAS BEEN SUSPENDED IN LINE WITH SOCIAL DISTANCING MEASURES. For all enquiries relating to baptism and weddings, and for other routine matters, please contact the Rector, details below.
Items for inclusion in future newsletters should be sent to the parish office:

DIRECTORY

Team Ministers

Team Rector	Revd Carol Pharaoh carol.pharaoh@gmail.com	01942 859251
Team Vicar	Revd Angela Wynne	01204 468150
Associate Vicar	Revd Malcolm Wearing	
Reader Emeritus	Alan Morris	01942 817871
Reader Emeritus	Elaine Simkin	01942 810762

Parish Wardens

Margaret Dolphin		01942 790415
Vacancy		

Deputy Wardens

St Bartholomew	Christine Andrews Edward McHale	01942 817146 01942 812193
St George	Pat James John Moore	01204 492994
St Thomas	vacancy	

www.westhoughtonchurches.org.uk

westhoughtonparish@outlook.com
or given to Edward McHale, churchwarden and Director of Music

www.westhoughtonchurches.org.uk



Parish of St Bartholomew
Westhoughton
St Bartholomew St Thomas
St George



NEWSLETTER - FEBRUARY 2021

Reasons to be hopeful

During the pandemic, I've been doing a bit of painting. Not the hall and landing you understand, but pictures. I enjoyed art in my younger days and have always dabbled a bit, but the various lockdowns and lack of other opportunities for my free time, has caused me to search out my paint box and brushes. I am my harshest critic. Many of my 'artworks' are hilarious but some are passable. I find I'm better if I work on themes. I've done a series of paintings on the various visitors (wildlife) to the Rectory garden and another series with a Christmas connection.

With my rediscovered hobby, it turns out Father Christmas thought it would be a good idea to provide me with some more art supplies. What theme should I explore next? Whilst reading my WWT (Wildfowls and Wetlands Trust) magazine, I came across an article entitled 'Reasons to be hopeful'. That, I thought, is a very good theme.

So, I had a few ideas of my own of what I might paint but thought I should ask other people - my three sisters for instance. Here's what they said: - Ken Bruce on Radio 2, daffodils, birds collecting twigs, orange tip butterflies, rainbows, custard slices, fish and chips, children in woolly hats and wellies, hot chocolate, blossom on trees, a sunrise, children blowing bubbles in a garden, a chick, Marcus Rashford, Joe Biden and a hug.

There are quite a few challenges here to say the least! What would you have suggested? It's an understatement to say that we are living in difficult and challenging times as the on-going global pandemic clearly shows. There is a lot of optimism with the roll out of the vaccine but also a lot of caution and uncertainty. People have lost their livelihoods. We know ourselves and hear of, how many from children to the elderly are struggling with their mental health. Where are the signs of hope? What reason do we have to be hopeful? Being people of hope is an important part of our Christian faith. The journey we will embark on from Ash Wednesday, through Lent, Holy Week and Easter speaks profoundly of this. Put simply, Christ is our hope. To be people of hope isn't just wishful thinking either. Hope isn't fanciful or pie in the sky. Hope is real, practical and certain.

A clergy friend of mine includes the following words in the signature of every email he sends out.

To hope is a duty, not a luxury. To hope is not to dream but to turn dreams into reality. Happy those who have the courage to dream dreams and who are ready to pay the price so that dreams take shape in other people's lives. (Cardinal Leon Suenens.)

Life is difficult at the moment. May we all find the courage to dream and to pay the price if necessary. May we sense God at work in us and in His church and may we all find every day, many reasons to be hopeful.

**With prayers and best wishes
Carol**

The beginning of February marks the end of the Sundays of Epiphany finishing with the Feast of the Presentation (Candlemas). Candlemas also known as “the Feast of the Presentation of Our Lord” and “the Feast of the Purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary”, is a Christian Holy Day commemorating the presentation of Jesus at the Temple.

The child who has been manifested [shown] to the Wise Men at his birth is now recognized by Simeon and Anna, when he comes to be presented in the Temple according to the Law of Israel. It is based upon the account of the presentation of Jesus in Luke 2:22–40. in accordance with Leviticus 12.

It falls on February 2, which is traditionally the 40th day of the Christmas–Epiphany season. On Candlemas, it was traditional to bring candles to the local church, where they were blessed and then used for the rest of the year; for Christians, these candles serve as a symbol of Jesus Christ, who referred to himself as the Light of the World.

Although a Christian feast day, it also has a bitter-sweet nature. We join with the celebrations of Simeon and Anna, but the prophetic words of Simeon point to the passion and Easter. Jesus is both ‘a light to lighten the Gentiles’ and ‘the glory of God’s people Israel’. But the redemption he will bring must be won through suffering; the Incarnation is directed to the Passion; and Simeon’s final words move our attention away from the celebration of Christmas and towards the mysteries of Easter.

We have a final look back to Christmas before looking ahead to the forty days of Lent, swapping the white vestments for green and then purple. Special vigil services were held often using candlelit processions and singing the words of Simeon [the *Nunc Dimittis*] to gather at the font where those marked with the cross of Christ at baptism can turn from his birth to his passion as we prepare again to mark his death and resurrection.

As a time to look forward with hope [and we need that at the moment] with many of us getting the first dose of the Covid vaccine we pray that more normal times will return soon. I’ve lost track of whether we’re at the beginning of the end of the beginning and which tunnel we’re looking for light at the end of.

1. Hope is a candle once lit by the prophets
Never consumed though it burns through the years
Dim in the daylight of power and privilege
When they are gone hope will shine on.

2. Love is a candle whose light makes a circle
Where every face is the face of a friend
Widen the circle by sharing and giving
God's Holy dare love everywhere

3. Joy is a candle of mystery and laughter
Mystery of light that is born in the dark
Laughter at hearing the voice of an angel
Ever so near casting out fear

4. Christ is the light that the prophets awaited
Christ is the lion the lamb and the child
Christ is the love and the mystery and laughter
Candles make way Christ is the day



As we write so often, it’s difficult to plan anything at the moment given the way restrictions are and the pace of change. We are planning an Ash Wednesday service on 17th February at St. Bartholomew’s at 7:30pm and other Lent & Holy Week services will be announced nearer the time.

Following the very successful Carol Service at the end of December, we were hoping that the choir would be able to sing in some of the services at St. Bartholomew’s. The post-Christmas lockdown has sadly deferred this again with the “stay at home” measures announced meaning that choir practices cannot take place and all professional & amateur groups are banned from singing in places of worship; a soloist or cantor is allowed provided they follow a whole host of guidelines. As soon as it’s allowed again, we’ll be back.

Keep safe & well

Ed

Hymn of the Month – February

So as we mark Candlemas on February 2nd [the Presentation of Christ in the Temple] here we have a hymn celebrating light. It is in our hymnbook, but we've not yet got round to learning it. It's on the list for when we're allowed to sing again.

It's a celebration of the light of Christ overcoming the darkness of the world, very suitable as we end this Epiphany season and in view of the Covid situation at the moment.

The tune is very singable and catchy – it's a bit West End show tune meets Broadway with some jazzy harmonies. Mind you, more than one person has noted that I can make any hymn sound like that if I ignore the harmonies written in the hymn book.

1. In a world where people walk in darkness
Let us turn our faces to the light,
To the light of God revealed in Jesus,
To the Daystar scattering our night.
**For the light is stronger than the darkness
And the day will overcome the night.
Though the shadows linger all around us,
Let us turn our faces to the light.**
2. In a world where suff'ring of the helpless
Casts a shadow all along the way,
Let us bear the Cross of Christ with gladness
And proclaim the dawning of the day.
For the light ...
3. Let us light a candle in the darkness,
In the face of death, a sign of life.
As a sign of hope where all seems hopeless,
As a sign of peace in place of strife.
For the light ...

The words are by Robert Andrew Willis (born 17 May 1947) who is an Anglican priest, theologian, chaplain and hymn writer. He was ordained into the Church of England as deacon in 1972 and as priest in 1973. He served

his curacy at St Chad's Church, Shrewsbury from 1972 to 1975 before becoming a vicar choral of Salisbury Cathedral and chaplain of Salisbury Cathedral School. From 1978 to 1987 he was Team Rector of Tisbury, Wiltshire, and served as chaplain of Cranborne Chase School and RAF Chilmark.

In 1987, he became Vicar of Sherborne Abbey, Dorset. In addition, he was chaplain to Sherborne School for Girls. In November 1992, he was instituted Dean of Hereford moving in 2001 to be the Dean of Canterbury.

He's written a number of hymns, four of which are in our current hymn book – we've sung 2 of them so far.

The tune is by Richard Shephard who was a chorister at Gloucester Cathedral before his degree at Corpus Christi College, Cambridge. While at Cambridge, Shephard studied under several noted composers including David Willcocks. He started his musical career as a lay vicar in Salisbury Cathedral Choir, and at this time was Conductor of the *Salisbury Grand Opera Group*, the *Farrant Singers*, Guest Conductor of the *Salisbury Orchestral Society* and Musical Director of various productions at the Salisbury Playhouse.

As a composer, he has written operas, operettas, musicals, orchestral works, music for television, and chamber music but is perhaps best known for his choral works which are sung extensively around the world today, especially in churches and cathedrals in England and America. His compositions are frequently broadcast in the United Kingdom.



To receive these pewsheets, newsletters or special events leaflets electronically, please e-mail westhoughtonparish@outlook.com

World Day of Prayer 2021

Friday 5th March

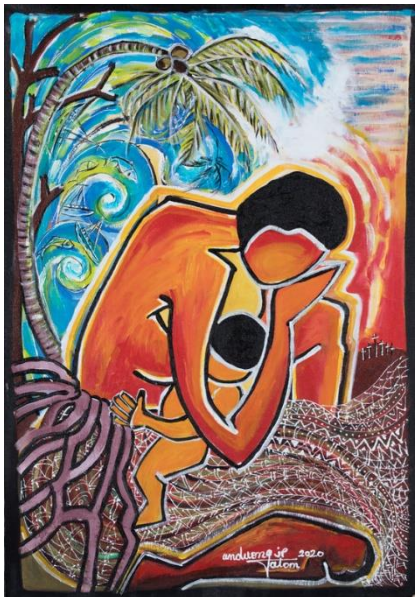
Build on a Strong Foundation

Matthew 7:24-27

So this time last year, we were looking forward to hosting our area service for the World Day of Prayer which is held annually on the first Friday of March. It was one of the very last services we managed before the first lockdown closed all places of worship.

It's still happening this year but on-line and is prepared by the people of Vanuatu. If you're like me, you'll have only come across Vanuatu as a frequent obscure answer on "Pointless." So we're printing some of the background and introduction this month as a taster.

When I'm organist at any of these services, I try and find a piece to play from the country which has prepared the service. I'm pleased to be spared that task this year as even I would struggle to find any Vanuatean [?] music.



Through the worship service we hear the voices of the Vanuatu women, whom invite us to focus on the Bible story in Matthew 7:24-27. Jesus tells a story about the kingdom of heaven using the image of a house and the land on which the house is built. Choosing the land on which to build the house is an important decision for people in Vanuatu. The combination of considering the terrain and the climate is crucial in a tropical archipelago located in the South Pacific Ocean prone to earthquakes, cyclones, volcanic eruptions and rising sea levels. On April 6th, 2020, Vanuatu was hit by Cyclone Harold, which had made its way across the Pacific destroying many islands in its wake.

Vanuatu's susceptibility to cyclones is highlighted in the painting chosen to represent WDP 2021, titled "Cyclone Pam II: 13th of March, 2015". It shows a mother bending and praying over her child. The waves crash over her but a palm tree bends protectively over them. The woman's skirt is modelled after the traditional clothing on Erromango. On the horizon you can see small crosses representing the lives taken by cyclone Pam in 2015.

The artist, Juliette Pita, born in 1964 on Erromango Island, is currently the most well-known artist in Vanuatu. Her talent was discovered early on. At school she was always the best in art classes. She was the first woman to graduate from the Institut National de Technologie du Vanuatu (INTV). Juliette never imagined making money from her art but she believed God had plans for her. She gives all the money she earns to anyone who needs help.

THE COUNTRY

The Republic of Vanuatu was founded on its traditional values, Christian principles, and the people's faith in God as established in the Constitution of 1980, upon gaining independence on July 30, 1980. Vanuatu is a beautiful country of many islands and people of many ethnic groups and languages. The islands have black and white sandy beaches and beautiful coral reefs with tropical coloured fish. The forests are full of lovely birds, flora and fauna, and spectacular cascades.

The inhabitants of Vanuatu are known as Ni-Vanuatu. Most are of Melanesian descent with a Polynesian minority on the outlying islands.

Vanuatu is a Y-shaped tropical archipelago located in the South Pacific Ocean with over eighty islands, sixty-five of which are inhabited. The islands are prone to natural disasters including earthquakes, cyclones and volcanic eruptions. There are seven active volcanoes scattered throughout the islands.

Land is very important to the Ni-Vanuatu and a crucial resource for production. Land is thought to be the precondition of human culture; the human inhabitants merge with the earth in some sense. Land is not viewed as a thing to be owned but as vital to the existence of humans and animals in sustaining their livelihood. "Land to a Ni-Vanuatu is what a mother is to a baby. It is with land that he defines his identity and it is with land that he maintains his spiritual strength."

Through the country background information and the worship service's prayers, we learned about some of the challenges in Vanuatu such as child malnutrition and violence against women. Today, we get a better insight into these issues directly from WDP Vanuatu and also learn about the impact of COVID-19 on the islands and their plans for their celebration in 2021.

The writing committee



The Writer Committee Workshop for the 2021 WDP annual celebration was held in Port-Vila, Vanuatu, from April 9-13, 2018. The workshop officially started the writing process and the world will discover the global result on March 5, 2021. For many participants, this had been their first opportunity to represent and lead their denomination. As friendships were established, it was wonderful to see the denominational barriers broken down. To hear the voice of Vanuatu women, their joys, their hopes and their struggles. God has chosen this group of women to be heard across the world in 2021.

The history of World Day of Prayer in Vanuatu was pieced together through conversations and research by the current committee. The first World Day of Prayer service was reportedly held on March 8, 1946, in the Presbyterian Paton Memorial Church in Port Vila. World Day of Prayer was introduced by Canadian missionaries, Mrs. Amy Skinner and Mrs. Catherine Ritchie.

On the invitation of the Presbyterians, Anglicans and Catholics joined in 1981. Women from Apostolic and Church of Christ congregations remember joining together as young women in the 1980's on the islands of Ambae and Pentecost. In later years, other women from different churches across the islands joined World Day of Prayer.

With the creation of the Women's Desk of the Vanuatu Christian Council, in the early 2000s, collaborations with WDP groups already in existence were developed. The World Day of Prayer International Committee held a workshop in Vanuatu in 2011 to strengthen the connection between those groups.

The Writer Committee Workshop for the 2021 WDP service was held at the Presbyterian Church, which was carefully set up for the meetings and included the traditional lap lap to celebrate WDP. The participants brought gifts to beautifully prepare the altar. It was decorated with flowers from their gardens, the Bislama Bible, garland necklaces, and palm weaved baskets and fans.



Those moments lived together are now extended to WDP around the world. The photo above represents a gesture of care from Vanuatu women to the WDP theme preparatory process. It symbolizes the Vanuatu communities, it reflects God's creation, and it shows the connection with the land and the beauty of a life by faith.

“By wisdom a house is built, and through understanding it is established” (Proverbs 24:3)

There is lots more information and plenty of pictures on the website below:
[Vanuatu 2021 - World Day of Prayer International](#)



LENT

Lent is the period of 40 days which comes before **Easter** in the Christian calendar. Beginning on Ash Wednesday, Lent is a season of reflection and preparation. By observing the 40 days of Lent, Christians replicate Jesus Christ's sacrifice and withdrawal into the desert for 40 days before the celebrations of Easter.

Why 40 days?

It's the number of days Jesus spent in the wilderness but 40 is also a significant number in scripture, a few examples being:

- In Genesis, the flood which destroyed the earth was brought about by 40 days and nights of rain.
- The Hebrews spent 40 years in the wilderness before reaching the land promised to them by God.
- Moses fasted for 40 days before receiving the Ten Commandments on Mount Sinai.
- Jesus spent 40 days fasting in the wilderness in preparation for his ministry.
- The 40 days between Easter and Ascension Day.



Why is it called Lent?

Lent is an old English word meaning 'lengthen'. Lent is observed in spring, when the days begin to get longer.

Why do we use purple in our churches?

Purple is the symbolic colour used in churches throughout Lent, used for two main reasons:

1. it is associated with mourning and so anticipates the pain and suffering of the crucifixion.
2. purple is the colour associated with royalty, and celebrates Christ's resurrection and sovereignty.



It can't be this easy?

So, of course, it isn't! Both the Eastern Orthodox and Western churches observe Lent but they count the 40 days differently. The Western church excludes Sundays (which is celebrated as the day of Christ's resurrection and is always a feast day) whereas the Eastern church includes them.

The churches also start Lent on different days.

Western churches start Lent on the 7th Wednesday before Easter Day (called Ash Wednesday). Eastern churches start Lent on the Monday of the 7th week before Easter and end it on the Friday nine days before Easter. Eastern churches call this period the 'Great Lent'.

Shrove Tuesday / Pancake Day / Mardi Gras

Shrove Tuesday is the day before Lent starts on Ash Wednesday. It's a day of celebration as the last chance to use up the foods that aren't allowed in Lent. Historically people would not eat such foods as meat and fish, fats, eggs, and milky foods in Lent. So that no food was wasted, families would have a feast on the shroving Tuesday, and eat up all the foods that wouldn't last the forty days of Lent without going off.

The need to eat up the fats gave rise to the French name *Mardi Gras* (literally translates as 'fat Tuesday').

Pancakes became associated with Shrove Tuesday as they were a dish that could use up all the eggs, fats and milk in the house with just the addition of flour.



Pancake races are thought to have begun in 1445. A woman had lost track of the time on Shrove Tuesday, and was busy cooking pancakes in her kitchen.

Suddenly she heard the church bell ringing to call the faithful to church for confession. The woman raced out of her house and ran all the way to church; still holding her frying pan and wearing her apron.

One of the most famous pancake races is held at Olney in Buckinghamshire over a 415 yard course. The rules are strict; contestants have to toss their pancake at both the start and the finish, as well as wearing an apron and a scarf. The race is followed by a church service.

But there's more to Shrove Tuesday than stuffing yourself with pancakes or taking part in a public pancake race.

Penitence

Shrove Tuesday gets its name from the ritual of *shriving* [literally translates as being forgiven] that Christians used to undergo in the past. In shriving, a person would confess their sins and receive absolution for them. This tradition is very old and was written about over a 1000 years ago by a monk in the Anglo-Saxon Ecclesiastical Institutes.

Ash Wednesday

The service draws on the ancient Biblical traditions of covering one's head with ashes, wearing sackcloth, and fasting.

In Ash Wednesday services churchgoers are marked on the forehead with a cross of ashes as a sign of penitence and mortality. The use of ashes, made by burning palm crosses from the previous Palm Sunday, is very symbolic.

The minister marks each worshipper on the forehead, and says *remember you are dust and unto dust you shall return*, or a similar phrase based on God's sentence on Adam in Genesis 3:19.

LENT

WALKING WITH CHRIST

