

St Mary the Virgin, Great Brickhill

PCC NEWSLETTER, 4th FEBRUARY 2016

Since the last Newsletter in mid-December a number of successful events have been held in and around St Mary's Church:-

THE CHRISTMAS SERVICES:

On 17th December High Ash held their end of term School Christingle Service - the church was full to capacity.

Thank you to all those who helped with the preparation or took part in the Christmas Services and to those who decorated the church so beautifully. All three services were very well attended. The Family Service / Nativity was very successful - starting at the bottom of Pound Hill the crowd sang their way to the Church for a short service where the Nativity Scene was set. Many thanks go to the children for their participation, with the readings and the prayers.

The church was as usual full for the traditional Christmas Eve Carol Service. Special thanks to Juliet Bennett for organising the Order of Service and thanks to organist, Jerry Brisling, the choir for their wonderful singing and to all the readers.

On Christmas Day it was wonderful to welcome lots of young families among the congregation for our Christmas Day Holy Communion Service. The Rector made a presentation to Jerry Breslin, a book token in appreciation of all that Jerry does for us as choirmaster and organist.

THE CHRISTMAS FUNDRAISING EVENTS:

In addition to the Christmas Fair that as reported on in the last Newsletter there were other fundraising events:-

The Carol Singing around the village on the two Saturdays prior to Christmas raised a total of **£577.63** towards general church funds.

Our Christmas Charity Appeal was for L & D – NICU, the neonatal intensive care unit (NICU) of Luton & Dunstable Hospital where Phoebe Read spent 177 days. A total of **£497** has been raised, including £297 from the Charity Songs of Praise. A note of thanks has been received from Jeni and Stuart Read thanking all at St. Mary's for their generosity in the wonderful amount collected for the charity, and for welcoming Phoebe and all the family into the community.

Sponsor a Light in aid of church funds has raised **£50**. Thank you to Emily Hudson for transcribing the dedications into the Commemoration Book. Thanks also to Michael and Julia Turner for providing the tree and to Stephen Anambra for erecting it and setting up the outdoor lights, a very welcoming sight on the approach to the church.

ASH WEDNESDAY, LENT & EASTER:

Due to the early date for Easter we are now moving quickly into the season of Lent. The **Ash Wednesday service** in the Benefice will be held next **Wednesday, 10th February** - Holy Communion at St Luke's Church, **Stoke Hammond at 10.30am**.

THE LENT COURSES:

These will start the week beginning 15th February. There is a choice of a daytime or evening group for each week - all will be welcome to join in any of the sessions at any of the venues.

The Psalms - "Prayers for Today's Church"

The ancient poems we call Psalms are over 2000 years old. They were written in very different times from our own when humans could travel at the speed of a camel - not at the speed of sound. But these songs have stood the test of time for they address many of the problems we still face: violence, injustice, anger - and bewilderment. In this 5-session course, Bishop Stephen Cottrell - a prolific and popular author - reflects on the psalms in general (and five psalms in particular – Psalms 100, 130, 13, 23 & 127).

Daytime Course in Stoke Hammond: Tuesday afternoons, starting at 2pm

Evening Course on Wednesdays or Thursdays at venues across the Benefice:

Please see the attached flier for more details.

SERVICE DETAILS FOR GREAT BRICKHILL DURING LENT/EASTER:

Mothering Sunday, 6th March:-

11.00am Holy Communion Service with Hymns

(Not the Said Prayer Book service normally held on the first Sunday of the month)

Palm Sunday, 20th March:-

11.00am Family Service at Great Brickhill

(including a dramatized reading of the gospel)

Holy Week Tuesday 22nd to Thursday 24th March

High Ash "Experience Easter" prayer stations project in church

Tuesday 22nd - a session for parents and church members from 6-7pm

Maundy Thursday, 24th March:-

9.00am High Ash School Easter Service, Thursday 24th March, 9.30am

7.30pm United Benefice Service of Holy Communion, at Great Brickhill

Good Friday, 25th March:-

2.00pm Hour of Devotion

Easter Sunday, 27th March:-

11.00am Easter Holy Communion

FORTHCOMING SOCIAL EVENTS:

SNOWDROP WALKS:

The first fundraising event of the year is the annual Snowdrop Walks, which will take place between 2pm and 4pm on **Sundays 14th and 21st February**. Please put the date in your diaries and spread the word amongst your friends.

Teas will be available in the church – if anyone could please help with baking some cakes, please contact Betty Kinsey (261836).

A PDF file of a flier for the Snowdrop Walks is attached

COFFEE MORNING:

There will be Coffee & Cakes in the church at 11.00am on Saturday 20th February. An invitation for you to attend is attached as a PDF file. This is an opportunity for us to say thank you to all those who support St Marys, and to all who contribute their time on the various church rotas to help run our church here in Great Brickhill.

We do hope that you will come and join us. Please contact Val Baldwin by 17th February if you would like to attend:- 01525 237265 or vafutcher@hotmail.com

THE PLANT FAYRE:

Advance notice of the date of this year's Plant Fayre:-

Saturday 9th April

If you are able to offer an hour or so of your time to help out with the event John and Celia Hall will be pleased to hear from you:-

johnnewhall@yahoo.co.uk

celiafeetam@madasafish.com

AND FINALLY,

GIFT AID ENVELOPES:

The formal wording for the Gift Aid declaration has changed. If anyone has any of the old version of the envelopes could they please return them to the church so that they can be used as soon as possible? If anyone wishes to keep some envelopes at home for future use then do please take away some of the new version. (The wording for the new declaration is above the "Full Name" line, rather than at the bottom of the envelope as in the old version). It is important that we use up the old envelopes whilst they are still valid.

Phillipa Cook
4th February 2016