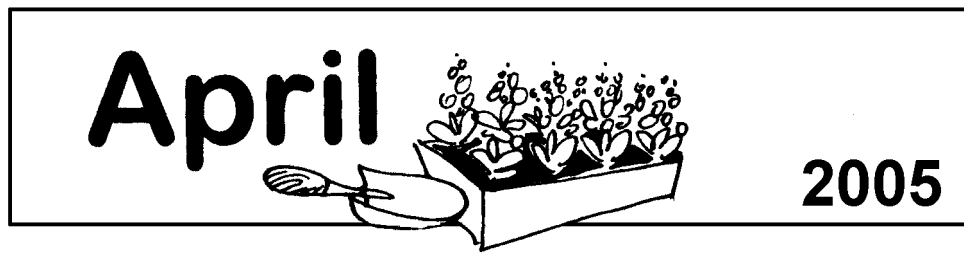


ELSTOW PARISH MAGAZINE



Dear Parishioners ...

Marriage is in the air!

After being nearly snowbound for two weeks last winter, a Seattle man departed for his vacation in Miami Beach, where he was to meet his wife the next day at the conclusion of her business trip to Minneapolis. They were looking forward to pleasant weather and a nice time together. Unfortunately, there was some sort of mix up at the boarding gate, and the man was told he would have to wait for a later flight. He tried to appeal to a supervisor but was told the airline was not responsible for the problem and it would do no good to complain.

Upon arrival at the hotel the next day, he discovered that Miami Beach was having a heat wave, and its weather was almost as uncomfortably hot as Seattle's was cold. The desk clerk gave him a message that his wife would arrive as planned. He could hardly wait to get to the pool area to cool off, and quickly sent his wife an e-mail, but due to his haste, he made an error in the e-mail address. His message therefore arrived at the home of an elderly preacher's wife whose even older husband had only died the day before. When the grieving widow opened her e-mail, she took one look at the monitor, let out an anguished scream, and fell to the floor dead. Her family rushed to her room where they saw this message on the screen:

"Dearest wife, departed yesterday as you know. Just now got checked in. Some confusion at the gate. Appeal was denied. Received confirmation of your arrival tomorrow. Your loving husband. P.S. Things are not as we thought. You are going to be surprised at how hot it is down here."

Recently I was waiting for a train at St. Pancras, with ten minutes to spare, so I thought: 'I'll just nip and have a quick look at OK Magazine, and Hello'. Marriage seems to be in the air not only in August and September in the Churches, registry offices and country homes, but also in the soaps as well! In Coronation Street we recently saw Ken and Deirdre's wedding called off and now planned for April, and in Emmerdale, Charity's proposed big day wedding to Tom being called off at the Church! It's all very exciting, I can hardly wait for the next episodes to come! With Charles and Camilla naming their day, there is always a lot to see in these magazines. So I then dashed and just caught the train! Currently at the cinema we can see the film 'Shall we Dance?' a beautiful film with Susan Sarandon, Jennifer Lopez and Richard Gere where a couple keep their marriage alive rather than getting divorced, and 'Hitch' a very funny film with Will Smith as a Relationship Doctor.

At university, before being ordained, I did an in-depth study into Marriage and Divorce and not to depress you, but hopefully to interest you, I would like to share some facts and figures.... Government statistics show that the number of divorces in the United Kingdom has grown by 633% between 1961 and 1991. It could be that the increase in divorces can be shown to be linked to the number of civil

weddings, suggesting that the Church's fault lies in not being involved in the marriage contract in the first place. It must also be said that the Church's fault may also lie in her not supporting couples when things are becoming difficult. We often conduct the wedding, and then have no other involvement except to condemn when a marriage leads into divorce. The Church has really tried to come alongside couples in recent years, and to not judge divorced people. I remember in the late 70's a divorced person could not receive communion; thankfully that is a thing of the past. Demographic and legal changes can also shed some light on the increasing divorce rate.

In the last twenty years there has been a significant variance in the rate of marriages celebrated, compared to the rate growth of the general population – before that it followed a general pattern of increase similar to that of the population. There has been a 24.2% drop in the total number of marriages over the last twenty years (from 404,737 to 306,756). The number of weddings conducted by the Christian Church has taken a sharp downturn from 13.7% in 1989 compared with 11.6% in 1991. It is also a matter of concern that the rate of decline in marriage has increased for three years (1988-1991). It has done this once before this century in 1955-58.

We have seen that there is a general decline amongst all groups (by religious or civil ceremony, and by pre-marital status) wishing to marry. We turn now to trends in divorce rates. In 1901, only 477 divorces were granted. This has grown to 158,745 in 1991 an increase of over 33,000% against a population increase of just 51%. Faced with such a growth, we need to ask ourselves about sociological factors influencing this. The number of divorces in 1939 was a little over 8,000. There was a slight decrease over the early war years, but at the end of the war, the numbers almost doubled from 15,634 in 1945 to 29,829 the next year, and doubled again to 60,254 in 1947, before falling back to around 29,000 in 1951.

Legal factors must also be included... The 1938 divorce law changed the grounds for divorce to include 'desertion, cruelty, and insanity' as well as adultery. The major 'explosion' in the number of divorces granted comes at the end of the 1960's – the sexual revolution had taken place. The next legal change came when the 1969 Divorce Act became law. The sole basis for divorce was now an 'irretrievable breakdown' of the marriage. This again sent the figures soaring, as a less specific proof was now required to show that the marriage had failed – divorce was easier. In 1970, immediately before the new law, there were 58,239 divorces. This doubled in two years to 119,025. The sudden surge of divorces in 1985 is probably due to another legal reform – the Matrimonial and Family Proceedings Act 1984 – which again allowed divorce after just one year of marriage and recently a friend divorced via the Internet in four months using www.divorce-online.co.uk. In the past having to bring a case to court may have helped the marriage to survive because the divorce had had to wait at least a year, which may have had a lasting effect. There is a contradiction in English law that understands marriage to be a 'lifelong and exclusive union' yet in 1991, it released 317,000 people from their 'lifelong' union potentially to enter another one.

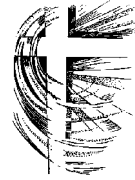
Is There a Future for Marriage?

At Elstow Abbey in 2005 we have 17 weddings booked and 10 in 2006 and 8 at St Mary's Cardington, so it is not all doom and gloom! The facts are that amongst the general population of the United Kingdom 72% of men and 74% of women, aged 50 or less, have married at some stage. In 1991, married people formed 46% of the population and each year two-thirds of a million people get married. Practising Christians form around a tenth of the population. The majority of the population of the UK continue to prefer marriage to cohabitation. There is a big future in marriage. It is just a huge shame that Marriage Law in this country makes it so easy for that 'life long commitment' not to be honoured.

If your 'marriage is in the air', and I or other members of the Church family can be a listening ear or a sounding board to try and help, then please ask.

With best wishes

Jeremy.



A Journey into Faith

A Journey into Faith is a study course over 10 sessions with a variety of speakers and discussions. Each session starts at 7.30pm with refreshments and finishes around 9.15pm, at Elstow Church Hall.

It is a course for those without faith or searching and for those who have faith and want to grow further.

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--|
| Wed 20th April | Believing in God
(This session includes sharing a meal together) |
| Wed 27th April | Beginning and Growing in the Scriptures
(a) The Life of Jesus |
| Wed 4th May | Beginning and Growing in the Scriptures
(b) Understanding the Bible - Old and New Testaments |
| Wed 11th May | Beginning and Growing in the Scriptures
(c) Stories from the Old Testament |
| Wed 18th May | Being the Church - Faith in Practice
(a) The Outward Church - Weddings, Baptisms and Funerals |
| Wed 25th May | Being the Church - Faith in Practice
(b) The Inward Church - Becoming and Being a Christian |
| Mon 6th June | Knowing the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit
(This session includes sharing a meal together) |
| Mon 13th June | Sin, Death, Judgement and Eternal Life |
| Mon 27th June | Learning to Pray |
| Mon 4th July | Images of the Resurrection (Lecture by Bishop of St Albans) |

Please indicate your interest in this course by completing and returning the tear-off slip below to Rev Jeremy Crocker, The Abbey Rectory, Church End Elstow.





I am interested in attending the course "A Journey into Faith"

Name :

Address :

Contact telephone number :

MISSIONARY GIVING

Once upon a time this boy was born in Elstow in the middle of the Second World War. He can remember the bombers going over the house and the convoys of Army lorries coming through the village on the A6.

He attended Elstow School and walked to and from there every day. He took part in all the May Day celebrations on Elstow Green performed by the school on the first Thursday in May. Like most of the young in Elstow he played on Elstow Green, attended the Youth Club in the old Church Hall and probably annoyed some residents by knocking on doors and running away. He was made to attend Sunday school at the Bunyan Meeting Chapel because his family had always done that. He could walk from one end of the village to the other and tell you everyone that lived in each house. He can remember the Pear Tree estate being built and all the houses at the bottom of Moss Lane.

During the school holiday he worked on the local farm of the Prole family, often leading a horse and cart from the fields to the farmyard. Most of his time was spent playing in the fields and on the Green. On leaving school he went to Silsoe to be an apprentice in agriculture, travelling to and from Silsoe every day, leaving home at 6 am, attending college and at the weekend played cricket and football for Elstow. Some great times were had. He was christened at Elstow Abbey church and was later married there both by the Rev, Peter Hartley when he was the vicar at the time. Later he became a member of the Parish Council trying to help the village stop the dumping of nuclear waste and to help it keep its identity and village life.

One day whilst walking down the village he noticed his toe was catching on the ground and wondered what the problem was, like most people he did not pay much attention to it until other problems started to occur.

When people used to ask if he had been drinking he sought expert advice and MS was diagnosed. He had not heard of it let alone knew anything about it. During these appointments with specialist he had to go to Biddenham Hospital and met a frighteningly efficient lady who helped and encouraged him. When MS progressed so that he had to stop work, it felt as though the end of the world had come, the saving grace was that the MS Therapy Centre in Manton Lane asked if he would try and raise some money to build a purpose built centre to cope with the ever increasing MS sufferers coming for help. In January 1995 he started with the help of the Centre Manager and a group of lady volunteers to send out letters asking for help. Thankfully people responded and a new centre was built in Barkers Lane, Bedford. The Elstow Abbey Church Council came forward from the start to try and help and thankfully continue to help and support the centre today. Did you know there are at least 3 people in Elstow with Multiple Sclerosis.

The real reason for writing is to say a big thank you to everyone at Elstow Abbey Church, to the Elstow Parochial Church Council and all members of the congregation.

We now have a purpose built centre where over 250 MS sufferers come each week for one thing or the other or a multiple of them. The therapies include physiotherapy, speech, hydrotherapy, counselling and many others. There are over 1,000 sufferers on the list and numbers continue to rise. In 2004, 73 new sufferers came for help. All these therapies and help is given free of charge because most cannot work and would not be able to pay for this much needed help. Unfortunately this continuing help is not available on the NHS. The therapists are professionals and paid by the hour, all the other work is done by volunteers, approximately 40 each week. In 2004 it cost £140,000 just to run the centre, with increasing numbers of MS sufferers seeking help. This must increase, we receive no statutory funding and have to raise every penny.

In conclusion, thank you to everyone for their help without people like you we would not exist. Please remember if anyone would like to see what you have helped us do, please give us a ring and we would love to show you around.

As my old grandma used to say "god moves in a mysterious way his wonders to perform".

Note: If any members of the Elstow Church Family would like to visit the MS Centre in Bedford would they please speak to Rosemary or Colin Albon and they will arrange a visit.

Colin & Rosemary Albon



TUNES OF GLORY

This month we will sing No. 354: '**Eternal Father, strong to save**' by **William Whiting, 1825-78**, to the Rev. J B Dykes tune Melita. This is clearly a sailors' hymn, the only hymn of the sea which has achieved world-wide popularity. When it first appeared in the first edition of Hymns A&M the words were changed to their now familiar form. The first stanza is based on the words of Job 38, 10-11, which tell how God prescribed the bounds of the sea. The second recalls the stories of Jesus stilling the storm and walking on the sea, Matthew 8, 23-27 and 14, 22-32. The third goes back to the story of creation, when the Spirit of God brooded over the face of the deep and brought order out of chaos, Genesis 1, 9. The final stanza is a prayer to the Trinity for seafarers in danger. William Whiting was a master of Winchester College Choristers' School, and had little output other than this hymn, which he wrote for a pupil who was about to sail for America.

The tune was written by the Rev. J B Dykes (1823-76), and composed for the hymn in A&M, 1861: Melita denotes Malta, taken from Acts 28, 1-2. Few composers have had so much influence, and he has written many other tunes of considerable note. Born in Hull in 1823, he showed great aptitude for music, and frequently playing the organ at St. John's Church. At age 18 he moved to Wakefield, and shortly afterwards went to Cambridge, continuing his musical studies under Professor Walmisley. He entered into the musical life of the place, and became conductor of the University Musical Society. His first curacy was at Malton, Yorkshire but his musical reputation preceded him, and he was appointed a precentor of Durham Cathedral. It marked his most prolific period of tune-writing.

On Sunday evenings his children and some friends would try over the new tunes he had composed, offering criticism, and if any tune did not meet with approbation he nearly always altered or rewrote it. Dykes wrote his tunes ungrudgingly for Anglicans and Nonconformists alike, e.g. 'Jesmond' was written at the special request of the Newcastle Wesleyan Service of Song. Dykes contributed several of his best-known tunes to The Congregational Hymn and Tune Book (1862), but the book was not in fact designed for Congregationalists, but to promote congregational singing in the Anglican Church. But he became involved in a dispute on questions of church ritual, and the strain and anxiety of a trial in the ecclesiastical courts completely broke his health. He retired to St. Leonard's, but the end came all too soon, and he died there on 20th January 1876. The high regard in which he was held soon showed, when £10,000 was raised to provide for those from whom he had so suddenly been called away. He was indeed a gifted musician and a devoted servant of the Church. *John Crookall*

News from Elstow Parish Council

We are pleased to welcome two new members onto the Parish Council, Tom Oliver and Lesley Robinson, both of whom live in Abbeyfields. Their telephone numbers are 306355 and 404336 respectively if anyone needs to contact them.

Residents of Abbeyfields have asked the Parish Council to help resolve the problem of lorries parking in the lay-by on the A421 and leaving their freezer units running all night. We have spoken to the police and Environmental Health and they are trying to find a solution. The Environmental Health Officer has asked for as many details as possible about the companies who own the lorries concerned and if anyone has any information, please contact the Clerk on 376256. Unfortunately, Carillion URS, who is responsible for the road will not put up a No Overnight Parking sign without first conducting a study.

Concerns have also been voiced about the revised plan for the Allotment Site. The removal of one flat and minor alterations to the facades of the buildings will make little difference to the overall impact of the development and so the Parish council has once again objected to the application. We have also expressed our reservations about the proposed scheme to remove leachate from the landfill site as it does not take account of the instability of the waste mass. We await a response to our comments. To encourage the Borough Council to take account of our views, we are hoping that the village can put together a Parish Plan this year. This must express the views of local residents as a whole, not just the Parish Council, and would be used by the Borough Council when considering planning applications. If you want to have a say in how Elstow will look in the future please get involved. Cllrs. Harris and Sharples are trying to put together a team to organise this project and if you would like to help please contact them on 218967 and 268150.

The Borough Council's Empty Homes Officer has also asked us to help in identifying empty homes in the area so that they can be brought back into use. If anyone wants to report an empty home, please contact Tabitha Resta on 227464.

Ann Paice, Clerk to the Parish Council. (01234-376256)

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

As I write this it is freezing, so I thought a warming soup recipe would be suitable. It is also tastes good cold, if the weather has changed by the time you read this.

Leek and potato soup (with variations)

Peel and chop half a pound of potatoes. Clean and chop half a pound of leeks. Boil in one and a half pints of water until soft (you could add a vegetable stock cube if you like). Liquidise in a food processor or pass through a sieve. Add more water or milk if necessary to get the consistency you want, season to taste with salt and pepper, and stir in a couple of tablespoons of cream just before serving, either reheated or chilled.

This can be varied by adding a small amount of carrot or tomato, cooked for the same length of time as the leek and potato, or some watercress for the last five minutes of cooking.

JMCE



BOOK REVIEW

“The Pope in Winter” by John Cornwell (Viking £20)

John Cornwell, as you may recall is a Fellow of Jesus College, Cambridge, and a much acclaimed – or, depending on your viewpoint, vilified – Vatican watcher.

The issues of Abortion, Aids, Divorce, Homosexuality, Clergy Paedophilia, Gay Clergy, Gay Couples, Clergy Marriage, Women Priests and Unjust War to name but some, are real and live. They rest at present, for the Catholic Church, on the sloping shoulders of a very ill old man. It is Cornwell’s thesis that the Roman Catholic Church, by far the majority Christian Communion (he, regrettably, does not touch on the desperate need in 2005 for ecumenism), must face up to these issues but should do so under an younger, energetic, modern and sensitive leadership.

Pope John Paul II (Kartol Wojtyla in his Polish pre-Papal incarnation) is, and will be seen to have been, a major figure of our times. He has turned the papacy into a modern world-wide phenomenon and, over the passing years of his primacy, we can see vividly the contrast between the strong, fit, young, politicised and charismatic Pope of the late 1970s and the deep formalism of his priestly training that has led to so many of his later pronouncements. Perhaps one of the less obvious, but historically most important, results has been the heightened centralisation of affairs within the Vatican under his – well let’s use the word, even though Cornwell does not – dictatorship.

Cornwell, a catholic, is full of admiration for so powerful a personality as that of Wojtyla / John Paul II.

The first half of Cornwell’s book is a biography which takes us up to 1999. When Karol Wojtyla was elected Pope in 1978, after the very brief (three week) papacy of John Paul I, the hope was that he would be a reforming Pope in the spirit of Vatican II (the second Vatican Council, of 1962-5). The reality was the very opposite, so that, over the ensuing quarter of a century, the expectations of many Catholics have been thwarted. Indeed it seems to many as though the Pope may not understand the issues we are all facing. Cornwell suggests that he does, but that he has a higher vision of the papacy which leads to his apparently occasionally soulless attitude.

John Paul II’s dislike of communism (a soul-destroying force) is mirrored by his mistrust of capitalism (lacking austerity and self-denial and, especially, lacking spiritual values). He was instrumental in destroying communism and is strongly averse to capitalism. If to this is added his sense of history and his vision of leading the world into the third millennium (the second had been a time of enormous turmoil), we may begin to intuit where he is coming from.

It is in the second part (post-1999) that we expect Cornwell to develop his thesis of a Pope past his sell-by date. But, curiously, he fails utterly to do this. He admires the man too deeply. No matter how much we may deplore John Paul II’s stand on the issues I have outlined above, his over-arching commitment to his role as leader of the catholic Church in its broadest sense is inescapable. He sees himself as the Pope of the third millennium and above mundane issues, responsible for the retention and application of the fundamental morality and ethic of Rome.

Cornwell, with his customary eye to polemicism, attempts to sustain his thesis with the occasional and lamentable childish sarcasm (“One wonders whether John Paul has ever met a child conceived as a result of IVF and noted the absence of life potential.”) The real paradox, though, is that he claims to have written a polemical book, but in reality has written a wonderfully insightful account of one of the world’s great men.



Bookworm

A SECOND HOME

Well, we have just witnessed a National pastime.

Cycling, in France, is as great a passion as is soccer and virtually no corner of the country is exempt. Even in the most isolated hamlet there is bound to be at least one cycling maniac.

The trouble with something like the Tour de France is that you only see the cyclists, with the police outriders, team cars, press, photographers and so forth, pass by once in a siren-infested but colourful blur spattered with brilliant blue and yellow rotating lights. (I am sure that you will have watched television coverage of this annual jamboree every July.) And the route is often lined with restrictive barriers. And no cars are allowed to park anywhere near. And the road is closed to all non-race traffic (a real nuisance, this, for local residents who are not – like myself – particularly interested and just want to get home or go out).

[I am, by the way, only talking of my own remote village: in the towns and elsewhere, it is a fully-blown carnival which all must endure willy-nilly.]

In my own village, we are not and are highly unlikely ever to be, on the route of the Tour de France. We are, if you're a fan, rather luckier.

In 1971, a well-known racing cyclist, Roland Fangille, organised a small race around and about a local mining town, Bessèges. Nobody thought that it would ever come to anything, but he had famous friends (does the name Raymond Poulidor, one of the true “greats” of the sport ring a bell with you?) who were willing to turn out for that first race and who have remained firm supporters down the years. Bessèges, like virtually all mining towns unless they are in the Ukraine or Poland, mines no more. The race, though, which started as a single-stage (one-day) event with a mere handful of competitors, is now a five-day event, the first major stage race in the French Pro-tour cycling calendar, attracting 25 team entries this year for only 18 places, each team consisting of 10 riders, and with a budget of some 455,000€ This money is partly raised from Press sponsorship, the two local “Départements” it covers, team entries (there's a lot of money sloshing around with the likes of Motorola and Cofidis) and relies very heavily indeed on volunteer input.

The 35th “Étoile de Bessèges” started in Marseilles and then centred, like its predecessors, on Bessèges itself which it reached at the end of the first day. Thereafter, it prescribed great loops into the surrounding – and very hilly – country with each loop covering its circuit at least twice. This means that cycling fans could see their heroes whizz past several times. I'm afraid that we watched the procession at half a mile's distance from our main terrace but even then it was impressive.

In case you are wondering as to how far the teams cycle, they cover a minimum of some 120kms a day. This year, the weather was definitely benign, a howling and freezing North wind having died down after twelve successive and miserable days. There was a bit of drizzle, but none of the snow which, some years, has caused real problems. Also, there were no serious accidents beyond the routine falls which always accompany such events.

The organisation behind this relatively small, if now famous, event is colossal. The route is marked out a week or so in advance, every single road junction being specifically labelled with appropriate arrows, which nobody is so caddish as to pinch. Volunteers man all the main junctions. The police are involved in providing outriders, traffic control cars, support officers on main junctions, radio communications with emergency services – the list is endless.

For the record, this year's winner was a little-known chap called Freddy Bichot of the *Française des Jeux* team. He got a “flyer” on the first stage and managed to hang on to his lead.

THE

CALENDAR FOR APRIL 2005

Sunday 3rd Easter 2	9.30am 11.00am 6.30pm	Family Communion with Children's Groups (The Revd Peter Littleford) Morning Prayer (Mattins Group) Evensong (Robert Heley)
Monday 4 th The Annunciation	7.00pm	Prayer Group meet in the Summerhouse
Thursday 7 th	11.00am	Holy Communion (The Revd Len Moore)
Friday 8 th	7.30pm	Rehearsal for Licensing for the Revd Stephen Smith as Team Vicar, Cardington
Sunday 10th Easter 3	11.00am 6.30pm	Parish Communion (Jeremy Crocker) Evensong (Jeremy Crocker)
Monday 11 th	2.00pm 7.00pm	Full Ministerial Team Meeting at the Rectory Prayer Group meet in the Summerhouse DEADLINE FOR MATERIAL FOR MAY MAGAZINE
Tuesday 12 th	8.00pm	Meeting of the Finance and Standing Committee in the Summerhouse
Wednesday 13 th	7.30pm	Licensing of the Revd Stephen Smith as Team Vicar, Cardington
Thursday 14 th	11.00am	Holy Communion (Jeremy Crocker)
Sunday 17th Easter 4 Vocations Sunday	9.30am 11.00am 6.30pm	Family Communion with Children's Groups (Jeremy Crocker) Morning Prayer (Jeremy Crocker) Evensong (The Revd Stephen Smith)
Monday 18 th	7.00pm	Prayer Group meet in the Summerhouse
Tuesday 19 th	8.00pm	Prayer Meeting SBCC London Road Methodist Church
Wednesday 20 th	7.30pm	Beginning of ' <u>Journey into Faith</u> '. A Bible Study Course at Elstow Church Hall. (Course will include a meal. Please book in advance.)
Thursday 21 st	11.00am 7.30pm	Holy Communion (Jeremy Crocker) Meeting of the Parochial Church Council in the Church Hall
Saturday 23 rd	2.00pm	Children's Workshop in the Church Hall. 'Making maps and Grass heads'.
Saturday 23 rd	6.30pm 7.00pm 8.00pm	Music rehearsal for Taizé Service Diocesan Taizé Service Hot supper in Church Hall. (Please book in advance.)

Sunday 24th**Easter 5**

9.30am Young People's Service: 'A journey begins'.
 11.00am Morning Prayer (Mattins Group)
 6.30pm Evensong followed by Holy Communion and the
 laying on of hands for healing (Jeremy Crocker)

Monday 25th

7.00pm Prayer Group meet in the Summerhouse
 8.00pm Meeting of the Trustees and Committee of the
 Friends of Elstow Abbey in the Church Hall

Wednesday 27th

7.30pm Bible Study: 'A Journey into Faith' at Elstow Church Hall

Thursday 28th

11.00am Holy Communion (Jeremy Crocker)
 8.00pm Meeting of the South Bedford Council of Churches at
 London Road Methodist Church

May**Sunday 1st****Easter 6**

9.30am Family Communion with Children's Groups (Jeremy Crocker)
 11.00am Morning Prayer (Mattins Group)
 3.00pm Baptism of Louise Hewson
 6.30pm Evensong (Jeremy Crocker)

Monday 2nd

BANK HOLIDAY NO PRAYER GROUP

Wednesday 4th

7.30pm Bible Study 'A Journey into Faith' at Elstow Church Hall

Thursday 5th

11.00am Holy Communion (Jeremy Crocker)

Ascension Day**'Living One Day at a Time'***The Serenity Prayer ...*

Just for today... I will try to live through this day without tackling life's problems all at once.

Just for today... I will be happy.

Just for today... I will adjust myself to what is, and not try to adjust everything to my own
 desires.

Just for today... I will try to strengthen my mind.

Just for today... I will be agreeable

Just for today... I will have a plan. I may not follow it exactly but I will have it. I will
 save myself from two pests: hurry and indecision.

Just for today... I will have a quiet half-hour all by myself, and relax – and try to get a
 better perspective of my life.

Just for today... I will be unafraid. Especially I will not be afraid to enjoy what is
 beautiful, and to believe that, as I give to the world, so the world will give
 to me.

Source (abridged): www.christianbookshop.com

February 2005

Letters to the Editors

Please send letters, via post or e-mail, by the closing date for magazine contributions (April 11th, for inclusion in the May edition). Please keep letters short. They may be edited for brevity.

Sir

The Revd Joanna Jepson – Update

The Elstow Parish Magazine recently published an article which strongly supported Miss Jepson's stance on abortion over the "cleft palate" baby. Specifically, she had won permission from the High Court to have West Mercia Police's failure to investigate the matter reviewed and Elstow Parish Magazine, encouraged by her website (www.jjepson.org) had spoken strongly in her favour.

I wrote expressing my dismay about the article and about this decision. There had, also, been uncomfortable and distorting undercurrents of a very unchristian witch hunt.

Today's press (Thursday 17th March), reports her failure to achieve that review. The Crown Prosecution Service has rejected her attempt to have the two doctors involved prosecuted.

TJ Elliott (March 18th 2005)