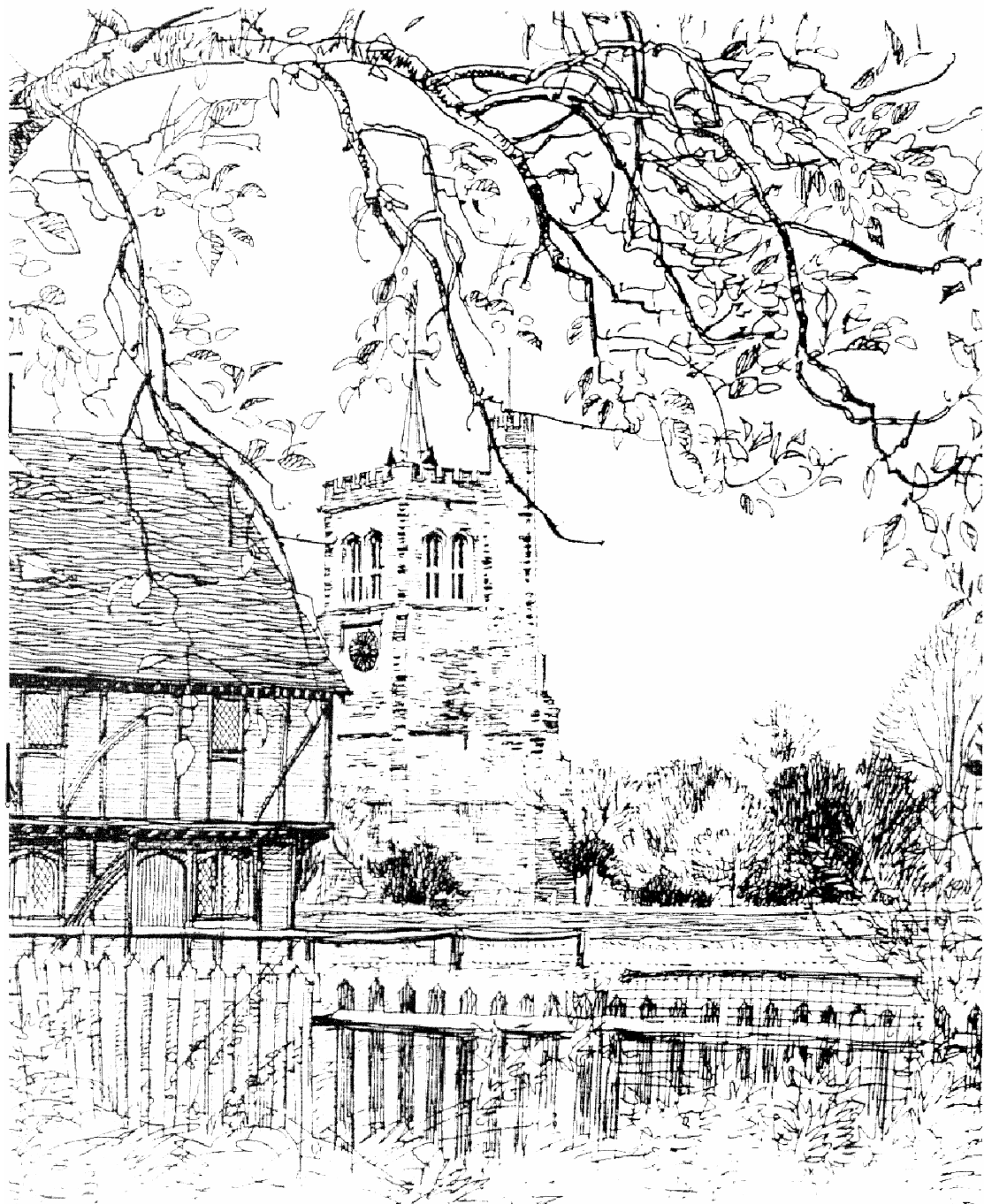


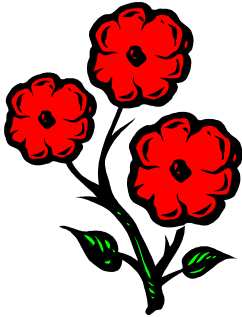
# ELSTOW PARISH MAGAZINE



November 2011

# ELSTOW & ST MICHAEL'S MAGAZINE

NOVEMBER 2011



## Remembrance Sunday 97 years on

Dear Friends and Parishioners,

A few months ago I bought the new Vera Lynn greatest hits album, and I suddenly came across the song: **UP THE WOODEN HILL TO BEDFORDSHIRE** – what a lovely and moving song it is:

**Up the wooden hill to Bedfordshire  
Heading for the land of dreams  
When I look back to those happy childhood days  
Like yesterday it seems  
It was grand my mother held my hand  
Daddy was the old gee gee  
The old wooden hill was the old wooden stairs  
and Bedfordshire of course where I knelt to say my prayers  
Climbing up the wooden hill to Bedfordshire  
They were happy happy days for me.**

**Last night I dreamt about the place where I was born  
The village school the winding lane the fields of waving corn  
Seems that dream brought memories to me  
My childhood days in fanciness I could see  
When the sun had gone to rest and I was tired of play  
Dad would put me on his back and then to me he'd say**

**VERA LYNN SONG LYRICS** Lyrics supplied by Jill Daniels

At this poignant moment in history, nearly 100 years since the end of the First World War I'd like to invite you all to the *Remembrance Sunday Service at Elstow Abbey - this year on Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> November (beginning at 10.55am,*

*followed by an Act of Remembrance at the War Memorial (in front of the Old School) at noon.*

On this Sunday we remember those who gave their lives, not just in the two World Wars but in countless conflicts since. What were they giving their lives for - to protect home? To make the world safe for democracy? I offer you a quotation that I would like to explore: **“To sacrifice one’s life is to achieve one’s maximum, for in doing so man bears witness to the truth and reality that is both above and beyond himself”**.

This quote is about personal redemption and it is the sense of sacrifice for belief whatever it may be that matters and it is also about society, community and our life together on this planet.

On Remembrance Sunday we think about conflict. We remember those who died for their cause. Their cause was our future. Why do we make the special effort on this day to remember them? We do so because memory is integral to identity. We honour those who gave their lives for us and in doing so we state who we are. But have we learnt anything from all the terrible things that have gone on over the last 100 years? Yes and no - there are some things that every generation has to learn for itself. Every one of us must learn to achieve a balance between the two sides of our nature, our uniqueness as individuals, with our identity providing beliefs, religious and personal, and our membership of society, community, nation or tribe – between our believing and our belonging. And here is the link: redemption is not unique to belief, to commitment to a cause, to justification – of anything – by faith. Redemption is also possible through reconciliation.

But for redemption to work we have to live our lives not only by our beliefs, however strongly they are held and whatever meaning they give to our lives; not only as members of our community, whether religious or secular, or our tribe, however defined, or our nation. We must live our lives by the acceptance – of our membership of the human race that is the family of God. For that is where we truly belong.

With Best Wishes,

***Jeremy Crocker***

***Team Rector***

# THE CHURCH CALENDAR

## NOVEMBER 2011

1 <sup>st</sup>	Tuesday	09.30am	Elstow Lower School Visit to the Abbey (JRC)
		12Noon	Group to visit Elstow Abbey (JRC)
		1.45-2.30pm	Sing and Sign in the Vestry
		3pm	JRC to Cotton End Lower School
		3.45-5.15pm	After school club at St Michael's
		6.30-8pm	Youth Club – Guy Fawkes night
		6.30pm	JRC to school governors' meeting
2 <sup>nd</sup>	Wednesday	09.30-10.30am	Wilstead Children's Centre <b>dance group</b> for under 5s and their carers – in the Abbey
		11.30am	Coffee and Soup in the Vestry
		7.30pm	St Michael's PCC
		8.00pm	Bible Study at St Mary's, Cardington
3 <sup>rd</sup>	Thursday	09.30am	Morning Prayers at St Michael's (JRC + SS)
		11.00am	Holy Communion (JRC)
		12Noon	Monthly Lunch at The Red Lion
		<b>Yoga not in the Abbey until Spring 2012</b>	
		7-8.30pm	London Road Youth Club.
		7.30pm	Wedding rehearsal in the Abbey
4 <sup>th</sup>	Friday	7pm	Choir Practice
		8pm	Bell Ringing
5 <sup>th</sup>	Saturday	12.30pm	Wedding of Sabrina Butler and Ryan Schreiner
		2pm	Help prepare Bonfire Night

		6pm	Bonfire night
<b>6<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Sunday</b>		Questionnaire will be given out during November, to help the PCC see where we are and to plan for the future. Please complete if you are able to.
		10.00am	Holy Communion + Sunday School + Baptism of Isobel Faith Downes (JRC)
		<i>10.15am</i>	<i>Holy Communion at St Michael's (NM)</i>
		11.20am	Mattins (JRC+ JEH to preach)
		6.30pm	Evensong (JRC + preacher Jane Findlay)
<b>7<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Monday</b>	<b>10.00am</b>	<b>Mums and Toddlers re-starts in the Church/Vestry</b>
		2.00pm	Prayer Group
		5.30-6.30pm	Children's confirmation class
		7-8pm	Adults' confirmation class
<b>8<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Tuesday</b>	11.30am	Clergy Meeting at Stephen Smith's house
		1.45-2.30pm	Sing and Sign in the Vestry
		3.45-5.15pm	After school club at St Michael's
		6.00-7.30pm	Youth Club – swimming at Oasis
<b>9<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Wednesday</b>		JRC at Archdeacon's Study day at The Rufus Centre, Flitwick
		09.30-10.30am	Wilstead Children's Centre <b>dance group</b> for under 5s and their carers – in the Abbey
		11.30am	Coffee and Soup in the Vestry
		3pm	Sharnbrook local history group visit the Abbey. Talk by John Crookall
		7.30pm	Wedding rehearsal for Friday (JRC)
		8.00pm	Bible Study at St Mary's, Cardington
<b>10<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Thursday</b>	09.30am	Morning Prayers at St Michael's (JRC + SS)
		11.00am	Holy Communion (JRC)

		12-2pm	JRC at Clergy Chapter at St Mary's, Goldington
		6.30pm	Main Governors' meeting for Elstow Lower and Abbey Middle Schools (JRC)
		7-8.30pm	London Road Youth Club.
		8pm	Finance and Standing at the Vicarage
11 <sup>th</sup>	Friday	3pm	Wedding of Keeley Ann Astle and Phillip Eric Jones (JRC)
		7pm	Choir Practice
		8pm	Bell Ringing

12 <sup>th</sup>	Saturday	2-4pm	St Michael's Christmas Fayre
If you wish to reserve a table please ring Rev Peter Littleford on 01234 356645			

13 <sup>th</sup>	Sunday	<b>Remembrance Sunday</b>	
		10.15am	<i>Holy Communion at St Michael's (RC)</i>
		10.55am	Remembrance Sunday (Rev Timothy Jackson) and noon at the War Memorial, followed by refreshments at the Elstow Bunyan Christian Fellowship. No Sunday School.
		6.30pm	Evensong (JRC + Owen Parker and Bedford Royal British Legion will be in attendance)
14 <sup>th</sup>	Monday	10.00am	Mums and Toddlers in the Church/Vestry
		2.00pm	Prayer Group
		5.30-6.30pm	Children's confirmation class
		7-8pm	Adults' confirmation class

**Deadline for the December/January Parish Magazine to **Jacque** Waterfield @ 269 Goldington Road, Bedford, MK41 9PH or [jakhat77@hotmail.com](mailto:jakhat77@hotmail.com)**

15 <sup>th</sup>	Tuesday	1.45-2.30pm	Sing and Sign in the Vestry
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		3.45-5.15pm	After school club at St Michael's
		6.30-8pm	Youth Club – Swap shop
16 <sup>th</sup>	Wednesday	09.30-10.30am	Wilstead Children's Centre <b>dance group</b> for under 5s and their carers – in the Abbey
		11.30am	Coffee and Soup in the Vestry
		7.30pm	Deanery Synod at St John's, Bedford
		8.00pm	Bible Study at St Mary's, Cardington
17 <sup>th</sup>	Thursday	09.30am	Morning Prayers at St Michael's (JRC + SS)
		11.00am	Holy Communion (JRC)
		7-8.30pm	London Road Youth Club.
		7-9pm	Alban Academy Open Evening
18 <sup>th</sup>	Friday	7pm	Choir Practice
		8pm	Bell Ringing
19 <sup>th</sup>	Saturday	1-3pm	Elstow Abbey Christmas Fayre, to be held at Elstow Bunyan Christian Fellowship. Stalls/raffle and lunch available.
For stalls and raffle prizes please contact Barbara Routledge on 01234 854369			
20 <sup>th</sup>	Sunday	10.00am	Holy Communion + Sunday School (RC)
		10.15am	<i>Holy Communion at St Michael's (JRC)</i>
		11.20am	Mattins (RC)
		6.30pm	<b>Churches Together service of the Feast of Christ the King at St Mary's, Cardington</b>
			<b>No Evensong at Elstow Abbey</b>

21 <sup>st</sup>	Monday	10.00am	Mums and Toddlers in the Church/Vestry
		2.00pm	Prayer Group
		5.30-6.30pm	Children's confirmation class
		7-8pm	Adult's confirmation class
22 <sup>nd</sup>	Tuesday	12.30-3.30pm	Team Rectors' Meeting (JRC)
		1.45-2.30pm	Sing and Sign in the Vestry
		3.45-5.15pm	After school club at St Michael's
		6.30-8pm	Youth Club – Craft Night
23 <sup>rd</sup>	Wednesday	09.30-10.30am	Wilstead Children's Centre <b>dance group</b> for under 5s and their carers – in the Abbey
		11.30am	Coffee and Soup in the Vestry
		8.00pm	Bible Study at St Mary's, Cardington
24 <sup>th</sup>	Thursday	09.30am	Morning Prayers at St Michael's (JRC + SS)
		11.00am	Holy Communion (JRC)
		4.00pm	Cotton End Governors' Meeting (JRC)
		7-8.30pm	London Road Youth Club.
25 <sup>th</sup>	Friday	10.30-11.30am	Wilstead Children's Centre <b>NEW Childminders' group in the church</b>
		7pm	Choir Practice
		8pm	Bell Ringing
26 <sup>th</sup>	Saturday	2-4pm	Cotton End Christmas Fayre
		7.30pm	Handel's Messiah at Bunyan Meeting
27 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Sunday</b>	10.00am	Family Service + Sunday School (JEH)

10.15am Holy Communion at St Michael's (PL)  
 11.20am B.C.P. Holy Communion (JRC)  
 6.30pm Holy Communion + Healing +Evensong (JRC)

28<sup>th</sup> Monday 10.00am Mums and Toddlers in the Church/Vestry  
 2.00pm Prayer Group  
 5.30-6.30pm Children's confirmation class

**6.30pm Christmas Concert for schools in the Abbey.**  
**Admission free. Donations for refreshments. This is being organised and sponsored by The Friends of Elstow Abbey.**

7-8pm Adults' confirmation class

29<sup>th</sup> Tuesday 11am-3pm Team Rectors' Meeting (JRC)  
**1.45-2.30pm Last Sing and Sign before Christmas**  
 3.45-5.15pm After school club at St Michael's  
 6.30-8pm Youth Club – Night Hike  
 7.30pm Elstow Parish Council Meeting at The Playing Fields

30<sup>th</sup> Wednesday 09.30-10.30am Wilstead Children's Centre **dance group** for  
 under 5s and their carers – in the Abbey  
 11.30am Coffee and Soup in the Vestry  
 8.00pm Bible Study at St Mary's, Cardington

## DECEMBER 2011

1 <sup>st</sup>	Thursday	09.30am	Morning Prayers at St Michael's (JRC + SS)
		11.00am	Holy Communion (JRC)
		12Noon	Monthly Lunch at The Red Lion
		7-8.30pm	London Road Youth Club
		<b>7.30pm</b>	<b>Elstow PCC meeting in the Vestry</b>
2 <sup>nd</sup>	Friday	7pm	Choir Practice
		7pm	Mums and Toddlers group Christmas Meal (for mums/carers) at The Red Lion
		8pm	Bell Ringing

3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday 7.00pm **Elstow Abbey Advent Quiz night at Elstow Bunyan Christian Fellowship for the whole Benefice.** Anyone locally is welcome.

Free event, but donations are welcome to cover hall hire. Includes jacket potatoe + filling supper.

4 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Sunday</b>	10.00am	Holy Communion + Sunday School (JRC)
		10.15am	<i>Holy Communion at St Michael's (NM)</i>
		11.20am	Mattins (Group)
		6.30pm	Evensong (JRC)

5 <sup>th</sup>	Monday	10.00am	Mums and Toddlers in the Church/Vestry
		2.00pm	Prayer Group
		<b>7pm</b>	<b>Confirmation Service at Elstow Abbey with the Bishop of Bedford, with refreshments following the service (cake!)</b>

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## READERS' LIST FOR NOVEMBER 2011

<u>DATE</u>	<u>SERVICE</u>	<u>1ST LESSON</u>	<u>2ND LESSON</u>	<u>READER</u>
6th Nov	10.00am	1 Thess. 4: v.13-end	Matthew 25: v.1-13	Alan Freeman
	11.20 am	Deut. 17: v.14-end	1 Timothy 2: v.1-7	Delphine
Fordham	6.30 pm	Judges 7: v.2-22	John 15: v.9-17	Barbara Routledge
13th Nov	<b>Service of Remembrance</b>			
	<b>10.55 am</b>	Reading as set in order of Service		Dorothy Steele
	6.30pm	1 Kings 1: v.15-40	Revelation 1: v.4-18	David Ewbank
20th Nov	10.00 am	Ezekiel 34: v.11-16, 20-24	Matthew 25: v.31-end	Sarah Duffy
	11.20 am	Isaiah 4: v.2---5:v.7	Luke 19: v.29-38	Eric Crossen
	6.30 pm	<b>No Evensong at Elstow - Feast of Christ the King at Cardington (Evensong)</b>		
27th Nov	10.00 am	<b>Family Service + Sunday School</b>		
<b>BCP H.C.</b>	11.20 am	Isaiah 64: v.1-9	Mark 13: v.24-end	Barbara Routledge
<b>H.C. + H.</b>	6.30 pm	Isaiah 1: v.1-20	Matthew 21: v.1-13	Peter Moss
4th Dec	10.00 am	Isaiah 40: v.1-11	Mark 1: v.1-8	Phillip Bettles
	11.20 am	Zephaniah 3: v.14-end	Luke 1: v.5-20	Tim Elliott
	6.30 pm	1 Kings 22: v.1-28	Romans 15: v.4-13	Ann Knight

**If any of the above dates are inconvenient, please arrange a swap and let Ann Knight know that you have done so. Thank you. Telephone: (01234) 854036**

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## SIDSMANS ROTA NOVEMBER 2011

### NOVEMBER

**Nov 6<sup>th</sup>** 10am Mrs G Freeman A Freeman  
11.20am F.W. Crossen  
6.30pm P.Moss

**Nov 13<sup>th</sup>** **REMEMBRANCE SERVICE**  
10.55am Mrs M Crossen Mrs A Knight  
6.30pm Mrs G Annan

**Nov 20<sup>th</sup>** 10am Mrs S Brown Mrs A Barfoot  
11.20am Mrs D Fordham  
6.30pm Miss M Eastwell

**Nov 27<sup>th</sup>** 10am Mrs A Morris Mrs B Routledge  
11.20am Mrs A Knight  
6.30pm Mrs C Parrish

### DECEMBER

**Dec 4<sup>th</sup>** 10am Mrs G Freeman Mrs A Barfoot  
11.20am F.W. Crossen  
6.30pm Mrs G Annan

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## YMCA BEDFORDSHIRE SUPPORTED LODGING SCHEME

Do you have a spare bedroom?

Could you offer support to a young person aged 16-20 to gain independence skills?

This is a new scheme across Bedford Borough that will recruit and match individuals, couples or families to become a 'Host' for a young person who needs a home, but is not quite ready to live independently. As a host, you would provide a safe and supportive environment, passing on practical skills such as cooking, cleaning and budgeting. You will receive thorough training, together with on-going support and financial compensation; being a host is a rewarding experience as you support a young person to grow in confidence and move on to enjoy a successful and independent adult life.

**For more information please contact Amy Elliott on 01234 307040 / 07508 807441 or [amy@ymcabedfordshire.org](mailto:amy@ymcabedfordshire.org).**



## **JUST ASK!**

Bedfordshire Rural Communities Charity (BRCC) has secured funding from Bedford Borough Council, and support from Bedfordshire & Luton Fire & Rescue Service and NHS Bedfordshire to run a project called ***Just Ask*** throughout the area of Bedford Borough.

I am writing to introduce myself as the Community Agent for the parishes of Willington, Cople, Cardington, Shortstown, Elstow, Wilstead, Cotton End and the Wixams. My role is to be able to help people within the community to access help to resources to help them live an independent healthy life within their home.

I am available to help people with:

- Feeling safer at home
- Becoming healthier
- Pensions and benefits
- Support for carers
- Transport options
- Joining a group
- Finding a job/volunteering
- Housing issues

***Just Ask!***

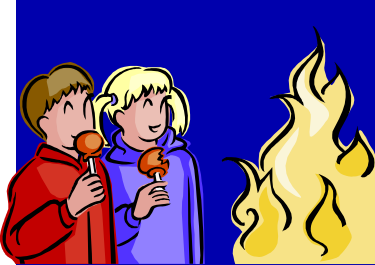
I can visit people in their own home to discuss individual matters or they can talk to me by phone or at a local group or event. All Community Agents are CRB checked and operate in the strictest confidence. The service is free of charge. I have a wide range of professional contacts and can provide high quality information, promote access to services and help individuals to make informed choices.

As I only work part time, please leave a message on my answer phone **0800 039 1234 – a free number.**

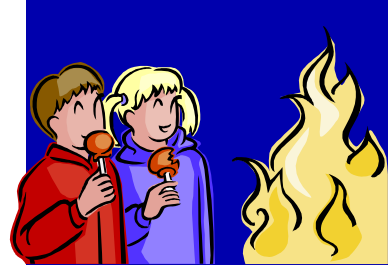
Yours sincerely

***Rosie Kind (Community Agent)***

**Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> November**



**6pm**



# **Bonfire Night**

Elstow Abbey. All Welcome.



## DETAILS FROM THE REGISTERS

### AUGUST 2011

Date	Communicants	Attendance	Collections
7 <sup>th</sup>	38	90	256.09
11 <sup>th</sup>	5	5	2.00
14 <sup>th</sup>	42	79	269.47
18 <sup>th</sup>	7	7	7.00
21 <sup>st</sup>	36	76	332.11
25 <sup>th</sup>	7	7	2.00
28 <sup>th</sup>	34	57	165.10
	<b><u>169</u></b>	<b><u>321</u></b>	<b><u>1033.77</u></b>

### SEPTEMBER 2011

Date	Communicants	Attendance	Collections
1 <sup>st</sup>	9	10	5.00
4 <sup>th</sup>	50	101	432.80
8 <sup>th</sup>	8	8	8.00
11 <sup>th</sup>	42	89	384.81
15 <sup>th</sup>	7	7	6.00
18 <sup>th</sup>	60	86	270.73
22 <sup>nd</sup>	10	10	5.00
25 <sup>th</sup>	55	102	282.77
	<b><u>241</u></b>	<b><u>413</u></b>	<b><u>1395.11</u></b>

**BAPTISMS**

September 18<sup>th</sup> Frankie DeAngelis

September 25<sup>th</sup> Zackery Finn Grayson

Callum John Brown

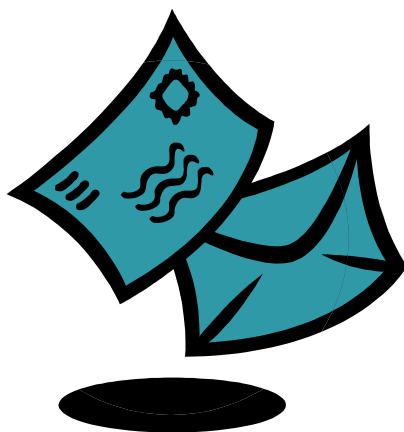
October 2<sup>nd</sup> Lewis Gordon Martin

October 9<sup>th</sup> Charlie Burrill

**MARRIAGES**

September 17<sup>th</sup> 2011 Victoria Ebsworth and Andrew Clark

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**Weekly Collection Envelopes**

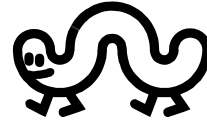
The new boxed sets of weekly collection envelopes for 2012 have been printed and will be available early in December. Please remember to look for your box at the back of the church.

If you do not at present have a set of envelopes but would like to start using them in 2012, please let Mavis or I know before the end of November.

We still have a few spare sets for 2011. If you would like a box now, please approach either Mavis or I and we will be happy to provide you with one. We are usually in church following the 10.00 am service or alternatively phone us on the number inside the magazine front cover (01234 768148).

Eric & Mavis Crossen

## 4 Worms in Church



A minister decided that a visual demonstration would add emphasis to his Sunday sermon.

Four worms were placed into four separate jars.

The first worm was placed into a container of alcohol.

The second worm was placed into a container of cigarette smoke.

The third worm was placed into a container of chocolate syrup.

The fourth worm was placed into a container of good, clean soil.

At the conclusion of the sermon, the minister reported the following results:

The first worm in alcohol: DEAD

The second worm in cigarette smoke: DEAD

The third worm in chocolate syrup: DEAD

The fourth worm in good, clean soil: ALIVE.

So the minister asked the congregation: "What did you learn from this?"

Maxine, sitting in the back, quickly answered: "As long as you drink, smoke and eat chocolate, you won't have worms!"

That pretty much ended the service!

## Archbishop's sermon to the Anglicans in Zimbabwe



Sunday 9th October 2011

**The Archbishop of Canterbury today preached a sermon to a packed sports stadium in Harare where over 15,000 Anglicans had gathered for a Eucharist, travelling from all over the country - from as far as Bulawayo and Gweru to Masvingo and Mutare.**

The full text of the sermon can be found below:

'So the servants went out into the streets and gathered all the people they could find.'

'When it happens, everyone will say, He is our God! We have put our trust in him, and he has rescued us.'

Jesus' parable of the great marriage feast is both one of the most joyful and one of the most challenging of his stories; and it speaks very directly to us as we gather here today. It begins with the picture of a great monarch who wants nothing but to invite people freely to feast with him. He has made all the preparations; there is enough for everyone to eat; he wants his guests to be joyful and fulfilled – in body and spirit!

And then the responses begin to arrive. One after another, the guests he wishes to honour find excuses for not accepting his generosity. They are too occupied with their own private interests to come and share a great public celebration. And so the king throws the doors open and invites anyone and everyone who is willing to come – anyone who is hungry enough to walk through the door, anyone who is eager enough for happiness and welcome to come and enjoy it. All the king wants is that his gifts should be received and that they should create joy.

Our God is a God who wants us to receive what he gives. He pours out his gifts in the world – the gifts of natural resources, the gifts of human skill, the gifts of human love and understanding – and he invites us to use them so that together we may find joy, together we may grow to maturity, together we may be glad and grateful for each other. His purpose is justice: not an abstract idea of fairness, but a situation where every person has the fulfilment God desires for them, without interference from others who want – in Jesus' own words – to shut up the Kingdom of Heaven against them. 'You lock the door to the Kingdom of Heaven in people's faces, and you yourselves don't go in, nor do you allow those who are trying to enter!' says Jesus to his enemies in Mt 23.12.

Because this is part of our problem. It is not only that some refuse the invitation of God to share his abundant love and generosity. It is all too easy for us human beings to try and block that love and prevent it from reaching others. You know very well, dear brothers and sisters, what it means to have doors locked in your faces by those who claim the name of Christians and Anglicans. You know how those who by their greed and violence have refused the grace of God try to silence your worship and frustrate your witness in the churches and schools and hospitals of this country. But you also know what Jesus' parable teaches us so powerfully – that the will of God to invite people to his feast is so strong that it can triumph even over these mindless and Godless assaults. Just as the Risen Jesus breaks through the locked doors of fear and suspicion, so he continues to call you and empower you in spite of all efforts to defeat you. And in the Revelation to John, the Lord proclaims that he has set before us an open door that no-one can shut. It is the door of his promise, the door of his mercy, the door into the feast of his Kingdom.

In your faith and endurance, you have kept your eyes on that open door when the doors of your own churches have been shut against you. You have discovered that it is not the buildings that make a true church but the spiritual foundations on which your lives are built. And as we together give thanks for the open door that God puts before us, we may even find the strength to say to our enemies and persecutors, 'The door is open for you! Accept what God offers and turn away from the death-dealing folly of violence.'

There is the message that the Church of God exists to announce. God has poured out his gifts in abundance: why must we human beings wreck and spoil these gifts by our sinfulness? God has given us the promise and hope of his mercy in Jesus Christ: why is it so hard to admit mistakes and sins? How strange it is that we so often behave – yes, even we who are Christians – as though we cannot survive unless we silence all voices of challenge or criticism. And God has given so many gifts to this land. It has the capacity to feed all its people and more. Its mineral wealth is great.

But we have seen years in which the land has not been used to feed people and lies idle; and we have begun to see how this mineral wealth can become a curse – as it so often has been in Africa, as people are killed and communities destroyed in the fight for diamonds that will forever be marked with the blood of the innocent. A few months ago I was in Congo and saw and heard some of the tragedies that arose out of a war fuelled by greed for minerals. Can we hear the voice of our Creator crying to us - like the blood of Abel 'out of the ground' itself – 'Why will you turn my gifts into an excuse for bloodshed? Why will you not use what you have for the good of a community, not for private gain or political advantage?'

Of course, to say this is at once to recognize that it was just this natural wealth that provoked the greed of colonists and imperialists in the past. No European can say these things without being aware of what one of my predecessors, Michael Ramsey, once said about 'the debt we owe to Africa' after generations of white rule. For a long period in this country, an anxious ruling class clung on to the power they had seized at the expense of the indigenous people and ignored their rights and their hopes for dignity and political freedom. How tragic that this should be replaced by another kind of lawlessness, where so many live in daily fear of attack if they fail to comply with what the powerful require of them. As we together give thanks for the gifts of nature that God has given us and the gifts of solidarity and the gift of freedom from foreign exploitation, can we stand together to say to all our political leaders and rulers, 'Listen! Not only to the voice of those who suffer but to the voice of God himself, grieving

over the way we ruin his creation, the voice of Jesus weeping over Jerusalem, longing for his people to open their hearts to justice and peace and mercy.'

This Eucharist is the sign of God's purpose for all of us; it is a feast in which all are fed with Christ's new life, in which there is no distinction of race, tribe or party. In this community there can be no place for violence or for retaliation: we stand together, sinners in need of grace, proclaiming to the world that there is room at God's table for all people equally. What the Church has to say to the society around it, whether here or in Britain, is not to advance a political programme but to point to the fact of this new creation, this fellowship of justice and joy, this universal feast. It is on the basis of this vision that we urge all people to say no to violence, especially as the next election approaches in this country; to discover that deep reverence for each person that absolutely forbids us from treating them as if their welfare did not matter, from abusing and attacking them.

The message we want to send from this Eucharistic celebration is that we do not have to live like that – in terror, in bloodshed. God has given us another way. He has opened a door of possibility that no-one can shut. He has announced that he will welcome all to the marriage feast of his Son – and so we see that all, even our bitterest enemies, still have a place in his peace if they will only turn and be saved. Did you hear what St Paul said in today's epistle? 'Fill your minds with those things that are good and that deserve praise: things that are noble, right, pure, lovely and honourable.' We need to feed ourselves and most especially to feed our young people with such things, to hold before us that great new possibility opened up by God for our minds to be transformed, to be excited not by false thrills of violence and bloody conflict, by the overheated language of party conflict, but by hope of joy and reconciliation.

And this also lays upon us the duty to keep alive our own concern for those least able to help themselves. The Church of God is – or should be – the great hope of the poor; not just as a source of material help, important as that is, but as a source of hope and a guarantee of human dignity. The Church could not exist with any integrity if it forgot that every person is of immeasurable value in God's eyes and so immeasurably worthy of our attention and service. In this country in recent years, you, our Anglican brothers and sisters, have been more and more active and courageous in this practical service, and in reminding the whole society of the universal dignity that the gospel implies. You have also been faithful to those who suffer from the HIV pandemic, which has ravaged a whole generation; and, like Christians elsewhere in Africa, you have been at the forefront of challenging the stigma that can make the suffering so much more bitter and can prevent people from facing the problem honestly. You know that the truth will make you free. To tell the truth about the sufferings and fears people endure, but also to tell the truth about their value in the sight of God – this is the most effective way of banishing stigma and prejudice and superstition.

Dear friend in Christ, you have given so much to the Church worldwide and to your neighbours in this great and troubled country. Day by day, you have to face injustice and the arrogance of 'false brethren' as St Paul would call them. You must often have prayed with the Psalmist, 'We have been treated with so much contempt. We have been mocked too long by the rich and scorned by proud oppressors' (Ps 123.3-4). Yet you must know that we give thanks to God for you – for your patience and generosity and endurance. Your life here is tortured by uncertainty and the constant risk of attack, yet it speaks to all of us in the worldwide Communion of the victory of Jesus Christ and the undefeated will of God to welcome people into his Kingdom and to seat them at the table of his Son so that we can celebrate the marriage of heaven and earth in the fleshly life and death and resurrection of the

Lord. 'We have put our trust in him and he has rescued us.' Today we are able to enjoy a foretaste of that rescue and that heavenly feast in the Eucharist. And the free invitation of God to be reconciled and healed, to leave behind the paths of violence and injustice, is once again spoken out as we gather – spoken out to this country and to the whole world. What can we say or pray except to cry out with Our Lord, 'Whoever has ears, let them hear!'