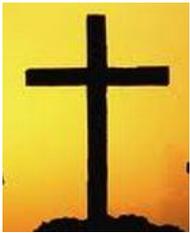


# Newsletter of the Smaller Churches in the Thames Valley Circuit

## March – April 2015



Empty Cross

**Wishing all our readers a happy and holy Easter!**  
**There are many special services throughout the circuit ...**  
**See the Preaching Plan for details.**



Empty Tomb

### Minister's Letter

**'Silence is golden golden but my eyes still see'** – so true and so precious too.

I have just returned from the District Silent Retreat where we were led by Jenny Ellis on the subject of "Hearing the Word and Finding our Voice". We spent three days exploring this theme through art and – although it might seem strange talking about 'finding our voice' through silence – that is what we did! We arrived on Tuesday morning and went into silence at 2 pm and kept it until Holy Communion at 9.30 pm on Thursday. During that time the only voice heard should have been the course leader as she set the scene for each session and then we pray and think about God's voice and set in Bletchingley, a very rural, quiet February a beautiful place to spend during the study time when exploring prayerful painting and even wrote a me really stop and think. When I left minutes and was on the M25 heading wanted to ask all the cars, lorries and get back into the noisy world again.



Isaiah 55 reminds us to <sup>1</sup>'Come, all you who are thirsty, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat! Come; buy wine and milk without money and without cost. <sup>2</sup>Why spend money on what is not bread, and your labour on what does not satisfy? Listen, listen to me, and eat what is good and you will delight in the richest of fare. <sup>3</sup>Give ear and come to me; listen, that you may live. Jesus recognised the need for quiet: "Then, because so many people were coming and going that they did not even have a chance to eat, he said to them, 'Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest.'"

As we travel through March and through Lent, we need to find some time each day to spend with God – not filling that time with words but in silence so we may be fed and watered by the most satisfying food and drink there is. Through the silence and rest we open ourselves to hear from our Father, to draw closer to him and be nourished, filled and enriched to travel in hope to Holy Week and beyond. Lent is such a precious time; a time for reflection and preparation; a time spent in communion with Father, Son and Holy Spirit nourishing, equipping and empowering us for his call on our lives.

May we find 'refreshment' in March, 'joy' in spring, 'hope' in Lent in order to take up our cross and follow Christ through the ordeal of Holy Week and then move forward find 'salvation' which renews, invigorates and enlivens us in our faith at Easter and beyond.

With every blessing. Margaret

## News from the Churches

### COLNBROOK & POYLE

This month saw our monthly Fellowship Group gathering at the local Toby restaurant for a good roast lunch. Unfortunately our numbers were slightly depleted due to illnesses and hospital visits. Despite this we still numbered fifteen, mostly ladies, with just four of us men to keep the ladies in order! Whoops did I really say that? Sorry Margaret!! I think. However we all had a jolly time together and no alcohol either.



After the meal several of us went back to the church for the Circuit Week of Prayer, led by our Minister Margaret. The subject for the day was *Exploring Prayer using symbols*. Margaret had already been to the church to set up her display, which she does with great gusto. Bringing all her props with her, with the exception of the tables of course. Cloths of many colours, vases and jugs, coloured glass beads to represent wine (the Blood of Christ, a large wooden cross, and palm crosses pinned to the main cloth. All done so very artistically, to depict the use of symbols in prayer. We were small in number with two friends from Old Windsor joining us. We did however have an enlightening time, and prayed silently

- For Repentance,
- To praise and thank God for good friends.
- To cry out for Syria, Egypt and Libya, and
- To pray for St Andrew's and St Mark's Crescent churches.

Bob Quarterman

### ETON WICK

After considerable research, we now have two new notice boards which we hope will give us added publicity when they are fully commissioned.

We met in "emergency session" in January to share our thoughts about possible ways forward for our Society and building. These were brought to the Church Council – to be followed through.

There was great activity on St Valentine's Day when we hosted Windsor Wesley Guild's away-day, led very ably by Rev Conrad Hicks. Jo Webb and her wonderful team prepared an excellent lunch and tea, the tables being beautifully decorated with red roses, while the attendees were introduced to the four Greek words for "Love" and their meanings and uses. We are grateful to Conrad for his excellent leadership.

**AGAPE**

**EROS**

**LOVE**

**PHILIA**

**STORGE**

Yet again we have to record the death of a valued member of our church family. Mrs Dorothy Blair had celebrated her 92nd birthday in January and died in hospital on 1<sup>st</sup> February. Over the years she introduced a number of women to the Thursday meeting, and was responsible for the monthly *Bring and Buy* stall, as well as being an eager contributor to the meeting. We thank God for her life.

*Come and See ... Circuit Week of Prayer ... Labyrinth ... Did you get lost? We were delighted to have so many from around the circuit joining us for the launch of this special week in the life of the circuit.*

Jo and Peter Webb and their friend Pam have supported us by their presence during Philip and Laura's 4 week visit to Spain. Jo has shared the Vestry Stewards duties, and we are very appreciative of this gesture of "togetherness".

During Holy week there will be a short service following diners' lunch on Wednesday, 1<sup>st</sup> April, and on Good Friday we shall meet at 9.30 am for Worship, followed by fellowship and refreshments. On Easter Sunday we turn our thoughts to Resurrection. Do come and join us if you are not committed elsewhere!

Daphne Hogg

## **OLD WINDSOR**

It is with much sadness that we have to tell you of the death of Mike Willcocks. Mike had been unwell for several months, and we had seen the gradual deterioration in his health but NOT in his spirit! We shall miss him for many reasons – his willingness to get “stuck in”, his care for church property, latterly as Property Steward, his practical knowledge, his creation of props for *Open the Book* ... Some of these have been well used by other teams around the circuit ... and beyond.



Some examples of the props Mike made for *Open the Book*

We say a big “Thank you” to Mary Sibley for a lively and entertaining *Traveller’s Tale* about her visit (including a wedding) to Poland. Customs and traditions so far removed from our British way of doing things! By way of a contrast ... our next *Traveller’s Tale* will be from Jill Baker, on 12<sup>th</sup> March, *Pilgrimage to Lindisfarne*.

Our *Open the Book* team continues to enjoy the enthusiasm of the staff and children at Kings Court First School. This last half term has seen some very dramatic Old Testament stories including Daniel in the lions’ den, and Solomon and the two women with the baby – which, when the sword was raised above the baby, causing gasps of surprise ... horror ... fright? Reaction certainly!

Anne Haggarty

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## **Editor’s note / Contact**

My thanks to all contributors for this edition!

The next edition will be coming out for the start of May. Please send in your contribution in good time ... including – *please* – a picture or two!

Anne Haggarty

## BURNHAM

Christmas 2014 brings back happy memories of a lovely Carol Service with a difference, in which so many people had a rôle. The 3 shepherds will long be remembered. Christmas morning was, as it should surely be, a time for a Church family celebration, relaxed, welcoming and reaffirming. As a point of interest, are other churches seeing a strong increase in Christmas jumpers? A wide variety was sported at Burnham, including one – which we believe was seen elsewhere – which was wired for lights! But not sound. Well, not as far as we know.

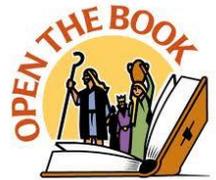
We have recently had a Local Arrangement (LA) Sunday – or, as it is known in these parts – ‘Do-it-Yourself-Sunday.’ We took the theme of ‘Healing – body, mind and spirit’, with very thoughtful contributions from members and friends and the opportunity for group discussions. We are looking forward to Palm Sunday – which is our next DIY – ideas are already buzzing.

The *Lent Risers* (Mums and Toddlers group) are doing really well. Your correspondent was recently roped in to help and it was so good to see not only the little ones enjoying the activities, but the friendliness between the adults.



Another *Messy Church* has taken place – this one with a Nautical theme – with Rev Sonia at the helm of the most amazing boat! The attendance was not so high this time, you can never be sure whether half-term week is good – or not good.

*Open the Book* at Lent Rise School is going really well. A member of the group told me this: “We were waiting to go in, and the children were walking past. One of the children looked up at me, smiled, and mimed ‘Open the Book’.” Thanks be to God!



Hilary Evans

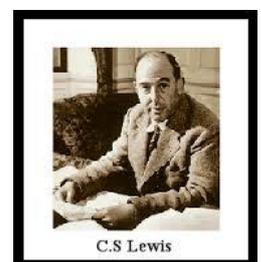
## COOKHAM RISE

I understand that feeling that time is passing more quickly every year is a sign of aging – in which case I must be getting very old, because I feel as though 2015 is flying by at a rate of knots! All the things I wrote about last year in the Smaller Church Newsletter continue – coffee mornings, church lunches, *Open the Book*, Ladies Circle, prayer meeting followed by Costa breakfast, Come & Play sessions twice a week, Diddy Disco, Bumps & Babies, Puppy and Dog Training, Needlepoint classes. We thank God for those things in which the church is involved but also for the community of Cookham Rise who seem so grateful to have found a warm, welcoming place to meet and do their ‘thing’ – whatever it might be. I suppose if we have a vision for Cookham Rise, it is being a church at the heart of the community, with hospitality as our watchword, and this is a vision we tried to put into words at our *Looking to the Future* Group Meeting at the beginning of the year as we re-wrote our mission statement.

On 20<sup>th</sup> February, in place of our usual *Come & Play* session for under-5s and their carers, we will be holding *Come & Play Messy Church* on the story of Zacchaeus, and encouraging mums and carers to bring their older children along too for some crafts, games, stories and worship followed by ‘tea’ (well, lunch really, but with tea-type things to eat!) *Messy Church* has never quite taken off, although we have had good numbers at some sessions, so we continue to experiment with different times and formats – travelling in hope.



Our Lent Course this year is another using clips from films – we’re not film or television addicts, honestly! We are using ‘Not a Tame Lion’ a look at Lent through the writings of C.S. Lewis, which utilises extracts from ‘The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe’ and ‘Shadowlands’. Watch this space for how it pans out.



On 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> April there will be an exhibition of textile art and poetry by Ruth Sprague in the church, with space to pause and reflect on life and death, love and loss. On the Wednesday the exhibition will be open from 2 – 8 pm (refreshments available) and on Maundy Thursday from 10 am – 7 pm when there will be lunch for those who would like it. Do come – it promises to be very good. On Maundy Thursday the exhibition will be followed by our usual service at 7.30 pm. led by Rev Andrew Baker. Then on Good Friday, 3<sup>rd</sup> April (6 – 10 pm) and on Holy Saturday, 4<sup>th</sup> April (8 am – 12 noon) there will be the usual Holy Week Prayer Vigil in the church, with prayer stations to help you think about the last week of Jesus's life on earth. We do hope there will be visitors from around the Circuit.

Good wishes to our friends in the other smaller churches.

Connie Jeffery

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## Joint Events ... dates for your diary

The next meeting of the Smaller Churches Group is on Thursday, 16<sup>th</sup> July, 7.30 pm at Old Windsor Methodist Church.

### March

Thursday, 12<sup>th</sup> at 2.30 pm Old Windsor Traveller's Tales –  
*Pilgrimage to Lindisfarne* – illustrated talk by Mrs Jill Baker.



### April

Wednesday, 1<sup>st</sup> from 2 pm to 8 pm and Thursday, 2<sup>nd</sup> 10 am – 7pm Cookham Rise  
*Illuminating the Shadows* – exhibition of arts crafts on the effect of grief.

### **Easter!**

There are many special services in Easter week throughout the circuit ... See the Preaching Plan for details.

### May

Saturday, 16th Saltau Centre Smaller Churches AwayDay

*If you can support the above circuit events or our activities and events listed under our individual churches, in any way, please do! Thank you!*

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### **Stop Press – Smaller Churches AwayDay**

Those who were at the last Smaller Churches Meeting will know that we discussed the coming Smaller Churches AwayDay, and that I had approached Rev Claire Potter, Superintendent of the Guildford Circuit, and was awaiting an answer.

Good News! Claire has agreed to come. Please note, though, that the suggested date has been changed. We shall now meet on **16<sup>th</sup> May**.