



St Leonard's

Ordinary People, Extraordinary God



Parish Magazine

January 2014

Mid-week services at St Leonard's

Morning and Evening Prayer.

This is held at 9am and 5pm Monday to Wednesday and 5pm on Thursday. We use **Common Worship Daily Prayer**; there are readings and prayers and it lasts about 20 minutes. I am always at these services, unless I am away, when it is taken by someone else, as I think it is important that the church is a place of regular prayer. I am rarely on my own – and you would be very welcome to join us. Evening prayer particularly is a good way to reflect on the day and offer everything that has happened to God, the bad as well as the good.

Wednesday Eucharist.

This is at 10am and lasts for about 30 minutes. It is a well-attended, said service using **Common Worship** (the same liturgy as at the 9.45 but is slightly simplified and usually has one hymn). Afterwards there is the opportunity to receive prayer ministry in the Lady Chapel and refreshments are provided in the Nicholls Room.

Thursday Eucharist.

This is at 8am in the Lady Chapel and lasts about 25 minutes. A completely said service using **Common Worship**. A quiet, prayerful start to the day.

Teresa

CHURCH OPENING

The Church is open every weekday morning, for anyone who would like to visit, to enjoy this beautiful building and to have the opportunity to experience God's presence. The normal opening hours are:

<i>Mondays</i>	<i>8.45 – 12.00</i>	<i>Thursdays</i>	<i>7.45 – 12.30</i>
<i>Tuesdays</i>	<i>8.45 – 12.30</i>	<i>Fridays</i>	<i>9.45 – 2.00</i>
<i>Wednesdays</i>	<i>8.45 – 12.00</i>		

Advertisements: The inclusion of an advertisement in this magazine should not be taken as implying endorsement of the objects of the advertiser by this church or the diocese.

Diary for January



Wednesday 1st: **No services**

Thursday 2nd

8.00am The Eucharist

3.30pm Holy Commotion

SUNDAY 5th: The Epiphany

8.00am Holy Communion (1662 rite)

9.45am All Age Worship

6.30pm Parish Eucharist – Incense will be used at this service

Monday 6th

7.30pm ‘Jubilee’ House group (at the Rectory, Teresa 575966)

Tuesday 7th

10.00 Holy Communion at Wren House

2.30pm Holy Communion at the Old Rectory

Wednesday 8th

10.00am The Eucharist with prayers for healing followed by Open Church

10.45am Holy Communion at Woodlands

7.45pm ‘After Eights’ House group (127 Straight Road, Sara 07710070387)

Thursday 9th

8.00am The Eucharist

7.30pm House group (10 Bale Close, Krisztina 579944)

SUNDAY 12th: Baptism of Christ

8.00am Holy Communion (BCP)

9.45am Parish Eucharist with Junior Church

6.30pm Evensong and sermon

Monday 13th

7.45pm PCC meet in the Nicholls Room

Tuesday 14th

2.30pm Mothers' Union meet in the Nicholls Room

7.30pm 'Medley' House group (Rosemary 515245)

Wednesday 15th

10.00am The Eucharist with prayers for healing followed by Open Church

11.30am Holy Communion at Cheviot

Thursday 16th

8.00am The Eucharist

SUNDAY 19th: Epiphany II

8.00am Holy Communion (BCP)

9.45am Parish Eucharist with Junior Church

6.30pm Evensong and sermon

Monday 20th

10.30am Holy Communion at Hill House

Wednesday 22nd

10.00am The Eucharist with prayers for healing followed by Open Church

Thursday 23rd

8.00am The Eucharist

8.15pm 'Harmony' house group (at 'Harmony', 145 High Road Layer,
Alison Ewbank 734246)

SUNDAY 26th: Epiphany III

8.00am Holy Communion (BCP)

9.45am Parish Eucharist with Junior Church

6.30pm Evensong and sermon

Monday 27th

7.30pm 'Jubilee' House Group (at the Rectory, Teresa 575966)

Wednesday 29th

10.00am The Eucharist with prayers for healing followed by Open Church

Thursday 30th:

8.00am The Eucharist

Sunday 2nd February: Candlemas

8.00am Holy Communion (BCP)

9.45am Christingle service - All Age Worship and Parade with guest preacher Liz Digby (from The Children's Society)

6.30pm Parish Eucharist

Bishop Stephen's New Year Message 2014



'If I had my life over', says the popular poem, 'I'd dare to make more mistakes, I would climb more mountains and swim more rivers. I'd have more moments, just moments one after another, instead of living so many years ahead of each day. I would pick more daises'.

There's something about this poem that makes me smile. It's refreshingly honest and simple. It lacks agenda. Time is to be enjoyed and savoured not simply time-tabled.

But it's natural for any of us looking into the face of a new year to perhaps ponder on the next steady stream of days, weeks and months which loom in front of us, as individuals, families, as a church and as a nation. What have we done this past year? Have we fulfilled our plans, hopes and dreams? And what of these, if any, will we carry with us into next year?

The Christian faith has a lot to say about our attitude to time.

We're reminded that all our time is in God's hands.

Jesus himself modelled a life of being 'unhurried', of being aware of the many demands on his time, but knowing the right time to act and respond through prayer. We, on the other hand, have an ambivalent relationship with the values of waiting and reflecting. It doesn't come easy to us!

But a new year opens up the space between what has been and what will be. And as Christians there is always hope. Through Christ, God speaks to us of the constant possibility of new beginnings. It's made personal to us through an invitation to know his love and grace. It comes to us as the

Body of Christ on earth, the Church, that our relationships can be transformed by his love. And there is the ever present hope of a life with Christ. There will come a day when there will be no more tears, or suffering or pain. There will be a new heaven and a new earth and the old order will pass away.

And so on the precipice - or is it the starting blocks of a new year, we have the space to reflect on our hopes. 2014 need not be seen purely as things we must attend to, but rather as a series of glorious possibilities. With God absolutely anything is possible.

+ Stephen Chelmsford

Stephen Cottrell, Bishop of Chelmsford

Prayer Ministry

We continue to offer Prayer Ministry at Sunday and Wednesday Eucharist services. This gives the opportunity for you to pray with, or just talk to, somebody in strict confidence. The time allows you to ask God's help with a problem, to ask His blessing on you or a loved one, or to share good news and say Thank You to God.

Prayer Ministry begins on a Sunday during the distribution of the bread and wine, and is also available after the service has ended. On Wednesday it is offered at the end of the service.

You may have noticed how one of the team goes up to the altar and takes communion with the serving team. This is when the celebrant asks the Holy Spirit to be with the prayer minister, to enable them to hear what needs to be heard and to discern how to respond with an appropriate prayer. We do not seek to give advice or counsel - merely to listen and pray.

Prayer Ministry takes place in the Lady Chapel. It is amazing how this can happen without our being disturbed, as we just focus on the Holy Spirit and let Him lead us.

If, however, you feel that you would like to pray with someone in a more private place, please speak to one of the team and we will endeavour to find somewhere quieter.

The team: Pauline Jarvis, Patsi Morgans, Maggie Whiteman, Jackie Messenger, Sarah Blake and Rosemary Elden

From the Rectory



How inclusive are we? Children and Communion

Recently Bishop Stephen sent an ‘Ad Clerum’; a letter which goes to every licensed clergy person in the diocese. In it he addressed the question of children receiving communion before confirmation (something which happens in the Roman Catholic, Methodist, Orthodox and some Episcopal churches).

In his letter he says:

‘With the support of the PCC there is no reason why any and every church in the diocese cannot admit baptised children to Holy Communion before they are confirmed....

I know it is a break with what used to be standard Anglican practice, but it makes sense theologically and pastorally to include children in this way. Moreover I see no reason why baptised Christians, whatever their age, should be refused the comfort of the sacraments. And if you still think understanding what is happening is the criterion for reception, then I’m afraid I shall have to stop receiving communion as well. Actually, those churches which do admit children to communion before confirmation find that not only do children and families feel more included in the life of the church, the process of preparing children for Communion provides another helpful staging post on the Christian journey where catechesis, appropriate to that age group, can be offered to the children and their parents. This must be a good thing.’

As the Bishop has raised the question – I thought it might profitably be explored by putting the concept of admitting children to Holy Communion in a historical and ecclesiological context.

In the early Church the three Sacraments of initiation—Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist—were celebrated in the same ceremony by adult catechumens at the Easter Vigil. The catechumens descended into a pool where they were baptized in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. They ascended, were clothed with a white robe, and the

bishop laid hands on them and anointed them with oil. They then proceeded to a place of honour among the community where they participated in the Eucharist for the first time.

The practice of children having to be confirmed before receiving Holy Communion dates from the late thirteenth century. After the Reformation, Baptism became a simple and private service. A Bishop always administered Confirmation, so, with the ceremony attached to his visit, it became seen to be a more important event than baptism. During the last thirty years, the Eucharist has become the central Sunday service in many Anglican churches. Believing and baptised children regularly join in the service but their exclusion from receiving Holy Communion can be seen to be unwelcoming, and a denial of their membership of the body of Christ.

In February 2006, after many years of debates, reports and experimentation, The General Synod of the Church of England approved the 'Children and Holy Communion Regulations'. The Regulations came into force on 15 June 2006, the Feast of Corpus Christi, and now about 15% of parishes admit baptised children to Communion before Confirmation; they are usually admitted around the age of 8 after a period of instruction.

Children may not have the language to talk explicitly and connectedly about God, but their sense of God is direct and vivid: they "move with ease in the world of the transcendent." It is connected to a child's sense of wonder, and to his or her ability to ask profound and simple questions. "Who made God?" "Why is there something rather than nothing?" The fact that the child cannot yet develop such a question in the way that an adult philosopher of religion would does not mean that it is not a real question, really asked. In the baptism service, the whole congregation takes on a responsibility to help children to become gradually more articulate in developing their intuitive sense of God. But the sense of God is there already, and children's worship is to be taken seriously as a present reality, not as a future hope. The responsibility for the preparation of children for communion lies primarily with the parents or carers of the children.

Differences stem from different interpretations about the meaning of the sacrament of Baptism. Baptism and Eucharist are inextricably linked and if Baptism means that you are commissioned for ministry, which is at the

core of the Church's baptismal ecclesiology, it makes sense to give communion to anyone baptized.

What will happen to Confirmation?

Hopefully, confirmation will come to be seen as a sacrament in its own right rather than a procedure to be got through in order to receive Holy Communion.

The House of Bishops expects communicant children to be confirmed at a later time, many by the time they are eighteen. This can be seen as an adult affirmation of faith as well as definitive reception of the grace of the Holy Spirit. Laying-on of hands was often linked with 'sending out' in the early Church so Confirmation is very appropriate for youngsters who are leaving school, starting their first jobs or going to university.

So, confirmation is still important. Growing into the promises made on our behalf at Baptism is still important. Faith is as much a journey of change and growth as it ever was. But Communion is God's gift to us to keep us going along the way as we journey towards his heavenly banquet. As Bishop Stephen says - we cannot understand Communion for it is a mystery; something Jesus does - not tell us to think about, but to **do**. 'Do this in remembrance of me' (Luke 22:19). So we may not be right in waiting for children to be old enough to 'fully' understand and we certainly would never want to say God's grace is only for those with a certain IQ or reading-age. Nor is Communion something we are 'ready' for. The Eucharist is the means by which God changes us into his Image, the way he transforms us to be like him. No one can be ready for that. But thank God, he is ready for us!

One final suggestion; as you look at the children in church on Sundays or watch children, fidgeting, colouring, finding their own way through our services, do not ask yourselves, 'Are they ready for Communion?' Ask simply, 'What possible reason would God have for turning them away?'

A recent teenaged confirmation candidate from St Leonard's said: *'I think that younger people in the congregation should be allowed to take communion because they feel left out and they want to know what happens. I think that if young people were to take communion it would give them a better understanding of the church service'*.

So what I would like you to do is merely to think about this... do you agree with the Bishop and those who advocate this? Or do you disagree?

ST. PETERSBURG DIARY (part 1)

St. Petersburg must count as one of the world's most beautiful cities. It is a 'new town' only dating from the early 18th century when the then Russian emperor (tsar) Peter the Great built it as 'a window on the west' and so employed western European architects, artists, sculptors etc. who designed cathedrals, theatres, and palaces in 17th-18th century European baroque style. He deliberately rejected traditional Russian art and architecture. As the last tsar, Nicholas 2nd, once said: "Remember St. Petersburg is Russian but it is not Russia".

Russia's 2nd city (and former capital) with a population of 5 million, is built across islands and peninsulas delineated by the river Neva and its tributaries and is often called the 'Venice of the North'. During World War 1 the city renounced its German-sounding name and became Petrograd. Later, after the 1917 revolution, in 1924 (the year of Lenin's death) it was renamed Leningrad and as such endured the terrible experience of the two and half years siege by the Germans in World War 2. Helen Dunmore's novel 'The Siege' tells the moving story of the siege as experienced by one family. In 1991 - the year the USSR collapsed - came the change of name back to St. Petersburg, following a referendum in the city.

At the end of September I went to St. Petersburg on a 5 day city break (organized by Intourist UK) accompanied by our good friend, neighbour and fellow member of St. Leonard's, Chris Newton. Chris was marvellous in helping me with my new collapsible mobility scooter (Monarch Mobie) which proved invaluable in helping me to get around. Because we had booked it in advance, I was able to use it right from check in until we boarded the plane at Heathrow, when it was folded up and put with the rest of the luggage in the hold.

On arrival at St. Petersburg airport (late Monday afternoon) I was met with a wheelchair by a pleasant young attendant, Nicolai, who spoke excellent English and took me very quickly through passport

control and immigration to baggage reclaim where we collected 'Mobie' together with our suitcases. We went through to arrivals and on to the street where we spotted a middle aged lady holding a sign with our names. This charming and motherly lady, Tanya, would be our guide for the next 5 days. She explained that the rest of our group (21 in all, all Brits) had been to Moscow first and we were the only ones who had come direct from Heathrow.

It was wet and the drive to the city was rather depressing, through a rather drab industrial landscape with grim tower blocks of flats in the distance. All changed dramatically as we entered the city - it was like driving into central Paris or into a French city: wide boulevard-like streets with flower beds down the centre. We seemed to arrive very quickly at our very comfortable hotel, the Ambassador, where all the staff seemed to speak English and were very helpful. At dinner (Western European menus all week - we didn't really experience any Russian food) that evening we met some of the members of our group.



Tuesday morning: An amazing buffet breakfast to start the day with far too much choice, including 'full English', cold meats and cheeses, fresh fruit and fruit salad, rolls, pasties, croissants etc. The restaurant is situated on the top floor with a wonderful view of the city dominated by the dome of St. Isaac's Cathedral. The motherly manageress, Olga, took us under her wing and told Chris he has not taken enough to eat (!) and thoughtfully assigned a waitress to carry my breakfast to our table.

This morning we had a city tour by minibus which started at 10.00am and finished at about 1.20. First stop was St. Nicholas's

Cathedral, known as ‘the sailors’ church’ because of the naval officers who used to worship here. A superb example of 18th century Russian baroque with a beautiful blue dome. A service was in progress - it was tantalising not to be able to stay and listen to the beautiful singing. Next



stop the St. Peter and St. Paul fortress, built in 1703 and the first major building of the ‘new town’. The stylish baroque cathedral was a deliberate attempt by Peter the Great to reject traditional Russian church architecture. Mobie was put to the test going across the cobbled square!

Back to the minibus and on with the tour: we took in a lot of famous sights including the Hermitage, the Marinsky theatre, and the magnificent Church on Spilled Blood - very Russian with its fine onion spires. The peculiar name is because the church is built on the place where the tsar Alexander the 2nd had been assassinated in 1881. We also drove down the famous Nevskiy Prospekt, a street full of western European and American shops and stores (or so it seemed) and numerous restaurants and bars, which is 2 miles long and St. Petersburg’s equivalent of the Champs Elysees, Unter den Linden, Regent Street or Piccadilly. A fascinating thoroughfare architecturally, with many fine buildings exhibiting a wide diversity of architectural styles.

Eventually at about 1.20 we got to the Intourist office and are given coffee and nibbles and the first opportunity of a ‘comfort break’! Most of the party went to the hotel but some of us took the opportunity of a visit to St. Isaac’s Cathedral, built in 1838 and as big as St. Paul’s in London and St. Peter’s in Rome. It took 40 years to build and hundreds of serfs lost their lives in its construction and at least 60 workmen were killed by inhaling mercury fumes used in the dome’s elaborate gilding process. Its vast interior is decorated with 14 kinds of marble, as well as jasper,

malachite, gilded stucco and a wonderful array of frescoes and mosaics illustrating Biblical scenes, the crowning glory being the mosaic under the dome of the virgin in majesty. During the Soviet era it became a museum of atheism, and although it has been reconsecrated as a church, it is still regarded primarily as a museum. I feel that is right as, personally, I would find it difficult to worship in such an ornate building.

We got back to the hotel at about 3.30 for a late lunch (sandwiches and coffee) and then time for a siesta - sightseeing can be very exhausting!

Hugh Beavan

Some Notes from the December PCC Meeting

A big event this year will be the Lexden Arts Festival which will run from Friday, 2nd May to Saturday 10th May.

The following week (14th-18th May) will be Mission Week. Bishop Stephen has been giving some very good training courses throughout the Diocese and this Mission Week will be our Outreach event.

The well known and excellent Alpha course is very well established and one will be run Spring/Summer 2014. However there are some very good alternative nurture courses and these are being considered.

Another Day of Prayer, in conjunction with Mission Week, is also being considered

Mia is continuing to settle in well, doing some very good work and proving a valuable asset to us. We will need to decide early this year if we wish to appoint another TfG volunteer.

Christmas Bazaar



The Church Hall was bustling for four hours on Saturday 7th December at St Leonard's Christmas Bazaar which was opened most wittily by Mark Cole just before the arrival of Father Christmas and his band of helpers.

A happy and friendly atmosphere pervaded the Hall throughout the day and the varied refreshments were particularly popular with rarely an empty table to be found.



Thanks to everyone who helped in any way to make this a successful Lexden event which raised £1755 for Church funds.

Tom & Kathleen



A Parishioner Remembers

Scotland 1944

Memories of a walk near Stirling

As I walked down the faintly trodden way
Through grassy meadows of a wooded glen
On that far distant, long remembered day,
The tree clad hillsides, reached beyond my ken.

Alone and happy now, for I was clear
Of military duties, put aside awhile.
Far, far from home, and those that I held dear,
And lost in thought, I strolled for many a mile.

The silent vale then filled with sound
As a lone piper played his haunting air
What tune it was I never found,
The hair upon my neck stood up, I swear.

Then standing still, I cast mine eyes around
But never saw this piper, playing clear.
Who was producing such a magic sound
That did, that day, re-echo in mine ear.

And now the years have swiftly flown away,
Yet still that scene is treasured in my brain
And I hear that lonely piper play
In that far Scottish valley, once again.

David Hodge, R.E.M.E

Would you like some help with reading the Bible?

Do you want to read the Bible regularly?

Would you like to begin reading the Bible regularly but are unsure where to start or how to do it? Do you already read the Bible regularly but would like some help with interpreting it? If the answer to either of these questions is, 'Yes', then you might find it helpful to use some Bible Reading notes. In this church quite a number of us use **Bible Reading Fellowship** notes. These come in handy booklet form and all you need is 5 minutes a day - although of course you could spend longer.

The **brf** have been producing notes for 90 years, and have developed four sets of notes to help a wide variety of Christians connect with the Bible on a personal level every day. As they say, *'The Bible is God's word, and encouraging Christians to read the Bible is our passion.'*

New Daylight includes a selection of verses, a brief and easy to understand explanation of the passage and a reflection or prayer. The actual Bible verses are printed, so no Bible is required.

brf: *'The Bible is God's word, and encouraging Christians to read the Bible is our passion.'*

Day by Day with God is written *by women for women*. It includes daily comment and prayer on a selection of verses helping you to connect the Bible passage with your own spiritual journey. It is designed to be used with a Bible

Guidelines provides a broad breadth of theological reflection. Each unit gives context for the passage and pointers for thought and prayer. Designed to be used with a Bible

The Upper Room has a worldwide readership of three million people and each meditation offers the opportunity to explore the topic through the eyes of a Christian from another country. Designed to be used with a Bible.

Watch out for a **brf** display
Jan 5th 2014

There will be a display of **brf** notes at the back of the church on January 5th 2014.

There will and some booklets for you to take away. They contain samples from each set so that you can see which one is right for you. There will

also be a number of back copies of **New Daylight** for you to take and try.

If you decide you would like to subscribe regularly, **Frances Bonner** would be happy to place an order for you. For more information speak to her or to me, or alternatively visit www.biblereadingnotes.org.uk

Rosemary Elden

From Matthew

My name is Matt and some of you may remember me being introduced at the beginning of September at the 9.45 morning Eucharist service. I came to you on placement from my home church of St. Johns, in order to experience a church tradition different to the one I was used to as part of my testing the call to the ordained ministry.

I grew up in a Christian home, Methodist in fact and my parents were enthusiastic evangelicals. During my adult life as a church youth worker I have experienced mainstream denominations mostly with an evangelical flavour of one type or another. So it was important to experience the liberal catholic tradition in order to add to my understanding and appreciation of the wider Church of England.

During September I mostly attended the morning Eucharist service. Immediately upon entering the church I was struck by the sense of expectation amongst you before each service and an awareness of coming into the presence of God. Although I perhaps struggled at first in following the spoken liturgy, by week three I was finding it more familiar. I enjoyed and even relished receiving Eucharist each Sunday as this sacrament is even special to me and was also struck by the visual richness of symbols which help you focus in worship and the beautiful church building which is in your care.

Every church whatever its style has its own language and culture and as a newcomer I suppose I felt something perhaps of what it must be like for a non-church visitor entering in for the first time. One of the most important things has to be making people feel welcome and I want to thank you for making me feel welcome. I appreciate the opportunity I have had to experience the way in which you worship. I pray that God will richly bless you as you seek to grow in Him together.

Matthew Houghton

“GERMAN”-News:



How can the time fly so fast? That’s a question, I have been asking myself a lot in the last few weeks. Already 3 months I have been here and I’m getting used to all the “normal” working days. I never expected it, but there’s a lot for me to do. From organizing and preparing

for Junior Church, creating Flyers for different events to planning a youth service- it’s very busy!

But on my free days I’m exploring England! Sometimes I go to London, or travel further: In the middle of November I went to Oxford to visit Claire. We had a few great days together. Even though it was really cold, we managed to see many of the colleges, the Christmas market, Christchurch and a lot more...

Oxford is such a beautiful city! And it’s even more beautiful, when you have a tourist-guide just for yourself... Two weeks later, when I went for a



day trip to London, we visited the big Christmas markets on the South-Bank and in Hyde Park. It was a lot of fun! There were wooden houses (like in the Alps), Bavarian pubs, Lebkuchen and people in “Lederhosen”. It was really funny to see the obvious stereotype of Germany... But just to let you know: You wouldn’t wear Lederhoden and the Bavarian dresses where I’m

living, unless there is a big (Bavarian-) event (once/twice a year). But it was a really nice experience... I think I know London quite well now, and I’m searching for different places to see. So when anybody has ideas or contacts, please tell me, that would be great!



Another big thing in my diary was the 5th Event Service on the 1st of Dec. It was a great service. I really loved the songs, Beyond Blue was singing and I really enjoyed playing in "Lynx". Just reading in front of the church made me feel a little bit nervous, but in the end everything went well and I can't wait to have the next 5th Event Service in March next year.

I hope all of you had a very nice Christmas and I wish you a Happy New Year.

Yours,

Mia

**Do you want to learn about
Acting, Movement and Music on Stage?**

Then come to

FUN DRAMA WORKSHOP

Sunday, 19th January

12.00 to 4.00pm

In the Church Hall

FREE but bring your own refreshments

ALL ARE WELCOME

Any further enquiries ring

Steve Whiteman on 01206 571142

vision came after months of prayer and seeking God's guidance. His original inspiration was the sending out of the 12 disciples in Mathew 10. Walk missions are the modern day equivalent. The emphasis being on simplicity and holiness and reaching out to people who have little or no contact with the Church - the aim is to share the Gospel.

Mission in and around Colchester 4th - 18th May 2014

TFM will be working with churches along the Stour and Colne Valley during the first three weeks in May. A mission closer to home as you will see from the map. It takes you through Essex and Suffolk villages in East Anglia and many churches have signed up to take part.

As you can imagine this mission will require a lot of willing Christians to work as team members both male and female. I heard at the weekend that team members are coming from the North of England to work with the churches encouraging them in Evangelism.

A lot of prayer has and is still going into this mission which will be coming into Colchester the last week and there will be many events in our town for everyone, those inside the church and those who we would like to encourage to hear more about Jesus and his love for them.

If you would be interested in knowing more about how you could be involved go to the www.throughfaithmissions.org web site or ask me.

Perhaps you are wondering what this has to do with St Leonard's. Well, we have been praying about whether we should invite a team to come to St Leonard's but after a lot of prayer and consultation it has been decided not to have a team staying with us but to use some of our own ideas and run mission events during the week ourselves.

We will be keeping you up to date with our plans and how you can all help and be involved. Please start praying now for God's guidance for this mission which is being planned by a small group from the Outreach and Mission group.

This all fits into Bishop Stephen's vision that each church should have Evangelism on their agenda for 2014.

When Bishop Stephen came here a few weeks ago for the confirmation service, at the end of the service he invited everyone in the church to speak to Teresa if they would like to think about confirmation. He used his passion for Christ to invite others to search for more. He tells us in his paper Transforming Presence how each member is called and equipped by

God for ministry and service. Every Christian has a ministry and we must pray and be a people of prayer.

The ministry of Evangelism is our sharing with others the good news of what God has already done in Christ and the transformation it brings to the world and our lives. It is the churches and our responsibility to invite others to come and share the gospel message. To go out of the church and invite those who have not heard to come in and hear the ministry of Jesus to make God's offer of reconciliation and new life available to everyone.

So we at St Leonard's should be involved in Evangelism to bring people to faith. Will you pray for Evangelism in 2014 in St Leonard's?

Lets remember the words of Jesus on that first Easter morning in John 20 v 21 :

“Peace be with you. As the father has sent me *I am sending you.* “

Tina Rose

CARDS



Handmade cards of various sorts are on sale in the Nicholls room after all services.

Also, I can make cards to order.

Proceeds to Church funds.

Owen Shepherd



Please would you all keep an eye out for new people moving into your road or block of flats. We would like you to put a Welcome leaflet through their door and if possible talk to them a little bit about our church. If you are unable to do this yourself, please let someone in the Ministry Team know and we will follow it up.

Many thanks, **Rosemary**



The Children's Society

From Barbara Cole

Last month thanks were recorded to Dennis Cook as he retired as Treasurer of the Lexden Committee of the Society.

Thanks are also due to Joan Kitson, who has retired after many years of dedicated service as Chairman of the Lexden Committee. She worked as a volunteer in the Society's charity shop, organised the house-to-house collections, Christingles, box opening days, stalls at the Diocesan Fete, the Primrose Festival and other Society fund-raising events.

Julie Hinchcliffe and Beverley Kettell are welcomed to the Committee as Chairman and Treasurer respectively.

From Julie and Beverley

You will have read in the December Magazine that Dennis Cook and Joan Kitson have decided to hang up their boxes and Christingles and sit back and relax whilst Beverley and I take over. We will endeavour to continue the excellent work of these two very kind and loving parishioners who have given both their time and talents over many years in support of the Children's Society. I am sure you will join me in thanking them both for all they have achieved over the years.

Christingle

This year the Christingle service will form the 09.45 morning worship on 2nd February 2014 Candlemas.

Please come and support the work of the Children Society and bring any children and young people along with you.

There will be collecting candles and envelopes at the back of church in January for you to take home and fill and bring with you to the service.

Pilgrimage to the Holy Land

GALILEE, by Viv Mendham & Sara Batts

Viv says... For the second half of the pilgrimage we left Jerusalem and moved to a hotel beside the Sea of Galilee, which is also known as Lake Tiberias. I had eagerly looked forward to this, anticipating that it would be the place I liked best. And it was.

Of course, the whole pilgrimage was a wonderful experience, with some very special moments, but inevitably many of the holy sites were approximate, or probable, or had elaborate churches built over them, requiring the use of a good deal of imagination and acceptance of 2000 years of changes.

Tiberias was different. From the grounds of our hotel it was possible to stand and look across the Sea of Galilee at the Syrian hills on the other side, knowing that Jesus had seen the same view. This was something which I found overwhelmingly powerful, and five thirty every morning would find me standing watching the dawn, listening to the unfamiliar birdsong and feeling a new closeness to Our Lord. I found myself trying to ensure that whatever we were doing, be it



group prayers in the evening or simply breakfast in the dining room, I had the Sea of Galilee in my line of vision. I frequently found myself exclaiming to anyone in earshot: “See those hills? *Jesus* saw them!”

One morning before breakfast Sara and I found a quiet spot on the shore to read the daily office together. That memorable experience was punctuated by a loud slap and then our laughter, as I swatted at a large, biting fly which joined us halfway through the Benedictus.

Sara says... It wasn't the only time we laughed, though, and there were other moments we laughed because the only other reaction would be chaining ourselves to railings wanting to never leave. I too will not, for as long as I can manage, forget standing on the shores of the sea of Galilee and just looking. And looking again. And putting my feet into the water.

Paddling off the landing stage from the hotel, looking at my feet, my own 21st century English feet, in the lake. And many, many times pointing and saying ‘see those hills? Those were Jesus’ hills,’ – or ‘see that water, that’s the Sea of Galilee.’ I think I might actually have squeaked when I first saw the water.

I was advised before the trip not to try to remember everything, not to hang on to great detail, but to stay with the parts that touched me the most. Which is partly why my notes are sketchy...I completely overused the words ‘awesome’ and ‘amazing.’

In Nazareth we visited a reconstruction of a 1st century village which others found held their interest for a lot longer than I could manage (short attention span) but I learned what the kind of roof you could lower a sick man on a mat through might look like, so that is one more bit of the Bible made real.



There were two lovely moments on the shores of the sea that stand out – definitely the two I will hang on to.

The first was Mensa Christi. The church was nice, nothing special, not one of the blinged up variety – practically stark, in fact. The beach, where, with a tolerance of plus or minus 56 km and 2000 years, Jesus appeared to his disciples, cooked breakfast for them, and reinstated Peter after his betrayal – now, that was special. No chance of hiding subtle tears there, for many of us. During the reading and prayers I did notice that it was Viv and me who were not standing, heads bowed prayerfully looking at our feet. You know why? Because just over there, that big wet thing, that’s your Actual Sea of Galilee. As a child I was taught that one closed one’s eyes in prayer to be able to block out distractions. When I’m standing next to the Actual Sea of Galilee, that is not a distraction, *that is a big ol’ lakeful of prayer just right there, wetly, wanting to be looked at, waiting to be seen.* Can you tell that I loved that moment? Could not take my eyes off the view.

The second moment that I will keep close was the Eucharist by the water’s edge at Tabgha. The one and only time I have willingly sat in the front row of a church setting, for starters, not just to look at the lake



birdlife.

There were *two very excited priests* who'd been talking about this service for a lot of the week. And one of the nicest things happened – we formed a circle for distribution, we made space for Bassam, our guide, and he joined us. It felt like the right thing to do – and I think it was, despite being in mild panic for

the rest of the distribution that I didn't know how many wafers had been consecrated.

Because so many of the Jerusalem churches were busy, they didn't, to me, feel like 'holy' places. I didn't need to go inside a building to pray, when the whole atmosphere felt charged. The lakeside places were different again – ratcheting up that sense of God has Been Here.

Back to Viv... On the last full day, after visiting those very special places of the lakeside ministry, we returned to our hotel by boat. The water was calm, no storm for us, as out in the middle of the lake the boat's engine was cut and we stopped for a reading and prayers. We sat for a while taking in the silence and the stillness, and thinking of Jesus long ago in another boat on this same lake. As we sailed on, there was time to ponder, to marvel at our surroundings and just be quiet with our own thoughts. I wanted to stay longer, to return to some of the places for another look, to try to capture the essence to take home.

But of course, I *have* brought it home, in memories, in numerous photographs, in the common bond with my fellow pilgrims, and in a new dimension added to my spiritual life. Now, when I'm



in church and the hymn or reading mentions Galilee, I see the place in my mind and think: "I've been there!" (*Definitely, says Sara*).