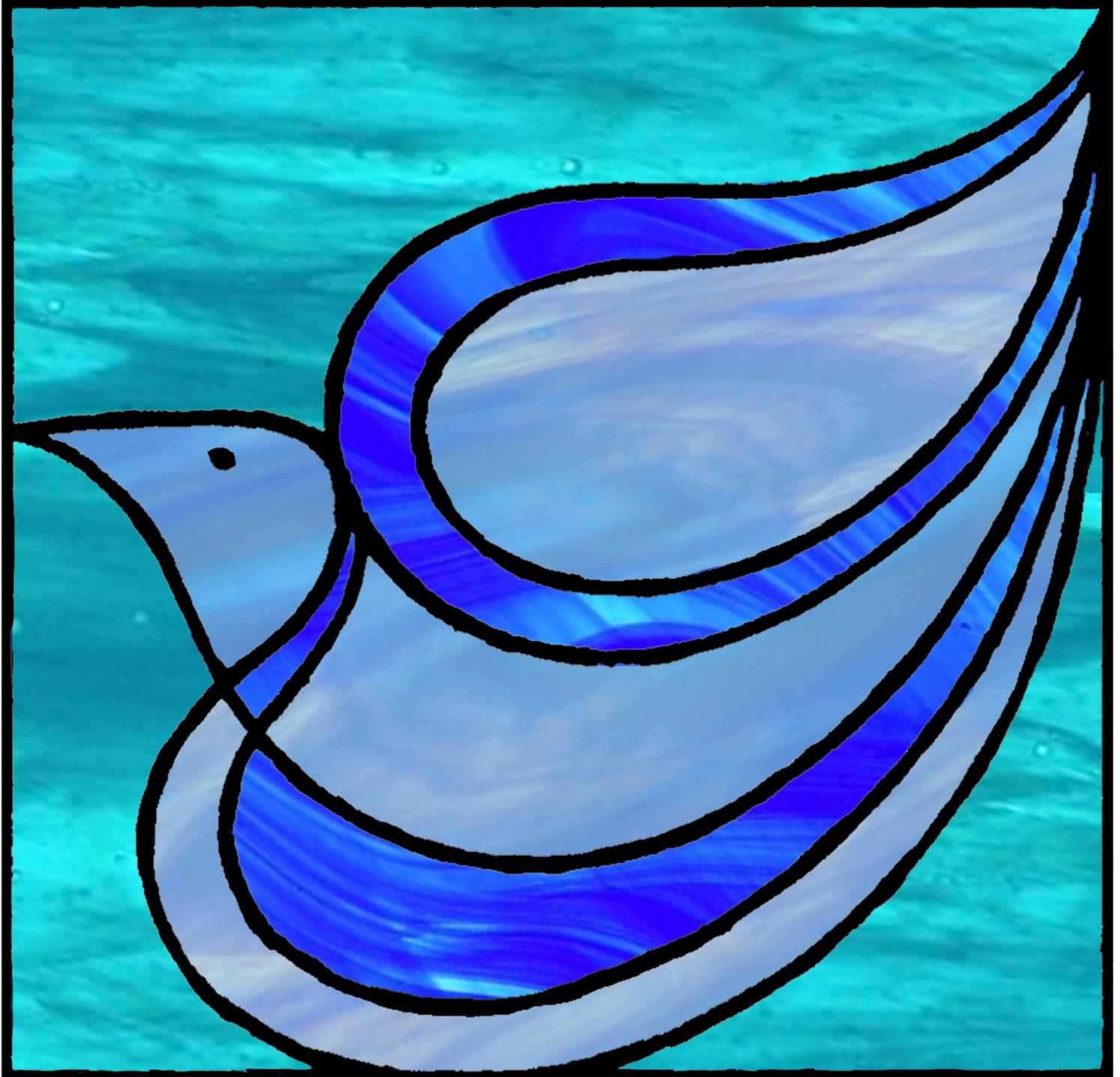


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SUNDAY 2ND FEBRUARY, CANDLEMAS
FRIDAY 14TH FEBRUARY, VALENTINE'S DAY
TUESDAY 25TH FEBRUARY, SHROVE TUESDAY, PANCAKE DAY
WEDNESDAY 26TH FEBRUARY, ASH WEDNESDAY
SATURDAY 29TH FEBRUARY, ST OSWALD THE LEAP YEAR SAINT



In memory of
MARY HOPE ROBINS - R.I.P.
02.02.04

Please consider sponsoring our magazine in March that we might continue to publish in colour.

Thank you to Ken and Dorothy Gates for the sponsorship of our February magazine !



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30.01.19

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Vicar's Letter*

Matthew 6:34: *So do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will bring worries of its own. Today's trouble is enough for today.*

Doesn't the year seem to pass by quickly. As I write this, we are still recovering from Christmas, but by the end of February we will be in the season of Lent and preparing once again for the great Easter Festival.

So, just how can we prepare? During Lent, I am planning to hold a series of study events using "The Pilgrim Course". We will be looking at "The Beatitudes". The courses are open to all people who want to find out a little more about Christianity, or to clarify in their minds just what do we believe. You may wish to invite your friends.

At the moment, one session will be on Thursday morning, after the coffee morning. But one will be in the evening. I will get details to you as soon as I have them available. The details should be on our website and Facebook pages soon. Ash Wednesday is on 26th February so the course will start on 27th February and will end on Thursday 2nd April.

Last month, I asked this question. "Are we a church who is servicing itself, or are we a church with an intention of finding a way to be of service to the community in which we are situated?"

The PCC will be meeting on 1st February to consider this question, and I think this is in so many ways at the heart of what we are about. In the last year, I have been thinking about the question, "Why church?". The Pilgrim Course may well help in this.

The privilege of being "Lead Minister" has also been a challenge. It has allowed me to see church from a slightly different perspective. I have seen how we support and encourage each other, both in our real lives, and in our church lives. I have seen people struggle with faith, but also grow in faith and confidence.

The experience has brought home to me the power of a Parish Church to simply be with people in their daily lives as a force for good.

It will be year of great changes as we leave the EU and seek a new focus for our national life. But at the same time, in spite of all the changes, as Christians we know that we are loved by God, so the really important things in life remain constant. As Jesus is quoted by Matthew, "*So do not worry about tomorrow*".

David

***Rev David Pierce is the Lead Minister at St. Mary's Church**

Pilgrim Course

During Lent this year, we will once again be holding weekly study groups. This year the groups will be using the popular Pilgrim Course. The Pilgrim Course is a major teaching and discipleship resource from the Church of England. It aims to help every local church create a place where people can explore the Christian faith together and see how it can be lived out each day.

There will be six sessions, one a week, starting on Thursday 27th February at 11:45 in the Church Hall. There will also be an evening session, but details of that are not available yet. Each session will be about an hour long.

Pilgrim takes a different approach from other Christian programmes. It approaches the great issues of faith not through persuasion, but participation in a pattern of contemplation and discussion with a group of fellow travellers.

This year we will be looking at the Beatitudes. Part of the Sermon on the Mount which only appears in Matthew's Gospel. The Beatitudes are a short but profoundly influential collection of sayings by Jesus. They set out the Christian vision of the world.

Each session begins with a short opening prayer, and then a discussion followed by a reading from the Bible. There is a video and a reflection.

I do hope that you can find time to attend these sessions, as I think they will help and support us on our Christian journey.

I look forward to sharing them with you.

God bless, David.



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Church Action on Poverty Sunday – 23rd February

Church Action on Poverty Sunday takes place later this month. Many of us want to help the poor, but the challenges are huge.

‘Good News for the poor’ - that was what Jesus promised – and the crowd flocked to hear it. But He didn’t promise to abolish poverty. ‘The poor you always have with you’, He said, and everything we have seen since has proved that He was right.

Two thousand years, many political promises and different regimes, and we still have poor people, often living alongside the conspicuously rich. ‘Good news for the poor’? Not, it appears, in any political or social revolution. Sadly, we have yet to abolish poverty.

But followers of Jesus have been in the forefront of those who have tried to mitigate its consequences. Churches and various individual Christians have been prime movers in the amazing development of Food Banks. The Bradford-based charity ‘Christians against Poverty’ has helped literally tens of thousands of people out of debt. Night shelters for the homeless, schools in the world’s poorest lands and support for drug addicts – these are on the agenda of every Church and that is good news for the poor.

There is so much more to be done, of course, if poverty is ever to be eliminated. But not being able to do it all mustn’t stop us doing what we can.

So this year, why not do something to support Church Action on Poverty?

Details at: <http://www.church-poverty.org.uk/sunday/>

Never look down on anybody unless you’re helping him up. – *Jesse Jackson*





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I walked into a post office just before Valentine's day, and couldn't help noticing a middle-aged, balding man standing in a corner sticking "Love" stamps on bright pink envelopes with hearts all over them. Then the man got out a bottle of Channel perfume from his pocket and started spraying scent over the envelopes.

By now my curiosity had got the better of me, and so I asked the man why he was sending all those cards. The man replied, "I'm sending out 500 Valentine cards signed, 'Guess who?'"

"But why?" I asked.

"I'm a divorce lawyer," the man replied.



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On why pews are better than chairs

The Rectory

St James the Least

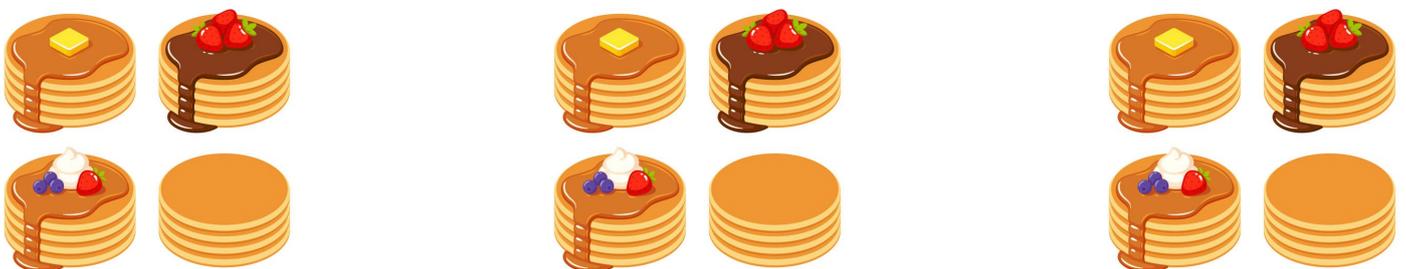


My dear Nephew Darren

While it was good to see you when you visited us last Sunday, your suggestion to our churchwardens that chairs would be far more comfortable than our pews was not well received. You must remember that significant numbers in any congregation firmly believe that the more uncomfortable they are, the holier they must be. Pews, generally designed several centuries ago when legs were shorter and bottoms smaller, are conducive neither to comfort nor sleep - although Colonel Marchington achieves the latter unerringly every Sunday within minutes of arrival.

At least with pews, parishioners can make some pretence at kneeling, adopting that peculiar crouch only ever seen in church life. Attempt that with chairs and you are assured of sending the one in front sliding across the floor with a shriek. Chairs may be all very well in your own church, so you can create space for the delights of liturgical dance and baby clinics, but we prefer something more immovable. Little Miss Thripp has, over the years, created something of a nest where she sits, quietly bringing in cushions, travelling rugs and her own supply of books and peppermints. As for Major Hoare, I suspect he is installing a drinks cabinet in his pew.

Pews, unlike rows of chairs, also create territorial behaviour. If a visitor should sit in a pew where regulars have sat for the last 50 years, it is regarded as if it were the invasion of Poland. One innocent family once chose the pew where generations of the Psmith family have sat since dinosaurs roamed the land. The Psmiths had no intention of ceding territory peacefully and so for the whole of Matins, one pew which should have held 6 people sat 9. When they stood to sing, the line exploded into the aisles on both sides, returning to their compressed state, necessitating staggered shallow breathing, when re-seated.



I will concede, however, that we made one mistake some years ago when the pews were re-varnished without having been fully cleaned first. The result is that every time the congregation stands, the organ is drowned out by the sound of tearing, while coats and jackets reluctantly part company with wood.

No, your congregation may relax in the luxury of padded chairs, but we will stoutly maintain our holy discomfort.

Your loving uncle,

Eustace



**The Church garden work party
this month will be on
Saturday 8th from 2-4pm.**

This of course is before the Beetle Drive (where did you think we were going to get the beetles from?)

Come along and burn a few calories so that you can tuck into the sausages & mash without guilt!

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29th February– Oswald of Worcester-the saint for a Leap Year

There is a saint for Leap Year: He is St Oswald of Worcester, who died on 29th February 992. His family story was extraordinary, and full of some surprising 'leaps', all by itself. It provides a tantalising glimpse of what happened to at least one of those pagan Viking warriors who settled in Anglo-Saxon Britain.

For Oswald's great-uncle had come to England c 865, as part of the 'Great Heathen Army' of Viking invaders. But his son, Oswald's uncle, Oda, forsook paganism, and not only converted to Christianity, but actually ended up as Archbishop of Canterbury. From there, Oda was in a position to help his nephew, Oswald, which he did.

Oda sent young Oswald to be educated at the abbey of Fleury, then a great centre of learning. There Oswald absorbed the Benedictine ideals which would guide his later life and work. Back in England, he became bishop of Worcester in 961, and with the support of King Edgar, eagerly joined in major reforms of the Anglo-Saxon church. In 972 Oswald was made Archbishop of York, and seems to have taken a great interest in renewing the church in the Danelaw. He founded Ramsey Abbey, which became one of the great Fenland monasteries.

Oswald was popular as an archbishop, and always washed the feet of the poor every Lent. On 29th February 992 he had just completed this service at Worcester when he collapsed and died. In later years, Worcester adopted both him and Wulfstan to be its two chief saints: they flank the tomb of King John, which is before the high altar in the cathedral.



FEBRUARY	Family Service	Parish Eucharist
Sunday 2nd February Candlemas	10am Family Service Family Eucharist Revd. David Pierce	11.00am Parish Eucharist Revd. David Pierce
Sunday 9th February 4th before Lent	10am Family Eucharist Revd. David Pierce	11:00am Parish Eucharist Revd. David Pierce
Sunday 16th February 3rd before Lent	10am Family Service Revd. David Pierce	11.00am Parish Eucharist Revd. David Pierce
Sunday 23rd February 2nd before Lent	10am Family Service Revd. David Pierce	11.00am Parish Eucharist Revd. John Russell
Wednesday 26th February Ash Wednesday		8:00pm Evening Eucharist Revd. David Pierce

Mid-week services

Monday 9:00am **Morning prayer**

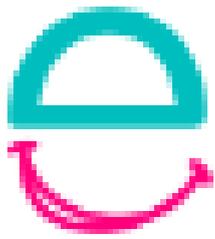
Thursday 9:00am **Morning prayer**

 10:00am **Communion**

 10:30am **Coffee Morning**

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Craig

HAVE YOU ANYTHING FOR THIS MAGAZINE?

Thank you to Francine and David for their contributions this month. If you have anything which would be of interest, please contact the editor, Craig Hunter early in the month, so that your space can be reserved.

07932503644; chunter2009@hotmail.co.uk

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CONTACT DETAILS

For all enquiries, including weddings, baptisms, blessings etc. please, in the first instance, contact the Churchwarden.

Phone numbers are all area code 01702 unless stated

Lead Minister	Revd. David Pierce	07305 710265 david@revdavidpierce.net
Churchwardens	Pat Fitch	585289 pat_fitch@btinternet.com
	Craig Hunter	07932503644 chunter2009@hotmail.co.uk
Hall Bookings	Phyl Wickenden	582185
	Francine Johnson	589244
PCC Secretary	Michelle Waters	589026
Church Finance & Gift Aid Secretary	Francine Johnson	589244
Electoral Roll	(Vacancy)	
Church Diaries & Flowers co-ordinator	Wendy Shipperley	588319
Social, Hall & Fundraising	Francine Johnson	589244
	Phyl Wickenden	582185
Readers, Chalice Assistants & Sides persons Rota	Church Wardens	
Parish Magazine	Craig Hunter	0793203644 chunter2009@hotmail.co.uk
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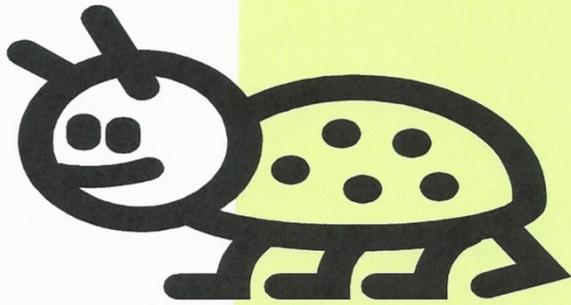
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