

## Church Newsround April 2009

### Reminder

Two more Lent Lunches Fridays 3<sup>rd</sup> & 10<sup>th</sup> April in St Wilfrid's Church Hall Noon to 1.30 pm.

Soup & a Roll etc £2.50. Profits to the Nomad Trust.

See you there

### BISHOP'S LETTER - Going for Growth

Recent statistics indicate that percentage growth in Church attendance has been greater in the Diocese of Lincoln than in any other Diocese in England. This includes children and young people as well as adults, and Electoral Roll registrations showed an increase where there was virtually universal decline elsewhere.

Clearly we must take encouragement from this, and pay tribute to all those whose faithful lives of service and witness to Christ attract new people to the worship of God.

But note Bob Jackson's comment when the national statistics showed a modest increase a couple of years ago: "For one year only, the Church of England is able to say: 'Good News, there are more of us on the Titanic than we thought' – but the ship may still be going down".

This is a salutary warning against reading too much into one set of statistics, but we should still want to celebrate evidence of growth however we encounter it, and these figures speak of growth.

Set them alongside significant increases in the number of people testing their vocation to Lay and Ordained ministry, and a steady expansion in Fresh Expressions of Church initiatives, and we have good reason to be in good heart as we take our mission forward into God's future.

And mission will be the watchword as we seek to live out the good news of Easter and Pentecost in the months ahead. Mission Forums are already in place around the Diocese, Mission Roadshows and easy-to-access resources are being promoted by the Fresh Expressions Group, and we Bishops are renewing our role as leaders in Mission.

Mission means many things, and we will want to take forward an holistic approach to Mission in this Diocese. At the heart of it all is our common calling to grow the Kingdom, and going for growth will remain our primary purpose because the Risen Christ commissions us to nothing less.

+ John Lincoln

### Joint Palm Sunday Arrangements – 5 April 2009

Leaders of the two congregations have consulted and prayed together and agreed that this year's Palm Sunday procession should be more of a 'prayer walk' than a 'march of witness' although, hopefully, it will also be the latter.

This decision arises in part from last month's sermon based on the experience of Nehemiah and its relevance to us in Metheringham. We, like Nehemiah and his companions, need to repair and rebuild. Nehemiah's physical repairing and rebuilding brought spiritual awakening in Jerusalem. It is felt that we need to 'build' in the spiritual realm in order to see visible signs of renewal in Church and Chapel and, as a result, in our community.

We will, as usual, have a donkey! The donkey will remind us of Jesus riding into Jerusalem in peace on the first Palm Sunday. But an added significance will arise from the fact that Nehemiah rode a donkey while he and his companions walked around Jerusalem assessing the damage hundreds of years earlier.

We shall begin by praying for the Methodists and end by praying for the Anglicans. In between Chapel and Church we will pause to pray at the shops, bank, Info-Links, library, surgery and pubs. We will set off from the Chapel at 10.15am, arriving at Church by 10.30am.

For various good reasons, some will be unable to join the walk but their prayers in church would be much appreciated.

The service at 10.30am will be Morning Worship followed by tea and coffee for those able to stay.

**John Tyrrell**

### **St Wilfrid's Parish Meeting**

The Annual Parish Meeting of St. Wilfrid's Church was held on Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> March. There were 14 parishioners present as Mr. Nigel Dickin, the Lay Chair of Graffoe Deanery, took the meeting. Mrs. Ann De-Vries and Mrs. Margaret Amos were duly elected churchwardens.

At the Annual Parochial Church Meeting, held on the same day and following the Annual Parish Meeting, short reports were given by people who carry out various roles.

It is sad to report that there are now only 71 names on the Church Electoral Roll. If you are not already on it please give consideration to becoming part of it. Further information can be obtained from Mrs. Amos.

The financial position of the church fluctuates from year to year. Planned giving has increased, but so too have costs for heating and lighting. We can take comfort in the fact that our Parish Share of £17,344 has been paid in full. There are, however, several worries about the fabric of the church building and these need to be addressed before we consider re-decoration of the interior.

Another decline has been in the number of children coming to the crèche/Sunday school, but on a positive note it has been calculated that over seven years a total of £10,000 in profit from "Another Chance" has been donated to worthy causes.

No new nominations were made for membership of the PCC, and the numbers have been reduced by three. Volunteers are always needed for the roles of sidesperson, intercessor and lesson reader, because the more we have the less times your turn will come up!

Mr. Dickin was able to inform us that in the near future there will be a new incumbent for the six parishes of Blankney, Branston, Dunston, Metheringham, Nocton and Potterhanworth, but not until a suitable property has been found for them to live in. JH

### **Dunston News**

#### **PLEASE CAN YOU HELP ME?**

As part of our service on Remembrance Day in November at St Peters, Dunston we read out the names of those in the Parish who have given their lives in service to their country and those remembered on the memorial. With that in mind it is my intention to do a display in St Peters in memory of the contribution and sacrifice of these local men.

If anyone has information, letters, newspaper copy or photographs to add to the display i would be very grateful and promise to scan the originals and return them immediately.

I understand this may be a sensitive and painful issue for some people and it is not my intention to upset or distress anyone. I hope the display will bring people together in the spirit of remembrance and fellowship.

Any information to [kay.howat@hotmail.com](mailto:kay.howat@hotmail.com) or 01526 321780

Thank you. Kay Howat Church Warden

## Dunston School News

We have been very busy in school so far during Term 4. Towards the end of February, we enjoyed an Indian workshop in school which included Rangoli patterns and Dandiya dance. Also some members of staff attended the celebrations at the chapel in Dunston to mark its 150<sup>th</sup> year.

On March 5<sup>th</sup>, we celebrated World Book Day. The children read out extracts from their favourite books, entered a competition to draw their favourite book character and voted (along with their parents) for their all time favourite books. Also on that day we held our monthly church service which again was well attended.

Last week we appointed a new teacher, Mr. Truelove, to cover my teaching commitment after Easter when the Federation with Digby Primary starts. On the Friday we all came to school wearing red to raise money for Comic Relief. We held a "Dunston's Got Talent" contest which saw over 40 children perform in front of the whole school. Entries included singing, dancing, magic tricks, joke telling, guitar playing and even whistling! We had great fun and raised over £120!

Graham Boyall Headteacher

## SERVICES FOR APRIL IN THE THREE PARISHES

### Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> (and each Thursday)

9.00am Holy Communion – St Wilfrid's Metherringham

2.15pm Monthly Family Service at St. Peter's with St.Peter's School

### Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> Holy Week Palm Sunday

8.00am Holy Communion – St. Wilfrid's

9.00am Holy Communion – St. Peter's Dunston

10.15am Palm Procession from the Chapel to St Wilfrid's for Service with the Methodists

### Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> Stations of the Cross

7.30pm St. Peter's Dunston

### Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> Holy Communion

7.30pm St. Oswald's Blankney

### Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> Maundy Thursday

9.00am Holy Communion – St. Wilfrid's Metherringham

7.30pm Holy Communion – St. Wilfrid's Metherringham

### Friday 10<sup>th</sup> Good Friday

9.00am Matins and Litany – St. Peter's Dunston

2 – 3pm Meditation – St. Wilfrid's Metherringham

7.30pm Compline – St. Oswald's Blankney

6.00pm United Good Friday Meditation Dunston Chapel

### Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> Easter Sunday

9.00am Holy Communion – St. Oswald's Blankney

9.00a.m Holy Communion – St. Peter's Dunston

10.30am Holy Communion – St. Wilfrid's Metherringham

### Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Easter

9.00am Holy Communion – St. Peter's Dunston

10.30am Morning Worship – St Wilfrid's Metherringham

### Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Easter

9.00am Morning Prayer followed by Holy Communion St. Oswald's Blankney

10.30am Holy Communion – St Wilfrid's Metherringham

## May

### Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter

8.00am Holy Communion – St. Wilfrids Metherringham

9.00am Holy Communion – St. Peter's Dunston

10.30am United Service – Metheringham Methodist Chapel

### **Metheringham WI**

At the AGM the 10 member committee was re-elected. Audrey Webb – President, Ronnie Wright – secretary, Brenda Hutchison – treasurer and Wendy Tompkins to replace Coral Earney. There was a vote of thanks to all the committee for their work. Many activities were organised throughout the year. Sports, Darts Table Tennis, 10 pin bowling along with Theatre and Cinema visits.

Cynthia Dobbs won three competitions cups and Cathy Mitcham the 10 Pin Bowl Trophy. Angela Harvey presented the Annual Spring Council Report held in Spalding.

This year is our 75<sup>th</sup> Birthday – to be celebrated later. The evening concluded with refreshments, a quiz and appropriate words from our own President “The ingredients of a good WI is a good laugh” Also as a non cake maker – her chocolate cakes. Next meeting April 15<sup>th</sup> Countryside and Birds. A talk by Mr J Weston. Visitors Welcome. JS

### **Metheringham Over 60s**

On Wednesday 4th March, the Metheringham Over 60s held their Annual General Meeting with over 120 members in attendance. The President, Mr. Bill Chambers, opened the meeting and summarised the past years events and thanked all those involved with the organisation.

A review of the Club's activities was given by Chairman Mrs. Margaret Amos with the conclusion that 2008 had been another very successful year for members. The Club is run by Volunteers who give up a lot of their time and effort to ensure the smooth running of the many activities.

Thanks were expressed for those retiring officers, their replacements and to Sheila Kettleborough and the many unsung helpers who organise the catering and flowers. Additionally, our drivers, Margaret Amos, Derek Bell, Kath Mandall, Maureen Reynolds and Pam Woolley, who bring members to the meetings and events throughout the year. This was met with an appreciative round of applause from the members.

Margaret will continue in the post of chairman winning overwhelming support of the members present. Regrettably, two committee members have resigned their posts, but happily they will remain within the club, as follows:

Our finance genius, Rita Blow, or should that be genie for pulling things out at the raffles, retired as Treasurer but will remain as Vice-Treasurer with responsibility for the two holidays arranged for members each year. We welcome David Harvey as our new Treasurer. Also, Doreen Cope returns to the role of organising coach trips.

Mrs. Ann Crooks, who has been supported by her husband Brian, retires as Secretary, Ann has done a splendid job, including making and sending out birthday cards, over the past 6 years.

Doreen Blackband will take over responsibility for the cards and Dave Williams as the new secretary.

April is the start of our year's activities and events and as usual tea and biscuits will be served during the intermissions, but no ice creams.

Diary Events 2009:

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|------------------|---|
| 1st April        | Existing members re-register and there will be a Talk by Maureen Sutton on Easter Traditions and Lincolnshire Folklore. Maureen is by all accounts both authoritative and witty.                                  |
| 16-20th November | Turkey and Tinsel Holiday. The cost will be £280 each person, this cost will cover everything including insurance and there is no single room supplement. Members should contact Margaret on Metheringham 321049. |

Dave Williams (Secretary)

## Maundy Thursday

Maundy Thursday is famous for two things. The first is one of the final acts that Jesus did before his death: the washing of his own disciples' feet. (see John 13) Jesus washed his disciples' feet for a purpose: "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another." His disciples were to love through service, not domination, of one another. In Latin, the opening phrase of this sentence is 'mandatum novum do vobis' The word 'mundy' is thus a corruption of the Latin 'mandatum' (or command). The ceremony of the 'washing of the feet' of members of the congregation came to be an important part of the liturgy (regular worship) of the medieval church, symbolising the humility of the clergy, in obedience to the example of Christ.

But Thursday was also important because it was on that night that Jesus first introduced the Lord's Supper, or what we nowadays call Holy Communion. Jesus and his close friends had met in a secret upper room to share the Passover meal together - for the last time. And there Jesus transformed the Passover into the Lord's Supper, saying, 'this is my body' and 'this is my blood' as he, the Lamb of God, prepared to die for the sins of the whole world. John's gospel makes it clear that the Last Supper took place the evening BEFORE the regular Passover meal, and that later Jesus died at the same time that the Passover lambs were killed. PP

## EASTER

Easter, of course, is the most special day of the Christian year: the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. Why does the date move around so much? Because the date of Passover moves around, and according to the biblical account, Easter is tied to the Passover. Passover celebrates the Israelites' exodus from Egypt and it lasts for seven days, from the middle of the Hebrew month of Nisan, which equates to late March or early April.

Sir Isaac Newton was one of the first to use the Hebrew lunar calendar to come up with firm dates for Good Friday: Friday 7 April 30 AD or Friday 3 April, 33 AD, with Easter Day falling two days later. Modern scholars continue to think these the most likely.

Most people will tell you that Easter falls on the first Sunday after the first full moon after the Spring Equinox, which is broadly true. But the precise calculations are unbelievably complicated and involve something called an 'ecclesiastical full moon', which is not the same as the moon in the sky. The earliest possible date for Easter in the West is 22 March, which last fell in 1818 and won't fall again until 2285. The latest is 25 April, which last happened in 1943 and is next due in 2038.

Why the name, 'Easter'? In almost every European language, the festival's name comes from 'Pesach', the Hebrew word for Passover. The Germanic word 'Easter', however, seems to come from Eostre, a Saxon fertility goddess mentioned by the Venerable Bede. He thought that the Saxons worshipped her in 'Eostur month', but may have confused her with the classical dawn goddesses like Eos and Aurora, whose names mean 'shining in the east'. So Easter might have meant simply 'beginning month' – a good time for starting up again after a long winter.

Finally, why Easter eggs? On one hand, they are an ancient symbol of birth in most European cultures. On the other hand, hens start laying regularly again each Spring. Since eggs were forbidden during Lent, it's easy to see how decorating and eating them became a practical way to celebrate Easter.

## St George's Day d circa 300 AD

The Saint of an English Army before he was Patron Saint of England, St George may have been a soldier, but he was no Englishman. He was an officer in the Roman army under Diocletian, who refused to abandon his faith during the Terror, and was martyred at Lydda in Palestine about the year 300 AD - supposedly 23 April. Over the years St George became the example of a Christian

fighting-man, a powerful helper against evil powers affecting individual lives. He was the soldier-hero of the Middle Ages, of whom remarkable deeds were reported.

In the Golden Legend of the 13th century, Jacobus de Voragine gave St George a handsome write-up. The story runs thus:

One day, St George rode up to the heathen city of Sylene in Lybia, where he found the citizens in great distress. A neighbouring dragon had forced them to surrender two sheep each day for its dinner, and when the sheep gave out, two of their children; and now they were about to sacrifice the King's daughter, dressed as if for her wedding. St George encountered the little party by a stagnant lake, where the dragon lived, and persuaded the sobbing Princess to tell him why she was so miserable. At that moment the dragon appeared, looking inexpressibly revolting. The Saint charged, and drove his spear into the gaping mouth. To everyone's amazement, he tumbled the monster over and over.

Then St George borrowed the Princess's girdle, tied it round the dragon's neck, and persuaded her to lead it back to Sylene herself. The sight of her approaching with the befuddled dragon on its makeshift lead emptied the town. When the inhabitants timidly crept back, St George promised to behead the dragon if they would all believe in Jesus Christ and be baptised.

It was a most effective form of evangelism, for everybody said 'yes' at once. So 15,000 people were baptised, and four carts were commissioned to remove the dragon's body.

St George thus became a symbol of the war against evil, and is usually portrayed trampling the dragon of sin under his horse's hoofs. The Crusaders had a vision of him helping them against the Saracens at Antioch, during the first Crusade, and so brought the story of St George back with them from Palestine. Presently England put herself under the protection of the Saint. His day was declared a holiday in 1222. A red cross on a white field is the flag of St George. PP

### **Mark (d c 74)**

Mark, whose home in Jerusalem became a place of rest for Jesus and his 12 apostles, is considered the traditional author of the second gospel. He is also usually identified as the young man, described in Mark 14.51, who followed Christ after his arrest and then escaped capture by leaving his clothes behind.

Papias, in 130, said that in later years Mark became Peter's interpreter. If so, then this close friendship would have been how Mark gathered so much information about Jesus' life. Peter referred to him affectionately as his 'son'.

Mark was also a companion to Paul on his journeys. When Paul was held captive at Rome, Mark was with him, helping him. Mark's Gospel, most likely written in Italy, perhaps in Rome, is the earliest account we have of the life of Jesus.

Early in the 9th century Mark's body was brought to Venice, whose patron he became, and there it has remained to this day. The symbol of Mark as an evangelist, the lion, is much in evidence at Venice. PP

### **On why a vicar should avoid taking weddings**

The Rectory St. James the Least of All.

My dear Nephew Darren

Offering to take last week's marriage service for you in your church, so you could attend your weekend plumbing course, proved to be an unwise act of generosity on my part.

You may now be qualified to unblock church hall kitchen sinks and install drainage to the font, but I will not be taking another marriage ceremony for you again, no matter how much you have set your heart on that electrician's course next year, so that you can re-wire the vestry and put strobe lighting in the sanctuary.

At first, I was delighted when the bride's mother called, inviting me to the reception. I assumed that Charnley Hall would be a fitting location for the reception, even if it was a little puzzling not to be able to find the venue in the directory of stately homes. I did not realise until too late that it was the name of the public house next door to your church. Clearly the regulars in the Saloon Bar were not

used to seeing a gentleman of the cloth in their establishment, because someone was sent over to ask me where the fancy dress party was.

At least I had been placed with the happy couple and both sets of parents, although the privilege was rather spoiled when I was told that my presence there was to stop the bride's mother attacking her newly-acquired son-in-law. My presence may have kept the peace at our table, but had no effect on some of the others.

Well before the speeches, remarks between bride's and groom's supporters had moved from sarcasm to the point where I expected tactical nuclear weapons would be deployed. Phrases such as "Who are you looking at?" and "Want to come outside and sort it out?" that I'd only ever read in the sort of cheap fiction one buys for long train journeys echoed round the room. Battle lines were drawn. The Archduke Ferdinand moment came when a bridesmaid slapped an usher. Chairs were overturned, fists made contact with noses and bottles were being thrown. I decided it was time to step in and command order, knowing they were bound to obey the Rector of St. James the Less. Approaching one gentleman who was wielding a bottle, I took it from him and then held it aloft above his own head, to demonstrate how threatening such a pose looked. Unfortunately, that was the moment the police arrived, who, unlike our local village constable, were deaf to explanations. Were our churchwarden, Lord Jelleby to have been on the bench that day, matters could have been settled quite amicably. It was not to be: you may enthusiastically pass the peace in your church; I am now bound over to keep it.

Your loving uncle,  
Eustace

When you mix children and religion...

You get some unexpected gems. The following are extracts from religious exam papers...

In the first book of the Bible, Guinnesses, God got tired of creating the world so he took the Sabbath off.

Adam and Eve were created from an apple tree. Noah's wife was Joan of Ark because Noah built an ark. The animals came on in pears.

The Jews are a proud people and throughout history they've had trouble with unsympathetic genitals.

Moses led the Jews to the Red Sea where they made unleavened bread which is bread without any ingredients.

The Seventh Commandment is: Thou shalt not admit adultery.

Moses died before he ever reached Canada.

Solomon, one of David's sons, had 300 wives and 700 porcupines.

Jesus enunciated the golden rule, which says do unto others before they do one to you. He also explained a man doth not live by sweat alone.

It was a miracle when Jesus rose from the dead and managed to get the tombstone off the entrance.

The people who followed the Lord were called the twelve decibels.

St Paul cavorted to Christianity down the Damascus Road. There he preached holy acrimony, which is another name for marriage.

God grades on the cross not the curve. anon

When you raise yourself above a servant, you have just ranked yourself above Saviour. anon

All the armies that ever marched, and all the navies that ever were built, and all the parliaments that ever sat, and all the kings that ever reigned, put together, have not affected the life of mankind on this earth as powerfully as has that one solitary life. anon

He suffered not as God, but he who suffered was God. John Owen

The death of Christ was the most dreadful blow ever given to the empire of darkness. William Plumer

The world cannot bury Christ. The earth is not deep enough for his tomb, the clouds are not wide enough for his winding-sheet. E Thomson

The best news the world ever had came from a graveyard. anon

The empty tomb of Christ has been the cradle of the church. WR Nicoll

The Christian church has the resurrection written all over it. E G Robinson

Christianity is the revelation of God, not the research of man. JA Stewart

Our friends bring us to the grave and leave us there, but God will not. Anon

Give God what's right - not what's left.

Man's way leads to a hopeless end - God's way leads to an endless hope.

A lot of kneeling will keep you in good standing.

He who kneels before God can stand before anyone.

To be almost saved is to be totally lost.

In the sentence of life, the devil may be a comma - but never let him be the full stop.

Don't put a question mark where God puts a full stop.

Are you wrinkled with burden? Come to the church for a facelift.

When praying, don't give God instructions - just report for duty.

Bibles that are falling apart are usually owned by people who aren't.