

Church News Round March 2009

The Three Parishes Present "LENT LUNCHESES"

Friday 27th March, and 3rd & 10th April in St Wilfrid's Church Hall.

12 noon to 1.30pm.

Home Made soup, roll, butter and cheese with Tea or Coffee. All for £2.50.

Ongoing raffle to be drawn at the Last Lunch. All profits going to a Local Charity.

Transport could possibly be arranged if you have mobility problems.

If anyone could help, or make soup, or donate a raffle prize, or for any query please contact :- June Greenhough tel.328642 or Barbara Spurrier tel.320483

BISHOP'S LETTER - Let's give it up for Lent

We give up things for Lent, but at the same time Lent is about never giving up.

It sounds as though we have got ourselves into a bit of a muddle about what Lent is for, but if we have then there is a good reason why.

On the one hand, Lent recalls Jesus' 40 days in the wilderness where he lived on very little, kept himself to himself and concentrated on preparing body and soul for the journey ahead of him. The least we can do is walk with him on wilderness way as a token of our commitment to follow him even at some cost to ourselves. So we use Lent as a time to give up something which matters to us in order to identify with Jesus in his period of abstinence.

On the other hand, the story which emerges most powerfully from Jesus' time in the wilderness is the story of his temptations. Tormented by hunger he was tempted to turn stones into bread; teased by the prospect of power he was tempted to pay the devil homage; tested by the opportunity to put on a spectacular demonstration of his divine nature he was tempted to throw himself off the Temple parapet into the arms of his guardian angels.

But he resisted all these temptations to give up on his allotted task and so give in to the allure of power, possessions and prestige which so besmirch the image of God in those he was sent to save. That is why Lent is also a time to strengthen our resolve and reinforce our defences against "sin, the world and the devil" to use the time-honoured words of the Baptism Service. It is sometimes tough to live the life of true discipleship, but the lesson of Lent is that we must never give up.

Of course, giving up and not giving up are not mutually exclusive alternatives.

By joining Jesus in his time of abstinence we are also joining with him in his campaign of resistance. We give things up so as to concentrate on the spiritual resources we need to never give up on his call to carry our cross and follow him through the valley of death and onwards to the gate of glory.

We give up things for Lent, but at the same time Lent is about never giving up. + John Lincoln

A Potted Edition of John Tyrrell's Sermon – Sunday 15 February

Those present were asked for a show of hands to see how long they had been members of the St Wilfrid's Church Family. Hands went up for 10 years, 20, 30, 40, 50, 60, 70 with the winner, Pam Reynolds at 80 years!

We were asked to think back all those years to see how the life of the church then compared with how it was today. It seemed to be downhill all the way! It was a rather exaggerated observation but the Register of Baptisms revealed that if all those baptised over the last ten years were in church that day, along with their parents, we would need seating for 951 people! As it was we were 23 adults and 3 children. Just one of those children and two of the adults represented the 951!

We were asked to imagine that we had been exiled from Metheringham many years ago when church life was flourishing. We were then asked to imagine how we would have felt if that day we had returned to find things as they now are.

Nehemiah was exiled from Jerusalem when it was a flourishing city, the City of David, the City of God, the Holy City. There was God-honouring Temple Worship, sound walls and gates – a secure place.

Many years later Nehemiah returned to find the walls of Jerusalem broken down, the gates burned, the Temple and its worship a disgrace to God. What was his reaction? He wept. He mourned. He fasted. He prayed. He was devastated because he loved God and loved Jerusalem.

How did we feel about St Wilfrid's and Metheringham? What did our imagined feelings tell us about how much we loved God, loved Metheringham? What did Nehemiah do? What should we do?

Nehemiah chose a few companions and, by night, walked around Jerusalem assessing the damage. Next he formed people into groups to start rebuilding. Some worked on the broken-down walls, some built and hung new gates. Everybody was asked to do what they could to repair any damage close to where they lived.

For doing this they were mocked, ridiculed, threatened, attacked, intimidated and slandered but they kept at it, praying "Lord, strengthen our hands."

In just 52 days the job was done. Their enemies realised that only with God's help could Nehemiah and his companions have achieved this. The Book of Nehemiah tells us that at this point Nehemiah's enemies "lost their self-confidence"!

It was suggested that the people of St Wilfrid's take heart from Nehemiah and his companions and follow their steps in the following ways:

- 1) Nehemiah's initial walking around the city by night suggests that we needed to honestly face the facts of our situation before we can begin our reconstruction work.
- 2) Nehemiah's fasting and praying showed us that we need a real determination, with God's help, to get the job done.
- 3) The broken walls/defences of Jerusalem should alert us to the fact that we have neglected to put in place the defences God can provide us with as we co-operate with him.
- 4) Nehemiah's emphasis on co-operation emphasised for us this essential element if any enterprise is to be successful in Metheringham.
- 5) Nehemiah's enlisting of help and allocating of tasks (every member ministry) means that thorough organisation will have to be employed here also (NB Wardens and PCC!)

Were we too old for this? Too few for this? Did we have the time? Nehemiah and his companions achieved their target in 52 days! And almost as soon as they did, exiles started returning. There was celebration and their theme song was "The joy of the Lord is our strength."

We were encouraged to proclaim and pray. To proclaim God's rule and reign over the people of St Wilfrid's and their building – prompted by every glimpse of the tower as we went about the village day by day. To proclaim God's rule and reign over every significant part of the village and over those areas that seem particularly 'broken'. We were to consider setting up a prayer chain, to use the Electoral Roll in such a way that we prayed for every member at least once a month, to pray, really pray, for our Wardens and PCC as they lead and organise and encourage, to pray that we will recognise and confront the situations in front of our own homes that need addressing.

Nehemiah reassured us that:

Prayer works!
Trust in God works!
Obedience to God works!

There would be mockery, ridicule, intimidation, temptation to compromise, but, if we persevered as Nehemiah did, the exiles would return, God be glorified and His Kingdom extended.

You can probably read the Book of Nehemiah in the Old Testament in less time than it takes to read today's newspaper. It will probably be more encouraging!

JT

LENT COURSES 2009

We start Lent with a service in St Wilfrid's on ash Wednesday 25th Feb at 7.30 and starting on 5th March there will be a weekly Lent Course on Thursday evenings at 7.30pm in St Wilfrid's Church Hall .

It will take the form of a Bible based course looking at what Lent is all about and why we still try to observe it. There will be opportunity to discuss what we read and to ask any related questions (or to keep quiet and listen if you are so minded !)

This is open to anyone interested. All you need to do is turn up, preferably with a Bible. Obviously not everyone will be able to make it every week but you will be no less welcome for that.

Rev Charles Sowden

I would like to thank all those people in our three parishes who turned up for my last service in Metherringham on February 1st. It was really good to see so many of you there.

I would also like to thank every one for the gifts presented to me and Dillon and Solomon. The money is being used to buy some new vestments so that I have my own chasubles in addition to the white one I already have. The boys have used their gift tokens to buy computer games and are really delighted with them.

As I look back over three years among you there are so many good things that I have been privileged to share with you. Scarecrow Weekend, Music Festival, Harvest Suppers, Carol Services, Palm Sunday Processions, Remembrance Sunday, Christmas Tree Festival, and the many other things we have done together, and of course the privilege of leading you in worship each week.

I have met many wonderful people over the three years and have come alongside many of you at weddings, baptisms and funerals.

I would also like to thank everyone in the parishes for their love and prayers and support following the death of my wife last year. Too many of you to name individually but I shall never forget the love and kindness shown to the family and me.

At the moment I am still living in the vicarage but am meeting with the Bishop of Grantham on 25th February to try and discern what the future may hold.

With love and every blessing for you all in the future,
Charles.

SERVICES FOR MARCH IN THE THREE PARISHES

Sunday 1st 1st Sunday of Lent

8.00am Holy Communion – St. Wilfrid's

9.00am Holy Communion - St. Peter's

10.30am United Service – Metheringham Methodist Chapel

Thursday 5th (and each Thursday)

9.00am Holy Communion – St. Wilfrid's

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

Friday 6th Women's World Day of Prayer

10.30am Methodist Chapel – Metheringham

Sunday 8th 2nd Sunday of Lent

9.00am Holy Communion – St Oswald's

9.00am Morning Worship – St. Peter's Dunston

10.30am Holy Communion – St. Wilfrid's Metheringham

Sunday 15th 3rd Sunday of Lent

9.00am Holy Communion – St. Peter's Dunston

10.30am Morning Worship – St. Wilfrid's Metheringham

Sunday 22nd 4th Sunday of Lent – Mothering Sunday

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

10.30am Holy Communion – St Wilfrid's

Sunday 29th 5th Sunday of Lent Passion Sunday

10.30am Holy Communion – St. Peter's Group Service

April

Sunday 5th Palm Sunday

8.00am Holy Communion – St. Wilfrid's

10.15am Process from Chapel to St Wilfrid's for the United Palm Sunday Service.

A Parable

A member of a certain church, who previously had been attending services each week, stopped going.

After a few weeks, the vicar decided to visit him. It was a chilly evening. The priest found the man at home alone, sitting before a blazing fire. Guessing the reason for his vicar's visit, the man welcomed him, led him to a big chair near the fireplace and waited. The priest made himself comfortable but said nothing. In the grave silence, he contemplated the play of the flames around the burning logs.

After some minutes, the priest took the fire tongs, carefully picked up a brightly burning ember and placed it to one side of the hearth all alone. Then he sat back in his chair, still silent. The host watched all this in quiet fascination.

As the one lone ember's flame diminished, there was a momentary glow and then its fire was no more. Soon it was cold and dead and dark.

Not a word had been spoken since the initial greeting. The two men sat on in reflective silence.

A little while later, just before the vicar was ready to leave, he picked up the cold, dead ember and placed it back in the middle of the fire. Immediately it began to glow once more with the light and warmth of the burning coals around it.

As the vicar reached the door to leave, his host said "Thank you so much for your visit and especially for the fiery sermon. I shall be back in church next Sunday".

Dunston News

The next annual parish meeting for St Peters Church, Dunston will be held on 2.4.09 at 7.30pm in the church, this is an opportunity to hear about all the work of church over the past year and elect churchwardens for the coming year. All parishioners are welcome.

St Peter's School

I write this month with some very exciting news. After Easter, Dunston Primary will be entering into a "Soft Governance Federation" with Digby Church of England Primary School. This is an exciting development for both schools and open up lots of possibilities for sharing ideas, resources, planning etc. It will initially be for four terms but we are hoping that it will become a longer term arrangement between these two schools that are both small and both church schools.

In effect, this will mean that I will become the head teacher of both schools, sharing my time equally between the two sites. The schools will however completely retain their identities, staff, governors and so on.

There are a growing number of such federations in Lincolnshire and I believe that it is the way forward to ensure that small schools thrive and develop in the future. Graham Boyall Headteacher

ST. WILFRID'S CHURCH, ANNUAL PARISH MEETING & ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING

These two meetings are scheduled for Tuesday 17th March 2009 at 7pm in St. Wilfrid's Church, and everyone is invited to them.

At the time of writing Mrs. Rachel Tyrrell has decided to stand down as churchwarden, and we thank her for all her hard work during the two years she has held this office. Mrs. Ann De-Vries, her fellow churchwarden, has indicated that she is willing to continue for a further year.

There is, therefore, a vacancy for the office of churchwarden at St. Wilfrid's Church which, in this time of interregnum, should be filled. The Church needs the support of the whole community at the present time. The office of churchwarden is an ancient and honourable one, and help and support is given by the Parochial Church Council to those in this position.

If you would like to be considered for election please let Mrs. Ann De-Vries (321363) know as soon as possible. If you know some-one who is interested, please ask them to get in touch with Mrs. De-Vries. The position can be filled by a parishioner of Metheringham, not just somebody from within the church congregation or Parochial Church Council. However, this person needs to be someone who is prepared to commit time and energy to the Church. So, please, give it your considered thought and prayers – we need to fill this position, and not leave all the work to our remaining churchwarden.

May I take this opportunity to thank Mrs. Ann De-Vries most sincerely for all the work she does on behalf of St. Wilfrid's Church, most of it 'behind the scenes.' JH

Metheringham Over 60's Club

In spite of the awful weather our February meeting went ahead with 80 members turning out for a wonderful evening's entertainment from our very good friends Nick & Anita (Country Contrast). March is the Annual General Meeting so come along and make your views known, if you have a grievance we cannot do anything to rectify matters if we don't know about them. April is Signing On Night for existing members, subject to places being available new members will be enrolled in May. If you have decided not to renew your membership would you please let a member of the committee know. We are having a Coffee morning in the Village Hall on Saturday 7th March commencing at 10.00am. All welcome to come in and enjoy a coffee and a browse around the stalls.

Diary Dates

4th March Annual General Meeting, 7th March Coffee Morning, 1st April

Signing On Night

Ann Crooks. Secretary

Metheringham WI

Merchants, Markets and Pilgrimages were the main aspects of medieval life affecting the development of some of our well loved Lincoln buildings.

The Merchants became prosperous. The Jews House was a corm merchants plus shops and the Norman House belonged to wealthy Christians.. Sheep farming contributed to increasing wealth and markets for every commodity became a way of life – as they are today.

The Bishop's Palace and St Mary's Guild Hall held feasts to raise money for the Cathedral. The Gothic building was rebuilt after being destroyed by fire, then an earthquake. It was and still is a centre for developing skills eg stone work. Many stone carvings warned a predominantly illiterate medieval population what would happen to them if they deviated from a Christian way of life. The Cathedral also became a Mecca for pilgrims (Medieval Tourists). Our thanks to Mr. Lance for his talk and slides.

Mr Euart Cauldicott writes :-

Dear Sir,

It is a while since I wrote to your magazine and in truth I haven't had much to say.

However I read an article the other day and I would like to share it with all your readers. I take no credit for the article just the joy of sharing it with you all.

The paradox of our time in history is that we have taller buildings but shorter tempers, wider motorways, but narrower viewpoints. We spend more, but have less, we buy more, but enjoy less. We have bigger houses, but smaller families, more conveniences, but less time. We have more degrees but less sense, more knowledge, but less judgement, more experts, yet more problems, more medicine, but less wellness.

We drink too much, smoke too much, spend too recklessly, laugh too little, drive too fast, get too angry, stay up too late, get up too tired, read too little, watch TV too much, and pray too seldom.

We have multiplied our possessions, but reduced our values. We talk too much, love too seldom, and hate too often.

We've learned how to make a living, but not a life. We've added years to life not life to years. We've been all the way to the moon and back, but we have trouble crossing the street to meet a new neighbour. We conquered outer space but not inner space. We've done larger things, but not better things.

We've cleaned up the air, but polluted our soul. We've conquered the atom, but not our prejudice. We write more, but learn less. We plan more, but accomplish less. We've learned to rush, but not to wait. We build more computers to hold more information, to produce more copies than ever, but we communicate less and less.

These are the times of fast food and slow digestion, big men and women but small characters, steep profits and shallow relationships. These are the days of two incomes, more divorce, fancier houses, but broken homes. These are the days of quick trips, disposable nappies, throwaway morality, one night stands, over weight bodies, and pills that do everything from cheer, to quiet, to kill.

It is a time when there is much in the showroom window and nothing in the stockroom.

A sobering though for 2009.

I am, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

Euart Cauldicott.

So you want to be a Churchwarden?

Congratulations! You have been asked to consider standing for election to one of the oldest offices in church government – and the wider significance of the role is underlined by the way in which churchwardens are elected. The meeting for the election of churchwardens is open to all local government electors who live in the parish, and not just church members.

When elected, a churchwarden is admitted to office each year, usually by the archdeacon, and, when admitted, the churchwardens are officers of the bishop. That's why the churchwardens escort the bishop into church, carrying their wands of office.

The duties of churchwardens are defined in the Church of England's Canons: 'They shall be foremost in representing the laity and in co-operating with the incumbent; they shall use their best endeavours by example and precept to encourage the parishioners in the practice of true religion and to promote unity and peace among them. They shall also maintain order and decency in the church and churchyard, especially during the time of divine service.'

That's quite a list – and helps us to see why this role is so important.

The way in which churchwardens undertake their role differs from parish to parish. It's very helpful if the parish priest and churchwardens meet regularly so that they can keep each other well informed about what's going on in the parish, celebrate successes and be aware of problems on the horizon.

This is particularly important when a priest has care for a number of different parishes; regular meetings between the parish priest and individual sets of churchwardens and the whole group of churchwardens can help everybody to keep in touch, even if they don't meet at services every Sunday.

Some people are worried about the workload involved in being a churchwarden. It isn't a role to be undertaken lightly or under duress, but there's no need for a new churchwarden necessarily to do everything that former churchwardens have done.

For example, some parishes assume that the churchwardens will also be an unpaid vergers or look after church building. The best person for the role of churchwarden isn't necessarily the best person to act as clerk of works and deal with minor repairs to the church. If you think that you could be a good churchwarden, but haven't a clue about drains, why not talk to your PCC about sharing out the jobs?

Normally, a churchwarden should not serve in that role for more than six years. PP

On the advantages of hospital visiting.....

My dear Nephew Darren

I was delighted that you mentioned hospital visiting in your last letter; it is an important part of ministry and has several advantages over general house visiting. It means that when a parishioner is confined to a hospital bed, you have a captive audience and they cannot pretend not to be in.

Should you ever knock on a front door and get no response, try looking through the sitting room window. You will probably see the occupants

kneeling under the table or hiding behind the sofa. In which case, pretend that you haven't seen them, but make it quite clear to them that you are pretending. The fact that you politely fail to mention the incident the next time they are in church will discomfit them even more.

If they are in hospital, it also means that after the first five minutes, they can't excuse themselves with having to collect the children from school/take some clothes to the dry cleaners/visit an elderly relative. You can stay as long as you want while eating their grapes. In their desperation to get you to go, they will agree to anything.

Thus one hospital visit could procure you a new Sunday school teacher, finance committee chairman or bell tower captain. The only lady to get the better of me in this game was Lady Burlingham, who generally said after five minutes: "Well, it has been nice seeing you." It's the most unavoidable "clear off" I've ever received.

I happened to be visiting our local hospital myself this last week – to see our Verger, Mr. Overall. Part of his duties is to protect the guttering with black paint every Spring; it is a job he hates, since he's terrified of heights. This year, he came up with a novel solution. He parked his car on the side of the church opposite to where his ladder was, tied one end of a rope to the car bumper and threw the rest over the church roof. When he ascended the ladder – and English Perpendicular architecture tends to be rather high – he tied the other end of the rope round his waist. Thus, if he fell off, the rope anchored to the car, would hold him.

Unfortunately he did not allow for Mrs Overall. She was passing the church, laden with shopping. Seeing their car and having a set of keys with her, she decided her husband could easily walk home, so loaded the car and set off. For those who witnessed the event, Mr O's airborne arc over the church roof was a truly magnificent sight. The holly tree on the other side may have cushioned his landing, but not in the most comfortable way.

The only problem we are now left with is how to remove a thick black line of paint running up one side of the church roof and down the other.

Your loving uncle, Eustace.

Church Magazine Bloomers

You know what they meant, but what they said was.. These church magazine bloomers are (allegedly!) all true...The choir seems to have been a fertile source:

At the evening service tonight, the sermon topic will be 'What Is Hell?' Come early and listen to our choir practice.

Eight new choir robes are currently needed due to the addition of several new members and to the deterioration of some older ones.

The senior choir invites any member of the congregation who enjoys sinning to see the organist after the service.

Next Thursday there will be tryouts for the choir. They need all the help they can get.

This evening at 7 pm there will be hymn-singing in the park across from the church. Bring a blanket and come prepared to sin.
As does food:

The Women's Tea for next week has been cancelled. We are sorry for any inconvenience this may cause.

The cost of The Fasting & Prayer Conference includes meals.

The church will host an evening of fine dining, super entertainment and gracious hospitality.

Parish supper Sunday at 5 pm - prayer and medication to follow.

Don't forget the Singles Progressive Dinner, 14 August. Attire is optional.

The pastor would appreciate it if the ladies of the congregation would lend him their electric girdles for the pancake breakfast next Sunday.

Thursday at 5 pm there will be a meeting of the Little Mothers Club. All wishing to become Little Mothers, please see the minister in his private study.

Attention Parents. There will be a conference on how to help your teen avoid pre-marital sex. The featured speaker will be Mildred Smyth, a nationally known speaker on abstinence and mother of eight.

The sermon this morning: "Jesus Walks on the Water." The sermon tonight: "Searching for Jesus."

Ladies, don't forget the rummage sale. It's a chance to get rid of those things not worth keeping around the house. Bring your husbands.

Don't let worry kill you off - let the Church help.