



THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND

REFOCUSED

THE PARISH MAGAZINE OF
ST ETHELDREDA'S CHURCH
WITH ST LUKE'S CHURCH

March 2020



BISHOP'S
HATFIELD

Letter to the parish from John Barnard, Lay Reader

In May last year, Alison Churhouse wrote an article about why people come to church and how and why we should try to grow our churches.

Since then we have embarked on a number of events inviting people to come and meet us which includes a programme of music being offered in church and improving our welcoming, so that people feel comfortable when they do come. We have also been improving our communications using social media as well as more conventional methods.

So far, the results are really rather good. The turnout at our Christmas services were outstanding. From the Nativity Play to the Nine Lessons & Carols, Crib service, Midnight Mass and Christmas Day itself were all very pleasing. However, the one service that was so surprisingly good was the 'Top 10 Carols' service held at St. Luke's. Over 70 people crammed in to a lovely and interesting afternoon. Attendance at our weekly services are also very encouraging.

Encouraging growth in our congregations is not only about numbers attending. Our primary objective as a church is to help people to come to and develop their faith in God. To assess where we are on our spiritual journey both as individuals and as a church there are in place opportunities to enable people to take initial steps or to go that extra little bit to develop their faith.

We at our churches run Explorer courses from time to time for those with questions about God, life and everything. We have opportunities for prayer and worship in smaller groups on most

days of the week so that we can meet together and support each other on our journey. We have other groups for example ladies' book club; men's breakfast club; afternoon tea club where we can talk together and be there for each other. Small groups are a great way to explore faith as well as enjoy some social time together. St Paul, probably the greatest evangelist ever, used small groups to help people come to God.

As we enter March the season of Lent is upon us and this is a good time to review our journey. To think about our relationship with God and to get ourselves ready for the most wonderful season of all in our Christian calendar, Easter.

You may consider joining a Lent course. There are several arranged at churches across our team (page 3). Or, if you cannot spare the time to go along, you might like to read a Lent book.

Some of us are using 'Meeting God in Mark' by Rowan Williams. We have several copies that are available in church but there are many others to choose from. I'm sure Fr. Darren or any of the clergy would be only too willing to guide you in finding something suitable.

Where are you on your journey of faith? Whether you are just starting out, having been going for some time or many years, or haven't really started yet, we all need encouragement and the feeling that we are not on our own.

Get ready for Easter. Use Lent to prepare yourself to hear the story afresh and to understand a little more how your relationship with Christ will help you through life.

With love and blessings

When they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some scoffed; but others said, 'We will hear you again about this'. At that point Paul left them. But some of them joined him and became believers. Acts 17:32-34

Parish of Bishop's Hatfield St Etheldreda with St Luke

St Etheldreda's Church Services

SUNDAY: 8^{am} Holy Communion BCP
9.30^{am} Holy Communion with Sunday School

3RD SUNDAY OF MONTH:

9.30^{am} All age Eucharist

TUESDAY: 9^{am} Morning Prayer

WEDNESDAY: 10^{am} Holy Communion

THURSDAY: 9^{am} Morning Prayer

7^{pm} Holy Communion or Compline

FRIDAY: 9^{am} Morning Prayer

St Luke's Church Service

SUNDAY: 11.30^{am} Holy Communion with Hymns

**CHILDREN'S
SUNDAY SCHOOL**

meets at 9.20^{am} on Sundays in term time
at 12 Fore Street (STEPS office)

Please contact Fr Darren to book your Wedding or Baptism t: 01707 256638 e: frdarren@yahoo.co.uk

DIARY DATE : THE RT REVD DR MICHAEL BEASLEY THE BISHOP OF HERTFORD
will be giving a talk at St Eth's on 23rd April in the evening—more details next month

What's on in the Parish in March

Sunday 15 March 3pm

Jill Knight Pupils' Concert

St Etheldreda's Church—tea and cake to follow

Thursday 26 March 7pm

Talk by the Rev. Tim Bull

St Etheldreda's Church

Tuesday 31 March 10am-12noon

Lady Salisbury's Coffee Morning

The Old Palace, Hatfield House

It can sometimes seem daunting taking those first steps in coming to church. If you would like friendly encouragement in finding out more about St Etheldreda's or St Luke's, then please contact: Thomas Walters on 07971 513021

Regular Hatfield Team Social Events

Men's Breakfast Club

St Michael & All Angels Church

8am on 1st Saturday of month

The Thursday Tea Break

Angie's Deli, Old Hatfield

2pm every Thursday

Poetry Group

St Mary's Church, North Mymms

2.30pm, 3rd Friday of month

Knit & Natter

St John's Church, South Hatfield

1:30pm—3:15pm every Friday

Friendship Teas

St John's Church, Lemsford

2.30pm, 2nd Tues each month

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Parish of Bishop's Hatfield St Etheldreda with St Luke : Registered Charity No.1152011
St Etheldreda's Church, Fore Street, Old Hatfield, Hertfordshire AL9 5AN

Lent 2020: Courses in the Bishop's Hatfield Team

St Etheldreda's Church: MEETING GOD IN MARK based on a book by Rowan Williams. A series of five weeks, looking at the challenges to us presented in Mark's gospel. To be held on **Mondays beginning on 2nd March at 6pm until 7.30pm** and on **Tuesdays beginning on 3rd March at 10.30am until midday**. Further details from John Barnard e: john209barnard@btinternet.com— phone: 01707 335074

St Mary's Church North Mymms: Come and join us for a **LENTEN LUNCH** of bread and soup at 12.30pm followed by a period of reflection for 30 mins. We will be following the **LIVE LENT CARE FOR GOD'S CREATION** series. **On Monday lunch times commencing on March 2nd for six Mondays**. If that time isn't convenient come along on **Monday evening at 7pm** for a 30 minute period of reflection. All sessions will take place in St Michael's room at St Mary's Church North Mymms. Further details from the Rev Ruth Barr e: ruthbarr77@gmail.com—phone: 01727 822887

St Michael & All Angels and St John's Church, Lemsford will be following the Diocesan Lent Course **SUPERSTAR** an ecumenical course in five sessions. To take place on **Thursdays at 2pm or 7.30pm** in St Michael's church hall, Birchwood beginning on the **27th February**. Further details from (and to book a place) the Rev Paul Seymour phone: 01707 271966

St John's Church South Hatfield: TEACH US TO PRAY—prayer is basic to the Christian life but many people struggle with it. We will be using the **24/7** prayer course to help us grow in this important area. To start at **7.30pm on Wednesday, 4th March**. **Saturday the 28th March** will be a **LENT QUIET DAY**. Further details from the Rev Andy Gardner e: revandygardner@btinternet.com

What's On at Hatfield House in March

2020 HATFIELD HOUSE WEDDING FAIR THE OLD PALACE

8 MARCH @ 11AM—4PM

DOGS AND DAFFS CHARITY WALK

22 MARCH @ 9:30AM—4PM

NGS GARDENS OPEN FOR CHARITY

Entrance: £6.00 ADULTS, CHILDREN FREE
28/29 MARCH @ 11AM—4PM

OLD PALACE TOURS – MARCH 2020

20 MARCH @ 11:00 AM - 30 MARCH @ 3:00 PM

ISABEL HOSPICE & HAD (HERTS ACTION ON DISABILITY) HALF MARATHON & 10 K

29 MARCH @ 9:30 AM - 4:00 PM

LADY SALISBURY'S ANNUAL COFFEE MORNING AND WEST GARDEN PREVIEW

31 MARCH @ 10:00 AM—12:00 PM

Full details inside on page 6 ...

HATFIELD HOUSE looks forward to welcoming you for the start of a new season on Saturday, 4th April

HATFIELD PARK FARM looks forward to welcoming you when it reopens on Tuesday 31st March

For more information:

www.hatfield-house.co.uk/events

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19th March—Saint Joseph's Day

I wonder what all the extraordinary events which occurred at the time of Christ's birth felt like for Joseph? He is one of the main figures in the nativity story, but we don't really know much about him at all, as not one word he ever said was recorded in the New Testament.

So, to celebrate Saint Joseph's Day this year, I would like to look at the well-known nativity story through his eyes. And also consider his great faithfulness, to God and to Mary, despite the most trying (to say the least) of circumstances.

•••••

Although Joseph was known to be a man of humble means, a carpenter from Nazareth, he had two important qualifications which gave him his place at the nativity – he was a descendant of David and, for whatever reason, he was God's choice.

Joseph is someone we can all identify with – an ordinary man, but he was also a man who dared to be obedient to God's will for his life.

His place in the nativity story, of course, is as Mary's husband. According to Matthew's gospel, Joseph and Mary were 'betrothed', but not yet married. There were three steps in a Jewish marriage at that time. The engagement; often carried out when the couple were children. The betrothal; a legally binding acknowledgement of the marriage-to-be. Then the wedding itself; lasting a week and during which the marriage was consummated.

It's at the second stage in this process it seems, after the betrothal, when extraordinary things started to happen.

This is when Mary is visited by the Angel Gabriel to explain her role in giving birth to the son of God. Sometime after this, Joseph learns Mary is pregnant. And although the scriptures are not specific on the matter, I think it entirely reasonable to presume that Joseph then 'hit the ceiling'!

Like any husband-to-be, he must have been beside himself to learn that his intended was pregnant. He was probably angry and hurt, to say the least.

After all, if Mary were pregnant, the only possible explanation was that that she'd been unfaithful, in which case, he had a legal right to have her stoned to death.

Joseph was a good man, true to his religious convictions and compassionate. But he must have found himself between a rock and a hard place when all this happened. He just couldn't, we imagine, with the best will in the world, go through with a wedding to a pregnant Mary; but he also couldn't bring himself to humiliate her either. And he certainly could not see her stoned to death.

According to Matthew's Gospel, when Joseph learnt Mary was pregnant, he 'planned to dismiss her quietly'. Breaking off the relationship, but not making a big deal of it, seemed to be the most honourable thing to do, and who could blame him?

But we know that Joseph then had a dream in which an angel of the Lord appeared and told him that the child in Mary's womb really was a Holy child. In the dream Joseph was told that he should become as the earthly father to the child.

The angel explained this was happening to fulfil Isaiah's prophecy of a virgin giving birth to the son of God.

Then Joseph must have seen the light. The initial shock and anger, we can only imagine, dissolved as he realised his beloved Mary was indeed the favoured one of God.

Joseph proves his faithfulness, first to Mary and then, more importantly, to God as we are told that when he woke up, he did as the angel commanded — he stood by Mary.

Mary's faith was unquestionable. She had been visited by the Angel Gabriel, knew of the miracle of her cousin Elizabeth's pregnancy—and could no doubt feel the baby Jesus growing inside her.

But, however amazing it was, the visitation from an angel was all Joseph had to specifically go on.

But then something else happened, something with an exquisitely divine twist.....

Good and faithful Joseph ...

Extracts from a sermon delivered by Lay Reader, Mary Rathbone in December 2019

St Luke's version of the story provides the twist. It says that as the time drew near for Mary to give birth, the Roman Emperor issued a decree that a census was to be conducted throughout his empire.

Through this census the emperor called everyone back to their hometowns. Mary and Joseph were living in Nazareth at that time and as Joseph was a descendant of David, it meant they had to travel south to the City of David—also known as Bethlehem, to comply with the terms of the decree.

This was God's hand at work again, positioning Joseph and a heavily pregnant Mary in Bethlehem for a census and the birth of Jesus. Can you imagine how Joseph must have felt when he realised that, because of the Emperor's census, he and Mary had absolutely no choice but for the baby to be born in Bethlehem?

He must surely have been filled with awe and wonder as he realised that not only was Isaiah's prophecy coming to pass with the virgin birth of the Messiah; but another prophesy was also being fulfilled, one given by Micah, who foretold that the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem...

Faithful Joseph claimed the Christ child as his own, making him a descendant of the house of David. And in one final act of obedience to God, he publicly named the baby—Jesus.

Because of the faithfulness of Joseph, Jesus had an earthly father and Joseph had a part in the most amazing event known to mankind.

The small amount we know about Joseph provides a perfect example of setting our own ego aside and allowing God's will instead of ours to be done. A perfect example of putting others before ourselves.

Joseph also demonstrated an enduring trust in God's grace throughout the most trying of circumstances. Even when everything seemed to be going wrong – he kept faith that, eventually, all would be well.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saint_Joseph



*Saint Joseph with the Infant Jesus
painted by Guido Reni, c.1635*

Saint Joseph's Day

also called the Feast of Saint Joseph, is in Western Christianity, the principal feast day of Saint Joseph, who was:
the Husband of the Blessed Virgin Mary and
the Legal Father of Jesus Christ.

Not many of us, if any, can expect to be visited by an angel as Joseph was, but we can learn from his experience. And if we could put into practice the selfless example he demonstrated by putting God's will first, then we would not only be pleasing God – but we would also be taking small steps towards fulfilling our own divine destinies.

Why not come along to some of our services
and hear ways in which WE can ALL
do God's will in our day to day lives?



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LADY SALISBURY'S 12TH ANNUAL COFFEE MORNING AND WEST GARDEN PREVIEW TUESDAY 31ST MARCH: 10AM—12 NOON

Adults £3.50 in advance or £4 on the door, children under 12 go free
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community Centre, Link Drive, Hatfield AL10 8TP between 9am-2pm any weekday.
Or Station Lodge, Hatfield House (opposite Hatfield Station) from 10am-4m on Monday 30th March.
Advance tickets available from Station Lodge, Hatfield House and Breaks Manor Youth & Community Centre.



In memory of Barbara Robinson ...Phil Robinson is to cycle another 1,000 miles

This year marks the 5th anniversary of my mum,
Barbara Robinson, passing away from Alzheimer's.
It's also a significant year as I turn 50.

To embrace my new decade and, most importantly,
celebrate the life of my mum who was an amazingly
warm, caring and wonderful person, so selfless in life
and who would do anything for anyone, I have decided
to embark on my biggest cycling challenge to date -
pedalling the length of the UK from Lands End Corn-
wall) to John O'Groats (Scotland), in September 2020

'LeJog' is no mean feat. It's a 9 day, 1000 mile endurance
adventure that ticks off three countries and 23 counties,
while giving me climbs along the route that equal the
height of Everest. Phew! I believe that this ride was
meant to be in my life, as the day that I finish is the
actual anniversary of mum passing and my dad is going
to be there to bring me home, a fitting end to an amaz-
ing challenge.

ARE YOU MAD? I hear you say! No I am not! is my
answer. My mum was so special that I really want to try
and make a difference, as she did when she was alive.

Three years ago almost to the day, I started cycling. In
July 2017, I managed to cycle from London to Paris.

This challenged me physically and emotionally, but it
was so rewarding knowing I was doing something in
memory of my mum. Furthermore, I was flabbergasted
to raise a whopping £5K. I know many of you readers
were instrumental in helping me reach this target.

I have a dream to try to equal, or surpass this by push-
ing myself further. However, whilst I promise to do the
training, I can't achieve my dream without your help. I
know we live in a world where finances are tight and the
charity market is competitive, so I'm not asking for your
hard earned cash lightly.

But, if you are able to support, even a little, something
so close to my heart that would be absolutely amazing.
Thanks for taking the time to read this and thanks in
advance for any support you can give.

With love from

the whole

Robinson family

My Lent By Jo Roscoe

Ash Wednesday (26 February) marks the beginning of the six week period leading to Good Friday. The Church calls this period Lent. It commemorates the 40 solitary days which Jesus spent in the Judean desert, fasting and praying about his ministry and its inevitable outcome.

Many Christians choose this time to discipline themselves in some way – giving up chocolate or concentrating on a Bible Study. I have never required of myself to give up chocolate or any other goodies. But I have often attended a Lenten Bible Study group and found it a useful time of deep thinking.

My personal Lenten study centres on three memories or events. Not in chronological order, they are:

Attending a lecture on mathematical logic. The usual tutor had arranged a stand-in. She may have been a brilliant logician but we saw nothing of that. A Jewish person, she had just returned from her first visit to Israel. This had been so emotional for her that she could hardly speak of it – yet could not speak of anything else! But it was the words, spoken with such reverence, that went so deep for me: ‘I walked along the shore of Lake Galilee where your Jesus walked, and it was wonderful’. I will never forget the emotional depth, sincerity and generosity of spirit in her words to us.

And another time, many years ago, watching a play by Denis Potter – a man who suffered a severe form of the skin-shedding and painful disease of psoriatic arthritis. In his play ‘The Son of Man’, Jesus is tormented by the confrontation of his Divinity and the frailty of his human nature. He constantly questions him-

self ‘Is it me. Is it me?’ The subtext being: ‘Am I the Christ, do I have to undergo the inevitable outcome of this ministry?’ But not faltering in that ministry. At the time, Potter was accused of blasphemy, but perhaps he was closer to understanding Jesus than many of us are.

And lastly a more recent experience of my own. I was being driven from Nazareth to a holiday kibbutz on the north east coast of Lake Galilee. As we drove through a string of small towns and villages, I dropped into a sort of reverie, becoming suddenly awake to notice that we were now surrounded on both sides by a stony desert landscape; not unlike the Judean desert where Jesus had gone apart to consider his ministry and to contend with and to confront Satan. We were not in the vicinity of Jericho, where tradition has it that Satan took Jesus to the top of a high cliff and offered him ‘kingship’ of the world laid out before him. But we were close to a town in North Galilee where there is a high cliff from where you can look down on distant Syria and Lebanon. The reality of the Gospel story we know as the Temptation struck me forcibly and I experienced what I can only describe as a moment of deep knowingness of the Truth.



https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sea_of_Galilee

Sunrise over the Sea of Galilee from the Oasis d'Emmanuel—Tibériade

Stop Press ...

Have just returned home from a guided tour of the, newly refurbished, old Church Hall at the top of Church Lane.

What can I say? Amazing, unbelievable, stunning—but, none of these words really capture the outstanding transformation that has taken place in the hall. It has been completely refurbished, to the highest standards, to accommodate up to 70 people for weddings, parties, conferences and the like.

Am hoping to have a full set of photos for the next issue of Refocused and more details on the business side of things and how to make bookings.

Watch this space, Mary Rathbone.

What I was shown was:

- A now open-plan hall with wooden panelled walls.
 - A lift for those who can not manage the stairs.
 - A sizeable new kitchen in what used to be the far-left hand corner of the hall.
 - Next to the kitchen a drinks bar able to serve out into the hall by removing a few wooden panels.
 - Ceiling re-opened to reveal beams and windows in the eaves to the east and west. I could see that the large window in the west will now allow stunning displays of the sunset for those in the hall to enjoy.
 - Access will be from George's Gate car park, but the Church Lane side of the hall will be replanted to provide a backdrop for photo opportunities.
 - And, am really not sure if Hatfield is ready for this yet but—unisex toilets!!!
- Was assured this is quite a common arrangement today. So that's OK then.



Old Hatfield Halloween Ghost walk Mark Bolitho

The people of Old Hatfield took to the streets for Halloween and took a short walk through the town. Starting at the Eight Bells pub around 80 people followed the route of various ghostly sites in the town. The route ran from the Park Street cemetery, travelling around to Salisbury Square, then up Church Street, to St Etheldreda's Church and down Fore Street to end up in the Horse and Groom.

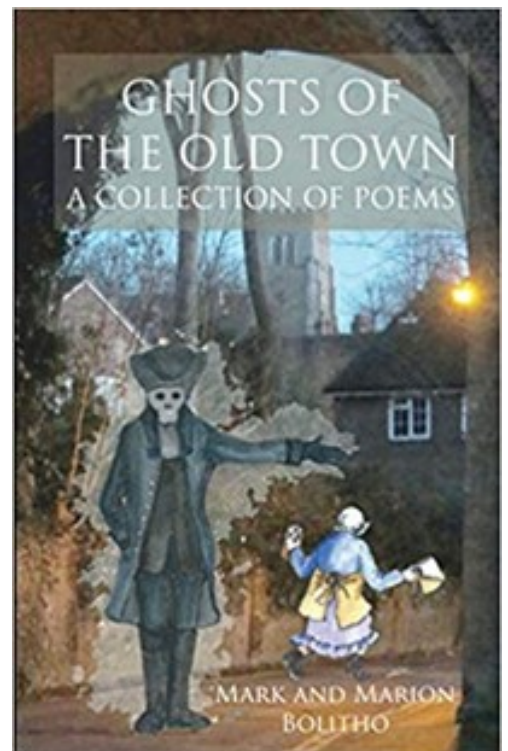
One of the highlights was a walk through the church and a talk from Churchwarden Malcolm Caie on the history of the church.

The evening was a great success and the community came together to contribute and make it work. A great thanks to all of the contributors—you all know who you are, and thanks also to St Ethelreda's Church and Gascoyne Cecil Estates for allowing access to the church and the Old Palace respectively.

The poems for the event were written by myself, my mother, Marion, my nephew Jack, David Jones and Pam Wallis. In the weeks following the event my mother and James Wilding drew pictures to illustrate the book and in December we published a small collection entitled "Ghosts of the Old Town: A collection of Ghost Poems".

The book is published on the Amazon Kindle direct platform and can be purchased on the website Amazon for £6.95.

www.amazon.co.uk/Ghosts-Old-Town-collection-Ghost/dp/1699158533.



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Please contact—maryrathbone@icloud.com if you have any editorial contributions.

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- SAINT JOSEPH'S DAY
- LADY SALISBURY'S COFFEE MORNING
- PHIL ROBINSON'S FUND RAISING APPEAL
- CHURCH HALL REFURBISHMENT
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