



Notes from the Riverbank

The newsletter for St Thomas of Canterbury Church in Goring,
St Mary's Church in Streatley and St Andrew's Church in South Stoke

July/August 2015 – 20th edition

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● Welcome to the twentieth edition of "Notes from the Riverbank."

All contributions should be sent to Toria, the editor, by the 17th of each month at the usual email address webcontent.thomandmary@gmail.com. The on-line versions of the calendars are maintained by Glenn Cooke using the same email address. Bookings for the church or Canterbury Room should be made by contacting the UB Parish Secretary Jenny Hall at jandjh2@btinternet.com. We aim to produce the on-line and printed versions of each issue by the 25th of each month.



Pastoral letter: A view from the Vicarage

No, not the sight of the John Barleycorn or Streatley Hill, but some reflections following the Lord's Prayer...

Our Father in Heaven... That's why God's church exists! God loves us so much and has called us (and everyone) to accept his invitation to be adopted, person by person, into his family and recognise him as our heavenly Father.

Hallowed be your name... How do you and I show that God is holy (hallowed) to us? Perhaps by spending the first waking hours of each week with others, worshipping him; by allowing him to guide our thinking, words and behaviour to become more like Jesus. If we can grow more like Jesus by spending time with him each day, let's do it! How easy it is to allow other activities and even material possessions to become more holy to us than God himself.

Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in Heaven... Praying, acts of generosity and inviting those who don't make God their priority to reconsider. This is how we co-operate with God to make the world around us, a place where everything is just as Jesus would like it to be. A kingdom is where a king reigns; God's kingdom is where God is allowed to be King.

Give us today our daily bread... In West Berkshire and Oxfordshire that's a prayer that doesn't require a great amount of faith. Or did we mean a willingness to receive the spiritual food of the body and blood of Christ (to quote the Book of Common Prayer) and to allow it to nourish us?

Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us... Our regular reminder that we contribute something to our relationship with Jesus. Because when we repent, God generously and reliably forgives us; also, he asks each of us to offer the same generous forgiveness to everyone who crosses us. Do take a look at verse 14 of Matthew 6.

Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil... Each of us can only resist so much temptation, but our prayer is that God will strengthen us to resist all the temptation we face. Then his kingdom will come on earth, as it is in Heaven. *Amen.*



The Rev Paul Boughton



Collection for the United Society

The global network of Anglican Churches provides a wonderful resource for development work and for responding to natural and human-made disasters. In the Ebola crisis, for example, churches in Sierra Leone, Guinea and Liberia have been distribution points for information about the disease and how to prevent it, and for hygiene kits and protective clothing. Work such as this, in turn, helps to raise the profile of the Christian Church and the Gospel.

The United Society (formerly USPG) is a Christian charity that works in partnership with local Anglican churches around the world to improve health, provide education and reduce discrimination, and to respond to emergencies. Please contribute if you can to our collection for the United Society at St Thomas' on Sunday 12th July. Thank you.



Patsy Calder



Children's Church Trail for St Thomas'

St Thomas' has recently launched a Children's Church Trail, designed by members of the Goring Decorative and Fine Arts Society (GADFAS). The Trail is aimed at children aged between 8 and 12 years, but is of interest to people of all ages!

Children and families of our own congregation and families visiting the church will find it a rewarding and enjoyable activity. The questionnaire is fun to complete, simple in layout, is in a child-friendly design and leads the child around the church exploring the history, architecture and furnishings. There is an answer sheet with interesting and well researched information for accompanying adults. Questionnaires and answer sheets are available at the back of the church. We very much hope that lots of families will take part; it could be a cheerful occupation for a wet day in the summer holidays!



Jenny Boyd



National Prayer Weekend, 25th –27th September 2015

One weekend, one heart, one vision

Individuals, churches and communities across the country are joining to pray for their local communities. Central to the whole weekend is a heart to see people know and encounter God as their Father through the power of prayer. We believe that prayer changes things on a personal, local and national level and we also believe that prayer is about saying thank you and appreciating all the fantastic aspects of our communities.

The churches of Goring, Streatley and South Stoke have signed up to take part. Prayer requests will be collected and there will be specific opportunities for prayer for our communities over the weekend both at home and in church. We hope everyone will take part in some way. More information from Liz Dowding, Joan Downham and Henry Fay, and from www.national-prayer-weekend.com



Brenda Kerr Muir



Midweek Communion

Don't forget that we meet for a quiet Communion service at 10.30am on Wednesday mornings at St Thomas', Goring. On the first Wednesday of each month we have coffee together afterwards as well. You might find that this a good place to invite a friend.



What to expect on Sundays...

Did you know that the various churches in the Benefice all have the same Bible readings at their main service, whether at 9.30am or 11.15am? Over the next few months this will enable us to learn together.

- Until 5th July we are learning from the last letter that Paul wrote to the Christians in Corinth about keeping the right perspective in life, about being generous, and learning that God can work despite our weaknesses.
- From the 12th July until 23rd August we will learn from the letter that Paul wrote to the Ephesian Christians where he emphasises the eternal benefits of faith in Christ and helps us to understand why unity is a Godly characteristic among God's people, especially as we face opposition.
- Beginning at the UB service on 30th August we will explore the big picture of the Old Testament. Finding all the major themes of the Bible in the first chapters of Genesis and the high and low points of the story of God's people, we will go on to explore the Bible's hymn book, where to find wisdom and how the prophets fit into the story of the Old Testament.

A series to discuss and not to miss!



The Rev Paul Boughton



Is there a difference between the styles of service in the Benefice churches?

One of the advantages of us working together as a benefice is that each of the three churches offers a different style of service. If you prefer to worship in a more traditional style with good music then Streatley may suit you; if you prefer a slightly less formal environment to worship or would like to go to a church where there is a crèche and a Sunday School, then Goring is for you. St Andrew's is the church for the village of South Stoke and we are experimenting with a family Service on the first Sunday of each month as well as more formal services on other Sundays but where families are always welcome. Do come and see!



The Rev Paul Boughton



Christian Aid

First, a big thank you...

Thank you to everyone who supported Christian Aid Week in May. This year, more than £4008 was raised in the Benefice. Many thanks to everyone who worked so hard to achieve this, and to all who donated so generously. As well as providing emergency relief, Christian Aid works with local partner organisations in many of the poorest countries in the world to help lift people out of poverty. By working with local communities, sustainable projects to improve people's lives can be implemented.

On 15th May a letter from a gentleman living in this country was printed in the Church Times. He said: *As a Kenyan, I have witnessed at first hand the transformation of many lives in Kenya through projects sponsored by Christian Aid, addressing needs such as sanitation, environment, conservation, education, and many more. Now that I live on the other side of the globe I am privileged to give to Christian Aid.*

Now, a request for help...

If we are to continue helping with this transformational work we will need more people to come forward to help with organizing Christian Aid Week in the Benefice next year. Ideally, we need one volunteer to coordinate the house-to-house collection in Goring, one person for Streatley and one person for South Stoke. Many churches have a small committee which organises Christian Aid Week each year. Would you like to be part of that? Could you offer to organise the publicity, for example? Have you got any ideas for other fund-raising events that you would like to organise?

It is best to order the resources we need for Christian Aid Week in February, so it would be good to have a new team together by then. Please contact me if you would be interested in helping in any way. Thank you.



Wendy Middleton, 875435 wendy.middleton@tiscali.co.uk



Michael Howell: Organ Recital

Michael Howell gave a fabulous organ recital in St Mary's on 13th June. He played works that he had specially selected to go with our baroque-style organ and added most interesting introductions which very much aided our understanding and enjoyment.

The program was a mixture of the familiar and the not-so-familiar and was very much enjoyed by everyone. Michael played *The Arrival of the Queen of Sheba* by Handel, Vivaldi's *Concerto in A minor* arranged by J S Bach (BWV 593) in an arrangement by Michael specially designed for our organ, *Five Chorale Preludes* by J S Bach, covering every style that Bach used to create these, J S Bach's *Gigue Fugue* (BWV 577), J Pachelbel's *Fugue on the Magnificat*, Albinoni's *Adagio in G Minor* and finished with a flourish with J S Bach's very fast *Tocatta in F Major*.

These works gave not only the manual keyboards, but also the pedals a very full exercise. It was a splendid musical experience, and raised over £350 for St Mary's church funds.



Stella



Nudge

In a book by this name, the authors explain that by merely mentioning something, people are stimulated to think about it, and perhaps even act. Perhaps we could help people by asking them if they would like to come to church with us?



Riverbank is now on holiday for August; we'll see you again in September.