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**To publicise any News or Events in the next edition of
In Partnership covering February, please send them to
the office no later than 20 January.**

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In Partnership January 2016



Lord Jesus, make us wise,
keep us faithful and lead us to
your light

Do you stay up to see the New Year in? I usually sleep through it. Seriously. Pretty much every midnight on any given December 31st finds me in my bed. If I am still up and about, then that's because we are with friends and having a good time, and that does happen sometimes, but generally I am buried under a duvet.

Even during the Millennium celebrations back when December 31st 1999 magically became January 2000, there I was, buried under that duvet. For a starter, the last year of the Millennium was actually 2000, not 1999. So any celebrations should, in theory, have been when January 2001 started. But to suggest that was to sound a little like a party-pooper....

It's not like I have anything against the start of the new year. For many people, it is a great reason to have a party. For some, it is seen as the start of something new, the chance to resolve to do something better, or new, or to stop doing something. If that works for you, great. But for me, if I feel the need to resolve to do something better, or to stop or start something, why wait until new year? And I find nothing new when I awake on the first day of January. The world is still full of trouble and strife. People are still finding ways to hurt each other and the world we live in. Nothing really changes. Nothing is different, except the calendar on the wall.

This may be sounding somewhat, well, grumpy (at best), downright miserable and bleak at worst. It's not meant to. I don't go around carrying an "I hate the New Year" sign. I just find the importance some folk attach to it a little odd, as though it has some sort of magical transforming ability, which of course it does not. Transformation and change for the better can and should happen at any time. And we are (at the start of the New Year) heading towards the period of Epiphany, traditionally the time in the church calendar when the "wise men" or Magi visited the young Jesus, bringing their gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh to his parents. Part of the significance of the visit of the wise men is that they were gentiles. Up until then, all those who had seen the baby Jesus were Jewish; which is how God planned it, as they had been promised a messiah; now, outsiders had seen him. There is an underlying meaning here: Jesus was a gift for everyone. And not just for Christmas. But Epiphany can also mean an illuminating discovery or realisation. Which is why I attach more significance to Epiphany than I do to New Year, as a time not to make resolutions that I probably won't

FROM THE REGISTERS

Weddings

19 December 2015 Jamie George Breeden and Hannah Mary Youngman

Marriage Blessing

22 December 2015 Jack Alexander Turner and Joanna Louise Twohey

Funerals

14 December 2015 Bradley Carl Rollings

21 December 2015 Marilyn Parsons

21 December 2015 Robert Hatch

PRAYERS

Please pray for:-

The millions of people who are suffering, in Syria and Iraq millions have fled their homes to escape the terrifying brutality of Islamic State (IS) militants.

The Alpha course we are helping to run.

As a New Year dawns.... at my praying hour

God, listen to my prayer, bend down to me thine ear,
My askings and my prayer rise upwards to thee clear.
Come, thou King of glory, my down-protection be,
King of life and mercy, the Lamb protecting me,
Thou MacMary Virgin, O listen to my prayer,
Son of lovely Virgin, pure, beautiful and fair,
Son of lovely Virgin, protect me with thy power,
Be at my praying hour.

From Prayers of the Western Highlanders



We are looking for people to partner churches and ministers in the Local Mission & Ministry Review process. The sort of people who have a passion for the church and God's mission, who are good at encouraging others and are organized – people who listen well, but know the right questions to ask. Our aim is to have enough partners that each need only do one review a year. Could you suggest someone from your congregation that might be invited to explore this vital ministry? Could that someone be you? It might be something that a couple of people would wish to do together.

We are offering two introduction sessions to choose from – Saturday 6th February and Wednesday 17th February, both 10 – 2 at the Synod Office with lunch, and travel expenses, provided. Attendance at one of these does not commit anyone to being a partner – it is only the first step.

For more information please contact me on Tel: 01823 275470

Email: ele@urcsouthwest.org.uk

Revd Kathryn Price

Moderators of General Assembly - 2018 to 2020

Our March Synod meeting will consider nominations received for 2 people to serve as Moderators of General Assembly from July 2018 to July 2020. Two moderators will be elected, one a minister or CRCW and one an elder (or equivalent in LEPs). On this occasion all synods will use the method successfully used in the Eastern Synod. Please use the attached Word document: Nomination for GA Mods 2018-2020.

Please send your completed form by 9 February 2016. Please do not contact your nominee(s) directly.

If you have any questions or need an application form please contact the Synod Clerk (Tel: 01935 420258)

keep, but to recall the visit of the Magi and realise what it means to us who are not of the Jewish tradition: that we are all welcome, Jew, Gentile, everyone.

In Holy Trinity, in keeping with a tradition started several years ago, we have an overall theme for the year for giving a structure to worship. The theme in 2016 is entitled “We make the road by walking”, which is based on a book by Brian McLaren, and it is “a year long quest for spiritual formation, reorientation and activation”. Which, to me, sounded both intriguing and quite exciting. It is a challenge to view our faith from a new perspective, to reorient ourselves with God, and to challenge us to put our faith into action. The book itself is one of several that have had an impact on me in 2015. The others are “How to read the bible for all its worth” by Gordon Fee and Doug Stuart (the missing apostrophe in “its” is deliberate....) and “Human Universe” by Brian Cox and Andrew Cohen. This last is not a Christian book, and is extolling scientific knowledge and discovery, but in its questions about who we are, where we are, why we are here, and what will be our future, it asks fundamental questions that science can only partially answer. And it has made me think deeply about my faith, and in its celebration of the beauty, magic and awesomeness of the universe has made me value and wonder the amazing beauty, magic and awesomeness of our creator God.

So my wish for you all as the New Year happens around us, is that you too will experience an epiphany at Epiphany, and to walk into the year hoping and looking and expecting God to walk the year with us. And – Happy New Year!

Mark Taylor

6 January Epiphany

On 6 January we celebrate Epiphany - the visit of the wise men to the baby Jesus. But who were these wise men? No one knows for sure. Matthew calls them ‘Magi’, and that was the name of an ancient caste of a priestly kind from Persia. It wasn't until the third century that they were called kings - by a church father, Tertullian.

Regular activities

2nd Sunday each month

Messy Church **10 January**
4-5:30pm @ Shaw

Every Monday

After School Youth Group **3:30 – 6:00pm @ Holy Trinity Shaw**
Contact Claire Camm 07981951381

Every Tuesday

Coffee Stop **1:30 – 3:00pm @ Holy Trinity Shaw**

Bell Ringing **7-9pm St Mary's Bell Tower**

Remix Youth Group **6:30 – 8:45pm @ Holy Trinity Shaw**

Contact Claire Camm 07981951381

4th Tuesday each month

Lunch Bunch **26 January**
Noon @Toothill

2nd Wednesday of each month

Mothers Union **13 January**
Contact Doreen Henderson 07434377587 **2pm @ St Mary's Stable Room**

Every Thursday

Toothill Tinies **10-11:30am @ Toothill**

The bump

A man who had just undergone a very complicated operation kept complaining about a bump on his head and a terrible headache. Since his operation had been an intestinal one, the nurse was concerned. Finally she spoke to the doctor about it. The doctor assured her, "Don't worry, he really does have a bump on his head. About halfway through the operation, we ran out of anesthetic."

Nativity Festival at St Mary's Church

A fabulous display of more than 100 Nativity scenes from all around the world were on display at St Mary's Church for 6 days in December. Some were produced by our Primary Schools in West Swindon and some were from personal collections loaned for the festival.

It was lovely walking round focusing on the different scenes of varying sizes and wondering at the different materials used to depict the images. The church was welcoming with music playing quietly in the background and really brought home the true meaning of Christmas.

Around 800 visitors attended the event and many took up the invite to vote for their favourite scene and say briefly why; the result being announced at the Crib Service on Christmas Eve.



The favourite with the most votes was number 90 (under the Altar) produced by Mark Taylor and one reason given for the vote was 'because baby Jesus looked so peaceful sleeping in his crib and the Angel Gabriel has an earring'.



The second favourite was number 82 produced by Shaw Ridge School with one comment saying 'very imaginative use of paper plates, quite the best Angel I have ever seen'.

Thank you to all who produced and loaned their scenes for making this an enjoyable and enlightening experience.

A Cathedral Visit (continued)

nativity festival or schools and youth work we must continue to engage with each other, care for each other, support each other, be there for each other, reach out to our communities together – this is what makes us the church, the worshipping people of God.

For me the last year has been one of challenge, of change, of rejection but also of opportunity as I have, through the worship leader training and Exploring Christianity course built up connections with others in the partnership and beyond. People to stop and chat to in Asda (other supermarkets are available), share with and worship with. So, while it is nice to have beautiful historic buildings, or large practical worship spaces what really matters is how we come together as a family of loving, brothers and sisters in Christ, as a Partnership of people who truly care for each other and our local communities.

One thing I've always liked about John Wesley's account of his 'Aldersgate experience' is that he 'went very unwillingly to a society in Aldersgate Street'. How often have I gone to things less than eagerly, yet God has blessed me. I pray that 2016 can be a year of blessing for all of us, willingly or not!

"In the evening I went very unwillingly to a society in Aldersgate Street, where one was reading Luther's preface to the Epistle to the Romans. About a quarter before nine, while he was describing the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone, for salvation; and an assurance was given me that He had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death."

John Wesley, 24th May 1738

Ian Bryon



"The Vicar's New Year Resolution is to attract more people by implementing a less formal approach to church-going."

Alpha

We are helping to run the Swindon Alpha course for 2016.

Date: Sunday 17 January 7pm

Location: McKenzies in Wood Street Swindon.

A talk by Darrell Tunningley

Hear the inspiring true story of Darrell Tunningley (author of bestseller Unreachable) as he shares his journey through drugs, violence, armed robbery and a miraculous encounter with God in prison. Food will be provided, plus paying bar available.

Please consider who you might like to invite along and sign up at <http://alphaswindon.org>

Further Alpha sessions will be Wednesday evenings from 27 January also at McKenzies

Christians in Science

Christians in Science Bristol is proud to announce "Mind 2016" – continuing our series of informal talks by scientists and theologians.

The next talk, is on **Friday 22 January 2016, 7:30-9:30pm**

"What can neuroscience tell us about faith?"

Revd Professor Alasdair Coles Professor of Neuroimmunology, University of Cambridge details available at <http://www.cis.org.uk/events/bristol-what-can-neuroscience-tell-us-about-faith-2/>

Venue: Tyndale Baptist Church, 139 Whiteladies Rd, Bristol BS8 2NR.

The church is directly opposite Clifton Down Station (CFN)

No need to book - just turn up. You can email Christina Biggs, CiS Bristol local group leader, cmbbiggs@gmail.com, to register interest. Refreshments provided including homemade cake and tea. No entrance charge, but opportunity to give donation, suggested £4, to cover costs.

Further talks planned

Friday 18 March *Ego Trip: does the self-esteem movement promote, or impede, human flourishing?*

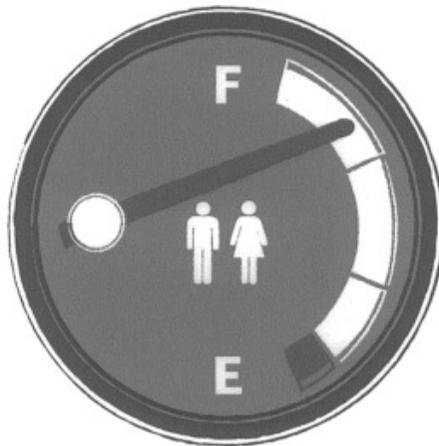
Friday 10 June 2016 *The cognitive science of religion - are we born to believe?*

Friday 30 Sept 2016 *Computers and Life*

Wednesday 16 November 2016 *Why Stephen Hawking is nearer to God than he thinks.*

give your relationship an MOT

Join thousands of couples who do
The Marriage Course every year



The Marriage Course starts: Friday 22nd Jan 2016, 7:15^{PM}

Venue: Jury's Inn, Fleming Way, SN1 2NG

For further information and to sign up visit:
www.swindonmarriagecourse.co.uk

The
Marriage
Course

A Cathedral Visit (continued)

There was a constant flow of people in and out (latecomers and people who had had enough), Bells were chiming somewhere in the background. There was a delay, an echo which meant the communal hymns were awful as everyone was not singing together, and the communion was more like a military operation - with wafers that stuck to the top of your mouth and that awful uncertainty – do I hold the chalice or not?

And just to make it clear only baptised Christians were welcome at the Lord's Table, if you have just come to faith you are not welcome to share in the meal!

There was a disembodied voice leading prayers and the cantor as I couldn't see them from where I was sitting. Then at the end of the service, the officious staff 'encouraged' us to leave by a side door, not allowing people to linger, to chat, to have fellowship rather wanting to get us out so they could set up for the next service.

This was so different from my last Cathedral visit, St Magnus in Kirkwall. The surroundings not quite as large or richly decorated but the worship wonderful, the singing all together, a challenging sermon, and fellowship over coffee after the service. Regulars mingled with and spoke with visitors, with no pressure to leave the sanctuary. We were invited to visit the visitors centre and understand the history of the worshipping community there and their patron Saint Magnus, an elderly lady accompanied us and showed us where to go. It was very much a loving, welcoming, Christian community.

So back at St Paul's we were ushered out, no time to light a candle as the staff were quite insistent we leave, through a side door, not back through the main entrance, which we did. As we walked down the steps there it was, a statue of John Wesley, Anglican Priest, as if to remind me that faith and worship is not about big, beautiful, magnificent buildings, but rather big, beautiful, magnificent love that leaves your heart strangely warmed.

So why did I want to share this with the partnership?

It's simply that I was reminded that we meet Christ when we come together in his name, as two or more individuals, in our local churches and as a partnership, as we share in fellowship with each other.

However we do it, whether it is over a cup of coffee or tea, bible study, morning worship, prayer group, messy church, partnership praise, partnership services, training and recognition of worship leaders,

A Cathedral Visit – 22nd November 2015.

I couldn't see the Cathedral as it was hidden behind the tall buildings that lined the street I was walking on, but I could hear the bells calling the faithful to worship. I turned a corner and there it was, standing in its own square, the unmistakable dome that would have once dominated the skyline.

People milled around as I approached from the side, taking photos, creating memories. How do I get in? Which way do I go? As always, I was running late, it was just a few minutes until the Eucharist started. Fortunately there was a sign that showed the way, I followed it round to the main doors - impressive, oak, tall and wide, open in welcome.

I went inside, there were crowds thronging the entrance, people of all nations come, not to worship the risen Lord but to admire the beauty of this monument to his glory. The enormity of the space, the highly decorated dome, the impressive edifices, the gilt and decoration - the majesty of Wren's design which echoes the enormity, the majesty of our God. As I stepped inside I stopped, just for a second, in awe, dumbstruck by the opulence, the sheer scale, the majesty of the ceilings and decoration. I wondered, just for a second, is this here for the glory of God or the glory of the church?

Then I made my way through the mingling crowds as one of the plethora of Virgers and Wandsmen (would you believe it if I told you there are nearly 150 members of staff at the Cathedral) offered me an order of service for the sung Eucharist, directed me to a seat and with strangers of all nations we prepared to worship God in his temple.

What a disappointment!!

The music was awesome, the organ played with such vigour and passion it rose up and filled that magnificent space, touching my very soul and making my teeth rattle. The choir sang harmonies worthy of angels filling the cathedral with sound which was emotive and beautiful. The grandeur, the ornate frescos, the windows and ceiling adornment, the sheer size and impressiveness of the space designed to give glory to God. The sermon short but thoughtful, "Happy Hogmanay everyone - time for New Year's resolutions to be people not of this world but the next so it can become a reality in our own time"

But we were individuals, alone in the crowd; treated to a show, a pageant. We were not a community, not the family of God worshipping together as we did not have fellowship with each other.



Upper Thames Methodist Circuit

"GRACE AND PEACE"

A Bible Study on

1 PETER

Rev. Steve Wild

President of the Methodist Conference

leads a day of fellowship, study and reflection on Peter's first letter – a letter of living hope written by Simon Peter, the disciple of Jesus, and founded on the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

SATURDAY 23rd JANUARY 2016

10.00 a.m. to 3.00 p.m.

THE CHURCH OF CHRIST THE SERVANT

Abbey Meads, Swindon SN25 4YX

Hot drinks provided. Bring your own packed lunch.

For further details contact:

Bob Mawer

Circuit Administrator

upperthamescircuit@gmail.com 01793 764544

Emerge Youth Project News – AUTUMN TERM UPDATE

This Autumn has been a busy time for our youth project, with lots of activities and 4 new young people joining the project.

The Monday after school club and Tuesday Remix youth club have both been learning about the work of 'Toybox' charity in Latin America through videos, discussion and drama which they have engaged with very compassionately and with a lot of interest. In October young people from these two groups took part in a fantastic afternoon, along with leaders, in Lydiard Park, completing a 5K run or walk around the park; some of the young people also ran a café in the Stable Room which attracted good numbers of park visitors and families of the young people. The event raised a massive £541.15 for Toybox (plus gift-aid) and we were very proud of the young people. One of the boys (not really a runner) did the course twice over and when I asked him ***'what kept you going?'*** he said: ***'it was thinking about all those poor children in the video we saw'***. Clearly it made an impact. We again raised funds for Toybox in our Christmas Show this year (Tues 15th Dec) when we had a Speaker from the charity who came to join us.

The Saturday Club (special needs group) has had a busy term preparing their drama and dance items for the Christmas Show and enjoying cookery, crafts and games. We have been really pleased to welcome Rebecca Kershaw to our volunteer leadership. Please do consider whether you might be able to help out at this fun group, monthly on a Saturday (1.30-4.30pm) – even if it's just making a welcome cup of tea!

At Remix we have also learnt about the work of a guide dog, when we had a Puppy Walker come in to speak and to demonstrate with her dog. This was a fun evening with a serious side and provoked lots of questions. Other Tuesday evenings have included music with one of the Dads (a music teacher) leading some great sessions in which all the young people participated with great gusto – again preparing a piece for the Christmas Show.

Sunday Night Live

Live entertainment with a twist of faith.

Third Sunday of every month

8pm at Costa Coffee West Swindon (Drive Thru), Great Western Way, SN5 8UY

Aimed at 18-30s in Swindon.

A place to meet, experience and take part in live entertainment and drink fantastic coffee.

Each evening involves a time to drink coffee and meet people, some live entertainment- music, comedy, open mic, etc.. and an opportunity for you to consider something of faith. Relaxed, informal, coffee filled and fantastic.

Could you give a child something extra special?

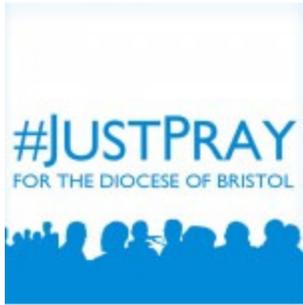
As caring, understanding and dependable people, did you know these are key qualities of foster carers? Many parishioners already help fulfil this vital role and do an amazing job. That's why Swindon Borough Council is asking whether you would consider giving a child in need a supportive home.

If you've got a spare room, as well as room in your heart, the Fostering Recruitment Team would love to hear from you as something to take forward together in the New Year.

Helen Wing, aged 48, from Stratton, became a foster carer two years ago and currently looks after two teenage girls. She said: "I decided to make my dream to care for disadvantaged teenagers a reality and haven't looked back. It has proved everything I wished for and more. Compared to my life processing invoices, this is so much more real and fulfilling. In hindsight I see that I was just counting the hours down, but now I'm making the most of every minute."

Foster carers are needed for children of all ages, sometimes just for a few days, several months, or many years. Carers receive payment and allowances to help cover their time and expenses as well as free ongoing training and help available 24/7, so you'll feel supported every step of the way.

To find out more, please call: (01793) 464329, email fosteringrecruitment@swindon.gov.uk or go online at www.swindon.gov.uk/fostering



Join a diocesan day of prayer at Bristol Cathedral on 3 March 2016 as part of a season of prayer during Lent that connects us with God and roots our diocesan vision and priorities in God's strength.

During Lent (10 February to 27 March 2016) we are inviting everyone across Bristol, Swindon, North Wiltshire and South

Gloucestershire to take part in a season dedicated to praying for the ministry, mission and witness of the parishes and schools across our diocese.

As one element to this we invite you to come along to Bristol Cathedral on Thursday 3 March, 2016, as we focus on our values, vision, mission and focus over the coming years.

The theme will be 'Creating Connections', looking at our relationship with God, our communities and each other.

Bishop Mike, Bishop Lee, Archdeacon Christine and the Dean, David Hoyle, will be among those leading sessions. - See more at: <http://www.bristol.anglican.org/2015/a-season-of-prayer-2/#sthash.Tymoyzr.dpuf>

Youth Worker Vacancy

There is a vacancy for a part-time Youth Worker in Shrivenham with effect from March 2016.

The successful candidate will be employed for 20 hours per week, working with the church and community to develop activities for the 10+ (secondary) age group.

Salary: £21,000 – 25,000 per annum (pro rata)

This is a fixed term contract for 2 years.

Closing date for applications: Sunday 31st January 2016

Interviews will be held early in February

To obtain an application form (Appendix 5.8 of Lay Employment Advisory information on Methodist Church Web Site) or further information please contact: Bob Mawer, Circuit Administration Assistant, Highworth Methodist Church, Vicarage Lane, Highworth, Swindon, Wilts SN6 7AD. Email: upperthamescircuit@gmail.com Tel: (01793) 764544 (Wednesday and Friday mornings) www.upperthamescircuit.org.uk

Emerge Youth Project News (continued)

Lastly, we have had some good reflective sessions in the worship area, where the young people have been able to pray in creative ways on a theme; for example, in the week leading up to Remembrance Day we talked about the significance of remembrance, using the Bible verse from John –

'Greater Love has no man than this; that he should lay down his life for his friends'.

I explained how this is often seen on war memorials, but that actually Jesus was referring to himself shortly before he gave up his life for his friends, for the world, for us. We then read from Isaiah 49 where God says: 'See I have engraved your names on the palms of my hands' (Isaiah 49:16). This is so that he won't forget us! We talked about the things we write on our hands to remember things. I then produced a large laminated picture of an open hand and placing a single lit candle on top, offered the young people the opportunity to write their name and/or the name of anyone they are concerned for on the hand, to remind themselves that God knows and loves each one of us. I was pleasantly surprised that nearly all the young people were very keen to do this and I had to hold them back! I then led a simple prayer to finish the activity. The whole reflection was probably only 10 minutes long, but it felt very special and all the young people engaged really well.

Lastly, thank you to everyone who came along to support our Christmas show this year and find out a bit more about what we get up to at emerge. We hope that you enjoyed the evening! I am pleased to say that we raised £256.00 for Toybox again. Amy O'Melia who came from Toybox to speak at the show told us how the charity is focussing its efforts on providing birth certificates for the children it works with – many do not have one and without it they are unable to enter education, get a job, get married or even be buried. They legally do not exist and have no state protection – clearly a very dangerous position to be in in countries like Guatemala. A birth certificate costs £32.00 which is a massive amount to anyone living there in poverty; through our fundraising for Toybox this Autumn we have been able to provide 25 birth certificates for vulnerable children and young people.

Emerge Youth Project News (continued)

I am extremely proud of this achievement on behalf of the young people at emerge and thankful to God for all the generosity shown by sponsors and others who have supported us. Thank you!

If you have a skill, interest or activity which you think young people may be interested in, please do have a word with me – it would be great to have you along to a Monday, Tuesday or Saturday session. The young people love having visitors and really don't bite!

Claire

Celebrating the Queen's 90th birthday

A message from the Church Buildings Council on 6 November 2015

With the approval and agreement of the Archbishops of Canterbury and York, the Church Buildings Council is encouraging every parish church in England to organise a festival on the weekend of 10-12 June 2016 to celebrate the Queen's 90th birthday and her role as head of the Church of England. This will coincide with official celebrations taking place in London.

The variety of potential forms for the celebrations is huge, from flower festivals to organ recitals, bell-ringing or choir festivals, food or even beer festivals! – and it is hoped that, wherever possible, every church will take part.

In addition, to coincide with the Queen's birthday we hope that every church will be able to organise an exhibition of the life of its parish over the previous 90 years. Such exhibitions should, by charting the changes in the lives of our communities since 1926, highlight the ways in which parish churches have been and remain the focus of those communities, and be a celebration both of our churches and of the people that they serve. We hope that most parishes will be able to find photographs, artworks and oral history connected with their church and the local area.

Though the onus will be on parishes to arrange their events, the Church Buildings Council will act as a hub for ideas and as a central co-ordination point. We will soon be sending out guidance on the organisation of these events, and all relevant guidance will be available on www.churchcare.co.uk Details of events will appear on www.churchdays.co.uk



Eye of the Needle Lectures

18th February: Rev'd Dr Leslie Griffiths
Living in Divided Worlds?
Faith & Politics

2nd March: Rt Rev'd Michael Doe
Being economical with the truth or truthful about the economy?
God & Money

14th March: Rev'd Dr Michael Lloyd
The Mission of the Church in a contemporary Society
Facing the big challenges together

The Phoenix Theatre, New College
7.30pm

To include Q&A sessions
Contributions to defray costs welcome on the night



Contact: Barbara, 01793 536815

barbara@flamefm.co.uk



Re-visiting an age old theme with new insights and relevance for our Community today.



'An eloquent witness to the Christian Gospel and a doughty fighter for truth and justice'. Leslie Griffiths began as a Methodist local preacher in 1963, and was a minister in Haiti during most of the 1970s, before returning to England to serve in several very testing urban ministries. He has been Superintendent minister at Wesley's Chapel since 1996, and is a popular and respected leader there. He is a life peer in the House of Lords.

Is the modern economy the best way to exercise our stewardship of God's world, achieving as much justice and sustainability as we can hope for, given our human nature? Or are there "principalities and powers" at work in our financial systems which, in God's name, we need to expose and confront?



Michael Doe became the first Bishop of Swindon in 1994. In 2004 he was appointed General Secretary of the Anglican mission agency USPG. Now retired in London, he is Preacher to one of the Inns of Court, an Assistant Bishop in the Diocese of Southwark, and chair of the Ecumenical Council for Corporate Responsibility.

Exploring how we might collectively address the challenges facing the Church today, and why we should have confidence in the Mission of the Church in serving our contemporary society, "because what we have to give is what people crave".



Michael Lloyd is the Principal of Wycliffe Hall and was formerly the chaplain at The Queen's College, University of Oxford and the Director of Studies in Theology at Christ's College, Cambridge University. Dr Lloyd has taught theology and doctrine at the University of Oxford, Cambridge University and St Paul's Theological Centre, London. He has published the popular introduction Café Theology and has a particular interest in the doctrine of evil, the problem of pain - and an inexplicable love of cricket.

Swindon Home Library Service

Is for people who can't get to their local library, due to mobility / health reasons. It can be a long term or temporary service depending on your needs.

It is run by the Royal Voluntary Service & Swindon Libraries, alongside volunteers. They choose materials which meet your reading preferences & they will bring them to your home, for free.

To receive this service, please ring Anish Harrison on 465495, leave a message & I'll get back to you. For further information, please go to - http://www.swindon.gov.uk/info/20026/libraries/295/find_out_about_the_home_library_service

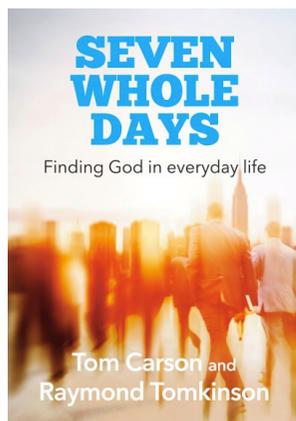
Thank you!

Anish

Be smart – don't keep up appearances

If you are struggling with money as the New Year begins, you are not alone. It has been estimated that half the people in the UK are living beyond their means. Too many of us are using our credit cards as almost permanent extensions of our bank account, instead of as highly expensive loans.

So this year, think about how just small changes could help you. For example, simply deciding to take your own sandwiches, and skipping lunch and coffee 'out' could save you £25 a week – that is £100 a month, or £1200 a year – probably enough to pay your heating bills, and a great deal of your Council Tax.



Seven Whole Days – finding God in everyday life **By Tom Carston and Raymond Tomkinson, Kevin Mayhew, £7.99**

'Seven whole days' explores how faith and a relationship with God in prayer can impact every day of the week, not just Sundays, and how we might take a sense of God's presence into our daily routines. Raymond Tomkinson spent some time in religious life before becoming a State Registered Nurse specialising in the care of elderly people and in hospice care. He was a hospital manager and staff development officer before training for ordained ministry.

25 January - The Conversion of St Paul

January is a month of the beginning of great things! As well as the naming of the Son of God, we celebrate the conversion of the greatest ever apostle of the Christian faith. Many books have been written on Paul, and here is the briefest of introductions.

He was a Jew, born as 'Saul' at Tarsus, and brought up by the rabbi Gamaliel as a Pharisee. A devout, fanatical Jew, Saul persecuted the Christians, and watched with satisfaction the first Christian martyrdom, the stoning of Stephen. Then on his way to Damascus Saul had a vision of Christ that stopped him, literally, in his tracks. He realised that this Jesus whom he was persecuting was in fact the Messiah for whom he had longed.

Saul changed overnight. He took a new name, Paul, and became an evangelist for the cause of Christ. He became a leader in the early Church, and his special calling was as an apostle to the Gentiles. He wrote many epistles to the young churches he founded - and thus, inadvertently, wrote a great part of the New Testament.

Life as the greatest apostle was hardly full of perks: he was stoned, beaten, mobbed, homeless, hated, imprisoned, and finally martyred. Tradition has it that he was beheaded in Rome during the persecution of Nero in AD 64, and buried where the basilica of St Paul 'outside the walls' now stands. His mighty faith in Christ has kindled similar belief in many hundreds of millions of people down the centuries.

No Longer Volunteers – the horror of 1916

1916 was to be the year of mass slaughter in the Great War. The huge volunteer British army was being decimated in the plains of northern France – and the generals knew that worse was to come.

On 29th January 1916 Parliament passed the Military Service Act, which would introduce conscription for the first time. From March all unmarried men between 18 and 41 would become liable for military service. They would be joined from April by married men – the extra month may have been to give them time to make domestic arrangements.

Provision was made, as we have seen, for 'Conscientious Objectors', but conscription was a recognition both of the scale of the slaughter across the Channel and of the involvement of the whole nation in what was now a titanic conflict.

Church Services in the Partnership

St Mary's Lydiard Tregoze

Date	Time	Form
03 January	10:00am	Morning Service
10 January	10:00am	Communion
17 January	10:00am	Family Service with Junior Church
24 January	10:00am	Communion followed by Baptisms
31 January	10:30am	Partnership Service at Toothill

Holy Trinity Shaw

Date	Time	Form
03 January	10:30am	Morning Service
10 January	10:30am	Morning Service / Covenant
10 January	4:00pm	Messy Church
17 January	10:30am	MS & God.com/SS
24 January	10:30am	Communion
31 January	10:30am	Partnership Service at Toothill
31 January	4:00pm	Partnership Prayer and Praise

Toothill

Date	Time	Form
03 January	10:30am	All Age Service
10 January	10:30am	Communion
13 January	11:30pm	Midweek Worship
17 January	10:30am	Morning Service
24 January	10:30am	Morning Service
27 January	11:30am	Midweek Worship
31 January	10:30am	Partnership Service

Westlea

Date	Time	Form
03 January	10:00am	Morning Service
10 January	10:00am	Family Service
17 January	10:00am	Communion
24 January	10:00am	Swap
31 January	10:30am	Partnership Service at Toothill

Partnership Prayer and Praise

31 January 2016

4.00pm

Holy Trinity Shaw

The theme will be

“Preparing for Lent”

Lent begins Wednesday 10 February 2016
and ends Thursday 24 March 2016

All Welcome

This is an opportunity to Pray and Praise together

