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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 16 January.

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(Anglican Priest and Authorised to Serve in the Methodist Church)

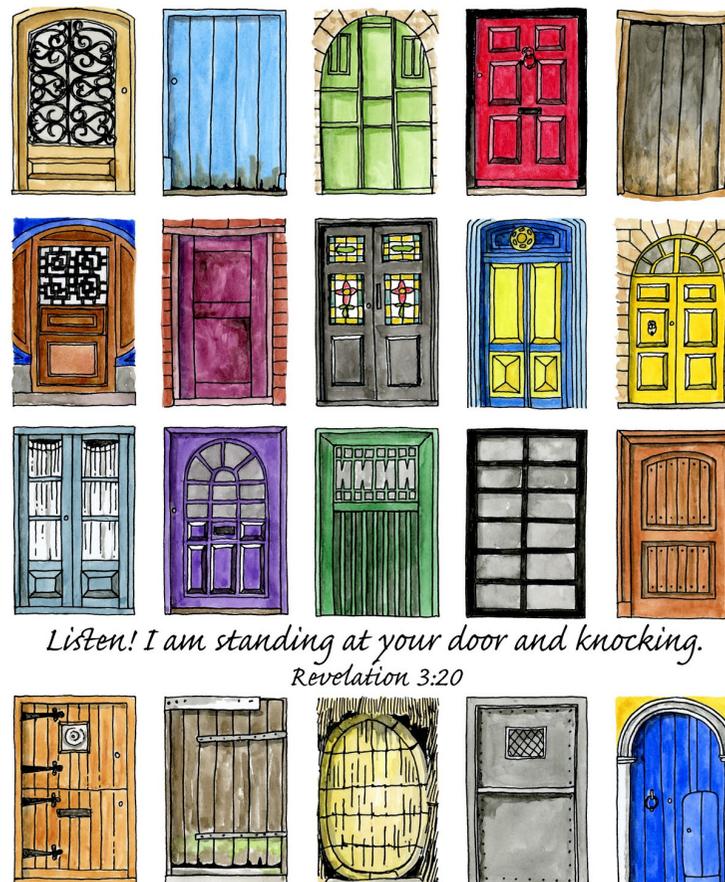
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In Partnership January 2017



*Listen! I am standing at your door and knocking.
Revelation 3:20*

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ²He was in the beginning with God. ³All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. ⁴In him was life,^[a] and the life was the light of men. ⁵The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. (Gospel of John, chapter 1, vs 1-5)

Happy New Year! As I write this, it is early December, we've only just bought the Christmas tree (a real one – no fake trees are allowed in the Taylor household for fear of excommunication...) and the decorations and advent calendars are barely up, and the very last thing I want to think about is the New Year. I love the time of Advent, despite all the extra work that it brings. It is probably my favourite time of the year, and I want it to last as long as possible. Advent is full of promise, of fun time with family, friends, a break from work, food, brisk cold winter days, carols, and the celebration of the birth of Jesus at its culmination. I have no wish to usher in January 2017 any quicker than it will arrive! But, unless the world ends between now and then, January 1st will come wandering in the door of 2017, much as January 2016 did, looking far too bright and breezy for my liking, and I'll be folding my arms and looking at the New Year and mentally saying, OK – what have you got for me?

And what has 2017 got for me? or for you, for that matter. I have no idea. You probably don't, either. There'll be work, and household chores, and school and university and probably some travel and some church "stuff". For the Taylor tribe, there will definitely be some household changes as Lucy starts at university, and we get used to having only three people round the house on a regular basis, and Finlay heads towards his GCSE and then college in the later part of the year. There may even be some time in amongst the usual (mis)managed chaos to get some time in for hobbies. Who knows. I can barely think past tomorrow at the moment, so thinking sensibly about January isn't a top priority.

And that is part of the problem, at least for me, about the new year. Father Christmas has only just exited stage left, HoHoHoing; the carols are still being sung as we continue to celebrate Jesus' advent; and then Epiphany arrives as the Christmas story continues with the visit of the wise men. Somewhere in there is some peace and goodwill, rapidly about to be buried under new years' resolutions (does anyone actually make those anymore? I've avoided them for years) and under all the expectations that somehow arrive, as if by magic,

FROM THE REGISTERS

Baptisms

24 December 2016 Matthew Francis Michuki Michel Cooke

Funerals

20 December 2016 Elizabeth 'Jane' Woolford

PRAYERS

Please pray for:-

Yemen is a country in crisis. More than 18.8 million people urgently need humanitarian assistance – that's over three-quarters of the population. Please Pray and petition God for peace in Yemen, so that those who are suffering can receive the help they need.

Faith Picture Services

Schools Work

A New Year's Resolution?

The year has gone, what have we done
To share the love that Jesus gives?
He's touched our lives, made us anew
This is the Lord's most precious gift.

The will of God is plainly shown
That all be saved and come to Him,
With arms outstretched to welcome us
As upon the cross when He took our sin.

So many lives in darkness held,
Poor blinded eyes that cannot see,
But prayer can take the scales away
So they may know God's liberty.

Why not resolve this year to pray
That God would send the gentle Dove?
To bring salvation to each heart
So they can know His Calvary love.

By Megan Carter

Westlea's Litter Picker Carol

Richard our litter-picking guru has produced this Christmassy offering.
You don't need telling the tune I hope.....

While Some Will Drop Their Bags and Cans

While some will drop their bags and cans
And leave them on the ground
A plan for folk of Westlea Church
Was a litter picking round

The council really liked the plan
So Richard met Gail Light
They would give us all the gear
To free Westlea from blight

The clips and sacks and big wide rings
Really were the Biz
But coolest of the gear we had?
The jackets with high viz

We prayed about this brand new plan
We sensed it was God's idea
And when we saw the bags pile up
He'd made it very clear

So out we go in to the streets
With pickers and our sacks
To fill them with all sorts of things
And bring God's order back

"All glory be to God on high,
and to the earth be peace;
good will henceforth from heaven to earth
begin and never cease!"

Richard Williams

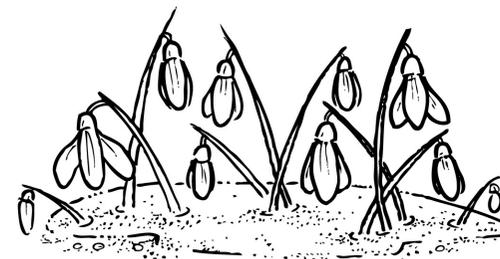
with the coming of January. Suddenly we have the chance to do a bunch of new things and resolve to do better in 2017. Humbug! If a new resolution is needed, make it when you think of it. If a new direction is needed, take it when it comes. If you need to stop doing something you know you shouldn't, stop it when it comes to mind. There's no need to wait for the new year to arrive.

And that's why I started with one of my favourite parts of the Bible. John's gospel starts with this wonderful declaration about God's Word, as personified in Jesus Himself. It echoes the very beginning of Genesis, as a starting point for something new and wonderful, something life changing. It fully unites God and His Word (Jesus) as One and the same yet different. In Genesis we read of God's Spirit hovering over the waters, and of the coming of the light. God the Father. God the Spirit. God the Son. Newness of Life. The Light in the darkness. The birth of the Christ-child, bringing new hope into the world. God's gift of salvation, wrapped up in a manger, visited by social outcasts and foreigners. The Light of the World in Jesus, and the darkness cannot overcome it.

Now, if THAT came in the door of the new year, then I'd take notice. THAT has real possibilities. THAT answers my earlier question about "what have you got for me?" But it doesn't need the new year or even the "New Year" to embrace the possibilities we have in God's Christmas gift. The light of the world that came to us that first Christmas time has shone into every new year since, and it will shine into 2017 and light up the darkness that often seems to overwhelm us. The darkness will not overcome it. No New Year's resolution is needed. No need to wait. The gift of God's outrageous grace is there for each of us, every day, new every morning, whether at the start of the year, or as the year dies away and the frosts return.

So –have a blessed and grace – full New Year!

Mark Taylor HTS



Regular activities

2 nd Sunday each month	
Messy Church	08 January 4 - 5:30pm @ Shaw
Every Monday	
After School Youth Group Contact Claire Camm 07981951381	3:30 – 6:00pm @ Holy Trinity Shaw
Every Tuesday	
Bell Ringing	7-9pm St Mary's Bell Tower
2nd Wednesday of each month	
Mothers Union Contact Doreen Henderson 07434377587	11 January 2pm @ St Mary's Stable Room
Every Thursday	
Toothill Tinies	10 -11:30am @ Toothill

Remember God in 2017

Never be afraid to trust an unknown future to a known God. - *Corrie ten Boom*

In His love He clothes us, enfolds us and embraces us; that tender love completely surrounds us, never to leave us. As I saw it He is everything that is good. - *Julian of Norwich*

Endurance and perseverance are qualities we would all like to possess, but we are loath to go through the process that produces them. - *Jerry Bridges*

In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths. - *Proverbs 3:6*



Based on the classic novel by Shusaku Endo, this epic drama tells the story of two devout and reverent young Jesuit priests, Father Rodrigues (Andrew Garfield) and Father Garrpe (Adam Driver). In the early 17th century they risk violence and persecution as they journey to Japan in search of their mentor, Father Ferreira (Liam Neeson), who travelled to Japan many years before and has now gone missing. Upon arrival in Japan, the two young priests discover a country in which Catholicism has been banned and where the new government is systematically eradicating any followers of the Christian faith; circumstances which test their beliefs to the limit as they search for the mysterious Father Ferreira.

[Silence] is a stunning exploration of what it means to live a life centered on belief and its ability to withstand the most aggressive testing and encounters with the ugliest sides of mankind. A truly transcendent and stirring piece of cinema..." *Antony Aris, Premier Christian Radio*

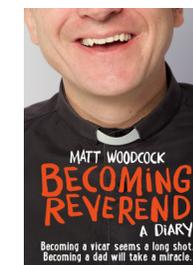
Baptist Union of Great Britain

Becoming Reverend

By Matt Woodcock, CUP, £9.99

Meet Woody. Former journalist. Die-hard Oasis fan. High energy. Low sperm count. Training to be a vicar. Obviously.

Matt Woodcock's frank, funny real-life diaries reveal what it was like for him to train as a vicar while struggling against all odds to become a father. In them he lays bare his joys and struggles as he attempts to reconcile his calling as a vicar with his life as a party-loving journalist, footy-freak and incorrigible extrovert.



Haircuts

Her hair was long, dark
like cocoa beans, coffee.
She hid, her fringe a shield,
a black-out blind.
The library her refuge,
a book her home.

Highlights next, they sparkled
with her eyes, fringe grown.
No longer alone. Surrounded
by swarms of possibilities.
A new twinkle in her face,
a new sway in her walk.

Blue followed, adventure.
She smurfed it up.
Asking for the looks,
the stares, the admiration.
Better, bolder than before.
Becoming something more.

A modern Marilyn, blonde.
Shorter skirts, dresses.
Legs out, jeans folded away.
Head held high.
Hair hanging down her neck,
her back, behind her shoulders.

Shorter next, cropped,
outlining her features. Gold-tinted.
Her face a watercolour,
or oil on canvas. Pure art.
But her hair.
Her hair was the frame.

This poem was written by Rhianna Bryon about one of her friends who likes to change her hairstyle.

Partnership Covenant Service

Toothill Church invite you to
A Partnership Covenant Service
29th January at 10am

The service will be led by The Reverend Steve Wild, Chairman of the Cornwall Methodist District and former President of Conference. Please stay for a bring and share lunch including a questions and answers session with Steve.

(A contribution to lunch would be appreciated)

Orient Express Coffee Afternoon

Saturday 25th February 2017
2.00-4.00pm at Toothill Church

There will be an Orient Express Coffee Afternoon with coffee/tea and biscuits at 50p, plus memorabilia of the Orient Express and other Steam Trains. Also there will be goodies on the table in connection with the Orient Express. All are welcome.

Please note date changed from 21 January due to unforeseen circumstances.

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.

Another church father, Origin, assumed there were three - to correspond with the gifts given. Later Christian interpretation came to understand gold as a symbol of wisdom and wealth, incense as a symbol of worship and sacrifice, and myrrh as a symbol of healing - and even embalming. Certainly Jesus challenged and set aright the way in which the world handled all three of these things. Since the eighth century, the magi have had the names Balthasar, Caspar and Melchior.

West Swindon and Lydiard Tregoze Church Partnership

“Looking outwards and growing together”

Starting Sunday 26th of February 4.00pm at Holy Trinity Shaw



What is *Faith Pictures*?

Faith Pictures is a short course designed to help Christians talk naturally to friends, neighbours and colleagues about what they believe. The heart of the course is about helping people to identify a single picture or image that embodies something of their faith. This is because the kinds of communication which best stick in the mind are concrete and rooted in story.

The course aims to be accessible and light-hearted, without jargon or inflexible methods. It has a number of emphases not always found in faith-sharing courses. These include the avoidance of one-size-fits-all models and the importance of honesty and listening. Each session contains a short video and encourages discussion in pairs and as a whole group.

Who is it for?

Any adult, growing, new Christians, of any Christian background. May well suit older youth too. Small groups. 'It is for people of any Christian tradition and none. It has been designed to appeal particularly to people who would normally run a mile from courses on faith-sharing.

THE MARRIAGE COURSE – SWINDON

NEXT COURSE STARTS:

Friday 20th January 2017, 7:30pm

LOCATION:

Gateway Church Swindon

The Trinity Centre

COST:

£15 per couple

The Marriage Course is a seven week course for any couple, whether married or cohabiting. Over coffee & cake, you'll be given time to talk on your own as a couple (there is no group work!) around specific topics following on from practical talks that are informative and fun.

The Marriage Course is for any couple who want to invest in their relationship, whether you've been together for one or sixty-one years, and whether you feel you have a strong relationship or are struggling. The course is full of tips and tools that will benefit your relationship enabling you face all that life throws at you.

Epiphany Concert of Live Classical Music

St Alban's Church, Watchfield

04 February 2017 7.30pm

Tickets £5 to include a glass of wine

An Evening with Epiphany

Epiphany" is the collective name for a group of highly talented professional musicians, all of whom play with well-known groups and orchestras and who come together from time to time to tour and perform, both nationally and internationally. This is an ideal event to which you could invite your non-Christian friend and music-lover. The "Sound Portraits" in part two of the concert are improvised arrangements specially tailored for individual volunteers (no pressure at all).

Epiphany will also be leading worship at the morning service on Sunday 5th at St Alban's Church.



75 Years on a Desert Island

The first episode of *Desert Island Discs* was broadcast on BBC radio 75 years ago, on 29 January 1942. It is Britain's longest-running radio show.

It was devised by freelance broadcaster Roy Plomley and introduced to listeners as "a programme in which a well-known person is asked the question, if you were to be cast away alone on a desert island, which eight gramophone records would you choose to have with you, assuming of course, that you had a gramophone and an inexhaustible supply of needles".

The first castaway was the Viennese comedian, actor and musician, Vic Oliver, and the first piece of music chosen was Chopin's Étude No.12 in C minor, played by pianist Alfred Cortot. During the war years, everything had to be scripted and read out.

Apart from a five-year break between 1946 and 1951, the programme has been on air ever since. Following Plomley himself, the hosts have included Michael Parkinson – who insisted that the selected music was played to the guests during the actual recording – Sue Lawley and Kirsty Young. Well over 3000 people have been cast away over that period.

As well as a choice of music, the guests also receive a copy of Shakespeare and the Bible, another book and a luxury item. Recently the choice of the Bible has unsurprisingly come under attack, with comedian David Walliams one of those who refused to accept it. A poll suggested that only 31% of people in the UK would want it.

Comedian Lee Mack, however, thought it odd that so many people dismissed the Bible without having read it. "I'm glad you get the Bible," he said. "I would read it."

Safeguarding Training

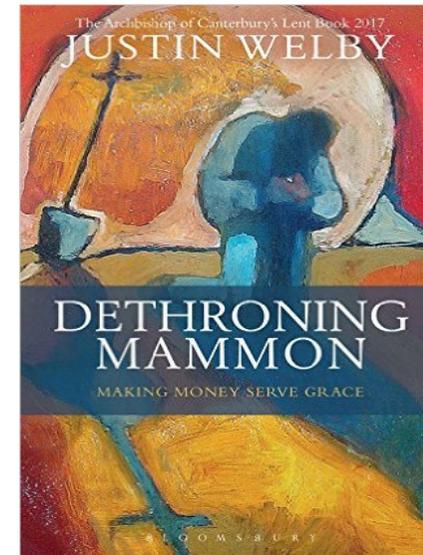
21st January 2017

Rodbourne Cheney Baptist Church. Cheney Manor Road SN2 2PE

Rodbourne Cheney Baptist Church, in Swindon have several places available on their Level 2 and Level 3 safeguarding course on Saturday 21st January.

Please contact Eric Clark for more details or to book a place:
eandjclark@aol.com

**Starting on Thursday 2nd of March 7.00pm
for 7.30pm at Toothill**



In his first full-length book Justin Welby looks at the subject of money and materialism. **Designed for study in the weeks of Lent** leading up to Easter, *Dethroning Mammon* reflects on the impact of our own attitudes, and of the pressures that surround us, on how we handle the power of money, called Mammon in this book. Who will be on the throne of our lives? Who will direct our actions and attitudes? Is it Jesus Christ, who brings truth, hope and freedom? Or is it Mammon, so attractive, so clear, but leading us into paths that tangle, trip and deceive?

Archbishop Justin explores the tensions that arise in a society dominated by Mammon's modern aliases, economics and finance, and by the pressures of our culture to conform to Mammon's expectations. Following the Gospels towards Easter, this book asks the reader what it means to dethrone Mammon in the values and priorities of our civilisation and in our own existence.

In *Dethroning Mammon*, Archbishop Justin encourages us to use Lent as a time of learning to trust in the abundance and grace of God.

New Year, New Life

The month of January is named after the Roman god Janus, who is depicted with two faces. We may look back to the old year with sadness or regret, but how can we make a fresh start at the beginning of 2016? The apostle Paul writes *'But one thing I do: forgetting what is behind and straining towards what is ahead, I press on towards the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenwards in Christ Jesus.'* (Philippians 3:13,14).

Firstly, if you want a new start, you need to **forget the things which are behind**. Paul pictures himself as an athlete running for Christ, yet not looking back. He refused to allow his past sins and failures to define who he was. By God's grace, he no longer saw himself that way. The same can be true of ourselves, as we confess our sins and receive God's forgiveness and new life.

Secondly, we need to **focus on the things that lie ahead**. The athlete is entirely focused on winning the race and gaining the prize. Like Paul, we have to be single-minded in making Jesus the focus of everything we do. How can we go deeper in our prayer life and Bible reading this year? What will it mean to better serve Christ in our workplace and career, or family and children?

Paul looked forward to the day when he would stand before God, and God will say, *'well done, good and faithful servant'*. In light of all that Jesus had done for him, Paul wanted to give his very best to Jesus. As we stand at the beginning of this New Year, let's ask ourselves, *'What can I do this year that will help me bring glory and honour to God?'*



"The vicar's hoping providing a really strong mobile signal will attract more young folk to the church."

to a life of adventure, walking into unknown and unfamiliar places and with a willingness and obedience to continually respond to Jesus' invitations to the next part of the journey.

Family and friends have always known that I am happy to explore new paths and new opportunities, especially where there are opportunities to develop and grow people, leaders and organisations. This has taken me from leadership in the education and corporate sectors to working globally for those who are persecuted for following Jesus.

When God invited me to be ordained, set apart as a priest for His people, in and beyond Christ Church, it was a surprise. Yet I should not have been surprised because over the years I have loved developing the spiritual hearts and minds of people across the world through discipleship, teaching and prayer

As with all adventures, I go with confidence that the Lord has gone ahead of me and he is walking beside me because I need Him to encourage and strengthen in the situations I will encounter on the journey.

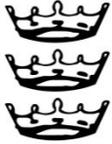
Read Jill and Richard's full stories of their journey to ordination at www.bristol.anglican.org

A Calendar to colour in

Reach for your pencil case! Bible Society has launched a calendar of hand lettered Bible verses for you to colour in each month during 2017.

The calendar was designed by illustrator Emma Skerratt, who started hand lettering Bible verses to help her commit them to memory. She found that the actual act of lettering helped her reflect on the verse and ultimately, to remember it.

Perhaps colouring the verses will have the same effect for you – and give you something beautiful to enjoy. For details of how to get one, go to: <https://www.biblesociety.org.uk/get-involved/christmas/christmas2016-colouring-calendar>



News from the Diocese of Bristol

The Very Revd David Hoyle, Dean of Bristol, on learning from history and telling the right story

If you went to church over Christmas, you almost certainly heard a history lesson. You almost certainly heard St Luke say something like: “*In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus.*” Luke reminds us of a history full of terrible kings like Tiberius, Herod, and Augustus, who talked of peace and traded violence.

Luke knows that history takes us nowhere. It is a lesson we are still leaning. Whatever you voted in the referendum on Europe; whether you hoped for Trump, or Clinton, or loathe them both, you come to a place where history does not feel like progress. We reach a place where promises are not kept, where bad decisions are made and terror and violence mess up the brightest hopes.

History, and our own efforts, betray us. We have to look for something else. The answer, Luke tells us, is to think differently and look elsewhere. Faith is not living in the midst of mad events and hoping for a happy ending. Christian faith is the absolute conviction that we keep telling the wrong story, trusting the wrong outcomes believing the wrong people. Power and political promises are the wrong story. They will lead us to a wilderness of our own making. We have to start believing in something else. We have to start believing in another story about reconciliation, forgiveness and redemption. We have to look for a new creation founded on love and lived out in real peace. In fact we have to *insist* on this other story. Luke told that story once, now it's our turn.

OLMs ordained

Jill Garfitt and Richard Pendlebury were both ordained as OLM at Christ Church Clifton by Bishop Mike. An OLM is an ordained ministry with a distinctive focus on a local community.

Here Jill gives her own story of her road to ordination.

Jill's story

Jesus gives us an invitation to COME and follow him. It is an invitation

Friday Focus 2017

calling on Christians across the UK to join in

Churches across the UK are preparing for mission together in 2018 to make Jesus known. A major new initiative, ‘Friday Focus 2017’ provides the opportunity for us to pray where we are, and unite across our nation on Fridays (whenever possible), supporting all on-going mission across the UK and preparing the way for HOPE 2018.

Many Christian denominations, agencies and churches are already part of HOPE 2018 (www.hopetogether.org.uk) There are many local and national initiatives being planned to make Jesus known to people in our villages, towns and cities during 2018. The aim is to see the entire church mobilised to work together for a year of mission, so that the good news of Jesus Christ is shared in words and action. The dream is to see 10 per cent church growth in these next two years. Without prayer and seeking the empowering of the Holy Spirit, our work will not be as fruitful.

Each week Friday Focus will be taking a different theme: supporting national initiatives of prayer and mission; key seasons in the church's calendar; the different people groups highlighted in the *Talking Jesus* report (www.talkingjesus.org); the people we know and meet; the communities we are part of, and the places where we live.

Leaders from denominations, mission and prayer organisations and networks are writing the reflections based on a Bible passage, and there will also be a written prayer to accompany each theme. Use Prayer Focus for private prayer or in church services and prayer meetings.

Colossians 4 verses 2-3 sums up what Friday Focus longs to see from this year of praying together. We want to see every individual and church devoting itself to prayer – being watchful and thankful. We want everyone to be asking God to open the doors for mission opportunities, and asking for clarity as we talk about Jesus. We want to encourage each other to make the most of every opportunity, to give the reason for the hope we have, with gentleness and respect (1 Peter 3:15).

Do join in – and be part of the answer! Download the prayers from www.hopetogether.org.uk/prayer

Church Services in the Partnership St Mary's Lydiard Tregoze

Date	Time	Form
01 January	10:00am	Partnership New Year
08 January	10:00am	Communion
15 January	10:00am	Family Service with Junior Church
22 January	10:00am	Communion followed by Baptisms
29 January	10:00am	Covenant Partnership service @ Toothill

Holy Trinity Shaw

Date	Time	Form
01 January	10:00am	Partnership New Year @ St Mary's
08 January	10:30am	Morning Service/Covenant
08 January	4:00pm	Messy Church
15 January	10:30am	MS & God.Com/SS
22 January	10:30am	Communion
29 January	10:00am	Covenant Partnership Service @ Toothill

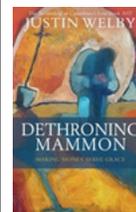
8.45am Morning Prayer on Fridays during term time.

Toothill

Date	Time	Form
01 January	10:00am	Partnership New Year @ St Mary's
08 January	10:30am	Communion
Weds 11 Jan	11:30am	Midweek Worship
15 January	10:30am	Morning Service
22 January	10:30am	Morning Service
Weds 25 Jan	11:30am	Midweek Worship
29 January	10:00am	Covenant Partnership Service

Westlea

Date	Time	Form
01 January	10:00am	Partnership New Year @ St Mary's
08 January	10:00am	Family Service
15 January	6:30pm	Communion
22 January	10:00am	All Age Service
29 January	10:00am	Covenant Partnership Service @ Toothill



Lent Course 2017 Dethroning Mammon: Making Money Serve Grace

The Archbishop of Canterbury's Lent book 2017

**Starting Thursday 02 March 2017
7pm at Toothill Church**

Intended as a companion for lent, this is Archbishop Welby's first book and a call for Christians to examine who it is that sits upon the throne of their lives.

See page 7 for more details

Faith Pictures

**From 26 February to 02 April 2017, 4pm at Holy Trinity Shaw
Except 12 March 6.30pm at Holy Trinity Shaw**

Faith Pictures is produced by Church Army, a mission community of people who are transforming lives and local communities. Its members are committed to sharing the Christian faith through words and action in a variety of contexts across the British Isles and Ireland. The 6 week course is about helping people to identify a single picture or image that embodies something of their faith. This is because the kinds of communication which best stick in the mind are concrete and rooted in story.

See page 6 for more details