

CHURCH NEWS

MARCH 2007

The Rectory, The Street, Ash, Nr Sevenoaks, Kent TN15 7HA

Tel: 872209

My dear friends,

The trouble with following sport is that the umpire or referee always seems to be biased in favour of the other team! Mind you the same is also true outside of sports grounds. Have you noticed how self important bureaucrats, tax inspectors or even traffic police seem to have it in for you? Then there is the subject of religion. How often it seems as if Christianity is the butt of media humour whereas other religions are untouchable. What can we do about it all?

As far as referees are concerned, probably nothing! As far as tax or police – perhaps I speak naively if I say that the guilty have more to fear than the innocent. What of religion, though? There are times when we seem to get a rough deal. I see the name of my God besmirched too regularly, even Christians using ‘God!’ as a swear-word! Or Christians can be forced to work when they would rather worship, and if you or your children want to play sport often the only possibility is a Sunday morning. So how can we react?

Jesus was willing to bear everything thrown at Him on our behalf - I feel that He does not need our righteous indignation now. This does not mean that we should not share with those who offend us the fact that we are offended, however, in the same way that they might if we offended someone near or dear to us. The early church had dawn services so that people could then go on to work on what was then a working day. Perhaps we might need to look at the time of our worship so that we are available to folk when they are able to join us in worship.

We often feel that the Moslem faith is full of fanatics, often that they seem to be treated with kid gloves (though they would see this as far from the true reality!) It may be that there are many fanatical Moslems – but I am sure that this is not true of the majority. What I see, however, is a group of people whose religion really does mean a great deal to them and who are prepared to stand up for it. I am sure that there are vastly more Christians in this country than the other faiths put together – it is just that so many Christians rarely go to church or, indeed, do much at all about their faith. Perhaps, before we grumble too much about the upfront position of Moslems in society, we might do something about our own faith. If we could only study, and live, our faith like members of other religions do perhaps we could again claim this lovely land for Christ. How about it – this Lent?

Yours very sincerely,

John A Peal

SERVICES AT ST. PETER & ST. PAUL'S ASH

<u>Time</u>	<u>Type of Service</u>	<u>When</u>
8.00	Holy Communion	Every Sunday in month
10.10	Junior Church meets in Ash Village Hall, age 3 and over	2nd, 3rd, 4th & 5th Sundays during term time
10.30	Family Worship	First Sunday in the month
10.30	Family Eucharist	2nd, 3rd, 4th & 5th Sundays

SERVICES AT ST. PETER'S RIDLEY

<u>Time</u>	<u>Type of Service</u>	<u>When</u>
9.15	Parish Communion	Every Sunday in the month
6.30	Evening Prayer	Second Sunday in the month only

diary dates

Full details can also be found on the website.

Mar.	13 th	Ash P.C.C. meeting	- The Rectory	8.00 p.m.
	14 th	Ridley P.C.C. meeting	- The Old Rectory, Ridley	8.00 p.m.
	17 th	Beetle Drive	- Ash Village Hall	7.30 p.m.
	25 th	Summertime begins		
Apr.	1 st	Palm Sunday		
	2 nd - 4 th	Compline		8.00 p.m.
	5 th	Maundy Thursday		
		Sung Communion followed by Stripping of Altars and Vigil		8.00 p.m.
		Compline		10.00 p.m.
	6 th	Good Friday		
		Children's project at Hartley		9.00 a.m.
		Walk of witness		9.45 a.m.
		Closing service for both at Hartley Church Centre		11.15 a.m.
		Service of hymns and meditation for Good Friday		2.00 p.m.
		The Cross of Christ		8.00 p.m.
	7 th	Lighting of the Easter Candle		8.00 p.m.
	8 th	EASTER DAY		
		Dawn Service	- Ash Church Tower	6.15 a.m.
		All other services usual times (<i>Easter eggs @ 10.30 a.m.</i>)		

FROM THE REGISTERS

FUNERALS

Jan.	30 th	George Herbert Byrne	Aged 74
Feb.	9 th	Lily Smith	Aged 95

May They Rest in Peace

DARENT VALLEY BABY MEMORIAL SERVICE

On Sunday March 11th @ 3 p.m. there will be a service in the Hospital chapel for anyone who has lost a baby during pregnancy or immediately afterwards. There will be an opportunity for people to remember them by lighting a candle for them, having their names read out, or composing a prayer for them if they wish. There will be an opportunity to have the baby's name inscribed in the Baby Memorial Book. Afterwards over tea and coffee there will be a chance to meet other parents as well as the hospital midwife who is also a psychotherapist.

PARISH ROOM AND CHURCH REPAIRS AT ASH

Following the sale of the school we are very much looking at the possibility of building a small room at Ash church with much needed toilet facilities. At the same time we are trying to find out how much it would cost us to totally repair the church, tower and bells. At the moment it looks as if the bill will be around £100,000 more than we have so we will probably have to apply for grants and do some fund raising. It really would be wonderful, though to have the job complete after thinking about it for so many years!

PARISH WEEKEND

As many of you will know, we are planning a Parish Weekend, when all of us, *of all ages*, will be able to get together to get to know each other better, learn from each other and gain confidence in ourselves and in our faith. The aim is that we will be better able to share the love of God in our community.

Originally this was planned for this coming autumn, but for some very positive reasons, it has now been postponed until September 26th –28th 2008. One of the reasons is that the PCC feel that this event is so important we really have to have the right leader for it; after much trying, we drew an absolute blank for this year, and rather than go for second best, we opted for putting it off until the person we really wanted was free. We have now indeed been able to book that person. Another reason was that the spring, with Lent groups, Easter, preparations for the Fete and for the choir 'instant' is very busy and it was felt that we should be able to give the parish Weekend our fullest attention.

There is a small committee working on the plans for the weekend, and if you feel that you would like to be a part of this, please let me know. There will be a great deal for all of us to think and pray about, and also a lot for many of us to do in practical terms in preparation. Please hold the weekend, and the group who are preparing it, in your prayers.

Our MP - Mr Michael Fallon - at work!

Our MP has signed an Early Day Motion at the House of Commons - along with nearly 90 MPs from all the political parties - on the following:

EDM 422 SUPPORT FOR CHRISTIAN UNIONS 06.12.2006 Dorries, Nadine 89 signatures:

That this House notes the valuable work and support provided to students by Christian Unions on university and college campuses across the United Kingdom; further notes the constructive dialogue that exists between the majority of Christian Union Societies and Student Guilds or associations on campuses across the country; believes a tolerant society should respect the rights of Christian Unions to their beliefs; believes that Christian Unions are entitled to the rights of freedom of expression, freedom of belief and freedom of association; and further believes that the leadership of Christian Unions should not have imposed upon them people who do not share their core beliefs.

The full list [plus party affiliation] can be found on the House of Commons Web site.

Our MP signed this EDM following problems that the UCCF has faced on our university campuses.

The BBC reported this problem on their news line:

Evangelical students 'suppressed'

The Archbishop of Canterbury has criticised the "suppression" of Christian unions in universities.

Dr Rowan Williams said the refusal by some student unions to recognise evangelical Christian groups looked like a "fear of open argument".

Writing in the Times Higher Education Supplement, Dr Williams said it was not a crime to hold traditional views.

But the National Union of Students said all local unions were trying to do was curb Christian societies' exclusivity.

Concerns arose when the student guild at Exeter University suspended the Christian union (CU) from its group.

The guild said that, by asking members must sign a form saying they follow Christ, the CU breached equal opportunities and was not open to all.

Members of the Christian union have threatened to take legal action against the guild.

And at University of Birmingham, the CU said the student guild wanted it to change its constitution and impose a guild leader onto its executive.

The CU said it has also had its bank accounts frozen by Guild authorities.

'Expression of hate'

In his article, 'It is not a crime to hold traditional values', Dr Williams said: "The danger in issuing sanctions against a body whose views you disapprove of is that it looks like a fear of open argument.

"If disagreement is to be silenced because offence may be caused, that is not good for intellectual life; it personalises and 'psychologises' all conflict of ideas and denies the possibility of appropriate detachment in debating issues."

Dr Williams said, while the views of evangelicals on the issue of homosexual sex may be "embarrassing" to liberal Christians, traditional values should not be compared to holocaust denial or racial bigotry.

"Quite often in discussion of Christian attitudes to homosexuality (and this is often the presenting issue where Christian unions are concerned), it is taken for granted that any statement that a form of behaviour might be sinful is on a par with the expression of hate."

This means, he said, it is "impossible for a conservative Christian, Catholic or Protestant or, for that matter, an orthodox Muslim to state the traditional position of their faith without being accused of something akin to holocaust denial or racial bigotry".

He added: "To challenge behaviour may be deeply unwelcome and offensive in a personal sense, but it is not a matter for legislative action."

Dr Williams also challenged evangelical groups to look carefully at the expression of some of their beliefs.

"No doubt some Christian unions might do well to undertake a little hard self-examination about whether their language is vulnerable to proper challenge.

He added: "They may need to affirm more clearly and credibly the distinction between declaring behaviour unacceptable and in effect passing judgment on a whole category of persons."

Limiting access

The president of the National Union of Students, Gemma Tumelty, said the union agreed that silencing disagreement was bad for intellectual life.

"But Dr Williams not consider that unfortunately some Christian unions themselves proscribe opinion through limiting access to others and that this is what students' unions are trying to mitigate."

"Students' unions are not seeking to be 'arbiters of acceptable opinion' as he claims. They are seeking to allow free flow of opinion within societies as well as between societies," she said.

"The student movement had a proud record of supporting faith groups, interfaith dialogue and ensuring the happy existence of equal opportunities structures", she added.

Story from BBC NEWS: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/1/hi/education/6161165.stm>

CAN WE BUILD A BETTER WORLD?

Building on the success of the ecumenical Lent groups last year, the local Covenanting Churches have decided to use the latest York Course material for our Lent groups this year.

The theme for the five-week course is, “Can we build a better world?” The springboard for this theme is the 200th anniversary this year of the abolition of the slave trade. This leads on to a consideration in the first session of current issues such as bonded labour, exploitation of migrant workers and unfair trade.

Session Two has the theme of “Friendship and Prayer”, focusing on how Wilberforce was encouraged by his friends in the “Clapham Sect”, including John Wesley, and bringing it up to date with the challenge of how we can encourage one another in working for a better world.

The third session looks at the struggle involved in working for change, and addresses such current issues as climate change, political correctness and racial prejudice.

Session Four is entitled, “The Bible: Then and Now” and notes how the Bible can provide us with encouragement, sustenance and challenge.

The final session has the theme of “Redemption and Restoration” and looks at how we can work for the fullness of life that Christ promised.

Seven ecumenical groups are being run across the Covenanting Churches, as listed on the facing page. You are warmly invited to join one of these groups. To help the group leaders in their planning we would ask you to kindly phone the group leader beforehand to let them know you are coming.

It is our hope and prayer that these Lent groups will be a time of growing together in faith and fellowship for Christians throughout our community.

Please contact Rev. Richard Worssam on 703819 if you have any questions.

MONDAY – 26th Feb, 5th, 12th, 19th, 26th March

Time: 8 pm

Venue: The Rectory, 67 Main Road, **Longfield**

Leader: Rev. Dave Johnston (702201)

TUESDAY – (20th), 27th Feb, 6th, 13th, 20th, (27th) March *N.B. The morning group begins one week earlier, on the 20th Feb. A crèche could be provided at this group.*

Time: 10.30 a.m.

Venue: 59 Lambardes, **New Ash Green**

Host: Maria Ashford (871252)

Leader: Alison Harding (874770)

Time: 8 p.m.
Venue: Turners Oak, **New Ash Green**
Leader: Lawrie Townson (872256)

WEDNESDAY – 28th Feb, 7th, 14th, 21st, 28th March

Time: 10.30 a.m.
Venue: Jubilee Hall, Main Road, **Longfield**
Leader: Vic Walsham (708832)

Time: 12 noon
Venue: Vermont, Gorsewood Road, **Hartley**
Host: Shirley Wilson (703336)
Leader: Margaret Munns (702446)

Time: 8 p.m.
Venue: 50 Chantry Avenue, **Hartley**
Leader: Wendy Stiddard (703471)

THURSDAY – 1st, 8th, 15th, 22nd, 29th March

Time: 8 pm
Venue: Kilrymont, Gorse Way, **Hartley**
Leader: Bea Cowan (707277)



The Covenanting Churches

ECUMENICAL LENT GROUPS

2007

WOMAN'S WORLD DAY OF PRAYER SERVICE

2pm Friday 2nd March 2007 at St Francis de Sales Church Hartley

Speaker: Ann Inman

Transport can be arranged - contact Shirley Orr 873553

ZIMBABWE

Please continue pray in your own prayers and in our Church Intercessions for our link Parish of St Paul's Marlborough.

Although everything at St Paul's appears to be running smoothly, tear fund report the following:

Members of the Zimbabwe Christian Alliance had been arrested by armed police officers, were released on bail by the government early in February.

On Friday February 9th , over 500 church leaders and Christians gathered to launch a new chapter of the Alliance in Kadoma, Zimbabwe, but eight of the leaders were arrested and put in jail by the police.

The state alleged that the Alliance was inciting the gathered crowd to violence as their reason for arresting and putting the leaders in jail.

The leaders' next hearing is expected to be on the 5 March in Kadoma.

The Christian Alliance works to equip leaders to promote church-based peace-building and advocacy in communities where continued injustice has paved the way for dire poverty and suffering.

As the EU continues with the process of review over renewal of sanctions against Mugabe's regime, Zimbabwe faces a massive food shortfall of hundreds of thousands of tonnes according to recent reports. Most Zimbabweans are now living far below the poverty line and thousands of children have been unable to resume schooling due to lack of fees. Tearfund believes that local church leaders must be allowed to develop and support the people who are suffering.

The local church is asking Christians worldwide to continue to pray, speak and act so that the situation continues to be highlighted to the international community.

- Pray that the EU would decide to renew sanctions.
- Thank God for the prayers of Christians in the country and that the leaders were released on bail. Pray that those working to alleviate poverty would be protected.
- Thank God for the prayers and unity of Christians in Zimbabwe. Give thanks for their witness to God while being held. Pray for a just outcome at the leaders' hearing in March.

NOT 2 B MISSED!!!

Lance Pierson

An entertainer who brings words to life.



He is coming to

Meopham School

on

Wednesday 9th may 2007

@ 7.30PM

with

'The Jesus Story'

More news next month

Arranged by Cobham Deanery

As I am getting older a few changes are affecting my life, in fact I have become a frivolous old girl. I am seeing five gentlemen every day. As soon as I wake up Will Power helps me out of bed and Jimmy Riddle calls. Next it is time for Earl of Grey. They leave then Arthur Ritus shows up and keeps me company for the rest of the day. He doesn't like to stay in one place very long, so he takes me from joint to joint. After such a busy day I'm off to bed with Jonny Walker. Such is life!!!

Hope this has made you smile in this sad old world.

Lillian French

BEETLE DRIVE SATURDAY 17TH MARCH - ASH VILLAGE HALL
COMMENCING AT 7 pm. £2.50 PER PERSON

Do try and join us. This is always a really fun evening for all ages and will once again be hosted by the youth club. Please bring your own drinks.

PREPARATION OF A NEW ELECTORAL ROLL

Notice is hereby given that under the Church Representation Rules a new Church Electoral Roll is being prepared. All persons who wish to have their names entered on the new Roll, **whether their names are entered on the present Roll or not**, are requested to apply for enrolment not later than Tuesday 27 March. The new Roll will come into operation on Saturday 7 April.

The new Roll shall be published for not less than 14 days. Forms of application for enrolment can be obtained from the Church Electoral Roll Officer, Carol Clark. In order to be entitled to attend the annual parochial church meeting (on Tuesday 24 April) and to take part in its proceedings, forms of application for enrolment must be returned by the earlier of the two dates given above.

Under the Church Representation Rules any persons are entitled to have their names entered on the roll if they -

- (i) are baptized and aged 16 or over;
- (ii) have signed a form of application for enrolment;

and either

(iii) are members of the Church of England or of any Church in communion with the Church of England being resident in the parish or (not being resident in the parish) having habitually attended public worship in the parish during the six months prior to the application for enrolment;

or;

(iv) are members in good standing of a Church (not in communion with the Church of England) which subscribes to the doctrine of the Holy Trinity declaring themselves to be also members of the Church of England and having habitually attended public worship in the parish during the period of six months prior to enrolment.

Any error discovered in the Roll should at once be reported to the Church Electoral Roll Officer.