

St Leonard's Lexden



Ordinary people. Extraordinary God.



Parish Magazine

50p February 2018



From the Curate



Live fully...

In priestly ministry I frequently refer to a quote attributed to Saint Augustine: “There is nothing sadder in God’s eyes than a life not fully lived”. I find it wonderfully uplifting. It is, in essence, an encouragement to each of us to go out and live life fully with God’s approval. God has given each of us our gifts, talents, and circumstances, it is up to us to use and enjoy them fully.

Implicit in the reassurance that we should live fully, is the optimistic acknowledgement that we should not be wrapped up in the past. We should be able to cast off concerns about how we may have acted or thought in the past; or of how we may have lived our life at times perhaps not as goodly full as God might have wished. It is up to God ultimately to judge us, not ourselves. In a meaningful relationship with God, the past is the past, and to live fully, we should live in the present and future in harmony and union with the divine.

We are entering Lent, a time of reflection. It is a period in which we should endeavour to take time to reflect on our lives, our faith, our relationship with God, and how God has reached out to us in the Spirit and in Christ. In considering God’s reaching out to us, we must accept his forgiveness when we truly repent. It is only by accepting that forgiveness that we can go on to live fully, unimpeded by concerns of things long gone. God’s unbounded forgiveness is central to our Christian faith.

Emphasising God’s nature of forgiveness is a poignant passage from *To be a Pilgrim – a spiritual notebook*, a book by the former Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster, Basil Hume. In it he writes:

“A priest started his homily at a funeral saying: ‘I am going to preach about judgement’. There was dismay in the congregation. Then he went on: ‘Judgement is whispering into the ear of a merciful and compassionate God the story of my life which I had never been able to tell’.

Cardinal Hume goes on to explain that many of us have a story, or part of one at any rate, about which we have never been able to speak to anyone. Fear of being misunderstood, inability to understand ourselves, ignorance of the darker side of our hidden lives, or just shame, make it very difficult for many people. Our true story is not told, or only half of it is.

Being in good relationship with God, means that our true and full stories are known to him, and we can whisper them into his merciful and compassionate ear knowing that there lies forgiveness and a permission to fully live our lives.

At the end of our lives, God will welcome us as his prodigal children. So, we should live now. In your reflection this Lent, please concentrate on the wonderment of Christianity, that is that all our sins are forgiven so that we can, and should, fully live our lives in the sight of God and be happy, God bless,

In David

FRIENDSHIP LUNCHES

Anyone who has enjoyed these excellent and popular lunches will agree that Beverley and her team have done wonders catering and serving them from a small tea bar with minimal space and equipment.

Work is being carried out during the spring to extend the area and make it into a kitchen with full catering facilities. The next Friendship Lunch will therefore be in May. Please bear with us and watch this space!



DIARY FOR FEBRUARY

Saturday 3rd

8.30am Men's Breakfast

Sunday 4th: 2nd before Lent

8.00am Holy Communion (BCP)

9.45am Christingle *in aid of the Children's Society*

6.30pm PARISH EUCHARIST



Tuesday 6th

10.30am Holy Communion at Wren House

Wednesday 7th

10.00am The Eucharist with prayers for healing, followed by coffee

10.45am Holy Communion at Woodlands

11.30am Holy Communion at Cheviot

Thursday 8th

8.00am The Eucharist

2.30pm 'Constable' house group (Hugh 564577)

7.30pm 'Medley' house group (Rosemary 515245)

Saturday 10th

10.30-12.00 Coffee morning—see p13 for venue.

SUNDAY 11th: Next Before Lent

8.00am Holy Communion (BCP)

9.45am Parish Eucharist with Junior Church

6.30pm Evensong and sermon

Tuesday 13th

2.30pm Mothers' Union meet in the Nicholls Room

Wednesday 14th: ASH WEDNESDAY

10.00am Eucharist and Imposition of Ashes

7.30pm Eucharist and Imposition of Ashes



Thursday 15th

8.00am The Eucharist

SUNDAY 18th: Lent I

8.00am Holy Communion (BCP)

9.45am Parish Eucharist with Junior Church

6.30pm Evensong and Sermon

Monday 19th

11.00am Holy Communion at Hill House

Wednesday 21st

10.00am The Eucharist with prayers for healing, followed by coffee

11.00am Lent Course in the Nicholls Room

6.30pm Lent Course followed by Compline

Thursday 22nd

8.00am The Eucharist

SUNDAY 25th: Lent II

8.00am Holy Communion (BCP)

9.45am Parish Eucharist with Junior Church

3.00pm Messy Church

6.30pm Evensong and Sermon



Monday 26th

7.45pm Jubilee house group (Viv 513495)

Wednesday 28th

10.00am The Eucharist with prayers for healing, followed by coffee

11.00am Lent Course in the Nicholls Room

6.30pm Lent Course followed by Compline

Thursday 1st March: David, Patron of Wales

8.00am The Eucharist

SUNDAY 4th March: Lent III

8.00am Holy Communion (BCP)

9.45am PARISH EUCHARIST with Junior Church**

6.30pm Evensong and Sermon

****Informal Eucharist will be on Mothering Sunday, 11th March**



Lent Boxes

After speaking with both Teresa and, more recently, with Fr David, it has been decided to support our two overseas charities on alternate years, rather than send a smaller amount to both charities each year. Therefore this year all the money from our Lent Boxes will be sent to the Church Missionary Society; next year we will support the United Society (formerly USPG).

CMS boxes will be available in the church from the beginning of February and should be returned at, or soon after, Easter, please. If you are a taxpayer please enhance your donation by filling in the Gift Aid section on your box, and ensure all boxes are named. When taking a box please sign the list.

Thank you.
Pam Calvert



MAGAZINE DEADLINE

FINAL DAY for items for the March edition:

SUNDAY 11th FEBRUARY

Please submit items to the Editor

email: magazine@stleonardslexden.org.uk

Please include your name with any submission.

Items from unknown sources cannot be used.

Please limit text to 500—600 words maximum.

Longer articles may be edited. Thank you

The background of the entire page is a repeating pattern of stacks of pancakes, some with fruit like strawberries and blueberries. At the top center is the 'Messy Church' logo, which features the word 'Messy' in large white letters with a red outline, and 'CHURCH' in smaller yellow letters below it, all set against a red, splatter-like background.

food

stories

Pancake Party

Date: 25th February

Time: 3pm-5pm

Place: St Leonard's
church Lexden

games

Craft
activities

lots of
pancakes

Everything is free, but please let us know if you are coming 😊

Contact Luisa:

youthworker@stleonardslexden.org.uk

Junior Church in February



4 February	Christingle All Age Service
11 February	The Dazzle Factor; the glory of God Mark 9:2-9
18 February	No Short Cuts Mark 1:9-15
25 February	The Path to Life; overturned expectations Mark 8:31-38

← **And don't forget Messy Church!**

Coffee Morning

Our first Coffee Morning of the New Year 2018 will be held on Saturday, 24th February at Apple Tree Cottage, Chapel Lane, West Bergholt CO6 3EQ by kind invitation of Beverley and Edward Kettell.

It will be from 10.30 - 12 noon and there will be a Raffle and a Bring & Buy of produce, home baking, preserves etc. books and jigsaws.

Anyone who would like to come and needing transport, please contact me and I will arrange it.

Please do come and maybe bring a friend.

Thanks,

Jean Hallett

Tel. 547837 or 07843 172625



Empty Garage Required for Three Months

My husband, Robert, needs to rent a garage for around three months to store his soft top car until the more clement weather.

If anyone has one they could offer him please could they call on 01206 760742 to discuss terms.

Many thanks,

Jacque Messinger.



Mothers' UNION

Christian care for families

Mothers' Union Celebration Eucharist with Banners - Memories of A Very Special Day in Chelmsford Cathedral

Monday, 6th November, saw five of our members attend the Diocesan AGM and Celebration Eucharist at Chelmsford Cathedral, presided over by the Right Reverend Stephen Cottrell, Bishop of Chelmsford. The service began with a procession of about thirty Parish Banners, followed by the Eucharist, during which Pam had the honour of administering one of the chalices. Bishop Stephen then gave a most inspiring Sermon, managing to display a touch of humour, whilst outlining serious and sensitive issues.

We were delighted that, at the close of the service, during the retiring procession of banners, Bishop Stephen had obviously noted our banner and, the day also being our Patronal Festival, singled us out to wish us a 'Happy St Leonard's Day'!

This year MU worldwide has been celebrating its 140th Anniversary since it was founded by Mary Sumner, and throughout the reports from Committee members and the Diocesan President, we were reminded of the many issues with which MU is concerned.

Two issues of particular interest were the growing work of 'English for Women' (*Continued overleaf...*)



amongst refugees in some parts of the Diocese and Activism Against Gender-Based Violence. The overriding theme and message to all attending was for each one of us to try and be more Christ-like and show more compassion to those less fortunate than ourselves and to try and bring others to Christ.

It was, however, sad to learn that the number of members over the Diocese are decreasing but we are delighted to be able to report that our branch is increasing and we welcome anyone else who would like to join us.

After a 'Bring and Share' lunch, that looked enough to feed the 5,000, the day was brought to a close with a very interesting and informative talk from Lynne Temby, our Worldwide President, who has obviously travelled extensively, both in this country and overseas and she spoke eloquently of several of her many interesting experiences.

Mary Hanmer

It was wonderful to see a full house on Tuesday, 9 January, for the first meeting of Lexden Mothers' Union in 2018. Unfortunately, due to ill health, both Pam and Dorcas were not in attendance and it was agreed that flowers would be sent to them both.

Following prayers, Kerry Conn and her husband, Dr Paul Conn, were introduced as the day's speaker/projectionist respectively, to share their experiences on their Spanish pilgrimage "The Camino de Santiago", otherwise known as "the Way of St James".

A large network of ancient pilgrim routes stretch across Europe, coming together at the tomb of St James in Santiago de Compostela, where the remains of the disciple were enshrined after his martyrdom. The (almost) five hundred mile journey from St Jean-Pied-du-Port, near

Biarritz, in France to Santiago, in Spain, crosses the Pyrenees, passes through the Basque country, Navarre, Rioja, Castilla y Leon and Galicia before reaching Santiago de Compostela.

Kerry and Paul completed their pilgrimage in three separate journeys, starting in October, which was cooler for walking and not so busy with like-minded people. They mostly stayed in hostels along the way, ate 'Pilgrim' food, where possible and met people from all walks of life from all over the world.

Kerry and Paul were thanked for a most informative and illustrative presentation.

In February, Mothers' Union will have an outing to the Beth Chatto Gardens and have lunch in their restaurant. This is being organised by Jean Hallett (01206 547837).

Jean Holden

Thank you

Thank you Junior Church for your bag of goodies and beautiful card you sent me for Christmas. A lot of time and effort has evidently gone into making the cards, shortbread and drawings.

Also, may I thank all the church for the prayers, cards, help and visits over the past months and I hope I will soon be able to see you in church. I have been a member of the church for 50 years and miss meeting you all.

Wishing you a healthy and peaceful New Year,

Sincerely,

Maureen Yeats

Wassail!



A most enjoyable Wassail Evening was held in the Church Hall on 16th December with entertainment from the Comrie Singers, Jubilant Brass and the 4 Saxes, and an excellent buffet supper. Thanks are due to the organisers Beverley & Edward Kettell for a lovely evening which also raised £298 for Church funds.



Hampers for Newwhythe



The Nicholls Room was a hive of industry just before Christmas, with a dedicated team of St Leonard's volunteers making up your generously donated gifts into hampers for Newwhythe. We were able to send 16 hampers, one for each family there.

Newwhythe is in our parish and is a specialist supported housing scheme for homeless young parents or single people who are expecting a baby. There are 16 self contained units around a central courtyard. The scheme has a communal lounge, a laundrette and a playroom that is used for organised activities such as play sessions, groups and meetings. Residents are allocated a support worker and may stay for up to two years.

These hampers were very attractive and will have been a real treat for the recipients. Many thanks to all involved.

Mouse Tails

Rupert and his young friends were very excited to see the snow in January; after Christmas was always a bit uneventful and a bit boring with the next big celebration being Easter, and that was a long way off. Grandpa and the parents were not excited at all by snow, in fact they dreaded it and knew how dangerous it could be for humans and creatures alike. Not only that but scavenging for food would be very difficult and their meagre stores would quickly become depleted.

However, as with all youngsters this didn't dampen their enthusiasm to get out and play in the snow. Last year Grandpa and Dad had made a couple of sledges using old, cracked little flower trays and with their sharp teeth had made holes in the sides of the trays and attached string for reins so that the sledges could be steered. Mum made sure that Rupert and Molly were well wrapped up with the warm scarves, hats and mittens that they had been given for Christmas gifts.



Off they set outside meeting up with their Hall cousins and the outside mice youngsters. They were soon having races and playing snowball battles. To be fair, they also looked for any foodstuff which the Mums could use to eke out their food and did manage to find some nuts, berries and green stuff.

When it began to get dark Dad came out to round up the youngsters and get them into the safety and warmth of their own homes. They were just setting off for home when Molly squeaked loudly, "Where is little Carol? We promised Aunty that we would look out for her and now she's not here; what are we going to do?" Dad told them not panic and started calling out for Carol, they were all very quiet listening out to hear if she was calling. No answering call came and they were all becoming very anxious about



(Continued on p27...)

(...continued from p25)

where she could be. The three of them split up and slowly covered the area, calling her name.



Half an hour later there was still no sign of Carol. Meanwhile, back in the balcony nest Mum was getting worried about where her family had got to. She scuttled down to the below the stairs family, to see if they were with their cousins, but they were not and immediately Carol's parents started to panic and hurried outside to see what was happening, they joined the group and spread out again, calling and combing the area for the little mouse fearing that something dreadful had happened. It was still snowing and it was dark.

Hearing all the commotion, several outside mice families emerged to ask what was going on? Dad told them and calling all the young mice together he asked if any of them could remember the last time anyone had seen Carol. Many answers were shouted out but one of the small mice said that Carol had said she was getting cold and tired and was going home. At this all the Church mice scuttled inside to search, after a little while Molly called out – I've found her! Carol's Mum and Dad were the first to run towards Molly who was at the front of the church; she just pointed at the Nativity crib and there, lo and behold, was Carol sound asleep nestled in the straw. Gently, her parents lifted Carol out of the crib and carried her back to the safety of their own nest under the stairs.

Later on, Carol's Mum and Dad went to thank Molly and the balcony family for finding their baby safe and sound. In fact, her Mum told them that when she awoke in her own little bed she told them that she didn't like snow, it was too cold and she didn't want to go out there again. They all laughed at that and they all joined in a prayer of thanks to God for keeping Carol safe and free from harm.



CT

The Story of Lenny, the St. Leonard's Lion

by Alice Goss, Kathleen Scrimgeour and Ruth Windscheffel

Every so often a story comes along that is both different and unusual. This story relates to a series of events with a happy ending. Some of the church's regular worshippers may know that the church had an unusual visitor last November. He was a five-foot lion called Lenny; not a real one of course, but a soft toy. He was donated by me (Alice) for the church to raffle at the annual bazaar.

Lenny's story actually started about a year before, when I first acquired him. I was in Wilkinson's doing a spot of Christmas shopping when I noticed a large box full of assorted soft toys. They all looked so cute and cuddly that my inner child just wanted one. I never had one when I was young! Well, not that big. For some reason I thought that purchasing him was a good idea. The only problem was that I had come into town on the bus! There I was standing at the bus stop in St. John's Street, holding this huge lion, much to the amusement of other people. I felt a little silly, so I told people that it was a present, not letting on that it was really for me! I began to wonder whether I would be allowed to take him on the bus due to his size. Would he be able to travel for free or would he need a ticket? Naturally a child's ticket, given his age and size. My bus arrived and I let the other passengers board first, then walked on, casually showing the driver my return ticket. He looked at me and then at Lenny, shaking his head. After all, it's not every day that a lion gets on the bus! Fortunately, the bus wasn't full and he just said: "On you both get". I took my seat with Lenny sitting next to the window, much to the amusement of the other passengers.

I got Lenny home and sat him in the corner of my bedroom, where he remained for nearly a year. He needed a new home, so when the church bazaar came along I spoke to Kathleen about him and she thought that he might make a good raffle prize. I'll let Kathleen take up the story of what happens next.

Kathleen continues overleaf...

Requests had gone out to the congregation for items for the Bazaar - gifts, cakes, books, toys etc, all the usual items. Alice spoke to me about this lion and after a slight hesitation I said "yes of course, bring it along"

Well, this was a lot bigger than I was expecting and certainly raised a few eyebrows, as the lion was all of 5 feet tall and very lifelike. I was even more surprised that he had a name. What could we do with him? Sell him the toy stall? Perhaps use him as a raffle prize or auction him? One or two of the older ladies present had other ideas as they fell in love with Lenny. He took pride of place in the Nicholls Room and was loved by Junior church children and of course his many fans. He never made it to the Bazaar and settled into his new home at the church.

The very next day, Messy Church was held in the church. Attending this fun event was a special little boy called Felix, aged seven. Felix has learning differences and some difficulties with social skills and emotions but he loves the freedom of Messy Church. At first when he spotted Lenny he was very scared but a little intrigued. Gradually through the afternoon, he overcame his fear and became completely won over. A happy boy. His mum was with him and was amazed with Felix's reaction to Lenny. To cut a long story short, on Christmas Eve, Father Christmas called into church and collected Lenny, delivering him to his new home. On Christmas Morning when Felix came downstairs to see his presents, there beside the Christmas tree waiting for him was Lenny. I'll let Alice finish off this story.

Alice continues...

Christmas time for me is always a quiet day, being single and usually on my own. Last Christmas was no different. I duly came to church for the morning Eucharist to celebrate Christmas with my Church Family. As I sat in my usual pew, Kathleen came over and told me that Lenny had been rehomed, telling me all about Felix and his new toy. I was so happy, especially to hear this news on Christmas Day. It was lovely to know that Lenny has gone to a good home and I hope that his interaction with Felix will help develop his social skills and emotions.

Felix's mum, Ruth writes:

Felix is a friendly and happy little boy of seven. We began to realise, when he was two or three years old, that he saw the world very differently from us. In particular, learning things like how to communicate using language, how to negotiate physical and social environments and how to interact with others in ways they understand presented challenges to him.

(Concludes on p35...)

(...from p33)

As university teachers, these things come pretty naturally to us so we found it difficult to understand, and often we found ourselves at a loss on how to help him progress.

Felix's love of animals and nature is profound and it is one of the ways in which it is easiest to connect with him verbally and emotionally. He loves visiting the zoo, finds aquaria soothing and likes playing with his toy animals at home. Felix is, however, nervous of new situations and can refuse to interact or open up when he is scared. I began to attend St. Leonard's regularly a couple of years ago. Like many, I feel at home here spiritually and socially. Felix was baptised when he was a few months old, says his prayers every night (another good way of developing his language and memory) and I've always tried to involve him in the life of the church wherever we've lived. This hasn't always been easy because he finds concentrating sometimes quite difficult. I have been very grateful for the sincere welcome the St. Leonard's family has given Felix whenever he has come to church and, as Kathleen says, he loves the informality of our children's services.

I was a bit concerned then, when at the Advent Messy Church, Felix wouldn't go into the Nicholls Room because of Lenny. I knew that his natural love of animals was battling against something else inside telling him not to get involved. Over the course of the afternoon, I and some of the other marvellous helpers worked with Felix to introduce Lenny to him. By the end, he was carrying Lenny around (difficult when they are almost the same size!) and sitting with him on the stairs. I was so proud of my little boy. It might seem like a tiny thing, but, for Felix, achieving this was as difficult as we might find it to cross a room to meet and talk with the Queen. Felix talked about Lenny at home, recalling their meeting and practising his language skills to explain how he'd been scared but wasn't anymore. He had made a real impression. I was delighted when Father Christmas, who looked suspiciously like Tom Scrimgeour, brought Lenny to us for Christmas. Felix just uttered one word when he came into the sitting room on Christmas morning: "Wow!" before joining Lenny on the armchair which he now occupies. He helped open Felix's presents and was his listening ear when the excitement and chaos of a family Christmas got too much. Lenny has been a real Christmas miracle. □

Thoughts on *Thought for the Day*

7.45am Today programme BBC Radio 4.

A spokesman for the BBC described the three minute slot known as Thought For The Day (TFTD) as 'an opportunity to reflect on the news, stories and issues of the day from a faith perspective'. Much has been made of the BBC's decision not to include humanist, atheist or secular contributions. The focus has been on the outrage expressed by these groups that faith and religion have been granted a privileged platform in order to impose their beliefs. On the 14th August, 2002 Richard Dawkins broadcast an alternative TFTD. In it he states 'that Evolution really explains all of life, and it needs no supernatural intervention of any kind'. Is this not an imposition of his belief? There are some, including many scientists, who would take issue with him but nobody would deny him the right to state his view. Secular contributions may well enhance the sum total of human wisdom but if they are excluded from this slot on the Today programme we shall never know.

One wonders if it would have made a difference if the BBC had talked about a philosophical, historical or wisdom perspective rather than a faith perspective. Thought For The Day is a collection of inspired daily reflections on life, how the wisdom of the past impacts on our lives today, the impermanence in all things, our vulnerability, the oneness of humanity, the importance of humour, the whimsical, the human condition and ultimately what makes people tick. TFTD has been described as boring and irrelevant by John Humphrys, one of the presenters of the Today programme. The news could equally be described as repetitive, confrontational, speculative, if not downright depressing. TFTD affords a brief escape to another realm of enquiry.

There is a universal and indeed transcendent truth in most TFTD. The sentiments expressed are by no means separate from the person expressing them. In a tribute to Rabbi Lionel Blue, Giles Fraser said, 'He used his own vulnerability as a gift for other people'. 'Jokes and laughter were a war against the darkness'. 'Being Jewish and gay, he described himself as having lived in two ghettos. He understood completely the pain of loneliness and rejection. But Lionel's very human genius was to

take all this pain and transform it into something that made life bearable’.

If Lionel Blue celebrates Jewish humour, so the former chief Rabbi, Lord Sacks, celebrates the importance of the Jewish festivals: Yom Kippur (forgiveness - 25/9/09), the Passover (memory and identity - 21/4/05), Hanukah (lighting of the lights in order never to lose hope - 19/12/08). This short article can only touch on the richness and variety of TFTD. From a collection going back over 15 years, highlights for me include Alan Billings on hope for the bereaved (All Souls Day - 2/11/07); Angela Tilby on the connection between Halloween and All Saints’ Day (30/10/12); Lord Singh on common ethical teachings across faith traditions (9/1/18) and a great many more. All can be found online.

The first word in this article went to a scientist. The last word should go to Lord Sacks (28/9/12) in the context of the Jewish festival of Sukkot which he describes as a ‘festival about the fragility of nature as a habitat hospitable to humankind.... Science can sometimes make us think we are in control; which is why we need moments like Sukkot to restore our sense of humility’, and finally, ‘Science explains; religion celebrates. Science speaks; religion sings. Science is prose; religion is poetry’.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p05tnpls> should take you to ‘clips’. You can either listen or read or both.

Robin Greatorex

Open Church

For security reasons, the church had to be closed during the day for a few months, but it is now open again for visitors on weekdays (Monday-Friday) during daylight hours. This generally means approximately 9.30am to 5.00pm except on Fridays when it will be closed at about 2.00pm. Please come in if you would like to sit for a while, pray, light a candle, pick up a leaflet or magazine, or just enjoy the beautiful building.