

# REFLECTIONS REFLECTIONS

St John-at-Hackney Church Magazine

February 2009

## FROM THE RECTOR

Rev'd Rob Wickham



Dear Friends,  
February is an important month for relationships. Of course, we all will remember, either through the lack of cards or the great plethora of cards, that the 14th is the Feast of St Valentine. This is the day when a Christian martyr is revered as a symbol of love.

Furthermore, February 2nd is Candlemass, or the Presentation of Jesus in the Temple. This is a day when we remember family relationships, and the many rituals we enter into as families, especially when children are born. Offering our children into God's hands is an important part of being a parent as God's desires for our children are far greater than our own.

February 24th then brings us the feast of St Matthias the Apostle - the great saint who replaced Judas when lots were cast to decide who the 12th Apostle would be. Here the relationships between Apostles are seen as greatly important and that there needed to be 12 Apostles to signify the 12 tribes of Israel.

Most importantly however is the journey of Lent, which begins on February 25th, Ash Wednesday. Lent is a time of penitence - a time of having the courage to say sorry and take stock of who we are and the way that we live our lives. Many relationships fail, both between people and with God, because people find it difficult to say sorry, and this will be the focus of our Lent journey at St John-at-Hackney.

Let's have the courage to say sorry this Lent, and then let's see the grace of God at work, and subsequently our relationships will flourish.

### • The Working Parties

Please make sure that you can attend your working parties at 11.45am on the following dates.

- 8 Feb People and prayer
- 15 Feb Operation and Finance
- 22 Feb Development and Communication

## Valentine's Day

On Saturday 14 February there will be an opportunity to renew your wedding vows at a special service at 4pm. Please come along, tell your friends, and encourage each other in the sacrament of marriage.

### Footnote from the BBC website

*The first official St Valentine's Day was declared on February 14th by Pope Galasius in 496, in memory of a 3rd century martyred priest in Rome. It is not known for sure whether Pope Galasius was honouring this 3rd century priest or whether it was one of two other martyred priests associated with February 14th. One was Bishop of Interamna (modern Terni) and the other apparently suffered in Africa along with a number of companions. Nothing further is known about these two St Valentines and it is the priest in Rome that has become the most widely acclaimed of the three..*

*It is believed that the young priest rose to distinction after betraying Emperor Claudius in 270 AD by conducting illegitimate wedding ceremonies in the capital. Emperor Claudius claimed that married men made poor soldiers and consequently decreed that all marriages of younger citizens would be outlawed. Bishop Valentine, however, maintained that marriage was part of God's plan and purpose for the world. He continued to conduct marriages in secret between young people, sometimes as young as twelve, in the name of love.*

*His success gained him unwelcome notoriety, which became Bishop Valentine's downfall. He was jailed and ultimately beheaded, but not before he fell in love with the jailor's daughter. It is thought that on the evening of his execution the bishop passed her a note which read "from your Valentine". This story has blossomed into the defining tradition of Valentine's Day. An estimated one billion cards sent each year, making it the second largest card-sending holiday of the year behind Christmas.*

## Ash Wednesday

There are 4 opportunities to celebrate Ash Wednesday (Feb 25) at St John's this year:

- 7.30am Hackney Free School
- 9am St John and St James Primary School
- 10am St John-at-Hackney
- 7.30pm St John-at-Hackney.

Please make sure that you attend at least one service that day.

## WELL, THEY'RE ONLY LITTLE!!

Phyllis Manning



I have just learned that the Rainbow Guides, aged 6-8 years, had 'a Visit to the house of Father Christmas' as the theme of their Christmas Party. They were all Father Christmases and had to think about his activities.

Part of the Den became his house where they had their Christmas Feast dressed as Father Christmases .... including beards. (What we miss by being too old, or the wrong sex, to be Rainbows!)

The Beaver Scouts have recently had a visit from the Police .... by invitation. They were shown and tried on various parts of the police uniform and heard about the 'jobs' that the Police are doing in Hackney and were suitably impressed.

They are now working on the Healthy Eating Badge so -as usual- cooking is going on in the Den as well as in Church! The Scout District Swimming Gala takes place in February so the Beavers are practising for this. Their events include a walking race which is often good fun (NB IN the water not on it!!). There are plenty of lifesavers in attendance so it's OK ... usually!

You will have noticed that the Borough Celebration Lights are still on. This is because very soon it will be the Chinese New Year and the Brownie Guides, girls aged 8+, are gearing up to cook stir-fries to celebrate. Who could resist it?

Pop into the Den and see what we're all up to. A different section meets every night in the week, as our Notice Board shows.

## CHURCH KEYS - URGENT

Everyone who has keys to any part of the church please contact our Parish Administrator, Emily Ovenden as follows:  
Tel: 07947 792 869  
Email: pastjohn@hotmail.co.uk



WE ARE A  
FAIRTRADE  
CHURCH

## IMPAIRED VISION?

We have LARGE PRINT versions of Hymn Books, Psalms and Service Sheets

Website: [www.stjohn-at-hackneychurch.co.uk](http://www.stjohn-at-hackneychurch.co.uk)

Editor: 020 8533 1720; [seabrook@mac.com](mailto:seabrook@mac.com)

## SOMETHING

from Jane Hutchinson

### Charitable Giving at St John's

A proportion of the money we raise through collections and stewardship is given by St John's to charity. The People & Prayer group are asked to decide which charities should receive our gifts.

Would you like to suggest any charities as worthy recipients of this money? It does not need to be a big or well-known charity - maybe you know of a small but worthwhile charity which would benefit from some extra funds.

Please let us know if you have any proposals which will be considered by the People & Prayer group at their next meeting on 8th February. This will be the first item on the agenda and we invite anyone to come along to this meeting to join in the discussion about how best to divide up our charitable giving.

Contact Jane:

Tel: 020 8533 4277

07985 057 209 (m)

Email: [cjhutch\\_uk@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:cjhutch_uk@yahoo.co.uk)

## AND ALSO

from Laura Tomlinson

### Helping You to Understand Our New Logo



The new logo came out of the brief set by the Development and Communications group which included a number of elements such as: using the architecture of St John's; making something of the symbolism associated with John the Baptist; making an image that looks welcoming and open; and using the cross as a very clear symbol of Christianity. So in the picture part of our logo you have an exact replica of one of our Georgian windows. At the edges the small panes of glass are just as they are in the windows themselves. The horizontal lines then break in waves at the bottom indicating baptismal waters. And in the centre of the window is the dove, which represents the Holy Spirit and appeared at Jesus's Baptism by John.

The 'namestyle' we are using is in Gill Sans – a font named after Eric Gill whose sculptures and carved lettering can be found in many churches – and the 't' of St has been deliberately elongated to stand out as a cross.

## THE NEW HEATING SYSTEM

Stephen Jakeman

As you all know the 50 year old boiler died in April 2008 and forced us finally to spend some money on its replacement. In reality the whole system needs to be replaced but after careful thought it was decided to replace only the broken part of the system, namely the boilers. Consider this as Phase 1, now complete at a cost of around £75,000. This may seem a lot of money (it is after all) but we have taken into account the likely future use of the building and the boilers (there are two of them) are capable of heating not only the main 'worship' space but also the halls and offices currently heated by very expensive electricity. The boilers are running on oil, but capable of being changed to gas should we get a supply in the future.



We now need to turn our attention to Phase 2 which covers the actual pipes and radiators. We have already had two failures of the pipework where it is buried under the floor and that's why the radiators in the entrance lobby and at the far side of the 'worship' space are always cold, because they are no longer connected. Logically it's only a matter of time before we have another failure which would arguably reduce the remaining system by 50%! The new system will be greatly influenced by the outcome of the redevelopment proposals now under discussion and the sooner these are firm-ed up the better.

**H.E.L.P.** (Hospitality, Engagement, Listening, Prayer)

David Hazeldine



After my presentation before Christmas about the St. John's H.E.L.P project, there are now 7 people interested. If you are keen to be involved in the church being open to the wider community more often, please contact me.

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C of E Community Development Officer  
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020 8533 4994  
07767 033451  
[davidinhackney@googlemail.com](mailto:davidinhackney@googlemail.com)

## INTRODUCING YOUR PARISH ADMINISTRATOR

Emily Ovenden



When I was a very little girl my father used to walk me up the medieval lane that runs by the side of our house, to St. Bartholomew's Church, Warleggan. My father, a fine

pianist used to go up several times a week to play the organ at preschool, I would normally go with him. Later, my father bought his own pipe organ at a car boot sale for £25 and installed it at home by cutting a hole in the ceiling to fit the pipes.

St. Bartholomew's is a small ancient building made famous by the writer Dauphine Demure who famously documented the tales of Reverend F.W. Densham. An eccentric man, to say the least, he frightened off all the locals with a large pack of dogs and ended up preaching to a congregation of cardboard cut outs in the pews on which he wrote the names of past vicars. Week after week as the service reached its conclusion, he would note poignantly in the register, "No fog, no wind, no rain, no congregation".

I tell you this funny little story as St Bartholomew's was the first important church in my life but St John-at-Hackney has now filled that space in my heart.

It was my father who instilled in me a love of religious buildings and devotional music, two great passions that live on in me to this day. Alongside a music career, I have worked in the community for many years. Mainly setting up and managing community spaces in Hackney. When the opportunity to join the team at St John's came about, I jumped at the chance. A job that incorporates my skills and passions, what more could I ask for?

What has surprised me the most, is how much fun we've had since I started work as the Parish Administrator in November 08. Pushing bits of paper around a desk always has its down side but everyday something happens when I find myself laughing with Fr Rob, Fr David or Toyin.

It's been a wonderful few months. The opportunity to meet and get to know so many new people has been an eye opening experience. I feel strangely at home at St John's, working alongside people who mirror my enthusiasm and sometimes outlandish and radical ideas. The role of Administrator here has few boundaries and that is something I like. As well as the running of the church office there are opportunities for ideas and event planning which is really exciting. Keep your eyes peeled for the East Festival and Hackney Mystery plays.

It's so wonderful to see a growing, vibrant church community using this fantastic building for the purpose that it was built for.

Certainly the plans that are currently being developed will help St John's reach its full potential, something I am proud to be a part of.

Lucky Fr Rob doesn't have to make a cardboard congregation, the enjoyment and excitement is evident at the services I have attended. Poor Revd Densham didn't quite get it right at St. Bartholomew but I'm happy to say at St John-at-Hackney sometimes there's fog, wind and rain, but be assured of an ever growing congregation.

## CHRISTIANS and JEWS



Our local branch of the Council of Christians and Jews has the following two events in its spring programme:

### Pilgrimage

Sunday 8th March, 7.30pm  
Ajex House, Stamford Hill

Peter Ottino will chair a symposium on the practice and significance of pilgrimage in the three Abrahamic faiths. The Revd Rosemia Brown of our neighbouring parish St James Clapton, will speak for the Christian tradition; Rabbi Plancey will present the Judaic approach; and Mr Abdul Ali, of the North London Islamic Centre will speak for Islam. After the three presentations, the panel of speakers will take questions from the floor and engage in what should be an interesting and enlightening discussion.

### Seder explained: the Passover

Thursday 2nd April, 6pm  
St Ignatius' Church, South Tottenham  
A Seder explained, led (as last year at St John's) by Rabbi Rigal. The Seder is the Jewish ceremonial Passover meal, annually celebrating the deliverance of the Israelites from bondage in Egypt. The ritual features of this meal, and its links with Our Lord's Last Supper, will be explained.

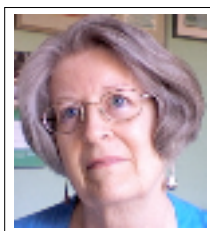
CCJ North London holds this event each year, at one church after another, drawing attention to the undoubted Judaic roots of much of our own Christian faith.

If you are interested in attending either of these events please speak to Peter or Beryl. All will be very welcome.

## STEWARDSHIP

Audrey Seabrook

There are still a few boxes of envelopes for 2009 awaiting your collection. If you have not found a box with your name on it, or wish to join the Stewardship Scheme please speak to me. You should all now stop using the blue envelopes from 2008. This year's envelopes are yellow. Also look



for a brown envelope with your name on it.

## RECIPE FROM THE BBC WEBSITE Chocolate Centred Valentine Biscuits

(Preparation time less than 30 mins)

Cooking time 35 mins)

### Ingredients

200g/7oz plain flour  
110g/4oz butter  
85g/3oz caster sugar  
1 egg, white only  
small bag of chocolate pieces/chocolate buttons

### Method

Preheat oven to 150C/300F/Gas 2.  
Lightly grease a baking sheet, or use a sheet of greaseproof paper.  
Beat the butter and sugar together until pale. Add sifted flour, then with your hands form a dough.  
On a board, lightly dusted with flour, roll out the dough thinly.  
Using a heart-shaped cutter, cut out 30 hearts and brush rim with egg-white.  
Put a chocolate piece in the middle of 15 hearts and another dough heart on top. Press the edges together lightly to seal.  
Bake in the oven for about 35 minutes.  
\* To decorate, you could put a chocolate button on top of each cooked heart biscuit.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

If you wish to comment on anything in *Reflections*, please do write to the address or email shown elsewhere in this edition. If you don't respond I will be left feeling that I am talking to the wall (always a danger when you live alone . . . aaah!).

I would like to hear from you and will assume your permission to print your letter in the next issue.

.... And here IS one! ....

## BUT WHAT DO I CALL THEM?

In January's *Reflections* we were treated to a personal insight of the way in which we address each other, and how this has changed over time, especially for the clergy. I recognise that there are many names for clergy, and this might be confusing, but there is logic in the madness, which I will aim to iron out for you!

Basically in the Church of England, clergy are addressed in two ways; who you are (Your Identity) and what you do (Your Job Description).

**Your identity** is determined by your Ordination or Consecration. Therefore the Orders of Bishop, Priest and Deacon demonstrate who you are as a person. This is catholic, universal teaching, and has been part of the Church of England since its foundation.

**Your Job Description** is demonstrated by the Office that you hold, the Offices being that of a Rector, Vicar, Curate, Dean, Canon, Prebendary, Chaplain, Padre, Archdeacon etc.

In reality some of these names mean the same thing, which can confuse matters. For Example, I am the Rector, the Vicar, the Curate, and the Incumbent of the parish of Hackney, because in today's world, they all mean pretty much the same thing. I am also the Parish Priest and Deacon, for I have been ordained Priest and Deacon. Fr David is the Assistant Curate, or the Assistant Priest and Deacon, for he has also been ordained Priest and Deacon. In addition, Canons and Prebendaries mean the same, whilst Padres are Chaplains in the armed forces.

As for being called Father, this is nothing new. Right from the beginnings of the Church of England, **Bishops** were called Right Reverend Father in God (From the Book of Common Prayer).

As for **Priests**, the use of Father is widespread across Africa, the Caribbean, England and America within the Anglican Communion. It comes from an understanding that the Priest is a *Father Confessor* to the parish or people - a person of absolute confidentiality and through whom the forgiveness of Christ can be proclaimed (*John 20, v23*) when working under the authority of a Bishop and in the seal of Confession. In England it is used mainly by priests who highly value a confessional ministry, striving for sacramental reconciliation.

In my view, Hackney needs the clergy to be *Father Confessors*. The levels of mental health difficulties, relationship breakdown or wider family issues including absent fathers, are acute and they all demonstrate our need to be in the midst of the poor, the broken, the vulnerable and the marginalised as a church. My insistence on the clergy being addressed as Father is a reminder of that calling into the brokenness of Hackney with words of actual Godly forgiveness and healing. This is not an ego trip, but a true historical Anglican statement on the love of Jesus Christ to the people of Hackney, which I would urge all to respect.

There, I hope that this makes it clear!  
Fr Rob

(Yes thankyou, but the Editor still asks "Where does this leave women priests????")

## ELY RETREATS and DAYS OF REFLECTION

For a *Pause on Life's Journey* see the 2009 programme details for these short breaks at Bishop Woodford House, Ely. A copy of the leaflet is on our church noticeboard. Please do not remove the leaflet until we get more copies. You can however go to their website at [www.bwh.org.uk](http://www.bwh.org.uk) or email them at [bwh@ely.anglican.org](mailto:bwh@ely.anglican.org) for further information.

Audrey would be interested in their painting or calligraphy retreat. Will anyone join her?

## AND NOW FOR THE (not so) LIGHTEARTED STUFF

*One of the many things the Editor receives by email.*

An Obituary apparently printed in the London Times .....

Today we mourn the passing of a beloved old friend, *Common Sense*, who has been with us for many years. No one knows for sure how old he was, since his birth records were long ago lost in bureaucratic red tape.

He will be remembered as having cultivated such valuable lessons as:

∞ Knowing when to come in out of the rain;

∞ Why the early bird gets the worm;

∞ Life isn't always fair; and

∞ Maybe it was my fault.

*Common Sense* lived by simple, sound financial policies (*don't spend more than you can earn*) and reliable strategies (*adults, not children, are in charge*).

His health began to deteriorate rapidly when well-intentioned but overbearing regulations were set in place. Reports of a 6-year-old boy charged with sexual harassment for kissing a classmate; teens suspended from school for using mouthwash after lunch; and a teacher fired for reprimanding an unruly student, only worsened his condition.

*Common Sense* lost ground when parents attacked teachers for doing the job that they themselves had failed to do in disciplining their unruly children.

It declined even further when schools were required to get parental consent to administer sun lotion or an aspirin to a student; but could not inform parents when a student became pregnant and wanted to have an abortion.

*Common Sense* lost the will to live as the churches became businesses; and criminals received better treatment than their victims.

*Common Sense* took a beating when you couldn't defend yourself from a burglar in

your own home and the burglar could sue you for assault.

*Common Sense* finally gave up the will to live, after a woman failed to realize that a steaming cup of coffee was hot. She spilled a little in her lap, and was promptly awarded a huge settlement.

*Common Sense* was preceded in death by his parents, *Truth and Trust*; by his wife, *Discretion*; by his daughter, *Responsibility*; and

by his son, *Reason*.

He is survived by his 4 stepbrothers; *I Know My Rights*; *I Want It Now*; *Someone Else Is To Blame*; and *I'm A Victim*.

Not many attended his funeral because so few realized he was gone.

If you still remember him, pass this on. If not, join the majority and do nothing.

## STAFF and VOLUNTEERS at ST JOHN-at-HACKNEY

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Interim Music Leader  
Community Development Worker  
Chair: People and Prayer  
Chair: Operation and Finance  
Chair: Develop't & Communication  
Cleaner  
Tower Captain  
Artist in Residence  
Mothers' Union Leader (Designate)  
Placement Student

Mr Jack Bicker  
Mr David Hazeldine  
The Rev'd David Evans  
Ms Jayne Bailey  
Mrs Laura Tomlinson  
Ms Hazel Panton  
Mr Stephen Jakeman  
Mr Andrew Coombes  
Mrs Mercy Moss  
Miss Karen Campbell

*Please keep them in your prayers*

Deadline for contributions  
for March issue is  
Sunday 22 February to  
seabrook@mac.com

### PHOTOGRAPHS for REFLECTIONS or WEBSITE

Please remember if taking photographs to send by email for use in *Reflections* or on our website, you should select a small file size.

## PARISH DIARY

For Services see the weekly Sunday notice sheet

Sundays 9am Choir practice

Mondays 7.30pm Bellringers practice

SCOUTS and GUIDES meet regularly at their headquarters

The Den, in the Old Rectory Drive

activities for boys and girls from age 6 years

Contact Jim or Judy Phillips

Tel: 020 8985 9397;

Email: phillips\_james1@sky.com

**Reflections is published on the first Sunday of the month**

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