

THE OLD CHURCH NEWS

O P E N T O A L L - O P E N T O G O D

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VICAR'S VOICE

'This Newsletter will reach you during the second week of Lent. So I'm bound to ask: How is Lent going for you so far?

Lent is an interesting, yet sometimes puzzling, season. Traditionally, we know that, between Ash Wednesday and Easter Day, we are encouraged to give things up or, as some would have it, to take things on; but, why and for what purpose?

We cannot delve into our Bibles for clear answers to these questions, because there was no such thing as Lent back then. But the Bible does offer some clues as to why it has developed into the season we observe today. For example, Israel spent forty years in the wilderness learning to trust God, Elijah spent forty days there before hearing the still, small voice of God on the same mountain where Moses spent forty days listening to God give the law. And, of course, there's the story about Jesus spending forty days in the wilderness being tested.

In all of these examples we see how people of faith entered into times and places of 'wilderness'; into the hard spaces that lay between where they had been and where they were going, between the life they had known and the life they could barely envision. And we are invited to do likewise in Lent.

Lent is a time when we can choose to place ourselves in, or to pay attention to, the hard spaces in our own lives, those spaces between where we have been and where we are going. It provides forty days in which we can allow the familiar landscape of our lives to shift by leaving behind some of the things that have a hold on us.

These things may include chocolate, our inability to say 'no', our drive to take care of everyone but ourselves, our compulsion to be busy all of the time or our negative view of ourselves; the list is endless and there is nothing too big or too small.

But letting go, and giving up, is only part of the story of what Lent means. The other part, of course, has to do with paying prayerful attention to what happens to us when we leave the things behind that have a hold on our lives. And it has to do with paying prayerful attention to what happens when we try to actively allow God into the void that the absence of these things exposes.

Entering into Lent is an option, not a requirement, of faith. No one has to sign up for it. But, if you do, then expect great things from God and from yourself. Believe that anything is possible.

LAST MONTH'S NEWS

We were privileged to welcome the Oakville Singers who gave a concert of sacred and secular music. This was followed by Choral Evensong for Candlemas which brought the Christmas season to a conclusion.

On Stewardship Sunday we were invited to contemplate God's gifts to us and prayerfully consider how we can express our thanks by giving of our talents and monetary resources to further the work of His Kingdom.

Some of our congregation joined those of other churches in the Warley Deanery on a pilgrimage to Birmingham Cathedral as part of the celebration of the 300th anniversary of its consecration.

Ash Wednesday and the beginning of the Lenten season was marked by a service of Holy Communion with the Imposition of Ashes, this year made from the burnt remains of previous years' Palm Crosses

FAIR NECESSITIES OF LIFE

As you may be aware it is Fair Trade Fortnight from 23rd Feb - 8th March when we are reminded of how important it is that everyone receives a fair wage, good working conditions and if in business a fair price for the goods they produce.

Traidcraft Stall

Every month Rosemary and Brendan run a Traidcraft Stall in the Dorothy Parkes' Centre after our Sunday Service to provide us all with the opportunity to buy fairly traded goods and to support Traidcraft. As you may know Traidcraft works with some of the most marginalised producers in the world using their business expertise to help them succeed and therefore giving them a route out of poverty. This year Traidcraft have launched a **Fair Necessities Appeal** and the great news is the government have agreed to double all donations made to this appeal up until 3rd April. Any money made from your Traidcraft purchases or donations during this time will go to the Fair Necessities appeal

A One World Cafe Event:- Fair Necessities Evening on 4th March 2015 - at the Vicarage

You are invited to a Fair Necessities afternoon/evening between 4pm and 8pm where you can pop in, have a natter, sample fair trade nibbles, cakes, wine, tea and coffee and have an opportunity to buy some fair trade crafts if you so wish. Any money raised will be added to the Fair Necessities Appeal. All are welcome.

Siân



Soul Space

If you would like to take some time out of your busy lives for peace and quiet, to pray in the candle-lit beauty of Old Church or to share conversation and refreshments with others, then you might like to come to 'Soul Space'.

'Soul Space' takes place from 6pm - 8pm on the last Wednesday of each month and will include a simple service of night prayer at 7:45pm for those who wish to join in.

Come and go as you please!



MARCH

- 2nd 7.30 pm **Lay Pastoral Ministry** team meet at the Vicarage
- 4th 4 pm - 8 pm A **One World Café Event:** 'Fair Necessities' at the Vicarage (see feature for more information).
- Thur 5th, 12th, 19th & 26th Either 10.15 am or 7.30 pm - **Churches Together Lent Course** at Holy Trinity Church
- 6th 2.30 pm **Women's World Day of Prayer** at Holy Trinity Church. Praying for The Bahamas. All are welcome.
- 23rd 3.30 pm - 5.30 pm '**Art Box**' at Old Church (see feature for more information)
- 25th 6pm - 8pm '**Soul Space**' at Old Church
- 26h 2.30 pm meet for **Prayers** in The Old Church (see Rosemary for details)
- 28h 10 am - 1pm '**Word Weave**' (a creative session led by Jess Boulton that will explore the themes of Lent through words and pictures) at Old Church.

ART BOX

Art Box is an initiative based upon the Messy Church principle of being 'church' to families through offering bible based creative activities and shared meals.

Art Box will be held in Old Church three times during the year :- before Easter, Harvest and Christmas. To offer families an alternative time and opportunity for exploring the Christian faith, each session of Art Box will be held at 3.30 pm during school term time.

The first Art Box will be on Monday 23rd March 2015 from 3.30 pm to 5.30 pm when activities will be based around the Easter story.

You are warmly invited to share your gifts and talents either through assisting with arts and crafts, preparing or serving the fellowship meal, setting/clearing up, providing resources etc

Please see Deb or Wendy if you feel drawn to supporting Art Box in any way.