

# THE OLD CHURCH NEWS

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

VOLUME 6 ISSUE 8 FEBRUARY 2016



## VICAR'S VOICE

Well here we are again, on the threshold of Lent. This year Easter is early, and so just as we see the celebratory seasons of Christmas and Epiphany brought to a close, we find ourselves plunging into the penitential season of Lent. The mood is about to change dramatically; the crib and the flowers will be removed from church and replaced by a stark and simple cross.

Moving from a season that marks the birth of Jesus, to one that looks towards his death, is quite a leap to make even with the help of the visual reminders in our church. But it's a leap worth taking because, just like Christmas and Epiphany, Lent is a rich season and one that provides an opening for us to deepen our relationship with God, to grow our understanding of ourselves and hear the call that God places on our hearts.

We associate this journey of discovery with the wilderness. But, of course, Lent doesn't require us to literally go into the wilderness. What it does, is to invite us to enter a place, or to take up or give up a practice, which will help us to see more of God than perhaps we have seen before, or usually see in the busyness of our everyday lives.

As Jesus knew all too well, the kind of challenging journey the forty days of Lent

offers isn't designed to prove how holy we are, or how tough, or how strong our will is. It's about allowing God to draw us into the unknown, into a quiet place where we are open to receive the new understanding, insight and wisdom.

So as we cross the threshold this year, let us ask ourselves to what kind of place we may need to go, or what kind of practice we may need to take up or to give up, that will help us to see what God is wanting to reveal to us? And how we might best be 'held' and sustained in whatever kind of wilderness that awaits us as we make our journey through Lent 2016?

Whatever our answers to these questions, may the daily prayer of St Richard of Chichester (1197-1253) help us on our way.

Thanks to thee, my Lord Jesus Christ,  
for all the benefits thou hast won for me,  
for all the pains and insults thou hast borne  
for me.

O most merciful Redeemer, Friend and  
Brother,  
may I know thee more clearly, love thee more  
dearly, and follow thee more nearly,  
day by day.

## LAST MONTH'S NEWS

We said goodbye to 2015 and greeted 2016 with our New Year's Eve party. Entertainment by DJ Lugan Sounds had many of us, young and not so young dancing the night away. The food was wonderful, there was a well patronised bar and everyone thoroughly enjoyed the evening.

A service of Holy Communion with Prayer for healing was held on the evening of 10<sup>th</sup> January. This was part of a series of special services on the second Sunday of the month

to replace the normal service of Evening Prayer.

Another service on a Sunday evening was held to mark the beginning of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. This was well attended with representatives from many of the Smethwick churches.

A Singing workshop took place on a Saturday morning when we tackled some spiritual songs of an African origin in the native language!



# LENT AND EASTER



## FEBRUARY



**Soup Lunches** will take place in Old Church following the Communion Service on the Tuesdays throughout Lent. The money raised from

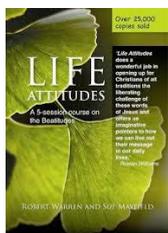
donations will be given to Christian Aid. Please note that the Tuesday service will move from 10am to 12 noon for the duration of Lent.



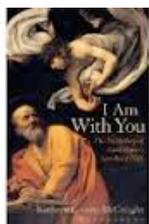
**Discovering Hope**, is an opportunity to explore the rich themes of Lent through creativity. It will begin with a session, led by Deb, on Saturday February 13th

from 10am - 1pm at Old Church

## Smethwick CAN Churches Together Lent Course



This year we will be drawing on the book 'Life Attitudes' by Robert Warren and Sue Mayfield. The course will provide the opportunity to gather together to explore the meaning of the beatitudes for the people of Smethwick in 2016. It will take place at Regent St Baptist Church from 7:30 - 9pm (refreshments served from 7pm). If you need transport, please let Deb know.



## Lent Reading

The Archbishop of Canterbury's Lent Book for 2016 is 'I am with you' by the Episcopal priest and theologian Kathryn Greene-McCreight. This, very readable book, explores the ways the bible

reveals God's presence with us in both darkness and light. It helpfully uses, as its structure, the seven hour pattern of monastic prayer. If you would like to have a look at a copy of this book before you decide to buy, have a word with Deb.

- 6th from 10am – 12 noon at Old Church – **Workshop: Assisting at Communion.**
- 8th 7.00 pm **Junior Church Leaders' Meeting** at the Vicarage
- 22nd 7.30 pm **Lay Pastoral Ministry team** meeting at the Vicarage
- 24th 2.00 pm **Smethwick Interfaith Group** meeting at the Abraham Centre
- 24th 6.00 pm - 8.00 pm **Soul Space**
- 25th 2.30 pm meet for **Prayers** in Old Church (see Rosemary for details)

## ADDITIONAL SERVICES FOR LENT AT OLD CHURCH

### February 10th - Ash Wednesday

7.00 pm Service of Holy Communion with Imposition of Ashes

**February 14th** 5.00 pm - A reflective service for the beginning of Lent.

**March 21st, 22nd & 23rd** - Holy Week services of Compline with meditation.

### March 24th - Maundy Thursday

8.00 pm Service of Holy Communion with foot washing, followed by a prayer vigil.

### March 25th - Good Friday

12.00 noon Reflections on the Cross

### March 26th - Easter Eve

8.00pm Service of Light.



**FAIR TRADE  
FORTNIGHT  
29TH FEBRUARY  
-  
13TH MARCH**

In the March issue of the newsletter watch out for news of exciting Fair Trade events happening at Old Church.