

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

We spend the majority of our holidays visiting the beautiful Gower Peninsula of south Wales and that's where we went for our most recent trip away. But the week we chose turned out to be bleak, grey and wet.

Crofty, the village where we stay, is on the North Gower and sits on the edge of marsh land which stretches the length of the estuary. The marsh is filled with wildlife including a large population of wild horse. Every day, when we're there, we walk the dog along marsh road and for the past four years we've watched a gorgeous tan and white horse grow from a tiny foal. This horse is not a wild horse, or so we thought, it lives in a paddock.

We knew this horse was lucky because it didn't have to sleep out in all weathers and he didn't have to forage for food. But we didn't know how lucky he was until, one day, we met Pam, the owner of the paddock, and she told us their story. Pam described the day, four years ago, when she looked across the marsh and saw a wild horse struggling to give birth and decided to go to help. When the foal had been delivered she led him and his mother into her paddock so that she could keep watch for a couple of days. When Pam felt sure they had both recovered from the trauma she released them back onto to the marsh.

But a couple of days later Pam found the foal lay in a stream fighting for his life surrounded

by cobs from further up the marsh who had, more than likely, separated him from his mother and kicked him into the water. So Pam rescued the foal again and decided she should keep him in the paddock with her other three horses. Not surprisingly she gave the foal the name Lucky.

This story revealed a light that the sun had failed to provide during that dreary week in Wales. It reminded us that the imprint of God can be seen running through our stories like a bright, golden thread, even when all around us is dark and cold. This story spoke to us, in a very powerful way, about Epiphany and the importance of seeking the light of God at the heart of the stories we hear and the stories we tell.

An Epiphany prayer:

Bright Mystery,
Your signs and clues are strewn across the
Universe,
Gleaming in the warp and weft of the
ordinary.
When I perceive and follow the wavering
glints
Lead me to find your manifest presence
And glimpse you purpose and mine own.
Keep me pointing to the shining of your love
As I search for your handwriting in the stars.

(from the Celtic Wheel of the Year by Tess Ward)

PAST MONTH'S NEWS

Old Church celebrated the mystery of the Incarnation with the traditional Christmas services including a well attended Crib service on Christmas Eve. This was followed later by Midnight Mass and a service of Holy Communion on Christmas morning.

In the new year the beginning of the season of Epiphany was marked by a special Sunday evening service of hymns and readings.

Old Church marked the passing of 2016 and greeted 2017 with a New Year's Eve party. We were entertained by a DJ who inspired the young and not so young to believe they were performing as contestants on "Strictly Come Dancing". We were energised by a super buffet supper. The evening was a great success and £530 was raised for church funds.

SMETHWICK LENT COURSE



Meals with Jesus renewing our place at God's table

Smethwick Lent Course 2017: 9th March to 6th April

You are warmly invited to join us for the Smethwick Lent Course 2017, which is going to be held on Thursday evenings from the 9th March to the 6th April at St. Hilda's Church, Smethwick. We will start with a light supper at 7.00pm and the session will finish by 9.00pm.

Week 1: Guess Who's Coming to Dinner!

Week 2: A Wedding Feast

Week 3: Fish on The Beach

Week 4: Call to Action - Feeding the 5000

Week 5: The Theology of Leftovers.



FEBRUARY

- 1st From 12noon - 2.00pm at Holy Trinity Church - **Charity breakfast** to raise funds for the 'Women First' interfaith project at Holy Trinity Church.
- 11th From 10.00 am - 12noon at Old Church - **Light and Darkness**: A creative and reflective workshop exploring the rich themes of Lent.
- 12th 4.00pm Concert performed by **The Oakville Singers** followed by Evensong at 5.00pm
- 15th from 10.00am – 1.00pm at Holy Trinity Church – **'Women First'** interfaith event involving talking with women of different faiths, craft activities and refreshments.
- 16th Discoverers' trip to **Lichfield Cathedral** (see Christine Tanner for details)
- 19th 12.15pm at Old Church - **Baptism** of baby Logan Peter
- 22nd From 6.00 pm - 8.00 pm **Soul Space** in Old Church
- 23rd 2.30pm meet for **Prayers** in Old Church (see Rosemary for details)

WOMEN FIRST

NEAR NEIGHBOURS Rubislawkes Sandwell Smethwick CAN

An opportunity for women from different faith and cultural backgrounds to come together for craft, chat and a cuppa!

Wednesday 15th February 10am-12:30pm
Holy Trinity, South Rd, Smethwick
(Just off Smethwick High Street)

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