



**St Michael and All Angels  
Amersham-on-the-Hill**

# Newsletter

## April 2010

### Easter Morning

Dawn's soft light  
women hurrying  
earthquake heaves  
angel guards  
empty tomb.

Grief's confusion  
seeing's blindness  
hearing's deafness  
till her name  
"Mary, Mary!"

Bursting joy  
leaps to touch  
gently loosened  
"Do not hold.  
Go and tell."

### Joy Tobler

**'He is risen indeed!'**

**HAPPY EASTER**



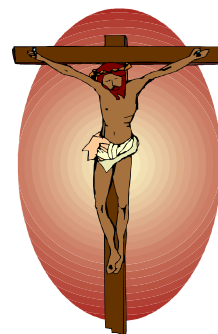
### Holy Week and Easter services

**Maundy Thursday  
April 1. 8 pm**

The commemoration of the Last Supper, with the washing of the feet of twelve members of the congregation and the stripping of the altar.

**Good Friday  
April 2. 10 am**

The day of the Crucifixion of Jesus. The service will include readings from *I Thirst* by Stephen Cottrell, our current *Inspiring Read*.



**Holy Saturday  
April 3. 8 pm**

Our new-look service includes a short gathering around a fire on the forecourt for the lighting of the Easter candle, the renewing of our baptismal vows and the first Eucharist of Easter. *Full details on page 5.*

**Easter Sunday  
April 4. 8 am Said Eucharist  
and 10 am Sung Eucharist.**

#### Worship – Sundays

8 am **Said Eucharist**  
10 am **Sung Eucharist** (*Coffee afterwards*)  
'2gether' 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday.

#### Tuesdays

10.30 am Said Eucharist

#### Alternate Wednesdays

10.30 am \*Praise & Play.  
3.45 pm \*Praise & Play Plus.

*\* see diary (page 6) for details*

#### Mondays - Saturdays

8.30 am Morning Prayer

#### First Saturday of the month

3 pm Saturday Slot

*The Church is usually open each morning from 8 am for anyone who wishes to meditate or spend time in quiet.*



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Vicar

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(Monday – Thursday  
8.30 am – 12.30 pm)

**Visit our web site**

[www.stmichaelsamersham.org.uk](http://www.stmichaelsamersham.org.uk)

Newsletter Editor

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**Diana Glover**

**REFLECTION**

## **Forgiveness comes first**

What's your way of feeling close to God? For me, it's through music; especially singing but also through listening to CDs and live performances. This Lent, as part of my attempt to "sustain my sacred centre", I attended a performance of James MacMillan's *St John Passion* at the Barbican. There was one personal tingle-factor moment when the narrator chorus sang: "Peter again denied it; and at once the cock crowed." After this, the large chorus sang: "*Tu es Petrus, et super hanc petram aedificabo ecclesiam meam*. You are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church."

MacMillan's juxtaposition of Peter's denial and his calling speaks profoundly of God's forgiveness. I don't think that MacMillan wants us to focus on the guilt that Peter must have felt. Rather, he is saying that in spite of claiming that he did not know Jesus when the chips were down, Peter was nevertheless the apostle chosen to form the early church. As Timothy Radcliffe says: "forgiveness always comes first". Jesus' calling of Peter also embraced forgiveness of Peter's betrayal. In a similar way St Paul, who had been a persecutor of the early church, was chosen to preach the Gospel to the Gentiles. God calls unlikely candidates.

Good Friday is ultimately about forgiveness and Easter about acceptance of forgiveness. New life comes to us when we realize that God does not call us as perfect people but as vulnerable individuals who rarely get it right but who, with God's grace, can be called to serve him with all that makes us human. The challenge for us, as it was for the Prodigal Son, is to recognize our weaknesses, to accept Christ's forgiveness, to allow him to embrace us, and then to use all that is vulnerable within us as we seek to serve him.

### **Our Vision Statement**

*As a Christian community, we seek to engage with the world around us and to be a place of welcome and acceptance for all on a journey to God – believers, doubters and those who are seeking.*



# Living Faith Sustaining the Sacred Centre

"This is about encouraging and enabling clergy and lay people to deepen their enjoyment of God, and to recognize God's presence in everyday life", says John Pritchard, Bishop of Oxford, talking about "Sustaining the Sacred Centre", one of five new themes from the Diocesan Vision and this year's priority at St Michael's. The other themes are: Making Disciples, Making a Difference in the World, Shaping Confident Collaborative Leadership, and Creating Vibrant Christian Communities. The plan is for each church in the Diocese to take things which they find useful from a menu, rather than to dictate an approach from the

centre. The focus at St Michael's this year will be on Sustaining the Sacred Centre and three things are being worked on: making the best use of clergy time (allowing them to sustain their own sacred

centre), making prayer resources available for people to use, and interviewing people during services about both their life and how they sustain their own sacred centre. The list of prayer resources is available online <http://www.stmichaelsamersham.org.uk/worship/prayer-resources/> as well as on paper and the interviews are currently being organised; the first will be Roger Leslie on May 30. If you want to know more about Living Faith there are leaflets available in the Narthex, together with a prayer leaflet written by the Bishop and our own prayer resources. If you are interested, please take one.

**Remember...**

**OUR LENT APPEAL  
For Dr Sam Ndimbo  
and St Anne's  
Hospital at Liuli, in a  
remote corner of  
Tanzania.**

Please put your contribution, in a clearly marked envelope, in the offertory bag on Easter Sunday (or, if you're away over Easter, please give it to Marjorie Redpath). Any cheques should be made payable to: Friends of St Anne's Hospital, Liuli. And, if you're a tax payer, do please sign and enclose the Gift Aid form.



## why we do Christian Aid Week

May 9 – 15 2010

- We are joining with more than **20,000 churches** in an unparalleled act of Christian witness to our communities – showing them we care about justice and poor people.
- Christian Aid has a vision – an **end to poverty**. By being part of this week we're not only funding life-changing projects, we're helping tackle the root causes of poverty – helping to change the world for good.
- In these **difficult financial times**, the world's poorest people need our time, prayers and financial support more than ever. Christian Aid Week helps us give people the opportunity to be generous.
- Around **300,000 volunteers**

- give their time to deliver envelopes door to door and put on events. We are part of this movement for change.
- We get **money for nothing!** Every taxpayer who signs a Gift Aid declaration on an envelope is giving Christian Aid 28 per cent extra – making even more development work possible in the world's poorest countries.
  - Christian Aid has successfully campaigned on 'dropping the debt', carbon-declaration reform and trade justice. Christian Aid Week helps bring about world-wide **structural change**.

**Volunteers are needed for the house-to-house collection and to help at the Craft Fair at St Michael's on Saturday May 15. If the Fair is to be its usual success gifts of cakes, plants, books and new goods will also be needed. All offers to Anne Rafferty (433269)**

## Til Faith Us Do Part

Jo Harrington reports on the March Millennium Lecture, in which Rabbi Jonathan Romain challenged us to respond to the reality of partnerships across the faith divide.

“A fish and a bird can fall in love but where will they build their home?” Dr Jonathan Romain, Rabbi at Maidenhead Synagogue, used these words from “Fiddler on the Roof” to illustrate his Millennium Lecture “Til Faith Us Do Part?”.

He urged us to look at the reality of the problems of those caught up in mixed faith relationships, the practicalities of where and how to marry, to set up home and to raise the children. Increased mobility in society, the privatisation of religion almost as a “hobby” and an element of chance all contribute to a situation addressed by Moses, by St. Paul and the Qu’ran. Apparently, 34% of Jews who “marry out” do so to Catholics, perhaps because for both communities their faith is “a way of life.”

Why do some speak of “the curse of inter-faith marriage”? In his work across religious boundaries,

Dr Romain sees the fear of clergy and of parents about the survival of the faith and an altruistic concern for the children they might “lose” when they “cross the line” by marrying someone of another faith or of no belief. He advises us to see the situation as issues, rather than problems, to accept the reality and not boycott the wedding, “to keep the channels of communication open” and to accept that a stronger marriage might ensue for a couple who talk through their religious differences. Children in a mixed marriage often “take difference for granted.”

Later discussion revealed the potential for pain which was understood by some of the audience. Rabbi Romain himself acknowledged a clash of logic and feeling, even in his own family. His advice remains that we respond to the reality of what is and feel reassured that all people of faith essentially speak the same language.

### Our persecuted Church family in

## MEXICO



Away from Mexico City, in the rural areas of Mexico, particularly in the southern state of Chiapas, ancient tribal traditions and beliefs are still strong, often mixed with folk Catholicism. People who become Protestant Christians are therefore targeted for failing in their civic duty to maintain traditional values (such as alcohol-fuelled festivals). Pressure

upon them comes also from drug cartels and rebel groups who threaten, kidnap and kill pastors and church members, and destroy churches and homes if they do not give them money. The police force often does nothing to protect them or to bring their assailants to justice, but rather arrests and imprisons the Christians.

### Our new web site

<http://www.stmichaelsamersham.org.uk/>

Now that the new website is up and running, it is important that information on it is kept up-to-date. Please check the website regularly. If you wish to submit any new material or amendments please send them, by email if possible, to Kiki at the Church Office. She will run them by Diana for agreement and forward them to the Webmaster, Rae Gillott, for input. Most church websites are looked at by people who do not attend that church but want to find out about it. The website is, therefore, a significant part of mission at St Michael’s.

### Welcome back, Pippa

Pippa Soundy, whom several of you met when she was on placement with us in January, is to become a non-stipendiary (ie unpaid) part-time curate at St Michael’s after her ordination on July 3. Pippa will spend two days a week at St Michael’s and two days with the Church Mission Society into which she is being ordained. Please pray for Pippa, and also for the work of the Church Mission Society, as she prepares for her ordination.

### We give thanks for the life of

John Ellis

**PRAY that believers would remain strong in their faith despite all these harassments; that those injured would be healed, those made homeless find somewhere to live in safety, and that they may be free to worship in their communities. Pray that the witness of their lives would draw their persecutors to cease attacks and turn to Christ themselves.**



## COME AND EXPERIENCE HOLY SATURDAY

### Saturday April 3. 8 pm



The Light of the world has died and the world has gone dark. As we arrive for the service we stand or sit for a short time outside the church around a brazier. Then the Paschal Candle – the candle signifying the Light of Christ, which is always used at Easter and at Baptisms – is lit from the fire and carried into the church with the people following on. Everyone will have their own candle and from that one light, all other light is drawn, and the darkness becomes flooded with light.

After this “Service of Light”, we listen to Bible readings, which recount our story - the story of God’s covenant with his people from earliest times. For Christians, of course, this story of salvation and freedom is achieved through the risen Christ but the service draws heavily on what Jewish people would recognise from the

festival of Passover – when the angel of death “passed over” the people of Israel held captive in Egypt and they could regain their freedom. Even the term “Pascha” – from which we get “paschal” - is borrowed from the Jewish word for “Passover”.

In the next part of the service we are invited to renew our baptismal vows, remembering that, in the early church, people were baptised only at Easter, and received their first Eucharist then. The font, filled to represent metaphorically Christ as Living Water, will have been placed near the church entrance, the position it has traditionally occupied since earliest times. We shall be sprinkled with the water from the font.

This is followed by the first Eucharist of Easter, and the service concludes with the *Surrexit Christus* (Christ is Risen) – Latin titles in the Holy

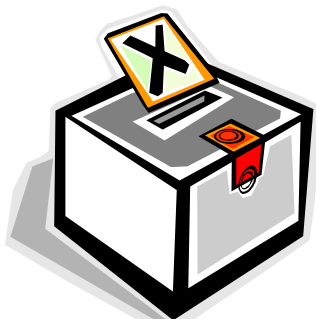
Week/Easter worship give us the clue that the text is ancient indeed!

This service is the high point of what is known as the Triduum (“three days”), which, beginning on the evening of Maundy Thursday and ending on Easter Sunday, contains the heart of the Christian faith. Why not experience all three as part of your Holy Week journey?

*Finally, Easter doesn’t end on Easter Monday! There is a full eight days (“octave”) of celebration and Eastertide lasts for 50 days, until Pentecost on May 23.*

### Our Annual Meeting

The Annual Parochial Church meeting will be in the Hall at 10 am on Sunday April 25 and will be followed by a short, informal Communion service in the Hall.



## Election Forum

### Thursday April 29

### at 8 pm

### Drake Hall,

### Community Centre

A reminder of the chance to hear all those standing in this constituency at the COTHA-run Election Forum. Each candidate will make a short presentation, followed by questions from the floor. This will give us a chance to reach an opinion about those who are seeking our votes and to make an informed judgement

about who we wish to vote for. Election Forums have been arranged by COTHA at each of the last two General Elections and have proved successful.

*NOTE: The date has been chosen on the assumption that the Election will be on May 6.*

## Quiz Night

Don’t forget this special social evening. A fish and chips supper for £10 (or sausage and chips for £9) – concessions £1 less – followed by a fun Quiz. There’ll be a raffle in aid of St Michael’s. Tickets from Anne Beattie (725333).

**Saturday April 10**  
**7 for 7.30 pm**

**Margaret Kuhn will be preaching on April 18 to introduce the COTHA Week of Accompanied Prayer to be held during the first week in August.**



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## DIARY

**April 2010**

### Regular Weekly Activities

<b>Sundays</b>	<b>8 am</b>	<b>Said Eucharist</b>
	<b>10 am</b>	<b>Sung Eucharist</b>
Mondays	8.30 – 8.55 am	Morning Prayer. Lady Chapel.
Tuesdays	8.30 – 8.55 am	Morning Prayer. Lady Chapel.
	10.30 am	Said Eucharist. Lady Chapel
Wednesdays	8.30 – 8.55 am	Morning Prayer. Lady Chapel.
	7.00 – 8.15 pm	Choir Practice
Thursdays	8.30 – 8.55 am	Morning Prayer. Lady Chapel.
Fridays	8.30 – 8.55 am	Morning Prayer. Lady Chapel
Saturdays	8.30 – 8.55 am	Morning Prayer. Lady Chapel.
Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays, Fridays.	10 am – 12 noon.	Wheeler Coffee. Wheeler Room.

*The Church is usually open each morning from 8 am for anyone who wishes to meditate or spend time in quiet.*

### Other Activities in April

<b>Thursday</b>	<b>April 1</b>	<b>MAUNDY THURSDAY. Eucharist 8 pm</b>
Thurs – Sat	April 1 – 3	Compline. Lady Chapel. 7.30 pm
<b>Friday</b>	<b>April 2</b>	<b>GOOD FRIDAY. 10 am.</b>
		<b>Walk of Witness. Free Church. 11.30 am, ending on the forecourt.</b>
<b>Saturday</b>	<b>April 3</b>	<b>Holy Saturday. Saturday Slot – Easter Garden. Lady Chapel. 3 pm</b>
		<b>The Easter candle and 1<sup>st</sup> Eucharist of Easter. 8 pm</b>
<b>Sunday</b>	<b>April 4</b>	<b>EASTER SUNDAY.</b>
Tuesday	April 6	LUNCH BREAK. Gilbert & Sullivan songs. Free Church. 1.10 pm
Wednesday	April 7	Healing & Wholeness. Lady Chapel. 4 pm – 6 pm
Saturday	April 10	Quiz Night. Hall. 7 for 7.30 pm
<b>Sunday</b>	<b>April 11</b>	<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Easter. 2gether.</b>
		<b>Communion. Free Church. 6 pm</b>
Tuesday	April 13	LUNCH BREAK. 20 minute worship. Free Church. 1.10 pm
<b>Sunday</b>	<b>April 18</b>	<b>3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Easter. Preacher: Margaret Kuhn</b>
Monday	April 19	Not One for Lunch. Lady Chapel. 12.45 pm
Tuesday	April 20	LUNCH BREAK. Workaid. Free Church. 1.10 pm
Wednesday	April 21	<i>Praise &amp; Play.</i> Lady Chapel. 10.30 am
Saturday	April 24	<i>Bric-a-brac sale</i> in aid of St Michael's. Forecourt. 9.30 am – 12.30 pm.
<b>Sunday</b>	<b>April 25</b>	<b>4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter. Annual Meeting. Hall. 10 am</b>
		<b>Junior Drama Group. Hall. 2.30 pm – 3.30 pm</b>
Tuesday	April 27	LUNCH BREAK. Singing for the Terrified. Free Church. 1.10 pm
Wednesday	April 28	<i>Praise &amp; Play Plus.</i> Lady Chapel. 3.45 pm
<b>Saturday</b>	<b>May 1</b>	<b>Saturday Slot. Lady Chapel. 3 pm</b>

### Our next issue . . .

Our next issue will appear on **Sunday May 2**. Please get your contributions to us by **Sunday April 18**.