



# CONNECTIONS

CONNECTING PEOPLE & BUILDING THE COMMUNITY OF FAITH @ ST.LAWRENCE'S



Dear Friends

I'm sure I'm not the only one who's confused about seasons. Last week I noticed the first Spring bulbs emerging through the ground; this week it's an icy -7°C and definitely Winter.

Whilst the pattern of seasons is changing, there's still a rhythm to the natural world. Likewise the

church has seasons as an aid to focusing on different aspects of Christian faith. This month sees the start of the season of Lent.

Often dismissed simply as a time to "give up chocolate" Lent is in fact a season in the Church's calendar to pay special attention to the disciplines of faith. It's a time to engage with the seriousness and rigour of being a disciple of Jesus Christ.

I was struck recently by words in 1 Timothy 4:8 where Paul draws a parallel between physical training and godliness. Sarah and I are currently trying to follow a training schedule to get us fit to run a Half Marathon at the end of March. The schedule includes 3 runs or activities each week to improve our fitness.

Paul recognises the value of such physical training, but goes on to say that training in godliness is surely even more important. How committed are you to getting spiritually fit?

The season of Lent offers us chance to consider our spiritual training schedule—how do you pray? What time do you commit to reading the Bible? How serious are you about getting rid of bad habits and living a holy life?

So this month may I encourage you to use Lent to improve your spiritual fitness, and train in godliness. Come to the Lent Course. Don't just give up chocolate but do something that takes seriously Jesus' call to follow him.

*Martin*

## Real Lyfe—Lent Course

**Tuesday evenings, 8.00pm—9.30pm  
in the Church Hall  
Starting Tuesday 28th February**

This year's Lent Course will consider some of the topics Christians traditionally turn to in Lent. How can we live with integrity? How do we become the person God wants us to be, so that we routinely and easily do the right thing? How can we be the same person on the inside and outside? How do we handle temptation? Frustration? Doubt?



Using resources produced by the Bible Society, including video clips, discussion questions, Bible studies, talks... the Lent Course will explore these issues.

*Holiness is world-affirming.  
The holy life is found smack  
in the middle of everyday  
life.* Richard J Foster

The course will run for 6 weeks and is open to all. Each session will stand alone, so if you can't make every week, come when you can. There'll be refreshments and a chance to meet others.

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

## Christians working in Schools

An evening for all teachers, teaching assistants and school governors.

**Tuesday 7th February,  
7.00pm  
in the Church Hall**

to reflect on what it means to be a Christian working in school, to share ideas and resources, and to encourage one another.

The evening will begin with a buffet meal, followed by a presentation by Libby Leach (newly appointed Diocesan Advisor for Schools' outreach) discussion and prayer.

Please speak to Ben if you are able to attend.

# This Month's Church Diary

## February

<b>Mon 6</b>	<b>8.00pm</b> Parish Leadership Team
<b>Tue 7</b>	<b>7.00pm</b> Supporting Christians in Schools <b>8.00pm</b> Beyond Ourselves course 4
<b>Sat 11</b>	<b>9.00am</b> Men's Breakfast with Keith Jones <b>10.30am</b> Marriage Preparation Day
<b>Sun 12</b>	<b>3.00pm</b> Mill Hayes Residential Service <b>4.00pm</b> Baptism Preparation
<b>Thu 16</b>	<b>6.00pm</b> Listening Ear—Anne & John
<b>Tue 21</b>	<b>8.00pm</b> Beyond Ourselves course 5
<b>Wed 22</b>	<b>Ash Wednesday</b> <b>10.00am</b> Holy Communion (here) <b>8.00pm</b> Joint Communion at St. John's
<b>Thu 23</b>	<b>1.15pm</b> Friendship Club
<b>Mon 27</b>	<b>8.00pm</b> Finance Committee
<b>Tue 28</b>	<b>8.00pm</b> Lent Course begins Session 1 <b>8.00pm</b> Beyond Ourselves 6

## March

<b>Fri 2</b>	<b>2.00pm</b> Women's World Day of Prayer
<b>Sat 3</b>	Learning Healing Ministry Conference
<b>Sun 4</b>	Healing Services (9.15am & 11am)
<b>Mon 5</b>	<b>8.00pm</b> Parish Leadership Team
<b>Tue 6</b>	<b>8.00pm</b> Lent Course: Session 2
<b>Wed 7</b>	<b>2.30pm</b> Ladies fellowship <b>8.00pm</b> Together To Pray
<b>Sat 10</b>	<b>9.00am</b> Men's Breakfast
<b>Sun 11</b>	<b>PLEASE RETURN PLEDGES BY THIS DAY</b> <b>3.00pm</b> Park Lane Residential Home Service

## Fit for Service

All church members will have received a letter from Martin and the Churchwardens inviting you to share in the vision to re-order the church interior, to PRAY IT, and to contribute financially SAVE IT, GIVE IT and RAISE IT.

Please do use this month to pray through your response. Feel free to talk to any member of the PCC about it. We ask that pledges be returned via the Church Office anytime before Sunday 11th March. This will enable the PCC to decide how we proceed when it meets later that month. Thank you.

We're also really pleased to pass on news that the Faculty (planning permission) required to do the work has now been granted. A copy is on display at the back of church.

# Regular Weekly Activities

## Worship & Prayer

<b>Sun</b>	<b>9.15am.</b> Traditional Service (HC 2nd & 4th Sun) <b>11.00am</b> Informal, Contemporary Service (Family Service 1st Sun, HC 3rd Sun) <b>6.30pm</b> Quieter, reflective Service (HC 1st Sun)
<b>Mon</b>	<b>8.30am</b> Morning Prayer
<b>Wed</b>	<b>10.00am</b> Midweek Service
<b>Thu</b>	<b>7.30am</b> Church open for private prayer <b>8.30am</b> Morning Prayer <b>7.30pm</b> Christmas Choir & Music Practice
<b>Fri</b>	<b>8.30am</b> Morning Prayer

## Youth & Children's Groups (termtime)

<b>Mon</b>	<b>5.30pm</b> NRG (school years 1-4)
<b>Tue</b>	<b>1.30pm</b> Kangas'n'Roos (Pre-school children)
<b>Thu</b>	<b>7.00pm</b> 10:10 (school years 5-8)
<b>Sun</b>	<b>7.00pm</b> CYFA (school years 9-13)

## Church Notices

Please take a copy of Steve & Debs Taylor's latest prayer news. They are planning to return to the FAITH ACADEMY later this year but will need extra financial support to do so. Please commit to praying for the family and for their future.

Subscriptions are now due for the 2012 editions of the Parish Magazine. A bargain at £4.80 for 12 monthly magazines. Containing more news than we can squeeze into Connections, the magazine informs, encourages and amuses.

Ben Topham was recently accepted to train for ordination. We rejoice that God has confirmed this calling, but will be sad to see Ben leave us at the end of August to begin training at Ridley Hall, Cambridge. It is the PCC's intention to advertise for a new Youth and Children's Worker to follow Ben and continue ministry with children, young people & schools. A letter about this is available for all who contribute to the Youthworker account. Extra copies are at the back of church.

There will be 2 service of Holy Communion on Ash Wed (22nd Feb) - 10.00am here at St. Lawrence's, and 8.00pm at St. John's, Knypersley.

The next service rota and rotas for those who read the Bible in church will be available this month.

Please continue to pray for Trevor Raaff as he continues his study at Ridley before coming to continue his training as Curate at St. Lawrence's.

Martin and a number of others are attending a conference "Learning Healing Ministry" at Christ Church Alsager, 2nd-4th March. This would be excellent training for anyone on the Prayer/Care teams or

interested in healing ministry. More details from Martin or the Office.

Women's World Day of Prayer Friday 2nd March @ 2pm. Biddulph Methodist Church. All are welcome—men women & young people to join in prayers offered by the church in Malaysia

The clergy and churches in Leek are planning to run The Bishop's Certificate course. This is a one year course offering a basic introduction to theology and a foundation for authorised ministry in the Diocese. If you are interested in exploring Christian faith and ministry in this way, please speak to Martin.



**IN BIDDULPH TOWN HALL  
Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> March  
10am-12noon.**

Grab yourself a footprint – from children's groups, schools, churches, Sainsbury's foyer (on the morning of Sat 3<sup>rd</sup> March), or even on the morning of the event in the Town Hall. Decorate it in any medium (pens, pencils, chinks, rice, pulses, pasta, cotton wool etc), in a way that reflects

either a well-known Fairtrade product, or a country that is well known for its Fairtrade producers. Then bring it along to the Town Hall between 10am and 12, and add it to the pathway!

As well as meandering along the pathway - enjoy refreshments, displays and free samples offered. Have a go at a fun quiz and join in the Dance around the Fairtrade World.

**RAISE IT**

Frank and Linda Davis have produced a wonderful CD of organ and piano music, composed and performed by Linda, recorded by Frank. Copies of "Reflections" are available for sale in aid of the re-ordering project. £5.00

A group of people are organising a Car Boot and Table Top Sale on Sat 28th April, 8am—12noon. Please pass word around. Pitches are available from £7.00.

**PRAY IT**

**Together to Pray** on Wed 7th Mar, 8.00—9.30pm we will again focus on praying for the church re-ordering project. This is such an important project this year that we encourage every church member to come.

**Cliff College Festival 2012  
1st—4th June 2012**

For the last 3 years members of St. Lawrence's have made an annual pilgrimage to Cliff College. The college is about an hours drive away, set in the heart of the beautiful peak district. It is a training centre for people with a heart for evangelism that annually opens it's doors to visitors for a week of teaching, worship and entertainment, with fantastic activities for youth and children. Festival goes either camp, stay in local B&Bs or in a room on site. Last year about 40 people attended from St. Lawrence's. It's a relatively cheap Christian festival, which I encourage you to think about attending, either for the full week-end, or as a day visitor. This year's theme is: "Therefore GO". Please speak to Ben or visit [www.cliffcollege.ac.uk](http://www.cliffcollege.ac.uk)



**Introducing...**



Hi, my name is Pauline Hodges. I am married to Jeff and we have two sons, Stephen who is 36, and Mark who is 35.

I am a retired Primary School Teacher and since retiring, Jeff and I have enjoyed spending time in France and have also travelled to the U.S.A. several times to visit our son Mark in California. I also enjoy reading, gardening and photography.

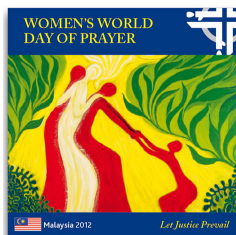
St. Lawrence's church has always been a part of my life. I attended Sunday School here from the age of four onwards and was later confirmed here. Jeff and I were married here and we will celebrate our 40<sup>th</sup> Wedding Anniversary in July this year. Our children were both christened, went to Sunday school and were later confirmed here.

During those years, when our children were growing up, I helped run the Toddlers Group, taught in Sunday School, also taught each summer at V.B.S. (now Vibes), and was involved in lots of other church activities too.

More recently, I have served on the P.C.C. and am now also a Deanery Synod Representative, as well as being on the Sidespersons' Rota and reading the lesson at evening service.

I am enjoying my role as part of the Re-ordering Committee, and feel deeply about the challenge to combine both the dignity, solemnity and history of the church interior, with the need for modernisation, to enable growth and expansion of the church, both now and for future generations. This is a task which requires much prayerfulness from each one of us, and with God's grace will cater for the needs of the church family and the wider community for many years to come.

## Day of Prayer



### Women's World Day of Prayer Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2pm Biddulph Methodist church

On Friday 2nd March @ 2pm. there will be an opportunity to join with over 3 million people worldwide, who will be praying and worshipping together, during an annual Women's World Day of Prayer, using a form of service prepared by Christian women in

## Message Board

### *Is there anything you need for home, garden, camping use etc?*

Before you buy, please ask me (Anne Argent) if I have it. Everything free, unless you feel that you would like to make a contribution for a bigger item, then a donation to the Church Refurbishment would be great.

I MUST empty the house by March 1<sup>st</sup> Can YOU possibly help me out??

Please 'phone me  
on 01260 277 288  
or email on

[anne.argent@dsl.pipex.com](mailto:anne.argent@dsl.pipex.com)

Malaysia. Although organised and led by women, this is essentially a day of prayer for everybody, demonstrating our solidarity with our sisters and brothers in other countries and all are welcome to attend.

Jean Hackett, president of the National Committee of the Women's World Day of Prayer movement in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, said: *'This is always an exciting day as a great wave of prayer sweeps the world, beginning when the first service is held in the Queen Salote Girls School in Tonga and continuing around the world until the final service takes place, some 35 hours later, in neighbouring Western Samoa. By then the day will have been celebrated in over 170 countries and more than 6,000 services will have been held in the British Isles alone.'*

## Contacts

### St. Lawrence's Church Office

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Monday 10.30am-12noon

Tue-Fri 9am-12noon

Thursday Evening 6pm-8pm

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Website is  
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## Prayer

### **Praise God for**

His promise to never leave nor forsake his people  
The free gift of eternal life in Jesus Christ our Lord.

### **Please pray for**

Christians living in Northern Nigeria and experiencing persecution  
The people and situation in Syria

Our partner church St. Paul's Syongila, Kenya  
all who work in our local schools

the Lent Course and those preparing for it

Those taking part in the Beyond Ourselves course

All church members responding to the challenge of "Fit for Service"

**Marriages:** for the Marriage Preparation Day on 11th Feb and all getting married at St. Lawrence's in 2012

the bereaved family & friends of Roy Pickering, June Squires, Marjorie Lowe, Jason Boulton, and Alan Amos

for those with particular needs incl Richard White, Gary Frain, Maggie, Peter & Jessica Hughes, Carole Dale, Craig Dawson, Pru Atikins, Peter Bailey, Nicholas Bourne, Jody Shaw and Francis Brown

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