

ST MARY'S GAMLINGAY, HATLEY ST GEORGE & ST MARY'S EVERTON



Weekly newsletter 14 January 2022



From Hilary...

As I am taking some leave from Thursday 13th to Tuesday 18th January you will not find me in church this Sunday. Home circumstances do not allow for Norman and myself to go away, but it will be an opportunity for some family time when we may have a few more family visits than usual and, hopefully, a few longer sleeps and possibly the odd visit out. I will, however, be reachable in emergency. For other matters please use the contacts at the end of this Newsletter.

There have already been a good few returned service consultation questionnaires but I am hoping for some more before finalising February services. Thank you to those of you who have responded and, if you haven't, it is not too late (see below).

As the season of Epiphany continues, we pray to be visible and hospitable people of God, living the Gospel in challenging times. Do make time to reflect on, and share with me, the ways in which you can be part of this amazing and mysterious Kingdom which Jesus came to reveal and show the way to.

'Living Ely 2025' and Christian Unity

There was always an intention, in this year, to follow up Diocesan planning (which had started before I came here) but a lot has changed between the publishing of the Diocesan Strategy and now. Since then, Covid 19 has brought about, or been a catalyst for, all sorts of challenges and changes. Nevertheless (in fact even more so in the light of what is happening to our parishes) there is a planning initiative underway called Living Ely 2025. This was launched before Christmas by +Dagmar and other leaders in the Diocese as they toured the Deaneries speaking to the Greater Chapters (clergy in post, retired clergy with permission to officiate and LLMs). Bishop Stephen will be with the Deanery in early March as this process continues.

Three pieces of printed information have been produced with the same information in more or less detail. Church Wardens and PCCs already have theirs and the congregational version will be available in churches shortly, explaining what's going on. Please take one when they are out, then read and respond in whatever way seems right. We will be looking for a few people from across the Deanery to be part of a core planning group, but it is hoped that all church members will get involved with sharing views and offering their gifts in supporting the ministry of the parishes.

The idea is for Deaneries to plan 'bottom up', by parishes sharing needs, successes and aspirations. A group in the Deanery will draw these together to formulate plans to present to the Diocese. Diocesan staff will then bring together the results from the Deaneries, supporting the best distribution of existing resources and ways to access what is available. This is meant to build on the previous Action Planning process, which in some parishes continues while in others, like our own, has been pretty much lost or shelved.

It is important to understand that this is not about reducing the number of paid clergy posts, as Ely is expecting to be able to sustain the existing numbers into the foreseeable future. However, it may be that the existing clergy posts are redistributed where additional needs are identified in some places and others have reducing populations and opportunities for ministry.

The timing for us, in this season when we pray for Christian Unity is worth noting. Most important will be finding ways in which we can work together between parishes and benefices, and with other Christians of different denominations, in sharing resources which can benefit both the apparent givers and the apparent receivers in the sharing.

My favourite story illustrating this principle of mutual resourcing, which is one of the principles of the Kingdom of God, comes from China, and describes Heaven and Hell.

Hell is a place where there is an amazing feast laid on at the centre of a circle of seated people. Each person has their food in front of them, but it can only be eaten with chopsticks, and the chopsticks are all 6ft (2 meters) long, so no one can feed themselves and they are all hungry and frustrated.



Heaven is also a place where there is an amazing feast laid on at the centre of a circle of seated people. Each person still has their food in front of them, and again it can only be eaten with chopsticks, and the chopsticks are still all 6ft long. BUT this time the people are feeding each other, so they all enjoy both the feast and the joy of sharing.

Services for the first months of this year

January

Sunday 16th January Epiphany 2

10am Shared Communion at Everton with Ven. Hugh McCurdy, Archdeacon of Huntingdon

Tuesday 18th January

10am Bible Study on Zoom

Wednesday 19th January

9.30am Midweek Communion at the Rectory (to be confirmed)

Sunday 23rd January Epiphany 3 (Sunday in the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity)

10.00am Shared Eucharist at Everton

6.30pm Service for Christian Unity on Zoom only (same link as for the morning)

Sunday 30th January Epiphany 4,

Celebrating the Presentation of Christ in the Temple

10 am Shared Eucharist for Candlemas at Everton.

TBC evening Zoom presentation

Services in February and March

A reminder that service patterns for the Benefice churches will continue to be temporary and subject to change in February. The pattern will be decided based on the responses to the accompanying questionnaire which some people have already seen and responded to. Thank you to those who have already responded. If you haven't, please do take the trouble to return yours and make it a personal response, there is still time for your reply to be taken into account. As before, this can be by email but hard copy through the door at Gamlingay Rectory, either directly or via a messenger, would be fine as would a phone call answering the questions.

NB : we can't do everything everyone wants!

When Gamlingay church is back in action later in the Spring we will be looking to implement a more stable pattern that best serves the mission and ministry of the whole Benefice. This is likely to link with the Deanery planning process and there will be more information as things develop.

Hilary

St. Hilary's Day

Did you know that 13th January is St. Hilary's Day?

Apparently, St. Hilary's Day has gained the reputation of being the coldest day of the year due to past events which started on or around this date!

In 1086 a great frost started spreading over the country on St. Hilary's Day and one of the most severe winters in history began on 13th January 1205. The river Thames froze over and ale and wine turned to solid ice and were sold by weight. According to Stowe's Chronicle at that time.....

"So began a frost which continued till the two and twentieth day of March, so that the ground could not be tilled; whereof it came to pass that, in summer following a quarter of wheat was sold for a mark of silver in many places of England, which for the more part in the days of King Henry the Second was sold for twelve pence; a quarter of beans or peas for half a mark; a quarter of oats for thirty pence, that were wont to be sold for fourpence.

Hard times indeed! In later years Frost Fairs were held on the frozen Thames but not necessarily linked to St. Hilary. We might have been feeling a little chilly recently but nothing to compare with the big freezes of days gone by and we do now have our central heating!

Happy Birthday to our own Hilary this week – make sure you wrap up warm!



Please let Brenda have any articles or pictures for the newsletter
by Tuesday evening each week to Brenda.elcome@ymail.com

A reminder of church opening times and some key contact details:

Everton church open Friday- Sunday, and on Bank Holiday Mondays 10am-4pm.

Hatley church can be opened on request.

Gamlingay church closed to the public until March.

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