

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



Weekly newsletter 3 February 2023



From Hilary...

As we have three Sundays before Lent, having completed the Epiphany season, there is the opportunity to think about the shape that our study and preparations should take this year.

This is the time when we refocus, from the beginnings of Christmas and Epiphany, to think about what everything is heading towards. This falls well for us in the northern hemisphere, coming as the dormancy season of winter turns, through spring, into the warmth and productivity of summer and autumn.

Keeping a Good Lent

Lent begins on Ash Wednesday, 22nd February, with services in the morning at Gamlingay and the evening at Everton. As mentioned above, decisions are being made about Lent Groups and will hopefully be published next week. The intention is that March and April services will also be available then, as we begin the count-down to Easter.

Many people have at least some idea that Lent is a time for fasting - 'giving something up' - and that is indeed one aspect of preparation, but the point of it is to prepare ourselves for Easter in a way that moves us forward on our journey of faith. So, whatever it takes this year for you, be sure to do something - join in with others if it helps you or take some study material, or a book, and give yourself time to think and pray. If you have a particular topic you would like to explore, please mention it very soon. So far there are several books that might be followed; a course on Mental Health which would fit with a desire expressed at PCC for intentional healing services (every Eucharist is of course a service of healing in itself); and the thought that we could all benefit from a 'Christian Basics' refresher which could also work as a starter for any new enquirers. The aim of our groups will be to provide material that works face to face, online and individually at home. This is an opportunity, possibly by meeting and talking, to address things of faith and life. There is likely to be at least one daytime group with the opportunity to share a simple meal. Confirmation preparation will be offered as part of at least some study - talk to Hilary if that is of interest. There is no obligation to be confirmed following the preparation if it doesn't seem right.

If you would like to join in with Lent groups, please let Hilary know which of the following times and ways of study are possible for you – you will then be added to an email group to be circulated with information.

Please indicate all that could work for you, with a star against your preferences.

- *Face to face, via Zoom link, with weekly material for personal study*
- *Following an optional meal, face to face (with or without zoom option) Monday or Wednesday afternoons.*
- *Face to face and/or zoom Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday evenings.*

If you have information and a personal link to a (Christian) charity you would like us to support during Lent, please be in touch, information can be published next week for consideration.

Services for February

Sunday 5th February - 3 Before Lent (Septuagesima)
9.30am Parish Eucharist at Gamlingay
11.15am Parish Eucharist at Everton

Wednesday 8th February
NO Midweek Eucharist in Gamlingay (or anywhere else!)

Sunday 12th February - 2 Before Lent (Sexagesima)
9.30am Parish Eucharist at Gamlingay
11.15am Parish Eucharist at Everton

Wednesday 15th February
9.30am Midweek Eucharist at Gamlingay

Sunday 19th February - Next before Lent (Quinquagesima)
9.30am Parish Eucharist at Gamlingay
11.15am Parish Eucharist at Everton

Ash Wednesday 22nd February
9.30am Midweek Eucharist for Ash Wednesday, Gamlingay
7.30pm Music for Ash Wednesday with Eucharist, Everton.

Sunday 26th February - First Sunday of Lent
9.30am Parish Eucharist at Gamlingay
11.15am Parish Eucharist at Everton followed by APCM

Wednesday 1st March
9.30am Midweek Eucharist, Gamlingay

Mental Health First Aid

It is central to the Christian faith that God embraces humanity in the person of Jesus, and that all that it is to be human is capable of transformation/redemption and is precious to God. I have completed a course, offered in Chatteris, to qualify as a MHFA (mental health first-aider). MHFAs are not qualified in the counselling of psychiatric support but have signed up to be part of a drive to raise awareness and remove stigma around mental health issues. They are there to help anyone who contacts them to find their best route through whatever needs attention. Covid 19 has taken its toll on many people in terms of heightened anxiety and stress, so this is a significant time to be addressing these issues. We are by no means out of the effects despite the sense that we are now 'post pandemic'. The idea that we can all now 'go back to normal' is not really working out like that. One of the key messages of MHFA is the need for us all to be listened to without judgement or collusion in order for us to find our way.

If there is interest, it may be possible to organise a similar course locally to enable others here to become MHFAs. There is also a free church course to enable churches to open up the subject and become better places for everyone to be as healthy as possible in body, mind and spirit. Just as we all have levels of physical health, which may fluctuate with time and may sometimes benefit from treatment, so it is with our mental health. Watch the local information for if/when a course may be running or contact Hilary to express your interest.

NEWS FROM GAMLINGAY

Simple Lunches

These are running at the Church Hall on alternate Tuesdays, mirroring the initiative at Everton started by the Community Association. In Gamlingay, this is an initiative from St Mary's looking both to make use of food that might otherwise be wasted and to provide food and fellowship for anyone who would like to take advantage of it. Donations are welcome but not obligatory, there is no set charge. Any profits will go to support whatever part of the work of St Mary's the PCC decides is appropriate.

Memory Lane met with a good turnout and some new faces - all made very welcome. Artificial flowers were made to brighten up January and an indoor curling tournament was enjoyed by teams of two. For the next session on 28th February the plan is to invite a ukulele group to which we have been introduced.

Toddler Praise

We are exploring what might work for families with very small children wishing to introduce the children to things of faith in a very accessible way. Please contact Hilary or Sandra to express interest.

NEWS FROM EVERTON

Sunday's service for Candlemas without the organ felt rather strange but was, nevertheless, an intimate and effective opportunity to offer worship in this special, sacred space for a festival.

Tuesday Lunches are flourishing in the Village Hall, with a now established clientele. Although originally conceived as being without charge to diners, donations have continued to be offered and the lunches turn out to be making a profit without trying, to the extent that donations were banned this last week.

Everton APCM has been put back by a week as the necessary legal requirements couldn't be met in the available time (how time seems to be flying by!).

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This Newsletter is circulated by email each week to all on the Church Electoral Roll plus anyone else who gives their email details and requests it. It contains any news we have been given to share in our villages (Everton, Gamlingay and the Hatleys) plus news of what's going on in all three churches in the two parishes of the Benefice. Gamlingay with the Hatleys is one parish while Everton and Tetworth is the second linked parish in the current Benefice - both looked after by one parish priest.

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