

SEVERN STOKE AND CROOME D'ABITOT NEWSLETTER

MARCH 2009

The Rector's Message : Reverend Peter Holzapfel 40 Pence

Forthcoming Events

Severn Stoke & Environs

Friends of St Denys
Thursday, 12th March
7.30 p.m.

At the Rose and Crown, Severn Stoke
The Friends of St Denys
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Severn Stoke & Croome d'Abitot
Parochial Church Council

Sunday, 15th March
Annual General Meeting
10.30 a.m.

in St Denys' Church

Easter Church Services

See inside for details

Kempsey

Wednesday, 4th March
Lent Lunches start at
The Firs 12.30 p.m.

Friends of Kempsey-
Monday, 23rd March
Dinner at the Walter de Cantalupe 7.30 p.m.
See inside for details

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Please submit Copy by 2nd Monday next month

Dear Friends,

One of the people who first drew me towards the Christian faith was not a character from the Bible, not even Jesus, but an artist: Vincent Van Gogh. Van Gogh's painting "Sunflowers" is one of the best known and most valuable works in the history of art and yet the artist himself lived in abject poverty and obscurity crippled with mental illness and eventually took his own life. What was it about this man that attracted me to him and provided a prelude to my own Christian journey?

It was two connected things: firstly, his humility. Van Gogh lived, worked and ultimately died with those whom society regarded as the lowest of the low: those who would never amount to anything in worldly terms and indeed were rejected and viewed as an embarrassment and a scourge on society. He didn't live with them because he was "investigating" them or because it was a trendy thing to do but because he was one of them. Van Gogh wasn't making a documentary but living a life. But, secondly, he saw in these dregs of society a dignity and an authenticity that he didn't find in the highly Christian, middle class, home of his upbringing and this led him to have an unquenchable lust for life and a deep desire to reveal the heart of things whether painting peasants in the field or the wonders and glories of nature.

Although society was cruel to him and others nevertheless he had a

passion for life and it is this passion that is conveyed in all of his work. Why did Van Gogh paint? Was it to become famous or wealthy? Most certainly not! He only sold a handful of paintings in his lifetime for a few francs and some of these were used to board up a pig sty! He painted because for him it was the right thing to do and because he could do no other. It was his expression and outpouring of his passion for life.

And it was this similar outpouring and passion that I discovered in the life of Jesus. The forerunner of Jesus was John the Baptist whilst for me the forerunner of my own Christian journey was Vincent Van Gogh. There is no doubt that the gods of our modern society are fame and fortune and we live in the age of the "celeb" where glitzy so called "successful" people are ever dangled before our eyes with the implication that if you're not one of them then somehow you're a failure. Am I immune from this? No. Would I personally like fame and fortune? If I'm honest, Yes. Am I likely to ever get it? No. Is it a right aspiration and would it be the right way to go? Most certainly not! I'm being honest about this because I suspect that very few of us, deep down, wouldn't secretly like a go at being famous and rich. But, sour grapes apart, there is a better way to live and greater things to aspire to.

In the wilderness, during His temptations, Jesus was offered instant satisfaction in turning stones to bread. He was offered fame in performing stunts by throwing Himself off the

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pinnacle of the Temple and landing safely. He was offered power and wealth by claiming all the kingdoms of the world were He to give His soul to the devil. Jesus was indeed tempted in every way like us but, unlike us, He did not give in to temptation and He told the devil to get behind Him and kept His focus on God, God's righteousness, and the purpose and path that God had set before Him. Jesus is not a "celeb" but a Saviour! He was penniless, lived and associated with the dregs of society and was ultimately rejected and crucified as an outcast by those He had come to save. He was buried as an unknown in an unknown and unmarked tomb.

This is the price you pay for following Jesus and the question to all of us is "Are we prepared to pay it?" You may not win an Oscar and you will not become a star and yet your star will shine in the purposes and Kingdom of God. You will have a lust for life that will carry you over into the next and ultimately God, not the public, will be your judge. And if you need any proof then I recommend that you go and look at a copy of Van Gogh's "Sunflowers" and remember the passion that went into it. And then have a look at the Cross and contemplate The Passion of our Lord Jesus. And where are they now? Van Gogh's paintings are virtually priceless and Jesus paid the price for all of us when He died upon the Cross and rose again to become The Saviour of The World.

With every blessing for this season of Lent.....*Peter Holzappel (Revd.)*

United Benefice of Kempsey and Severn Stoke with Croome d'Abitot Church News

United Benefice Prayer Meetings – Welcome to our meetings (usually every other Monday) for an hour, from 8.00 p.m. on Monday, 9th and 23rd March and 6th April. We meet each fortnight either in St Mary's Church or at the homes of those taking part.

Contact John and Cara (W/ 371 218) for the next ensuing venue.

We give thought and prayer for people and projects around us and for the health and enhancement of the Churches' work. You don't have to say a word unless you wish, but just be with us.

Wednesday 4th March: 12.30 p.m.-1.30 p.m.: LENT LUNCHESES at The Firs, Kempsey.

Once again there will be Lent Lunches held at The Firs every Wednesday lunchtime throughout Lent. This is open to everyone in our United Benefice and is a lovely opportunity to enjoy a simple but delicious lunch, in good company and raise much needed funds for a worthwhile charitable cause.

Please do think of joining us this year and I can promise you a very warm welcome.

Friday 6th March: WOMEN'S WORLD DAY OF PRAYER

A special service to be held at 7.30p.m. at Upton Roman Catholic Church which is open to everyone of all denominations across the Deanery. Everyone most welcome (men included!)

The Severn Stoke Fellowship and Study Group meets fortnightly on the 2nd and 4th Thursdays of each month and to coincide with school terms (roughly!) at 2.30 p.m. at the homes of various Members.

Next dates: 12th and 26th March. Everyone is most welcome to join this group, which is informal, very welcoming and stimulating. Please contact John and Cara (W/ 371 218) for details and next Venue.

St. Mary's & St. Denys' website - a new, updated look – The church website, www.stmaryskempsey.org.uk, has had a bit of a make-over during Jan 2009. We've made it more colourful and widened it to work better on modern PC screens. Please do take a look at the new format and see what you think. We hope you like it. We are always updating it with fresh information so do keep a regular eye on the website and please do get in contact, via the Contacts page, if you have anything to contribute.

CHURCH SERVICES at St MARY'S, KEMPSEY

Every Thursday 10.30 a.m. Holy Communion in the Lady Chapel

Every Friday 11.00 a.m. Mothers and Toddlers Service

MARCH

Sunday 1st: Lent 1 8.00 a.m.: Morning Prayer BCP, 9.00 a.m.: Holy Communion BCP at Kerswell Green,
10.30 a.m.: Family Service, 6.00 p.m.: Holy Communion BCP.

Sunday 8th: Lent 2 8.00 a.m. Holy Communion BCP, 10.30 a.m. Informal Family Communion, 6.00 p.m.
Evensong BCP

Sunday 15th: Lent 3 8.00 a.m. Morning Prayer BCP, 10.30 a.m. Family Service, 6.00 p.m. Holy Communion BCP.

Sunday 22nd: **MOTHERING SUNDAY** 8.00 a.m.: Holy Communion BCP, 10.30 a.m. Family Communion,
6.00 p.m. Evening Praise at The Firs.

Sunday 29th: Lent 5 (5th Sunday) 8.00 a.m. Holy Communion BCP,

10.30 a.m.: UNITED BENEFICE SERVICE at ST MARY'S

This will be entirely led by our Youth Group. We are really privileged at St Mary's to have such an active and committed Youth Group and I do ask you to give this service your fullest support and to thank God for all our young people and those who encourage and nurture them in their Christian journey.

6.00 p.m.: Please note that there will be no evening service at St Mary's

APRIL

Sunday 5th **Palm Sunday** 8.00 a.m.: Morning Prayer BCP, 9.00 a.m.: Holy Communion BCP: Kerswell Green,

10.30 a.m.: Special Family Service, 6.00 p.m.: Holy Communion BCP.

Thursday 9th **Maundy Thursday** 10.30 a.m. Holy Communion in the Lady Chapel

7.30pm: Special Maundy Thursday Meal and Communion Service in Church.

This will be a different and very special occasion when we can remember in a unique way, the last supper that Jesus shared with His disciples. There will be a list at the back of church for you to sign so that we know how many to cater for. This is for the whole United Benefice.

Friday 10th: **Good Friday** 10.30 a.m. Praise service at St Denys', Severn Stoke,

2.00 p.m. Meditation at St Mary's, Kempsey

Sunday 12th: **EASTER SUNDAY** 8.00 a.m. Holy Communion BCP with Hymns, 10.30 a.m. Family Communion,

6.00 p.m. Holy Communion BCP.

The Cornflower Club – If you'd like to come along and join for an enjoyable and fun-packed programme of events then you're most welcome - Meets on Wednesday, 4th and 18th March and 1st April at 2.30 p.m. in Kempsey Parish Hall. **New Members are always welcome.**

Age Concern Coffee Morning - meets every Thursday at 11.30 a.m. at St Mary's House.

Women's Fellowship – meets on Wednesday 11th March 7.30 p.m.: Women's Fellowship Holy Communion Service in Church followed by AGM at St Mary's House, Kempsey.

LENT LUNCHESES at THE FIRS starting on Wednesday 4th March

Every Wednesday lunchtime at 12.30 p.m.: : Do come along and support Lent Lunches throughout Lent and have a simple but delicious lunch, enjoy good company and raise much needed funds for a worthwhile charitable cause.

MANY THANKS to all those involved in the organisation and preparation of this ever-popular event.

Monday 23rd March: 7.30 p.m.: SPECIAL DINNER AT THE WALTER DE CANTELUPE

organised by The Friends of Kempsey in aid of St Mary's Church. This will be a very special and enjoyable event with delicious freshly cooked food in a great setting with good company and all in a very good cause. Tickets are £25 and all proceeds will go towards St Mary's Church. MANY THANKS to Chris and Nigel who are organising and preparing the food. Tickets can be obtained from Peter, Marian Walters, Church Wardens or from Kempsey School.

Thursday 26th March: 7.30pm ST MARY'S ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING at ST MARY' HOUSE. Please do come and attend the AGM. Reports will be available for you to read at the back of Church from 9th March. This is an important meeting in the life of our church and it would be good to see another good attendance as in recent years.

SEVERN STOKE AND CROOME d'ABITOT PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL

The Deanery Synod has been discussing the need for Parish amalgamations in readiness for the time when the present five Clergy are reduced to four, because of financial pressures. After much deliberation, Kempsey and Severn Stoke with Croome d'Abitot are to remain unchanged as to boundaries of the Benefice, but only in anticipation of taking responsibility for those coming to live in the proposed Housing Development, planned for north of Kempsey.

SEVERN STOKE and CROOME d'ABITOT PARISH COUNCIL

The Worcestershire County Council has set up web sites for all its parishes and the Severn Stoke & Croome d'Abitot Parish Council is taking advantage of it. As well as much information about the Parish Council, meetings, agendas, minutes etc., the site has links to the County and District Council sites and contains information on local services, schools, travel, events etc and also features an emergency alert (weather, flooding, school closures etc) on the opening page

The website is at: <http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/MyParish>, from which you select the parish from the list. Currently, the two parishes have separate sites, but hopefully this will be corrected before too long. With apologies to Croome d'Abitot, the Severn Stoke site is the active one at the moment.

The Lengthsmen continue their work to drain water off our road surfaces and have recently re-exposed tarmac footpaths in Clifton, Severn Bank Lane, Birch Lane and Kinnersley. After much hard work over the last year, most of the 25 Kms of roads in the Parishes have had some attention. The next year will hopefully see a great deal of maintenance and an attempt to tackle issues not caught first time round.

The Parish Council will seek to keep the full width of tarmac footpaths available for Pedestrians and invite Parishioners to ensure that their borders adjacent do not encroach.

SEVERN STOKE SCOUT & GUIDE GROUP

The Team Leaders are still urgently seeking Leaders to succeed them, when they are obliged to retire later this year. Please contact Pam Gerrard on W/ 820955, if you can help.

EARL'S CROOME WOMEN'S INSTITUTE

Tuesday, 10th March—**Open Meeting** - A talk by Mr Bob Price on 'The Long Thin Country—Chile' and the Competition is "An Interesting Holiday Souvenir".

MOTHERS UNION – Upton Deanery

Thursday 26th March

London Church—Deanery Quiet Time followed by a Bring and Share Finger Lunch.

TABLE TOP SALE in aid of Footprints Cancer Charity

Sunday 15, March from 10.00 a.m. to 4.00 p.m. at Severn Stoke Parish Hall

Loads of things to Buy and Tea and Cakes available.

Entry **FREE**

Anyone wishing to hire a Table for £5.00, please obtain more details from **Elizabeth Francis**,
Tel. No. 01684 290 625

RECTOR: Reverend Peter Holzapfel

Office Address; St. Mary's Church House
for letters Squires Walk,
 Kempsey.

Cherry Tree Rectory
 3, Oakfield Drive,
 Kempsey, WR5 3PP
 Tel: W/ 820 202

Tel: 01905 820 740)

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CHURCHWARDEN: Mr. Bryan Hadley
 Severn Stoke **01905 371 383**

Assistant Churchwarden: Mrs Gail Brookes
 Kempsey **01905 821 823**

CHURCH SERVICES at St Denys' Church, Severn Stoke

MARCH

Sunday 1st Lent 1: 10.30 a.m.: Holy Communion (CW).

Sunday 8th Lent 2: 9.15 a.m.: Morning Prayer and Praise.

Sunday 15th Lent 3: 9.15 a.m.: Holy Communion (BCP) : This will be followed by ST DENYS' PCC ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING. Please do stay on after the service and have a hot drink followed by the AGM which lasts about an hour to 11.30 a.m. approximately. It would be good to see as many of you there as possible for this important meeting in the life of our church.

Sunday 22nd MOTHERING SUNDAY: 10.30am: Special Service of Praise & Thanksgiving for Mothering Sunday

Sunday 29th Lent 5 (5th Sunday) 10.30 a.m.: UNITED BENEFICE SERVICE at ST MARY'S

This will be entirely led by the Youth Group. We are really privileged at St Mary's to have such an active and committed Youth Group and I do ask you to give this service your fullest support and to thank God for all our young people and those who encourage and nurture them in their Christian journey.

APRIL

Sunday 5th PALM SUNDAY 10.30am: Holy Communion (CW) Palm Crosses will be blessed and given to everyone attending this special service

MAUNDY THURSDAY: 9th 7.30pm: A United Benefice Service at St Mary's, Kempsey which will involve a Communion Service in the context of a simple shared meal recalling the Last Supper that Jesus shared with His disciples. This will be a very special service and I do recommend that you share in it if you can. There will be a list for you to sign a couple of weeks beforehand so that we can have some idea of numbers to cater for.

GOOD FRIDAY: 10th 10.30am: Good Friday Praise Service at St Denys'.
 2.00 p.m. Good Friday Meditation at St Mary's Kempsey

Sunday 12th EASTER DAY 9.15am: Holy Communion Easter Celebration Service.

Further copies of this Newsletter can be obtained on-line:

www.stmaryskempsey.org.uk and click on **Home Page** for St Denys' news and events.