



Notes from the Riverbank

The newsletter for St Thomas of Canterbury Church in Goring,
St Mary's Church in Streatley and St Andrew's Church in South Stoke

February 2017 – 35th edition

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● Welcome to the thirty-fifth edition of "Notes from the Riverbank."

All contributions should be sent to Toria, the editor, by the 17th of each month at the usual email address webcontent.thomandmary@gmail.com. The on-line versions of the calendars are maintained by Glenn Cooke using the same email address. Bookings for the church or Canterbury Room should be made by contacting the UB Parish Secretary Jenny Hall at jandjh2@btinternet.com. We aim to produce the on-line and printed versions of each issue by the 25th of each month.



Pastoral Letter

As I write this, the snow is still hanging around, and I look up to a clear blue sky and the snow on Streatley Hill. It almost feels Christmassy again, but the decorations are packed away for another year, and (rather wonderfully) we are still eating the Christmas cake and chocolates!

I don't know about you, but after the joy and celebrations of Christmas, Jesus born as a baby for us, I always find New Year a bit of an anti-climax. And yet the start of a new year gives us a great opportunity to reflect on all that happened in the past year – and what a year it was:

Politics took us all by surprise, with referendum and presidential election results that shocked the world. Celebrity deaths were announced all too regularly, including one that bought the world to Goring. We celebrated with our sportsmen and woman as they competed in Rio and around the world. We watched in distress as migrants continued to risk their lives crossing the Mediterranean, we wept as Syria was destroyed, and we grieved as terrorist attacks took place around the world.

I am reminded of *Ecclesiasties 3* as we look back on 2016 – so many emotions and reactions, and yet God reminds us that there is a time for everything and that He never changes and is faithful. For each one of us, 2016 will hold memories that are joyful and even painful. For our family it was a year of change – the year that bought us to the Benefice meaning a move from Cambridge, a change of school and job. It meant getting to know new people and a new area to explore. But also a time to celebrate God's goodness and faithfulness with my ordination in July with family, old and new friends.

A new year also gives us an opportunity to look forward to the year ahead... to think and pray about the year to come. Are we approaching it with excitement or with

trepidation? We might be thinking about our holiday, maybe setting ourselves some challenges, or we might see only the challenges imposed on us.

But what about our walk with God? Was last year one in which we grew in our faith or is that still work in progress? We spent the summer reading and thinking about our discipleship; as we start the new year, there are many ways to continue in that, whether that be through Alpha, the Ecumenical Lent groups or reading the Archbishop's book *Dethroning Mammon*. Each of these are great opportunities to help us grow deeper in our faith and we also welcome our new Benefice Mission Partner at the end of January, who will help us in our understanding of world mission, as we get to know him, pray for him and the work God has called him to in Guatemala.

Let us take the occasion of a new year to reflect on what has passed but also look forward in hope, as we continue to grow and journey with our faithful God. With prayers and best wishes for 2017.



Steve Johnson, Assistant Curate



Christingle Service, Sunday 29th January

As we hope that you will receive the Riverbank before the end of January, just a reminder that this year's Christingle Service takes place on Sunday 29th January at 4pm in St. Mary's Church. Refreshments will be served from 3:15pm in the Morrell Room where you can also collect the materials for making your Christingle.

The service is especially suitable for families with children. It is a very special occasion with lots of candles as we celebrate Jesus as the Light of the World and this year our new CMS partner, Steve Poulson, will also be joining us. Everyone is welcome!



Steve, Assistant Curate



Interdenominational Women's World Day of Prayer

The Interdenominational Women's World Day of Prayer will be held at St Mary's Church, Streatley on the 3rd March at 1:30pm. The Service has been written by the Christian Women of the Philippines and the theme this year is: *Am I being unfair to you?* Everyone welcome, (including gentlemen!) and there will be refreshments served after the service.



Linda Ogle, 873517



St Mary's early spring clean

There will be a cleaning session at St Mary's, Streatley on Saturday 1st April (a risky date!) starting at 10am. Everyone is welcome to join in, and coffee and biscuits will be provided. We have some cleaning materials, but extra dusters and cobweb busters would be welcome.



Diana Fenton



A heartfelt thank you from the Vicar and family

Thank you! Signs of your love and prayer support have abounded through these past difficult months. Liz and I are so very grateful for your support, often expressed in tangible tokens. All of us, Alice, Sophie, Liz and Paul, have so appreciated feeling upheld by our Heavenly Father and you, our fellow disciples.

Following successful surgery in November, Paul is now undergoing a six-week course of chemo and radiotherapy, which will probably be followed by continuing courses of chemotherapy. As well as the treatment making Paul feel a little fatigued, the chemotherapy makes Paul particularly susceptible to serious infection, so do please excuse his reluctance to shake hands and join gatherings in confined spaces during these periods.

We would be grateful too, for your prayers for Liz who had surgery for breast cancer on 17th January, which was diagnosed at the end of December. She is making a strong recovery from the operation and awaits news of her next treatment.

Sophie and Alice have returned to university for the new term, making occasional visits home to make sure we are behaving ourselves. We all feel so blessed to be a part of such a loving and prayerful Church.



Paul and Liz



Meet Steve Poulson

On Sunday 29th January we have our new CMS Mission Partner – Steve Poulson – with us all day.

Steve will be speaking in both the United Benefice Service at St Mary's, Streatley, and also at the Benefice Christingle Service. Steve will also be staying on for Discoverers to meet the young people. Do come along to meet him!



Steve Johnson, Assistant Curate



Andrew James Johnson piano recital

London pianist Andrew James Johnson will be giving a Piano Recital in St Mary's Church on Saturday 4th February at 7:30pm.

The program will include music by Mozart, Beethoven, Chopin and a selection of original compositions from Andrew's forthcoming album *Parallel Universe*.

Tickets £12 full or £10 concessions. For further information or advanced bookings please email stmarysconcerts@hotmail.co.uk



United Benefice of
Goring & Streatley
with South Stoke



Benefice Calendar – February 2017

		<u>Goring</u>	<u>Streatley</u>	<u>South Stoke</u>
We. 1 st	Midweek Holy Communion followed by coffee Goring PCC Meeting @ 19:30 Canterbury room	10.30		
Th. 2 nd	Alpha Course in the Canterbury Room	19:30		
Sa. 4 th	Piano recital by Andrew James Johnson		19:30	
Su. 5th	4 th before Lent Holy Communion	8.00	11.15	
	Family Service	9.30		11.15
	Choral Evensong (BCP)	16:00		
Tu. 7 th	South Stoke Prayer Meeting @ 14.30, Crossways			
We. 8 th	Midweek Holy Communion	10.30		
Th. 9 th	Alpha Course in the Canterbury Room	19:30		
Sa. 11 th	Prayer Breakfast in the Canterbury Room	8:30		
Su. 12th	3 rd before Lent Holy Communion	9.30	8.00 11:15	11.15
	Stillness on Sunday		17.30	
We. 15 th	Midweek Holy Communion	10.30		
	South Stoke Coffee Morning			10.30
Th. 16 th	Pick a Flick & lunch showing 'Florence Foster Jenkins'	10:30		
Su. 19th	2 nd before Lent Holy Communion (* service followed by Bring and Share lunch in the Morrell Room)	8.00	11.15 (*)	
	Good News Service	9.30		
	Matins			11.15
	Baptism	14:00		
	Discoverers in the Canterbury Room	17.00		
We. 22 nd	Midweek Holy Communion	10.30		
Th. 23 rd	Alpha Course in the Canterbury Room	19:30		
Fri. 24 th	Come on Board Scrabble in the Canterbury Room	15:00		
	Schools' pancake event	9:00		
Sa. 25 th	Coffee & Cake in the Canterbury Room	10:30		
Su. 26th	Sunday before Lent Holy Communion	9.30	8.00	11.15
	Matins		11.15	
Mo. 27 th	Mum's Out Tonight @ 20.00, 18 Wallingford Road, Goring			
We. 1 st	Midweek Holy Communion followed by coffee	10:30		
March	Ash Wednesday service Holy Communion and ashing	20:30		

Morning Prayer: South Stoke @ 9.30am every Friday; Goring @ 9.15am on 9th & 23rd February.
For more details: call the Vicarage (875651) or look at the website www.thomandmary.org.uk.