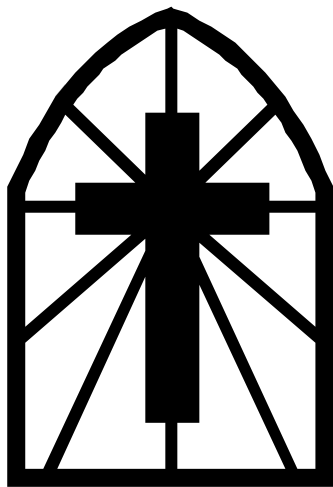


CHRIST  
CHURCH  
CHALLENGE



February 2004

**CHRIST CHURCH, JULIAN ROAD**  
**DIOCESE OF BATH AND WELLS IN THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND**

**SUNDAY SERVICES**

8.00am	Holy Communion
10.00am	Family Communion, Junior Church & Crèche
First Sundays & Festivals	Choral Evensong and Sermon at 6.30pm
Other Sundays	Said Evening Prayer at 5.30pm (see page 5)

*There is amplification to assist the hard of hearing*

**MID-WEEK SERVICE**

11.00am Thursday	Holy Communion
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**CHOIR**

Junior Choir Practice	Friday 6.30pm - 8.00pm
Adult Practice	Friday 7.30pm - 9.00pm

*New singers always welcome - please contact Director of Music 01225 445360*

**BAPTISMS, MARRIAGES, FUNERALS**

By arrangement. Please 'phone the Vestry 338869 / Officiating Minister 427462

*Chris and Angela, the churchwardens, would like to know about people who are ill, or of any circumstances in which the ministry of the Church would be welcome.*

Lent is upon us once more, so for further information, please turn to...

Page 8      ... for details of this year's Lent Course

Page 10     ... for details of the Lent Lunches

Both are a good opportunity to spend some time with our friends at St Mary's, so do make the effort to go along if you can. On a more "in-house" level, don't forget the Away Day on 14 February. Preliminary details of this can be found on page 4.

## Forum...



It is usual to explain the season of Lent as the time of preparation for Holy Week, leading up to Easter. For many people, even if they never go to church, it is a time to give up something like sweets or cakes.

Lent owes much of its spirit to the forty days Jesus spent in the desert preparing for his ministry. We say he was tempted there, but a more accurate translation might be "tested." The Jewish view of the desert was a place of demons, especially in areas where gales scream and swirl around rough pillars of stone. Terrifying at night, this is a landscape of fear. It was into this kind of place that Jesus came and was offered the opportunity to be the wrong sort of Messiah.

When Jesus entered the wilderness, he left behind all the expectations people had of him, all the hopes and all the illusions. But in solitude, demons come. No role is more dangerous than that of the reformer. There were at least three wrong ways to be the Messiah, and Jesus rejected them all. The defeat of Satan during this testing hinted at the final defeat of evil through the Cross and Resurrection.

We are people of illusions. We think we understand God. We imagine we know what we want. We plan our lives and are shocked when these plans fall through. We impose our wills on God or even declare we know his plans. Jesus did not have such illusions. He did not come to bribe us with earthly bread, or astonish us with feats of invulnerability. He did not seek world domination or command an army. He had the courage to meet himself in the desert and give himself to the will of his Father.

Many people perform acts of penance or self-deprivation, such as giving up sweets, TV and so on. Exactly what is done is less important than the fact that it connects us with the desert. During Lent, we have the opportunity to hear voices that are usually lost in the din of pleasure and meaningless talk. We can enter into a private desert even in the midst of the world and face our own demons. We can tear down false idols only to be heartbroken at finding others behind them. If we are brave, we can run on and on through this desert to find the real God



amid the other gods who plague us.

Thomas Merton writes about "disordered attachments". By this he means the burdens we take on as we set the wrong priorities and worry about things that are at worst bad or at best not worth bothering about.

However we choose them, our Lenten disciplines are metaphors. In a very small way, they model the rejection of illusions about what we need, who we are, and who God is.

Through all of this, God is with us. He may not offer comfort now, but he promises no trial beyond our ability to succeed. He offers us no truth we cannot accept if we become as children. When Jesus had finally driven off the devil, angels came to wait on him. When, through Jesus, we have rejected illusion and self-deception, we can be sure of God's continuing grace. This is not the reward of virtue but a divine gift available only to real people.

Antony

## Christ Church Away Day

*A few hours together in the country*



Christ Church has responded well to the Archbishop's call **Restoring Hope in our Church**. We were also well represented at the **An Evening with Bishop Peter** at The Pavilion in Bath where the diocese launched its initiative under the title **First to the Lord 2004**.

When Antony arranged for the Christ Church congregation to see the film **Restoring Hope** and discuss the implications for our church, he promised an Away Day to look at the ideas and responses. As previously announced, this Away Day will take place at the retreat centre established at Chewton Keynsham church. Keynsham parish have done a brilliant job in refurbishing the little church and providing modern facilities for conferences and retreats. It is a peaceful, warm and comfortable place.

On Sunday, 1<sup>st</sup> February, every member of the congregation will receive an invitation to the day and will be asked to complete a booking form. The day will begin at 10 am and end promptly at 3 pm. We shall take a packed lunch but hot drinks will be freely available throughout the day.

It is hope that during the act of worship which we end the day we shall be able to offer our plans for the future of Christ Church. Everyone is encouraged to come along and help lay the foundation of what Christ Church will be in the city and wider in the diocese.

# Church Calendar for February

**Feb 1 Sun THE PRESENTATION OF CHRIST IN THE TEMPLE (CANDLEMAS)**

**6.30pm** Choral Evensong

**5 Thurs 11.00am** Holy Communion - Rev Antony Claridge

**8 Sun THE THIRD SUNDAY BEFORE LENT**

NO SERVICE IN THE EVENING

**12 Thurs 11.00am** Holy Communion - Rev Antony Claridge

**15 Sun THE SECOND SUNDAY BEFORE LENT**

**5.30pm** Said Evening Prayer

**19 Thurs 11.00am** Holy Communion - Rev Antony Claridge

**20 Sun THE SUNDAY NEXT BEFORE LENT**

**5.30pm** Said Evening Prayer

**25 Wed ASH WEDNESDAY**

**11.00am** Holy Communion - Rev Antony Claridge  
Followed by Lent Lunch at Christ Church

**7.30pm** Sung Eucharist

**27 Fri George Herbert, Priest, Poet, 1633**

**29 Sun THE FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT**

**5.30pm** Said Evening Prayer

**Mar 3 Wed 11.00am** Holy Communion - Rev Antony Claridge  
Followed by Lent Lunch at St Mary's

**7 Sun THE SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT**

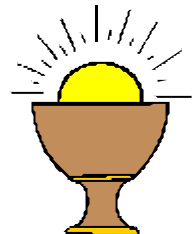
**6.30pm** Choral Evensong

# Service Rota for February

	8 am	10 am Celebrant Preacher	Evening Leader
<b>Feb</b>	<b>1</b> Rev Antony Claridge	Rev Antony Claridge Rev Sandy Munday	Rev Antony Claridge
	<b>8</b> Rev Antony Claridge	Rev Cliff Burrows Dr Cyril Selmes <i>Rev Antony Claridge - Junior Church</i>	No Service
	<b>15</b> Rev Antony Claridge	Rev Antony Claridge Rev Cliff Burrows	Rev Antony Claridge
	<b>22</b> Rev Antony Claridge	Rev Antony Claridge Rev Sandy Munday	Rev Antony Claridge
	<b>29</b> Rev Antony Claridge	Rev Antony Claridge Rev Antony Claridge	Rev Antony Claridge
<b>Mar</b>	<b>7</b> Rev Antony Claridge	Rev Sandy Munday Rev Cliff Burrows	Rev Antony Claridge

## Midweek Services at 11.00 am

<b>Feb</b>	<b>5</b> Rev Antony Claridge	(Thursday)
	<b>12</b> Rev Antony Claridge	(Thursday)
	<b>19</b> Rev Antony Claridge	(Thursday)
	<b>25</b> Rev Antony Claridge	(Wednesday)
<b>Mar</b>	<b>3</b> Rev Antony Claridge	(Wednesday)



# Laity Rota for February

Readers	OT Readers	NT Readers	Gospel	
<b>February</b>	1	Ms J Anderson	Mr B Pont	Mrs E Selmes
	8	Mrs M Burrows	Mrs P Adelman	Mr M Palmer
	15	Mrs J Bishop	Dr D Marles	Mr L Grosvenor
	22	Mrs A Sheppard	Mr J Metcalfe	Mr M Elliott
	29	Mrs R Gabe	Mrs N Gladstone	Mr R Siderfin
<b>March</b>	7	Mrs S Ayers	Mrs E Selmes	Mrs P Edwards

## Chalice Assistants

<b>February</b>	1	Mrs J Metcalfe	Mr R Siderfin
	8	Mrs M Burrows	Mr C Graham
	15	Rev S Munday	Dr C Selmes
	22	Miss J Fletcher	Mrs P Edwards
	29	Mrs J Metcalfe	Mr R Siderfin
<b>March</b>	7	Mrs M Burrows	Mr C Graham

## Intercessors

<b>February</b>	1	Mr R Vince
	8	Mr M Elliott
	15	Mrs P Edwards
	22	Mr B Pont
	29	Dr D Marles
<b>March</b>	7	Rev C Burrows



Sidespeople	8am	10am		
<b>February</b>	1	Miss E Iden-Hart	Mrs T Claridge	Mrs J Ferguson
	8	Mr A Jones	Mr & Mrs Olney	
	15	Mrs D Twissell	Mr M Silver	Mr F Twissell
	22	Mrs B Hayward	Mr & Mrs Ayers	
	29	Miss E Hewlett	Dr D Marles	Mrs J Bunkin
<b>March</b>	7	Mr C Tilling	Mr & Mrs Metcalfe	

# Lectionary for February

	Old Testament	New Testament	Gospel
<b>Feb 1</b>	<b>The Presentation of Christ in the Temple</b>		
	Malachi 3.1-5	Hebrews 2.14-18	Luke 2.22-40
<b>8</b>	<b>The Third Sunday before Lent</b>		
	Isaiah 6.1-8	1 Corinthians 15.1-11	Luke 5.1-11
<b>15</b>	<b>The Second Sunday before Lent</b>		
	Genesis 2.4b-9, 15-25	Revelation 4	Luke 8.22-25
<b>22</b>	<b>The Sunday Next Before Lent</b>		
	Exodus 34.29-35	2 Corinthians 3.12-4.2	Luke 9.28-36
<b>29</b>	<b>The First Sunday of Lent</b>		
	Deuteronomy 26.1-11	Romans 10.8b-13	Luke 4.1-13

## This year's Lent Course – CHANGING LIVES

Christians from other churches in the area have been invited to join together for a thought-provoking Lent Course. The course, with ecumenical groups in mind, has been commissioned by the Bishop of Bath and Wells and will have wide appeal. It contains five stories from the Bible –

1. Hannah the mother of Samuel
2. Gomer, wife of Hosea
3. Jesus and the children
4. Paul on the road to Damascus
5. Thomas after the Resurrection

and is about the way in which faith and responsiveness to God's calling are responsible for **Changing Lives**. The course will take place on Thursday evenings during Lent – look out for the leaflet with full details coming soon.



## When going away can be a problem

It's that time of year when we take our minds off winter gloom by thinking about summer holidays. Many of us are spoilt for choice – we can just pick from the brochures that line travel agents' shelves, go to that favourite hotel or perhaps camp under the stars. But things are not always so easy for people who have a mobility problem or some other disability.



If you are in this category or know someone who is, help is at hand. Holiday Care, a service set up specially to seek out and codify holiday facilities for people with disabilities, will tap into its database and match a caller with accommodation suited to their needs. They have a series of guides, mostly regional, covering inspected accommodation that caters for all kinds of physical and sensory impairment.

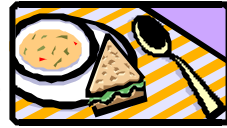
Besides the UK guides, there are guides for popular European destinations, also for Florida and New York. There's one for caravan parks and another deals with the needs of disabled children. If you are looking for a carer or escort, Holiday Care will put you in touch with reliable sources of assistance.

Anyone who is hard up can find out where to apply for a grant towards the cost of a holiday. The guides cost between £2.50 and £5.00 each, but some inquiries can be dealt with on the telephone. Call Simon Hawkins on 0845 124 9971 (local rate) – the hours are 9 to 5 Monday and Tuesday, 9-1 Wednesday to Friday. Or you can write to Holiday Care, 7th floor, Sunley House, 4 Bedford Park, Croydon CR0 2AP.

For those who have hearing difficulties, the charity Hearing Concern has started to organise group holidays in the UK and abroad; the parties are accompanied by a lipspeaker. For details write to Hearing Concern, 275-281 King Street, London W6 9LZ or telephone 0208 680 2229. The Royal National Institute for the Blind runs two hotels, in Blackpool and Eastbourne, and can supply addresses of hotels and activities in many locations, suitable for those with impaired vision.

The helpline is 0845 766 9999. Website: [www.rnib.org.uk](http://www.rnib.org.uk)

## This year's Lent Lunches



Once again, thanks to John and June Metcalfe, we shall be joining with the people of St Mary's RC for Lent Lunches in aid of charity. This year we shall be supporting the Bristol Hospice for Sick Children. In the spirit of Lent, by giving up a little time and money, we shall be contributing to a vital ministry of healing and comfort.

Beginning on Ash Wednesday, of the lunches will be preceded by a Eucharist at 11am. Many people make attendance at this service part of their Lenten discipline - a time for prayer, reflection and spiritual refreshment.

Please make a note of the dates in your diary and join old friends and new each Wednesday throughout Lent.

<i>25 February (Ash Wednesday)</i>	<i>11am Eucharist, lunch at Christ Church</i>
<i>3 March</i>	<i>11am Eucharist, lunch at St Mary's</i>
<i>10 March</i>	<i>11am Eucharist, lunch at Christ Church</i>
<i>17 March</i>	<i>11am Eucharist, lunch at St Mary's</i>
<i>24 March</i>	<i>11am Eucharist, lunch at Christ Church</i>
<i>31 March</i>	<i>11am Eucharist, lunch at St Mary's</i>
<i>7 April (Holy Week)</i>	<i>11am Eucharist, lunch at Christ Church</i>

## "The Positive Side of Life"

- a new series to make us smile and think

Happiness comes through doors you didn't  
even know you'd left open

## USPG News

In December, I received a newsletter giving an update on St Anne's Hospital, Lake Malawi - the project supported by Christ Church. As you are probably aware, Malawi is one of the



poorest countries in the world, and has a high percentage of its population living below the poverty line, set by the World Health Organisation as "earning less than one American Dollar a day". In the hospital catchment area, it is estimated that 65% of the fishing families and rural subsistence farmers are living below the poverty line. This means that with fishing and farming being seasonal, only a simple hand-to-mouth existence is available.

In Malawi, and especially in the Lake Malawi vicinity, malaria is rife, and is especially dangerous to pregnant mothers and children under the age of five. Where malaria is prevalent, one of the most effective measures is to sleep in a treated mosquito net-covered bed (something which this writer has experienced on his visits to the West Indies). In Malawi the market price of a mosquito net is 350 Kwachas (about £1.75) - well beyond the means of most of the local population. In order to assist the local people, the hospital has entered into an agreement with Population Services International (PSI) to supply mosquito nets at a reduced price of 50 Kwachas (approx. 25 pence) for antenatal mothers and mothers with children up to five years old. This scheme also includes orphans. The reduced price is just affordable in the poor community based around the hospital, and needless to say, this initiative has been enthusiastically welcomed.

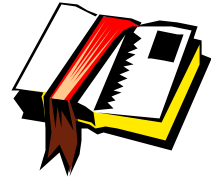
Remember that USPG aimed to raise £9,800 in 2003 to support St Anne's Hospital, and will have to supply a similar or greater amount this year. We at Christ Church must never forget the importance of giving to such a worthwhile project, especially where lives can be saved.



*Adrian Pegg*

## OUR BIBLE CONSULTANT WRITES...

...about the Letter to the Hebrews. Before I started to read this letter I knew only two things about it: no-one has any idea who wrote it, although St Paul has been suggested at various times; whoever wrote it had considerable knowledge of the Old Testament and the Jewish religion. So these comments come from someone with little knowledge of the Old Testament and must be taken with a pinch of salt!



It does seem clear that the letter was written in order to convince Jews that belief in Jesus as the Messiah was acceptable and did not contradict the teachings in the Old Testament. It seems there were two things that Jews had to accept: that Jesus was the equivalent of a High Priest; and that he was the Son of God. Although Jesus did not come from the family of priests, the descendants of Aaron, he could be recognised as such a person because of what he had done by dying on the Cross. Since the time of the setting up of the tabernacles, priests had made all kinds of sacrifices to God in reparation of the various sins of the Israelites. All these offerings, both small and large, had been a waste of time: in spite of all the priests' efforts they had not managed to stop their people from committing sinful acts.

Moreover, there were plenty of examples in the Old Testament to show how they had failed, time and time again, to follow the Laws delivered to them by Moses. For example, they had to wait forty years before they were allowed to enter the Promised Land. However, Jesus had now performed all the necessary acts of a High Priest: By dying on the Cross he had made the one perfect sacrifice for all the peoples of the world. His death had cancelled all the sins of the world; made it possible for us to have closer contact with God, and to approach Him through the person of Christ. Indeed, there is a strong suggestion that the death of Jesus has completely altered the attitude of God to our sins: God will no longer remember our sins.



If Jesus was accepted as a new High Priest, then it must also be accepted that a new law, a new covenant, was being made with God. This new covenant existed because God had sent His Son into the world, as so often prophesied in the books of the Old Testament, like Micah and Isaiah. Descriptions of the Saviour in the OT also reflected the life of Jesus as shown by the Gospels. When the Gospels contained passages which proclaimed that God had called Jesus His

Son, this supported the arguments in the Letter to the Hebrews.



Towards the end of the letter, too, there is almost a summary of the lives of Old Testament leaders: but the message is rather severe; in spite of all they did they did not receive the promise of salvation. This has only come from the life and death of Christ.

In many ways this is more like a thesis than a letter but it does become more personal at the end: offering advice about how to be a member of a church. For example, seek to be at peace, seek to be sanctified. Show brotherly love and hospitality. Care for prisoners and be without avarice. Praise the Lord, do good and share your belongings.

*Cyril Selmes*

## **Mothers' Union News**

At the beginning of February each year, all MU members are asked to join in the MU Wave of Prayer, using the thoughts and ideas of our world-wide members. This year our service will be on 3rd at 2.30pm in the vestry, when Margaret Burrows will lead us. Members of the congregation interested in the work of the Mothers' Union will be very welcome to join us.



I have now received notification that the MU annual subscription for 2004, which is due in February, is £12. This amount will include donations towards the running of the Diocesan and Deanery offices, including their associated Fares Funds; the upkeep of Mary Sumner House and the payment for our quarterly newsletter. From the total fee, we are then permitted to keep £1 per member for our own funds. You will all appreciate that prompt payment would greatly assist me.

Following Ken's return home from hospital, I would once again like to thank everyone for their support, and also request you to understand if we are not able to attend every activity at the moment, owing to his continued immobility while wearing a combined front and back brace. Thank you

Sylvia M Ayers (MU Secretary)

## Christianity and Homosexuality: The Arguments

As a follow up to last month's article highlighting the House of Bishops' report *Some Issues in Human Sexuality: A Guide to the Debate*, I thought it might be interesting to present a précis of five of the most commonly rehearsed arguments on each side of the discussion. Obviously this is a difficult issue and the arguments do not lend themselves to abridgement. Nevertheless, I have attempted not to caricature either viewpoint.

### Homosexual activity is incompatible with Christianity because:

#### 1. The Bible is clear in its condemnation

In Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13 we're told it is an abomination "to lie with a man as with a woman". In 1 Corinthians 6:9 Paul says that "male prostitutes" and "sodomites", will not inherit the kingdom of God, and 1 Timothy 1:10 agrees. The precise meaning of these terms is disputed, but the word translated "sodomites" seems to be Paul's own, adapted directly from the Leviticus passage, literally "those who lie with males". These passages seem to refer to gay sex in general. Romans 1:26-27 is explicit in that it talks of men and women turning from 'natural' intercourse to 'unnatural' with the same sex due to 'dishonourable passions'.

#### 2. 2,000 years of Christian teaching is against it

The current acceptance of homosexuality in society is an historical anomaly. Western Christianity in the late 20th century is the first and only time in any Christian culture that homosexuality has been viewed as acceptable. What makes us think that these people are right and 2000 years of Christian tradition is wrong, not to mention contemporary non-western Christians.

#### 3. Not "homophobic"

Christians who believe that gay sex is wrong are not "homophobic". This implies an irrational fear or hatred. Rather, they believe that homosexual acts are forbidden by God and are harmful to human beings.

#### 4. Not sexuality but sex acts

The inclination towards homosexual acts should not be condemned. Any natural disposition can be acted upon or resisted. We can see this if someone has a violent temper or a compulsive eating disorder.

#### 5. God did not create us this way

Whatever the arguments over individual texts, the bible is based fundamentally on the principle, laid down in Genesis 2, of humans being created as male and female to find fulfilment in each other through monogamous heterosexual relationships.

### Homosexual activity is compatible with Christianity because:

#### 1. The Bible is not against it

Leviticus, which forbids homosexual acts, also forbids eating pork and wearing clothes of mixed fabrics. It instructs us to kill those who work on Saturday and to sell penniless thieves into slavery. Why is one law more important than the others? The verses in Corinthians and Timothy use language which refers to specific man-boy or client-prostitute relationships, not gay sex in general. The passage in Romans seems more unambiguous. However, many interpretations have been offered for this passage: that it refers to temple prostitution; that it is an ironic passage rehearsing the usual accusations thrown at pagans (and then overturning them in the next chapter); that the passage is really about idolatry, not sexuality.

All in all, this hardly adds up to a strong case against homosexuality.

**2. The church always lags behind society**

The church has in the past, defended slavery, opposed democracy and oppressed women. The churches opposition to homosexuality will soon seem as embarrassing as its opposition to these other reforms.

**3. It harms no one**

There is no harm caused to anyone by two people of the same sex living together in a loving relationship which incorporates sex. Surely God is not some kind of divine kill-joy. God says something is wrong because it is harmful. Homosexual acts within a loving relationship are not harmful.

**4. Creation is not homophobic**

If the bible is predicated on the belief that men and women were made purely to find fulfilment in each other through monogamous heterosexual relationships then wilful singleness and celibacy could be seen as equally sinful as homosexuality.

**5. Sex is not just for procreation**

If sex is purely for procreation then married couples where one or the other partner is infertile should not have sex. Contraception would be equally as sinful. Sex is obviously there to provide an emotional bond as well a means of procreation.

My personal opinion is that those who believe that loving, committed, homosexual relationships are compatible with Christianity have by far the strongest case. (Or perhaps I should say that I feel the case against this view is weak.) However, many committed Christians come to a different view. For certain, this issue will not disappear and I think it is incumbent upon all Christians, particularly those in the Anglican church given the current situation, to think carefully and prayerfully about this issue. It's important. It may well tear our church in two.

*Mark Elliott*

*- Advertisement -*



**“A service that gives choice and control to the older person”**

*If you, or someone you care for, needs assistance to carry out the normal activities of daily life.*

*Contact: Sarah Talbott on 01225 334692*

**We offer support seven days/week**

# Prayer Cycle for February

- Sun* 1 For our Clergy Team and their families
- Mon* 2 For any innocent people in prison
- Tue* 3 For guidance for our Parliament and Government in both home and foreign affairs
- Wed* 4 For a sensible attitude by young people in the use of alcohol
- Thur* 5 For stability in marriage and other sexual relationships
- Fri* 6 For children who have run away from home
- Sat* 7 For those heavily in debt
- Sun* 8 For Rowan our Archbishop and Peter our Bishop
- Mon* 9 For victims of earthquakes and other natural disasters
- Tue* 10 For our Junior Church and those who take care of its members
- Wed* 11 For the safety of all who travel, especially by air
- Thur* 12 For growing understanding between Israel and the Palestinians and between Israel and the Arab world
- Fri* 13 For the victims of HIV and AIDS
- Sat* 14 For David our Treasurer, and Angela and Chris our Churchwardens
- Sun* 15 For those leading worship in the countryside
- Mon* 16 For full co-operation between all members of the public and our police forces
- Tue* 17 For our National Health Service, our hospitals, nursing homes and our local surgeries
- Wed* 18 Let us give thanks for those who quietly and efficiently do the unspectacular tasks which enable our church programmes to be carried out



- 
- Thur 19** That those whose words are widely heard or read may consider the consequences of ill-expressed criticism of others
- Fri 20** For Mark, our Director of Music, David, our Organist, our Choir and all who contribute musically to our worship
- Sat 21** For a sensitive and helpful attitude towards those who suffer mental illnesses and to their families
- Sun 22** For all who celebrate the Eucharist or who preach at Christ Church
- Mon 23** For the work of CRUSE in caring for the bereaved
- Tue 24** For those whose constant sickness keeps them away from public worship and for carers for the sick who are also unable to come
- Wed 25** For the Mission to Seafarers
- Thur 26** For our branch of the Mothers' Union and the Children's Society
- Fri 27** For our Servers
- Sat 28** Let us give thanks for the blessings of the month now ending
- Sun 29** For effective witness of the whole Church on this "extra" day
- March**
- Mon 1** For Tom and Cyril our Readers, and for Sarah's ministry in Batheaston
- Tue 2** For any so grievously handicapped that work is impossible
- Wed 3** Any day will do for a new beginning. Why not today?
- Thur 4** For parishes coping with an interregnum
- Fri 5** For the work and witness of Churches Together in Bath
- Sat 6** For the end of violence in Iraq
- Sun 7** For our Clergy Team and their families

## St Valentine's Day confused



There are two confusing things about this day of romance and anonymous love-cards strewn with lace, cupids and ribbon: firstly, there seems to have been two different Valentines in the 4th century - one a priest martyred on the Flaminian Way, under the emperor Claudius, the other a bishop of Terni martyred at Rome. And neither seems to have had any clear connection with lovers or courting couples.

So why has Valentine become the patron saint of romantic love? By Chaucer's time the link was assumed to be because on this saints' day - 14 February - the birds are supposed to pair. Or perhaps the custom of seeking a partner on St Valentine's Day is a surviving scrap of the old Roman Lupercalia festival, which took place in the middle of February. One of the Roman gods honoured during this Festival was Pan, the god of nature. Another was Juno, the goddess of women and marriage. During the Lupercalia it was a popular custom for young men to draw the name of a young unmarried woman from a name-box. The two would then be partners or 'sweethearts' during the time of the celebrations. Even modern Valentine decorations bear an ancient symbol of love - Roman cupids with their bows and love-arrows.

### *Why send a card?*

If you are wondering whether to send a card or not, a charming legend about a Roman Emperor might help. Claudius II needed soldiers. He suspected that marriage made men want to stay at home instead of fighting wars, so he outlawed marriage.

A kind-hearted young priest named Valentine felt sorry for all the couples who wanted to marry, but couldn't. So secretly he married as many couples as he could - until the Emperor found out and condemned him to death. While he was in prison waiting execution, Valentine showed love and compassion to everyone around him, including his jailer. The jailer had a young daughter who was blind, but through Valentine's prayers, she was healed. Just before his death in Rome on 14 February, he wrote her a farewell message signed 'From your Valentine.' So the very first Valentine card was not between lovers, but between a priest about to die, and a little girl, healed through his prayers.

There are no churches in England dedicated to Valentine, but since 1835 his relics have been claimed by the Carmelite church in Dublin.

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**WHO'S WHO?**

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**OFFICIATING MINISTER**

The Rev Antony Claridge, 62 Cranwells Park, Weston, BA1 2YE Tel: 427462

**ASSISTANT CLERGY**

The Rev Cliff Burrows, Stonecroft, Entry Hill Drive, BA2 5NL. Tel: 334743

**READERS**

Tom Slade, 42 Rockcliffe Road, Bathwick, BA2 6QE. Tel: 465864

Cyril Selmes, 10 Daffords Buildings, Larkhall, BA1 6SG. Tel: 420039

**CHURCHWARDENS**

Chris Gladstone, 16 Croft Road, Fairfield Park, BA1 6JJ. Tel: 444938

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# ***CHRIST CHURCH, JULIAN ROAD***

## **DIOCESE OF BATH AND WELLS IN THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND**

### **PAST HISTORY**

Christ Church was built at the end of the 18th Century by the socially concerned clergy and lay people for those excluded from worship by the system of pew rents. It was probably the first church of that time to provide seating free of charge. Early supporters included the Archbishops of Canterbury and York; the great evangelical campaigner against slavery, William Wilberforce; Philip Pusey, the father of E B Pusey; and Martin Stafford Smith, the godfather of John Keble, who were both founders of the Oxford Movement. The building was designed by the famous Bath architect John Palmer, who was responsible for the completion of the Great Pump Room, Lansdown Crescent and St Swithin's, the parish church of Walcot. In November 1998, the congregation, friends and well-wishers from all over the world celebrated the bicentenary.

### **MINISTRY**

Christ Church is unusual in not being a parish church. Much of the vitality of its life and worship derives from the fact that the congregation comes from all areas of the city and the surrounding districts. Whilst there is no full-time paid vicar, there is a non-stipendiary priest-in-charge, who leads a ministerial team of ordained and lay people. Worship at Christ Church largely reflects the traditions of those responsible for its foundation and the rich diversity of the Church of England as a whole. Thus, preaching and Bible-based teaching is firmly set within a liturgical setting which is best described as liberal and catholic.

### **SERVICES**

The 8am Holy Communion is either Book of Common Prayer (1662) or Common Worship. At 10am the Family Eucharist is celebrated according to Common Worship. On the first Sunday of each month, there is a full Choral Evensong. A more informal discussion-based service is held on the third Sunday of the month. A Junior Church and a Crèche cater for the children and young people who attend the 10am service. At festivals such as Easter, Christmas, Mothering Sunday and Harvest, our special services, designed for the whole family, are very popular.

There are a variety of mid-week activities including Holy Communion at 11am every Thursday (with lunch on the first and third weeks of the month). The notice board and the weekly notice sheet provide details of discussion and prayer groups which are held at different times throughout the year. An all-age choir, which rehearses on Friday evenings, maintains the much-admired music tradition at Christ Church.

### **THE CHURCH MAGAZINE**

Currently published on the first Sunday of every month, Christ Church Challenge brings news of the church locally, in the Diocese, and throughout the world.

**Articles or news items MUST be with the Editor by the 15th of the month preceding the publication date**