

Deane St Mary's

January/February 2010

Elizabeth writes to sum up the interregnum and the contributions people have made.

There's a sad tale to tell of a 13th century Christian lady who never seems to have learned of the free gift of salvation offered to us in Christ.

Les has given us an update on our financial position.

Irene Ashley is the subject of this month's profile.

After the recent Copenhagen summit Alison has sent an article about climate change and how we need to think and act about that.

We start a new series this month, working over the months through a timeline of Christianity. We shall only be able to give the briefest summary of the events we tackle but perhaps it will provoke you to find out more.

There are bits and pieces of



humour and things to think about.

Joel brings us up to date on how he's getting on in Bolton.

An update on home groups follows this.

A hefty but fascinating tome is the subject of our book review.

Elizabeth tells us more of her pilgrimage to Armenia and there's info about the Ladies' Dinner.

The last two page spread gives ideas as to how to think on and to pray about the matters covered in the magazine.

St Mary's Info: Dec 2009/Jan 2010

	9.00	10.30	6.00
Jan 24	Holy Communion	Service of the Word	Evening Service
	1 Corinthians 12:12 — 31a; Luke 4:22 — 40		
Jan 31	Holy Communion	Holy Communion	Evening Service
	1 Corinthians 13:1 — 13; Luke 2:22 — 40		
Feb 7	Holy Communion	Family Parade	Evening Service
Feb 14	Holy Communion	Holy Communion	Evening Service
Feb 21	Holy Communion	Baptism	Evening Service
Feb 28	Holy Communion	Service of the Word	Evening Service

**Service of Institution and Installation of
Rev'd Dr Terry Clark
as Team Rector
7.30 p.m. February 1st**

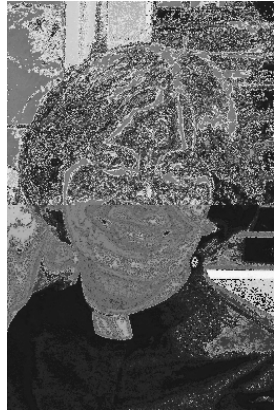
ASH WEDNESDAY 17th FEBRUARY
There will be a joint service of Holy Communion
at St Andrew's at 7.30 p.m.

Please watch the notice sheet for
readings for February.

Our OLM Writes

Well, it's nearly over! On February 1st the inter-regnum will end when the Revd Dr Terry Clarke is installed as the next Rector of Deane. This has been a comparatively short interregnum. It will be

exactly eight months on February 1st since Ian was installed as Vicar of Birkdale which is when the interregnum officially began. Churches are often without a Vicar for eighteen months and sometimes for several years.



I would like to take the opportunity to thank you all for all that each one of you has done to help and support the Wardens, the Readers and me over the last few months.

Many people have had a lot of extra work to carry, much of which goes on behind the scenes and is not obvious Sunday by Sunday. The wardens have had the legal responsibility for the church and for appointing, with the Simeon Trustees, the new Rector. But each warden has also had their own increased work-load.

Les has had additional financial responsibility, greatly increased by the plans to build the new hall. Sometimes I hear people say they wish they were given more news about the new hall. Often the answer is that there is no new news to give, but that does not mean that nothing is going on behind the scenes! Les, and Nola, will still have been working hard even when results are not obvious.

Craig has done a great deal of work concerning the graveyard. He often acts as an additional verger. The church family is probably completely unaware of how many funerals take place at Deane which literally require a search for a grave, sometimes on the coldest and darkest of days. On many a Sunday morning recently Craig has been clearing and salting the church path while most people are still in bed.

Beccy, as well as having an important full-time job in the 'real' world has produced service sheets and organised the music. She and Karen have taken on the task of co-ordinating and often leading and preaching at the evening services which are attracting a good number of young people to in the church family. They also have taken on not only baptism applications and preparation but also events like the day of prayer on December 29th. And on Christmas morning they were at church at 8am clearing the path with Craig for the rest of us.

The Readers, Nola and David, and Joyce Mitson have had to preach and lead more than they would otherwise have done. David has to do this while working full-time for the NHS; and Nola while also having to arrange meetings with the architect and others about the new hall, not to mention her co-ordinating role with the Sunday School. There are others from outside the immediate church family who have supported and helped us in many ways over the last few months. Roger Jackson has taken a good number of 9am services and has also taken several funerals. John Armstrong with the help of Roger Jackson has taken most of the weddings. Julia Davies and Roger Cooper have also been very helpful and I have welcomed knowing that they were at the other end of the phone.

I was particularly grateful to all who supported me the week before Christmas when I felt under great pressure and then in addition had to take the funeral of a baby whose family grave is in our churchyard. I was suffering with a cold and was trying to take home communion to the housebound, deliver the church Christmas cards not to mention prepare three sermons! There are too many people to name individually, but you know who you are!

I know that for many people February 1st cannot come too soon. But we must give Terry time to settle into his new role and get to know us. He is very keen to find out how we tick. I hope and pray that as many of you as possible will be in church on February 1st.

Elizabeth Plant

Turn to the last two page spread for Elizabeth's suggestion as to how to respond to our new situation.

22nd February

Margaret of Cortona c. 1247 - 97

Did you have a miserable childhood? Were your parents more absorbed in themselves than in you? Later, looking for love, did you fall for the wrong man? Perhaps you now have children of your own, and struggle to raise them. If you feel your life has been 'wrong-footed' from the start, and that there is no way of 'putting it right' now, then Margaret of Cortona is the lady for you.

She was born the daughter of a small farmer in Tuscany way back in 1247. Her mother died in her childhood, and a jealous step-mother moved in, who distanced her from her father's love. Lonely and vulnerable, Margaret was then seduced by a knight of Montepulciano. He did not offer marriage, and so she lived as his mistress for nine years, hanging on to the only affection she had ever known. She even bore him a son. Then one day her knight was murdered by persons unknown. Margaret's life was in crisis.

What happened next seems to indicate that Margaret was desperate to 'put her life right', in the only way she knew how. She gave away the riches that the knight had left her, and returned to her father and step-mother, humbly seeking forgiveness and reconciliation. They, who had let her down in the first place, slammed the door in her face. Margaret then sought out the Franciscans, and became a penitent. She was desperate for kindness, forgiveness and peace in her sad life.

What happened next is a tragic example of how the church can let people down. For when Margaret turned to the Franciscans in repentance, they did not tell her the wonderful news: that indeed she could be forgiven, because Jesus had already paid the price to 'redeem' her. Instead, they told her a lie: that she would have to 'earn' forgiveness by on-going acts of abasement and severe mortifications. She was never told the simple truth: that God loved her, and lavished forgiveness on her.

(Continued four pages forward)

REVIEW OF CHURCH FINANCES

At its final two meetings of 2009, the PCC reviewed the church's financial position for the year just ending, and also began to look forward to our prospects for 2010. Although the final accounts for 2009 will not be published until the end of March, the PCC agreed that I should write an article for this edition of the church magazine, so that you are all aware of the situation before the accounts are presented to the Annual Church Meeting in April.

The start of a new year is an obvious time for us as part of the body of Christ and as individuals to take stock and to renew our commitment to serve our Lord in whatever ways we can. It is especially relevant this year for us at Deane as we prepare to welcome our new Rector - by the time you read this, Terry's induction service will only be a couple of weeks away.

Income and expenditure 2009

In terms of 'regular' income (from weekly or monthly giving, other donations, and fees for weddings and funerals) compared with 'ordinary' expenditure (i.e. spending on church and worship running costs, parish share payments, and donations to missions and charities), we expect a **deficit of almost £13,000 for 2009**. This continues the pattern from recent years - in 2007 the deficit was £1,710, and in 2008 it was £4,438 - although this downward trend now seems to be accelerating at an alarming rate. The reason for the rising annual deficit is that while costs continue to increase year-on-year, income (and especially income from regular giving) has steadily fallen. Thus, 'regular' income was £76,552 in 2007, £70,101 in 2008, and is expected to be about £68,500 in 2009.

The 'bottom line' for 2009 is that whilst income is estimated to be £68,500, expenditure will total about £81,500.

Where are the funds to pay for our deficit each year?

The PCC has available financial reserves, most of which it has in-

vested over the years with the Church of England Board of Finance. These investments have accrued from gifts, bequests or savings made when our financial situation was healthier. Some of these funds are 'free' reserves which are not restricted by the terms of the original gift or bequest, and have not been designated by the PCC for a specific purpose. Any annual deficit in running costs has to be funded by withdrawing money from these 'free' reserves. The problem of course is that these free reserve funds are being depleted every year we have to use them to fund our deficit, and themselves will not last more than three or four years.

How will the PCC manage our finances in 2010?

At its first meeting in 2010 the PCC will have to approve a budget which seeks to break even over the year. The PCC Standing Committee has been considering a budget based on annual income of about £70,000, and expenditure at the same level. We can only achieve this if our income from giving is increased by 5%, and costs are reduced by about 13% compared with 2009. Savings are very difficult to make, because most of our running costs are beyond our control - for example, the cost of insurance, church heating and lighting, maintenance of the church building, worship (ie church services) and administration (all of which are essential) will total at least £25,000. Essentially there are only two areas in which we can control our expenditure at any meaningful level - our payment of parish share and our donations to missions and charities. Our parish share requirement for 2010 has been set at £68,000, whilst our commitment to missions and charities in 2009 was £3,900. In 2009 we paid parish share of £43,200 (against a requirement of £52,000). The PCC will have to consider carefully and prayerfully what level of payments to make in these two areas.

Les Kilsby
PCC Treasurer

Turn to the last two page spread to see what Les suggests our response might be.

This month's Profile

Irene Ashley

Irene was born in Bolton in 1927 and she attended St Simon and St Jude's School.

She began her working life as a machinist and then as a

despatch clerk at Chesro, a dress manufacturer belonging to the Tootal group, until she left when the first of her three children, two daughters and a son, were born. Later she returned to work in the drawing office of at Wadsworth Lifts Co. where Terry also worked; then finally as a dinner supervisor at Heathfield School until her retirement.

Irene was married to Terry in 1947 and they have always lived in Hulton Lane, apart from three months in 1953, when they were moved into a prefab to allow the Coal Board to rebuild part of their house which had been damaged as a result of subsidence.

While she was at school, Irene acquired an American pen friend. In 1990 they met for the first time, on the 50th anniversary of the commencement of their correspondence. As a result of that meeting, Irene and Terry had two wonderful holidays in Minnesota, Missouri and Washington DC.

Irene also had another pen friend, an airman serving in India during the Second World War. This also had good results; she married him and they celebrated their Diamond Wedding two years ago! Ten years before, when they were celebrating their Golden Wedding, Irene and Terry together with Irene's brother and sister-in-law (they had a double wedding) were fortunate enough to receive an invitation to attend the Queen's Golden Wedding Garden Party at Buckingham Palace.

Irene and Terry now have six grandchildren and to date, and three great grandchildren. Irene considers herself to be well



blessed in life and she thanks God for a loving family and good and caring friends and for the help and advice that she could always depend on from her parents.

Writing is a hobby that Irene enjoys. She keeps a daily diary, which is a good record of her life and which is very useful when she wants to recall exactly the dates of certain events. In addition, she belongs to the Bolton Art circle and gets great pleasure from trying to paint.

Irene first got involved with Deane Church as a result of taking her children to Sunday School. She joined the newly formed Teacher/Parent Committee, which arranged field days and social events, in the early sixties. These activities were a great success.

She was then confirmed, joined the Ladies Guild, eventually becoming the leader, and also helped in the Sunday School as an infant teacher for fourteen years.

Irene has always been involved in a wide range of activities for Deane Church. She was a church cleaner for many years, has made banners and is still a member of the flower arranging team and a sidesperson. Irene's hope for St Mary's Deane is that more young people will become members, as they are the church of tomorrow!

Margaret of Cortuna (continued)

And so the final tragedy of Margaret's life began: for years and years she practised severe acts of self-abasement: starvation, sleeplessness, the daily torment of hair-shirts. She was never told that all this was pointless, that her sins were gladly forgiven her because Jesus had died for them on the cross.

There is nothing so broken in our lives that almighty God cannot fix it. At whatever point we turn to him, he accepts us just as we are. Forgiveness is just the beginning of the good things that God wants to give us. He wants to begin a life-long work of restoration and healing in our lives.

Poor Margaret never found that out in this life. So she must have had the most wonderful, almighty surprise when at 50 she died,

What has the Church got to do with Climate Change?

There is now compelling evidence that the world is warming and the climate is changing, largely as a result of human activities in burning coal, oil and gas. Through the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, the world scientific community has been able to give detailed information about what is likely to happen. Increased global temperatures make climate extremes more likely. Higher temperatures also lead to more energy entering the atmosphere's circulation that in turn brings more frequent and intense floods, droughts and storms. Further, because ocean water expands as it warms and because of increased melting of polar ice, the sea level is rising by about one metre per century.

The impact of these changes is already evident. Within a few decades they will severely affect billions of people around the world. The damage will be greatest for poor countries in the developing world; it is there that climate extremes will be most severe and where there is little capability to adapt to them. Within 40 years, there could be 150 million or more environmental refugees whose homes are no longer habitable because of rising sea levels, flooding or persistent drought.

In early Bible history, Egypt's Pharaoh had a worrying dream. The interpretation of that dream, which God gave to Joseph, was a forecast of a climate crisis: seven years of plenty to be followed by seven years of severe famine. Joseph was put in charge of storing the grain during years of plenty and distributing it when the famine came. Joseph had been sold into slavery by his brothers as part of God's plan to deal with the climate crisis. Clearly God cared deeply about the people of Egypt and nearby countries threatened by starvation because of the climate crisis.

Today we face a climate crisis of enormous magnitude and proportions— not local but global, not of seven years duration but lasting indefinitely. Information about it has not come through

dreams but through science. Climate change science is bringing two important messages of the severe impact on billions of the world's poorest people and the threat to millions of the world's species.

Those of us in rich countries need to be reminded that, over 200 years since the industrial revolution, we have grown rich through cheap energy from the burning of fossil fuels. We have not realised its effects on the world's climate nor that the damage falls disproportionately on the world's poorest. There is therefore an inescapable moral imperative for rich countries to avoid further damage by rapidly reducing their carbon emissions and to share their wealth and skills with developing countries to help them to adapt to climate change and build their economies sustainably.

For Christians this imperative comes over with particular potency. We live in times when we are raping the Earth and exploiting the poor. The flow of wealth in the world is overwhelming from the poor to the rich—a statistic that should make us blush with shame. The Bible, from its first chapters through the prophets, the ministry of Jesus and to its last book, puts high priorities on caring for the Earth and caring for the poor.

Four thousand years ago Joseph had seven years to prepare for his climate crisis. Today action is required just as urgently. Global carbon emissions are still rising rapidly. Within about seven years, global emissions need to peak and begin to reduce rapidly—an extremely challenging goal. The means to achieve it are available and affordable—but is the will there to do it?

A tremendous challenge and unmistakable opportunity are presented to the world-wide Church to shoulder these God-given responsibilities. God is there to help us to do it just as he was with Joseph 4000 years ago.

Adapted from an article by Sir John Houghton, former head of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and founding member of the International Society for Science and Religion, published in "IDEA" magazine Nov/Dec 2009.

Alison Partington (Turn to the last two page spread for suggestions for our response.)

TIME	Europe and the World		Th	
BC	4BC	Birth of Jesus		
	30AD 35AD 57AD 60AD 80AD 80AD 110AD 325AD	The Crucifixion Conversion of St Paul Letter to the Romans St Mark's Gospel St Matthew and St Luke Acts of the Apostles St John Nicene Creed adopted		
	380AD	Christianity is official religion of the Roman Empire.	420AD	St Pat
500AD	530AD	Rule of St Benedict	550AD 563AD	Wales Columb
	590-604AD	Reforms of Pope Gregory the Great	590AD	St Colu
	793AD	Viking raids on Christendom begin at Lindisfarne	597AD	St Aug Church
	800AD	Charlemagne first Holy Roman Emperor	664AD 690 ...	Synod Parts c
1000AD	1054AD	The Schism of East and West	1065AD	Consec
	1095-1291AD	The Crusades	1093-1109AD	Anselm
	1274AD	Thomas Aquinas Summa Theologiae,	1390AD	Wycli
	1378-1417AD	A Pope in Rome, a Pope at Avignon.	1408AD	Counc
	1453AD	The Fall of Constantinople		
	1455AD	The Gutenberg Bible	1457AD	Henry

e British Isles	St Mary's	
	<div>Timeline of Christianity</div>	
	See next page	
rick's Irish Mission		
converted oa founds Iona		
umba's mission in Scotland	Saxon Chapel thought to be on present site	
gustine establishes Catholic n in Canterbury.		
of Whitby of Bible in English		
eration of Westminster Abbey		
n Archbishop of Canterbury	1111AD	Chapel of St Mariden
f's Bible		
il of Oxford	1452AD	Present building begun
VII King of England		

Timeline of Christianity

"The History of Christianity" on BBC4 has inspired us to include a timeline up to 1500 B.C. in this issue. Some of the dates are approximate and some of the events need explanation. In future issues we hope to include brief entries by editors and readers about selected events (some listed here and others not listed (not room for them all) in close to chronological order. The timeline to the present day will appear when we have covered events in this period. To begin with we have a paragraph on St Mark. If you are interested in this series, then we suggest you remove and keep the two page spread above.

Topic from the Timeline St Mark's Gospel

This is the first of the three synoptic gospels which share sources for their descriptions of the life of Jesus. Both Matthew and Luke take material from Mark and they have other sources as well. Mark includes nothing about the birth of Jesus and begins with John the Baptist and his teaching. After his baptism, as described by Mark, Jesus resists temptation, calls his first disciples and enacts many miracles. Mark concentrates on his actions, whilst giving some account of his teaching. The last chapter tells us that Jesus has risen but the final verses about his appearances after death do not appear in the earliest manuscripts of St Mark. A note in the New International Version of the Bible suggests these verses were added by other leaders of the early church. Even though it was written thirty years after the death of Jesus, the gospel records vividly the presence and divine power which gave life to Christianity.

If there is a topic in the history of Christianity , in which you are particularly interested, listed here or not, as long as it of fairly major importance, please feel free to submit a paragraph of up to 175 words

Heavenly Humour

A man who had lived a life of selfish luxury died and went to heaven. An angel was sent to show him to his house. They passed many lovely mansions and each time the rich man thought, must be mine' But not so. They passed through the main streets and arrived at the outskirts where the houses were very small. Finally they came to a miserable hut. 'This is yours,' said the angel. There must be a mistake,' said the man. 'No,' answered the angel, 'there's no mistake. This is the best could do with the materials you sent up!.

Bits and Pieces

Inside some of us is a thin person struggling to get out, but they can usually be sedated with a few pieces of chocolate cake.

You can give without loving but
you can't
love without giving.

It is said that Mahatma Gandhi considered the seven deadly sins to be:

- Wealth without work
- Pleasure without conscience
- Knowledge without character
- Commerce without morality
- Science without humanity
- Worship without sacrifice
- Politics without principle

Out of the mouths...

Dear God, I think about you sometimes even when 'm not praying.

Dear God, Maybe Cain and Abel wouldn't kill each other (*sic*) so much if separate rooms. It works with me and my brother.

Dear God, We read Thomas Edison made light but in School they did. So I bet he stoled your idea.

Fruit
is
the
evidence
of
the
root.

Peace and love are always alive in us,
but we are not always alive to peace and love. Julian of Norwich

We asked Joel to answer a few questions about how he's finding life in Bolton, after a few months here.

How are you finding life in Bolton? What things are most different from life at home?

Bolton is an interesting town, and I'm enjoying my stay here quite well. I like the cultural diversity, which brings the opportunity to meet and interact with people from different backgrounds; it has a way of broadening your mind and making one open to diversity... One difficult thing about Bolton is the weather; the problem to me lies in the unpredictability and radical temperature swings. In Bolton there could be sunshine at noon and snow at twilight or foggy at dawn then rainy at noon, wet and damp today then very dry tomorrow.

Many things here are different from life back home; I cannot enumerate all of them here, but some of the obvious differences are reflected in the weather and the food. Nigeria is a tropical country with only two seasons- Dry season and Rainy season, it is either hot or just warm most of the year and it gets cold mainly in December at the end of the rainy season. It is very cold here compared to home and the style of clothes reflects it. The food is also very different; one of the major differences is that much of the food here is frozen stuff, while food at home is fresh.

What does your normal week look like?

A normal week for me means perhaps a day off on Monday, an assembly at St Mary's primary school and working with the Chaplaincy and Christian Union at the University of Bolton on Tuesdays and/or Wednesdays, and, well, I try to sing in the band rehearsals on Tuesday evenings as well. Thursday and Friday is youth work with Element and Voltage. Some Saturday nights we try to do detached work around the Parish. I do Pathfinders on Sundays and CYFA every fortnight.

What have you found satisfying about your job here?

The opportunity to get involved in the lives, and in a sense, the

future of so many children and young people is very satisfying to me. I cherish that privilege I have through the work I do to make a contribution, no matter how little, to the lives of these young people I come in contact with.

Any frustrations or disappointments?

Sure, I have my disappointments and frustrations. With the background and experience I have in working with young people, I find it very frustrating that there is no opportunity to develop a deep personal, meaningful and intimate one-to-one relationship with the young people which I think is what counts for meaningful impact and impartation in people's lives... I think Child protection policies are a brilliant idea and have very noble intentions, but they have not spared innocent and genuine causes too. I find it disappointing that even a lot of the young people do not even trust their leaders. It is also disappointing and frustrating too, to discover that so many people have no place at all for God and know so little or nothing about God and faith. It is so disappointing to find less than a handful of young people in Church.

In what ways have you found a new or different need for God's help?

I have come to need the help of God in the way I try to make him known, in a manner that is not only innovative but also culturally relevant and appealing to the tastes and values of different people. I also find that that I need the help of God to discern and make wise use of daily opportunities and open doors. I need His help in listening and understanding people and their needs and situations.

Anything to add about how being here has affected your relationship with God?

Being here has made me learn how to depend more and more on God and his leading and Grace and provision than on my abilities, experience and advantages. Working with and among people whose needs and problems and values are not familiar to me, has turned out to make me one who depends more on Him for inspiration and direction than anything else.

How about our style of worship compared with home?

Ha-ha...this is a funny one. Any comment may be too subjective perhaps. However, maybe I should say I find the style of worship here very formal and almost like acting out a script. I am used to spontaneity in worship, a style of worship that is a reflection of the individual and more 'natural' than having to do strictly with pre-scribed order. For example, prayers are read instead of being spontaneously said like a natural communication. All songs are preselected so that worship is guided by people rather than the people being guided by the worship. But I'm happy doing stuff in a different way, and I like the hymns that are sung in the services. Most of them are not familiar, but I like them, the words and the music.

Any other comments?

I am quite excited being here, and meeting all the very nice people I have met with and all the stuff I am involved with. I seriously hope that I'll have learnt a lot and acquired good experiences at the end of my stay in Deane.



(Turn to last two page spread for reflections on what Joel has said.)

Home groups 2009 -10

Two groups met since last September, one on Tuesday afternoons, the other on Wednesday evenings, combining independent choice of material with prayer and social gathering. Each group celebrated the coming of Christmas with a party. The Tuesday group has discussed the Sermon on the Mount and the Wednesday group the Letter of St James. Everyone has taken part and listening to each other's comments has helped everyone's thinking. New members have come since September and are always welcome because new voices bring new understanding. A third group for people who have begun recently to attend church, or are thinking of doing so, has begun to meet. (See last two page spread for action invited)

Books 4U

Wolf Hall by Hilary Mantel

was the winner of the 2009 Man Booker Prize. There was a time in the 1980s when I made a point of reading the Booker Prize winner. But in recent years I have rarely done so. My tongue-in-cheek reason was that I preferred my novels to be written in full sentences with a plot with a beginning, middle and end, preferably in that order!

But when I heard about the subject matter of the 2009 winner, Thomas Cromwell, I decided to have another go - and I do not regret it!

Thomas Cromwell is the man best known for carrying out the dissolution of the monasteries under Henry VIII. Historical novelists generally depict him as a dark, cruel, almost satanic figure who enjoyed the blood-curdling work he was required to do. But Hilary Mantel depicts him sympathetically, as a man who did his best in trying times.

The novel follows Thomas Cromwell's life from his childhood as the son of an abusive father, through his work for Cardinal Thomas Wolsey, Archbishop of York, his survival of Wolsey's fall from Favour, to Cromwell's own rise to be perhaps the most powerful man in England after the King. This is the time when Henry VIII is seeking to annul his marriage to Katherine of Aragon and marry Anne Boleyn; the time of the beginnings of the Church of England.

This is a giant of a book, 650 pages long. It is not particularly easy reading. Hilary Mantel writes in the present tense. She gets a huge amount of information into every sentence. She generally refers to Cromwell simply as 'he'. 'He enters... he sees... he asks.....he thinks.....he says.' And it is not a book to attempt without at least some knowledge of the period and the reformation, but for those who enjoy a challenging read Wolf Hall will not disappoint. I can thoroughly recommend it. (RRP £18.99—out in paperback in March or hardback at £9.49 on Amazon now.)

Elizabeth Plant

My pilgrimage to Armenia

Elizabeth Plant

Armenian and Anglican Churches
Very Different, but in Communion
with One Another

*Elizabeth Plant continues to tell us
about what she learned on her recent
pilgrimage to Armenia.*



Whenever an Armenian enters an Anglican church or vice versa, each will find much that is strange. Armenian churches are generally square or rectangular on the outside, but clearly cross-shaped inside. The four corners

are occupied by rooms used for offices and vestry, Over the centre of the cross is a round tower topped by a cupola, often shaped rather like an umbrella!

If there is need for a church to be extended, the custom is for a new church to be built right up against the existing church, rather than have an extension.

Outside many churches are memorial stones called Khachkars which are beautifully carved in stone. Inside a church there are no pews, except for a few benches against the walls for the old or infirm. Services are long, lasting two hours or more, but the congregation can come and go if they need to. At the east end is a raised platform, five or six feet high, on which is the altar. Narrow steps lead up to it. Across the front of the platform is a curtain which is drawn across while the bread and wine are being consecrated. Armenians are baptised and confirmed in the same service as infants. But only a few people receive communion at any one service as anyone wishing to take communion has to make a personal confession before a priest. But for the Armenians the important thing is to experience the liturgy. This is sung in ancient Armenian. The people understand what it

all means, as they have been taught it as children, but they cannot follow every word. As described in a previous article all the priests have singing lessons as part of their training for ordination. Strange though it may seem to us, Armenian priests sometimes sacrifice animals. Outside some churches is a stone, a bit like an altar, in the middle of which is a hollow where salt (and the animal) is blessed. Families who wish to give thanks for recovery from sickness or whatever bring an animal, always male, usually a ram or cock, to church which the priest kills out of sight. The meat is boiled, never roasted, and then divided up for the people and the poor to enjoy at a celebration meal. The 'sacrifice' is thus a thank offering and not a sacrifice to atone for sin,

The majority of churches are dedicated to St Gregory who brought Christianity to Armenia in 301AD, but a good number are dedicated to Mary, whom they refer to as the Mother of God. There are comparatively few churches named after other saints. Almost all Armenians are practising Christians. It was a humbling and inspiring experience to spend a week in this most Christian of countries. Armenians, though they have many customs which an Anglican can find strange, are fully in communion with the Anglican church.



Ladies' Dinner at Deane Golf Club

29th January

7 for 7.30

Friends welcome. Make up tables of 8.

Names and menu choice on list at back of church, please.

Pay on the night.

Enquiries to Edna on 01942 817434

Think/Pray about it!

From Elizabeth

We are moving into a new phase in the life of St Mary, Deane. Let us remember the new commandment that Jesus gave when he said in John 13 v34

A new commandment I give you. Love one another.

As I have loved you, so must you love one another.

If we keep that verse in our hearts, 2010 will bring us many blessings as well as a new Rector!

From Les

We can each

- Pray regularly for renewed growth, both spiritually and numerically, in the life of our church
- Pray for and support the new Rector as he seeks to lead the church forward
- Prayerfully consider our own giving to the church - is it possible for us
 - to increase the amount of our donations,
 - to join the weekly envelope or regular standing order scheme, or
 - agree to gift aid our donations if we are tax-payers?
- Pray for members of the PCC as they have to make decisions about our finances during the coming year.

From Alison's article

As individuals we need to work hard to reduce our personal carbon footprint through such actions as buying green electricity and ensuring our homes, shopping and transport are as energy efficient as possible. Through our churches and communities we need to

support aid to poorer countries and press our government, through national and international action, to move rapidly towards zero carbon emissions.

Christians in the rich world and in the developing world must get together in partnership and take the lead to demonstrate love for God, the world's creator and redeemer, and love for our neighbours, remembering the words of Jesus:

**"From everyone who has been given much,
much will be demanded"**

Luke 12.48.

Reflect on Joel's comments

What might we learn from Joel's comments? How does it help to reflect on how others see our worship and relationships?

Home Groups

If you would like to join any of the groups, even for a single session to see what it is like, please speak to Edna Barlow(Tuesday), Beccy Rutter(Wednesday) or Nola Kilsby(Inquirers).

Margaret of Cortuna

Do we still struggle with self justification? Do we know that forgiveness and eternal life come as a free gift of God in Jesus? Convinced? Not convinced? If the latter, why not respond to the item about small groups and contact Nola about the Inquirers' group?

Deane Shop

Thank God for an amazing first year and all the hard work freely given. Pray for the witness of the shop in the area. Here's how it looked in the lead up to Christmas. We'll have more about the shop in the March edition of the magazine.



St Mary's Directory

Team Rector	Terry Clark from 1 Feb 01204 649560
Team Vicar	John Armstrong 01204 651851
OLM	Elizabeth Plant 01204 63730
Retired Clergy	Joyce Mitson 01204 655081
Readers	David Dewhurst 01204 651347 Nola Kilsby 01204 665700
Wardens	Les Kilsby 01204 665700 Craig Mochrie 01204 652324 Beccy Rutter 01204 654737
PCC	
Lay Chair	Jane Hampson 01204 848433
Hon Treasurer	Les Kilsby
Hon Secretary	Bryan Shephard 01942 817288
Magazine Editor	Anne Roberts 01204 849468