

During this year, the Church lectionary focuses on the Gospel of Mark which gives us an opportunity to get to know it better.

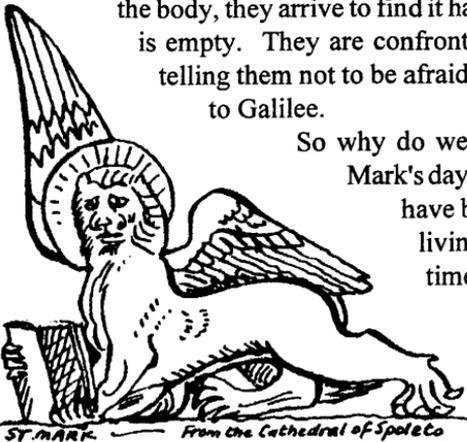
It is generally agreed that this was the first Gospel to be written and both Matthew and Luke drew a lot of their basic knowledge from it. By far, it is the shortest Gospel, covering only twenty pages of the Bible. It is well worthwhile setting some time aside to read it all in one go!.. You will find no church history here; no concentration on sacraments or indeed ethics. It is about the story of Jesus. Mark has no doubts that He is the Son of God and while we are not spared any of the pain of his Passion there is a clear message of hope and renewal , that all in the end will be well.

Though Mark was Jewish, his gospel has a clear missionary purpose to spread the good news to the Gentiles. He concentrates on what he considers to be vital for his readers. This was particularly important when the Christians in Rome were suffering the most terrible persecutions under Emperor Nero. Both Peter and Paul died for their faith at this time. Mark's account was to encourage and sustain a minority church in a hostile environment and because of this it speaks to and encourages many of us today.

He wanted to explain the true nature of Christianity , that the death of Jesus was not a tragic accident but part of God's plan of salvation for the establishment of his rule on earth. Throughout his gospel, he is clear that Jesus was not merely a good man or a prophet but the Son of God. This became clear to the Roman officer who witnessed his death on the cross; then there is the empty tomb on the resurrection morning.

Not only that, what is particularly distinctive about this Gospel is the way it finishes. There is no ending - we are left with an account of Mary Magdalene and other women running away from an empty tomb. Having been worried as to who was going to move the stone for them to embalm the body, they arrive to find it has been moved already and the tomb is empty. They are confronted with someone dressed in white telling them not to be afraid, that Jesus had gone ahead of them to Galilee.

So why do we have such an abrupt ending? In Mark's day evidence for the resurrection would have been given by word of mouth by the living witnesses - the apostles. By the time the gospels of Matthew and Luke were written, all the apostles were probably dead and it would have been necessary to contain a full account in writing of the



resurrection appearances.

Mark never makes the mistake of putting Pentecost rather than Calvary at the centre of his faith and he never isolates the Spirit from Jesus. This is a danger which we may face today in our glad rediscovery of the person and gifts of the Spirit. We need to remember that it is the task of the Spirit to bear witness to Christ.

Perhaps it is particularly fortunate that this is the Gospel we shall be concentrating on during this new Millennium, an age of indecision with many unanswered questions because it remains open-ended for us to ponder and to make our own contribution.

Freda Evans



The following courses have been arranged:

TUESDAY 15th FEBRUARY at St. Augustine's Church, Whitton
8.15 - 9.45 p.m. preceded by Holy Communion at 7.30 p.m.

COMMUNICATING CONVICTION

A look at how we might communicate our faith more effectively.
How the Christian faith relates to life and
how to improve our communication skills.

Led by the Rev. Gillion, Kensington Area Adviser for Evangelism.

TUESDAY 16th MAY at St. Mary's Church Hall, Church St., Hampton
8 - 9.30 p.m.

WORDS FOR WORSHIP 2001

Reasons for change from ASB to Common Worship
Review of changes, words, worship
Led by the Archdeacon of Middlesex, Malcolm Colmer

Entrance to both events is free.

For details, please contact

Hugh Wood 020 8979 5735 or John Burton 020 8 894 1795



GREETING THE NEW MILLENNIUM AT ST. JAMES'S

*"God of all ages, you dwell among us in our world of time and space.
As we rejoice and sing, put a new joy in our hearts and a new song on our lips.
Set the praise of Christ in our living and the good news of Christ throughout
our world.
Blessed be God for ever. Amen."*

On New Year's Eve at 11.30 p.m. about thirty of us gathered in church for a prayerful service of celebration for the new millennium. We entered the softly-lit church to the sound of gentle music and then Freda presided over (and provided the piano accompaniment for) a quiet service of prayers and hymns. It was a spiritually moving and lovely way to remember the two thousandth birthday of Jesus. As the chimes of midnight rang out, Freda lit a millennium candle, "a candle of hope, peace, love and joy, to remind us of God's gift to us through Jesus Christ, the Light of the World."

We came out to the sound of ringing church bells and an explosion of brilliantly coloured fireworks from the neighbouring gardens. Then Freda treated us to mulled wine and refreshments at the home of Ruth and Jack. It was a truly memorable way to greet the New Year, New Century and New Millennium.

RUMINATIONS ON MONEY

One factor in life that affects everyone is money. For most of us the need to balance the books, to pay the mortgage, sometimes school fees, not to use the credit card unwisely, seem to be part of the eternal struggle. For so many in other parts of the world possessing almost nothing is part of the struggle too. Then as Christians there is the whole matter of stewardship, all resources including money made available to God for His use under His direction. It is a difficult assignment in our materialistic world.

The Vicar reminded us recently that the Bible indicates that we should tithe and give one tenth of our income to the church, and some people abide by that.

Others do not. Many do much more. In the early church, "Barnabas sold an estate that he owned; he brought the money and laid it at the Apostles' feet". Every gift is precious, large or small.

In a life where there has not been too much lucre available, I am still learning that faith can play a big part in the economics of living. The discipline of stewardship is available to all, whoever we are and whatever our circumstances, and prayer is a great help. I believe praying for money for a particular need or situation can play a part in releasing resources for our church, our charities or our own family and personal needs. We have experienced this needful provision on four missionary visits to Southern Africa.

We never know how the Holy Spirit might move in someone's life so that more money is given and becomes available. This is perhaps evidenced by Paul Peterken's report in the January Spire. People sometimes want to give out of gratitude for some particular experience.

All of us probably have experience of stewardship and God's provision. The stories of people who have trusted God about finance I find an inspiration. James Hudson Taylor, founder of the China Inland Mission, had many stories to tell about such provision, not only enabling him to go to China in 1853 but during the whole of his life there. After the end of World War II, women gathered together in Darmstadt, Germany and became the Sisterhood of Mary. The story of the foundation of their movement, now an evangelical centre known throughout the world, illustrates repeatedly the "wonderful providence of God". All their needs, including the building of a chapel and a rest house for the needy and elderly, were laid before God. Their book called "Realities" makes exciting reading, as does the story of Frederick Muller who founded the children's homes. He firmly believed God would provide if he and his committee and the carers of the children prayed enough. They not only absorbed gifts of money but often gifts in kind like the bread for breakfast! In the midst of our busy modern lives, perhaps we can learn afresh that God does really care about all our needs including the practical ones. Sometimes we are slow to ask for His help but life becomes more interesting when we do!

Betty Rainbow

Attention all theatregoers
The Mysteries at the Royal National Theatre

The Nativity, The Passion and Doomsday are currently playing in the Cottesloe at the Royal National Theatre - a cycle of medieval mystery plays in a unique celebration of the Millennium.

These are promenade productions, so seating is limited.

Currently booking to the end of March.

RNT Box Office: 020 7452 3000 (Mon - Sat, 10 a.m. - 8 p.m.)

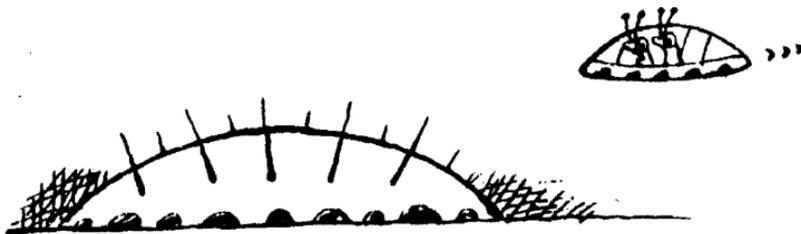
TWO VISITS TO THE DOME

Rose Frier, aged 84, was one of the first to visit The Dome on Sunday 2nd January, arriving before it opened. If she hadn't gone to the New Year's Parade the day before she might have stayed the course! In the event she felt it was too much for her to do in one day and is planning another visit in the Summer. That, she says, speaks for itself - she enjoyed it!

Rose says "It is for the young and about the future. I thought the Millennium Show was superb and am saying nothing more about it, except that I was on the edge of my seat the whole way through - you must go and see it for yourself. I was disappointed with the Faith Zone, finding it very impersonal. I would have preferred to have people there rather than words, pictures and videos, and I did not find the inner meditation area so felt that there was nowhere to sit quietly. I will look for it when I go again.

Next time I particularly want to see the Space Zone, because I am fascinated with outer space.

All in all I was thrilled with it and would recommend it as a good day out, despite of the lack of seating!"



We never intended to go, but family visiting from Northumberland were insistent, so I booked tickets for the 4th January.

I have to admit it was very exciting travelling on the Jubilee Line and emerging at North Greenwich Station into the Dome complex (strangely reminiscent of Tsim Sha Tsui in Hong Kong). The Dome itself is huge and impressive. Thankfully we were given a map, for there is no other explanation of what is there. The map itself gives only the briefest outline of what each "zone" contains - at the end of the day I could only draw the conclusion that this was because they actually contain very little. Very high tech, very well laid out as most of them were, they appeared to be prepared by professional exhibitors who had nothing exhibit.

The two hour queue for the Body Zone, a huge and rather beautiful sculpture, is for a ten minute tour. We didn't bother, but our cousins did and were not impressed. The children, however, said they had loved their day - the Time Zone, the Play Zone and the morphing machine in the Mind Zone coming up

tops. They did not, however enjoy the Millennium Show, which I thought visually spectacular and exhilarating. Again, I would have liked some explanation of the plot for there was clearly a story being told - of life on earth from primeval swamp to ultimate destruction and rebirth? But maybe I'm over elaborating it.

John and I found time to visit the Faith Zone. We thought it more impressive than we had been led to believe, though very politically correct and inevitably superficial. All the major faiths were represented, and at least one that I had never heard of. There were three sided pillars for family, birth, marriage, initiation, worship etc, with a short paragraph and picture for each religion. These were surrounded with the story of Christianity being told with words, pictures and on video monitors. In the centre of the zone there is a quiet space for meditation, very blue with just the hint of a crescent moon at the top. Somehow, though I suppose you could make of it what you liked, it seemed a bit "new age". A place for worship might have been more appropriate.

We are glad to say that we have been there and done it (though at £20 we didn't get the tee shirt). If you have children it is a good day out, but get there early and take your own picnic because the queues for food are almost as long as for the Body Zone.

Elizabeth Gossage

PS: John says that the Blackadder film we saw at the beginning was the best bit!

KNEELERS

It was lovely to come into the church after Christmas and see a new kneeler at the end of the pews. It was something we had imagined and worked towards for the past year; 34 kneelers finished, some more still on embroidery frames and some in the process of making up. We hope the first part of what started as a millennium project will result in 50 kneelers for the church. How did it happen you may ask? From a small seed planted Margaret Taylor grew a group of wonderful women from Hampton Hill who used their talents and artistic energy to give something lasting to St. James's. But more importantly they created a sense of community to add to the parish. Those who thought they couldn't sew discovered that they could; it helped some to stop smoking; strangers met and became strangers no more; church-goers and non church-goers not only made their kneelers but also generously donated the cost of the kneeler to the project. From conversations I have had it seems we should continue, so watch this space, you may want to be a part of what, for me, was a great experience. There isn't sufficient space for me to tell you everyone who was in this part of the project but there will be a list in the church for you to see.

Tina Bunce

LAMBETH PALACE



MILLENNIUM OPENING

For the first time in its history, the public as part of the "String of Pearls" Millennium Festival in which a number of historic or important sites and buildings on the banks of the River Thames in London not normally open to visitors will be made accessible to the public.

The Palace has been home to Archbishops of Canterbury since 1197 and remains both a home and a working office. Visitors will be taken on a guided tour of the historic rooms such as the Great Hall, the Crypt, the Chapel, some of the state rooms and the Lambeth Palace Library. In a marquee in the Palace gardens there will be an exhibition on the role that the Archbishop plays today and the challenges presented by the new Millennium.

The building will be open during the period 1st April to 4th November 2000 (except Holy Week 18th - 23rd April). Tours will be at 15 minute intervals, lasting approximately one hour, and will finish in the marquee, where there will be gift shop offering souvenirs and guidebooks and a restaurant area for light refreshments. The tours cost £6 for adults and £4 for children and concessions and can be booked through LMPO, Lambeth Palace, London SE1 7JU or by telephone on 020 7898 1198.

The Archbishop of Canterbury points out that this could provide churches with a non-threatening way of interesting non-churchgoers in the importance of the Christian faith.

An evening of poetry is planned for Saturday 26th February, at 7 p.m. in the Hall. As an event at St. James is unthinkable without food, this will be combined with a "Pot-luck" supper.

Neither part of this evening will be possible without the participation of many of the congregation!

Please contact Ruth Mills or Judith if you have a poem you would like to read/recite - or if there is a memorable performance that you have heard on a previous occasion that you would like to hear again, so we can persuade the performer to repeat it.

If everyone would bring something to contribute for supper, that will deal with refreshments, with the excitement of "something different". Main courses, puddings, bread, cheese, wine, beer,



lemonade - all will be welcome. If the freedom to decide is too much for you, Ruth or Judith will be glad to help with suggestions! Phone: 971 5165. There will be an opportunity to contribute to "2000 in 2000" in an attempt to reach our target of £ 10,000.

BROWNIES' MILLENNIUM CAPSULES



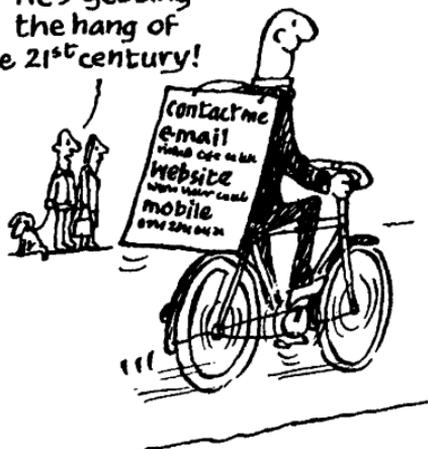
During last term, the Brownies prepared two Millennium Capsules. They filled them with items which would reflect their world at the end of the 20th century, among which were photographs, pictures of favourite sports, cinema and train tickets and pictures of toys and food together with till receipts to show the cost of such items.

At our last meeting before Christmas, the capsules were buried in the churchyard near to the tree which the Brownies planted in 1977 to mark the Queen's Jubilee. The area will be marked by a plaque kindly donated by Gary Hide. It was a cold, wintry night but Freda said a few warming words after which we sang carols and ate mince pies.

The evening also included the enrolment of our newest members and some fund-raising for our Animal Charities which we are supporting during the next two terms. Our first "Animal" venture is a special service at St. James's on Tuesday 15th February from 6 p.m. to which all animals (and owners) are welcome - so long as the animals are suitably restrained, i.e. dogs on leads, cats in baskets and rabbits in cages, etc. There will be a short service to say thank you for all our pets past and present and to help us understand the meaning they have in our lives. During the service there will be a collection for Hounslow Animal Welfare which looks after and cares for a variety of unwanted pets. Donations of pet food would also be welcome.



He's getting
the hang of
the 21st century!



CHURCH-SEARCH

www.church-search.com
or via
www.cofe.anglican.org

*- the Church's electronic
notice board on the
Internet!*

- 1. Find Churches:** Just enter a Village/Town, or a 'Search Area' (note 'Search Area' is added by local churches; so it will not yield results initially): then click 'Find Churches'. Alternatively, enter a Saint's name to check for sister churches!
- 2. Find Services:** Enter the required date as shown and either a Village/Town or 'Search Area' (see above): then click 'Find Services'. You can specify am/pm or a service type (from the drop-down menu) if you wish, but these are optional.
- 3. Click for more detail:** Check for full details of services or churches by clicking from the summarised information. Visit church websites, or generate e-mail directly as you wish.

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

Church-Search is an integral part of the Church of England website (Tel: 020-7898-1445)
Church-Search is being introduced by individual parishes as from August 1999.

FROM THE DECEMBER REGISTERS

Baptisms

- 5 Alexandra Thomas, 10 Irene Road, London SW6 4AL
19 Edward Morley, 8 Hatherop Road, Hampton

Funerals

- 1 Doris Mitchell, 23 Pigeon Lane



Many thanks to Brian, Betty and Freda for all the hard work they put into the services over Christmas and New Year. The carol services, Crib service, Parish Eucharists and New Year Meditation offered everyone an opportunity to worship in different ways at this special time. The afternoon Eucharist on the first Thursday of each month, which started in September, has been well received and fulfils a need for those who find it difficult to get to Church early on Sundays or who want a short, quiet service.

Margaret Taylor and Freda attended Laurel Dene Christmas Party. This was a very hospitable occasion with a wonderful buffet and they were very impressed with the amount of trouble the staff had taken to make this a memorable and enjoyable occasion for the residents.

Congratulations to Michael and Val Ralph on the birth of Isabel, to Kim Duller and Jonathan Smith on the birth of Rudi and to Pippa and David on the birth of their daughter, a first grandchild for Val and Mike Butterfield.

The Millennium Bug may have failed to bite but the virulent flu bug certainly did! We hope that the many affected in the parish have now recovered.

The Hall heating is now working as it should so a warm welcome awaits you for all events!

DATES TO NOTE IN FEBRUARY

1		Brigid, Abbess of Kildare, c.525
6		The Fifth Sunday before Lent The Martyrs of Japan, 1597
10		Scholastica, sister of Benedict, Abbess of Plombariola, c.543
13		The Fourth Sunday before Lent
16	1930	Women's Forum: Favourite Discs
17		Janani Luwum, Archbishop of Uganda, Martyr, 1977
20		The Third Sunday before Lent
23		Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna, Martyr, c.155
26	1900	An Evening of Poetry and Pot-Luck Supper; Hall
27		The Second Sunday before Lent George Herbert, Priest, Poet, 1633
28	2000	PCC

COPY DATE FOR MARCH MAGAZINE: 12TH FEBRUARY