

Who is this?

It's an odd question, but people kept on asking it about Jesus. We hear members of the amazed crowd asking it when Jesus teaches with authority. Some others ask it openly, some ask it suspiciously, some ask it of themselves quizzically. On Palm Sunday, when Jesus enters the city of Jerusalem, the crowds are expecting the Messiah, God's specially chosen one. But you can almost hear them say 'Who is this?' riding on a donkey.

It's a question which can be answered on many levels. On one level this is a man, grown from the baby at Bethlehem, a man brought up in a Palestinian backwater. On another level this is a person about whom so much was promised. As his life progressed more and more people are challenged by the question Mary faced in the message of the angel, the presence and gifts of the Shepherds and Wise Men, the haunting words of Simeon and Anna. As people gain an inkling as to his purpose so they wonder at the consequences.

Who is this? It's a question which the church has tried to answer by speaking out with the Good News of God's hope and peace, justice and truth which we find in Jesus. It's a question which the church has had to struggle with putting into practice as it has tried to witness in the way Jesus did. For the question 'Who is this?' can only be meaningfully answered with commitment. It is not just a question of genetics it is also a question of faith. It needs to be lived to be realised.

On 13th February Lent begins with Ash Wednesday. As we prepare for Easter, from Palm Sunday through Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, Easter Eve and Easter Day we need to keep asking 'Who is this?' Easter, like Christmas, focuses our attention upon the scandal of the way God deals with us, for if Jesus is the human image of God, the 'very imprint' of what God is like, then we have lots more questions to ask ourselves about what it means to be followers of Jesus in our world of 2002.

Strangely the world today is both utterly different from and uniquely the same as the world of Jesus. The differences are perhaps in the scale, speed and scope of human activity, but the similarities are about the very nature of human life, love and pain, hope and loss, failure and reconciliation, greed and generosity.

So this **Lent** I would urge each of us to ask the question 'Who is this?' Is Jesus a figure from the past, a good man or someone who uniquely shows us what God is like? If the latter, then this **Lent** perhaps the time has come for a searching after a renewed answer in your own personal life, in the life of the church and of the world. Each of us will answer differently, for each of us is made to serve God in both our uniqueness and in our unity as the one body of Christ.

Who is this? It will take quite some answering but you will be welcome to join us at St. James' for any of our attempts to renew our answer this Lent, Holy Week and Eastertide.

BROOK PLACE
Bagshot Road, Chobham

Are you ever free on the first Tuesday of the month? If so, you would certainly find one of the quiet days at Brook Place calming and peaceful.

The setting is quite beautiful. There has been a house there since 1302 and the present Dutch gabled building was rebuilt in 1656 on the site of an earlier Elizabethan residence. Set in 23 acres of grounds, there are formal gardens around the buildings leading to open fields with a lake and a hidden, charming pousinia - a little wooden hut set apart for individual prayer.

The Chapel, which was built as a granary, provides a simple prayer space, in the garden close by the house. The tithe barn, used by larger groups, is at the far end of the garden.

The place is a delightful haven, a mile from Chobham, and about 10 minutes from exit 3 of the M3.

Led quiet days are held each month (apart from January and August) from 10 to 4pm and if the numbers are small, they are held in the main house. The layout of the rooms is such that there is usually space to be on your own. You need to take a packed lunch and coffee/tea are provided. It's a wonderful way to unwind and read a book of your choice or to just quietly reflect on a short biblical reading.

A donation of around £5 is normally made to cover overhead costs.

Phone for details on 01276 857561.



The Council of Christians & Jews
(Staines & District Branch)

WINE!

ITS SIGNIFICANCE TO
CHRISTIANITY AND JUDAISM

explained by
The Rev. Dr. Brian Leathard
Vicar of St. James's Church, Hampton Hill
and Rev. Michael Binstock
Minister of Staines Synagogue

in the informal atmosphere of a

CHEESE & WINE EVENING
(non-alcoholic wine available)

8p.m. on Thursday 7th March 2002
Staines Synagogue, Westbrook Road, South Street, Staines

Tickets £3 each in advance only
Phone Stan Conway Tel: 01784 455615
or Carole Greville-Giddings Tel: 020 8979 6592



Ponder this...



If we could shrink the earth's population to a village of precisely 100 people, with all the existing human ratios remaining the same, it would look something like the following. There would be:

- 57 Asians
- 21 Europeans
- 14 from the Western Hemisphere, both north and south
- 8 Africans
- 52 would be female
- 48 would be male
- 70 would be non-white
- 30 would be white
- 70 would be non-Christian
- 30 would be Christian
- 89 would be heterosexual
- 11 would be homosexual
- 6 people would possess 59% of the entire world's wealth and all 6 would be from the United States.
- 80 would live in substandard housing
- 70 would be unable to read
- 50 would suffer from malnutrition
- 1 would be near death
- 1 would be near birth
- 1 (yes, only 1) would have a college education
- Only 1 would own a computer

When one considers our world from such a compressed perspective, the need for acceptance, understanding and education becomes glaringly apparent.

The following is also something to think about . . .

If you woke up this morning with more health than illness . . . you are more blessed than the million who will not survive this week. If you have never experienced the danger of battle, the loneliness of imprisonment, the agony of torture, or the pangs of starvation . . . you are ahead of 500 million people in the world. If you have food in the refrigerator, clothes on your back, a roof overhead and a place to sleep . . . you are richer than 75% of this world. If you have money in the bank, in your wallet, and spare change in a dish somewhere . . . you are among the top 8% of the world's wealthy. If your parents are still alive and still married . . . you are very rare.

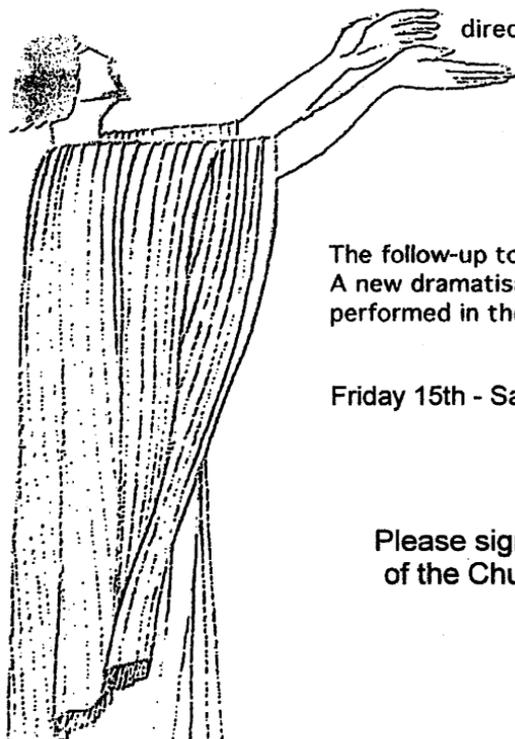
If you can read this message, you are more blessed than over two billion people in the world that cannot read at all.

Churches Together
Around Hampton
present



in association with Tryptych Productions

ACTS



written by Charles Smith
directed by Anthony Plumridge
and performed at

*Hampton Hill Playhouse
90, High Street,
Hampton Hill*

The follow-up to the acclaimed St John Live.
A new dramatisation of Acts of the Apostles
performed in the Mystery Play Tradition.

Friday 15th - Saturday 16th February, 2002
at 7.45p.m.

Please sign the list at the back
of the Church for tickets (£6).

SAINT JANANI LUWUM

It will be twenty-five years in March since Janani Luwum was martyred in Uganda at the instigation of the tyrant President Idi Amin. We can recall the many terrible events in Uganda during the troubled years of Amin's rule during the 70s; it is estimated that between ninety and one hundred thousand Ugandans were murdered either on his direct orders or by his licensed thugs and many of these were killed by Amin himself.

The rise of Amin, the one-time army cook who rose to command the Ugandan Army and Air Force, is well documented. Uganda became a republic in 1962 with Milton Obote as President. There was no blood-bath, but the new republic was made up of tribes who hated one another and the coming of independence opened the door to ancient tribal rivalries. Obote became a despot, democracy fled and the power of the army grew. Amin began to build up his own following and his support strengthened. Obote left for the Commonwealth Conference in Singapore in 1971 and whilst he was away Amin and his army followers carried out a successful coup and the General became the President.

In 1969 Luwum was consecrated Bishop of Northern Uganda, having been ordained priest following training and working as a lay reader for twenty years. He had spent a year in England and returned to Uganda to take charge of a very tough parish - twenty-four churches, scattered over 40 miles and only a bicycle! He was then, and after becoming Bishop, much loved and admired, and when he became Archbishop of Uganda in 1974 this love and admiration followed him. He said that he had become "the servant of the servants of God."

Civil unrest grew, Christians were persecuted, removed from any office they might have had and by 1975 the country was in the grip of terror. Still Janani Luwum preached of love and gentleness, of forgiveness and pity. "We must love the President", he often said. "We must pray for him - he also is a child of God". Janani prayed publicly for peace, he pleaded with Amin to spare Uganda and its people from further suffering. But Amin accused the Church of advocating bloodshed and his sick mind dreamed up a plot in which he imagined Luwum and Obote were proposing a coup of their own. The Church rebelled against Amin and the Bishop wrote protesting to the President.

On February 14th, Amin summoned Janani, accusing him of plotting with Obote and of hoarding arms in his house. Two days later the "arms cache" was discovered, publicly displayed, the bishops assembled and accused on the word of an obviously tortured prisoner after hours in the scorching sun. The bishops were dismissed, except Janani, who was driven away in a presidential car at high speed. A "fatal accident" was reported but totally disbelieved. Janani Luwum's body was later found to have received two bullet wounds; Amin is reported to have said, "I lost my temper. I killed him."

There was to be no memorial service, at Amin's command, but thousands came to the cathedral on the following Sunday. There was an empty grave but for many it was an

"Easter experience" and one friend said afterwards, "We greeted each other (at the service) using the Easter greeting 'Christ is risen - He is risen indeed'. One bishop said 'Why are they bothering about his body - Janani went straight to Heaven'.

Margaret Taylor



St. James's Chronicles

The Hampton Hill Parish Magazine 1902 Extracts from the February Issue



MY DEAR FRIENDS,

The continued spread of the small-pox epidemic in London and the neighbourhood renders it most important that vaccination or re-vaccination should in no case be neglected. The Official Returns show that while upwards of 100 persons have died during the present outbreak, who had not been vaccinated, only three have died who had been re-vaccinated. It is every one's duty to attend to this matter, not only for his own sake, but for the sake of his family and neighbours as well.

The Mothers' Supper took place at the Schools on the 3rd ult. About the usual number were present, including several of the husbands. After Supper there was a short Concert, followed by Magic Lantern Pictures showing how we get our coal.

Mrs. FitzWygram entertained her Bible Classes to supper, the young men on the 9th ult., and men on the 16th ult. Upwards of 50 were present on the two occasions. Most enjoyable evenings were spent.



The Distribution of Prizes to the Sunday School Children took place on the 17th ult. There was a very large attendance of children and a sprinkling of parents. The Superintendents spoke of the marked improvement that had taken place, both in conduct and attendance. Most of the teachers were present. A few months ago the schools suffered the loss of the former Superintendent of the Boys' School, Mr Joseph, jun. owing to his removal from the neighbourhood. The children were entertained with a Magic Lantern, and buns and oranges.

I am, my dear friends, Yours very sincerely,
CHARLES R. JOB.

15th December 2001

Dear Saints of St. James,

Now we've been here for 3 days we are proper country people, so it seems that it's time to tell you what country living is all about. So far we're only fair weather countryfolk, as the worst weather we have had is a day's cloudiness. We arrived to bright sunshine and sparkling frost. The stars have been magnificent but it has been too cold to spend much time looking at them except from our bed and by the time we've hit that we haven't been able to keep our eyes open. (Please feel free to phone, but not after 9.30p.m., please!)

The chickens and ducks aren't up very early at this time of year so we're allowed to stay in bed until about 7.30a.m., but try to be home to shut them away from the foxes at about 4p.m. We have 10 full-sized chickens (they look HUGE!) as well as our 6 little ones. One of the big ones is laying even now so we enjoyed "our own" eggs for breakfast this morning. The sheep greeted us the first few times we went to see them, but they are ignoring us now, as they have realised that we won't have sheep nuts in our pockets! Now we have seen the neighbour's sheep on the common, (same breed) we realise just how fat ours are! That neighbour was one of several who have called either in person or on the phone. We feel very optimistic about building up good relationships. We will go and spy out the congregation of St. Michael's on Sunday (Common Prayer!) and will go to the carol service, which is the same time as St. Jim's. Judith will be in London for the evening of "carols around the village" but I have a couple staying with me that evening and I will take them with me.

The move went as smoothly as it possibly could have done. I forget who it was who recommended the removal firm, but, thank you. They were pleasant men and used common sense and care of both us and our possessions. Of course we weren't ready for them, but it all worked out. We seem to take an age unpacking, but the mountain of empty boxes grows. The big mystery is: Where is that half a sliced loaf? - as Judith said, as soon as we have found it you can all come to supper as we discover that we have two goldfish in the pond!

The point of this letter was to thank everyone in and around Hampton Hill, who made the move as easy as it could have been. From those who found boxes and bags to pack in, to those who entertained us to meals, and those who gave us individual gifts of plants, fruit loaf, etc. to all who contributed to leaving gifts, lent us camp-beds, sent or signed cards and all of those who have been especially nice to us these last few weeks - thank you. We haven't had time to miss anyone yet, in fact, it still feels as if we are on holiday, but we do think of you often and will, especially, in church tomorrow.

Please don't be shy about requesting a visit. We really would be pleased to see you. We appreciate greatly the community that has, in good times and bad, supported Ruth



and her family for more than 50 years and both of us in the last nine. At the moment life is a bit chaotic - if you want a peaceful visit it had better be in a few months time - but be warned, the chances are that whatever skills you have will be used!

God bless you all,

Love Ruth and Judith.

THE ENGLISHMAN'S BOY BY GUY VANDERHENGE

(Available at the local library)

This novel gives us two different views of history, and if that sounds dry and academic, when you read it you will find it compelling and as one reviewer described it "irresistible". The author tells two parallel stories each of which moves at a great pace until at the end of the work they come together in a tremendous resolution - a climax which comes unexpectedly but on reflection with inevitability.

The earlier narrative set in 1873, tells the story of the Englishman's boy (he has no other name) who joins a group of wolf hunters on their way north to Canada in pursuit of Indians who have stolen most of their horses. Hardwick (note the choice of name) is the leader of this gang and his complete lack of humanity contrasts with the developing character of the boy to whom his cruelty and violence become intolerable. The second story comes from the early days of Hollywood where a film mogul, Ira Chance hires a run-down writer who desperately needs money, to work out a script for an epic film about the Wild West which will rival as an American national myth 'The Birth of a Nation', that epic of the Civil War. Chance needs to portray the life of the frontier looking at history through his own lens; Vincent finds an old actor Shorty McAdoo whose experiences of life and Western films he wishes to use for the script. But McAdoo does not offer a view of the past as Chance wishes to see it. Eventually the two narrative strands are woven together so skilfully that the reader, seeing the whole picture, does not understand why he could not see it earlier!

'The Englishman's Boy' is a truly exhilarating read with its rapidly moving pace, stunning descriptions of the rugged scenery of the Canadian West with its dangerously uncomplicated inhabitants, set against the delusions, dreams and nightmares of Hollywood. It is satisfying and enjoyable - and it will make you think.

Margaret Taylor



Thank you to the members of the band for playing for our Carol Service. We all enjoy and appreciate their regular contributions to our church music. Also on the musical front, our organist Karl Bridge has resigned as he found making the long journey from his home too onerous and we are very grateful to Chris Myhill for stepping in.

Christmas Collections for the Upper Room, a drop-in centre attached to St. Saviour's Church in North Hammersmith, totalled just over £1000.

We were sorry to learn of the death of Margaret Lawrence's mother, Doris Smith (usually known as Bessie), and send our love and sympathy to Margaret and the family at this time.

Congratulations and many happy returns to Eila Severn, who celebrated her 75th birthday on 19th January.

Many thanks to Freda for organising the Quiet Day at the end of January. Malcolm Colmer gave us much to reflect on as we approach Lent.

FROM THE DECEMBER REGISTERS

Baptisms

- 1 Catherine Jane Walker, 15 Burtons Road
Jane Ann Walker
- 9 James Daniel Bullen, 35 St. James's Avenue

Funerals

- 3 Amy Taplin, 31 Holly Road 94
David Henry Squire, 12 St. James's Avenue 79
- 20 George James Stanton, 146 Hanworth Road 81

Confirmation

- 9 Kathryn and Clare Williams, Jennifer Greville-Giddings, Rebecca Grant and Kim Fitchett
-

The Liddon Trust

warmly invites you to the
2002 Liddon Lectures

at the New Theatre, King's College, Strand. London WC2
on Tuesdays 12th and 19th February 2002 at 6.30p.m.

Tom Devonshire Jones and Charles Pickstone of the
Art and Christianity Enquiry Trust will give illustrated lectures on

**Church and Art in the Twentieth Century:
a decade by decade survey of an engagement**

1. Work within the Temple 2. The Sacred beyond the Walls

Tickets £5 per person covering both lectures and all refreshments.

Followed by light refreshments at:
St. Mary-le-Strand Church (opposite the college)

Enquiries to David Roberts
7 Nunnery Stables, St. Albans,
Hertfordshire AL1 2AS (Tel: 020 7915 3262)

"I must stay at your house today"

Luke 19: 3 - 6

Jesus, this Lent I am yearning to wear a Zacchaeus heart.
I am wanting to hear you call my name just as you did his.
I am anxious to know that you are inviting yourself to my home.
I am humbled, amazed, excited, and astounded, just as he was.

But that is where the desire to wear a Zacchaeus heart stops,
because I know what happens when you visit someone's house.
Conversations occur. Choices are presented. Changes happen.
That's because you look for more than dust when you come to visit
and you talk about things more vital than the weather.
You move into the heart's dimension. You gaze deeply.
You don't just dwell. You interact. You activate.
You dwell so lovingly that the truth cannot be resisted.

This Lent help me to welcome you and yearn for your love.
Grant me a Zacchaeus heart that turns around and sees the truth.
I need the gaze of your love to remind me of my truest self.
I, too, need the strong call to make amends and start anew.
Hurry, Jesus, come and stay at my house today.

by Joyce Rupp

DATES TO NOTE FEBRUARY 2002

1	Brigid, Abbess of Kildare, 525
2	Presentation of Christ in the Temple (Candlemas)
18.30	Holy Communion with The Apocalypse Singers
3	2 nd Sunday before Lent
6	Martyrs of Japan 1597
10	Sunday next before Lent
12	Shrove Tuesday
13	ASH WEDNESDAY
20.00	Parish Communion with Imposition of Ashes
14	Cyril & Methodius, Missionaries to the Slavs
17	Lent 1
23	Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna, Martyr 155
24	Lent 2
27	George Herbert, Priest & Poet

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