

St Mary's Monthly Message

February 2022



A Note From David

Newsletter editor: Louise Fell

BY THE RECTOR

Dear Church Family,

February is the month when thoughts turn inevitably to love with St Valentine's Day sitting right in the middle of the month. The shops are full of red love hearts and cuddly toys, but what does love really mean to us?

Love is, of course, the core principle of Christianity, and God is the perfect representation of love. There are numerous verses about love and relationships in the Holy Bible. Love is influenced by everything God does, and love is a fundamental characteristic of who God is. There is no doubt that love is an incredibly powerful force: Martin Luther King Jr. expressed this when he said, "Love is the only force capable of transforming an enemy into friend."

The Bible makes it clear that love is the plan God has for us. Jesus himself said, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbour as yourself.' " (Matthew 22:37-39)

Many Blessings, David.

IN THE FEBRUARY ISSUE

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The Interview: Jo Williams

Joanna has been married to our Rector, David, for nearly forty years. Jo shares her thoughts on love and marriage, and the importance of Jesus in their relationship.

Q. How did you meet your husband?

A. I met David at school and we kept in touch through Uni and work. In April 1983, I asked David to help me take some young people to Spring Harvest. Three days following that holiday, David asked me to marry him and I accepted, marrying in Sept 1983. It felt like jumping off a cliff into the unknown as we went from being friends to being married, but we had Christ at the centre of our friendship and had complete peace that we were being called by God into a lifelong commitment together. It was thrilling, exciting and scary too!

Q. Was marriage to David what you expected?

A. I don't think I knew what to expect. It has been a whole mixture of exceeding expectations as well as enormous challenges. Since our marriage had its foundation in strong friendship and mutual faith, that bedrock meant I expected our marriage would work. As the years have gone by I am understanding more the words of the Marriage Service which states how 'two shall become one flesh'. We are inextricably linked by almost 40 years together.

Q. What keeps you busy?

A. Right now, family needs are at the forefront. We have three elderly parents plus our young family members who need care. I look after an adopted young family in Kent as well as daily contact with our Ugandan family. I take great enjoyment in having people live with us, whether long or short term and this works well. Our Church family means the world to me and when I am away from Church I feel really sad! Housework is NOT a priority!

Q. What is the importance of faith in your marriage?

A. Jesus is the most important part of our union. Knowing Him means we have more love than we could ever ask or imagine.

Living in Love and Faith by Bryan Matthew

Bryan Matthew is the co-ordinator of the Living in Love & Faith (LLF) Life Group.

Q. Bryan, can you tell us about the LLF Life Group?

A. The group was set up following the LLF course that was held at St Mary's. The course will help the Bishops/General Synod to discern a way forward regarding questions about identity, sexuality, relationships, and marriage. The Life Group is a forum on issues that are raised on the course.

Q. Can you say more about that?

A. This is about engaging in conversations about different understandings of human identity, relationships, families and sexual attitudes/activity, what does it mean for followers of Jesus? How do we meet with people whose identity/gender beliefs and experiences are different from ours?

Q. This sounds like an important topic for church members?

A. Very much so. The Bishops/General Synod members have asked people to let them know what their reflections are on this topic. This will lead to a period of discernment on what the Holy Spirit is saying to the C of E. A decision will be made about the Church's traditional teaching on areas such as same sex marriages later on this year.

Q. How can the St Mary's church family get involved?

A. They can attend the LLF course at St Dunstan's Church Hall from 18 January to 15 February (7.30pm). For more information contact rev.mdhunt@yahoo.co.uk. The LLF Life Group meet in the Chapter House next on Thursday 17 February starting at 7.30pm



**AND NOW
THESE THREE
REMAIN:
FAITH, HOPE
AND
LOVE. BUT
THE
GREATEST
OF THESE IS
LOVE.**

1 CORINTHIANS 13:13



In other news...

Lighthouse: urgent request for key roles for 2022. The Chair and Admin/Secretary have felt it time to step down after a number of years in their respective roles and they really need to fill these vacancies before committing to Lighthouse 2022. They have a deadline of end of February 2022. Please prayerfully consider whether you could take on a role or task even. You would be supported by the Lighthouse Committee and training needs will be taken into account and provided. Contact Lizzie Tinsley to register any expressions of interest and find out more elizabethctinsley@gmail.com

BRF is offering free daily Bible reading notes. Go to brfonline.org.uk to claim a copy for you or a friend.

St Mary's is very grateful to those in our congregation who have **sponsored a child through Compassion**: 10 additional sponsors is a wonderful response from our church family.

Appeal from One Can. They are desperately short of: baked beans, tinned fish, cereals, tinned fruit, cooking sauces, tinned mixed veg, jams and spreads, tinned pulses, meat meals, tinned tomatoes, pasta and rice and UHT milk. Don't forget, there's a wheelie bin outside the Chapter House door for your donations.

There are copies of "26 Prayers for the Climate and Ecological Emergency" by Rev Jon Swales in the Lady Chapel for anyone who might want to use them.

Would you be able to help with a **Parent and Toddler Group starting** in March 2022? St Mary's is keen to bring this opportunity to the community and already has a management team for it. With a few more team members, we can make it a reality. If this is you, please contact the Parish Office.

Do you want to make a real difference in the lives of people with a mental health problem? **Buckinghamshire Mind is looking for volunteers** in all capacities from administration to befrienders and they provide training, ongoing, support and pay expenses.

Contact: info@bucksmind.org.uk, 01494 463364, www.bucksmind.org.uk

Looking ahead to March, **World Day of Prayer will be back this year.** The team is looking forward to another lovely service at 11.00am on 4 March, this time at St Dunstan's.

The chosen book for this year's **Lent Groups** is the BRF Lent Study Guide: 'Sharing the Easter Story: from reading to living the Gospel' by Sally Welch. The book explores two questions: 'What is the Easter story really about?' and 'how do we share it?'. Look out for more information about Lent Groups, including the St Mary's one starting 8 March. Books available from the Parish Office at £7.99 - cash on collection please, thank you!

St Peter's Ilmer needs your help. Can you help towards current urgent repairs of the roof? See St Mary's website for a giving page.
<https://www.stmarysrisborough.org.uk/2021/11/st-peters-church-ilmer-needs-your-help/>

Any suggestions/additions for the newsletter would be very welcome to mrslouisefell@icloud.com.

*Could you
help out
with a new
Parent and
Toddler
Group?
Contact the
Parish
Office
01844
273300*

*Sign up for our
weekly e-news
by going to the
homepage on
our website.
Receive all the
news from St
Mary's direct
to your phone!*

Dates for your Diary

The **Bereavement Drop In** will meet in the Chapter House on 14 February at 3:00pm

Messy Church - Focus on God's Love in the Mess - will be on 20 February at 4:00pm

Longwick School Art Show: Sat 26th to Sun 27th Feb - Over 80 artists will be exhibiting at the exhibition where the artwork will be for sale. Refreshments available.

Nicci Maxwell - our CMS Mission Partner in Uganda - will be speaking at both Sunday morning services on **Sunday 27th February**.

The next **Monthly Lunch Club** is on Weds 2 March starting at 10:00am. Booking via the Parish Office.

Fairtrade Fortnight will run from 21 February to 6 March. See Fairtrade.org.uk for more details.

The next **Men's Breakfast** is on 12 March, at 9:00am in the Church Hall.

Services at St Mary's and St Peter's

We will continue to keep church safe: any changes to covid measures will be notified in services. Refreshments will be served from 13th Feb onwards.

From 6th Feb there will be a zone in church allocated to those who prefer to wear a mask and sit socially distanced - please ask the Welcomers on arrival to show you to this area.

Parish Communion continues at 9.30 on Sundays in church and live streamed to your home. See the St Mary's website for the link to our YouTube channel.

Live@St Mary's all age service continues at 11.15 both in church and live streamed to your home. Kid's Church welcomes children to join them for activities during this service - contact Jenni Kerr at childrensworker@stmarysrisborough.org.uk for further info on sessions.

Mid week Holy Communion is on Thursdays at 10.30.

Third Sunday in the month, **Evensong at St Peter's Church, Ilmer** at 3pm (check website for variations).

For your Prayers in February

A Prayer for Love

Dear Lord Jesus,
Bless us with Love,
O Merciful God;

That we may Love as you Love!

That we may show patience,
tolerance,
kindness, caring
and
love to all.
Amen.

Prayer for our Earth

Let us pray for an end to the
Waste and desecration of God's
creation

For access to the fruits of creation
To be shared equally among all
people

And for communities and nations to
find sustenance

In the fruits of the earth and the
water God has given us.
Amen.

Please pray for the families of Norma Amos, Elizabeth Flitney, John Sainsbury and Lina Cunningham. Please pray also for Sadie and her family on the loss of her father, David Lawrie.

And let's share the love of Christ with all this month.

Copies of this newsletter are available in Church for you to collect and pass on to friends and neighbours.

Join our weekly prayer meeting on Zoom every Wednesday at 9am – Zoom invite available from the Parish Office .

We encourage everyone to pray for one another. Ask the Parish Office if you would like to receive details of prayer requests.