

St Mary's Monthly Message

February 2024



A Note From David

BY THE RECTOR

Dear Church Family,

There is a story that is told of St Francis of Assisi who, one day, invited a young monk to join him on a trip to a local village. The young novice, delighted to have been chosen, accepted with enthusiasm. They walked through the main streets showing love and care to all they met and then returned to the monastery. On their return, the young monk asked St Francis why he hadn't preached in the town and Francis replied, "My son, we did preach. We were preaching while we were walking, and our behaviour was closely watched as well as our care for others. It is of no use walking somewhere to preach, unless you preach everywhere you walk."

In this month, as we enter into Lent, to help us on our Lenten journey we will be recommending the book 'Loving My Neighbour', which is based on Jesus' parable of the Good Samaritan and invites us to reflect more deeply on what this means in today's world. It is said that we can preach a better sermon with our lives than with our lips and that the best testament is the living testament. Every blessing as you journey through Lent!

Every blessing, David

Newsletter editor: Louise Fell
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Our interview this month is with Ronel Murray

In Other News...

Dates for your Diary

Prayers for this month

Ronel Murray: her Life and her Faith Journey

Ronel was born and raised in South Africa and emigrated with her ex-husband to London in 1990. They have a daughter Hannah who is 31, who lives with her husband in Philadelphia. She is a social worker by profession, working in Adult Social Care.

Q. Can you tell us a little about Hannah?

A. I am immensely proud of her and what she has achieved. She has just qualified as a paediatric physiotherapist at Washington University in St Louis. I visit as often as I can but the difference in miles is difficult. Last year I attended both her graduation and her wedding in Delaware! It was such a blessed time to be with her.

Q. It cannot be easy being a social worker?

A. It has been a wonderful career for over 40 years. Working for Adult Social Care is not easy in the current climate, but I would still like to think I can make a difference in people's lives. The shortage of services, the financial climate and lack of care services remains a challenge. I still work full time and can get quite tired in a stressful role as Team manager for a team of 30 social workers, but I feel blessed in my role.

Q. And how about your Faith?

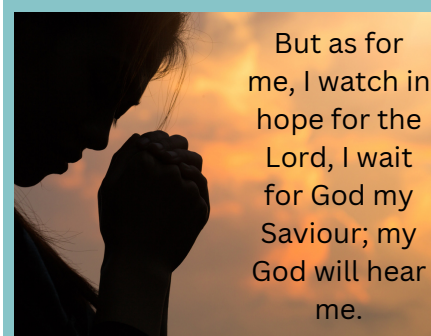
A. In terms of my faith, I grew up in an Afrikaans household with my Mum, Dad and two older brothers and with a strong Christian foundation. As a child I attended a very traditional Dutch reformed church where my Dad was a Deacon. It was the type of church where children were seen not heard, very different from my experiences now! I drifted in and out of different churches in my early adult years, but my faith took a leap during my 10 years in the Baptist church in Speen. My pastor and his wife at the time were an amazing influence in my and my daughter's life following a difficult period during a divorce when Hannah was young, and we found a wonderful Christian family. We were introduced to New Wine and Soul survivor for Hannah and moved forward in a new-found faith which I treasure to this day. When I left Speen, I joined St Michael and All Angels Hughtenden where I became involved in Worship and Alpha. I moved to Princes Risborough in April 2022 and joined St Mary's. The welcome I have had and continue to receive here is a blessing in my life. I have joined a Life Group, I do worship at times and have just started supporting Andrew with the Alpha Course which I love to do. It is a joy to share my faith with others but most of all the ideas they bring. I joined St Mary's at a time where I found myself single again after a breakdown of a 10-year relationship and my daughter making a permanent move to America. I have found a family at St Mary's at a time where I needed it most. My faith and church are very important to me, and I thank God for my journey this far. I, like all of us at times have been through difficult times but an old friend told me once, "God will never let you fall without picking you up" I have found that to be true over and over again.

Q. What does the future hold?

A. I have just renewed my tenancy for another year in Princes Risborough and I am excited to see the plans that God has for my life. One of my favourite Bible verses is Jeremiah 29:11. "For I know the plans I have for you, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you a hope and a future."



Ronel Murray and the Liberty Bell in Philadelphia



Micah 7:7

In other news...

Huge congratulations to **David Williams following his Installation as Canon** at Christchurch, Oxford on 27 January.

How are you doing with **the Bible in a Year**. Find out more on the new St Mary's Discipleship website <https://discipleship.stmarysrisborough.org.uk>

Messy Love, Sun 4 Feb, 3.15-5pm. Free fun, games, faith and food. Sign up for your free tickets at: <https://bit.ly/StMarysMessyLove>

It's not too late to join our **Alpha Course** on Tuesday evenings. It's a chance to discuss life and the Christian faith in an informal, fun and friendly way. It is a course for anyone, whether you are exploring questions about the Christian faith, or you are already a Christian, but want to want to learn more. If you are interested, or have any questions please email curate@stmarysrisborough.org.uk.

You are invited for some flipping good games, races and good fun – all for free! **Pancake Party**, Tues 13 Feb, 4.30pm-6.30pm. All welcome – children please bring an adult. Sign up at: <https://bit.ly/StMarysPancakeParty>

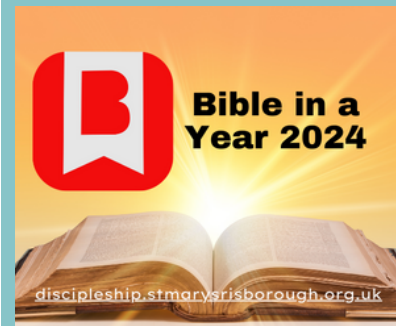
There will be an evening for ladies - **Feeling Fabulous in February** - on 22 February from 7.15 in the Chapter House. It will include sessions with a **nutritional therapist, colour and style consultant and an award-winning hairdresser**. Book your seats: mrsloisefell@icloud.com or 07730678792. Bring a friend, or just come along yourself and feel fabulous inside and out. Drinks and nibbles included. Free (donations to Lighthouse).

Can you help out at **Play Cafe**? Already running every Tuesday morning 9.30-11.00 and aspiring to run on Mondays too, Play Cafe is a blessing to those mums, carers, grandparents who bring toddlers to enjoy some fun in our church. It is very well-attended and we are looking to expand our reach by running on another day. Can you help with chatting to adults, cuddling babies, making drinks, putting away? Contact the Parish Office if you can help.

Lighthouse is a children's holiday club which provides a week of fun, faith, crafts, games, singing, drama, and sport Over 300 children and over 100 volunteers are involved each year. The dates for 2024 are Monday 29th July to Friday 2nd August. For more information check out the Lighthouse website: <http://www.lighthousecentral.org/lighthouses/princes-risborough>

Don't forget you can still donate to **One Can** in the wheelie bin by the Chapter House door. Only items with a long use-by date, please.

This year's **World Day of Prayer** service will be on 1 March at St Theresa's Church. The service, planned long before the current conflict, is prepared for us by the women of Palestine. Please come along, you will be very welcome. The service starts at 11.00am, but there will be an opportunity to practice the singing prior to that, from 10.30. There will be refreshments afterwards.



Feeling Fabulous in February: 22 February



Play Cafe



Hosts for Ukrainian refugees

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

Messy Love Sunday 4 Feb, 3.15-5pm

Lunch Club Wednesday 7 February, 10am-3pm in church.

Bereavement Drop-in Group in the Chapter House, 3pm 12 February.

Pancake Party 13 February 4.30-6.30pm in church

Ladies' Evening Feeling Fabulous in February 22 February 7.15pm in the Chapter house

World Day of Prayer Friday 1 March 11.00am at St Theresa's church.

The **Alpha Course** continues on Tuesday evenings in the Chapter House .

Youth Alpha: every Tuesday from 7.30pm to 9pm in the Cafe, Elim Church.

Play Cafe: every Tuesday during term time from 9.30am to 11am in church.

Services at St Mary's and St Peter's

Holy Communion at 8am (*said*)

Parish Communion 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 at 11.15 in church. Kid's Church welcomes children to join them for activities during this service - contact the Parish Office for further info on sessions.

Mid week Holy Communion is on Wednesdays at 10.30 followed by coffee.

The **Ash Wednesday** service will take place on 14 February at 10.30am

3rd Sunday in the month (18 February) at 3pm, Evensong & shortened HC

St Peter's Church, Ilmer

For your Prayers this month

A Prayer for the beginning of Lent

O gracious Lord, infuse in our hearts the light of Your Wisdom and open the eyes of our mind that we may understand the teachings of Your Gospel.

Guide us so that we may lead a spiritual life, both thinking and doing everything to please You.

Amen

A Prayer for a Peace

May I stand in solidarity today with all my brothers and sisters around the world who are suffering.

May we be united in your love, and may I work to build your kingdom here on earth.

Amen.

Please remember Sonia Tucker and Mark Timmis who will be getting married on 24 February. Please pray too for the baptism of Esme Gibson this month.

We remember these families in our prayers following the deaths of: Audrey and Michael Smith, Erica Purssell, Natalie Berlinsky, Marjorie Witcher, Leonora Priestley, Thomas Henningsen and Joan Loosley.

We uphold in prayer: David Coleman, the Rolfe family, Carl State-Claridge, Jackie Powell and her daughter Lisa, Kelly May, and all those bereaved, suffering ill health or facing operations.

Please pray for:

- all those Christians in the world who daily risk their lives to follow Jesus
- those running and attending the Alpha Course
- those helping with our children's and families work.

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.

Prayers for Ukraine: are held weekly on zoom - Fridays @ 9.00am. Zoom Link - Meeting ID: 714 5146 5358 Passcode:262GY9

*Contact the Parish Office
parishoffice@stmarysrisborough.org.uk*

*Telephone: 01844
273300*