

FROM THE TEAM RECTOR February 2012

Dear Friends,

Lent begins on Ash Wednesday 22nd February. Once again we are called to spend these 40 days in drawing nearer to God, so that the celebrations of Easter will have richer meaning in our lives. Lent is often seen as a season for giving things up, but it should also be about those things we might take up for God.

There is of course nothing wrong in forgoing something for a greater good, giving up chocolate may make us healthier, it might also help to strengthen our mastery over our appetites so we are not a slave to every whim and fancy. Some Christians fast during Lent and regularly on Fridays either by not eating at all or by missing a meal on those days. This is not to say that food is not a wonderful gift of God but that God is more important than the gift. The same principle may apply to many apparently innocent pleasures. I knew a priest who gave up knitting for Lent – not a problem I will have! But perhaps I need to spend a little less time checking the latest cricket scores. The issue is whether these admittedly pleasant pastimes get in the way of our relationship with God and the time we have to serve Him and to care for others. For we are stewards of all God's gifts and we need to learn to use them appropriately.

However, we may need to take something up for Lent, for example someone might take up knitting instead of abandoning it, in order to knit something for someone who needs it. We might resolve during Lent to spend more time in prayer or devotional reading, may I suggest 'Lent for everyone: Mark' by Tom Wright, a journey through St Mark's gospel, available from church. We might set ourselves to attend a Lent course or to give money for the parish Lent project 'Tools with a Mission'.

Lent helps us take our Christian faith seriously. It is not just a hobby; it is the heart of all we are and all we ever hope to be.

Please do pray and reflect on this before Lent comes and please do join us in church as we pledge ourselves afresh to our Lord on Ash Wednesday.

Have a good month.

John

TEAM RECTOR'S NOTES

Saturday **4th February** at **7pm** The PTFA are holding a **Fun Quiz** at Holy Trinity School, Halstead. Teams of up to 6 and BYO drink and snacks. Tickets cost £2.50 per person and can be obtained through the school office on 472096.

Junior Church Sunday 5th February.

Deanery Synod will meet on **6th February** at **7.30pm** in the Centre to discuss the Anglican Covenant. It is an **open meeting** so **all are welcome**.

Edward Bear Club meets on Tuesday mornings from 9.30 until 11.30 during term time for coffee, chat and fun activities. Please contact Gemma Neal for more details.

The **Area Conference** is on **11th February** at St John's Church, Colchester. It will be focusing on the importance of prayer.

The **Home Group** meets once a month on the third Tuesday. It will next meet again on **Tuesday 21st February** at Mallow's House, Mallow's Field (Jim & Linda's) starting at **7.30pm** and formally finishing at 9pm though you are welcome to stay on for chat or worship etc. All are welcome to the evenings led by Jim Davis.

Baptism Preparation will take place on **Tuesday 21st February** at **7.45pm** in St. Andrew's Church.

Mother's Union meets on **Wednesday 22nd February** at **7.30pm** in the St Andrew's Centre. Visitors are always welcome. Please

contact their Branch Leader, Tracy Holdgate through the Parish Administrator 07963 764 350 or email halsteadparish@gmail.com.

On **Ash Wednesday** (22nd) you are welcome to join us for **Holy Communion with Ashing** at 1.45pm with children from St Andrew's School or at 7.30pm for a **Sung Communion with Ashing**. Please can you let **David Lorkin** have your **old Palm Crosses** by **Sunday 19th February** to give us enough time to make the ashes!

This year's evening **Lent Course**, starting on **29th February**, will be looking at the various traditions of each of our sister churches whilst celebrating our similarities:

29 th February	St Francis' Roman Catholic Church
7 th March	Halstead Baptist Church
14 th March	Halstead Methodist Church
21 st March	St Andrew's Church
28 th March	United Reformed Church

The first of this year's **Lent Services** will be led by Revd John Blore at **noon** on **Friday 24th February** in St Andrew's Church. The service will be followed by a **charity lunch** in the St Andrew's Centre provided by St Andrew's Church.

Men's Supper Evening— Monday 5th March at the Five Bells, Colne Engaine. Taking the theme 'Judge Not' listen and discuss with two Judges, issues of law, justice, fairness and faith. Tickets cost £8 and can be obtained through the Parish Administrator 07963 764 350 or email halsteadparish@gmail.com.

Annual Parochial Church Meeting will be held on **11th March** following the morning service. If you have **reports** to **submit** for the report brochure, please send them to Brian Vidler by email if at all possible. Please contact Jim Davis to join the Electoral Roll.