

St Mary's - at the Heart of Your Community

Church is at the heart of what we do at St. Mary's, and these are our weekly services:

Day and time	Worship
Sunday 8 am	Holy Communion
Sunday 10 am	Parish Communion with children's church ('Stepping Stones') and creche, followed by breakfast
Sunday 6 pm	Evening Prayer (Healing Service on 2nd Sunday of month)
Mon – Fri 9 am	Morning Prayer
Tue & Wed 9 am	Eucharist (Book of Common Prayer on Tuesday; coffee after service on Wednesday)
Thursday 7.30pm	Eucharist

On major festivals and other special occasions, there may be changes or additions to the services listed above, and on the second Sunday in each month we have an all-age service at 10.00 a.m. when we welcome beavers, cubs, scouts, rainbows, brownies, guides and rangers from Monkseaton.

There are also many other things that happen at St. Mary's:

Bible Study Groups (one afternoon, two evening), prayer cells (small groups meeting regularly to pray for the world, the church and individual concerns).

Mothers Union (working to support Christian family life while enjoying shared prayer and fellowship).

Choir Singing (members sing at the 10 am and 6 pm Sunday services and practice at 6.30 pm, Fridays, in church.)

The Praise Band (budding musicians accompany the monthly All-Age service on a variety of instruments).

Menzone (a group for men to share fellowship and to learn more about the faith).

COGS (A young people's group offering the opportunity for teenagers to explore more deeply issues of faith and life).

Lunch Club on the second and fourth Wednesday in the month at 12 noon.

In addition, the church hall is used by a Mums and Toddlers Group and a Badminton Club. The hall can also be booked for group events or parties. St. Mary's also invites inquiries about baptisms and weddings.

Information about all the above is available from:

St. Mary's Parish Office
(open Tuesday – Friday
10.00 am – 12.00 noon)

Telephone: (0191) 251 4216
(answerphone outside office hours).

Email: newsletter@
stmarysmonseaton.org.uk

Web: www.stmarysmonseaton.co.uk



St Mary's Newsletter

St Mary's – at the Heart of Your Community

Something for Everyone



By Robin Greenwood,
vicar of St. Mary's

In the Christian community based at St Mary the Virgin, Monkseaton, we're

convinced we have something society urgently needs.

But we know that the Church is often a poor advert for the Good News of Jesus, so we're asking God to show us how to make a better job of being a church for everyone.

We want to help make a world in which respect, mutual care and service are seen as the things that really matter. And we are convinced that as a church we can offer a community life that has something valuable, whatever stage on the journey people feel themselves to be.

Among those who are older, housebound or bereaved, we create networks of care, prayer for healing, scripture and sacrament.

continued overleaf

What is St Mary's? – St Mary's is the Anglican church for the parish in which you live.

Where is St Mary's? – We're at the junction of Claremont Gardens and Davison Avenue, Whitley Bay.

Why a newsletter? – To keep all the people of the parish informed about what is going on in the church, so that everyone will feel welcome to participate in the many events and activities which take place in the buildings and through the people of the church.

Why might you want to participate? – Maybe you want to know more about the Christian faith, or maybe you would like to be part of the community, or maybe you have a need which could be met through the church.

Whatever your situation or need you are welcome at St Mary's.

stMary 75 YEARS
THE VIRGIN
MONKSEATON

See inside for Easter
service information

continued from front page

To the active of all ages we offer social contact and friendship. Our musicians play instruments of many kinds, and we are introducing worship where respect for different tastes and styles is important.

Learning more about our faith and its implications for living is another part of what we offer. We want to discover how to be Christian disciples together, and work out how to make faith a positive force for change and growth.

We would like you to join us in this joyful task – putting something in and also drawing good things out of our life together.

If everyone does a little, no one need be overwhelmed.

Your community Your voice

We'd like to know what you think about this Newsletter, and the various services and events available at St Mary's.

Why not drop us an e-mail newsletter@stmarysm Monkseaton.org.uk or phone 0191 251 4216.

Turning the tide



There's going to be a special day at Valley Gardens Middle School on Saturday 28 April 2007. St Mary's is joining with

St Alban's, St Mark's, St Paul's and St Peter's for a day filled with a huge variety of activities. Some are about faith, some are about fun, all are open to anyone of any age, of any level of Christian commitment or none.

Do think about coming along, possibly with your family or neighbours, for a few hours (the event will run from 10.00 am to 3.00 pm). What's on offer? Lots!

- workshops about story-telling, music, theatre
- circus skills, drama, balloon modelling, prayer, worship, puppets
- street entertainment, Northumbria pipes, clowns, jugglers, a football shoot-out
- stalls offering Traidcraft items and religious books
- a sandwich bar and a non-alcoholic cocktail bar
- a healing service and a 45-minute concluding act of worship at 2.15 pm

Ant and Ec do religion



St Mary's "Ant and Ec" – Tony Garland and Eric Peel

Ant: Tell you what, Ec, religion's finished in this country

Ec: How's that, like?

Ant: There was this survey in one of the weekend supplements. 36% of people asked said they preferred humanist answers to religious ones on questions of morality and the universe. So, that's what I'm sayin'. Religion's had it. Only thing is, it doesn't square up with the last census results.

Ec: What d'ye mean?

Ant: Why in 2001 around 72% of the population reckoned they were Christians.

Ec: Oh aye, but that doesn't mean much! I mean we all say we're 'C of E'. We're just a bit embarrassed to say 'none'. You might get struck down with a thunderbolt or somethin'.

Ant: Well, there was a place to say 'no religion' or to leave the section blank. Around 23% of people opted for that – the second biggest group.

Ec: Haad on, how can you reckon religion's dead if nearly three-quarters of the country say they're Christians?

Ant: Aye, that's the puzzle, isn't it? There's certainly nowt like 72% show up in churches of a Sunday. More like 10%.

Ec: So what's that about, like?

Ant: Mebbes people want to believe in God but churches aren't the place to find him?

Ec: Howway, you're jokin'! Churches not the place to find God?

Ant: Well, when were you last in church?

Ec: For me Auntie Mabel's funeral. This vicar was gannin' on about sin, and starin' in my direction. Didn't fancy that much and got out as soon as possible for a couple of pints in the Gravediggers Arms, next door.

Ant: That's me point, man! If it's God you're lookin' for, the last place you want to go is church.

Ec: Well if there's 72% of people claim they're Christian, but only around 10% ever go to church, surely the churches ought to be findin' out what people want? Making the places more attractive?

Ant: Fat chance!

Ec: Hang about, hang about. Where's that Newsletter thingy from that church down the road – St Mary's, wasn't it?

Ant: Dunno. Shredded mine for the hamster's beddin'.

Ec: Here it is! Hey, mebbes this is worth thinkin' about...

Celebrate Easter

Everyone loves Easter. Fluffy chicks, lambs in the fields, daffodils everywhere and of course, lots of chocolate eggs. It's feel-good time, the moment for a new outfit, a lick of paint on the house, plans for the summer. No wonder most folk fancy a trip out on Easter Sunday –sometimes even to church - especially if it's one of those powder blue days with the sun warming the pavements.

But why must Christians persist with all the shock-horror stuff that comes before the big day, indulging themselves in an ancient story of scourging and beating which ends with an act of execution, a man being put to death in one of the most fiendish ways of torture yet devised? Do they really expect everyone else to join in? Why can't they lighten up?

These are fair questions. The world is hopeless enough, surely, without dwelling on the detail of a terrible piece of history. Why can't we, as someone once said, simply eat, drink and be merry? Isn't that the only way to live without going barmy?

Yet many people find that the pains of the world can't be brushed aside so easily. War, famine, disease, natural disasters, suffering way beyond the experience of most people in Whitley Bay, press upon us daily from our newspapers and TV screens. If only there were some way of dealing with all this pain, of unloading it and in the

process, finding a vision of something better?

Christians have found that way, and Easter is the climax of that vision. The suffering of Jesus becomes the joy of resurrection, and suddenly, on Easter morning, the world is transformed. Human life, with all its undoubted horrors and fears, is revealed as something precious, to be nurtured and celebrated because, in the context of eternity and in the eyes of God, it matters.

How good is that? How much does that make you want to sing aloud and be merry? How much does it call upon you to oppose injustice and oppression, to fight against poverty and help its victims, so that all the world might join in the great celebration?

Why not come to St. Mary's this Easter, and begin to find out?

Easter Holiday Club

There will be a 'Holiday Club' for 5-11 year olds running in the church hall from Monday 2 April to Friday 6 April. Cost is £2.50 per day or £10 for the whole week. Fun, games, song, stories and craft work. Learn about Jesus and the things he did during Holy Week!

Details from the church office tel: 251 4216.

Countdown to Easter

During Holy Week, which runs from Palm Saturday (31 March) to Holy Saturday (7 April), there'll be an opportunity every day to meet and think about Jesus' last week leading to his betrayal, trial, crucifixion and glorious resurrection. You'll be welcome at any or all of the following:

Saturday 31 March, Palm Saturday

6.00 pm Evening Prayers

Sunday 1 April, Palm Sunday

8.00 am Eucharist;
10.00 am Palm Procession and Eucharist;
6.00 pm Reflection in music and words on the way to the cross

Monday 2 April, Tuesday 3 April, Wednesday 4 April Holy Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday

9.00 am Morning Prayer;
9.30 am Eucharist and address;
7.30 pm Eucharist and address

Thursday 5 April, Maundy Thursday

9.00 am Morning Prayer;
9.30 am Eucharist and address;
7.30 pm Eucharist, with washing of feet, and watch through the night

Friday 6 April, Good Friday

9.00 am to 3.00 pm: Readings, Silence and Reflection
30 minute services beginning on each hour
12 noon: service led by children and young people

Saturday 7 April, Holy Saturday

9.00 am Readings, Silence and Reflection
10.30 am Easter journey to Lindisfarne (Holy Island)

(Contact the church office for details)

Sunday 8 April, Easter Day

6.30 am Lighting the Easter Fire and First Eucharist of Easter
8.00 am Eucharist
10.00 am Sung Eucharist followed by games and celebrations
No service this evening

Pick up a copy of our Easter Service Guide from church or the church office. The printing of the guide has been sponsored by **129 Coffee Shop**, Park View, Whitley Bay NE26 3RH





What St Mary's means to me



After early retirement at 50, not working was not an option. So... I now have two

part-time jobs, working longer hours than before, and now also visiting ageing parents at weekends.

What's that got to do with my Christian faith and St Mary's?

Well, it's important to me that I set aside time each week to say a big thank you to God – thanking him for all I now realise is important, and for being able to cope with the demands I must take on board. Sunday worship at St Mary's gives me this opportunity to say thanks and to worship God, while drawing strength from like-minded Christians for the week ahead.

Stuart



As a young person, I enjoy being a member of the COGs ('Children of God') youth group, which encourages us all to be open and more knowledgeable about being a Christian. We

have a lot of fun with our learning (with the occasional bowling trip!!). I also like playing violin or guitar in the band to help lead the worship.

Daniel



Although I don't attend every week at St Mary's with my family, that doesn't mean I am less committed. The service I enjoy the most is the All Age Service because of the jovial music, a gifted

group of musicians, the children can sit on the floor as the pews are rearranged to create a relaxed atmosphere, there are also facilities for children to draw, play and read books and occasionally they have interactive slide shows.

Christine

The Power to Heal



By Katy Bell

Why might you seek healing in church? Why not at the doctor's surgery, the hospital or the complimentary therapist?

Well you can seek healing in all of these places. If I have a chest infection I seek to have it healed by antibiotics from my GP. If I have ongoing or acute problems that the GP can't treat I hope that the hospital will be able to investigate and treat me. If I have a problem that conventional medicine is not so good at treating I might go to a complimentary therapist. But through all of this I seek healing from God, because healing is not about the body in isolation, it's about the interaction between body, mind and spirit. They are all interconnected.

We talk about being 'low in spirits' and the obvious physical effects of this can be lack of energy, difficulty sleeping, skin rashes, indigestion and more. We may have known different people with the same physical illness – one who was totally disabled by it, and one who carries on working, playing and enjoying life. The difference is not in the illness itself but in the mind and spirit.

I believe it is difficult to be truly healed if we think we can go it alone and are separated from God and a sense of God's unconditional love for us. Knowledge of that love can come from other people and in my work as a GP I believe that I use not only my knowledge and skills as a doctor but also the love and care which I have for my patients because

of God's love for me and all of us, as his children.

When I think of the healing that we might experience in church I don't think of some dramatic cure delivered as a theatrical showpiece with lots of noise and attention. I think of an experience of quietness and reflection, of loving and prayerful concern from others, where the dignity and privacy of everyone is respected and maintained. A place to find peace and to have your inner resources renewed and strengthened for the days ahead.

In the New Testament we hear many stories of people being healed by Jesus. In church today we don't expect such dramatic miracles as a man who was blind being able to see or someone being brought back from the dead. The sceptic in me thinks they must have got the diagnosis wrong so I search for another meaning; I find it in seeing that in following Jesus and accepting God's love for them they are made whole again, they are able to function and have a life worth living; the illnesses they suffer from become just a part of the background picture of their lives rather than being the whole focus of the picture.

The next Healing Services will be held at 6.00pm on 15 April, 20 May, 10 June and 8 July. There will also be a service at 'Turning the Tide' (see page 2).