



# St Mary's Newsletter

St Mary's – at the Heart of Your Community

## Meet Benjamin Carter, our new Curate

St Mary's has a new curate, Benjamin Carter, from Lancashire, who has come to serve in the parish with his wife, Steph.

Benjamin says: "I am originally from a village by the sea in the North-west, so coming to Whitley Bay and being so close to the sea does feel like home, even if the sun sets are over the hills and not over the sea like I'm used to!

"After leaving school I went to university in the south of England and studied at various places, ending up in Bristol where I taught history at the university for some time. However, my main passion has always been music. I have always sung in choirs and when not working I was fortunate to sing in Bristol Cathedral Choir for five years. It was through this connection that I met Steph.

"Having felt called to serve in the Church we were keen to move back to the north of England. Consequently I went to train for the ministry at Cranmer Hall in Durham and this in turn led to me coming to live and work in Monkseaton.

"While I am at St Mary's my main job is to continue my training so that I can, in time, be equipped to lead and serve



Benjamin with Bishop Martin on Ordination Day

a parish by myself. It has been a joy joining such an exciting and vigorous community and I feel sure that this experience will put me in good stead for my future ministry. My hope is that I am able to contribute to the ongoing life and ministry of St Mary's and help support and encourage all who live in the parish to grow in the knowledge and love of God."

The parish extends a warm welcome to Benjamin and Steph and invites everyone to St Mary's to come and meet them personally.

# Five Talents

*"Master," he said, "You have entrusted me with five talents. See, I have gained five more." His master replied. "Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful in a few things; I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master."*

Did you see Sandy Toksvig on BBCtv's 'Lifeline' just holding back the tears as she reported on how women in Tanzania were working to support their families through loans from 'Five Talents'? St Mary's Justice and Peace Group are promoting 'Five Talents' this year, and we held an information and prayer and fund-raising service with a 'developing world lunch' a few weeks ago. We invite you to find out more about this third world microfinance project, and to consider supporting it. What's microfinance? It's about small loans to people living on the edge of



poverty, people who with the smallest amount of capital can create jobs, pay for education and health for their families, pay back their loan, and make it available for the next person with a good idea. Repayment is usually over four or six months.

There's always been a credit crunch in the developing world. Around 1.5 billion people who would want to do so can't access savings or borrowing facilities. The nearest bank may be 100 miles or more away, would-be borrowers have no collateral, may well be illiterate, and banks don't lend money to people who don't wear shoes!

Through training and small loans, Five Talents helps to establish and nurture small businesses like grocers, hairdressers, bakers, brick-makers, shoe repairers, even bicycle puncture repair services. This tackles poverty bottom up. Each business builds economic independence for the individual entrepreneur, their families and the families of those they employ. Employment and independence bring dignity. Five Talents creates jobs to fight poverty. The great thing is that as loans are repaid, the money keeps getting recycled for more and more projects. And we can all help through financial support.

You can find out more about Five Talents, how to support them and how to sign up for their Newsletter at [www.fivetalents.org.uk](http://www.fivetalents.org.uk)

# Marriage in church after divorce

*A message from Rev'd Eileen Noble, Associate Priest*

Here at your local parish church of St Mary's we see marriage as a lifetime of love that grows within God's protection. But we recognise that some marriages fail for all sorts of painful reasons. So the Church of England accepts that in exceptional circumstances a divorced person may remarry in church during the lifetime of a former spouse.

If you are considering remarriage in Church, you should talk to one of the clergy team – Robin, Eric or myself, well before choosing a date for your wedding. Our starting point will always be that we want to offer you love and support. Whichever of us you choose, we'll need to talk to you frankly about the past, your hopes for the future and your understanding of marriage. Our guiding principles in any conversation will be dignity, care and loving concern.

You and your intended husband or wife will have to consider some questions and think in advance about the issues they raise. It's not a test you must get through, but you will need to be open and honest. What does marriage mean to you? What have you learned from your previous marriage? Has there been healing of past hurts? If you have children, how are they being looked after? What do others think of your marriage plans? When did your new relationship begin? Has either of you been divorced more than once?

You will also need to assure us that you are free to remarry, and to bring with you



written legal proof that any divorce decree is absolute (not just a decree nisi).

We will probably ask for more than one confidential interview with you and your intended spouse together. In complicated circumstances we might feel the need to consult with the bishop or his adviser before making a decision, although the decision remains with us. By the end of our meetings we will have come to a shared agreement as to the right way forward.

Whether or not you eventually remarry in church, your priest and your local church are available to offer you guidance and support as to how you proceed on life's journey.

Even if it is not possible for us to conduct your wedding, there are alternatives such as a service of prayer and dedication after a civil wedding. So do come and talk to us.

One of the favourite occasions in the church calendar is the Harvest Festival, full of nostalgia as we gather to share seasonal fruit and vegetables and give thanks to God for the richness of the harvest.



Lavender plant souvenirs from 'World Environment Day'

environmental crisis affecting all life.

We decided to focus upon the plight of bees, and in our main service on June 6, we learned that the bee population has been declining for a number of years and

that in 2007/8, 30% were lost.

Why does it matter? Because honeybees pollinate 90% of English apples and one in three mouthfuls of food is produced with the help of bees, contributing £200m to the British economy.

A hive only flourishes because all the inhabitants work together, each with a role to play in the community, and as a church community we can learn a lot from this model. What a bee collects from around the hive gets turned into something wonderful – honey – and the outside world benefits. If we were all to bring our love into church and then take God's love back out into the world we would be sharing God's message for the benefit of everyone.

We can help by growing native species of plants in our gardens to encourage bees. So this Harvest, think about a world without flowers, fruit and vegetables, and give thanks for the role of bees.

However, as the world gets smaller our traditional crops are more likely to be gathered from around the globe rather than our own doorstep, and with a plentiful supply all year round, it's easy to take food for granted.

Yet the story of Creation has never been more important than today. On the one hand we delight in the colour and diversity of the earth, while on the other we plunder its resources for our own selfish needs. But what if we suddenly learned that our food supplies were threatened?

This summer the Justice and Peace Group at St Mary's decided to hold a special service for World Environment Day, the theme being 'Biodiversity – Many Species, One Planet, One Future'. Our congregation wanted to pray for the earth, to acknowledge God's love in creation, to try to become less self-centred and understand our place within creation, and to recognise the need to respond to any acute



## What St Mary's could mean to you

In every Newsletter since our launch people from the church community have written their own stories. Here are some of the things they've mentioned:

- Being part of a community, part of a family
- A place I can bring up my son so he can share the joys and responsibilities of being a child of God
- The place where I most felt the presence of God, where I can feel 'at home'. A place where I feel happy, safe and protected.
- A rock in times of trouble. Mutual trust
- Finding God in God's people. One word? Kindness!
- We were made so welcome and looked after
- Good to see the church used as a community facility
- A place where I can feel heaviness becoming lighter
- A place where I meet friends and share laughter or tears
- I join in if I want to, but more often I meet with myself and reflect
- Being actively involved in service to other people
- I have found my niche among others who are curious about life, puzzled by our place in creation, bound up in the example of Jesus of Nazareth
- Meeting new people and reaching

- out into the community
  - Very moved by concern and prayers when my husband was in hospital
  - Friends who have shown us kindness and encouragement in times of sadness and of joy
  - So many people comment on how 'unstuffy' it is
  - A spiritual 'base' where I can go to think, reflect and talk about things that are bothering me
  - A place to receive strength, forgiveness and guidance
  - It's really about the people – they're an amazing bunch
  - A challenge to our understanding of the Christian life
  - Great peace and comfort from the sharing of worship
  - The more you put in, the more you seem to receive
  - After a hectic working week, I find I can reconnect with what really matters in life
  - It's important that I set time aside to say a big thank you to God
- These snatches of life of St Mary's show some of the things that have helped people feel at home here. At St Mary's we offer companionship for life's journey and the comfort of loving friends in distress. Through worship and friendship we also offer a hopeful place, somewhere people can grow as human beings. Why not give us a try?





# What St Mary's means to me



As I think about St Mary's, words assault my mind. Warm, Loving, Welcoming, Progressive, Accepting, Encouraging, Fun, Open to new ideas. ...and I love it.

I moved to Whitley Bay about three years ago, realising my life was going to change: new job, house, area, people, and soon to be married, so the thing I wanted to keep constant was my relationship with God, and attendance at a good church.

I had attended the same church in London for 20 years, so it was that feeling of family and acceptance that I was looking for in a church, and thank God, as I walked into St Mary's the first time, I felt it, and fought tears as I heard 'Holy Holy Holy' sung so beautifully. The immediate love, and desire to get to know me, was important; being from the South, of a West Indian upbringing, and one of only a few black people in the area, I was worried how I'd fit in. I had nothing to fear - the biggest issue would be the accent, but I'm learning a bit more Geordie every day, and will soon be fluent! Thanks St Mary's.

Nadia Leake



A wedding, three Christenings and a funeral (my father's) all feature in my meaningful relationship with St Mary's! The church has

played a role in my life for over fifty years. I have always been on the periphery of its life, never being a major player but through life's highs and lows it has remained a firm influence on me.

As a young teenager I remember Friday evenings in the Church hall as a guider. Definitely not a model guide but they tell me, character building! My late teens were filled with very happy days spent at St Mary's tennis club, dramatic society, confirmation class, and a thriving youth club - a hotbed of hormones!

In April this year my husband and I celebrated our Ruby wedding, 40 years since we made our vows. Over the years I have seen much ecclesiastical change at St Mary's. But in this ever altering world it remains a solid presence; my personal haven of tranquillity and peace.

Pam Miller

## Coming Up

### Quizaid

St Mary's, 7.30pm, Friday 17 September. Cost: £2 minimum donation to enter and the cash raised goes to Christian Aid to help people in the developing world have access to clean water, education and health care.

### Last Night of the Proms

7.30pm, Saturday, 16 October: Concert in aid of the Building Fund from the New Tyneside Orchestra (leader: Dawn Allen, conductor Stephen Pettitt) Tickets £7.50 adults, £3.50 children, including a glass of wine or a soft drink. Call the parish office for further details.

## 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 8.00am	Holy Communion
Sunday 10.00am	Parish Communion with children's church and crèche, followed by breakfast
Sunday 6.00pm	Evening Prayer (Healing Service on 2nd Sunday of month)
Monday-Friday 9.00am	Morning Prayer
Tuesday & Wednesday 9.30am	Eucharist (Book of Common Prayer on Tuesday; coffee after service on Wednesday)

On **Sunday 17 October** at the 10.00am Holy Communion service for St Luke's tide, the focus for worship will be healing. In any service of Holy Communion we experience healing when God relieves us of our sins and when our prayers of intercession combine our love with God's love, and our will with his will. At the same time, the Peace reminds us that we're all engaged in a healing relationship through the grace of God.

During this service you have the opportunity to bring your worries or concerns, for yourself or those you love, and, if you wish, to receive anointing with holy oil and the laying on of hands. This is not compulsory, but whatever you choose or choose not to do, a warm welcome awaits you.

Information about all the activities is available from St Mary's Parish Office (open Monday – Friday 10.00am – 12.00 noon)

Telephone: **(0191) 251 4216**

(voicemail outside office hours).

Email: [newsletter@stmarysmonkseaton.org.uk](mailto:newsletter@stmarysmonkseaton.org.uk)

Do check out our new, improved website:

[www.stmarysmonkseaton.co.uk](http://www.stmarysmonkseaton.co.uk)

You'll find us at the junction of Clarendon Gardens and Davison Avenue, Whitley Bay.

If any of the many other activities at St Mary's interest you, please ring the office, and we'll put you in touch with the right person:

- baptisms and weddings,
- Bible Study Groups,
- prayer cells,
- Mothers Union,
- choir singing,
- the Praise Band,
- funerals
- beavers, cubs, scouts, rainbows, brownies, guides
- mums and toddlers group
- 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),
- a lunch club,
- Badminton Club,
- Church Hall for group events or parties.



# st Mary

THE VIRGIN  
MONKSEATON

## AUTUMN FAIR

Claremont Gardens, Whitley Bay  
10.00am to 1.30pm  
Saturday 25th September 2010

Bouncy Castle • Photo Portraits  
Face Painter • Competitions • Coconut Shy  
Big Band Sounds • Lots of fun to be had...

**FANTASTIC RAFFLE PRIZES:**  
Linden Hall 2 nights B&B  
4 Whitley Bay  
Playhouse Tickets  
Christmas food Hamper  
dinner for 2 at a  
local restaurant,  
and lots more...

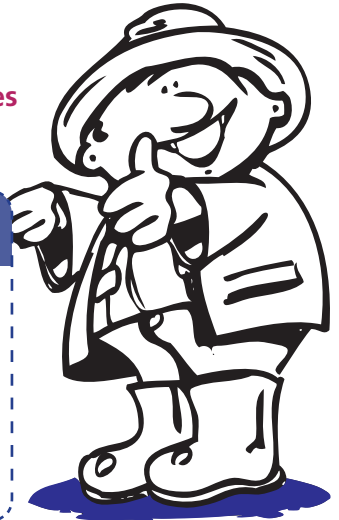
**LOTS OF STALLS...**  
Toiletries  
Home Produce,  
Cakes, Plants,  
Books, Toys,  
Jewellery,  
Tombola  
Traidcraft

**REFRESHMENTS**  
Morning Coffee  
Freshly made lunches  
Italian Ice Cream

Admission only 50p  
Children FREE

Doors open 9.45am  
Official opening 10.00am

Tomorrow's Antiques  
and lots more...



### FREE Prize Draw - Bring this with you!

Name:.....  
Address:.....  
.....  
Telephone:.....