

## WELCOME TO THE FOUNTAIN



*The Ministry team letter has been written by our vicar, Jenny Fennell.*

Spring has to be one of my favourite times of year; there are so many visible signs of new life, the daylight hours are lengthening, and people just seem happier and filled with energy to take on new and exciting things.

At St. Francis there are many signs of new life and new growth too; some new challenges and some exciting developments.

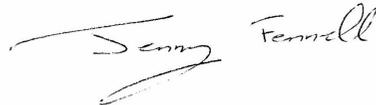
Recently the PCC had its PCC Morning, which we have once a year. It gives the committee a chance to look and reflect upon some of the bigger issues, which it is simply not possible to do within our regular evening meetings. This year we wanted to reflect upon all that has been achieved over the last five years and look forward, thinking about our aims and ambitions for both the next year and the next five years. Over the next year, we felt that we would like to concentrate particularly on areas such as our communication both within our community and to the wider community; the nurturing of our congregation; and the continuing development of our work with children and families. Here are just some of our thoughts:

**Communication:** many improvements have been made over recent years such as the updating of our website, the new diary system, the redesign of the external notice boards and the setting up of the Comms Group. We are very aware though, that there is still room for improvement. Whilst we have some ideas of things we can do, we would also welcome any suggestions you may have regarding ways of communicating within our congregation and to the wider community.

**Nurturing our congregation:** whilst we currently have house-groups, Lent and Advent courses, retreat day etc., we are very conscious that many are untouched by these. We want to look into new ways of nurturing all ages, those new to faith and those further along the journey. We are looking into the possibility of recording a Sunday Service so that those who are housebound can join in our worship and hear the sermon; we want to improve our interaction with visitors; and we want to provide opportunities for all ages within our congregation. We want to nurture potential, inspire minds and change lives.

**Children and Families:** We have seen huge developments in this area over the past five years thanks to the hard work and dedication of many. It was felt though, that in order to be able to develop this further, whilst still giving the Ministry Team time to nurture all members of the congregation, the PCC would commit to funding a part-time Children and Families Worker. It is with great excitement that I can announce that Nikki Clare will be starting with us Monday 18<sup>th</sup> April, working for 15 hours a week.

As we explore these exciting developments together, may the Holy Spirit guide and strengthen us in all we do, that we may grow in faith and spread God's light and peace in the world. Please pray for our community and church and help us to spread God's love and nurture faith.



**From the registers:**

***Rest In Peace:***

(Elsie) Ntombomntu Fumba Badejo  
John Ivorson Taylor  
Bernard Williams  
Dorothy Grace Rymell  
Evelyn Mary Eleanor Barron  
Sylvia Thompson  
Please pray for these people , who died recently, and for those who mourn their passing.

## CHOIR NOTES

Congratulations to the following Trebles who recently gained their Red Ribbons and medals: Amelie and Annelise Apling, Annabel Dunstan and Freddie Ellingworth.

Congratulations also to James Byrt, Ellen Green, Rufus Jasko and Thomas Noakes who recently completed their tests and were presented with their Light Blue Ribbons. Photos of these two sets of trebles can be found on the inside cover.

Good Friday and Easter services are currently monopolising our choir rehearsals – on top of the Good Friday and Easter Sunday service, we are also singing evensong at St Francis on Easter Day.

The Youth Choir, members of St Francis Choir and St Francis Singers combined to sing for the Ash Wednesday service this year, conducted by Andrew Henthorn – I sat in the congregation which was for me an uplifting and moving experience, especially during the singing of the Miserere (Psalm 51) to the famous setting by Gregorio Allegri (including the “High C” notes sung perfectly by Eleanor Adams). The same forces will be leading the services on both Maundy Thursday and Ascension Day.

Rehearsals are continuing with our new Junior Choir (Years 1 to 3) lead by Emma Harrison, Jessica Wiley and Jo Dunstan – they will make their debut on Easter Day at the 10.00am service.

Richard Harrison

## **FRIENDS OF ST FRANCIS**

The Friends have recently been left £2000 in the will of the late Phillis Weaver. As many readers will be aware, Phillis was the main archivist and keeper of the history of the church. She did write a history of St Francis Church some years ago and there are some copies still in circulation.

At a recent meeting of the Trustees, it was felt that a fitting way of using some of this legacy and remembering Phillis, would be to update this history, and publish it in a professional format. The aim would be to have it ready for the Centenary of the Garden City celebrations in 2017.

Our Chairman, John Butler, has kindly offered to edit the book. He would be grateful to receive any material – photos, articles, reminiscences that he may be able to use. He will return anything he uses as long as it is clearly labelled.

Jan Nafzger, Secretary to the Trustees.

## **And it's Goodbye from me.....**

When you read this Til and I will either have left Welwyn Garden City or be just about to leave to move to a bungalow in Ravenshead, a small village just north of Nottingham and more importantly just half an hour from our daughter Bianca, her husband and lifelong member of St Francis Choir, Mikey, and two of our gorgeous grandchildren Gabriel and Ruby.

Our association with St Francis Church began with a letter from Richard Harrison, which arrived in March 1990, inviting our son Adam, who was just 8, to join the choir. We were bemused by the Colchester post mark on the letter, but of course Richard was commuting to St Francis every weekend until he moved permanently to the Garden City.

At first we came to St Francis to support Adam but gradually I got roped in to help with the choir boys on Choir Week. Last summer was my 22<sup>nd</sup> choir week!! But for many years I was simply a choir dad, but then joined the PCC. I was invited to help direct 'Joseph' for our 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary and gradually became more involved. Adam was christened at St Francis prior to his confirmation, Bianca and Mikey were married in 2007 and both their children Gabriel and Ruby were christened, all at St Francis.

It was not until 2010 when Jan Nafzger asked me if I was interested in becoming warden that St Francis Church became almost a full time post!! I was bowled over and queried whether I had the necessary experience to take on such an onerous role. We had been without a vicar for a year and Jenny Fennell was soon to fill that role. I spoke to many people including Jenny and after permission from my family agreed to take on the role. Of course Jan and Helen Wilkie, the other warden were very well informed and knew that I was due to retire from teaching that summer.

I have to say that my family were incredibly supportive. I took on the role in May 2010 and I have to admit that the last 6 years have been as busy, if not busier than when I was in full time work. But all that I have done has filled me with the greatest satisfaction and sense of fulfilment

I joined the Schools Outreach Team, taking over as co-ordinator when Jenny Gray left. I joined the assembly team that goes into Applecroft on a weekly basis and then was approached to become a Community Governor at the school. I have really enjoyed my two years at Applecroft, the school where Bianca and Adam attended in the eighties.

I was most fortunate to have Jan to hold my hand in the first year as warden and then to work with Stuart Richardson for the next two. It was in Stuart's first year that we had both Jenny's off together, one on maternity leave and one on sabbatical! Those were very demanding times. Both Stuart and I clued up on the rules and regulations governing the Sunday services just in case one of the many visiting clergy failed to turn up and we had to lead the worship!

My tenure as warden also coincided with the formation of the Development Group and how gratifying to see the engraved glass doors on the St Clare Chapel, the new lighting system and the complete redecoration of the church. This of course is in addition to the new kitchen in the hall and the renovated toilets.

I have also had the pleasure of working with the Memorial Pathway Team, headed up by the enthusiastic Ed Giberti.

Sundays at St Francis are busy times and I have also been able to work with the Youth and Children's Church team. How gratifying to see the numbers grow. How gratifying too to see the increased numbers of young people in our fantastic choir.

My daughter Bianca and I have really enjoyed organising two Last Night of the Proms Concerts and one of my outstanding memories will be Sandra Partridge coming to the concert in 2014.

Then of course there is the Christmas Tree Festival! A wonderful outreach project for the whole town. How this project brings the whole church and the whole community together is fabulous.

Til and I have made many friends during our association with St Francis Church. I believe that we are lucky to have so many dedicated people who ensure that the church business runs smoothly.

St Francis is truly blessed with a vibrant Ministry team, so ably led by Jenny. Let's not forget Simon. Behind every strong woman there is a supportive man! It would seem invidious to name other individuals but music is the cornerstone of our worship and in Richard we have a truly talented and inspirational leader.

It seems a long time since I stood on the touchline and watched the choir boys football team ably organised by Dougie Agnew and how lucky we are to have his skills and devotion as our treasurer. I see Dougie as the 'go to man' since if seeking a volunteer to set up tables, spring clean, set up lights, put up trees etc etc he is always the first man you go to!

It was a privilege to work alongside Jan and then Stuart, who is 'never knowing undersold!' but gets on with so many jobs in the church almost unnoticed.

Then there's Dermot, my 'Man for all Seasons'. You want a chariot for Joseph, ask Dermot. Screens for the production – ask Dermot. You want to soundproof the cellar – ask Dermot!

Then there's the schools team – Cynthia, Marcia, Christine, Janet, Dermot, Pam, Carolyn and our new recruits Alison and Zoe. Not forgetting Genevieve and Sheila who provide refreshments.

Then there's 'Everyman' – our very dear friend Keith Crabb, 'Mister fixit!' and my partner in crime on the tenor line and also for all those wonderful choir weeks: not forgetting the end of week choir revues!!

And the voice of calmness in Alison Daniels, who is kindly taking over the administration of the Memorial Pathway.

Then let's not forget Emma Harrison, who I have so much enjoyed working with on two productions of 'Joseph'.

Then there is my house group, headed by our master chef Josh, together with Joan and Vince, Rob and Clare, Lorna and Matt.

Then our very own soon to be ex warden Howell, who asked me to define the role of warden before agreeing to take it on, and then finding out his tenure also coincided with the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary!

Then the ever present Liz Green, Mary, Julie and Robin and not forgetting Andy, Peter, Nigel and Tony and Montse and Pui San, and more, so many more.

Then those who have passed on, Ed, Bill and Sandra.

The Towndrow family will miss you all including a special mention for Anthony Salmon, who has tried to keep me in check for years and possibly failed.....

Thank you for letting me in particular indulge my passion of working with enthusiastic and talented young people.

Finally a huge thank you to Jenny Fennell, who leads the church with so much integrity and has allowed me to follow my dreams.

We will be back to visit and wish St Francis Church and all our friends the very best for the future.

Brian Towndrow and family.

Many congratulations to Wendy Sellers, who has been accepted for training to the Priesthood.

Please keep her and her family in your prayers. She will begin her training in September.

## Where do all the books go?

Every year at both the Summer Fete and Christmas Tree Festival the church sells second hand books in good condition. The stall is successful - a good range of books for children of all ages, and many categories of books for adults draw both browsers and those hoping to find something special. Books are donated by members of the congregation - sometimes we are even given what seems to be an entire collection – and at the last Christmas Tree Festival, there were six tables full of books on sale, and well over £130 was raised.

People sometimes ask “What happens to those books that are not sold?” Well, they are sorted into those worth keeping for next time, and those which clearly will not sell (mainly ones that have been around for over a year or so). The latter are boxed to be passed on, and twice a year two or three boxes of books are taken to either the Oxfam Bookshop or the shop run by the Children’s Society (a charity St Francis supports) at Woodhall. It ensures we have a regular turnover, so that the books we offer are always fairly new.

This time things are a little different. Some of the books we cannot sell have already started on a much longer journey, to a place where they will be read over and over again. St Francis has supported Mercy Ships for many years and, following a lot of correspondence to identify what is and isn’t already on board so as not to double up, some 130 books are on their way to enhance the library on board the hospital ship *Africa Mercy*. The ship’s library helps to provide relaxation for all working on board, both medical staff and other crew, not only during any time off, but also when the ship is at sea. There is always some rotation of library books. As a result of much use the more popular books become worn out and need replacing. Some will be taken for their readers to finish when they leave the ship, while books brought by people joining the ship become added to the library. Our books will provide a welcome addition, especially for those on board for a lengthy period.

All this from books that are no longer wanted by their original buyers. Now that is recycling!

So please keep the books coming in. The only requirement is that they are in good condition. They will always be found a new home.

Anthony Packer

## Lent Lunch 2016

On Sunday February 28<sup>th</sup> we held our Lent Lunch and this year we have supported the work of Y-Care International in Sierra Leone as our Lent Appeal.

To give us some experience of life in Sierra Leone, we enjoyed a West African lunch of Sierra Leonean Lamb and Aubergine stew, Corn Chaff (sweetcorn and bean stew), Jollof Rice (spicy rice with tomatoes), Spring Greens and Sweet Potato, with plantain chips on the side. This was followed by tropical fruit for dessert. This proved to be a very popular meal with many going back for second helpings. Congratulations to Josh and his team for embracing a new culture of cooking so successfully! The lunch raised over £400. The Lent Appeal came to an end on Easter Day, so watch out in the pew leaflet to find out how much we raised in total to support this work.

Following the meal, there was a talk from Adam Leach, the CEO of Y-Care International. He was able to give some general background about the work of Y-Care International before focusing on their work in Sierra Leone, post the Ebola crisis. He explained how communities suffered during the Ebola outbreak and how they continue to suffer as, even though the disease is under control, there is still prejudice against those who have had the disease, and whole communities need rebuilding. He explained how Y-Care International informs and mobilises the young adults to educate their communities, manage disasters etc.

The Charities Committee

## Marhaba!

Marhaba means “Hello” in Arabic. It comes from a Syriac origin and was used by the first Christians in Syria.

Mar = Master or God... Haba = Love

So: Marhaba = God is love!

After our traditional greeting, we’d like to introduce our selves: We are a married Syrian couple, Maurice & Reem. We recently relocated from Dubai to Welwyn Garden City! It’s quite a move, isn’t!!

I (Maurice) left Syria in 2009 to Dubai for work and lived there for 7 years. In 2013, war in Syria turned into a fierce and very violent conflict that engulfed the whole country. Our biggest city (Aleppo) suffered badly from terrorists who cut all water, electricity and even food supplies from reaching millions of trapped people, in addition to shelling the city with countless rockets. This forced thousands of families to leave their homes, leave for the unknown...

During that time I was leading a successful and interesting life in Dubai, but it was always lacking something fundamental, true love. I didn’t imagine, however, that from the deepest sorrows happening back home, God is preparing a wonderful plan for my life. There in St. Mary’s Church, Dubai in 2013, and after a catechism class, I met with a lovely and beautiful lady who introduced herself as: Reem from Aleppo, she left Syria (along with those families I talked about) through Lebanon coming to her brother’s place in Dubai, unknowing that God had a plan for her as well... in the fullness of time, we met and fell in love, and in less than a year we got married!

I was working with MasterCard, whose regional Middle East & Africa office is in Dubai. Reem is a chemist, but she worked as an Arabic Teacher in Dubai, mainly teaching Europeans living there and looking to integrate more with the society.

Just 2 years into our full-of-blessings marriage, my company offered me a position in our MasterCard’s Welwyn Garden City office!! I jumped into Google maps to see where that Garden city is! Isn’t technology great for mankind?

While still in Dubai, we used Google “Street view” to roam around WGC from my laptop. I remember one day while I was “walking” in Welwyn through Google “street view”, I stumbled upon a church with a sign reading “St. Francis church”.

I told Reem: “*Habibti (my love) there’s a church called St. Francis in that city, and I have a feeling we’ll be part of this church!*” (Reem still remembers these words crystal clear). I didn’t tell you yet that we got married in St. Francis Church Dubai!

So here we are, moved into Welwyn in January 2016, and now live in a lovely flat in the city centre, just across the road from our new church, where we feel we truly belong.

My office is in Bessemer Road, which is a walking (or cycling) distance from home. Isn’t that great after 7 years of extensive driving in Dubai?

Reem is still looking for a job, and she’s into the second month of pregnancy!

So that was our story... We want to **Thank You** all for the heart-warming hospitality we found here. Everyone was smiling, welcoming us and asking us whether we needed any help. In St. Francis we found a caring family and experienced the presence of Jesus Christ.

We would love to connect and be friends with all of you, talk about life and learn from each one of you. So feel free to reach out and even visit us.

Maurice Abd

## FORTHCOMING EVENTS

We have some exciting events planned for the Summer, please put them in your diary!

**Saturday June 11th 7.30pm     *The Galini Piano Trio***

**Saturday June 25th             *Our Summer Fete***  
**12—4.30pm**                     Activities, stalls etc for all the family

**Saturday July 9th                 *Teddy Bears’ Picnic***  
**2—4pm**                             Fun for families with young children

## OUT AND ABOUT IN HERTFORDSHIRE

I’m sure many of the readers of this magazine enjoy getting out into the countryside to explore what Hertfordshire has to offer. Indeed, our family used to often go out for a walk in the countryside, perhaps with a stop for refreshment in a local hostelry!

We now find that our situation is slightly different, as my reduced mobility means we have had to reconsider suitable places to go, with paths that can accommodate a ‘wheeled’ mobility aid. Our situation is not unique, for example many couples will have experienced the need to change their walking plans to accommodate a pram or pushchair and then a toddler etc.

In our quest to discover new routes, we have found Broxbourne Sculpture Park (a walk of about a mile with well surfaced paths, not too muddy when we went and a number of wooden sculptures along the route which would keep a small child interested and keen to carry on. Car parking is easy but there are no facilities.

Another very interesting discovery was the Wheathampstead Heritage Trail. You can download it from the web and it takes you round Wheathampstead village, pointing out architectural features, and gives a history of some of the buildings etc. There is a reconstructed railway platform where the station used to be and all the way along the trail there are information boards. We had a very enjoyable walk around the village, followed by lunch in a pub there. I think it would be a good walk for families to enjoy and find out a bit more about the local area. There is a good sized free car park and facilities, and various options to get a snack or lunch.

Do you have any suggestions for similar walks? I’d be happy to include them here for others to enjoy!

Janet Packer

## We are all God's Family!

Youth and Children's Church age 5 to 10 are very excited to be welcoming the Reception Children (those 5 / turning 5) up from the preschool group after Easter as well as the new choir probationers when they join the choir in services. This will make us a big and energetic group for the summer term!

Following on from the themed learning of the Spring term where the children learnt how the Lord's Prayer is the great family prayer of the Church we will be exploring families in the Bible, how God loves and supports families and how we are a family of Christians at St Francis. We will be looking at scripture across the Old and New Testaments each splitting into 2-3 age groups for fun age-appropriate activities. The topics will be:

24<sup>th</sup> April – We are all God's Family *Luke 8:19*

1<sup>st</sup> May – Abraham, Sarah and Isaac – God fulfils His promises, *Genesis 18-22*

8<sup>th</sup> May – Joseph: Brothers fight, brothers forgive, *Genesis 37: 1-36*

22<sup>nd</sup> May – Ruth and Naomi: Families stick together, *Ruth*

5<sup>th</sup> June – What makes a good Mum? *Proverbs "The Capable Wife" 31:10-31*

12<sup>th</sup> June – Mary, Martha and Lazarus – Jesus in our homes, *John 11:1-45*

19<sup>th</sup> June – Jairus's Daughter and the Widow's son – Jesus's compassion for sick children and their families *Luke 8:10-56 and 7:11-16*

26<sup>th</sup> June – The Prodigal Son – God is the best father

3<sup>rd</sup> July – Paul's advice to children and parents *Ephesians 6: 1-14*

10<sup>th</sup> July – We are all God's Family – what have we learnt?

17<sup>th</sup> July – End of term praise party

On 26<sup>th</sup> June the children will be holding a cake sale after the service to raise money for a sick children's charity of their choice as they learn about ways in which they can make a difference to the world around them and show Christ's love in action. We would really appreciate your support on this day.

Please hold YACC in your prayers and, as always, if you would like to become involved and help out at sessions the YACC leaders would be very grateful of your help. Thank you!

Zoe Jasko

## Wardens' Report January-February 2016

The new PCC when it is in place after the APCM in April will review the goals of a revised Mission Action Plan. Meanwhile, for the final time, our current Mission Action Plan goals; once again:

1. To increase our engagement with Secondary aged children, including our own uniformed organisations
2. To recruit more volunteers in all areas of our church life
3. To offer more prayer and study opportunities and measure their success
4. To develop a plan for a more formal pastoral network by Easter 2015
5. To embrace and achieve our 80th Anniversary Projects activities as a whole

### **1. To increase our engagement with Secondary aged children, including our uniformed organizations**

We are hoping to hold our first youth group meeting at the beginning of April. Plans are also in place to make our Pentecost and Harvest 10am services Parade Services, involving the uniformed groups.

### **2. To recruit more volunteers in all areas of our church life**

I would love to write that we are moving forward on this front, but I suspect we are rather going backwards, particularly in the gardens where Tony Young and Graham Barnes are hanging up their shears. Tony has done a great job while he has been Garden Supremo and Graham deserves the most enormous thanks for the many years that he has been cutting and cleaning out the hedges – and we have a lot of hedges.

### **3. To offer more prayer and study opportunities and measure their success**

At the end of February Sister Sue from the Franciscan community led a wonderful and very well supported retreat for us at St Giles Codicote on the theme of St Clare, the mirror of eternity. Things got off to an inauspicious start when the (full and freshly brewed) cafetiere of coffee that I was holding expired unleashing a flood of coffee/ coffee grounds that Noah would have been proud of. I think the St Giles kitchen will smell of coffee for weeks. The retreat is, as such things are, hard to describe – short readings, guided prayer, a lot of silence, a convivial (non-silent!) lunch, and a closing Eucharist. Perhaps it seems odd to say, but shared silent prayer does a lot to bring a community closer together.

We have also been running a Lent course based on the film 'Les Miserables' on Thursdays and Sundays.

### **4. To develop a plan for a more formal pastoral network by Easter 2015**

As you know, if you have been reading previous reports, this one is on hold, although the launch of the Women's Group, which has been hugely successful, has obviously met a pastoral need.

### **5. To embrace and achieve the 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Project's activities as a whole**

Complete. And 2016 brings with it another year of activities, with two Andrew Watkinson (Galini Piano trio) concerts, a Teddy Bear's Picnic, a Barn Dance, and the more usual annual events such as the Lent lunch, the Christian Aid Quiz, the Fete, the Rock and Roll Revival and the Christmas Tree Festival. So not that quiet a year!

### **Other matters**

This section comes once again a mixed metaphor warning:

Together with the WGC Concert Club, we are looking at refurbishing the grand piano so that it s returned to full glory, and are going to ask a piano technician (not a piano tuner, they are completely separate species) to assess it and advise us. The only problem is, you guessed it, he is proving elusive and some suspect that he may be closely related to the Lesser Spotted Locksmith (see below).

As we discussed last time, Advent may be interpreted as penitential or devout expectation. Lent is straight penitential, and Stuart again has been very busy doing sterling penance, if there is such a thing, on behalf of us all:

I have lost count of how many phases of drains we have had, but they are now complete, and the drains are now no doubt glistening, and more important, functioning without blocks or leaks.

Decisions on the hall lantern windows and acoustic tiles in the lantern are pending. We hope that the installation of acoustic tiles will reduce the noise in the hall, particularly in parish coffee, so that we have a greater chance of talking to each other.

The amplifier on the sound desk has been repaired so that anyone listening to services in the porch can hear them in non-crackly mode.

Together with Keith, Stuart has decluttered a number of areas, including the shed and, more visibly, the porch, meaning that it can accommodate more than one curate and two parishioners at a time.

Finally, despite the cold snap and the threat of snow, the signs of spring have been all around us, with snowdrops, primroses and daffodils all in bloom and, yes, the longed-for, rumoured, but now seen and touched, the Wandering Migratory Lesser Spotted Locksmith, who has now departed leaving behind churchwardens who for the last several weeks have indeed only needed one key!

The Warden Team

## 'Cooking Curate's' Recipes

Every chef has their favourite season – mine has always been spring. British lamb, wonderful seafood, a huge range of fresh fruit and vegetables: there's so many good ingredients to work with at this time of year. Here a few recipes that are simple but delicious, and really make the best of the products.

### Crab rarebit

(This recipe is designed to use fresh crab and then serve in its own shell, but if using pre-prepared crab meat, this also works spread on to thickly cut toast.)

#### **Ingredients:**

2 small whole crabs, cooked	50g flour
50g butter	250ml beer (London Pride is my preference for this)
150g strong cheddar	100g parmesan
2 tbsp Worcestershire sauce	1 tsp mustard powder
1 tsp cayenne pepper	Black pepper

#### **Method:**

Open the crabs and scoop out the white and brown meat (or ask your fishmonger to do this for you).

Pick through the crab meat to make sure there are no small pieces of cartilage or shell.

Gently mash the white and brown meat together with a little salt and pepper.

Wash the crab shells and pat dry.

Spoon the crab meat back into the shells .

For the rarebit, heat the flour and butter over a gentle heat for a couple of minutes, constantly stirring.

Add the beer, turn up the heat and keep stirring until it forms a smooth paste.

Remove from the heat and stir in the cheese, Worcestershire sauce, mustard, cayenne and a sprinkle of black pepper.

Spoon the sauce over the crab meat in the shells, and place under a hot grill for 2 minutes.

Serve with peppery rocket or watercress (also both at their best at this time of year.)

## Spiced roast shoulder of lamb with couscous salad

#### **Ingredients:**

##### *For the lamb:*

Shoulder of lamb	3 cloves garlic, crushed
2cm piece of fresh ginger, peeled and grated	2 tsp cumin seeds
2 tsp coriander seeds	1 tsp mustard seeds
1 tsp cayenne	1 tsp smoked paprika
2 tbsp garam masala	1 tsp turmeric
Juice of 1 lemon	500ml plain yoghurt
Salt and pepper	

##### *For the couscous:*

150g couscous	Boiling chicken stock
50g pistachio nuts, chopped	Seeds of 1 pomegranate
2 sprigs fresh mint, finely chopped	2 spring onions, finely chopped
1 green chilli, deseeded and finely sliced	

#### **Method:**

In a frying pan (no oil), toast the cumin, coriander and mustard seeds until fragrant.

Grind the seeds in a pestle and mortar.

Mix the ground spices together with the garlic, ginger, cayenne, smoked paprika, garam masala, turmeric, lemon juice, yoghurt and seasoning.

Spoon the marinade all over the lamb and leave for at least 2 hours, but preferably overnight.

When ready to cook, preheat the oven to 170°C.

Remove any excess marinade from the lamb (otherwise it will burn), and roast for 3 to 4 hours (depending on size of the lamb).

For the couscous salad, place the couscous in a large bowl and add enough stock to just cover the top of the couscous. Cover and leave for 10 minutes.

Uncover and fluff the couscous with a fork.

Add the remaining ingredients and check seasoning.

Before serving, take the lamb out and rest it on the couscous – this will help it to absorb all the wonderful flavours.

## Vanilla nectarine millefeuille

Serves 4

### **Ingredients:**

6 nectarines  
100g caster sugar  
1 vanilla pod  
Zest of 1 orange  
Juice of 2 oranges  
200g mascarpone  
Puff pastry (ready-made – no one has time to make their own puff pastry!)  
Icing sugar

### **Method:**

Preheat the oven to 200°C.  
Half the nectarines, remove stone and place on a baking tray (skin side down).  
Split the vanilla pod in half, remove the seeds and then mix seeds with the caster sugar and orange zest.  
Sprinkle the sugar mix over the nectarine halves, and then pour over the orange juice.  
Bake in the oven for around 15 minutes, until the nectarines are soft but not losing their shape.  
Leave to cool.

When cool, reserve 4 nectarine halves for decoration.  
Chop the remaining nectarine into small pieces, and mix with the mascarpone and a sprinkle of icing sugar.  
Roll the pastry thinly, and cut out 12 circles, a little larger than the nectarine halves.  
Place on a baking tray, sprinkle with icing sugar and bake until golden and flaky (about 15 minutes).

When the pastry is cooked and has been left to cool, start to build the layers!  
Place a little spot of mascarpone on the middle of the plate, and add the first layer of pastry – the mascarpone will help to hold it in place.  
Top the pastry with a spoonful of the nectarine mix, then add another layer of pastry.  
Repeat – more of the nectarine mix and a third layer of pastry.

On the top of this, add one of the half nectarines that you have reserved, and sprinkle with icing sugar.

## Rev'd Josh's ingredient of the month

### **SPRING ONIONS**

These are a lovely, versatile vegetable – milder than an onion, and without the bitter aftertaste. Try chopping them roughly and adding to a pasta bake, or finely dicing them and mixing with tuna and borlotti beans on top of a bruschetta. Leftover mash? Add spring onions and some herbs and form into potato cakes for tomorrow. Use their mild flavour to enhance a hummus, or a summery coleslaw. Feeling more adventurous? How about a bacon, chilli and spring onion cornbread? Loads of possibilities, have a play!

### **Parish Retreat Day February 27th 2016**

This was held at the Parish Centre at St Giles, Codicote. It was good to be able to meet together in a new place, which offered plenty of space to sit and listen to the very capable Sister Sue and then to find a space for oneself, either inside or outside, to contemplate on what she had said and explore the ideas she had talked about. She gave examples of Saint Clare's teaching and helped to put them in the context of the time that Clare lived, as well as relating them to modern life.

I am sure the experience was very individual and different for each participant and it was good to combine the periods of listening with times of quiet personal response.

A hot lunch, with an opportunity to talk, provided refreshment in the middle of the day.

The final activity was a Eucharist, held in the church, which provided a fitting climax to a very thoughtful and spiritual day.

Many thanks to those who made this day possible.

Janet Packer

## Children's Choir

It was a great privilege to attend one of the rehearsals of the Children's Choir on a Thursday evening before Easter.

Jessica Wiley, Emma Harrison, and Jo Dunstan have been working hard with a group of about fourteen children (Years 1,2 or 3) to learn some songs to sing for us on Easter Day. The children come from four local primary schools; Applecroft, St John's, Lemsford, St Mary's, Welwyn and Templewood. Some of the children had been part of the choir in 'Joseph' in September.

The rehearsal started with some breathing, vocal and physical exercises to make sure everyone was in the best shape for singing. The children then played a singing game before settling to rehearse the songs they will be singing on Easter Day. Their enthusiasm was obvious as their singing filled the church. They had been asked to learn the words and it was clear that they had spent time at home doing just that as they sang the words out loud and clear.

By the time this magazine comes out, you will all have had the chance to hear their first performance, which should go very well!

Janet Packer

## Done and Dusted

Done and dusted doesn't cover all that took place at the Annual Spring Clean, on the day and in the week before. In every nook and cranny there was polishing, scraping (yes, you've guessed it - the ubiquitous candle wax), hoovering, scouring, wiping down, buffing up and general setting to rights of our lovely church.

Thank you to each and every one of the helpers, almost 60 of you including Annabel and Matthew Dunstan who played their instruments so beautifully to encourage the workers. Thank you also to the home bakers who provided treats at the coffee break as just reward for work well done.

Floor polishing in the church and hall always takes place in the following week to complete the task.

See you all next year everyone!

Dougie and Marcia Agnew

## MERCY SHIPS

St Francis Church has supported Mercy Ships for many years. Currently, The Africa Mercy is preparing for a tour of duty in Benin., where thousands of eye operations will take place to save the sight of so many people, young and old.

The medical team on board, all of whom are volunteers and give their time and skills for free, and also pay towards their own accommodation, expect to see 12000 patients during their stay. Some will have check ups and get advice to stop eye problems from occurring, others will need surgery to correct problems like cataracts and correcting crossed eyes.

The trip to Benin had to be postponed by two years because of the Ebola emergency but the ship is due to dock in August and already word is spreading in Benin and thousands of people are daring to hope they will see again.

As well as offering completely free medical treatment to everyone who needs it, the Mercy Ship staff will also be working with local hospitals and health clinics, training local doctors and nurses in the latest techniques to ensure that benefits remain long after The Africa Mercy moves on.

We have been able to support those on the ship in a slightly different way this year—see the article on page 11.

<b>PARISH DIRECTORY</b>		
<b>Vicar</b>	The Revd Jenny Fennell The Vicarage, 48 Parkway      jennyfennell@virginmedia.com	320960
<b>Assistant Curate</b>	The Rev'd Josh Young revdjoshiyoung@hotmail.co.uk	01582 947145
<b>Children and Families Worker (from April 18th)</b>	Mrs Nikki Clare	694191
<b>Reader</b>	Mrs Carolyn Annand      mail@grannyannand.plus.com	321299
<b>Reader</b>	Mrs Wendy Sellers      wendy.sellers@sky.com	372315
<b>Reader in Training</b>	Mrs Joan Gilbert      jnvgilbert@gmail.com	376693
<b>Choral Director</b>	Mr Richard Harrison      richard@theharrisonfamily.co.uk	695851
<b>Organist</b>	Mr Robin Coxon	324011
<b>Churchwarden</b>	Mr Howell Schroeder      howell@schroederforbes.com	330519
<b>Churchwarden</b>	Mrs Clare Smith      cdsmith25@gmail.com	01438 814807
<b>Assistant Warden</b>	Mr Stuart Richardson      stuart.richardson@ntlworld.com	881930
<b>Assistant Warden</b>	Mrs Liz Green      lizgreenlane@hotmail.com	891828
<b>Assistant Warden</b>	Mr Brian Towndrow      brian_towndrow@hotmail.com	07918126745
<b>Verger</b>	Mr Keith Crabb      keith.crabb@ntlworld.com	324330
<b>PCC Secretary</b>	Mrs Jan Nafzger      thenafzgers@waitrose.com	331880
<b>PCC Treasurer</b>	Mr Dougie Agnew      marciaagnew@waitrose.com	321854
<b>Parish Admin</b>	Mrs Pui San Apling admin@stfranciswgc.org.uk	694191
<b>Electoral Roll</b>	Mrs Janet Packer      j_packer@tiscali.co.uk	321243
<b>Membership Fund Treasurer</b>	Mr Richard Blanch      RichardBlanch@aol.com	322166
<b>Servers</b>	Mr Anthony Packer      anthonyfpacker@hotmail.com	321243

<b>Women's Group</b>	Mrs Alison Paterson thewomensgroup_wgc@gmail.com	329012
<b>Men's Group</b>	Mr David Buck      dbatwgc@tesco.net	336827
<b>Sacristan</b>	Mrs Jan Nafzger      thenafzgers@waitrose.com	331880
<b>Magazine Contributions</b>	Mrs Janet Packer      j_packer@tiscali.co.uk	321243
<b>Magazine Distribution</b>	Mrs Janet Packer      j_packer@tiscali.co.uk	321243
<b>Web Site Administrator</b>	Mrs Montse Day      montse.day@live.co.uk	322380
<b>Church Hall Bookings</b>	Via the Parish Office admin@stfranciswgc.org.uk	694191
<b>Guides, Brownies &amp; Rainbows</b>	Mrs Margaret Breese m.breese@btinternet.com	01438 718702
<b>Scouts, Cubs &amp; Beavers</b>	Carl Davidson Carl.davidson@1st-wgc-scouts.org.uk	07907703387
<b>Church Cleaning</b>	Contact the Churchwardens	
<b>Parish Coffee</b>	Mrs Susan Welton	323894
<b>Church Flowers</b>	Mrs Diane Hemmings	335645
<b>Friends of St Francis</b>	Mrs Jan Nafzger      thenafzgers@waitrose.com	331880
<b>Children's Society</b>	Mrs Kate McQuillen      knafzger@hotmail.com	371215
<b>Youth &amp; Children's Church</b>	Contact a member of the Ministry Team	
<b>Safeguarding Coordinator</b>	Mrs Janet Packer      j_packer@tiscali.co.uk	321243 07814417518
<b>Toddle Time Play Group</b>	Contact the Parish Office	694191
<b>Coffee For All</b>	Mr David Buck      dbatwgc@tesco.net	336827
<b>Lifts to Church</b>	Mrs Denise Crabb      denise.crabb@ntlworld.com	324330
<b>Sunday Readings</b>	Mrs Jennifer Witt      jandjwitt@uwclub.net	265738
<b>Church Linen</b>	Mrs Pamela Hawkins	324833
<b>Thursday Lunches</b>	Rev'd Josh Young revdjoshiyoung@hotmail.co.uk	01582947145