

# St Peter's Church

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Children's Minister: Romeo dela Cruz (07563 154739)

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**Sunday Services:** 11.15am Parish Eucharist and Sunday School  
[Children start in church, returning at  
Communion to receive a blessing]  
6 - 7pm PrayerSpace

**Weekday Services:**

Monday-Friday : 5.00pm Evening Prayer

Thursday: 10.30am Holy Communion

**Baptisms, Weddings, Funerals** by arrangement with Father Paul.

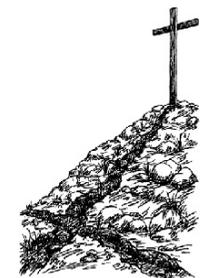
Magazine material to be sent to [judy.east@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:judy.east@blueyonder.co.uk) or given to  
Father Paul, please

## February and March 2013

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\* from *Parish Pump*



## DIARY FOR FEBRUARY AND MARCH

### Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> Presentation of Christ in the Temple

11.15am Parish Eucharist *Celebrant & Preacher Fr. Mark Speaks*  
6 – 7pm PrayerSpace

Tue 5<sup>th</sup> 8pm PCC Meeting (Studios)

Thu 7<sup>th</sup> 10.30am Holy Communion

11.15am Coffee and Croissants  
3.30pm Junior Youth Club  
6.45pm Belsize Community Choir

### Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> Next before Lent

11.15am Parish Eucharist *with baptism of Finn Cooper*  
*No Evening PrayerSpace*

### Wed 13<sup>th</sup> Ash Wednesday

7.00pm Evening Prayer  
8.00pm Holy Eucharist with Imposition of Ashes



Thu 14<sup>th</sup> 10.30am Holy Communion

11.15am Coffee and Croissants  
3.30pm Junior Youth Club  
6.45pm Belsize Community Choir

### Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> Lent 1

11.15am Parish Eucharist  
7.30pm Charity Concert – *The Violathon*

Tue 19<sup>th</sup> 8.00pm Lent Study Group 1 (St Saviour's Eton Road)

Thu 21<sup>st</sup> 10.30am Holy Communion  
11.15am Coffee and Croissants  
3.30pm Junior Youth Club  
6.45pm Belsize Community Choir

### Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> Lent 2

11.15am Parish Eucharist

6 – 7pm PrayerSpace

Tue 26<sup>th</sup> 8.00pm Lent Study Group 2 (St Peter's Studios)

Thu 28<sup>th</sup> 10.30am Holy Communion  
11.15am Coffee and Croissants  
3.30pm Junior Youth Club  
6.45pm Belsize Community Choir

## MARCH

### Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> Lent 3

11.15am Parish Eucharist *with baptism of Orhan Cetin*  
3.00pm The Marriage of Ian and Christie  
6 – 7pm PrayerSpace

Tue 5<sup>th</sup> 8.00pm Lent Study Group 3 (St Saviour's Eton Road)

Thu 7<sup>th</sup> 10.30am Holy Communion  
11.15am Coffee and Croissants  
3.30pm Junior Youth Club  
6.45pm Belsize Community Choir

### Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> Lent 4 (Mothering Sunday)

11.15am Parish Eucharist  
6 – 7pm PrayerSpace

Tue 12<sup>th</sup> 8.00pm Lent Study Group 4 (St Peter's Studios)

Thu 14<sup>th</sup> 10.30am Holy Communion  
11.15am Coffee and Croissants  
3.30pm Junior Youth Club  
6.45pm Belsize Community Choir

Fri 15<sup>th</sup> 7.30pm Belsize Community Choir Concert

Sat 16<sup>th</sup> 7.30pm Piano Recital (Belsize Music Academy presentation)

### Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> Lent 5 - Passion Sunday

11.15am Parish Eucharist  
6 – 7pm PrayerSpace

*Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> Joseph of Nazareth*

Wed 20<sup>th</sup> 8.00pm Lent Study Group 5 (St Saviour's Vicarage, Eton Villas)

Thu 21<sup>st</sup> 10.30am Holy Communion  
11.15am Coffee and Croissants  
3.30pm Junior Youth Club  
6.45pm Belsize Community Choir

### **Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> Palm Sunday**

11.15am Parish Eucharist  
4.00pm Belsize Music Academy End of Term  
Concert



Holy Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup>

8.00pm Lent Study Group 6 (St Peter's Studios)

### **Maundy Thursday 28<sup>th</sup>**

8.00pm Eucharist of the Lord's Supper

### **Good Friday 29<sup>th</sup>**

12 noon Devotion and Holy Communion

### **Sunday 31<sup>st</sup> Easter Day**

11.15am Service of Light and Easter Eucharist  
No Evening PrayerSpace



*No mid-week Services or Activities in Easter Week*

### **Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> April**

11.15am Parish Eucharist  
6 – 7pm PrayerSpace

*Monday 8th The Annunciation (transferred from 25 March)*

Creative Wizzkids' Art Classes (Mothers and Toddlers) and 'Classical Babies' continue on Wednesdays at 9.30am and 2.00pm respectively

## **Vicar's letter**

'Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen' (Hebrews 11:1). I love the ambiguity of that New Testament verse. It expresses very succinctly the nature of Christian hope, but I'm aware that its talk of 'the conviction of things not seen' will be a stumbling block to many. As I write I've just been attending a Clergy Conference at which the eminent Psychiatrist Dr Iain McGilchrist was the speaker. Though he couldn't avoid using some (...much!) of the highly technical language that goes with his specialised discipline, his reasoning and thesis, based on clinical evidence, seemed to hold much relevance to the consideration of religious faith. It is that the left and right hemispheres of the brain, which in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century were popularly assigned to quite separate characteristics, actually share many similar ones, except that the left hemisphere, though ultimately dependent on its right hand equivalent, likes to believe itself superior. The left hemisphere, principally concerned with physical manipulation, has – Gilchrist argues – for a variety of historical and sociological reasons - come to dominate much of the way human society engages with the world, at the expense of the superior, more intuitive, right hemisphere, which it should be working with and serving more equally.

Although I will certainly read his work on this topic with interest, I can't pretend to have fully understood its implications. But Dr Gilchrist avows that his research does amount to a critique of the utilitarian, materialistic outlook which expresses itself in some secular views, *and* the formidable search for 'certainty' which drives certain religious views. **Hope** is a Christian state of mind which, as that opening text from Hebrews expresses, does not look for certainty; the 'assurance' it speaks of comes (unlikely as it may seem) through the exercising of faith – looking *beyond* the evidential and purely sensory.

This real hope (not to be confused with "hope for the best – but expect the worst") will be the theme of our Lent Study Groups series this year –

'Glimpses of God'. Whether or not you come to church, you may be interested to hear the experience of some who have put this living hope to the test and live by it. Please note in this Magazine when and where it's taking place, and come along!

*Paul Nicholson*

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## Lent Study Group 2013

*Meeting each week in Lent to follow the 'York Course': GLIMPSES OF GOD*

Focussing on the theme of Christian **Hope** in turbulent times, this series has an accompanying course booklet, and each session starts with a recorded interview by eminent Christian leaders and thinkers on topics including 'God who bears our pain', God as 'Shepherd', and Jesus 'The Way, Truth and Life' – all leading into group discussion

*Sessions will be alternate between St Saviour's, Eton Road, and St Peter's Studios, Belsize Square:*

Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> Feb at 8pm – St Saviour's Vestry  
(nearest Eton Villas gate)

Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> Feb at 8pm – St Peter's Studios  
(entrance next to 53 Belsize Square)

Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> March at 8pm – St Saviour's Vestry

Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> March at 8pm – St Peter's Studios

\*Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> March at 8pm – St Saviour's Vicarage (30 Eton Villas)\*

Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> March at 8pm – St Peter's Studios

## SERMON for Epiphany 3

*Isaiah 62:1-5; John 2:1-11*

### Jesus turning water into wine, and how to apply the Bible with integrity

In the Church's authorised Marriage Service mention is made of that eventful Marriage at Cana of which we've just heard. In some ways that would seem natural enough, but in both the old Book of Common Prayer, and the form we now use – 'Common Worship', the particular way the Marriage at Cana gets a mention causes me some misgivings. In Common Worship, for instance, we get the statement 'Marriage is a way of life made holy by God' – no problem with that – but which continues 'and blessed by the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ with those celebrating a wedding at Cana in Galilee'. In the 1662 language of the BCP the statement is even more gilded: 'which holy estate Christ adorned and beautified with his presence, and first miracle that he wrought, in Cana of Galilee'. I don't like to criticise a sentiment so beautifully expressed, but I do find something rather forced about what is made in both of these about Jesus' presence at this marriage. The narrative of John's Gospel tells us absolutely nothing about the couple being married, and shows no interest whatsoever in the relationship between them or in the celebration of it, *apart* from the one detail in which Jesus gets involved – that potentially embarrassing little matter of the wine running out. In fact if we read the story in the way the narrator intends us to, we realise that Jesus' behaviour at this wedding was categorically **not** intended to teach us anything about the human institution of marriage; rather, it had the far more elevated purpose of being the first of his **signs** which '*revealed his glory*' and caused his disciples to 'believe in him'.

We can of course find Biblical strictures about marriage – perhaps the most obvious being the seventh of the Ten Commandments given to Moses, 'You shall not commit adultery' – but taking the Bible as a whole, most of the 'marriage talk' found in it is again not expressly about married

life or who can get married to whom, but about God's love and God's faithfulness to God's people. Marriage is taken as an established human activity and used – rather as Jesus would use every-day human activities in his Parables – to illustrate the *ways of God* with human beings, and vice versa. For example, Old Testament prophets like Amos would castigate the Israelites when they were unfaithful to 'The Lord' and went 'whoring' after other gods. But a more positive instance is seen in today's first reading from Isaiah. Once again, rather as in the passage from the same book we heard last week, Isaiah's language is consoling and giving assurance, and it makes its effect first by using the language of tender love and affection – giving Jerusalem the beautiful Hebrew girl's name 'Hepzibah', meaning 'My delight is in Her'. This leads into more explicit talk of marriage – Jerusalem's very land being given the name 'Married', and these words are addressed to her: 'For as a young man marries a young woman, so shall your builder marry you, and as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, so shall your God rejoice over you'. In the New Testament St Paul builds on such marriage-talk to speak of Christ as the Bride of the Church. Again, the authorised Marriage Service alludes to this teaching of Paul but, I think, puts it the wrong way round – saying that human marriage signifies that 'mystical union' between Christ and the Church, whereas Paul simply takes the existing institution of earthly marriage, and likens Christ and his Church to it in a transcendent way.

To interpret the things of God as all about our relationships with each other is perhaps an easy and very human trap to fall into. But as we read elsewhere in the prophecy of Isaiah, 'my ways are not your ways, says the Lord', and so much of the Bible in general – and of Jesus' parables and teaching in particular – serves to point this out in a radical way, to lift our horizons to the generous abundance of the limitless love of God which is beyond our imagining. I mention my quibble with the existing marriage service, not out of any desire to be mildly controversial, but because I feel it's important – amidst the current debate about gender and sexuality in the church – to focus on the true importance of Jesus' teaching about the Kingdom of God, which is what today's Gospel is really about. I also feel that if holy scripture in both Testaments considers it right to liken

marriage to the relationship between God and ourselves – which is by definition beyond any concept of gender – that we should allow that this might have something to say to us about any limitations we put on the form that human marriage can take. As Queen Elizabeth I is once said to have declared, "There is only one Christ Jesus, one faith. All else is a dispute over trifles."

The steward said to the bridegroom after Jesus had effected his transformation, '...you have kept the good wine until now'. That simple statement is a symbol of the Hope which is the hallmark of Christian faith from cradle to the grave, and beyond – the energising belief and trust that with Christ the best is always ahead of us. My prayer is that this will eventually become the reality for some who want to believe, or who are trying to hold on to the faith they have, but are held back by the negative tone of some of the decisions and the statements of the Church of England.

*Paul Nicholson*

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## **Which Big Question ?**

When the House of Laity failed to endorse Women Bishops by a sufficient majority, this caused consternation, and Nicky Campbell laid on a special session of his Big Questions to discuss the question 'Should Parliament force the Church to accept Women Bishops? We were invited to join the studio audience at a school in Peckham.

They gave us coffee and biscuits and a chance to get to know each other, possibly to enable the presenters to spot potential troublemakers. They told us they do want a lively audience showing approval of comments made, but if you shout out 'Rubbish!' or worse, the camera looks away. I had brought a bible, but I was asked to hand it in. I might have thumped it, when we were live on the air!

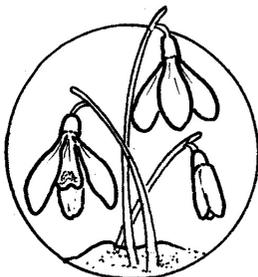
The discussion was livelier than the Synod debate. The supporters are understandably incensed at being out-smarted by the opposition. One venerable gentleman used language he should only have used on his computer. A Daily Mail journalist replied by comparing the enthusiasm of the supporters with war hysteria in 1914. But I began to understand- without sympathising- with the opposers' feeling that the machinery devised to protect them in 1992 does not work now. Then Evangelicals were assured of the oversight of an Evangelical bishop who had voted 'No'. They nearly all voted 'Yes'. The Anglo-Catholics had grudgingly accepted that they would need a Bishop's permission to opt out.

Now they may have to go cap-in-hand to an 'unperson' a woman or worse still, a man who had ordained one of those meretricious creatures. But the question 'Should Parliament force?...' was not examined. One member of the audience asked whether the Roman Catholics could be exempted – if not, Westminster Cathedral could be inundated with Industrial Tribunal applications from women and married men demanding consideration on merit

for entry to the priesthood. What about the Orthodox churches and the Muslims?

No one said 'Woman priests are doing a grand job, so they ought to be accepted as bishops- nor the reverse. Always 'Of course I personally have nothing against them,' but some figure in the background would capsize the boat if it carried on on course. Why do God-fearing people in so many religions sincerely feel that that there are some types of service which the Lord will only accept if they are performed and overseen by a man?

*Bob Braithwaite*



## **OPENING : a celebration of the arts at St Peter's**

St Peter's has hosted some remarkable musical events in recent years, as well as serving as a treasured place of worship all the year round. But never before, as far as we know, have we had a whole week of artistic performances. Our first Arts Week will run from **22-30 June 2013**. The church itself will be the venue for a varied programme of events designed to appeal to the congregation and the wider community in this part of London, and to people of all ages.

The programme will begin with a summer fair which will include a Punch and Judy show among other attractions. Then in the evening we will have an opening concert by Belsize Baroque, a leading baroque orchestra with a core of young professional musicians, performing on this occasion with Fr Paul – our very own – as the director / harpsichordist. At the end of the week, the closing concert will be a performance by the Belsize Community Choir and the Belsize Square Synagogue Choir under the direction of Hannah Gill, our new Musical Director.

In between these concerts, there will be a rich variety of events including a poetry evening, a flute and piano recital, an evening with an author, story-telling for children and, we hope, a drama performance by students from the Central School of Speech and Drama. The programme will also include a series of workshops for people who want to sing, dance, act or explore prayer through clay.

The Arts Week will include two Sunday Eucharists with guest preachers. Canon Vernon White, the Canon Theologian at Westminster Abbey, will give a sermon on 23 June, and on the following Sunday the preacher will be James Roose-Evans, the writer, theatre director and Anglican priest.

The main aim of the Arts Week is to attract audiences to the church for cultural and spiritual refreshment rather than to raise money, and admission to events will be at a moderate ticket price or by donation. Any net surplus at the end of the week will be divided among three

charities – Jessie’s Fund (helping children through the use of music), St Christopher’s Fellowship (providing care for children and young people) and the Friends of Luwero in Uganda – and the parish church fund.

This ambitious venture is dependent on finding sufficient funding from **supporters**, and the Parochial Church Council hopes that some financial assistance will be given by members of the congregation in the form of advance sponsorship. We also need to recruit several members of the congregation as **volunteers** to help as welcomers and in serving drinks for performers and audiences.

Guy Daines, the Church Treasurer, will be pleased to receive any sponsorship donations of £50 or more; and it would be appreciated if tax-payers could complete a gift aid envelope, marking it “Arts Week”. Fr Paul or Mary Shakeshaft or I will be glad to receive any offers of volunteering help. For all who donate money or time, there will be a celebratory dinner with some of the Patrons and performers.

Further details of the Arts Week will appear in the next edition of the magazine and on the church website: [www.spbp.org.uk](http://www.spbp.org.uk) . In the meantime, I am happy to answer any questions or to receive any comments: in person, by telephone to 020 7431 1202 or by e-mail to [kenneth.robby@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:kenneth.robby@hotmail.co.uk) .

Please mark your diaries – we have a boxful of treats in store!

**Ken Robbie**, Churchwarden

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#### Miscellaneous observations on money

- Born free. Taxed to death.
- By the time you make ends meet, they move the ends.
- The cost of living is always about the same – all a person has.



Lent begins with Ash Wednesday. But why 'Ash' Wednesday? The reason has to do with getting things right between you and God, and the tradition goes right back to the Old Testament.

In the Old Testament, the Israelites often sinned. When they finally came to their senses, and saw their evil ways as God saw them, they could do nothing but repent in sorrow. They mourned for the damage and evil they had done. As part of this repentance, they covered their heads with ashes. For the Israelites, putting ashes on your head, and even rending your clothes, was an outward sign of their heart-felt repentance and acknowledgement of sin. (See Genesis 18:27; 2 Samuel 13:19; Job 2:8, 30:19; Isaiah 58:5; Jeremiah 6:26; Jonah 3:6)

In the very early Christian Church, the yearly 'class' of penitents had ashes sprinkled over them at the beginning of Lent. They were turning to God for the first time, and mourning their sins. But soon many other Christians wanted to take part in the custom, and to do so at the very start of Lent. They heeded Joel's call to 'rend your hearts and not your garments' (Joel 2:12-19). Ash Wednesday became known as either the 'beginning of the fast' or 'the day of the ashes'.

The collect for today goes back to the Prayer Book, and stresses the penitential character of the day. It encourages us with the reminder of the readiness of God to forgive us and to renew us.

The Bible readings for Ash Wednesday are often Joel 2:1-2, 12 – 18, Matthew 6: 1-6, 16 – 21 and Paul's moving catalogue of suffering, "as having nothing and yet possessing everything." (2 Corinthians 5:20b -

6:10)

The actual custom of 'ashing' was abolished at the Reformation, though the old name for the day remained. Today, throughout the Church of England, receiving the mark of ashes on one's forehead is optional. Certainly the mark of ashes on the forehead reminds people of their mortality: "Remember that you are dust and to dust you will return..." (Genesis 3:19)

The late medieval custom was to burn the branches used on Palm Sunday in the previous year in order to create the ashes for today.

The Collect for Ash Wednesday is:

Almighty and everlasting God,  
You hate nothing that you have made  
And forgive the sins of all those who are penitent:  
Create and make in us new and contrite hearts  
That we, worthily lamenting our sins  
And acknowledging our wretchedness,  
May receive from you, the God of all mercy,  
Perfect remission and forgiveness;  
Through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,  
Who is alive and reigns with you,  
In the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
One God, now and for ever.

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## Hang on a minute...or two...or three

What should you be doing today that you haven't yet started? Perhaps even reading this article is a way of avoiding a job which is calling to you! It seems that we waste up to 69 minutes a day avoiding tasks that need to be done. We pay a high price for our procrastination: up to three years of our lives. Women are better at procrastinating than men are, and young

people are better at procrastinating than older people.

The research, by Microsoft, found (unsurprisingly) that we tend to delay unpleasant tasks more than pleasant ones. Half of us wait only a couple of days to ask someone we fancy out for a date; we can take up to two months to dump an unwanted lover.

As one psychologist explained: "People often avoid 'doing' things which may lead to important results. Yet ticking things off your 'to do' list helps you to better focus on your goals. It may be that Britons like to spend time mulling things over before actually doing them – perhaps too much so." This year, what unpleasant task do you need to tackle in order to move on with your life?

## The arrival of those Sunday blues

What will your coming week be like? It is likely that you started thinking (and worrying?) about it at 4.13pm on Sunday afternoon. That is the time of the weekend when the 'Sunday blues' begin – that mild sense of depression and anxiety that many of us get about the week ahead. Nearly half of us admit that our Sunday evening comfort is dulled at the thought of Monday, according to research by Premier Inn. Mind, the mental health charity, has found that the recession has only increased this unease. Psychologists suggest that ways to counter the Sunday blues include having a busy schedule, doing exercise and being around other people. The Bible offers the following comfort: 'Cast your burden upon the Lord, and he shall sustain you.' Ps 55:22

## Turn off that light!

British children are the worst in Europe for switching off lights and saving electricity, even though they know the most about climate change.

The National Curriculum includes a module on climate change, and how carbon emissions from burning fossil fuels are contributing to global

warming. Yet children in Britain still waste energy by leaving the television on standby and enjoying ‘energy-guzzling’ gadgets such as PlayStations and iPods. They admit that they regularly throw away food and buy unnecessary clothes. The study was carried out by the Energy Saving Trust.

### Are we consuming our way to disaster?

A new study published recently reminds us of Gandhi’s wise observation that the world has enough resources for everyone’s need - but not for everyone’s greed.

Two-thirds of consumers interviewed in six large countries agreed that “as a society, we need to consume a lot less to improve the environment for future generations” (66 per cent) and that they feel “a sense of responsibility to purchase products that are good for the environment and society” (65 per cent). These findings are based on an online survey of over 6,000 consumers in six countries (Brazil, China, India, Germany, the United Kingdom and the USA).

The trouble is that many of the consumers who respond positively to such a survey are, apparently, the same people who wait outside stores before dawn to snap up sale bargains.

Can we reasonably expect the general public to resist the tide of marketing activity and product innovation? Can we hold consumers alone responsible for the excesses of today’s lifestyles? On the other hand, can we blame business people for producing and promoting goods and services that create and sustain jobs?

A glimmer of hope comes from the fact that the concept of Corporate Social Responsibility is beginning to be taken seriously by companies large and small, especially in countries where conspicuous consumption is most prevalent.

Professor David Crowther, chair of the international Social Responsibility Research Network (SRRN), has shared his views: “I think that practice is gradually improving, but people have not caught up with this and still expect poor behaviour from organisations. So they find what they are looking for.

“Reducing consumption is not the answer when we have an economic system predicated on production and consumption. The focus should be on more pertinent things such as sustainable consumption – which implies both environmental sustainability and less exploitation in the supply chain.”

For further exploration of this topic visit the websites of the New Economics Foundation, and the SRRN (mentioned above).

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**in time of daffodils**

in time of daffodils (who know  
the goal of living is to grow)  
forgetting why, remember how

in time of lilacs who proclaim  
the aim of waking is to dream,  
remember so(forgetting seem)

in time of roses (who amaze  
our now and here with paradise)  
forgetting if, remember yes

in time of all sweet things beyond  
whatever mind may comprehend,  
remember seek (forgetting find)

and in a mystery to be  
(when time from time shall set us free)  
forgetting me, remember me

e.e. cummings

