

**ASHBURY
COMPTON LONGCOT
FERNHAM
NEWSLETTER MARCH 2018**



Thought for the month

It can't have escaped anyone's notice that this year marks the 100th anniversary of the first victory in the battle for votes for women and once again I am wondering (as I have done since I was young) who it was that first decided that half the human race was inferior to the other half. In the Bible there are lot of stories about strong women who took the lead – think Deborah, Esther and all those in the stories of the early church. Genesis tells us that God created Adam and Eve to be 'companions' for each other and St. Paul, writing to the Ephesians, says that husbands and wives should respect and support each other.

Somewhere along the line somebody must have had the idea of fifty per cent of humans being superior to the rest and that leads me on to further musings about inequality which so often leads to discrimination – which white person came up with the idea that those of a different skin tone were less than human and that is was okay to sell them into slavery to be exploited and abused? Why is it, in this day and age, that those born with a disability or disfigurement can still be regarded with suspicion and hate? Modern medical science has found the reasons for most birth defects so ignorance is no longer an excuse for discriminatory behaviour towards anyone who 'looks different' - just imagine what a protest there would be if suddenly it was decided that anyone with a snub nose was not the equal of those with straight noses!

No. Inequality on the grounds of race, gender, age, or ability is simply wrong. We need to remember that Jesus came to teach that God loves and values everyone equally and he certainly demonstrated that love – he touched lepers and dead bodies (both regarded as unclean) treated women with respect, consorted with society's rejects, and helped the disabled and those with mental health problems. He healed anybody and everybody (including members of the occupying force) who asked for his help, from important officials to beggars, as long as they believed he could.

In this country huge strides have been made over the past one hundred years with respect to equality and we give thanks for progress so far but we need to pray for the demolition of any further barriers to true equality in

this country and around the world so that love and respect for all humans becomes the universal norm. What an amazing world it would be if each person valued others as their equal and worthy of respect.

Stella Tidmarsh

Views expressed in "Thought for the month" are those of the contributors

Shrivenham and Ashbury Benefice Services in March

Sunday 4th March

| | | |
|---------|--|----------------|
| 7.45am | Holy Communion (BCP) | Shrivenham |
| 9.00am | Holy Communion (BCP) | Compton |
| 9.00am | Holy Communion (BCP) | Fernham |
| 10.15am | Family Service with Baptism | Shrivenham |
| 11.00am | Morning Worship | Ashbury |
| 3.00pm | Joint Service | Longcot Chapel |
| 5.00pm | 160 th Anniversary Service Evensong with choir | Watchfield |

Sunday 11th March

Mothering Sunday

| | | |
|---------|----------------------|------------|
| 9.00am | Holy Communion (BCP) | Watchfield |
| 9.00am | Morning Worship | Fernham |
| 9.30am | Family Communion | Longcot |
| 10.15am | Family Communion | Shrivenham |
| 11.00am | Family Communion | Ashbury |

Sunday 18th March

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|---------|----------------------|------------|
| 7.45am | Holy Communion (BCP) | Shrivenham |
| 9.00am | Matins | Watchfield |
| 9.00am | Matins | Compton |
| 9.00am | Holy Communion | Fernham |
| 10.15am | Parish Communion | Shrivenham |
| 11.00am | Family Service | Ashbury |
| 6.00pm | Evening Worship | Longcot |

Sunday 25th March**Palm Sunday**

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|---------|------------------------------|------------|
| 8.00am | Holy Communion | Longcot |
| 10.00am | Palm Sunday Procession | Shrivenham |
| 10.15am | Palm Sunday Benefice Service | Shrivenham |

Thursday 29th March**Maundy**

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|--------|--------------|---------|
| 7.00pm | Agape Supper | Fernham |
|--------|--------------|---------|

Friday 30th March**Good Friday**

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|---------|-----------------------------------|-------------------|
| 9.30am | Children's activity Easter Garden | Shrivenham |
| 12.00pm | An Hour at the Cross | Longcot |
| 2.00pm | An Hour at the Cross | Ashbury |
| 3.00pm | Good Friday Liturgy | St Alban's Chapel |

Saturday 31st March

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|--------|-----------------------------------|------------|
| 8.00pm | Easter Eve Liturgy with Communion | Shrivenham |
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Sunday 1st April**Easter Sunday**

| | | |
|---------|------------------------|------------|
| 9.00am | Holy Communion | Compton |
| 9.00am | Holy Communion (BCP) | Watchfield |
| 9.00am | Communion by extension | Fernham |
| 9.30am | Holy Communion | Longcot |
| 10.15am | Parish Communion | Shrivenham |
| 11.00am | Holy Communion | Ashbury |

The Ashbury prayer cycle for March will be: 4th Wixes Piece, 11th Ashbury Hill, 18th Berrycroft, 25th Berrycroft Lane.

Ashbury Evangelical Free Church**March meetings**

Sunday 11th at 10.15 a.m. Communion service

Wednesdays 7th & 21st at 2.15pm. tea & chat. Everyone is welcome!!

Ashbury News

(See Ashbury also under Benefice News)

COFFEE MORNING for BRAIN TUMOUR CHARITY - Friday 2 March, 10 am-12 noon at the Village Shop

Everyone very welcome to come and support this charity fundraising event.

Advance Notice Ashbury Market –Ashbury Market on **Sunday 22nd April** between **11 and 1pm**. Please come along and support the market in aid of Friends of Ashbury School. Other Ashbury Market dates for your diary so far: 24th June, 23rd September, 18th November.

Ashbury Community Club. Thursday 29th March 2.30pm

Charles Ash of Touchwood Crafts will be giving a demonstration of woodworking skills using a pole lathe.

He will tell us about both the history of the craft and the items he makes in his workshop in Berrycroft. Also raffle and refreshments; everyone welcome, Village Hall, £2

The WI - Inspiring Women

Our WI is currently planning the next year of meetings, visits and social events for members and their friends. In addition to our monthly meetings on the second Thursday of each month at either Bishopstone or Hinton Parva Village Halls we have a Dinner at Swindon College training restaurant on 15th March, a tour of The Merchants House, Marlborough on 18th April, Literature festivals at Swindon and Bath, “Have a Go Bowls” session at Hoopers Field with the Wanborough Bowls club on 31st March, a cheese and wine evening with award winning artist “The Feather Lady” Mandi Baykaa-Murray who uses feathers as her painting medium on 29th June.

If you would like to know more about joining our WI or to come along to a meeting as a visitor please contact **Maggie Simons 710801**

Church Flower Arranging and Cleaning

Our church is kept clean and the flowers are arranged by a group of volunteers to whom we are very grateful for their help. The new rotas for the next year will be drawn up soon and in the meantime we would like to thank everyone who gives their time in this way. Please will you join us for tea and cake in the village hall at 3pm on Saturday 3rd March when we will have time to listen to your ideas and any suggestions you may have for improvements.

If you would like to volunteer with flower arranging and/or cleaning please let me know and come along to meet us on 3rd March.

Maggie Simons 710801

An unsolicited and unapologetic 'plug' from the Editor.

Why did the chicken cross the road? Why, to greet Holly and (on her first outing,) Crocus; Dexter mother and daughter. This was the scene outside the **newly reopened Village Stores** on a bright but chilly Tuesday afternoon. The cattle-wranglers were refreshing themselves with hot chocolate from the Jam Jar café while the Dexters accepted pats and praises. The chicken, or cockerel, to be more precise, was snugly enfolded in a brown paper bag and tucked under the arm of a passer-by and his family. Conversation ensued. The cockerel was on extended leave from his organic chicken farm of 250 hens and was now recuperating on a barge with his saviours. Other items of interest followed.

Where else could you enjoy such a scene? And for the price of a good coffee and a warm welcome? We Ashburians/ Ashburyites, take your pick, said we wanted a village shop, a children's playground and an open space. We have all three. Two are very well used. The Village Stores is run for our benefit. A warm place to see your friends for a chat and meet new ones, free wi-fi and, with your support, a wider range of staples as well as the great cards and local craft goods. **Why wouldn't you drop in?**

Marion Turner

Book Club -Relaunch at the Jam Jar (Ashbury)

*The more that you read,
The more things that you will know.
The more that you learn
The more places you'll go. Dr. Seuss*

We hope you will come and join us each month at 11.00 for coffee and cake at the Jam Jar. The first meeting will take place on Friday March 23rd at 11.00 when we can chat about how you would like the book club to run. Bring along a favourite book to share for this first meeting. Contact: Julie Carr 01793 710043 and 07742570161

St Mary's Churchyard Spring Tidy up- We should be pleased if you would join us on **Saturday 10th March at 10am** when we carry out an annual Spring tidy up of the old & new Churchyards-lasting about 2 hours. Free hot drinks and refreshments available. New helpers always welcome. Good social occasion.

Longcot and Fernham News

Longcot Churches working together -Chapel News

SUN. 4th 3pm -Everyone is welcome to our monthly united service which will be led by Revd. Norma Fergusson. Tea and biscuits will be served afterwards.

FRI. 23rd 3pm Yes, we shall be meeting a week earlier because our regular date on the last Friday of the month clashes with Good Friday. Everyone is welcome. There is no charge but we welcome donations to our chosen charity for this month. If transport would help or you'd just like to know more please contact **Stella on 01793 782584**.

NB Sadly, there will be no service in the Chapel on 1st April which is Easter Sunday.

Benefice News

Music in Country Churches, patron HRH Prince of Wales, will present two concerts in St Mary's Church, Bampton, on Friday 18 and Saturday 19 May 2018. On Friday 18th May, the Kings Consort and soprano, Julia Doyle, will perform work by Handel and several famous Italian composers. On Saturday 19th May the English Chamber Orchestra, with John Anderson on oboe, will perform works by Mozart and Hummel. We expect tickets to sell quickly once they are released on 26 March, further details will be available soon. In the meanwhile, please hold the dates. **Neil Sutherland** Fernham

Lent courses -Something for everyone this year, we hope.

As usual, the Lent course in Ashbury is being held jointly with the Free Church and this year is based on the film The Shack, based on the film of the same name. We started on 20 February but anyone who is interested is welcome to come along. More details from Richard & Norma (710055).

Meanwhile in Shrivenham a series of films is running on Sunday evenings; again, more details from Richard and Norma (710055) but the March dates are: **4 March** at 7pm The Mission **25 March** at 6pm Blade Runner 2
No film on 18th as this is Mothering Sunday

And on Saturday 24 March in Fernham (10-4) there is a chance to look at The Beatitudes and what it means to be a contemplative, compassionate and courageous church – not just in theory, but practically for our church communities. Everyone, especially those with (or aspiring to) a role in church leadership is invited to come along. Lunch and refreshments will be provided. More details from Richard Hancock (780183) or Richard & Norma Fergusson (710055).

Women's World Day of Prayer

This year's service is on Friday 2 March in the Ashbury Free Church at 2.15. The theme is "All God's creation is very good!" and the service has been prepared by the Christian women of Surinam. Come along and hear what they have to say to us.

Breakfast Groups

Men's breakfast will be held in Ashbury Village Hall as usual on Saturday 3 March at 8am; Breakfast Bible Study on 31 March (Easter Eve). All welcome. Please let Norma and Richard know if you would like to come – 710055

Magazine deliverers' tea

We are most grateful to everyone who takes the time to deliver copies of this magazine in our villages and would like to invite you to tea in Longcot Chapel in May, during the Flower Festival. Watch out for more details.

Faringdon Singers' Easter Concerts

These will be on Saturday 17 March at All Saints, Faringdon, at 7.30 and Sunday 18 March at St Michael's, Cumnor at 6.30. The programme will include the Duruflé Requiem and the Choral Suite from Karl Jenkins' The Armed Man. Entry is free. See www.faringdonsingers.org.uk got further details.

A Prayer for Lent

Heavenly Father, your Son battled with the powers of darkness, and grew closer to you in the desert:

help us to use these days to grow in wisdom and prayer that we may witness to your saving love

in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

Norma

Country Matters

Here's a thought. If we lived on the equator we would have no seasons and no spring to look forward to. I think most of us are programmed to anticipate spring with expectation and joy. In my own case I have always had a reminder because I have an embroidered sampler hanging in my loo "In the spring a young man's fancy lightly turns to thoughts of love"!

March is said to come in like a lion and go out as a lamb. We hope so. But the signs of spring have been creeping up on us ever since the end of January. For a start we see the days lengthening, more noticeably in the evening at first. Rooks and magpies start getting busy with twigs on a fine day laying the foundations to their nests. Wherever there are hazel or nut bushes the long lemon strands of catkins are formed and a bit later the pussy willow breaks out to exhibit the softest of silky buds.

Snowdrops are the earliest flower, then in our garden suddenly at the end of January we saw a nice show of yellow aconites poking through with crocuses not far behind. Our daffodils come later but we have noticed elsewhere there are even early varieties of daffodils or narcissi this year out on roundabouts into Swindon as early as the beginning of February.

First thing in the morning the garden birds are definitely more vocal with blackbirds and robins squabbling over territory and you hear the long repeated notes of great tits. Another sign of spring is the drumming on trees and "yaffle" call of woodpeckers. I have read that cuckoos fitted with transmitters have already started their migration back from their winter quarters in Angola, hopefully repeating this particular journey of last year to Suffolk in late April.

Even on the farm our rape crops are moving on, putting on a few extra green leaves. With the housed cattle we had one small beef steer that had had to be separated in a box with a joint problem. He has now rejoined his mates and is nearly sound. Farmers call these half-grown cattle stirks. Hopefully, with turn out and Dr Grass and some summer climes we will see this beast fully recover.

Richard Green

Benefice Clergy

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|--------------|---|------------------------------|
| Vicar NSM | Rev Richard Hancock Revd Norma Fergusson (Except Monday and Friday) | 01793 780183 01793 710055 |
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Newsletter entries for April 2018. Submit your entries for April by **16th March** to: M. Turner Claremont, Ashbury SN6 8LN. marionturner@me.com 01793 710302

For more of “what’s on” and local information see the Ashbury Village Website www.ashbury.org.uk and the community page on Facebook.