Before coming to Great St Mary’s I was Vicar of a church in South London. One of our neighbouring churches had an interesting approach to Good Friday worship. Whereas we were reflecting on the pain and sorrow of the cross in quiet and reflective devotional services, our neighbours closed their church and went out into the streets to proclaim Christ’s victory over evil, his forgiveness of sins and triumph of love. The Cross of Christ was a sign of victory.

Good Friday and Easter belong together. On the Cross, Jesus, the Son of God, reveals the infinite capacity of love to reach out and continue to love - whatever happens; at the Empty Tomb it is a wounded Christ, with the mark of nails and spear still in his hands feet and side, who comes out to speak words of peace, joy and love to those who follow him.

Both days invite us to respond in faith to God who comes to us and cares for us.

At Great St Mary’s the Majestas is placed right at the centre of the east end of the church. It is a Cross; but a Cross on which a triumphant Christ reigns in majesty; a Cross which is also a tree with a fruitfulness which brings healing and new life; a Cross surrounded by symbolic figures of the four gospel writers to show how this message is proclaimed in what they wrote.

The Majestas invites us to place the figure of the triumphant Christ ruling in love and compassion at the heart of our life together.

In practical terms, it is also the time of year when we prepare the Annual Report, looking ahead to the Annual Parochial Church Meeting on 23rd April. All members of the congregation whose names are entered on the roll of the parish are welcome to attend and to take part in the proceedings. This year we will be presenting some of the many aspects of our ministry across the whole parish. As you read it, please pray for our church and share in our joy-filled mission to proclaim the Christ of the Majestas, and bring that triumphant and compassionate love to those who come to us, and to those we go out to meet.
Nine ways of living gently on the Earth

**Stand up for the planet:** work with your MP, write letters, sign an online petition, go on a protest

**Get connected:** seek out like-minded people in your local area or online to encourage one another.

**Practice gratitude and generosity:** simplify, be liberated by needing less

**Reconnect with the natural world:** Get wet. Dig the earth. Grow herbs on your window sill.
Include the Earth in all Church liturgies, plant trees for special occasions such as baptisms or weddings.

**Go Fossil Free:** change your electricity provider or campaign for your university, council or church to disinvest. Insulate your home; turn the thermostat down
If you must fly, donate at least £50 to a sustainable energy project or to disaster relief agency.

**Walk, cycle, take the bus or train, if possible, and use local shops. Notice the beauty on your doorstep.**
Organise a lift share scheme for your church.

**Explore this island:** get in touch with the seasons, seek out local adventures, enjoy the journey and limit your driving.

**Use your LOAF:** Local, Organic, Animal-friendly, Fairly traded
Support local shops. Try to buy British fruit and veg in season. Eat less meat and dairy. Buy free-range eggs and meat, and sustainably caught fish (MSC). Perhaps communal church meals could follow the LOAF principles.

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**ACCOMMODATION SOUGHT FOR REFUGEE FAMILY**

A professional family with 3 children have just received their leave to remain in the UK, and are urgently seeking a 3 bedroom property in or near the city needed within the next 2 or 3 months. They have been living in Cambridge during the last year while claiming asylum, so are familiar with the area, and the children are well established in local schools. They will probably need to start renting at Local Housing Allowance rate or similar (see https://www.cambridge.gov.uk/local-housing-allowance-and-rates-we-pay) but hope to get into employment as speedily as possible. If you know of a property they could rent on either a short-term basis while they get their income established, or for the longer term, please contact Cambridge Refugee Resettlement Campaign on crrc@gmail.com
Pluck out your eye

R evd Devin McLachlan writes:
Earlier this year we wrestled with a particularly challenging part of the Sermon on the Mount — when, in Matthew 5.21-37, Jesus invites us to pluck out our eye if it causes us to sin!

The bloody imagery serves to shock us into paying attention while Jesus teaches the internal consistency of discipleship. The qualities of discipleship are more than external actions; they are deep qualities of being. Discipleship is more than not murdering people; discipleship is about coming to terms with the anger within our own hearts. Discipleship is not just about refraining from adultery; it is about not objectifying others as means to our own gratification. And to get at that internal consistency of discipleship, Jesus makes the law so abhorrently extreme that he forces us to surrender our legalistic idolatry of easy codes that we follow in lieu of God’s grace. Jesus challenges us to focus on the larger Biblical witness about the nature and purpose of God’s commands — ‘right relationship’, with one another and with God. Here is the heart of Jesus’ antitheses: Our relationships matter to God. Lutheran theologian David Lose writes that “Our God is no Unmoved Mover of the philosophers, nor the disdainful gods of Greek mythology who saw humans as playthings. Nor is our God simply a spiritual guide….Rather, our God cares about our relationships — cares deeply and passionately, that is, about how we treat each other because God loves each and all of us so much.”

God as stern, bearded rule-enforcer—an image we often lazily and errantly blame on the Hebrew Scriptures—misses what is life-giving about God. Christ’s teaching challenges us to understand the intent of God’s commands not as a way to bully, nor even to judge, but to protect the vulnerable and the weak, to remind us of our obligation to our neighbour and how wide the circle of neighbour is drawn. To that end I would even argue that when our ethic of marriage centres around a couple’s genitalia, rather than on a couple’s faithful relationship reflecting God’s love, we have missed the point entirely.

God’s commands spring forth not from control but from Love. In an era where the rule of law surrenders to the rule of greed and power, where truth is shoved aside by alternate facts, where the social contract is overruled by social media and right relationship is steamrolled by self-righteousness. Right Relationship is the work of the Church. Without it, we put ourselves in a hell of our own making.

God cares so much about our relationships that He would rather have us tend those relationships than come to church — ‘So when you are offering your gift at the altar, if you remember that your brother or sister has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother or sister, and then come and offer your gift’ (Mat. 5.23-24).

As Christians, we are called to by Christ to tend the garden of our relationships. Call to mind one of the relationships in the garden your life that is important and life-giving. Consider what makes it healthy and whole. Give thanks to God for that person, for the relationship you share. And look to the thorny parts of your garden, to a relationship that has suffered damage. Don’t problem-solve, don’t go blindly back to someone who has been abusive. Simply hold that estranged person in prayer, and offer that broken relationship to God.

God of wonder and of joy: grace comes from you, and you alone are the source of life and love. Without you, we cannot please you; without your love, our deeds are worth nothing. Send your Holy Spirit, and pour into our hearts that most excellent gift of love, that we may worship you now with thankful hearts and serve you always with willing minds; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. (Common Worship, prayer for The Marriage Service)
BETWEEN MYTH & REALITY

Exhibition of sculpture March 1-May 10

Pauline Davison writes:

If you are anywhere near St Martins-in-the-Fields in the next two months, do go and see this exhibition of sculpture by Chaim Stephenson. Born in Liverpool to Russian immigrant parents he worked down the mines in the Second World War as a ‘Bevin Boy’, then went illegally to Israel in 1947 and fought in the first Arab-Israeli war. He joined a Kibbutz in Galilee where he worked as a gardener and shepherd, and in his free time began to create sculptures using wood, plaster and metal.

During a year’s study leave in England in 1960 he met the writer Lynne Reid Banks whom he later married in Cyprus, a mixed marriage being impossible in Israel. They returned to England in 1971 and he became a full-time artist. Stephenson died in 2016 at the age of 89.

Though not a practising Jew, Stephenson was inspired by the stories of the Old Testament, by the natural world, by people and the relationships between them and their suffering in war and famine. This exhibition in the crypt of St Martin’s is quite small and the sculptures are not large and majestic, but express great warmth, humanity, intelligence, even humour.

Somehow Stephenson manages to express the strength of their emotions without sentimentality. He was also moved by the plight of refugees and those fleeing war and other disasters, as is evident in images such as Refugee Woman, who looks back at her war-torn country for the last time, and Fleeing Family. I loved this exhibition for the beauty of the sculpture, and for the imaginative way it enlarged my understanding of the archetypal Biblical stories, drawing out their humanity and their continuing relevance to the world we live in now.
Update from St Frumentius College: taken from an article appearing in the Spring 2017 edition of The Call

“There are things that are hard about this place, but many more that are wonderful” so write Chris and Suzy Wilson who are currently working in the College.

“Gambella is beautiful; fish caught in the Baro River are freshly served in restaurants and it is one of the few places where Nuer, Anuak and Opo highland people gather together. There’s a great bunch of students at St Frumentius Anglican Theological College and it’s a privilege to be working with them. Slightly more than half are refugees from South Sudan; others are Ethiopians from the Gambella region. The college is unusual in that it’s the only place as far as we know, where Anuak and Nuer students join in daily worship, pray and study together. There is still a strong belief in the region that these two ethnic groups should live, worship and study separately.

A highlight of the week is the evenings of food and fellowship with some Mabaan students. They are South Sudanese refugees who all hope to go back home to further establish and strengthen the church. Our times of shared worship have always lifted our spirits. Our eyes are being opened to how much of the Bible is about people who are displaced, and the encouragement offered by these texts, not least from Moses. For more information see Catherine Smart

REFORMATION 500

The Vicar writes:

This year is the 500th anniversary of the beginning of the Reformation. On 30th October 1517, Martin Luther nailed a paper with 95 statements about faith on the door of the Castle Church at Wittenberg. These ‘95 theses’ are seen as the defining principles of the Reformation; the break of the Church of England from Rome was one of the consequences.

We have many ideas for celebrating this anniversary at Great St Mary’s, many working with friends and colleagues from around the city.

Here are a few:

A LECTURE ON THE REFORMATION by well known historian James Simpson on 9 September;

‘THE FIVE SOLAS’ a set of sculptures by Romanian artist Liviu Mocan illustrating the five great themes of the Reformation;

A RE-ENACTMENT of Great St Mary’s history when Martin Bucer’s bones were dug up and burned in the market place;

A UNIVERSITY SERMON by BELAY GUTA, a leading African Lutheran theologian.

REFORMATION MUSIC CONCERT by the GSM choir and orchestra on 17 June.

A SCHOOLS’ EVENT – Reformation Personalities and Pictures.

It will be an exciting year – watch this space for further information.
The PCC noted the prioritisation of funding and work on the south aisle roof to be followed by further action on the screen in the Narthex for safe-guarding choir children.

Appreciation was expressed to Philip Hensman and Robert Smyth for their work during the flooding caused by blocked drains in the kitchen and toilets. A faculty would be sought to drill an appropriate flow-pipe re-routed to the outside drain to avoid kitchen waste colliding with toilet waste, thus preventing further flooding.

It was noted that few people had attended the Harvest Lunch, or the All Souls service. It was recommended that in future people should bring the names of those they wished commemorated to the All Souls service, rather than jotting the names down on a list. Conversely, numbers at both carol services at GSM and in Michaelhouse were greater than could be accommodated. Regarding lighting, it was noted that Norwich Cathedral had particularly fine lighting.

The viability of a Parish Directory with contact details was discussed. The PCC welcomed the proposal, but were concerned about data protection issues. It was agreed that the Vicar should consult further to determine what might be possible.

A lunch arranged at the Hopbine pub had proved so successful that it was decided to arrange a monthly lunch at Michaelhouse.

It was suggested that Emma Dunn be invited to become the GSM Safeguarding Officer. The Vicar and Veronica McDouall would support her in this role.

A draft budget showed the expectation that the proceeds of the tower and shop would be higher than the previous year. The budget would be recommended to the APCM. Thanks were recorded to G. Day and also to Stafford’s for all their work. It was also agreed unanimously that the accounts be approved for presentation to the APCM.

The APCM would be held on 23rd April at 11 a.m. at Michaelhouse, followed by a Bring and Share lunch. The revision of the Electoral Roll would be undertaken at once. The following members of the PCC were due to retire: A. Lindley, K. Willetts, G. Vivian-Neal and V. McDouall. They were thanked for their considerable contributions. An Annual Review would be available before the APCM.

The provisional programme of events for the commemoration of the Reformation was noted.

The application to the Diocese for a grant for a pioneer minister at Michaelhouse had been refused. Discussions would take place between Michaelhouse Trustees and the Vicar, and a further application considered.
Choir Tour to Prague
Sam Cross writes:

Our tour began at 04:00 on Saturday 11th of February leaving on the 07:00 flight to Prague. We arrived at the hostel around lunch time, which was conveniently right next to the Charles Bridge on the east side of the Vltava River; we began rehearsing our repertoire almost straight away. Later, before dinner we walked over the beautiful Charles Bridge and into the Old Town, which for most of the children meant filling up on Trdelníks.

On Sunday morning, we walked up the hill to sing Mass at St Vitus’ Cathedral: Elgar’s Ave Maria and Ian Ledsham’s arrangement of Holy Mary, sung from the organ loft in sub-zero temperatures, which the children probably coped with better than the adults! After the service we visited the cathedral tower - whilst all the bells in the city were pealing - a unique experience combined with panoramic views of Prague. On Monday, two recitals. One at lunch time at Kostel svatého Havla (the Church of St Havel) in the Old Town, and in the afternoon at Kostel Panny Marie Vítězné a svatého (The Church of Our Lady Victorious) in the lesser quarter, which happened to draw the largest crowd of the tour so far. These recitals were largely made up of pieces written by English composers, including Tallis, Weelkes and Vaughan Williams, with the exception of Bruckner’s Tantum Ergo and Holst’s Ave Maria, sung beautifully by our female voices, despite the challenging circumstances of having fewer singers than usual. Tuesday was our last day of recitals and after an early breakfast we travelled to Kutná Hora to sing our first recital of the day at The Church of Saint Barbara; we arrived early so the children revelled in having the chance to play in the snow. Following our morning recital and a very filling lunch in the town we took a short coach ride to Sedlec where we sung our final recital - at the Cathedral of Assumption of Our Lady and Saint John the Baptist.

We later visited the Cemetery Church of All Saints, with the Ossuary, ornately decorated with human skeletons from 40,000-70,000 people.

Our last day was one of leisure as we had a late return flight. After checking out of the hostel, we visited the Astronomical Clock Tower, collected our lunch and took the funicular railway to Petrin Park to eat it and enjoy snow-ball fights. We also managed some further sightseeing!

The tour choir performed a lunchtime recital of our repertoire at Great St Mary’s which drew a large crowd and which was possibly even better than any of our recitals on the tour. On behalf of the Choir, I would like to thank Emma Dunn, Sam Hayes and Benedict Todd, without whom the tour would not have been possible, and John Binns and the parents who accompanied us, for being excellent company and a great help to us all.

Contributions to the newsletter from you, the reader, make for a greatly enhanced document and we value articles “from the pew”. Do consider providing an item of news, or your views relating to your faith, your time at GSM, or what it feels like to be living through current events. The structure is simple:
• News items: 50 - 200 words. • Major articles: up to 500. Please provide a photo if possible. The Editor reserves the right to edit submissions; if major revisions are required, the article will be run by the author prior to publication. Deadline is 10 days before the end of the month.
DIARY APRIL 2017

GREAT ST MARYS AND MICHAELHOUSE

FREE LUNCHTIME RECITAL AT GSM
18 @ 1pm Emmanuel Bach—Violin

6-22 April Douglas Jeal: Light, Place, Colour & Form
An exhibition of paintings and acrylic pieces at GSM. Donations welcome for GSM and Arthur Rank Hospice.

5 Adult Lino-Cut workshop
11am–5pm. £30 pp booking essential (email margaretj222@gmail.com). All materials included, plus tea and cake.

6-7 Children’s craft sessions
10am-1pm. £1 per child. No booking required, just come along

SERVICES IN MARCH

Sundays
- 8am Holy Communion
- 9.30am Holy Communion
- 11.15am Choral Mattins
- 5.30pm Choral Evensong

Mondays
- 9.15am Holy Communion

Tuesdays
- 9.15am (MH) Morning Prayer
- 10.30am (MH) The Ark

Wednesdays
- 1.00pm (MHFH) Holy Communion

Thursdays
- 9.15am Morning Prayer
- 1.05 pm (MH) Holy Communion

Holy Week and Easter Services

PALM SUNDAY 9 APRIL
- 8.00am Holy Communion
- 9.30am Procession, Passion and Communion
- 11.15am Choral Mattins
- 5.30pm Choral Evensong

MAUNDY THURSDAY 13 APRIL
- 7.30pm Communion followed by Vigil till 1200

GOOD FRIDAY 14 APRIL
- 9.30am A service for children (MH)
- 10.30am Mattins and Litany
- 11.40am Ecumenical act of witness
- 12.00pm Poetry, music and reflection
- 1.30pm Service of the Cross

EASTER SUNDAY 16 APRIL
- 5.30am Lighting the fire & Communion
- 8.00am Holy Communion
- 9.30am Festival Sung Communion
- 11.15am Choral Mattins
- 5.30pm Choral Evensong

Visit our website at: www.gsm.cam.ac.uk  Newsletter Editor: Sarah de Mas sarahdemas48@gmail.com; 01223 561 131

The Editor reserves the right to edit submissions; if revisions required are major, they’ll be run by the author prior to publication.