

## Your rector's letter

*Dear friends,*

### **Don't give up anything for Lent**

This year I would like to ask you not to give up things for Lent. You could keep eating your favourite biscuits or bars of chocolate. Practising Lent is not the same as making New Year's resolutions or attending a Weight Watchers session. Lent is about spiritual renewal and this is not seen in reducing your snacks but in the extra mile you walk, the extra time you give, the extra prayers you say. So instead of doing less, do more during Lent; do not give up things but take on something extra for Lent. So, just give.

### **Walk the Way**

Just a few examples of the things you could do in March.

You could give your time to the Foodbank, Soup Run, Beacon House, put your name on the list as a volunteer for Christian Aid or support the Bishop's Lent appeal which supports the people from Marsabit in Kenya who have asked to join with them in raising money for a water bowser to be used during drought.

It is not too late to join the Churches Together Lent Course and if you want to walk a spiritual trail, do come to church on a Wednesday evening in March. Each 7 past 7 will be dedicated to the Stations of the Cross as we will follow the way of the cross pondering the Stations painted by Wivenhoe artist Michael Fletcher. The church will be open from 6.45 until 7.30pm on Wednesdays.

### **Holy Week**

The last three days of Lent, the final journey of Christ to his death and resurrection, are not supposed to be walked by Jesus on his own. Maybe this year you could walk with him. So what I would like to ask you may sound difficult, or too pious, or may just help you to intensely experience the core of your faith. On Maundy Thursday you'll sit around the table where he serves you with bread and wine and his love; on Good Friday you touch the cross and be close to him; Holy Saturday is a day of waiting, hoping, and trusting that he will burst from the tomb. During these three days there are services to which you are warmly invited. Please see the separate poster in this magazine with dates and times.

### **Children's Easter**

This year again Sunday Club leaders and other volunteers will be running an afternoon of Easter themed crafts, drama and food on Holy Saturday **31 March from 2 to 4pm at St Mary's**, ending with an Easter party and Easter eggs. It promises to be a fun and inspiring Easter event. All children are welcome – under 7s need to be accompanied by a parent or carer. All activities are free.

### **Emergency Appeal**

You will recall that in November we made an appeal for support needed for the start of the preparatory works to the annexe. Many of you have contributed and thanks to you we reached our pre-set total nearly. On 5 February we had raised £ 15,320, so £ 4,680 away from the hoped-for total of £20,000.

As we now have the funds we expect test bores to be carried out during the course of March and the archaeological survey will follow later in Spring.

### **Appeal launch**

This is the preliminary of the proper appeal. We informed the congregation in December about our progress regarding the building of the annexe and the improvements in the church. Unfortunately this presentation was on a Sunday with snow and only 37 people turned up. We'll give our church members an update next month on Sunday 22 April at the 10.30am service. The great launch for the community is planned on Saturday 5 May. Please put these two dates in your diary. Thank you for your prayers and support.

### **For him**

People sometimes do not know to what cause they should give their time and skills. If you consider that someone has given his life to conquer death and sin for you (yes, you!) and thought of you and all people when he died on a cross, it should not be difficult to decide to whom you should give yourself. What a joy that each of us is able to give ourselves to the ultimate Giver. Happy Lent!

*Erwin*