

SERVICES TODAY, Sunday 22nd March 2009, 4th Sunday in Lent,

Mothering Sunday

Highworth 8.00am Holy Communion BCP. David
 10.00am All Age Worship/thanksgiving, Geoff Sowden/Katie James
 6.00pm Informal Worship, Arthur Woo
 Hannington 10.30am Mothering Sunday, Arthur Woo
 Blunsdon 8.00am Holy Communion BCP. John Rees
 10.00am Mothering Sunday, John Rees



SERVICES NEXT WEEK, Sunday 29th March 2009, 5th Sunday in Lent

Highworth 8.00am Holy Communion CW, Allan Bucknall
 10.00am Parish Communion, Geoff Sowden/Douglas Holt
 Blunsdon 10.00am Family Worship, Katherine Dack



TODAY we welcome the family of **Mason Pepperell** as they come today to give thanks for Mason's birth.

LENT LUNCHESES 2009

This year the ICC Lent Lunches will be supporting the work of iThemba AIDS Foundation, a Christian charity bringing hope to people affected by HIV and AIDS in sub-Saharan Africa.
 Lent lunches take place at 12noon at the Methodist Church on Wednesdays.

Peter Croton

"Hosanna to the King of Kings"

On Saturday 4th April, come and join the joyful Palm Saturday procession waving palms and singing. We will meet at the Brewery St car park for the walk at 10.30am, ending on the podium for a short service which will start at 10.45am. The Churches of Highworth will be there as we re-enact the very first Palm procession.

"All glory laud and honour to thee Redeemer King"

HIGHWORTH CHORAL SOCIETY are pleased to invite you to their Spring Concert in St Michael's Church at 7.30pm on Saturday 4th April. The programme will include Rossini's beautiful and tuneful Stabat Mater and excerpts from Handel's Messiah. The soloists include Louise Lloyd known well to many of you locally. This should be a fitting start to Holy Week so we look forward to welcoming you. Tickets are available at £7.50, concessions £6.50, from the Lighthouse Bookshop.

Anne Hinton

TEARFund COFFEE MORNING

On 4th April the coffee morning in the church room between 10.00am and 12.00noon will be raising funds for TEARFund, "Christian Action with the world's poor."

Offers of cakes and raffle prizes, bric-a-brac to **Jean Homer** or **Helen Weaver** (764577) will collect.

HALF DAY OF PRAYER - Monday 6th April

Please join us for the next in our series of half days of prayer and fasting as we consider the future of our corporate worship. There will be two prayer sessions from 9.30am to 12.30pm and 6.00pm to 9.00pm. Both will start and end with a half hour of corporate prayer. In between we will have prayer stations around the church where we'll be using the words of the song "The Servant King" to help focus our thoughts and prayers.

Lynn Woo and Lesley Page

CHRISTIAN AID COFFEE MORNING

On Saturday 28th March we will be supporting and raising awareness for Christian Aid. Christian Aid week is 10th-17th May and we would like to raise as much interest as we possibly can in supporting this.

Patricia and Peter Croton

WHAT'S ON THIS WEEK

Mon 23rd 9.00am Watercolour group, church room, till 3.00pm
 9.30am Prayers in church - all are welcome
 10.00am Ministry Meeting, Church Office
 10.00am Monday daytime fellowship (venue? contact Bella 762010)
 7.00pm Highworth Choral Society in church
 8.00pm Baptism Preparation in Church Room
 9.30am Pilates in the Church Room
 Tue 24th 10.00am Tuesday Daytime Fellowship, 14 Brookfield (Lynn 763197)
 11.20am Funeral of Oswald Forbes at Highworth cemetery
 7.00pm Church Room booked for private hire until 9pm
 8.00pm ICC Lent Prayer at The Methodist Church led by HMC
 8.00pm Tuesday Fellowship, 28 Henley Drive (Allan 762721)
 Wed 25th 9.30am Music Bugs, Church Room
 9.30am Little Fishes, Cullerne Room and Chancel
 12.00noon Lent Lunches, Methodist Church
 2.30pm Magazine Working Party, Cullerne Room
 7.00pm Pilates in the Church Room
 Thu 26th 10.00am Holy Communion with Mothers' Union, Warneford Chapel
 10.40am Mothers' Union, Church Room
 7.30pm Alpha in the Church Room
 7.30pm Bellingring practice, Bell Tower
 Fri 27th 7.00pm Choir Practice
 Sat 28th 10.00am Coffee Morning and bulletin folding, Church Room
 Sun 29th 12.30pm Roast Sunday Lunch, Church Room

ST MICHAEL'S FLOWER GUILD - Our coffee morning last Saturday was a great success, we would like to thank everyone who supported us and helped us make a profit of approximately £128 towards church flowers. **Barbara Lawton**

SWINDON STREET PASTORS - caring, listening, helping, in the name of Jesus. Want to join us? Our next 15-week training course starts on Friday 27th March - download an application form from the website www.streetpastorsswindon.org.uk, or email swindon@streetpastors.org.uk or call 07806-337790. Street Pastors is an initiative of Ascension Trust, whose desire is to see Christians working effectively with their local churches, community and society.

PRAYING FOR THE BENEFICE

This week we pray for those living in Grove Hill, Grove Orchard, Hanover House, Henley Drive, Home Farm, and for who live or work at Grove Hill Nursing Home

PRAYER

Lord God of love, thank you that you want us to grow ever closer to you.
 Lord God of love, hold us as your children in your loving care.
 Lord God of love, awaken us to the knowledge that your love is not dependent on us.
 Lord God of love, help us to love you and others as you love us.
 Lord God, Father, keep us safe.
Amen

LIFE Stories: the Swindon LIFE Group will host an evening event at St Joseph's Catholic College on Friday 3rd April at 7pm. Guests Martin Foley, Chief Executive of LIFE, Gill Duval, LIFE's In-house Training Co-ordinator and Dr Carole Collins, a local GP, will tell us something of their lives and work in the fields of politics, law, education, counselling and health care in relation to pregnancy, abortion and related issues of justice and peace. There will be an opportunity for questions from the audience. Tickets £5 from **Marguerite Holiday (tel 480611)**. Please support this event and come prepared to enjoy a really great evening at the same time as tuning in to this vital issue.

FIVE SIDES OF A CIRCLE - a play by Neville Boundy, will be performed at Christ Church Swindon on Saturday 4th April 2009 at 7.00pm. Tickets at £5 are available from the Christ Church Parish Office on 01793-522832. 'Eventually, the four Gospel writers meet.....'

PLEASE REMEMBER IN PRAYER...

...all those who are sick or troubled,
 praying especially for
 Frank Barnett, Lorna Bowie, Bob Bromberg, Leonard Cheesley, Val Cox, Andrew Crowley, Lesley Evans, Arthur Francis, Kim Fulgoni, Peter Gibbs, Syd Huband, Timothy James, Julia Riggs, Mick Sellar, Betty Taber
...all those who are recently bereaved,
 praying especially for those who love and miss Yvonne Beck, Eileen Maydew, Oswald Forbes, Jack Tipping

Parish of Highworth, with Sevenhampton & Inglesham - who to contact

All Ministry Enquiries - Rev Geoff Sowden (day off Friday) telephone 01793-765554
 Church Office (Administration/General Enquiries) - tel 01793-762702 or email to stmichaelshighworth@offices.orangehome.co.uk
 Youth Ministry Enquiries - telephone 07983-507349 (day off Saturday) www.stmichaelshighworth.co.uk



**Week beginning Sunday 22nd March 2009
 Mothering Sunday**

Isaiah in our passage today uses some images of a Mother's and Father's love to show the wonderful truth about God's love for us. Isaiah paints us a lovely picture of God longing to draw us ever closer to him; nothing should stand in the way of his heartfelt desire for each of us to be drawn ever closer to him.

Firstly, he wants us to see that nothing that we do should stand in the way. The people of Israel had abandoned God, and as a result had been taken off to slavery in Babylon. God still longs for the relationship to be restored:

- V8, I will restore you to the land
- V9, I will care for you like a shepherd, finding pasture.

God says, what ever has happened in the past, I still love you and want us once again to be close in our relationship.

Secondly, Isaiah wants us to see that nothing we think God has done to us should stand in the way. People of Israel had seen their city, the city where God had said he would be, destroyed, so in v14 they say, this view of restoration in the future is lovely, but what about the present reality. We feel abandoned, how could God have allowed his city to be destroyed.

For some of course images of Mother and Father are in fact painful, even hurtful. This is a day many find difficult, memories and feelings are brought to the surface. But here from Isaiah God uses images of the best in a Mother's and Father's love to prove that God would no more abandon us than:

- Would a mother forget the baby she is feeding. V15
- Would a proud father not rest until his daughter had been fully prepared as a bride? 18.

Geoff Sowden

Our readings today are

Isaiah 49:8-15 (pew bible p736) Luke 2:33-35 (pew bible p1028)

Please join us for refreshments after the 10am service today

If you prefer not to take alcohol, alcohol-free wine is available at our communion services - please take a pink card from a steward and ensure it is visible as you come for communion