



UPDATE

JANUARY 2012

THE MONTHLY NEWS BULLETIN FOR THE LIVING STONES AT ST PETER'S & ST JAMES' WITH ST OWEN'S & ST BARNABAS'

I still think we should have got him a teddy...



Epiphany:
the Feast of the Magi -
&, for one year only,

Hilary's Licensing

Sunday 8th January, 6.30pm,
St James' Church



A reminder that we shall be combining some great Epiphany hymns with a visit from the Bishop of Hereford to license Revd Hilary Morgan in her new role among us. Please join us for the evening if you are able.

An old Rugby player's prayer

For those of us well in to the second half of this Rugby game of life,

God grant that we may play on with the wind of the Spirit at our backs.

Amen

Peter Strevens



ELLIS'S HAPPY FEET



In September we asked 'Can we help this little Hereford boy to walk?' We were made aware of Ellis Jones, a two-year old boy suffering from Cerebral Palsy, who needs to have an operation in America that will mean the difference between a life being able to walk or a life in a wheelchair.

So far his family, friends and the church have raised over £40,000 of the £45,000 needed by February to fund this surgery, which is now booked for March. **Thank you for all you have given - and big thanks to Philip & Jean Anderson for all they've done to help this amazing total come about.**

Please keep praying for Ellis, his family and his surgical team in America. If you can think up ways of raising any of the remaining money, please speak to Philip or Jean on 01432 268963. Please give any cash or cheques (made payable to **Ellis's Happy Feet Fund**) to Philip or Jean at St James'. If you would prefer to donate anonymously, just pay into HSBC account 62040085, sort code 40-24-11. Thank you.



Punch a Hole in the Darkness

**Start the New Year in style
with St James' Church
Sunday 1st January @ 4.00 pm**

There will be a **W**arm welcome for all

It will be **O**ver in less than an hour

There will be **R**efreshments café style

We'll do some **S**inging

There will be **H**ands on things to do

It will be very **I**nformal

There will be time to **P**ray for others & ourselves

"There is no switch for darkness: it just takes an absence of light." (Malcolm Duncan)

WE'LL MISS YOU

if you don't come
to our

SUNDAY EVENING SERVICES
6:30pm (except 1st January)

1st January 4:00pm
Café service at St James'

8th January
Epiphany Carols at St James'

15th January
Holy Communion at St Peter's

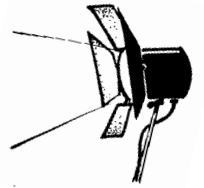
22nd January
Evening Worship at St James'

29th January
Evening Worship at St Peter's



Jazz
with
The Not So Big Band

Poetry
with **Bill Thomas**



and a
two-course
meal

BANISH THOSE
WINTER BLUES!

Saturday 21 January 7:00pm Putley Village Hall
Tickets £10 per adult, £7.50 for under 16s
from Cara, Alice or John Rhodes on (01531) 670015

in aid of Cara Rhodes's conservation trip with Operation Wallacea

WE ARE NEVER SAFE... GOD IS NEVER SAFE...

"Those who believe in God can never in a way be sure of him again. Once they have seen him in a stable, they can never be sure where he will appear or to what lengths he will go or to what ludicrous depths of self-humiliation he will descend in his wild pursuit of humanity. If holiness and the awful power and majesty of God were present in this least auspicious of all events, the birth of a peasant's child, then there is no place or time so lowly and earthbound but that holiness can be present there too. And this means that we are never safe, that there is no place where we can hide from God, no place where we are safe from his power to break in two and re-create the human heart because it is just where he seems most helpless that he is most strong, and just where we least expect him that he comes most fully.

For those who believe in God, it means, this birth, that God himself is never safe from us, and maybe that is the dark side of Christmas, the terror of the silence. He comes in such a way that we can always turn him down, as we could crack the baby's skull like an eggshell or nail him up when he gets too big for that. God comes to us in the hungry one we do not have to feed, comes to us in the lonely one we do not have to comfort, comes to us in all the desperate human need of people everywhere that we are always free to turn our backs upon. It means that God puts himself at our mercy not only in the sense of the suffering that we can cause him by our blindness and coldness and cruelty, but the suffering that we can cause him simply by suffering ourselves. Because that is the way that love works, and when someone we love suffers, we suffer with them, and we would not have it otherwise because the suffering and the love are one, just as it is with God's love for us.

The child is born in the night - the mother's exhausted flesh, the father's face clenched like a fist - and nothing is ever the same again."



(from The Hungering Dark by Frederick Buechner)

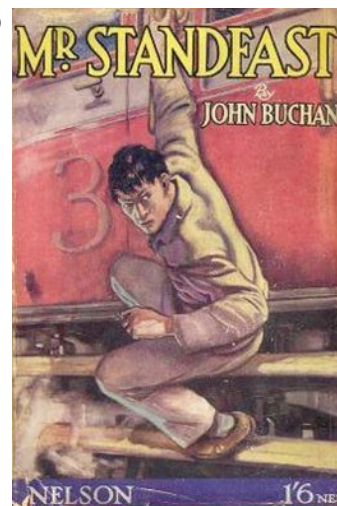
PAUL'S PONDERINGS JANUARY 2012

For some people 7.30 in the morning is unimaginably early, whilst for others its one of the best parts of the day. I suspect that, for those of us who gather for a men's breakfast once a month, we are mainly in the latter category. Anyway, the conversation is usually pretty lively, and December's session was no exception. Amongst other things we discussed there was a comparison of what we rated our favourite books within a certain genre. Our views differed widely of course, but I was interested to find that when it came to what might be called "adventure stories" several of us put the same book at the top of our list.

If you've never read it, I hope what follows won't spoil your reading of John Buchan's *Mr Standfast*. Most people of my age will be familiar with the book or film *The 39 Steps* and its hero Richard Hannay. Well, there are three more books about Hannay, the last being the book we were talking about. There's lots, as you can imagine, about character formation, personal choices and inner courage, all set in a First World War espionage setting. The final two chapters are gripping and challenging, and draw much of their depth from their use of images and characters from Pilgrim's Progress, and in particular the link with Mr Standfast.

For everyone in St Peter's and St James' the current challenge, as we enter a new year, seems to me to be about how we "stand fast", both in our individual discipleship and in our corporate church life. With so many people facing tough personal challenges, and with all the demands around the new opportunities in St Peter's, it is important that we take careful thought about these things. And it helps me to "stand fast" if I break the word down in that way, and recall the Bible's injunctions about those things.

Stand is such a key word in Ephesians 6, reminding us that we stand together in Christ, as one in Him, equipped with his protection. Of course we need to check that our feet are on the Rock, that we are standing alongside each other in faith, that we stand "in His great might". And fast has a place both in Jesus' teaching (Matthew 6 and 9) and in the life of the early church (Acts 13 and 14), and needs, I believe, to be part of our own contemporary discipline. Note that in Acts this comes in the context of discernment and leadership, both important to us as a church in the year ahead. May we therefore, with all these things in mind, take as our "text motto" for 2012, a small part of that Ephesians passage - let's pray for ourselves and for each other, "...and having done all, to stand firm" (Eph 6:13).



WEAPONS OF MASS DEVOTION

Naomi Bell writes: "Prayer at St James will be at my house, 100A Green Street, Monday January 9th at 8:00pm, to avoid both the cold temperature in the church and the Bank Holiday."

All are welcome. Consider yourself invited in person; if you can't make it after all, do spend some time in prayer for St P's & St J's, perhaps using this issue of UPDATE as a guide.

God is healing people today!
Yes, in High Town,
Hereford.

HOTS (Healing On The Streets)
takes place outside The Old House, High Town,
every Saturday from
12 noon – 2:00pm.

Contact Details

Parish Office:

Carolyn Hattersley, Parish Administrator, 24 St James' Road, Hereford, HR1 2QS.

Tel: (01432) 276320 email: spsjoffice@btinternet.com

The deadline for items for our weekly Sunday notice sheet is Thursday at 10.30am.

UPDATE Co-ordinator Diana Thomas dianathomas@btinternet.com

The deadline for items for **UPDATE** is the 20th of each month; please email them to Diana.

For all of this and more look on our website: www.spsj.org.uk

Website items to Peter Massey pwmassey@btinternet.com

Why not join our Facebook community? For more details contact Jeremy Wilding.

Organising a church event?

Then please email Diana for our new guide to give your event a flying start!

MISSIONARY COMMITTEE

After years of faithful service Anita Newton has stepped aside from convening this important group.

Paul is summoning an open meeting, hoping that anyone who would like to be part of of a re-formed committee might come and be part of the discussion about its role and purpose in the church: supporting our link missionaries and links with Rwanda, encouraging mission awareness and?

The open meeting is on Monday 16th January at 7:30pm, in the Upper Room of St Peter's Church House.