

ASH WEDNESDAY

Next Wednesday is Ash Wednesday, Masses will be celebrated at 9.15am and 6.00pm, and the ashes blessed and distributed. Ash Wednesday is also a day of fasting and abstinence, one of just two days in the year, when we are asked to refrain from eating meat, and to eat considerably less than usual.

LENT

It's good to mark Lent in some positive way. Below are some of the opportunities available in the parish. In addition to these there is the, almost, daily Mass. A good way of marking Lent, if not daily, then perhaps once or twice during the week.

STATIONS OF THE CROSS

A traditional Lenten devotion is the Stations of the Cross. We are fortunate in our church to have such fine artwork to illustrate Jesus' last journey to Calvary, and to assist us when we reflect on this journey. The "Stations" will take place each Sunday of Lent at 6.00pm – a good activity for Lent.

LENT GROUPS

The groups will begin meeting in the week beginning 19th February for 6 weeks. All details can be found in the Invitation leaflets. This year we shall be reflecting on the Gift of the Holy Eucharist using the Diocesan Programme. "We adore you, O Christ, and we praise You" Please do join a group if you possibly can. There is no pressure on anyone to speak. We shall read scripture, pray, share ideas and stories and enjoy fellowship with coffee and biscuits.

MY DAY BY DAY

Daily reflections for Lent are available in the 'My Day by Day' series. There are different booklets for adults, juniors and children. They are available, price £1 in the porch.

OUR LADY OF LOURDES

Today is a special day for our parish, as we keep the feast of Our Lady of Lourdes. It is an opportunity to pray for everyone in the parish, and to pray for all that goes on in our parish. We are fortunate to have Mary as our patron, who we can learn from how to listen to God's Word, and what it is to be a disciple. This weekend Canon Dwyer, and a group of parishioners, will be celebrating the feast in Lourdes, and will no doubt be praying for our parish, and everyone in the parish.

DEVELOPING WORLD GROUP

New project

The Group is currently raising £5,768 for a new project in Uganda. The money will help finance the construction of large water tanks in the ground, and related piping/pumps for St Martin de Pores parish centre (with schools) in Lukome, near Gulu in Northern Uganda. Our aim is to send the total amount, against receipts, by end February - the first £2,000 was sent on 30 January - so that the project can if possible be completed before the wet season which begins around April. In order to achieve this, the Pakistan project which we intended to do in December/January, will be funded in March/April instead. For further information about the Uganda project please visit <https://parish.rcdow.org.uk/harpenden/parish-groups/the-developing-world-group/>

Finance

On 9th January donations of £1,165.66 were credited to our account. A further £602.50 from the Barn Dance, £890 from the Lea Singers 23rd December Christmas concert and £683.30 from the Green Box collection on 20/21 January has also been paid in or will be very soon. We are very grateful to the Lea Singers for choosing us as their charity for the year and their donation. The Green Box total is tremendous, especially as this excludes a large number of Green Boxes handed in one by one over the last year. Thank you and your friends from outside the Parish who have contributed so generously, including by coming to and arranging these events - you have made this project possible.

CATENAINS

The parish has an active Catenian group that meet on the second Wednesday of each month. As a change from our normal venue, the February gathering which falls on Ash Wednesday, will start off by attending 6pm mass and then convene in the Undercroft for a short meeting followed by a fish and chip supper. If any men (and through them their families) of the parish would like to find out a little more about the group without any obligation, do join us at this relaxed and simple supper evening. Just contact denniscooper238@btinternet.com

ST DOMINIC NURSERY

On the 5th February 2018, the application process for Nursery places will open for children born between 1st September 2014 and 31st August 2015. This year, we are looking to extend our Early Years provision to enable parents to access 30 hours free childcare. The school will also be offering an optional Lunch Club and afternoon sessions run by *Friends Together* (our breakfast and afterschool provider). For further information please visit our website www.stdominic.herts.sch.uk or contact the school office on 01582 760047 to book an appointment to come along to one of our visit mornings on Thursday 8th, Tuesday 20th or Wednesday 28th February at 10.15am. Applications close at 3.30pm on 5th March. To support your application, a Certificate of Catholic Practice form will need to be signed. A form signing session will take place in church on Saturday 24th February 11.30am to 12.30pm. There is no need to make an appointment, just turn up.

Signing is **ONLY AT THIS TIME**. Please note that 'practising Catholic' means attending Mass every Sunday.

WOMENS' WORLD DAY OF PRAYER 2018

This year's Womens' World Day of Prayer will take place on Friday 2nd March. There will be two services: 10.30am at the High Street Methodist Church and 7.45pm at St Mary's, Kinsbourne Green. This year's service has been written by the women of Suriname with the theme "All God's Creation is Very Good!" Everyone is welcome - the service is not just for women! For more information please see the postcards in the porch or contact Teresa Newham on [01582 766403](tel:01582766403).

BLESSED JOHN HENRY NEWMAN AND THE ENGLISH SENSIBILITY

All are welcome to this Newman Association talk by Dr Jacob Phillips of St Mary's University, Twickenham. Sunday 18th February, 8pm, at St Bartholomew's Church, 47 Vesta Avenue, St Albans AL1 2PE.

AUCTION OF PROMISES SATURDAY APRIL 21st 2018

An opportunity for everyone in the parish both young and not so young to start thinking of what they can "promise to do" or "promise to give" for the Auction of Promises in aid of the Developing World Group. So what is an Auction of Promises? It is simply a promise by you or your family that you will do or give something that someone else will bid for at the Auction. There is no limit to what the promise can be. It could be to bake a cake, cook for a dinner party, do some gardening, drive someone to/from the airport, donate tickets to the theatre or a sporting event or use your creative skills to provide a memorable experience for the successful bidder. The list is endless. Alternatively you might like to suggest something that you would like to bid for (e.g. someone to cook for a family BBQ) and someone else might be able to offer this. Further details on the Auction and how you can submit your promises will be given nearer the time. In the meantime put your thinking caps on and a note in your diary for April 21st to come to the Auction and have a fun evening.

LIVE SIMPLY

The LiveSimply group meet again at 7.30 pm in the Undercroft next Tuesday 13 February to put the final touches to the LiveSimply Action Plan before it is submitted to CAFOD to register for their Award. Anyone interested in joining us is most welcome! Thank you to all those who have contributed to the process so far or supported it in any way, and we pray that your support and encouragement will continue during the year ahead, as the Action Plan becomes a living reality for the parish community. Laudato Si