



THE BANSFIELD BENEFICE

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CHURCH NEWS



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Dear friends,

“He said to them, ‘Where is your faith?’” (Luke 8:25)

Amid storms of bitter controversy threatening to overwhelm the Church and break it apart, a Christian leader was recently asked what was the one essential message that all its members needed to hear. You might have expected “Maintain the unity of the Spirit” or “Love one another”, but his response was “Don’t panic!” When we panic we stop trusting that God is present among us. But God is present in every storm and the way ahead for us always begins with trust. This is what the panic-stricken disciples of Jesus learnt when they were caught up in a storm on the Sea of Galilee.

In the Bible, the sea is often thought of as a place of chaos and disorder, threatening God’s good purposes. The people of Israel spoke of God stilling the raging of the waves and saving those in danger on the sea. Here the disciples see Jesus doing the same things: terrifying natural powers are tamed; life can go on in peace. And in his wider ministry Jesus calms storms not only at sea but also in the lives of those he heals and delivers from evil.

Such authority prompts the disciples to ask who this man is; gradually they will come to understand the fullness of God’s presence and action in Jesus. There’s also a hint here that the authority exercised by Jesus stems from his perfect trust in God; as the

disciples rush around in panic achieving nothing, Jesus at first sleeps peacefully and then acts in power. The childlike trust in God which Jesus taught and lived out may appear impractical and foolish, but it is this trust which enables him to be a channel of God’s action in the world.

This story illustrates the slow and painful progress of the disciples. They have left everything to follow Jesus; for some time now they have listened to his teaching and witnessed his power to heal; they acknowledge him as their master. But the storm on the Sea of Galilee seems to blow away everything they have learnt. “Where is your faith?” asks Jesus: panic has driven trust from their hearts. This isn’t the only time the disciples fail in faith and understanding. Often Jesus rebukes them, but he perseveres with them and continues to entrust his mission to them.

The God we see in Jesus is a stiller of storms; God wills harmony for the world and peace for all our hearts. But storms rage on, around us and within us. So why isn’t the God who through Jesus stilled the storm more obviously at work in the world today? Although that question is notoriously hard to answer, our faith does offer us ways forward.

Storms in our own lives can all too easily undermine our trust in God and make us panic, like the disciples. But the disciples are rebuked for their lack of faith, not for calling out in their genuine need. So when our lives are in danger of being swamped by chaos or suffering of various kinds it’s far

worse to turn away from God in bitter silence than to cry out in faith (perhaps mingled with anger). We may then know some lessening of the storm about us or it may be that as the storm continues we are drawn deeper into the trusting relationship with the Father which we see in Jesus, who in this storm lies asleep like a child and trusts the Father through worse storms yet to come.

As we look beyond our own lives to the storms in God’s world, it helps to remember that what we often call “miracles” are usually known in the New Testament as “signs”. Signs point to something greater than themselves: when Jesus healed, fed hungry crowds, or calmed a storm, these were pointers to something greater, a foretaste of God’s kingdom of lasting well-being, justice and peace. So in our daily praying for the coming of that kingdom there is both pain and confidence: pain because of the world’s continuing storms; confidence because in Jesus God has stilled storms and the world is in the hands of this God. And sharing in the prayer of Jesus naturally leads to sharing in his work of stilling storms — a link well made in the prayer that asks God to make us channels of his peace.

So don’t panic. Trust that God is present in every storm. And pray that we may be channels of God’s peace.

Rev. Ian Finn

CHURCH & VILLAGE EVENTS : March 2007

- Friday 2nd 7.30pm Women’s World Day of Prayer—Wickhambrook church
- Saturday 3rd 10.00am—12 noon Traidcraft Coffee Morning in the Benefice Hall
- Sunday 4th 5.00pm Denston church PCC meeting
- Monday 5th 7.30pm Lenten study Group in the Benefice Hall
- Tuesday 6th 12.30pm Lenten Lunch in the Benefice Hall
- Monday 12th 7.30pm Lenten study Group in the Benefice Hall
- Tuesday 13th 12.30pm Lenten Lunch in the Benefice Hall
- 7.30pm Benefice Committee meeting in the Benefice Hall
- Wednesday 14th 7.30pm Lidgate Church PCC meeting
- Monday 19th 7.30pm Lenten study Group in the Benefice Hall
- Tuesday 20th 12.30pm Lenten Lunch in the Benefice Hall
- Wednesday 21st 10.30am Marmalade Morning in Ousden Hall
- 7.30pm Benefice Ministry Team meeting at the Vicarage
- Thursday 22nd 7.00pm Wickhambrook school Governor’s meeting
- Monday 26th 7.30pm Lenten study Group in the Benefice Hall

HOLY WEEK 2007

- Palm Sunday** (1st April)
10.00am Benefice Service at Lidgate.
- Good Friday**
2.00pm Liturgy at Ousden Church
- Easter Eve** (7th April)
8.00pm Vigil & First Mass of Easter
at Wickhambrook church
- Full details of Holy Week Services next month!



SERVICE ROTA MARCH 2007

March 2007	St. Nicholas DENSTON	All Saints STANSFIELD	St. Margaret STRADISHALL	All Saints WICKHAMBROOK	St. Margaret COWLINGE	St. Mary LIDGATE	St. Peter OUSDEN
Sunday 4 th LENT 2	10.30am Matins BCP Fiona Evans	9.30am Matins BCP John Dennis		9.30am HC CW Jam Club IMF	11.00am HC CW IMF	9.30am HC CW Bob Torrens	
Tuesday 6 th			10.00am HC	LENT LUNCH			
Thursday 8 th							10.00am HC
Sunday 11 th LENT 3			3.00pm Evensong BCP + APCM IMF				10.00am Benefice HC CW IMF
Tuesday 13 th				LENT LUNCH		10.00am HC	
Thursday 15 th		10.00am HC					
Sunday 18 th LENT 4 Mothering Sun	9.30am HC BCP IMF	8.00am HC CW IMF		9.30pm Family Paul Bevan	9.30am Morning Prayer CW Ann Jones	11.00am HC CW IMF	11.00am HC ext CW Philip Draycott
Tuesday 20 th	10.00am HC			LENT LUNCH			
Thursday 22 nd					10.00am HC		
Sunday 25 th LENT 5			10.00am Benefice HC CW IMF				
Tuesday 27 th			10.00am HC	LENT LUNCH			
Thursday 29 th							10.00am HC

HC = Holy Communion CW = Common Worship service BCP = Book of Common Prayer Service IMF = the Vicar

LENT 2007

Mondays in Lent

7.30pm

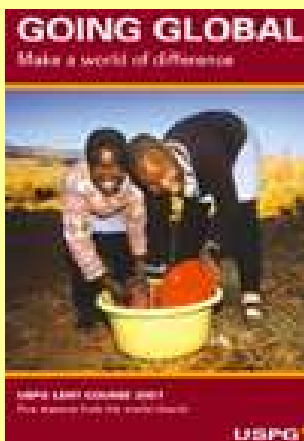
Lent Group

USPG LENT COURSE 2007

'Going Global'

Booklet available.

Let the vicar know if you want to use the booklet



Tuesdays in Lent

12.30pm

Simple lunch

in Benefice Hall

WOMEN'S WORLD DAY OF PRAYER

Friday 2nd March 2007
7.30pm

ALL SAINTS' CHURCH, WICKHAMBROOK
(All welcome – men, women & children!)

NEW APPOINTMENT

It was announced at the Benefice service at Cowlinge church on Sunday 25th February 2007

that the **Vicar, Rev. Ian Finn**, has been appointed **Rector of the Benefice of Haverhill & Withersfield**.

Ian & Angela will leave Bansfield Benefice at the end of May. He will be Instituted during June (date to be announced.)

Ian will remain Rural Dean of Clare Deanery and will be in close contact with the Benefice churches during the interregnum.

The date for a final service in the Benefice to be arranged and will be announced soon.

DON'T PANIC! (see over).

Plans will be put into place and as many services as possible will be covered during interregnum.

Remember in your prayers the Benefice Ministry Team and Church Wardens who will have increased responsibility for interregnum.

LENT BOXES

We have some Lenten giving boxes for the USPG Missionary Society.

Collect your change during Lent for their work.

Available at the back of church today!