



the arena

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newsletter

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MARCH
2023

Dear All,

I am starting to write this on Sunday 26th February. And what a day it has been with two well attended Masses (some coming especially because it was Ashing Sunday, others because they wanted to hand in new Electoral Roll forms), Sam Lewis from the Junior Music group playing during Communion, a piano Trio rehearsal afterwards and then a big concert in the evening played by Thomas Kelly, a finalist of the Leeds piano competition no less! And I have to say that there is nothing more encouraging than seeing St James' being used by a wide variety of people. It is my hope and prayer that we are beginning to come out of the Covid difficulties at last and are ready for all that God has in mind for us in 2023. Being willing to take part and do things together certainly transforms our Church life.



ORGAN PROJECT At last we are making progress! As from Monday 27th the Church will be closed throughout the day (Monday to Saturday) while Robert Woodland takes over the north aisle and turns it into a gilding workshop! Covering the renovated pipes in gold leaf is a very time consuming and delicate job and requires at least a couple of weeks for the gilding to stabilise. But if all goes to plan the bulk of the organ will be delivered to Church on Monday March 6th and Paul Mortier can set about making sure it is playable for the first time on Passion Sunday, March 26th. I am sure we won't mind all the mess in the meantime!



EDUCATION, EDUCATION, EDUCATION, Tony Blair's famous catchphrase, plays a big part in our work at St James'. Recently a year group of 5-6 year olds came from Rotherfield Primary School to see what a Church looks like from the inside. And our Confirmation programme for 2023 continues to run on Tuesday evenings until the middle of May when we welcome Bishop Joanne for her first official visit here.



JUNIOR MUSIC GROUP For the last three weeks members of the JMG have played during the administration of Communion. Matteo Falcioni (left) was followed by his sister Francesca on the cello and by Sam Lewis on the trombone. Lucy Haire is coordinating a performance of one of Bach's great Chorales on Sunday 26th March (Passion Sunday) with guitar, flute, violin trumpet, clarinet, cello, saxophone, trombone and piano!!

Lent
FRIDAY FILM NIGHTS
On the big screen



Feb 24th **The Mission** (UK, 1986)
 March 3th **The Gospel According to St. Matthew** (Italy, 1964)
 March 10th **Decalogue** (Poland, 1989)
 March 17th **Paul, Apostle of Christ** (US, 2018)
 March 24th **Nazarin** (Mexico, 1959)

Films start at 7:30 pm

Free Entry Refreshements

ST JAMES' CHURCH, Prebend Street N1 8PH | 020 7226 4108

LENT 2023 The showing in Church of some powerful Lenten themed films started last Friday night with 'The Mission' which told the story of what happened in South America two hundred years ago when the Church came up against powerful forces wanting to exploit the natural resources of that continent. Sadly we know that in many places, not least in the Amazon area, the destruction of forests and the mining of raw materials needed for all our electronic devices, is still going on unchecked. In Lent we try to take time out to think more widely about the social issues of our day. If you can, do take advantage of these film nights which open up so many new ideas. Also on offer (on the long sheets at the back of Church) are selected readings from the last three chapters of St Mark's Gospel which take us through the last days of Jesus' Passion for each week of Lent:
 Week 1: St Mark 11: 1-19. Week 2: St Mark 12: 1-17. Week 3: St Mark 12: 28-44. Week 4: St Mark 14: 1-42. Week 5: St Mark 14: 43—15: 22. Week 6: St Mark 15: 23-47.

BEATRICE AWOONOR-RENNER In the last edition of the Arena e-newsletter we celebrated Beatrice's 92nd birthday. So we were so sad when she fell just outside her house in Prebend Street and broke her leg. Despite a very successful operation at UCH, she later picked up Hospital Acquired Pneumonia and died a week later. Her body will be flown to Sierra Leone for a laying in state in the Law Courts and a funeral in the Cathedral in Freetown, but not before we have had the opportunity to remember Beatrice with a memorial service at St James'. The date has yet to be arranged.



THANK YOU SIRE! The new King has decided to grant a substantial sum of money to charities like Pack-Up to provide freezers to assist with the preparation of food for the street community and other disadvantaged residents. Toni Parker who coordinates our Lunch Club has been active in securing a small freezer for St James' Hall and also in getting an Islington Council grant to replace the aging cooker that has served us so well over the last thirty years. She says the numbers of people sitting down to a hot three course lunch each Monday is now nearly 40. Gifts of biscuits, rice, tea, coffee and sugar continue to be welcome.



DO YOU THINK THIS WILL CATCH ON? Just as well these 'glasses' didn't work! My next eye appointment at Moorfields is on Wednesday 15th March when we hope for something more helpful than just another eye test!

THE PCC (the Church Council) met on Monday 27th February. The major discussion centred around the work needed to be done to prepare for the interregnum at the end of the year. Isabel reported back on a zoom meeting she and Hilary had had with the Area Dean at which they had flagged up the need to start writing the 'Parish Profile' as soon as possible. This is the document which all potential new priests will read very carefully! There was also a discussion about whether the current pew sheets could be continue in the future and whether the Church could remain open during weekdays. The job description for the new Building and Maintenance Manager was discussed as was the need for lots of handover notes!



LENT ALL AGE MASS is this coming Sunday (5th) at 10am. A really interactive remembrance of what Jesus went through for us. Do come if you can.

Donation to St James



May God bless every £1 we give so that St James' will be here, not just for today and for tomorrow, but for the future he wants to create.

Please do keep in touch!
 Best wishes as ever,
 John