



**ST. MARY'S
CHURCH**
LONG NEWTON



**St Mary's
News** Issue 13
March 2016

A warm welcome to the 13th issue of St Mary's News, we aim to keep you informed of the events taking place in the Church Community leading up-to Easter. The next issue will be distributed in September giving details of Church events leading up to Harvest, with a further issue being delivered in December.

Food for Thought

OK, here's a teaser for you, especially if you're the type of person who enjoys a trip to the cinema. What do the films *Cast Away* (Tom Hanks), *Blade Runner* (Harrison Ford) and *Total Recall* (Arnold Schwarzenegger) have in common? There may be several things in fact, like they each have a title with two words, but what I'm thinking of is that they all have open endings. The credits start to roll at the end of each film but there are still loose ends to tie up. What happens next? Cynics might say "Oh, they're just making you come back for the sequel" but actually I find that I get into great conversations when a motion picture keeps me guessing with an ambiguous or open ending.

We've come across a really good resource called *Puzzling Questions* which explores issues like 'Who am I deep inside?', 'Is there a spiritual side to me?', 'How can I find happiness in life?' and 'If there's a God, what is he/she/it like?' It doesn't offer pre-packaged answers or tie up all the loose ends for you. There are no right or wrong answers. But it does help frame the questions many people wonder about in interesting and surprising ways.

We're going to get together over cheese and wine at the Wilson Centre, watch interviews with fascinating people, let the questions out of the box and see what happens. The atmosphere will be relaxed and friendly - we think it's going to be really enjoyable. The first evening is on April 19th. Maybe I'll see you there. John Lambert

Forthcoming Dates and Events in St Mary's Church

all welcome to join in any of these events

Sunday 20th March	10.30am 3.30pm	Palm Sunday—Songs of Praise Messy Easter
Monday 21st March	7.30pm	Compline
Tuesday 22nd March	7.30pm	Prayers for Holy week
Wednesday 23rd March	7.30pm	Prayers and Readings for Holy week
Thursday 24th March	7.30pm	Agape Meal with short Communion
Friday 25th March	2.00pm to 3.00pm	Service of Meditation and Prayer
Sunday 27th March	10.30	Easter Day Communion service
Saturday 30th April	7.30pm	LongNewton Music —Barbara White (piano) & Yarm Strings

Weekly Events

Tuesday - Tuesday@10, informal service
Wednesday - Little Ted in Church at 9.15am
Thursday - Drop In at Wilson Centre from 10.00am.

Find us on
Facebook



Why not take a look at St Mary's Church Website for further details of events and contacts
www.stmaryslongnewton.co.uk

GodZone Service in St Mary's

GodZone is a service in which the school comes to church in the afternoon, when we have times of worship, learning and prayer together, and also a time where we split up and move around the church to various activities or Zones. Parents and carers are welcome too. We normally have two GodZones a term, but Easter is very early this year and the term is unusually short, so the GodZone on 10th February will be the only one this term. With the proximity to Valentine's Day, we made the theme "God's love for us", and looked at the story of the woman washing Jesus' feet with her tears.

John Taylor

Terri Reed's Reflections on the New Year

With New Year now a distant memory, it would be interesting to see how many of us are doing with those New Year resolutions we made. Did you along with many others make resolutions to change or improve something in your life? Having made a resolution myself to change; I began to wonder whether the real issue was less about change and more about renewal. A renewal of commitment to God, to family and to the small changes that strengthen and improve what is essentially good about ourselves and our church.

St Mary's is showing renewed commitment to the inclusion and provision of child friendly activities within its weekly services, and are in the process of providing the children with their own dedicated area to learn and play in. As a grandma whose grandchildren attend regular services, I can only say how much joy is created by these smaller members of our congregation, and appreciate the value placed on what is essentially the future of not only St Mary's but all our churches.

This year St Mary's is also running a programme of 'Puzzling Questions'. On four evenings throughout the year, both church and non-church going members will be invited to interesting discussions about many of those questions we all ask ourselves: Who am I? Who Is God? Is there Life after death? etc. Please come along and perhaps bring your own question, you may even find answers to questions you didn't know you had!

Going forward in 2016, I feel that both on a personal level and as a member of St Mary's, that those New Year resolutions are more about a renewal of commitment to keep the good things in our lives, but rise to the challenge of making small changes to improve and invest in the future of those commitments to God, ourselves and others.

St Mary's School Report

At my last count there were 99 children on roll from Reception to Year 6 with 13 in Nursery. All the children participated in the Christmas productions "Prickly Hay" (KS1) and "Mother Goose" (KS2) and in the Nativity service in St Mary's church. Years 5 and 6 also participated in a cross-diocesan service at St John the Baptist church in Stockton. The choir has been busy with Christmas performances in St Mary's Church and more recently singing at the Music for Youth Festival at the Gateshead Sage.

John Taylor, Chair of Governors