



February 15<sup>th</sup>, 2010

Dear Friends

**'I am the Vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing'** (John 15. 5).

Greetings in the Holy Name of our LORD Jesus Christ as we prepare to enter this Lenten season.

I wanted to take this opportunity to draw to your attention some important things happening in the life of our Parish. On Tuesday this week (February 16<sup>th</sup>) we have the opportunity to come together as a family and enjoy our traditional Shrove Tuesday pancake supper followed by some folk dancing led by our dancing Bishop! We will eat from 6-7pm and then dance from 7-8pm. Shrove Tuesday marks the end of 'feasting' before a season of 'fasting' in preparation for Easter. We begin our observation of Lent on Ash Wednesday (February 17<sup>th</sup>) with two services of Holy Communion with the Imposition of Ashes at 10am and 7.30pm. As Christians we are marked with our sign of ownership and our belonging to Christ and we are reminded of our call to turn away from sin and be faithful to Him.

Sunday (February 21<sup>st</sup>) is our Vestry Sunday. Our joint service at 9.30am will be following a special Lenten liturgy from Common Worship (U.K) which will then be used at the 10.15am Sunday services throughout Lent. I hope that this liturgy will help to heighten our awareness of the importance of this season and the opportunity it gives us to grow closer to God. Bishop Trevor Walters will be preaching at the joint service and the Vestry meeting will follow shortly after the service. Those interested in standing for election at Vestry are encouraged to contact the chair of the Nominating Committee; Lanny Reedman.

Beginning on Thursday March 4<sup>th</sup> at 7pm our Lent course starts and meets for four consecutive Thursdays. I will be leading the sessions on various aspects of prayer. Jesus claimed that His house is to be a house of prayer and we all know the importance of prayer for our own Christian life. Our lent course aims to explore what prayer really is at it's heart, and how we might pray in a way that keeps us connected and growing in our relationship with God. Prayer is breath for the Christian.

By now you will know that St. Matthew's Trustee's have decided to stay in the legal appeal process. As Trustee's we believe that God is asking us to continue to stand firm, not yielding out of fear, and not leaving in haste. The process of this appeal will continue to its end without requiring much attention from us. St. Matthew's has not committed any further financial support, although our Legal Fund remains open, and those who feel that God is calling them to give financial support are encouraged to do so. Plans for a possible move to Grace Church at some point in the future will continue to be looked at as a matter of good Stewardship.

Another important piece of news is that as of last week, the Canonical Committee, with Bp. Trevor's approval, posted our advertisement for a full-time Assistant Priest. Deadlines for applications are set for March 31<sup>st</sup>. Please keep this important process in your prayers as we seek to appoint the person of God's choosing later in the year.

Last Sunday, as we celebrated the Feast of the Transfiguration, we were reminded of the voice of God which spoke from the cloud concerning Jesus, "This is my Son, whom I have chosen; listen to Him". May I encourage you to take time to do this in Lent, to take necessary steps to give yourself this opportunity. Let us listen to Jesus concerning our life together and listen for His will for our lives.

**'As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love'** (John 15. 9).

In Christ Jesus,

Mike Stewart+  
Rector.