



COVER STORY:
LOOKING AFTER THE CHILDREN OF
ST AIDAN'S NURSERY ON A DAILY BASIS:
MEET FIONA BROWN AND HER TEAM!

Issue 02 April/May 2014

£0.50

ALSO INSIDE:

NEWS &
UPCOMING EVENTS

SERVICES DURING
HOLY WEEK

ASK THE VICAR:
WHY DO WE
FAST?

INSIDE THIS ISSUE



Editorial & Highlights	p 2
Cover story: St Aidan's Nursery	p 3-4
News from the Parish	p 5-6
Upcoming Events	p 7
Life Events & In the Spotlight	p 8
Ask the Vicar - on Fasting	p 9
Advertisements & Prayer for Lent	p 10

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Would you like to contribute to the magazine? You could either feature in one of the articles or help with writing, design, photography and proof reading. Please get in touch with Mirjam.

Please be aware, the deadline for contributions to the next issue of the magazine is Sun 11th May!

SERVICES DURING HOLY WEEK

SUN 13/04	9.20	Start of procession from Church Hall
PALM SUNDAY	9.30	Holy Communion with Sunday School
	18.30	Music & Readings for Palm Sunday
MON 14/04	19.30	Holy Communion (at Holy Family Church)
TUE 15/04	19.30	Stations of the Cross
WED 16/04	9.30	Holy Communion
	19.30	Agapé Meal (at Church Hall)
THU 17/04	20.00	Holy Communion (inc. Washing of Hands) & Stripping of Altar
FRI 18/04	9.30	Devotional service
GOOD FRIDAY	11.00	Passion Play at the centre's Town Square then procession to Windmill Hill
	14.00	The Last Hour
SUN 20/04	9.30	Holy Communion with Sunday School
EASTER SUNDAY		

EDITORIAL



CHURCH HIGHLIGHTS



22nd February - Men's Lunch



4th March - Shrove Tuesday Celebration



7th March - Women's World Day of Prayer



5th April - Worship Service

CONTRIBUTORS

We have been able to put together and distribute this magazine thanks to the help of the following people:

- Mr Ernie Lane
- Mrs Mavis Prater
- Mr Michael Welch
- Mrs Mirjam Ngoy
- Rev Lusa Nsenga-Ngoy



AN ACT OF KINDNESS EVERY DAY

Spring has come so quick and with it some lovely sunshine. The last few months have been busy with lots of activities going on at church and in the community.

One of these activities was the Shrove Tuesday gathering, where we ate pancakes and were challenged by a quiz. We learnt lots of new facts, for instance: did you know that Brits use 52 million eggs on Pancake Day!

It was good to start the season of Lent with a bit of fun, but it is also a period when we prepare ourselves for the Easter celebration. We are used to the tradition of 'giving stuff up' during Lent. I was personally touched by the idea of 40acts.org.uk, where instead of giving up, people are encouraged to perform an act of kindness every day of Lent!

Maybe this is something we could also take into our community: say hello to a person we don't know, clean the rubbish from the playground, etc. An act of kindness every day! As you read of other people's stories in this issue, may you be encouraged to make a positive difference in your community as we journey towards Easter.

Mirjam Ngoy - Editor

25 YEARS AND COUNTING...

FIONA BROWN SHARES HER STORY



from left to right: Georgia, Ella, Karen Douch (staff member), Alisha, and Fiona Brown (nursery manager)

As I ring the bell of the Christopher Centre at Leander Drive, I can hear lots of happy children sounds on the other side of the door. One of the staff members of St Aidan's Nursery opens the door and warmly invites me in.

I suddenly find myself surrounded by about forty busy, happy children. They are just about to go off to their different areas where small chairs have been lined up, waiting for them to sit down and enjoy story time. I am greeted by a smiling Mrs. Fiona Brown, the Nursery Manager. Fiona is a busy lady, so we only have a short time for this interview. I am excited to find out about her story and how she got involved with our Church's Nursery.

A home away from home

Fiona Brown was born in Brentwood, Essex. She moved to Gravesend in 1979, with her husband Ian. Gravesend soon became a real home away from home. All her three children grew up and went to school here. When I ask what Fiona loves about Gravesend, Bluewater is the first thing that comes to her mind. She also loves her weekly evenings of badminton.

Obviously, shopping and leisure are not the things that occupy most of Fiona's time. In fact she has been, for many years, a faithful and important member of St Aidan's Nursery staff. As we start talking about her role at the nursery, I soon realise that this is more than just a job for her. In fact, her own children attended St Aidan's nursery when they were young.

Fiona first got involved as a volunteer after her youngest child went off to primary school: "I started to volunteer in 1988, twenty-five years ago! I enjoyed it so much, that I decided to do some childcare courses, including a two-year B-Tech course in Childhood Studies. Eleven years later, I became the Nursery Manager."

A supportive team

"Our nursery runs from two sites: the Christopher Centre in Riverview and St Aidan's Church Hall in Westcourt. What makes St Aidan's Nursery special is that we want to give every child the best possible start in life and support them to fulfil their potential. We have strong relationships with parents and try to fit our activities around the needs and interests of each of the children."

I am curious to find out what makes Fiona so passionate about her work with these young children: "I just love seeing them develop from when they first arrive. I like it when they enjoy the activities we provide and make progress during their time at the nursery. What makes me enjoy it even more, is the special team of workers

"WE WANT TO GIVE EVERY CHILD THE BEST POSSIBLE START IN LIFE AND SUPPORT THEM..."

we have. Everyone is so supportive of one another and they are prepared to do things beyond what is required of them. I have been very lucky to have such good teams to work with, both at Westcourt and Riverview.”

Does she ever face challenges in her work as a manager?

“Yes, there are certainly challenges. Over the years there have been significant changes in the early years development area. There are lots of legal requirements we have to meet to ensure the welfare of all our children. This is very important to us as a nursery, but can be challenging to deal with at the same time.”

So what is it like to be linked to a church?

“I think it is a positive thing, because the church gives us a lot of support. It is also important to us to work under the Christian ethos and morals. We give attention to the Christian celebrations. Parents often like this. As far as I know, it has never put anyone off coming to this nursery. We welcome all children, regardless of their faith and background. At the moment we have Christian children, but also Sikh and Muslim children.”

“WE WELCOME ALL CHILDREN, REGARDLESS OF THEIR FAITH AND BACKGROUND.”



from left to right: Jessica, Frankie, Tami Backhouse (staff member), and Aimee

“THE NURSERY HAS REALLY TAKEN OVER MY LIFE, BUT IT HAS BEEN WONDERFUL...”



from left to right: Jean Stewart (supervisor), Fiona Brown (nursery manager), and Carol Down (deputy supervisor)

We talk a bit more about the role of the church in the local community. Fiona thinks it is important that the church offers support and social activities for people in the area. Faith does play a role in Fiona’s life too: “My children and I have been christened into the Church of England. Faith is always there, in the back of my mind. Even though I am not a regular churchgoer, I do like to follow the Christian values. If I were involved in a church, my interest would be with younger people. However, I am so busy with what I am doing at the nursery, it has really taken over my life. I love being in this position, it has been wonderful for all the twenty-five years I have been doing it.”

By Mirjam Ngoy

ABOUT ST AIDAN’S NURSERY:

Our nursery is open every Monday to Friday, 9.00-12.00 during term-time.

For more information, get in touch with:

Christopher Centre

Mrs. Fiona Brown (fbrownatstaidans@aol.com)

St Aidan’s Church Hall

Mrs. Sarah Morgan (sarahmorgan2213@btinternet.com)

NEWS FROM THE PARISH

ONLY MEN “ALLOUD”

It's been a long time coming, and it was totally worth the wait. On Saturday 22nd of February, ten of us gathered in the Powerhouse to share a meal and engage in conversation with one another.

Gary Cordice, who has often felt that, as men we don't always have opportunities to come together and openly share about life and faith, our successes and struggles, initiated the occasion. Commenting on the evening, Jack Mitchell, talked about how much he valued the opportunity of spending time with a group of likeminded people.

What do men talk about when they come together, some may ask? Well, everything and anything really. One thing however that we valued was the opportunity to hear some of the more personal stories including Jack's adventures during the war. It was moving to hear Lewis Cordice tell the story of his migration from St Vincent to England, the challenges he faced and how love took him to Gravesend where he's since found a new place to call home.

One of the highlights of the evening was probably Alfred Osinibi sharing a few thoughts about the well-known bible story of Jesus' visit to Mary and Martha.



His main focus was on Jesus' words to Martha as she was protesting against her sister's lack of support in the kitchen. "But one thing is needful," answered Jesus, "and Mary has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away from her." (Luke 10:42) It was refreshing to be reminded that in our busy and stressful lives, not everything is of need. We have to be discerning in our choices and set our priorities right.

The evening turned out to be more than just sharing food and spending a good time together. It was more about connecting lives. I really hope that many more men can join us for our next men's dinner on Saturday 26th April from 7pm in the Powerhouse.

For more info, contact Gary Cordice on 079 8145 7667.



The Music Group (from left to right): Catherine (guitar and vocals) Lusa (vocals), Mirjam (piano), David (cajon) and Gary (vocals)

SINGING A NEW SONG

On the first Sunday of February, we launched a different format of service at St Aidan's. Instead of the organ leading our singing, we had a keyboard, a guitar and a cajon drum box.

The music wasn't the only change. In fact, the whole format of the service was set in a totally informal style, with no books to hold and opportunities to respond creatively to the theme of the day. Many have commented on how refreshing they found this new style and were looking forward to the next one.

The informal nature of the service is aimed at offering an opportunity for all to experience something new and different. This new service will be held every first Sunday of every month. Join us for the next one on Passion Sunday (6th April) at 10.30.



Janet Munson was wearing an Egyptian outfit for the occasion

WOMEN'S WORLD DAY OF PRAYER

Each year, on the first Friday in March, Christian women from around the world gather to celebrate their particular contribution to the world and the Church.

It is also an opportunity to engage with some of the darkest aspects of life as women all over the world experience it on a regular basis. Women's World Day of Prayer (WWDP) reaches millions of women around the world, starting on the island of Samoa and coming to a close, thirty-six hours later on American Samoa.

This year again, dozens of Christian women from Gravesend gathered at St Aidan's for another celebration of WWDP. The service theme, Streams in the Desert, was put together by Christian women from Egypt, at a time of great hope, following the Arab Spring.

Jacky, one of the participants, commented on how moving the service was. Mavis, who coordinated the event said: "I've heard nothing, but positive feedback."

SPRING BOOT FAIR

How young were you when you attended your first jumble sale? Well, this year's record goes without contest to nine week old baby Isabella. She might have slept through most of it, but once awake, there was no keeping her out of the hustle and bustle of the place.

It felt good to walk in a busy Church Hall filled with enthusiasm and happy sounds coming from all corners. Anyone with a good eye for a bargain would have appreciated the great variety of items on sale. From binoculars to toys, books to clothes, or even jewellery; whether retro in your taste or more conservative, there was something to satisfy every taste.

While deals were brokered and goods purchased, all were kept hydrated and fed thanks to a constant flow of hot beverages and biscuits kindly provided by a team of committed volunteers. This certainly added



to the pleasant atmosphere inside the hall. It was particularly encouraging to see that some of the sellers were trying to raise both money and awareness for worthwhile causes such as Demelza House and a Parkinson's charity.

We look forward to welcoming you back again for our next jumble sale on Saturday 17th May in support of Christian aid.

UPCOMING EVENTS

EVENTS AT ST AIDAN'S

APRIL

WED 02/04/2014, 10.15

COFFEE MORNING

This will be during the Lenten period, so in order not to tempt you with cakes, we will be offering a selection of savoury items instead. If these should prove popular, we can perhaps widen the scope of our baking skills in the future.

WED 02/04/14, 14.00 & 19.30

EGG LENT COURSE - CHRIST CHURCH

Join us for the Lent Course on 'Christ and the Chocolaterie' at Christ Church.

SUN 06/04/2014, 10.30

APCM

We invite you all to join us for our Annual Parochial Church Meeting. This year, the APCM at 11.15 will follow a short worship service and we will finish together with a shared meal (please bring a packed lunch).

WED 08/04/2014

AIDAN LADIES

In April we are going out for a meal on Tue 8th. There will be no meeting on Wed 9th April. Speak to Jenny Rawlinson (01474 352 253) for more details.

WED 09/04/14, 14.00 & 19.30

EGG LENT COURSE - ST AIDAN'S CHURCH

Join us for the Lent Course on 'Christ and the Chocolaterie' at St Aidan's Church.

WED 15/04/2014, 14.00

CRAFT CLUB

We will continue making canvas wall decorations in the Powerhouse.

SAT 19/04/2014, 9.00-12.00

EASTER CRAFT FOLLOWED BY EGG HUNT

An activity for young and old! Join us at the Church Hall to do crafts followed by an Easter Egg Hunt!

SAT 26/04/2014, 19.00

ONLY MEN "ALOUD"

Come along and enjoy a hearty meal and share a time of fellowship and encouragement with other men from our community on Sat 26/04 in the Powerhouse. Any enquiries, please contact Gary Cordice (07981457667).

MAY

SUN 04/05/2014, 10.30

CHRISTIAN AID - ALL AGE SERVICE

We are delighted that Emma Kevan, the Christian Aid Regional co-ordinator has accepted our invitation to join us at our 10.30 All Age Service on 4th May. Emma has travelled widely for Christian Aid and will undoubtedly have some inspiring stories to tell.

WED 07/05/2014, 10.15AM

COFFEE MORNING

SUN 11/05/2014 - SAT 17/05/2014

CHRISTIAN AID -

HOUSE TO HOUSE COLLECTING

As always, we hope to cover as many roads as possible for house to house collecting. Please can you spare an hour or two between 11th & 17th May to help - either by covering a road yourself or joining a small group of people who go out each evening. If so, do please let Mavis Prater know.

WED 14/05/2014, 14.00

AIDAN LADIES

We are watching a film at 2pm in the Powerhouse.

SAT 17/05/2014, 14.00

CHRISTIAN AID - JUMBLE SALE

The popular jumble sale is back on 17th May and we need your help with sorting the jumble during the morning from 9.30 and to sell in the afternoon from 13.45. The sale begins at 14.00. Speak to Mavis Prater for more information.

WED 21/05/2014, 14.00

CRAFT CLUB

Meeting in the Powerhouse.

SAT 24/05/2014, 19.30

SINGLES EVENING

Are you over 18, single and free? - St Aidan's church hall is the place to be - Fun and games and something to eat - A time to socialise a time to meet. - £2.50 is all you need to pay - Come and have fun on the day - May 24th is the date - 19.30 don't be late!

EVERY WEDNESDAY DURING TERM-TIME

AFTER SCHOOL CLUB - 15.30-17.00

CHILDREN'S GOSPEL CHOIR - 17.00-17.30

LIFE EVENTS

BAPTISMS, FUNERALS & WEDDINGS

Funerals:

17th February 2014: Mary Maria Winston (93)
25th February 2014: Frank Charles Moss (76)
25th February 2014: Peter George Hayward (80)
27th March 2014: Robert James Boakes (89)

Baptisms:

2nd February 2014: Jessica Butland

IN THE SPOTLIGHT

MEET GLENNYS SCOTT (72)

In every issue of *The Pilot*, we introduce you to one of our community members.

For those of you who don't know Glennys Scott, here are a few facts about her life: She was born in Durban, South Africa. She is a retired schoolteacher married to David, a retired Anglican minister. Together they have three children, six grandchildren and one great-granddaughter.

What's your favourite day of the week and why?

I like Saturdays, possibly because before retirement it used to be the day when David (husband) and I were both free.

Football or Rugby?

Neither.

Eating in or eating out?

Easier to eat in, eating out is a special occasion.

What's your favourite season of the year and why?

Spring, because of the flowers.

What inspires you in life?

Working with children.

If you could invite anyone for dinner, dead or alive, who would you take?

Jesus, obviously. Probably Mandela.

What do you do when you cannot sleep?

Lie and worry. Watch the clock. Plan things. Try to put myself in a quiet place. If David is quiet enough, I'll go and make myself a cup and sit on the sofa.

Who do you talk to on the phone most often?

I don't. I'm not a great talker on the telephone. But I suppose I talk the most to my daughter Claire.



“I LOVE MY CHURCH BECAUSE OF THE SENSE OF COMMUNITY AND BELONGING”

What would you change if you were Prime Minister for one day?

I was just thinking about that earlier today. Probably a combination of benefit system and work.

What does it mean for you to be in a Christian?

Reason for living.

I love my church because...

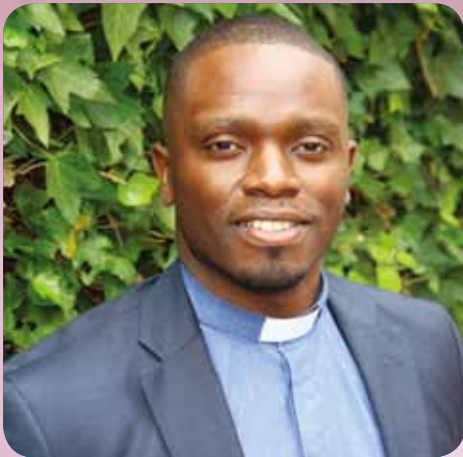
...of the sense of community and belonging.

What's next for you?

I made bread last night and it flopped. So, I'm going back to check why. I love to bake.

ASK THE VICAR

WHY DO WE FAST?



Email your question to info@staidangravesend.org

Dear Lusa,

Each time Lent comes round and I hear more talk of fasting and giving things up, I'm left feeling guilty for not being able to keep up my commitment to give things up. I want to know, is fasting that important for Christians? (Anonymous)

Dear anonymous friend,

The church I used to go to in Staplehurst had a tradition of occasionally offering a full English breakfast between the two Sunday morning services.

One Sunday morning, during the season of Lent, as I stood behind the altar leading worship, my nostrils were gently tickled by the sent of frying bacon and sausages rising from the kitchen at the back of church.

The experience would have been an enjoyable one if it had not been for the fact that I had decided to give up meat for Lent. Needless to say that it turned out to be a real battle of the will and a struggle to keep the mind on the job that Sunday.

Why do Christians fast at Lent? The short answer would be that Christians use the period of Lent to prepare themselves through prayer and penance to celebrate the most important feast in Christianity, Easter.

Fasting is not an exclusively Christian practice, but examples are found in both the Old and New Testaments. In Old Testament times, fasting was usually observed to express grief. In the New Testament, fasting took on a different meaning, as a way to focus on God and prayer.

After many attempts at fasting, I have come to understand this much: Lent is not just about keeping our mouths and stomachs locked. It's not just about the hunger game. Lent is about much more than doing without. It is about going within; looking more deeply at who we are, what we need. Part of the experience should be about confronting, in an honest way, what

feeds us. What do we feel we can't do without? What do we crave?

If all we yearn for when we fast is testing the limits of our endurance, or proving a point, then we might fail to satisfy a hunger deeper than anything we've ever experienced. I wonder whether that is what the Gospels mean when they say: "And after fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry." (Matthew 4:2) Might have Jesus been hungry for more than just food? Fasting sets Him off on his mission. He often fasted before important episodes of his life.

Fasting is, after all, not about us, at least not in the self-centred sense of it. It is an invitation to reset the centre of our lives, to rethink our priorities. It forces us to face our own weaknesses. It also helps us reconnect with what is good, beautiful and generous in each of us.

We start the season of Lent with ashes smeared on our foreheads on Ash Wednesday as a reminder of what we are. We are dust. We are human. We have weaknesses, urges, desires. And at the end of the season of fasting, we are invited to face a different kind of emptiness: the empty tomb. And that emptiness speaks of hope, of death-defying love, of God's generosity to humanity.

Fasting has never been easy. Perhaps the most challenging fast is not giving up food, but giving ourselves up to God and to others. My prayer for us all is that in fasting, we may discover what our real hunger is and get closer to God.

With best wishes, Lusa

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PRAYER FOR LENT

O Lord, this holy season of Lent is passing quickly. I entered into it with fear, but also with great expectations. I hoped for a great breakthrough, a powerful conversion, a real change of heart; I wanted Easter to be a day so full of light that not even a trace of darkness would be left in my soul. But I know that you do not come to your people with thunder and lightning. Even St. Paul and St. Francis journeyed through much darkness before they could see your light. Let me be thankful for your gentle way. I know you are at work. I know you will not leave me alone. I know you are quickening me for Easter - but in a way fitting to my own history and my own temperament.

I pray that these last three weeks, in which you invite me to enter more fully into the mystery of your passion, will bring me a greater desire to follow you on the way that you create for me and to accept the cross that you give to me. Let me die to the desire to choose my own way and select my own desire. You do not want to make me a hero but a servant who loves you.

Be with me tomorrow and in the days to come, and let me experience your gentle presence. Amen.

A Cry for Mercy: Prayers from the Genesee, © Henri J.M. Nouwen.



OUR MISSION

To share God's love in the community.

OUR VISION

As a church we want to develop relationships that demonstrate the love of God.

We aim to be a multi-ethnic, multi-generational, mission-shaped church that loves God completely, ourselves correctly and the neighbour compassionately.



St Aidan's Way
Gravesend
Kent, DA12 4AG

www.staidangravesend.org
info@staidangravesend.org

Registered Charity No 1130169

OUR SUNDAY SERVICES

1st	10.30	All Age Service
2nd	9.30	Holy Communion with Sunday School
3rd	9.30	Holy Communion with Sunday School
	18.30	Joint Service with Riverview Baptists at the Christopher Centre
4th	9.30	Holy Communion
5th	9.30	Healing Eucharist with Sunday School

Please note, in April the joint service will be on the 4th Sunday of the month instead of the 3rd!