

**News from the Church**

**Community celebrations and commiserations**

It was a joy to welcome so many to the church to celebrate Christmas – the birth of Jesus. From Messy Church to the Carol service, Quiet Christingle and the busy one, Christmas communion and Christmas morning, we shared many happy occasions.

We came together for sad times too, at the funerals of Charles Everett and ‘our Brenda’s’ beloved Ed. It was a comfort that so many came to mark their lives and support their families.

**Congratulations** to the Syresham Parish Quiz Team who came second in the first of the Inter Parish round of competitions. The next round is on February 9th in Whitfield.

**Steeple Saga** We accepted the cheapest (but recommended) quote for the steeple works – total cost around £80,000. We are so grateful to the generous support of: congregation and community, 200 Club and Madge Payne Trust also NHCT grants, for gifts and pledges received. We have so far raised £30,000 in money and pledges with a loan of £45,000, which we hope will be covered by grants. Just £5000 to find – all help welcomed!

**Signs of new life** Bulbs are peeping through and the first tentative signs of spring are around us. We now enter a season feasting, reflection and celebrations with Pancake Lunch, Lenten reflections, Mothering Sunday and Easter celebrations.

**Lent fasting** Quite a lot of people in our country, even if they don’t attend church much, still do give things up for Lent. That might seem surprising in what often looks like a ‘me’ culture which cheers people on as they seek their own satisfaction and fulfilment in doing their own thing. Maybe, though, this survival of the ancient Lenten Fast in our day indicates that a lot of people *don’t* think an unrestrained pursuit of what they as individuals might want is always appropriate; perhaps there’s an acknowledgement here of the need for self-discipline and self-denial. Resolving to give something up in Lent (it doesn’t have to be much) and sticking with that decision is to stand against the ‘me’ culture. It’s to recognise that ‘me and what I want’ isn’t the best guide to living well and it’s to train oneself a little in the self-restraint necessary to honour the principle of loving our neighbours as ourselves. So do think of giving something up over Lent; as so often when doing something not directed to your own immediate gratification, you will, nevertheless, feel the better for it!

Here are some dates for your diary.

**February 9th**Inter-Parish Quiz night Whitfield

**February 13th** Pancake Lunch in school - organised by the Friends of St James

**February 14th** Ash Wednesday service 2pm in Church

**March 2nd** TBC Messy Church for the under 7s.

**March 10th** Joint Mothering Sunday service in Church

**March 28th** Maundy Meal in Church

**March 29th** Good Friday Meditation and Walk starting at Church.

**March 31st** Easter Communion 11am in Church

**April 6th** Churchyard working party 10-12 – all welcome

**April 27th** Friends of St James Walk & Lunch

*Thanks to Rob Powell for the new view of the church.*

Alice Palmer & Revd. Hugh White