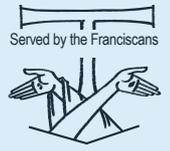




ST THOMAS OF CANTERBURY
Woodford Green



TheWord TheWord TheWord

Issue 5 - Summer 2018

Welcome to the 5th edition of The Word. In this issue we are focusing on some of the parish council sub-groups that are active for our parish. If you would like to know more about them then please contact the group leader, the Parish Office or email us at parishnews@stthomaswoodford.org

If you would like to feature your group, ministry or activity in a future edition then please send an email to parishnews@stthomaswoodford.org. Your contributions are vital to keep alive the communication within our parish family. Ideally articles should be up to 75 words but if space permits the article can be longer.

IT & Communications Group

The present Committee was set up in July 2016 with the purpose being . . . **to facilitate communications within the parish. This will be primarily electronic but we will bear in mind that allowances need to be made for parishioners not having access to or not being confident with electronic devices.**

The full terms of reference can be found on our parish website.

Since then we have held meetings to discuss various ideas and come up with proposals to support the parish in terms of communications. However, a large proportion of our group communication is electronic. We have looked at the following:

- Initially we looked at the Parish Office infrastructure in terms of IT and arranged for a professional audit to be carried out.
- We have upgraded all of the Parish Office PC operating systems, also some of the friary machines, to Windows 10.
- We have provided first line IT support for the office.
- We produce 'The Word' a (roughly) quarterly news sheet.
- Our major project was to set up the new parish website in December 2017 and, of course, we continue to maintain that.
- We have set up social media accounts for the parish on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.
- We issue the parish newsletter weekly by email.
- We are streaming mass for the sick and housebound of the parish.

We would be delighted to hear from you if you have any ideas to improve our parish's communications and electronic services in any way and if you have some time, no matter how little, to be able to help. We are always on the lookout for people to support us with electronic skills. We also need people who could help to write or collect articles for *The Word*.

If you think that you could help us in any way please get in touch via communications@stthomaswoodford.org

Adult Formation Committee

The Adult Formation Committee has been active over the past year, running a series of interactive discussion sessions focussed around Pope Francis' papal exhortation, "The Joy of Love".

We have run nine sessions in total, covering the fundamental teachings in the Pope's text (discernment, accompaniment and gradualness) and concentrating on how these teachings apply to us in our everyday lives. The sessions are not lectures, but are designed to be highly participative, always including group discussion and feedback.

Although the sessions have to date been coordinated by Quentin, Paul, Michelle and Isabel, we would be very happy to hear parishioners' suggestions as to other areas we should cover, and as to the format of the meetings. All ideas are very welcome.

Liturgy Sub-Committee

The present Liturgy Sub-Committee was set up in April 2017 with the purpose being to coordinate the various ministries and have general oversight of all liturgies in the parish. The full terms of reference can be found on our parish website.

Since then we have held a number of meetings (roughly monthly) to discuss various ideas and come up with proposals to support the parish liturgy.

- In practical terms these are some of the things we have looked at:
- How can we get more volunteers? We are making a start on this with a Volunteers Day to be held in conjunction with the Open Air Mass.
- A Welcome Pack – this has been created and published on our parish website.
- We have organised prayer slips and additional offertory envelopes. This is currently in trial at Chigwell.
- We proposed new mass times for the Christmas masses in 2017.
- We implemented new proposals for the Scripture Sharing group.
- We proposed mass streaming for the sick and housebound. This is currently being looked at by the IT & Communications committee.

We would be delighted to hear from you if you have any ideas to improve our parish's services in any way and if you have some time, no matter how little, to be able to help.

If you think that you could help us in any way please get in touch via liturgy@stthomaswoodford.org

Parish Consultative Group: July 2017 – May 2018

The purpose of the Parish Consultative Group (PCG) is to help the Steward of the Gospel to enable the Diocesan consultation process within the parish with respect to restructuring and spiritual renewal.

We worked through discussion and dialogue with various members of the parish; reading a broad range of current literature and materials from other parishes, dioceses and continents; attending the Diocesan events on the "Alpha", "Called and Gifted" and prayerful retreats.

While the proposed restructuring for St Thomas was relatively "straight forward"; a far greater task is the evangelisation and renewal of our parish; it demands a change of mind and heart from 'maintenance to mission'. The formation of young adults and young people plays an essential part. This is echoed across the Dioceses, country and globally. It is more than promoting a "programme"! To have a "vibrant and living parish" for new Catholics and young people to become part of, require existing parishioners to discern what their strengths are and what they can do to support evangelisation.

There are activities in the Parish with a need for the leaders to reach out and encourage others of a new generation to belong and participate with them. Our meeting with the Diocesan evangelisation leaders tells us this takes time; a vision across the parish, a large group of people across all areas of parish life committed to finding the means to reach out to all the parish. Any change requires several months of planning and "selling" to parishioners! All forms of communication are needed but the most effective seems to be the "personal invitation, 1-2-1" hence the need for a large team of people working together on renewal!

Looking Forward

The PCG group felt keen that an Alpha course would benefit the parish and Alan Mair has offered to start the process here enabling people to discuss the big questions life poses, ask questions about belief and importantly develop a deeper understanding of our faith. But it is important to work slowly and find a way forward – long term and for every stage of the process to be steeped in prayer!

We need to identify the richness of natural social groups of the parish and how evangelisation might look in different contexts and to look for leaders who would develop their own relationship with the Lord (Intentional Disciples) and thus enrich others' lives.

Annual Parish Sponsored Walk for BCCS

This year's walk through Epping Forest for Brentwood Catholic Children's Society is on Saturday, 23rd June.

The walk is suitable for ALL ages. Families are especially welcomed. The sponsored walks in parishes in the diocese are a major fundraiser for BCCS. Last year we raised approx £3k out a total for the diocese of £13k so a big, big thank you everyone who either took part or sponsored the walkers. Let's see if we can match that again this year.

Contact David Underwood on 07905 741033 for more details and for registration and sponsorship forms.



Lent Family Fast Appeal

A message from Chris Driscoll, Community Participation Coordinator
CAFOD - Brentwood Diocese

CAFOD
Just one world

“To parishioners at St Thomas of Canterbury, Woodford Green, thank you for your very generous support for CAFOD’s Lent Family Fast Day appeal. Your parish of raised a total of £1793 which will be doubled to £3586 with government match funding.

“Peanut butter is a great source of protein and nutrients for malnourished children.

This donation could buy peanut seeds for almost 600 families.

It could buy 128 families all the seeds they need to begin a vegetable garden.

Or it could train up to 97 health workers and new mothers to identify the early effects of malnutrition in babies and children and save many lives.

“Your donations will make a huge difference to people’s lives in Zimbabwe, Eritrea and Uganda”.



Chris Driscoll

CAFOD Brentwood Volunteer Centre
Cathedral House, Ingrave Road
Brentwood CM15 8AT

Tel: 01277 218730

Mobile: 07776 493162

Email: brentwood@cafod.org.uk

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/cafodbrentwood>

Twitter: [@CAFODBrentwood](https://twitter.com/CAFODBrentwood)

Blog: <https://cafodbrentwood.wordpress.com>



Seeds of hope



Vegetable garden



Healthy mum and baby

SHARE THE JOURNEY

War, persecution, natural disaster and poverty force millions of people from their homes. Most come from poor countries, and seek safety in poor countries nearby. We cannot turn away. These are human beings with hopes, fears, desires and stories to share, just like each one of us.

Pope Francis has declared this time a ‘unique opportunity’ for us to press our governments to make global commitments which place the human dignity of people on the move at their heart. Add your voice to his.

[Sign the petition to the Prime Minister today.](#)



Internet resources

Pope Francis at the Vatican: <http://w2.vatican.va/content/vatican/en.html>

Follow Pope Francis on Twitter: <https://twitter.com/Pontifex>

The Art of Dying Well - what does the church say about death? <http://www.artofdyingwell.org/>

Steward of the Gospel: What is all about? [Steward of the Gospel Questions](#)

Order of Friars Minor in Great Britain: <http://www.friar.org/home>

St. Thomas Parish Website: <http://www.stthomaswoodford.org>

Parish Facebook: [@STOCWoodford](#)

Parish Twitter: [@STOCWoodford](#)