

# CHURCHES TOGETHER IN FARNHAM

## March E-News

*Please publicise the items below - and forward to editors for inclusion in church magazines, newsletters and service sheets. Also let us know about YOUR forthcoming events so that we can put them on the web: Email to above address*

### **Dear Church Leaders, Representatives, Associates and other Friends**

This is a rather longer e-news than sometimes but we wanted to include a tribute from Churches Together in Farnham to Desmond Parsons following his death towards the end of January. On the website is an account of the Thanksgiving Service for Desmond at St Andrew's on 31st Jan and a fuller Obituary by Desmond's son Benedict. They all go to show what a remarkable man Desmond was.

We have also given summary details of Lent programmes in some of the town churches. These details are also on our website. If anyone would like to have details of their own church's Lenten activities added to the website\*, please email them to Mary Clarke (at above address).

With very best wishes

***Andrew Partridge - Secretary of Churches Together in Farnham***

## **Churches Together in Farnham's TRIBUTE TO THE REVD DESMOND PARSONS AND HIS UNIQUE CONTRIBUTION TO CHRISTIAN UNITY**

The Revd Desmond Parsons was co-founder of Churches Together in Farnham in 1962 with a vision to see Christians in Farnham worshipping and serving together in greater unity.

A notable demonstration of this unity was Celebrate 2000, the great Christian festival organised by Churches Together in Farnham, when thousands gathered at Waverley Abbey for Pentecost 2000 to celebrate the beginning of a new Millennium. Nicola Mountain, Co-ordinator of the festival, said in remembrance: "Desmond has achieved great things with Churches Together in Farnham - it was a privilege to work with him for 'Celebrate'."

Having retired as Vice-Chairman in 2009, Desmond played a special part in Churches Together in Farnham's Golden Jubilee Service at St Joan's Church in October 2012.

He told a packed congregation from our 26 member churches: "Little did we think 50 years ago that we should become this united body of churches, praising God together and working together in so many different ways; a glimpse of Heaven, each and every one praising God and caring for one another."

Desmond was co-founder and first Secretary of Farnham Christian Council when it came into being on 4th October 1962 following months of planning and inter-denominational discussion. Co-founder George Baxter, Headmaster of Farnham Grammar School, was its first Chairman. At the 1992 AGM the Council of Churches agreed that the name Churches Together in Farnham (CTF) should be adopted.

Over the past half century CTF has continued to progress and develop but there have been occasional setbacks to overcome.

Problems came to a head at the AGM in 2007 when the Chair and Secretary were due to stand down, clergy leaders failed to put forward any candidates and some members were saying that they saw no future for CTF. Faced with the threat of immediate closure. Desmond, his son, Benedict, Gwen Mansfield and Mary Clarke volunteered to form a steering committee with the serving Treasurer Andy Marriott and the only remaining member of the former committee, Jenny Floyer, who was strongly urging that CTF should continue.

The new committee swung into action. At the next meeting of the CTF Council in April 2008, the provisional appointments of Jenny as Chair, Desmond as Vice-Chair and

Benedict as Secretary, sharing duties with Gwen and Mary, were approved and ratified. Since then Churches Together in Farnham has continued to flourish. Desmond was a proactive Vice Chairman until his retirement from the committee at the 2009 AGM. A vote of thanks to him for all he had done for Churches Together in Farnham from its foundation was passed by the meeting with unanimous acclaim.

Desmond continued his support as representative of the Parish of Crondall on the CTF Council until his death, peacefully at his home on 20th January, 2014, aged 88. During more than 50 years he made a truly unique contribution towards Christian unity in Farnham.

Among further remembrances of Desmond we have received from members of Churches Together in Farnham, present and past:

From Michael McDonnell, Co-ordinator of the Golden Jubilee Celebration: "I remember his warmth and sincerity".

From Jenny Floyer, former Chair of CTF: "The Thanksgiving for Desmond was such a lovely and uplifting service at St Andrew's and to see the slide show on the wall at Church House made Desmond feel present with us. I shall miss him immensely, but he is, no doubt, alive in Christ and enjoying being with him."

From Canon Dr Alwyn Pettersen, former Chair of CTF, now Canon Theologian at Worcester Cathedral: "Desmond was a very good man; and he had strength and the mind to see through his desire for church unity in the locality. Farnham and the surrounding region have much for which to be thankful."

*[Go to Churches Together in Farnham website\\* for an account of Desmond's Thanksgiving Service and his Obituary](#)*

### THINGS TO DO IN LENT 2014

**Is your Church planning special activities for Lent? Please let us have details for the CTF website. The items below are on the website, with more being added day by day.**

#### ST JOAN OF ARC CHURCH Lent programme:

Thursday 13th March - 8pm: Praise & Worship Evening with the theme "**Victory of the Cross**". Refreshments follow.

Thursday 3rd April - 8pm: Healing Service. Refreshments follow.

Every Tuesday - 7.25pm: Holy Rosary; 8pm: HOLY MASS

Every Monday - 10.30am to 11.15am: Ecumenical Meditation Group at St Joan's Centre.

#### THE BOURNE AND TILFORD Lent programme:

**Ash Wednesday Services** at St Thomas-on-The Bourne and All Saints, Tilford; weekly **Stations of the Cross** reflections at St Thomas'; and **seven Lent Groups** meeting at locations across the United Benefice of Tilford and The Bourne to study "Life Calling" a five session course on how we live out our faith in daily life and decision making. To join sign list in churches.

Additionally, the popular **Midday Music Recitals at St Thomas-on-The Bourne**, with retiring collection for Christian Aid, will take place on Tuesdays from 11th March to 15th April. Lunches of hot soup, cheese and bread in the Cobbett Room will follow each recital. The programme is on the CTF website.

#### St ANDREW'S Lent Programme:

**Six study groups** across the parish of St Andrew's, Farnham, will be following one of three courses:

1)The York Lent course for 2014, '**Build on the Rock**' addressing faith, doubt, and Jesus.

2) 'Lentwise', a course devised by Paula Gooder, Canon Theologian at Guildford cathedral.

3) A course of study based on the Archbishop of Canterbury's Lent book 'Looking through the Cross', by Dr Graham Tomlin.

Sign-up sheets with times and places for the various groups are at the back of the church.

### **SOME COMING EVENTS:**

**TUESDAYS from 11th MARCH to 15th APRIL- 12noon - St THOMAS-ON-THE**

**BOURNE CHURCH: Midday Music for Lent** - Various musicians - see website\* for details. Retiring collection for Christian Aid. Each recital followed by soup, bread & cheese lunches in the Cobbett Room.

**TUESDAY 18th MARCH - 10.30am - St JOAN'S CENTRE: Churches Together in**

**Farnham Monthly Prayer Meeting** - ecumenical reflective prayer, readings and intercessions - followed by refreshments and fellowship. ALL WELCOME - just come along

**PALM SUNDAY 13th APRIL – St MARY'S CHURCH, FRENHAM: Stainer's**

**Crucifixion** sung by St Mary's Choir and friends.

**GOOD FRIDAY - 18TH APRIL - 11.45am for 12 noon Start - at top of THE HART:**

**Churches Together in Farnham's Walk of Witness.** All Christians are invited to take part in this silent procession. We will follow a wooden cross as it is carried through the streets of the town, finishing at St Andrew's Church with a hymn and prayers. Let's make the 2014 Walk of Witness the biggest yet!

**EASTER DAY - 20th APRIL - from 2.30pm - in GOSTREY MEADOW, FARNHAM: 'HE**

**IS RISEN' Easter outreach Event:** Presented by Farnham Pentecostal Church with support from other churches.

### **A little further afield:**

**SATURDAY 15th MARCH - 9am to 1pm - St DUNSTAN'S CHURCH, WOKING: Poverty**

**Amidst Affluence' - Churches Together in Surrey Forum:** Churches Together in Surrey forum on 'Poverty Amidst Affluence - the changing face of Surrey and our Christian response', hosted by the Rt-Rev'd Kieran Conry, Bishop of Arundel and Brighton, on behalf of the Roman Catholic Diocese. **Admission is free but booking is essential.** Contact Lorraine Burrows on 01293 651163

**SATURDAY - 5TH APRIL - 2pm - ALTON ABBEY: Catharsis** - A Grand Monastic Clear-Out Sale - teas £3 with cake by the Friends of Alton Abbey.

**SATURDAY 12TH APRIL - ALTON ABBEY: Quiet Day Before Holy Week:** Anglican Mass 9am, meet in Reception 10.15am, finish 4pm. £25 Please bring a packed lunch; tea and coffee will be available in the Visitor's Centre kitchen. For booking details see website\*

**\*For more one-off and regular monthly and weekly events, links to member churches' websites, and other information, go to CTF website: [churchestogetherinfarnham.org.uk](http://churchestogetherinfarnham.org.uk)**