

Christian faith in theatre spotlight

THREE different stage productions will help audiences to discover more about the Christian message in the next couple of months.

Our cathedral will host a passion play by the much-loved Christian theatre company Riding Lights on March 20. *Inheritance* weaves the strands of the Biblical narrative together, evoking the community in which Jesus lived and the women who knew him.

It mixes both theatre and worship, with opportunities for us to respond at the foot of the Cross. It starts at 7.30pm and tickets, priced at £10 or £8, can be booked via www.ridinglights.org/inheritance or on 01904-613000.

Saltmine Theatre Company will perform twice in two nights on the Isle of Wight. *Amazing Grace* tells the story of John Newton and the transatlantic slave trade. It's staged on March 12 at Aspire (formerly Holy Trinity Church), Dover Street, Ryde, and on March 13 at Christ the King College, Newport, both from 7.30pm. Tickets, priced at £12 or £10, are available on 01983-810112.

And H & A Musicals will stage a show about the life of Paul in our cathedral. *Blind Faith - The Musical* is staged on May 8 and 9. More details are available on www.handamusicals.co.uk.

Having breakfast with US president

HE was given the chance to meet Barack Obama at the US president's annual prayer breakfast.

And Dr Graham Giles, from Holy Rood Church, Stubbington, also got to meet people of faith from 130 different countries at the event in Washington DC.

Graham was invited to the two-hour National Prayer Breakfast last month at which he heard President Obama talk about the importance of faith – and the dangers of extremism. The event is held each year, hosted by members of the US Congress, and designed to be a Christian forum where business, political and social leaders can build relationships.

As well as the breakfast event – at which the president normally speaks – it also includes a series of other meetings over several days.

Graham was invited because of his pioneering work in drug detoxification, which has been piloted in Tennessee and East Kentucky.

"It's one of those unique events where guests from all over the world are invited, each of whom is a follower of Jesus," said Graham.

"The King of Jordan was planning to lead the Bible study, but he had to go home after the brutal murder of the Jordanian pilot by Islamic State. And the Dalai Lama also spoke.



Dr Graham Giles at the White House

"Exceptional things happen at these events, with the emphasis on reconciliation between politicians from different parties and between presidents, prime ministers and ministers whose countries might previously have been at war.

"It was encouraging to be involved in such a prayerful event. President Obama appeared very relaxed and spoke very articulately about the situation in the Middle

East. The words he used seemed exactly right in the context, and there was a recognition that reconciliation comes through Jesus."

Graham, who is a criminologist, had previously been invited to the prayer breakfast to recognise his work with prisoners of conscience before the 1989 Romanian revolution. He founded the first East European Probation Service

after the collapse of the Communist regime there. He has previously joined and mentored members of delegations to Washington on four occasions, most of whom were senior politicians and East European justice or police officials.

This time, he was invited after working with a scientific team to develop a breakthrough British treatment for drug addicts called SPERA – Subtle Pulse Electrobiological Recovery Apparatus.

It uses electrical pulses at the same frequency as our brains to treat those addicted to alcohol, drugs and nicotine.

"This is something we'd like to spread around the world, so this was a great opportunity to tell people about it," said Graham. "I got to talk to the Russian delegation, which was important as there is a huge heroin problem there.

"It's not a new science, but it hasn't become widespread, mostly because of people's greed. In those situations, it is usually the poor who miss out. It is compassion for the poor that has driven other advances in medicine, and it is driving us too."

Newcomers connect in cafe

A CHURCH in Titchfield has launched a new Sunday event to reach out to the local community.

St Peter's Church launched Café Connect last September to help reach those who don't normally come to church. It's held in the parish room on the High Street, and offers bacon butties, homemade cakes, tea and coffee on a Sunday morning – all completely free.

The idea behind the café was to create a welcoming environment for everyone to enjoy. It's a Fresh Expression of church that aims to offer a different style of worship.

Volunteers leave a selection of Sunday papers and magazines to read, offer craft activities for the children, and finish the morning with a short talk on a Christian theme and some worship.

It is open between 11am and 12.30pm, and people can



Guests at Café Connect, in the parish room in Titchfield drop in and out as they like.

Organiser Penny Murrells said "Visitors are being attracted to the café by virtue of posters around the village, word of mouth, and regulars bringing friends who are not necessarily churchgoers."

"Café Connect is connecting

with the community in a lively, friendly way."

It happens on the third Sunday of each month, so the next Café Connect will take place on March 21. A more traditional Sunday service takes place in St Peter's Church simultaneously.

Pompey Chimes

The *Pompey Chimes* is the official newspaper of the Church of England's Diocese of Portsmouth, which covers 142 parishes in south-east Hampshire and the Isle of Wight. Its circulation is 8,000, and it is produced monthly except for January and August. Each parish pays 15p for each copy, which allows our readers to pick it up for free on the final Sunday of the previous month. Paid-for adverts are dealt with by our publishers, Cornerstone Vision. For a list of editorial deadlines, see: www.portsmouth.anglican.org/pompeychimes

DEADLINE FOR APRIL EDITION:
Monday 9 March

Portsmouth, PO2 8HB (023-9289 9673 or neil.pugmire@portsmouth.anglican.org)

AVAILABLE TO COLLECT FROM DEANERY DEPOTS: Thursday 26 March

ADVERTISING: Glenda Charitos, Cornerstone Vision, 28 Old Park Road, Peverell, Plymouth, PL3 4PY (01752-225623 or glenda@cornerstonevision.com)

AVAILABLE IN YOUR CHURCH:
Sunday 29 March

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