

COMMENT

THE MAGAZINE OF THE CHURCHES IN TRING



What's on in April in Tring Church

Services at Tring Church

Sunday 7th April

8am Holy Communion traditional language
10am Communion with craft activity **

Monday 8th April

2.30pm Lady Day service Tring

Sunday 14th April

8am Holy Communion traditional language**
10am Worship for all
3pm Piano and More concert

Sunday 21st April

8am Holy Communion traditional language
10am Communion with craft activity **
Mega Stick Sunday - raising money for
Christian Aid by walking round the parish and
running the London Marathon.
Finish with **5pm** BBQ in Tring churchyard

Sunday 28th April

8am Holy Communion traditional language
10am Communion with craft activity **

** Streamed service on our website and YouTube

Mid-week Services in Tring

9.15am Tuesdays
Holy Communion

10am Thursdays
Holy Communion in traditional language

Lots more going on



Mondays 3.30pm - 5pm
Youth Café in term time - toast,
chat etc for secondary school kids

Food Bank

Monday to Friday
10am - 12noon.
Drop-off donations and
collect food



Tuesdays 2pm - 4pm Craft and a Cuppa

Drop in for chat, cuppa and bring
a craft to do if you would like to

Social Coffee

Fridays, Saturdays
10am - 12 noon,
and after Sunday, Tuesday
& Thursday services



Piano & more series



Sunday April 14th
3pm for an hour's concert of
music followed by
refreshments.
Free but collection for
church and piano expenses

Everyone is welcome to join us at any of our church services and activities.

The Easter season



Alleluia! Christ is
risen!
He is risen indeed!
Alleluia!

Each year on
Easter Day
our shout of
acclamation rings
out from churches
across the world as we celebrate the
resurrection, this great good news that
we have, that death and sin are defeated
and new life is given to each one of us.
No matter what may happen, God is
greater and we can put our hope in him.

The resurrection is central to the
Christian faith and yet in 2017 a survey
claimed that nearly a quarter of UK
Christians do not believe that the
resurrection took place. Given that the
survey only questioned 2,010 people, I
think we can question how representative
it actually was, but it does raise the
question, what do we really think about
the resurrection? It is sometimes said
that death is the ultimate statistic – ten
out of ten people die – and so I can
understand why some people struggle
to accept the resurrection as a historical
fact. Yet Easter by Easter we celebrate
someone who didn't go by the rules, who
went against that ultimate statistic, whom
death could not hold and who rose again.
Easter by Easter we declare 'Christ is
risen. He is risen indeed. Alleluia!' Death
might be the ultimate statistic, but not for
God.

I came across a quotation recently
from Rowan Williams which said this:
'When we celebrate Easter we are really
standing in the middle of a second Big
Bang, a tumultuous surge of divine
energy as fiery and intense as the very
beginning of the universe.'

It was a quotation that made me
stop and reflect. We prepare for and
celebrate Easter each year; we give
our Easter eggs, go to our services and
many of them will touch us deeply, but
there is always the risk that we can take
it for granted, that we forget how earth
shattering the resurrection was, that
death was defeated, new life begun.
Yes, it happened in one city in our very
big world, with relatively few people
as witnesses, but it has since spread
across the world; millions have been, and
continue to be, changed by the good
news of the resurrection and the new life
that it can bring.

Two things that are important to me
when I think about the resurrection are
the changes that are seen in the disciples
and what went on to happen after the
resurrection. The change in the disciples
is amazing – straight after the crucifixion
they are hidden away behind locked
doors, terrified for their lives, yet the day
of Pentecost sees them preaching in
the streets. They start travelling, telling
people the good news; they are arrested,
beaten, martyred; they have to run for
their lives: and yet nothing will stop them.
I'm reminded of Jesus' comments on
Palm Sunday – Jesus is told to rebuke

his disciples for making too much noise,
but he answers 'I tell you, if these were
silent, the very stones would cry out'
(Luke 19:40). I don't think anything would
stop the disciples sharing the good news
wherever they go. With the gift of the
Holy Spirit, they go from silent and scared
to bold and determined, because of what
they had seen. It would have needed
something as amazing as the resurrection
for that to happen, something as world-
changing as the events of that first Easter
Day. The disciples had seen Jesus alive
again and that changed their lives and the
lives of many others. Their actions led to
the news of Jesus' resurrection spreading
across the world, the Christian church
becoming the global movement that it is
today. If it had been just a fad or fashion,
if the resurrection had just been an empty
story, I don't believe that Christianity
would have lasted as long as it has done
or would have spread as it has. Yes, the
church in this country is struggling at
the moment in some places, but across
the world churches continue to grow as
more and more people hear about the
new life that the resurrection gives, the
hope that we can know, because of the
resurrection.

So, during this Easter season, I
hope that you will know the truth of the
resurrection, the new life and hope that it
brings, and have a glimpse of the world-
shattering event that was. For Alleluia!
Christ is risen! He is risen indeed! Alleluia!
Rachael Hawkins
St Martha's Methodist Church

A planet for future generations

God has created the most
wonderfully amazing and
diverse planet with an
abundance of beautiful
wildlife and creatures of all
shapes and sizes. Every
time I stop and take it all
in, I am reminded of how
beautiful our planet is and
what a wonderful home it
makes for us, our families
and all of God's living
things.

It saddens me that we
are not looking after his
creation as we should. I
want this wonderful planet
and everything on it to be
around for generations to



come: for all of our children,
grandchildren, great-
grandchildren and beyond. This
is my motivation when making
choices in how we do things at
home and in creating my Loving
Earth panel.

Let's work together to do
what we can to protect and
nurture this planet for future
generations.
Lisa Rogers
High Street Baptist Church

The human race – our place in creation



Shortly after finishing my article for last month's *Comment*, which responded to Edmund Booth's question about whether or not the human race was the crown of creation, I came upon the quotation below from Dean Inge.

The Revd Dr William Ralph Inge (pronounced as in 'sting', not 'whinge') was an interesting character, academically very bright but possibly not temperamentally suited to being a clergyman (or really anything else!). He failed as a teacher and a parish priest, was for a short time a Professor in Cambridge but found fame as the dean of St Paul's Cathedral from 1911 to 1934, where his outspoken views upset many, but entranced a few.

While he was a prominent dean, he was not popular with the College of Canons, with whom he argued constantly. He was harsh with the minor canons, a position which he described as 'No job for a man', which was odd as only a man could then hold the post. One minor canon once asked if he was interested in the study of liturgy, to which he replied, 'No, and I don't collect postage stamps either'.

He was opposed to Roman

Catholics, Anglo-Catholics, fundamentalists and Dissenters. He only really approved of intellectually minded, theologically informed, central Anglican churchmen such as Bishop Barnes of Birmingham or Herbert Hensley Henson, Dean of Durham, but he fell out with the latter as he did with so many people. He also disliked the idle rich, tramps, feminists, Liberals, Socialists, Trade Unionists and the working classes and in his weekly column in the Thursday press made no bones about saying so. A wag once wrote that 'he began his career as a pillar of the church and ended it as two columns in the "Evening Standard".'

In preparation for retirement in 1933, he purchased Brightwell Manor, a country house in the village of Brightwell-cum-Sotwell in Oxfordshire. The house is now owned by Boris Johnson, but that is hardly Dean Inge's fault.

Dean Inge's main redeeming quality was his intellect. Inge wrote a book called 'God and the Astronomers' in 1934 which might more accurately have been called 'God and Two Astronomers', the two astronomers being Sir Arthur Eddington (who 'proved' that light was indeed bent by a massive object such as the sun, as predicted by Einstein) and Sir James Jeans, Eddington's contemporary and

critic. This book, though badly received on publication, was ahead of its time. Inge, a brilliant classicist and theologian, understood the work of Eddington and Jeans better than philosophers such as Bertrand Russell. In the book, Inge, writing in the language of his time, says: 'God is revealing Himself to our age mainly through the book of nature, fresh pages of which are opening before us nearly every year. I have no doubt this knowledge is given to us for a purpose. Science has been called, by Baron von Hugel, the purgatory of religion. The study of nature, he means, purifies our ideas about God and reality... It makes us ashamed of our petty interpretations of the world – ashamed of thinking that the universe was made solely for our benefit; ashamed of thinking that our little scheme of purely human values is valid for the whole; ashamed of our arrogant assumption that we are "the roof and crown of things".'

As I said last month, while we are described as 'a little lower than the angels' in Psalm 8, the Bible does not describe us as the top of creation or 'the roof and crown of things', to use Tennyson's words. Science has indeed made Christians rethink our place in God's creation and our kinship with the natural world.

Jon Reynolds
Tring Team

Bluebell Walk

Our sponsored walk in May, in aid of The Children's Society, seems to go from strength to strength. Last year we raised nearly £7,000 and were able to keep our costs right down, thanks to successfully achieving sponsorship from Berkhamsted Waitrose again. We're looking forward to another good one this year.

The walk this year will be on Sunday 12 May.

Please join us to raise funds for The Children's Society. The walk is Berkhamsted's longest-standing sponsored walk and, since 1968, has raised over £300,000. The money raised is given to The

Children's Society, who work tirelessly on projects to help children in this country facing neglect and abuse, with nowhere else to turn.

All walks this year start from Kitchener's Fields, Castle Hill, Berkhamsted HP4 1HE which is by the Cricket Club. There is an 18-mile walk for the adventurous, a 12-mile Bluebell walk and a family friendly 6-mile walk. Find out how you can participate and register at www.berkhamstedwalk.com. To find out more about The Children's Society's work, take a look at their website: www.childrenssociety.org.uk.

Vicki Blake
Berkhamsted Committee for The Children's Society

Berkhamsted Walk
Raising funds for The Children's Society
Sunday 12th May 2024

Choose the walk that suits you for a great day out in the beautiful Chiltern countryside around Berkhamsted
6, 12 and 18 mile walk options

#berkhamstedwalk
For details and to register online: www.berkhamstedwalk.com

Coming to know Jesus



Hello! Allow me to introduce myself. I'm Tom Copperwheat. I've had the honour of serving as the pastor of Akeman Street Baptist Church since mid-January of this year.

What's the significance of 6.2 miles, you might wonder? Well, it's the distance from the church I currently serve to the church where I used to work. I was on the staff team at Limes Avenue Baptist Church in Aylesbury for eleven years before moving to Tring.

While the physical distance may not be vast, the cultural distinctions between the two towns are notable. Tring, with its affluence and picturesque surroundings, stands in contrast to Aylesbury. (Not to dismiss the beauty of Aylesbury's council offices!)

I hope there may be other times to talk to you about the journey that led me here, but I thought, as a way of introduction, I would share with you the journey that led me to know Christ.

Growing up in what one might consider a typically Christian home, I attended church on Sundays and participated in the youth ministries. I possessed knowledge about Jesus, but I hadn't truly come to know him. Are you tracking with me there? For you can know much about a person without truly

knowing that person. Indeed, over time, such academic knowledge puffed me up. So, despite attending church regularly, I lacked a genuine desire to know and follow Jesus.

During the summers, I joined my brothers at various Christian camps. One year, during a camp's final evening, the speaker discussed the death of Christ. In that moment, the penny dropped, or, in biblical terms, the illuminating work of the Spirit took place. God's grace opened my eyes to see who Jesus truly is. I realised I was a sinner in desperate need of his grace, and that night, I gave my life to Christ, confessing my sins and asking that Christ's death count as mine.

After the summer holidays, when I returned to school and shared my newfound faith, my friends laughed. Being a naive kid, I sought the applause of my peers. So, for the next couple of years, I lived like a Christian on Sundays but was an absolute hypocrite during the rest of the week. Around the age of 14, I sensed I was heading the wrong way, and something needed to change; into such days, God knocked me to my knees!

You might recall the biblical story of Saul on his way to Damascus, where God knocked him to his knees and changed his life. For many of us, a similar experience serves as a turning point. When I was about to turn 14, I was diagnosed with thyroid cancer. Through my father's private health treatment scheme, soon my parents

and I were sitting in a doctor's surgery in Harley Street with the best thyroid cancer specialist in the UK. From horsing around at school to hospital visits, teasing my brothers to treatment, and rugby to radiotherapy, my life changed dramatically in those days. Over the next year or so, through various operations and treatments, I underwent significant medical procedures. Despite the challenges, those days revealed my hypocrisy. Confessing my faith in Christ on Sundays wasn't reflected in my daily life. While I don't want to experience them again, I see how the Lord used those difficult days to shape me, and looking back, I see God's hand at work even in the messiness of life.

As you read these words, I'm unaware of the circumstances you find yourself in. But for believers in Jesus Christ, take heart – the Lord can use even the hardest days for good.

Though we may not see it now or even in this life, a day is coming when we will.

Press on to that day.
Go well.

Tom Copperwheat
Akeman Street Baptist Church

*These inward trials I employ
From self and pride to set thee free
And break thy schemes of earthly joy
That thou may'st find thy all in Me.*
John Newton (1779)

Parish registers

Baptisms

We welcome this child into our church community and pray for his family.

Freddie Joseph Grimdsdale

Funerals

We thank God for the lives of the departed and pray for comfort for those who mourn.

Doris Primrose Parker 93
Jane Shardlow 71
Ian Jones
Phyllis Proctor 90

High Street Baptist Church

Crafts & Toys
Lego Lounge

Come and join us for our
Easter Holiday Kids' Activity Morning

Wed 10 April
9.30-11.30am

Adult & child £5, additional children £1 each

Kids Activities @ High Street Baptist Church Tring

89 High Street, Tring, HP23 4AB (opposite Tring library)
admin@tringbaptistchurch.co.uk www.tringbaptistchurch.co.uk

All ages welcome
Children must be accompanied by an adult

'I am the Truth'



"What is truth?" said jesting Pilate, and would not stay for an answer.'

These are the words of Francis Bacon (1561-1626) in his essay on truth. Bacon was an English lawyer, philosopher and essayist and a man of great influence in politics and the like. He was Lord Chancellor and in 1618 was named Viscount St Albans. His mortal remains lie in St Michael's churchyard in St Albans. He was strongly attracted to the problems of philosophy and wrote much on the subject. He also wrote 'Be so true to thyself as thou be not false to others' echoing Hamlet.

But is he right in saying that Pilate was jesting? Or was Pilate being serious? Pilate's question is part of the trial of Jesus when Pilate asks Jesus if he is the king of the Jews. Jesus's answer is that he was born to be a king and that he came into the world to testify to the truth and, further, that everyone who belongs to the truth listens to him. In answer to this Pilate puts his question. There is no answer but Pilate tells the Jews he can find no case against Jesus. Yet he hands

him over to them. Truth was standing before Pilate and Pilate, in part, answers his question by the words he writes in the inscription to be affixed to the cross.

In our consideration of the 'I am' sayings of the fourth Gospel we come now to 'I am the Truth' (John 14:6) at the beginning of the so-called Farewell Discourses (John 14 - 17). Here Truth follows the Way and precedes the Life. (See last month's and next month's *Comment* respectively!) The apostle Thomas, at the Last Supper, does not understand Jesus' words about going to his Father's house where there are many dwelling places. In his reply Jesus identifies himself as the Way, the Truth and the Life. So, by the time we reach chapter 18 of John's Gospel and Pilate's question, we know that the truth is standing before him in person. Of course, we do not know in what sense Pilate asked the question - was he jesting? Was it a cynical question expecting no reply? Was it an expression of worldly scepticism from one who was impatient with Jewish theological jargon, from one in a superior position as the Governor acting for the Roman Emperor?

But how do we understand the Truth, referring to Jesus? In the prologue to this Gospel the Word is described as 'full of

grace and truth' (John 1:16) and, later, we are told 'grace and truth come through Jesus Christ'. Are we just saying that Jesus speaks the truth, that he is a dependable, truthful person, that he is upright and so on, or are we going further and identifying him as the Truth incarnate? As well as identifying himself as the Truth along with the Way and the Life at the beginning of the Farewell Discourses, when he comes to the High Priestly Prayer (as John 17 has been called) he prays to sanctify the disciples in the truth - 'your word is truth'. It is a prayer which sums up the Son's relationship to the Father and to those who believe

in him. Earlier on in John 8:32, Jesus has referred to the truth known by his followers which will make them free.

But having mentioned Jesus as being the Truth among other titles, the real difficulty in the modern world goes back to Pilate's question. For readers of *Comment* are fully aware in an unbelieving world that there is a difference between believing something is true and proving it is true. We know some things are true by experience - such as the facts of nature - and some things are true by faith, but these latter cannot be proved scientifically to someone who has no faith. It is interesting to think how appropriate a symbol of Easter an Easter egg could prove to be. The egg is a symbol of life. It can be proved from experience that a chicken hatches from an egg. So, as Christians we believe that Jesus rose from the dead, new life from the tomb. But we cannot prove it to the senses of one who does not believe. We can prove the facts of nature, of creation, but the truths of religion are different and disputable.

So, what is truth? The three great Abrahamic religions agree there is one God but disagree about what exactly follows on from that truth. Most obviously Jews and Muslims do not believe Jesus is the Son of God in the way that Christians do; they would question most of what we assert in the Creed. It is therefore a distinctive item of the Christian faith to assert that the one who said he is the Way, the Truth and the Life is God of God, very God of very God.

Pilate asked 'What is truth?' of the one who stood before him as the Truth. He went on to give a partially true answer when he ordered the words 'Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews' to be inscribed on the cross. Interestingly Pontius Pilate is a name known to millions around the world and for centuries because his name appears in the Creeds. He was a Governor whose date and place prove there was a man called Jesus who suffered on a cross. But did he ever realise who Jesus really was and is and ever will be? Many legends are attached to him; to some Christians he is a saint and martyr. Most Christians see him as a governor who asked the vital question but did not accept the answer that Jesus of Nazareth is the Way, the Truth and the Life.

Martin Banister
St Albans Cathedral

G'day mate!
Encounters with the Risen Christ

Parish Quiet day
with space for encounter and exploration
9.30am-4pm, Saturday 27th April
St Mary's Puttenham
Led by Rev'd Deborah Snowball
For more information and to book:
www.tringteamparish.org.uk/news-events
or phone 01442 824929

TRING TEAM PARISH
Living God's Love

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

Stephen Hearn
TringMarket Auctions
Antique and Fine Art Auctioneers and Valuers. Est. 1982

Our salesrooms continue to attract a wide range of customers from throughout the UK and across the world and we deal with almost everything that comes out of your home whether 17th century or 21st century.

Visit our website and view the sales catalogues with accompanying illustrations, you will find us at www.tringmarketauctions.co.uk

- Valuations for Sale, Probate & Insurance
- Total and Part House Clearance Specialists
- Fine Art and 20th Century Decorative Arts Sales
- Fortnightly Sales of Antique & Modern Furniture and collectables

We provide a full service to meet all your requirements

www.tringmarketauctions.co.uk
The Market Premises, Brook Street, Tring, Hertfordshire HP23 5ED
t: 01442 824449 e: sales@tringmarketauctions.co.uk

WILSTONE STICKS
Handcrafted by John Evans

Member of The
BRITISH Stickmakers Guild
www.wilstonesticks.com
Telephone: 01442 822115

THE TYRE CHANGERS

OUR NEW TYRE CHANGER BASE IS OPEN
Unit 5C Airfield Industrial Estate,
Long Marston HP23 4QR

In addition to our popular **mobile service**, that can visit your home or work, we can now also offer a **drive-in facility** by appointment.

We offer a wide range of **Premium, Mid-range and Budget** tyres at competitive prices and can now accommodate the largest of alloy size and low profile run flats.

Do you need new tyres, or have a puncture?
Please let us know and we will be happy to quote and make an appointment.

Not sure of the condition of your tyres?
We can have a look for you, just get in touch.

Wheel swap needed?
Winter and summer wheel swap also available.

Please call or text on **07746 903 095** or email info@thetyrechangers.co.uk

"Both children have had a fantastic time at Heirs & Graces Nursery and I have gone to work each day knowing they were safe in your hands."

Heirs & Graces Day Nursery

A place where **CHILDREN SHINE...**

Open from 7.30am until 6pm

Childcare vouchers accepted Free hours scheme accepted
Sited in a beautifully converted Victorian home conveniently located on Tring High Street.
High quality food prepared by our fabulous chef.

Find us on - www.heirsandgracestring.co.uk
Telephone: - 01442 891818
Heirs & Graces Day Nursery, Florence House,
2 Christchurch Road, Tring, Hertfordshire, HP23 4EE

Mega Stick Sunday!



Christian Aid is a charity that is a global movement of people, churches and local organisations that are working to end poverty. For some years now, our main annual parish support of Christian Aid has been to have our Mega Stick Sunday fundraising walk. It is named after the walks and worship that we had for several years, when all the children would pick up sticks and leave them at church. This then turned into a Sunday when people were invited

to walk, run or cycle from church to church, or as much as they could, and we sponsored some fantastic people who had matched funding which helped raise a terrific sum in support of Christian Aid. This year it is a little different. We are holding it on 21 April, earlier than Christian Aid week (12-18 May), as Richard Abel is running the London Marathon on that day in aid of the charity. We wish him lots of luck, and keep an eye out for him if you are watching any of it! We hope to show some on a big screen in church. Details about sponsoring him will be on our website and in St Peter & St Paul's Church.

In the parish, Annette Reynolds will be

walking from church to church which is a half marathon (up hills and across muddy fields), and sponsorship details for her are also on the website and in St Peter & St Paul's. She has matched sponsorship so any donation made will be doubled. As in previous years, there will be a BBQ outside the church on the afternoon of 21 April to welcome her back. If you would like to join in with a walk/run on that day of whatever length suits you, do please let us know, or if you would like to come to the BBQ, please contact me at jane@tringteamparish.org.uk or telephone 01442 822170. Everyone is welcome!

Jane Banister, Tring Team

always said no to doing a full marathon because of the time needed for longer training runs alongside work and family commitments. But as my children have got a bit older and more independent, I realised I should have just about enough time to put in the training. So hence at 53 years old, I'm going for my first marathon!

I am most certainly NOT going to run even a half marathon, but I have been persuaded to walk it, across the muddy fields and up and down the hills around the parish to raise money for the same cause and the same reasons on the same day. It's nothing like as impressive as Richard's efforts and I wish I had made time to practise a little first! But somehow, I have not made time to do that – work, fostering, 'stuff' and rather a lot of rain has got in the way. I have walked this same walk six or seven times with various people with the same aims but none since the lockdown years – which means it's a long time since I last did around fourteen miles in one go... and I seem to be rather older and less fit than I was (though that's not saying much!). Pushing a pushchair around the zoo on a very blustery day was my last long walk. I hesitated at first when asked to walk for sponsorship – but next year I will be 70 – I decided I should just have another go now in case I really can't attempt it in the future. And what I lack in fitness I will make up for with determination. Let's hope I can raise enough money to make it worthwhile!

Annette Reynolds, St Peter & St Paul

Running – and walking – for Christian Aid



Christian Aid is so familiar to many of us that we forget that not everyone grew up with it. It doesn't seem so long ago that little envelopes came through our door which we dutifully filled with donations – or lost before the collector came round and scrabbled around for change while they waited.

More recently we have found other ways to give – and encourage others to give. Small amounts multiplied by many people equals lots of money, money that Christian Aid uses to support people living in poverty, working in thirty countries, with people of all faiths and none, to stand up for dignity, equality and justice.

Richard Abel runs regularly to keep fit but this year in London will be his first marathon. He chose to run to raise money for Christian Aid because he feels passionate about supporting hard-pressed communities in emerging and developing countries. He has been running informal local half marathons with others from the Tring Team Parish for the last several years to fundraise for Christian Aid. What will get Richard through those 26.2 miles? 'My wife's flapjacks, the support of family and friends in the crowd, and knowing I'll be raising a decent amount for Christian Aid if I get to the finishing line.'

Richard did his first organised running event ever in February, the

Brighton half-marathon, and really enjoyed it. Who knew that having other people work out a great route and ensure there is no traffic was such a great idea?! And he got a medal!

The most surprising thing he has learnt throughout his training is how quickly your body and mind gets used to going longer distances more regularly. But this is a massive challenge. 'I've had to get some physio for my heels but I've found marathon training overall to be positive for mental and physical health.'



What will be the first thing Richard will do after he crosses the finish line? 'Find my family and friends and have a bottle of full-fat Irn Bru, Scotland's specialist sports recovery drink.'

Richard has found the goal of raising funds for a great cause with a supportive and engaged Christian Aid team a real inspiration and encouragement along the way. So why has he not run a marathon before? 'I

always said no to doing a full marathon because of the time needed for longer training runs alongside work and family commitments. But as my children have got a bit older and more independent, I realised I should have just about enough time to put in the training. So hence at 53 years old, I'm going for my first marathon!

I am most certainly NOT going to run even a half marathon, but I have been persuaded to walk it, across the muddy fields and up and down the hills around the parish to raise money for the same cause and the same reasons on the same day. It's nothing like as impressive as Richard's efforts and I wish I had made time to practise a little first! But somehow, I have not made time to do that – work, fostering, 'stuff' and rather a lot of rain has got in the way. I have walked this same walk six or seven times with various people with the same aims but none since the lockdown years – which means it's a long time since I last did around fourteen miles in one go... and I seem to be rather older and less fit than I was (though that's not saying much!). Pushing a pushchair around the zoo on a very blustery day was my last long walk. I hesitated at first when asked to walk for sponsorship – but next year I will be 70 – I decided I should just have another go now in case I really can't attempt it in the future. And what I lack in fitness I will make up for with determination. Let's hope I can raise enough money to make it worthwhile!

Annette Reynolds, St Peter & St Paul

Postcard from Orkney



Is there anyone out there?

It's a question I always ask myself when I write a *Comment* article, although that's a bit of a misnomer as my scribbles could hardly be called an article.

If there is anyone reading this, good day to you from the wild north. The last time Carrie wrote the article for *Comment*, it was in the middle of our snow, such a rarity that nothing like it has happened before. However, we survived, and are now just seeing the beginnings of Spring.

What a joyous occasion, the surprise and excitement of seeing the first snowdrops and just the peeking of daffodils, of which we have an abundance, all adding a new lift to one's spirit.

I have tried a number of new projects during the winter, and I'm happy to say all have been successful: making Orkney butter, garlic & chive cheese, and most recently, acquiring an indoor smoker (fantastic, especially with salmon). Herring turns magically into gorgeous kippers when smoked. It has become rather an obsession: if you stand still long enough in our house, you will be smoked. However, the results are fantastic. Our problem during the snow was fresh food supplies. The Ferries were so irregular due to high seas and high winds (we topped 100mph) that Tesco's shelves were regularly bare – including milk. Farmers are not allowed to sell unpasteurised milk here. Fortunately, we had 'future planned' for such occasions and had tinned and frozen goods including milk. It played havoc with my cheese and butter production, though.

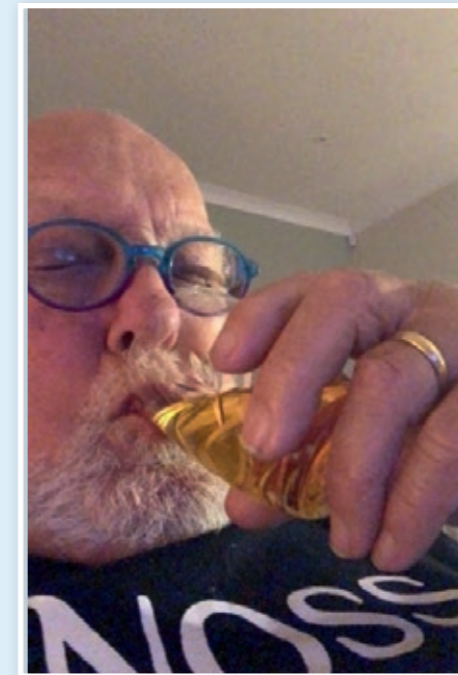
Having a freezer full of lamb, I thought I might try my hand at sausage making using our mincer sausage-making attachment. I very soon realised this is a skill which must be learnt. However, I am making progress and also getting fatter. I am currently under orders to desist cheese making due to quantity, and her ladyship requires her kitchen back.

The farmers are moving sheep ready for lambing, this is the beginnings of

their busiest time of year. Lambing flocks of several hundred sheep is no mean feat.

Our first visitor of 2024 arrives in a couple of weeks or so, which is great, followed in April with the next sitting and so on. Nothing beats sharing our table with good friends and catching up on the local news. It's lovely.

I gave up Whisky for Lent, which has plonked me in big trouble with our local nurse. I was recently prescribed 'Warfarin' medication which she went to great lengths to balance correctly, allowing me my two large drams a day. Oops! When I stopped for Lent I forgot, and the whole prescription went haywire. Nurse Phyllis was not best pleased. To make matters worse, I have to creep in the surgery at Easter and do it all again. No, I am not giving up the Nectar for good. I will take her in a Chocolate Easter Egg.

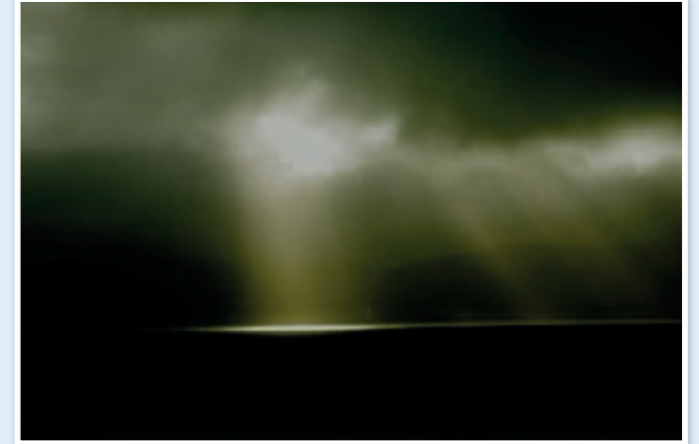


In two weeks our first cruise ships arrive. I know it benefits the community and our council economy but I can't help feeling that spending £34,000.00 on two bottles of whisky, when so many folk are in need, is totally and utterly obscene. I happened to enquire if anyone bought the Highland Park Beverage on show at the Distillery at £17,000.00. 'Oh yes,' was the reply, 'mainly the cruise ship clients – one to take home and one to drink on the way.'

Carrie is very busy with her new discovery 'Art classes' fitting in with 'Keep Fit' sessions, Writing Group, Orkney Rocks choir, and her Book Group. Me? I'm busy being a layabout, emulating my hero 'Compo' from 'Last of the Summer Wine', when I am not tied up with the Polycrub, smoking, butter making, creating cheese and sausage production (that's without the serious matter of 'yard arm' whisky sampling at 6.00pm).

On the whole, our little bit of Canaan is definitely laced with a touch of 'milk and honey' albeit wet and windy. God bless you all and may the wind be at your back.

Mac Dodge, Milestone Kirk, Orkney



Tweet of the month



As I write this it is now 1 March, for me the first day of Spring as I follow the meteorological seasons which defines Spring as 1 March to 31 May, Summer 1 June to 31 August,

Autumn 1 September to 30 November and Winter 1 December to 28 (or 29) February. The astronomical seasons are defined by the Earth's position relative to the Sun and so the start of Spring is after the Vernal Equinox, roughly 20 March, to the Summer Solstice, roughly 21 June. Summer is roughly 22 June to the Autumn Equinox, roughly 22 September. Autumn goes through to the Winter Solstice, roughly 22 December, and Winter is after that until the next Vernal Equinox.

So why do I follow the meteorological seasons? Well firstly they are consistent and neat – using fixed dates and whole months. Secondly, they seem to more accurately reflect the seasonal behaviour of birds. OK, there are variations and a few birds are still migrating in June, but very few by 20 June – which really does feel like Summer to me. Conversely, in February this year, Sand Martins, Swallows, House Martins and Wheatears had already been seen in Britain and these are typically some of our earliest

Spring migrants – I am ignoring Chiffchaffs and Blackcaps as these regularly overwinter in Britain.

Of these typical spring migrants, Sand Martin is normally the earliest to arrive in numbers in Britain with Wheatears next, then Swallows and finally House Martins.

So, this month I would like to talk about the true harbinger of Spring – the Sand Martin. The Sand Martin is in the Hirundine family, like its close relative the Swallow. Most people who know a little about birds, and even those who don't, may have heard of the Swallow. However, most won't have heard of a Sand Martin, which is ironic since it is probably the most numerous hirundine occurring at Tring Reservoirs.

The Sand Martin breeds across Europe to the Pacific coast of Asia and Japan and also in North America as far north as Alaska. It winters in sub-Saharan Africa, South America and patchily in South-east Asia. It is called Sand Martin as it typically nests in burrows dug into soft, sandy soils, usually in banks – hence the name Bank Swallow used in North America. Swallows make nests from mud pellets, attached to buildings – particularly farm buildings, hence they are also known as Barn Swallows. Both catch insects when flying and are a similar shape with relatively long



wings and forked tails, but Sand Martin lacks the long tail-streamers sported by Swallows. It also has dark brown upperparts and white underparts with a distinctive dark brown breast band that separates a white throat from the rest of the white underparts and so isn't as brightly coloured as a Swallow. Also Sand Martins nest in colonies whereas Swallows typically don't, and are more solitary in the breeding season.

I will probably see both Sand Martins and Swallows in Colombia as they head north to breed in North America: a lovely reminder of home while I am there and that some things are found all over the world, God's love being one of them if you choose to look for it and recognise it for what it is – a wonderful gift of love and life.

Roy Hargreaves, St Peter & St Paul

Poem of the month



This is one of the cycle of eighty-nine sonnets in which Spenser chronicles his courtship and eventual marriage to Elizabeth Boyle, his second wife. Spenser is probably best known

for his long epic poem 'The Faerie Queene', an allegorical celebration in praise of Queen Elizabeth 1. The tone of this sonnet is confident and joyful, and the style is elegant and refined. What begins as a welcome to the glories of the resurrection ends, in the last two lines, as a romantic plea to Spenser's 'deare love'.

Edmund Spenser was born in 1552 in London. The details of his early

life are uncertain – his family was apparently well connected but not wealthy. He attended Merchant Taylors' School and then Cambridge University, where he studied Classical literature and gained a reputation for his poetry. In 1580 he went to Ireland in the service of the Lord Deputy, and while there he acquired land and estates no doubt hoping to gain a place at Court.

On the publication of the Faery Queene he was granted a pension of £50.00 a year from the Queen. However, during later troubles in Ireland his estate was burned and while on a subsequent visit

Sonnet 68 from Amoretti ('little loves')

*Most glorious Lord of Lyfe that on this day,
Didst make thy triumph over death and sin:
And, having harrowed hell, didst bring away,
Captivity, thence captive, us to win.
This joyous day, deare Lord, with joy begin;
And grant that we, for whom thou diddest die
Being with Thy deare blood clene washt from sin,
May live forever in felicity!
And that Thy love we weighing worthily,
May likewise love Thee for the same againe:
And for Thy sake that all lyke deare didst buy,
With love may one another entertayne.
So, let us love, deare love, lyke as we ought,
Love is the lesson which the Lord us taught.*

Edmund Spenser, from Amoretti, 1595

to London he died in 1598, aged 46, and was buried in Westminster Abbey. Apparently, he was the first poet to use print to advertise his work.

**Kate Banister
St Julian's, St Albans**

Mowing the grass



It all started way back in the first lockdown in 2020. If people remember, it was a beautiful spring, despite all that was going on in the world. I had a bit of spare time on my hands (as did many people) and I saw a request from Huw Bellis: 'Could anyone help to mow the grass at St Peter & St Paul's?'

Grass cutting is something I really don't mind doing. In my view, it beats housework any day. Anyway, I responded and said I could help, and so began my church mowing career! That summer there were three of us cutting and doing any other jobs going, Ben Cartwright, Peter Child and I. We cut a side each and Peter helped with the heavy work such as hedge cutting and strimming. We had some extra people who offered their services along

the way. Grass cutting and weeding was something we could do and still maintain our distance as required.

It all seems so odd looking back on it now. I remember at first it was very quiet around the town. A few people passed; one person asked me if we were allowed to be cutting the grass during lockdown but most people were pleased that something was being done.

Mowing the lawn has made me realise how many people appreciate the area around the parish church and the seats provided there. Lots of people come just for some quiet time and contemplation; visitors to the town come and wander around; local people pass through on their way somewhere. I feel guilty sometimes disturbing their peace with the mower but most don't seem to mind and seem to recognise the work needs to be done.

Since that time, I have continued to help, but the job is now on a rota

and efficiently organised by Barry Anscombe. There are quite a few of us, so our mowing turn does not come around too often, although there are always other jobs that can be done if you have the time.

For me it suits to just turn up when I have a spare hour or so in the day and, as long as we avoid the church services (and the rain!) it can be done at any time. I often come down late afternoon. It's great exercise after sitting at a computer for several hours. It's also very therapeutic trying to get nice straight lines and cutting around the not-so-straight gravestones.

If there is anyone who wants to join the churchyard group, you will always be welcome. Please contact Barry on 01442 828325 and you can offer as little or as much time as you like, mowing or a little bit of weeding. It all helps to keep the churchyard looking good!

**Elaine Winter
St Peter & St Paul's**

Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Lutheran pastor, martyr, 9 April



If it's not raining and I have the time, I much prefer to walk within central London than to take the tube. It's not just that I dislike the crowded atmosphere of the underground, but also that I enjoy seeing unfamiliar parts of London.

While on such a meander in Aldgate, I noticed a blue plaque commemorating the German Lutheran theologian, Dietrich Bonhoeffer. I knew who he was, but I did not know he had ever visited London. I also knew that he had been hanged in 1945, long before the building on which the plaque I'd seen could have been built.

Research revealed that Bonhoeffer spent two years in the mid-1930s as pastor to two German-speaking congregations in London. The plaque marks where St Paul's, one of his churches, stood. It was destroyed by German bombing in 1941 and the site is now part of London Metropolitan University.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer and his twin sister

were born in Breslau, Germany in 1906. It was expected that Dietrich would follow his father into medicine, but at the age of 13 he stated his intention to enter the church. After studying at Tübingen, Berlin and New York, he was ordained in the Lutheran Church.



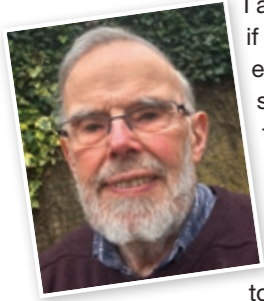
Opposed to the rise of Nazism, in 1934 he was one of the founder members of 'The Confessing Church', a movement which resisted government efforts to unite all Protestant churches into a pro-Nazi Reich church. He was on a lecture

tour in America when war broke out in 1939, and could have chosen to stay there, but he returned to Germany where he became involved with the Resistance, and ultimately, with a plot to kill Hitler. During this time Bonhoeffer worked on his book 'Ethics' in which he wrestles with the question of whether a Christian can ever justify murder. Bonhoeffer's outspoken opposition to Nazism led to his arrest and imprisonment in 1943. The letters he wrote to friends and family during his two-year imprisonment constitute some of his best-known writings. Eventually, Bonhoeffer was transferred to Buchenwald, and from there to the extermination camp at Flossenbürg. In the final month of the war, Hitler gave a personal order to execute Bonhoeffer and this was carried out on 9 April 1945, barely a week before the allies liberated the camp.

A decade later, a camp doctor who witnessed the hanging described Bonhoeffer praying before climbing the steps to the gallows. He said, 'In the fifty years that I have worked as a doctor, I have never seen a man die so entirely submissive to the will of God'.

Linzi James, St Peter & St Paul

Dear T, Z and L



I am writing this as if to you to help me explain more clearly some complex things about Musalaha, Gaza, Palestine and Israel to people in Tring. I want to give a summary of where things are, of what is planned and how people can encourage at least a little more sanity. Finally, I will pose a few specific questions, believing there is a fund of goodwill in Tring people wanting to understand.

You are already very aware. The daily news describes an unbelievably awful situation. The news as I write is that over 100 people seeking food for starving families in Gaza were killed as they stormed the very few aid trucks entering Northern Gaza. The BBC's Political Editor Chris Mason writes that the UK Parliament and the two major parties found themselves 'buckled, bent and contorted' by the furious arguments provoked by the Israel-Gaza war. This news will be dated as you read this and who knows what will have replaced it. Polarisation grows uncontrollably. How do we cope and survive with such a background? How do we find and encourage more sanity?

Let me first run through what we in Tring already know. Musalaha, after more than thirty years work of building reconciliation across the divided communities of Israel and Palestine, shared the trauma their own communities experienced on 7 October. Their leaders created a very valuable Lament borne out of costly personal sharing. [See *Comment* December 2023 Statement of Lament, and February 2024 The Groaning Spirit.]

In March's *Comment* we confirmed many Musalaha Groups are holding together, though two board members resigned (community pressures being overwhelming for them) and a few group members left. Significantly the Community Leaders groups held. Such programmes build relationships with 'other' communities which have withstood the fierce community pressures.

- Colleagues in Norway and Denmark have been very active in supporting Musalaha.
- Musalaha UK confirm that the Women of Distinction tour will go ahead – Hiba Allati, and Racheli Pex, a Palestinian and an Israeli respectively will do a short UK tour 9-16 September – and they may even pass through Tring.
- An application to UK Government for funding for relationship building continues to be developed. It would include training 150 UK reconcilers using a group of London Anglican leaders already trained in Musalaha's Reconciliation Curriculum. The scale is of the order of £3m over three years, most of it in the land! A complex application so I ask for your special prayers.
- A downtown Birmingham Academy and a leading public school are relating to Bethlehem Lutheran High School for shared curriculum experiences.



- Tours by US personnel and Norwich churches continue to be planned by 'Boundary Breakers', though at a later date than first intended (<https://www.boundarybreakers.net/#holy-land-encounters>).
- Prayer meetings in Tring are taking up such needs.

The 'other'

May I finish by picking up the 'other' theme for Tring. I'd like to raise some questions for us. In our world where polarisation has become so rapid, so worldwide and so deep, you may consider these are questions to take quite seriously.

- Who are 'others' for you? How do you develop relationships with 'others'? How do we learn such things? Who teaches us today how we relate to 'others'?
- Who were the 'others' for Jesus? How did Jesus develop his relationship with his own 'others'? How did he teach his followers to relate to their 'others'? Can we learn from him how to relate to 'others'?

Jesus had a picture of the likely outcomes of doing what he said to do. It's a golden oldie children's action song: 'The wise man built his house on the rock – and it stood firm in the flood'.

Colin Briant
High Street Baptist Church
colin.briant@hotmail.com
<https://musalaha.org>
<https://www.musalaha.uk>



A musical thanksgiving

On Saturday 20 April, international pianist Alexander Ardakov will give a piano recital in St Martha's Methodist Church, Tring, with an all-Beethoven programme, including the Tempest and the Appassionata Sonatas.

Tickets are £15.00 each and all proceeds are shared between St Martha's and our Extra Mile Fund which is a thanksgiving offering of £10,000 for our church extension. We have already

sponsored a nurse's training in Kenya with the first third of the money raised. We are currently trying to purchase toilets in places where they are needed.

Please order your tickets from me on 01442 822305 or pay on the door (cash only please).

Rosemary Berdinner
St Martha's Methodist Church

Selling used cars as a Christian vocation?



I was very interested to read, in last month's *Comment*, the story of the new head of Tring Park School, Simon Larter-Evans. His suggestion that Revd Huw Bellis might have pursued a career in drama and performance was certainly intriguing although, as he says, there is much theatre in worship.

I was, however, concerned to read Simon's discussion of vocation, and of the doubts that performers have about the value to society of what they do. I am sure that any honest occupation, carried out diligently, can be a Christian vocation. While some of us might be called to be medics, others are equally called to be performers, to be economists, even to be used-car sellers. We read in the Bible that Jesus associated with all sorts of people (e.g. 'tax-collectors and sinners' in Matthew 9:10). The original disciples

were tradesmen – fishermen, carpenters, tent-makers – and yet they managed to set in motion a movement that has swept the world ever since. What matters is not what we do, but whether we show our Christianity in the way that we do it, the way we treat people we encounter and deal with.

It is four centuries since George Herbert wrote the hymn 'Teach me, my God and King' and some of the verses are a bit turgid (we often leave them out these days). But the phrase 'who sweeps a room as for thy laws...' albeit not too catchy is very compelling. People need culture of all kinds to help them to live in understanding. And they really do, at times, need used cars. Helping them to make the right choice is a valid calling.

John Whiteman
Tring Team

Taizé and tea



Something that began as an idea and became a plan has developed into a pattern of four 'Quiet Days' each year. Twenty-six people gathered at St Mary's

Church in Puttenham in January for the third Quiet Day event. This time it was Taizé and Tea.

Linzi and I gave what, I hope, was an interesting and informative account of the formation of the Taizé Community in France, from its inception to the present day, concentrating on what was always a guiding principle of the Taizé community from its start – A Pilgrimage of Trust on Earth.

This became a theme of our reflection on a couple of verses from John's Gospel: 'Thomas said to him, "Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?" Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. If you know me, you will know my Father also. From now on you

do know him and have seen him.'" John 14: 5-7

The Taizé prayer which followed (which included singing Taizé chants, ably and sensitively led by Beth on the keyboard) reflected on the following:

'Lord, we do not know where we are going. Show us the way'; and 'Are we tourists or pilgrims on this journey?'

We then shared a sumptuous tea, followed by prayers with Vespers to end our time together. These two have also become a feature of Quiet Days – eating together and shared common prayer builds up our common life. The quiet days are non-denominational and we hope that people from all Tring churches (or none) will want to come and spend



The Elixir

*Teach me, my God and King,
 In all things thee to see,
 And what I do in any thing,
 To do it as for thee:
 Not rudely, as a beast,
 To runne into an action;
 But still to make thee preposset,
 And give it his perfection.
 A man that looks on glasse,
 On it may stay his eye;
 Or if he pleaseth, through it passe,
 And then the heav'n espie.
 All may of thee partake:
 Nothing can be so mean,
 Which with his tincture (for thy sake)
 Will not grow bright and clean.
 A servant with this clause
 Makes drudgerie divine:
 Who sweeps a room, as for thy laws,
 Makes that and th' action fine.
 This is the famous stone
 That turneth all to gold:
 For that which God doth touch and own
 Cannot for lesse be told.*

George Herbert

time together in fellowship, reflection and prayer.

The next Quiet Day at Puttenham will be on Saturday 27 April and will be led by Revd Deborah Snowball, a priest in our diocese. It will commence at 10.00am and end with tea and farewells at 3.30pm. She has entitled her day, perhaps a bit provocatively, 'G'day, Mate: Encounters with the Risen Christ.' There will be three sessions through the day, each looking at an encounter with the Risen Christ. Session 1 is titled 'Is it you?' as in the garden Mary encounters the Risen Christ. Session 2 is titled 'Do you see me now?', on the road to Emmaus when the disciples encounter the Risen Christ. Session 3 is titled 'G'day, Mate!', when at a barbecue by the beach the disciples encounter the Risen Christ. As well as the three formal sessions and Holy Communion, the day will allow space for personal encounter and exploration. Booking details will be in the Tring Team and on posters for others for what will, I am sure, be a valuable day in our Quiet Day programme.

Tim James
St Peter & St Paul

An inspiring DENS story

Oscar was homeless for several years, living on the streets of Dacorum. An immigrant to the country, he had experienced a family breakdown, was facing social exclusion and did not have the confidence to reach out for support to improve his living conditions.

Oscar first attended the DENS Day Centre with a friend, and soon started visiting daily for amenities like showers, laundry and lunch. He was guarded at first, but through continuous support and a positive social environment, Oscar began to build trust with staff.

His Key Worker said: 'Oscar started coming in and shaking my hand, whereas before he would blank me. We would then talk about his home country and family. He opened up about things he probably had never spoken to others about.'

Oscar received support with important personal documents and registering for Universal Credit. Staff were then able to refer him to a hostel

outside the borough, so he could have a fresh start away from problematic relationships.

Oscar felt apprehensive about this due to being street homeless for so long. His Key Worker set up a telephone meeting with the hostel's staff, and helped to alleviate any concerns Oscar had.

Around this time, Oscar was also supported with registering at a GP. He found using technology a challenge, so after his Key Worker explained to the practice how this could be a barrier to him accessing care, he was allowed to book his appointments over the telephone instead of online.

After Oscar had moved into the hostel, he continued to receive support at the Day Centre for a few weeks with



“OSCAR OPENED UP ABOUT THINGS HE PROBABLY HAD NEVER SPOKEN TO OTHERS ABOUT.”

searching for employment.

Now, Oscar has settled in his new hometown, and has progressed from the hostel to living in supported, semi-independent accommodation. He is also in full-time employment.

While Oscar no longer needs the support of the Day Centre, he has phoned up the service several times to say thank you for the help they gave him.

Oscar's name and image have been changed to protect his anonymity. This story and more can be found on the DENS website: www.dens.org.uk

What is a church?



In the English Bible the word 'church' is translated from the Greek *ekklesia*. *Ekklesia* is a compound of *kaleo* – to call and *ek* – out. So the word means 'the called-out ones'

or 'those who are called out'. The English word 'church' is derived from the Greek *kuriakon* (via the proto-Germanic *kerika*) which translates as 'dedicated to the Lord' or 'belonging to the Lord'. Paul used the word *ekklesia* to describe the early church but it was already in use in Greece to describe the citizen assemblies called together to address the concerns of their city. In the Greek translation of the Old Testament, it is used to describe Israel's sacred assemblies called for worship. So, by these definitions we could say a church *kuriakon* is a place dedicated to the Lord for those who have been called out to be in it *ekklesia*, and also the name for those who are called to worship in an assembly *ekklesia*.

In Northern England and Scotland, a church was (and still is in Scotland) called a kirk. This is linked to the Galic *keel*

or *cell*, derived from the Latin *cella*, or small room. In modern Galic *keel* means church. The derivation comes from the original small cells of the monks who brought Christianity to Ireland.

So, I think there are two linked concepts of the word church. It is the assembly of a group of Christians, and also the place where they assemble. So, one could speak of the church in North Korea as those Christians who worship secretly without any church building to worship in. We could also speak about an abandoned church which has no one to worship in it. Personally, I like to use church with a small c for the building and Church with a capital C for the people. (But the Editor of *Comment* doesn't!)

We have six churches in Tring, each home to a specific church worshipping in a specific way. There have also been churches in Tring without a specific church to worship in such as the Tring Community Church. Community churches originally grew up in settlements too small to have denominational churches and worshipped in halls or houses. Nowadays many Community churches are a church building used by various denominations. The Church of Christ the Cornerstone in central Milton Keynes is shared by the

Church of England, the Baptist Union, the Methodist Church, the Roman Catholic Church and the United Reformed Church. A church for many churches!

As I have thought about this, I realise that I know people who are in a church, but have no church. I think of God's Squad – a motorcycling group of Christians where my son-in-law is a member. They are most certainly a church, and an international church too. Their church is the open air. I also know people who worship in different churches without ever wanting to become a member of a church.

Personally, I feel that both are very important. I worship at High Street Baptist Church as a member of the local Baptist Church community. I worship at Turvey Abbey as a member of the Roman Catholic Church monastic community. I find both buildings help me to worship and both communities, or churches, help me to develop as a Christian.

I think it is helpful to think about how we use the two meanings of church – people and building – and how this impacts our personal faith.

John Allan
High Street Baptist Church

Christian meditation changed my life



This April will mark the 10th anniversary of my first encounter with the practice of Christian meditation. I remember very clearly how it came about. The occasion was

a Retreat held by the Redemptorist Priests at Corpus Christi Church during Lent. Part of the evening involved group discussions on prayer. I remember saying in the group I was part of that I did not know how to pray. By that, I meant I knew all the words and many prayers, but I felt they had become a ritual rather than words that came from my heart.

The Holy Spirit undoubtedly was moving that evening because the two people I said this to suggested that I tried Christian meditation. How could it be that of all the discussion groups in the church that night, I was in the only one that had two members of the Christian Meditation Group? I had never heard of the practice before, but as I had been searching for a deeper meaning in my spiritual life, I felt I ought to try it.

I duly went along after Easter to the group meeting held in Corpus Christi. I had been asked to come along earlier than the rest of the participants to obtain more information about the practice. I was welcomed by Malcolm Nobbs, a WCCM leader, who kindly took me through the basic principles.

WCCM stands for the World Community of Christian Meditation. Christian meditation has its origins in the early church when Christians went off into the desert and remote places to feel closer to God. Christian meditation was revived in the 1960s by Fr John Main, and it is now practised throughout the world.

The meditation session in Tring involves three parts. The first part is the greeting of fellow participants, whether face to face or online and the saying of prayers for both personal and collective concerns. The second section is the meditation part which consists of twenty minutes of sitting still and silent, saying a mantra internally. The recommended mantra by the WCCM is 'Maranatha', which in ancient Aramaic means 'Come Lord'.

Focusing on the mantra and stressing each syllable to oneself helps to still the mind. Someone likened our thoughts to monkeys in a tree swinging from branch to branch. I can certainly relate to that analogy.



I found that the first meditation session was the longest twenty minutes of my life. I am someone who rushes around taking on too much and doing too much. I found doing nothing for twenty minutes incredibly difficult. Malcolm reassured me that it could take six weeks before it felt natural. The key is to find time to practise every day. I am so glad that I persevered with it because I can honestly say Christian meditation has changed my life.

The final part of the group meditation session is watching a talk from a wide range of speakers on aspects of Christianity. We follow the talk with a discussion on elements that we found interesting. This third part is optional, and

some members leave the group session after part 2.

Those more steeped in Christian meditation say that you should not come into the practice with expectations of the benefits you might receive other than to feel closer to our Creator. Certainly, my spiritual life has been greatly enriched, because when I read scripture now, I see, understand, and feel so much more than I ever did before. It is almost as if my Christian faith has been re-awakened.

On a secular front, my husband, close friends, and work colleagues noticed a change in me. After six to eight months of meditation, I was noticeably calmer, even in the most stressful situations. Before meditation, I could react emotionally and immediately if put under stress; now I have more control over how I react to events. Meditation has created space between an action and my reaction to it. I meditate every day, usually in the early evening between finishing work and dinner. Establishing a routine means that time is set aside in my day to meditate.

I smile at the words of the Buddha when asked by his followers what he had gained from meditation. He answered that he had gained nothing but that he had lost a lot!

Our group meditation takes place at Corpus Christi Church in Langdon Street on Thursday evenings, starting at 8.10pm and finishing around 9.45pm. You can come along in person or join on-line via zoom.

If you would like to find out more about Christian Meditation visit WCCM, The World Community for Christian Meditation or please email me at margaret.donnelly@hotmail.co.uk. It has made such a positive difference in my life; it may be able to do the same in yours.

Margaret Donnelly
Corpus Christi Church

TRING CHARITIES

(Registered Charity No 207805)

ALMSHOUSES IN TRING

From time to time, one and two-bedroom bungalows become available to let, for people who currently live in Aldbury, Long Marston, Marsworth, Pitstone, Pottenham, Tring, Wigginton or Wilstone.

Applicants, one of whom must be aged 55 or over, must not own their own home or have significant savings.

Applicants will be asked to supply personal financial information to prove their beneficial status.

The average weekly maintenance contribution (equivalent to "rent" for housing benefit purposes) is £107 for a one bedroom property and £126 for a two bedroom property.

If you would like to be considered for the Waiting List, please telephone Elaine Winter, Secretary to the Trustees, on **01442 827913** (weekday office hours only), for an application form or email info@tringcharities.co.uk

Everyone welcome!



Fun for all the family in the heritage heart of Tring

Tring is growing; vibrant with young adults and new families all drawn here by its unique character and our unspoilt country town environment. Saturday 11 May is the day we hold our annual Family Fun Day in the church and churchyard at the very heart of Tring. It's a day when everyone is welcome and there's a fun-packed programme for all to enjoy. So, whether you're a regular or a newcomer – do save the date and make sure you join in the fun!

Who we are and what we DO!

For the last thirty-five years, FOTCH (the Friends Of Tring Church Heritage) has had a fairly high profile in our town. It has been well regarded for the quality of its social events and entertaining productions and attracted a much wider audience than those who simply used the church as a place of worship. Since the lockdown years that profile has faded somewhat as we have been unable to hold as many events. Few people outside the membership group either really know or care what 'FOTCH' is or does; yet our long-term mission concerns everyone in Tring. We are committed to preserving the wonderful heritage church building and splendid churchyard as an asset to be used and enjoyed by every person in Tring.

Toys and books to a good home

Do you have unwanted or unneeded toys taking up space?
Would you like to offer them a new home?
We need donations of children's toys and games for our Children's Toy Stall and books for all ages for our new Book Stall at the

Tring Family Fun Day
11 MAY 11.00am – 3.00pm
St Peter & St Paul's Church

Please contact Hayley Abel at richard.hayley@btinternet.com or 01442 825723 to donate these items. Hayley can arrange local collection of donations if needed.

Where we are going

The town of Tring has grown and developed from how it was thirty-five years ago. It is a thriving town with a vibrant restaurant and social scene and already has a considerable number of new houses and new residents. It has now become much more family-oriented and has a very much more youthful vibe.

It is sadly the case that the overall relevance of places of worship has decreased in our society as a whole. The times have certainly been 'a-changing' – to quote Bob Dylan.

The heritage heart of Tring

What has not changed over this period is the way in which the heart of Tring – the historic church of St Peter & St Paul in the green centre of the community – continues to be valued and appreciated by all our residents. Not only is it still a vital centre of worship for the Anglican community, but it is also increasingly a place where schools and associations meet and major cultural events are held.

It is the strategy of FOTCH to ensure that we do everything possible to increase the perceived relevance and value of the building for every member of our community.

Getting the whole town together

One of the most significant occasions in the annual calendar of Tring is the Family Fun Day which has traditionally been held on the second Saturday in May in the church and churchyard. It is a great draw. It's free to enter and everyone is welcome. In 2024 we are planning to try to make this event even more popular and more welcoming. The poster on the back cover indicates that Tring Family Fun Day is going to be bigger and better than ever. As well as attractions such as the ever-more popular zipwire ride for teddies, we will be having an increased number of activities for all ages.

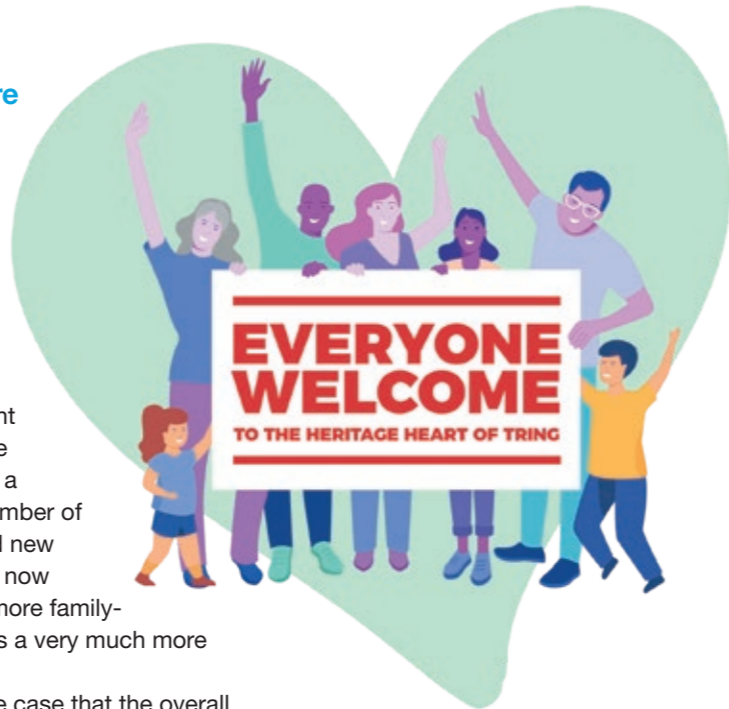
We will also have an exhibit explaining how the (very costly) renovation of

the groundworks and drainage in the churchyard has been essential to keep the building standing and safe. Communicating what we do with the money that we raise is very important. Making every occasion that we organise inclusive and welcoming and fun for all is even more vital.

A great event with something for everyone

Happily, we have a great team making it all happen. Now that Maria Lashley and Andy Hall are co-ordinating the teams for Family Fun Day, we have a very enthusiastic set of people who know exactly what they are doing with their activity. As well as Ben and Phillip Cartwright controlling the set-up arrangements and Vivianne Child co-ordinating the indoor entertainment with Robin Schafer's Tring Music Partnership and the local schools, we have Lottie Lashley dealing with all the social media communication and Andy Hall dealing with all the graphics. We are also blessed with Mal Goodes and the Halton High Ropes team from RAF Halton, Richard Shardlow's Tring Brewery brigade and Aidan Cahill's barbecue buffs all giving us their essential enthusiastic support. We are also planning some extra activities this year to make sure that all generations and every taste are catered for. Watch this space for further details and heartfelt thanks to all those individuals who together make this thing happen.

The following message from Maria, Lottie, Andy and Richard gives you the exciting flavour of what you can expect when you come to Family Fun Day 2024:



they assure you that it will be the 'best ever!'

'Of course you want to come to our Family Fun Day but we want to give you a few extra reasons as to why you should come.

No matter what age you are, the Tring Family Fun Day is for YOU. We have stalls for many ages and activities for everyone to enjoy. Unlike going out in London, our Fun Day will guarantee you a cheaper day out and will mean you don't have to worry about getting buggies and wheelchairs into London. You just have to pop to the centre of our lovely town! The Family Fun Day isn't just close by, it is full of fun and helps us connect with our local community to fundraise for our church.

Which brings us to the next point!

Our church, which is the community hub of Tring, needs your help. The Fun Day raises money for our church and it desperately needs it. Currently we are fundraising for many church repairs. So, this year for the Fun Day we have "upped the ante" and introduced many changes – including changing the name to Tring Family Fun Day. This encapsulates what our event stands for as it involves EVERYONE in Tring. One other major change is a new ex-professional footballer running Beat the Goalie! We've also made a few changes that we are keeping under wraps until the day itself!

Here is some of what to expect from this year's Tring Family Fun Day:

- A delicious candyfloss stall
- A blooming fantastic plant stall
- A wonderful children's toys and games stall
- A tasty cake and preserves stall
- A gorgeous jewellery and bric-a-brac stall
- An amusing bouncy slide
- A footy-fantastic Beat the Goalie game
- An enjoyable tombola and raffle
- An amazing craft stall
- An awesome tower tour
- A sensational programme of musical entertainment
- All the scrummy food and drink you need to fill your day out: a BBQ, brewery and church refreshments
- And finally, as always, our stupendous and totally tremendous Teddy Tower zip wire!

We can't wait to see you there!

If you are reading this and you have some great ideas as to how to make it all better, and want to be involved in any aspect of it, please get in touch

with Maria, Richard or me and your contribution will be warmly welcomed. Donations for stalls would also be greatly appreciated.

As you can see from our Theme Logo for the day (Everyone Welcome!) we want everyone who loves living in Tring to join in and be part of the party! Together we can make it an even better event and make absolutely sure that there is something happening for everyone.

Working together for our long-term future

We all know that Tring is a great place to live, work and bring up a family. We've all heard the saying that once people move here they never want to live anywhere else. We all want to keep it that way for everyone's future and we know that Tring's heritage heart is a vital part of what makes Tring feel special. That's

why our strategy is to make sure that our wonderful heritage asset is used and enjoyed by all kinds of organisations for all manner of events.

As well as ensuring that the fabric is securely preserved and 'fit-for-purpose' we are also committed to keeping the facilities up to scratch and capable of supporting all kinds of events and activities.

Please, please get involved and help us as we evolve together to make sure that Tring's heritage heart remains alive and welcoming for all future generations in Tring.

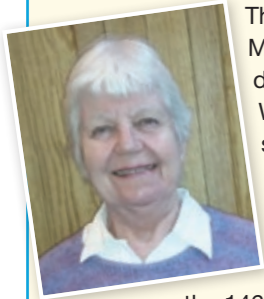
Everyone is included and warmly welcome at Tring Family Fun Day 2024!

Here's a montage of action shots from previous years' events to give you the flavour.

Grahame Senior
FOTCH Honorary President



World Day of Prayer Service 2024



The first Friday in March is always designated for the World Day of Prayer service; the service that makes its way around the world from sunrise in Samoa through the 146 countries taking part, back to the Pacific as the sun sets over American Samoa. This year the service was written by the Christian women of Palestine. It wasn't an easy service to advertise. If we had put the word Palestine on the posters, folk may have jumped to conclusions that we were taking sides and just praying for Gaza. In fact, the service was far from that and was inclusive of all people.

The Christian women had been given a quotation from Ephesians chapter 4, 'I beg you, bear with one another in love' on which to base the service. Services are planned years in advance in order that they can be translated into the languages of all 146 countries, so the current problems were not in the minds of the women writing the service. Despite this, the service was steeped in prayers for peace. We sang, 'God of peace come among us,

rain down your peace on the world. / Make a path for your goodness, fill e'vry heart with your peace.'

The meditation was based on the words 'Put peace into each other's hands, and like a treasure hold it'. We were asked to do more than hope, yearn and pray for peace but to actively do something. How does it feel to offer peace to those who are different from us, those we don't agree with, those we are not sure we can trust? We are reminded that the wounded traveller in the Good Samaritan story accepted help from someone who was very much thought of as 'the other', someone not agreed with or trusted. If we offer peace, it must be with generosity of spirit in openness and trust, and peace offered to us should be accepted with humility. So, we need to work towards peace with those we love and those we find it hard to love because they may have different views.

Every year a song is written for the service by the team preparing it. This year the words were, 'I urge you to be patient with the calling you receive, Bearing one another with love and unity.'

So, we go on, in the strength of God, working for peace amongst

ourselves and our neighbours; offering God's love where we are able to. May these little 'mustard seeds' of love and peace which we sew, grow beyond our imaginings into more than we can ever dream of.

It is always a joy to work with the people from the different churches in Tring, Corpus Christi, High Street Baptists, New Mill Baptists, St Martha's and St Peter & St Paul's, the parish church. The people who come forward to plan the service are supportive and very encouraging. Thank you to everyone involved in the planning, everyone who took part in the service, those who served the refreshments, to Ted for looking after the music and especially to St Peter & St Paul's Church for welcoming us all so warmly.

The collection, which amounted to £224, will be distributed as grants or donations to the many organisations throughout the world which The World Day of Prayer supports.

Next year, we look forward to seeing you on the first Friday in March. The service will be written by the women of the Cook Islands and is likely to be held at New Mill Baptist Chapel. Not sure about the time yet!

Jill Smith, St Peter & St Paul

Lifelong learning



The love of words runs deep in my family (you can tell that from the other contributors to *Comment!*). It is about both the spoken word and the written, and it is about the importance of communication and learning, as well as the beauty they can hold. It might be the poems and hymns that enrich our hearts, or it may be the articles that lead us to new understanding, let alone the spoken word and the value of conversations.

I am writing this on 27 February when the Church of England commemorates George Herbert, the 17th century priest whose use of words in poetry and writing has given so much to many, but this is also a day when the media is full of news about an MP who has used language in a deliberately inflammatory way. So once again, I find myself musing on words and how the pen can be mightier than the sword.

In a Year 9 lesson (where the students are aged 13 and 14), we were discussing helpful and unhelpful things to say to recently bereaved people. What was noticeable was how for some it was

beneficial to be able to say all the very unhelpful comments, and to do so in a safe environment where you were not upsetting people, before going on to consider what are supportive and kind things to say. But even as they did that, we were able to talk about how some people have a dark sense of humour, and with someone you know very well, there are certain phrases that you can say that do work for them, but would not for others.

Some students wanted to put the more emotional elements into a message (WhatsApp, text etc), because they felt that then you did not need to say anything else when you met the person again. And some just did not want to have to deal with it at all as there was too much sadness and emotion involved. We may think that young people live in a world where everything is out in the open and talked about, but it would seem that this only applies to the simple things. Complex emotions are difficult to convey in electronic messages, and without ongoing dialogue and the ability to say what one does not know or understand.

It was so important to talk about the value of a face-to-face conversation, of being able to ask a friend how they are and if they want to talk about things, and taking the lead from their responses. What I had not realised is that some of

the students thought that grief, even for a person very close to you, is a feeling that you would get over, rather than something you would learn to live with. Once again, it was a situation where I had made assumptions because of what I know, rather than finding out what others know.

Some lessons in school are valuable because they will teach you knowledge, others because they will help you get through exams, and some, like these in Life Skills, are because they are part of how we learn to be good humans, to show love and care for each other, and to be able to face emotionally difficult situations. That is lifelong learning, and how to use our words, spoken and written, is part of that.

Psalm 19:14 is a verse that I am sure is familiar to many: 'Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable to you, O Lord, my strength and my redeemer'. Many preachers pray it before a sermon. For me it is a reminder that words are to be used with care, and with forethought, and that God is part of all aspects of our everyday lives. I also find it comforting that it says 'acceptable' and not perfect – we are to be honest with God and to recognise where there needs to be change.

Jane Banister, Tring Team

Do you suffer from 'money illusion'?



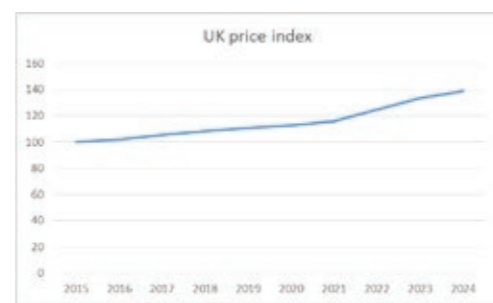
Economists quite frequently assign specific meanings to words and phrases that ordinary people use; some might say it's an attempt to cloak the dark art in a more human light. One such phrase that is or should be topical is 'money illusion'. In normal parlance it probably means the illusion that money and wealth always bring happiness (not that deprivation is the route to it either). The more specific meaning of 'money illusion' was very relevant back in the 1970s and is again now as inflation has surged. The concept was coined by Keynes in the 1930s, as the (mistaken) notion that a fixed number of pounds (Euros, whatever) has a fixed value in terms of what it will buy over time. Over the longer term, all of us know that to be completely untrue ('I used

to buy that loaf of bread for 20p, it's now £1.50'). But we might have been lulled into a false sense of security in money values, by the low (and on occasion negative) inflation of a decade or so ago.

This matters, to be blunt, because it might well colour the way we look at our individual donations to support the church we attend. The chart shows inflation in the UK since 2015, with a cumulative rise of more than 30%.

It means that a monthly donation of £10 (for example) in 2015 would need to be adjusted to £13 to be the same now in terms of value. Of course, the best way to do that is to make a small annual adjustment. Perhaps one might match the increase in one's pay or pension each April or whenever it happens. Otherwise it

Prices have risen by more than 30% since 2015



Source: UK Consumer Price Index from Office for National Statistics

gets to be what feels like an unbridgeable gap. Each of us will decide what is the right level of our support for the work of our church, in relation to our means and to the other calls on our money. We just need to be aware that a constant level of giving, in £s, will be a dwindling amount in real terms.

**John Whiteman
Tring Team**

Plant Sale
Corpus Christi
Church Hall, Tring
Saturday 11th May
12pm to 4pm

Flowers and vegetables locally grown
from seeds or cuttings in peat free
compost and recycled pots.

Proceeds for the upkeep of the
gardens at Corpus Christi

A Piano Recital in Aid of St Martha's Church

Alexander Ardakov

Saturday 20 April 2024 at 7.30pm
St Martha's Church
14 Chapel Street, Tring HP23 6BL
Tel: 01442 822305 E-mail: berdinner@gmail.com

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)

Sonata No. 3 in C major Op. 2 No. 3
Allegro con brio
Allegro
Scherzo: Allegro
Allegro assai

Sonata No. 5 in C minor Op. 10 No. 1
"Little Pathétique"
Allegro molto e con brio
Adagio molto
Prestissimo


Interval

Sonata No. 17 in D minor Op. 31 No. 2 "Tempest"
Largo: Allegro
Allegretto

Sonata No. 23 in F minor Op. 23
"Appassionata"
Allegro assai

Andante con moto
Allegro, ma not troppo

Seven Variations on theme "God Save the King" WoO 78



Born in Samara, Russia, Alexander Ardakov studied under the renowned pianist and professor Vera Gortseva at Moscow State Philharmonia. Upon graduating, he joined the Moscow State Philharmonia as a performer. Alexander won prizes at the Kabalevsky Piano Competition in Russia and the Vosti International Music Competition in Vercelli, Italy. Moving to Britain and Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance, where he has been teaching since 1991, has helped him develop as an international recitalist of exceptional versatility and musical integrity. Alexander has made notable radio recordings for BBC Radio 3 and Classic FM. His extensive discography consists of 20 different CD albums. Among them is a remarkable recording of Rachmaninov's Second Piano Concerto, with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Sir Alexander Gibson. Alexander has given recitals at the Bösendorfer Hall in Vienna, Southbank Centre, Wigmore Hall, St Martin-in-the-Fields and St John's Smith Square in London; Carnegie Hall in New York; Gasteig and Carl-Otto Sael in Munich; Benaroya Hall in Seattle; and Herbst Theatre in San Francisco. He frequently gives masterclasses in the UK and abroad.

Tickets: £15

A new way to look at an old story



Recently, Barry and I had a trip to Dorchester Abbey, Dorchester on Thames near Wallingford. The current Abbey was begun in the 12th century, with enhancements

through to the 14th century. Entering by the south door, you are immediately aware of the large scale of the Abbey. With a long central aisle, there is a smaller north chapel and a wide south chapel, which has a wall running south-north dividing it into large spaces for events and exhibitions.

In the easternmost area there was an exhibition entitled 'Cell', where there was a life-size box 3m x 2m, a reconstruction

of the prison in which Alexei Navalny was sentenced in January 2021 to solitary confinement and hard labour. The outside was covered with portraits of men and women who are prisoners of conscience.

In the western area, we found the sculpture

of 'The Last Supper' by Peter Barnes which had brought us to the Abbey. This sculpture was inspired by Leonardo da Vinci's 1498 painting, the figures following the positions of the apostles gathered around Christ.



The first thing that hits you is the size of the work: 4m long and weighing 450kg, it took five years to make. It has a clay/cement base and a mosaic surface made up of over 50,000 keys from around 600 keyboards. There are details flowing all around the work and quotes from

the Bible, often easy to miss.

Sculptor Peter Barnes said, 'My



aim was to recreate Leonardo da Vinci's painting as an abstract, three-dimensional form; I wanted to keep the detail to a minimum while retaining all the expression and interaction of the characters.'

To show the scale of the piece, you can see Barry looking over Jesus' shoulder! The backs of the figures are adorned with many different Christian symbols. The different key sizes were used to represent a cross, a dove and a fish.

Peter's thoughts were that, during past centuries, paintings were used to communicate Bible passages, so he used modern communication tools to make the viewer think and feel in new ways. It was certainly impressive to stand alongside the life-size characters looking at 20th century items telling the story from over 2,000 years ago.

Barbara Anscombe
St Peter & St Paul

Flight distance



Julia Dale is a poet living in Cambridge who has just published her third volume of poetry 'Flight Distance'. All three volumes have been edited for private publication by my

sister, Rachel Douglas, who first met Julia in India fifteen years ago and was herself a publisher in an earlier life. Where I come in is that I have helped design the cover for the last two volumes; I'm not naturally artistic, but my career as an engineer helped me navigate around the software used to create something striking.

I love her poetry: it's gentle, understated but always thought provoking and often beautiful, so I feel privileged to be able to assist on the creation of a work of art. 'Flight distance' is centred around the theme of our tortured relationship with our natural environment. Of course, this is one of the major issues of our time – arguably the most important one – and I thought others in Tring might like to read Julia's poems. A few copies of the book will be available for sale at St Peter & St Paul's Church, with an invitation to donate £10.00 a copy to cover printing costs



and a contribution to the environmental charity A Rocha. Perhaps Kate Banister might be persuaded to choose one of the poems for her regular 'Poem of the month' column for a future issue of *Comment*?

To give you a flavour of the book, here is Julia's introduction and one of the poems.

'Flight Distance' is a term referring to the space between two animals, birds or other creatures, that gives time for either to escape the other if needed. I came across it in Edward T. Hall's book 'The Hidden Dimension' (Bodley Head, 1966). These days it often feels as if, as a species, we humans have so comprehensively overridden these spaces that swathes of the natural world have flown off into extinction, while we ourselves have been both alienated from nature and overwhelmed by it in the form

Murmuration

*I wasn't too keen
as they clowned on the washing-line,
scoffing from feeders,
off-putting the little birds –
then they were gone
with their dark iridescence,
their speckles of glitter,
their insolent whistles.
I missed them. But look –
up there, on the pylon-wires,
gathered, they chatter,
fall silent, then whoosh
in a flight that's a dance that's a wave
that turns and unfolds and refolds,
up, round, and away ...*

of floods, pandemics and other extreme events. Nonetheless, here we still are, for now, still part of it all, uneasily balancing, interacting and intervening – sometimes disastrously, though not always, and now more than ever trying to remedy, to learn, to coexist. These poems explore the spaces and my experience of them, both recollected and imagined. I hope none of them indulge in mere anthropomorphism; that they neither despair nor presume. The earliest was written in the 1970s, the latest, just this year, and they touch on other distances, e.g. between seasons or times of life; they're an offering of grief and joy, of gratitude.

Edmund Booth
St Peter & St Paul

News from Tring bell tower

On 9 March we hosted The Ladies Guild of Change Ringers in the bell tower at St Peter & St Paul's. There was a friendly, welcoming atmosphere in the company of fifteen cheerful ladies and three gentlemen, including our own Tower Captain.

Watching and listening to these practised ringers, I was impressed again by the mesmeric quality of the sound of all eight bells interweaving with each other. Plain hunt on seven sounded as mellifluous as can be expected from guild ringers; and we all heard how beautiful a sound can be achieved with all the bells working together. I talked to one lady from the Easters group who called herself a beginner, but she had been ringing for four years; truly there is much to learn!

This session reminded me again of how sociable and pleasant an indoor activity bell ringing is, and a communal exercise that many prefer to the gym.

We are always looking for new ringers, and surely the sound of joyful bells ringing out over the town will resonate with passersby who will be inspired to come in and give bell ringing a try!

In the afternoon of Saturday 11 May, at the Tring Family Fun Day, we are opening up the tower for anyone to 'have a go'! Come and see! Otherwise you will find us on all Tuesday evenings at 7.30pm in the bell tower. The door is open; do come in, please!

Johanna Morgan,
Tring bell tower



Do you have a story to tell about D Day?



The date 6 June 2024 marks the 80th anniversary of D Day in 1944 and, rest assured, we will see a lot of commemoration of the day, both locally and globally.

If you take a look at Gov.uk you will find more information, and the opening paragraph tells us that in 2024 the UK will commemorate the 80th anniversary of the Normandy Landings on 6 June 1944 with a series of major commemorations and events across the UK and in France. Also known as D-Day, the historic operation saw the Allied Forces mount a large-scale invasion of Nazi-occupied France that ultimately tipped the course of the Second World War in the Allies' favour. Meanwhile, back in Tring, there are a



couple of opportunities for you to share family wartime stories.

On Thursday 6 June at 11.00am, there will be a service of commemoration at St Peter & St Paul. With the same ethos as previous

wartime anniversaries, this will be a service that is family friendly, inclusive and welcoming and will feature the Town Crier's proclamation written especially for the day. After the service there will be refreshments served and the chance to look at a display of local wartime family stories. We hope that the bells will 'ring for peace' before the service.

There will be some work with local schools around sharing the Royal British Legion's D-Day 80 materials and there is a plan

to invite some younger school students to interview a veteran or someone that can share what life was like during the war years. If you fit the bill and would like to be included, please email lucy@tringtogether.org.uk.

You can also share your family stories in *Comment*, of course! Have you heard the one about the fire watcher on the roof, being supplied with local beer from the Rose and Crown? Or the one about a 'love at first sight couple' who met at a dance in the Victoria Hall in 1944? Do you have a story to share about any of the WW2 names on the War Memorial? Watch this space for more details in future editions.

If you have any thoughts about how Tring could commemorate the anniversary, please get in touch via vivianne@tringtogether.org.uk.

Thank you to Mike Bass for permission to use his photographs!

Vivianne Child
Tring Together



Working Together for Tring



Protecting and celebrating creation through sustainable flowers



Flowers are a very precious part of creation. Culturally they have many meanings, are an important part of our life events like weddings and funerals.

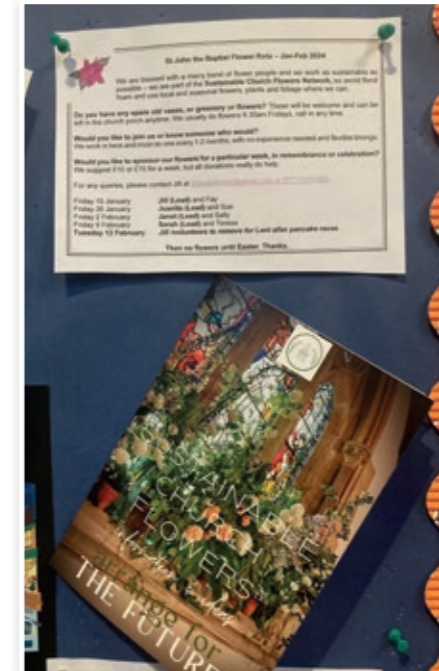
We give them to say thank you, sorry, to express love and to cheer others and ourselves. But have you ever considered the impact they may have on people and our planet?

For me, flowers is a topic where my home, spiritual and work life come together. For those who don't know me, I'm a regular at St John's in Aldbury, with my husband Neil and two sons, Seth and Frank. We live in the village and about nine years ago I took on the organising of the flower rota there, and am blessed with a wonderful team. In my work life, I am a sociologist and lecturer at the University of Surrey, where I focus on workers' rights, sustainable lifestyles and ethical production. As part of this I have been researching the flower industry for nearly two decades, trying to work towards better practices for labourers within the flower sector and its impact on the environment.

What's the problem? Well briefly, in the UK about 90% of our flowers are imported, many flown from East Africa. Issues can include high carbon footprints, use of pesticides, working conditions, and single-use materials in how flowers are sold and arranged. To read more just search online for my article: Valentine's Day: five ways to ensure your flowers are ethical.



What can churches do? I believe a great deal; and some are starting to lead the way. Last year I was privileged to join the national committee of Sustainable Church Flowers (SCF), an organisation promoting better use of flowers in churches. Their mission is to promote the use of locally grown, seasonal and natural flowers – without harmful pesticides or bleaching or dying, and without the use of floral foam in displays. They provide a wealth of resources to skill arrangers in traditional ways of reusing materials for structuring displays and the simplicity of vases too. I'm proud to say Aldbury have been foam free and regularly using local flowers and foliage when available for over a year. Why not join us?



Is it just churches? No! Please think about these issues for all your flower buying. The Royal Horticultural Association have now banned floral foam in their shows and many florists are also making this move. See the resources below for ideas of where to source and how to spread the word. Flowers really are such a beautiful part of creation, what better way to celebrate and worship than to do so making sure we are protecting rather than exploiting our precious planet.

Further information and resources: if you are involved in organising your church flowers or would like to know more, please contact me on j.timms@surrey.ac.uk or see the resources right. Do please share them too! Thank you.



Sustainable Church Flowers (SCF): for advice and how-to videos, a sheet to give people having events in your church, as well as a parish pledge or motion (this will be presented to Tring Parish in March), <https://suschurchflowers.com>

Sustainable Floristry Network (SFN): for free resources on sustainable flowers, including video on floral foam and blogs, such as on sustainable wedding flowers. It's an organisation I've worked with on the first international course on sustainability for florists. <https://www.sustainablefloristry.org>

Flowers from the Farm (FFtF): network of UK growers/florist providing seasonal flowers, with postcode search and resources, <https://www.flowersfromthefarm.co.uk>

The Sustainable Cut-Flowers Project: site drawing together our research on the flower industry and resources on improving practices throughout the supply chain, <https://sustainableflowers.coventry.domains>

Eco Churches: with guide to church flowers and sustainability, as well as case studies for churches working towards improving their impact, <https://ecochurch.arocha.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/Church-flowers-and-sustainability.pdf>

Jill Timms
St John the Baptist, Aldbury

Turning loss into something good



It was one of those things for which I will be forever grateful, a lunchtime conversation whereby we unexpectedly found a profoundly moving link and then formulated a plan: it has been a moving highlight of things recently at Tring Park.

Clare, our Assistant Wardrobe Mistress, takes on the story.

'Our daughter Olive was born on the 7 June 2014 around midday at North Middlesex Hospital. It took us by surprise that she had been born with a heart defect and after some investigations she was transferred to Great Ormond Street Hospital (GOSH) to receive specialist cardiac care and – hopefully – lifesaving surgery.



'On arrival at Great Ormond Street, she had lots of specialist tests where it was discovered she had some very rare heart defects and it was decided to try to let her grow a bit to make the surgery she would need a bit easier. We spent three weeks on Bear Ward which is the cardiac ward at

GOSH and tried to get our beautiful brave baby to grow – which would prove to be quite tricky! In the end the team decided that they would have to go ahead and operate as Olive was deteriorating. She had open heart surgery to try to fix her many issues. They thought they had been successful until the last minutes of surgery, where it was realised that she was bleeding into her lungs. She was put onto an ECMO machine which bypasses the heart and lungs, giving life support. She spent a week on Flamingo Ward, which is for cardiac intensive care, and where the doctors hoped that her lungs might recover and then they could work on another way to fix her heart.

'Sadly, there was no improvement to her damaged lungs. Some of her other organs began to fail and she had no brain function. We had to make the decision to turn off life support. She had really suffered in the last week of her life and, although we didn't want to lose her, we also didn't want her to suffer any longer. She died in our arms on 22 July 2014.

'Although we didn't get the outcome



we had hoped for at Great Ormond Street, we experienced what an amazing place it is and how many children are helped there. The nurses who cared for Olive particularly in her last week were quite incredible! We wanted to do what we could to raise money to help other families and to honour Olive's memory. We set up The Olive Martin Brighter Future Fund in her memory and have raised £40,000 so far with the help of friends and family.

'It was so lovely to meet Sarah and hear about how her husband Alex had worked in cardiology at Great Ormond Street. I told her about our fundraising and how it helped us try to turn our terrible loss into something positive.

'£236 was raised and it helped us go into half-term with more joy in our hearts as it was an uplifting event on Valentine's Day, hence the fabulous cakes. The Tring Park Staff Family are quite something.'

Sarah Bell & Clare Martin
Tring Park School

Jane Ducklin
OSTEOPATH

Professional and effective relief of back pain, postural problems and muscle and joint pain

18 Christchurch Road, Tring HP23 4EE
Tel: 01442 890073 Mob: 07973 188420

Highly qualified and registered with the General Osteopathic Council

Osteopathic Care for all the Family
Serving Tring since 1995

GCSE & A Level Tutoring
Biology, Chemistry, Physics

Zoey Child

Recent Cambridge Science graduate, available for face-to-face tutoring in Tring.

Email: imperialoctopus@gmail.com
Phone: 07462 551560

Crossword

1		2		3		4		5		6
							7			
8										
								9		
10				11						
			12							
13						14				
							15			
		16						17		18
19						20				
				21						
22										
					23					

ACROSS

1. eg: Organist (8)
7. Picture (5)
8. Capital of Israel (9)
9. But (3)
10. Burst out in anger (4)
11. To buy back (6)
13. Fully grown (6)
14. Tree rot (6)
16. Badge (6)
17. Loud noise (4)
19. Transport for Jesus (3)
21. Old and New (9)
22. Depart (5)
23. eg: Wisteria, Ivy (8)

DOWN

1. More important (5)
2. Day of giving, prior to Lent (6,7)
3. Actors in a play (4)
4. Supporters (6)
5. First to see Jesus after resurrection (4,9)
6. Priests (7)
7. Driving force (7)
12. Generous 'Thank You' (7)
13. ' ' right or wrong' (7)
15. Boat or ship (7)
18. 'Fling wide the ' '(5)
20. Serene (4)

Answers page 30

Our Charity Focus for March & April 2024

Working for a World where everyone can lead a life free from Poverty

PLEASE SPONSOR RICHARD ABEL RUNNING THE LONDON MARATHON

During Lent & Easter 2024 we are focusing on Christian Aid supporting those in need in over 100 countries around the globe. Wherever there is a crisis, from Afghanistan to Malawi, Christian Aid will be there.

- **Climate change is happening – the effects are mounting up**
- **Christian Aid supports communities in the fight against this dangerous combination**
- **Join in the Lent Lunches (see date announcements) every week throughout Lent**
- **Support Christian Aid where it matters most; full details and resources from www.christianaid.org.uk**

Real people. Real change. 75 years

For further information on how you can help contact Reverend Jane Banister on 01442 822 170 or email: jane@tringteamparish.org.uk

Ding, dong merrily...



TRingers are a small group of people who meet once a week to play the church handbells. There are a dozen handbells on which the group plays a wide

variety of music – folk songs, popular classical tunes, traditional airs and Christmas carols. Each player plays just two bells and only has to count regularly up to four beats in a bar. The music is even written out as numbers to make it more straightforward to follow, although each note is only played by one player, so everyone is a soloist in a sense.

Tune ringing became popular in the 1700s when the more musical tower bell

ringers discovered that there were far fewer limitations to ringing handbells than ringing swinging tower bells. By the middle of the 19th century, tune ringing had reached its heyday, so we are following a long tradition.

The TRingers were started more than ten years ago by Margaret Gittins and we are much indebted to her for arranging all the music as well as composing a theme tune for the group. We originally practised in the Emmie Hobbs room, but during the Covid-19 pandemic, we needed to spread out more and we moved down to play in the nave which makes us feel



even more a part of the life of the church.

As the group plays for fun, it gives us pleasure to give occasional performances for local groups and care homes. Often we'll play songs that our audience can sing along to and sometimes we'll invite people to come and have a go with the bells themselves.

We welcome new members to the group and if anybody wants to find out more, then please call in to St Peter & St Paul's Church on any Monday morning between 9.30 – 10.30. We all started as beginners, so we are happy to teach others to enjoy handbell ringing.

After all, what better way to start the week can there be than making music with friends in the splendid setting of our parish church in Tring.

Elaine Schafer
St Peter & St Paul



Piano & more series

An hour of music on Sunday afternoons

Three late romantic classics

Elgar: Serenade for strings

Arensky: Variations on a theme by Tchaikovsky

Grieg: Holberg suite

String players of the

Chiltern Sinfonietta

Conductor: David Moore

Leader: Lesley Pearce

Sunday 14th April
at 3pm

followed by tea and refreshments

Tring Parish Church HP23 5AE

For further details see:

piano-and-more.org.uk
or Google "Piano and more, Tring"



Mega Stick Sunday

21st April

Walk, run, cycle, amble or scoot round Tring Parish to raise money for Christian Aid.

You can join a group leaving Tring Church at 9.30am, or a group from Aldbury, or a group from Wilstone to Tring in the afternoon.



Please take part and/or sponsor a group of walkers and all come to the celebratory BBQ at 5pm in Tring Churchyard

To find out more or to join a group contact Rev Jane Banister jane@tringteamparish.org.uk or 01442 822170

The cost of living in a Christian country



There has been a lot of news recently about MPs being given greater security because of the threats of violence to them. Readers of *Comment*

will know of Caroline Ellwood, a regular contributor. Her son, Tobias, is one of the MPs whose house has been besieged by protestors. It is certainly an uncomfortable time.

As well as pressure on our politicians, there is an unacceptable rise in both anti-Semitism and Islamophobia. Some of this is fuelled by far-right extremists who shout loudly about the need to preserve England as a Christian country. Anyone who has done the government's 'Prevent' anti-terrorism training knows that the threat raised by far-right extremism is as prevalent as any perceived threat about Islamic terrorism. What a world!

This has got me thinking, though, about what it means to be a Christian country. Are those of us who are church goers prepared to pay for it? Whenever there is a conversation about our parish finances, one of the first questions is 'Why do we have to give so much to the Diocese in parish share?'. Most of that money comes back to us in ministry, pensions, housing and diocesan support of training, safeguarding and legal on advice on buildings. The remainder, the 'common share', I view as us paying towards maintaining a

national church which plays a part in shaping the very fabric of our society. Some of this is done through the wide range of chaplains which the Church of England provides in schools, universities, prisons and hospitals and many other places.

The Tring Team Chaplaincy at Tring School is defined as being: Liturgical: developing the collective worship of the school in a way which is appropriate for a comprehensive school and which engages teenagers; Incarnational: to provide a Christian presence within the school and to get alongside the students and staff where they are; Pastoral: to respond to the pastoral needs of all at the school; Prophetic: to be a counter-cultural voice and to enable the school to be confident with its distinctive Christian ethos; Spiritual: to encourage the spiritual development of the whole school community. We work within the structures of the school and are sensitive to the concerns of non-believers as we seek to build a church within the school. To me, this is what it is to be a Christian country.

Chaplains in the armed forces help those who fight on our behalf deal with the morality of a 'Just War' and are valued voices as the military wrestle with what is right (often in very difficult moral situations). In hospitals they can help with those struggling to make life and death decisions. All prisons must have a chaplain and it seems vital as we address questions of crime and rehabilitation. Every single Anglican chaplain will have been trained through

the Church of England and they will have at the very least served a curate in a parish funded by the common fund. A friend who trained with me did three years at theological college and three-and-a-half years as a curate – all centrally funded. He then did Royal Navy and now Prison Chaplaincy, both paid for by the tax payer, but the first six and a half years were funded by the Parish Share.

In our parish, we pay for the chaplaincy ourselves (through the development we did in New Mill). Elsewhere hospitals and prisons pay for their chaplains, but they are not produced for free. We should be pleased to be funding things like this through our contributions to the Team Scheme.

If we want a genuinely Christian country which has mature political debates, and is inclusive of all faiths and none, we should champion the work of chaplains who enable worship to happen, who care for those in various institutions, but above all, who help shape the fabric of our society by being the moral compass of our organisations – and by living and working within them, are able to help shape them.

Those of us who are church goers should be pleased to pay for this and should certainly not cede what being a Christian country is to extremists who would not recognise a Christian value if it was staring them in the face.

Huw Bellis
Tring Team

Twenty years ago



April marks for me the last time I saw my dad and March marked the last time I saw my mum. They died seven weeks apart twenty years ago exactly.

Having waited longer than most to have a child, I loved celebrating Mother's Day at home with my various sons as they were born. But in 2004, I felt I wanted to spend it with my mother who was not particularly old, but was frail and lived a two-hour drive away. The six of us made the journey to Poole in Dorset and I cooked for us all

and made a special day for my mother instead. My mother, who probably had dementia, though we didn't know it at the time, was different that day and was more the mum I had remembered from childhood than the person she had become in recent years. We talked as we had not for many years and she let me brush her hair; each of my children remembered that day as being quite different for them with their nanny. By the time we had driven home, she had had a stroke: she never regained consciousness. Afterwards I was able to remember that last day with her as a good day.

For the next few weeks, my sister and I took it in turns to visit my dad so

he had company every weekend. He was very lost and lonely. Every evening I rang him at the same time to chat on the phone. On the weekend of 16 April, it was our turn to visit and we had a good and happy Saturday together. The next morning, on a beautiful sunny Sunday, we prepared to take him with us to the beach. Around 9.00am, he had a fatal heart attack and, despite the best efforts of the emergency services, he did not recover.

I was very fortunate: I was able to be with both my parents for that last time and to enjoy being with each of them just before the end.

Annette Reynolds
St Peter & St Paul

The start of a Christian life



I had just finished reading about the life and ministry of Charles Simeon when the subject of 'the new birth' was raised by Huw in the February edition of *Comment*.

Revd Simeon was ordained to serve on 26 May 1782 at St Edward's Church in Cambridge. He began with six weeks during the minister's absence when he had complete care of the congregation as well as the responsibility of preaching and gave a series on the Ten Commandments. His preaching began to fill the church, something unknown for the best part of a century. He eventually became the vicar of Holy Trinity Church in the same town. For some time, he faced the opposition of the congregation who would have preferred their curate to take charge. In time and with patience he overcame their hostility with pastoral visiting and concern for all his parishioners.

When Simeon started to preach on the subject of the new birth, it immediately started to have an impact on all his congregation who had never encountered this before. They had never experienced anything other than the rather dull expositions of previous preachers. The church filled to overflowing with the congregation rejoicing in their new understanding of how one can enter the Kingdom of God and be saved. Simeon was invited to preach in many other places and the same result occurred – ordinary churchgoers who regarded church attendance as an obligation were transformed by his continual preaching based on John chapter 3 when Jesus explained to a learned Pharisee seeking the truth that 'unless a man is born again, he cannot enter the Kingdom of God.' These teachings made a great impact on the crowds who came to hear him. Religion for them had turned from a formal system to a spiritual renewal which brought new life, a spiritually-moving understanding of what the basic belief of the Christian faith means to an individual. The joy that brought to thousands in the city meant a complete transformation of church life and changes in their way of life for many.

After such evidence of the impact his teaching had caused, the higher church authorities began to be concerned and eventually closed the door to his

preaching in the established church. He then began to preach anywhere – in churches who would accept him, in university colleges and, very often, in the open air. Wherever he went crowds would swarm to hear him and responded to his message – always the same, 'you must be born again'.

He was invited to preach at many places around the country including London. Being banned from churches, he found places outdoors where thousands would flock to hear him. He was following the example of John Wesley who had the same outlook and experiences.

What do I think is meant by these unusual words: to take them literally as the Pharisee, Nicodemus, did was, of course, absurd. I think we have to start by accepting that each person born as a physical human being is endowed with all the capability to live in a physical world through the senses etc. When God created man he made him in his image. God is Spirit and man was given a spiritual life. Therefore, he was able to understand and enjoy both the physical world and a spiritual relationship with his maker. We all know this was broken when he disobeyed God and sin entered the world. As a result, his physical life would not last as the effects of sin took hold and death would result at some time. We see the terrible effects of sin in the world through all history and certainly in the days we ourselves live.

But what happened to him spiritually and in his relationship with God? He lost this and became 'spiritually dead'. God became distant, seemingly non-existent, which is why, all through history, and certainly today, some have no experience of God in their lives and do not want it. They live their lives physically for good or bad, but all of us from birth are afflicted with the 'sin' problem. We live our lives with 'self' as the main criterion for every situation.

But God who made man to enjoy the spiritual, as well as the physical, wanted that relationship restored because he loved everyone 'made in his image'. Everyone, although tainted by sin in various ways, still has something of that image in him and showed it in their love and concern for others, particularly the family unit. But he was unable to bring back that relationship with God himself either through 'good works' or religious observances yet, for many, there is a desire deep down to want 'to get right with God' as we were made for him. We are not complete without him.

What was needed was a new birth – a

spiritual life so that we could live a full life in a way which God originally intended and he would be at the centre of our lives. As Jesus put to Nicodemus in John chapter 3, 'What is born of the flesh is flesh' and 'what is born of the spirit is spirit'. This cannot really be understood bodily or intellectually but knowing, by faith, that God is in us, through us and is part of us and therefore when our physical life ceases, our spiritual union with God means we will not be separated from him but be with him for all eternity. We were made for God and to enjoy him for ever.

How can we be 'born again' and so enjoy all that this life has to offer with God with us, guiding us, supplying our physical and spiritual needs?

There are several ways by which a person can enter the Kingdom of God or start the Christian life. They can start by an understanding of God as one who cannot tolerate sin – a Holy God, and of Jesus Christ who was the visible presence of an invisible God who came to this earth to die to take the punishment which God must exact on sin. There must be an acceptance that we all need to have our sins forgiven through the work of Christ. There must be a desire to put God first in one's life, to 'take up the cross' and live for the one who took up his cross. We confess our sins and ask for forgiveness believing that he who promised is faithful and will accept us as his child and that relationship is restored. We are alive spiritually and will live with God for ever when our physical life is ended. We are then what God intended us to be and a new life opens up for us. We are born again not through any merit of our own or through any religious observances but only through the grace of God.

For some this may be a 'one moment' experience as it was with Saul of Tarsus who realised that Jesus was Lord and which changed his life for ever. We have all heard of conversion experiences when someone who has led a godless life is changed in a moment. But, for many, it may be a gradual process with God working over a period of time but will result in a complete acceptance of all the facts about Jesus but also of an inward movement of the heart to know, without doubting, that Jesus is Lord of their life. They will then realise that they should obey the teaching of Jesus in two ways at least. To remember his death on the cross in the institution of the Lord's Supper (or Communion or Breaking of Bread) in which we are warned not to

participate if we do not know Christ in our life as our sin-bearer. Jesus also invited his followers to show that they are genuine in their faith by being baptised – an outward symbol of an inner experience.

How will one know that they are born of God? I believe that there will be several things which may show in one's life at once, or over a period of time. Firstly, a spiritual 'new birth' will mean that the Holy Spirit has entered their life, a counsellor and friend who will be ever present to guide them in the way they should now live. Jesus will live in us and through us to help us live a life acceptable to God. (I would be the first to say that I sometimes fail and therefore am continually aware of the need for ongoing forgiveness). We are not on our own. He is there to teach us. There will be an inward desire, a real thirst, to know more of how to live the Christian life through reading the Bible so that there will be growth. Just as a seed in the earth comes to life and grows and bears fruit so should a 'born again' believer want

to grow and be a blessing to others. The 'fruit of the Spirit which we read of in Galatians chapter 5:22-25 will be evident in the way we 'love our neighbour,' thus obeying that most important of commandments. The whole of life will become more understandable because God is part of everything we do and say and think. It will not be enough just to listen to a sermon once a week but we shall feel a need to read for ourselves, maybe every day and put into practice what we read – with the Holy Spirit's help. Small groups are also very useful as we discuss and ask questions and share problems.

Prayer is so important in the life of a 'born-again' believer as we shall feel the need to talk to our Heavenly Father about anything and everything. Praying at church and with others in a group is helpful, but we need to talk personally and listen to the one who understands us more than we do ourselves. Maybe our prayers have always been rather formal, but when we are born into God's family his fatherhood will take on a

new meaning. We will pray with more understanding of what he has done for us and continually thank him for making it possible to belong to him. Prayer will become increasingly important as we feel God is our friend to whom we can turn at any time of life. We will discover answers though reading or listening to his voice.

For myself, although I asked Jesus into my life as a young boy, it was only through the following years that I really understood and believed more deeply. For me, there was a real desire to pass on to others the 'good news' of how God acted to bring us back into a living relationship with him. God has given us the physical world to richly enjoy. To know spiritual life enhances our love for him because we are truly alive.

There are at least four Bible verses which will help to understand these two words in addition to John 3: 1 Peter 1:23, Ephesians 1:13-14, Ephesians 2:1, 4-5, 2 Corinthians 5:17.

John Young
Akeman Street Baptist Church

The last time



As a teacher of primary-aged children, I know birthdays are very important, and rightly so. Children will sometimes proclaim, 'This is the last time I shall answer the register aged 7', or 'This is my last Maths lesson before I am 8,' and their announcements are not purely to let us all know that their birthday is imminent, but perhaps because they believe things will be different when they are a year older. It's hard to remember all your times tables when you are 7, but by 8, magically, you might know them all. A year is a very long time in a child's eyes, and there is a big difference in what you can do when you are nearly 9, as opposed to what you can do the day after your 8th birthday. I remember expecting to start school on my 4th birthday, as I had always been told I would go to school when I was 4 and being very disappointed that I had to wait until the following Easter.

When the Year Sixes (the oldest children) are ready to move on to secondary school, they (and sometimes staff) start ticking off their 'lasts.' E.g. – the last residential, the last Sports Day, the last class assembly, the last time chicken pie comes up on the

menu, the last homework assignment, etc. One child once remarked that they wished they had known when their last 'normal' day was, as by the end of term, timetables and 'occasional' events have to be fitted in, so a day of regular lessons will probably not have happened for a least a week. Other children agreed, but often, in school, much as in life, things move on, and we never really know when the last time for an everyday event will be. I can't remember the exact day (or possibly year) when either of my children used a bib or a bottle, or the last time I used the pushchair. Some events are noted, for example, when they 'graduated' from having to use a car seat; the last time taking them to school, and the last time we had to pay the day nursery bill.

I could make a long list of things that no longer happen as my children have grown up – e.g. when was the very last time I picked them up? Held their hands? Sat them on my knee? Read their last bedtime story? There are probably numerous 'lasts' which I could dwell on, but instead I have learned to embrace the 'firsts' and the things they do regularly now they are older. Again, these are not all noted, but over time I have noticed that they do their own washing, they enjoy having an alcoholic drink, they understand and can use taxis, and the first time my husband and I went away for a weekend and

could leave them in charge of the dog. In short, yes, I could be wistful that I no longer have small children, but I am enjoying the adults they have become and not looking back. Unlike the child who would have liked to know when the last 'normal' day was, I am glad that I did not know, and that instead I noticed that certain things just no longer happen.

Sometimes we know when it is going to be the last time, such as going to say goodbye to a sick family member or friend or leaving home to live away, and we can prepare. We might be like my pupils, 'This is the last Sunday lunch before I leave for university,' or we may not realise it is the last time until we look back and reflect at a later date.

There are other times when something occurs which forces change, like war, accidents or sudden illness, when we have had no or little time to prepare for change. Would we have we wanted to know when our last 'normal' time was, or are we better accepting the change and making the most of it? My father is nearly 92. He lives some distance away, in Cornwall. At the end of every visit, as he stands on the doorstep and waves us off, I often wonder if this will be the last time. We never really know when the last time will be, and I, for one, definitely prefer not to know.

Gill Kinsey, St Peter & St Paul

Useful contacts

TRING TEAM PARISH

Team Rector (Tring & Puttenham)
 Rev Huw Bellis
 01442 822170 or 07411 483229
 huw@tringteamparish.org.uk
 (Day off Thursday)

School Chaplaincy and Team Vicar
 (Aldbury, Tring School)
 Rev Michelle Grace
 Aldbury Vicarage
 01442 851200
 michelle@tringteamparish.org.uk
 mgrace@tringschool.org
 (Day off Friday)

School Chaplaincy and Team Vicar
 (Tring School, Long Marston, Wilstone)
 Canon Jane Banister
 01442 822170
 jane@tringteamparish.org.uk
 jbanister@tringschool.org

Diocesan Lay Ministers
 Jon Reynolds
 01296 662326
 jonreynolds1386@gmail.com

Grahame Senior
 01442 822770
 gsenior@seniorpartners.co.uk

Mike Watkin
 07715 553556
 mike.watkin@btinternet.com

Parish Co-ordinators
 Vivianne Child
 01442 826092
 vchild@childassociates.co.uk

Parish Advisor
 John Whiteman
 01442 826314
 john@tringteamparish.org.uk

Church Wardens
 Jane Brown (Aldbury)
 01442 851396

Christine Rutter (Puttenham)
 01296 668337

Canon Jane Banister
 (Wilstone)
 01442 822170
 (Day off Thursday)

Judith Weatherill
 (Long Marston)
 jweath76@gmail.com

Tring Team Administration
 Administrator
 Trish Dowden
 admin@tringteamparish.org.uk

Janet Goodyer
 pewsheets@tringteamparish.org.uk

Hall Bookings
 Janet Goodyer
 01442 824929
 jjgoody@ntlworld.com
 tringparishhall@hotmail.com

Hall Secretary
 Barbara Anscombe
 01442 828325
 Bandb33@talktalk.net

Safeguarding
 Jon Reynolds
 07712 134370
 safeguarding@tringteamparish.org.uk

ST MARTHA'S METHODIST CHURCH
Minister
 Rev Rachael Hawkins
 01442 866324
 rachael.hawkins@methodist.org.uk

Senior Steward
 Rosemary Berdinner
 01442 822305

AKEMAN STREET BAPTIST CHURCH
Minister
 Vacancy

Administrator
 Emma Nash
 01442 827881

CORPUS CHRISTI ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH
Parish Priest
 Father Sean Thornton
 seanthornton@rcdow.org.uk

Parish Administrator
 Annabelle Halliday
 01442 823161
 tring@rcdow.org.uk

HIGH STREET BAPTIST CHURCH
Ministers
 Joe Egan 07521 513493
 joe@tringbaptistchurch.co.uk

Ruth Egan 07521 513494
 ruth@tringbaptistchurch.co.uk

Assistant Minister
 Kevin Rogers
 km_rogers@outlook.com

Administration/facilities hire
 admin@tringbaptistchurch.co.uk
 01442 824054

NEW MILL BAPTIST CHURCH
Minister
 Rev Jackie Buie
 07549 432582
 minister@newmillbaptist.org.uk

Church Secretary
 Valerie Carr
 07831 709793
 secretary@newmillbaptist.org.uk



Hall Hire
 Andrew Webber
 07773 148706
 treasurer@newmillbaptist.org.uk

JUSTICE & PEACE GROUP
 affiliated to
 Churches Together in Tring

Secretary
 Michael Demidecki
 07887 980004
 michaeldemidecki@gmail.com
 www.justiceandpeacetring.org

OUR CHURCHES ONLINE
 www.tringteamparish.org.uk
 www.tringchurchmusic.org.uk
 www.stmarthas-tring.org.uk
 www.tringbaptistchurch.co.uk
 www.newmillbaptist.org.uk
 www.akemanstreet.org
 www.berkotring.org.uk

SOCIAL NETWORKING

 Tring Parish
 @revhuw

COMMENT
Editor
 Annette Reynolds
 07968 312161
 comment.magazine@gmail.com

Advertising, Distribution and Treasurer
 Barbara Anscombe
 01442 828325
 bandb33@talktalk.net

Design
 Kev Holt, Ginger Promo

Please contact Barbara Anscombe if you would like to take a subscription to *Comment*: £20.00 for 10 issues each year. The magazine can be posted to you with an additional cost for postage at current rates.

Articles, photos and publicity adverts for the next edition should arrive with the Editor no later than the 1st of the previous month.

COMMENT DEADLINES

- 1 January
- 1 February
- 1 March
- 1 April
- 1 May
- 1 June
- 1 August
- 1 September
- 1 October
- 1 November

NB There is no magazine for January or August

High Street Baptist Church - Tring

Growing in the message and challenge of God



For details about our services, prayer meetings and special events visit our website.

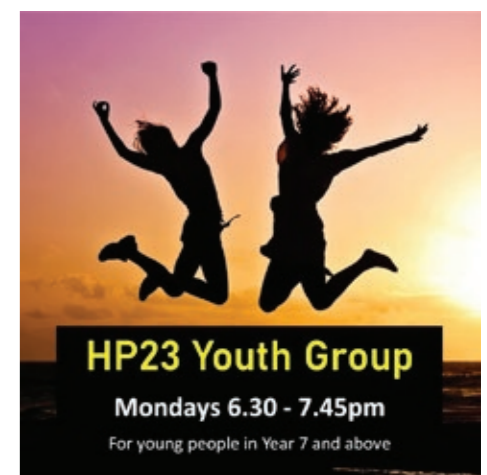
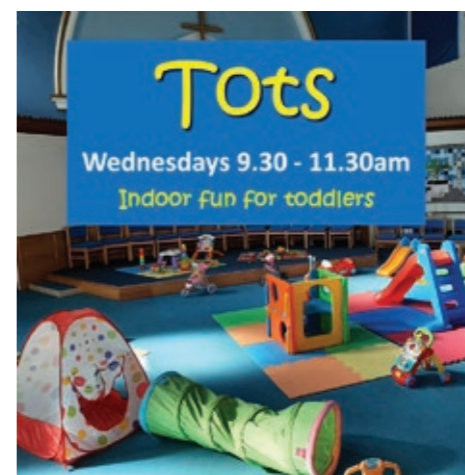


Morning worship

Sundays 10.30am

Join us in-person or online with Junior church

Growing in the message and challenge of God.



Church office

Revd Joe Egan

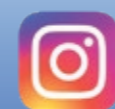
Revd Ruth Egan

admin@tringbaptistchurch.co.uk

07521 513493 or joe@tringbaptistchurch.co.uk

07521 513494 or ruth@tringbaptistchurch.co.uk

www.tringbaptistchurch.co.uk



tringbaptistchurch



High Street Baptist Church

Crossword puzzle answers
 From page 25

ACROSS	DOWN
1. MUSICIAN	1. MAJOR
7. IMAGE	2. SHROVE TUESDAY
8. JERUSALEM	3. CAST
9. YET	4. ALLIES
10. RAVE	5. MARY MAGDALENE
11. REDEEM	6. RECTORS
13. MATURE	7. IMPETUS
14. FUNGUS	12. TRIBUTE
16. EMBLEM	13. MORALLY
17. BANG	15. VESSEL
19. ASS	18. GATES
21. TESTAMENT	20. CALM
22. LEAVE	
23. CLIMBERS	

The Friends of Tring Church Heritage proudly present

2024 Tring Family Fun Day

THE TEDDIES FLY AGAIN!



SATURDAY 11TH MAY
11AM - 3PM

**ST PETER & ST PAUL CHURCH
AND CHURCHYARD**

Teddy 'Wings' Zip Wire • Tower Tours
Bouncy Castle • Tring Brewery Bar
Beat the Goalie • Childrens tombola
Choirs & Musical Entertainment Programme
Lunchtime Barbeque • Big Prize Raffle
All Day Refreshments

OPEN TO EVERYONE - ALL WELCOME

Preserving the heart of Tring for future generations to enjoy

ADMISSION FREE

For further information telephone

Grahame Senior on 01442 822770 or Trish Dowden on 07720 836930

