

COMMENT

THE MAGAZINE OF THE CHURCHES IN TRING



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Editorial



What better way to spend a damp, grey Bank Holiday than to do some life management, a bit of DIY and to clear of bit of space in my home office? It came with a huge dollop of nostalgia.

After working in an office in Tring High Street for fourteen years, the last year and a half has defeated us. One colleague has retired, another found a new job and suddenly the space we were renting was too big and expensive to justify keeping on. But without an office to go to, I needed to make space for at least some of the books and equipment to live in my home.

So it was that I moved furniture, painted walls, and began to open the storage boxes nestled in a corner of my home office to see what I no longer needed... to make that space. I found paper records belonging to

my previous role as a FOTCH trustee that I could pass on, and file copies of *Comment* going back to 2012... I found photographs of extended family members going back 100 years. But I also stopped to reminisce about the fifty years of theatre programmes that I had lovingly kept, annotated with the occasion of the outing: to celebrate my first job offer, birthdays and anniversaries. I found records of Shakespeare plays I could not remember ever seeing. I found that I had seen Judi Dench, Alan Rickman, Zoe Wanamaker, Tom Conti, Timothy Dalton and countless other actors when they were playing bit parts before they were famous. Quite a nostalgic day.

Then came the questions. Why was I keeping them? What purpose do they serve? What would they mean to those who clear them out after I have gone? Would I really notice if they were not there? Thus I decided to throw them away (recycle them) and make space to do my day job from home. I spent a nostalgic few days saying goodbye to a

piece of my past but perhaps it leaves room for the present and maybe even a future.

We all know that stuff doesn't really matter – and watching the news with all those Afghan refugees fleeing with only the clothes they stood up in was a reminder of what does. Perhaps what really matters is the stuff you can't quantify, the people you have loved and lost, the acts of kindness, the support given to others and maybe, in our case, the love given to the children we have fostered who will never remember us but who will have started out knowing they were loved and kept safe and become secure, content individuals because of it.

PS I have kept – for a limited time – a few extra copies of various editions of *Comment*. If you or someone you know would like some because you had an article in it or an obituary or something you would like to keep, please tell me before the end of October and I will see if I have those issues to pass on to you.
The Editor

Safely gathered in



Who would have thought it? It turns out that Jeremy Clarkson is actually quite a good television presenter. Many people got turned off by the later episodes of 'Top Gear' and his propensity for 'shock jock' style comments and he became the figure that the liberal left would love to hate; so it was a surprise when 'Clarkson's Farm' became a much-loved TV show this year. Clarkson continues to play the pantomime fool but there is a real sense of appreciation of farming life and its difficulties. The real star of the show is Clarkson's young farm hand Caleb. Between them they managed to convey something of the story of the people we see driving the combines and bringing the harvest in.

Harvest festivals used to be one of the defining aspects of our communal life. The reason we still have long summer holidays dates from when all of the school children would need to help bring in the harvest. A good harvest could

change the fortunes of a community and a bad harvest could spell disaster. This year has been challenging. We had the long cold and dry spring and then summer never really arrived. It is certainly one of the latest harvests this year.

We are by and large oblivious these days as to whether it has been a good harvest or not, yet we are in a funny time when our supermarket shelves aren't fully stocked. This is unheard of for us millennials. It may be that we don't have enough lorry drivers to get the supply lines working but we do panic when our preferred tonic water isn't available to go with the gin. It might make us more aware when we hear in the news how farms haven't been able to get seasonal fruit pickers,

how pigs are not being able to be sent to slaughter because there are not enough butchers, and how supermarkets are worried that they cannot stockpile for Christmas.

All of these things should make us more aware once again how we need to sing our thankfulness to God at harvest time and also to pray for, and to help those around the world whose lives are massively affected by climate change and ruined harvests.

Huw Bellis, Tring Team

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Harvest celebrations



Late September is the traditional time for a Harvest Service – normally at the time of the Harvest Moon. The Harvest Moon is the first full moon after the autumnal equinox, 20 September

this year.

Nowadays an emphasis seems to be on providing food for the homeless, but this is a very recent trend. Harvest events in the Middle Ages were firmly rooted in pagan harvest ceremonies. They centered around the cutting of the last small patch of corn, which was thought to hold the spirit of the grain which would become homeless. In some areas it was bad luck to make the spirit homeless so scythers were blindfolded so they did not know who had cut the last stems! Maybe this, rather than the cider that followed, was the origin of 'legless'? This last sheaf was sacrificed along with a hare (always found in the corn field) to ensure a good harvest next year. The sheaf of corn and hare eventually became the 'corn dolly' where the spirit of the corn could rest until next year. This corn dolly was hung up in public and carefully kept until the next sowing. In Cornwall it was traditional for either the last sheaf or corn dolly to be kept over winter in the church.

This pagan tradition continued until the first proper Christian thanksgiving harvest service was introduced by the Reverend Hawker, who created a special harvest thanksgiving service at the church in Morwenstow, Cornwall, in 1843.

From the 5th century a special church feast has been held on 29 September, Michaelmas day – Michaelmas is short for Michael's Mass – is one of the 'quarter days'. The other quarter days are Lady day, Midsummer day and Christmas day. Harvest had to be completed by Michaelmas which celebrated St Michael who was considered the protecting archangel for the winter months, warding off evil and protecting until the spring sowing around Lady day. In Scotland the feast had to contain a large cake made from the farm's wheat.



The proper celebration of Michaelmas was forbidden by Henry VIII when he split from Rome and it was then called Harvest Festival. This later became the service of thanksgiving held by the Pilgrim Fathers with the local Indians, following their first successful harvest. This is what is now celebrated in the

United States as Thanksgiving, a festival at least as important as Christmas. It was traditional to eat goose on Michaelmas day – the Pilgrim Fathers had a few geese – but later Americans had to substitute local turkey. Goose Fairs used to be held on Michaelmas day – especially around Nottingham. Geese were driven to the Michaelmas Goose Fair at Nottingham from many miles away in the Lincolnshire fens, and had to have little leather shoes to protect their feet on the long journey.

Michaelmas day was the day Lucifer was supposed to have fallen out of heaven and landed on a blackberry bush – he cursed its prickles and spat on the blackberries. In Medieval Times you could not pick blackberries after Michaelmas day for this reason.

In Ireland Michaelmas day was the day when farmers calculated how many animals they could feed over winter – the rest were sold or killed and salted down to provide meat for winter. It was also the end of the fishing season and the start of the hunting season. So, the Harvest Celebrations always marked a turning point in the agricultural year throughout the British Isles.

Today agriculture is very different with autumn sowings of winter wheat as well as the traditional spring sowings, so Michaelmas day no longer has the same emphasis on the end of the farming year, although winter wheat is not normally sown until after Michaelmas!

A modern harvest verse: 'All is safely gathered in, / cooked and put inside a tin. / Collected, sent to Trussell Trust, / To make us all feel good and just.

John Allan
High Street Baptist Church

The power of touch



I wonder if you saw any England matches during the Euros? Mostly they were a great watch! There was something about each match that I found very moving. Not just the early goals, the tiny number of goals conceded, or even Gareth Southgate's leadership. What moved me each time I watched, was the crowd: The great mass of people, together in that huge stadium, swaying and chanting and singing, the passionate support, the physical presence and togetherness. It moved me.

A crowd often has a single purpose, people gathered for one reason – to support a team, to stage a protest, to celebrate a new year, or to catch a glimpse of a celebrity.

Imagine you're in the crowd that's chasing after Jesus. You've legged it around lake Galilee, kept up with everyone else, determined to get to the front of the crowd and reach Jesus. You've heard that he's been doing amazing things and that if you can just touch the hem of his cloak you'll feel better. You've been feeling pretty ropery lately and so you really want this. You push and shove people out of the way to get to the front – just to touch this person's cloak. And when you get through, and you reach out and grasp onto the edge of his cloak, you feel a sort of sense of power and love and warmth flow through you: the power of touch.

How would you describe the power of touch?

Touch can connect one person to another. It's a sign of shared humanity – the touch of a lover, the cuddle of a baby, the hug of friend, all act as a bridge between two people. The touch of Jesus is the bridge between two worlds, heaven and earth.

When someone gives us an unexpected gift, we might say, it was 'so touching', when we cry at a film, or the roar of a football crowd, we might say, 'it was so moving'. The gap between us has been bridged, and for

a moment we feel deeply connected to another. Human connection is an embodied connection.

The apostle Paul's letter to the Ephesians emphasises the bodily nature of our faith. Ephesians 2:11-22 doesn't mention Jesus' dying on the cross as what wins our salvation, but that 'in his flesh' divisions are broken down, the divided are united. God became flesh and dwelt among us. The incarnation of God in Jesus Christ means that God knows what it's like to inhabit a human body. The word incarnation is related to the Latin 'carno' meaning 'flesh' or 'meat'. The incarnation then is God enfleshed in the person of Jesus. To put it literally, if a bit crassly, Jesus Christ is 'God with meat on'. God taking on flesh gives human nature meaning – our very human being has been made sacred. Our flesh, our bodies, matter. But how?

How do they relate to our spiritual life?

Each week those of us who say the Creed say 'We look for the resurrection of the dead'. It seems that, when the creed was written, the body was considered important – it mattered what happened to it in the future. But some time after the creed was written, the church separated our spirituality from our bodies. This dualism meant body and the spirit were kept apart, and that the body was treated as inferior. We might say that uncomfortable pews or kneelers are part of this. They suggest that attending to our mind and our spiritual life is more important than treating our body with kindness. We might even get to the point where our body is simply a form of transport for our mind and spirit, a burden from which we can't escape. Someone who sits and fidgets is labelled irritable or anxious, when maybe forcing the body to be still causes it to cry out, longing for freedom.

Some traditions do use the body in prayer – making the sign of the cross, or holding up a hand in praise. I was taught to find a posture that is the most comfortable for my body, enabling my body to be part of the prayer, rather than a distraction from it. Attending to our breathing, and what we are feeling in our body, is all part of bringing the whole of us to God in prayer.

Christian spirituality is an embodied spirituality. We worship with our body, mind and soul. Whatever our bodies are like, however broken or painful, however large or small, however hairy or bald, our bodies are God-given, and they are us, as much as our minds and personalities and spirit. The life in all its fullness that Jesus came to give us is life for the whole of us, not only our spiritual side or even our minds. We are called to reject any idealising of the body. Our bodies may well have limitations and weaknesses, they can be frail, they're not made to last forever, they can let us down and we let them down. We may need to reconcile ourselves with some of this. Our relationship to our body can be one of acceptance.

Our human bodies don't just transport and accompany us to church and sit there while our mind and spirit engages with God. Our bodies are part of our faith, honoured by God in the incarnation. When Jesus tells the disciples to come away and rest awhile, he's attending to their bodily need to relax, to breathe a sigh of relief.

Humanity has an odd relationship with the idea of body. Our bodies can divide us. Bodies with different-coloured skins are treated differently. Some of us carry the truth in our bodies that we are overweight, while others starve. We fight with our bodies when they fail or break or cause us pain: all this is true about being embodied creatures. We live an embodied existence that Jesus chose to share, so that the walls of hostility may be broken down between us.

During the summer we became free to make choices about how we protect our bodies, or not. Some of us were ready to embrace freedom, while others were very concerned about it. The choices we make in our churches are always communal, affecting others too. We respect one another's bodies as if they were sacred – because they are.

Michelle Grace
Tring Team

Thank you to Judith Dimond for some of this content

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Please note that the closing date is 15 November 2021, to lodge a completed application for grants payable from autumn the following year.

Book Group – with a local author in situ



'When I grow up, I want to be a mummy and a writer'. Thus the 5-year-old Anthea Fraser, whose fiftieth novel, 'Sins of the Fathers', was the subject

of the August meeting of St Peter & St Paul's Book Group. (Incidentally, she has just published her fifty-first and is at work on her fifty-second).

It was a special meeting for at least two reasons; firstly, we were able to meet in church as a real group for the first time since before the Dark Ages, and secondly, we were very privileged to have the author herself chairing our meeting, made possible because Anthea is a long-standing member of our church's congregation.



Even at the age of five, Anthea was already a storyteller; before she could write the words down herself, she would tell them to her mother, who significantly was also a published novelist. She continued to write throughout her school days, and then, as a young married mother, (yes, she did fulfil her first ambition too!) she decided it would be good to get some professional training, and embarked on a correspondence course with the London School of Journalism. The exercise for lesson 13 (there were 15 altogether) was to write a short story, and so when Anthea noticed a story competition in a magazine she was idly thumbing through at the hairdressers, she had something ready to submit. No, she didn't win but was runner-up, although reading between the lines, I suspect some of the judging committee thought her story the best.

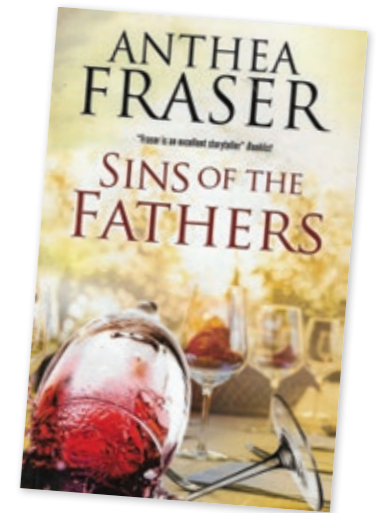
However, she did get something

much more valuable than the prize the magazine was offering. It was a letter from a Mayfair literary agent saying he'd spoken to the editor of the magazine, who thought she had promise, and may they represent her? It was an introduction that survives essentially unchanged to the present.

Anthea proved to be the ideal chair for our meeting, answering all our questions fully and directly, with a down-to-earth, unfussy approach: things in common with the novel we were discussing, really. 'Sins of the fathers', taken from the third of the Ten Commandments, has no direct relationship to worshipping graven images which that commandment prohibits; the sins that the fathers commit are sexual in origin, although the promise that God will show mercy to thousands who love him is perhaps reflected in the book's essentially hopeful ending.

Did we enjoy reading it? Yes, unanimously we all did, finding it a compelling page turner, although the extensive range of characters and their complex interactions meant some of us took a bit of time to get hooked. The novel is based around a character called Mark who lives in leafy Kent. His marriage is in difficulties and, at the start of the book, he's setting out on his own for a few days' walking holiday in Yorkshire, in order to get away, reflect and relax. But reality turns out to be quite different: waiting for his train at King's Cross, he is grabbed by a young woman called Helena and bundled into a train bound for Scotland. It turns out to be a case of mistaken identity: Helena had thought he was someone from an escort agency she had hired to act as her fiancé at a gathering of her family. The true story quickly emerges on the train rushing towards Scotland and, because he'd no commitments for the next ten days or so, Mark reluctantly agrees to play the role of 'fiancé' instead. The story then unfolds by the skilful interweaving of events in an icy cold Scottish house with the rest of Helena's family, who are celebrating their parents' ruby wedding, and dramatic happenings back in Kent among Mark's immediate circle.

What struck us was the way we could relate to all the characters and believe in them as real people. That meant, of course, that we wanted to know what happened to them, and kept on turning pages to find out. We appreciated the very direct and unglamourised (but never



boring) approach to all aspects of life. Something else that we haven't always found in the books we have discussed in the past was the immaculate use of English. No doubt that correspondence course all those years ago helped there, but I suspect it is an innate quality possessed by Anthea, too. So do read some of Anthea's books, if you haven't already.

For a list of the books Anthea suggested we might try after 'Sins of the fathers', contact me or Sarah Marshall, the curate at St Peter & St Paul.

Edmund Booth, St Peter & St Paul

Parish Book Group

We meet nearly every month, on a Sunday evening in St Peter & St Paul's Church, for an hour or so from 6.45pm. Our remit is broad, encompassing any book that helps us to explore and sustain our faith. We have room for one or two more members.

This is our planned reading to Easter 2022:

24 October – Restless by William Boyd, led by Jon Reynolds

28 November – A year lost and found, by Michael Mayne (we need a volunteer to lead this session)

23 January 2022 – Revelations of Divine Love, by Julian of Norwich, led by Huw Bellis

24 April – Robert Elsmere, by Mrs Humphry Ward, led by Caroline Ellwood (2022 Lent Classic)

For more details, contact John Whiteman

A story of resistance



Introduction

If you have a Bible with the Apocrypha between the Old and New Testaments, you will find the last two books of its contents are the First and Second Books of the Maccabees. The books of the Apocrypha are read by Anglicans 'for example of life and instruction of manner... but not to establish doctrine'. If you have a New Revised Standard Version of the Bible, you may find that, in addition to the index of the Apocrypha, you will also find a reference to 'Books in the Greek and Slavonic Bibles not in the Roman Catholic Canon', including 3 Maccabees; 4 Maccabees can be found in an Appendix to the Greek Bible.

What are these books and what do they matter to us? The irony is that the Books of the Maccabees are about the history of the Jews in the second century BC and yet are not found in the Jewish Bible and so are not canonical. The original Hebrew version has not survived, only the Greek translation, yet readings from them form part of the scheme of readings for Anglicans in Common Worship. It is in Maccabees that we read of the origins of Hannukah, the Jewish Feast held about the same time as Christmas.

1 Maccabees

This book covers the history of the Jewish people from 175 to 135BC, and is the primary historical source for this period. It starts with a summary of the life of Alexander the Great and describes how, after his death, his officers ruled various parts of the empire in accordance with his wishes. We are told they caused many evils on the earth and one of them in particular, Antiochus Epiphanes, was described as 'a sinful root'. Many of the Jews were attracted by Greek customs and ideas and wanted to make an agreement with the Greeks so they built a Gymnasium in Jerusalem. But athletes competed at Greek games naked (the word gymnasium comes from the Greek

word for 'naked'), and to Jews to uncover one's nakedness was a great sin. But some Jews wanted to change Jewish ideas and 'remove the marks of circumcision' and 'abandoned the holy covenant'.

Antiochus was not satisfied with the extent of his kingdom and so attacked and plundered Egypt. Then he turned his attention to Israel and attacked Jerusalem. He desecrated the Temple, took all its treasure and went back home. Two years later he returned, speaking of peace, but suddenly and deceitfully attacked, plundered and burnt the city.

This sort of behaviour was all too common in Jewish, as in other nations', histories. Usually kings were satisfied with submission, plunder and the like. However, this turned out to be worse in that Antiochus wanted all his subjects to give up their particular religious customs. While the Gentiles accepted the king's commands, sadly so too, did many from Israel – the people 'gladly' adopted his religion or suffered persecution. Usually rulers allowed their subjects to follow their religion provided they submitted to their authority and paid their taxes.

In 167BC 'a desolating sacrilege was erected on the altar of burnt offerings'. The books of the Law were destroyed, possession of a Law book became a capital offence as was circumcision, mothers were executed and their infants hung around their necks. The chapter ends telling us that, nevertheless, many in Israel stood firm and chose to die for their faith and 'very great wrath came upon Israel'.

Now started a general persecution and the consequent resistance to it and the book of Maccabees is about those who resisted this religious change and tells the story of their Resistance. There was a priest, called Mattathias, who had five sons – John, Simon, Judas called Maccabeus (familiar to us as the basis of the oratorio by Handel written in 1746), Eleazar and Jonathan. Mattathias moved from Jerusalem to Modein, and when the king's officers came to Modein they tried to persuade Mattathias to offer pagan sacrifice and offered him money and honours to do so. He

refused and, with his family, started the resistance movement.

One interesting issue early on was the question of how far to keep the Sabbath Laws in time of war. Some kept the Sabbath Law of no activity so strictly that they were killed without fighting back and a thousand died. Mattathias and his friends decided they would have to fight back even on the Sabbath in order to survive. When Mattathias died his sons continued under Simon's leadership and, with Judas Maccabeus as leader of the army, they defeated the Syrians. Finally, in 164BC they took back control of Jerusalem, cleansed the sanctuary and restored the priesthood. The very date of this restoration was established as the feast day of Hannukah. Hannukah means dedication.

It was not the end of conflict, however, and indeed there were too many battles to describe in this article. The Maccabees' brothers fought on and the book ends with the killing of Simon. To read on is to be reminded not only of struggles with the Greeks and the Gentiles but also struggles within the movement as when Alcimus wanted to be High Priest and allied himself with the King's friend, Bacchides. Alcimus was favored by one group of Jews, the Hasideans, because he was of the priestly line of Aaron, but he treacherously killed them.

And so it goes on. One cannot help but reflect how some things never change, particularly as one reads the daily news about Afghanistan and Syria and other places where religion is intertwined with politics.

Conclusion

The Maccabees acted as Saviours and Judges, who delivered Israel. They were zealous for the Law and, in defence of the Law, they fought pagan oppressors and their allies, renegade Jews.

To be continued...

Martin Banister
St Albans Cathedral

Stand up for climate justice #GreatBigGreenWeek



Last year I was interviewed on Three Counties Radio in connection with High Street Baptist Church being awarded a gold Eco Church award. The interviewer had briefed me about the questions and I felt fairly prepared, then during the live interview he added in, 'Do you think Jesus would have been green?' I had to think quickly and commented, 'Well, he walked everywhere!'

So, Jesus may not have had much choice about his mode of transport but there is a lot to be said about walking the way Jesus did. Yes, it is the carbon-neutral option but it also gives you time to look at the world around you and to have conversations with fellow walkers. I have no doubt that Jesus was 'green'. He cared deeply about his fellow humans, especially the marginalised and the rejected. Today, we are putting the lives of the world's most vulnerable at further risk due to climate change brought about by our lifestyle choices. Populations are seeing their homes flooded, are facing extreme weather conditions and farming livelihoods are in jeopardy.

Over the last few months extreme weather events seem to be moving nearer and nearer to our own doorstep. We are

seeing the impacts of climate change on the people and places we love both here in the UK and abroad. The time is now to do everything we can to protect them. Climate change is the fight of our lifetime. Climate change needs to be tackled at all levels, from personal decisions about what to purchase to petitioning decision-makers and businesses. As the UK hosts the UN climate summit COP26 in Glasgow this November, we have a huge opportunity to raise the ambition of plans to tackle climate change at home and abroad.

The Great Big Green Week, 18–26 September 2021, brought together thousands of events around the country. Together we called upon politicians to raise their ambition and champion action on climate change. If you have not yet done so, Tring's Justice & Peace Group invite you to write to your MP to ask them to be ambitious and proactive at COP26 by backing a fair climate promise. We have the means and opportunity to speak up for farmers and workers facing the worst effects of the climate crisis every day. I am sure that Jesus would have stood up for climate justice.

For more information visit:
www.fairtrade.org.uk/get-involved/current-campaigns/join-in-with-great-big-green-week
Polly Eaton
High Street Baptist Church



Beginnings and endings



I am currently on a quiet holiday in the beautiful East Neuk of Fife, staying on my own in a small cottage right on the sea front, at the end of a cul de sac. Very few

people venture along here, and so the prevalent sounds are the gulls and the oystercatchers and the waves breaking. I've become tuned in to how the sound of the waves changes as the tide turns, something I have never really noticed before. I haven't been completely solitary – I have spent time with some of my very dearest and oldest friends, people I have known for two thirds of my life, and whom I haven't seen since before lockdown, and Edmund is coming soon to join me for a couple of days.

But I have been reflecting on beginnings and endings; how the drama of the waves crashing against the other side of the road when the tide is fully in is heightened by the fact that at low tide it's sometimes hard to hear the sound of the sea at all. I have seen for the first time in my life the full moon rising over the water, and have reflected on how the slight melancholy of the waning of the moon is tempered by the hopefulness that it will soon wax again. The sun sets earlier and earlier at this time of year, and the weather feels autumnal here at the moment, with a mist lying over the water and the need to wear a fleece rather than a T shirt, but there will come a time before the year is out when the days will start getting longer again, and we will appreciate this lengthening all the more

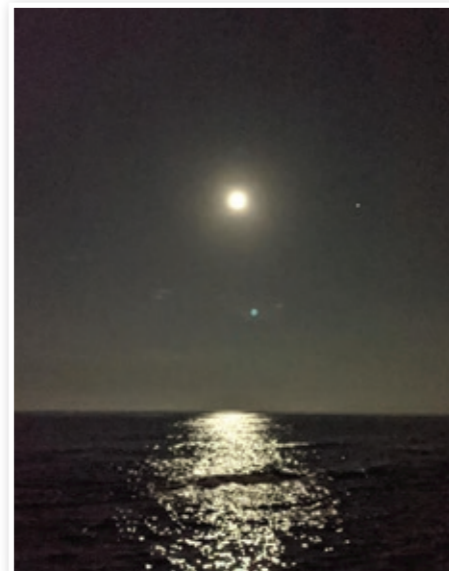


because we've had the shortening.

The harvest is currently being taken in, and the narrow Fife roads are often slowed down by tractors, but next year the crop cycle will begin again. When I leave here, I'll be sad and I'll bid a fond goodbye to the peace, tranquillity and the time to spend thinking, and not thinking, just being, not governed by the clock, but at the same time I will be beginning the next phase, going home, getting sorted for the new term, practising the piano again for the next lot of concerts, and I will be happy to be doing that.

Seneca said 'Every new beginning comes from some other beginning's end'. Life is full of beginnings and endings – every day is filled with them. Every day I count my blessings, and watching the ebb and flow of the tide, like the ebb and flow of music, and the seasons, and our moods, reminds me anew that it's really worth taking the time to make the most of them.

Anna LeHair
St Peter & St Paul



A time to embrace and a time to refrain from embracing



And we thought Brexit divided opinion! Well, it turns out Brexit was just the warm up act. Exit Brexit – stage left. Enter a global pandemic.

I can't think of anything in my adult life which has created such discussion, opinion and division as Covid-19. And that's just amongst church-goers. And how many opinions! It's said there are two sides to every story. Well, there are more sides to the pandemic than you could shake a stick at. And some views are not mutually exclusive from others. You can be an anti-vaxxer and at the same time Covid-cautious. You can be a conspiracy-theorist and at the same time Covid-confident. There are more concentric circles in our pandemic world than there are when the Audi badge meets the Olympic rings. We all have a tendency to unconscious bias or cognitive dissonance where we find data points which reinforce our own views – by definition, more often we are unaware we are even doing so. The result is increased entrenchment. Polarisation. Hostility. Even hate.

As we slowly emerge from the grip of the pandemic in the UK – it no

longer dominates our news feeds and Professor Chris Witty (he of 'next slide please' infamy) appears to get the odd day off, bless him – this plethora of opinions seems to be hardening to two mainstream views. The first is that we are not out of the woods, that Covid-19 remains a global menace and we need to continue to take every precaution against the virus. Let's call those who hold this view 'tribe one'. The second mainstream view is that it's masks off and business-as-usual, we need to live with the virus and we can't 'scamper down a rabbit hole' every time a new variant emerges (credits to Professor Sir John Bell, regius professor of medicine at Oxford University). Let's call those who hold this view 'tribe two'. Two tribes. Dangerous territory.

Which brings me to Frankie Goes to Hollywood and their rather grotesque but strangely compelling 1980s music video 'Two Tribes' in which US and USSR leaders slug it out in a boxing parody to the repeated lyrics 'When two tribes go to war, a point is all that you can score'. Exactly – a point is all that you can score. And what's the point of scoring a point?

So how do we as Christians fit into the current two-tribes narrative that is being played out across our nation and across Tring – where those who wear face coverings in Tesco are despised by

those who don't and those who don't are despised by those who do?

What does the Bible have to say about our response as Christians? Well, it says a lot.

Here are three things it says. Firstly, the apostle Paul neatly takes away our permission for self-aggrandisement with the clear instruction of Romans 12:3 'Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought'. He then goes further than this in Romans 14:22 with 'Blessed is the one who does not condemn himself by what he approves'. This is difficult to misinterpret. Thirdly, and perhaps most importantly the apostle Peter nails it in 1 Peter 4:8 where he says 'Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins'. The reason this is the most important is because love is the most important. In the 'Top Trumps' game of life, love always beats offence and intolerance. Always.

So wherever we are personally in our pandemic position as Christians, above all, let's love each other deeply. Because who knows, perhaps another's view is valid after all? And as Solomon, the wisest mortal who walked our earth once said, 'There is a time to embrace and a time to refrain from embracing'.

John Heasman
Akeman Street Baptist Church

Frescoes in an Old Church*



If you have visited any ancient monument or church you will be familiar with the sentiments expressed so beautifully in this short

poem – what were the builders of this building really like? Notice the gentle pace, the soft sounds, the contemplative mood and the dream-like quality of the phrases 'air's vacancy' and 'transitory fragments'.

Walter de la Mare was born in Kent in 1873. (His name possibly indicates Huguenot stock.) For a time he was a pupil at St Paul's Cathedral Choir School.

He left school at 16 and spent eighteen years working for Anglo-American Oil in London. He was granted a pension (aged 35) enabling him to devote his time to writing. He was a prolific author of novels, short stories, children's books and poems – many of us can still recite bits of his somewhat eerie 'The Listeners' – and was hugely popular in the 50s though now, sadly, out of fashion. Basically a Romantic poet, his subjects included dreams, death, the natural world and the fantasy world of children. His career attracted many honours – Companion of Honour in 1948 and the Order of Merit in 1953 as well as several Honorary Degrees and prestigious literature prizes. He died in 1956 and is buried in St Paul's Cathedral.

*Six centuries now have gone
Since, one by one,
These stones were laid,
And in air's vacancy
This beauty made.*

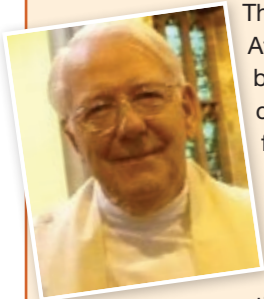
*They who thus reared them
Their long rest have won;
Ours now this heritage -
To guard, preserve, delight in, brood upon;
And in these transitory fragments scan
The immortal longings in the soul of Man.*

Walter de la Mare
*Stowell Park, Gloucestershire

Kate Banister
St Jude's, St Albans

Copyright: This poem can be found in 'The Sun, Dancing'; Christian Verse compiled by Charles Causley, 1982

A point of view



The exit from Afghanistan has become bloody, confused, frightening and seemingly fairly chaotic. One can't help but have the deepest sympathy and concern for the many Afghans who have helped the US and UK troops over the years; but at the same time after twenty years the Afghan people ought to know what they want and why.

President Trump's policy was to leave the country and Biden has merely done what he said he would in his election manifesto. Now, having done what all Afghans knew would happen, he is reviled by everyone for leaving at all. Although by no means a Boris Johnson fan myself, he had little choice but to follow suit. The UK cannot be a world policeman on its own in the 21st century. We are not an empire any more and gunboat diplomacy anyway can't work that well in a landlocked country!

So how did we get there in the first

place? Many countries and empires down the centuries have invaded Afghanistan and always left it the worse for wear. The most recent country was, of course, Russia and the reason we went there after 9/11 was because the Taliban were sheltering Al Qaeda and the future ISIS terrorists. The USA, supported by the British, moved in and did deal fairly successfully with them. They spent billions of dollars on training the army to defeat the Taliban, enabled women to have decent education, became MPs indeed; but while there was a President and parliament, it never became a Western style democracy.

The Afghans have known for at least three years that the 'occupation' forces would be leaving. They had a well-trained army of 150,000 to cope with 75,000 Taliban fighters – and what happened? The President fled to Dubai, accompanied by his entourage and boxes and boxes of money; the army put up only token resistance to the Taliban and then threw down their arms. Complete collapse in just over a week in that vast nation. What does that say?

First, their patriotism and belief in a

free government meant little or nothing. Secondly, the Taliban must have a great deal of support in the population or the extraordinary week-long victory all over the country could not have happened. The Taliban claim to be different from twenty years ago with their antagonism to music, sport and the rights of women. Time alone will tell.

Usually I am on the liberal side of politics and social action, and the thought of what the extreme Taliban can do to their enemies is frightening. We must continue to try to get as many refugees out as possible. But is it really fair to blame Biden and Johnson for the scenes at the airport? Afghan commentators in the US and UK say there would have been chaos at the airport whenever the troops moved out and as President Biden said, 'There is never a good time to leave'.

I am a priest, not a politician, but rightly or wrongly, I believe Biden made the right decision. Of course, things could have gone better, but at some stage surely Afghanistan has to look after itself?

Ian Ogilvie, Tring Team

New beginnings



This summer has been made up of farewells, weddings and house sales. All are potentially good and very good (the wedding) but also brought stress and anxiety!

At Corpus Christi we said our farewells to Fr David who is off to become an Army Chaplain with a 'Bring and Share' party.

'Will you coordinate it?' I was asked at a very pleasant coffee catchup, mid July, not long after 'Freedom Day'.

'Ok,' I said, thinking – not much time! Needless to say all went well and people were very generous, and the weather was OK. The planning of the gazebos was essential 'just in case' as we were sitting outside.

A weekend later the weather was still a preoccupation at my son's wedding in Hampshire. As we splashed through the puddles along the country roads

on our way to the rehearsal we had our misgivings, but all was well on the day with sun at the appropriate time for the photos. I met one of my other sons beforehand and decided on a coffee at a small cafe opposite the church.

'We can take your order but we need to close soon, as we need to be across the road at the church.'

'It's OK,' we said, 'we need to be across the road as well.'

We eventually walked over to the church and we saw our friendly cafe people now become the choir! It was a lovely, lovely day!

Ongoing in the background of these events was my house sale which happened purely by chance after a previous loss of sale. This seemed to be going very well but, as I think many will understand, there was lots of stress involved and, now I have sold, I need to find somewhere to live!

So summertime has been eventful but not necessarily easy with the weather not very summery, and things happening in the world that make many of us despair!

But it is also a time of change, a time of new beginnings:

*'Then the delight, when your courage kindled,
And out you stepped onto new ground,
Your eyes young again with energy and dream,
A path of plenitude opening before you.'*

*Though your destination is not yet clear
You can trust the promise of this opening;
Unfurl yourself into the grace of beginning
That is one with your life's desire.*

*Awaken your spirit to adventure;
Hold nothing back, learn to find ease in risk;
Soon you will be at home in a new rhythm
For your soul senses the world that awaits you.*

From 'For a New Beginning' in 'Benedictus' A Book of Blessings by John O'Donohue

Tricia Apps, Corpus Christi

What is prayer to you?



A quick cry for help?
The stuff of life?
Boring? Irrelevant?
A great comfort?
Inspiring? Peaceful and calming?
Frustrating?
Pointless? (The list could go on and on!)

Prayer can be all of these things, sometimes all at once. I have certainly used all of these words to describe my experience of prayer, and I'm sure I'm not alone. In spite of this, billions of prayers have been offered over the centuries in all sorts of ways.

There isn't a correct way of praying. There's nothing we can do to make prayer efficient or more productive. Prayer just is. It's because prayer can be a tricky thing to get hold of that we look for ways of shaping our prayers and expressing ourselves in prayer. Prayer is about expressing our deepest thoughts and fears and hopes and dreams, and doing so consciously before God. We may find ancient carefully crafted words help, we may prefer to ad lib, we might most easily pray in complete silence. However we do it, it's all prayer.

We're spiritual beings

Each of us has a spirituality – a capacity for transcendence: experiences beyond the simply physical. We know it when

we've climbed a mountain (physical or metaphorical), when we've known love, or when we've found ourselves in a perfect moment – we all connect with our spirituality in different ways. Prayer is simply another part of humanity's capacity for transcendence. It's the desires and anger and hopes and fears that lie in our soul, communicated to God.

Someone once said that prayer is about 'going to God with the world on my heart, so that I can go into the world with God on my heart'. I like that. I find it helpful when I'm finding prayer difficult.

Something else that helps as we pray is knowing that we don't do it alone. Prayer may sometimes be a solitary experience, but it's also always an experience shared by the great community of faith across the world. Our intercessions are an expression of this – the person speaking the words of the

intercessions isn't praying on our behalf, rather they are leading us all in prayer. Inevitably, for each of us some prayers are more heartfelt than others, but we pray as a whole people, coming before God with the world on our hearts, before we go into the world with God on our hearts.

Michelle Grace, Tring Team

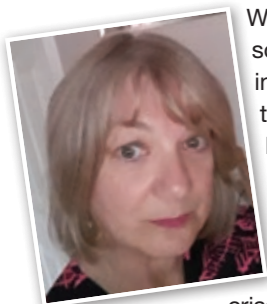
Hello from Shipley!

Recently Jane Legg wrote for *Comment* of her move from Tring and St Peter & St Paul's Church to Shipley in West Yorkshire. Here she is with her son and his family, Gordon, Lucy, Ryan and Henry, sending greetings to all in Tring and the villages.

The Editor



New Mill is back!



We're back! Like so many churches in Tring and throughout the UK, New Mill Baptist Church is once again open for worship. The yellow crime tape criss-crossing the

pews to indicate the appropriate socially distanced seating has been removed. We are all using that much loved old-fashioned thing called common sense and sitting where we like with a sensible space between us.

Throughout lockdown half of us met each Sunday morning for Zoom services and enjoyed fellowship 21st century style with speakers, Bible readings and hymns. We spoke to one another on the phone and were encouraged by Nick Harris, our Moderator.

Now, though, we can half see each other when we arrive at church and when seated and masks removed,

recognise familiar faces, never forgotten. We miss some of the regulars whose circumstances have changed and are no longer able to attend church. They are in our prayers and we remember them fondly.

Communion is celebrated Covid-style, with specially, pre-prepared, Fellowship cups. They're a good idea, even if a little fiddly.

Thursday café has re-opened with cold items available. It has been well attended by many who have missed the weekly opportunity for good food and good company. All are welcome.

New Mill is still looking for a permanent Minister. The Deacons are in touch with applicants and the service on 12th September was taken by someone seeking a new post. It was great to meet him.

The garden area at the church was maintained during Lockdown and this year it was decided to leave the lawn at the back to grow wild. It became a haven for bees and a couple of toads were

spotted now and then. No one wants blood of toad on their mower!

During lockdown we have taken the opportunity to review our responsibilities regarding disabled access into the church. A ramp has been constructed inside to enable mobility scooters, wheelchairs and walking frame users as well as those using walking sticks to enter safely into the church. There's flat access at the side door and there are no steps down into the worship area.

We're always happy to receive visitors. Sunday service begins at 10.30am and we hope soon to enjoy refreshments before heading home. We're gradually returning to pre-lockdown routines, but we accept that as images on the daily news confirm, our world has changed though as Hebrews 13:8 tells us 'Jesus Christ, the same yesterday and today, and forever'.

Julie Harris
New Mill Baptist Church

In quires and places where they sing...



During lockdown, the services in our churches, especially the 10.00am Sunday services, have had to be very much simplified and the musical element has taken a big hit. By now the restrictions have been relaxed to some extent and choir and congregations are pleased to be singing again.

But there is of course more to church music than just hymns. At St Peter & St Paul in Tring other elements in the service are normally sung, including the Kyrie (during Advent and Lent), the Gloria (at other times of the year), the Sanctus and Benedictus, Sursum Corda, Agnus Dei, and so on. Sometimes, especially at festivals, the choir may sing an anthem during the administration of communion.

Back in the day, when the 1662 form

of service was the norm in Anglican churches, even more of the service was generally sung and many older people even now, brought up on the Mass settings of John Merbecke (16th century) or Martin Shaw (20th century), could probably sing their way straight through the Creed or The Lord's Prayer.

Fortunately during these recent long months we have had the benefit and support of organ music during the service (which has incidentally highlighted just how important the solo organ passages are) at, for example, the gospel procession or the administration of communion.

Singing in the choir places you behind the clergy, facing the congregation and strengthens a sense of community around the altar. Singing in four-part harmony, led by the organ, also reinforces the impact of the words and their contribution to the worship. The downside is that you have a good view of the back of the clergy heads, even during the sermon.

We have been singing in church choirs for more than three decades and this has undoubtedly enriched the experience of worship for us as well

as being a great pleasure and privilege in itself. There are times, especially at Christmas and Holy Week through Easter when the intensity of the worship, as well as the sheer number of services, exerts great pressure; this can be challenging; but at the same time it is exciting and very rewarding.

We have decided that now is the time for us to retire from the choir and make way for younger singers to take our place. We want to thank our Organist and Choirmaster, Cliff Brown, very warmly for all his hard work and expertise which have enabled and supported us and we wish our successors all the joy and fulfilment that we have known in the choir.

*When in our music God is glorified
And adoration leaves no room for
pride
It is as though the whole creation
cried – Alleluia*

Rev Fred Pratt Green, 1971

Carole & Martin Wells
St Peter & St Paul

Eternal life after death



without God.

Virtually every religion in the world believes that something happens after death – whether it is reincarnation, a waiting place, or life with or

Christians believe that as Jesus was resurrected, so will we be. The Nicene Creed says 'We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come.' The Western and Orthodox Churches have their own views on the afterlife.

The Orthodox Church says 'It is precisely the presence of God's mercy and love which cause the torment of the wicked. God does not punish; he forgives... In a word, God has mercy on all, whether all like it or not. If we like it, it is paradise; if we do not, it is hell. Every knee will bend before the Lord. Everything will be subject to Him. God in Christ will indeed be "all and in all," with boundless mercy and unconditional pardon. But not all will rejoice in God's gift of forgiveness, and that choice will be judgment, the self-inflicted source of their sorrow and pain.' Fr. Thomas Hopko

Traditionally, Protestants believe that life is a pilgrimage and ends with the soul either going to heaven or hell after a judgement day. Some liberal Protestants believe that the soul either goes to be in God's love, or is cut off from God's love.

The Catholic Church believes in a judgement with souls going to heaven or hell, but most Catholics also believe that there is a state of purgatory where souls with unforgiven sins will go to be purified and reach heaven.

Hindus believe that the 'soul' or 'Atman' is reborn in some form, which can be human or animal, after death. This cycle continues until eventually the soul is reunited with the 'One Being'. 'Even as water becomes one with water, fire with fire, and air with air, so the atman becomes one with the Infinite Atman (Brahman) and thus attains final freedom.' Maitri Upanishad 6.24

Buddhists believe in life after death because the Buddha taught that human beings are each born an infinite number of times, unless they achieve Nirvana. Nirvana refers to realization of emptiness, marking the end of rebirth by stilling the fires that keep the process of rebirth going. This 'emptiness' is the ultimate goal.

Sikhs believe that God lives inside everyone 'like the reflection in a mirror or fragrance within a flower'. There is a cycle of reincarnation after death, but eventually they reunite with God.

Muslims believe that when people die, they remain in their graves until the Day of Judgement when they will be judged and sent to Jannah (Paradise) or Jahannam (Hell). Life is simply a preparation for eternal life after death.

Jews have no single view on life after death. Almost all Jews consider that how life is lived on earth is far more important than what happens afterwards. In the time of Jesus Jews were divided into Pharisees, who believed in the resurrection of the body after death to an afterlife and Sadducees who believed that there was no resurrection after death. Today most orthodox Jews believe that the physical body will be resurrected in the Messianic Age, when the good will rise from the grave.

Pagans, especially Wiccans, believe in an afterlife for the soul: 'This realm is neither in heaven nor the underworld. It simply is: a non-physical reality much less dense than ours.' Scott Cunningham.

Most pagans believe in a soul – but the afterlife beliefs vary. A YouGov poll in December 2020 showed that 55% of the population says they are 'not religious', 34% describe themselves as 'Christian' and 7% as 'other religion'. However only 28% believed that Jesus was the son of God – indicating that 18% of those who said they were Christian do not believe in Jesus! This means that probably only 35% of the population (Christians believing in Jesus + other religions) might believe in an afterlife of some sort. In 2017

the BBC had a big survey where 51% said they were Christian, and 46% believed in an afterlife. This is a slight change from 1970 when an Institute of Education survey showed that 43% called themselves Christians and 49% believed in an afterlife. So the number of people calling themselves Christian and the number believing in an afterlife have both declined significantly in the last fifty years; sadly the largest decline has happened in the last few years.

I think that the number declaring themselves to be Christian has to be taken with a pinch of salt. In the BBC survey, 37% of those who said they were Christian said they never attended a religious service of any sort. A third of those who believed in an afterlife said they believed in reincarnation of some sort rather than the soul living on in some form. My view is that this indicates that under 25% of the population are churchgoing Christians with a belief in an afterlife.

It is interesting to note that the latest faith survey published in Church Statistics shows that the only denominations showing an increase in membership are Russian Orthodox, Pentecostal and New Wave churches. All of these have a strong belief in a life after death with God. In all the churches that I have attended, life after death or everlasting life are rarely the subject of a sermon or teaching. Perhaps there is a moral here!

John Allan
High Street Baptist Church

I found myself aligning partly with the Jews in this description, believing that what we do in this life really does matter as a natural outworking of our Christian faith – being a 'living sacrifice' as St Paul says; and that the life hereafter with God is something more than we can ever imagine, a free gift given because of Jesus' sacrifice for us, a new life because he conquered death by his resurrection which no longer has a 'sting'.

What do you think?

The Editor

My church journey



I guess this must start with my baptism at St Michael and all Angels in Aston Clinton.

I remember nothing of this due to my age but

one of my Godparents was part of my life throughout their life so I guess this was my first indication that church was more than just a building, as they supported me over many years. The other Godparent was an RAF chaplain of whom I have no recollection at all, no doubt Godfather to many post-war children and himself posted to somewhere else around the globe.

My earliest recollection of attending church services was at St Peter & St Paul's Church here in Tring. I remember it being dark and boring and I recall spending much of it on the floor in the pew doing my own thing.

I do vaguely recall my sister's baptism at St Peter & St Paul Church, when the font was under the tower, which again was dark and of little interest as well as being cold.



In an attempt to get me more interested, I was enrolled in the choir, under Roland Stevens who was choir master at the time, although it was soon clear that the choir pay would not outweigh my boredom and, given my lack of tunefulness, I stepped down. This did, however, give me a basis of singing Book of Common Prayer services which has been valuable in later years.

One of my friends at school, Jeremy Hill, attended Akeman Street Baptist Church where his dad was one of the youth leaders, so I started attending their Sunday School with him. This led to me attending a Baptist run youth camp near Lulworth Cove and this was really the next significant church in my life. The church was a group of tents on a hillside and a marquee where we ate and met for services, indicative of the sort of church I have always warmed to, more about the people than the building.

At the Sunday morning service in the marquee the leader held up a glass of water and said it represented our lives and then poured a black substance into it to demonstrate what sin did to our lives. Having been challenged by God over the years I decided to make a stand and, in my head, said 'If you are really God then turn that water clear again'. Probably more by way of getting God off my back but perhaps something more... The upshot was that the leader then poured another liquid into the glass and the water cleared... Oh! I had not expected that. And God cheated by getting the leader to do it. And it therefore didn't count. But perhaps it did... Hmmm.

I continued to wrestle with this for the rest of the week and came home with two black eyes having fallen out with the lad in our tent who was bullying one of the younger members; but then I hate bullies.

I continued to wrestle with God over this and got invited to join Crusaders, a non-denominational Christian youth group which met on Sunday mornings at Dundale School, so I guess the school and the community was my next church, as over time my commitment to God grew, still wrestling with him over commitment; but I became a leader and alongside the group in Tring, I helped run Crusader camps and house parties around the UK, as many other children sought the same God I had in that camp near Lulworth Cove.



My next church was The Church of the Holy Spirit, Bedgrove, Aylesbury, and typically for me, the homes of those I got to know there as we met in what we called 'XN70', (Christian in the 70s). Many of those I met there are still friends today. It was here my faith grew as I struggled with God alongside others who were on the same road. Church seems to be as much about getting stuck in and doing things to help and support others as it is about holding our hands up to God in praise and prayer. For me both are important. Activities like leading a group of youngsters at a church weekend away in Ashburnham Place and helping tow a friend's van back from Swindon at 2.00am have always been part of being God's church.

My 'church' then widened greatly when I became involved with a group of narrowboat enthusiasts through a friend I met at work. The 'Christian Narrowboat Fellowship' organised and led holidays on the canal and later ran a small fleet of boats out of Croxley Green and it was through them I learned to steer narrowboats and gained a love for the canal network. Over the years this has been somewhere I have gone to find peace and refreshment and is where God is often found for me, which is a key part of what church is about; so I guess my next church is the canal network and all those I have met and worked with over the years.



It was from these beginnings that I worked with the Diocesan Youth Officer, Revd Mike Shaw, to organise canal holidays for church groups, alongside disabled or disadvantaged young people

which became ReachOut Projects with several canal craft, yachts on the River Hamble, coaches and minibuses as well as Chellington, a redundant church we used as a retreat for church groups. This was not so much individual churches but the community, and particularly the young people who made use of us and the services we provided, being church for them.



Another church that had a significant impact on my life was St Mary Magdalene Church in Westerfield, Suffolk, where I married Sandra. Our wedding was attended by most of the village as there had not been a wedding there for some time, and the building was full with congregation in the choir stalls in front of us as we stood at the altar rail and others standing at the back: again, more about the people than the building, but still memories and commitments that made a real difference to me.

As the Tring Parish grew to bring the villages of Puttenham, Wilstone, Long Marston and Aldbury in to the newly



formed Tring Team Parish under the Rectorship of Revd Donald Howells, I became committed to supporting the wider parish. Recognising the challenge Donald had with such a diverse parish, I sought training for the ministry and joined the St Albans Diocese Ministerial Training Scheme

(MTS) so I could be better able to support Donald and the parish.

The MTS met at St Andrew's Church in Watford which then became the next church, very much part of my life for three years. We met there twice a week after work for dinner, laid on by the church there, then a service, followed by lectures and discussions. Weekends away and summer schools added to this but the church there, the team who provided food and training, as well as the other trainees, were very much my church as we were encouraged to stand back from any involvement in our local church. If I had been struggling with God prior to that training, I was certainly really challenged during my time at St Andrew's and, at times, was on the edge of walking away from God completely as all my preconceived beliefs were put under the spotlight.

So I went back to the Tring Team Parish which was very different from when I started training. Donald had been replaced by Revd John Payne Cook but I was quickly integrated into the team and the wider family across the parish, so not one church but five. Of course, other things had changed as well as over



those three years: Sandra and I had three children which made quite a difference to our lives.

My ministry was shared between the Tring Team Parish, where I am licensed to the Rector, but also to the Diocesan Youth Officer for the St Albans Diocese as well as (not formally on my licence but equally important) my work in what is now known as BT.

The parish with its five churches, the Youth Service where the canal continued to be a key part of my ministry and the Data Centres I was working at, all played a part as 'church' in my life, places where I practised my ministry amongst people of all races and cultures, a very broad church indeed.

My ministry has continued to develop over the years, although I continue to struggle with God, coming to terms with what is happening around the world and on my own doorstep. I have retired from the Youth Service and BT but still have a commitment to the wider Tring Team Parish and all who live and work here, irrespective of race or denomination. God's children are all his church.

Mike Watkin
St Peter & St Paul

One man went to mow...



Well, that's not strictly true – there were a number of us, and not all men, either! But now that you have the earworm, I thought you might like to sing about 'One man and his: scythe, rake, lunch, cake, shirt (on), gloves (off), aching limbs – went to mow a meadow'.

And, indeed, we did all of those things. What else is there to do on a (slightly damp, could-have-been-worse) August Bank Holiday Monday?

But I should start at the beginning.

The Tring Justice & Peace Group have been working towards our town not being only a FairTrade town, but a bee-friendly one; and not just friendly for bees, but insects and butterflies, which serve such a vital purpose in pollinating our crops, but whose favoured garden and wild flowers are diminishing. At the same time, it was noticeable, during last year's lockdown, how many beautiful wild flowers and meadow grasses were in evidence in the unmown churchyard at St Peter & St Paul. Huw and Barry (who manages the churchyard gardening team) decided to leave the patch on the North side, behind the church, to grow on, seed, and be mown off at the end of the summer.

This year, local wildlife expert, Martin Hicks, carried out a new survey of wildflowers in that part of the churchyard. Lo and behold, he found the sort of plants that we might only have expected

to see on reserves like Aldbury Nowers, College Lake, Dancers End or the Ragpits. There were a few Bee Orchids, Pyramidal Orchids, Common (not any more) Spotted Orchids and Twayblades, among all the more universally recognisable grassland flowers like Red Clover and Ox-Eye Daisies. Later, another local conservationist, Mike Jennings, confirmed these – and more – on a walk around the churchyard with Janet Goodyer.



Martin joined in a meeting of the Justice & Peace Group to link this information to our Bee-Friendly Town initiative. He said that it would be great if the long grass in the churchyard could be cut with scythes. This is so that the vegetation doesn't get shredded or mashed, but is just sliced through and falls in clumps, scattering seed as it goes. (A similar effect can be achieved with shears, if you have decided to keep a wild patch in your garden.) We had the idea of turning this scything operation into a 'shared picnic' event, once everything had seeded.

A few of us had used scythes before, however inexpertly, but Martin started

the day with some interesting facts about scythes and some hints and tips for us. (For example, he told us that we should not wear gloves, as this would reduce our grip on the wooden nibs (scythe handles) and he had string round his knees to stop the rats going up his trouser leg, which thankfully were not pressed into service! We didn't all mow at once, but took turns and tried out different scythes. We were hoping for a dry day, so that the grass could be left to dry and used for hay, but in the event we raked up the damp stuff and composted it. People passing by, on the other side of the church wall, often stopped to watch and ask questions. It was a great way to spread the message, as well as the seeds!

There were a dozen or more of us, including the regular churchyard working party. At lunchtime, we got together in the Quiet Space, and enjoyed a happy time of chatter and shared food, before getting back to work.

Our efforts did not produce such a tidy look as probably could have been achieved with a strimmer. We were none of us well-practised, and – in our defence – there were a lot of well-grown coarse grasses in the sward that had flopped and tangled in the drizzly weather, hampering our efforts. My comment on my own work was that it rather resembled a bad haircut. (I was familiar with that, after I'd pressed Malcolm into cutting my hair during lockdown!) But the gentle swish-swish of the scythe, and rhythmic scratch of the rakes were soothing sounds, and the easy swing from the hips made it a whole-body exercise without causing strain. Add to that the shared experience in easy company, all working towards a desired goal, in the great outdoors – we were all very glad to have done our bit.

And for the future? There are more drainage works planned for that part of the churchyard, so Barry will probably move in with the mower, now, to take the grasses down a notch, then removing the cuttings to avoid feeding the soil.

Apparently, wild flowers prefer less rich soil, so we may take steps to encourage them and discourage coarse grasses by scarifying some areas and sowing Yellow Rattle seeds in the Autumn. (Yellow Rattle used to be found in traditional hay meadows. It is useful, as it is semi-parasitic on coarser grasses.) Then the churchyard will be left uncut from March to the end of July next year.

As the saying goes – 'Watch this space!'

Coda: how about designating a bit of space of your own for wildlife? You might be surprised what grows, if you leave an area uncut – and what visits it. If you decide to actually seed an area of your garden with wildflowers, remember that they don't need cossetting or feeding

– they actively enjoy poor soil. And do consider only using hand tools, rather than power tools in your garden. You will reduce pollution of all sorts (including noise) and find the work becomes purposeful exercise and a mindful experience of enjoying the moment, rather than a chore.

Please note – if you are tempted to scatter wildflower seeds on an apparently neglected patch of common land/grass verge, please STOP and find out if that area already supports some important species that could be overcome by those you are introducing.

Anne Nobbs
Justice & Peace Group (affiliated to Churches Together in Tring)



Keeping the water out



As Ian Matthews has now moved away from the area, it fell to me to take over as the chair of the Tring Parish Church Fabric Committee earlier this year.

One of my first tasks was to review the quinquennial report, which reviews every area of the church and provides requirements for conservation and repair work needed over the next five years.

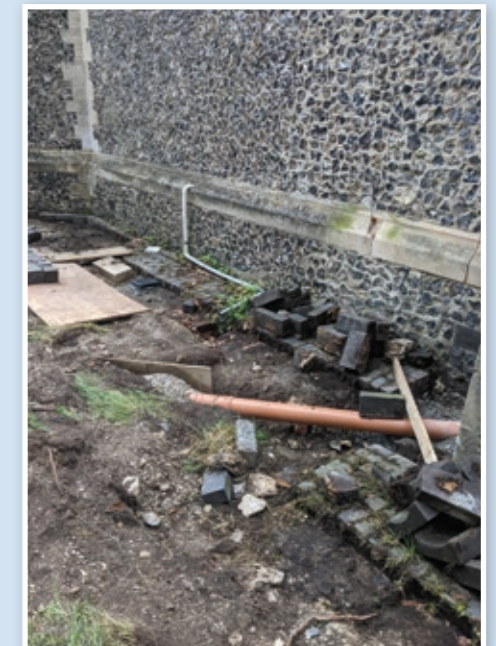
The previous quinquennial report was completed in 2020 and highlighted several urgent issues to be addressed to secure the structural integrity of the building. These were classed as 'category 1' – of the utmost urgency, or 'category 2' – essential within the next eighteen months. Most notably this included dealing with drainage issues and structural repairs, particularly to the areas near the vestry.

The necessary work has now been planned in four phases. In outline this will involve: improving drainage from the vestry pipes, construction of a new soakaway and realigning and reinstating the external pathways; renewing gulleys and installing further new soakaways; repairs to the channels and aprons around the church; and once the area has dried out sufficiently, undertaking structural surveys to monitor and review what needs to be planned to stabilise and repair the vestry area. This may include underpinning, superstructure repairs and partial rebuilding of windows.

Thanks to some generous support from the Friends of Tring Church Heritage (FOTCH) we have now been able to commence with the first phase of these works. A faculty was applied for and was received at the end of July 2021, allowing works to commence immediately, and we have appointed Alan Temple to complete these works for us.

Preventing the ingress of water is often an issue with preserving ancient buildings like St Peter & St Paul's. Unfortunately, following a recent visit by our organ tuner, we have also discovered water has got into the building via a leak from the roof, which has affected some of the high-end notes. On further investigation by our architectural advisors, we have identified some repairs to the roof drainage that will be urgently required.

Unfortunately the damage caused is outside the scope of any insurance policies we hold, so we will have to



review the situation and identify further funding to address the necessary repairs to the roof drainage and repointing that is required to prevent further damage to the internal fabric being caused.

Andrew Kinsey
St Peter & St Paul



Getting the most out of living in Tring



If you ask people 'Why did you come to Tring?' you get a huge variety of answers. If you ask them what they like most about living here, one of the most common responses actually

is 'Everything!' When pressed, by far the most-frequently mentioned aspect is the way the town nestles cosily in the heart of some of the finest countryside and natural beauty – right on the doorstep.

Back in 2002 I asked my good friend John Bly to put the essence of this into a few words. He wrote this: 'Tring is a wonderful place for young people to grow up – and Tring's young people grow up wonderfully'. The reason I asked him for this quotation is that we were writing a book describing Tring and its surroundings from the perspective of getting out on two legs (and two wheels) and really enjoying what Tring and its surroundings has to offer.

That book was 'Tring Days Out' and what it offers is as relevant and informative now as it was then – it is about exploring all the options in the

'Town that thinks it's a village'. We published it some fifteen years ago as part of the initiative for the launch of Tring Together. It was a collaboration between Tring Together, FOTCH and a group of friends who loved living here, supported by many of the organisations that enrich our community, sponsored with a grant from EEDA (The East of England Development Agency). It was a big success and something of a 'bestseller' (at £2.50 a copy) for the High Street Book Shop.

Would you like a copy?

I still have a number of copies of the book each containing (in addition to the information in the text) six different itineraries for you to use to explore all the variety that Tring and its surrounding countryside has to offer. If you would like a copy, please see the contact details at the end of this article.

Even more relevant today?

That was all a long time ago. However, when the Editor asked me for any thoughts on a positive message for the next edition of *Comment* on making the most of living in these strange times, it came to mind. The front cover of the

book describes the objective accurately 'Making the most of a unique town in an area of OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY'.

Since those words were written, many new families have come to Tring. Also many of our longstanding residents have found in the past couple of years of challenge that their working routines, lifestyles and priorities have changed. Outdoor activity is good; taking the time to reflect and consider what really matters in how we live seems to have greater importance; staying local

and reducing our 'footprint' is very much front-of-mind; keeping in touch with those around us in shared activities also enhances our sense of being in one community together.

It is our little corner of the world and we are increasingly aware that we need to take good care of it for the future as well as making the most of its benefits today.

If those thoughts have some resonance with you, I think you might well enjoy this little book and its information about the town and its heritage; the countryside and its quiet pleasures; the many activities which fulfil our spiritual and cultural needs. Its content seems perhaps even more relevant today at a time when 'Just when you least expect it, stuff happens!' – to quote our erstwhile Rector Frank Mercurio. Clearly there is much to be thankful for in our immediate neighbourhood and its resources when the big, bad world outside can seem a rather uncertain place.

Getting back together – getting out more!

I suspect that many of our readers will have been cautiously stretching their legs and courageously returning to their 'pre-lockdown' routine; getting out-and-about a bit more and stretching their legs with some longer walks and cycle-rides. The habit of daily activity has been for many a positive benefit of the restrictions of the lockdown period; as we have fewer constraints, people are starting to entertain and enjoy the company of friends again. Our church services are starting to feel more familiar as we can sing and enjoy coffee and conversation again.

Recent events like the Children's Society Garden Day and the Summer Barbecue have re-introduced us to the pleasures of 'mingling'. There is even a sense of expectation that some of the events that have become familiar milestones in our seasonal routines, both socially and in our church and community life, are returning to the calendar and give us something to look forward to.

The detailed shape of how life will actually emerge has yet to become quite in focus, but I think it is clear that we will place greater importance on making the most of each day – whether it is an 'ordinary' day or one of special celebration.

What we can all be thankful for here in our small corner is how fortunate we are

in our location, our heritage and natural resources and the sense of neighbourly goodwill that still hangs on in this lovely place and enriches our daily lives.

'Just like those Old Movies – England as it should be' – to quote Raffaele Mercurio and Amend Alio who moved to Tring from Campania and Kosovo – and fell in love with the place. Even if you are not planning a hike or bike but share that love, you will probably enjoy this little book which is imbued with that feeling.

Long may we continue to appreciate and enjoy our good fortune. Peace be with us all.

Grahame Senior Tring Team

To get your copy of 'Tring Days Out', please contact me on 01442 822770 or gsenior@seniorpartners.co.uk (Donation to Tring Together of £2 appreciated).



Letter from Orkney



Ahoy, my lovely Tringsters, peace be with you from the lands of marauding Vikings and escapee southerners. Life has been somewhat hectic here lately with the descending visitors both to our own home, and to the islands generally.

Our Island visitors also come to our little church and so swell the very small congregation which is really good. Things are now settling down at St Mary's after a fairly traumatic period and are hopefully getting back to normal. It did appear at one point we might lose our church but thankfully this seems to have passed.

We have finally sighted Orcas (killer whales) which are really dolphins. This is the first time we have sighted Orcas in the four years we've been here, although they regularly pass through the 'Flow', so it is really exciting. We actually saw a pod of eight in Scapa Flow, rolling out of the water so one could see colours of black and white. Whilst on the wildlife front, we now have quite spectacular murmurations of starlings prior to their departure.

Unfortunately we are inundated (in thousands) with Greylag Geese so the government have authorised a cull. Due to a large population staying on Orkney rather than migrating, when added to the normal migration heading North,

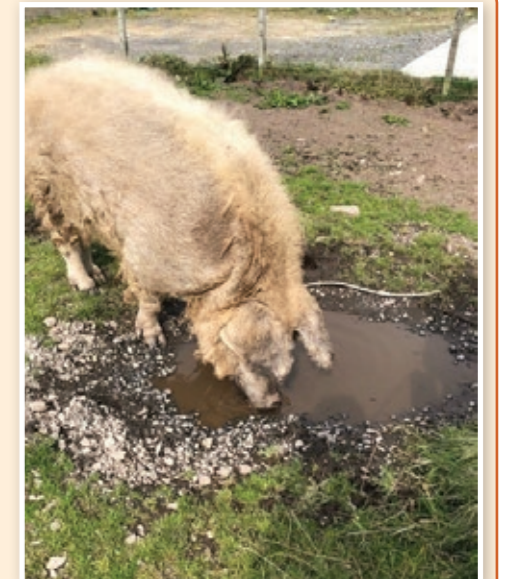
the crop destruction is immense, like supersized locusts, only leaving ground-poisoning deposits also. It is unfortunate that the culled geese are inedible due to tough sinewy meat, so it appears to be a sad waste, although necessary to maintain Orkney's farming economy.

On the homefront our kitchen is almost complete after some three months and we are expecting our new furniture and the last piece of granite to arrive at the beginning of September, although like everything else on Orkney, we are not holding our breath, Ahh! C'est la vie.

We are still enjoying summer and the Polycrub produce is abundant: we have lettuce coming out of our ears and spring onions everywhere else.

At the moment we have six beautiful Suffolk Ewes in our front paddock, courtesy of a local farmer. With their black heads and black socks, they are extremely handsome, but they stare. As soon as we move outside the house, they all turn and stare – including at the dog. Our black Lab Jasper is such a wuss that as soon as they take a step towards him, he runs back indoors – the first case of dog worrying by sheep.

Carrie has joined the local book group and her writing group has started up again for the winter. She's also joined a singing group so what with looking after me and the dog and all her other activities, she is not bored. As for me, I am recovering slowly and I'm able to do a few jobs and, of course, I have the



Polycrub to attend to, plus a lot of lawn to mow.

Along with the sunshine comes the woolly pigs (yes! I did say woolly pigs) covered in real wool – what next? Woolly cows?

We also have a plethora of cruise ships. They are back, thank goodness on behalf of our tourist industry, which was really suffering. However, the huge liners with fourteen decks have only around 1500 passengers due to Covid-19 restrictions. We don't mind them coming as they go through very rigorous tests before boarding the boat, and are kept in a bubble on their tour around the islands, but they do buy from the various stops.

Well, that's it for now, we both send our love to all of you and sincerely hope things are going well for you all in lovely TRING.

Mac Dodge, St Mary's, Stromness

Around the world...



This is part 5 of an article that began in the May edition of Comment.

Whilst Marion and I were scheduled to start our tour of New Zealand that evening, the rest of the family were going to stay on for a few days exploring before returning to America and England. During the day, whilst the youngsters went out to the hot spring beach to get a tan, we took off to see something of Auckland and to visit the Kelly Tarlton underwater world aquarium where we wandered amongst sharks, rays and sea horses swimming around and above us! That evening after dinner with the family, we moved to the Imperial hotel in Auckland as our first tour stop.

The following day we drove North, into the sun, something which takes some getting used to, to our first stop at Paihia and the Bay of Islands. On the way we detoured east off the main highway to visit Lang's Beach, a delightful area of sand, super seashells and sun! The drive north on highway one was very undulating with conical volcanic peaks dotted around the landscape and lush green tropical foliage abundant in all the wooded areas. One somewhat unnerving factor was the number of white crosses, some in great clusters, erected on the road verges marking the place of fatal car accidents.

That afternoon we walked into Paihia from our hotel to book a boat tour of the Bay of Islands for the following day. After watching some fishermen on the quayside weigh in

some mighty marlin they had caught, we wandered into the seafront shops and, to everyone's amazement in the shop, including our own, met up with a couple from Tring whom we knew who were just finishing their tour of the island doing our route but in reverse.

Our tour of the Bay of Islands, known as the 'Cream Run' because the boat delivers milk and mail to those isolated souls living on the numerous islands, started early next morning. The day was one of brilliant sunshine and the sea was clear and very calm. At lunchtime we disembarked at Cable Bay on the island of Pohutukawa to climb a small hill to get an aerial view of the islands. On the cruise back to Paihia we watched penguins and some gannets with a 5 foot wingspan, so gorged on fish they had great difficulty in flying off the water. We broke our journey back to walk around Russell, the oldest town in New Zealand, started in 1809.

On Thursday our route was from Paihia to Tairua on the Coromandel Peninsula. We lost our way at one point and drove through the village of Thames. Looking at the map there was another road over the mountains which led to our destination so we pressed on. We found the turning and started to climb the mountain, but with no warning the tarmac road stopped and we were climbing a loose gravel dirt road and so it continued for some 28 kilometres. The 'road' was cut straight out of the mountainside with granite one side and a plunging gorge on the other with no modern Armco safety barrier, only gigantic ferns and palm trees that were growing prolifically in the rainforest. Whilst we crept along to preserve our tyres we met cars coming down the

mountain whose drivers clearly had no inhibitions about tackling such road conditions.

Our hotel 'room' that evening was a small chalet set alongside a river creek with dinner taken in the adjacent 'shell' restaurant with the room decorated with seashells and all manner of nautical paraphernalia. Breakfast in the morning was brought to the room where we laid it out on the veranda to watch the mist slowly clear and the creek gradually fill on the incoming tide with the wildfowl warming their wings in the early morning sun.

Our journey from Tairua to Rotorua took us down the pacific coast road through kiwi, orange and avocado fruit groves, stopping off for lunch at a beach and a quick dip in the bay.

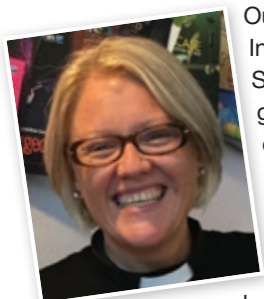
Some two or three miles out of Rotorua the atmosphere noticeably changed with a definite smell of sulphur being apparent. Our stopover that night was at the Princes Gate Hotel beside the government gardens and a range of thermal pools which bubbled away quite happily with notices advising that the water temperature was 212°F.

The following morning dawned wet and miserable so we donned raincoats and made our way to the Maori cultural centre and thermal springs to see more boiling water and mud amidst the ever-pervading smell of sulphur. Just outside the town are a range of lakes and the buried village of Te Wairao submerged in a volcanic mud eruption in the 1800s and only recently partially excavated.

Our trip the next day involved a 300-mile journey down the island to Wellington to catch the ferry to South Island.

Phillip Lawrence, St Peter & St Paul

Toddler Drop-In – open for business



Our Toddler Drop-In at St Peter & St Paul is ever growing! It happens on Wednesdays between 10.00am and 12.00 midday and was set up in response to what we suspected

was a need for somewhere for parents or carers and their babies to socialise. We noticed that most groups locally do not

run in the school holidays, and when they open require pre-booking or set times to attend.

We obviously have lots of space in St Peter & St Paul's Church, so we thought we would open up our doors to parents and carers with babies and toddlers and offer them a chance to let their babies play while they have a nice cup of tea or coffee made for them.

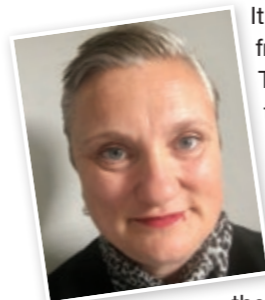
The group so far has been a huge success! We started advertising on Facebook and other local social media

sites, along with posters outside the church, and each week attendance has increased. We are being recommended by word of mouth and we have even had some parents enquiring about baptisms too.

If you know of any parents/carers/grandparents looking to get out of the house, please do let them know we are open to all – and we would love to welcome them in.

**Sarah Marshall
Tring Team**

There's a squirrel in the house!



It sounds like a line from a children's TV programme but these were the words yelled by my youngest on one day in August and much to my amazement,

there really was! A fluffy grey squirrel who, despite being an alien interloper threatening our native red species, was still rather cute.

Cute and all, but I still didn't want him living behind my sofa which is where he had fled to after jumping in through the small outward opening top panel window (although he did tone nicely in with my colour scheme...).



His (or her) entry coincided with a village-wide power cut so, since I didn't fancy tackling the fluffy tailed intruder myself, I went to enlist my eldest son who is working from home (our home currently) to come and assist in the planned humane squirrel removal.



My youngest suggested we sprinkle some nuts to lure him out from behind the bookcase where he had dashed to, probably because my youngest was eagerly leaning over the back of the sofa chatting to him in that high-pitched voice usually reserved for puppies and babies. We tried it to humour him but apparently our intruder didn't fancy the nuts we offered, even though they were not just nuts, they were gently roasted M&S nuts.

I was a tad concerned the squirrel might jump up and bite his face off in some kind of zombie squirrel movie scene, but didn't want to express this fear in case I instigated a lifelong terror of small wild furry mammals.

Meanwhile my eldest son had a cunning plan which involved building a kind of maze-like course which he assured me the squirrel would follow once flushed from the bookcase with the aid of a roll of ancient Christmas paper too glittery to tolerate Sellotape but too pretty to throw away. (I know: I need help.)



While not outwardly voicing my doubts re the efficacy of the plan, I retreated to the stairs, along with my daughter who was muttering about vermin and shotguns under her breath.

The course was created with some furniture removal and the front door was opened to facilitate escape. After some brandishing of Christmas paper and encouragement from my youngest, who reported every twitch of the beast's whiskers, the critter did in fact make a dash along the course and out of the front door, immediately disappearing from view.

Even though I was poised with my phone, he was so speedy I failed to capture even a grey furry blur.

The whole process took an hour and, after congratulating my boys for their braveness in the face of squirrel invasion, like magic the power came back on.

I suspect that, despite having enjoyed some lovely days out and caravan mini-breaks, it will be this event which will be reported as the most fun event this summer.

**Afra Wilmore
St John the Baptist, Aldbury**



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TEN YEAR GUARANTEE

Volunteering or serving?



On St Bartholomew's day (24 August) we remembered Margaret Wilson, whose funeral was the same afternoon in St Peter & St Paul's Church. I've

been told several times about how much Margaret did for the church, serving in various practical ways. Margaret helped out and got things done (both in church and with very many different charities).

Before moving to Tring, Margaret served for many years as a churchwarden at Holy Innocents Church near where she lived in Finchley.

In Luke 22 we are reminded that we are called to serve. The disciples had had an argument about which of them should be known as the greatest – you can imagine the conversation! Jesus cuts through this, reminding them that he himself is there as a servant, that we are all called to serve.

We often talk about volunteering in

church. We need volunteers for the coffee rota, for the welcoming team, to be a church warden – as Margaret was. And while we very definitely DO need people to do those things, I don't think the word volunteer quite works in a church context. There's nothing wrong with the word in itself, and volunteers are crucial to the success of many organisations. But in referring to ourselves in church as volunteers, I think we can lose sight of the fact that everything we do is part of serving God. The word 'volunteer' might be about obligation, whereas serving is about answering God's call. Rather than simply being a way of spiritualising 'getting stuff done', the naming of our tasks as serving, rather than volunteering, reminds us that there's something deeper going on.

This reminds me of a joke from an old Adrian Plass book: a young lad gets a Saturday job in Woolworths, and a solemn gentleman from church says to him, 'I hear you will be serving the Lord in Woolworths!'. 'Well,' says the lad, 'that depends on whether he comes in or not'.

We are called to serve God in all

that we do. Our paid work, our unpaid work, our very living, is in serving God. The church isn't a club of volunteers, but a gathering of God's servants. In our baptism and confirmation vows, we promise to serve God. It's not an optional extra, but part of the calling of every Christian. It's worth being reminded from time to time that all we do is in thanks to God who gave us everything, and all we do is in God's service.

Sometimes we need a nudge to offer our time and talents – some people don't recognise their own gifts and need encouraging. Good stewardship of our time and talents happens most effectively in a culture of generosity and grace – one where we are allowed to take a risk, to try something, and where we are allowed to fail – and then try again.

We give thanks for Margaret Wilson, for her service to God – and in turn to all those who have served our communities. And we can give thanks for all the opportunities there are to serve God.

Michelle Grace
Tring Team

Cities (towns and villages) of Sanctuary



Since coming to live in Bournemouth, I have become much more aware of the 'Cities of Sanctuary' movement. It was started first in Sheffield by

a Methodist Minister,

but has since grown to include not only cities and large towns, but villages, universities, and other organisations. They are all part of a network of groups across the UK, their aim being to build a culture of welcome and hospitality for the stranger, especially asylum seekers and refugees who have fled to this country for reasons only too well known at present.

I have been attending the Bournemouth Quaker Meeting over the past year, sometimes by Zoom, but more recently in person again: one Friend and I have started to join in the Zoom meeting run by the

Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole City of Sanctuary co-ordinator and it is good to learn of the extensive network of charities and voluntary organisations who are working on behalf of refugees and asylum seekers in this area. They are backed by the Bournemouth Christchurch and Poole Council which is a great help in their work.

At the time of writing my friend and I would like to offer 'tea and conversation' to some local neighbours, both longstanding and new at the Meeting House, but Covid-19 related restrictions still have to be negotiated and a time slot to become obvious, as the Meeting House is much used by local organisations, especially the U3A. The building is, however, in an accessible place in Boscombe and has a pleasant garden to offer as well.

As you probably already know, the nearest City of Sanctuary to Tring is St Albans.

Margaret Whiting
formerly St Peter & St Paul

Parish registers

Baptisms

We welcome into our church family all those below and pray for their parents, Godparents and families.

Elijah Albert Goodson

Weddings

We offer our congratulations and prayers to these couples as they begin their married lives together.

Luke Hammill & Lisa Burrows

Funerals

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

Zacheriah Draper 71
Margaret Wilson 88
Olive Elizabeth McSweeney 67
Tammi Marie Rooney 45
Sheila Doreen Hall

Stephen Hearn

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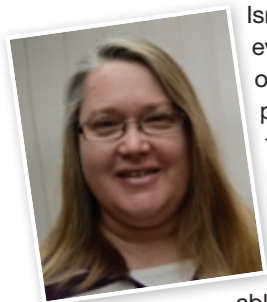
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We don't come for the weather!



Isn't it lovely when everything works out? So often we prepare ourselves for things going wrong, by announcing, 'Oh, it'll be too busy,' or 'We won't be able to park,' possibly

to cushion the blow and try to persuade ourselves that we never really supposed it would work in the first place. Sometimes, however, things seem to work out better than expected, as was the case with our recent holiday to the Isle of Arran, off the west coast of Scotland.

Our previous excursion to Scotland, two years ago, saw us limping around the Isle of Skye. I was on crutches with a broken ankle (sustained before the holiday) and one son was recovering from a mysterious illness picked up in Cambodia. During our long drive north, we listened to radio presenters giving listeners tips on how to stay cool over the weekend. We arrived in the Isle of Skye, which was a chilly 12 degrees with rain and realised we would not need to pay too much attention to the programme. It continued to rain almost every day. To make it worse, England was bathed in glorious sunshine, with a mini heatwave. The tiny roads in Skye were busy with coaches and day visitors, and it was not the peaceful, quiet place we had imagined. There are many photos of us in raincoats, brandishing flasks, and hot cups of coffee to warm us up. However, as we tell ourselves on every Scottish trip, 'We don't come for the weather'.

For our Arran trip, we left home very early in order to make sure we didn't miss the ferry across to Arran, it being a Friday, and there would be 'traffic'. Before we had even reached Leighton Buzzard, we hit a diversion. As Jane, the nice, unflappable Sat Nav lady, navigated us quickly through the village of Mentmore, it reminded me of when I was little, living in rural Cornwall. In our village, the main (indeed, only) road led to the sea, or back to civilisation and Up North. This was the road by which you always left the village, there being no other. I remember thinking that a special journey, such as a holiday, should have a different road from the start, rather than having to take the normal route. This was the case today and I enjoyed driving through unfamiliar villages so early into our trip.

That was really the only traffic-related incident for the entire journey, which was quite remarkable. We found a lovely service station just into Scotland, with a picnic area and a lakeside walk for Lady, the spaniel. It was not yet lovely weather, so yes, we did picnic in the rain wearing raincoats, chanting the family mantra, 'We don't come for the weather!'

We made good time and managed to find a large superstore with petrol station, literally metres from the ferry terminal, to stock up before getting onto Arran. At this point, the sun came out and some of the braver/more rash members of the family even put their coats away.

On the ferry, Lady was allowed to go on board, and we were able to have a snack in the pet-friendly area of the bar. When we disembarked, it was easy to find our way to our cottage on the other side of the island. The roads were quiet and well-maintained and wide enough for two cars to pass comfortably.

The cottage was very clean and comfortable and well-equipped. Sometimes in holiday cottages you are only given four knives, four mugs, four plates etc, but this cottage had ample supplies. There were two living rooms with televisions, one with Netflix, and I was reliably informed that the Wi-Fi was better than at home (important as we have two teenagers).

The weather continued to be better than we expected. We were able to sit outside to eat dinner most evenings, often without needing an extra fleece. A few days into the holiday, when it was forecast to be dry all day, I did some washing and was amazed to find there were sufficient pegs in the laundry basket. (Normally you only get about six in my experience.) A sudden squally shower made me bring it in before it was completely dry, but I was sure I had spotted a clothes airer upstairs. It turned out to be a heated clothes airer, something I have not come across before, but it finished the washing off nicely, a bit like an airing cupboard without the cupboard.

We found there was enough to do on



View on Arran

the island for a week. Like most Scottish islands, it has a museum of island life, a castle, a craft shop selling scarves and sofa throws, and not one, but two whisky distilleries. There were also some beautiful and empty beaches, and several walks. We didn't try them all (the dog has fairly short legs) but we did visit some standing stones and walk to the cave where Robert the Bruce reputedly sat and watched the spider persevering with its web, inspiring him to keep on fighting against the English.

Reflecting on our holiday, we all felt that it had not merely met our expectations, but in many cases, exceeded them. The views were stunning, the roads were quiet, and it was just the right sort of distance to feel we had been 'properly away' without being too far. The weather was not perfect, but much better than anticipated, and as people say in the Scottish isles, 'If you don't like the weather, wait half an hour'.

**Gill Kinsey
St Peter & St Paul**



Keeping out of the rain in the tea tent

Tweet of the month

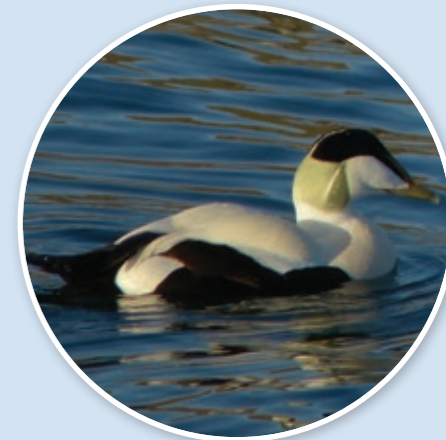


I thought this month I would talk about the unique thing that allows birds to fly – feathers. Feathers are light-weight and strong where necessary. They are always functional as even the beautiful ones are used to attract a mate.

Every bird has feathers to perform different functions and they vary accordingly but the basic structure is similar for all but a small number of specialist feathers. All feathers have a shaft – the central stem which is the main support for the rest of the feather. The vane is typically the flat surface of the feather and is made up of two webs – one each side of the shaft. The webs are made up of barbs, which are the hair-like structures that can attach to each other to form the feather's flat surface. Each barb has barbules that are in two lines on opposite sides of the barb. Finally, there are little hooklets on the barbules, known as barbicels, that hook onto other barbules and make the feather seem like one continuous surface. The advantage is if the barbicels become disengaged, the bird can easily zip them back together again with their bill. The shaft has two parts, the hollow, bare end, is called the quill and attaches the feather to the bird and allows the feather to receive nutrients when it is growing. The solid part of the shaft that has the vane attached to it is called the rachis. Some specialist feathers, called bristles, are basically a shaft with few barbs that are mainly found around the bird's mouth and

look like whiskers. These are used to guide insects in the mouth by making a sort of cone in concert with the bill's mandibles.

Despite feathers being fairly tough, they don't last for the whole lifetime of the bird and are renewed via a process called moult. Basically, feathers are deliberately lost and new ones grow in their place. Eider is a sea duck and like most ducks the male undertakes a dramatic moult called eclipse. When they moult, they lose a lot of their flight feathers at the same time so they adopt a duller eclipse plumage to avoid being conspicuous and vulnerable to predators. The male in eclipse is mainly black with some white feathers on the wing; by contrast the male's normal plumage is striking and has much more white and a pale green patch on the back of the head and neck. The Eider is very much a northern duck and breeds as far north as Svalbard and northern Greenland and down to northern England. They rarely breed along the south coast and in the winter there is some southerly movement but they still are scarce in the English Channel.



Their northern distribution has led to them having body feathers that are excellent at insulating and these are the feathers used to make Eiderdown coats and bedding etc. On a plus note the eiderdown is collected from nests after breeding has finished as the female eider deliberately sheds feathers to line the nest and keep their eggs warm. So most eiderdown is collected sustainably and without harming the birds and the birds then regrow those feathers in the autumn to protect them in the winter.

One of the places Eider do breed in England is the Farne islands, where St Cuthbert lived on Inner Farne in the 7th century. In the north-east of England Eider are also known as St Cuthbert's Duck or Cuddy Duck, Cuddy being an abbreviation of Cuthbert. It is said that Cuthbert tamed Eider to such an extent that they would nest anywhere, even next to the chapel's altar. Also he had placed the ducks under his protective grace, so that no one would eat or disturb them. St Cuthbert had a similar reputation to that of St Francis of Assisi and indeed may have been the earliest known conservationist in Britain – clearly a man of God who was ahead of his time.

**Roy Hargreaves
St Peter & St Paul**

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Eat, sleep, poo, repeat!

You've probably just read that title and thought 'WHAT! you can't say poo in a *Comment* magazine article!' I apologise, but I'd like to introduce you to the world that currently consumes the High Street Baptist Church manse, the world of parenting a newborn baby.

On Tuesday 10 August, Ruth and I (ministers at High Street Baptist Church) welcomed our second child into our little Egan family, a beautiful baby girl named Hope Annabelle Egan. Caleb, our 3-year-old, is absolutely besotted by his new little sister and cries of 'Caleb, no! don't wake her,' and 'Caleb, that's enough



kisses now,' echo around the manse every waking hour. At 9lb 8oz Hope was certainly as big as the challenges Ruth faced during the nine months of pregnancy, but at the same time so little that she is completely dependent upon us as parents (well, mostly on Ruth at the moment).

The last few weeks have involved a lot of tears (mostly Hope's, but a few tears of joy!), a lot of food (Hope is feeding well and we give thanks to our church family who provided us with some delicious evening meals), sleep of differing quantity (Hope sleeps pretty well, Ruth and I could do with more!), and a lot of nappies!

At the post-natal appointments, the midwife and health visitor always asked the same things about Hope: 'How is she sleeping?' 'How is she feeding?' 'How many dirty nappies has she made?'

I initially thought this last question a bit strange, but on reflection I imagine they ask this to check for signs of healthy growth. I'm sure we all know the importance of eating and sleeping (rest) for our health and wellbeing, but a sign that we are healthy is seen in what comes out of us (I'm not just talking about poo here, but our words, attitude and actions)!



I'm reminded of a proverb in God's word; Proverbs 14:4 'Without oxen a stable stays clean, but you need a strong ox for a large harvest' (New Living Translation). In other words, growth and fruitfulness require active and constant care and attention; and a sign of healthy growth both in and around us is that we are investing our time, our energy, our love into others, even if it involves getting our hands dirty.

This is quite literally true for Ruth and I as we care for Hope in her current growth cycle of eat, sleep, poo, repeat; but is also true for all of us as we invest our love and care in those around us for the growth of God's kingdom and the healthy fruitfulness of our community.

May God bless you abundantly.

Joe & Ruth Egan
High Street Baptist Church

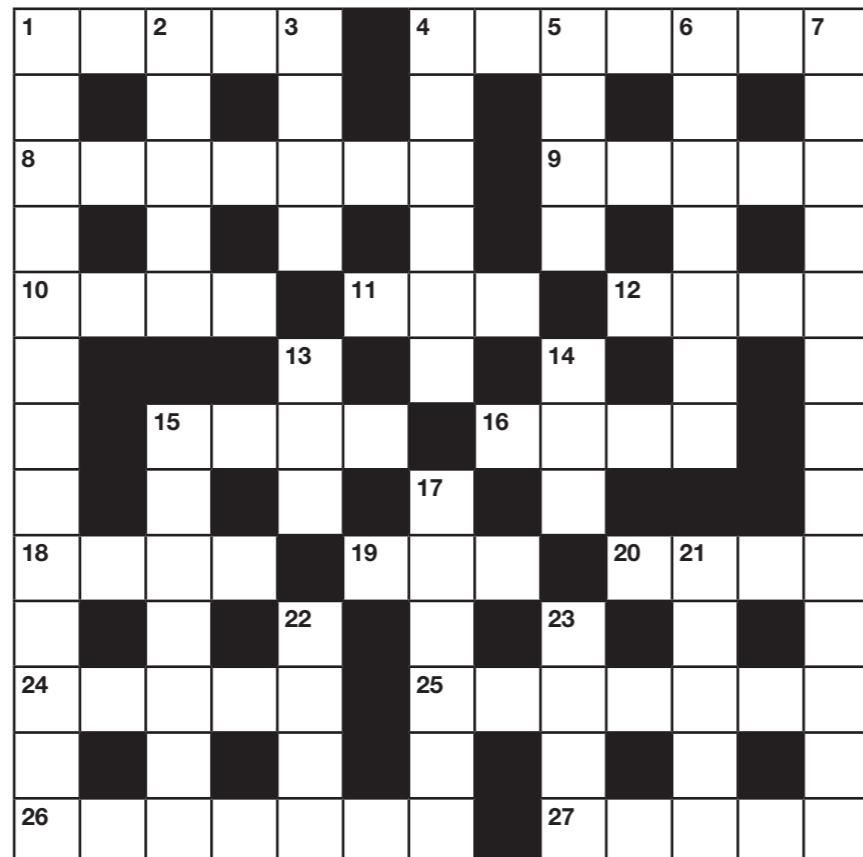
Crossword

ACROSS

1. Brownish colour (5)
4. Title of Pope (7)
8. Floor coverings (7)
9. Sports ground (5)
10. Release (4)
11. In favour of (3)
12. Smear (4)
15. Opposite of next clue (4)
16. Virtuous Father (4)
18. Solo song (4)
19. Attempt (3).
20. List of those on duty (4)
24. Stupid (5)
25. John, the '.....' (7)
26. Postal address for one of the N.T. letters (7)
27. Position marked (5)

DOWN

1. First words of a fable (4) (4) (1) (4)
2. King, when Jesus was born (5)
3. Biblical garden (4)
4. Church minister (6)
5. Close (4)
6. Very close to England (7)
7. Absolutely amazed (13)
13. Edge (3)
14. Offspring (3)
15. Message on a tomb (7)
17. Groups of people of the past (6)
21. Vegetable (5)
22. God (4)
23. Gem (4)



We are the town's Parish Church, set in the heart of Tring.

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We have an open door during the day so please call in as you pass.

Baby and Toddler Drop-in.

Wednesdays 10am –12 noon
chat, play, singing,
refreshments and more.

Little ones and carers welcome

Baptisms, Weddings and Funerals

We feel privileged to be asked to conduct services for baptisms, weddings and funerals in the church and spend time with families preparing.

Contact Revd. Huw to find out more information or look for more information on the website.

1st Saturday Lunches.

In our hall we host a monthly lunch for those living alone.

We welcome volunteers to help as well as new guests to meet, eat and socialise with others.

St Peter and St Paul Tring
- an inclusive church



Services.

Our main Sunday worship for all ages is at 10am.

We also offer an 8am service that is in traditional language, and mid-week communion services.

Coffee Tea etc.

Fair-Trade refreshments are available after services and on Friday and Saturday mornings, 10am - 12noon.

Prayer

Prayer is at the heart of all we do.

Our doors are open each day for you to come in and sit quietly in prayer or to light a candle.

You may leave prayer requests on-line or in the prayer box and they will be prayed by the prayer team in confidence.



Contacts

Revd Huw Bellis 01442 822170
huw@tringteamparish.org.uk
admin@tringteamparish.org.uk

Address

Church Yard, Tring HP23 5AE
www.tringteamparish.org.uk



Tring Team Parish page

Craft and a Cuppa

Drop-in for a cuppa and bring your craft to do or just come in and sit and chat

Tuesdays 2pm - 4pm

Youth Café

Drop-in for toast, lemonade and chat.
Mondays 3.30pm - 5pm in term-time.
For secondary school age young people.

Piano and More Concerts

These are on a Sunday afternoon at 3pm, usually on the second Sunday of the month.

We welcome local talented classical musicians as they perform for about an hour, followed by refreshments.

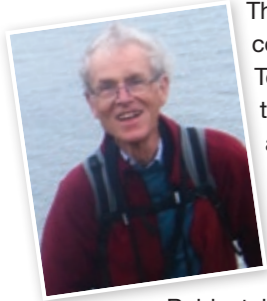
The concerts are free, we have a collection at the door to cover expenses.

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We have lots more for people to come to - Bell-ringing, Book Club, Choir, Tring Choral Society and other musical concerts, fund-raisers etc.

Please see our website for information!

Farewell and welcome return to old customs



The Russian composer Pyotr Tchaikovsky was the close friend of another giant of the 19th century Russian musical scene, the pianist Nikolai Rubinstein, who was also his mentor. When Rubinstein died, Tchaikovsky wrote his only trio for piano, violin and cello and dedicated it to the memory of his friend. Why a piano trio? It is actually a rather surprising choice, because Tchaikovsky had previously written: 'I simply cannot endure the combination of piano with violin or cello. To my mind the timbre of these instruments will not blend ... it is torture for me to have to listen to a string trio or a sonata of any kind for piano and strings. To my mind, the piano can be effective in only three situations: alone, in context with the orchestra, or as accompaniment, ie, the background of a picture.

And yet, Tchaikovsky chose a piano trio for commemorating his friend. It

is inconceivable that he would have published something he considered inferior for such a personally important work, and I am among many who still today regard the piano trio as one of Tchaikovsky's most important masterpieces. Perhaps the torture of writing in a medium which was alien to him was prompted by the torture of the loss of his great friend. Tchaikovsky of course was never one to hide his deep personal emotions, which are fully exposed in the trio; the emotions depicted range from solemn mourning, to deep grief and finally to some sort of calm acceptance.

This highly charged piece, lasting 45 minutes, was the only item in August's concert in the Piano & More series at St Peter & St Paul's Church. So huge demands were placed, emotionally and physically, on the Icknield Trio (Arwen Newband violin, Sarah Boxall cello and Anna Le Hair piano), who gave a superb and committed account of the work. There was no doubt that it gripped the audience too. On a personal note, I would ask you to spare a thought as well for the pianist's page turner, who was a

rather incoherent wreck at the end of the concert from the strain of turning the right number of pages at precisely the right time in such an enormously long work!

Emotional catharsis of this kind demands a concluding release! – and it is here that the 'welcome return to old customs' comes in. Though there have been many Piano & More concerts since March 2020, some of them live in church and some by Zoom, this was the first post-lockdown concert when Pam and her team were able to offer the traditional tea and cakes afterwards. Most people stayed on for this, and it generated an almost palpable buzz, as the Tchaikovsky was discussed, the joy of live music celebrated and old friends re-encountered. God is worshipped in a great variety of ways at church, but surely this sort of concert is one of them.

So why not come to St Peter & Paul's at 3.00pm, one second Sunday in the month, for more wonderful music? Details of concerts up to next May can be found at piano-and-more.org.uk
Edmund Booth, St Peter & St Paul
 Pyotr Tchaikovsky (1840 – 1893)
 Nikolai Rubinstein (1835 – 1881)

How did your garden grow?



For those of us who have a garden and enjoy keeping it in order, this year has probably been quite different; but then, every year is different as weather and growth are never the same. Also, we try out different plants and projects which makes gardening so satisfying. That's the joy of it and makes all the hard work worthwhile. Many have a lawn and, whether small or large, it has to be kept cut and the edges trimmed which makes all the difference to any garden.

We all have our own favourite flowers and shrubs and whether we sow seeds, buy plugs or plants or take cuttings, it is all so interesting to follow their progress. Our favourites this year have been begonias, dahlias, asters, nicotianas, geraniums, gazanias, coleus etc.

This must be hard for those who have no garden and have been confined at home a lot during the last eighteen months, but I expect you made the most of all the beautiful countryside around our town and villages. For others who have been locked in, it may be that the garden has had more attention than usual and given an appetite for more.

My early years were spent in a terraced house in Islington with a postage-stamp size garden, a corner of which was taken over by an Anderson Shelter in 1939. My parents still managed quite a bit of colour with Michaelmas daisies and golden rod, the favourites. When Audrey and I married we enjoyed a slightly larger garden where there was room for a swing for our children. When searching for a place in the country we discovered this half acre plot in Hemp Lane in Wigginton. It was already sold, but came back on the market three months later. The garden was really just a field, but after a broken fork and with the help of a pickaxe, we managed to tame it a little. It backed on to fields and woods so, coming out of a dusty, noisy city, we seemed to have stepped into a new world. It was so exciting that, when travelling by bike to the station to work in London, I used to sing 'How Great Thou Art' at the top of my voice. (Fortunately, there was no one about along Beggar's Lane.)

A small oak tree (now three times the size) dominated one corner of the garden and, gradually, we brought it under reasonable control, growing fruit and vegetables as well as lots of different flowers and shrubs.

Being a good size, we were able to have a 'Fellowship Day' for all our friends at Wigginton Chapel once a year and also had thirty to forty children from our 'Jungle Club' down for various games in the summer. Our grandsons, at an early age, would knock golf balls for hours on end (sometimes into the field beyond). This provided much practice and one of them almost took the game up professionally. I am still finding golf balls buried in the leaves and under shrubs.

It is fascinating to remember that the human race started in a garden where there was perfection and where God provided everything for man's good and enjoyment. How foolish it was then, and forever after, that he spoil this wonderful opportunity to live with God, his friend, in complete harmony with others and with nature. Once he made the decision to defy God and 'do his own thing', mankind and all of creation have suffered. The garden, land and all the earth suffered and have meant sweat and toil ever since. The effect on human life has been disastrous and caused untold suffering right to the present day. The greatest consequence was, of course, that man was separated from his loving Creator who still wanted the best for him and has provided us all with so much that is good ever since. The greatest good was the way God offered everyone a way back through sending his Son to be one of us, and to die in our stead, so that all our wrongdoing can be forgiven.

Gardens appear at various times in the Bible narrative leading to the garden when the final hours of Jesus' suffering commenced with his betrayal; then when he was placed in a garden tomb. Three days later we have the amazing story of his resurrection when he was mistaken for a gardener!

The Bible story finishes with a reference to a river and trees bearing fruit and we read 'the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations'. (Revelation 22:2) How much we need that healing in the nations of the world today and also in our own hearts.

John Young
Akeman Street Baptist Church

Echoes of the past

The following are opinions of young schoolchildren, regarding their interpretation of what they had learnt from Sunday School. Previously printed in a long past edition of *Comment*.

1. In the first book of the Bible, Guinesses, God got tired of creating the world, and so took the Sabbath off.
2. Adam and Eve were created from an apple tree. Noah's wife was called Joan of Ark. Noah built the ark and the animals came on in pears.
3. Lot's wife was a pillar of salt during the day, but a ball of fire during the night.
4. The Jews were a proud people and throughout history they had trouble with unsympathetic Genitals.
5. Sampson was a strong man who let himself be led astray by a Jezebel like Delilah.
6. Samson slayed the Philistines with the axe of the Apostles.
7. The Egyptians were all drowned in the dessert. Afterwards, Moses went up Mount Cyanide to get the ten amendments.
8. The first commandment was when Eve told Adam to eat the apple.
9. The seventh commandment is thou shalt not admit adultery.
10. Moses died before he reached Canada.
11. The greatest miracle in the Bible is when Joshua told his son to stand still and he obeyed him.
12. David was a Hebrew king who was skilled at playing the liar.
13. Soloman, one of David's sons, had 300 wives and 700 porcupines.
14. When Mary heard she was the mother of Jesus, she sang the Magna Carta.
15. Jesus was born because Mary had an immaculate contraption.
16. St John the blacksmith dumped water on his head.
17. The people who followed the Lord, were called the 12 decibels.
18. St. Paul preached holy acrimony, which is another name for marriage.
19. Christians have only one spouse. This is called monotony.

David Gittins
 Previous editor of *Comment*

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tringteamparish.org.uk

The church with a heartbeat



Churches and cathedrals have always been part of our itinerary on visits abroad as well as holidays here in the UK. Whether it's Chartres,

Glasgow, Edinburgh or New York, visiting historical places of worship never ceases to fascinate and inspire me.

We have also been no stranger to churches and churchyards in obscure parts of the country, often knee deep in wet stinging nettles as we tried to locate the gravestones of long dead ancestors, from Pembrokeshire to Herefordshire and Shropshire as well as Middlesex and Surrey. But on these visits, wonderful though it is to stumble across that all so important link with the past, covered in lichen and almost impossible to read, it is the inside of the church, no matter how humble, that silences my heart. It stirs for me the sense of time standing still in the knowledge that, hundreds of years before, my great, great or even greater grandparents stood at this altar to be married, or were baptised in this font or simply stood here in this holy space.

Churches have great significance for me but none so much as the living church, the body of believers who stand beside you and with you in times of joy and sorrow and grief and through all the struggles of life, as well as times of celebration. St Peter & St Paul's Church in Tring has been a welcoming place for

me for at least the last twenty-five years (I am a relative newcomer). The 'church' stood with me when I lost both parents suddenly with seven weeks of each other; the 'church' has been a huge support as we became foster parents, welcoming and celebrating the various children in our care and weeping with us when they moved on and we had to say goodbye.

The events of 2020 and various lockdowns meant not meeting together in person, not joining together to worship (except in the comfort of our own homes), and not singing together. It prevented those casual conversations that often turned into so much more, including what in our house we call 'meaningful conversations' when we really connect with others, or the opportunity to welcome newcomers or hug someone arriving after an absence or leaving for a while. We could and did worship via Zoom as we met others virtually for Book Group or House Group or vital church meetings, to study and share together as well as to communicate church matters. But it wasn't the same.

The restoration of normal church for me means sitting with friends and family and singing alongside them, making a joyful noise (though I for one have greatly appreciated those individuals and groups who have provided music for us during the last eighteen months); it means taking communion again alongside others who know they need God's grace and want to


share together in that meal; it means having house groups and convivial meals together in people's homes, and Book Group back in the church building; it means taking our foster children to meet others caring for children, with opportunities for company and conversation. It means Sunday afternoon Stick Sundays enjoying the local countryside with friends from church in a relaxed environment and barbecues or coffee and cake at every opportunity. It means Harvest suppers and picnics and Beer & Hymns and fundraising events with benefits for everyone as we enjoy social occasions together again.

God is with us when we think we are completely alone and in our midst when two or three are gathered in his name. But God welcomes us when we meet with the rest of the church to worship, whether that's a Sunday morning or on one of the weekday opportunities offered. I am so grateful church is 'back'.

Annette Reynolds, St Peter & St Paul

COMMENT

The magazine of the Churches in Tring



Please submit your article to the Editor by the 1st of the month.

Aim for 400 or 800 words and please send a head and shoulders colour photo or jpg and any other photos in high resolution.

Contact comment.magazine@gmail.com

In memory of Margaret Wilson

Margaret died on 26 July and her funeral was at Berton Crematorium on 24 August. Margaret was a mainstay of our congregation in St Peter & St Paul. She would take the dogs for an early morning walk to put posters up around town; she was a Mothers' Union member serving for many years on the committee both as treasurer and committee member; she cleaned the church; was a DCC member and Churches Together rep, making breakfast for Churches Together at Tring Prayer breakfasts; she was a Justice and Peace member; supported FOTCH and so much more. She started the litter-pick rota in Tring churchyard.

Margaret Oram found her a staunch helper at the first Saturday Lunches many years ago and husband John was one of the first drivers who offered lifts to their guests.

Margaret was a very 'hands-on' energetic member of our church, cheerfully volunteering for whatever needed doing. Outside of the church she was very involved in the community, running the Oasis Club for many years, amongst other clubs, and she received the annual award from the Town Council for her services to the community.

She and her late husband John were keen gardeners and often had their garden open to the public, both for

'Friends' and for Mothers Union. She adored her dogs, most of them taken on as re-homed orphans!

Margaret was a friend to many and took a keen interest in people. Sadly dementia had kept her housebound more recently but she received the pewsheet each week as well as *Comment* magazine regularly.

We will miss you, Margaret. Thank you for all you gave us during your years in Tring. Now rest in peace and rise in glory.

**Janet Goodyer
St Peter & St Paul**

In memory of Margaret Wilson, AKA 'The Lady with the dogs'

In September 1989 I moved to Tring and was made very welcome by the neighbours, Margaret and John Wilson, who had moved in three months before. We all came from near Harrow so discovered that moving 'to the country' there were a few changes: no underground trains, fewer buses, milkmen delivering in the middle of the night, farm shops, more craft fairs – to name but a few. We were there for each other, and this continued for over thirty years.

Margaret and the dogs were the best morning alarm I ever had, because if I was in my kitchen when she and the dogs went for their first morning walk, it meant I was running late! Margaret encouraged us to plant our 'not required' plants on the land opposite our homes. That even included the planting of a Christmas tree one year and used to be decorated every December for many years. Margaret was the first person to live in Plaiters Close, and sadly the last 'original' neighbour from the Close that had a good community spirit.

Margaret was born in May 1933 in Ormskirk. She was the second of Fred and Margaret Winter's four children. The family moved to Chadwell Heath where Margaret spent her early childhood. At the outbreak of the Second World War, Margaret was evacuated to Norfolk and then to Speen in Berkshire where she lived happily with William and Ellen Way. Margaret regularly visited them after the

war for the rest of their lives.

After leaving school Margaret went to work for Lloyds Bank in Lombard Street, where she met John Wilson. They were married in July 1953. Initially living in Finchley, in 1959 they moved to Kingsbury along with their daughters Anne and Kathryn. As well as raising her family, Margaret worked at a local hospital as an Occupational Therapy Assistant, taking an active part in community life, including serving for many years as a churchwarden at



Holy Innocents Church. In her spare time Margaret enjoyed her garden and allotment. In 1986 she was judged to have the best front garden in Brent and was rewarded with a Royal visit from the Queen Mother.

In 1989 John retired and they moved to Tring. They were quickly involved in the local community, enjoying an active social life as well as their two granddaughters Siobhan and Abigail. Another addition was Ben, a much-loved rescue puppy.

In 1998, following John's death, Margaret continued to live a busy life, always accompanied by a procession of much-loved rescue dogs, Archie, Peggy, Phoebe, Penny and Socks. Margaret was regularly seen around Tring with the dogs delivering the latest leaflets for the church and local charitable organisations where she volunteered to help.

As well as a hardworking helper behind the Church scenes, Margaret was also a volunteer helper and fundraiser for many charities, including Save the Children, Meals on Wheels, Chiltern Dog Rescue, Tring Museum, Cats Protection, and the Child Contact Centre and opened her garden for many different charities. You would never see a weed in her garden! She was a longstanding blood donor, donating over 500 times until she had to stop due to age.

Margaret was honoured by Tring Town Council with their Annual Community Award in recognition of her dedication to helping others. In 2006, in recognition of her charitable work, she received

an invitation to attend one of the Queen's Tea Parties at Buckingham Palace.

Margaret died peacefully, with her daughters by her side, on 26 July, knowing that her first great grandson, Ellis, had been born the day before. A peaceful end to a long life well lived.

On behalf of Margaret's family including extracts from the family eulogy.

**Maggie Guiver
formerly of St Mary's, Puttenham**



Useful contacts

TRING TEAM PARISH

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School Chaplaincy and Team Vicar
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CORPUS CHRISTI ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH Parish Priest
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JUSTICE & PEACE GROUP
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OUR CHURCHES ONLINE
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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

Crossword puzzle answers From page 28

ACROSS	DOWN
1. OCHRE	1. ONCE UPON A TIME
4. PONTIFF	2. HEROD
8. CARPETS	3. EDEN
9. ARENA	4. PASTOR
10. UNDO	5. NEAR
11. FOR	6. IRELAND
12. DAUB	7. FLABBERGASTED
15. EVIL	13. RIM
16. GOOD	14. SON
18. ARIA	15. EPITAPH
19. TRY	17. TRIBES
20. ROTA	21. ONION
24. INANE	22. DEUS
25. BAPTIST	23. OPAL
26. EPHESUS	
27. LINED	



Services in Tring Team Parish in October

Sunday 3rd October

8am Holy Communion traditional language **Tring**
8am Holy Communion traditional language **Aldbury**
10am Holy Communion with Sunday Club **Tring**
11am Harvest Worship for All **Aldbury**
10am Holy Communion **Long Marston**

Sunday 17th October

8am Holy Communion traditional language **Tring**
10am Holy Communion and Sunday Club **Tring**
10am Worship for All **Long Marston**
10am Holy Communion **Aldbury**

Sunday 31st October

8am Holy Communion traditional language **Tring**
10am Holy Communion and Sunday Club **Tring**
10am Holy Communion **Aldbury**
3pm All Souls Service **Long Marston**
4pm All Souls Service **Tring**
5pm Hot Dogs and Prayers **Long Marston**
6pm All Souls Service **Aldbury**

Sunday 10th October

8am Holy Communion traditional language **Tring**
10am Harvest Worship for All **Tring**
10am Holy Communion **Aldbury**
6pm Beer and Hymns (venue tbc)
6pm Celtic Evening Prayer **Long Marston**

Sunday 24th October

8am Holy Communion traditional language **Tring**
10am Worship for All Holy Communion **Tring**
10am Morning Prayer **Aldbury**
Time tbc Harvest Lunch and Harvest Service **Puttenham**
6pm Holy Communion **Long Marston**

Mid-week Services in the parish

9.15am Tuesdays Holy Communion **Tring**
10am Tuesdays Alternates weekly either Holy Communion or Morning Worship **Wilstone**
10am Thursdays Holy Communion in traditional language **Tring**

Worship for All

Worship for All is the name we give to our church services where we all worship together but there is more provision for children, however they are for everyone. They can either be with or without Holy Communion. They are a more relaxed style of worship and can be a bit shorter.

Sunday Club in Tring

There are also times when it is important to have age related worship. We all worship in different ways so we have a Sunday Club in Tring, run by the clergy. Here the children (0 - 11 years old) hear the same Bible Story and sing songs / have a craft and then rejoin the wider congregation to take communion.

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

Until all lockdown restrictions are over we ask you to book; all the services are listed on our Services and Events booking on the website. This gives us the details for NHS Test and Trace and we can let you know if there are late changes to our services. We ask you to wear a face covering while walking about but can be removed when sitting. We have areas in church that allow space for people who want it, please ask as you come in. We now have singing at some of our services and most services will be followed by refreshments.

All Saints, Long Marston

CURRY
AND
QUIZ
NIGHT

FRIDAY 15th OCTOBER

7.30 pm start with curry at 8pm, in Long Marston village hall. **Featuring Quiz by Martin Kelly & Curry by Huw**
Proposed menu: Beef Rogan Josh, Sag Aloo, Chana Daal, Rice, Naan (vegetarian option available on request) **Tickets only £15** (includes the curry)
Book at www.tringteamparish.org.uk
or phone Rev'd Jane 01442 822170

