

MARCH 2022 £1.50

COMMENT

THE MAGAZINE OF THE CHURCHES IN TRING



PALM SUNDAY - HOLY WEEK - EASTER IN TRING TEAM PARISH



Palm Sunday - We remember Jesus' arrival on a donkey into Jerusalem.



Maundy Thursday - We remember the last supper that Jesus celebrated with his friends



Good Friday - We remember Jesus' death; his betrayal, trial and crucifixion on a cross.



Easter Day - Christ is risen! He is risen indeed, Alleluia!

Come with us on the way to the cross

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some of them live streamed on our website and YouTube channel.

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Welcoming everyone into the community



Do you have a favourite Bible passage?

It is hard to pick, but I do wonder if mine is Luke 4:16-30. For me, this is the real beginning of Luke's Gospel. We have a prologue of birth stories but we get into the Gospel 'proper' when Jesus returns to his home town, goes to the synagogue, unrolls the scroll of the prophet Isaiah and begins to read. We hear that Jesus is anointed with the spirit. It is the spirit who leads Jesus, the same spirit who is with the disciples on the day of Pentecost, and the same spirit who is with us now, leading us onwards into a new and different future with God. As we enter Lent, you may be interested to see that in Mark's Gospel Jesus is 'driven' into the wilderness but in Luke the Spirit 'leads' Jesus. What is your relationship with God like? Does God harass and chase you, or does

God lead you?

We also get in this reading a sense that we don't have to wait for some unknown time when the kingdom of God will arrive. As Jesus says 'today it has been fulfilled'. The spirit calls us to make the kingdom a reality now. Not all will accept this – Jesus is rejected by his own people and we, too, know that many in society will reject God's call and God's vision of a fairer society.

It is this vision which makes the passage so appealing. Jesus declares that God's central mission is to bring release. Throughout his Gospel, Luke portrays both forgiveness and healing in social terms to match their more evident spiritual and physical overtones. What is forgiveness, apart from removing the barrier (sin) that had previously excluded one from one's own community?

In the Anglican church we are wrestling with how the church over the centuries has excluded those of different sexual orientation and gender. What greater freedom can the church offer than full acceptance and welcome

into the community, and the body of Christ.

I have been running our Youth Café for many years now. The first members are now reaching an age when they are having children and getting married (in any order). Seeing them grow up has made me reflect on what it would feel like if I had to say to one of them in a same-sex relationship that I could not marry them. It would be a physical pain to do it. They are part of our family. It would hurt.

I then raise my eyes to the wider community and want to be able to offer that same welcome, inclusion and release to everyone.

For some of us it may feel as though society is changing and that we are being driven, chased and harassed into having to accept things we don't like. I hope, however, that as we journey through Lent, as we are led by the Spirit, that we are able to see it as the church being called into a new future.

Huw Bellis
Tring Team

Editorial



There have already been hints about what the Church of England want to consult on in earlier editions of *Comment* magazine, and both the leader article (above), and the article on page 5 by Jane Banister refer to it in this March edition. This is because many of us in the Tring Team will be attending Lent groups – in church, in people's homes and on Zoom, at different times and on different days of the week to accommodate everyone – to talk to each other about the issues raised.

It's a big deal – and anyone who hasn't set foot inside one of our churches for a while might be forgiven for wondering why. We all know that various church institutions may hold views that are not necessarily held by those of us who attend our churches. A quick (anonymous) poll of members or visitors to any of our churches would reveal a wide spectrum of opinion and belief over what people might expect to be the views held. Try it!

As we were signing up for those Lent

groups after church recently, I talked briefly to a few other members of the congregation planning to join a group. One of the conversations could be an article in itself called 'People in pain', because despite what people expect of us, many people, happy to be labelled Christians, still wrestle with the everyday problems of living in the 21st century. Yes, we know that God loves us; we know that Christ died for us; we know that the Holy Spirit gives us his comfort in our sufferings and power in our daily lives. But does that mean that we don't have problems? Do we have perfect marriages, perfect children and everything we need? Are we strangers to broken or strained relationships, mental illness, stress, unemployment, disappointment, bereavement and suffering? Sometimes I wonder about the articles we publish in *Comment* because readers might think that the contributors are not like them: maybe those people come from another planet where nothing 'goes wrong' in their lives?

The service I mentioned was just before Valentine's Day and its theme was (you guessed it!) love. It was an all-age service so, along with the children, most of us did the actions to a number of

songs about God's love – it was more like a work out actually(!) – and there were many smiling faces to be seen and lots of laughter. But there were plenty of people in that service who were in pain for various reasons. We don't show that often in church (unless at a funeral) but it made us reflect (in those little conversations afterwards) that the Lent groups which are smaller and more intimate are just the opportunity we need to talk about what real life is like, to open up to each other about how what we think we should be like, and what we actually feel like, may differ.

The themes to be covered in the sessions in March and April are supposed to be about feeding back lay opinion to the powers that be; but I bet we will find out much more about ourselves and each other in our discussions and help and support each other in our pain.

If you are an Anglican, you already know you are welcome to attend these sessions. But how about the rest of you? You would also be welcome as part of one of these groups to discuss biblically how to live out what we believe and listening to what God is trying to say to us.

The Editor

How do you observe Lent?



Lent is a period of penitential preparation for Easter. At least that is what the Encyclopaedia Britannica says. This year Lent is 2 March to 14 April which is the day before

Good Friday. It starts on Ash Wednesday (which is six and a half weeks before Easter) and represents the forty days Jesus fasted in the wilderness – except that six and a half weeks is more than forty days! The answer to this apparent contradiction is that in the Western Church, Sundays are not included as fasting days. In the Eastern Church Lent begins on the Monday of the seventh week before Easter and ends on the Friday that is nine days before Easter. The Eastern Church has an easier time of it as both Saturday and Sunday are not included as fasting days.

Ash Wednesday is so called because the palms used for Palm Sunday celebrations in the early church were burned and the ashes used to

dress in sackcloth and ashes on Ash Wednesday as a penance. This habit died out by the 10th century but was replaced by making the sign of the cross on the forehead in ashes. The picture shows Joe Biden with an Ash Wednesday Cross which was reported in some papers as a bruise from falling! This tradition is continued in Tring and you can join the services in the Tring Team.

Ash Wednesday is preceded by Shrove Tuesday when we all (well, some of us) eat pancakes. Shrove is derived from the word 'shrive' which is what a priest did by hearing confession, giving a penance and absolving sins. It is traditionally the day when the Palm Sunday palms are burnt and is a day for reflection before starting the Lenten fast. In some countries the day is known as Mardi Gras, the French for Fat Tuesday, and is a day for feasting before the start of Lent. In a few places, particularly Louisiana, Mardi Gras is a two-week long festival culminating on Shrove Tuesday. This festival was originally called Shrovetide in Europe, and was not a festival but rather a period of

reflection of one's shortcomings and deciding how to behave during Lent. Shrove Tuesday pancakes are all down to Pope Gregory around AD600, who decreed that from Ash Wednesday onwards, no meat or any animal product could be eaten during Lent. This meant that all the eggs and butter had to be used up, and the ideal way to use them up was to make pancakes. The eggs that were being laid during Lent were stored and eventually had to be hard boiled to be preserved.



These hard-boiled eggs were used up on Easter Sunday in special dishes such as Hungarian egg stew. At High Street Baptist Church we now roll them down a hill!

We usually consider Lent to be a period when we give something up to remind us of the need to reform our lives anew during Lent, but some churches have recently started the practice of doing something positive each day of Lent rather than the negative act of giving something up.

The early church did not practise Lent as we know it. In the latter half of the second century, both Irenaeus and Tertullian record that Lent was forty hours, the time Christ spent in the tomb. By the mid-third century, Dionysius of Alexandria recorded a fast of six days as being the norm. It was not until the Council of Nicea in AD325 that Lent became forty days.

Lent traditionally ends with the Triduum – or three days – starting on the evening of Maundy Thursday and finishing on the evening of Easter Sunday. Maundy Thursday commemorates the Last Supper and Maundy derives from the washing of the disciples' feet by Jesus and the commemoration of this in a formal sung Maundy service where the first line is taken from 'A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another' from John 13:34 which in Latin is 'Mandatum novum do vobis ut diligatis invicem sicut dilexi vos...'. Mandatum has become Maundy.

What does your church do for Lent? Each denomination has its own traditions. If you are not sure what to do, can I suggest <https://www.church-poverty.org.uk/lent-course-for-2022-life-on-the-breadline>. Church Action on Poverty has an excellent course of six sessions of an hour that you can follow.

John Allan, High Street Baptist Church

Tring Team Lent Groups



Candlemas is one of my favourite festivals – it marks the end of Christmas, and the point where we turn towards Lent and Easter. There is nothing more moving than seeing the candle light spread from person to person in the service, until the whole building is filled, symbolising the light of Christ. For me, there are two aspects of shining a light that are powerful: it both shows us the way we want to go, and it lights up the things that are hidden.

'Living in Love and Faith', the Church report on relationships and sexuality, symbolises both those aspects of light. It is about acknowledging what is positive in our church at the moment, and also where we need to have conversations and prayer. We will be looking at it for our Tring Team Lent groups. It is an issue that is difficult for many of us, and the aim is to be able to look at it together with compassion and truth.

It might be that we change what we think, it might be that we are confirmed in where we are, or it might be the beginning of a journey; but whichever it is, it is vital that we look at all aspects of

human life in the light of Christ. All are welcome at our Lent groups and we hope to see many of you there. Planning is needed as most take place in people's homes which is intimate for such discussions – but space is therefore limited. At least one group will meet in St Peter & St Paul's where there is much more space.

Let us know if you would like to be involved and we will try to accommodate everyone.

**Jane Banister
Tring Team**

Quiet Place

Need space to contemplate?

Pop in to
St Martha's Methodist Church
Chapel Street, Park Road, Tring

Every 3rd Saturday of the month
between 10.00am and 3.00pm
(circumstances may cause variations in times)



Churches Together in Tring

You are warmly invited to the following Lent Lunches in support of Christian Aid. They are held between 12noon and 2pm and you can come along at any time that suits you. There is no set charge but hopefully you will donate generously to Christian Aid.

Lunch is a bowl of soup, bread & cheese and a cup of tea or coffee.

- | | |
|-----------------------------|---|
| Wednesday 9th March | St Cross, in Wilstone Village Hall |
| Wednesday 16th March | St Martha's Church |
| Wednesday 23rd March | Corpus Christi Church Hall |
| Wednesday 30th March | New Mill Baptist Church |
| Wednesday 6th April | St Peter and St Paul Parish Hall |

There may be unavoidable late changes, to check please phone Jane Banister 01442 822170 or check www.tringteamparish.org.uk

Donations for Christian Aid can be given at any of the lunches or via the Tring Team Parish website, www.tringteamparish.org.uk/giving ref. Christian Aid



2nd March
Imposition of Ashes and Holy Communion

**** 2 pm St Peter and St Paul Tring**
7.30 pm St Peter and St Paul Tring
**** The 2pm service will be streamed**



Tweet of the month



Rewilding is a relatively new word to me and I don't think I had heard of it before 2010, although the word was first used in print in 1990 and there have certainly been rewilding projects going since 2001 and possibly earlier.

Reintroduction has been around a lot longer as a word and as a practice. Reintroduction is typically putting a species back into an area where it was previously found but has become extinct. This was first done in 1832 when Capercaillie (think turkey-sized grouse, with a splendid big tail that can be fanned) was reintroduced into Scotland having become extinct by about 1785. Other reintroductions in Britain include: Osprey, Red Kite, White-tailed Eagle, Eurasian Beaver and Water Vole. Water Vole and Red Kite did not become completely extinct in Britain, but numbers did reduce significantly and it was obvious something needed to be done. Certainly, Red Kite reintroductions throughout Britain have been a great success and have largely been popular, with persecution being largely confined to the hunting fraternity, and then it is usually being aimed at other predators such as Buzzards, Hen Harriers and Golden Eagles. Larger predators are often contentious and, initially, rumours of Red Kites being able to carry off babies, cats and dogs did spread; but got quashed by those of us who know this is simply impossible. The

reintroduction of apex predators such as White-tailed Eagle, Bears, Wolves and Lynx are frequently unpopular and I doubt very much that Bears and Wolves will ever be reintroduced to Britain in a truly-wild state – a pity in my view.

Rewilding is the large-scale restoration of habitat to an area so that an entire ecosystem is resurrected and gets to the stage where it is self-sustaining and ideally requires little or no human intervention. To achieve this, it may be necessary to reintroduce key species such as Eurasian Beaver as they actually do environmental engineering and make significant changes to the habitat and recreate ecosystems by themselves. This is recognised as being beneficial to the land, and to us, despite the loss of land as it becomes covered in water. It can improve water retention on the land and reduce flooding downstream which can definitely benefit us economically as well as environmentally.

Rewilding also can benefit species that are declining in Britain and locally can arrest or reverse these declines.



The Knepp Estate in West Sussex pioneered rewilding in Britain and has turned an intensively-farmed estate into a wildlife paradise. Famously they have reintroduced White Storks here that are now breeding; but the rewilding has also benefited Nightingales and Turtle Doves, along with Purple Emperor butterflies – which are declining nationally but not here. Commoner birds and insects have also increased in numbers and the land's fertility has also improved.

In case you were wondering, rewilding can also be done on a small scale and reducing the number of times you cut the grass can make a big difference if done at the right time of year. I cut mine two or three times last year and had a few wild flowers appear, and, as a result, more insects in the garden.

God certainly gives us many second chances as we need to come to him; so maybe we should give nature a second chance and support some rewilding. After all, nature hasn't really done anything wrong in the first place!

Roy Hargreaves
St Peter & St Paul

The world prays with us



Friday 4 March 2022 will be a very special day in Tring, in St Austell (where I live), and throughout England, Wales and Northern Ireland – but also all around the world.

This is World Day of Prayer, when a great wave of prayer circles the globe for something like thirty-eight hours.

World Day of Prayer is a women-led, global, ecumenical movement – the largest ecumenical movement in the world. It is a 365-day a year prayer movement although its main activity is centred on the Day of Prayer on the first Friday of March every year.

On that day each year we pray with the Christian women of a different country, using a service that they have specially prepared. Last year we prayed with the Christian women of Vanuatu, the year before Zimbabwe and next year will be the turn of Taiwan. But what about this year?

Well, this year is very special indeed for us because the thoughts and prayers of the world will be centred on England, Wales & Northern Ireland. The last time England and Wales prepared a service for World Day of Prayer was in 1945, whilst Northern Ireland put together a service jointly with the Republic of Ireland in 1982. For this service, the women designed a special emblem consisting of a cross made up of four praying figures. Two years later this became the official WDP logo. It will probably be at least 100 years before we get a chance to prepare a service again, because the movement is now active in about 150 countries.

The process of preparing the 2022 service began in 2017 at the International Meeting of World Day of Prayer, which happens every five years. Before this meeting takes place, member countries are invited to submit suggestions for themes and writing countries. These submissions are considered by a group of delegates; I am told that this is a long process with much prayer and discussion. Finally, at the last session of the conference, the decisions of the group are announced: 'For 2022, the title will be "I Know the Plans I Have for You" based on Jeremiah 29:11 and the writing country will be (pause – worthy of the Oscars) England, Wales & Northern

Ireland; for 2023, the title will be... ' And so on – ending at 2026 when the writing country will be Nigeria.

The work of preparing the service and the related materials – background information about the countries, a Bible reflection, related activities for children and young people – began in earnest in November 2018. It was delegated to a group of women chosen to represent as wide a spectrum of age (although the majority were under 50), place of birth, denomination and life experience as possible; some of them had scarcely heard of World Day of Prayer before. I was one of two coordinators for the process and can vouch for the fact that it was bathed in prayer from start to finish: I have no doubt that what has been produced is God-inspired.

When the writing process began, Brexit was the subject we were all talking about; the virus we now know as Covid-19 did not even exist. The writing group completed its task in the summer of 2019 and handed everything over to the International Executive for editing. Its members went through everything with a fine toothcomb and, for almost a year, there were regular discussions between the coordinators here and the World Day of Prayer International Office in New York. During this period, concerns about Brexit were gradually replaced by fears about Covid-19. Finally, in the summer of 2020, the 2022 service was distributed to WDP National Committees worldwide.

So, in a fast-changing world, how likely was it that a service planned in 2017, prepared in 2018-9 and completed in 2020 would still be relevant in March 2022? In fact, the omens are good.

Almost every year, as we prepare for the service, I find myself commenting about how remarkable it is that a service that was written three or four years previously should turn out to be so relevant when it comes to be used. God clearly knows what God is doing. To take just one example: the service used in March 2011 had been written by the Christian women of Chile; in the autumn, as we began preparing for this service, Chile was the focus of the whole world as we watched, waited and prayed that the miners trapped in the Copiapómine would be rescued – as of course they were.

And so, as we approach March 2022, I marvel once again that the service, its subject and its content – light, hope, and



World Day of Prayer

Friday 4 March at 2.30pm
High Street Baptist Church

ALL WELCOME!

God's peace – are so right for this time.

I have lost count of the number of times I have read through this service – and yet parts of it still move me almost to tears. In it you will hear the stories of three women who found themselves living in difficult situations – in 'exile' due to poverty, fear, isolation – and of how God's plans for them have blessed them in very unexpected ways. These are not made-up tales but the real life experiences of three British women told in their own words. I think they will move you too.

Although the WDP movement is women-led, it is not for women: the service on the Day of Prayer is for everyone of every age. It is equally inspiring for men! Children and young people can also be involved either in the service itself or through the service-related activities designed for them which can be used at any time of year – although maybe more appropriately in February or March, around the time the Day of Prayer. I particularly recommend the sessions for young people which can be downloaded from our website www.wwdp.org.uk together with other interesting add-ons.

I hope that every branch in England, Wales & Northern Ireland will enjoy this year's service and will want to make it even more special than usual. Many branches already regularly invite the local mayor to attend, but why not expand the guest list this year – to other local leaders, not solely church ones but also business leaders and your MP; local celebrities; local students. All are welcome.

Have a wonderful service on 4 March!
Elizabeth Burroughs
President, WDP National Committee
England, Wales & Northern Ireland

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Pilgrim's Way

This is the second part of an article that started in the February edition of Comment and covers the second phase of the journey into Wales in 1997.

Thursday 29 May

We left West London at 9.00am. The coach went to Dorchester-on-Thames where we were welcomed by Hugh Brunner, the Lord Lieutenant of Oxfordshire and had a short service in the Abbey. A protester was standing near the coach with a placard and a biblical text. This involved some discussions but we boarded the coach and departed for Sutton Courtney. We were missing Revd Irene Bligh, who, much to our amazement, arrived a few seconds later in the car of the protester! We then walked along the Thames to Abingdon, where we were welcomed by Revd Derick Wales U.R.C. Then we took a launch to Folly Bridge, Oxford where we were welcomed by the Eastern Orthodox Bishop. Next, we walked to Christchurch and attended a Eucharist led by the Bishop of Oxford. We then stayed that night with some friends of ours, close by.

Friday 30 May

We left Oxford at 9.30am and were taken to Swindon where we assembled in an ecumenical church in the middle of the shopping centre. A service was held here and then we had a talk about Swindon. We ate our picnic lunches and boarded the coach for Lea where we disembarked and walked to Malmesbury Abbey. It was awfully warm, and we had to dash off to a charity shop to buy shorts. The east end of the Abbey was solid stone, no windows, as it had been blocked up when the tower fell. This was an attempt to emulate that of Salisbury, in height, but it failed. We then assembled for our coach and were informed there might be limited accommodation in Bristol and that church halls may be used. This proved to be a false alarm. We arrived at the Cathedral for Compline, and after this, we were met by our hostess who took us to her house, where her daughter and family lived in the garden!

Saturday 31 May

We left Bristol for Aust. Here we met another coach which had come from Cornwall and gathered for

another ecumenical service led by the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Archbishop of Wales. They recalled the historic visit of Saint Augustine. After the service we all filed through the tiny church, signing our names as pilgrims. We then left Aust for Tintern via the Severn Bridge. We had lunch in the grounds of the Abbey, where we were welcomed and listened to a concert given by the Welsh male voice choir. We walked along the Wye Valley to Biggsweir, followed by a late departure by the coach for Hereford, where we had some tea and a welcome in a Roman Catholic church hall, and then processed to Hereford Cathedral. Here we met the Mayor and other civic leaders, and then processed into the town centre for a short act of worship.



Sunday 1 June

Our hosts for that Saturday night lived in Ross-on-Wye which was a great co-incidence, because Margaret's father lived there in his retirement. In the morning, we attended Matins at 9.30am where our host was the organist. Then we were taken back to Hereford Cathedral, had a picnic on the green, and met up with all our pilgrim friends again. The coach took us to Pencelli in central Wales where we walked along the canal to Brecon for Evensong, and an excellent evening meal, before going

to our host's house for the night. The house was the opposite of the night before. This time our room was the office of the host – there was no space to put anything! We hoped we could survive a few hours' sleep – and we did. After breakfast, we said Matins, and were taken back to Brecon to join the coach.

Monday 2 June

The coach then departed and went to Builth Wells and we had a coffee, and then on to Llandrindod Wells, where we had a picnic lunch. We then had an address from a theologian on an update of 'Pilgrims Progress'. We sat in a circle on the grass for a brief act of worship. After a brief walk in the woods, we went to the village hall for tea. Then the coach took us to Llanbister and we walked on to Llananno Church, far from anywhere. Here was an incredible carved wooden screen depicting twelve Old Testament characters and twelve apostles each side of Christ. The vicar was delighted to see his pews filled as he only had sixteen on the electoral roll. Then we boarded the coach for Newtown Church where we met our hosts for the night. This was a splendid old house with stairs only four steps high, the bedroom set in the roof.

Tuesday 3 June

We met back in Newtown in order to arrive at a local school for assembly. Two of the pilgrims told the children about the pilgrimage, and all joined in hymns and prayers. The coach then took us to Powys Castle in Welshpool. We were given free admission to the gardens prior to opening time. These were splendid steep-sided gardens with wonderful views. The coach then took us to Shrewsbury, having difficulties through a one-way system. We arrived at the Abbey, and had a hasty lunch. The mayor welcomed us and a short service of worship followed. We then departed to arrive at Llangollen. The driver gave us a scenic extra and took us up to the Horseshoe Pass before dropping us off at Valle Crucis Abbey, to walk back to Llangollen. Part of the walk was along Offa's Dyke. After tea and cake in the hall, we attended Compline in the church. We stayed in Llangollen for the night.

**David and Margaret Gittins
St Peter & St Paul**



When we came to Tring

All of our boys went to the Infant Sunday School with Mrs Hollands, until they were old enough to go to the Junior classes, which were held in various places: St Martha's, Bishop Wood and the parish Church Hall.

One day, our eldest son came home and asked if he could go to Crusaders instead, as some of his friends had started there. It was held in Dundale School. We had never heard of them and asked Donald Howells what he thought. He assured us that he knew all about it and it was being run in Tring by several young men attached to local churches: Mike Watkin, Graham Broad, Norman Waldock and Robert Honeycombe. He was sure our boys would enjoy it and they certainly did.

Over the years they all joined as they became old enough. Crusaders is a



Tring Crusaders c 1977

countrywide organisation which runs summer camps all over the country, and many other activities too (though now renamed Urban Saints). But they also had activities in Tring most weeks, as well as on Sundays. At first it only catered for boys but later on they included girls – and some of the Leaders' wives and

girlfriends used to help too.

Every year, for several years, the churches in Tring held a big Summer Holiday Club for the children. It was held at various places around the town, required a lot of planning and lots of willing helpers. It lasted a whole week and finished with a big service in St Peter & St Paul's on the last Sunday. It was not unusual to have upwards of 200 children attending, of all ages. Every year there was a theme. One year I think it was 'Heroes'. We used to have lots of different craft activities and sports and games. Mostly the children came to the club on their own, but the really small ones had a parent with them. It was very popular as it helped to pass the long summer holiday when not everyone could go away.

Erica Guy, St Peter & St Paul

Faith in action

The origins of the Hospice of St Francis go back to a Prayer Vigil held in St Peter's Church in Berkhamsted. Pam McPherson, the main driving force behind the starting of the hospice, said that, after that vigil, she knew they had a hospice – that's faith in action.

We could say that the Wedding at Cana is a story of faith in action, a story of Mary's faith in her son to know how to deal with the difficult situation of running out of wine at a wedding. Jesus' mother said to the servants, 'Do whatever he tells you'. There are three things about this story that have chimed with me as I think of the hospice – it's a story about celebration, about incarnation and about provision.

Celebration

The wedding at Cana was a celebration of human love, of family and community, of marriage and, in turning water into so much wine, of enjoying good food, drink and partying.

The story of the hospice is a story of celebration too. When people find out that I work at the hospice they often say, 'That must be so depressing' when in fact it's the least depressing job I've ever had. Of course, there are some very difficult times but drawing alongside people in their pain and suffering is a real privilege. But there are also moments of real joy and laughter.

We regularly celebrate love. For me that may be organising a wedding; or being with a family as they reminisce; or talking to someone about what lies ahead after we die. I have the privilege of being with people as they come to terms with what awaits them and often that is about the belief that love remains, that love sustains, and that love wins.

Incarnation

The wedding at Cana is a story of the Incarnation. Mary says to Jesus, 'They have no more wine.' 'Woman, why do you involve me?' Jesus replied. 'My hour has not yet come.'

Of course, there are theological implications in this story about who Jesus is and what he came to accomplish – there's also a lovely sense of the ordinary earthly relationship between Jesus and Mary.

For me, the story of the hospice is a story of incarnation. The theology of the incarnation is one of the things

that helps me most in my job: that Jesus understands what we experience because he has experienced it too. The idea is not just that he understands, but also that he continues to draw alongside us when times are good and in the times we suffer. And, a most beautiful truth, he draws alongside us through one another.

In my experience, God's presence can be sensed whether he is acknowledged or not.

Carl Jung discovered among the Latin writings of Desiderius Erasmus, a statement that had been an ancient Spartan proverb. He was so struck by it he had words inscribed over the doorway of his house, and written on his tomb: 'Bidden or unbidden, God is present.'

That has been my experience at the Hospice of St Francis. There is a grace around the process of dying. There is the Celtic idea that there are thin places where the divide between heaven and earth is wafer thin. Patients' rooms are often thin places. The inpatient unit is holy ground and it's a privilege to be there. This has been my experience in patients' homes when I have visited too. Bidden or unbidden, God is present!

Some of you may use the Northumbria Daily Prayer – we follow it at home most mornings – the canticle in those prayers sets me up for the day and reminds me that Christ will be there.

*Christ, as a light
illumine and guide me.
Christ, as a shield
overshadow me.
Christ under me;
Christ over me;
Christ beside me
on my left and my right.
This day be within and without me,
lowly and meek, yet all-powerful.
Be in the heart of each to whom I
speak;
in the mouth of each who speaks
unto me.
This day be within and without me,
lowly and meek, yet all-powerful.
Christ as a light;
Christ as a shield;
Christ beside me
on my left and my right.*

Provision

The wedding at Cana is a story of provision. Six stone water jars, the kind used by the Jews for ceremonial washing, each holding from twenty to thirty gallons, turned from water into the choicest of wine.

150 gallons is three wheelie bins full – more than the gathering could drink. This is certainly a story of provision and real abundance.

The Hospice of St Francis is a story of provision: the way the nuns provided our first home on Shrublands Road; and the way the old brickworks were acquired for our new home; these are both examples of this.

I was reminded, as I thought about the amount of water in this story, of a hospice story I've been told: when the present site was acquired, the cost of running mains water to the building would have been prohibitive. A local water diviner said that he could find water and under his guidance bore holes were sunk that tapped into an aquafLOW. The aquafLOW has provided all our water ever since.

There are stories of the way we have been provided for over the years that include very large legacies from major donors; but what we depend on more than anything, to raise the over £5 million we need every year, is the faithful giving of our local community. The Hospice of St Francis belongs to the community – it's our hospice. We do need finance. However, I want to ask you to never give up praying for us. As a community of faith, that's the most important thing that you can do for us.

The hospice is not just there for end-of-life care. As many of you will know, we're there to help people live their precious lives well, at whatever stage they are at. However, it's inevitable that thinking of the hospice, our thoughts turn towards death. If you have family or friends who have died under our care, you may be feeling that loss again reading this article. It's also natural, and healthy, for us to contemplate our own deaths too.

I read these words by John O'Donohue when I pray final prayers – they sum up our hope for those who have gone before us and for our own time when it comes:

*May your spirit feel
The surge of true delight
When the veil of the visible
Is raised, and you glimpse again
The living faces
Of departed family and friends.
May there be some beautiful
surprise
Waiting for you inside death,
Something you never knew or felt,*

*Which with one simple touch,
Absolves you of all loneliness and
loss,
As you quicken within the embrace
For which your soul was eternally
made.
May your heart be speechless
At the sight of the truth
Of all belief had hoped,
Your heart breathless*

*In the light and lightness
Where each and everything
Is at last its true self
Within that serene belonging
That dwells beside us
On the other side
Of what we see.*

Ray Ashley-Brown
The Hospice of St Francis

Craft and a Cuppa



Craft and a Cuppa is a social group who meet in the Parish Church on Tuesdays at 2.00pm. We started about four or so years ago in response to the need to have a supportive social group in a building that was under used. We were short of 'welcomers' to sit in church and welcome visitors, and to keep an eye on the place. With Rector Huw Bellis's agreement, I decided to advertise it, thinking that if no one came, I would sit and do some craft happily on my own.



The first week Lilian Purse turned up and said, 'I've been waiting a long time for this!' My response to her was, 'Have you brought something to do? Can you knit? Would you like to knit a poppy for the 2018 WW1 centenary?'

She duly picked up a pair of needles and started knitting, and the group was born!

Always intended to be a drop-in group, our numbers at the moment are around ten to twelve each week and we have about a sixty years' age span. Although most of us are in the 'retired' age-group, we have had our children and grandchildren joining us for some sessions as well. The kettle is always on, generally with biscuits, sometimes cake as well, and although we are all female at present, we are very happy to welcome all genders!

The social aspect is probably the most important; our members include a number of people living on their own: some recently bereaved, some new to the area looking to make friends. We have had one or two with memory problems and dementia which has given their partners a bit of respite time. Most of us are church members but we welcome anyone who feels



comfortable in the building and we are all happy to talk about anything and try to give support to anyone struggling. Lockdown was difficult, but once we got used to Zoom, those that had access to the technology joined in from home. But it is so good to be back with everyone in person, in the church building!

The craft aspect is always optional. One or two are not into knitting or sewing, but that is fine! We sometimes have some church projects: making Christmas Tree hearts or repairing kneelers. Some are knitting and crocheting for charity, some looking for instruction or inspiration, or wanting to try something new: we are all happy to share ideas or knowledge with each other.

If this tempts you, please join us. Our door is always open. Please drop-in for a cuppa and a chat on Tuesdays at St Peter & St Paul's Church from 2.00pm – 4.00pm.

Janet Goodyer, St Peter & St Paul

Caretaker required for small local charity in Tring

The Old Church House in Tring is situated at the beginning of Western Road and was built in 1897. The building is used by a range of local clubs and groups and is managed by a committee of volunteers. Our caretaker is due to retire at the end of this year and we are looking for someone who has experience of

maintaining an old building that is available to the public. This includes ensuring all health and safety practices are followed.

The role would suit someone looking for part time work for a local, friendly organisation and pays a reasonable rate for approximately 15 hours per month, although there

may be times when additional work is required.

Please contact Andrew Herbert, Chair of The Old Church House (Tring) for further details on aherbert@jnsolutions.ltd.uk


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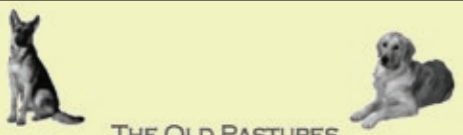
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New buildings, street parties and more...

I am now over half way through my Mayoral year. Although Covid-19 restrictions are putting a bit of a dampener on things, there is a reasonable amount of progress to report.

On the good side, plans for a new 'Nora Grace Hall' are progressing. A meeting held on 7 February was our first chance to look at the recently commissioned plans for a new 'eco' build replacement. It is round in shape and I am looking forward to working with our architects to try to move the plans forward.

We have now set the precept for next year with a modest increase of £1.16 for a typical household, meaning that Tring Town Council costs the average household just over £30 per year. (I know, that's only a fraction of the full council tax – the rest is Dacorum, County and the Police.) As part of the budgeting, we have put money aside for improvements to council properties and also made an allocation for continued professional support on our response to the Local Plan. The Local Plan is a requirement placed on us by central government and must account for a predetermined number of new houses across the Borough. This is challenging for us in Tring, surrounded as we are by Green Belt; but, I can assure you that keeping the character of Tring is on every Councillor's mind. We are

navigating the dilemma of the need for housing versus the need to protect our environment.

We are also making progress on spending CIL money. This is money that is allocated to the Town whenever development occurs. We are expecting to allocate some to the replacement Nora Grace Hall, have purchased some new outdoors gym equipment and have made a generous donation towards the Wendover Canal Trust. The rules on how we can spend CIL are relatively tight, but if there are ideas that you think should be considered, do please get in touch.

There are also a number of other projects progressing: looking at whether we can put Electric Vehicle (EV) chargers on Council property and investigating a water fountain or similar to allow people to fill up their water bottles. Finally, we are due to take delivery of some trees to be planted over the winter. All steps that are part of our focus on Green matters.

Looking forward to the year as a whole, we are hoping to contribute to the Town's marking of the Queen's Platinum Jubilee. Events are being coordinated via a small group including



Tring Together. Would you like your road closed during the extra Bank Holiday for a street party? We should be able to help guide the process.

I feel very well supported by fellow councillors, particularly those who have stepped up to Chair the various committee of the council. Without their hard work it would be difficult to make this progress. Thank you!

On the not-so-good side, we are sadly still finding face-to-face meetings are not back to normal due to Covid-19. The council chambers are relatively small and it is not felt appropriate to have members of the public in such a confined space. We are currently using the Victoria Hall for our public meetings, which is not ideal. Fingers crossed, with the Spring, we get back to normal.

**Cllr Christopher Townsend
St Peter & St Paul
and Mayor of Tring**

Pied Beauty



February's poem was a solemn, majestic assertion of God as Creator – metre, form, rhyme and words were regular and made it easy for the whole to be sung as a hymn. This one is quite different – metre, form, rhyme and words are all irregular – even reading this aloud is quite difficult. But the message is the same – God's glory is clear in all creation. The poet starts with praise for dappled nature – sky, cows, fish, finches, then moves to the landscape and then to human activity, and then picks up speed in a series of opposites coming to a halt in the final assertion of the unchangeable existence of God. The poem is full of Hopkins' typical effects – alliterations,

assonances, hyphenated words, unusual words and is remarkable for its vividness and intensity of feeling.

Gerard Manley Hopkins was born in London in 1844, the eldest of nine children. His parents were devout Anglicans and were estranged from their son when, as a student, he converted to Roman Catholicism. Gerard read Classics at Oxford and joined the Jesuits. He was a skilled draughtsman and wrote poetry from an early age, but burned his early poetry on joining the Jesuits, as he thought poetry was incompatible with his vocation. Later

he took up writing again, but his work was so unusual and original that it was not published until thirty years after his death. He died of typhoid in Dublin in 1889 and is buried there.

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

*Glory be to God for dappled things –
For skies of couple-colour as a brindled cow;
For rose-moles all in stipple upon trout that swim;
Fresh-firecoal chestnut-falls; finches wings;
Landscape plotted and pieced – fold, fallow, and plough;
And all trades, their gear and tackle and trim
All things counter, original, spare, strange;
Whatever is fickle, freckled (who knows how?)
With swift, slow; sweet, sour; adazzle, dim;
he fathers-forth whose beauty is past change:
Praise him.*

Gerard Manley Hopkins, 1877

Weird and wonderful: The Book of Daniel



Where in the Bible do you expect to find the Book of Daniel? You will find it in an English Bible between the major and minor prophets, yet look in a Hebrew

Bible and the book of Daniel comes just before Chronicles with Ezra and Nehemiah. (Just a reminder, the Hebrew Bible has three sections – The Law [Genesis to Deuteronomy], the Former and Latter prophets [Joshua to the Twelve prophets], and the third section, The Writings [Psalms to Chronicles].) In between the Hebrew and English Bible is the Greek Bible in which Daniel is back with the prophets.

Does the position matter? Yes, if we want properly to understand what sort of book Daniel is. It is, in fact, easier to understand Daniel when we realise it is a different type of book, later in date and different in content. Daniel is a book of the same period as the books of Maccabees, dealing with all those events in a rather different way.

Daniel is a weird and wonderful book, written to help the persecuted, not by telling of battles but of God's strange and wonderful ways of encouraging the faithful to persevere. So instead of rulers and battles and divine interventions, we have visions and dreams, stories and revelations. The name Daniel or Danel was not unfamiliar. There was a Daniel mentioned in the book of in Ezekiel along with Noah and Job as examples of righteous men. So it seems to be a name from the past of whom little is known otherwise. But here for us, he is the author of a variety of stories to show that, in the end, God prevails.

Our English Bibles give us twelve chapters under the title Daniel in the Old Testament proper which is the equivalent of the Hebrew Bible. But also in the Greek Bible are some 'extras' attached to Daniel's name – The Song of the Three, Daniel and Susanna, Bel and the Snake. To these books we owe some familiar stories such as the Lions' Den, the Fiery Furnace, Belshazzar's Feast (the basis of William Walton's Cantata), Susanna and the Elders (sometimes considered to be the first detective story) as well as some familiar phrases – 'the writing on the wall', 'feet of clay', the title 'Son of Man', the canticle the Benedicite, used

in Morning Prayer, and so on. Another intriguing feature is the language – part of the book is in Aramaic, not Hebrew, like the rest of the Old Testament.

The first six chapters of Daniel are midrashic or edifying stories. (A midrash takes a biblical event or verse and makes it into a very imaginative and interesting story.) It's a little bit like the way some preachers add to a verse or two a lot of details with the words 'one may imagine that ...' in order to interest the listener by expanding the story and bringing out the point. These stories are told about Daniel in the third person ('he did this') and about his companions Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah, who were named in the story – Daniel became Belshazzar with Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego. The scene is set in 606BC at the time of the Exile and the reign of King Nebuchadnezzar. This setting in the past has caused great problems for those who wanted to regard Daniel as a prophet foretelling the future, rather than seeing that this is a historical background to later stories (and hence not always getting the history right).

So we begin with Daniel and his friends being favoured by God for their learning; and Daniel, in particular, for his gift of interpreting dreams and visions. In passing, it is interesting that the king chooses Israelite deportees from Jerusalem to be trained to serve in his court. (God is looking after Daniel!) Chapter 2 shows how Daniel can interpret the king's dream even though he is not told its content, as he might reasonably expect. The dream is of a huge statue made of different materials from gold at the top to clay for the foot and it is interpreted as symbolizing four powers which are destroyed in succession. This is presented as in the future, but they belong, in fact, to the past – Babylonians, Medes, Persians and Greeks. The king promotes Daniel for his ability to interpret this dream and thus acknowledges the power of Daniel's God (the point of the story). Yet, the next chapter tells of his three companions who refuse to worship the huge statue of himself that the king has had built to the exclusion of all other gods or God. Their punishment is to be thrown into the overheated fiery furnace. There they are not only unharmed but are seen in the flames with a fourth person 'who has the appearance of a god'. As a result of this, Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego are promoted. Any who deny

this God are to be severely punished. Another story, then, of how God looks after his faithful worshippers. The fourth chapter tells of the king's dream in which he sees himself as a great tree which is cut down – a symbol that he is to suffer from insanity for seven years. On recovery the king acknowledges the King of heaven. This may refer to a king in past history.

Then we come to Nebuchadnezzar's son, Belshazzar, who held a great feast using the vessels looted from the Jerusalem Temple. During this feast, a hand is seen writing a warning (as it turns out) that the days of his kingdom are numbered. As well as being the basis of William Walton's cantata, readers may know Rembrandt's picture of this event. In this the four words 'Mene, Mene, Tekel and Peres' are interpreted as meaning the kingdom is to be divided and given to the Medes and Persians. For this warning Daniel is given promotion and a gold chain. But the final two verses tell us, in a rather matter of fact way, that the king was killed that night and that Darius, the Mede, became king!

This change of regime, we are told in Chapter 6, led to Daniel being promoted to one of three presidents of the kingdom. This arouses the jealousy of his co-rulers. Their response is to get the kings to enforce an order that no one is to pray to anyone but the king. Daniel, of course, remains true to God. His high position in the kingdom does not exempt him from obeying the king's orders since 'the law of the Medes and Persians cannot be revoked'. So Daniel is thrown into the lions' den – another of this book's familiar stories. But God keeps Daniel safe in spite of the lions' hunger which is satisfied by his opponents being fed to the lions. Daniel prospers during the reigns of both Darius and Cyrus.

So ends the collection of fanciful but encouraging stories presented as history, to show that fidelity to God triumphs in spite of everything.

We change gear for the second part of the book, chapters 7 – 12. This consists of visions from the time of the vicious persecution of the Jews and the desecration of the Temple by Antiochus, of which we read in the books of the Maccabees. More next time!

Martin Banister
St Albans Cathedral

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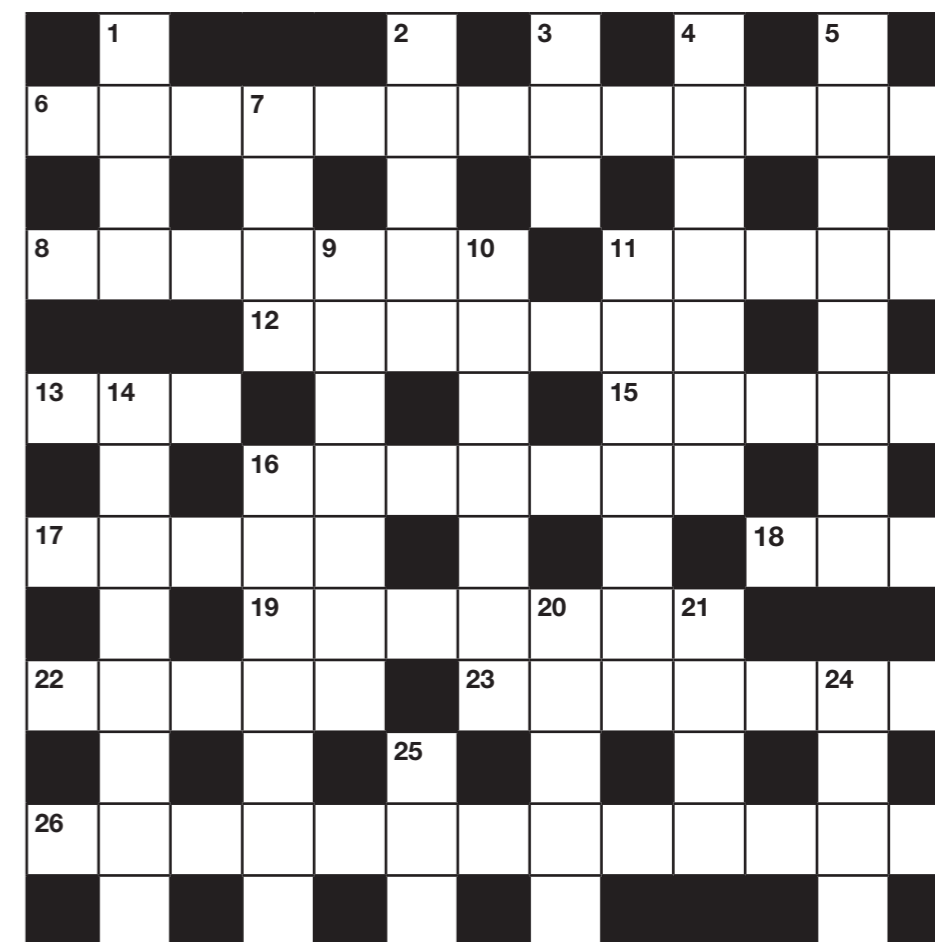
Crossword

ACROSS

- 6. Last day of Epiphany (6) (7)
- 8. First book of the Bible (7)
- 11. Focus of worship (5)
- 12. Esteem (7)
- 13. Question (3)
- 15. Conifer tree (5)
- 16. Works at school (7)
- 17. A church minister (5)
- 18. Home of a pig (3)
- 19. Tell a story (7)
- 22. Near to home (5)
- 23. One who tries hard (7)
- 26. Our county (13)

DOWN

- 1. Footwear (4)
- 2. A man's Christian name (5)
- 3. Enjoyment (3)
- 4. Book of canticles (7)
- 5. Waterfall (8)
- 7. Finished (4)
- 9. A small number but more than 1 (7)
- 10. Ghost (7)
- 11. Different tones of a language (7)
- 14. Holy (8)
- 16. Leaseholders (7)
- 20. Put to left or right (5)
- 21. Things used one at a time (4)
- 24. Aristocrat (4)
- 25. The Father (3)



Answers on page 30

Tring Linking Lives



Tring Linking Lives is a joint venture between Linking Lives UK (www.linkinglives.uk) and High Street Baptist Church.

At High Street, we had been concerned for some time about loneliness and social isolation in Tring. It was estimated that there could be as many as 800 lonely people living in Tring and the surrounding villages. So, after much prayer and discussion, we formalised a partnership with Linking Lives UK and officially launched Tring Linking Lives three years ago. We started with a small group of six dedicated volunteers and no clients! It was a leap of faith, but we knew there were people out there who needed help: people feeling alone and isolated.

At Tring Linking Lives we run a personal visiting 'befriending' scheme for Tring and a number of villages that surround it. To date, we have over fifty 'Link Friends' and around thirty volunteers. It's important to note that we are not an 'older persons' service: we have Link Friends from their late 90s to their early 40s – we've realised that loneliness has nothing to do with age.

We had only been operating a

few months when we ran head-first into the pandemic. This actually made finding the lonely much harder. Many people decided that everyone was lonely so there was no point worrying anyone about their own difficulties. We obviously had to follow Covid-19 restrictions and found ourselves operating in ways we never envisaged when we launched this work. However, through the dedication of our volunteers, we now facilitate a hybrid befriending service with a mix of telephone and face-to-face visiting.

Moving forward, we are linking to activities at High Street Baptist Church to provide a community venue to combat loneliness. Activities such as the newly re-opened 'Coffee for a Cause' on Tuesday mornings (10.30am – 12.00 noon); Wednesday Games Afternoon (2.00pm – 4.00pm); 'Coffee and Chat' on Friday mornings (10.00am – 12.00 noon) are already in place and we plan to run a series of garden parties in the church garden when the weather improves. The aim of these activities and events is to provide an opportunity and environment where people feel comfortable and able to connect with others in a way that will bring a sense of community and positive wellbeing.

We are holding a celebration service at High Street Baptist Church on

Saturday 19 March 2022 at 2.30pm and all are invited to join with us to celebrate the progress and success made over the last few years and to hear about the many facets of our service.

We are always grateful for help to keep the service running and, to develop our service, we are looking for help in the following areas:

- Volunteers to visit or telephone Link Friends, making a visit or two a week or a couple of short telephone calls
- Volunteers to help run events and assist with lifts to regular and one-off events
- Referrals of people suffering from loneliness and social isolation: if you're worried about anyone let us know. Don't worry, we won't force anyone to receive our services.

If you want to help, or know someone who does, or if you know someone you think might benefit from our services – please contact Tring Linking Lives at High Street Baptist Church, or pop into one of the events at the church. We can be contacted on 01442 824054 or via our contact page on www.tringbaptistchurch.co.uk/linkinglives.

Cliff Brown, Linking Live Coordinator at High Street Baptist Church

A new COP on the block



We live in a beautiful world. I think everyone will agree with that. In lockdown, particularly, the countryside around Tring has brought pleasure to many. We have had

time to look and wonder. But we don't really have a sense of being in another world, the world of the animals and plants that get along together without man's intervention. To do that, we have to go somewhere relatively untouched and wild. There are many such places in the world, for example, the Amazon Rain forest, but they are disappearing fast, and with them go the animals and plants, beautiful in themselves and many useful to mankind as a source of food and medicines.

This loss of biodiversity has long been recognised. In 1992 the Convention on Biological Diversity was adopted at the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro by states which signalled their intention to do something about the issue. Today there are 196 states which are parties to the convention, including the UK but not, strangely enough, the United States. (Although the US has signed the convention, Republican lawmakers have always blocked ratification, which requires a two-thirds majority). The Convention has, like other conventions, a Secretariat and this arranges a meeting of the parties (a COP) every two years. COP 15 is currently underway having been initially postponed because of the pandemic and is being conducted in two parts. There was a hybrid meeting of physical and virtual attendance in

October 2021, and there is to be a physical meeting in Kunming, China from 25 April to 8 May 2022.

The COP has the task of coming up with a new 'Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework' which will establish a critical agenda for national and international actions for the next decade and beyond, en route hopefully to 'living in harmony with nature' by 2050. Key targets in the first draft include:

- Ensure that at least 30% globally of land areas and of sea areas, especially areas of particular importance for biodiversity and its contributions to people, are conserved through effectively and equitably managed, ecologically representative and well-connected systems of protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures, and integrated into the wider landscapes and seascapes.
- Prevent or reduce the rate of introduction and establishment of invasive alien species by 50%, and control or eradicate such species to eliminate or reduce their impacts.
- Use ecosystem-based approaches to contribute to mitigation and adaptation to climate change, contributing to at least 10 GtCO₂e per year to mitigation; and ensure that all mitigation and adaptation efforts avoid negative impacts on biodiversity.

Achieving these (and other) targets are not without their difficulties however. For example, with regard to the first target, the 30 x 30 goal would see the expansion of protected areas, and there is concern that the rights of indigenous peoples and

local communities living in biodiverse regions could be harmed. These indigenous peoples know, of course, how to look after their land and their way of life should be allowed to continue.

With regard to the last target, I would just explain that 'GtCO₂e' means billions of tonnes of global annual CO₂ equivalent emissions. (To put this into context, the total greenhouse gas emissions of the UK for 2019, before the coronavirus pandemic, were over 550 million tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (MtCO₂e) (residence basis).

So these are fine ambitions and let us hope that they (and others which I have not listed) will be achieved.

There was a lot in the news last year about COP26, the meeting of the parties to the climate convention, but so far there has not been much publicity for the forthcoming COP15, so this has prompted my article. People are realising now that regard for the climate and biological diversity are inter-linked, and following the first (hybrid) meeting of COP15, the UK government announced that it will direct a 'significant part of its increased climate funding' towards tackling the biodiversity crisis.

In his encyclical *Laudato Si* Pope Francis says (at paragraph no. 140) that 'Each organism, as a creature of God, is good and admirable in itself; the same is true of the harmonious ensemble of organisms existing in a defined space and functioning as a system. Although we are often not aware of it, we depend on these larger systems for our own existence.'

All sessions at COP15 will be streamed live at cbd.int/live.

Michael Demidecki
Justice and Peace Group, Tring

Can you lend a hand?

Huw Bellis has kindly given me the title of 'Head Gardener'. Thank you, Huw.

I am trying to organise a work party to tidy up the church grounds around St Peter & St Paul's before the mowing season starts. I am thinking of a Saturday, possibly either the 5 or 12 March. The main work is weeding both the brick 'apron' which surrounds the church and the paths leading up to the parish church. If anyone feels they are able to give an hour or two, I would very much appreciate it.

I am also interested in anyone who can help with the mowing of the church grounds on a rota basis. We have a few people, but the more, the merrier. There are only two areas to cut now and we cut one area a week. There is no specific day to cut. Anytime within a week is OK.

If anyone feels that they can help, please contact me on the following: Email barnbar@outlook.com or tel. 01442 828325.

Barry Anscombe, St Peter & St Paul



Mothering Sunday



Mothering Sunday is the fourth Sunday in Lent – and, as a Sunday, is not subject to the Lent fasting. It is not to be confused with Mothers' day in the USA which is the second Sunday in May and was first held in 1908.

Mothering Sunday is the same day as Refreshment Sunday and Laetare Sunday. These names derive from the Mass said on this Sunday in the Middle Ages where the introit verse specified in the Lectionary was Isaiah 66:10-11, 'Rejoice with Jerusalem and be glad for her, all you who love her; rejoice greatly with her, all you who mourn over her. For you will nurse and be satisfied at her comforting breasts; you will drink deeply and delight in her overflowing abundance'.

Rejoice with Jerusalem in Latin is Laetare Hierusalem – hence the name

Laetare Sunday. Refreshment Sunday comes from 'drink deeply', and Mothering Sunday from the words, 'For you will nurse and be satisfied at her comforting breasts'. The Epistle was Galatians 4:21-31 which includes 'more are the children of the desolate woman than of her who has a husband' – another mother reference.

These readings continued to be specified for this particular Sunday after the Reformation in the Book of Common Prayer, and this Sunday continued to be called Mothering Sunday. Two traditions are related to Mothering Sunday – servants were usually given this day as a holiday and would visit their mother with the gift of a cake, and people would return to their mother church where they had been baptised.

The Gospel in the original Mass was John 2:1-14 – the feeding of the 5000. This gave rise to the gifts of a cake on this day, particularly Simnel cake; and mothering buns, which were made for breakfast on Mothering Sunday in some

parts of England.

In the Middle Ages children as young as 10 years old were servants and it is thought that they were allowed to return to the church in which they were baptised for a special Lent service, so naturally took the opportunity to visit their mothers. This indicates that the meaning of Mothering Sunday was a return to the mother church and the visit to mothers was secondary. The time



Little Girl Holding Flowers, William Bouguereau, 1878

of year meant that, when walking from the church to their mother's house, the young children would pick spring flowers as a gift. The flowers joined cake as the traditional Mothering Sunday gifts.

Some historians see Mothering Sunday as another example of the church taking over pagan festivals. The Megalenses Ludi was an ancient Roman festival to the mother of the gods – Cybele – held from 4-10 April. The Greeks had a festival for their mother of the gods – Rhea – a Spring festival. Both festivals were seen as honouring a mother and both were special in that the climax of the festival took the form of a play enacted before a large audience and watched over by the statue of Cybele (in Rome) or Rhea (in Greece). These plays were considered to be an act of worship and so form a direct link with the early Mothering Sunday services.

Nowadays most Anglican and Catholic churches have Mothering Sunday services and many Methodist and Baptist churches have started to join in. Often flowers are given out during the service to be taken and presented by children to their mothers. The tradition of Simnel cake seems less popular but Mary Berry has an excellent recipe to be found at https://www.bbc.co.uk/food/recipes/mary_berrys_simnel_cake_49483.

John Allan
High Street Baptist Church



Sunday 27th March

We celebrate Mothering Sunday across the Tring Team Parish.

Please invite friends and neighbours or bring the whole family along.
Posies are given to all.

Tring 10am Worship for All Communion
Aldbury 10am Worship for All Communion
Puttenham 3.30pm Parish Evensong
Long Marston 6pm Worship for All Communion



Retirement – the end or the beginning of life?



As I mentioned in a recent Tweet, I retired on 31 December 2020. I had worked for BT for thirty-two years at that point and wanted a break from work – either temporary or permanent. When I joined BT in 1988 it was already privatized but still had rules that lingered from when it was a nationalized company as part of the General Post Office. The pension had been identical to the Civil Service, i.e. index-linked and final salary. However, it was still pretty good when I joined. Also, when I joined you had to retire on or before your 60th birthday and this even applied to the chairman. Many people were surprised when Sir Iain Vallance retired in 2003, as he was doing a good job, but this was because he had to.

Anyway, during my time with BT, pensions changed as did retirement rules. In 2009 in a national review of pensions, the mandatory retirement age was removed at BT and so there was no upper age by which you had to retire. Also the final salary pension scheme that I was on was closed and a career average scheme introduced. This meant that the contributions made into the final salary scheme would still be implemented as final salary when I retired, but no more contributions could be made to that scheme. Despite the upper age limit being taken off, I had decided at that point I was still going to retire at 60 and had planned accordingly. When the state pension age was increased, that gave me some pause for thought, but I still aimed to retire at 60. In the end I was 59 when I retired, only ten months off my original target date, but it was a decision that needed to be weighed-up rather than being a *fait de complis*.

By contrast my father had been in the Civil Service for almost forty years

and had an index-linked final salary pension that was pretty much the maximum he could get. Although my father was not a senior civil servant, my parents are financially comfortable and their income exceeds their outgoings.

There are other differences between myself and my father that probably make a difference to how we have approached retirement. I wouldn't say my father was a workaholic, but he was conscientious and a commuter for the vast majority of his working life, going into London for most of that, and, for the last few years, travelling about forty miles to Andover each day. This obviously added to his working day and he certainly set out to London before 7.00am most mornings and would return home at about 6.00pm. Also he didn't have obvious hobbies and interests outside of work, and so, when he retired he relaxed and had a well-earned rest, but it is fair to say he also became fairly sedentary. While I am not a medical expert, I can't help but wonder if this sedentary lifestyle contributed to the onset of my father's dementia. It would probably have happened anyway but possibly later.

Initially I also commuted to West Byfleet and then to London, Apsley and Leavesden. In 2003 I started to work from home and this continued to be the pattern for the most part until I retired. Ironically just before Covid-19, late in 2019, my senior management had decided they wanted everyone in a BT office three or four days a week and by this time my official office was in Hatfield. Just as this was about to be implemented the first lockdown hit and so we were then told to work at home – so in my last year working I went into the office once. A consequence of lockdown also meant I didn't go out as much, so in 2020 I put on 21lbs in weight – I am probably not alone in this experience.

Before I retired from BT, I resolved to do more birdwatching and in the course

of that, do more walking to reduce my weight down to something lower than pre-Covid levels. I also decided I would spend more time looking for and at moths and not look for paid work for two years and see how the finances worked out and, if not, working again was a viable option – not something my father had to consider when he retired. My other promise to myself was to keep mentally active as much as possible.

So having been retired for just over a year now, I have lost more than 30lbs in weight by walking anything up to twice as far as I used to prior to retirement. Instead of just walking round Tring Reservoirs I also walk round Ivinghoe Beacon, Steps Hill and Pitstone Hill most days and have seen more Ring Ouzels and Wheatears than I have ever seen before. I have also seen 130 new species of moths both in my traps and from walking in the countryside. It also looks like the income is sufficient to meet our needs, so I am not currently planning to look for paid work.

There were some unplanned things I also took on, as I am now Church Warden at St Peter & St Paul's Church as well as Parish Co-ordinator and have learnt how to stream services to the internet so that congregations can watch live services from their home or the recordings later at their leisure – not something any of us had planned three years ago.

Some people have asked me if I miss my old job and my answer is an emphatic 'No'. I do miss some of the people I worked with, but not the actual job. The chance to do more of the things I love doing – both in the church and outside – means I am happier and far less stressed than I was when I was working.

In 1 Corinthians 6 it says 'your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you', so when you retire, look after yourself as best you can.

Roy Hargreaves
St Peter & St Paul

Parish registers

Baptisms

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

Megan Charlotte Beasley
Ruby Alexandra Grace Barber

Funerals

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

Brenda Smith, 93
Jack Rupert Martin, 98

Tring *enjoying life* **Together Fundraising Event**

Golf Day

Friday 20th May · 9.30am
Stocks Golf Course
 Aldbury, Herts

Tee up your best shot as you support our ongoing work with the community and local businesses.



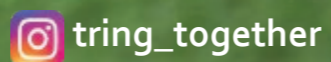
Some of our initiatives:



Teams of 4 • £280

Including Breakfast, Refreshments and a BBQ Lunch

To register, email toby@tringtogether.org.uk and find further details here www.tringtogether.org.uk



1st Saturday Lunches



Our first Saturday lunches have been going for more years than I can remember. They were started by an ecumenical bereavement group through Churches

Together in Tring, championed by Major Sharon King of the Salvation Army and held in the citadel in Albert Street.

For many years Margaret Oram spearheaded them, over the years changing venues to the Tring Parish Hall, changing the name to 1st Saturday lunches, and welcoming anyone living on their own. When Margaret took well-deserved retirement in 2019 and with no one coming forward, the clergy took over the running of it. Within three months we were in lockdown so it had to be curtailed, but as soon as we were able to have groups of six, we opened up in St Peter & St Paul's Church with one table of six socially-distanced guests. One guest said that it was the first time she had sat down to eat with anyone for six months!

Now back in the Parish Hall, we welcome around twenty guests for a two-course home-cooked lunch each

month and we cater for dietary needs. Our team of cooks have increased but we would like to have a few more kitchen assistants. This will mean with several teams the commitment is not too great for anyone. The teams also sit down to eat with the guests and it is lovely to get to know them and to hear of the benefit they gain from the fellowship. We have space to have a few more guests as well as helpers, so please let me or Huw Bellis know if this interests you or someone you know.

The highlight of the year was the Christmas lunch which was exceptional. Turkey with all the trimmings, Christmas pudding and mince pies, crackers and chocolates and a glass of Baileys! And presents from Tring Elves and Tring Together, Christmas carols played on the hand-bells from TRingers and Sally Cottle serenading us on the piano. It was so good to be back to celebrate!

Janet Goodyer
St Peter & St Paul



Letter from Orkney

One of the problems of belonging to a tiny church, both physically in terms of the building, and also the number in the congregation and clergy members, is if someone is unwell, you can lose a large proportion of the machinery that keeps everything going.

At present, Edward is our minister. He retired from the Church of England, moved to Orkney and then somehow found himself standing in at St Mary's while there is a vacancy for a House for Duty Priest here. He is doing an amazing job, both in terms of leading Sunday services, as well as keeping everything else running smoothly. He and his wife Hilary were invaluable in supporting Mac and me when Mac had his stroke last year, so I can highly recommend his pastoral care skills! He also chairs the Vestry Committee, of which I am a member. As an aside, for such a small church, I am staggered by the amount of work required to run it, perhaps because there are so few of us available to cover the responsibilities involved.

Edward recently contracted what he called 'man-flu' but what I suspect was actual real flu. All lateral flow and PCR tests were negative. Despite this, in these Covid-ridden times, he felt he shouldn't soldier on, spreading germs, and so he had to cancel his attendance in church. We have no back-up clergy and our Lay Reader, Catriona, who stands in when Edward is committed elsewhere (that's Plan B), was herself committed at another church on that day. What to do?

Plan C, in place to cover such an eventuality, is for the congregation to run the service ourselves. I therefore found myself, with Barbara, the other Vestry Committee member, standing in front of the congregation and sharing the responsibility of 'A Service of the Word' commemorating 'The Presentation of Christ at the Temple'. The wearing of purple is apparently de rigeur on this occasion so that's what Barbara and I did (see photo). Edward had composed the sermon from his sick bed and this input from



him was invaluable. It was a very interesting experience, facing the congregation rather than being amongst everyone. Full concentration was required to keep track of what was to happen next, rather than just following along as usual. I took comfort beforehand from Catriona who said, 'God won't mind if everything isn't perfect, the main thing is everyone is still meeting in his name'. In the event, everything ran more or less as it should and St Mary's was still open and running.

Hallelujah! I just pray Edward gets better soon.
Carrie Dodge
St Mary's, Stromness

Opening hearts and homes to children



I weep when stories of children being neglected, abused, abandoned or worse reach the news. I have no doubt that you do, too.

Social services get very bad press when this happens - yet England faces a 25,000 shortfall in foster families over the next five years. Around a fifth of foster households exit the system each year, leaving local councils and specialist agencies scrambling to recruit families just to keep the current levels.

On 31 March 2021, 57,380 children in England were living with foster families. This is 71% of the 80,850 children in care looked after away from home. The rest are in children's homes or secure accommodation. There are around 45,370 foster families in England. Every year, thousands of new foster families are needed in England and the supply is not keeping up with the demand. It is almost always better for a child in care to be in a

family setting than in an institution.

Experts fear that local councils will face increasing pressure to place vulnerable children with families unsuitable for their needs, leading to them passing through several homes and becoming more unstable.

Last year, the children's charity Barnardo's warned of a 'state of emergency' in the foster system, while local government sources have warned that a series of factors risk combining to cause a fresh crisis. Increased poverty as a result of the pandemic is likely to be exposed now that children are back in the classroom. The end of the ban on eviction is also a concern. And more foster placements will also be needed as the courts work through a backlog of hearings. Several councils have privately warned they are facing shortages that they have not encountered for years, or are being forced to pay ever higher rates to private agencies supplying foster carers.

'There is a shortage of foster carers, while more children are coming into our care,'

said Edwina Grant, from the Association of Directors of Children's Services (ADCS) and previously the lead on Children's Services (which includes fostering and adoption) for nearby Central Bedfordshire Council.

'There has been a lack of focus and investment from government in this area. Local authorities across the country continue to invest in local and regional

recruitment campaigns. ADCS members remain concerned about the significant profits being made by a small number of fostering organisations.'

From my perspective, writing as a Christian, there seems something very wrong about a company making a large amount of money out of some of our most troubled youngsters by trading lists of names of the foster carers who actually do the hard work.

The number of children in care is continuing to grow, the key problems being drugs, drink, mental health challenges and domestic violence. Much of the challenge in finding children the best home for their needs lies not in the number of placements but types of placements available. What is needed is a nationally funded recruitment campaign so that far more people who might be interested in fostering could be reached. Almost nine in ten fosterers are currently aged over 40. But research by the Social Market Foundation suggests that younger carers could represent an under-utilised source of fostering places. Some 6% of 18- to 34-year-olds said they were considering fostering - that represents around 300,000 people. This reflects the conversations I have had with my young friends and my nephews, nieces, my children and their partners.

Reports show that many people would consider fostering, or returning to fostering, if they were given the right support and treated professionally. The change to a more flexible working approach for some people, brought about by the lockdowns of recent years may help people face the challenges of juggling fostering and a career.

One young foster carer, only 23 herself and single, who came from a fostering family, said that while fostering is hard work, nothing is more rewarding. I would agree with that completely.

Anyone interested in fostering in Hertfordshire can contact 0800 917 0925 or email fostering.recruitment@hertfordshire.gov.uk. Anyone interested in fostering in Buckinghamshire can contact 01296 674973 or email fosterwithbucks@buckinghamshire.gov.uk.

Jon Reynolds, Tring Team

Comments from Edwina Grant taken from The Guardian in August 2021 and used by kind permission.

Lent and Easter Appeal

Walking humbly through Lent 2022

A prayer for walking humbly

- We have walked to Glasgow for climate justice
- We have walked 300K steps
- We have walked with Christian Aid Week envelopes
- We have walked to hand in petitions
- We have walked to get medical help
- We have walked for daily water
- We have walked to reach new pasture
- We have walked to get an education

Show us this Lent what it means to walk humbly with you as we seek to act justly and love mercy.

Amen

Join the Churches Together in Tring for Lent lunches throughout Lent to raise money for Christian Aid. Give directly via the Christian Aid website. www.christianaid.org.uk/appeals/key-appeals/lent-easter-appeal




Woman not witch

If Ruth Osborne could hear us talking about her now, what would she think? Sadly, we know very little about her history, apart from the fact that she was an elderly woman born in 1680, who somehow ended up homeless and hungry and was murdered - you could say - for daring to speak her mind when a man refused to help her.

All she wanted was some buttermilk and, when John Butterworth, the farmer she approached, sent her packing, she dared to retaliate muttering that 'the Pretender would pay him out'.

It would be easy to demonise John Butterworth but this was a time when loyalties were divided. The Jacobite rebellion, an attempt to put Catholic James Stuart on the throne, had been crushed in 1715 but that wasn't an end to it. In 1745, the year the buttermilk incident took place, Edward Stuart was leading his army into England in a final attempt to depose King George and put his father James on the throne. Unable to muster sufficient support, he was ultimately defeated in 1746 at the battle of Culloden but down-and-out Ruth's remark to a farmer and Protestant loyalist would have seemed highly contentious - and even treasonable.

As luck would have it, not long after the incident, John Butterworth's cattle became ill and he himself began to suffer from epileptic fits and had to give up farming. He then became innkeeper of the Black Horse in Gubblecote, a mere three miles from Tring (making this a very local story). No doubt, when he'd had a few drinks with his clientele, he would have a good grumble about his bad luck and the encounter with the annoying Ruth, which still rankled. Perhaps he wasn't the only one she'd upset, for somehow the idea took hold that she was to blame and must be a witch, a notion that soon got out of hand when exploited for personal gain by the unscrupulous chimney sweep, Thomas Collet, and which ultimately was to cost him and Ruth and her

husband, their lives.

As for so many others throughout the ages - women who dared to be different in some way or, heaven forfend, wise, or just old or poor or annoying like Ruth, who was possibly all of these - this accusation led to her being brutally murdered by a thrill-seeking mob. And this didn't happen in the Middle Ages or in some faraway land, it was here in the Hertfordshire countryside in the rural community of Long Marston, Wilstone and Gubblecote, in preindustrial Georgian times.

In case you don't know the full story, or haven't read the John Noakes play about what happened, Ruth and her husband, John, were living rough on land belonging to her brother who owned Folly Farm in Long Marston; but, being warned of the oncoming danger, they took shelter in the workhouse in Tring. Collet and his cronies had organised a witch-ducking, which they advertised by means of posters and town criers as far afield as Hemel Hempstead, Leighton Buzzard and Winslow. On the chosen day, a mob reported to have been some 4000 strong, descended on Tring, eager for 'entertainment'. Fearing violence, Ruth and John were taken to St Peter & St Paul's Church for sanctuary, but the mob was not to be deterred. They forced their way in and dragged the terrified couple away to be subjected to a medieval form of torture, where they were stripped naked, tied by their thumbs and toes and hauled by ropes three times through a pond, the idea being that if they sank, they were innocent, if they floated, they were witches. Either way, they had little or no chance of survival. Ruth died choking on the muddy water after being repeatedly prodded with a stick to encourage her to sink by the over-zealous Collet, who once the ducking was over, went round collecting money from the onlookers. Her husband John

survived the ducking but never fully recovered and died not long afterwards.

Of course, not everyone in the area took part and Robert Gregory, one of local farmer, Ivor Gregory's forbears, tried to stop the ducking but was overwhelmed by the sheer size of the mob. In the end, no one would or could stop it, because it had gained such momentum, but afterwards, people were shocked and shamed by what had happened to this helpless old couple and the full force of the law was brought to bear to ensure this illegal and barbaric act (the ducking of witches had already been outlawed in the Witchcraft Act of 1735) would never happen again. Collet was found guilty and hung from a gibbet in Gubblecote, as a stark warning to others.

Like many who preceded her, Ruth Osborne might have been forgotten had she not been the last so called 'witch' to suffer this brutal treatment. And let us not forget that random acts of violence against women are still happening all over the world. Take the recent case of Sarah Everard, murdered by a serving police officer in the UK; and the often-violent repression of women in countries like Afghanistan, where for the Taliban, prejudice and discrimination of women is an accepted part of their culture and everyday life; and they are by no means the only ones.

For all these reasons, the Ruth Osbornes of this world should not be forgotten and the Long Marston Book Group want to pay tribute to her and all those who went before her. Whatever her beliefs or circumstances, she did not deserve to be brutally murdered. No one does. There is a rose called the 'Bloom of Ruth' which Book Club members are going to plant in gardens around the villages and they hope to raise enough money in 2022 to create a memorial for her and all those killed in the name of prejudice and superstition. We hope you will all support us.

The Long Marston Book Group

The Tring Workhouse

Probably at the time of the Ruth Osborne case, and certainly up to 1834, the Tring Workhouse occupied the building known as the Rectory Manor House. This was a medieval building which stood roughly between the present library and Bishop

Wood School. At the time of Domesday, the rectory was a manor in its own right; the tithe barn behind Gilbert Grace's shop being part of it. After the Tring Workhouse closed in 1834, its users had to travel to Berkhamsted. The workhouse

there was called Nugent House, and was demolished in the 1930s for the construction of Kitsbury Parade.

Tim Amsden

The first female Dean of St Albans

On Saturday 4 December, the Very Reverend Jo Kelly-Moore was installed as Dean of St Albans, during a special service at St Albans Cathedral.

St Alban, Britain's first saint, was executed near to where the Cathedral stands today and since that day, no female has had the role of Dean of St Albans.

Dean Jo's appointment was approved by the Queen in September, after spending four years at Canterbury Cathedral and prior to that, Jo was Dean of Holy Trinity Cathedral in Auckland, New Zealand.

The Very Reverend Jo Kelly-Moore said: 'It is a huge privilege and a joy to become the 10th Dean of St Albans and to work with the Cathedral community and in our Diocese as we, inspired by Alban, Britain's first saint and martyr, serve and support the communities we are part of. In this challenging and anxious world, there can be no doubt of our need to work together, across our communities, as we seek to build

communities of care where all have what they need and can reach their potential. I am committed to that partnership. Thank you for the warm welcome already and I look forward very much to meeting you all over the coming months and to life and ministry here in the counties of Hertfordshire and Bedfordshire'.

The Bishop of St Albans said: 'I'm delighted that Jo has arrived to take up her responsibilities as Dean of St Albans. As well as being the "mother church" of the diocese, the cathedral is a centre of worship and tourism, welcoming large numbers of people on a daily basis. I am confident that under her leadership the cathedral will continue to play a major role in the life of the city and the region. We are looking forward to working with her over the coming years'.

Tim Fleming, Chief Operating Officer at St Albans Cathedral said: 'The Cathedral's staff and many volunteers are absolutely thrilled to be welcoming Jo in her new ministry, here at St Albans and throughout the communities we

serve. St Albans Cathedral is known to be a welcoming and friendly place, and Jo's energy and enthusiasm will fill it beautifully. Jo has talked about the importance and joy of being the people of God in all that we do. It is that



message of love and care, inspired by the witness of Alban, that I'm sure Jo will find here as we welcome her and her family.'



TRING CHARITIES
(Registered Charity No 207805)

ALMSHOUSES IN TRING

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

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

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

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

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

Fairtrade Fortnight



Fairtrade Fortnight (21 February to 6 March 2022) is an annual event when thousands of individuals, companies and groups across the UK come

together to share the stories of the people who grow our food and drinks, mine our gold and grow the cotton in our clothes – people who are often exploited and underpaid.

In 2022, the online 'Choose the World you Want' Festival will return from 21 February to 6 March. There will be events ranging from webinars and panels to bake-offs and virtual coffee mornings. In addition, Tring had its own, in-person, coffee morning at High Street Baptist Church where people popped along for a freshly brewed Fairtrade cuppa, cake and craft.

Since last Fairtrade Fortnight we have seen the G7 and COP26 take place. Over 33,000 campaigners joined 1.8m Fairtrade farmers and workers in backing the 'Be Fair With Your Climate Promise' challenge to world leaders at the UN COP26 summit. But frustration came as the wealthiest nations failed to recognise the urgent need to invest in farmer expertise by delaying their promised \$100bn annual funding to the most climate vulnerable countries until 2023. That isn't good enough.

'A frustrating conclusion to a summit filled with hope.' This was the verdict



of Mary Kinyua, Fairtrade's lead COP26 delegate, and a Fairtrade flower farmer representative.

Climate justice was never going to be won or lost at one conference in Glasgow. But where the COP26 agreement fell short, we need to increase the pressure for urgent action. We need to be louder than ever to make sure politicians turn their promises into action at COP27 in Cairo later

this year. The failure to deliver enough progress at COP26 makes it even more important that governments get serious. We also need businesses to support Fairtrade more than ever.

Fairtrade is about social, economic and environmental justice. A root cause of the inability to adapt

and mitigate climate change is poverty. More money is needed in the hands of farmers if they are to adapt and survive the climate crisis. Choosing Fairtrade helps the fight for improvements in producers' livelihoods, giving them collective strength through co-ops and their bargaining power, the protection of a minimum price and Fairtrade premiums.

How can I get involved?

- Join the online 2022 festival
- Ask for Fairtrade coffee and tea when you visit local cafés and restaurants
- Buy Fairtrade when it's an option
- Write to your MP about the importance of supporting Fairtrade

Polly Eaton
High Street Baptist Church

More information and link to online festival: <https://www.fairtrade.org.uk/Get-Involved/Current-campaigns/Fairtrade-Fortnight>

Fairtrade Fortnight
21 February - 6 March 2022



The mystery of pictures in print



I am a 'words' person, happier with punctuation and points of grammar than images; and I don't pretend to be a designer or a printer; but over the years I have been in publishing, I have picked up odd bits of knowledge that carry over into other parts of my life. I now take them for granted, but in being Editor of *Comment*, I can see that the 'mystery' could do with being unravelled.

We love to bandy about words like high and low resolution (high res and low res). This simply means the level of detail in a printed image. The higher the resolution, the more detail you can see in a picture; this is measured (in case you are interested) in dots per inch (DPI). When there are more dots of ink printed per inch, you can see more detail and the image is sharper and clearer.

So why does it matter? When you submit a photo to be printed – for example, in a publication like *Comment* – you don't want it to be blurry or fuzzy. You want it to be clear so everyone thinks it's as professional as in a printed book. If you send a photo from a Smartphone or digital camera, it will usually be in high resolution, but if you have a choice, always opt for high resolution. If you are scanning it with your desktop scanner, choose 300DPI. You can also get a good result by photographing a printed photo in good light with a Smartphone camera (but don't tell Kev, the designer of *Comment*, that I said that!).

Don't take images to be printed from Websites, or Facebook, or WhatsApp, which all compress images to save 'space' because then it can only be used very small when printed, and even then it may be poor quality. Don't embed the photo in a Word document – that also compresses the image and reduces the quality. Many contributors produce beautifully constructed articles with all their pictures positioned perfectly in the text – and I have to ask them to send the images separately and then I have to remove all the formatting...

We love to have photos in *Comment* and there is usually a way to make it happen even if you don't have the modern technology and all the above is as good as something written in Chinese. I have borrowed photos in the past and

scanned them and returned the photos – but maybe you know someone else who can help you get your precious photos in high resolution to me for printing.

If you have not yet fallen asleep and now passed your GCSE in photo production and want the A Level, I could tell you about RGB (Red, Blue, Green) and CMYK (Cyan, Magenta, Yellow, Black)... RGB is the colour system used on your TV, computer screen, phone screen or 'tablet' such as an Ipad and always looks brighter and more vivid because it is backlit. When your photo is printed on paper, there is no light to help make those colours brighter, so the image must be converted into CMYK which will make your image the best possible quality for printing. Warning! Don't do this at home! Kev is an expert –

and if you do, you will have a file too big to send to me!

When it comes to file formats for images, you might hear acronyms such as JPEG, PNG, TIFF, GIF, EPS, PSD, BMP to name but a few. However, all we really want to see are TIFF (Tagged Image File Format) or JPEG (Joint Photographic Experts Groups) files. TIFFs are high quality images but very large files. JPEGs are a 'lossy' format, compressing the image to make it smaller but not so you would notice it. Most digital cameras and phones will produce your picture as a JPEG file. Please send us JPEGs!

You now know as much as I do – and if you know more and think it can help us make *Comment* even better – feel free to correct me or add your own tips!

The Editor

Piano & more series
An hour of music on Sunday afternoons

Alison Eales *Clarinet & Piano*
Anna Le Hair *Piano*

A varied programme of music including works by
Brahms and Schubert

Sunday 13th March
at 3pm

followed by tea and refreshments

Live performance, to be held in
Tring Parish Church HP23 5AE

Free admission, with retiring collection

For further details see:
piano-and-more.org.uk
or Google **“Piano and more, Tring”**



Finally in the new building!



After years of planning and then building, the students and staff of Tring School are finally in the fabulous

new building! On

Thursday 16 December 2021 they had their last day in the old school buildings. Over Christmas and the new year, a lot of the furniture, equipment, materials, etc was moved over into the new building and then on Tuesday 11 January the children and the staff had their first school day in the new facilities.

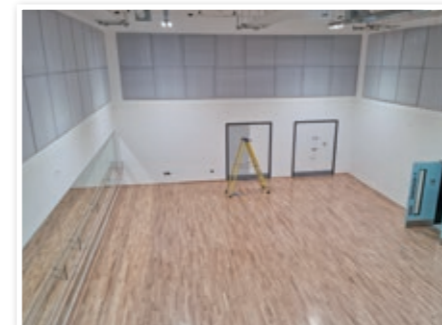
The day started with every tutor group trying to find their way around the new facilities. The three storey building takes some getting used to and navigation and memory skills are definitely required. All routes eventually lead back to the dining hall which is a fabulously bright and airy atrium that can seat 340 students for lunch or an assembly.



Other highlights include state of the art science labs, fantastic design and technology rooms (on top of which are kiln and dark rooms), a well-stocked Learning Resource Centre and, on the third floor, the Sixth Form Centre with fabulous double aspect views of the Chilterns.



The school also invested heavily in a bespoke space for student support. This is unique amongst recently built schools and includes spaces for the Heads of Houses, counselling services, emotional support and careers advice.



Other stand-out features include the double height activity studio (half-sprung wooden floor, mirrored wall with ballet barres, sound and visual system) and a hugely impressive sports hall (grey 'pulastic' flooring with multiple sports

markings, high spec cricket nets and mats, electronic scoreboard, socket/post system for badminton, futsal, netball and handball) and 'swing out' basketball hoops. All of these facilities are available to the community as well as the school and will be fully integrated with the swimming pool in due course.

Work has now started on the demolition of the original school frontage and the subsequent added art and D&T blocks. Once this is complete, a landscaped car park will be constructed featuring boulevards of trees, specially selected shrubs and discreet down lighting. This will also be brilliant news for the school's neighbours as it will take school buses and many cars off of the road at the start and the end of the day.

The students are, without doubt, loving their new facilities. All of the teaching spaces feature

extremely large windows which allow an optimum amount of natural light into the rooms. Temperature is controlled by sophisticated and highly efficient technology to make it one of the most energy efficient buildings in the country.

So, it's taken seven years but it's been worth the wait – the new Tring School building is FABULOUS!

Rod Gibberd
Tring School



Join us on Easter Day

7am Sunrise Service

at Pitstone Hill, followed by
egg-rolling competition
(bring your decorated hard-boiled eggs)

9am Breakfast

at High Street Baptist Church

10.30am All-age celebration service

Photo by simon wood on Unsplash

In memory of Wendy Hinds

Wendy Hinds will have been known to many *Comment* readers who might remember her in years past, riding around Tring on her bicycle and, in more recent times, on a mobility scooter. She was generally well known among the congregations of the churches and chapels in the town, mainly because of her membership of Churches Together in Tring as principal representative of Corpus Christi Parish. She provided an important contribution to the ecumenical life of our town for many years.

Wendy was a very good friend for more than thirty years. In 2011, when I retired from the NHS, she also became my mentor, teaching me with great care and kindness all that I needed to know about becoming a volunteer server and sacristan at Corpus Christi.

She was an excellent teacher and put these skills to good use as a catechist, providing instruction for children preparing for the sacraments of first reconciliation and first holy communion, as well as young people preparing for confirmation. She also provided preparation for parents who wished their children to be baptised, prepared couples for the sacrament of matrimony and also gave support to bereaved families, helping them prepare for the family funeral.

Over the years, Wendy served four parish priests, Monsignor McGuinness, Fr Potter, Canon Sheehan and Canon Berry, as well running our parish with a small group of parishioners during a two-year interregnum when we had no parish priest. Her qualities of kindness and compassion

were well known and shown in many ways, but particularly when she took Fr Tony Potter into her own home to nurse him during the months of his final illness.

'Above and beyond' are words I would use to describe Wendy's kindness, compassion and consideration to all. She was a true Christian demonstrating 'faith in action'.

Wendy's service, and her contribution to the life of our parish and the local community in Tring, culminated in a number of very well-deserved awards. In 2007 she was nominated as one of the Catholic Women of the Year in our diocese of Westminster. Closer to home, in 2014 Tring Town Council made an award to Wendy for her outstanding volunteer work in the town; and in 2018 she received a Westminster Diocesan Award from Cardinal Vincent Nichols, Archbishop of Westminster in recognition of her outstanding contribution to the life of our parish and the local community.

In recent years, Wendy seemed completely accepting of her own ill health and its daily challenges. Whenever I asked her how she was, she would always say she was OK and would never dwell on her own situation, always adding that there were so many people much worse off than herself.

I was one of a group of parishioners who took her holy communion at home

A prayer of St John Henry Newman (1801-1890) who was first an Anglican priest and later a Catholic priest and Cardinal. It was chosen by Wendy to be said at her Requiem Mass on 24th January 2022

*Lord, support us all the day long,
until the shadows lengthen,
and the evening comes,
and the busy world is hushed,
and the fever of life is over,
and our work is done.*

*Then in your mercy,
grant us a safe lodging,
and a holy rest,
and peace at last.
Amen*



when she was no longer able to come to Corpus Christi to attend Mass. She was always welcoming, nearly always had a large mug of latte by her side, and was always ready to make one for me, too. I valued our peaceful, prayerful, times together hugely: her spirituality shone through. Invariably one or other of Wendy's beloved cats would share our devotions, sitting with Wendy either beside her on the sofa or on her lap, nose nudging her prayerbook for attention.

In early 2020, just weeks before the first national lockdown, Wendy and David moved to Aylesbury to share a home with their middle son, Daniel and his family.

It was here that I felt very privileged to have been able to visit Wendy on the morning of what turned out to be the day she died. Though she was by then unconscious, I talked to her of times past and people she and I had known over the years. She was surrounded by the love and care of her three sons with her beloved cat sleeping, where else, but

beside on the bed. She was the Wendy I had known and loved to the end.

She will be very much missed. May she rest in peace and rise in glory.

**Frances Sherratt,
Corpus Christi**

Wendy's kindness was limitless; and many memories abound of her charitable acts. Some outstanding moments are legendary, such as taking into her home needy people, from our then parish priest, Father Potter, to a homeless gentleman she rescued from the cold in the High Street; but Wendy's love for others shone in many more quiet ways.

Like lots of other Corpus Christi parishioners, I was a recipient of that ordinary (for Wendy) reaching out to help. During a time of serious illness, she came to my aid, organising a rota of helpers, and herself coming by every Thursday to

do the ironing. Apart from the practical, it was her cheerful zest for life and spiritual support that sustained not just me but the rest of my family. For that we will all be endlessly grateful.

I was fortunate enough to visit Wendy in hospital during her final illness. In typical Wendy-way, although she knew the seriousness of her condition, she wanted to know how I was and then went through all of my family members in turn. She was full of praise for the care she was getting on the ward and she was her upbeat-self from start to finish. That visit is a memory I will always treasure. I didn't

want it to end, as I felt in my heart that it would be my last chance to be with my very dearly loved friend. Wendy died the afternoon before my planned home visit. Tring, and Corpus Christi in particular, was blessed by having in our presence a soul like no other. Wendy was wonderfully unconventional, wickedly funny and an example to the rest of us of how to live close to God and embody the faith she held so close. Thank you, Wendy, for every single act of kindness you did for us all. May you rest in peace and rise in glory.

Lucy Hutt, Corpus Christi

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COMMENT DEADLINES
1 January
1 February
1 March
1 April
1 May
1 June
1 August
1 September
1 October
1 November

NB There is no magazine for January or August

High Street Baptist Church - Tring

Growing in the message and challenge of God



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



Morning worship



Sundays 10.30am

zoom

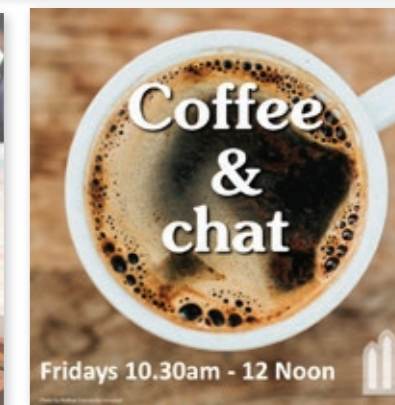
Meeting ID: 978 9592 0392

Pass code: highstreet

Worshipping together in our building and at home.

For information about our midweek kids' activities visit our website or

f Kids Activities @High Street Baptist



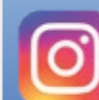
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#tringbaptistchurch



High Street Baptist Church

Crossword puzzle answers From page 15

- | ACROSS | DOWN |
|-------------------|--------------|
| 6. SHROVE TUESDAY | 1. SHOE |
| 8. GENESIS | 2. LEWIS |
| 11. ALTAR | 3. FUN |
| 12. RESPECT | 4. PSALTER |
| 13. WHY | 5. CATARACT |
| 15. CEDAR | 7. OVER |
| 16. TEACHER | 9. SEVERAL |
| 17. ELDER | 10. SPECTRE |
| 18. STY | 11. ACCENTS |
| 19. NARRATE | 14. HALLOWED |
| 22. LOCAL | 16. TENANTS |
| 23. ESSAYER | 20. ASIDE |
| 26. HERTFORDSHIRE | 21. EACH |
| | 24. EARL |
| | 25. GOD |

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Lunchtime Barbeque • All Day Refreshments • Big Prize Raffle

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**WATCH THIS SPACE
FOR FURTHER DETAILS**

