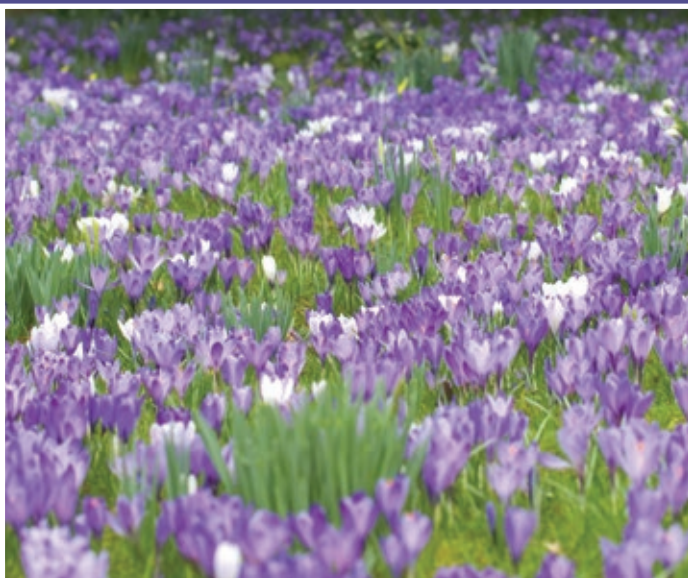


FEBRUARY 2021 £1

COMMENT

THE MAGAZINE OF THE CHURCHES IN TRING



Tring Team Parish

www.tringteamparish.org.uk

Aldbury, Long Marston, Puttenham, Tring and Wilstone Churches.

Please visit our website for everything.

Services - Resources - Pastoral Care Support - And Much More!

It's ok to contact any of the clergy

Team Rector Revd Huw Bellis 01442 822170 or 07411 483229 huw@tringteamparish.org.uk

Team Vicar Revd Jane Banister 01442 822170 Long Marston and Wilstone: jane@tringteamparish.org.uk

Team Vicar Revd Michelle Grace 01442 851200

Aldbury: michelle@tringteamparish.org.uk

Curate Revd Sarah Marshall 07538 888502

sarah@tringteamparish.org.uk

Open Churches for Services

We have services in our five churches throughout the month, **subject to current government restrictions**. You need to book through our website, to allow space and for NHS Test and Trace.

www.tringteamparish.org.uk/news-events.

Aldbury, Sundays at 10am, and 1st Sunday at 8am
Tring, Sundays 8am * & 10am*, Tuesdays 9.15am on Zoom, Wednesdays 10am

Long Marston Sundays at 10am or 6pm.

Wilstone Tuesday at 10am,

Puttenham 2nd and 4th Sundays of the month 3.30pm.

* denotes live-stream service on our website or YouTube

Open Churches for individual Prayer

Tring Church open daily, 10am - 12noon

Wilstone and Long Marston Churches open Sundays (daylight hours).

Aldbury Church open daily, 11am - 3pm

Join in with our worship on the web. Some streamed, some recorded.

Services featuring our clergy and others coming into your home! Different styles, something for all ages and activities for families. Access to daily prayer and services from the Church of England.



Pastoral Care and Support

We are here for you, please contact any of our clergy. - Keep in contact with church friends - Prayer support and resources - Protecting your mental health, lots of ideas about staying focussed and in balance.



The Foodbank in Tring Church is open on weekdays, 10am - 12noon, to collect food and to drop - off food donations.
www.dens.org.uk



Light in the darkness



So here we are, entering February in our third national lockdown. Ash Wednesday is just a couple of weeks away. Who would have believed that when we first closed our churches during Lent last year that we would still be in the midst of a pandemic, and that we would have celebrated all of the feasts of the Christian year under a variety of restrictions? Once more our schools are closed, and it looks like another year of GCSEs and A-levels will be cancelled. Where is our message of hope within this?

I have always been struck by what is known as the Stockdale paradox. Stockdale was the most senior US airman to be held in the notorious H a Lø Prison. Stockdale was asked which prisoners didn't survive and make it out

of Vietnam. He replied: 'Oh, that's easy: the optimists. Oh, they were the ones who said, 'We're going to be out by Christmas'. And Christmas would come, and Christmas would go. Then they'd say, 'We're going to be out by Easter'. And Easter would come, and Easter would go. And then Thanksgiving, and then it would be Christmas again. And they died of a broken heart. This is a very important lesson. You must never confuse faith that you will prevail in the end - which you can never afford to lose - with the discipline to confront the most brutal facts of your current reality, whatever they might be.'

As a nation we placed a lot of hope in the idea that we would have a 'normal' Christmas; but we did this in the face of the knowledge that respiratory diseases peak at this time of the year. We started New Year assuring each other that 2021 would be better than 2020; but we knew it would start in a much tougher fashion with little evidence that an end is in

sight. We placed our hope in a vaccine, without acknowledging that it would take months to be distributed. This may sound pessimistic; but let us look again at the festivals we have just celebrated.

At Christmas, the light came to the world. Light did not come to light; light came to darkness, and the darkness could not overcome it. This is always our hope; in the reality (and messiness) of our world, light will always triumph. Then at Epiphany we saw that the glory of God was made manifest in unusual ways. We won't always find God by going back and doing the same old stuff. God will surprise us. Looking forward to Ash Wednesday on 17 February we normally give things up to help us to focus on that which is truly important. We have given so much up this past year, maybe this year instead we will just be able to focus on that which is important, on those things which lead us to God, which set us free.

Huw Bellis, Tring Team

Matthew's Gospel

Seldom has such an important book begun in such a repellent way' is one scholar's comment on the list of names at the beginning of St Matthew's Gospel. In fact, it is the genealogy of Jesus and shows the Old Testament is the essential background to, and preparation for, the life of Jesus.

The first two words in the original Greek echo the beginning of the Old Testament in the book of Genesis - a name meaning beginning, origin or descent.

Matthew is the name of the Apostle who was also known as Levi, the tax gatherer, but this book is of a later date than the Apostle and is not the work of an eye-witness, but derived from other sources, especially Mark.

Authorship in the Bible is not viewed in the same way as today and often a famous or appropriate name is given. There is an early reference to Matthew gathering sayings in Aramaic 'which everyone translated as they could' but this is not thought to be the book of sayings used by Matthew and Luke.

The sources of this book are the Gospel of Mark, an apparent collection of Sayings of Jesus (which scholars call 'Q') and other material found in his Infancy narrative, as well as a few details in his Passion narrative.

The date of Matthew's Gospel is after Mark (about AD64-69) and before AD110: a reasonable guess is AD80-90, i.e. after the Fall of Jerusalem and at a time when controversy and divisions were arising between Christians and Jews.

Handbook for church leaders and teachers is a helpful word to describe this Gospel. In an orderly way it sets out what Christians of the time needed to know for worship and instruction - the careful arrangement in five sections (perhaps an echo of the five books of the Law of Moses) of which one is the Sermon on the Mount.

Ecclesiastical is a word we could use of this Gospel, because only Matthew uses the word 'ecclesia' (church). It contains a full account of Christ's teaching thus making it a manual for church leaders and well adapted for public reading. It contains the form of the Lord's Prayer we use today as well as extra information such as the Wise Men and Pilate's wife's dream.

We owe to Matthew the stress on the Old Testament - he quotes it more often than the other Gospel writers, often with a formula about Scripture being fulfilled. Yet it clearly reflects the split and dissensions developing in the AD80s between synagogue and church.

Rule of St Benedict from Abbey of Metten



I know that some of you have been to Turvey Abbey and met Brother John (the Superior of the monastery) and Brother Herbert (at 99% the oldest there). I am an

Oblate at the monastery and go there regularly to work. I have been archivist, librarian and gardener but now spend most of my time shampooing the carpets of the many rooms in the monastery and guest house.

In Brother John's recent newsletter, he says that the morning Office of Readings had a letter from St Augustine as one of the readings, and that Brother Herbert was writing a letter to St Augustine in reply, as he disagreed with it! I smiled and thought that maybe I should write a letter to St Paul arguing a few points.

That made me think about authority. Fundamentalist Evangelical churches believe that only the Bible has authority, and that it cannot be altered or interpreted in any way whatsoever. As I understand it, Catholics believe that the church, inspired by the Holy Spirit, can interpret – particularly through exegesis or considering the historical and cultural context of a passage. Pope Francis has risked the wrath of traditionalists by approving a change to the wording of the Lord's Prayer. Instead of saying 'lead us not into temptation,' it says 'do not let us fall into temptation'. The new wording was approved by the general assembly of the Episcopal Conference of Italy in May 2019.

So inside the Christian family of denominations, the authority of the Bible is seen differently. My own viewpoint is that as man evolved from a stone age people in Genesis to man at the time of the birth of Jesus, God's revelation

to man kept pace with man's intellectual development. If that is the case then it seems reasonable to me that God's revelation keeps pace with man's development through the Middle Ages up to today. That is just my personal view!

The early versions of the Bible were copied by hand and differ significantly in places from the texts we have today. I am reminded of the old Benedictine joke:

'A young novice is being shown around by the Abbot and taken to the Scriptorium where the Rule of St Benedict (which sets out how a monk should live his life) is being copied.

"Excuse me, Abbot," says the novice, "but how do you know they are not making mistakes in the copying."

"That is simple," replies the Abbot, "I can check it against the original version in the cellar. I will go down and get it."

The Abbot has not returned after an hour and the novice finds him weeping in a corner of the cellar with the original Rule open. "It says Celebrate," weeps the Abbot.'

The earliest known Bible is in the Vatican – the Codex Vaticanus, which was written in Greek on vellum around AD300 but is missing Genesis, Hebrews and Revelation.

The second oldest is in parts – most in the British Museum. It is the Codex Sinaiticus and dates from around AD350. It is missing quite a bit of the Old Testament but the New Testament is intact. It is interesting that the books in them are virtually identical to what was officially recognised as the Bible in AD382 at the Council of Rome. This Canon was accepted until the Reformation when the Thirty-nine Articles made Martin Luther's translation from the Hebrew the official version for Protestants – he omitted the texts only found in Greek which became



the Apocrypha for Protestants but remain in the Catholic Bible.

The Eastern Orthodox Bible differs in places from the Western Bibles, and contains a 200-page introduction to help readers, and has extensive footnotes and references. There are also Syrian, Sahidic and Coptic Bibles which contain Apocryphal books, omit a considerable number of verses from the New Testament and have the books in a different order.

The Church of Latter Day Saints (Mormons) adds the Book of Mormon, the Doctrine and Covenants, and the Pearl of Great Price as their 'Canon of Scripture'.

There are many current translations of the Bible into English which all differ slightly in the translation of various verses. At the last count there were over 450. The New Revised Standard Version is the one preferred by many scholars. Personally I use the New Living Translation which was first produced in 1996.

As the old saying goes 'You pays your money and you takes your choice'.

Please note that I have simplified the detail in this article a lot!

John Allan
High Street Baptist Church

Thank you



At the end of December I wrote thank you letters to the family for the wonderful gifts they have provided this Christmas. There is another thank you I would like to write,

and that is to the team of leaders we have in our local churches who have kept worship going throughout a difficult year.

In St Peter & St Pauls team I would like to say thank you to Huw, Jane Michelle, Sarah and all the others who have held the services, recorded them and made sure that they have kept in touch. It cannot have been easy, especially during Easter and Christmas

when so much goes on.

I have felt inspired by their teaching, humbled by their commitment and grateful that we can still feel part of a family of worshippers. So one GREAT BIG THANK YOU to you all!

Jill Smith
St Peter & St Paul

Have a happier, and more fulfilled 2021, guaranteed!



Just take yourself back twelve months. What were you doing on this day and time last year? I suspect for most of us it was a normal day, with our usual friends,

family or colleagues, much like the month before, and with an expectation that next month, and the year ahead would be pretty similar. Of course, we all know how 2020 turned out. For many, these challenges have brought sadness, loneliness, loss and lost opportunities. Nothing can make up for these physical events, but how we respond to them in 2021 is up to us.

As I look forward to the arrival of Spring, my mind has turned to how we might seek out blessings in 2021, whatever events might throw at us. Here are three mental tasks to exercise your brain in 2021. While nothing is guaranteed, they may just contribute to you experiencing a happier 2021, whether we are 'locked in' at home or 'pushed out' at work.

Daily gratitude

Gratitude is a concept which has become diminished in Western society, almost in parallel with the increasing wealth that most of us enjoy. Wealth, possessions and health have, for many, become expected norms rather than personal 'blessings' that are appreciated. As expectations have changed, so gratitude has diminished. Gratitude has, for many, been replaced by disappointment, anger and resentment when these expected 'blessings' either fail to appear or disappear. As Christians, how can we recapture this gratitude? After all, in the main, we live like princes.

Just as an example: I woke up this morning and found myself in a bed of clean white sheets, covered by a warm duvet, and I stepped out of bed onto a carpet. Entering a separate room, I

found taps with clean water, a hot shower revived me, a choice of clothes awaited me in a wardrobe, on the opposite wall were several hundred books, and access to tens of millions of songs, plays, films, stories, sports, games and entertainment available at my command to entertain my every whim. In short, I am 'wealthier' than even the richest prince from a thousand years ago, richer than most humans who have ever lived and richer than 85% of the world's population today.

Only when I recognise these blessings of clean water, shelter, education, employment, healthcare, transport, food and entertainment, most of which I take for granted, can I then truly thank God for what I have.

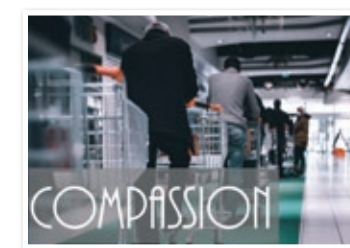


Three good things

Three good things is very simple and revolves around a single question: 'What are the best three things about today?' I find this works best for me when asked at the end of a day. I try to capture my thoughts in a note pad, along with the feelings associated with each of the three good things. I find that focusing my mind towards the positive events of the day, as opposed to ruminating about the less-good parts, helps me to drift off to sleep more quickly, thinking about my blessings. The question also works well with children. I often ask it to my youngest, aged 9, who is quick to tell me stories about her day and usually, and what's best, is she often ends by asking, 'Daddy, what's been the best part of your day?' Research evidence suggests that the repeated use of this question (for example, a daily practice over several months) strengthens the neural pathways which look for the positive aspects our lives, helping us to become more positive and optimistic.

Compassionate mind

Christians seek not only to act with compassion to others, and ourselves, but also seek to become compassionate: a state of being which contributes to our



wider becoming as servants of Jesus. One way I try to do this is through silent blessings. We can do it when we are stuck in busy traffic, standing in a queue at Tesco or when walking down the High Street. As I look at the strangers around me, I usually see composed faces, faces that reveal nothing. But I know that while one person may be worried about their teenage daughter's behaviour, another may be dreaming about their next holiday, a third person may be sad about the loss of their partner, while a fourth may be fearful about what their boss may do next. The truth is: none of us know what sits behind each façade, but we can try to empathise with the multiple feelings of humanity – sadness, joy, fear – and offer each person a blessing for their day as we stand next to them in the queue, walk past them on the road or sit next to them on the M25: 'May your day be blessed, and may you carry with you joy and peace in your heart to the next people you meet.' Occasionally, just occasionally, someone will look up and catch my eye. In these situations, I can offer a warm smile. Most times, the person smiles back. Maybe this tiny interaction brightens the other person's day. These shared moments of loving kindness can also brighten our day. They remind us that while we are one of 8 billion people on this planet, each of them is just like us, trying their best to earn a living for their family and live a peaceful, happy and fulfilled life. While this technique may not change the world, it may gradually change us.

Finally, a warning: unlike the offers of magical transformations in magazines and TV adverts, don't expect results next week. Developing our brain in these ways, like developing our other muscles, is about frequent and regular practice, over weeks and months. But you don't need to do this in your own strength: we have a friend who is always with us.

Jonathan Passmore,
High Street Baptist Church

An unsettled Advent



Not only Advent but most of the year has been unsettled and continues to be. Unsettled Advent was the title of an Advent Course that was offered by the Tring Team

Parish: to spend a while focusing on the stories of Elizabeth and Mary and how they were faced with enormous upheavals as they were unexpectedly chosen to be the mothers of John the Baptist and Jesus.

Our Tring Mothers' Union group have been meeting regularly by Zoom for a social time and Jane Banister offered to run a course with the MU members. We had a very positive response with just

over twelve members signing up for it. At our sessions we thought about choices (or lack of choice) when Elizabeth and Mary were chosen by God. Even though their stories resonated with us in the unsettling times of Covid-19 and the ever-changing restrictions, it sparked lots of memories and times in our lives when we were faced with big problems or decisions, and how our faith and support from others had helped.

Some of us felt that this time of Covid-19 has really made us think more about our faith and our greater reliance on God's love for each one of us and how we can support each other through trying times. Although it was a large group, members were respectful, giving time for others to share their stories. However, especially for a large group, a Zoom

meeting can be limited on how we share ideas and for some it meant they were left when the meeting closed with painful memories that left them feeling sad.

We re-visited The Magnificat again, reading different versions. Some members are very familiar with the Book of Common Prayer Magnificat, sung at Evensong, and reading a more modern version gave us a new dimension to the words and what it was saying to us. We had homework each week that we could do, although time was limited to share it all. On one occasion, we were given the task of re-writing the Magnificat to reflect our struggles and bring it up-to-date. Revd Janet Ridgway wrote a very personal version which she is happy to share with *Comment* readers.

Janet Goodyer, St Peter & St Paul

Magnificat, Book of Common Prayer

My soul doth magnify the Lord: and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour.

For he hath regarded: the lowliness of his handmaiden.

For behold, from henceforth: all generations shall call me blessed.

For he that is mighty hath magnified me: and holy is his Name.

And his mercy is on them that fear him: throughout all generations.

He hath shewed strength with his arm: he hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts.

He hath put down the mighty from their seat: and hath exalted the humble and meek.

He hath filled the hungry with good things; and the rich he hath sent empty away.

He remembering his mercy hath holpen his servant Israel: as he promised to our forefathers, Abraham and his seed for ever.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son: and to the Holy Ghost; as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be: world without end. Amen

Magnificat, Revd Janet Ridgway

My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour. My Lord and Saviour, you are present at all times and in all places. Without you I lose my way. I lay before you my life, all my yesterdays, today and tomorrows. I praise and thank you for your presence in my life. I give you every relationship, every situation in my life, all my outbursts of joy and of anger, all my moments of elation and despair. I lay before you my frail thoughts, questions and aspirations. I give you all my searching and striving, my grasping after truth. I acknowledge you to be the truth, truth in its entirety, truth which can set me free.

Help me to know that beneath me are your everlasting arms, bearing me up. Be the Lord of my thoughts and feelings. Holy Spirit, source of all truth, giver of strength and power. Come upon me now. as a gentle dove or like tongues of living fire, or as a mighty roaring wave. Come and dwell within me. Enable me now to do those things which before were impossible. Unworthy as I am, keep me faithful that I may show forth your love and your light in all that I try to be and endeavour to do. God be with me today and always. Glory be to you, Father.

Glory be to you, Lord Jesus Christ, and glory be to the Holy Spirit. Amen

Bible Society news

I have written a couple of times about the effect of the pandemic on Christian publishing and Bible Societies around the world. I heard from the Bible Society of Brazil recently who were anything but discouraged.

'We feel that 2020 was not a lost year at all. We have suffered, but we have learned a lot and I think we have come out of it much stronger. During the year,

we felt a significant reduction in our sales, but churches and Christians supported us with prayers, volunteer work and donations for special campaigns that helped keep the outreach programmes running and sowing the Word that transforms lives. Thank God we have the support of all our publishing partners in renegotiating payments, so our accounts are up to date. In addition, we have

intentionally shrunk our catalogue and our inventories considerably. Little by little we are feeling a general improvement in politics and economics in our country; and we believe that vaccines will play a positive role in the resumption throughout the year.'

**Annette Reynolds
St Peter & St Paul**

A true story



Hello folks of Tring, it's me again. Carrie and I would like to wish everyone we know and especially those we don't know, a very peaceful, safe and

contented new year.

I thought it might be a little different this time to give you exactly what I read in our little church on Christmas Eve. It is a true story; I'm not proud of some of it, and I learnt a great deal from it, but then – life is like that. There is a sort of poem at the end. I do hope you will forgive me for the erratic metre.

The Backstory (as the trendies say)

Carrie and I were holidaying on our boat and at the time were moored in Birmingham at 'Gas St. Basin, a wonderful area surrounded by cafes and restaurants of every kind. The Convention Centre, Art Galleries, the City Museum and eventually 'The Bullring' Shopping centre.

We had walked through the Convention Centre to the museum when we passed a young man seated on the floor begging. Ignoring the body (analogous to crossing over and walking on the other side) we carried on touring the art gallery of the museum then onto The Bullring for some holiday shopping.

Whilst we were walking along we got to discussing the young man, and we both decided to put something into his hat. Conscience now satisfied, we walked on carrying our shopping and

talking about the reconstruction and renovation of Birmingham City Centre.

We got to within sight of the boat when I remembered the young chap. The natural tendency (for me anyway) was to think 'Oh well, I'll catch him another day' and carry on, quietly forgetting the whole event. But this time something inside me said I MUST go back (I thought it was my decision at the time).

So, saying to Carrie I would go back and put a few quid in his hat, I set off. It was only a short distance through the convention centre. When I arrived he had moved further along the same wall. I then had a second uncontrollable urge, 'Hello Mate.' I said. 'Do you mind if I sit down? (I was dressed in boating gear, old jeans, tee shirt and trainers.) He said he didn't mind.

Sitting down beside him we had an interesting chat, about how he came to be in this position and how he was managing, what the problems were; but the most striking thing was, the minute I sat down I became invisible, no eye contact, legs marching by like a forest, no contact, no love, and so lonely. I had also become an outcast, an untouchable.

I eventually took my leave and joined the rest of the Pharisees, first helping my new friend as much as I could.

This experience, although now probably over ten years ago, has stuck with me. I now have a tiny insight into that world that is so close, yet out of sight. There is no going back on knowledge, you cannot 'unknow'. I do not know WHY I did that – whilst

every bit is true, it was very much out of character for me. Having run a business for forty years near London, I am as cynical as you can get. Yet this happened...

As a result of these memories, the present time of year prompted me to write the following:

Your Christmas

*Christmas, time to be shared
With loved ones all around.
Chance to show you cared.
Time for a joyous sound.*

*Though, excitement high,
and Tinsel tree you adorn.
With food, piled to the sky,
Remember, Christ was born.*

*Now, Me, sat in an alleyway.
Rain and sleet, it's now December.
No home, no love, no Cash, no say.
Ahhh! Long past days, I remember.*

*Please, eat, drink and sing,
Hallelujah! Our Lord to thank,
Provider of all, and everything,
Unto us, a needed food bank.*

*I only ask of You, to think,
Make a promise to his Son.
Provide him, with that mortal link*

*At this new year's hopeful start You,
remember us with none, and thus, show
a Christian heart.*

**Mac Dodge
St Mary the Virgin, Stromness**

The humble email...

If, like me, you communicate with others mostly by email, you might be interested to know that even the humble email has an environmental impact.

The Financial Times of 18 November last year stated: 'British officials working on plans to tackle climate change have alighted on a new threat to the planet: millions of unnecessary emails sent every day, including those that say nothing more than "thanks".'

I try always to acknowledge emails and, in my attempt to be affirming, it seems I am guilty of an environmental blunder. Perhaps we should be more

hesitant about clicking 'Reply all' if it's not really necessary – or in my case – sending a friendly emoji as my final acknowledgement that we have closed the subject?

Maybe like so many other things in this area, we need to balance one desirable thing against another? If I receive contributions gratefully for *Comment* but don't ever thank people for them or tell people I appreciated them – will the sender feel offended or unloved and not send any more articles? That would not be a desirable outcome!

The Editor

Parish registers

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

Jean Elizabeth Wakefield 89

Olga Eileen MacKenzie 99

Peggy Harman 98

Frank Dalton 83

Doris Welling 93

John Wildsmith 85

John Cadge 90

Ann Sykes 86

Tweet of the month

After the last two articles about rare birds on Shetland I thought it would make a change to talk about a species that everyone is familiar with and that is common locally and nationally – the House Sparrow. It gets its name from living successfully in cities, towns and human habitations, but is not exclusive to these habitats.

House Sparrow is a common bird in Britain, although it has suffered population decline since the 1970s and the British population has halved from 12 million to about 6 million today, giving cause for concern despite the fact that 6 million is still a large number. The exact causes of this decline are unclear, with changes in agricultural practices thought to be the reason in rural areas, which is in line with a number of other species that eat seeds and relied on stubble fields in the winter. Declines in towns and cities obviously must be due to other reasons and indeed pollution has been suggested as a cause for the decline in built-up areas.

House Sparrow is a widespread bird being common and widespread across

its natural range in Europe, Asia, North Africa and the Indian sub-continent. Indeed, its familiarity with man has resulted in it being introduced to North and South America, southern Africa, Australia and New Zealand – along with cities scattered through central Africa. Certainly, I have seen it in twenty-four different countries and it has sometimes been the first species I have seen when visiting a country, which I must admit can leave me feeling a bit disappointed when I was hoping to see something exotic or brightly coloured.

Among birdwatchers there are not many that would put House Sparrow in their top ten favourite birds, although it must be said that a male House Sparrow in pristine summer plumage is not exactly a dull or unattractive bird, but it is very familiar and, as they say, familiarity can breed contempt. Years ago, when there was a move to standardise bird names across the world, more than one person suggested that House Sparrow was renamed to Slum Weaver – not exactly complimentary.



In the Bible sparrows are mentioned more than forty times in the Old Testament and twice in the New Testament – in Matthew and Luke. It is possible that sparrow is also used for small birds because the Hebrew word for sparrow is 'tzippor', which also means any small bird. However, House Sparrow is a common bird in Israel so they would have been familiar to the Jews in biblical times. In Matthew 10:29-31 Jesus tells us that sparrows are two a penny and yet God knows them and goes on to say much more God loves us than the sparrows. So we should love sparrows because God does; and remember that God loves us even more than sparrows.

Roy Hargreaves, St Peter & St Paul

'This Green and Pleasant Land'



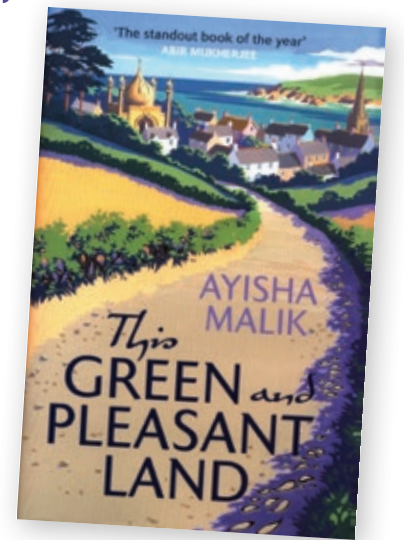
Bill worked hard to become part of Babbels End, the picturesque village he and his family had moved to (from Birmingham) some years before. He was a successful accountant, played golf, drove a Lexus, and was even a member of the Parish Council (PC). His wife sacrificed her career as a journalist to become a freelancer for local news sheets. However, his name was not an abbreviation of William, but rather of Billal, and his mother had come to Britain from Pakistan in 1982. He goes back to see her on her death bed in Selly Oak, and she gives him two instructions: first, to look after her sister, Khala (aunt) Rukhsana; and second, to build a mosque in Babbels End.

For months, Bill dodges this second instruction, at some cost to his sleep and ulcers; he talks it over with Richard, the local vicar, who responds with less than complete enthusiasm. Nonetheless Bill announces his intention at a meeting of the PC, and civil war breaks out in

Babbels End. 'It's not personal' insists Shelley Hawking, the retired school headmistress who chairs the PC, but the graffiti, the petitions, the social exclusion strain that assertion. Hostility and support are shown in unlikely places; Billal's own marriage seems on the brink of breakdown. Several other relationships are harshly divided as people explore what matters to them, and how they respond to the threat (or promise) of change.

I don't want to spoil the story, and so if you want to know what happens, read the book by Ayisha Malik, a young Muslim writer born and still working in London.

The Parish Book Group was quite divided in its opinions on the book when we met by Zoom during the Christmas period. Several felt quite strongly that it is too far-fetched, and was just a peg to make points about racism and young people's mental health. Some felt that it was more about faith, and poked gentle humour at British preconceptions. Different views are not unusual in the group, and we hope that we show more tolerance than the residents of Babbels End.

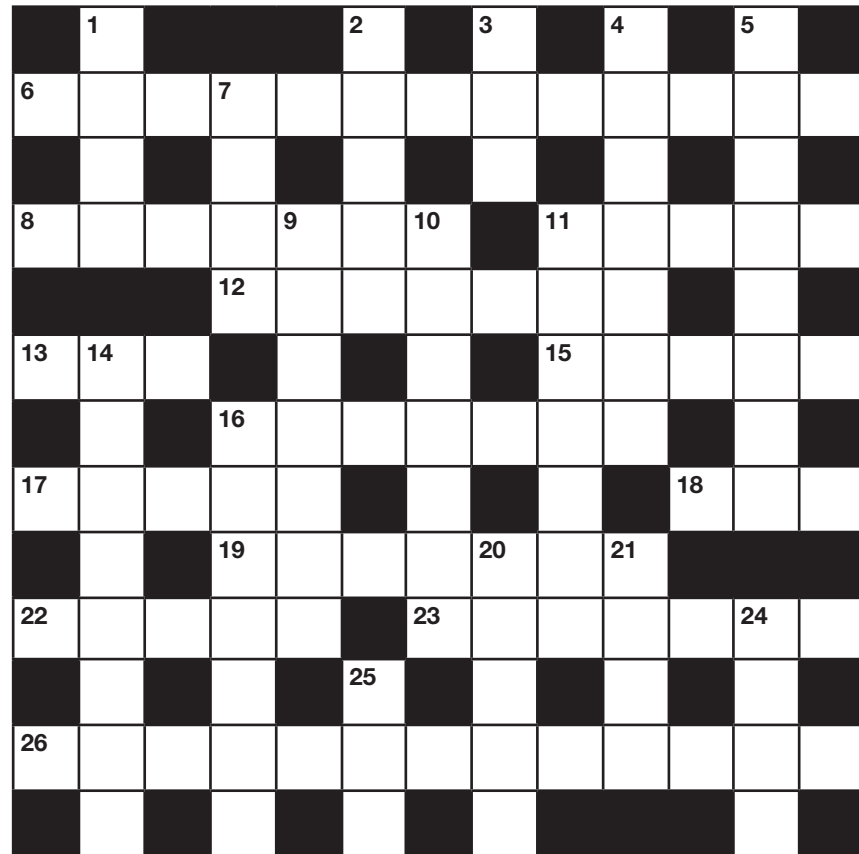


Oh and what about Khala Rukhsana and Billal's first instruction? She has to move in with Billal and Mariam, and gradually becomes more adventurous, despite knowing almost no English and having no experience of rural life. Her daily practice of her faith sustains her, and her limited language protects her from some of the worst offence. She forms a surprisingly warm relationship with one of the most strident opponents of the mosque scheme.

**John Whiteman
Tring Team**

Crossword

- | ACROSS | DOWN |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 6. Middle of the month (10) (3) | 1. Stare (4) |
| 8. Greatly respects (7) | 2. Homes of pigs (5) |
| 11. Priest (5) | 3. Finish (3) |
| 12. Try to go again (7) | 4. From the East (7) |
| 13. Not working (3) | 5. Lists of employees (8) |
| 15. Pathway in church (5) | 7. Eternal (4) |
| 16. Piece of eg: pottery (7) | 9. Declined (7) |
| 17. Element of communion (5) | 10. Layer of rock (7) |
| 18. Request (3) | 11. Worshipped (7) |
| 19. Examined (7) | 14. Indeed (8) |
| 22. Wanderer (5) | 16. Can be relied upon (7) |
| 23. Tissue of a gland (7) | 20. Feeling (5) |
| 26. Local diocesan centre (2) (6) (5) | 21. Unable to speak (4) |
| | 24. Vegetable (4) |
| | 25. Vehicle (3) |



Soaring like birdsong, growling like a bear...



The piano was invented in Italy by Bartolomeo Cristofori around 1700 and was given the name pianoforte because you can play both loudly (forte) and quietly (piano). The player presses the keys, causing the hammers to strike the strings and create sound, and anyone can do it! There are usually 88 keys on an acoustic piano, 52 white keys and 32 black keys, but electric keyboards often have fewer keys, and there is a piano with 102 keys, which would be awkward to play unless you have very long arms! The keyboard is split into octaves, each made up of 7 white keys and 5 black keys, and the pattern is repeated all the way up the keyboard.

The white notes are called A, B, C, D, E, F and G and the black notes in

between them can be either sharps or flats, depending on the key of the piece of music you are playing, but there are also double sharps and double flats, which can be very confusing at first, and every note can have three different names – but it's best to start with middle C!

Pianos are basically called uprights and grands, but some uprights are huge and some grands are tiny, although the largest concert grand piano is 274cm long (8 feet 11¼ inches) and when you're playing them, the far end can seem a very long way away indeed!

Most pianos have two pedals, soft on the left and sustaining on the right (often erroneously called the loud pedal), but some pianos have a third pedal in the middle, which can either be a sostenuto pedal, enabling you to sustain one sound while clearly playing something else at the same time, or a practice pedal which muffles the sound, useful if you don't want to disturb others.

Some more modern composers have written music which requires reaching

inside the piano to pluck the strings, which is both awkward and potentially painful but can produce some interesting results, and there are many other varied percussive effects which can be achieved without actually using the keys at all but you do sometimes need to be a contortionist to achieve them.

There is a left-handed piano, which was invented by a friend of mine from Royal College of Music days, Christopher Seed, literally a keyboard in reverse, with lowest notes at the top and highest at the bottom, very hard for us right hand dominant people to get our heads round, but although it hasn't taken off yet its time might still come....

The piano can sound like a large orchestra or like the murmuring of a gentle river, can soar like birdsong and growl like a bear, can create colours and textures and take you to other worlds, and can communicate every emotion you can think of.

**Anna Le Hair
St Peter & St Paul**



Ballet
Modern
Tap
Jazz
Contemporary
Musical Theatre

And many more!

bbodance



Graham Blake

soft furnishing

- Loose covers
- Curtains
- Re-Upholstery
- Tracks & Poles

For personal, helpful service,
please call

Tel: 01844 261769

Mob: 07801 182400

grahamblake123@btconnect.com

www.grahamblake.com

TEN YEAR GUARANTEE

Welcome to toxophily



It was in 1554 that Roger Ascham had his book 'Toxophilus' published, during a time when the English people were forgetting the glory of the Battle of Agincourt and the ancient art, so by presenting a copy to Henry VIII, the practice was resurrected, as well as Ascham receiving a pension of £10 per year.

After all, toxophily had been a skill for over 10,000 years as one of the earliest forms of gathering food, being nearly silent for stalking, and of protection or defence, as enemies could be defeated from a long distance away.

In fact the last time a toxophilite attacked an enemy in war was in World War II in 1940 during the Battle of Dunkirk, when Colonel Malcolm Fleming Churchill struck down a German soldier.

Have you guessed yet that a toxophilite is an archer?

In 1356 Berkhamsted was the favourite home of the Black Prince and the fact that this residence coincided with the peak of the development of the Longbow as a weapon of war gives Berkhamsted a special association with archery, and certainly Berkhamsted archers were among the victors at the battle of Crecy and Poitiers, and it is reasonable to suppose that many local men were engaged in making and repairing bows and arrows as well as associated equipment.

There was a major revival of toxophily in the late 18th century, mainly as an upper class pursuit, and the Toxophilite Society was formed in 1781 with the Prince of Wales as patron who established a fixed number of rings and their colours, hence the scoring rings were known as 'The Prince's Colours'.

In 1840 the national governing body was formed to hold annual championships and began to structure the sport, which has steadily grown around the world, first entering the summer Olympics in 1904, where only

four nations competed, but now having up to twenty-one nations taking part, with varied UK successes.

The now Royal Toxophilite Society has had a royal patron to this day and has been granted permission in this century, to hold private tournaments in the grounds of Windsor Castle, where her Majesty has occasionally attended to watch the event and discuss the skill and equipment with members.

As a sport, archery is all inclusive, as any gender and age can enjoy the feeling of sending an arrow towards the target, be that any distance between 20 and 100 yards and most clubs these days welcome varied bow styles from the traditional longbow, to the modern recurve bow, as demonstrated in the Olympics, and compound bows, which use a pulley system to bend the limbs.

I took a beginners' course over forty years ago and found that archery 'got under my skin' and I am still learning, so you can teach 'an old dog new tricks'!

Barbara Ancombe
St Peter & St Paul

WILSTONE STICKS

Handcrafted by John Evans



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



There is something for
everyone at CMWorkout !

Personal Training: 121 or Zoom

Group Training: Zoom

Exercise to Music: medium intensity

Strength & Stretch: low to medium intensity

Keep on Moving: low intensity exercise to music

All classes on Zoom until further notice

for more information contact Corinne
corinne@cmworkout.co.uk 07988 649275

The ultimate emergency service?



I came across a fascinating article on BBC online a few weeks ago entitled 'Surprise discovery of rare plant at Norfolk "ghost pond"'. The BBC's environment

correspondent explained that a rare plant had reappeared after more than a century in hiding – found growing on the banks of an old farmland pond in Norfolk. The mystery species 'came back from the dead' after seeds submerged in the mud were disturbed during work to restore the pond, letting in light which allowed the dormant seeds to germinate. A professor at University College London's Pond Restoration Research Group said 'the discovery shows plants believed extinct can be "brought back to life" with good conservation'.

Hold that thought.

For several years The AA had an advertising slogan that it was 'the fourth emergency service'. I recall some inevitable parodies at the time – in

particular Interflora. Perhaps in our day it would be Amazon or one of the home delivery national grocery chains!

Hold that thought too.

Christians don't find it difficult to focus on Jesus Christ as a person – the good teacher, the model example. Of course, it's right we should focus on these qualities. We often also focus on his character – loving, compassionate and kind. And it's right we focus on this too. But we can easily neglect the most important aspect of Jesus' ministry – one of rescue. The Bible is a divine rescue story from cover to cover, ultimately fulfilled through the death and resurrection of Jesus.

Over the recent Christmas period many of us will have read the familiar words of the angel to Joseph; '...you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins' (Matthew 1:21).

It's not universally popular in the church to celebrate this most central aspect of Jesus' ministry nowadays – that of Saviour. Perhaps it feels exclusive or old-fashioned? But one thing it is not is irrelevant and we ignore Jesus being

our Saviour at our peril. Back to The AA – Jesus is the ultimate emergency service, and we all need rescuing.

Let me conclude with an encouragement to those who have been praying for years for friends and family to respond to Jesus' offer of forgiveness and salvation but who seem totally unconcerned and disinterested. With apologies for a deliberate misquotation of the UCL professor '...friends and family believed to be spiritually extinct can be "brought back to life" through faith in Jesus Christ'.

John Heasman
Akeman Street Baptist Church

COMMENT

The magazine of the Churches in Tring

Please submit your article to the Editor by the 1st of the month. Aim for 400 or 800 words and please send a head and shoulders colour photo or jpg and any other photos in high resolution.

Contact comment.magazine@gmail.com



When was Jesus born?



Just before Christmas, Alan Linfield suggested it might be interesting to research into when Jesus was born. It is almost certain he was not born on 25 December AD1!

Note there is no AD0. The years go 1BC then AD1.

There are at least eight clues: the dates of Herod; the dates of various census taking; seasonal behaviour of shepherds; the Bethlehem star; the Magi; John the Baptist and Jesus; ancient beliefs about birth and death dates; the belief of the very early church.

In addition there is some evidence that 25 December was only chosen as it was already the solstice birth of the sun god in Greece and Egypt. The Semitic nations worshipped the 'Heavenly Virgin' goddess, linked to Astarte, the Egyptian god of love and fertility (and also war!). In Egypt a picture of the sun as a child just having been born was presented to the worshippers in the temples at the winter solstice. The Church only formally started celebrating Christmas on 25 December in AD336 – before that it had been 6 January. There seemed to be confusion between the 25th as Christ's birthday and the Sun god's birthday, as outlined by Augustine (around AD400) when he exhorted his Christian brethren 'not to celebrate that solemn day like the heathen on account of the sun, but on account of him who made the sun'. Similarly Pope Leo the Great, around the same date, rebuked 'the pestilent belief that Christmas is solemnised because of the birth of the new sun, as it is called, and not because of the nativity of Christ'.

Dates of Herod

Herod the Great is named as the Herod visited by the Magi and ordering the slaughter of the newborn (Matthew 2:1). However, Herod is variously described as dying in 4 or 1BC and his son Herod Antipas took over rule of Galilee and Perea (Herod's other sons were given the other parts of his Kingdom). Herod Antipas took over sometime between 4BC and AD1 and he is the Herod who divorced his wife Phasaelis and married

his half-brother's wife, Herodias. He had John the Baptist beheaded. He reigned until AD39. He got his come-uppance when Phasaelis's father King Aretas IV invaded Galilee and defeated Herod. So this gives a date for Jesus' birth sometime between 4BC and AD1.

The census

The census which caused Joseph to go to Nazareth is thought to be that mentioned in Luke 2:1-5, the Census of Quirinius which took place in AD6. However, Matthew places the census in the reign of Herod the Great which places it before 1BC. In addition, no Roman census required people to return to the town of their birth! Many scholars dismiss the census (if it ever took place) as being irrelevant.

Seasonal behaviour of shepherds

At the time of Jesus there were three environments for the sheep. In spring there were lush pastures and sheep grazed there near the village. In summer food was scarcer and flocks were taken from one area to another by the shepherd who stayed with them. In winter there was very little fresh food and sheep were fed on grain usually in an area on the ground floor of the shepherd's house or in an enclosure beside the house. So shepherds watching the flock by night indicates a period of June to October approximately when the sheep were being pastured well away from the village.

The Bethlehem Star

Numbers 24:17 foretold the star: 'I see him, but not now; I behold him, but not near. A star will come out of Jacob; a sceptre will rise out of Israel'. Johannes Kepler, a key figure of the scientific revolution in the 17th century and the first correctly to explain the motion of

the planets, believed that the Star of Bethlehem was a triple conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn. A normal conjunction takes place every twenty years (the last was on 21 December 2020). He calculated that there was a triple conjunction in 7BC. A comet or nova, was seen by Chinese and Korean stargazers in about 5BC, and did not appear to move at all. There was also a triple conjunction of Jupiter, called the king planet, with the fixed star Regulus, called the king star, starting in September 3BC. All of these could have taken place while Herod the Great was alive.

The Magi

Assuming the Magi saw the star of Bethlehem which had just appeared, and then set off for Bethlehem, it has been calculated that it would take them 2½ years to reach Bethlehem from Babylon at ten miles a day. So if the star appeared in the summer of 3BC (summer as shepherds were with their flocks) they would have got to Bethlehem at Christmas AD1 when Jesus was 2. The Greek word used for the baby Jesus, paidion, also means young child.

John the Baptist and Jesus

The Jewish historian Flavius Josephus relates in his 'Antiquities of the Jews' that Herod killed John, stating that he did so 'lest the great influence John had over the people might put it into his [John's] power and inclination to raise a rebellion, (for they seemed ready to do anything he should advise), so Herod thought it best to put him to death'. He does not give an exact date for this, which was probably in the years AD28-29. He was put to death a year into Jesus' ministry. Luke 3:23 says Jesus was about 30 when he was baptised by John the Baptist, so this indicates a birthdate around 2BC for Jesus.



Beliefs about birth and death dates

The findings of Prof Gabrielle E Kelly and Prof Cecily C Kelleher, published in the 'Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health' in December 2018, concluded that 'while the empirical data imply there is a connection between birthday and deathday and that there is some variability across cohorts and by gender, it must be speculative as to whether this is an inherently biological or a sociocultural phenomenon'. This seems to validate what many ancients believed – there is a link between birth

and death dates. This is why some, taking Jesus' death date at Easter, believe in a birth date at the same time ie March/April.

Belief of the very early church

The early church was not interested in the year Jesus was born – just the day. The earliest source stating 25 December as the date of birth of Jesus is likely a book by Hippolytus of Rome, written in the late 2nd century. He calculated this by assuming Jesus was born on the spring equinox, possibly on the assumption that he died on the spring

equinox.

So, a lot of different dates and theories. What do I conclude? I think it is likely Jesus was born in the summer around 3BC and was visited by the Magi around Christmas day AD1 but I have no evidence for this. You could argue his birth in Spring, Summer or Winter between 6BC and AD1!

There are so many different views for something that happened so long ago without a firm historical reference. What do you think?

John Allan
High Street Baptist Church

This is my story, this is my song



Over a year into ministry at High Street Baptist Church now, one of the questions that's come up a number of times whilst visiting (and 'zooming') with people is 'What's your favourite hymn?'

If you've been a Christian for a little while like me, I'm sure you've had this question asked of you. It's the type of question that's used as an ice breaker in Christian circles, a 'get to know you' type question.

My answer is the well-known classic 'Blessed Assurance'. I'm sure many of you will be humming the familiar tune to this hymn written by Fanny Crosby in 1873. She penned these words when visiting her friend Phoebe Knapp who played for Crosby a newly composed melody asking 'What do you think this tune says?' Fanny replied, 'Blessed Assurance, Jesus is mine'.

For me, this hymn is a great reminder that my story is wrapped up in God's story. That, throughout my life there have been 'Echoes of mercy, whispers of Love' which rekindle my faith; that I can live with hope, identity and deep assurance because 'I in my saviour am happy and blest'. Sung with gusto, I find these lyrics invigorating to the mind and food for soul; and I love to belt out the chorus (even though I'm not the most tuneful of singers!) which declares 'This is my story, this is my song, praising my Saviour all the day long'.

Such a chorus invites us to tell our story as an act of worship to what God has done, is doing, and will do in our lives.

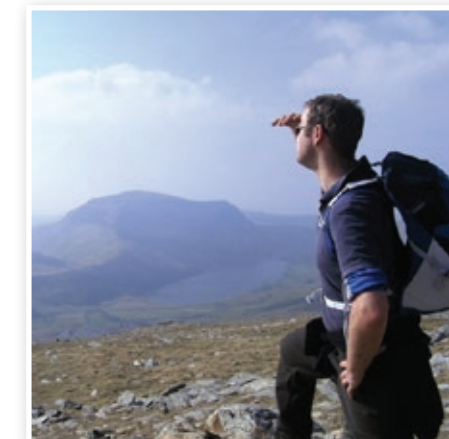
As a church minister there is no

greater joy than hearing someone's testimony, a person's individual story of what God has done in their lives and what difference knowing God makes to them; and if you will indulge me, I would love to briefly share with you part of my story of faith.

Growing up in a Christian family, when I was 12, I experienced God at work first hand. I had a lactose intolerance as a child, and after being very poorly one week, I attended a Sunday service where a guest speaker invited folks to come forward for prayer for healing. I hesitantly went forward, apprehensive about what to expect. The prayer was short and I don't remember particularly 'feeling' anything miraculous, but I do know that since that night I have had no side effects to lactose whatsoever (even when I have overindulged on milk-chocolate!). At that point in my life, I knew God was the living God and soon after I declared my faith in Jesus through the act of baptism.

However, like many teenagers, I drifted in my faith somewhat, finding that social activities, sport (I was a keen cricketer), and work strained my commitment to God.

When I was 18, I had an opportunity to go on short-term mission to Mexico City where I worked with a charity that cared for street children. Upon return I attended university but struggled and made some poor choices, falling away from my faith almost completely. I soon felt unhappy and didn't like where my life was heading. I knew deep-down that God's love and path for me was better than my wandering through life. In many ways, coming back to God and asking for forgiveness was the easy part – repairing certain mistakes and mending broken relationships took slightly longer – but God's grace was in that too. (



often wonder how quickly – or not – the relationship of the two brothers in the parable of the Prodigal son mended).

A verse that several people gave me at that time was Jeremiah 29:11-14 which says "For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. Then you will call on me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart." For me, this verse rings true. As I seek God daily, I'm turning away from my natural inclination to 'wander' through life and I'm letting God direct me. I don't know the bumps, the challenges or the joys that will cross my path, but what gives me assurance is that when I look back, I can't help but praise God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit for the love that forgives, strengthens and guides; and this gives me confidence that God will continue to work in and through me as I put my faith in him each and every day.

This is (part of) my story. And I pray in it you see 'echoes of mercy and whispers of love'.

May God Bless you abundantly this New Year.

Joe Egan, High Street Baptist Church

Use what God gives you



I was bored by everything at school, and regularly counted the weeks, days, and hours, until the next holiday. I was also inclined to complain of mysterious ailments

which kept me away. So discovering Economics as a 6th former was truly life-changing for me, and it's been an unending surprise that I could get paid for looking at the world in a way that came so naturally. But this doesn't mean that Economics is either easy or obvious.

Economics is not about guessing the future, be it one day, one year, or one decade ahead: it's about comparing different futures; so not 'how rich or poor might we all be in 2030?', but how much richer or poorer as a result of a policy choice.

Economics is Positive not Normative, about what actually is, not what ought to be: it doesn't tell us whether the rich should be taxed for the benefit of the poor, it helps us to understand the impact of different ways of taxing and of paying benefits.

It's not just 'common sense', indeed several key ingredients are not intuitive at all, but rather the opposite of our natural feeling. The most crucial of these is that what applies to an individual person or company does not necessarily apply to a whole economy. Mrs Thatcher's housewife analogy, echoed by others since then, is a fallacy – families can save and be rich, nations can save and make themselves poorer (but, just to be complicated, in some circumstances countries can spend and bankrupt themselves).

'Sunk cost' is another counter-intuitive concept: in any decision, past efforts and costs should be

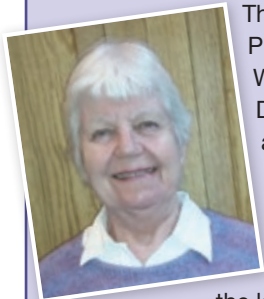
disregarded in working out what next step is most worthwhile. Related to this is 'opportunity-cost': what we have to sacrifice to take the proposed step; it's why trade at any level – local, national, global – is driven not by absolute advantage but by comparative advantage (an essay in itself but it explains why, pace Liz Truss, it makes sense for us to import cheese).

Markets are not perfect – far from it – but are a practical way of passing information from people who need things to those best placed to provide them; correcting for their defects and failures (most blatantly, on climate change) may be more effective than trying to tell everybody what to do.

Ultimately, Economics is about stewardship, making the best use of everything that God has given us. It's a Christian calling and duty.

John Whiteman
St Peter & St Paul

World Day of Prayer 2021



The World Day of Prayer (formerly the Women's World Day of Prayer) are holding their service this year on Friday 5 March. The service has been prepared by the ladies of Vanuatu,

a cluster of Islands in the south west Pacific which lie just over 1,100 miles east of Australia. You may know them as The New Hebrides. The Islands have black and white sandy beaches, coral reefs with coloured fishes, lovely birds, fruits and nuts in the forest which all make the islands a pristine environment. However, the islands are vulnerable to frequent tropical storms, earthquakes, cyclones, tsunamis and volcanic activity. Cyclone Harold in April 2020 destroyed buildings and crops on the island of Espiritu Santo. This was particularly devastating as the islands, like much of the world, was in a state of emergency over the Covid-19 pandemic.

The theme of the service calls for women, men and children to 'Build on a strong foundation' and to live in unity, love and peace in the context of ethnic and cultural diversity. Vanuatu is

one of the first countries to celebrate the Day of Prayer as it progresses from Samoa through Asia, Africa, the Middle East, Europe and the Americas before finishing in American Samoa thirty-nine hours later.

The World Day of Prayer is an international, inter-church organisation which enables us to hear the thoughts of women from all parts of the world; their hopes, concerns and prayers. The preparation for the day is vast. An international committee is based in New York and there are national committees in each participating country. Regional conferences meet to consider the service and then local groups make plans. If you want further information about WDP, their website is wwdp.org.uk.

The preparation day for our local area was back in November. Like most meetings this year, it was on Zoom but was as constructive as ever. Some of your 'local committee' joined in the meeting. I am always encouraged and overjoyed by the way in which our local churches come together for the service, and the fellowship we share amongst ourselves. Personally, I feel inspired by what our local churches have to offer and the warmth with which we can work together, and I want to thank them for that spirit.



The service is held in a different church each year, and this year should be at High Street Baptist Church. However, in these unpredictable times, you will have to keep eyes and ears open to see how the service will happen this year. Whatever comes our way, I hope you will be able to join us in the service on 5 March 2021 and share some of the warmth of fellowship with us. May all of you have a peaceful and blessed New Year.

Jill Smith, St Peter & St Paul

Facing up to 2020



In the future, how will you reply to people who ask you about 2020, or Covid-19, or how you felt during lockdown? I imagine there are as many answers as there are

people. But how many will mention in one form or another: anxiety, depression, fear, loneliness, isolation?

Poets have often written about these emotions as they have experienced them in their lifetimes. The occasions were different – very different in some cases – but all were prompted to put their feelings into words.

W. H. Auden, an English poet who spent much of his life in America, was born in 1907 and died in 1973. Probably his most famous poem is 'The Age of Anxiety' written in 1947, which won the Pulitzer prize for poetry. But it isn't the most read or liked by the general population. Do you remember the film 'Four weddings and a funeral'? The poem from 'Twelve Songs', recited so movingly at the funeral, began 'Stop all the clocks, cut off the telephone...' I think this expresses so well the feeling of loss; that life is no longer worth living; that it is incomprehensible that life should go on in any normal way when someone dear to you has died.

In lockdown, when personal

freedom was limited, it sometimes seemed as if we might lose our identity. How do we really see ourselves? Auden's poem 'The Unknown Citizen' sums this up very well. It begins: 'He was found by the Bureau of Statistics to be / One against whom there was no official complaint...' Having listed all the very mundane occasions in his life it ends: 'Was he free? Was he happy? The question is absurd; / Had anything been wrong, we should certainly have heard.' How many 'unknown citizens' do we know? In the past few months so many people have 'just been doing their jobs'. But they are all invaluable. And so are we; helping a neighbour; talking to a friend; keeping ourselves sane by walking, reading, gardening; the list could go on.

The world has a major refugee problem and it is a problem that is ever increasing. Auden wrote a poem entitled 'Refugee Blues' which deals with the plight of German Jews in the 1930s. Once again it translates relatively easily to situations in the modern era. 'Say this city has 10 million souls, / Some are living in mansions, some are living in holes: / Yet there is no place for us, my dear, yet there's no place for us'. And 'The consul banged the table and said / 'if you've got no passport you're officially dead' / but we are still alive, my dear, we are still alive'.

It has been impossible in 2020 to deal with many problems as the

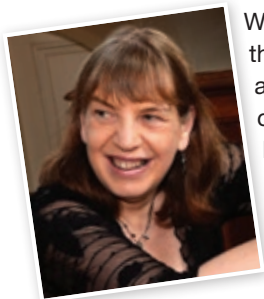
immediacy of the Covid-19 problem has had to take priority. But many people have felt themselves totally isolated from reality in much the same way as a refugee is isolated and stateless and doesn't know what the future holds, doesn't know what might happen to him.

'Old People's Home' deals very bluntly and openly, but I think very movingly, with the 'problem' of old age and the many limitations it brings. Once again the situation is a very different one but can transpose into the lives of many people in the last year. '...a child, / in dismay with Mamma, could refuge with Gran / to be revalued and told a story.' Once again, how many grandparents or older relatives or honorary aunts and uncles have found themselves 'forbidden' to communicate with their younger relatives and friends; to give them a hug in one of the most valued and intimate ways of communication? 'One tie, though, unites them: all / appeared when the world, though much was awry there, was more / spacious, more comely to look at, its Old Ones with an audience and secular station.'

We all have to hope and pray that soon life will return to normal, albeit the 'new normal' that is so often talked about. But few people will remain unaffected or untouched by the events of 2020.

Dorothy Townshend
St Peter & St Paul

Piano and More



We were so pleased that the Piano and More Advent concert on 13 December at St Peter & St Paul featuring local families (which has now become

an annual tradition in the series) was able to go ahead. It was a very happy event, featuring solos, duets and ensembles involving oboe, violin, trumpet, cello, voice and piano. Thanks to everyone who took part, and also to everyone who came to support us. We were lucky that it could happen before we were plunged into Tier 4!

There wasn't a concert in January, but on 14 February we hope that Alan Dorn

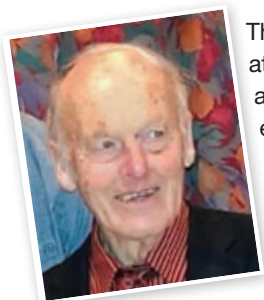
will come to play a piano solo recital which he's wittily titled 'From Bard to Verse' (think about it!) – music inspired by Shakespeare and other poets. Alan last played in the series in March 2019 and it's lovely that he's planning to return, but obviously it very much depends on what the restrictions are at that time.

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank all the supporters of our 'Piano and More' concerts, and hope that many more people will join us in 2021. They are held on the second Sunday of the month at 3.00pm for around an hour. Entry is free but donations are welcome in support of both the church and the maintenance of the piano, and we will continue to try to keep them going online if we are not able to have a live audience.

Anna Le Hair, St Peter & St Paul



The very English game



There's no more attractive sight on a balmy, sunny evening than to see thirteen white-flannelled figures in action on a well-mown field surrounded by trees, some intent on knocking a little red ball out of the ground and others trying to flatten three pieces of wood with it. Some may not agree, but all over the country, on a rain-free summer's day on village greens to County grounds can be seen some of the essence of England's character.

I was so pleased to read Jon Reynolds's article opening up this subject as I, and probably many of our readers, have enjoyed the fascination of this game over many years.

My earliest introduction was in 1934 at the age 4 when my father took me to matches around London where he played in local leagues. Many years later I discovered he was rather good at the game, coming top, by far, of the batting averages of the League. I found this in the handbook which I still have. He also bowled a decent 'googly' which he claimed to have invented, but on researching this I found that an England cricketer, Bernard Bosenquet, claimed to have used it. (His son happened to be Reggie Bosenquet, the ITV newsreader.) For the uninitiated – a googly is a ball bowled out of the back of the hand and turning in a different direction to what was expected. I used to try bowling this, but the ball always stuck to my fingers and dropped just in front of me! What a lovely word that is – googly; maybe that's where we got our modern term 'google' from. Trust cricket to be the first!

I played cricket in the school playground, in the park and for the school in Islington. Just before the war started in July, I was surprised to be picked for North London Schools against South London in Haringey Stadium. I cannot remember much about the game or the result, but think I made 2 not out. I was coached by my father in our tiny kitchen using a table-tennis ball! He was very keen to teach me the backward defensive stroke with elbow held high. Being only three yards away must have helped my reflexes!

On leaving Highbury Grammar

School where I captained the first XI, I was recruited, with a few others, into North London Cricket Club where I enjoyed matches in their third XI, as an opening bowler, never being good enough to go higher.

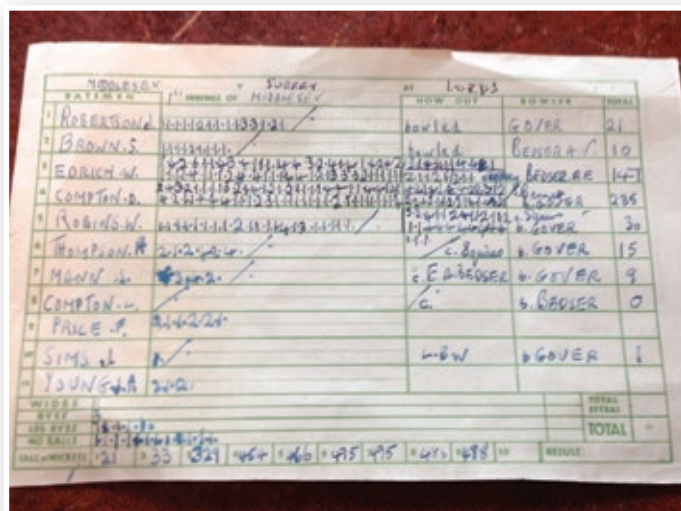
From the age of 12 I would quite often go to matches at Lord's where, during the war, County games and

Test matches were suspended. But they did have some excellent games with players from around the world. I was able to watch famous players like Leary Constantine from the West Indies, Keith Miller from Australia and Wally Hammond and Len Hutton from England. I would try to get autographs and, once, was so pleased to speak to that great English wicketkeeper, Leslie Ames, that I decided to support his County, Kent, from then on, and still do, despite never living there.

Later, after the war, when County Competition resumed, I was at Lords when Denis Compton and Bill Edrich put on nearly 300 runs for Middlesex against Surrey. Finally, Edrich made 147 and Compton 235 but here was a problem for me. I used to use my own scorebook and record every run, so, on this occasion, I ran out of space, but still managed to complete their innings. The main Surrey bowler in this match was the England player, Alf Gover, who took 6 wickets. It was interesting, that, some years later, he took a cricket coaching course at Westminster College where I studied for teaching, P.E. being my main subject. So I was able to gain the MCC coaching certificate.

When life became very full as our children arrived, I had to stop playing. That's the thing about cricket – it takes up almost a whole day – but it is not a priority, so first things must come first.

When we moved to Wigginton in 1975, I had a few games for Tring Park 3rd XI in that lovely setting at the bottom of the Chilterns. Then, in the 2010s I ran some light-hearted matches for boys and parents of the Baptist Chapel Youth Club plus some of our own members. These were held at the beautiful Cholesbury



ground and players would just join in as they returned from work. The only trouble with that ground was that the pitch was so near the road that we always feared that even a short six would land on a car.

God-given talents should always be used whether in sport, craft, preaching or encouraging others or in any way. I think cricket is sometimes a test of character. How does a batsman react on being dismissed first ball, especially if it was due to a dubious decision? How do team members react when they make a long journey to play only to find it is rained off? I could multiply these examples, but whether one excels as an individual or as part of a team, it is a bit like life when times of trial come and there are great disappointments. In the end we need to do as the poet has written, 'Play up, play up and play the game'.

*There's a deathly hush in the Close tonight,
Ten to make and the match to win.
A bumping pitch and a blinding light,
An hour to play and the last man in.
And it's not for the sake of a ribboned coat or the selfish hope of a season's fame.
But his captain's hand on his shoulder smote;
'Play up! Play up! And Play the game.'
Sir Henry Newbolt, 1897*

By the way, Jon, when 'Peter stood up with the eleven', do you think he was first reserve, the umpire or was just preaching at them telling them to go out and win? I'm sure there's a sermon here somewhere.

John Young
Akeman Street Baptist Church

A reply to John Young



Looking at Acts 2:14 in the RSV it says: 'But Peter, standing with the eleven, lifted up his voice and addressed them, "Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem, let this

be known to you, and give ear to my words".'

It sounds to me as if Peter was the captain and opening batsman giving his team and the local spectators a pep-talk before he goes out to lead the apostles in a particularly difficult fixture.

I enjoyed John's article a lot, particularly when he mentions that he decided to support Kent, the noble county of my birth. This shows excellent taste. In the past I often sat in the Les Ames stand – named after the cricketer John Young admired. It was closest to the Nackington Road entrance, but alas it no longer has public seating. Since redevelopment it consists of a public bar on the ground-floor level with sixteen hospitality boxes and the main scoreboard directly above.

Canterbury was unique in County grounds in having a tree within the boundary rope. The presence of a

tree within the playing area required special local rules. Shots that touched the tree were counted as a four, even if they ricocheted and cleared the boundary rope, and no batsman could be out caught off a rebound. Only four cricketers are known to have hit the ball over the tree to score a six: Arthur 'Jacko' Watson of Sussex in 1925, the West Indies' Learie Constantine in 1928, Middlesex's Jim Smith in 1939, and Kent's Carl Hooper in 1992. The tree was damaged in a storm in 2005 and had to be cut down. I have a 'holy relic' – a piece of this tree in my study.

Jon Reynolds, Tring Team

2021, a critical year for the climate crisis



What is COP26?

This is a meeting of the United Nations Climate Change Conference of the Parties, and will be held in Glasgow in November 2021 – postponed from 2020 because of the pandemic. Hosted by the UK, this COP is especially crucial because the nations of the world need to work together in order to try and limit global average temperature rise to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels and this will only be achieved if carbon emissions are significantly reduced by 2030.

What is Net Zero?

Net zero refers to either eliminating greenhouse gas emissions altogether (the ideal) or balancing remaining emissions by removing greenhouse gases from the atmosphere. The latter is often achieved by 'offsetting', where actions are taken by others to remove CO₂, for example, by planting trees. To limit average global temperature increase to 1.5°C the world needs to reach net zero by 2050.

What is 'The Time is Now'?

'The Time is Now' is a campaign organised by the Climate Coalition – a group of over 140 organisations – lobbying government



to build back from the current health crisis in a way that: leads to a resilient economy benefitting everyone; tackles climate change and biodiversity loss; and protects the most vulnerable, both in the UK and around the world. Find out more at <https://thetimeisnow.uk>.



How do I 'Show The Love'?

Show the Love is an annual celebration of everything we care about and want to protect from the worst impacts of the climate crisis. During February people from across the UK use the power of green hearts to join together and ask politicians to put aside their differences and tackle the climate crisis. Join the campaign by wearing a green heart during February, creating a green heart window display, or writing to your local politicians and MP, asking them to commit to building a cleaner, greener world that works for everyone. The Show the Love website has a resource pack with more information about how to communicate with your MP, as well as crafting ideas for your green heart! Find out more at <https://www.theclimatecoalition.org/show-the-love>.

Nicky Bull & Polly Eaton
High Street Baptist Church

Treating others with humanity

We all have a CV – and here's mine:

Rover Cars Apprentice from 1970 – 1975;
 Reliability Engineer 1975;
 Married to Sue in 1976;
 'Dad' in 1978;
 Theological Training 1979;
 'Dad' again in 1980;
 Ordained Deacon in 1982 and
 Priest in the Church of England in 1983;
 Curacy in Perry Barr, Birmingham; Curacy in the
 Broseley Group of parishes in 1985;
 'Dad' in 1986;
 Inducted as parish priest of Effingham with Little
 Bookham, Surrey, in 1987;
 Inducted as parish priest of Merrow in 1996;
 Prison Chaplain 2006;
 'Grandad' 7 times since 2006
 and retired in 2019.

During my second incumbency at Merrow, Guildford, Huw Bellis joined me as a curate. I left Merrow in 2006 to become a prison chaplain.

I fondly recall travelling in a coachload of Merrow parishioners to Aldbury and Huw's licensing as a parish priest in the Tring Team. I was surprised, and rather touched, that during his sermon the Bishop of St Albans, Christopher Herbert, quoted the personal 'motto' I shared with him when he was my Archdeacon: 'Adopt, Adapt and Improve!'

As an Engineering undergraduate it was used to describe Ergonomics or 'Human Factor Engineering' (though I gather it was pilfered from the Rotary Club by my lecturer). However, it runs through my life like a lurex thread and continues not only to describe my relationship with the Lord who continues

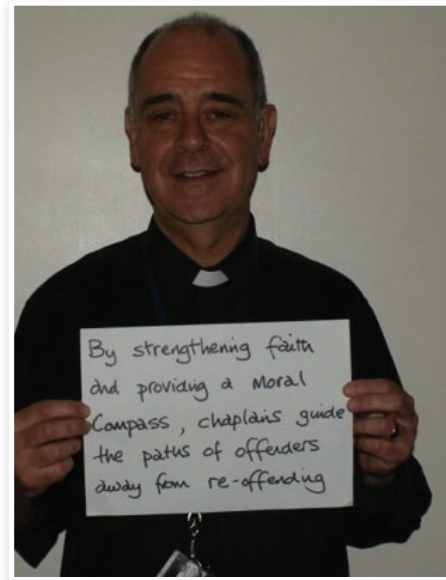
to 'Adopt, adapt and improve' me, but also describes the way I long for people to engage with our loving Lord in a way that he may also 'Adopt, adapt and improve' them!

Early in 2006, I stayed overnight in Aldbury Vicarage with Huw, Jane and family in order to attend an interview for a prison chaplaincy at HMP Woodhill in Milton Keynes. The last time I was at Aldbury was for my 25th Anniversary of Ordination in 2008 when we had a lovely party in the garden and my prison Governor attended too.

My interview was successful and I was appointed as their Anglican Chaplain. So began another chapter of 'adopting, adapting and improving' – though the transition from parish ministry to prison ministry involved copious learning curves that lasted for at least five years. I became Coordinating Chaplain in the September of 2006 and Managing Chaplain in 2014 until my retirement.

During my ministry at Woodhill its status remained as a Category A – Core Local prison serving the courts in Thames Valley primarily. It is still in the High Security Estate but is a Category B or 'Lifer' prison with Category A facilities. It looks rather like a Temple I think, and over the inside of the gate there is a poster which you will find over every prison front door. Treating 'People in Prison' with humanity was always my watchword and I became known by all the prisoners and staff in a way that was simply remarkable.

Alan Hodgetts



'It'll be lonely this Christmas...'

So sang glam rock band Mud in 1974. This seemed quite appropriate for 2020 as for many of us we experienced a Christmas away from our friends and family.

Whilst for many British households, it is a secular celebration, and as Shakin' Stevens penned it, 'a time for parties and celebration, people dancing all night long, a time for presents and exchanging kisses, a time for singing Christmas songs', Christmas (or the feast of the Nativity), is a very important event in the Christian calendar.

Christmas is preceded by Advent, and initiates the season of Christmastide which historically lasts twelve days and culminates on the twelfth night. The name Christmas is shortened from 'Christ's Mass'. Christ comes from the Greek word 'Khristos' normally Christos which is translated from the Hebrew word for Messiah which means 'anointed' and Mass from the Latin word 'missa' – from the words of dismissal at the celebration of the Eucharist (Holy Communion).

The Bible tells us that Jesus was born in Bethlehem. Joseph and Mary had to travel to the city for a census, but when they arrived, there was no room at the inn, so they were given a stable where Jesus was born. Angels proclaimed him

a Saviour for all people and shepherds came to adore him. Later Magi (wise men) visited Jesus, who was born as King of the Jews, by following a star, bringing three gifts – gold, frankincense and myrrh. Some have suggested that this star was the conjunction of Saturn and Jupiter that has recurred recently.



The wise men had asked the Roman King Herod about the whereabouts of Jesus on their journey, and Herod had ordered a massacre of all boys under two years old in Bethlehem, but warned in a dream, the family fled to Egypt before returning to Nazareth.

Nobody knows exactly which day Jesus was born, but 25 December was the date of the Winter solstice in the Roman Calendar and this date has been adopted as the date to celebrate Christ's nativity.

The commemoration of Jesus' birth may also have origins in various

pre-Christian winter festivals that were celebrations by pagan populations who later converted to Christianity. For example, the Anglo-Saxons and Norse celebrated a winter festival called Yule in late December to early January, which today is also synonymous with Christmas. In eastern Europe, old pagan traditions have also been incorporated into Christmas celebrations, such as Kolyadka which are traditional eastern European songs that became Christmas Carols.

Normally Christmas would be celebrated at Christmas dinner with friends and family, the giving and receiving of gifts, playing games and watching television such as The Queen's Christmas

Broadcast at 3.00pm. Due to lockdown, Christmas was a little different in 2020.

Places of worship were open, but there was limited or no Christmas singing allowed. Some services were live streamed to those who could not attend in person. Christmas dinner was a smaller affair, and held over Zoom or other internet video meetings, and for the organised among us, Christmas presents were sent by post rather than given in person; and due to social distancing, there was no kissing under the mistletoe.

**Andrew Kinsey
 St Peter & St Paul**

Does it end in tears?



The UK is Covid-ranked in Tiers – but what does the word mean, and where did it come from? It is one of the words that is a nightmare for foreign students learning English.

- Tier: some who ties, i.e knots.
- Tier: a level of importance or height.
- Tear: a drop that falls from the eyes.
- Tear: pulling apart with force.
- Tear: to move around in a reckless manner.

No wonder English is considered a difficult language.

Tier is also a very old Scottish

surname dating back to the 5th century in the Kingdom of Dál Riata in Northern Ireland and Western Scotland. It means carpenter or shipwright. This was changed to a clan name around 1150 when King Somerled made Murdock Tier the first chief of the Macintier (later MacIntyre) clan. Mac is 'son of' in Gaelic and Macin 'little son of'. So the first Macintier was the young son of a Tier.

A traditional shipwright builds up the side of a boat in planks placed overlapping in tiers on frames and stringers, one above the other, known as lapstrake construction.

However, the old English word tier is not thought to have come from the Gaelic, but rather from 13th century France. Tier in French meant rank, order

or sequence. Some etymologists think it might have derived from the old German Zier (Dutch Sier) meaning an ornament denoting high rank. It was in use in English meaning 'ordered' by the 15th century.

Until Covid-19 tier was a word mainly used to describe the levels of seats in a theatre, stadium or the layers of a wedding cake. I wonder why it was used to describe levels that geographical locations were to be placed into?

Unfortunately many people will be in tears about their town being placed in a high level Covid-19 tier.

**John Allan
 High Street Baptist Church**

Hospital chaplains



'We will need our hospital chaplains to be chaplains during this pandemic – no redeployment,' said our Chief Executive.

In March

2020, our hospitals mobilised swiftly in response to Covid-19 and staff across the organisation were redeployed into new roles, drawing on experience and transferrable skills.

I've spent almost my entire ordained ministry as an Anglican chaplain employed by the NHS. It has been my vocation since my hospital placement while at theological college. I work in Barnet and Chase Farm hospitals, which are now part of the Royal Free London NHS Foundation Trust.

The NHS employs chaplains to care for the spiritual, religious, pastoral and emotional needs of patients and their families and also of staff. We provide this for people of all faiths and none. The Chief Executive's statement showed her appreciation of having this resource within the fabric of the NHS and it has been a particular privilege to fulfil my vocation in recent months.

I'm grateful for the opportunity to share with you a sense of what this has meant. The Barnet Hospital site sits within the Diocese of St Albans and therefore I operate across St Albans and London Dioceses. Bishop Alan, the Bishop of St Albans, recently asked me to become his Advisor for Hospital Chaplaincy. I hope to build relationships with other chaplains working in the Diocese of St Albans and support them as they serve you and communities across the Diocese.

'Strange times' is often used to describe daily life during the pandemic. Going out to work every day and continuing to do much of what I've done for years has given me more normality than many have experienced.

Some pastoral encounters have been extraordinary. I received a phone call one evening in April from the daughter of a patient. She was unable to visit her father and neither was I, because of restrictions on that ward. Her father was an ardent fan of a premier league football club and the club manager had recorded a video message for him. The daughter emailed me the video and asked for it to get to

her father if at all possible. The ward was so busy that it took until 1.00am to make contact with a member of staff who could facilitate this. Rarely has an electronic file transfer felt so moving. The family were comforted in their grief by knowing that their father had seen the film before he died.

Of course, there have been day-to-day differences in my working environment. Pre-Covid, wearing PPE for my bedside visits to patients was the exception and now it's the rule. I am touched by the care that ward staff take to ensure I'm fully protected. There has been more phone-based work, especially in the early days of the first lockdown. I had never before said commendatory prayers for patients who were dying while doctors held the phone to their ears. We had to close the hospital chapels, which are now open again for private prayer, though it is not yet possible to hold services. The constraints on patient visiting by family and friends have influenced how I've ministered to Covid and non-Covid patients and to those they hold dear. Sources of patient referrals have widened, with a number of doctors and local clergy referring patients for the first time.

There have been moments of unexpected joy. Following a local clergy referral regarding a woman who was close to death, I visited the patient and said the commendatory prayers, continuing to visit each day for the rest of the week as the patient deteriorated and remained unresponsive. I didn't go on Saturday and returned on Sunday to find her sitting up in bed, reading *The Spectator* and asking to receive Holy Communion, which I did on that occasion and subsequently until she was discharged.

One doctor who referred a patient had also discovered that the patient enjoyed 'Songs of Praise'. I visited the patient throughout her

time in hospital, until she was discharged. Each time, we watched a bit of 'Songs of Praise' together, via i-player on my phone. The doctor asked me to call the patient's daughter and the patient was also keen for this. I had several pastoral calls with the daughter over the following week as her mother improved. This included relaying messages between mum and daughter as mum found it hard to hear on the phone. This is one small example of the efforts by staff across the NHS to connect patients with their families and sources of comfort.

It was good to receive referrals from a number of clergy on Palm Sunday. Tight restrictions at that time meant I generally could not visit these patients and instead delivered a palm cross to each one, together with a letter from the Chaplaincy with assurances of prayers and greetings from their church family. A nurse told me how one of these crosses had comforted a patient who received it, his widow who had been unable to visit and was glad to know he had the cross and the ward staff who were able to keep it afterwards.

Barnet and Chase Farm Hospital



sites offer long-stay in-patient mental health provision in addition to the acute services. I am glad to have been able to continue with some of my regular ministry to mental health patients. A weekly service for a group of patients in Barnet was suspended at the start of the pandemic and it was wonderful to resume it some months ago.

Pastoral support for staff has always been an important part of my ministry. Part of this takes place through chance meetings and informal encounters with staff. There has been more of this over the past year with a wider range of colleagues, including more doctors who have appreciated a moment's conversation to share how they are feeling.

Another part of my pastoral work is supporting whole teams following especially painful or traumatic experiences. I have conducted acts of remembrance and provided pastoral counselling for bereaved teams when a member of staff has died, following up the initial support with regular visits to the

team and then more informally through chance meetings with colleagues who need to share their reminiscences and express their grief.

The compassion and hard work by doctors, nurses, palliative care teams, domestic staff, porters, and so many other clinical, support and administrative staff members continues to be extraordinary and it takes its toll. Our hospital leadership has worked hard to create a culture of wellbeing and encouraged staff to draw on support.

The team spirit across the organisation has been inspiring and every day I have seen and felt the support that colleagues give each other. Regular briefings from the Trust's Senior Leadership Team has strengthened morale, reminded us of what we've been achieving, explained how challenges were being met and demonstrated that they understand and appreciate the work going on across the organisation.

Within the Chaplaincy team I've valued the support of my manager who is based at the Royal Free site in

Hampstead and the deepening working relationship with my Muslim and Jewish Chaplain colleagues. I have also valued the prayers of so many people over these past months who have been in touch, including parishioners from local churches, local clergy, Bishop Alan and the Deputy Lieutenant for Barnet.

When Covid-19 has taken so much from us, it is important to give ourselves permission to be thankful for the support we have given each other and the growth that has come from going the extra mile. That is true in our communities, our churches, across the NHS and I can feel it in terms of Chaplaincy within our hospitals.

As you know, the next few months are set to be extremely challenging, so please do keep praying for all healthcare workers, including your hospital chaplains. It makes a difference. Thank you.

**Fr Tom Baron, Chaplain
Barnet & Chase Farm Hospitals
Advisor to the Bishop of St Albans on
Hospital Chaplaincy**

Expect the unexpected!



My role as Head of Chaplaincy-Spiritual Care is incredibly varied and there's very rarely a dull moment. I've worked as a healthcare chaplain for thirteen years across London teaching hospitals and I've often used the phrase, 'expect the unexpected!' How true that has been this week, with two emergency marriages in the hospital, including one in ICU with full PPE! When I do teaching sessions for healthcare staff, I get them to imagine how life can be turned upside-down in a split second for the patients they are caring for. How apt that is for all of us right now in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic. Life and work has changed dramatically for so many people.

I have had to re-think and re-imagine the role of the chaplain and how we work within the current restrictions to best care for patients, their families, loved ones, as well as how we can support staff. Chaplaincy-spiritual care is all about connection, being human, being alongside people, at often the toughest times of their life. It's about holding a space for people to tell their

stories, to express their emotions, to laugh, to cry, to reminisce, or to sit in silence.

I think there are two common assumptions people frequently make about what chaplains do. Firstly, that we are here for death, and secondly that we are here only for people who are religious. Of course, we ARE here to support those who are dying and those who have a religious belief, but we are here for everyone of any faith, belief, philosophy of life, religious and non-religious. Also, importantly, we are not just here for people who are dying, but for anyone in the hospital who would appreciate support.

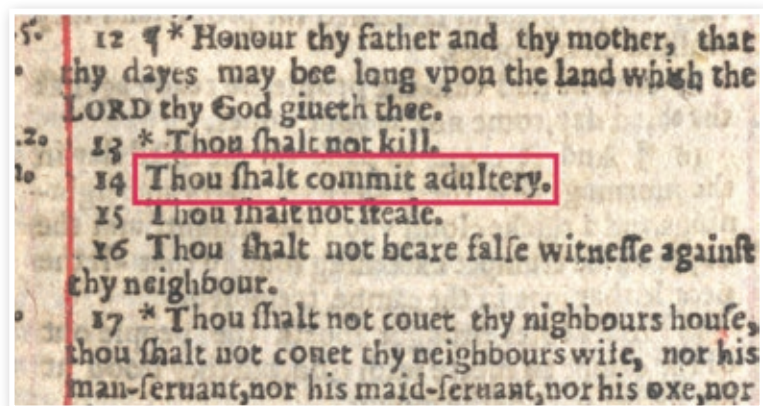
Spiritual care is about valuing and respecting who people are and what is important to them. We encourage compassionate, non-judgmental care, respectful of diversity. It's always important to start by listening to a person's story. Our team includes an Imam, female Muslim chaplain, Rabbi, Roman Catholic priest and Anglican priest. All chaplains work generically as well as faith specific when needed. Pre Covid-19 we had a team of volunteers who would each visit a ward and offer support to patients. This was a great and engaging way to enable patients to refer themselves to our service. We

now rely on staff making referrals to us, which means communication with ward staff is crucial to help us provide the best possible holistic care to patients and their families at home, who are often incredibly anxious because they cannot freely visit.

I'm mindful as we start a New Year just how difficult it is for so many people. I'm so aware of how many people are waiting: waiting for results, waiting for surgery, waiting to go home, waiting and longing to see their loved ones, and of course, waiting for a vaccine! Waiting can be full of fear and a place of loneliness, but at the same time waiting can also be full of hope. In the midst of pain, loss and grief there has been such kindness, compassion and generosity. It is always such a privilege to be invited into another person's world, even if only for a short time. How fragile and precious life is.

**Claire Carson, Head of Chaplaincy-Spiritual Care at the Royal Free London NHS Foundation Trust
The Chaplaincy-Spiritual Care team want to encourage compassionate, holistic care for everyone, being respectful of diversity and celebrating all traditions.**

The Wicked Bible



This is probably the most famous misprint in a Bible. In 1631 the King James Version of the Bible was printed by the Royal printer, Robert Barker and his partner Martin Lucas. It was not until a year later that two errors were discovered. Exodus 20:14 was rendered 'Thou shalt commit adultery' and Deuteronomy 5:24 which should have read 'Behold, the LORD our God hath shewed us his glory and his greatness,' was printed as 'Behold, the LORD our God hath shewed us his glory and his great-asse'.

Charles I was livid and had the copies collected up and burnt. Barker and Lucas were summoned to the star chamber, deprived of their printing licence and fined £300 – an enormous sum then. It was rumoured that the misprints were secretly arranged by Bonham Norton in order to take over as royal printer. This edition of the Bible was christened 'The Wicked Bible'.

Only a short time later in 1653 another printing rendered 1 Corinthians 6:9 as 'Know ye not that the unrighteous shall inherit the kingdom of God' (instead of righteous). This Bible is also called 'The Wicked Bible' or alternatively 'Unrighteous Bible'.

The first listed misprint, or rather miswrite, is in the 'Book of Kells' written around AD800 (actually only the four Gospels, not a Bible) – which was in Latin. Matthew 10:34 should read 'I came not to send peace, but the sword'. However, rather than 'gladium' which means 'sword', the word written is 'gaudium' meaning 'joy'. So the verse reads: 'I came not to send peace, but joy'.

Another Gospel book, 'Book of Deer', a Gaelic book written in the 10th century, has many errors including listing in Jesus' genealogy in Luke 3:38, Seth as the first man and the grandfather of Adam.

Famous misprinted Bibles include:

of 'terror'; the 'Wife Beater's Bible' where in a 1549 printing, a footnote on 1 Peter 3 inserted by Edmund Becke the theologian, offers husbands some terrible advice: 'And if she be not obedient and helpful unto him he endeavoreth to beat the fear of God into her'; the 'Breeches Bible', a 1560 Geneva Bible that says in Genesis 3:7, 'Adam and Eve put on breeches' instead of 'aprons'; the 'Printers' Bible', a 1702 edition of the King James, contains an error in Psalm 119:16 where it says instead of 'princes have persecuted me without a cause', David complains,

'printers have persecuted me without a cause'.

In 1717 the 'Vinegar Bible' was printed by John Baskett. It was considered a landmark in graphic art, but in the heading of Luke 20, instead of the 'Parable of the Vineyard', it says 'Parable of the Vinegar'.

This Bible had so many errors it was called 'a Baskett-full of errors' at the time.

The 'Murderer's Bible' is a King James version from 1795, that contains a typo in Mark 7:27 that says: 'Let the children be killed', instead of 'filled'.

Altogether

The 'Bug Bible' also known as the 1535 Coverdale, which says in Psalm 91:5: 'So yet thou shalt not need to be afraid for any bugs by night' instead

there are more than fifty Bibles given nicknames because of their misprints.

There are also fictional Bible errors. 'The Poisonwood Bible' is the title of a magnificent novel by Barbara Kingsolver where the character of the missionary Nathan Price creates his own 'misprint' by mispronouncing the local expression 'Tata Jesus is bāngala', meaning 'Jesus is most precious', saying instead 'Jesus is poisonwood!'. In the BBC series Red Dwarf there is a sect called 'Seventh Day Advent Hoppists' as a result of the verse in 1 Corinthians 13:13 appearing as 'Faith, hop and charity, and the greatest of these is hop'.

So if you are quoting a passage from the Bible to justify your actions, first make sure that your quotation is not a misprint! Unless, of course, you are using the version of Jeremiah 31:34 that reads 'sin on more' rather than 'sin no more' – 'The Sinners' Bible' – which enables you to do absolutely anything.

John Allan
High Street Baptist Church



Computer & Printer Repair & Support
Friendly, patient and expert help
Telephone advice or Covid19-safe collection of your printer, laptop or p.c. available

Barry Child
barry@childassociates.co.uk
01442 826092
07879 497704

Building back better



The phrase 'build back better' is being used a lot in conjunction with economic recovery from the pandemic. It generally refers to longer-term investment in infrastructure projects around the world – railways, roads, electricity generation and distribution, housing, schools, broadband, and so on.

A lot of businesses and economic activity needs short-term customer demand to come back because this is the biggest and most acute problem caused by the pandemic. Investment in infrastructure for the longer term supports economic activity and wider community life by providing essential services of one kind or another. It generally also provides shorter-term economic stimulus through the provisions of jobs and services associated with the expansion of the facilities.

My job involves helping finance renewable energy and energy efficiency projects in Africa and India. In many places in these geographies this is not just about cleaning up a more carbon-intensive energy generation system but expanding the electricity supply to satisfy unmet demand. 600 million people in sub-Saharan Africa still have no access to electricity at all.



There is also a large deficit in infrastructure to support essential services for communities in many parts of most developing economies. The

building back better agenda is about trying to build in climate considerations when these investments in infrastructure are made. These could be new bits of infrastructure or expansion or renewal of existing facilities – for example, repairing a crumbling sewer or broken water main.

Building back better means taking into account making new build as low carbon intensity as possible and also in some circumstances making adaptations to reflect the fact that some degree of climate change is already baked in and it's a reasonable assumption that extreme weather events and more stress on natural resources are likely.



An example of adaptation is where, in a large solar energy plant in India in which the UK Climate Investments fund I support is active, we have invested in robotic waterless cleaning. Without needing water, microfibre brushes (a bit like you see in a car wash) move along the row of solar panels

and brush off the dust. It's important to keep panels from getting too dirty because dirt significantly reduces the amount of electricity they can generate from the available sunshine. There is already pressure on water resources for agriculture, social and other purposes in many parts of India, and droughts are becoming more common. So this way we can be confident we will be able to keep the panels clean for the next twenty-five years and beyond that the solar panels will be generating electricity, while reducing the pressure on increasingly erratic water supplies which are needed for other important purposes.

Beyond the obvious reduction in carbon intensity from building new renewable energy generation plants, there are other ways to reduce carbon intensity. For example, we are also investing in affordable green housing in Kenya. There is a huge unmet need

for quality affordable housing in Nairobi which is expanding in size rapidly like many other cities around the developing world. Here the housing must reach an externally accredited energy and resource efficiency standard. There is potential for our partner, who is managing the housing in Kenya, to be rewarded through the way we have structured our investment for outperforming the efficiency standards. That's good for the environment and good for the future tenants of the houses who should benefit from lower utility bills.

As the costs of building new renewable energy facilities have plummeted in recent years, this has made building back better rather than just building an affordable and achievable goal globally, including in less well-developed economies. There are lots of short-term challenges to making things happen, exacerbated by the pandemic. But there is also



momentum building to meet the global climate challenge at the same time as – and not as an alternative to – investing to create the jobs and community assets to meet the needs of today and decades into the future.

Richard Abel, St Peter & St Paul



Building a future



What kind of world do we want to be 'normal' in 2021?

Advent is a season of watching and waiting; what are we waiting for?

Do we want to finally come out of all the gloom and return to 'yesterday's normal' or do we want to build our community into 'something new'? Do we want the old world to come back and make us feel comfortable again? Or do we want to build a new world – a better world?

There's a song that keeps rattling round my head – tune by Paul McCartney, words by John Lennon – *Yesterday all my troubles seemed so far away / now it looks as though they're here to stay / Oh, I believe in yesterday.* I imagine that most of us reading those words can 'hear' that tune in our heads. There's a haunting quality about nostalgia that we always find attractive. It goes on: *Yesterday love was such an easy game to play / Now I need a place to hide away / Oh, I believe in yesterday.*

Do those words strike a chord today and what do we believe in? Do we seek the comfort blanket of yesterday? Or will we find the courage to build a better today and an entirely NEW tomorrow?

The only way is forward

In reality, of course, we don't have a choice. The river flows only one way and we can't go back. The past isn't really an option – no matter how much we might yearn for yesterday.

Surely God wants his people to move forward.

Early in Advent our Rector, Huw Bellis, preached a sermon in St Peter & St Paul asking this question: 'What kind of world do we want to become our new normal?' Perhaps the answer ought to be 'a better one'.

Brilliant as John Lennon was, I am not sure his words were entirely true. Probably we can all agree with the first part at the moment (now I need a place to hide away) but was it really truly the case that yesterday was such an easy game to play? If it was, then why was – and is – our society so fractured?; why is there such a huge demand for foodbanks even in our richest countries?; why do so many young people commit suicide?; why are so many, many people just plain lonely?; why are we wrecking our planet and humanity's future?

Do all those 'whys' sound like loving is easy? In reality it doesn't seem to me that yesterday love WAS such an easy game to play. Surely, we can play it better – given the chance – and hopefully we will be given that chance in 2021.

During December the BBC television news featured more than one story from a

parish in Burnley where both the Anglican and Catholic priests were spending their time feeding the homeless and hungry. They appeared on television several times in tears overcome with pity for the suffering of so many unfortunate people of all ages in their Parishes. Their loving, caring words and example inspired huge outpourings of support and donations and they do seem to have found a new direction and realism to their Christian ministry. The fundamental kindness of this practical care for a community in dire need of feeding goes right to the heart of Christ's commandments to us all; 'If you love me...feed my sheep...' (John 21).

I am sure that this kind of practical support activity has been replicated throughout many parishes and communities in the UK as indeed it has here in Tring.

Will that positive and caring community support and generosity continue when the world feels safe again? Hopefully it will. There is a wonderful hymn we sometimes sing which tells us clearly what kind of community we 'ought' to be building – what kind of tomorrow we should be making. It was actually written by an American called Marty Hagen around the same time that John Lennon wrote 'Yesterday' and I am sure you will recognise it: *Let us build a house where love can dwell / And all can safely live / A place where saints and children tell /*



'Feed My Sheep' by Raphael – commissioned by Pope Leo 15th in 1515.

Our hearts learn to forgive. / I am sure you will also recognise the chorus and its clear message: All are welcome, all are welcome, / ALL are welcome in this place.

I think that that probably defines the kind of house, the kind of community, the kind of church(es) we ought to be building in Tring. We keep on trying to do that and the greater outreach that involves is truly appreciated.

One thing that has happened during the nightmare autumn and winter has been a greater use of our churches as community resources and again that is happening here in Tring. The recognition that they are places of community connection for all who need help – no matter what religion they follow, is a very positive affirmation of our faith.

Perhaps we can build ever more strongly on that community role and relevance as we go forward into a closer, kinder and more caring relationship with all.

So, in our NEW tomorrow, let's continue to build a 'house' where love DOES dwell and ALL are truly welcome. Perhaps that's not the comfortable world of 'yesterday' – but it could be our future salvation – it could just be what we've all been waiting for!

Grahame Senior, Tring Team

A prayer for resilience



*Oh God who brings so much joy to the world
Let the goblins in all our heads fall silent
May their power to scare and torment be diminished.
Let there be God space and good space
May our young people learn how to thrive
May they know healing if they have been caught in the maelstrom of life
On that journey may they gain insights as well as inspiration
By accepting themselves and striving for the best version of themselves
May they know your Peace and seek the Light*

Hymn 198 in the Church Hymnary, 4th Edition The Church Hymnary Trust

*Let us build a house where love can dwell
and all can safely live,
a place where saints and children tell
how hearts learn to forgive;
built of hopes and dreams and visions,
rock of faith and vault of grace;
here the love of Christ shall end divisions:*

*all are welcome, all are welcome,
all are welcome in this place.*

*Let us build a house where prophets speak
and words are strong and true,
where all God's children dare to seek
to dream God's reign anew.
Here the cross shall stand as witness
and as symbol of God's grace;
here as one we claim the faith of Jesus:*

*Let us build a house where love is found
in water, wine and wheat:
a banquet hall on holy ground,
where peace and justice meet.
Here the love of God, through Jesus,
is revealed in time and space;
as we share in Christ the feast that frees us:*

*Let us build a house where hands will reach
beyond the wood and stone
to heal and strengthen, serve and teach,
and live the Word they've known.
Here the outcast and the stranger
bear the image of God's face;
let us bring an end to fear and danger:*

*Let us build a house where all are named,
their songs and visions heard
and loved and treasured, taught and claimed
as words within the Word.
Built of tears and cries and laughter,
prayers of faith and songs of grace,
let this house proclaim from floor to rafter:*

*all are welcome, all are welcome,
all are welcome in this place.*

Marty Hagen (b.1950)

Resilience work in schools has become more common. It is aiming to acknowledge not only that life has stresses and strains within it but also there can be ways to manage these. It is all about the sense that you can bounce back from adversity as well challenges and even failure. A series of strategies is shared that help guide them into other ways of thinking about demanding situations.

This is fascinating work, especially in recent times. As they face so much uncertainty, the mindset of young people has been much discussed in the media. It is humbling to think that these are the sorts of skills that, hopefully, will be of practical use for our young people for the rest of their lives. There is the hope that it will share ways of trying to overcome negative mindsets that can hold you back. It is a privilege when you see that there are seeds sown, connections made and ideas starting to be owned by that young person.

Sarah Bell, Tring Park School

Twins travel for Christian Aid

We may only be a few months old but we realise that there are many children in the world who don't have somewhere warm to live and food provided on demand every three hours. We also know that Christian Aid is one of the agencies which helps those in greatest need. Will you help us to support Christian Aid as they seek to help more children during this pandemic?

We can't travel for long without stopping to be fed but we think we can 'walk' three miles a day and do a whole marathon (in our prams) over a week. We also hope to get matched funding to double the amount we raise. Will you sponsor us? Watch for more details in the next edition of Comment.

**The twins
St Peter & St Paul**



Being a twin

'Everything all right, Dr Jones?'
'Fine, though I think there's another one.'

These are the words which we are told accompanied our birth in 1938. Lizzie and I are identical twins, rarer than non-identical, accounting for around three in every 1000 births – a rate which has remained constant, both over time (as far as records can tell us) and across human populations. We share the same DNA, for we come from one egg split in two, but we do not have exactly the same fingerprints (very similar but not identical). So we can give each other our kidneys but not be held responsible for the other's crimes! Nor are we clones of each other – influences from before birth and through life can change our genetic pattern. With the advent of ultra sound scans not many twins nowadays are complete surprises – one of us slept in an emptied drawer until a second cot was acquired.

So, what do we have in common? Physical characteristics – our eye, skin and hair colour are similar and we are both right-handed, though we have hair partings on opposite sides and our jaws (so the dentist says) are mirror images of each other. So we look very similar and have always confused people, particularly if they see only one of us at any one time. Many are the occasions when either one of us has wondered whether it was worthwhile explaining that we were actually the other one – the people we met might be embarrassed to know they had made a mistake. It



could be very amusing, but could also land us in hot water. At our first school we took each other's teacher reprimands without owning up because one never wrong-foots a teacher, particularly when he or she is cross. Actually, we never minded being confused with the other one; what we didn't like was being called 'twins' by people who didn't even try to get our names right! Needless to say our husbands didn't muddle us, and there has always been a particularly close relationship between our respective children – 'Whoops, wrong Mummy' or reference to an 'extra Grandpa (with glasses)'.

It is interesting to note that we do not both remember the same things about our childhood. Did we have a private language? No. Our mother always said it was interesting to hear our conversations because it showed what we were thinking. A classic comment heard by her through a closed door, 'She thinks we're babies!' We have both always been talkative, probably because there was always someone to talk to and share things with. We also had three older sisters, who were very upset that there were only two of us and they each wanted a 'real-life' baby. All through our early life we would always say 'our' and 'us' – 'Thank you very much for having us' at the end of a party, for instance, even if only one of us was there! Did we squabble? Yes, of course, from time to time, like all children. But we always had someone to play with. Did we share each other's pains? No, and only one of us had her tonsils and adenoids taken out, although it was a very common practice sixty years ago. Were/are our interests similar? Up to a point, yes, but this may be down to nurture rather than nature and there have been times when we have chosen very similar clothes. Lizzie doesn't hoard; I do! Up to the age of 11 we were dressed alike – mostly hand-

me-downs and home knits for it was war time. However, we always wanted our own clothes, even though they might be similar, and even went to the length of pulling some beads off each of two dresses so we, at least, would know which was which.

Perhaps, most significant of all, we went to different schools; it is important, if possible, for twins to be independent of each other. We went to different boarding schools so our friends didn't know our twin sister, and there was no opportunity for comparison either by our friends or the teachers: we could be ourselves. Our father was probably behind this decision. Although a Victorian by age and father of five daughters, he was very modern in his views that women should be independent and must be able to earn their own living. Even when we were babies he was very involved – apparently he went into the bank one day with a baby in each arm, put us down on the counter and, in reply



to the clerk's 'Good morning, Mr Bird, what have we here?', said 'What do you think of my twins?' History doesn't tell us what the clerk replied. However, it is interesting to note that in the christening photographs it is not Pa who holds the other baby but our aunt. Etiquette of that time did not wholly approve of hands-on fathers.

Lizzie read for a Science degree, I did an Arts degree. She spent most of her married life in Cardiff, while I moved away and have lived in six different houses compared to her three. Even relatively recently there have been occasions

when one has been mistaken for the other. A man, unknown to me, once rushed towards me with open arms in a London department store and greeted me very warmly; and there was the time when Lizzie took her seat at a big service in Canterbury Cathedral only to be greeted by her neighbour with the words 'Hello, Mrs Banister!' And there was the little group of students Lizzie saw in a University library whispering and constantly looking at her. Eventually she approached them with the words 'You think I'm Mrs Banister, don't you?' They did.

We enjoy such happenings – they are a constant reminder of the uniqueness of our relationship and, although we have spent most of our lives apart, that does not break the bonds. As we age it is great to have a listening ear with whom we can commiserate over the passing years, the trials of age-related medical complaints and even a brain-jogger when the memory fades. We have always been very close and during Covid-19 lockdowns have spent a lot of time on the telephone, longing for a hug.

Kate Banister
St Albans Cathedral

Permission to speak



I recently went on a course (virtually, of course) about child abuse as part of my training as a Foster Carer. We were trained by an excellent clinical psychotherapist who deals all the time with children and adults coming to terms with trauma of one kind or another.

What happened in that course was not what any of us expected, in that it was a small select group of no more than eight people, three of whom had been caring for children who were sexually abused. Those three people shared not so much what had happened to the children but how they felt as a result of caring for them. One of the attendees broke down and we unexpectedly became her support group. It transpired that she had experienced 'vicarious trauma' but didn't know till then that this could happen. The supportive, caring atmosphere in the group had given her permission to speak out, to say how she felt, to help her understand that her sense of failure was misplaced and that she was suffering second hand as

she shared the pain the children had suffered; she needed more specialist help in her particular situation.

Our family were unable to experience the family Christmas we had hoped for as we entered Tier 4 at the end of last year. For only the second time in twenty-four years, we did not celebrate the event with our four sons – and we had hoped to have a friend with us who lives alone and had been alone for most of the last year. She told us she was feeling rejected and unloved (and angry) because all her friends with whom she usually spent Christmas had family and were up to the limit of the three households mixing. We invited her to come to us. In the event, of course, no one went anywhere.

We did spend Christmas with two unexpected visitors, however, in the form of two baby girls, born prematurely and needing someone to take care of them. We felt it a privilege to be able to do this; but we may have underestimated how hard it would be... It is certainly very special when both are asleep, snuffling and content in their cots. It is less so when you have had more than two months of broken sleep (some nights almost no sleep at all) and the demands on you are relentless. We

are, of course, significantly older than most parents of babies and while we have more time, admit to having less energy. We have been given a huge responsibility and are determined to live up to expectations... but 'surviving' would be a truer description of our current state rather than 'flourishing'. Like so many others, when asked how we are, we tend to put on a brave face and smile through bleary eyes.

There are many in all kinds of circumstances, less dramatic than my lonely friend or the foster carer in need of support, who need permission to speak out, tell it like it really is and ask for help; to stop pretending they are coping and are just fine. Somehow if we are Christians we feel we are letting the side down if we are not dealing with all life throws at us and proving that prayer can change our lives. God CAN and does answer prayer: but as our Rector Huw Bellis has been saying for the last year: 'Do ask if you need help. There are people just waiting to listen or support or help in some practical way.' And in my experience, God usually uses other people to help us in answer to our prayers.

Annette Reynolds
St Peter & St Paul

Reflections on being 90...

... and looking forward to Spring, and special friendships and of people we love and now don't see.

The dreadful virus that has claimed so many lives worldwide and continues to do so has shown me the kindness of people young and old. The youth that has it all to do: parenting, earning a living in difficult times, helping neighbours – and strangers too at times.

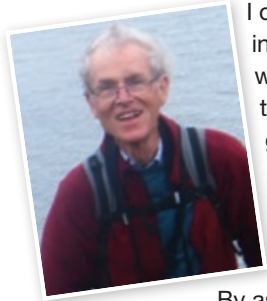
Age isn't just a number – at least it's what I think. People quote platitudes frequently on the subject!! Age comes year on year, celebrated or not depending on how fortunate we are. We talk of it and are often asked for our date of birth, a statistic, perhaps a boast, an acknowledged hint of what we can no longer do.

I'm glad to have lived for quite a long

time and acquired some wisdom. The planet is needing much more considered care and only then can we claim to understand 'Mother Nature' and how it works to bring about the beginning of a different world and a heaven-sent compromise.

Peggy Bainbridge, St Peter & St Paul and St John the Baptist, Aldbury

My love affair with the violin



I once went on an interviewing course where one of the tasks we were given involved choosing three statements about ourselves, one of which was false.

By asking each other questions to which only the answers 'yes' or 'no' were allowed, we had to seek out the false statement. Two of mine (one false, one true) were: 'I once played the Mendelssohn violin concerto in the Royal Albert Hall' and 'I make my living from earthquakes'. Interestingly, more people thought the true one was false than the other way around.

So in case you are not familiar with violins, let me introduce you: first you've got to be in love with the sound a violin can make, even if the noise you make

seldom, if ever, achieves your highest aspirations.

You need patience – it's a really hard instrument to play, because you have to sound the notes, while at the same time supporting the violin in a particularly awkward fashion.

You need to practise, practise, practise! – and although that's really the same as above, it's worth pointing out.

'Playing the violin' says my teacher 'is a very physical activity': you need to remember that because not binding yourself up in knots while simultaneously playing and supporting the violin is a vital key to success.

Never lose hope and remember that you can still get somewhere near the heart of wonderful compositions, even if there are loads of mistakes, funny noises and poor tuning.

Always be ready to learn because you can improve at any age, including mine,

and last year, I finally took my Grade 8 exam, 60 years after I started learning the violin.

Find a really good teacher: I have had a number during my life, but my current teacher is superb and unlocks doors for me that I thought might be closed for ever.

Enjoy playing with others: find congenial groups to make music with and you will have an enormous repertoire of some of the greatest music ever written.

Don't despise that irritating instrument, the 'tick-tock' metronome, because one of the rules of a top professional violinist was, 'The metronome is your friend' and it's great advice.

Optional – try to marry one of the top piano accompanists in the country, as I did!

Edmund Booth
St Peter & St Paul

A thousand ways to spread the love...



It's February (woop woo!) It's the time of late snowfall and blooming snowdrops; the last month of winter, nature's preparation for the Spring! The first signs of life are

poking through the snow (I wish, more like poking through the endless mud).

It's a time for dog walks in the cold, for spotting the first creatures emerging after the winter as the days grow longer. This time last year I was beginning my fundraising for World Challenge – I've been looking back over my photos and memories are returning of standing in a cold field, advertising 'Fern's Eco-Products.' And the 2020 February snow: hopefully that will put in a reappearance this year. As the month drew to a close, we began Lent – our preparation for Easter.

It may be the shortest month but it's filled with celebrations like Chinese New Year and Pancake Day; but there are some really weird little-known special days too... Here's a few examples (prepare to have your mind blown at the amount of absurd celebrations that exist in this month alone!).

National... 2nd Groundhog Day?! 4th Create a Vacuum Day? 5th Shower with a Friend Day (OK that's just weird), 8th Toothache Day – what? Do you just go and eat too much sugar until it hurts? 17th Cabbage Day (oh come on, who would come up with a whole day in which to celebrate cabbage?).

There you have it then – although that's only a tiny fraction of the national holidays through February! But I think my favourites would have to be (of course) Valentine's Day on the 14th – and Random Acts of Kindness Day on the 17th. (Don't worry, World Nutella Day, no one's forgetting you: you're also very special.)

I get the feeling that Valentine's Day gets mixed reactions. Some view it as a chance to show your partner you love them, for a gift, dinner or date. Others may just skip it, since if you need a special day to tell someone you love them then I think you're doing something wrong. It's a time for those cringey little messages and heart cards you make/order in school, where there's always that kid with at least ten different

declarations of love... For some, it's a day where you wake up to a card or a box of chocolates, sneakily given by a parent. And then, do you get this? Around 20-30% of pet owners buy their pets Valentine's day gifts or cards!

But the common idea around Valentine's Day is it's all about showing your significant other that you love them... It's a day for celebrating girlfriends and boyfriends, wives and husbands and any other partners. But what a lot of people don't remember or acknowledge is that Valentine's Day is a day of love for all. It's not just about romance, a gift for your partner, but a day to celebrate everyone in the world who has someone to love, whether it's love for your family, friends or (dare I say it) pets! You don't have to give out pink cards with 'Be My Valentine' on front or little heart-shaped chocolates (although I'm never one to turn down chocolate, whatever shape it's in...) In fact, you don't have to buy anything at all, just consider what you could do and say to remind someone that they're loved...

Random Acts of Kindness Day follows a similar pattern. This year it will be on the 17th, a day to spread the love and joy to all.

Maybe you could leave out some chocolate for a neighbour, colleague or the people who aren't appreciated enough; leave something nice for the binmen/women or postpeople (is that the proper non-gender specific term?? Postman, postwoman, postpeople?) Your kind gesture doesn't even have to be to another person... You could be kind to the environment by picking up litter on your next walk, or plant a tree in a public space (only if it's legal, though) Perhaps you could: smile at everyone you meet, even for no particular reason (might struggle

with that one through a mask though... maybe just when you're outdoors...); make a donation to a charity or cause you believe in; bake some food for a neighbour, relative or random stranger; get up early and do that job that nobody wants to do; make a poster to go in your front window to spread joy to all around.

There are a thousand things you could do, all of which would make someone feel that little bit happier, especially in tricky times. So this month, just keep an open mind for things you could do to spread the love – and it's definitely not limited to the two days I've mentioned. If on any day of the month you see someone who needs a hug, I'm sure you will find a way to cheer them up without actually going near them or sharing any physical contact because otherwise you are spreading a different kind of gift – coronavirus...

Anyway, thanks for reading. I hope you enjoyed my inspirational paper-speech (that is totally a thing) and have a great February!

Lots of Valentine's love...

Fern Asquith
High Street Baptist Church

A rewarding experience



Both Ian and I were involved in Ridgeway Cubs with our eldest son. So when our youngest joined Scouting and attended Ridgeway Beaver Scout Group at the age

of 6, and the Leader asked for someone to help on a regular basis, it was an opportunity to offer some voluntary time.

For the following two years I attended Beavers. A few months in, I was invested as a Leader during a St George's Day Parade Service, which was a very proud moment for me as my parents were present, my Dad having been a Scout Leader many years previously: obviously it is in the blood.

Time for Olie to move to Cubs and so did I, as that section was in need of a Leader at that time. I guess my plan was to stay whilst Olie was there and then retire gracefully. However, the rewards one gets from being involved with a group are amazing.

Over the last twelve years I have met and worked alongside many wonderful people, who have become good friends. We have enjoyed a variety of activities from walks in the countryside, Camps –

Scout and Cub camp – cooking on fires, outdoor activities and fun evenings at the Hut to name but a few. A highlight is meeting with young people each week and listening to what they have to say – learning about their world – sharing and learning all the time.

All groups need volunteers. A misconception is that this only benefits the organization. Many groups rely on volunteers so it is vital for all of us to think; 'Is there something I can help with?'

By becoming involved and donating some time you are not only helping those organisations directly but also benefiting the community and our own well-being. Even the odd hour makes a huge difference.

The benefits of volunteering include building connections, improving family life, sharing our skills and experiences and

learning new valuable skills.

So give it a go: many hands make light work. Ridgeway Scout Group are looking for volunteers with the Beaver Scouts (age group 6-8 years) and Cub Scouts (age group 8-10 years). For more information please contact: jmatthews@ridgewayscouts.org

Jacky Matthews
Ridgeway Scout Group



THE FOTCH Family Fun Day

CALL MY BLUFF! ANTIQUE CALL MY BLUFF!

GARDEN SAFARI DAY

WE'LL BE BACK!

THE CHANDOS ENSEMBLE

BARN DANCE

BRILLIANT BRAINS

30 YEARS

THESE ARE SOME OF THE EVENTS WE SHOULD HAVE HAD IN 2020... AS SOON AS WE CAN WE'LL PLAN THEM BIGGER AND BETTER SO WE CAN ALL ENJOY THEM TOGETHER - WATCH THIS SPACE!

2021 – an exciting time for Tring School



After moving into the temporary 'Modular Village' on the school field in August 2020, the first phase of the demolition of several blocks of the old Tring School commenced.

For those of you who know the school, Neville was the first building to go, followed by Watkins, Hobson and half of Fells. This was a fascinating process that at several points was greeted by a mixture of cheers, gasps and even applause as the students and staff watched buildings be torn apart before their eyes. It also brought some mixed emotions and a hint of sadness for some of us.



This demolition was completed on 9 November 2020. After this we moved into a period of grinding down the fabric of the old school which will (poetically and symbolically) form part of the foundations of the new school. Alongside this, the

build area has been levelled, various tests on the ground structure undertaken and then the ground broken in preparation for the foundations. All of these activities led to a fascinating variety of vehicles and machines being on site and has at times caused the whole school to vibrate.

The first delivery of concrete was on 27 November and since then there has been a steady stream of lorries with fresh deliveries. The contents of the lorries are creating the foundations for the steel work that will form the framework of the new building. The initial pieces of this steel structure arrived before Christmas. It will be a momentous occasion when the first of these is installed.

Throughout all of this the school has continued to operate in a Covid-19-safe manner. Having to manage the school and the environment for the new build at the same time as following all of the Covid-19 guidelines has brought its challenges, of course, but nothing that we haven't been able successfully to deal with. Similarly, all of the meetings with



Bowmer + Kirkland (the contractor) and the DfE have had to be held 'virtually' and given the level of detail and meticulous planning required for every step of the process, the amount of work involved has been enormous.

At the moment the new build project is on time and on schedule, to be completed late in 2021, with the new buildings coming into operation at the very start of 2022. After this we still have to demolish most of the remaining old buildings (excluding the Beloe and Desborough blocks) and complete the parking areas and landscaping.

2021 is going to be a very exciting time for Tring School. Our new buildings and sports facilities will be very 'state of the art' and we can't wait to see them start to take shape and then be completed before our eyes. Please do visit the school website to see regularly updated photos, drone footage, the plans for the new building and a virtual 'fly through'.

Rod Gibberd, Tring School

Fairtrade Fortnight, 22 February – 7 March



For two weeks each year at the end of February and start of March, thousands of individuals, companies and groups across the UK come

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

In 2021, Fairtrade Fortnight will feel very different. 2020 has been a hard year and we know that physically campaigning and meeting people will continue to be challenging but that won't stop us! The Covid-19 pandemic has shown us more than ever how interconnected we are globally. This interconnection is at the very heart of the Fairtrade message. As a Fairtrade Town we have already shown a commitment to making Fairtrade choices in Tring. As consumers we have the power to maintain this status and drive long-term change with our shopping choices and conversations.

Choose the world you want

Fairtrade Fortnight 2021 highlights the growing challenges that climate change brings to farmers and workers in the communities Fairtrade works with. The facts are straightforward. Farmers and workers in the global south, who have done the least to contribute to climate change, are disproportionately affected. They have told us that:

- Climate change is one of their biggest challenges right now.
- Low prices for their crops mean that they are struggling to fight back.
- With more money through Fairtrade they feel more equipped to meet their everyday needs and deal with the challenges posed by climate change.

The climate crisis is an immediate and ever-increasing threat and those in climate vulnerable countries are already seeing its impacts, from droughts and crop disease to floods, heatwaves and shrinking harvests.

The Fairtrade Premium in action

With the emergence of the global Covid-19 pandemic, the challenges that farmers face now are bigger than ever before, with falling commodity prices

and widespread shocks reverberating along our global supply chains. Ongoing poverty in farming communities makes it increasingly hard to cope with the effects of climate change.

One of the unique features of Fairtrade is the contribution to the community Fairtrade Premium fund. The farmers and workers then democratically decide how to best invest those funds locally. Throughout the pandemic, many Fairtrade co-operatives have used those funds to protect the most vulnerable in their communities, from sending vital supplies to local older people to distributing thousands of face masks. The Fairtrade Premium you have helped create by choosing Fairtrade has been a real lifeline this year.

Fairtrade, climate and you

Our global trading system is balanced in favour of the powerful few. Trapped in this system, farmers already struggle to meet their immediate needs. More than ever, they need a fair price for their crops and their hard work. Fairtrade works to raise the voices of producers and prioritise what they need to respond to the environmental crises unfolding in already vulnerable communities. This year the Fairtrade Foundation are asking you to 'Choose the World You Want' and use your voice to tell others about the challenges that farmers face from climate change.

What can I do?

- Find out more: visit the Fairtrade Foundation website to find out more about how climate change is affecting farmers.
- Choose Fairtrade when purchasing tea, coffee, sugar, chocolate, wine, fruit etc.
- Ask for Fairtrade in local shops in cafes and restaurants.
- Spread the word: talk to others (or share on social media) about the benefits to producers of making Fairtrade choices.
- Sign the Climate Coalition's Climate Declaration and tell your local MP or



Council about your commitment to putting the voices of producers at the heart of the climate crisis fight.

- Are you a young person between the ages of 5 and 25? Get involved in the 'Choose the World You Want' youth exhibition in Fairtrade Fortnight 2021.

(Text adapted from www.fairtrade.org.uk, with resources and more information available there.)



Fairtrade Town renewal

This year Tring's Fairtrade Town status is up for renewal. We need your support more than ever to keep being a Fairtrade Town. Ask for Fairtrade tea and coffee when purchasing from a cafe or restaurant and comment positively when this option is available! Make Fairtrade choices from local shops: Healthfare, Co-op, Marks & Spencer, Beechwood are all great stockists of Fairtrade products.

Polly Eaton
Justice and Peace Group, Tring



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 savings in excess of £16,000.

The average weekly maintenance contribution (equivalent to "rent" for housing benefit purposes) is £104 for a one bedroom property and £123 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

Fake news and conspiracy theorists



Without a sensible reference framework, eccentric ideas and beliefs gain traction with parts of society. Pilate asked 'What is truth?' His question is simple,

but the ensuing discourse is not. Fortunately, truth in science is tethered to understandable principles. In this sense it can be tested more tightly than philosophical or religious truth. It is this truth that helps us to decide about Covid-19 vaccination.

Testing assertions by experiment is the key to scientific insights and advances. Failure to replicate condemns an assertion to the scrap heap; successful replication keeps it in play for another day. Scientific truth is subject to revision based on validated evidence. Rumours cannot be tested in this way. The Covid-19 vaccines are a product of this system of enquiry.

The weight of scientific evidence confirms that humans clear infection by

producing an immunological response involving specific antibodies and special 'T' cells, and that exposure to infection or components of the infecting agents generates the response.

The front-runner Covid-19 vaccines initiate the production of useful antibodies and 'T' cell immunity, and in large scale trials, immunised volunteers have been at a considerable advantage in resisting Covid-19 infection in comparison with volunteers who have not been immunised with the candidate vaccines. The published health benefits are clear.

The evidential waters have been slightly muddied by dosage errors with the Oxford-Astra-Zeneca tests, but two issues have emerged, the first being the organisers' willingness to publish the error, and the second is the implied integrity of the scientific teams. Rumours of a conspiracy to smuggle illicit agents into the immunisation process have no plausible mechanism.

Unplanned harm is a concern. However, the numbers of volunteers in the vaccine trials are in the tens of thousands. None has suffered severe

unwanted effects, and we have no evidence of suppression of inconvenient data. When the numbers of vaccinations run into the millions, rare unwanted effects are likely to emerge, because the genetics of recipients are diverse. (Genetic tests have recently revealed characteristics that pre-dispose patients to needing ITU interventions if they contract the disease.)

Late adverse effects might theoretically develop after weeks to months, but the late development of such effects is highly unlikely based on our current knowledge.

It looks, therefore, that a decision to accept vaccination boils down to a question of trust in the unfolding evidence of efficacy and safety of what is being offered. The risk of exposure when shopping etc. carries its own price, not personally costly for the young, but a big burden for the elderly with actuarially fewer years to live, and greater risks of dying from the infection if caught. The rational choice for later decades of life is clearly in favour of immunisation by one of the vaccines on offer.

Dr Mike Sherratt, Corpus Christi

Mark's Gospel

Second book of the New Testament, but first of the four Gospels to be written: because most of it is found in Matthew it was the least studied until recent centuries when, ironically, it has become the most studied.

Abbreviator was the word used of Mark, because his Gospel is the shortest, and only forty verses of it are not used by Matthew and half of it is used by Luke.

Is Mark's Gospel best described as the drama of the Way of the Cross, with a prologue and then five acts or sections climaxing with the Empty Tomb?

Now read as a consecutive narrative it is a collection of materials put together in a way that has been described as being like a block of chocolate or a string of pearls: a better image would be a piece of rope with interwoven strands.

Theology is more important to Mark: he is not primarily concerned with biography, chronology or geography for his concern is Jesus' words and works.

Mark alone would mean no Christmas. For him the story of Jesus begins with adulthood, John the Baptist's message of preparation, the baptism of Jesus and the Father's voice from heaven.

Abrupt is the best way to describe the ending: his Gospel ends with the Empty Tomb, and the fear of the women rather than a Resurrection Appearance, so a couple of endings were added later.

Reading Mark's Gospel we find that while a third of its content is devoted to teaching we look in vain for the Sermon on the Mount or the Lord's Prayer.

Knowledge of time and place and destination of the four Gospels is sparse but Mark alone probably wrote before the Fall of Jerusalem (AD70). He seems to have been writing for the Christians in Rome.

Mark was a common name at that time in the Roman world. Early tradition says he was a disciple of Peter and described as his 'interpreter', either of interpreting from Aramaic into Greek or of explaining the Apostles' teaching to the Christians in Rome. He has been identified as John Mark, Paul's companion, cousin of Barnabas, and also with the young man who fled naked when Jesus was being arrested (perhaps doubtful). Eventually he ended up as Bishop of Alexandria and his relics are in St Mark's Basilica in Venice.

Martin Banister, St Albans Cathedral

In praise of the NHS

The service we received from the NHS was brilliant. John's appointment to receive his Covid-19 vaccine was 5.00pm and we were on our way home by 6.00pm. The downside was that there was a wait of about twenty-five minutes to get into the venue. It was freezing cold, so a huge warning to everyone else

planning to go: 'Go well wrapped up!' I took John in his wheel chair and fortunately he was wheeled straight to the entrance door. Everyone was so pleasant, I just couldn't fault the helpers.
**John & Ann Hawkes
St Peter & St Paul**



The vaccine is here!



I was told by my doctor that GP practices in Dacorum had got together and arranged for their patients to be vaccinated at a vaccination centre set up on the industrial estate in Hemel Hempstead.

Sure enough, I had a telephone call from the surgery on 6 January and an appointment was made for me at Maxted Road Hemel Hempstead on 8 January at 10.20am.

On arrival I was directed to join the

queue where I waited for thirty-five minutes. On entry into the building, I completed an enquiry form, was given a number and then went to one of the nurses and had my vaccination. She gave me a card giving the type and batch number of the vaccine and said I would be contacted with an appointment for my second vaccination in about twelve weeks. I had to sit in the waiting area for a few minutes so that they could observe if I had any adverse side effects. I then went home.

However, I am told by a friend who had her vaccination afterwards in Hemel Hempstead that she completed her enquiry form in the car and then went

into the building without having to wait outside. Therefore, apart from having to travel to Hemel Hempstead and wait to be observed afterwards, the vaccination is hardly any worse than having the usual flu jab.

One word of advice. Two days after having my vaccination I received a letter from the NHS inviting me to contact them to arrange a vaccination appointment. I am told that if you do this you will be sent to Stevenage – or even further away – so I would suggest waiting for your surgery to contact you.

**Betty Aston
St Peter & St Paul**

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

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

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

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

We provide a full service to meet all your requirements

www.tringmarketauctions.co.uk
The Market Premises, Brook Street, Tring, Hertfordshire HP23 5ED
t: 01442 826490 e: sales@tringmarketauctions.co.uk

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

Heirs & Graces
Day Nursery

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

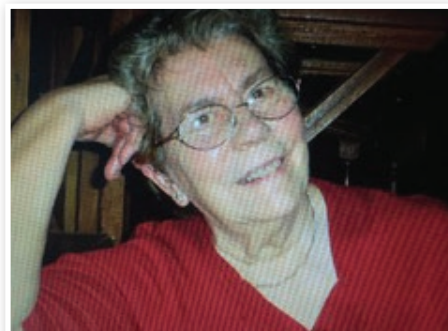
Open from 7.30am until 6pm

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

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

In memory of Jean Wakefield

Jean Elizabeth Wakefield was born in Birmingham on 17 September 1931 where she lived on one of the first council estates with her parents, brother Brian, maternal grandparents and her Aunt Minnie. She described how proud people were to have a home with a bathroom and inside toilet. They had a wonderful local community, growing and sharing veg and all helping each other. The local shops were all independent traders: the butcher, baker and of course fish 'n chips, a favourite throughout her life. The children loved playing traditional games in the street in the evenings: marbles, football and hopscotch.



Her mother was a fierce Nursing Sister and she and her brother were latchkey children from the age of 5 at a time when it was unusual not to have a parent at home. Her father was extensively involved in Scouting so the whole family became involved. Eventually Jean met her future husband, Len, at Scouts.

After Grammar School Jean completed an unqualified teaching course before going away to college to study. Jean started her teaching career in Foundry Road, Birmingham. She and Len were married in 1953 and I was born in 1954.



Jean was a highly regarded teacher and became a Deputy Head in Foundry Road and moved to her first Headship in Oldbury before it was relocated to a brand-new build, Christchurch School in 1970. Friends from Wordsley Church commented that there must be many middle-aged people in Wordsley grateful for the great start Mrs Wakefield gave them in life. Her former secretary said she was a kind and thoughtful person to staff and parents alike; she insisted on entering all the new children's details into the admissions book herself so that she could get to know them.

Jean and Len loved ballroom dancing and travelling. They had a van which they used to strap my pram in to go on holiday. In 1982 they bought a plot of land in Calonge which was to become a very special second home when they retired.



The move from Wombourne to The Furlongs in Tring bought them close geographically to us and their only regret was they wished they had done it sooner. Since Len passed away in 2012, Jean became a member of St Peter & St Paul's Church where she sat in exactly the same position as she and Len had done in their previous church. She joined the coffee rota to provide refreshments for people after the Sunday service and made friends with those who sat near her.

In recent years the arrival of great grandchildren Harry and Lucy brought Jean much joy as did her pride in her daughter and granddaughters Sarah and Rachel.

Jean had a fall in November 2017 which put a stop to her busy life and holidays in Spain, but she made the most of her time and loved holidays and theatre trips with her family. For the past



two years she was blessed by being cared for by Emmanuel and Sophia and their lovely team. We are all very grateful to them for making life comfortable and treating her with such respect and for giving her some real laughs and comfort.

Mum's warm smile, generous love to us all and her sense of humour will live on as it was a beacon as we walked through the door to see her. Although unable to attend church for some time, she kept in touch by reading *Comment* magazine and when she went into hospital, she appreciated visits from Jane Banister. She said she was happy and glad to go and join 'the party in the sky' as she was sure Len was waiting with a shaken-not-stirred G&T along with their dear friends and family. Although her health issues were mainly around her mobility, she died of a stroke on 22 November 2020. She was still giving me Christmas shopping instructions as she slipped away.

I was blessed with amazing parents, both wonderful role models, and I know our family and friends feel fortunate to have had lives enriched by knowing Mum and Dad.

Denise Matthews, daughter



In memory of Daphne Nash

On 14 November 2020, Daphne Nash, a long-time member of St Peter & St Paul's Church, died after a battle with cancer which she bore with cheerful stoicism. She was a month short of her 92nd birthday. A visit or phone call to her always focused on the positive and how grateful she was to her son Stephen who stayed with her all through lockdown and other children John and Barbara for their love and support; and she always asked about our family and others she knew we were in touch with. She was a proud grandmother and spoke often of Andrew, Edward, Michael and Robert and her great grandchildren, Emma and Paul. Daphne was delighted to find we were fostering and took a real interest in what we were doing. Daphne was a gentle, lovely lady.

Some five years before I had been asked to bring Daphne and Gwen Hewison to Church each Sunday and we all became friends. Daphne became a real support to Gwen who lived alone with no family close by and many phone conversations were had between them. On birthdays and bluebell days, we took them out in the car to see local sights such as College lake, Ashridge and Ivinghoe, familiar to both of them from more independent days. Daphne also enjoyed various events organised by FOTCH, especially the Family Fun Day and Garden Safari Day.

Daphne was born in Hemel Hempstead in 1928, the first of three children. Daphne's father, George Broughall, worked for the Secretary of the Foundling Hospital in Berkhamsted where a basket was hung at the gate so that children could be placed there to be cared for and later adopted.

She spent her childhood at Ashley Green just outside Berkhamsted. After leaving school, she became a nursery nurse and had her first job in Ashley Green. She moved to Hindhead in Surrey, then to London where she worked for The Church of England Waifs and Strays Society where she loved looking after the babies. She felt a future in London was not for her, and in 1946 she joined the Land Army and was posted to Markyate. It was while working in the Land Army that she met her future husband, Bill.

After marrying in 1949, they moved

to Bill's farm at Felden just outside Hemel Hempstead and Daphne settled in to a new life as farmer's wife and, subsequently, mother of their three children. In 1985 Daphne and Bill moved to Tring where she lived for thirty-five years, mostly as a widow.

She was an active member of St Peter & St Paul's and was a member of the church cleaning team: she hung up her duster on her 90th birthday. Daphne was a long-time member of the First Saturday Lunch Club and Margaret Oram recalls that she was always very appreciative of the meals and thoroughly enjoyed the companionship, normally sharing a table with Gwen Hewison, Beth Scraggs, Frank Dalton, Lilian Purse and Barbara Daniels. Daphne never failed to come and thank the team for her meal before she left. She also loved going to Good Companions



with Beth and Gwen, where they enjoyed sharing each other's company and having a good sing together. Beth and Daphne shared having family in Germany. 'She was just such a lovely person,' Beth commented, 'very caring and proud of her family.'

Daphne was a member of one of the house groups led by Grahame Senior who said that Daphne was a loyal and very forthright member of the 'Greenways Group' for quite a few years. She always had a succinct and appropriate view to express in discussions. 'At the root of her faith and approach to life she had two abiding principles – kindness and fairness; and the centre of her world was always family life. She also had a



soft spot for the Children's Society as one of her earliest jobs was with one of the earlier incarnations of that organisation when they still ran orphanages. Her

faith and commitment to the word of God shone through every observation and action and she was one of those quiet Christians who so often inspire love and affection in those around them. I spoke to her son Stephen quite often in latter times when he was living at 65 Grove Park and looking after Daphne with great dedication. The way in which she still functioned as the centre of her family even

in the past year when she had very poor health and was in and out of hospital was evident in everything he and his siblings had to say. She loved and was thoroughly loved in return which is probably just about the best thing you could say about anybody's life. We miss her quiet presence in our group and remember her every time we meet.'

Daphne will be much missed by us all.
Annette Reynolds, St Peter & St Paul



In memory of Gwen Hewison

I first met Gwen not long after I moved with my husband and two daughters to Tring from Scotland. We met at a Scottish Country Dance Class in the Temperance Hall. Almost immediately she took me under her wing and introduced me to a group of singers called Mrs Rodley's Ladies. It was such fun: Gwen sang, but she excelled in giving recitations. Her most memorable rendition being Albert and the Lion, putting on her Yorkshire accent. She was brilliant and regularly brought the house down in Care Homes around the area.

Her stepson Robin, who had Downs Syndrome, came to all the rehearsals and concerts we performed at; he could keep perfect timing.

Gwen gave Robin a wonderful life, taking him everywhere and introducing him to many people. She was so proud of him even if his achievements were small. She took him to the Riding for the Disabled (RDA) at Hastoe, which was and is a wonderful organisation for all who have disabilities. Robin thoroughly enjoyed it and Gwen did a lot of Fund Raising for this organisation.

We also joined the Caledonian Society and went to Aylesbury every week for Scottish Country Dancing.

For years Gwen was the Hall Keeper for the Parish Church.



What a free spirit Gwen was, knowledgeable on so many topics and she could talk on most subjects, and she did! She had a long wish list, one of which was to have a trip in a Hot Air Balloon. She did manage this on the third attempt over Wendover in her mid-70s, but was not happy as she could not have the champagne at the end because she would be driving home. She also managed to operate a computer well enough to send emails (but technology was not her special forte).

On the death of my own mum, Gwen became my other mother and I her surrogate daughter. We loved each other very much. She supported me both when we moved to Tring and when my mum died in Scotland. From the beginning until Gwen's death there were lots of adventures and many discussions: we often agreed to disagree. In 2005 she flew up to Scotland to visit us with her friend Brian, the first time out of England and the first time on an aeroplane. When I met her in Glasgow Airport her face was a picture to be remembered (Scotland has never been the same). She visited Loch Lomond and other places of interest around the central belt. Unfortunately there was not enough time to do more.

Over the twenty-three years I lived in Tring and in the seventeen years since I moved back to Scotland, Gwen was one of the most important people in my life. I did make some very good friends in Tring and am still in touch with many of them, even though some of them also moved away.

Her beginnings were humble, moving from Yorkshire when she was 7 to London. She went to a very good school in Kensington but while her parents were most loving they were not at all well off and really struggled. Her father was a butler in a large house in London. It was then, as it is now, not a cheap place to live and butlers were not that well paid.

Gwen has a niece called June, the daughter of one of her brothers. I asked Gwen a few years ago to write her life story, but her reply was 'Who would want to read that?' I wish she had but she never did it, so we can only try to piece little bits of it together.

She worked for De Havilland during World War II, and in Woolworths in an administrative position in charge of a number of women (I am sure they all



looked up to her) and at some stage did some nursing training which gave her the experience to look after her first husband at home until his death from cancer. Rex was Welsh and she kept in contact with his family until her death (and she could still use a few choice Welsh phrases – Ed).

In 1968 Gwen married Mont Hewison who had three children, Anne, Barbara and Robin, who was then aged 21. Gwen adopted Robin and when Mont died in 1987, continued looking after him until early the 1990s when he went into care in sheltered housing. She was still active in his care until his death in 2004. I flew down to be at his funeral.

In her last few years she was befriended by Natalie Sisley who helped Gwen through modern living with shopping, banking, modern technology (mobile phones, etc) but mostly Natalie was a good listener. Natalie also introduced her to her young family who, from what I heard, virtually adopted Gwen: the love was mutual. She taught the children how to win playing card games and spent a few Christmas Days with them and I was told all about it. Since Gwen became ill, I have made a new friend in Natalie and I do not know how I would have managed without her help. Gwen was also given great support from other members of the Parish Church. God is good.

I have been down to Tring regularly over the last seventeen years, though Covid-19 prevented that visit in 2020. Gwen and I had regular phone calls until recently about old times and discussed all manner of subjects under the sun. I must admit, I did more of the listening.

So many happy, happy memories which I shall treasure. Gwen was definitely a one-off! I shall miss my other mother so much.

Margaret Wardil, formerly St Martha's Methodist Church

Memories of Gwen



I first remember Gwen at Beavers (swimming for the disabled) where Gwen and her step-son Robin were long time members. Robin loved the water and got very excited; she was very protective of him.

We got to know Gwen after our mum Phyllis moved into Emma Rothschild Court where Gwen had lived for some years. They became friends due to their shared interests of whist, bingo and their wicked sense of humour! She came to the Thursday evening whist drive at Wilstone with us and helped run the Monday afternoon whist drive and was the bingo caller on Friday afternoons at Emma Rothschild Court. She enjoyed the armchair exercises held in the main hall and loved to dance (with assistance) at

any musical event held at the Good Companions Club and especially at the Help the Aged Christmas Party – even into her late-90s.

Gwen was very independent and very tough; she was proud of being born in Yorkshire but moved to London when young when her father, who was a butler, moved down looking for work. She loved Tring and I understand from her that she had been very active in the community over the years.

When Mum was very poorly she used to pop in every day on her 'exercise route' around the building and often brought her a few sweets or a little treat.

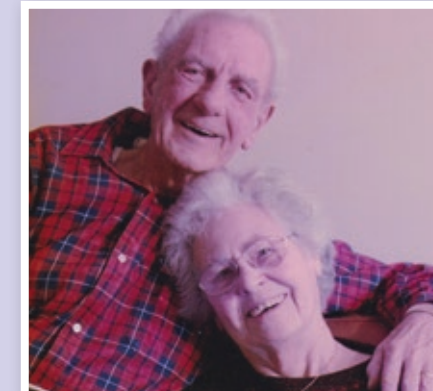
She was quite a character and will be missed.

Janet Liptrot, former neighbours

I have known Gwen Hewison for a few years as she attended two groups that I have helped with – one at Emma Rothschild Court and the other Good Companions.

Gwen always had a smile on her face. She enjoyed talking to people and getting involved. If music was involved, her toe would soon be tapping and she'd be singing along. May she rest in peace.

Alison Bickerton, St Peter & St Paul



Useful contacts

TRING TEAM PARISH

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

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

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

Curate
 Rev Sarah Marshall
 St George's House
 3 New Mill Place
 Tringford Road
 07538 888502
 sarah@tringteamparish.org.uk

Diocesan Lay Minister
 Mike Watkin
 01442 890407

Parish Co-ordinators
 Roy Hargreaves
 01442 823624
 roy.hargreaves@btinternet.com

John Whiteman
 01442 826314
 john@tringteamparish.org.uk

Church Wardens
 Chris Hoare (Tring)
 01442 822915

Ian Matthews (Tring)
 01442 823327

Jane Brown (Aldbury)
 01442 851396

Christine Rutter (Puttenham)
 01296 668337

Ken Martin (Wilstone)
 01442 822894

Rev Jane Banister
 (Long Marston)
 01442 822170

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

Janet Goodyer
 pewsheets@tringteamparish.org.uk

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

Hall Secretary
 Barbara Anscombe
 01442 828325
 Bandb33@talktalk.net

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

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

Senior Steward
 Rosemary Berdinner
 01442 822305

AKEMAN STREET BAPTIST CHURCH Minister
 Rev David Williams
 01442 827881

Administrator
 Emma Nash
 01442 827881

CORPUS CHRISTI ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH Parish Priest
 Father David Burke
 01442 863845
 davidburke@rcdow.org.uk
 www.berkotring.org.uk

HIGH STREET BAPTIST CHURCH Ministers
 Joe Egan 07521 513493
 joe@tringbaptistchurch.co.uk
 Ruth Egan 07521 513494
 ruth@tringbaptistchurch.co.uk

Assistant Minister
 Kevin Rogers
 km_rogers@outlook.com

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

NEW MILL BAPTIST CHURCH Minister
 Vacancy

JUSTICE & PEACE GROUP
 affiliated to
 Churches Together in Tring

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

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

SOCIAL NETWORKING

 Tring Parish

 @revhuw

COMMENT Editor
 Annette Reynolds
 0845 8681333
 07968 312161
 comment.magazine@gmail.com

Distribution
 Barbara Anscombe
 01442 828325
 bandb33@talktalk.net

Treasurer
 Chris Hoare
 01442 822915

Advertising
 Sue Mayhew
 0845 8681333

Design
 Kev Holt, Ginger Promo

Please contact the Treasurer if you would like to take a subscription to *Comment*: £10.00 for 10 issues each year. Contact Barbara Anscombe if you would like it posted.

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

COMMENT DEADLINES

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

High Street Baptist Church - Tring



Growing in the message and challenge of God

Visit our website for Worship at Home resources, updates of services and special events. Although we are not able to meet in person at the moment, please join us at our services and prayer meetings via Zoom.



If you, or someone you know, would like to find out more please call Cliff on 07906 597882 or email admin@tringbaptistchurch.co.uk
www.tringbaptistchurch.co.uk/linkinglives/



Recycling area is located at the left hand side entrance to High Street Baptist church for bras, plastic milk bottle tops, baby food pouches, pens, spectacles, mobile phones, stamps and batteries.



Morning worship



Sundays 10.30am

zoom

Meeting ID: 978 9592 0392

Start the Week

Mondays

9.15-9.45am

Code: 100 710 735

zoom



Sermons, all-age talks and other videos are available on YouTube

'High Street Baptist Church, Tring, UK'.

 Kids Activities @High Street Baptist Church

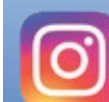
Don't hesitate to get in touch if you need pastoral support.

Church office admin@tringbaptistchurch.co.uk

Revd Joe Egan 07521 513493 or joe@tringbaptistchurch.co.uk

Revd Ruth Egan 07521 513494 or ruth@tringbaptistchurch.co.uk

www.tringbaptistchurch.co.uk



#tringbaptistchurch



High Street Baptist Church

Crossword puzzle answers From page 8

- | ACROSS | DOWN |
|---------------------|--------------|
| 6. VALENTINES DAY | 1. GAZE |
| 8. REVERES | 2. STIES |
| 11. PADRE | 3. END |
| 12. RESTART | 4. ASIATIC |
| 13. OFF | 5. PAYROLLS |
| 15. AISLE | 7. EVER |
| 16. CERAMIC | 9. RECEDED |
| 17. BREAD | 10. STRATUM |
| 18. ASK | 11. PRAISED |
| 19. PERUSED | 14. FORSOOTH |
| 22. NOMAD | 16. CAPABLE |
| 23. MEDULLA | 20. SENSE |
| 26. ST ALBANS ABBEY | 21. DUMB |
| | 24. LEEK |
| | 25. VAN |

BEECHWOOD

FINE FOODS



A multi award-winning deli offering an extensive range of British & local produce

- the only all British cheese counter in the locality
- wide range of hand-made chutneys & preserves
- Sarah's homemade cakes
- Artisan breads & seasonal produce



We also serve Fairtrade Coffee, Tea & Hot Chocolate to take away

A taste apart

Gift Vouchers Available



42 Frogmore Street | Tring | HP23 5AU | 01442 828812



OPEN 7 DAYS A WEEK www.beechwoodfinefoods.com