

# COMMENT

THE MAGAZINE OF THE CHURCHES IN TRING



# High Street Baptist Church - Tring

Growing in the message and challenge of God



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



For information about our midweek kids' activities visit our website or Kids Activities @High Street Baptist

Morning worship

Sundays 10.30am

**zoom**

Meeting ID: 978 9592 0392

Pass code: highstreet

Worshipping together in our building and at home.

Coffee for a cause

Tuesdays 10.30am-12 Noon in the church hall

Fairtrade tea, coffee and homemade cake. Proceeds toward BMS World Mission

Seniors Afternoon Games

Wednesdays 2-4pm

Coffee & chat

Fridays 10.30am - 12 Noon

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](http://www.tringbaptistchurch.co.uk)

#tringbaptistchurch High Street Baptist Church

## Easter hope



I wonder, do you have any Easter traditions? I know Tring traditionally has many wonderful community activities over Easter that, for many, form part of family traditions during the Easter holidays. So, perhaps your tradition is a family outing, or perhaps something a little more creative like making a simnel cake or, like me, perhaps it's something food related like roast lamb for Easter Sunday lunch and eating your weight in chocolate!

In my family, over the last few years, we've started a new Easter tradition – Easter egg hunts. Caleb, our 4-year-old son, loves a treasure hunt at any time of the year; if you came round to our house, you'd be sure to find one of many hand-drawn treasure maps leading to 'treasure' hidden around the house. But at Easter there's a real sense of joy and excitement for Caleb when we let him loose, running around the garden on an Easter egg hunt. The 'treasure' goes from being something that's imaginary to something that's tangible, visible, enjoyable and, in Caleb's mind, something that's of worth

(chocolate!); and the encouragement and hope Caleb receives when he finds an egg, to search for more, is truly a delight to behold.

Easter, for Christians, is a celebration of a moment that's of eternal worth and brings us hope. Hope that's not wishful thinking, like Caleb's when he searches for 'treasure', but hope that is sure and certain. Because 'Jesus is risen!' we can have confident expectation for life beyond simply what we see and feel around us.

Emil Brunner once said, 'What oxygen is for the lungs, such is hope for the meaning of human life'. As humans are dependent on a supply of oxygen, so humanity is dependent on its supply of hope. Without hope, life would be like going on an Easter egg hunt when there are no Easter eggs hidden to find; a life doomed to fail, with our only hope being wishful thinking, rather than a confident expectation and desire for something good in the future which is tangible and visible to us through the resurrection of Jesus.

Yet today, hopelessness and despair are everywhere: war, disease, mental health challenges, financial hardship, relationship breakdowns and the general impact on our wellbeing of circumstances beyond our control. Yet Peter, who

himself was given to despair during the days of Holy Week, writes in a triumphant note in his first letter to the Christian churches in what would be modern-day Turkey, 'Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! By his great mercy he has given us a new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead' (1 Peter 1:3, New Revised Standard Version).

You see, in the joy of the resurrection that we specifically celebrate this month, there is hope that mistakes and sins can be forgiven. There is hope that we can have joy, peace, assurance and security in the midst of the despair of these days in which we live. There is hope that Christ is coming soon – this is what is called in Scripture 'the blessed hope' (Titus 2:13). There is hope that someday there will come a new heaven and a new earth, and that the Kingdom of God will reign and triumph. As Billy Graham once said, 'Our hope is not in our own ability, or in our goodness, or in our physical strength. Our hope is instilled in us by the resurrection of Christ'.

I pray that, whatever your personal circumstances and the situations worldwide, you may find sure and certain hope in the truth of the empty tomb. Jesus is risen!

**Joe Egan, High Street Baptist Church**

## Editorial



There's a lot of bad stuff going on in our world right now. One of the things I hate about editing *Comment* is that it's very hard for a monthly magazine to be topical. By the time it arrives on the mat, something written a month earlier is out of date, superseded, irrelevant, the danger past. How I wish that was the case with the war in Ukraine.

When people write their articles it may be more than a month before people read what is written. Two years ago, we thought that lockdown would last for three weeks – look how that went for us! As we write now in late February and early March, there could be peace in Europe or World War III

and no doubt lots of other variants in between before the April edition is read. But to ignore what is happening in *Comment* means that people who look back at the magazine in years to come will wonder if we simply didn't care.

Current events, happening in freezing conditions for those in Ukraine, occur against a welcome backdrop of lighter mornings and the long-awaited appearance of Spring sunshine in the UK. Welcome, that is, for all except those who have small children who wake with the light – earlier and earlier each day. The blackout curtains in our house proved insufficient to stop the light getting in, so our slumbers have been punctured by a small person (with a very loud and insistent voice!) demanding 'Wake up! Downstairs! Eat!' I spent several hours applying black card to the nursery windows only to find that a tiny crack anywhere allowed light

in... which reminded me of a Leonard Cohen song called 'Anthem'.

It takes only a tiny crack for light to dispel darkness. Huge atrocities are met with overwhelming compassion and sacrificial kindness. A 13-year-boy tells his mother he will sleep in a tent in the garden so there is room for a refugee family in their house... As we find in John 1:5, 'The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.'

Our common humanity thinks only that what is happening to 'them' is also happening to us; and we weep with those who weep and stand with them. And maybe when this edition of *Comment* lands on your doormat, there will already be Ukrainian families sharing our homes and the homes of those around us.

**The Editor**

# Peace is a choice that shapes the way we live

Many of us will have troubled hearts as we watch with horror the attack by Russia on Ukraine. This attack is an act of evil, imperilling as it does the relative peace and security that Europe has enjoyed for so long. The attack by one nation on a free, democratic country has rightly provoked outrage, sanctions and condemnation.

We lament with the people of Ukraine, and we pray for the innocent, the frightened and those who have lost loved ones, homes, and family.

We continue to call for a ceasefire and the withdrawal of Russian forces as well as wide-ranging efforts to ensure peace, stability and security.

These events remind us powerfully that peace is precious and it is fragile. In Chapter 14 of John's Gospel, Jesus

speaks to his disciples at the Last Supper and he leaves them his peace. This is not a mere greeting, but rather something deep and abiding. This peace is something that only Jesus gives; for it is a gratuitous gift, a way of living, something to be received, for the gift of peace is the gift of Jesus himself. That is why the Lord is able to offer reassurance to our hearts, why those who receive the gift of the peace of Jesus Christ at the deepest of levels should not be afraid.

Peace, therefore, is so much more than the absence of war. It is a gift, and it is also a decision, a gift that must be received. It is a choice we make that shapes the way we live well alongside each other. It characterises our relationship with God. It comes into being by seeking justice.

## The Blessing of the Light

You may wish to light a candle and place it in your window

*Peace I leave with you, my peace I give to you.*

*I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not let them be afraid.*

John 14:27

## Prayer for Ukraine

*God of peace and justice, we pray for the people of Ukraine today.*

*We pray for peace and the laying down of weapons.*

*We pray for all those who fear for tomorrow, that your Spirit of comfort would draw near to them.*

*We pray for those with power over war or peace, for wisdom, discernment, and compassion to guide their decisions.*

*Above all, we would pray for all your precious children, at risk and in fear, that you would hold and protect them.*

*We pray in the name of Jesus, the Prince of Peace.*

*Amen.*

*The Lord bless us and watch over us; the Lord make his face shine upon us and be gracious to us; the Lord look kindly on us and give us peace. Amen.*

In these days of uncertainty and fear, we pray that each of us might again turn to the Lord and receive God's gift of peace, work for God's justice, know God's reconciliation and love, and choose paths not of hatred or destruction, of violence or retribution, but God's way of justice, mercy and peace.

As Christians, our response to a crisis must always be rooted in prayer. Pray most earnestly for an outpouring of the Spirit of God, that the world may once again choose peace, strengthening those international bodies that enable us to work and live together as one humanity inhabiting one world.

We pray for those in Ukraine who suffer grievously, for all who take decisions around the world, and for the people and leaders of Russia too.

**Justin Welby & Stephen Cottrell**  
Archbishops of Canterbury & York

# A new canon in the Tring Team



The Church of England excels in arcane and strange rituals and language, and this has never been more clear than in the appointment of canons. Get ready to have a dictionary to hand, and feel free to google. Firstly, what is a canon?

The word comes from the Greek Kanonikos, which became the Latin word Canonikus, and means relating to a rule. Canons are both the rules of the church and is also the word used for clergy attached to a cathedral. It used to apply to those who were part of a community. Honorary canons are those who are given the title as a reward, and it can be given to ordained and lay people. It comes with no 'emoluments' (marvellous word!) but it is a metaphorical pat on the back, usually

for long years of service. There is no extra work involved, but canons can be invited to preside at services at the cathedral.

The service is known as an installation as each canon has a designated stall in St Albans' Abbey. Anglican canons are also entitled to wear cassocks with red piping and red buttons; a small cape over the top also trimmed in red; a cincture which is like a cummerbund, and this can be either all red or trimmed in red; and a biretta – a square hat with a tassel worn by only the most anglo-catholic of priests – with a red pom-pom on.

Have you finished laughing yet?

I have to say that I was very surprised to receive a letter from the Bishop of St Albans inviting me to become an Honorary Canon – normally this is given out to those close to retirement as a 'well done', and I am definitely not retiring – and was convinced that the letter had gone to the wrong person at first. I see it as an acknowledgement of all that

this parish has done with its vision for a school chaplaincy, of which I have been fortunate enough to be the public face.

I will be entitled to be called the Reverend Canon Jane Banister, but I will not insist on it, and I am not planning to purchase any red-trimmed clerical wear (except for the pom-pom – I am not getting the hat, but thought I might get the pom-pom to use as a key ring). And I will be given stall number 15, the Venerable Bede, the earliest historian of the English Church whom the notes from the Abbey describe as 'persevering with work which made no outward show'.

My parents are pleased, my husband and children find it funny, and my grandmothers and mother-in-law would all have been very proud.

**Jane Banister, Tring Team**

*And the Tring Team are all proud too and know that it is well deserved!*

**The Editor**

## Celebrate Holy Week and Easter at Tring Church

### Palm Sunday 10th April

8am Holy Communion in traditional language

10am Worship for All (starts on Church Square)

### Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday 11th - 13th April

8pm Talk on Living and Love and Faith, and Night Prayer

### Maundy Thursday 14th April

10am and 8pm Team Holy Communion Services with foot washing

9pm Vigil until midnight - stay for as long as you like.

### Good Friday 15th April

10am Team Worship for All

11am Walk of Witness and service from St Martha's Church to Tring Church

2pm Last Hour at the Cross

7pm Sepulchre Service - Jesus is laid in the tomb

### Easter Day 17th April

6am New Fire of Easter & Holy Communion (This service will start in the churchyard)

8am Holy Communion in traditional language

10am Communion Together

*A service suitable for all ages - you may like to bring a long-stemmed flower to place in the cross.*

*This service will be live-streamed.*

[www.tringteamparish.org.uk](http://www.tringteamparish.org.uk)



# Things ain't what they used to be



My auntie Maggie died of kidney failure in November 1967. She was in her early 60s, and had endured a slow painful decline with great cheerfulness.

There was no treatment available at that time which could make a difference to her illness. Now it is different, and she would survive, maybe thrive, despite her condition. In the five decades or so since 1967, medical treatments for so many afflictions have been transformed; instead of fading away in their 60s, many enjoy life into their 80s and beyond. We are used to this; it is normal for us.

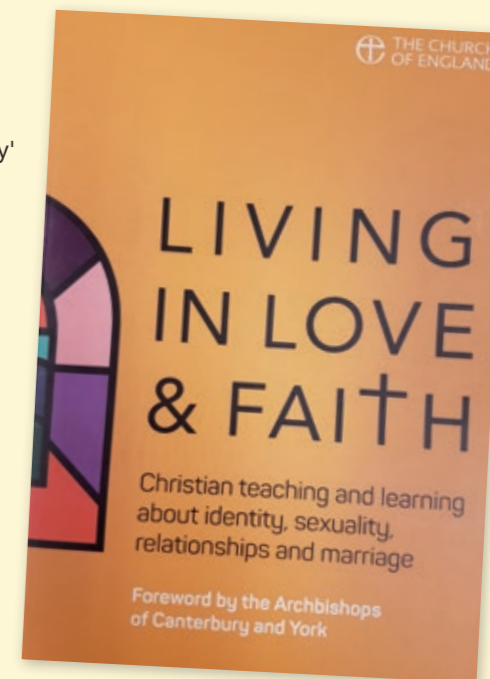
Also in 1967, in July in fact, the Sexual Offences Act was passed, legalising homosexual acts between consenting males (in private) over the age of 21. As a teenager I was warned not to linger in public toilets and I heard about 'queers', not least in scandals like the Profumo affair in 1963. But I also had my hair cut by Bob, a workmate of my dad's who lived in a nice bungalow with his friend Ron. It wasn't talked

about and I didn't really think anything about the arrangement.

To be honest, I've not really thought very much about what is now (sometimes) referred to as 'gay' sex. I suppose I've gradually got used to lots of attitudes changing. Some of my more Evangelical friends would seem to be in no doubt that the Bible condemns same-sex relations. Aspiring to be a liberal, I'm not always sure what I feel, but recognise that my feelings are not a sound basis for morality.

When I heard about the 'Living in Love and Faith' course to be undertaken in the Tring Team, I did wonder whether I wanted to lift the lid on my feelings, let alone share them. I went along to the parish workshop on 6 February more in duty than expectation. So I was a bit surprised to find it helpful and down-to-earth; I was most taken by Bishop Michael's plea that the debate about all this should be taken back from the opposing extremes; the silent majority needs to air its worries and uncertainties to make a difference to what our church decides to do.

I've signed up for a Lent Group to



explore all this stuff, and might even read some of the weighty report on which the course is based. I could perhaps be persuaded to share what I make of it with readers of *Comment*. Let me know if you have a view on this.

**John Whiteman**  
Tring Team

# A man of dust... or a man of heaven?



## We are all insecure

A few years ago one of my major clients – Hilton International – commissioned me to do some global research into how to make guests feel at home, welcome and comfortable when they entered a ‘smart’ hotel. It was a huge project and the results were very illuminating...

The most common shared attribute – the most defining characteristic – of any guest, of any class, was that they felt insecure and uncertain. Even the most apparently confident and ‘cool’ felt a rush of human insecurity when they went into a smart lobby and crossed that elegant marble hallway to the reception desk. Don’t we all?

No matter how much we pretend, we all, it seems, get nervous.

‘Why me?’ we think. ‘How can I be so lucky?’ That sense of insecurity seems far more common than any sense of entitlement... for most of us humans. We know of what we are made and we don’t really think we actually deserve good things to happen.

A bit like St Paul, we might consider the flawed reality of our nature and say, ‘That’s just the way I am (I can’t help it, I’m made that way!)’. We are ALL ‘What we are’, all made, head to toe, of basic stuff – of base materials, of dust. People born of the dust – as Paul so lucidly writes in his first letter to the Corinthians.

On Ash Wednesday at the beginning of Lent, many of us remembered ‘that we are dust... and to dust we shall return’. We all know of what we are made and that we are all sinners... so why do we expect others, human just like us, to be better? By the grace of God WE are what we are... and so are they! So, let’s not be too hard on any of us – including ourselves – for our all-too-human frailties. ‘By the grace of God, we are what we are’, frail, fallible, frightened – but far from alone.

## Travelling the road to Easter

The reality is that there are not really any human heroes who never fall short. Only Christ walked the hard road to the end

– to the bitter end. And he did it for US. He is still doing it for us.

In AD54 Paul wrote his first letter from Ephesus to the rather naughty and wayward church in Corinth. He gave each of his brethren there a clear choice to ‘remain a man of dust or be reborn as a man of heaven’. Surely that yearning need to rise above our basic nature is the very essence of our human condition, to know what we are and yet wish we were something better.

Lent is the time of year when we prepare to look inside ourselves, admit who we are, and reflect on that, as we journey towards Easter. It’s a time of reflection and consideration of what it means to be human – and especially what it means to be Christian. That’s what the Ash Wednesday Prayer at the beginning of Lent tells us. ‘Remember that thou art dust – and to dust thou shalt return; turn away from sin and be faithful to Christ.’



Are we to remain people of dust – or become people of heaven? Paul gave us that choice in AD54 and we still face that choice in 2022. In 1969, the summer of love, someone wrote and recorded in New York one of the most evocative and haunting descriptions of the human condition. It could have been straight from St Paul’s letter 2000 years earlier. That someone was Joni Mitchell; that song was ‘Woodstock.’ She didn’t actually get there herself – she had to stay in New York working, but she captured the aching, longing essence of those times. These are her words that beautifully describe the choice we all face between the ‘Man of heaven’ and the ‘Man of dust’:

*I came upon a child of God, he was walking along the road;*

*I asked him ‘where are you going?’ and this he told me...*

*I’m gonna try and get my soul free.*

*We are stardust... We are Golden... And we’ve got to get ourselves back to the garden...*

*Well maybe it’s just that time of year, or maybe the time of man, I don’t know who I am but, you know, life is for learning!*

*We are stardust – billion-year-old carbon, We are golden – caught in the devil’s bargain, And we’ve got to get ourselves back to the garden.*

Joni Mitchell wrote those words for her friends Crosby, Stills & Nash who performed them at Woodstock. You’ll find her own 1970 recording of that on YouTube and I think you’ll find it heartrendingly beautiful and relevant to the choice that faces us every day – especially on the journey through Lent to Easter.

The Lectionary readings for the last Sunday of Epiphany give us both the question and the answer. Paul’s letter to the Corinthians sets the question: ‘Are we to be people of dust or be reborn as people of Heaven?’ Luke’s Gospel gives us the answer as to how we are to achieve that: ‘Love your enemies, bless those who curse you... forgive and you will be forgiven... give and it will be given to you’. As we often put it – ‘Do as you would be done by!’

By the grace of God we are what we are... and only the grace of Christ will save us from ourselves and let us become truly golden. So, let us ‘judge not – lest we be judged’.

Perhaps we might pray that our human insecurity and tendency to blame others is tempered with kindness; and that we can truly learn to forgive others – and even ourselves.

That could make this the Easter we are truly able to ‘return to the garden.’ Born of the dust, yet capable of grasping the golden stardust of heaven.

PS I don’t know about you but I find the idea that we are all made of billion-year-old carbon strangely comforting. Do try to listen to Joni Mitchell’s own recording – it will transport you to the summer of love; ‘back to the garden.’

**Grahame Senior, Tring Team**

# What is the symbol of Christianity?



The most obvious answer to that question is the cross – but what type of cross? In any case, the simple cross was not used in the first couple of centuries of the Christian church – it was the sign of a criminal’s death.

The first symbol that seems to have been used in the very early church is the *tau-rho*. This symbol is based on the Greek letters *tau*, representing the cross, and *rho* representing the head of Jesus. It is sometimes called the stauros cross – stake-shaped. The stauros cross in the form of a staurogram symbol was used in early handwritten New Testaments as a condensation of the word cross.

A little later the *chi-rho* cross was used. This signified the head of Jesus on a different cross form and is associated with Emperor Constantine around AD310.

It is also symbolised by the Roman letters XP.



Although these two types of cross were used as symbols, Christians used to trace on their foreheads the sign of a cross as we know it – Tertullian wrote about this in AD204. This was a simple cross known as the Greek cross.



The fish symbol started in the second century and was widespread by the fourth century. Fish in Greek is *ichthys* which the early Christians used with each letter representing a word – *Iesous Christos Theou Yios Soter* or Jesus Christ, Son of God, Saviour. The fish was a secret sign that Christians could use to recognise each other. The fish symbol has had a recent revival as a car sticker.



The Celtic cross appeared in the eighth century in Ireland and in the ninth century on Iona. The Celtic cross was a cross set in a circle representing the world. In the nineteenth century it became very fashionable as a decorative design.



Eastern forms of the cross appeared in Russia and the Orthodox church in

the tenth century, particularly in icons and altar symbols. They were the Patriarchal cross (or Cross of Lorraine) and the Russian cross.



Around 1100, during the Crusades, a form of the cross that is widely used now was the symbol of the crusaders. This was the Roman, or Latin, cross and is the most enduring symbol as it is widely used nowadays throughout the world.



The Maltese cross, worn by the Knights Hospitaller, or Knights of St John, evolved over the years. It started out as the Roman cross in the Crusades but by the fourteenth century had evolved into an eight-pointed cross. The first modern ‘four arrowhead’ design, as used today, is found on a coin minted in 1567 showing the Grand Master of the order with the four arrowhead design on his robe.

What cross symbols are used in your church? St Peter & St Paul probably has the most formats as fashions changed over the years and it’s been there in Tring a long time!

**John Allan  
High Street Baptist Church**

## Our Charity Focus for Lent and Easter 2022



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

**During lent 2022 we are focusing on Christian Aid supporting those in need in over 100 countries around the globe. Wherever there is a crisis, from Afghanistan to Yemen, Christian Aid will be there.**

- Climate change is happening – the effects are mounting up
- Coronavirus has made the world-wide impact much worse
- Christian Aid supports communities in the fight against this dangerous combination
- Join in the Lent Lunches (see date announcements) every week throughout Lent
- Support Christian Aid where it matters most; full details and resources from [www.christianaid.org.uk](http://www.christianaid.org.uk)

**Real people. Real change.** **75 years**

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

Tring *enjoying life Together* Fundraising Event

# Golf Day

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

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

Some of our initiatives:

**Teams of 4 • £280**

Including Breakfast, Refreshments and a BBQ Lunch

To register, email [toby@tringtogether.org.uk](mailto:toby@tringtogether.org.uk) and find further details here [www.tringtogether.org.uk](http://www.tringtogether.org.uk)

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The Friends of Tring Church Heritage Proudly Presents

# WE'RE BACK! The Teddies Fly Again!!

## The 2022 Family Fun Day

**SATURDAY MAY 7TH**

11AM - 3PM • ST PETER & ST PAUL CHURCH AND CHURCHYARD

Teddy 'Wings' Zip Wire • Tower Tours • Bouncy Castle  
 Choirs and Musical Entertainment • Tring Brewery Bar  
 Lunchtime Barbeque • All Day Refreshments • Big Prize Raffle

**OPEN TO EVERYONE • ALL ARE WELCOME**  
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For further information telephone Grahame Senior on 01442 822770 or Trish Dowden on 07720 836930

**ADMISSION FREE**

TRING 32 YEARS 1990-2022

Presented & Organised by the Friends of Tring Church Heritage • All Events and Activities subject to prevailing social requirements

## We're back!



At last – we can plan a proper Family Fun Day after a two-year gap.

The Family Fun Day organised in the parish church and churchyard of St Peter & Paul by the Friends Of Tring Church Heritage (FOTCH) has become a very popular event in our annual calendar. It is a day when the church community opens up to welcome all families and friends in Tring to a time of celebration and relaxed enjoyment – hopefully in the sunshine!

We are very happy to say that we again have the help of the Halton High Ropes team from RAF Halton to organise the zipwire. Once again the town's teddies will be suitably terrified as they make their brave flight from the top of the tower to receive their certificate of bravery. We have a wide array of stalls planned, are trying to negotiate the bouncy castle and have a programme of in-church entertainment and outdoor activities to suit all members of the family.

The promotional poster gives a



flavour of the event and we very much hope everyone will put the date in their diary. Once again we are supported by Tring Brewery and their very popular bar and there will be a lunchtime BBQ and all day refreshments in church.

We'd love to have your help. Obviously in years past we have built up well-practised teams of organisers who have got themselves well into the swing of things. Doubtless the two-year hiatus will have made us all a little bit rusty! We would really appreciate volunteers to help with manning the stalls and activities on the day. If you feel you can give an hour or two, please contact either Trish Dowden 0772 083 6930 or Grahame Senior 01442 822 770.

There will be the usual big prize raffle, tombolas for both adults and children and lots to see and do throughout the day.

All of this activity is in aid of the funds for the Friends Of Tring Church Heritage.



Their help and support in handling the cost of the vestry renovation and the completion of the lighting project during the lockdown period have demonstrated yet again how important this resource is for the ongoing security and wellbeing of the parish church in the centre of Tring. Obviously, our income during this period has been close to nil and so it's important we take this opportunity to build up our funds for the next eventuality.

Please do come along and support us and enjoy a day when we celebrate the best of our St Peter & St Paul's community spirit. Please note: you don't have to worship with us to volunteer – we welcome all-comers!

If you would like any information or have any suggestions, ideas or requests, please contact Trish or myself as above.

**Grahame Senior**  
 President, FOTCH, on behalf of the Trustees

Tring Team Parish with Blues Bar Tring are proud to present

# 'Saints & Sinners'

May 27th 2022

Music from the Cross to the Crossroads  
 Tring Church (St Peter & St Paul) HP23 5AE  
 Doors & Bar 19:00 - Concert 20:00  
 Reservations - [www.bluesbartring.co.uk](http://www.bluesbartring.co.uk) on the door £10.00

Tring Brewery Bar profits and Raffle proceeds to Tring Team Parish

BLUES BAR TRING TRING TEAM PARISH Living God's Love TRING BREWERY CO

"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."

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A place where CHILDREN SHINE...

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 Telephone: - 01442 891818  
 Heirs & Graces Day Nursery, Florence House,  
 2 Christchurch Road, Tring, Hertfordshire, HP23 4EE



TRING CHARITIES  
 (Registered Charity No 207805)

# ALMSHOUSES IN TRING

From time to time, one and two-bedroom bungalows become available to let, for people who currently live in Aldbury, Long Marston, Marsworth, Pitstone, Puttenham, Tring, Wigginton or Wilstone. Applicants, one of whom must be aged 55 or over, must not own their own home or have significant savings. Applicants will be asked to supply personal financial information to prove their beneficial status. The average weekly maintenance contribution (equivalent to "rent" for housing benefit purposes) is £107 for a one bedroom property and £126 for a two bedroom property.

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

# Why did Jesus have to die?



An 80-year-old Welsh teacher called Owen Davies arrives at the gates of heaven and is greeted, by name. The guy at the pearly gates says to him: 'I see you had

an exemplary career as a teacher, were good to your friends and family and gave regularly to charity, had faith in Christ and attended your local chapel. But do you have anything on your conscience?'

Owen replied, 'Well, I have had just one thing on my mind for a long time. In the days of the amateur rugby code, I played for Cardiff and Wales. Once, in the dying seconds of the match, I ran down the wing, just avoiding the English full-back and I think I might have put my foot just into touch before I touched down, isn't it? I looked at the crowds cheering, and my team mates were rejoicing because there were only 90 seconds to go and my score put us one point in front. So even if we missed the conversion (and our kicker was from Newport, so he did) we would still win. So I didn't say anything about my foot being in touch. It has played on my conscience ever since.'

'No problem,' came the reply. 'I was watching from here. You were just inside the line – and did you see the English cheating in the scrum?'

'Thank you, St Peter,' said the teacher. 'You have put my mind at rest.'

'I'm not St Peter,' the guy replied. 'He has the weekend off.'

'Who are you, then?'

'I am St David.'

Let me be clear, as politicians say, I do not believe in a literal pearly-gates, nor do I believe St Peter or St David will be waiting for us at the gates; but I do believe in a literal after-life.

The question of why Jesus needed to die is a big question on which the church has never agreed; not just the house group in the Tring Team that I attend, not just the Church of England, but the whole church. So what follows is the outline of one of the answers that many traditional Protestants, and many traditional Catholics, have given. Other views are definitely available. As in all things where Christians disagree, it is important to trust that the other person's point of view

is held in good faith.

In the book of the Acts of the Apostles, St Peter, on the day of Pentecost, said to the Jewish leaders: 'Listen to what I have to say: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with deeds of power, wonders, and signs that God did through him among you, as you yourselves know— this man, handed over to you according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of those outside the law. But God raised him up, having freed him from death.'

St Paul wrote in one of his letters: 'I handed on to you as of first importance what I in turn had received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures, and that he was buried, and that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures.'

At one obvious level, Jesus the Jew died because he upset the Jewish religious leaders of his time who manipulated the Roman Prefect or Governor, Pontius Pilate, into permitting his death; but the early church came to believe that this was not the end of the story.

The first generation of Christians, like many Christians ever since, were convinced that Jesus' death on the cross had a profound effect on their own lives. But how could such a thing be explained in terms that other people could understand? It was an event that needed to be described and talked about in pictorial language. So, the New Testament uses many different figures of speech to describe what Jesus was actually doing when he died upon the cross: he was sacrificed for us; he took the punishment for our sins; he ransomed us; he justified us; he set an example for us; he triumphed over death for us.

Each of these pictures, images or metaphors, brings out part of the story; none of them tells the whole story and you mustn't push any one image too far. One writer on the New Testament has put it like this: 'the teaching of the New Testament is more like a landscape than a portrait, as a landscape is made up of a number of different items, so the New Testament explanation of Jesus' death is made up of many different images.' I will just pick on one bit of picture language: that Jesus paid the ransom for us.

Today the word ransom is used when a rich business person or child of

a wealthy family is kidnapped, and the company or family have to pay a large amount to get the person back.

In the time of Jesus and the early church, the ransom was the price paid to set a slave free. The ransom was paid by someone else. The slave and the person setting them free visited the shrine of the local pagan god and, in a religious ceremony, the ransom was paid to the owner of the slave. Then the slave belonged to the god and so could no longer belong as a slave to someone else.

This is a great picture for the death of Christ and people at that time would have joined up the dots and seen the meaning. Peter said that the followers of Jesus had been 'ransomed from their futile ways' (I Peter 1:18) while Paul wrote 'You are not your own; you were bought with a price, so glorify God in your body' (I Corinthians 6:19-20).

The question of to whom the ransom is paid treats these words too literally. If I say 'The price of love is sorrow' most of us will know what I mean. If we love someone, we experience sorrow when we lose them; the greater the love, the greater the sorrow – but the price isn't paid to anyone.

Back to our Welsh rugby player, when I arrive at the-life-that-is-to-come there will be far more on my conscience than any mistakes I made on a rugby field, many though there were of those. I don't just need a moral example. I need a Saviour.

People question whether or not our faults separate us from a loving God. My experience of my own faults is that they drive a wedge between me and my loving family, me and my loving friends and between me and other people; so it does seem likely that they drive a wedge between me and a loving God. Calling it a ransom or price is a simple and pictorial way of saying that it cost the life of Jesus to bring men and women back into the love of God. It means that the cost of our salvation was the cross of Christ; and that I need have no worries as I approach death: 'When I tread the verge of Jordan bid my anxious fears subside' – as we sing at the Welsh National Rugby Stadium – for Jesus paid the ransom for us.

**Jon Reynolds**  
**Tring Team**

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# Your bells need you, yes you!



This time last year we had twelve in the band, we now have just five. A few weeks ago we could ring only three bells for Sunday morning but there are eight bells to ring!

Surely there's never been a better time for you to find out what's going on in the tower when you hear the bells, learn to ring in time for the Platinum Jubilee and be more involved in church life!

We ring the bells to call people to worship and to mark important occasions.

So, we ring for

- Sunday services
- Weddings and funerals
- Remembrance Day
- Easter and Christmas
- New Year
- Anything else we can think of!

We are looking forward to joining in with national ringing for Her Majesty's Platinum Jubilee: you could be part of that: just imagine!

Bell ringing is also listed as a Skill for

the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme, so let your teenagers know about it too. There is a very active Young@Herts program within the Hertford County Association of Change Ringers.

## How to join in at Tring

Bell ringers are a sociable bunch, on top of which, learning to ring will keep you active physically and mentally.

Anyone can become a bell ringer. However, you will need a full range of movement in your arms and shoulders and be able to climb the spiral staircase up to the ringing chamber.

Each Tuesday at 7.00pm I am organising bell-handling lessons – why not come along, even if it's just to 'have a go and see if you like it'?

You will be taught on a one-to-one basis and learn the basic skills of bell-handling.

Having mastered bell-handling, you will learn to ring 'rounds' where the bells ring in order from highest note to lowest note. After rounds, you move on to 'call changes' in which the conductor shouts (to be heard above the sound of the bells) an instruction which changes the sequence of the bells. Then come 'methods'. Here the bells change order each time the rope is pulled,

no shouting needed! Everyone learns to ring at different rates; the younger you start, the quicker you'll learn. I learned to ring when I was 53 and was service ringing within two months.

If you would like to learn to ring or just 'have a go' please contact me via [tringbells@gmail.com](mailto:tringbells@gmail.com).

**Philip Dobson**  
**Association of Ringing Teachers**



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# Help needed for Ukraine



## How we can help

The Diocese of St Albans is co-ordinating church efforts in Beds and Herts to help the people of Ukraine, as

combining forces means that we can offer the most help in the most effective way. At the moment, the government's system for British people offering accommodation relies on us making contact with the refugees, which is fraught with problems. So we as a parish, are signing up to the Diocesan plan, and urge you to support this.

## Contact us

We are asking you to contact us on [admin@tringteamparish.org](mailto:admin@tringteamparish.org) uk with any help you can offer. This includes not only those willing to offer accommodation but also those willing to offer a range of other kinds of support – provision of food, assistance with mental health care etc. It is important to be fully safeguarding

compliant for the safety of all involved, and guidance will be offered on how this is to be approached. Keep it in mind that if 'it takes a whole village to raise a child', 'it takes a whole church to care for a refugee family'. We will register these offers of help with the diocese through a web-based link to a form that will ask for various information – incumbent details, host details, support group details, parish safeguarding contact, host reference, accommodation offered, duration of accommodation, transport provision etc. This can then be used as and when refugees arrive.

## Financial support

There may well be more information coming through about specific help that is required and we will let you know as we find out more. There is a Diocesan Fund which can both take funds to help refugees placed locally, and can give grants out. All grants will be monitored and any surplus will go the Christian Aid Ukraine Appeal. To donate to the diocesan fund you will need this information: Barclays Bank Account



Name: The St Albans Diocesan Board of Finance, Account Number: 20776041, Sort Code: 20-05-03, Reference Code: 2103161. Payment by BACS is most welcome but we also accept cheques. In either case, please include the reference 2103161. We will need this to identify it.

## Opening your home

If you want to offer help as an individual, then contact Refugees at Home and The Sanctuary Foundation. Financial support can also go to the DEC. You may have seen Rachael Poulton on daytime TV talking about The Sanctuary Foundation. Nigel and Rachael Poulton used to live in Brook Street, Tring, and were members of St Peter & St Paul's Church here in Tring. They now live in York and have five refugees from the last disaster living as part of their family.

**Jane Banister, Tring Team**

**PALM SUNDAY - 10th April**

8.00am Tring - Holy Communion  
(traditional language)

10.00am Tring - Worship for All  
(meet at Church Square for procession)

10.00am Aldbury - Holy Communion  
(meet at the pond for procession)

6pm Long Marston - Celtic Evening Prayer

# No one should be ashamed...



It's a sad reality that more people than ever are turning to the Foodbank, as they face the impossible choice of paying bills or feeding their household.

I am so proud that, thanks to the amazing support of our community, we are able to deliver this vital lifeline to struggling individuals and families throughout Dacorum. No one should feel

embarrassed or ashamed to access services like the Foodbank at a time of need.

We are currently in urgent need of 20p carrier bags to help transport emergency food supplies for our service users. If you're able to make a donation, please drop them off at Dacre House, 19 Hillfield Road, Hemel, HP2 4AA on Monday-Friday, 10am-1pm (or take them to St Peter & St Paul's where they will be passed on with food donations).

Also currently needed are: sponge puddings, custard, rice pudding (tinned), tinned fruit, laundry detergent liquid/capsules/tablets (small), cleaning sprays, washing up liquid (small), Liquid hand soap and deodorants (male).

**Michelle Woodhall**  
**Foodbank Coordinator**



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# The risen Christ, according to Luke



This year the Tring Team have been focusing on Luke's Gospel. So how does he deal with the central aspect of our Christian faith – the resurrection?

Mark, the first Gospel written, is surprisingly quiet on this. All we have is an empty tomb and frightened disciples.

Luke's account is much longer. As well as the text being longer, the whole of Luke chapter 24 (rather than just the eight verses in Mark's Gospel) covers a longer time span giving us four resurrection narratives spread over a 24-hour period. These are the women at the empty tomb, the Emmaus Road, the appearance to Peter (albeit this is just a passing reference in a single verse, Luke 24:34) and the appearance to the eleven in Jerusalem.

In common with what has gone before in Luke's Gospel, the women will take centre stage. It is notable that they are

the witnesses, and possibly controversial, because women could not testify in court. However, as Luke continues to tell his story in Acts, we will see that women go on to play a significant role in the early church.

Luke, along with Mark, makes great reference to the empty tomb. The issue we have is that the first written resurrection account isn't Mark, but Paul. The first letter to the Corinthians predates Mark's written account by at least ten years. Paul makes no mention of the empty tomb. Paul gives a list of eyewitnesses to appearances, but does not mention the empty tomb. For Paul, it is not a body of flesh, but a spiritual body (1 Cor 15:44, Phil 3:21). The bodily resurrection (hence empty tomb) is important in Luke. That's why we have Jesus sitting down at a meal, a real body (but one which isn't confined).

Some possible reasons why this is so important to Luke are: he is quoting from an early Aramaic oral tradition; Paul is writing for a different Greek audience where reality can be abstract; but Luke inherited his story from a Jewish tradition

where reality has to be concrete; the authorities will claim it was only a vision unless it was a real body; and finally, Luke is trying to counter the idea that the body of Jesus was adopted by God and that God left shortly before the crucifixion. For Christian theology, it is important that God suffers with us on the cross. Whatever the reason, and whatever your experience of resurrection, for Luke, it is clearly a bodily one.

This is reinforced in the further encounters with the risen Christ, but we also see that this bodily resurrection isn't limited in the way a human body is. It appears that what Luke is doing in the remaining encounters is using the resurrection as a 'bridge' episode. The resurrection bridges two periods of human time: the time of Jesus alive on earth and the time of the church – the believers or people of faith. We see how the Emmaus part of the story dwells on past events, and the appearance to the disciples points to the future. This future will include the gifts of the Spirit.

**Huw Bellis**  
**Tring Team**

# Daniel and some weird and wonderful visions



After the stories we read in the early chapters of the book of Daniel (chapters 1-6) come visions.

In Chapter 7 Daniel has a dream and a vision of four strange

beasts, all different and coming out of the sea – a lion, a bear, a leopard and the fourth with ten horns. Nowadays modern film makers can devise all sorts of strange and terrifying creatures but the point for the reader of Daniel is that the weirdness has meaning. These beasts are symbols of several empires: the first beast represents the Babylonian Empire, the second the kingdom of the Medes and the third the Persians. 'The fourth beast was powerful, horrible, terrifying; with its huge iron teeth it crushed its victims and then it trampled on them.' Unlike the other beasts it had ten horns and an eleventh horn appeared which tore out three of the other horns. This creature is a symbol of the kingdom of the Seleucids, who ruled in the author's day and of whom the worst was Antiochus Epiphanes, who persecuted the Jews and plundered the Temple. But then comes the Ancient of Days with his attendants and explains the meaning of the vision and how, in the end, kingship and dominion will be given to the Holy Ones of the Most High. During this vision Daniel sees 'one like a human being', literally 'like a son of man' which is a title used of himself by Jesus in the Gospels. As a conclusion the writer adds the following words: 'I was so frightened that I turned pale, and I kept everything to myself'.

In chapters 8 and through 9, 10 and 11 we have a series of visions which reveal the future destinies of the Jewish people. Set against a background of past history, they are intended to encourage the Jews in their current persecutions by Antiochus Epiphanes, who abolished the Jewish sacrifices and set up the 'abomination of desolation' as mentioned in Mark 13 and 14. There is a ram and a goat, interpreted by the voice of Gabriel coming over the river as being a 'vision for the time of the end'. Gabriel makes another (literally flying) appearance in the following chapter, foretelling the establishment of eternal justice and the rededication of the Temple.

Two significant observations need to

be made here. Firstly, that this strange apocalyptic style of writing had great influence in the next few centuries, as we see in the New Testament, especially in the Book of Revelation. Secondly, Daniel gives great importance to the ministry of angels, especially Gabriel and Michael. 'Someone wearing linen clothes and a belt of fine gold; his body shone like a jewel. His face was as bright as a flash of lightning and his eyes blazed like fire. His arms and legs shone like polished bronze and his voice sounded like the roar of a great crowd.' Christianity and Judaism picked up this idea of heavenly beings and messengers. But, most important of all, is the clear teaching of the resurrection of the dead – 'many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life and some to shame and everlasting contempt' (Daniel 12:2). This is unique in the Hebrew Old Testament.

## The additions to Daniel

If your Bible contains the books of the Apocrypha, you will find three supplements to Daniel. The first is The Prayer of Azariah and the Song of the Three Jews. The second is a supplement to the story of the Fiery Furnace in the form of a prayer by Azariah (1-22) and an addition (22-26) which tells how God's angel kept the young men cool in the furnace. This is followed by another prayer and a psalm. These additions serve to underline the piety and humanity of the martyrs as well as praising God in his creation.

Susanna is the story of a young woman falsely accused of adultery by two elders whose advances she had rejected. In revenge they had her tried for adultery and sentenced to death. But Daniel spoke up for her and interrogated the two men about the precise location where the event had happened. They gave conflicting accounts and Susanna was spared the death penalty by the cleverness of Daniel. So Susanna

was saved, the elders were convicted of perjury and Daniel's reputation for wisdom was confirmed.

The third part of the additions to Daniel is, in fact, two stories to show that the true and only God is the one whom Daniel worships. In the first he refuses to worship the god Bel. The idol of this god was daily given food which he ate (according to the priests). In fact, Daniel devised a clever plan by which he showed it was the priests and their families who came out at night and ate the food offerings! He had ashes scattered in front of the statue and, in the morning, the footprints of the priests could be seen. The king put the priests to death and Daniel destroyed the temple and the statue of Bel. The second story is about a great dragon worshipped by the Babylonians. Daniel refused to worship the dragon (or snake) and said that he would kill the dragon without sword or club. So he made cakes of pitch, fat and hair – the dragon ate them and burst open. As a result the Babylonians turned against Daniel and threw him into the den of lions, where, miraculously, he was fed by the prophet Habakkuk with stew and bread which he, Habakkuk, had prepared for the reapers in Babylon. An angel carried Habakkuk by the hair to and from Babylon to deliver the food to Daniel. So Daniel was saved from the lions' den.

So ends the book of Daniel and its additions and the weird and wonderful stories about him. Good stories they are and the inspiration for many painters but also very significant in the development of certain religious ideas.

**Martin Banister**  
**St Albans Cathedral**



**Jane Ducklin**  
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# January – one month, two bishops



It has been a very busy start to the year here at Bishop Wood School.

In early January, I was very pleased to receive a letter from Dr Richard Wood, the sole

surviving child of Bishop Wood, after whom our lovely school is named. Dr Wood was writing on the occasion of the 61<sup>st</sup> anniversary of the passing of his father and enclosed a donation of £500 for the school. In his letter, Dr Wood expressed a desire that the money could be used for an environmental or nature project of some kind.

We are currently working hard to develop the school's eco credentials and will use the donation to plant a bee-friendly, wild flower meadow within

the school grounds. It was fantastic to hear from Dr Wood and to receive the generous donation.

Later that month, we were pleased to host the Rt Revd Dr Michael Beasley, Bishop of Hertford, for an afternoon at the school. Bishop Michael was taken on a very detailed guided tour of the school by four members of our School

Council. This took in the inside of the school and the wider school grounds.

Bishop Michael spoke very highly of his tour guides. Following the tour, the whole School Council gathered to have a question-and-answer session with the bishop. The children formulated the questions themselves and asked Bishop Michael about many aspects of his job



and his faith. I am pleased to say that the quality of his answers matched the high-quality nature of the questions.

It is always a great pleasure having people visit the school and this was certainly the case here.

**Gary Stanley, Headteacher**  
**Bishop Wood School**

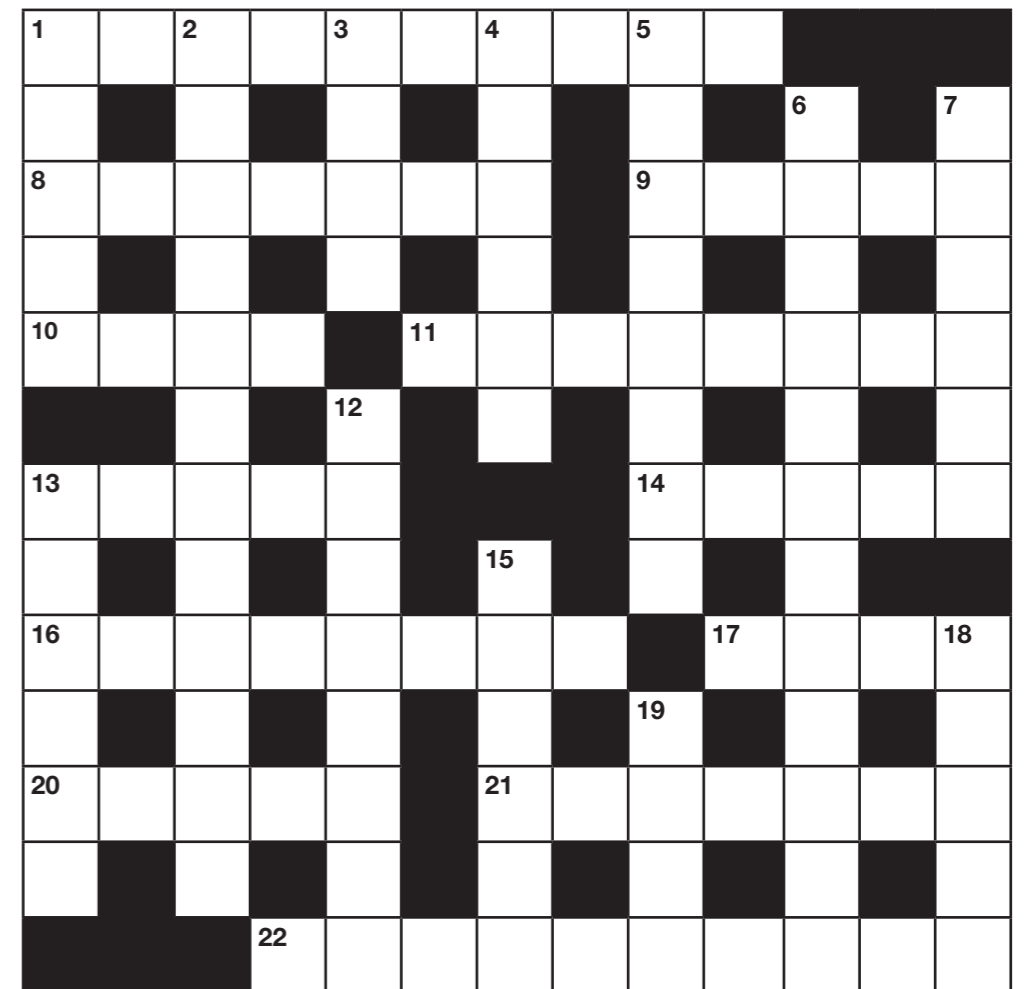
## Crossword

### ACROSS

1. Your choice (10)
8. Holiday places (7)
9. Higher than the ground floor (5)
10. Slow cooked dinner (4)
11. Our theme of belief (8)
13. Adhesive (5)
14. Unique edition (5)
16. Given as a payment (8)
17. Standard (4)
20. African animal like a giraffe (6)
21. Arched parts of the feet (7)
22. One of our religious groups (10)

### DOWN

1. Capital of France (5)
2. Most important day of this month (6)(6)
3. Nobleman (4)
4. Followed next (6)
5. Picture of Christ on the cross (8)
6. Those (5) (7) 'They go my way' - song
7. Jesus '(6) of peace'
12. Ecclesiastical living (8)
13. Clergyman (6)
15. Object of devotion (6)
18. Receiver of the 10 Commandments (5)
19. Was put into practice (4)





# Holy Week (last week of Lent)



What makes this week holy? What is holy? What does holy mean?

If something is holy, it is sacred, special. Sacraments are sacred/holy gifts eg Baptism.

So Holy Week is special, it is sacred. We are remembering the last days of Jesus. Has this remembering become habitual? We are familiar with what happens – the Passion of Jesus. But are we really there? Are we paying attention to what is happening?

We have our physical senses: sight, touch, taste, but for Holy Week especially, we need our senses of the heart.

Holy Week is a week of preparation, a culmination of the austere weeks of Lent. There is a sense of foreboding – we know the endgame – and that is the trouble, we

are too familiar; we need the sensitivity of the heart.

How can we do this? The imaginative prayer of Ignatius Loyola helps us to be there at points we choose in the gospel story.

Let's focus on Gethsemane. This is one of the most intense and dramatic occasions of the Passion. Jesus is surrendering everything in himself to his father's will. Let us allow God to come in; let us surrender everything to Jesus.

Let's close our eyes: the garden at dusk, the outline of the olive trees, some ancient, broad and gnarled. They are outlined against the deepening dusk. There is an outcrop of stone, silhouetted against the sky. There we find Jesus. His friends are a little away, asleep. Imagine Jesus there alone; his friends have opted out, sleeping. Imagine him leaning his whole body into the rock. He prays to God, his father. Look at his face, his eyes, take in the full weight of the moment.

We kneel down beside him. We hear

his laboured breathing that moves his body in waves of sighs. We look up to his face and see blood mixed with sweat dripping down his face. We hear the sound of his words and they print themselves on our hearts. We see his eyes and they turn towards us and see us. He takes his hand and puts it on ours – he knows what he is about to do.

What do you want to say to him, if anything?

Take your time. Just stay there with Jesus in the garden...

Welcome back. This is a precious time, between life and death; between friendship, service and deception and betrayal, humanity and divinity.

There will be church services during Holy Week. Remain attentive, not habitual, be aware of the holiness, the sacred.

**Tricia Apps, Corpus Christi with thanks to Fr Mark Toups, Ascension Press**

## Sending it to the cross



I recently met up with my niece who has been eager to discover why certain problems seemed to be recurring in our family. In talking about the past,

and revisiting the pain that people had experienced, we could both see a pattern of behaviour being repeated again and again. She was keen to know how to stop it ruining more lives.

In fostering we are taught many things to help us help those in our care with the particular problems they encounter. One of the things that is very important is to teach children that they do not have to be defined by the past – whether that is 'bad' parenting or deep trauma. Many of the children who have experienced abuse or neglect could be

destroyed by their terrible experiences. Indeed, that may be why some of those children grow up to become adults who repeat the cycle of pain and inflict it on another generation – and why breaking that cycle is thought to be a good thing. If we can help them, not to forget their pain, but learn that it can be left behind so they can yet fulfil their potential and be the person they were intended to be; to let it go and move on – they can learn to change their lives to achieve positive outcomes.

I come from the 'low' end of the church, which means my church tradition has never included all the symbols that many take for granted and find comfort in. I watch others cross themselves or genuflect and wonder when they were taught to do it and what it means to them.

At one of the Easter services at St Peter & St Paul's, we use liturgy which I believe comes from the Anglican church

of Kenya, where we are encouraged to use our whole bodies to pray. Instead of making the sign of the cross, we sweep a hand towards the cross above the altar (or table if you are low church like me) and say the following:

*All our problems: we send to the cross of Christ.*

*All our difficulties: we send to the cross of Christ.*

*All the devil's works: we send to the cross of Christ.*

*All our hopes: we set on the risen Christ.*

At the last one, we sweep our hands above us.

It's quite a powerful thing to do as we say and do this in unison. Come this Easter and join us.

**Annette Reynolds  
St Peter & St Paul**

# The Stations of the Cross



Until 1187 pilgrims were able to go to Jerusalem and retrace Christ's journey to the cross. In

1187 Saladin

took over, and pilgrims could no longer visit. This led to a great desire for a suitable substitute pilgrimage. It was not until 1505 that a pictorial pilgrimage was put up in Louvain with eight bas-relief illustrations by Peter Sterckx, which the faithful could use to follow the pilgrimage path in Jerusalem. Was this the first virtual pilgrimage?

In those days illustrations were necessary as members of a congregation were usually unable to read – especially not in Latin, the church's language.

The eight stages were: Jesus is condemned to death; Jesus falls the first time under the weight of the cross; Jesus is helped by Simon of Cyrene; Jesus meets Veronica; Jesus falls the second time; Jesus meets the women of Jerusalem; Jesus falls the third time; Jesus is stripped of his clothes.

In 1515 Romanet Bofin visited Jerusalem to try to determine the stations for a Way of the Cross installation he was financing in his native Romans-sur-Isère. The local Friars in Jerusalem told him there were thirty-one stages! In 1584 Adrichomius published *Jerusalem Sicut Christi Tempore Floruit* which describes twelve stations coinciding exactly with the first twelve of the current Stations of the Cross.

They were: The Condemnation in Pilate's palace; The imposition of the cross; The first fall under the weight of the cross; the meeting of Jesus and Mary; Simon of Cyrene helps carry the cross; St Veronica offers Jesus a cloth to wipe his face; the second fall; the daughters of Jerusalem; the third fall; the stripping of Jesus' garments; the nailing to the cross; Jesus dies on the cross.

In 1731 Pope Clement XII allowed this series of fourteen stations to be erected



Station 1



Station 2



Station 3



Station 4



Station 5



Station 6



Station 7



Station 8



Station 9



Station 10



Station 11



Station 12



Station 13



Station 14



Station 15

Station 1 Mark 15:1-5, 15  
Station 2 John 19:6, 15-17  
Station 5 Mark 15:21  
Station 8 Luke 23:27-31  
Station 10 John 19:23-24  
Station 11 Luke 23:33-34  
Station 12 Luke 23:44-46  
Station 14 Matthew 27:57-60  
Station 15 Mark 16:9

in any church – so long as a Franciscan father erected them. He also fixed the number at fourteen. The final two stages were: Jesus' body is removed from the cross; Jesus is laid in the tomb and covered in incense.

Up until 1978 there were fourteen stations of the cross whether you were Catholic or Protestant. In 1978 Pope John Paul II added a fifteenth for Catholics. As a Baptist this seems, to me,

essential, as Jesus' resurrection is central to the story: Jesus rises from the dead.

You may like to go around the illustrations of the Stations of the Cross this Easter with these Bible verses: only eight of the stations are found in the Bible; the rest are traditional from the early Church.

**John Allan  
High Street Baptist Church**

## Spring Fayre

Enjoy two weeks packed with free activities from yoga, aerobics to Nordic walking, art exhibitions, local festivals and markets to arts and crafts, live concerts and business networking.

Including FOTCH Family Fun Day on 7 May, Ridgeway Chorale Concert 7 May and Tring Spring Clean (date to be announced).

**Trish Dowden, Tring Together**



# Easter Hymn



A lucid, somewhat pessimistic, poem addressed to Jesus, as the son of man, to come and save the world, if, indeed, he was raised from the dead to sit at

the right hand of God, as Christians believe. It seems to carry the sentiments of an unbeliever, who, yet, longs to believe. There are clear details from the scriptural accounts of the resurrection – rent grave clothes, the stone rolled away, the agony in the garden of Gethsemane – and a vivid description of the centuries of war and hatred among humans which Christianity has failed to quench. His style has undertones of the Romantic movement

but without the verbal flourishes common in the work of his contemporaries. At the present time of war and ecological disaster these words sound a somewhat despairing note with which we find it easy to identify.

Alfred Edward Housman (usually known as A.E.) was born in 1859 in Worcestershire, one of seven children. He was particularly fond of his mother who died on his twelfth birthday. He read Classics at Oxford and, while he excelled in the first part of his degree, for some reason he failed the second part, though he gained a pass degree at the end of the following year. He spent ten years working in the Patent Office, studying classical texts at the British Museum in his spare time. He then was appointed

*If in that Syrian garden, ages slain,  
You sleep, and know not you are dead in vain,  
Nor even in dreams behold how dark and bright  
Ascends in smoke and fire by day and night  
The hate you died to quench and could but fan,  
Sleep well and see no morning, son of man.  
But if, the grave rent and the stone rolled by,  
At the right hand of majesty on high  
You sit, and sitting so remember yet  
Your tears, your agony and bloody sweat,  
Your cross and passion and the life you gave,  
Bow hither out of heaven and see and save.*

**A.E. Housman**

Professor of Latin at University College, London, and later Professor of Classics at Cambridge. He was not a prolific poet but became well-known and popular with 'A Shropshire Lad'.

'Easter Hymn' was published after his death in a volume edited by his brother. He died in 1936.

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

# Tweet of the month



As I write this it is 1 March – the first day of Spring, if you follow the meteorological calendar. Coincidentally it is also Shrove Tuesday and so

Lent starts tomorrow and the journey to Easter. Personally, I see this as a time of renewal and revisiting a number of aspects of my life and I am sure I am not alone in that.

This week I have already noticed that more birds are singing and a few of the earlier summer visitors are already trickling into this country from the south and a few of our winter visitors have started moving around the country – some being more visible than others. Pink-footed Geese for instance have largely vacated their mid-winter areas in Norfolk and flown north-west into Lancashire before they will head north to their breeding grounds on Iceland, Greenland and Svalbard.

As part of this 'revisiting', I decided to revisit the Cuckoo, a summer visitor to our country, and look at what it does on its African wintering grounds, as they perform movements similar to those of Pink-footed Goose, but obviously in different locations. I thought looking at one of the satellite-tracked Cuckoos being monitored by the British Trust for

Ornithology (BTO) would be interesting – see <https://www.bto.org/our-science/projects/cuckoo-tracking-project/about-project/updates-our-cuckoos?name=AJ> for more details. The Cuckoo in question is known as AJ by the BTO and he had the tracker fitted last year on 27 May in Nottinghamshire.

If your memory is really good, you may remember I said in 2018 that cuckoos leave Britain early in the Summer. So unsurprisingly, on 12 June AJ left Britain and flew to Normandy where he spent three weeks before flying to the south of France. In mid-July he flew south again into Algeria and then crossed the Sahara Desert, via southern Mauritania, to south west Mali. After two weeks AJ flew east into Burkina Faso – arriving on 3 August. AJ then took a week to fly east to Togo and then a few days later to Nigeria. Next stop was western Cameroon and then south east Cameroon. A month later, 6 October, AJ was in the Democratic Republic of the Congo in an extensive area of tropical rainforest. By 6 December he was in north western Angola just south of Luanda, in an area I visited in 2005 and saw seven species of Cuckoo, none of which were the species we get here. By 6 Jan AJ had moved north to Gabon and with luck will be back in Britain before Easter: an incredible journey and feat of navigation.



The other reason I looked at Cuckoo again was that since 2018 I have visited Thursley Common in Surrey which is an excellent area to see heathland wildlife. However, Thursley Common is also famous for Colin the Cuckoo, a famously-tame Cuckoo that has been visiting the area for at least seven years. The journeys he must have completed in that time are mindboggling. All of my best Cuckoo photos are of this Cuckoo and last year I revisited how I take photos with my camera and this has significantly improved their quality.

As Christians we should continually revisit and think about what we believe and how this is applied to our daily lives, our interactions with other people and with our world in general, in the hope that we can help make the world a better place.

**Roy Hargreaves**  
**St Peter & St Paul**

# Discovering treasure in life's scars



I wonder what your expectation is as you encounter a title such as this?!

Perhaps it conjures up anticipation of hope and possibility of beauty through brokenness; or perhaps it provokes cynicism and fear. Maybe neither of

these responses describes where your mind goes to, and maybe for others a combination of conflicting thoughts are felt by the idea suggested in this sense.

This time last year a group of people coming from all different perspectives and backgrounds were midway through our first 'Wellbeing Group Journey'; and each week we considered together the material that we had been given by the charity who had introduced us to this concept.

'Kintsugi Hope' partnered with us to provide this group opportunity, and the above title is one of their straplines. (Even their name 'Kintsugi Hope' stems from the idea that when a pot is cracked in Japan, it is often glued together with gold paint, and as a result arguably becomes more beautiful through the art of 'kintsugi').

Alongside a concern to raise our awareness of the notional issues surrounding mental health and wellbeing, many of us were motivated too by a very real experience of these aspects of life impacting those around us, including our friends and family. However, confronted with occasion to dialogue

about such matters, many of us faced an unanticipated mixture of daunting emotions, and discovered unexpected riches from our time of sharing this journey together.

'I was a little apprehensive about joining the course, but thought it would help me to understand others who suffer from anxiety etc. Little did I realise how helpful it was for me, and I addressed issues I had not confronted for years. We formed such a strong bond with each

significant and valuable.

Our Wellbeing Group was 'a safe space to talk with each other' one lady said. 'We grew closer as the weeks progressed and shared in each other's triumphs and sorrows.' It was 'a great opportunity to learn coping techniques for difficult times' said another person, and the volume of additional material that we were signposted to, gave those of us who wanted to know more about particular subjects the tools to find further support as and when we needed it.

The bottom line was that those who attended fed back that they would really recommend a Kintsugi Hope Wellbeing Group to others.

With this in mind, we are planning to hold another Wellbeing Group journey in person very soon; so if this is something that might interest you (or someone you know), then do please get in contact so that we can answer any questions that you might have, and point you in the direction of more info (email: [ruth@tringbaptistchurch.co.uk](mailto:ruth@tringbaptistchurch.co.uk)).

When life throws up challenges that overwhelm us, we need safe spaces where we can admit that we struggle at times without fear



other, and I have forged real friendships (although I have not actually met one or two of the people yet!). The fact that we still Zoom for a catch up, and use the group WhatsApp to share with one another speaks volumes.' said one group member.

Although we were only able to meet virtually online each week due to the circumstances at the time, the genuine connections made with each other as we shared our own personal reflections without shame which were met with unjudging response and support, were

of shame or embarrassment, and seek to learn together how we can support each other more honestly as we search for hope and life in the midst of our circumstances. In our experience, these Wellbeing Groups provide one way we can do this, and so our prayer is that those who can benefit from them will find their way to our doors, and discover 'treasure in life's scars'.

**Ruth Egan**  
**High Street Baptist Church**

# Parish registers

## Baptisms

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

**Owen Willis**  
**Sofia Willis**  
**Barnaby Willmore**

## Weddings

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

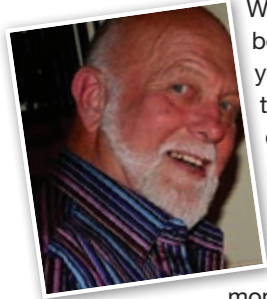
**David James Prestwich & Melanie Zoe Hicks**  
**Joshua James Waters & Kayleigh Rebekah Elizabeth Green**

## Funerals

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

**Stanley (Stan) Frederick Cleaver, 95**  
**Joyce (Grace) Blaxley**

# Letter from Orkney



Well, it would be better to greet you all in happier times. We, as part of the worldwide community of humanity, are passing through a dark cloud at the moment and as with every other part of the United Kingdom, aid is being gathered together here in Orkney.

As the Salvation Army have 'boots on the ground' we are using their resources to channel our help and, of course, our prayers are for the folk in Ukraine and also for the many soldiers of Russia who we understand, have no wish to be there.

I have some good personal news. So far, the Hospital successfully removed a lump from my luscious body yesterday, and I am back home thanking God. However, they took away my piece of lusciousness for four weeks. I expect they want to admire it under a microscope.

Enough of this silliness: we have had the most appalling weather even for Orkney which is not renowned for good weather in winter. The winds have hit the 90+ mark and with little in the way of landscape protection such as hills and trees, we have been hunkered down, especially when the wind was accompanied by sleet, rain and the odd cat, dog and frog.

I have been busying myself typing up (so far) 297 recipes we have collected over twenty to thirty years and put into

a wicker basket. You know how it is. You tear out a scrumptious looking meal from a magazine, fully intending to cook it but never get round to it. We now have two fully indexed files of recipes, complete with shopping lists.

Another twenty years and I might have cooked some. However, it did stop me going stir-crazy.

I'm sure you have been the same with the weather down south. I hope you are all safe and undamaged. At least we are used to high winds so all is strapped down, and no trees of course, which is the only time we are glad, since we usually envy you with Ashridge and Wendover Woods on your doorstep.

Carrie has headed South to Birmingham leaving me unattended for the first time after the one year anniversary of my stroke. Of course, unattended also means unsupervised so 'Bring out the good biscuits' – a bit scary though.

Petrol and Diesel have soared to 155p/ltr here and are expected to go higher. Whilst we are advised that we are on the cheapest electricity rate, we are also advised our fuel will rise by £1000.00 per annum to start with. The ironic thing is that Orkney is totally carbon neutral with our power generation entirely wind and sea powered. In fact, we



manufacture some 5-10% more than we use. All surplus power is sent to Scotland mainland but, would you believe it, the power cable under the Pentland Firth is too small to cope with the volume. So much for wind and wave power.

St Mary's Church is hanging on by a thread and you will be pleased to know the wreath made from the poppies of St Peter & St Paul's was brought out for our commemoration service and took pride of place in front of our altar. I am writing this having just returned from the Ash Wednesday service. So, now Lent has commenced, no nightly dram for me. This is day one: oh dear! I shall miss my two tots in the evening. But looking on the bright side, the money saved can go to Ukraine. The amount was rather surprising to me but this is Scotland.

God bless you all and keep you safe, well and of good heart, I sincerely hope, and pray there will be changes for the better by the time you read this.

**Mac Dodge**  
**St Mary's, Stromness**

# Heaven is a place on earth



Many of us, it seems, are comforted by the idea of heaven – a place or else a state of existence – where there is no more pain, suffering and fear. We also quite like the idea of hell, where bad people (not us!) go and face endless misery. In both cases, what we do here and now determines where we go after we die. But how well-founded are these popular notions?

The Parish Book Group, never lacking in ambition, tackled the question of heaven in a recent session, with the help of a book (aptly entitled 'Heaven') written by Paula Gooder, a well-known and respected biblical scholar. Some of us cheated a little and watched an engaging talk by Ms Gooder on YouTube (we're not yet ready to rename ourselves the Parish Multi-media Group.)

Our notions of heaven and hell owe more to myth than to scripture, according to Paula Gooder's careful exposition. We have privatised and postponed heaven, she says, by concentrating on what happens to us individually when we die. As she explains, with careful reference to the Bible and to other studies, heaven is primarily where God dwells. According to first century cosmology, this is just above the sky; translated to our current understanding, it is an alternative reality,

plane or dimension of existence, close at hand to us here and now.

Paula Gooder's book, while brief, is thorough in its exposition of biblical sources on heaven (with many notes and references). Most of us struggled to see the importance of what the Bible's writers saw as the exact components of God's throne (trying to express the inexpressible). We did like the idea of angels as messengers, in biblical times and since; after our recent study of Mother Julian's book ('Revelations of Divine Love') we were open to the idea of being blessed with a vision of Christ. We especially liked the concept of 'thin places' where we can feel closer to heaven, i.e. to God our creator. For some of us this was associated with a geographic location, for others it was more about a state of mind.

The Book Group was pleased to meet in person at the end of February to discuss our reactions to the book and thoughts about heaven. As usual, we had a lively and cheerful discussion (lubricated by a lot of lemonade and a little red wine, according to choice). Also as usual, attitudes to the book ranged from enthusiasm for the imagery depicted to dis-satisfaction with the approach. We exchange our views with tolerance and good humour.

I'd like to include a couple of sentences from the last paragraph of 'Heaven': 'A good theology of heaven challenges us to re-imagine who we are



and what the world might be. Most of all it summons us into worship of the one who created our world, who summons all living things into being, who breathes life deep within us, who hears when we cry out in despair and who time and again breaks out of the constraints we place upon him to speak to us'. (SPCK edition 2011, page 106.)

The group doesn't meet during Lent, and our next session – again in person, we hope – will be on Sunday 24 April, from 6.30pm in St Peter & St Paul. We shall be discussing 'Robert Elsmere', by Mrs Humphry Ward, who lived in Aldbury at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century; the book is about conflict in the Church of England.

**John Whiteman**  
**Tring Team**

# Pancake races!



Who would have believed it?! An event is planned for the churchyard and the sun shines!

You may have heard of Shrove Tuesday but we like to be different at St Peter & St Paul's. So we had Shrove Saturday. In previous years we have included not just pancakes but sausages and it became a great social event for the church (and as always food was involved). This year the event was designed as something for everyone, so it was in the churchyard to encourage passers-by to come and join in – and they did!

Groups of children took up the

challenge to toss their pancake while running on the grass – and great fun was had by all. One little two-year-old had no idea what it was all about (our American friend was similarly in the dark!) but wanted to copy the other children and run with them. He was given a frying pan by Sarah Marshall so he could join in (picture edited for safeguarding reasons).

Not only were there children in the churchyard running with pancakes and people eating pancakes outside on that sunny Saturday, the church was



also supplying teas and coffees as they do every Saturday morning, thanks to a team of willing volunteers. You may not get pancakes if you turn up next Saturday, but you will receive a hot drink and friendly company. Do join us!

**Annette Reynolds, St Peter & St Paul**

# Carrying the cross



The annual calendar of Tring fixtures has been affected in many ways over the past couple of years, not least through the absence of the annual Walk of Witness.

There will be readers who will be familiar with the origins of the Tring walk – I'm not one of them – however, for over twenty years, I have found myself at the front of the procession with other people carrying the cross.

The solemn walk from St Martha's, ending up in the churchyard at St Peter & St Paul's, via a pause in Dolphin Square, has provided the context for an entry into the Easter weekend for hundreds of local people each year.

The cross is heavy, and there is a small plaque saying that it was made by Tring School in the 1970s. It takes four to five people to carry – with the volunteers deliberately staggered in height order (tallest to shortest) to assist with the weight distribution. This goes some way

to assisting with the balance of the cross as we walk over the speed bumps along the High Street, while ensuring that we are all uniform in the feet

that we are putting forward at the same time, to avoid the cross vibrating up and down as we walk along.

There have been occasional humorous moments as we have walked down Western Road into the town centre – the attempt to send cars the wrong way up the one-way system of Henry Street brought a discreet chuckle – but with only one contrary example that I can recall, people watching are respectful as we walk by.

Matthew's Gospel provides an insight into the familiar Good Friday story: 'Then



the governor's soldiers took Jesus into the Praetorium and gathered the whole company of soldiers around him. They stripped him and put a scarlet robe on him, and then twisted together a crown of thorns and set it on his head. They put a staff in his right hand. Then they knelt in front of him and mocked him. "Hail, king of the Jews!" they said. They spit on him, and took the staff and struck him on the head again and again. After they had mocked him, they took off the robe and put his own clothes on him. Then they led him away to crucify him.'

For me the Walk of Witness has significance on many levels. There is the commemoration: to step out of the normal and walk in memory of the walk Christ took is powerful, meaningful and emotive. To walk carrying the cross provides a symbolism to the act of Jesus on that first Good Friday. On a human level, it is always edifying to meet up with folk from other churches within the town, to share stories and be told how much the children are growing. But, crucially, it is a reminder that, whatever the world is throwing at us at any given time, the hope and joy of Easter Sunday is just around the corner.

**Kevin Rogers**  
High Street Baptist Church



# Walk of witness



Remember when Good Friday was about marching behind that heavy cross in silence from St Martha's to St Peter & St Paul's (and eating hot cross buns at the end)? You may

have done it in warm sunshine and more likely in rain! You may have done it when your children were small and now they have children of their own.

Well, after two years when we were not allowed to do it because of Covid-19 restrictions, it's back – and this year we can all do it again on Friday 15 April.

People from all the churches join

in; people who are just walking down the high street join in; small children or babies in prams join in; older people who have trouble walking – all join in.

If you haven't done this before, make 2022 the first time. Make it a family tradition. And welcome back if you have missed it!

**Annette Reynolds**  
St Peter & St Paul

# Pilgrim's Way

This is the third part of an article that started in the February edition of *Comment* and covers the final phase of the journey into Ireland in 1997.

## Wednesday 4 June

We caught the coach at 9.00am and this took us to Wrexham where we had coffee at a local church which had a splendid tower. We then boarded the coach again and went to Holywell where we had a picnic lunch at the church of St James in a dismal church hall, followed by a short service in the church itself. Then we were taken to St Asaph and walked to the bishop's palace where we had tea in the library. Protestants had gathered in force, and were vociferous over their belief that Augustine was part of a papal plot. We then assembled for Compline after which a young clergyman took us across the road to the home of our hosts for the night. Their friends joined us for a splendid – though slightly rushed – meal as we were due back at the cathedral for a concert given by a male voice choir, a school choir, and a young harpist.

## Thursday 5 June

We had Holy Eucharist at St Asaph's first thing, and then left by coach for Bangor. We then listened to a lecture, given by an elderly historian on Celtic Christianity. We heard so much that we were not able to concentrate any more! We then walked over the Menai Bridge, now into the isle of Anglesey. The coach took us to Penmon Priory, where we walked to the lighthouse and had a time of silent prayer (and were given a box of flapjacks!). Now we were bound for Holyhead and the crossing to Ireland. We bade farewell to Frank, our coach driver, in the rain, and boarded a high-speed ferry to have a very smooth crossing to Dun Laoghaire in Ireland. We then met up with our new coach driver, who took us to Kells, near Dublin. We were late, wet, and very tired and hungry. We were met by our hosts, and were driven to their bungalow.

## Friday 6 June

Next morning the coach took us to the small village of Onstown, where we

held a short act of worship under a tree. A young person played an accordion with Irish tunes. We walked from there to Kells where the coach from Wales caught us up, and others re-joined us. It was interesting to see familiar faces again. Sandwiches were provided in a church hall and a brass band played while we ate. Then we went into an adjoining theatre for a pageant about St Columba, performed by a local dramatic society. A guided tour of the town took us to the Market Cross which included the round tower, the bell tower, and St Columba's house, recently hit by a vehicle. We had prayers and hymns at the nearby church, followed by tea and cakes in and around the tiny church hall. We then departed for Northern Ireland, and arrived at Armagh.

Here we attended a service in the Protestant Cathedral, and then another, almost identical one, in the Roman catholic Cathedral. We had a light buffet lunch for many hungry pilgrims. Our accommodation that night was in a hostel at Benburg, a few miles away. Much to our advantage, married couples were offered twin rooms, while others suffered large dormitories and bunk beds, some without sheets. No food or drinks in sight.



## Saturday 7 June

Breakfast was much later than originally stated before we left for Lough Garton, Donegal, the birthplace of St Columba. Here we said prayers by the cross. We continued to the Visitors' Centre nearby, and had lunch by the lake. We stopped briefly at the ruins of an abbey in the local cemetery, and continued to Church Hill for tea in the church hall. The coach then took us to Letterkenny. Here, some spent two nights in the hostel while others, including us, were taken to local lodgings. We eventually had dinner at 10.00pm, along with Bishop Phillip, and Margaret Goodrich (previous bishop of Worcester).

## Sunday 8 June

We had a leisurely breakfast and then walked to Donegal in the rain to pick up the coach. This took us to Londonderry bus station for lunch, then along the coast to Corymeela, the ecumenical centre, where all the pilgrims re-united. Here there was a lovely dome-shaped chapel. This was a beautiful position on the coast with lovely views and in the sunshine. A huge marquee provided cover for our service. Banners were taken to the platform. We all received a small pebble with a cross painted on it to mark the occasion. A magnificent cold supper was served and then a ceilidh was held, but we all then had to leave to go back to Donegal at a respectable time for our hosts.

## Monday 9 June – St Columba's Day

There was an early departure for Londonderry where we walked through the city wall arches and attended a final service of Anglican Choral Eucharist in the cathedral. This was filled to capacity and included oarsmen who were to row to Iona. Some other rowers also left for Iona where St Columba died. We then got on the correct coach which was going to take us to Belfast airport. Here we pilgrims said 'goodbye' to each other before the plane took us to Birmingham airport. We were met by my daughter, Jenny, and taken home. It had been a marvellous voyage.

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

# Serving the community in New Mill

During the lockdown period, the folk at New Mill Baptist Church took the opportunity to improve the access into our Church building for people who were experiencing difficulties walking or tackling steps by having a new ramp installed. This is wide enough for Mobility Scooters, Buggies, walking frames and, of course, people... to come into the church sanctuary by entering via the double opening side doors in New Road. This will help us to be inclusive for the whole community. Don't take my word for it! Come along and have a look and try it out for yourselves. Everyone is welcome to join with us at 10.30am on any Sunday to share in our services.

Another project that we are undertaking is to have a Defibrillator fitted outside the church's side door for use in an emergency – not only by people using the church, but also by people who need emergency help in the surrounding community. We have managed to raise some money ourselves, but not enough to purchase the equipment needed. So, Tring Lions

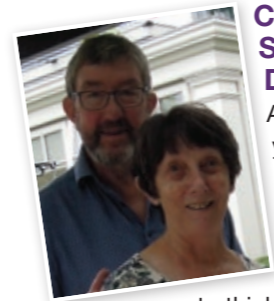
have come to our rescue and very kindly helped us to make up the shortfall. A VERY BIG THANK YOU TO THE TRING LIONS! We are very grateful for your help and hopefully we will be able to have the machine fitted shortly. We will be arranging some training for the public on how to operate the equipment when it is in place, so keep your eyes peeled for information about this.

We are also trying hard to become a hub for the community. We have two halls that are available for hire, as well as a Community Café running on Thursdays from 11.30am to 1.30pm, serving hot homemade soup, a variety of delicious hot foods, desserts and cakes to tempt the palate. Again, come and see for yourself. Tea and coffee are also available. We have restarted our Fareshare connection with Tesco's again, using foods that would otherwise go to waste, so managing to help 'feed the flock'.



If anyone would like any more information about the various church activities then please contact either the Church Secretary on 07831 709793 or secretary@newmillbaptist.org.uk ; or the Church Treasurer on 07773148706 or treasurer@newmillbaptist.org.uk.  
**Val Carr**  
**New Mill Baptist Church**

# A summer day to look forward to....



## Children's Society Garden Day

At this time of the year, as the days lengthen and we struggle to shake off the winter blues, it is nice to think of sun-shiny (hopefully) days relaxing in the garden and spending time with friends.

For many years we have tried to bring together those who like to support the work of the Children's Society to enjoy some relaxation and spend some time in the garden together; that idea became the 'Children's Society Box-Opening Garden Day'. By inviting all the box-holders to get together and have their boxes counted as they relax and chat with one another in the garden, we developed a format for a kind of garden party which has proved quite a popular event.

## Saturday 18 June 2022

Obviously, the period of lockdowns and subsequent restrictions created something of a hiatus in this tradition but we did manage to have a jolly get-together last year in July. This year we are planning to return to our normal timing and have set the date of Saturday 18 June as the target.

This will be our 25<sup>th</sup> Annual Box-Opening Garden Day. In tune with the times, the format will be slightly different and we shall write to all the box-holders to let us have their boxes ahead of the day, if possible, so that the counting can all be done securely. Of course, given the shortage of actual coinage these days many of our supporters prefer to give a donation rather than filling a box and that works extremely well.

(Interestingly, a surprising number of us seem to be rather attached to the actual boxes and there is an intriguing range of different iterations of antique,

vintage and just plain ancient boxes with different identities going right back to the 'Waifs & Strays'. They have become almost like old friends!)

The message is very simple: please put the date of Saturday 18 June from 11.00am till 2.00pm in your diary – and do come and join us.

## Everyone is welcome!

You don't have to be a box-holder; all friends who support the important work of the Children's Society (never more needed than now in these rather troubled times) are invited and ALL ARE VERY WELCOME.

Please make a date and come and join us so we can thank you for twenty-five years of unstinting support.

**Prue & Grahame Senior**  
**St Peter & St Paul**



## Exercise for Parkinson's



Boxing / Group classes / 121 training  
Face to face and Zoom exercise based on neuroplasticity principles to help people with Parkinson's



[www.parkinsonsknockout.co.uk](http://www.parkinsonsknockout.co.uk)

## Exercise for Over 60s



Group classes / 121 training  
Face to face and Zoom classes ranging from chair based, to low intensity and medium intensity



[www.cmworkout.co.uk](http://www.cmworkout.co.uk)

Contact Corinne Mandard-Wood: 07988 649275  
Classes in Aylesbury, Tring, Cheddington, Hemel Hempstead and online

# It's all going to the dogs...



We quite naturally expect the Gospels to portray Jesus as the one in the story who displays wisdom, compassion, and godly virtues; but try reading Jesus' encounter with the

Canaanite woman in Matthew 15:21-28. It's unsettling. Quite frankly, Jesus does not come off well in this encounter.

It's tempting to justify Jesus' unseemly behaviour or pretend we did not see it, but, if we can resist this temptation to save Jesus, and us, from embarrassment, we might discover some new insights in the Gospel story of Jesus as Matthew tells it.

First, Jesus ignores the Canaanite woman's plea for mercy for her daughter. He responds to her by saying, in effect, that her needs are not any concern of his. When she persists, he insults her with a derogatory term that displays ancient hostilities toward one of Israel's ancient enemies, the Canaanites. He likens this woman, her daughter, her kind, to dogs begging for scraps from the table.

The reference to 'Canaanite' evokes a deeply ingrained national prejudice. The Canaanites were known for having several deities, unlike the one God of the Hebrews. The label 'Canaanite' therefore defines the woman in terms of this age-old prejudice a first-century Jewish audience would understand.

The woman greets Jesus as the 'Son of David'. Her recognition is all the more remarkable because, let's face it, the disciples have been a bit slow in recognising Jesus for who he is.

We know the overall gospel narrative is about Jesus and we look to him for the meaning of this encounter; however,

it would be remiss of us not to pay close attention to the woman in this story, not least because she is yet another woman, in a long line of other women, who recognise the importance of Jesus.

The Canaanite woman, and not Jesus, models the most admirable human behaviour. She shows humility and a willingness to be vulnerable by seeking help from a longstanding foe whom she knows despises her because of national and racial divisions.

She asks for help for her daughter, not for herself, and she is persistent in the face of insults and rejection for her daughter's sake. The Canaanite woman has the best lines in the story too, especially her last one. 'Call me dog,' she says, 'but even the dogs get the crumbs that fall from the table.' I like this woman. She is bold in her words! She is the clear underdog (pun intended) who receives the ultimate wish that any mother, Jew or despised Canaanite – could hope for, the health and well-being of her child.

Of course, the story is ultimately about Jesus, and here we see a very human Jesus. We see ourselves mirrored in Jesus' attitude toward the Canaanite woman, but probably not our best selves. We know very well the tendency to define and fear the 'other' for a variety of reasons, which is why the Tring Team 'Living in Love and Faith' course is proving such a useful discussion in our Lent groups this year – we are encouraged to confront some of those engrained prejudices we all hold at some level.

In Jesus we see the very best of human potential in relationships with others, even those we avoid and fear. We see in Jesus the possibility of

perceiving common humanity where we could see only difference. And when we encounter the 'other' as one who shares our humanity, we can never see them as 'other' again.

The Canaanite woman has the best lines in this story, but Jesus has the last word: 'Woman, great is your faith! Let it be done for you as you wish.' Not 'Canaanite woman' but simply 'woman'.

She will never be defined by national or racial or religious prejudice again. She is now a mother like any other who desperately seeks help for her child; and for this mother's sake, Jesus heals her daughter. Perhaps Jesus heals us, too, from the temptation to hang on to old stereotypes and habits that prevent us from embracing our common humanity. She claims a place in the household, but it is not a position of privilege or even the position of an insider. She accepts the crumbs from the table.

Jesus is in the unsettling business of meeting outsiders and granting them not just a crumb, but a place at the table. So how do we claim our place at the table?

The hymn 'And can it be' comes to mind and in particular the imagery in last two lines of the final verse: 'Bold I approach the eternal throne / And claim the crown, through Christ my own.'

To attain this requires the bravery of the woman in today's story, humbling ourselves before Jesus. It is only through doing this that we can take our place in the eternal kingdom.

Dare we be so bold?

**Sarah Marshall**  
**Tring Team**

## Quiet Place

Need space to contemplate?

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

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



# One bag – big difference

Dacorum Borough Council is proud to once again be supporting the Keep Britain Tidy's Great British Spring Clean, encouraging people to pledge to do their bit to clear up the litter that blights the borough.

This year's mass campaign, running between March and April, calls on families, neighbours, friends and colleagues to join forces and pledge to collect a bag of litter from nearby streets and beauty spots in order to protect our vibrant communities and precious wildlife habitats.

Last year, over 1000 local volunteers collected 314 bags of rubbish and over 215 bags of recycling from around Dacorum. In a national survey of people who took part in 2021, 86% said volunteering helped improve their mood, more than half agreed it helped them meet new people and make friends, and a staggering 91% agreed they felt more pride in their local area after participating.

As well as polluting our streets and parks, litter harms wildlife, domestic pets and cattle, and costs UK tax payers over £1 billion a year to clean up. In the last five months alone, volunteer litter pickers and Street Champions have collected a staggering 353 bags of rubbish from across their local areas in Dacorum.

The Great British Spring Clean, now in its seventh year, brings together individuals, community organisations, businesses and councils to make a difference to the environment on our doorstep – and the charity is keen to stress litter picking can be accessible to everybody with the right resources.

Dacorum will be supporting our local litter heroes by loaning out litter picking equipment including litter picking sticks, recycling and rubbish bags as well as providing advice. To find out more about how you can take part in the Great British Spring Clean and help represent Dacorum on the national stage, please visit our webpage: [www.dacorum.gov.uk/gbspringclean](http://www.dacorum.gov.uk/gbspringclean). If you would like to help keep your streets clean, safe and green all year round, you can sign up to be a Street Champion. You can find more information here: <https://www.dacorum.gov.uk/street-champions>.



## When is a joke not funny?



Have you ever been asked 'where is your sense of humour?' It is normally when someone has said something which is offensive and, by and large, it is said with a sense of power and the supposed joke is directed at a minority group.

A recent example would be the comedian Jimmy Carr making a crass joke about the holocaust and claiming it was good that thousands of Gypsies were murdered alongside the 6 million Jews. Carr claimed it was a good joke and edgy as hell. However, it comes across as a privileged person making fun of a minority group in society. It is very clear where the power lies in this. And those who complain are accused of

having no sense of humour.

In the 'Living in Love and Faith' course which the Tring Team are exploring during Lent, one of the key pastoral principles is to pay attention to power. Tring has a significant minority traveller community and, as a parish, we have been privileged to take a number of funerals and weddings for them, and have consequently seen the racism which they experience on a daily basis. There may be many aspects of traveller culture which we don't understand or even disagree with. However, it is impossible to justify the abuse they receive.

Of course, this may be a niche area of comedy. What about 'banter'? Is banter acceptable? This is the first anniversary of the murder of Sarah Everard and her death highlighted an epidemic of violence towards women. At Tring School a number of students

have identified the unacceptable use of language, usually justified by the term banter, which reflects this outright sexism. Just to be clear, there is nothing unusual in the school apart from them having the courage to name a national / society-wide issue. Are women meant to just get a sense of humour and deal with it, or do we have to change the way in which we make jokes?

When we watch old comedy shows from the 1980s, and even more recently, it can be cringeworthy. I suspect at times we have all been guilty of abusing our power and mocking the other. I know full well I have. Joking between mates and equals is part of our building friendships; joking about those who hold power is a great way of pricking their pomposity; but can making jokes directed at those with less power ever be funny?

**Huw Bellis, Tring Team**

### 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**

# Celebrating Spring



The Spring Fayre, organised by Tring Together, is two weeks (23 April – 8 May) of events and activities dedicated to welcoming Spring in Tring. At High Street

Baptist Church we are taking the opportunity to get creative by offering free craft activities at our regular coffee mornings.

I love to use the name 'Creator God' when addressing God in my prayers. I think of the magnificence of his creation in the nature on my doorstep, but also mountains, oceans, continents, and the planet itself. But I also like to remember that we are his creations too: 'We are the clay, you are the potter; we are all the work of your hand' (Isaiah 64:8).

Consequently, we too are creative beings. I know how nerve-wracking it can be trying something new – I'm not doing 'Go Ape' anytime soon! But I also know people can have the same reluctance to draw or try some new craft activity. I remember leading a creative session at my sister's wedding. It was a relatively small wedding, and we stayed all together in a house for the weekend before the wedding ceremony itself. As part of the preparations, I led a session on making beaded-napkin rings for the wedding reception. I had hoped it would be inclusive, and certainly not 'just for the kids'. Gradually most of the guests joined

in and the chat flowed. Some reminisced that they hadn't done anything like this since school, others shared their different hobbies and projects. I remember my uncle pacing around the table 'harrumphing', being pretty certain that this wasn't the way for a 70-year-old man to spend his afternoon, and he would rather be watching the cricket. After quite a lot of encouragement he eventually joined us and had a go. Inevitably he was the last to leave the table, commenting, 'This is quite fun, isn't it?!'

Whether we paint in oils, take photographs or like to arrange the scatter cushions on our sofa, we all have the capacity or, I would argue, innate desire, to be creative. The latest edition of the Baptists Together magazine focused on the arts. It asked questions such as: God has given people the inspiration to create wonderful works of art – so what are the artists saying? How does art in general deepen our understanding of God? The magazine explores how art has a place in our world post pandemic. As well as artists sharing their story, there are articles about how churches have integrated art galleries into their spaces. It's an inspiring read! ([www.baptist.org.uk/Groups/371310/Spring\\_2022.aspx](http://www.baptist.org.uk/Groups/371310/Spring_2022.aspx)).

Most art and craft projects involve a number of steps. From the initial inspiration to the final piece, there will be problems to solve along the way, a range of emotions as we feel frustrated or discouraged and then a sense of accomplishment and pride. This process



might take months, or even years, with a major project or just half an hour with something smaller and less complex. I believe that this act of creating something is within all of us and can be hugely rewarding. It is also something that can get pushed aside or even drop off our daily routine. Therefore, in celebration of being God's creations, and in celebration of spring, we are arranging opportunities for you to 'have a go' at a variety of craft activities. All are welcome to come along to our midweek coffee mornings during the Spring Fayre, to try something new, and create something to take away.

- Coffee for a Cause with FREE Spring craft on Tuesday 26 April and Tuesday 3 May, 10.30am – 12 Noon
- Coffee and Chat with FREE Spring craft on Friday 29 April and Friday 6 May, 10am – 12 Noon

**Polly Eaton**  
High Street Baptist Church



# Brahms 1-2-3



Tring is fortunate to have so many musicians of top calibre living in the parish. April's Piano & More marks the return to the series of one of them: the violinist Robert

Salter, whose performance of a complete cycle of Beethoven violin and piano with the pianist Kathron Sturrock will long be remembered as one of the highlights of the series since its inception in January 2017. They will be joined by another distinguished Tring musician, the cellist Penny Bradshaw, who is married to Robert. Their programme also features music by a single composer, also one of the famous German trio of composers with names beginning with B – Bach, Beethoven and Brahms. We will be hearing Kathron play a Brahms Intermezzo, Robert and Kathron a violin and piano sonata, and finally (to complete the 1-2-3) they are joined by Penny for a piano trio.

Brahms published a set of three intermezzi for piano in 1892, which he dedicated to his lifelong friend Clara Schumann. Kathron will play the second in the set, in A major. This is very beautiful and one of the most beloved of his short piano pieces, full of nostalgia, yearning and passionate tenderness.

The violin and piano sonata that Kathron is playing with Robert was written some thirteen years earlier. It is the first of three he wrote, a gorgeous warm and sunny piece in G major. That might sound an odd comment,

because the sonata is known as the rain sonata. The name is taken from the last movement, where Brahms moves into the minor key, and uses material from a song he wrote called Regenlied (rain song). Even here, the constant pattering of rain that we hear eventually gives way to a glorious finish in G major – the sun has returned at last.

As well as three intermezzi and

three violin and piano sonatas, Brahms also wrote three piano trios. Robert, Penny and Kathron are playing the last one, written between the two previous works; it is an altogether darker but still gorgeous work, which will bring their concert to a close.

We are in for a rare treat!  
**Edmund Booth**  
St Peter & St Paul

## Piano & more series

*An hour of music on Sunday afternoons*

**Robert Salter** *Violin*  
**Penny Bradshaw** *Cello*  
**Kathron Sturrock** *Piano*

*playing* **Johannes Brahms**  
**violin sonata, piano solo, piano trio**

**Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> April**  
at 3pm

Tring Parish Church HP23 5AE  
*Free admission, with retiring collection*

*For further details, see:*  
[piano-and-more.org.uk](http://piano-and-more.org.uk)  
or Google **“Piano and more, Tring”**



# Useful contacts

## TRING TEAM PARISH

**Team Rector**  
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01442 822170 or  
07411 483229  
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**School Chaplaincy and Team Vicar**  
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**JUSTICE & PEACE GROUP**  
affiliated to  
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**OUR CHURCHES ONLINE**  
www.tringteamparish.org.uk  
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Please contact Barbara Anscombe if you would like to take a subscription to *Comment*: £15.00 for 10 issues each year. The magazine can be posted to you with an additional cost for postage at current rates.

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

## COMMENT DEADLINES

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

NB There is no magazine for January or August



# Services in April in Tring Team Parish

## Sunday 3rd April

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

## Services in Holy Week and Good Friday Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday

**8pm** Talk and Compline **Tring**  
**Maundy Thursday**  
**10am & 8pm** Team Holy Communion and Foot Washing **Tring**  
**9pm** Vigil until Midnight **Tring**  
**Good Friday 15th April**  
**10am** Worship for All **Tring**  
**11am** Walk of Witness and service from **St Martha's to Tring Churchyard**  
**2pm** Last Hour at the Cross **Tring, Aldbury, Puttenham and Wilstone**  
**6pm** Good Friday Service **Long Marston**  
**7pm** Sepulchre service **Tring and Aldbury**

## Sunday 10th April - Palm Sunday

**8am** Holy Communion traditional language **Tring**  
**10am** Worship for all starts on Church Square **Tring**  
**10am** Holy Communion starts at the pond **Aldbury**  
**6pm** Celtic Evening Prayer **Long Marston**

## Holy Saturday 16th April

**8pm** Easter Vigil & New Fire **Aldbury**  
**Sunday 17th April - Easter Day**  
**6am** New Fire of Easter and HC **Tring**  
**8am** Holy Communion traditional language **Tring**  
**10am** Communion Together **Tring**  
**10am** Holy Communion **Aldbury**  
**10am** Holy Communion **Long Marston**  
**10am** Holy Communion **Wilstone**  
**3.30pm** Holy Communion **Puttenham**

## Sunday 24th April

**8am** Holy Communion traditional language **Tring**  
**10am** Communion Together **Tring**  
**10am** Holy Communion **Aldbury**  
**3.30pm** Team Parish Evensong **Puttenham**  
**6pm** Holy Communion **Long Marston**

## Mid-week Services in the Parish

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

## Worship for All and Communion Together

At these services we all worship together but there is more provision for children, however they are for everyone. Worship for All doesn't have Holy Communion, Communion Together does.

They are a more relaxed style of worship and are a bit shorter.

## Holy Communion with Sunday Club in Tring

There are also times when it is important to have age-related worship. We all worship in different ways so we have a Sunday Club in Tring. The children (0 - 11 years old) go upstairs during the first hymn to have activities then re-join the wider congregation to take communion.

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

## Crossword puzzle answers From page 15

### ACROSS

1. PREFERENCE  
8. RESORTS  
9. UPPER  
10. STEW  
11. RELIGION  
13. PASTE  
14. ISSUE  
16. RENDERED  
17. NORM  
20. OKAPI  
21. INSTEPS  
22. METHODISTS

### DOWN

1. PARIS  
2. EASTER SUNDAY  
3. EARL  
4. ENSUED  
5. CRUCIFIX  
6. APRIL SHOWERS  
7. PRINCE  
12. BENEFICE  
13. PARSON  
15. FETISH  
18. MOSES  
19. USED



# Tring Choral Society and Orchestra



Conductor: Colin Stevens

## J S Bach

# St John Passion

Soloists:

Soprano: Amy Wood

Contralto: Jessica Gillingwater

Tenor: Rob Johnston

Bass: Philip Tebb

## Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> April

## Church of St Peter & St Paul, Tring

7.30pm (doors open 6.45pm)

Tickets: £15 Under 18s Free

Email: [tickets@tringchoral.org.uk](mailto:tickets@tringchoral.org.uk)

Web: [www.tringchoral.org.uk/tickets](http://www.tringchoral.org.uk/tickets)

Tring Choral Society

Registered Charity No. 276980