

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.

Morning worship

Sundays 10.30am

zoom

Meeting ID: 978 9592 0392

Pass code: highstreet

Worshipping together in our building and at home.



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

Recycling area (left hand side entrance to building)

Items collected include bras, plastic milk bottle tops, baby food pouches and pens and markers.

Visit our website to find out more about creation care.



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
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#tringbaptistchurch High Street Baptist Church

Seeing face to face



Which of the senses would you describe as the most important? Apparently in the 4th century BC, Aristotle came up with a hierarchy of senses. The most important, he said, was sight, which was followed by hearing, these two being the most important because they allow us to sense things from afar, danger for example. At the bottom were taste and then touch, senses that require contact and so were felt to be less important. In the middle was smell.

Would you agree with Aristotle in his positioning of the senses? I'm certainly surprised that the sense of touch isn't higher and would probably put smell at the bottom, but I think I would agree with him in putting sight at the top.

Two things are making me particularly aware of the importance of sight at the moment. My age means that I am at the stage in life when my arms aren't always long enough to see what I want to read clearly and my glasses can be on and off as I try to find the best place to focus on the tiny writing that is often on washing or

food labels and similar. Alongside that, with the current need to wear masks in various situations and places, those of us who wear glasses have the regular frustration of our glasses steaming up, making it difficult to see clearly, particularly when we enter a warm building from the cold outside. I have a wipe that I sometimes remember to use, but it only lasts so long until once again I find that I am getting frustrated by the misty view through my lenses. It reminds me to give thanks for the sight that I have and to remember the struggles that those who are visually impaired must have on a daily basis.

As my mind started thinking about sight and vision, the verse that came to my mind was from Paul's first letter to the Corinthians and his famous chapter on the subject of love. As he speaks of the endurance of love, that love never ends, Paul writes of other things that are partial, but then says that 'when the complete comes, the partial will come to an end... For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then we will see face to face.' As someone who has been short-sighted since I was a child, I love that idea of being able to see face to face. To be able to see the face of our loving God without any mistiness or blurring.

That verse also, however, refers to

another kind of 'seeing' which is more about understanding than actual sight. We so often live with an incomplete picture, unsure of exactly what is happening and why. Particularly at the moment, as the pandemic continues, we are regularly having to make decisions without knowing for certain what is for the best. More than that, however, is our knowledge of God and the relationship we have with him. For now, our knowledge of God can only be incomplete, but we have this promise that then we shall 'know fully' even as we are fully known.

Life isn't always easy and we can't always 'see' properly and that can be difficult, but Jesus came giving sight to the blind and it's been my experience that he can still help us to see those things that we need to understand; and, ultimately, we have this great promise that we shall see 'face to face'. It is good to remember that in amongst all the mistiness of our own seeing, God sees clearly and each of us is fully known, just as we are loved completely with a love that will never end.

Blessings,
Rachael Hawkins
St Martha's Methodist Church

Editorial



As we start a new calendar year of Comment, I want to thank all those people who contacted us to say how much they liked the magazine and looked forward to hearing news of all the churches and articles from the Tring community on all sorts of things. We had an overwhelmingly positive response to the need to increase the cover price after many years of holding it below printing costs.

Of course, just as we decided we could do this, we heard that some advertisers were unable to renew; and then that the cost of paper had increased by 40%! It's like rejoicing that you have just received your state pension and then finding that the taxman claws it all back

after you have given it away!

Let me continue to encourage all readers to send in their contributions for next time (deadlines are always the 1st of the month before the edition – not the day before the end of the month when it will already have been printed and delivered!). All readers have something to say, whether it be about the Tring they remember or the event they have just attended or the friend they want to remember who is sadly no longer with us.

For those interested in the latest addition to our fostering family (people are kind enough to ask whenever they see us), you will probably know that names, photos and background cannot be shared, but some may have a clue about the age, at least, when I tell you that we have become well acquainted with channel 202, the Pontypines, Iggle Piggle, Upsy Daisy, the Tombliboos... I could go on. Those in the Parish Church over Christmas will have seen

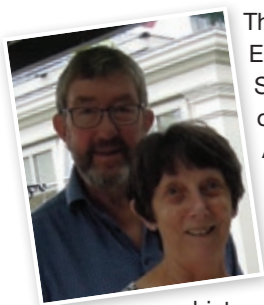


Congratulations to Janet Goodyer of St Peter & St Paul's Church who celebrated her 70th birthday in January!

the enthusiasm of that latest addition who is not at all shy, loves children and especially babies, wants to make friends with everyone and their dog, and has not learned that there is any appropriate behaviour required in a church building. 'Suffer the little children to come unto me and do not prevent them...?'

The Editor

Investing in our children is vital – whatever the future may bring



The Church of England Children's Society is one of our earliest Anglican charities and has arguably seen more changes than most in its long history. It used to be one of the largest providers of both children's homes and arrangements for adoption. It now runs no homes and deals with no adoptions – yet its services are ever more vital for the wellbeing of our most vulnerable children. Keeping ahead of the changing needs of society is a considerable challenge. The caring community of Tring has been active in support for many years. Fortunately, the punishing effect of the pandemic has not completely distracted us from this vital cause.

Christingle – bright lights in the gloom!

This year the Christingle service in St Peter & St Paul's went ahead and was well attended and greatly enjoyed. Whilst social distancing was carefully observed and all the Christingles were self-assembled by the children, it was a heart-warming occasion and raised over £470 for the society.

Looking to the future – meeting the challenges

More than forty years ago, we (Prue and I) were recruited by Derek and Diane Sandy to 'help out' with a few things. We started

by participating and then organising the house-to-house collection which was a very important fundraiser at that time. It was an enjoyable, if time-consuming, activity (Longfield Road is very well-named and very long indeed!). That style of fundraising has now completely gone and house-to-house collections have been discontinued by almost all charities. The face-to-face contact they provided was, however, a very valuable communications activity and we made many friends for the Society during that period.

For the past twenty-five years we have organised the Box-Holders group and again, personal contact is a most important part of the 'glue' that binds us together. We still have well over 100 supporters actively contributing to society funds each year: a very loyal and determined group.

Obviously recent changes have significantly reduced the use of cash itself and practical changes in how people contribute are moving forward rapidly. However, the box holders are a resilient lot and many cherish their boxes (some even still labelled 'Waifs & Strays' – the original name of the Society). Nowadays their contributions are mostly made by cheque or electronic transfer rather than coinage. What has not changed is the warmth and companionship that goes into our support. The annual Box Holders Garden Day is when our supporters come together and we were able to hold this event in 2021 as one of the first occasions on which we were able physically to 'mingle' after last

year's lockdown. (Activities even in this challenging year resulted in donations to the Society of almost £4700.00 from Tring – a very positive result.)

Hopefully the latest flurry of difficulties will be overcome by the time we come to late spring. We are planning to hold a Garden Day event on Saturday 18 June here in the garden at Greenways. This will be our twenty-fifth Garden Day and will hopefully be a celebration of the many generous supporters and the events which have been both greatly enjoyed by those who take part and delivered great benefit to the cause. We look forward to a very jolly occasion in which we celebrate the long-term support of so many active, enthusiastic helpers.

No doubt what happens thereafter will soon become clear.

Caring & effective support from 'Head Office'

Any charity with a strong supporter base has to foster a good relationship with its Head Office team and its activist members. There have been times when organisations have found themselves out-of-step with their grass-roots support and that can have a rather negative effect.

In recent years we have been fortunate to enjoy the very helpful involvement of Rachel Brockie who has been our Eastern area organiser for the Children's Society. She has done a wonderful job in communicating and empowering the team. Rachel has now moved to take over the West Midlands area and her role with us has been taken on by Hannah Ratcliffe. Hannah has also been with the Society several years and her area has been extended westwards from East Anglia to take in our patch. Hopefully she will be with us on 18 June when I am sure she will enjoy meeting our team. We look forward to a continuing strong relationship.

Getting the message across

As well as fundraising, one of the important tasks the Children's Society asks its organisers to undertake is communication. This often takes the form of preaching and presenting during church services as well as other meeting formats. Over the years it has been a privilege to be involved in a wide number of church communities in this role and we have many continuing links. The

Children's Society does seem to 'capture' people for life!

What is absolutely clear is that the support for the Children's Society across our whole church community is vibrant and active. I very much hope that we in Tring will continue to be significant contributors to the society as its changing role continues to provide active support to

our most vulnerable young people.

The recent activities of those youngsters passionate about ecological and environmental matters has certainly caught the imagination. Their energy and fearlessness can be very exciting. Looking after our young people, no matter how punishing the social pressures we have to endure, is something the Children's

Society is extraordinarily professional and proficient in doing.

Long may we in Tring continue to be active and effective in its support.

If this is something you feel you would like to be more involved with, please do get in touch.

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

Anno Domini?



It may surprise you to know that for 500 years after the birth of Jesus, the dating system of Anno Domini – AD and Before Christ – BC – did not exist.

The early church based dates on the consular dating system, the imperial dating system and the Anno Mundi calendar.

The consular and imperial systems were the Roman dates according to which year in the reign of a consul or emperor the year was. The Anno Mundi system dated years 'AM' from the date of the creation of the world as given in Genesis.

There were two Anno Mundi calendars in use in the early centuries – the Hebrew calendar and the Byzantine calendar. The Hebrew calendar was calculated from the Hebrew Bible and the Byzantine calendar was calculated from the Septuagint. This gave two different start dates – in terms of the Julian calendar of the time, the Hebrew date for creation was sunset on 6 October 3761BC. The Byzantine calendar had creation as 1st September 5509BC.

The not-insignificant discrepancy of 1748 years is down to the differing

genealogies in the two versions of Genesis. The Babylonians considered the creation took place much earlier – 244,100BC. The Egyptians chose 39,670BC. The Hindus were far more accurate. They believed in the 5th century AD (as does modern science), that the universe goes through continual rebirths and that the present universe is 4.3 billion years old.

On Friday 22 October 2004, The Guardian reported that 'Britain's geologists are about to celebrate the fact that the universe is exactly 6,000 years old. At 6pm tonight at the Geological Society of London, scientists will raise their glasses to James Ussher, Archbishop of Armagh, who in 1650 used the chronology of the Bible to calculate the precise date and moment of creation. Working from the book of Genesis, and risking some speculation on the Hebrew calendar, he calculated that it began at 6pm on Saturday October 22, 4004 BC. Actually, he put the date at October 23, and then pedantically realised that time must have begun the night before, because the Bible said that "the evening and the morning were the first day."

The Anno Domini system was developed by a monk named Dionysius Exiguus in Rome in 525 and was based on the year of Jesus' birth. He had wanted a new dating system to fit the

new calendar for calculating Easter each year that he had devised. His was not the only dating system in use in the 6th century, there was also an Anno Passionis (AP) system based on the date of Jesus' passion. The AD system also had variations based on whether you took the date of the conception or the birth of Jesus. The AD system was adopted by Emperor Charlemagne around AD800, and as he was Emperor of the Western World, that set the system in stone. Well, almost. It was not until the 15th century that the whole of Western Europe used AD and BC.

Some people now use CE and BCE to avoid religious context, Common Era and Before Common Era. Not very inventive since this was used by Johannes Kepler in 1615, when it first appeared in a book by him as the Latin: 'annus aerae nostrae vulgaris' (year of our common era).

AD and BC are not universally used. In North Korea it is 112 this year; in Thailand it is 2565; in Ethiopia it is 2015; in Israel it is 5782; in Iran 1400; in Japan 4; In Saudi Arabia 1444, in China 4720... That is just a small selection! How difficult it must be drawing up contracts between different countries!

**John Allan
High Street Baptist Church**

Happy New Year!

Comment readers will understand that messages designed for a January edition are postponed till February as we have historically had no edition at the beginning of the year. The Editor

Very best wishes for a peaceful, happy and healthy 2022 to all our friends and members of the congregations in the Tring Team. We think of you often and appreciate watching the service on Sunday mornings and reading articles in *Comment*.

Someone said that you sometimes wonder if people read the articles in *Comment*. I look forward to receiving it and it read cover-to-cover every edition. THANK YOU. Godfrey has said that he doubts there is another Parish Magazine as full of interesting articles as *Comment*.

The photo was taken by Vanda Emery when we were recently in Puttenham.

**Godfrey & Judith Orrell
formerly St Peter & St Paul**



A life of faith



As soon as I heard of the death on Boxing Day of the death of Desmond Tutu, I just knew that his life and legacy were going to feature in my teaching and Assembly. His life of faith, faced with tremendous challenges, especially during the Apartheid era, was the backdrop of my childhood in the 1980s. A week would not go past without something being reported on BBC Newsround (the news programme for children) that did

not sugar-coat the realities of any global issues but sought to educate and inform. I think that I am a teacher due to this and, indeed, Blue Peter, whose reporting of social issues was also strong.

My pupils were astounded by the situation that came about upon his appointment – whereby, as a black person, he could not live in the Archbishop's palace, due to it being in a white area.

My pupils were moved that he requested the most plain of coffins, with no ostentation.

He was the most quotable of souls; here are a few that I used in class:

'Do your little bit of good where you are; it's those little bits of good put together that overwhelm the world.'

'God's dream is that you and I and all of us will realize that we are family, that we are made for togetherness, for goodness, and for compassion.'

'If you are neutral in situations of injustice, you have chosen the side of the oppressor. If an elephant has its foot on the tail of a mouse and you say that you are neutral, the mouse will not appreciate your neutrality.'

May he rest in peace and rise in glory.

Sarah Bell
Tring Park School

A new arrival in Tring – sixty years ago

When we first moved to Tring from London sixty years ago, with our two small boys, one of our first visitors was Canon Lowdell, who arrived on his bike to invite us to the Pram Service at St Peter & St Paul's Church. It was held once a month at 10.00am and was for young families. We had not heard of one before. The boys had been Christened in the church where we had been married but we thought them too noisy to go to a Sunday service in church. Canon Lowdell said it didn't matter! So we planned to go along to the next one.

Now prams in those days were large and cumbersome and had a seat on the front. Ours was no exception. But we need not have worried because everyone else had a pram just as big and we filled up a lot of space in the aisles. Nobody seemed to mind about the noise – which was a relief.

We found out that there was a Sunday school for the over 4s, so when our eldest was 4, we took him along to

Church House on Western Road where Mrs Hollands was in charge of a large group of children. This was the first time he had been away from us, so we were a bit apprehensive, but he was fine with the others and by the time of the Christmas party, he was well used to the big group. Mr Hollands supplied the party hats and they had a conjuror or a film show which was very exciting for a small boy. Not many of those children live in Tring now – most are parents and some are grandparents.

In the summer they had a garden party in the grounds of the Old Vicarage which was also greatly enjoyed. Later I got to know Mrs Hollands well and she entrusted me with her very old, secret beetroot pickle recipe, probably dating from the war years, which I have made countless times for various bazaars but I think now is the time to pass it on.

Erica Guy
St Peter & St Paul

Beetroot Pickle

3lbs beetroot, cooked and peeled
1 pint vinegar
8-12oz sugar to taste
1 sachet gelatine
2 tablespoons cornflour

1. Heat the sugar and vinegar until the sugar dissolves.
2. Mince or blend the beetroot and add to the sugar solution. Bring back to the boil.
3. Sprinkle on the gelatine and stir in the cornflour.
4. Keep stirring till the mixture thickens.
5. Spoon into pots and tighten lids as it cools.
6. Store in cupboard till opened, then in the fridge.

Caretaker required for small local charity in Tring

The Old Church House in Tring is situated at the beginning of Western Road and was built in 1897. The building is used by a range of local clubs and groups and is managed by a committee of volunteers. Our caretaker is due to retire at the end of this year and we are looking for someone who has experience of maintaining an old building that is available to the public. This includes ensuring all health and safety practices are followed.

The role would suit someone looking for part time work for a local, friendly organisation and pays a reasonable rate for approximately 15 hours per month, although there may be times when additional work is required.

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



The right school for me!



'Rooted in God's love, we rejoice to learn and respond to challenge'

Whenever a new headteacher joins a school, this signals the start of a new chapter in its life. I've now spent a whole term settling into my new position at Long Marston Church of England School and what a wonderful journey it has been already. I've been getting to know all the children, staff and parents, and we've already got a lot of exciting things planned.

Previously, I was a headteacher in London in a vibrant, ethnically diverse school following a role as deputy headteacher in a larger school. Since having children, however, I've been working in teacher training, supporting teachers new to their teaching career. This gave me a wide view of so many schools – I always enjoyed collecting the best ideas from each one of them.

As soon as I visited Long Marston, I knew it was the right school for me – it's like buying a house! I was particularly drawn to the school because, like all

the schools I've worked in, teamwork and collaboration are key. We all work together, creating a sense of community within every classroom while finding ways to help each other in specific challenges that go across the school.

I'm looking forward to bringing more elements of my experience into the school, both into what we teach and how we teach it. For example, I trained in Marine Biology before doing my PGCE and specialised in science teaching, so I've always been passionate about how this is taught in schools. Another example is how I prioritise the student voice. We need to continue to listen to what children are telling us about life at the school and make sure we respond in the right way.

So far, I've been struck by how engaged children are in their learning. They really enjoy school, which is down to the exciting curriculum as well as all the extras we offer that range from Forest School and Adventure Club to running the daily mile. Our teachers continually find new and interesting ways to engage children in topics that bring the curriculum to life. They're so committed to delivering all of this that it, of course, rubs off on the children.

Recently, another success at the school has been the breakfast and after school clubs. This has only been going a couple of years but has proved to be both valuable for parents and fun for the children. Whenever I pop in, the clubs are a hive of activity and they get to explore some of the most fun things they do during the school day, which includes a lot of haring around the playground!

As it's a small school I feel as though I've already been able to get to know the children even though I've only been here a matter of months. The last few years haven't been easy on anyone, with many disruptions due to the pandemic, and as we come out of that we can move forward with plans that will bring even more to the children, their families and the wider communities.

If you would like to find out more about the school, I am happy to show people around personally to discuss your child's individual needs.

Laura Whateley
Headteacher, Long Marston VA Church of England Primary School

It's a Tring thing!



Were you aware that Tring's Foodbank is run from St Peter & St Paul's Church?

Each weekday from 10.00am – 12.00 midday the DENS Foodbank is open for Tring residents who are in need, with

a team of twelve or so volunteers. There can be many reasons for this need – loss of income, delay in income, benefit delay, homelessness, domestic abuse and more – but they all have the basic need of food.

We are really lucky in Tring that there are lots of people who donate, so there are always plenty of foodstuffs and toiletries to deliver to the DENS foodbank office in Hemel Hempstead where the foodbank parcels are made up and collected by a volunteer for distribution at the parish church. A box is outside the church when foodbank is open to donate foodstuffs and toiletries.

The Foodbank is part of The Trussell

Trust group and the idea is that a person should only need to receive three boxes in a six-month period as it is hoped that by that time they will be getting the help they need from social service teams. This is not always the case; so our volunteers have to make occasional judgement calls.

People can be referred to us by various social service groups or they can just turn up and ask for a parcel.

A single box contains enough food for three days for an adult and a family box has enough for two adults. Treats are also part of the box but there is no fresh food in the boxes as we don't have the facility to store fresh food at the church. Toiletries are also not included in the boxes we give out in Tring so we keep a small supply of essentials like deodorant, shower gel, shampoo, washing up liquid, soap powder, etc to supplement the boxes. We also get dog and cat food from DENS to distribute if the clients have pets.

It really is a lifeline to some people and everyone who comes is so grateful to be able to receive this service. During

lockdown we saw our foodbank requests increase by 700% due to lots of people being out of work. Many had never been to a Foodbank before so there was the embarrassment level to get through, but all of our volunteers are there to put clients at ease and not feel embarrassed. I remember attending a talk from a DENS person who pointed out how few steps we are all away from becoming homeless – it's scary to think about.

DENS have quite a surplus of food at the moment so they really need monetary donations (you can leave them with a volunteer and I make sure they are given to DENS support when I collect food boxes) or you can donate online. If you really don't want to give money, then please do check the high needs list on their website Donate Food & Household Items - DENS. There are only so many things you can do with pasta.

So thank you to everyone who has donated in goods, money or time – it really is a worthwhile thing you are doing.
Trish Dowden, Tring Foodbank

Rampant eschatological expectation



Or to be more prosaic, what twenty of us learnt about St Luke and his writings, in a workshop led by Revd Huw Bellis.

We can't be sure whether Luke

was a physician, but he was a Gentile, probably from Antioch in Syria. He was a companion of Paul in the early days of Paul's ministry. He wrote his Gospel and The Acts of the Apostles (Acts) in about AD80, a very turbulent time in Roman and Jewish history, and in Greek, the lingua franca of the Roman Empire. His audience was the Empire (the Gospel is addressed to Theophilus, a Roman rather than a Hebrew name and which means 'lover of God').

Luke's purpose was twofold: first, to show how what might look like humiliation and defeat – Jesus' crucifixion as a terrorist, the sacking of the Temple in Jerusalem (in AD70) – actually was the working out of God's purpose for his creation. And second, in support of this, to trace the route from Abraham, through the prophets, to Christ, and thence to the post-resurrection era, the final stages (that 'e' word in the title). So Luke is not trying to write a chronological narrative, but rather an 'orderly account' (Luke

1:1) of the truth about God in action in the world. And not least, of a historic religion to be tolerated by Rome, not an upstart revolutionary movement to be suppressed.



A stained glass window in All Saints Anglican Church, Brisbane

The first three chapters (up to 4:18) essentially set Jesus' ministry and mission in context. It is thought that the songs we sing, such as the Magnificat, taken from those chapters (usually in Morning or Evening Prayer), were themselves songs of the early church.

Each of the stories in this section has a purpose in relating the central message – Jesus' resurrection – to themes and stories in what we now know as the Old Testament.

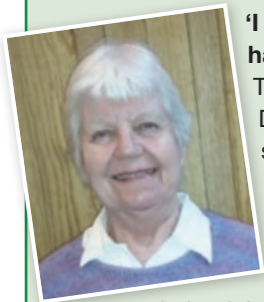
Luke demonstrates that God through Jesus was faithful to promises made to Israel, but in unexpected ways, to include Gentiles, the unclean, the poor, women, Samaritans, rich toll collectors, and assorted other outcasts as well as elect people who are repentant of their initial rejection of Jesus, God's prophet and Chosen One.

We have to remember that Luke's writings are not a journal, written at the time of the events in Jesus life from his birth to his resurrection, but a retrospective, a re-creation of the story of Jesus' life, based on the knowledge of his death and resurrection.

Finally, why were we being told about Luke just now? Because we'll be listening to readings from Luke each week in our church services during 2022. This workshop focused on the start of Luke, and the beginning of Jesus' life and ministry. We hope to hear more from Huw as the year progresses. (You can watch a version of this first talk on YouTube: ask me or Huw for details. Also, Huw can give you details of further reading about Luke.)

John Whiteman
Tring Team

World Day of Prayer 2022



'I know the plans I have for you'

This year the World Day of Prayer service has been prepared by the team representing England, Wales, and Northern

Ireland. It is based on the quotation from Jeremiah above. Jeremiah sends out a message to the people of Judah who have been taken into exile by the Babylonians. They long to return to their homeland, but God asks them to build houses and settle where they are, saying, 'For surely I know the plans I have for you'. The service picks up the reassurance that trust in God brings hope.

The World Day of Prayer is a women-led, global, ecumenical movement which enables women

all over the world to share ideas and concerns of the country writing the service. The theme is chosen by the national committee a few years prior to the year in which it is used, enabling the writing of the service and the translation into other languages. All are welcome to the service to join in worship which encircles the world, starting in Samoa and moving on through New Zealand and Australia, across Asia, Africa and Europe and finally to the United States and South America.

As I write this at the beginning of January, the plans for the service, like so much, depends on current circumstances. Rest assured that the service will go ahead on Friday 4 March and when final plans have been made, you will be informed of what exactly will happen by your local church and through posters.

For further information and



resources, visit the WDP website: www.wdp.org.uk.

We look forward to welcoming you to our worship.

Jill Smith
St Peter & St Paul

Reflections on seven years of 'sleeping out' for DENS



In 2014 Didier Jaquet, then our curate, suggested that we encouraged our Youth Café to join him 'sleeping out' at St Albans Abbey for DENS. He had done it by himself a couple of years previously. The first year we managed to convince Eliza (now in her second year at Sheffield Uni) Lucy (now in her first year at Portsmouth) and Peter (now working as a mechanic) to come along.

As a small group we set out our sleeping bags on the lawn in front of the great west doors of St Alban's Cathedral. All three of the kids had been involved with a Tring School music concert, so we arrived quite late and certainly didn't get a prime spot, and we were too late for the opening worship in the cathedral. All I really remember is that when we woke up in the morning, there was a thick layer of frost on our sleeping bags.



The good news is that obviously they enjoyed themselves and were able to convince more of the Youth Café to come along next time. In fact, we had enough of them to need a minibus! We found our new preferred spot, nestled in under the wall by the Gate House at the cathedral. When the sleep out was in St Albans there were loads of youth groups from around the Diocese. Apparently our youth would wait until Didier and I were snoring and then go and spend the night chatting with loads of others. (Safeguarding alert!)

In 2016 Didier had not been planning to come. Sarah Eynstone had geared herself up that she would be

with us instead. It was a huge shock when Sarah died the day beforehand. But we decided to go ahead. That year the kids didn't go off with others: they waited until Didier and I were asleep to sit up through the night talking about Sarah.

The following year the cathedral grounds were closed for building works so the DENS part of the sleepout was relocated to Hemel School. The DENS posters advertising the event had pictures of a bearded dishevelled homeless man. It turns out it was actually the Rector of Tring... This time Jane accompanied me as the responsible adult. It made a change to have a responsible adult. Didier and I had always been relieved if we ended up with the same number of children in the morning that we had set out with. Jane couldn't sleep properly: she had to keep doing a head count.

Roll on 2018 and it was back to slack parenting. Ian Munro became our new irresponsible adult. It isn't quite the same experience in the school grounds but we have been pleased that each year new members of the Youth Café are pleased to join us.

The November lockdown in 2020 meant that the event didn't go ahead, but in 2021 – we were back.

For my seventh sleep out, the weather was the worst possible you could imagine. It had been wet in 2019 but, even then, it stopped raining by 11.00pm so our night was dry. This year we had gale force winds. We were hoping for snow – that would have at least been exciting and beautiful, but instead, with the air temperature hovering just above 0, we had driving rain and a wind chill temperature of



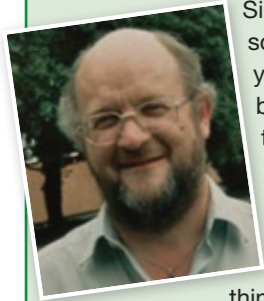
-11. Apparently, along with the wind and the rain, others were disturbed by someone snoring. Fortunately, I didn't hear this. It was also our first year with a medical emergency. DENS put on a 'silent disco' before everyone beds down. Some of the kids were excited to meet the DENS ambassador: Chris from 'Skins' or Gendry Baratheon from 'Game of Thrones'. Apparently it all got too much for one of them. They came over all faint and needed to see the medics. You have to be proud of our youth – on the coldest day of the year, he had overheated! He had too many clothes on.

Actually the real reason for being proud of them is that every year our youth group are willing to raise money for DENS. With some money going direct it is hard to give an accurate figure, but we think the Tring Team contributed about £2,000 out of a DENS total of £50,000. I am sure many memories will have been made too.

Huw Bellis
Tring Team



Books are cool!



Since I retired some eleven-plus years ago, I have become a term-time regular at the Tuesday morning Communion service in Tring Parish Church. I think *Comment* is the best church magazine I know.

Back in May, I read an article from the Editor offering children's Bibles or other religious books, free of charge, to children for whom English is a second language. I knew this would be of interest to my wife, Shirley, and her pupils at Westcott School, and my son, Kieran, who is Vicar of St John's, Walthamstow.

Here's what they said on receiving the books.



'This sounded a brilliant opportunity,' said Shirley. 'Lists of languages and age groups were duly made and sent to Annette Reynolds. Soon

we received an email to say that the books were ready for collection from St Peter & St Paul's Church. What a surprise! We hadn't anticipated such a huge carrier bag of books would be waiting for us! It was like Christmas, with so many beautifully illustrated books to sort, first by language and then age group [this required some detective work and use of the internet!]. The languages included Bulgarian, Romanian, Russian and lots in Polish.

'My school decided the books would be given to the children at the end of term. Once again they were received with first surprise, then happiness, as they realised these were to keep forever.

'One of our older boys said "The books were awesome. I finally got to read the Bible in my own language. My mum and dad have looked at them too. One day I will be able to read and share these books with my baby sister. They are cool!" These books will be treasured by children and their families.

'We would like to give our very grateful thanks to Anno Domini in Tring who provided these books on behalf of

Izabella (Romanian), Gabriel (Bulgarian), Jakub (Polish), Marcin (Polish), Marcel (Polish), Julia (Polish), Rares (Romanian) and Kevin (Polish).'



'Thank you so much,' said Kieran. 'What a blessing to be able to give good resources to our ESL families. Amelia (Polish) had books in her own language. Lia, Sofia, Kira and Naomi received Russian books but are from Lithuania.'



Lia said: 'Thanks so much, we have the Bible in English. It is so nice to have it in Russian as well.'

John Bush, St Peter & St Paul

Since reading this, books in Lithuanian have made their way to Lia, Sofia, Kira and Naomi. Thank you to John and his family for putting us in touch with them.
The Editor

The gospel: good news for God's earth!



Tring Team Parish is committed to responding to the climate emergency. We are aware that we have a lot to do and it is challenging to make our medieval churches

energy efficient and more environmentally friendly.

We already have an air source heat pump to heat St Mary's, Puttenham, and have upgraded to energy efficient LED lights in Tring and Aldbury; we are developing our plans to improve further. The Fabric Committee at St Peter & St Paul's Church have now completed an environmental

survey and have been awarded a bronze award in the Eco Churches scheme.



What is Eco Church?

Regular *Comment* readers will know that High Street Baptist Church has written about their impressive awards before; but for new readers, Eco Church is an award scheme run by A Rocha UK (a Christian charity) for churches in England and Wales who want to demonstrate that the gospel is good news for God's earth.

Participating churches complete a unique online Eco Survey about how they are caring for God's earth in different areas of their life and work, achieving points towards an Eco Church award.

The survey covers five key areas of church life: worship and teaching; management of church buildings; management of church land; community and global engagement; lifestyle.

There are three levels of Eco Church award, Bronze, Silver & Gold. To qualify for an award, it is necessary to attain the required standard in each of the areas covered by the Eco survey that apply to the church.

Having completed the survey for St Peter & St Paul's to record what we are already doing to care for God's earth, it offers us the opportunity to reflect on the



findings and identify what further steps we can now take.

For more details about the Eco Church scheme please visit www.ecochurch.arocha.org.uk or watch this video: <https://youtu.be/vPxlKjilJM>.
Andrew Kinsey, St Peter & St Paul

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A warm and friendly welcome



When we came to Tring in 1969, we received a warm and friendly welcome from all sides. Church people were strongly represented everywhere in the

town: Tom Grace (Churchwarden, local farmer), Chris Slameck (Churchwarden, local solicitor), Ralph Seymour (Lay Reader, later ordained, Manager, Mead's Flour Mill); many local businessmen belonged to other denominations, eg Frank Clark, Methodist, High Street butcher.

The place was awash with teachers (is it still?). For a start, there were nine of us commuting in to Berkhamsted, to Ashlyns School. Head teachers on the PCC here at St Peter & St Paul's included Paul van As (Bishop Wood), Dennis Aldridge (Kings Langley), Keith Pearce (Augustus Smith), Brian Mather (Northchurch), and the formidable (no other word will do) Miss Baker (Tring School, when it was in the High Street, where the library is now). At one time there was a stretch of Christchurch Road that was jocularly known as Headmasters Row. (I apologise for all this name-dropping, but for those of us who knew them, these people are a strong and happy memory.)

On a Sunday morning at 10 o'clock

the church was fairly full; all the girls from the Arts Ed (now Tring Park) School who were not committed to another denomination were there (there were no boys in those days). In the centre of the nave was a magnificent double pram containing Win Gibbs' baby twins, Sebastian and Matthew, who later became choirboys.

We joined a 'house group' which met at the Vicarage (now part of the Sutton Court development) and these meetings often seemed to end up with a post-meeting nightcap in the Vicarage kitchen. At the time there was a movement to merge the Church of England with the Methodist Church and I think there was disappointment on both sides when the scheme failed to reach the necessary majority in a General Synod vote in 1972. Some complicated negotiations followed here in Tring, as a result of which the Methodist Church took over St Martha's Church and contributed to the cost of the 'new' Church Hall.

A great deal has changed in fifty years. In the 1970s, the parish of Tring was just that; Aldbury and Long Marston, Wilstone and Puttenham were separate parishes. Over the years we have seen several different patterns of service being tried out until now we seem to have settled down with Common Worship. Have we got it right at last (or at least right-er)?

Carole Wells, St Peter & St Paul

Poem of the month



In simple and majestic language Addison uses the evidence of the sun, moon, stars and planets to prove the existence of a divine Creator. Based on Psalm

19, the poem used

to be sung as a hymn (to the eminently 'singable' tune 'Firmament' by Walford Davies) but has been omitted from many modern hymn books, probably because the language is considered too remote. It first appeared as a poem at the end of an essay 'on the proper means of strengthening and confirming faith in the mind of Man', and it surely achieves exactly that.

Joseph Addison was born in 1672, the son of an Anglican priest who

became Dean of Lichfield. He was educated at Charterhouse and Oxford, and, as a prominent Whig, he held several important political positions. He is best remembered as an essayist and the founder, with Richard Steele, of 'The Spectator' in 1711. His writing

*The Spacious Firmament on high,
With all the blue Ethereal Sky,
And spangled Heav'ns, a Shining Frame,
Their great Original proclaim:
Th' unwearied Sun, from day to day,
Does his Creator's Pow'r display,
And publishes to every Land
The work of an Almighty Hand.
Soon as the Evening Shades prevail,
The Moon takes up the wondrous Tale,
And nightly to the list'ning Earth
Repeats the Story of her Birth:
Whilst all the Stars that round her burn,
And all the Planets, in their turn,*

is widely acclaimed for being clear, simple and without vulgarity or excessive elaboration. He died in 1719 and is buried in Westminster Abbey.

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

Confirm the Tidings as they rowl,
And spread the Truth from Pole to Pole.*

*What though, in solemn Silence, all
Move round the dark terrestrial Ball?
What tho' nor real Voice nor Sound
Amid their radiant Orbs be found?
In Reason's ear they all rejoice,
And utter forth a glorious Voice,
For ever singing, as they shine,
The Hand that made us is Divine.*

Joseph Addison 1712
*obsolete spelling of 'roll'

Quiet Place

Need space to contemplate?

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

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



The voice of the voiceless



'You step out of that door, Kaffir, you are a dead man.' One of the first phone calls from a neighbour as Archbishop Desmond Tutu arrived at Bishops Court,

the official residence of the Archbishop of Capetown in 1982. The reason was that it was in a wholly white district and, under apartheid law, no black person could live outside a designated area.

Desmond Tutu was the first black person to head the Anglican Church of Southern Africa and it was a scandal to most white South Africans of all faiths, including many white Anglicans. I was privileged to meet him when he came for three days to our diocese in 1988 and, as Chaplain to our then Bishop, John Taylor, I had been involved in organising his visit. I had many conversations with his chaplain in Capetown and one I remember well.

'The Archbishop rises at 5.30 and goes jogging, followed by 30 minutes prayer and the Eucharist before breakfast.' I was somewhat bemused by the jogging, and said our Bishop would be delighted to pray and share the Eucharist with him, but jogging was not on our Bishop's list of activities! Tutu nonetheless went jogging but with a policeman in attendance, as he got death threats almost every day from white extremists. Indeed, we had to have panic buttons installed in Abbeygate House in all the public rooms and there was a policeman outside the front door for all three days of the visit.

Tutu was feared by the white, not least because of his strong teaching on non-violent resistance, which had led to his award of the Nobel Peace Prize in 1985, an amazing international honour, which angered the government greatly. Tutu refused to support violence and this made him unpopular with some of the black majority too, who wanted to take up arms against the white oppressors. But his faith and convictions never wavered in believing a peaceful transition was vital.

What was he like as a person? He had the most wonderful laugh and he was happy to laugh at himself. Despite his sufferings, and daily threats to his life, and one or two short periods in jail,

he was never bitter; angry yes, as Jesus was, at injustice and wrong, but never pitying himself. Other people always came first – he had a tearful call from the wife of the Bishop of Mozambique whose helicopter had gone down in the country and was thought to be dead (he was found later). Linda Taylor had just brought coffee into the office and was stopped in her tracks as Desmond shouted, 'Let us pray,' down the phone 3000 miles away as he prayed with this lady.

The highlight of the visit was the midweek evening service in the Abbey. It was absolutely packed and we must have broken all the Health and Safety regulations, even though there were fewer of them thirty years ago! People were sitting on window ledges, all around the altar and on the floor. As he came out of the vestry, spontaneous applause broke out and went on for five minutes as he processed with Bishop John around the building. He began his sermon by saying he was tickled pink to be in St Albans 'but with my skin you wouldn't know

anyway!' It had been his birthday recently and his wife gave him a card, which read, 'We have a unique, beautiful relationship – I am beautiful [as indeed Leah Tutu was] and you are certainly unique!' He went on to preach about reconciliation and forgiveness with deep conviction.

I believe Desmond Tutu was a prophet. Prophets tell it exactly as it is with no regard for themselves. The Old Testament prophet Jeremiah was put down a sewer and New Testament prophet John the Baptist had his head chopped off. Much of Tutu's ministry was under apartheid and he saw it as the greatest moral evil of his time, but when the black ANC government began to show signs of corruption he said, 'I didn't fight to stop the white gravy train

just so that you guys could jump on.' This did not make him popular with some of the black community but prophets don't compromise and they speak the truth whatever the consequences.

Nelson Mandela spent the first two weeks of his freedom at Tutu's home in Capetown and later appointed him to head the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, where white and black people who had committed violent acts under apartheid were made to face their crimes and seek forgiveness.



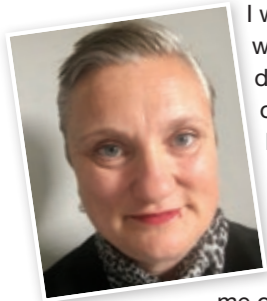
Now that wonderful man, diminutive in stature but immense in spiritual power, has left us at the age of 90 to be with the Lord he served so well.

I want to end with two quotes about him, the first from our own Archbishop John Sentamu: 'Desmond Tutu loved, he laughed and he cried'. The last can only come from the great Nelson Mandela: 'Sometimes strident, often tender, never afraid and seldom without humour. Desmond Tutu's voice will always be the voice of the voiceless'.

Tutu may no longer be with us but his legacy and his smile will live on. Thanks be to God.

**Ian Ogilvie
Tring Team**

Small acts of kindness



I was out shopping with my eldest daughter at the end of November when I got a call from my husband. It took me a while to realise he was trying to tell me our neighbours' house was on fire – we live in a terrace in Aldbury.

As he works nights, Ray had in fact been in bed sleeping but thankfully our smoke alarms woke him up. He called 999, alerted the neighbours on the other side of the house on fire and, when I got home 15 minutes later, our road was cordoned off and filled with vehicles with flashing blue lights.

Ray has been diagnosed with a life-limiting lung disease so we quickly got him checked out by medics and thankfully his oxygen sats were fine. Our neighbour was in a worse state as after racing home from work she had gone into the house to try to save her beloved Husky dogs who unfortunately succumbed to the smoke.

The house next door is structurally sound but badly smoke damaged. Fire investigators located the cause of the fire – faulty wiring behind a socket. The way our terraced houses are formed means my daughter's room is kind of puzzle-pieced into their house, while the boys' room shares an interior wall. A couple of days of cleaning, vacuuming and washing meant the rest of our house was back to normal and, after a couple of nights in our caravan, we could move back in and use most of the house. However, the boys' room still smelt very smoky unless you keep the windows open (brrrr) and my daughter's room was frankly uninhabitable.

We had a shuffle about and now share our bedroom with our youngest son and our younger daughter is sharing with one of her brothers. She is being very stoic about it even though her wardrobe now looks suspiciously like an Ikea bag!

This, combined with coming to terms with my husband's potentially life-limiting health condition and car issues (thankfully solved now), has made for a stressful few months. I have been really at the end of my tether.

I'm normally quite resilient, but looking in the mirror recently, I saw an

older, tired face gazing back. No amount of creams could help the bags under my eyes and my patience has been stretched paper thin.

When both our neighbour's insurance people and our own refused to help restore my daughter's room to a habitable state, I despaired, not really knowing what to do. But a few unexpected acts of kindness gave me a real boost and gave me the strength to pick myself up.



My daughter bought her sister a new duvet, pillow case and a new rug. We'd only just redecorated the bedroom and when we were planning the colour scheme and design, our youngest daughter was very keen on getting a soft rug – her sister understood that replacing that was very important. My sister (whom I've had a difficult relationship with in the past) sent some money to go towards replacing some of the other things destroyed by smoke damage.

I'd mentioned to a friend how upset I was that we couldn't use our Christmas decorations, some of which I've had since I was a child, as they were in the



attic which had filled with smoke and soot which we'd been told could be toxic.

She contacted members of our book club and asked them to bring a Christmas ornament to our meeting – when I was presented with a little pile of decorations. I was absolutely overwhelmed by their kindness.

Meanwhile, another friend has given us a decent fold up bed so my youngest doesn't have to sleep on a folded duvet on the floor. It's not just Christmas which is a time for little acts of kindness and I've discovered that something as small as a tiny Christmas decoration could mean the world to someone who is struggling.

Like many people, I suppose, I live under the impression that people don't generally like me and I never feel as if I fit in anywhere, so that kind gesture by my friend and the fact that our group responded to her request was one of the most lovely moments of my life.

Added to some charity shop finds, and one ridiculously overpriced but beautiful bauble from Liberty bought for me by my thoughtful eldest daughter, we were able to decorate our home. And I donned a mask and, with my younger daughter's help, cleaned out her room, took all the soot-covered soft stuff to the tip and scrubbed every surface clean. It's a lot better than it was, although still not habitable. However, moving forward in optimism, I'm hoping to sort a mattress and if we can manage to banish the smoky smell with ongoing cleaning and vacuuming, I hope to have her back in there soon.

Afra Wilmore
St John the Baptist, Aldbury

God and the big bang



My day always starts with the 'Today' programme and a cup of tea. It has since I was about 12 and the 'Today' programme was on the BBC Home Service, Jack de Manio (who could seldom tell the time accurately) was the presenter and my family listened in the kitchen to an old valve radio which took three minutes to warm up.

Frequently you will hear something along the lines of 'On the programme this morning we have Fred Bloggs from the Conservative Party. Responding from the Labour Party will be Joe Soap.' They then go on to argue about the economy, education or the latest changes to the off-side rule. While this annoys many people (I actually quite enjoy it) it is part of the democratic debate and reflects the neutrality of the BBC.

The problem comes when this approach is transferred to the science and religion debate. Occasionally you hear a scientist talking about some interesting new breakthrough and they then find a Christian who opposes the big bang or evolution. The BBC then thinks it has got a balance. But it hasn't.

In 2017 Newman University in Birmingham (founded around the old Catholic Newman Teacher Training College) commissioned a YouGov poll which found that 72% of British atheists polled believed that someone who is religious would have to reject evolutionary science. The same poll found that only 19% of religious respondents rejected Darwin in favour of what they described as, 'a literal reading of the book of Genesis'. I know what they mean, but you cannot take both Genesis, chapter one and Genesis, chapter two as literal for they contradict each other as to the order of the creation of humans and animals. Have a look and see. Incidentally, my favourite creation story is found in the Book of Job, Chapters 38 and 39.

This false belief that religious people cannot accept modern science and certainly not be scientists is one which I have often encountered. Before I retired from full-time work, I was the Director of the Church of England Schools in the Diocese of St Albans. We worked with the Councils in Barnet, Hertfordshire,

Luton, Central Bedfordshire or Bedford Borough. In Council meetings some Councillor or other would frequently question why the Church of England should be allowed to start a new school or take over a failing Community School as we would no doubt be teaching a six-day creation and not Darwinism. I had politely to point out that we did not have a problem with either Darwinism or Big Bang Theory: these were accepted by the vast majority of Anglicans and the Councillor was perhaps confusing the Church of England with Fundamentalists in the United States; and (by the way) Charles Darwin went on the voyage of the Beagle as preparation for becoming a clergyman.

When I was talking recently on science and religion in a secondary school there were many young people surprised to find that a scientist could actually be Christian or other believer in God. The keynote speaker trained as a mathematician and applied this skill to become a Professor of Oceanography. Another guy with a mathematics PhD used his skills in mathematical modelling to become a climate scientist. A fourth speaker had a science PhD and was now studying for one in Theology. Another speaker was an Oceanographer from Cape Town University.

In my talk about astronomy, I asked the pupils the question: 'If the sun were the size of a football in England, how far away would the nearest star be and roughly how big would it be?' (Read to the end for the answer.) I then told them about the two Nobel Prize winners in Physics (the top prize in the world for Physics and Astronomy) and the one who should have got the prize – someone I have met.

The first was when I was in the science sixth form and he was the great Muslim Scientist Professor Abdus Salam who won the prize for his contribution to particle physics. The second was Professor Antony Hewish, a Methodist, who won the prize after his student Jocelyn Bell (a Quaker and now Professor Dame Jocelyn Bell Burnell) discovered the first Pulsars – tiny rotating stars which emit high energy beams of radio waves. Jocelyn was the person generally thought to have not received the Nobel Prize because she was young and (worse still) female! None of these leading physicists seemed to see any problem with believing in God.

At the end, a number of pupils found they had modified their views on the compatibility of science with belief in God. It is not surprising that young people have the view that the two are at war if the media (and not just the BBC) regularly portrays them as in conflict. It is quite possible to be a Christian (Muslim, Jew, etc) and be a scientist. A significant number of the clergy, including our own Bishop Michael of Hertford and the late Bishop Richard Inwood of Bedford, studied science at university before studying Theology. Many atheists are clearly in need of a bit of education as to what most Christians actually believe about the world.

PS If the sun were the size of a football in Tring, the nearest star, Proxima Centauri, would on this scale be in Chicago and about the size of a golf ball.
Jon Reynolds, Tring Team

O come all ye faithful!

On Thursday 16 December, a group of us from St Peter & St Paul's Church and High Street Baptist Church met by the show home in Roman Park and spent a happy hour or so carol singing in various locations around the estate. Many of us wore appropriate festive embellishments, but none could beat Sarah Marshall's string of coloured lights! Several families came out to hear us, and it was fun; and hopefully helped to swell the numbers of families in the churches over the Christmas period. It was a great success and hopefully there will be a similar occasion next year!

Anna Le Hair
St Peter & St Paul



Obstacles, unforeseen circumstances – and a blessing



On 8 December, Tring School was delighted to welcome the Bishop of Bedford to bless the new school building. The Rt Revd Richard Atkinson was accompanied by

the Head Students, school governors, members of the school Leadership Team and the Reverend Jane Banister.

The blessing was carried out by Bishop Richard on the middle floor of the three storey atrium, which forms the new dining room in the school. After the blessing, the group toured the whole of the enormously impressive new building.

The contract to design and build the new school was awarded in the summer of 2019 with planning permission being granted in January 2020. The project kicked off on-site in March 2020 and, of course, we all know that was the month that the Covid-19 pandemic was declared.

The entire construction programme has been carried out against a backdrop of lockdowns, restrictions on travel, school one-way systems, mass testing, Brexit, school closures, HGV driver shortages, remote learning for students, resource and labour shortages etc, etc. The context could hardly have been more unusual and challenging.

Remarkably, despite the myriad of obstacles and unforeseen circumstances, the construction has been completed on budget and on time. Items were decanted from the old school and the temporary classrooms into the new building over the Christmas break. The building was



officially handed over to the school on 6 January 2022 with students returning on 11 January.

The final phase of the programme is the demolition of the original school, followed by the landscaping and construction of a new car park, to be completed by the summer of 2022.

The building is very attractive with a brick frontage within which is a large in-laid cross. The windows are large and obviously double glazed. The sides and rear of the L-shaped building are a mixture of bricks and light grey render with occasional dark red panels to reflect the school colours. The unusual design is highly effective. The inside of the building is even more impressive. The classrooms, laboratories and all of the other teaching rooms are very spacious with large windows to allow maximum natural light. The corridors and stairwells are wide and allow a two-way flow of staff and students. The dining room is an atrium at the heart of the school.

The four-court sports hall is larger than a normal school facility in order to meet the Sport England specification for a number of sports at national level. The activity studio is equally impressive and includes a large skylight to allow natural light to flood in. The Learning Resource Centre and the

Sixth Form are on the second and third floors respectively and both enjoy fantastic views towards Tring Park and Wendover Woods.

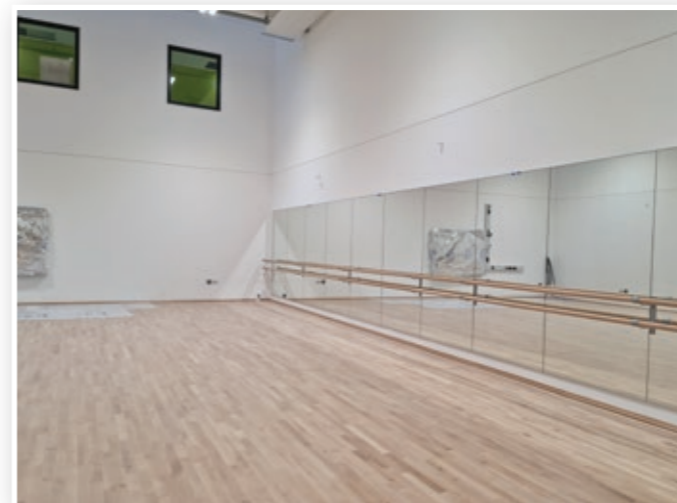
Every single teaching space will benefit from new and high-quality ICT equipment. The front of the new building will be significantly further back from the road, thus reducing the impact on the local community; this has been a key element in the exterior design and landscaping.

The planning, design and construction of the new school has literally taken years to reach this point. The Government funding was first awarded in 2015 but due to the challenges caused by the configuration of the site, it wasn't until late 2018 that the ball began rolling in earnest.

The final cost of the project is about £30m, making it one of the largest projects of its kind in the UK. The school has invested nearly £1m of its own money to increase the size of the sports hall and to create dedicated spaces for pastoral support and mental wellbeing.

Alongside the construction of the new building, the school has invested over £350,000 on the refurbishment of the retained Beloe block. All of the teaching spaces in this block will have an identical configuration to those in the new building. This includes a state of the art 86-inch interactive screen in every room.

The school is also hoping to invest in many other new items such as cricket nets, dining room furniture, outside green spaces, high quality audio/visual in the dining room and the activity studio, outdoor furniture, a boulevard of trees, sports equipment and a whole load more.



None of this comes cheap and the school's 'The Big School Fit Out' fundraising campaign is just over half way to reaching its target of £50,000. If you would like to support the school, please visit www.rocketfund.org and search for Tring School. The new school building looks fabulous, both inside and outside. It will be tremendous for the students, the staff and the entire community of Tring. The school is already considered

outstanding in many areas and the new building, with so many new and innovative facilities, will take it to another level.

The new sports hall has a 'pulastic' floor and will be a magnificent addition to the facilities readily available in the town of Tring. The two-storey high activity studio has a mirrored wall, ballet barres, a partially sprung beech floor and a state-of-the-art sound system. Both of these

facilities are available for community use during evenings, weekends and school holidays. They are integrated with the 25m swimming pool to form the Tring Sports Centre.

Please visit www.tringsportscentre.org for further information.

Tring and the surrounding villages should feel extremely proud of their new school building on Mortimer Hill.

Rod Gibberd, Tring School



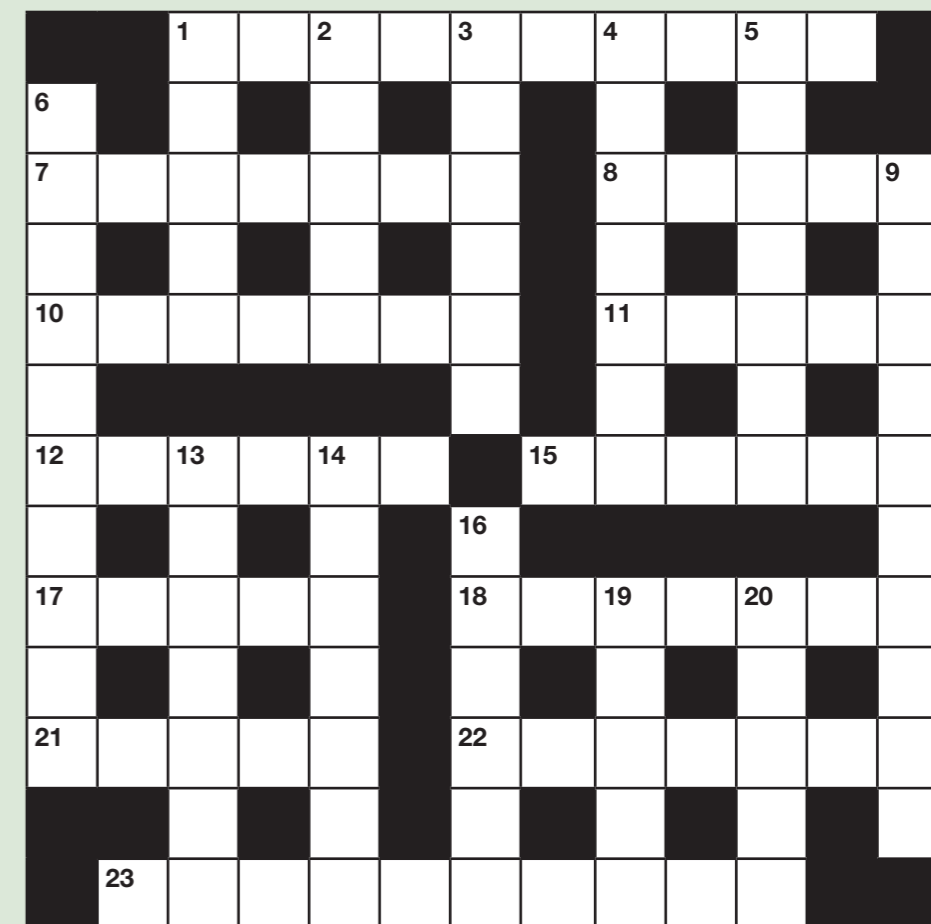
Crossword

ACROSS

1. Handwritten (10)
7. Clergymen (7)
8. Canal boat (5)
10. Slope (6)
11. Buy and sell (5)
12. Stimulate (6)
15. Plan (6)
17. Concise (5)
18. Heavy rain (7)
21. Tune for a psalm (5)
22. At school all the term (7)
23. Wanting to know (10)

DOWN

1. Tunes (5)
2. Relative of Ruth (5)
3. Name of each in a nunnery (6)
4. Mechanical (7)
5. Spread completely (7)
6. Happy state of mind (10)
9. Basic (10)
13. Sure (7)
14. Type of table (7)
16. 'Born in a' (6)
19. Sunday dinner (5)
20. Finished (5)



Answers on page 30

The searing injustice at the heart of climate change



The world's attention was on Glasgow in November 2021 when the UK hosted the 26th UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)

Conference of Parties meeting, or COP26. This is the formal forum where countries come together to discuss a collective response to the huge risks of increasing temperature and climate change posed by pollution. Even at the current level of 1.2° above pre-industrial temperatures, the news is regularly filled with events like the current drought in Madagascar, last year's 'heat dome' in north America, floods in Germany, melting glaciers and sea level rises affecting low-lying islands.

At COP26, negotiations led to some positive outcomes, like a new commitment to protect forests, to reduce methane levels,

and to phase down (but not phase out) coal. However, the ambition of sticking to a 1.5° target was not achieved, and while there is a definite shift towards fewer countries actively denying climate change exists, and more talking about their proposed actions, many are yet to take responsibility for their contribution to the carbon emissions.

This was my first COP, and I attended on behalf of the Christian charity I work for: CBM Global Disability and Inclusion. Our focus is on seeking equity for people with disabilities and other causes of marginalisation, and what struck me most about the whole process was the searing injustice at the heart of climate change. Climate change impacts are felt most seriously in the poorest countries in the world, which are having to cope with increasing regularity of weather-related humanitarian emergencies and long-term threats to infrastructure, and

food, energy and water security, and with displacement, and reductions in human security due to competition and conflict over increasingly limited resources. Past commitments by the richest countries for funds to facilitate resilience building in poorer countries (a \$100 billion 'adaptation' fund) have not been fulfilled. Emerging economies are being asked not to use the cheap energy and resources we enjoyed in our own industrial revolution, and there is a strong sense of injustice about this.

My own focus at COP26 was in mental health, wellbeing and climate change. We are increasingly recognising how climate change negatively impacts mental health. Probably the most important risk is financial insecurity and loss of access to basic needs. The poorest 20% of people in Nigeria,

describing climate anxiety as a problem. While, of course, these feelings are a rational response to a real threat, there is no doubt that this is a cause of great distress. Such concerns are made worse when people feel let down by those in power, and do not feel that they are able to make a difference.

The solution is engendering hope for the future, and of agency – a sense of purpose and motivation to act to address the problem is an important part of recovery and coping. Many governments, including our own, have moved to make protest harder and more likely to be punished, rather than promoting active engagement with the issue. As Christians, we can find hope in the vision of a healthy world created by a God who cares for nature and the people who rely on it. We can find

solidarity with others who wish to see a more just world than one driven mainly by greed and disregard for the impact on nature and people with less power.



for example, are 50% more likely to be impacted by a flood and 130% more likely to be affected by drought. Moreover, those same people who are more likely to be in poor housing in areas with increased risk of flooding or landslides are also least likely to have financial resources to protect themselves in future. In Africa 60% of people rely on subsistence agricultural income, and their daily basic needs are therefore at risk with climate events, or gradual change in environments or seasons.

The second way that climate change is increasingly impacting mental health is climate or eco-anxiety. A recent large survey of 10,000 young people in ten countries found that 84% were at least moderately worried, and over 45% said their feelings about climate change negatively affected their daily life and functioning. Mental health specialists are increasingly reporting patients

COP26 showed me that there are many people earnestly striving to change the current broken system, but we have released as much carbon into the atmosphere since the Kyoto Protocol sought to reduce carbon emissions in 1997, than all that humanity had produced prior to that. If we are to see the urgency that is needed to stem the massive negative impact on the world's most vulnerable people, we need to join our voices with those calling for justice, and commitment to stewardship of God's creation that we are called to as Christians.

You may be interested in a couple of recent publications on this issue that were shared at an event at COP26, available at www.cbmun.org.uk (search 'climate').

Julian Eaton
High Street Baptist Church

Choosing to follow Jesus

Victoria and I will never forget 8 December 2021. It was the day that we were both confirmed at St Peter & St Paul's by the Bishop of Hertford, the Rt Revd Michael Beasley, in the company of family, friends and so many other wonderful people, who came to welcome us with open arms, as we confirmed our commitment to following Jesus Christ.

Life passes by so quickly. People are under so much pressure and the pace of life is so fast that it can be difficult to find a moment to contemplate and take stock of whether we're really living in a way that aligns with our values, hopes and beliefs. Day-to-day issues come and go; however, there is always something else around the corner and it can be far too easy to get caught up in the moment, focusing so much of our attention on matters that happen to be urgent at the time but which aren't necessarily a source of fulfilment and happiness in the

longer-term.

After having four wonderful children enter our lives, we made the conscious choice to reassess what really mattered to us as a family. What sort of family environment did we want? We reflected on those moments in our lives when we had been happiest and most fulfilled –

and invariably, they were all times when we had been closest to our Christian friends who were helping us to live out our personal values in a meaningful way. Sometimes life events would get in the way, which made it more difficult to stay in close contact with those friends – but we had always felt that the influence of Christ somehow remained alongside us at all times, regardless.

There are too many problems in the world right now. But in Jesus Christ, God puts things right. And by choosing to follow Jesus, we can all bear the fruit of the Spirit – love, joy, peace, patience, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. These are the things that provide true happiness – and it's for that reason that we chose to get to know Jesus and to affirm our commitment in the presence of our friends at St Peter & St Paul's.

Paul and Victoria
St John the Baptist, Aldbury



A tale of two ladies

I moved to Tring from Birmingham city centre, 61 years ago. I was employed at the Nesle company in Aylesbury, as the Nursing Sister in charge of medical services and I remember well that we had 27 different nationalities all working together and it was a wonderful environment to work in. I was soon to meet a German lady who worked there as a shop steward. She, too, had been a nurse in Berlin, during the bombings of World War II. She had married an English man and over time we had become best friends. Later, when the Berlin wall came down in 1989, the pair of us travelled back to Berlin to the Kaiser Wilhelm Memorial Church which had been damaged by the British so many years earlier. We stood there together holding hands, much to the surprise of the people gathered around us. 'A German woman and an English woman holding hands!?' My friend was then able to visit family and friends there for the first time in many, many years. Just two months later we went

on to visit Coventry Cathedral, which as a child I had seen smoking after having been bombed by Germany. This is one of many lovely memories I have from over the years of living in Tring.

As someone who's been reading Comment since the very first issue, when it was little more than one or two sheets of paper brought to us by Canon Lowdell of St Peter & St Paul (1947 to 1966), I'd just like to say that I have always looked forward to receiving my copy of the Church Magazine, which I read cover-to-cover every month, and at 91 years of age it still brings me great joy, even reading the deeply serious and scientific articles that appear too, and I so miss my dear friends Douglas and Lillian Purse, who used to deliver it to me until their recent passing.

The photo was taken at the Red Cross Hall by Mrs Marion Laurence during one of our floral art meetings. A short time after passing away, her husband found a roll of film, had it developed and there I was! I so miss



being a part of the community and meeting people, It has certainly been a difficult couple of years, being house-bound, like so many of Tring's elderly people.

I feel so lucky to have my wonderful caring neighbours, Rob and Sandra, watching over me. I'm sure there are many not so fortunate.

June Flavell, Comment reader


Stephen Hearn
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From our street to your home...



It was my sister-in-law's idea! So, in March 2020 as we all went into lockdown, I thought, well, maybe my neighbours would like to do that too. I'll ask them – we have a WhatsApp group and all kinds of messages get passed around, so it was a very easy way to find out if this was something which our Close of thirty houses could get involved with and support regularly. Before I posted on WhatsApp, I put the idea to a few neighbours whom I met whilst out walking and overwhelmingly had a very positive response. So I decided: 'Yes, let's do it, let's have a go!'

By now, I hope you're wondering whatever is it that this person is writing about! Most Wednesdays since the end of March 2020, I've put a plastic crate with a lid in our porch from around 9.00am until c.6.30pm. I've posted a message on the WhatsApp group for Hollyfield Close, Tring, which is where we live, inviting our neighbours to contribute to this collection box for the DENS Food Bank. I ask for donations of whatever non-perishable foods (with long BBE dates), personal hygiene and household cleaning items they can spare. People come by and pop their gifts in the box; no one needs to stay in or be available – it all just happens! The support of our neighbours has been truly wonderful, for which I'm most grateful. I know some folks buy especially for our weekly collection, which is so very kind.

The following day, I take what we've jointly collected, often two bags of good

things, to the collection point at Tring Parish Church, which is open daily from 10.00am-12.00 midday. From there, the Hollyfield Close collection is added to others and then taken to DENS at Hemel Hempstead, where the goods are sorted and packed ready for distribution to individual people and families who are struggling to feed and care for themselves.

Before I go to the Food Bank, I take a photo of that week's collection and then post this, thanking everyone, with the following week's invitation. I'm told my neighbours like this, as they can see what our little community has given and it also offers ideas about what might be most needed.



We hear regular news from DENS on its activities which really helps focus on why we're doing this and how giving as much as we can regularly is important support for its work. I post details of high needs (or if there's an abundance of baked beans for example!) but like to encourage folks to give whatever they wish, whenever they can. I also relay the news from DENS on how many people, families and children they've supported through

the Food Bank over a given period. According to the DENS website, in the last year, 2,708 food parcels were distributed by DENS; 6,362 people received emergency food relief, of which 2,574 were children. I am conscious of the words of Mother Teresa: 'We ourselves feel that what we are doing is just a drop in the ocean. But the ocean would be less because of that missing drop'.

It is just so heart-warming to feel that our little community's efforts will have helped to make a real difference to people who might otherwise go hungry.

As we go into yet another winter where the pandemic is impacting people's lives and livelihoods, with

inflation, energy and food prices increasing at an alarming rate, more people are likely to be struggling to stay afloat and requests for help by the Food Banks locally and nationally will increase. We might not be able to offer the hospitality in our homes that we normally like to give so this is a great alternative or additional opportunity to share the provision which we enjoy with those faced with the awful choice of 'eating' or 'heating'.

As we are reminded in Luke 3:11: 'Anyone who has two shirts should share with the one who has none, and anyone who has

food should do the same.' So, we'll carry on putting that box in our porch every Wednesday possible, and with the loyal support of our little community, work together to extend a practical hand of friendship to neighbours whom we don't know and may never meet.

Could you do this for your street? It's truly worth it.

Sue Yeomans
St John the Baptist, Aldbury

Parish registers

Baptisms

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

Edward (Teddy) Sidney Crowley
Chloe Isabelle Robinson
Chloe McGregor

Weddings

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

Aidan Robert Knight & Lauren Olivia Harvey
Michael James Kenyon & Eleanor Isobel Taylor

Funerals

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

Becky Barker
Anita Rolfe, 59
Kurt Moennich, 87
Janet Wendy Dobberson, 87
Colin Edward Brown 83
Maureen Brown 91

Going to church... in medieval times



Do you ever wonder when the first Christian service took place in Tring and what it was like? If you do, then do read 'Going to Church in Medieval

England' by Nicholas Orme, published by Yale University Press 2021. The author describes the history of the Church in England from Anglo-Saxon times to the reign of Elizabeth I in terms of ordinary Christians and their local church. In many ways their lives were not only distant in time but also very limited in scope. We are linked by the very buildings which they put up, but separated by modern beliefs and ideas. One problem for those looking back is that traditional history appears to be mostly about the few famous men (and only occasionally women). We are told of what these men did and said – battles, conquest, legislation, administration – in fact, their use of power. We date the centuries by the name of the monarch. It is the same with Church history: it is about bishops, saints, abbots, doctors of the Church and so on. Nowadays there is more concern to try to tell the story of the 'ordinary' people as well.

One reason that we know so little is that, before printing and all subsequent methods of communication, comparatively little was recorded and preserved. Early records are often administrative lists of who was appointed to what position and what was the financial arrangement involved. Or there are court records which deal with disputes, law-breaking, misbehaviour and the like. However, there is enough evidence to give us a reasonable idea of many aspects of church life.

Maybe the biggest difference between then and now is that Western Europe, Christendom under the Pope, was a unity of sorts, as opposed to the diversity of today. Now we have various sorts of Christians and they are a minority in a nation of several faiths and many secularists. When St Peter & St Paul's Church in Tring was built and altered through the centuries, virtually all the inhabitants were at least nominally Christian and mostly practising. We talk a lot about community today and are often not quite sure how to define it – what is its focus and what binds a community

together? In medieval Tring, as in the rest of the country, people 'belonged' to their local parish church and it formed the basis of their communal lives led by the parish priest. In his book, Professor Orme deals with the whole gamut of church life – the origins of the parochial system, the clergy, the church year, worship, the calendar, the building and so on. It covers daily life up to the Reformation, which changed so much.

Though familiar to many, the most obvious difference between then and now is the language. As in all Western Europe, the language was Latin, which few understood. So worship was something one attended and left to the professionals, the clergy, to organise. There was not the active sharing that we mostly expect, nor, in many cases, the understanding of what was being said or sung. Nowadays we expect worshippers to be literate and to be able to join in. We dish out great numbers of service sheets or have words projected on screens, although our grandparents and their forbears were used to Prayer Books and Hymn Books, often owning their own copy. All this meant an 'educated elite' – the clergy and some of the gentry and a largely passive attending congregation – at least passive with regards to the service. They took part in various ceremonies as well as making the most of the social side of meeting together.

Sadly, but not surprisingly, considering how many clergy there were then, not all were up to it! In 1222 the Dean of Salisbury had an inspection in a Berkshire parish and found that, of the seven priests, six were deficient in grammar and one could not understand one particular Gospel reading nor say what the words of Consecration meant!

People turned up to Mass, but most could not understand the words. The development of the understanding of the Mass as making the Body of Christ truly present in the consecrated bread meant there developed a huge devotion to the Host, the consecrated bread, the Body of Christ and the need to see it at the Elevation. Seeing became more important in practice than eating it at Communion. Bells were rung, incense used and so on. This also led to the idea that the Sacrament was too sacred to approach or be received often, and the altar was distant at the East end of the church and marked off by a screen. Normally then only the priest received

both the consecrated elements (as now in pandemic mode!). The laity received the bread only at Easter and this had to be after Confession to the parish priest: all very different from today when the faithful few expect to receive every time they are present at the Eucharist.

Three items give a very slight impression of the medieval church.

Baptism

One thing that surprises us is that, by the 12th century, baptism was usually administered on the day the child was born and, consequently, was a naming ceremony as well – an idea which persists. Because of the need for immediate baptism, lay people, particularly midwives, needed to know the regular words. However, one midwife is recorded as using the words 'God and St John, christen the child both flesh and bone'. Another note that caught my attention was about a man in Cornwall whose name was Pagan, because he was not baptised until the age of 12!

Confirmation

This was often known as being 'bishops' and it was not linked to age or learning the catechism as later happened. It depended on the availability of a bishop – easy if he stayed in a local manor but difficult in a large diocese like Lincoln. Some bishops confirmed from horseback. One sign of St Hugh of Lincoln's sanctity was the fact that he dismounted, even when elderly, to confirm.

Marriage

It took time for the church to lay down rules about marriage and to regard it as a sacrament. It is after all a universal institution and not a specifically ecclesiastical rite. There grew up rules about the minimum age – 12 for girls and 14 for boys – and forbidden degrees of kinship which were quite severe: no marriage between any sort of relationship (first, second, third cousins and so on), no marriage between any in a spiritual relationship (godparent) or the like. It sounds complicated and makes 'The Table of Kindred and Affinity' at the end of the Book of Common Prayer seem simple. Something to read during dull sermons!

I leave you with a note about the congregation. There were at least four

unpopular kinds of person in church. First, there were the restless, who walked about even once the building had seats – men wandering from altar to altar showing off their clothes or the hawk on their wrists, setting a bad example to the

young. Next there were the gossips, male or female, who disturbed other people with their chatter. Another group was the quarrellers who brought a dispute to church or raised one there. There could even be assaults on the priest in church,

but the majority came to worship as best they could, as we do today.

Martin Banister
St Albans Cathedral

Pilgrim's Way

This is a report on something I discovered by accident, recently. I see that we first learnt about this from an article in the Church Times. While this is still produced, the local diocesan magazine seems to have finished.

Margaret's father was a priest, and we often had a copy of The Church Times to read. We were excited to see that a pilgrimage was being arranged to go from Canterbury to Londonderry in Northern Ireland to celebrate the anniversaries of the arrival of Saint Augustine from Rome, and the death of Saint Columba on Iona in AD597. The original notes were written by Margaret, but I am editing them for this edition, now twenty-five years on from when we went on the trip. This covered the dates Saturday 24 May to Tuesday 10 June 1997.

Saturday 24 May

We went by train to stay with Margaret's sister, Christine.

Sunday 25 May

Christine drove us from Pluckley in Kent to Canterbury, where we assembled at St Peter's Place with other pilgrims from our local Tring area. They lived in Wigginton, where Basil Jones was the priest. Other pilgrims arrived during the day, and we had a high tea in the Church Hall. At 7.00pm we went to Saint Augustine's Abbey, where a visitors' centre and a small museum had been opened that day. We rehearsed two services, Morning Prayer, and Songs of Praise, which were recorded for the BBC Radio and TV. A local choir led the singing, accompanied by the Salvation Army band. We then went to our hosts' house, where we had a very good meal at 9.00pm. We then retired to our room for the night, which was a self-contained, previous granny flat.

Monday 26 May

A taxi was waiting for us at 8.45am and took us to an assembly point at the Abbey. Our luggage was then put on a coach and we were told that we were the coach leaders! We then processed

to the Cathedral for the commissioning service. Many were gathered outside, but only pilgrims and invited dignitaries were allowed. We pilgrims were in walking gear, clutching lunch bags, in contrast to the rest in 'Sunday best'. This was a grand atmospheric service, in which the Archbishop asked us to be ambassadors of Christ, in unity, and then led us out by the west door, and wished us well. After lunch we took the train to Rochester. We processed to the Cathedral and were warmly welcomed by the bishop, the mayor, and others. We stayed at a splendid manor house, and slept in a huge 4 poster bed.



Tuesday 27 May

We were now in Rochester. We joined up with the rest of the pilgrim group and walked from here to go to Maidstone. At a half way point, Margaret's sister joined us, and we continued on the walk. Here we had a picnic lunch addressed by the mayor of Maidstone. After this, we all took a train to Eltham, where we had tea in the church hall. We then met our hosts for the night. After the meal we were driven across Black Heath to see the lovely view of London in the sunset.

But we didn't have a very good night, due to the traffic noise.

Wednesday 28 May

We departed from Blackheath early, in order to reach Greenwich by 8.00am, where we had a civic reception breakfast. It was a bitterly cold morning; everybody was delving in suitcases to find jumpers. We pilgrims walked to St Alfege Church, near the Cutty Sark, for the planting of a commemorative tree, and an outdoor service led by the Bishop of Woolwich. We then took a boat up the Thames to Tower Bridge. From here we walked to Southwark Cathedral, where we were given a packed lunch to eat in the yard. We walked along the Thames to Lambeth Palace where we had tea in the gardens, hosted by the Archbishop of Canterbury. A large marquee housed us and we sat at tables under trees, as it was now a beautiful day.

We left Lambeth Palace at 5.00pm and boarded a coach which now housed all those in our own group. We arrived at Heathrow at 6.30pm to find that our meal was only two cakes and a carton of squash, so we all poured into Macdonald's on the other side of the road. Having eaten, we went to the visitor's centre. We divided into groups, ours being led by the Bishop of Willesden, where we were told about the work of the chaplains within the airport. We were also asked to share our experiences of the pilgrimage so far. The Salvation Army provided the music for our service.

The drive to Ruislip and Harrow for overnight hosting was long and tedious. We had come back to be the nearest to our home since we had left on the first day. We were then to be in a coach the next day to go to Oxford, and then to Bristol.

The first section of our journey covers five days, so we will continue in next month's edition of *Comment*.

David and Margaret Gittins
St Peter & St Paul

Why has God done this to me?



Michael Mayne wrote a short but powerful book, relating his year-long battle with an ailment which was eventually diagnosed as Myalgic

Encephalomyelitis (M.E.), a debilitating viral illness with a wide range of symptoms. I say 'battle', but in fact one of the lessons of his suffering was that he had to accept his own weakness.

The book is written as a journal, telling of the sudden onset of a mysterious weakness when Michael Mayne was the overworked vicar of Gt St Mary's, a high-profile church literally and metaphorically in the centre of Cambridge. Mayne tells of the sequence of symptoms, the corresponding sequence of referrals – his book works through from 'Doctor A' to 'Doctor H'. And just as the disease is striking him down, Mayne is invited to become the Dean of Westminster Cathedral.

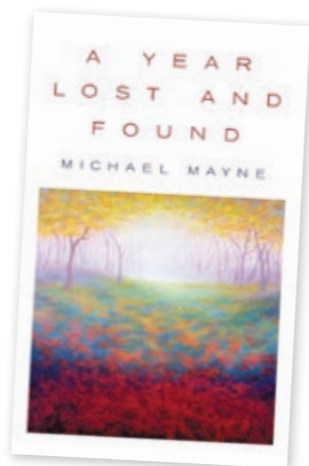
The book is a very lucid and frank expression of Mayne's search for a diagnosis, and also for meaning behind this sudden affliction to a healthy person in their 50s. It is a treasure trove of reflections on the meaning of faith, especially during periods of adversity. He quotes: 'The maxim of illusory religion

runs: "Fear not, trust in God and he will see that none of the things you fear will happen to you"; that of real religion on the contrary is: "Fear not, the things that you are afraid of are quite likely to happen to you, but they are nothing to be afraid of". Being passive is as much a part of a Christian life as being active. Mayne also explores how the demands of ordained ministry can lead to tension, guilt, and exhaustion.

This book prompted a lively discussion amongst the Parish Book Group members, and some disagreements – but hearing different viewpoints on important aspects of life and faith is one of the benefits of the group. Most of us admired Mayne's candour about his search for help and for meaning; some felt he was privileged to have the financial security and wide support to be able to explore his illness. We recognised that often crippling illness can lead to lots of other worries, including career and money. Some struggled with the notion that suffering could become a blessing. Probably all of us wanted to be more able to live in the moment, to be still, to resist the temptation always to be active and busy.

Certainly all of us were pleased to have read the book and to have had the opportunity to share our reactions in a friendly group.

**John Whiteman
Tring Team**



Why not join us in the Parish Book Group?

We are just a group of Christians, with a range of skills and backgrounds, who enjoy exploring our faith by reading and discussing books. Our next meeting is on 27 February, when we shall share our reactions to 'Heaven', by Dr Paula Gooder.

For Lent, we are reading 'Robert Elsmere', by Mrs Humphry Ward (who lived in Stocks House, near Aldbury, at the turn of the 20th century), which we'll be talking about on 24 April. It's a book about conflicts in the Church of England...

We meet for an hour or so on the fourth Sunday, usually in St Peter & St Paul's Church, but recent events have prompted the use of Zoom on occasion. For more details, please contact John Whiteman, john@tringteamparish.org.uk

How long?

I came to Tring in early January 1962. It was not difficult to seek out a place of worship as Tring Parish Church was opposite the bottom of the school drive. By January 2022 I had been attending St Peter & St Paul's Church for sixty years.

As well as worshipping in the church, I had other connections with it.

Three of my colleagues were married there, as was I, and later both our sons were baptised there. Goddaughter (Nuala) Jane Grace was baptised there and (much later) was married there to Tim Blake.

At a meeting chaired by Revd Donald Howells to raise funds, I suggested that the proceeds from the Friday evening Parent's Day Performance at Tring Park should be given – which they were.

For ten years from 1978-1988 I helped in the St Peter & St Paul's Junior Sunday School. Both sons, Ben and Tim attended Junior Sunday School and Senior Sunday School before joining Tring Anglican Youth (TAY).

Both my sons were confirmed, Tim in the Tring Team held that year at St John the Baptist, Aldbury, while Ben was confirmed at school.

When my husband, Jim, died, his funeral service was held at St Peter & St Paul's as were the funerals of four close friends: John and Nuala Grace



and Sam and Norah Glennon.

More recently I have been on the list of readers and intercessors so read the lesson or lead the congregation in prayer some Sunday mornings.

Sixty years – and counting.

**Felicity Pemberton
St Peter & St Paul**

Tweet of the month



So as we start 2022 and look forward to a new year I decided to look back at 2021 in terms of my wildlife experiences as well as other changes in

my life. One major change for me personally was that I retired at the end of 2020 and so 2021 opened up new opportunities; obviously Covid-19 played a major part in what I could or couldn't do.

During this year I had more time to do moth trapping and indeed look for day-flying moths as I increased the time spent outside looking for birds – particularly at Ivinghoe Beacon, Steps Hill and Pitstone Hill. Having built a battery-operated moth trap, I was now able to catch, study and release moths in locations other than my garden and in April I started to catch moths in earnest at a local nature reserve with the blessing of the reserve's wardens. This allowed me to catch species I had wanted to see for years like

the Poplar Hawk-Moth and Clifden Nonpareil – both being spectacular moths.

On the first day travel into and out of Wales was allowed, I headed to Tenby to see the Walrus and this animal was subsequently seen in Cornwall, France, Spain and finally Iceland so it looks as if he was on his way back to a more suitable home. In July the wedding, near Edinburgh, of a former member of our church youth group, allowed a nearby Sei Whale to be seen after the wedding as Covid-19 restrictions meant we couldn't attend the reception.

Bird-wise 2021 was also pretty good for me. Finding unusual birds is always special as the thrill of seeing the bird is added to by the surprise of the unexpected sighting and this year I found a local Wryneck; in Scotland I found two White-tailed Eagles; and in Cornwall in November I found two Serins on my first day out. In addition to this I saw Northern Mockingbird but also saw three of my bogey birds. Now a bogey bird is one you have missed before,



possibly more than once. The miss can be for a variety of reasons: getting there too late, leaving too soon just before the bird reappears or not being able to see it due to work commitments etc.

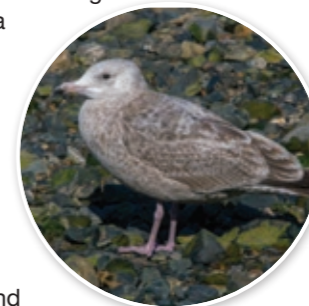
American Herring

Gull is not a beautiful bird by any means but after missing them in Cornwall, Devon, Scotland and other places for all

of the above-mentioned reasons I had promised myself that I wouldn't travel to see another one until I was retired and could stay in the area it was in until I had seen it or was convinced it had left. To cut a long story short, in February I had booked a holiday in Cornwall for 1-8 May near Land's End. So when an American Herring Gull turned up on 18 March in Newlyn Harbour I gritted my teeth and ignored the easing of lockdown restrictions and waited until my holiday in May to try to see it. I looked for it on the way down but it wasn't there. However, I saw it really well on 2 May and got really good photos as a bonus, even if it is not the most exciting bird I will ever see.

The first Green Warbler seen in Britain was found on 26 September 1983 on The Isles of Scilly and stayed until 4 October. I arrived for my first ever holiday on the islands on 5 October – a day too late!! The second record wasn't until 2014 on Foula and four other records were either one-day birds in Devon or Cornwall or on Shetland for a few days – so not exactly easy to see! Anyway, this year one was found on Fair Isle in June, so again it was easy to ignore.

However, on 9 September one was found at Buckton, near Bempton Cliffs RSPB reserve in Yorkshire. Now Bempton Cliffs RSPB had been on my radar since the end of June as a Black-browed Albatross had taken up residence there. When I say residence, I mean it would hang around there and then go out to sea to feed and potentially disappear for days at a time – so not exactly guaranteed. I know that several of my friends took two or three attempts to see it so I had vacillated through the summer and not gone to see it myself. Combine this with a White-tailed Lapwing at Blacktoft Sands RSPB in East Yorkshire that turned up in late August and I was optimistic on 10 September when I headed up to



Yorkshire. Fortunately, it was a great day out and I saw the Green Warbler, Black-browed Albatross and White-tailed Lapwing all in the same day! Patience can definitely be a virtue at times and seeing the Black-browed Albatross flying round amongst Gannets was worth the trip by itself.

The third and final bogey bird that I saw this year was Two-barred Warbler. In 1987 I had spent several weeks on the Isles of Scilly and left two days early on 22 October to go and see my wife-to-be. On that same day a 'dull-looking' Yellow-browed Warbler was reported on Gugh but this hardly required a change in plans as I had seen quite a few Yellow-browed Warblers that year while on the islands. However, the next day, the bird was re-identified as Britain's first Two-barred Warbler, a close relative of Green Warbler, and I had missed it as I had left too early! Subsequent to this the species has been recorded a number of times but these were either too brief or too far away to get to. One last year turned up in Northumberland while I was on Shetland, but to be honest, I was having too good a time on Shetland to even vaguely consider going to see it. This year history sort of repeated itself though when a 'Yellow-browed Warbler' was found at Spurn in Yorkshire on 16 October and then reidentified as a Two-barred Warbler later that day. The weather was filthy on 17 October so the following day I set off to Spurn to try to see it. This was a good decision as the weather was much better and I managed to get one decent photo of it.

So, all in all 2021 has been a memorable year for all sorts of reasons – some not so good and others very good indeed. Seeing birds I have missed before was really nice and I think those are the birds you appreciate more when you do see them. In some ways God can feel like these birds at times: elusive, enigmatic and yet beautiful to behold. However, although there are times when God may feel like that, unlike these birds, God is always there and we don't have to wait years to find him as he is always there, patiently waiting for us to seek him out.

**Roy Hargreaves
St Peter & St Paul**



Life at Tring Park School



course.

Our first in-house show was the Commercial Music showcase and the performance momentum continued with the Acting course shows, 'Amadeus', 'Idomeneus' and 'Machinal', followed by the Performance Foundation course shows, 'Find Me' and 'Fame'.

The end of term was as busy as ever with a show in the Markova by alumna Jess Robinson, the Student Choreography show and the Third Year Sixth Form Dancers' Grad show. It was lovely to end the term with two carol services in the atmospheric setting of Tring Parish Church.

We were also able to perform at a number of external venues over the course of the term, including a charity cabaret performance by some of our Musical Theatre students at Kilworth House in Leicestershire, our annual Theatre in Education project touring local primary schools, the PFJs performing outdoors (in rather chilly weather!) at the Tring Christmas Festival, and 'The 16' chamber choir taking part in the Salvation Army Carol Concert in Dunstable.

Over the Christmas holiday, some of our younger dancers danced in the English National Ballet production of Nutcracker at the Coliseum in London—a

Without doubt, a real highlight for all of us was the return of live performances in our Markova theatre and elsewhere, under careful Covid-19 protocols of

collaboration that has taken place for over fifty years and, for much of that time, organised and run by a much-loved and respected alumna and former ballet teacher at the school, Eve Pettinger MBE, who sadly died in the summer holiday. We remember her with great affection.

It was also very good to be able to put on courses at weekends and during half-term as part of our Associates and Holiday course programmes for young people from the wider community.

Do take a look at the website regarding the ones that might be of interest to any young people in your life.

We hosted two very successful Open Days for prospective

pupils and their parents and it was terrific once more to have live auditions this term. Another one is happening on the afternoon of 25 February...

Sarah Bell
Tring Park School

Turning points



choices made that affected the way my life has evolved.

I suppose the first turning point I remember was passing the 11+ plus exam. I left behind many school friends in Tring and moved on to Cavendish School in Hemel Hempstead. Cavendish was a new school with excellent sports facilities and an indoor swimming pool which was my saving grace as I wasn't particularly academic and quite sporty. I made new friends in Hemel Hempstead, but those I still remain in contact with today are all from my junior school years in Tring, those who accompanied me to Cavendish.

I probably think my teenage years would have been tricky no matter where I went to school – who knows. My initial poor showing in the 'O' levels was another turning point. I suddenly grew up, knuckled down to work, stopped arguing with my mum and thought about what I actually wanted to do in the way of a career.

I have written previously about my stamp collecting hobby and the associated love of travelling and visiting new places, but what I didn't realise at the time was that my two years as a VSO in Nigeria would really change my life.

I was off to Nigeria without a backward glance. I often wonder what would have happened if I had decided not to go and stayed with my boyfriend of the time, which wouldn't have been so difficult. However, we parted. I wanted to work abroad not just in Nigeria but elsewhere. God must have laughed when I had all my plans set out in my own mind!

I witnessed the extreme poverty and squalor of ordinary Nigerian families, how many lived from hand-to-mouth and where health care, clean water and education were out of the reach of much of the rural population and illnesses that were relatively minor to us in the west were life-threatening in Nigerian communities. Life was so

precarious for many and expectations limited. Since then, I have always valued my life in this country and seldom moaned about what are relatively minor tribulations. We have so much.

Just at a time when I was enjoying my freedom, I met Michael, a civil engineer who came with Wimpey to build a college in Plateau State – just where I was enthusiastically running part of a UNICEF project. He wasn't looking for any attachments either! We became good friends and I think we were probably destined to marry. However, it took us three years to do so, for thirty of those months we were apart in different countries and writing once a week to each other! Mike went back to England, then got another contract in Nigeria and I finished my work and returned to the Midlands to a temporary teaching post.

Communication was so bad and slow that we numbered our letters and cross-referenced things so we didn't lose track of what we were writing to each other about! After almost three years, some months of which were quite lonely, I knew that my life was about to change and I was quite happy with that.

The next few changes were more for the benefit of my family as it grew, rather than just me. Why did I return to Tring to live, when at 18 years of age I couldn't wait to escape?

Well, its not such a bad place after all. There were grandparents just down the road, good schools and playgroups for my children, a town small enough to have a sense of community and large enough at the time (1981) to have most essential services.

Then in the new century, the last of my children's grandparents died, and we as a family were just four. This was a great cause of sadness and life was different. Suddenly I was part of the older generation of the family and it felt strange for a few years.

Regrets, well, I could have been kinder to my brother when we were children, nicer to my mum when I was a teenager, more understanding of my husband at times, less of a nag to my grown-up daughter.

However, what is done is done and all part of my evolving life.

Victoria Baldock
St Cross, Wilstone

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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**

The first six months

When we moved away from Tring last summer, the main objective was to be nearer family, but there were other important considerations: a town with amenities and a church with regular services. Grantham fulfilled the first and second criteria, but we could not have envisaged what a wonderful church community we would also find.

It doesn't seem as if we have been here six months. It was a huge wrench to leave, and we prayed a great deal about taking such a big step. The beginning was hard work. As anybody who has moved house knows, it's stressful: even more so when the people concerned have racked up 151 years between them in the same town, and spent twenty-six happy years together in the same house. Thankfully we have retained long-term friendships and links with Tring, and intend to hold on to them.

The draft title of this article was 'We know we brought it, but where did we put it?!' There was a list of items we couldn't find initially, and as soon as one appeared another joined the bottom of the list. There were also all the little jobs around the house that Brian found it necessary to deal with, whilst we worked at getting to know Grantham and acquire some new friends. We discovered lovely neighbours, a town with lots of history, and an amazing church. We have met people, and joined various groups. Whilst Brian is back to his fishing, bowling and general DIY, I am playing badminton whilst being slowly but inexorably drawn into church rotas.

The church is big in all senses: a large beautiful building, an enormous spire, and a big congregation and choir. But we would like to share with you some of the events that have taken place inside it since we arrived. Back in October they held a Metanoia Climate Festival. No, we hadn't heard the word before either: it's Greek meaning 'change of mind'. The focal point was the huge revolving globe hanging above the nave (Gaia – the personification of the earth in Greek mythology), and it was accompanied by stalls and displays around the church, all championing ways of dealing with climate change.

That was followed by the weekend beer festival in early November – don't tell Huw!

Then the Christmas tree festival over the last weekend in November saw over 100 trees of all shapes and sizes, real and otherwise, constructed inside the church, whilst the nave was given over to an indoor 'ice skating' floor. But at the same time the Christmas angels were installed, and will stay in place until the end of January. Incredible on their own, once the usual decorations for Christmas arrived later in the month, the church was transformed.

This 'Festival of Angels' has been a community project. Partially funded by the Lottery Heritage Fund and the Arts Council, it is a display of seven internally illuminated larger-than-life angels suspended above the nave. The eighth angel, Gabriel, greets you at the west door. The design process started in 2018 and the actual making took seven weeks by a dedicated team of volunteers. Messages and dedications have been written on the wings to remember loved ones.

And we would like to finish by remembering all our friends in Tring, and wishing you all a very happy new year and a blessed 2022.

Brian & Chris Impey
formerly St Peter & St Paul



Memories of a treasured friend

True and treasured friends don't come along too often, but I remember the day Wendy Hinds walked into my life. It was a little over fifty years ago and I was working at Boots, the Chemist, in Hemel Hempstead. Wendy had recently moved into a flat in Boxmoor and got a job on the drug counter at Boots. We got into conversation on her first day and it transpired that she and David were planning on buying their first house together and they were viewing a house that evening. Where was the house? Tring – where John and I lived! And where in Tring? Albert Street, just a few doors away from us! They came round for coffee after seeing the house and our friendship started from that day.

They duly moved to Albert Street and, within a year or so, we both had our first babies, gave up work to be stay-at-home mums (it was common in those days), and shared the joys of motherhood together: precious memories that last forever. Pushing prams together, and with Tring Park and Stubbings Wood on our doorstep, and Wendy having a dog called Bullet, we spent many happy hours with babies in slings, enjoying each other's company and giving each other mutual support and laughing at Bullet as he tried to carry a branch back home that was as wide as the path and much bigger than him.

More babies followed for us both – Wendy having hers a bit faster than mine. Wendy had three boys, we had three girls, but they all got on well, and still do, and we each became godmother to each other's. Neither of us drove cars in those days so when we had to shop it was easier to leave the kids to play together with one of us and the other to do shopping for us both. By this time we had both moved to Buckingham Road and I can remember the girls loved being with Wendy and the boys; often there were tears as I dragged them home afterwards!

Wendy loved children and recognised that some children benefited from small pre-schools in a home rather than a larger group that wanted to have children five days a week, so she started her own. This was before Ofsted but she was duly licensed by the council and I helped her run that from her home for a number of years, giving that important step to little ones.

As our friendship blossomed, so did our faith. After the boys had changed schools to Thomas More in

Berkhamsted, Wendy found her home in the Catholic Church and converted to Catholicism. That didn't divide us as we were part of ecumenical Bible study groups and prayer groups and both became reps of our churches on Tring Council of Churches, hosting the Lent Lunches together and later working together as secretary and treasurer in Churches Together in Tring. We were both interested in Celtic spirituality and our shared love in God's creation shaped our faith and our desire for Christian Unity.

We both joined ACTS, a Christian theatre squad, and performed together in a number of productions. 'Hopes and Dreams' was a production for the Millennium. Wendy relished the finale when we were all on stage waving flags! For many years we took part together in the Good Friday Walk of Witness, both



in the drama and in putting the service together, special memories where we had a common desire to take our faith out to others.

I was immensely proud of her work in the Catholic Church as Pastoral Visitor but in effect running the church! She was awarded Catholic Woman of the year in the Westminster Diocese and I was privileged to go on the coach to the ceremony in London. In 2018 she was awarded a medal for services to the Diocese of Westminster, both awards so well deserved.

As the children grew, Wendy was suddenly struck down with Rheumatoid Arthritis, an illness that affected her for the rest of her life. She was in constant pain but it didn't stop her from enjoying life and she didn't let it get her down. For a number of years we ran the local branch of the Arthritis and Rheumatism Council for research together, raising awareness and funds. We took part in many a Tring Carnival parade, with our children dressed up as animals and other fancy dress!

She was nuts about animals and shared her home with many varieties, usually dogs, cats, hamsters and gerbils at any given time, with guinea pigs, rabbits also putting in an appearance. She loved the horses in the field at the back of her house in Okeley Lane and adopted donkeys at donkey sanctuaries. I always reckoned there was an invisible sign over her door that only animals could read that said, 'Animals Welcome Here'. And opening her home to care for others didn't stop at animals. She has, over the years, taken in Tom, a gentleman of the road, for a while until he could be given the professional care he needed, and Father Tony Potter whom she nursed in the final days of his battle with cancer. She looked after her father after her mother died, until he also died.

Over the years we had an unspoken bond and friendship that continued, and although we didn't see so much of each other due to work and other commitments, we had a deep spiritual link that lasted our lifetime. We prayed for each other, especially through difficult times in our lives.

She was immensely proud of her three boys and later her five grandchildren whom she loved so much, often having them to stay overnight. Her arthritis took its toll on her body with nerve damage affecting various bits of her. How she stayed upright I'll never know, apart from fierce determination on her part. Nearly two years ago she and David sold up in Tring and moved to Aylesbury where they shared a house with Daniel and his family. She told me that although she was falling apart physically, she was very happy with the move and the support she and David had.

Her purpose in life was for others, not herself. Her death was not unexpected and we know she is in a better place and free from the pain she had for much of her life. But a light has gone out in my life; I feel I have lost a part of me. She had been part of my life for so long. But I thank God for being part of that friendship and bond for so long and for the memories we created together. I'm sure without the friendship I would have been the poorer and different from the person I am today.

Thank you, Wendy, for all you have given me. Now rest in peace in the arms of the one who created you. Until we meet again, I love you always.

Janet Goodyer, St Peter & St Paul

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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 1st of the previous month.

COMMENT DEADLINES

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

NB There is no magazine for January or August

Crossword puzzle answers From page 17

ACROSS	DOWN
1. MANUSCRIPT	1. MUSIC
7. PASTORS	2. NAOMI
8. BARGE	3. SISTER
10. INCLINE	4. ROBOTIC
11. TRADE	5. PERVADE
12. INCITE	6. OPTIMISTIC
15. SCHEME	9. ELEMENTARY
17. TERSE	13. CERTAIN
18. TORRENT	14. TRESTLE
21. CHANT	16. STABLE
22. BOARDER	19. ROAST
23. INTERESTED	20. ENDED



Services in February in Tring Team Parish

Sunday 6th February

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**

Sunday 20th February

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

Sunday 13th February

8am ** Holy Communion traditional language **Tring**
10am Worship for all **Tring**
10am Holy Communion **Aldbury**
6pm Celtic Evening Prayer by zoom **Long Marston**

Sunday 27th February

8am ** Holy Communion traditional language **Tring**
10am Worship for All with Holy Communion **Tring**
10am Holy Communion **Aldbury**
3.30pm 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

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

Sunday Club in Tring

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

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

You need to wear a face covering while in our Church buildings but can be removed when having refreshments after the service.

We have areas in church that allow space for people who want it, please ask as you come in.

We have singing at most of our services (congregation wearing face coverings), and most services will be followed by refreshments.

** We stream at least one service from Tring each week and the link can be found on our website or our YouTube channel; Tring Team Parish.

All services are subject to the latest Covid advice, more information can be found on our website.

www.tringteamparish.org.uk

GHOSTLY RETURN

Brenda Hurley

Publication Date: 28th January 2022

Price: £8.99

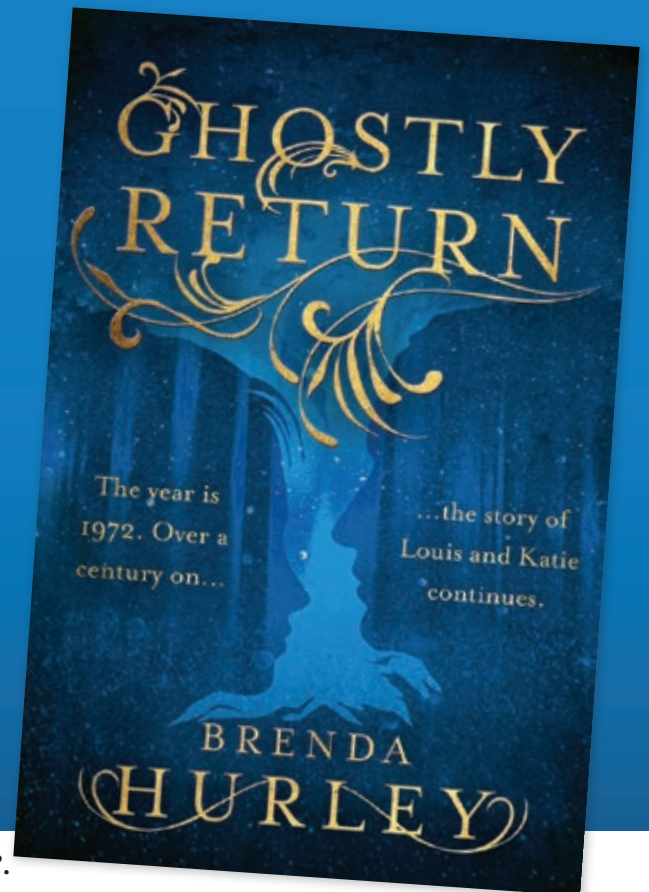
ISBN: 9781803130163

Distributor: Troubador Publishing

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Continuing the story of Louis and Katie from 'Ghostly Embrace'.

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