

COMMENT

THE MAGAZINE OF THE CHURCHES IN TRING



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Editorial



As Editor I frequently notice how many connections there are in the articles that come in month by month. I am sure if I tried

to engineer them I would fail! This month, the month of Spring and Easter, there are several articles about charities (and in particular celebrating 100 years of Save the Children), different kinds of suffering but also many articles about choirs! What a large part singing in a choir has played in people's lives. Many of these are historical and it's great to have responses from readers to articles written in a previous edition of Comment. Thank you for taking the time to read and respond.

I was hoping to have time to do

COMMENT The magazine of the Churches in Tring



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

Contact

comment.magazine@gmail.com

lots of planting so that I have plenty of plants to sell in aid of the Friends of Tring Church Heritage on 11 May. I began Lent with a broken wrist, however, so my gardening activities may be sadly curtailed... We need your help even more to help provide plants for the Plant Stall. I hope every Comment reader has made a note of the date as the FOTCH Family Fun Day continues to be a major event for everyone in Tring. Come and share the barbecue or other refreshments. Listen to the music. Bring children to bounce on the castle or come down the slide or beat the goalie. Buy your plants, toys, books, cakes and preserves and jewellery. Come and just talk to friends. And if you are desperate to contribute in any way on the day, whether by bringing things to sell or to help, we would love to hear from you.

The Editor

Celebrating Easter



Do you decorate your home for Easter? We are all used to Christmas decorations, but one of the changes over the past few years is the ideas for other seasonal

decorations that there are around. In October, you can buy bunting, banners, window stickers, door wreaths and even cushions and soft furnishings with a Halloween theme – that is, they are orange and black, with images of witches and ghosts. In Spring, the shops and magazines are full of ideas of how to decorate your home for Easter – door wreaths made of wooden eggs or sugared almonds; table crackers shaped as bunnies or carrots; even chicken-shaped tea lights. Of course, all the decorations are in delicate pastel shades and while they may say 'Happy Easter' not one seems to have any Christian symbolism on.

It is easier to add the Christian element at Christmas, although it is still easier to buy an 'elf on the shelf' than a nativity set. The heart of Easter does seem to be missing from the High Street

and the internet. Unless you go to a specific Christian shop, there are no decorations that say 'Alleluia', the cross is absent, and while we can see eggs and Spring flowers as part of our faith celebrations, it is only because we have learnt the meanings.

In the Anglican tradition, we do not decorate our Churches with flowers during Lent, and the colour of frontals and vestments is dark blue or purple, both of which runs counter to secular ideas of this season. Some of you may also have experience of Churches where all statues and symbols were veiled in purple during Lent, although that is not something I miss! The drama and brightness of Easter when the Church is filled again with gold and white, and fresh, beautiful flowers and greenery is a huge contrast and symbolises our joy and the message of new life.

There are also two important Easter decorations that I do carry out each year at home. One is to make sure that the palm crosses we are given on Palm Sunday are put somewhere obvious – in a vase, as a book mark, in the car. The other is to put out a table decoration on Easter Day which is usually a flowering branch in a vase that we then decorate

with little eggs we have collected over the years. We add the palm crosses, and an Alleluia flag.

The decoration is there to remind us of all that Easter means – the sorrow of the cross and the joy and glory of the resurrection. It is the heart of our faith as Christians, it is the high point of our church year, and to have a physical symbol of that in our home seems very important. We learn from what we see as well as what we hear, so how we decorate all our buildings, whether our homes or our Churches, is important. It is also a valuable marker to others, a visual way of proclaiming what we believe.

And for me, there is one Easter hymn, written by John Macleod Campbell Crum (1872-1958), once Vicar of nearby Bucks village Mentmore with Ledburn, that sums up this visual aspect: *Now the green blade riseth from the buried grain, / Wheat that in the dark earth many days has lain. / Love lives again, that with the dead has been. / Love is come again, / Like wheat that springeth green.*

Jane Banister, Tring Team

What did you give up for Lent?



We'll be more than half way through Lent by the time this edition of Comment slips through the letter boxes in and around Tring [and beyond!]. Some of us will be feeling

good that we've kept up our Lent observance; some of us feeling bad that we haven't. And others mystified or irritated by the whole idea of Lent. What is it all about?

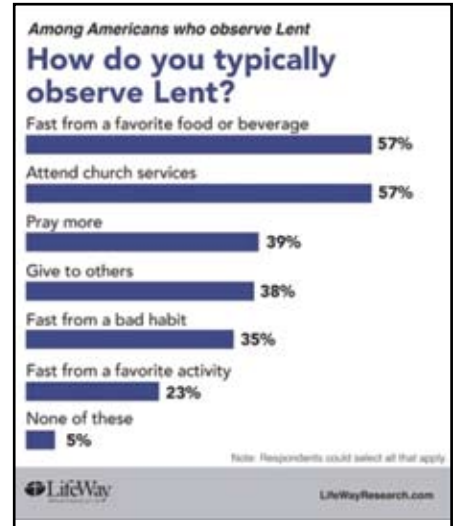
The origins of Lent can be traced to the Bible (the word is a derivation from lengthening, noting the longer days of spring). Mark's Gospel has a terse account in Chapter 1: 'And the Spirit immediately drove him [Jesus] out into the wilderness. He was in the wilderness for forty days, tempted by Satan; and he was with the wild beasts; and the angels waited on him.' Matthew and Luke have longer versions, which are thought to be elaborations drawing out parallels in Israel's history, all on the theme of keeping faith in the face of difficulty or temptation. Forty is an important number in the Hebrew tradition, generally representing a time period for change or for a shift in generation – so Moses was forty days on Mount Sinai receiving the Commandments, the Israel nation was forty years in the desert before reaching the promised land.

Ash Wednesday is actually forty-six days before Easter Sunday – 6 March and 21 April respectively this year; the extra days are because Sundays are

not meant to be part of Lent. In the past Lent has been more emphasised in the Roman Catholic church as a time of self-denial – not eating meat on Fridays, missing one meal a day, avoiding a luxury or self-indulgence. Its observance has more recently spread to other Christian traditions, and even to non-believers as a sort of self-help. And we can only be humbled by our devout Muslim friends who really do fast (not eat or drink at all during daylight) for the whole of Ramadan (which normally lasts thirty days).

But what do people give up these days? The February 2018 edition of the US Christianity Today magazine publishes the results of a regular Twitter survey (clearly biasing the results towards subscribers to that medium). It's intriguing that among users of (so-called) social media, giving up the use of it is one of the favourite ideas. In the chart, the size of the words indicates the number of times they are found in the survey results.

More serious, perhaps, is a survey by a Christian research organisation, again in the US, showing that positive actions – praying or attending Church more regularly, giving to others – are chosen as frequently as negative ones. *Doing* something rather than *not* doing something. And that maybe gives us a sign of what Lent is really about: training, preparation, exercise, just as one would for a physical or mental test. But what is the test for which we prepare? Fortunately, few of us will face the persecution, torture and execution



suffered by Jesus. For most of us the test is to keep going in the way of faith among myriad small setbacks.

I can't really remember when I started to observe Lent by giving something up, but it's quite a few years ago now. It used to be biscuits (which I ate voraciously as a child) but I seemed to grow out of that being an attraction. Latterly I've given up alcohol, but that's been undermined as I mainly drink a glass of wine at the weekend, and so learning recently that Sunday was a day off from abstinence felt like cheating. And does it make me a more worthy Christian? I look forward to the glass of wine at Easter, and maybe feel a bit righteous because I've shown myself that I can give something up. But it feels as if that's missing the point.

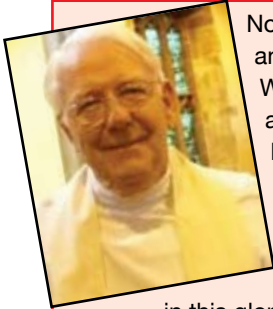
Certainly the most lasting benefit that I've gained from Lent has been from participating in study groups, both what I've learnt and the friendships that I've gained or reinforced. These days it seems that the online daily course is the fashionable observance, the Christian equivalent of online shopping perhaps; greater choice, more accessible, maybe even more quality – but also isolated. I wonder, however, whether really our Lent observance needs more rather than less 'social networking', but the real face-to-face interaction instead of the iPhone variety.

So, what shall I be doing to observe Lent in 2019? The Church of England's Lent Pilgrim course sounds interesting, and I hope I'll be able to take part in a fellowship group. But why not ask me how it's going (preferably not in an email, please).

John Whiteman, St Peter & St Paul



A locum-ing we will go...



Norway is a fascinating and majestic country. We did a locum at a place called Balestrand, which is a village at the head of the Sognefjord. Why should the C of E have a branch

in this glorious part of the country?

At the end of the 19th century the owner of the beautiful Hotel Kvikne married the daughter of an Anglican priest in the UK and brought her to live in the village. At the time it was a centre for wealthy English visitors on holiday long before the days of mass tourism. Mrs Kvikne said she would fund an English Chaplain for the



summer months to meet the spiritual needs of the English visitors. She had a lovely wooden 'stave' Church built on a hill opposite the hotel. Four sets of chaplains would come out for two-week periods and be looked after at the hotel, conduct services on Sundays and be pastorally available to the visitors.

We were lucky enough to go twice. The first time we took our sons, Mark and Hugh (aged 9 and 6 at the time). We were given free half board treatment and I will never forget the first night we went into the dining room – there was the most amazing huge smorgasbord buffet in front of us. Hugh said, 'It's just like fairyland!' By the end of the fortnight Mark had put on half a stone!

After dinner Jenny and I, in evening dress, were expected to talk and dance with the guests and also to open the Church, tell visitors its story and garner as many krone as I could from all who came! I apparently achieved a record amount, I was told later. As a friend said, 'Once a fundraiser, always a fundraiser!'

The second time we went was very different: no longer evening dress and dancing, but coach after coach staying one or two nights; no children, but we took the car across to Bergen by boat and drove through the towering mountains and country scenery. The same terms applied and we ate a

fortnight of too-good food! One thing to remember is to bring any wine you want to drink with you. The cheapest bottle of plonk we could find in the hotel dining room was £38! I guess it will be over £50 by now! (Norway is a very expensive place to visit!) I had to do more tours than before of the Church, this time every evening as the guests were constantly changing. Again, the money rolled in and large numbers came. It was also possible to have conversations about faith with people who did know me but wanted the ear of a priest. Sunday services were well attended and we met people from all over the world.

It is strange to have this lovely wooden Church in the Norwegian stave tradition at the end of this fjord. The C of E spreads its wings in many different places!

Ian Ogilvie, Tring Team



Much needed support

At High Street we recycle as much as we can and we would like to add a Bra Bank to our Recycling Centre, becoming a collection point for anyone in the local area. However, to get an ABC Bra Bank up and running we need to collect 200 bras to begin with. Can you help us?

Giving your old bras a new lease of life is a great way to raise funds for Against Breast Cancer.

This keeps textiles out of landfill, helps small businesses in Africa and raises funds from ABC's recycling partner for ground-breaking research, based on the weight of the bras collected. Every £1 raised is vital in the work to find a vaccine against breast cancer and to look at ways to increase the survival of women and men who have the disease.

Successful ventures like this also keep many families in developing countries out of poverty and plenty of people in the UK in a job. Any bras that are genuinely beyond redemption will be dismantled and disposed of properly, and helps the textile recycler save 7.8 million tonnes of CO² emissions every year by collecting, reusing and recycling thousands of tons of textiles.

From the last week of February 2019 there will be a labelled box located outside the kitchen at High Street Baptist Church, or you can give your donations of old bras to Polly in the Church Office. Telephone 01442 824054. www.tringbaptistchurch.co.uk admin@tringbaptistchurch.co.uk





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Why we need to love the bugs



'Insects could vanish within a century at current rate of decline' according to a global scientific review published recently.

'So what?' many people might

respond – thinking perhaps of those pesky midges on a Scottish holiday, the harvestmen that leave strands of cobweb behind the furniture or an unwelcome influx of ants one summer.

But, in fact, this is a huge concern because believe it or not, if insects vanish from the face of the earth then humans will not be far behind. So this warning is potentially very depressing indeed, and is just one more piece of scientific evidence reinforcing the message that the future of humankind is really quite vulnerable and that its greatest enemy is ... humankind!

The big-picture story seems to me to be that greed, coupled with a

blind conviction that economic growth can be sustained on a finite planet, threatens the lives of generations yet to come – and that how we grow things is a significant part of this damaged system because food and clothing are among our basic needs. Around the world, artificial pesticides, weedkillers and other chemicals are being applied to agricultural land in a ceaseless effort to maximise yields and therefore profits. But this comes at a cost, sometimes to those working the land and invariably to insect life. So the closer-to-home story would be that we should all do everything we can to protect all biodiversity, including insect life – which starts with being much more thoughtful about the food, the flowers and the clothes that we buy.

How are animals reared, how are the crops grown, how are the textiles made? If chemicals (pesticides, herbicides, artificial fertilisers, etc) are used, then what are the environmental impacts of these on the health and wellbeing of those involved in the industries

concerned and on the plant, animal and insect populations?

This may not be a comfortable message for many people. Perhaps we too readily accept the idea that 'creepy-crawlies' are not quite nice – and to be fair they don't get a great press in the Bible, do they? Swarms of locusts, plagues of flies, no pairs of bees going into Noah's ark! But human existence depends upon insects, which not only pollinate the vast majority of our food crops but also create the very soil in which they grow. They are a vital part of the food chain on which we all depend.

So if you are able to do so, choose organic foodstuffs and textiles whenever possible. And if you have a garden, avoid using chemicals if at all possible – creation is wonderful and the birds will soon be feeding on some of the aphids and caterpillars, in the balance of nature that allows everything its place. Love them or loathe them, insects are essential – God made them for a reason.

Nicky Bull, High Street Baptist Church

The original hot cross bun

The hot cross bun is said to originate in St Albans, where Brother Thomas Roccliffe, a 14th century monk at St Alban's Abbey, developed an original recipe and distributed the bun to the local poor on Good Friday, starting in 1361.

For nearly 700 years, the Alban Bun has been a part of the Easter tradition at St Alban's Cathedral and is available



at the Abbot's Kitchen from the start of Lent through to Easter Monday.

The buns are now produced by Redbournbury Mill, once owned by St Alban's Abbey. They are hand-formed, so they are a less regular shape than ordinary hot cross buns. The cross on the top is formed with two slices of a knife – there isn't a piped cross on top – and the bun has a distinctive, spicy taste.

The original full recipe is a closely guarded secret but ingredients include: flour, eggs, fresh yeast, currants and grains of paradise or cardamom. The baker today stays faithful to the original 14th century recipe, with only a slight addition of some extra fruit.

The original source of the Alban Bun is still being researched. An article in the Herts Advertiser of 1862 report it as follows: 'It is said that in a copy of: "Ye Booke of Saint Albans" it was reported that; "In the year of Our Lord 1361 Thomas Roccliffe, a monk attached to the refectory at St Alban's Monastery, caused a quantity of small sweet spiced cakes, marked with a cross, to be made;

then he directed them to be given away to persons who applied at the door of the refectory on Good Friday in addition to the customary basin of sack [wine]. These cakes so pleased the palates of the people who were the recipients that they became talked about, and various were the attempts to imitate the cakes of Father Roccliffe all over the country, but the recipe of which was kept within the walls of the Abbey." The time-honoured custom has therefore been observed over the centuries, and will undoubtedly continue into posterity, bearing with it the religious remembrance it is intended to convey.'



Who is your inspiration?



I hope you enjoyed the biblical characters supplied last month by John Young, Andrew Kinsey, David Whiting and

John Allan? Apart

from the relevant obscurity of some of their choices – three of whom came from the Old Testament – half of them were women! I write that with an exclamation mark because it would be a challenging exercise to find as many named women in the Bible as men, yet two of the first inspiring characters were women chosen by men. Feel free to write to me if you can name more than fifty women in the Bible without cheating and using a search engine... And no, it doesn't count if they are described as someone's wife, mother or daughter and are otherwise nameless.

In this edition of Comment we have Abigail and Esther! Are few men inspirational? Please submit your favourite or most inspirational Bible character telling us what you like about them. What do you take from their story that inspires you? Write a few sentences and we will print them.

I thought I would wait to choose my own inspirational character but I wondered about the apostle Andrew, who barely gets a mention in the pages of the New Testament, is mostly described as brother to the more 'famous' Peter, and whose main claim to fame is to bring someone else to Jesus, thus helping the miracle of the feeding of the 5000 to take place. He was happy to be out of the limelight but nonetheless working faithfully in the background, serving God. I suspect he is the forerunner of the majority of the people of faith.

Then, of course, there is the minor prophet, Micah. How can you not be inspired by a man whose message is so powerful yet simple: 'And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.' Micah 6:8

The Editor



Abigail

I have chosen to write about Abigail as an inspirational biblical character, an excellent example of a wise woman. Abigail is first mentioned in 1

Samuel 25 as the 'intelligent

and beautiful' wife of Nabal, who was considered to be 'surly and mean in his dealings'. We are told Nabal was a 'very wealthy' man with over 1000 goats and 3000 sheep in the desert at Carmel.

It so happened that David's move to the Maon desert, following the death of the prophet Samuel, coincided with sheep-shearing time for Nabal. As they were celebrating this, David sent his servants to Nabal asking him to spare some food for them, reminding Nabal that when his shepherds were shearing among David's people, they were safe amongst them and that nothing had gone missing. Unfortunately, Nabal didn't listen properly, instead assuming that David was stealing his servants and demanding food. David's messengers returned, without being fed. 'Put on your swords!' was David's reaction, and we are told 400 went with David, to march on Carmel.

It is not until this point that Abigail gets involved. Possibly she has been out overseeing the laundry, or doing a spot of light dusting, but somehow, she has remained oblivious to the situation up in the desert. One of her servants puts her straight about what had happened, and asks her to, 'see what you can do, because disaster is hanging over our master and his whole household. He is such a wicked man that no one can talk to him.'

Abigail clearly has a good relationship with her servants who feel able to moan about their master to her, and they have great confidence in her to sort this out. It suggests that this is not the first time that Nabal has got the wrong end of the stick and Abigail has had to do some damage limitation to rescue a situation.

If I were making a film about this, at this point Abigail would roll her eyes in despair and resignation, and she would shake her head, in a wise womanly way. 'Right!' she would announce. 'Quick, grab a few Bags for Life from the utility room and let's raid the larder. We need to show that very important fellow up in the

desert that Nabal has got it wrong. Again! Oh, and obviously we won't mention any of this to the master just yet.' We are told she lost no time in grabbing bread, wine, grain, raisins and cakes and loading it all onto a donkey, sending her servants on ahead of her.

Meanwhile, up in the desert the situation has escalated. David had just told his fellow marchers they were to kill all of Nabal's men, and in my film they would be looking quite fierce and ready for a fight by now. Just as she and her donkey rounded the corner of a mountainous ravine, Abigail ran into David. Here, she leapt off her donkey, knelt before him and made amends: 'May my lord pay no attention to that wicked man Nabal. He is just like his name – his name is Fool, and folly goes with him. But as for me, I did not see the men my master sent.'

David replied, 'May you be blessed for your good judgement and for keeping me from bloodshed... go home in peace.'

In my film, David and his fired-up men would probably take a moment before granting this blessing. I'm sure a few would be grumbling things like 'Get out of the way, woman, we've got important manly things to do,' or 'That's what she says, Dave, don't listen to her.' This would be a very good time for the laden donkey, the one carrying all the goodies and the servants, to round the corner, just to prove that Abigail wishes to make amends; at which point, the men would be overcome by the sight of cake and wine, so would have an impromptu picnic by the ravine, and then David would pronounce his blessing, and back down the mountain Abigail would go: job done.

Back at the sheep farm, Nabal was in festive mood, and very drunk, so Abigail decided to tell him after he had sobered up the following day. We are told, 'his heart failed him and he became like a stone,' and he died ten days later.

No sooner had David heard the news about Nabal, than he sent word to Abigail to join her as his wife. Clearly, David has been impressed by her wise-woman attributes at their previous meeting. Again, it would appear that she lost no time. 'Abigail quickly got on a donkey and went with David's messengers and became his wife.'

Abigail could be considered to be a hero. One of my pupils recently defined a hero as the one that 'saves the day and

gets the girl'. In this case it is Abigail who gets her man, and in my film, Abigail is definitely the hero.

Gill Kinsey, St Peter & St Paul



Queen Esther

Esther came from a wealthy Jewish family living in Susa, the heart of the Persian Empire, roughly between BC 460 and 331.

To our 21st century sensibilities, whether formed by feminism and or civil rights and democracy, she would appear to have had very few free choices in her life.

She became an orphan and was brought up by her older cousin, Mordecai. Although he was Jewish, he had a position in the palace of Xerxes, king of the Persians.

For me, she is exceptional because she made a perilous choice in a lose-lose situation – she and her family would be killed with the rest of the Jewish people or, if she goes to the king, he has passed a law forbidding (on pain of death) anyone to come before him. It is also a sacrificial gesture – her one life in exchange for the lives of the Jewish people living in Persia.

King Xerxes gave a lavish party lasting several days; his wife, Queen Vashti, gave an equally lavish party for the women. At the end of the festivities, Xerxes called for his wife, eager to show off her beauty to his guests. The queen refused to come. He was furious, and banished Queen Vashti.

There was now a search for a new queen. Xerxes hosted a beauty pageant to find one... and Esther was chosen. A young Jewess was now Queen to King Xerxes of Persia.

Soon afterwards, Mordecai uncovered a plot to assassinate the king. He told Esther and she in turn reported it, giving Mordecai the credit. The plot was

thwarted and Mordecai's act of kindness was recorded in the Chronicles of the King.

Haman, the King's first minister, a man of great importance and influence hated Mordecai as he had refused to bow down to him. He extended this hatred to all the Jewish people. Haman devised a plot to have every Jew in Persia killed. The king agreed to this without realising the consequences for his wife, and on a particular day, all Jews were to be annihilated.

Mordecai learned of the plan and challenged Esther with these words: 'If you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance for the Jews will arise from another place, but you and your father's family will perish. Who knows? Perhaps you have come to your royal position for just such a time as this.'

Esther asks Mordecai to gather all the Jews to pray and fast – and then offers to go before the king, and take the consequences, even if it means her own death.

What courage did it take to go to an almost certain death? If courage is doing the right thing, even though you're scared rigid, that's what Esther did. She went against the absolute power of an egocentric monarch. But the alternative was to let all her people be annihilated.

She invited Xerxes and Haman to a banquet, where she revealed her Jewish heritage to the king, as well as Haman's wicked plot to kill her people and herself. In a rage, the king ordered Haman to be hung on the gallows he had built for Mordecai. Mordecai became First Minister (Haman's job) and Jews were given protection throughout the land.

After this time the feast of Purim (now celebrated in March) was inaugurated as two days of gladness and feasting to remember what Esther did.

Tricia Apps, Corpus Christi

Peter, the apostle

It may be a cliché but St Peter is my biblical hero.



So what do we know about him? Simon and his brother Andrew were fishermen and the first disciples called by Jesus. When Simon says that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, then Jesus renames him as Kepha, Cephas, or Peter as most Christians know him. There is some debate over what Peter actually means and is commonly thought to mean 'rock' but 'stone', 'jewel' or 'precious stone' are also possible interpretations. Whatever it means, Jesus goes on to say he will build his church on Peter.

We know from the Gospels that Peter was an enthusiastic, impetuous man and prone to well-intentioned, rash actions like offering to build shelters for Jesus, Moses and Elijah and cutting off the ear of the high priest's servant in Gethsemane. He was also brave and was prepared to try to walk on water when he saw Jesus doing it; but probably the best-known story in The Bible is when he denied that he knew Jesus and immediately after that went and wept for shame when he remembered that Jesus had the night before warned him that he would do it.

However, after the coming of the Holy Spirit, after Jesus was crucified and rose again, it is as if Peter has also been reborn. In Acts we see Peter as a great orator, performing miracles and a man with unshakeable, rock-like faith. There can be little doubt that without Peter (and Paul as well), the church today would be very different and possibly not exist as we know it.

So for me, Peter is a hero. He wasn't perfect, he made mistakes and had doubts at times. But even with all his faults, Jesus was able to use Peter to do great things to the glory of God. I believe that even the mistakes Peter made were for a reason and acted as a springboard for him to go on to do those things. So as someone with numerous faults myself, I look at Peter and think that maybe God can use me too – even if it is not on such a grand scale as Peter, but in smaller ways that would be no bad thing at all.

Roy Hargreaves, St Peter & St Paul

Lent pilgrim Lent Films 2019 **TRING TEAM PARISH Living God's Love**

RISEN Sunday 7th April **RISEN - 2016** **PG**

Roman military tribune Clavius (Joseph Fiennes) remains set in his ways after serving 25 years in the army. He arrives at a crossroad when he's tasked to investigate the mystery of what happened to Jesus (Cliff Curtis) following the Crucifixion. Accompanied by trusted aide Lucius (Tom Felton), his quest to disprove rumors of a risen Messiah makes him question his own beliefs and spirituality. As his journey takes him to places never dreamed of, Clavius discovers the truth that he's been seeking.

All films start at 6.30pm at St. John the Baptist in Aldbury Tea, coffee, wine and popcorn will be available. There will be discussion after each of the films.

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What are the epistles?



The first Christians expected Christ to return soon after his Ascension to heaven, and, hence, as far as we know, felt no need for anything on paper, as we might

say. This is part of the explanation for the Gospels being written several decades after the Ascension. But clearly it was necessary sometimes to communicate with local gatherings of Christians. The only way of doing so, of course, was by letter. Hence the earliest Christian writings are in the form of letters. We tend to call them epistles.

This was a word that covered two sorts of communications – a letter in the sense of something written to a person or group at a particular time. There must have been a number of these of which we know nothing: they just dealt with practical matters. But a few have survived because their content was of more than passing local interest. Such are the letters of St Paul.

The other sort of letter at that time was like an essay on a particular subject, possibly a matter of philosophy or general interest. These were addressed to readers at large. Some of the New Testament letters are of this type: Hebrews, for example.

In the New Testament we have twenty-seven books, of which half have Paul's name attached, all of them in letter form. Not all are regarded nowadays as undisputedly Pauline. Of the thirteen letters/epistles that bear Paul's name, nine are addressed to communities at geographical places – Romans, I and II Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, I and II Thessalonians – and four are addressed to individuals – I and II Timothy, Titus and Philemon. Each collection is arranged in descending order of length.

Hebrews, long associated with Paul, follows: then come the so-called Catholic epistles (Catholic here meaning universal and addressed to everyone) associated with James, Peter, John and Jude. While I Thessalonians is the first in date, about 50 or 51AD, the rest of this article will concentrate on Paul's first letter to Corinth. It was a church Paul claimed to have founded, though there may have been a few Christians there

before he arrived (e.g. Aquila and Priscilla, according to Acts 18).

This first letter, as we have it, shows us it was a community with many problems. One scholar has written 'the range of their problems (rival "theologians", factions, problematic sexual practices, marital obligations, liturgy, church roles) makes the correspondence exceptionally instructive for troubled Christians and churches of our time'. As well as dealing with a multitude of problems, this letter contains what is perhaps the best-known chapter in the New Testament, excluding the Gospels (or perhaps including them). This is, of course, I Corinthians 13 on love.

But before reminding ourselves of some of the contents it is worth wondering about how the first letter was received. Few of us nowadays write or read proper letters, living, as we do, in the age of mobiles, emails and the internet. What happened when a letter arrived at Corinth? Was it read the next Sunday in its entirety during, before or after worship? Few worshippers in the churches of Tring would expect such a long reading! Would it count as a Reading of Scripture or part of the Notices? Or that kiss of death, would it be left on the table at the back of Church for those interested?

Unlike any letter we receive today, we read Paul's letter bit by bit. This is necessary but makes it hard to understand just how many big issues are being addressed and at what length. We start with an address and greetings and a reminder of the Corinthians' spiritual gifts. The first major problem is that of factions – clearly there are already divisions. Sadly these started very early in the life of the Corinthian church apparently. It reminds us of the many labels used today – Catholic, Protestant, Evangelical, Charismatic, Liberal, Conservative, High, Low and all the rest. Then there are problems of behaviour – incest, lawsuits, sexual behaviour, marriage, food, as well as patterns of the Eucharist and liturgy. Paul has heard

about these or has had questions about them put to him. It is from this letter that we learn about the earliest description of the Institution of the Eucharist. If the Corinthians had behaved decently when celebrating Holy Communion, we would not have had this account which has affected our modern liturgies (1 Corinthians 11).

Next Paul writes about spiritual gifts. Clearly the Christians of Corinth needed a reminder that people have different gifts while all being at the same time part of the Body of Christ. This leads into possibly the best-known of Paul's writings, 1 Corinthians 13. Although the King James version uses the word 'charity', modern translations have love – hence the popularity of the reading at weddings and funerals.

Then comes the great chapter on the Resurrection in 1 Corinthians 15, nearly all of which was supposed to be used at the Book of Common Prayer Burial Service (in spite of its length). Here we may note that Paul gives a list of those who saw the Risen Jesus, the first such account, and the list includes some not mentioned in the Gospels. The final chapter, 1 Corinthians 16, is more like what we might expect in a letter to a church congregation – what to do about the collection, what Paul's travel plans are and messages about individual people. It all ends with greetings and a form of the Grace.

So it is a long and varied letter covering many subjects and which gives so much teaching that it is no wonder this letter was kept, circulated and still is read today.

Martin Banister, St Albans Abbey



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My God, my God, why did you forsake me?



Some while ago the editor of this magazine asked me, 'Do you think you could write an article about your cancer experience and how God, faith, etc.

supported you through it – or perhaps God didn't?' Thank goodness, thank God, for the caveat, without which this article would not have come to fruition.

The presumption, perhaps especially for a priest, is that when things get really bad, when all resources are exhausted, God will be there to 'hold you in the palm of his hands'. With the cancer journey, however, that was not my experience and when both life and faith took this unexpected turn, I found very little to support me through it and much, written and spoken, about how other people had felt very upheld by God's reliable love and presence in their own life crises.

Generally the expectation and, it would seem, experience of the faithful is that God is most demonstrably present in times of trouble, and what a wonderful and necessary gift this is. At the same time though, it is this confidence and presumption that makes it very difficult to speak of God's absence. In the face of overwhelming positivity I was made to feel, and indeed was told on one occasion, that I was wrong, or that I shouldn't say such a silly, ill-considered thing. I was made to feel that I had fallen short somehow. I was shamed into silence.

Yet central to our Christian faith is the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus. Every Good Friday we read and often enact this narrative. As he dies, Jesus cries, 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?' Since in this act of sacrifice we believe that Jesus took away our sin (all that separates us from God) once for all, perhaps we do not consider that there is any way in which God can really be inaccessible if we truly cry out in faith – more pressure. More silencing.

My year (2017) of surgery, cancer diagnosis, chemotherapy, a long wait for more surgery and eventual remission, was not the only huge crisis in my life. In the experiences of caring for long-

term very sick children, initial rejection for ordination training, my husband's departure and the death of my youngest son, I absolutely knew and was thankful for God's abiding and sustaining presence. Without God, there were times, years even, when life would have been intolerably grim. And, of course, there were the glorious times – marriage, births of children, selection for ordination training. And these are just the huge life events. There are millions of smaller delights, wonders, fears and pains along the way. In all of them I knew God was with me. I had a lively and life-giving personal relationship with my Creator, Saviour and inspirer.

I have kept a personal spiritual journal for the past fifteen years and whilst in the weeks when I was most debilitated by the chemotherapy I wrote very little, over the course of fifteen months the word count, when I transferred my hand-written notes onto computer, was 35,000 – words of complete and immediate raw honesty about the daily reality of what life threatening illness and chemically-invasive and destructive treatment did to my body, mind and spirit. The person I was changed to such an extent that I didn't recognise the person I had become. Over a comparatively short period of time, a few months, I ceased to be me, the me that had been formed in the course of 58 years of life and relationships with God and with his created world.

Cancer and its treatment is now very individualised. Everyone's experience is uniquely their own. This is mine. From a couple of weeks before chemotherapy

started I was advised to stay away from enclosed public spaces because of the infection risk and, for the same reason, restrict the number of people visiting my home and that those who came should use anti-bacterial wipes on bathroom, kitchen and other hard surfaces they had touched in the course of their visit. So the first loss was community and Church-going. The next loss as a direct consequence of the chemo was my hair, and then a seriously compromised sense of taste: coffee, a drink that normally punctuated my days, lost all its flavour and was just like drinking hot water; coconut tasted like eating pink carboric soap (though how I know that is a wonder!); only fresh fruit and veg tasted right. After a couple of weeks I stopped praying the daily offices of morning and evening prayer because what had once connected me with the historical and global Christian Church, even when I was alone in my study, now only emphasised my isolation. Lack of sleep due to high-dose steroids, appalling dreams when I did sleep, nerve damage to my fingers and heels, mouth ulcers and skin that was sore to the touch of clothing, painful and weepy eyes – and more unpleasant stuff you don't need to hear about – removed, one by one, all the things that connected me with God: companionship (people and prayer); creativity (playing piano, singing, knitting, painting); walking and reading; constructive or reflective thinking. Ultimately all that was left was TV, radio and jigsaws. So I was separated from God in every meaningful and personal way. I felt completely abandoned by God. Forsaken.



Of course, the great creator and sustainer of all that exists continued to be so; of course, God was present in the love and care I received from my children and close friends who were wonderful; but the personal connection and relationship I had with God, that sense of this relationship being my daily delight and joy, comfort and strength, faded and for long periods disappeared completely at the time in my life when I needed it most.

After treatment finished and as I began to recover, as I slowly became recognisably me again, the relationship returned – oh, if only someone had suggested this might happen when I was mired in absence and loneliness! As I had become ever more debilitated by the chemotherapy I had tried so hard to maintain a closeness with God and failed. Now, as I was able to mix with people again and begin to take up some of the activities that had been denied me for so many months, God returned. Indeed, at times God's presence became quite overwhelming. There were days when I wanted him to leave me alone for a while. I even ran away to IKEA on

one occasion (somewhat Jonah like!) to get away from his insistent call – How could I trust him again? Why should I? I needed time and space to think and not to think.

Then one morning, walking on Pitstone Hill, I found myself saying, 'OK God, maybe you didn't abandon me deliberately, maybe you didn't forsake me, but (and this is a huge but) we were separated from each other. The destruction of the cancer had nearly destroyed me too, physically, emotionally and spiritually. How could I have an intimate, personal relationship with God when I wasn't me? It was not possible.

Now I am me again and God lives in me as I live in him. Resurrection. Alleluia!

For most of human history (including the 2000 or so years since Jesus was born of a woman in Palestine, called his disciples, taught and healed, ate and laughed and cried, died and rose again), we humans have not had medical treatments that alter who we are for a substantial period of time. Now we do, and many of us live with cancers, mental illnesses and dementias for months and years. Increasing numbers

of people will be exposed to the problem of how the mechanisms of relationship with God can be enabled to change, perhaps quite quickly in comparison with a lifetime of active and supportive faith development, so that God can still be personally present, so that what was impossible for me in 2017 can become possible. Because when God 'seems' to be absent, the last thing we need is people telling us we are wrong, he isn't really absent, or the illness and drugs are speaking, implying that the responsibility is somehow on our shoulders. This only adds to the separation and dissolution of our lives. God being there propositionally, in the distance, is not what we need. In extremis, if God 'seems' to be absent then experientially God 'is' absent. This is not a judgement on God or myself. It's simply a statement of fact – an important statement, for only when we who experience it and those who support us are able to acknowledge this reality, can we 'search for God, and perhaps grope for him and find him' in this new context.

Jane Nash, retired priest

Unravel these Easter hymns

Each of the lines below is the beginning of a well-known Easter hymn. Check your answers on page 24

1. Ila oyrlg audl and orouhn
2. Ila nveaeh arlscdee
3. nda acn ti eb
4. eb lstli nda nkwo hatt i ma ogd
5. eb tllsi fro teh erscnepe fo eht rdol
6. earebht no em tabahr fo gdo
7. hrsict het rlod si eisnr ydaot
8. ofmr anehev ouy ocme
9. eh si rdol
10. i ecandd ni eht grnnimo
11. i oknw taht ym rdemreee eilsv
12. amke wya, amek awy
13. onrmnig ahs eonkrb
14. deri no, ider no ni mateysj
15. Kroc fo gsae
16. eth dol rgdeug srcos
17. heter si a negre illh raf awya
18. tnihe eb teh lgoyr
19. eerw ouy heter
20. enwh i rsevuy the dunroswo ocsrs

George Jevon
via *The Parish Window*

Tree Cathedral Service at Easter

On such a day at sunrise,
When women took spices to the tomb,
We climbed the hill to Whipsnade,
Walking quietly through the gloom,
To hold our service in the dawn
In memory of Easter morn.

The Tree Cathedral was the place
Where we would hold our time of
prayer;
And in the garden, long ago,
The angel showed the tomb was bare -
That Christ had risen from the grave,
Had conquered Death, our souls to
save.

A Woodpecker tapped on a branch
As we reached the avenue of trees,
And sounds came floating from the
Zoo -

Carried on the morning breeze
Of beasts awake in Whipsnade,
And God was with us in the glade.

And as the shreds of mist dissolved,
And as the morning light grew strong,
We worshipped him in silent prayer,

We praised aloud in fervent song,
As, long ago his name was praised
When Jesus from the dead was raised.

"Lord of the Dance" was our final
hymn:
"Take hands and dance!" we cried
aloud:
And my dog running gloriously free in
our midst
Stood on his head and danced in the
crowd.
And we laughed at the joy that to us
was given -
All seemed so right both on earth and
in heaven.

Jenny Revel, St Peter & St Paul



World Day of Prayer



There was no 'beast from the east' this year, so we were able to hold afternoon and evening services for the World Day of Prayer (WDP). New Mill Baptists

hosted us with lots of support and warmth and the services went well – a big thank you to them!

The service, written by the ladies of Slovenia, was based around the parable from St Luke's Gospel, chapter 14. It tells the story of someone organising a feast, but all the invited guests made excuses not to attend; the servant was sent into the streets and the lanes to bring in the poor, the crippled, the blind and the lame to enjoy the feast.

There is always a painting commissioned by an artist from the country to meditate on. This year the central portion of the painting represented a table with Slovenian food. Above it was a narrow band of people outlined, but it was not clear what they were doing – were they greeting one another, dancing, celebrating, or going about their daily business? Could they be the people originally invited

to the banquet? In the lower part of the painting, below the table are larger figures, a mother with a child, a blind person and a cripple. Are these the people who are side-lined, on the edges of society? They are under the table.

Does this remind us of the story of Jesus meeting the Canaanite woman, of his words about dogs eating the crumbs that have fallen under the table? We were asked to think of the people we would be least likely to invite to a celebration – a homeless person, a drug addict, someone who has been in prison, a person who has a disability which makes communication difficult?

During the service we met Slovenian women who had had different experiences. Marjeta, as a Christian, left the country when it was a socialist-communist state and worked abroad, returning after she retired. We reflected on how we regard migrants who have to do this today. Mojca was a single mum who, through the support of her family, was able to become a researcher in a scientific institute. We reflected on women who have to overcome barriers. Marija is in her eighties and lives with her son, but her

elderly neighbour has been left to cope with a farm because all her children have moved away to get employment. We reflected on the care of the elderly. Ema was born into a family who were alcoholics and married a man who turned to alcohol when he lost his job. We prayed for those who are addicts to alcohol. Finally we met Natasha who is from the Roma community, and we reflected on those we send to the margins of society.

All of these are very real problems in our society here in Britain. During the service we sang (to the tune of Scarlet Ribbons) a very lovely hymn by Andrew Pratt with these words 'Love of neighbour is not easy, cuts us till we feel the pain, sharing hurt that they are feeling till they find new life again'. It is worth looking up the rest of the hymn and reflecting on the words.

The services are well worth attending. Next year it will be prepared by the ladies of Zimbabwe. Maybe you will think of joining us; you will be most welcome.

Jillian Smith, St Peter & St Paul

Girls in the choir!



I have just sat and read the March edition of Comment and thought I should write following on from Carole Wells' article about the lack of females in the Parish Church fifty years ago.

I remember Carole Wells as Miss Lambert from Ashlyns School!

I was amongst the first girls to join the Choir in 1965, along with

Carole Goodman, Elizabeth Cowan, Jill Wallis and Anne Mellor. Fortunately other females followed including Jackie Booth, Rosemary Stacey [now Berdinner, who has defected to St Martha's Methodist Church!], Sally Hawkes and Vivianne Child. I am sorry I cannot remember the names of all the others!

Thank you to Roland and Colin Stevens for allowing me to join the Choir. I became an Alto, sat next to the basses and met my future husband, Ian! We are still singing in our Church Choir in Biggleswade and occasionally sit next to each other. (And I still read Comment magazine!)

Rosamund Drakes née Hardy
Once of Friars Walk



Churches Together in Tring

You are warmly invited to the following Lent Lunches in support of Christian Aid. They are held between 12 noon and 2pm and you can come along at any time that suits you. There is no set charge but hopefully you will donate to Christian Aid. Lunch is a bowl of soup, bread & cheese and a cup of tea or coffee.

- Wednesday 3rd April St Cross, in Wilstone Village Hall
- Wednesday 10th April St Martha's Church
- Wednesday 17th April St Peter and St Paul Church Hall



Mega Stick Sunday returns



Sometimes if you put two good ideas together, you get something fantastic. So how about Christian Aid and walking? Christian Aid is a charity that has been

going since the Second World War, and while it grew out of churches, the aim was also to help those who need it all round the world. The aim was also to help, not by sending British people to tell others what was needed, but to work with local organisations in partnership to support the right initiatives, campaigns and projects as well as in emergency situations.

Tring supports Christian Aid throughout the year, with Lent Lunches and films, but had been searching for a successor to the house-to-house collection in May, during Christian Aid Week, which this year is 12-18 May. We think we have found this in a parish walk which we have run (or walked!) for a couple of years at St Peter & St Paul's in September, which we have called Mega Stick Sunday. The name comes from our

church's regular Sunday afternoon walks which were called Stick Sundays after all the odd pieces of wood the children picked up. So, when this was turned into a Christian Aid fundraiser, it seemed obvious to call it Mega Stick Sunday.

Support Christian Aid on 19 May 2019

What we would love to do this year is to get as many people as possible involved; there are lots of ways of doing this. We have some people who walk round the whole parish, from Tring and through Aldbury, Long Marston, Puttenham and Wilstone, ending up back at St Peter & St Paul's. Some brave souls run it. Others do the final part of the walk from Wilstone, and we all end up in St Peter & St Paul's churchyard for a BBQ at 5.00pm.

Walking around all the Churches in Tring itself is also an option, and you are also welcome to come for the BBQ, and welcome back the walkers, if mobility is an issue. This is something for all ages, and dogs are also welcome. We also try to have a support car running in case blisters get too much!

Supporters have been incredibly

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generous, and there has also been matched funding from employers, so we have been able to raise over £6000 in the past, which is far more than we were managing in the house-to-house collection in one year.

So on Sunday 19 May 2019 what are you doing? We would love to have walkers/runners/supporters from all the church communities in Tring and the villages, so that we can continue with our support of such an important charity.

If you are interested in knowing more, please contact me on 01442 822170 or jane@tringteamparish.org.uk.

Jane Banister, Tring Team

Our Ruby Wedding

On 10 March 1979 in Westerfield, a village north of Ipswich, a windy day when the sun broke through occasionally between the snow and the rain, Sandra Jane Brooks became Sandra Jane Watkin at the church of St Mary Magdalene. We then walked across the road to her parents' (Mildred and Peter Brooks) house where we celebrated further and ate cake.

On 10 March 2019 in Tring, a windy day when the sun broke through occasionally between the snow and the rain, we celebrated forty years of

marriage at the church of St Peter & St Paul, Tring, then after eating cake we went home where we ate more cake.

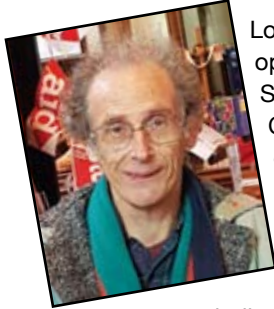
Over those years we have had tremendous support, in prayer, word and action, from very many people so the celebration was at least in part recognition and to say thanks to all those who have helped us, and of course to eat more cake, and talk and share experiences.

Thanks from us both.

Sandra & Mike Watkin
St Peter & St Paul



A day out at Euston



Located directly opposite Euston Station is the Quaker Centre. The Quakers or Society of Friends was founded in the mid-17th century by George Fox.

Quakers believe that there is something of God in everyone. At their meetings they sit in a circle or square, which allows people to see and be aware of each other, and for all to contribute equally. They are particularly known for their pacifism and role in peace-making.

In 2014, this Meeting House, originally designed for Quaker annual gatherings, was transformed into The Light, to be an inspiring venue for London. There is a bookshop selling a wide range of Christian books, as well Quaker publications. The Café and Friends House Restaurant offer healthy organic and Fairtrade food at reasonable prices. Adjacent is a quiet courtyard for reflection or eating outdoors, screened from the traffic on Euston Road. The Centre is also a conference venue with a variety of meeting rooms equipped with the latest audio visual equipment.

A hundred meters to the west is the Wellcome Collection, 'a free museum and library for the incurably curious'. Free talks and tours accompany some of the exhibitions. For example, the 'Living with Buildings' exhibition last Autumn included a tour designed for the deaf or hard of hearing. A book



with the same title accompanied the event, which explored how the built environment contributes to physical and mental health positively and negatively. It covers housing and sanitation from the mid-19th century up to the Grenfell Tower fire.

The exhibition also displayed the results of a competition to design a mobile health clinic for emergency situations. The permanent exhibitions 'Medicine Man' and 'Medicine Now' explore the connections between health, life and art. A leaflet is available which will guide you on a walking tour through the area with its socially significant buildings. There is of course a book shop, selling books and gifts, and a café. Visit their website www.wellcomecollection.org for the current exhibitions and booking free events.

Opposite the Wellcome Institute is the Royal College of General Practitioners at 30 Euston Square, now cut off from the remnants of the square by the HS2 construction site. The original part of the building is along Melton Street where the entrance is



situated. It is an Edwardian office block built for the London, Edinburgh and Glasgow Assurance Company which provided welfare insurance for low-income families. Inside is an exhibition area and café open to the public with original interior fittings. A temporary exhibition last year was on migrants who made the NHS. A leaflet describes the library, archive and museum collections; and another the history of the RCGP in relation to this building.

On 'Open House' day in September there are guided tours showing more of the original building and modern interventions in various contemporary styles, including the examination rooms and five-star accommodation for doctors' overnight stays. Here potential GPs take their exams. There is also a roof-top garden with a view over the HS2 site.

Euston Station itself has a large variety of places to eat, outdoors if fine, and a newsagent and chemist. There is also an M&S Food store, and most recently a Sainsbury Village.

Leslie Barker, St Peter & St Paul



A huge contribution



At our APCM on 27 March, Ted Oram finished his final term of office as Parish Co-ordinator. I owe him a huge personal thank you, not only because he was one of the people

who interviewed me when I applied to become Team Rector (it is entirely up to you to decide whether you wish to thank Ted or to blame him) but because ever since, Ted has been a rock of support. Ted, a proud Yorkshire man, who would probably still describe himself as a Methodist, has ended up as a pillar of the Tring Anglican Church and also the wider deanery of Berkhamsted as the lay co-chair of the Deanery.

Our team parish is set up a little differently from probably any other parish. As well as Church Wardens in each of our five churches we also have two Parish Co-ordinators, best thought as of wise people with a parish-wide role of bringing things together and making sure the whole team runs smoothly. For many years Ted has fulfilled this role. In a previous edition of this magazine Ted has detailed 'a day in the life of a parish co-ordinator'. It is a wide-ranging role because the job description

includes the helpful statement 'They will carry out such responsibilities as determined by the PCC', in other words, whenever a job comes up we give it to Ted. As such Ted has spent countless hours negotiating with developers as we provided a curate's house. He has proved pretty adept at choosing bathroom and kitchen tiles.

Asked what he has not enjoyed in the role, Ted was too polite to answer. Asked what he has most enjoyed, the answer is the responsibility of refurbishing Tring's War Memorial, a project which he took on on behalf of the PCC. Here we have seen Ted fundraise, liaise with heritage bodies, work with the council and the RBL and meet with the contractors. He has done all of it for the good of the

church and town. I think he is rightly proud of what he has done, and we should be proud of him.

Ted has probably forgotten quite how much he has done in his role. We shouldn't underestimate it. I started by mentioning his role in interviewing me. I should say Ted is also responsible for appointing Reverend Joanne Wetherall, Reverend Jane Banister, Reverend Sarah Eynstone and Reverend Michelle Grace. I doubt there can be many folk who have read so many clergy CVs and still keep smiling. It is, however, a responsibility which Ted took extremely seriously and we all owe him a huge debt of gratitude for his generosity of time, and serious dedication to the work of the church.

Huw Bellis, Tring Team

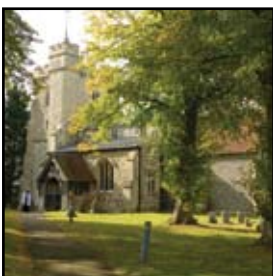


A rather different kind of Sunday service...

In Tring Team Parish we are richly blessed in the variety and range of different services we offer – and in the different environments our Churches provide. We have many options in our Holy Spaces.

Worship every Sunday

During the course of last year it was decided that a service would be held at 3.30pm every Sunday afternoon in the beautiful and peaceful (and these winter days, wonderfully warm) country church of St Mary's in Puttenham. We have for a number of years held a Communion Service which was originally in the mornings but is now at 3.30pm



on the first Sunday of the month and on the fourth Sunday we have a traditional Choral Evensong using the BCP liturgy.

This is usually very well attended – which may have something to do with the excellent tea, sandwiches and cake provided by Christine and the Puttenham team. Christian hospitality in action!

Taizé

We have also started holding a Taizé style service at 3.30pm on the third Sunday of each month which is led by Malcolm Nobbs and has already found a loyal congregation. If you would like any information on that, please contact Malcolm direct.

The Service of Light

During the autumn and winter we have been developing another quiet and reflective service for second Sundays for which we have developed a special

and quite informal liturgy – the Service of Light.

This act of worship takes place in a 'group format' (sitting in a circle) in the choir of the church. It focuses on the Gospel of the day with readings and reflections which encourage us to consider and appreciate the Light of Christ in every aspect of our lives.

If you would like to do something a little different on a Sunday afternoon, there is now a regular opportunity at 3.30pm in Puttenham every Sunday. If you would like further information on any of the services, please contact Christine Rutter or John Barron at St Mary's.

The regular rhythm of services is outlined in the weekly Tring Team pew sheet. If you would like to have any further information or have any queries about the Service of Light, please contact me on 01442 822 770.

Grahame Senior, Tring Team

The ministry of the Gideons



When you last stayed at a hotel, there is a very good chance that you came across a Bible on your dressing-table or in a drawer. In hospitals, many bedside

cupboards hold a copy of the New Testament. But how did they get there?



Who are the Gideons?

They are placed by The Gideons, an organisation originally formed in the USA in 1899 by a trio of Christian commercial travellers who made a mutual

commitment to encourage each other and share the love of Jesus with everyone they met. They hit on the idea of placing Bibles in hotel rooms as a way of doing this. Within a year, their number had grown to some 600, all making the same commitment, and it was not long before the movement spread beyond the USA, reaching the UK not long afterwards.

GideonsUK continues to be active, placing Bibles not just in hotels and hospitals but also in such diverse places as care homes, cruise ships, prisons, and with the armed forces and emergency services. Schools are also an important focus of the Gideon ministry, and many of you reading this will probably have received a small Gideon New Testament when you were at school. The armed forces, emergency services and some other organisations have special badged versions with their particular insignia embossed on the front cover.

What effect do the Gideons have?

What does all this achieve? If letters regularly received by the HQ of GideonsUK are anything to go by, quite a lot! A distinctive feature of the Gideon scriptures are the introductory pages which include a 'where to find help when...' section. This lists many of the stressful or difficult situations most of us



encounter at some time or another, and directs the reader to appropriate verses which speak to those situations. We receive many thankful letters and emails from people who have found comfort and encouragement this way while grappling with sometimes very desperate problems, and who have found their lives transformed through what they have read. Some have even been turned back at the last minute from taking their own lives. Not infrequently this help has come from a school testament which had lain unread for many years and turned to as a last resort!

Our local West Hertfordshire branch, which covers the Tring area, is active throughout the year in this ministry. One distinctive aspect of our local work is our support of the Inland Waterways Chaplaincy. The chaplains covering this region hold regular meetings in a canal boat (where else?!) at Apsley, and once a year we join them to supply them with copies of our specially badged IWC testaments, which they have found to be very helpful in their ministry to canal folk.

Help needed

But we now urgently need to recruit new

members if our work is to continue in this locality. In recent years our numbers have shrunk through natural wastage, and those of us who remain are not getting any younger! Is this something you might consider becoming involved with? We are confident that any who do so will find, as we have, that Gideons is a highly worthwhile and rewarding ministry.

It is worth pointing out that certain conditions of membership which may in the past have deterred some people from becoming Gideons have now been removed: everyone is welcome whoever they are or whatever they do. Membership is now open to any person with the appropriate spiritual qualifications and calling. These changes have been made specifically to help the organisation become more accessible and appealing to a larger group of people. We would love to welcome some new members from the Tring area into our local branch, and would encourage anyone who thinks this ministry might be for them to make contact – we'll be delighted to let you know more!

Alan Linfield

High Street Baptist Church
alanlinfield23@gmail.com





your own home care

putting the nursing back into care

Outstanding care provided for you in the comfort and privacy of your own home by caring, kind and compassionate staff who are handpicked for their commitment and passion for excellent care. Safety, kindness and gentleness are our core values.

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To talk to us about your care requirements, or if you would like to work for us, please call: Helen Yates RGN on 01442 843064 or email admin@yourownhomecare.co.uk

www.yourownhomecare.co.uk



Save the children 100 years on

In the beginning

Just as now, 100 years ago famine often followed wars, having a devastating effect on young lives. After the First World War ended, Britain kept up a blockade that left children in cities like Berlin and Vienna starving. Malnutrition was common and rickets were rife. An eye witness reported that 'In the hospitals there was nothing but paper bandages'.



Eglantyne Jebb

Save the Children's founder, Eglantyne Jebb, and her sister Dorothy Buxton, were part of the Fight the Famine movement, spreading information about what was

happening in Europe.

In 1919, Jebb was arrested for distributing leaflets in Trafalgar Square bearing shocking images of children affected by famine in Europe, headlined: 'Our Blockade has caused this – millions of children are starving to death'.

Jebb was tried for her protest and found guilty. But the prosecuting counsel was so impressed with her that he offered to pay the £5 fine himself.

Save the Children

Soon, the sisters decided that campaigning alone would not be enough – direct action was needed. In May 1919, the Save the Children Fund was set up at a packed public meeting in London's Royal Albert Hall.

In 1921 Save the Children raised considerable funds for refugee children in desperate need. Single donations ranged from two shillings to £10,000. It gave the money to organisations working to feed and educate children in Germany, Austria, France, Belgium, Hungary, the Balkans and for Armenian refugees in Turkey. Later, famine in Russia saw children struggling in dire conditions.

To raise money for these children, Jebb and her colleagues used page-length advertisements in national newspapers and footage of famine and disaster work in operation. Films showing the conditions children were facing, screened in cinemas up and

down the country, were unlike anything else seen at the time.

With the funds raised, Jebb and her colleagues filled a ship with 600 tons of aid bound for Russia. From winter 1921 through much of 1922, daily meals provided by Save the Children helped keep 300,000 children and more than 350,000 adults alive – for just a shilling per person per week.

Save the Children had not been set up as a permanent organisation, but it soon became one after it was called on to deal with emergency after emergency.

As Buxton moved to focus on political campaigning, the charismatic Eglantyne Jebb, as honorary secretary, became a force to be reckoned with. Persuasive and committed, Jebb quickly established Save the Children as a highly effective relief agency, able to provide food, clothing and money quickly and inexpensively.

In the 1920s, we started focusing on working here at home in Britain.



Children in 1921 being fed

The rights of the child

Armed with ideas ahead of her time, Eglantyne Jebb wanted to make the rights and welfare of children something that everyone took responsibility for.

She said: 'I believe we should claim certain rights for the children and labour for their universal recognition, so that everybody – not merely the small number of people who are in a position to contribute to relief funds, but everybody who in any way comes into contact with children, that is to say the vast majority of mankind – may be in a position to help forward the movement.'

Jebb's 'Declaration of the Rights of the Child' was adopted by The League of Nations, a forerunner to the UN, and it inspired today's UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Present Day

Save the children believes that all children deserve to thrive, not just



Present day

survive. They will then be in a position to make their mark on their world and help in the building of a better future.

Save the Children stands side by side with children in the toughest places to be a child. They do whatever it takes to make sure children survive, get protection when they're in danger, and have the chance to learn.

Save the Children protects children who are in danger, exploited or neglected. Our child protection teams work tirelessly to keep children safe around the world.

Whether a child is living on the streets, moving across borders, in a refugee camp or an institution; whether they are at risk of child marriage, dangerous work or being recruited as a child soldier – we are there, standing side by side with them working to protect them, especially when they are made more vulnerable by natural disaster, poverty or conflict.

And, as well as working on the



Helping children survive abuse, exploitation

ground to directly support vulnerable children, we're helping governments around the world strengthen their child protection systems and train social workers.

Tackling poverty and its causes

In 2017 Save the Children helped bring 1.6 million children out of extreme

poverty. The effects of child poverty can be devastating – and it lasts a lifetime.

Around the world, the poorest children are most at risk of disease, malnutrition and stunting. They're more likely to miss out on school, or get a poor-quality education. And there's a greater chance they'll suffer early marriage, physical violence or child labour.

And now governments are recognising this too. In 2015, more than 160 national leaders signed up to seventeen Sustainable Development Goals, a set of targets that could end hunger, extreme poverty and preventable child deaths by 2030.

We're campaigning tirelessly to make sure governments deliver. We're also working to tackle child poverty in the UK. Britain's one of the world's richest countries, yet rates of poverty are rising – which means more children growing up without the essentials they need to fulfil their potential.

Save the Children helped 10.6 million children through our health and nutrition work in 2017. Over the last twenty-five years, we've been part of a remarkable story of progress. Since 1990, child mortality has almost halved. But despite this leap forward, there's a danger we are leaving many children behind.

5.9 million children still die each year, many from causes that could be prevented, such as diarrhoea and pneumonia. Rates of newborn babies' deaths are not coming down fast enough, and malnutrition remains a stubborn challenge. We're determined to change this.

We're putting pressure on governments and working with global partners to improve health for millions. Every day, our doctors, nurses and health teams are saving lives in hard-to-reach communities around the world.

There's enough food in the world for everyone. But poor breastfeeding practices, lack of support to women, poverty and rising food prices mean that many families simply can't afford it. At the same time, climate change threatens to increase the frequency of droughts and food crises.

Relentless hunger weakens children's immune systems and leaves them vulnerable to infection, disease and death. And for those who survive, malnutrition is a life sentence.

Nearly a quarter of children in the world today suffer permanent damage to their bodies and minds because they don't get the nutritious food they



Health and nutrition

need, often due to lack of breastfeeding practices.

We're committed to ending child deaths from hunger. On the ground, our teams are providing skilled counselling, support on breastfeeding and complementary feeding, screening children for malnutrition, distributing vitamin supplements and helping families improve their income. And we're pioneering new methods of predicting food crises so governments can take action sooner.

Education programmes

Save the Children works with families, in nurseries, schools and the community to help children reach their full potential. Around the world, millions of children never see the inside of a classroom – meaning they miss out of life-changing opportunities.

Other children drop out of school because their classes are overcrowded or their teachers poorly trained. Many are robbed of the chance to learn because of conflict; others because they're a girl, or come from a poor family, or live in a rural area. And for children whose worlds have been turned upside-down by conflict or environmental disaster, education offers stability and hope.

In the UK, too, children's lives are shaped by their education. The poorest children do less well at school than their wealthier classmates – and low literacy is linked to low pay and unemployment.

This has to change. We're working tirelessly in the world's poorest, most dangerous and hard-to-reach places to make sure every child has the chance to realise their full potential and make their mark on the world.

Wherever disaster strikes Save the Children are there to help save lives. Right now, we have emergency appeals for our work in Indonesia, Yemen, Syria and for the Rohingya in Bangladesh.

Save the Children in Tring

It was in 1963 that local people created a branch pledged to raise money for Save the Children. The first meeting was held at 58 Goldfield Road and fourteen people attended. Branch members held various events such as jumble sales and the selling of Christmas cards. They also distributed collection boxes and sacks for good clothes around town.

Such was the success of the branch that by 1978 they had managed to secure shop premises at 85 High Street and begun successfully trading as a Save the Children shop. Patience Cartwright managed the shop on a voluntary full-time basis for many years from its inception, ably assisted by a band of volunteers (and her family), too many to mention by name.

We need YOU!

The shop is still managed and run by volunteers and plays a vital role in raising funds, loyally assisted by the population of Tring and district who are generous with their donations of clothes, toys, bric-a-brac and books that can then be sold in the shop. Such is the generosity that the shop is able to forward goods to other Save the Children shops who are not in such a fortunate position. Items that are unsaleable are recycled and the income credited to the shop.

For the last fifty-six years, Save the Children has been active in Tring. Its volunteers participate in local events such as the carnivals, Apple Fayre and treasure trails. Staff shortages are now affecting our ability to stay open during normal working hours. It is FUN working in the shop and we would be delighted to welcome new volunteers for however short or long a time. Anyone interested can apply on-line or in the shop. Why not call in and have a look at what we do?

Anne Chatterley

Save the Children Shop, Tring

Is the resurrection fake news?



In 2018, Easter Day fell on the 1st April. That only happened four times in the last century, the last time being in 1956. As a child I remember my parents

laughing about the April Fools' spoof produced by BBC TV's Panorama, which featured a Swiss family harvesting their spaghetti trees.

The problem nowadays is that with the growth of 'fake news' people don't always know what to believe. St Mark proclaims the extraordinary news that Jesus, who had been crucified, has been raised from the dead. Is it a hoax? Could this be fake news too?

Well, if I were recording those events, I certainly wouldn't do it in the way that Mark does. His gospel splutters to an end in confusion, bewilderment and terror.

If you were making it up, you would never have two women discovering an empty tomb because in the law of the time, women weren't able to appear in court as witnesses and their testimony would be dismissed. And why would two women go to the tomb when, by their own admission, they couldn't roll the huge stone away from the entrance? When they do arrive and see the young man dressed in white, they don't fall to their knees in instant belief. Instead they run for their lives, scared out of their wits! And then, far from believing and proclaiming the good news of Jesus' resurrection, they don't dare tell anyone anything of what they had seen.

You could hardly think of a more depressing finale than the one we have in Mark's Gospel. And yet it is precisely because of these things that the Gospels have such power and authenticity. Even though the disciples had been told that Jesus would be killed and raised to new life, they simply didn't believe it – at least not at first.

It's all too tempting for us to dismiss these first century Galleians as naïve and gullible. We conveniently forget that one of the main schools of religious teaching, the Sadducees, held that there is no resurrection. They weren't stupid: they'd seen death often enough and they knew that dead bodies don't come back to life.

The Gospel accounts were not

invented by a group of people who fooled themselves into believing the unbelievable. They were men and women who had been confronted unexpectedly, astonishingly, with the God who enters into our broken world, into situations where everything seems hopeless, bringing light and hope.

The heartbeat of Christianity is not some vague notion that things might get better, but which has no basis in reality. Almost forty years ago the Monty Python satire 'Life of Brian' upset a lot of Christians, especially the crucifixion scene at the end. You may recall the controversial scene where one of the thieves hanging on a cross next to the crucified Brian tells him to cheer up. The thief breaks into a jolly song, 'Always look on the bright side of life'.

But the film spectacularly missed the point. Groundless optimism such as that does not and cannot offer real comfort and solace. As we look around the world it is certainly easy to lapse into despair. Yet greater than acts of evil are the actions of self-giving love. When a gunman took hostages in a supermarket in Trèbes in the south of France last year, Lieutenant-Colonel Arnaud Beltrame, a 44-year-old gendarme, offered to swap places with one of the women hostages, knowing that three hostages had already been killed. Tragically the gunman stabbed and shot the policeman and he died of his wounds. His self-sacrifice spoke powerfully to people of all cultures and religions across the world.

Lieutenant-Colonel Arnaud Beltrame was a practising Christian and what inspired him to offer his own life for another was nothing less than the example of Jesus Christ.

Jesus' resurrection confounded the first disciples, just as it confounds people today. It is God's promise that his love is more powerful than the worst that evil can throw at us. His love will overcome all things and will triumph. For Arnaud Beltrame

death was not extinction but the door to eternity and life with God. And resurrection hope is not just about the future: it is also a reality to be lived out here and now.

People of all faiths – and none – find a multitude of ways to support communities who need help. But for Christians, it is the victory of Christ which inspires people the world over to acts of self-giving love. I think of the numerous food banks, credit unions, children's groups, lunch-clubs for the elderly and work with the homeless that are supported by the churches of this diocese right across Hertfordshire and Bedfordshire, as well as the countless untold acts of neighbourliness and compassion. These are all examples of resurrection life bubbling up in the midst of a fearful world beset with anxiety. Such is the power of the resurrection of Christ at work among us today. This is not fake news – it is good news.

Let us proclaim afresh the good news of Christ's resurrection and pray for grace to be Easter people who live out his resurrection in our daily lives with joy.

The Lord is risen! He is risen indeed, alleluia!

Alan Smith, Bishop of St Albans



DENS Foodbank

High Needs List Feb 2019

- | | |
|------------------------------|-------------------------|
| ✓ 10p carrier bags | ✓ Long life fruit juice |
| ✓ Meat (Tinned) | ✓ Long life milk |
| ✓ Potatoes (Tinned or Smash) | ✓ Jam |
| ✓ Vegetables (Tinned) | ✓ Chocolate |
| ✓ Sponge Puddings | ✓ Cleaning sprays |
| ✓ Custard | ✓ Shower gel |
| ✓ Tinned fruit | ✓ Toilet rolls |

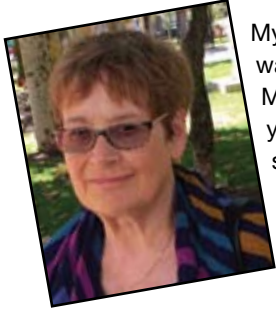
Please note that:

- We request that all items are within their best before date and unopened.
- **At the moment we have good supplies of Dry Pasta, Tea and Breakfast Cereals.**
- All these items will be used to help those in need across DENS Services, supporting the Elms, Day Centre and Foodbank.

Thank you for your support.

For donations/deliveries, Weekdays 10am - 12pm
The Hub, Paradise, Hemel Hempstead HP2 4TF, T: 01442 250969 E: office@dacorumfoodbank.org.uk
www.DENS.org.uk Charity No: 1097185

Seventy years up the tower



My dad, Chris Badrick, was born in Long Marston in 1906, the youngest of seven sons. His older brothers, Percy and George, died in the Great War and are commemorated on the war memorials. The family were Baptists and attended the Baptist chapel in the village.



there were restrictions on when they could be rung. He was sent to train for the army, but after a period of training he was invalided out and his skills in the grocery trade were used in managing the NAAFI in Halton.

After the war, Dad was made general manager of the three Co-ops in Tring, Chesham and Wendover, so the family was required to return to Tring, where they moved into a big old house in Western Road. The Co-op owned a whole stretch of land from Western Road to King Street, where Stanley Gardens is today. In addition to the house, there was a derelict Baptist Chapel, an abattoir, rose gardens, orchard, tennis court and a coalyard. This move meant Dad could ring with the Tring tower again and eventually he became Tower captain.

As a child, I went on many of the bell-ringing outings, which were great fun and there was always a good tea. We could never go out as a family on a Sunday, unless it was for ringing or a church event, so it is not surprising that I married a bell-ringer. My brother and I had been encouraged to take up ringing, of course, and I did manage to master call changes. Over the years Dad introduced lots of young people to bell-ringing. He also taught my two eldest children to ring, so his love of bells has been passed on down the generations, which is a worthy tribute to a man who spent nearly seventy years up the tower.

Vanda Emery, ex-St Peter & St Paul



Towards the end of the war, the family moved to Charles Street in Tring and started to attend Akeman Street Baptist Church. The boys were quite naughty and it was fun to play around in St Peter & St Paul's churchyard. One Friday evening Dad was caught by the Choirmaster and hauled inside where he was told 'If you've got nothing better to do than mess about, then you can come and join the choir!' So he did, and he got paid too, and he stayed until his voice broke.

At this stage it was the custom to send teenage choirboys 'up the tower' to learn bell-ringing. Some took to it and some didn't, but for my dad, he really

loved it, and it became 'his life'. Bell-ringers rang twice on Sundays, for the morning and evening services, and they were expected to attend these services after they had finished the ringing. The two back pews were reserved for them.

During this time, Dad was apprenticed at the Co-op, where he started as an errand boy, cycling round all the villages delivering orders and promoting less popular lines, because he definitely had 'the gift of the gab'. The Co-op used to sell everything and had three shops in the town. Dad was very outgoing and did well there.

In 1930 he was married to a local girl, Daisy Cherry, in St Peter & St Paul, and lived in Langdon Street, where they brought up their young family. In 1939, Chris had a promotion to the post of manager at the Co-op in Wendover, so the family moved to live above the shop. They attended St Mary's in Wendover and Chris was soon ringing the bells there, although once war broke out,

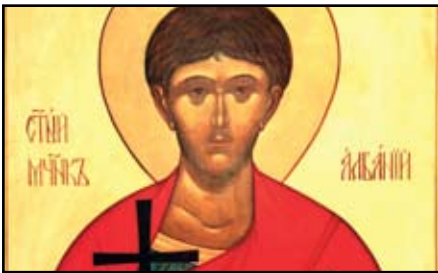


Exploring early poetry, history and language

As Spring takes hold, why not spare a few hours to consider beginnings of a different kind? At St Albans Cathedral's Adult Learning programme, this month's events look back to Anglo-Saxon England, in which the story of St Alban took shape, the Abbey was founded and the language we speak today was first written down. Experience the strange and beautiful poetry of the Dream of the Rood; have a go yourself at speaking Old English; or explore the beginnings of the cult of Alban.

St Albans runs a series of events for adults to continue the long history of learning at the Abbey. Our termly events cover a diverse range of subjects – from medieval languages to science and faith, from art and music to theology – and we hope to welcome you at any or all of these events!

TALKS



Alban: How a Roman-British martyr became an Anglo-Saxon saint

Date: Thursday 4 April

Time: 7.30-9.00pm

Price: £10

This talk will explore how the Anglo-Saxons re-shaped earlier traditions about Alban to make him into the 'first martyr of the English'. Drawing on his expertise and doctoral research into early medieval devotion to St Alban, Dr Mark Laynesmith will cover archaeology and literature, focusing especially on the work of the Northumbrian monk-historian Bede.

Tutor: **The Revd Dr Mark Laynesmith, University of Reading**

Venue: Board Room, Holywell Lodge



The Dream of the Rood: an Anglo-Saxon vision of the Crucifixion

Date: Wednesday 10 April

Time: 8.00-9.00pm

Price: £10

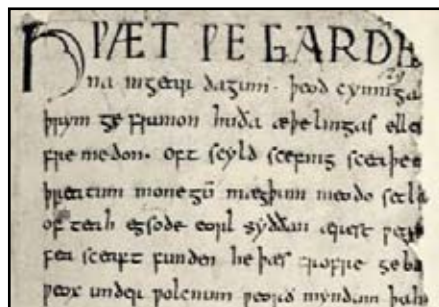
A candle-lit and atmospheric recital of the beautiful Anglo-Saxon poem of the Dream of the Rood – a vision of the Crucifixion in the voice of the Cross. Using a mixture of the original Old English and modern language to make this poetry accessible while still authentic, this evening will be a lovely and unusual opportunity for reflection as we prepare to enter into Holy Week.

Tutor: **Caroline Godden**

Adult Learning Officer

Venue: The Quire, St Albans Cathedral

STUDY DAYS



Introduction to Old English in a day

Date: Saturday 6 April

Time: 10.00am – 3.30pm

Price: £25

An opportunity to learn the language spoken by Offa of Mercia – the founder of the Anglo-Saxon monastery here in 793 – in an informal and interactive session. In order to offer an engaging experience of the literature and language

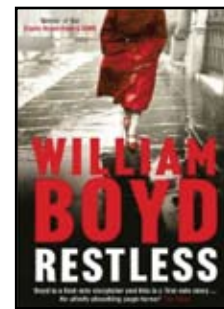
of the Anglo-Saxons, this course will introduce some basic grammar, vocabulary and historical context, culminating with an opportunity to translate some sections of a text used by an Anglo-Saxon tutor, Aelfric of Eynsham.

Tutor: **Caroline Godden**

Adult Learning Officer

Venue: Board Room, Holywell Lodge

READING GROUPS



Do you enjoy reading and want to discuss thought-provoking novels with likeminded people? Join the **Book Club** on Tuesday 9 April to discuss *Restless* by **William Boyd**

at 2.30pm or 6.00pm in the Lawrance Room. All are welcome, no need to book.

Have you studied an ancient language and want to practise it (or jog your memory of it!)? Keep up your **Latin** (Monday 1 April), **New Testament Greek** (Monday 1 April), **Hebrew** (Tuesday 9 April) and **Old English** (Tuesday 9 April) with our **Language Groups**; please see our website for details of the texts.

If you're still looking for some thought-provoking Lenten reading, why not pop into the Cathedral Library and take out a copy of one of the Dean's suggested books, which are now displayed in the collection?

To book tickets and see the full Adult Learning programme: go to our webpages at www.stalbanscathedral.org/learning or call the Box Office on 01727 890290 or visit the Box Office (situated in the Cathedral Gift Shop). We do not wish the cost of our events to be prohibitive, so are pleased to be able to offer a small bursary fund. Please email studycentre@stalbansecathedral.org for more information.

Easter hymns unravelled

From page 13

1. All Glory Laud and Honour
2. All Heaven Declares
3. And can it be
4. Be still and know that I am God
5. Be still for the presence of the lord
6. Breathe on me breath of God
7. Christ the lord is risen today
8. From Heaven you came
9. He is lord
10. I danced in the morning
11. I know that my redeemer lives
12. Make way, make way
13. Morning has broken
14. Ride on, ride on in majesty
15. Rock of ages
16. The old rugged cross
17. There is a green hill far away
18. Thine be the glory
19. Were you there
20. When I survey the wondrous cross

Can God suffer?



Do you like *Alleluia Sing to Jesus*? This wonderful Eucharistic hymn was written by William Chatterton Dix who was the manager of a marine insurance company in Glasgow and wrote hymns in his spare time. He also wrote the hymns *What Child is This? As With Gladness Men of Old*, the Harvest hymn *To thee O Lord our hearts we raise* and many others. At St Peter &

St Paul's we recently sang *Alleluia Sing to Jesus* to the best tune – Welsh, obviously – *Hyfrydol*, written by a 20-year-old weaver R H Pritchard from Holywell, Flintshire. The second verse starts thus: *Alleluia! not as orphans / are we left in sorrow now: / Alleluia! he is near us; / faith believes, nor questions how.*

As a fully paid-up member of the awkward squad I sang 'and questions how.' I am not alone in not liking this line: the Jubilate Hymnbook has changed it to *faith believes, but knows not how*. So how much should a Christian question their faith? I think we always should.

At our February meeting of the Tring Anglican Team Book Group we discussed *Heresies and How to Avoid Them: Why it matters what Christians believe* edited by Ben Quash and Michael Ward (SPCK, 2007). My online dictionary defines a heresy as 'belief or opinion contrary to orthodox religious (especially Christian) doctrine'. It comes from the Greek word for choice. Of the eleven choices or heresies, only one of the proponents physically suffered for what they taught, which is obviously one too many.

Opinion was divided on the book, which is always good fun. If we all agree a book is good, rubbish or just plain average it makes for a less interesting book group meeting. The book describes the time the heresy arose, the person or persons who led it and what the standard or orthodox position is. I found that I believed the orthodox view (what Catholic, Anglican, Baptist, Methodist, United Reformed Church, Eastern Orthodox, Lutheran, etc churches have taught) on ten out of the eleven heresies.

The one exception is that I believe that God can suffer so I am guilty, apparently, of Theopaschitism. Orthodox Christian belief says that God is impassable, that is, that God cannot suffer. Orthodox believers have always said that while the human Jesus suffered on the Cross and at other times in his life (when his friend Lazarus died, for example) the Divine Christ did not suffer at all. They reject the idea that God can change and suffering is a form of change.

Many modern Christians who have thought about this (as opposed to the sensible ones who knew it is a mystery and therefore not necessary to consider) have identified three reasons why the traditional view is suspect.

The first is that the church, when it established this view around 500AD, was too influenced by the Greek thought of thinkers such as Plato and Aristotle.

The second is that on this topic Greek thought seemed to be out of line with the description of God in the scriptures where God seems emotionally involved in the fate of the people of Israel. While I don't take everything in the Bible literally, I am sceptical about those who say they do and then pick those verses they take literally and ignore those verses which don't support their point of view. Here are some verses which depict God as changing, suffering or having

compassion: The word of the LORD came to Samuel: 'I regret that I made Saul king, for he has turned back from following me, and has not carried out my commands.' 1 Samuel 15:10-11; 'It was no messenger or angel but his presence that saved them; in his love and in his pity he redeemed them...' Isaiah 63:9; 'So they put away the foreign gods from among them and worshipped the LORD; and he could no longer bear to see Israel suffer.' Judges 10:16; 'and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ—if, in fact, we suffer with him so that we may also be glorified with him.' Romans 8:17.

If you believe in God then you probably also believe that human words cannot convey the mystery of God. Having said that, these biblical writers show God and the Risen Christ as changing or suffering or suffering with us.

The third and possibly major challenge comes from the suffering seen in the two world wars of the last century. Key in this debate was a German theologian called Jürgen Moltmann who witnessed much suffering in the Second World War, including being held as a prisoner of war by the British. And we didn't release him until April 1948. Moltmann argued that God is involved in the suffering of the world: Any other answer would be blasphemy. There cannot be any other answer to the question of this torment. To speak here of a God who could not suffer would make God a demon.

So, for me, God suffers with creation. I would rather go with the Bible and Moltmann than Aristotle and Plato. The writer of the chapter in the book, Michael Ward, makes a good case for the unchanging nature of God, which means he cannot suffer. But perhaps God is unchanging in his compassionate nature. I don't mind that other people hold a different view but I don't think I am going to be drummed out of the Church of England for this opinion.

Of one thing I am sure – it is that humans and animals can suffer. Perhaps we could spend more time helping Christian Aid (which works with people of all faiths and none to help people of all faiths and none) or the RSPCA or other similar organisations to relieve the sufferings of our fellow creatures.

Jon Reynolds, Tring Team

New members of the Parish Church

Congratulations to Charlie and Jo Cowpe who have recently had twins, a brother and sister to Alice and Nancy. While their family is a regular part of the St Peter & St Paul congregation, so far Phoebe Elizabeth and Joshua Peter, born on 7 December 2018 and weighing in at 5lbs 13oz and 6lbs respectively, have been the quietest of the babies in Church as they have slept through the services – but I am sure we will hear their contributions to the sounds of worship soon!



The Editor

Social awareness



Before the Men's Society Meeting on Social Awareness, we looked at the current edition of Comment and counted the number

of articles in it which raise awareness. I counted at least six in the February issue.

Jeremy Buckman began by thanking the members for accepting his offer to co-ordinate the Men's Society and chair their meetings on the retirement of John Hawkes. John was thanked for all he had done, particularly in establishing the society as a viable group, and in encouraging men from the villages to join. One was Jeremy, who was well qualified to take over having already taken on the role of organising the Society's dinners, and also being the leader of a local cycling group.

Jeremy opened the discussion on social awareness by asking each member for one aspect they thought particularly important.

Ted began with being neighbourly, and looking out for their next door neighbours' needs. Later someone added that, due to age or circumstances, that neighbours, family and friends rather than the wider country and world problems might dominate our concerns.

David G said that with the declining number of clubs and gatherings there were fewer places for social interaction, and hence awareness, for both young and old. He recalled six clubs he had belonged to in his youth.

David W said that as well as having concern for family, friends and close associates, we should include the much wider world of local, national and international concerns and that this concern should involve action. I mentioned the particular needs of national issues such as homelessness and refugees.

John said the ability to relate to and share the feelings of others was important.

Clive R mentioned that it was valuable that the Rector keeps us informed of parish needs by the use of emails, websites and Facebook.

Martin thought that the concept involved being aware of the needs of others and how to assist them, and our own responsibility to avoid being an unnecessary burden on one's neighbours.

Jeremy himself had looked through the last three editions of Comment. Attitudes are important; for example, a new housing estate meets obvious needs, but 'not in my back garden'. Awareness should lead to action but there is nimbyism in us all. From the ensuing discussion, often with two animated debates at the same time, it showed that while aware of the housing shortage, members did not understand its causes, nor who was responsible for solving it. The different roles of developers, local and central government, housing associations and technical terms like 'affordable' were not widely understood.

I am a housing architect, but not an expert on other aspects of housing. I attempted a very brief history of housing the poor. In the mid-19th century, Christians encouraged the idea of five per cent philanthropy: investors would loan at less than the market rate. The LCC later took on the task of housing the poor, and after the First World War, built healthy homes fit for heroes – to provide men fit for the army and with gardens to grow their own food. Quaker industrialists built villages, complete with amenities, some not limited to their own employees.

Then in the mid-20th century, churches were amongst those establishing housing associations to provide an alternative and addition to council housing. A similar initiative is required today as the housing shortage has been increasing since the 1970s, but is now so acute that it requires a national, and not just Christian, response.

Our awareness was very much centred on housing and homelessness, and returned to this even after Jeremy had reminded us of the wider remit. One continuing question was: how do we help those who are unwilling to seek help?

One 'off piste' debate was on prefabricated housing. The photograph shows Y Cube prefabricated housing for young people in south London developed



by the YWCA.

We can try to keep 'socially aware' by reading a daily paper, listening to radio and TV news and current affairs programmes; also by keeping in touch with family and friends by using modern communications methods as much as possible.

All men are invited to attend meetings which are usually on the first Wednesday of the month at 7.30pm (meals available) at the Half Moon in Wilstone. For details of meetings, including lifts, contact Jeremy, email jeremybuckman814@gmail.com.

Leslie Barker, St Peter & St Paul



The place of music

If you read my article in the March edition of Comment you may have been left wondering why the two photographs showed St Andrew's Church

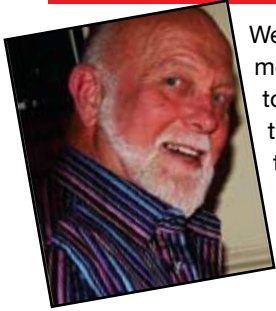
in different locations.

Unfortunately the extract from the Daily Mail which prompted my article could not be reproduced as it was subject to copyright, so I have written a small piece in order to clarify the position.

The Church was built in the late 1840s on a site in Wells Street which is located within London's West End. It became a meeting place for many of the top musicians of the day and was known for the calibre of its music. But after the First World War, for reasons unknown, attendances fell dramatically and resulted in it being closed in 1931. Planners wanted to demolish the Church and replace it with offices but, following a public outcry, the unusual decision was taken to move it to Kingsbury in NW London where it was re-consecrated in 1934. At that time the population of Kingsbury was expanding as part of 'Metro Land' and presumably the two existing Churches, one dating back to Saxon times, were considered inadequate to meet the growing needs.

Ken Martin, St Cross, Wilstone

Letter from Orkney



Well! Here I am once more, looking forward to the Spring. All the signs are out there now though probably a bit behind you in the South. Our daffodils are

surfacing well and Carrie saw the first full bloom out and about yesterday. We are fortunate that the snow in general bypasses us. We had several flurries a week or so ago which lasted a couple of days but that was it. However, our winter winds accompanying fierce rain have been abundantly apparent.



Our building works are progressing apace with everything weatherproof and the end vaguely in sight. It has been three-and-a-half months so far and the builders have worked every day except two weeks at Christmas. We are both looking forward to the completion.

I have had an epiphany moment. For many, many years I have tried to understand Opera. We both have very eclectic tastes in music but Opera has always eluded me until two days ago. We went to a 'Live screening' of La Traviata, a three-and-a-half hour marathon screened from Covent Garden.

I was reduced to an emotional wreck. I make no excuses for the tears that rolled down my cheeks. I was so engrossed in a performance that sucked every last vestige of emotion out of me, I then realised this could not be done with a stage play, film or just the music. The strange thing is, it took moving to the remotest part of the UK to bring this about.



Hooray! Our boat trailer has arrived. At last our little 'Peedie Smidge' has transport. Well, she will have once we get rid of the bricks, used pallets, roof tiles, sand and bags of cement cluttering up the front of the house along with our car and Campervan.

The Art classes are going well: Carrie is progressing like a house on fire with her one-to-one sessions with Sheena, and I am on an outside project at The Highland Park Distillery. I know! I can imagine the comments that elicits. However, you would be quite wrong: it is jolly hard work, but enjoyable (definitely NO whisky). I am instructed to sketch a part of the distillery and, by the following week, take along a fully finished painting in oils. After eight weeks the paintings from about eight people will be assessed and hopefully exhibited in their soon-to-

be opened flagship shop in Kirkwall. All jolly exciting.



Carrie has started to learn the local dances. She says, quite rightly, everywhere we go there seems to be dancing. I, however, declined this challenge, mainly due to a damaged knee awaiting replacement; but I have to admit to a personal reticence to prancing about to the 'Westray One-Step' when I could be helping to keep the bar going.

We awoke recently and found thirteen rams in our front garden mowing our grass like mad. Well done, Boys!! Hopefully we will enjoy some spring lambs in about another month. I do enjoy watching them race each other round the perimeter fence. We are really looking forward to the Stromness music festival, last year being our first time. Music is an integral part of the Islands. Every school child seems to play an instrument and all our builders are either Fiddle players or Guitar/Base players. Looking out of our window, I can understand the real need for music, painting, poetry and photography to express the glorious and sometimes harsh beauty that surrounds our little community. Simple words do not do it.

Mac Dodge, St Mary's Stromness



Family Discovery Trail at Gloucester Cathedral



Home schoolers, desperate parents with bored children and all those who like a more exciting way of learning, heads up! The new Family Discovery Trail at Gloucester

Cathedral is a brilliant way of finding out fascinating facts in an engaging and interactive way.



I don't want to spoil the surprises contained in this neat little guide, held together with a sturdy ring which allows the pages to be flipped over easily, but expect scratch 'n sniff, puzzles, pictures and even some regal headgear. It's pitched at families but I think anyone who doesn't like a more traditional tour would enjoy it. It proved especially suitable for my autistic family members, some of whom have a shorter than average attention span, especially if the activity is not screen based!

For just £4.50 you can pick up your own copy of the trail guide in the cathedral gift shop. We were amongst the first people to trial the trail for free as part of the fun at a recent Flea Ents regional blogger meet up and it was much more exciting than I expected as I am not usually a fan of such things.

My children, aged 10 and 13, thoroughly enjoyed hunting for stonemason's marks, counting fish on floor tiles and learning about some of the amazing and occasionally gruesome history of Gloucester Cathedral.

I noticed that even some of the tinier tots were also enjoying using the guide so I'd say it's suitable from around age 4 upwards (maybe with assistance for

under 8s). If doing it all in one go is too much for smaller children, or those with a shorter attention span, you can always do a couple of pages and come back whenever you like to complete a few more challenges.

A homeschooling mum who attended the event said she thought the Discovery Trail and the fabulous free guided tours would be amazing for home schooled children. Each trail and tour contains elements of history, architecture, art, music and more. We really enjoyed the tour which combined some fascinating snippets of information plus some Harry Potter trivia as scenes for two of the famous movies were filmed there.

The guides are so knowledgeable that groups can ask for the tour to be tweaked to suit the audience. We had young (quite tired) children with us so the lovely guide simplified her spiel to suit them whilst giving the adults enough to keep us all interested. However, if you are keen to know all the architectural details, religious or royal history or more,



they have guides with all the know-how to give a detailed tour for those who want it.

You can go on a crypt, tower or library tour – check the website for details. Groups of seven or more are asked to contact the Cathedral before visiting and be aware that guides are volunteers and as such may not always be available. You can, however, pick up a self-guiding booklet (£2) from the gift shop if you prefer to explore alone or there isn't a guide available when you visit. You can also download an app which gives lots of information and has some really fun stuff built in.

There's so much going on at the Cathedral you could combine your tour



or Discovery Trail adventure with other events. We spotted the very popular Brunch and Bounce going on while we were there with the Chapter House filled with families enjoying free crafts, a bouncy castle and yummy looking brunch treats all free.

Check out the Cathedral website for details of everything going on from the showing of Disney's Fantasia with live music and classical music concerts to all the Easter services plus an egg hunt.

Entry to the building is free as are many of the events but check on the website as some do carry a charge. If you want to take photographs, there is a £3 charge for a photo pass. I found so much to photograph there – I could populate my Instagram account with #DoorsOfGloucesterCathedral alone for ages!

I also loved snapping my youngsters having loads of fun in the gallery. From dressing up to building custom gargoyles and discovering the magic of the whispering gallery, there's so much to do whatever the weather.

In conclusion, if you think a day out at Gloucester Cathedral would be dry and dusty, think again. We can't wait to go back and explore some more.

There is plenty of parking and the Cathedral is also easily accessible by public transport. The city centre is a few steps away with lots of shops, an outlet centre and plenty of places to eat and stuff to do. The Cathedral has a café which visitors speak highly of, along with toilets. Disabled visitors are welcome and most aspects of the building are accessible with ramps and lifts. Check the website for details.

Afra Willmore
St John the Baptist, Aldbury

Tweet of the month

The Ring-necked Duck is mainly a North American bird which I first saw in 1981 on a gravel pit in Hampshire. It is a bird I have seen in USA, St Kitts, Antigua and the far-flung corners of Britain – namely Shetland and the Isles of Scilly. In the 1980s one wintered on Frimley Gravel Pits for two successive winters and as that was my local patch at the time, I saw it on numerous occasions. I have also seen five on Tring Reservoirs over the year. I think what sealed its fate as one of my favourite ducks was finding a male on Drift Reservoir down in Cornwall in 2006, while I was on a very successful holiday down there. Following this I also found two on Wilstone Reservoir, so it is definitely one of my favourite birds.

Before I launch off into using potentially unfamiliar terms, here are some explanations. Individual feathers on a bird typically do not last its whole lifetime and are replaced regularly. In small birds all feathers are replaced once a year – some are replaced twice though. The process of replacing them is called moult and this process varies

in the number of feathers replaced and time taken according to the species and its age. A bird's plumage is basically the complete set of feathers it has at a given time and can be basically the same all year round or vary from breeding to non-



breeding and indeed with age as the bird goes from a nestling to a full adult – a process that can be completed in months for small birds or over several years in the case of large birds such as gulls and albatrosses.

Like most male ducks a male Ring-necked Duck has three distinct plumages. Its first is a very nondescript juvenile plumage that it has for about five or six months. It then has its normal adult plumage for about eight months of the year. Most male ducks have a post-breeding plumage known as eclipse.

Because they shed a lot of their flight feathers at the same time, their ability to fly and escape danger is reduced, or in some cases, temporarily lost completely. In order to reduce risks to themselves while this happens, they adopt a duller plumage, which is often similar to that of the female of the same species. So basically a Ring-necked Duck can have three different appearances but it is always the same individual. The photo is an adult male in its normal plumage and was taken by a friend of mine and used with their permission.

This got me thinking about the Holy Trinity and how God has three different appearances but is the same. Obviously the Holy Trinity is a complex idea to grasp and comparing it to a duck's appearance is a gross oversimplification. But you can't help wondering if the basic idea isn't the same – to be able to fulfil three different functions. In the duck's case it is to help it survive. In God's case, it is to show how perfect and complete his love is for us.

Roy Hargreaves, St Peter & St Paul

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CLUES ACROSS

1. eg: Organist (8)
7. Picture (5)
8. Capital of Israel (9)
9. But (3)
10. Burst out in anger (4)
11. To buy back (6)
13. Fully grown (6)
14. Tree rot (6)
16. Badge (6)
17. Loud noise (4)
19. Transport for Jesus (3)
21. Old and New (9)
22. Depart (5)
23. eg: Wisteria, Ivy (8)

CLUES DOWN

1. More important (5)
2. Day of giving, prior to Lent (6,7)
3. Actors in a play (4)
4. Supporters (6)
5. First to see Jesus after resurrection (4,9)
6. Priests (7)
7. Driving force (7)
12. Generous 'Thank You' (8)
13. ' ' right or wrong' (7)
15. Boat or ship (7)
18. 'Fling wide the ' (5)
20. Serene (4)

Answers on page 38

Living in uncertain times



I am writing this as our MPs debate the latest meaningful vote on the Government's Withdrawal

Agreement. By the time you will read this, you will know if and how we

have left the European Union. I have no idea on earth what is going to happen – and I reckon I listen to more than my fair share of news and political programmes – and I find none of the predictions particularly convincing.

So we live in uncertain times. But what I find so disappointing about the debate about Brexit (regardless of which side you are on) is the lack of discussion of what kind of country we are aiming to become. If the claims are true that Brexit means taking back control – what is it that we wish to do with that control? Almost all of the conversation so far has been about trade and our economy. In simple terms, how rich or poor are we going to be? Surely the kind of country we want to be has to be about more than that?

Aren't issues such as immigration, our employment laws and our standing in the world (to name but three) more important and complicated than whether or not we shall have more or less money? Does immigration have to be only about jobs? Our employment laws could be based on the value we place on individuals taking into account the demands of business and not whether we are able to sack people more cheaply and easily than elsewhere. Is our standing in the world to be determined by the number of bombs

and billions we have as a country? Are there not broader questions about what sort of society we wish for which will influence the answers? But where's all the talk about this?

Jesus once said: 'For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.' If it's true, then our discussions about Brexit have revealed us to be absurdly obsessed with our wealth to the detriment of much else. Our politicians seem to have taken their eyes off the ball in the face of the growing level of knife crime, rising homelessness and a National Health Service struggling to cope with finite resources and the burden they are called to carry. I don't just want a single crisis summit when something so horrible happens that people feel forced to act; I want a persistent scrutiny on these issues and action to achieve better.

Our lives are more than about our wealth. What I earn is not a very good indicator of the kind of person I am. Whatever we are paid, it is never enough as we nearly always want to have more. I don't end up being particularly happy if all I have becomes little more than a boast to others that I have more than them – especially as there's always someone who will come along with even more. So, if it's true of us, then why not our country? Why have we allowed Brexit to have been hijacked about being all about the economy?

Maybe it will take our departure for us to confront finally these kinds of questions. But I hope we ask the same ones if we stay in or if our leaving is delayed.

Easter is about new life. For

MAY DAY
Wednesday 1 May
6.00am

In Puttenham Churchyard

Time for the annual early setting of alarm clocks to be in St Mary's churchyard for May-Day Madrigals, then at 6.30am into Cecilia Hall for a full breakfast

(fruit juice, kedgeree, sausages/bacon, toast & marmalade, tea/coffee)

Christians, it's about the new life with God that becomes possible by the death and resurrection of Jesus. We are also surrounded by new life that comes with Spring. But like those early disciples of Jesus, we shall have to negotiate what kind of life that will be and what's next?

When it comes to leaving the EU, I hope that what comes next is more than simply whether we end up being richer or poorer but whether we have become a better kind of society: where each is valued for who they are, not what they earn; where each is important for what they do, not what they have; and where we come to realise that the real treasure of our communities is the people that form them.

Didier Jaquet, Tring Team

Close encounter of a clerical kind

It was a long day's drive from Tring. Eventually we arrived at a remote hotel on Dartmoor in the early evening and went straight in to dinner. An elderly gentleman in a body-warmer and his wife were already eating and he looked up and said, 'Good evening'. We were startled and collided to reply, 'Good evening Your Grace/My Lord', (because that's how you spoke to an Archbishop forty years ago).

The hotelier later told us proudly that the Ramseys came every year,

flying down from Durham, where they were living in retirement and that he would drive to Plymouth airport to collect them. Next morning Lady Ramsey said, 'We've been remembering the last time we met – wasn't it cold! The pipes froze and you couldn't wash.' To say that we had 'met' before was a kindly exaggeration – in the memorable freeze-up of Spring 1963, they had come to Exeter for a 'mission' week and we had been nobodies in the audience.

Michael Ramsey's sight was failing, so Lady Ramsey read any post aloud to him over breakfast. Seated a couple of feet away, you couldn't help hearing; the difficult thing was to stop yourself actively listening.

It would be lovely to have a photograph, but it seemed a bit presumptuous to ask them, so we didn't.

Martin & Carole Wells
St Peter & St Paul

In memory of David FE Thallon

In February, in St Peter & St Paul's Church, Tring, we said farewell to one of its most respected and well-loved medical practitioners, long serving Dr David Thallon. Comment magazine asked me, because I knew both David and his wife Jenny, if I would speak to her to get a family view of David's life and career. At the funeral service in Tring the children and grandchildren all took a part in a moving tribute to the doctor. Afterwards Phil asked Jenny for more background information on how the couple met up.

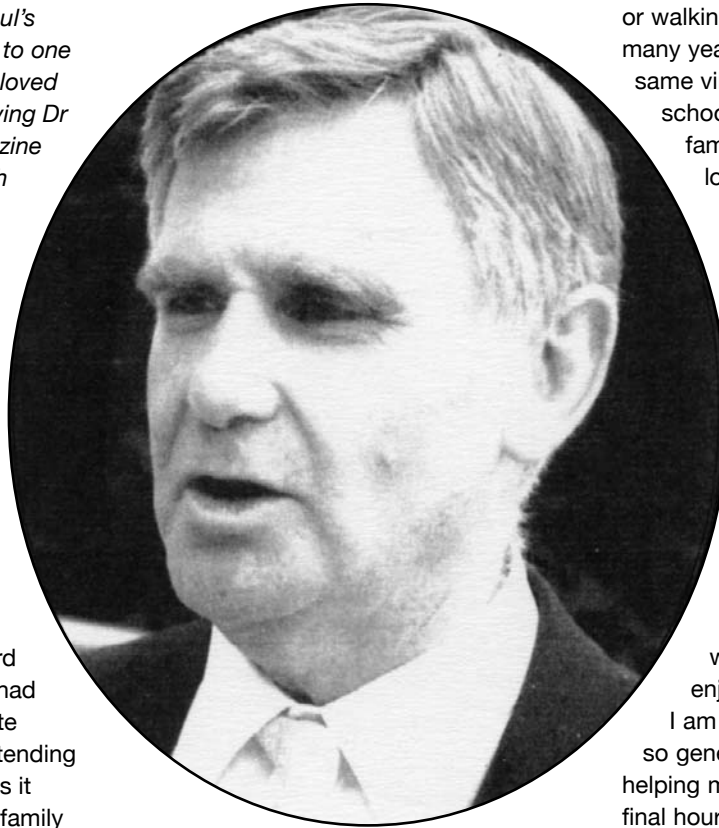
Phil Lawrence
St Peter & St Paul

My husband David was the third son of Australian parents who had come over to England in the late 1920s with two young sons, intending to stay for around two years. As it happened, due to unexpected family circumstances, they remained here and David was born in London in 1933.

David went to school in London, was a good hard-working student and was also very keen on rugby and rowing. At Cambridge, where he read medicine, he played a lot of college and university rugby. His college rowing eight won the Ladies Plate at Henley regatta in 1955, which he always regarded as one of his great sporting achievements.

David studied medicine at St Thomas's Hospital and met me while I was a student nurse. We married a day after his final exams. For the next two years we both worked in hospitals attached to St Thomas's and in Burton-on-Trent before coming to Tring in 1962 where he joined a General Medical Practice and worked with them for thirty years. During his career here he was school doctor at Tring Arts Educational school for many years and also looked after the nuns at St Frances de Sales. David loved his work and was very happy with life here in Tring.

Outside of work David played rugby whenever he could; he was a founder member of Tring Rugby Club, played squash and learned to play golf. His sporting activities became hampered by trouble with his hips and he took up playing the violin again, which he had not done since leaving school. He had



lessons to help him regain his skill on the instrument and for the rest of his years he very happily and enthusiastically played in local orchestras and groups.

During the 60s we had three children, William, James and Jo, and by the 70s they were all in the Church Choir and William became deputy organist. For all this David was very much a Christmas and Easter Churchgoer but he would always go to any service where the choir had a particular involvement.


We had exciting family holidays, camping in France

or walking in the Lake District and for many years, as we still do, a week in the same village in Cornwall during summer school holidays with as many of the family as could make it. David loved being with the children and was extremely proud of all they had achieved: he loved hearing all that they were doing and latterly the same for his seven grandchildren.

Sadly, David became unwell five years ago and was cared for by family and carers until his final few months when he was looked after in St Joseph's Care Home until he passed away on 27 January 2019. We all miss him dreadfully but we must be happy that he so enjoyed his life here in Tring and I am so grateful to all those who so generously gave of their time in helping me and supporting David in the final hours of his life.

Jenny Thallon
St Peter & St Paul

2019
Spring Concert



Tring Choral Society and Orchestra

Conductor: Colin Stevens

Elgar

The Dream of Gerontius

(reduced orchestration by David Meacock)

with The Chamber Choir of
St Clement Danes School

Soloists	
Mezzo Soprano:	Gaynor Keeble
Tenor:	Robert Johnston
Bass:	Jimmy Holliday

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(doors open 6.45pm)

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e mail: tringchoralsociety@gmail.com

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In memory of Mike Weatherley

Mike was born in Loughborough on 5 June 1943 to Doris and Charles Weatherley. Soon after, the family moved to Bexley Heath in Kent where his father joined the local police force and Mike joined the local scout group, eventually becoming a Queen's Scout.

On leaving school Mike attended Westminster College, a school of cookery, where he excelled in creating his specialty dish, chicken and ham pie, which has become a great favourite of visitors to his home over recent years.

At 16, he secured an offer of

employment on the cruise ship 'Oriana' where he mastered his trade and enjoyed seeing the world several times around. From there he joined a catering firm within the company British Petroleum and, now being married with two children,

moved to Camberley in Surrey, while his parents relocated to Brixham in Devon. Unfortunately, his marriage was not to last and he spent many years on his own.

BP relocated to Hemel Hempstead and Mike was offered the post of Catering Company Manager where a new team was brought together. I was part of that team. I enjoyed working

with him in the private dining rooms of BP and it was two years before we eventually got together. In January 1991 Mike organised a dinner and dance as a thank you to all his staff for their hard work, and it was that evening he asked me for a dance. In February he booked a skiing trip for us. A few months later he set up a silver tray with strawberries, champagne and a lovely card saying 'You have the key to my heart and now the key to my front door'.

We were married in St Lucia in September 1991 and the marriage



was blessed, soon after, at St John the Baptist Church, Aldbury. We spent twenty-seven happy years together. He was a romantic. There wasn't a day that went by when he didn't tell me he loved me, and thanked me for loving him. He decorated our lovely house

so many times we lost count and was a very keen gardener. Our garden at home was his pride and joy. Mike spent the years we had together looking after me, and spent his last days making sure I would be well looked after. Mike's sense of humour was second to none and I will miss his fun and laughter, silly jokes and his cooking.

Mike was a brave man who touched

the hearts of many. He was a man who fought an evil illness to the end, trying never to give up. He was never selfish, but someone who would, without thinking, help anyone if he could.

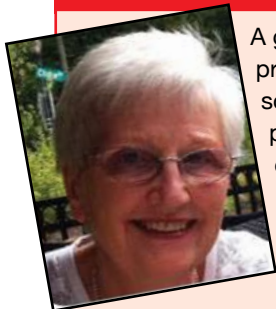
Sue Weatherley, St Peter & St Paul

Before you leave

Before you leave, tell me you will always walk with me.
When you say goodbye, make sure I know it's only for a while.
Take my hand and hold it until you die.
Touch my heart and look at me with your soft forgiving eyes.
Show me your smile, so I can remember our days of happiness.
Show me your tears and I'll remember those days too.
Remind me of the times we walked together,
sat by streams and listened for the morning birds.
Help me understand what happened to you.
Tell me I've done all I could to bring you peace.
I must tell you, I cannot let you go easily.
You know I will grieve and I'm not ashamed.
Speak to me softly and let me hear your voice.
I don't care what you say,
just let me hear you say my name again.
I will be here with you when you pass,
here until the day we are together once more.

Sue Weatherley

The Gift...



A gift isn't always a present or package, sometimes it's a person... and for our Lunch Club on the first Saturday of the month, that person was Mike Weatherley. Mike's

wife, Sue, overheard us talking about needing help with the catering for our lunch club for the bereaved and told me to go and have a chat with Mike.

I was actually quite nervous when I popped over to meet Mike, but I

needn't have worried: he was so delightful and when I explained what the club was about, he immediately said he would help. That was back in March 2016.

Mike arrived at the April lunch, immaculately turned out in his chef's outfit and with a big smile, which was so typical of him, and trays of delicious-smelling food... The first meal consisted of chicken and ham pie, croquette potatoes and buttered vegetables.

Not only did Mike prepare and bring the food but went to each table talking to our guests, asking about their likes

and dislikes and chatting generally. He was a great addition to our team.

This continued until last autumn when the pain from the cancer Mike was fighting made it too difficult for him to continue.

On occasions I've sat with Mike in his beautiful garden and he told me stories of how he became a chef. The last time I saw Mike was the night before he went into the hospice and he sadly died a week later. We miss him very much, not only for his food but for his cheerfulness and happy smiling face.

Margaret Oram, St Peter & St Paul



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In memory of Ron Kennett



We remember Ron as one of our more 'cantankerous' Aldbury parishioners but also someone who was passionate about the church and his faith, someone who thought deeply about the role of the church in society, and who was immensely proud to have been a Church Warden (his wife, Sylvia, was clear that his headstone must include this). Ron had also been PCC secretary and Treasurer of St Mary's, Puttenham, and has been influential in shaping the nature of our Team Parish.

I am also grateful for the personal support and friendship which he offered to Jane and myself.

Being Ron, he asked that the Priest conducting his funeral service would speak about our hopes and fears as we depart from this earthly life. What follows are his own words.

'I found myself attending too many funerals which led me to decide what I would like for mine. I have never wanted an oral eulogy and the short autobiographical note below should suffice.

'Ron was born at Hayes, Middlesex, and most of his formative years were spent there during the war. Swapping interestingly-shaped shrapnel for cigarette cards was a highlight! After struggling through Primary School, he was lucky enough to win a scholarship to what was then a prestigious Grammar School – Bishopshalt. It was then that he woke up a bit and did well, but all

this abruptly changed when his parents relocated to West Yorkshire. He then found himself in a five-year traineeship at the electrical engineering company where his father had secured a senior post. Ron attended Bradford College and duly received the prescribed higher electrical engineering qualification.

'All this was quite remarkable, as he had then met Sylvia and experienced her distracting qualities! They married in the midst of the Suez crisis with negligible



financial resources and proceeded to build their family.

'Ron then joined the newly-formed aircraft equipment business of the then English Electric Company at Bradford. He progressed up through the Company, which became Lucas Aerospace through mergers and acquisitions. This led to Ron becoming a Boardroom figure. This was the foundation for an aerospace

career, which led to global recognition, ultimately reflected by his inclusion in 'Who's Who' and by his election to Fellow of the Royal Aeronautical Society.

'In the last decade of his professional life, Ron was fortunate to be invited to take the position of The Director (chief executive) of the Royal Aeronautical Society, which is the prestigious multi-disciplinary professional body for aerospace activities. Founded in 1866, operating under a Royal Charter, the RAeS is located in a beautiful period house in Park Lane. In this capacity, Ron and Sylvia experienced worldwide travel in visiting the global aerospace community.

'On its 175th Anniversary, Ron was adopted as a "Hero of Bradford College" in recognition of his professional achievements.

'Ron retired in 1998 but took up a part-time Board appointment with the NHS at the invitation of the Secretary of State for Health, which he held until stepping down in 2006. He also served on The Court of the University of Hertfordshire.

'Ron and Sylvia took up residence in Aldbury in 1978, with their family of four: Andrew, Julie, Stephanie and Ruth. They have played an active and enjoyable part in life in Aldbury village and church life, including periods as Church Warden, as Chairman of the Village Hall and as an Aldbury School Governor.

'Ron also played golf at Stocks for some years, which his expert son-in-law described as a rare combination of elegance and incompetence. Which perhaps sums up his life!

Huw Bellis, Tring Team, with Ron Kennett, St John the Baptist, Aldbury

Parish registers

Baptisms

We welcome these children into our church family and pray for their parents and Godparents.

Finlay Toogood
Walter King
Teddy King
Amelia Tutton
Harrison Dennis Day Sinfield

Weddings

We offer our congratulations and prayers to this couple as they begin their married life together.

Kieran Cook & Carly Janes

Funerals

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

Beryl Frances Hobbs 80
Doreen Austin 75
Jean Horwood 79
Mike Rickaman

Notices from the Tring Churches

ST MARTHA'S METHODIST CHURCH



FRIENDSHIP CLUB

The Ladies Friendship Club will meet again on Tuesday afternoon 2 April, when there will be a talk about PACE of Aylesbury (St Martha's charity for the year).

JEAN'S CAFÉ

Making use of our new kitchen facilities, Jean will continue to provide lunches at the Church every Tuesday from (12.00 midday to 1.30pm). Everyone is welcome to drop in for soup, lunch, tea or coffee, etc. Saturday afternoon teas will start later in the spring.

LENT LUNCH

This year's Lent Lunch at St Martha's will be on Wednesday 10 April from 12 till 2.00pm.

MAUNDY THURSDAY

On Thursday evening, 18 April at 7.30pm, St Martha's has been invited to join an Agape style meal at New Mill Baptist Church.

EASTER SERVICES

The service on Good Friday will be at High St Baptist Church this year (9.45am on 19 April) followed by the walk of witness at 11.00am starting from St Martha's. On Easter Sunday morning (21 April) Communion will be led by Revd Rachael Hawkins. Please note the earlier starting time of 9.00am on Easter Sunday morning.

Sunday 7 April 10.00am
Revd Brian Tebbutt

Sunday 14 April 10.00am
Revd Rachael Hawkins

Good Friday 19 April 9.45am followed by walk of witness at 11.00am
Revd Rachael Hawkins

Easter Sunday 21 April 9.00am Communion
Revd Rachael Hawkins

Sunday 28 April 10.00am
John Benson

NEW MILL BAPTIST CHURCH



MILL CAFÉ
Thursdays 12.00 midday

Sunday 7 April
David Nash

Sunday 14 April
Stephen Copson

Sunday 21 April
Harold Liberty

Sunday 28 April
Peter Worley

TRING COMMUNITY CHURCH

SERVICES
Every Sunday 10.30am
Nora Grace Hall

CORPUS CHRISTI CATHOLIC CHURCH

SUNDAY MASS

Confession 5.15pm & by appointment
Saturdays 6.00pm (Vigil)
Sundays 12.15pm with Children's Liturgy
Coffee afterwards

WEEKDAY MASS

Mondays 10.00am
Thursdays 10.00am
Rosary Prayer group after Mass

THURSDAYS

Christian Meditation Group
8.00pm in Sacristy

FRIDAYS

5.00-6.00pm Church Hall
SPOG (Small People of God)
Age 7 + onwards:
Tricia Apps

SATURDAYS

9.00-10.00am *Tricia Apps*
Sacramental Preparation
First Reconciliation and Communion

SUNDAYS

2.00-3.00pm Power Hour
Group Years 7 - 9

JUSTICE AND PEACE GROUP

Michael Demidecki
michaeldemidecki@gmail.com

ROSARY PRAYER GROUP

Thursdays, after 10.00am
Mass

LADIES GROUP

Annabelle Halliday

CHILDREN'S LITURGY

Viv Bryan, Helen Bojarski

SAFEGUARDING

Caroline Burmaster
tringsg1@rcdow.org.uk
Mary Miles
tringsg2@rcdow.org.uk

MEDITATION

Thursdays 8.00pm

HIGH STREET BAPTIST CHURCH



SUNDAY MORNING WORSHIP

Service at 10.30am with Junior Church and Crèche

SUNDAYS @ 7

First Sunday of the month at 7.00pm

ACTIVITY ROOM

Tuesdays 9.30-11.30am
Craft, stories, songs and more! Suitable for 0 to 4yrs

COFFEE FOR A CAUSE

Tuesdays 10.30am - 12noon
Coffee in the foyer in aid of BMS World Mission

TOTS

Wednesdays 9.30-11.30am
Baby play area, soft play, trikes, scooters!
Suitable for 0 to 4yrs

GAMES AFTERNOON

Wednesdays 2.00-4.00pm
Traditional games, puzzles and refreshments

PLAY CAFÉ

Thursdays 9.30-11.30am
Relax while the little ones play
Suitable for 0 to 3yrs

FRIDAY CAFÉ

Fridays 12.00-1.30pm
Freshly cooked lunches

WHO LET THE DADS OUT

First Saturday of the month at 8.30am to 10.00am

Tring Team Anglican Churches

The Tring Team consists of five churches: St Peter & St Paul in Tring; All Saints, Long Marston; St Cross, Wilstone; St Mary's, Puttenham; and St John the Baptist, Aldbury.

1ST SUNDAY OF THE MONTH

8.00am Holy Communion BCP Tring
8.00am Holy Communion BCP Aldbury
10.00am Worship for All Communion Tring
10.00am Sunday Worship CW Long Marston
10.00am Worship for All Aldbury
10.00am Holy Communion CW Wilstone
12.00 midday Baptisms Tring
12.00 midday Baptisms Aldbury
3.30pm Holy Communion Puttenham

2ND SUNDAY OF THE MONTH

8.00am Holy Communion CW Tring
10.00am Holy Communion BCP Aldbury
10.00am Holy Communion Long Marston
10.00am Sunday Worship Wilstone
10.00am Worship for All Tring
11.30am Holy Communion BCP Tring
3.30pm Service of Light Puttenham
6.00pm Evening Prayer Long Marston

3RD SUNDAY OF THE MONTH

8.00am Holy Communion BCP Tring
10.00am Holy Communion CW Tring
10.00am Holy Communion CW Wilstone
10.00am Worship for All Long Marston
10.00am Holy Communion Aldbury
12.00 midday Baptisms Aldbury
3.00pm Stick Sunday Service with tea
3.30pm Taizé Puttenham

4TH SUNDAY OF THE MONTH

8.00am Holy Communion BCP Tring
10.00am Holy Communion CW Tring
10.00am Worship for All Wilstone
10.00am Holy Communion Aldbury
10.00am Holy Communion Long Marston
3.30pm Evensong Puttenham

5TH SUNDAY OF THE MONTH

8.00am Holy Communion BCP Tring
10.00am Holy Communion CW Tring
10.00am Holy Communion Long Marston
10.00am Holy Communion CW Wilstone
3.30pm Service of Light Puttenham

PALM SUNDAY 14 APRIL

6.30am Whipsnade Tree Cathedral
6.30pm Stainer's Crucifixion St P&P

GOOD FRIDAY 19 APRIL

11.00am Walk of Witness St Martha's

WEEKDAY SERVICES

Mondays 9.00am Morning Prayer Tring
Tuesdays 8.30am Morning Prayer Tring
Tuesdays 9.15am Holy Communion CW Tring
Wednesdays 8.30am Morning Prayer Aldbury
Thursdays 10.00am Holy Communion BCP Tring
Fridays 8.30am Morning Prayer Tring
Fourth Tuesday in the month 10.00am Holy Communion Wilstone

DACORUM FOODBANK

Weekdays 10.00am St P&P

BABY SONG TIME

Mondays in term time 11.00am St P&P

YOUTH CAFÉ

Mondays in term time 3.30pm St P&P
Secondary School aged children meet for toast, crisps, coke and chat.

MEDITATION

Thursdays 8.00pm Corpus Christi

COFFEE MORNINGS

Tuesdays 10.30am Aldbury
Tuesdays 10.30am Wilstone
Fridays 10.00am St P&P
Saturdays 10.00am St P&P

YOUNG ADULTS GROUP TAYA

First and third Thursdays 7.30pm St P&P
A discussion group for young adults

FIRST SATURDAY LUNCH

Saturday 6 April
From 1.00pm for those who have been bereaved to meet and eat with others.
Contact Margaret Oram for information on 01442 824575.

CTT PRAYER BREAKFAST

Saturday 6 April at 8.30am

BAPTISM PREPARATION

Second Sunday in the month 11.20am
St P&P Emmie Hobbs Room

AFTERNOON TEA

Fourth Tuesday in the month
2.00-3.30pm All Saints, Long Marston

BOOK GROUP

Fourth Sunday in the month 6.45pm
St P&P

CRAFT AND A CUPPA

Tuesdays 2.00pm, St P&P

MEN'S SOCIETY

Wednesday 3 April 7.30pm
Half Moon, Wilstone

PIANO & MORE

Sunday 14 April 3.00pm St P&P

CTT LENT CHRISTIAN AID LUNCHESES

Wednesday 3 April Wilstone Village Hall
Wednesday 10 April St Martha's
Wednesday 17 April Tring Parish Hall

LENT FILMS 6.30PM

ALDBURY CHAPTER HOUSE

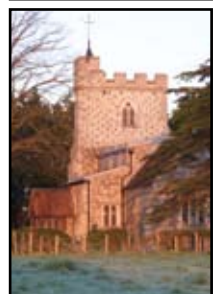
Sunday 7 April 'Risen'
Join us for Evening Prayer at 6.00pm in St John the Baptist, Aldbury, before the film

PILGRIMAGE TO ST ALBANS ABBEY

Monday 22 April 7.00am

RIDGEWAY CHORALE CONCERT

Saturday 27 April 7.00pm St P&P



Useful contacts

TRING TEAM PARISH

Team Rector

(Tring & Puttenham)

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

School Chaplaincy and Team Vicar

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

School Chaplaincy and Team Vicar

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

Associate Priest

(Wilstone)
Rev Didier Jaquet
didier@tringteamparish.org.uk
(Day off Saturday)

Diocesan Lay Minister

Mike Watkin
01442 890407

Parish Co-ordinators

Roy Hargreaves
01442 823624
roy.hargreaves@btinternet.com

Ted Oram

01442 824575
ted@oram-home.net

Church Wardens

Chris Hoare (Tring)
01442 822915

Ian Matthews (Tring)
01442 823327

Jane Brown (Aldbury)
01442 851396

Ray Willmore (Aldbury)
01442 825723

Christine Rutter (Puttenham)
01296 668337

Ken Martin (Wilstone)
01442 822894

Rev Jane Banister (Long
Marston)
01442 822170

Tring Team Administration

Administrator
Trish Dowden
admin@tringteamparish.org.uk

Janet Goodyer
pewsheets@tringteamparish.org.uk

Hall Bookings

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

Hall Secretary

Barbara Ancombe
01442 828325
Bandb33@talktalk.net

Safeguarding

Jenny Scholes 01442 825276

ST MARTHA'S METHODIST CHURCH

Minister

Rev Rachael Hawkins
01442 866324
rachael.hawkins@methodist.org.uk

Senior Steward

Rosemary Berrinner
01442 822305

AKEMAN STREET BAPTIST CHURCH

Minister

Rev David Williams
01442 827881

Administrator

Emma Nash
01442 827881

CORPUS CHRISTI ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

Parish Priest

Father David Burke
01442 863845
davidburke@rcdow.org.uk
www.rcdow.org.uk/tring

HIGH STREET BAPTIST CHURCH

Minister

Vacancy

Assistant Minister

Kevin Rogers
km_rogers@outlook.com

Administration/facilities hire

admin@tringbaptistchurch.co.uk
01442 824054

NEW MILL BAPTIST CHURCH

Minister

Vacancy

JUSTICE & PEACE GROUP

affiliated to
Churches Together in Tring
Secretary
Michael Demidecki
07887 980004
michaeldemidecki@gmail.com
www.justiceandpeacetring.org

OUR CHURCHES ONLINE

www.tringteamparish.org.uk
www.tringchurchmusic.org.uk
www.stmarthas-tring.org.uk
www.tringbaptistchurch.co.uk
www.newmillbaptist.org.uk
www.akemanstreet.org.uk
www.rcdow.org.uk/tring

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COMMENT

Editor

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

Distribution

David Whiting
01442 767403
davidswhiting@aol.com

Treasurer

Chris Hoare 01442 822915

Advertising

Sue Mayhew
0845 8681333

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

Articles and photos 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

Crossword puzzle answers

From page 29

ANSWERS ACROSS

1. MUSICIAN
7. IMAGE
8. JERUSALEM
9. YET
10. RAVE
11. REDEEM
13. MATURE
14. FUNGUS
16. EMBLEM
17. BANG
19. ASS
21. TESTAMENT
22. LEAVE
23. CLIMBERS

ANSWERS DOWN

1. MAJOR
2. SHROVE TUESDAY
3. CAST
4. ALLIES
5. MARY MAGDALENE
6. RECTORS
7. IMPETUS
12. TRIBUTE
13. MORALLY
15. VESSEL
18. GATES
20. CALM



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