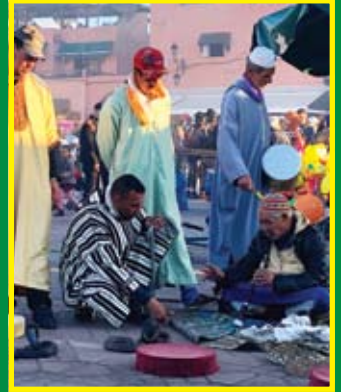


COMMENT

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A walking retreat



The Bishop of St Albans rightly emphasises that the clergy, for themselves and to model behaviour for congregations, need to make time for quiet days and

for retreats. As part of it the three Bishops each lead a series of quiet days for the clergy. Earlier in the year Michelle Grace went to reflections on the Psalms at Bishop Alan's house. Bishop Michael has this year decided that for his quiet days, rather than sitting in the Abbey, he wants to get out and to enjoy creation.

Safeguarding God's Creation is one of the five marks of mission for the Anglican church. A group of us will be going for a 10km walk around Ashridge. The route will include a skylark meadow (above Stool Balk on the way into Aldbury), three glorious bluebell woods (including my favourite, Flat Isleys), and then coming back down the valley into Aldbury past fields full of lambs (well, to-date we have at least seven lambs in one of the fields) and the ability to watch the red kites scouring the countryside for food. As you might have gathered, it is a route that has been planned and will be led by me, and the Bishop will give the theological input. The question is, is it work (don't honestly tell me this is what the clergy do; it sounds like a 'jolly' to me)? Is it prayer? Or is it just a walk?

You will probably be aware that for



My chatty walking companion on the way up Bow Fell with Crinkle Crag behind

me pilgrimage and walking retreats are important. I would never get a sermon written or have any ideas if I just sat at a desk. Walking is conversation-with-God time. All right, maybe it would be truer to say, sometimes walking is conversation-with-God time and the rest of the time it is remembering what I haven't done or planning what I should do if only I got round to it. Much of my walking and very slow running is done by myself with the dog for company and he isn't a great conversationalist. I do like walking with others but, even in a group, I will plod along in happy silence. My favourite English landscape is moorland. Is this the closest that we get in our country to the harsh desert landscapes of biblical lands?

Our Tring Team Parish Book Group recently read 'Another Bloody Retreat: Abbot Peter's desert years'. It is about

life in a desert abbey and, in the prologue, there is an explanation why the desert is so important. The author, Simon Parke, rather cynically says: 'This is precisely why the great religions have liked the space, of course; why the great religions have always gone there. They have gone to the desert precisely because no one lives there; they know they will be alone. If the religions had wanted a normal chat with normal people, they would have gone to the bus stop or the hairdressers. Instead, they retreated to the desert, where the normal is in short supply. You may or may not be greatly impressed by the results of their retreating; I have reservations myself. But to be alone with the alone, to find the inner light, that is why they go.'

I in no way feel called to the monastic life because ministry is rooted in normal people, chats at the bus stop or in the pub. Ministry and church are people based and so a retreat is for me almost the direct opposite. Simon Parke introduces each chapter with a definition of desert. For chapter 1 he says, 'Desert n. a place where you find your name'. It does sound a bit like a trendy fad and it would be far too pretentious to say that in walking I find out who 'Huw' is, but I do genuinely sometimes come back buzzing with excitement and full of ideas and thoughts. Are they my thoughts or have I been in conversation with my God? Who knows? At the very least I have been able to rejoice at the new day that God has given and been able to rejoice in the beauty of creation. I hope to get a couple of days wild camping on Dartmoor this term. You can decide if it is a 'jolly' or a retreat.

Huw Bellis, Tring Team



Flat Isley Copse in Ashridge

Biblical heroes?



Bloody, violent, dirty and dusty sums up most of the biblical heroes in this year's Lent films for the Tring Team.

The series kicked off with Ridley Scott's

'Exodus: Gods and Kings', which involved an awful lot of black eyeliner on the part of the Egyptians. I particularly enjoyed the plague of frogs and locusts. This film was quite an epic at two-and-a-half hours long.

'Noah' featured far fewer frogs but obviously lots of other species. Russell Crowe made quite a taciturn, grumpy

Noah: I would not want to be in his family, apart from the guaranteed place on the ark. Once again, God's wrath was fairly epic with scenes involving most of mankind drowning.

My second favourite film was 'Samson', this was a cross between a biblical Robin Hood and Bionic man. There were some entertaining swashbuckling scenes and foxes setting fire to crops, followed by a temple being destroyed by God's wrath.

Rooney Mara made a great Mary in what for me was the best film, 'Mary Magdalene'. A very different perspective and portrayal of Mary was provided, highlighting how unusual and difficult it would have been for her as a female to

'up sticks' and follow Jesus.

'Risen', the last film in the series, offered a Roman soldier's viewpoint on the Easter story and was enjoyed by many including my son and Betty Aston, for whom this was their favourite. Again, there were some very violent fight scenes.

The films were excellently hosted by the team in Aldbury Chapter House and the refreshments included heaps of popcorn, wine, tea and at one film, some of Shirley's excellent cake. Thanks again for a thought-provoking series of films which made me truly thankful that we don't live in biblical times.

Rachel Munroe
St John the Baptist, Aldbury

The cross



The importance of Easter in the life of believers today has been a key theme in the RS teaching at Tring Park to Year 8. These creative and thoughtful crosses have been

made for the local community of churches. There was no fixed concept as to what they must write; they pooled ideas and came up with some lovely Easter greetings, focusing a great deal on hope, love and joy.

Sarah Bell, Tring Park School



Easter at Bishop Wood



With a late Easter right at the end of the two-week break from school, we were still firmly in Lent at the end of term.

Mr Stanley, our Headteacher, had used one

of his Worship sessions to encourage the children to perform '40 Acts' throughout Lent. These focused on doing something new to help or show your appreciation of others. It got quite competitive in some classes to see who could complete their sheet first.

The penultimate Friday of term saw the traditional Lenten Bazaar, an event

that is now, so I'm reliably informed, well into its fourth decade. The children design games for each other to play for a small fee and the chance to win prizes, usually sweets or chocolate. This year the money raised was shared between Action Aid and local charity, Electric Umbrella (see www.electricumbrella.co.uk).

There is always a theme running through our Worship, and the issue of trust was explored by Mr Stanley through Da Vinci's famous painting of the Last Supper. Some pupils showed good knowledge of how both Judas and Peter were about to betray the trust Jesus had placed in them.

There was time, too, for the Easter

story to feature in RE lessons. Junior age children love a good story and ask great questions: how much would the thirty pieces of silver be worth today? So what had Jesus actually done wrong? Would there have been a lot of blood when Peter cut off the servant's ear? Somehow 'get on with your cartoon strip and we'll talk about that later' doesn't seem to work...

Another tradition in school at this time of year is the designing and building of Easter Gardens in Year 6. The children bring in trays, soil, pots, stones, twigs, flowers and moss to help them create some beautiful reconstructions of the cave where Jesus was buried.

Jon Hall, Bishop Wood School

The view from the foot of the hill



I have attended the Pitstone Hill Easter morning 'sunrise service', organised by High Street Baptist Church, almost every year since it started, getting

on for twenty years ago, and I can honestly say that, whatever the weather, it has always been both an uplifting but also a chilly experience.



We used to meet just in time for sunrise but the logistics of having a different service time every year became too complicated and so, some years ago, it was decreed that as far as High Street was concerned, the sun would rise at 7.00am on Easter morning. Attendance has increased as a result – although it was a challenge in 2018 when the clocks went forward the night before and 7.00am really did feel like 6.00am.

We have experienced rain, snow, sleet, fog and – almost always – a cold wind blowing across the Chilterns – and

we have never actually seen the sun rise. However, 2019 was very different: it was warm! As the whole country basked in summer-holiday weather for much of Holy Week, it became more and more likely that the Sunday morning would be fine and dry, and so it proved to be.

Around thirty members of the congregation, ranging in age from 3 to 75+, made it up to the top of the hill where we had a short service to celebrate Christ's resurrection. We heard again the Gospel account of the empty tomb, and reflected on the Lord's death and the new life we have in him. We also sang (albeit not especially tunefully) a couple of Easter songs; the early hour and the lack of any of our church musicians meant that we were never going to match the great singing that we hear in Tring on Good Friday at the start of the Walk of Witness and in the churchyard at St Peter & St Paul's.

After the service, we hold our annual 'egg-rolling competition' – this has become a popular event, with prizes awarded during the morning service on Easter Sunday, and in recent years there have also been prizes for the 'best-decorated egg' and runner-up. I confess that I have always had some qualms about the waste of edible food that this event represents, and this year the fact that people in the UK throw away some 720 million eggs annually had recently been receiving widespread news coverage. (Don't do it, folks – eggs keep for ages; I have never thrown one away!) However, in the grand scheme of things, three dozen eggs a year, almost

all of which get eaten by the local birds, seems OK when a group of children are encouraged to display their artistic talents and also to learn a bit more about Easter.

This year I was a judge again and the standard of decoration was extremely high; we had everything from a beautiful stained glass window, to an Easter bunny complete with added ears, some delicately marbled eggs, and a jewel-encrusted egg featuring a cross. Once the winners had been chosen, all competitors had to line up on the brow of the hill while my fellow judge and I hot-footed it to the bottom in readiness for the egg-rolling – strictly no throwing allowed. It is tricky trying to work out just how far the eggs may travel but we managed to be in about the right place and then the eggs were 'launched' – rolling and bouncing down the hill, some of them veering off into rough grass quite quickly while others headed straight for us.

This year, the dry and fairly hard ground had the effect of partially peeling quite a lot of the eggs but fortunately the ones that travelled farthest were still identifiable. Winners were duly congratulated and, as our small congregation dispersed – some to walk back along the Ridgeway and into town, others heading back to the car park and their cars – we still had breakfast at Church and our all-age celebration service to look forward to. Egg-rolling was over for another year – and I wonder what the weather will be like in 2020.

Nicky Bull, High Street Baptist Church



Carrying the cross



My family has been walking as part of the Good Friday Walk of Witness for more than twenty years. I can remember Ben, my youngest son (now 22), toddling on to the

grass to join in with the drama performed by ACTs in front of St Peter & St Paul in 1998. But we are newbies!

How did it start? Does it go back before living memory or was there a decision by someone at some time to carry that extremely heavy cross from St Martha's through Tring High Street to Dolphin Square and then to the Churchyard of St Peter & St Paul's Church? How many people have carried

the cross in that time? Who has carried it the most number of times?

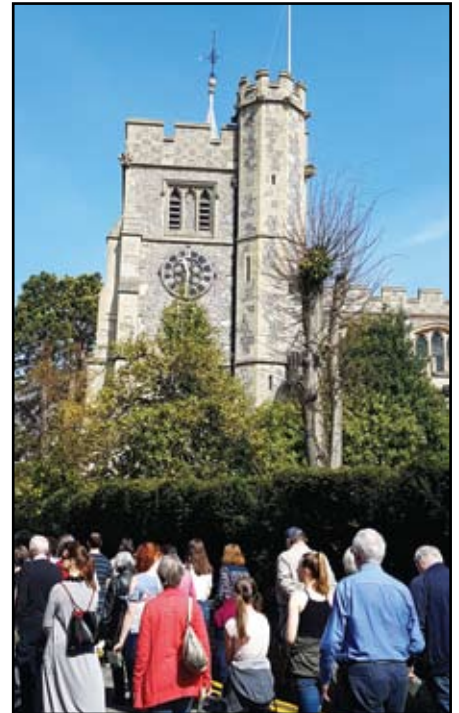
My best information so far seems to put Ted Oram, Roy Hargreaves and Kevin Rogers at more than twenty times... with Roy at 28 times! Paul Phillips and Philip Cartwright joined Roy and Kevin in 2019 which was David Bellis' first year. It was only in 2016 that women were among those who helped to carry the cross: Nicky Bull from High Street Baptist Church and Jane Banister from the Tring Team.

David Eeley does not remember the Walk of Witness in the 1960s. Janet Goodyer remembers that it was in the 1970s when a handful of people met outside St Peter & St Paul's for a service. From then it developed to a walk on the pavement from St Martha's

Methodist Church in Chapel Lane; later that walk was on the road and needed a road closure.

The cross itself was made at Easter 1977 by Tring School for Tring Council of Churches – the forerunner of Churches Together in Tring. But it is thought that before that there was a lighter cross being carried.

When was it accompanied by a drum being struck along the way? Brian Impey thinks that the drummer in the 1970s was Ronnie Franklin, followed by Brian Johnson and then much later by James Everton who does it today. Pam Everton tells me records exist that say the band played in 1977 at an open air service held in the afternoon, not the morning. In 1983 the cross was raised in Dolphin Square. It was called a United Church



March in 1988 and the Salvation Army were part of it till probably 2008...

When did ACTs first perform a drama on the grass outside St Peter & St Paul's? Moira Hargreaves thinks that was in the early 1990s.

The ministers and leaders of most, if not all churches, have helped to lead the worship and the walk itself is open to all and supported by all. Members of the Tring Friday Market were singing with us this year. Hymns include both traditional favourites known by all to some more recent songs that are known to the church congregations. Some prefer to listen rather than to sing.

But Jenny Thallon remembered that years ago shops did not open on Good Friday and the market was not there, only 'the fish man' because it was traditional to eat fish on Fridays. Jenny told me that she used to buy her fish before the 10.00am service and then

worry that the smell might reach people during the service!

Mary Haywood remembers that John Payne Cook started the tradition of serving hot cross buns and coffee after the procession in 1986. Robin Haywood used to order around 250 from Barnetts in Frogmore Street (now Hughes) till his death in 2001 when Roy Hargreaves took over. Roy says we now order 200 from Atkins on Western Road.

At one level the first date does not matter. What matters is that each year Tring is reminded of the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross because God loved us so much, his son died for us. People of all ages have walked and still walk today in rain and snow, cold and brilliant sunshine. We sing hymns together and listen to Bible readings of Christ's Passion at points along the way. Cars stop for the cross, children ask questions, people look out from their

windows and from the coffee shops to pause, wonder and think.

'This year was particularly special,' says Pam Everton. 'It was quieter and there was a greater diversity of those marching together. The innovation of everyone placing rosemary at the foot of the cross was very moving – everyone laying down their burdens, worries, fears, pain and concern for others in need; and afterwards there was such a wonderful mingling together of people, a meeting of friends from across all the churches. Fantastic.'

We may not remember those other first times, but we remember the one that really matters.

Annette Reynolds, St Peter & St Paul

If you can add details to the history of Tring's Walk of Witness, please phone or email me so we can print them next time.

The Editor

The light of Christ



Of all the Christian celebrations, Easter is the most special for me.

Whilst Palm Sunday and Good Friday are powerful, and witness to the world and the town of God's love, the sunrise 'New Fire' service and on into Easter Day itself is when I find real joy and personal engagement. This is at least in part because I am often providing Audio and Visual support for the others, so Easter Day is more about worship than PowerPoints and microphones.

The importance of the New Fire is also, for me, because it is when the



Paschal Candle is first lit, which is used to pass the light of Christ on to all those who are baptised throughout the year. We talk about this with families bringing

children for baptism at the preparation sessions we hold after the second Sunday Worship for All service at St Peter & St Paul's. Baptism is full of very powerful images and the light of Christ being passed from that Easter morning to all his people is one I cherish – well, that and a good bonfire and the bacon and sausages we cook on it.

When you are next in a Church, take a look at the Paschal Candle. See the cross and nails it bears and remember Easter when it was first lit and the light that it has given to all God's people, especially those who have carried that light out of the Church when they have been baptised.

We go in the light of Christ, Alleluia!
Mike Watkin, Tring Team



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Another Easter Monday pilgrimage

As of 22 April I completed my eighth Easter Monday Pilgrimage. Obviously, that is not as impressive as Janet Goodyer who started walking fifty-four years(!) ago but not too bad all the same.

The preparation for each year usually begins with reminiscing about previous years: 2016's snow is always memorable, the various escapee dogs (Daisy slipping her collar on the A414 or Fizz's various breaks for freedom) and, for me, 2014 remains infamous as I spent PE the next day running round the Astroturf for an hour (I was not best pleased). This year was a completely new experience... the sun was shining and it was warm! It is the first year I've ever felt the need to bring sunglasses with me.

As a group we had people with a variety of experience and it was great to be joined by so many people on

their first walk, those who had been persuaded to join friends, those who wanted to join another part of our church life and, of course, those who had a point to prove after losing a race in primary school.

Having met bright and early we headed off on our journey. I think other walkers must always find us a surprising group: we range in age and ability and for me that is part of the joy of it. We welcome everyone from church to join us, regardless of their situation, which gives us an opportunity to talk to new people and in seven hours we can learn a lot about people whom we barely knew at the beginning of the walk. I am sure that if Annette joined us she would be signing people up for Comment articles left, right and centre. (*Eliza is absolutely right and that's the only reason I don't do this walk... The Editor*)

This year my siblings brought out their scouting side, having walked in the Alps, Lake District and elsewhere, this walk seemed to them a piece of cake so they both kept an impressive pace throughout. Lucy and Sam recognised their need for revision or a lie-in (in one case) so joined us at Hemel. Eleanor seemed to take on as many bags as she could from those who were struggling to take their own. George, however, has completed his final year as he has a business scheme to take to Dragon's Den to make his millions. The world will need to prepare itself for 'Hands-Free Pringles'. All in all it was, as always, an entertaining walk.

Our Easter Monday is certainly not how most choose to spend their bank holiday. Girls at my school were



surprised by the answer when they asked how I got so tanned, but it is a wonderful way to spend a bank holiday. The relief when we get our first sight of the Abbey, the happiness (and pain for George as he was half carried) of running down Verulamium Park and the pride when we make up the last hill and can, at last, sit down. The service is always slightly chaotic: filling an Abbey with tired and noisy walkers has an interesting effect.

As we know the Church of England is full of a variety of Christians who may not always agree but, regardless of our differences, there is a shared joy. There is a tangible feeling of celebration and it makes the aches, pains and blisters worth it.

Eliza Bellis, St Peter & St Paul



With thanks to Arun Kataria for the main cover photo and the first two on this page.

Out of the mouths of babes and grandfathers

In the face of continuing news about the effects of global warming, younger (and older) people are increasingly campaigning for more action.

In March the BBC reported a new study that has found that rainfall is becoming more frequent in Greenland and accelerating the melting of its ice. Scientists from the GEOMAR ocean research centre in Germany have been surprised to discover rain falling even during the long Arctic winter. In a warming climate there will be more rain than snow, and it's one more reason why the ice sheet can go into deficit instead of being in surplus.

More recently the BBC reported that because of global warming, the ice sheet and glaciers of the Himalayas are melting quickly and dead bodies that have remained buried for years are now becoming exposed. On almost every newscast there are reports of the effects of global warming.

Sixteen-year-old climate activist Greta Thunberg made a passionate call to action in August 2018. She walked out of school and organised a strike to raise awareness of global warming, protesting outside the Swedish parliament. This action caught the attention of the world's press. In her address she confirms that she is autistic, but states that 'I think in many ways that we autistic are the normal ones, and the rest of the people are pretty strange especially when it comes to the sustainability crisis, where everyone keeps saying climate change is an existential threat and the most important issue of all, and yet they just carry on like before.'

She states that emissions of greenhouse gases have to stop and questions why we are not reducing these emissions. She asks: 'Are we knowingly causing a mass extinction? Are we evil?' But observes that people keep doing what they do because the vast majority doesn't have a clue about the actual consequences of our everyday life, and they don't know that rapid change is required. She regrets that no one talks about it. There are no emergency meetings, no headlines, no breaking news. No one is acting as if we were in a crisis. She concludes her talk with this challenge: '... the one thing we need more than hope is action. Once we start to act, hope is everywhere. So instead of looking for hope, look for action. Then,

and only then, hope will come.' As we find in the Epistle of James: 'What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if people claim to have faith but have no deeds?' and 'faith (hope) without deeds (action) is dead' (James 2:14, 26).

Young people around the world have heard this call: see 'YouthStrike4Climate'. In the UK young people are saying that they are choosing to rise up and take direct action where older generations have failed. They state that we are already facing devastating and irreversible impacts around the world. On Friday 15 February, more than 10,000 students across the UK went on strike to protest at the lack of government action to combat our climate crisis, and on 15 March, 50,000 participated. Over half a million young people took part worldwide.

After the last march the Oxford Mail on 18 March reported that four students from Cheney School, Oxford, have begun lobbying to protect the planet. More than 46,000 people have signed a petition arguing that climate change must become a compulsory and more prominent part of the national curriculum.

The government response is lukewarm if not antagonistic in the face of these protests, with comments such as children would do better to remain in school and read about climate change, and that climate change is already covered in the science and geography syllabuses.

At the other end of the age spectrum, grandfather Sir David Attenborough, speaking at the opening ceremony of COP24 in December 2018, said that climate change is humanity's greatest threat in thousands of years. The British naturalist was taking up the 'peoples' seat' at the conference, acting as a link between the public and the policy-makers. He suggested that climate change could lead to the collapse of civilisation and the extinction of much of the natural world. He concluded that we are facing a human-created disaster of global proportions. He stated that the people had spoken and that time was running out. His new documentary about climate change for BBC One focuses on the potential threats to our planet and the possible solutions. The broadcaster says conditions have changed far faster than he ever imagined when he first

started talking about the environment twenty years ago.

For Christians it is a responsibility, given to us by God, to care for the planet and to protect those least able to deal with the effects of climate change. As a grandfather this is an essential part of my love for my own grandchildren and for all future generations.

The Revd Dr John Weaver
VP of the John Ray Initiative
President of the Baptist Union of Great Britain 2008-09

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Extinction Rebellion: the facts

What is Extinction Rebellion (XR)?

XR is a socio-political movement which uses nonviolent resistance to protest against climate breakdown. Initially formed by a group of academics who studied social change movements, XR is now a large group of volunteers and protesters who have gathered to campaign for radical and immediate governmental action to avert climate disaster. The group (post-protest) has



hundreds of thousands of members who actively protest and campaign in over 100 countries.

What are XR's demands?

1. Tell the truth: Government must declare a climate and ecological emergency, working with other institutions to communicate the urgency for change.
2. Act now: Government must act now to halt biodiversity loss and reduce greenhouse gas emissions to net zero by 2025.
3. Beyond politics: Government must create and be led by the decisions of a Citizens' Assembly on climate and ecological justice.

Have XR's protests worked?

The UK government has now declared a climate emergency. This represents a huge success for XR and the other groups protesting inaction on climate change (most notably in the UK, perhaps, the *schoolstrike4climate*). We've all known politicians to promise one thing and totally fail to deliver and what we need now is action from our MPs. Hopefully this is the start of something meaningful...

What XR are not:

We are not a collection of hippies, privileged middle classes with 'nothing better to do', anarchists or people who take joy from disrupting people's lives. We are people of all ages from all



backgrounds and all countries who are desperate for governments to act now to avert the impending climate catastrophe that scientists and academics agree will happen (and in some ways already is) if we don't drastically change the way we live our lives. The people who will suffer first and have suffered so far are almost always the poorest people on the planet.

What can I do?

1. XR is extremely active on social media and can be followed on Facebook and Twitter to show your support through the usual likes and retweets.
2. Send a quick letter to your local MP expressing your own concerns over climate change and your support for *schoolstrikes4climate* and XR.
3. XR also takes kind and generous donations to fund our ongoing campaign and administrative costs. Donations can be made at fundrazr.com/Global_XR.
4. You can volunteer on a flexible basis (1 hour or more a week) at rebellion.earth/act-now/join-us.
5. You can choose to eat less meat and fly fewer planes.

Tom Reynolds
former Tring School pupil

First Holy Communion, 2019



This year we have a small group of six children. I have had brilliant assistance from Rona, and Andrew (10 years old – a leader in the making!). We have an extended

programme that begins in late September and continues until May.

How do we go about developing the children's faith when dealing with mystery in this factual, evidence-driven postmodern world that does not accept anything unless it can be seen, heard, tasted or touched?

We can give knowledge, which we do, but that is not enough.

I begin with a very simple time of quiet and meditation. We listen to a song then 'sit with Jesus' for about five minutes. This is an important time for the children and adults who also join in.

The children begin to realise that it is in the stillness and silence that they can be with Jesus in a way they may not have experienced before. Most accept the silence readily but some do find it

difficult at first. Many children have not experienced this combination of silence and stillness in the frenetic lives they live.

The aim of this silent prayer time is to give them the gift of silence, where they can experience the God who loves them and wants to be with them; knowing that God loves them – whether they get things wrong or are as good as gold – and he will never give up on them no matter what.

We then move on to the books we use which are called 'We Share in the Eucharist'. This is planned around the parts of the Mass: we learn about beginning of the Mass; we share God's Word; we give thanks; we remember and celebrate; we share the Bread of Life.

After the time of meditation, I try to keep the one-hour class as active as possible – children of this age cannot focus for an hour without some change of pace and some activity! When we get to the Offertory, the children re-enact bringing the bread and wine to whoever is the 'priest'. When we are sharing God's Word, the children stand at the lectern to read. We also practise our

prayers – Sign of the Cross – which is almost like a bookend as we say it at the start of our prayers and also at the end of our prayers. It is also a prayer in itself: recognising the Trinity, and signing ourselves with the cross itself, reminds us of the ultimate sacrifice Jesus made for us. We learn the 'Lord's Prayer' and 'Hail Mary'.

I also use a series of DVDs called 'Brother Francis' who is a sporty Franciscan monk who talks about Forgiveness, the Eucharist, the Sacraments and so on. I use them intermittently to reinforce their learning. While watching, they sometimes turn and look at me in surprise when Brother Francis repeats what I've already said!

These children made their First Communion on Sunday 19 May 2019, at 12.15pm Mass. Please pray for them and their families.

Tricia Apps, Corpus Christi





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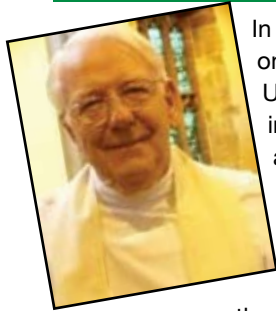
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Honest faith, honest doubt



In 1964 when I was on the staff of the University Church in Cambridge I was asked to baptise a boy called Tom. His parents were research students and I asked

them why they had chosen this name. 'After Thomas the Twin: Doubting Thomas' they said, 'as surely he is the patron saint of the 20th Century.'

Thomas is certainly a character who strikes a chord in the heart of every 21st century Christian's heart. Why?

We have all grown up not in an age of faith but of doubt, where everything is up for grabs, from whether computers will take over our lives completely and AI rule the universe to the existence of God. Not least we doubt whether it is remotely possible to believe Jesus Christ rose from the dead – as the Christian faith claims and which is the heart of the forty days of the Easter season (which represent the time between the first and last Resurrection appearances of Jesus).

To doubt honestly is a healthy thing to do, as long as it does not turn into an excuse to sit on the fence and not commit yourself to anything or anyone. As to the Resurrection, the disciples themselves found it just as hard to swallow, as we sometimes do. When Mary Magdalene and Mary came to the tomb and said they had 'seen Jesus', that he had risen from the dead, the disciples refused to believe them. They doubted. Only when Jesus showed himself to them did they really believe and even then, as Matthew writes, 'some were doubtful'. Mark writes, 'He appeared in different guises to two of them as they were walking.' They also went and took the news to the others, but again, no one believed them. Luke, too, reports that Jesus said, 'It is I, myself. Touch me and see'. But they were still unconvinced, still wondering, for it seemed too good to be true.

The disciples were not religious mystics nor were they stupid people easily taken-in. But when the evidence was in front of them it was overwhelming: then they threw caution to the winds and committed themselves to what they knew from experience was the truth.

But the disciple many of us like to identify with is, I guess, Doubting Thomas. Jesus had appeared to his closest followers and they now believed. But Thomas had not been there and when they told him, 'We have seen the Lord' he wouldn't believe them. 'Unless I see the marks of the nails in his hands,' Thomas said, 'unless I put my hands into his side, I will not believe it.' A week later Jesus comes again and says, 'Thomas, reach your finger here and see my hands; reach your hand and put it into my side. Doubt no more but believe.' And Thomas says, 'My Lord and my God'. Note he did not need to touch Jesus. He had experienced the risen living Jesus and his life was changed.

We don't have the opportunity of a face-to-face interview with Jesus so our evidence for believing the Easter story is second hand. But there is nothing wrong in that: most of our evidence of facts is second hand – we believe a heart bypass can save a person's life but we have not experienced it. The study of history inevitably comes second hand, evidence of contemporary writers and thinkers. We can't all be Thomas with his eyeball-to-eyeball contact with Jesus. Remember Jesus' closing words to Thomas, 'You believe because you have seen me. Blessed are those who have never seen me and yet believe'.

Most of us have come to faith 'catching it' from someone. Easter Monday 1980 saw Mervyn Stockwood, then the Bishop of Southwark, begin a holiday in Moscow. He tried to use the shaver point in his hotel room but to no avail, quite common in Communist times. He went to look for a barber to shave him and walked into a large shop near Red Square and waited his turn as there were fifteen men there. Eventually a large lady barber approached him and looking at his Pectoral Cross and purple shirt said to him, 'Are you a bishop?' When he replied yes, the woman shouted at the top of her voice, 'Christ is risen' and the whole group of men rose to their feet and shouted, 'He is risen indeed'. 'Poor old Communism,' thought the Bishop, 'sixty years of trying to eliminate the Christian faith and see what has REALLY happened.' Christian leaders were imprisoned and often murdered for their faith in Stalin's Russia, yet the church in Russia is much stronger today than in our country; those

Christians murdered in recent years by Isis in Iraq and Syria found their faith and lived it. It may have been second hand but it was real.

Our 21st century hearts say, 'What happened to Jesus after the Resurrection?' In one of John Masefield's plays, he pictures Pilate's wife, Procula, talking to the centurion, Longinus, who was present at the death of Jesus. 'Do you think he is dead?' she says. 'No, Lady, I don't,' he replies. 'Where is he then?' asks Procula. And the centurion answers, 'Let loose in all the world, Lady, where no one can stop his truth.'

Wherever the disciples went in spreading the gospel, they knew he was there to encourage them and give them hope. Their faith was not in an empty tomb but in a risen Lord. If the risen lord is real, we can know in our hearts what the great Christian writer C.S.Lewis meant when he wrote, 'I believe in Christianity as I believe in the sun, not only because I see it, but because by it I see everything else'.

Ian Ogilvie, Tring Team

Feedback

Thank you to the Editor for the article on How To Create a Church Magazine in the May edition of Comment. I'm always pleased to find other people with the same concern about correct grammar. I was brought up in a family where we were always corrected if our grammar was wrong. I went to a Grammar School where we could never get away with it so it is embedded in my mind. It seems unimportant these days and even on the BBC there are many errors. I know many people who think I'm either talking rubbish or am too fussy. Thank you for being on the same side!

Margaret Gittins, St Peter & St Paul



In mourning



I was extremely sad to hear about the devastating fire that has destroyed so much of Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris. But I immediately found myself questioning just

how much – and whether – we can grieve for a building. The loss of life at Grenfell Tower in London was a much greater human tragedy in so many respects and perhaps these very different events can and should evoke different responses?

I have visited Notre Dame and thinking about it brings back particular and personal memories, and so, like millions around the world, I do mourn its loss and fervently hope that in due course it will be restored. By contrast, I knew nothing at all about – indeed, had never heard of – Grenfell Tower until it was engulfed in flames and the avoidable deaths, injuries and other losses became a national scandal. This was a tragedy that quite rightly prompted anger, protest and calls for change. (Some of this may also prove to be true, of course, in the

aftermath of the Paris fire if negligence or carelessness prove to have been involved.) But what both events share is the loss of community that accompanies the destruction.

Nobody lived in Notre Dame and no one died in what should have been their safest place, but I was reminded while spending a day in one of our British cathedrals that it will have been at the



heart of a vibrant community of service, caring and outreach. We will probably never know how many people's lives will spiral downwards – or even end in despair – because they could no longer access the peace and solace they were used to finding in the aisles of the Paris cathedral, and which helped them to cope with difficult lives. We will probably never know how many people will miss out on a life-changing experience of the presence of something holy, conveyed through the craftsmanship of stonemasons and the stories in stained-glass windows, or through a friendly word from cathedral guides or clergy.

So I think we can rightly mourn – perhaps not so much for the fabric of the building but for the loss, albeit hopefully temporary, of all that Notre Dame means to people far and wide, just as the surviving residents of Grenfell Tower will long mourn the loss of their close-knit community.

At the same time, we should continue to be angry and to campaign to ensure that all homes are places of safety and that neither negligence, greed nor war continue to rob people of their lives or their communities.

Nicky Bull, High Street Baptist Church

Annual Town Council Award for Community Service 2019

Ask anyone who knows Ted Oram and they would immediately agree that family life is at the centre of his world. The thing is that Ted's definition of family is community-wide! Ted has dedicated his life and energy not only to looking after Margaret, Helen and Matt but also to caring for the wellbeing of the whole community of Tring.

Ted and Margaret have lived in Tring since July 1976 and been members of the Parish Church community at St Peter & St Paul's throughout. Ted has functioned as committee activist, Church Warden and, for the last ten years, as Parish Co-ordinator. Perhaps the high point of all this dedicated work with its myriad of practical projects has been the restoration of the War Memorial in 2018, culminating in the amazing centenary celebrations of November 2018, a project which involved deep research,

wide communication and considerable charm.

As well as his church responsibilities, Ted has also been engaged with Raynet who support public events with effective communications (increasingly essential in these challenging times). Whether it's a marathon event, a Scouts' event or the annual Town Festival, Ted and his team are always there caring for their wider family.

Whatever the community occasion, Ted takes time to help and does every job asked of him with considerable attention to detail, extraordinarily thorough administration and unflinching charm.

Ted is a man at the heart of Tring who always has Tring in his heart!

**Grahame Senior
President, Friends of Tring Church
Heritage**



Fairtrade and a living income for producers



This is written as a follow on to the two events in the town organised by the Justice & Peace Group during Fairtrade Fortnight 2019, and reported on in Polly Eaton's article 'Tring: a Fairtrade Town' in the last edition of Comment.

During the Fortnight we were confronted in a poster produced by the Fairtrade Foundation with the image of a lady cocoa farmer from Cote d'Ivoire and the caption 'She deserves a living income'. So what is a living income in the Cote d'Ivoire and elsewhere? and why is the Fairtrade Foundation campaigning for this? To seek an answer to the question, the Justice & Peace Group invited David Taylor, Policy Manager, Fairtrade Foundation, to come to Tring to tell us about the campaign.

At a well-attended meeting in High Street Baptist Church, David told us that the campaign at the moment is focusing on cocoa farmers. Nearly 60% of the global production of cocoa comes from Cote d'Ivoire and Ghana in West Africa, but although the chocolate industry in the UK is worth at least £4 billion, most of these cocoa farmers live in dire poverty. The average cocoa farmer in Ghana earns about \$1 a day (about 74p) while in the Cote d'Ivoire the figure is less than \$1 dollar a day. In both cases this is below the extreme poverty line of \$1.90 (about £1.40). An actual living income – enough to afford a decent standard of living – has been calculated to be \$2.50 (about £1.86).

With their present low income many cocoa farmers cannot afford to invest in their farms and so cannot increase their

yields to the full potential of the land. There is less to spend on their families for such things as healthcare, school books, transport and clothes.

Fairtrade is already helping farmers and their families. Fairtrade certified producer organisations receive: the Fairtrade Minimum Price, even when the world market price falls below this. Fairtrade is currently the only certification scheme that pays a guaranteed minimum price; and the Fairtrade Premium which is an additional sum for farmers to invest in their communities or their businesses as they wish.

To become Fairtrade certified, farmers must follow Fairtrade Standards which include adhering to a wide range of human rights, women's rights and workers' rights, including core International Labour Organisation (ILO) conventions prohibiting human trafficking, forced labour and the worst forms of child labour. Fairtrade organisations must also protect the environment, and the Standards include rules on biodiversity, reducing the use of pesticides and preventing deforestation.

After two years' consultation with all the major stakeholders, Fairtrade have now introduced the Living Income Reference Price. This is the price that cocoa farmers would need to receive for their cocoa in order for them and their family to achieve a living income (the \$2.50 a day, per person, as above). To help farmers progress towards this, from October this year the Fairtrade Minimum Price will be increased by 20%, and the Fairtrade Premium will also be doubled. The price and premium for organic cocoa will also increase. Unfortunately, action from Fairtrade alone won't be enough, which is why the Fairtrade

Foundation has set out an ambitious agenda for action. The Fairtrade Foundation calls on the UK Government, the chocolate industry, cocoa-exporting country governments and ourselves as shoppers to all play a part.

The Belgian Government has launched the 'Beyond Chocolate' initiative, bringing together 40 stakeholders including major chocolate manufacturers and retailers who have committed to ensuring that cocoa farmers receive a living income by 2030. The German Government are launching a 'Living Income Task Force' later this year which is globally focused and aims to develop solutions for a sustainable cocoa industry, including improving farm gate prices. The Fairtrade Foundation believes that the UK Government should actively support the Living Income Task Force and calls on chocolate companies, traders and supermarkets to join the Living Income Task Force too. Cocoa-exporting country governments have a strong role to play, especially in Cote d'Ivoire and Ghana, where the governments set the price that cocoa farmers receive.

Finally, we all of course as shoppers have considerable power and influence. We can buy, bake and give Fairtrade to help cocoa farmers. We can also sign a petition to the UK Government at www.fairtrade.org.uk/petition.

In writing this article I have relied on David Taylor's talk, subsequent correspondence with David, also on the report by the Fairtrade Foundation entitled 'Craving a Change in Chocolate: How to secure a living income for cocoa farmers', written by David Taylor and Susannah Henty and published in 2019.

Michael Demidecki
Justice & Peace Group



Love and/or Marriage?



Anna Karenina by Leo Tolstoy

A beautiful young woman escapes from a loveless marriage to be with her passionate lover. She sacrifices her security and her home, and even

gives up being with her young son, for the chance of experiencing true love. But, how does it turn out? Does the happiness overcome the sacrifice? This is one of the main threads of Leo Tolstoy's 'Anna Karenina', the Parish Book Group's 'Lent classic' for 2019. We don't meet during Lent and so have the chance to grapple with a longer book.

Tolstoy gradually weaves the thread of Anna's affair with Count Alexis Vronsky, and its consequences in the high society of late 19th century Russia. Men, it seems, must be free to follow their instincts (hunting, gambling, drinking, women), at least as long as their money and health last. Women can have discreet dalliances, but appearances must be kept up, and living 'in sin' involves rejection by society (for the woman involved).

It has been argued that the book could equally well have been called 'Constantine Levin', for Tolstoy devotes many pages to the evolution of Levin's love for, and marriage to, Kitty (Princess Catherine Shcherbatskaya). Kitty's head

is briefly turned by the dashing looks of Vronsky but he prefers Anna, and Levin eventually manages to pluck up courage to marry Kitty. Meanwhile Dolly (Princess Darya Oblonskaya) puts up with her husband's serial infidelity for the sake of her security and her children.

Fifteen members of the Book Group had a very animated (but friendly) debate about the book, and their reactions to the characters. They differed quite sharply in their views, some liking Anna more as the book progressed, others having gradually less sympathy for her. Equally some acquired more appreciation of Vronsky, her lover. Personally I liked Levin the best. It is thought that he represented a lot of Tolstoy's own feelings and perceptions, and it was possible to identify with his desire to do the right thing, and with his frequent uncertainty as to what that was. He agonised about his faith, and indeed about whether life was worth living, but in the end decided just to get on with it all.

The book's subtitle is 'Vengeance is Mine, I will repay', a quotation from Romans 12:19 (and in turn from Deuteronomy), and Tolstoy does not judge his characters, but lets the reader

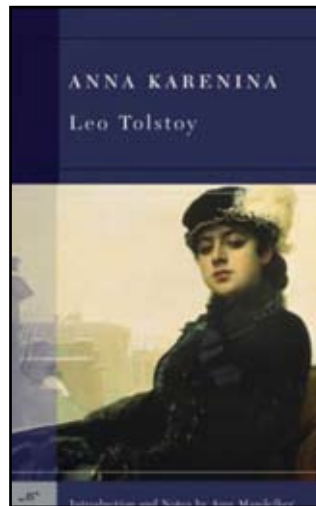
sort through the complexity of good and bad that is in them, as in all of us. I've tried not to include 'spoilers' because the Book Group was unanimous in recommending 'Anna Karenina' for others to read.

One more reflection, attributed by the author to Vronsky: 'He soon felt that the fulfilment of his desires gave him only one grain of the mountain of happiness he had expected. This fulfilment showed him the eternal error men make in imagining that their happiness depends on the realization of their desires.'

Our next meeting is on 23 June at 6.45pm in St Peter & St Paul's Church and all are welcome. At the time of writing this we don't yet know what book we shall discuss (we'll have met in May

to study The Acts of The Apostles). We shall be saying farewell to Didier in June, and also a big 'Thank you'; we are indebted to Didier for his initiative and gentle persistence in establishing and sustaining the group for eight years. We'll organise ourselves to continue during Didier's sabbatical. Why not join us and help us to evolve?

John Whiteman, St Peter & St Paul



Thy Kingdom Come



Thy Kingdom Come is a global prayer movement that invites Christians around the world to pray for more people to come to faith in Jesus. What started in 2016

as an invitation from the Archbishops of Canterbury and York to the Church of England has grown into an international and ecumenical call to prayer.

Between 30 May and 9 June this year, it is hoped that everyone who takes part will deepen their relationship with Jesus Christ, pray for God's Spirit to work in the lives of those they know and

come to realise that every aspect of their life is the stuff of prayer.

After the very first Ascension Day the disciples gathered with Mary, constantly devoting themselves to prayer while they waited for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. Like them, our reliance on the gift of the Holy Spirit is total – on our own we can do nothing.

Through the centuries Christians have gathered at that time to pray for the coming of the Holy Spirit. 'Thy Kingdom Come' picks up this tradition.

In Tring we have joined the global movement with various ideas, to help us all to understand something of the power of prayer. We plan to have a number of prayer stations inside the churches of Tring, Aldbury and Wilstone,

all of which are open during the day for visitors of all ages. There will be lots of prayer resources and ideas available to take away to assist in prayer. Please make a point of calling in.

At midday on the nine days between these dates we will have a short time of prayer, based on reflections using the sermon on the mount in St Peter & St Paul's Church. All are welcome to come. You can download these from the website to use at other times.

Join us for morning prayer in one of our Churches: the timetable is on our website. Please visit www.thykingdomcome.global for lots of ideas, resources, videos, and stories to encourage and inspire.

Janet Goodyer, St Peter & St Paul

What do Quakers talk about?



When will we ever learn?

'There are currently ten official wars, eight active conflicts and other violent conflicts involving sixty-four countries and 576 militias

and separatist groups. More than two thirds of refugees currently come from just five countries where there is war or conflict: Syria, Afghanistan, South Sudan, Myanmar and Somalia.

War has an environmental impact too: the Pentagon has the world's biggest carbon footprint and in the new world order envisioned by Extinction Rebellion there can be no war to accelerate climate breakdown. Peace has become essential to the survival of humanity as a species.

In our discussion about peace, the most distinctively Quaker of testimonies, we looked at peace as personal witness, peace as hope not fear, peace as reconciliation and mediation, as conscientious objection and withholding of tax, as public protest, as disarmament, as a symbolic gesture and as an alternative to militarism.

It's a big subject and one that inspires me as an activist with Campaign against the Arms Trade (CAAT). I am part of Roots of Resistance which aims to find creative ways to oppose and prevent this year's London DSEI Arms Fair at the ExCel in Docklands. Tuesday 3 September will be Faith Day and we hope to get 1000 Quakers there, along with people from many faith backgrounds. With this in mind I will be returning to this testimony soon.' So writes Sue Hampton, a member of Berkhamsted Quaker Meeting.

Over the past few months we have been looking at and discussing the 'Testimonies' adopted and used by Quakers since their early days. Testimonies as described by Quakers are not easy to define, but they are broad principles which can guide us in our attitudes and actions. They were adopted early on in the life of Friends (another word for Quakers), the Peace one being of great importance in the 17th century when there was civil and religious unrest: the Quakers wanted to assure King Charles II that they had

no evil intentions towards him and the government.

Over the years the testimonies have changed slightly, and are currently – peace, simplicity, equality, truth and integrity, and a recent and important addition, sustainability.

The next discussion was on 'Simplicity'; we soon found that the concept of 'simplicity' is not as easy as the word sounds! Dictionary definitions include: an absence of complexity, adornment or artificiality, but also, straightforwardness, clarity, sparseness, modesty, and others – you can really take your pick!

However, we looked at things like learning to say 'no' as well as 'yes', separating the essential from the non-essential, having a sense of proportion, having an attitude of 'cheerful frugality'.

Practising simplicity may start with a desire to de-clutter our homes and wardrobes, but may lead to more radical changes such as no longer owning a car, not taking holidays which involve flying and so on. We also acknowledged that one person's simplicity may lead to another person's complications, for instance, where lifts by car are needed to get to certain destinations.

Simplicity is close to a more recent testimony, Sustainability, where we think about how our use and disposal of resources can impact on the environment, a pressing matter now.

We made a list of things that can make for greater simplicity and also things that work against it, including: too much choice, succumbing to marketing in its many forms, temptation to indulge in 'retail therapy', lack of rural transport.

A Quaker writer, Jennifer Kavanagh, in 'Simplicity made Easy' writes of the need for a 'focus on the essential, the essence, the spirit, in every part of our lives.'

We had three further meetings discussing respectively, Equality, Truth and Integrity, Sustainability, which I will cover in a second article in the next edition of Comment.

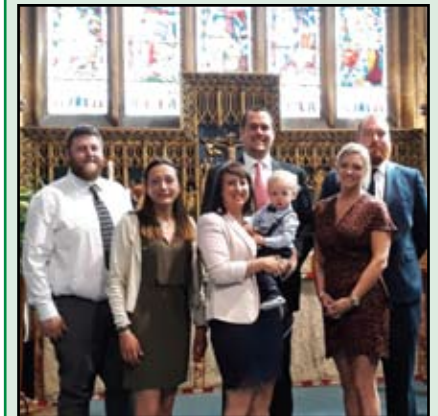
Margaret Whiting Berkhamsted Quaker Meeting



A very special blessing

Harrison Dennis Day Sinfield was born to very grateful parents, Nicki Day and Bradley Sinfield on 26 April 2018. They had waited many years for a child and celebrated his baptism with family and friends and the whole community in a very joyful service on Easter Sunday, 21 April 2019. Harrison's dad may be known to many readers of Comment as he is an excellent plumber. He comes highly recommended if you haven't met him yet.

The Editor



The letter of James



The May edition of Comment carries thoughts on the Epistle of Paul to the Romans and this time the Epistle of James – there could hardly be a greater contrast, in many ways, between the two. Luther wrote that James was a ‘right strawy epistle’ as compared with the true gold of the Gospel. Yet its socially-sensitive-Christianity is likely to appeal to people of our own time. One scholar has written ‘what one generation despises, another generation may esteem as the heart of the Gospel’.

Apart from its opening sentence, it is not really a letter. There is no news about the sender, or really to those to whom it is sent; and there is no concluding formula. It is moral instruction for all. The first word is the name of the sender. In Greek (and in Latin) going back to Hebrew, the name is Jacob. In English the name is James.

There are a number of men called James in the New Testament including two Apostles. There was also a James, known as ‘the Lord’s Brother’, who became a leader of the Church at Jerusalem with Peter at an early date, and continued to be its president and bishop until he was put to death in 62AD. Traditionally, it has often been assumed that he is the author. But its style and language supposes a good Greek culture rather than coming from someone whose language was Aramaic. Further, it appears that he attacks a misunderstanding of Paul’s doctrine of justification by faith, suggesting it was written after Paul’s letter to the Romans.

This letter is addressed to the twelve tribes in the Dispersion, probably seeing the Church as the new Israel. It is concerned with how Christians should behave. It is the most socially conscious writing in the New Testament.

The letter starts with a series of exhortations and encouragements to endure, and to resist temptation. We are to be ‘quick to listen, slow to speak, slow to anger’. We are to be doers of the word not merely hearers and the first chapter ends up with a definition of the Christian religion as being care for orphans and widows and keeping oneself unstained by the world. One may suspect this emphasis on care for the needy resonates more today than in some centuries. At other times people would want faith in Christ to come first. For James good works come first.

We pass on in Chapter 2 to an attack on the rich who dishonour the poor. Partiality, favouring the rich, breaks the ‘royal law’ (James 2:8) to love one’s neighbour. The author goes on to contrast faith and works with examples from the Old Testament. Faith has to show itself in practical terms. In fact, James is working out Our Lord’s words that not everyone who says ‘Lord, Lord’ will enter the kingdom: ‘Faith without works is dead’ is the conclusion of this chapter.

Teachers beware! Chapter 3 starts with a warning that teachers will be judged with greater strictness. It goes on to remind us of the tongue’s power for evil. It may be a small part of the body but can do great damage. There follows more about faults which can divide a Christian community – the dangers of pride, of wealth, of lacking patience and so on, with more warnings in Chapter 4.

The fifth and final chapter tells us not to take oaths. ‘Let your ‘Yes’ be yes, and your ‘No’ be no.’ Here again is teaching from the Sermon on the Mount. Anglicans are told in the last of the Thirty-Nine Articles of Religion that while ‘vain and rash swearing is forbidden Christian men by Our Lord Jesus Christ, and James his Apostle’ yet ‘we judge the Christian religion doth not prohibit, but a man may swear when the Magistrate requireth in a cause of faith and charity’. This chapter ends with teaching about forgiveness for believers who have deviated from the faith. James tells us at the end that a sinner can be saved from death and that a multitude of sins can be forgiven.

But just before the final section about forgiveness, there is an interesting section on ministry to the sick. The elders (the presbyters – a word which later was used for ‘priest’) should pray over the sick and anoint them in the name of the Lord. ‘The prayer of faith will save the sick.’ This has been taken to be the origin of the Sacrament of Anointing. This use of anointing of the sick has had a chequered career, becoming Extreme Unction and then, at the Reformation, disappearing; but it is now much revived and used for the sick and, indeed, on behalf of the sick. (In the course of half a century of ministry I have seen anointing being used in various aspects of Christian discipleship.)

James’s final point is to remind us that we have to be careful how we use words in trying to express what we believe.

Paul says in Galatians ‘a person is justified not by works of the Law but through faith in Jesus Christ’. James says ‘You see that a person is justified by works and not by faith alone.’ It would appear that James is correcting a misunderstanding of the Pauline formula.

Martin Banister, St Albans Abbey

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Déjà vu?



Monday evening, 9.00pm, January. Cold. Very cold. But not quite freezing; just hovering above freezing point. So the call earlier that evening never came, the call from

Tring Sports Centre to say that the astroturf was frozen and they would have to cancel the final football session from 9.00-10.00pm that evening. It was January 1992 and my wife and I had recently moved to Cheddington and started attending Akeman Street Baptist Church in Tring. For some time, someone at the church had run 'Monday Night Football' each week for anyone who wanted to play, whether they were involved with the church or not. It had my name on it – being football-mad and not very talented. So I started playing every week. And then the person who organised Monday Night Football moved away... and somehow I started organising the church football.

We play football every week because we like playing football. Pure and simple. We've pitched it as 'adult' level but have always welcomed youngsters from mid-teens providing they are either fast, skilful or strong. Over the years we've had a number of female players join us too. The truth is, no one knows where everyone comes from. Several folk are

from Akeman Street Baptist Church, others are friends or neighbours or colleagues, others friends of friends.

The whole thing reminds me of a story a Dutch lecturer told me when I was at university: of four students who started carrying a telegraph pole across a Dutch city as an experiment. As they laboured with the pole, other people started joining them to help and one by one the original four students dropped out. The pole continued on its journey unabated. And so it is with Monday Night Football!

We play football because it's a great leveller. Over the years, we've had students play alongside a GP, teachers, scaffolders, a dentist and shop assistant. We've played occasional 11-a-side friendly matches on Saturdays against other church teams and enjoyed a proper thrashing from Tring Town FC this past Christmas (see picture).

We also play church football every week because we like the manner in which it is played. Make no mistake, there are some robust challenges and the odd poor foul. But the air isn't 'blue' and the atmosphere isn't nasty – both of which go with the turf in most football environments. I don't imagine for a moment that everyone who comes along to Monday Night Football would call themselves a Christian, but there is a Christian ethos about the way we play which every single one of us

appreciates. As the Apostle Paul writes in Colossians 3 verse 17, 'And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus'.

Being blokes (most of the time it is just blokes) we don't chat much about our mental health but whilst I am no medic, Monday Night Football is great for our mental health. The endorphin-rush that physical activity generates, getting out exercising on dark winter nights, the social stimulation of being with other guys – this has got to be good for us.

But most of all we play football because as a church at Akeman Street Baptist Church we want to point people to Jesus Christ. As Christians we believe a relationship with Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour is the most important thing of all and football gives us an opportunity to share this great news. So we have invited our fellow footballers to church events – Christmas and Easter services, a sports quiz and men's breakfast. Some guys come. Others don't. There's no pressure, but everyone knows what we're about. And in the meantime, we keep playing football.

Monday evening, 9.00pm, January. Cold. Very cold. But not quite freezing, just hovering above freezing point. So the call earlier that evening never came... It was January 2019. Déjà vu?

John Heasman

Akeman Street Baptist Church



The road to Morocco

What an assault on the senses Morocco is! The wonderful smells (spices from the market, roses, sweet mint tea) and the not-so-wonderful (tanneries and drains); wonderful sounds (music and drums, the call of the muezzin, snake charmers' pipes) and the not-so-wonderful (mopeds revving as they force their way through people in the narrow medina alleyways); wonderful sights (1000-year-old city walls, timeless desert, snow-covered peaks in the High Atlas mountains) and the not-so-wonderful (litter! Everywhere); and the wonderful tastes (cumin, saffron, amlou, oranges).

Throughout my family's trip to Morocco during the Easter holidays, I couldn't help but think, time and time again, how we were smelling, hearing, seeing and tasting experiences that had probably remained constant for 2000 years.

We started our trip in Marrakech, the 'red city'. Snake charmers, orange juice squeezers, henna painters and story-tellers all find their space at dusk inside the medina's rose walls, in Jemaa El Fna central square, and wait for the tourists to come. By day, to escape the cacophony, we visited the beautiful Jardin Majorelle, bought and restored by Yves St Laurent. We travelled by horse-drawn carriage and tuc tuc, dodging tourists and bikes and donkeys and trolleys and cats in the narrow lanes of the souks (markets).

The wild, stony and barren landscape of the Agafay desert was welcome relief after the hustle and bustle of the city. There's been even less rain in Morocco this year than normal so river beds were

dry and the parched Agafay gave us a taste of what the great Sahara, a few hours' drive away, might have looked like. We got up close and personal with the ships of the desert, thoroughly enjoying our rocking, lurching ride on Sultan, Aladdin, Fatima and Gobi.

Landscape changed once again as we headed for Imlil, the gateway to the High Atlas. Although the snowy 4000m+ mountains had been visible from both Marrakech and Agafay, we hadn't seen their green-ness from afar. Blossoming apple, pear, cherry, walnut and almond trees cloaked the lower slopes – often draped by villagers with carpets in the hope that passing trekkers would be tempted to buy – before we climbed above the tree line into the rocky landscape. It was a strenuous climb into the clouds at Tizi M'Zik pass (2500m) before plateauing through juniper and pine woods to the Tamsout Cascade. In the mist we couldn't see the top of the waterfall. We were above the snow line so chose not to swim in the frozen pool which apparently is a lovely place to bathe from late spring!

We stayed in a Berber village that night, and in the morning descended 500m through the village and the steeply terraced fields to the mule track that's being turned into a road. As we dodged pneumatic drills and tumbling cliff faces, we passed women carrying greenery for their animals, sticks for firewood and water for cooking. Children watched us pass, wide-eyed, the brave ones calling 'bonjour!'. One little boy wore a pair of headphones with pride. They weren't attached to anything but his friend told

us they made him feel cool.

The final destination of our whirlwind tour was coastal Essaouira, Africa's 'Windy City'. Formerly known as Mogador, the new name means 'little rampart', a reference to the fortress walls that were built by the Portuguese 250 years ago and still enclose part of the city. The city felt much more modern than anywhere else we'd visited in Morocco; instead of burkha-clad women and jelaba-clad men, locals and tourists alike wore surf shorts, sunglasses – and, thanks to the relentless trade wind – a bit more sand in between their teeth than usual.

The markets, the landscapes, the welcoming people – Jesus and the early church would have recognised so many of the sights, smells, tastes and sounds we experienced in Morocco. As we watched boys separate goats from sheep, as we smelt fish fresh from the sea and ate unleavened bread, as we followed our mules and muleteers up the mountain pass, in some ways, it felt as if Morocco offered us a glimpse back in time.

But what our holiday to Morocco certainly did was open all of our eyes to the life of ease we live here in Tring. We don't need to walk for water. We can dispose of our rubbish easily. Our houses are warm without having to find firewood. We choose what to eat – at least three meals a day – from a world-wide larder. Our children are educated until at least 16 and then have a choice of careers. We can plug our headphones into an iPhone or iPad or tablet and listen to music or news or opinion.



Having the time, money and opportunity to travel is wonderful. Travel makes us cognitively flexible – it helps us think in different ways. It makes us humble. It makes us grateful. It makes us open to new things. It makes us less fearful. And I believe it helps us love our brothers and sisters in Christ. For all the visible differences, we're all the same underneath.

Hannah Asquith
High Street Baptist Church



Godparents' Sunday



What a privilege it is to be asked to be a godparent to a friend's child! In the Tring Team Parish we are aware of the commitment made by so many as godparents:

we thank you for this and we want to celebrate all that godparents everywhere do.

Godparents, of course, make some big promises: to pray for their godchild and help them to follow Christ; but other than that (which is in itself quite a lot!) there are no set rules about what a godparent will do. Over the last twenty-plus years we have made a special effort to ensure godparents have the chance to think about what being a godparent means for them as part of the preparation sessions we hold with parents and godparents every month.

During these times we discuss praying for and with our godchildren – perhaps using one of the many children's prayer books that are available which later on they can read themselves. We also talk about sharing the amazing stories from the Bible, as they are key to

the faith journey they are on, and help us to talk with them about the big things in life as they grow up.



Another way to help our godchildren on their journey is to go to Church with them, and as part of the church's commitment to support godparents, godchildren and their parents, we are holding special Godparents' Sunday services in July to celebrate all godparents everywhere.

All are invited to St John the Baptist Church in Aldbury on 7 July and to St Peter & St Paul church in Tring on 14 July when the 10.00am 'Worship for All' services will be focused on our celebration of godparents. The services are relaxed and fairly informal (no need to dress up, wear whatever you feel comfortable in – within reason!). We will also give thanks and prayers for godparents on these Sundays

in All Saints' Long Marston, St Mary's Puttenham and St Cross Wilstone.

We'd love to hear more about your experiences as a godparent, and it would be great if you brought a picture of you and your godchild to make a massive 'godparent and child' display in our Churches. If you are happy for a photo to be used in this way, please bring one with you to the service.

For more information about Christening and being a godparent, please take a look at our website at <http://www.tringteamparish.org.uk> or contact me, Mike Watkin, or one of the other ministers in our team.

Mike Watkin
Tring Team Parish
Baptism Coordinator



Europe, Brexit and a brave new world



Party time again? We thought we had seen the end of our participation in the European Parliament. It has brought back some interesting memories for me.

My first encounter with European elections was in 2003 in a draughty marquee in Newmarket. It was part of the candidate selection procedure for the first Euro elections in 2004. At that time the East of England Region (Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Essex, Hertfordshire, Norfolk and Suffolk) was allocated eight MEP places.

I (and a lot of others) listened to the presentations of the twelve or so candidates for the then eight potential seats for my party. It was a grinding process and I must admit I didn't last to the final 'shoot-out', when the eight candidates were chosen and ranked in order of audience votes from 1 to 8. I

believe other political parties followed broadly similar procedures.

The actual voting on Euro-election day was on party lines, not for specific candidates – the turnout was low. It was, however, proportional representation in action. In the event my party gained close to half the votes and its first four ranked individuals became MEPs, in a parliament with a five-year life. By comparison with our own MPs they were (are?) very well-paid positions, including travel and living expenses for Strasbourg as well as Brussels.

I later went on a three-day trip to Brussels in 2010 as part of an EC public relations exercise. Coach travel was paid for but all other costs were mine to cover. It was an eye-opener. My group had a tour guided by one of our MEPs, in part to EC offices and parliamentary chambers in Brussels and in part to the battlefields and cemeteries of WW1. In my free time I took a guided bus tour of 'old' Brussels.

Memories? The contrast between



'old' and 'new' Brussels was brutal. The old city was frankly scruffy, dirty and rundown; the EC area was well-spaced out, bright, shiny and clean. The parliament chamber was surrounded by the translator gallery. There were twenty-eight booths, one of which was labelled 'Gaelic'. I asked our MEP guide how much they cost – her answer was, 'Don't ask'.

It was my first visit to the WW1 battlefields and cemeteries. Even close to a hundred years later it was very moving; too much to absorb on a single brief visit. Jenny, my wife, has two uncles buried there.

My starkest memory was a visit to a German cemetery. Small, dark, not well-cared for, with many names recorded on a single plaque.

A last thought – can we use the Euro PR voting system to elect new members to our House of Lords?

Bill Bradford, St Peter & St Paul



Countdown to the World Scout Jamboree



With just over a month left until the plane leaves Heathrow airport, the anticipation for the World Scout Jamboree builds. Nearly 45,000 young people, adult

leaders and other volunteers from all over the world, will all meet in West Virginia to experience a life-changing experience.

Somehow I was voted as one of the four patrol leaders in my unit, giving me the responsibility of looking after eight other people across the Atlantic. I am very excited especially to meet people from different countries, cultures and religions, as the world is so vast, and varied, and I would be honoured to even see a part of this beautiful creation.

Obviously it would be crazy if I were not stupidly nervous, but I know that my faith in God, and people's faith in

me, will get me through this. So many people from the community have helped me on the 18-month journey, from everyone who bought cakes last year, to the people who gave me the confidence to even sign up to the challenge. This will be a once-in-a-lifetime chance for me, and I could not have done it without the amazing people in St Peter & St Paul who have helped me grow into the person I am today. Thank you to everyone who has supported me.

Eleanor Terrett, St Peter & St Paul

More Sunday afternoon concerts



The Piano and More concerts at St Peter & St Paul are going from strength to strength. They are held at 3.00pm on the second Sunday of each month, lasting

about an hour, with free entry and tea and cakes to follow. Donations are always welcome – half goes towards the cost of the piano refurbishment, and half towards Church funds.

Details of upcoming concerts can be seen at our website, www.piano-and-more.org.uk, and the June concert will

be a programme of songs and poetry from between the Wars, by composers such as Peter Warlock, John Ireland and William Walton.

Performers will be Beth Evans (soprano), John Griffin (reader) and Anna Le Hair (piano). It's a fascinating programme, well worth hearing. Plans for the next few months include a cycle of Beethoven violin and piano sonatas, played by Tring-based violinist George Salter and acclaimed pianist Kathron Sturrock, and there are many other exciting concerts to look forward to!

Anna Le Hair
St Peter & St Paul

Bra Bank news

Thank you to everyone who has already donated their old, outgrown or unwanted bras in response to High Street Baptist Church's appeal. We have now collected the 200 necessary to become an official Bra Bank for the local area and in due course there will be a 'proper' bra bin located in the Church.

Please continue to donate bras so that we can help 'Against Breast Cancer' to provide bras to ladies who are having to go without and also to raise research funds in the fight against breast cancer.

Nicky Bull
High Street Baptist Church

Flower power at St Cross



Somebody once told me that Christianity can be summed-up in one word – JOY. Love of Jesus, love of Others and love of Yourself – in that order. No need for discussion,

analysis or division, just JOY. A lovely simple phrase. Maybe that is what the hymn writer had in mind – 'You shall go out with joy, and be led forth with praise... and the trees of the field shall clap their hands...'

Neil Gurney can truly be said to represent joy in the fullest sense. His quiet faith sees him as a member of Wingrave Church, organist and choirmaster. But his faith is probably the only aspect of his life that Neil is quiet about. His exuberant love of life shines through everything he does, from writing and directing the annual Long Marston pantomime, producing musicals at Pendley Theatre, running two hair dressing salons, and perhaps that for which he is most well known, flower arranging.

On the last Monday in April St Cross were delighted to welcome Neil to the Church after an absence of nearly six years. Last time it was to co-ordinate a Flower Festival; this time was a little less ambitious with an evening of flower arranging, accompanied by a running commentary on Neil's views on life

(fabulous), the universe (fabulous), and everything in between (fabulous).

Over sixty people enjoyed more than two hours of entertainment, sustained by tea/coffee and nibbles half way through. During this time, Neil created seven wonderful arrangements, which were raffled at the end of the evening. The lucky winners then had the difficult choice of which arrangement to take home, decisions possibly being determined by the size of their car.

Many people had seen Neil's work before but for some this was a new experience. Revd Didier Jaquet had been very sceptical that flower arranging could ever be a 'man's thing', so he brought his wife along for moral support, but by the end of the evening even he was converted. And as a final seal of approval, Kathryn won an arrangement.

Further evidence of Neil's skills can be found throughout the year at Church flower festivals, principally Marsworth, but also Aston Clinton, Wingrave and Pitstone. He has also created displays at Halton House and performed at the Waterside Theatre in Aylesbury. Some of these events are to raise money for the venue hosting the demonstration, but the main fundraisers are for The Florence Nightingale Hospice, which has benefited from thousands of pounds thanks to Neil's efforts. For all his charity work, over many years, he was awarded the British Empire Medal in 2017.

On this occasion all the proceeds

from the evening at St Cross are going towards the Access for All appeal and everyone connected with the Church is very grateful to Neil for his time and generosity in supporting this venture. The planned new access to the Church is going to cost £20,000, and the Friends of St Cross are hoping to fund this themselves, but it is a big ask for a small church, and we are very thankful for everyone's support as we strive to reach our goal.

One visitor has already asked when Neil will be returning to St Cross. At the moment we don't have an answer but hopefully it won't be another six-year wait! Until then, cross the diocesan border and enjoy the Marsworth Flower Festival, held during the August Bank Holiday – the flowers are wonderful, and the refreshments are pretty good too: but get there early if you want a large home-made fresh cream meringue. Fabulous!

Pam Cockerill, St Cross, Wiltshire



Pilgrimage to the Holy Land

Yvonne and I went on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land just before Easter which presented to us an utterly fascinating perspective about the life of Jesus.

One of our biggest concerns was that the reality of the trip would not match the preconceived imaginings that we had regarding what we have read in the Bible. We need not have worried as the well-loved stories of the Bible were only enhanced by the powerful experience of 'walking where Jesus walked'.

We travelled with a company called Worldwide Christian Travel led by the retired Baptist minister David Ronco. It was David who really added value to the trip as he incorporated readings, songs and prayer when we visited well-known places in the Bible. There were so many highlights but below are some that are representative of the emotional and spiritual impact that the trip had for us: we visited the area of the desert in Jericho where Jesus was tempted; we refreshed our baptismal vows in the River Jordan; we sailed on the Sea of Galilee; we shared prayers with people of all religions at the Wailing (Western) Wall; we visited the site of Jesus' birth in Bethlehem where we sang, in 25 degrees heat under perfect blue skies, 'While shepherds watched their flocks by night' and 'Away in a Manger'; we spend three days in Jerusalem experiencing Jesus' last days from the Last Supper, his Resurrection from the tomb and the encounter on the road to Emmaus.

In all fairness to our guide, we were not spared the harsh realities of life for Christians living in Israel and Palestine today. A visit to our twin



church in Cana opened our eyes to the persecution they endure on a day-to-day basis – their church is surrounded by Muslims whose leaders are very much opposed to this Christian church in 'their land' (an example was that the local Iman told his people that it was a crazed Christian who had orchestrated the recent terrorists attack in New Zealand). Our trip to Bethlehem was



a mixed experience. While visiting the site of Christ's birth, we are reminded that it is now a Christian town totally annexed by the Palestinian Authority by the construction of a divisive wall all around the town. Our visit to the Muslim shrine on Temple Mount, the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem, was both thrilling and challenging. We were shocked to see armed Israeli security forces 'accompanying' Jewish visitors around the site but could not deny the beauty of the Golden Dome. We still felt God's presence there despite the lack of a Christian focal point.

We were overwhelmed with amazing sights, smells, sounds and a very warm welcome from different nationalities and religions – although the Muslim 5.00am call to prayer every morning became rather tiresome.

What struck us has been the conflicting layers of identity – our tour guide was an Israeli by citizenship, Palestinian by nationality, Arab by ethnicity and Christian by religion – it makes the thorny issue of Brexit seem like an afternoon tea party!

We left The Holy Land with a real sense that we had walked with Jesus through his life and that our faith had been strengthened by undertaking this very personal pilgrimage.

While it is mandatory for Muslims to visit Mecca once during their life, I would encourage all Christians who have the opportunity, to undertake their own personal journey, as we felt it has enlivened and reinforced our faith taking it to new levels of intensity and depth.

Kevin and Yvonne Ashton
High Street Baptist Church



Love – and forgive – your neighbour



Twenty-one months after the Grenfell Tower tragedy sixty-seven households have not yet moved into permanent housing.

Radio 4
Archive on 23

March reconstructed the events which happened on the 14th floor with recordings from the enquiry. Four out of seven trapped on that floor survived. The story is typical of many floors. Most of the dead were found sheltering in flats on the far side of the tower, to which they had fled for refuge from the smoke.

Kensington Aldridge Academy at the foot of the tower was put out of commission, but swift action from the Education Department had a temporary school operating within days. One student successfully took an 'A' level paper on the morning after the fire. Trauma counselling was provided, and continues for staff and students.

Immediately after the fire the kitchen in the Al-Manaar Muslim Cultural Heritage Centre was used to cook meals for victims and firemen. It then opened its doors to women who no longer had kitchens of their own so that homeless families could still eat homemade meals. When Meghan Markle visited, she suggested the group create a cookbook to raise money. Together: Our Community Cookbook was published in September 2018. The kitchen now operates seven days a week, delivering meals to a wide range of organisations.

Grenfell Hope by Gaby Doherty published by SPCK in May 2018 is a fitting testament to a wonderfully diverse and powerfully resilient community, with stories from adults and children of horror, grief, anger and disbelief, but of grieving together and making new friends across religions and ethnic groups.

In March last year the Government agreed that relatives of those who died would have their choice of memorial on the site, though its design will clearly be controversial.

Also in Spring 2018 the tower was at last shrouded. Since the fire the gaunt ruin was the principal view from many homes, and from the tube station and surrounding streets. As the site of a criminal investigation by the police, but with the wind blowing through it,

one wonders why this was not done immediately.

Following the publication of the Hillsborough Inquiry, the fire survivors successfully called for themselves to be included in the Grenfell Inquiry. With each witness, including firefighters, giving their accounts, it took much longer than originally hoped for. Part 2 with around 200,000 technical submissions to be read first has been postponed until later this year, so the report will not be published until late in 2020 at the earliest.

A new community centre has been constructed by the BBC's DIY SOS, which opened in 2018, a bright modern and colourful building tucked under Westway. The interior design was done in collaboration with the local young people, and provides facilities for them. Adjacent is the Dale Youth Boxing Academy, decorated with photographs of the previous club which had just

Art and music therapy are important means of expression in dealing with traumas, for adults and children, as seen for example by the graffiti and piano under the nearby A40 Westway, which became a gathering point.

'Grenfell United is a group of survivors and bereaved families... The group came together out of solidarity – but also to make sure that true change really does happen...'

They advocate safe homes for everyone and continue to fight for more and better social housing and its oversight for all tenants. The tragedy of Grenfell serves to remind us that we are still doing little about the housing crisis in terms of management or building more dwellings.

In conclusion 'What does the Lord require of us, but to do justice, and to love kindness [or mercy] and to walk humbly with our God?' Micah 6:8.

Leslie Barker, St Peter & St Paul



reopened with state of the art facilities at the foot of Grenfell Tower.

What have we learnt specifically from the Grenfell tragedy? That council tenants are wonderfully diverse people! Loving one's neighbour as one's self, and treating others as you want to be treated, includes between clients, customers, colleagues, and the media – and forgiving one another. The secular world is beginning to see the importance of forgiveness. In A Point of View on Radio 4 (3 September 2017) Roger Scruton promoted the Christian concept of forgiveness, but said that western society had rejected its Christian background. Bitterness eats away unforgiving people.



Aldbury Morris Men celebrate their Golden Anniversary!

Way back in 1969, there was a thriving folk club in Aldbury – and a few young men decided to take up Morris Dancing!

Fifty years later Aldbury Morris Men are still going strong – including one of the original young men, Rod Puddefoot, the original Squire.

To celebrate our Golden Anniversary, no expense has been spared, and you may notice that we will be waving new hankies featuring our 50th Anniversary logo, and, for this season only, we are wearing new golden socks in place of our traditional white 'Cotswold Morris' socks.



We will also celebrate with a Day of Dance on Saturday 8 June, when we will be joined by several other Morris sides for a dancing tour, followed by a feast in the evening. There should be between sixty to seventy Morris dancers on the tour which will start in Aldbury at around 10.00am, then move on to dance in Tring Church Square from 11.00am to noon, then on to the Half Moon at Wilstone, the Red Lion in Little Missenden and The Junction Arms in Bulbourne, returning to dance in Aldbury again at around 5.30pm. All Morris times of course!

So, fifty years of bells, sticks and hankies in Aldbury. At the start, the men used to practise in an unheated

barn at the rear of the Greyhound Pub in Aldbury, but after the floorboards threatened to give way and frostbite became severe, they moved to the comfort of Aldbury Memorial Hall and that's where we continue to practise every Thursday evening during the winter months, followed, of course, by rebuilding our strength in the Valiant Trooper!

From May Day to the end of August we dance outside a different pub every

Thursday evening and then retire inside to play music and sing until closing time. (Some people have remarked that we are better musicians than dancers!)

In earlier years, we represented Hertfordshire at the National gathering of the English Folk Dance and Song Society, and travelled on tour to Germany, Holland and France. In the UK our talents have been seen from the Yorkshire Dales to deepest Dorset, and we continue to enjoy an annual weekend



away. Over the years you may also have seen us in the odd television programme or film, such as Jim Davidson's 'The Generation Game' or 'The Man Who Knew Too Little'; and a few years ago on 'A League of Their Own', dancing a Morris response to the New Zealand rugby team's Haka! (Just google Aldbury Morris Haka.)

It's good to see that Morris dancing continues. It really is good fun – and good exercise – and new members, young or old, are always welcome. See our website www.aldburymorris.co.uk for our dance out schedule and other details.

Tony Smith
Squire of Aldbury Morris Men



Best year yet for Great British Spring Clean!

Throughout March and April volunteers have been heading out into their communities to take part in the annual Great British Spring Clean. This national campaign run by Keep Britain Tidy empowers people to help clean up the country. In Dacorum, around 700 residents took part over the two month period.

Forty different groups spruced up their streets with a community litter-pick. These were made up of community groups, schools, individuals and businesses. Throughout the two month period, these hard-working volunteers collected a total of nearly 400 rubbish bags and over 200 recycling bags! This is the most litter that has ever been collected in Dacorum during the Great British Spring Clean. Separating recyclable litter is especially valuable to ensure that these items are able to be used again and will no longer be left littering the floor, or end up in landfill.

In total across the UK the Great British Spring Clean brought together over 560,000 litter-pickers, collecting nearly 1 million bags of litter!

Group Manager for Environmental Services, Craig Thorpe, said, 'We would like to thank every volunteer who carried out a litter-pick during the Great British Spring Clean. These dedicated people are a shining example to others in the community, and show that we can all play a part in making our neighbourhoods cleaner, safer places to live, work and play.'

To complement the Great British Spring Clean, we also visited local primary schools and Scouts groups and taught nearly 250 children about the problems litter causes, such as damage

to wildlife and our environment, as well as the importance of recycling rubbish correctly.

If you are caught dropping litter you could face a Fixed Penalty Notice of £80. This fine is increased to £150 for those who litter from a car following new laws which came into effect last April.

All year round, we can loan out litter-pick sticks and bags, as well as arrange for the collection of these bags after your litter pick. For more information or to request litter picking equipment, visit www.dacorum.gov.uk/litterpicks.



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CLUES ACROSS

- Overlord (7)
- Objects that help (4)
- Title of Jesus (6)
- Church musical instruments (6)
- Daughter of royalty (8)
- Way up (4)
- Area of authority in a diocese (9)
- Carve in wood (4)
- One of Paul's epistles (8)
- Dedicate oneself (6)
- Horrifies (6)
- '... in the East' (4)
- Ancient Semitic tribe (7)

CLUES DOWN

- Stick to (6)
- High priest of Shilo (3)
- Important name (5)
- Well known saint (9)
- Son of King David (6)
- Chit-chat (6)
- 'Love thy as thyself' (9)
- Occur (6)
- Verbal support (6)
- Pursue (6)
- Ridiculous (5)
- Equivalent (3)

Answers on page 38

Mary, an inspiration



Does Mary inspire me? Interest me? Intrigue me? Can I identify with her?

Yes, to all those questions. Was she that perfect serene Madonna, always smiling, the image

many medieval painters give her, or was she an ordinary girl, like the girl next door, with hopes and dreams, with fears and anxieties?

Identifying with her is a little limited, but I have an emotional connection. I am a female, daughter, wife and mother; I have known joy, pain and sadness, grief and love. I know what it is like to let go of children as they have made their way in the world. I have wept with my children and hugged them as they have had to endure painful episodes in their lives. I have lost close family members. I share with her many emotions that she went through during her life.

I have lived with Mary a long time. As a child she was known to me as the mother of Jesus, a figure in the nativity plays who always wore blue, the character that every girl wanted to play in the school or Sunday School plays. And it was always the prettiest girl in the class that got the part of Mary (the likes of me usually got the part of one of the animals in the stable!). She was the perfect mother of the perfect Jesus who never cried. She was the central figure in that story in my eyes: Jesus was a mere doll that just appeared during the story.

Over the years my understanding of Mary has developed, and my image of her is mostly from my imagination. And my imagination has developed from reading the Bible and by reading what others have interpreted from those facts, from paintings and statues, from music and films, and through poetry and prayers. And my picture of her is probably a little different from the one you may have. And Mary keeps popping up throughout my life.

I was brought up in a Christian family, attending two middle-of-the-road Anglican churches. My father was from a non-conformist background and my mother's family came from a 'higher' than central church. Mum's sister, my Aunt Mary, was not married but devoted her life to public service and working for the church in various capacities. She

was also a third order Franciscan and so St Mary was very much a part of Aunt Mary's life; and she was a special Saint, probably the most special of them all, and that specialness was conveyed to me in my upbringing. Aunt Mary used to go on retreat to various places, but in later years to the Anglican Benedictine Community of St Mary at the Cross in Edgware. She was privileged to finish her days there in an attached nursing home run by the community, and whenever I visited her, I enjoyed going to the daily communion in the chapel with her and being part of that community: a community dedicated to stand at the Cross of Jesus with Mary his mother, as they seek to serve Christ in one another, in the care of the sick and poor, and others; a community of welcome, care and compassion.

There are not too many references about Mary in the Bible, and it can be difficult to know how she felt about being the mother of Jesus. In Jesus's early life, Matthew's accounts are very factual; in Luke we get glimpses of her reaction to some of the events.

We know she was with Jesus and at some of the events through his ministry, but very often we don't know whether she was part of the crowd of his followers. I suspect she was there more times than is recorded, as the writers of the Gospels (four men!), appear to favour the men more: a sign of those times. She took a prominent role at the wedding at Cana in Galilee and had the confidence to stand up to say 'Do whatever he tells you', and she was well aware of the ministry he was starting on and how it would end.

Very often it is our own emotional reaction to an event that will colour our perception of a similar event. When we view paintings and films, the pictures that are shown to us can resonate with us, or we can say no, it wasn't like that: our own personal interpretation.

The Annunciation is when we first meet Mary, when the Angel Gabriel comes to tell her she is to be the mother of Jesus. She was a young virgin, younger than when we had our children. When the angel greeted her, we hear she was deeply troubled. She was puzzled, bewildered by what he said as it was so extraordinary and she didn't know how it could be as she was a virgin. She expected to be ostracised by Joseph,

her family and community. It was beyond comprehension. By the time she had visited Elizabeth she showed acceptance of what was to come.

The birth was hard for her. She was tired as she had travelled a long distance on a donkey. She was young and had no female companions: she had left her family far away. She had to give birth in a stable with no pain relief. She had a crying baby with an inexperienced husband. Many paintings show a new mother full of joy, looking radiant, but I think it was rather more a mixture of confusing emotions, however much she clung on to the angel's words. When the shepherds were told of Jesus' birth by the angels, and had come to visit him and pay homage, I believe she then began to understand what Gabriel had told her and the role of the baby she had given birth to. She treasured these things in her heart and pondered over them.

Soon after the birth, Mary and Joseph took Jesus to the temple for purification and to be blessed, as was the custom, and Simeon recognised the baby was the Christ Child and that he was to be a light of revelation to the Gentiles, but he also told Mary that Jesus was to be rejected and that she would be pierced to her heart: a two-edged sword.

Then just as we think Jesus would have a normal childhood, Herod was told of the new-born King and ordered all the new-born boys to be killed in Bethlehem and district. Mary and Joseph fled to Egypt but I do think Mary must have felt guilty, as well as broken, on hearing about the slaughter of the innocents, children of young mothers like herself. Surely the first sword to pierce her heart.

After returning to Nazareth we assume Jesus had a normal upbringing, his parents delighting in his company most of the time, teaching him new things, telling him off! (Just like our families.)

Each year they went to Jerusalem with others from their community, for the Passover festival. But the year he was twelve, they assumed on the way home he was travelling with friends. To their horror they realised he was not with them and after three days of looking, they found him in the temple with the teachers, discussing and questioning. Mary berated him as she had been so worried, but Jesus told her off, saying

she should have known that he would be in his Father's house.

Mary knew then that she had lost part of him, that God was preparing Jesus for ministry, that sooner or later he would go his own way. It is hard for us to let go of our children as they get older and take on their new lives, as they move away from us: hard to let go.

Those last few days of Jesus' life, it was hard for Mary to let go, to face the inevitable suffering of her son, the false accusations, the torture; she was powerless to stop it, to watch him die so horrifically on the cross, to cradle him in her arms when they took his body down.

Through all the emotions Mary has gone through, I don't believe she ever felt betrayed by God or abandoned. Difficult as it was, she held on to the trust that whatever happened, God was with her, even though that was so hard to cling on to sometimes. And I reflect on how that has helped me on my Christian journey. Being a Christian doesn't make us immune to what is thrown at us. It doesn't mean life is always a bed of roses, or a free pass to no suffering. We treasure things in our heart, but also our souls are pierced by events that we long to escape from. But it does mean we always have that trust that we are not alone, that we are loved



and forgiven whatever we have done. We may not always be aware of it, but we have been promised that by the God who created us and wants the best for us. We have to cling on to that hope, however small it may seem at times.

Jesus, in John's Gospel says, 'A new command I give you: love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.'

Jesus, in Matthew's Gospel, says, 'Behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.' And in Romans, Paul says, 'For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things

present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.'

So, a perfect serene Madonna or the woman next door? I believe she has qualities of both we can draw on, someone for everyone: a special friend. When we weep, she weeps with us, just as Jesus wept. We remember, each day of our lives, whatever we go through, Mary has been on that same journey of pain, of love and death, of loss and of faith: faith in the God who created us and loves us so completely.

Janet Goodyer, St Peter & St Paul

Tring Summer Carnival
Saturday 29 June
12 Noon - 5pm
Pound Meadow

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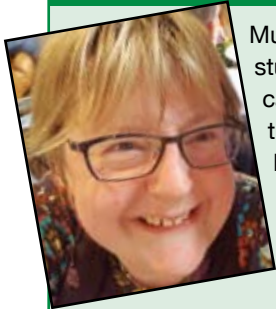
Prayer stars!

Chill out!

FREE space themed craft!

CHURCHES TOGETHER

What's happening at Tring Park?



Musical Theatre students did two cabaret shows at the Pheasantry in London, which included alumni who returned to perform as well.

We also hosted a charity fundraising fashion show for Rennie Grove Hospice in which some of our current pupils performed and the evening was a great success.

Musical Theatre students also performed at a dinner given by the Lord Lieutenant of Hertfordshire (and Vice President of the school), Robert Voss CBE, in honour of all of Hertfordshire's Deputy Lieutenants and their partners at Moor Park near Rickmansworth.

Our chamber choir, Tring Park 16, competed in the Songs of Praise BBC Young Choir of the Year competition. You may have seen the semi-final broadcast on BBC One television on Sunday 26 May.

Once again we hosted the Independent Schools' Association National Drama Festival in early March.

Our Third Year Sixth Form dance company, Encore, toured England and Wales in March and for the first time the show, Kab-er'esque, included some students from the Musical Theatre Course. The tour culminated in a matinee and evening performance at the Lilian Baylis Studio Theatre at Sadler's Wells, London.

Next term pupils will be performing in the Music Showcase, the Theatre Arts and Prep shows, and the Senior Dance show including a gala performance at the Swan Theatre in High Wycombe. There will also be our Shakespeare in the Park performances at the beginning of July, along with external performances by Musical Theatre and Commercial Music students.

Sarah Bell, Tring Park School

Our new Tring Park reporter

Sarah Bell, who is bringing us news from Tring Park, has been teaching there since 2003. Her first school, over twenty years ago, was a CofE comprehensive in St Albans. At Tring Park she is RS and PSHE Coordinator Safety Officer as well as the Head of the Lower School.

Sarah told us: 'My niece told her Star Wars obsessed nearly 4-year-old that I had taught Rey (Daisy Ridley). My great nephew's eyes widened and he asked in awed tones... Auntie Sarah... are you a Jedi?!?'

The Editor

Tweet of the month

Humans like to categorise things, and this is true of birds and their origins. In Britain birds are assigned to one of six main categories. Category A are wild birds that have turned up since 1 January 1950. Category B birds are those seen between 1 January 1800 and 31 December 1949 and not since. Category C birds are birds that have been introduced into Britain in the past and now have a self-sustaining population, i.e. survive without help from people. Categories D and E refer to birds thought possibly to have escaped from captivity or are known to have done so. Category F is birds recorded only prior to 1800.

Over the years a number of species of bird have either been introduced into Britain deliberately (e.g. Little Owl, Pheasant and Red-legged Partridge), or have escaped and become established in the wild (e.g. Egyptian Goose, Mandarin Duck and Ring-necked Parakeet).

Equally it may come as a surprise to some people that there is a thriving population of Parakeets in the country. Originally Rose-ringed Parakeet was found in a belt across Africa, just south of The Sahara and the Indian Subcontinent and east into South-east Asia. Now there are isolated pockets in The Middle East and Southern and Western Europe with populations in South Africa, Japan and USA – almost all as a result of accidental or deliberate introductions.



In Britain they are first thought to have bred in the wild in 1855 in Norfolk but it wasn't until the 1970s that a population started to establish itself in London. I saw my first in 1984 right on the outer edge of west London at Little Britain Lake – when the British Population numbered less than 1000. This was the same year they were officially accepted into Category C of the British List and so could be counted as

a wild bird. Now it is a common sight in certain parts of London and continues to spread across south-east England. The last population estimate in 2012 was 32,000 and it has increased since then.

In my opinion there is no denying that they are beautiful

birds with their green plumage and red bills. But despite their obvious beauty they are not universally loved by any means. Some people don't like them because they are noisy, others because they eat fruit (no doubt why Kent was quickly colonised) and some people don't like them because they might displace some of our native species from nest holes. One of my friends doesn't like them because they are too brightly coloured.

This led me to thinking about Jesus – surely he was beautiful? I don't know about aesthetically but his personality certainly was; and yet many people don't seem to see that beauty or they would surely believe he was divine, given what he did for us all.

Roy Hargreaves, St Peter & St Paul

Letter from Orkney



I start this letter from Orkney on a sad note and with a heavy heart. Annette told me about the passing of Dougie Purse. Dougie was a very special person: he and

I used to have a bit of backchat before the service in St Peter & St Paul and as I sit here typing this I can hear his London accent in my ears saying to Carrie, 'What you have to bring 'im for?' Then Lilian would tell him off. The world is a poorer place without him. I am sure the good folk of the church will rally around Lilian. Rest in peace, old mate.

We're heading into Summer, intermediate seasons of Spring and Autumn are very short. Up here it stays light very late and returns very early so we are using blackout blinds going to bed. Lambing is in full swing here keeping most of the farmers busy. Sheep are the staple farm product with agriculture our biggest earner, followed by tourism. Talking of which, the cruise liners are arriving one per day, fortunately restricted by Orkney Islands Council. They arrive through the evening and are fed and watered on board and the following morning the cruise buses spew forth to all the major sites and then back on board quickly and away,

Exciting times are ahead with the Stromness Folk Festival shortly. We are booked onto the 'Hamnavoe', our large car ferry, to cruise through the islands, hopefully seeing Puffins and Orcas. This nature cruise takes place once a



year for islanders. Inside the ship local businesses such as Highland Park Distillery have stands with free Whisky and Orkney Cheese. A taxi home after that one I suspect. Carrie enjoys her Whisky as much as me (it was really stupid to introduce her to the pleasures of the amber nectar).

The Orcas are in greater numbers now, and the screaming Oyster Catchers are arriving in droves. With regard to the local Flora and Fauna, the daffodils are dying off, being replaced by the occasional tulip and bucket loads of primroses. Soon we will start getting the huge multi-petalled poppies. We regularly see Owls hunting during the day as there is very little night here so they have adapted and just hunt when they are hungry.

We are back on Orkney from a two-

week tour of Italian culture, Leonardo DaVinci to the Vatican City, and La Scala to The Borghese Gallery and a 300Km/hr train journey. It was mind-blowing but it is a tribute to Orkney I was so pleased to see home again with its huge, huge skies, vast empty land, and Scapa Flow thrown in for good measure. Getting back to Jasper our dopey Labrador might have played a part also. I am so grateful for the God-given treasures that have been placed in my lap; both Carrie and I take nothing for granted.

I haven't got the boat on the trailer yet. To be honest it's one of those jobs I find every excuse not to do. The idea of balancing one ton of boat on a few bits of wood and a small trolley-jack and manoeuvre the trailer under fills me with dread and the thought of one damaged boat on its side in the drive with the distinct possibility I might be under it... mmmmm! I will let you know next time.

St Mary's Kirk, our lovely little church is doing fine, although the congregation of about twelve to twenty dropped to five the other week due to 'THE BUG'. I suspect you have it in Tring. We caught it on the Italian train probably due to air conditioning, similar to aircraft. It was AWFUL but like many things 'even this will pass'; in fact, we are almost fully functioning again.

It is blowing a bit of a howly here today, the winds topping 50mph, and of all things, I had to go outside and put our motor mower back together after a failed attempt to get it started. It is a big sit-on beast so the local repair man is going to trailer it back to Kirkwall for mending. Writing to YOU and all our friends in Tring is a great respite.

From the 25-27 April we have our first 'Haar' of the year: a thick dense mist that silently moves in from the sea – you can see it coming! If the wind drops then we are left in the middle of a cloud. I can understand the folk of old weaving tales about the 'Selkies' and the 'Trowse' into Orkney folk law. Talking of tales, we are off to St Magnus Cathedral tomorrow for a storytelling evening in aid of 'The Notre Dame repair fund'. Carrie is about to submit her short story into a competition and I am awaiting dates for displaying my paintings of Highland Park Distillery. Life goes on, I get fatter, the Whisky tastes better and Carrie despairs.

Mac Dodge, St Mary's, Stromness





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Faith



The March meeting of the Men's Society addressed the subject 'What is our faith?; how do we answer when challenged?' This

was based on a sermon given in the Tring Team parish on Luke 8:22-25, the account of the disciples caught in a storm on Lake Galilee, when Jesus had fallen asleep. On awaking and stilling the storm, Jesus asked them 'Where is your faith?'

Clive R said he had a simple faith stemming from John 3:16. The apostle wrote that God so loved the world that he gave us his Son, that whoever believes in him would not perish but have everlasting life.

Clive G had a general feeling of being protected by someone from above, and that following the Ten Commandments was a good way to live.

David W's faith began as a set of rules, something legalistic (as mine also began). He had neglected John 3:16, but now has that faith in God's love.

I wondered why the experienced fishermen were so afraid, but it does say that water was beginning to fill the boat. Perhaps the storm was unseasonal.

I recounted staying in a hotel on the shore of Galilee. One night there was a thunderstorm and strong winds, and in the morning the hotel terrace was strewn with debris by this unexpected storm.

Martin first really learned about faith issues when he attended confirmation classes in his early teens.

Mike believed that a superior being was looking after him as he had been brought through, amongst other things, three brain haemorrhages; and now funding is in place for his total hip replacement.

Jeremy shared that he couldn't remember ever not believing in God and Jesus Christ, which could be because he was brought up in a Christian family and encouraged to go to Church and be confirmed. He values the comfort of feeling that he can have a relationship with a greater Being and enjoy his protection.

One problem with faith was: is it in God, the Father, Jesus, or the Holy Spirit; which led into a discussion on the Trinity.

The different creeds which set down the content of our faith were aired; although different, sometimes in important aspects, most thought they were written to give a set of beliefs for

all Christians. I said I had been told they were written to highlight differences and show who was orthodox and who were 'heretics'.

Although we shared our beliefs about personal faith, most of the ensuing discussion was about theological or academic faith – one question being about whether this faith could change with history (Henry VIII) or justify women priests? or does faith transcend the everyday developments in life?

Jeremy is investigating visits for us to make in the summer. Previously we had visited other Anglican Churches, museums and the Mini factory. We may be able to visit Edlesborough Church high on its Chiltern bluff.

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, jeremybuckman814@gmail.com.

Leslie Barker, St Peter & St Paul



Bishop Richard Inwood – a personal tribute



Richard Inwood, Bishop of Bedford from 2003 to 2012 died on 14 April 2019, Palm Sunday. For those nine years he was my 'boss' while I was the Director of the Church of

England Schools in the St Albans Diocese.

Richard studied Chemistry at Oxford and then after teaching in Uganda for a year and a spell as a Research Chemist with ICI, he read Theology at Nottingham. He was ordained in 1974 and served his first curacy in Sheffield Diocese where Leslie Barker (St Peter & St Paul, Comment contributor and Men's Society) was one of the congregation. He was a curate at All Souls' Langham Place in London and then held posts as Vicar of Bath and Rector of Yeovil, during which time he was a Prebendary of Wells Cathedral. He was made

Archdeacon of Halifax in 1995 and was consecrated Bishop of Bedford in 2003.

He was a very hard-working man who was well known in the parishes of Bedfordshire. He had a love of maps, walking, steam trains and classical music. His grandfather had been a manual labourer at one of the Burton-upon-Trent breweries but Richard had gone to Grammar School and then to Oxford. We shared the view that while Selective Education had worked well for both of us, it was not a solution for our own time when we needed a highly educated workforce, not just twenty per cent equipped to be professionals and



managers and the rest 'factory fodder'.

He let me do my job in my way (not all of my colleagues in other Dioceses were so lucky) and did not question my judgements; but he did once tell me to get on with one particular change which I had proposed but hesitated to implement, for which I was grateful. He was a very bright man – he could, in the words of his Deputy as Chair of the Board of Education, 'think in paragraphs'. He was not afraid of expressing his views – he marched against the war in Iraq.

Apart from education and the church we enjoyed conversations around maps, music, locomotives, the theatre ('I sympathise with poor King Lear; I too have three daughters') and politics.

He is survived by his wife Liz (a maths teacher and examiner), his three daughters and eight grandchildren. It was a pleasure to have him as a boss. May he rest in peace and rise in glory.

Jon Reynolds, Tring Team



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In memory of Douglas Purse

Last year Douglas and Lilian Purse celebrated sixty years of marriage, most of which was in their home in Tring. Sadly, after a short illness, Douglas died on 15 April this year, aged 90. He would have been overwhelmed at the Church full of family, friends and neighbours who gathered on 7 May 2019 to remember him and give thanks for his life.

His son, Nigel, in his tribute said, 'Dad lived a long and fulfilled life in which there was so much to be glad about. Mercifully, his passing was sudden and brief and surrounded by his family – calm of mind, all passion spent. I distinctly recall asking him, just over twenty years ago, what his ambition was and he replied that he wanted to see his granddaughters grow up. He got to realise that ambition.' Nigel and his sister, Melanie, were in Church with Douglas' four granddaughters, Caroline, Bryony, Lucy and Holly.

Born in Watford in 1928, Douglas left school at fourteen and started working for the Post Office as a boy messenger, delivering telegrams in London on a pedal bike. In 1942, many of the telegrams he delivered were informing parents that their son was missing, presumed dead; often the next telegram would arrive the same day bringing news of their son's death. Huw Bellis recalled that Douglas was no grumpy old man but retained the joy of youth and had great respect for the self-confidence of the young people of today; he seemed unaware that he had himself had very little childhood and had grown up too quickly in bomb-torn London.

Douglas and Lilian have been key members of St Peter & St Paul's for many years and have been Church

welcomers as well as helping with the Food Bank every Monday. Again, Huw reflected on the fact that instead of feeling that, at 90, Douglas might have felt the need to be the recipient of help from others, he was instead giving food parcels to the needy, unselfconsciously and cheerfully.

Douglas always had a twinkle in his eye and a warm sense of humour. Mac



Dodge recalled, 'Every Sunday Dougie and I would have a little touch of gentle banter, with Lilian keeping him in order. I can hear him now with his London accent congratulating Carrie for getting me out of bed and to Church. Both were stoical and pragmatic and good Christian souls. Dougie was a perfect role-model even for a time-worn old codger like me. He will be sadly missed by many folk.'

I sit on one side of St Peter & St Paul's Church and Douglas and Lilian sit on the other. From time to time I would cross the Church when we 'shared the peace' (went to greet others in our church family and shake their hand) and Douglas would ask if I had brought my passport! I 'interviewed' Douglas and Lily for a Comment article last year and was overwhelmed by their hospitality, humility and sense of humour.

Huw spoke of Douglas' exuberance and understanding of resurrection joy, of living life abundantly yet with a sense of deep peace. He had no fear of dying knowing that nothing could separate him from God's love. Nigel described his father as a quiet, kindly and unassuming man. 'To those of you who may recall how Dad was occasionally overburdened by the adversities of life, such as when our house was destroyed by fire in the summer of 1983, let me share with you that in his final days and, particularly, in his last hours, Dad knew he was facing that journey to the "undiscovered country from whose bourn no traveller returns". He chose not to burden us with any fears over that prospect. Indeed, his only concern at that time was for my mother. Dad was old school. And that's what I grew to love about him – his immutable old-worldliness, redolent of a seemingly better age when everyone appeared to have manners, politeness, respect and old-fashioned values. I never once heard him speak a profanity.'

Lilian wanted to thank all their friends and neighbours for their support and kindness and in particular for the care given to her by the congregation at St Peter & St Paul.

Annette Reynolds, St Peter & St Paul

Parish registers

Baptisms

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

Amber Lucy Whitley
Lucas Alexander Belton
Maximilian Leo Johan Collins
Gemma Murphy
Sebastian Burley
Eve Burley
Olivia Haywood

Weddings

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

Billy James Goodyear & Samantha Mary Elizabeth Taylor
Craig Chapman & Eleni Rapsey-Jackson

Funerals

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

Hazel Margaret Dobrotka 99
Douglas Purse 90
Paul Rutter 81
Brenda Tourle 79
George Murrell 21
Denis John David Jones 96
Mary Margaret Knight 70

Notices from the Tring Churches

ST MARTHA'S METHODIST CHURCH



FRIENDSHIP CLUB

The Ladies Friendship Club will meet again on Tuesday afternoon 4 June, when the talk will be about Neighbourhood Watch.

JEAN'S CAFÉ

Jean continues to provide lunches at the Church every Tuesday from 12.00noon to 1.30pm. Everyone is welcome to drop in for soup, lunch, tea or coffee, etc.

CONCERT AT ST MARTHA'S

On Saturday 22 June at 7.30pm, there will be a piano recital by Russian pianist, Alexander Ardakov at the Church. The programme will include Mozart's Fantasia and Sonata in C minor and the large-scale Fantasy in C by Robert Schumann. Admission at the door is £10.00 or phone 01442 822305 to reserve a place. Proceeds will be shared between the Building Fund and the Extra Mile Fund.

CHURCH COUNCIL

A reminder that the next Church Council meeting is due to take place on Saturday 8 June at 10.00am.

2 June 10.00am
Baptism

Rev'd Rachael Hawkins

9 June 10.00am
John Benson

16 June 10.00am
Communion Service
Rev'd Rachael Hawkins

23 June 10.00am
John Watkins

30 June 10.00am
David Williamson

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9 June 10.30am
Steve Brehm

16 June 10.30am
Kenneth Poulter

23 June 10.30am
David Nash

30 June 10.30am
Aubrey Dunford

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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

DACORUM FOODBANK

Weekdays 10.00am St P&P

BABY SONG TIME

Mondays in term time 11.00am St P&P

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

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

CTT PRAYER BREAKFAST

Saturday 1 June at 8.30am

FIRST SATURDAY LUNCH

Saturday 1 June
From 1.00pm for those who have been bereaved to meet and eat with others.
Contact Margaret Oram for information on 01442 824575.

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 5 June 7.30pm
Half Moon, Wilstone

PIANO & MORE

Sunday 9 June 3.00pm St P&P

CHILDREN'S SOCIETY BOX OPENING GARDEN PARTY

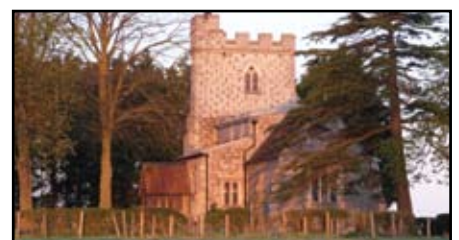
Saturday 15 June

STICK SUNDAY

Sunday 16 June 3.00pm All Saints LM

MOTHERS' UNION WAVE OF PRAYER AND TEA

Monday 24 June 3.50pm



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

John Whiteman

01442 826314
john@tringteamparish.org.uk

Church Wardens

Chris Hoare (Tring)
01442 822915

Ian Matthews (Tring)
01442 823327

Jane Brown (Aldbury)
01442 851396

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 Anscombe
01442 828325
Bandb33@talktalk.net

Safeguarding

Jon Reynolds
safeguarding@tringteamparish.org.uk

ST MARTHA'S METHODIST CHURCH

Minister

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

Senior Steward

Rosemary Berdinner
01442 822305

AKEMAN STREET BAPTIST CHURCH

Minister

Rev David Williams
01442 827881

Administrator

Emma Nash
01442 827881

CORPUS CHRISTI ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

Parish Priest

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

SOCIAL NETWORKING



Tring Parish



@revhuw

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

COMMENT DEADLINES

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

Crossword puzzle answers

From page 29

ANSWERS ACROSS

1. MAJESTY
5. AIDS
8. CHRIST
9. ORGANS
10. PRINCESS
12. STEP
13. BISHOPRIC
17. ETCH
18. PHILEMON
20. DEVOTE
21. APPALS
23. STAR
24. HEBREWS

ANSWERS DOWN

2. ADHERE
3. ELI
4. TITLE
5. AUGUSTINE
6. DANIEL
7. GOSSIP
11. NEIGHBOUR
14. HAPPEN
15. ATTEST
16. FOLLOW
19. INANE
22. PAR

A pair of feet wearing colorful socks and brown leather shoes. The left sock is white with yellow, blue, and red stripes. The right sock is red with a gold floral pattern. The shoes are brown leather with black laces. The background is a plain, light grey surface.

the
Akeman

Father's Day

This year give Dad something he really wants

16th June

Book Dad's Table

9 Akeman Street, Tring, HP23 6AA | 01442 826027 | www.theakeman.co.uk



brown & merry

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Brown & Merry were not the only agents that came to value the property but right from the start I was impressed by Alan Dempsey's knowledge, experience and professionalism; I therefore chose to market the property with him and his team. It was a good choice. The level of contact whilst seeking a buyer has been excellent; regular updates from Alan and the team on interest in the house, plus constructive feedback after each viewing and after each offer made on it. I can recommend Brown & Merry to anyone seeking a professional, effective team.

Joe Smith, a review

Brown and Merry lettings in Tring, were great to deal with. Both Emily Walker and Jo always helped to make things work with ease. Their can do attitude and always approachable has made my move such a pleasant experience, even from staff fielding calls. Highly professional yet extremely friendly.
Top Marks!