

COMMENT

THE MAGAZINE OF THE CHURCHES IN TRING



- IN THIS ISSUE:
- Farewell to Andrew • Pastures new • Comment distribution • Be kind to clergy
 - The afternoon church • Letter from Orkney • Women's World Day of Prayer • Shrinking the footprint
 - Our first Christmas in Orkney • TRingers – the handbell ringers • Let's stop extreme inequality
 - Why do Catholics light candles? • To Russia, with love • Freedom to worship? • Beer and carols
 - Everybody dies... • Sleep out for DENS • The Rule of Benedict • Holocaust • My spiritual pilgrimage
 - Lent films: the gender issue • Fundamentalists and versions of the Bible • Tweet of the month
 - In memory of Mary Richardson

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Editorial



A new year, new opportunities, new challenges. Do you embrace it or do you approach it with trepidation?

So much can happen between

January and

December. Sometimes those things are good, if unexpected! In February twenty-two years ago I thought my family was complete; but by Christmas I had a new baby son. In February fourteen years ago I had two parents; by December I had neither. Unlike my eldest son who is bored if he doesn't have an adventure planned at least once a week, I rather like weeks that follow a routine without too many surprises.

We are all different. When people write for Comment I have my favourite kinds of article; but I try to represent all the churches and include longer and shorter articles, serious and lighthearted ones, those that are informative or stimulating and sometimes those that are controversial.

This month we have a number of longer and more serious articles, not

by design – it just happened that way. There's a controversial one thrown in for good measure too. I would love to know what your favourite articles are. Do you like stories about local people? Do you

your copy on to others or keep them filed away... or clean your shoes on them?!

Please let me know what your preferences are and I will try to include something that you like. And of course if you have something that you want to say, write to me by email or put a note in the R pigeon hole in the Parish Church.

Next month, among others as yet unknown, we have a story from World War II, the account of a call to the ministry and a meeting with the Queen to receive Maundy money. Make sure you get your copy of Comment.

Finally, I will pass on some words from a recent sermon in the Parish Church which challenged me. In Matthew 5:6 we are told that those who hunger and thirst for righteousness are blessed by God. Huw Bellis said that he is fortunate not to suffer hunger and thirst for very long, even if



prefer topical or theological articles? Are people's opinions what interest you or do you like to know what is happening in a church that is not your own? Do you read from cover to cover or pick out the articles that interest you? Do you pass

he might often be rather peckish. As we approach a new year or even the season of Lent, do we hunger and thirst for righteousness; or are we just a bit peckish?

The Editor

From Christmas to Easter

My predecessor at the Parish Church, Frank Mercurio, used to comment that Easter is never on time: it is always early or late.

This year it is certainly 'early' with Easter day being on 1 April; however, it isn't as early as it is going to be in 2035 when it will be 25 March; but we will have to wait until 2285 for it to fall on its earliest possible date which is 22 March.

I understand that the vagaries of the date of Easter can have a significant effect on things wide and varied including the pub trade. When Easter falls can affect business: it is all about getting people out again after winter.

For the clergy an early Easter can mean there is little time to recover post-Christmas before we start gearing up. In Tring we will pack away our Crib set on 2 February at Candlemas and then Ash Wednesday is 14 February. The

plus side is that we get a long period without major festivals later in the year. Easter is, of course, always a Sunday. Christmas Day is a set date, but the day of the week it falls on means that it has a different feel each year. This year having been a Monday meant that we had all the usual Sunday services on Christmas Eve followed by the Christmas Eve services. What worked well was that the schools broke up just before Christmas so the children were off for the whole twelve days and the whole of Christmas could be celebrated.

However, would it be better to just set Christmas as, for example, the last Sunday of December and Easter as the first Sunday of April? Everyone would know where they are. There was some talk of this recently, especially the latter, but I think it would be a shame. Whilst we go through the same routines each

year, it is good to know that 2018 will be unique. Yes, there is an annual cycle of anniversaries and remembrances, but each year is subtly different. We will have our Lent films, and Lent courses, but we are not just repeating that which we have done before.

Maybe it doesn't matter if Easter (and Ash Wednesday) are early or late as long as we can find that our relationship with God is refreshed and renewed, not stale and going through the motions. The change of date isn't the greatest surprise – but God can surprise us. May (s)he surprise you this Lent.

Huw Bellis, Tring Team



Farewell to Andrew



It was with surprise and sadness that the congregation at High Street Baptist Church, Tring, heard the news a couple of months ago that Revd Andrew Cowley would be moving on to pastures new in early 2018.

As a result of reorganised sabbatical arrangements – following his period in hospital last year, which led to the postponement of his summer plans – he had his last Sunday with us on 14 January 2018 and then from mid-April, following his rescheduled sabbatical, he will be the senior minister at Leigh-on-Sea in Essex. We shall all miss him greatly and we now enter the process of seeking to fill a ministerial vacancy at High Street. Across the Baptist Union, this is currently taking on average between two and two-and-a-half years, so we would really value your prayers, both that we would know God's guidance through the process and that we might find ourselves with a new minister rather sooner than 2020!

We have asked members of the congregation to reflect on what Andrew's time in Tring has brought to the church or to them personally, and some of their comments are given below.

'Andrew's style has been collaborative and constructive; full of wisdom and compassion. One of his greatest achievements has been to ensure that our Church is open for activities almost every day of the week. We have made the transition from a 'Sunday only' Church to one that reaches out to Tring every day of the week in its desire to reduce loneliness

and social exclusion by making Jesus' teaching real and relevant to modern-day life.' (Kevin A)

'Andrew has been approachable and willing to give time when I needed to talk.' (Carol)

'I knew he'd fit into HSBC when he invited the congregation to get to know him, advertising the fact he'd be sitting in a pub for a couple of hours on a certain date – and a coffee shop for a couple of hours on another! He is flexible, in touch with his congregation, able to think how different people respond in different ways. Andrew baptised me; and encouraged me to consider becoming a deacon. He's been a very important figure in my Christian journey. But he cannot be made to dance. No matter how persuasive one thinks one is... but we'll make him... we're organising a barn dance for his leaving do! He can't not dance at his own leaving do, surely?' (Hannah)

'As a relative newcomer to High Street Baptist Church, Andrew has welcomed my family into the fold. It is a pleasure to be part of a church where there is genuine concern for one another, as well as a real connection with the local community. I think a lot of this has come from the sensitive style of Andrew's leadership.' (Polly)

'Andrew has exceptional leadership skills that have made the Leadership Team very effective.' (John)

'I feel that Andrew has been the right minister for us at High Street for this time. He has preached some very good sermons, going through books of the Bible as well as relevant topics. He is approachable and helpful and I find him easy to talk to and he gives considered replies and help. He helped me through the sudden loss of my husband and



hospital treatment later that year. I think that as a church we have benefited from the involvement of his whole family and will miss them all. However, we have people in our congregation who can lead services and preach well and we can all work together and support each other through these coming months.' (Thelma)

We have really enjoyed having Andrew as our minister and together with his wife Rowena and their children, Emma and Tom, they have been valued members of our church family. As our Moderator following the retirement of Bill Ives, Andrew was leading us through the process of seeking a new minister when we all realised that we had the right candidate in front of us! He has been the perfect fit for High Street over his time with us, and his years at the church have seen an extension to our engagement with all aspects of the local community, from parents with new babies right through to hosting discussions about dementia care and tackling isolation; under his leadership we have built on the foundations laid prior to 2011 to become an open and welcoming family church.

Andrew has also been extremely supportive of the church being at the forefront of faith-based creation care and with his backing we have become the first Eco Church in the area.

As Andrew moves on, we shall also miss Rowena's involvement with the worship group and the ladies' house group. Leigh-on-Sea are very fortunate to be getting Andrew – and we hope that the Cowley family will come back to visit us in Tring!

Nicky Bull, High Street Baptist Church



Pastures new

As I leave Tring and the group of Christ's followers at High Street Baptist Church, this means change for us all. Some of us don't do change well; others are quick to embrace the new, yet others move ahead but with a level of caution.

For me, the seven-and-a-half years have been years of challenge, affirmation, growth, sadness, wonder, excitement and amazement. I have been reminded and surprised on an almost daily basis of the grace of God. It has been a privilege to be a co-traveller with many people of faith, and no faith. There has been much laughter, and some sadness, celebrations of new birth and lives ended.

Tring is a special place in which to live and work. From a minister's perspective there is a group of affirming colleagues, and genuine inclusion in

the civil life of the town. Long may both continue.

At High Street Baptist Church the foundations laid down by my predecessor Bill Ives, have been built upon. The community now based here continues to be one of acceptance, reality, inclusion and growth, seeking to serve God, and the community of Tring; bringing and being God's grace.

As people who seek to follow in all we are and say and do; but as people who often have lives that don't always meet that gold standard; what are we to be and do? We are asked to be people who worship God the Father, follow Jesus the Son and are empowered by the Holy Spirit.

As I start a new ministry in Leigh-on-Sea in Essex, I know it will be very different. For one thing, there is the sea!

Having lived in the Chilterns for sixteen years, there will be some major changes and no doubt, challenges. I know, however that God has gone before me, will travel with me, and will go ahead of me. 'Here am I Lord, I come to do your will.'

And so... Goodbye and Godspeed to all.

**Andrew Cowley
High Street Baptist Church**

After a sabbatical, Andrew begins his new role as Senior Minister of Leigh Road Baptist Church, Leigh-on-Sea, on Saturday 28 April 2018



Comment distribution



As we enter a new year of Comment editions we would like to thank all those volunteers who ensure that your magazine arrives by post, by hand or pigeon hole, on time and in good condition.

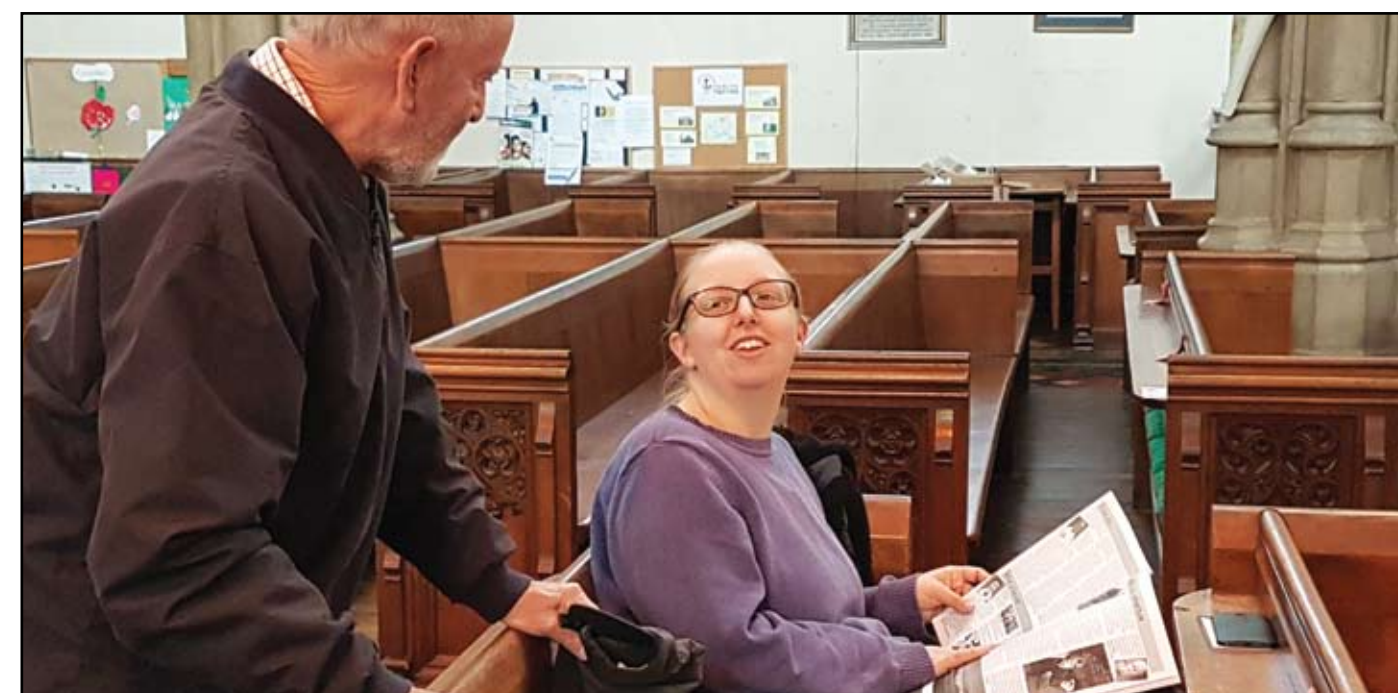
At present we send 14 copies out by post, 220 copies are collected from the Parish Church by our 39 couriers for

distribution around the district, 20 are sent directly to various district churches and a further 9 copies are pigeon holed for collection by named recipients. The remaining copies are available for purchase at St Peter & St Paul's Church.

Comment is £10 for the year or £22.20 by post. The price has stayed the same for a number of years despite extra pages and now full colour throughout. This is thanks to the many advertisers who buy space. Please do use the services they offer.

We hope that most of the yearly subscription will be collected by the May edition. Comment is also available on the parish web site or by email on request.

**Frank Dalton and
David Whiting
St Peter & St Paul**



Be kind to clergy

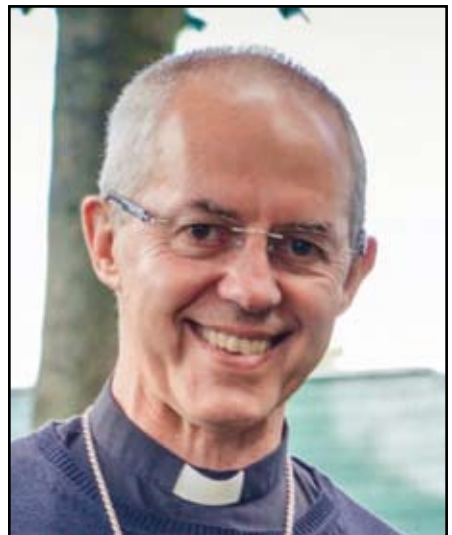


Will you join me in my New Year's resolution?
Just before Christmas, a clergy friend of mine sent me a newspaper article that made me pause and think 'oops'. The article persuasively made the link between the behaviour of a congregation (that's me) and the stress levels of the clergy. Imagine having a life where you are supposed to have the answer to every question, for everyone, for all of the time. When you stop and think about it, that's what life must be like for anyone wearing a dog collar who is involved in Parish Ministry. I'm sure this is energising to start with, for a little while, but it must get very wearing when everyone wants a 'piece of you'.

And so, my New Year's resolution is to stop pouncing on anyone wearing a dog collar to deal with something on my 'to do' list.

In the newspaper article, which started life as a report in the Church Times, the Archbishop of Canterbury remembered his time as a Parish Priest. I was amazed that he felt that being a Parish priest was more stressful than being the chief religious figure of the Church of England!

'This summer, Justin Welby, the Archbishop of Canterbury and a former oil industry executive, revealed that his time as a parish priest was the most stressful job he has ever done. "It was isolated, insatiably demanding and I was on the whole working without close colleagues – and that wears people



down," he said. The role is "for many, quite overwhelming and completely exhausting".

The bulk of the article was written by Revd Canon Dr Alan Bartlett who has been ordained for many years.

'None of us is super-man or -woman. So when we are stretched and a member of the congregation makes a grumble about something petty, we can snap. It is the proverbial straw that breaks the camel's back – someone complaining about a flower arrangement when we have just come from a bereaved family's home. I have learned to recognise that this is one of my own danger moments.

'There are others. Working on the front line in an age of austerity means that there are times when I see face-to-face the sheer, raw sadness of people's lives. Even at 59, with the experience of 25 years in ministry, I sometimes come away from being with a family in grief and cry my own tears in private, so I can continue to do my job in public.

'Is it getting harder for vicars like me? The brutal economics of the Church of England right now certainly results in us being stretched thinner. The problem isn't so much lack of vocations, but cost. It requires over £50,000 to keep a stipendiary (paid) priest in the field – that's wages, a home and a diocesan structure to support them.

'In many of our parishes in the North East, even if you cluster several of them together, there is not going to be enough in the collection plate to cover having a vicar among them. Yet the more we cluster parishes together, with one vicar shared between many, the clergy become more invisible.

'There is a limit to how many communities you can relate to effectively. One of the pressures is

staying fresh, for the next christening or funeral, because for that family it is a unique occasion. For us, though, it may be the fiftieth funeral that we have done that year.

Like lots of professions – like the police force, like teachers – as we grow fewer on the ground, the pressure on the individual gets greater.'

So, I'm going to do my bit to not increase the pressure any further. Most especially not to 'sweat the small stuff' as the saying goes. My New Year's resolution is to stop chasing for details that probably don't matter anyway and to think more about the clergy rather than myself. Oh – and no more moaning about the quality of Huw's coffee making.

The good news is that the newspaper article ends on quite a positive note from Alan Bartlett. 'Yet being a vicar is also, for many of us, hugely rewarding. In research done by the Cabinet Office in 2014, vicars came out as the happiest of all professions. My nine years in Gilesgate, Sherburn and Shadforth was one of the best jobs I will ever do. It was a privilege to be with people at those immensely important moments, when they open up and share their lives with me and with God. There were very few doors in my parish where, if I turned up in my dog collar, they wouldn't say: "Hello vicar, come in."'

The quotations are from an article in the Telegraph by Revd Canon Dr Alan Bartlett as told to Peter Stanford. Revd Canon Dr Alan Bartlett is now the clergy development advisor in the Durham Diocese. You can find the original article via google.

Vivianne Child, St Peter & St Paul



Changing times – the afternoon church!

These days you don't buy vests: walking and out-door shops will be full of 'base layers' which are long johns and long sleeved thermal vests of days gone by, but unless you are going skiing, it is unlikely these days that people will wear such garments. Indeed, in our modern centrally heated world it can be quite normal for people to be dressed in t-shirts in the middle of winter, safe in the knowledge that every building they go into will be ridiculously warm. The idea of turning the heating down and putting on a jumper appears to be an anathema.

This can be a challenge then for our Churches and how we are welcoming. Even those who grew up wearing a vest every day to make sure they didn't get a 'chill on their kidneys' have become used to warmer buildings and can quickly shiver in a medieval stone building.

St Peter & St Paul's Church is blessed with excellent heating and is used enough that we keep the place pretty warm. Visiting a village Church can be a colder experience. However, St Mary's Church in Puttenham has used the opportunity of addressing a serious damp issue to turn the Church into a comfortably warm building. We needed to lay a new floor and so we have put in underfloor heating connected to an air source heat pump to utilise renewable energy. The Church is now a constant 14.5°C: not exactly t-shirt warm but certainly comfortable.

This isn't the only change at St Mary's. The congregation have been



thinking what the future looks like for them now that they have a beautifully redecorated, warm, dry and yet ancient building that has been used for worship for generations.

Traditionally they have been a Prayer Book congregation with one Holy Communion a month (at 8.15am on the Second Sunday) and one evensong a month (at 3.30pm on the fourth Sunday). It has also not been a youthful church, which is fine; it doesn't have to be the goal for every church to be filled with children and have Messy Church and Worship for All. Some people prefer to choose a more 'traditional' style of worship. However, one thing that we have noticed is that for our more mature worshippers, the early morning service can be a challenge.

We have therefore decided to have a service every Sunday afternoon at 3.30pm. No longer do you have to wonder what Sunday of the month it is, all you need to do is think, 'Oh, I can't

get to the Sunday morning service at my Church, but don't worry there is a service at Puttenham at 3.30 today. I will go there.'

There will be some variety with the services but the pattern of worship will look like this at the beginning:

- 1st Sunday – Holy Communion
- 2nd Sunday – Evening Prayer
- 3rd Sunday – Taize
- 4th Sunday – Evensong followed by afternoon tea
- 5th Sunday – Sunday Worship

For those of you who love Evensong, then the 4th Sunday service is a real gem. If you enjoy singing evensong, you are most welcome to turn up early and join the informal choir to rehearse singing the psalms beforehand.

As well as changing our pattern of worship we also want to make the Church more accessible. From now on St Mary's will be opened up on a Sunday morning and only locked again after the Sunday afternoon service. This means that you can call in any time on a Sunday. We will see how this goes and maybe will look to open up on Saturdays as well.

We look forward to welcoming you at St Mary's soon.

Huw Bellis, Tring Team



Letter from Orkney



As I write this at the end of November we have now been living in Orkney for about a month. As expected, life is very different living on a Scottish island in the far north as opposed to living in the market town of Tring.

There is for example the climate – four seasons in one day is an understatement! I like walking and having a dog presents the perfect reason

eyes shut against the freezing onslaught and I was enduring an ‘Orkney facial’ where my skin was being very efficiently exfoliated. We made it back to the car sopping wet and I vowed never to go out without being fully toggled up in water-proofs regardless of the weather.

Something that has taken me by surprise is my new found enthusiasm for baking cakes! I love cooking but hadn’t embraced the ‘Bake Off’ branch before. Fruit cake, apple cake and banana loaves have been produced and are, I have to say, pretty good. Despite our good intentions of keeping them

great time. Harvest Home is a big deal in this farming community. They are held in the towns, villages and islands all over Orkney and are basically an excellent reason to get together for a blather (dictionary definition: ‘long-winded talk with no real substance’ – yes we can do that), several drams and a good dance to live folk music. Even my husband Mac, who is definitely not a candidate for ‘Strictly’ was persuaded to join in the Gay Gordon’s, and just about survived the exertion. We were made very welcome and arrangements made to meet up again.



to get out there and explore. A few days ago I set off in bright sunshine with our Labrador Jasper to head up a local hill to admire the stunning crystal clear view from the top. Some call Orkney the land of rainbows and lo and behold a beautiful rainbow appeared. The clue of course is in the name. Within two minutes a vicious hailstorm ensued. Jasper was cowering behind me with his

just for visitors they seem to be quickly disappearing to the detriment of our waist-lines. Must try harder.

I was also taken aback at one point by feeling homesick. How can I be homesick when I’m in my own house? However this was all dispelled when we went to the Harvest Home on the neighbouring island of Graemsay where we have stayed before and we had a

Adjustments are still being made, and this will continue for a while I suspect. We will be making contact with the local church, which is of course a very effective way of meeting local people. I am settling in – I’m out tomorrow with a couple of ladies for coffee, cakes and lots of chat, which proves that some activities are the same wherever you are!
Carrie Dodge, St Peter & St Paul

Parish registers

Baptisms

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

Elsie Olivia Knight
Leo James Anthony Cavalier

Weddings

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

Paul Lockyer & Rachel Allen
Kieran O’Reilly & Rachel Harvey

Funerals

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

Beryl Christine Marshall 85
Paul John James 51
Alan Geoffrey Partridge 91
John Rex Painter 74
Ivan Dennis Mills 86
James Alec Rudkin 91
James MacKenzie 90
Mary Richardson 88

Women’s World Day of Prayer

I wonder how much you know about this movement?

For the last few years I have been, along with people from other churches in Tring, to a preparation day in Watford for services to be held in the area the following March. These meetings inspire me about the movement and the service to come.

So what is it all about? The Women’s World Day of Prayer (WWDP) is a movement led by Christian women of many traditions. More than 170 countries take part, bringing together people of various races, cultures and traditions to share God’s word and to worship together. Each year the service is prepared by a group of women from a particular country. The ladies of Suriname have written the service for 2018. Not sure where Suriname is? Look it up, as I had to! It is a multi-ethnic country where 90% of the population of 540,000 live in coastal regions and 10%

in the vast interior forests. The country has a lot of natural resources including gold and crude oil.

The International Committee sets the themes and chooses which countries will compile the service. Suriname was given the theme ‘All God’s creation is very good!’ It is an interesting service relating the creation story to today’s living and how we care for the world. The service includes a reflection on Psalm 8, challenging us to think about how we use the gifts God has given us so freely.

Each year the service reflects something of the country where it was written. I like this aspect as it makes us be outward-looking, identifying with another part of the globe, standing in someone else’s shoes and seeing what their praises or concerns are. We are seeing something of the bits that don’t make the news headlines, the nitty-gritty of ordinary lives of people like us. That helps us to feel at one with them in

worship. I also enjoy sharing the service amongst the churches in Tring. The local group that meet to prepare the service are from different churches; we all work together, inspire each other and offer different skills. It is a joy to be with them.

So why don’t you come along to our service on 2 March? This year the services are in St Peter & St Paul’s Church. We usually have an afternoon and an evening service. Times will be confirmed later – look out for the posters!

Still not sure where Suriname is? Try the north east coast of South America. ‘Women’s’ World Day of Prayer? Yes, it is prepared by women but is for all people. Do come and join us!
Jillian Smith, St Peter & St Paul



Shrinking the footprint

In my role as Chair of Trustees of Christian climate change charity, Operation Noah, I was privileged to be invited to attend an award ceremony and lunch at Lambeth Palace on Monday 16 October. Hosted by Bishop Nicholas Holtam, Bishop of Salisbury and lead Church of England bishop on the environment, the event was also attended by representatives from churches that had been selected as finalists in four categories, and in addition there were individuals who had been nominated as ‘Green Champions’ and were finalists in that category. Having been involved in submitting entries from High Street Baptist Church in two of the sections, I was very interested to see what we had been up against!

First up was the ‘Green Building Award’, which was won by a small rural church in Cornwall that had worked with a neighbouring school to install and share a biomass heating system.

For the ‘Biodiversity Award’, the winning church, from Berkshire, had transformed scrubland into a garden of remembrance and churchyard extension; they had incorporated many aspects to attract and nurture wildlife, including wild

flowers, bat boxes and bee hotels, and had worked extensively with people from the local community.

The ‘Green Congregation Award’ went to a guerilla gardening team from Durham; they had involved over 1000 young people, and many others as well, in planting in a range of locations, and this had also led to the establishment of community gardens and the distribution of fresh produce as part of the local food bank scheme.

The ‘Green Futures Award’ went to an incredibly inventive and innovative scheme by Holy Trinity Church in Tulse Hill, London. They are constructing a new Church Hall using straw-bale techniques and are using volunteer labour over a number of years to complete the project – which will have solar panels and be built almost entirely of recycled materials.

In all these categories the judges had a difficult task in selecting winners from shortlists that consisted of other equally inspiring and exciting projects and we were able to see presentations from each of them during the morning. There were five individuals shortlisted in the ‘Green Champion’ category and clearly this had been an even more daunting

choice for the judging team – and so they opted to share the award between all five.

On a beautiful autumn day, we were invited to spend time looking around the gardens of Lambeth Palace – a rare treat – and to share a buffet lunch with everyone. This was a great opportunity to catch up with a number of friends and colleagues and also to talk with a couple of people from the Tulse Hill winners. It was a day of shared celebration but with a very serious motivation. As we heard in a message from Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby: ‘Responding to climate change is an essential part of our responsibility to safeguard God’s creation. Meanwhile, to love our neighbour – particularly, in this case, our neighbour whom we may never meet but who lives daily with the profound threat posed by this moral crisis – is at the core of what it is to follow Jesus Christ.’

Nicky Bull, High Street Baptist Church





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Our first Christmas in Orkney

I was truly AMAZED at the wonderful way we were greeted at St Peter & St Paul's on our first return visit from Orkney. It was very heartwarming. Thank you, one and all: this means a lot to Carrie and me. Twenty-five years of memories – along with many friends – are from Tring.

Visiting done, Carrie headed for Birmingham for a brief visit to her mother while I headed back home alone with the dog and a brace of plump Pheasant (thanks to Grahame Senior) to meet The Australians. The dog never lost interest in his feathered companions throughout the entire trip.

The weather up north was appalling: ice and snow everywhere. I needed a miracle and I got it, in triplicate. I assure you: prayers do work! My trip back was scheduled to take three days, allowing one day to sort myself out before The Australians arrived; not a lot of wriggle room on timing. The first miracle occurred at Penrith. The northern Ice and snow suddenly stopped and moved behind me leaving clear, well-gritted roads through to the ferry port of Scrabster. Bit like the parting of the Red Sea, don't you think? After three days, was I GLAD to get on that Ferry! I must say the Scottish local authorities do know how to handle snow.

I picked up my Aussie pal and his wife from Kirkwall Airport, and a day later did the same for Carrie. After a huge shop at Mr Tesco, we were set to hunker down for Christmas. Our Australian friends emigrated from the UK about forty years ago and wanted a traditional Christmas, complete with Carols, Christmas Tree, Goose and Pheasant

plus Christmas Pud. That is exactly what they got. We made them put up decorations, decorate the tree and chop the veggies all to a loud rendition of Christmas Carols from the iPod. That's when the second miracle happened.

Our builder, a Mr Eoin Tait, AKA Scapa Builders, phoned to let us know he was about to arrive and start fitting our woodburning stove complete with hearth and flue (a four-day task) and on the same day our new cooker arrived, for which we had been waiting four weeks. What a gift for Christmas. The third miracle? I didn't go completely barmy.

A bottle of celebration bubbles with a night of Carols and Christmas Music at St Magnus Cathedral, Kirkwall, was the icing on the cake. It took one's mind off the army of (very nice) builders in and out, but all completed in time.

Christmas Day looking out across the sea to the snow-capped hills of Hoy, stuffing Goose and Pheasant, a lovely new range to cook them in, the flickering new fire and the sparkle of the Tree, gave me a warm glow of appreciation and much thanks.

On St Steven's Day, there was snow to complete this lovely first Christmas in our new home. Carrie and I went to a wonderful community Carol Service at Stromness [Old] Town Hall held by the local Baptist church, featuring four fiddles, a guitar and a fantastic pianist on a grand adding a touch of Jazz to familiar old tunes. The singing blasted the roof off.

They are such an inclusive community here, maybe because

many originate from such a variety of places. People like us, moving onto the Island, some Orcadians returning for retirement from far-flung places around the world, some folk returning for Christmas. Maybe it is just a lack of materialism? It really, really, doesn't matter what car you drive, or what clothes you wear or what your job is, it seems that if you are willing to treat everyone else in the same way you become just accepted, warts-n-all. Maybe it is something inherent to Island culture. Whatever it is, I can say the Spirit of Christmas is alive and very well on Orkney. I hope it remains so for the next 365 days.

As I write this note, the Aussies have left, on their way to Hong Kong. The leftovers have been cooked up into a stew (for the posh people, that's a casserole) and frozen. The laundry is being done as I sit here in our tiny temporary study, and the thought of taking down the decorations is looming on the horizon. Now it is the time for reflection. Did I have a proper Christmas? God, the birth of Christ, and all that. Or did I succumb to the Telly, the Grub and the Booze.

A bit of both really. I like to think I didn't miss the whole point of Christmas, and in doing so had greater cause for jollification. I am not sure about the Telly but Feasting and Drinking on such a celebrated occasion, I certainly can do, and with gusto.

Next, HOGMANAY! Woo hoo! Wind up the elastic band at the distillery.

I recovered very quietly in our friend Sue's croft on the Isle of Graemsay, contemplating last night, having spent New Year's Eve in the local farmer's huge kitchen with the twenty-two Graemsay islanders. The enormous table groaning with food and drink, we sang songs, drank whisky and feasted. The birth of a new year, a fresh start, a new beginning – it somehow doesn't call for moderation.

A toast to you all in Tring, 'Carrie and I wish you a very peaceful, contented, and healthy new year'. Hoping to see you all around Easter.

Mac and Carrie Dodge
St Peter & St Paul





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TRingers – the handbell ringers

Handbells were first introduced in the late 17th century and were often used by tower bell ringers for practice purposes and also for ringing tunes. Over the years they saw a decline until the late 20th century when there was renewed interest. Until last year, the Whitechapel foundry in London produced and repaired bells.

I had longed to ring bells and eventually joined the group at Ivinghoe as a novice, remaining with them until recently. In March 2013, I found myself in the position of finding a group of willing and able people, as I had permission to borrow one set of St Peter & St Paul's handbells.

'The invitation to join the St Peter & St Paul handbell ringers (now officially TRingers) was an intriguing prospect which I accepted with a curiosity that quickly developed into a great pleasure,' remembers Sheila Whitehead.

There was great excitement along with an element of apprehension as we assembled in the Emmie Hobbs Room in the Parish Church and my then novices learned how to handle the bells and how to read the music (in coloured and numerical form) that I had written for them.

As Carole Wells noted, it was 'a joyously collaborative activity; after all, when each player has just two bells, you can't make much of a tune on your own!'

We started with a group of eight, having the need for six at a time, each ringing two bells. Our bells were in the range of middle C to an octave above G plus an additional top A, therefore all our music was to be written in the key of C with no accidentals. More recently, we added two B flats to our range enabling us also to play in F major, thus giving a wider scope. By January 2013, we had

two new members, bringing our numbers to twelve: 'full house'. Since then we've had a further couple of changes.

We play our bells in three groups of two people, each group having an identical music book and each person responsible for two bells. The bells in each group are numbered 1-4 with the highest note held in the left hand. We ring down from the top note every time we commence playing to ensure that we have the correct order. The music format is a grid from which the ringers of the top four bells play the top line, the middle four play the middle line and the bottom four the bottom line. Vertical lines indicate three or four beats to a bar.

It may sound very complicated but with considerable concentration and with the ability to count 1-3 or 1-4 depending on the number of beats in the bar, all will be well. We have additional markings for rhythm which it's vital to adhere to! On occasions, some people finish a piece before others! We are all very good humoured over errors. We have a good laugh and try again.

Janet Goodyer remembers the early days when her most common words were 'Where are we? I'm lost again.'

We don't keep to the same two bells when practising but keep moving round to experience all positions and all parts.

In March 2018, we will have been in action for five years. As we started with empty books I have been busy writing music to improve our skills, to maintain our interest and to provide what may be required of us when we go out to ring for an entertainment or for Church services.

As well as ringing at St Peter & St Paul's we visit other local Churches, sometimes for pure entertainment and sometimes for carol services. We go to

groups for the elderly and also for those with disabilities. We've been to the Garden Centre and to Ivinghoe's Musicathon.

We play a wide variety of music from war time songs to childhood songs, folk songs, love songs, sections of classical pieces including excerpts of symphonies and hymns and carols.

John Whiteman says, 'For me, one highlight was the time I persuaded everyone to play Lady Gaga.'

I wrote a chiming piece when we started out and we use it as our signature tune each time we go out to ring. The title is TRingers!

When we're entertaining, we like to integrate with our audiences. Thanks to John, we tell them a little about the origin of our pieces and when appropriate, we give them the opportunity of holding a bell. The question we are asked most often is 'What happens if you go wrong?' We can't afford to go wrong! We go on regardless, not wincing or nudging our neighbour for failing to come in. 'AND not muttering 'oh dear' or 'help',' adds Prue Senior.

Elaine Schafer comments, 'It is lovely to give pleasure to groups we visit particularly when they feel encouraged to sing along with us.'

My conclusion is that we have tremendous fun, we all help and understand each other AND we work very hard in order to give of our best. Do come and listen to us.

Margaret Gittins, St Peter & St Paul



Let's stop extreme inequality



It is a sad truth that in the past few decades, levels of inequality within many societies have become ever more extreme.

Similarly, inequality between rich and poor countries

has also been increasing. This is despite the fact that the world has effectively become wealthier in recent decades, and that many millions have been lifted out of extreme poverty. So in effect, the poor have become slightly less poor whilst the rich have become much, much richer.

Just how alarming these trends have become is illustrated by some statistics: just eight men now own the same wealth as the 3.6 billion people who make up the poorest half of humanity; seven out of ten people live in a country that has seen a rise in inequality in the last thirty years; corporate tax dodging costs poor countries at least \$100 billion every year. This is enough money to provide an education for the 124 million children who aren't in school and prevent the deaths of at least 6 million children thanks to health care services.

Even mainstream economists now

acknowledge the negative effects of extreme inequality.

It is clear that worldwide investment, innovation and economic growth are now actually being held back by these levels of extreme inequality and the associated use of tax havens. The global economic pie would be bigger and would grow faster if there was a fairer distribution of income, as poorer people tend to spend income increases on housing or education or health-care rather than hoarding it in offshore bank accounts as many wealthy corporations and individuals do.

The good news is that most people oppose the unfairness of such extreme inequality in income, wealth and life opportunities. A 2017 survey by Christian Aid revealed that most UK adults are clearly against tax dodging: two out of three people believe tax avoidance to be morally wrong; four out of five people say that multinationals' tax avoidance makes them feel angry; a third of people say that they are currently boycotting the products or services of a company because it does not pay its fair share of tax in the UK while almost half say they are considering a boycott; almost three-quarters of people agreed the Government has a responsibility to



ensure that all UK-based companies pay the proper amount of tax in every country in which they operate; eight out of ten people want to see multinationals' accounts more transparent and publicly available.

Given that the UK public is so opposed to extreme inequality, what can be done practically to reverse this trend? In recent years, concerned campaigners have focused on two key areas – fairer trade relationships and fairer tax regimes.

Fairer trade relationships have been in the public eye for many years, and this theme continues to attract widespread support. In the UK the flagship campaign is the Fairtrade movement, now in its 30th year and recognised as a global leader. Years of hard work by the Tring Justice and Peace Group and others has led to Tring being recognised and renewed again as a Fairtrade town. We all need to keep striving to support and strengthen the Fairtrade campaign, and we also need to ensure that Brexit does not cause damage to the UK's smallest and most vulnerable trading partners.

Fairer tax has been rising up the political agenda, probably for a few reasons: publicity around the derisory amounts of UK corporation tax paid by multi-nationals such as Amazon, Google and Starbucks; disclosure through brave whistleblowers of malpractice and illegality in the offshore financial world viz. the cases of Lux Leaks, the HSBC Swiss tax leaks, the Panama Papers, and recently the Paradise Papers; the impact of years of austerity on Western societies, with the realisation that many multi-nationals are not paying their fair share of tax.

Tring residents are often shocked when they discover that their water from Thames Water comes via an opaque

multi-national structure (including a Cayman Island company) – and that despite extracting over £1.2 billion in dividends for shareholders in the past ten years, Thames Water has not paid a penny in UK corporation tax in those same years! If you feel angry at the unfairness of that, then imagine how the citizens of developing countries feel about the tax dodging that many multi-nationals get up to in their countries where governments are even more desperately short of funding to provide infrastructure and basic health services.

Some significant victories have been achieved as a result of these pressures, and have already resulted in some major legal changes in the UK and globally. Please excuse some of the dry tax terminology below, but it is useful to understand these key measures, what they are and what still needs to be done to make them fully effective.

The new tax measures to be aware of are as follows:

Common Reporting Standard (CRS)

Over eighty countries have now implemented procedures (also called automatic exchange of information) to share details of the owners of bank accounts with each other. There remain flaws in this procedure that exclude many smaller countries and that favour tax havens – but even so, this is a level of global cooperation that would have been unthinkable even ten years ago, and shows just what can be achieved when the political agenda moves against malpractice.

Public Registers of Beneficial Ownership (PRBO)

The UK government has been a global leader in implementing rules that allow the public to see the names of the actual owners of a privately owned company i.e. to stop company owners hiding behind the screen of anonymity that previously existed. Some eleven other countries have already or are currently implementing similar public registers.

The UK PRBO was introduced during David Cameron's term as prime minister, and he stated at the time: 'For too long a small minority have hidden their business dealings behind a complicated web of shell companies, and this cloak of secrecy has fuelled all manners of questionable practice and downright illegality. Illegality that is bad for the developing world, as corrupt regimes can stash their money abroad under different identities, but illegality that is



bad for Britain's economy too, as people evade their taxes through untraceable trails of paperwork. Not only is this hugely unfair to the millions of hard-working people in Britain who pay their taxes, it is also bad for business...'

At the G8 summit in 2013, Cameron stated his intention that the UK's Crown Dependencies (Jersey, Guernsey, Isle of Man) and Overseas Territories (Bermuda, Cayman Islands, British Virgin Islands and others) should implement similar PRBO measures, but they have all so far refused to do so (apart from Montserrat which has committed to implement a PRBO in 2018). Cameron said 'Just as in Britain people get angry when they work hard, pay their taxes and then see others not paying their fair share, so we should demand the same justice and fairness for others in developing countries too'.

So further action is needed to ensure that the country that led the way in abolishing the slave trade in 1833 should now be showing similar moral leadership in abolishing the malpractices of the offshore financial industry. Please lobby your MP to press the UK government to require the Crown Dependencies and Overseas Territories to implement PRBO measures.

Country-by-country reporting (CBCR)

Today many multi-national companies simply show a single composite amount for their business in many countries globally. This makes it impossible for anyone to judge how much business they do or how much tax they pay in any single country. It has become clear in recent years that this approach to accounting disclosure has facilitated widespread abuse, where multi-nationals use many methods to shift profits and cash to tax havens where they pay little or no tax. Although these methods are often technically legal, their effect is an immoral one whereby many countries

suffer significant losses of tax revenues that could be paying for desperately needed schools, hospitals or economic infrastructure.

The new measure called CBCR throws light into these murky accounting corners by requiring larger multi-nationals to disclose their revenues, profits and taxes paid in each country where they operate. This makes it far easier to see where countries are being ripped off and deprived of vital tax revenues. Our own MP David Gauke has previously stated that 'If we want to achieve greater transparency, as I believe we all do, it is right that we focus on driving forward international efforts on public country-by-country reporting... We will continue to support and drive this multi-lateral change forward...'

CBCR measures are in place in many countries, but this data is private and only available to governments. Campaigners want this data to be placed in the public domain. This is called Public CBCR or PCBCR. When the data is made public, then campaigners and the press can examine it, otherwise there remains the risk that governments may continue supporting cosy tax arrangements that damage other countries (as the Irish and Luxembourg governments, for example, have been found to be doing).

Oxfam are currently running an online campaign for small UK businesses to petition the government to introduce PCBCR, as small businesses are placed at a serious disadvantage when they pay their full tax bill whilst large multi-nationals exploit the system to dodge their tax responsibilities.

If you are involved in a small business, please sign this petition at <https://actions.oxfam.org/great-britain/tax-sme/petition>.

Peter Dobson

Tring Justice and Peace Group

FURTHER INFORMATION

Oxfam

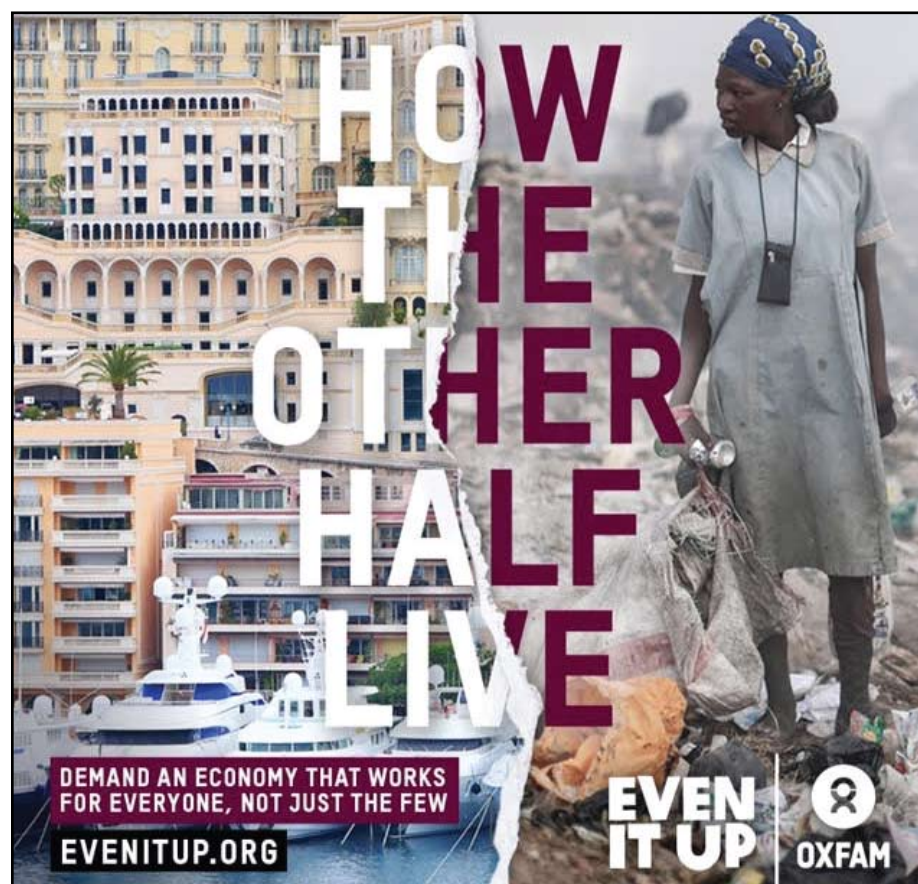
<https://www.oxfam.org/en/campaigns/even-it-up>
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2x4jbN6_q5Q

ChristianAid

<https://www.christianaid.org.uk/campaigns/tax-justice-campaign>

Methodist Tax Justice Network

<http://www.mtjn.org.uk>



Why do Catholics light candles?



One of the oldest Christian practices, Catholics use candles as both symbols and prayer intentions.

Fire and light have always been an important feature of worship in the Christian and Jewish religions. As far back as the time of Exodus the people were instructed to 'keep a flame burning perpetually' (Exodus 27:19-20), as 'perpetual incense before the Lord from generation to generation' (Exodus 30:7-8) and as a 'lamp stand in the Tent of Meeting... set up before the Lord as He has commanded Moses' (Exodus 40:24-25).

The ancient Jewish people used a perpetual fire to be two major things: a constant act of devotion, and a symbol of a holy space where God dwells. This practice is most clearly seen being continued by the tabernacle in every Catholic Church. The tabernacle, which is the Latin for 'tent', is where the body and blood of Christ are kept between Masses. Just like in ancient times, a candle is kept perpetually burning beside it for the same reasons practised back then; God is physically with us within the 'tent' and we wish to perpetually adore him.

Christ's coming added further dimensions to our use of candles. In

John 8:12, Jesus says of himself: 'I am the Light of the world; the one who follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have light and life'. The early Christians, who already saw the lighting of candles as an act of worship and devotion, began to also see the candle as a symbol of communion with Christ and a symbol of him and his love in the darkness.

As the liturgy took shape, candles became a crucial symbol in many of the sacraments.

With our understanding of the lighting of candles as an act of devotion, a symbol of God's presence and communion with him through Jesus, early Christians began placing candles on the tombs of martyrs in the catacombs. They did this because they understood the martyr to be a person who, now being certainly in heaven, was in complete communion with God.

Catholics believe it is only those in hell who are truly dead and that those in heaven especially are living in a higher reality (John 3:16). This being so, we ask this person in full communion with Christ to pray for us in much the same way we would ask a dear and close friend. Due to their complete communion with God, Catholics believe intercessions are especially helpful.

In lighting a candle before a relic, statue or icon we are saying that God resides fully within that person; the person is in full communion with God

and that that person is giving perpetual glory to God. Catholics practise this not to honour the image itself, but rather the one it truly represents. When we ask this saint to pray with and for us, this light, as it is kept burning, also shows our desire to remain in God's presence as we go through our daily duties at home and in the workplace.

Lastly, when candles are lit before Christ's image, it is done to show our reverence to him who deserves our adoration and thanksgiving and who alone can forgive our sins and bring us back into a deeper relationship with him. Only when candles are lit before images of God are they being used for worship of the depicted figure.

Callum Moore, Corpus Christi



"Pierce's voice rang like a bell with beautiful clarity"
— EdinburghGuide.com

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To Russia, with love



In August 2016, five of us decided to go on a river cruise in Russia. It began with a flight to Moscow to board our riverboat, then two days exploring in Moscow, a cruise down rivers to reach

St Petersburg and then two days there before returning home.

Sounds nice and easy – but then we hit the Visa problem! SAGA sent us a list of questions, the answers to which would be forwarded to the authorities; then we would have to travel to London to obtain the document. We duly sent off the replies but received a letter explaining that the Russian Embassy now required answers to a further list of thirty questions, some of them quite personal. Once completed, we went to London to be fingerprinted and then our passports were taken to have the visa inserted and returned by courier post. It was a bit close to the departure date by the time all this was completed.

We set off on 8 September and had a good journey to Moscow and a fantastic stay there seeing some of the main sights. Vladimir Putin was in the city as that weekend celebrated 870 years of Moscow being a settlement. We didn't see him but we heard rehearsals taking place for his visit. We visited parks, memorials and lakes on the first morning and in the afternoon visited a cemetery where notable people are now buried as there is no more room in the Kremlin. This included Yeltsin, Krushchev and Shostakovich. After this we went down a fashionable street to find a group of people chanting 'Hare Krishna' and dancing. Some onlookers joined in too. In the evening we went down the Moscow Metro which was amazing with



beautiful artworks all around. Our guide was worried that we might get lost and told us how to behave on underground trains but in fact one person went the wrong way and he had to search for her. He then took us to Victory Park and it was very dark by then.

The next day we visited the Kremlin and we saw where the May Day parades took place. They seemed to be such a regular feature at one time with military hardware being paraded for all to see. In our free time we were going to St Basil's Cathedral but it was a fair walk away so we decided to visit the GUM department store and had ice creams instead.

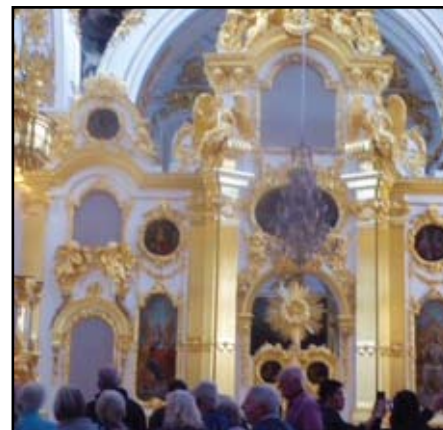
We returned to our boat and set off that evening on our trip to St Petersburg. On the way we stopped at small towns and villages so different from the busyness of Moscow. There were many Churches, many of which were being repaired, funded by the wealthy. Souvenirs were sold in each place and once we did stop for coffee, but only once! We went to one fascinating place where they are renovating old wooden Churches. Mandrogia was another lovely village with lots of craftspeople working there and selling their goods.

On board ship, there were lectures about the places we were visiting,



cooking talks, question and answer sessions about Russia today, dancing and singing lessons too. Some of us took part in a concert on board and sang 'Kalinka'. The food on board was good and there were musicians who played in the evenings too. We entered Lake Lagoda at 6.00pm and noticed that our boat had stopped along with several others. Apparently our boat could only take waves of 4.5 feet – and the waves on the lake were 10 feet high! We stopped there for around twenty-eight hours, entertained on board by the singers, DVDs about the Czars and other activities. We then moved on to St Petersburg and had a wonderful sightseeing tour around the city and then explored by ourselves. In the afternoon we went to the Hermitage, once the home of Catherine the Great. It is now a vast museum housing many famous artworks. It is said that if you looked at a painting there for ten minutes, it would take you eight years to see them all. It is spectacular! In the evening we went to a fantastic Cossack show which made a great end to our tour.

Thelma Fisher
High Street Baptist Church



Freedom to worship?

Having seen over 5000 visitors welcomed to services in the Parish Church alone over the Christmas period, I was very interested to read Thelma Fisher's article about her recent trip to Russia.

I am old enough to remember Bibles being smuggled into the USSR and have worked since then with many Christian publishers who were created after 1989 once there was freedom to share the Christian message via literature for adults and children alike. The Russian Bible Society has published a number of our Children's Bibles in the last 30 years as have publishers in the Ukraine, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Georgia, Hungary, Slovenia, Romania, Poland, the Czech Republic and Slovakia – well over a million books in fact. But freedom, it seems, is not a one-way street.

In July last year, Russian president Vladimir Putin approved a package of anti-terrorism laws that restricted missionary activity and evangelism. People prayed and religious leaders and human rights advocates protested, but the amendments went ahead.

There is now a law against sharing faith in homes, online, or anywhere but recognized church buildings. Christians

will not be allowed to invite their friends or neighbours to a Church service. This has already affected Protestants – around 1% of the population – and religious minorities small enough to gather in homes. Konstantin Bendas, deputy bishop of the Pentecostal Union, spoke of the local police promising to drive them out of the home where they met for worship.

The new laws are considered to be Russia's most restrictive measures in post-Soviet history. They place limitations on missionary work, including preaching, teaching, and engaging in any activity which might recruit people into a faith group.

If people do want to share their faith, they must secure a government permit through a registered religious organization, and they cannot evangelize anywhere besides churches and other religious sites. The restrictions even apply to activity in homes and online.

Russian nationalist identity is tied up with the Russian Orthodox Church. Protestants who may want to share a different perspective on worship or belief are seen as a threat.

Sergei Ryakhovsky, head of the Protestant Churches of Russia, sees this

law as a violation of religious freedom and personal conscience and believes it creates the basis for mass persecution of believers for violating these provisions. We may be seeing the church go underground once more in Russia.

Foreign visitors who attempt to share their faith are violating the law and face deportation. Missionaries who have left the country are not able to return because they cannot renew their visas.

Did people share their faith more when they knew how precious it was; when they were risking their freedom? Do we take for granted that freedom to worship and to invite others to Christian events, to teach our children the Christian faith or share it with friends, neighbours, colleagues or strangers? Watch what is happening in Russia. Maybe the days of religious freedom there are now over. Could it happen here?

Annette Reynolds, St Peter & St Paul



Beer and carols

Thank you to Richard and Jane Shardlow of Tring Brewery for hosting the Beer & Carols event on 7 January to celebrate Epiphany. A wonderful time was had by all – Anglicans and Baptists alike – and £750.00 raised for DENS.



Everybody dies... leaving the rest of us behind



No doubt many among us are familiar with those stirring words of Randy Newman in his not entirely uplifting song 'Old Man', used as the title track for Dustin Hoffman's latest film. His riveting conclusion: 'Won't be no God to comfort you... You don't need anybody... Nobody needs you... Everybody dies' certainly has a pretty stark message about the nature of death.

Let's talk about death and dying

It is probably not a subject many of us find inviting and we do tend to avoid it and talk about something 'nicer'. However, if you had joined us on Sunday 5 November for a whole day devoted to the subject, you might have been surprised by the general atmosphere.

The general consensus was that 'A Good Life Deserves a Good Death' was well worthwhile as an event and quite a lot of it was actually enjoyable. Indeed, the strongest element in the soundtrack was not weeping and wailing but laughter; lots of laughter.

The 'Grave Talk' group discussions clearly enabled people to relax and talk about what they actually feel and fear about the whole process. There was so much relief and so much willingness to share – and even laugh about – secret fears and worries. We all travel on the same journey and being able to talk

about it openly was clearly liberating.

The brief but fact-packed talks by our six speakers (two lawyers; two funeral directors; the Senior Nurse from St Francis Hospice and a local Bereavement Support Volunteer) were fascinating. The Q & A session that followed lasted twice as long and allowed people to explore some of their deepest concerns. Again, there was a lot of laughter. ('Don't donate your body to Cambridge unless it's perfect' was probably the most surprising nugget of information.)

We ended the event with a lovely reflective recital from Anna Le Hair prior to the Annual All Souls service in the Parish Church.

One thing that was abundantly clear is that Randy Newman's lines, 'You don't need anybody, nobody needs you' are little short of silly.

We ALL need each other

The dying need the living in order to support the process for them; the living need the dying in order to properly celebrate and truly understand the transitory nature of all our lives on earth. Death is a shared experience and involves different participants in different ways. Surely, sharing best practice and approaching the whole process together makes sense.

We are going to do it again

There was an overwhelming wish from those who participated in the event the first time around to have another go. Another go at Grave Talk with more time to explore the themes; another go at the speakers with more time to ask questions and start discussions. So we are going to do it again but we are going to try to do it even better.

Death is a subject for every generation

Whilst we had a big age range at the first event, the youngest being in their twenties, the majority of those who participated were the upper quartile; those in their sixties and upwards. What many of them remarked on was that there was a great deal of good information and the opportunity to share appropriate approaches. After all, it is the grown-up children and the young families – all those left behind – who have to

manage the practical, economic and legal components of the process. They have to do all that at the same time as coping with the grieving process and the sudden realisation that the death of a loved-one is real and it hurts. Perhaps it might be helpful for some of our busy, stressed mid-life/mid-career Mums and Dads (aka Sons and Daughters) to have an opportunity to spend an hour or two getting to grips with how best to approach the loss of parents.



So that's what we are going to try to do but...

We're going to do it in the Brewery.

The re-run of 'A Good Life Deserves a Good Death' won't be in the Parish Church, it will be in Tring Brewery. It will have the same components of a relaxed opportunity to explore 'Grave Talk' and share our hopes and fears followed by some brief talks from the experts. It will have the same opportunity to ask questions and explore all the angles as a group. It will be informal, relaxed and social. It will have beer and wines and some nice things to nibble.

Most importantly, it will be open and inclusive for all generations and it will not be forbidding and daunting. As one of our guests said last time: 'I didn't want to go, I thought I would be bored, but I really enjoyed it.'

Help us get it right

We are working on the details and the plans and sorting out the right date. We hope you will want to come along and bring family members. Watch this space for all the details but in the meantime do write to me at gsenior@seniorpartners.co.uk or telephone 01442 822770 or Huw Bellis or any of the team with your suggestions. This is a subject that concerns us all; it's for all of us to try to get it right.

Everybody does indeed die as Randy Newman says. However, contrary to his view that 'nobody needs anybody', may I suggest that we all need each other as we approach the next big step. Together.

Grahame Senior, St Peter & St Paul

Sleep out for DENS

We did the Dens sleep out because it would be a new experience, and it was for a good cause.

It was fascinating, and very different to anything we'd ever done before. It was interesting to see how much money we could raise, knowing it was going to help homeless people.

It was fun having a one-off experience, to raise money, but it would not be nice to be homeless. It would be uncomfortable, and we were quite privileged – we were with our friends, we had hot soup in the evening, and bacon butties in the morning!

Fin Eaton (11) & Lois Eaton (10)
High Street Baptist Church



When I started at Tring School in September one of the first things I did was go along to Youth Café with my older sister Maya. Basically it's a club which meets in St Peter & St Paul

on Mondays after school in term time and we chat and eat a lot of toast!

When Revd Huw mentioned the DENS sleepout, I already knew what he was talking about because Maya has done it three times already, once at the Church in Tring and twice at St Albans Abbey. This time we would be sleeping out in the grounds of a school in Hemel Hempstead.

I agreed to do it because it sounded like fun but as the time came closer I started to get nervous and wonder if I'd made a mistake. The weather was a lot colder than when we first started talking about it and I was worried about being really cold. But it helped to remember that homeless people don't get a choice so I thought I should do it. It was just one night after all.

On the night it wasn't as cold as I thought it would be. When we got there we signed in and got a wristband and then we found a spot in a corner where we thought it wouldn't be windy and laid down our sleeping bags on the cardboard we were going to sleep on. The organisers were giving out heated hand warmer things. I put some in my sleeping bag to warm it up and my sister and I put some in our socks. I hate having cold feet!

There was soup and some



sandwiches for us to have and we could have some hot chocolate and tea and things too. I knew I would be up late but I actually fell asleep at about 12.30am and slept through till about 5.30am. Some people stayed awake until 3.00am (Maya!). I stayed in my warm sleeping bag until about 6.00am then went to get

a bacon roll and juice and some biscuits for breakfast.

The best bit about it was being with lots of people doing the same thing raising money for the charity. Would I do it again? Yes!

Maisie Willmore, St John's, Aldbury

Festive Choral Evensong for Candlemas

Sunday, February 4th 2018 at 6.30pm, St Peter and St Paul, Tring.

With canticles 'based on Latin-American rhythms' by Bryan Kelly, a sumptuous anthem and rousing hymns.

Refreshments will be provided after the service.
Further information from Vivianne Child on 01442 826092 or email us at vchild@childassociates.co.uk

The Rule of Benedict



Benedict was born at Norcia in Italy in 480AD. His father was a nobleman and he had a twin sister – Scholastica. As a young man he was sent to Rome to study rhetoric,

but unhappy with the dissolute life lived there by the other students, he went to Affile, aged about 20, with a few priests and his old nurse as a servant. His piety – and a miracle claimed by his followers – created attention and he retired to a remote cave near Subiaco where he lived for three years as a hermit. A local monk gave him a habit to wear and local shepherds befriended him and started to follow his teachings. He was not free from temptation – one day he had such a vivid dream about a young lady he had known in Rome that he ripped off his habit and rolled in a thorn bush so the pain could take away the tempting vision!

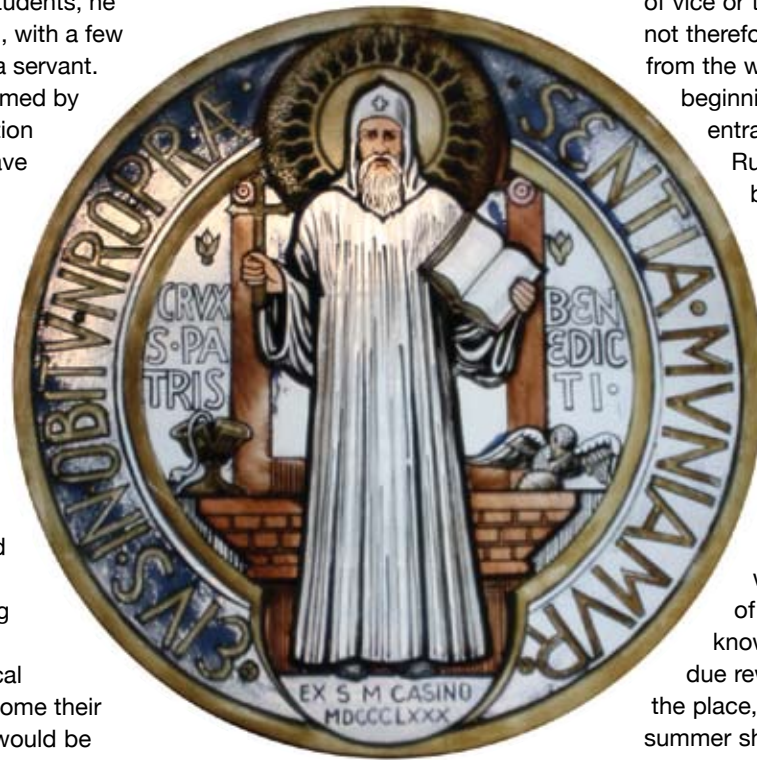
As his fame spread, a local monastery asked him to become their Abbot. He warned them he would be strict, but they insisted. When one of the monks, annoyed with his strictness, tried to poison him, he returned to solitude. Eventually he formed twelve small local monasteries as his followers wished to live according to his teachings. Unfortunately a jealous local hermit created a lot of trouble. He poisoned Benedict's bread and sent prostitutes to tempt his monks!

Benedict moved to Monte Casino where he founded a larger monastery and his sister Scholastica moved to the same area and founded a monastery for nuns nearby. At Monte Casino around 530AD he wrote the Rule by which the monastery operated, and this became the Rule of St Benedict. The Rule has been adopted by many other monasteries who term themselves Benedictine, so in the UK as well as Catholic Benedictine monasteries (the term monastery applies to places where monks or nuns live) there are Anglican Benedictine monasteries, Cistercian monasteries and Trappist monasteries all

using the Rule of St Benedict.

Why is the Rule used so much? I believe it is because it is an ideal rule which guides the religious life, but is very humane and compassionate.

The Rule consists of seventy-three short chapters dealing with every aspect of monastic life from the form of prayers and liturgy, through how the tools and crockery should be treated,



to details of clothing and how the dormitories should be organised. All of this is simply to guide the individual to become a true follower of Jesus Christ. The rule is described by the Benedictine monks as follows: 'Preferring nothing whatever to Christ, seeking to live the Gospel in a radical way, they are gathered in community, committed to the brotherhood by a promise of stability in chaste love and led in the way of conversion by the guidance of a superior to whom they promise obedience. Living in an atmosphere of silence, seeking to be constantly attentive to God's presence, the monks strive to create a harmonious balance between prayer and work.' The Rule is also available with modified wording making it more applicable to nuns.

Why do I think Benedict is humane and compassionate? There are several reasons. For example, he considers one of the greatest sins to be that of 'murmuring', what we might

call grumbling. He knew that such murmuring could destroy a community.

At the start of his Rule Benedict writes, 'We have therefore to establish a school of the Lord's service, in the institution of which we hope we are going to establish nothing harsh, nothing burdensome. But if, prompted by the desire to attain to equity, anything be set forth somewhat strictly for the correction of vice or the preservation of charity, do not therefore in fear and terror flee back from the way of salvation of which the beginning cannot but be a narrow entrance'. Benedict is saying his Rule is not supposed to be burdensome but has to be strict at the start to show the way of salvation.

There are many examples of his humility and compassion in the Rule. Here are a few: 'Duly considering the infirmity of the weak we believe that half a pint of wine per head per day suffices; but let those to whom God gives the power of the endurance of abstinence know that they shall have their due reward. But if the necessities of the place, or the work, or the heat of the summer should call for more, let it stand within the discretion of the superior to grant more, he taking all care that neither surfeiting nor drunkenness creep in. Although we read that wine is by no means for monks, yet because in our time monks cannot be persuaded to see this, at all events let us agree as to this'.

After writing in great detail exactly what Psalms had to be said at each service he finishes, 'We particularly advise however that if haply this distribution of the psalms be displeasing to anyone, he set it in order, if he judge it to be better when arranged otherwise'.

After decreeing that for certain faults of pride the offender should be excommunicated (made to eat and work on his own until he repented) he then adds, 'And so the Abbot ought to use every means in his power like a wise physician and send colleagues, that is to say wise senior brethren, to console as it were in secret, the wavering brother and incite him to make humble satisfaction; and console him that he be not swallowed up by over-much sorrow'.

He also understood that young men could have the best ideas: 'let the Abbot call together the whole community and state the matter to be acted upon. The reason we have said that all should be called for counsel is that the Lord often reveals to the younger what is best'.

And I am pleased to know he thought of people like me when he said, 'Let there be stationed at the monastery gate

a wise and elderly monk who knows how to receive an answer and to give one and whose ripeness of years does not suffer him to wander about'.

Of course a Rule written some 1,500 years ago cannot be applicable in every respect for life today. That is why oblates, living outside the monastery, are expected to live by the Rule in their everyday life 'as much as is possible'.

A passage from the Rule has to be read each day by each Benedictine monk, nun or oblate.

Personally I find that the principles behind the Rule still apply today.

John Allan
High Street Baptist Church
and Turvey Abbey

Holocaust

Holocaust – not a word I often use or want to dwell on, but it is important that we do not forget the sufferings of those who have died, and those who have survived the horrors of Nazi persecution. And not only that attempted genocide but subsequent ones: Cambodia 1975-1979, Rwanda 1994, Bosnia 1995, in Darfur since 2003 and on-going, and in Myanmar with the persecution of the Rohingya people happening as I write this.

In 2001 forty-six governments signed the Stockholm Declaration for an International Holocaust Memorial Day to be held each year on 27 January. Since that time the number of events and teaching days has grown and grown, and in 2016, 7,700 such events were held in Britain alone.

The Holocaust Memorial Day Trust was set up by the UK Government in 2001 and run by the Home Office until 2005 when it became a charity with Trustees. It now has a professional team and is funded by the Department for Communities and Local Government; the Patron is the Prince of Wales.

So how do genocides come about? It doesn't just happen. A set of circumstances occur, or are created to build the climate in which genocide can take place. It is a steady process which can begin if discrimination, racism and hatred are not checked and prevented.

Below are Gregory Stanton's Ten Stages of Genocide: [genocidewatch.com]

1. CLASSIFICATION: the differences between people are not respected. There's a division of 'us' and 'them', which can be carried out using stereotypes, or excluding people who are perceived to be different.

2. SYMBOLISATION: this is a visual manifestation of hatred. Jews in Nazi occupied Europe were forced to wear yellow stars to show that they were 'different'.

3. DISCRIMINATION: the dominant group denies civil rights or even

citizenship to identified groups. The 1935 Nuremberg Laws stripped Jews of their German citizenship, made it illegal to do many jobs or to marry German non-Jews.

4. DEHUMANISATION: those perceived as 'different' are treated with no form of human rights or personal dignity. During the Genocide in Rwanda, Tutsis were referred to as 'cockroaches'; the Nazis referred to Jews as 'vermin'.

5. ORGANISATION: genocides are always planned. Regimes of hatred often train those who go on to carry out the destruction of a people.

6. POLARISATION: propaganda begins to be spread by hate groups. The Nazis used the newspaper Der Stürmer to spread and incite messages of hate about Jewish people.

7. PREPARATION: perpetrators plan the genocide. They often use euphemisms such as the Nazis' phrase 'The Final Solution' to cloak their intentions. They create fear of the victim group, building up armies and weapons.

8. PERSECUTION: victims are identified because of their ethnicity or religion and death lists are drawn up. People are sometimes segregated into ghettos, deported or starved and property is often expropriated. Genocidal massacres begin.

9. EXTERMINATION: the hate group murders their identified victims in a deliberate and systematic campaign

of violence. Millions of lives have been destroyed or changed beyond recognition through genocide.

10. DENIAL: the perpetrators or later generations deny the existence of any crime.

This has made for a depressing read but one we should take note of especially as the use of social media has made it all too easy for people to send abusive and threatening messages with little fear of any consequences: a group of MPs looking at this problem has been shocked at the high level of on-line abuse suffered by fellow MPs or candidates in recent elections and on-going. How should this be tackled? I imagine there are several routes to follow to improve the situation, but let us hope that some serious steps will taken to prevent worse things developing in the future.

I would like to thank Peter Dobson, a new member of the Tring Justice and Peace group, for bringing the Holocaust Memorial Day to our attention and obtaining the booklets you can see in the Parish Church this month.

Margaret Whiting, St Peter & St Paul



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**If so, or for more information, please contact Rev Michelle Grace
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01442 851200**

Lent films: the gender issue

We have a joke in our house that if we see a black and white film with subtitles that is vaguely depressing, we say to each other 'that would make a good Lent film'.

It is not true that all the films that we have shown at Lent fall into that category, but it is noticeable that a proportion do! Our films at Lent have been going for some years now, and we have covered a wide variety of topics from the original one of portrayals of the life of Jesus. We have used suggestions from lots of different people, and this shows in the variety both of topics and types of film. What has also been very clear, is how much this is valued as a way of both learning more about an issue and sharing ideas and opinions with others. We also know from how much we lend out the DVDs that there are people who cannot get to the Sunday evening showings, but who still want to watch the films as part of their Lenten journey.

As with anything that requires organisation, we start muttering about what we might do as a topic in the autumn, and hope we have had an idea by January. Last year's topic of ageing was one that we all agreed was important, but many of us did not want to talk about. It is certainly an issue that I have thought about while preparing the series and afterwards. If God has given us life and life in all its abundance, then how does that fit with old age which we only seem to see in negative terms? It has left me with several resolutions, from trying to get rid of some of the stuff in the house (an activity that is called Death Cleaning and the Swedes have written a book about it!), to making sure that I don't just moan about changes and the younger generation (a teenager commented to me the other day how my coat was now back in fashion!).

So what are we going to do this Lent which begins on 14 February this year? I should confess that at the time of writing, we have not completely finalised the list of films, but we are clear about the topic, which is 'gender'. Let me explain further before I hear the collective sighs. One issue that has been discussed much in the media and society in recent months has been what it means to be male and female. We are still struggling to get parity in pay and work conditions for women, yet we have

a female monarch, Prime Minister, and Bishop of London. We are told that now there is more equality, and that many men therefore find it difficult to know what it means to be a man in the world today. We try hard to avoid pink is for girls and blue is for boys, yet it is very difficult to buy a T-shirt for a little girl that does not have anything pink or glittery on it. And above all, what does this mean for us as Christians? How much of our faith is informed by our gender? 'Dads and Lads' camping grew out of an attempt to stop our church being too female. How much does our worship rely on stereotypes?

It may well be that some of the films will look at the issue of transgenderism, but that is not going to be the whole theme; nor is it a series that will be majoring on sexuality, which is different

from gender, although again one should not, and cannot, compartmentalise all these issues. I hope it is a topic that you will find interesting and the list will be published as soon as possible. We have also not yet been able to find a Lent course that fits with this, so the course for house groups and others will have a different focus. This does mean that there is variety for the Parish Church in Lent 2018.

The Sundays that we will be showing the films in Aldbury will be 18 & 25 February, 4, 11 & 18 March at 6.30pm in the Chapter House. We look forward to seeing you there.

Jane Banister, Tring Team



Churches Together in Tring

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

Wednesday 21st February New Mill Baptist Church

Wednesday 28th February St Martha's Church, Park Road

Wednesday 7th March St Cross, in Wilstone Village Hall

Wednesday 14th March St Peter and St Paul Church

Wednesday 21st March High Street Baptist Church

Wednesday 28th March Corpus Christi Church Hall



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DENS Foodbank shopping list

Food: Rice, Vegetables (tinned), Hot meat (tinned), Cold meat (tinned), Tuna (tinned), Fruit (tinned), Rice pudding (tinned), Sugar (500g or 1kg), Coffee, Teabags, Puddings (tinned), Instant mash, Cereal bars, Chocolate, Biscuits, Milk (long life), Fruit juice (1L long life), Spreads (not jams), Squash, Custard, Breakfast cereals, Tomatoes (tinned), Cooking sauces (pasta and curry).

For use within DENS services: Strong black bags, Washing powder, Dishwasher tablets, Toilet cleaner, Antibacterial cleaning spray, Furniture polish, Air freshener, Floor cleaner, J cloths, Washing up liquid, Antibacterial liquid soap, Bathroom cleaner, Window cleaner spray, Toilet rolls, Shower gel, Kitchen roll, Tin foil & Cling film, Rinse aid, Dishwasher salt, Deodorants (men and women), Sanitary items, Socks and underwear (men and women).

The Foodbank provided 815 emergency 3-day food parcels to local people in crisis in the last 6 months, benefiting over 750 children. This is an increase from 617 parcels during the same time period last year.

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

Fundamentalists and versions of the Bible



Philip Scribbins, formerly of St Martha's Methodist Church, wrote to the Editor after my response to Ian Ogilvie's at the end of last year saying that 'a Fundamentalist is "someone who believes that all the Bible should be taken literally". Past experience has led me to think that it is the Bible in English (American English) which the Fundamentalists seem to claim infallible or inerrant. However, the many versions indicate the problems of translation from the original texts. My question is: does Jon, or anyone else, know which version the Fundamentalists refer to?'

Some people who hold this position say is that it is the original manuscripts of the Bible which are considered to be infallible, that is: without error and true in all that is asserted. The Universities and Colleges Christian Fellowship (UCCF) basis of faith says on the topic of the Bible: 'The Bible, as originally given, is the inspired and infallible Word of God. It is the supreme authority in all matters of belief and behaviour.'

This allows people to say that any contradictions or errors in the text could be down to a mistake in copying from an old worn out copy to a new, fresh copy or because of imperfect translations from the original Hebrew, Aramaic or Greek. I personally don't believe that the Bible is perfect as there do seem to be occasions when, for example, two biblical writers give a different account of an incident in the life of Jesus. It could be argued that what we have is two accounts of two different events, but sometimes it seems that what we have is the gospel writers either having received the story differently or are telling the story differently for their own reasons.

I am quite happy with Article VI of the Articles of Religion found in the Prayer Book which begins: 'Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation: so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man, that it should be believed as an article of the Faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation.'

There are a number of American Fundamentalists, to go back to Philip's question, who think that the King James Version (KJV) or Authorised Version of the Bible is infallible. There are very few English Evangelicals who believe this. But as has been said before, not all Evangelicals are Fundamentalists and not all Fundamentalists are Evangelicals. The idea that a particular translation was somehow particularly blessed by God amongst thousands of translations to make it perfect both seems very unlikely and against the evidence.

For example, in the KJV in Isaiah 4:5, 'canopy' is mistranslated as 'defence'; in Isaiah 5:25 'refuse' is mistranslated as 'torn'; in Acts 19:2, 'when' is mistranslated as 'since'.

Part of the popularity of the KJV goes back to the large sales of the Scofield Reference Bible, a study version of the KJV first published in 1909 by Oxford University Press. This was written by Cyrus I. Scofield, an American minister. He brought out a second edition in 1917 which contained Archbishop Usher's date of creation as 4004 BC. Both editions contained a commentary on the Bible alongside the KJV text. This proved very popular with American Protestants, some of whom gave to Scofield's comments the same authority as the Bible! The popularity of this particular study Bible in the States helped further establish the KJV as the go-to translation for Americans.

If the Bible is not infallible, is it still worth reading? Of course it is! I still consider it to be inspired, but it was not written by God but by fallible, fallen men and women. My brother and I often meet and chat about our childhood – fifty years ago we were 12 and 10. This time span is what many scholars see as roughly the gap between the time of Jesus' ministry and the writing of Matthew and Luke's gospels. My brother and I sometimes differ on the detail of what we recall – which of us actually broke the living room door when fighting – but that does not mean that a particular incident did not happen. The Bible writers were inspired by the Holy Spirit but not in such a way as to make them perfect, infallible writers who spoke only to people with perfect 50-year memories who were witnesses to the life, death and resurrection of Jesus.

I am not perfect, the church is not perfect, the clergy are not perfect, the Bible, written by men and women, is not perfect. Perfection rests in God alone.

What do I think of the Bible as an Anglican? This can be summed up for me by a Catholic and a Baptist. 'Ignorance of Scripture is ignorance of Christ!' said St Jerome, an Early Church Father and Doctor of the Catholic Church. Anne Steele wrote:

*Father of mercies, in thy Word
What endless glory shines;
Forever be thy Name adored
For these celestial lines.*

*Here may the wretched sons of want
Exhaustless riches find
Riches above what earth can grant
And lasting as the mind.*

*Here the Redeemer's welcome voice
Spreads heav'nly peace around;
And life and everlasting joys
Attend the blissful sound.*

*O may these heav'nly pages be
My ever dear delight;
And still new beauties may I see,
And still increasing light.*

*Divine Instructor, gracious Lord,
Be thou for ever near;
Teach me to love thy sacred Word,
And view my Saviour there.*

Jon Reynolds, Tring Team

Parish magazine February 1918

James Harrowell, Lance-corporal, 9th Battn. King's Royal Rifles, was killed in France on 22 October. He joined the Army in May, 1916, and was sent to France in the August of the same year, and has never returned to England since.

George Oakley, Private, Northumberland Fusiliers, died from wounds received in France on 26 October. He was invalided home once, but returned to the firing line last June.

He was formerly a keen member of the YMCA drill squad.

Joseph Poulton, Pt. 2nd Northants Regt., was killed in France on 14 November. He was buried with military honours in a little cemetery behind the lines.

Albert Arthur Cross, Pte. R. Bucks Hussars, met his death on 28 November when fighting with our Forces advancing on Jerusalem. He was early attached to

the Palestine Expeditionary Force, and keenly looked forward to reaching the holy places. He was brought up in our schools, sang in the Parish Church Choir and for many years was a promising member of our Church Lads Brigade.

Lance-Corporal Charles Edward Spinks was hit by a sniper's bullet on the night of 11 Jan and died almost immediately.

May they rest in peace.





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Tweet of the month

Now that 2017 is finished I thought I'd look back and try to decide what my favourite sighting of the year was. With holidays to Honduras, the Highlands of Scotland and Shetland, along with many day trips, I had quite a few sightings to choose from. In the end it was quite easy and it was a sighting of Parrot Crossbills in Lerwick on Shetland that was my most memorable and enjoyable.

Parrot Crossbills are finches and one of five or more species of Crossbill which includes Scottish Crossbill, which is the only bird species that is confined solely to Britain. Crossbills are so-called because their bill tips cross over and this allows them to prise apart the scales of pine cones to feed on the seeds within. Crossbills are all basically the same colours – with males being mainly red and females mainly green. The Parrot Crossbill is the largest Crossbill and has a deep, parrot-like bill – hence its name.

Parrot Crossbills breed in Northern Europe and like other Crossbill species found they can erupt out of their normal range when food is scarce there and end up in Britain – although they do it

less frequently than the other Crossbill species. I was fortunate enough to see a flock of 24 Parrot Crossbills in 1983 and since then have seen ones and twos in the 1980s and early 1990s. The invasion in the 1990s was significant because since then a small population has stayed and bred in Scotland – making the definite identification of any Crossbill



species on mainland Scotland very difficult unless you manage to record their calls or songs.

When I was on Shetland in early October, Parrot Crossbills were reported and when the closest were about thirty miles away, we went to look for them. We had no luck at that site but did hear of one at another location. The following day we tried again at the first site, but

again with no luck. We then decided to try for two reported in Lerwick. This was further away but they were reported repeatedly so it seemed worth a try.

We arrived in Lerwick and had amazing views of them. Normally Crossbills are seen at the tops of trees, but if you are very lucky you can see them when they come to the ground to drink. Due to the windy conditions these birds were taking cones off pines with their secateur-like bills and shredding them for their seeds while perched on the ground a few metres away! I'd be surprised if I ever see any Crossbills as well as this again, never mind Parrot Crossbills, and I managed to see detail on them I've never seen before. It was well worth the effort.

This experience brought to mind The Bible and the reminder that you might have read it several times and can still pick out some new detail or nuance that you hadn't noticed before and learn something new and exciting about your faith in the process.

Roy Hargreaves, St Peter & St Paul

In memory of Mary Richardson

St Mary's Puttenham has only three bells which are not easy to ring; however, ever since I have been looking after St Mary's as their Vicar, they have been tolled, until their deaths, by two octogenarians, Jim Richardson, Burma Star Veteran, who died in 2012 and his wife Mary. Mary died on 29 November 2017. There will be a memorial service for Mary at St Mary's, Puttenham on 12 February and both sets of ashes will be interred in the church yard. So who was Mary?

Born on 8 May 1929 in Grays, Thurrock, the only child of William and Bess Pirrie, Mary grew up during WWII and enjoyed the air raids at school as the teacher used to read Dorothy Sayers books in the shelter.

She obtained her School Certificate and was very good in Geography, French, Maths, Chemistry and Physics and obtained a credit in English Language, English Literature, Latin and Art; she then obtained her higher School Certificate in Chemistry, Physics, Botany and Zoology. She then went on to work for May and Baker as an analyst whilst studying part time for a BSc through the

University of London.

Mary met her husband, Jim, whilst studying and they married in 1956, living at Horndon on the Hill. They had two daughters, Joan and Brenda, and from 1967 Mary taught for four years at her old school.

Jim and Mary moved to Cheddington in 1972 after the reorganisation of the education system. Mary continued teaching mostly on supply after the house move and ran brownie packs in Cheddington and Horndon, taking girls on pack holidays and day trips.

Jim and Mary liked 'traditional' church services. Her neighbour remembers a conversation over the fence about the travesty of having a modern version of the Lord's Prayer. They learnt to ring bells later in life and went on 'ringing holidays' together. Jim was a very keen gardener and Mary arranged flowers in Church for a number of years.

They believed in being good neighbours and were known to everyone in the street. They were very patient with the boys next door who perpetually

kicked balls over into their beautifully tended garden. In later years those same boys would change Mary's light bulbs or solve her computer problems. Mary was not afraid of new technology and started shopping online after giving up driving, though she enjoyed trips into town on the bus as well.

Mary was a practical, no-nonsense woman, but she had a tortoise who outlived her. She could often be heard talking to him (named, of course, 'Tortoise') and sometimes it was hard to tell over the fence whether she was talking to Jim or to the Tortoise. She also fed the birds regularly and had a blackbird who would take food from her hand.

Jim and Mary had six grandchildren, Chris, Krissie, Will, Heather, Elie and Steph. Mary moved to Leicester in June 2017 so she could live nearer to her daughter, Brenda, and settled there well, happy in her new location, especially games afternoon where she played Scrabble. Mary met her first great grandchild before her death.

Huw Bellis, Tring Team

St Martha's Methodist Church

FRIENDSHIP CLUB

The Ladies Friendship Club will meet again at St Martha's on Tuesday 6 February, when Chris Burrows will tell us all about Life in the Orkneys.

HOUSE GROUPS

John and Jennifer's House Group meets again during February on Wednesday afternoons, 7 and 21 February, at 20 Verney Close.

LENT LUNCHESES

The Lent Lunch of soup,

bread & cheese and a cup of tea or coffee will be held between 12 noon and 2pm at St Martha's on Wednesday 28 February. All donations to Christian Aid.

WOMENS WORLD DAY OF PRAYER

This year's event will take place on Friday 2 March at the Parish Church. The theme will be 'All God's Creation is Very Good' and the service has been prepared by the women of Suriname.

DAFFODIL DAY

This year's popular spring event at Westminster Central Hall will be on Monday 5 March. Hemel Methodist Church will be organising a coach, so contact Madeline Freelove or Sheila Davis for more information if you would like to go.

CHURCH COUNCIL

Don't forget, the Church Council meets again on Saturday 3 February at 10.00am in the Church.

4 February 10.00am
Katie Breedyk

11 February 10.00am
Communion Service
Revd Rachael Hawkins

18 February 10.00am
John Benson

25 February 10.00am
Revd Brian Tebbutt



Tring Community Church

Every Sunday 10.30am
The Nora Grace Hall

New Mill Baptist Church

TOT SPOT

Tuesdays @ 10.00-11.30am
6, 20, 27 February

BRIGHT HOUR

Tuesday 13 February @ 2.30pm
Speaker – Margaret Mcdonald

KNIT & NATTER

Wednesdays @ 7.30pm
7, 14, 21, 28 February

THE MILL COMMUNITY CAFÉ

Thursdays @ 11.00-2.00pm
1, 8, 22, 29 February

FRIDAY CLUB

Fridays @ 6.00-7.15pm
2, 9, 23, 30 February

4 February 10.30am

Morning Service

Revd Andrew Openshaw

11 February 10.30am
Morning Service
Kate Openshaw

18 February 10.30am
Morning Service
Bob Little

25 February 4.30pm
Morning Service
Revd Andrew Openshaw



High Street Baptist Church

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 and chat 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

SUNDAY MORNING WORSHIP

Service at 10.30am with Junior Church and Crèche

SUNDAYS @ 7

First Sunday of the month at 7.00pm



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

2nd Sunday of the month

8.00am Holy Communion CW Tring
8.15am Holy Communion BCP Puttenham
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
6.00pm Evening Prayer Long Marston
3.30pm Evening Prayer Puttenham

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
3.30pm Taize 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 CW Long Marston
3.30pm Evensong Puttenham
6.00pm Alternative Communion CW Tring

5th Sunday of the month

8.00am Holy Communion BCP Aldbury
8.00am Holy Communion BCP Tring
10.00am Holy Communion CW Aldbury
10.00am Holy Communion CW Tring
10.00am Sunday Worship or Holy Communion Long Marston
10.00am Sunday Worship or Holy Communion Wilstone
3.30pm Sunday Worship Puttenham

Weekday Services

Mondays 8.30am 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
Last Tuesday in the month 10.00am Holy Communion Wilstone

Dacorum Foodbank

Weekdays 10.00am St P&P

Youth Café

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

Meditation

Thursdays 8.00pm Corpus Christi

Coffee Mornings

Saturdays 10.00am St P&P
Tuesdays 9.00am Aldbury
Tuesdays 10.30am Wilstone

Young Adults Group TAYA

First and third Thursdays 8.00pm St P&P
A discussion group for young adults

Fairtrade Fridays

Second and fourth Fridays 9.00-12.30 St P&P

First Saturday Lunch

Saturday 3 February
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

Last Sunday in the month 6.45pm St P&P

Piano and More Concert

Sunday 11 February 3.00pm St P&P

Chiltern Arts Festival Concert

Thursday 8 February 1.00pm St P&P

Imposition of Ashes

Wednesday 14 February 8.00pm St P&P



Useful contacts

TRING TEAM PARISH

Team Rector
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(Day off Thursday)

Team Vicar
(Aldbury)
Rev Michelle Grace
Aldbury Vicarage
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(Day off Friday)

School Chaplaincy and
Team Vicar
(Long Marston, Tring School)
Rev Jane Banister
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Associate Priest
(Wilstone)
Rev Didier Jaquet
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(Day off Saturday)

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Annie Eggar (Aldbury)
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Christine Rutter (Puttenham)
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www.stmarthas-tring.org.uk
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next edition should arrive with
the Editor no later than the 6th
of the previous month.

Crossword puzzle answers
From page 24

ANSWERS ACROSS	ANSWERS DOWN
1. GALLOP	1. GARRET
4. PSALMS	2. LEAF
7. LAY READER	3. PAROLE
9. REEF	4. PLANET
10. NEAR	5. AMEN
11. ELDER	6. SPIRIT
13. TRIPLE	7. LEVITICUS
14. TURRET	8. RETRIEVED
15. PRINCE	11. ELECT
17. INFERS	12. RUINS
19. TRUSS	15. PASTOR
20. SHUN	16. ERRANT
22. GEAR	17. ISRAEL
23. SEPARATED	18. SERMON
24. RESORT	21. NERO
25. LESSON	22. GEMS




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