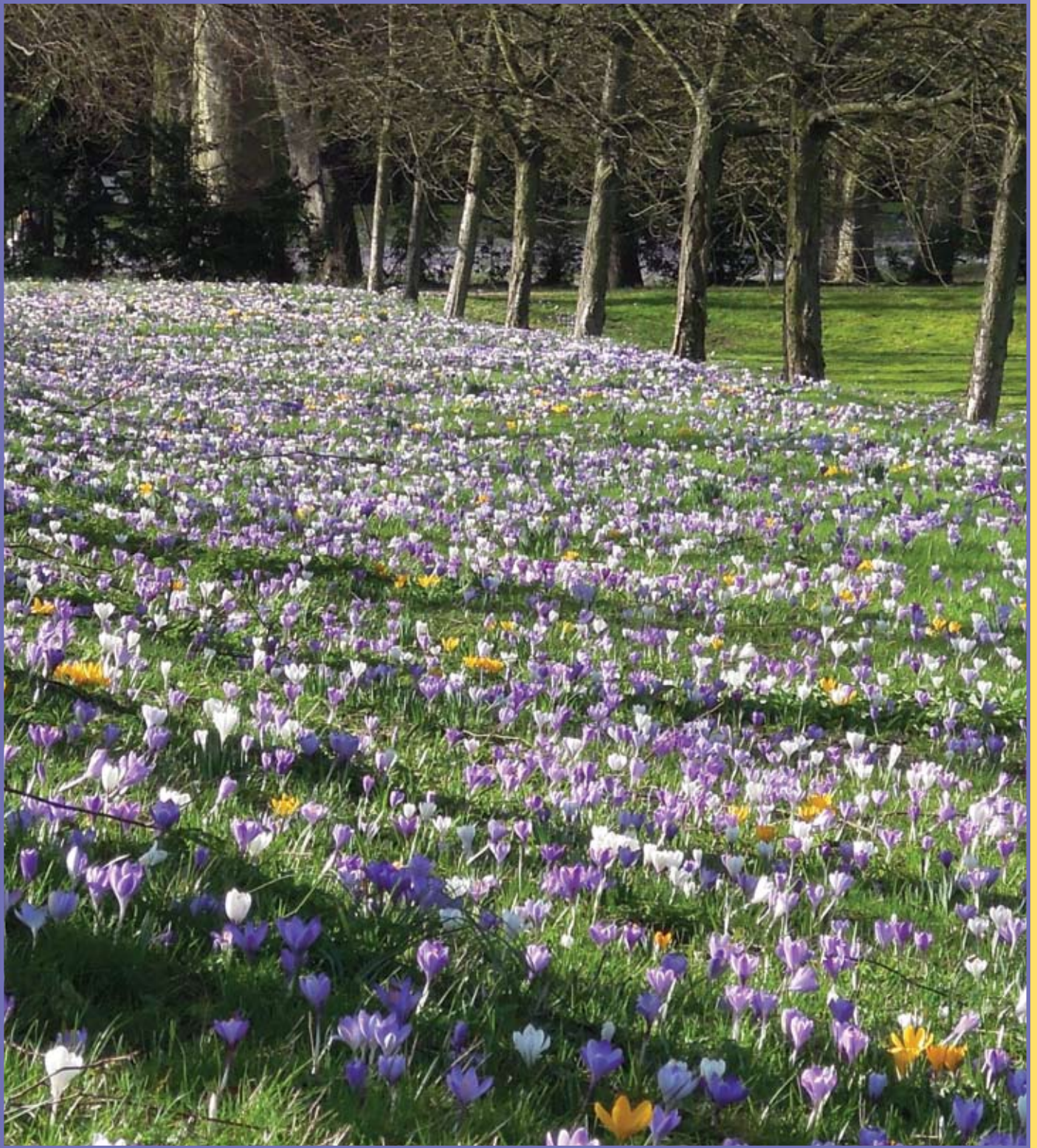


COMMENT

THE MAGAZINE OF THE CHURCHES IN TRING



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Festive Choral Evensong for Candlemas

Sunday, February 5th 2017 at 6.30pm,
St Peter and St Paul, Tring.

Musical programme specially selected and
directed by Richard Grylls.



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

LENT LUNCHES

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 8th March New Mill Baptist Church

Wednesday 15th March Corpus Christi Church Hall

Wednesday 22nd March St Cross, Wilstone Village Hall

Wednesday 29th March High Street Baptist Church

Wednesday 5th April St Peter and St Paul Parish Hall

Wednesday 12th April St Martha's Church

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Small acts of kindness

My husband is a Facts man. Think Mr Gradgrind (Charles Dickens, 'Hard Times') and you wouldn't be far wrong. He knows a lot about almost everything and manages to retain information. He blames it on Radio 4. Much as I admire this, I am the opposite. I am notorious in my household for not being able to remember facts (though I did surprise my youngest son by knowing a few bits of nonsense while playing Trivial Pursuit over Christmas). Tell me statistics or that the government is spending £349 million on something and I just hear 'big number'.

But I love stories. I may not remember exactly where you came from or exactly what you do but I will remember the process that got you there, the connections, the threads that hold it together and I will be inspired and fascinated by it.

As a result of this, Comment often has stories in it, the threads that connect to make meaningful things in people's lives, the circumstances and events that make us who we are. I love it when people share 'themselves' in this way and am grateful to them for letting us print the stories in Comment.

This month we have several accounts of people's lives from a Barnardo's boy to a faith story to the struggles of a rural vicar to someone who no longer feels comfortable in post-Brexit Britain; we have the story of a young member of the clergy who died prematurely and of someone who spent the last week of Advent in hospital. These are the people behind the faces we see regularly in Tring; these are their stories. Do talk to them about what you read. Engage with them so they know you appreciate that in sharing we trust each other

because we are making ourselves vulnerable. Perhaps you will be inspired to tell us your story too.

Finally, I have never been a New Year resolution person – if something is worth doing, it shouldn't need a new year to decide to do it. But I was inspired by the Queen's Christmas message. She spoke of 'meeting ordinary people doing extraordinary things' and of the importance of 'small acts of kindness'. Maybe we can fit a few more small acts of kindness into our lives even if we didn't make a resolution this year.

The Editor



It comes to us all...

I had a wonderful conversation recently with someone who told me his wife had commented on how musical he was becoming. When he asked what she meant, her reply was all the oogh, aagh, ough sounds that he made when sitting down and getting up. Both he and I smiled at this, but all of us recognise how this is a sign of getting older. For me, getting older has included increasing visits to the optician and dentist, and even more exclamations of 'now where did I put that?'; although to be fair, my ability to lose things has always been good.

There are lots of platitudes these days such as 'age is just a number' or '60 is the new 40', but there is also a multitude of products on the market that do all they can to persuade us that they are able to reverse or halt the physical signs of ageing. Our culture is one that does acknowledge the different needs and requirements of an older population, but it is also clear that these needs are not being met. We know that society has to change, but we rarely have the difficult conversations about what will need to change to accommodate people living longer in terms of health care, well-being, relationships.

From the moment of birth, we age,

and for the first part of our life it is seen as something positive. Then it changes, and it is as if, having spent years trying to get to a certain point, we spend the rest of our life trying to stay there, and yet we are unable to work out when this optimum moment is. It is a huge part of how we view life and what we do. So because of that, it seemed good for us in the Parish Church to take as our Lent theme this year, old age. I have thought long and hard about alternative ways of phrasing that, involving words such as maturity, or senior, or silver, but have decided to stick with the cold hard truth!

Elsewhere in Comment you will find details of the films that the Tring Team are showing on the Sundays in Lent which I hope cover a wide variety of issues such as relationships, physical difficulties, and the fact that being old does not always make us nicer or better people. It was encouraging when looking for these films to discover just how many there are, so I have not gone for some of the more obvious or most recent options. I hope they will engender good conversations.

The Lent course will also be on this topic, although at the time of writing it has not been entirely finished(!), as old age is a huge issue for us as a church

community. Not only does the issue of ageing affect us in terms of pastoral care, and practicalities about services and buildings, there is also the aspect of our spiritual life. We speak of heaven, and eternity, and of a timeless God, yet how does this relate to our lives and our faith? We read a Bible that gives many examples of mature role models, that talks of respect for age and wisdom and experience, yet we live in a world that values youth and looks. How do we cope with that dichotomy?

This is an opportunity for us to share with each other what it is like to be truly human, and it is a chance for us to be honest, and to do so in the hope that this will help us to understand more of this world and the life that God has given to us.

'So we do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day.'

2 Corinthians 4:16

Jane Banister, St Peter & St Paul



Last words from Sarah



Three weeks before my university finals and my 21st birthday, I was involved in a serious road accident. I suffered what

was called by the medical profession catastrophic injuries; this included a life threatening brain injury which left me in a coma for a few days. This sounds the stuff of high drama and sometimes and in some ways it has been just that, although the road to rehabilitation has been a long and much more prosaic one.

One of the things that has struck me

since this time, and in particular during the long legal case that followed these injuries, is that the story of the accident has been told by other people, by doctors, by lawyers, by eye witnesses, all people doing what their role requires of them. Yet in the midst of all this, how the incident affected me and my identity has been overlooked. But, and this is the wonderful and amazing thing, I have found that my sense of story does find room for expression in the words of the Bible. The 139th Psalm provides for me a space in which I may understand myself as one known and cared for by an intimate God.

'Oh Lord, you have searched me out and known me. You know my sitting

down and my rising up, you discern my thoughts from afar.' Oh Lord, when I do not know my thoughts, when others, neurologists, psychologists and doctors proclaim to know them better than myself, it is you who sees my thoughts and understands.

'You search out my path and my lying down, and are acquainted with all my ways; even before a word is on my tongue, Oh Lord, you know it completely.' Oh Lord, when I cannot say the words that I know lurk beneath my memory, when I struggle to find the words to speak, even before they are on my tongue, you know them completely.

'You hem me in behind and before and lay your hand upon me; such

George Herbert

George Herbert is probably one of the best-known English religious writers of the seventeenth century, and for a long time, a great favourite of mine. He was born in 1593, a contemporary of John Donne, Francis Bacon and Bishop Lancelot Andrewes. Primarily a poet, both in Latin and English, he also wrote a prose treatise on the life of a priest, known as 'The Country Parson'. None of his works can be precisely dated and none of his works in English was published in his lifetime. They were kept in manuscript, carefully corrected and rearranged, and handed over at the end of his life to a friend, who took the notebook to Nicholas Ferrar, leader of the community at Little Gidding, with the request that he decide whether or not they should be published. Within a year the poems were published under the title of 'The Temple'.

Four of his poems are today sung as hymns. Evidence suggests that 'Let all the world in every corner sing' was intended by Herbert to be sung antiphonally, the choir singing the verses and the congregation belting out as a refrain 'Let all the world in every corner sing'. This is surely worth trying nowadays. The other three were only put to music and sung as hymns in the twentieth century: 'The God of Love my Shepherd is' (a version of the 23rd Psalm); 'King of Glory, King of Peace' and probably the most well-known of all 'Teach me, my God and King'

with its memorable examples of the transformation of the ordinary by the Spirit in the image of the window and sweeping a room. Four of his poems were put to music in 1911 by Vaughan



Williams in his collection of 'Five Mystical Songs'.

Every poet has roots in time and place and however internal the thoughts, they are necessarily influenced by external circumstances. So what of the man? George Herbert was born in Montgomery, the fourth son of Richard Herbert, a local landowner and squire, and Magdalen Newport, member of a rich, cultured family, well known for their generous and lavish hospitality to rich and poor alike.

Richard died when George was three

and his mother moved with their ten children to live with her widowed mother near Shrewsbury. In 1599 Magdalen and family moved to Oxford, where George's elder brother was a student, and it was while living there that she met John Donne, who later referred to this period in Oxford as 'providing two mothers for George, her own personal care and the advantages of the place'. In 1601 the family moved to London, to a house in Charing Cross. This area was close to the royal palaces of St James and Whitehall with their banquets and high life, plays of Shakespeare at the Globe, music and sermons at Westminster Abbey. His mother continued the family tradition of hospitality and George was surrounded by gentry, writers, and musicians as guests at her table. She was also a great believer in education and sent George to Westminster School. As a scholar here, George lived in semi-monastic conditions – a rigid timetable, long periods of prayers in Latin and much time spent composing and translating in Latin and Greek as well as music. George was an accomplished musician (lute and viol) and apparently one of the best Latinists of his day. From these disciplines surely come the characteristic clarity, inventiveness and charm of his English verse.

In 1609 he was elected to a scholarship at Trinity College, Cambridge where he spent the next fifteen years, first as an undergraduate, then as Fellow

knowledge is too wonderful for me, it is so high that I cannot attain it.' Father, you have laid your hand on me and I cannot begin to know the wonder of your gifts to me.

'Where can I go from your spirit or where can I flee from your presence? If I ascend to heaven, you are there. If I make my bed in Sheol, you are there. If I say, surely the darkness shall cover me and the light around me become night, even the darkness is not dark to you. For darkness is as light to you.' Wherever I have been you have been there also, in accident, in hospital, before and after and during injury, Lord you are there. If I say illness has taken hold of me and all health in me has vanished, even these things are perfection to you. The damaged me is as a new-born child for they both contain your vision of me.

'For it was you who formed my

inward parts, you knit me together in my mother's womb; I praise you for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.' When I was being reformed, through accident and injury, you had been recreating me in secret ways. I praise you for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works – that I know very well.

'My soul was not hidden from you when I was being made in secret, intricately woven in the depths of the earth. Your eyes beheld my unformed substance. In your Book were written all the days that were formed for me when none of them as yet existed. How weighty to me are your thoughts, oh God, how vast is the sum of them.' There is nothing about my being that you have not known. When I was being made in secret, my history being woven in the depths of this illness, you saw my

recovery as yet unmade. In your Book were written all the days that I was yet to live when no one could imagine what was yet to unfold. How huge are your thoughts, oh God, great beyond my imagination.

'Oh that you would kill the wicked, oh God, and that the bloodthirsty would depart from me.' Oh that you would take my anger, oh God, against those who flee from me, from the changes they see in me, changes that they cannot bear.

'Search me, oh God, and know my heart and lead me in the way everlasting.' Look inside me, oh God, and know my heart and all those things that are beyond humankind, and lead me in the way of true health.

From 'Glimpses of God' by Sarah Eynstone

St John the Baptist, Aldbury
who died 1 December 2016

and Tutor ending up as Public Orator in 1620. This latter was a post of some standing, in charge of composing official eulogies and diplomatic speeches (in Latin) and usually leading to a place at

The Quiddity

My God, a verse is not a crown,
Nor point of honour, or gay suit,
No hawk, or banquet, or renown,
Nor a good sword, nor yet a lute:

It cannot vault, or dance or play;
It never was in France or Spain;
Nor can it entertain the day
With my great stable or demain:

It is no office, art, or news,
Nor the Exchange, or busy Hall;
But it is that which while I use
I am with thee, and most take all.

George Herbert

Court and some State employment. But these years were not trouble-free for Herbert. Money was short and his health was not good; 'quotidian ague' (possibly tuberculosis) often affected him as well as a perpetual tension between 'setting foot in Divinity' or following a more worldly path.

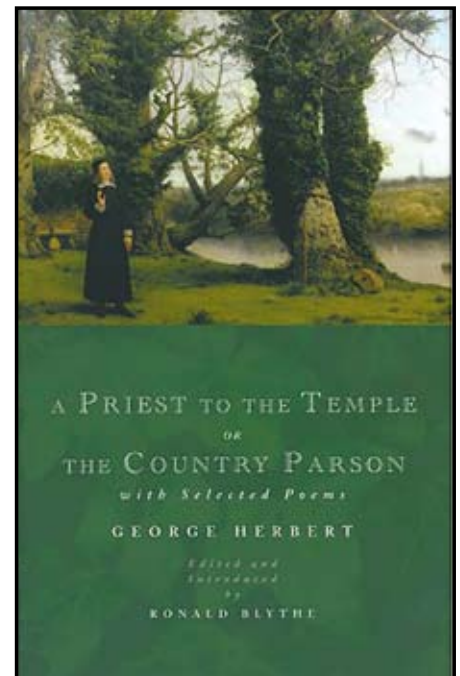
Herbert served briefly as MP for Montgomery and was ordained deacon in 1626. Two years later he was inducted as vicar of Leighton Bromswold where he devoted himself to the restoration of

the Church. He married Jane Danvers in 1629 and after ordination as a priest, for the last three years of his life was a very active vicar of Bemerton, near Salisbury. He died in 1633, just before his fortieth birthday. One drawing of him survives on which other engravings are based. He was described as 'lean to an extremity, cheerful in aspect and both speech and motion declare him a gentleman'.

Herbert describes his own poetry as autobiographical – 'a picture of the many spiritual conflicts between God and my soul'. Some are full of anger, despair and self-doubt; others are cheerful and full of hope. Many show a mixture of majesty and intimacy, sometimes in the form of conversations between him and God, and because they seem to lay bare his struggles, they appeal to Christians. On first reading they may appear clear and simple ('Give me simplicity that I may live') but the apparent simplicity belies the variety and ingenuity of his technique. What better description can there be of prayer than – 'the soul in paraphrase', or 'the heart in pilgrimage'? In the Quiddity his words tumble out in a multitude of rich allusions, before coming back in the last two lines to the private conversation with the God he addresses at the beginning.

Herbert's language is based very firmly on the Bible, which, by this time, was widely available in English. His poetry is full of biblical images and allusions. Moreover, Cranmer's revision

of the liturgy brought the Bible and, in particular, the Psalms, into regular use by the congregations, and in 'The Country Parson' Herbert encourages the parish priest to use Scripture as



a fundamental source for his life and ministry. The priest must 'be not only a Pastor, but also a Lawyer and a Physician'. Not only was he to visit his parishioners but also provide them with herbal remedies for their ailments, and, importantly, keep open-house, particularly at great festivals; for 'Love is his business'.

Kate Banister, St Albans Abbey

100 favourite hymns

'Give to our God immortal praise'

The first time I sang this was in 1974 at the Bunyan Meeting Church in Bedford. It was not in 'Hymns Ancient and Modern' on which I was brought up and I was struck by its simplicity and wondered why it was not in many Anglican hymn books – possibly the statement that Kings will be no more in the world to come. The third lines are repeated alternately through the hymn in a completely natural way.

Isaac Watts, the author, started writing hymns at the age of sixteen. Returning from the Independent (or Congregational) Church where his father was an Elder, Isaac complained to him that what they sang in Church was boring. His father replied 'Then write something better'. So he did. His output included, 'Come Let Us Join Our Cheerful Songs', 'Jesus Shall Reign', 'O God, Our Help in Ages Past' and 'When I Survey the Wondrous Cross' which is possibly my favourite hymn.

Jon Reynolds, St Peter & St Paul

***Give to our God immortal praise;
Mercy and truth are all His ways:
Wonders of grace to God belong,
Repeat His mercies in your song.***

***Give to the Lord of lords renown,
The King of kings with glory crown:
His mercies ever shall endure,
When lords and kings are known
no more.***

Isaac Watts

'All praise to our redeeming Lord'

A joyful hymn about Christian fellowship – and of course the last verse makes reference to our rapture when we meet around his throne, a popular theme for Methodists.

St Martha's Methodist Church

***All praise to our redeeming Lord,
who joins us by his grace,
and bids us, each to each restored,
together seek his face.***

Charles Wesley

'Such love'

For me it is almost a prayer.

Debs Berry, St Peter & St Paul

***Such love, stilling my restlessness
Such love, filling my emptiness
Such love, showing me holiness
O Jesus, such love.***

Graham Kendrick

'God be in my head'

A simple prayer and favourite from my childhood.

Afra Willmore

St John the Baptist, Aldbury

***God be in my head,
and in my understanding;
God be in mine eyes,
and in my looking;
God be in my mouth,
and in my speaking;
God be in my heart,
and in my thinking;
God be at mine end,
and at my departing.***

Sarum Primer

'I Will Sing the Wondrous Story'

This recalls for me sitting on the beach at Port St Mary 'with his saints in glory, gathered by the crystal sea'. I became a follower of Jesus when I was six, probably because of the wonderful stories that were told on that beach year in year out. 'He will keep me till the river rolls its water at my feet: then he'll bear me safely over, made by grace for glory meet'. I'm not a big advocate of using language that is not used in current English; I think it can sometimes be off-putting (I don't like the idea of being washed in blood!) – but there are some hymns that if you were to change the words, the whole meaning would change! So a good mix of traditional and contemporary works for me!

Kate Openshaw, New Mill Baptist

***I was lost, but Jesus found me,
Found the sheep that went astray,
Threw His loving arms around me,
Drew me back into His way.
Yes, I'll sing the wondrous story
Of the Christ Who died for me,
Sing it with the saints in glory,
Gathered by the crystal sea.***

Francis H Rowley

'Abide with me'

This goes deep within me, reminding me of evensongs at St Andrew's Church in Bedford, where I always felt safe and always loved attending, where we often used to sing this. We also sang it at my dear grandmother's funeral – I miss her every day still, even though she died twenty-three years ago, and this hymn always makes me think of her. I find the words comforting, and I love the tune.

Anna Le Hair, St Peter & St Paul

Mac Dodge also chose this hymn which he described as a universal prayer. It was also his mother's favourite hymn.

***Abide with me; fast falls the
eventide;
The darkness deepens; Lord, with
me abide;
When other helpers fail and
comforts flee,
Help of the helpless, oh, abide with
me.***

Henry F Lyte

'Soul of my Saviour'

I have known this since childhood and it's still the perfect hymn to sing in preparation for the Mass.

Irene Berry, Corpus Christi and Halton

***Soul of my Saviour sanctify my
breast,
Body of Christ, be thou my saving
guest,
Blood of my Saviour, bathe me in
thy tide,
wash me with waters gushing from
thy side.***

Fourteenth Century, Latin

'O Jesus I have promised'

A lovely hymn reminding me of my commitment and enabling me to restate the same.

Mac Dodge, St Peter & St Paul

This hymn was also chosen by Carole Harrison, Maria Lashley, Andrew Openshaw and Afra Willmore.

*O let me see thy footmarks,
And in them plant mine own;
My hope to follow duly
Is in thy strength alone;
O guide me, call me, draw me,
Uphold me to the end;
And then in heaven receive me,
My Saviour and my Friend.*

John E Bode

'Be still and know that I am God'

This is a favourite because of the quietness of the song; I always enjoy singing this one. We usually sing it through more than once and this can help to make it more memorable. (This is not always the case with some songs...)

Thelma Fisher, High Street Baptist

*Be still and know that I am God,
be still and know that I am God,
be still and know that I am God.*

*I am the Lord that healeth thee,
I am the Lord that healeth thee,
I am the Lord that healeth thee.*

*In thee, O Lord, I put my trust,
In thee, O Lord, I put my trust,
In thee, O Lord, I put my trust.*

Anon

'At the name of Jesus'

A real belter of a hymn but rooted solidly in Scripture.

David Whiting, St Peter & St Paul

This was also a favourite of Debs Berry and Maria Lashley who saw it as a real 'feel good' hymn.

*In your hearts enthrone him;
There let him subdue
All that is not holy,
All that is not true:
Crown him as your captain
In temptation's hour;
Let his will enfold you
In its light and power.*

Caroline M Noel

'The Solace of Leaving Early'

As a student only two months into my PhD, I still enjoy spending most days in the library, reading up on all sorts of obscure fields of scholarship. Reading fiction during my holidays is a welcome break, however, and Langston Braverman – in Haven Kimmel's 'The Solace of Leaving Early' – is a character with whom I expected to identify. Also returning home from graduate school, she is also a slightly bookish girl in her mid-twenties: I understood why my dad might recommend this novel for my holiday reading.

However, I was a little perplexed when I learned that Langston had stormed out of her academic studies. In fact, Kimmel presents to us a thoroughly unlikeable and generally unsympathetic girl, impatient with the small-town life and the – in her eyes – simple-minded people she thought she had escaped. This includes the church community, and especially, the minister Amos. Here

is another troubled character, afforded a rich but sometimes unflattering depiction. As a pastor of a string of depleting parishes, Amos' life work gives us an insight into the joys and tribulations of an ordinary Indiana rural community.

Kimmel's prose is compelling and sometimes comic in narrating a series of emotional events that bind together the lives of these two individuals. In her depiction of many personal trials, broken lives and relationships, Kimmel draws out the pain and grief when this love goes wrong. Such shared experiences provide level ground for characters who, on the surface, seem diametrically opposed; and this realisation allows good to emerge eventually from a seemingly hopeless situation.

Every now and again, Kimmel's reflective style moves into deep theological musings. Paradoxically, the story actually illustrates the limits

of academia. For both Langston and Amos, their thorough groundings in philosophy, theology and an intimate knowledge

of literature, only got them so far. Out of the safety of the library, life is inevitably harder, full of suffering, but ultimately much richer.

This is a very gripping read, and a love story deeper and more honest than any other I have yet encountered. The growth of the main characters, and the effects of the dramatic climax of the story, could have been extended beyond where the narrative breaks off. However, any shortfall on this account is made up for by how much I was left to ponder well after the book had finished.

Rebecca Whiteman, St Peter & St Paul and St Andrew the Great, Cambridge



Parish registers

Baptisms

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

Archie James Corr
Georgina Jo Campbell-Smith

Funerals

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

Alan Richard Tanner
Annie Mckinnon Blackwood
Peter George Barnes

Betty Willmore
John William Midwinter
Paul Barker
Heather Barker
Revd Sarah Francesca Louise Eynstone
Belinda Jane Susan Dawe
Victor Tewfik George



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Sleep out without the sleep

On Friday 2 December, nine children from Youth Café aged eleven to fifteen went to St Albans Abbey to take part in the Sleepout for DENS (the Dacorum Emergency Night Shelter). I am twelve and a half. We went with Huw Bellis and Didier Jaquet.



We left at around 8.30pm and arrived just after 9.00pm, then we started setting up camp. We laid down our cardboard then went inside to register and get some hot chocolate. Once we had returned to our spot, we chilled out and some of us fell asleep very quickly, whilst others took a while to fall asleep; some staying up the whole night! I couldn't have slept all night since I ate cookies and crisps at various times before morning...

The most interesting point in the night was when a drunk man came up to us claiming we would be struck down, and he wouldn't leave us alone; luckily he did eventually though.

In the morning we packed up our stuff, put all our cardboard on a pile and then left and headed for the minibus. Once we had returned we had a lovely breakfast round Huw's (the Vicarage), then we all went home, most of us extremely tired.

I think the reason we all decided to participate in the Sleepout is because we not only wanted to raise money for a good cause, (we raised over £700!) we also wanted to experience what it's like



for homeless people – to see how tough it was. I can't possibly imagine having to do that every day! We had access to clean toilets in the Abbey but people who sleep on the streets don't have that luxury and they can't have a shower whenever they want one. That night as I lay in my bed I realised how lucky I was

to have a bed, and I don't think any of us will take our warm houses or hot running water for granted anymore.

**George Johnson
St Peter & St Paul**



Who will rebuild Aleppo ?

Will it be the Russians?

No. 'Cause they've razed it to the ground.

Will it be the Syrians?

No, they are dead, or to Russia bound.

Will it be the Americans?

No, they've got to settle Trump.

Will it be the Chinese?

Maybe, of the world Syria is just another lump.

Possibly the Japanese could do it.

A sinkhole restored in just five days.

If they set their mind and resource to it.

The rest of the world they could amaze.

But wait ,that is the buildings only:

Who's going to rebuild the young?

They are frightened, hungry, lonely.

How will their rebuild be begun?

Charities,world-wide,
will come to the rescue.

Yes, charities spreading hope and love
that don't hide.

That means me and you.

Pip, via the Save the Children Shop

A thank you from the Sunday Club leaders

Jenny Revell, Mary Haywood, Sandra Luddington and I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone in the Parish Church for our lovely plants and also the generous tokens which we did not discover until we were all back home. The big cards full of names were given pride of place among our Christmas cards. Our thank yous were really inadequate on Sunday 11 December as we were so surprised and overwhelmed it left us speechless (which must be a first!).

We have so enjoyed our years at

Sunday Club. We will miss our time spent with the children on a Sunday morning where we sometimes seemed to learn more than we imparted. The children certainly made us think and questioned our own attitudes to some of the stories we told.

It will be difficult to stop looking for new ideas, songs and prayers or stop collecting things as 'they might be useful' – we are all hoarders.

On the positive side, we will gain the time we spent in preparation which we hope to use wisely (I have been

cultivating a 'wild garden' all these years) and we will have rooms back that seem full of the paraphernalia needed to prepare such diverse things as walls or mountains or houses with stacks of puzzles, games and songs to suit our Bible stories.

We do hope that a different time can be found that suits the needs of the children: they are the future of our church.

Sue Tarbox, St Peter & St Paul



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Counting my blessings

Following the sad death of my dear wife, I now find that I have time to sit quietly and reflect on the spiritual side of life. Equally I am now in the position of being Patriarch of a wonderful family of four fifty-year-old children and their families, providing me with seven granddaughters and four grandsons, aged twelve to twenty-seven years, and in turn five great grandchildren aged two months up to six years; and I am told one of my granddaughters is expecting twins in May 2017. Of course I am very lucky to have such a wonderful family and my heart is full of hope and love, as the head of the family, for each one of them.

My view on life is from the standpoint of a person growing up in a time of war in our country. Things were so much simpler because there was a general shortage of products. I recall the excitement and joy of waking up on Christmas morning and seeing a new book, a comic and an orange at the end of my bed. Families today are constantly bombarded by commercial pressures and brainwashed into 'needing' too many things: items that people 'must have' that only lead to excesses and overindulgences. Parents find that in the season of Advent, family budgets are challenged to their limit leading to a very stressful time for many.

At the end of last year I joined one of the housegroups at the Parish Church to help my own personal reflection on Advent. Then suddenly on the fourth Sunday of Advent I found myself overcome with a chronic chest infection, a subsequent collapse, and the patient of a 999 call to be transported to A&E.

As such I was able to witness and reflect on the many other people and families experiencing Advent away from the frantic festive celebrations. I was able to experience the tireless work of all the NHS Staff, firstly the Ambulance Team who patiently had to queue with me for a couple of hours at the entrance of A&E before I could be handed over; then while I waited in the reception hall for a bed to be available in the Assessment Ward. I was transported in at 3.00am. Finally, two days later I was transported once again in the middle of the night onto the ward for my treatment. All the time, the team of carers worked quietly, efficiently, and cheerfully, looking after all their patients, monitoring, recording and administering to their various needs. In the Advent season the hope, peace, joy and love was to be seen at the forefront.

We can reflect on how fortunate we are in our country to have so many essential services staff to support our lives. All the hospital staff working 365 days of the year on twelve-hour shifts; equally our Police, Firemen, Emergency Planning teams, Transport workers, Power supply staff, and not to mention those in my own profession. I served part of my duties on twelve-hour shifts at the Weather Centre in London, carefully monitoring the hourly changes in the weather and providing predictions on the likely changes and hazards to enable decisions to be made and to ensure services were well prepared to meet demands on them. While many enjoyed the Christmas festivities there were all the workers (hopefully not being taken for granted) in our communities

continuing non-stop their essential duties.

My stay in hospital brought home to me our mortality. In the bed next to me the gentleman quietly ended his days at 2.00am on Christmas Eve, a couple of hours into his 80th birthday. His close, grieving family arrived, after his passing, to pay their final respects and collect his belongings before the bed space was sanitized ready to receive the next patient by 7.00am. No sleep for me in this period and very emotional feelings reliving similar events after my wife's six weeks in hospital. This event exemplified how life goes on even after our demise. All that day onto the Ward there was the endless procession of anxious visitors, like the biblical Magi, bearing gifts – not for the infant child – but for their frail elderly relative unable to enjoy the family gathering over Christmas.

I managed to escape the hospital by the late afternoon of Christmas Eve to be able to enjoy the peace and safety of my own little home. Sadly, however, I had missed the joys of the carols and the joy of the celebration of Christmas to end my reflections on Advent, the hope, peace, joy and love, but I was left with an overwhelming feeling of love for my family, people and life itself.

Advent the season of hope, peace, joy and love in all our lives. I can count my blessings.

Frank Dalton, St Peter & St Paul



Recipe of the month

ANZAC biscuits

These biscuits were originally cooked by wives and sent to the men of the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps (ANZACs) in the First World War.



Ingredients

110g (4oz) butter or margarine
3 teaspoons Golden Syrup
150g (5oz) sugar
2 tablespoons of boiling water
1 teaspoon of bicarbonate of soda
100g (3oz) flour
100g (3oz) rolled oats
100g (3oz) desiccated coconut
100g (3oz) chopped walnuts (or currants or anything of your choice!)

Preparation: 15 minutes
Cooking: 30 minutes
Serving: makes 20 approximately

To make

Pre-heat oven
Warm the butter, syrup and sugar in a fairly large saucepan.
Mix the bicarbonate of soda and the boiling water and add to the pan.
Add the remaining ingredients.
Mix to a moist but firm consistency.
Put in small piles on a baking tray covered in baking parchment.
Bake at 150F (Gas mark 2) for about half an hour until golden brown.
The recipe originally featured in the Daily Telegraph in 1947 – seventy years ago!
Jo Green, St Peter & St Paul



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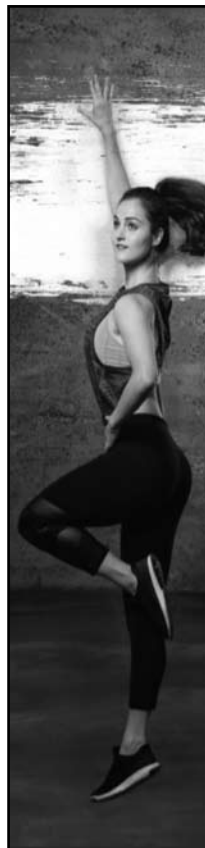
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Nora Grace Hall, Tring

Wednesday 11.30am (Lite)

Pitstone Memorial Hall

Wednesday 7.30pm

Wilstone Village Hall

Monday, Wednesday & Saturday 9.30am

Tuesday 6pm (Low Impact)

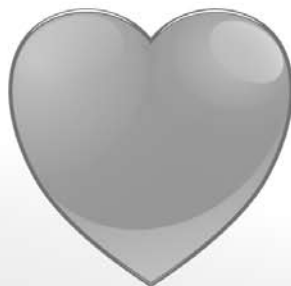
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Do we still love our neighbour?

We skipped Christmas this year. Well, not exactly, but my husband and I were travelling in Australia for business this time and decided to stay a bit longer and have Christmas on the beach for a change. That may sound fun (and it was) but for me that's also a big thing.

Having grown up in probably the most Christmassy region in Germany – the Stollen, the Nutcracker, the glass baubles all originate there – Christmas and its traditions mean a lot to me. It is a time that I normally look forward to very much, as it fills me with hope, peace and inspiration for the new year ahead. Yet, this time I didn't feel 'Christmassy' at all. I was glad to escape. And it wasn't just the wintry temperatures; it was also the frosty political climate that has emerged in this country (and worldwide) over the last year.

When I was asked to write an article on how I (as a German expat/immigrant) feel post-Brexit, my first reaction was that all I could say was that I'm angry and disappointed. Now, more than six months later I still feel that way, but more than that, I am worried. I'm worried about an emerging culture where critical,

independent and intelligent voices – judges, civil servants, 'experts'! – are silenced on the pretext of patriotism and 'the will of the people'. Moreover, I am worried about the rise in hate crimes against my fellow European citizens and about the fact that the government so far has done little to assure any of us that we will have a right to stay in the country that has been our home for many years. When I voice these concerns to people I will often hear, 'Oh, but you don't have to worry, you are married to a Brit, so you should be safe'. Yet, didn't Jesus tell us that we ought to love our neighbours as ourselves? So, the thought that I might be lucky while my neighbours from Poland, Romania or Slovakia might not, does not reassure me in the least. Moreover, for me the question that emerged, even in a kind and caring community like Tring, was not so much if I will be allowed to stay, but if I still feel welcome. I acknowledge that people had many different reasons why they decided to vote 'Leave' last summer, some more valid than others. Yet whatever the argument was, for me the core message that Britain sent in

June was that we no longer want to be part of a community and that we no longer care enough about our European neighbours.

A month or so ago, I read a story in the newspaper about a fellow German academic who has been in this country for as long as I have (over ten years). While travelling to work on a busy commuter train, he received a phone call from his mother, but for the first time he did not dare to pick up his mobile for fear of being overheard speaking German in public. I wept when I read the story. His fear might have been irrational – like so many things are in this post-Brexit debate – but for me it highlighted the prevailing feeling that I have had over the last six months. In 2016 Britain has become just a little bit colder. What will we as Christians do to ensure our neighbours that we indeed still love them?

Sylvie Magerstaedt, St Peter & St Paul

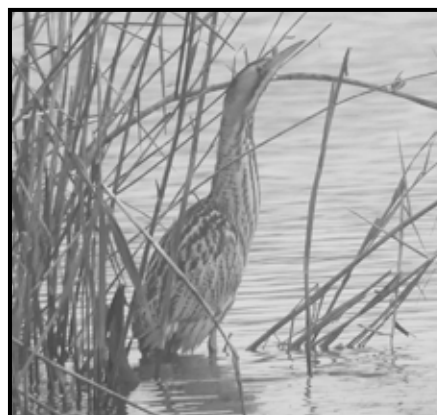


Tweet of the month

So 2017 is upon us and I have started my year lists, a record of those species I have seen this year within a particular geographical context. In the software package I use to keep my bird records I have two year lists set up – one for Britain and the other for Tring Reservoirs. Of these I will put more effort into my Tring Reservoirs year list than my British year list – much to the relief of my wife!

A good year list for the reservoirs is over 150 species. Achieving this involves early morning walks to Wilstone Reservoir most working days, weekends checking all four reservoirs, and the odd dash down in the car in the evening, or possibly at lunchtime if work allows. However, a good British year list involves seeing over 300 species and thousands of miles of travel. The larger British year lists are over 350 species and involve tens of thousands of miles of travel and thousands of pounds spent doing so. So for those who think I am obsessive there are people out there who make me look like a normal well-adjusted human being – well almost.

For an inland site Tring Reservoirs is pretty good and regularly records over 170 bird species in the course of a year. While it doesn't usually get ultra-rare



birds it does occasionally get rare birds. One scarce species that regularly occurs in the winter is the Bittern and January to March is the best time to see them. The British breeding Bitterns are mostly resident but will move within Britain if their normal territory freezes over. Bitterns also migrate here to overwinter

from mainland Europe and it is probably these birds that turn up at Tring Reservoirs. In 1997 there were as few as eleven booming males in Britain (a male Bittern's territorial call is described as a loud boom – used to attract a mate and let other males know not to enter its territory) and so a number of conservation bodies decided to try to reverse this decline and undertook to create reed beds in an effort to increase this small population. This has been very successful and last year over 150 booming males were recorded in Britain.

The best way to see a Bittern at Tring Reservoirs is to go to Marsworth Reservoir just before dusk as they can fly from a feeding area to a roosting site, which is up in the reeds, making this elusive bird easier to see. Alternatively when Marsworth Reservoir freezes over they can walk out onto the ice and be visible at any time of day. Persistence is the key to seeing this species as there are certainly times when I go and don't see them.

Roy Hargreaves, St Peter & St Paul

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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).

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What is a Church Operations Manager?



'I love it when I come to Church – it is always clean, warm, and bright with a hot or cold drink and refreshments waiting for me.'

While

Ministers/Pastors/Priests are (quite rightly!) the very public face of our Churches in Tring, there are so many volunteers that support what our respective leaders do which go towards prompting the above comment on so many occasions.

One of these roles in High Street Baptist Church (opposite Tring Library) is mine as an Operations Manager – equivalent to, but also different from, a Church Warden in the Church of England.

I regard my role as being responsible for all non-ministry activities in the Church although I also play a key

pastoral role within our Leadership Team and congregation.

My operational responsibilities include being responsible for: all administrative duties which encompasses internal and external communication across numerous platforms, the essential production of rotas, hall and church lettings; along side our Treasurer, all salary payments, recording of PAYE and National Insurance with HMRC including pension contributions, budgeting, distribution of 10% of our income as tithing to other Christian organisations, and the production of monthly management reports and annual financial statements; ensuring we are compliant with legal/regulatory issues around health and safety, submission of annual reports to the Charity Commission, fire safety, employment law and food safety; ensuring that our Church is a safe and secure environment in terms of the building and that the activities for visitors

are compliant with our Safeguarding Policy; ensuring that our IT, internet, social media presence and equipment is up to date and can support our growth.

I have taken on this role recently after retiring from working for thirty years for a multi-national company. I can honestly say how surprised I am at the complexity of issues, the number of people involved and the sheer team work that goes into successfully running a Church from 'behind the scenes'.

That said, it is also great fun, very enjoyable and ultimately very rewarding.

Oops – did I mention that the most important part of my role is to ensure



there is a non-stop supply of tea, coffee, cakes and biscuits every day of the week? Essential food for the body to compliment essential food for the spirit!

Kevin Ashton

High Street Baptist Church



Churches Together in Tring prayer breakfasts

Did you know there are monthly prayer breakfasts in Tring to pray for the churches in the Tring area, for Tring, for our young people and for the world? We take it in turns to host these hour-long breakfasts, on each first Saturday of the month. We spend about half an hour having breakfast and chatting, often sharing news about our churches, then half an hour of 'led' prayer. This can vary in style of liturgy, depending on which church is leading it, but it is always a special time of prayer together.

We have generally up to twelve people coming, but some months just a few friends; but however many

there are, we are a very friendly and sociable group. It is open to anyone: you don't need to be a Churches Together member, in fact, we have friends who come from churches that are not members of CTT. We welcome new people and hope you may like to join us.

The breakfast starts at 8.30am and finishes around 9.30am so there is always plenty of Saturday left for whatever we do.

This year's Prayer breakfasts are being held on: February 4th at New Mill Baptist Church; March 4th at High Street Baptist Church; April 1st at St Martha's Church, Park Road; May 6th

at Corpus Christi Church, Langdon Street; June 3rd at St Peter & St Paul's Church; July 1st at New Mill Baptist Church; August

5th at High Street Baptist Church; September 2nd at St Martha's Church; October 7th at Corpus Christi Church; November 4th at St Peter & St Paul's Church; December 2nd at New Mill Baptist Church.

Janet Goodyer, St Peter & St Paul



A typical Christian?



My mum and dad went to church for weddings, christenings and funerals (much like their parents before them). They worked on the premise that

they ought to treat other people as they wished to be treated themselves. They were honest and upright citizens who never thought of breaking the law and imparted their values, and gave moral guidance to, their children.

However, despite their non-attendance in Church, at the age of six I was sent to Sunday school. First I went to a group at Gravelly School, then at the age of eight I went to St Martha's Church at the top of Chapel Street. Mr Preece who worked in some capacity for the Church in Tring was seemingly quite ancient – at least to a seven-year-old. For years I thought he was called Mr Priest!

Each Sunday during term time, we went and learned about Jesus' parables and the stories of the New Testament, learned prayers and sang hymns. He was a kindly man, I remember, with a Welsh lilt to his speech, but didn't really know how to talk to children. This was the late 1950s, and we were taught to be 'seen and not heard'. There was never any trouble. I remember moaning a little as we had to return to Sunday School every September after the long summer holiday.

I was sure this weekly session gave my parents a break from me on a Sunday morning. Looking back on it, I have a lot to be grateful for. I learned about the cycle of the Christian year and faith within our culture.

At the age of nine or ten, I moved to a Bible Class with the Vicar, the Reverend Lowdell. He was a larger-than-life character, rode a bicycle around Tring (with a basket on the front) and had a club foot or something similar. He never needed a microphone when giving the sermon in Church – everyone was awake! We met most Sundays at the Old Vicarage (now part of the offices near the Parish Church Hall – so that's two Vicarages ago!). It was lovely and warm in the winter with an open fire in the meeting room, and cold in the summer when there was no heat in that vast old

building. My friend Rosie also went and one or two other people I knew, but have since forgotten.

We learned great chunks (or so it seemed at the time) of the Book of Common Prayer. The Apostle's Creed was one text that I could recite by heart. We discussed the meaning of the parables and other notable parts of the Gospels, but seldom touched on the Old Testament.

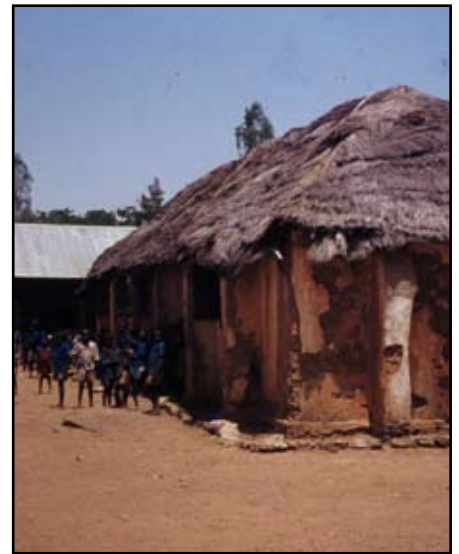
The School in the High Street was called Tring C of E Voluntary Aided Junior Mixed School. Whilst there we all had to attend the Parish Church at the end of each term and were marched in twos down the High Street and into St Peter & St Paul's. Woe betide anyone who talked. Imagine walking 300 children down Tring High Street in silence now! Our hymn books were wrapped in brown paper (as were all our text books) and we had to take them with us and remember to return with them. My mum also remembered having to cover all her text books in brown paper too when she went to the same school in the 1930s!

At thirteen I had the opportunity of being confirmed. Confirmation classes were on a Monday evening at the Vicarage and these I duly attended as well as the weekly Bible Class on a Sunday. I can't now say why I wanted to be confirmed. It just seemed right and was just part of a regular pattern; I have always liked a routine. I had to wear a white dress and mum found me one from one of her friends. I remember wearing my flat Clarke's school regulation sandals – so it must have been in the summer time. We had refreshments with the Bishop of somewhere-or-other and all our parents afterwards. Following Confirmation, Bible classes ceased, and I attended Church once or twice a month, usually with Rosie and her parents. I could have gone more often, but chose to play tennis instead!

In 1970 I went to a St Peter's C of E Teacher Training College in Saltley, Birmingham. I attended Church on Sundays for the first half year, but found that the regular group of churchgoers nicknamed the 'God Squad' wanted me to commit all my time to their activities. Unsurprisingly as an eighteen-year-old away from home and the confines of Tring, I wanted to try out other things

such as pot-holing and rock climbing, badminton, lifesaving and so on. There just wasn't enough time to fit everything in. So life got in the way.

In 1975 I went to Nigeria with VSO. I attended a Catholic Church once or twice in Pankshin, where I was living. It was the only Christian Church for seventy miles and when I arrived there the two Catholic fathers were two of the four expatriates in the town of 3000 Nigerians. They were very easy-going and were happy to have anyone attend Church regardless.



It was fascinating seeing the Christian church groups trying to establish a foothold in this region of middle Nigeria. The American Baptists seemed the most dogmatic with seemingly very little respect for the beliefs of the Nigerians in general. They were all subjects to be 'converted' to Christianity. However, these modern-day missionaries did a lot of good. Hospitals were founded by all sorts of religious communities – schools too. The 'rest houses' they established enabled travellers to find cheap accommodation and food for a few nights, and I took advantage of this as I travelled around Nigeria. Clean cheap accommodation, good food and lots of prayers. There was always a 'conversion' side to everything.

Back in England, and being a primary school teacher for thirty-seven years, and much of the time in Church of England schools, I regularly attended Church with classes of children. We celebrated Harvest Festival in late September, Christmas, Lent and Easter and the end of the terms. The hymns

and prayers were more modern, but many are those that I sang in school when I was a child: somehow reassuring. My children both went to Sunday School until they were about ten or eleven years old when they then wanted to do other things on a Sunday (Simon to play cricket, particularly).

When I retired from teaching in July 2010, I found I missed these regular outings to Church; I missed the hymns and the comforting routine. So now I go to the church at St Cross. It is friendly and welcoming. I feel comfortable there.

Do I believe in God? Am I hedging my bets? When I think about it the answer is 'Yes' to both questions. I envy those who are truly committed to their Christian faith. It's very hard to know what next step to take. Go to Church more? Take up charitable good works? Attend courses? There is no easy answer. I suspect I am much like many of the population – a good Christian some of the time!

However, I do believe that my mum and dad got it right – treat others as you would like to be treated and I have tried to live with that in mind. And did I provide moral guidance to my children? Oh yes, just like my parents!

Vicky Baldock, St Cross, Wilstone



Tring Parish Men's Society



A Christian response to political turmoil

The December meeting began with a minute's silence in memory of Revd

Sarah Eynstone.

Martin then led our debate on 'A Christian Response to Political Turmoil' which Sarah had written for the Pew Sheet on Remembrance Sunday and was reprinted in the December/January edition of Comment. The first two thirds of Sarah's article are about reactions to Brexit and Donald Trump's election, which we felt were generally motivated by our personal concerns and prejudices. However, the Christian response should be informed by a spiritual maturity which does not seek out scapegoats, but asks God to illuminate our understanding. The article was written for the Kingdom Season, to assert the nature of God's Kingdom.

Our discussion before the main debate was very much on current affairs, as it was the day of a referendum in

Italy, and the far right had only just lost an election in Austria. The situation in Scotland was unresolved, and the French presidential election was coming up in a few months. All these showed a rise in nationalism, but we also discussed the role of politicians, for instance David Cameron's plan which backfired and led to wider support for UKIP.

Education was also blamed, having produced too many graduates, who then did not want and were not trained to do some of the more practical jobs. You should not need to have a degree in order to begin training as a nurse. Someone suggested that what was needed was something like National Service, which many members had undergone, rather than the massive increase in spending on education.

But the real question was what can we now do as individuals, given that politicians do not have the answers. Jeremy said the first response should be to pray for the situation, such as

we heard about from Yemen the previous evening; and then to pray for guidance; to give and to get involved. Clive hoped that all Church of England

Bishops would speak out in a controlled way without being party political.

Martin also wanted the Bishops to connect with the outside world, as the Bishop of Chichester and his suffragen bishops had spoken out over the disputes on Southern Railway. The Bishops need our support, but church leaders at all levels should encourage members of their congregations to share the hope given by God's Kingdom.

We concluded that 'When there is political turmoil we need to assert the entirely different nature of God's kingdom.'

Leslie Barker, St Peter & St Paul



Incredible things happen when you believe

Believe in
children
Barnardo's



Barnardo's is marking 150 years since its founder began his campaign to change the lives of destitute children.

Thomas Barnardo's own life changed dramatically when he was shown the desperate conditions in which children lived in the East End of London. Abandoning his dream of a life as a medical missionary in China, he set up the Ragged School in London to give poor children a basic education. Three years later he established his first home for youngsters, providing them with training so they could make their own way in the world as adults.

His philosophy was that no child should be turned away and by the time of his death, there were nearly 100 homes around the country caring for more than 8,500 children.

By the middle of the last century, the nation's attitude towards childcare had changed and for the first time, local authorities were given responsibility. Barnardo's was at the forefront of this change and by the end of the 1950s, almost a quarter of the charity's work involved helping children to stay with their own families. As the evolution in childcare continued, Barnardo's increased its fostering and adoption work, set up family centres and worked to improve the lives of youngsters with disabilities.

Today, Barnardo's works with nearly 250,000 of the UK's most vulnerable children, young people, parents and carers, running nearly 1000 projects around the United Kingdom. Children, young people and parents come to



Barnardo's for support for a wide range of issues, including drugs misuse, mental health, child sexual exploitation, youth crime and domestic violence, as well as good parenting classes and children's services.

Barnardo's Chief Executive, Javed Khan, said: 'The greatest challenge we face now in 2016 is that the demand for our services from vulnerable children, young people and our families, is outstripping our ability to meet those needs. A quarter of a million children are now supported through our charitable work.'

Last September Barnardo's unveiled a new ten-year strategy to help 300,000 more vulnerable children and their families across the country. Its themes are Safer Childhoods, Stronger Families and Positive Futures. It also aims to double its donations income and recruit another 10,000 volunteers by the end of the decade. At the heart is the Barnardo's founding ethos that no child that needs help is ever turned away.

As part of that campaign a new advert with the theme 'Believe in Me' is being shown on television and in cinemas around the country. It was created by award-winning director Sara Dunlop and features positive images of young people to highlight that they can achieve anything if people believe in them. The children featured were street cast through visits to sports, music and dance clubs across the country.

New research commissioned for the charity shows confidence and self-belief are at an all-time low among children and young people across the United Kingdom. Nearly ninety per cent (88 per cent) of 11-18 year olds, who were

among 4,000 people surveyed, say they fear for their futures.

'We risk losing an entire generation because they feel no one believes in them,' said Mr Khan. 'Barnardo's has a massive challenge ahead – to help, support and transform the lives of thousands more children in the next ten years. This will be impossible without the public's help, be that through donations, volunteering, or simply finding out a little more about what we do for vulnerable children and young people to help them have a bright future.'



The survey for the UK's leading children's charity also shows that British youngsters feel increasing pressure to perform in all aspects of their lives, but don't necessarily have the support they crave to help them cope. Sixty five per cent say grown-ups they know are 'not very good' at telling them they believe they can succeed. Nearly two thirds of the adults who were questioned accepted that their expectations of children are high or too high.

For more details of Barnardo's 'Believe in Me' campaign please go to the website believeinme.barnardos.org.uk.

Iain McBride, Barnardo's





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A Barnardo's boy



Roy Hurley is an active member of St Peter & St Paul's and long-time FOTCH member (Friends of Tring

Church Heritage). He describes his birth in 1942 as part of the collateral damage of World War II, one of the many babies conceived thanks to rushed courtships during this time.

Roy doesn't blame his mother. Adelaide Hurley – Addy – was orphaned at age eight or nine and grew up with her uncle's family in Swansea. She was a naive young woman, a vulnerable adult, and as a result of her relationship with a Canadian seaman, became pregnant and was sent up the valleys to Presteigne (where they were training army recruits) so as not to bring disgrace on her family.

After Roy's birth, Addy found herself pregnant again. She was living with an eccentric aunt but when his half-brother, Jim, was born, Addy found she couldn't cope. She wrote to Barnardo's and asked them to take her children. They agreed to take Roy, then a toddler, if she paid them £1.00 a week; they wouldn't take the baby and felt she should try to be a mother to him. It was supposed to be a temporary arrangement so Roy was not fostered at this stage, but when Addy became pregnant for the third time, she again asked Barnardo's to take Jim. Both children had been neglected and Roy spent some time in hospital before becoming part of the Barnardo's home.

Roy started school while he was at Barnardo's. He remembers the stigma of walking in 'crocodiles' and wearing a name label. Meals were taken together and the discipline was firm but they could receive pocket money by earning it. Thanks to Barnardo's, Roy was clothed and fed and healthy; but he

does not remember affection or love.

Fostering meant having a little holiday with strangers who had the children 'on trial'. As his brother wet the

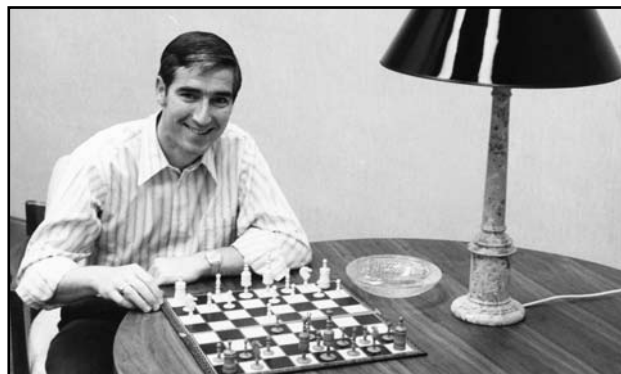
finally placed with foster parents when Roy was six. Elsie and Bill lived in a flat in Bingley which still had gaslight; the toilet was at the end of the street; hot water was collected from a geyser.

Roy remembers their first council house and the novelty of an indoor toilet around 1952. Roy's foster parents worked hard to take care of the children but their marriage was bumpy and Bill was often out of work. Barnardo's sent someone regularly to check on the children but they were never interviewed alone, always with the foster parents, so they were never able to explain their real circumstances and the things that could have been better.

One of the stipulations of Barnardo's was that a foster family should send their children to Sunday School. Roy not only went to Church but also joined the Church choir and later the Youth Group. He remembers being asked to carry the cross and the sense of privilege and responsibility he felt at doing so. At that time he was learning shorthand at school, and he practised by taking down the Vicar's sermons in services. So began the beginning of Bible knowledge, Christian understanding and the stirrings of his Christian faith. 'I knew that someone was looking after me in all that had gone on. I felt that I had a guardian angel.'

Roy stayed with his foster family till he was twenty. His foster parents had turned foster parenting into a family business by this time and his brother had already left; Roy no longer had a room of his own. Schooling had not been easy for him as Roy was dyslexic but Barnardo's helped him again with careers' advice and to get into accountancy as he was clearly gifted in maths.

His career path took him from insurance to banking to Mergers and Acquisitions to being headhunted to head up Liverpool Victoria later in life. The boy who had been given away



bed, there were many such 'holidays' before they were placed.

Barnardo's were good at keeping the two brothers together and they were

before his second birthday had made a good life and had had a successful career. 'I owe it all to Barnardo's and to my guardian angel,' said Roy.

When Roy was in his teens he wanted very much to find his birth family, to know who his mother was. The legislation at the time meant that Barnardo's were not willing to help him. Then in his thirties he found himself working opposite Somerset House. He investigated the records there and found enough information to trace his mother, Adelaide Hurley, who had been living in the Welsh village of Presteigne when he was born. His birth certificate recorded no father. So he went from Horwich near Bolton

with his brother Jim to see what they could find one Friday morning in 1975. They knocked on a cottage door and asked if the occupant knew whether his mother still lived in the village. He was

directed to the farmer who had known him as a child who welcomed him in and then told him some of the story he now knows. There was even a photograph of himself on the mantelpiece – all this just four hours after setting off that day to

Addy and she was amazed at how Roy's life had changed from her own modest beginnings. But there were things that were not spoken of. Addy had a photo of Roy and Jim as small children which was annotated 'Killed in air raid 1944',

the story his mother had presumably formed to come to terms with what she had done when she gave her children away. Addy died in 1988. She was in her late sixties.

The Barnardo's motto is 'Believe in children'. 'No one goes through life with everything sewn up and perfect,' says Roy. 'We are who we are because of all we experience and a tough beginning does not mean we must fail. God gives us all gifts,

abilities and opportunities. Barnardo's gave me support when I needed it. We need to make the most of all we are given.'



begin their search. His mother was still local, living with her third son, Alan. So Roy and Jim went to meet them.

Addy was in bed ill, having suffered a small stroke, so Roy took his half-brother for a drink and explained the story. The meeting with his mother the next day was emotional, though it did not really fill the void Roy had hoped and he was able to learn nothing more about his father. But over time, Addy became part of his family.

Roy had married Brenda and had four children of his own, Nicholas, Natalie, Lyndsay and Simon – the centre of his life. He knew that the mother he had found would never fill the emotional gap he thought he had. His own family had done that. But some of the mysteries were solved. The family loved



100 favourite places

The places that people from Tring and the villages recommend are many and various. This time you can't all go to them unless invited! Please send in your favourites with reasons – we need more to achieve 100 before the end of the year.

Cape Town



Edmund and I spent four weeks there in 2013 while he worked at the University. It's just beautiful. There are some really wonderful places to see within a couple of hours drive, too. I'd love to go back.

Anna Le Hair, St Peter & St Paul

Stockholm (Gamla Stan)



The beautiful buildings of the old town with water around every corner!

**Andrew Openshaw
New Mill Baptist Church**

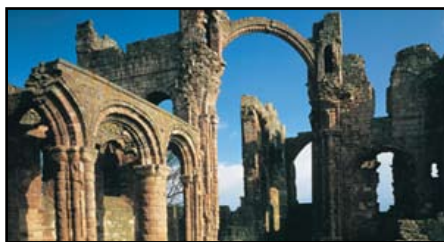
Our Kitchen Table at Home



This is where Mac (my husband) and I talk. We chat for hours at breakfast and dinner times, and enjoy wonderful food and wine (the wine only at dinner!). It's where we love to serve dinners for friends and family as well, and it's also where I do my Open University work. It's the heart of our home.

Carrie Dodge, St Peter & St Paul

Northumberland



Big skies, big coast and a real sense of our country's Christian history through Holy Island.

Hannah Asquith, High Street Baptist Church

Gold Hill, Somerset



From the photo you will see the same picture that was used as an advertisement for Hovis bread, a steeply curved street of cottages called Gold Hill, winding up to 700ft to the top of the town. Here, the same background view is opened up as a marvellous vista overlooking the Blackmore Vale of Somerset. It is here that King Canute was buried – yes, I can see why; it is half way to heaven.

David Gittings, St Peter & St Paul

Magdalene Fjord, Spitsbergen



Ice all round with a wonderful blue glacier breaking off as icebergs.

John Allan, High Street Baptist Church

Isle of Wight



Where I was born and brought up and where my family still live.

Maria Lashley, St Peter & St Paul

Otterham, Cornwall



The location of St Tinney's farm, near Boscastle. I took the farmer sea fishing and he let my son and I milk the cows and ride his horses – long before Health and Safety: it was a real farm.

Mac Dodge, St Peter & St Paul

Heritage railways



Any heritage railway that is running steam trains.

Clive Russell, St Peter & St Paul

Under the Sea



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Sally Smith, St Peter & St Paul

P Greville

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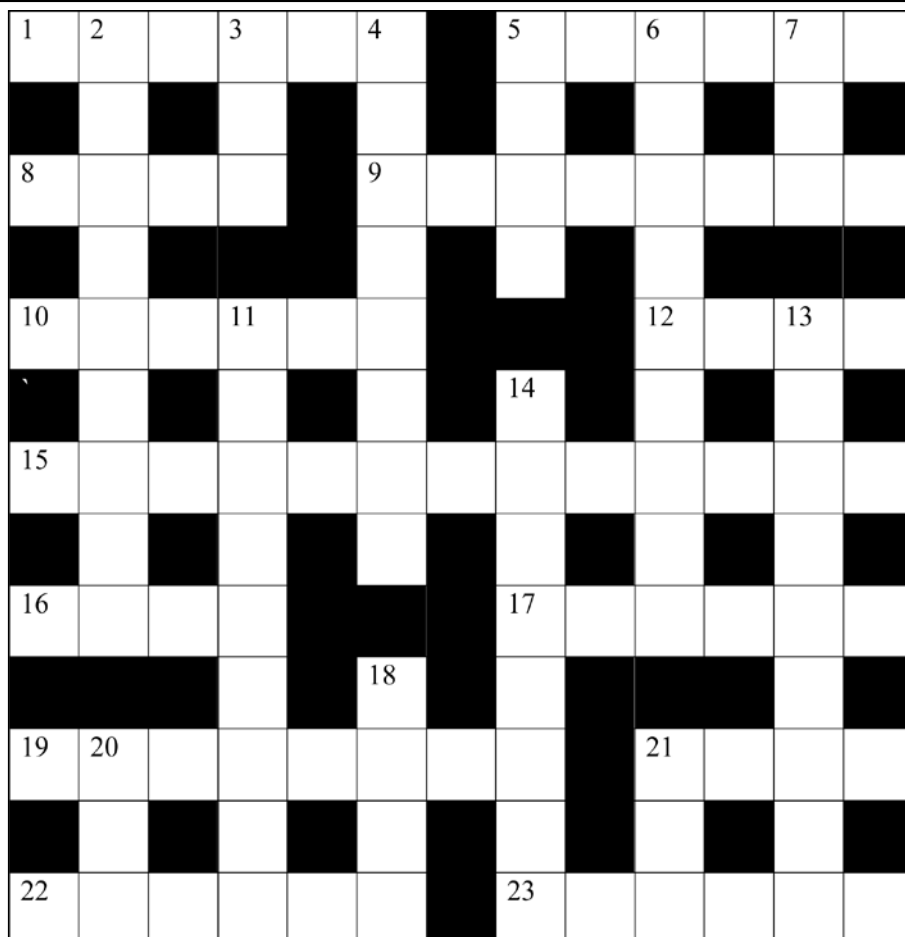
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CLUES ACROSS

1. To mature (4) (2)
5. Respectable (6)
8. 'We have seen his in the east' (4)
9. Signed at the end of a wedding (8)
10. Agreement (6)
12. Engrave (4)
15. Showing sympathy for (13)
16. Son of Jacob (4)
17. Distance across a circle (6)
19. Friend of St. Paul (8)
21. Pentecostal sect (4).
22. Period prior to Christmas (6)
23. Longs for (6)

CLUES DOWN

2. Keeping in the background (9)
3. Conflict (3)
4. Garden of Eden (8)
5. Wise man (4)
6. 'He descended into' (9)
7. Bind (3)
11. To do as one is ordered (9)
13. Roman commander (9)
14. Vestry (8)
18. Located next to (4)
20. Sum up (3)
21. Long time (3)

Answers on page 36

We only work on Sundays...



Most people have no idea what the clergy get up to on a day-to-day basis. The old joke that we only work on Sundays doesn't hold true anymore –

without evensong we just work Sunday mornings!

So what do we do? The simple answer to the question is probably that we spend our lives feeling guilty that we aren't doing enough. There is always more that could be done. We are not industrialists or business people. We don't have productivity or efficiency targets and we most certainly don't get bonuses. Instead, when we are together or being trained, we pontificate on whether we have a ministry of *being* rather than *doing*. This may seem incredibly pretentious, but if we reflect upon Sarah Eynstone's short life and ministry with us we can see that her greatest impact was not in what she did with us but who she was and what she represented. Some of those most affected by her death will have been touched by a simple conversation, or by having been listened to.

So a priest listens to people. Does it make a difference? Sometimes. But they feel guilty that they aren't making a big enough difference, and then convince themselves that ministry is about *being* rather than *doing*. It is with these thoughts in mind that I will try to answer the question about what I do each day. In order to do so I will quote from Stewart Henderson's wonderful poem 'Priestly Duties'. I was first introduced to this by our current Dean when he was still in Southwark Diocese and I was a curate in Guildford. I often refer to it as the defining text for understanding my ministry.

What should a priest be? All things to all – male, female and genderless. What should a priest be? Reverent and relaxed vibrant in youth assured through the middle years divine sage when ageing.

There can be quite a gear change slipping between leading a Christmas service for the toddlers at Stepping Stones in the morning to talking over coffee to a group of octogenarians. We

move between a gentle coffee morning to a Head teacher's performance appraisal. Most of us are most comfortable in our own age groups. Parishes want young family ministers to appeal to families. A priest, however, needs to be there for everyone. For some this is less of a challenge. Didier Jaquet and Jane Banister are two unusual priests, natural extroverts who can glide into any social setting and thrive. For those introverts amongst the clerical profession, it isn't easy. But we know that with each of us being made in the image of God, every encounter is important and everyone matters.

A wise old priest (my father-in-law) said 'Take everyone apart from yourself seriously', and my kids tell me that when I am at my most introverted – daydreaming or in my own world – 'Don't forget to smile and wave'. I wish I could be more extrovert but the only thing we have to offer in our ministry is ourselves; and whilst needing to be all things to all people, we do still need to be ourselves. We worry it isn't enough, maybe it isn't enough, but it is all we have to offer.

And what do we do amidst all this angst? We try to preach and communicate to everyone that just as they are, they are known and loved by God, not for what they do, but for who they are.

What should a priest be? an authority on singleness, Solomon-like on the labyrinth of human sexuality, excellent with young marrieds, old marrieds, were marrieds, never marrieds, shouldn't have marrieds, those who live together, those who live apart, and those who don't live anywhere.

In 2016 we in the Tring Team had dealings with sixty-three couples looking to get married. By no means all of these got married in our Churches and some were just banns enquiries; others we spent many hours with. Overall it still represents 126 people and with them at some point there are fundamental conversations about the nature of love. Of course, the clergy are not experts on love. We ask couples difficult questions such as 'Are you going to have children?' or 'What happens if you can't have children?' or even 'What happens if you lose a child?' We say that we hope your wedding day won't be the happiest

day of your life (it can't be downhill from there on in!). We ask difficult questions of those who have been married before and raise an eyebrow at those who have never been married but whose children from three previous relationships are the bridesmaids. In this context we struggle when our friends cheat on their partners and want to be loyal to them; but we then go and listen to a divorcee still bitter and hurting over a failed relationship from thirty years previously.

What should a priest be? teacher, expositor, confessor, entertainer, juggler, good with children, and possibly sea-lions, empathetic towards pressure groups.

There is no greater privilege in what a priest does than in leading worship. In days gone by the church offered its worship and people came. At times, it is tempting to offer just the Book of Common Prayer, the same every day of the year. But would people come? I think not. Worship needs to be relevant to day-to-day life. It needs work. It isn't entertainment but it should be enjoyable. Planning worship requires all of the things which Stewart Henderson describes (look out for sea lions in the future) but along with many other clergy I have eaten a daffodil to illustrate a sermon (I doubt you can remember why) and I am told that Jon Reynolds once took off three layers of clothing to illustrate the Trinity!

What should a priest be? on nodding terms with Freud, Jung, St John of the Cross, The Scott Report, The Rave Culture, The Internet, the Lottery, BSE, and Anthea Turner, pre-modern, fairly modern, post-modern, and, ideally, Secondary-modern – if called to the inner city.

Stewart Henderson's poem is showing its age now but over the years in my ministry I am fairly sure I have preached on all of the above (apart from, perhaps, Anthea Turner). The days leading up to Christmas saw me reading up on Post Truth for the midnight mass sermon. Being a governor at our Church Schools takes us deep into the heart of modern political life. We are involved in some huge decisions – should there be a single multi-academy trust covering all of the schools in the Tring area (both primary and secondary)? What kind of

education should such a trust provide? Little did I think being a priest would require such involvement.

What does a priest do? answers the phone when sometimes they'd rather not.

It is the Saturday morning after Sarah Eynstone's death. A lie-in wouldn't go amiss. A bit of family time maybe. The phone rings – a school are sleeping out in Church and all the lights have gone off. What has happened? I go down and the good news is that there is a powercut affecting the whole village. It is good news in that the teachers can be reassured the kids haven't broken the Church! On returning home the phone is ringing – a colleague wanting to talk about Sunday's service. The phone rings again. It is my mother. She senses I am not happy. I put the phone down and look at the clock. It is not yet 9.00am. So much for the lie-in. However, we always want people to call no matter what the time.

I still remember the time when I was in Aldbury and the phone rang the minute after I turned on the study light. Someone could see our house across the fields and were sitting waiting until I had woken up before they called. Their husband had died. They could have called anytime in the night, but people are considerate, they waited. We always know that if the phone does ring very early in the morning, it isn't good news. No one wants to hear bad news, there is not a lot a priest can do BUT we do want to be here to answer that call. It is what we do. We are here for you.

So, what does a priest do? mostly stays awake at Deanery synods, tries not to annoy the Bishop too much, visits hospices, administers comfort, conducts weddings, christenings – not necessarily in that order, takes funerals, consecrates the elderly to the grave, buries children, and babies, feels completely helpless beside the swaying family of a suicide.

I was once invited into Bishop Wood

to be interviewed by the children of Year 5. It must have been a bad week. At the end they said it doesn't sound like you enjoy all the meetings you go to. With five churches, four halls, District Church Councils, Parochial Church Councils, School Governors, Churches Together, Deanery and Diocese, there are countless meetings. There are buildings to be maintained, money to be raised. We often think whilst carrying yet another stack of chairs, I didn't get ordained to move furniture. However, this is what we do. The church is an organisation. It needs managing and running and it needs to be there so that we can sit (completely helplessly) alongside and hearing the howling grief of a mother who laments the death of her son. Sadly, I have done this too often...

Just writing this reminds me of how inadequate our ministry is in such circumstances. However, I know that in our funeral visits we offer something vital. We can make some sense out of death, we can offer our knowledge of the love of God, which is eternal. I, like many priests, find our funeral ministry the most fulfilling. Maybe it is the only time that we know what we are doing. We are helping those at their hour of greatest need. Whether we do it well or not, we offer help.

What does a priest do? tries to colour in God, uses words to explain miracles which is like teaching a millipede to sing, but even more difficult.

It is just before lunch. Four hundred bored teenagers are staring at you, daring you to say something interesting. They are more concerned about being fed than listening to someone talking about God. What do we do? We try to find ways to show that God is relevant in their lives. It means taking them seriously. It means recognising that they are more than targets and that learning is about more than a curriculum. Later in the day our House Group meets. This time there is a group of people who have taken their faith seriously.

What does a priest do? tends the flock through time, oil and incense, would secretly like each PCC to commence with a mud-pie making contest sometimes, falls asleep when praying, yearns, like us, for heart-rushing deliverance.

It is Good Friday – the mind is racing. Is Worship for All planned? Is the sermon for the 2.00pm service OK? Will I feel the joy of Easter Dawn? Who has the hot cross buns? The day before Maundy Thursday has ended with a vigil watch until midnight. I see one of the other vigil watchers and I ask them what time they left. They replied, 'I didn't think you saw me go: you were snoring.' What does a priest do? Pray surely? Is it wrong that I didn't even manage that?

What does a priest do? has rows with their family, wants to inhale Heaven, stares at bluebells, attempts to convey the mad love of God, would like to ice-skate with crocodiles and hear the roses when they pray.

Morning prayer hasn't gone well. I have been a little preoccupied. It isn't easy to pray when family life intervenes. I, like most fathers, have days when breakfast doesn't go well. However, on other days the most important thing that I do is run in Ashridge and get awestruck by the majesty of a big buck staring through the trees at me; or overwhelmed by the scent of the bluebells. What does a priest do? We search for the love of God. It is a privilege to have time to think, to come up with answers, or yet more questions.

So, what do I do? Not enough. We can never do enough. I am constantly guilt ridden but at the same time, I believe I have the best job in the world. It makes me wonder, do any of you want to do what a priest does? Is God calling you to hear the roses when they pray?

Huw Bellis, Tring Team

The full poem is by Stewart Henderson, "Priestly Duties: Written for Eric Delve 23.5.96" in Limited Edition (Plover books, 1997)

Tring Parish magazine February 1917

On 17 November, Joseph Horne, 2nd Middlesex Regiment, along with five others, was killed instantly by a shell which burst in his 'dug out'. He joined the Army on the 30 May 1916, and had been only out in France six weeks. He died doing his duty, and who could wish for a nobler death? May he rest in peace.

Jesse Collins, who joined the Royal West Kent Regiment in August 1916, died from a sharp attack of pneumonia at the Connaught Hospital, Aldershot, on 25 December 1916, and was buried at Aldershot with full military honours. R.I.P.



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Lent films



Why watch the Lent films?

Thought provoking, a chance to escape tea and bedtime on a Sunday night and back in time for

Ian, my husband, to go to the pub: just three of the reasons why I am a long-running Lent films stalwart.

The films are often ones I would not choose to watch myself and therein lies some of the charm of Lent films. Sit back with popcorn (sweet or salted), wine or a cup of tea (my favourite tippie) and let the wide-ranging films reveal themselves to you. There is something very relaxing about letting someone else choose the films, whilst all you have to do is the watching. They are usually based around a common theme linked to Lent, last year's being the seven deadly sins. My favourite was 'Supersize Me', in which the film-maker ate only McDonalds for one month. This in itself covered a number of sins, greed, gluttony and lust depending on your view of a month's worth of McDonalds' food. Other favourites over the years have included a film about a silent community who made communion wafers, memorable for the lack of talking and a black and white, an unrelentingly bleak Danish film centred around death. If that doesn't sound your cup of tea, don't pre-judge: I am often surprised by what I have enjoyed.

After each film, we share our views on the film and this can lead to some interesting discussions, differences of opinion about whether the film in question was good, bad or indifferent and shared laughter. You can join in or just listen, it's up to you.

'Walking the Way', a beautiful film about walking the Camino de Santiago, has even made me want to walk the Way and plan a holiday there; just don't tell the kids it's a walking holiday. Whatever your taste in films, I am sure there is something to suit, so pull up a chair and enjoy the 2017 Lent film season.

Rachel Munroe

St John the Baptist, Aldbury



Over the past year, I have had several conversations with different people about ageing and what it means. We live in a society that

does all it can to prevent it or at least ignore it, yet every day we are confronted with the issues it raises about how and where we should live, what the medical treatment should be, and perhaps most important of all, how we feel about getting older. It is an area that we need to explore in a much more honest way than we do, so I hope that these films will be a way of doing this.

Jane Banister, St Peter & St Paul

Amour



Rated 12a

Octogenarians Georges and Anne are retired music teachers whose daughter lives abroad with her family.

When Anne suffers a stroke and is left paralyzed on one side of her body, the couple's abiding love for each other is put to the test.

Tokyo Story



An elderly couple journey to Tokyo to visit their children and are confronted by indifference, ingratitude and selfishness. When the parents are packed

off to a resort by their impatient children, the film deepens into an unbearably moving meditation on mortality.

Up

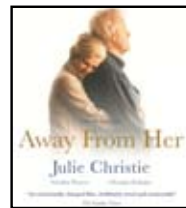


Rated U

From Disney-Pixar comes "Up," an animated comedy adventure about 78-year-old balloon salesman Carl

Fredricksen, who finally fulfills his lifelong dream of a great adventure when he ties thousands of balloons to his house and flies away to the wilds of South America. *Editor's note: 'Up' is **not** a comedy. My children told me it was and I have never cried so much!*

Away from her



Rated 12a

Married for almost 50 years, Grant and Fiona's commitment to each other appears unwavering, but there is a sense that this

marriage may not always have been such a fairy tale. This, along with Fiona's increasingly evident memory loss, creates a tension that is usually brushed off casually by both of them. But, when it is no longer possible for either of them to ignore the fact that Fiona is being consumed by Alzheimer's disease, the limits of their love and loyalty must be wrenchingly redefined

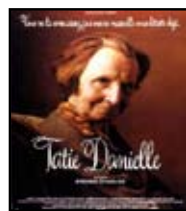
Company of Strangers



In this feature film, eight elderly women find themselves stranded when their bus breaks down in the wilderness.

With only their wits, memories and some roasted frogs' legs to sustain them, this remarkable group of strangers share their life stories and turn a potential crisis into a magical time of humour, spirit and camaraderie. Featuring non-professional actors and unscripted dialogue, this film dissolves the barrier between fiction and reality, weaving a heart-warming tale of friendship and courage.

Tatie Danielle

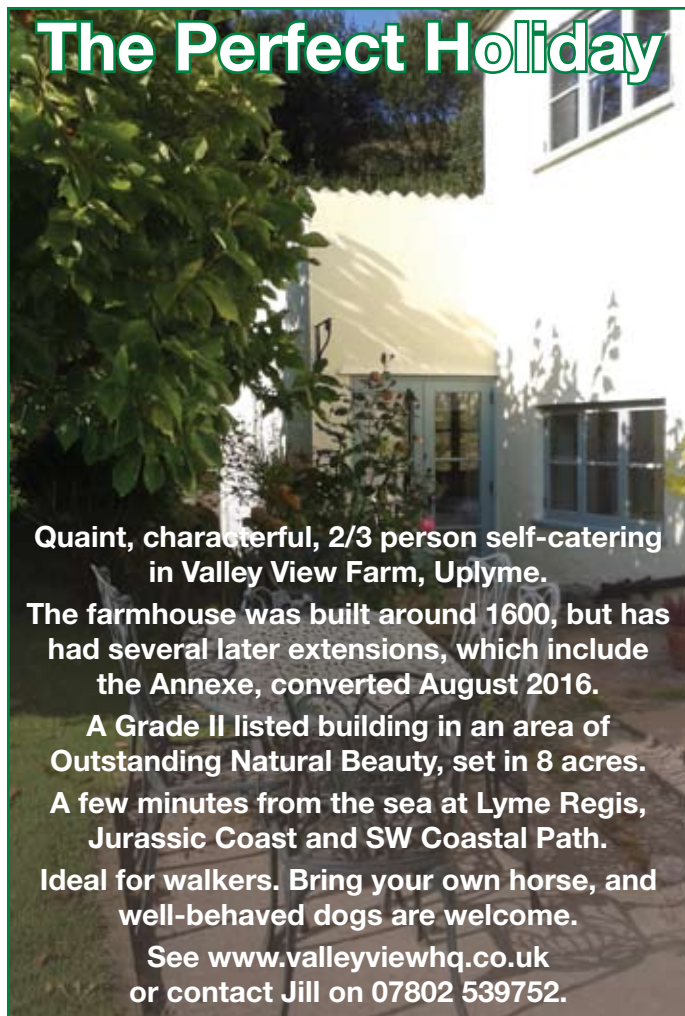


Rated 12a

Auntie Danielle, supposedly in ailing health but in reality just a nasty old bitch, lives with a paid housekeeper who she

regularly abuses. When the housekeeper dies falling off a ladder, Danielle moves in with her great-nephew and his family. She continues using her nastiness to manipulate everyone into doing things her way until the family goes on vacation to Greece. The young housekeeper they hire to watch after her knows what Auntie is doing, and deals with her accordingly, and they begin forming respect for each other.

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'May you live in interesting times'

This is supposed to be a curse. Probably apocryphal, some may see recent political events as the curse come true. Many may see current times as a cause for hope. It matters not which way you may feel. How should we as Christians, and as church, deal with our current interesting times?

As Christians, as church, we need to keep it in mind that we are a church of the Everlasting God, of Christ, of the Holy Spirit. Yesterday, today and tomorrow, God is the reason we are a church, and we believe Christ to be God made man. We come together to worship him. We offer up our weakness in sin, and with his grace, are redeemed from that sin. Only by recognising that we are not the authors of our own salvation can we even start to accept God's salvation.

The world is full of challenges, fears, trepidations, worries, divisions and differences. Perhaps much of this is in

God's plan, as God hardened Pharaoh's heart. Perhaps much of this is due to people turning away from God, like Jonah, and failing in human weakness. When we receive God's grace, we leave all worldly pleasures and fears behind. God does not always provide the solution we want; he certainly provides the comfort of being in his grace. He transforms our spirit to be his.

When our church turns away from Christ, when it offers commentary on the changing of the seasons, rejects one set of politics over another, it is embracing the world. If the church, its spokespeople, its clergy, preach anything other than embracing Christ, it is welcoming the world into the church. 'Render unto Caesar, that which is Caesar's'. If the church looks to the world for salvation, for redemption, the church will be weak, as the world is weak. The world will enter the church, and the church will become

overwhelmed by the world. With God, with Christ, the church will be strong, as Christ is strong. The church cannot offer specific answers

to choices offered to us in this time, it must offer Christ as the answer, for all time. As an established church, it is more important than ever that the spiritual independence of the church is maintained.

Despite any differences we all have, we are all the same in grace with Christ. It is what unifies our purpose in the church which is an expression of that knowledge which has been shared with us.

No matter how interesting our times get, I thank God for yesterday, for today, and for tomorrow.

Mark Anderson, St Peter & St Paul



Who let the dads out?

This is growing movement that resources churches to reach out to dads, father figures and their children. It started at Hoole Baptist Church, Chester, in March 2003 when twenty dads turned up to the first session with their children. From those humble beginnings, other churches

started to pick up on the idea and asked if they could set up similar groups. The national initiative started formally in 2008 and the first 'Who Let The Dads Out?' conference took place in January 2009.

In March 2012, 'Who Let The Dads Out?' became part of BRF (The Bible Reading Fellowship), a registered charity. 'Who Let The Dads Out?' is resourced, supported and enabled by BRF as one of its core ministries and today there are over 200 registered groups in the UK and overseas.

High Street Baptist Church has joined this growing network of churches that are offering a WLTD group and opened its doors for the first time in July 2016. This group adds to the range of activities offered by the church to attract children and young people, including the Activity Room (Tuesday morning), TOTs (Wednesday morning) and the Activity Room (Thursday morning).

The WLTD group meets on the first Saturday of each month from 8.30-10.00am and is aimed at children in the 0-7 age

range; it costs £3.00 per family. Various activities are laid on and it is an opportunity for children to spend quality time with their dad, grandad or uncle while giving 'mum' some crucial time-off! Alongside these activities there are aspects to appeal to the dads who come along, including newspapers, bacon butties and scrolling Sky News on the big screen. Currently around eight to twelve families attend each session and feedback from those attending has been really positive. It has also proved to be a springboard and impetus for many of the church dads to get together (without children) and more recently they were seen frequenting one of the local curry houses!

If you would like more information about WLTD at High Street Baptist, please email: admin@tringbaptistchurch.co.uk. If you would like to turn up, please do so – there is no need to book and it would be great to see you!

Kevin Rogers
High Street Baptist Church



High Street Baptist Church - Tring

WHO LET THE DADS OUT?

2017 dates
7th January
4th February
4th March
1st April
6th May
3rd June

First Saturday of each month
8.30am - 10.00am
(Suitable for 0-7 year olds)

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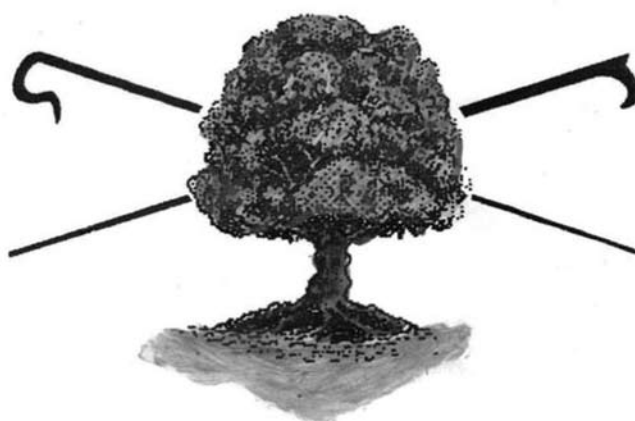
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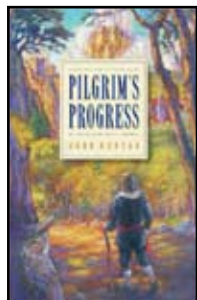
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100 favourite books

Quite a mix of readers' favourite books here – but we are running out of choices. Did you read something you love over Christmas? What would you recommend to readers of Comment?

'Pilgrim's Progress' by John Bunyan

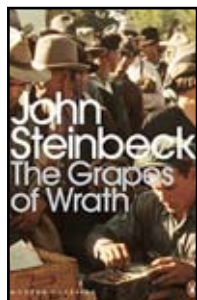


I come from Bedford, John Bunyan's town. The places and people in 'Pilgrim's Progress' are based on actual places and people Bunyan met, some of the buildings still standing. It is a good story with

spiritual truths still relevant today.

Leslie Barker, St Peter & St Paul

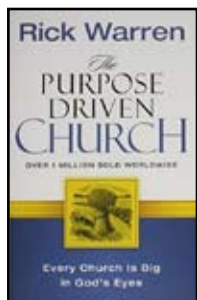
'The Grapes of Wrath' by John Steinbeck



Tragic but challenging novel of the Great Depression.

**John Allan
High Street Baptist**

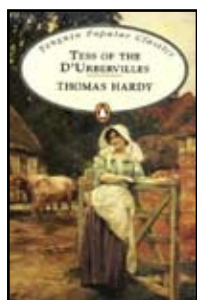
'The Purpose Driven Church' by Rick Warren



A stimulating and challenging book about church and the need for intentionality and vision.

**Andrew Openshaw
New Baptist Church**

'Tess of the D'Urbervilles' by Thomas Hardy

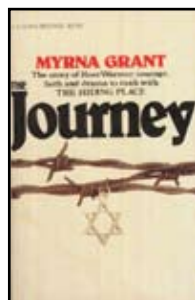


This is my favourite Thomas Hardy novel. A drunk clergyman puts an idea into the head of plain Mr Durbyfield, a labourer, that he is descended from an ancient noble family. This sets in train a series of

events that lead to the tragic downfall of his beautiful daughter, Tess.

Jon Reynolds, St Peter & St Paul

'The Journey' by Myrna Grant

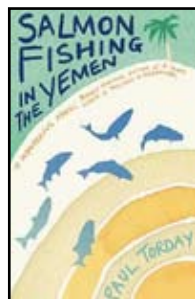


Rose's description of being released from Bergen-Belsen particularly touched me, as my friend's father was one of the first British Troops to enter the camp on cessation of hostilities (did he help her,

see her?). It helped to remind me of the horrors that Christians are enduring in places like North Korea, and it makes me consider my faith deeply.

Gill Barber, St Martha's Methodist

'Salmon fishing in the Yemen' by Paul Torday

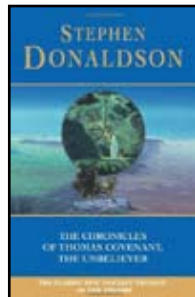


I have just re-read this book, and have seen the film twice, but it remains enthralling. It is a story of the triumph of faith over cynicism and doubt. The approach, the archive of a parliamentary

inquiry into the events in the Yemen, sounds really dry but is a powerful satire on the ways of politics, as well as being an inspiration to hold on to our dreams. It is a fascinating narrative of salmon fishing, and the Yemen, but you don't need to be interested in either of these to be captivated by its commentary on life.

John Whiteman, St Peter & St Paul

'The Chronicles of Thomas Covenant' by Stephen R Donaldson

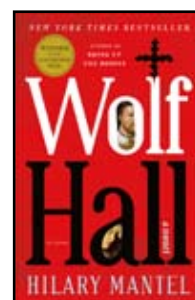


It's an epic story of a reluctant and often truculent man, on the outskirts of society in his own world, transported to another time and place where he becomes a hero – much against his

wishes!

Prue Senior, St Peter & St Paul

'Wolf Hall' by Hilary Mantel



A long, but excellent read which plunges you into the shady and dangerous world of England at the time of its break with Rome; the book that makes the traditionally unpopular character

of Thomas Cromwell someone to admire and sympathise with.

The congregation and friends of St Cross, Wilstone

'Papillon' by Henri Charriere



This book was published in 1969 and was a best seller, and was also made into a film starring Steve McQueen. It is based on a subject that I have always found compelling: namely, an innocent

victim imprisoned for a crime he did not commit. He is sent to a notorious penal colony in French Guiana called Devil's Island, miles from the mainland. The core theme of the book is an exposition of his attempts to escape, very exciting.

David Gittins, St Peter & St Paul

'Any Human Heart' by William Boyd



An ordinary man in an extraordinary century; the people (some of them important historical figures such as Picasso, the Prince of Wales, Hemingway) who touched his life and gave it value, huge

social and political events in which he became involved, his successes and failures, the women he loved and lost. It is moving without being sentimental and it's hard not to reflect on the purpose and meaning of life by the end.

Annette Reynolds, St Peter & St Paul

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800 years and counting

The Phoenix rises again! Well, not exactly, I am referring to the rebirth of the Fabric Committee at St Peter & St Paul's.

I am sure you are all aware of the wonderfully picturesque, inspiring, movingly peaceful building we call OUR Parish Church. We, that is all the people of Tring, Friends of Tring Church Heritage, the Worshipping Community of St Peter & St Paul's and The Fabric Committee, are charged to look after our Parish Church. So, this focus on OUR God, this focus on OUR Community, this focus on OUR history, may be passed to OUR children and their children and so on into the future. This has been going on for some 800 years. It is now our turn to pick up this gift, appreciating what we have been given and passing it on, undamaged and pristine to our descendants so they also may have a haven of peace: rather like a Tring Family Heirloom.

The new Fabric Committee looking after our Church for the next four to five years will be: Elaine Winter, Secretary; Tony Mackinder, Lighting Specialist; Ian Mathews, Church Warden; Andrew Kinsey, Construction Specialist; Annette Reynolds, FOTCH Representative; Ben Cartwright, General Maintenance Engineer; Janet Goodyer, Minor Works Co-ordinator; Revd Huw Bellis, Tring Team Leader; Mac Dodge, Chairman & General Whipcracker.

The reason I want to shout about this is because of the exciting new challenges that face us, us being all the people of Tring. The Fabric Committee is merely a tool to focus everyone's efforts however small onto this Heart of Tring. You may recall the never ending saga of 'The Wall Works' which often made an appearance in 'Comment'.

Over the coming four to five years we will be executing the instructions of the surveyor Mark Battram laid out in the most recent Quinquennial, a five-yearly in depth look at our Heart. Think of it as

a health check. I guess if you were 800 years old you would take the doctor's instructions pretty seriously, as we on the Fabric Committee do.

But further to these instructions we are also charged to improve the lighting, in addition to making it more economical, providing a means for highlighting the sheer joyous beauty within.

But of course, as everyone knows, when you switch on the lights, all the defects are then obvious. So, a decorating job is needed. The next time you go inside our Parish Church, just take a moment to look at the scale of task that it is. It must all be done off scaffolding. We must come into the 21st century not only with technology but also Health & Safety Legislation.

It would be advantageous to raise the floor level between the front pews and the Chancel to enable Huw to preach from the floor, to enable Wedding Couples to be seen taking their vows, and to see our dear departed friends as we say goodbye.

It would be lovely if we could have storage for all the church-related literature. It would be glorious if we could have the two stunning paintings at the rear of the Nave cleaned. And thanks



to FOTCH, the cleaning of the Gore Memorial which draws so many people to the Parish Church (whether you like it or loathe it) is the first of the works to be undertaken. Come and see! Then we move on...

This is all very exciting stuff, but being realistic, a very, very tough and tall order. The Tring Team also has responsibility for four other Churches, to the diocese and their financial commitments by way of the Parish Share which pays our Clergy and provides a roof over their heads. These expenses are in addition to our responsibilities as Christians to help those in need.

FOTCH has been very generous in the last few years and has also paid for the restoration of the Gore memorial. The Trustees must manage its finances to ensure they are sufficient to be able to provide a continued support to the Church, a bit like a pension pot. They are also bound by their constitution to be able to help with some things – the specialist treatment required for a Grinling Gibbons sculpture – but not others, such as decorating, which is part of everyday maintenance. So, we are back to fundraising and generous giving to raise additional money for 'Building Works'. There is to be a special fund dedicated to repairs and maintenance.

Grant aid is a possibility but as you can imagine, the world and its mother are all after the same pot of money. So getting a grant is a very slow and very difficult process with no guarantees at the end. But... WE ARE GOING TO DO THIS! We will keep people regularly informed as to what the plans are, how much it is going to cost and where your help, time and money has gone.

As I said earlier, The Fabric Committee is 'but a tool': it is your hands that power the engine.

Mac Dodge, St Peter & St Paul



Watchnight Service

I would like to thank John Watkins for organising the Watchnight Service on New Year's Eve in St Martha's Methodist Church. It was a wonderful way to see out the 'old' year and welcome the new,

to prepare ourselves for the forthcoming challenges our Heavenly Father has in store for us, knowing we are safe in his care. The evening was topped off with another marvellous 'spread' from

Jean Buchanan, setting us up for a great 2017!! Thank you both for all your hardwork spoiling us.

Gill Barber, St Mary's Puttenham and St Martha's Methodist

The Revd Sarah Eynstone, RIP

Sarah Francesca Louise Eynstone was born on 14 May 1975, the Feast of St Matthias, the apostle chosen by the drawing of lots. There is an irony here, in that much of her life can be said to have been about resisting chance, resisting circumstance.

Her childhood was in Woking, Surrey, with father Anthony, mother Geraldine, and sister Lisa, and a much-loved Siamese cat, Mylinda. She valued being brought up in a Christian family. She expressed her devotion already as a primary school child; her mother has found a book of her prayers and thoughts from this period, full of the passion – and misspellings – of childhood. Sarah studied Ancient History and Anthropology at University College London. It was weeks before her finals that she, a pedestrian, was hit by a car, as she went to hand in her dissertation. Her family kept a vigil by her bedside as she spent forty-eight hours in a medically-induced coma, critically ill. Her long road to recovery began, supported by family, friends and her parish priest, Father Peter Farrell, from All Saints, Woodham, a Church in the Anglo-Catholic tradition, which Sarah over time came to make her own. And here it is that we first see her ‘godly stubbornness’. As she fought for life, so again and again she would fight against the idea that this horrible incident or any of its consequences should restrict her.

Sarah was able without pretension to look back at this time as one of grace. There followed a time of helpful rehabilitation, it being at this stage quite unclear what ‘recovery’ might concretely mean. But ‘as soon as she could’ (reports her mother), Sarah left home for the big city of London again. There she had a variety of jobs, some reflecting her pastoral calling – including working at Action Disability Kensington and Chelsea – and in due course was a chaplaincy assistant at King’s College London, and pastoral assistant at St Mary’s Primrose Hill. During this time, she explored the possibility of a vocation to ordained ministry. Some had doubts, given her perceived uncertain health, but Sarah’s godly stubbornness – and the Church’s good sense – prevailed.

At Westcott House she flourished, not only in her academic courses, but also as Senior Student. This involved leading the student body

through discussions, controversies and change. Sarah being Sarah, it also meant being pastorally available to her peers (personal turmoil often being a recognised part of preparation for ordination), in and out of hours. Already at college the patterns of her ministry became clear: she combined grace and calm, with a clear orientation towards fun, with an unsentimental awareness of her own vulnerability (she was, for example, unafraid of her own tears).

Her curacy, from 2005, was at St John’s, Hampstead. This gave her a good grounding in the ongoing cycle of services, and the occasional offices. For a while, Sarah lived in a house in the primary school grounds, and school life too was an important part of her work. She enjoyed leading a women’s study group, and a gathering of young people, facing the agonies of their age, through to confirmation. Her pastoral antennae were sensitive, of course, as she suggested a new way of offering coffee after services, to welcome newcomers more naturally. A trivial matter? Not to any who know how important making a good first impression can be to people who – sometimes with anxiety – ‘give church a try’.

A highlight of this time would be Sarah’s involvement in the church’s amateur dramatics. Like many a priest, Sarah was an introvert who liked playing the extrovert, blending into the foreground, as it were. But the pinnacle was probably her leadership of a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. Rather than feigning special expertise in archaeology or contemporary politics, Sarah treated the group of pilgrims as a community in its own right, to be formed and brought together in love. This left a huge impression on those involved.

In 2010 Sarah became Minor Canon and Chaplain to St Paul’s Cathedral, giving her national visibility. Minor canons are responsible for the day-to-day running of cathedrals as worshipping communities, alongside planning and taking full part in the major flagship events. The pressure is thus relentless. On Sarah’s watch, the cathedral found itself absorbed in the controversy of the ‘Occupy’ demonstrators, on and around its steps. Rather differently, Sarah had a hand in the funeral of Margaret Thatcher. But in all truth, such publicity-generating occasions were not the heart of things

for Sarah, who was always Chaplain first to the cathedral’s vast array of sometimes-overlooked employees; to those people on the fringes of church and social life who often find their way to cathedrals. She also took proper pride in overseeing an exhibition within St Paul’s on the lives of those with brain injuries. It is a measure of how loved she was that members of St Paul’s Consort choir were so keen to sing at her funeral.

After serving her five years at St Paul’s, Sarah carved out for herself a sabbatical year. Her intention was to take stock spiritually, and make good progress on a book which would look at the intersection between brain injury, identity and theology. She also served at St Saviour’s, Pimlico, where again her calmness and kindness left their mark.

And so in 2016 Sarah came to Aldbury and to Tring. She was excited by this, and by the new challenges of rural ministry. Top of the list was, we know, learning to drive. Her firm hope was she would use ‘the other half’ of her time to tackle the book. She had become more ambitious about this, wanting to interview people and offer research on the lived reality of those in recovery from acquired brain injuries.

As you were getting to know Sarah – and her sense of fun, which was always closer to the surface than her demeanour might have suggested, whether with bassoons, baboons, balloons or buffoons – so she was getting to know you, and grow in her love of you in Christ, as the people she was called upon to be alongside, in church... and pub and school and sports ground, and in countless other places.

As befits ordained ministry, Sarah had no ‘career plan’. But in the times when she mused about how things might develop, she imagined she might be the modern equivalent of an Anglo-Catholic ‘slum priest’ – in gritty, urban London. Yet she in fact moved from leafy Hampstead (which is not to say easy or un-needy), to national St Paul’s, and then to rural Aldbury. Each move she was convinced was right. So she was, after all, able to make her peace with chance and circumstance, within the great overarching of God’s Providence. May she rest in peace, and may her memory be eternal!

The Revd Patrick Morrow, with kind assistance from Sarah’s family



Making sense of suffering

When someone dies as we put it 'before their time' – we have a variety of phrases we resort to, to try to explain what has happened and to reduce our grief a little. We suggest that it was somehow meant to be, that it was his or her time, that God knows what he is doing even if we can't understand. We console ourselves with the knowledge of the years that have been. So in Sarah's case we might suggest that the twenty years for which she survived the terrible accident she had when she was twenty were somehow a gift from God.

And yet underneath it all we can't avoid the sense that we are in the presence of something tragic. And as Christians we may have some difficulty with the idea of tragedy in our faith. How do we experience suffering? Can we talk about loss and grieve for it together, without looking for explanation or immediate consolation?

After the catastrophic injury just before her 21st birthday, Sarah found amongst the doctors and lawyers with whom she had to deal all sorts of stories about what had happened which claimed to know her better than she knew herself. Her story was being told all the time by other people and seemed to overlook her and the identity she was struggling to re-establish. The

people round her were trying to find meaning too quickly for her. For anyone preaching about her life in these tragic circumstances that is a salutary warning. Over the last few years she was at last trying to write a book about her experiences and put them into a story which might be of help to others who had suffered in similar circumstances. She knew that for all the difficulty it is good to try to tell the experience of pain and suffering.

We know Sarah for her calm efficiency in organising visiting clergy at large services in St Paul's; the sensitive dignity of the prayer she read at Lady Thatcher's funeral; her bursting onto stage in 'We Happy Few', with gay abandon, waving her cane and arms in wild windmill motion, and her reciting of the speech 'All the world's a stage'; her lighting a mass of candles before a meditative Eucharist in the side chapel; or celebrating the Eucharist by the Sea of Galilee on the parish pilgrimage she led; her setting up of the Women's Bible Study Group; her generosity with her time in pastoral listening; her smile which so lit up a normally serious face. As she wrestled with what had happened to her after her accident she found much help in Psalm 139, which gave her space not to understand but still to

find herself in the presence of a God who knows completely and ultimately who she is. However hard it may be for us to find meaning in the unforeseen suffering, the psalm makes it clear that God's knowledge of us holds us with the tenderness of a parent, as though his knowing is with a smile breaking through seriousness.

In remembering Sarah in this way we are not trying to explain what has happened but seeking a way to mourn appropriately. We grieve, we remember and we find a way to speak that is not paralysed by sadness. And we do this because underneath the fine robes of the risen Christ, Christ's glorified body still bears the marks of his wounds. We, the living and the departed, are all part of the wounded body of Christ, we are all part of a fragile, costly, often tragically diminished body. And yet as members of that body we are enabled to be honest, to be angry, to be confused and doubting; but also we are enabled to see our wounds in the wounds of the risen Christ and to hear his voice speaking of peace and sending us out to serve him as Sarah also faithfully served him.

Stephen Tucker
Parish Church of St John-at-
Hampstead

St Martha's Methodist Church

FRIENDSHIP CLUB

The Club continues to meet on the first Tuesday of each month at 2.30pm. On 7 February, Barr and Brian Kazer will visit to describe their winter trip to Lapland.

CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING

The next Church Council

meets at St Martha's on Saturday 4 February at 10.00am.

JOHN AND JENNIFER'S HOUSE GROUP

House groups will continue on Wednesday afternoons 8 and 22 February.

5 February 10.00am
Communion

Revd Rachael Hawkins

12 February 10.00am
Morning Service

John Watkins

19 February 10.00am
Morning Service

John Benson



26 February 10.00am
Morning Service
David Morgan

New Mill Baptist Church

TOT SPOT

Tuesdays @ 10.00-11.30am
7, 21, 28 February

BRIGHT HOUR

Tuesday 14 February @ 2.30pm
with David Chapman

KNIT & NATTER

Wednesdays @ 7.30pm
1, 8, 22 February

CAFÉ

Thursdays @ 11.00-2.00pm
2, 9, 23 February

FRIDAY CLUB

Fridays @ 6.00-7.15pm
3, 10, 24 February

5 February 10.30am
Morning Service

Revd Andrew Openshaw

12 February 10.30am
Morning Service

Aubrey Dunford

19 February 10.30am
Morning Service

Revd Alan Cookson



26 February 10.30am
Morning Service
Revd Andrew Openshaw

High Street Baptist Church

@MEYG

Monday evenings 7.30 - 8.45pm
Youth Group for years 7-13

ACTIVITY ROOM

Tuesdays 9.30 - 11.30am
Plenty to do: crafts, games, Bible stories, songs and more!
Suitable for 0 - 4 year olds

TOTS

Wednesdays 9.30 - 11.30am
Safe baby play area, soft play shapes and toys. Bikes and

scooters in the hall!
Suitable for 0 - 4 year olds

PLAY CAFÉ

Thursdays 9.30 - 11.30am
Relax, chat and let the little ones enjoy our safe play area with stories and music
Suitable for ages 0 - 3 year olds

THURSDAY YOUTH CAFÉ

Open 3.30 - 4.30pm, for years 7-13 Free hot chocolate!

FRIDAY CAFÉ

Fridays 12noon - 1.30pm
Freshly cooked lunches

SUNDAY MORNING WORSHIP

Service @ 10.30am
With Junior Church and Crèche

SUNDAYS @ 7

Evening service
7.00pm first Sunday of the month



St Peter & St Paul's flower rota

High Altar

5 February Lady Jane Simmons
12 February Lady Jane Simmons
19 February Diane Jarvis
26 February Diane Jarvis

Lady Chapel

5 February Margaret Wilson
12 February Beth Wastling
19 February Margaret Oram
26 February Margaret Oram



Tring Team Anglican Churches

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

Sunday 5 February

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 Baptisms Tring
6.30pm Candlemas Evensong Tring

Sunday 12 February

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 in Wilstone
10.00am Worship for All Tring
11.30am Holy Communion BCP Tring
6.00pm Evening Prayer Long Marston

Sunday 19 February

8.00am Holy Communion BCP Tring
10.00am Holy Communion CW Tring
10.00am Holy Communion CW Wilstone
10.00am Holy Communion Aldbury
10.00am Sunday Worship CW Long Marston

Sunday 26 February

8.00am Holy Communion BCP Tring
10.00am Holy Communion CW Tring
10.00am Holy Communion CW Long Marston
10.00am Holy Communion Aldbury
3.00pm Christingle Tring
3.30pm Evensong Puttenham
6.00pm Holy Communion Tring

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

Baptism Preparation

Thursday 9 February 7.30pm St P&P

Churches Together

Saturday 5 February 8.30-9.30am
Prayer Breakfast St Martha's Methodist

Dacorum Foodbank

Weekdays 10.00am St P&P

Meditation

Thursdays 8.00pm Corpus Christi

Coffee Mornings

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

First Saturday Lunch

Saturday 4 February 12.00 midday
Tring Parish Hall
For those who have been bereaved to meet and eat with others. Contact Margaret Oram for information on 01442 824575.

Afternoon Tea

Tuesday 28 February 2.00-3.30pm
All Saints, Long Marston

Youth Café

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

Young Adults Group

Thursday 2, 16 February 7.30pm St P&P
A discussion group for young adults.

Mothers' Union

Thursday 2 February 2.00-3.30pm Tring Parish Hall

Book Group

Sunday 26 February 6.45pm St P&P

Winter Workshop

Sunday 12 February 11.30pm Tring Parish Hall

Pancake Races

Saturday 25 February 11.30am St P&P



Useful contacts

TRING TEAM PARISH

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

Team Vicar
(Aldbury)
Vacancy

School Chaplaincy and
Team Vicar
(Long Marston, Tring School)
Rev Jane Banister
01442 822170
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Associate Priest
(Wilstone)
Rev Didier Jaquet
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(Day off Saturday)

Diocesan Lay Minister
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Annie Eggar (Aldbury)
01442 851854

John Barron (Puttenham)
01296 631351

Christine Rutter (Puttenham)
01296 668337

Ken Martin (Wilstone)
01442 822894

Rev Jane Banister (Long
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01442 822170

Mothers' Union Branch Leader
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**AKEMAN STREET
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Canon Vincent Berry
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01442 823161
tring@rcdow.org.uk

**HIGH STREET
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**NEW MILL
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OUR CHURCHES ONLINE

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

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next edition should arrive with
the Editor by the 6th of the
previous month.

Crossword puzzle answers

From page 23

ANSWERS ACROSS

1. GROW UP
5. SEDATE
8. STAR
9. REGISTER
10. ACCORD
12. ETCH
15. UNDERSTANDING
16. LEVI
17. RADIUS
19. BARNABUS
21. ELIM
22. ADVENT
23. YEARNs

ANSWERS DOWN

2. RETICENCE
3. WAR
4. PARADISE
5. SAGE
6. DESCENDED
7. TIE
11. OBEDIENCE
13. CENTURION
14. SACRISTY
18. ABUT
20. ADD
21. ERA



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