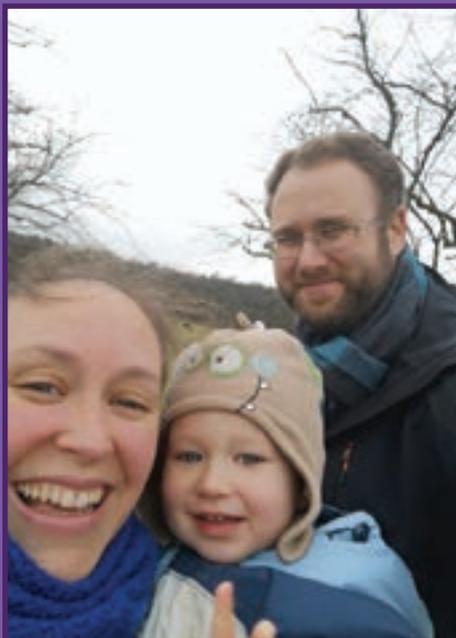


# COMMENT

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## Editorial



I can't stop thinking about *Comment*. I know it's a sad affliction when I receive an article by email when I am far from home and deadlines (on holiday, in fact...) and am frustrated that I can't edit the article, name it and label it with its word count and page number

and file it ready for press!

It takes more than forty articles to put your edition of *Comment* together each month. I quickly run out of friends if I ask the same people to write every month and you will know that hearing new voices is as good as hearing those you know or particularly like. I am very grateful to those who respond when we are short of content and pull out the stops at short notice. I love it when someone reads what others have

written and writes to me with their own responses or article prompted by it; or when the magazine is well balanced by articles from members of all the churches, schools and communities we represent.

The March 2020 edition has articles from most of those churches and schools and some new voices. Enjoy!  
**The Editor**

## New beginnings



For the last six months or so I've been reflecting on new beginnings. My wife and I moved to Tring a little over four months ago to take up the role of co-ministers

at High Street Baptist Church. For us this season has been one of new beginnings: new home, new neighbours, new community, new local shops, pubs and coffee shops, new church family, new job roles, new friends and, perhaps best of all, new dog walk routes!

While new beginnings can be challenging and sometimes unexpected (are you someone who finds change difficult?), what has made this season in life easier for us as a family is the time we intentionally and sacrificially invested in preparing for our move.

For example: the relationships we built with the congregation during our many visits to High Street Baptist Church prior to our move helped grow a sense of anticipation; a visit to the church manse prior to moving in brought a sense of comfort and helped alleviate anxiety around uprooting our family; researching things like local parks, amenities and generally 'things to do' helped prepare us for the challenges of day-to-day life with a dog and a toddler; the affirmation we received from our previous church family and friends, alongside the assurance of God's guidance as we stepped out in faith, overcame any doubts; decluttering the house helped not only make packing and unpacking swifter, but helped us focus on what was important to us as we decided what to keep and what to let go of.

This time of preparation, while initially increasing our stress and limiting our 'free' time during a busy season of handing over our ministry in Enfield and saying our goodbyes, truly proved valuable and time well spent as we embarked on this new beginning of life in Tring.

New beginnings are always preceded by a time of preparation (how well we prepare is a thought for another day...), and we only have to look at God's beautiful creation to see this truth. I've gone on a number of quite muddy walks with Penny (our family dog) towards Tring reservoirs and noticed that at this time of year the public footpaths are largely lined by dormant, bare and woody shrubs and trees. These hedgerows are in a season of preparation, conserving energy and in some cases being trimmed so that they start their new beginning well as they sprout new shoots of life and grow in ways they never have previously.

Seasons of preparation are key to effective new beginnings.

As I've reflected on this over the last few months there is (to me at least!) an obvious connection to this season of Lent we now find ourselves in. Lent fills just over six weeks in the church calendar and concludes with Easter Sunday celebrations, as we remember the resurrection of Jesus and the new life (new beginning) freely given to all who come to know and believe that Jesus is the way, the truth and the life (John 14:6).

Traditionally during Lent, Christians will spend intentional time in prayer, Bible study and personal reflection as they fast and/or abstain from some of life's luxuries and/or give of their time/energy/finances. It is in essence a time of preparation to focus heart and mind on God and make room for him in the busyness of daily

living. In doing so, Christians may look forward with confident assurance that God is with them and working in them to prepare their hearts and minds for whatever new beginning may be on the horizon.

I don't know what season of life you are in right now, whether you are preparing for a known new beginning or, like me, just starting something new. You may be experiencing the challenge or pain of an unexpected new beginning, or preparing for something you wish wasn't ahead of you. Whatever stage you may be at, I encourage you this Lent to make room in your lives for God by: intentionally investing in your relationship with him through prayer; preparing for challenges by deepening your faith and understanding of God's word through Bible study; decluttering your days so that you can focus on what's important; and, if you are in a position to, giving sacrificially of your time, energy and finances as you share God's love and blessings with others. I believe and testify to the truth that in doing this, you not only prepare yourselves for whatever new beginning lies ahead of you, but you invite God's love, power, and peace into your life in the present.

1 Peter 1:13 says this '... prepare your minds for action; discipline yourselves; set all your hope on the grace that Jesus Christ will bring you when he is revealed' (New RSV). I pray that this season of Lent may be a blessing to you all, that it may be a season of discipline, learning, dependence, comfort, readiness, anticipation and facing challenges fully prepared. And that God may give you strength to persevere with hope beyond whatever awaits you, and rejoice in the joys that new beginnings can bring.

**Joe Egan, High Street Baptist Church**

# Tring Park News



## Certificate Ceremony

Our first event of 2020 was the Certificate Ceremony for our GCSE and graduate A Level students who

returned with their parents to celebrate their success.

The afternoon also included a speech by Tring Park alumni William Quinn (pictured left) who is currently studying for a PhD in Physics having taken the decision to go down an academic rather than a performing arts route. It was a lovely opportunity to also welcome back former teachers.

Interestingly, there are three female alumni prior to Will who have gone down the PhD Physics route in the last seventeen years, one of whom spent time at CERN, the European Organization for Nuclear Research, getting around the massive underground facility in Switzerland on a bicycle!

## Growth Mindset Work

Every fortnight staff nominations are collected on a given theme, recognising a pupil's contribution that may not happen in a lesson but recognise some aspect of their wider life here at school.

The values that we are recognising this year include helpfulness, commitment, nurturing, thoughtfulness, compassion, consistency, respectfulness, generosity, adaptability, determination, dependability, supportiveness, fairness, willingness, consideration for others and endurance.

In line with our Growth Mindset approach, we have been broadening the ways in which we recognise achievements by praising methodologies and strategies. So, it is not just the fact that a very good test result is worthy of praise, it is the way that the person engaged with the process in order to gain that result, perhaps trying a new revision idea or working with others to support their learning. Also, a very good test result can be relative: for some, academic work is pretty straightforward while for others it is a tougher journey.



This approach helps show that through effort, persistence, as well as learning from mistakes, many life lessons are learnt. Not only do you become more resilient but have those adaptable skills that will help you in the future.

**Sarah Bell**  
Tring Park School

# The discipline of gratitude



I was inspired by Michelle Grace's article on gratitude in the last edition of *Comment*. As part of my professional coaching practice, I often encourage people to start

a 'gratitude journal', inviting them to write down three things a day for which they are thankful. Michelle's article reminded me that I have lapsed in the habit myself, and so I have started again.

There is evidence that capturing things we are grateful for is helpful for mental well-being (you will find lots of learned medical websites telling us so) but the reason that I recommend a gratitude journal is to look for patterns and surprises and clues as to what makes us happy at work. This helps us learn about ourselves, builds resilience and can keep us motivated.

Witness me. I've never considered myself an 'outdoors person', but my first gratitude diary was full of comments like

'a blue sky today', 'the crisp morning air', 'the view over Tring Park'. I was quite surprised! But now I'll quite often suggest a walk rather than a cup of coffee when meeting clients or friends in Tring. That was a change for the good, which came from keeping a gratitude diary.

If you're thinking of joining me on this new journaling pursuit, then here are some ideas:

## Technique

Find the technique that works for you. There are apps (there are ALWAYS apps) for your phone. 'Gratitude Garden' is pretty. Personally, there is nothing I like better than a new notebook. Anything shiny works for me, but Fancy That in Tring stock a 'Gratitude Jotter' which you may like.

## A regular time

Find a regular time that works for you. Last thing at night works for me, so I go to sleep with positive thoughts in my head. But you may prefer the 'first thing in the morning before I get going' approach.

## Write it down

Write down three things for which you feel grateful. The physical record is important—don't just do this exercise in your head. The things you list don't have to be massive events; mine yesterday were 'shopping in the new Lidl with Mum', 'Barry's fish soup for supper' and 'blue sky from my office window'. They all make me smile when I think of them and the goal of the exercise is to remember a good event, experience, person, or thing in your life – and to enjoy the good emotions that come with it.

When I suggest the technique at work, I often get the response 'THREE! You want me to think of THREE positive things a day – impossible!'. But people invariably enjoy the exercise when they get into the habit. I shall be keeping my gratitude diary 100% from now until Easter. If you're looking for something to 'take up' rather than 'give up' for Lent, why don't you join me?

**Vivianne Child,**  
St Peter & St Paul

# Growing creation care



During the past few months we have had four churches approach us to seek advice about going green.

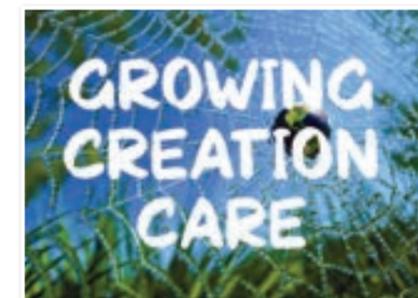
This has been encouraging and thought-provoking. Their stories were different: one church was taking their first steps towards exploring green issues and was looking at how to start; another had started their journey but faced opposition and felt disheartened.

In each instance the conversations were with people who felt moved to engage with environmental issues and seek support from fellow Christians. The climate emergency is impossible to ignore, no longer a niche or 'hippy' idea, every form of media presents news, debate and articles about this topic.

At High Street Baptist Church, we do not see creation care as simply an add-on to the usual 'business' of being church. As Christians we believe that God is our Creator. He not only created the world that we might live in it, he gave us stewardship of it. With this comes responsibility:

'Creator of the heavens, who stretches them out, who spreads out the earth with all that springs from it, who gives breath to its people, and life to those who walk on it ...' *Isaiah 42:5*

'What does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.' *Micah 6:8*



Following these enquiries, we thought it would be useful to put down some thoughts to share with our friends in Tring to encourage further conversation about this topic on our doorstep! We don't have all the answers by any means, but we do feel passionately about the need to be active in tackling climate change. One of the risks with aspects of green-ness can

be feeling judged or being judgemental. Just as individuals are on a journey, so are our churches. There is always plenty more we can be doing, but that shouldn't stop us doing something.



The following points were ones that came up repeatedly during our conversations and seemed to be key pieces of advice for churches embarking on their green journey.

- Start with the biblical truth of being stewards of the earth and our responsibility to care for creation.
- Plan an event for members to explore what eco means as a church and as individuals.
- Use national/global days to tie in the topic to services or midweek activities (e.g. Earth Day, Season of Creation, Harvest).
- Encourage individuals to do a carbon footprint assessment (see, e.g. [www.carbonfootprint.com/calculator.aspx](http://www.carbonfootprint.com/calculator.aspx) or [www.climatestewards.org/offset/](http://www.climatestewards.org/offset/)).
- Keep creation/environment as part of intercessory prayers.
- Register with A Rocha to begin the process of becoming an Eco Church and use their structure to help guide your consideration of all elements of church life.



You can read more about High Street Baptist Church's green journey on our website, along with links to useful websites and resources at [www.tringbaptistchurch.co.uk/eco-church](http://www.tringbaptistchurch.co.uk/eco-church).

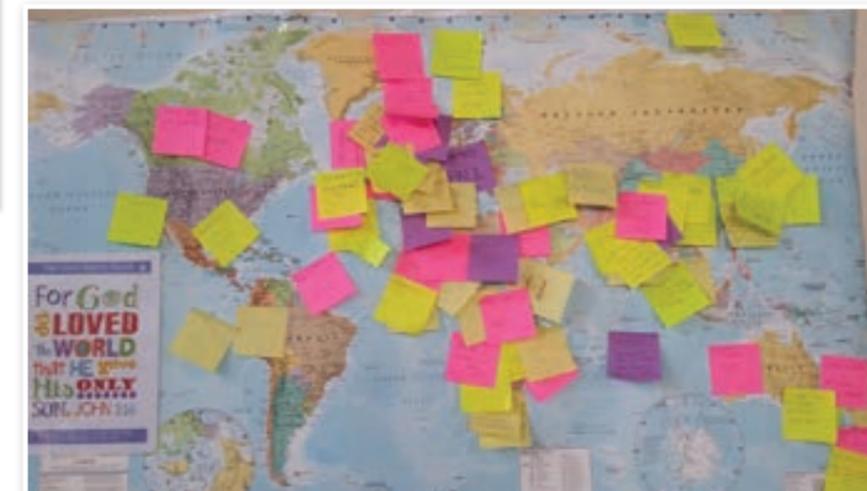
## Eco Church Awards

The vision of A Rocha is for churches of all denominations to care for creation as an integral part of loving their neighbours and following God faithfully. They issue bronze, silver and gold awards depending on where the church has reached on their journey. They invite churches to complete a survey addressing five key areas of church life:

- Worship and teaching
- Management of church buildings
- Management of church land
- Community and global engagement
- Lifestyle

The website is full of practical assistance and resources about the process to become an Eco Church. Visit [www.ecochurch.arocha.org.uk](http://www.ecochurch.arocha.org.uk).

**Polly Eaton**  
High Street Baptist Church



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## Final words



It was the final time I ever spoke to my father, precisely 9.00pm on Monday 22 January 2007.

Two days later he died suddenly following an accident at home during the night. Why do I recall that final conversation so clearly? Because I had rung my father whilst driving to Tring Sports Centre to play football on the astroturf that evening. I pulled up at 9.00pm and can still recall almost verbatim, my saying 'I need to go. I've just arrived at footie. Nice to chat. Speak soon. Bye.' I had no idea they were the final words I would ever say to him.

All these years later those final words are burned into my memory retrospectively by the traumatic events that soon followed later that week. It was a very ordinary conversation. It was just an adult son in his 30s ringing up his dad to say hello. It was our last conversation. And it was a warm conversation. But it was an extraordinary conversation too because it taught me a life-changing lesson – that every goodbye, parting, au-revoir from then on would similarly never ever be on bad terms. Not because I live in fear of impending doom or disaster but because life is uncertain and brief and can all be over unexpectedly. And so since then, without being intense or making a song and dance about it, I have simply said goodbye warmly to my family as I headed out to work, or sent the children off to school, or at the end of a call with one of our children at university.

In his superb book *Taken on Trust*, the Archbishop of Canterbury's special envoy, Terry Waite, explains how he made three resolutions in captivity in Lebanon which helped him survive his unimaginable ordeal: 'No false sentimentality. No self-pity. No regrets.' And it is the third of these – no regrets – which I have consciously and actively applied to each of the thousands of goodbyes I have made and said to my family over the past thirteen years. Probably without them even knowing. Death is rubbish enough without regretting final words and conversations.

As the film 'Love Actually' concludes, the Prime Minister (played by Hugh Grant) narrates over a growing montage of thousands of images of people: 'When

the planes hit the Twin Towers, as far as I know, none of the phone calls from the people on board were messages of hate or revenge – they were all messages of love'. Final words.

Perhaps a little out of context, I think the Apostle Paul may be driving at all this when he writes: 'Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry' (Ephesians 4 verse 26). Surely that is a great exhortation for all people regardless of whether they have a Christian faith or not.

One of the deepest and most beautiful conversations recorded in the Bible is that in Luke 23 between two dying men. The first man says, 'Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom'. The second responds with the most amazing words of hope and comfort, 'Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise.' What a great final conversation.

We all know in truth that there is nothing that puts things more into perspective than matters of life and death. In recounting a little of my own story of family sorrow here, I realise that I have no monopoly on this and each of us will have different stories of pain and sorrow and parting. We cannot change the past, so somehow we need to avoid starting sentences with 'If only...' as Terry Waite learned.

But when all is said and done, for all the wonderful loving words with family and friends – the most important words we need to hear and respond to in all of life and eternity are the words of Jesus: 'Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest' (Matthew 11 verse 28). The good news, the best news, is that this offer of forgiveness and salvation is still available to all who will receive. One day all those who have accepted this offer will hear the words of Jesus echoed from the Parable of the Talents; 'Well done, good and faithful servant... come and share your master's happiness'. Those words were read at my father's funeral service. He was trusting in his Lord and master to his dying day and so I am entirely confident that he is now sharing his master's happiness.

**John Heasman**  
**Akeman Street Baptist Church**

## Prayers of the month

### 1-7 March

*God of power and might, of knowledge, wisdom and truth: we thank and praise you that you show us how to overcome temptation and to keep our focus on you; we thank and praise you that you never give up on us, even when we get things wrong; we thank and praise you that when we go off course, you lead us back on track. Thank you, Lord God, for your constant love. Amen*

### 8-14 March

*O Lord, our God, the earth is full of your glory. Let us come before your throne to worship you, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. As you were faithful to our ancestor Abraham, so too are you faithful to us. Your promises never fail. We worship and adore you. Amen*

### 15-21 March

*We give you thanks and praise today, Lord, for the woman at the well. Thank you for her willingness and eagerness to seek you. Thank you for the life-giving water that you gave to her – and now give to us. Thank you that she – and we – may thirst no more. Thank you that you welcome the outcast and the stranger. Thank you that you welcome us. We give you thanks and praise for your life-giving Spirit that transforms individuals and communities. Amen*

### 22-28 March

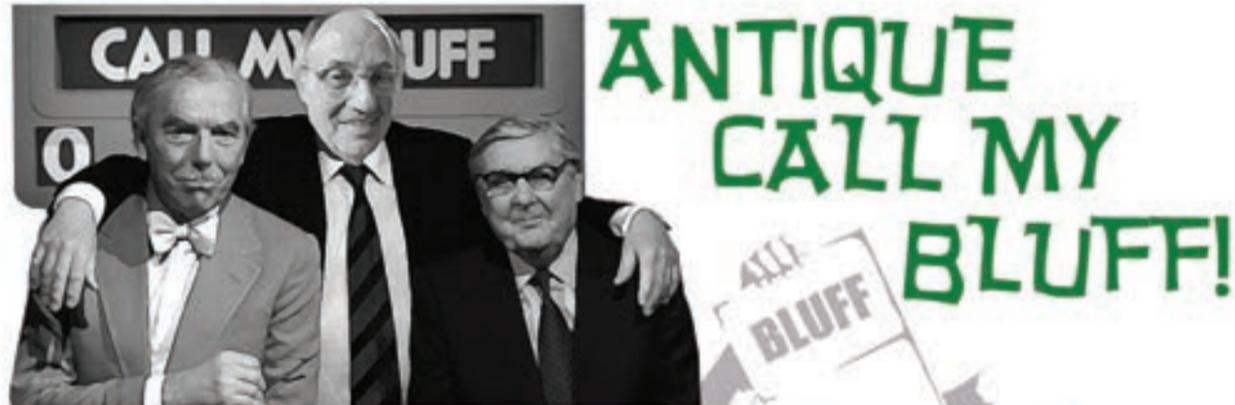
*God of grace, forgive the blindness that stops us from seeing the best in people, assuming that we are always right, so others must be wrong. Forgive the blindness that sometimes makes us regard some people as inferior, or when we haven't allowed them a point of view because of disability or status. Forgive our blindness to poverty, to prejudice, to injustice. Forgive our blindness when we see people as 'nobodies'. Forgive us, Lord, and open our eyes to wonder and to possibilities, to relationships and to community. Amen*

The Trustees of the Friends Of Tring Church Heritage  
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[info@fotch.co.uk](mailto:info@fotch.co.uk), or ringing on 0772 083 6930, or by responding  
to the notice in the Spring Newsletter.



## My church history



Recent articles in *Comment* have led to my re-examining my own history of faith and Church-going, which has brought back many memories.

Although my mother wasn't a Church-goer she taught me to say my prayers every night, kneeling beside my bed – a custom I followed all my life until recently, when I found it difficult to kneel. Those early prayers weren't the formal Lord's Prayer but more of the 'God bless Mummy and Daddy' variety, and I'm told that from a very early age I insisted on including 'all the animals in the world'.

My father, however, was a sidesman at St Michael's, where I and my brother had been baptised and where, twenty-odd years later, I was married. I occasionally went with him and sat in our designated pew, for which we paid an annual fee. My mother told the story of my asking whether it was a 'wedding Church' or a 'hum Church'. When, slightly mystified, she enquired what a 'hum Church' was, I replied, 'Where you sing hums!' As far as I can remember, I never went to Sunday School and a more regular routine was established once I started school and every morning began with prayers.

But it was only when, at the tender age of ten, I went to boarding school that my Church-going perforce became regular. The school was in a glorious building, halfway up a scar in the Lake District with spectacular views and deer just outside our windows. Lord Stanley, son of the Earl of Derby, had built it for his bride, but she declined to live in it and our classroom was the original ballroom! Every Sunday we walked two and a half miles in crocodile to the little church of St Paul in the village of Witherslack, where we sat in the choir stalls. Then, of course, two and a half miles back again. Our route lay across fields, through Milner's farmyard, down Jackson's Hill and along the bridle path – truly rural! Sometimes along the way we came across the pitiful sight of a rabbit caught in a snare. The Vicar seemed ancient to us – he was certainly grey-haired! – and he lived in the vicarage next door to the Church with his unmarried sister.

My next school was in the centre of town and had about a dozen boarding

houses. Again, every morning started with prayers in the main Hall, and we also had vespers each evening in our individual houses. Sunday Church-going was a given, but we were allowed some choice as to which of several Churches we attended, and which services. Communion was held only once a month, hence my abiding love for Matins. In my late teens I also developed a fondness for Evensong, which I attended at St Hilp & St James, irreverently known as Pip and Jim's, though I have to confess the main reason for going there was the choirboys! One Christmas they gave a beautiful performance of arias from Handel's Messiah, the first time I'd heard it.

After I left school my Church-going lapsed and I tended only to go to occasional services. One of those, when I was married with two small children, still makes me smile. I took them to Church one morning, only to discover that for some reason there was no Sunday School that day; so, since we were quite a distance from home, I had to take them into Church with me. My younger daughter at that time was about two and a half. She sat quietly until the Vicar, who (again!) was grey-haired and really did look old, went up into the pulpit. She then asked in a penetrating whisper, 'Who dat?' I whispered back, 'That's Mr Selby, the Vicar.' 'Oh.' There was a pause, then she added, 'Fought it was God!'

Regular Church-going only began when one year the children had bad colds that prevented them attending their infant school's carol service, much to their distress. So once they'd recovered we all went to the nearby Church to sing carols – and continued to attend it until we left Sevenoaks a few months later. We then transferred our allegiance to St Mary's in Shortlands, Kent, where we became much more involved in church life. The children joined the young people's club, my husband Ian became a sidesman and I joined the PCC.

So to Tring, where, in due course, Ian served as Treasurer and leader of the Men's Society and I became involved in Church catering and Parish Breakfast in its earlier incarnation. By then both girls were at away at university, and now that they're married with families of their own, their Church-going has become considerably less regular. Perhaps they'll come back to it later in life!

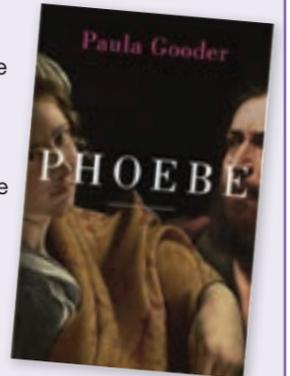
**Anthea Fraser, St Peter & St Paul**

## Phoebe

The Tring Parish Book Group met on 26 January and this month we looked at 'Phoebe: A Story (with notes): Pauline Theology in Narrative Form' by Paula Gooder (Hodder and Stoughton, 2018).

This interesting book weaves a story round the biblical character, Phoebe, a deacon of the church at Cenchreae (near Corinth) mentioned in Romans 16:1. Phoebe was the person who took the letter we call 'Romans' to the church in Rome from St Paul. The author of the book is Dr Paula Gooder, a Reader in the Church of England and an expert on St Paul.

In addition to a story in which Dr Gooder imagines the life of a female deacon in the church at Rome and her back story, in the notes she explains what we know about the lives of women, slaves and orphans, the fast-food outlets in first century in Rome, the housing of that great city and many other topics.



She is a fan, not a foe, of St Paul and takes the reader gently through the background to Roman life with plenty of suggestions for further reading.

Most of the group liked the book, with about three-quarters preferring the story to the notes and one-quarter preferring the notes to the story. It emerged that two members at St Peter & St Paul learnt how to free a Roman slave as part of their legal training – this must have come in use many times in legal practice in Tring!

St Paul never appears in the book although St Peter does. One of the interesting quotations from the book is: 'I sometimes wonder what the Good News of Jesus will look like when it doesn't upset people any more.' The book is an easy way into St Paul and at least two people not in the Book Group read it as well.

'The Bell' by Iris Murdoch is our Lenten 'classic' and this session will be led by Edmund Booth in St Peter & St Paul at 6.30pm on Sunday 19 April.

**Jon Reynolds, Tring Team**

## Piety – good or bad?



Many years ago, I was chatting with our then Minister, Dr Robert Bean, and although I can't remember what the conversation was about, he made a comment

which both amused me and stayed with me. He said that he thought people were at their worst when they were being pious. This seemed to be a very unusual comment from one who, I should have thought, was in the business of piety. Incidentally this view was never expressed in the pulpit. It was just a private comment, but thought-provoking.

The Oxford English Dictionary defines pious as 'Devout, religious, hypocritically virtuous, dutiful': three good qualities and one bad one. When we sing 'preserve me from my calling's snare' (a line from the hymn 'Forth in Thy name O Lord I go') could the hymn-writer be thinking of that one nasty quality?

At this point, my endeavour to respond to the *Comment* Editor's plea for something for the March edition of *Comment* completely dried up. However, later that same day I found myself watching, 'The Church's Darkest Secret'.

One of our set plays at school was 'Le Tartuffe' by Moliere, which was about a pious man who was taken into the home of a nice family and, while constantly exhorting them to 'be perfect just as your father in Heaven is perfect', was himself behaving atrociously. I never, for one minute, thought Tartuffe existed in real life until I started watching this programme about

Peter Ball – a man who with his twin brother, set up a monastic community for young men in the early 1960s. Today, I think that alone would ring alarm bells. He applied for the Bishop of Norwich post in the early 1990s but was rejected because they were not happy about the community he was running. I wonder what they knew?

Peter Ball lived as a monk and impressed many very important people with his simple, holy lifestyle and was counted a friend of Prince Charles – it is unfortunate how Royal princes seem to attract dubious friends! He became the Bishop of Gloucester in the early 1990s and started an abusive relationship with a young trainee, Neil Todd. The husband-and-wife housekeeper and gardener at Gloucester Cathedral became very concerned for Neil and tried to help but most unfortunately, they went to Peter Ball's boss, another Bishop, for help. It was a tragedy that they did not go to the police.

In 1993 Neil Todd himself formally complained about Peter Ball, which caused six other people to write to the Archbishop of Canterbury. It was so disappointing that the Archbishop decided not to pass those letters to the police. I remember when he was appointed to his role as Archbishop, our then Minister, Rev Alan Cox recommended that we read 'The Church in the Marketplace' about the amazing work George Carey had done in his church in Durham. He was an inspirational appointment. I think we Methodists feel that the Archbishop speaks for us too, as our top person changes every year, so no one knows who speaks for the Methodist Church – not even Methodists (apart from the inner circle)! If you ever hear that the

President of the Conference is coming to St Martha's, you will know that we are being favoured!

In the early 2000s, the Anglican church appointed a safe-guarding officer for Peter Ball's area, which the officer said was a 'tick-box' exercise for the church, as every enquiry she made into Peter Ball was frustrated. She also received phone calls from high-up church officials telling her to back off. A file was discovered in Lambeth Palace labelled 'Naughty Boys'. We can guess what that means.

The tragedy was that in 2012, a proper enquiry was to be made into Peter Ball and Neil was asked to help with the enquiry; but after being vilified the first time, he couldn't face going through everything again and he took his own life.

Robert Bean's words were more prophetic than I thought. It was disgusting how pious people covered up for pious people. To think that we should be part of such an organisation... (I don't make a distinction between the denominations). We are all tarnished by the doings of Peter Ball and the mighty Bishops who protected him. While we have to guard against malicious allegations being made against innocent people, surely if the Church authorities had really wanted to know the truth about Peter Ball, there would have been scores of people who could have been approached for an off-the-record opinion which might have pointed them in the right direction. Perhaps Robert's message should be proclaimed more widely; people are at their worst when they are being pious!

**Rosemary Berdinner**  
**St Martha's Methodist Church**

## The community of Bishop Wood School



Our vision at Bishop Wood School is Community, Hope, Wisdom and Dignity. These values are the key to life at Bishop Wood.

Being part of the welcoming Bishop Wood Community has been a hugely important part of my life, so much so that I just can't keep away!

My first encounter with Bishop Wood was at four years old when my older sister moved up to 'big school'. I remember spotting the iconic big tree in the huge field and playing on the 'Monkey tree'.

Three years later, I attended Bishop Wood as a pupil and have fond memories of my time there. I remember the importance of Collective Worship and singing together as a school. It was the happy times and wonderful teachers at Bishop Wood that inspired me to become a teacher myself.

After completing my degree, I was looking for my first teaching post. I was over the moon to see a job advertised at my favourite school. I worked at Bishop Wood for three years before deciding

it was time to move on and spread my wings.

The Tring community was still important to me. I was married in our lovely Parish Church and my parents still lived in Tring. I remained friends with former colleagues and even tutored past pupils. As soon as money would allow it, twelve years later, our family of five moved back to Tring. Although I was happy with my job at the time and having young children, I was not ready to return to work full time. However, I heard of a vacancy at Bishop Wood and I couldn't resist having a look round. As soon as I entered the school, lovely staff welcomed me. I heard the children singing in Collective Worship and at that moment, I knew that coming back 'home' to Bishop Wood was the right decision for me.

Of course, the school had changed in the years I'd been away, but the core values and happy, supportive environment still remained the same. The staff, governors and parents all continue to work together to provide a strong community, ensuring all children have a happy and secure learning experience at Bishop Wood.

I enjoy being part of the active

Tring community through the school. We take part in the Carnival and Apple Parade, sing to some of Tring's older residents at Christmas as well as being involved in many sporting activities. I've also had the privilege of watching my own peers' children as well as some past pupils' children pass through the school.

**Christine Ing, Bishop Wood School**



## Getting married in Tring?

If you are getting married in one of the Churches in the Tring Team Parish, we would like to invite you to a service at St Peter & St Paul, Tring, on Sunday 8 March at 10.00am.

This will be an opportunity for us to pray with all the wedding couples from across our five churches and to give thanks for God's gift of love to you.

After the service we would like to invite you to the Parish Hall so you can share your experiences of planning your wedding with others. We will share some resources, and comments from those who have been married in our Churches recently, and we will talk about bells, flowers, music, photos and the like. We will provide a light lunch including Tring Brewery Beer (free of charge—but we will never say no to a donation!) and it will all be finished by 1.30pm at the latest.

This invitation is one of the things we can do as a church to help you. It will be a great opportunity for you to come with all of your questions, and if we as a



'church' can't answer them, then maybe other wedding couples will have similar questions or answers.

It would be helpful if you could write to admin@tringteamparish.org.uk to say if you are able to come. It would also be really helpful to us if you could send a picture of yourselves that we can display

in our service, and again when we call your banns of marriage. This helps the congregation to pray for you.

If you have any questions, please contact the minister conducting your wedding.

**Huw Bellis, Tring Team**

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# Paying it forward



I recently had a very stressful day and was feeling quite flustered, tired and anxious. However, my children seem to like to eat every actual day so I decided to pop into a shop after browsing a local charity shop for a large dining table (that's a story for another day) to buy ingredients for a quick and easy meal for my herd.



I grabbed the items I had gone in for, the two children who were with me added a few extra things (don't they always?) and, with one eye on the clock with school pick-up looming, I headed for the tills to pay.

My basket added up to just under £15. As I got my debit card out, the cashier warned me there was no

contactless feature on the machine – it had apparently stopped accepting contactless payments some time previously.

No worries – I inserted my card knowing there were several hundred pounds in that account.

**DECLINED.**

What? The cashier assured me it was probably the machine and stood looking at me. I asked if I should try again. He shrugged. Feeling my anxiety rising, and aware of a growing queue, I popped the card in again and paid more attention to typing the pin in.

**DECLINED.**

I only had £10 cash on me and was reluctant to put stuff back as this store has a complicated discounting multi-buy system. My son offered to pay with his card knowing he also had more than enough funds available.

**DECLINED.**

The cashier just stood there still mumbling that it was almost certainly the machine not working. I asked if he could try another machine or save my shopping so I could nip to the cashpoint. Bless him, he just looked bewildered – seriously I have underwear older than this boy looked – and I was on the verge of just

giving up. On top of the day I already had endured, I was on the edge of tears.

Then a very glam woman standing behind my son leaned forward with a £5 note folded discreetly in her hand. She nodded at me and said, 'Take this. I'm very happy to help.'

I thanked her and asked for her Paypal address so I could ping her the money but she smiled and shook her head. I don't know if she thought I genuinely didn't have the money or if she just wanted to move the queue or what, but her kindness saved me from further embarrassment and possibly a complete breakdown.

The cashier took my £10 and her £5 and offered me the change. I gestured for him to give it to my heroine and she hesitated and asked if I was sure. So she really did think I hadn't got the money! I decided not to feel embarrassed just grateful that there are still lovely people out there who are happy to help a stranger in need.

If you were that lovely lady in Dunstable, let me assure you, I will pay forward your kindness and the £5. Thank you!

**Afra Willmore**  
**St John the Baptist, Aldbury**

# People, look East



I should be surprised if there are many of our parishioners and friends who have not been inside St Peter & St Paul's Church in Tring; some will have visited hundreds of times. If you have

been inside, once or often, you will have seen the chancel window, over the altar. You probably saw it in the distance from somewhere in the middle of the Church. If you were lucky, and an early bird, you might have seen it blazing in light from the rising sun. But have you really looked at it? To our 21<sup>st</sup> century eyes it's probably just another set of images, merging with the many coloured pictures we are bombarded with, in print or on a screen.

Next time you are in the Church, why not go closer and look at the window? Try to see it through the eyes of a parishioner in the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, when the stained glass was created. It would then have been one of the very few colour images that you might have experienced, in an era before extensive colour-print, and before cinema and television, let alone electronic devices.

In 1850, stained glass windows in Church would have been one of the primary visual images illuminating your faith. When you look closely, you'll see that it is an illustrated set of Bible stories. Starting at the top, in the centre there is an image of God, holding the world in his left hand, and giving a blessing with his



right hand. Below that are two figures: on the left is St Peter, holding the keys (of 'heaven and hell'), and on the right St Paul, with a sword of righteousness. You can tell that they are saints by the halos around each of their heads (I always found that re-assuring, if a little misleading, when I was a child). Our two patron saints are flanked by what I suppose are pairs of angels, one pair topped with Alpha and the other with Omega; this shows that they encompass everything, from the beginning to the end of time. Below the saints and angels is a row of images, basically depicting the gospel story.

From the left there is: the nativity, or birth of Jesus; Jesus' baptism by John in the river Jordan; the crucifixion, Jesus dying on the cross; Jesus' resurrection; Jesus' ascension to heaven, with the apostles looking up to him in wonder.

The bottom row of the window is another set of images, partly obscured by the top of the reredos, the wooden screen behind the altar (with more pictures, for another time). This row depicts a sequence of stories from the Old Testament.

Again, starting from the left, there is: Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, the creation and fall story from chapter 3 of the Book of Genesis (I wonder whether

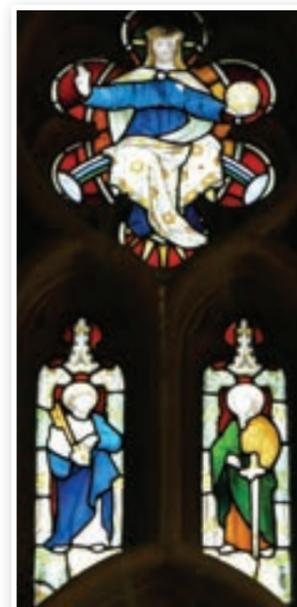
the red circles represent apples, and also whether Adam's fig leaf was symbolic of his fall from grace, or just in deference to Victorian sensitivities?); the animals trooping in, two by two, to Noah's Ark, in the story of the flood from chapter 7 of Genesis; Abraham preparing to sacrifice his only son Isaac, but being stopped at the last minute, in the story from chapter 22 of Genesis; Joseph being put into a pit by his jealous brothers, from chapter 37 of Genesis; the prophet Elijah being carried up to heaven on a whirlwind in a chariot, from chapter 2 of the second Book of Kings.

Of course, being Victorian, these colourful images are surrounded by lavish neo-gothic archways and frills.

The chancel window is often also called the East window. It was traditional for Anglican (and Catholic) Churches to face east, towards the rising sun. This was seen as representing Christ's resurrection, and also reflecting the words in Chapter 24 of Saint Matthew's Gospel about Christ's return in glory being with lightning from the East.

So, why not spend a few moments studying the pictures in this window. You'll be standing in the footprints of Christians from more than the last 150 years.

**John Whiteman, Tring Team**



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## Rory's Christening

On 26 January our third son, Rory Benjamin, was baptised in St Peter & St Paul's Church wearing a gown that has been used by five generations over almost 130 years.

The gown is passed down through the eldest daughter of the maternal side of the family and the ribbon changed from blue to pink depending upon the sex of the child being christened. It was handmade around 1894 by Eleanor Roberts (my granny's granny), the mother of Mary Jane Roberts.

The first known baptism was of Mary Jane Roberts (1894), Welsh Chapel, followed subsequently by her brother and sisters: Margaret Roberts, Selina Roberts, John Roberts, Blodwyn Roberts, Susannah Roberts and Isabella Roberts.

It was then used through the generations as follows: Barbara Ellen Vost (1931) and Peter Vost (1933), daughter and son of Mary Jane Roberts, Church of England; Ian Paul Barker (1956) and Deborah Jane Barker (1961), son and daughter of Barbara Ellen Barker nee Vost, Church of England; Sarah Jane Barker (1980) and Rachel Marie Barker (1984), daughters of Ian Barker, Catholic;

Natalie Emma Jewitt (1984), Stephanie Ann Jewitt (1986), Michael Alexander Jewitt (1990), Church of England and Eleanor Jane Jewitt (1999), Methodist, children of Deborah Jane Jewitt nee



Our boys James, Matthew and Rory

Barker; Thomas Paul Alexander (2009), Katie Jane Alexander (2011), and Emma Louise Alexander (2014), children of Sarah Jane Alexander nee Barker (2014), Church of England; James Edward George Fossey (2015), Matthew William Fossey (2018) and Rory Benjamin Fossey (2020), sons of Stephanie Ann Fossey nee Jewitt (2020), all Church of England.

**Liam & Steph Fossey  
St Peter & St Paul**



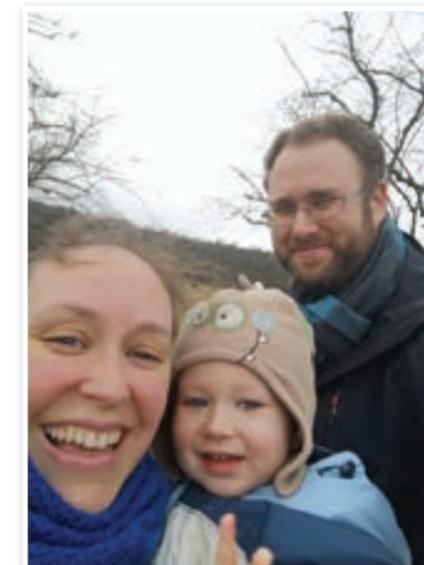
My granny, Barbara Ellen Barker nee Vost and Rory in the gown

## Two ministers, a toddler and a dog



Little did we know this time last year that we would be moving to Tring in November 2019 to serve as ministers at High Street Baptist Church and embarking on a new chapter in our lives as a family. However, as the saying goes, 'God works in mysterious ways!' And so it was that we 'upped sticks' and began the adventure of settling into our new home...

With both toddler and dog to 'help' with the boxes, unpacking progress has been slow, but thankfully the essentials were unloaded fairly quickly and a sense of 'home' established. I have been reliably informed that it is very normal to have a stack of boxes with semi-identified contents lingering in the garage or 'spare room' for quite a while after a house move, so I have taken solace in this.



Our primary household concern over these first few months has no doubt been similar to that of most folk who move to Tring (with the added dynamic of a new church family to understand and engage with)... We have spent most of our 'spare' time trying to find our way around and get our bearings, while trying to keep our busy son's energy level satisfied.

One of the things we have immediately appreciated about being here is all the extra walking we do, both around town and in the surrounding countryside (and not just when walking the dog). As we have roamed around we

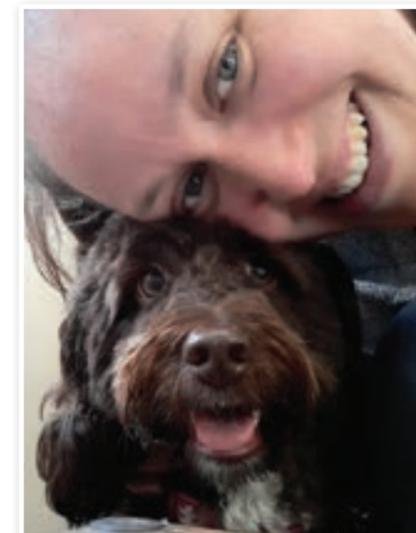
have been made to feel very welcome by the locals along the way, so thank you!

The landscape here is simply stunning, and as a family we love to be outdoors (even if our opportunities to do so during the winter season are more limited) and the never-ending task of exploring the numerous footpaths and tracks together is one that will keep us occupied for many years to come, I'm sure. Both Penny (our dog) and Caleb (our toddler) have enjoyed making good use of the local parks and, given the time of year, come home thoroughly covered in mud as a result. Life is never dull with these two around, and we certainly have our hands full, but we wouldn't have it any other way, as they both bring such joy (and entertainment) to our lives. Our 'little man' particularly seems to have a gift for brightening any rainy day with his cheeky smile and relentless mischief, and is a continuous reminder of how God has perfectly blessed us as parents because he knows us so completely.

Many people said to us that we were bonkers to take on the role of leading a new church just before one of the busiest seasons of the year (Christmas) and, quite honestly, they were right (hindsight is a wonderful thing!). However, despite the crazy busy-ness of these first few months in post, there have been many moments that have highlighted that God's timing is perfect, and his bringing us here when he did was for good reason.

When we originally felt God prompting us to make this move in our ministry, an image of a plant being replanted from a large pot into the ground was given to us, and has been a point of reflection ever since. The upheaval of this current season for us as a family has been immense, but it has also been a reminder again of the constant presence of God that remains with us, sustaining and strengthening us for the way ahead. We have held on tight to our faith, and as other aspects of our familiar life have been uprooted, we have been provoked to depend on the reliability of God as an anchor to us during such a time of unsettlement.

This got me thinking about how a plant embeds into a new location. Under the surface roots go deeper in order to search out the richness and nutrients that it can benefit from in the new soil. Above ground the leaves stretch out in search of light and water to nourish and prepare for new growth and fruit.



Similarly, relocating for us has involved deliberate effort and intentional action in order to embed into our new environment. As a church we began 2020 reflecting on our vision for 'Renewed G.R.O.W.T.H': rooted in love as we cultivate the garden for fruitful living', and personally this has challenged me again to consider the opportunities that arise from unexpected change. I'm sure that plants being transferred from pot to garden have no concept of what experiences lie ahead of them, but instinctively they put their roots down deep to hold them secure whatever the weather, and seek to expand their reach on the surface to make good use of the new space that they have been given. I hope and pray that this would be our approach also, as we move forward into this new season of our lives.

I don't know what particular changes you are facing in your life at this time, but may I encourage you to look on them as an opportunity for renewed learning, and fresh growth, possibly in ways that you hadn't previously anticipated, revealing blessings that you would never have discovered otherwise. Most of us don't find change easy. However, in our experience there is purpose in every move, and we never know what is around the corner that can enrich our life and enable us to grow more in character and hopefully in positive influence too. If you, too, are new to town, then we'd love to meet you and swap stories and discoveries together as we continue on this adventure of life in the very beautiful and increasingly familiar location of Tring.

**Ruth Egan  
High Street Baptist Church**

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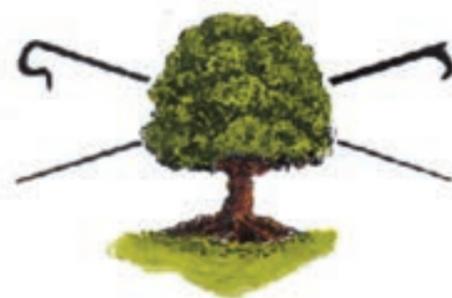
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# The Hospice Movement



In the February half-term of 2007, nine weeks prior to my wedding, my father was diagnosed with esophageal cancer, which proved to be terminal. He was approaching retirement and his loss is with me daily, as his Quaker spirituality was so profoundly linked to his outlook, passionate ethics regarding social justice and love of the natural world. I owe him so much as his interest in world matters was infectious and

teaching seemed to me to be the way forward.

The North Devon Hospice, founded in 1981, was there for my parents and we have done as much fundraising for it as possible, including using Tring Park to hold a tea party for my 40<sup>th</sup> birthday.

The Tring Park staff family donated their Christmas cards and they were turned into new ones on my Mum's kitchen table. All who help out once a month have a hospice story and that time together is invaluable and spiritual as they gather in a Meeting for Worship; most have some link to Quakerism, hence this has become part of any gathering. Some of the cards made became the

stock in the hospice – a great help to the local care home as the residents there might not be able shop for cards.

The work of the hospice movement is part of the Religious Studies GCSE syllabus, with the wider content of sanctity of life issues including abortion and euthanasia. I do feel that I have my dad's blessing to tell his story and to allow my classes the chance to ask questions and share their own experiences, if that is what they want to do.

**Sarah Bell**  
**Tring Park School**



# Sharing the journey with friends



When I was at university, it seemed to me that only kids with nothing else to do went to Christian Union. My experience of CU came from a handful of meetings in the dusty and outmoded humanities lecture theatre. It felt just like a lecture except the professors had been replaced by student leaders and local ministers. It was hard to make friends with the people on either side of me because we were sitting theatre-style, facing the front, in a hushed atmosphere.



The problem was that 'real life' seemed to be happening outside the CU. The bar crawls and house parties and mountaineering trips seemed incompatible with the people who attended CU. I went to a few meetings and then gave up. While everyone else might have found their best friends at CU, I found mine in my halls of residence and sports clubs.

thanks for this wonderful group of people (you know you are!) I'm second-guessing myself. Is socialising in the main with Christians a bad thing? The Bible tells us many times over that it's our responsibility to share Jesus' love with those who haven't heard the good news. 'And he said to them, "Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation"' Mark 16:15; 'And the master said to the servant, "Go out to the highways and hedges and compel people to come in, that my house may be filled"' Luke 14:23; 'Walk in wisdom toward outsiders, making the best use of

# Light



One of the joys of All Saints' Church in Long Marston is the light. There are very few stained glass windows, so the daylight streams in. Depending on the time of day, and the time of year, it lights up different parts of the building, and makes one see it in a

different way. Good designers always say how important lighting is, and how changing that can be more effective than redecorating. There is also a practical element in that we all know how frustrating it can be to drive if the sun is too low and dazzling, or to read if the lamp is not bright enough. We celebrated Candlemas at the beginning of February, a feast of light, and a time when we acknowledge how

Jesus, the Light of the World, changes us and the world around us. Our forty days of celebration of the Incarnation have come to an end, and we do not continue Jesus' life on a standard time scale, but instead reminding ourselves of what he came to do. We cannot have one without the other. So, with Simeon and Anna, we rejoiced then and we rejoice now, that Christ is here, and together we turn from his birth to his passion. **Jane Banister, Tring Team**



Church had been part of my upbringing. My brother and I attended Sunday School weekly before being reunited with Mum in the Church Hall afterwards. While she talked to elderly people whose names we could never remember – though their names were all prefaced by 'Auntie' in a show of respect – we ate hotdogs. The highlight of Sunday mornings: soft white finger rolls with a single chipolata doused in ketchup. We'd eat as many as we could before Mum noticed.



But as Ecclesiastes 3:1 tells us, 'There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the heavens'. And I've been mulling this over every Sunday morning for the last few months. Not from 10.30am during our service at High Street Baptist, but from 7.00am when a group of us meet to run. We've formed an informal running club. Sometimes there are just two of us, sometimes more. It's always off-road, usually muddy but always sociable. And, during our runs, I've realised that times have changed. In my twenties I couldn't imagine choosing to socialise with Christians. Could there be a drier, more serious group of people anywhere, I wondered? Twenty years later, almost all of my closest friends are Christians.



the time' Colossians 4:5-6. As with everything, I'm sure the answer is everything in moderation. Recharging our physical, emotional and spiritual batteries with Christian friends strengthens us for our conversations and interactions with others. I hope this piece might cause you to consider whether you spend enough time recharging with Christian friends, and conversely whether you spend enough time with non-Christians. I'll continue to mull it over during my runs, to which you're all cordially invited. We could even provide hotdogs afterwards. **Hannah Asquith**  
**High Street Baptist Church**



Fast forward a few years, during Freshers' Week at university, the university's clubs and societies set up stalls to recruit from the new student intake. The Christians were very friendly. Christian Union: what a good way to make friends, I thought. There might even be hotdogs.

# The two Popes



Have you sometimes wondered just how blokeish was Jesus the man? As he wandered around the Sea of Galilee in the company of 'the lads', did he hold himself quietly aloof from the jokes and horseplay? We know that he was a sociable, gregarious person, fond of the apostles as people, and someone who treasured his friends. In the film 'The Two Popes' we see two very different personalities who hold/have held the position in the Roman Catholic Church of Christ's vicar (representative) on earth and we get to know them as people as well as ecclesiastical spokesmen. The film is not a 'biopic' of either pontiff (Joseph Ratzinger who became Pope Benedict

and Jorge Bergoglio who became Pope Francis), but we learn something of the back story of each man and hence the roots of the shame and guilt that each feels about his personal adequacy to be leader of the Church. The film explores the different perspectives they have, on issues of Church policy such as priestly celibacy\* and on personal lifestyle – Pope Francis is happy to carry his own luggage and take the bus; Pope Benedict sticks to his scarlet slippers and chauffeur-driven car. The film has been called 'an exercise in wish-fulfilment' and the reconciliation between the two men which the film presents so movingly is perhaps in reality not as total as we are shown; nevertheless the scene where they share a sofa, watching the 2014 World Cup Football Final between Argentina and Germany, each rooting for his own nation and Francis wearing an Argentina

scarf over his white papal uniform is a truly joyful climax to a story with much loneliness, disagreement and tension. The film may highlight the unique position of Benedict and Francis but it speaks to us all about wrestling with our own faults and failures and shortcomings and reconciling our differences with our neighbour. \*From the Depths of Our Hearts (published in January), by Guinean Cardinal Joseph Sarah, argues for the retention of celibacy for RC clergy; the book's cover names Pope Benedict as co-author, which could be seen as a hostile and meddlesome attempt to encroach on Pope Francis' right to determine policy on such matters (watch this space!). **Carole Wells**  
**St Peter & St Paul**



# LENT LUNCHES

## Churches Together in Tring

You are warmly invited to the following Lent Lunches in support of Christian Aid. They are held between 12noon and 2pm and you can come along at any time that suits you. There is no set charge but hopefully you will donate generously to Christian Aid.

Lunch is a bowl of soup, bread & cheese and a cup of tea or coffee.

Please note they are not always on a Wednesday this year.

- Wednesday 4th March St Martha's Church
- Wednesday 11th March High Street Baptist Church
- Thursday 19th March Corpus Christi Church Hall
- Wednesday 25th March New Mill Baptist Church
- Wednesday 1st April St Cross, in Wilstone Village Hall
- Wednesday 8th April St Peter and St Paul Parish Hall



Spring Concert

## Tring Choral Society and Orchestra

**Conductor: Colin Stevens**

*J S Bach*

# St John Passion

**Soloists:**  
Soprano: **Alice Gribbin**  
Contralto: **Jessica Gillingwater**  
Tenor: **Rob Johnston**  
Bass: **Tim Dickinson**

**Saturday 4 April**  
**Church of Saint Peter & Saint Paul,**  
**TRING**  
**Starting at 7.30pm**  
**(doors open 6.45pm)**

**Tickets: £15, Under 18's free**  
from **Beechwood Fine Foods, Frogmore St**  
email: [tringchoralsociety@gmail.com](mailto:tringchoralsociety@gmail.com)

Tring Choral Society    Registered Charity Number 276980    [www.tringchoral.org.uk](http://www.tringchoral.org.uk)

## Mothering Sunday

# Sunday 22nd March

We celebrate Mothering Sunday in all of our five churches.

Please invite friends and neighbours or bring the whole family along.  
**Posies are given to all who mother.**

Aldbury 10am Worship for All Communion  
Wilstone 10am Worship for All  
Tring 10am Worship for All Communion  
Long Marston 10am Worship for All Communion  
Puttenham 3.30pm Evensong (traditional language)

# Toddler Worship

**Every second Tuesday of each month  
(except August)**

**11am @ St Peter & St Paul's Church, Tring**

Suitable for toddlers to four-year olds and their carers

Songs, stories activities and prayers

For half an hour followed by refreshments

Free, donations welcome

[www.tringteamparish.org.uk](http://www.tringteamparish.org.uk)

## A transportation stopper

In Rose Berdinner's article in the July/ August 2018 edition of *Comment* about the highs and lows of being a pensions administrator, I promised that I'd do a similar account of my job, in an attempt to boost Methodist contributions to *Comment* magazine. Rose wrote her article from the point of view of 'is my job interesting?', so there's an angle there that I can use in relation to an account of my work experience. For me, however, 'is my job interesting?' should be 'was my job interesting?' as I have been retired now for nearly seven years.

It seems a long time ago now, but I left university in 1969 with an Economics degree, and joined Manchester City Council as a transportation planner, and was told that I could look forward to spending years and years designing the (as yet unbuilt) motorway system for the Manchester area. If that sounded like a boring job, for me it was a step up in interest compared with the previous three years of listening to (or dozing through?) lectures about macro-economics and public finance.

But then a diversion occurred in my immediate career path, in that before I would get to grips with motorways, the City Council had an idea to connect the two railway terminals in Manchester (Piccadilly and Victoria) with an underground railway (a sort of mini-Crossrail of the North), and it would be my job to prepare the plans and costs of the scheme and send these off to the Treasury in the hope of getting a subsidy to build the line.

All I had to do was spend hours in meetings listening to guys from British Railways telling me how expensive it was to bore (!) tunnels through the city centre and build the trains to run on the line. Though the final cost was (from memory) less than £100 million, needless to say the scheme was turned down. 'Far too expensive!' said the man from the Treasury. Though at the same time they were quite happy to throw millions at similar schemes in Liverpool and Newcastle.

But eventually, long after I had left the job in Manchester and forgotten about the disappointment of the failed rail project, I got to hear that the idea of connecting Piccadilly and Victoria had been successful, with a newly built tram system! No boring tunnels! And I quietly reflected to myself that it was me who first developed a version of this plan. Now if you visit Manchester, you can catch a tram not only from Piccadilly to Victoria, but to Altrincham, Salford, Trafford Park, Bury, Rochdale, Eccles, Wythenshawe... zzzz... Oldham, Ashton... zzzz... zzzz...

By this time, working in another job in Bedford, I was happily planning motorways and by-passes all over Eastern England, when one day someone walked into my office (we still had offices in those days: workstations had not been invented) and said, 'Do you fancy planning an airport?'. 'No one else wants to do the job... it's too likely to fail'. 'Oh, I specialise in schemes that fail,' I replied. 'I'll give it a go!'

So I set to work to design Junction 8 on the M11. For those of you not familiar with the location, Junction 8 is at the approach to Stansted Airport. The roundabout at Junction 8 has to accommodate the Airport Road, the Bishops Stortford By-Pass, the A120 towards Braintree, the entry road into Birchanger Services... zzzz... zzzz...

When I'd finished with Junction 8, I'd made the slip roads extra wide to deal with all the potential traffic. After it was built I happened to become a regular traveller to the airport myself. And it was then that I was often snarled up in the traffic on the clogged-up roundabout. We've all been stuck in motorway traffic queues; these days they are a fact of life. But there's nothing quite like getting stuck in a queue which is the result of your own inadequate design for the road. That's a special kind of frustration.

But there was a Plan B. The design had left enough room for flyovers to be built right over the roundabout to connect the airport approach road directly to the London-bound motorway, and, to my amazement, these flyovers eventually got built, though by that time I had long since ceased to work in Bedford on motorway planning.

So was all this development worth the hours and hours spent (by me and many others) sitting in meetings haggling over the details about some transport scheme that would end up covering a chunk of the country with concrete and tarmac... well, was it?

It's only when you retire that you can allow yourself to say, 'Well, yes, of course it was.' Only when there are no more Monday mornings, no more decisions, no more hassle, no more deadlines, no more protestors, and when things do go wrong, it's no longer your responsibility to try to sort it out!

**David Sands**  
**St Martha's Methodist Church**

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# Lent Films 2020 - The Hidden God



Sunday 1st March **BREAKING THE WAVES - 1996 LARS VON TRIER**



Drama set in a repressed, deeply religious community in the north of Scotland, where a naive young woman named Bess McNeil meets and falls in love with Danish oil-rig worker Jan. Bess and Jan are deeply in love but, when Jan returns to his rig, Bess prays to God that he returns for good. Jan does return, his neck broken in an accident aboard the rig. Because of his condition, Jan and Bess are now unable to enjoy a sexual relationship and Jan urges Bess to take another lover and tell him the details. As Bess becomes more and more deviant in her sexual behaviour, the more she comes to believe that her actions are guided by God and are helping Jan recover.



Sunday 8th March **GROUNDHOG DAY - 1993 HAROLD RAMIS**

A weather man is reluctantly sent to cover a story about a weather forecasting "rat" (as he calls it). This is his fourth year on the story, and he makes no effort to hide his frustration. On awaking the 'following' day he discovers that it's Groundhog Day again, and again, and again. First he uses this to his advantage, then comes the realisation that he is doomed to spend the rest of eternity in the same place, seeing the same people do the same thing EVERY day.



Sunday 15th March **DAY OF WRATH - 1943 CARL THEODORE DREYER**

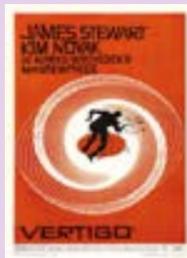


In a 17th-century Danish village, an old woman is accused of witchcraft. In the shadow of her flight, capture, confession, and burning at the stake, the young wife of the town's aging pastor falls in love with the pastor's son. Her confession of this illicit affair to her husband brings on her husband's death. At the funeral the pastor's mother denounces the young widow as a witch. Will the widow's lover come to her defense, or has the day of wrath returned?

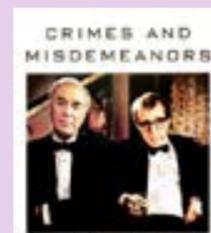


Sunday 22nd March **VERTIGO - 1958 ALFRED HITCHCOCK**

John "Scottie" Ferguson is a retired San Francisco police detective who suffers from acrophobia, and Madeleine is the lady who leads him to high places. A wealthy shipbuilder who is an acquaintance from college days approaches Scottie and asks him to follow his beautiful wife, Madeleine. He fears she is going insane, maybe even contemplating suicide, as he believes she has been possessed by a dead ancestor who committed suicide. Scottie is sceptical, but agrees to the assignment after he sees the beautiful Madeleine.



Sunday 29th March **CRIMES AND MISDEMEANOURS - 1989 WOODY ALLEN**



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



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

# Running for Youth Concern



13.1 miles of MK's roundabouts, dual carriageways and parks: my first half marathon. My year's resolution was to run more in 2020. A year ago, I started

doing Tring parkrun (5k) and more recently, weekend runs with friends. But a half marathon (21k) feels like a long way... especially since I've never run more than 12k!

I'm raising money for Youth Concern, the most amazing charity supporting 500 disadvantaged and vulnerable young people in Aylesbury aged 13-25 every year from their

Aylesbury drop-in centre. The charity offers counselling, guidance and support on a wide range of issues including education, employment, housing, welfare and health. They provide emergency accommodation for young people facing housing crises and this year will be launching their newest and biggest project yet: supported accommodation for up to twenty young people every year, giving them the opportunity to really turn their lives around.

Here's to my first half marathon, and the 500 young people who benefit from Youth Concern's guidance, support and counselling every year.

**Hannah Asquith**  
**High Street Baptist Church**



If you would like to sponsor me, please go to: [uk.virginmoneygiving.com/HannahAsquith](http://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/HannahAsquith)

# Teach your children well



My children did not go to school in Tring but attended the local village C of E School in Long Marston. Sons Jon and Ben were there with a little girl called Olivia.

Some of you may know Olivia, who was born with Downs Syndrome.

One Sports Day I watched Olivia take part in a race along with all the other children (I think it was the Egg and Spoon). It brings tears to my eyes just to write this because Olivia came last in the race by a long way – but all the staff, children and parents at the event that day cheered Olivia to the finishing post as if she were an Olympic champion. I forget many things nowadays but I will never forget that moment of affirmation, warmth, solidarity and kindness.

I then read Gary Stanley's article in the February edition of Comment about the values we teach children (and at which Bishop Wood School excel) which are even more important than the A stars they are later supposed to get in every subject. Many of us still believe in kindness, generosity and the desire to think of others first, to be the Good Samaritan, to help someone in need – whoever they are, on the doorstep, in the supermarket, the train station, the bus or in another country, and we take it for granted that everyone else feels the same way. (It's a naïve thought this side of heaven.)

So it was a shock to me on a plane, in a confined space for four hours, to find myself sitting next to a young couple who clearly did not share these values. Although the flight was at 9.50am, they boarded having already imbibed a certain amount of alcohol. They then bought two bottles of Champagne on board and

proceeded to drink it all before ordering Jack Daniels... They argued far too loudly almost the entire journey using language only suited to the worst of TV soaps broadcast after the watershed. The guy was very aggressive towards his partner and I (and the people in front and behind) had the beginning of their holiday spoilt. I found myself unable to get beyond the first few pages of the book I had intended to finish on the journey. Eventually Cabin Crew moved me to an empty seat between two female passengers, both reading books, and asked the couple to stop using such bad language.

I was very unhappy with my experience at the time but have since reached the conclusion that the young couple were not fortunate enough to have the start in life that my own children did and the children in our C of E schools continue to do.

**Annette Reynolds**  
**St Peter & St Paul**

# Parish registers

## Baptisms

We welcome the children into our church family and pray for their parents and Godparents, and also welcome Peggy who comes as an older candidate for baptism.

**Oscar Driscoll**  
**Aidan Burroughs**

## Funerals

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

**Jean Smith 93**  
**Jacqueline Rotheroe 83**  
**Jamie George Jeffery 22**

**Joyce Muriel Willmott**  
**Patricia Milner**

# 2020: A crucial year for the climate



Last year was one of very mixed news on the climate crisis that is facing all the inhabitants of the wonderful planet that God created and of which we are called to be good stewards. There were yet more extreme weather events, now increasingly being recognised as linked with climate change, and as the year ended, vast tracts of southern and eastern Australia were in flames after severe drought was followed by the worst wildfire season in many decades. Many – perhaps millions – of animals have died, thousands of homes and businesses have been destroyed and a number of people have lost their lives in a tragedy that has received wide media coverage. But this closed a year which one journalist suggested might even come to be regarded as ‘Year Zero of the climate apocalypse’.

The Australian heatwave and fires follow on from extremes of weather all around the globe: in the USA – which recorded fourteen separate billion-dollar disasters last year – and in Thailand, Africa, Iran, Sri Lanka, India, Bangladesh and Bhutan; and there was loss of life in many of these disasters. There is also mounting concern about the loss of ice in the Arctic and the Antarctic, and how this may both cause sea levels to rise and exacerbate extreme weather, as average global temperatures inch slowly upwards.

However, last year also saw Greta Thunberg becoming a worldwide leader of young people, who are quite justifiably calling on their parents’ generation – and particularly those in positions of political and corporate power – to act urgently to address the climate crisis. Then aged only 15, in August 2018 she began a ‘School strike for the climate’ outside the Swedish parliament and the resulting school strike movement has since spread around the world. She has addressed the United Nations, met the Pope and a number of world leaders, and convinced many people to review their lifestyle choices with the aim of reducing their carbon footprints. She was a nominee for the 2019 Nobel Peace Prize for her outstanding leadership. Last year also saw Extinction Rebellion grow from a small UK-based activist group into a mass movement, with the result

that local groups have sprung up all over the place: in Tring alone, the Extinction Rebellion Tring group on Facebook has 308 members and a ‘Green Tring’ group has over 930 members. This upsurge in interest led to a Tring ‘Climate Event’ in the autumn and more is planned for the coming year. This represents a huge increase in local awareness of environmental and sustainability issues, which can only be a good thing.

So what about this new decade? Well, 2020 is being talked about as a crucial year, the year in which we really do have to start to turn things around if there is to be any chance at all of keeping the average global temperature increase to 2°C above pre-industrial levels – and ideally this should be no more than 1.5°C to reduce the otherwise inevitable risks and impacts associated with climate change.



The UK has the opportunity – and churches within the UK have a significant part to play – to demonstrate leadership this year, because in July it will host the Lambeth Conference of the Anglican communion. As Bishops gather from all over the world, it is hoped that Creation Care will have a significant place in the discussions as the church leaders share experiences and talk about the future. The Archbishop of Canterbury’s Lent book 2020, ‘Saying Yes to Life’, has been written by Dr Ruth Valerio, who has worked extensively with both A Rocha and now Tearfund on climate and sustainability from a faith perspective. This would be a great way to explore the issues if you or your church have not yet done so.

The Global Catholic Climate Movement have also identified two important moments in 2020 that they believe will help to unite Catholics around the vision outlined in Pope Francis’

encyclical letter, *Laudato Si’*, on care for the earth: these are *Laudato Si’* week (16-24 May) and the season of creation (1 September – 4 October).

Then, in late autumn, the 26<sup>th</sup> session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP26) will take place in Glasgow (9-19 November). This is the first time that one of these very significant meetings has been held in the UK and environmental groups and faith representatives will be lobbying for concerted action after the disappointing outcome of COP25 in Madrid last year. It is five years since the landmark COP21 in Paris, when 197 countries signed the Paris Climate Accord which requests each country to now outline and communicate their post-2020 climate actions, the nationally determined contributions (NDCs) for the five years to 2025. There is a need to ensure that carbon emissions targets are strengthened for there to be any hope of keeping the average global temperature increases within the target.

In Paris, political leaders repeatedly acknowledged that climate change is no longer a purely political issue but that it has an ethical component which cannot be overlooked. Some of the world political leaders attending the Paris summit even directly quoted from the papal encyclical *Laudato Si’* in their speeches. It was acknowledged that climate change is the defining issue that humanity has to face in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and that it is imperative to act.

It is estimated that 84% of the world’s population are people of faith, with Christianity being practised by an estimated 2.4 billion. Our faith calls us to love our neighbour, to care for orphans and widows, to feed the hungry and tend the sick. How can we say that we are fulfilling these callings if we do not speak out and act on behalf of the planet that sustains all life? Perhaps you could make it part of your Lent challenge to: get involved with an organisation that will be represented in Glasgow; or write to your MP urging them to support renewable energy initiatives and carbon reduction; or contact your church’s overseas mission link and find out about the challenges they face from climate change; and look at a ‘sustainable Lent’ or ‘eco-Lent’ theme this year?

**Nicky Bull, High Street Baptist Church**

essentials such as clothing, medicine and school. We believe this is not a luxury but a human right.

If we can work together with governments, chocolate companies and retailers to make the commitments and policies necessary, then we can make it happen. Day to day, as consumers, we can easily make Fairtrade choices with products such as chocolate, tea, coffee and bananas. If you are looking for Fairtrade chocolate in Tring, Marks & Spencer, the Co-op and Healthfare all have excellent ranges.

This year the Justice & Peace Group are holding a Fairtrade Tombola on Saturday 14 March, at Tring Farmers’ Market. Prizes will include Fairtrade treats from local shops and businesses and coffee vouchers from local cafes and restaurants. Make sure you roll up for Fairtrade Fortnight!

The Justice & Peace Group meet monthly to plan local events with a global concern. Find out more at [www.justiceandpeacectring.org](http://www.justiceandpeacectring.org) or follow us on Facebook. If you are interested in joining the Justice & Peace Group, please contact Michael Demidecki

on 07887 980004/01442 823514 or [michaeldemidecki@gmail.com](mailto:michaeldemidecki@gmail.com).

**Polly Eaton**  
**High Street Baptist Church**  
Information taken from:  
[www.fairtrade.org.uk](http://www.fairtrade.org.uk)

## Lucia’s story

Lucia is a cocoa farmer in Sierra Leone. She belongs to a Fairtrade co-operative of farmers called Ngoleagorbu, who live around the edge of the Gola rainforest. This forest-edge community became Fairtrade certified in 2019, which means they grow their cocoa according to Fairtrade Standards. The Standards cover the social and environmental practices the farmers use. Now they’re selling some of their cocoa on Fairtrade terms to the UK, receiving the Fairtrade Minimum Price and Fairtrade Premium. Farming in the rainforest is tough. During the night, chimpanzees wreak havoc, hollowing out the ripe, sweet cocoa beans from the pods, destroying the whole crop and leaving the farm

strewn with empty shells. Not only this, but the hot, wet climate provides ideal conditions for the rapid spread of disease, which can lead to food shortages. Lucia has seen many farmers turn to mining, logging or rice farming as alternative sources of income. But she has also seen the destruction these activities bring to her beloved forest. Lucia is hardworking, proud and determined. She deserves to use her land in a way that earns her a decent living, but also protects her forest home.

# Roll up, roll up for Fairtrade Fortnight

**Monday 24 February – Sunday 8 March 2020**

It may be hard to swallow but many of the people behind our most-loved food still live in extreme poverty. It is a scandal that behind the sweet delight of chocolate lies the bitter taste of exploitation. The UK chocolate industry is worth at least £4 billion each year. And yet the average cocoa farmer in Côte d’Ivoire and Ghana, where 60 percent of all cocoa is grown, makes less than 75p a day. This is well below the extreme poverty line of around £1.40 per day. If this wasn’t enough to cope with, the climate crisis is already wreaking havoc on global food production.

Farmers are battling less predictable seasons, more plant diseases and weather extremes, leading to a lack of food. They are suffering, struggling to harvest crops and working longer hours, for lower prices. For women, the situation is even more unfair. In Côte d’Ivoire, for example, women carry out more than two thirds of the labour involved in cocoa farming. They work in the fields, look after children, carry water, and help bring the crop to market. And yet they often have fewer rights than men, and often earn less than a quarter of the money generated. That’s why ‘She Deserves a Living Income’ is the Fairtrade Fortnight campaign. A living income means enough money to live a simple but dignified life, paying for



## A hidden glory of Tring



it met in the Salvation Army Citadel. Following the closure of

One of the hidden glories of the Tring Team Parish is the first Saturday lunch. Originally set up by Churches Together as a lunch for those who had been bereaved,

the Citadel, it continued to meet in the Parish Hall. For the last twenty-five years it has been organised by Margaret Oram with Sheila Whitehead and we owe them a huge debt of thanks for the work they have done.

It is open to anyone at all from across the parish but in particular those who now find themselves living alone. In February we had my winter warming casserole (beef in Tring’s award-winning

beer) followed by a cherry pie which Sue Gascoine made. To book, please call me on 01442 822170. It would be great to invite new friends to join us.

We also really need some volunteers to drive people to the Parish Hall as a couple of our regular drivers are not available. It is a great thing to be able to support. Please contact me if you can help.

**Huw Bellis, Tring Team**

## Holocaust education: our sacred duty



Our Holocaust education takes many forms at Tring Park. I am so sad that I have to teach about such atrocities and place before my pupils some shocking events.

However, my commitment to teaching this is utterly rock solid because it is, via education, that we are trying to ensure that these events are not forgotten. Furthermore, if it helps just one pupil be more tolerant, more thoughtful and more ardently against racism, prejudice and discrimination, then I have done my job.

We have Holocaust Memorial Day Ambassadors in the current U6th who went on the Lesson From Auschwitz course, with the Head of History. This included a visit to the Auschwitz concentration camp and seminars in London. They presented their experiences to their peers in several student assemblies.

We take the Third Form (Year 9) to the Holocaust galleries of the Imperial War Museum as it is part of our RS/PSHE and History curriculum.

In the past seventeen years we have been able to invite Holocaust survivors to visit the school to speak to our community on four occasions. Many wrote books that are in our library.

Our Third Form students (Year 9) cover the rise of the Nazi party, the persecution of the Jewish, and other minority communities, in Germany during the 1930s and 40s, and the Holocaust

as part of their history curriculum in the Spring term. The RS curriculum focuses on the prejudice and discriminatory life of Nazi ideology, as well as the experiences of those who opposed the regime, especially Christians like Corrie Ten Boom.

Prior to Third Form, we send home a 'Holocaust and allied issues' reading list which contains a selection of memoirs, biographies and fictional material based on the experiences of those who lived through the Holocaust to all Second Form students in preparation.

Each year we ensure that these matters are covered in assemblies across the whole school during HMD week. Quoted in assembly was the famous confessional poem from 1946 by Pastor Niemöller.

*First they came for the Communists  
And I did not speak out  
Because I was not a Communist*

*Then they came for the Socialists  
And I did not speak out  
Because I was not a Socialist*

*Then they came for the trade unionists  
And I did not speak out  
Because I was not a trade unionist*

*Then they came for the Jews  
And I did not speak out  
Because I was not a Jew*

*Then they came for me  
And there was no one left  
To speak out for me*



### Imperial War Museum workshop

Two years ago, in a workshop to help us gain a deep understanding of how artefacts can be used to communicate history, we were introduced to a replica toy from the exhibit, as the real one is so fragile. It was a clockwork bear, owned by Paul Sondhoff, a Jewish teenager from Vienna. This is one of the few things that he had when he was being hidden in a cramped cupboard by his piano teacher in Vienna for several years.

Here are some of their comments and feedback from the thank you letters that have been written to the Education Team at the IWM: Lambeth: 'It made me think about how lucky I am today. Even if the world is far from perfect, at least there is a general feeling of acceptance,' commented Lara.

*'I hope to come back one day to show my family,'* said Dulcie.

**Sarah Bell**  
Tring Park School

## Are you over 80?



In 2020, the Early May Bank Holiday will be moved to Friday 8 May to coincide with Victory in Europe Day, or VE Day, which marks the 75th anniversary of the formal end of World War II. It will be the first day of a long weekend featuring numerous commemorative events across the country. You may have noticed Vivianne Child's article in last month's edition

of *Comment* about plans already in preparation to make this a special event in Tring.

I am hoping that among *Comment* readers we have enough people who are aged 80 and over to have been there and remember something of 8 May 1945. If you can remember anything



of the lead up to that day in your family and how you celebrated it, please contact Vivianne Child, [vivianne@tringtogether.org.uk](mailto:vivianne@tringtogether.org.uk), or me at the *Comment* email, [comment.magazine@gmail.com](mailto:comment.magazine@gmail.com) or via the R pigeon hole in the Parish Church or by phone on 07968 312161. I would be happy to record your memories for you and print them in *Comment*.

**The Editor**

## 'Saint' of the month – an irreverent look at Thomas Cranmer



The Anglican calendar sets aside 21 March to remember Thomas Cranmer. For me he is the father of Anglicanism.

Forget all this nonsense that the Church of England was only formed because of Henry VIII's desire to have yet more wives. Two things seem to have been going on: first, with a rise of national identity, a king wanted control of his kingdom, and to have control he had to get rid of the other great landowner, the church (and the Pope); secondly the clergy were having their own theological revolution. The king needed the clergy to legitimise his land grab and the clergy needed the king to enable their Reformation. Wives don't come into it much, and when they do it is in a surprising way. But for the Anglican church, Cranmer is the hero of the story, which is why we have a day to remember him. The only problem is that my memory only remembers the useless stuff.

Cranmer crossed my theological education path a number of times. The first that I remember was when at Lampeter, D G Selwyn was lecturing on Cranmer's library. The only problem is that I believe I was the only person at the lecture and that when I awoke the lecturer had gone! I am afraid I cannot shed much light on the contents of the library but I believe Selwyn has written a book on the subject.

A few years later I found myself at Jesus College, Cambridge. I hasten to add I was actually a student at Westcott House Theological College just opposite Jesus, but needing a rugby team to join, I wheedled my way into a proper college.

One of the few injuries I sustained in my playing career is a scar on the top of my head when I was a hooker for Jesus. As I wandered up and down the path to the rugby pitch, I realised that I was treading in the same steps as Cranmer. He, of course, was a Fellow at Jesus College rather than an interloper, but there is still something special when you walk the same paths as someone like him did 500 years before.

Early in my time at Westcott, one of my tutors encouraged us to read Diarmaid McCulloch's biography of Cranmer. I purchased a copy: it made a great door stop being by far and away the thickest book in my library. I did read it, but over twenty years later I remember little of the glories of Cranmer's theology and only the useless stuff.

So what do I remember? When he was fellow of Jesus (but not yet a priest) Cranmer had an affair with a barmaid from the Dolphin Pub. The pub is no longer there but I would walk past the site of it on the way to lectures at the URC College. When Joan became pregnant, Cranmer had to stand down from his position but he was reinstated when she died in childbirth. Shortly afterwards the king appointed him as one of his diplomats and Cranmer spent time in Lutheran Germany. Without his knowledge Henry appointed him Archbishop of Canterbury. The only problem was that by this time Cranmer himself had married. Many other priests who found celibacy difficult tended to have affairs but his marriage is one indication of how Cranmer's theology had progressed. Throughout the rest of his life, Cranmer was dogged by his critics claiming that he carried his wife around in a box. Wherever Cranmer travelled

he was accompanied by a large box. He always maintained the box contained his library. If only I had stayed awake, I may have discovered the truth: wife or library? These days, of course, the main way that Cranmer crosses my path is each Sunday morning at 8.00am when we use his prayer book. I have a bit of a love-hate relation with it. I am pleased to defend its use for those who love it. However, I have serious problems with some of its theology. For example, it is my understanding that in the warped minds of medieval religious fanatics, in order to save souls it was alright to torture people so that they recanted any erroneous beliefs. Once they had recanted, the best thing to do was to kill them so that they couldn't slip back into any false beliefs. In doing so their souls had been saved. Odd thinking indeed. It means I struggle to read the prayer book absolution 'Almighty God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who desireth not the death of a sinner, but rather that he may turn from his wickedness, and live,' not least because, at the end of his life, Cranmer was tortured until he recanted of his Protestant faith. He was then taken to be burnt alive. Legend has it that, as the flames grew, Cranmer held out his right hand so that the unworthy hand with which he had recanted would be burnt first.

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I am sure I should remember much more of his Eucharistic theology and his role in shaping the English Reformation. I suspect the question is: on 21 March, will I actually dust down my biography of Cranmer or will I continue with my lack of remembrance? As you can tell, the many errors in memory in this article are all mine.

**Huw Bellis, Tring Team**

## Volunteer on offer!

We have been approached by a Hungarian Christian family who are looking for a safe summer home for their 17-year-old daughter who wants to practise and improve her English for a few weeks.

Could your Church use an extra pair of hands? Do you have a spare room you could offer, an extra place at the table and a warm welcome and interesting conversation in return?

Please contact me on [comment.magazine@gmail.com](mailto:comment.magazine@gmail.com) or 07968 312161.

**The Editor**

## Computer & Printer Repairs & Support

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No call out fee in Tring

## Talking with strangers



It is the eve of the country formally leaving the EU as I write this. I don't know how I shall feel tomorrow. If you are happy you can party, but if you are sad, what do you do?

Last night I listened to a programme about Wordsworth's poem about his life. I love Wordsworth and have delved into 'The Prelude' at times. He recalls incidents from his childhood vividly and with feeling. I think it was said on the programme that he talks about 'spots in time' that stay with him. I am sure we all have 'spots in time', and some of mine have been when I have spoken to strangers. Here are a few.

Take yesterday, for example: in WH Smith's I did a full half turn to go back for a second look at something, and found myself staring at the chest of a tall man supporting a Watford scarf. There was the ice-breaker! After an apology, I commented, 'You must support Watford!' 'Yes,' came the reply, 'and I am from Norway!' After a brief exchange about the fortunes of Watford FC, we talked about his country and he explained that he was moving here permanently and that he was disappointed about how his home city in Norway was changing.

Later the same day, before a lecture in the evening, I was talking to a gentleman who had moved from Germany thirty years ago, met his wife and stayed. We discussed the richness of the English language as well as how some of Schubert or Mahler's songs sounded lovely in the German language.

A year or two ago I was travelling to London on the train. It was a drab day and almost everyone in the carriage was wearing black and glued to their phones or laptops. I had on a bright blue coat and was sitting by a young lady who was in a yellow coat. I commented to her that

we were the only ones in the carriage to wear something other than black. The following conversation took us all the way to London. This young lady was Eastern European, had been a European champion at one of the martial arts and was trying to make a living as a personal trainer. She had been in Cyprus, but things were looking down there so she had come to England to try to make a go of it here. One or two others were listening to our conversation including a young Asian lady who asked if I knew anyone she could contact who could help her to improve her English speaking skills. I only wish I could have obliged by putting her in touch with someone in her town.

Then two years ago I was at a carol concert at the Barbican. Beside me I spoke to two visitors from Germany, in the row in front there were people from Italy. The hall had many visitors from Europe and beyond. What I really liked about this was that we were all there to sing or hear carols celebrating Christ's birth. When we stood to sing 'Hark, the herald angels sing' the line 'Joyful all ye nations rise' took on a whole new meaning!

I could go on... there was the postgrad from Oxford who was answering my questions about the Arabic writing. He got so carried away that he was illustrating characters in a book he had with him. A mistake – it was a library book! Then, how

about the gentleman who declared himself to be a 'minimiser'? He had all his holiday packing in a very small leather suitcase, smaller than a brief case.

Where does all this get me? I didn't have to go abroad to meet these lovely people yet my horizons were opened through meeting them and there was very definitely a feeling of goodwill between us. I hope they, like me, felt enriched by the conversations. The Lord has given us all a place and a time to be in and I think it is important that we do not isolate ourselves in that place or that moment.

I go back to Wordsworth's 'Prelude'. He writes, 'The earth is all before me. With a heart / Joyous, nor scared at its own liberty, / I look about; and should the chosen guide / Be nothing better than a wandering cloud, / I cannot miss my way. I breathe again!'

As Christians we know who our guide is (I rather like the image of God being a wandering cloud). Wordsworth has lifted me to be joyous and not afraid; we cannot miss the way with our guide, we can breathe and carry on and, like Wordsworth, appreciate all that has been given us in this world. We can build good relationships with the people around us whether we are in or out of the EU. I shall be sad when we leave the EU, but move forward in faith!

**Jill Smith**  
**St Peter & St Paul**

**INVITATION TO TRING'S TABLE**

Would you like to build on Tring's Climate Event by coming together with other Tring groups to share a meal?



Tring's Justice & Peace Group are proposing a **COMMUNITY FEAST** on **SATURDAY 7 MARCH at 12NOON** at **HIGH STREET BAPTIST CHURCH**

*We would like to keep to LOAF principles (Local, Organic, Animal friendly and Fairtrade) for our feast if possible!*

The purpose of the feast is to **BUILD COMMUNITY, have CONVERSATIONS and MOVE THE GREEN AGENDA FORWARD.**

If you would like to join the Community Feast, please contact Polly at [pollyyeaton5@gmail.com](mailto:pollyyeaton5@gmail.com) or 07977 230175 with your name and the group you are affiliated to by Saturday 29 February 2020.

\* GLEAN \* SHARE \* PREPARE \* EAT \* TALK \* RESPECT \*

## It's great to sing!



Let us introduce ourselves... We are Dacorum Community Choir, often called the friendly daytime choir, because we are friendly and we meet to practise in

the daytime (Tuesday mornings during school term 9.40-11.30am at the Church of the Resurrection, Grovehill, Hemel Hempstead HP2 1BJ)

We sing all sorts of music from Bach to the Beatles and from the 16th century to bang up-to-date. We sing songs from stage musicals, traditional folk tunes from Britain and around the world, and sometimes light classical and religious stuff too. Our rehearsals are FUN and there is lots of laughter. We learn mostly by the 'sing it after me' method. Both our musical director, Rufus Frowde, and accompanist Judi Kelly, know that encouragement is the best way to get the best out of people.

We welcome adults of all ages. No auditions or experience are needed. Not



only is it fun, but various studies show that singing in a group is good for health and wellbeing. Many of our members have found it helped them get through a rough patch in their lives. They've made lasting friendships as a result. As well as singing for our own enjoyment, we perform in care homes and social clubs throughout the year – giving something back to the community – and hold at least two major concerts a year.

Our concert on 14 March in St Peter & St Paul will include the second performance of 'Were I not to Sing?', composed for the choir by Rufus Frowde, to mark our 10th Anniversary in November 2019. The programme also includes some Purcell, Vaughan Williams and some lighter music. Please come!

**Caroline Lees**  
**Dacorum Community Choir**

**St Peter & St Paul Tring**

**THE CRUCIFIXION**  
by **JOHN STAINER**

An act of worship for Congregation and Choir depicting the events leading up to Christ's death upon the cross.

Presented by the Church Choir together with the Aylesbury Methodist Circuit Choir and friends from other local churches and choirs.

Worship leader: Rev'd Huw Bellis  
Director of Music: Cliff Brown  
Organist: Derrick Matthews

St. Peter and St. Paul, Tring  
Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> April 2020 at 3 pm

(Also performed in Aylesbury Methodist Church on Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> March 2020 at 3pm)

**EVERYONE WELCOME**

Refreshments will be served afterwards

*Piano & more series*

*An hour of music on Sunday afternoons*

**David Borsada** *Baritone*  
**William Watson & Rob Wallace** *Trumpets*  
**Anna Le Hair** *Piano*  
**Colin Stevens** *Organ*

*Programme includes song cycles by Vaughan Williams and Finzi, plus Vivaldi's concerto for two trumpets*

**Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> March**  
at 3pm followed by tea

Tring Parish Church HP23 5AE  
Free admission, with retiring collection

*For further details, see:*  
[piano-and-more.org.uk](http://piano-and-more.org.uk)  
or Google "Piano and more, Tring"

# Edward Barber VC



Most Tring people will be familiar with the name of Edward Barber, the town's only holder of the Victoria Cross. This was awarded for gallantry during World War One. Both he and his younger brother, Ernest, are commemorated on the War Memorial and Edward is also commemorated by a plaque set in the pavement of Church Square.

The Aylesbury Branch of the Grenadier Guards Association wanted to have a more visible commemoration of Edward and originally proposed having two benches, one on each side of the war memorial. These would have been in metal with a silhouette on the upper part of the back. On reflection, the committee of the association felt that there was a risk that these might be stolen for their

scrap value and requested that we have something inside St Peter & St Paul's Church.

After discussion, we suggested that they might like to pay for three display boards, that would be mounted on the inside of the south wall and used to display specific presentations and not routine notices. Examples of these might include displays of special events, produced by local school children, and other special similar exhibitions.

In November, we had a display of information regarding the additional seven names which have been added to the war memorial and are to be inscribed in the Book of Remembrance. In January, we had a display of information concerning the Week for Christian Unity.

A design has been provided by Rocky Savage of Carlisle Furniture Limited. This comprises three display boards, each 6 feet wide and approximately 2 feet 6 inches high. The middle board will be suitably engraved.

At the time of writing, the information has been sent to the Diocesan Advisory Committee to start the process for the granting of a faculty and we await their response. We are planning to have the boards dedicated at the commemoration service on 8 May 2020.

**Ted Oram, St Peter & St Paul**



# Letter from Orkney



In Orkney, we live in a foodie heaven, which is fantastic for us – if not always quite so fantastic for our waistlines. This was highlighted one day early last summer when we were down at the harbour and a fishing boat arrived. There was an abundance of lobsters and crabs being landed and I was asked if I would like to buy anything. I selected a crab and presented it to Mac, assuming he would be delighted to have an extremely fresh crustacean for dinner that night. In fact, it was so fresh it was still alive, which put a slightly different perspective on things. I don't think he was overly keen on despatching said crab – and I certainly wasn't going to do it.

Our crab was apparently female and ended up being called Crystal. In the event Crystal was so large she wouldn't fit into any of our cooking pots which gave us a splendid reason not to eat her. I therefore put her into a washing up bowl of water and transported her to the beach in front of our house, where she

was carefully liberated into the sea. She sidled off under the protective cover of seaweed, ready to fight another day.

Despite all this, we are extremely keen on Orkney crab (when it has been caught and dealt with by the Orkney Fishermen's Society) and this recipe, featuring Orkney salmon and dressed Orkney crab is absolutely superb. It's packed with flavour, easy to cook but looks impressive – which is the sort of dish I like to prepare. (Food photography is a specialized art, so forgive the photo – our meal was getting cold!)

**Carrie Dodge  
St. Mary's, Stromness**

## Salmon stuffed with crab and spinach with dill sauce (courtesy of Aldo Zilli)

Serves 4

### Ingredients:

4 salmon fillets (185 gm each)  
100g of mixed brown and white crab meat  
200g fresh spinach, sautéed & finely chopped  
1 garlic clove, finely chopped  
500ml full fat milk  
1 teaspoon soy sauce  
25g fresh or dried dill, chopped Dill sprigs to garnish (I had to use coriander leaves as dill wasn't available)



### Method

1. Preheat oven to 180 degrees (350 degrees/gas 4)
2. Cut along the side of each salmon fillet to create a pocket
3. In a bowl mix the crab meat, spinach and garlic and stuff into each fillet.
4. Place a large piece of aluminium foil in a roasting pan so the edges come up the sides of the pan and place all the fillets in the centre of the foil, leaving 1 cm between each one
5. In a jug, stir together the milk, soy sauce and dill and pour over the salmon fillets
6. Fold over the edges of the foil to enclose the fish and pinch together at the top to form a parcel
7. Cook for 10-12 minutes in the oven, being careful not to overcook the salmon.
8. Serve hot, on a bed of steamed mange tout if desired, with a little of the sauce on top. Garnish with dill (or coriander!) sprigs.

# How Repair Sheds benefit our community

Community Action Dacorum (CAD) make a difference to people's lives through its Repair Shed programme by providing opportunities for (mostly) men to talk and share their feelings in an environment that is safe and non-threatening.

The charity currently runs two Repair Sheds, one in Hemel Hempstead (with Sunnyside Rural Trust) and one in Redbourne (with St Luke's School). They do lots of craft with recycled materials like pallets and trees, and an engineering workshop, building furniture and repairing tools and equipment. We are about to open a third Shed in Northchurch to cater for demand from Tring and Berkhamsted.

The Repair Shed is an opportunity for Sheddors to talk 'shoulder to shoulder', supporting one another to overcome their concerns and fears on an informal basis. By doing this, Sheds address loneliness and isolation in our community and provide purpose for those who need it. For a long time, research has shown the negative impact of loneliness and isolation on health and wellbeing. Recently we have seen more evidence that shows loneliness and isolation can be as hazardous to our health as obesity and excessive smoking. Surveys from mental health charities found that millions of people report feeling lonely daily. As recently as last month, a new study from researchers at Nottingham Trent University (NTU) showed that being a member of a community group can lead to a 25% reduction in health care use.

Last year our Shed at St Luke's School won the National Schools and Academy Award for Innovation. What makes this project so innovative is that it impacts so many people.

The 'Shed' came about when the usage of St Luke's changed from providing mainstream education to becoming a specialist SEND school focusing on working with young people with learning difficulties. Technology workshops were no longer needed so the school approached CAD to run a second shed at St Luke's. The Sheddors come together to work on engineering projects and use their experience to support the school with maintenance and repair of buildings and equipment. There is also a sewing café running at the school where the philosophy of



repair and reuse is applied to materials, as well as training members how to sew.

The men in the sheds recycle and repair items for use by the school or host charity, saving the school money. The men pass on their experience to the next generation through vocational classes and clubs, the Sheddors work with the young people to build items to be sold to raise funds.

For the children at the school and the young people at Sunnyside, the Shed provides them with opportunities to learn how to build basic wooden items and gives them opportunities to access tools. They learn from the experience of grandfather figures. They have succeeded in building bird boxes or insect houses, achievements that they would otherwise not have had.

Our partners get many wonderful products made that would otherwise not



be possible. These include a wormery, leaf sculptures in the school field and numerous decorative statues or bird houses that enhance the grounds and people's experience. In addition, many of the odd jobs that caretakers are unable to undertake can be quickly addressed, from fixing things, to painting doors. The years of experience and qualifications held by the Sheddors are at the disposal of organisations that can use them.

The men who are involved with the shed get friendship and a sense of purpose which enhances their lives. In some cases, the men report that they were lost before discovering the Shed and that it gives them a sense of wellbeing that makes a positive difference to their lives.

Through partnership with other local charities, Repair Sheds make a difference to the lives of people in Dacorum.

The community benefits. The men, and by association the school, take in commissions from the local area. For example, the local church's lawn mower is frequently in the Shed for repairs.

Repairing items that otherwise would be thrown away benefits all, reducing waste and helping save the environment.

It is this model that we hope to replicate in Northchurch, providing role models and learning opportunities for people with learning difficulties, whilst benefitting Sunnyside and the individuals involved.

For information about getting involved, visit the Repair Shed website [www.communityactiondacorum.org/repair-shed](http://www.communityactiondacorum.org/repair-shed).

**Simon Aulton  
Community Action Dacorum**

# Contemporary Theatre Season at Tring Park School

The Acting Dept are due to perform 7 plays within  
the space of around 10 days

**B** by Guillermo Calderón – **Tuesday 3 March**

**The Red Devils Trilogy** by Debbie Horsfield – **Wednesday 4 March**

**Woman in Mind** by Alan Ayckbourn – **Thursday 5 March**

**Death of a Salesman** by Arthur Miller – **Friday 6 March**

**Hedda Gabler** by Henrik Ibsen – **Monday 9 March**  
(in the Ballroom of the Mansion)

**The House of Bernarda Alba** by Lorca – **Tuesday 10 March**

**Pack of Lies** by Hugh Whitmore – **Thursday 12 March**

Unreserved seats: £11 with reductions if you purchase tickets  
for more than two plays at the same time.

[www.tringpark.com/whats-on](http://www.tringpark.com/whats-on)

## The Commercial Music Acoustic Night 'Unplugged'

**Wednesday 11 March 7.30pm**

The Assembly Hall of Tring Park Mansion

The 6th Form Commercial Music students return with their Acoustic showcase.

The night will see them present an exciting line-up of live acoustic music.

All performers will bring you some of their freshest music picks,  
performing some original music and contemporary classics.

Unreserved seats: £11  
[www.tringpark.com/whats-on](http://www.tringpark.com/whats-on)

## Rowan Williams on Ethics and Empathy



At the end of January, I was privileged to attend a talk by Rowan Williams in Cambridge, where he is Master of Magdalene College. I was not sure what to expect

from the title, and rather surprised when Bishop Rowan started out by critiquing an excessive pre-occupation with 'Empathy', and, in particular, the notion that any problem or conflict can be solved by engaging with empathy. Looking at the media – old-fashioned and especially so-called 'social' media – there seems to me to be a distinct lack of empathy. Online comments and reactions on almost any sensitive topic descend in no time to insult and obscenity; also 'the will of the people' does not leave much room for compassion about a different viewpoint or set of feelings.

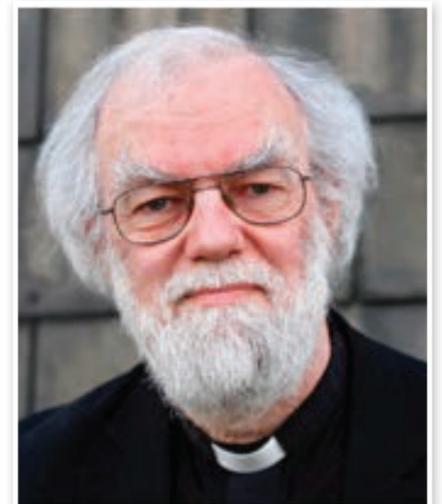
Bishop Rowan's argument was that it is all too tempting – especially for a Christian – to be seduced by the language of empathy. We are instructed to bear one another's burdens, and so would hope to be able to say 'I feel your pain'; but are in danger of thinking that 'when I know what I feel, I know what I must do'. Actually, when faced with incomprehensible suffering, our response

should be to say 'I don't know, it's beyond my experience, please tell me'. The real question is not whether we feel, but whether we take the time and effort to understand and so can act to alleviate the pain of others.

Bishop Rowan highlighted how focusing purely on the need for empathy in some emotional sense can go wrong: 'If I think that I know how you feel, I may know how to make you suffer more'. Also empathy can become self-centred, a search for emotional experiences, what Bishop Rowan termed 'emotional colonialism'. In the political arena one can see that, in a sense, Donald Trump has a real empathy with his voter constituency in the US. He seems to know just what gesture to make, what 'tweet' to send, to sustain their support.

The term 'empathy' has only existed for about 100 years, originating in the German term 'Einfühlung'. It grew in usage in the latter part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Books have been written on the history of empathy, and even 'Against Empathy'. After listening to Bishop Rowan's talk, I still feel that I prefer empathy over apathy, or even worse psychopathy; but I see that just 'feeling bad', and then only doing what stops me feeling bad about a person or situation, can be at best lazy and, at worst, just selfish.

You can hear the audio of Rowan Williams' talk at the St Edwards website:



<http://stedwards.cambridge.co.uk/stedstalks> or the rather long original lecture in Harvard is on YouTube at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v79tL7uYTrA>.

One definite impression that I gained from listening to Bishop Rowan talk, watching him respond to questions, and having a brief chance to chat with him afterwards, is what an erudite but kind and gentle man he is. He happens to be just a few days younger than me, but seems to be decades wiser. He retires from Magdalene College this summer and will return to Wales.

**John Whiteman**  
**Tring Team**

## Echo from a past edition of Comment

A little girl at bedtime: *'Please bless and take care of Mummy, Daddy and my little brother – and please, God take care of yourself. Because if anything happens to you, we are sunk'*.

A little boy: *'God, please stop Bobby throwing stones at me. By the way, I've mentioned this before'*.

*'Dear Lord', prayed a five year old, 'please try and put vitamins into sweets and ice-cream and not just in spinach and cod liver oil'*.

A child insisted on varying the text of the Lord's Prayer, saying: *'Give us this day our daily oranges'*. When gently corrected, his answer was, *'No, I've got plenty of bread. What I want are oranges'*.

A little boy, when given a teddy bear by his grandmother, said, *'I'm going to call him Gladly, after the bear in the hymn'*. *'Which hymn is that?'* asked the surprised grandmother. *'Gladly my cross-eyed bear,'* replied the boy.

And for our older readers: At the end of the minister's pre-Lent sermon he suggested that, as an example to the rest of the community, the congregation should worship in an unheated Church during the whole of Lent. As they made their way out into the chill Sunday air, the minister addressed one member of the congregation asking what she had decided to give up for Lent. *'Church,'* she replied firmly.

The Vicar, passing an elderly gentleman attending to his garden, remarked, *'How wonderful you and God have made your garden, Harry'*. *'Yes,'* said Harry, *'but you should have seen what it was like when God had it to himself.'*

**David Gittins, Tring Team**



## Tweet of the month

Having just spent eight days in Colombia on holiday, it seemed appropriate to choose a bird that I saw there for this month's Tweet and it is the Green-and-black Fruiteater. I saw many beautiful birds on this trip but one individual of this species stood out.

Currently there are twelve species of Fruiteater recognised and they are part of the Cotinga family. The Cotingas are exclusively confined to the Neotropical Region (which comprises South America, Central America, the Caribbean, southern Florida and parts of Mexico), and are mainly brightly-coloured birds. Most of the Fruiteaters are bright green with dark heads and fit well within this family. They are called Fruiteaters because they mainly eat fruit and can be incredibly difficult to find as they move around trees in fruit looking for food, despite their striking patterns and bright colours.

To set the scene of this encounter we need to talk about another family of birds exclusive to the Neotropical Region – Antpittas. Antpittas have characteristically long legs and virtually

no tail and walk around on the ground with their body held almost vertically. Most of them live in forests and their habit of walking round on the ground makes them incredibly difficult to see in the dense undergrowth found in most forests. About fifteen years ago an Ecuadorian man called Angel Paz (which translates as 'Angel Peace') found a Giant Antpitta on his land and, using worms, trained this Antpitta, which he called Maria, to come out of the forest when he called it by name, to feed on worms. I have met Angel and when I visited him in 2006 he had trained three different species of Antpitta to come to him to be fed! News of this phenomena has spread to other countries in the region and people have copied this and in Colombia we visited two sites where we saw Antpittas in this manner.

It was at the first of the Antpitta sites that we saw this special Green-



and-black Fruiteater. When we got to the special area where two species of Antpitta come out to be fed, there was a Green-and-black Fruiteater there. It had learnt that the Antpittas were fed there and also what time they are fed and had taken to waiting there as well; sure enough the local guide also handed it worms. He explained that this bird had trouble flying and had become very tame – an amazing contrast to the other Fruiteaters that fed elusively in the canopy of the trees. The trust, and faith if you like, of this bird was really quite touching. Here it was, with a need that this man was meeting, in much the same way that God meets our important needs when we have trust and faith in him.

**Roy Hargreaves**  
**St Peter & St Paul**

## Farewell to Roger & Audrey Bennett



How sad it was for us all to learn of Audrey and Roger's deaths, so close together, before Christmas. It seems no time since I was writing for

Comment about their move to Lymington in 2018. At that time, Audrey was recuperating after the stay in hospital that made certain of their need to move away. Even from a wheelchair, she had got stuck in to gentle work in the Linden House raised vegetable beds and Roger was already acclimatizing to the new surroundings and enjoying being able to sing for other residents. It was good that they were nearer to family and Linden House proved the perfect place for them.

Gradually, though, their health was deteriorating and the family warned us, in the early Autumn, that Audrey was becoming very frail. Their daughter, Judith, was going to be married later in the year, and they were not sure that Audrey would be strong enough to be there. So Judith modelled her wedding dress for her Mum, and ran past her all the details of the service and catering for the day. (Those who knew her will remember that Audrey was a consummate organiser and was a very capable provider for all sorts of parish feasts.)

Audrey died, with Judith at her side, on 21 November last year. Her passing was very peaceful, and Roger – though struggling with increased confusion as well as creaky joints – had grasped that the time was coming, and said a special goodnight to her with a hug and a last kiss. Her funeral was scheduled for 23 December, after Judith's wedding – and when her brother Jeremy would have returned from America. Her other brother, Graham, was supporting Roger, along with the very caring staff at Linden House.

They were seldom apart in life, and Roger seemed lost without his soulmate. He did manage to get to Judith's wedding, and still liked to sing, but was constantly feeling very sad and alone, without always fully realising why. A friend continued to play for him, so that he could sing, and Jeremy, too, was singing with him until very shortly before he went into a decline. He drifted away, though,

and died peacefully on 21 December, with Jeremy at his side. This was, of course, very close to the day for Audrey's funeral and the family decided that they would include tributes to Roger within the same service, then have his funeral as a private family service at a later date.

Roger and Audrey were such a part of our church family, who it seemed were always there to add their support to occasions, and who lovingly and prayerfully gave so much of their time and attention in any way it was needed. Several of us from Tring, as well as honorary Tringites Godfrey & Judith Orrell,

a 'cross in their pocket'. The presiding vicar on the day was one who had come to know Roger & Audrey when he led services at Linden House. Jeremy had made a CD of Roger's solos, over the years. It was poignant to hear the strains of his voice as we followed Audrey into the building and again, during a reflective time in the service. It felt that Roger was singing his own farewell, as we left the chapel.

We were made most welcome, afterwards, for a delicious lunch in a community centre close to Linden House. Staff were there, as well as



went to the service on 23 December. We were glad to be there on behalf of others who couldn't make the journey.

The sun shone – it was a beautiful, bright midwinter day. It did not feel a sombre occasion, and it truly seemed to reflect their lives of faith, love, honest work and simplicity. The family had requested no flowers at all, but donations to Dementia UK, who work in the service of people with dementia and their families. Audrey's wickerwork coffin was crafted by a British basketmaker. It was garlanded with seasonal greenery of ivy and holly with berries – understated and very beautiful. We sang 'The Old Rugged Cross', and I remembered the many little wooden crosses Roger used to make for people to take away from Church as

family and friends, sharing stories and laughter. Jeremy told us he hopes to put Roger's songs on YouTube, and Judith and Colin were about to have a belated honeymoon. Roger's quiet funeral took place in January. There will be a Thanksgiving Service for the lives of Roger and Audrey on Saturday 28 March at St Cross, Wilstone, at 1.00pm.

One of the songs played at the end of the service was 'God's Garden'. I like to think that Roger and Audrey are busy tending that, now, or perhaps they are just resting and enjoying the tranquillity of it, after all the busyness of their earthly lives, so fully lived.

**Anne Nobbs**  
**St Peter & St Paul**

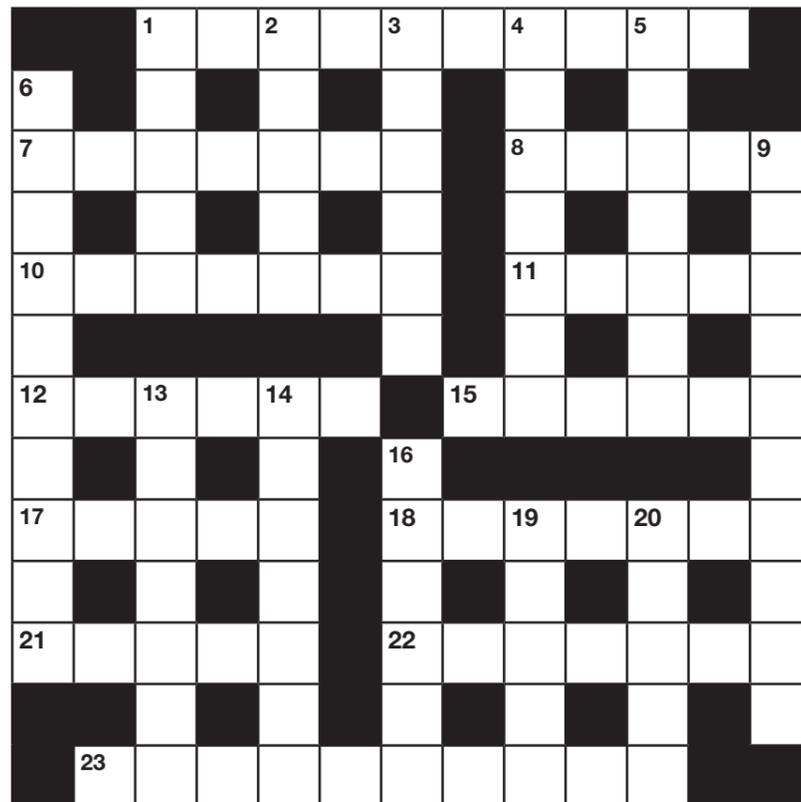
## Crossword

### ACROSS

- C of E important city (10)
- Priests (7)
- Preference (5)
- Bishop's ceremonial staff (7)
- Girl's name (well known!) (5)
- Person to follow (6)
- Making a request (6)
- Guide (5)
- Everlasting (7)
- National emblem of the U.S. (5)
- Family carers (7)
- Harmony (10)

### DOWN

- Notable collection piece (5)
- Mother-in-law of Ruth (5)
- Make certain (6)
- Swimmers (7)
- Italian composer (7)
- Book of Revelation (10)
- One who spreads the Gospel (10)
- Medium speed music (7)
- Reverses (7)
- Preaching time (6)
- Swallowed (5)
- Relative (5)



Answers on page 38

# In memory of Jean Royle

Jean Helliwell was born in Nelson, Lancashire. She was an only child, but much loved by her parents and extended family. She played with the children in her street and befriended a little dog who lived next door. She had three special friends, Audrey, who was the daughter of one of her mother's friends; Kathleen, known as Kay, whose own mother died when she was young and became part of Jean's family, spending many holidays with them and later marrying Jean's cousin; and Joy, the daughter of a colleague of Jean's father. These friendships have endured a lifetime, a sign of her loyalty and dedication.

When Jean was just 5 she developed a septic condition in her arm. This was before penicillin and she was seriously ill for several weeks, suffering hot poultices and bed rest. When she got up her legs were weak and she had to go back to being wheeled (indignantly!) in a push chair. Happily she soon returned to her dancing and regained her strength, though her left arm never fully recovered.

About this time her mother was also seriously ill with pneumonia and Rheumatoid Arthritis. An aunt came to stay and Jean spent some time living with neighbours. I'm sure it is these two events which made her into the resilient person we knew.

Jean's father ran a coach business which took tours to summer holiday destinations including Weston-Super-Mare. Jean and her mum, and sometimes Kay, went to act as stewards to the guests, and Mum spent several summers there improving her social skills, swimming and diving. A few years ago, Mum visited her grand-daughter, Helen, who now lives in Weston. They took her to the pier and she danced along it, reminiscing about the opening of the Lido.

At 11 Jean won a place at the local grammar school and later to train as a teacher at Derby training college, then, because of the war, accommodated at Elveston Castle. She told us stories of draughty dormitories and girls scaring each other with ghost stories. She trained to teach primary children, majoring in biology, English and art. While she was there she developed her artistic and theatrical skills, making puppets for and producing a number of plays.

Sadly, before she completed her training her father died. She was already attached to Brian and I know he was a



great support to her then, as he always was. When she qualified, she was sent to teach in Ashton-Under-Lyme. As well as Biology, Maths and English, she was also required to teach boys' Games, a task she neither enjoyed nor excelled in. Fortunately, she soon moved on and found herself in an open-air school for TB patients, where she was able to use her skills and her caring side which we all came to recognise.

Brian, now her fiancé, was sent with the army to Egypt and they began fifteen months of separation, with no telephones or internet but by letter, which at best took several days. Jean was still teaching and filled her time with preparing for her wedding, planned for June 1948, as Brian was expected home in April. Inevitably Brian was delayed, causing much anxiety and the necessity for a Bishops' special marriage licence as there was too little time to call the bans!

Married life began in Horsforth, Yorkshire where Mum became a housewife, and put her artistic talent to use doing makeup for the local amateur dramatic group. Kevan was born and soon the family moved to Chorley, and I arrived.

It was during this time that Jean and Brian became involved with Round Table and Ladies Circle as founder members of the Chorley clubs. Over the next nineteen years this was to be a very important part of their lives. The organisations were concerned with serving the community and making friends. Many of those friendships have also been long-lasting.

When they moved to Chelmsford,

Jean and Brian transferred to the local clubs and were immediately welcome. They had a wonderful social life. I have many memories of them going off to balls, Dad in his DJ and Mum in one of her gorgeous home-made creations. But it was also at this time that I learnt the importance of caring for those in need. Chelmsford Ladies circle supported a lady called Joyce, who was a tetraplegic polio victim. Mum soon became one of her regular visitors and in school holidays I went too. Daddy leant to drive an ambulance and we took Joyce several times to visit her sons at boarding school.

Jean started teaching at St John's hospital school and occasionally brought home Pam, a Down's Syndrome child who was a long-stay patient.

Later when she was teaching at Stoke Mandeville Hospital she supported a homeless 16 year-old, who came and spent the summer with me and my young family as a mother's help. I know this experience of reaching out stayed with my daughters too.

In 1964 Jean was persuaded to stand for National President of Ladies Circle and was duly elected. The next three years were a whirl of correspondence, meetings, travelling, speeches, hats and ball gowns. She and my father had a wonderful, if hectic time. Kevan and I were now teenagers and soon learnt to cook simple evening meals when Mum was away.

Life in Chelmsford also revolved around The Cathedral, our Parish Church, where we were all involved. When they moved to Tring in 1971 Mum commented that St Peter & St Paul's felt like the Cathedral, only smaller.

The rest of their lives was here in Tring, centred on the Parish Church, where Dad was Church Warden, Mum a flower-arranger and Church watcher. They joined 41 Club and Tangent and Jean became active in Aylesbury Soroptimists, including a project to improve wheelchair access to shops and other facilities.

She continued teaching, first at Wilstone Village school in its final term, and then on supply, until she was appointed as teacher at Stoke Mandeville Hospital School, being promoted to Head a few years later. This was a job she relished. She worked individually with the children, tailoring the curriculum to their needs and abilities. Some were long-stay because of burns or spinal

injuries, some returned several times for surgery. Her care and dedication not only helped some achieve GCSEs but also boosted their morale and speeded up their recovery.

This caring side of Mum continued when she took early retirement to be with her own mother who moved with them to their second house in Sandon Close, and later caring for my father as he battled with PSP, until it became too much for them both and he went to the Leonard Pulham Nursing home. It was no surprise that that is where she chose to live her last months.

It was always a surprise to Mum to realise she had seven grandchildren and twenty great-grandchildren, having had only two children herself. She loved their visits, running down the hall to open the door with a genuine 'How lovely to see you'. She was always ready to hear what they were doing, listening to what they had to say, guiding and encouraging them, and was proud and delighted by their achievements, clapping her hands with joy. They loved her Chocolate biscuit cake, but it was cut into too dainty slices for hungry boys.

She often had her grandchildren painting in the kitchen, always ready to help eliminate or incorporate mistakes as if they were intended. She went on painting herself until her arthritic hands made holding a brush too difficult, but managed to paint an animal picture for each of her great grand-children.

To me Jean was just my mummy, and everything that means, most of which I simply took for granted. What others remember are her interest in people, that she always saw something good in everyone; that she was a good listener, she was non-judgemental and offered wise counsel or just allowed you time to draw your own conclusions; that her tone of voice was calm and she never complained.

She loved to dance, especially a quick step with Brian. She liked nice clothes and always wanted to look her best. I am so pleased she had her hair done the morning she died. And finally, her smile which so many people have mentioned. She was known as the smiler, the lady with the smile. When things were difficult there was a smile of encouragement. She always left you with a smile. Now she has left us for the last time, let us try to remember her with a smile.

**Anne Newton, daughter**

## Gran's poem A thoroughly modern woman, from another age

*Alison Taylor, granddaughter*

*A thoroughly modern woman,  
from another age  
My Gran was from another age,  
An age of glamour and dances  
and grace  
Of waisted dresses swirling  
Of pearls and heels for everyday  
Of perms and weekly sets  
And hair always lifted from  
the roots.*

*My Gran was from another age  
And we loved her for it.*

*My Gran was a painter, a teacher,  
a dancer  
A beauty who loved the limelight  
But never forced the spot to shine  
on her.  
Though she was natural and radiant  
in its glare  
She would curtsy and smile  
And bid it move on  
To honour others.*

*My Gran was from another age,  
And we are glad of it.*

*My Gran was a much-loved wife  
She was Brian's prize and his  
pride.  
I wanted a marriage like theirs -  
Of respect and attraction  
Of being known and beloved  
Of faithfulness and homeliness  
and joy.*

*My Gran was my fashion advisor.  
We chatted through trends and  
cut and colour;  
We perused the style guide  
Deciding what to scorn and what  
to follow.  
She'd show us new pieces and  
well-loved dresses,  
Now and then we'd put them on  
And slink downstairs in Italian silk,  
just 13  
To stun the men.*

*There were red beads and mink furs  
And a magical wooden jewellery box  
With wonders to be discovered  
and rediscovered;  
And always the right piece to borrow  
For drama shows and fancy dress.  
My Gran was from another age  
And we adored her for it.  
My Gran was a home-maker, a  
hostess extraordinaire -*

*For the adults, a drinks cabinet on  
the wall  
And a trolley laden with cheese;  
For the children, jelly in silver  
dishes  
And a well stocked blue glass  
sweetie jar.  
Her home was elegant, not flash -  
And full of light in every way.  
She'd pursued suburban dreams  
And delighted in their comfort  
and joy.*

*My Gran was from another age  
And we loved our visits there.*

*My Gran was a carer, a daughter,  
a mother,  
A nurse to our Nanna and Brian.  
She was patient and thoughtful,  
persistent and kind  
So loyal and loving, she really  
didn't mind  
The sacrifices made for the  
service offered.*

*My Gran was from another age  
And we admired her for it.*

*My Gran was 'Mummy' to my mum  
and 'Gran-Gran' to my kids.  
Through all the years of family life her  
discernment was steadfast  
Yet her high expectations left plenty  
of room to be oneself.  
I loved to see her with my children,  
drawing them on to her knee,  
She used that gentle sing-song voice  
with an edge of authority  
'Now Now', 'Ri-ight', 'Let me see...'*

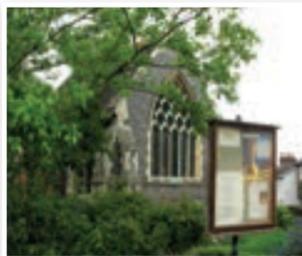
*My Gran was from another age  
And we honour her for it.*

*My Gran was a lifelong teacher,  
She showed so much to me.  
She taught me posture and poise  
Tap and the Charleston;  
She taught me hosting and cooking,  
And modelled marriage and caring;  
She opened my eyes to beauty  
and colour  
And instilled in me confidence to be  
feminine  
And truly me.*

*My Gran was from another age.  
My Gran has gone to another place,  
And we are grateful for her.*

# Notices from the Tring Churches

## ST MARTHA'S METHODIST CHURCH



### THANKSGIVING SERVICE

On Sunday 1 March, instead of our morning service at 10.00am the church will hold a 3.00pm service to give thanks for our completed building project. Jean has very kindly offered to provide a meal to follow the service.

### FRIENDSHIP CLUB

The Ladies Friendship Club will meet again at St Martha's on Tuesday afternoon 3 March, when Christine Tebbutt will be visiting to give a talk.

### LENT LUNCH AT ST MARTHA'S

This will take place on Wednesday 4 March from 12noon till 2.00pm.

### HOUSE GROUPS

John and Jennifer's house group will continue at the church on 4 and 18 March and every other Wednesday at 2.15pm.

### WORLD DAY OF PRAYER

This year's event will take place on Friday 6 March at St Martha's. The theme will be 'Rise! Take your mat and walk' and the service has been prepared by the women of Zimbabwe.

### ST MARTHA'S AGM

This year's AGM will take place after morning service on Sunday 8 March.

1 March 3.00pm  
Thanksgiving Service led by  
**Revd Rachael Hawkins**

8 March 10.00am  
Communion  
**Revd Rachael Hawkins**

15 March 10.00am  
**John Benson**

22 March 10.00am  
**Chris Nash**

29 March 10.00am  
**Bob Blencowe**

## NEW MILL BAPTIST CHURCH



### BRIGHT HOUR

First Tuesday of every month  
2.30pm

### MILL CAFÉ

Thursdays 11.30am-1.30pm

1 March 10.30am  
**Tim Prouse**

8 March 10.30am  
**Gerald Webber**

15 March 10.30am  
**Steve Brehm**

22 March 10.30am  
**John Heasman**

29 March 10.30am  
**Peter Wortley**

## TRING COMMUNITY CHURCH



### SERVICES

Every Sunday 10.30am  
Nora Grace Hall

## CORPUS CHRISTI CATHOLIC CHURCH

### SUNDAY MASS

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

### WEEKDAY MASS

Mondays 10.00am  
Thursdays 10.00am  
Rosary Prayer group after  
Mass

### THURSDAYS

Christian Meditation Group  
8.00pm in Sacristy

### FRIDAYS

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

### SATURDAYS

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

### SUNDAYS

2.00-3.00pm Power Hour  
Group Years 7 - 9

### JUSTICE AND PEACE GROUP

**Michael Demidecki**  
michaeldemidecki@gmail.com

### ROSARY PRAYER GROUP

Thursdays, after 10.00am  
Mass

### LADIES GROUP

**Annabelle Halliday**

### CHILDREN'S LITURGY

**Viv Bryan, Helen Bojarski**

### SAFEGUARDING

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

### MEDITATION

Thursdays 8.00pm

## HIGH STREET BAPTIST CHURCH



### SUNDAY MORNING WORSHIP

Service at 10.30am with  
Junior Church and Crèche

### SUNDAYS @ 7

First Sunday of the month at  
7.00pm

### ACTIVITY ROOM

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

### COFFEE FOR A CAUSE

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

### TOTS

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

### GAMES AFTERNOON

Wednesdays 2.00-4.00pm  
Traditional games, puzzles  
and refreshments

### PLAY CAFÉ

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

### FRIDAY CAFÉ

Fraturdays 12.00-1.30pm  
Freshly cooked lunches

### WHO LET THE DADS OUT

First Saturday of the month at  
8.30am to 10.00am

# Tring Team Anglican Churches

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

### 1ST SUNDAY OF THE MONTH

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

### 2ND SUNDAY OF THE MONTH

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

### 3RD SUNDAY OF THE MONTH

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

### 4TH SUNDAY OF THE MONTH

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

### 5TH SUNDAY OF THE MONTH

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

### DACORUM FOODBANK

Weekdays 10.00am St P&P

### BABY SONG TIME

Mondays in term time 11.00am St P&P

### TODDLER WORSHIP

Second Tuesday of each month 11.00am  
St P&P

### WEEKDAY SERVICES

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

### YOUTH CAFÉ

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

### MEDITATION

Thursdays 8.00pm Corpus Christi

### COFFEE MORNINGS

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

### YOUNG ADULTS GROUP TAYA

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

### FIRST SATURDAY LUNCH

Saturday 7 March  
From 1.00pm for those who have been  
bereaved to meet and eat with others.  
Contact Huw Bellis for information on  
01442 822170.

### BAPTISM PREPARATION

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

### AFTERNOON TEA

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

### BOOK GROUP

Book Group does not meet in March

### CRAFT AND A CUPPA

Tuesdays 2.00pm, St P&P

### WEDDING EVENT

Sunday 8 March 11.00am  
Tring Parish Hall

### MEN'S SOCIETY

Thursday 12 March 12.30pm  
Half Moon, Wilstone

### FOTCH SPRING LUNCH

Call My Bluff  
Sunday 29 March 12.30pm  
Tring Parish Hall

### PIANO & MORE

Sunday 8 March 3.00pm St P&P



# Useful contacts

## TRING TEAM PARISH

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

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

**School Chaplaincy and Team Vicar**  
(Tring School, Long Marston, Wilstone)  
Rev Jane Banister  
01442 822170  
jane@tringteamparish.org.uk  
jbanister@tringschool.org

**Curate**  
Rev Sarah Marshall  
St George's House  
3 New Mill Place  
Tringford Road  
07538 888502  
sarah@tringteamparish.org.uk

**Diocesan Lay Minister**  
Mike Watkin  
01442 890407

**Parish Co-ordinators**  
Roy Hargreaves  
01442 823624  
roy.hargreaves@btinternet.com

John Whiteman  
01442 826314  
john@tringteamparish.org.uk

**Church Wardens**  
Chris Hoare (Tring)  
01442 822915

Ian Matthews (Tring)  
01442 823327

Jane Brown (Aldbury)  
01442 851396

Ray Willmore (Aldbury)  
01442 825723

Christine Rutter (Puttenham)  
01296 668337

Ken Martin (Wilstone)  
01442 822894

Rev Jane Banister  
(Long Marston)  
01442 822170

**Tring Team Administration**  
Administrator  
Trish Dowden  
admin@tringteamparish.org.uk

Janet Goodyer  
pewsheets@tringteamparish.org.uk

**Hall Bookings**  
Janet Goodyer  
01442 824929  
jjgoody@ntlworld.com  
tringparishhall@hotmail.com

**Hall Secretary**  
Barbara Anscombe  
01442 828325  
Bandb33@talktalk.net

**Safeguarding**  
Jon Reynolds  
07712 134370  
safeguarding@tringteamparish.org.uk

**ST MARTHA'S METHODIST CHURCH**  
**Minister**  
Rev Rachael Hawkins  
01442 866324  
rachael.hawkins@methodist.org.uk

**Senior Steward**  
Rosemary Berdinner  
01442 822305

**AKEMAN STREET BAPTIST CHURCH**  
**Minister**  
Rev David Williams  
01442 827881

**Administrator**  
Emma Nash  
01442 827881

**CORPUS CHRISTI ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH**  
**Parish Priest**  
Father David Burke  
01442 863845  
davidburke@rcdow.org.uk  
www.rcdow.org.uk/tring

**HIGH STREET BAPTIST CHURCH**  
**Ministers**  
Joe Egan 07521 513493  
joe@tringbaptistchurch.co.uk  
Ruth Egan 07521 513494  
ruth@tringbaptistchurch.co.uk

**Assistant Minister**  
Kevin Rogers  
km\_rogers@outlook.com

**Administration/facilities hire**  
admin@tringbaptistchurch.co.uk  
01442 824054

**NEW MILL BAPTIST CHURCH**  
**Minister**  
Vacancy

**JUSTICE & PEACE GROUP**  
affiliated to  
Churches Together in Tring

**Secretary**  
Michael Demidecki  
07887 980004  
michaeldemidecki@gmail.com  
www.justiceandpeacetring.org

**OUR CHURCHES ONLINE**  
www.tringteamparish.org.uk  
www.tringchurchmusic.org.uk  
www.stmarthas-tring.org.uk  
www.tringbaptistchurch.co.uk  
www.newmillbaptist.org.uk  
www.akemanstreet.org.uk  
www.rcdow.org.uk/tring

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**Design**  
Kev Holt  
Ginger Promo

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

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

## COMMENT DEADLINES

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

## Crossword puzzle answers From page 32

**ACROSS**  
1. CANTERBURY  
7. PARSONS  
8. TASTE  
10. CROSIER  
11. ELIZA  
12. LEADER  
15. ASKING  
17. PILOT  
18. ETERNAL  
21. EAGLE  
22. MOTHERS  
23. CONSONANCE

**DOWN**  
1. CURIO  
2. NAOMI  
3. ENSURE  
4. BATHERS  
5. ROSSINI  
6. APOCALYPSE  
9. EVANGELIST  
13. ALLEGRO  
14. ESTEEMS  
16. SERMON  
19. EATEN  
20. NIECE



Old Church House,  
Tring

**Mummy and me Ballet**  
Thursday 9.30-10.00am

**Preschool Ballet**  
Friday 2.15-2.45pm  
Saturday 9.00-9.30am

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