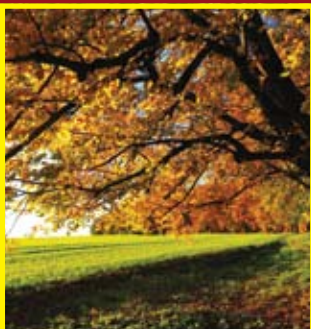


COMMENT

THE MAGAZINE OF THE CHURCHES IN TRING



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Editorial



If you have ever listened to 'Saturday Live' on Radio 4, you will know that one of their regular features is to thank people. A listener calls in with the story of how someone helped them in the past for no other reason than they needed help – and often they are people they did not know and were never able to thank at the time. It's often a very heartwarming story (though it must be an amazing co-incidence if the person who did the helping actually hears it).

As I am always on the look out

for new ideas to make into regular Comment features, I wondered if any readers had similar experiences? It doesn't have to be someone you didn't know who helped you – maybe it was just someone inspirational who helped at the right time in your life. Please tell us the story of who you would like to thank and I will print it.

My big thank you is much more recent: to all those who wrote contributions for this edition of the magazine. I found myself short of quite a number when the deadline came and panicky emails were sent out... I won't name the people – but you know who you are – friends from various churches who put pen to paper at short notice to

make sure Comment magazine wasn't too thin this month.

With next year being 100 years since the end of WWI, I also wondered if anyone has any Tring (or the villages) in wartime stories? This can either be stories of your family handed down or of your own from WWII if you lived here then. I look forward to hearing from you.

Remember to send in feedback if you feel strongly about something that has been contributed. The deadline for the November edition is a little earlier this month. It would help greatly if you could submit your articles before 6 October.

The Editor

What the Almighty can do...

Innovation is often seen as a golden key in today's world, something that will unlock many wonders and is to be hunted for and valued and can be the key to success (acknowledging of course that not all innovation leads to success). But the value we give to innovation can lead to a devaluing of tradition and old, practised routines.

Autumn is a time when we have many yearly festivals; we move in quite quick succession from Harvest to All Saints' Day to Remembrance Day, with us gradually becoming aware that Advent and Christmas are also approaching. As the years go by, it can be hard to come to all the yearly festivals with the same sense of newness or excitement that we may have experienced previously. One of the reasons why I think we focus so much on children at Christmas time, is that we see in them the excitement and wonder of that festival which we wish we could experience again. Harvest time might have a similar feel: we take comfort in the singing of familiar harvest hymns, enjoy the sight of the Church being decorated and the smell of the fruit and vegetables on display, but somehow it doesn't have the same sparkle that it had as we were growing up.

And yet we celebrate these festivals each year because they are important and if we approach them in a jaded,

unexpected way, then we may miss some of the insights into God and his love for us that they have to offer.

I was listening recently to the Sunday service on Radio 4 and heard again a familiar hymn which includes the lines: (name that hymn!) 'Ponder anew, What the Almighty can do...' I was sat quietly at home, getting myself ready for some time of prayer, and those words spoke to me in a way that they hadn't done before about what that time of worship, and regular times of worship, can be about, namely, taking time to ponder once again on what the Almighty can do, has done and will do in the future.

That thought led me to thinking about the festivals that we celebrate each year. These festivals aren't about innovation, new messages from God, but rather they are important opportunities for us to stop and 'ponder anew' on all that God can do.

At Harvest time my mind turns to themes such as God's generosity to us, his activity in the world, our stewardship of the planet and him continuing to hold to his promise to Noah that 'As long as the earth endures, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night, shall not cease' (Genesis 8:22).

You may have other themes that come into your mind. Many of these themes have been preached on and

reflected upon on many occasions, but just because the theme is an old one, that does not mean that it can't have something to say to us that is important.

In a similar way, we gather in worship each week, because it is important to take the opportunity to spend time with God, but that can lead to us taking for granted the great God that we are privileged to worship and his love for us.

I was ill for a few days recently and confined to the sofa. As I gradually improved, so I took a walk out into the garden. It was so wonderful to feel the sun and the wind, to walk up and down the garden without feeling dizzy and to enjoy the sights and sounds of the approaching Autumn. We so easily take the gifts that we've been given for granted. Harvest is just one opportunity for us to 'ponder anew' on all that God has given to us and remind ourselves that we worship a mighty God who deserves all the praise and gratitude that we can give.

Blessings,

Rachael Hawkins

St Martha's Methodist Church



500 Years of the Reformation



Luther's theology and the legacy of the Reformation

The second of four pieces on this 500th anniversary year of the Reformation looked at the life of Martin Luther, ending up with the question of what Luther's central theological ideas were, and how we might view their legacy. It is perhaps a mug's game even to try to answer such huge questions in the length of a Comment article, but having foolishly told the editor I would try, here I stand: I cannot do otherwise.

Church reforms

Luther's original intention was certainly not to invent a new branch of Christianity called Protestantism, but as the implications of the 95 Theses unfolded (see last month) he began to work out a distinct theology and programme of church reforms.

Some of Luther's key theological ideas – crucial for debates as the Reformation developed – were sketched in three short but significant tracts of 1520-21: To the Christian Nobility of the German Nation (written in German

for those with political power); The Babylonian Captivity of the Church (written in Latin for the clergy); and The Freedom of a Christian (written in two versions in both languages).

He took aim at church corruption, denouncing as unbiblical various marks of separation that marked out the clergy as a 'special interest' group – such as compulsory clergy celibacy and the claim that only the Pope could legitimately interpret scripture or summon a Church Council. Luther argued instead for the 'priesthood of all believers'. He claimed that only three of the seven sacraments of the Catholic Church – Baptism, Eucharist and Penance (confession) – genuinely passed the biblical test of being 'a divine promise marked by a divine sign' (later judging the last as of lesser importance).

Faith, grace and scripture

From these and other works developed what have become known as the three *solas*: *sola fide*, *sola gratia*, *sola scriptura* (faith alone, grace alone, scripture alone). Each of these inter-connected ideas prioritised something Luther believed was threatened by a rival idea which had gained too much prominence in church teaching.

First, 'faith' (*fides*, connoting trust) mattered more than 'works': our 'justification' (what sets us in right relationship with God) comes through our trusting God in Christ, not from our own good deeds.

Second, God's grace, not our own 'merit', is the means by which we are justified before God: there is nothing in us which qualifies us for salvation. Hardly any theologian of the time denied that grace mattered, and – despite the indulgences controversy – official teaching was not that we could 'earn' our place in heaven through our own merits. But what Luther challenged was the view that for grace to be effective, you needed to co-operate with it (so on Luther's view, God is the sole agent in grace). For Luther, we are by our own natures alone too corrupt to do good works of genuine merit: hence his crucial contrast between the Law (which condemns us: we'll always fall short), and the Gospel (through which alone we are saved).

Third, scripture has priority over church tradition: all church teachings should be biblically based; scripture should be the norm for Christian life (so the availability of the Bible in vernacular languages was key); and the church has no authority to make new doctrines necessary for salvation.

Why do good works?

We might wonder (and plenty have): if we are not at all justified through our own spiritual efforts, but only through Christ, why bother doing good works? Luther's answer is essentially: as an expression of overflowing gratitude. We should love our neighbours not to secure ourselves divine brownie points, but out of sheer gratitude for what God has done for us in Christ. (Strictly speaking, he seems to say, it is not us who love and do good works at all, but God through us.) As he puts it, 'A Christian is a perfectly free lord of all, subject to none. A Christian is a perfectly dutiful servant of all, subject to all.'

The real presence of Christ

Later reformers were more radical in their break with Catholicism than was Luther (for example, over the nature of the Eucharist: Luther, for all his criticism the Catholic doctrine of transubstantiation,

still held to the real presence of Christ in the bread and wine – a view rejected by some other reformers, such as John Calvin's precursor Huldrych Zwingli).

Life and work

The Protestant Reformation has often been thought to have had a much wider influence than on the church alone: an influence on how we modern folk view ourselves. One of its legacies has sometimes been labelled the 'sanctification of ordinary life'. For instance, the centrality of ordinary family life as an arena in which a valuable Christian life could be lived, and the focus on the importance of being an industrious, productive member of society as opposed to an unworldly ascetic (the so-called 'Protestant work ethic').

Freedom and conscience

But possibly the Reformation's most controversial consequence concerns freedom – the topic of the third of Luther's tracts – and the importance of individual conscience. Examples of the so-called 'radical' Reformation, such as the Anabaptists, made a greater break with hierarchy than did Lutheranism. This greater focus on liberty – marked, for instance, by giving greater authority to individual local congregations – made such groups highly prone to schisms. What, some have worried, prevents all



this going off the rails?

Related developments in some forms of contemporary 'Evangelical' Christianity – listening for the 'leadings of the Spirit' – have led others to worry about whether there are any external checks against individual interpretation of the 'voice of God'.

The proliferation of denominations

Luther could not have foreseen the splintering of Protestantism into manifold Christian denominations, and it is hard to think that he would have approved. (The distinct development of one post-Reformation church, Anglicanism, has often been seen – and has sometimes consciously seen itself – as an attempt at a *via media*, a middle way, between the Catholic and Protestant traditions.) But certainly, an excessive focus on unchecked individual freedom risks completely losing sight of a key part of



what Luther meant by the 'freedom of a Christian': to be free from one's – sinful – self, not free to 'be oneself', in the way that our more individualistic age might put it.

Scratching the surface

There is far more to Luther than I have had space for here. I've said nothing about his contributions to education – for girls as well as boys – in sixteenth century Wittenberg; his conviviality; or his love of – and contributions to – church music. (I suspect Luther would have been a regular at Beer and Hymns.) And as this article has hinted, there is, of course, far more to the Reformation than Luther. But the other names mentioned in this article are, like him, Dead White Males.

In the final article of this series, then, Sylvie Magerstädt will explore some key women of the Reformation.

John Lippitt, St Peter & St Paul



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Vicarage life in the 40s and 50s

My three sisters, my brother and I were 'vicarage children', a term not much used these days. My father's parish was situated on the outskirts of Rickmansworth and consisted of three churches, two fairly rural and one in a fast-growing suburb which is where I spent most of my formative years.

Our enormous vicarage was built in 1875, set in large grounds with the Church School playing fields on one side and the Church just the other side of the driveway. It comprised four reception rooms, a typically old kitchen, complete with copper and large walk-in larder and an offshoot from the kitchen known as the 'beyond'. The yard outside the back door had two coal sheds and a rather draughty toilet. A further small indoor room, generally used for storage, was cleared for a while for a local doctor's surgery. The patients' waiting room was in the porch on the side of the house which was really more like a large conservatory.

The cellar, large, damp and musty, was used for storing apples and pears, milk, butter and other perishables.

Two staircases led from opposite ends of the house to the first floor comprising no fewer than seven bedrooms of which at least four were good doubles. It suited very well for a family of seven, but in the main, one or two rooms were let, usually to local teachers. A priest from a neighbouring parish used our loft for his electric trains.

Our huge garden was home to many trees – a holm oak, chestnut, cedar, fir, lime, sycamores as well as vast lawn areas. It was a haven for play and for camping in the summer. We kept cats, dogs, rabbits, tortoises, chickens, ducks and geese. They all fitted in not just to family life but parish life except for the geese which chased members of the congregation up the drive to Church!



My parents were early risers. Mothers wanted the first round of chores dealt with before we were up for breakfast, family prayers and over a mile's walk to school. Father started the day with Mass at 6.30am or 7.30am and sometimes additionally at 9.00am. When we were older we had to attend the earliest Mass on feast days before catching the bus to school in Watford. Evening prayer was at 6.30 every day and the angelus was rung at 6.00pm. If our father thought he may not be available by 6.00pm we were summoned to ring it. 'Three threes and a nine' was embedded in our minds.

We had family time again in the early evening with stories followed by prayers. We often went to bed hearing the distant rumble of voices from the dining room below where my father regularly held meetings.

Our vicarage had an almost open door. Many parishioners walked straight in the front door and proceeded through the house in search of my parents for business or a cup of tea and a chat. It wasn't unusual to find people using our upstairs toilet! As we grew older we had to be very cautious how we walked around the house! It was as if the parishioners were our extended family. Prior to Confirmation services, women and girls would use our sitting room to have their white veils fitted; the Bishop and other priests used the study for vesting, following supper in the dining room.

The St Petertide garden party was a highlight for us. We would watch through the bars of our bedroom window, while everyone ate, drank and danced. Sometimes a little food came our way much to our delight.

Our visitors were not only there in the daytime. We sometimes had children staying with us if their families were facing problems. We accepted it as a



matter of routine.

Our doorbell rang frequently and we were expected to know how to receive different callers. On occasions there would be a queue in the porch and hall. The stage at which the doctor's surgery was at our house was also a doubtful one for fear that someone wishing to see the vicar may end up with the doctor and vice-versa! Homeless people were also fairly regular visitors and Mother provided them with sandwiches, and tea in tin mugs in the yard outside the back door.

My father was obliged to take two weeks holiday in August when we had to be away from the parish. Although we were small, it wasn't easy to fit five children in the back of a Morris 8, so a family friend would accompany us with her identical vehicle to Teignmouth or other resorts and the trunks would go by train. We have memories of visiting numerous churches. It was quite a novelty on Sundays to have our father sitting with us for a service – although more often than not he was called on to assist the priest.

Children's play and language often relates to their home life. We often played churches and my older sister was never allowed to forget that she used to call out 'Stand for the holy Gospel!' and I used to sing 'Oh that I had swings of angels.'

In many ways conditions were quite hard in an old and cold vicarage with limited means for the basics (not to consider luxuries) but we knew no other and were all very happy. We had so much to be thankful for.

Margaret Gittins, St Peter & St Paul



My faith story



Attempting to tell my 'faith story' is to reveal something deeply personal about myself, the state of my relationship with God and what I really believe.

I don't find that easy and suspect I'm not alone in that; these days we may be more willing to discuss other very intimate details of life, including our sexuality, than our religious beliefs. And unlike the tale of our sex lives, our faith story concerns the One 'to whom all hearts be open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid'.

My story begins with what was nearly a non-event. In a sleepy, very traditional Anglican church in a semi-rural setting on the edge of Richmond Park, my parents, four siblings and my godparents gathered to baptize the latest and last addition to our family. But... there was no sign of the vicar, and eventually someone was sent round to the vicarage, next door to the Church. The Reverend Earnest Beard, a bachelor with a plummy voice, was found having tea in the garden, having completely forgotten he was supposed to be on duty.

Whether or not this story is true, the baptism certainly took place. Sunday mornings for the rest of my boyhood were marked by the walk across Ham Common to Sunday School and later Matins – never Holy Communion, a sparsely attended service at which children were definitely not welcome. Leaving home and becoming a member of the college 'God squad' during my three years at university gave rise to more spiritual experiences; worship was firmly based on the Eucharist; questions, doubts and debates were facilitated and encouraged; and there was the precious experience of being part of a Christian community which met and worshipped regularly together.

I also had the immense privilege of living for three years within walking distance of Kings College Chapel, and the chance to go to Evensong, where I was immersed in some of the most beautiful architecture and music of

western civilisation. Being young, I didn't take the opportunity nearly often enough, but when I did, I believe I found in this sumptuous experience some glimpses of God.

The next stage of life – fifteen years working as a civil engineer in London, Suffolk and West Africa – marked a retreat from this; Church-going ceased on a regular basis and was mainly confined to when I visited my parents. The exception was my two-and-a-half years in West Africa: the local Methodist church was the only African-led organisation of which I could be a part. Moreover, living in a predominantly Muslim society meant I could admire the discipline, regularity and beauty of Muslim worship, have Muslim friends, and envy their being released from the strain of having to believe in the one God who somehow at the same time has three Persons.

My first marriage to Sheena in 1983 marked a return to being a regular part of a worshipping community when we became members of the parish church in South Woodford. In my twenty-five years there, I found encounters with the Holy Spirit in various ways: more or less weekly attendance at parish communion, monthly house group meetings and my

So is my relationship to God essentially marked by being part of a community of believers, and is that experience really different from being a part of any sort of welcoming society – a cricket club, say, or an amateur dramatic society? Is my regular assent to the words of the Christian creed, and its definitions of God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, more or less important to me than my belief in the vital need for promoting Christian values, as I understand them? And would it be possible to express those values in purely humanistic terms, with no reference to God?

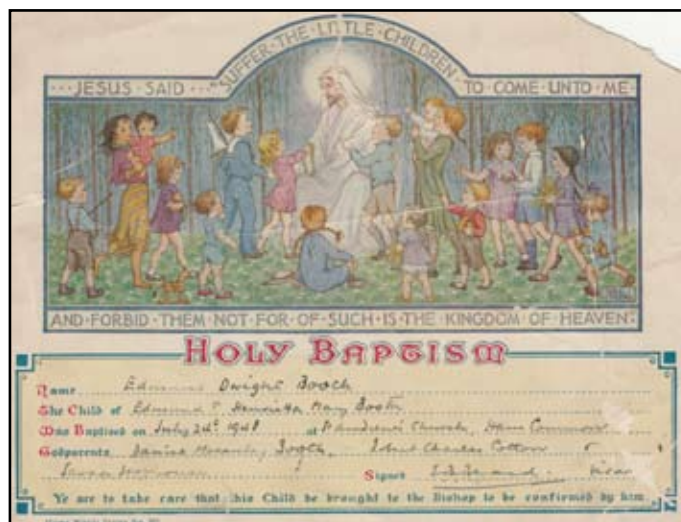
I don't have fully satisfactory answers to any of these questions and as a 69-year-old, I find it no easier to express in words my relationship to God, and my understanding of him, than I did as a squalling baby, waiting for the vicar to arrive and baptise me. Increasingly, I think of talk about God as being poetic rather than literal, whose meaning is no more transparent or literal than a passage of music by Mozart but which uses the language of poetry and metaphor to express something which is nevertheless profound and vitally important.

Our rector Huw Bellis preached recently about the role emotion played in underpinning our faith. Emotion, of course, can lead one dangerously astray, but there is no doubt in my mind that it plays a more vital and necessary role in finding God than any amount of rational argument.

So Edmund, at the end of your story, declare your faith! Do you love the Lord Jesus? Oh, yes, yes, especially as revealed in his holy gospel... but I don't want to count him as a pal, an intimate to help me through the rough patches

of life. *Do you love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength?*... (pause)... yes, I try most of the time, and sometimes, perhaps I get close. *Do you love your neighbour as yourself?*... (longer pause)... often I have fallen short. I live in hope and trust of the infinite mercy of God.

Edmund Booth, St Peter & St Paul



role over many years in helping to run the Sunday School group for 10-13-year-olds.

Sheena died in 2002, and Anna and I married in 2009, shortly afterwards moving together to Tring. We found in St Peter & St Paul another Christian community which welcomed, accepted, challenged and demanded of us, and to which we felt able to make some contribution.

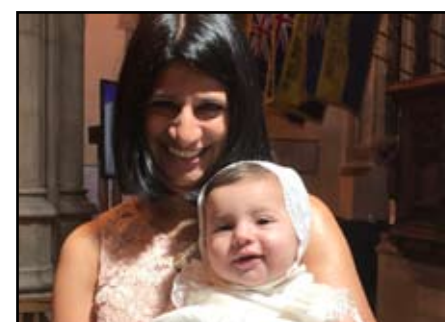
Scarlett's spiritual journey

Joe and I were given 'The Christening Bible' following Scarlett's thanksgiving. Both Joe and I wanted to start Scarlett off on her spiritual journey and it was the perfect tool to help with that.



It's condensed the Bible stories into small enough versions for us to have the time to read one a day to her.

As a family it gave us something to talk about as well as we frequently



discussed the day's story after Scarlett had gone to bed. For me it served as a useful reminder of the things I had learnt, taking me back to my Sunday School days!

Scarlett was always quite absorbed when Joe read the stories to her and it created a lovely sense of peace and calm in our household. She loves to go to her bookshelf and often pulls it out and looks at it.

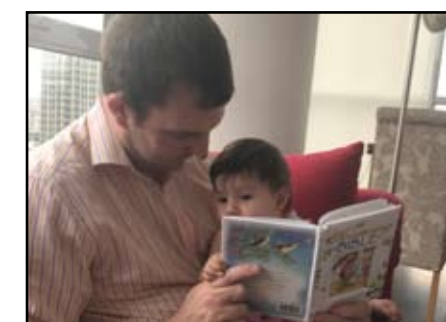
With our current circumstances of travelling and relocating – Scarlett has lived in Trinidad, the UK and now in Chicago – 'The Christening Bible' has been a lovely present which we can take with us everywhere to provide a sense of constancy and continuity for her.

For all families seeking a way to incorporate a spiritual and biblical component into everyday life with a baby or young family, I really recommend it. We've loved it so much we bought a copy for Scarlett's cousins and hopefully they can all discuss what they have

learnt as they grow up using them.

Scarlett was christened on 4 June in our church in Tring, St Peter & St Paul's, which was very special for our little family and her Godparents. As we continue to move forward, 'The Christening Bible' and daily prayers are the ways we have incorporated into our lives teaching and sharing our faith to Scarlett.

Shalini McGregor, St Peter & St Paul



Broken

When I saw the trailers for 'Broken' on BBC 1 earlier in the summer, I was quick to make sure we watched it. Sean Bean, Jimmy McGovern – what's not to like? (But prepare to be depressed and the possibility of the hero dying...) Yet I couldn't find anyone locally who had watched it to write for Comment. I have borrowed some quotations from an article in Premier Christianity by Revd Cindy Kent, with permission, to use here.

For those who don't know it's a drama series about a well-respected and much loved Catholic priest presiding over a large parish on the outskirts of a major city in northern England. Sean



Bean plays, with huge sensitivity, the troubled priest, Father Michael, who has himself been 'broken' by terrible events in his childhood that haunt him as an adult. Yet he has learned compassion for the whole gamut of humanity that he meets daily.

It is to be hoped no priest, minister or pastor has to engage with the range of terrible events that Father Michael does in the six week series. He helps a woman who loses her job and can't feed her family; she steals her dead mother's pension and is faced with prison; he supports a woman in his congregation whose troubled son is unlawfully killed by the police; he becomes confessor to a woman who robbed her firm to feed her fruit machine addiction and tries to prevent her from committing suicide; he tries to heal rifts between neighbours – an arrogant devout Catholic and a caring gay man; and in his time off he spends time with his mother who is dying of cancer.

We see him struggle with his humanity and imperfection, experiencing guilt, spiritual doubts and personal fears yet his passion for justice and his fellow man means that he fights the 'system'

when it seems to fail those around him; 'humankindness is overflowing' through all his actions but there are no happy endings.

He would light a candle when he met with anyone to remind them of God's presence with them. 'The people who came to him were overwhelmed by the weight of their sin and he took that from them and brought God into the picture,' said Cindy Kent. 'The series covered many of the ills in today's society, from foodbanks to the benefits system and biased cops and mental illness – all human life was there.'

If you can see this series next time around or see it on 'Catch up', you won't be sorry. 'He's the sort of priest we all want in times of trouble or hardship and he has an integrity that all priests aspire to. He isn't perfect, he's broken, and we can identify with that with our own brokenness,' said Cindy Kent.

Oh and – spoiler alert – Sean Bean doesn't die!

Annette Reynolds, St Peter & St Paul



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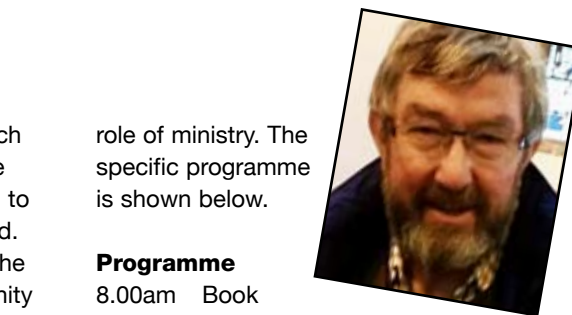
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A GOOD LIFE DESERVES A GOOD DEATH



A day to consider all the practical and spiritual aspects of the end of our lives here on earth.

You may have already seen posters and articles about this event but here are the final details and your opportunity to save the date and come along. The whole idea of the day is to focus on those issues which face us all as we come to the end of our lives. It is designed to allow people to consider the spiritual aspects and also explore some of the practical matters and concerns that inevitably surround the process.

The morning will start with services in St Peter & St Paul's Church at 8.00am and 10.00am with breakfast in between. In each of the services, the sermon will be on this aspect of our lives. Following the 10.00am service, there will be an opportunity to transfer to the Parish Hall where we will have 'Grave Talk Cafe', which is a programme designed by the Church of England to allow people to talk about any aspect of living and dying.

At 12.30pm there will be a light lunch served in the hall and we shall have some speakers on various subjects to do with the practical issues involved. They will speak very briefly and in the afternoon there will be the opportunity to talk to them individually about any specific queries or concerns.

We will then revert to the Church for individual discussions in the afternoon followed by a concert / reflective recital. The day will end at 4.30pm with the traditional All Souls service, which gives an opportunity for all in the parish to remember and celebrate their loved ones.

The whole event is open to all and there will be no charge. However, the central part of the day in the Parish Hall will be ticketed to ensure that we have the right logistical and catering arrangements in place. Tickets will be administered by Annette Reynolds. You will find posters and leaflets in St Peter & St Paul's Church giving full details of the event. If you have any suggestions or concerns or would like a particular subject covered, please contact me or any member of the ministry team.

As regular readers of Comment will know, the whole subject of ageing and dying has been something of a focus during this particular year, starting with our Lent courses and reflections. We very much hope that this day will allow people to reflect on the whole subject and openly discuss any concerns that they may have.

Someone once said, 'The job of a parish priest is to prepare his flock for death'. I think most of us would agree there's much more to it than that but nonetheless it is a very important part of the

role of ministry. The specific programme is shown below.

Programme

- 8.00am Book of Common Prayer
Communion Service: 'If for this life only'
- 8.45am Breakfast in Church
- 10.00am Common Worship Communion service: 'If for this life only'
- 11.30am 'Grave Talk Cafe' in the Hall – probably upper room
- 12.30pm Lunch in the hall – lower room
- 1.30pm Individual speakers give a very short address (five minutes) – in the hall
- 2.15pm Move to Church: individual conversations and appointment-making with speakers each located in a separate area
- 3.30pm Reflective concert in Church from Anna Le Hair
- 4.30pm All Souls service

Footnote

A very interesting article on this whole subject was featured in the Sunday Times Magazine on 3 September 2017. It's in the 'How It Feels...' feature and is entitled 'Learn How to Die'. It's an extract from a book 'My Father's Wake: How the Irish Teach us to Live, Love and Die' by Kevin Coolis.

Grahame Senior, St Peter and St Paul
gseior@seniorpartners.co.uk
01442 822 770

Tickets

Please contact me for your (free) tickets for the event described in the article above. You can do this by phone, text or WhatsApp to 07968 312161, email annetter@ad-publishing.com or by putting a note in the R pigeon hole at St Peter & St Paul's.

Annette Reynolds, St Peter & St Paul

A day to consider all the practical and spiritual aspects of the end of our lives here on earth

St Peter and St Paul Church, Tring
8am - 5pm - 5th November 2017

FROM HERE... TO THERE*

*AND ALL THAT DEATH ENTAILS


"Human life is like a sparrow: it flies in through one end of a tiled roof and all about it is brightness and gaiety and feasting and friends. Then it flies out through the other end." The Rite of Burial

Enjoying life in all its fullness
Preparing for death with calm optimism
What does it all mean...
For us?
For those we love?
For others?

A GOOD LIFE
DESERVES A GOOD DEATH

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Cold Meat (Tinned)	Toilet Rolls
Potatoes (Tinned) or Smash	Washing up liquid
Sponge Puddings	Washing powder/liquid
Rice pudding	Cleaning sprays
Custard	Double Duvet (must be new or as good as new)
Fruit (Tinned)	Carrier bags
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Tring: a survival guide

On returning to Hungary in July, Gabi, who had been High Street Baptist Church's first intern, left a very thoughtful letter for Catha and Elena, the two German students who would be replacing her from September. The letter welcomed the girls to 'lovely Tring'. It wished them well and reminded them that they are part of God's plan, quoting Jeremiah 29:11 ('For I know the plans that I have for you,' declares the Lord, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future').

The letter also gave eight top tips for surviving the first few weeks in Tring. Many of the tips made me chuckle, and I realised how in just ten months, a twenty-year-old Hungarian had really got under the skin of us British. I thought you might like to sit down with a nice cup of tea and read this insight into how we are seen by at least one of our European neighbours...

'British people truly love tea, it's not just a myth!' Did you know the British consume 60 billion cups per year, according to the Tea and Infusions Organisation? That's more than 900 cups a year for every man, woman and child in Great Britain - though we no doubt all know someone who likes many more than that...

'Kevin's jokes are funny, but you won't always get them.' Kevin is our assistant minister. His delivery of the notices on a Sunday morning could take centre stage at any comedy club open-mic night. He personifies the British sense of humour: not taking himself too seriously, highlighting his own flaws, leaving no room for ego. Awkward encounters, clumsiness and embarrassing moments are all fodder for Kevin whilst baffling any Hungarians in ear shot.

'If you are at Church, you can't possibly go hungry - there's always something to eat.' For years, HSBC was known as the 'doughnut Church', where on a Sunday morning you were greeted by tea, coffee and doughnuts. With a baker in our midst now, we may have moved onto other sugary delights but Gabi's right: we're proud to be

associated with hospitality in Tring. Like our Friday Café...

'If you are like me and not familiar with any of these words, look them up before your first Friday Café: rhubarb, custard, apron, crumble, bain-marie.' Day one of work at HSBC. Menu: lamb stockpot, rhubarb and custard. A room full of eighty hungry guests. Funnily enough, vocabulary for fruit from northern climes (or cooked milk / cream and egg yolks) hadn't been on her A

that we buy more cards per person than any other nation - a whopping thirty-three each, every year?

'The best time to go to Tesco's is either at 4.00pm or 8.00pm because that's when it's more likely you'll find reduced stuff.' Is this true across the country, or is this

Tring only? (There's an idea for a bit of research and a future article, Ed!)

'Whenever you go to Activity Room, TOTS or Play Café, wear something you don't mind getting dirty. You can get covered in paint easily!' Gabi was too polite to tell Elena and Catha where glitter could be found after a day working with young children at church. And how British children LOVE playing with slime. The messier a session, the better for the children ... but not for Gabi!

'Learn a few interesting facts about your culture / history / home town / country; it will come in handy at some point.' Working with a foreign student gives us great opportunities to learn more about our European neighbours. Gabi obviously had some stock answers when people asked her where she'd come from. She got used to telling us that the capital of Hungary is Budapest, that the country lost two thirds of her territory after World War 1, and that yes, megszentségteleníth-

level equivalent syllabus. Talk about in at the deep end...

'CARDS! Cards everywhere! They even have a shop called House of Cards! Birthdays, Christmas, Easter... seriously, cards for every occasion! You name it, there's a card for it!' Had you realised card-sending is a particular British speciality? The Greeting Card Association tells us proudly that no other country has such a tradition of sending cards or displaying them in our homes; the sending and receiving of cards is an important part of our culture. Perhaps it's not surprising that 85% of all cards are bought by women, but did you know

etettlenségéskedéseitekért is a real word (and it means something like 'for your [plural] continued behaviour as if you could not be desecrated')!

So whether you put your shorts on the minute the sun makes an appearance, whether you grumble throughout a meal, but don't tell the staff (so as not to cause a fuss), or whether you consider queue-jumping a heinous crime, let's be proud of what makes us British while we continue to welcome and laugh at our own foibles with our European friends.

Hannah Asquith
High Street Baptist Church



St Ephrem: ‘The Harp of the Spirit’



‘Hymns have been Britain’s particular and most distinctive contribution to Christian worship.’ So it has been claimed. Certainly for many British Christians, hymns

and worship go together like fish and chips. Yet hymns have a longer history than British Christianity. Basically a hymn is a poem or song to be sung in worship. We tend to draw a distinction between psalms, hymns and canticles but their meanings overlap.

We read in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke that after the Last Supper, Jesus and his disciples sang a hymn before going to the Mount of Olives (perhaps the Passover Psalms 114-118). There is evidence of singing at worship in the Epistles and in Revelation. A third century writer refers to ‘psalms and odes such as from the beginning were written by believers, hymns to Christ the Word of God, calling Him God’.

There is some evidence of hymns in those early centuries but in the fourth century, hymns became more general to express the worshippers’ feelings or to teach doctrine. The title on the Cross was written in Hebrew, Greek and Latin and these were the three languages used in worship in the following centuries. Hebrew is, of course, the language of the Old Testament. Its sister language, Aramaic, was spoken by Jesus, and one dialect of this language became known as Syriac. This was widely used in the eastern part of the Roman Empire and remains in use in worship today by many of the persecuted Christians of the Middle East. Of the writers, teachers and poets who used this language, one of the greatest was St Ephrem.

Ephrem was born around 306 AD. He lived in Nisibis on the Turkish/Syrian border, and spent the last ten years of his life in Edessa where he died on 9

June 373. A very great number of his writings have come down to us and even more writings bear his name. He wrote prose works against heretics, and biblical commentaries on Genesis and on the Diatessaron (a Gospel harmony much used in his time but later abandoned). In addition he wrote verse homilies and, what concerns us here, a dozen or so cycles of hymns, many of which he used as vehicles of teaching for the seasons of the Church’s year.

Our prime concern is, of course, with his hymns and in particular with the few attributed to him which can be found in modern hymn books. The English Hymnal contains one hymn under his name – but I have never heard it used. The more familiar one, attributed to him and included in many hymn books is ‘Strengthen for service, Lord, the hands which holy things have taken’. It is intended to be sung after receiving Holy Communion and in three verses it sums up the connexion between our daily life and Jesus who is the Bread of Life. The hands in which we received the Sacrament are to be used for the service of God and neighbour. The words we have heard in worship are to stay with us, whatever the distractions of noise around us. The reference to holiness (the Sanctus is a very ancient part of the Eucharistic prayer) reminds us not to give in to worldly untruths and, finally, we ask that we are not banished from the Light of Christ we have glimpsed in worship.

This brief hymn is far too short to give us a real appreciation of the great poet’s work. In days when we think humans can or should be able to understand everything, Ephrem protested against human intellectual arrogance. In his day some thought, for example, that Christ’s nature as God or Man could be fully described. For Ephrem, God is a mystery that cannot be fully understood or described.

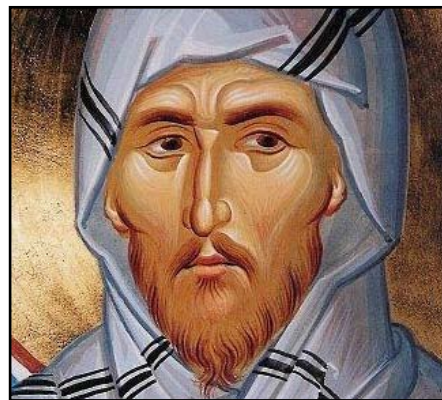
‘How can the servant, who does

not properly know himself, pry into the nature of his maker?’ Ephrem defends Christian doctrine in poetry and for him this included organising choirs of women to sing specially written hymns, hymns which often have a chorus after each verse.

He is concerned to show that everything in Scripture and in Creation is to the eye of faith a pointer to the Creator. His attitude to the Bible is essentially creative – not only were the original writers of Scripture inspired but inspiration is a continuing process and affects every reader. Ephrem sees literalism as deadening. Creation and Scripture are a constant source of wonder, enlivened and made new by the ever-present Spirit. While we must not expect to be able to probe deeply into God’s nature (we are too limited for that) yet we can see and believe: ‘God clothed himself in the likeness of man in order to bring man to the likeness of God’.

Much more could be said to commend this great hymn writer and Teacher of the Faith, to whom was given the title ‘The Harp of the Spirit’. Further accessible examples of Ephrem’s work can be found in Common Worship, Daily Prayer, canticle 80, entitled A Song of Ephrem the Syrian, which begins ‘Behold Fire and Spirit in the womb that bore you’; and another, ‘What shall I give you, Lord, in return for all your kindness?’

Martin Banister, St Albans Abbey



is marked by a wooden cross and inscription. Ralph was some miles behind the lines when he was killed by a shell.

Who do you say that I am?

Imagine being asked that question by the person you know best. What would you say? Parts of society seem obsessed with how people might answer the question, ‘Who do you say that I am?’; endless Facebook statuses, thousands of photos shared online, millions of tweets posted everyday say, ‘Look, look, this is who I am, this is what I think. Look how hilarious/wise/bold/popular I am.’ And even offline, away from the carefully edited lives on social media, often we want people to know who we are and what we think.

Jesus asked his disciples, ‘Who do people say that I am?’ And then, ‘Who do you say that I am?’ What would you answer?

Bible scholar and former Bishop NT Wright says in his book ‘Following Jesus’ (SPCK), ‘The longer you look at Jesus, the more you will want to serve him in his world. That is, of course, if it’s the real Jesus you’re looking at. Plenty of people in the church and outside it have made up a ‘Jesus’ for themselves, they’ve found that this invented character makes few real demands on them. He makes them feel happy from time to time, but doesn’t challenge them, doesn’t suggest they get up and do something about the plight of the world. Which is, of course, what the real Jesus had an uncomfortable habit of doing.’

How do we know that our Jesus is the real deal? That we haven’t made up a ‘Jesus’ to suit us? How do we answer Jesus’ question, ‘Who do you say that I am?’ There are many types of Jesus presented to us. John Pritchard, the former bishop of Oxford, writes about ‘Jesuses’ he’s been offered in ‘Living Jesus’ (SPCK). Maybe you’ve been offered some of these too.

‘Gentle Jesus, well known in Sunday Schools and Primary Schools... calm, tall, blue eyes and fair hair, a strong jaw-line and a strange fondness for long white nighties. Gentle Jesus is everyone’s friend. Gentle Jesus might be comforting, but is remote from our real world.’ John Pritchard recalls that line in the carol, ‘Christian children all must be, mild, obedient, good as he’, and says, ‘such a manifesto was hardly attractive to a boy who wanted to play cricket for England and climb Everest. If I got too close to this Jesus, would I have to drink fruit juice at parties and have a cold shower every time I thought of girls?

This Jesus wasn’t going to go very far in my life.’

John Pritchard was later introduced to ‘National Trust Jesus, who is really rather well brought up. The great thing about this Jesus is that he’s very understated. His churches are a delight to visit occasionally to remind oneself of one’s heritage. This Jesus is frozen in time, but usually in a time which never existed.’

Other Jesuses he mentions are Terminator Jesus, Professor Jesus, and Jesus, the Honorable Member for Galilee South: many variations of Jesus. You could probably add some to the list. We can be faced with so many ideas of who Jesus is, we need wisdom to sift through them, to find the truest, most life-giving pictures of Jesus.

The Jesuses I’ve met

I’d like to share with you some of the Jesuses, whom I’ve found, and who’ve found me.

The Jesus I first found was, as a child of six, when I had a strong sense of Jesus wanting to be my friend. It might sound sweet and childish but that strong sense of Jesus calling me to get to know him better has stayed with me. Children have a great awareness of the spiritual, and this first connection I had with Jesus was one of those stand-still, stay-with-you-forever moments, I knew it mattered and that I had to do something about it.

And then there’s earthy, in-it-all-with-me Jesus, who’s has been around for a long time: Jesus who is there in all parts of life – ordinary and extraordinary, joyful and painful; Jesus who I can speak to normally, not needing special words or ceremony.

Earthy, in-it-all-with-me Jesus is why

**Jesus, Son of the living God,
as you asked Peter, you ask us to decide who you are,
we say you are the Son of man, our pattern for living,
we say you are prophet, inspiration for the way ahead,
we say you are the brother always by our side,
we say you are the anointed one, the Christ,
we say you are the Saviour of all.**

Amen



I struggle sometimes with the next Jesus I was offered: Christian Conference Jesus. This Jesus seems to have lots in common with Walt Disney, providing an escape from the problems of day-to-day life. This Jesus gives you a ‘buzz’, he equips you to cope with the bit of life in between conferences, until you can return for another hit, another Jesus-fix. I’m not sure that this Jesus really exists.

Patient Healer Jesus and Liturgical Worship Jesus are other ‘Jesuses’ I’ve met; space doesn’t allow me to elaborate. In thinking about the identity of Jesus, we are reminded that the truth about who Jesus is comes to us as revelation from God. God’s Spirit, God’s word and God’s people help us discern who Jesus is. We must guard against inventing our own Jesus, and we must move on from knowing only Gentle Jesus. God’s gift of revelation is offered to us today as it was to Peter. Who do you say that Jesus is?

Below are some names or descriptions of Jesus. You might like to meditate on this list and notice whether one stands out to you, perhaps holding that in prayer, asking for further revelation from God.

Jesus Christ, the first and last, Immanuel, God with us. Suffering servant, man of sorrows. Redeemer, mediator, advocate, friend, disturber, bread of life, light of the world, counsellor, Holy one, mighty God, Prince of peace, resurrection and life.

Michelle Grace, Tring Team Parish

Parish magazine October 1917

News has been received that Frederick Turvey was killed in action on 8 August. He joined the Bedfordshire Regiment on 12 February 1915, and was subsequently transferred to the Royal Dublin Fusiliers.

He had been five months in France.

Driver Ralph Battson’s mother has received official information as to the place of his burial. His grave is in the British Cemetery at Duisans, and

Grenfell three months on



As I write at the end of August, only eight families have been rehoused. Not surprisingly most families want to stay near their support group of family, friends, church, and health services. That means 180 households are still in temporary accommodation, although £176m has been set aside to buy houses.

The Notting Hill Carnival brought the community together wearing 'We love Grenfell' tee shirts and releasing doves. But people also wore 'Justice for Grenfell' shirts. Many feel that no one cares for them, but the community also wants to be left alone while working through its grief.

When I got off the Tube at Latimer Road it was impossible to avoid seeing the gaunt icon, which still houses the remains of its missing residents towering above the local shopping street, and visible from living room windows. 'Nothing prepares you ...' is awfully true on reflection.

The question for Christians, indeed for everyone, is not so much how we respond to tragic events but what our

attitudes are to the poor and vulnerable. This particularly concerns the planning, construction and management of social housing, gentrification and allocation policies. The simple solution is to build more housing and Christians should be prepared to pay towards social justice, and be Good News for the Poor.

In the mid-19th century Christians began to provide housing for the working classes, and in the mid-20th century churches founded many housing associations. It is now time for another ground breaking initiative.

Personally we could begin by supporting DENS which works with

homeless people in Dacorum, and buying The Big Issue. This is an excellent magazine, 'a hand up, not a handout'.

Perhaps Churches Together in Tring could address the unacceptable rich-poor divide for next year's Lent course. Housing is the main issue, and it is surprising how easily anyone can become homeless.

In the parable of the Good Samaritan it was the outsider, despised by the rest of the community, who demonstrated God's love to his unknown neighbour.

Leslie Barker, St Peter & St Paul



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Are you hoping to go to University or College in 2018, but are concerned that financial resources might not match up to the requirements? Are you under the age of 22? Have you lived in Aldbury, Long Marston, Marsworth, Pitstone, Puttenham, Tring, Wigginton or Wilstone for at least three years?

To see if you would be eligible for a grant, apply to Tring Charities' Millennium Education Foundation for information and an application form.

Website details: www.tringcharities.co.uk/education

Telephone: Elaine Winter, Secretary to the Trustees 01442 827913

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Please note that the closing date is 15th November 2017 to lodge a completed application for grants payable from Autumn 2018.



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A warm welcome to all...



I am told that it was about twenty-five years ago when the idea of an extension to St Martha's was born. It certainly hasn't been a fast-moving project, and there have been several challenges to overcome along the way, but finally this year, the building work has started.

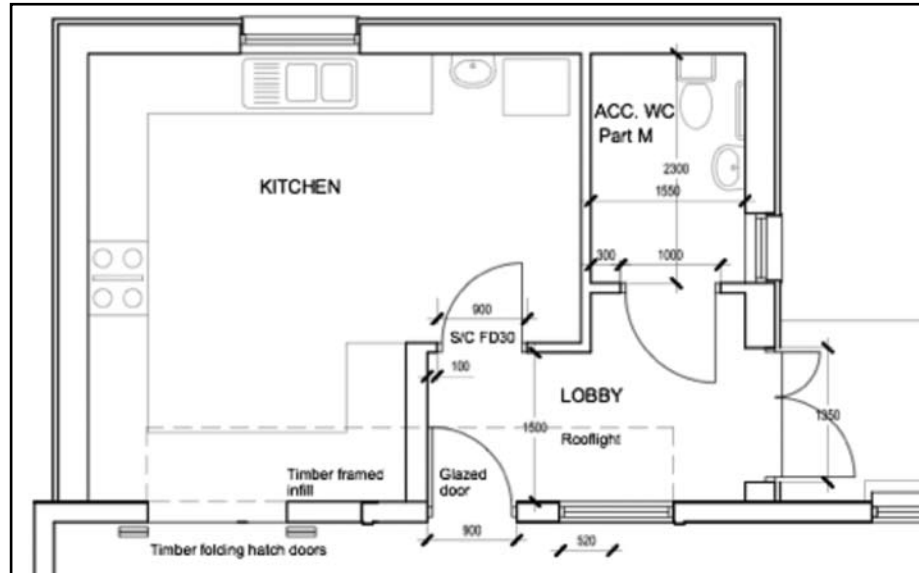
The plan is to build an extension onto the back of the Church, onto a piece of land that we currently don't use. This extension will give us a disabled toilet and a working kitchen with full catering facilities (previously we have only had a power point to boil a kettle, a sink to wash up and cupboards for storage).

Spring saw the foundations dug out and the first bricks being laid. This autumn will see the wall being knocked through and, hopefully, the kitchen being fitted.

There will be tidying up to do afterwards, flooring and chairs need to be thought about, but we are already starting to make plans for how we will use our new facilities. A lunch club is being planned; other ideas include an afternoon family-friendly service, a regular coffee morning and opening our facilities for use by the local community.

It's a work in progress, and we still have money to raise, but we hope to soon be celebrating the opening of our new facilities and the mission opportunities that they will give us as we reach out to our local community with God's welcome.

Rachael Hawkins
St Martha's Methodist Church



Recipe of the month

October is THE month for apples! In Tring the month is set aside for Tring's Own Apple Fayre. One of the highlights is the Pippin Parade through the streets of Tring, down to the Farmer's Market in front of the Parish Church. The celebrations continue with lots of music and dancing on Church Square, an event not to be missed. This year it is on 14 October and among other events, FOTCH are holding a Barn Dance on the 20 October.

The recipe I have chosen for this month is quick and easy and makes a change from the usual apple pies and crumbles. While I was making this recently it brought back many memories of my childhood and how apples at this time of the year took over our lives.

I was lucky enough to spend my childhood in two houses that had orchards as part of their gardens. The second one, from the age of nine, had half an acre of garden with half of it as an orchard, not laid out like a commercial orchard but a wild hidden area at the bottom of the garden with a mixture of trees, some old and past

their best that produced virtually no fruit, but others still fruitful. First in the season came the Worcester Pearman which were quite nice but not as good as the delicious coxes which followed a bit later. There was a plentiful supply of bramleys which, in my opinion, are the best cookers you can get.

Life was busy as we had to help with the apple harvest. Many of them were packed in boxes that were stored in the cellar under the shed and lasted through the winter. As well as apples we had pears, plums and cobnuts, and Dad always grew loads of tomatoes so Mum was kept busy in the kitchen. Freezers were not in common use then so most of it was bottled or turned into jam or chutney. And of course there were always plenty left over for the Harvest Festival at Church and school.

This recipe is Adaptable Apple Cake: adaptable as you can vary the flavour. I make it usually with raisins and cinnamon, but you can keep it plain or throw in some blackberries with the apple or chopped dried apricots and

some flaked almonds.

500gm cooking apples
120gm self raising flour
60gm butter or margarine
90gm castor sugar
2 large eggs, beaten
1 tsp. cinnamon (optional)
60gm raisins (optional)

Grease and line a 7-8" deep, loose bottomed tin. Peel and core the apples and cut them into half-inch chunks. Cream the butter and sugar until soft and fluffy, gradually adding the beaten eggs. Sieve the flour with the cinnamon and fold in and then stir in the apples. Turn into the prepared tin and bake in the oven 180°C for 30-35 minutes or until firm to the touch. Cool before removing from the tin. Serve on its own or with whipped cream! Enjoy!

Janet Goodyer, St Peter & St Paul's



All Saints, Long Marston

CURRY AND QUIZ NIGHT

FRIDAY 13th OCTOBER

7.30 pm for 8 pm start in Long Marston village hall.
Featuring Quiz by Toby & Curry by Huw Beef Rogan
Josh, Sag Aloo, Chana Daal, Rice, Naan (vegetarian option available on request) **Tickets only £15** (includes the curry)
 phone Rev'd Jane 01442 822170
 or email Trish admin@tringteamparish.org.uk



All Souls Services in Tring Parish

Sunday 29th October 6pm
St John the Baptist, Aldbury

Tuesday 31st October 10am
St Cross, Wilstone

Sunday 5th November 4.30pm
St Peter and St Paul, Tring

You are invited to come and remember those who have died.

You may wish to bring a sprig of rosemary or a flower to lay on the altar.

You are also invited to add names to a list of the departed which will be in each of the churches.

Living God's Love



Tweet of the month

One question I have been asked several times over the years is what my favourite bird is. There could be many contenders of the thousands of species I have seen. The rarest is probably New Zealand Storm-petrel; the most spectacular is probably Resplendent Quetzal; one of the most amazing is Sword-billed Hummingbird – its bill is almost as long as its body. The one bird I remember wanting to see the most on a trip was Egyptian Plover. All have their merits as does Black-and-white Owl, Hawk Owl, Wandering Albatross and many others.

However, when asked what my favourite bird is my answer remains the same: Great White Egret. When I was growing up it was a rare bird in Britain and I remember seeing my first on the same day as I saw a Green Heron in 1982. It was only the second time a Green Heron had been seen in Britain and the first was in 1889 so I'd not seen that one! At

the time it was only the 24th Great White Egret in Britain so seeing both together at the same time was an amazing, unforgettable experience.

Although the Green Heron was and is much rarer than the Great White Egret, it was the egret that impressed me the most. Now I have seen over twenty



in Britain and more than 2000 have been recorded; they breed in Somerset and bred in Norfolk for the first time this year. I have also seen thousands

abroad, spread over every continent I have visited, which is all of them except Antarctica – where they aren't found anyway. Despite seeing so many, and even finding several at Tring Reservoirs, their appeal remains undiminished.

Perhaps I should explain that the Great White Egret is a heron and it averages slightly smaller than the Grey Heron. Its feathers are pure white and the bill is normally yellow and the legs are mainly black. It always seems to be a serene bird and a thing of great beauty.

My relationship with the Great White Egret is much, I hope, like my relationship with Jesus should be, undiminished over time, indeed improving with time. Jesus always strikes me as having been a beacon of serenity when all around him were panicking; and his

love for us is also a thing of great beauty and a wonder to behold.

Roy Hargreaves, St Peter & St Paul

What is RE?

What was the study of religion called when you were at school? For me it was first Religious Instruction (RI) then Religious Knowledge (RK) and then finally the familiar Religious Education (RE). For my wife, it was Divinity. Today the subject at GCSE is Religious Studies but it can also be called: Religion; Theology; Philosophy; Philosophy, Religion and Ethics; and many other names.

The variety of names reflects the variety of aims for the subject. Is it to tell young people what they should think – as in the old fashioned RI? Is it, in short, to tell everyone how to be good Christians? Is it to help young people understand European history and English literature? (How can you understand Milton's 'Paradise Lost' or Britain in the sixteenth century without a knowledge of the Bible or Protestant Reformation?) Or is it (in the opinion of many young people) to help them understand the religion of their friends from different faith backgrounds and to help them sort out their own personal beliefs?

The legal framework for Religious Education is mainly set out in two Education Acts from 1944 and 1988. Britain has changed greatly since then. Two changes are significant for Religious Education (or whatever you want to call it). The first is that there are many Britons who follow a faith which is not Christianity or Judaism, the two most common faiths in England in 1944. The figure for people who follow another faith is actually lower than some people would have you believe. Around 1 in 20 (6%) people belong to non-Christian religions.

The other change that is more

significant for Tring is that a large number of people now describe themselves as being of no faith at all. In the British Social Attitudes Survey in 2016 48% described themselves as not having a religion and the National Centre for Social Research 2017 claim their sample was higher at 53%. If you talk further to these people, some of them will describe themselves as 'spiritual but not religious' but they do not appear to want to be associated with the established churches. When I worked in Buckinghamshire, a leading County Councillor expressed surprise that in a school of eight teachers none of them was Christian. He imagined that this was a group of radical young teachers in one of the urban schools. In fact, it was a group of middle-aged, middle-class (and at a guess Conservative-voting) ladies in a posh North Bucks village who just did not count themselves as Christians.

The allegiance to Anglican and Catholic Churches has gone down amongst white Anglo-Saxons and Celts (by which I mean the indigenous people of Wales, Scotland and Ireland). This is a generalization. In London the Anglican Diocese is growing, as are the other churches. One Sunday I drove down after church from St Peter & St Paul, via Sunnyside in Berkhamsted to the Oval on Palm Sunday with a friend. (Unfortunately, his team – Surrey beat mine – Kent). All over the city we saw people who had just left churches with their Palm Crosses. The variety of ethnic backgrounds of people holding the crosses was wonderful: a foretaste of heaven perhaps. The church in London is growing; in market towns and villages it is often shrinking, a reversal of fifty years

ago. While many of the traditional Free Churches are struggling, new life has been breathed into this sector by the arrival of Pentecostal and Adventist Christians, some of whom are taking over old Anglican, Catholic and Free Church buildings for their own use.

The consensus of what RE is about does not exist as it did in 1944. Then it was thought that a study of the Bible would suffice. Very little else was often taught; not much on morals and not a great deal on Christian theology. What we teach in RE must reflect the demographic change outlined above and it must interest young people. When I started teaching RE in 1978 we did quite a bit on 'naming of parts' – the difference between a hassock and a cassock in a Church and a minbar and a mihrab in a mosque. I soon discovered that did not grip their attention! But some did want to hear about what Christians and Muslims thought about the treatment of animals or whether God existed.

RE has some challenges, but more pupils are entered for Religious Studies GCSE than for History or Geography GCSE – partly due to the compulsory nature of the subject. It is also popular with pupils when taught well and openly. It helps young people understand their fellow citizens, the Christian heritage of this nation and its modern multi-faith nature.

Jon Reynolds, St Peter & St Paul
 The views are entirely my own.



Not forgotten

Seeing the frightening and awesome images of Hurricane Irma in early September led us to realise that there were going to be many people in desperate need of help and support. Of course, this is newsworthy for a few days. There will be many other places around the world where natural disasters, war or extreme poverty are no longer newsworthy.

Yet these places are not forgotten. Christian Aid, along with their local

partners, are on the ground giving practical love and support.

Once a year people from St Peter & St Paul run or walk a sponsored half marathon around the five Churches in our parish in support of Christian Aid. This they did in the middle of September, from the members of our Youth Café to some of the older members of our congregations, not all of them regular walkers or people who would call themselves fit.

If you haven't yet sponsored someone and would like to, please contact the Editor who will make sure that this money is added to the total raised to help those in most need around the world.

Huw Bellis, Tring Team



A day in the life of a Baptist Minister's wife



When asked to write this article I thought it would be easy.

I enjoyed reading Andrew Cowley's and Huw's contributions on their roles. But it wasn't easy!

Andrew and Huw wrote about what they do for a living and spend every day of their week doing it and getting paid for it. Mine is more of a role that happens to claim rather a large part of my life!

I suppose the title of a 'Minister's wife' has changed a lot over the years. It used to be a kind of status symbol – a bit like being the Bank Manager's wife or the Doctor's wife. You'd get a kind of hush as people would suddenly realise that here was someone who was married to AN IMPORTANT PERSON! Fortunately that has changed, but I still get introduced as 'our Minister's wife' therefore altering my identity from being Kate Openshaw, mum of three (and maybe even a person in her own right!) who happens to be married to Andrew.

We'd been living in France for twelve and half years before we moved back to England in order for Andrew to start his ministerial training. To be perfectly honest I was looking for a move, either somewhere warmer in France or potentially back in the UK. The Anglican Church we were attending was getting harder to deal with and I just needed something new. I'd gradually pulled away from the French Baptist church because I spent more and more time speaking English and deep emotional stuff (like spiritual stuff) is hard to do in another language unless you're totally bilingual. I wasn't at all disappointed about returning to England though I did think we'd perhaps have more say on the church we were to be assigned to – but in the long run we've made some really good friends here.

Being who I am and where I am has its ups and downs. At the moment it means that I spend two days of the week in paid employment, but then the rest of the week is taken up with church activities. Sometimes it is assumed that I must be good at listening to problems and dealing with issues that come up because I am the Minister's wife. Or that I must have some kind of telepathy with

Andrew so know absolutely everything about all the meetings he's been to. Fortunately the latter isn't the case!

I do love being with people of all ages which helps with the role. We have Tot Spot, our group for babies up to pre-school and their (grand)parents or childminders and I absolutely love this group. We meet some great people and it's an absolute pleasure in being able to serve them and give the adults a space for them to relax and unwind whilst their children play (usually raucous games with Andrew!).

We have a youth group for local kids who are mostly primary school age. The majority of them live on the streets nearby and come happily, but with so many burdens sometimes. This is the more challenging aspect of the role and is one that I do struggle with. There just isn't enough time, or enough money or resources to deal with some of the situations we find ourselves in and that's very sad.

The café has been a great asset to the church. It helped put us on the map and get people through the doors. It's been the starting point for a few of our Sunday regulars and also as a way to reach out to bereaved families after Andrew has taken a funeral. Personally I would love to see it happen on a Saturday too, but we really don't have enough people to manage it. If we had some lovely young students who were looking for volunteer work it would be great...

I'm also involved with Knit & Natter which meets once a week, for anyone who likes to do knitting, stitching, colouring and wants the company of others. It's a good place to make friends and I enjoy that. The ages range from

nineteen to over seventies so it's like an extended family with lots of generations.

Rather surprisingly, the hardest part for me is the Sunday Morning service. Possibly because we have pews, everybody tends to sit in the same seats ALL THE TIME. There's no free movement (don't forget, we don't have sharing of the peace as part of our non-conformist service), and this can make you feel isolated because everybody else is there in their family unit or with their best friends. It was easier when I had kids sitting with me, but they've all grown up and I have a big wide (uncomfortable) pew all to myself. So it's easier to keep playing musical chairs/pews (or the piano!), and me being in control of the computer is never good for the easy flow of the service!

Working with Andrew has been an extension of what we were doing before in Lille where we found ourselves looking after 'waifs and strays', students away from home for the first time and needing to be made to feel welcome and part of a family but we developed close friendships with many people and I think Lille was the training ground for what we do now. But Andrew's call to ministry is separate from my role as his wife – we were not called as a couple – so my involvement and support for all we do here is as his wife but also as a member of the church and as a person offering myself in service to God.

Would I do things differently next time? Yes, I possibly would. Like all things this is a learning curve, you get to know what works and what doesn't. Would it change who I am? I don't think so!

Kate Openshaw
New Mill Baptist Church



Memories of books

I have followed with interest the favourite books of Comment readers over the last few months. Many I have read and enjoyed, others I have never heard of but they have stimulated my interest. So when my children ask me what I would like for a birthday present I will have something to request other than bubble bath or hand cream!

I also wondered how others came to love reading and what type of books they read when they were younger. Surely not everyone was hooked on science fiction like me!

My parents never had many books in the house. I remember we had Mum's old school atlas, Bible and dictionary and her prayer book but little else. Dad was a reader though. He would visit the library in Tring every Saturday and as soon as I was able to join, I got my own library ticket and went with him. The library was underneath the old Church House on Western Road to start with and then progressed to the downstairs room of the Victoria Hall. In about 1985 a new library was built on the site of the 'old school' in the High Street.

At the age of 9 or so, I picked up a library book called 'The Kon-Tiki Expedition' by Thor Heyerdahl. I was intrigued by the pictures and although the text was rather adult, Dad assured me he would help. I struggled through the text about how a boat built of balsa logs crossed the Pacific to prove that the ancients could have done the same journey thousands of years ago.

I also remember starting to read science fiction books at the age of 7 or 8. Angus MacVicar wrote a junior space fiction series 'The Lost Planet'. Patrick Moore (among his many other attributes) also wrote science fiction for children – 'Mission to Mars', 'The Domes of Mars' and 'Voices of Mars'.

One day when I was in a second year class at junior school, our teacher was taken ill suddenly and one of the other class teachers came to take our class for the afternoon. Mr Hummer clearly

wasn't prepared for the sudden move to a younger class, but he brought a book with him called 'The Box of Delights' by John Masefield. He summarised the first part of the story and then started reading from the book. I remember how he gave all the characters their own voices and had the whole class entranced for more than an hour. It was not until I was about twenty that I read the whole book. It came with the original style of cover on it too. When my children were of junior school age there was a TV serial made of the book starring Patrick Troughton.

Mum bought me books sometimes from the toy warehouse where they bought the goods for the family Toy Shop; they were of a series called 'The Bobbsey Twins' and the 'Happy Hollisters'. They were 1950s American equivalents of 'The Famous Five' and 'Secret Seven' by Enid Blyton – which I have never read. They were cheap, so I guess they sold well in the shop!

I can remember very few books from my teenage years; some John Wyndham science fiction and Ian Fleming stories. Maybe I had other things to do! The English literature course at school was not compulsory for all of us and I didn't fancy studying Shakespeare and all the 'dead poets'. In any case I studied technical drawing instead! Maybe the main reason for not reading so much is that when I was 14 and my brother 11, Dad bought our first television in 1966. I did however love looking at maps and atlases as I had started collecting stamps.

At the age of 18, I went to a College of Education (Teacher Training College) and came upon others who had read far more widely than I. Without television except in the television room, I started to read again. There were numerous classic children's books that I needed to read and I really enjoyed them. 'The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe' series by C S Lewis, Alan Garner's 'Weirdstone of Brisingamen' and 'The Owl Service'. I devoured them all. As a teacher I read

'Charlotte's Webb' and nearly cried in front of the class. Dick King Smith came on the scene in the 1980s and then 'Martin's Mice' and 'The Queen's Head' were all well received. I also read them to my own children.

When I went to Nigeria as a VSO in 1975, I took a whole pile of books with me that I had never read but always intended to. I had been told that I needed to take things with me to keep myself occupied. So apart from some watercolour paints and a short wave radio, I took six books, among them 'The Hobbit', 'Lord of the Rings' and 'Watership Down'. They kept me company for the first three months of my time until I had grown used to my new life and had got over the culture shock.

I then married a reader. Mike reads regularly and also uses the library. So my interest in Science Fiction expanded to thrillers, detectives and any other book Mike borrowed from the library.

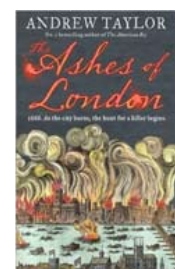
I also read all the Folio hardback books that Mike brought with him when we married. The most notable of these was 'The Ragged Trouser Philanthropists' by Robert Tressell, which it is said converted many to Socialism at the beginning of the 20th Century. I found it a highly emotional book to read.

I continue to read everything from JK Rowling, Tom Clancy, Kim Stanley Robinson, Terry Pratchett, Stieg Larson and Jussi Adler-Olsen, to diaries from the Mass Observation Unit. Currently historical mysteries from SL Parris and CJ Sansom are my favourites.

The U3A Book Reading Group I joined challenges me to read books that I wouldn't necessarily look at; 'Mansfield Park' by Jane Austen – ghastly, 'Another Part of the Wood' by Beryl Bainbridge – odd, and 'Moondust' by Andrew Smith.

Recently I was given a Kindle Paperwhite which is amazing. When Mike is ready to put out the light and go to sleep, I can continue to read without disturbing him!

Vicky Baldock, St Cross, Wilstone





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CLUES ACROSS

1. Title of Jesus (6)

4. Tiny piece (5)

8. Local saint (5)

9. Altar screen (7)

10. Roman historian (7)

11. Single performer (4)

12. Spasmodic twitch (3)

14. Feature of Lent (4)

15. Painful (4)

18. Positive (3)

21. King before David (4)

23. St Paul's residence for 2 yrs (7)

25. A happening or event (7)

26. Depart (5)

27. Prophet of the O.T. (5)

28. Long list (6)

CLUES DOWN

1. Music for psalms (6)

2. Wife of Isaac (7)

3. Holiness (8)

4. Certain (4)

5. Media before TV (5)

6. Clergyman – possible title (6)

7. Rely on (5)

13. Universal church (8)

16. Held for ransom (7)

17. At the back (6)

19. Number of deadly sins (5)

20. Rise up (6)

22. Famous Hittite (5)

24. Wander (4)

Answers on page 34

The glorious Gore memorial

An irresistible magnetic force for 'Monuments Men'?

Over recent years there has been a steadily growing interest from people wanting to visit the Parish Church in Tring and have a conducted tour. As the author of the collection of heritage leaflets we have on display in St Peter & St Paul's, I have usually been roped in to handle this. This is very much part of the FOTCH strategic initiative as we try to foster appreciation of both the building and the interesting and varied artefacts we are fortunate enough to possess within the widest possible audience.

Earlier this year the long-awaited renovation of the Gore Memorial (paid for by the Friends of Tring Church Heritage) was finally completed and it is generally agreed that it has come through the process with renewed splendour. There are, of course, those who do not consider the Gore Memorial to be much of an asset and rather out of place in the Church. There are very few, however, who doubt that it is indeed a remarkable artefact. It is also an historic testament to the powerful faith and deep commitment to the Church in Tring from those generations who have passed this way before. Certainly the Gore family over a number of generations provided richly for the Church and contributed hugely to its restoration and preservation.

An eye-catching focus of attention

As most of our tours start through the West Door, we usually begin with an appreciation of the Gore Memorial and then proceed around the Church to look at other aspects and explore the history of the Church within the context of the story of our town and its people.

The usual 'market' for these tours consists of various types of affinity groups – one notable recent party was the Company of Cathedral Guides from St Albans Abbey, who were certainly very knowledgeable. In fact, they had

quite an argument about the correct pedigree of the Gore Memorial and certainly spent a lot of time on it.

An eye-catching assembly of academics

However, the most notable group of all arrived in mid-July this year after a great deal of pre-planning. This group was a collection of extremely knowledgeable

they had prepared their own appraisal of the monuments in the Church and produced a remarkable handout with a level of detail and relative references which was most impressive. They

were led by their president, Dr Jean Wilson, and required absolutely no input from me other than to direct them to the leaflets and to various other reference points around the Church. I was a fascinated hanger-on and listened to their many arguments and debates about monumental minutiae which I had never even noticed before. It was a privilege to be there with these 'Monuments Men (and Women)'.

I have to say that on this occasion I probably learned a lot more from them than they did from me. What was most interesting was that we were strictly forbidden to reproduce their appraisal sheet and notes, which were clearly the result of a great deal of careful academic labour and research. On this occasion we weren't even required to deliver any catering, as they went off to Great Gaddesden for tea. We were left with a handsome donation and a real sense of having been visited by the mighty.

The Gore Memorial in all its newly defined splendour is the magnet that brought them to St Peter & St Paul's and was certainly the highlight of their visit.

I know that the lighting project that is currently being considered will take into account the need to properly highlight the memorial and reveal even more of its splendour to all who visit the Church. It certainly has a magnetic pull on all who come in through our West Door and we are privileged to be the custodians of such a fine piece.

Grahame Senior (St Peter & St Paul)



academics who were members of the CMS (Church Monument Society). They were certainly a different league of visitor and it seemed rather as if an Oxbridge Common Room had cleared out its most distinguished Fellows and Dons and sent them on a trip to Tring.

They would have been just perfect as an alternative cast for the academics who featured in the film 'Lucky Jim'. They didn't need much from me as



In quires and places where they sing...



My place in the choir stalls in St Peter & St Paul's Church faces one of the splendid Victorian stained glass windows. This features an imposing portrait of St Paul, flanked by somewhat idealised depictions of St Alban and St Stephen. It was Paul who famously told the early Christian community at Ephesus 'to let the Holy Spirit fill you: speak to one another in psalms, hymns and songs; sing and make music in your hearts to the Lord' (Ephesians 5:19-20).

In his article in the June 2017 Church Music Quarterly the Director of the Royal School of Church Music (RSCM), Andrew Reid, quotes this passage and states that 'we are not Christians in isolation but are intended to worship in song together'. However, he goes on to say that we must use song with both 'spirit' and 'understanding' (I Corinthians 14:15), as stated in the RSCM motto.

This is where the robed choir and music group come in, to lead the meeting of God's people in singing as exhorted by Paul. The choir, under

the direction of Church Organist and Choirmaster Cliff Brown, leads the music at the 10.00am Holy Communion services and at weddings and other special services. The music group, led by Beth Townsend, leads the music at the Worship for All services in the Parish Church.

Together we sing a wide variety of songs of praise and anthems, ranging from ancient plainsong to modern worship songs. Some hymns are congregational favourites, but others are more challenging, such as 'This joyful Eastertide', which is in Hymns Old & New. The choir sang this as an anthem last Easter Day. Both traditional and modern church music can speak directly to the congregation, with the particular choice depending on the type of service and season of the year.

However, while the choir remains enthusiastic it urgently needs new members, particularly from the younger generation, in order to survive and prosper. This will involve some commitment, including a weekly Friday evening practice from 7.30 to 8.45pm. However, the rewards are considerable: singing hymns, anthems and communion settings in both unison and three or four

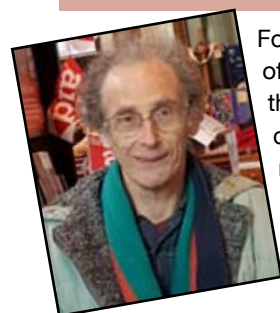
part harmony throughout the Church year is richly fulfilling. We are also a welcoming social group. Let us match the restoration of our historic Church with the conservation and enhancement of our rich tradition of Church music. We are now starting to practise the music for the popular Christmas Carol Service. If you can read music and sing, please give us a try!

Interested? Please have an informal word with Cliff Brown or any member of the choir, or contact Cliff through the website www.tringchurchmusic.org.uk, where you will find more information.

I shall give the last word to the great 17th century poet, orator and priest, George Herbert. His poem 'Let all the world in every corner sing' was probably first sung by Herbert himself (he was a noted lutenist) and has since been set by numerous composers including Basil Harwood, whose tune appears in Hymns Old & New. The poem is inspired by Paul's letter to the Ephesians and continues to lift the hearts of congregations with its simple but profound message: 'Let all the world in every corner sing, my God and King!'

Martin Wells, St Peter & St Paul

The relevance of the Ten Commandments



For the first meeting of the new season, the Men's Society discussed the relevance of the Ten Commandments.

David Gittins presented a very good background account to Moses receiving the tablets from God on Mount Sinai. He began with Abraham and his descendants, explaining how they had ended up as slaves in Egypt for 400 years.

To refresh our memories and clarify the discussion, the Ten Commandments were read out from the Prayer Book. It was noted that the first four concern our duty towards God, and the remaining six our duty towards others. Jesus confirmed and expanded them all, and summed up the six as 'Love your neighbour as yourself' (Matthew 22 verse 39).

Is keeping the Sabbath or Sundays

holy relevant today? Certainly the principle of one day's rest in seven is.

We discussed two basic needs for humanity which are met by the commandments. All peoples throughout history have wanted a superior being and have invented their own gods or religion to explain their environment, and a set of rules for community cohesion. It is the last six commandments which have provided the latter since Moses' time, and form the basis of our legal system and attitudes.

The commandment says 'Do not murder,' not 'Do not kill'; so does this support the just war theory, and that the state, instituted by God (in a week when Korea and the US were upping the stakes) can defend its citizens?

Problems debated included what it meant for God to be jealous, and why it could be right to be envious or covetous – not to end up stealing but being ambitious or entrepreneurial. Some thought that Moses was taking

too much power when he went on to make up many more regulations. The majority said he delegated authority to elders as so many people came to him with questions of interpretation that he could not cope.

Today one particular commandment is often ignored, together with questions of sexual morality. Some basic concepts, like marriage and environmental responsibility, are in the opening chapters of Genesis, and could be called creation commandments applicable throughout history and to all races.

Everyone agreed that this was one of the best Men's Society discussions with everyone contributing their own ideas in a friendly atmosphere.

The next meeting is on Wednesday 4 October at 7.30pm in the Half Moon in Wilstone. All men are welcome. The likely topic is the issues raised by the Grenfell tragedy.

Leslie Barker, St Peter & St Paul

Eyeball sweeties and severed hands...

Just on the wild off-chance that someone reading this hasn't noticed – it's Hallowe'en soon apparently.

Now call me miserable but I hate this so-called 'holiday' (flinches at the sound of people yelling 'miserable!').

It's not just because I am a Christian who spends most of my time encouraging people away from celebrating dark forces – so it seems a bit ludicrous to dress up as a demon one night a year. No. I wish I was that holy; but if I am honest, I love Harry Potter and I'm not entirely sure the church would really approve of the fact that I sometimes hope my invitation to attend Hogwarts just got lost in the post and I'm really an undiscovered Wizard.

I think my dislike of the 31 October is also because I have enough work to do looking after my larger than average family without making costumes, carving pumpkins and decorating the house with fake cobwebs – I have enough of the real things complete with real life spiders.

And I'm always on a tight budget so resent having to buy enough sweets to send myself into a diabetic coma if I ate them. Not that I could eat them even if I wasn't diabetic because I have to hand them out to all the ghosts and ghouls who turn up at my door throughout the evening.

I'm almost tempted to reply 'trick' when given a choice – though most of the children who ring my bell don't even bother chanting 'trick or treat', they just stand silently thrusting bags and buckets at me in expectation of sweet treats.

Last year I read that one vicar wrapped healthy treats with stickers

with Bible verses on. Bet the kids don't bother him again this year! And I loved the picture I saw once on Pinterest with a pumpkin, carved with an instruction to 'go away' only in rather coarser terms. I really did laugh at that one! Yes, I know. I'm miserable.

I made the fatal mistake of ducking into a large supermarket last year to buy a birthday card, some milkshake and some dried fruit for my Christmas cake baking project. Or my 'keep up with the Jones' project' as I call it, as I only made one so as not to be outdone by my mate who is even planning to make the marzipan for himself and stick it onto the homemade cake with homemade jam! Despite my best efforts, his was still better than mine. Don't tell him I said so though, will you?

Anyway, I digress. As I was saying I was in this supermarket and I literally could not move without tripping over hoards of small overexcited children and their harrassed looking parents all hunting for the perfect pumpkin, the last Dracula costume, black Hallowe'en tinsel (no really!) and yet more nasty, chewy sweets to hand out. There were brain jelly moulds, severed hands, chocolate finger biscuits with the packaging redesigned to make them Hallowe'eny though I'm guessing inside they were fundamentally just finger biscuits?

There were plastic rats, a variety of skulls which lit up or moaned. I could have bought fake blood, fake tattoos, fake axes, fake wounds... but I just wanted milkshake and sultanas. At the tills there were bat balloons and eyeball sweeties and the lady behind me was buying a large Egygyptian Mummy-

shaped cake. I just paid for my shopping plus the ten extra things I didn't really need as always and thanked my lucky stars I hate Halloween and therefore saved myself a fortune.

My children for years have loved going to our Church's light up the dark party where they usually have lots of fun planned like a BBQ: games, crafts, apple-bobbing and sweetie hunt. In the past they have dressed up as a dinosaur, gorilla, giraffe, cat and Pikachu and always very much looked forward to it.

On the way home, if we see any homes obviously prepared for visiting children I will allow them to knock and 'trick or treat'. At home we usually make a nice display of happy smiley pumpkins and gourds and if people who know me knock, I will hand out sweets. But I'm always hoping that largely we will be left in peace and I will have enough sweets left to have a go at getting myself comatose!

I have been invited to a Hallowe'en party this year – but like my daughter I'm dressing as a cat and largely going for the company and the promise of cake.

Next it will be Bonfire night – I like to watch fireworks from the warmth of my bedroom window but am less keen on standing in a cold field. See, I told you I was miserable. But there's hope for December – I LOVE Christmas!

Afra Willmore, St John the Baptist



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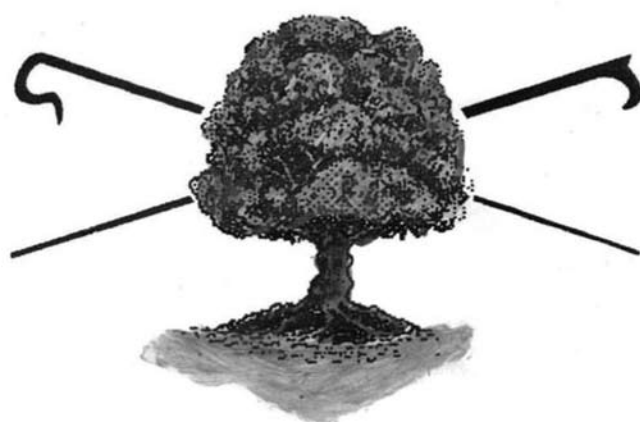
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Piano and More...

On 23 July, a sizeable audience gathered for the latest in the series of Piano and More... concerts in St Peter & St Paul.

Jane Glover and I played piano solos by various composers including Janacek and Rachmaninov. Colin Stevens and Margaret Flanigan brought style and

panache to a duet by Czerny to round things off before tea and cake was enjoyed by all.

The series had a break during August, but returned on 17 September when Leon Bosch conducted a small string orchestra made up of mostly

local players in Tchaikovsky's Rococo variations, with Helen Godbolt as cello soloist, as well as a suite by Arensky.

This month, on 15 October the next concert will include Mendelssohn's D minor trio, a popular and tuneful work, which will be performed by Marion Garrett, Gavin Clements and myself.

Anna Le Hair, St Peter & St Paul



Holy Communion for St Luke's Day



St Luke was also known as the Great Physician and his day is celebrated throughout the world on 18 October. The Tring team has celebrated St Luke's day with a home communion for a number of years but this year will make it a parish celebration in St Peter & St Paul's in Tring at 8.00pm.

Rev'd Jane Banister will be taking the service and there will also be an opportunity to have prayers for yourself or others you have concern for with the laying on of hands. This will be offered by the prayer ministry team. Come and join us, and stay for refreshments afterwards if you are able to.

Janet Goodyer, St Peter & St Paul

Celebrating Christmas

Few of us want to be thinking about Christmas when Autumn has barely begun... But the Comment Team have always to be thinking about what happens two months ahead to ensure we have content for the magazine.

Do you have Christmas stories to share for the December issue? The deadline is 6 November and it need be no more than 500 words. Was there a special Christmas in your Church which stands out because of some wonderful or unfortunate event? Can you remember one of the rare white Christmases? Was Christmas different in the way it was celebrated 50, 60, 70, 80 years ago? Did you have a baby born in your family on Christmas Day or get married at Christmas? Was your father in a war zone on Christmas Day? Are there traditions you observe in your family to make it special? Did you celebrate it in a strange location one year? Were you Mary or Joseph in the Nativity play?

If you can help, please send your story to me by email with any appropriate photos or put your contribution into the R pigeon hole in

St Peter & St Paul's Church. You could even telephone me on 0845 868 1333 if you would rather tell me about it and I will put it together for you.

The Editor



Parish registers

Baptisms

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

Hannah Elizabeth Lear
Hetty Jameson
Emily Ciara Cremin
Bramwell Hanson
Kezzia Williams

Frederick Daniel Smith
Arthur Jameson
Alfie William Bottle
Max Arthur Joseph Adams
Olivia Sophie Carol Weedon

Funerals

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

Roy Charles Stevens 77
Philip Watts 89
Gill Atkins
Francis David Walker
Barbara Buckley 92

The Christian church: a glossary of terms



In my article last month I used a number of labels which may be worthy of unpacking. Here they are.

Apostolic Succession

This is the concept of the true church being traced directly back to the twelve apostles of Jesus and the laying on of hands by bishop to bishop to their successors.

It refers to the doctrine that the validity and real authority of Christian ministry derive only from Jesus' apostles. The church is not just a collection of different denominations, but one true church united by the ministry of bishops, priests and deacons.

The Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox and Anglican Churches believe in the apostolic succession, but with differences. The Roman Catholic church believes St Peter as first bishop of Rome was the senior apostle and his successors were 'Popes' forever. The Orthodox believe all those ordained by the apostles' successors are bishops, and the Anglicans believe all priests must be ordained by a bishop and their authority stems from the bishop of their Diocese. But the Orthodox and Anglicans do not believe in the overall authority of the Pope.

The Orthodox have a senior bishop, originally in Constantinople, often called a Patriarch, while Anglicans see the Archbishop of Canterbury as the focus of their unity all over the world. But Anglicans do not see the Archbishop as having overriding authority.

Anglicanism

In England Anglicans are usually called members of the Church of England, which is officially the established church of the Land. That is why Royal Weddings take place in Westminster Abbey, the Queen is crowned by the Archbishop etc. After the Roman Catholic church and the Orthodox, Anglicans are the third largest Christian group in the world. The growth areas today are in South East Asia and Africa where Anglicans grow apace.

The church is not governed by a central authority figure like the Pope. The Archbishop of Canterbury is the titular international leader, but that is more by

agreement than because he can control everything they do in worship and practice.

Anglicanism is based on the teachings of the Bible and the ministry of Bishops, priests and Deacons and every ten years leaders from all over the world meet at the Lambeth Conference.

The church was established under Elizabeth 1st, after Henry 8th set things rolling to leave the Roman Catholic church, but Mary later restored the papacy. The church was much influenced by the reformers in Europe, Calvin in Geneva and Luther in Germany, but also retained the catholic order of bishops, priests and deacons.

Anglicanism is often called A Middle Way between the Roman Catholic church and the Protestant church, and is both Catholic and Reformed. Different Anglican churches emphasise the Catholic and Protestant teachings in their teaching and in their services.

Evangelicals

The word comes from the Greek word in the New Testament meaning Good News. Evangelicals believe the Bible to be the Word of God and is to be followed and believed in literally. They emphasize the importance of being saved by the atoning death of Jesus on the Cross through personal conversion.

To Evangelicals the authority of Scripture and preaching the Word is the top priority; ritual is not important, though many do like a formal style of service as well. They are often called Fundamentalists and in the USA there is a 24-hour diet of evangelical preachers to watch.

The word was used most recently in England as a name given to John Wesley and the 18th century Great Awakening, which kicked a rather moribund C of E into life. The Bible Belt in the Southern USA is the home of evangelical churches attended by large crowds of followers; their theology is very conservative as is their politics. President Trump owed a great deal to the evangelical vote in the last election. His Vice-President, Mike Pence, is a committed Evangelical himself.

In the UK Evangelicalism now emphasises the important of Charismatic worship and Baptism in the Spirit. The most famous evangelical church is Holy Trinity, Brompton in London, the origin

of the Alpha Course teaching for new Christians.

Evangelicals have much to each other Christians. Sadly most of them think theirs is the only way to find faith and are less tolerant of those whose beliefs differ from theirs.

Pentecostalism

A renewal movement in the Protestant churches, particularly in Africa, the Caribbean and parts of USA, they place great emphasis on direct personal experience of God and Jesus Christ, through the Baptism of the Holy Spirit. They believe that speaking in tongues is an important part of Christian experience.

Pentecostal worship is energetic and dynamic, and to be a full member you would probably speak in tongues, prophesy and practise spiritual healing. Conversion for a Pentecostal Christian is seen in the Baptism in the Spirit. It has a majority of members who are black and their worship is very unlike that of most churches in Tring.

I wrote in an earlier article in Comment about my experience of preaching in a Black Pentecostal Baptist Church in San Diego, California. The congregation was over 1000 strong, with only three white people: Jenny, myself and the drummer in the church band. My sermon was punctuated with 'Yeah Man!', 'Praise the Lord!' and occasional applause! It was very exciting: the adrenalin started pumping in me and though I don't think I could cope with it every Sunday(!) it is an experience I have never forgotten.

Pentecostals trace their origins to the first Day of Pentecost when the first Christians spoke in different tongues and were wrongly accused by outsiders of being drunk. They believe in a simpler and purer faith, which they believe links them with the early church. They believe in the literal truth of the Bible as the undisputed word of God.

It is an interesting fact that Pentecostal and Charismatic churches are the fastest growing Christian communities in the UK.

Ian Ogilvie, St Peter & St Paul

Getting involved

Where do you start when asked to write a piece for Comment?

Let's start with being a 'Twinkle' in my father's eye. Howard, my dad, and my mum, Dulcie (Doll) Burnett, came out of London in 1946. Mum was pregnant with me when we went to a place called Brickendonbury in Hertford. It was a Farmers' Training Farm in those days – my dad wanted to be a farmer like the days when he was in Australia.

I was born there in January 1947. My dad then got a posting to a farm in Puttenham so when I was just six weeks old, they moved across the country – in all that snow – and I was christened at St Mary's Church.

Just before I was two, Mum and Dad moved us all to Long Marston into the new council houses in Tring Road. I grew up and went to school in Long Marston and then went to Tring School.

I worked in Aylesbury, starting off in a wool shop in Kingsbury Square just on Saturdays until I left school; then I moved onto Woolworth's in the High Street. I met Keith while I was there. Keith worked at Cox's with my two brothers. I was invited to a dance and met him there – and it was almost love at first sight. I married Keith in All Saints' Church, Long Marston in 1966. We lived with my mum and dad at first (not a good idea).

Later that year my first daughter arrived and about two years later, my second daughter came on the scene. After that things became difficult between my mum and me. We were always arguing... Then I found out that the butcher had an empty house

so I pleaded with him to let us rent it from him. My youngest daughter was about nine months old and we moved in just before Christmas 1968. We had a two-up, two-down, no bathroom and an outside loo – after all the mod cons at my parents' house! But it was ours. It was hard at first, but we did it. We were then lucky enough to get a house in Woodland Close, Tring, in 1970. We moved there and my son was born in 1977. Over the years my family grew up and flew to other pastures...

When I first came to Tring in 1970 I didn't know anyone on the estate. People were so frosty I felt I had to find something else to do to make me acceptable. The first thing that came through my letterbox was about a Residents' Association that needed volunteers, so in my wisdom, I signed up. I met some lovely people (two were Alan and Brenda Lee) and learned from them. We had to get articles about the town and put them in a small booklet with useful telephone numbers. In those days we met in people's houses, usually mine as it was easier because I had small children. We had committees for printing and planning. I think I served for two years on this committee. We fought for things and got stuff done; we went to council meetings and it was good fun – I loved it.

In 1972, when I was twenty-five, I was elected as a Chairperson/Secretary for the Tring Methodist Church Wives Fellowship. We did all sorts of things: we had speakers and I was in charge of writing to them and making sure all the arrangements worked out; we had coffee

mornings and garden parties! One of the worst jobs of all time for any committee is getting raffle prizes – touring around the shops, asking. I suppose it's one of my pet hates!

When you are a Committee Member you can upset people trying to get what you want – and I probably did over the years. There's no easy way of raising money; it's hard work all the way.

But there's a huge amount of satisfaction in working with others to get things done when it works. Currently I am helping to organise a street party next year for Woodland Close, part of a former resident's dream to bring old and new residents together. I also organise the Tring Reminiscence Group, part of the Local History Society, which meets one Friday morning a month at the Nora Grace Hall from 10.30am – Keith was caretaker there until his death a few years ago. The group has enjoyed some very interesting and lively discussions, sharing stories and experiences of days gone by in Tring over tea, coffee and home-made cake. Our next meeting is on 20 October and all are welcome.

The theme of being involved in the community is a strand that has run through my life. If you need any encouragement to do the same, do talk to me. If you are in any doubt about getting involved – just do it!

Sue Gascoine, St Peter & St Paul



A word on Evangelicals...

I like my good friend Ian's set of definitions but I would like to comment on a few points.

I was brought up in the Liberal Evangelical tradition of the Church of England. I am not sure whether or not I am still one: that is for others to decide. While I am not too bothered about labels, I wonder if I am, in the words of the late, great John Betjeman, 'a hearty middle-stumper'.

Ian picks his words carefully: 'They are often called Fundamentalists'. I would not call myself a Fundamentalist,

someone who believes that all of the Bible should be taken literally, including Creation in six days roughly 6000 years ago. I have never believed that. The evidence points to a hot big bang about 13.8 billion years ago, give or take a week or two! I have no problem with evolution either.

On the issue of the Charismatic strain within Evangelicalism, again Ian picks his words well. When I was a teenager and a young man, the leading Anglican Evangelical Church was not Holy Trinity, Brompton, but All Souls, Langham

Place, the Church next to the BBC. There the Rector John Stott was very wary indeed of the Charismatic Movement. Not all Charismatics are Evangelical and not all Evangelicals are Charismatics; that applies to all Evangelicals, not just those in the Church of England.

Do 'most' Evangelicals think theirs is the only way to faith? I hope it is 'many' rather than 'most', but Ian may be right. I am quite sure mine is not the only way.

Jon Reynolds, St Peter & St Paul



St Martha's Methodist Church

FRIENDSHIP CLUB

The Ladies Friendship Club will meet again at St Martha's on Tuesday 3 October, when Revd Rachael Hawkins will be visiting, and there will also be the AGM.

CHRISTIAN AID CONCERT

On Saturday 7 October at 7.30pm there will be a concert of piano music given by David Berdinner and pupils. This year will focus particularly on Nocturnes, Preludes and Mazurkas by Chopin. Refreshments served.

Admission free. Retiring collection for Christian Aid.

1066 CLUB

St Martha's would like to put in a plug for the 1066 Club, a club for partially sighted people that meets in Berkhamsted once a month. Transport is provided, including from Tring. If you would like more information, please phone Mary Cutler on 01727 860 695.

1 October 10.00am

David Morgan

1 October 6.00pm

Revd Rachael Hawkins

8 October 10.00am

To be arranged

15 October 10.00am

Revd Rachael Hawkins

22 October 10.00am

John Benson

29 October 10.00am

John Watkins



Tring Community Church

Every Sunday 10.30am
The Nora Grace Hall

New Mill Baptist Church

TOT SPOT

Tuesdays @ 10.00-11.30am
3, 10, 17, 31 October

BRIGHT HOUR

Tuesday 12 September @
2.30pm
The Speaker is Mrs Barbara Smith

KNIT & NATTER

Wednesdays @ 7.30pm
4, 11, 18, 25 October

THE MILL COMMUNITY CAFÉ

Thursdays @ 11.00-2.00pm
5, 12, 19 October

FRIDAY CLUB

Fridays @ 6.00-7.15pm
6, 13, 20 October

1 October 10.30am

Morning Service
Revd Andrew Openshaw

8 October 10.30am

Morning Service
Revd Andrew Openshaw

15 October 10.30am

Morning Service
Revd Andrew Openshaw

22 October 10.30am

Morning Service
Mr Aubrey Dunford

29 October 10.30am

Morning Service
Mr Harold Liberty



High Street Baptist Church

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Coffee in the foyer in aid of
BMS World Mission

TOTS

Wednesdays 9.30-11.30am
Baby play area, soft play,

trikes, scooters!
Suitable for 0 to 4yrs

GAMES AFTERNOON

Wednesdays 2.00-4.00pm
Traditional games, puzzles
and refreshments

PLAY CAFÉ

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

FRIDAY CAFÉ

Fridays 12.00-1.30pm
Freshly cooked lunches

WHO LET THE DADS OUT

First Saturday of the month at
8.30am to 10.00am

SUNDAY MORNING WORSHIP

Service at 10.30am with
Junior Church and Crèche

SUNDAYS @ 7

First Sunday of the month at
7.00pm



Tring Team Anglican Churches

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

1st Sunday of the month

8.00am Holy Communion BCP Tring
8.00am Holy Communion BCP Aldbury
10.00am Holy Communion CW Tring
10.00am Holy Communion CW Wilstone
10.00am Sunday Worship CW Long Marston
10.00am Worship for All Aldbury
12.00 midday Baptisms Tring
No services in Puttenham

2nd Sunday of the month

8.00am Holy Communion CW Tring
8.15am Holy Communion BCP Puttenham
10.00am Holy Communion BCP Aldbury
10.00am Holy Communion Long Marston
10.00am Sunday Worship in Wilstone
10.00am Worship for All Tring
11.30am Holy Communion BCP Tring
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
No service in Puttenham

4th Sunday of the month

8.00am Holy Communion BCP Tring
10.00am Holy Communion CW Tring
10.00am Worship for All Wilstone
10.00am Holy Communion Aldbury
10.00am Holy Communion CW Long Marston
3.30pm Evensong in Puttenham
6.00pm Alternative Communion CW Tring

5th Sunday of the month

8.00am Holy Communion BCP Aldbury
8.00am Holy Communion BCP Tring
10.00am Holy Communion CW Aldbury
10.00am Holy Communion CW Tring
10.00am Sunday Worship or Holy Communion Long Marston
10.00am Sunday Worship or Holy Communion Wilstone
No service in Puttenham

Weekday Services

Mondays 8.30am Morning Prayer Tring
Tuesdays 8.30am Morning Prayer Tring
Tuesdays 9.15am Holy Communion CW Tring
Wednesdays 8.30am Morning Prayer Aldbury

Thursdays 10.00am Holy Communion BCP Tring
Fridays 8.30am Morning Prayer Tring
Last Tuesday in the month 10.00am Holy Communion Wilstone

Dacorum Foodbank

Weekdays 10.00am St P&P

Youth Café

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

Meditation

Thursdays 8.00pm Corpus Christi

Coffee Mornings

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

Churches Together in Tring

Saturday 7 October 8.30-9.30am Prayer
Breakfast Corpus Christi

Mothers' Union

First Thursday in the month 1.45 pm
Tring Parish Hall

Young Adults Group TAYA

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

Fairtrade Fridays

First and third Fridays 9.00-12.30 St P&P

First Saturday Lunch

Saturday 7 October
From 1.00pm in Tring Parish Hall for those who have been bereaved to meet and eat with others. Contact Margaret Oram for information on 01442 824575.

Baptism Preparation

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

Afternoon Tea

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

Book Group

Last Sunday in the month 6.45pm
St P&P

Piano and More Concert

Sunday 15 October 3.00pm St P&P



Useful contacts

TRING TEAM PARISH

Team Rector
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huw@tringteamparish.org.uk
(Day off Thursday)

Team Vicar
(Aldbury)
Rev Michelle Grace
Aldbury Vicarage
01442 851200
michelle@tringteamparish.org.uk
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Team Vicar
(Long Marston, Tring School)
Rev Jane Banister
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Associate Priest
(Wilstone)
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**AKEMAN STREET
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Please contact the Treasurer
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Articles and photos for the
next edition should arrive with
the Editor by the 6th of the
previous month.

Crossword puzzle answers

From page 24

ANSWERS ACROSS

- 1. CHRIST
- 4. SCRAP
- 8. ALBAN
- 9. REREDOS
- 10. TACITUS
- 11. SOLO
- 12. TIC
- 14. FAST
- 15. ACHE
- 18. YES
- 21. SAUL
- 23. EPHESUS
- 25. EPISODE
- 26. LEAVE
- 27. NAHUM
- 28. SCREED

ANSWERS DOWN

- 1. CHANTS
- 2. REBECCA
- 3. SANCTITY
- 4. SURE
- 5. RADIO
- 6. PASTOR
- 7. TRUST
- 13. CATHOLIC
- 16. HOSTAGE
- 17. ASTERN
- 19. SEVEN
- 20. ASCEND
- 22. URIAH
- 24. ROAM



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