

# Parish of Stockport and Brinnington

St Mary

Stockport Parish Church

St Thomas

St Luke



## May 2021

### Welcome to our parish news sheet.

May is probably my favourite month of the year, the days are warmer (one would hope) and there is the expectation of an enjoyable summer ahead. This year in particular with the prospect of being out and about and being with people again - such a joy.

Local Government Elections are on the 6th May —election of councillors to Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council and election of the Mayor for Greater Manchester Combined Authority.

Assuming all goes according to plan, we should have a new Mayor of Stockport to welcome to the parish —although plans for a full civic service at St Mary's likely to be delayed until later in the year.

Christian Aid week is between the 10th and 16th May this year—we may not be able to host events as in past years, but once again if you are able to do so—please donate on-line.

What we are able to offer is an exciting initiative called “restore” - it will offer a time for reflection and restoration in the form of 20 minute slot on a Thursday (at St Mary's) starting on the 27th May (12.00noon). Bible readings, prayers, music and silence. No participation needed, you are invited just to come along and find a little space. Sounds wonderful—come and take a little time-out in the surroundings of one of our beautiful Grade 1 listed buildings—you will be most welcome.



Galatians 3:14

Are you thinking of mowing the lawn ...

### **NO MOW MAY launches for 2021**

Plantlife's No Mow May campaign doesn't ask you to do much. In fact, it asks you to not do anything at all... Just lock up your lawnmower on May 1st and let the wild flowers in your lawn bloom until the end of the month, providing a feast of nectar for our hungry pollinators.



May is the month when the ancient pagans used to get up to 'all sorts'! The Romans held their festival to honour the mother-goddess Maia, goddess of nature and growth. (May is named after her.) The early Celts celebrated the feast of Beltane, in honour of the sun god, Beli.

For centuries in 'Olde England' the people went mad in May. After the hardship of winter, and hunger of early Spring, May was a time of indulgence. And so it might again—as we come out of lockdown and once again allowed to visit the pub, go to the hairdressers—and who knows even take a holiday.

Henry VIII went 'maying' on many occasions. Then folk would stay out all night in the dark rain-warm thickets and return in the morning for dancing on the green around the May pole, archery, vaulting, wrestling, and evening bonfires.

The Protestant reformers took a strong stand against May Day, and in 1644 May Day was abolished altogether. Many May poles came down – only to go up again at the Restoration, when the first May Day of King Charles's reign was 'the happiest Mayday that hath been many a year in England', according to Pepys.

May Day to most people today brings vague folk memories of a young Queen of the May decorated with garlands and streamers and flowers, a May Pole to weave, Morris dancing, and the intricacies of well dressing at Tissington in Derbyshire.

May Day is a medley of natural themes such as sunrise, the advent of summer, growth in nature, and – since 1833 – Robert Owen's vision of a millennium in the future, beginning on May Day, when there would be no more poverty, injustice or cruelty, but harmony and friendship. This is why, in modern times, May Day has become Labour Day, which honours the dignity of workers. And until recently, in communist countries May Day processions were in honour of the achievement of Marxism.

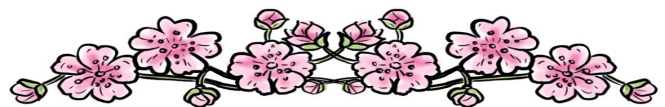
There has never been a Christian content to May Day, but nevertheless there is the well-known 6am service on the top of Magdalen Tower at Oxford where a choir sings in the dawn of May Day.



An old May carol includes the lines:

*The life of man is but a span,  
it flourishes like a flower  
We are here today and gone tomorrow  
– we are dead within an hour.*

There is something of a sadness about it, both in words and tune, as there is about all purely sensuous joy. For May Day is not Easter, and the joys it represents have always been earth-bound and fleeting.



Whatever you are doing this May Day / Bank Holiday weekend do enjoy yourself and above everything else stay safe.

## **9<sup>th</sup> May: Rogation Sunday . (Sunday before Ascension)**

Rogation means an asking of God – for blessing on the seed and land for the year ahead. It is appropriate in any emergency, war, plague, drought or foul weather.

The practice began with the Romans, who invoked the help of the gods Terminus and Ambarvalia. In those days a crowd moved in procession around the cornfields, singing and dancing, sacrificing animals, and driving away Winter with sticks. They wanted to rid the cornfields of evil. In about 465 the Western world was suffering from earthquake, storm and epidemic. So Mamertius, Bishop of Vienne, aware of the popular pagan custom, ordered that prayers should be said in the ruined or neglected fields on the days leading up to Ascension. With his decision, ‘beating the bounds’ became a Christian ceremonial.

Rogation-tide arrived in England early in the eighth century and became a fixed and perennial asking for help of the Christian God. On Rogation-tide, a little party would set out to trace the boundaries of the parish. At the head marched the bishop or the priest, with a minor official bearing a Cross, and after them the people of the parish, with schoolboys and their master trailing along. Most of them held slender wands of willow.

At certain points along the route – at well-known landmarks like a bridge or stile or ancient tree, the Cross halted, the party gathered about the priest, and a litany or rogation is said, imploring God to send seasonable wealth, keep the corn and roots and boughs in good health, and bring them to an ample harvest. At some point beer and cheese would be waiting.

In the days when maps were neither common nor accurate, there was much to be said for ‘beating the bounds.’ It was still very common as late as the reign of Queen Victoria. Certainly, parish boundaries rarely came into dispute, for everyone knew them.

**Calling all church administrators**—if you are looking for a patron saint or just some general support it might be a toss up between John Truscott (church consultant and trainer as well as founder of UCAN - the UK Church Administrators Network) —or Pachomius the Great.

9th May—Pachomius should be the patron saint of administrators everywhere. For back in the 4th century, without a computer or even a mobile he managed to run 11 separate monasteries like clockwork.

Pachomius was born into a pagan family in Upper Egypt at the end of the third century, and as a youth conscripted into the army. On his release in 313 he became two things: a Christian and a hermit (probably craved some peace and quiet!). But Pachomius was no loner, and when other monks gradually sought him out, he did with them what he did best: he organised them. By 320 he had founded his first monastery.

Pachomius seems to have had exceptional powers of administration, no doubt perfected by his years of disciplined army life. By the time of his death in 346, he presided over nine large monasteries for men and two for women. Each monastery was divided into houses, according to its craft, such as agriculture, tailoring or baking.

Pachomius knew how to delegate: each house had its own leader. He knew how to keep in touch: he held team leaders’ meetings twice a year. Pachomius knew about supply chains: food and drink never ran out. Pachomius knew about marketing: he found buyers for their produce in Alexandria. Pachomius knew about delivering a vision: a daily pattern of work and prayer and sleep was set in place to make sure that the monks and nuns could devote themselves to God for hours each day in prayer, and in memorising the Psalms and other Bible passages.

Pachomius knew how to help people get things done. No wonder his Rule went on to influence that of Basil and Benedict. Certainly the gift of administration is listed by St Paul as a genuine gift of God, and prudence and clear forward planning are highly prized in the Proverbs.

## 13th May — Ascension Day. 40 Days with the Risen Christ

40 days after Easter comes Ascension Day. These are the 40 days during which the Risen Christ appeared again and again to His disciples, following His death and resurrection. (*Matthew 28; Mark 16; Luke 24; and John 20.*)

The Gospels give us little of Christ's teachings and deeds during those 40 days. Jesus was seen by numerous of His disciples: on the road to Emmaus, by the Sea of Galilee, in houses, etc. He strengthened and encouraged His disciples, and at last opened their eyes to all that the Scriptures had promised about the Messiah. Jesus also told them that as the Father had sent Him, He was now going to send them – to all corners of the earth, as His witnesses. Surely the most tender, moving 'farewell' in history took place on Ascension Day. Luke records the story with great poignancy: 'When Jesus had led them out to the vicinity of Bethany, He lifted up His hands – and blessed them.'

As Christmas began the story of Jesus' life on earth, so Ascension Day completes it, with His return to His Father in heaven. Jesus' last act on earth was to bless His disciples. He and they had a bond as close as could be: they had just lived through three tumultuous years of public ministry and miracles – persecution and death – and resurrection!

Just as we part from our nearest and dearest by still looking at them with love and memories in our eyes, so exactly did Jesus: 'While He was blessing them, He left them and was taken up into heaven.' (Luke 24:50-1) He was not forsaking them, but merely going on ahead to a kingdom which would also be theirs one day: 'I am ascending to my Father and to your Father, to my God and your God...' (John 20:17).

The disciples were surely the most favoured folk in history. Imagine being one of the last few people on earth to be face to face with Jesus, and have Him look on you with love. No wonder then that Luke goes on: 'they worshipped Him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy. And they stayed continually at the temple, praising God.' (Luke 24:52,53)

No wonder they praised God! They knew they would see Jesus again one day! 'I am going to prepare a place for you... I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.' (John 14:2,3) In the meantime, Jesus had work for them to do: to take the Gospel to every nation on earth.



### THY KINGDOM COME (13th – 23rd May)

Thy Kingdom Come is a global initiative, in which Christians are called to pray from Ascension to Pentecost for more people to come to know Jesus. This year it runs from Thursday 13 to Sunday 23 May.

The Diocese of Chester is encouraging everyone to participate. Whether you are new to prayer or it has been your lifelong discipline, there are resources to help you participate individually or as part of your family or church.

Visit the Diocese of Chester web-site and you can play a short video where Lynne offers a short prayer for our parish in the lead up to Thy Kingdom Come and in which she reflects on the idea that we judge ourselves on our intentions, but others judge us on our impact. Her prayer is that people will go out to the community with good Christian intentions but also make an impact for the common good too.







The climate crisis hurts us all. But people living in poverty fight the worst of it every day.



From drought to flooding, climate change robs people of control over their lives. Extreme weather means people like Rose are struggling to survive without a reliable source of water.

Your gift could help a community build an earth dam, so when the rains do come, they will have the water they need to live. A reliable source of water will help families withstand long drought or relentless rainstorms.

#### **Give thanks for your vaccination—**

*Christian Aid's recent appeal which enables people to give thanks for their Covid-19 vaccine and help others in crisis across the world, has raised £130,000.*

*The Christian Aid's "Give Thanks" appeal encourages people to pass the blessing on, by helping others who have little protection from the pandemic. Funds from the appeal are helping vulnerable communities around the world access soap, water, food and vital health information as Covid-19 continues to destroy lives and livelihoods. Christian Aid partners have so far directly helped over half a million people in 27 countries.*



**Also helping to spread the vaccine world wide — the VaccinAid campaign — to 'Give the World a Shot' to help defeat Covid-19**



The Church of England is supporting the 'VaccinAid' campaign which aims to help fund the biggest vaccination drive in history.

Led by UNICEF UK, with the online fundraising platform Crowdfunder, the campaign offers people a practical way to give thanks for their Covid-19 vaccination, by making a voluntary donation

It aims to help fund almost two billion Covid-19 vaccines for health workers and the most high-risk and vulnerable people on our planet. The money raised will also help UNICEF provide tests and treatments to people in 190 countries around the world through the global COVAX initiative.

The Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, is encouraging people and congregations both to donate, and also to spread the word in their community, as a practical demonstration of Jesus's command to love our neighbour.

VaccinAid is being supported by other faith groups, businesses, celebrities and the NHS. Using the Crowdfunder platform, individual donations can be given, or communities — including parishes — can sign-up to fundraise together.

Local churches are being encouraged to join the campaign, with resources available to download for free on the AChurchNearYou.com Resource Hub to share on social media, newsletters or notice boards.

The recently launched campaign has been developed in just a few weeks following a meeting convened by Archbishop Justin with faith leaders, Government and NGOs to discuss how people in the UK could do something practical in response to the real sense of gratitude they have felt as they and their loved-ones receive their vaccines.

Archbishop Justin said: "The Covid-19 crisis has had a profound impact on people here and around the world, but vaccines offer the hope of a brighter future. I'm delighted that churches and other faith groups in the UK are supporting the VaccinAid campaign.

"There is no better way to show our deep gratitude for the gifts of science and medicine than making sure vulnerable people around the world are also given a shot.

For more information on the campaign go to [www.vaccinaid.org](http://www.vaccinaid.org) to donate or begin fundraising.



# ***restore***

A weekly space for reflection and restoration.

20 minutes of Bible readings, prayers, music  
and silence.

No participation required – just come and find  
a little space.

St Mary's Church, Stockport

Thursdays @ 12

(starting on 27<sup>th</sup> May)

“He restores my soul.” (Psalm 23:3)

Many people in our churches and our communities have had a very difficult year. Our prayer is that we can provide a little space for people to rest and know something of God's peace & care. Tea and cake will be served afterwards (provided that restrictions allow), for those who want to stay and chat. Why not come yourself? Or bring a friend or neighbour with you? We hope to see you there.



## A Service of Remembrance

for HRH The Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh.

16th April 2021

The first civic service since the pandemic began was sadly in remembrance of the Duke of Edinburgh, attended by The Worshipful the Mayor of Stockport, Cllr Dean Fitzpatrick and the Deputy Mayor, Councillor Chris Gordon.

Numbers attending were restricted in view of continued Covid restrictions with strict social distancing observed.



### In Loving Memory Irene and Frank Hamnett



#### God's Garden

(one of the poems read at the funeral)

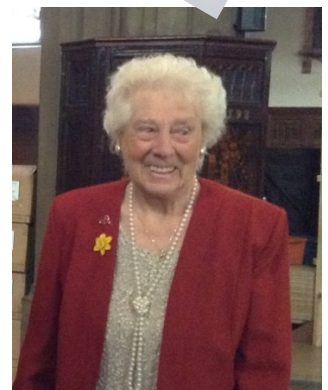
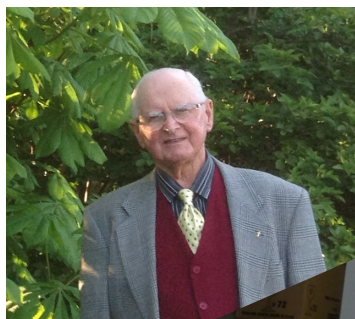
God looked around his garden  
And He found two empty places  
He then looked down upon the earth  
And saw your tired faces

He put His arms around you both  
And lifted you to rest  
God's garden must be beautiful  
He always takes the best

He knew that you were suffering  
He knew you were in pain  
He knew that you would never  
Get well on earth again

He saw the road was getting rough  
And the hills were hard to climb  
So He closed your weary eyelids  
And whispered "Peace be thine"

It broke our hearts to lose you both  
Although you did not go alone  
For part of us went with you  
The day God called you home



## Frank and Irene Hammett

We're grateful to Revd Roger Scoones, former Rector of St Mary's Church, for this tribute to Frank and Irene from the years that he has known them. Roger closes his tribute by saying that Frank and Irene have played an enormously valued part in the life of St. Mary's and that's very much a sentiment I, as current Rector, would endorse and echo. Since I first arrived here Frank has been a source of constant support and encouragement. I have had the privilege of sharing Communion at home with him and Irene and he would phone me often, greeting me with the words 'hello love, it's Frank'. Both he and Irene were a delight and a joy. They will be sorely missed by all at St Mary's and, living in their community myself, I know how saddened that community is at their passing too.

Our love and prayers are with Chris, Robert, Ian and all of Frank and Irene's family and friends at this time,

Lynne  
Rector of Stockport and Brinnington



Frank had already been serving as Churchwarden for over 30 years and for at least 10 years as Church Treasurer by the time I arrived as Rector in 1996. If you wanted to know anything about St. Mary's, the answer was usually "Ask Frank. He's bound to know!" To have a man like Frank in the congregation was a very great asset, and as Rector for 20 years I was immensely grateful for his help and advice. If ever there was a gap that needed filling, Frank would say, without hesitation "I'll do it"!

Of course Frank had seen many Rectors come and go and to each he has been loyal and supportive with a thoughtfulness, which was nurtured through years of experience of working alongside the clergy and church representatives.

When I arrived at the Rectory just before Christmas 1996 two ladies of the parish, offered to help me unpack the dozens of boxes with which I had arrived. One of those ladies was Irene Hammett, like Frank, she was always willing to help out. I recall very vividly walking into town, down through the Market on the Saturday after my welcoming service. She wanted to show me where various shops were. We walked right past St. Mary's which was closed. It was kind of her to do so. But what struck me that morning was that St. Mary's should be open, and so on the way home I opened the West doors, and welcomed my first visitors!

Frank loved to welcome people to church, and especially so on Civic Sunday and on other ceremonial occasions. He'd dress up in his Verger's black robe and carry the Verger's wand with great dignity and pride. He also liked to read the Lesson in church services and did so often, if with a slight hesitancy of speech, but always with great meaning from the heart. He believed what he was saying.



Frank never persuaded me to play crown green bowls with him, but I got Frank and Irene to play croquet on the Rectory lawn, which was greatly enjoyed. Each summer we would have a whole afternoon of activity in the Rectory garden, beginning with strawberries and cream tea, followed by an open air service and ending with a barbecue, which Frank always offered to prepare. The only problem was that he liked to get the fire going before the end of the service, which meant that quite often the gathered crowd was enveloped in the smoke drifting across from the barbecue. The meal itself was a splendid affair, and greatly enjoyed by those who came to it. Its success was all down to Frank.

Frank and Irene were keen gardeners at home. One day Frank brought me three saplings which he'd grown from seed. Knowing that trees have a propensity to grow in time, I was naturally exercised about where to plant them. I believe they are still there, and now quite large! They are Frank's trees!

Frank not only took a pro active role in the lay leadership of St.Mary's, serving on the Church Council forever, but also taking a positive interest in the life of the Stockport Deanery, serving as a member of Deanery Synod for more years than I care to remember.

When Frank stepped down from being Churchwarden I invited him to become Warden Emeritus, which I think he took to mean "church warden for life"! In any event, Frank never gave up sharing that sense of responsibility and care, not only for the church building of St.Mary's, which he'd known and loved all his life, but also and especially for the people who came into church, either as worshippers or as visitors.

Frank Hammett has played a unique and much valued part in the life of St.Mary's, "The Parish Church" or "The Old Church" as it was once variously known. Former Rectors of St.Mary's would undoubtedly have paid a similar tribute both to Frank and to his dear wife of 70 years and friend for 74 years, Irene Hammett.



I thank God for Irene; and for Frank, for his life, his faithfulness, his ministry and his unstinting, unfailing commitment to the life and witness of St.Mary's in the Marketplace, Stockport, throughout the 20th and the 21st centuries.



May they together Rest in Peace and Rise in Glory

Roger Scoones

Rector of St.Mary's 1996-2016

## **23<sup>rd</sup> May: Day of Pentecost, Whit Sunday**

Pentecost took place on the well-established Jewish festival of Firstfruits, which was observed at the beginning of the wheat harvest. It was seven weeks after Easter, or 50 days including Easter.

A feast day to celebrate the country's wheat harvest does not sound exactly world-changing, but that year, it became one of the most important days in world history. For Pentecost was the day that Jesus sent the Holy Spirit – the day the Church was born.

Jesus had told His disciples that something big was going to happen, and that they were to wait for it in Jerusalem, instead of returning to Galilee. Jesus had plans for His disciples, but He knew they could not do the work themselves. They would need His help.

And so, they waited in Jerusalem, praying together with His other followers, for many days. And then on that fateful morning there was suddenly the sound as of a mighty rushing wind. Tongues of flame flickered on their heads, and they began to praise God in many tongues, to the astonishment of those who heard them. The curse of Babel (Genesis 11: 1-9) was dramatically reversed that morning.

That morning the Holy Spirit came to indwell the disciples and followers of Jesus. The Church was born. The Christians were suddenly full of life and power, utterly different from their former fearful selves. The change in them was permanent.

Peter gave the first ever sermon of the Christian Church that morning, proclaiming Jesus was the Messiah. His boldness in the face of possible death was in marked contrast to the man who had denied Jesus 50 days before. And 3,000 people responded, were converted, and were baptised. How's that for fast church growth!

Of course, Pentecost was not the first time the Holy Spirit had acted in this world. All through the Old Testament there are accounts of how God's Spirit guided people and strengthened them. But now, because of Christ's death and resurrection, He could INDWELL them. From now on, every Christian could have the confidence that Jesus was with them constantly, through the indwelling of His Holy Spirit.



## **23rd May: Pentecost in Jerusalem**

On that long ago first morning of Pentecost, Jerusalem was crowded with thousands of visitors, for it was one of the most popular feast-days in the Jewish calendar – the Feast of Firstfruits, looking forward to the wheat harvest.

In one small room of that great city, a small group of people who had followed Jesus were praying. There was nothing else for them to do: Jesus had died, He had risen, and He had ascended, promising to send them ‘a Comforter’. They were left alone, to wait at Jerusalem. And so they waited – on Him, and for Him. They were not disappointed, for that morning the Holy Spirit fell upon that small room, and transformed those believers into the Church, Christ’s body here on earth.

Pentecost was not the first time that the Holy Spirit came to the world – throughout the Old Testament there are stories telling of how God had guided people and given them strength. But now His Spirit would use a new instrument: not just isolated prophets, but the Church, His body on earth.

Acts opens with the preaching of the gospel in Jerusalem, the centre of the Jewish nation. Within 30 years the Gospel had spread throughout the northern Mediterranean: Syria, Turkey, Greece, Malta... to the very heart of the Roman Empire: Rome. The Church was on the move – God was on the move! He was calling people from every nation to repent, turn to Jesus for forgiveness of their sins, and to follow Him.

## **Pentecost, not a Ghost but a Gift**

We used to call it Whitsun – ‘White Sunday’ because long ago children marched to church in white on that day. No processions nowadays, and we’ve even changed its name. It’s now ‘Pentecost’, which is more accurate but needs explaining.

Pentecost marks a vital event in Christian history. It is celebrated 50 days after Easter. The year Jesus was crucified (which took place at the Passover), the remnant of His followers, just 120 of them, were together in an upper room in Jerusalem. They were afraid to show their faces in case the authorities arrested them. But on the day of Passover they had an amazing collective experience.

They described it in terms of wind and fire, a great surge of spiritual energy and confidence. Afraid no longer, they burst out on to the streets where crowds were gathering for the festival, led by Peter they began to tell them about Jesus and His resurrection. As they did so, although many of the people in the crowd were foreigners who spoke other languages, everyone heard them in their own tongue. Peter told them that what they were seeing was the fulfilment of an old prophecy when God would pour out His Spirit on the human race, men and women, young and old.

As a result of His words and the extraordinary spectacle, 3000 people believed and were baptised in the name of Jesus. They were the nucleus of what in 100 years would be a Church that would turn history upside down. For Christians Pentecost is in effect the birthday of the Church.

Many people find the whole idea of the Holy Spirit mysterious and elusive. It wasn’t helped by the earlier title ‘Holy Ghost’. The spirit is not spiritually a ‘ghost’ but a precious gift.

**30<sup>th</sup> May: Trinity Sunday, celebrating our God who is Three Persons**

Trying to explain the doctrine of the Trinity has kept many a theologian busy down the centuries. One helpful picture is to imagine the sun shining in the sky. The sun itself – way out there in space, and unapproachable in its fiery majesty – is the Father. The light that flows from it, which gives us life and illuminates all our lives, is the Son. The heat that flows from it, and which gives us all the energy to move and grow, is the Holy Spirit. You cannot have the sun without its light and its heat. The light and the heat are from the sun, are *of* the sun, and yet are also distinct in themselves, with their own roles to play.

The Bible makes clear that God is One God, who is disclosed in three persons: Father, Son (Jesus Christ) and Holy Spirit. For example:

Deuteronomy 6:4: 'Hear O Israel, The Lord our God, the Lord is one.'

Isaiah 45:22: 'Turn to me and be saved... for I am God, and there is no other.'

Genesis 1:1-2: 'In the beginning God created.... and the Spirit of God was hovering...'

Judges 14:6: 'The Spirit of the Lord came upon him in power...'

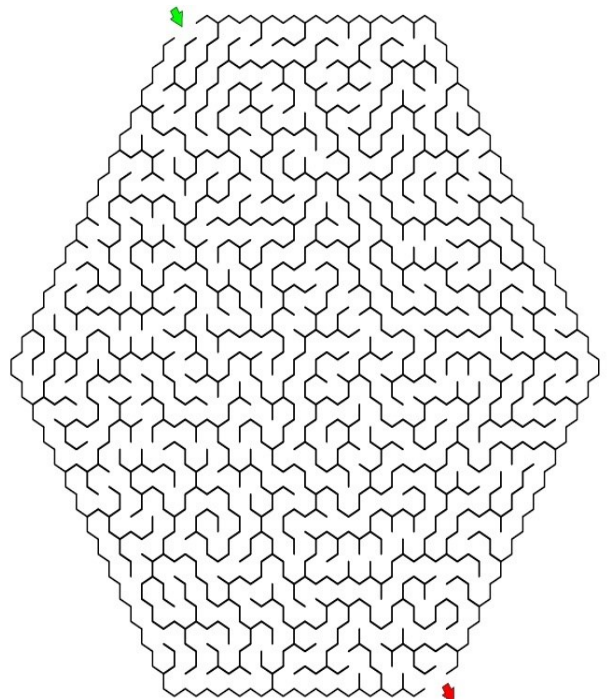
John 1:1-3: 'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through Him all things were made; without Him nothing was made that has been made.'

Luke 24:49 actually manages to squeeze the whole Trinity into one sentence. Jesus tells His disciples: 'I am going to send you what my Father has promised; but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power (the Holy Spirit) from on high.'

In other words, the sun eternally gives off light and heat, and whenever we turn to its brilliant light, we find that the warmth and life there as well.



**Maze**







We very recently held an information evening here at Safe Families during which I shared our vision which aligns so fully with that of yours at Stockport and Brinnington: *that no one should feel alone, and everyone deserves to feel a sense of belonging.*

Most of us know that if we were facing difficult times our friends and family would be there to support us and help out. But for some people, there is no-one there to turn to for help.

Safe Families are a Christian charity who partner with churches to offer support, hope and belonging to improve the lives of families in crisis. We work with over 38 Local Authorities and our aim is to stem the flow of children into the care system.

We have volunteers who are willing to come alongside a family and offer a hand of friendship. We have our **Family Friends** who will invite a parent for a coffee just to see how their week has been, or they may take a child out for the afternoon to provide some respite, or it may be that they will spend an afternoon baking with a child to give it that 'one to one' attention that it really needs. Next, we have our **Host Families**. These take a child into their homes for the night in all sorts of circumstances, It may be that there is a medical emergency and there is no one else to look after the child, or it may be that the family is dealing with a difficulty and it would be better for a child to be out of that environment for a night or two. Thirdly we have our **Resource Friends** who may not be able to commit to a weekly chat, but they do have a spare highchair to donate, or they can go and fix a fence to keep a garden safe, or they donate monthly.



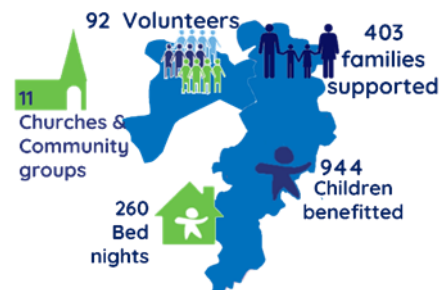
Finally, we have our **Connect Friends** – these support families via the phone or video call during Covid when we cannot have face to face contact. All of our volunteers are trained and supported to ensure that both they, and our families, enjoy the best experience together.

If you think that you would like to hear more about the work we do, please visit our website: [www.safefamilies.uk](http://www.safefamilies.uk) where you will find lots of information and stories of hope, and where you can find our giving page. We are on Facebook, Twitter and even Instagram

We very much look forward to getting to know you in the near future and I cannot wait until this lockdown is lifted so that I can come out and speak to you all in person.

Kind Regards, and many blessings, Nicola Williams

Safe Families in numbers in Salford & Manchester



## We Chose to Go to the Moon

The Revd Canon Paul Hardingham on the challenge of commitment

On 25<sup>th</sup> May 1961, President John F Kennedy announced to Congress that the United States 'should commit itself to achieving the goal, before this decade is out, of landing a man on the Moon and returning him safely to the Earth.'

This reflected the United States' desire to catch up with the Soviet Union in the space race. Although an extremely challenging goal, it was finally achieved on 20<sup>th</sup> July 1969, when Apollo 11 commander Neil Armstrong stepped on to the Moon's surface.

Such a challenging mission required commitment and sacrifice from many people. What is our mandate, as the people of God in today's world? What challenge have we been entrusted with by God that requires our absolute commitment and sacrifice in these difficult days? When Jesus ascended into heaven, His last words to His disciples were significant: 'But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be My witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.' (Acts 1:8).

Our mission is to be witnesses for Jesus, making Him known in our workplaces, to our families and friends, as well as the wider community. A credible witness speaks of what they know personally. What is my story of how Jesus has changed my life?

However, we have the gift of the Holy Spirit to empower our witness: 'you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you' (1:8). The Spirit enables us to display the fruit of Jesus' character and gifts us to be effective witnesses.

We choose to go to the moon in this decade and do the other things, not because they are easy, but because they are hard' (JFK, 12<sup>th</sup> September, 1962 at Rice University).

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*Nigel Beeton writes: "A few weeks ago, the UK paused to remember the devastation that Covid-19 has caused. Who could imagine that in just a year such a thing could happen. What a tribute to those who laboured long and hard to achieve that. I realise that some of us still await the first dose of the vaccine, and I hope that they will soon get it. I also realise that some vaccinators are men; it was just that, for me, on both occasions I met A Lady with the Shot.*

*So, begging pardon for the awful pun, and to Alfred, Lord Tennyson for crimes against his masterpiece, here is my poem:"*

### A Lady with the Shot

On either side the dangers lie  
We may sicken, we may die;  
We cannot drive, we cannot fly,  
We must wear masks, but some ask, "why?"  
"It's just a massive plot!"  
Though some may protest loud and shrilly  
We have to tell them, "don't be silly,"  
There's just one route from fear so chilly:  
The covid vaccine shot!

Through long and anxious toilsome days  
They sought for virus-killing ways,  
It's hard to find the words of praise –  
Their skill and knowledge just amaze!  
They loosed a Gordian Knot!  
For months the news had gone so badly  
How nice to turn from thinking sadly And go  
and meet so very gladly  
A lady with the shot

And now must all folk gladly share  
The vaccine which, with equal care  
Protects all people, everywhere  
If it's use is wise and fair.  
We must share what we've got.  
And then at last this virus stealthy  
Will threaten no-one – poor or wealthy  
No more masks to keep us healthy  
This clever vaccine shot!

*By Nigel Beeton*



Roggie here...

Hello everyone—  
here I am sat by the  
font—checking the  
flower display at  
church and having a  
few words to say to  
Mummy!

It was nice to be  
back at St Mary's,

but Mummy was busy for well over an hour  
and I was a bit bored waiting all on my own.  
Where are you all?

I tried the odd bark which Mummy com-  
pletely ignored, crying didn't help either so  
I simply had to jump off my desk and go  
and find her in the end to see if it was time  
to go home or at the very least play outside.

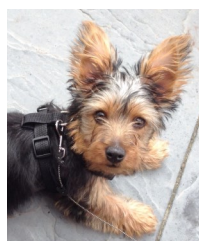
She laughed, but I think she got the mes-  
sage, when I dragged her handbag over and  
plonked it at her feet!

I hope that very soon when I am at my desk  
again you will be there too—to say hello and  
talk to me—Can't wait to see everyone  
again.

May is such a special month, it's my birthday  
on the 13th and Mummy's too on the 25th. I  
will be four—Mummy refuses to say.

FOUR—that is quite a big boy isn't it—  
already I'm quite grown up. I wonder if  
there will be birthday cake this year.

Here I am at just a eight weeks  
old—sat in Mummy's hand - was  
I really so small!



This photo was tak-  
en a few weeks lat-  
er when I was al-  
lowed to go out-  
doors. My dark coloured puppy  
hair was growing out—but

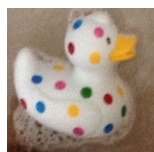
Mummy says I still had those same beautiful  
eyes and little nose. I had lovely sharp  
teeth, but changed them (to my surprise)



later on for bigger ones. The baby teeth  
served me well as a pup-dog—ideal for  
home decoration, furniture restoration  
and Carpet removal.

I've not eaten a Carpet or item of furni-  
ture for at least a couple of years I  
would think—the fact we have teeth  
marked furniture and a hole in the bed-  
room Carpet isn't my fault anymore—it's  
Mummy's fault for not making good and  
replacing things.

I might have grown out of playing with all  
my toys now that I am older—except my  
ball—but I like to know how they all  
are—and I'm not happy if Mummy moves  
any.



BUT I have to say that I am a  
little worried about my duck  
Dottie (well actually she flew  
in from John Lewis and was

originally a gift to Mummy—but I share  
my bath with her) for I fear she has been  
involved in an accident where I stay  
when in Wales—I have heard Mum saying  
part of the bathroom ceiling is in the  
bath—I'm sure I left Dottie sat on the  
edge of the bath—I wasn't expecting fly-  
ing plaster-board heading her way. Nei-  
ther was Mummy for that matter, but  
she seems more concerned at the price  
of a new roof! If only I'd put her on the  
bed with "Gullie" the sea gull.

I was wondering if keeping a ceiling in  
the bath meant no more baths—but I  
suspect not!

You would have thought that I was keen  
on birds, but really I'm not a great fan of  
our feathered friends—other than bark  
at and want to chase. However, have  
you heard of the Secretary Bird—  
Mummy seems to be greatly interested in  
them.



We're thinking this month of a guy called Pachomius, a sort of patron saint for administrators, which made Mummy think about the "Secretary Bird" so I was interested to know what it was and how a bird of prey could have anything to do with administration.



'So I've got a new friend - Sussie the Secretary Bird who I asked to tell me all about the connection.

She didn't but the internet did. Sussie couldn't of course for thankfully she isn't a real one—for they grow to about 4 ft tall and I would be very frightened I'm sure to meet one of those on the patio. But I think it is safe, they don't live here I don't think —well I hope not.



The Secretary Bird is an iconic African bird that is found in the grasslands, savannas, and even shrublands in sub-Saharan Africa. They are large birds that impress with their size, stand out from the crowd with their incredible resilience and focus. They are easily recognized by their extremely long legs (unusual for a bird of prey) and crown of black feathers at the back of their head, which stand up like a halo.

And the link to administration: well it would appear that the Secretary Bird is the emblem of the Chartered Institute of Secretaries and Administrators (the Governance Institute).

Had it not been I doubt Mummy would ever have associated this big bird with administrative tasks and have such an interest in these over-sized feathered creatures.



*Nigel Beeton writes: "Do you ever go into your own garden and feel that you are trespassing?"*

## My Garden?

I thought I owned a garden  
A lovely place to be  
A bird said, "Beg your pardon,  
"This land belongs to me!"

A squirrel dropped a nut on me  
Which wasn't what I'd planned  
"Get lost!", said he, "for can't you see  
"You trespass on my land?"

A pheasant flapped and squawked so loud  
I scarce could hear me think!  
"Get off my ground, for two's a crowd!"  
He kicked up such a stink!

The wild-life around me  
So loudly do protest!  
They growl and screech till I can see  
That I am just a guest!

*By Nigel Beeton*



## 100 years of the British Legion

Tim Lenton

One hundred years ago, on 15th May 1921, the British Legion was founded in the aftermath of the First World War, to provide support to veterans of the British Armed Forces, their families and dependants.

It was created at a time when two million people were unemployed. More than six million had served in the war: of those who came back, 1.75 million had suffered some kind of disability, and half of those were disabled permanently.

Four organisations came together at the instigation of Lancastrian Lance Bombardier Tom Lister, who was angered at the Government's unwillingness to help, and Field Marshal Earl Haig, who had been Commander in Chief of the British Forces. The Legion campaigned for fair treatment of those who given everything for their country, and it continues this work today.

In 1922, the Legion's poppy factory opened in the Old Kent Road, London, with 40 disabled men manufacturing 1000 poppies a week. The first Poppy Day was held that same year. The Festival of Remembrance began in 1927, and the Legion became 'Royal' in 1971 – 50 years ago – on its golden anniversary.

At first membership of the Legion was confined to ex-Service personnel, but it was expanded to include serving members of the Forces in 1981.



## Amnesty International celebrates 60 years

Tim Lenton

Amnesty International was founded in London 60 years ago, on 28<sup>th</sup> May 1961.

A non-governmental organisation with its headquarters in the United Kingdom, Amnesty International focuses on human rights and is believed to have more than seven million members and supporters around the world. It was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1977 for its "defence of human dignity against torture".

Amnesty came together following the publication of an article in *The Observer*, 'The Forgotten Prisoners', by Peter Benenson, a Jewish lawyer whose mother Flora Benenson was Russian. His father Harold Solomon was British, but he died when Peter was nine. Peter, who was tutored by W H Auden and went to Eton and Balliol, took his mother's name much later as a tribute to his grandfather, a gold tycoon.

With a group of lawyers and as a member of the Labour Party he founded Justice, the influential human rights and law reform organisation, in 1957, but the following year he fell ill and moved to Italy to convalesce, where he converted to Roman Catholicism.

Amnesty campaigns to put pressure on governments where human rights abuse takes pace. It considers capital punishment to be "the ultimate, irreversible denial of human rights."

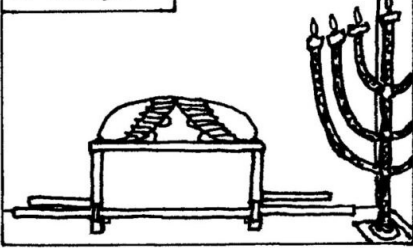
# Bible Bite

A short story from the Bible

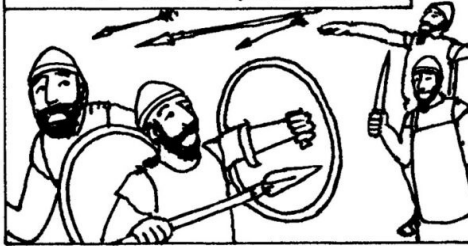
It can be read in the Bible in  
1 Samuel 4:1-10, 5:1-7:1

God gave Moses two stone slabs with His laws for the Jews on them. They were kept in a special chest, the Ark, and carried with them

When the Jews got to Israel, the Ark was kept at Shiloh.



The Jews did not keep God's laws so He let the Philistines attack and defeat them.



The Jews took the Ark into battle with them to make God help them win.



But the Philistines won. They took the Ark to their city of Ashdod and put it in the temple of their god Dagon.



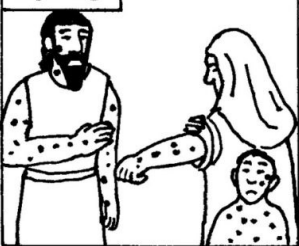
The next day they found Dagon's statue face down.



The next day it was over again and its head and hands had broken off.



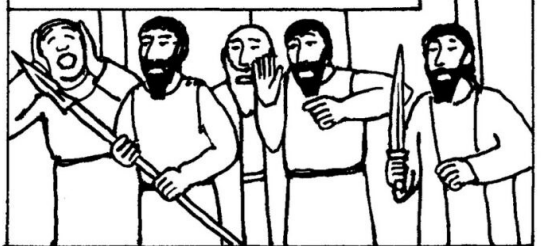
Then the people became covered in sores.



They moved the Ark to the city of Gath.



They were going to move the Ark to Ekron, but the people there wouldn't let them.



So they put the Ark on a new cart with a gift of gold.

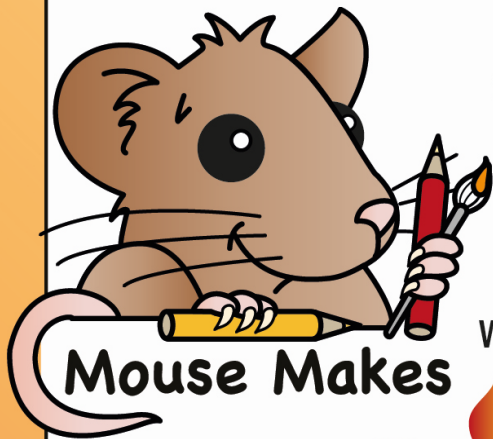


At Bethshemesh, people harvesting saw the Ark.



But some treated it without respect and died.





Re arrange the scrambled letters to find the missing words.

 The Holy Spirit  
**V S E I L**  
with us and in us.

The Holy Spirit  
helps us to  
**W K N O**  
we belong to God.

The Holy Spirit  
**H C T S E E A**  
us about God.

The Holy Spirit  
**K P E S S A**  
God's word to us.

The Holy Spirit  
**P H L S E**  
us to tell others  
about Jesus.

The Holy Spirit  
helps us when we  
**A Y P R**



On the day of PENTECOST  
the disciples were gathered  
together in one place...

What sound did they hear?

Acts 2:2

What did they see?

Acts 2:3

What filled them?

Acts 2:4

How did they speak?

Acts 2:4

What did the crowd hear?

Acts 2:6

Which countries  
had they come from?

Acts 2:9

What was  
their reaction?  
Acts 2:12-13

Who explained  
what was  
happening?  
What did he say?

Acts 2:14-36

How many  
people were  
baptised  
that day?

Acts 2:41



Change each letter to the  
letter before it in the  
alphabet and see what  
the **Holy Spirit**  
produces in us:

KPZ  
IVNJMJUZ  
TFMG DPOUSPM  
GBJUIGVMOFTT  
LJOEOFTT  
QBUJFODF  
QFBDF  
MPWF  
HPPEOFTT

Galatians 5:22

What is the work of the  
**Holy Spirit**? What does He do?

Fill in the missing letters.

  
TEAC \_ ES  
COMF \_ RTS  
REVEA \_ S  
IN \_ OU  
    
TRAN \_ FORMS  
HEL \_ S  
   
GU \_ DES  
 ENEWS  
CONV \_ CTS  
SANC \_ IFIES



w	c	k	p	e	o	p	l	e	l	a	l
g	d	e	u	w	h	a	n	d	s	e	h
m	g	e	l	o	t	e	m	p	l	e	e
c	a	p	l	e	s	a	f	e	u	k	a
h	t	i	i	j	b	c	a	t	r	r	d
e	h	n	n	z	l	r	a	a	e	o	q
s	a	g	g	s	s	t	a	l	s	n	v
t	s	v	h	i	s	m	x	t	p	s	e
p	h	i	l	i	s	t	i	n	e	s	c
b	d	a	g	o	n	g	j	s	c	d	o
s	o	r	e	s	f	m	o	u	t	r	w
i	d	c	a	r	t	m	s	d	b	g	s

Shiloh  
Israel  
God  
sores  
Gath  
safe

Moses  
Philistines  
temple  
keeping  
head  
Dagon

Ekron  
pulling  
Ark  
cows  
statue  
celebrated





## Crossword clues (may 21) & Sudoku puzzle

### Across

**1** Sense of right and wrong (*1 Corinthians 8:7*) (10)

**7** Coming (*John 11:17*) (7)

**8** 'All I have is — , and all you have is mine' (*John 17:10*) (5)

**10** Smarten (*Acts 9:34*) (4)

**11** Hold back (*Job 9:13*) (8)

**13** Member of the Society of Friends (6)

**15** At ague (anag.) (6)

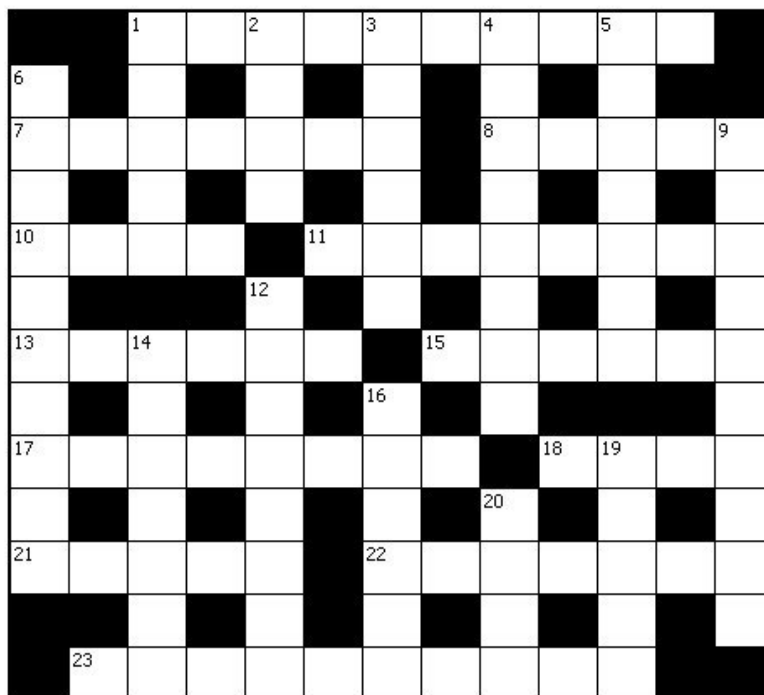
**17** Citizen of the Greek capital (8)

**18** So be it (*Galatians 6:18*) (4)

**21** Twentieth-century poet and dramatist who wrote *Murder in the Cathedral*, T.S. — (5)

**22** Empowers (*Philippians 3:21*) (7)

**23** Imposing (*1 Samuel 9:2*) (10)



### Down

**1** Healed (*Luke 7:21*) (5)

**2** Central space in a church (4)

**3** Co-founder of Spring Harvest and General Secretary of the Evangelical Alliance 1983–97, Clive — (6)

**4** Moses killed one when he saw him beating a Hebrew labourer (*Exodus 2:12*) (8)

**5** Bravery (*Acts 4:13*) (7)

**6** It interrupted Paul and Silas singing hymns in a Philippian jail (*Acts 16:26*) (10)

**9** Transgression (*Psalms 36:1*) (10)

**12** Irish province in which Dublin is situated (8)

**14** Same hit (anag.) (7)

**16** 'The Spirit of God was hovering over the — ' (*Genesis 1:2*) (6)

**19** Author of the immortal stories of Winnie the Pooh, A.A. — (5)

**20** Cab (4)

	7			5	4	6	3	8
		9			7	1		
				8		7		9
	8				6	3	7	1
		3				2		
1	4	2	5				9	
3		8		2				
		7	3			5		
5	2	6	7	9			8	



**BE  
FILLED  
WITH THE  
SPIRIT**

EPHESIANS 5:18





Have you ever laughed at a joke you did not understand?

Then you are not alone. It seems that two thirds of us have laughed at jokes we did not 'get', simply because we wanted to fit in with our friends at the time.

And more than half of us have actually gone on to repeat jokes with punchlines which we don't ourselves understand.

More than half of us have even researched a



## Beware the use-by date

Nobody likes to throw food away, but if you ignore the use by dates and go by smell alone, you can risk serious illness.

So warns the Food Standards Agency. In a recent study, the regulator found that half of us do not always check use-by dates.

Many of us still smell the milk to see if it is still okay, and even Theresa May, the former Prime Minister, has admitted to scraping the mould off jam in order to cut waste.

The agency has warned that some Britons who actively ignore use-by dates could risk being hospitalised. Use-by dates are carefully calculated by assessing bacteria on food which could multiply to make them ill.

A spokesman for the agency said: "It's great that consumers are trying to minimise food waste, but there are lots of ways to do that without gambling with your health, such as planning your meals ahead of time, checking what you have in the fridge that is close to its use-by date, and freezing food right up until the use-by dates."

Sadly, there are around 2.4million cases of food poisoning each year, and 180 deaths.

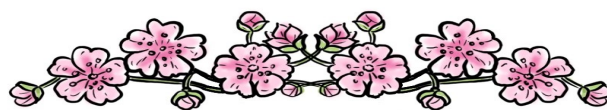
## Is there life without the BBC?

Could you live happily without the BBC? Just try it for two weeks.

That was the recent challenge of the corporation's outgoing chairman, Sir David Clementi, to a group of critics who said they resented the licence fee.

Apparently, nine days later, two thirds of the critics had changed their mind and said that the licence was worth every penny. Sir David observed that when "things that they took for granted are removed from them, they realise how valuable the BBC is."

So he encourages anyone else who thinks that the license is not worth £3 a week, to try life without the BBC. "I think that most people would find it very hard to cope."





**The Meeting of Parishioners and Annual Parochial Church Meeting for 2021 took place on Sunday, 25th April via Zoom** as recommended following the continued restrictions due to Covid-19 .

Many thanks to those of you who managed to join us at the Annual Meeting and for those of you who didn't manage to connect—thank you for trying.

Zoom is wonderful in many ways, but it does have its challenges ...

Our Annual Report and Statement of Financial Activities was published in advance of the meeting as required and made available for download at [www.stmarysinthemarketplace.com](http://www.stmarysinthemarketplace.com) (where a copy remains) and on our Church Near You websites (copies now deleted).

The Notice of Elections has been posted (again as required) - a note of which is given on the next page.

The Electoral Roll for the parish has been prepared as required under the Church Representation Rules 2020 by our Electoral Roll Officer.

Numbers: St Mary's 57; St Thomas' 50; St Luke's 34 = Total: 141. From those named on the Roll – 37 are resident in the parish / 104 are non-residents.

**Thank You** to our regular planned givers—in whatever format that might be and for those one-off most valued donations.

Our churches have been closed for such a long time since the first lockdown with hire activities suspended, income generating initiatives restricted all resulting in our overall income being very much reduced.

What could have been a difficult situation for us (as it has for so many) greatly helped by those who kindly continued with their regular giving either directly via the bank, stashing their planned giving envelopes in a safe place until they could be handed in, sending us a cheque or paying in via bank transfer. Thank you so very very much.

Thank you too to those who have given us a “one-off” payment or that little bit extra at this difficult time—this has been most appreciated.

We are also grateful for legacies received and for grant income we were able to secure. Gift Aid receipts and monies from other sources.

As Kevin retires as PCC Treasurer (although still very much part of the team) we say a BIG thank you to him for all his work in the background sorting out our financial arrangements for the parish. Our thanks to John for taking over the reins.



## **ANNUAL MEETING**

Your churchwardens this year are:

Jayne Brindley

Anne Jepson

Susan Heap

Paul Heard

James Kitchen

(with a vacancy at St Mary's)

Newly elected PCC members:

Margaret Forster

Janet Langton

(with two vacancies)

### **Appointments of the PCC:**

Brenda Baxendale—Safeguarding Co-ordinator

John Brearley—Treasurer

Sue Heap—Secretary

Eric Tomlinson—Electoral Roll Officer:

### **Co-opted at the first meeting of the PCC:**

Pat Hamilton (Environmental Officer)

Peter Nelson (Vice Chair)

### **Appointment of Sides-persons:**

Hamid Amiri

Sheila Andrews

David Birch

Isobel Clarkson

Bill Frith

Sarah Mason

Peter Nelson

Margaret Shuttleworth

Anne Stewardson

Ann West

David Andrews

Barbara Ashton

Brian Broderick

Margaret Forster

Sue Heap

Kevin Morgan

Adam Pinder

Catriona Smith

Carol Taylor

## **Full PCC membership details are:**

Brenda Baxendale (R)      Safeguarding Co-ordinator)

John Brearley (E)      Treasurer

Jayne Brindley (CW)

Lynne Cullens      (Rector)

Marilyn Donohoe (E)

Marie Flint (Curate)

Margaret Forster (E)

Jennifer Goulden (E)

Patricia Hamilton (Co)      Environmental Officer

Sue Heap (CW)      Secretary

Paul Heard (CW)

Anne Jepson (CW)

James Kitchen (CW)

Janet Langton (E)

Harry Long (E)

Tony Marsh (E)

Linda Mather (DS)

Kevin Morgan [E/DS)

Peter Nelson( Co)      Vice Chair

Adam Pinder (DS)

Jess Piper (Associate Minister)

Jane Scott (E)

Catriona Smith (E)

R = Reader

CW = Churchwarden

E = Elected

Co- = Co-opted— for a period of 1 year

Joining meetings are Ordinands: Jane Crooks & Geoff Reyner

Full details can be found on the web-site for St Mary's along with a copy of the Annual Report available for download

**Contract us at:** *St Mary's with St Andrew's Parish Office*  
*St Andrew's Community Church, Hall Street, Stockport, SK1 4DA.*

**Telephone:** *0161 429 6564 - not in use at the present time*  
*(Sue) 0161 456 0262*

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**Stockport Parish Church** *[St Mary's in the Marketplace]*  
*Churchgate, Stockport, SK1 1YG*

**Telephone:** *0161 480 1815 - not in use at the present time*

**Website:** *stmarysinthemarketplace.com*

**Email:** *st.marysstockport@gmail.com*

**Facebook:** *Stockport Parish Church - St Marys*

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**St Thomas' Church, Stockport, Holt Street, Stockport, SK1 3PY.**

**Telephone:** *0161 429 9524*

**Website:** *st.thomasstockport.org.uk*

**Email:** *info@stthomasstockport.org.uk*

**Facebook:** *St Thomas' Church Stockport*

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**St Luke's, Northumberland Road, Brinnington, SK5 8LS**

**Telephone:** *0161 406 8160 Mobile: 07711 355064 (Linda)*

**Website:** *stlukesbrinnington.co.uk*

**Facebook:** *St Luke's Brinnington*

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