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June 2020

Parish of Stockport and Brinnington

St Mary - St Thomas - St Luke



June 2020

Hello everyone – being at home for a good eight/nine weeks without leaving the premises even once has been somewhat of a challenge as I am sure it has been for many “shielding” and avoiding total contact with the outside world. I needed to post some letters, so bravely decided to see if the car would start and drive to the nearest post box. It felt quite strange just driving round the block (twice) and I was quite relieved to return home. I’m not quite sure what I expected, nothing had changed – or appeared to have changed - but everything was different - it felt really weird just being out. Having braved the post box, I did decide to start taking Roggie a relatively short walk up the road to a grassy area – thank you to the Council that the grass has been neatly cut – so it really is like being in a mini park. A taste of freedom! My travels and the desire to run the car engine has since taken me a drive round including Churchgate, St Mary’s looked as fine as ever, Roggie barked as we turned into the car park, to drive back out again. Felt very strange not to be parking up, opening up and getting on with normal activities.

Summer is certainly creeping up on us – my neighbours buying paddling pools for their children – what beautiful weather we have enjoyed during our lock down at home. I hope that you are all keeping well and keeping safe of course, as lockdown restrictions are being lifted little by little. Although I suspect that it could still be some time before we can meet up again as a congregation. When we are allowed to return to church I am confident there will be lots to be done before we can actually open the doors and welcome everyone back. Lots to be done before we can open our premises for general hire again.

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5	6	1	3	9	4	8	2	7
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I	O	T	C	R	C	R	A	E	H	M	M	L
T	Y	S	H	A	D	O	W	H	G	P	P	Y
S	S	E	N	L	U	F	H	T	I	A	F	P
E	W	U	E	A	D	E	S	A	M	R	G	L
P	M	I	R	N	R	O	N	E	L	T	R	A
A	H	R	N	T	M	E	L	F	A	S	R	G
S	O	T	H	G	I	N	H	G	I	H	E	U
W	E	E	V	A	S	I	T	S	F	N	R	E

The hospital has put one of those wire cages on wheels in the front entrance so that donors can put their home-made scrubs into it. There's a poster on it thanking contributors most effusively but otherwise it's just a bare wire cage. So these paragons of home sewing, after all these hours of cutting, stitching, overlocking and elastoplasting the occasional cut finger, just drive up to the hospital and deposit the fruits of their labours into a wire cage.

I think that is true charity. No formal thanks, no prize for producing the most scrubs, no smiling grip and grin photos in the local paper (grip and grins are out for the duration anyway). Just the simple satisfaction of knowing that you are making a real difference to the working lives of staff facing the greatest challenge of their health service careers. (It's certainly been the greatest challenge of mine, and if any twenty-somethings setting out on their careers will have to face worse, then I tremble at the thought.)

If you, or someone you know, has been sewing scrubs, then on behalf of all of us, may I say:

Thank You!

Sending our best wishes to members of the Stockport Operatic Society

There will be no performance of "Top Hat" at the Plaza this year, Stockport Operatic Society having had to take the decision to postpone until next year. Sadly (for all concerned) we won't be seeing them in rehearsal at St Andrew's this season – but look forward to their return in 2021.

Life continues of course and although our premises are empty it is nice that Lynne is now able to go inside at St Mary's – St Thomas's and St Luke's to record our Sunday worship. Sunday's are so different from the norm – I was late to Church last week and why was that you wonder – not because I slept in, the roads were busy – no – because I could – time didn't matter there was absolutely no urgency although granted there might have been had we been live streaming - as they were at Chester Cathedral. I "arrived" there, having viewed our worship first, as the service was drawing to a close, but that didn't matter either a few clicks of the mouse and I just watched the recording from the beginning.

Church business continues, as best we can, and it is anticipated that the PCC will meet (virtually) during June. We have had some "discussions" (via e:mail / Zoom) in particular with regard to financial issues and potential new initiatives.

We look forward to having our Ministry Team fully in place later in the year – although clearly Covid-19 is delaying various activities taking place. We can however prepare and make plans for when Covid-19 is behind us and pray that is sooner rather than later. SMH

Enjoy our June magazine.....

Stockport Parish Pew Tube

You have to say that this is quite impressive and improving week by week with items recorded indoors, outdoors and clever bits of editing bringing it altogether. If you are not doing it already, please keep an eye out for additional services as well as our regular ones. Our viewing numbers are encouraging to say the least. Many thanks Lynne, Marie and all others involved.



Cheadle FM 87.9

From St Cuthbert's Church, Cheadle:

A new community radio has taken to the airwaves based at St Cuthbert's Church. What a wonderful idea and great achievement in these difficult times. Featuring a mix of information, music and a whole lot more, it aims to bring together Cheadle and local communities at this time of isolation with many still spending most (if not all) their time at home.

You don't need to live in Cheadle or surrounding areas to enjoy the programmes (just tune into FM 87.9) although we do have members from Cheadle or thereabouts within our congregations.

Why not give it a go!

Well done to the Rev Mike Newman (Associate Minister at St Cuthbert's), Cllr David Mellor and everyone else involved.



On the Covid Frontline

Nigel Beeton

You can say what you like about the coronavirus, it has certainly brought some colour into our lives! This morning I encountered one of my colleagues. Starting from the top, she was wearing a bright yellow visor, a pale blue regulation issue surgical mask, bright pink scrubs and bright orange clogs. She looked like one of those rainbows that we now see all over the place!

I can assure you that her bright pink scrubs did not come through the NHS supply chain! No indeed, those scrubs were put together and stitched by a member of the public.

Scrubs, for those of you not addicted to *Holby City*, are pyjama-like outfits of trousers and top which do nothing for your figure (mine's a hopeless cause anyway) but which are cool to wear and easy to keep clean. The idea is that you can change out of your day clothes and into scrubs and vice versa so you are not carrying bugs into or out of clinical areas. They were originally worn in the operating theatre environment, hence the term associated with 'scrubbing up' for theatre. Their use had become considerably more widespread but the advent of the requirements for PPE in the covid situation put enormous pressure on demand for scrubs, and our existing stocks quickly ran out. It was the same story across the NHS.

But the public have responded magnificently. Carol, my wife, sews, and in fact she has made us both masks that we can wear when out and about (but not at work). It took her a while, and of course she's at work nursing so doesn't have the time to make scrubs, but I would think that a set of scrubs must take several hours to make.

Word Search clues for June 2020

E D W E L L S G S T R I E
 C E E I F E S R E A D H D
 N S H E L T E R E F U G E
 E T A I I V R P S Y R T A
 L R W R O O T R R T A D D
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 W E E V A S I T S F N R E

Coronavirus has turned our world upside down. But God is still there, and we can call on Him, as Psalm 91 (vs 1-6) reminds us...

Whoever dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty. ²I will say of the Lord, "He is my refuge and

my fortress, my God, in whom I trust." ³Surely he will save you from the fowler's snare and from the deadly pestilence. ⁴He will cover you with his feathers, and under his wings you will find refuge; his faithfulness will be your shield and rampart. ⁵You will not fear the terror of night, nor the arrow that flies by day, ⁶nor the pestilence that stalks in the darkness, nor the plague that destroys at midday.

Dwells	shelter	most	high	shadow
Almighty	refuge	fortress	trust	save
Snare	deadly	pestilence	cover	feathers
Wings	faithfulness	shield	rampart	fear
Terror	night	arrow	plague	destroys

Over 6,000 calls in first 48 hours to Daily Hope

A free phone line offering hymns, prayers, and reflections 24 hours a day while church buildings are closed because of the coronavirus received more than 6,000 calls in the first 48 hours. The Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, recently launched 'Daily Hope' as a simple new way to bring worship and prayer into people's homes, during the lockdown period.

The line – which is available 24 hours a day on 0800 804 8044 – has been set up particularly with those unable to join online church services in mind. The service is supported by the Church of England nationally as well as through the Connections group based at Holy Trinity Claygate in Surrey and the Christian charity Faith in Later Life.

Within 48 hours the line had received more than 6,000 calls from across the country, with many being referred by friends, family or members. Calls have so far spanned more than 50,000 minutes, with some of those accessing the service listening to the music, prayers and reflections for up to 50 minutes at a time.

The Revd Canon Dave Male, the Church of England's Director of Evangelism and Discipleship, said: "The volume of calls shows that Daily Hope is meeting a need.

"We have a duty in these strange and difficult times to find new ways of bringing prayer and worship to people wherever they are, and this is one more way of helping people to connect with God from their own homes.

“This is such a simple idea – planned and launched all within a few short weeks by a small dedicated team – but hopefully it will bring real comfort, hope and inspiration to people at this time.”

Callers to the line hear a short greeting from the Archbishop before being able to choose from a range of options, including hymns, prayers, reflections and advice on COVID-19.

Options available include materials also made available digitally by the Church of England’s Communications team such as Prayer During the Day and Night Prayer, updated daily, from Common Worship, and a recording of the Church of England weekly national online service.



75th Anniversary of the Liberation of the Channel Islands



Evacuee Service

Sunday 28th June 2020



Our service at St Mary’s is cancelled of course, however plans are in hand for a short service to be recorded locally and broadcast to Channel Islands listeners by BBC Guernsey.

to be needed is for action that will change the economic system that is driving climate change and poverty. Thus, the Christian Aid campaign “New Deal for Climate Justice” (that we are being asked to support) is a set of policies and action intended to provide solutions as to what is needed to tackle the climate crisis, and the UK Government asked to take action as the nation due to host the next UN’s key climate change talks.

So what are the actions? Christian Aid are calling for the UK Government to:

To transfer its fair share of finance and technology to poor climate-vulnerable countries; To stop fossil fuel expansion and support clean renewable energy instead; To develop renewable energy without exploiting people of destroying the environment; To curb the over-consumption that is driving climate breakdown and to invest in decarbonising the UK economy in a way that addresses economic and social inequalities.

It is difficult to forget that we are facing an economic down-turn of our own, many facing hardship and difficulties with the country likely to be in debt for years to come. Hard to think beyond immediate priorities, but this we must. Five years on from the Paris Agreement, action does really needs to be taken **now**.

You are invited by Christian Aid to support the campaign, one action could be (as we remain in partial lock down) to sign the e-petition to the UK Government – just log-on to the Christian Aid web-site caid.org.uk/climatejusticepetition where you will also find more information regarding the campaign.



Demand a New Deal for Climate Justice

It is difficult in the present “climate” to think much beyond Covid-19, a pandemic that has taken hold world-wide. But we have, for a few weeks at least, seen cleaner air and a reduction in pollution which should remind us that there is another global crisis that we must all take action against – climate change.

The “New Deal for Climate Justice” calls for the UK government to respond to the global climate emergency by addressing the underlying drivers of climate change and global inequality. Let’s face it we have been burning fossil fuels, extracting natural resources and polluting the planet for years. We’re starting to see changes to our weather patterns, rising sea levels etc. We are equally aware of inland flooding issues in the UK, as well as hotter and dryer conditions including water shortages and moorland fires. We all know that we must do “our bit” to help, as we have during “lock down” in the fight against Coronavirus. In the midst of this, as the traffic starts to fill our roads again, flights take off from our major airports, as we start to come through Covid19 – we still need to address climate change preferably with the same will and determination.

The people that Christian Aid are working with people NOW are not facing climate change in the same way as we are – they are already living with it. From the indigenous communities whose homes have been destroyed by Amazon fires, to the farming communities in Malawi starving because of drought. These people are said to have done the least to cause this crisis but suffering the most and that they are the least able to adapt to climate breakdown.

People around the world are doing what they can, but what appears

#FaithAtHome aims to make prayer a household habit

The Church of England has recently launched #FaithAtHome, a new programme which it is hoped will “make prayer a household habit once again.”

#FaithAtHome will feature weekly video content to help families to talk about faith and pray together. The videos will be led by children, young people, staff and school leaders from across the country.

The #FaithAtHome programme will run for an initial 11 weeks, until the end of July, and can be accessed at churchofengland.org/faithathome. It will explore themes including courage, patience, generosity, resilience, love and hope.

The Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, said: “The aim of these resources is to offer simple ways for families and households to approach complex and difficult topics, such as illness, fear and bereavement. The coronavirus pandemic has forced people to confront difficult and painful questions that none of us can explore on our own.

“My hope and prayer is that #FaithAtHome will not only equip children and young people to engage with difficult questions, but also inspire them.”

The Church of England’s Chief Education Officer, Nigel Genders said: “Home is the new normal, and faith at home is a habit we need to re-discover. #FaithAtHome will offer people of all ages and faith backgrounds a chance to pause, think and reflect, and to rebuild lost habits of prayer and faithful reflection in the home.”

Christians Against Poverty (CAP) concerned at rising level of household debt

“The coronavirus crisis will push thousands of households to the brink.” So warns a spokesman for CAP, the charity which helps people in debt. So, while CAP approves the Government’s recent £20 per week boost for those on Universal Credit and those receiving Tax Credits, “what many won’t realise is that a staggering 2.83 million people will still fall through a gap in this vital provision. “These people are those who are still receiving ‘old style’ benefits that Universal Credit is designed to replace – things like Job Seeker’s Allowance (JSA) or Employment Support Allowance (ESA). “Around one in five of our clients will therefore miss out on the Government’s support package, which is worth more than £1,000 over the next twelve months.”

In all, CAP has listed three further changes it would like to see the Government make:

- > Increase Job Seeker’s Allowance and Employment Support Allowance by £20 per week.
- > Increase Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates to the median market rents.
- > Suspend the benefit cap during the pandemic.

In the meantime, CAP has launched a coronavirus emergency appeal to provide everything from emergency food packages to fuel vouchers, to crucial mobile phone credit to help those who are isolated stay connected during this time. It points out that one in five adults in the UK has less than £100 in savings, and that 38% of their clients’ debt is priority debts like rent, Council Tax and utility bills.

If you can help, go to www.capuk.org



Coronavirus cases in Africa increasing sharply

Christian Aid has warned that time is running out to prevent coronavirus overwhelming health systems across Africa.

As coronavirus infections rise sharply across the continent, and with African countries lacking the specialist equipment or staff to cope with a pandemic, the international development agency is calling for the cancellation of debt repayments from African countries this year, so that money can be freed up and spent instead on saving lives.

As the poorest continent in the world, Africa is least equipped to provide the specialist care necessary to treat people infected with coronavirus. According to the World Health Organisation there are less than 2,000 ventilators and 5,000 intensive care unit beds across the entire Africa region.

Patrick Watt, Christian Aid’s Director of Policy, Public Affairs and Campaigns, said: “Debt repayments falling due this year should be cancelled in full if we want African countries to have a fighting chance of limiting the spread of coronavirus, and surviving the hit to their economies.

“It is completely perverse that dozens of the world’s poorest countries are expected to pay debts to wealthy creditors in the midst of the biggest global health challenge in a generation, and the worst economic downturn since the 1930s. At this moment, cancelling the debt is a matter of life and death.”

A biblical plague of locusts

A new wave of crop-eating locusts has been devastating East Africa, just as communities are also dealing with an increase of coronavirus cases.

At the start of 2020, Ethiopia and Somalia faced the biggest invasion of the insects in 25 years – and the worst in Kenya and Uganda for 70 years. The locusts also reached parts of South Sudan, where millions of people are already suffering from severe food shortages amid conflict and political instability. The latest plague could be 20 times larger. The UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), is calling it ‘an unprecedented threat’ to food supplies and jobs.

Yet tackling the locusts will be even harder now that coronavirus has forced governments to close their borders. With severely reduced air travel and cargo shipping, pesticides from Europe and Asia can’t get into the countries – and to the farmers – that need them. Tearfund is asking governments to recognise activities responding to the locust swarms as essential services, so that they can continue despite the restrictions on travel.

‘The locust plague, together with the coronavirus pandemic, could mean all the work Tearfund supports communities with is on the brink of collapsing,’ says Ephraim Tsegay, Tearfund’s Country Director for Ethiopia.

‘If the second wave of locusts is not prevented before it inflicts further damage, more people will be forced to leave their homes to find food, land for their animals to graze, and an income elsewhere. It will also make people more vulnerable to coronavirus.

Christians and the bubonic plague of London

The Reverend Richard Peirson was one of the exceptions. Most of the other clergy in the City of London had fled the Great Plague in 1665, but Peirson stayed behind to look after the parishioners of St Bride’s Church, Fleet Street, where he was Rector. The parish was densely populated and the pandemic was catastrophic. The church’s register records 636 burials that year in the month of September alone, with 43 interred in one day. Houses of infected people were marked with a red cross on the door, with occupants kept inside for 40 days. Handcarts were pulled along the city streets to cart away the bodies; the drivers’ cries of “Bring out your dead”, became etched in the memories of subsequent generations. Relatives were banned from attending funerals.

The official count numbered 68,596 deaths in London alone, but other estimates suggested two or three times that number. Bubonic plague – for that is what it was – was incurable. Poor people were fatalistic about it but complained that even their ‘spiritual physicians’ had abandoned them. Clergy of the Church of England were often supplanted by non-conformist preachers.

It wasn’t just the St Bride’s Rector who put his life in jeopardy by staying at his post. While most wealthy people, along with King Charles II and his court, escaped the plague-ridden city, Churchwarden Henry Clarke also chose to remain at the church. When he succumbed to the illness, his brother William took over. William survived for a fortnight.

Plague cases continued to occur sporadically at a modest rate until mid-1666. That year the Great Fire of London destroyed St Bride’s Church and much of the City of London. It was rebuilt to a design by

Christopher Wren, but almost obliterated once more in 1940 during World War II before being restored yet again.

Today's Rector, Canon Alison Joyce, says that compared with her predecessor Richard Peirson, she has it easy. Like everyone else, she is confined by the lockdown rules to her Rectory next to the church. But her pastoral work continues, and she collates sermons and archive music to create a Sunday webcast service. Alison writes, "these days it is a ministry of telephone calls, emails and Facetime. I offer such practical help and support to the vulnerable as I can . . . I keep a candle burning before our main altar and continue a ministry of prayer."

Alison says she is surprised when people regard the faith as a kind of celestial insurance policy against bad things happening to them. The first followers of Jesus knew that in dedicating their lives to following the crucified and risen Christ, their discipleship would take them into the very heart of darkness, not away from it.

She adds, "Hope is no hope at all unless it can engage with utter despair and meaninglessness."

The Revd Paul Hardingham on future hope – after coronavirus

The Valley of Dry Bones has a future hope

'A dem bones, dem bones, dem dry bones. An' I hear the word of the Lord!'

At this time of global pandemic, we live with stark reality of death and life. Ezekiel's vision of the valley of dry bones (37:1-14) was given when God's people were in exile in Babylon. They felt dead, being separated from home and God! The vision answers God's question: '*can these bones live?*'.

We can also feel cut off from God, facing the loss of job, business, home or health, with churches unable to meet on Sundays. This vision assures us that God has power over death and can breathe new life into what is hopeless. When Ezekiel is told to '*prophesy to the bones,*' God brings them back to life: the bones come together and are covered with muscles and skin. He then prophesies to the wind, from the four corners of the earth, to bring the bodies alive. The physical bodies are then filled with God's breath to bring new life. The miracle of this story is that God not only makes these bones live, but also brings the life of His Spirit. The Covid-19 virus robs people of their life by suffocation, so that they can't breathe. Our hope beyond the pandemic is that the gift of God's Spirit will bring new life to our lives, churches and world. Life will certainly look very different in the future, but we can be assured that God is with us and that we are safe in His hands.

'I will put my Spirit in you, and you will live, and I will settle you in your own land. Then you will know that I the Lord have spoken, and I have done it, declares the Lord.'(vs14)

Lockdown, you and IT

David Pickup

How are you getting on with technology? The coronavirus pandemic has driven hundreds of millions of us to use it more than ever, as we sit at home in frustrated isolation. If you are used to digital meetings and Zoom, it is not a problem, but for millions of grandparents wanting to see their families, or non-techie people wanting to see their friends, it has been quite a learning curve. So, is there a patron saint of computers and electronics and all the difficult stuff?

Some people say the patron saint of the internet should be Saint Isidore of Seville, a Bishop and scholar in the Seventh Century who wrote a book called *Etymologies* or *The Origins*, in which he tried to record everything that was known. That seems to be a good basis for sainthood, or at least for the internet. Another candidate is Saint Eligius who lived about the same time. He is quite busy already as the patron saint of goldsmiths, metalworkers, vets, the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers (REME), horses and those who work with them. His main qualification seems to have been his ability to make things.

My suggestion is Zebedee. No, not the character from *The Magic Roundabout* but the father of James and John. After all, consider this: *“James the son of Zebedee, and his brother John...were in a boat with Zebedee their father, mending their nets, and He called them. (Matt. 4:21)*

Ok, it is not *the* internet, but Zebedee knew about mending a net which would have had both good and bad stuff all over it. Certainly, whenever I get in an IT muddle during this lockdown, I would welcome any patron saint that was willing to help me!

Looking for Hope Amongst the Clutter

Jane Brocklehurst

In this strange locked down season, because of the coronavirus pandemic, I've noticed a change in the type of pictures posted on social media. In place of the look-here-at-me selfies are snapshots of buds opening to display the colours of spring. Such hopeful images counterbalance gloomy statistics in the news media. There are also more memory pictures – this is what I was doing on this day years ago with people I love – I wish we could be together now. While we're not allowed to make the kind of memories depicted in those pictures, we find comfort in memories we already have.

One thing I've done with this unexpected free time is to organize printed photographs into albums. The photos and the albums have been there for a while, waiting for me to get a round tuit. You remember the old joke? Imagine people finding their round tuits in cupboards and drawers all over the country. How would you use yours? To sow seeds that had not been planted? To read the book gathering dust on a shelf?

What else needs tackling? Now may be an ideal time to face the daunting corner where clutter lurks. Daunting because of what you may disturb among age-old piles of unsorted belongings. Looking squarely at the past may be an unwelcome prospect. It makes us face uncomfortable questions. Projects we may never finish, equipment we cannot use any more, objects of attachment from people we've lost. Isn't that like what we're doing as a nation in these unprecedented times? Issues we have been avoiding are suddenly highlighted through unfamiliar circumstances.

There is much talk about how we're looking forward to getting back to normal on the other side of this international crisis. Some people say they hope things will have changed, that normal will not look the same as it used to, because we have learned valuable lessons about what really matters in life. It's up to us whether or not we rise to the challenge, to reorganize society more fairly, to care more for the environment.

By myself I cannot change the world, but I'm determined to look after the little space that is in my care, not to let it be overwhelmed with needless clutter. Be brave. Use this negative time to make a positive change in your small corner. If you choose to sort it out, I guarantee that amidst all the mess you will find at least one thing, however small, to bring you joy – even if it's just a clean and tidy corner.

Jane Brocklehurst on the value of going through our 'sentimental' stuff...and finding some wonderful memories.

Sudoku

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

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Just a pint of social media for me, please

Even before the lockdown, social media seems to have been replacing the role of pubs in socialising, as far as young people are concerned.

In 2005, an estimated 18 per cent of young people aged 16 to 24 were non-drinkers. According to one study, that has now risen to 29 per cent.

“Online technology has made friends and family instantly accessible and the role of pubs and clubs for initiating and consolidating social networks appears to have changed.” So says Dr Dominic Conroy, a psychologist at the University of East London. Dr Conroy adds: “With the internet being used to initiate and maintain social relationships, both romantic and otherwise, the use of alcohol as a social lubricant may be less necessary.”

Dr Conroy co-authored a recent study on the subject with Prof Fiona Measham, a criminology expert at Liverpool University.

We can claim the gift of sleep

Many of us have had our sleep patterns disturbed in recent weeks. After all, a pandemic, lockdown and growing financial crisis are hardly conducive to relaxation. But the fact is that, whatever is happening out there, we desperately need our sleep. It is vital for the proper functioning of our brain and heart. Anyone who has ever been deprived of sleep for a period will remember their ever-diminishing ability to perform complicated tasks. Sleep can also help us solve problems. We go to bed struggling with a decision to make or a relationship to resolve, and we wake up to find a solution presenting itself. The old advice to 'sleep on it' is true: we see things more clearly after sleep. The Bible considers our sleep as a blessing from God. As Christians, we can calmly commit ourselves to His loving care, secure that He who watches over us "will neither slumber nor sleep" (Ps 121:4). Knowing that God is with us, we can let ourselves go.

If you are having trouble sleeping, why not memorise one of the verses below, and repeat it to yourself as you lie in bed tonight?

- > 'I lie down and sleep; I wake again, because the Lord sustains me.' (Ps 3:5)
- > 'In peace I will lie down and sleep, for you alone, Lord, make me dwell in safety.' (Ps 4:8)
- > 'In vain you rise early and stay up late, toiling for food to eat— for He grants sleep to those He loves.' (Ps 127:2)
- > 'When you lie down, you will not be afraid; when you lie down, your sleep will be sweet.' (Prov. 3:24)
- > 'I will refresh the weary and satisfy the faint.' (Jer. 31:25)

As the writer George MacDonald so aptly put it: "Sleep is God's contrivance for giving man the help He cannot get into him when he is awake."

Mend and make do

According to handicraft expert Kirstie Allsopp, a missing button was the number one reason why 350,000 tonnes of wearable clothing may end up in UK landfill this year.

But that was before lockdown. Now you have time to make do – and mend! Rescue and reuse your clothes. After all, it saves money and the planet.

Crime up and down

There are four crimes on the rise during lockdown: domestic abuse, the online grooming of children, commercial property theft and coronavirus-related frauds.

Nearly all other offences have declined, including murders, robberies, domestic burglaries and assaults.

Terry Waite – on coping with lockdown

Terry Waite spent four years in solitary confinement in Beirut.

He says: “In isolation, it is easy to become introspective and depressed. All of us, when we are honest and examine ourselves critically, will discover things about ourselves of which we are not especially proud. I had to learn how to grow a greater acceptance of myself and work towards a deeper inner harmony.

“... Today in lockdown, it’s important to keep yourself well. Don’t slob around all day in pyjamas and a dressing gown. Dress properly and develop a routine. It’s important to have a structure – get up at a certain time, eat regular meals and so on.

“If you have faith, then that will give you resources to draw on”, especially if you know some hymns, psalms and prayers by heart. “When I was captured, they were there to call on.”

In danger from domestic abuse?

Domestic abuse is soaring just now. Even as far back as early April, it was up by 30 per cent.

No wonder, then, that charities are urging us to keep an eye out for anyone in danger. The warning signs include bruising, repeated shouting and all types of controlling behaviour.

If someone is in immediate danger, call 999 and ask for the police. If you dare not even speak, then use the silent solutions service by dialling 999 and press 55. If there is no immediate danger, you can still contact the 24-hour confidential National Domestic Abuse helpline on 0808 2000 247.

Refuge, the national domestic abuse charity, estimates about 1.6 million women already experienced domestic abuse last year, and that “self-isolation has the potential to aggravate pre-existing abusive behaviours.”

Upset? Chill out...

A recent survey carried out by YouGov, on behalf of the Mental Health Foundation, found that more than one in five adults in the UK had felt panicked by the coronavirus, three in 10 had felt afraid, and more than six in 10 had felt anxious. And that was even *before* lockdown. One therapist suggests that if you are suffering high anxiety, then turn off the news and social media for a while. Dig out those old films you’ve always loved, cook a favourite recipe, and get some exercise, to help you relieve the tension in your body.

Sweet dreams?

From large pink hamsters that smile and wave at you, to cars that can't get off roundabouts, a lot of us are reporting weird, vivid, and intense dreams just now.

Experts say that financial worries, cabin fever and boredom may all be factors. But – on the plus side, there is also the fact that many of us are finally catching up on our sleep. And by waking up without an alarm, we will have better recall of our dreams.



What kind of stress do you have?

These are stressful days. The towering storm clouds of coronavirus and financial trouble are casting a long shadow over all of us.

Many of us deal with our stress by expressing it. Loudly! We lose our temper, swear, shout and even throw things at our loved ones. We over-react to various personal setbacks because we can't retaliate against the virus or the stock market.

But some of us do the opposite: we under-react. We display 'quiet stress'.

"We quietly hold our stress within: we don't speak up about how we feel. And crucially, we become inert. We don't act on situations that require action." So warns Jillian Lavender of the London Meditation Centre.

"We stay in unhappy relationships and unfulfilling jobs. We feel overwhelmed, yet we ignore important admin tasks. We procrastinate. Quiet stress creates an emotional paralysis that keeps us 'stuck' in unhappy situations. Inaction is just as much of an inappropriate response to stress as over-reaction is"

A further danger of 'quiet stress' is that instead of taking positive action, people can withdraw into themselves, and turn to comfort eating or drinking too much. This further lowers their immune system.

Conservation Foundation wants to hear stories from your garden

Have you been gardening during lockdown? If so, you may have a story or some advice to share. In that case, the Conservation Foundation would love to hear from you.

It has recently launched a virtual *Gardening Against the Odds* network on Facebook @gardeningagainsttheodds and on the Conservation Foundation website: conservationfoundation.co.uk

David Shreeve of the Conservation Foundation explains: “Over the years running our GATO Awards we have made many friends and now we are making more virtually every day. If you or anyone you know would be interested in sending news and information to us especially if it doesn’t involve an actual garden or somehow it’s against the odds. We hope to be adding news every day and giving details of plant availability, tricks of the trade and offer the odd prize.”

Christian summer events and travel agencies hard hit by crisis

A number of Christian travel companies face possible financial ruin in the wake of the Covid-19 virus.

Companies affected include: Lightline Pilgrimages (to the Holy Land), Oak Hall Expeditions, Pax Travel, and McCabe Pilgrimages (which would have handled travel to the Oberammergau Passion Play this summer – now postponed until 2022.) Ironically, the Oberammergau Passion Play has its roots in the plague in Germany in 1633.

Meanwhile, here in the UK, the following events have been abandoned for this year: Spring Harvest, New Wine, the Walsingham Youth Pilgrimage, Focus (for churches on the Holy Trinity Brompton network), and Greenbelt.

A prayer for Trinity Sunday

Shield me

O may God shield me, and may God fill,
O may God watch me, and may God hold;
O may God bring me where peace is still,
To the King’s land, eternity’s fold.
Praise to the Father, praise to the Son,
Praise to the Spirit, the Three in One.

From The Creed Prayer, poems of the Western Highlanders

Creative things you can do with your Bible

Bible Society is urging people to make good use of their enforced time at home by using their creativity to read the Bible with better appreciation. To help with this, Bible Society is offering a range of creative Bible-based resources to help people learn new skills, such as journaling, colouring or doing crafts that are Bible-based.

These include:

Bless Our Nest (£5.95) – a colouring book filled with Bible verse designs, featuring colour charts and tools for Bible journaling.

Faithful Papercrafting (£12.99) – now you can create note cards, gift tags and scrapbook paper, mini cards, bookmarks and envelope templates full of inspiring Scripture.

Complete Guide to Bible Journaling (£14.99) – offering new creative techniques for Bible journaling.

Go to: <https://www.biblesociety.org.uk>

No plastic please, we're the National Trust

The National Trust is going to get rid of its plastic membership cards. Replacing the five million membership cards with a paper alternative will save 12.5 tons of plastic each year.

The new cards will be made from a strong and durable paper, with a water-based coating. The cards will be recyclable and compostable.

The National Trust also has plans to almost completely remove single-use plastics from its sites by 2022. It has already replaced all disposable food packaging with compostable products. Next, it wants to remove plastic drinks bottles and eliminate plastic packaging from its shops.

Nature out and about

The lockdown this Spring at least gave Nature a brief respite. Wild goats, herds of deer, sparrowhawks, stoats, snakes, badgers, spawning toads and songbirds all seemed to have enjoyed the peace and quiet.

We, in turn, have enjoyed watching them from our windows. As Mark Thompson, a presenter on *Stargazing Live*, said, "This lockdown is giving people a chance not just to connect with our families, but also to connect with Nature around us. It has given us the change to recalibrate."

Discovering the Great Barrier Reef – the hard way!

It was 250 years ago, on 11th June 1770, that English explorer Captain James Cook discovered the Great Barrier Reef off Australia, when his ship ran aground on it.

While the aborigines and the Chinese may have found the Reef – the largest structure in the world made of living organisms – before him, Cook made more of an impact. His ship, the *Endeavour*, unloaded ballast and was re-floated at high tide, but extensive repairs were necessary, as well as skill at navigating a way out through the labyrinthine coral.

Cook made extensive journeys to unexplored waters, particularly in the Pacific. At an earlier stage, when he was charting Newfoundland, he said he intended to go “not only further than any man has been before me, but as far as I think it is possible for a man to go.”

Born in Yorkshire, he worked for a Quaker ship-owning family at Whitby and started his sea life as a merchant seaman before joining the Royal Navy. Later he attended St Paul’s Church, Shadwell, in East London. Although he had six children, he has no direct descendants.

He was killed aged 50 in 1779, during a scuffle with some natives in Hawaii, but left a huge legacy of scientific and geographical knowledge.

Tim Lenton

The day they first climbed Annapurna

The first successful ascent of a mountain over 8,000 metres high was achieved just 70 years ago this month, on 3rd June 1950, when Annapurna in the Himalayas was climbed by a French expedition led by Maurice Herzog. Annapurna is the tenth highest mountain in the world.

It was just three years before the first ascent of Everest. Annapurna was a largely unknown mountain, and the team first had to find a way to reach it, and then survey a possible ascent route before doing the actual climb – an amazing achievement in one season.

The team had originally intended to climb the slightly higher Dhaulagiri, but when they saw it, they decided it was impractical. They went on to climb Annapurna without oxygen and survived extreme conditions which resulted in the two summiting climbers, Herzog and Louis Lachenal, suffering severe frostbite and surviving an avalanche on the descent.

At the summit the excitable Herzog said: “Never have I felt happiness like this, so intense and pure.” Lachenal, who had been reluctant to make the final attempt, said he felt “a painful sense of emptiness.”

This was the first mountain summit attempt that Nepal had permitted: afterwards the Maharajah of Nepal greeted the climbers as national heroes.

Tim Lenton

Charles Dickens – prolific writer with a social conscience

Popular Victorian novelist Charles Dickens died 150 years ago, on 9th June 1870. His books include *The Pickwick Papers*, *A Tale of Two Cities* and *David Copperfield*.

He died of a stroke in Gad's Hill Place, his country home in Kent, when halfway through writing *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*. The last novel he completed – most of them were written in regularly released parts – was *Our Mutual Friend*, in 1865.

He had been born in Portsmouth in 1812, the second of eight children. His family were relatively poor, and his mother wanted him out at work, so he never received a formal education. Nevertheless, he edited a weekly journal for 20 years and wrote 15 novels, as well as many other stories, articles and letters. He was also a staunch social campaigner, particularly for children's rights and education.

As could be deduced from one of his most loved works, *A Christmas Carol*, he was a firm believer in Christian elements such as compassion and redemption, and he loved the New Testament, while having little time for the Old or for organised religion. His parents were nominal Anglicans. He is said to have wanted his stories to be seen as 'parables' emphasising the teaching of Jesus.

Tim Lenton

JUNE 1940 – a month to remember

June 1940 – 80 years ago – was a dramatic month in the Second World War, and one which saw two of the most memorable speeches in English.

As the evacuation of Allied Forces from Dunkirk was completed, recently appointed Prime Minister Winston Churchill told the House of Commons on 4th June: "We shall fight on the beaches, we shall fight on the landing grounds, we shall fight in the fields and in the streets, we shall fight in the hills; we shall never surrender."

Surprisingly he did not broadcast it to the nation: it was not recorded until 1949, "for posterity." When he spoke, the French had not surrendered, and the idea that "in God's good time" the USA might conceivably have to ride to the aid of a 'subjugated' England actually depressed as many people as it invigorated.

Two weeks later, on the 18th June, with the battle in France lost, Churchill did address the country directly with a rallying call in what must indeed have seemed a very dark hour. "The Battle of Britain," he said, "is about to begin. Upon this battle depends the survival of Christian civilisation." He concluded by saying that if Britain were to last a thousand years, people would still say, "This was their finest hour."

Tim Lenton

Mayor of Stockport 2020/21



The Mayor and Mayoress of Stockport for 2020/21 are Councillor Dean Fitzpatrick and Miss Joanne Fitzpatrick.

We are of course unable to welcome the new Mayor & Mayoress to St Mary's for the Civic Service which was due to have been held this month, but look forward to meeting them later in the year.

Cllr Fitzpatrick was born at Stepping Hill hospital, has lived in Stockport all of his life and comes from a long line of Stopfordians. First elected as a Labour Councillor for Heatons South in May 2011.

The Mayor's Charity for 2020/21 is "Beacon Counselling" - a local charity based on Middle Hillgate who support people suffering mental and emotional distress

The Deputy Mayor and Mayoress are Councillor Chris Gordon and Dr Margaret Gordon.

Nigel Beeton writes: "Simon, my vicar, was completely unfazed by the closure of his church in March. The very next week he'd set up 'Zoom' and many of us have been weekly attenders of his 'virtual church' for the weeks now. I realise that many other churches are doing the same, but we've had people join us from all over the place! Of course, we all look forward to getting back to St Mary's, but it has brought the congregations together in ways that we could never have imagined. This poem began one recent Sunday morning when I said to my wife, Carol, "let's go and worship at St Sofa's". That inspired her and so the first verse of this poem is hers, not mine!

St Sofa's

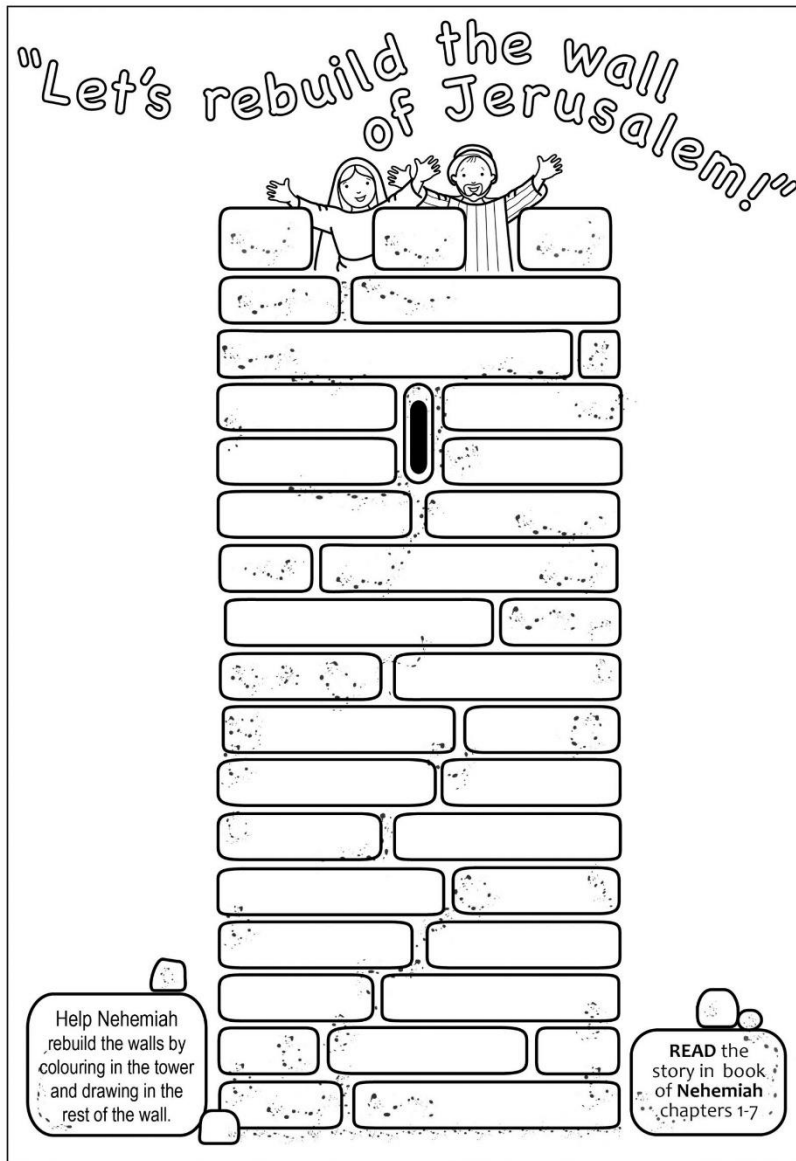
By Nigel and Carol Beeton

We worship at St Sofa's now
Since Covid came to stay
We don't dress up or do our hair
But still we come to pray!

Our Vicar is a clever chap
A Zoom with his IT
And so we sit down ev'ry week
And meet up virtually!

Our Parish Church stands empty
With praise she does not ring;
But still her people gather round
To pray, and praise, and sing!

The virus is a nasty thing
Yet it has helped us see
The church is NOT a building
But folk like you and me!



During the lockdown, whilst we were forbidden from driving to beauty spots and walking in National Trust parks. Nigel Beeton wondered what the birds make of it all?

Titwillow (With apologies to WS Gilbert)

On a tree by a river sat little Tom Tit
 Singing 'willow, titwillow, titwillow'.
 His mate fluttered in and beside him did sit,
 Singing 'willow, titwillow, titwillow'.
 "Oh, where are the people?" bewildered, he cried,
 "Tis many a day since a soul I have spied"
 "I think," said his wife, "they're all staying inside!"
 "Oh willow, titwillow, titwillow".

"I do like the quiet, I do like the peace!
 "Oh, willow, titwillow, titwillow,
 "But find myself wondering why did they cease
 "Singing willow, titwillow, titwillow?"
 "The people in hundreds of cars they all came
 "Especially when there was no sign of much rain,
 "The weather's so nice, it seems such a shame!
 "Oh willow, titwillow, titwillow!"

"I think I can tell you!" – she'd a smile on her beak,
 Singing willow, titwillow, titwillow,
 "For I saw some people last Saturday week,
 "Singing willow, titwillow, titwillow,
 "They stood in a group, they were flying a kite,
 "Along came a police car with lights flashing bright,
 "It seems the Old Bill gave those people a fright!
 "Oh willow, titwillow, titwillow!"

A buzzard, above them, then uttered his ‘mew’
Oh willow, titwillow, titwillow.
As quick as they could off to safety they flew,
Singing willow, titwillow, titwillow!
Arrived at their nest then our avian pair
Correctly concluded what caused human scare:
“They’re frightened of critters that fly in the air!”
“Oh willow, titwillow, titwillow!”

By Nigel Beeton

FRESH is an organisation headed by local Christian Geoff Bradley who contacted the Parish recently asking if we could help support schools in Brinnington (Geoff already fully committed to supporting eight other schools in Stockport) with donations of food during lockdown (if that was needed), there being a significant number of working low-income families struggling at this time.

Following some internal (virtual) discussion within the PCC membership (including the six churchwardens and treasurer) it was agreed that we would do what we could to assist and initial donations/pledges have been received and designated to our “Community Support Fund”. Our help was indeed called upon and the first donation of food has actually been delivered to one school, with the promise of another to follow shortly. A similar offer has been extended to two other schools in the parish, one if not both we expect to contact us this coming month.



I am helping out in the garden too, although the green bin is difficult to jump in and out of (I need a little help with that) I had such fun helping to fill it with clippings from our very overgrown Honeysuckle. I’m still on bird patrol too but making no progress in catching up with one – just to play with!

Take care everyone – hope to see you when the pandemic is under control.

Love: Roggie Dog



What does that dog think it’s doing..... if we just sit here and keep quiet he’s no idea we are watching him – so near but yet so far!



Speaking of money.....

In case you were wondering - church finances are somewhat under pressure at this time and certainly at St Mary's we are spending around £2.5K per month more than we are receiving in direct payments. With no income at all now from St Andrew's. Clearly this can't go on too much longer but we are all working together within the parish [and the Diocese] to find ways to keep us going whilst our premises are closed and activities at "lock-down". For those who are able to pay their "planned giving" directly to the bank (and don't at present) – we can easily give you the appropriate bank details for you to contact your bank – and that action would be most helpful. If not then that's not a problem just please keep your brown envelopes safely at home until we can collect them in.

Thank you for those who have increased their monthly bank payments and/or made one-off donations to church funds – greatly appreciated.

Roggie Dog

Thank you for your kind comments (those who have emailed Mummy) following my first report "What is a dog to do!"...



Well here we are, several weeks into the "lock down" and I was really getting fed up of not being allowed to step a paw outside the gate – then suddenly Mummy put my harness on and we went for a lovely walk up the road. I was so excited... Back at home I remain busy keeping guard at the front window and barking at all that pass by, informing Mummy if someone appears at the door.

We will review the need for help during the next few weeks and hope to be ready and able to give aid as required. Clearly we don't have too much money available and our own church funds are suffering (as are many others) at this time. If you are able and wish to help with donations (of the financial type) then that would be most helpful and appreciated - deposits may be made directly into our "Parish" banking account:

Nat West Account Name:	PCC Stockport & Brinnington
Branch Sort Code:	01-08-38
Account Number:	64035654

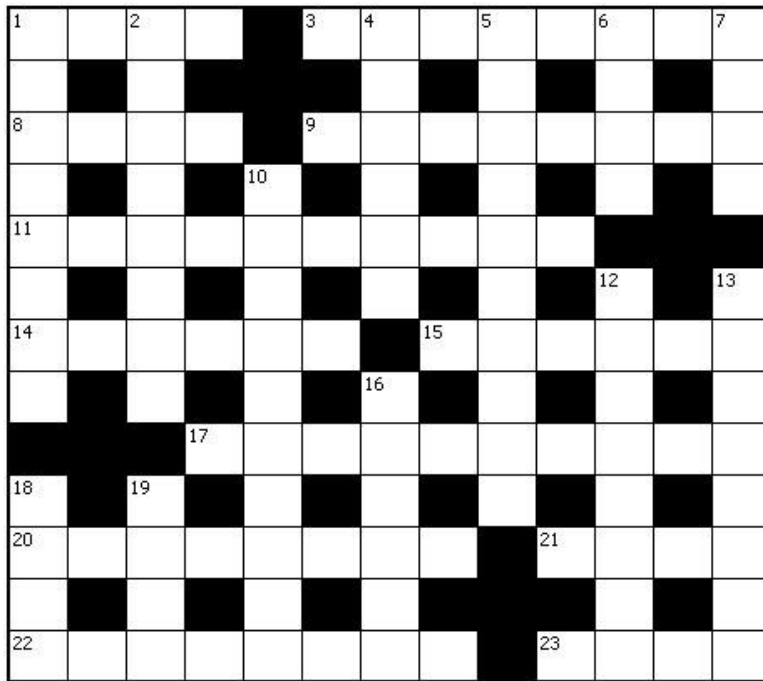
[Gift Aid can be arranged if you wish Kevin to do so]

As things stand at the moment using this account is the easiest way for our Treasurer (Kevin Morgan) to deal with income and expenditure specific to the project and also allows Lynne to shop for items specifically requested, as and when required. However, if you do wish to donate food items (non perishable) then Lynne has arranged for a storage box to be located at or near the gate at St Mary's Rectory (24 Gorsey Mount Street – SK1 4DU) where items can be delivered and deposited. We are unfortunately unable at this time to open our premises and make available collection points at St Mary's. St Thomas's or St Luke's.

We will review how things are going during the next few weeks and determine if donations of this kind need to continue into the summer.

Your prayers would also be appreciated, for those struggling at this time, for those involved in helping out, for our Schools and staff (as with so many others) working under challenging conditions.

Crossword for June 2020



CLUES

Across

- 1 See 23 Across
 3 Where the thief on the cross was told he would be, with Jesus (Luke 23:43) (8)
 8 Invalid (4)
 9 Blasphemed (Ezekiel 36:20) (8)
 11 Adhering to the letter of the law rather than its spirit (Philippians 3:6) (10)
 14 Shut (Ecclesiastes 12:4) (6)

- 15 'This is how it will be with anyone who — up things for himself but is not rich towards God' (Luke 12:21) (6)
 17 Mary on Isis (anag.) (10)
 20 Agreement (Hebrews 9:15) (8)
 21 Native of, say, Bangkok (4)
 22 Deaf fort (anag.) (5-3)
 23 and 1 Across 'The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of — to work it and take — of it' (Genesis 2:15) (4,4)

Down

- 1 Struggle between opposing forces (Habakkuk 1:3) (8)
 2 James defined this as 'looking after orphans and widows in their distress and keeping oneself from being polluted by the world' (James 1:27) (8)
 4 'The one I kiss is the man; — him' (Matthew 26:48) (6)
 5 'Be joyful in hope, patient in — , faithful in prayer' (Romans 12:12) (10)
 6 St Columba's burial place (4)
 7 Swirling current of water (4)
 10 Loyalty (Isaiah 19:18) (10)
 12 'God was pleased through the foolishness of what was — , to save those who believe' (1 Corinthians 1:21) (8)
 13 Camp where the angel of the Lord slew 185,000 men one night (2 Kings 19:35) (8)
 16 'There is still — — Jonathan; he is crippled in both feet' (2 Samuel 9:3) (1,3,2)
 18 David Livingstone was one (4)
 19 Driver and Vehicle Licensing Authority (1,1,1,1)