

STOCKPORT PARISH CHURCH

St Mary's in the Marketplace

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St Mary's with St Andrew's Parish Office

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 Stockport Parish Church – St Mary's

Service times at St Mary's

Sunday: 10:30am Holy Communion or Morning Prayer

Normally the first and third Sunday is Holy Communion with Morning on the second and fourth.

**Tuesday: 10.00am Holy Communion
12.15pm Lunchtime Service**

Wedding, Baptism, Funeral and other services by arrangement.

St Mary's and the Nave Café is open – Tuesday, Thursday, Friday & Saturday from 9.00am – 3.00pm

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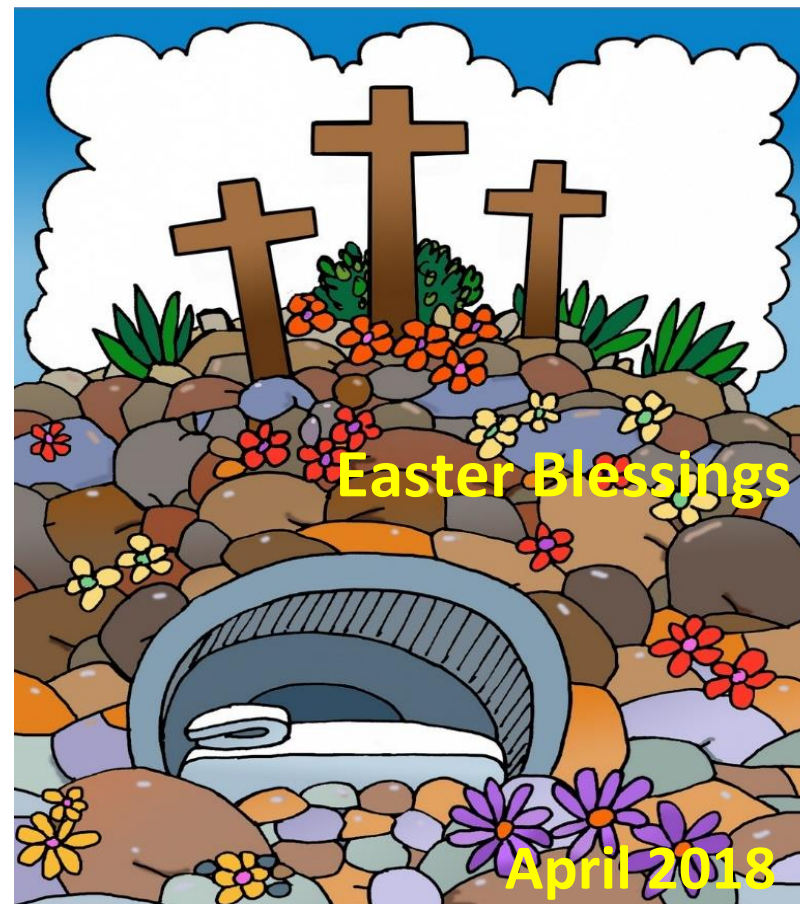
Parish Magazine of



STOCKPORT PARISH CHURCH

[St Mary's in the Marketplace]

with St Andrew's, Hall Street.

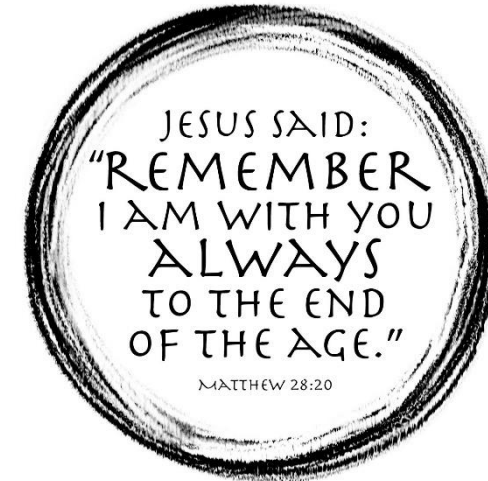


A contribution towards the cost of producing this magazine would be appreciated please – in the donations box. Thank You

Diary

March 2018

Sunday, 1 st April Easter Sunday	Holy Communion Zeal Church	10.30am 3.30pm
Tuesday, 3 rd April	Holy Communion Lunchtime Service	10.00am 12.15pm
Sunday, 8 th April	Morning Prayer PCC Receiving of Accounts Zeal Church	10.30am 12.00 noon 3.30pm
Tuesday, 10 th April	Holy Communion Lunchtime Service	10.00am 12.15pm
Friday, 13 th April	Café Church with Tiviot Dale Methodist	10.45am
Sunday, 15 th April	Holy Communion Zeal Church	10.30am 3.30pm
Tuesday, 17 th April	Holy Communion Lunchtime Service Meeting of Parishioners & Annual Parochial Church Meeting	10.00am 12.15pm 1.00pm
Friday, 20 th April	Café Church with Tiviot Dale Methodist	10.45am
Sunday, 22 nd April	Morning Prayer Zeal Church	10.30am 3.30pm
Tuesday, 24 th April	Holy Communion Lunchtime Service	10.00am 12.15pm
Friday, 27 th April	Café Church with Tiviot Dale Methodist	10.45am
Sunday, 29 th April	Holy Communion Zeal Church	10.30am 3.30pm



ACROSS: 1, Womb. 3, Agnostic. 9, Long ago. 10, Fleet. 11, Horeb. 12, Yellow. 14, Deceitfulness. 17, Banish. 19, Towel. 22, Boils. 23, Inferno. 24, Eternity. 25, Defy.

DOWN: 1, Will hide. 2, Minor. 4, Glory of Christ. 5, Offal. 6, The Robe. 7, City. 8, Zabbai. 13, Psalmody. 15, Chalice. 16, Let off. 18, If son. 20, Worse. 21, Able.

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

1st May 2018 Note: Archdeacons Visitation for Chadkirk, Mottram and Stockport will be held at St Paul's Stalybridge 7.30pm

HOME FREED: How Much is Enough? Decluttering a small space is on a par with spring cleaning. A more significant, grand-scale declutter is about completely changing the way you live. As I write this I am facing the prospect of moving to a new house. What shall I pack? How much will fit into the new house? It is brand new (exciting) but its footprint is only half the size of the house I live in now (daunting). I can only take half of my belongings with me, unless I intend to live in a cluttered mess! How will I know I have enough to meet my needs? Although my new house is surrounded by others that look alike, no two homes are ever exactly the same. No two people have exactly the same needs. "Enough" is not a fixed quantity. I can't look at somebody else to decide how much of anything is sufficient for me. Before becoming a domestic declutterer I used to teach Biblical Studies. Studying the ancient texts opened up thought worlds outside British culture. I found insights into different ways to live. At first glance Nehemiah chapter 6 verse 15, in English, doesn't seem to say anything at all about decluttering: "After fifty-two days of work the entire wall was finished" (Good News Bible). However, the original text was not written in English but in Hebrew, where it says literally: After fifty-two days of work the entire wall was SHALOM". Doesn't Shalom mean "peace"? How can a wall be peace? When we say "peace" in English, it can sound negative. We are influenced by the Greek word for peace, irene, meaning "no noise", "no war", "no turmoil". We talk about "peace and quiet" together, so you can't have peace without something being absent. By contrast, Shalom is a positive word, meaning blessing and completeness as an expression of peace. When Shalom is used as a greeting it is a wish for everything joy-giving and wholesome to come to the person you greet. Shalom invites the Spirit of God to be present, filling the space. This is what I want for my new home. If there is not enough there it will feel bleak and unwelcoming, if there is too much it will be cluttered and stifling. I just have to keep on giving things away until it is finished - Shalom. I pray that the Lord will help me to recognise how much is ENOUGH.

Jane Brocklehurst

1 EASTER - the most joyful day of the year

Easter is the most joyful day of the year for Christians. Christ has died for our sins. We are forgiven. Christ has risen! We are redeemed! We can look forward to an eternity in His joy! Hallelujah!

The Good News of Jesus Christ is a message so simple that you can explain it to someone in a few minutes. It is so profound that for the rest of their lives they will still be 'growing' in their Christian walk with God.

Why does the date move around so much? Because the date of Passover moves around, and according to the biblical account, Easter is tied to the Passover. Passover celebrates the Israelites' exodus from Egypt and it lasts for seven days, from the middle of the Hebrew month of Nisan, which equates to late March or early April.

Sir Isaac Newton was one of the first to use the Hebrew lunar calendar to come up with firm dates for Good Friday: Friday 7 April 30 AD or Friday 3 April, 33 AD, with Easter Day falling two days later. Modern scholars continue to think these the most likely.

Most people will tell you that Easter falls on the first Sunday after the first full moon after the Spring Equinox, which is broadly true. But the precise calculations are complicated and involve something called an 'ecclesiastical full moon', which is not the same as the moon in the sky. The earliest possible date for Easter in the West is 22 March, which last fell in 1818. The latest is 25 April, which last happened in 1943.

Why the name, 'Easter'? In almost every European language, the festival's name comes from 'Pesach', the Hebrew word for Passover. The Germanic word 'Easter', however, seems to come from Eostre, a Saxon fertility goddess mentioned by the Venerable Bede. He thought that the Saxons worshipped her in 'Eostur month', but may have confused her with the classical dawn goddesses like Eos and Aurora, whose names mean 'shining in the

east'. So, Easter might have meant simply 'beginning month' - a good time for starting up again after a long winter.

Finally, why Easter eggs? On one hand, they are an ancient symbol of birth in most European cultures. On the other hand, hens start laying regularly again each Spring. Since eggs were forbidden during Lent, it's easy to see how decorating and eating them became a practical way to celebrate Easter.

Easter faith

Three years after the Russian Revolution of 1917, a great anti-God rally was arranged in Kiev. The powerful orator Bukharin was sent from Moscow, and for an hour he demolished the Christian faith with argument, abuse and ridicule. At the end there was silence.

Then a man rose and asked to speak. He was a priest of the Russian Orthodox Church. He went and stood next to Bukharin. Facing the people, he raised his arms and spoke just three triumphant words: 'Christ is risen!'

At once the entire assembly rose to their feet and gave the joyful response, 'He is risen indeed!' It was a devastating moment for an atheist politician, who had no answer to give to this ancient Easter liturgy. He had not realised he was simply too late: how can you convince people who have already experienced God, that He does not exist?

Pancake "Party" – Thank you to everyone who stayed for lunch on Shrove Tuesday and enjoyed a pancake. The sum of £41.00 being raised for the charity "Christians Without Poverty"

General Data Protection Regulation

The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) is coming into force in the UK on the 25th May 2018, and will affect all organisations, **including churches**, which store personal information about individuals.

The Regulation is designed to give individuals more rights when it comes to how their information is gathered, stored and used.

It will build on current Data Protection legislation to ensure that all organisations are acting transparently and fairly when it comes to personal information.

The GDPR aims to ensure an individual's right to make sure their data is held securely, correctly, and in a manner which is easily accessible and is under one of GDPR's "lawful bases" - in our case mainly that of "consent". For example, completion of an electoral roll application form provides sufficient consent to add the applicant to the roll. Likewise, a completed Gift Aid declaration is sufficient consent for us to claim Gift Aid on the relevant donations. Under no circumstances however can we use data obtained for a specific reason for any other purpose, so we cannot, for example, mail everyone on the electoral roll, or even everyone for whom we have a Gift Aid declaration, with fundraising communications etc.

Your parish administrator is presently undertaking the necessary "audit" of what records we do hold, what additional records we need to hold, what we can effectively "bin", review the methods we adopt to hold records properly/securely, and determine what else we need to do to comply with the new rules.

One interesting fact - that each incumbent or priest-in-charge is considered to be a separate "data controller" from their PCC because they are separate legal entities.

More information will be available shortly.

Café Church with Tiviot Dale Methodist

Starting at St Mary's on Friday, 13th April

**All welcome – café open from 10.00am
– service at 10.45am**

Service Leader:

13 th April	Lindsay Kemp
20 th April	Ian Coverdale
27 th April	Liz Morrell
4 th May	Frank Dean
11 th May	Iris Kiernan
18 th May	Amy Hill
25 th May	Lindsay Kemp

2 Hugh of Grenoble - the saint who fought corruption and built hospitals

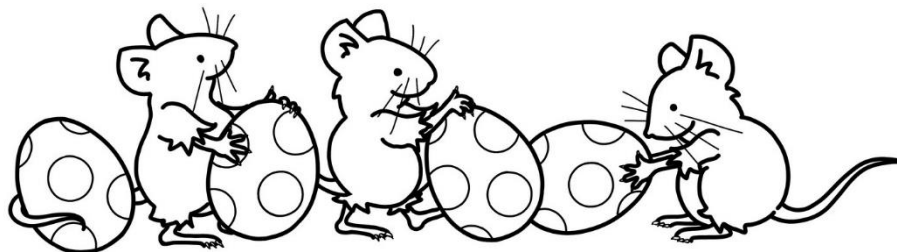
Murky crimes committed by some church leaders, local shops in trouble, roads needing repair, and hospitals in a sorry state.... wanting to retire, but the law said no... it seems that Hugh of Grenoble was dealing with 21st century problems in the 11th century. Born at Chateauneuf in 1052 as the son of a knight, Hugh attended the cathedral school of Valence and became a canon. He was talented and learned, good looking - and yet bashful. Sounds a bit like a shy public-school boy. Certainly, Hugh's parents' contacts and his privileged schooling earned him a good job early on - as secretary to the Bishop of Die, who was also a papal legate. In 1080 Hugh was taken along to the Synod of Avignon, where the deplorable state of the diocese of Grenoble was reviewed. It was afflicted with widespread simony and usury, and clerical promiscuity was rampant. Hugh was outraged at what he heard - and was soon in a position to do something about it. He was made Bishop of Grenoble by Pope Gregory VII and went on to fight the excesses and sins of the clergy with notable success. He became virtual co-founder of the Carthusian order. The common people soon came to love him, for as well as reforming their churches and restoring their cathedral, he built a bridge, a marketplace and three hospitals for them. In later years Hugh wanted to retire, but like many people today, was not able to do so: in his case the pope would not let him. During the last few weeks of his life Hugh went back to basics: he seemed to forget everything but the Lord's Prayer and the Psalms. He was greatly loved, and so canonised only two years after his death in 1134.

Manchester Cathedral Bell Ringers

A warm welcome to the ringers from Manchester Cathedral using our tower for practise sessions. A wonderful opportunity for Stockport (much depending on which way the sound is travelling as to how far and wide) to hear our bells. Thank you Clive for making all necessary arrangements.

5 Vincent Ferrer - Dominican who opposed a Pope and brought grace to sinners

- Leaving England to live in Spain was popular long before the TV show "Location Location Location" became popular. Back in 1350 Vincent Ferrer's parents had left England to settle in Valencia, where their son Vincent was born and grew up. In 1367, when he was 17, Vincent felt called by God to become a monk, and joined the Dominican order. The reason for his 'call' was soon clear: Vincent had outstanding gifts as both a philosopher and as a preacher. What is preaching? If you think of it as a way of bringing the reality of God and the love of Jesus Christ to people, then that is a good summary of what Vincent did for all who heard him. In the great tradition of John the Baptist, he called them to come to God by way of repentance for their sins. In the tradition of St Peter, the apostle to the Jews, Vincent was also heard by many Jews in Valencia. A great number of these listened to his preaching and came to believe that Jesus was indeed their promised Messiah. Vincent's preaching met with extraordinary success in France, Spain and Italy. He seems to have been an evangelist at heart, for his topics were sin, the Last Judgement, and Eternity. In Spain such large numbers of both Gentiles and Jews wanted to hear him that no church was big enough to contain the crowds: and so Vincent preached in the open air. When in 1414 the Council of Constance attempted to end the Great Schism (there were two Popes fighting for the same job), Vincent persuaded Ferdinand, king of Aragon, to withdraw his allegiance to the doubtful contender, Pope Benedict. The end result was that Benedict's credibility collapsed, and the schism was ultimately healed. Vincent went back to preaching and spent his last three years in Normandy and Brittany, where he died at Vannes in 1419, worn out by all his labours.



Easter Saturday

Nave Café: Open: 9.00am – 3.00pm
“**special menu**” day incorporating lots of “Easter Treats” ...

.... **Joining us from 12.00noon – 3.00pm**

“Easter Eggstravaganza” with Zeal Church

Family Event (children must be supervised)

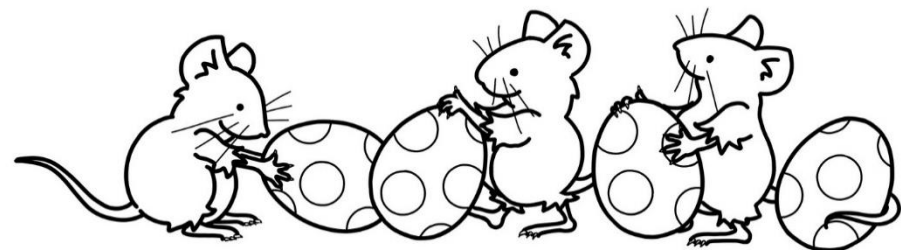
Egg hunt

Story time

Face painting

Charity Raffle

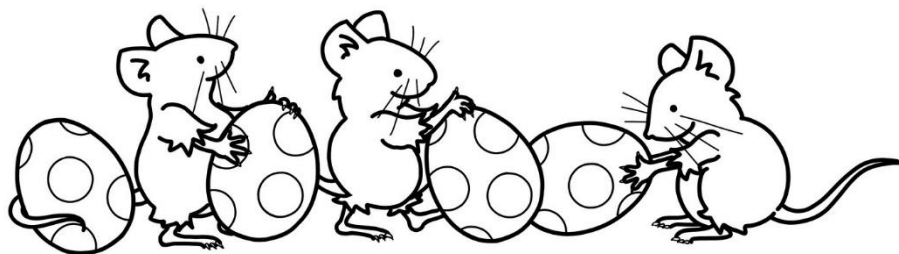
Kids Activities



Easter - This month starts with Easter, which is a lovely thought. Whatever else, Easter speaks of new life, of fresh starts and the return of hope. The whole traditional story is about darkness defeated by a light which can never be extinguished. That's why, in our hemisphere, Easter seems to fit in well with the changing season. Fresh flowers in the graveyard match the Easter hymns inside the church: The Lord of life is risen today/ Bring flowers of song to strew his way'.

It's a strange fact that all through the long history of mankind, despite the evidence of our eyes, people have stubbornly refused to believe that death is the end. They buried their dead with food and implements they would need in the next life, whatever name they gave it - Valhalla, the Elysian Fields, Abraham's Bosom or Nirvana. Jesus called it 'the kingdom of heaven' or 'eternal life'. The very idea of heaven is beyond our comprehension, because we can't image a life not lived in our familiar dimensions of space, time and physicality. But God lives beyond time and space, and Jesus said He is 'Spirit'.

It's good that there are some things to believe in which we cannot possibly understand now. Although one day, St Paul said, we shall. Until then we trust, and Easter hymns and flowers are signs of the annual return of hope.



9 April Lady Day - the Annunciation

This beautiful event took place in Nazareth, when Mary is already betrothed to Joseph. The Archangel Gabriel comes to Mary, greets her as highly favoured, tells her not to be afraid, that she will bear a son Jesus, and that her elderly cousin Elizabeth is already pregnant (with John the Baptist). The church calendar is never quite as neat as some would like it. To celebrate the Annunciation on 25th March does indeed place the conception of Jesus exactly nine months from his birth on 25th December, but the latter part of March almost inevitably falls during Lent. But the birth and death of Jesus are intrinsically linked - He was born to die, and thus fulfil God's purposes. The Annunciation is a significant date in the Christian calendar - it is one of the most frequent depicted in Christian art. Gabriel's gracious strength and Mary's humble dignity have inspired many artists. Certainly Mary's response to the angel has for centuries been an example of good faith in practice - humility, enquiry of God, and trusting acceptance in his will for her life.

12 Zeno of Verona - the more things change....

Zeno (d. 371) should be the patron saint of all who suspect that the more things change, the more they remain the same. Ethnic diversity... church-planting... teaching.... concern for the poor... women's ministry in the church... sound like modern-day Christian concerns? Not a bit of it . Ethnic diversity? Zeno was an African who had been consecrated a bishop in Italian Verona. Church-planting and teaching? Zeno had a reputation as a hard-working pastor and dedicated preacher who founded churches throughout his domain. Some of his sermons still survive. Concern for the poor? Zeno was zealous in alms-giving, and encouraged others to do the same. Women's ministry? He founded nunneries As for down-time? Zeno went fishing in his spare time - links between fishermen and Christian leaders go back a long way!

24 St George - our patron saint who isn't English by David Winter

It's perhaps typical of the English that they should have a patron saint who isn't English, about whom next to nothing is known for sure, and who may not have existed at all, but that didn't stop him being patriotically invoked in many battles, notably at Agincourt and in the Crusades, and of course it is his cross that adorns the flags of English football fans to this day. It's most likely that he was a soldier, a Christian who was martyred for his faith somewhere in Palestine, possibly at Lydda, in the early fourth century. At some point in the early centuries of the Church he became associated with wider military concerns, being regarded as the patron saint of the Byzantine armies. There is no doubt that he was held as an example of the 'godly soldier', one who served Christ as bravely and truly as he served his king and country. The story of George and the dragon is of much later date and no one seems to know where it comes from. By the middle ages, when George was being honoured in stained glass, the dragon had become an invaluable and invariable visual element, so that for most people the two are inseparable. Pub signs have a lot to answer for here: 'The George and Dragon'. However, it's probably more profitable to concentrate on his role as a man who witnessed to his faith in the difficult setting of military service, and in the end was martyred for his faithfulness to Christ. The idea of the 'Christian soldier' was, of course, much loved by the Victorian hymn-writers - 'Onward, Christian soldiers!' The soldier needs discipline. The heart of his commitment is to obedience. The battle cannot be avoided nor the enemy appeased. He marches and fights alongside others, and he is loyal to his comrades. In the end, if the battle is won, he receives the garlands of victory, the final reward of those who overcome evil. St George's Day presents a challenge and an opportunity. The challenge is to distance the message of his life from the militarism and triumphalism that can easily attach itself to anything connected to soldiers and fighting. The opportunity is to celebrate the ideal of the 'Christian soldier' - one who

an unusual flower. It was quite a find, for Anne was the first person to notice the Common Spotted Orchid! Over the years that followed the collection grew from 1 to 34, thanks to Anne first spotting this beautiful wild flower, in a Town Centre garden! Anne appreciated days out in the country and especially a memorable trip to Shugborough Hall, with Roger at the wheel.

Anne was proud to recall that she'd been christened, married and confirmed, all in St. Mary's Church. As a child she went to Stockport Sunday School. In later adult life she attended St. Mary's, where she served on the PCC and helped in various ways in church. Anne was blessed with valued friendships, made in church, and in the neighbourhood. Over the years she maintained contact by telephone with friends in the congregation, whom she couldn't always meet at church. Anne was a good neighbour and good friend. As her health declined she was able to walk into town, but she took a taxi home! Lately, mobility issues have limited her activity, but she still got out into town! She loved shopping! Anne once stood at the top of the drive down to the Rectory, and Roger, the then Rector, stopped his gardening and invited her down for a cup of coffee. "What would I have to talk to the Rector about?" She replied. She accepted, and found it wasn't so bad after all. And so began a friendship of many years, and happy shared experiences.

Our sympathy goes to her sons Keith and Stephen and their family; and to Norma, her surviving sister and her family, in their sad and sudden loss. Anne will be missed.





Anne Waterhouse
An Appreciation by Roger Scoones –
former Rector and friend.

Anne Waterhouse was born in No.1 Athens Street just before Christmas 1936. She died peacefully, in hospital, after a short illness on 21 February 2018.

Her Mother Mrs. Vera Storie, who lived to a great age and her younger sister Norma, had both been born and brought up at No.1, so it wasn't far to remove when Anne married her husband Dennis and moved up the street into 21 Athens Street. Anne had many fond memories of family holidays, spent variously in Berwick, Torquay, Prestatyn, and Tenby, always an adventure! On one holiday she recalled a miraculous escape from a car accident, when the car which the family was in rolled over. Thankfully nobody was seriously hurt.

Anne was the mother of Keith and Stephen. She loved her grandchildren, Katie and Joshua. She also loved her cat; and Anne had had dogs too, at one time. She collected small things, and liked nice things. Anne cherished her mother's paintings, which she had had framed and hung up in the house. Every year, at Christmas, Anne set out an exquisite Winter scene, in her front room, with lots of little houses and figures, a sight to behold, along with her carefully decorated Christmas tree. She also enjoyed watching television and reading magazines. Anne cared for her garden, mostly in the back, where she grew plants that were her favourites. Some years ago, Anne enthusiastically helped Roger to plant new shrubs, when the Rectory garden was made more private. One of them was a gift, Rambling Rector rose! Indeed, Anne often enjoyed sitting in the Rectory garden in summer, having a cup of coffee with the Rector! On one occasion she looked across at the long grass, where the daffodils had been flowering, and she noticed

submits to discipline, sets out to obey God truly, does not avoid the inevitable battle with all that is unjust, wrong and hateful in our world, and marches alongside others fighting the same noble cause. Discipline, obedience, courage, fellowship and loyalty - they're not the most popular virtues today, but that doesn't mean that they don't deserve our gratitude and admiration.

Not many came...

Anyone whose organises events for the church or community must sometimes scratch their heads and ask themselves what more they could do in order to better publicise them. You announce events, you advertise events, but after the event people still say, "If only I had known!"

Is it that no-one ever reads signs on noticeboards or pieces of paper attached to lamp posts? Such a method is still worth trying, though please remember to take them down afterwards.

Flyers delivered door to door are good and sometimes there are firms that do leaflet drops at quite reasonable prices. Handouts to specific groups work well such as children at school. (As long as the children pass them on to their parents!) Free advertising on local radio or newspapers is a good idea. You need to make the announcement as newsworthy/interesting as possible.

Facebook and village and other websites are the modern way and can be very effective. Sometimes local estate agents or other businesses will sponsor signs.

If all else fails, why not actually ask someone face to face? A personal invitation is best. Your best chance is a combination of two or more things, for example ask someone to an event, and if they have already heard about it from a notice they are more likely to say yes.

Diary of a Momentous Year: April 1918: 'Stand firm and fight it out'

April 1918 was possibly the last really low point in the War for the Allies. Casualties remained high - indeed, so high that it was felt necessary to extend conscription (compulsory military service) to all men up to the age of 50. There were setbacks on the Western Front, too. Another German operation, bizarrely named 'Georgette', was initially successful, pushing the front line back across the river Lys and capturing the towns of Armentieres and Merville. Mind you, those names are evidence of how static this War had become, because they had been part of the battle zone almost throughout the war. By the end of the month, and at great cost, some of this territory was recaptured. Field Marshall Haig issued a rather desperate call in a 'Backs to the Wall' speech, calling on the troops to 'stand firm and fight it out'. There was at a high level a certain element of panic. Could the whole thing be lost after all those years of sacrifice? Outwardly, Germany seemed surprisingly buoyant. They invaded Finland and had military gains in Russia, taking the city of Kharkov. Their Operation Michael in France had also had some success. No wonder the Secretary of State for War, Lord Derby, resigned, to be replaced by Lord Milner. British generals and politicians were apparently unaware that the morale of the German people was falling, as international trade collapsed and the cost of the war began to bite. In fact the 'Michael' campaign ended in defeat at the battle of Ancre. The pattern of the War hadn't really changed: gains and losses were simply part of the stalemate, and both sides were approaching exhaustion. There was, however, one historic first for Britain in this month, the birth of the Royal Air Force. I had an uncle who was in the Royal Flying Corps, which, with the Royal Naval Air Service, was now amalgamated in one fighting force. As if to mark the birth of the RAF, the most outstanding German pilot of the war, Manfred von Richthausen - known as the 'Red Baron' - was shot down and killed over the Somme. In the aerial dog-fights which were now

NEW: Tertullian - the fierce firebrand of the Early Church

Tertullian was born in Carthage, North Africa, about 155 AD. He had pagan parents and his father may have been a centurion. Carthage was a prestigious Roman colony and Tertullian was given a good education in Greek, Latin, literature, history and philosophy. On arrival in Rome, Tertullian probably worked as a lawyer. In Rome, he also enjoyed visits to the arena, to see gladiators kill each other and Christians devoured by lions. However, Tertullian grew impressed with the Christians; by their courage, and willingness to die for their belief in one God. He was also moved by their compassion for the poor, the orphans and widows, and how they prayed for their persecutors. In AD 185, he converted, and married a Christian woman. On Tertullian's return to Carthage he became a vociferous, if not always orthodox, defender of Christianity. He wrote in Latin, instead of Greek, and used legal terms to persuade the Roman establishment to cease its relentless persecution of Christians. He argued they had a right to a fair trial, instead of just being condemned to death. Tertullian advocated that Christianity should stand uncompromisingly against the surrounding culture. He addressed a whole range of issues, from appropriate dress and marriage, to idolatry, repentance and baptism. He also wrote essays on prayer and devotion. Tertullian used the Scriptures to refute heresies, especially Gnosticism, which was a major threat to the Church at the time. His prolific works are full of memorable phrases, puns and wit. While he could be gentle, sensitive, self-critical and reflective, he could also be aggressive and sarcastic. He devised the term New Testament, and introduced the words penitence and sacrament. His most famous statement was: "The blood of martyrs is the seed of the Church". Late in life, Tertullian sadly decided that Jesus and the Holy Spirit were not wholly equal with the Father. This was Montanism, one of the early Christian heresies. Although he coined the word Trinity, a word that does not appear anywhere in the Bible, sadly he did not mean a triune God, but a group of three. This was heresy, and so the Early Church was not able to recognise him as a saint. According to tradition, he died about AD 225.

Lunch Hour Services

April – July 2018

12.15 – 12.50pm.

The Spreading Flame (Studies in Acts)

3 rd April	*Time to live! (The Resurrection today)
10 th April	Act 14: 1-7 The disturbing Gospel
17 th April	Acts 14: 8-20 A case of mistaken identity
24 th April	Acts 14: 21-28 Provision for growth
1 st May	* Are there clues to God and Jesus outside the Bible?
8 th May	Acts 15: 1-5 Thorney issues: what's essential?
15 th May	Acts 15: 6-21 The priority of grace in the one family
22 nd May	Acts 15: 22-35 A gracious settlement with a personal touch
29 th May	Acts 15: 36-41 New departures, same mission
5 th June	*Would a loving God send people to hell?
12 th June	Acts 16: 1-10 Discerning the direction to take
19 th June	Acts 16: 11-15 Small beginnings, key people
26 th June	Acts 16: 24 Delivered – to live!
3 rd July	*Religious – or Christian?
10 th July	Acts 16: 25-34 Songs at midnight
17 th July	Acts 16:35-40 When to stand your ground

*The talks are specially suitable for those wishing to think through issues of faith

a feature of the war, he had shot down no less than eighty British planes. On 18th April 1918, the first of the 50-year-old men were recruited. How long would they serve, people wondered? In fact, by the time they finished their training, the war would be over.

Canon David White

Read us a Bible Story!

Do you have any spare time in which you might visit your local primary school? Bible Society is looking for volunteers to help run their Open the Book scheme in schools across the country. In the UK, two out of five children have never had the Bible read to them. You could change that for your local children!

More than 15,000 volunteer storytellers have already signed up, but many more are needed. To put it simply, if your local school does not yet have an Open the Book group, then you are needed.

Details at: <https://www.biblesociety.org.uk/get-involved/open-the-book/>

Sudoku

				6			3
		1		7			
		5	2			4	
7	6				3		1
		8		9		2	
9			1				7 4
		3			7	5	
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Billy Graham - godly man with a simple message

Billy Graham, the renowned American evangelist, was remembered with great fondness by Christians the world over when news of his death was announced on Wednesday 21st February. He died peacefully in his sleep, aged 99. Billy Graham leaves a unique legacy: he preached to more people in live audiences than anyone else in history - nearly 215 million of them, in 185 countries and territories. Hundreds of millions more were reached through television, video, film and webcasts. Born William Franklin Graham on 7th November 1918, four days before the Armistice ended World War I, Billy Graham was reared on a dairy farm in Charlotte, N.C. He grew up during the Depression, working hard on the family farm. In late 1934, when he was 15, Billy Graham was converted to Christianity through the ministry of Mordecai Ham, a travelling evangelist, who visited Charlotte for a series of revival meetings. He was ordained in 1939 by Peniel Baptist Church in Palatka, Fla. (a church in the Southern Baptist Convention) and studied at Florida Bible Institute (now Trinity College of Florida) and Wheaton College Illinois, before going into the ministry. He also married a fellow student, Ruth McCue Bell, daughter of a missionary surgeon to China. Billy Graham's gift of evangelistic preaching was evident early on, but it was the 1949 Los Angeles Crusade which vaulted him into the public eye. He astonished the churches and people of Los Angeles by drawing 350,000 people over eight weeks, and leading 3,000 of them to make decisions for Christ. In the nearly 60 years of ministry that followed, Billy Graham preached the gospel in nearly every corner of the world. His last 'crusade' was at Flushing Meadow in New York in 2005. Many Christians in the UK can trace their own faith in God back to Billy Graham's crusade to Harringay in 1954, or Earls Court in 1966 or 1967, or to Mission England, in 1984, as well as other, shorter visits. Hundreds of men went for ordination because of his preaching. Billy Graham's son, Franklin, writes: 'My father's journey of faith on earth has ended. He has been reunited with my mother and has stepped into the eternal joy of Heaven in the presence of his Saviour, in whom he placed his hope.'

AGMs: Don't miss out!!

We are currently in the season when churches hold their AGMs or Annual Church Meetings. It's an important opportunity for the church to come together, to celebrate its life over the past year and look forward to the future. There is important business to do, i.e. elect churchwardens, PCC and Deanery Synod members, as well as receiving the church reports and accounts. This is probably why it's not always well attended! However, why is this gathering of the church so significant? 'In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.' (Ephesians 2: 21,22). Paul says here that the Church is God's home and our home too. In the Old Testament, God's presence was focused in the Temple, however today the Church is his Temple. It is the means by which Jesus is uniquely present with His people and distinctively expresses Himself in the world. We are called offer worship and service to God, both when gathered together and scattered in our daily lives. We are also to make Him known in the world, by our words and actions.

God's presence among us in this way is worth celebrating together! However, as we gather we have the opportunity of discerning His vision, by which we can make His presence more real in the life of our church and in the wider community: In what ways can we become more a community committed to the mission of God in our time, with a worship life, resources and leadership to support this aim? It's an exciting prospect, in which 'the local church is the hope for the world' (Bill Hybels).

Annual Parochial Church Meeting & Meeting of Parishioners 2018

Please note that these meetings will take place after the lunch-time service on Tuesday, 17th April 1pm.

General Synod welcomes move towards communion with Methodist Church.

The General Synod has recently welcomed a report containing proposals which could bring the Church of England and the Methodist Church in Great Britain into communion with each other. Members backed a motion welcoming a joint report published last year, which sets out proposals on how clergy from each church could become eligible to serve in the other. The report, 'Mission and Ministry in Covenant', which was co-written by the two churches' faith and order bodies, also sets out how the Methodist Church could come to have bishops in the historic episcopate. The motion acknowledges that there is further work to do to clarify a number of areas, including how the proposals would be worked out in practice. It also calls on the Church of England's Faith and Order Commission to update Synod at its next group of sessions in July of this year on this work. But an amendment to the motion speaks of "confident hope" that outstanding issues can be resolved quickly. Speaking during the debate the Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby said: 'I want to support this motion very strongly indeed. 'It seems to me that in voting for it we respond to the word of God in the scriptures where there is a clear command to unity in diversity and in responding to this paper positively we respond to the Spirit who is already working in both of our Churches bringing us together.' The Bishop of Coventry, the Rt Revd Christopher Cocksworth, Chair of the Church of England's Faith and Order Commission, said the proposals would be a step towards 'healing a tragic division in the Church of England' when the two churches separated almost 200 years ago. The Archbishop of York, Dr John Sentamu, told Synod: 'A mute button must be switched off for the sake of the Kingdom of God and the urgent need to re-connect our two Church traditions with England. All has to do with God's Mission.'

The report builds on the theological convergence established by 'An Anglican-Methodist Covenant', signed in 2003, and the subsequent work of the Covenant's Joint Implementation Commission. In 2014 the General Synod of the Church of England and the Methodist Conference mandated the faith and order bodies to bring forward proposals that would enable the interchangeability of ordained ministries in the two churches.

Christians challenged to step beyond 'fear barrier' during weekend of invitation



Question: What scares most Christians?

Easy: The thought of inviting their friends and family to church with them.

But suppose we all got together, and did it as a national initiative? And so it is that the UK's first National Weekend of Invitation was planned. It will take place Friday 15th to Sunday 17th June 2018.

It is hoped that tens of thousands of church members across the country will use the weekend to step beyond the 'fear barrier' and invite their friends and family to church events. The weekend is in response to what the organisers call 'The churches' greatest missed opportunity'. For research shows that up to three million people in the UK are actually open to an invitation - which never comes, because most Christians are too timid. The date for the Weekend has been set to follow the Archbishops' Thy Kingdom Come prayer initiative.



WHAT IS THY KINGDOM COME: Thy Kingdom Come is a global prayer movement which the Archbishop of Canterbury is inviting people around the world to join. He is calling on Christians to pray that people might know Jesus Christ during a focused time between Ascension and Pentecost from **10th - 20th May 2018**. The Archbishop's invitation is simply

- asking people to pray in whatever way they want, with whoever they want and wherever they can, that others might know Jesus Christ.

Just a reminder that we hold a monthly Prayer Meeting at St Mary's on the first Thursday of the month at 7pm. Bible Study on the remaining Thursdays. Everyone welcome.

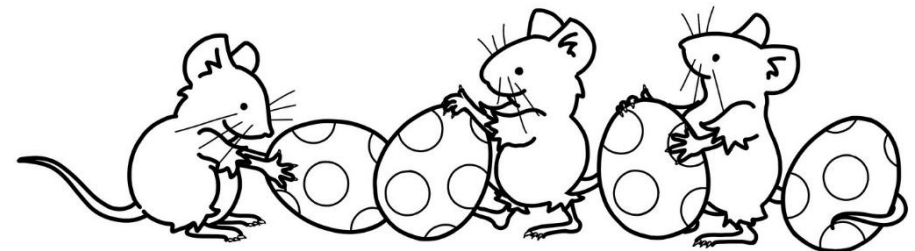


THY KINGDOM COME - Thousands of churches across the country will be joining this year's global ecumenical prayer movement, Thy Kingdom Come, which takes place 10th to 20th of May. First launched in 2016, Thy Kingdom Come has spread rapidly, beyond all expectations. In 2016 - 100,000 Christians pledged to pray. Just one year later, in 2017 - more than half a million had pledged to pray, from more than 85 countries including Ghana, Netherlands, Malaysia, Cuba, South Africa, Australia, Korea, Japan and the Philippines. Considered one of the most dynamic prayer initiatives to emerge from the Church of England in recent years, Thy Kingdom Come is a simple invitation to pray between Ascension and Pentecost for friends and family to come to faith. Now in its third year, participation looks set to grow again. In the UK, in 2017 every diocese in the Church of England was involved. Many cathedrals took part, hosting 'beacon' events designed to focus prayers in towns and cities nationwide. The campaign's broad ecumenical appeal led to more than 50 denominations and traditions being involved last year. The positive impact of Thy Kingdom Come 2017 continues to unfold as numerous stories of personal and communal transformation pour in from churches, families and whole communities alike. One of the highlights for this year is a new film featuring Archbishop Justin Welby, his grandson Elijah, and Brian Heasley, Director of 24/7 Prayer International. This year also sees some digital developments including a brand-new website and a Thy Kingdom Come devotional app created by leading Christian publishers SPCK. The Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby said: 'The business of being witnesses to Jesus Christ and of praying to be witnesses compels us to look into the world around us. It compels us to seek, to experience the compassion of God for a world caught up in lostness, in sin, but also in suffering and pain, in oppression of the poor, in cruelty, in abuse, in outrageous inequality, in all the things that go against the Kingdom of God. 'There is no limit to what the Kingdom of God does, and so the moment we start praying Thy Kingdom Come we look outwards.'

Rev Paul Hardingham considers the story of Easter evening.

The road to Emmaus - one of the best short stories in the world

The story of the two disciples walking the road between Jerusalem and Emmaus on the first Easter day is 'one of the immortal short stories of the world' (W. Barclay). Their encounter with the risen Christ is also a model for how we can meet him in our lives. (You can find the story in Luke 24: 13-35) **Hearts Opened.** The disciples displayed 'downcast' faces (17), as their hearts were preoccupied with grief. They felt let down by God, as well as bewildered by all they had heard. No doubt their emotions prevented them from recognising Jesus walking with them, even though their hearts burned within them. Despite our feelings, Jesus is still with us in situations of loss or desolation, as well as when we feel let down by God or other people. **Minds Opened.** Although this pair knew the Scriptures, they didn't understand what they said about the Christ. Therefore, Jesus opened their minds to make sense of the events they were experiencing. The Holy Spirit also brings God's word alive for us, as He challenges our preconceptions about Jesus. **Eyes Opened** The couple only recognised Jesus when He broke the bread as they ate together. The turning point came when they invited Jesus into their home, and allowed Him to take charge. If we are to recognise Jesus' presence with us, we need to open our lives to Him. What part does Holy Communion play in this? **Open eyes, minds and hearts** will lead to open mouths. Having discovered Jesus, the disciples can't keep the news to themselves. The Christian message is never truly ours until we have opened our mouths and shared it with others!



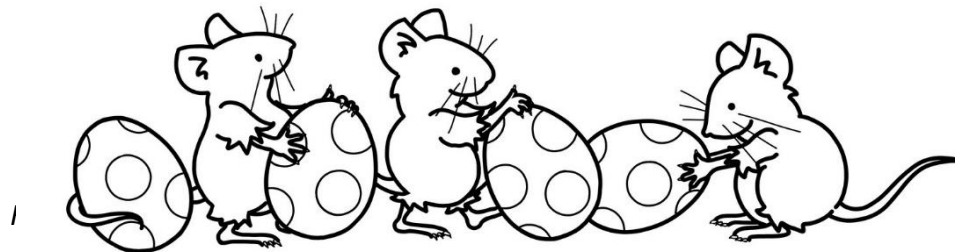
How passion flowers got their name



Why is the passion flower known as the passion flower? This beautiful climbing plant that grows in many of our gardens is not native to the UK, but comes from South America. It was first discovered by Spanish missionaries working there, centuries ago.

Drawings were sent back to Europe, and in 1609 an Italian priest interpreted the flower to represent the crucifixion, otherwise known as the Passion.

He decided that the five petals and five sepals could represent the ten disciples who remained steadfast (Judas and Peter both abandoned Jesus). The corona could be seen as Jesus' crown of thorns. The stigma could be seen as the cross or nails, and the five stamens could be seen as the number of wounds Jesus received.



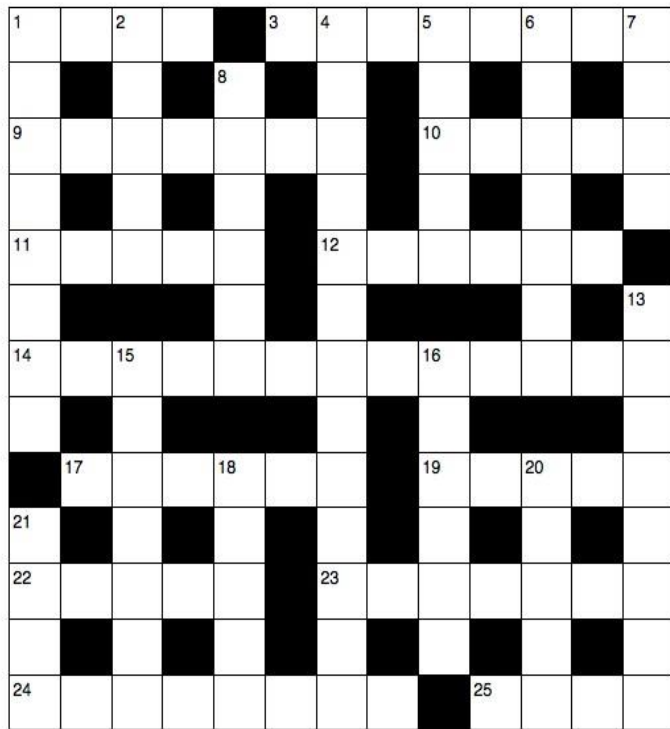
Victory over Dragons

'Remember Jesus Christ, raised from the dead, descended from David.' (2 Timothy 2:8)

This month we remember the story of St George defeating the dragon. Although this is the stuff of legend, we face our own dragons today. We are engaged in a spiritual battle against the powers of sin, Satan and death. In this Easter season, we remember that the great battle has been won. By His cross and resurrection, Jesus secured the victory over sin, Satan and death. The resurrection is the proof that they are no longer too powerful to resist. 'Death has been swallowed up in victory. Where, O death, is your victory?' (1 Cor 15:54,55). Where is your power, dragon?

The story is told of a village in India, terrorised by a great bear looking for food each night. Eventually, the villagers decided to take action, and tracked down the bear to his cave. One man, stronger and braver than the rest, ventured into the dark cave. The villagers outside could hear nothing; eventually they heard a loud shrieking cry and then silence. They waited to see what had happened. Finally, the man emerged from the dark cave victorious! The bear was dead, and the villagers were safe.

The victory was won deep within the cave. They could only be confident and celebrate when the champion emerged. For us, this happened when Jesus rose from the grave. The finality of death is no more and so we need fear death no longer. Also, the power of sin and Satan no longer controls us. The devil, the biggest, is helpless to prevent Jesus taking us home. When Jesus beckons us through death, away from the dragon's power, will you follow him? The victory is complete: 'Remember Jesus Christ raised from the dead.'



Crossword

Across

- 1 'The baby in my — leaped for joy' (Luke 1:44) (4) 3 A 'don't know' in matters of faith (8)
- 9 In the distant past (Jeremiah 2:20) (4,3)
- 10 Armada (1 Kings 10:22) (5)
- 11 Where Moses was confronted with the burning bush (Exodus 3:1) (5)

12 Hair colour indicative of skin infection (Leviticus 13:30) (6)

14 'The worries of this life and the — of wealth choke it, making it unfruitful' (Matthew 13:22) (13)

17 Expel (2 Kings 13:23) (6) 19 What Jesus wrapped round his waist when he washed his disciples' feet (John 13:4) (5)

22 The sixth plague to afflict the Egyptians (Exodus 9:9) (5)

23 For nine (anag.) (7) 24 Where there is no time (Psalm 93:2) (8)

25 Goliath's challenge to the Israelite army in the Valley of Elah: 'This day I — the ranks of Israel!' (1 Samuel 17:10) (4)

Down

1 'I will become angry with them and forsake them; I — — my face from them' (Deuteronomy 31:17) (4,4)

2 Usual description of prophets such as Amos, Hosea, Micah, and so on (5)

4 'They cannot see the light of the gospel of the — — — , who is the image of God' (2 Corinthians 4:4) (5,2,6)

5 An animal's internal edible parts (Leviticus 4:11) (5)

6 Popular 20th-century religious novel by Lloyd C. Douglas, which became a 1953 film starring Richard Burton (3,4)

7 'A — on a hill cannot be hidden' (Matthew 5:14) (4)

8 One of the exiles, a descendant of Bebai, who married a foreign woman (Ezra 10:28) (6) 13 Old Testament hymn-singing (8)

15 'And O what transport of delight from thy pure — floweth' (7)

16 Of felt (anag.) (3,3)

18 'So — the — sets you free, you will be free indeed' (John 8:36) (2,3)

20 Comes between 'bad' and 'worst' (John 5:14) (5)

21 'Neither height nor depth... will be — to separate us from the love of God' (Romans 8:39) (4)

