



Welcome to our parish news sheet for March.

The roadmap out of lockdown - most of us have done as we were asked – we have stayed at home going out for essentials only – we haven't been silly and if the "jab" hasn't yet come your way it will be very soon. March 2021 is looking as if it could be the start of really bringing Covid-19 under control – a year for us since all this began. Alright we know that there are continuing problems with new variants and that it will be some time yet before restrictions are totally removed, but we can at least start off this month on a much more positive note (although we won't be re-opening our churches just yet) as we continue to travel through Lent and Easter "virtually" via the screen of our computers, i-pads or smart phones. We know what we are dealing with now (not like the uncertainty of March 2020) and we know that our way forward and out of lockdown (hopefully permanently) is to act with caution and unlock (or whatever the expression is) slowly and carefully. We will open up our churches as soon as we feel that it is safe to do so without putting anyone at unnecessary risk or reversing the progress made so far in reducing infection rates etc. It is at the top of our Parochial Church Council agenda to determine our best "roadmap" out of our own lockdown and to decide what we can and can't do in the weeks and months ahead. We'll be meeting (via Zoom of course) to discuss, and we'll be asking for your input too.

"Lent and Easter at Home" packs



We very much hope that those who wished to receive one of our "Lent and Easter at Home" packs has done so and found the contents a welcome addition to our on-line preparations for Holy Week and Easter Day itself. The pack was prepared and is sent with love and prayers of blessing from the Ministry Team – so on behalf of all of us that have received one - thank you Lynne, Jess, Marie, Jane and Geoff. Thanks too to our distribution and delivery team(s).

Our provisional date for the "Meeting of Parishioners" and "Annual Parochial Church Meeting" for the parish of Stockport and Brinnington has been set for Sunday, 25th April 2021 (most likely via Zoom). Details to be made available in due course.

I suppose it depends on where you live as to when the Daffodils flower in your area – anywhere from March to late April but they seem to be in the supermarket earlier and earlier. Treat yourself to a bunch on Mothering Sunday (14th March).

AND.... Don't forget our Easter Garden challenge – closing date to send a photograph of your creation (in whatever format you decide) to Jess being Sunday, 28th March and remember that our Ministry Team will be featuring as many photos as possible in our on-line 10am service on Easter Day, Sunday 4th April.

You can't be late to "virtual" church you can turn up whenever you like BUT British Summer Time begins on Sunday, 28th March – Palm Sunday – so time to "spring forward" an hour.



Artwork by Francesca Ross

Census Day

The 21st March requires us to complete our Census form – in England and Wales that is.

Clearly it is a year with a “1” at the end (2021). There is some fascinating history on the Office for National Statistics website as to the history of the census – well worth a look if you are interested in such things. We have come a long way since “census day” on the 10th March 1801, and although 2011 gave us the option to respond online, this time round it will be a “digital-first” census where we are all encouraged to tap in our details electronically. There will be plenty of help to assist with completion of the census forms (by email – web chat – text – social media and the census.gov.uk website). Where technology is absent, or just doesn’t work for you, census “field officers” will still visit households (end of March beginning of April) where returns have not been received. They won’t need to enter your house – will have PPE - so nothing to worry about.

Sunday, 21st March – Census 2021 (In England and Wales)
<https://census.gov.uk/>

‘One Year On’

The Revd Canon Paul Hardingham looks back on the year that changed the world.

It was just over a year ago that the WHO discussed the coronavirus that was starting to spread around the world. None of us could have foreseen the devastating effect on our world, with over 80 million people infected and nearly two million deaths. How has the pandemic challenged our faith, as we look back over the last year?

Firstly, it has forced us to face up to the **reality of our situation**. We cannot underestimate the health, social and economic effects of the virus on our lives, churches and communities. We have learned how to do church online, but the future shape of church life is uncertain!

As the apostle Paul writes: *‘We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed. We always carry around in our body the death of Jesus’* (2 Cor 4:8-10).

The pandemic has challenged so much of what we take for granted, but also demonstrated that God is alongside to help us in these circumstances.

Secondly, alongside the fear and uncertainty of this year, we have also learned to find **new faith and hope in Jesus**. The experience of Jesus’ death and His resurrection provides a pattern for us in facing the future: *‘so that His life may also be revealed in our mortal body. So then, death is at work in us, but life is at work in you.’* (2 Cor 4:10-12).

During the season of Lent, as we anticipate the events at Easter, it’s good to focus on the promise of sharing in the death and resurrection of Jesus. As we consider our present struggles, are we ready to surrender them to Jesus? May the hope of Easter Day take us forward into the coming year.



Roggie here –

Although I nearly WASN'T here this month owing to a "technical" or maybe "human" issue. I had spent such a lot of time writing my page for March, but it went missing! My "lockdown story" of waking up to no heating and no hot water during the coldest days of the year – my file had gone. So too now are the memories of ice-age Stockport and the saga of the central heating pump, but I never thought I would need to wander round the house in my Christmas jumper when it wasn't Christmas – but the snowflake design fitted the situation quite well.

What with the incident of spilling tea all over the laptop, the lack of warmth on the coldest of days when the central heating pump had to be replaced, the slow cooker inner pot cracking (whilst cooking our dinner and spilling gravy on to the hot plate), there have been several moments of interest spending time at home.

It can be quite a challenging time – we only went into the garage to collect the wheelie bin ready to put it out for collection – such a simple task. BUT why were my paws wet. I mean seriously wet – "look Mummy" I said to myself silently – "there is water running through the full length of the garage". Ah! Mummy only had on her flip flops and appeared to have wet feet too. "This isn't good Roggie – out of here" Mummy said in a proper voice – "the freezer is plugged in and shouldn't be standing in water". I was whizzed off inside whilst Mummy did – well I don't know what she did really - but there was a lot of frozen food moved into the kitchen as our trusty little freezer was switched off and emptied. Mummy says we can't dry the garage out until it's nice and warm and we can take everything out – preferably with a skip on the drive! What's a skip?

It very much looks as if March will be spent at home – there doesn't seem to be a roadmap for Yorkies going on outdoor adventures – not yet anyway. A whole year of having a full-time stay at home Mum - although she did disappear for half an hour or so the other morning.



Something to do with a vaccination - I have those every year but not like the one you humans are being given. Mummy seemed quite pleased to have been asked to attend, and she only had to go down the road – she didn't even take the car. Not often Mummy leaves the car behind – we do live in a strange world at the moment.



My greatest worry isn't Covid related at all, it's the grey cat next-door – it doesn't run away when I bark at it – it doesn't run away when I try and chase it – it just looks at me – it comes and says hello to Mummy – it sits in my garden. It sits on my patio table! Mummy says he is really friendly – too friendly if you ask me. Mummy says he just wants to be friends with both of us – I'm just not too sure about that or what that cat is thinking.



My page is full – time to save my work and give Mummy the laptop back. FILE – SAVE – CLICK. Look after yourselves everyone, take care and stay safe. Bye for now Roggie Dog

What will March bring?

Mental health ideas for uncertain times

Dr Ruth M Bancewicz, who is Church Engagement Director at The Faraday Institute for Science and Religion in Cambridge. Ruth writes on the positive relationship between Science and Christian faith.

We may all have rather mixed feelings on reaching March this year. On the one hand, it is lovely to see the onset of Spring, and vaccinations and better weather may make handling the pandemic a little easier. On the other hand, marking a year from the start of the first UK lockdown will be painful for some, especially as many of us are likely to be experiencing restrictions or ongoing hardships for quite some time. We may need to find new ways to keep going, so here are some suggestions that draw on both science and Christian theology.

Getting outside Time outdoors in a natural environment is very good for you – and you can't argue with the happy hormones produced by exercise. Attending to the details of nature can also inspire awe, which has been linked to positive mood, and increased life satisfaction. Enjoying creation can also help us connect with God.

Looking outside If you are truly stuck indoors, try putting bird feeders outside your window so creation comes to you. This is also an act of kindness (see below)!

Lament and praise The Psalms are a rich resource to help us express both our grief and our thanks to God. Try reading one or two each day.

Journaling Keep a journal of thoughts, experiences or practices you have engaged with during the day. Constructing a personal narrative or story is now recognised as a very powerful psychological and spiritual tool for building resilience. It is also a vital learning tool that we can go back to when tough times return in the future.

Acts of kindness Helping or encouraging someone else is obviously a good thing to do in itself, but it also has a very positive effect on the giver – spiritually, mentally, emotionally, and even physically. Whichever way you look at it, finding new ways to show kindness to others can be a very effective way to help ourselves feel better too.

Gratitude Gratitude is another natural drug – in a sense – that can help us feel better. Try keeping a grateful diary, adding a few things each day.

Laugh, sing, make music, dance All of these activities are deeply rooted in our physical and mental makeup. You may have forgotten how great they feel, especially in times of sadness, but we can learn from children who do them very naturally.

I hope these ideas may help bring us closer to God, each other, and His creation.



Are you 'Zoomed Out'?

The Revd Canon Paul Hardingham considers the need to stay connected

You're still on mute! If you've used Zoom over the past year, you'll be familiar with this cry! After a day on Zoom, the last thing we often want to do is using it for a chat with friends or a church service on Sunday! Now this reveals a wider problem that we face. We know that staying connected in the pandemic is hard. When we're tired and busy, it's easy to stop connecting with others, which would encourage our faith or wellbeing. This might also include not sending a text, Facebook comment or phoning somebody up.



Remember what Paul says: *'For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do.'* (Romans 7:15). It's often easier to avoid connecting with God and others, when this would be good for our sense of value, purpose and identity. Certain patterns of behaviour can make us feel safer, but in reality they prevent us from living our lives fully as God intends. Paul adds: *'What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body that is subject to death? Thanks be to God, who delivers me through Jesus Christ our Lord!'* (Romans 7:24,25). Through the death and resurrection of Jesus we have the freedom to act differently. Lent is an ideal time to develop new habits, especially when we are tired or anxious. It may involve spending less time on Facebook, turning the TV off to call a friend who we need to catch up with, or getting up a bit earlier to spend time in Bible reading and prayer.

Let's keep reminding ourselves that *'God is bigger than Zoom'* and make sure that we don't get disconnected! Let's be committed to doing the right thing, rather than simply the easier thing.

5th March – World Day of Prayer Build on a Strong Foundation – Vanuatu

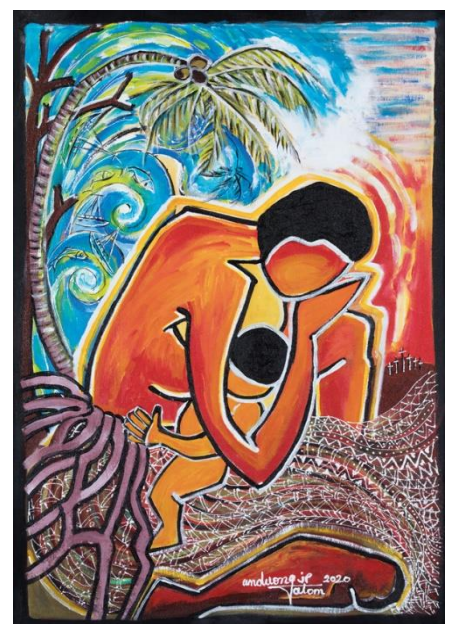


World Day of Prayer will still be taking place on Friday 5 March in spite of the current restrictions! However our service this year will be pre-recorded and available on YouTube.

You will be able to access it via the Stockport Citadel website. If anyone would like a service booklet please ask me (mobile number : 07947 591049)

This year the WDP organisation has asked us especially to remember that they usually rely on the collections from the services held all over the UK for their income. They give it all to various Christian projects and charities, both at home and abroad. So if you would normally come to the service, please consider making your donation via text or directly to WDP or via me (number above).

Catriona Smith



How Sunday became a Christian day of rest

By Tim Lenton.

It was 1700 years ago, on 7th March 321, that the Roman Emperor Constantine 1 (Constantine the Great), who had converted to Christianity, decreed that Sunday should be a day of rest throughout the Empire. This was a change from normal Roman Empire practice, which was to regard Sunday as just another work-day – something the UK seems to be reverting to. But Constantine's civil decree made Sunday a day of rest from labour. It said: "All judges and city people and craftsmen shall rest upon the venerable day of the sun."

This was not intended to replace the Jewish Sabbath, which starts at sunset on Friday and continues to sunset on Saturday. Such Jewish observance was regarded by most Christians as being bound to the old law instead of the Spirit, and so was resisted. Christians backed the Sunday rest because it was the day on which Jesus had risen from the dead and the Holy Spirit had come – despite possible doubts about the phrase "day of the sun". Christians meeting for worship on Sunday in fact dates back to the Acts of the Apostles, and it is mentioned historically about 115AD. Actual practice varies across the world and through the years.

Metropolitan Museum of Art, CCO, via Wikimedia Commons



Also in the month of MARCH

1600 years ago, on 25th March 421, that the city of Venice was officially founded when its first church was dedicated at noon. **300 years ago, on 24th March 1721, that Johann Sebastian Bach dedicated six of his concertos to Christian Ludwig Margrave of Brandenburg-Schwedt. They are now commonly known as the Brandenburg Concertos.** 200 years ago, on 19th March 1821, that Sir Richard Burton, British explorer, writer and translator, was born. He was noted for his translations of *The Arabian Nights* and the *Kama Sutra*. **150 years ago, on 27th March 1871, that the first international rugby union football match was held in Edinburgh. Scotland beat England 1 – 0.** Also 150 years ago, on 29th March 1871, that the Royal Albert Hall in London was officially opened by Queen Victoria. **80 years ago, on 28th March 1941, that Virginia Woolf committed suicide, aged 59. Author of *To The Lighthouse*, *Mrs Dalloway*, *Orlando*, and *A Room of One's Own*, among others, she was one of the leading modernist writers of the 20th century.** 75 years ago, on 5th March 1946, that Winston Churchill gave his famous 'Iron Curtain' speech in Fulton, Missouri. He used the term to describe the separation between Soviet and Western countries. **Also 75 years ago, on 25th March 1946, that London's Heathrow Airport was opened, as London Airport. It was renamed Heathrow in 1966.** 65 years ago, on 23rd March 1956, that Pakistan became the world's first Islamic Republic. **60 years ago, on 6th March 1961, that George Formby, the 'ukulele king' died. A British comedian, singer and actor, he was best known for his comic songs, including 'When I'm Cleaning Windows'.** Also 60 years ago, on 8th March 1961, that Sir Thomas Beecham, British conductor and impresario died. He founded several major orchestras and transformed the operatic and orchestral scene in Britain. **50 years ago, on 8th March 1971, that the 'Fight of the Century' took place at Madison Square Garden in New York City. Two undefeated heavyweight boxers fought each other for the world title, with Joe Frazier defeating Muhammed Ali.** 40 years ago, on 1st March 1981, that IRA member Bobby Sands began a hunger strike at Maze Prison, Northern Ireland. He was elected as an MP to the British parliament on 10th April, and died on 5th May. **Also 40 years ago, on 29th March 1981, that the first London Marathon was held.**



30 years ago, on 3rd March 1991, that American construction worker Rodney King was beaten by officers from the Los Angeles Police Department following a car chase. The beating was captured on amateur video. When the four officers were later acquitted in April 1992, it triggered the Los Angeles riots in which 53 people died and around \$1billion worth of damage was caused. **Also 30 years ago, on 14th March 1991, that the convictions of the Birmingham Six were quashed by Britain's Court of Appeal and they were released from prison after 16 years. They had been convicted of carrying out pub bombings in Birmingham in 1974.** Also 30 years ago, on 21st March 1991, that the British Government announced that the controversial poll tax (officially called the community charge), which had sparked riots, was to be scrapped and replaced by a new property tax (council tax) from April 1993. **25 years ago, on 13th March 1996, that the Dunblane Massacre took place in Scotland. A gunman killed 16 children and a teacher at a primary school and wounded several others before taking his own life.** Also 25 years ago, on 20th March 1996, that the British Government reported that Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease (CJD) in humans was linked to BSE (mad cow disease) and could be transmitted to humans who ate infected beef. On 25th March the European Union banned the export of British beef (until 2006). **20 years ago, on 8th March 2001, that British racing driver Donald Campbell's speedboat Bluebird was recovered from the bottom of Coniston Water in Cumbria. (It had crashed and sank during a record attempt in January 1967 in which he was killed.)** 15 years ago, on 1st March 2006, that the Senedd, the National Assembly for Wales's debating chamber, was officially opened by Queen Elizabeth II in Cardiff. **10 years ago, on 11th March 2011, that the great Tohoku earthquake and tsunami of Japan took place. It shifted Japan's main island, Honshu, 2.4 metres to the east. 15,897 people were killed, 2,533 went missing, and nearly a quarter of a million were made homeless. Three reactors at the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant went into meltdown, leading to the second-largest nuclear accident in history.** Also 10 years ago, on 15th March 2011, the Syrian Civil War began. It still continues today.

1st March: St David (Dewi Sant)

guiding the Welsh through turbulent times

On 1st March Wales celebrates its patron saint, David – or, in Welsh, Dewi or Dafydd. He is revered wherever Welsh people have settled. As with most figures from the so-called 'Dark Ages' (he lived in the sixth century), reliable details about his life are scarce, but there are enough for us to form a picture of a formidably austere, disciplined and charismatic leader, who led the Church in Wales through turbulent years and fought tenaciously for the faith. It's likely that David was strengthened in his ministry by time spent in Ireland, where the Church was stronger and more confident. Early records tell of a meeting of Irish church leaders with three 'Britons', as they were described, among them 'bishop David'. His mother, Non, is also celebrated as a saint in Wales, where a number of churches are dedicated in her name. That he founded a monastery at Menevia, in Pembrokeshire, seems beyond doubt. It later became the site of St David's cathedral and the settlement which is now the smallest city in the United Kingdom. From Menevia David embarked on preaching and teaching missions across Wales, and probably beyond. His eloquence was legendary. At a famous Synod of the Church, held at a Carmarthenshire village called Brefi, he preached passionately against the Arian heresy – indeed, so passionately that he was (according to some accounts) immediately named as archbishop of Wales. The village is now known as Llandewi Brefi – *brefi* in Welsh is a hillock, and legend claims that it appeared miraculously in order to provide the eloquent bishop with a pulpit. His monks avoided wine and beer, drinking only water. Indeed, he and they lived lives of rigorous austerity and constant prayer, in the manner of the Desert Fathers of the Eastern Church. The date of David's death is disputed – either 589 or 601. It wasn't until the 12th century that he was generally accepted as the patron saint of Wales, and pilgrimages to St David's were highly regarded in the following centuries – including two made by English kings, William I and Henry II. It's traditional for Welsh people to wear daffodils on St David's Day (*Gwyl Dewi Sant* in Welsh) – but there seems no particular reason for it, beyond the fact that they tend to make their early Spring appearance round about his day – oh, and they look nice!

Lets make something “Welsh” for St David’s Day.

The key ingredient must surely be “leeks” – so there is always the very popular Chicken & Leek Pie to be considered, but maybe give a thought to making “Glamorgan Sausages”. These Welsh veggie sausages are made from leeks, mustard and cheese encased in crispy breadcrumbs.

25g/1oz butter	115g/4oz leeks, trimmed and finely sliced
175g/6oz fresh white breadcrumbs	2 tbsp chopped fresh parsley
1 tbsp chopped fresh thyme	150g/5oz Caerphilly cheese/ Welsh cheddar, or Lancashire will do!
2 free-range eggs, separated	1 tsp English mustard
Salt & Ground Black pepper	
Cooking Oil – for frying	

Mix cheese (having first grated it) and breadcrumbs (around half the quantity prepared) – technical challenge - by hand in a bowl or using a food processor (by far the easiest method).

Trim and slice thinly the leeks, cook in butter until soft - then add into the bowl/processor

Whisk the yolks, herbs, mustard and seasoning together – add to the breadcrumb/cheese mixture mixing thoroughly.

The mixture should be quite moist and come together in your hand – if not add another egg yolk or small amount of water.

Divide and roll into equally sized sausages

Dip in egg white

Roll in the extra breadcrumbs

Fry until golden brown in hot oil

Serve with boiled potatoes, perhaps a salad.... the choice is yours – but if you do not want to go truly veggie these yummy sausages go nicely with grilled bacon.

4th Sunday in Lent

There is an old Jewish saying: *God could not be everywhere, and therefore He made mothers.*

Mother Church, Mother Earth, Mother of the Gods – our human mothers – all of them have been part of the celebration of ‘Mothering Sunday’ – as the fourth Sunday in Lent is affectionately known. It has been celebrated in the UK since at least the 16th century.

In Roman times, great festivals were held every Spring to honour Cybele, Mother of all the Gods. Other pagan festivals in honour of Mother Earth were also celebrated. With the arrival of Christianity, the festival became one honouring Mother Church.



During the Middle Ages, young people apprenticed to craftsmen or working as ‘live-in’ servants were allowed only one holiday a year on which to visit their families, which is how ‘Mothering Sunday’ got its name. This special day became a day of family rejoicing, and the Lenten fast was broken. In some places the day was called Simnel Day, because of the sweet cakes called simnel cakes traditionally eaten on that day.

In recent years the holiday has changed, and in many ways now resembles the American Mother’s Day, with families going out to Sunday lunch (except in “lockdown” of course – those were the days that we hope will return soon) and generally making a fuss of their mother on the day.

St Patrick is the patron saint of Ireland. If you've ever been in New York on St Patrick's Day, you'd think he was the patron saint of New York as well... the flamboyant parade is full of American/Irish razzmatazz.

It's all a far cry from the hard life of this 5th century humble Christian who became in time both bishop and apostle of Ireland. Patrick was born the son of a town councillor in the west of England, between the Severn and the Clyde. But as a young man he was captured by Irish pirates, kidnapped to Ireland, and reduced to slavery. He was made to tend his master's herds. Desolate and despairing, Patrick turned to prayer. He found God was there for him, even in such desperate circumstances. He spent much time in prayer, and his faith grew and deepened, in contrast to his earlier years, when he "knew not the true God". Then, after six gruelling, lonely years he was told in a dream he would soon go to his own country. He either escaped or was freed, made his way to a port 200 miles away and eventually persuaded some sailors to take him with them away from Ireland. After various adventures in other lands, including near-starvation, Patrick landed on English soil at last, and returned to his family. But he was much changed. He had enjoyed his life of plenty before; now he wanted to devote the rest of his life to Christ. Patrick received some form of training for the priesthood, but not the higher education he really wanted. But by 435, well-educated or not, Patrick was badly needed. Palladius' mission to the Irish had failed, and so the Pope sent Patrick back to the land of his slavery. He set up his see at Armagh and worked principally in the north. He urged the Irish to greater spirituality, set up a school, and made several missionary journeys.

Patrick's writings are the first literature certainly identified from the British Church. They reveal sincere simplicity and a deep pastoral care. He wanted to abolish paganism, idolatry, and was ready for imprisonment or death in the following of Christ. Patrick remains the most popular of the Irish saints. The principal cathedral of New York is dedicated to him, as, of course, is the Anglican cathedral of Dublin.

19th March: St Joseph

patron saint of fathers and holy death

Why should St Joseph's day be in March? Surely, he belongs to Advent and Christmas, at Mary's side in millions of nativity scenes around the world.

In any case, as the foster-father of Christ and husband of Mary, Joseph played a major part in the story of the coming of Jesus Christ. All that we know about him for sure is in the gospels. Read especially Matthew 1 – 2. He was of Davidic descent, but his trade as a carpenter shows that he was not at all wealthy.

Joseph's gentleness and decency towards Mary, and his willingness to do God's will when it was revealed to him, portray him as a kind and godly person. Joseph is the patron saint of fathers of families, and he makes an excellent example. He comes across as a protecting, loyal, thoughtful, self-controlled person, full of integrity, and willing to work hard. Who wouldn't want a father like that?

Joseph is also the patron saint of all who desire a holy death. Thus, countless churches, hospitals and religious congregations are dedicated to Joseph.

20th March: **Cuthbert** *beloved monk and bishop of Lindisfarne*

Cuthbert of Lindisfarne (c 634-87) has long been northern England's favourite saint. It is easy to see why: Cuthbert was holy, humble, peaceable, prayerful, faithful in friendship, winsome, and really kind. Cuthbert was born into a fairly well-off Anglo-Saxon family, and he became a monk at Melrose in 651. He and another monk, Eata, were sent to start a monastery at Ripon, but Alfrith, who owned the land, insisted that they adopt the Roman customs, which Cuthbert's Celtic church did not allow. So, Cuthbert and Eata quietly returned to Melrose, where Cuthbert became prior in about 661. Then came the Synod of Whitby in 663/4, and the Celtic Church formally decided to adopt the Roman customs. After this, Cuthbert was sent on to Lindisfarne as prior, where he sensitively introduced the new ways, and won over the monks there. Cuthbert was very much loved at Lindisfarne. His zeal was evident in his constant preaching, teaching, and visiting of the people. He was also said to have gifts of prophecy and healing. Occasionally, Cuthbert reached 'people overload'. Then he would retreat to a tiny islet called Inner Farne, where he could pray in total seclusion. When, to his horror, he was told he had been made Bishop of Hexham, he immediately 'swapped' sees with Eata, and stayed on at Lindisfarne as Bishop. Sadly, Cuthbert died on little Inner Farne, only two years later, on 20 March, 687. Cuthbert was buried at Lindisfarne, but that is not the end of his story. For it was only now that his travels began. After the Vikings destroyed Lindisfarne in 875, several monks dug him up and set out to find Cuthbert a final, and safe, resting place. For the next 120 years Cuthbert was deposited in various monasteries around the north of England and southwest Scotland. Finally, in 999, Cuthbert was allowed to rest in Durham, where a Saxon church was built over his shrine. All that travel must have done him good; when his body was exhumed to be put into the 'new' Norman Cathedral in Durham in 1104, it was said to be still in perfect tact, and 'incorrupt'.

30th March: **John Climacus** *and his ladder to Paradise*

John Climacus (d 649) had a thing about ladders. He was a monk in Palestine who was only seen out at the weekends, during the week he prayed and wrote in solitude. He wrote *The Ladder to Paradise*, a treatise of spiritual encouragement to other monks. This gave him his name 'Climacus' (= ladder), and also led to him being chosen as abbot of Sinai when he was 70. John Climacus had a helpful picture of the spiritual life: he saw it as a ladder up which the believer slowly climbed to heaven, with God's help.

Finding God in Each Moment of the Day

The Revd Canon Paul Hardingham offers the following for Lent... Do you know the popular series of books entitled *Where's Wally?* These books are filled with very detailed cartoon drawings in each of which is hidden Wally. He is dressed in a red and white striped ski cap and glasses and the challenge is to find Wally. You have to search for some time to pick him out of the crowd, but Wally is always there! In many ways, like finding Wally, we need to develop the skill of identifying God's presence in our daily lives. One approach that can help us to find God throughout the day is to do a daily review of our day with God. It can provide us with a means of seeing where God has been at work during our day. It's an opportunity of remembering how God has been at work and how we have responded to Him. As the psalmist says, '*On my bed I remember you; I think of you through the watches of the night*' (Ps 63:6). What does this look like in practice? Here is a step by step guide: 1. Be still for a moment, and quiet your mind; 2. Acknowledge that Jesus is present. Invite Him to guide you; 3. Recall the beginning of the day, when you first woke up. Watch that scene, as if on film. What is your reaction to what you see? Talk to God about it. 4. Continue through the film of your day, going from scene to scene. As you reflect on each one, some scenes may fill you with gratitude, others with regret. Speak directly to God about this. You may also want to pray for those you encountered during the day. 5. End your review with a prayer of thanksgiving for God's mercy and love. Ask him to refresh you as you sleep. As you begin reviewing your day with God regularly, you can expect to see two things beginning to happen: Firstly, you will become more aware of recurring negative patterns in your life, which will challenge these wrong attitudes and habits and increase your desire to grow and change. Secondly, you will become more aware of God's presence in the ordinary moments of your life. And when you start experiencing the reality of God's presence with you every day, it's not ordinary any more!

Palm Sunday & Holy Week

The events of Easter took place over a week, traditionally called Passion Week.

It began on Palm Sunday. After all His teaching and healing, Jesus had built a following. On the Sunday before He was to die, Jesus and His followers arrived at Jerusalem. The city was crowded. Jewish people were arriving from to celebrate Passover. This commemorates how they had escaped from slavery in Egypt nearly 1,500 year earlier. Jesus rode into the city on a young donkey. He was greeted like a conquering hero. Cheering crowds waved palm branches in tribute. He was hailed as the Messiah who had come to re-establish a Jewish kingdom. The next day they returned to Jerusalem. Jesus went to the temple, the epicentre of the Jewish faith, and confronted the money-changers and merchants who were ripping off the people. He overturned their tables and accused them of being thieves. The religious authorities were alarmed and feared how He was stirring up the crowds. On the Tuesday, they challenged Jesus, questioning His authority. He answered by challenging and condemning their hypocrisy. Later that day Jesus spoke to His disciples about future times. He warned them about fake religious leaders; the coming destruction of Jerusalem; wars, earthquakes and famines; and how His followers would face persecution. By midweek the Jewish religious leaders and elders were so angry with Jesus that they began plotting to arrest and kill Him. One of Jesus' disciples, Judas, went to the chief priests and agreed to betray Him to them. Jesus and the 12 disciples gathered on the Thursday evening to celebrate the Passover meal. This is known as the Last Supper. During the evening, Jesus initiated a ritual still marked by Christians – Holy Communion – which commemorates His death. Jesus broke bread and shared it and a cup of wine with His disciples. Judas then left to meet the other plotters. Jesus continued to teach the others and then went outside into an olive grove to pray. He even prayed for all future believers. He agonised over what was to come but chose the way of obedience. The Bible book, Luke, records Him praying, 'Father if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will but yours be done'. Minutes later Judas arrived with soldiers and the chief priests and Jesus was arrested.

Nigel Beeton is a recently retired senior radiologist, and this poem comes out of time spent back at the hospital in January, helping colleagues.

Together

In the year nineteen seventy-one
They heard the church bells ring
That wedding day was so much fun!
They promised they would cling
Together they would always stay
Till death will come to part their way.

In the year two thousand and one
Their lifelong odyssey
Had brought to them their first grandson
But everyone could see
Together they would always stay
Till death will come to part their way.

For ten years they'd been wed
Two daughters and a strapping son
And still they often said
Together they would always stay
Till death will come to part their way.

In the year twenty-eleven
Retirement came at last
Grandchildren – now they counted seven
The family grows fast!
Together they would always stay
Till death will come to part their way

In the year nineteen ninety-one
Their children nearly grown!
Yes, troubles go and troubles come
But they had always shown
Together they would always stay
Till death will come to part their way.

In the year twenty twenty-one
Their Golden Wedding day.
But celebrations? There were none
A Care home said that they
Together couldn't always stay
For Covid came to part their way

.. .. .



Not available in your local supermarket this year
If you are one of the 80,000 people who would usually buy at the supermarket then you will need to order direct.



The Meaningful Chocolate Company has launched its 2021 Fairtrade Real Easter Egg range. All Real Easter Eggs come with an Easter story in the box. The stories range from simple guides to a 24-page activity book version with a prize competition worth £200. They provide an opportunity to share the joy of Easter with friends and family.

The 2021 Original Real Easter Egg includes a new 24-page Easter story activity book. It features a rainbow design to remind us of the importance of working together, in amazing and inspiring ways, for the common good. It costs £4.50 and is delivered in multiples of six or as singles.

David Marshall, from Meaningful Chocolate, said: “Even with the current uncertainties we believe that it is more important than ever that churches, schools and individuals find ways to share the Easter story in 2021. Our aim is to provide some of these resources and continue to support Fairtrade. The Real Easter Egg is a proven way to do this. You can order direct from www.realeasteregg.co.uk ”

Real Easter Egg dropped by pandemic hit supermarkets - The UK’s top supermarkets will not be stocking The Real Easter Egg in 2021. For the past ten years Tesco, Waitrose, ASDA and Morrisons have made room on their shelves for The Real Easter Egg. The head of The Real Easter Egg, David Marshall, said: “Easter 2020 was right at the start of lock-down and we saw people change the way they shopped. We saw an increase of 40% in people buying from our website for friends, family and food banks. However, at the same time, the early pandemic led to the supermarkets having a disastrous Easter as people stayed away from high streets. This year, supermarket buyers were told to cut brands, reduce the volumes and in some cases ask for stock to be supplied at a loss or cost price. It means there will be fewer brands, including the Real Easter Egg, on supermarket shelves this Easter... ”.

About the Real Easter Egg - Out of the 80 million chocolate Easter eggs sold each year in the UK, The Real Easter Egg is the first and only Fairtrade chocolate Easter egg to share the Easter story. The Real Easter Egg has been on sale since 2010 and involves thousands of churches, schools and groups. It crosses all denominations and offers individuals a simple way to share the Easter Story while supporting Fairtrade and charitable projects. The Real Easter Egg continues to be the UK’s top mail order Egg in terms of volume. To date more than a million eggs have been sold and more than £300,000 has been donated to charitable causes.

Send personalised cards and gifts

The team at Meaningful Chocolate has created a new way to send personalised cards, personalised chocolate bars and message bars through the post. Called “Dove from Above” it is an alternate to Moonpig & Funky Pigeon.

This Easter online customers will be able to choose from a range of exclusively designed Easter cards. Postage is included in the price and items are delivered without the need for a signature or for the door to be opened.

www.dovefromabove.co.uk

When your prayer is not answered

The Revd Dr Herbert McGonigle, considers the problem of prayer. Dr Herbert McGonigle was formerly Senior Lecturer in Historical Theology & Church History, Nazarene Theological College, Manchester

2 Cor. 12:8; 'Three times I asked the Lord about this ...BUT...' Paul is talking about one of the most mysterious and one of the most baffling aspects of prayer – when God does not say yes.

On the face of it, Paul's prayer was very modest. For some time he had been troubled by 'a thorn in the flesh.' He doesn't tell us what the 'thorn' was and down the centuries theologians and commentators have made suggestions. Most of them have thought that the affliction was physical because Paul says it was 'in the flesh.' Some have suggested that he suffered from epileptic fits which caused him to fall down, while others have suggested that he was laid low by constant fevers or that he had very poor eyesight, the last based on his remarks in Galatians 6:11. But in spite of this great servant of the Lord praying earnestly three times that the thorn would be removed, God did not answer as Paul expected. A number of things in this passage (verses 7-10) are very helpful to all of us in the matter of prayer. First, although God's answer was not what Paul asked for, God did answer him. God is never indifferent to the prayers we utter from the depth of our heart. Unlike the idol Baal in the Old Testament story about Elijah, (1 Kings 18) the God and Father of our Lord Jesus is not on a journey, nor is He busy elsewhere, nor is He sleeping. He hears our prayers and our cries when we come to Him in our need and pain and distress. Second, although Paul did not get the answer he wanted, God made him a wonderful promise. He said, 'My grace is sufficient for you' (v.9). This was not what Paul asked for, yet what a promise it was! God said in effect. 'I will not take the thorn away – but my daily grace is all-sufficient.' In spite of the thorn, Paul will triumph. When God gives us all-sufficient grace, it will take care of everything in our lives. Thirdly, Paul learnt that God's wonderful grace meant that in his weakness 'the power of Christ' (v.9) would be with him, the power that would make him effective and fruitful in his ministry. Fourthly, this experience taught Paul that he could be 'content with weaknesses and insults' (v.10) because it was for Christ's sake, and when he is weak in himself, he is strong in Christ (v.10).

So what about unanswered prayer? Unless our prayer was selfish and not for our good in the first place, God does answer our cry. When the answer is not what we expected, then it means that our loving Father has something for us even better and more important than what we asked for.

Nigel Beeton writes: For those of us fortunate enough to have gardens one reliable source of joy and pleasure over the past dark months has been the birds visiting our gardens. I even saw goldfinches in mine, they are not common visitors but it's lovely to see them when they come! They really are spectacular birds!

The Goldfinch

A flash of yellow, gold, and red
Dancing in our flower bed
Flocked together, bringing charm
Their joyful song restoring calm.

So, go ahead, and plant some thistles
You will see, among the bristles.
Golden birds who dance and dart
Bringing joy to warm your heart.

Through centuries since times of old
We've always loved their plumage bold;
As they gathered round to feed
Seeking grubs, and thistle seed.

By Nigel Beeton

150 years of the Royal Albert Hall

The Revd Michael Burgess celebrates a special building.



Joyce Grenfell wrote a wonderful song, *Joyful Noise*, about three lady choristers:

Miss Clissold, Miss Truss and Ivy Trembley. Their greatest delight was to sing in an oratorio at the Royal Albert Hall. 'It may be like a gasworks with a green-house roof above it, and it may lack convenience, but all the same we love it.'

That love has marked the life of the Royal Albert Hall over 150 years as this month we celebrate its opening on 29th March 1871.

After the success of the Great Exhibition, Prince Albert dreamed of creating a more permanent cultural area in London to promote and popularise the arts and sciences. On his death in 1861 at just 42 years, it was decided to erect a memorial and a 'Central Hall.' And so the Royal Albert Hall was built. At heart it is an impressive concert hall promoting classical music with an annual performance of Handel's *Messiah* from 1876, and from 1941 the BBC Proms: 8 weeks of concerts in the summer welcoming musicians from all over the world and culminating in the memorable *Last Night*. Composers from Wagner and Verdi to Bernstein and Britten have conducted and had works performed there.

But the Royal Albert Hall has also hosted an amazingly wide variety of events through its life: the Beatles in 1963, Ella Fitzgerald in 1990, poetry evenings, sport (boxing, tennis and basketball), the *Cirque de Soleil*, Teenage Cancer Trust concerts, and the 25th anniversary performance of *The Phantom of the Opera* in 2011. It has provided a platform for Winston Churchill, Einstein and the Dalai Lama. Many of us will have poignant memories of the annual RBL Festival of Remembrance held every November since 1923: a moving occasion that culminates with the shower of poppy petals.

Sadly, because of the restrictions with the pandemic, the Hall's programme of events has had to be limited in scope since last year, but the frieze on the outside of the building remains to inspire. There we see a celebration of the rich variety of arts and sciences that include music, sculpture, painting, astronomy and navigation, and the words *Thine O Lord is the greatness and the power and the glory and the majesty* – a reminder that all our creative work here is a reflection of the wonder of God the Creator.

'He will never forget at all The day he played at Albert Hall'. That line from the Kinks' song *Session Man* invites us all to celebrate and give thanks for the richness of the life and work of the Royal Albert Hall as we look back over its 150 years and as we look ahead with hope and faith to a richer future.



Behold the handmaid of the Lord

The Rev Michael Burgess takes a look at 'Ecce Ancilla Domini' by Dante Gabriel Rossetti. It hangs in the Tate Gallery.

Sailko, via Wikimedia Commons

'*Ecce Ancilla Domini*' (Behold the handmaid of the Lord) is the title of this month's painting of the Annunciation by Dante Gabriel Rossetti. We shall hear those words in the Gospel for this feast on 25th March, when Mary responds to Gabriel's message that she is to be the mother of our Saviour.

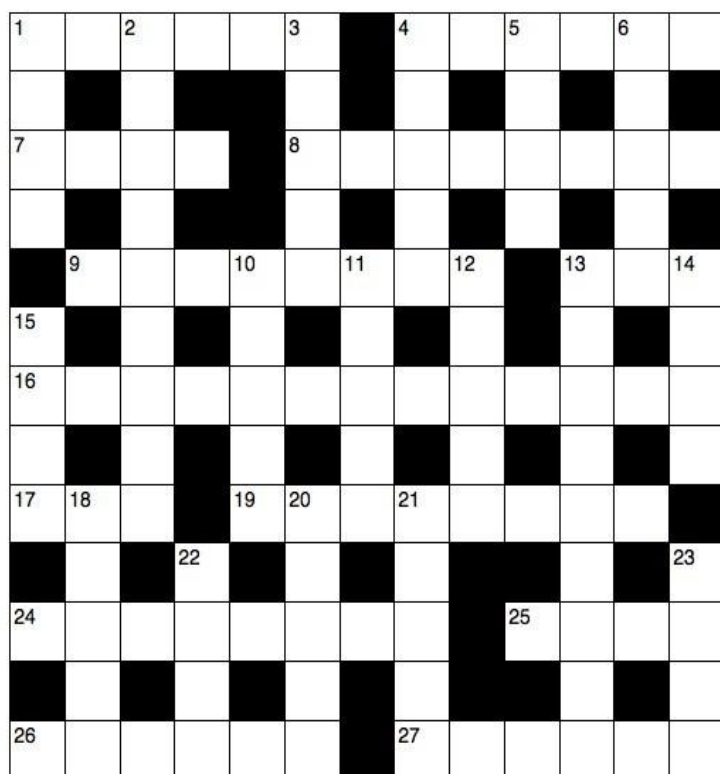
It is a scene that has inspired artists throughout the history of Christianity. Over those years certain traditions emerged: in many paintings Mary was often shown at prayer, dressed in blue, in a room that was filled with elaborate furnishings of the period, all opening out onto the wider world.

Rossetti's painting of 1850 is very different. He was a founding member of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, and as both a poet and a painter, he soon became its recognised leader. But the work of the Brotherhood was not without its critics. When Rossetti's painting was exhibited, it was dismissed as 'absurd, affected, ill-drawn, insipid, crotchety and puerile' because it was such a contrast to the more traditional portrayals of this scene in Luke's Gospel. Here there is a claustrophobic feel to the painting. Mary and Gabriel fill the tiny, cell-like room. There is a window, but it does not open out to scenery and nature: just a solitary tree. Rossetti called '*Ecce Ancilla Domini*' his 'white picture.' That is the colour that dominates: the robes of Mary and the angel, the stones of the floor, the paint on the walls, the flowers that Gabriel offers. Blue, the traditional colour for Mary, is relegated to the screen behind and the sky outside. Other colours are provided by the yellow flames of Gabriel's feet and the tapestry in the foreground on which Mary has embroidered lilies. These flowers, like the whiteness, are symbols of purity.

The model for Mary was Christina, his sister, the author of 'In the bleak mid-winter', and in portraying her, Rossetti has captured the adolescent vulnerability of Mary. A small dove linking the two characters is a sign of God's spirit coming to bring new life to this young girl. How does she respond? What is the expression on her face? Does she see the adult world of responsibility and motherhood opening up before her? Is it anxiety or wonder or awe? Or are all of these responses captured in her expression? The stillness of the scene, the whiteness of the room – they are like a blank canvas on which God can paint His Gospel, His Good New of life and hope. Just as it opened up a new world for Mary, so the Gospel can open up a new world for all of us.

We may respond with anxiety and worry, or with wonder and awe to that invitation. Or those feelings may be transformed into trust and service like Mary in Luke's Gospel: 'Here am I, the servant of the Lord: let it be with me according to your word.'

Crossword



Across

- 1 The earth is one (6)
 4 'On a hill far away stood an old — cross' (6)
 7 'I am the — vine and my Father is the gardener' (John 15:1) (4)
 8 The Caesar who was Roman Emperor at the time of Jesus' birth (Luke 2:1) (8)
 9 'Your — should be the same as that of Christ Jesus' (Philippians 2:5) (8)
 13 Jesus said that no one would put a lighted lamp under this (Luke 8:16) (3)
 16 Involvement (1 Corinthians 10:16) (13)
 17 Armed conflict (2 Chronicles 15:19) (3)
 19 Where the Gaderene pigs were feeding (Mark 5:11) (8)
 24 What jeering youths called Elisha on the road to Bethel (2 Kings 2:23) (8)
 25 The Venerable — , eighth-century Jarrow ecclesiastical scholar (4)
 26 8 Across issued a decree that this should take place (Luke 2:1) (6)
 27 Come into prominence (Deuteronomy 13:13) (6)

Down

- 1 Where some of the seed scattered by the sower fell (Matthew 13:4) (4)
 2 Sexually immoral person whom God will judge (Hebrews 13:4) (9)
 3 Gospel leaflet (5)
 4 Physical state of the boy brought to Jesus for healing (Mark 9:18)
 5 Tugs (anag.) (4)
 10 Nationality associated with St Patrick (5)
 11 Leader of the descendants of Kohath (1 Chronicles 15:5) (5)
 12 'After this, his brother came out, with his hand grasping — heel' (Genesis 25:26) (5)
 13 At Dothan the Lord struck the Arameans with — at Elisha's request (2 Kings 6:18) (9)
 14 'Peter, before the cock crows today, you will — three times that you know me' (Luke 22:34) (4)
 15 Spit out (Psalm 59:7) (4)
 18 'When I — , I am still with you' (Psalm 139:18) (5)
 20 Concepts (Acts 17:20) (5)
 21 Thyatira's dealer in purple cloth (Acts 16:14) (5)
 22 Does (anag.) (4)
 23 The second set of seven cows in Pharaoh's dream were this (Genesis 41:19) (4)



Wordsearch

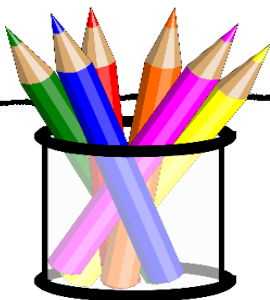
Life is full of ups and downs: after blessings, hard times often follow. They are not meant to destroy us but to help us grow spiritually by deepening our faith and dependence on God. The Holy Spirit led Jesus into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil – to give Him the opportunity to stand fast against the enemy. The devil's temptations were based on half-truths, which Jesus rejected by standing firm on the whole truth of Scripture. The truth sets us free!

Holy	Spirit	Jordan
Wilderness	Tempted	Devil
Fasted	Hungry	If
Bread	Alone	Kingdom
World	Authority	Glory
Worship	Me	Serve
Jerusalem	Pinnacle	Temple
Stone	Foot	Angels
Bear	Strike	Test
temptation		

Sudoku

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

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



Bible Bite

A short story from the Bible

It can be read in the Bible in
Luke chapter 14 verses 15-24

Jesus was at a dinner when one guest said
how good it would be to be at God's feast
for His people at the end of time.

So Jesus told a story -

A man once gave a great
feast.



I love feasts!

He sent his servant to
invite his guests.



Then he knows
how much food to cook.

When everything was
ready, he sent his
servant to tell his guests.



Time to get dressed up!

But they all
made excuses.

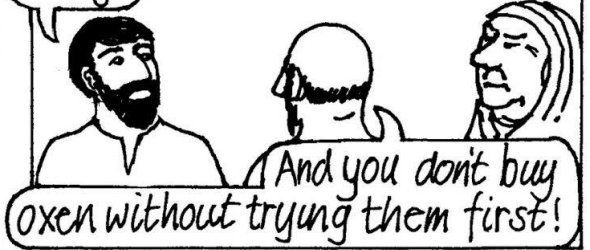


One said, 'I've bought some
land and I need to see it.
Sorry!'



How rude! Nobody
buys land without seeing it!

The next said, 'I've bought some
oxen and I need to try them out.
Sorry!'



And you don't buy
oxen without trying them first!

And another said, 'I got
married so I'm not coming.'



They insulted
him with their
rude excuses!

The master was
very angry.



He told his servant to go to every
street in the town and fetch
everyone who was poor or
disabled



How generous!

His servant did that
and there was still
room.



Who
else will be invited?

He told his servant to
search outside the town
and fill the house.



Everyone who will come!

The master of the feast said,
'None of those I invited but who
wouldn't come will get even the
leftovers.'



The Widow's little coins



JESUS OFTEN TOLD STORIES WITH HIDDEN MEANINGS



ONCE JESUS WAS WATCHING PEOPLE BRINGING GIFTS TO THE TEMPLE



HE SAW THE RICH PEOPLE BRINGING THEIR MONEY



THEY MADE A BIG FUSS

THE PROUD PEOPLE WANTED EVERYONE TO SEE HOW RICH THEY WERE.



THEY MADE SURE EVERYONE COULD SEE THEM PUTTING THEIR MONEY IN THE BOX



BUT THEN JESUS WATCHED A POOR WIDOW CREEP UP TO THE TEMPLE...



...AND DONATE TWO SMALL COPPER COINS.

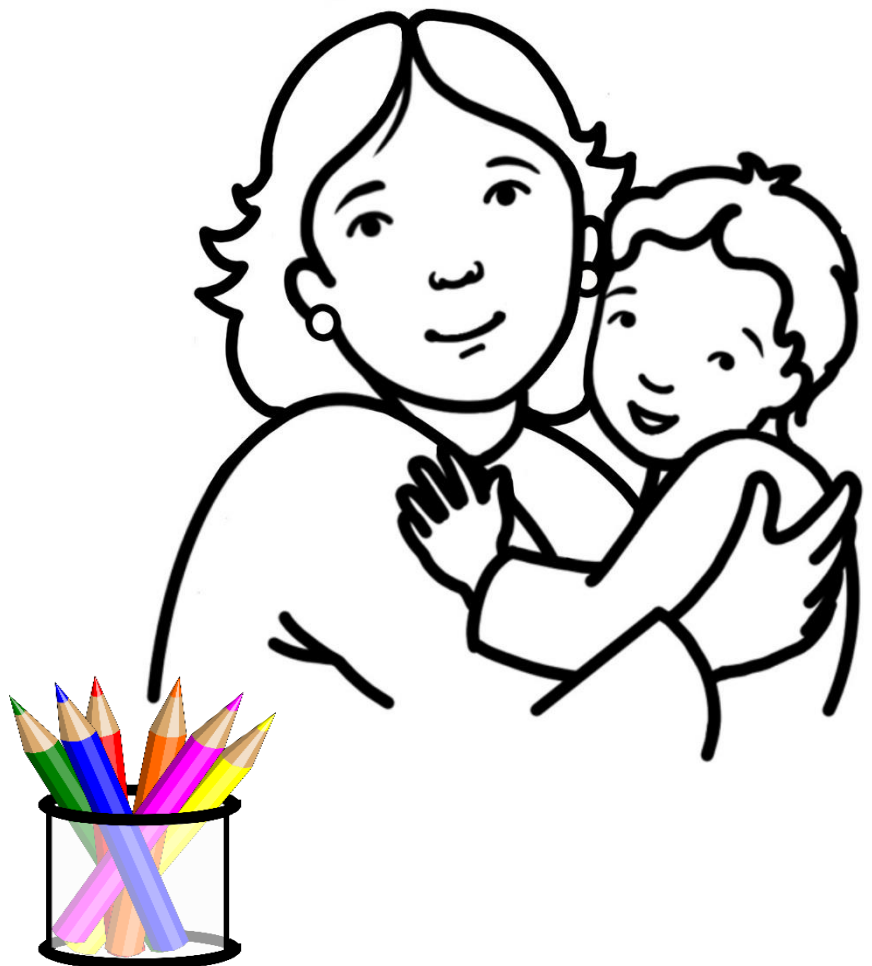


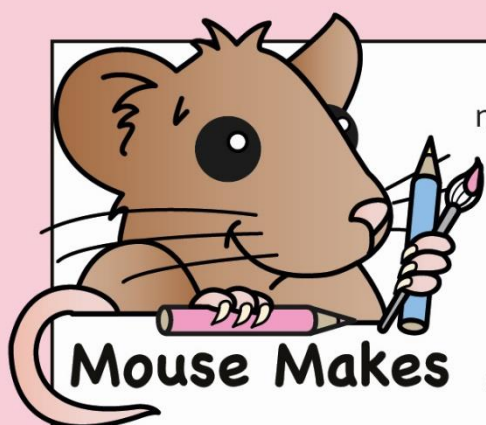
"THE WIDOW HAS GIVEN THE GREATEST GIFT", EXPLAINED JESUS. "IT IS WORTH SO MUCH MORE THAN ALL THE RICH PEOPLE'S GIFTS!" see Luke 21.1-4



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

dinner	story	excuses
land	bought	Jesus
time	feast	married
generous	everyone	servant
guest	dressed	rude
street	God	oxen
invited	house	town
angry	master	leftovers





Mouse Makes

Who is my mother?

Look up the Bible verses
then find the mother's
names in the word search

CAIN and ABEL
Genesis 4:1-2

JOSEPH
Genesis 30:22-24

ISHMAEL
Genesis 16:15

TIMOTHY
2 Timothy 1:5

RUBEN
Genesis 29:32

GAD
Genesis 35:26

SAMUEL
1 Samuel 1:20

OBED
Matthew 1:5

ISAAC
Genesis 21:3

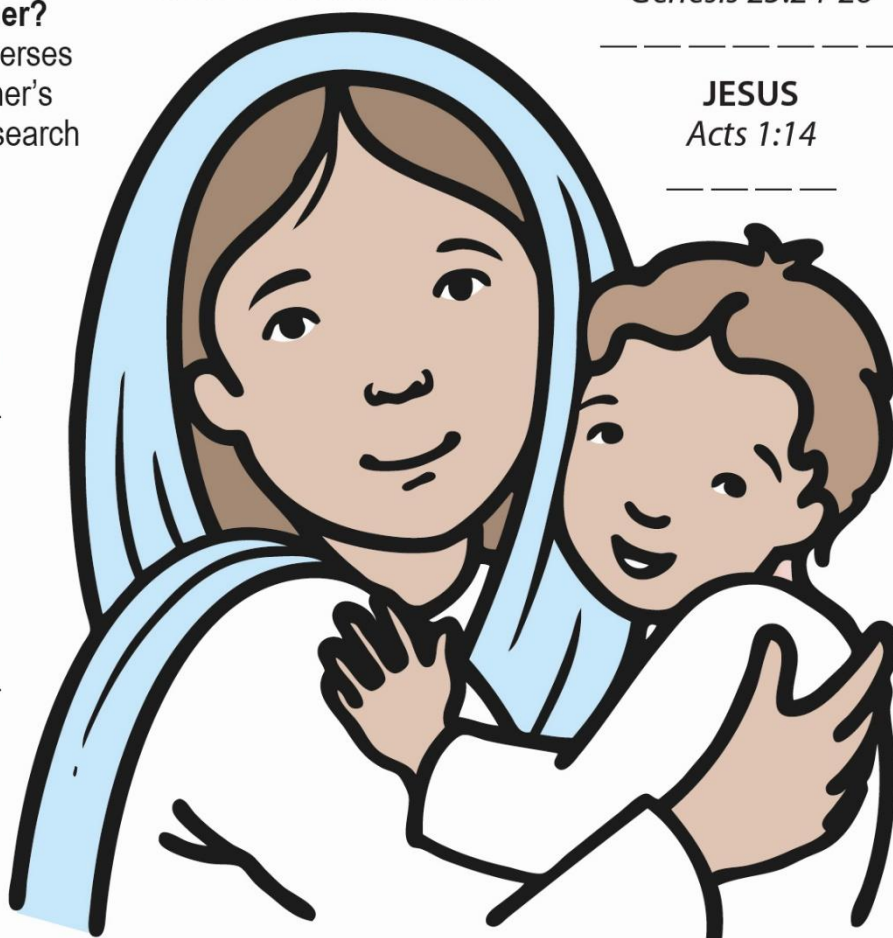
Jesus was **loved** by his
mother Mary, she looked
after him, worried
about him and prayed
for him. She **cuddled**
Jesus when he was
born, **cried** when he
died and **rejoiced** when
he rose from the dead.

SOLOMON
1 Chronicles 3:5

JOHN
Luke 1:57-60

ESAU and JACOB
Genesis 25:24-26

JESUS
Acts 1:14



R	A	C	H	E	L	M	A	R	Y	A	V	Z
E	L	I	Z	A	B	E	T	H	H	E	V	I
B	Z	D	R	E	B	V	S	U	A	U	O	L
E	T	M	U	M	L	E	A	H	N	N	L	P
K	M	O	T	H	E	R	R	T	N	I	E	A
A	I	S	H	H	A	G	A	R	A	C	G	H
H	S	T	A	B	A	T	H	S	H	E	B	A

There are two other words in the word search, can you find them?

P	L	A	N	E	T		R	U	G	G	E	D
A		D				R		I		U		X
T	R	U	E			A	U	G	U	S	T	U
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	A	T	T	I	T	U	D	E			B	E
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5	1	9	3	8	6	7	2	4
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St Andrew's Community Church, Hall Street, Stockport, SK1 4DA.

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Telephone: 0161 480 1815
Website: stmarysinthemarketplace.com
Email: st.marysstockport@gmail.com
Facebook: Stockport Parish Church - St Marys

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

Telephone: 0161 429 9524
Website: st.thomasstockport.org.uk
Email: info@stthomasstockport.org.uk
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