



September 2020

Parish of Stockport and Brinnington St Mary Stockport – St Thomas Stockport – St Luke Brinnington

Welcome to our parish newsheet for September 2020



Earlier this week - and apparently due to unprecedented demand - John Lewis opened their online Christmas shop. Though August feels very early to be thinking about Christmas festivities, I think many of us would have sympathy with those who are trying, in whatever way, to find something of joy to look forward to. This year has been grim; globally, nationally and individually, and on a scale that is still hard to believe, normal life as we knew it has changed radically.

And that has and is taking its toll. Not least on our mental health and well-being. Over the past weeks, people have been in touch who are really struggling to find much of joy, comfort and peace in their lives currently.

So where do we look for hope and encouragement in times of hardship and challenge? How do we lift our spirits as people of faith?

Well there are some great sources of encouragement in scripture; speaking personally, I love the daily Bible readings, prayers and reflections that are produced online by Sacred Space, a ministry of the Irish Jesuits (www.sacredspace.ie). And they remind us on their site that 'when you pray you are not alone; you are part of a global community', and that sense of being part of something bigger, of not being alone in our times of challenge, can be a tremendous source of comfort too.

It also helps to be reminded of the assurance that God walks with us throughout. In her book 'Come be my light', Mother Teresa quotes the words given to her by her mother as she left home to take up the religious life... "Put Your Hand

in His Hand, and Walk Alone with Him". Even when we appear to walk alone, we are hand in hand with Christ. In fact, nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus, we're assured in Romans chapter 8.

And we can also lift our spirits by joining in - albeit virtually - with the celebrations of others. It was wonderful this week to deliver a parish gift with love, prayers and best wishes to Frank and Irene Hamnett as they celebrated their 70th wedding anniversary. How wonderful, and there are a couple of lovely photos of them both below!

So if you're feeling isolated and challenged by the changes that 2020 has brought, please know you are not alone. Not alone because we have clergy and lay folk across the parish who are available to give a listening ear, to pray with you or help with other forms of support. And moreover, not alone because we have confidence that we each rest in the love and presence of God always...no one is able to snatch us from his hand (John 10).

With love, prayers and best wishes. Please do call at any time if you would like a chat,

Lynne



They married at St Mary's, with Frank having to do his milk-round as usual that morning, and Irene then being an hour late for the Service because the driver couldn't find her house!

Thankfully all went well for the Service itself...

Our love, best wishes and prayers are very much with them both as they celebrate this special "Platinum" anniversary.

Photo above taken by Lynne Cullens whilst delivering in the red bag a gift from the parish – a "Special Anniversary" rose.



Photo right - taken by Ian Hamnett. The happy couple receiving "gifts and guests" on the door step due to Covid restrictions – but nothing stops the celebrations!





All in the month of September...

What are your thoughts of September, the start of a new school year maybe (if you have children or grand-children), summer months drawing to a close (as we think of autumn and winter ahead) – but what about harvest ... that wonderful season when even in towns and cities we think of ripening fruit, maybe we have fruit trees and bushes near to us, or blackberries that we can collect and make into a pie. I would imagine many of us have memories of going for a walk, plastic bag in hand, and returning home with black (or maybe slightly red) squishy berries and a few insects too. Stained fingers after touching the over ripe fruits and the odd scratch on hands and arms stretching too far into the brambles.

There is something special about this time of year, the “harvest” safely gathered in, before the winter storms begin. Perhaps you have grown some fruit and veg of your own this year, even the smallest amount in pots. Herbs, potatoes, beans, tomatoes, apples, pears, and soft fruits. If you have then I hope for you that it has been a good harvest, a success – says one who has not seen a single strawberry on what are healthy looking plants growing in a trough, but have a multitude of runners trying to plant themselves into any soil available, including cracks between the block paving on the patio. Maybe next year... Nor yet any beans from a large pot – maybe they are a late variety – although I suspect not! I do have apples – slightly too high to reach.

So what of September – it was:

400 years ago, on 6th September 1620, that 102 English Puritans (now known as the Pilgrims) set sail aboard the Mayflower from Plymouth, for a new life in America. After a perilous journey they landed in what is now Provincetown Harbour, Cape Cod, Massachusetts on 11th November. They had intended landing in Virginia, but were unable to reach it because of heavy seas.

150 years ago, on 20th September 1870 that Rome was captured. Italian forces defeated the Papal States and captured the city of Rome at the end of the wars of Italian Unification. The Papal States were dissolved. Rome was annexed, and it became the capital of Italy in 1871.

125 years ago, on 28th September 1895 that Louis Pasteur died. This French biologist, microbiologist and chemist was one of the main founders of the field of medical microbiology.

Best known for originating the pasteurization of foodstuffs to eliminate micro-organisms that cause disease. Pasteur saved the French beer, wine and silk industries and developed vaccines against anthrax and rabies.

65 years ago, on 22nd September 1955 that Britain's first independent television channel, ITV, was launched. It ended the BBC's monopoly. Regional franchises were rolled out across the whole country by 1965.

60 years ago, on 27th September 1960 that Sylvia Pankhurst, suffragette leader, died.

50 years ago, on 19th September 1970 that the first Glastonbury Festival was held, at Worthy Farm near Pilton, Somerset. About 1,500 people attended (compared to 135,000 today). It became an annual event from 1981 and is now the world's largest greenfield festival. The first festival was billed as the Pilton Pop, Blues & Folk Festival.

40 years ago, on 22nd September 1980 that the Solidarity movement was created in Poland, with Lech Walesa as its leader. It was the first independent trade union in the Soviet bloc.

25 years ago, on 3rd September 1995 that the auction site eBay was founded (as AuctionWeb).

20 years ago, on 17th September 2000 that Paula Yates, TV presenter (*The Tube*, *The Big Breakfast*) died of a heroin overdose, aged 41. Wife of the musician Bob Geldof, she was also noted for her relationship with the musician Michael Hutchence. She was the daughter of Hughie Green, host of the talent show *Opportunity Knocks*, though she did not discover this until late in life.

15 years ago, on 24th September 2005 that the IRA decommissioned its last remaining weapons in front of independent inspectors. SMH



Did you know the parish of Stockport and Brinnington now has a community support programme, with plans to develop projects across our parish in the Autumn? Would you like to be part of that by giving some time to volunteer? We'd love to hear from lively, enthusiastic people of all backgrounds, and across the age range, who are able to give a couple of hours either weekly or monthly and who want to make a positive difference...perhaps by supporting our work to schools with FRESH (more food donations arrived yesterday), or by volunteering in our soon-to-be relaunched donation-only Café or by helping to run our social business. There's lots to do and we'd love you to be part of it. Interested? Please call or text 07544 350692, leave your details and we'll be in touch 😊



The nights are closing in already (Summer drawing to a close) and who knows what kind of Autumn/Winter we can expect, with Covid-19 still around. What we will be able to do, where we will be able to go still very much unknown. We just have to make the most of an unfortunate situation and do the best we can as we have been doing for the past few months since the Coronavirus pandemic started. We have certainly not been standing still since closing our doors to the public last March even if most of us have been (or still are) spending a lot of time at home. I remain at the end of my keyboard most days, ordering virtually everything I need on-line and avoiding gatherings of any type. Although an end of summer break beams brightly in my mind as being a light at the end of the “stay at home” tunnel. Well distanced of course!

As a Parish we have had a most productive summer, and taken on board technology with Zoom meetings, use of our Facebook pages and recording services and stories on our Stockport Parish Pew Tube channel. We have been able to welcome Jess and Marie to the team and undertaken a vital support role within the community – something that is growing from strength to strength. This has certainly been a time of challenge and opportunity to work in different ways and to make contact with many that we may not otherwise have been able to do in normal times. The “views” on our social media sites, web-sites and the CofE site “A Church Near You” has been amazing.

As soon as we could we opened St Mary’s for private prayer sessions, and later for public worship. All our churches open at some time or another for public worship by mid-August. We’ve taken a leading role, as you would expect.

Parish life continues as we work round Covid-19 restrictions/guidelines and plan to open our premises for more general use in the coming weeks and hope that many of our hirers will be able to return during September/October. We already have back the Stockport Evangelical Church and Brighter Futures Education and Training (term-time) at St Andrew’s on Hall Street. Slimming World are all set to return to St Luke’s Centre early September and we anticipate the sessions at St Andrew’s can start again a little later on. We’ll do our best to get everyone back as soon as safe and possible to do so. Rest assured there are a lot of things going on with our preparations to returning to “business as usual” although slightly differently. We anticipate that most of September will be spent preparing our premises for more general opening – we need to review social distancing methods, PPE requirements, counter/desk screening etc. It is a definite possibility that we will be able to re-open/re-launch the café (in a new format) during October very much hope that Marie’s ordination will run to plan that month. We also look forward to a visit by the new Bishop of Chester to the Parish (parish service to be held at St Luke’s) in November. Nothing is set in concrete of course and plans may need to be changed and adjusted as we go long.

The message remains – stay well and stay safe – as we emerge from lockdown and shielding with the hope that present restrictions are lifted further and we have no further set-backs with Covid “spikes”.

SMH



One thing that we can be doing is putting together our Shoe Box gifts. Margaret has been in contact with the charity (Teams4U) so we are aware now of where various changes to our normal plans need to be made. The following notes are a little lengthy – apologies for that – but without us distributing leaflets and discussing it in person thought it best to give as much information as possible.



Shoe Box Christmas Gifts 2020

Things will be a little different this year, but we still intend to send as many “Shoe Box” gifts as we can to Teams4U for distribution to a vulnerable child or family.

We won’t be holding a special service in November on one specific Sunday but will be asking you to bring your completed boxes (as and when you can) to St Mary’s during October (please check our up-to-date opening times as these are subject to amendment as we try to re-open our premises for more general use) and leave them in at our drop-off point. We will leave them for 72 hours, in quarantine as it were, then remove them to our storage facility ready for taking to the depot.

Nor this year will we be providing empty shoe boxes, we just ask that if you can’t acquire one yourself that you leave us the contents for a box, label etc. (in a plastic bag), and we’ll do the rest.

If you are unable to complete a box then as usual we are more than happy to receive items to help us make up a box, and to receive cash/cheque donations (cheques payable to Teams4U).

We won’t be leaving paper leaflets in church either this year, but copies are available via Margaret Forester if required.

If you have internet access then everything you need to know is available on the Teams4U website: <https://teams4u.com/>

What to do:

Step 1. Find an old shoebox (medium size)

If you don’t have one at home, you can always pop into a local shoe shop.

Step 2. Wrap it with Christmas paper

Please wrap the box and lid separately.

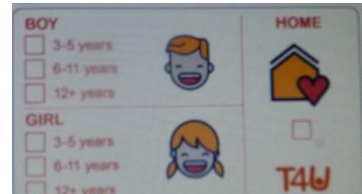
Step 3. Fill it with useful gifts

You can get some inspiration from the list below and watch the Teams4U Shoebox Guide videos on the T4U "You tube" Channel.

Step 4. Fill in a donation slip and label

You can download a label if you have internet access – or just write a note giving us the relevant details

BOY	GIRL	HOME BOX
3-5 years	3-5 years	
6-11 years	6-11 years	
12+ years	12+ years	



Step 5. Attach a cheque or some cash

If you can, please include £2.50 in an envelope and attach to the inside of the shoebox lid.

If you are eligible for gift aid and can download the form please complete and tick the box on the donation slip to increase your donation to £3.12. - **or you can donate online.**

I would like to help change children's lives

I enclose my donation of £ - (cash or cheque). Please make cheques payable to Teams4U.

If you choose to donate online please write your donation reference here:

If donating more than one shoebox, you can use the same donation reference for all your boxes. If you need additional donation slips, you can download these from our website.

Title:

Your name (first and last):

Address:

Town:

Postcode:

T4U Once you have filled your shoebox, please pop this form together with your cheque/cash in the envelope and attach it to the inside of your shoebox lid. Please do not seal your shoebox. Take your shoebox to your nearest drop-off point and we will do the rest, thank you!

Teams4U values your information and will only use this data for gift aid purposes as set out in our data protection policy.

Make every £1 worth 25p more and Gift Aid your donation (e.g. a £2.50 donation becomes £3.12) *I am a UK taxpayer and understand that if I pay less Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax in the current tax year than the amount of Gift Aid claimed on all my donations it is my responsibility to pay any difference.

Yes, please Gift Aid my donation *giftaid it*

Signature _____ Teams4U is a registered charity No. 1114131. @2019 Teams4U

Step 6. Drop off your box

Close the lid with a rubber band. Please do not tape the lid shut.
Leave your box at St Mary's (when the church is open)

What to put in your box

Please choose a selection of items from those suggested below – this is not meant to be an exhaustive list (more ideas are available on the T4U website) but please do not include anything from the ‘NO’ list.

For boys or girls:

Toothbrush & toothpaste, hair accessories/brush, soap & face cloth, stationery & paper, gloves, hat & scarf, new socks/underwear. Please also include: A soft toy, game, puzzle, small musical instruments, toy vehicles, small rubber ball/inflatable ball, sweets (use by date from March), a photo of yourself.

The Home box:

Candles, cooking utensils (no knives), plastic containers, t-towels (preferably decorative), hairbrush, small toiletries, plastic utensils, bowls & cups, small Christmas decoration, small decorative item, soap, washing up cloths, clothes pegs, headscarves, new socks/underwear, jewellery, make-up.

Please DO NOT include:

Food (only exception is sweets), medicines, military themed items (such as toy soldiers/tanks/guns), aerosols or anything highly flammable, sharp items, novels.
Please ensure all items are in good condition and undamaged.

All shoeboxes are checked before leaving the UK and any unsuitable items will be removed. Sometimes a shoe box may need to be changed to meet packaging requirements.



The Cooke family originated the idea of the ‘Christmas Shoebox’, by asking children in the UK to fill shoeboxes with stocking fillers for Romanian orphans. In 2015, they celebrated the 25th Anniversary by returning to Cluj-Napoca, Romania. Here we are in 2020 and the current need is still extraordinary and the power of the shoebox has never faded. T4U undertake various projects, the

“shoe box” we are familiar just being one. Your shoe box will leave the UK heading for Eastern Europe where T4U teams will take boxes into schools, nurseries, hospitals, day centres and even door to door to the poorest communities living on the fringes of society.

Please be a part of this ongoing story that is continuing to impact and change lives by donating a shoebox to this year’s appeal!

Thank You

SMH (on behalf of Margaret Forster)

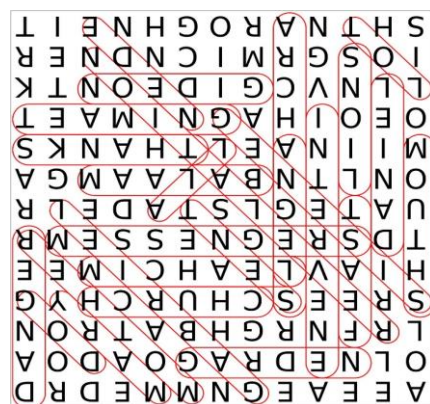


Wordsearch Clues & Answers



The Church gives thanks for angels in September: the 29th is the feast day of Michael and All Angels. Since the days of Genesis, these messengers of God have been sent many times to intervene for the good in human affairs. Angels guarded the Garden of Eden, they led Lot away from Gomorrah, they helped Gideon, they stopped Balaam, they closed the mouths of lions for Daniel, and, most important, the archangel Gabriel was sent to tell Mary that she would mother the Messiah. Angels sat in the empty tomb of Jesus, and told of His Resurrection. Revelation is teaming with angels, sent on all sorts of missions by God in the last times. Today, many Christians in the world's hot spots report having had angels help them when in mortal danger.

Thanks	Angels	Church	Feast	Michael	All
Genesis	Messengers	God	Sent	Intervene	Garden
Eden	Lot	Gideon	Balaam	Mouths	Lions
Daniel	Archangel	Gabriel	Mary		
Mother	Teaming				
Revelation	danger				



Bring back our hedgerows

Are you a lover of the countryside? You don't really have to go far out of our area to find some lovely walks, some through woodland and beside rivers and canals. We may not live surrounded by fields and farmland – not many of us anyway – but we can all appreciate what is around us and just how important it is allow patches of land to be left grow “wild” as it were.

We need our hedgerows back – urgently. They are part of ‘nature’s toolbox’ to help us reduce our carbon emissions.

That was the recent message from the CPRE countryside charity which points out that there were twice as many hedges in England before the Second World War. Since then thousands of kilometres of hedges have been ripped up to make way for new housing and motorways, and to merge and enlarge fields.

The 2007 UK Countryside Survey found that there were 600,000 kilometres of managed and unmanaged hedgerows in the UK, with the vast majority of them in England.

This was a significant decline on the same survey from 1984, when there were about 680,000 kilometres of hedges across Great Britain. That is a reduction of 80,000 kilometres, or 50,000 miles. To put that another way, we have ripped out about 57,000 times the entire length of Britain (874 miles).

No wonder, then, that the CPRE’s report, *Greener, better, faster: countryside solutions to the climate emergency and for a green recovery*, calls for millions of pounds to be spent on new hedges. It says: “By planting more trees and hedgerow, restoring peatlands and moving toward a more sustainable way of farming, we can use nature’s toolbox to capture greenhouse gases from the air, while revitalising our natural environment.”



Have you children at home?

Watch our Facebook pages and Stockport Parish Pew Tube for stories with Marie and some of her puppet friends – perhaps some of you already recognise Peter, Tommy and Niomi

Did you take part in our Holiday Club at Home – with Jess and Marie?

Feedback and comments most welcome.



Nigel Beeton writes: "One facility that has now reopened after lockdown is the tea shop. Oh, how I've missed tea shops!"

A cup of joy!

A tea shop is a wondrous place
Where I for one just love to be!
A place to rest from life's harsh pace
And sit and drink a cup of tea!

Indeed, it's time to take a rest!
From all life's pressures, take a break!
And just today it might be best
To have a slice of home-made cake!



Colour in ready to make your very own cake to go with Nigel's cup of tea.





Gorse – cheerful and perfumed, but prickly!

Staying with our countryside theme, Kirsty Steele (a retired teacher and active church organist) tells us about this prickly yet pretty bush.

Drawing: Ruth King

The old saying ‘Kissing is out of season when the gorse is not in bloom’ is based on the fact that it is a rare time of year when a flower or two cannot be found. The bush itself, growing on heaths and moors is well-known for its vicious spikes. This is its answer to the problem of producing leaves that will withstand wind, rain and hungry animals.

The golden yellow flowers are at their absolute best in spring when the bushes, growing often to a height of seven to ten feet, seem to glow in the countryside. They attract bees and other pollen-seeking insects and many of us enjoy the rich coconut-like perfume as well as the joyful colour. The sharp foliage gives protection to several species of bird as they nest deep in these bulging bushes, and larger animals such as sheep and cows, if grazing nearby, will take advantage of gorse as a very effective windbreak.

In the past, gorse, also known as ‘furze’ or ‘whin’, was used as fuel as it burns very readily when dry. This has caused many serious moorland fires in recent years, but gorse is fortunately a resilient species and quickly sends up new shoots from the burnt stumps that remain. It is also apparently somewhat susceptible to frost, but will recover quickly with new growth.



Photo: Kirsty Steel

A member of the pea family, its seeds are set in brown, somewhat unattractive pods, which on a hot summer’s day can be heard popping, or they may be provoked into doing so when held in a hot hand. However, what might surprise us even more is that in the past, in country districts, it was used for drying washing, as the thorns would allow nothing to escape, even in the strongest of winds.



Has anyone attended the Glastonbury Festival? *Not this year as the festival had to be cancelled due to Covid-19 restrictions, but hopefully many enjoyed the 50th anniversary celebrations from home. If you have a story to tell, do please share with us.*

Glastonbury Festival. The name conjures up images of world-famous bands and singers making loud music before enthusiastic crowds who are up to their knees in mud. The statistics for the famous Pyramid stage are impressive: standing 25 metres tall, it has 292 audio speakers and 8.5 km of cables for video and audio. It has 354 microphones and 3743 lightbulbs. The festival uses about 27 megawatts of power, enough to power the city of Bath.

It all began 50 years ago this month, on 19th September 1970, when a farmer, Michael Eavis, opened his farm, Worthy Farm near Pilton in Somerset, for a festival. He called it the Pilton Pop, Blues & Folk Festival and about 1,500 people turned up. It was a success, soon had changed its name, and by 1981 it had become an annual event. Glastonbury was born out of the hippie ethic and free festival movement of the late 1960s and early 1970s. It is now the world's largest greenfield festival, attracting about 135,000 each year.

Here are some highlights: **By 1985 the festival had grown too large for Worthy Farm, but neighbouring Cockmill Farm was purchased.** 1989 saw impromptu, unofficial sound systems spring up around the festival site. They would play loud, electronic acid house music 'round the clock. **1994 saw Channel 4's 4 Goes to Glastonbury bring televised coverage of the festival.** 1996 saw the release of Glastonbury the Movie. **In 1997 major sponsorship arrived from The Guardian and the BBC, but also heavy rain which turned the entire site into a muddy bog.** 1998 brought more severe floods and storms, but that year attendance broke the 100,000 mark. **1999 was a hot dry year, much to the relief of organisers and festival goers.** 2000 saw an estimated 250,000 people attend the festival (only 100,000 tickets were sold) due to gate-crashers. **In 2003 the issue of 150,000 tickets sold out within one day.** By 2005, the enclosed area of the festival was over 900 acres. 150,000 people attended more than 385 live performances, but heavy thunderstorms saw several stages struck by lightning, and flash floods of four feet deep. **2007 brought so much torrential rain that everything was covered in mud. When cars took more than nine hours to exit the saturated fields, violence erupted.** 2008 saw biodegradable tent pegs and biotractors running on waste vegetable oil. **In 2010 Michael Eavis joined headline artist Stevie Wonder to sing 'Happy Birthday', for the festival's 40th year. The weather was kind: three days of abundant sunshine made it the first rain-free festival since 2002, and the hottest since the festival began.** The 2015 festival made good use of the hundreds of pairs of wellington boots discarded by festival goers – they were donated to the migrant camp at Calais. **In 2017 the BBC renewed its exclusive national rights to broadcast the event until 2022.** Then this Spring, in March 2020, the 50th anniversary of the festival had to be cancelled due to coronavirus. The next Glastonbury Festival is planned for June 2021.



Churches and Young People in lockdown

Recent research by the Allchurches Trust has found that lockdown had one good result: it was “a major driver for churches to embrace digital opportunities and engage with families online.”

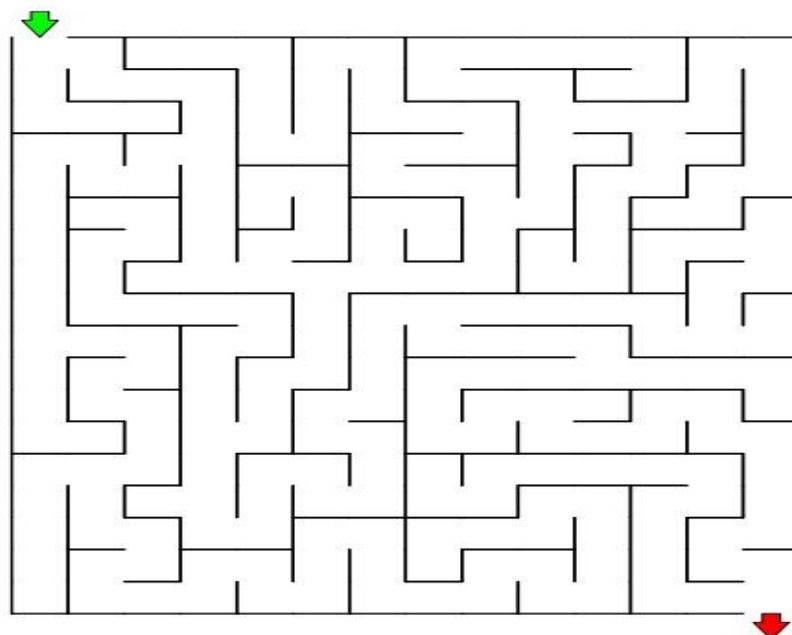
The research found that in recent months, more than half of churches (55 per cent) have been able to engage children and young people through regular online worship; 46 per cent have run family focused online activities for children and parents; and 31 per cent have run online activities and challenges for young people. Similar numbers have reached out by phone and e-mail.

A spokesman for the Trust said: “What’s heartening are the many examples of churches that have quickly adapted to launch online activities ... when physical youth work was not an option.” The churches have been “creative in meeting the needs of the families and young people they work with” and “reaching others they may not previously have been able to engage.”

Around £1.4 million pounds has now been given to more than 140 projects across the UK and Ireland since Allchurches Trust’s *Growing Lives* programme launched in May 2019. It is aimed at enabling churches and Christian charities to help young people reach their potential. More at: <https://www.allchurches.co.uk>



Maze



What's in your hand? *Canon Paul Hardingham considers our personal resources – in light of the pandemic.*

September is usually the time when we get back to our normal routines after the summer break. With the current coronavirus pandemic, it's very different this year! However, it is still a good time to consider how God can use us to make a real difference in our workplace, school, family, friends and community. He equips us with everything we need to make His love known.

When God gave Moses the job of bringing the Israelites out of Egypt, He asked the question, *'What is in your hand?'* (Exodus 4:2). Moses was holding his staff, which represented his livelihood (what he was good at); his resources (his flock represented his wealth) and his security (which God was asking him to lay down). God asks the same question of us: *What has God given you?* Our gifts, temperament, experience, relationships, mind, education can be used in the work God has given us to do. How will we use them to make a difference in the places where He calls us to serve Him?

John Ortberg, in his book *It All Goes Back in the Box*, speaks of Johnny, a 19-year-old with Downs syndrome. He worked at a supermarket checkout putting people's items into bags. To encourage his customers, he decided to put a *thought for the day* into the bags. Every night his dad would help him to prepare the slips of paper and he would put the thoughts into the bags saying, *'I hope it helps you have a good day. Thanks for coming here.'* A month later the store manager noticed that Johnny's line at the checkout was three times longer than anyone else's! People wanted Johnny's thought for the day. He wasn't just filling bags with groceries, he was filling lives with hope!

What has God given *you* that will help and encourage others?



Psalm 23 – a psalm for the pandemic

Canon Paul Hardingham considers a best-loved psalm.

There are few psalms as personal and real as Psalm 23. It records David's experience of God as his Shepherd going through dark times. In the midst of the effects of a global pandemic, this psalm speaks to the fears that can overwhelm us.

He Knows Me: 'The Lord is my shepherd...' Just as a good shepherd knows every sheep in his flock, so God know each one of us intimately.

He Provides for Me: 'He makes me lie down in green pastures...' Just as the shepherd knows the needs of his sheep, so God will provide what we need in our lives and circumstances.

He Guides Me: 'He guides me along the right paths...' Just as the shepherd leads the sheep to the best pastures, so God provides the best for us, as we listen and follow Him.

He Protects Me: 'Even though I walk through the darkest valley...' Just as the sheep have no need to fear danger when following the shepherd, so we live knowing God's presence and protection.

He Comforts Me: 'your rod and your staff, they comfort me.' As the shepherd's rod defends the sheep, and the staff enables him to control the sheep, so God comforts us through His Word and discipline.

The final verses of the psalm (v5-6) offer the security of knowing that our lives are in His hands, even through death, as He leads us to the home we've been looking for all our lives.

Some years ago, a great actor was asked to recite Psalm 23, but asked one of the other guests to do the same. His remarkable rendition was followed by the other man, an older Christian speaking from the heart. Afterwards the actor said: *'The difference between us is that I know the psalm, but he knows the shepherd.'*



Has lockdown damaged your eyesight?



Are you suffering from ‘coronavisión’? It is perfectly possible.

Lockdown led to many of us staring at our television or computer screens for long periods of time. And that could have strained our eyes, warns the College of Optometrists.

By this summer one in five adults in Britain had reported a deterioration in their eyesight. Symptoms include blurred vision, difficulty in focussing, and red or painful eyes. As one optometrist explained: “Working from home, video calls with friends and family, watching more TV, time spent looking at your phone – all that screen time adds up.

The good news is that this is unlikely to cause any permanent harm to your vision.” Nevertheless, the College urges people to get their eyes checked if they feel on-going discomfort. They also advise that when you are looking at a screen, you rest your eyes every 20 minutes, blink regularly, use eye drops, position your screen below eye level and increase the size of the text.



Roggie Dog:

I'd just like a quiet word... don't tell Mummy

I am a bit worried about this – Mummy has bought a mask with a nose and lickie tongue that looks just like me.

Am I supposed to use it when I go out?

I have tried it on and just looked up at Mummy in shock and amazement.



There was no alternative but agree to do the photo shoot BUT I ASK YOU.... It has a thing to grip on your nose, but it doesn't fit mine and falls down (photo left) . If I lift it over my nose I can't see where I am going (photo right).



BUT it does fit my ears really well! (photo below)



Thankfully, I am exempt from face coverings – so if you see Mummy looking like a Yorkshire Terrier – worrying isn't it - you will know why and that I have given this one back for her to use – with luck when we are not out together!.



Your facemask and your dog... “of course these masks are serious business to us doggies” says Roggie “and I’m a supporter of the Dogs Trust”



drawing Ruth King

Face masks have been a big adjustment for all of us, but dogs especially may be struggling, warns the animal charity, Dogs Trust.

Dogs use our facial expressions to tell how we are feeling, so if they suddenly encounter people whose faces are covered, they could become confused, stressed, and even feel threatened. Their confusion may lead to a loss of obedience and cooperation with you.

Here is how to get your dog used to you wearing a face mask:

- Hold your hand over your face for a moment, speak reassuringly to your dog, and then reward him.
- Introduce your dog to your face mask, let him sniff it and let him see you put it up to your face, and then down again. Reward him.
- Put it on for a moment. Reassure and reward him.
- Put it on and move about the room, while reassuring him. Reward him.
- Gradually build up the length of time that you wear the face mask around him. Keep reassuring him. Reward him.

Expect that he may not be so quick to understand and obey you when you are wearing the mask – be patient.

Don’t take him into public places where many people are wearing masks, unless you absolutely have to do so. It could be very stressful for him.



Where can you live with your dog or cat?

The numbers of people looking for pet-friendly homes to rent has risen by 140 per cent in some areas since March. It all started with lockdown, when many of us decided to get a dog or a cat. The Kennel Club said breeders have seen a 180 per cent rise in the number of people wanting a dog.

Of course, it is not always easy to persuade your landlord that your young spaniel or kitten is a desirable tenant. But the renting app, Movebubble, reports some good news: compared to this time last year, there are nearly 40 per cent more pet-friendly homes out there to rent.

The real problem will come when it is time to go back to the office for keeps. As one professional dog trainer points out: "We should be concerned about the lack of understanding new owners may have with regards to issues around mental health in these dogs once their people go back to work." In other words, dogs need company, and will suffer social and emotional deprivation if left on their own every day.



Mental health and Covid-19

It is important to be as kind and patient as possible with other people this autumn. Covid-19 has turned many millions of lives upside-down, and the resulting distress, anxiety, fear, grief and economic meltdown means that now widespread mental illness is inevitable. So says the new president of the Royal College of Psychiatrists. Dr Adrian James warns of 'multiple layers' to the fallout from the pandemic, both for people with pre-existing mental health conditions and also for those who have never suffered before. NHS front-line staff will need support, while those who have had a serious case of Covid-19 may suffer anything from post-traumatic stress disorder to a full-blown psychosis. Dr James says: "There will be very significant mental illness consequences of Covid, and we need to be ready." Meanwhile, up to one in five Britons may have contemplated self-harming during lockdown, according to some separate research by University College London.



Churches warned to prepare for “tidal wave of poverty”

The Revd Peter Crumpler, a Church of England priest in St Albans, Herts, and a former communications director for the CofE, reports on a recent warning from the Trussell Trust.

Church leaders are being urged to be ready to respond to the lasting impact of the pandemic on the country’s poorest people. The effect on urban, suburban and rural communities is likely to be severe with many thousands of jobs being lost and livelihoods threatened. The poorest in society may find themselves hardest hit.

Churches are being encouraged to respond to the devastating impact of the pandemic and to build on the numerous social projects already in place.

The Trussell Trust that supports around 1200 UK foodbanks is warning of a ‘tidal wave of poverty’ poised to engulf the country. Chief Executive Emma Revie has called on church leaders to talk to their congregations about justice and compassion and to work to address the root causes of poverty. Speaking at a Bible Society webinar she encouraged church leaders “increasingly to talk to their congregations about God’s concern for justice and compassion to characterise the structures of our society: the way our benefit system works, the way our economy functions, people’s employment conditions and wage levels. Emma Revie said that the Trussell Trust was “very clear that food banks are not a solution to poverty” and the charity wanted “to see people experiencing fulness of life and not being trapped by poverty.” She praised the vital role played by churches in running foodbanks and encouraged congregations “That when we pray for our foodbanks, that we would also allow ourselves room to lament the injustices that make them necessary in the first place and seek wisdom about how we might be part of bringing about change. “Because if we don’t concern ourselves with these things, the tidal wave of poverty is going to be too high and too powerful for us to respond to and we will see many more people being swept into destitution in the UK.”

At the webinar ‘Mission during lockdown and beyond,’ the Bible Society published research showing that church leaders are expecting increased demand for food banks, poverty relief, mental health work, bereavement support, relationship counselling, as well as courses such as Alpha that introduce people to the Christian faith.

The insights resonate with responses to the impact of the pandemic from other church leaders. The Bishop of Tonbridge, Simon Burton-Jones, warned a Church of England webinar that the pandemic would cause growth in the ‘precariat’, the numbers of people on zero-hours contracts or juggling several jobs to survive. The bishop also forecast an increase in tension between the generations, with the future particularly bleak for many young people who have lost their jobs, and those living in insecure rented accommodation.





Roggie Dog

Look what I've got...

I nearly forgot to tell you – you may have noticed my portrait painting in the photo of Mummy in the Yorkie mask.

I am such a lucky little boy – how many of you have had your portrait painted?

I knew that a nice gentleman called Ken had taken photographs of me sat on my desk at church – and I love having my photo taken – but neither Mummy or I had any idea why or thought any more about it. It was such a long time ago too – before lockdown - but what a wonderful surprise when we found out what had been planned right in front of us.

Thank you to my favourite Auntie for arranging such a beautiful present for my Birthday - except Mummy claims was really for hers - but I know it was for me really. Wag tail – that's me in that picture. What a clever Ken – a picture of me!



It must be wonderful to be able to draw and paint, and Mummy has a couple of line-drawings hanging on the wall at home – by artist Ken Cottam. But this is truly lovely and is such a good likeness to little me – and it shows my favourite harness too.

Mummy and I can be found staring at the wall whenever we walk past – and a house is not a home without a Yorkshire Terrier.



Nigel Beeton writes: "Genesis 22 is quite a disturbing chapter, describing how Abraham was called upon to sacrifice his long awaited and much-loved son, Isaac. The account tells of Isaac's confusion on his way up the mountain with his father, but his response to subsequent events is not disclosed to us..."

Why has my father brought me here?

Why has my father brought me here?
Upon this mountain top so high?
And why do I behold a tear,
Within my father's loving eye?

Where is the lamb for sacrifice
To lay upon this altar wood?
And where the funds to pay the price?
I can't see how this will do good.

Why am I so tightly bound?
My eyes are wrapped – I cannot see!
I'm tied to wood, my heart does pound!
Oh *why* has he forsaken me?

Can it be my father's plan
As he takes up that awful knife
That I should be the special lamb?
The sacrifice be my own life?

I hear a voice call "Abraham!
"Don't harm the lad! I hear your prayer!
"The sacrifice should be that ram
"Caught in a thicket, over there!"

"And you have not withheld your son,
"Despite your love, your father's pride!
"You have this day My blessing won,
"And, like today, I will provide."

Why has our Father brought us here?
Upon our troubles harshly tied?
So far from all that we hold dear?
Just trust in Him, He will provide!

By Nigel Beeton



He gave us eyes to see them: 'The Madonna of the Goldfinch' by Raphael

Rev Michael Burgess considers 'The Madonna of the Goldfinch' by Raphael. It hangs in the Uffizi in Florence.

The weeks and months of lockdown have been difficult and testing times for many of us, but they have also provided the opportunity to look afresh at the world of nature. With less traffic on the roads, less air pollution, and less noise pollution, the sky has somehow seemed bluer and the bird song more joyful and confident.

It is appropriate that we focus this month on one such bird noted for its liquid, tinkling song – the goldfinch. In this month we also celebrate the feast of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary on 8 September, and so the painting is 'The Madonna of the Goldfinch' by Raphael.

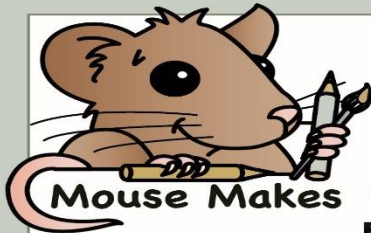


Raphael was only 37 years old when he died in 1520, but his work is marked by maturity and great beauty. No more so than in this painting which shows Mary with a young Jesus and John the Baptist. You could easily miss the tiny bird which is carefully held by John and gently stroked by Jesus, who has one foot resting on His mother's. It is an intimate, tender scene which was painted in 1505 as a wedding gift for Lorenzo Nasi. It was badly damaged by an earthquake in 1548, painstakingly restored in the early part of this century, and now hangs in the Uffizi in Florence.

As we look, we rejoice in the grace and simplicity of the scene. We look again and ask ourselves 'Why a goldfinch?' The bird has a red spot on its head, and legend tells that the goldfinch flew down to the cross of Calvary to take a thorn from the crown of thorns. As it pulled the thorn in its beak, its head was splashed with a drop of blood.

And so this painting of gentleness and innocence opens out into a wider canvas of redemptive love. Our thoughts move from infancy to the cross. Mary, sat on a rock, is reading 'The Throne of Wisdom', and the artist is inviting us to ponder where true wisdom is found. Here, as we look at the wonder of nature and new life with a mother and children, but also as we look ahead to the 'wisest love' of Jesus who is our Redeemer.





Mouse Makes

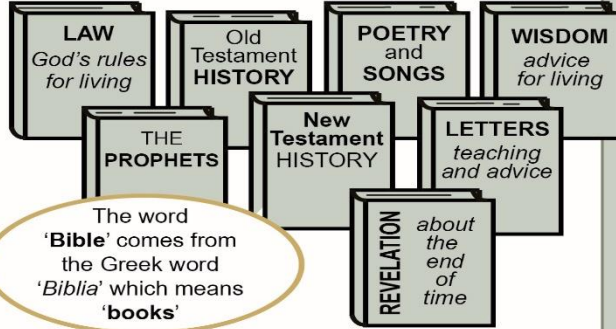
The **Bible** is a collection of **books** that took over 2,000 years to write! The books were written by many different people, all helped and inspired by God. The Bible has books about:

There are **66** books in the Bible. How many can you name?



BIBLE WORDS
The Bible words in **BOLD** type on this page are also hidden in the word search, can you find them?

P L B O W I K
R I O S I L G
O G O N S W O
P H K E D O L
H T S W O R D
E R L T M D O
T E A E G O D
S V W S E E D
L E T T E R S
T L W A N L O
H A M M E R N
O T I E H I G
N I R N I R S
E O R T S A B
Y N O R T I I
F I R E O N B
P O E T R Y L
F O O D Y O E



The word '**Bible**' comes from the Greek word '*Biblia*' which means '**books**'

God speaks to us today as we read the Bible. The Bible encourages us, corrects us and shows us how to live, it also describes itself as:


- Mirror** James 1:23
- Food** Hebrews 5:12-6:1
- Honey and Gold** Psalm 19:10
- Light** Psalm 119:105
- Rain** Isaiah 55:10-12
- Living Word** Hebrews 4:12
- Hammer** Jeremiah 23:29
- Fire** Jeremiah 20:9
- Seed** Mark 4:14
- Sword** Ephesians 6:17

...but most of all The Bible teaches us about **God** and how we can be friends with Him.

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The parable
of the
Fish
and the
Nets



JESUS OFTEN TOLD STORIES WITH HIDDEN MEANINGS



ONCE JESUS SAID THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN WAS A BIT LIKE CATCHING FISH!



WHEN PEOPLE GO FISHING THEY THROW THEIR NETS INTO THE LAKE...



...WHEN THE NETS ARE FULL, THEY PULL THEM TO SHORE



ONCE ON SHORE THE FISH HAVE TO BE SORTED OUT.



THE GOOD FISH GO INTO BUCKETS



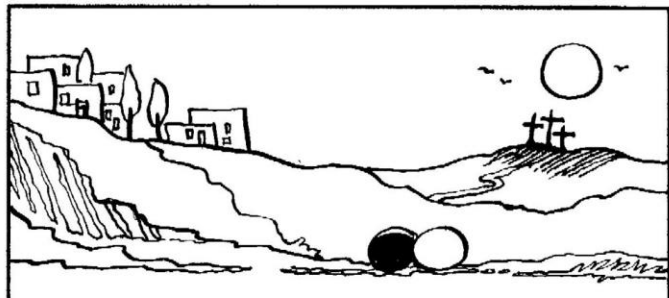
THE BAD FISH GET THROWN AWAY!



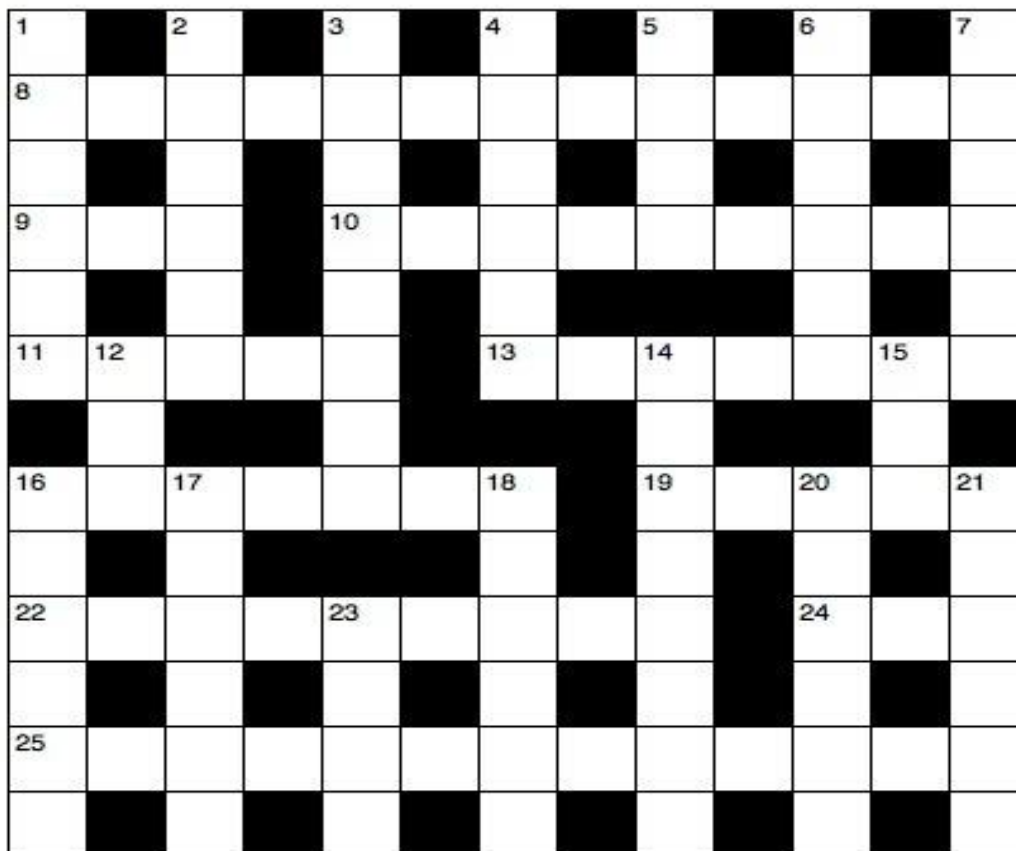
JESUS EXPLAINED THAT WE TOO WILL BE SORTED LIKE THE FISH. WE CAN CHOOSE TO DO GOOD OR BAD THINGS WITH OUR LIVES.



BUT EVEN IF WE MAKE TERRIBLE MISTAKES - WE CAN ALWAYS BE FORGIVEN - THAT'S JESUS' PROMISE.




Crossword Clues



Across

- 8 Where the Ark of the Covenant was kept for 20 years (1 Samuel 7:1) (7,6)
- 9 One of the parts of the body on which blood and oil were put in the ritual cleansing from infectious skin diseases (Leviticus 14:14–17) (3)
- 10 Uncomfortable (3,2,4) 11 ‘Yet I have loved Jacob, but Esau I have — ’ (Malachi 1:3) (5)
- 13 Where Paul said farewell to the elders of the church in Ephesus (Acts 20:17) (7)
- 16 ‘Jesus bent down and — to write on the ground with his finger’ (John 8:6) (7)
- 19 Prophet from Moresheth (Jeremiah 26:18) (5)
- 22 Comes between Exodus and Numbers (9)
- 24 and 2 Down ‘Then Elkanah went home to Ramah, but the boy ministered before the Lord under — the — ’ (1 Samuel 2:11) (3,6)
- 25 There was no room for them in the inn (Luke 2:7) (4,3,6)

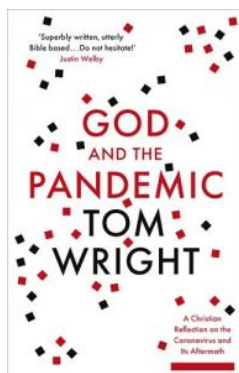
Down

- 1 Rough drawing (2 Kings 16:10) (6)
- 2 See 24 Across

- 3 Underground literature (including Christian books) circulated in the Soviet Union (8)
- 4 Lo, mash (anag.) (6)
- 5 The Bible's shortest verse: 'Jesus — ' (John 11:35) (4)
- 6 'Can a mother forget the baby at her — and have no compassion on the child she has borne?' (Isaiah 49:15) (6)
- 7 Can be seen in a dying fire (Psalm 102:3) (6)
- 12 'Send me, therefore, a man... experienced in the — of engraving, to work in Judah and Jerusalem' (2 Chronicles 2:7) (3)
- 14 Second city of Cyprus (8)
- 15 United Nations Association (1,1,1)
- 16 One of the women who first heard that Jesus had risen from the dead (Mark 16:1) (6)
- 17 Braved (anag.) (6)
- 18 — of Evangelism, outreach initiative in the 1990s (6)
- 20 'Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes and — in their own sight' (Isaiah 5:21) (6)
- 21 'Neither — nor depth... will be able to separate us from the love of God' (Romans 8:39) (6)
- 23 What Jesus shed in 5 Down (4)



Book Review:



A Christian Reflection on the Coronavirus and its Aftermath By Tom Wright, SPCK, £7.99

What are we supposed to think about the coronavirus crisis? Some people think they know: “This is a sign of the End,” they say. “It’s all predicted in the book of Revelation.” Others disagree but are equally clear: “This is a call to repent. God is judging the world and through this disease He’s telling us to change.” Some join in the chorus of blame and condemnation: “It’s the fault of the Chinese, the Government, the World Health Organization...”

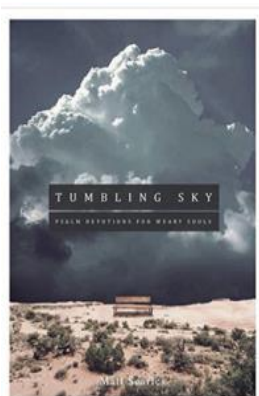
Tom Wright examines these reactions to the virus and finds them wanting. Instead, he invites you to consider a different way of seeing and responding – a way that draws on the teachings and examples of scripture, and above all on the way of living, thinking and praying revealed to us by Jesus.

Time to Pray – Prayer During the Day and Night from Common Worship CHP £3.99

Time to Pray contains a simplified Daily Office: a pattern of prayer, praise and Bible reading. to help you take a break during the day, give thanks to God, and lift your needs to Him. It is suitable for those seeking a simpler form of daily prayer or those just beginning a regular routine of time with God. Prayer During the Day can be said at any time when you have space to pause, while Night Prayer is an uplifting and beautiful way to end your day.



Straightforward and flexible to use, Time to Pray will draw you into a tradition that has been practised by Christians throughout the centuries and continues to be shared across the world today.



Tumbling Sky – Psalm Devotions for Weary Souls - By Matt Searles, 10Publishing, £3.99

Gentle and wise, this devotional is balm for bruised souls. It will comfort and enable you to see the love of God afresh.

Honest and wholly Christ-centred, these Psalm devotions shine the light of God’s truth and grace into some of the darkest corners of our emotions. They help us to see the joy we can have even in the midst of pain, giving rich comfort, refreshment and hope to the suffering believer.

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RECTOR: *Rev Lynne Cullens*
St Mary's Rectory, 24 Gorse Mount Street, Stockport, SK1 4DU Telephone: 0161 477
1938 Email:lynne.cullens@gmail.com

On behalf of Frank and Irene a big thank you for the "special anniversary rose", cards and gifts received on their 70th wedding anniversary.

