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**March 2020**

**Parish of Stockport and Brinnington**

**St Mary - St Thomas - St Luke**



# March 2020

Each week, on a Tuesday evening at St Thomas', we meet for Open. Open is an hour 6.30-7.30pm where anyone can drop in, either as a one-off or more long-term, and we discuss aspects of faith. We spend time reflecting on scripture, as well as our response to it, and generally learning more about God, each other and ourselves. And we do that in ways that are fairly creative. This week we looked at the passage from 2 Corinthians 4

**6 For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of God's glory displayed in the face of Christ.**

**7 But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us**

and we considered the imagined roughness of the clay jars mentioned, with all their chips and cracks and imperfections. We thought of ourselves as being like those jars; imperfect vessels, bearing the scars of life's knocks.

## Puzzle Answers

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

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

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	S	
H		L			C		I		T		D		
	A	T	T	I	T	U	D	E		B	E	D	
S		E		R		R		S		L		E	
P	A	R	T	I	C	I	P	A	T	I	O	N	
E		E		S		E		U		N		Y	
W	A	R		H	I	L	L	S	I	D	E		
	W		O	D		Y				N		L	
B	A	L	D	H	E	A	D		B	E	D	E	
	K		E		A				I		S	A	
C	E	N	S	U	S			A	R	I	S	E	N

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

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**DON'T FORGET: BRITISH SUMMER TIME BEGINS**  
**Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> March.**

## 2019 TEAMS4U SHOE BOX APPEAL



Thank you to everyone who brought to St Mary's gift filled shoe boxes, knitted lots of hats and scarves or gave donations for transportation. A wonderful surprise to find we had collected 90 boxes! Along with other local churches Teams4U received nearly 400 boxes from the Stockport area.

I spent a day at the Wrexham warehouse helping to process the boxes and was assured all our boxes were going to Romania.

Now at the end of January Teams4U are thrilled that they have distributed 64,061 boxes. (51,315 in 2018)

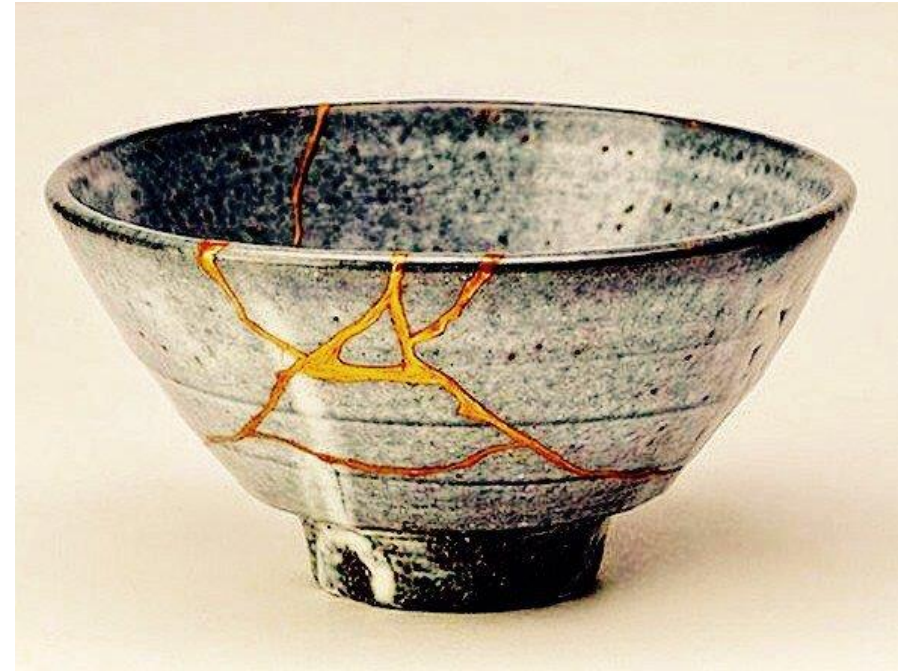
The boxes went to poor communities in Bihor, Braila and Tulcea in Romania, orphanages and deprived communities in Belarus, displaced groups in Bosnia and for the first time to deprived communities in Moldova. Also to Kuma in Uganda where they do so much work with schools.

Besides bringing joy the boxes impact on the lives of the children and families – much more than the gifts in the boxes but each box is an expression of kindness and compassion saying someone cares for you.

Thank you again for supporting the appeal and please start collecting or making for our 2020 boxes.

Margaret Forster.

And then we looked at images of the Japanese art of Kintsugi. Here broken clay pots are mended using gold...the finished results are beautiful, as you see below, and highly prized.



The cracks and chips are the parts of the pot with the highest value in fact. And, in the same way, the Bible passage from Corinthians tells us that the scars, cracks and chips that we bear - perhaps from experiencing loss, from enduring illness or pain, from relationship breakdown and so on - those cracks, those points of 'imperfection', can be the very places that the light of Christ within us can shine through the brightest. Those can be the places where we can empathise with

those in pain, grieve with those who grieve, use our experience of brokenness to help heal the scars of others. Like the Kintsugi pots, those cracks and imperfections in each of us as rough jars of clay, bear the greatest value in bringing the light, love, comfort and hope of Christ to others. A witness to the power of Christ to work through the humblest; it is through our weakness and brokenness that the light of Christ within us shines most powerfully.

So we made clay jars of our own with the light of Christ shining through our brokenness... this is mine. I'm not sure the Kintsugi artists will feel threatened!



Do join us on a Tuesday if you're ever at a loose end...we're a friendly, lively group of chipped, cracked and broken jars of clay seeking to understand more about how God might want to shine through us. We'd love to have you with us.

With love  
Lynne

## St Andrew's [Hall Street] Volunteer Cleaner(s) Required

**Could you spare us an hour or two on a weekly basis to help keep St Andrew's clean and tidy for our many hirers? The hall is in regular use Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday evenings – Saturday and Sunday morning / some afternoon sessions. We also have some week day users – especially during term-time.**

**Our cleaning schedule needs to fit round our clients giving various options during the week to pop in, clean the floors, service the loos etc.**

**If you feel that you are able to assist please speak to Sue Heap.**

## Knit a chick for Easter

**Could you “knit a chick for Easter”, fill it with a chocolate or crème egg, let us have it (or them) and we'll sell our chicks at church – a bit of fun and a little extra income too.**

A copy of the pattern is available from Rita Waters (although I am sure there will be some left down at St Mary's) or it can be downloaded from [www.stmarysinthemarketplace.com](http://www.stmarysinthemarketplace.com) - filed under “events, meetings and notices”

## Family and Freedom

### *The Revd Canon David Winter considers the Royal Family.*

The ructions in the Royal Family in January, widely reported (whether a fact or guess work) remind us that while they are 'royal' they are also a 'family'. God sets the lonely in families, the Bible says. But He also sets the awkward, the odd and the rebellious in them. Families are not associations of the identical, but places where difference is recognised and honoured.

Prince Harry is not Prince William, but neither is he Prince Charles, his father. Perhaps he is a bit more like the independent Diana, his mother.

Recognising difference, and respecting it, lies at the heart of family life, and always has. We may wish our children were replicas of ourselves, but they are not. My late wife was a nurse, and I was a journalist and broadcaster. We had three children. Today one of them manages a posh shop in Covent Garden, one is a musician travelling the world with a well-known folk-rock band, and another is a vicar. Long live the difference!

Families are wonderful. But they seem to work best when the individual members are set free to be themselves. We are not all the same, thank God!

**March 1** is the 60th day of the year (61st in leap years) in the Gregorian calendar. 305 days remain until the end of the year

### 1 March – St David's Day: time for daffodils



1<sup>st</sup> March is St David's Day, and it's time for the Welsh to wear daffodils or leeks. Shakespeare called this custom 'an honourable tradition begun upon an honourable request' – but nobody knows the reason. Why should anyone have ever 'requested' that the Welsh wear leeks or daffodils to honour their patron saint? It's a mystery!

We do know that David – or Dafydd – of Pembrokeshire was a monk and bishop of the 6th century. In the 12th century he was made patron of Wales, and he has the honour of being the only Welsh saint to be canonised and culted in the Western Church. Tradition has it that he was austere with himself, and generous with others – living on water and vegetables (leeks, perhaps?!) and devoting himself to works of mercy. He was much loved.



In art, St David is usually depicted in Episcopal vestments, standing on a mound with a dove at his shoulder, in memory of his share at an important Synod for the Welsh Church, the Synod of Brevi.



## World Day of Prayer

**Rise, take your mat and walk.**

**Friday, 6<sup>th</sup> March 2020  
Stockport Citadel Salvation Army  
121 Stockport Road  
Cheadle Heath  
Stockport  
SK2 0JE**

**13.30 [1.30pm]**

Everyone welcome - women, men and children of all ages are called to '*Rise, take your mat and walk*' and to join this day of prayer.



Women of Zimbabwe have prepared this year's service and they encourage us all to reflect on the difficulties and unrest that have plagued their country over many years. They share the challenges they have met and the hopes they have for the future.

They encourage us to '*Rise, take your mat and walk*' with them as they continue their often turbulent journey towards full reconciliation.



## Have you done something which haunts you?

Do you ever worry that your past failings mean that God will not accept you now?

Some of us have done many things which we regret – things that have caused us, or others, great pain. We've given our children short shrift, we've betrayed our marriage partners, we've been dishonest at work, we've been ruthlessly greedy and ambitious – no matter what the cost to anyone else. And now the memory of the wrong we've done lingers, and it makes us ashamed. Our past failings make us very reluctant to turn to God. Why should He forgive the damage we have done?

If you think this way, then you have a big surprise waiting for you: God isn't like that. You haven't yet encountered His GRACE. God knows all about you, and most of all He knows you need His help. Jesus said that He came into the world to reach sinners – to help anyone who turns to Him in true repentance to find forgiveness, and a new start.

You can't do anything to turn yourself into a good person. But you don't have to. All that God asks of you is that you turn to Jesus in prayer, and say you are sorry, and ask Him to forgive you, and to put His Spirit within you. Then you find His GRACE – which means His loving-kindness, beginning in YOUR life. Just try it.

Today let God begin to set you free from the past!

## Look for good pasture – spend time with good people

There are some people who inspire you to be all you can as a Christian.

When you meet one of these, it is a good idea to stay near them, and learn all you can from them. We are affected by the people whom we spend time with – pray that you will meet people who will lift you up, and not drag you down, in your Christian walk. The Bible says: ‘He who walks with wise men will be wise.’ (Proverbs 13:20)

Many Christians admit that their present Christian faith was built on the wonderful example of Christians they met during their teenage years. They were inspired and encouraged and moulded by these older Christians. What a wonderful gift they were given! Good spiritual nourishment is vital for building a strong, vibrant faith.

Seeing God bless someone else can increase your own desire to reach higher, and also be blessed in that way. When you see a ‘successful’ Christian, don’t be envious, and want to sabotage them. Instead, be inspired and ask God to use *you* in some fruitful way. But remember – Jesus said that HE is the vine, and we are only the branches. No branch is ever going to flourish unless it stays deeply attached to the vine.

Zimbabwe, in the south-east of Africa, is a land-locked country of immense beauty and diversity, almost 400,000 square kilometres (nearly twice the size of the UK). It lies between the mighty rivers of the Limpopo to the south and the Zambesi to the north. It shares borders with South Africa, Botswana, Zambia and Mozambique, and the Inyanga and Udzi mountains stretch along its eastern border. It is rich in natural resources and minerals, among them coal, copper, nickel, gold and diamonds. On the Zambesi and at the point where Zambia, Botswana and Zimbabwe and Namibia meet are the dramatic Victoria Falls.

Zimbabwe lies in the tropics. The temperature and climate vary greatly with the altitude. There are distinct seasons: cool, dry winters (July – October), hot, dry summers (November – March) and a rainy season from April to June. In the eastern mountains there are tropical forests, but most of the country is savanna where big game animals (elephants, rhinos, lions, leopards, water buffalo) are found. Among the numerous flowers the flame lily is the national flower of Zimbabwe but widespread illegal harvesting and trade is threatening this highly prized flower which mainly grows in the wild.



About 16 million people live in Zimbabwe, and about 50% of them are young. There are 16 official languages, reflecting the tribal history of the region. The majority languages are Shona and Ndebele, and English is a first language for only two per cent of the population. Women make up 51% of the population. They play a significant role in the socio-economic life of the country. Many rural households are headed by women, since husbands often migrate to towns to find work, and young people leave their villages for neighbouring African countries or elsewhere in the world. Because of a complex interplay of economic, social and historical factors, women and girls often face systematic disadvantage, especially those who are poor, live in rural areas or are from particular social groups. For more information go to: <https://www.wwdp.org.uk/2020>

# Bible Bite

A short story from the Bible

It can be read in the Bible in Matthew 25: 14-30

Jesus told a story to help his disciples to be ready for the end of time. 'A rich man was about to go on a journey...'

He gave his servants money to look after, depending on what they could do.

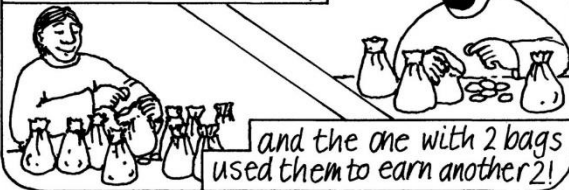


He gave 5 bags of coins to the first, 2 to the second, and 1 to the third.

As soon as he had gone, the first two servants started to work.



The one with 5 bags of coins used them to earn 5 more,



and the one with 2 bags used them to earn another 2!

The third servant dug a hole and buried his bag.



When the master came back, he called his servants to him...



The first two showed him they had doubled his money, and he was very happy with them.

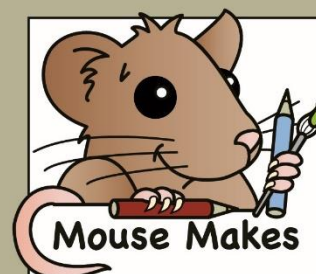


You are a hard man who expects us to work. I was afraid so I just hid it.

If you knew what I expected, why didn't you do it?



Get out of here!



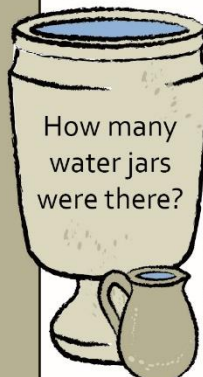
## Mouse Makes

Jesus, his disciples and his mother Mary had been invited to a wedding. The wedding was to last a week, but too soon the wine had all been drunk.

READ *John 2:1-11* to find out what happened.



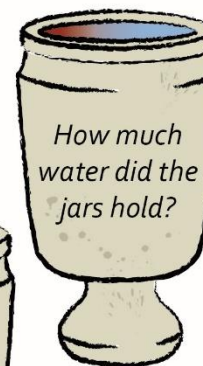
Where was the wedding?



How many water jars were there?



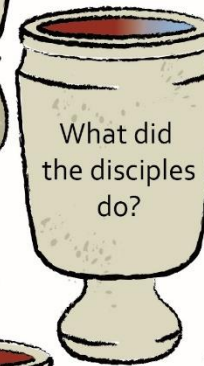
What were the water jars made of?



How much water did the jars hold?



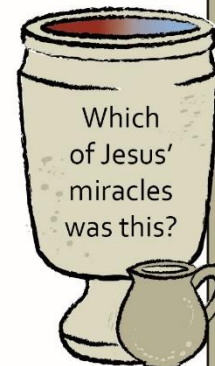
What were the water jars for?



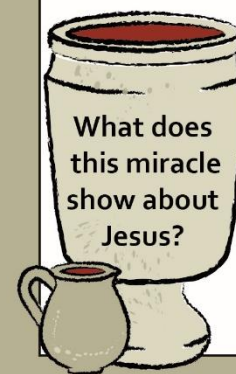
What did the disciples do?



What had happened to the water when it was taken out?



Which of Jesus' miracles was this?



What does this miracle show about Jesus?

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

WEDDING • CANA • GALILEE • JESUS • MARY • DISCIPLES  
SERVANTS • RAN • OUT • SIX • STONE • WATER • JARS  
FILL • TOP • TASTE • TURNED • WINE • FIRST



## Mothering Sunday and Mother Church

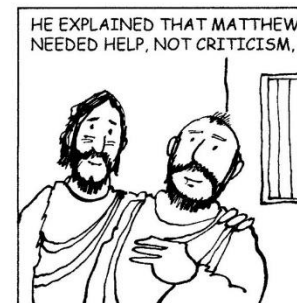
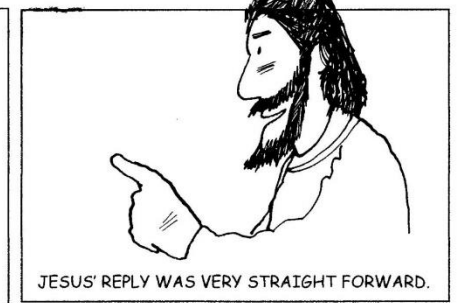
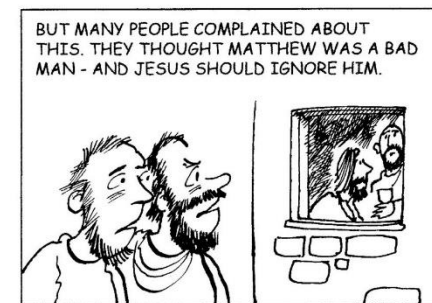
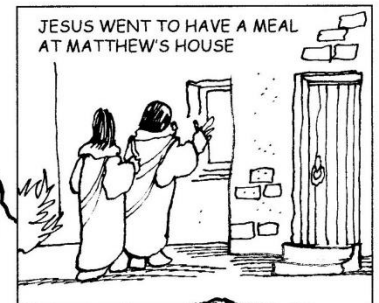
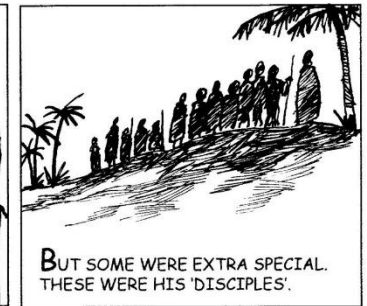
The Fourth Sunday in Lent was called 'Mid-Lent' or 'Refreshment Sunday', when the rigors of Lent were relaxed more than was normal for a feast day. It is called Mothering Sunday as a reference to the Epistle reading for the Day (Galatians 4:21-31). The Lenten Epistles follow from each other with teaching about our life as Christians and how we are to follow Christ. On Mid-Lent Sunday the Epistle talks of bondage and freedom; the bondage of the Law and the Old Covenant as compared to the freedom in Christ, "the promised one", and the New Covenant. Verse 26 reads "But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all." We gain our freedom from Christ and, as it was seen before the Reformation, the Church.

Thus, Mothering Sunday is about the freedom that we gain through the promise of Jesus Christ delivered through our Mother the Church. People were encouraged to go to their 'Mother Church' (their home church or their home Cathedral) to worship and give thanks. Hence apprentices, and others, went home for the weekend and often brought gifts (or accumulated pay) home to their family.



On the other hand, Mother's Day is a secular festival invented in 1904 and is celebrated on the 2nd Sunday in May in most countries in the world. The UK seems to be the exception. In recent years Mothering Sunday has been hijacked to take the place of a special, secular day to give thanks for our mothers.

## The Doctor and the Patient



## Sudoku

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

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

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## 17 March – St Patrick: beloved apostle to Ireland

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

## Wordsearch

Lent lasts for 40 days. Sundays in Lent are 'oases'; as Sunday is never a day of fasting, but a weekly celebration of the resurrection of Jesus. Christians have used Lent as their '40 days in the wilderness', when they set aside the indulgences of life and instead look inward, seeking spiritual renewal and growth. Lent looks towards the Cross and the Empty Tomb, with the assurance of redemption and new life in Christ. The daffodils in our gardens are golden trumpets to proclaim the wonderful message of Easter! The English word for Lent is not at all religious; it is an abbreviation of the Old English word 'lencten', or 'lengthen'. At last winter is over, and the days are getting longer...

- Lent
- Forty
- Days
- Sundays
- Fasting
- Weekly
- Celebration
- Resurrection
- Jesus
- Wilderness
- Indulgences
- Inward
- Spiritual
- Renewal
- Growth
- Cross
- Empty
- Tomb
- Redemption
- Daffodils
- Lencten

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

**Nigel Beeton writes:** In this year, 2020, we shall be marking some wartime anniversaries; 80 years since the Battle of Britain and 75 since VE and VJ Days. **March seems to have two such milestones. Eighty years ago, 16th March 1940 saw the first casualty of German bombing following an air raid on Scapa Flow, while 29th March sees the 75th anniversary of the last German ordnance to fall on British soil, a V1 bomb which landed in Hertfordshire.** It brings to mind the terrifying nature of air raids, terror which few alive today can recall. My mother had no air raid shelter; she, her mother, and my uncle used to hide under the dining room table while bombs fell nearby:

### **The Table [Nigel Beeton]**

**The table in our dining room,**  
Where daily dinners are consumed;  
Where Mother serves her wondrous pies!  
Where candled cakes light birthday eyes!

**That table in our dining room**  
Now stands against our fiery doom;  
Beneath it, we, in trembling fear  
Can feel the shocks as bombs fall near

**That table in our dining room**  
Unseen within the blackout gloom  
Dark sentinel of precious lives  
As, overhead, the bombers dive.

**The table in our dining room,**  
It could, maybe have been our tomb!  
Protects us from our foes up there  
Supported by our fervent prayer!  
The silence comes – the planes are gone  
We thank the Lord with joyful song  
As we emerge from our cocoon –  
**The table in our dining room.**

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.

## St Mary's

### Sunday Services:

1 <sup>st</sup> March	Holy Communion	10.00
8 <sup>th</sup> March	Morning Prayer	10.00
15 <sup>th</sup> March	Holy Communion	10.00
22 <sup>nd</sup> March	Morning Prayer Mothering Sunday	10.00

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Tuesday Services:	Holy Communion	11.30
	Lunch-time Service	12.15
	During Lent: "Seven Sayings from the Cross"	

Thursday Evening	Prayer Meeting/ Bible Study	19.00
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Prayer meeting first week of the month / Bible Study all other weeks  
During Lent: Bible Study Sessions "The Passion"

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Friday Morning	Café Worship	10.45
Foodie Friday (27 <sup>th</sup> March)	TAPAS	18.30

St Mary's will be open for a couple of hours during the evening – look round our Grade 1 listed building, get a coffee or find a quiet space to think, pray or light a candle.

St Mary's is open to the public 10.00 – 15.00 on Tuesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday (along with the Stockport Heritage Trust). The Nave Café from 11.00 – 14.00.

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Monday 30 <sup>th</sup> March	Stockport Music Services Concert	18.00
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## Church of England launches energy rating tool for churches – as Synod considers new 'net zero'

The Church of England is launching an energy rating system similar to those used for household appliances. The aim is to help monitor the carbon footprint of its almost 40,000 buildings, as General Synod has recently voted on a major new proposal to reach 'net zero' CO2 emissions. The hope is for all parts of the Church of England, from parishes to national bodies, to aim for ambitious year-on-year reductions in emissions to reach 'net zero' by 2045 at the latest. In a first step, parishes are being offered a new rating tool, which calculates their energy consumption. It will take into account factors including the type of power they use, whether they are on 'green' tariffs, the size of the building and usage. The Bishop of Salisbury, Nicholas Holtam, the Church of England's lead bishop for Environmental Affairs, said: "The Church of England has buildings in every architectural style and material from the past 1,500 years, posing some unique challenges when it comes to energy efficiency. "However, churches are not museums; they are living buildings which serve their communities every day of the week, and being greener isn't about doing less, it's about equipping parishes to get smarter about energy consumption. "Christians are called to safeguard God's creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth. Faced with the reality of catastrophic climate change, which will affect the world's most vulnerable people the soonest, radical and immediate action is our only option." A paper sent to Synod members before February's General Synod also outlined the potential impacts of climate change directly affecting the Church. It warned parishes that, as impacts start to accelerate, more churches will need to be prepared to play missional roles in their communities, including offering sanctuary in extreme weather events, as was seen at the church of St Cuthbert, Fishlake, following flooding of the River Don last year.

## Christian heritage network will

“reach thousands with a gospel message”

Church-based, actively Christian groups have teamed up to create a new network of Christian heritage tour operators.

The network includes operators of tours, exhibitions and resources in London, Norwich, Oxford, Cambridge, Harwich/Essex, Birmingham, Edinburgh and Lincolnshire-Nottinghamshire. It is at: [www.christianheritagenetwork.org.uk](http://www.christianheritagenetwork.org.uk)

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## Fabric grant funding made easier for churches

Changes have been announced making it easier for parishes to apply for funding to support fabric repairs. The Church of England, working with the Wolfson Foundation and the National Churches Trust (NCT), has announced that during 2020 administration of the Wolfson Foundation funds for fabric repairs of churches will move from the Cathedral & Church Buildings Division of the Church of England to the National Churches Trust. (The Wolfson Fabric Repairs grants programme supports fabric repairs for Grade I and II\*, A and B+ listed Anglican church buildings throughout the United Kingdom. £400,000 per year is awarded to projects, including urgent roof repairs, improving rainwater goods, drainage works, and wall repairs. In 2019, awards were given to 79 parishes.) The move to the National Churches Trust will result in a simplified funding application process for fabric repairs. Parishes will be able to submit one application form and be considered for up to two fabric repair grants. This will reduce form filling for the parishes. There will also only be one reporting and claims process for the two grants, again reducing the burden of paperwork on parishes.

## St Thomas's

### Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> March

The First Sunday of Lent      9.00am Litany in Procession and Sung Eucharist

### Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> March

The Second Sunday of Lent      9.00am Sung Eucharist

### Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> March

The Third Sunday of Lent      9.00am Sung Eucharist

### Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> March

The Fourth Sunday of Lent      9.00am Sung Eucharist  
(Mothering Sunday)

### Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> March

The Fifth Sunday of Lent      9.00am Sung Eucharist  
(Passion Sunday)

### Weekly events:

Tuesdays 10.30am – 12 noon during term time - Praise and Play - A session for pre-schoolers led by Marie Flint

Tuesday 6.30pm – 7.30pm “OPEN” - A discussion based approach to faith and discipleship led by the Rector. Followed by a curry at a local restaurant. Everyone welcome. Open Tuesday: Lent series “Jars of Clay”

Friday 9am – 11am Church open – visitors welcome to have a look around our beautiful church. Tea & coffee available.

## St Luke's, Brinnington

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### Sunday

11.00 – 12.00 Holy Communion

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### Tuesday 09.30 – 11.00

Mums/Carers & Toddlers Group - Primary School – term time only  
(fees apply)

*Slimming World - Tuesday 17.00 – 18.00 & 19.00 – 20.00 (fees apply)*

**Wednesday and Thursday** Coffee morning(s) 09.30 – 11.15:  
09.30 (stalls) 10.00 (Coffee Bar)

**Thursday** – Chapel open 10.30 – 11.30  
for private prayer and lighting candles



**Thursday morning at 10.45** (during Lent)

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## The bonus years

*by Tony Horsfall, who has just celebrated a significant birthday....*

*Our days may come to 70 years, or 80, if our strength endures.' Psalm 90:10*

I have known this verse most of my life, but only this month has it become reality for me. Yes, I have transitioned into my 70s and am now a septuagenarian. It is a strange feeling as I realise that I am now in my bonus years. With 25,550 days of my life already gone, each new day is to be welcomed as a gift and enjoyed to the full. Life expectancy in the UK is currently 79.2 years for men and 82.9 years for women, so hopefully there are still a few years ahead of me. However, we cannot take our health for granted, nor that of our loved ones. This is the period when the fact of our mortality – and that of those around us – will become increasingly real. Psalm 90 was written by Moses who lived to the grand old age of 120, and who stayed in remarkable health – his eyes were not weak nor his strength gone (Deuteronomy 34:7). Growing old is not too bad when you have good health and adequate resources, but for many of us that may not be the case. Indeed, Moses – with a touch of realism (or pessimism?) – also says about our years that 'the best of them are but trouble and sorrow, for they quickly pass, and we fly away' (v10).

All the more reason, then to remember that God, the One who is from everlasting to everlasting, can be our dwelling-place (v1). He can be our refuge, and our fortress, the One in whom we place our trust. Whatever our later years may bring, we can dwell safely in the shelter of the Most High and rest securely in the shadow of the Almighty (Psalm 91:1-2).

*Sometimes during Lent people meditate on a passage of scripture. Here is a favourite Psalm, looked at with light-hearted modern Christian eyes....*

## What Psalm 23 is really all about

The Lord is my Shepherd – **THAT'S RELATIONSHIP!**  
I shall not want – **THAT'S SUPPLY!**  
He maketh me to lie down in green pastures – **THAT'S REST!**  
He leadeth me beside still waters – **THAT'S REFRESHMENT!**  
He restoreth my soul – **THAT'S HEALING!**  
He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness – **THAT'S GUIDANCE!**  
For his name sake – **THAT'S PURPOSE!**  
Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death –  
**THAT'S TESTING!**  
I will fear no evil – **THAT'S PROTECTION!**  
For thou art with me – **THAT'S FAITHFULNESS!**  
Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me – **THAT'S DISCIPLINE!**  
Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies  
– **THAT'S HOPE!**  
Thou anointest my head with oil – **THAT'S CONSECRATION!**  
My cup runneth over – **THAT'S ABUNDANCE!**  
Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life –  
**THAT'S BLESSING!**  
And I will dwell in the house of the Lord – **THAT'S SECURITY!**  
Forever – **THAT'S ETERNITY!**

## When Spring comes

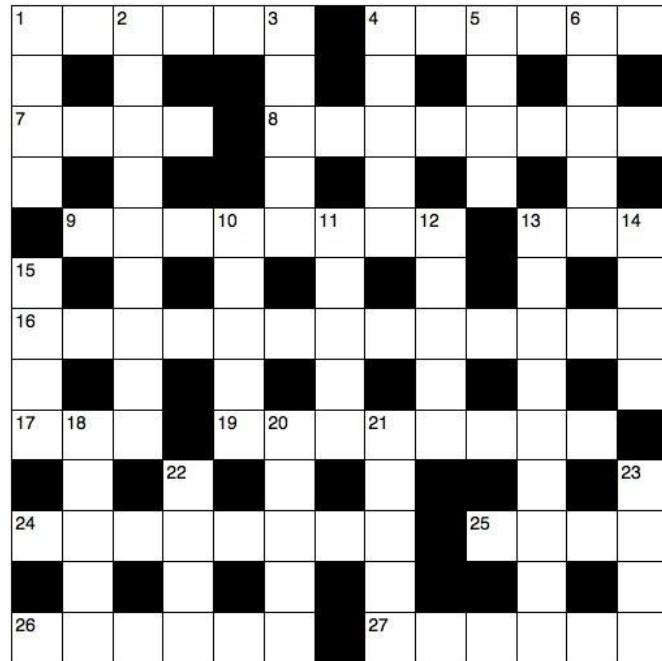
*By the Rev Tony Horsfall of Charis Training.*

*'See! The winter is past; the rains are over and gone. Flowers appear on the earth; the season of singing has come, the cooing of doves is heard in our land.'* Song of Songs 2:11-12

March is the month that I associate with the coming of Spring, my favourite time of the year, and such a relief after the darkness and gloom of Winter. This verse beautifully describes the joy that most of us feel as the days begin to brighten, and Nature starts to awaken once again. These words also speak to us about a new season in life, one that is filled with hope and expectation. Sometimes we experience the darkness of winter in our lives – maybe in the form of depression, bereavement, chronic illness, family difficulties, financial problems and so on. These long winter months of the soul may seem to last forever. Our joy disappears, our energy dissipates, our mood is low. A thick black cloud hangs over us and it seems as if the sun will never shine again. Then we have this reminder that no season lasts for ever. The cold grip of Winter gradually thaws and gives way to warmer days. The sun does shine again, and the temperature rises. Birds sing and flowers blossom. The sap rises. Love is in the air. And in the spiritual realm the same happens. Eventually we will enter a new season of the soul. Joy returns and life gets back to something like normality. No darkness lasts for ever. We experience our own awakening, a kind of mini resurrection. We start to feel alive again, to see possibilities and to dream again.

In the depths of Winter, we can look ahead to the certainty of Spring. Faith enables us to believe that the winter of the soul will soon be past as well. In the darkness we choose to hope in God.

## CROSSWORD



### CLUES

#### 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 Gadarene 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)

6 To put forth (5)

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)