

October 2020

Parish of Stockport and Brinnington

St Mary Stockport – St Thomas Stockport – St Luke Brinnington
STOCKPORT PARISH CHURCH

Welcome to our parish news-sheet for October 2020.



Autumn is such a colourful season, I love to see the shades of red and orange as the leaves turn colour, especially on bright sunny days. As a youngster I would enjoy walking through woodland near home on a sun lit afternoon after school, kicking the leaves that had fallen and looking for conkers with Mum and my little Shih-Tzu dog. Nowadays however it is more a question of avoiding the leaves as they become wet, soggy and slippery with a fear of falling to the ground myself.



We have reached the time of year that Keats called the “season of mists and mellow fruitfulness” – ... *“With fruit the vines that round the thatch-eaves run; To bend with apples the moss'd cottage-trees, And fill all fruit with ripeness to the core; ...”* Sufficient to say that Harvest for us this year will be on Sunday, 4th October (at all churches) but no grapes or apples please, if you do wish to contribute “in person” as it were – the list of items appreciated at The Wellspring” are given below. Of course donations “on-line” or by post are always welcome too, since the Wellspring doesn't receive funding from the Council, Government or the Lottery – so every penny counts. All contributions gratefully received and as they state on their website:

...what a difference it makes to life on the streets of Stockport. Thank you for your kindness. <https://thewellspring.co.uk>

Cooling temperatures (I am sure I noticed frost on the car this morning) and darkening nights the season is certainly changing. Spring and summer seem to have been and gone, most of it spent at home, and as restrictions tighten again I wonder just how tough it is going to be as the season changes again and we face the winter months with Covid-19 and all that comes our way. Still, if we support each other, keep an eye on those around us who may be struggling a little and even if we can't visit in person, phone or wave as we pass the window – it all helps

A simple act of kindness goes a long way.



We have mentioned before knitting and crafting and making things to go into Shoe Box gifts and now is the time to collect these together and either make up your complete boxes (which need to be with us no later than the 25th October) or let us have items for inclusion (which need to be available by the 18th October). Full details of the project were given in our September news-sheet and a collection table is now set-up at St Mary's. We'll be talking about the work of Teams4U at our service at St Mary's on the 11th October – updating as to the timeframe we are working towards and just reminding ourselves of what can go into this little boxes - **Simple act of kindness that we know are very much appreciated.**



TOGETHER

A WEEKLY SOCIAL CHAT FOR PARISH OF STOCKPORT AND BRINNINGTON



2PM MONDAY

Join us at 2pm every Monday afternoon for an informal chat and get together



LOG INTO ZOOM

From your computer or smartphone log into zoom and join the meeting using meeting ID 830 9780 4438 and passcode 830586



USE YOUR PHONE

If you don't have access to a computer or the zoom app on a mobile, you can join in the conversation using your landline. Call 0203 481 5237. You will need the meeting ID 830 9780 4438 and passcode 830586



NEED ANY HELP?

if you need any help with logging on or calling in please ring one of the ministry team

Marie 07780964365
Lynne 07544350692
Jess 07854185860



Marie is starting a new initiative. We can't arrange to meet in person for a coffee and a slice of cake, but we can stay in touch (as we have during the last few months) in other ways.

So, we now have the opportunity to "meet" virtually every Monday at 2pm. If you haven't a laptop or a smart phone to log in via Zoom that really doesn't matter as you can join in by just ringing in from your landline.



Stockport and Brinnington Zoom Coffee Morning

Join us for a virtual brew and slice of cake on Friday 2nd October at 11am



Again, thanks to Marie we are holding a virtual Coffee Morning for MacMillan Cancer Care on Friday, 2nd October at 11am. You don't need to bake a cake this year, just provide your own snack and log-in. Donations to MacMillan can be made via our special donations page for this event.

Friday, 2nd October 2020 11am via ZOOM

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81434107345?pwd=OEx-JaXlKeG5sNVhTRytKVTBURTNwZz09>

Meeting ID: 814 3410 7345 Passcode: 758695

One tap mobile

+441314601196,,81434107345#,,,,,0#,,758695# United Kingdom
+442030512874,,81434107345#,,,,,0#,,758695# United Kingdom
Dial by your location

+44 131 460 1196 United Kingdom
+44 203 051 2874 United Kingdom
+44 203 481 5237 United Kingdom
+44 203 481 5240 United Kingdom
+44 203 901 7895 United Kingdom

Meeting ID: 814 3410 7345

Passcode: 758695

The link to our on-line giving page, for donations to this event

https://dc.thyngs.net/5771/Experience?code=BUU004616408&time=09%2f25%2f2020+14%3a58%3a12.113&appUserID=2f9809f1-608b-44a3-875f-c05ebaee5867&thyngDetailID=3244639&valid=ght-mwnj%2bN8Qz09h4%2bCVTt2HOHxFvVsmFNd3Xi65gTImr0tA8txhnxp7Q65Psa%2fWM0k%2fGgVFfZFOlBgwp5um-QFQ%3d%3d&goalType=DONATION_AND_GIFTAID#!/



Harvest Sunday

St Mary / St Thomas / St Luke

4th October 2020

Due to present Covid situation The Wellspring have asked that only the following items are donated this year:

COFFEE	SUGAR	BISCUITS	CEREAL
TINNED potatoes	TINNED vegetables	TINNED custard	BOTTLED WATER
TINNED Rice pudding	TINNED Meat (SANDWICH MEATS SUCH AS HAM AND CORNED BEEF)		
CRISPS	UHT/LONG LIFE MILK		CEREAL BARS

A message from the Wellspring:

HARVEST FESTIVAL WISH LIST We understand that during these difficult times it may not be feasible to go out and purchase items we have therefore created an alternative, below is our 'Wish List' with an estimated cost for each item. Coffee (200g) - £4.00 Sugar (2kg) - £1.25 Biscuits - £1.00 Cereal (500g) - £2.50 Tinned custard - 60p Tinned rice pudding - 60p Tinned vegetables - 60p Tinned potatoes - 60p Tinned meats - £2.50 UHT/Long life milk - 75p Cereal bars - £1.00 Crisps - £1.50 Small Bottled Water - 50p

Total cost of full wish list £17.40 Should you wish to donate the value of an item from our Wish List please visit; <http://thewellspring.co.uk/harvest> Cheques can be sent to PO BOX 456, Stockport, SK1 1YD and made payable to The Wellspring

Hopefully many of you will be able to participate in our October activities and that you are able to keep in contact with us, as well as your friends and family. We hope that Covid-19 will not cause further restrictions or another total lock-down and that we can continue our ministry within the community. But whatever is ahead of us - we are here – to help and support in various ways. If you need us, please do get in touch.

A reminder that on the 18th October the parish will hold its Annual Meeting – delayed due to Covid restrictions this should have taken place in normal circumstances by the end of May.

Parish of Stockport and Brinnington

Meeting of Parishioners (Vestry Meeting) and Annual Parochial Church Meeting Sunday,

18th October 2020 at 1.00pm

Previously scheduled to be held at St Mary's
THIS MEETING IS NOW LIKELY TO TAKE PLACE VIA ZOOM

Looking forward to later in the year and finishing off my note to you remembering **A simple act of kindness** we have been in contact with Stockport Homes who would very much welcome gifts of toys, clothing etc. in preparation for Christmas. Our annual "Toy & Gift Service" at St Mary's this year may need to take a different format, but if everyone could think about donating appropriate item(s) or getting those knitting needles clicking away again that would be wonderful. We'll speak more about that next month, but once again hats, scarves and gloves welcome – gifts for babies to 18 year olds (new items please no second hand unless good-as-new).
Sue. All the best – stay well and stay safe



All in the month of October

It was:

500 years ago, on 21st Oct 1520 that Portuguese explorer Ferdinand Magellan's Spanish expedition to the East Indies discovered the Strait of Magellan at the southern tip of Chile. **175 years ago, on 12th Oct 1845 that Elizabeth Fry, died. This prison reformer and philanthropist was depicted on the British £5 note between 2001 and 2016.** 100 years ago, on 7th Oct 1920 that Oxford University allowed women to become full members and study for full degrees for the first time, and the first 100 women were admitted. **90 years ago, on 22nd Oct 1930 that the BBC Symphony Orchestra gave its first concert.** 80 years ago, on 9th Oct 1940 that during the Blitz, a German bomb destroyed the high altar of St Paul's Cathedral in London. Later that same month on 31st Oct, the Battle of Britain ended. **70 years ago, on 7th Oct 1950 that Mother Teresa founded what would become the Missionaries of Charity, in Kolkata, India.** 40 years ago, on 3rd Oct 1980 that the Housing Act came into effect in Britain, giving more than five million council tenants the right to buy their homes. **Also 40 years ago, on 10th Oct 1980 that Margaret Thatcher gave a memorable and defiant speech defending her policies to combat inflation and economic recession. She told the Conservative Party conference in Brighton: 'The lady's not for turning!'** 30 years ago, on 8th Oct 1990 that East and West Germany reunited as the Federal Republic of Germany. **20 years ago, on 17th Oct 2000 that the Hatfield rail crash took place. Four people were killed when a high-speed passenger train derailed because of a cracked rail.** 15 years ago, from 18th to 26th Oct that Hurricane Wilma, the most intense Atlantic hurricane ever recorded, caused massive damage worth \$29billion across the Caribbean, Central America and the eastern USA. 63 people were killed.



Remembering the Hatfield rail crash - *Tim Lenton looks back on a horrific and unnecessary accident.*

The Hatfield rail crash took place 20 years ago, on 17th October 2000. Four people were killed and more than 70 injured when a high-speed passenger train derailed because of a cracked rail.

The crash was caused by metal fatigue and exposed major problems within Railtrack, the infrastructure company responsible for track maintenance, resulting in their eventual demise. Reports said there was a lack of communication and expertise in essential areas from both Railtrack and contractors Balfour Beatty. The problem was known about before the accident, and replacement rails had been ordered but never delivered. Because Railtrack did not know how many other rails might be affected nationwide, it imposed over 1800 emergency speed restrictions which disrupted the national network for more than a year while tracks were replaced.

A memorial service was held for the victims on the tenth anniversary of the crash at St Etheldreda's Church, Hatfield, conducted by the Rector of Hatfield, the Revd Richard Pyke, who had looked after casualties and the bereaved at the time of the crash. In 2004, the widow of one of the victims was awarded £1 million damages in the High Court. Families of the other three fatal casualties received out-of-court damages.





Hello everyone

I'm back from my holiday but I know what you humans have to cope with now with all these rules are regulations to follow.

Here I am - Roggie Dog at the seaside BUT not on the beach!

I'm back from a short summer holiday, and it was very nice to be able to go away for a few days but unfortunately I am subject to rules and regulations just like you humans are with Covid-19. In my case it's a question of being barred from going on the beach March – September and very disappointing it is too. BUT I was a good boy, not a paw crossed over the wall and I stuck to the rules (don't want Mummy to have to pay a fine). I had lots of lovely walks on my lead whilst it was quiet and when mummy said there were too many visitors around I stayed at home and spent my time running around in the garden. I love to explore and see what I can find.



I am here! >

<Can you see me under the apple tree?>

Mummy gave the Bramley apples to the neighbours, delighted a few days later to be given a great hunk of Dorset Apple Cake made with some of them. There were still one or two on the floor for me to play with, but I didn't eat them and kept an eye out for wasps and other nasties.



We would like to thank everyone who has contributed towards our Parish Community Support Programme.

The parish support programme started earlier in the year when we were approached by Jeoff Bradley, from FRESH [Stockport], to help support local schools and families within the parish where there was clearly need for assistance, especially as the Covid-19 lockdown took its toll.

Since then our partnership with FRESH (which in case you were wondering stands for “Food Ready Every School Holiday”) has continued throughout the summer months, as the need for food parcels and donations of other items were identified via the local school we are supporting.

Our Community Support Programme had grown from strength to strength and our support team have been out and about. We have received generous donations (for which we are most grateful) to the fund in the way of money as well as food items (non perishable). There have been donations from local businesses and general goodwill throughout the parish.

As/when lockdown restrictions are eased again we very much hope that more of us will be able to volunteer to assist and help keep up the good work, and continue our work on new programmes and initiatives into Autumn/Winter and beyond.

We are still limited as to what we are able to do, especially when it comes to re-opening our premises for additional use, but when we can, we will. We’d like all our hirers and activities back as soon as possible, but for now everything is very much under constant review. We can guarantee that returning at some point will be the café service at St Mary’s. Something to look forward to and not quite in the same format as it was previously, it will have a new name (to be known as the Host Café) and a new management team/structure. If you would be like to be part of the new café team – you would be most welcome.

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, or by volunteering in our hopefully soon to be relaunched Café or by helping to run activities at our other centres. 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.





Mentioned on the previous page was FRESH (Food Ready Every School Holiday) which, to give you a little more information, is a relatively new community group of volunteers who formed in early 2020 to help alleviate hunger during school holidays .

The group had initially planned to organise food packs to be distributed to 60 families whose children would normally receive a free school meal at a specific school. The arrival of Covid-19 and the premature closure of schools saw the group quickly expand to providing weekly help for 380 families across four schools. The need for such a resource is clearly great and perhaps wider than some of us may have initially realised. We'll talk about the toll of lockdown on low-income families later on – but “food poverty” is regrettably an issue that won't instantly go away.

The food parcels that have been distributed contain a mixture of dried foods such as rice, pasta and cereal; tinned foods such as beans and soup; and some fresh food. Food is donated by local churches (such as ourselves) as well as many other groups/organisations and of course individuals (you will recall our collection point at the gate of St Mary's Rectory). FRESH were also able to purchase at bulk discount joining forces with “Fareshare” (a charity that saves good food from going to waste and redistribute it to frontline charities) and have worked closely with other local charities, housing associations and businesses who again have helped enormously with contributions.



The toll of lockdown on low income families

Coronavirus has left low-income families struggling with a significant deterioration in living standards and high stress levels. So warns a new report from Child Poverty Action Group and the Church of England. The report, *Poverty in the pandemic: The impact of coronavirus on low-income families and children*, is based on a survey of families with children who are eligible for free school meals. It found around eight in 10 respondents reported being in a worse financial position than before the pandemic, and half were much worse off because their income had fallen while costs have risen. Nearly nine in 10 respondents reported spending substantially more than before on food, electricity, and other essentials – usually because they have been at home much more. Many families also said that the cost of food had gone up significantly during the early part of lockdown. The Bishop of Durham, Paul Butler, who speaks for the Church of England on matters relating to children and families, said: “In these unprecedented times, we all need to ask ourselves urgently how we can help our neighbour. It is also imperative that the Government does all that it can to protect families and children.” Alison Garnham, Chief Executive of Child Poverty Action Group, said: “Low-income parents have been living under a cloud of anxiety in lockdown – trying to find money for family basics as their costs have been rising. That's taken a very heavy toll.”





Are you suffering from Maskne?

Face masks are giving us skin complaints. In fact, so many of us are now suffering that the complaint has been given its own name: 'maskne'.

The causes are obvious. Our breath is warm and moist, and every time we exhale into our masks this humid air gets trapped. Masks move, and so we have friction. Added to that is the unpleasant fact that our saliva is actually teeming with bacteria (with more bugs per square inch than even a loo seat!).

Acne mechanica is the medical term for 'maskne'. With all that bacteria being trapped and rubbed against our nose and chin, no wonder 'mask breakouts' are rising dramatically.

Stress is another cause for skin complaints, and the pandemic has given many of us huge stress this year. We may face crippling anxiety over job security, finances, the health of loved ones, social isolation, or even being trapped in an abusive household. No wonder our faces are breaking out in a rash!



As if Maskne isn't bad enough, the pandemic has doubled our rates of depression.

Now one in five adults are struggling with the symptoms, and yet the peak of the Covid-19 mental health crisis is 'yet to come', according to NHS bosses.

In June the Office for National Statistics released data showing that 19.2 percent of adults were experiencing some form of depression. This figure had almost doubled, from around one in 10 (9.7 per cent), before the pandemic. But NHS bosses warn that up to half a million more patients are expected to enter the system in coming months.

Those most vulnerable to depression are women aged 16 to 29 who are unable to afford an unexpected expense, or who are disabled.

A spokeswoman for Mind, the mental health charity, says, "It's crucial that mental health is put at the centre of the government's ongoing recovery plans." A report from the NHS Confederation echoes this, saying that mental health bodies will need "intensive support and investment." The pandemic has doubled our rates of depression. Now one in five adults are struggling with the symptoms. And yet the peak of the Covid-19 mental health crisis is 'yet to come', according to NHS bosses.





Oppression and discrimination against Christians has increased during Covid says Release International who have launched an appeal to help Christians suffering during the pandemic.

Many Christians have been denied food and relief aid and excluded from support systems during lockdown. They have been abandoned by families because of their faith and refused relief by governments and NGOs (non-governmental organisations). At the same time, several countries have stepped up persecution against Christians. One of the worst offenders is China, where Christians have been arrested for simply holding prayer meetings online. “The situation has got much worse for many Christians during lockdown,” says Release International CEO Paul Robinson. “Covid-19 is having a devastating impact on the lives of many poor Christians. In places hostile to the faith Christians are experiencing increased hardship. “Food is now in short supply. They are unable to work and can’t earn, and support is being withheld because of their faith. Their cries for help are being ignored by local charities who are distributing food packages only to families of other faiths. We can’t afford to delay. These Christians need our help.”

In **Algeria**, many Christians have had to stop work because of the lockdown, and so lost their income. They have been rejected by society and their families as a result of their faith. There is no social security in the country or government support. **Eritrean Christians** fleeing persecution have been barred from refugee camps and are unable to get support from UNHCR. And they refuse to resort to crime to get the money and supplies they need. In **Pakistan** the situation is especially hard for converts from a Muslim background. The only form of social security is family support, and Muslim families often withdraw support for family members who change their religion.

In several countries, lockdown has led to an increase in persecution.

In Upper **Egypt**, where Christians face discrimination for their faith, some organisations are allegedly refusing food and support to Christian families. Release partners report: “The authorities are helping Muslims but not Christians. And churches that try to help are being closed by police order.” In **China**, Release partners say the government is using the pandemic to step up its crackdown against Christians. They have accelerated campaigns such as the forced demolition of crosses. Pastors have been rounded up for sharing the gospel and distributing facemasks on the street. The authorities have “totally prohibited” online church services and prayer meetings, as “nothing constituting a religious service is allowed.” In **Nigeria**, the lockdown deepened the insecurity facing many Christian villagers, who face attacks by Fulani militia.

Paul Robinson of Release International says: “Right now, it’s up to us in the family of faith to give them our support.” Partners of Release International are providing food parcels to impoverished Christians in Algeria, Ethiopia, Egypt, Nigeria, Pakistan and Turkey. If you can help, go to: www.releaseinternational.org/covid





We love milk but where does it come from?

Dairy cows have serious competition these days: a third of young people are now opting for vegan milk instead. Recent data from the global market research firm, Mintel, has found that 23 per cent of Britons now use plant-based milk. It has become most popular among the 16 to 24-year-olds.

Many millennials have switched to soya milk because of environmental concerns, but the Sustainable Food Trust has recently warned that vegan milk could actually be far more harmful to the environment. They say that grass-fed dairy milk poses less of a threat to the Amazon and other rainforests than many soya products do.



Understanding the Bible

As we acknowledge Bible Sunday this month, it's a good opportunity to ask the question: *why should I read the Bible?*

The Bible is the world's best-selling book of all time. However, it isn't one book, but a library of 66 books, composed by some 44 writers over a period of 1500 years in a range of literature including history, poetry, prophecy, letters and apocalyptic (end times). Despite having a number of different writers, the Bible claims one author: God himself!

This is the basis of the unity of its message and authoritative claim to be the primary way by which God speaks to us: *'All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work'* (2 Timothy 3:16). The Bible is inspired (*'the word of God in the words of men'*) and presents itself as a *manual for life*, equipping us to live for God in every aspect of our lives. We also have the promise of the Holy Spirit to guide us in applying the words to our lives: *'the Spirit will guide you into all truth'* (John 16:13).

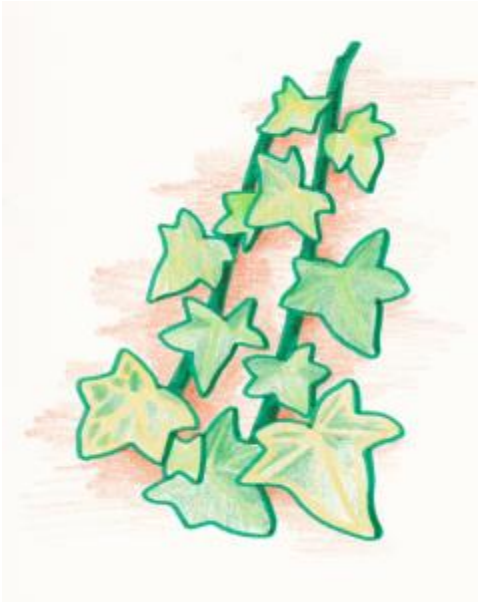
At her coronation the Queen was given a Bible with the words *'the most precious thing this world affords'*. Does this reflect our own attitude to the Bible?





Ivy – never underestimate its goodness

We continue our occasional series on different common flowers by Kirsty Steele, a retired teacher and active church organist. You could invite your readers to look out for ivy this month, and to send in pix of any they find in your locality. There is a drawing by Ruth King to go with this article.



Autumn is in full swing but there is at least one plant that is in full bloom. Not spectacular to look at, yet ivy is an important source of nectar for bees, moths, flies and wasps, and while they are not most people's favourite insects, they all play a vital part in Nature's jigsaw.

Ivy produces flowers from September to November. Spherical clusters of greeny-yellow blobs, which on closer inspection have endearing little horns with knobs on! The resulting fruits are dark berries with ridged sections, resembling tiny black footballs each containing five seeds. Poisonous for us, but birds love them.

Ivy is one of the few native climbing plants that can reach a substantial size. Contrary to popular belief, it is not a parasite. Its stems have lots of fibrous, adhesive-covered, roots which cling to buildings, brickwork, trees, telegraph poles, in fact just about anything to help it gain some height. However, when it comes to nourishment, that comes via the roots in the ground. [There's not much nutritional value in a brick.] Although ivy does not normally damage sound buildings or walls, and is rarely a threat to healthy trees, its weight can cause problems.

What a useful plant it can be! Providing shelter, hibernation and nesting sites for birds and insects, its glossy green leaves are happily munched by sheep, goats and deer. These leaves, so familiar, are different shapes according to whether they are on flowering or growing branches. The flowers are surrounded by heart- or spear-shaped leaves, while the rest of the plant has the three- or five-pointed ones we all recognise.

Many legends involve ivy. But has anyone discovered why although mentioned in the first line of the carol 'The Holly and the Ivy', it is absent from the rest of the verses?



Don't 'go it alone'

If you are helping others at this time, remember to still leave space and time for yourself. Going the extra mile for other people all the time will only ensure one thing; your collapse. Work in teams. Even the Good Samaritan did not attempt to help the injured man all on his own; he brought in the innkeeper. By sharing the problem, they solved it!





There is one thing I try not to think about and I know it worries Mummy too, and that is who would look after me if Mummy was ill and unable to take care of me herself. I hope that one of my friends of the human variety would help us out, but there are many doggies out there who have needed help, especially since the pandemic began – and no doubt there will be plenty more needing a paw of friendship – it is so reassuring to know that urgent assistance is available if needed. I’m asking Mummy to donate all my pocket money this month to the RSPCA – or better still set-up a monthly direct debit - on my behalf. I’m sure she will! Roggie Dog

RSPCA launches emergency appeal in wake of Covid

The RSPCA has been overwhelmed this year by calls for help from people who are ill with Covid-19.

The animal welfare charity was swamped with 442,344 calls, and responded to 106,676 incidents of animals in need just between 24th March and 5th August. That averaged out at 790 incidents a day.

Such a volume of need was especially a challenge to meet, as the charity was working with fewer officers, due to ‘furlough, shielding and ill health’, a spokesman explained.

He went on: “As well as operating an emergency service, rescuing animals in need, RSPCA officers have also been collecting animals from the homes of people who have been admitted to hospital with Covid-19, who may not have anyone else to care for them while their owners are being treated.”

The charity has now launched an emergency fund-raising appeal, and said that its front-line animal rescue and care teams have been “stretched to their limit”.

With about 6,400 animals in the care of the RSPCA across England and Wales, it is the largest animal welfare charity in the UK.



Best Wishes Marie



Praying for you on your ordination

May God bless your ministry

You will recall that Marie was commissioned Curate for this parish on the 2nd July (via Zoom) to be ordained deacon in Chester Cathedral later in the year. As that date approaches, what better time to wish her the happiest of days on this special occasion.

*The Lord himself goes before you and will be with you
He will never leave you nor forsake you*





Nigel Beeton writes: 'Followers of the Morning Prayer service on the Church of England website will be aware that we have recently been following the book of Judges. Some of the stories in there make difficult reading in these enlightened times – what, for example, can we possibly learn from the near-total destruction of a city and its inhabitants? Except that, sometimes, our own problems and challenges seem to be just as insurmountable as those city walls.'

Jericho

Jericho had mighty walls –
A well-defended fort,
'A year long siege before it falls',
Or so the soldiers thought.

The gates, of solid oaken wood
Were closed and barred so tight,
No-one went in for no-one could,
And Joshua took fright!

But then he did what wise men do
And fell down on his knees
And sought the Lord, in answer who
Then uttered words like these:

"The city's yours – it's troops and king
"I'll place them in your hand
"If you'll just do this simple thing –
"And do as I have planned."

"For just six days you all must walk
"Around those walls so strong,
"The priests and troops, but do not talk –
"And bring the ark along!"

"On day seven – seven times around
"Those mighty walls you go
"And shout this time – make lots of sound!
"And seven trumpets blow!"

"And you will see, if you do that
"The city's walls, so tall
"Will start to crack, and fall down flat
"And Jericho shall fall!"

The people did as God had said
(It is the only way)
And we must follow where they led
And *really* learn to pray!

By Nigel Beeton





Do the Bible and Science contradict each other?

Dr Ruth M Bancewicz 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.

For the Christian, the Bible is God's word to us; it tells us about His character and creative purposes, how He has related to people in the past, and His promises for the future. Science is a specific way of studying the world, exploring the physical properties of things – a wonderful way to explore God's creation. So, the question to ask if the Bible and Science seem to be contradicting each other is, have we made a mistake in interpreting one or the other?

Science is very good at answering certain types of questions: 'What size is it?', 'How fast does it travel?', 'What is it made of?', and so on. Questions like 'What's it for?', 'What should I do with it?', and 'What's it worth?' can't be answered using scientific methods. Some of the misunderstanding in discussions of science and religion come from not recognising the limits of science.

It's also important to recognise what the Bible is, and what sorts of questions it can answer. The Bible was written well before people began to investigate the world in ways we would recognise as scientific. Of course, people in the Ancient Near East were studying the world around them, observing the movements of the stars, the processes of life and death that happened all around them, the seasons, the behaviour of physical objects, and so on. But they did not study the mechanisms underlying these things systematically using the tools of science, and they did not see or describe the world in scientific terms – not because they weren't intelligent, but because science as we know it wasn't happening at that time.

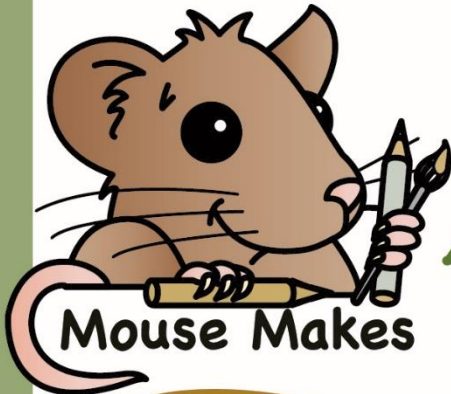
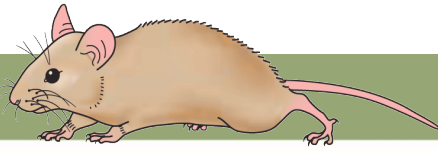
Instead, the biblical writers used words that were commonly used in their own cultures to record events, share truth and wisdom, and tell stories that convey deep truth about God's character. If we want to understand God's intention in inspiring these words, we need to do some careful work to connect with those ancient writers and find out what they meant, before we can discover what those words mean to us today.

These principles can help us have far more fruitful conversations about science and Christian faith. If we allow any apparent conflict between Science and the Bible to fuel our search for understanding, not only will we learn as individuals, but we will be able to draw others into a conversation that is relevant to wider society today.



Download the App. The app uses contact tracing technology to help protect yourself and others so we can all get back to the things we love. The app notices and logs other nearby app users. If any of those users later test positive for coronavirus you'll receive an alert with advice. The app also lets you report your symptoms and find out if you need a test. You can also use it to scan official NHS QR codes to quickly and easily check in to places you visit. **Track and trace QR codes are now on display at all our premises.**





Jesus said:
 "The kingdom of heaven
 is like a _____ **seed**
 that a man took and sowed in
 his **field**. It is the _____
 of all the seeds, but when it
 has grown it becomes a tree,
 so that the wild _____ come
 and nest in its branches."

Read
 Matthew
 13:31-32

"GOD is the **one**
 who gives seed to those
 who **plant**, and He gives
bread for **food**. And GOD
 will give you spiritual seed
 and make that seed grow.
 He will **produce** a great
harvest from your goodness."

2 Corinthians 9:10

Jesus said:
 "You do not need more **faith**. There
 is no 'more' or 'less'
 in faith. If you have
 a bare kernel of faith,
 say the size of a poppy
 seed, you could
 say to this
 sycamore
 tree
 "Go
 jump
 into
 the
 lake"
 and it
 would do it."
 Luke 17:6

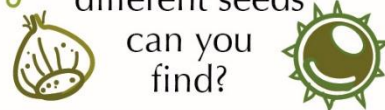
So the one who
 plants is not important,
 and the one who **waters** is not
 important. Only **GOD** is
 important because He is the
 one who makes things grow."

1 Corinthians 3:7

Look out for seeds
 in the
 park
 and
 garden
 and in your kitchen
 store cupboard.

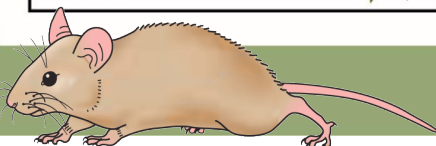


How many
 different seeds
 can you
 find?



Find the
 words
 in **bold**
 on this
 page
 in the
 word
 search

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





Bible Bite

A short story from the Bible

It can be read in the Bible in
Matthew 24:44-51, Luke 12:40-46

Jesus warned his disciples to be always ready for his return at the end of time by telling the story of two servants

The good servant



While I am away, I am putting you in charge of the food

My master could be away a long time; I will work as if he was here.



When the servants came for their food, he had it ready



He made sure everyone got their full amount every day.



Then his master came back



Well done!

I am putting you in charge of everything I have



The bad servant



While I am away, I am putting you in charge of the food

My master could be away a long time; I can do what I want!



When the servants came for their food, he chased them away!



He had friends come round, and they ate and drank as much as they liked.

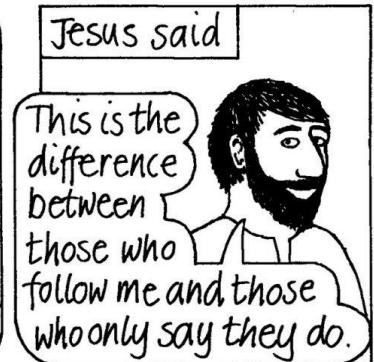


Then his master came back



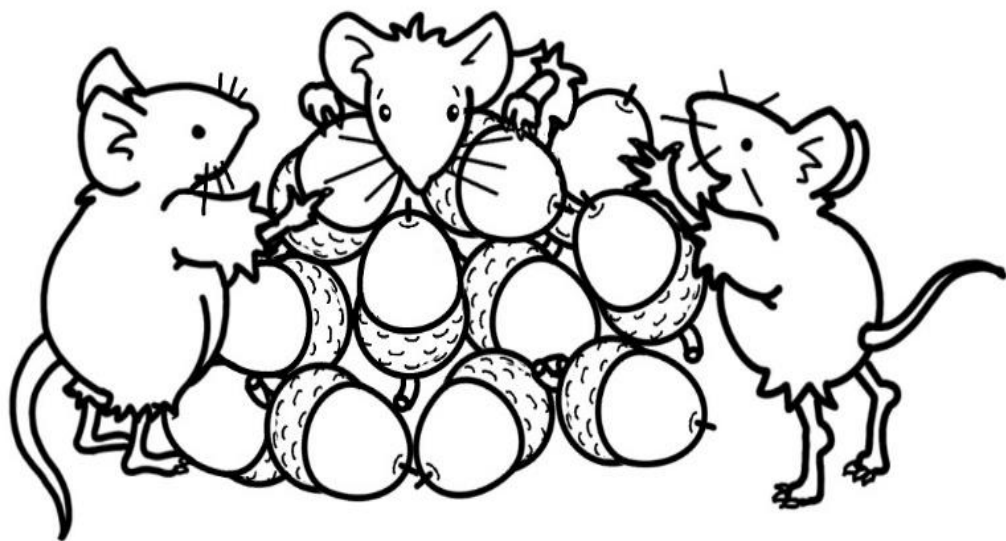
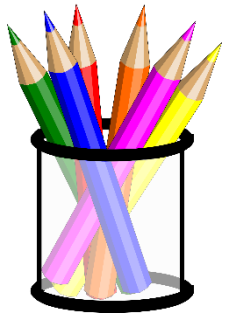
and punished him.

Jesus said



This is the difference between those who follow me and those who only say they do.







Junior Wordsearch

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

want
return
drank
master
story
good
food
putting

warned
disciples
always
follow
while
friends
everything
amount

long
Jesus
ate
ready
chased
servant
bad
charge





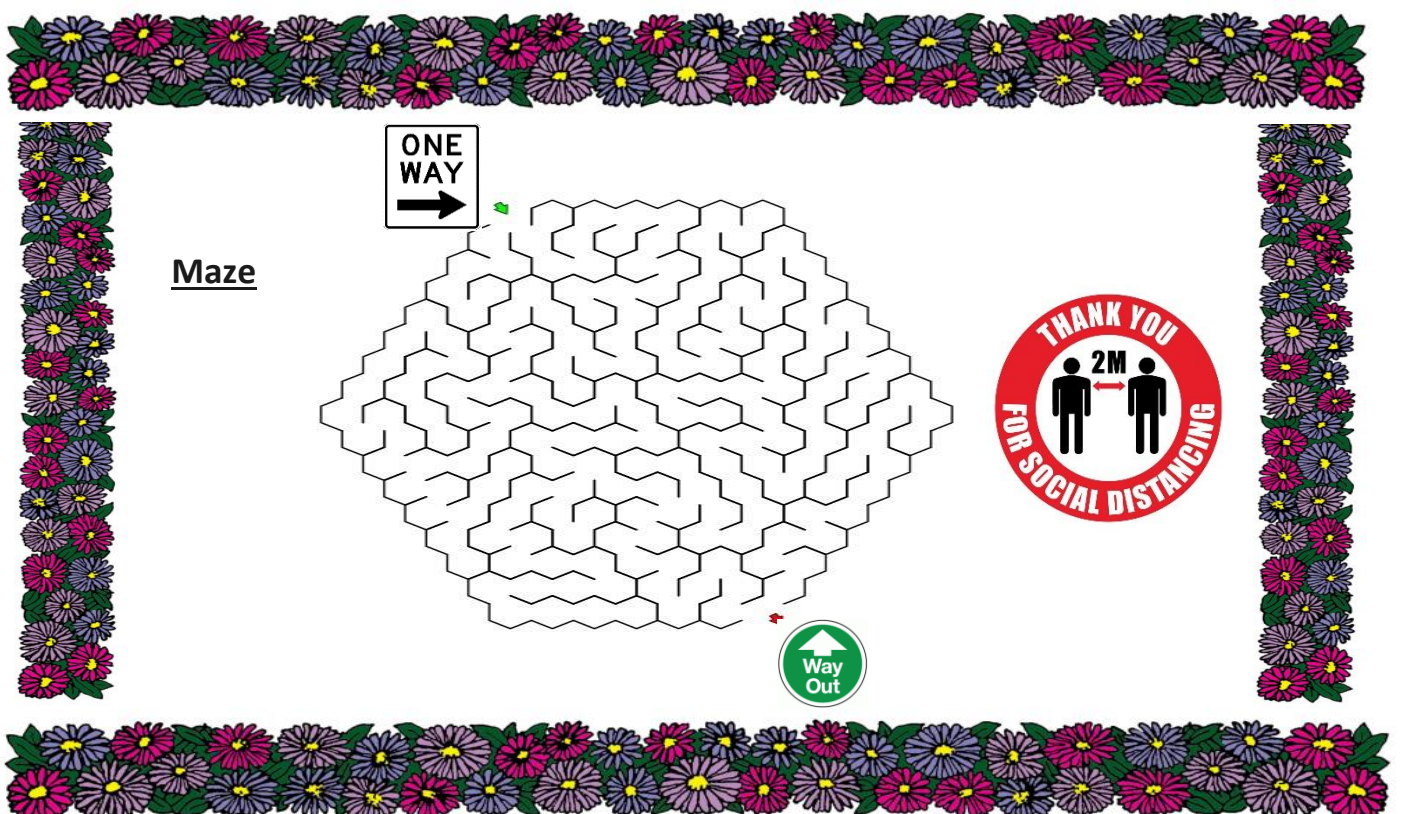
Churches enjoyed Zooming

I'm not entirely sure "enjoyed" is the right word, but "Zoom" has been a welcome digital tool during recent months and a method of communication that will no doubt stay with us well into the future. There is something quite nice at not having to travel to a meeting, especially if it is one that is being held miles away from home on a not so nice day or evening. Something quite nice at just having to log-on (or even phone in) and there you are, you've arrived – and can be joined by anyone virtually anywhere with the right connectivity. You miss the networking opportunities I suppose, the chance to catch up with people you may only meet now and again, but what would we have done without it! So maybe "enjoyed" is the right word, I'd never have dreamed of Zooming or anything else before lockdown, and have it say that it has been relatively easy and you do get accustomed to seeing people in a little box on your screen!

Our PCC have meet a few times via Zoom, and although we are sorry that a couple of our membership have been unable to join us (for various technical reasons) it has been quite an experience for us all. It has however been vital to keep in touch and as far as possible continue with "business as usual". We weren't alone!

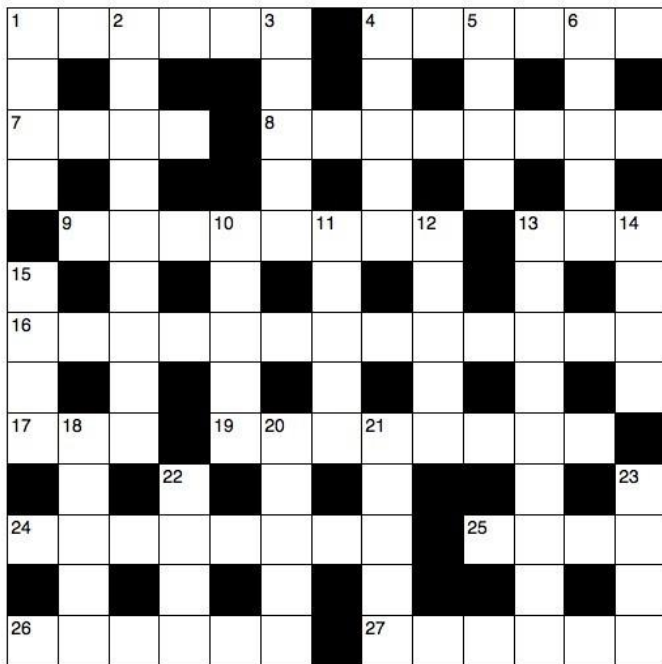
Most churches who used digital channels during lockdown, in order to keep in touch with their congregations, found that their favourite platform was Zoom. A recent survey by Ecclesiastical found that Zoom was used by 78 per cent; Skype by 12 per cent, and other platforms, including WhatsApp, by eight per cent.

Nearly one third of churches who used digital channels have also reported an increased attendance at their virtual services. That has led to some 38 per cent of churches saying that they would continue to use digital channels, even now that churches are physically open again. We can identify to that too, the response to our "Stockport Parish Pew Tube" channel has been most encouraging.





Crossword



Across

- 1 He must be 'the husband of but one wife and must manage his children and his household well' (1 Timothy 3:12) (6)
- 4 'For we must all — before the judgement seat of Christ' (2 Corinthians 5:10) (6)
- 7 'They reeled and staggered like drunken men; they were at their — end' (Psalm 107:27) (4)
- 8 See 19 Across
- 9 It concerned who among the disciples would be the greatest (Luke 9:46) (8)
- 13 Formed by the Jews in Thessalonica to root out Paul and Silas (Acts 17:5) (3)
- 16 'He has sent me to bind up the — ' (Isaiah 61:1) (6-7)
- 17 Moved rapidly on foot (Matthew 28:8) (3)

- 19 and 8 ' — a great company of the — host appeared with the angel' (Luke 2:13) (8,8)
- 24 Hindrance (Romans 14:13) (8)
- 25 Comes between Luke and Acts (4)
- 26 Empower (Acts 4:29) (6)
- 27 'Get these out of here! How dare you turn my Father's house into a — !' (John 2:16) (6)

Down

- 1 Sunrise (Psalm 119:147) (4)
- 2 The part of the day when Cornelius the Caesarean centurion had a vision of an angel of God (Acts 10:3) (9)
- 3 He was one of those who returned with Zerubbabel from exile in Babylon to Jerusalem (Nehemiah 7:7) (5)
- 4 'No one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born — ' (John 3:3) (5)
- 5 Animal hunted or killed as food (Ezekiel 22:25) (4)
- 6 'He encouraged them — — remain true to the Lord' (Acts 11:23) (3,2)
- 10 Ruses (anag.) (5)
- 11 Jewish priestly vestment (Exodus 28:6) (5)
- 12 Visible sign of what had been there (Daniel 2:35) (5)
- 13 This was the trade of Alexander, who did Paul 'a great deal of harm' (2 Timothy 4:14) (9)
- 14 'This is my — , which is for you; do this in remembrance of me' (1 Corinthians 11:24) (4)
- 15 One of Noah's great-great-grandsons (Genesis 10:24) (4)
- 18 Traditionally the first British Christian martyr (5)
- 20 Relationship of Ner to Saul (1 Samuel 14:50) (5) 21 Jacob had one at a place he named Bethel while on his way to Haran, fleeing from Esau (Genesis 28:12) (5)
- 22 Bats (anag.) (4)
- 23 'You strain out a — but swallow a camel' (Matthew 23:24) (4)



Wordsearch

All Hallows Eve - or Holy Evening

Modern Halloween celebrations have their roots in pre-Christian times. In those long-ago days, on the last night of October, the Druid priests celebrated the Festival of Samhain, or 'Summer's End'. They lit great bonfires and performed magic rites to ward off the dark supernatural powers of oncoming winter. Today, Christians turn to prayer instead of charms to overcome the powers of darkness. And the deeper, true meaning of All Hallows' Eve, should not be forgotten. As Christians, we all draw closer to Christ when we remember and give thanks for our loved ones and for others who have gone before us through the gates of death.

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

- | | | | | | |
|---------|------------|-----------|--------|--------------|----------|
| All | Hallows | Halloween | Druid | Priests | Festival |
| Samhain | Bonfires | Magic | Dark | Supernatural | Powers |
| Winter | Christians | Prayer | Charms | Deeper | True |
| Eve | Closer | Christ | Thanks | Loved | Death |
| Gone | | | | | |



Sudoku

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

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

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There are quite a lot of Holy Days in October, too many to list them all, but here are some that may be of interest.

1st Oct: 7th Earl of Shaftesbury – the Poor Man's Earl



Think of Piccadilly Circus, and that small statue of the angel poised with bow and arrow. Most people think it stands for Eros. It does not. It stands for An-teros, his brother, the god of selfless love. It is a memorial to the greatest Christian Victorian philanthropist, politician and social reformer of his generation – Lord Shaftesbury

Anthony Ashley Cooper, the 7th Earl of Shaftesbury (1801 – 1885) was a devout Christian who spent his life fighting to help ease the plight of lunatics, chimney sweeps, children in factories, women and children in the mines, opium addicts, and children without any education.

His own early life was loveless and bleak – his parents formal and frightening, his early schooldays a ‘horror’ of ‘cruelty and starvation’. The only love came from the family’s housekeeper, Maria Millis. A biographer wrote: ‘She provided for Ashley a model of Christian love that would form the basis for much of his later social activism and philanthropic work.’ The reality and homely practicality of her Christian love were a beacon for the young Ashley. She told him Bible stories, she taught him a prayer.

After Christ Church Oxford, where he proved an outstanding scholar, Ashley turned to politics. In 1826, aged 25, he was elected as Tory MP for Woodstock. He was eager to serve on parliamentary committees that got things done; his great life’s work had begun.

Lunatics: In 1827 lunatics were kept chained naked in straw, forced to sleep in their excrement. They were washed in freezing cold water, with one towel for 160 people and no soap. There was gross over-crowding and inedible food: asylums were places to die in.

Shaftesbury’s maiden speech in Parliament was in support of a Bill to improve conditions. He wrote: ‘By God’s blessing, my first effort has been for the advance of human happiness.’

It took years: from 1827 to 1884 he fought for a succession of Lunacy Acts, writing later of ‘the years of toil and care that, under God, I have bestowed on this melancholy and awful question.’

Child Labour and Factory Reform. Again, reform took years. Shaftesbury fighting for the Ten Hours Act from 1833, 1842, 1844, 1846 and 1847 – when it finally got through Parliament. No child under the age of 9 should work in the cotton or woollen industries below the age of 9, and no one under 18 must work more than ten hours a day.

Miners. In 1842 he fought to outlaw the employment of women and children in coal mines.

Climbing boys. Thousands of young boys were dying in terrible pain – scorched, blinded and suffocated by soot, or with cancer of the scrotum. Ashley fought for Bills in 1840, 1851, 1853, 1855, 1864 until finally the Chimney Sweepers Act 1875 closed the practise down.

Education reform: 1844 Ashley became president of the Ragged School Union that promoted education for poor children. He wrote that if it were to fail, 'I should die of a broken heart'.

Religion. Lord Shaftesbury was a devout Christian who became a leading figure in 19th century evangelical Anglicanism. He was President of British and Foreign Bible Society for nearly 30 years. He was very sympathetic to the Jews, and advocated their return to the Holy Land.

Lord Shaftesbury's funeral service at Westminster Abbey on the morning of 8th October 1885 drew thousands of people. The streets along the route were thronged with the poor: costermongers, flower-girls, boot-blacks, crossing sweepers, factory hands and many more. They waited for hours just to see his coffin go by. He was dearly loved by them as the 'Poor Man's Earl'. One biographer wrote: 'No man has in fact ever done more to lessen the extent of human misery, or to add to the sum total of human happiness.'

The great preacher Charles Spurgeon called him 'the best man of the age'. He 'lived for the oppressed', he was a 'moral anchor in a drifting generation', 'friend of every living thing', 'he had a 'fervent love to God, and hearty love to man.'

4th Oct: St Francis – and the Life of Simplicity

Just about the only thing most people know about Francis of Assisi is that he talked to the birds. Church-goers also know the popular hymn based on his famous prayer, 'Make me a channel of your Peace', which was sung at the funeral of Princess Diana.

However, Italy's patron saint, whose feast day is this month (the 4th) was a more complex, and some would say controversial character. His life spanned the end of the twelfth and beginning of the thirteenth centuries. He was born into a very wealthy family, but after what he called his 'conversion' standing before a crucifix. He renounced all his possessions. In fact, he stripped himself of his of his wealthy garments in a public square in his home-town, Assisi. For the rest of his life he and his followers, including his feminine counterpart. St Claire longed, prayed and worked for a life of simplicity – a lifestyle without luxury or privileges. For the Franciscan brothers and the Poor Claires. This meant no private possessions at all. Francis saw that many poor people without these things, actually seemed to live happier and more fulfilling lives than the ambitious rich. He spoke of a simple life not shaped by money or power but by love and mutual concern. As his hymn says, 'it is in giving of ourselves that we receive'.

Of course, poverty; in our modern western world is seldom a matter of blissful simplicity, as present-day Franciscans recognise. For too many it is a matter of poor diet, over-crowded rooms, rough sleeping and unemployment. The call of today's followers of Francis and Claire is that those who are better-off should 'live more simply, so that others can simply live'. Christians follow a Master who said that he came with 'good news for the poor'. They believe that many of us today can be that good news.

6th Oct: William Tyndale, Bible translator and Reformation martyr

This month is the 501th anniversary of the beginning of the Reformation, and so a good time to pay tribute to an outstanding English scholar, translator and martyr of the Reformation.

William Tyndale (c. 1494 – 6th October 1536) was born near Gloucester, and studied at Oxford and Cambridge. He could speak seven languages, and was proficient in ancient Hebrew and Greek. As a priest, his abilities would have taken him a long way, but by 1523 Tyndale's only desire was to translate the Bible, so that English men and women could read it for themselves. It became his life's passion.

For Tyndale had rediscovered a vital doctrine that the Church had been ignoring: that of justification by faith. He had found it when reading Erasmus's Greek edition of the New Testament. In fact, his life's work was well summed up in some words of his mentor, Erasmus: "Christ desires His mysteries to be published abroad as widely as possible. I would that [the Gospels and the epistles of Paul] were translated into all languages, of all Christian people, and that they might be read and known."

Tyndale's translation was the first Bible to be published in English, the first to draw directly from Hebrew and Greek texts, and the first English translation to take advantage of the printing press. It was to cost him his life. For Tyndale's work was seen as a direct challenge to the power of both the Roman Catholic Church and the laws of England in maintaining the Church's position.

When the authorities had tried to stop his translation, Tyndale fled to Hamburg, Wittenberg, Cologne, and finally to the Lutheran city of Worms. It was there, in 1525, his New Testament emerged. It was quickly smuggled into England, and King Henry VIII, Cardinal Wolsey, and others, were furious.

Tyndale moved on to Antwerp, where for nine more years he continued his work. Then in May 1535 he was betrayed, arrested, and jailed in a castle near Brussels. Tied to the stake for strangulation and burning, his dying prayer was that the King of England's eyes would be opened. Sure enough, two years later King Henry authorised the Great Bible for the Church of England, which relied largely on Tyndale's work. Not only that, but in 1611, the 54 scholars who produced the King James Bible drew very heavily from Tyndale. Even today we honour him: in 2002, Tyndale was placed at number 26 in the BBC's poll of 100 Greatest Britons.

18th Oct: Thank you, Dr Luke!

by David Winter

'Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, bless the bed that I lie on' – my grandma taught me that one. At least it meant I never forgot the names of the writers of the four Gospels. This month Luke, the writer of the third of them, has his feast day – 18th October.

He was, we learn from the letters of St Paul, a 'physician' – an educated man and probably the only one of the writers of the New Testament who was not a Jew. In modern terms, he was Turkish. Paul took him as one of his missionary team on a long journey around the Middle East, and they clearly became close friends. Under house arrest later in his life Paul could write, 'only Luke is with me'.

However, it is his Gospel which has established him as a major figure in the history of the Christian Church. Mark's Gospel may have more drama, Matthew's more prophetic background and John's a more profound sense of the mystery of the divine, but Luke offers us a Jesus who is utterly and believably real. This man

turned no one away, reserved his harshest words for hypocrites and religious grandees, cared for the marginalised, the poor, the persecuted, the handicapped and the sinful. His Gospel is full of people we can recognise – indeed, in whom we can often recognise ourselves.

He was also a masterly story-teller. Try, for instance, the story of the Prodigal Son (Luke 15:11-32). Read it (this time) not as a sacred text but as a brilliant piece of story-telling: subtle repetitions ('your son, this brother of yours'), believable characters, drama and profound emotion. There is the older brother, so cynical about his sibling's alleged reformation, the 'prodigal' himself, so hesitant about throwing himself on his father's mercy after the folly of his earlier behaviour, and there is the father, of course, abandoning the dignity of his role in the family and actually running to welcome his wretched son's return.

There are more women in Luke's Gospel than in any of the others, but also more poor people, more lepers, more 'sinners' and tax-collectors, more 'outsiders' who are shown to be 'inside' the love of Christ. This, for many of us, is the great Gospel of inclusion and compassion. Here is a Jesus for the whole world and for every one of us. Thank you, Dr Luke!

24th Oct: Felix of Thibiuca – the man who would not give up his Bible

Do you value your Bible? If so, Felix of Thibiuca (247 – 303) is a good patron saint for you. The year was 303, and Diocletian was emperor in Rome. In February of that year he decided that Christians were NOT a good thing. So he issued an edict: all copies of the Christian Scriptures and all liturgical books were to be surrendered and burnt. Diocletian had decided to 'wind up' this upstart religion.

The persecution began in Rome. By June of that year, the edict had reached North Africa, and Thibiuca, where Felix was bishop. Felix was arrested and interrogated. Yes, he said, he did have a copy of the Scriptures. No, he said, he would not hand them over.

Felix was a highly respected bishop, and even the authorities were loath to take immediate action against him. So they gave him three days grace to see sense, and back down. But Felix prayed and became only more certain that this was a conflict between the commandments of God and the commandments of men.

At the end of the three days Felix was referred to the proconsul. He still refused to hand over his Scriptures. His last words in public were memorable "God, I thank you. I have passed 56 years in this world. I have preserved my chastity; I have observed the Gospels; I have preached the faith and the truth. Lord God of heaven and earth, Jesus Christ, I bend my neck as a sacrifice for you, who abides for ever." He was condemned to be beheaded at Carthage, and became one of the first martyrs to die under Diocletian.

Needless to say, Diocletian did not succeed in destroying the Scriptures. Today there are hundreds of millions of copies around the world, and this month, Sunday, 23rd October, Christians will thank God for the Scriptures when they celebrate Bible Sunday.

31st Oct: All Hallows Eve – or Holy Evening

Modern Halloween celebrations have their roots with the Celtic peoples of pre-Christian times.

In those long-ago days, on the last night of October, the Celts celebrated the Festival of Samhain, or 'Summer's End'. The priests, or Druids, performed ceremonies to thank and honour the sun. For there was a very dark side to all this: Samhain also signalled the onset of winter, a time when it was feared that unfriendly ghosts, nature-spirits, and witches roamed the earth, creating mischief. So the Druid priests lit great bonfires and performed magic rites to ward off or appease these dark supernatural powers.

Then the Romans arrived, and brought their Harvest Festival which honoured the Goddess Pomona with gifts of apples and nuts. The two festivals slowly merged.

When Christianity arrived still later, it began to replace the Roman and Druid religions. 1st November – All Saints' Day – was dedicated to all Christian Martyrs and Saints who had died. It was called 'All Hallows' Day'. The evening before became an evening of prayer and preparation and was called 'All Hallows' Eve', The Holy Evening, later shortened to 'Halloween'.

For many centuries, however, fear of the supernatural remained strong. During the Middle Ages, animal costumes and frightening masks were worn to ward off the evil spirits of darkness on Halloween. Magic words and charms were used to keep away bad luck, and everybody believed that witches ride about on broomsticks. Fortune telling was popular, and predicting the future by the use of nuts and apples was so popular that Halloween is still sometimes known as Nutcrack Night or Snap-Apple Night.

Today, Christians have learned to turn to prayer instead of charms to overcome the powers of darkness. And the deeper, true meaning of All Hallows' Eve, should not be forgotten. As Christians, we all draw closer to Christ when we remember and give thanks for our loved ones and for others who have gone before us through the gates of death.



Don't forget to change to GMT
Summer Time ends Sunday 25th October





Roggie Dog - *If you have a doggie, or even a cat, do you allow him/her to sleep on the bed? I know that many of you probably don't approve of anyone – or anything - with four-paws being allowed to go on the big bed, let alone sleep on it - but my view (shared by Mummy as she has no choice) is that there are numerous health benefits to sharing – a greater sense of security, reduction in stress – for both of us – so we just have to ignore all the disadvantages – not that I am saying all doggies (and certainly not cats) should jump up or sometimes/always sleep on the big bed, but I most definitely do!*



I don't know about you but I find changing the bed really hard work but oh what fun!



Mummy has the first task of stripping the bed whilst I try and run off with some of the bedding – sheets and duvet covers are a bit too big for me but many a pillow case has gone missing – only three re-appearing from the washing machine instead of four.



When it comes to re-making our bed with nice clean bedding – always best to have clean paws - it is my job to help once again with the pillow cases – Mummy counts them and hunts down any that were late arriving back upstairs having had to catch a later wash and then it's time for a pillow fight. Mum tries to put the covers on the fluffy pillows whilst I grab an end and try to pull them off again.



I don't help with the duvet cover, whilst Mum does the inside out bit at least, but I adjust it all later to where I think it should be, and it is a lovely place to hide my doggie chews. Even better to pop a ball under the cover and not tell Mummy.



I'm a "night owl" just like Mum – I like to play mad games late into the evening when Mummy wants to watch television before bed-time - although sometimes I do go upstairs first but usually told to come down again. Our routine is that I usually pop out on to the patio before bed – just to check all is well outside (I'm a guard dog you see – another of my duties) and that Harry or Toby (cats from next door) aren't anywhere to be seen on my patch. My favourite trick on Mum is to wait until we are settled and just as Mummy says "goodnight Roggie" and we've had a little cuddle pull the duvet off altogether! It's quite a task but I can usually manage it at least half way on to the floor before Mummy yanks it back again. This of course can go on for ages before mummy says "STOP IT – that's enough – GOODNIGHT ROGGIE". Time to go to sleep...or is it!



I usually wait until Mummy is asleep (or at least I think she is) then sometimes slip back downstairs for a drink and a bite to eat, although I always take a chew to bed with me. There isn't much to do on my own in the dark, with the curtains closed, so quickly rush up the stairs back to Mum. I sometimes sleep on one of my own pillows on the floor by the bed or under the little chair ready to jump back up to Mummy if she stirs. Sometimes I go to sleep at the bottom of the bed – never far away from my Mum, always ready for morning cuddles before we get up.





What is the origin of evil spirits?

This article is adapted from a book by the late Canon Richard Bewes, formerly of All Souls Langham Place, London, 'The Top 100 Questions' (Christian Focus)

Halloween is the month of ghosts and witches and evil spirits. Have you ever wondered where evil spirits come from, and how we are to view the unseen world of evil and occultism?

The Bible tells us that evil spirits come from the created angelic order. They were not created as evil beings, for all of God's creation was good (Genesis 3:1). The Bible tells us that a number of angels, headed by Satan, or Lucifer, rebelled against God's authority and fell (Isaiah 14:12-15; Ezekiel 28:11-19).

The serpent, Satan, is leader of the fallen angels, and opposes himself to God. But evil and good are not co-equal. 'Dualism' (belief in the equal and permanent existence of evil alongside the good) has no place in the Bible. Unlike goodness, evil has a beginning and will have an end. Satan's final destruction is already assured. (Revelation 12:12; 20:10).

The world of the occult (from the Latin: *occultus*, 'secret', 'hidden') is the intrusion into the forbidden territory of superstition, fortune telling, magic and spiritism. Its downfall is finally assured through Jesus. His early ministry established a bridgehead against the evil unseen world; hence the hostile, and sometimes violent, reaction of the demons. (Mark 1:23-27; 32-34).

Jesus had no fear of demons, and nor need the believer. It is important that Christians avoid becoming obsessed by the unseen world – to the extent that we become either intimidated, or fascinated. After the showing in London of a film featuring the occult, a number of cinema viewers went for counselling. They were under the impression that they had been 'taken over' by evil spirits. They had not. All 20 recovered after a course of prescribed tablets. They had only been victims of suggestion.

We are wise, then, not to imagine, as some do, that every sin, habit, illness or misfortune is due directly to the activity of the Devil and must therefore be 'exorcised'. Terrible damage has been done in this respect by well-meaning but uninformed Christian leaders.

Faced by Christ's authority, the kingdom of spirits has no option but to shrink and retreat. Magic spells and charms have no power over the true Christian (provided we do not open ourselves to their influence), for 'the One who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world' (1 John 4:4). If we resist the devil, he will flee from us (James 4:7). All occultism is to be ruthlessly shunned (Leviticus 19:31; 1 Samuel 28; Isaiah 8:19, 20; Acts 19:18-20).

The Bible is quite clear that the demonic world is already doomed and defeated (Colossians 2:15; Hebrews 2:14,15). It is the death of Jesus that has achieved this victory. We are to be confident, but not complacent – for Satan's kingdom has yet to concede its defeat at the Cross. Its final destruction will be at the return of Christ.

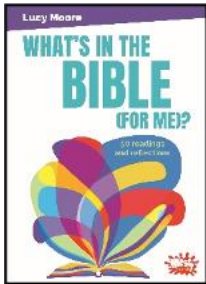




Book Review

What's in the Bible (for me)? – 50 readings and reflections

By Lucy Moore, BRF, £4.99



Lucy Moore's pocket-sized guide to the Bible takes readers on an epic journey through 4,000 years of history. Spanning Old and New Testaments from Genesis to Revelation in 50 bite-sized readings, the founder and leader of Messy Church writes for families and individuals who are new to the Bible: its riches, puzzles and complexities.

Taking a single theme, she explores 'the big journey' of God's people in order to help the reader to better understand their own journey. She explains the different kinds of writing within the Bible and the different perspectives of the writers.

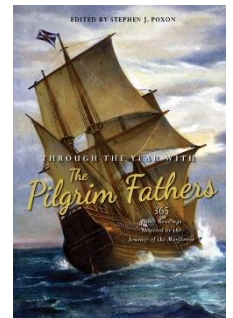
For anyone who wonders where to start reading the Bible, this is the perfect introduction and companion. It will, writes Lucy, 'fit in your bag or pocket, so it can go with you to the place where you have time to read it – on the bus or train, in the cafe or playground or on your lunch break. Scribble on it; wave it at your local minister or Christian friend and make them answer your questions or listen to your theories. Safe travels!'

Through the Year with the Pilgrim Fathers – 365 daily readings

By Stephen Poxon, Lion Hudson, £12.99

The year 2020 witnesses the 400th anniversary of the voyage made by the Pilgrim Fathers, who sailed from England to America on board the Mayflower.

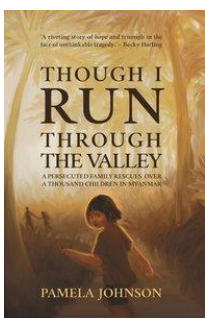
This epic excursion signalled one of the most significant episodes in Christian history, making as it did an enormous impact on the trajectory of Christianity in the USA.



Through the Year with the Pilgrim Fathers is a commemorative edition featuring excerpts relating to that event. It is a story of faith, adventure and courage. Each excerpt is married to a verse of Scripture and a prayer, providing 365 daily readings telling the story of great exploits in God's service.

Though I run through the Valley

By Pamela Johnson, Authentic, £9.99



At a time of ethnic cleansing and military dictatorship, being a Christian in predominantly Buddhist Myanmar brought huge risks and danger. Yet despite persecution, one family chose to use the weapon of love to combat evil.

'Though I Run Through the Valley' tells the incredible story of three generations of Karen Christians living out their love for God and each other by rescuing over 1000 children who have been orphaned, abandoned or made destitute by their country's upheaval. Theirs is not a story of merely evading the enemy and surviving, but instead one of seeking out the vulnerable and teaching them how to thrive. Daring to trust God against all the odds, this is the powerful story of one family's sacrifice over many years to protect and show the love of Christ to many lost children in Myanmar.





The Revd Michael Burgess continues his series on animals and birds as seen in art and scripture... this month he considers 'St Francis of Assisi preaching to the fish' by Luc-Olivier Merson.



On 4th October we give thanks for one of the most loved saints in the church – Francis of Assisi. He died in 1226, but his example and witness have lived on to inspire Christians through the centuries.

His was a life focused on the crib and the cross, Lady Poverty and the stigmata, suffering and transfiguration. But also, it was a life marked by a deep love of creation: St Francis had a special nearness to all creatures great and small. As we read the stories of Thomas

of Celano, we learn how he tamed a wolf in Gubbio, how swallows would chirp and fly around his head, how lambs would come close and gaze with delight, how his faithful donkey wept as the saint approached death, and in this month's painting, how fish would come to the shore to hear him preach.

Thomas relates how Francis returned some fish that had been caught to the water, telling them not to be caught again. They lingered near the boat, listening to the saint until he gave them permission to leave.

The sermon to the fish is portrayed in this work by Luc-Olivier Merson, a French artist who lived from 1846 to 1920. He is better known for his work with designs for banknotes, postage stamps, and the basilica of Sacré – Coeur in Montmartre. Here in this canvas, we see St Francis with followers young and old, a faithful dog and the fish at the water's edge.

What was the saint telling them? I think that they were loved and valued as part of the rich tapestry of God's creation, and they must return that love. It is the mood of the Benedicite where all things that move in the earth, the skies and the seas are exhorted to praise the Lord and magnify him forever. St Francis captures that mood in his own Canticle of the Sun.

In the weeks and months of lockdown many of us have had the time to look afresh at our relationship with the world of nature as we have journeyed through the seasons of spring and summer. We have learnt to wonder at the richness and variety of creation. We need to take that lesson into the 'new normal' as restrictions are gradually relaxed. The clock and the complexity of life may easily take over again, but St Francis is inviting us to journey with him in simplicity and joy as we praise God with all His creatures:

'Let all things their Creator bless and worship Him in humbleness.'





Puzzle Solutions:

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

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

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

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

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



Contract us at: *St Mary's with St Andrew's Parish Office*
St Andrew's Community Church, Hall Street, Stockport, SK1 4DA.

Telephone: 0161 429 6564 **Mobile:** 07421 000123 (Sue)

Stockport Parish Church *[St Mary's in the Marketplace]*
Churchgate, Stockport, SK1 1YG

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
Facebook: *St Thomas' Church Stockport*

St Luke's, Northumberland Road, Brinnington, SK5 8LS

Telephone: 0161 406 8160 **Mobile:** 07711 355064 (Linda)
Website: stlukesbrinnington.co.uk
Facebook: *St Luke's Brinnington*

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

Associate Minister: *Rev Jess Piper*
Curate: *Marie Flint*
Readers: *Brenda Baxendale / Rita Waters*

