



WELCOME



To all Readers of “New Leaves”, the magazine
for the Parish of St David’s with St. Michael
and All Angels.

The editorial team invites you to submit appropriate articles which
reflect Church, Parish or Community interest

Please send as Word documents to:

newleavesnews@gmail.com

Please note that all articles will be printed with the author’s name

Enjoy this month’s read.

We will welcome critical comments on the magazine

Editorial Team: Bill Pattinson and Richard Barnes supported by
Sue Holden and Stephanie Aplin

New Leaves December/ January 2016

Dear Friends at St David's and St Michael's and all who are reading this on our websites

On January 1st I will be taking my last service in the parish, before moving to our house in Oxford. We will be downsizing considerably, and as I write Jeanie is putting furniture and other things on Gumtree.com. We have never lived in our own house, and we are looking forward to making a home of our own after many years in vicarages. There is a small garden, and I will enjoy having time to plant and grow a wildlife friendly garden.

Our children are now all adults. Kate is in Amsterdam, studying for a Masters degree in Music, Ben is working in London for a Marine Biology NGO (look at their work via this link <https://blueventures.org>) and Jessie has just gone to the University of East Anglia at Norwich, where she is reading English, singing in the Chamber Choir and playing sax in a jazz band.

I am not retiring, but will be working three days a week at St Michael's Hospice in Basingstoke. My new work will involve a commute, and I am wondering how to fill the time. Reviving my French, listening to classic novels, or favourite music. I'll be refining my playlist on Spotify. My

work will be challenging but very fulfilling. My role is to be a listening ear for patients approaching their death, their families and the dedicated staff of the hospice. I feel that my parish ministry has been preparing me for this work, and I pray for sensitivity and grace to be a channel of God's compassion.

As I reflect on time spent in this parish, I have many good memories of worship in the two churches, supportive friendships made, happy and sad times marked in the presence of God. I will remember the music that has enhanced our worship in both churches - very different but equally a blessing and an inspiration.

I will also remember things I have done less well or left undone, and the frustrations of a delayed Transformation Project over the last year. There have been misunderstandings between our two churches, which have been very difficult at times. I wonder how that can be resolved for my successor.

The memories are almost all good. Both churches have been exemplary in offering a welcome that has transcended differences. This is a much needed example in today's world where increasingly difference is viewed with suspicion and scapegoating, which gives tacit permission to intolerance and even violence.

Welcome and diversity are not only ways of drawing people into our fellowship, they are at the heart of the Christian gospel. Increasingly, progressive Christians are coming to see that faith is not mainly about what you believe in your head, but about what you practice in your daily lives. Jesus never asked his disciples to believe any doctrines, but

to trust him and follow him. Then he took them to places and people they would never have known, and he opened his arms and his heart to them, challenging the disciples to follow his example. Faith does give security, but our security in the love of God should lead us to new ways of expressing our love for God and our neighbours.

It was a bold step to rebuild St David's Church and with the rebuilding came the vision of transformation. Could we make a space that was beautiful and sacred but also open to neighbours and strangers to share in common ownership. I hope to hear in the future that both churches are open to the local community and widely used, not just on Sundays.

Belonging to the body of Christ, and recognising that body in our neighbours is a life-changing experience. Some of us can hold up our hands and say that coming to St Michael's or St David's or another Christian community has made us who we are, expanded and nurtured us, given us friendships and a rich inner life, as we seek to go further into the divine presence. It may have been sadness or loss or being lost ourselves that first brought us in. At church we meet the comforting and sustaining love of God reflected and lived out by his people. It's a challenge that our two churches constantly have before them. I will remember you in my thoughts and prayers. God bless you all.

Tom



RHYMING TOM HONEY

With thanks and love to Tom and Jeanie

Poets, just like hymn-writers, know
How hard it is to do without rhymes –
Somehow they simply flow and flow,
Their chimes as regular as time.

And though I've tried my very best
To steer clear (see what I mean)
Of rhyming words, as if by request
They rush back, as if they'd never been

Away. Take for instance, TOM
Or HONEY. Rhymes are two a penny!
Come on! Don't tell me you're such zom-
Bies you really can't think of any!

I mean, it's clear in the case of TOM,
That any nice rhyme goes down a bomb –
His ready smile that says Shalom!
His warmth, cosy as any pom-pom...

And, look, we haven't even begun
To think of HONEY, either set or run-
Ny. Alert as an Easter Bunny,
TH is always on the money:

His smile (that again!) is always sunny,
He senses the absurd and funny,
He dances as well as any tunny
Caught and wriggling in a gunny...

Whatevs! Whatevs! the poet cries,
And I'm not even joking! the poet shouts,
However hard you try, those rhymes
Simply cannot be shut out.
They simply cannot be shut out,
They flock like gulls to the end of the line –
So give me a break, this poem's about
To end without rhyming, and that's just fine.
Line / Fine ? I mean, perfectly OK.
At the end of the day.
I've had my say.
Leave it!

Lawrence Sail

Written for the St David's Christmas Concert

27 November 2016

Memories of Tom

I first met Tom with Jeanie, early in 2010, at the top of Bury Meadow, close to the Vicarage in Howell Road. I had arranged to show them round the incumbent's residence in my role as Church Warden. I learnt much later that they recognised me as a Church Warden immediately on seeing me. How disappointing! It was a very embarrassing tour of the Vicarage as the house was overrun with students, sub-letting having occurred quite prodigiously. Tom and Jeanie took it all in good heart knowing that if Tom was successful in becoming the incumbent of St David's Parish, they would have their new home redecorated and furnished throughout.

Prior to Tom taking up his post in June 2010, I had to meet him again in his home where he lived in Cathedral Close as Canon Treasurer. I sought his approval and support for me to train as a Reader. Obviously at that time he knew nothing about me, so he asked the advice of John Henton, the previous vicar of the Parish. I realised that Tom and I would need to build a good working relationship so that we were able to support each other in our future ministry in the Parish. I feel really honoured to have worked with Tom over the last six years. He has given me quiet, but thoughtful, advice in leading worship, preaching, pastoral care and, more recently, taking funerals.

It was always a joy to meet with him for supervision, usually out at Silverton, where his love of coffee, the garden and sharing our joint enthusiasm for sport, especially golf and cricket, could too easily interfere with discussion on my own developing role as a Reader.

What I will always remember about Tom is the generosity he showed in giving me the opportunity to be so actively involved in Church life.

I especially valued, and continue to value, the times when I deaconed for Tom and other priests. Tom's presidency at the Eucharist is always very special, whether at a 9.30 Sunday morning service or a smaller service perhaps in the Lady Chapel. Joyful yet reverent, celebratory but uncluttered, welcoming and inspiring, he prepares the Lord's table and invites all to share in the sacred feast with humility, grace and great love. I have always been amazed at Tom's memory for people's names, for during the Thursday morning Communion he would often offer the host using Christian names, only possible when you know everyone there by that name, and it was occasionally twenty or more.

Besides Tom's great desire for inclusion for all among our Christian brethren, he passionately values God's creation and genuinely supports activities which have climate change or animal preservation on their agendas. For many years now, along with his family, he has attended Greenbelt, a Christian festival of arts, faith and justice whose participants in recent years have grown to 20000. Justice in trade is yet another of Tom's hopes and since he began his ministry among us a Fairtrade stall made a regular appearance after worship on a Sunday morning.

Tom trained for Ordination at a time when the Parish priest led worship, met people, visited the sick, buried the dead and cared for souls. As such he is a people's man and never happier than when listening, talking and sharing fellowship. His journey now continues as he becomes a chaplain to St Michael's Hospice in Basingstoke, a role for which he is truly called and plays to all his strengths.

Thank you for all you have achieved and given in our Parish, Tom. God be with you!

Bill Pattinson

Memories of Tom

In 2013 I'd been living and working with the Society of Mary and Martha at Sheldon for a year when I started the journey that would result in my training for ordination. The diocese wanted me to experience a 'regular parish' and, in its wisdom, directed me towards St David's and the tender-hearted care of the Revd Canon Tom Honey. The first thing to do of course was look him up on social media. What kind of fellow is this priest? And so, my original impressions were formed by the TED talk he gave a decade ago, in which he thoughtfully and gently considered how it is that so many natural disasters could occur in a world created by a good and almighty God.

Over the following 18 months I discovered Tom to be a man and priest without guile, vulnerable but steadfastly present to the pain and suffering of those around him, warm-hearted and generous with compassion, not a human lost in the busyness of doing, but a human being, with struggles worn as vestments.

I perhaps never knew until I left, how special a church St David's is, and how wonderfully Tom has held that family in Christ's name, his gentle welcome and graceful teaching mirrored in my experience of finding there a home – the sort of home where you do not need to watch your every motion but can slump down on the sofa and become comfortably, completely yourself among others all at ease.

I confess myself a fan. As I write my essay on church leadership this year, I'll need to talk about techniques and skillsets, but as for me, I'll always turn to the person rooted in openhearted prayer who can look at me and know me. Tom Honey is such a man. His new vocation does not surprise me; it's the same vocation to be with people as we all struggle to

live and love together, though perhaps without the burden of building maintenance! May God bless Tom and Jeanie and their family in all that is to come, just as they have been an unforgettable blessing to me.

Tess Lowe



Servant Tom

– mainly from a St Michael's perspective (with apologies to Graham Kendrick)



From Cathedral you came, Honey Babe,
Entered our Parish, Vicar ready made,
Blonde Apollo, Master of the Fête,
Reluctant Keeper of the Honeygate.
This is our Priest, our Canon Tom,
We come today to honour him,
To give our thanks for his daily offering
Of witness to the Servant King.

There in the incense of St Mike's
Humble pose in chasuble he strikes,
Mellifluous Benediction meditations,
And Corpus Christi perambulations.
This is our Priest, our Father Tom,
We come today to honour him,
To give our thanks for his holy offering
Of worship to the Servant King.

Hands that follow birds across the sky,
Warm comfort to weary shoulders apply.
As St David's West End goes askew,
It's SuperTom to the rescue.
This is our Priest, our hands-on Tom,
We come today to honour him,
To give our thanks for this six year offering
Of service to the Servant King.
Men's breakfasts, Parish lunches,
School assemblies, keys in bunches.
PCCs with awkward members,
Michaelmas in late Septembers.
This was his work, our Vicar Tom,
We come today to be with him,
To give him thanks for the gracious offering
Of living for his Servant King.

Richard Barnes



Memories of Tom

I first met Tom at a homelessness event in Exeter. He was instantly warm, open, friendly and kind, his lovely manner and welcoming spirit a confirmation that I should start worshipping at St David's as an initial step in considering ordination. Tom had a reputation for being an encouraging and supportive vicar and has journeyed alongside four women in the last three years as they progressed through the priestly discernment process!

I have always found it easy to be 'real' with Tom, to be able to relate to him in my humanness with all my flaws, disappointments and questions about life, as well as being able to talk with him about deep issues of Christian faith and the role of a Priest. His own transparency and compassion have made this possible. It's a joy to spend time with Tom because he clearly not only loves people and conversation, but relishes an opportunity for coffee and cake...not to mention gin and tonic!

St David's is described as a warm, open and welcoming church. A church's culture is clearly affected by its priest and for me Tom has exemplified these characteristics. I have always felt that St David's was a community in which my involvement was welcomed but in which it was OK to make mistakes...and to laugh about them. Some of my most precious times have been sharing silly humour, talking and praying together in the vestry before and after services. Serving at the early morning Eucharist on a Tuesday and Friday were really special, intimate gatherings through which Tom's heart for prayer, his deep commitment to the sacraments and his peaceful, open presence enabled me to learn

much and feel closely ‘held’ within the St David’s community. Tom’s reputation for spiritually and psychologically profound preaching is well deserved but I have also loved the joyfulness with which he enters into family services, particularly some of his double acts with Christopher!!

I cannot write about my memories of Tom without including wonderful times spent with Jeanie, Kate, Ben and Jess. Alongside his faith, Tom’s wife and family are clearly the most precious priorities in his life and, as a person new to St David’s and indeed Exeter, the Honey family played a huge part in me feeling loved and accepted within the community. They have also been massive encouragers and listeners as I grappled with, and continue to wrestle through, the ordination journey. I have felt utterly safe to laugh and cry with them and treasure times spent with the family...their children are all wonderful individuals with such delightful gifts of presence and deep communication yet also able to have the most outrageous fun! What a joy!

Although life at St David’s and, indeed visits to Exeter, will never be the same again without Tom and Jeanie present, I am thrilled that they have decided to accept a new challenge. Returning to Oxford seems like such a wise decision for them now that the children have left home and Tom has an opportunity to use his compassionate pastoral gifts as a chaplain. I can so imagine him offering beautifully holistic and prayerful support within a hospice setting. I send Tom and Jeanie love and prayers for much joy and fulfilment for the adventure ahead and huge thanks for all their ministry at St David’s. I am excited to share future gin and tonics in Oxford – thanks for moving nearer to Birmingham guys!!

Catherine Matlock

Some Memories of Tom's time at St David's

- Tom demonstrating his commitment to us by coming to sit with the Church and Chapel wardens and other members of our churches at the Archdeacon's Visitation, before he was even licensed to the parish.
- at a preliminary meeting with the Churchwardens to discuss his Induction, not batting an eyelid at finding our downstairs loo full of chitting potatoes, despite falling over them. There are many other incidents of him embracing the ups and downs of church life, dealing positively with the little things that go wrong, from finding no water in the font to his impromptu vocal solos when he forgets to turn his radio mike off, with a smile.
- his enthusiasm for working lunches in Bostons, accompanied by coffee.
- his introduction of ground coffee after the Sunday morning service to add to the welcoming atmosphere. Tom is a great welcomer and very inclusive. He reaches out to the wider community and encourages us as a church to do the same.



- his introduction of the Thursday morning 10.30 Communion, followed by a period of fellowship and ... coffee. We have had many happy times on Thursday mornings, and have been able to get to know others who cannot make the Sunday services or who go to St Michael's. The same is true of the Parish Lunches at the College and the Farmers Union, and, I am told, the Men's Breakfast.
- his fondness for appalling puns.
- along with a number of other members of the congregation, watching his TED talk on YouTube to see what we could expect- and not being disappointed.
- him bringing the portable lectern down to preach from among us, his willingness to illustrate his sermons with his own vulnerabilities, the way he never shies away from difficult issues or from being controversial if necessary. There have been many good sermons but I particularly remember him having the courage, in a question and answer session with the
- Junior Church, to say that he didn't know.
- the sensitive funeral service he took for someone who had taken their own life.
- him sitting and praying with us after Clive's mother died and our feeling that he was standing beside us in our loss.
- and lots more...

Sue Wilson

Tribute to Tom

I first met Tom when he was Canon Pastor at Exeter Cathedral, where I was an active member of the congregation. At the time I had only recently returned to faith, and Tom and Jeanie provided a model of Christian living that I found truly inspiring. When I felt God calling me away from the Cathedral to worship in a parish church, it seemed obvious that I would follow the Honeys to St. Davids, where Tom was now the incumbent. Shortly after joining St Davids I began the official Church of England discernment process which eventually saw me ordained deacon this year. Throughout this process Tom's gentle and steady support and encouragement have been a great comfort and blessing. He has been my priest, wise spiritual guide and friend for a decade, and I will miss having him and Jeanie living close by terribly. The warmth and kindness I have received from the whole Honey family will stay with me forever. Exeter's loss is Oxford and Basingstoke's gain, and I wish Tom and Jeanie every happiness on the next stage of their journey together.

Helen Drever

St David's Eucharist December

December 04 : Advent 2

Reading 1	Isaiah 11: 1-10	Katy Tyler
Reading 2	Romans 15: 4-13	Suzi Leather
Gospel	Matthew 3: 1-12	
Time of prayer		Bill Pattinson

Junior Church: Sarah Harrison

December 11 : Advent 3

Reading 1	Isaiah 35: 1-10	Pam Smith
Reading 2	James 5: 7-10	Emma White
Gospel	Matthew 11: 2-11	
Time of prayer		Hilary Francis

Junior Church: Helen Sail

December 18 : Advent 4 (Family Service) Carol Service

Reading 1	~	
Reading 2	~	
Gospel	~	
Time of prayer		

No Junior Church

December 24 : Midnight and 25th Christmas Day

Reading 1	Isaiah 9: 2-7	Lawrence Sail (Midnight Service)	Geoff Crockett (Christmas Day)
Reading 2	Hebrews 1: 1-4	Dilys Thorp (Midnight Service)	Tom Honey (Christmas Day)
Gospel	Luke 2: 1-14 (15-20)		
Time of prayer		Jeanie Honey (Midnight Service) Tom Honey (Christmas Day)	

No Junior Church



St David's Eucharist January

January 01 : 1st Sunday after Christmas

Reading 1	Isaiah 63: 7-9	Richard Johnson
Reading 2	Hebrews 2: 10-18	Charlotte Townsend
Gospel	Matthew 2: 13-23	
Time of prayer		Bill Pattinson

Junior Church: *tbc*

January 08 : Epiphany

Reading 1	Isaiah 60: 1-6	Gina Redman
Reading 2	Ephesians 3: 1-12	Philip Walker
Gospel	Matt 2: 1-12	
Time of prayer		Helena Walker

Junior Church: *tbc*

January 15 : 2nd Sunday after Epiphany (Family Service led by Simon) "Come and See"

Reading 1	~	
Reading 2	~	
Gospel	~	
Time of prayer		

No Junior Church

January 22 : 3rd Sunday after Epiphany

Reading 1	Isaiah 9: 1-4	Jeremy Lawford
Reading 2	1 Corinthians 1 : 10-18	Paula Lawford
Gospel	Matthew 4: 12-23	
Time of prayer		Ian Cartwright

Junior Church: *tbc*

January 29 : 4th Sunday after Epiphany

Reading 1	Micah 6: 1-8	Ann Watts
Reading 2	1 Corinthians 1: 18-31	Keith Postlethwaite
Gospel	Matthew 5: 1-12	
Time of prayer		Robert Mitchell

Junior Church: *tbc*



December & January: some thoughts from St Michael's

Depending on how you ask the question “Who do you think you are?” you could cause offence or initiate a new series of BBC television programmes. Some well-known faces are the subjects of the current series, discovering surprising, heart-warming or distressing moments in their ancestry. The obverse of that question, it seems to me, is the one asked by the arrogantly famous (or those who assume they are famous): “Do you know who I am?” apparently when trying to upgrade flights or get a better table in a restaurant.

When I was at school in Johannesburg in the sixties, a subject that appeared on the curriculum was “Race Studies”. I think the intention was for us to know our place and that of others in the social structure. There were obvious identifying features of the different groups populating the country to which one could not pretend blindness; migration and conflict played their parts in building what is now called the Rainbow Nation. To use these differences to establish superiority we now acknowledge to be immoral; to use Biblical quotations to underpin it even more so. The teacher designated for the task, Phoebe Masterax, was honest with us: she supported neither content nor intention of the lessons. We copied the notes, maps and quotations and then she gave us the unrecorded version. The written stuff was for the School Inspectors,

should they call, but the unwritten remains strongly in my memory. She had worked closely with the Indian community in Natal, descendants of the slaves who had worked in the sugar plantations and knew at first hand the deprivations and difficulties that non-Whites faced in the days of Apartheid.

When later I arrived in London to continue post-graduate studies, I was quite shocked at how many English people presumed to tell me my identity: I was a White South African, clearly privileged, and wrong, in their eyes. It was with some satisfaction that I was able to tell them I was British by birth and not a supporter of the then South African government. Whether or not I was believed is another matter. I make this point because in the most recent series of lectures at St Michael's, Professor David Horrell addressed the issues of Ethnicity, Race and Religion in early Christian and Jewish texts. There is not one feature that brings people together, but many commonalities allowing the development of a sense of people-hood.

The recent Radio 4 Reith Lectures, interestingly, also dealt with identity. Kwame Anthony Appiah talked about four main themes: Culture, Colour, Country and Creed, even mentioning some of those abhorrent ideas that popped up in Race Studies all those years ago. He also said "What binds citizens together is a commitment to sharing the life of a modern state, united by its institutions, procedures and precepts." This could almost be guidance for our membership of the Christian kingdom which is not bound by earthly, geographical measures but has limitless spiritual existence. It is because we are not one-dimensional in our identity that we need to understand God as Three-in-One, the aspects or facets of the Supreme Being reflected on our own lives as we explore our own identities. One does not exclude

another; we gain layers of identity, rather like adding pages to a book, as we grow in faith, age and wisdom. Amy Down, confirmed here by Bishop Martin Shaw on November 20th, has now an added layer to her identity: she is a confirmed member of the Christian family, committed to sharing the life of the congregation of St Michael's and we are delighted to welcome her.

Come and join us for the now traditional Advent Procession (followed by mulled wine and mince pies), with the clear reminders of our heritage and identity as we prepare to celebrate Christmas and the New Year, offering us the chance to be clear about our Christian identity, despite what the everyday world attempts to tell us Christmas is. Be brave, and be identifiable, unlike some who are afraid to hand on their faith to their children in case they are alienated or side-lined at school. That is too great an issue for discussion here, now. I'm sure it will happen later! In the mean-time, we wish you all much joy over the period of Christmas and the prospect of happiness in the New Year.

Stephanie Aplin

Family Services at St David's: December 2016 – March 2017

We hope you are enjoying the non-Eucharistic family services on the third Sunday of each month. Please find below details for the next six family services. We look forward to seeing you there.

Remember there is an Edibles Stall each month (not August and December) Please bring and buy homemade cakes and biscuits.

Sunday 18th December 9.30 “Mary, the Mother of Jesus” Matthew 1:18-25

Leader: Tom

Sunday 15th January 9.30 “Come and See” John 1:29-42

Leader: Simon

Sunday 19th February “Do not Worry” Matthew 6:25-end

Leader: Christopher

Sunday March 19th “The Samaritan Woman at the Well “ John 4:5-42

Leader: Bill

Bill Pattinson

Music & Events @ St Michael's – December 2016 & January 2017



Whether you're a regular, visitor or returnee over these winter months, you are most welcome to "Come and worship" with us here at St Michael's.

Please pray for our Curate Fr Christopher, and the Chapel & Church wardens, as the Interregnum starts at New Year; and for Fr Tom as he starts his new ministry at St Michael's Hospice in Basingstoke.

The seasons of Advent, Christmas & Epiphany are about the earthing of religion in relationships, strained or fulfilling, the unsettling humility of God become human, one of us, at his mother's breast, in the outbuilding behind the Inn, awake in a manger.

This is Incarnation, the messy humanity of it all, for Mary & Joseph, the Shepherds and their families, ruthless Herod and his clever advisers, the Magi with their expectations; explored in our words & music, as we ponder the selfishness, sadness and sinfulness of 2016.

There is a strange symmetry in the life of Jesus, sometimes picked up in

poems or paintings – stable cave and rock-hewn tomb, the wood of crib and cross, swaddling-bands and grave-clothes, the spices of the Wise men and the Women, Angel's words to the Shepherds and the Women, the cruel pragmatism of politicians and zealots.

We hope our worship & fellowship at St Michael's and St David's will help us to delight in the Season of Incarnation, Jesus Son of God born in humility, Joy to the World.

Sunday 4th December, Advent II, 10.45am Sung Mass. Missa Brevis by Lotti; Motet “Canite Tuba” by Guerrero. ...Veni, Domine, et noli tardare. Sound the trumpet ...Come, Lord, and do not delay.

Our beautiful candlelit **Advent Procession** at St Michael's is on **Sunday 4th December** at 6pm. Prayers, Readings, Hymns and Carols illuminate the 7 Great O Antiphons of the Advent Hymn “O come, O come Emmanuel”. The choir will sing the Pergolesi/Durante setting of the Magnificat. The service is followed by mulled wine and mince pies.

Thursday 8th Dec at 6pm. Vespers for the Feast of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary. All are welcome.

Sunday 11th Dec, Advent III, Gaudete Sunday with Rose Red Vestments. 10.45am. Mass in A minor by Casciolini; E'en so Lord Jesus, by Manz.

Sunday 11th Dec at 2pm, the Choir will sing Carols in the Chapel at Killerton House. National Trust admission applies. Please come and support us.

Sunday 11th Dec at 4.30pm, Exeter Chorale, conducted by Dr Nigel Browne, presents a Tea-time Concert with a “watery” theme. Music includes Stanford “The Blue Bird”, Tippett “Deep River”, a couple of stormy Baroque Motets, plus Drunken Sailors and a Mermaid!

Admission £8 (children free) including refreshments.

Saturday 17th Dec at 5pm – Carol Concert with St Michael's Choir in aid of the charity Refugee Support Devon.

Sunday 18th Dec, Advent IV, 10.45am. Mass in Phrygian Mode, by Wood. The Motet is “Anna mater Matris Christi” by John Plummer, a 15th century piece on the worthiness of St Anne to be the grandmother of Jesus.

Sunday 18th Dec, at St David's Church at 6pm – Carol Service and Farewell to Canon Tom Honey & Jeanie.

Saturday 24th December, 11pm Carols from the West Gallery, 11.30pm, Midnight Mass. A “Victoria” Christmas, Missa “O Quam Gloriosum” & Motet “O Magnum Mysterium”.

Christmas Eve, and twelve of the clock. “Now they are all on their knees,” An elder said as we sat in a flock By the embers in hearthside ease.

We pictured the meek mild creatures where They dwelt in their strawy pen, Nor did it occur to one of us there To doubt they were kneeling then.

So fair a fancy few would weave In these years! Yet, I feel, If someone said on Christmas Eve, “Come; see the oxen kneel,

“In the lonely barton by yonder coomb Our childhood used to know,” I should go with him in the gloom, Hoping it might be so.

“The Oxen” by Thomas Hardy, was published in The Times on Christmas Eve 1915. On the face of it, a pastoral idyll of worshipping animals and simple country folk, but below the surface are Hardy's growing doubts and the irony of such a myth ‘in these years’ of war raging in the mud of the trenches. Yet still hope lingers for peace on

earth, upon the midnight clear.

Sunday 25th Dec, Christmas Day, 10.45am Mass in F & In the Bleak Midwinter, both by Harold Darke.

Wednesday 28th Dec, Holy Innocents Day, Childermas, 10am Said Low Mass.

Sunday 1st January 2017, Christmas I, Holy Name 10.45am. Mass in F by Sir William Harris. Carol: Infant Holy, Infant Lowly, trad. arr. Willcocks. N.B. No Evensong today, but please come to...

Friday 6th January, Epiphany, 7.30pm. Mass in F by Sumsion; O God who by the leading of a star, by Attwood. Please support the first Feast of 2017.

Sunday 8th Jan, Baptism of Christ, 10.45am. Missa Aeterna Christi Munera, by Palestrina; Listen Sweet Dove, by Grayston Ives.

Sunday 15th Jan, Epiphany II, 10.45am Sung Mass. A little post-Christmas austerity with Kenneth Leighton's Mass in D and John Tavener's "The Lamb".

Sunday 22nd Jan, Epiphany III, 10.45am . Mass in C & F and Beati quorum via, both by Stanford.

Sunday 29th Jan, Epiphany IV, 10.45am. Missa L'Hora Passa by Viadana; Ubi caritas, by Duruflé.

We complete the Nativity narrative with the Feast of the Presentation of Christ in the Temple, **Candlemas, on Thursday 2nd February** at 7.30pm. Mass in C by John Ireland; Nunc Dimittis by Gustav Holst.

Wishing you all love, joy and peace this Christmas and New Year.

Richard Barnes

A Pychester Christmas



In a city not so far away, a contemporary story with seasonal resonances unfolds. Christmas Eve, young graduates, Jo & girlfriend Mary, unexpectedly pregnant, return to Pychester by Bus (more like a donkey, jokes Jo) to avoid their parents who still don't know about the baby, due any day.

Jo's an engineer for a Green Energy company, Wave, Sun & Wind – the sustainable trinity. Mary teaches R.E. It had been embarrassing when the kids started talking – should've paid more attention in S&R lessons, Miss – but she really wanted this special baby now. Mary fell pregnant visiting Salisbury at Annunciation, overshadowed by a white winged presence, she says. Jo is mystified how this could be, but is loyal & forgiving.

The Shepherds farm on the hills above the River Pyke, diversifying into alpaca wool for craft knitters producing Christmas jumpers for the well-heeled hunters of special gifts in London boutiques. Their

new Vicar has replaced the village's West Gallery Band & Quire with a Worship Group of his mates.

An Angel told the Shepherds, "There's a place, where sacred music comes to life. A church like no other in Pychester – St Pythagoras & All Angles, where friendly people meet God in formal worship and fine music." And now they sing in the choir there.

Three wise and wealthy men from London, that great Imperial city in the East, where you can buy anything or anyone if you have the money, are also travelling to Pychester early on Christmas Eve. They're Thomas, a doctor, Richard, a banker, & Harold, a software engineer.

Harold loves Lizzie, the pretty young Curate at their prosperous West London Church, St Anna's (patron saint of stair-lifts and Jesus' grandmother). They met at the Croquet-themed Lent Course and hit it off straight away. But Lizzie needs time for her Parish and parents this Christmas, so Harold will serve lunches and seasonal cheer to the homeless for a few days.

Thomas & Richard are long-time friends with children not long left home, and wives, Christina & Annabel, who have started living together; traditional marriages turn complicated too. But they will all meet up for a civilised New Year party at Harold's parents' large house in the Cotswolds. 'Aga Father' Christians, Lizzie calls them, but their hearts are in the right place, running the local FoodBank and complaining to their MP about the impact yet another round of cuts is having.

Their clients at St Petrock's fed and cheered, Harold skypes Lizzie before her Christingle service. "Still a few of us left in the big orange," she says. "I've told Pixy you'll sing Midnight Mass at St Pythag's tonight, Harry. Choir practice at 10 o'clock sharp."

Jo & Mary are walking slowly in from the Bus Station past the decorated Christmas trees along the Roman Wall; so many needs, but so

much compassion and generosity too. No room at the Cathedral Carol Service, packed with the great & the good. Jo & Mary try St Simon Says, but it's noisy and crowded, and they feel fingers on Bible verses judging them.

In Candy Street, the shops selling Yuletide gifts, magic crystals, and baby clothes have closed. With a biting wind and snow in the air, Paul Street is an Abomination of Desolation as they plod slowly down to their old haunt at the City Gate.

Peter Shepherd holds the door open for them. "We're just warming the toes and tonsils before choir practice," he says. "Can I get you something?" Jo & Mary join his wife, Agnes, and their children.

The Hotel's fully booked, so they suggest Jo & Mary come to St Pythag's for Midnight Mass. "You can come back with us afterwards," said Agnes. "We had Eve at Christmas; looks like you've not got long now, Mary."

"Jo's brother, Gabriel, sings at Salisbury," says Mary, blushing. Snow is falling, snow on snow, as they cross the Iron Bridge with its Narnia street-lights. The sharp-eyed Peregrines watch from their lofty pinnacles as two young pigeons flutter past, safe tonight; Candlemas still 40 days away.

Mary & Jo sit at the back while the Choir rehearses. They seem to be bilingual in English and Latin and rather good. One of the tenors looks like that guy at Lizzie's church in London, thinks Jo, as Mary returns from the loo with the news "Waters broken – I'm scared, love."

The candlelight is dim, the clouds of incense thick, but Mary notices her father and Uncle Thomas slip in with snow on their shoes, as the Full Moon smiles down on an expectant Pychester.

"So that's why you two have been avoiding us," whispers Thomas. "I thought you'd twigged about Mum & Annabel, and were not as

broad-minded as you young folk claim to be. How frequent are the contractions, Mary? I delivered you, and unless you'd rather chance A&E at midnight, it looks like I may be delivering your baby too. Relax, there's 150 years of faithful prayer around us."

The sermon is based on Thomas Hardy's poem, *The Oxen*, 100 years old this very night. "‘Christmas Eve, and twelve of the clock. Now they are all on their knees.’ In those days the heavenly and the earthy came together more easily for country folk. But then as now, and when Jesus was born, people were concerned, afraid despite the message of the Angels, at the nasty business of war where there should have been peace on earth."



"And while St Paul puts Love ahead of Faith and Hope, for many this Christmas, Hope for peace is top of their Santa list – and our prayers. Will we listen and hear the Angels sing? Do we still have a message worth sharing? Tonight in the birth of the Christchild, the prince of peace, we do."



They stop to look at the baby Jesus in his manger now. Soon he, Mary and Joseph would be refugees in Egypt, until Herod was gone and they could return to Nazareth. The organist plays a pastoral improvisation

as they smile at Harry in the choir and wait to receive Communion. Getting up from the altar rail, Mary feels a movement, grabs Jo's arm and looks hopefully at Uncle Thomas.

Into the choir vestry, put on the heater, get some hot water from the steaming urn which the ladies at the back had felt might be needed, grab some tea towels, not for dressing up as shepherds now.

This is a simple story, naïve you might say, so as the choir sings "In dulci jubilo" the birth of this Christmas baby is swift "in praeseptio... matris in gremio" and safe "ubi sunt gaudia...nova cantica".

"We could call her 'Dulcie' then," says a euphorically relieved Jo. "I think she'll prefer 'Carol'," whispers an exhausted Mary, as she takes the baby in her arms for her first cuddle and feed.

In London, Fr Lizzie sits Christina & Annabel down amid the post-Mass prosecco and nibbles. "Don't panic, but by some strange miracle you've both just become grandmothers – Jo & Mary are with Tom & Dick in Pychester, and Gabriel has fainted in the choir stalls at Salisbury."

"I know it's Christmas, Mary," enquires Uncle Thomas doubtfully, "but another virgin birth does seem medically unlikely."

"Yes, sorry Jo, I didn't know how to tell you. We've been friends so long, grown up together, you, Gabriel and me. He loves floating around in that surplice. But it's you I truly love, Joanna."

Richard Barnes



Bishop Sarah's Christmas Message

Messengers of God's love.

You may recall a song written by the Fisher Folk which includes the line

“And all creation's straining on tiptoe just to see, the sons of God, come into their own.”

How often do we see children straining on tiptoe to get the best view? To see the Christmas tree lights hanging across the high street or Father Christmas.

As adults we have often lost that sense of anticipation and wonder which we see in children at Christmas as they wait.

Well, the Christmas lights have gone up and the Christmas Markets are open and as Christmas arrives for the world the church goes into a time of waiting.

We don't like to wait and maybe that is why we have lost that sense of anticipation. We are so used to reducing waiting because we see so little value in it.

However, waiting is not a passive act.

Take for example during pregnancy where waiting is anything but inactive it is nurturing,

it is full of hope and has value in its own right and it is anything but passive.

As we wait to celebrate again Emmanuel - God with us - we wait for that day when we will see his kingdom come in full.

In celebrating what happened in the past in the birth of Christ, we hope for a future when death and suffering are no more.

But for now this hope breaks into our present and calls us to be Christ to others in the world.

We see the face of Christ in the work of those who will be running food banks and soup kitchens, not just at Christmas but throughout the year.

We see the face of Christ in those providing shelter and housing not just at Christmas but all year round.

We see the face of Christ in those who are welcoming the refugee not just in this season but throughout the year.

We should with anticipation look for signs of God's kingdom in our midst.

So let us actively wait reaching out to the hungry, the imprisoned, the homeless, the refugee, the naked, the sick and all those whom Jesus longs to touch.

To become messengers of God's love 'straining on tiptoe just to see, the sons of God, come into their own'.

Rt Rev Sarah Mullally

Bishop of Crediton – from Exeter Diocese Magazine (Dec 2016)



A Life Sentence

I first played the organ for an Exeter prison service in the late 1980s. The regular organist had an emergency and I was asked if I could step in. I hadn't played an organ since my teenage but went as requested, with some trepidation.

In those days there was a choir. Practice was first thing, followed by tea and a biscuit; then the service. During the break one man, observing I was well out of my comfort zone, came and talked to me with kind reassurance and since then I have been totally at ease when associating with the prisoners.

When the choir mistress left I took on her mantle and choir practice changed to Friday evenings. This shortly became an Education Class which we called 'Music for Pleasure!' What else!

After the summer break a newcomer would inevitably ask 'Do we get paid to come to this Miss?' and I would retort, 'No, this is pure pleasure, pleasure for you and pleasure for me.'

Prisoners receive a nominal amount for some life skill classes, perhaps numeracy, literacy or skills leading to a qualifying certificate. However, I did once say to a class, "For some of you this will be the first time you have worked in a group entirely voluntarily with no other reward." They were thoughtful for a while.

My present role is to enable the men to sing. I play for two services on the third Sunday of the month. The organ is a very good two manual instrument. For music other than singing, I play the piano, before and after the service and during Communion.

Spontaneous appreciation takes many forms. Usually a man touches my arm and says ‘God bless you Miss’ Once I was thanked for playing ‘My Grandma’s favourite tune.’ That was Lara’s theme from the film Dr. Zhivago. I’m sure I’m a substitute Grandma for some of the men.

One day a man stuck his hand over the top of the piano and said ‘I’d like to shake your hand.’ I was playing ‘Jesu Joy of Man’s Desiring’ and was so shocked I said, ‘I can’t. It’s busy.’ But next time the hand came down I was ready for him, and after two more months he was gone.

Schubert’s “To Music” is a favourite and a cultured voice interrupted it to say “An die Musik”, I think.

“Let’s hear it for the pianist!” shouted a man at the end of one service and the chapel erupted into applause, cheers and whistles. But my favourite one happened during Communion. As the men filed silently past the piano a voice murmured, “Beautiful music this morning.”

Margaret Grimsey

What should a priest be?

All things to all –
male, female and genderless
What should a priest be?
reverent and relaxed
vibrant in youth
assured through the middle years
divine sage when ageing

What should a priest be?
accessible and incorruptible
abstemious, yet full of celebration,
informed, but not threateningly so,
and far above
the passing soufflé of fashion

What should a priest be?
an authority on singleness
Solomon-like on the labyrinth
of human sexuality excellent with
young marrieds, old marrieds,
were marrieds, never marrieds,
shouldn't have marrieds,
those who live together, those who
live apart, and those who don't live
anywhere respectfully mindful of
senior citizens and war veterans,
familiar with the ravages of
arthritis, osteoporosis, post-natal
depression, anorexia, whooping-
cough and nits.

What should a priest be?
all-round family person counsellor,
but not officially because of the
recent changes in legislation,
teacher, expositor, confessor,
entertainer, juggler, good with
children, and possibly sea-lions,
empathetic towards pressure
groups

What should a priest be?
on nodding terms with Freud,
Jung, St John of the Cross, The
Scott Report, The Rave Culture,
The Internet, the Lottery, BSE,
and Anthea Turner, pre-modern,
fairly modern, post-modern, and,
ideally, Secondary-modern – if
called to the inner city

What should a priest be?
charismatic, if needs must,
but quietly so, evangelical, and
thoroughly meditative, mystical,
but not New Age. Liberal, and so
open to other voices, traditionalist,
reformer and revolutionary and
hopefully, not on medication
unless for an old sporting injury.

Note to congregations:
If your priest actually fulfills all
of the above, and then enters
the pulpit one Sunday morning
wearing nothing but a shower-
cap, a fez, and declares: 'I'm the
King and Queen of Venus, and

we shall now sing the next hymn
in Latvian, take your partners,
please'. –
Let it pass.

Like you and I, they too sew
the thin thread of humanity,
Remember Jesus in the Garden –
beside Himself?

So, what does a priest do?
mostly stays awake at Deanery
synods tries not to annoy the
Bishop too much visits hospices,
administers comfort, conducts
weddings, christenings – not
necessarily in that order, takes
funerals consecrates the elderly
to the grave, buries children, and
babies, feels completely helpless
beside the swaying family of a
suicide.

What does a priest do?
tries to color in God
uses words to explain miracles
which is like teaching a millipede
to sing, but even more difficult.

What does a priest do?
answers the phone when
sometimes they'd rather not
occasionally errs and strays into
tabloid titillation, prays for Her
Majesty's Government

What does a priest do?
tends the flock through time,

oil and incense, would secretly
like each PCC to commence
with a mud-pie making contest
sometimes falls asleep when
praying yearns, like us, for
heart-rushing deliverance

What does a priest do?
has rows with their family
wants to inhale Heaven
stares at bluebells attempts to
convey the mad love of God
would like to ice-skate with
crocodiles and hear the roses when
they pray.

How should a priest live?

How should we live?

As priests,
transformed by The Priest
that death prised open so that
he could be our priest martyred,
diaphanous and matchless priest.

What should a priest be?

What should a priest do?

How should a priest live?

**Stewart Henderson, "Priestly
Duties: Written for Eric Delve
23.5.96" in Limited Edition**
(Plover books, 1997)

The Dedication of St David's

As the time draws near for the end of the work on our Church it seems appropriate to look again at our dedication

Here in the West Country the ancient churches often have dedications to Celtic saints - usually because the saint is associated with the spot. This is not the case here at St Davids who was a Welsh Celtic saint who never left Wales to live or preach in Devon. Some earlier historians in the Victorian era speculated that Welsh celts who settled in the Exeter area brought the cult of St Davids with them even before the Saxon settlers. The facts, however, do not fit, for the first church dedicated to St David on this site was in 1294 bang in the middle of the Norman period. The first Norman kings all seemed to have gone on pilgrimages to St Davids in Wales. The royal pilgrims included their queens.

Now pilgrimages were very much a feature of Medieval life, not purely because of the Spiritual benefits of such journeys, but because they were very popular and were organised, as we know from Chaucer's Canterbury Tales, to start from the town or city in which the pilgrims lived. It was inevitable that the assembly point became associated with the place of Pilgrimage. Hence we have St Davids chapel on the North Road out of Exeter to Wales, and St Thomas a Becket chapel just over the Exe Bridge - the starting point for Canterbury. The first St Davids Chapel thus became the medieval equivalent of St David's Station for the West and Wales pilgrim passengers.

The Normans became particularly attracted to St Davids in Wales largely because of a decree of Pope Callixtus III that two such pilgrimages to St Davids was recognised as the equivalent of one to Rome. This was a very much easier and safer option than a pilgrimage to Rome or Jerusalem or even to Santiago de Compostela in Spain, making the pilgrimage a sort of EasyJet Package deal as opposed to the Thomas Cooke trip to the Holy Land.

The traditional pilgrimage included an assembly point at the start of the journey with a Mass in honour of the Saint whose shrine the pilgrims were to travel towards. As a consequence the place of assembly was often established as a chapel dedicated to the Saint, always outside of the City walls. Almost all churches dedicated to St Thomas a Becket are so placed. The fact that St David's is outside of Exeter City walls is thus very significant - a sort of Medieval St David's Station for travellers.

Raymond Ravenscroft

The Silent Prayer Group

When the silent prayer group began to meet at St David's in the spring, I didn't at first attend it, thinking: "Oh no, too difficult and austere! -not for me!"

In the past I'd been hopeless at practising regular meditation in both Christian and Buddhist traditions, and why would this be different?

But something drew me, and I did begin to go to the fortnightly meetings in church. The structure is the same each time: Tom or Catherine read a short passage either from the Bible or from other illuminating writings within the Christian tradition. Then we sit in still silence for half an hour. Then we have a cuppa. It's that simple.

But though simple, silent or centering on prayer is not easy, I find. The difficult part is not physical but mental and emotional stillness. Buddhists call the incessant, barely conscious chattering of the mind "monkey mind". Practising centering prayer is learning to gently still this burble, and pull awareness away from daydreams and fantasies. It is a practice of the heart and will; it owes a lot to the 14th-century work "The Cloud of Unknowing", with its famous line in chapter 6:

"By love may he be gotten and holden, but by thought never".

Centering prayer is a form of meditation, yet unlike in the past I find myself wanting to continue, to persevere with regular times of sitting, both alone and in the group. And I think this change is because for the first time I feel part of a praying community at St David's, and part of an ancient tradition of prayer. Trust in both the community and the tradition is so important.

At an excellent and informative day workshop Tom hosted in the summer, we learned more about the tradition of contemplative prayer and its close association with the slow and meditative reading of scripture. Here we also read poems of darkness and unknowing, and learned more about the technique of “letting go”, of nurturing an attitude of surrender. A helpful book was recommended, and having read it I can commend it now: “Centering Prayer and Inner Awakening”, by Cynthia Bourgeault.

But in the end it’s not about talking or reading. Just do the practice. The goal is the process.

“For thus says the Lord God, the Holy One of Israel: In returning and rest you shall be saved; in quietness and trust shall be your strength”
(Isaiah 30:15)

Julia Mercer



Exeter Choral
directed by Dr Nigel Browne
present

AQUA MUSICALE

A Teatime Concert with a watery theme

Music from Byrd to Sea Shanties, with two storms along
the way, and including
The Bluebird by Stanford and
Deep River by Sir Michael Tippett,
as well as geese and a mermaid;
and, of course, CAKE

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Sunday 11th December, 4.30pm

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Refreshments included

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to support our team of 12 volunteers
who enable children to see their non-resident parent
every other Saturday?

The role entails working with 2 assistant co-ordinators,
arranging visits and the timetable for contacts by phone and email,
taking 6-8 hours a week, working from home.
Availability some Saturdays too.

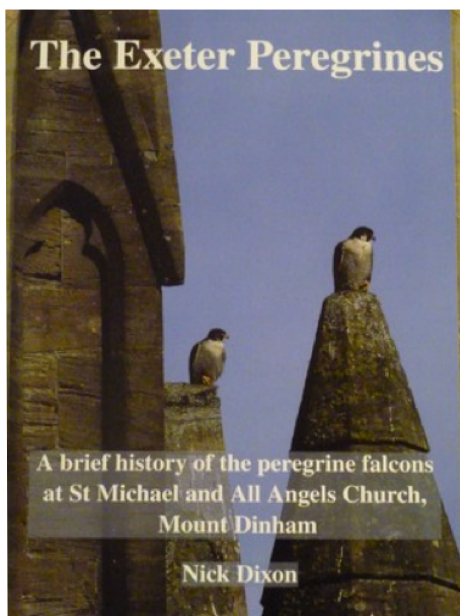
A phone, expenses and training provided.
Support available from the Management Committee and NACCC

Details from Julia
southernhaycontact@gmail.com

Closing Date: 20th December 2016

The Exeter Peregrines

Hot off the press, a beautifully illustrated new 24-page booklet by Nick Dixon, our local peregrine expert, charting the history of the family of falcons that lives on the Spire of St Michael's Church. For 20 years now, successive generations of peregrine have been breeding here in Exeter, and Nick has been observing and studying them. This booklet brings together his extensive knowledge of "our peregrines" with the best pictures by local bird of prey photographers.



Available at £5 per copy from me at St Michael's, and hopefully Tom at St David's, all proceeds will go towards upgrading the nestbox webcam to HD and streaming live pictures again in 2017.

An ideal Xmas Present or stocking filler for you or the naturalist in your life.

Also available at £6 incl P&P directly from
nick@urbanperegrines.co.uk

Richard Barnes

Our thanks

This month will be the final time that Ashley and Joh will be putting together and designing our magazine “New Leaves”. They have steadfastly, quietly and with no fuss whatsoever offered an invaluable service to the Parish and our two churches for over 7 years. As such we owe them both a huge thank you. We have only been working with Joh and Ashley for three months, but in that short period of time we realise the skills and energy they bring. They completed our magazine each month using articles from a website called “The Parish Pump”. These included the list of Saint days, monthly crossword and children’s activities. They personally paid the subscription to this website at no small cost. Some church ministry is outwardly visible, making it easy to recognise and acknowledge. Yet many ministries are quietly observed in the background and may not be so easily be realised. They are of no less importance.

“Thank you” again, Ashley and Joh. We hope to continue to see you and your family in St David’s Church. God’s blessings be with you!

The Editorial Team

Are you a Magazine Designer?

*Could you design our
Parish Magazine?*

Please speak to
Bill P, Sue H, Richard B
or Stephanie A



Bible Study Groups @ St. David's

Q) What is it?

A) An opportunity for us to gather as a small comfortable group to read scripture, share our reflections and receive some teaching.

Q) Will it be like a school class?

A) No, thankfully! I believe everyone present will have something important share. Be assured though, the clergy will have prepared a little something to start things off ;-)

Q) What sort of things will come up?

A) We're not sure, but each evening will have a theme – e.g. Creation, The Fall, God's Covenants, Sacrifice of Isaac, Jacob's Ladder, etc.

Q) I'm still not sure...

A) Come along! I pray this will be an encouraging and affirming group as we explore some of the richness of the Book of Genesis together.

We shall meet on THURSDAY evenings, 20:00 - 21:15

December 8th, 15th and 22nd at Iris' House

Please sign your name on the list by the North Door

(Add your telephone number if you'd like to come, but don't know where Ann or Iris live – we'll provide directions)

Rev. Christopher

The Soup Kitchen at St. David's

As many of you will know, Thursday evening is the time we receive a number of homeless folk at St. David's and provide soup and refreshments to sustain them through the cold nights.

They need warm clothing and shoes, so if you have fleeces, sweaters, coats, jeans, or trousers you would like to pass on, they will be gratefully received.

We also like to have paperbacks they can take to read, so if you are parting with books please think of leaving them with us.

Thank you.

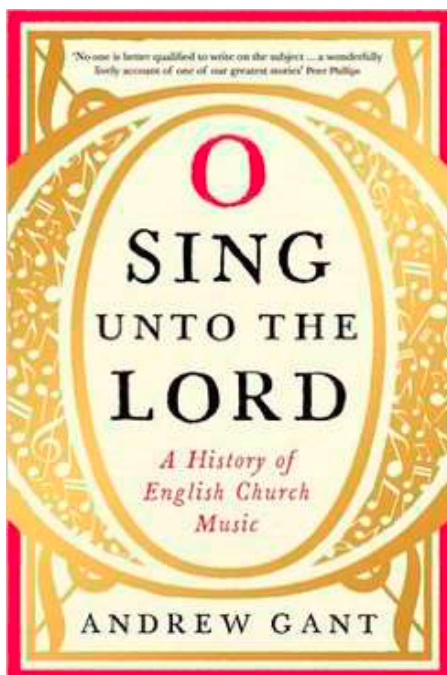


Contact Mary on:- 07872 626 168 if you need to leave donated goods



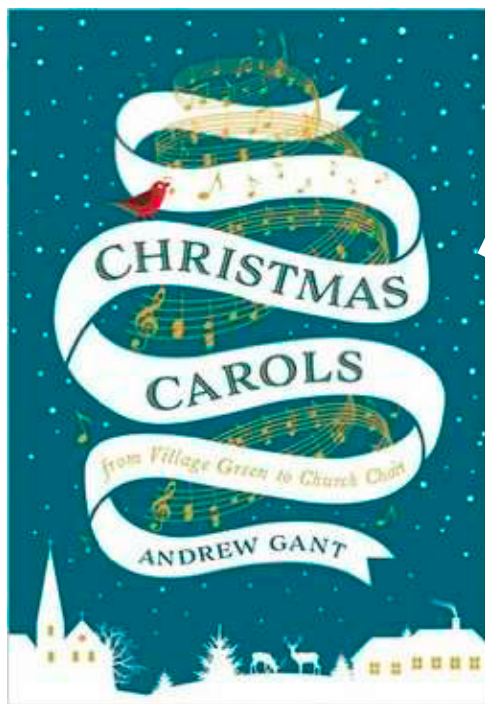
Book Review – **O Sing Unto the Lord**

A History of English Church Music – at over 400 pages this is definitely a breve (long note) account of our musical heritage, rather than a brief one! It's chapter 4 before we reach the 16th century. The Reformation (Keeping your Head) and the Victorian revivals merit the most pages, but it also shows where music went in the often overlooked 18th & 20th centuries.



Whether you've spent 50 years in the choir stalls (like me) or are new to it all, there's plenty to interest; not just charting 2000 years of sacred music, but also viewing the changes and chances of English religious & social history through the musicians who navigated its turbulent waters. With well-titled chapters and a comprehensive index from "Abbot's Leigh" to "Zip Bam Boom", you can also dip into your favourite period or topic.

Andrew Gant has been, inter alia, Cambridge choral scholar, director of the Chapel Royal and Oxford music professor. He wears his knowledge lightly and writes in an engaging style, covering the music of parish church & non-conformist chapel as well as cathedral.



He is honest and fair in his treatment of the never-ending tensions between musician and clergy, choir and congregation, traditionalist and moderniser, in every age. As well as composers and their works, he follows the ever changing styles in Psalm singing and the eventual rise of Hymns.

“Jerusalem, Cwm Rhondda & Abide with me” are perhaps the last vestiges of choral music known to the secular 21st century Englishman. Published in 2015 by Profile Books, it’s available for about £8 p/b, £16 h/b. Andrew Gant and Profile have also published “Christmas Carols: From Village Green to Church Choir”.

Richard Barnes





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**We have a long-standing tradition of high quality education
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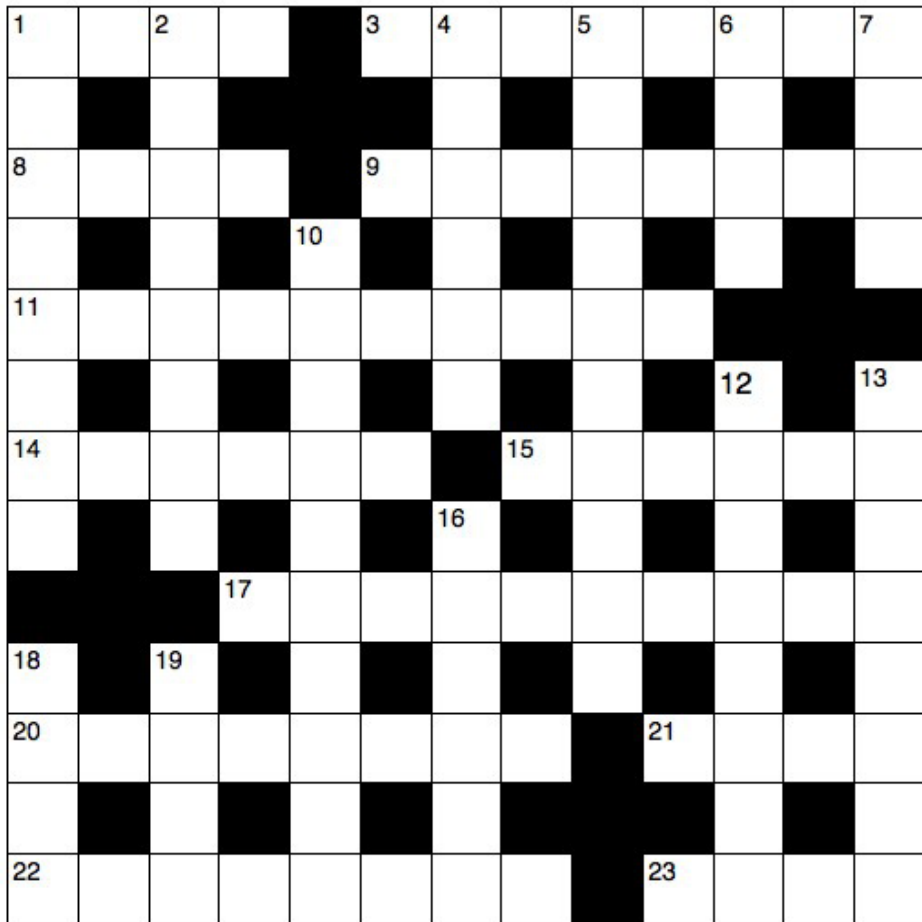
"St Sidwell's is a good school where teaching is good and pupils' achievement is high"

"An outstanding feature of the school is the care, guidance and support it gives pupils."

"The personal development of pupils is also outstanding."

"Spiritual development is excellent." "Behaviour is exemplary."

December crossword



Across:

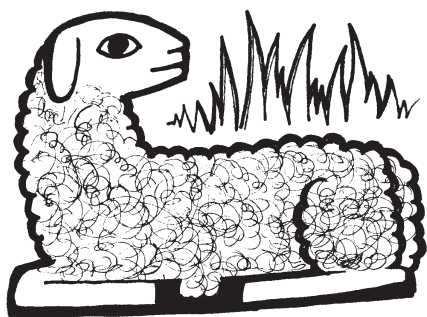
- 1 'The blind receive sight, the — walk' (Luke 7:22) (4)
- 3 Got (Philippians 3:12) (8)
- 8 Leave out (Jeremiah 26:2) (4)
- 9 Castigated for using dishonest scales (Hosea 12:7) (8)
- 11 Weighty (1 John 5:3) (10)
- 14 'Now the serpent was more — than any of the wild animals the Lord God had made' (Genesis 3:1) (6)
- 15 'Those controlled by the sinful nature cannot — God' (Romans 8:8) (6)

- 17 Because Israel lacked one of these, tools had to be sharpened by the Philistines (1 Samuel 13:19) (10)
- 20 In his vision of the two eagles and the vine, this is how Ezekiel described the latter (Ezekiel 17:8) (8)
- 21 Rite (anag.) (4)
- 22 Nine gigs (anag.) (8)
- 23 ‘The eye cannot say to the — , “I don’t need you”’ (1 Corinthians 12:21) (4)

Down:

- 1 ‘Flee for your lives! Don’t — — , and don’t stop anywhere in the plain!’ (Genesis 19:17) (4,4)
- 2 Principal thoroughfare (Numbers 20:19) (4,4)
- 4 ‘The tax collector... beat his — and said, “God have mercy on me, a sinner”’ (Luke 18:13) (6)
- 5 ‘The zeal of the Lord Almighty will — this’ (2 Kings 19:31) (10)
- 6 ‘The day of the Lord is — for all nations’ (Obadiah 15) (4)
- 7 Specified day (Acts 21:26) (4)
- 10 Deadly epidemic (Deuteronomy 32:24) (10)
- 12 Roman Catholic church which has special ceremonial rights (8)
- 13 Tied up (2 Kings 7:10) (8)
- 16 In his speech to the Sanhedrin, Stephen described Moses as ‘powerful in speech and — ’ (Acts 7:22) (6)
- 18 ‘Although he did not remove the high places, — heart was fully committed to the Lord all his life’ (1 Kings 15:14) (4)
- 19 Tribe (Deuteronomy 29:18) (4)





NATIVITY PLAY

To see the story of the first Christmas through the eyes of little children makes it fresh and new. I like the story of the little boy who so wanted to be Joseph but was picked as the inn keeper instead. All went well until the nativity play started and Mary and Joseph arrived at the inn. The boy playing the innkeeper greeted them with ‘Come in Mary love, there’s plenty of room for you, but Joseph can get lost!’

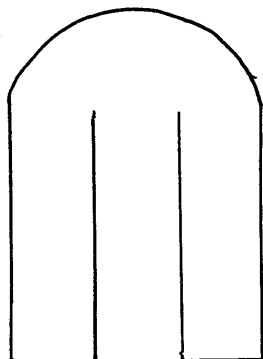
Mary may insist that her teddy is the Baby Jesus, the angels may trip over their robes made from sheets, but every nativity play shows the wonder of the story of the first Christmas when the son of God was born a baby, like us. Tea towels used as shepherd’s headdresses and angels’ haloes made from wire coat hangers only serve to underline the humanity

of it all. A baby born in a stable – a simple story that changes the world.

Time to make some Christmas decorations?

Cut out two shapes like the pattern below, one in red card, one in

green card. Don’t forget to cut the slits.



Interlock the 2 shapes by weaving the strips under and over their opposite colour.

This will give you a heart shape.



Use a little glue to hold them together if needed. Punch a hole in the top at the centre and thread with cord to hang your decoration. You can make lots in different colours and decorate them with sequins or stickers too.

Nice symbols of love to decorate your Christmas.



Days of Note

3 December Francis Xavier - the seasick missionary

Ignatius Loyala sent his friend and follower Francis Xavier (born 1506) to the Orient as a missionary. What a missionary! Imagine David Livingstone, Billy Graham and the Alpha Courses rolled into one. His mass conversions became legendary – he baptised 10,000 people in one month and in just ten years of work was credited with 700,000 conversions.

Xavier became the most famous Jesuit missionary of all time, working so hard that he had only a few hours' sleep each night. He was known as 'the Apostle of the Indies' and 'the apostle of Japan'. He began by reforming Goa, which contained numerous Portuguese Catholics, notorious for cruelty to their slaves, open concubinage, and neglect of the poor. For three years, by example, preaching and writing verses on Christian truths set to popular tunes, Francis did much to offset this betrayal of Christ by bad Christians.

For the next seven years he worked among the Paravas in southern India, in Ceylon, Malacca, the Molucca islands, and the Malay peninsula. He met with immense success among the low-caste but with almost none among the Brahmins.

In 1549 he ventured on to Japan, translated an abridged statement of Christian belief, and made a hundred converts in one year at Kagoshima alone. When he left Japan, the total number of Japanese Christians was about 2,000; within 60 years they were resisting fierce persecution, even to death.

Wherever Xavier sailed, he left after him numerous organised

Christian communities. Not bad for a man who suffered seasickness and had trouble in learning foreign languages!

Xavier died in 1551, on his way to China. His body was preserved and enshrined for many years. His right arm was detached in 1615 and is still preserved in the church of the Gesu at Rome. He was canonised by Gregory XV in 1622, and declared Patron of the Foreign Missions by Pius XI in 1927.

26 December St Stephen **– the first martyr (died c 35 AD)**

Have you ever stopped to consider that the very first martyr of the Christian Church was a deacon? (But no, he wasn't worked to death by his church.) It was Stephen, one of the first seven deacons of the Christian Church. He'd been appointed by the apostles to look after the distribution of alms to the faithful poor, and to help in the ministry of preaching.

Acts 6 and 7 tells us all that we know of his life, and the passages seem to suggest that he was an educated Hellenistic Jew. Certainly Stephen's famous challenge to the Jews reveals him to have been learned in the Scriptures and the history of Judaism, besides being eloquent and forceful.

Stephen's proclamation on the day of his martyrdom pulled no punches. He told the Jews that God did not depend on the Temple. The Temple was but a temporary institution destined to be fulfilled and superseded by Christ, who was the prophet foreseen by Moses as the Messiah for whom the Jewish race had so long awaited.

Stephen then challenged his hearers for resisting the Spirit and for killing the Christ, as their fathers before them had killed the prophets. The Jews were so outraged by this that they stoned Stephen on the spot for blasphemy.

As he died, Stephen saw a vision of Christ on God's right hand. The men who were witness to the stoning placed their clothes at the feet of Saul (afterwards Paul), who (to his deep regret later) consented to Stephen's death.

By the fourth century Stephen had his own feast day in both East and West Churches. When his supposed tomb was discovered in 415, his popularity soared. His (supposed) relics were taken to Constantinople and then Rome, along with some stones (allegedly) used at his martyrdom.

Early on the Church made Stephen the patron saint of deacons. In the late Middle Ages he was also invoked against headaches (?!).

In England, 46 ancient churches are dedicated to him, most of them built after the Norman Conquest. In art Stephen is usually given a book of the Gospels and a stone, and sometimes the palm of martyrdom.

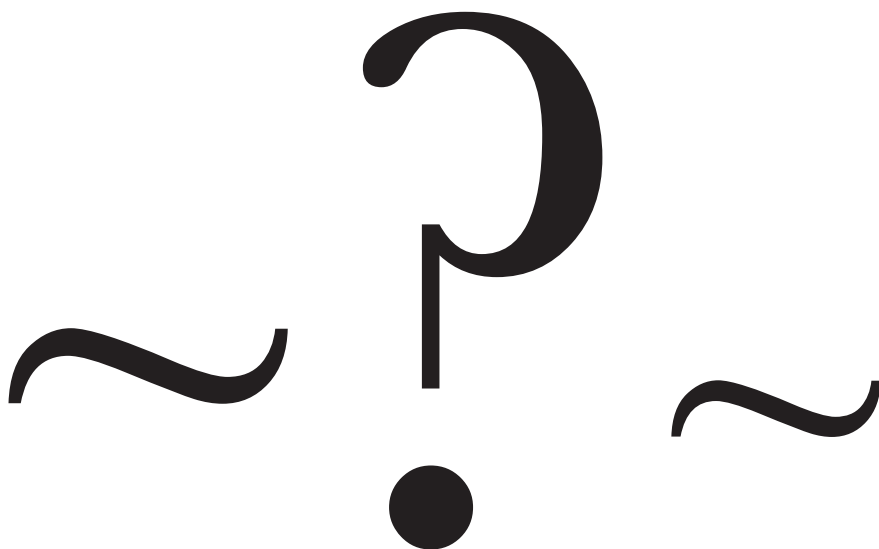
Crossword solutions

December answers

ACROSS: 1, Lame. 3, Obtained. 8, Omit. 9, Merchant. 11, Burdensome. 14, Crafty. 15, Please. 17, Blacksmith. 20, Splendid. 21, Tier. 22, Singeing. 23, Hand.

DOWN: 1, Look back. 2, Main road. 4, Breast. 5, Accomplish. 6, Near. 7, Date. 10, Pestilence. 12, Basilica. 13, Tethered. 16, Action. 18, Asa's. 19, Clan.

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The deadline for inclusion of articles for the February issue of New Leaves is Sunday January 15th 2017

If you have images of any events of interest to the Parish community please send them to us. Any information and articles you'd like to submit for inclusion in future issues should be sent to the new editorial team at:

newleavesnews@gmail.com

Please send digital files via email and please make the subject header fit the content of the email - thanks!

Thank you to Graham Lerwill for organising the
printing of this magazine
- his hard work is much appreciated.

