

New Leaves

May 2021



**Parish Magazine
of St David with
St Michael and
All Angels,
Exeter**

50p

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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
Stephanie Aplin and Clive Wilson

New Leaves

From the Vicarage May 2021

Looking Ahead

At the moment we are rejoicing in good news about the low level of Covid-19 infections in the South West and the huge drop nationally in hospitalisations since the early part of the year. But at the same time we are looking in horror as Indian hospitals are overwhelmed and run short of oxygen. We can't forget the global reality that, in this pandemic, no one is safe until everyone is safe. New variants that may arise in other countries could still have serious consequences in spite of the amazing progress made in vaccinating our own population.

So, in church, we are looking ahead cautiously, trying to balance gratitude for the progress made with the knowledge that we will be living with Covid-19 and its variants for the foreseeable future.

It was a great blessing for many of us to be able to celebrate Easter together in our churches this year and we certainly needed to hear the resurrection message again as individuals and as a nation after the great losses of the past year. I think we must continue to acknowledge that the way ahead will be challenging and the time for recovery after this pandemic may be measured in years rather than months for the church and for wider society.

However, we are continuing to look ahead and plan events for the rest of the year in the sincere hope that they can go ahead!

Firstly, we have a provisional date for a parish fête of Saturday 17th July. This is likely to be a smaller scale event than usual, but it would just be great to celebrate together if we can.

Secondly, we are planning an environmental awareness morning at St David's for 11th September in the wake of the climate summit to be held in Cornwall this summer.

Thirdly, we have a date for the Archdeacon of Exeter to come and listen to us and to speak as part of a consultation about the future shape of ministry in Exeter City Centre. This will be on Saturday 16th October.

So please do get these dates in your diary in a spirit of hope, even if you keep them in pencil at the moment!

Thrive meets Songs of Praise

Our online Sunday afternoon service 'Thrive' which Ash launched back in Advent is one of the Exeter initiatives to be featured in a forthcoming edition of BBC Songs of Praise. Thrive offers an opportunity for reflection each Sunday at 4pm and a chance to think about big questions of life and faith. The Songs of Praise team visited us recently to record some interviews which we hope will be included in the programme on May 16th and which will also include material from the Graham Kendrick programme that was recorded at St David's in 2018. We will keep you updated if the schedule changes.

Visiting Speakers at St David's

As part of our third Sunday worship, it was proposed that we should sometimes have visiting speakers who will inform our prayers and support for Christian mission in its widest sense. So far we have invited three speakers:

The Revd Val Atkinson acting chaplain at Exeter Prison on Sunday 20 June
Chris Forster from the Clewer initiative on modern slavery on Sunday 18 July

Bethan Spencer from YMCA Exeter on Sunday 17 October

We hope that you will want to make a special note to come and hear these speakers and learn about their spheres of ministry.

Feast Days during May

As it becomes easier to celebrate together we will be holding two evening masses At St Michael's during the coming weeks. Ascension Day falls on Thursday 13th May and as well as the regular morning communion service at St David's there will be an evening mass at 7.30pm at St Michael's. The feast of Corpus Christi falls on Thursday 3 June and we plan to hold sung mass at 7.30pm at St Michael's. We are not yet sure whether a full

procession will be possible, but we will certainly meet for mass.

Christian Aid Week online Big Breakfast

Once again this year it is going to be difficult to hold live events to support the work of this important Christian charity but we would like to offer a 'Big Breakfast' on Zoom on Saturday 15th May at 9.30am. Do join in, if you can, and, make a donation to Christian Aid so that we can continue to support their work in fighting poverty and injustice. I will publish a Zoom link in the weekly notices beforehand.

Living in Love and Faith

In the December/January edition I wrote about these new resources from the Church of England which is billed as 'Christian Teaching and learning about identity, sexuality, relationships and marriage'. In the same edition of 'New Leaves' Jonathan Draper wrote an excellent introduction to the material which you might like to review in which he also gave some pointers to commentary on the material.

We have now planned two parish groups starting in May to study the material together. We are holding a Tuesday afternoon group starting at 2pm and a Tuesday evening group starting at 7.30pm. The dates are as follows: 11 May, 18th May, 25th May, 8th June and 15th June. It would have been lovely to hold these in person but given the current restrictions they will have to be on Zoom and the links will be published in the weekly notices. Because the sessions touch on sensitive material we need to restrict the size of each group to 12 so that we can work in sub-groups of no more than 6. The study course is based on videos which include personal stories and there is time for discussion and sharing of thoughts and feelings about the topics. Each session should last no more than 90 minutes. So please join us if you can and let me know if you would like to join the afternoon meetings or Belinda if you would like join the evening meetings.

All those taking part will be invited to make their responses to the Church of England as the House of Bishops will be considering their approach to these matters during 2022. All the material can be found online by searching for 'Living in Love and Faith' and accessed free through the LLF

learning hub. This will be a very significant consultation for the Church of England and for many people within it so please give it your consideration.

With every blessing,

Nigel

25.04.2021



May 2021 from St Michael and All Angels

Adages and Acronyms

'Cast no clout till May be out' had to be explained as a quaint English saying when I lived in the southern hemisphere. May is getting into autumn there, and you'd want to be adding 'clouts', not thinking about losing them or casting them off. Clout was explained as an old English word for clothes. When I returned to England, I found it was still a matter of debate: was May the flower of the blackthorn (or some other wild plant) or the month of May? (In which case, you'd wait until the beginning of June for summer clothes.) This month of May has been preceded by an odd April, the driest since 1938, I read, and deceptive, too. All glorious sunshine for the last few days, which hid a sneaky bitter wind that grabbed and tore at the plants and dried out the pots and tubs in our garden more rapidly than a drought! I was reminded of the fable of the Sun and the Wind wrestling to decide which was the stronger by trying to make a man remove his cloak. A French calendar I have tells me that there is an adage for every month. For May, 'In May, the blackbird's song tells us April is done!'

We have passed the first anniversary of the first lock-down; we had no idea what it would involve, and perhaps that's just as well. For many it was a terrible year with illness and death very close, unable to see family and friends, closed off from socialising and all the other things you can remember about the time. Whatever we say, though, we seem all to be agreed on how rapidly the year passed. Millions have been vaccinated and there is hope of freedom from the restrictive life of lockdown.

Our technology skills grew and many were WFH (working from home), being advised on suitable dress (smart top to be seen, not pyjamas, etc.) Although many of the acronyms were from the earlier days of text messages, some gained ground and FOMO and FOGO are frequent (fear of moving on and fear of going out). A friend was convinced that LOL meant 'Lots of love' instead of 'Laugh out loud'. Apparently one needs notes of some kind for the acronyms in the series 'Line of Duty', which some viewers think is amazing, whilst others think it is awful. Would the notes make it more intelligible?

Christianity offers us two powerful acronyms (and has given many adages to the English language, thanks to the King James Version). The Greek word

for fish, ichthus, was used as a secret code for the statement of belief; each letter demands deep reflection on its meaning. *Jesus Christ, God's Son, Saviour* is a short sermon or a long treatise and has stood for many Christians as a source of strength and faith.

INRI, the acronym of the words Pilate wrote in three languages, Latin, Greek and Hebrew, to be attached to the cross, now always needs explanation because there was no 'J' in use in Latin or Greek, only 'I'. *Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews* is, unexpectedly, a statement of faith. Pilate was not persuaded to change it to accommodate angry officials who wanted it to read 'He said he was the king of the Jews'. Pilate is often described as a weak or a puppet governor; in some ways he was, but in refusing to change his statement shows he was less of a pushover than some may think.

The quietude of lock-down has enabled us to follow the seasons more closely, I think, and we have been able to enjoy the changes as the year has progressed. The greening of the trees especially has given hope - and awareness that the air had been polluted in the past. The reading and psalm used at the funeral of the Duke of Edinburgh reminded me that the green movement does not have the only new ideas, whatever it claims to offer. Sirach 43 (or Ecclesiasticus, not Ecclesiastes) praises the wonder of God the Creator as evidenced by His creation; the Book of Leviticus is detailed in all the laws deemed necessary for the survival of God's people in formerly unknown circumstances, giving directions for people now settled on the land to manage it wisely and productively, allowing rotation of crops, grazing and leaving fallow: all these methods are recognised today in 'slow' farming. The human race has ignored the messages of the faiths about the need to work in harmony with the world, its resources and seasons for too long.

Here's an old acronym: TTFN and enjoy the summer!



Stephanie Aplin

25.04.2021



Thrive: Review - and Summer Programme

thrive
at St David's



Your space for peace, questions and growth



Sundays at 4pm

stdavidschurhexeter.org.uk



Join Zoom Meeting

[https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88685738289?
pwd=WEh1dINCy3NRQTICcXFjK2ZlejR0UT09](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88685738289?pwd=WEh1dINCy3NRQTICcXFjK2ZlejR0UT09)

Meeting ID: 886 8573 8289

Passcode: 159821

You will have seen or heard Thrive publicised here in New Leaves or in church or online, but maybe you haven't dropped in on a session yet, or have only been to one or two sessions and aren't sure what's coming up. Let me start by saying that Thrive *is for you*, wherever you are in your faith: it is for people who are new to church **and** for those of us who've been doing this a while! So, whether you're already a regular or have never been, or are somewhere in between, you are welcome at Thrive.

The format involves a warm welcome and usually a quiet activity like reflecting on some questions which will appear on your screen as people

arrive, then an opportunity for chatting in breakout groups, generally about how you are and about the theme for the week's session. We then have some input and reasoning together on scripture and Christian tradition, ending with a pause and some quiet prayers (and often a link to click on or an ad for some other activity you can head to at the end of the session, such as a Taizé chant video on YouTube or a prayer resource online).

The concept for Thrive started, really, as a plan for an afternoon service to help school families, college community, and university students connect with our churches and serve as both an evangelistic and pastoral ministry in its own right, and as a bridge to our existing excellent service provision. This requires your support, to serve as welcomers and mentors to new people, and to build relationships that could grow faith and discipleship, including offering people invites to our existing Sunday and midweek services and socials.

When the pandemic made it obvious that an extra gathering on a Sunday afternoon in church was going to be impossible due to the need to disinfect the chairs and so on between the services, Zoom presented itself as a ready 'venue' for launching something on a Sunday afternoon which we could still build with a strong core of people from morning church and use to share church with some folk from our non-church networks.

The opportunity to start came in Advent last year, after we ran a series of assemblies at St David's Primary and St Wilfrid's School inviting questions the children would like to explore together about God, Christianity, and spirituality. This 'crowdsourcing' gave us plenty of material to consider, including deep questions about Creation, the existence of death and suffering, the historical basis for belief in Christmas, and whether unicorns are real (the Bible is silent on the last subject, which I like to think doesn't rule them out).

We continued in January due to popular demand from the growing group of attendees we'd built up over Advent, and in the months since I have co-lead or sat out leading entirely in deference to input from Sunday morning regulars and new people who's first connection with our parish was hearing about Thrive online. Several of these new friends (perhaps you're one of them!) have also now joined our notices mailing list and have come to services in the building or plan to come as Covid circumstances ease.

Meanwhile, topics we've looked at have included "Sacred Pathways" (on

how different people relate to God), “Love Languages” (how different people ‘speak’ and ‘hear’ love in different ways), and “Mother’s Day” (exploring biblical and traditional imagery of God as Mother), as well as sessions equipping us on how to enrich our prayer lives, and sessions on sharing stories of God’s work in our lives. Coming topics include “Sainthood in scripture and Christian tradition”, “Christian Aid Week”, and “Vocation” (God’s call on your life).

So, wherever you are in your journey with Jesus, I personally invite you to Thrive.

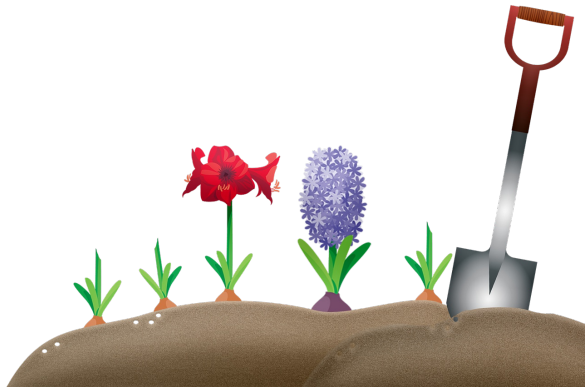
Ash



Sacred Garden

The idea of our spiritual garden , comes from a book called “The Feminine Face of God” by S. Andrews and P Hopkins (1992) that was recommended to me by Glynis. It presents a model of spiritual development that uses the metaphor of a garden, and is an attractive image to me as it moves away from the idea of spiritual journey with an ultimate destination , to an image of a garden that grows, changes and is cultivated over time. The authors describe that a garden can have lots of different entrance gates, some people’s gate are open and obvious, others are overgrown and hidden. The metaphor talks of cultivating this garden for the whole of your life, and Glynis asked me to describe my spiritual garden.

I have always loved the book “The Secret Garden”, and am a lover of gardens, but not a gardener – love visiting gardens , but perhaps not all the hard work and knowledge that a good gardener pours into creating a garden. My happy childhood, with a strong sense of community and belonging in a church where the rural village and church



life where inseperable is the “seedbed of the sacred” in my life. The importance of hospitality, celebration and acceptance informed the shape of my garden which has to have a large table and lots of chairs in the middle of it! My work in hospices over the years has also hugely influenced what I grow in my spiritual garden, an understanding of how things grow and die and that there is a time for every season. My garden would also have a rather messy collection of childrens toys scattered across any lawn and would have enthusiastic bursts of colour but also patches of neglect. Friendships are key in my spiritual (and real) garden – I have belonged to a cell group with six other women who have been meeting together for a weekend of retreat and laughter and prayer for over thirty years and my “cell group sisters” are a growing plant that has changed over the years as we have negotiated as a group work, parenthood, divorces, illness and our

lives in the church.

My spiritual life is always challenged by me wanting immediate results and at times the weeds overwhelming the small growth, but I have nearly always enjoyed being in the garden and sharing it with others -- what I am interested in now is what I am going to grow in this garden as I move into my 60's - will it bear different fruit ? Does the organisational church support my growth and develop my gardening skills ? Is everyone welcome in my spiritual garden ? How much effort do I want to put into the cultivation of this garden, and what will the results look like – hopefully blossom and magnolias.



Maggie Draper



Chosen Readings for May 2021 @St David's



Sunday 2nd May 5th Sunday of Easter

1st Reading: Genesis 22:1-18

2nd Reading: Acts 8:26-end

Gospel Reading: John 15:1-8

Preacher: Belinda Speed-Andrews Bible Reader: Hilary Todd

Prayer Leader: Deborah Leighton Plom

Sunday 9th May 6th Sunday of Easter

1st Reading: Acts 10:44-end

2nd Reading: 1 John 5:1-6

Gospel Reading: John 15:9-17

Preacher: Nigel Guthrie Bible Reader: Maggie Draper

Prayer Leader: Richard Johnson

Sunday 16th May 7th Sunday of Easter, Sunday after Ascension Day

1st Reading: Ezekiel 36:24-28

2nd Reading: Acts 1:15-17,21-end

Gospel Reading: John 17:6-19

Preacher: Howard Friend; Bible Reader: Jean Thomas

Prayer Leader: Chris Gill

Sunday 23rd May Pentecost

1st Reading: Ezekiel 37:1-14

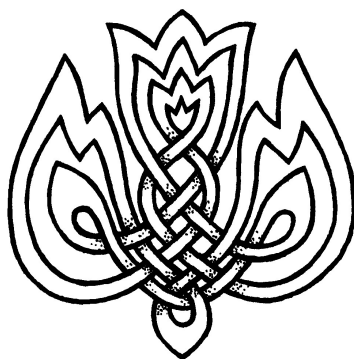
2nd Reading: Acts 2:1-21

Gospel Reading: John 15:26-27;16:4b-15

Preacher: David James; Bible Reader:

Stephanie Hils

Prayer Leader: Ash Leighton Plom



Sunday 30th May Trinity Sunday

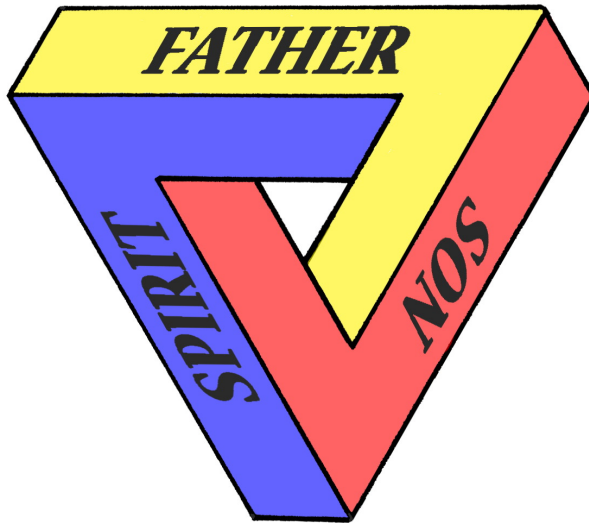
1st Reading: Isaiah 6:1-8

2nd Reading: Romans 8:12-17

Gospel Reading: John 3:1-17

Preacher: Ash Leighton Plom Bible Reader: Jeremy Lawford

Prayer Leader: David James



Sunday 6th June 1st Sunday after Trinity

1st Reading: Genesis 3:8-15

2nd Reading: 2 Corinthians 4:13-5:1

Gospel Reading: Mark 3:20-end

Preacher: Bill Pattinson Bible Reader: Emma White

Prayer Leader: Helen Friend



Services & Events for St Michael's - May 2021

Our thanks to all who joined us for our Eastertide worship, moving and joyful despite the Covid limitations on some aspects. Thanks especially to Connie Cannon & Paula Lewis for preparing the Easter Garden, to Stephanie Aplin for the flower arrangements, and to all our servers, musicians & clergy.

We are also grateful to Frs Robin Eastoe and Dominic Cyrus for coming to celebrate Mass and preach on some Sundays.

Our regular pattern of Worship In Church & Online is:-

Sundays 11am Sung Mass & Sermon, in Church only.

Wednesdays Matins at 9.30 and Mass at 10am, the latter is also broadcast to

<https://www.facebook.com/stmichaelsmtdinhamexeter>

and can be watched later if more convenient.

Plainsong Vespers led by Richard Parker on Thursdays at 6pm is also Covid aware public worship, also broadcast to

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/2227703237/>

Friends of St Michael's Facebook Group.

Our website is <https://www.stmichaelsmountdinham.org.uk/>

St David's Facebook page

<https://www.facebook.com/stdavidschurchexeter>

will broadcast St David's Sunday 9.30 Eucharist and Morning Prayers on Thursday & Friday.

The weekly Parish Notices and Pewsheets will keep you informed. Our thanks to Oliver Nicholson for emailing these each week.

Current CofE Rules limit Music in Church to Organist and 'a small choir', with no Congregational singing (except outdoors).

Now is the month of Maying, with many a Named Sunday and Feast Day for praying.

Sun 2 May. Easter IV or 5th of. 11am Sung Mass. (Also St Athanasius of Alexandria, 373.)

Wed 5 May and subsequent Wednesdays, 9.30 Matins & 10am Mass (Mass also streamed to Facebook page).

Thu 6 May, and most Thursdays, 6pm Plainsong Vespers (also streamed to Facebook group).

Sun 9 May. Rogation Sunday. 11am Sung Mass, with Rogation Prayers & Hymn outside.

Wed 12 May. Matins & Mass

Thu 13 May. Ascension Day 7.30pm Sung Mass.

Sun 16 May. Sunday after the Ascension, 11am Sung Mass.

Wed 19 May. 9.30 Matins & 10am Mass, Dunstan Abp of Canterbury, 988.

Thu 20 May. 6pm Plainsong Vespers, Alcuin of York & Tours, 808.

Sun 23 May. Pentecost, Whitsun, 11am Sung Mass.

Wed 26 May, 9.30 Matins & 10am Mass, Augustine of Canterbury, 605, John Calvin, 1564.

Thu 27 May, 6pm Plainsong Vespers.

Sat 29 May, Men's Breakfast. If conditions allow it is hoped to meet in person at the Farmers' Union at 9.30am. Otherwise 9am by Zoom.

Sun 30 May. Trinity Sunday, 11am Sung Mass.

Wed 2 Jun. Matins & Mass.

Thu 3 Jun. Corpus Christi, 7.30pm Sung Mass & Procession.

Sun 6 Jun. Trinity I, 11am Sung Mass.

We hope you stay safe and enjoy celebrating with us the Church's many Feasts this month.



Richard Barnes – 25/04/21.

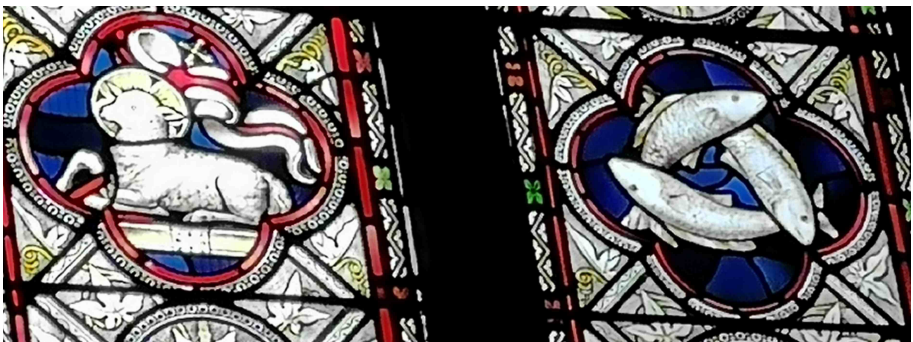
Choir & Chancel Windows at St Michael's.

When you come up to the High Altar at St Michael's Church, do you notice the 5 'lancet' windows to the sides, as well as the great East Window? There are 3 on the south side but only 2 on the north side owing to the Organ Chamber being there too.

Our Church historian, Dr Richard Parker, says that when St Michael's was built in 1868 these windows were plain. Or rather their glass was made with faint monochrome foliage patterns, technically known as 'grisaille'. This style echoes the windows of mediaeval Cistercian monastic churches; very appropriate as Major Rohde Hawkins based his design for St Michael's on 14th century French architecture. The patterning, still visible in the plainer six roundels of each light, also links with the beautiful foliage carving on the nave column capitals.

However, in the 1880s, each of these choir and chancel windows was enhanced with a pair of coloured glass roundels inserted near the top, the work of Exeter firm Frederic Drake.

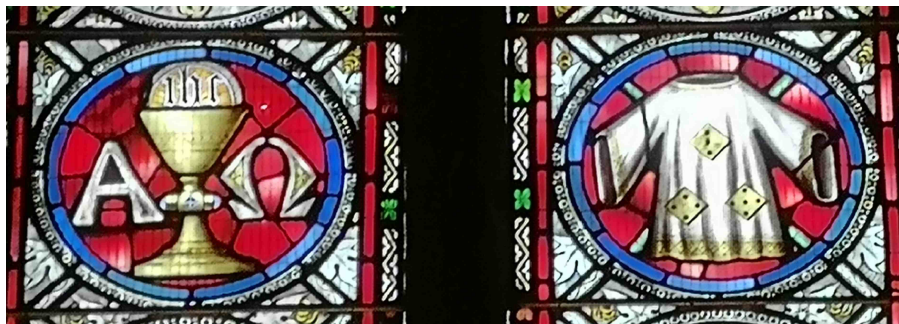
My thinking on these 10 panels is that as they progress towards the High Altar they signify the Nature, Passion and Names of our Lord.



The first window on the south side has panels showing 3 circling intertwined fishes. This is a well-known symbol of the Holy Trinity. The fish was one of the earliest Christian symbols, more popular than the Cross and Crucifix in early centuries. The letters of the Greek word for fish, ichthus, can stand for Jesus Christ Son of God Saviour, a simple but full creed and prayer. Various forms of this Trinity knot or Triquetra are found in Celtic

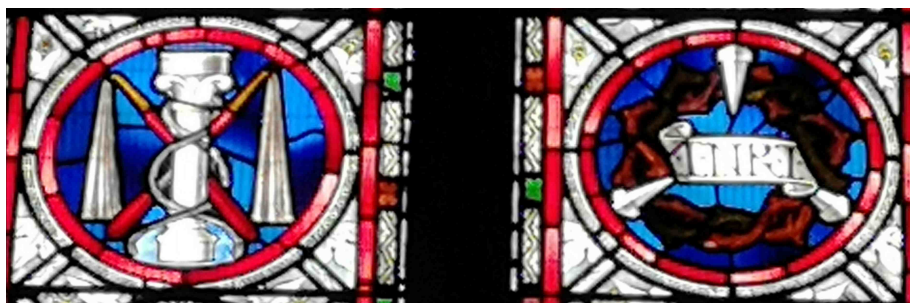
Christianity.

The Lamb and Flag is a clear symbol of Christ. Behold the Lamb of God, as John the Baptist said. And the Lamb upon the Throne in Revelation. O Lamb of God that takest away the sins of the world. As the Easter Sequence says, A lamb the sheep redeems, Christ who only is sinless reconciles sinners to the Father.



The next windows illustrate Jesus' Passion. On the north side, the one I have seen most often from the choir stalls, the Cup and Bread of the Last Supper stand between the Alpha & Omega, the first and the last. The letters 'ihs' are visible on the Host.

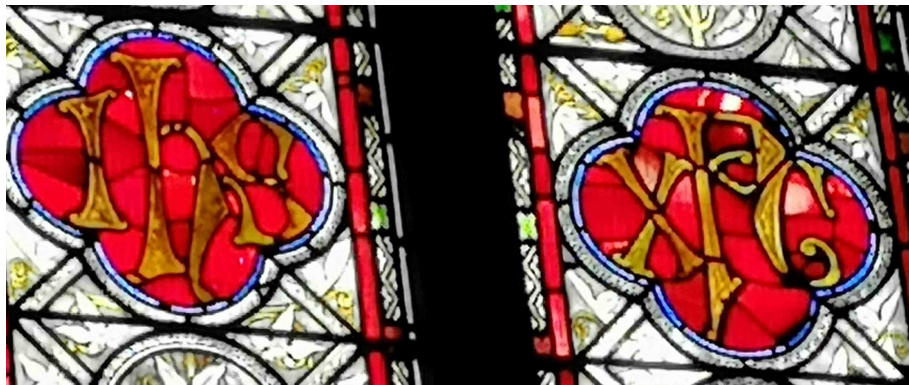
Alongside, what looks like a surplice is Christ's robe (John 19:23) woven in one piece or without a seam, ie. a fairly high-status garment. You can see



the dice on it representing the soldiers gambling for the robe.

On the south side are symbols of Jesus' Scourging and Crucifixion. Prof Oliver Nicholson reminds me that the Pillar of Scourging was a revered site in Jerusalem, visited by the Lady Egeria in the 380s as recorded in the account of her Pilgrimage to the Holy Places (which we read as a group in October 2017). In the second panel here, the Crown of Thorns and three piercing nails surround the board with INRI, the accusation against him,

Jesus of Nazareth King of the Jews.



High up either side of the Altar are the monograms of our Lord.

One Christogram is IHS. This symbol is often seen on chasubles, pulpit falls, etc. and indeed in the postcode of Exeter Cathedral, EX1 1HS, surely no coincidence. IHS has several meanings. The most well-known is standing for Iesus hominum salvator, Jesus saviour of humanity, though originally it was simply the first 3 letters of the holy name of Jesus in Greek, iota-eta-sigma written in Latin script as ihs.

Among other variants is Jesus saviour of Jerusalem, a medieval spelling of the holy city being Hierusalem. Oliver adds that the symbol IHS is also used in laying out the vestments for Mass; the maniple makes the I, the stole the H and the girdle the S.

The other Christogram, xPc, also in gold, is actually the Greek letters chi-rho-sigma, the first 3 consonants of Christos, reminding us that Jesus is the Christ, the Anointed of God, our Messiah.

One final observation. The 6 panels on the south side have deep blue backgrounds, the 4 on the north side red ones. We don't know why this is so. Possibly just for variety. Perhaps blue on the sunny south side for Matins, red for the darker north face at Evensong or Vespers.

So many layers of meaning and devotion spelled out in these beautiful little panels of coloured glass which lift our heads and hearts to God through our Saviour Jesus Christ.



Richard Barnes – 25/04/21.

Green Matters – Renewable Electricity

At the recent Men's breakfast the discussion turned to wind turbines and the Green "lobby" and how some of us dislike the sight of the wind and solar farms "destroying" our beautiful countryside. Apparently wind turbines are OK offshore but not on land. Can we afford to make this choice? Also where does the pejorative sense of "lobby" come from? More on this later.

On Easter Monday the UK electricity grid generation was the greenest ever. At 1pm wind power made up 39% of the electricity mix, solar power 21%, and nuclear 16% – meaning zero carbon power sources made up almost 80% of the nation's power. This mean



the CO2 emissions dropped to 39g CO2 per kilowatt-hour on 5 April, the lowest figure in history. Sunny and blustery conditions coupled with lower demand over Easter meant renewable sources dominated the electricity generation mix over the weekend. Generally electricity generation is the second largest source of CO2 emission in the UK (at 25%) with 62% being generated by burning fossil fuels, either coal or natural gas. Just this week new target for a 78% reduction compared to 1990 levels in UK carbon emissions by 2035 was announced and which will become law by June 2021. Already there is a target of 68% reduction by 2030. It seems clear to me that we need to emulate Easter Monday on many more days of the year to achieve these ambitious targets, without the benefit of especially sunny and windy conditions and a holiday. This means increasing the capacity of cleaner electricity sources.

There are large offshore wind farms planned or under construction which will contribute a lot. However there are still many suitably windy sites on land which could be used. These sites cost less to develop as construction costs are much lower than offshore and existing grid infrastructure is largely in place. Onshore wind is the cheapest renewable energy source per

kWh. Five years ago the government scrapped subsidies for new land-based wind farms and put a block on them, largely as a result of pressure of not-in-my-backyard public opinion. David Cameron (now a latter day lobbyist) said at the time that people were “frankly fed up” with wind farms and the cut to subsidies led to a reduction by 80% in new wind farms. However last year this policy was reversed with apparently a change of heart in both the government and opinion polls. To help achieve net zero carbon by 2050 it is estimated by the government’s climate advisors that onshore wind will have to triple. Public opinion now seems to realise that it makes sense to use all the tools to tackle climate change and especially the cheapest and cleanest. There is also a realisation that nearly all our landscape has been managed by humans in some way and that nothing apart from the few truly wild spaces are natural. Indeed Dartmoor, on our doorstep, is full of the remains of past industrial activities. We have learned to accept many changes to the landscape, such as large electricity pylons, that accommodating ourselves to wind turbines, that are actually quite graceful in operation, will happen in time. Many other European countries such as Denmark, Germany and Spain have invested heavily in wind power. The UK being the furthest west and with a benevolent maritime climate is the best-suited country in terms of wind power potential which we should harness to contribute to our net target.

The discussion of these important policy choices is not helped by the diversionary tactic of trigger words such as Green “lobby”. It conjures up a self-interested group of conspirators “lobbying” to their own ends against the majority which any reasonable person would be against, thus neatly avoiding a proper discussion on the issues. Lobby comes from the latin for a covered walkway such as a monastery cloister. It became a verb in the US following the practice of visiting the lobby of the House of Representatives to influence its members to support a particular cause. We have a similar practice with groups attending parliament to meet MPs, which is an open practice and strength of democracy. When the influencing is less public and obscure there is more suspicion that special interests are being given undue attention.



Clive Wilson

25.04.2021

Our Planet

Has anyone else watched Climate Change: Ade on the Frontline or Greta Thunberg: A Year to Change the World? Do take a look if you haven't.



Both show just how fast the earth is changing and the effects on the lives of people, from the Sami and their reindeer in the Arctic to those on the Solomon Islands whose lands are literally disappearing under rising sea levels. Even here, in our garden, our water butts are already empty and the ground is cracking and it is only April. Both also look at what is already being done to try to mitigate the changes which is really interesting.

I want to see more of these programmes but more about what we as individuals can do to help, but as so often in this game, there do not seem to be many clear answers. So here are my questions for the moment:

- How do we move from gas for heating and cooking to electric (Roger and I both remember the move from coal to gas!)? Is induction the way to go for cooking, is it possible to retro-fit ground and air source heat pumps for heating and how is it all to be paid for? And what if it is not practical?
- Electric cars? And many thanks to Dave Allin for his article last month.
- Food? In making choices, would it be helpful for packaging to show if products from abroad were air or sea freighted? We are already being encouraged to eat seasonally and less meat.
- Travel in general? We have come to see it almost as a right to go when and where we please – with restrictions easing, our mileage is already rising - but should we be thinking more carefully?
- The internet? How much are the vast servers and their cooling contributing to the problem? It doesn't seem to be much talked about but it was on Morning Live this week. Should we be sending less email and clearing it out regularly as we (maybe?!) do our home filing? Should we be using Cloud storage or an external hard-drive? We need to know more on this.

- Housing? In planning the vast housing estates we see all around us, are the planners looking at where the water is to come from that people will need, where the effluent is to go, likewise the additional rainwater run-off? Do we need to bath/shower every day?

So many questions! The Pandemic has shown just how much and how fast we can change our ways if we have to or are compelled to. The question now is how and how much we are prepared to change our ways going forward, not in the face of an unseen threat, but one that is becoming ever more visible day by day? Answers on a postcard ...



Love our planet. Image by Ajay kumar Singh from Pixabay

Poem of the Month

This poem came to us from our local Councillor, Peter Holland, when we were talking about the problem of litter. It was drummed into us as kids that you should leave a place as you found it for the next people to enjoy as you had, but now it seems that for some, it is a case of 'someone will clear up after me' and they don't care about their environment. Would they if?

Hilary Todd

If the Earth were only..

*If the Earth were only a few feet in diameter,
floating a few feet above a field somewhere, people would come from
everywhere to marvel at it.*

*People would walk around it, marvelling at its big pools of water, its little
pools and the water flowing between the pools.*

*People would marvel at the bumps on it and the holes in it, and they would
marvel at the very thin layer of gas surrounding it and the water suspended
in the gas.*

*The people would marvel at all the creatures walking around the surface of
the ball, and at the creatures in the water.*

*The people would declare it as sacred because it was the only one, and they
would protect it so that it would not be hurt.*

*The ball would be the greatest wonder known and people would come to
pray to it, to be healed and to gain knowledge, to know beauty and to
wonder how it could be.*

*People would love it and defend it with their lives because they would
somehow know that their lives their own roundness, could be nothing
without it.*

If the Earth were only a few feet in diameter.

Joe Miller 1975

Hospiscare Plant Sale

Several members of the parish know that for over ten years the Exeter Friends of Hospiscare have organised a plant sale every May in Baring Crescent. The residents of the



crescent have generously allowed us to hold the sale in their private garden and it has become a really popular event supported by crowds of people queuing patiently until the gate opens at 10am. Last year we realised that because of lockdown this was going to be impossible and thanks to help from our friends at Bicton College we were able to hold a successful on line sale.

We hoped that this year it would be possible to return to a sale in the Crescent but, even if we delayed it till late June when all lockdown restraints are to be lifted, we don't feel people will be comfortable to be in a crush of keen buyers and so once again our sale will be on line. The link to the catalogue of plants available for sale will open on Monday 17th May at this link <https://bictoncollgardening.co.uk/hospiscare/> and will continue for at least two weeks. There will be perennials, annuals, shrubs, veg plants and herbs for sale. Once you have found the link, all the instructions are there for choosing plants and phoning the hospice to order and pay. I will then contact buyers to arrange about collecting plants from 8 Victoria Park Road where we shall also have a table of small plants for sale.

It would be marvellous if anyone reading this feels able to support Hospiscare in this way and we are grateful for any help for our local palliative care charity which does such good work for people with life limiting illnesses. Thank you.



Paula Lawford

09.04.2021

This year's Lent Course: Persecution and the Early Church

I have been asked to write about my reactions to Oliver Nicholson's most interesting series. Oliver is an erudite scholar, who teaches using detailed, serious research, with lighter intervals of amusing anecdotes. His retranslations of some extracts were interesting in themselves. Word meanings can vary, and have a serious effect on context, if mistranslated. Terms once read as admirable may now be derogatory. Calling someone a martyr is now often defined as an attention-seeker, who "enjoys ill health".

Oliver did a fine job in helping us to try to understand the mindset of the early Christians and the situation in which they were living and dying. That is almost impossible to do.

Those in power still try to stop protesters becoming a martyr, in case that strengthens the opposition and challenges control. As Oliver explained, the Romans really did not want to persecute or kill the Christians; they wanted them to pay lip-service to the Roman Empire and the pagan customs (and, of course, taxes!). They knew that martyrs are dangerous. The recorded number of deaths surprised me, but Oliver reminded us that many may well have been suppressed.

I really learned a lot from this course – but I just find it hard to accept the desire to martyr oneself. I hope this will not offend. I know that many will strongly disagree. If Jesus wanted his followers to go forth & spread the Word, why not try to stay alive and do it? I was taught that Jesus died to redeem our sins once and for all, and that our living sacrifice is to follow the Way as Jesus taught it. Oliver explained clearly that some early Christians were driven by the desire to purify and perfect themselves for eternal life. I guess I am imperfect at best and cowardly at worst...



Vivien Finnigan

Athanasius of Alexandria

A few years ago I penned this limerick:-

There was an old Saint Athanasius

Who couldn't abide Creedal haziness;

To Arian fault

He said Quicunque vult

With theology that's still amazin' us.

May 2nd is St Athanasius Day. Born around AD 296-8, he was Bishop of Alexandria in Egypt from 328 till his death in 373, for 45 years. Athanasius was present at the Council of Nicaea in 325 as a confident young theologian.

We sometimes think of the arguments at Nicaea as settling the disputes among bishops & theologians over the nature of Christ and of the Trinity. But Athanasius spent the rest of his life defending what became the orthodox Christian beliefs of the Nicene Creed against Arianism and other errors. This often made him unpopular with politicians and other bishops, and he was exiled from Alexandria no less than 5 times by 4 different Roman Emperors.

His 'exiles' included to Trier, to Rome, and to the Egyptian Desert. He wrote the Life of St Anthony, founder of desert monasticism.

We should remember and pray for today's Christians in Egypt, being persecuted and martyred for their faith in Jesus.

Like Athanasius, it is admirable when someone can hold to and hold out for their passions & principles, amid the changes & expediences of the short-term self interests of the powerful.

Today his name is most familiar in the western Church for the Athanasian Creed which he certainly did not produce. Athanasius wrote in Greek and Coptic; the "Quicunque vult" is in Latin, written a century or so later in Gaul, and showing the influence of Augustine of Hippo.

It can be found in the Book of Common Prayer - 'Whosoever will be saved...'. A pretty fierce defence of the doctrine of the Trinity.

When writing last month about Crucifixion & Resurrection, I realised I was using two lines from the Nicene Creed as my 'texts' rather than Bible verses. As my daughter commented, it's because we say or sing the Creed every week, whereas there would be 4 or more Bible passages to choose from.

Clearly the Christian life is far more than a statement of belief. There is encounter with God, worship, prayer, charity & service, witness, confession that we fall short, and more. But the Apostles' and the Nicene Creeds give us succinct statements, just a couple of dozen lines, of the beliefs we try to hold in common about God as Trinity, the Church, and Humanity.

The Creeds are like gold or silver extracted from the ore of scripture, sometimes indeed by hammer and heat. Or, if I may say so without sounding flippant, the Bible's 31,000 verses distilled to 20 or 30 lines, like fine whisky or brandy, and matured over centuries.

The Book of Common Prayer states that the Athanasian Creed should be used at Morning Prayer on major Festivals, including Ascension Day and Trinity Sunday which occur this month.

One benefit of Lockdown has been rediscovering Morning Prayer, and particularly BCP Matins, through our Facebook broadcasts.

One might turn to Iona or Celtic style worship to affirm the Green, ecological or conservation themes & issues that need to be at the forefront of Christian concern to protect the Climate as the world hopefully emerges from the Covid-19 pandemic.

But equally Matins with its blend of Canticles, Psalms, Old & New Testament Lessons and Prayers highlights the Glory of Nature, the Folly of Humanity, the Wisdom of God and our Hope in Jesus Christ.

Think of the Venite & Jubilate (Psalm 95 & 100) and the Benedicite.

In this decade when we need action to flatten the curves of greenhouse gases and global warming, could the simplicity of Morning Prayer speak to more people than the brash triumphalism of the Worship Meeting or even the lavish banquet of the Eucharist?



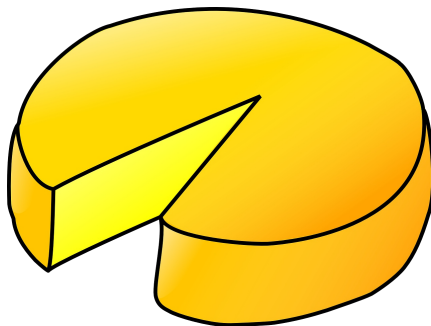
Richard Barnes – 25/04/21.

Episcopal Anecdotes - apocryphal or not

What are the credentials for bishops? Do they have to take a height test? In his time in the ordained ministry my husband (pushing 6 foot 2) only served under one bishop shorter than himself.

In Grahamstown in the Eastern Cape of South Africa, Robert Selby-Taylor was our bishop - tall, of course, patrician but kindly, fond of his clergy, but giving the impression of aloofness because he was rather shy. Our first experience of him was, when returning home to our little cottage, we found two casserole dishes made at the local potteries on our kitchen table - a present from Bishop Robert. How had they got there? Who let him in? How could one not warm to a bishop, who managed to open the kitchen window and climb through? And who might drop in of an afternoon and sit quite comfortably in an armchair, surrounded by children's toys and maybe even a potty?

Robert always had a young ordinand from England over for a year to act as his driver and general amanuensis. There was one young chap, we'll call him Andrew, who heartily disliked Robert's taste for smelly cheese. Once, when Robert was away, Andrew seized the opportunity to take the offending Camembert and bury it in the garden. Robert came back home and took a stroll in the garden with his dog, who soon sniffed out the cheese and dug it up. Returning to the house, the bishop handed the cheese to Andrew with a laconic, "Wash it." That evening the ripe Camembert graced the dining table once more.



Once kindly Robert took his flock of ordinands down to our favourite seaside resort, Kenton, for the day. It seems that on a whim he proposed that they should all wade through the little river which ran into the sea there and cross to Bushman's River Mouth on the far bank. I think he must have misjudged the tide, because as he stood on the shore, one by one the heads of his bright young students disappeared under the water.

Metaphorically wringing his hands, he began to fear that he had caused the drowning of a whole cohort of precious ordinands, but to his relief, one by one, the heads appeared through the surf and they all reached the further shore intact.

Episcopal Anecdotes - apocryphal or not? part ii

In the fifties and early sixties the Archbishop of Cape Town was Geoffrey Clayton. He was a trusty opponent of the apartheid regime in the country and I believe he died at his post writing a letter in opposition. Clayton was a celibate and might have been described as a 'crusty bachelor'. Here are two tales about him - but they could be just hearsay:

The archbishop was in his study when the phone rang. "Oh, is that you, darling?" asked a breathless female voice. "Probably not," replied the archbishop, gruffly, and hung up.

Tom Inman, an undergraduate friend of ours, told us of an experience his parents had. His father, recently consecrated and now Bishop of Natal, was attending his first bishops' conference, presumably at Bishop's Court. Ignorant of the protocol, he brought along his wife to this 'men only' conclave and I believe she was allotted a bedroom at the far end of the building from her husband. On the first evening, poor Mrs Inman, realizing that she and her husband had made a faux pas, said after dinner with a nervous smile, "Well, I think I'll have an early night and go to bed with a thriller." The Archbishop surveyed the table of bishops. "And which of you gentlemen answers to that description?" he asked



Ann Barnett



Easing out of Pychester.

I expect you have heard enough of the Pychester Lockdown saga over the past 8 Magazines. We have come a year with our friends there, from Lent 2020 to Easter 2021.

Having corrected a few more typos and tidied a few phrases, I have packaged the eight chapters into a single pdf for you to revisit here...

https://www.stmichaelsmountdinham.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/Pychester_Lockdown_Story.pdf

There are a few loose ends that could be tied up, particularly when Bishop Ric launches St Frank's Resource Church with its Toddlers' Soft Pray Area, Bonhoeffer's Costa Discipleship Coffee Bar, Hot Dogmas B-b-q, Biretta & Skittles Aisle and Salon Scriptura Pamper Zone in the Lady Chapel. But for now you deserve a rest.

It is also probably time to say that sadly our resident Peregrine Falcons, the elderly female and much younger male, have produced no eggs this year, and there has been little serious activity in or around the nest box.



Image by Iulian Ursache from Pixabay

With my deteriorating eyesight, I have started using screen readers on my laptop & smartphone. They have pleasant mid-Atlantic voices but clearly know more about geography than religion. Thus...

At Street Michael's Church, 11am Sung Massachusetts. Cantor Drive Richard Parker. Music to include Howells' Setting Colonel Reg, Avenue Maria and Lord for Thy tender mercies' sa-ke (Japanese rice wine)!

As well as Byrd Masses, in pre-Corvid time we sang Mozart's Sparrow Mass, but I recently noticed a typo suggesting we also sang the Duckling Mass by Victoria "O Quak gloriosum".

To re-iterate a piece from New Leaves October 2019, Mark 8:24, I see Men like trees walking, please forgive me (and stop me) if I walk past you. Even when our face masks come off, I will not be able to recognise you from afar

except by your voice and gait.

My thanks to Bill Pattinson for picking up most of the typos that evade my proof-reading these days, and thanks also for his Editorial latitude enabling our Parish Magazine & its writers to venture into such diverse areas & issues.



Richard Barnes – 25/04/21.



"After a year of working from home,
Anthony will seize any opportunity to
put on a suit"

THE TREASURES OF ROMANIA.

Monday 20th - Wednesday 29th September 2021

Bishop Martin and Elspeth Shaw invite you to join them on a journey into the landscape, history, spirituality and resilience of a nation in its traditions and development. From the vibrancy of Bucharest, through rural Marmures' ancient villages; wooden churches; staying at an Orthodox Convent, we will move across the Carpathian Mountains to the famous World Heritage [UNESCO] Bucovina monastery churches. Via Moldavia, We will come to the mysterious culture of Transylvania, staying at the historic mansion of Szekerland. Our journey will be completed by a visit to a Children's Hospice, cared for by an Orthodox priest. This journey is a pilgrimage into the heart of the Orthodox tradition. We'll have a daily Eucharist and time to enjoy new as well as deepen friendship.

Cost: £1695 [which includes a deposit of £200].

If you are interested to receive more information and a booking form, please get in touch with Bishop Martin:

07801 549615 or amartinshaw@gmail.com The Pilgrimage company is: Worldwide Christian Travel, 36, Coldharbour Road, Bristol BS6 7NA. Email: info@christian-travel.com Website: www.christian-travel.com



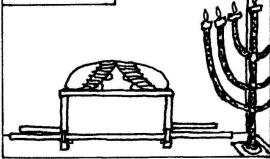
Bible Bite

A short story from the Bible

It can be read in the Bible in
1 Samuel 4:1-10, 5:1-7:1

God gave Moses two stone slabs with His laws for the Jews on them. They were kept in a special chest, the Ark, and carried with them

When the Jews got to Israel, the Ark was kept at Shiloh.



The Jews did not keep God's laws so He let the Philistines attack and defeat them.



The Jews took the Ark into battle with them to make God help them win.



But the Philistines won. They took the Ark to their city of Ashdod and put it in the temple of their god Dagon.



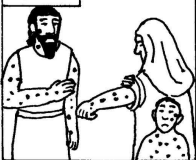
The next day they found Dagon's statue face down.



The next day it was over again and its head and hands had broken off.



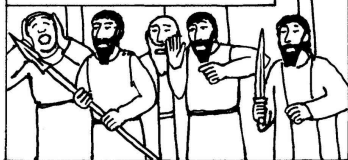
Then the people became covered in sores.



They moved the Ark to the city of Gath.



They were going to move the Ark to Ekron, but the people there wouldn't let them.



So they put the Ark on a new cart with a gift of gold.



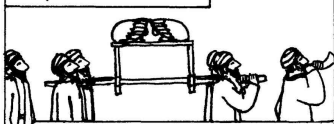
God led the cows pulling the cart.

At Bethshemesh, people harvesting saw the Ark.



They celebrated its return.

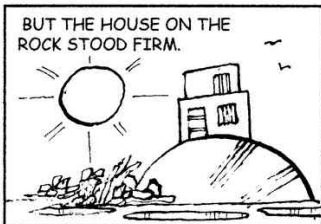
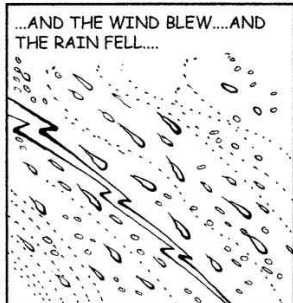
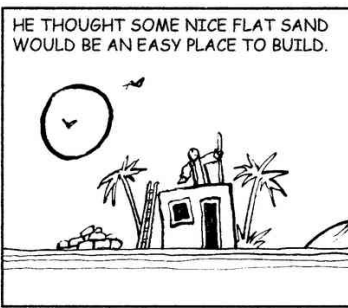
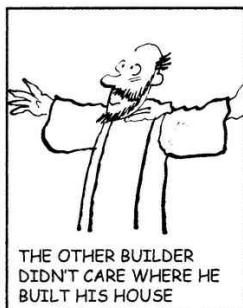
But some treated it without respect and died.



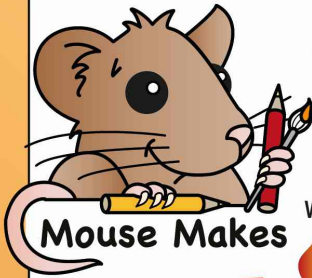
So it was moved to Keriath Jearim for safe-keeping.



**AT LONG, LONG LAST HE
FOUND THE IDEAL SPOT.**



**JESUS EXPLAINED -
IT'S IMPORTANT OUR LIVES HAVE
A FIRM FOUNDATION.**



Mouse Makes

Re arrange the scrambled letters to find the missing words.



The Holy Spirit
V S E I L
with us and in us.

The Holy Spirit
helps us to
W K N O
we belong to God.

The Holy Spirit
H C T S E E A
us about God.

The Holy Spirit
K P E S S A
God's word to us.

The Holy Spirit
P H L S E
us to tell others
about Jesus.

The Holy Spirit
helps us when we
A Y P R



On the day of **PENTECOST**
the disciples were gathered
together in one place...

What sound did they hear?

Acts 2:2

What did they see?

Acts 2:3

What filled them?

Acts 2:4

How did they speak?

Acts 2:4

What did the crowd hear?

Acts 2:6

Which countries
had they come from?

Acts 2:9

What was
their reaction?

Acts 2:12-13

Who explained
what was
happening?
What did he say?

Acts 2:14-36

How many
people were
baptised
that day?

Acts 2:41



Change each letter to the
letter before it in the
alphabet and see what
the **Holy Spirit**
produces in us:

KPZ

IVNJMJUZ

TFMG DPOUSPM

GBJUIGVMOFTT

LJOEOFTT

QBUJFODF

QFBDF

MPWF

HPPEOFTT

Galatians 5:22

What is the work of the
Holy Spirit? What does He do?
Fill in the missing letters.



TEAC _ ES

COMF _ RTS

REVEA _ S

IN _ OU



TRAN _ FORMS

HEL _ S

GU _ DES

_ ENEWS

CONV _ CTS

SANC _ IFIES

Smilelines

Miscellaneous observations on daily life:

You know you're into middle age when you realise that caution is the only thing you care to exercise.

Some people you're glad to see coming; some people you're glad to see going.

You do not need a parachute to skydive – you need a parachute to skydive twice.

The only thing to fear is fear itself... and spiders.

How do you start a fairy tale in the modern age? "If elected, I promise..."

Coronavirus – warning about vaccine

This happened recently and is an important lesson for our friends and family in the older age group. A friend had his second dose of vaccine at the vaccination centre. Shortly afterwards he began to have blurred vision and struggled to get home.

He rang the vaccination centre and asked if he should go straight to the hospital for help. He was told NOT to go to the hospital, but instead to return at once to the vaccination centre and pick up his glasses....

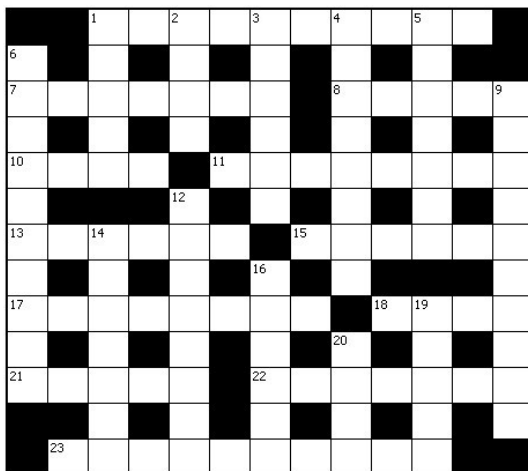
What did I do with the car?

As I left a meeting at our church, I could not find my car keys. They were not in my pockets. They were not in the church. Then I thought – I've left them in the car! As I burst through the doors of the church, my heart sank: the church car park was empty.

With a heavy heart I called the police, confessed that I had left my keys in the car, and that it had been stolen. Then I made the really difficult call, and told my wife that the car had been stolen. There was a little gasp. "You did not have the car. I dropped you off. Remember?"

My heart sang as relief flooded through me. "Of course! Thank God! Well, come get me quick – I am already running late... what is keeping you?"

My wife replied with ominous calm: "What's keeping me? I'll tell you what's keeping me. The police are here. They think I've stolen the car..."



Crossword clues

Across

- 1** Sense of right and wrong (*1 Corinthians 8:7*) (10)
7 Coming (*John 11:17*) (7)
8 'All I have is — , and all you have is mine' (*John 17:10*) (5)
10 Smarten (*Acts 9:34*) (4)
11 Hold back (*Job 9:13*) (8)
13 Member of the Society of Friends (6)
15 At ague (anag.) (6)
17 Citizen of the Greek capital (8)
18 So be it (*Galatians 6:18*) (4)
21 Twentieth-century poet and dramatist who wrote *Murder in the Cathedral*, T.S. — (5)
22 Empowers (*Philippians 3:21*) (7)
23 Imposing (*1 Samuel 9:2*) (10)

Down

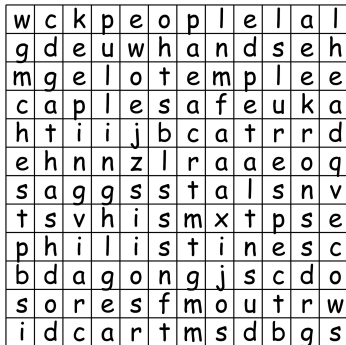
- 1** Healed (*Luke 7:21*) (5)
2 Central space in a church (4)

- 3** Co-founder of Spring Harvest and General Secretary of the Evangelical Alliance 1983–97, Clive — (6)
- 4** Moses killed one when he saw him beating a Hebrew labourer (*Exodus 2:12*) (8)
- 5** Bravery (*Acts 4:13*) (7)
- 6** It interrupted Paul and Silas singing hymns in a Philippian jail (*Acts 16:26*) (10)
- 9** Transgression (*Psalms 36:1*) (10)
- 12** Irish province in which Dublin is situated (8)
- 14** Same hit (anag.) (7)
- 16** 'The Spirit of God was hovering over the — ' (*Genesis 1:2*) (6)
- 19** Author of the immortal stories of Winnie the Pooh, A.A. — (5)
- 20** Cab (4)

Sudoku - Medium

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

Word search

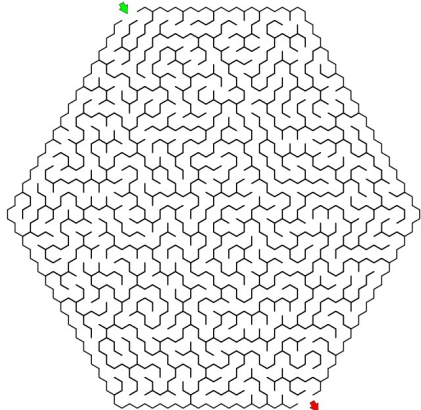


Shiloh
Israel
God
sores
Gath
safe
hands
Ashdod

Moses
Philistines
temple
keeping
head
Dagon
cart
chest

Ekron
pulling
Ark
cows
statue
celebrated
respect
people

Maze



Days of Note - May

1st May: Philip, the apostle with common sense

Is there someone in church whom you respect for their spirituality and common sense combined? Someone you feel easy about approaching to ask questions? That person's patron saint should be Philip.

Philip came from Bethsaida and was a disciple of Jesus from early on. He knew how to lead others to Jesus; he brought Nathanael (or Bartholomew) to Him in a calm, kindly way. He knew how to do some financial forecasting: at the feeding of the 5,000 it was he who pointed out that without divine help, even 200 pennyworth of bread wasn't going to feed that crowd. He was the one whom the Greeks approached when they wanted to ask Jesus to show them the Father, but didn't quite have the nerve to approach Jesus directly. People had confidence in Philip's spirituality, common sense and kindness. Such a person is a gift to any church! In art, the Apostle Philip has been represented either with a cross, or with loaves of bread.

1st May: James the Less, quiet son of Alphaeus

One thing for sure: the apostles were not self-obsessed. In fact, many a church historian has wished that they had left us just a few more personal details about themselves in the New Testament. James the Less is an excellent example.

This is the name we give to James the son of Alphaeus, but beyond that, who was he? Sometimes he is identified as the James whose mother stood by Christ on the cross. Sometimes he is thought to be the James who was 'brother of the Lord'. Sometimes he is thought to be the James who saw the risen Christ. He has also, and often, been called the first bishop of Jerusalem. And finally, sometimes James the Less has been thought of as the author of the Epistle of James.

But who really knows? If none of these identifications are correct, we know practically nothing about James the Less. So perhaps on this day we can simply recall 'all' of the James' above, and thank God for the mother who stood by the cross, the brother that supported Jesus, the apostle who saw his risen Lord and gave his life to proclaiming the truth, the first bishop of Jerusalem, and the author of the marvellous Epistle of James. Whether it was one James or several, they were all faithful to Jesus, and proclaimed Him as the Messiah. So perhaps that should make them James the More!

James the Less has been given an unusual iconographic emblem: a fuller's club. Tradition has it that he was beaten to death with one, after being sentenced by the Sanhedrin in AD62. In England there are only 26 churches which are dedicated to James the Less.

9th May: Pachomius, the patron saint of administrators

Have you ever worked for a disorganised organisation? You know the scene: your boss lives in a mild panic, your goals and deadlines keep being changed, your colleagues whisper darkly in corners, emails contradict each other, meetings lead to more confusion... and you go home each night with a headache.

Pachomius should be the patron saint of administrators everywhere. For back in the 4th century, without a computer or even a mobile he managed to run 11 separate monasteries like clockwork.

Pachomius was born into a pagan family in Upper Egypt at the end of the third century, and as a youth conscripted into the army. On his release in 313 he became two things: a Christian and a hermit (probably craved some peace and quiet!). But Pachomius was no loner, and when other monks gradually sought him out, he did with them what he did best: he organised them. By 320 he had founded his first monastery.

Pachomius seems to have had exceptional powers of administration, no doubt perfected by his years of disciplined army life. By the time of his death in 346, he presided over nine large monasteries for men and two for women. Each monastery was divided into houses, according to its craft, such as agriculture, tailoring or baking.

Pachomius knew how to delegate: each house had its own leader. He knew how to keep in touch: he held team leaders' meetings twice a year. Pachomius knew about supply chains: food and drink never ran out. Pachomius knew about marketing: he found buyers for their produce in Alexandria. Pachomius knew about delivering a vision: a daily pattern of work and prayer and sleep was set in place to make sure that the monks and nuns could devote themselves to God for hours each day in prayer, and in memorising the Psalms and other Bible passages.

Pachomius knew how to help people get things done. No wonder his Rule went on to influence that of Basil and Benedict. Certainly, the gift of administration is listed by St Paul as a genuine gift of God, and prudence and clear forward planning are highly prized in the Proverbs.

9th May: Rogation Sunday (Sunday before Ascension)

Rogation means an asking of God - for blessing on the seed and land for the year ahead. It is appropriate in any emergency, war, plague, drought or foul weather.

The practice began with the Romans, who invoked the help of the gods Terminus and Ambarvalia. In those days a crowd moved in procession around the cornfields, singing and dancing, sacrificing animals, and driving away Winter with sticks. They wanted to rid the cornfields of evil.

In about 465 the Western world was suffering from earthquake, storm and

epidemic. So Mamertius, Bishop of Vienne, aware of the popular pagan custom, ordered that prayers should be said in the ruined or neglected fields on the days leading up to Ascension. With his decision, 'beating the bounds' became a Christian ceremonial.

Rogation-tide arrived in England early in the eighth century and became a fixed and perennial asking for help of the Christian God. On Rogation-tide, a little party would set out to trace the boundaries of the parish. At the head marched the bishop or the priest, with a minor official bearing a Cross, and after them the people of the parish, with schoolboys and their master trailing along. Most of them held slender wands of willow.

At certain points along the route - at well-known landmarks like a bridge or stile or ancient tree, the Cross halted, the party gathered about the priest, and a litany or rogation is said, imploring God to send seasonable wealth, keep the corn and roots and boughs in good health, and bring them to an ample harvest. At some point beer and cheese would be waiting.

In the days when maps were neither common nor accurate, there was much to be said for 'beating the bounds.' It was still very common as late as the reign of Queen Victoria. Certainly, parish boundaries rarely came into dispute, for everyone knew them. (Do you know yours today?)

20th May: Alcuin of York, Abbot of Tours, a teacher of genius

Here is a saint for all primary school teachers who have a passion to help children learn to read and write.

Alcuin was born near York in about 735. His family were of noble stock, and they sent him to York Cathedral School, which had the best teachers in the land. They soon realised that Alcuin had a genius for learning, and within a few years he had become master of the school himself. Under his guidance, the fame of the school grew, with more pupils and an ever-increasing library.

In 781 Alcuin visited Rome, where he met Charlemagne, then King of the Franks, who persuaded him to move to Aachen and become master of the palace school – in effect his minister of education.

Alcuin did a magnificent job – he went on to establish a primary school in

every town and village, and because the teachers were the clergy, he saw to it that their own literacy and education were improved. But Alcuin did much more – he set up scriptoria for the copying and preservation of ancient manuscripts, for which we owe him the survival of many classical authors. He is also credited with inventing cursive script – or as we know it, ‘joined-up writing’ – as an aid to speedier copying.

Alcuin also revised the Latin liturgy, wrote nine biblical commentaries, revised the Vulgate Bible, and supported the orthodox doctrine of the procession of the Holy Spirit from the Father and the Son.

By 796, Alcuin was over 60 and ready to retire. Charlemagne appointed him Abbot of St Martin’s at Tours, and here, in his declining years, he built up a model monastic school as he had done at York and Aachen. He died in May 804, but his influence lives on today, and affects hundreds of millions of us – all of us, in fact, who use joined-up writing!

23rd May: Pentecost: not a Ghost but a Gift

By Canon David Winter

We used to call it Whitsun – ‘White Sunday’ because long ago children marched to church in white on that day. No processions nowadays, and we’ve even changed its name. It’s now ‘Pentecost’, which is more accurate but needs explaining.

Pentecost marks a vital event in Christian history. It is celebrated 50 days after Easter. The year Jesus was crucified (which took place at the Passover), the remnant of His followers, just 120 of them, were together in an upper room in Jerusalem. They were afraid to show their faces in case the authorities arrested them. But on the day of Passover they had an amazing collective experience.

They described it in terms of wind and fire, a great surge of spiritual energy and confidence. Afraid no longer, they burst out on to the streets where crowds were gathering for the festival, led by Peter they began to tell them about Jesus and His resurrection. As they did so, although many of the people in the crowd were foreigners who spoke other languages, everyone heard them in their own tongue. Peter told them that what they were seeing was the fulfilment of an old prophecy when God would pour out His

Spirit on the human race, men and women, young and old.

As a result of His words and the extraordinary spectacle, 3,000 people believed and were baptised in the name of Jesus. They were the nucleus of what in 100 years would be a Church that would turn history upside down. For Christians Pentecost is in effect the birthday of the Church.

Many people find the whole idea of the Holy Spirit mysterious and elusive. It wasn't helped by the earlier title 'Holy Ghost'. The spirit is not spiritually a 'ghost' but a precious gift.

24th May: The hymns of the Wesleys

by Canon David Winter

Later this month the Church calendar celebrates the lives of John and Charles Wesley. John's great gift to the Christian cause was the little matter of founding the world-wide movement known as Methodism. His brother Charles had an equally profound impact through his hymns. He actually wrote over 6,000, most of which aren't sung nowadays, but among the ones we do still sing are all-time favourites – 'Love divine, all loves excelling', 'O for a thousand tongues to sing'. 'Jesu lover of my soul', 'Hark the herald angels sing' – and scores more.

40 years ago almost everybody knew quite a lot of hymns, but sadly that's no longer true. Traditional hymns aren't usually sung at school assemblies, not even in church schools, and while the audience for 'Songs of Praise' on BBC TV is substantial, most of those watching are over 50.

With only about ten per cent of the population even irregular church-goers there is inevitably a lack of familiarity with hymns of any kind. Christmas carols are an exception, as is 'Jerusalem' and 'Amazing Grace', because they are frequently heard outside church.

Singing hymns is a wonderful experience at its best – just ask a Welsh rugby crowd singing 'Bread of heaven'! It seems a pity to lose it.

It's not a bad idea to take ten minutes and think about what is your favourite hymn, and why – ancient or modern doesn't matter. Then try singing it in the bath or under the shower – a very purifying experience!

26th May: Augustine of Canterbury, apostle to the English

Augustine, a 6th century Italian prior, holds a unique place in British history. He became the 'apostle to the English,' although it was with great reluctance.

In 596 Augustine was chosen by Pope Gregory to head a mission of monks whom he wanted to send to evangelise the Anglo-Saxons. Augustine was not a bold man, and by the time he and his band of priests reached Gaul, they wished to turn back. But Gregory would not hear of it, and he bolstered their confidence by sending some more priests out to them, and by consecrating Augustine bishop. Finally, the little party, now 40 in number, landed at Ebbsfleet, Kent in 597.

It would be fascinating to have a detailed description of that first meeting between Bishop Augustine and Ethelbert, powerful King of Kent. Whatever Augustine said, it must have been effective, for Ethelbert granted the 40 priests permission to stay in a house in Canterbury. He even allowed them to preach to his people, while he himself considered their message of Christianity. His wife, Bertha, was a Christian princess from Paris, but she does not seem to have played any role in the conversion of Kent.

By 601 Ethelbert and many of his people had been baptised Christians. The mission to the English was well underway. More clergy, some books, a few relics and several altar vessels arrived from Rome. At Gregory's wise urging, Augustine decided to consolidate the mission in one small area, rather than try and reach all of Kent. So, Augustine stayed in Canterbury, where he built the cathedral and founded a school. He left only temporarily to establish a see in London.

Also, at Gregory's wise urging, Augustine did not destroy the pagan temples of the people of Kent, but only the idols in them. In this way, familiar rites were taken over and used for the celebration of the Christian feasts. Meanwhile, before his death in 604, Augustine helped Ethelbert to draft the earliest Anglo-Saxon written laws to survive – and so influenced British law for centuries to come.

Puzzle solutions

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

The deadline for inclusion of articles for the June issue of New Leaves is Sunday 23rd May

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!

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