

New Leaves

May 2022



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

50p

Parish of St. David with St. Michael & All Angels

Directory | May 2022

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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 Clive Wilson supported by
Stephanie Aplin and Tony Pugh

New Leaves



May
2022

Curate's Corner: Alpha Confirmation Course and L&T at Thrive

How is it May already?! I feel like it was Christmas a minute ago! But now we're in the Easter season, and our readings immerse in records of the Resurrection and accounts of conversion.


I've shared with many of you before some of the details of my journey to Jesus: I worked as a university researcher and tutor, and my religion was antitheist - I thought science had disproven God, religion was a thing of the past, and only idiots were Christians.

My turning point came in a coffee shop where I met a man who totally surprised me by challenging me to look into Christianity. It was the very last

thing on my radar, but despite my scepticism something made me curious. After eight months of study, I eventually had to concede: it's true. We have persuasive, abundant evidence that Jesus was raised from the dead.

I would never have heard this without an ordinary person engaging me in conversion in that coffee shop, inviting me to explore. There was no way I would have come to a church service or found out about Christianity otherwise. I needed a Christian to speak to me "out there", and personally invite me to church, so that by degrees I could begin to engage.

St Luke's Gospel opens and St John's Gospel closes with the statement that they're writing their accounts "so that" their readers and listeners may have faith and certainty in their Christian belief.



Everyone has questions.

Exploring is good. We're built for it. Explore more about life, faith and meaning with Alpha.

Tuesdays at 3.45pm from 3rd May to 26th July we're running an Alpha/confirmation course at St David's Church for anyone wanting to explore and confirm their faith in a supportive "no question is stupid" environment. Please do come along or get in touch for more info if you can make any of those sessions.



Sundays at 4pm from 8th May to 31st July we're running a series called Living & Telling at Thrive at St David's Church. Living & Telling is designed to encourage and inspire you to help people around you encounter Christianity through

every day living. It is for everyone, whatever your age, and whether you are already confident talking about faith or whether you are really really reticent! It is ecumenical, theologically robust and intensely practical. It will help you live Jesus' teaching to tell others about him and make new disciples.

Year by year, the number of people attending church in this country is currently declining. We can't rely on people hearing the earth-shattering truth of the Resurrection by them coming to church. Instead, we need help and resources to share the message, most powerfully by talking to people. Over the coming weeks, as we hear the Scriptures about the Resurrection and early Christian mission in the Sunday readings, don't miss out on the opportunity to join our Alpha Confirmation Course on Tuesdays or Living and Telling on Sundays at 4 at Thrive, if you can come along to those, even if just to drop in from time to time. Looking forward to seeing you for what promise to be two very special courses together.

--

Peace and blessings,

Ash

You might find this link to an article in the Premier Christianity Magazine of good value:

<https://www.premierchristianity.com/opinion/5-tips-to-help-you-share-your-faith/12869.article>



Living and Telling?

By Tim Moyler

In 2012, the Evangelical Alliance conducted a survey of over 1,000 Christians to find out what they felt about sharing their faith. The results were fascinating:



74% said none of their non-Christian friends seem interested in talking about spiritual things.

87% said that they lack confidence in talking about their personal testimony.

57% said they feel they can share the gospel well without needing words.

This raises some big questions for Bible believers!

In Romans 10, the apostle Paul makes an important point:

... for, 'Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.' But how can they believe in him if they have never heard about him? And how can they hear about him unless someone tells them? (NLT)

So, unless we are speaking out about our faith, how will those around us know what makes us different? How will they know what journey they need to take to get reconnected with their Creator? How can we start to put helpful words to our helpful actions?

I became a Christian when I was 22. I experienced God's peace and healing simultaneously. I had a great story to tell, so I told it. I battled through my introvert nature rather like a bull in a china shop. Nobody seemed to be interested. I soon concluded that telling people about Jesus was not for me, so I spent the next 20 years avoiding every opportunity of getting into a spiritual conversation. People may have thought I was nice, but Jesus

certainly wasn't getting any of the credit. As time went by, my fears and reasons for not sharing my faith became entrenched. Surely, God uses extroverts to do evangelism? If God needed a Christian to help someone get to know him, I would be the last person to show up for the job. And then the guilt started to kick in. My Bible didn't help. In 1 Peter 3, I read:

Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect.
(NIV)

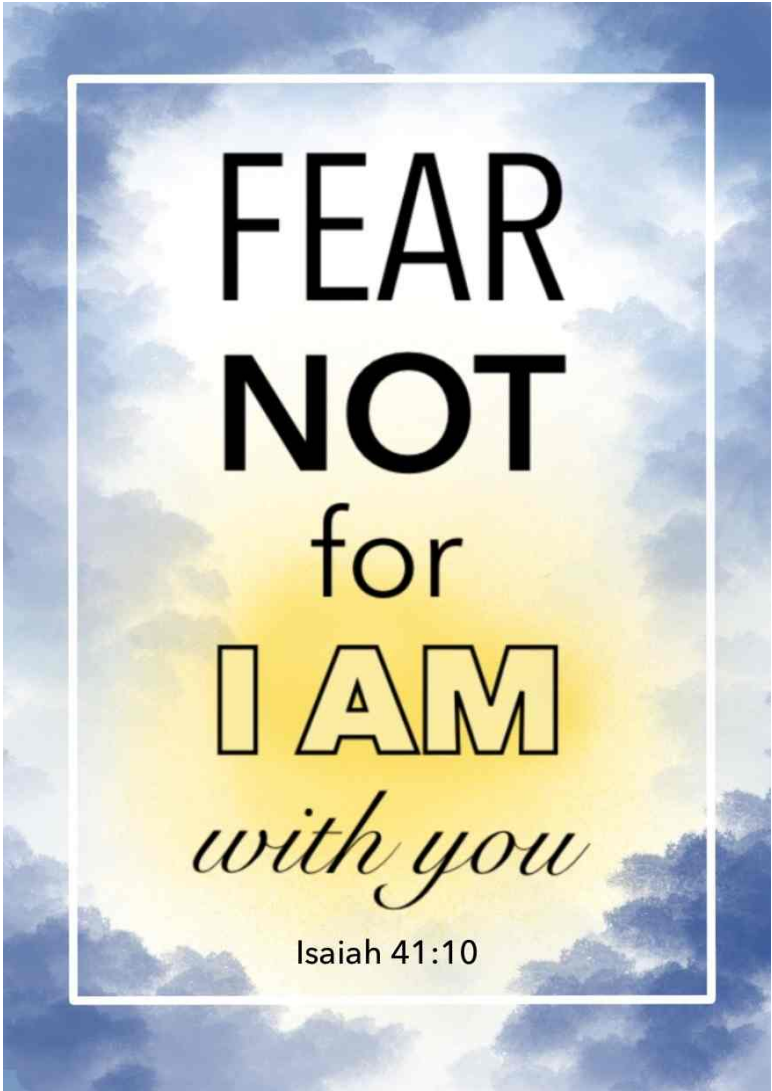
I just couldn't do it. That's when, in 1997, I found myself on a Living & Telling course. The penny dropped and I began to change. My fears, excuses and guilt started to evaporate. It's been quite a journey – too long for this little article – but I am now in a place where I love getting into spiritual conversations. I don't always have answers for people's questions, but I'm no longer fazed by them.

And here's the crazy bit. God has used me to help develop that Living & Telling course into something that is changing thousands of Christians around the country. Here's a quote about the new edition from Rev'd James Grier, Diocesan Mission Enabler for the Diocese of Exeter:

"I think Living & Telling is fantastic. Basically, it gives people the confidence to share faith. What's not to like about that? There's loads of research done recently about how non-Christians feel about Christians, and most of it is way more positive than we could ever imagine. So, the issue isn't about non-Christians wanting to *hear*, it's about whether we're confident and comfortable to *tell*. Living & Telling helps us to live our faith *and* tell others about Jesus. I recommend it whole heartedly - anyone who's thinking about it should do it."

So, who is Living & Telling for? It's for the 74%. It's for the 87%. It's for the 57%. If that's you, and you'd love some encouragement too, don't miss the Living & Telling taster session – 4pm Sunday 22nd May at St David's Church, Exeter.

Tim Moyler is a leader of Christ Church Woodbury and works with Agapé UK.



FEAR
NOT
for
I AM
with you

Isaiah 41:10

Some thoughts from a member of St Michael's congregation, May 2022

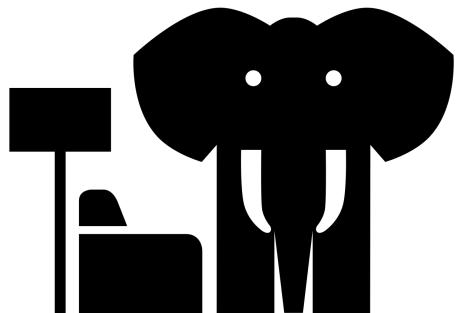


How do you like your history? Happening in graphic detail in front of your eyes? In a 5,000 word essay from Vladimir Putin, published 6 months before the invasion, in which he explains that Ukraine is just an artificial offshoot of Russia? As a 'Horrible Histories' event? Domestic/social/military/naval/political interest? Portrayed as a great drama series??

A recent survey found that some young people think the the dog Churchill is more of an historical being than Winston Churchill. 58% thought that Sherlock Holmes was a real person. A new book, *'Making History'*, by Richard Cohen, suggests that this misinformation really matters. Without a sense of the past, we live in two-dimensional universe. We cannot escape the fact that the recording of history has a bit of a bias, (the lions always win) and that for many, that bias is towards white colonial dominance. With little or no knowledge of the past, erroneous views can take over the present and cause aggressive nationalism or irrational woke responses This infantilises people and diminishes their intellectual dignity. Rich debate and argument are swamped in bitter feuding.

Our history at St Michael's is under scrutiny too. The Archdeacon's request that we consider four options for our future has been a great exercise in ignoring elephants. The core issue, is, it seems to me, that of the Ordination of women. We are not part of the Forward in Faith movement; that discussion

was abandoned some years ago. We are, however, an Anglo-Catholic congregation and therefore follow the teaching of the Apostolic Succession.



This tradition is of an uninterrupted line of continuity from the Apostles, after their commission from Our Lord Himself to go out and teach all people. There were no women amongst the commissioned group. They were there as followers of Christ and they had important roles, but they were not priests. The Early Church Fathers, such as Irenaeus and Tertullian made this clear. People will argue that the social situation was different then and we should not now be bound by these traditions; men and women had clear roles. It is said women were downtrodden, subservient and suffering. Things have changed (for some).

In the model of the Apostolic succession, men were able to confirm church members, consecrate bishops and rule over dioceses. This was not just a job, but a vocation, a calling by God, for which there was serious soul-searching, as well as examination and commendation by fellow-Christians. The notion of vocation seems to have all but disappeared in modern life; people look for a job or a career that will bring social and financial security and satisfaction. Social patterns have changed, allowing enfranchised women to achieve genuine university degrees, recognition of further study, financial independence and a choice of career. Choosing to enter a profession – law, medicine, engineering - is not the same as ‘choosing’ to be a priest. For many people, priesthood is and remains a male preserve. Now this is far too complicated an issue for a short piece like this, but please believe us when we say that for many of us it is not a sexist issue, nor is it because we ‘don’t like women priests’; it is a deeply theological issue and starts with accepting the Apostolic Succession as a model for Church governing, rather than seeing the Church as a social convention, following the vicissitudes of modern life. It also raises questions about the role and actions of women who have been consecrated as bishops.

I am sure there will be some deep disagreements with these views, but I believe it is time for all this to be aired; for a greater understanding and tolerance, rather than foisting one view only about priesthood on the congregation at St Michael’s, and we need some dignified discussion and the grace of God to help us move forward.



Stephanie Aplin

(Making History by Richard Cohen, pub. Weidenfeld and Nicholson)

The editorial team will welcome responses to Stephanie’s article in future editions of this magazine.

Bill Pattinson



Readers and Leaders in Prayer for May 2022 at St David

Please note the reading from Acts must be used on Sundays in Easter up to and including Pentecost

Sunday 1st May (3rd Sunday of Easter)

1st Reading: Acts 9:1-20

Gospel Reading: John 21:1-19

Preacher: Ash Leighton-Plom Bible Reader: Sarah Rimmington

Prayer Leader: Glynis Harflett

Sunday 8th May (4th Sunday of Easter)

1st Reading: Acts 9:36-end

Gospel Reading: John 10:22-30

Preacher: Howard Friend

Bible Reader: Lawrence Sail

Prayer Leader: Geoff Crockett



Sunday 15th May (5th Sunday of Easter)

1st Reading: Acts 11:1-18

Preacher: Belinda Speed-Andrews Bible Reader: Alice Francis

Leader in Prayer: Pete Francis

Sunday 22nd May (6th Sunday of Easter) also Great West Run

1st Reading: Acts 16:9-15

Gospel Reading: John 14:23-29 or John 5:1-9

Preacher: Nigel Guthrie Bible Reader: Stephanie Hills

Leader in Prayer: Ian Cartwright

Sunday 29th May (7th Sunday of Easter); Sunday after Ascension Day

1st Reading: Acts 16:16-34

Gospel Reading: John 17:20-end

Preacher: Bill Pattinson Bible Reader: Philip Dale

Prayer Leader: Nigel Walsh

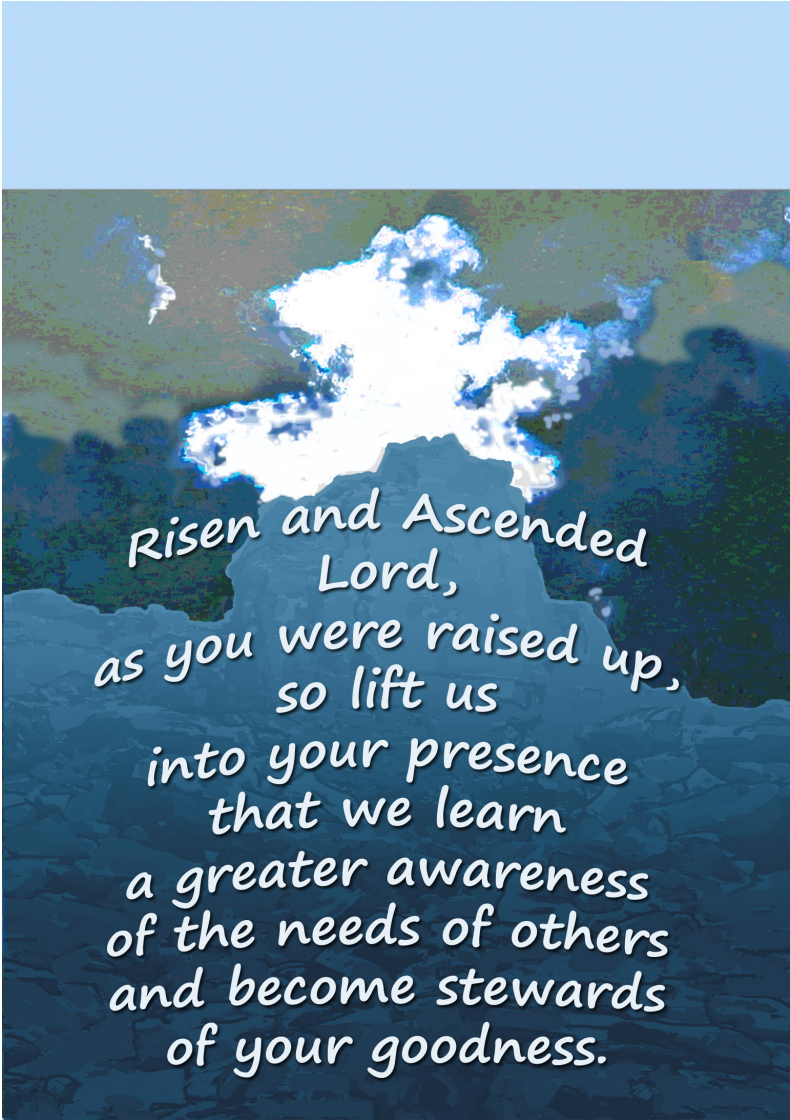
Sunday 5th June (Pentecost) also Queen's Jubilee

1st Reading: Acts 2:1-21

Gospel Reading John 14:8-27

Preacher: Nigel Guthrie Bible Reader: Jenny Baker

Prayer Leader: Robert Mitchell



*Risen and Ascended
Lord,
as you were raised up,
so lift us
into your presence
that we learn
a greater awareness
of the needs of others
and become stewards
of your goodness.*

Services & Events for St. Michael's - May 2022

Our thanks to all who have joined us in worship at St. Michael's during the month of April – especially over Holy Week and Easter - and many thanks to our visiting clergy (Fr. Dominic Cyrus and Fr. Robin Eastoe). The continued success of the Bountiful Table on the first Sunday of the month is due to the organisation of both Stephanie Aplin and Elizabeth Hughes and to those that support them in cooking and providing goods as well as those who buy them! Thanks, also, to Adrian Hewitt and Barry Mather for the organisation of the newspaper collections. Please continue to support both ventures.

This month sees the continuation of Eastertide and Ascension Day on Thursday 26th May. Rogation Days may also be observed between 22nd and 25th May. Also, we see the resumption of the St. Michael's Lecture on Wednesday 11th May at 7.30pm. The lecturer invited is Professor Richard Seaford who presents "Animal Sacrifice: from Prehistory to Early Christianity". Free, with retiring collection. To join the lectures mailing list please send an "e-pistle" to: mountdinhamlectures@gmail.com

Below are our regular patterns of worship in Church and on-line:-

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

First Sunday in the month – 6pm Evensong & Benediction (check regular notices for variations)

Wednesdays Matins at 9.30am and Low Mass at 10.00am, the latter is also broadcast to (and viewable later)

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

Plainsong Vespers led by Dr. Richard Parker on Tuesdays and Thursdays at 6pm is public worship, also broadcast live to the Friends of St Michael's Facebook Group <https://facebook.com/groups/2227703237>

St. Michael's website is <https://www.stmichaelsmountdinham.org.uk>

St. David's Facebook page <https://facebook.com/stdavidschurchexeter> will "stream" their 9.30am Sunday Eucharist and Morning Prayers on Thursday and Fridays.

The weekly Parish Notices and pew sheets will keep you informed. Our thanks to Oliver Nicholson for typing these and sending them out by e-mail each week. To be added to the mailing list, please email Oliver at virtualstmichaels@gmail.com.

Choir rehearsals take place before Mass on Sunday at 10am and immediately after Vespers on Tuesday evenings at 7pm. If you are interested in joining the choir please contact Tasha Goldsworth – Musical Director or speak to a choir member.

Services and Events for May

Sunday 1st May | Second Sunday after Easter also the Feast of Saints Philip and James (Apostles)

11.00am **Sung Mass**

Setting: Missa l' hora passa – *Viadana*

Motet: If ye love me – *Tallis*

12.15pm Immediately following Mass is a meeting of the congregation relating to the recent survey about the future direction of St. Michael and All Angels Church. There will not be a Bountiful Table this month.

6.00pm **Evensong and Benediction**

Responses: *Reading* Canticles: *Stanford in B flat*

Motet: Blessed be the God and Father – *Samuel Wesley*

Monday 2nd May | St. Athanasius: Patriarch of Alexandria

Tuesday 3rd May | Invention of the Cross

Wednesday 4th May | English Saint and Martyrs of the Reformation Era

9-10am **Tea & Toast**

9.30am **Matins** 10.00am **Low Mass**

Sunday 8th May | 3rd Sunday after Easter, also St. Julian of Norwich

11.00am – Sung Mass

Wednesday 11th May

9-10am **Tea & Toast**

9.30am **Matins** 10.00am **Low Mass**

7.30pm **St. Michael's Lecture:** Richard Seaford

Thursday 12th May | St. Pancras

Sunday 15th May | Fourth Sunday after Easter

11.00am **Sung Mass**

Wednesday 18th May

9.30am **Matins** 10.00am **Low Mass**

Thursday 19th May | St. Dunstan

Dunstan was born near Glastonbury and eventually became Archbishop of Canterbury in the second half of the 10th Century.

Sunday 22nd May | Fifth Sunday after Easter

11.00am **Sung Mass**

Wednesday 25th May | The Venerable Bede

9-10am **Tea & Toast**

9.30am **Matins** 10.00 **Low Mass**



Thursday 26th May | Ascension Day, also St. Augustine of Canterbury

7.30am **Morning Prayer**

Sung to Plainsong (check the time nearer the date for confirmation)

7.30pm **Sung Mass**

(Likewise, please check nearer the date for confirmation)

Sunday 29th May | The Sunday after the Ascension

11.00am **Sung Mass**

Wednesday 1st June

9-10am **Tea & Toast**

9.30am **Matins** 10.00am **Low Mass**

In addition to the usual “thanks” in the first paragraph of this month’s letter I would like to thank all those people who have responded to the recent survey from the Archdeacon – the time taken to put pen to paper and thought into their response. It has shown a positive impact from many regular worshippers and those who are not so regular. It has had many positive aspects in the possibilities of expanding our contacts within the diocese.

Another good development of the outreach is Wednesday mornings “Tea and Toast” which warmly welcomes local parents from our neighbouring primary school as well as local residents.

An event I must mention is the service of Tenebrae held on Good Friday evening when we welcomed in the region of sixty to seventy people. It was quite an event for the clergy and choir inasmuch that we hadn’t been able to have this sung service since 2019. We were supported in the gallery by some past choristers and in the ceremonial aspect by two young people under 10! Rose (aged 9) and Harry (aged 7) were servers at this service for the first time - snuffing out the candles gradually throughout the services as required! Well done, Rose and Harry and thank you!

I am reminded that the DRC Courses have resumed following the Easter break –

Tuesday	Noon - 2pm	Ukulele for Your Recovery
	3pm – 5pm	Taking Your Recovery Further
Thursday	10am – Noon	Yes, You Can Sing!
	1pm – 3pm	Introduction to Rhythms for Recovery with Djembe Drumming
	3.30– 5.30pm	Taking Recovery Further With African Djembe Drumming

Finally, thanks must go to Oliver Nicholson, Kim Nettleton-Croley and Deborah Leighton-Plom for inspiration and ideas for this month’s news.



Anthony Pugh – St. George’s Day, 2022

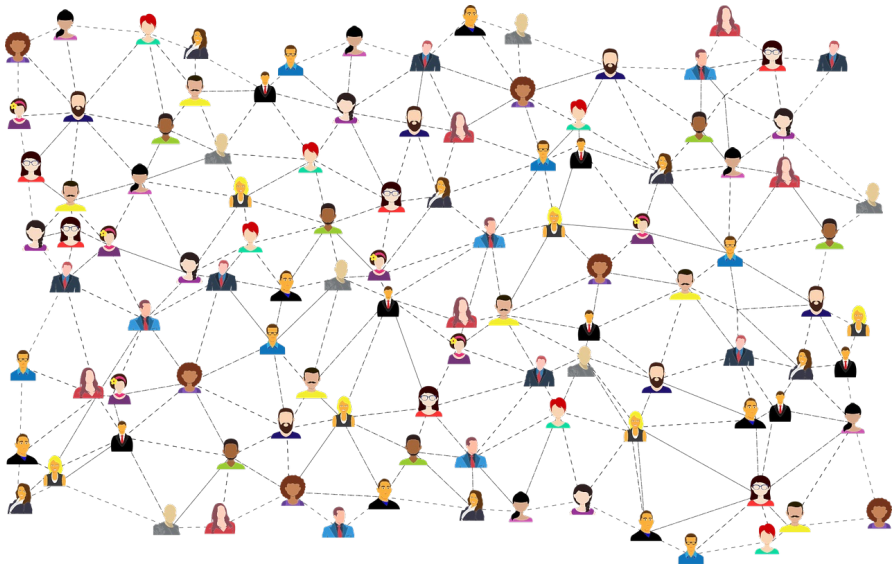
The Joy of Our Community

I wanted to congratulate all the cast of Calendar Girls in the musical production which came to The Northcott Theatre. It was a first class performance (not least by Pete Francis, our fellow chorister from St. David's) with excellent singing voices, fine Yorkshire accents, and a true, uplifting and touching delivery of an event in a small community which changed many lives.

The decline and death of one of the men in the village affected not only his wife, but the whole community. They expressed their grief while reaching out to each other, offering support and celebrating the life of their late friend.

The wives then stepped out of their comfort zone to raise funds for the cancer ward, but in the process found depths in each other to love and respect. Everyone was shaken out of their familiar ways but remained as a unit, even allowing for the loss of one of their own.

Now, I have rather drawn you to this page under false pretences. Yes, my thoughts on the musical I watched on Saturday are absolutely genuine and heart felt. What I would like to suggest is that we can remind ourselves of



the reforming of a community that takes place with the loss of one of the group, or indeed with the arrival of new faces.

At St. David's we do look out for each other, care about each other, laugh and cry together, but I know for myself, that when new people arrive, it is sometimes a challenge to put out a hand of friendship, not knowing what they may be seeking. This can be particularly tricky if there is an obvious vulnerability in them which we feel we do not have the skills to 'take on'. So I wonder if we can remind ourselves that we have notice boards in both St. David's and St. Michael's which have current signposting for any Safeguarding issue and the appropriate person to contact on the Safeguarding team.

It is doing what we already do well but with a certainty that, as the churches open up again and the range of activities and uses of the church space expands, we are confident in our actions towards everyone we encounter.

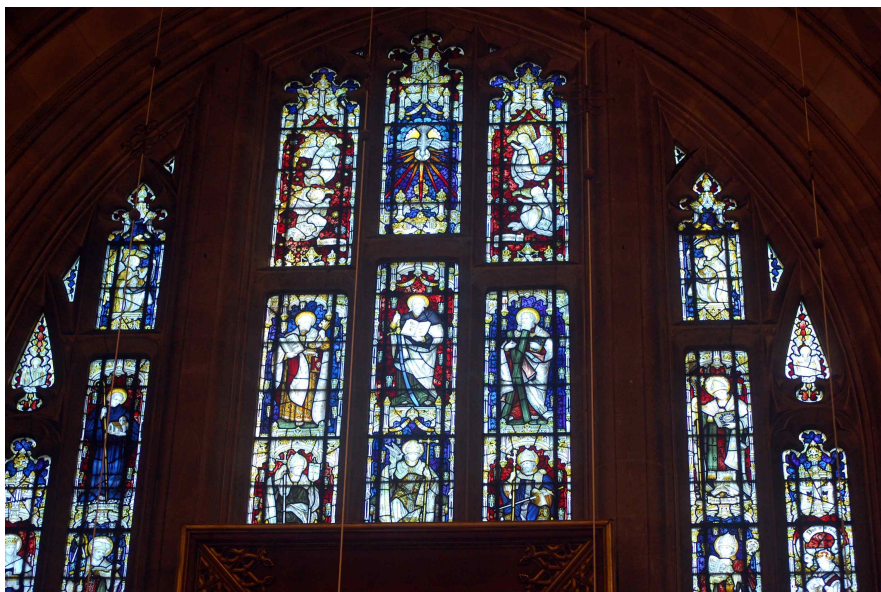


Mary Kirkland

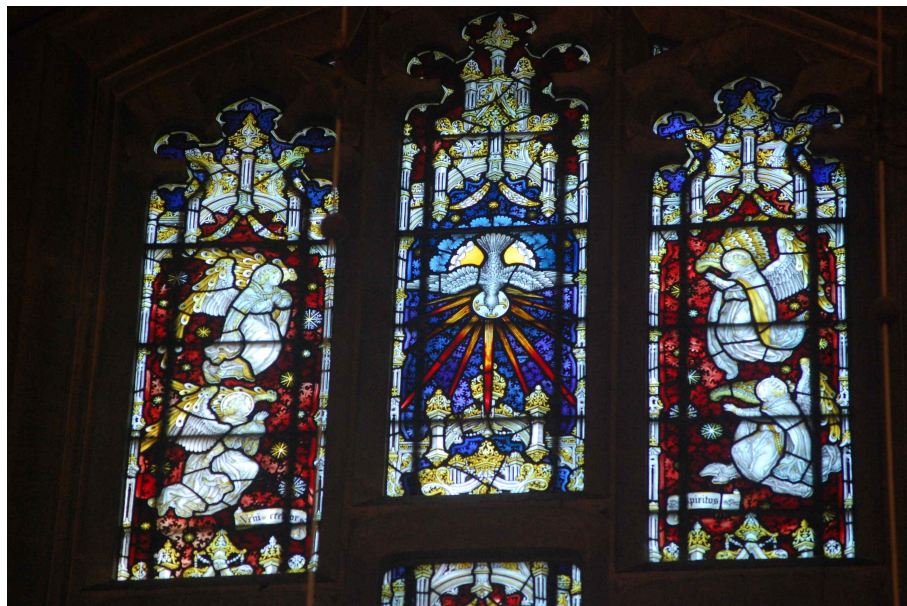


*...if you have been affected by any
of the issues raised in this sermon...*

The East Window



The East Window of St David's was formally unveiled during Morning Service on Sunday 1 May 1904. It was given to the church by Richard Bowerman

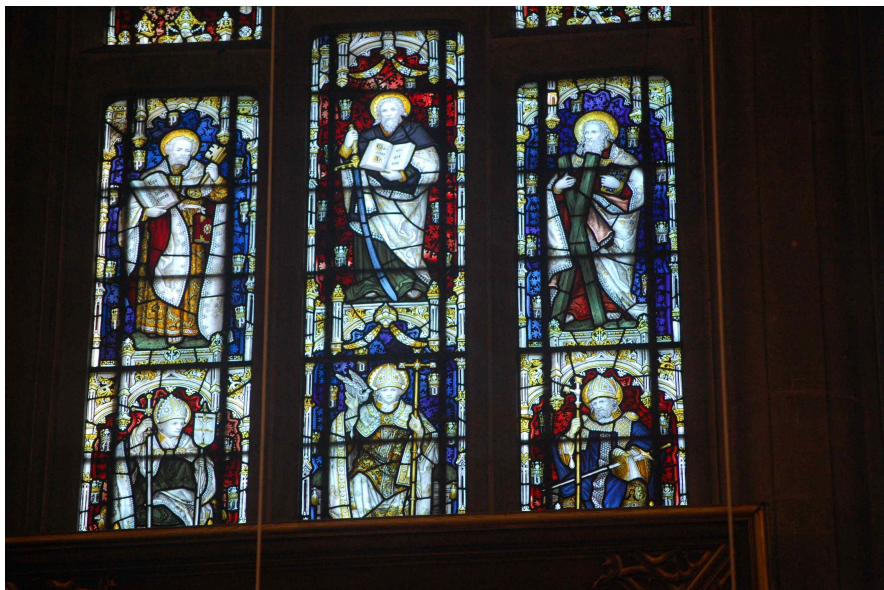


and Elizabeth Eames in memory of their sister Sarah Thornton West of Streatham Hall, who had died in December 1902.

Mrs Thornton West had paid for the demolition of the old church, and she and her son Richard had contributed some £12,000 (around 60% of the total) towards the cost of the new building. Richard is commemorated by the window in the south transept and it seems entirely fitting that the great east window should have been dedicated to Sarah.

As is the case with most of the windows in the church, Charles Eamer Kempe was the designer, and the windows were made in his London workshops. His famous trademark, the wheatsheaf, can be found low down in the border of the window on the left side.

At the top of the central window, we see the Holy Spirit descending in the form of a dove, flanked by adoring angels on either side. The Spirit descends first on three of the early apostles, Peter, Paul and Andrew. Each has his traditional attribute, so Peter holds the keys of heaven and a book with the words of Jesus in Latin “Ego tibi dabo claves” – “I will give you the keys” (Matthew 16:18). Paul and Andrew have the instruments of their martyrdom: respectively a sword and the cross saltire. And Paul holds the text “Caritas Christi urget nos” – “The love of Christ urges us on” (2 Corinthians 5:14).



The word 'apostle' is from the Greek *apostolos* meaning envoy or messenger, and below these three first apostles are three later emissaries: St Augustine of Canterbury, St David and St Boniface – the apostle to the English, and the patron saints of Wales and Germany, with David being also our titular saint and Boniface having the additional local attraction of being a man from Crediton.



The left window represents the flow of Christian faith from Ireland to the shores of Scotland, and thence to the North of England. So the blue robed figure of the Irish St Columba carries his abbey of Iona in his left hand. Below him is St Aidan, the apostle of Northumbria, who came from Iona to establish the priory of Lindisfarne, and appointed St Hilda, who stands to his left, as abbess of Hartlepool. She also holds an ecclesiastical building, presumably the abbey of Whitby, which she founded in the year 657AD. Thus Christianity was restored to Anglo-Saxon England.

The first figure in the right window brings us closer to the west country. It is St Aldhelm, abbot of Malmesbury and bishop of Sherborne. Below him

is St Birinus, first bishop of Dorchester-on-Thames and apostle to the West Saxons, who is credited with the conversion of the people of Wessex and the baptism of Cynegils their king around 634AD.

The last figure, and perhaps a surprising inclusion in this galaxy of saints, is that of Queen Victoria in prayer. Above her is the legend "In D[omi]no Confido" - "In the Lord I Trust" – and the message must be that here is the

dynastic and spiritual heir to Cynegils, and one of the latest and greatest of those whose lives have been directed by the Holy Spirit of God.



Jeremy Lawford

April 2022

With many thanks to Clive Wilson for his fine photographs.

Incidentally, there is another image of Queen Victoria in St David's. Does anyone know where it is?



St Sidwell's Bells Recalled

Eighty years ago, early on the morning of 4th May 1942, 20 bombers of the German Luftwaffe followed the estuary of the Exe, shining in the moonlight, to Exeter and for 90 minutes rained down incendiaries and high explosive bombs on to the city. Large areas of the city centre were laid waste as fires rapidly spread in the narrow streets. 156 people died as a result of the attack, 583 were seriously injured and thousands made homeless as 800+ houses were destroyed and many more badly damaged. Public buildings across the city were hit including, St Lawrence's, St James' and St Sidwell's churches.



The nave of St. Sidwell's was destroyed by a direct hit and the tower left in such a parlous condition that it was thought prudent to demolish it with explosives. Down came the tower and the bells bringing to an end the proud tradition of change ringing at St.

Sidwell's. The remains of the bells were rescued in the hope that they could be recast and rehung in a restored church. A Nissan hut served as a temporary church for a number of years. As with so much in Exeter it was decided to build a new church rather than restore the ruins of the old one. A modern church was completed in 1958 but without its planned tower and bells. In 1965 the diocese decided that there were better things to do with £60,000 than build a new bell tower for St. Sidwell's.

Just one bell remains, the old ninth, which is hung dead in the grounds. In October 2021 it was moved to a slightly more prominent site near the entrance to what is now a chapel, much of the building having been converted to community use.

St Sidwell's had been a place of pilgrimage since Saxon times.



Except for the tower, the church was rebuilt in 1812-13 on the original foundations. The tower was built in the 15th century, but during the Prayer Book Rebellion (1549) it suffered severely. For five weeks the rebels who were protesting at the introduction of the Book of Common Prayer, laid siege to Exeter. At that time the church was used as a prison by the rebels and the father of Sir Walter Raleigh was confined in the tower because he had chastised a woman for carrying a rosary.

Afterwards, in the middle of the 17th century the tower was partly rebuilt.

The eight bells were re-cast in 1773 by Mears & Stainbank. Three of the bells formerly belonged to the ancient church of Allhallows-on-the Walls. This church, during the siege by the Parliamentary army, had a culverin placed on it by the Royalists and was practically demolished in the conflict. Afterwards, the republican governor ordered the three bells in the tower to be melted down for cannon. The inhabitants of St. Sidwell's, hearing of this, and headed by George Cheeke, a worthy and well-known brewer of the parish (who lent his dray and several horses) went by night privately, and removed them to their own belfry.

When the bells were re-hung in 1875, a frame for ten bells was constructed and placed in the tower, the intention being to increase them to ten by the addition of two smaller ones but due to lack of funds it was 16 years before two new trebles were added to give the parish and ringers a fine peal of ten musical bells, claimed to be second to none in the west of England.

In 1875 the newly formed Guild of Devonshire Ringers held its first AGM in

Exeter to coincide with the reopening of the bells of St Sidwell's. The St. Sidwell's Society counted its own AGMs from that date but change ringing was already beginning to flourish in the parish.

According to Edwin Shepherd, St Sidwell's Ringing Master, speaking in 1931, "St. Sidwell's was the oldest society in the city dating back to 1865. Difficulties had been met and overcome, and the ringers were never downhearted."

In October 1871, 'Church Bells' reported, "The bells of Paignton Church having recently been rehung, The St. Sidwell's Society of Change-Ringers were invited to open them; which they did on Saturday, 16th inst., in good style, by ringing several fine peals of Grandsire Doubles and other peals*. Their performances were much appreciated and enjoyed by a large number of listeners. The St. Sidwell's Society of Ringers have of late acquired much repute by their steady perseverance in the practice of change-ringing, being one of the first Societies that have turned their attention to proper half-pull change ringing — so generally ignored in Devon and Cornwall."

**At this time the term "peal" didn't mean over 5000 changes as it does today which would have taken 3 or more hours at St Sidwell's.*

In 1872 'Church Bells' carried a report of a Prize Ringing Contest, in Dartmouth, in which ringers from Broadclyst and St. Sidwell's, amongst others, took part. Colonel Charles Troyte of Huntsham was quick to follow up to assure readers that the ringers who took part were "not members of the Societies of Change Ringers established in those two church towers". Prize ringing was held in contempt by the method ringers nationally, as was the traditional West Country way of ringing with its "ups and downs and rounds and rounds, which an intelligent convict would find as great a nuisance as the tread mill, and not much harder to learn." This was one of the difficulties referred to by Edwin Shepherd.

Rule 12 of the Devonshire Guild was, "That no member shall take part in any ringing match for a prize; should he do so, he will be liable to immediate expulsion from the Guild." This was connected with the movement for belfry reform and the efforts to make bell ringing a church activity rather than a secular one. The perceived problems with prize ringing were, competing for money in consecrated buildings, drunkenness and betting on the outcome. It was considered that method ringers were a steadier and more thoughtful

bunch. This of course was a generalisation but it was undoubtedly one of the factors that drove the St. Sidwell ringers and others to make efforts to spread the word about method ringing.

[It wasn't until 1939 that the rule was rescinded. Guild members now compete for shields and cups. St. David's today is affiliated to both the Devon Association and the Devon Guild, and call changes and method ringing both have their place.]

Charles Troyte, of Huntsham Court, was a member of the Acland family and a keen ringer. He increased the number of bells at the church adjacent to his house to 6 and then to 8 bells at his own expense and established a band of method ringers there. It was a band predominately from Huntsham that rang the first peal at St. Sidwell's in 1875 and thus the first peal ever rung in Exeter. The peal was conducted by William Bannister who had brought method ringing to Plymouth when he transferred from Woolwich Dockyard to Devonport.

St. Sidwell's Society were active in promoting method or "scientific" change ringing as it was called locally. 'Bell News' in February 1884 reported, "For several weeks past, several of the more energetic members of this Society have been spending their available time on Saturdays by visiting different country villages around Exeter, thereby endeavouring to stamp out the old style of round-ringing, which has been very prevalent around this part of the country in time past."

The St. Sidwell's annual reports list the towers that the Society had visited during the previous year [e.g. in 1892/3, 14 were visited]. Between 1905 and 1911, 13 members of the society took to their bikes as part of the Exeter Ringers' Cycling Club Branch, which rang 26 peals and took method ringing to places where it was unheard of.

Ferris and Edwin Shepherd, Frank Davey and Arthur Searle were active as conductors and teachers in the area and beyond. The latter three were members at St. David's and St. Sidwell's; in 1906 six of the eleven ringers at St. David's were also members at St. Sidwell's. By 1913 the practice of being a member of more than one society seems to have died out.

St. Sidwell's Society were prolific ringers. All but two of the thirty peals rung at St. David's before 1942 included members of St. Sidwell's. Of the 229 peals included in the Guild's First Peal Book [1875 to 1909], 43% of them

had some sort of St. Sidwell's involvement. It is worth going on the Guild of Devonshire Ringers website and seeking out the First Peal Book which is truly a work of art. [Once on the site click on "The Guild" tab and then "Library".]

To mark the Eightieth Anniversary of the destruction of St. Sidwell's I have compiled a "Peal Book", of the 43 peals rung at St. Sidwell's and the 29 peals attributed to members of St. Sidwell's which were rung elsewhere; this book will be housed in St. David's ringing chamber. The peals have also been uploaded on to the Ringing World's Bellboard website.



Geoff Crockett



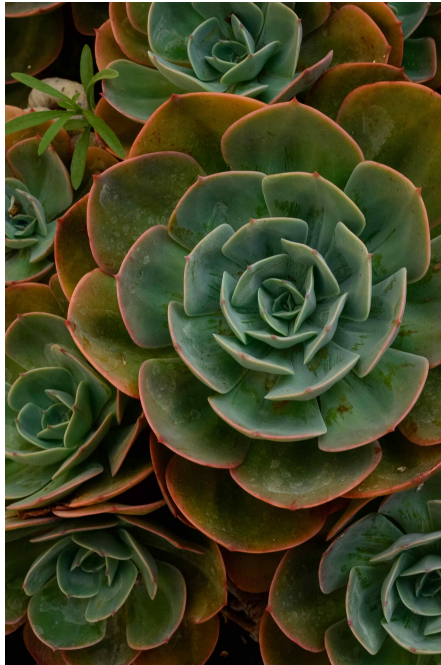
"It comes to something when the state of the pound is such that we *hope* to find lots of foreign coins!"

Hospiscare Plant Sale

For many years members of the congregation have supported this event with offers of plants and by coming to browse and buy. For the last two years we have had to have an on line sale because of Covid restrictions. These were amazingly well supported but at last we can return to Baring Crescent for the real thing, a much loved and popular event. The date is Saturday 14th May from 10am till midday and Baring Crescent is between Heavitree Road and Magdalen Road. We shall be selling perennials, annuals, herbs, veg plants and small shrubs as well as some garden equipment. Our two experts from Bickton College will be there to give advice and help with plant choices. Tea, coffee, cold drinks and homemade buns and biscuits will be available and we hope that it will be a successful morning raising a good total for Hospiscare our local charity which depends so much on local support. Thank you.



Paula Lawford



Libraries and beans on toast

Every two or three weeks, I visit Exeter library to change my books and have a meal in the cheerful cafe – often accompanied by the sound of toddlers singing that “the wheels on the bus go round and round”. It is comfortable and welcoming. How different from when I joined my local library eighty-eight years ago. Silence notices abounded and were vigorously enforced by big Queenie. As for eating! Thoughtlessly chewing a sweet, a child might enter the hallowed room- a stern look from Queenie would stop you in your tracks. It mattered not that you might murmur that it was a cough sweet- she would silently proffer a piece of paper into which you deposited the offensive sweetmeat – an inspection of sticky fingers and a finger pointing to the children’s section and you would slink there with no thought of requesting a return of your toffee. As I mused on the past, my jacket potato with baked beans and cheese arrived. The beans reminded me of my first date. I was invited by a young Post Office engineer to tea and pictures at our newest cinema. I was not used to going out to eat. The height of sophistication in 1943 was a milk shake at the Clover cafe. Even quite small children take it in their stride now- the ones in the library certainly do. Not being well-off the young man ordered beans on toast. Ah, a simple repast, I could cope with that. Casually, I stuck in my fork, and equally casually the slice of toast, plus beans, slid gracefully to the carpet. Luckily time has blotted out my horror. But, we did go out a few times more. A couple of years later I had a soldier boyfriend in the army, in



London. One Saturday morning I drew out my month’s salary from the bank, and, on impulse, decided to go to London, where I had never been. To cut a long story short, I persuaded the sentry at the barracks (I was younger and prettier then) to find said boyfriend. He was off duty and took me to a Lyons Corner House. By then I was more experienced with beans on toast in public. All was well until a fiddler appeared at the table and began to serenade me.



This time, I remained in control of the beans but not my giggles.

Returning to the present, I enjoyed my meal, but couldn't help thinking, back in the Midlands, Queenie would be spinning in her grave.

Eileen Jarman

12/4/2022



*Mrs Logan went for her atmoiser and
Mrs Pugh went for hers...*

Church of S. Michael & All Angels,
Mount Dinham, Exeter, EX4 4EB
The S. Michael's Lectures Summer 2022



7.30 p.m. Wednesday 11th May, 2022

Professor Richard Seaford

*Animal Sacrifice:
from Prehistory to Early Christianity*



Professor Seaford is an expert on Ancient Greek Religion

His most recent book is entitled

*The Origins of Philosophy in Ancient Greece and Ancient India,
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Exeter Forum Programme of Talks – 27 April to 29 June 2022

The weekly programme of Exeter Forum talks from Wednesday 27 April to Wednesday 29 June is listed here. Meetings take place in the Mint Methodist Church, Fore Street, Exeter, EX4 3AT from 10.00 to 12.00, with talks starting at 10.45. Refreshments will be available from 10.15 in the Entrance Lounge.

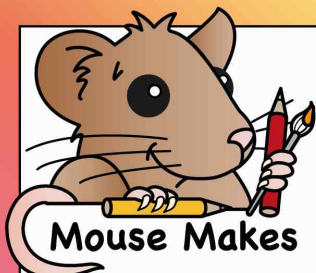
Full descriptions of talks and speakers appear in the weekly emails and on the Exeter Forum website www.exeterforum.org/talks.

If there is any need to change the programme or replace in-person talks with zoom presentations, this will be announced by email and on the Exeter Forum website.

All are very welcome to attend these meetings. There is an admission charge of £3 if not a member of the Exeter Forum.

Date	Speaker	Title
20 April	No meeting	Easter holiday break
27 April	Dr Julia Neville	Exeter and the Trams 1882-1931 Julia will describe the establishment of a horse-drawn tram service in Devon and the change in the early 1900s to an electrically powered system. Her talk will highlight the benefits of the trams to the city of Exeter and some of the people who work on them, and finally take the audience on a tram ride from Heavitree to Exeter City Centre.
4 May	Dr Clare Maudling	'Be Bold, Courageous and Wise': Building an Exeter for the future from 1942 to the present. Special talk to mark the 80th anniversary of the Exeter Blitz The story of Exeter's blitz is well known, but the process of rebuilding the city remains hidden behind misconceptions and myths. This talk will uncover the hidden story of Exeter's rise from the destruction of the blitz, through the post-war struggle to rebuild, to the shaping of the modern city.

11 May	Brenda Parsons	<p>The Civil War in Exeter – 1642 to 1646 – An eyewitness report!</p> <p>Brenda will provide an illustrated eye-witness account about the effects of the English Civil War on the City of Exeter.</p> <p><i>This will be a short talk and will be followed by the Exeter Forum AGM</i></p>
18 May	Michael Parrott	<p>The Polish 307 Squadron – The Eagle Owls</p> <p>In this second special talk to mark the 80th anniversary of the Exeter Blitz, Michael will tell the story of the Polish 307 Squadron nightfighters. The Eagle Owls helped defend Great Britain from enemy bombers during the Second World War. For two years the squadron was based at Exeter Airport and prevented the total destruction of Exeter during the blitz in May 1942.</p>
25 May	Ian Johnston	<p>The work of the Devon and Somerset Fire Rescue Service (DSFRS) and fire safety in the home.</p> <p>This talk will look at the various roles of the Devon and Fire Rescue Service and how it responds to the demands it has to face. It will also cover the importance of fire safety in the home with some practical advice.</p>
1 June	No meeting	Spring Bank Holiday week break
8 June	<i>Speaker to be confirmed</i>	
15 June	Brian Freeland	<p>The view from the Wings</p> <p>A slightly saucy talk about the theatre from a stage manager's view. Brian will draw on his own experience from variety (Butlin's Holiday Camps and the London Palladium) to the Royal Shakespeare Company, the National Theatre, Scottish Opera and Sadler's Wells Ballet.</p>
22 June	<i>Speaker to be confirmed</i>	
29 June	Mark Richardson	<p>The Exeter Food Bank and the challenges of recent months</p> <p>Mark will describe the current work of the Exeter Food Bank which is based alongside the Mint Methodist Church. He will look at the challenges of Covid, the cost-of-living crisis and other uncertainties, and how the food bank has responded.</p>



Mouse Makes

Jesus said,
*"This, then, is how
 you should pray:*

Our

_____ in _____
 hallowed be your

_____ your

_____ come,
 your _____ be
 done, on

_____ as it
 is in _____.

Give us this day our
 daily _____.

And

_____ us our _____,
 as we also have
 forgiven our debtors.

And _____
 us not into
 temptation, but

_____ us from the
 _____ one."

Read Matthew 6:9-13
 to fill in the words.

*"Give thanks to the
 Lord for He is good,
 His love endures
 forever"*

Psalm 136:1

I thank you Lord for...



I pray for my family and friends



I ask for...



I praise you Lord for...



I pray for the Church and world



"Never stop praying."
 1 Thessalonians 5:17

I am sorry for...



*"Do not be anxious about
 anything, but in every situation,
 by prayer and petition,
 with thanksgiving,
 present your requests to God."*
 Philippians 4:6

Bible Bite

A short story from the Bible

It can be read in the Bible in Genesis chapter 1 to 2 verse 3.

This story is at the start of the Bible, and the start of time...

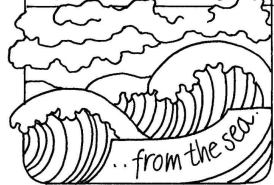
When God first made the universe it was empty and shapeless. God said...

Let there be Light!



God separated the Light and dark.

On the next day, God separated the sky...

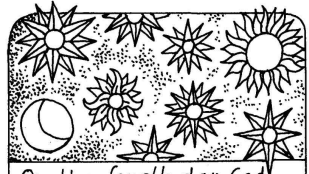


...from the sea

On the third day God separated the sea...



.. from the dry land. Then He made plants of all kinds grow on the land.

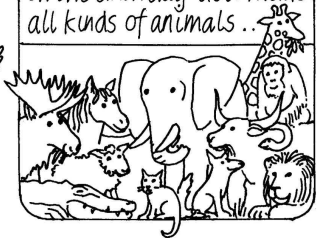


On the fourth day God made lights shine in the sky for day and night.



On the fifth day God filled the sea with all sorts of fish, and the sky with all sorts of birds

On the sixth day God made all kinds of animals...



and then He made people, men and women.

God told the people....

Take care of all I have made.



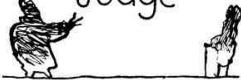
God saw that everything He had made was very good.

On the seventh day God rested...

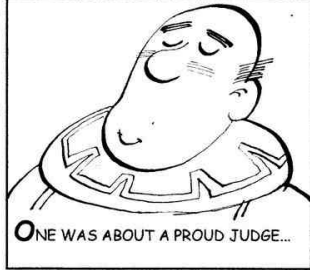


and so did everyone else!

The
Tale of the
The Widow
and the
Judge



JESUS OFTEN TOLD
STORIES WITH
HIDDEN MEANINGS

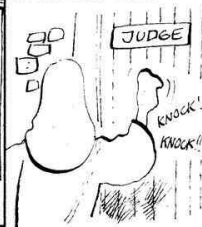


ONE WAS ABOUT A PROUD JUDGE...



...AND A POOR WIDOW

THE WIDOW NEEDED HELP
FROM THE JUDGE.



BUT HE WAS FAR TOO PROUD
AND BUSY TO LISTEN

BUT THE WIDOW
WOULD NOT GIVE UP



PLEASE COME AND SORT OUT
MY LEGAL PROBLEMS

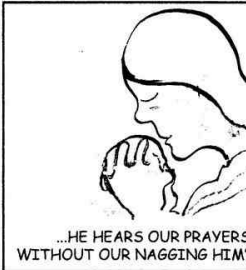


AT LAST THE JUDGE
GAVE IN - AND WENT
TO HELP THE WOMAN

I'M ONLY DOING THIS BECAUSE
YOU KEPT PESTERING ME!



JESUS EXPLAINED - 'GOD IS
MUCH KINDER THAN THE JUDGE
- WE DON'T HAVE TO PESTER
GOD...



...HE HEARS OUR PRAYERS
WITHOUT OUR NAGGING HIM.

Smilelines

Mistake

A mistake is proof that someone was at least trying to accomplish something.

Found

On the church noticeboard: Contact lens found in church. See vicar. If you can.

Bread

Baker's trade bread recipes on a knead-to-know basis.

Preaching

Church members were discussing the vicar's and the curate's sermons. The church warden said: "The vicar, now, when she says 'in conclusion', she concludes. But the curate, when he says 'lastly' – my! How he do last!"

Pillar

After a certain Dean retired, a number of years ago, from his cathedral, he began writing for the press. Soon a rival paper declared that he was no longer a pillar of the Church of England, but now only two columns in the Evening Standard.

Cats

A Cheshire vicar has two cats. Their names are Ancient and Modern – because they are both him.

When children pray (they did their best!)

~ Give us this steak and daily bread, and forgive us our mattresses.

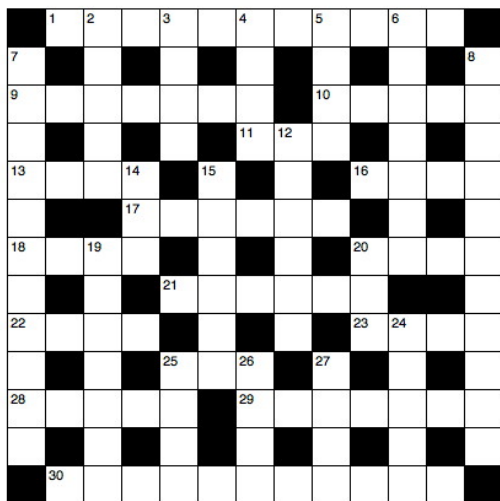
~ Hail, Mary, full of grapes.

~ He suffered under a bunch of violets. (Pontius Pilate)

Grannies

Grandmas are mums with lots of frosting

What bargains grandchildren are! I give them my loose change, and they give me a million pounds worth of pleasure. – Gene Perret



Across

- 1 Overpowered (Deuteronomy 11:4) (11)
- 9 'The — are mantled with corn' (Psalm 65:13) (7)
- 10 'Each man—a sword to his side'(Exodus32:27)(5)
- 11 On the death of Jesus the curtain in the temple was torn from— to bottom (Matthew 27:51) (3)
- 13 Stagger(Isaiah 28:7)(4)
- 16 'Anyone,then,who knows the good he ought—and doesn't do it, sins' (James 4:17) (2,2)
- 17 Stir up or provoke(Acts13:50)(6)
- 18 Burden(Luke11:46)(4)
- 20 'As far as the east is from the—,so far has he removed our transgressions from us' (Psalm 103:12) (4)
- 21 Sign(Luke23:38)(6)
- 22 'After that,Jesus poured water into a basin and began to—his disciples' feet' (John 13:5) (4)
- 23 The nature of the seven ears of corn which swallowed up the good ears in Pharaoh's dream (Genesis 41:23) (4)
- 25 Has(anag.)(3)
- 28 'This is the account of Shem,Ham and Japheth,—sons' (Genesis 10:1) (5)
- 29 'I will...make them drunk,so that they...sleep for—and— awake' (Jeremiah 51:39) (4,3)
- 30 Paul said of him,'he often refreshes me and is not ashamed of my chains' (2 Timothy 1:16) (11)

Down

- 2 Worth (Matthew 13:46) (5)
 3 'A bruised — he will not break' (Matthew 12:20) (4)
 4 'Suddenly a great company of the heavenly — appeared with the angel' (Luke 2:13) (4)
 5 Slip (anag.) (4)
 6 'Take an awl and push it through his — — into the door, and he will become your servant for life' (Deuteronomy 15:17) (3,4)
 7 Bountiful (2 Corinthians 8:2) (11)
 8 'Therefore, as we have — , let us do good to all people' (Galatians 6:10) (11)
 12 Acquire(2Timothy2:10)(6)
 14 Container cover(Numbers19:15)(3)
 15 'He...became obedient to death,even death on— —!' (Philippians 2:8) (1,5)
 19 Refrain(1Peter2:11)(7)
 20 'She began to—his feet with her tears'(Luke7:38)(3)
 24 One who worships Brahma,Vishnu or Shiva(5)
 25 'Give to everyone who—you'(Luke6:30)(4)
 26 'I lift up my eyes to the hills;where does my—come from?' (Psalm 121:1) (4)
 27 One of those whom the Lord said would be taken from Jerusalem and Judah as judgment on them (Isaiah 3:2) (4)

Sudoku - Medium

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

Word search



animals

dark

everything

land

made

people

sea

sorts

birds

day

fish

light

men

plants

separated

universe

creation

everyone

good

lights

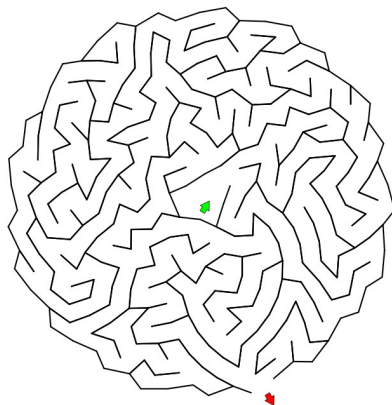
night

rest

sky

women

Maze



Days of Note - May

1st May: May Day and unbridled merriment

May is the month when the ancient pagans used to get up to 'all sorts'! The Romans held their festival to honour the mother-goddess Maia, goddess of nature and growth. (May is named after her.) The early Celts celebrated the feast of Beltane, in honour of the sun god, Beli.

For centuries in 'Olde England' the people went mad in May. After the hardship of winter, and hunger of early Spring, May was a time of indulgence. One Philip Stubbes, writing in 1583, was scandalised: 'for what kissing and bussing, what smooching and slabbering one of another, is not practised?'

Henry VIII went 'maying' on many occasions. Then folk would stay out all night in the dark rain-warm thickets and return in the morning for dancing

on the green around the May pole, archery, vaulting, wrestling, and evening bonfires.

The Protestant reformers took a strong stand against May Day, and in 1644 May Day was abolished altogether. Many May poles came down - only to go up again at the Restoration, when the first May Day of King Charles's reign was 'the happiest Mayday that hath been many a year in England', according to Pepys.

May Day to most people today brings vague folk memories of a young Queen of the May decorated with garlands and streamers and flowers, a May Pole to weave, Morris dancing, and the intricacies of well dressing at Tissington in Derbyshire.

May Day is a medley of natural themes such as sunrise, the advent of summer, growth in nature, and - since 1833 - Robert Owen's vision of a millennium in the future, beginning on May Day, when there would be no more poverty, injustice or cruelty, but harmony and friendship. This is why, in modern times, May Day has become Labour Day, which honours the dignity of workers. And until recently, in communist countries May Day processions were in honour of the achievement of Marxism.

There has never been a Christian content to May Day, but nevertheless there is the well-known 6am service on the top of Magdalen Tower at Oxford where a choir sings in the dawn of May Day.

An old May carol includes the lines:

*The life of man is but a span, it flourishes like a flower
We are here today and gone tomorrow - we are dead within an hour.*

There is something of a sadness about it, both in words and tune, as there is about all purely sensuous joy. For May Day is not Easter, and the joys it represents have always been earth-bound and fleeting.

2nd May: Athanasius, the theologian who gave us the Nicene Creed

This is the name behind the Athanasian Creed. Athanasius (296-373) was

born into a prosperous family in Alexandria in Egypt, studied in the Christian school there and entered the ministry. He was 29 years old when he accompanied Alexander, the bishop of Alexandria, to the Church's first ecumenical Council, at Nicaea in 325.

Although Athanasius could not take part in the Council's debates because he was a deacon and not a bishop, Alexander consulted him on the meaning of biblical texts and theological distinctions. With Emperor Constantine sitting as President, 300 bishops argued about the Person of Christ. How is He the Son of God? Is He God or man or both together? Did He exist before He was born? If we worship Him, does that mean that we are worshipping two Gods?

The young Athanasius saw that some bishops wanted to impose the teaching of Arius on the Church. Arius was a popular preacher in Alexandria who taught that Christ was not eternal but was a 'Saviour' created by the Father. Athanasius worked with his bishop, Alexander, in framing what became known as the Nicene Creed. Our Lord's full divinity was safeguarded in the words, 'eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, light from light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one substance with the Father.'

When Bishop Alexander died in 328, Athanasius succeeded him as Bishop by popular demand. For the next 45 years Athanasius' devotion, scholarship, and forceful leadership established the Nicene Creed in the Christian Church. His enemies, both in Church and state, conspired against him, and he was exiled five times from the See of Alexandria and spent a total of 17 years in flight and hiding. It was his uncompromising stand for Nicene theology that gave rise to the familiar saying, *Athanasius contra mundum*, 'Athanasius against the world.'

Athanasius' name will always be linked with the triumph of New Testament Christology over every form of reductionism. Of his many writings the most significant was his great study on the person and work of Christ; *On the Incarnation of the Word of God*, written before he was 30 years old. The whole Church of Christ is always in need of bishops, leaders and theologians in the mould of Athanasius.

8th May: Julian of Norwich, voice from a distant cell

Julian of Norwich was born in 1342 and wrote at the end of the 14th century, when our modern English language was slowly emerging from its origins in Anglo-Saxon and Middle English.

We know little about Julian's early life, but when she was 30, she fell ill and was near death when suddenly her pain left her, and she received 16 visitations. Julian wrote these down, in what became known as the 'short text'. 20 years later she extended this to become her 'long text'.

She was an anchoress – someone who had committed herself to a life of solitude, giving herself to prayer and fasting. St Julian's, Norwich was the church where she had her little 'cell'.

Julian taught that all things depend upon the love of God for their being. Her spirituality was focussed on the cross, and she wanted to share the sufferings of Christ. She believed that humanity is separated from God by sin, but redeemed through Christ, who reunites us with God. Julian also emphasised Christ as mother, but within a clear Trinitarian understanding of the godhead.

Her masterpiece, *Revelations of Divine Love*, reveals a mystic of such depth and insight that it is still read by many thousands of Christians today. One of the notable features is that her theology determined her experience, rather than the other way round.

She is honoured this month in the Lutheran and Anglican Churches, but although she is held in high regard by many Roman Catholics, her own Church has never felt able to recognise her as a 'saint'. This is probably because she spoke of God as embracing both male and female qualities. *Revelations* is an account of the visions she received in her tiny room, which thousands of pilgrims visit every year.

Her most famous saying, quoted by T S Eliot in one of his poems, is 'All shall be well, and all shall be well, and all manner of thing shall be well.' These words have brought comfort and strength to many a soul in distress.

19th May: Dunstan, the abbot who restored monastic life in England

Dunstan (909-988 AD) stands out as an example of what just one person can achieve when they follow the call of God on their life.

Dunstan was born near Glastonbury, of a noble family with royal connections and church connections; his uncle was Archbishop of Canterbury. But in 935, at the age of 26, he was accused of 'studying the vain poems of the pagans' – and expelled from court. He nearly married, but instead made private monastic vows and was ordained a priest by Elphege, bishop of Winchester. Dunstan felt God's call on his life and responded. That decision was to shape English history.

Not at first, however. For Dunstan began his priestly life by simply returning to Glastonbury and living as a hermit. He painted, embroidered and did metalwork. But when in 939 Edmund became king of Wessex, he recalled Dunstan and made him abbot of Glastonbury. The monastic life of the country was all but dead; the Danish invasions and the hostility of local magnates had seen to that. Dunstan set out to change all this, and went on to restore monastic life in England, under the Rule of St Benedict.

Down the years, Dunstan saw kings come and go: Edmund, Edred, Edgar, Edward. Under King Edgar Dunstan was made bishop of Worcester in 957, bishop of London in 959, and Archbishop of Canterbury in 960. Thus was born a fruitful collaboration between King and Archbishop which was to reform the Church in England. Monastic orders began to thrive once more. After the Conquest, the days of Dunstan would be looked back on as the 'golden age'.

Dunstan was zealous for the faith. He taught, prayed, fasted, repaired churches, acted as judge, inspired national laws of the land, made sure taxes were paid, and encouraged his monks in their manuscripts and prayers. He remained active right to the end of his life: he preached three times on Ascension Day 988, and died two days later, on 19 May, aged nearly 80.

They wrote of him: he was without doubt "chief of all the saints who rest at Christ Church" (Canterbury). It has been well said that the 10th century gave shape to English history, and Dunstan gave shape to the 10th century.

22nd 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?)

26th May: Ascension Day, 40 Days with the Risen Christ

40 days after Easter comes Ascension Day. These are the 40 days during which the Risen Christ appeared again and again to His disciples, following

His death and resurrection. (*Matthew 28; Mark 16; Luke 24; and John 20.*)

The Gospels give us little of Christ's teachings and deeds during those 40 days. Jesus was seen by numerous of His disciples: on the road to Emmaus, by the Sea of Galilee, in houses, etc. He strengthened and encouraged His disciples, and at last opened their eyes to all that the Scriptures had promised about the Messiah. Jesus also told them that as the Father had sent Him, He was now going to send them - to all corners of the earth, as His witnesses.

Surely the most tender, moving 'farewell' in history took place on Ascension Day. Luke records the story with great poignancy: 'When Jesus had led them out to the vicinity of Bethany, He lifted up His hands - and blessed them.'

As Christmas began the story of Jesus' life on earth, so Ascension Day completes it, with His return to His Father in heaven. Jesus' last act on earth was to bless His disciples. He and they had a bond as close as could be: they had just lived through three tumultuous years of public ministry and miracles – persecution and death – and resurrection! Just as we part from our nearest and dearest by still looking at them with love and memories in our eyes, so exactly did Jesus: 'While He was blessing them, He left them and was taken up into heaven.' (Luke 24:50-1) He was not forsaking them, but merely going on ahead to a kingdom which would also be theirs one day: 'I am ascending to my Father and to your Father, to my God and your God...' (John 20:17)

The disciples were surely the most favoured folk in history. Imagine being one of the last few people on earth to be face to face with Jesus, and to have Him look on you with love. No wonder then that Luke goes on: 'they worshipped Him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy. And they stayed continually at the temple, praising God.' (Luke 24:52,53)

No wonder they praised God! They knew they would see Jesus again one day! 'I am going to prepare a place for you... I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.' (John 14:2,3) In the meantime, Jesus had work for them to do: to take the Gospel to every nation on earth.

30th May: Josephine Butler, social reformer for women

Josephine Butler is the 'saint' for anyone who believes in social justice. This remarkable 19th century clergyman's wife became a renowned campaigner for women's rights and for putting a halt to human trafficking.

Josephine was born in Northumberland in 1828, the daughter of a wealthy family of liberal politics and committed Christian faith. They had already been deeply involved in the abolition of slavery and the extension of the franchise. Such notions of equality instilled into Josephine a passionate desire to combat social injustice.

In 1852 Josephine married George Butler, the son of the Headmaster of Harrow, who shared her views. George was ordained in 1854 and they moved first to Oxford and then to Cheltenham. In 1863 tragedy struck when their daughter Eva fell to her death.

Josephine's grief found expression a few years later, when in 1865 George had become Headmaster of Liverpool College, and the couple were settling in Liverpool. Josephine was horrified at the lives of destitute women in Liverpool, and so she founded a 'home' to care for them, as well as a hostel to train them for suitable work. In 1869 she agreed to head a campaign against the Contagious Diseases Act of 1866, and by 1871 she had addressed a Royal Commission, explaining how this Act brutalised these women, already trapped in the slavery of prostitution. She got the Act rescinded.

By 1882, when George had become a Residentiary Canon of Winchester Cathedral, Josephine had not only founded a refuge for recovering prostitutes in Winchester, but she had also begun to fight sex trafficking across the world. This included freeing British girls from Belgian brothels. By 1885 Josephine had exposed the white slave trade in London, and had got Parliament to increase the age of consent for girls from 13 to 16, and to penalise those engaged in the transport of women for profit.

In 1890 George died, but Josephine continued her work until retirement to Northumberland, where she died in 1906.

All in all, Josephine Butler's deep Christian compassion transformed the lives of many tens of thousands of suffering women. She has been described as one of the most important early members of the feminist movement.

31st May: Mary, the Blessed Virgin, visits Elizabeth

Mary – the virgin mother of Jesus. For centuries, the eastern and western churches have considered her pre-eminent among all the saints.

In the gospels, Mary makes her first appearance as a teenager. Nothing is known of her childhood, and what we do know of her is found mostly in Matthew 1 – 2 and in Luke 1 – 2. If you read both accounts, you'll notice that Luke's account seems to give the story from Mary's standpoint, whereas Matthew concentrates more on Joseph's side of things. In both accounts the virginal conception of Christ is clearly stated. Mary's quiet devotion to God and her total acceptance of His will shine forth.

Her visit to Elizabeth, when both were pregnant, is a moving and poignant account of two humble, ordinary women, suddenly caught up in a great event that would shape world history. Their trusting faith in God and acceptance of His will, shine through.

After Jesus is born, Mary fades into the background, and makes few appearances: when the family visits Jerusalem and she loses her son on the way home; when she urges Him to help the wedding party in Cana with its wine problem; and when Jesus gives her into the keeping of the beloved disciple when He is dying on the cross. Mary's last appearance is in Acts chapter one, just before Pentecost.

Mary obviously joined the early Church, but her role was never one of teaching and preaching, and indeed she remained so much in the background that nothing more about her is known for certain. Both Ephesus and Jerusalem have claimed to be the place of her death.

Mary, chosen to be the mother of Jesus Christ, one who is both God and Man, holds a unique place in the history of mankind. Down the centuries that have followed, the Church has paid special honour to Mary – and well deserved it is. "All generations shall call me blessed..."

Puzzle solutions

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

The deadline for inclusion of articles for the June issue of New Leaves is Sunday 22nd 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!

Thank you to Graham Lerwill for organising the printing of this magazine

- his hard work is much appreciated.