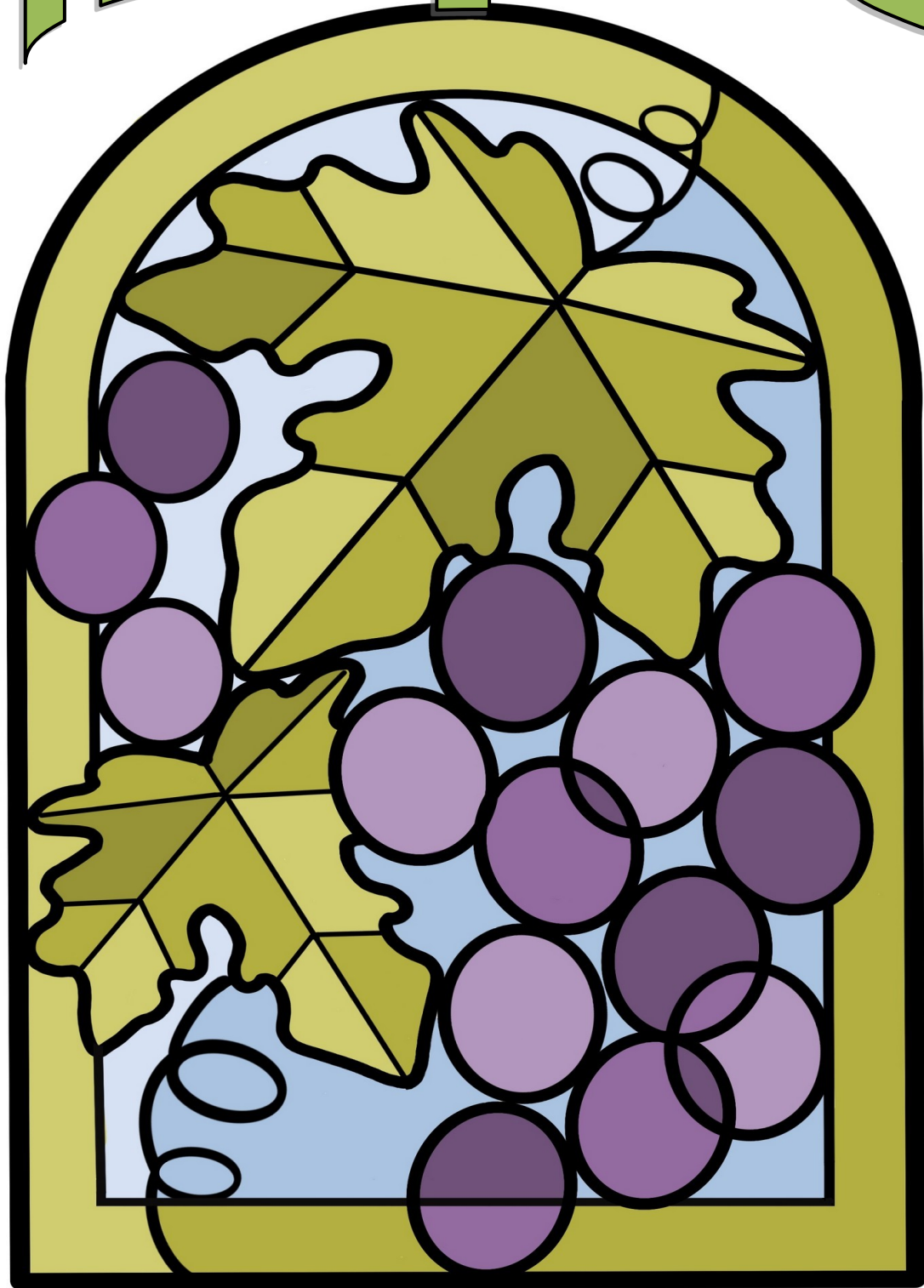


The monthly publication for the Parish of Capel & Ockley

Inspire



Issue 77 October 2023

Free of charge - donations welcome in honesty box in wall

St John's & St Margaret's Harvest Supper

NEVER SAY DY

by Mo Speller

A murder mystery to be solved by the audience
plus a two course supper
in aid of the combined parish of Capel and Ockley

Friday 13th October in Ockley Village Hall

Saturday 14th October in Capel Memorial Hall

Doors open at 7pm for curtain up at 7.30pm

Tickets

Adults £14
Children £7
Family £35



Box Office Capel

Corinne Jay
07718 346294
Capeditor@gmail.com

Box Office Ockley

Helen Burt
07990 597553

Make a group booking with your friends to ensure that you sit together and form a team with the other people on your table

This amateur production is presented by arrangement with Scripts for Stage

Would you like to sponsor a 2024 issue of InSpire?

We would like to thank all our sponsors over the last six years for their support of the magazine. It enables us to reach a wide audience at no cost to the reader.

If you would like to discuss sponsorship, please speak to either
Suzanne Cole, Editor on 01306 711449
or Helen Burt, Treasurer (contact details on page 3)

Thank you

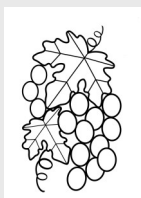
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Falling Leaves

Fall, leaves, fall; die, flowers,
away;
Lengthen night and shorten day;
Every leaf speaks bliss to me
Fluttering from the autumn tree.

*From a poem by Emily Bronte
(1818-48)*



Don't want a paper copy ...

You can register to receive **InSpire** via email each month OR download individual issues!

www.capelandockleychurch.org.uk/inspire-magazine

This issue is sponsored by

John Dale
**In loving memory of
Margaret Dale**

See John's tribute on page 6

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Rev Liz writes

Dear Friends,

This month begins with final week of our season of Creationtide. Five weeks where we have explored our role as human beings in the story of creation, our relationship to the earth, and the earth's relationship with the Creator God. It has been a fascinating time of discovery and one which as a parish we hope to continue as well as aiming to cut our carbon footprint in our church buildings and churchyards. We shall be celebrating and giving thanks for God's creation at our Harvest Festivals, and Capel's Harvest Festival is the very first day of this lovely month of October.

We will be welcoming your donations of food that is suitable to take to Dorking Foodbank for their distribution as well as LeatherHEAD START who provide emergency housing for homeless people in the local area.

As well as donations of foodstuff we will be collecting monetary donations and offering our Harvest collections from both churches (St Margaret's Ockley and St John's Capel) to the charity ShelterBox. This charity based in Cornwall exists to ensure no one is without shelter after disaster. Providing tents, shelter kits, and other essential equipment ShelterBox works to support thousands of people affected by disasters all over the world. Currently their teams in Morocco have been visiting villages in the mountains where homes have collapsed leaving people with very little in the way of shelter and belongings. As winter approaches they are looking to support people affected by the earthquake with tents, blankets, solar lights and kitchen sets. ShelterBox is also responding to the humanitarian needs in Libya in partnership with ACTED another humanitarian organisation who are already working in Derna before Storm Daniel and have a good presence there. Do support these or any other humanitarian support agencies as they try to support those affected by these devastating so called natural disasters. If you would like to add to our ShelterBox donation this Harvest, please come to one of our Harvest festival Services or pop it through my Vicarage door in an envelope marked Harvest Donation.

On a lighter note (really?!) we have the opportunity to become amateur sleuths as another Murder Mystery play and supper is performed. Two performances, two villages, two suppers! Hurry and book your tickets for either Friday 13th October for Ockley or Saturday 14th for Capel. Should be great fun!!

Finally, at the end of the month we will be holding our annual service of comfort for those who are bereaved. Lists for names of loved ones will be put inside churches towards the middle of this month. This peaceful service will be followed by teas as usual.

In the meantime enjoy the colours and textures of Autumn, do visit your lovely parish churches and enjoy our harvest flowers, a fitting tribute to the glorious creation that God has given us.

With my love and prayers,

Liz

Revd Liz Richardson

liz@hostmyserver.co.uk

01306 711260 Vicar St John the Baptist Capel and St Margaret's Ockley



**Let Justice
and Peace Flow**
Season of Creation 2023

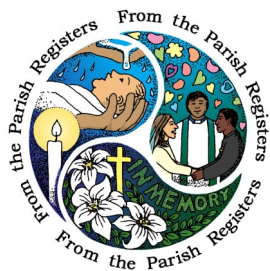
CHURCH SERVICES AND EVENTS - OCTOBER 2023
at St John the Baptist, Capel & St Margaret's, Ockley



OCTOBER

Sunday	1st	Creation 5 and Celebration of St Francis of Assisi (Trinity 17)
	9.30am	Matins at Ockley
	10.30am	Harvest Festival at Capel
	3-5pm	Harvest teas at Capel
Sunday	8th	Trinity 18
	9.30am	Holy Communion at Ockley
	10.30am	Cafe Church at The Crown, Capel.
Friday	13th	Never Say Dy!
	7.00pm	Murder mystery play and supper - Ockley
Saturday	14th	Never Say Dy!
	7.00pm	Murder mystery play and supper - Capel
Sunday	15th	Trinity 19
	10.30am	Parish Communion Capel
	11.30am	Special meeting re: The Parish Needs Process (<i>brief details in the Editor's letter on page 17 and more in Bishop Andrew's letter on page 7</i>). <i>The meeting will be held at St John the Baptist, Capel</i>
	3-5pm	Capel church Teas
Sunday	22nd	Trinity 20
	9.30am	Holy Communion BCP - Ockley
	10.30am	Family Communion - Capel
Sunday	29th	Bible Sunday
	9.30am	Parish Communion - Ockley
	3.00pm	All Soul's service for the bereaved
	4.00pm	Capel church teas
NOVEMBER		
Sunday	5th	All Saints
	9.30am	Matins Ockley
	10.30am	Family Communion Capel
Saturday	18th	Capel Christmas Fair 12 noon—4pm in aid of our Parish Churches and The Motor Neurone Disease Association (MNDA). Entry £3 (Children go Free)

Don't forget you can find details of all events & services on our website!
<https://www.capelandockleychurch.org.uk/events-calendar/>



In Memoriam

We give thanks for the lives and
mourn the loss of

Peter Hugh Farley
5th August 2023

Richard Williams
26th August 2023

Dorothy Lilian Tabb (Dot)
4th September 2023

May they rest in peace and rise in glory

In Memory of Margaret

We were married in St John the Baptist, Capel on 30th September 1967. The church was decorated for Harvest Festival the next day and it looked lovely. Margaret always said the church smelt of apples! She died on 11th October 2022 and is missed so very much.

John Dale

Our thanks to John for sponsoring this issue of InSpire in memory of Margaret. We remember our friend Margaret with great affection.

Could you volunteer to help prisoners rebuild their lives this autumn?

Prison Fellowship has opportunities in many prisons across England and Wales for PF volunteers to help run its various programmes for prisoners, including the Sycamore Tree programme, supporting prison chaplaincy ministry, and delivering the Angel Tree project this Christmas, as well as much more.

If you would like to help Prison Fellowship reach out to people in prison, please go to:
www.prisonfellowship.org.uk

The Pavilion Café



We are open every Wednesday morning from 9am to 12 o'clock in the Cricket Pavilion on the green in Ockley.

We serve homemade cakes and savouries and offer a range of teas and fresh coffee. On the last Wednesday of the month we also serve bacon butties which are very popular.

We ask for donations and, after expenses, the money goes to charity. We like to donate to our local churches, local amenities and charities and also national ones.

We have become very popular over the years and there is plenty of parking and disabled access to the building.



SAFEGUARDING NOTICE

'The care and protection of children, young people and adults involved in Church activities is the responsibility of everyone who participates in the life of the church. If you are concerned that someone you know is at risk of, or is being abused, or presents a risk to others, please seek advice from a Safeguarding Adviser or if necessary report the matter to the Local Authority Social Care Services or the Police without delay.'

If you have any concerns please contact our Safeguarding Officer:

Leigh Smith 07732825908
leighdesouza@yahoo.com

or Revd Liz Richardson 01306 711260
liz@hostmyserver.co.uk

This notice will appear each month in InSpire and the contact details for our Safeguarding Officer and the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor Jackie Broadfoot will be published in our weekly pew sheets as well as in the Church Contacts section in each issue of InSpire.

'The local church is the hope of the world'. It's a striking phrase, and one that encourages us to act locally and think globally as we seek to pray and work for the coming of God's Kingdom.

As a diocese we are committed to the flourishing of the local church, and it's been great both to hear and to witness the impact of our Parish Needs Process (or PNP), a shared listening exercise which has just reached the end of its first cycle.

What should be the focus of our efforts as a local church? That has been the question at the heart of the process. And as local clergy and their leadership have prayerfully engaged with our central team of Mission Enablers, it's been exciting to see clear priorities beginning to emerge, as well as the sharing of experience across the diocese.

The biggest lesson from the PNP so far (perhaps unsurprisingly) is that our commitment to 'Growing disciples' is foundational to the whole vision of a '*Transforming Church, Transforming Lives*'. Our other diocesan goals - to 'grow diversity' and 'grow community' - will only be fulfilled as that primary goal is prioritised.

The focus of the second round of the PNP, then, will be on growing the faith of the core and committed disciples in each congregation (including those who have recently joined us) - a faith that will then invigorate the whole church and community. I much look forward to witnessing how that goes, and remain hugely grateful for the privilege of leading such a committed and able workforce of laity and clergy, as we seek to bring the hope of our incarnate, crucified, risen and ascended Lord to a world in such urgent need of it.

Every blessing,
Bishop Andrew

Taken from Parish Brief
12/09/2023

**Can you help at the Capel Christmas Fair on Saturday 18th November 2023
in aid of our Parish Churches in Capel & Ockley and
The Motor Neurone Disease Association?**

Could you spare a couple of hours on the day to help?

We need help with a Barbecue for the duration of the Fair

- * Parking / Helping Stallholders unload and reload ***
- * Helping Joy with the refreshments in the Cricket Pavilion ***
- * Entrance Desk * Raffle ***



**There is now a list to sign up to in Capel church. Alternatively please email
Suzanne Cole on: info@capelchristmasfair.co.uk or call 07923 517202 THANK YOU!**

Café Church October 2023

Waste Not – Want Not

Is it really October already? It seems like only a moment ago that the first blossoms of Spring were blooming in the fruit trees and farmers were out sowing their seeds in neat rows in the fields.

(It sounds like I'm turning into Monty Don!) We then had what passed for a Summer and now, this month, we celebrate Harvest Festival when our focus moves to bringing in all the fruit and veg and preparing to store it for Winter. And so the cycle of the seasons gently moves along year after year. I don't know about you, but I take for granted that if I visit Village Greens or a local supermarket, the shelves will always be full of everything that I need and want. I'm ashamed to say that very little thought goes into how it all got there. Until, that is, I hear the tractors driving past our bedroom window at midnight as the local farmers race to harvest their crops in the very narrow window of time that will bring them the best return for their hard work during the rest of the year. What a fantastic job they do and what a debt of gratitude we owe them for the sacrifices that they make in order that we can enjoy our cornflakes for breakfast!

We're reminded by the media constantly about how important it is for farmers to increase the yield that their fields can produce and maximise potential of the land. Farmers are encouraged to add more and more nutrients and fertilisers to the ground to replace the natural goodness of the soil that has become exhausted. The more they produce, the more we can buy - and the more we can waste! In 2022 we in the UK wasted somewhere around 9.5 million tonnes of food. The Grocer magazine estimates that, "*the UK's total food waste could feed upwards of 30 million people a year.*" Seriously? What does that tell us about the dreadful throw-away culture we've developed over the past few years.

The bible, of course, has a very different view of how the land should be managed and how we should treat one another. OK, things were very different back then, but perhaps there are some principles that we can apply today. For example, in Exodus 23 we read that, "*For six years you are to sow your fields and harvest the crops, but during the seventh year let the land lie unploughed and unused.*" This gave the land time to recover and regenerate and any crops that grew by themselves during that seventh year were to be harvested by the poor. And during the six years of productivity, when it came to harvest, farmers were told, "*When you reap the harvest of your land, do not reap to the very edges of your field or gather the gleanings of your harvest. Leave them for the poor and for the foreigner residing among you. I am the LORD your God.*" (Leviticus 23)

What I see in this is a God who is telling his people, don't exhaust the land I have given you; don't take everything for yourself; there is enough for everyone. Is this a message just for farmers? Absolutely not! Next time you go to the shop, don't pick up all the things from "the very edges" that you don't want and can't use. Take only what you really need. And stop wasting so much of God's rich harvest. Then those amazing farmers that drive through our village at all times of day and night and work in the fields in all weathers will not have laboured in vain.

Bob Cranham

*Café Church meets at The Crown pub, Capel
on Sunday 8th October
at 10.30am.*

***Expect music, discussion, poetry, laughter and free coffee and
croissants!***



Editor: Bible Sunday is 29th October. Canon Paul Hardingham considers why Christians put such a high value on the Bible.

Bible Sunday – 29th October

At the recent Coronation the King was given a Bible with the words *'the most valuable thing that this world affords'*. As Bible Sunday is celebrated this month, let's ask why we should read the Bible?

The Bible isn't a single book, but a library of 66 books, composed by some 44 writers over 1500 years in a range of styles including history, poetry, prophecy, letters and apocalyptic (looking at the end times). Despite having a number of different writers, it claims one authority - God Himself! *'All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work'* (2 Timothy 3:16). The Bible is inspired (*'the word of God in the words of men'*) and equips us to live for God in every aspect of our lives. We also have the promise of the Holy Spirit to guide us when we read: *'when the Spirit of truth comes, He will guide you into all truth'* (John 16:13).

How should we read the Bible? Let's consider the following guidelines:

Right time: We need a regular routine, which will meet our needs. This will vary according to our circumstances: e.g., a mum at home with young children, somebody with a demanding job or a retired person.

Right Place: We need to find a space where we can be undisturbed (e.g. lounge, bedroom, train or kitchen).

Right Version: We need a version of the Bible which we can readily understand and use. A number of versions are available (e.g. NIV, The Message), as well as Bible apps we can access on our phone.

Right Help: Reading notes also help us to understand a passage and apply it to our lives.

Let's get reading!!

Editor: With thanks to my Mum who gave me this prayer!

A SENIOR PRAYER

Today dear Lord I'm eighty,
There's a lot I haven't done
So I hope, dear Lord, you'll let me live
Until I'm eighty one.

But if I haven't finished
All the things I'd like to do
Perhaps, dear Lord, you'd let me live
Until I'm eighty-two.

So many places I could go
So much that I could see,
Perhaps, dear Lord you could manage
To make it to eighty three.

The world is changing very fast,
There is so much more in store,
I'd like it even better, Lord,
To live to eighty four.

In your glorious universe,
Oh dear Lord, I could survive
So if you would be willing
I'll do four score and five.

Many a dream I need to fulfill
So perhaps you'd like to fix
To let me still be here, dear Lord,
When I am eighty six.

I know dear Lord, it's a lot to ask
And it must be nice in heaven,
But I really would be so happy
To be around at eighty-seven.

I know by then I won't be fast,
And sometimes I'll be late,
But I'm sure it will be pleasant
To live to eighty eight.

I will have seen so many things,
Had a lovely time, all's fine
So I'm sure that I'll be willing
To leave at eighty nine.

Loyalty

In Edinburgh, the capital city of Scotland, stands Greyfriars Graveyard. In 1858 a faithful dog called Bobby followed the remains of his beloved master to this cemetery. Here the dog stayed on or near the graveside until his death, 14 years later.

This is a story about loyalty. More poignantly, many people have devoted themselves to others through all kinds of circumstances. It's amazing what some people have gone through in giving their lives to someone to ensure their comfort, safety, and well-being.

There are numerous examples of loyalty in the Bible. The widow Ruth refused to return home to Moab to be with her people. Instead, she committed herself to staying with her mother-in-law, Naomi, whatever happened.

The young David, many years before he became king, and Jonathan the son of King Saul promised to look out for each other no matter what ill befell them.

Moses was faithfully loyal to God. They spoke with each other as if they were friends! He served God endlessly despite the frustrations of leading a vast crowd of people through the desert for 40 years.

What about us? How loyal are we to God? A difficult question, when so much can sway our eyes, our minds, emotions and behaviour in a world that thinks it doesn't need a faithful and loving God to care for them! It's easy to be loyal when times are good, but a different thing when hardships surround us.

Do we ever feel uncomfortable singing hymns about courage, obedience and service? Some provoke a challenge. Do we *really* mean all the words we sing? Consider the popular hymn *Jesus I have promised to serve Thee to the end*. It is a stirring declaration of faith, with prayer requests that we be steadfast in all circumstances. While it is good to sing hymns about loyalty, we should also endeavour to work out what our commitment to God really entails.

Jesus made some testing statements about loyalty, and warned His hearers about weighing up the pros and cons before following Him. Jesus said "Take up your cross". This challenging phrase is the ultimate test of our devotion and dedication to Him.

Loyalty in all relationships is a joy to behold, but no loyalty is greater than our loyalty to the Lord. Fortunately, God knows our weaknesses and will always pick us up when we stumble and will forgive us when we fail. After all, Jesus is 100% loyal to us and promised "I will never leave you and never forsake you." Amen to that!

Editor: October brings St Luke's day, and as St Luke is the patron saint of physicians and surgeons, we thought you might enjoy these comments, allegedly taken from actual medical records, dictated by doctors.

From medical records....

~ On the second day, the knee was better and on the third day it had completely disappeared.

~ The patient has been depressed ever since she began seeing me in 2022.

~ Alive, but without permission.

~ She slipped on wet leaves in late September, and her legs went in separate directions.

~ The patient was released to the Outpatient department without dressing.

~ She is numb from the toes down.

SAD people need our help and understanding

The nights are getting darker, and many people are getting SAD, as the autumn closes in around us. SAD is properly called 'Seasonal Affective Disorder', and it is a kind of seasonal depression.

How can you tell if someone has SAD? The symptoms include: a persistent low mood, a loss of pleasure in everyday things, irritability, despair, guilt, lethargy, sleepiness, a craving for carbohydrates, difficulty in concentrating, and decreased sex drive.

No one knows exactly the cause of SAD, but it is often linked to reduced exposure to sunlight during the short autumn and winter days. Lack of sunlight may affect the part of the brain called the hypothalamus, which then affects the production of melatonin, the production of serotonin, and the body's own internal clock.

If you suspect that you may be getting SAD, contact your doctor. Doctors can offer tips on lifestyle changes, light therapy from a light box, talking therapies, and antidepressant medicine.

© Parish Pump

Editor: Canon Paul Hardingham continues to his year-long series on the Spiritual Disciplines.

Spiritual Disciplines: Worship

'Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshippers will worship the Father in Spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshippers the Father seeks.' (John 4: 23).

The spiritual discipline of worship has both a personal and corporate dimension. It includes worship services as well as day-to-day activities. God is actively seeking worshippers (John 4:23) and worship is a response to our experience of God's love. The main words used of worship in the Bible have the sense of *submission* and *service*. They remind us that our lives need to be shaped by worship *on a daily basis*.

There are different ways into worship: practising stillness, offering praise (cf Psalm 95) and offering the whole of our lives as a living sacrifice (cf Romans 12:1). Worship is an act of the will; we choose to honour and please God. Depending on our circumstances, worshipping God requires effort on our part. However, entering into worship is to be transformed by His presence into the likeness of Jesus (cf 2 Corinthians 3:18).

Richard Foster in *Celebration of Discipline* offers some helpful ways in which to engage with worship on a daily basis:

Learn to practise the presence of God daily by punctuating every moment with praise and adoration.

Have different experiences of worship, both in large and small gatherings (i.e., small group)

Be prepared for gathered worship in heart and mind.

Be willing to let our worship transform our thinking and practice as God meets us.

Cultivate holy dependence on God for everything in our lives, looking forward to all God wants to do.

Learn to offer a sacrifice of worship, however we are feeling!

'Now the worship is over, let the service begin' (Bishop Michael Marshall, closing a service)

© Parish Pump



God will help Ukraine to 'destroy evil'

The Primate of the independent Orthodox Church of Ukraine, Metropolitan Epiphany (Dumenko) has praised the dignity and "self-sacrificing love" shown by Ukrainian soldiers. He said that God would help the country to "destroy evil".

He said: "We are fighting for fully understandable fundamental values: for our independence and territorial integrity, which the whole world has recognised for 30 years.

The Russian invaders constantly invent delusional, incomprehensible excuses for their attack. But these will not help them, since evil is always overcome and punished."

The Evangelical Baptist Union of Ukraine has urged its congregations to pray for "the spread of God's light in all spheres of social life."

Meanwhile, a former President of the Russian Union of Evangelical Christians-Baptists, Yuri Sipko, has fled to Germany to escape arrest in Russia. He said: "A criminal case has been opened against me – they are looking for me to put me in prison because I've spoken the truth that Russia waged war on Ukraine. People are dying and everything is being destroyed. It's criminal, and they should not be doing this... I think everybody should be speaking out against it."

£9.4 million approved for additional curate posts

The Church of England is going to spend more money on curates.

Funding to the tune of £9.4 million has been approved to support dioceses with the costs of nearly 70 additional stipendiary curacy posts across the Church of England.

The grant, approved by the Strategic Mission and Ministry Investment Board (SMMIB), will support 68.5 additional stipendiary curacy posts for deacons ordained this year.

The funds have been made to ensure that there is no shortfall in the number of available stipendiary curacy posts. A further £8.4 million has been approved by the Board for additional curacies in 2024.

The Revd Helen Fraser, Head of Vocations and Deputy Director of the Ministry Development Team for the Church of England, said "Once again I am delighted that dioceses will receive this support in their ongoing provision of excellent training in curacy."

Group to meet ahead of November Synod

A group drawn from across different traditions within the Church has recently met, as part of ongoing work in the Living in Love and Faith process.

This is ahead of the November General Synod, which will once again consider proposals to enable same-sex couples to come to church following a civil marriage or civil partnership for prayers of dedication, thanksgiving and for God's blessing on the two people.

The group was created at the invitation of the Co-Chairs of the Living in Love and Faith Steering Group, Bishop Sarah Mullally and Bishop Philip Mounstephen. It brings together a wealth of knowledge from prior involvement in the LLF process, as well as a range of lived experiences.

The group was given an update on the ongoing work on pastoral guidance and pastoral assurance in relation to the Prayers of Love and Faith, and members were asked to provide their insights and reflections. These will be fed into discussions at meetings in the autumn of the College and House of Bishops, ahead of the November Synod.

Contd on page 13

The Bishop of London, Sarah Mullally, said: "The House and the College of Bishops have a real desire to create a loving, generous, ecclesial, and pastoral space, despite deeply held differences of opinion, in which we can share our ministry and implement the motion agreed by the Synod in February.

"There is a desire to joyfully offer a pastoral response to loving, faithful and long-term same sex relationships. There is at the same time no intention of changing the doctrine of marriage as expressed in the canons and the authorised liturgy of the Church of England.

Recommendations for collaboration between dioceses

The Church of England's Dioceses Commission has shared the themes which emerged from a recent consultation looking at bishops and their ministries.

It is part of a series of 'listening exercises' exploring how the Church of England can best serve the nation in the 2020s and beyond, and also make best use of resources.

Recommendations included suggestions for new collaborations between dioceses in areas such as Net Zero, Racial Justice, Ministry Training and Education, either on a regional level or between a number of dioceses.

The consultation also considered how dioceses might cooperate to use resources better, as well as how the ministry of suffragan and area bishops can best be delivered. There will not be any centrally led structural changes to dioceses, or combinations of dioceses, as a result of the consultation.

Public opinion and a 'prophetic' voice - Bishop Nick responds to newspaper survey

The Church has a duty to challenge popular culture but also to listen and be challenged by it, the Bishop of Leeds Nick Baines, has said.

He was speaking as a recent survey in *The Times* newspaper highlighted views among some clergy on a range of questions. The findings were based on replies by clergy who responded to a list of email questions this past summer.

Bishop Nick said it highlighted the challenge the Church has faced in every generation in seeking both to listen to public opinion but also being a "prophetic" voice.

"The Church is the Church, and, as such, not a club, he said. "It has a distinct vocation that does not include seeking popularity. As God's Church, it is made up of people who love God, His world and its people. Worship, love, and justice lie at the heart of its vocation.

"This means that the Church – in every generation – has to live with the tension of being prophetic (challenging the way the world is) whilst listening to the challenge the world brings to it.

"'Repentance' means being open to changing our mind in order that society should encounter both love and justice. And this means sometimes going against the flow of popular culture, however uncomfortable that might be.

"What this survey seems to show is that clergy aren't detached in an ivory tower, but really wrestling – thoughtfully and prayerfully - with the kinds of questions our society is also addressing. This is how it has always been and should be.

"Evidently, the Church hasn't always got it right, but cannot escape the demands of its calling to be faithful to God in loving His world."

Filling libraries in China with Bible books

Author: Simon Bartz, 13 September 2023

Ding Yunying felt called to the ministry after her father and father-in-law, both loving people whom she respected, died within a month of one another.

Ding was inconsolable until a friend invited her to a local church where she found peace and joy through Jesus. She was baptised that same year and felt called to ministry. But there was a hurdle to overcome, something that required much prayer.

'I was not confident in preaching the gospel and shepherding the believers in my church because I was not equipped. There were hardly any resources to help me fully understand the Scriptures,' she says.

Ding felt led to a place on a lay preaching course at Shaanxi Bible School in northwest China. Here her prayers were answered. The library was brimming with Bible reference books that Bible Society supporters helped provide.

'The materials in the library are very valuable to us. We are seeing them for the first time in our life!' she says.

Ding is now building up her knowledge of the Bible, and her confidence in sharing it with others.

'Your loving contribution of the Bible resources has given us an opportunity to learn much. I am better equipped not only for ministry but for personal growth too,' she says.

'The best way to thank you is to share the gospel and spread the Christian love to more people in China and understand more deeply that we have a true God whom we will serve with full commitment and dedication.' Thanks to the regular giving of Bible Society supporters, we are able to partner with theological seminaries and Bible Schools in China on a long-term basis. This means their libraries are stocked with the Bible reference books they need to equip pastors, lay preachers and teachers.

Let's pray for China

Lay preachers are crucial in China as there is only one ordained minister on average for every 6,700 Christians. Pray that more Christians in China will feel confident to enter the mission field, knowing they have the full prayerful backing of Bible Society supporters.

Thank God for the success of Bible Society's partnerships with Bible colleges in China. Pray for the many projects we are currently engaged in to supply even more resources.

Pray for a stable relationship between Bible mission in China and the authorities. Pray that any obstacles to our work will be overcome.

To share or read more prayers for China please visit our [China Prayer Tree](#).

Ding's story first appeared in our Bible a Month prayer letter and was taken from content provided by United Bible Societies-China Partnership. If you want to support lay preachers and other Christians in China on a regular basis please [join Bible a Month](#).



Many Bible students in China rely on Scripture reference books that are provided thanks to the generosity of Bible Society supporters. Photo credit: Andrea Rhodes/Bible Society

Editor: Lester Amann considers how the Bible Society was inspired to begin its work.

Bibles for all

Think for a moment about something you really want. How much would you spend to buy it? How far would you go to get it?

Young Mary knew what she wanted. It took years before she could afford it. She was ready to walk 25 miles over mountainous terrain to get it. Mary just wanted a Bible.

Mary Jones lived in a small village in Wales at the end of the 18th century. From an early age, Mary loved to hear stories from the Bible. Every Sunday she attended her local chapel and enjoyed listening to people reading from the Scriptures.

When Mary was only nine years old, she decided on the most important thing in her life. She wanted to read from her own Bible. Unfortunately, Bibles were hard to come by. They were expensive and Mary's parents couldn't afford to buy one. So, Mary decided to do odd jobs for people and earn enough money to buy a Bible.

Six years later, Mary had saved enough money for her special book. Although the nearest shop which sold Bibles was in Bala, 25 miles away, undaunted she set out on her long journey. In Bala, she discovered that the book shop had sold out of all the Bibles! We can only imagine how upset and disappointed she was.

When the bookseller, Thomas Charles, heard about her long walk and that she would return home empty handed, he gave her his Bible. Later, Thomas Charles wondered if there were other children (and adults) around the country who wanted a Bible but had problems getting one.

Soon after Mary's visit, Thomas Charles went to London. Here, he met influential people including William Wilberforce and shared with them the story of Mary Jones. From this meeting came a response to Mary's situation. On 7th March 1804 the *British and Foreign Bible Society* was formed. Its purpose was to provide Bibles throughout the world, in a language people could understand and at a price they could afford.

After this, other national societies were created and in 1946 the *United Bible Societies* was established to co-ordinate the work worldwide. Today, there are over 100 Bible Societies, working in nearly 200 countries. While they are busy with translation, production and distribution programmes, there are still countless numbers of people who do not have the Scriptures.

If we own a Bible, let's give thanks we have God's Word in our hands and, where possible, support a Bible Society with their valuable work.



Miscellaneous thoughts on daily life...

One thing all nations have in common is the ability to see each other's faults. - *Anon*

Over the centuries, people seem to have improved everything - except people. - *Anon*

In giving until it hurts, some people are extremely sensitive to pain. - *Anon*

Monday morning: when we look back wistfully on the good old days - Saturday and Sunday. - *Anon*

Don't let the littleness in others bring out the littleness in you. - *Anon*

A clear conscience makes a soft pillow. - *Anon*

Some people are born great, some achieve greatness, and some just grate. - *Anon*

Editor: The Revd Dr Jo White continues her series on finding faith in the fabric of our church buildings.

Reflecting faith: Seating in churches

In many 'old' churches and cathedrals today the original wooden seats or pews have been completely removed. They have been replaced by moveable chairs, to enable the space to become very flexible. In this way concerts and exhibitions can more easily take place.

But where does the priest or worship leader sit?

Often there will be a special chair or 'stall' set aside for them. In older churches, you may find as many as three.

The first is a 'prayer stall' between the choir stalls and the nave. From here the priest will conduct the majority of the first section of the Sunday service, and during the week will use this stall for their morning and evening public office.

There is likely to be also a chair for them in the sanctuary, and in older church buildings you will see in the chancel area some seats (sedilia) set into the wall. Depending on the size of the original parish, these vary from being a single plain seat for the priest alone to something quite ornate: seating up to four people. They even come stepped, so that the people are sitting at different heights.

In medieval times, during Mass, the priest was the celebrant, the deacon read the Gospel and the sub-deacon read the Epistle. They would be seated in the sedilia while the Creed and Gloria were being sung, giving them a time of rest during a long ceremony.

Where the seats are at different heights, the priest would have sat on the highest one, nearest the altar. Later when Chantry endowments provided some churches with several clergy in full orders, the seats were all made at one level. Where there are four seats, the last would have been for the clerk.

In many churches nowadays, you have to look very carefully for these seats, as over time they have been rearranged, and sometimes even the floor around them has been raised so they no longer look like seats.

More modern churches also need somewhere for the priests and deacons to sit, and often you will find very fine chairs placed near the altar for them.

This month: What happens when the bishop comes to your church? Where does s/he sit? How do you know? What does the formality or informality of these chairs say about the way your church thinks about these roles?

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PRAYERS, PROSE & POEMS

Stewardship

Lord Jesus, you teach us that it more blessed to give than receive. Make us worthy stewards of our time, our talents and our earthly possessions. Grant that we may not waste our opportunities to learn and that our time here on earth may be spent profitably—ready to make sacrifices even if this disrupts our own plans. As we discover the gifts you have given us Lord, show us ways of developing them that they may be used for the benefit of the community and not just hidden away and ignored. Increase in us the desire to give what we can of our love, our compassion and our help. This we ask for Jesus' sake.

Amen

Our father ...
Each one, as a good manager of God's different gifts, must use for the good of others the special gift he has received from God. 1 Peter 4:10

Taken from Prayers for Everyday Use by Josephine and Christopher Bunch

Thanksgiving for Creation

We thank you, O Lord, for what we see of your creation.
We see the earth and the sky and the light which was separated from the darkness.
We see the firmament of heaven and the vast expanse of the universe.
We see the lights of heaven aglow, the sun by day, the moon and stars by night.
We see the beauty of the waters gathered up in vast oceans, and the dry land giving birth to grass and trees.
We see man made in your image, thus possessing intelligence and ruling over all unintelligent life.
And as we see these things, we see also that they are very good, and give you thanks.

Adapted from St Augustine

All creation bless the Lord; and you, angels of the Lord, praise and glorify the Lord.

Sun and moon, bless the Lord;
and you, night and day, bless the Lord,
and you, light and darkness, bless the Lord.

Praise the Lord all the earth.
Birds of the air, bless the Lord,
all creatures of the sea, bless the Lord.

Fire and hail, bless the Lord. Snow and frost,
bless the Lord,
mountains and hills, bless the Lord.

Praised be Christ, he is our hope,
he is the joy of our hearts.
Compassionate and gracious is our God.

The Lord opens up a way, and leads us on paths of life, the earth is full of God's love.

The glory of the Lord fills the earth.
Let all peoples bless God's name,
Let everything that breathes bless the Lord.

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Creator God,
you give seed for us to sow, and bread for us to eat;
make us thankful for what we have received and generous in supplying the needs of others so all the world may give you thanks and glory, through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

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Exmoor Churches

by Stuart Cole

This August, we went on a family holiday to Exmoor. In the past we have always visited the western side of Exmoor as I have several relatives that lived in the area. This time we stayed in Dulverton just within the south eastern corner of Exmoor. My memory of visiting Exmoor as a child in the 1960s was my father driving us and my aunt (who did not drive) down narrowing and ever winding roads. My Aunt liked to visit churches and would often have a number in mind for when we visited. As a boy at primary school churches were not high on my list to visit, but I already liked the moors, and to visit a church was a chance to go over the moors. Later when I could read a map, I would set the route and navigate him down ever winding narrow roads with sheer drops on one side and if possible, plenty of fords and hairpin bends.

Two churches stuck in my memory. Those at Culbone and Stoke Pero. We had visited Culbone with probably in the mid 1960s. It is only accessible by footpath from a toll road. It was hot and plagued with midges. On this (next) visit we used the coast path which did not have any midges but was an extremely hilly 1 ½ miles from Porlock. Culbone describes itself as the smallest complete parish church in England. It is hidden in a tree lined combe and is about a mile away from any form of road and is on the ancient footpath from Porlock to Lynmouth. It is thought that celtic missionaries went from Wales and Ireland to this part of north Somerset in the sixth century. Among those that visited was St Beuno who is now the patron saint of Culbone. Initially it was a wooden built Saxon church, but the Normans rebuilt in stone. It has had minor alterations since, a bell in the early 1300s, a screen in the early 1400s, a new roof in the 1500s and two more bells in the 1600s and lastly a spire in 1810. Despite all these changes it is still only 35 feet long, 13 feet wide with two foot thick walls. It seats no more than 30 people with services at least once per month and on festivals.



Above: Culbone church

Because it is so remote the Culbone area has been used for outcasts. In 1265 a group that had been convicted for offences against ecclesiastical land civil laws were banished to the parish. They were left there without food or shelter, and how they fared is not known. A hundred years later Culbone became a prison colony until 1385, and by 1544 a leper settlement with 45 sent there and abandoned. The lepers were compelled to keep away from others and to live in the woods eventually dying out in 1622. There is a leper squint in the north nave wall to enable them to watch the service from outside. In 1720, 38 prisoners of war that had been fighting for the French in India were sent to Culbone to work as bark strippers (for leather tanning) and charcoal burners. Their community died out in 1850.

Stoke Pero is huge compared to Culbone. It is the highest church on Exmoor and dates from the early 1200s with rectors recorded since 1242 although the last one to live in the parish was in 1700s. It is not dedicated to any saint but there is an inscription to St Barbara on one of the bells. The current church was largely rebuilt and enlarged by Sir Thomas Ackland in 1897. It still retains the medieval tower and porch, and many of the walls have no foundations. The hero of the rebuild



Above: Stoke Pero church

was a donkey called Zulu that walked from Porlock to the church twice a day carrying the roof timbers. His portrait is hanging in the church.

In the early 1800s, the rector complained to his bishop that he had to ride 5 miles to Stoke Pero on horseback from Porlock where the congregation seldom was more than 10 to 15 and often in severe weather none at all. This is not surprising as there has only ever been one farm near the church and in 1881 only 49 parishioners. In one year, the rector made a contribution himself of £3 to the annual expenses of the church of £5. Stoke Pero might not be the most remote church, but it was not until the 1950s that a tarmac road was built to it. The day we walked there was extremely hot. Like Culbone the area around is very hilly all adding to the remoteness. We were there for about an hour, and only saw one cyclist go past.

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Dear friends,

We have been celebrating Creationtide in church for the last few Sundays. Creationtide, or the Season of Creation is the period in the annual church calendar, from 1st September to 4th October, dedicated to God as Creator and Sustainer of all life. According to my research online, the observance of Creationtide began in 1989 when the Eastern Orthodox Ecumenical Patriarch Dimitrios the First proclaimed a day of prayer for the environment. The issue features several articles on God's creation and Harvest time. Bob Cranham writes on the **Café church** about unnecessary waste and the little ways we as individuals can help. Café church on 8th September will be looking at **'Waste not, want not'**. The murder mystery evenings with supper and the play **'Never Say Dy'** will be taking place on 13th October in Ockley and 14th October in Capel. Hurry to get your tickets as I believe Capel was nearly sold out a couple of weeks' ago! Capel's Harvest festival will take place on 1st October and Ockley's took place on 24th September.

Our thanks to Helen Berry and her helpers for the harvest festival flowers. Helen and Joy do the Capel church flowers each week together, but with Joy being away, she has currently taken responsibility for the funeral flowers and our Capel harvest festival service on 1st October. Thank you Helen for your dedication and creativity! We hope that Joy is enjoying a much deserved rest on her holiday before she comes back to do the flowers, church coffees, cleaning and the many other jobs she does for us. Where would we be without so many unsung volunteers such as Joy?

Amongst the articles this month, on page 10 Lester Amman examines faithfulness and **'Loyalty'**. There are many examples of loyalty in the bible and he cites several, but also asks us *"What about us? How loyal are we to God? A difficult question, when so much can sway our eyes, our minds, emotions and behaviour in a world that thinks it doesn't need a faithful and loving God to care for them! It's easy to be loyal when times are good, but a different thing when hardships surround us."* Canon Paul Hardingham continues to his year-long series on the Spiritual Disciplines and this month looks at 'Worship'. He points out that "God is actively seeking worshippers (John 4:23) and worship is a response to our experience of God's love. The main words used of worship in the Bible have the sense of *submission* and *service*. They remind us that our lives need to be shaped by worship *on a daily basis*."

With Bible Sunday falling on Sunday 29th October, there are some articles on the **Bible Society**—how it is helping people around the world on page 14 and on page 15 a potted history of how the Society came into being. There is also an advert on page 35 for a **'Family Advent Box'** available from the Bible Society for £12.00.

There is an article on **'Silver Sunday'** which falls on 1st October on page 24. It is the 'national day for older people'. So perhaps this is a good month to consider what churches can do to support their older people. *"Nearly one in five people in England and Wales is aged over 65. The over-70s currently make up around a third of the Church of England, and 40% of Methodist/URC churches."* This leads me on to say that the **PCC have recently been revising our Church Development Plan as part of the 'Parish Needs Process' (please see Bishop Andrew's letter on page 7 for more information)**. The Parish Needs process is designed to help embed the Diocesan vision of 'Transforming Church, transforming lives' in the parish. The three goals of the Diocesan vision are now:-

- 1) Growing Disciples - upward, inward and outward.
- 2) Growing Diversity - increase the number of young, reflecting the diversity of the community which the church serves.
- 3) Growing community - to expand the church community to include children and all parts of the community.

The PCC agreed that it was important to seek the views of the congregation going forward and involve them fully. Hence there will be a special meeting after the 10.30 am service on Sunday 15th October to discuss how we progress. Please do put the date in your diaries!

With my best wishes,

Suzanne

editor@capelandockleychurch.org.uk

BOOK REVIEWS

by Parish Pump



Majesty – reflections on the Life of Christ with Queen Elizabeth II

By Richard Harries, SPCK, £17.99

Published in honour of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, this beautifully illustrated book will be treasured by people all over the world who admired her for the grace and wisdom she demonstrated throughout her reign, and for the faith that she held so dearly.

Each of the paintings in this book, many of them from the Royal Collection, portrays an important episode in the life of Christ – from the joy of the nativity to the mystery and majesty of the resurrection.

With helpful commentary by Bishop Richard Harries, interlaced with inspiring quotations from the Queen's Christmas broadcasts, this is a powerful presentation of the faith that sustained Her Majesty throughout her long and glorious reign.

'For me, the life of Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace, is an inspiration and an anchor in my life. A role-model of reconciliation and forgiveness, he stretched out his hands in love, acceptance and healing.' The Queen's Christmas Broadcast, December 2014

Love Mercy – the twelve steps of forgiveness

By Samuel Wells, Canterbury Press, £6.00

This is a thoughtful exploration of forgiveness and making peace.

It is utterly realistic about the nature and effects of the hurt we inflict both as individuals and societies, and the conditions and work that is needed to bring healing. Sam Wells sees forgiveness as a twelve-step process, beginning

with resolve and culminating in the newness of resurrection.

With deep pastoral wisdom, he reflects on the issues and challenges that touch us all, and he offers a way of living to bring us into reconciliation with ourselves, with others, with creation and with God.

Love Mercy is the sequel to 'Walk Humbly' and the second of three volumes by Samuel Wells that offer a basic introduction to Christian faith and life.

Faithful Exiles – finding hope in a hostile world

By Elliot Clark and Ivan Mesa, 10Publishing, £9.74

Our world is rapidly changing. In the West, Christians increasingly are strangers in a strange land. Biblical values are maligned. Christian ethics are called hateful. How should the church respond?

Is now the time for cultural isolation, political aggression, or something else? What are the options for heaven's exiles living in an earthly Babylon?

More than a simple fight-or-flight response, the authors of *Faithful Exiles* offer us hope when we're far from home. Gleaning courage and insight from biblical characters in both the Old and New Testaments, they consider how God's people through the ages have been faithful in the face of hostility. Their stories inform our worship and preaching but also how we pursue vocation and engage in politics. They show how those with hope beyond this world can be faithful in it.

Nine Day Queen of England – Lady Jane Grey

By Faith Book, 10Publishing, £10.99

Kneeling down on the hard wooden scaffold Jane turned to Feckenham who stood by her. "Shall I say this Psalm?" she faltered. Overcome with emotion ... he simply said, "Yea".

Jane then began to repeat Psalm 51 in English, David's great prayer of contrition. Jane recited all 19 verses "in a most devout manner" and then both she and Feckenham rose to their feet. A deep silence rested over that sad scene, nothing could be heard except for the quiet sobbing of her lady attendants. Hardened soldiers who had witnessed brutality many times before stood without moving.

Lady Jane called out in a clear voice. "Lord, into thy hands I commend my spirit." Then with a stroke, swift, sharp and terrible, Jane's short life was ended. Like the Apostle Paul she had fought a good fight, finished the course and kept the faith. Henceforth there was laid up for her a crown of righteousness – a crown that none could take from her'

Lady Jane Grey has often been called the 'Tudor Pawn' but to see her as one whose life was simply moved around by others is totally inadequate. This is no simplistic life and death of a sixteen-year-old girl. In order to understand the full tragedy and triumph of her life it is vital to grasp the far-reaching political and religious changes that were shaking England at that time.

The Reformation touched the whole population; from palace to university; from emerging town to peasant cottage. Like a complicated jigsaw the pieces fit together giving a picture of a girl with outstanding natural abilities whose strength of character and remarkable faith shine out despite the darkness that often surrounded her.

Better than Halloween – bright alternatives for churches and children

By Nick Harding, CHP, £1

This book will help you to transform 31 October into a fun and meaningful Christian-themed event for children aged 5-11.

It includes: an explanation of the origins of Halloween, and why many Christians choose not to celebrate it; detailed instructions and practical suggestions for planning and running Bright/Light parties; a wealth of supporting resources, such as photocopyable fun sheets, party invitations, sheet music and sources of further advice and guidance; and a free full-colour CD-ROM of all the supporting resources.

My Baptism Book – a child's guide to baptism

By Diana Murrie and Craig Cameron, CHP, £4.99

This book aims to help children understand one of the most important days of a child's life. It is a beautiful personal reminder of this special day and one that a child can return to again and again. It can be used by adults and children together, or in more formal baptism preparation and includes a number of inspiring ideas on ways to use the material creatively. This is an ideal gift for children aged 3+.

Do you have a Book recommendation you could share with the readers of InSpire? If so please send it to: editor@capelandockleychurch.org.uk

Thoughts on our Christian pilgrimage...

Exercise daily - walk with the Lord. - *Anon*

We don't change God's message - His message changes us. - *Anon*

Whatever we part with for God's sake shall be made up to us in kind or kindness. - *Matthew Henry*

Affliction is God's shepherd dog to drive us back to the fold. - *Anon*

God's biggest problem with labourers in His vineyard is absenteeism. - *Anon*

God works in us and with us, not against us or without us. - *John Owen*

God always provides a light through every one of His tunnels. - *Anon*

We are saved not by our deeds but by Christ's sacrifice for our misdeeds. - *Fred Catherwood*.

Necessary evil: one we like so much we refuse to do away with it. - *Anon*

The need of the world is to listen to God. - *Albert Einstein*

A religion that does not begin with repentance is certain to end there – perhaps too late. - *Anon*

If Christians praised God more, the world would doubt Him less. - *C E Jefferson*

The Bible has a great deal to say about suffering and most of it is encouraging. - *A W Tozer*

Some people treat God as they do a lawyer; they go to Him only when they are in trouble. - *Anon*

The wages of sin is death. Repent before payday. - *Anon*

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Junior InSpire

Bible Bite

A short story from the Bible

It can be read in the Bible in Genesis chapters 39:20-41:44

Joseph's brothers had sold him as a slave and he had ended up in Egypt. Then he was wrongly accused and was sent to prison.



Joseph was trusted to look after the other prisoners.

Then Pharaoh's butler and baker were sent to the prison. One night they had strange dreams.



... I made juice from the grapes and gave it to Pharaoh..

.. all the bread in my baskets was eaten by birds.



God knows what your dreams mean - you will be pardoned . . . but you won't.

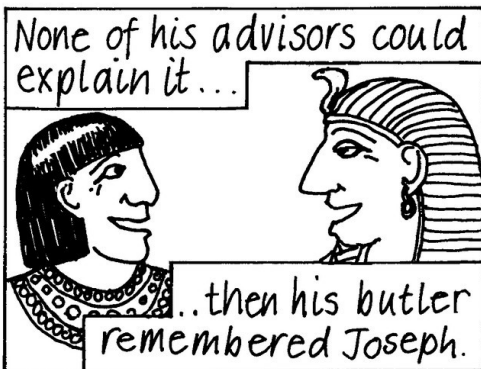


The two men left the prison.

Don't forget me!
But they did

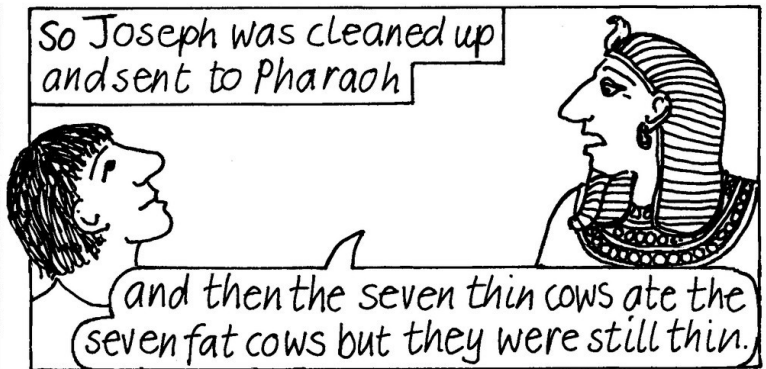


Two years later Pharaoh had a dream



None of his advisors could explain it...

.. then his butler remembered Joseph.

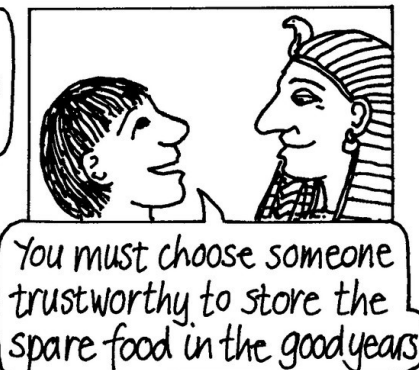


So Joseph was cleaned up and sent to Pharaoh

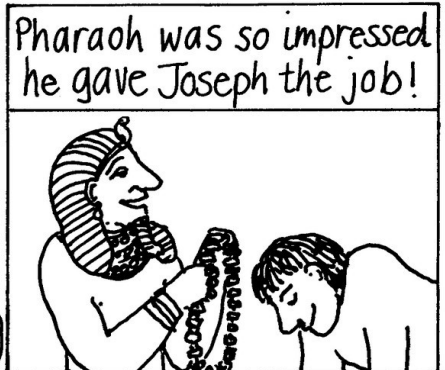
and then the seven thin cows ate the seven fat cows but they were still thin.



God says there will be seven bumper years, then seven years of famine.



You must choose someone trustworthy to store the spare food in the good years



Pharaoh was so impressed he gave Joseph the job!

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

Egypt

grapes

butler

pardoned

advisors

someone

forget

trusted

baker

famine

prison

trustworthy

food

birds

cows

Joseph

thin

seven

juice

Pharaoh

dream

bread

bumper

choose

Helping the older people in church

'Silver Sunday' is 1st October - the 'national day for older people'. So perhaps this is a good month to consider what churches can do to support their older people.

Nearly one in five people in England and Wales is aged over 65. The over-70s currently make up around a third of the Church of England, and 40% of Methodist/URC churches.

But many churches are very focused, for all the best reasons, on children and young people. This means that the needs of the older generations may be neglected, in terms of resources.

Here are some things to consider:

Loneliness is apparently as bad for your health as smoking 15 cigarettes a day.

Yet Age UK has found that half of older people say the television or pets are their main form of company. Half a million older people go at least five or six days a week without seeing or speaking to anyone at all. Churches are in an excellent position to proactively combat this reality.

Churches can help people prepare for end of life.

Sometimes older people neglect to do important practical things, like sorting out their old-age care, finances, or lasting power of attorney. While church leaders can't offer advice, of course, but they could help to point people towards the right professional bodies.

A quarter of our children will live to be 100

Apart from grandparents, church may present the best opportunity for children to discover intergenerational relationships. We can more easily cultivate a positive imagination of a long life when we have models to inspire us.

The Bible presents a wonderful vision of the fruit of later years and longer life. Psalm 92 says: 'In old age they will still bear fruit; healthy and green they will remain, to proclaim, "The Lord is upright; He is my Rock, and in Him there is no unrighteousness."'

With all this in mind, in 2017 a charity, Faith in Later Life, was formed by a group of other Christian charities to reach, serve, and empower older people through the Church.

Faith in Later Life has a network of 'church champions' who ensure that older people are not forgotten in their churches. The 'champions' receive regular training and support – and it is completely free to join. If you are concerned for the older people in your church, then this may be for you.

More info at: <https://faithinlaterlife.org>

We're no longer a Christian country? Don't panic, I say (and I'm a vicar's wife!)

By Anne Atkins

Shock! Horror! Three-quarters of Church of England clergy believe Britain is no longer a Christian country! Well, I'm married to a clergyman. And to this news, I say: thank goodness.

Imagine the alternative: "Clergy desperately cling to the fantasy that most of the country still believes..." despite overwhelming evidence for much of a century that this is not the case.

Parish priests are supposed to be in touch. But let's face it – that isn't the case for some in the hierarchy. We invited our bishop to a farewell for my clergyman husband, Shaun. His Grace looked around the hundred or so there and hardly recognised a face. "Are these from your church?" When I answered in the negative, he said, "How do you know them all?"

Continued opposite

They are known, my Lord, as friends. Very few of whom have ever darkened the door of a church. When Shaun was appointed parson of Parsons Green in the early 1990s, the overwhelming majority of the parish was not Christian. Happily, after a few years, quite a lot of the congregation weren't either – outsiders were finding church worth attending. When we were undergraduates even longer ago, despite the Christian Union being the largest student body, most of the university wasn't either.

Is this because the Church is hopelessly unbusinesslike? When a parish priest moves on, it's become standard practice to have an interregnum of up to two years – to save money. Imagine: the CEO of a major company retires and leaves an intentional vacuum for 24 months. Do you predict share prices will rocket? Similarly, without a priest, congregations decline and don't recover with the new appointment. And one of the predictable consequences of this is that the money going into the collection plate dwindles, too.

Perhaps a business model is inappropriate for a church anyway: money lavished on "think tanks" and "mission statements", dioceses heaving with suits, paid far more than local clergy. Is this what Church is about? An influential member of our congregation complained that the vicar wanted to appoint someone simply because he was prayerful, faithful and keen to serve: "But we aren't looking for someone with his gifts; you couldn't run a business like that!" Maybe not. And maybe Church isn't a business. Maybe God sent him our way.

Or perhaps the Church of England is using the wrong business model? If the Church is like a chain of corner shops, then a vast staff in IT, PR and HR (with almost no one behind the counters) ain't going to sell much, is it? Most parish clergy are now in charge of multiple benefices. How can you live in the parish if you have 15 to run? That's not even an exaggeration – that was the case for a friend of ours.

How can they be a constant, soothing presence in the pub, the school and the community if torn in so many directions? How can they be available night and day, as we were, if paid a quarter of a stipend and having to supplement income in order to live? How can they make toasties for the homeless at their door – as our children grew up doing – if they live, say, 10 miles away? It makes me wonder if the Church of England simply doesn't have the courage to see the business model through.

Take the heartbreaking farce of the last century: the selling-off of the priceless community centres that vicarages were. Archdeacons for decades have argued it's inappropriate to have big houses with clergy expected to be available. It worked for us – and more importantly, our parish: Sunday school in every bedroom, prayer meetings in our sitting room, church parties in the garden.

This has now replaced by "executive" (indisputably middle-class) homes, with privacy. And perhaps that's what modern clergy (if not congregations) need. If so, then go the whole way: remove Church accommodation altogether and pay clergy enough to buy homes and have parity with their flock. Or perhaps this is all irrelevant. Perhaps Christian decline is nothing to do with Church policies.

"Strait is the gate and narrow the way... and few there be that find it." It is very clear indeed that Jesus expected his followers to be a small, persecuted band – a view consolidated in the New Testament. The last thousand years have been an anomaly. In some ways, our Christian history has been benign and beneficial, in others exploitative and shameful. But never expected.

The Church of England has declined before – the decadent morals and celebration of "reason" of the 18th century combined to see a huge drop in Church attendance and allegiance, until the Wesleys and the Evangelical Revival, which changed the face of England. Nor will trying to align Christian doctrine with 21st-century sensibilities – on sex or anything else – necessarily fill our pews. Far more traditional, orthodox churches elsewhere in the world are growing just as ours decline.

Ultimately, does it even matter if the Church of England dies? Personally, I'd be very sad, but if Jesus is who he claimed to be – if not, the sooner debunked, the better – then his true, universal Church can never die. So I'm sorry to disappoint, but this news is no news at all. Even if it were, it really might not matter much.

© The Independent



Animal Welfare Sunday - 1st October

Animals suffer. All over the world.

One way in which you could help them is to support the work of The Anglican Society for the Welfare of Animals (ASWA), which has been working for more than 30 years to promote animal welfare, and to make “Christians and others aware of the need to care for the whole of Creation.”

ASWA introduced the annual service of Animal Welfare Sunday (held on the nearest Sunday to 4th October – St Francis-tide) to encourage churches to include animal welfare concerns in their prayers.

As a spokesman explains, “Care for all God’s creatures is a non-negotiable part of Christian discipleship. Animal issues are theological issues and should be on the churches’ agenda. We believe that God has given us a responsibility towards sentient beings with whom we share God’s world. The Bible teaches us that God has given us ‘dominion’ not ‘domination’ over animals (Genesis 1:26). This means ‘loving care’ not ‘ruthless exploitation’.

“We teach respect for all creation and highlight the ways in which animals suffer because of human neglect, exploitation and cruelty.

“Throughout the Bible, there is a recurring theme that when people are given power by God, it is in the expectation that they will use it to benefit rather than oppress the weak. Furthermore, it is inconceivable that a compassionate Creator would make animals capable of thought and feeling, of knowing comfort and pain, and then be indifferent to the quality of life which they enjoyed.

“When we see images of animal cruelty on television or the newspapers, we ask what kind of person could have inflicted it. Similarly, what kind of God would deem it acceptable?

And so ASWA works, through education and lawful action, to curb the abuse of animals in intensive farming, the food chain, experimentation, diseases associated with animals, the ill treatment of pets and the killing of animals for pleasure. “These all raise ethical questions.”

ASWA co-operates with other organisations, religious and secular, that have similar aims.

More info at: <https://www.aswa.org.uk>

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Turkey-Syria Earthquake Appeal: Christian Aid thanks supporters

Eight months on from the devastating earthquakes that killed at least 58,000 people across southern Turkey and northwest Syria, Christian Aid has thanked the generosity of their supporters for raising over £3.4m to help “tens of thousands of people who lost their homes, livelihoods and loved ones.”

Since the deadly earthquakes on 6th February, the first of which struck in the early hours of the morning when many people were asleep and destroyed thousands of buildings, survivors have faced torrential rains and flooding and then the extreme summer heat affecting much of southern Europe.

In northwest Syria, working through local partners and with funding from several donors, Christian Aid has been able to reach more than 60,000 people badly impacted by the earthquake and another 5,000 people in Southern Turkey.

Prisons Week - 8th to 14th October

Prisoners and their families need help, if they are to really repair and rebuild their lives.

And so it is that Prisons Week has been growing steadily, year by year. It currently has 25 Christian denominations and organisations working together to use “all our skills and gifts to see God’s kingdom come and His peace be established in a place of suffering and weeping.”

Prisons Week is supported by the Church of England, the Catholic Church, the Free Churches Group, and the Salvation Army. It is also supported by the prison ministry organisations including Prison Fellowship, Prison Advice and Care Trust, and Caring for Prison Leavers. Other supporting organisations include Bible Society, the Mothers Union, and Youth for Christ.

The week-long campaign each October aims to provide Christians across the country with information, expertise, resources, and encouragement for this particular, and challenging, area of ministry.

For anyone, or any group, who would like to support Prisons ministry, there are several campaign resources available at their website.

Above all, Prisons Week urges individual Christians to pray for prisoners and their families, that their lives might be rebuilt and renewed.

Prisons Week describes its aim as “relieving the human suffering caused by crime and imprisonment.” For more info, please visit: www.prisonweek.org

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29th October - Bible Sunday as Ukrainians request more Bibles

The war in Ukraine has led to a dramatic rise in the demand for Bibles, as people ask existential questions about life and death.

The Ukrainian Bible Society reports that, in the last 15 months, some 700,000 Bibles have been distributed across the war-torn country. This is a five-fold increase on numbers handed out before the war. In 2020, some 136,767 Bibles were distributed in Ukraine.

Anatoliy Raychynets, deputy general secretary of the Ukrainian Bible Society explains, “The experience of this time is that so many people are looking for Bibles and churches.

“We are doing everything possible to reach all the needs, but more Bibles are needed. With the help of the Word of God, we can bring the love of God to those who need it.”

Bibles are distributed around the country, including to soldiers and civilian communities on the front line, and to those in hospital. “Wherever the Bible is taken, it is very much appreciated,” said Anatoliy.

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Editor: By the Revd Peter Crumpler, a Church of England priest in St Albans, Herts, and a former communications director for the C of E.

Is now a good time to grow old?

"Don't grow old," a parishioner of advanced years warned me some while back. "You won't like it."

Sadly, that dear woman is no longer with us, and I'm a whole lot older than when she offered me that kind advice. But was there wisdom in her words?

It's true that generally people are living longer and in better health than in generations before, but there are increasing challenges for older men and women in our society.

My friend, Maggie Dodd is an 'Anna Chaplain' for older people. She is one of around 300 such chaplains up and down the country. They spiritually support people – of strong, little or no faith – in care homes, sheltered housing or in their own homes.

Maggie has told me how life is becoming harder for older people, and we've swapped notes on what we have both observed.

She told me: "Some of the basic services older people need are becoming more difficult to access. I hear about doctor's surgeries asking for patients to print out their own forms or send photos to or from smartphones. Banks are phasing out high street branches, pushing everyone towards online banking. Many older people feel very uneasy about going online, worried of being scammed out of their savings.

"A trip to the shops is also becoming more complicated. Checkouts in supermarkets are increasingly self-service. Mobility can also be affected as car parks often need an app to be uploaded onto a smartphone to park. In many car parks there is no option to pay by card or cash!"

Plans to remove the ticket offices at train stations will make matters worse for many older would-be rail travellers.

Maggie told me "This gradual marginalisation of people can leave them feeling lonely and isolated. Loneliness can have a huge detrimental effect on health and wellbeing. Prolonged social isolation and loneliness are the equivalent of smoking 15 cigarettes a day."

It's good that many churches run special events and activities for older people, as well as groups for all ages. But is this enough? Christians are called to follow Christ's example and speak out for at risk of being marginalised in our society.

Today, that could be our older brothers and sisters.

© Parish Pump

What would Jesus do?

While waiting in line to check out at a Christian bookstore, a man in front of me asked the clerk about a display of hats with the letters WWJD on them. The clerk explained that WWJD stands for 'What would Jesus do?', and that the idea is to get people to consider this question when making decisions.

The man pondered a moment, then replied, "I don't think He'd pay £17.99 for that hat."

Long wait

We went away for a half-term break but found the service in the local restaurant abysmally slow. My husband was getting really irritated, so I tried to distract him with small talk. "You know," I said, "my friend Christine is getting her baby baptised."

"Really?" my husband snapped. "It was even born when we walked in here."

Editor: The Ven John Barton is intrigued by some modern-day usage of our language.

Those over-the-top words that we use

I'm trying to stop saying the word 'incredible'. It's overused and has become almost meaningless. "We are incredibly grateful"; "I had an incredible meal". As the word really means 'beyond belief or understanding', it can't actually apply in either case.

'Unbelievable' is similarly misused. So is 'fantastic', which is meant to describe something belonging to an imaginary world. So, strictly speaking, a fantastic tennis player can't be a real one.

How about 'amazing'? Count how many times you hear it today. It should be reserved to describe something astonishing, out of this world. If you think about it, if everything is amazing or incredible, then nothing really is. When the exceptional becomes normal or commonplace, nothing is special.

We seem to be struggling to find words to convey something out of the ordinary. Try 'iconic'. Iconic only appeared recently and has been distorted to mean 'historic' or 'traditional' or 'classic'. My dictionary tells me iconic actually means something to do with an icon, which is a depiction of Christ, the Virgin Mary, or a saint.

In fact, most of these over-the-top words, now in everyday use, have a religious association. Originally, they were reserved to communicate otherness, difference, deep respect.

For example, what about 'awesome'? It should mean 'awe' or reverence. It's a take-your-breath-away word. Awe is what Moses felt when he saw a bush on fire, because it didn't actually burn away, and he sensed the presence of God. Awe is something St Peter experienced, when he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, 'Go away from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man!'

If you try to imagine what Moses and Peter actually felt, words like 'unworthiness' and 'fear' might come to mind. They really were experiencing something out of the ordinary, too hot to handle. They were out of their depth. An experience like that stayed with them for life. They had encountered holiness. Now there's a word worth using.

© Parish Pump

Christian Aid Harvest prayer

*The earth is fruitful
may we be generous.*

*The earth is fragile
may we be gentle.*

*The earth is fractured
may we be just.*

*Creating God,
harvest in us joy and generosity
as we together share in thanks
and giving.*



As Halloween approaches...

Have you ever wondered what a Christian is to make of the unseen world of evil and the occult? Where do evil spirits come from, anyway?

The Bible takes the unseen world of evil spirits very seriously indeed. It tells us clearly that evil spirits were once part of the created angelic order (Genesis 6). They were not created as evil beings, for all of God's original creation was good (Genesis 3:1). The Bible relates how a number of angels, headed by Satan, or Lucifer, rebelled against God's authority and fell (Isaiah 14:12-15; Ezekiel 28:11-19).

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

So, what is the world of the occult, then? The word 'occult' comes from the Latin: *occultus*, 'secret', 'hidden', and is our intrusion into the forbidden territory of superstition, fortune telling, magic and spiritism. Its downfall one day is promised us through Jesus. His early ministry established a bridgehead against the evil unseen world: no wonder the hostile, and sometimes violent, reaction of the demons! (Mark 1:23-27; 32-34).

But Jesus had no fear of demons, and neither should you, if you are a Christian. Further, it is important not to become obsessed with the unseen world – don't let it intimidate or fascinate you. Occult films can have deeply disturbing after-effects on people. Avoid them. A Christian has better things to think about.

While the occult world is certainly there, we are wise not to imagine, as some do, that every sin we commit, every bad habit, illness or misfortune we meet is due directly to an attack on us by Satan himself, and that therefore we need to be 'exorcised'. Terrible damage has been done in this regard by Christians who mean well but who are uninformed.

The kingdom of spirits is real, but so too is Christ's authority. Before Christ, the spirits shrink and retreat. Magic spells and charms have no power over the true Christian (provided we do not open ourselves to their influence) for "the One who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world." (1 John 4:4)

If ever you are frightened by anything occult, remember some sound biblical advice: resist the devil, and he will flee from you. (James 4:7). But remember, a Christian has no business dealing in anything occult. All occultism is to be ruthlessly shunned (eg Leviticus 19:31;20:6; 1 Samuel 28; 1 Chronicles 10:13; Isaiah 8:19,20; Acts 19:18-20.)

The demonic world is very real, very powerful, but it is also already doomed and defeated. (Colossians 2:15; Hebrews 2:14,15). Why? Because the death of Jesus Christ has achieved this victory.

So – be confident in Christ, but not complacent in your everyday life. Satan's kingdom is alive and well in this present world, and it will still not admit its defeat at the Cross. The final destruction of all things occult will not come until the return of Christ.

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Those Church Bulletin notes that didn't quite work as intended

The Fasting & Prayer Conference includes meals.

The sermon this morning: 'Jesus Walks on the Water.'

The sermon tonight: 'Searching for Jesus.'

Ladies, don't forget the jumble sale. It's a chance to get rid of those things not worth keeping around the house. Bring your husbands.

Remember in prayer the many who are sick of our community.

Smile at someone who is hard to love. Say 'Hell' to someone who doesn't care much about you.

Don't let worry kill you off - let the Church help.

Miss Charlene Mason sang 'I will not pass this way again,' giving obvious pleasure to the congregation.

At the evening service tonight, the sermon topic will be 'What is Hell?' Come early and listen to our choir practice.

Eight new choir robes are currently needed, due to the addition of several new members and to the deterioration of some older ones.

The senior choir invites any member of the congregation who enjoys sinning to join the choir.

Please join us as we show our support for Amy and Alan in preparing for the girth of their first child.

For those of you who have children and don't know it, we have a nursery downstairs.

© Parish Pump



"Wait a moment, dear, this isn't a tourists'- attraction ratings guide, it's a Health and Safety warning!"



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

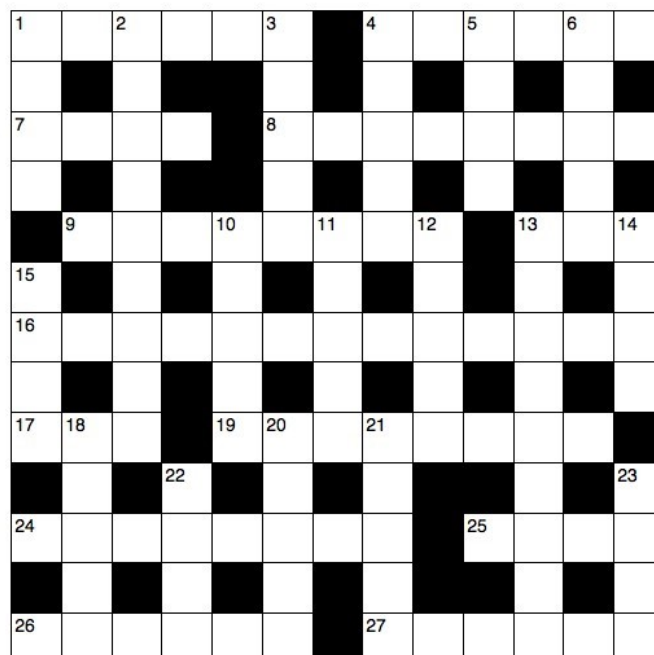
CROSSWORD CLUES

Across

- 1 He must be 'the husband of but one wife and must manage his children and his household well' (1 Timothy 3:12) (6)
- 4 'For we must all — before the judgement seat of Christ' (2 Corinthians 5:10) (6)
- 7 'They reeled and staggered like drunken men; they were at their — end' (Ps 107:27) (4)
- 8 See 19 Across
- 9 It concerned who among the disciples would be the greatest(Luke 9:46) (8)
- 13 Formed by the Jews in Thessalonica to root out Paul and Silas (Acts 17:5) (3)
- 16 'He has sent me to bind up the — ' (Isaiah 61:1) (6-7)
- 17 Moved rapidly on foot (Matthew 28:8) (3)
- 19 and 8 ' — a great company of the — host appeared with the angel' (Luke 2:13) (8,8)
- 24 Hindrance (Romans 14:13) (8)
- 25 Comes between Luke and Acts (4)
- 26 Empower (Acts 4:29) (6)
- 27 'Get these out of here! How dare you turn my Father's house into a — !' (John 2:16) (6)

Down

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



WORDSEARCH

Wordsearch - St Luke

To St Luke, whose feast-day is 18th October, we owe a beautifully written gospel as well as the Book of Acts. He was a Greek physician and faithful travelling companion to St Paul. Under house arrest near the end of his life Paul noted, 'only Luke is with me'. Luke's gospel focuses on the compassion of Christ, and offers us moving parables, such as the Good Samaritan and Prodigal Son. Women figure more prominently in Luke's gospel than in any other: look out for the extended story of the Virgin Birth, and stories of Mary, Elizabeth, and the woman who was a sinner. His gospel also features more poor people, more lepers, more 'sinners', who are all shown to be 'inside' the love of Christ. In Acts, Luke skilfully links sacred and profane history, as subsequent archaeology has shown. He tells of how the early Christians moved away from Jerusalem into the pagan world, and especially on to Rome.



- | | | | | |
|-----------|------------|----------|---------|------------|
| Luke | Paul | Prodigal | Poor | Early |
| Physician | Compassion | Son | Lepers | Christians |
| Companion | Parables | Women | Sacred | Jerusalem |
| House | Good | Virgin | Profane | Rome |
| Arrest | Samaritan | Birth | Pagan | |

Easy Soduko

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

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Medium Soduko

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

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Puzzle Solutions

Easy Sudoku solution

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

Medium Sudoku solution

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

CROSSWORD ANSWERS

ACROSS: 1, Deacon. 4, Appear. 7, Wits. 8, Heavenly. 9, Argument. 13, Mob. 16, Broken-hearted. 17, Ran. 19, Suddenly. 24, Obstacle. 25, John. 26, Enable. 27, Market.

DOWN: 1, Dawn. 2, Afternoon. 3, Nehum. 4, Again. 5, Prey. 6, All to. 10, Users. 11, Ephod. 12, Trace. 13, Metalwork. 14, Body. 15, Eber. 18, Alban. 20, Uncle. 21, Dream. 22, Stab. 23, Gnat.

D	E	A	C	O	N		A	P	P	E	A	R	
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	A		A		L		A				R		A
E	N	A	B	L	E			M	A	R	K	E	T

Junior Inspire WORDSEARCH solution

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a	m	h	e	o	d	e	e	o	o	r	
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k	c	p	j	b	u	t	l	e	r	q	d

WORDSEARCH solution

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

What a great idea for Advent!

Get yours from The Bible Society

<https://www.biblesociety.org.uk/products/pr01321/>

Family Advent Box 2023

The Family Advent Box will make for a FAB Christmas season in your home. It's packed with ideas and everything you need for interactive, memory-making, family fun suitable for all ages. Learn more about Christmas and each other, while engaging in some easy and inexpensive activities.



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- Conversation cards
- Prayer triangles and string
- Dai Woolridge's Christmas children's booklet *Festive Fred Finds the Greatest Gift*
- Activity card



£12.00



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SATURDAY 18TH NOVEMBER 2023 12.00 - 4.00 pm

at Capel's Parish & Memorial Halls, 55 The Street,
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www.capelchristmasfair.co.uk



A charity Fair raising funds for Capel & Ockley Parish churches and
The Motor Neurone Disease Association (MNDA).

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Come and start your Christmas shopping!
Entry: £3.00 (Under 12's go FREE)
Refreshments available throughout the Fair!

- Silent Pool Distillery * Cody's Waffles * The Country Dog Barn * K & M Stained Glass * French Soap Store * Olivia Rose Jewellery * Tracey's Jewellery * Whinny Poo natural plant food * Osborne Books (The Wonder of Books) * Tiffany Budd Art * LavenderLime clothing & accessories * MNDA Christmas cards * Surrey Hills Candle Co * Little Sundry cards * Vestimenta clothing & accessories * Charlie Cha Teas * Bramble Cottage Crafts * Abinger crafts * Helen Moore Faux Fur accessories * Teal Creative * M & M Christmas supplies * Hive & Keeper * Surrey Hills Tinies - infant clothing * Cushions by Shirley * Tropic skincare with Tracey Salmon * Gem Design laser cut woodcraft and much more! * RAFFLE *



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