

St. George's Honesbury

Magazine 50p



June 2021

The Parish of Pontesbury

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QUOTE:

Without God the world would be in a maze without a clue.
- Woodrow Wilson

Contributions for St. George's Magazine should be in by the 15th of the previous month. It may not be possible to include contributions received after this date until the following month.

Send E-mail & attachments to stgsmagazine@googlemail.com
Please post handwritten articles to Ford Place, The Bank, Pontesbury Hill, SY5 0XX.

Website: www.st-george.org.uk

Items for inclusion in the Deanery News to be submitted by 10th of previous month to Alison Bebb - Keepers Cottage, Cruckmeole, Shrewsbury, SY5 8JN Telephone: 01743 860158 email: alisonbebb5@gmail.com



LIFTING UP OUR EYES

I remember one occasion in my late teens, I was walking in the Lake District with a couple of mates from the sixth form. It was the first time any of us had walked in the hills without adult supervision. Adult advice in my household was confined to "be careful" and therefore to be frank, I didn't know what I was doing. Making it up as I went along (as I have done for much of my life since) included putting my favourite cereal (Alpen) into a thermos flask. I anticipated an appetising lunch, but you can guess how congealed the resulting mess proved to be.

On one occasion, we found ourselves walking in the thick mist, barely able to see each other let alone our path. We encountered a group of walkers on the same path but heading in the opposite direction. "Where are you going?" they enquired. "Great Gable," we answered confidently, "where are *you* going?" Rather inevitably, the response was "Great Gable". We let them disappear from sight before turning round.

The Bible has a word for what we did that day: repentance. It has become one of the most unpopular and unfashionable words in the English language. Associated with threats of hellfire and damnation, it is popularly understood to be a joyless injunction, invented by the church, to remove any pleasure from life.

However, repentance literally means 'turn around' and is simply the recognition that if we walk in the wrong direction, we won't get to where we want to go. It is an idea that one finds at the heart of the Baptism service. Parents and Godparents are invited to declare that they turn to Christ and repent of sin. The adults at a Christening are promising to guide the child through the early stages of its life until it is old enough to decide for itself its direction of travel. Grown ups carry children or hold their hands and the child walks where it is led. However, if the adult is heading in the wrong direction, the child is in trouble. Hence, the central promise to go Christ's way.

Turning around can entail swallowing our pride and admitting that we've misread the map. Some of us find this harder than others.

The simple truth is that if we are heading in the wrong direction, at best we are only going to get ever more lost and at worst will walk off a cliff!

You will be pleased to know that once turned around, we did reach the top of Great Gable!

Greg



29th June is St Peter's day ...

Peter

(Matt 26:71-75, John 21:15-18)

By Daphne Kitching

I don't know the man.
I don't know Him.
I don't know Him.

But I did.
From the moment I turned to
Him,
That day by the Sea,
I knew Him,
Knew He was the Lord.

I so wanted to serve Him,
Speak for Him,
Follow Him,
Fish for Him
Live and give my life for Him
No matter what.

He is the Lord
And I let Him down
Again and again and again.
I go on letting Him down.

But Jesus,
Who knows the best and worst
of me,
Who knows how I rush in and
blurt out,
Mix and mess things,
Fail and fall asleep,
Who feels the agony of the de-
nied one,
Understands the agony of the
one who denies.

He is the Lord
And He forgives
Again and again and again.
He goes on forgiving.

Feed my lambs,
Take care of my sheep
Feed my sheep.

Readings and Services for this MONTH

Here are the Sunday Service details, and the readings which you may enjoy at home if you are unable to come into church this month.

Date	Service	Readings
6th June 1st Sunday after Trinity	Holy Communion 10:30 am	Gen 3: 8 – 15 2 Cor. 4: 13 – 5:1 Mark 3: 20 - end
13th June 2nd Sunday after Trinity	Holy Communion 10:30 am	Ezekiel 17: 22 – end 2 Cor.5:6-10 (11 – 13) 14 – 17 Mark 4: 26 - 34
20th June 3rd Sunday after Trinity	Holy Communion 10:30am	Job 38: 1 – 11 2 Cor. 6: 1- 13 Mark 4: 35 - end
27th June 4th Sunday after Trinity	Holy Communion 10.30 am	Psalm 30 2 Cor. 8: 7 – end Mark 5: 21 - end



World Day of Prayer Service
in St George's Church
on Friday 11th June at 2.30 pm.

Everyone is welcome.



Our Church Community

June 21st - a long-awaited Celebration!

Provided the government's roadmap to unlocking remains on track, a special service is planned on Monday June 21st at 7 p.m. at St George's. This is an opportunity for the whole family to come together and welcome Greg and Fran and celebrate the start (albeit four months later) of their ministry. All are welcome. Refreshments will be provided.

Good Neighbours

Are looking for additional volunteers to run errands and visit those living alone. Anyone who thinks they might be interested in joining the current team of 15-20 volunteers who volunteer in Pontesbury and Minsterley should contact Greg.

The Children's Society

Thank you to all of our Children's Society box holders for helping me to collect a total of **£804.00** for the Society. This is an amazing amount raised in this present climate, especially as we have lost six box holders this year, mainly due to bereavement.

You must all feel proud that your contributions are helping the most vulnerable of children, well done.

Thank you once more,

Irene

NEW WEBSITES!

The Stiperstones benefice has a brand new website
<http://stiperstoneschurches.org.uk/>

The deanery now has a brand new website
<https://pontesburydeanery.org/>

St. George's PARISH VISITORS

Would you, or someone you know, appreciate some help or a phone call? Maybe you're feeling lonely, isolated, in need of support and friendship?

We may not be able to visit you at this time, but St. George's Church has a team of friendly people who would love to **phone** you - **if we can help, we will!**



Call in confidence:

Phone **Marion Elliott 01743 792256**

ST. GEORGE'S PRAYER CHAIN is a small group of people who believe that prayer can make a difference. Each person within the group offers daily prayer for anyone who asks for prayer.

If you yourself or someone you know needs special prayer for any reason, please contact **Mary Worrall 01743 791069**.

All information given is given in confidence.
A name is enough if that is all you wish to give.



The **Food Hub** and the **Shrewsbury Food Bank** are always grateful to receive monetary donations. Follow them on Facebook or look on the website for details of how you can help this local cause.



<https://www.barnabascommunityprojects.org/donations> <https://www.shrewsburyfoodhub.org.uk/>



Correction.

In last month's Magazine, in my tribute to dear Bob Webb, my memory bank suffered a blip when I related an anecdote about a trip to Israel, mistakenly relating it to Bob and Cynthia. In actual fact, they didn't take part in the Israel trip so I give my sincere apologies for my memory lapse.

Val

The Bishop's visit, Friday 21st May

Bishop Richard and his wife came from Hereford to visit St. George's as part of his Prayer Pilgrimage, visiting churches in the diocese.
He came to encourage us in our outreach as Christians within our local community.





*Photos taken by Robert Pither
—of Bishop Richard and of our socially-distanced
and masked gathering in church, the Bishop behind
the font in the centre.*

SOME MISCELLANEOUS QUOTES:

Nothing is ever lost by courtesy. It is the cheapest of pleasures; costs nothing and conveys much. - *Erastus Wiman*

Salvation is free, but discipleship costs everything we have.
- *Billy Graham*

The Christian's chief occupational hazards are depression and discouragement. - *John R W Stott*

Job cursed the day he was born. Most babies can't even speak till they are at least 18 months old. - *Anon*

Deanery of Pontesbury

DEANERY NEWS

Rural Dean: **The Revd Bill Rowell**

telephone: 01938 552064 • email: wkowell@btinternet.com

Thought for the Month from Mark Hackney

Writing this in the week of Ascension I am drawn towards Matthew 28: 19 & 20 where Jesus gives His disciples their final instructions before leaving them. "Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely, I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

Part of my role as Intergenerational Missioner is to make disciples, which for me means growing. On Tuesday evenings 25 of us meet together on zoom to grow as disciples, and we are growing towards becoming a group of disciples that will grow new disciples. The great thing is that we do this together, helping each other and being a support to one another in the process.

In September we are aiming to run two Alpha courses, both on the same day, which we are praying will be in person in the daytime and on zoom in the evening.

On Tuesdays we are encouraging each other to be praying for 3 people that we know and invite them to Alpha. I would like to extend that invitation out to everyone, either to join us for the Alpha course or start praying for 3 people you can invite to Alpha as well. We see this as an amazing opportunity for us all to 'Go, and make new disciples'.

At the moment we are doing the "Discipleship Explored" course but on 8th June we will be starting something new, so why not join us all on Tuesdays as we continue to grow as disciples and get ready for the Alpha course. Just contact me on 07593817684 and I will give you more details.

God Bless
Mark Hackney



Bruce and Barbara Norsworthy
invite you to come and have tea or coffee
in their garden

Saturday 19th June
10.00 – 3.00pm

at **The Gables**
on the corner of The Grove/ Horsebridge Road, Minsterley

Cake stall, plants and raffle.

Proceeds to Holy Trinity Church, Minsterley

(We still need to raise money to complete the repairs on the building!)



Caring for God's Acre in Minsterley

June 7th – 13th

Our friends in Minsterley have been invited to take part in a wildlife survey
of their churchyard between these dates.

Identification charts will be available.

You are welcome to come along between 10am and 4.30pm on any of
these days and see what you can find.



QUOTE: *The ability to speak several languages
is an asset, but to be able to hold your tongue
in one language is priceless.* - Anon

Looking at GOD

Canon Paul Hardingham considers our priorities in life.

The Parable of the Great Banquet

One thing that we've probably missed over the past year is parties. Well, this month should enable us to party again! Lots of Jesus' parables focus on parties, as they are a picture of the joy, hope and life of the kingdom of God. The parable of the Great Banquet (Luke 14: 15-24) challenges us not to miss out on this.

In Jesus' day, when people accepted an *invitation* to a banquet, they were only told the actual time on the day: '*Come, for everything is now ready*' (17). Jesus' invites each one of us to share in the life of His kingdom.

However, the guests made *excuses* for not coming. At the time, this would have been extremely insulting to the host. They said: '*I have just bought a field; I must try out my new team of oxen; I have just got married*' (18-20). These are all good things in themselves, however they reveal their priorities were elsewhere.

We too can be pre-occupied with our own routines of work, family, retirement, holidays, friends, home, social media, that we forget God's priorities for our lives. Jesus calls for total commitment from His disciples. *What priority in my life is holding me back from accepting His invitation?*

How did the host *respond*? He ordered His servants to '*Go out quickly into the streets and alleys of the town and bring in the poor, the crippled, the blind and the lame.*' (21). He invited the unexpected and unacceptable people to His banquet. Jesus makes the point that *God's kingdom is open to all!* Thinking about our family, friends, colleagues and neighbours, even if they're not like us or show little interest in God: *Are we willing to offer them God's invitation to share His love and life?*



Canon Paul Hardingham considers the value of encouraging others.

Barnabas the Encourager

This month (on June 11th) we remember the life of St Barnabas. His real name was Joseph, a wealthy Levite from Cyprus. However, he is known by his nickname '*Son of Encouragement*' (Acts 4:36). Throughout Acts we see him encouraging others in different ways.

He was an example of *generous giving* (Acts 4:36-7), when he sold property and offered the money to the church for those in need. In the midst of a caring and sharing community, he was singled out as a symbol of generosity. Are we prepared to be generous to those in need around us?

He later *encouraged a new Christian* in the person of Paul (Acts 9:27). After Paul's conversion and aware of his reputation, Barnabas came alongside him and brought him into the fellowship of the church. Are we ready to help those who are new in the faith to find a place in our church?

Finally, Barnabas was sent to the church in Antioch where he '*saw the evidence of the grace of God*' (Acts 11:23). It was a church which brought Jewish and Gentile believers together for the first time. Like Barnabas, do we rejoice when we see God doing new things in people's lives? Are we also willing to embrace these things and facilitate change?

Encouragement is one of the spiritual gifts in the New Testament (Romans 12:8). It can be greatly undervalued, but it is still crucial in growing the church. Like Barnabas, will we nurture gifting; strengthen the doubters and those tempted to give up; show generosity to God's people and beyond and will we strengthen people to move beyond their own comfort zones to help those in need?

Be prepared to ask the following questions: '*Are there people alongside us who will encourage us?*' and '*How can we be encouragers to others?*'

(See Prayer on page 18 and also Give a Complement on page 28)

QUOTE: The contented man is never poor,
the discontented never rich. - George Eliot



The Revd Dr Jo White continues her *Reflected Faith* series with what it can really mean to 'be still.'

Reflected Faith: Sit and be Still

How do you 'sit' in church? I'm a wriggle and change my position on the seat often. I cross one leg over the other, then swap them over, stretch them out, then cross them at the ankles. I do the same with my arms. I lean one way and then the other.

In other words, 'I'm a fidget.' But having been absent from a church building for so long, I wanted to think this month about simply *sitting and being still* before the Lord.

I'm well aware we've done little else this last 18 months – but if you manage to get into a church building, for whatever reason I'd like to encourage us all just to sit still and breathe in the place. To relish being 'back'!

To sit 'heavily' in that spot. To feel the solidity of the surface you are sitting on. Lean into it. Feel how it supports you. Feel each part of your body where it is touching the chair or pew.

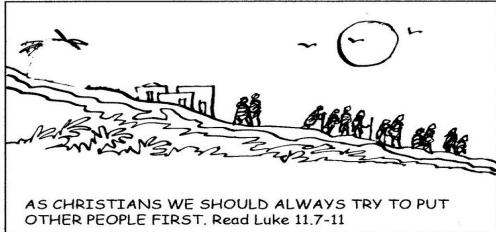
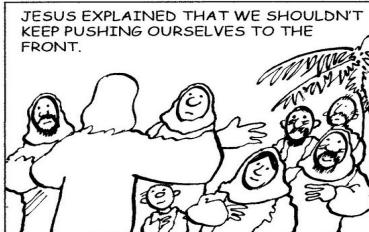
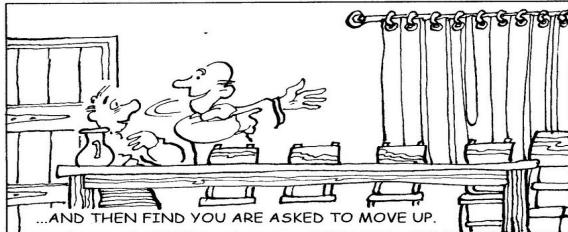
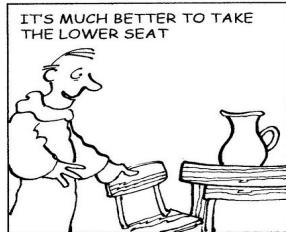
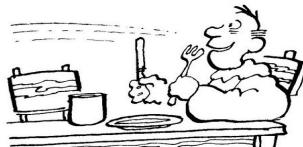
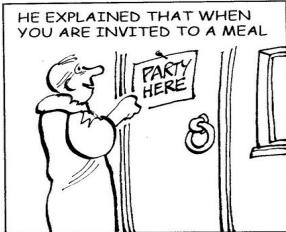
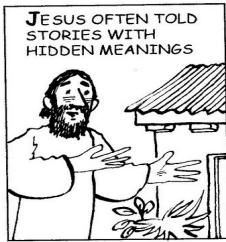
Look around you at all the distinctive seating set aside for the different participants of the church: the choir, the worship leader, a deacon or curate, the priest and so on.

In an Anglican church there will be a chair especially dedicated for the use of the Bishop.

However plain or fancy each piece of furniture is within your building, they all have the same purpose. To hold the person and keep them safe.

This month:

As you sit in the church building – or at home if you are not able to do so – think of all those people in the Bible stories who sat with Jesus. The number of times He taught in the Temple or in a synagogue, or to crowds gathered on a hill. Recall the Last Supper and His friends gathered sitting with Him to eat and share the Passover meal, and then recall the meal with the men from the Emmaus Road. So many meal times with the bold and the weak, the saints and the sinners. With you and me.



Tony Horsfall is thankful for God's constant presence.

Wake up!

Remember the story of Jacob, and how God met him in a dream when he was sleeping on the desert floor with a rock for his pillow? The story in Genesis 28 says this: 'When Jacob awoke from his sleep, he thought, "Surely the Lord is in this place, and I was not aware of it."

I wonder what place you find yourself in today, and if you are aware of God's presence with you there?

It may be a geographical place, the place where you live or work. That may be a beautiful place to be, or it may be a very hard place to be, and you would much prefer to be somewhere else. Either way, God is with you there, for He is everywhere, and there is no place where He is not.

It may be an emotional place, as when we say, 'I'm not in a good place right now'. How are you feeling today – up or down? Again, whatever mood you are in, God is with you for He knows us through and through. Having become human, He understands all our fluctuating emotions. He can comfort us right where we are.

It may be a phase of life that you are passing through, a stage on life's journey or a transition as you move from one situation to another. You may be passing through the valley of grief and loneliness, or anxiously waiting for news of a loved one who is ill. No matter where you are, you are not alone, for God is with you whether you can feel His presence or not.

What is needed is for us to become more aware of God's surrounding presence, to wake up to His closeness as did Jacob.

Lord, wake me up to your abiding presence, even this day.



The story behind the HYMN: 'Lord, for the years'

*Lord, for the years your love has kept and guided,
urged and inspired us, cheered us on our way,
sought us and saved us, pardoned and provided:
Lord for the years, we bring our thanks today.*

*Lord, for that word, the word of life which fires us,
speaks to our hearts and sets our souls ablaze,
teaches and trains, rebukes us and inspires us:
Lord of the word, receive your people's praise.*

**Lord, for our hopes, the dreams of all our living,
Christ and his kingdom one united aim;
Rulers and peoples bound in high thanksgiving,
Lord of our hopes, our trust is in your Name. ...*

By Timothy Dudley Smith

This well-loved hymn was written in 1967 by the Revd Timothy Dudley Smith, who later became Bishop of Thetford. He later confessed: "I wrote it on a train when I was very pressed for time. I'm thankful if something I write gets picked up, but I suspect anyone who does something in a rush later regrets that they didn't find time to apply the sandpaper a bit more!"

Dudley Smith had been asked to write a hymn for the centenary service of the Children's Special Service Mission, now Scripture Union, in St Paul's Cathedral. His commission was to write words that could be fitted to Jean Sibelius's *Finlandia*, as it was to be accompanied by an orchestra with this tune in their repertoire. And so – 'Lord for the years' was written.

Dudley Smith need not have worried about lack of time – his lyrics were a 'hit' in the cathedral on the day, and went on to become so well-loved that George Carey chose the hymn to be sung at his consecration as Bishop of Bath and Wells, and then again later, in 1991, or his consecration as Archbishop in Canterbury Cathedral.

The hymn continued to be widely sung and loved, until in 2002

Timothy Dudley Smith was asked to write an extra verse for it so that it could even be sung around the time of the Queen's Golden Jubilee.

Many of the words in the hymn are true for the Queen herself, as she celebrates her 95th birthday this month. She does indeed thank God 'for the years your love has kept and guided, urged and inspired us, cheered us on our way'...

And so indeed the 'extra' verse added for the Queen has also held true:

*Lord for our hopes, the dreams of all our living,
Christ and his kingdom one united aim,
Rulers and peoples bound in high thanksgiving,
Lord of our hopes, our trust is in your Name.*

This is adapted from an article by Matt Jolley of the London Institute for Contemporary Christianity.

First, you simply have to be willing to listen

... the sheep listen to his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. ...he goes on ahead of them, and his sheep follow him because they know his voice. (John 10:3-4)

Therefore, everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. (Matthew 7:27)

"Bad listeners do not make good disciples. "So said the well-known Christian writer John Stott, whose centenary we celebrate this year. And Stott's 'listening ear' still remains at the heart of what disciples are called upon to do, today.

We listen to God because God speaks, and He speaks to us primarily through Scripture. Through the Spirit's animation, these ancient scrolls remain living and active, addressing our contemporary world. Listening to this living Word is to receive life itself; to ignore it leads to death.

Such high stakes explain why our Bibles are packed with urgent

reminders and stark warnings to *listen to what God is saying*. If we turn away from His Word, our hearts, speech, and actions follow.

But if we *listen*, we discover nothing less than Christ's riches imbuing our everyday lives. His words will inform our minds, reform our hearts, and transform our actions. That's why for Hebrew writers, hearing God was inseparable from obeying what He said – to hear and NOT obey is as ludicrous as building a house on a beach in hurricane season.

So, what does it look like for us to be obedient hearers of the Word?

First, we listen to God *for* our frontlines, prayerfully carrying our workplaces, our families, and our streets with us to Scripture, seeking wisdom for how to live gospel-soaked lives in ordinary places. As we read the text, and let it read us, the way we go about our day – from replying to an email to greeting a shop assistant – should look different as a result.

Then, we listen to God *on* our frontlines, sensitive to where the Good Shepherd is at work in the everyday. Where might His voice lead us if we expected to hear Him not just in our morning quiet time, but on the bus, in the pub garden, at the supermarket? What might He say to us, and through us, for the places we go and the people we meet, if we'd only make time to pause, and hear? What starts as a gentle whisper to us could outwork *shalom* through us to demonstrate the kingdom to those around us.

Because, as Stott reminds us, often being the hands and feet of Jesus first requires us to simply use our ears.

Prayer for Encouragement in June by Daphne Kitching

Father At this time of year, we remember Barnabas, a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and faith, who encouraged people to stay true to you - and others to trust you for the first time.

Lord, we have gone through difficult days. The pandemic has taught us that we are not in control. We don't know what each new day might bring. As we move into June and the hope of more normality after the restrictions of Lockdown, we too need encouragement.

Help us to have courage to step forward with confidence and common sense. Most of all help us to stay true to you and to trust you, knowing that you are the security we need, knowing that you will never leave us or forsake us. Help us to be en-couraged!

In Jesus name, Amen.

Looking at CHURCH

India - engulfed by a tsunami of grief

Covid-19 has been overwhelming India in recent weeks, bringing its health services and institutions to their knees. Hospitals have run out of oxygen, medical staff cannot help the queues of desperate patients, and bodies are piling up as people die in vast numbers.

The Indian Christian community, like their compatriots, have also been suffering. Reports speak of many church leaders contracting the virus and some even dying. Their congregations, also sick and dying, are left without pastoral care.

Indian Christians report that more than 50-60 senior church leaders have died. One pastor said: "in the last seven days we have lost four pastors to Covid19." Another organisation lost three missionaries within a week. These examples are just the tip of the iceberg.

The lockdown is causing severe suffering to the poorest, the day-labourers, who now have no work and no income. Barnabas Fund is working with Indian Christian leaders to provide assistance, both food and medical help, for our brothers and sisters. If you would like to help support them, please go to: <https://barnabasfund.org>

The Ven John Barton considers Prince Philip's questions on religion.

A prince's legacy on matters of faith

Just when we thought the last word had been written about the late Duke of Edinburgh, it emerged that he had a genuine interest in theology. That dashing young naval officer, who became the Queen's dutiful consort and accompanied her to thousands of church services, was someone who listened intently to sermons, thought through what was being said, and then asked questions.

Every Sunday when the royal couple were at Sandringham, a diocesan bishop was invited to preach in the parish church. After-



wards, they were grilled by the Duke who, we are told by one of them, showed that he "wanted to be intellectually and spiritually engaged". That's a polite way of saying he wasn't prepared to swallow what came out of the pulpit if he wasn't convinced by it.

Some Christians are suspicious of people who probe the faith. Should it not be taken on trust? Who are we to question the Almighty? For others, doubt hovers uninvited.

Honest doubt won't settle for unbelief but will continue to persevere with its enquiries. The Russian writer and philosopher Fyodor Dostoyevsky wrote: "It is not as a child that I believe and confess Jesus Christ. My hosanna is born of a furnace of doubt." Dostoyevsky had lived a turbulent life, both personally and publicly, and wrestled mentally with himself and God. Some people are like that.

Prince Philip had been baptised into the Greek Orthodox Church and was received into the Church of England just before his marriage. He organised much of his own funeral, and if you followed it, you will remember how traditional it was. Many of the prayers were from the 17th Century Book of Common Prayer, the hymns were more ancient than modern, and the Bible readings confidently proclaimed the magnificence of God's Creation and Jesus' teaching about the resurrection. These are basic to Christianity and it was from such a foundation that he was able to explore.

So, if you wake up one morning questioning everything you have believed, take it as a spur to dig deeper and ask questions. Be encouraged by Philip, who shunned a second-hand faith because he wanted to know the truth for himself.

The next time you hear a sermon which you can't understand or disagree with, don't let the preacher get away with it. And if, in your private conversations with God, you find yourself praying, 'Lord, I believe; help my unbelief,' you won't be the first. See Mark 9, verse 24.

Nigel Beeton writes: 'We're still having to listen to the choir singing hymns rather than joining in with them. Ironically, we heard 'The King of Love' this morning:

*And so through all the length of days, Thy goodness faileth never;
Good Shepherd, may I sing thy praise, Within thy house for ever.*

I suppose 'Within thy house except during global pandemics' wouldn't scan....?! But when you go to an old church like ours (St Mary, Bury St Edmunds) you do become acutely conscious of that legacy of faithful prayer and praise down the centuries:

The Ancient Church

Sometimes I sit within my pew
And gaze upon an ancient view
Of stones, which, set by mason's line
Have stood through centuries of time;
Of glass, whose colours, vivid, bright
Have told their wondrous tales of light
And filtered sunshine's timeless rays
To countless eyes through countless days.

The pulpit where, through long past years
God's servants preached to faithful ears;
The lectern and its Bible read
Aloud to both the quick and dead;
The feet, which down that aisle have trod
To worship everlasting God;
The angels, as they downward gaze
Have heard ten thousand songs of praise!

Songs of joy, and infant cries
As they gathered to baptize,
Songs of love and celebrations
In marriages and confirmations,
Songs of sadness and of loss
Sung before the Saviour's cross.
So many lives have come, then flown
Within this ancient house of stone.

So, as I sit and wonder how
Such history should guide me now?
Such faithful worship through the years
May move me to shed humble tears.
These ghosts bring me joy, not fear
I know I'm just a tenant here
And in one way they are my guide –
They keep me free from pompous pride!



From the Archdeacon of Ludlow, The Venerable Fiona Gibson

This is the first time I've written one of these articles since I moved to south Shropshire and was collated as Archdeacon of Ludlow at the end of April, so I'd like to begin by thanking you for the very warm welcome my family and I have received among you here in the arch-deaconry and the wider diocese. Moving house during a pandemic was a challenge, but we were well supported all the way, not least by the prayers of those in both dioceses: St Albans and Hereford.

Like you, I'm hopeful that we may now be entering a time where the necessary restrictions under which we've lived for the past year will ease, and I can get out and about more to visit parishes, beginning to get to know the clergy and people in our schools, churches, and wider communities.

You may be wondering what my hopes and prayers for the coming years are. In many ways they're summed up in the reading from Paul's letter to the Ephesians which was read at my collation:

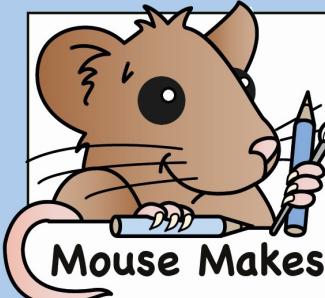
"I pray that out of his glorious riches God may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge – that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God."

Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen."

- Ephesians 3:16-21

I long that each of us in the churches across the diocese may know the fullness of the love of God in Christ ourselves, and may be equipped and inspired to share that love with those around us in our homes, families, schools, workplaces, and places of leisure. I pray that this faith and love will fill you, and our churches, villages, and towns.

A tall order? Maybe. But at the end of the passage, we're reminded that God can do *immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us*. That's the grounds for my confidence, as together we move on and out in faith, filled with hope, to share the love of Christ with our lips and our lives.



JESUS HEALS

Who was the first person Jesus healed?
John 4:46-54

Who did Jesus heal from fever?
Mark 1:29-31

How was the the paralysed man brought to Jesus?
Mark 2:1-12

Jesus healed and made the...

SICK	ABLE
DEAD	WALK
BLIND	FORGIVEN
DEAF	ALIVE
CRIPPLED	SPEAK
SINNER	MOVE
MUTE	SEE
PARALYSED	WELL
DISABLED	HEAR

Where did the demons ask Jesus to send them when he drove them out?
Mark 5:1-20

How long had the man by the pool been • disabled?
John 5:1-15



What did Jesus say made the woman well?

Matthew 9: 20-22

"There are **many** things that Jesus did. If every one of them were written down, I suppose the whole world would not have room for the books that would be written."

John 21:25

How many men were healed from leprosy?

Luke 17:11-19

What did Jesus heal Bartemaeus from?

Mark 10:46-52



Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead, how many days had he been buried?

John 11:1-45



From the Dragon's Den

Big decisions to be made during the next week or two regarding resumption of Little Dragon sessions as and when restrictions are gradually lifted.

Currently, Senior/Big Dragons are hurriedly doing the online safe-guarding training and online certification – 2 levels! (You couldn't make it up, could you?)

Anti-bacterial spray seems to be the new perfume of the month as all the soft toys that can't go in the washing machine are given the 'treatment'. Stocks of hand-wash and paper towels are being garnered from here, there and everywhere. (No chance of Home Bargains going out of business.)

The Little Dragon bus, which you may have noticed at the rear of church is perhaps in need of a small face-lift as the wheels are looking rather well-worn with flat-ish tyres.

Maybe George, Uncle Sam and Idris can have an airing soon following their imprisonment in the dragon basket.

Exciting times ahead!

*From Val and from we three:
George, Uncle Sam & Idris.*



The Lord is my Shepherd

A Sunday School teacher decided to have her young class memorize one of the most quoted passages in the Bible - Psalm 23. She gave the youngsters a month to memorise the short Psalm. Little Richard was excited about the task - but he just couldn't memorise things very well.

On the day that the children were scheduled to recite Psalm 23 in front of the congregation, Richard was very nervous. When it was finally his turn, he stepped up to the microphone and said proudly, "The Lord is my Shepherd, and that's all I need to know."

Bible Bite

It can be read in the Bible in
2 Sam 6: 1-10, 2 Chron 13, 15:1-28

A short story from the Bible

Copies of God's Laws for the Jews were kept in a special holy chest - the Ark. It had been stored at Keriath Jearim for 20 years...

When King David made Jerusalem his capital, he decided to bring the Ark there.



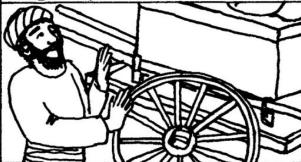
David brought his soldiers and a huge crowd came too



They put the Ark on a new cart and set off down the hill.



The oxen stumbled, and Uzzah thought the Ark might fall off the cart.



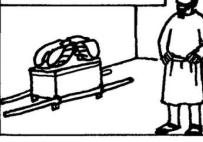
He forgot the Ark was holy and held on to it.



David was very angry with God that Uzzah had died



So he left the Ark stored at the house of Obed Edom.



David realised that they had not treated God's Ark with respect.



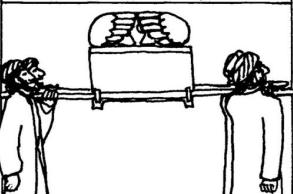
He talked to the Levites, the tribe that God had chosen to be His priests.



They organised musicians and trumpeters, and people to carry the Ark.



God's holy Ark was treated with respect.



Everyone cheered and sang as the Ark was carried into Jerusalem.



Part 1 of the story was in last month's magazine ..

Looking at Our COMMUNITY

What do you think will happen after Covid?

You can take your choice: a recent survey has found that a third of us think that society may *never* go back to the old ways, a third of us think we will go back to *exactly* as we were before, and a third of us think that we will be *keener than ever* to stay together.

The Together Coalition, chaired by the Archbishop of Canterbury, has been working for the past year on a piece of research to track just what has happened to communities during lockdown.

The new research has found that “people feel a stronger sense of connection to their neighbours and community. ...We found a clear public appetite for a society in which we are more connected to each other, and the community spirit of 2020 is kept alive.”

It also found that around 12.4million people have volunteered during the pandemic, 4.6million of them for the first time. And 75 per cent of those volunteers would be happy to do so again.

The beginnings of the Chemist *by Tim Lenton*

Jesse Boot, the British pharmacist and philanthropist, died 90 years ago, on 13th June 1931. He turned the Boots Company started by his father John – a former agricultural worker – into a chain of chemists branded ‘Chemists to the Nation’.

The 1st Baron Trent, as Jesse became in 1929, sold his controlling interest to American investors in 1920, but Boots continues to be a familiar name to all Britons. Ironically John Boot had offered his close friend and business associate John Harston the opportunity of going into business with him, but Harston had felt it was not a good investment.

Jesse Boot was a great benefactor to the City of Nottingham. He

gave land for what is now the University of Nottingham and was presented with the Freedom of the City of Nottingham in 1920. He met his wife, Florence Rowe, in a Wesleyan Chapel in Jersey while he was recuperating from illness. She was also an astute businesswoman, who helped to develop the Boots business, and her home island of Jersey benefited from the couple's generosity. After her husband's death she commissioned the glass artist René Lalique to refit the Anglican church of St Matthew there as a memorial to him.

The man who invented the saxophone by Tim Lenton

It was 175 years ago, on 28th June 1846, that Belgian musical instrument maker Adolphe Sax patented the saxophone.

Born Antoine-Joseph in 1814, Sax quickly became known for his brilliant inventiveness and his abrasive personality, but also – to the despair of his mother – for his brushes with death as a child. He fell from a height of three floors and was believed dead, drank a bowl of dilute sulphuric acid thinking it was milk, swallowed a pin, and received serious burns from a gunpowder explosion. He also fell on to a hot cast-iron frying pan, was struck by a cobblestone and fell into a river, then several times narrowly escaped poisoning from sleeping in a room where varnished furniture was drying.

He also contracted lip cancer in the 1850s but made a full recovery.

It was surprising then, that he lived until his 80th year, dying in poverty in Paris despite his many musical instrument inventions, which did not bring him wealth because they were copied by others, despite his patent.



As well as the saxophone, which received huge support from classical composer Berlioz, he also invented the saxatromba, saxhorn and saxtuba. He himself played flute and clarinet. His parents were also instrument designers.

QUOTE: A happy marriage is the union of two good forgivers. – Robert Quillen

Looking at YOU

Making changes by David Pickup, a solicitor.

*They also failed to show any loyalty to the family of Jerub-Baal
(that is, Gideon) in spite of all the good things
he had done for them. (Judges 8:35)*

There are some things we change often, and others rarely. All businesses want customers and clients who return again and again, without making a fuss and who do not 'shop around'. Do you 'shop around' or are you steadfastly loyal, whether you are valued or not?

Take a minute to think about how loyal you are to your supermarket, bank, doctor, insurer or energy supplier. Some of these we change often without a thought, and some not so. Many of us are skilled at getting the best deal and haggling. There is nothing wrong with that, and we should certainly be good stewards of what we have. This applies to both our home and church. We should shop around to get the best offer for our families or the congregation. When was the last time your church got several quotes for electricity or insurance?

If you think about the list above, there are some things we would rarely change. We tend to keep the same bank, and the same usually applies to doctors and other professionals. Some of these are simply not easy to change! Banks are supposed to make it easy to change accounts, but it rarely is. We would not give a second thought to doing the week's shop somewhere different, but business likes customers who are loyal, so they introduce reward schemes to encourage us to always buy things from them. All businesses depend on reputation and loyalty is to be valued. If we get a good experience, we should cherish it. If not, then tell them.

What should we look for when shopping around? How about asking yourself the following questions: 'Is it *really* a good deal?' 'Are there hidden extra charges?' 'How long are you tied into the deal for?' 'How difficult will it be to change supplier?'

If you want to renew a contract or if you are a new customer, it is

usually easy. But try to cancel and they make it difficult; you often have to telephone to explain why. If you say you do not want to renew because you have a better quotation elsewhere, then you may suddenly get a better deal.

We do not usually have loyalty cards or reward points in church, do we! We could probably learn something about welcoming new customers and keeping existing ones loyal.

Give a compliment by Colin Hammacott

We all like to receive a compliment from time to time. As Robert Orben, former script writer for President Gerald R. Ford once said, "A compliment is verbal sunshine."

Another American, Leo Buscaglia once observed: "Too often we underestimate the power of a touch, a smile, a kind word, a listening ear, an honest compliment, or the smallest act of caring, all of which have the potential to turn someone's life around."

At a funeral service, nice things are usually said of the deceased. While these comments are comforting for the relatives, did the same folks ever bother to say these kind things to the person themselves, when they were alive, to show them how much they were appreciated?

Sadly, not everyone seems able to compliment others. Perhaps they never received compliments when they were young, or perhaps they feel that to compliment someone else is to somehow put themselves down. For whatever reason, such people miss out on a whole lot of pleasure in life.

Whenever we see something that is worthy of a compliment, why not give it, and bring 'a little verbal sunshine' into someone else's life!



In the NEWS

Churches stepped up support for their communities during pandemic

More than 4,000 Church of England parishes have stepped up their support to local communities in the face of rising levels of poverty, loneliness and isolation since the Covid-19 pandemic, according to new research.

Church volunteers have delivered food, shopped, walked dogs and collected prescriptions this past year, according to a report by the Church of England and Church Urban Fund.

Church volunteers have also done gardening projects, been 'phone buddies', aided with job-hunting, and helped people get online, as local people struggled with the social and economic effects of the pandemic.

Despite restrictions on meeting socially, nearly a quarter of churches even started a completely new activity during the pandemic. More than of them adapted two or more of their existing community activities in order to meet local needs.

Overall, 37% of churches reported that they were providing *more* support to their communities, with this figure rising to

41% in rural areas.

Food provision and pastoral support were by far the biggest area of support provided by churches, with nearly 80% of churches involved in running or supporting a food bank or similar service. Many opened food banks for the first time.

Church leaders reported that isolation, loneliness and mental health difficulties, food poverty, unemployment and debt are more widespread in their communities as a result of the pandemic.

Church buildings, because of their size and ventilation, have been well used for activities from ante natal classes to socially prescribed exercise. In fact, many became 'symbols of hope', with flags, posters and artwork as a "form of visual encouragement".

Church Urban Fund Chief Executive Rachel Whittington said: "2020 was a year like no other, and yet churches across the UK rose ... with undeterred compassion, displaying the love in action which lies at the heart of the Christian gospel."

SEE PAGE 6 IF YOU THINK YOU COULD HELP WITH OUR LOCAL GOOD NEIGHBOURS SCHEME.

Archbishop of York's Presidential Address to General Synod

It was "sobering and shameful" for the Church of England to be "confronted by the recent *Panorama* documentary", which looked at "a number of shockingly specific instances where sisters and brothers in Christ have experienced racism in the Church of England."

So said the Archbishop of York in his recent Presidential Address to the General Synod.

He went on to say that the Anti-Racism Task Force set up by the Church last autumn had now published its "inspiring, challenging, and – God willing – far reaching report" to deal with the "institutional racism" found in the church.

"It identifies five areas where urgent action is needed, name-

ly: participation, including appointments and shortlists for appointments; education; training and mentoring; work with young people; and governance and structures."

The Archbishop looked forward to the discussion of all this at a future Synod. "However, we couldn't let this group of sessions pass without acknowledging the scale of the challenge and the call to action."

The Archbishop went on: "I'm not standing here to defend our record. Nor am I saying everything will be ok. ...I'm saying that there is racism in the Church, and it must be confronted."

The Archbishop agreed with a statement by the Revd Arun Arora which said: 'Apologies and lament must now be accompanied by swift actions leading to real change.'



After months of lockdown, the Sunday procession probably needed some practice.

God in the Arts

by the Revd Michael Burgess

The Revd Michael Burgess looks at 'Christ before the High Priest and the Denial of Peter'. This painting, done in tempera on wood, now hangs in the Museo dell'Opera del Duomo, Siena.

'I do not know the man', the fearful Peter said

At the end of this month, on 28th June, we celebrate two of the great saints of the early church: Peter and Paul. We might relate more easily to Peter because his humanity and vulnerability spill out of the pages of the New Testament in everything he said and did. Peter was a fisherman, who was impetuous and headstrong, not once, but over and over again, saying one thing, and doing another. And yet our Lord chose Peter as the rock on which He would build His church, and at Caesarea Philippi Peter acknowledges that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of the living God. Then, when Jesus is arrested, the same Peter in the High Priest's courtyard declares with an oath, 'I do not know the man.'

That denial is in all four Gospels. We might have expected the evangelists would have had greater respect for this follower of Jesus. But they are not intimidated by his later fame and importance, and they record the episode in vivid detail.

That episode is recorded by Duccio in this month's painting, 'Christ before the High Priest and the Denial of Peter.' Duccio worked in Siena in the late 13th and 14th centuries. In his paintings Jesus and the saints are no longer remote, austere figures: he portrays them in a natural, simple way. His greatest work was a series of 45 panels called the Maesta.

This month's picture is the first painting to depict Jesus' trial and Peter's denial together. The scene is a two-storey building: the figures above, apart from the High Priest, are all on their feet. Below, the figures are all seated, with the exception of the serving girl. Notice the wonderful array of hair styles and beards that are typical of Duccio's work.

In the painting Peter is recognisable by his halo, like Jesus above. He is in a direct line below Jesus, but just look at the contrast between the two. Jesus is standing with His hands bound in front of Him and His head to one side. Peter below is seated, looking



straight at the girl, raising his hand to protest his ignorance and warming his feet by the fire. It needed courage for Peter to be there, but the Gospels tell us how quickly his vulnerability is exposed. As he answers the questions and reveals his Galilean accent, he starts to curse. He denies Jesus three times, and the scene ends in bitter tears. For all the bravado, a human, broken figure leaves the scene.

On his feast day we rejoice in that humanity of Peter, which brought him low, but encouraged him to try again. In Duccio's painting his denial takes place by the fire of the courtyard. It will be by another fire lit on the shore of the sea of Tiberias that Peter will be asked another three questions – not by a serving girl, but by Jesus. This time he will respond with affirmation, knowing that his Lord has come in resurrection glory to bring a new way forward for him and for everyone as He offers life in abundance.

Here is an 'older' prayer, from France:

Fulbert of Chartres (c.970–1028), the son of a peasant family in northern France, rose to become Bishop of Chartres, renowned for his brilliant sermons. A powerful man, but his prayers reveal his keen appreciation of just how fleeting worldly success can be....

God's Care

How brief is our span of life compared with the time since You created the universe. How tiny we are compared with the enormity of Your universe. ...yet during every minute and ever second of our lives You are present, within and around us. You give your whole and undivided attention to each and every one of us. Our concerns are Your concerns. And You are infinitely patient with our stupidity. I thank you with all my heart....



Old and alone and needing help...

An old Italian priest lived alone. He wanted to plant his annual tomato garden, but it was very difficult work, as the ground was so hard. A member of his church, Vincent, who used to help him, was in prison. So the old priest wrote a letter to his parishioner and described his predicament:

Dear Vincent, I am feeling pretty sad because it looks like I won't be able to plant my tomato garden this year. I'm just getting too old to be digging up a garden plot. I know if you were here my troubles would be over. I know you would be happy to dig the plot for me, like in the old days. I remember you in my prayers!

Fr Louis

A few days later he received a letter from his parishioner.

Dear Fr Louis, whatever you do, don't dig up that garden. That's where the bodies are buried. Thanks for your prayers.

Vinnie

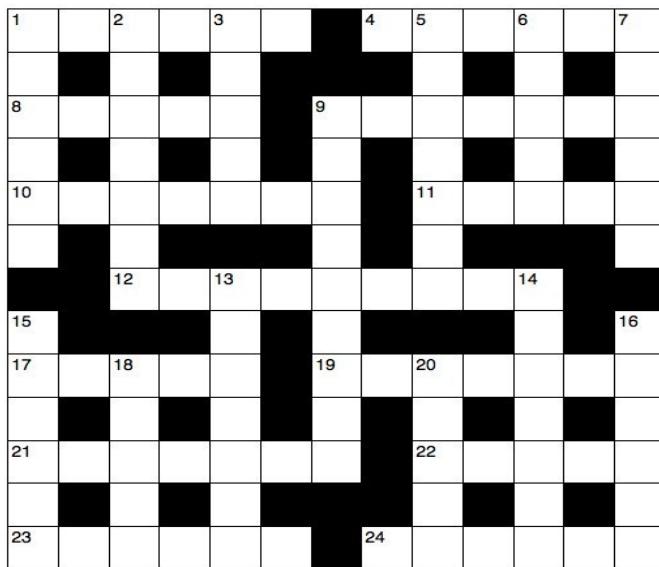
At 4 am the next morning, the local police arrived and dug up the entire area, without finding any bodies. They apologised to the old priest and left. That same day the old priest received another letter.

Dear Fr Louis, You can go ahead and plant your tomatoes now. That's the best I could do under the circumstances.

Vinnie



Your Puzzle for this month



Across

- 1 Military tactic used by Joshua to attack and destroy the city of Ai (Joshua 8:2) (6)
- 4 Place of learning (6)
- 8 'When Moses' hands grew — , they took a stone and put it under him and he sat on it' (Exodus 17:12) (5)
- 9 Unpleasant auguries of the end of the age, as forecast by Jesus (Matthew 24:7) (7)
- 10 Stronghold to which girls in King Xerxes' harem (including Esther) were taken (Esther 2:8) (7)
- 11 Where Saul went to consult a medium before fighting the Philistines (1 Samuel 28:7) (5)
- 12 Propitiation (Hebrews 2:17) (9)
- 17 Turn away (Jeremiah 11:15) (5)
- 19 So clear (anag.) (7)
- 21 'I have just got — , so I can't come': one excuse to be absent from the great banquet (Luke 14:20) (7)
- 22 Long weapon with a pointed head used by horsemen (Job 39:23) (5)
- 23 Musical beat (6)

24 What the Israelites were told to use to daub blood on their door-frames at the first Passover (Exodus 12:22) (6)

Down

- 1 Fasten (Exodus 28:37) (6)
- 2 Art bite (anag.) (7)
- 3 'The people of the city were divided; some — with the Jews, others with the apostles' (Acts 14:4) (5)
- 5 Contend (Jeremiah 12:5) (7)
- 6 Possessed (Job 1:3) (5)
- 7 Sheen (Lamentations 4:1) (6)
- 9 'You love evil rather than good, — rather than speaking the truth' (Psalm 52:3) (9)
- 13 Large flightless bird (Job 39:13) (7)
- 14 They were worth several hundred pounds each (Matthew 25:15) (7)
- 15 'A — went out to sow his seed' (Matthew 13:3) (6)
- 16 How Jesus described Jairus's daughter when he went into the room where she lay (Mark 5:39) (6)
- 18 The part of the day when the women went to the tomb on the first Easter morning (John 20:1) (5)
- 20 Narrow passageway between buildings (Luke 14:21) (5)

Answers below



18, Early. 20, Alley.
14, Talents. 15, Farmer. 16, Asleep.
7, Lustre. 9, Falsethood. 13, Ostrich.
3, Slidet. 5, Compete. 6, Owned.
DOWN: 1, Attach. 2, Biretta.

22, Lance. 23, Rhythm. 24, Hyssop.
17, Avert. 19, Oracles. 21, Married.
11, Endor. 12, Atonement.
8, Tired. 9, Families. 10, Citadel.
ACROSS: 1, Ambush. 4, School.



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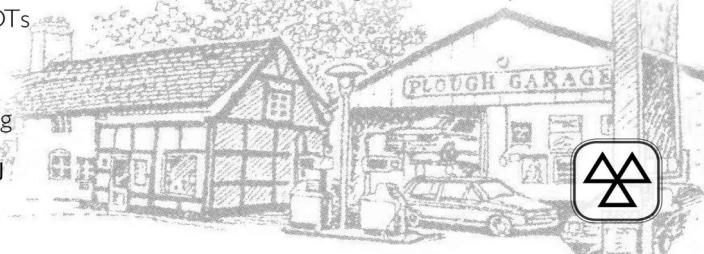
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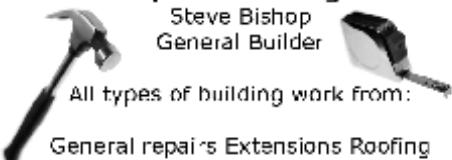
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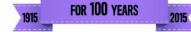
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£550 per week



Cliffdale
CARE HOME

Shrewsbury Road, Pontesbury, SY5 0QD

01743 790 261

Email: info@cliffdalecarehome.co.uk

Weekly
Wednesday
Lunch Club
@12.30pm.
Two course
meal £3.99

We offer full time supported residency, respite and day care for older people who require assistance from dedicated care staff.

