

St. George's Montezbury

Magazine 50p



January 2023

The Parish of Pontesbury

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

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

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*We know not what the future holds, but we do know
who holds the future. - Willis J Ray*



LIFTING UP OUR EYES

With the Parish Pump online team

What is the one word that best sums up 2022 for you?

For its 'word of the year' in 2022, The Collins English Dictionary has chosen 'permacrisis' - meaning 'an extended period of instability and uncertainty'. Considering the on-going pandemic, war in Europe, droughts, floods, famine and wildfires of climate change, political instability, and now a truly frightening cost-of-living crisis, 'permacrisis' is a good description!

No wonder if our Christmas celebrations and 'Happy New Year' hopes may be a bit muted this year. Many people are deeply worried about the future.



And yet as Christians, we have somewhere to turn, Someone to turn to, for comfort and for reassurance that we are not forsaken, and that we need not be overwhelmed by whatever 2023 may bring to us. God can be our strength, a trusted refuge in times of trouble.

For January, we can offer you these well-loved promises:

- ♦ **Cast your cares on the Lord and He will sustain you; He will never let the righteous be shaken. (Psalm 55:22)**
- ♦ **Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to Him, and He will make your paths straight. (Proverbs 3:5,6)**

Both are good verses to memorise for 2023!

*With warm wishes for a blessed and happy Christmas,
from Anne Coomes and the Parish Pump online resource Team.*

Wise Men Seek Him—a message from the Online Vicar

'A cold coming we had of it. Just the worst time of the year. For a journey and such a long journey.' (Journey of the Magi, T.S. Eliot).

In this poem, T.S. Eliot imagines the journey of the Magi to worship Jesus, as told in Matthew 2. This story is at the heart of our celebration of Epiphany, as we remember the astrologers from the East following a star to find the baby: *'Magi from the east came to Jerusalem and asked, 'Where is the One who has been born king of the Jews? We saw His star when it rose and have come to worship Him.'* (Matthew 2:1,2).

The Magi provide a powerful picture of the journey we make in searching for God in our lives. Like them, it requires time and effort (they travelled for months) and will not always be easy! As they followed the star, so we are called to pursue God's light in our lives.

What does this say to us at the beginning of a New Year? Are we ready to go deeper in our relationship with God? Are we looking for new ways to use our time, treasure and talents for Him? It is a great time to offer these things to Him, and like the Magi, commit ourselves to pursuing Him. His light, through prayer, worship and His Word, will be our guide on the way.

T.S. Eliot used the imagined journey of the Magi to reflect on his own spiritual journey. It reveals the pain and doubts he experienced on his long and troubled journey to find the light of Christ. He describes finding Christ as a *'hard and bitter agony for us, like Death, our death'*. Are we prepared to make this journey for ourselves?



STILL WANTED:

a WEBMASTER for PONTESBURY

We are urgently looking for a webmaster to take over the responsibility from Richard Elliot.

A draft job description has been produced, the chief tasks being keeping the site updated by posting the weekly bulletin and advertising events, and disseminating emails to the appropriate person.


If you would like to know more please speak to Greg at rectorpontstip@gmail.com or directly to Richard at webmaster@st-george.org.uk or phone 01743 792256

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 join a church service this month.

Services and Readings for January 2023



Date	Service	Readings
1 st January 2 nd Sunday of Christmas	Holy Communion (said service) 10.30am	Psalm 8 Luke 2 15-21
Tuesday 3 rd January	Tea Services 2.30pm	
8 th January Baptism of Christ	Holy Communion 10.30am	Isaiah 42 1-9 (Acts 10 34-43) Matthew 3 13-end
15 th January 2 nd Sunday of Epiphany	Holy Communion 10.30am	Psalm 40 1-12 (1 Corinthians 1 1-9) John 1 29-42
22 nd January 3 rd Sunday of Epiphany	Holy Communion 10.30am	Psalm 27 1,4-12 (1 Corinthians 1 10-18) Matthew 4 12-23
29 th January 4 th Sunday of Epiphany Group Service at St. George's	Holy Communion 10.30am 	1 Kings 17 8-16 1 Corinthians 1 18-end John 2 1-11

You are today where your thoughts have brought you;
you will be tomorrow where your thoughts take you.
- James Allen

Our Local and Church COMMUNITY

Wreath Making

A wonderful evening was had by all who attended and made Christmas Wreaths on Saturday 3rd December. Beautiful wreaths are now adorning doors around Pontesbury and the area . Thank you all for attending and making it a wonderful, productive evening with plenty of laughter, nibbles and wine !!!!

Marianne and Mary



Farewell to Pontesbury Mothers' Union

I'm sure that many readers will have been aware of the Pontesbury Branch of Mothers' Union, but perhaps not aware that it had been running for 60 + years. During the first 40 years it had enjoyed a strong membership and was very active.

However the last 17 years has seen a steady decline in numbers either due to frailty and ill health, or sadly the end of life for many, ending the year with just 7 members.

At our meeting in November we came to the difficult decision that it was no longer practical or viable to continue so we agreed to close.

So in memory of all the lovely ladies who so loyalty supported and upheld the aims and objectives of the Mother's Union over the years, I would like to say a big thank you for all that you achieved in your time, and for the fellowship and friendship that I've enjoyed from members past and present.

Marion Elliott

Mothers' UNION
Christian care for families

God gives wherever He finds empty hands. - Augustine

PCC UPDATE

Recently, Members of the PCC have been busy dealing with matters as listed below:

- ♦ We have welcomed our new Treasurer, Mike Bowen, who has settled into the group very smoothly.
- ♦ Broadband facilities in church have been updated making the system more reliable.
- ♦ Following the April 2023 APCM it is noted that the post of PCC Secretary will become vacant. It is hoped that someone will step forward to take on this very interesting task. The writer of this update has enjoyed carrying out the tasks involved for 11 years, but increasing age and increased personal responsibilities suggest that the time has come to hand over. This may be just the job to suit you!
- ♦ There have been many changes in the area of SAFEGUARDING and much PCC time has been spent on this matter; especially by our Safeguarding Office, June Cribb.
- ♦ Matters concerning the Quinquennial update are under discussion, with some urgent emergency work needed.

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?

*St. George's Church has a team of friendly people who would love to **phone** or **visit** 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

Rev. Shirley Small 01743 791885.

All information given is given in confidence.

A name is enough if that is all you wish to give.

OASIS *FREE lunch & companionship for anyone living in Pontesbury, Minsterley and surrounding villages, who has been recently bereaved...
...on the 2nd & 4th Tuesdays every month, 12pm - 1.30pm
Minsterley Methodist Chapel, Horsebridge Rd, Minsterley.
Transport is Available—Friends & Family are Welcome too.*

Contact Heather Ryder for more information, at
ryder928@btinternet.com or 01743 790359

The Rea Valley Foodbank(in partnership with Shrewsbury Foodbank Plus)

This is being written in early December when our teams are looking forward to the week leading up to Christmas - 550 hampers will be packed at The Barnabas Church Centre, Shrewsbury, many of which are destined for Rea Valley households. What an amazing accomplishment and only achieved by the huge generosity and kindness of people in the Rea Valley community.

THESE ARE UNPRECEDENTED TIMES

Many household budgets are already under huge pressure. Sudden illness, a delay in benefits, a large unexpected repair bill, etc, can easily cause a financial crisis. We can bridge the gap until your circumstances improve by providing a weekly parcel of nutritionally balanced food.

Throughout the county of Shropshire, many people are keen to share with others and here in the Rea Valley it's no exception. The giving is so generous - we are immensely grateful to those who donate and we're here to pass that support on to those who could do with a bit of extra help.

You do need a referral but just call Rev Greg Smith 07902 794653
or Rev Richard Lonsdale 07922 830488

and you will be warmly welcomed by our team
when you come to your collection point.

Holy Trinity Church, Minsterley Tuesdays 10am-12.00
St George's Church, Pontesbury Thursdays 10am-12.00

We owe huge thanks to **Shrewsbury Foodbank Plus** for providing the storage space we need for our donated food and the start-up help they have given us. They are currently donating food to our own collections to ensure a balanced diet in the food parcels.

**FINANCIAL DONATIONS ARE HUGELY WELCOME AND
ENABLE US TO BUY ITEMS WE RUN SHORT OF.
HERE ARE THE ACCOUNT DETAILS:**

**The Rea Valley Foodbank
51-61-06
76841804**

The reference is: Donor

If you would like more information then please email:
support@reavalleyfoodbank.co.uk

Looking at GOD

Reflecting faith - To the Glory of God by Revd Jo White

Everything about the church building is intended to tell us something about God.

But it doesn't end there. We put into the building things that are important to us and again reflect not just our specific denomination but our ways of worship.

Imagine visiting someone in their home whom you are just getting to know and have a look around at the decorations, photos, wall hangings, books, music etc. What are their hobbies? How do they enjoy spending their time? Who is important to them? Well our church interiors are like that.

In most church buildings each week there will be a display of flowers. Venues vary from being large and elaborate to simple and homely and so do such arrangements. Of course, much depends upon finance and the availability of flowers as well as the interest and skills of the arranger.

Flower arrangements 'should' be in keeping with the church season or the occasion that is being celebrated. During Advent (Latin meaning 'coming') while we anticipate the birth of Christ at the Feast of Christmas most places of worship show restraint in their arrangements and often decline to use any coloured flowers using only evergreen leaves.

Then nearer to Christmas itself everything changes and either flowers are added to the original evergreens or they start completely new. Colours change to red for love and Christ's death and passion, white and gold for importance, royalty and celebration: with green alongside for the hope of new birth and spring.

This month: Have a look at the flowers used in a church near you. What do they 'say'? Perhaps there will be poinsettias, lilies or even irises. Each has a different story to tell of the glory of God.





Paul Hardingham concludes the series on the very foundations of our Christian faith.

The Return of Jesus

'For the grace of God has appeared that offers salvation to all people... while we wait for the blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Saviour, Jesus Christ' (Titus 2:11,13-14).

Advent is the time when we focus on the first and second coming of Jesus. He first came as a baby in Bethlehem as our Saviour, *'to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own.'* (14), through His cross and resurrection. Now we wait for His return to judge the world and finally put an end to sin and death.

We can understand the relationship of these two events by considering D Day and VE Day in World War 2. D Day marked the allied invasion at the beaches of Normandy on 6th June 1944. It was not the end of the war, but it was a decisive turning point in which victory was assured, although not finally achieved until VE Day on 8th May 1945.

For us, Jesus' death and resurrection marks our D Day, when He secured victory over sin and death. However, only when He returns, will Jesus finally end sin and death and all who have put their trust in Him can share the great victory celebration in heaven.

In Advent we reflect on what it means to live in the time between these key events. Paul says, we need to *'to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age'* (12). More troops died in the period between D Day and VE Day than during the rest of the war. Although we live under Christ's victory, we will still struggle with sin and suffering.

Feel a failure because you don't get everything on your list done each week? Don't worry – the only person who ever got everything done by Friday was Robinson Crusoe! - Anon

And here, Canon Paul Hardingham begins a new series on the spiritual disciplines that help us to grow and deepen our faith.



Spiritual Practices

January is a time for thinking about New Year Resolutions, even though we can struggle to keep them very long! However, this month is a good time to re-set our spiritual disciplines. These practices, which engage our whole person, help our spiritual growth as disciples of Christ.

If we want more of Jesus' presence in our lives, we often find ourselves thinking, *'I'll have to try harder: to pray, listen to God or read the Bible'*. Paul makes the important distinction between training and trying in the Christian life:

'Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize. Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last; but we do it to get a crown that will last forever'. (1 Corinthians 9:24,25).

Paul insists that runners undergo strict training if they are to win the race. It would be foolish to enter a marathon without adequate training. The runner wouldn't complete the course despite trying hard! The same principles apply to the Christian life: God wants us to train by developing spiritual practices: *'to train means to arrange my life around activities I can do that will enable me, over time, to do what I cannot do by direct effort alone'* (Dallas Willard).

In his book *Celebration of Discipline*, Richard Foster lists the following spiritual disciplines:

Inward Disciplines: Meditation, Prayer, Fasting, Study

Outward Disciplines: Simplicity, Solitude, Submission, Service

Corporate Disciplines: Confession, Worship, Guidance, Celebration

Over the coming year we will be looking at some of these. Effective discipline is not drudgery, but delightful! Richard Foster insists that we can *'celebrate' these disciplines which can help us grow.*

My plans for you by Nigel Beeton

Nigel Beeton writes: *Although of course we will heartily wish one another a Happy New Year, we have to be honest and realise that for very many the future in general, and the new year in particular, holds a great deal to be feared. War, energy costs, inflation, we've all just come through a nasty pandemic. The future looks very frightening indeed.*

So it did for the Israelites in the time of Jeremiah. Exiled to Babylon, surrounded by their enemies and by false prophets, there was nothing whatsoever for them to look forward to.

And yet, in Jeremiah 29:11-13 we read this promise by God to His people:

"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and

not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. Then you will call on Me and come and pray to Me, and I will listen to you. You will seek Me and find me when you seek Me with all your heart." Because of our faithful God, we can truly say: Happy New Year!

My Plans for You by Nigel Beeton

When your troubles are great
And you fear so much
When you've gone to a land far away:
When all those that you love
Are far out of touch
And you're scared of the night and the day.

"
"
"

When the darkness surrounds
And the night is long
When the storm's blowing hard on your door:
When your bones ache with pain
And you feel so wrong
And you really can't take any more.

When your world has gone wrong
Though you've tried so hard
And the ends never seem quite to meet:
The betrayal of friends
Leave you deeply scarred
And it all seems to end in defeat.

When you seek you shall find
If you search for Me
You be sure that I will do My part:
You know I will be found
And I'll hear your plea
When you search with the whole of your heart!

*"I know," says the Lord, "of My plans for you.
"Plans for good not for ill – you will see!
"Your future and hope in My plans for you
"When you pray, and you call out to Me!"*

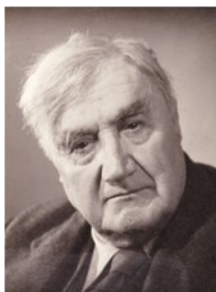
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Looking at the CHURCH

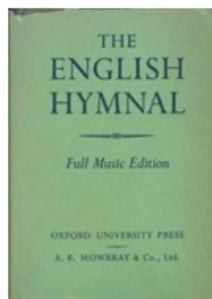
Vaughan Williams and the Anglican Church



On October 12th 2022 Anglicans celebrated the 150th birthday of Ralph Vaughan Williams - a well-known composer of orchestral music (including 9 symphonies) as well as operas, chamber music, choral music and many songs, some of them religious. However, the debt which the Anglican Church owes to Vaughan Williams is perhaps less well known. Ralph (he insisted on a pronunciation with a silent 'l') was the son of an Anglican minister, and went on to become the music editor of the *English*

Hymnal (1906) and of *Songs of Praise* (1925) - two of the most important hymnals of the Anglican Church. The *English Hymnal* has been widely used in cathedrals and 'High Anglican' churches ever since. A revised edition appeared in 1933, and a further revision - the *New English Hymnal* - appeared in 1986. A brand new edition, the *Revised English Hymnal* was due to be published in 2022 to mark the Vaughan Williams 150th birthday, but this will not now appear until May 2023. Nevertheless, a version of the *English Hymnal* has now been in print continuously for a century, and is one of the defining documents of English hymnody.

The *English Hymnal* of 1906 was a pioneering work which, thanks to Vaughan Williams' extensive knowledge of music history and diligent work as a collector of English folksong, brought together a wide range of excellent hymn tunes from both English and European sources. It included early English tunes by Tallis, Gibbons, Purcell, Handel, and William Croft; Lutheran chorale melodies by JS Bach and Johann Crüger; early Calvinist psalm tunes from Geneva and Scotland as well as some ancient Gregorian chant melodies. Furthermore, Vaughan Williams was an enthusiastic collector and transcriber of folk songs, as were his contemporaries Cecil Sharpe and George Butterworth, and he adapted many of these melodies to create superb hymns. Famous examples include Forest Green (the usual tune for 'O little town of Bethlehem') Kingsfold (the tune for 'I heard the voice of Jesus say') Sussex (the tune for 'Father, hear the prayer we offer') and a particular favourite of mine, Rodmell (the tune for 'Dear Christ uplifted').



Vaughan Williams also included a number of his own original hymn melodies in the *Hymnal* - the best is perhaps *Down Ampney* ('Come down O love divine') which is named after the Gloucestershire village of his birth. However, many of you will also be familiar with tunes such as *Sine nomine* ('For all the saints') *Lasst uns erfreuen* ('Ye watchers and ye holy ones') *Salva festa dies* ('Hail thee festival day'). Some of these hymns became so well known that they have been included in nearly every hymn anthology which has appeared subsequently.

Overall then, Vaughan Williams bequeathed to Anglicans a superb anthology of hymnody, establishing a widely recognised Anglican musical heritage drawn from a wide range of sources, and ensuring the survival of some almost forgotten English folk melodies. This enduring legacy is European in its scope but, like his *Fantasia* on a theme of Thomas Tallis, is timeless and uniquely English at its heart. This perhaps reflects the life of Vaughan Williams himself - from a wealthy family, he was fortunate to be able to study composition at the Royal College of Music in London under Hubert Parry and Charles Stanford, as well as with Maurice Ravel in Paris and Max Bruch in Berlin. However, when war broke out in 1914, saw it as his duty to enlist in the army at the age of 42, although his age and social connections could have ensured that he avoided military service entirely. Initially, Ralph served in the army Medical Corps, driving ambulances at the front; later he served as an officer in the Royal Garrison Artillery. As a musician, scholar and soldier, the Anglican Church and the English Nation as a whole owe him a huge debt of gratitude. He died on 26 August 1958, and his ashes are interred in Westminster Abbey.

Paul Bracken

Ukrainian Christians standing defiant

Church leaders in Ukraine have expressed their doubts about any meaningful peace talks with Russia, after a fresh wave of missile strikes in recent weeks.

The primate of Ukraine's independent Orthodox Church, Metropolitan Epiphany (Dumenko) said: "Our continuing struggle will certainly be crowned with success with God's help - we are fighting for our homeland's liberation, our own existence, and our children's futures. It should also be clearly understood that this struggle isn't just physical, but also spiritual. It cannot be that the body of our state is Ukrainian, while its spirit is Russian.

The Franciscan RC bishop of Odesa, the Rt Revd Stanislav Shyrokoradiuk, said that "although pressure is being exerted on us to negotiate and cede territory, our government and armed services will not agree to this; we've already suffered too much, while everyone knows any concessions will merely fuel further demands."

Churches in Ukraine recently staged a Day of Prayer for Orphans, as aid agencies warn that the destruction of power and water supplies could drive a whole new flood of refugees westwards.

With Covid and Flu jabs still in our minds

The man who made the first-ever vaccine by Tim Lenton

Two hundred years ago, on 26th January 1823, Edward Jenner, the British physician and immunologist who created the first vaccine (for smallpox), died of a stroke.

He was the son of a Gloucestershire clergyman and the brother of another – who brought him up when his father died. He was also a violinist, a poet and a naturalist, but he chose medicine and became the pupil of a distinguished surgeon, John Hunter, at St George's Hospital in London. Hunter also had wide interests, and the two kept in touch for many years.

Jenner, a committed and sincere Christian, married a near neighbour, Catharine Kingscote, in 1788. He was described as amiable and quiet, but his work in creating a smallpox vaccine was said to have saved more lives than any other man on earth, though his treatment in making inoculations using cowpox lesions, initially from a dairymaid in 1796, was laughed at by some to start with.

The word 'vaccination' (relating to cows) stems from this experiment. Previous smallpox inoculation attempts were known as variolation and were both less successful and dangerous to health. Jenner himself had received this treatment as a child.

Jenner was a member of the Royal Society, primarily because of his work as a naturalist. He published valuable observations and interpretations on, for instance, the life of the cuckoo, which was little understood at the time.

But in the end, he gave so much time to vaccination work that his personal affairs suffered badly, though he was voted a total of £30,000 by Parliament.


His wife died of tuberculosis in 1815, after which he retired from public life. In 1980 the World Health Organisation said that smallpox had finally been eradicated from the world, though a few lab samples were kept.

Bible Bite

A short story from the Bible




It can be read in the Bible in
Genesis 12:1-9, 17:1-22, 18:1-15, 21:1-7

About 6000 years ago, God told Abram and his wife Sarai to leave their home and go to a new land that He would give them

<p>This land will belong to your family, but not yet</p>  <p>But Sarai and I cannot have children</p>	<p>and I am changing your names to Abraham and Sarah</p>  <p>'Abraham' means 'Father of many' 'Sarah' means 'Princess'</p>	<p>You and Sarah will have a son, Isaac</p>  <p>We are too old to have children. Ha ha ha!</p>
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<p>It was noon, and everyone was resting from the heat...</p>  <p>When Abraham saw three men coming to his tents.</p>	<p>He recognised the Lord</p>  <p>Please stay and have something to eat.</p>	<p>He ran to tell everyone</p>  <p>Quick, we need a feast cooked for special guests</p>
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<p>Sarah was in the tent, listening</p> <p>By this time next year, you will have a son</p>  <p>At our age? Ha ha ha!</p>	<p>Why did Sarah laugh?</p> 	<p>I didn't laugh</p>  <p>Yes, you did.</p>
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<p>Soon afterwards...</p>  <p>I'm pregnant!</p>	<p>Sarah and Abraham's baby boy was born</p>  <p>I'm so happy, I can't stop laughing</p>	<p>They called him 'Isaac' which means 'laughter'</p>  <p>Ha ha ha! Ha ha ha!</p>
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From the Dragon's Den

Immediately prior to me writing this item, I along with the other Senior Dragons, 31 Little Dragons, plus their Carers, enjoyed Little Dragons' Christmas Party. As one would imagine, it was a busy, busy time, with several attendees wearing suitably decorated outfits. One of our Little Dragon Grannies wore a fantastic necklace of flashing lights, much coveted by many of us. The Man in Red managed to fit in a visit during his busy time – much appreciated by all.

We lit our candle for the last time – it being our Christmas 2021 candle to celebrate the birth of the Baby Jesus; in January we will have a new candle to, once again, mark the wondrous event which we would celebrate in a few days.

When you read this, we will already have celebrated Christmas and the New Year, as we find ourselves in 2023. Please accept the good wishes of all connected to Little Dragons. We wish all readers the best that life can offer and hope that your life is filled with all that is good.

Joy to everyone, from Val and from we three
..... Idris, George and Uncle Sam.



*Our students, at school, college, university,
will be starting another term soon, and they need our prayers.*

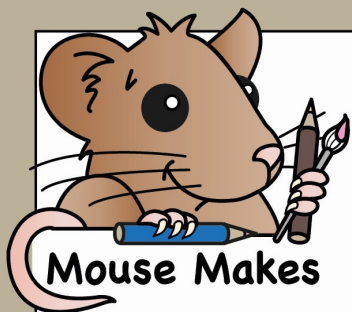
A Prayer for Students

Grant, O Lord, to all students, to know what is worth knowing, to love what is worth loving, to praise what delights You most, to value what is precious in Your sight and to reject what is evil in Your eyes.

Grant them true discernment to distinguish between different things.

Above all, may they search out and do what is most pleasing to You;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

By Thomas a Kempiss



Mouse Makes



Why did **Joseph** and **Mary** travel to **Bethlehem**?

Read *Luke 2:1-4*

When **Samuel** came to **Bethlehem** who sent him? Who did he go to see?
_____ and his sons.

Who had he come to anoint as king?

Read *1 Samuel 16:1-13*



Naomi and **Ruth** came to **Bethlehem** where had they travelled from?
_____ and why?

When did they arrive?

At the _____ harvest.

Read *Ruth 1:22*

E B A O F O O D K J E S S E S
M O A B A I J E I T J I A M E
R R M R A N O I N T O D M E A
U N J E S U S B G N U A U S S
T P B A R L E Y H A R V E S T
H G O D O S P F O O N I L I A
M A R Y B E H N Y M E D I A R
B E T H L E H E M I Y M A G I

A JOURNEY TO BETHLEHEM

When the **Magi** (wise men) came to **Bethlehem** where had they travelled from?

The _____

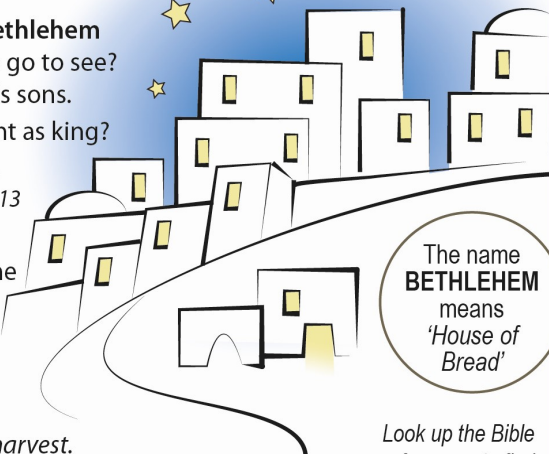
Why did they make the journey?

What did they follow to get there?

A _____

What did they see?

Read *Matthew 2:1-12*



The name **BETHLEHEM** means 'House of Bread'

Look up the Bible references to find the missing words, find them and these words below in the wordsearch

JOURNEY
BETHLEHEM • GOD
JOSEPH • MARY
JESUS • BORN
MAGI • MESSIAH
NAOMI • RUTH
FOOD • HARVEST
SAMUEL • ANOINT
KING • BREAD



Looking at you

David Pickup, a solicitor, considers house contents insurance

Make sure your valuations are up-to-date

*"Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and steal".
(Matthew 6:18)*

We once had a break in just before Christmas; the thief stole presents from under the Christmas tree and my laptop. This was some years ago, but I can still remember the trauma of it. We got off lightly as there was not much damage and the items stolen had little sentimental value. I have recently heard of an issue with insurance which could make matters worse.

Supposing you claim for the cost of your belongings which were stolen. The insurance company appoints an investigator who then assesses the value of your claim. The person adds up the figures which come to say £30,000. Some of the jewellery has gone up a lot in value over the years. But wait a minute, your cover was only up to £10,000.00. The insurance company refuses to pay anything, not even the £10,000.

The insurers are doing nothing wrong as you, the insured, have a duty to give up-to-date accurate valuations. The insurance company is within its rights not to pay anything at all, not even the cover amount. You can complain and the Financial Services Ombudsman who will investigate. They have a very helpful section on insurance problems. It is not only contents this relates to, but any insurance could be 'voided' for under-valuation. It seems a hard rule. The word 'voided' means it is as though it never existed at all. Even previous claims might have to be refunded.

Here are some things you can do:

- ♦ If you have valuables, make sure they are accurately valued.
- ♦ Have a record of what valuables you have, when you got it and how much you paid.
- ♦ Think about security. When did you last check window locks, doors?
- ♦ Do the other people in your house know about safety?
- ♦ Do your family members have insurance? Young people often do not think about this.

And more thoughts from David Pickup ...

Happy New Year

*I will stop all her celebrations: her Yearly Festivals,
her New Moons, her Sabbath days—all her appointed festivals -
Hosea 2:11*

He sounds a bit of a party pooper, old Hosea! Actually, he wanted to make a point that if God's people were not faithful to Him, then things would get really bad. God wants loyal, faithful worship.

I am not sure why we celebrate New Year. It is too soon after Christmas, although it is a good way to finish up the cooking sherry you opened in September, those orange flavoured soft-centred chocolates no-one wants, and the last mince pies. I think we would do better to go back to having New Year in March, like they did centuries ago.

We start each year with such high hopes and resolutions to drink and eat less and be kind and nice everyone. We console each other by saying that last year was tough and let us hope for a better one. Often one year is much like another. But wait a moment, Hosea goes on to talk about a change for the good. It is like a family being reconciled.

*I will show my love to the one I called 'Not my loved one.'
I will say to those called 'Not my people,' 'You are my people';
and they will say, 'You are my God.'"* (Hosea 2:23)

Last year I reflected on the passing of H M Queen Elizabeth II, and looking forward and feeling that we *can* make the future better. We cannot guarantee a life without problems: bereavement, shortages and calamities, but we can, as a church, work together to pray for the Church, to lead the world back to God. To pray in our difficulties and for our leaders.

Happy New Year.

New Year? Get First Aid training

Here is a very worthwhile New Year's Resolution: consider doing some First Aid training this year, especially if you are a parent with young children.

In a survey by the British Red Cross, 96% of parents agreed that their main fears were of their children choking, or of finding them unconscious – when seconds could make the difference to their survival. Even 15 minutes of proper First Aid training is enough to give you knowledge that could save someone's life in an emergency.

For details of your nearest First Aid Course visit: www.redcross.org.uk

Deanery of Pontesbury

DEANERY NEWS

Rural Dean: **The Revd Bill Rowell**

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

THOUGHT FOR THE MONTH from Bill Rowell

Rector of the Chirbury Hills Group

It's nice to begin the New Year on the first day of the week. It doesn't happen all that often, but it sort of feels like the right thing to do. Sunday's a good day for a fresh start - though even so, I do wonder whether I'll make it even to January 13th (the traditional Quitter's Day for those who've trashed their New Year's resolutions) with my plans for the year intact.

T.S. Eliot wrote: "Last year's words belong to last year's language and next year's words await another voice. And to make an end is to make a beginning." Well, for us the voice of 2023 is to be the voice of prayer - Bishop Richard has asked that this year should be a Year of Prayer . . . a year of purposeful and disciplined prayer, though also I hope fervent and joyful, in support of the Church in mission, in support of one another, in support of the love God is calling us to live and show and share, not just in churchy things, but in all we say and do (after all, it's when we're "off duty" - or think we are - that, for better or for worse, we tend to have the biggest impact).

As a Franciscan Tertiary, I try to live by a rule of life that includes a discipline of prayer - but straight away I'll admit that one of the reasons I have that rule is that I know prayer is something I'm not all that good at! I have a butterfly mind that flutters off much too easily. So I think that for me this Year of Prayer needs to be a learning and growing experience. And I hope it will be a time of discovery and delight. "I delight greatly in the LORD; my soul rejoices in my God" writes the prophet Isaiah - and maybe I need to do more of that delighting in God when I pray.

Perhaps as well my prayer needs to be less shopping list and more silence. It's not much of a conversation if it's all going one way. "You're just not *listening* to me!" said my brother crossly the other day in the course of a conversation in which the really good story I was itching to tell had felt more important than whatever it was he wanted to tell me. I suspect God may well be saying much the

same - from time to time, anyway.

So the one resolution I hope will make it past Quitter's Day is my resolution to be better at praying, which may mean fewer prayers and more listening; and almost certainly means less by rote, and more just being quietly aware. And I think that if I want that to happen, the Lord will meet me in my striving.

Our Stiperstones Benefice COMMUNITY

Bits & pieces from Greg:

Alpha

Have you ever wondered how all the stories that we hear on a Sunday morning fit together? Have you ever worried about the difficult questions: Why is there so much suffering in the world? Does the Christian faith really conflict with what scientists tell us? Is the Bible still relevant today? Do you ever think "if only I knew a bit more about the Bible"? If so, then **Alpha** may be for you. It is a ten-week course that seeks to answer these questions and many more. The course has been enjoyed by millions of people worldwide and has transformed countless lives. Attendance requires no prior knowledge of the Scriptures and makes no assumption about your starting point. You will be encouraged to say as little or as much as you feel comfortable with.

In addition to the faith-building aspect of the course, there is wonderful fellowship to be found in a small group of 10-12 attendees (new friends just waiting to be found). And of course, there is delicious hot food - we like to spoil our guests!

The course will run on Wednesday evenings from 7 p.m. starting 25th January at The Deanery.

To book a place or to find out more, please contact Sue Townsend at susantownsend267@gmail.com

Alternatively, do speak to one of the guests who completed the course last summer. They are our best advert!

A Webmaster for Pontesbury

We are still looking for a webmaster to take on the responsibility from Richard Elliot. A draft job description has been produced; the chief tasks being keeping the site updated by posting the weekly bulletin and advertising events and disseminating emails to the appropriate person. Please speak to Greg or directly to Richard if you would like to know more.

A PCC Secretary for Pontesbury

After ten years of wonderful service, Val Butterworth will be stepping down as PCC Secretary at St George's at the next APCM. Although this is a little way off, she is offering a full briefing/induction to her successor, providing an opportunity to shadow her in the coming months. Anyone interested in this role should speak to Val or Greg. A role description is available.

A Warm Welcome ...

The churches of Pontesbury are looking to provide a warm place for people to go over the winter.

The programme is as follows:

Mondays	10-12	The Pavilion
Tuesdays	11-2	Pontesbury Baptist Church
Wednesdays	10-12	Pontesbury Congregational Church
Thursdays	10-12	St George's
Fridays	10-12	St George's

Everyone is warmly welcome to come on any and every morning.

Cliffdale

We want to recruit an ecumenical team to offer ministry at Cliffdale Care Home. To this end, there is a meeting on Monday January 9th at 2 p.m. at the Deanery. Anyone who might be interested in this is welcome to attend.

Prayer workshop

The Diocese is hosting a prayer workshop in Church Stretton in the church hall on Saturday Jan 14th from 10-1 p.m. Let Greg know if you would like to attend. Places are free but need to be booked in advance.

Burns Night

There is to be a Burns Night Supper at Hope Village Hall on Friday Jan 27th at 7 p.m. This is aid of church funds. Tickets will need to be ordered in advance for catering purposes.

Hedge creation at Pontesbury Cemetery

When: Monday 16th January, start 9.30am

Where: Pontesbury Cemetery, Bogey Lane, Pontesbury, SY5 0TG.

Come and help us plant a new hedgerow in Pontesbury in the New Year!

A chance to do something positive for nature and the landscape with like-minded people. All tools provided and if you have not planted trees or hedges before, guidance is available on the day.

We expect to be finishing around 1pm.

Let us know you are coming!

Contact Kirsty Stevens, Opening the Ark Project Officer, Caring for Gods Acre
email kirsty@cfga.org.uk

Looking at the wider COMMUNITY

The man who gave us safe milk and saved the silk industry

Two hundred years ago, on 27th December 1822, the French biologist, microbiologist and chemist Louis Pasteur was born. One of the fathers of germ theory, he was best known for the pasteurisation process, which is named in his honour.

At school he was not an outstanding student, his favourite subject being art. But he eventually became a professor of chemistry first at the University of Strasbourg, where he met his wife Marie, and then, in 1854, at the University of Lille, where he was also dean of the science faculty.

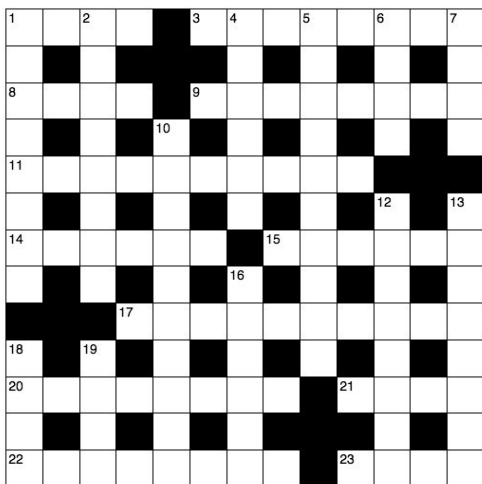
A Roman Catholic by birth, he was said to have retained strong beliefs in God and eternity, –saying that studying nature led to his amazement at the works of the Creator. But he rarely attended church, saying that he prayed while working in the laboratory.



His achievements were many and varied, though after his death some doubt was cast on his methods and his failure sometimes to attribute the work of other scientists. He is best known for the now familiar process of pasteurising milk, removing harmful bacteria, but he also developed vaccinations for anthrax, TB and rabies. He also created, in 1865, a method of eliminating microbes that attacked silkworm eggs and was said to have helped save the silk industry as a result.

In 1868 he suffered a stroke and became partially paralysed, but he was able to continue his work. In 1885 he vaccinated a boy who had been bitten by a rabid dog: the success of this brought him fame and led to fundraising and the building of the Pasteur Institute in Paris in 1888. He died in 1895.

Your PUZZLE for January *answers following*



Crossword Clues for January 2023

Across

- 1 'Again Peter denied it, and at that moment a — began to crow' (John 18:27) (4)
 3 Fetters (Job 33:11) (8)
 8 Perform on a musical instrument (1 Samuel 16:23) (4)
 9 Paul describes it as 'the third heaven' (2Corinthians 12:2-4) (8)
 11 Loyally (Deuteronomy 11:13)(10)
 14 Hens? Me? (anag.) (6)
 15 Not visible (Matthew 6:6) (6)

- 17 Predicted site of the final great battle (Revelation 16:16) (10)
 20 Jacob's youngest son (Genesis 35:18) (8)
 21 One of Zophar's eleven sons (1 Chronicles 7:36) (4)
 22 For example, London, Paris, Rome (8)
 23 United Society for the Propagation of the Gospel (1,1,1,1)

Down

- 1 Favourite church activity: Fellowship round a — — — (3,2,3)
 2 Divinely bestowed powers or talents (8)
 4 Pile together (1 Thessalonians 2:16) (4,2)
 5 Commanded to justify (John 8:13) (10)
 6 Timothy's grandmother (2 Timothy 1:5) (4)
 7 Killed (Psalm 78:34) (4)
 10 One of Graham Kendrick's best-known songs, — — King (3,7)
 12 Indecency (Mark 7:22) (8)
 13 Unceasing (Jeremiah 15:18) (8)
 16 He prophesied 'the abomination that causes desolation' (Matthew 24:15) (6)
 18 British Board of Film Classification (1,1,1,1)
 19 Pans (anag.) (4)

ANSWERS BELOW—NO CHEATING!

ACROSS: 1, Cock, 3, Shackles, 8, Play, 9, Paradise, 11, Faithfully, 14, Emmesh, 15, Unseen, 17, Armageddon, 20, Benjamin, 21, Bert, 22, Capitals, 23, USPG.
DOWN: 1, Cup of tea, 2, Charisma, 4, Heap up, 5, Challenged, 6, Lois, 7, Slew, 10, The Servant, 12, Lewdness, 13, Unending, 16, Daniel, 18, BBFC, 19, Snap.

Now for a different puzzle to start the New Year: This recipe quiz was found in Becket News, No 57, January 2014, the Bulletin of the Hamburg Anglican Church. (Answers are provided below).

Biblical cooking

If you can prepare this dish without looking up the references in the Bible, you should be on Mastermind! It is suggested the Authorised Version is used. (You can find it online at www.kingjamesbibleonline.org/)

Ingredients:

- 1 ½ lb of Judges 5:25 (end);
- 2 ½ lb of Jeremiah 6:20;
- 3 1 tablespoon of 1 Samuel 14:25;
- 4 3 of Jeremiah 17:11;
- 5 ½ lb of 1 Samuel 30:12;
- 6 ½ lb of Nahum 3:12 (chopped);
- 7 2 oz of Numbers 17:8 (blanched and chopped);
- 8 1 lb of 1 Kings 4:22;
- 9 2 Chronicles 9:9;
- 10 a pinch of Leviticus 2:13;
- 11 1 teaspoonful of Amos 4:5
- 12 3 tablespoons of Judges 4:19

Preparation: Mix 8, 9, 10 and 11, and put them aside.

Beat 1, 2 and 3 to a cream.

Still beating add 4, one at a time.

Then add 5, 6 and 7 and beat again.

Then add 12.

Bake in a low oven for 1½ hours

Answers to the Bible clues are:

- 1 butter; 2 sugar; 3 honey;
- 4 eggs; 5 raisins; 6 figs;
- 7 almonds; 8 flour; 9 spices;
- 10 salt;
- 11 leaven may be taken as baking powder or as yeast;
- 12 milk.



God in the SCIENCES

This is written by Dr Ruth M Bancewicz, who is Church Engagement Director at The Faraday Institute for Science and Religion in Cambridge. Ruth writes on the positive relationship between Science and Christian faith.

Science and Miracles

We live in a world where we can expect the sun to rise tomorrow and the milk to pour out of the bottle when we tilt it over our cereal. But for God, the properties of matter and the biological processes that we know and read about in textbooks are simply the usual ways He works. If He chooses to do something unexpected to demonstrate something about His character, His relationship with us, and His purposes, then He will.

A group of 14 UK-based science Professors wrote to the Times in 1984, saying that "We gladly accept the Virgin Birth, the gospel miracles, and the Resurrection of Christ as historical events. We know that we are representative of many other scientists who are also Christians standing in the historical tradition of the churches." For the non-believer, I would suggest a thought experiment: if God exists, why should He be bound by the same laws of physics as us?

Professor Christine Done is an Astrophysicist at the University of Durham. In the book *True Scientists, True Faith* (Monarch, 2014) she writes: "Even when I was an atheist I used to get cross at discussions...on how all Jesus's miracles could be physically explained. To me, once you have believed in a God, a supernatural being, then it's obvious that supernatural stuff could happen, since any God who can make the physical universe and its laws can presumably suspend those laws in any time and way He chooses."

There are also miracles which appear to be a case of wonderful timing. The wind blew all night, and the Israelites crossed the Red Sea on dry land, for example. The biblical writers don't seem especially interested in distinguishing between wonders that seem to break the usual rules of how things happen and those that don't.

Many in Jesus' audiences were not won over by His wonders. Most of the people in the crowds who ate the food He produced out of nowhere were quite happy to turn on Him when the religious authorities decided He was dangerous. We can only make sense of something unexpected, such as an answer to prayer for healing, in the context of a growing relationship with God.

The exciting task for a Christian is to explain what this interaction looks like, and to demonstrate what 'your kingdom come' looks like in our communities. God works through us in words, works *and* wonders.

God in the ARTS

Michael Burgess continues his series on God in the Arts.

'He gave us eyes to see them': Joseph Turner (1775-1851)

Amid the hectic, busy lives we lead, many people fall under the control of 'the hurry syndrome.' We have to do 'A' as soon as possible, and we have get to 'B' as soon as possible. And along the way, we have phone calls to make, emails to open, and Facebook and Twitter and all the social media to check.

It means that we often go through the world without giving that world a second glance. This year in these articles we are going to pause, and, as the poet says, 'stand and stare.' Each month we shall be looking at a painting that celebrates the wonder, the joy, the mystery, and the marvel of the created world in which we live. Joseph Turner (1775-1851) was one of the great artists of the 19th century. But he did little to conform to that accolade. But no matter – he was passionate about his vision of the world around which inspired his art. Wherever he went, he sketched and painted. The ending of the Napoleonic wars meant that people could travel safely through Europe, and he visited Italy many times. That country and its scenery taught him the place of light in art, which in many ways was the foundation of the paintings of his last 15 years. Ruskin hailed Turner as 'a great angel of the Apocalypse....sent as a prophet of God to reveal to men the mysteries of the universe.' Turner was not particularly religious himself, but in the paintings of his old age, he was like a creator grappling with the elemental forces of light and sky, of water and sun.

In 1842 he painted 'Steamboat in a Snowstorm.' We see the water and the sky and the snow all cascading around each other. The clouds and driving snow, the churning of the water – all are there in abundance, and in the midst there is the steamboat trying to keep afloat and make its way through the forces of nature. Without that title we might think this painting is a modern abstract. With the title, we sense the wildness and wonder of the great forces of sea and sky, snow and clouds.

This month of January can bring snow which stops the traffic and maroons us in our homes. Here in the painting the snow and wind beat around the steamboat: it could be an image of human life tossed around by circumstance and event.

But I think Turner wanted us to see something of the extraordinary power the great forces of nature have over life – not to make us fatalistic and gloomy, but to proclaim that here in our world are mysteries and marvels that can stop us in our tracks.

It is like the voice of God speaking to Job, who has questioned the justice of God's ways in His world. 'Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth?' God asks Job. 'Can you bind the chains of the Pleiades or loose the cords of Orion?' Job's response is to question no more. He puts his hand over his mouth and looks out at the world God has created in wonder and amazement.

*'Steamboat in
a Snowstorm',
by J. M. W. Turner,
in the Public domain,
via Wikimedia Commons*



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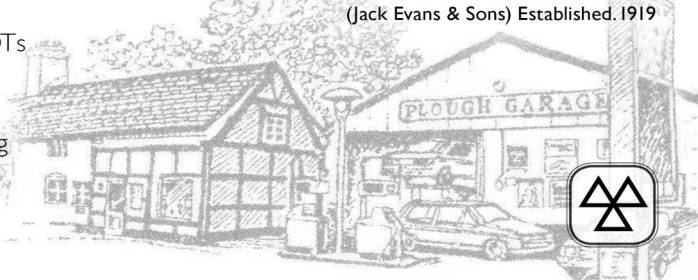
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