# St. George's Hontesburg Magazine 50p



March 2023

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Contributions for <u>St. George's Magazine</u> should be in by the **15**<sup>th</sup> 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 <u>Deanery News</u> to be submitted by 10<sup>th</sup> of previous month to Alison Bebb - Keepers Cottage, Cruckmeole, Shrewsbury, SY5 8JN Telephone: 01743 860158 email: alisonbebb5@gmail.com

QUOTE: Be joyful, and keep your faith and your creed. Do the little things that you have seen me do and heard about. I will walk the path that our fathers have trod before us. - St David (1st March)



# LIFTING UP OUR EYES With Richard Lonsdale

It is a frosty morning which is typical given we had just moved a few pots with bulbs from the utility room to outside based on the warmth of the previous week. Early February was probably too early, but hopefully they will be okay.

This morning I met with the Messy Church team to discuss the activities and themes for the next couple of Messy Church sessions (Minsterley Parish Hall, 3rd Thursday of the month). It was a good and encouraging time, and I am fortunate to have people engaged and willing to pick up various tasks and responsibilities. This month we are looking at Lent and the temptations of Jesus in the wilderness; that through his endurance and reliance on God then he was able to resist the devil's wiles. Why was this? So that he is able to go through everything that we go through and yet because he resisted the temptations, then the Bible tells us that he is a "merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make a sacrifice of atonement for the sins of the people. Because he himself was tested by what he suffered, he is able to help those who are being tested".

Because Jesus went through temptations he is able to identify with us in our human state, but because he did not act on those temptations he is able to not only identify with us but also represent us to God. My friends, this is such incredible Good News because it means that the purpose of Jesus' ministry on earth is to be on our side, that God wants to be friends with us!

Easter is approaching when we celebrate all that God has done for us in Jesus Christ and as we start to see signs of Spring all around us - never forget that through the cold winter of our own fallenness, revival and rebirth are distinct and real possibilities for us all.

### Richard



# 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.

Date	Service	Readings		
5 <sup>th</sup> March 2 <sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Lent	Morning Worship 10.30am	(Genesis 12 1-4a) Psalm 121 John 3 1-17		
7 <sup>th</sup> February Tuesday	Tea Service 2.30pm			
12 <sup>th</sup> March 3 <sup>rd</sup> Sunday of lent	Holy Communion 10.30am	(Psalm 95) Romans 5 1-11 John 4 5-42		
19 <sup>th</sup> March 4 <sup>th</sup> Sunday of Lent <b>Mothering</b> <b>Sunday</b>	Holy Communion 10.30am	Psalm127 1-4 (Colossians 3 12-17) John 19 25b-27		
26 <sup>th</sup> March 5 <sup>th</sup> Sunday of Lent (Passiontide begins)	Holy Communion 10.30am	(Psalm 130) Romans 8 6-11 John 11 1-45		

### A PRAYER FOR LENT by Daphne Kitching

### Dear Father in Heaven

In this month, when Lent begins, we remember Jesus' experience in the wilderness. The world today can seem like a wilderness. So many difficult, incomprehensible things going on. It is tempting to turn away in horror or denial, tempting to look out for ourselves, tempting to take the easy path, to pay attention to whatever the culture dangles before our eyes.

Lord. please help us. We need your word to guide us. We need your Holy Spirit to fill and strengthen us. Help us to give our attention and our worship only to you. Lead us not into temptation. But deliver us from evil.

Thank you. Father, for Jesus, who by his death and resurrection, opens the way to you. Help us to renew our trust in him and through him, to walk with you every day. In his name, Amen.

# Our Local and Church COMMUNITY



# In Memory of Myra Heap 4/6/1926 - 28/12/2022

Carolyn, John and family would like to thank all the friends who helped make Myra's funeral such a special occasion.

She would have loved the send off she received.

A sum of over £300 was raised for the Firefighters Charity, on her behalf.

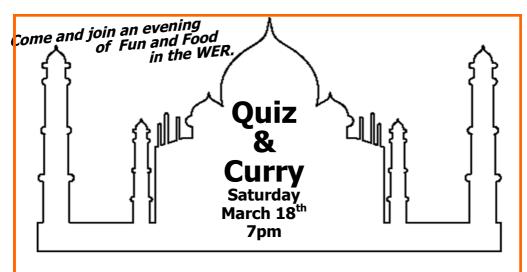
### APCM 2023

The APCM (Annual Parochial Church Meeting) this year will be held on Sunday, 23rd April following the 10:30am Service.

All members of the Electoral Roll are invited to attend the APCM, when we appoint Church Wardens, Assistant Wardens, Sidespeople and PCC Members.

We hope you will be able to join us.





Tickets £8 from Mary Worrall 01743 791069 or Marianne McCall

DASIS 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

### 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

### Revd. Shirley Small 01743 791885.

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

# PCC Secretary - From Me to You!

As you are probably aware, I am stepping down from the position of PCC Secretary following the APCM Meeting on 23<sup>rd</sup> April. I have enjoyed serving in this capacity for the past 11 years and am really sorry to give up, but current circumstances and commitments point to this being a sensible way forward.

I think that some people envisage that the post of PCC Sec is bigger than it really is, as they see me busy about the place. However, it must be remembered that I am involved with several other 'church' occupations: leading Little Dragons, being a choir member, giving Intercessions and Lesson Readings during Services, in addition to serving on various Committees.

Tasks involving a PCC Secretary are interesting and mean that the post-holder knows much of what is going on without having to make final decisions concerning life of our church; but giving one a chance to be involved to a degree in purpose and planning. A good position to be in!

Main responsibilities are the taking of Minutes at PCC and Standing Committee Meetings; sending and receiving occasional information to and from the Diocese; forwarding information to PCC Members on behalf of the Rector - much of this via email, thus indicating a need for some technical competence; - and setting up details for the APCM Annual Parochial Church Meeting.



I am happy to give support as required, initially.

I hope someone reading this may feel inspired to 'give it a go!'

I know that one of you, reading this, is just the person we seek.

Val

Coming soon:

Saturday April 22nd

Big Breakfast.
Tickets £10,
from 9.30 to 11.30am



# Caring and sharing within the community

The support of Shrewsbury Food Bank Plus continues as we become more established, and enables us to help the many households where budgets are under huge pressure. In these unprecedented times, sudden illness, a delay in benefits, a large unexpected repair bill, etc, can easily cause a financial crisis. We will bridge the gap until your circumstances improve by providing a weekly parcel of nutritionally balanced food, along with other essential household items.

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

A referral ensures that your parcel will meet the needs of you and your family and take into account any diet requirements. 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'RE IN NEED OF DONATIONS OF FRESH FRUIT AND VEGETABLES

These can be donated at St George's Church either during the day on Wednesday, or on Thursday morning at 10.00am."

FINANCIAL DONATIONS ARE ALSO WELCOME, ENABLING US TO BUY ITEMS WE RUN SHORT OF - ACCOUNT DETAILS ARE:

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

We make a living by what we get: we make a life by what we give. - Anon

# Looking at GOD

Canon Paul Hardingham considers our appreciation of mothers:

# Mothering Sunday

Mothering Sunday is a day of mixed emotions. For many it's a happy, joyous day, but for others it's one of pain and grief. A day to celebrate love, while acknowledging those who cannot have children or have lost them and those who have no relationship with their mother.

In the dying moments of His life, Jesus honored Mary his mother by showing her love and care. He entrusted His mother to John's protection: 'When Jesus saw His mother there, and the disciple whom He loved standing nearby, He said to her, 'Woman, here is your son,' and to the disciple, 'Here is your mother.' From that time on, this disciple took her into his home.' (John 19:26,27). While affirming the importance of mothers, Jesus reminds us that the love we show on Mothering Sunday is just a token of our continuous appreciation of them.

Jesus also creates a new way of being family, marking the beginnings of the church. In the past, people would go back to their 'mother' church on this Sunday, to acknowledge its importance in their lives. Jesus invites us into this new family of love and mutual belonging, where we can find a place, irrespective of our own family circumstances.

Church is not always an easy place to be, because we are shaped by our own experience of mothering. We may find it hard to give or receive love without ourselves getting in the way. However, God's help is available to change things, 'because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.' (Romans 5:5)

The mother of three difficult youngsters was asked whether she'd have children if she had it to do over again. 'Yes,' she replied. 'But not the same ones.'

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



# Spiritual Practices—Fasting

Spiritual disciplines are practices designed to help us grow as disciples of Jesus. This month we are looking at the practice of *fasting*.

Fasting can be a neglected discipline, but plays an important part in the Christian life, especially during Lent. Jesus began His earthly ministry by fasting in the wilderness for 40 days and taught His disciples to fast: 'when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, so that it will not be obvious to others that you are fasting, but only to your Father, who is unseen.' (Matthew 6:17,18).

#### Why Fast?

Firstly, giving up something in my life underlines my desire to put God first in my life. Secondly, fasting shows me how much I depend on things other than God in my life, so I can surrender my idols to Him. Thirdly, fasting encourages me to have a deeper hunger and dependency for God in my life. Therefore, fasting gives me space to focus on God for His strength, provision, and wisdom and leads to a more intimate relationship with Christ. It also enables the Holy Spirit to reveal my true spiritual condition, leading to repentance, and a transformed life and a more attentive heart towards God.

### How can I fast?

Usually fasting involves missing one or two meals during the day, although some can't abstain for medical reasons. It might also include abstaining or limiting the time I give to television, alcohol or social media. However, Lent can also be a time to embrace new spiritual disciplines e.g. joining a study group, 'random acts of kindness', or giving more time to prayer and Bible Study. Whatever you do, make Lent count this year!

'Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.' (Matthew 5:6).

> If you can't sleep, don't count sheep: talk to the Shepherd. - Anon

Here is some encouragement to 'take soundings' on our lives this Lent.

# Stay trimmed and balanced

'Do not let this Book ...depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night,...be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be ...successful.' Joshua 1:8

Any flying instructor will tell you that aeroplanes need to be 'trimmed' or 'balanced in flight' on a regular basis. After flying through storms and hitting air pockets, they get knocked out of line. That's true of our path through life. The bad storms of sickness, redundancy, divorce and disappointment, can knock us off our balance, too.

In other words, our attitude needs to be constantly checked and adjusted. Have you checked yours lately? What are you encountering at the moment that is putting pressure on you to veer off course? So long as we live, we will always need to look to God, to stay 'trimmed and balanced'. Lent is an excellent time to do this.

The best way to stay balanced is to read God's Word. t gives us a true map of the world around us, and it shows us where we are on that map. Here's an idea you can try for Lent: every week, for the next few weeks, choose a Bible verse and write it down on a small card. Carry it with you wherever you go and memorise it. In one year, you'll know 52 new scriptures, and more importantly, your attitudes will be more naturally in line with God's Word, your faith will be strengthened, and your life will be moving in the right direction.

The wilderness is a place where we all go at some point in our lives...

# Head for the wilderness

'And he said, 'Which way shall we go up?' And he answered, 'The way through the wilderness...' 2 Kings 3:8

The only way into the Promised Land is through the wilderness. One Bible scholar has called it 'God's killing field'. He says: 'That's where the things that cause us to stumble in our walk with God are permitted to die; where God 'weeds out' those who want only a momentary, superficial relationship with Him, from those who

want their lives really to count."

If your life is a wilderness at present, take heart: God is there with you the whole time. It's where you learn to stand and to cast all your cares on Him(1 Peter 5:7). Sometimes God will lead you there abruptly, especially if He's been trying to get your attention. He may want to talk to you about the call He's placed on your life, but you haven't had time to listen. Now you find yourself in the wilderness, and you realise that God is the only one who can get you through this.

Here, He permits you to be stripped of pride, so that you can be clothed with humility; stripped of self-sufficiency, so that you can be brought to the place of total dependence on Him. If you're there today, don't think that God's punishing you or that He's forsaken you. No, He's simply allowing some things in your life to die, so that other things can be born and grow into life and fruitfulness.

You'll get through this and by God's grace you'll reach your destiny. The truth is – there is no other way to the Promised Land other than through the wilderness.

### Giving the journey

In a remote village in Central America the word got out that one of the missionaries who had served their region for many years was about to return home because of her old age.

The people decided to hold an event of 'public appreciation' for her. One very old and very poor man walked for four days to reach the ceremony. He came in over mountainous terrain carrying two coconuts, which was all he had.

The missionary recognised the man as coming from the remote village in the mountains.

"Brother," she said, "I cannot believe that you would walk so far to present me with this gift."

His response? "Long walk part of gift."

# Looking at the CHURCH

The Ven John Barton considers some findings from the 2021 Census.

### The 'Nones'

Do you know any? 'Nones' are people who, when asked what religion they belong to, say 'None'. At the last Census in 2021, just over 50% of adults in England and Wales said they were 'Nones'.



Not all are atheists. More detailed delving by the research organisation Theos, revealed that 16% of Nones believe in reincarnation, 14% in the healing power of crystals and 14% in the supernatural power of ancestors. The author G K Chesterton (1874-1936) wrote, "When people choose not to believe in God, they do not thereafter believe in nothing, they then become capable of believing in anything." He had himself dabbled in the occult and a variety of alternatives, before becoming a committed Roman Catholic.

Recent research by historian Tom Holland convinced him that, "to live in a western country is to live in a society still utterly saturated by Christian concepts and assumptions." You'll find all this in his book, "Dominion: How the Christian Revolution Remade the World".

Even the Guardian's resident atheist admits, "I feel culturally Christian, so deeply imbued with its myths, paintings, hymns and parables". Many others who also claim atheism, often turn out to be less certain than her, and are actually agnostic, meaning 'don't know'. Many of us seem to have lost touch with our roots and contented to live our lives on the surface without asking questions, until we have to.

Actor Amanda Abbington and stuntman Jonathan Goodwin tell of how their love for each other deepened after an accident left him paralysed from the waist down. He says, "I've always been a very cynical person but since meeting Amanda I've shifted my opinion about the power of the universe. I just had this really powerful feeling that we were supposed to be together."

Does that mean 'none', or something more?



"The new vicar is really cool, Dad. Did you know that God emailed the Ten Commandments to Moses' Tablet PC?"





Look—he's grown up!

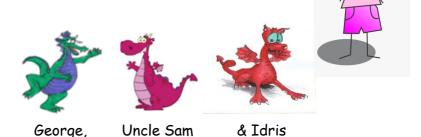
An elderly man called in church during a recent Little Dragons Session. He has recently lost two of his life-long friends and, although he has never been into our church before, he felt a need and entered. We chatted in the inner porch for a few minutes before I offered to take him - by safe passage - to the quiet chapel where he could light a candle to the memory of his friends.

The Little Dragons continued in their usual pursuits at the craft table, pushing the prams or riding the bikes up and down the main aisle; or, in the case of their Mums, catching up on the latest interesting news. They didn't even notice our visitor, who spent quite some time, after lighting candles, sitting quietly in the Lady Chapel.

When he came to leave, our little people were sitting on the chancel step enjoying Storytime and singing. So, W... chatted again and told me much about his life; his loneliness and his need for company. After telling him about Friday Coffee and our ever-open door, I am hoping that he will return.

St. George's Church is always open during the day and it is good to know that people, even strangers, feel welcome to enter and take peace in this haven.

Joy to everyone, from Val and from we three:



Love is blind. Your mother started loving you before she ever saw your face. - Anon



**BIBLE MOTHERS** 

Who had two sons called Cain and Abel?

Genesis 4:1-2

Who was 90 years old when she had her son Isaac?

Genesis 17:19

Whose prayers for a child were answered by God?

1 Samuel 1:20

Who was Ruth's Mother-in-Law?

Ruth 1:1-5

Eunice was Timothy's mother, but who was her mother?

2 Timothy 1:5

Who saved her baby by putting him in a basket in the river?

Exodus 6:20

How many other words can you make from:

Look up the Bible verses

Matt 1:16

2 Tim 1:5

1Kings 1:11

1 Sam 1:20

Gen 34:1

Gen 30:22

and find out who the

Bible mothers are.

ot yo MOTHERING SUNDAY

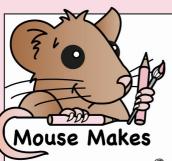
Look up the Bible verses then find the answers and the names below in the word search



Н K

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**EVE** 

MARY **JOSEPH** 

SARAH **EUNICE** 

JOHN

SAMUEL

16

### In the News



# ... goes into administration

Traidcraft PLC – a Christian group that has spent years campaigning for fair trade – has gone into administration.

The stands were familiar to many churchgoers, with almost 3,000 churches in the country selling Traidcraft products at some point in their 40-year history.

The brand cited the coronavirus pandemic, the war in Ukraine and soaring energy prices as the reasons behind the severe financial difficulties.

### Millions of children starving worldwide

More than 30 million children worldwide are suffering from "acute malnutrition" as the global food crisis persists into 2023.

That's according to international experts, who say that the 15 countries enduring the worst of the crisis are Afghanistan, Burkina Faso, Chad, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Haiti, Kenya, Madagascar, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan and Yemen.

In 2022 the key driver of food insecurity was massive inflation, which put even staple food such as bread beyond the financial reach of many. In 2023 there are likely to be increased shortages of food, owing to a global fertiliser shortage.

Natural disasters also have a terrible impact. Seven of the worstaffected countries are East African nations that have suffered several years of failed rainy seasons and droughts.

Now the Barnabas Fund has created food.gives – the international Christian foodbank, to supply food aid to needy Christians in many lands and meet this desperate, ongoing need. If you would like to help, please visit: http://food.gives

# Looking at you

Some thoughts from the Revd Peter Crumpler, a Church of England priest in St Albans, Herts, and a former communications director for the C of E.

# Time for some good news?

If you can't bear to watch or read the news, you're not alone.

Newly published research shows that more than seven out of ten news publishers are concerned about increasing levels of 'news avoidance.'

More and more people are turning away from the news because it's just too difficult to take. And that may present an opportunity for Christians to present our life-giving gospel message.

The Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism has published its 'Journalism, media, and technology trends and predictions 2023' report, based on a wide-ranging survey of 303 news leaders in 53 countries. It explores the latest developments in journalism and the priorities for the year ahead.

One area of deep concern was increasing levels of 'news avoidance' with 72 per cent of publishers worried about the phenomenon. Many readers and viewers were avoiding news, especially, says the report "around important but often depressing topics like Ukraine and climate change."

Does this widespread 'news avoidance' have any messages for the Church and for Christians generally? Well, maybe two.

The first is for ourselves. How guilty are we of scrolling past bad news on our social media feed, switching off the TV or radio, or pausing a podcast when the subject matter becomes tough to take?

That's tempting to do, but it's important for Christians to be aware of events and trends across the globe, to enable us to pray intelligently, and to be able to support organisations and people working to make the world a better place.

The second is about how we present our gospel message. We have 'good news' to proclaim, while we are living in a time when people

are turning away from news of any kind, seeking instead to look for entertainment and distraction.

In our preaching, in our personal testimonies and in the wide range of ways that we communicate the gospel message of 'abundant life' through Jesus Christ, we are called to be positive and upbeat.

In a world that is turning away from bad news, we have good news to offer. Our mission is to present this good news in ways that can catch the attention of a distracted world that's tired of the gloom and looking for something better.

# Time for a Spring clean? by David Pickup, a solicitor.

Cleanse me with hyssop, and I will be clean; wash me, and I will be whiter than snow. (Psalm 51:77)

People used to have an annual 'Spring clean' when they would clean the house from top to bottom. Perhaps it was a way of marking the new season or because the longer days and increasing sunlight rays made the dust stand out. Certainly, the coal fires used all winter before central heating would have made the houses dusty!

If you do have a clean-up, why not have a clear-out as well? Some of us are not good at throwing things away. Even if we don't use the thing, we can have a sentimental attachment to it, and not want to let it go.

But what do you do with the stuff you no longer want, without simply adding to landfill? There are online places to sell second-hand goods and local online organisations that advertise things people want to get rid of. You could also have a garage sale (called a yard sale in America) where you sell stuff, or even go to a car boot sale.

Another way of passing things on is via a charity shop. But charity shops are particular about what they can accept. Many reject items that do not have a safety label, and items that could be potentially dangerous, such as electrical goods.

If you want to raise money for church funds, how about holding a church or village jumble sale? If you decide to go ahead, just give yourself time to plan it well in advance with rules about what you will accept, how you will publicise it, how you can keep everyone safe, and who will manage the money.



### From the Bishop of Hereford

#### Dear friends

I have been delighted to see how many people have already engaged with events in our year of prayer. Not only, that but parishes across the diocese are organising their own programmes. It has felt a welcome going back to basics of why the church is here. We are too often overwhelmed by our obvious challenges and forget that prayer connects us with the one who holds the future in his hands.

Prayer is confusing! If God is all powerful and all knowing, why do we need to ask him anything? Wouldn't he unfold his purposes in spite us? What about those prayers that must be in his will, but seem to remain unanswered? But Jesus clearly taught us to ask for things. What are the requests in the Lord's prayer for God's will to be done on earth as in heaven and for daily bread, if not prayers for God's intervention to sustain us and even change our circumstances? Paul advised the Philippian Church 'in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, to present our requests to God'.

Perhaps our quandary is because we mistake correlation with causation. If we could really twist God's arm, then it would be about formulas and patterns, with God sitting inactive until the right prayers were offered. Correlation is rather more mysterious. As Archbishop William Temple said, when challenged whether prayer had a point, "When I pray co-incidences happen; when I don't, they don't!" In the Lord's prayer, your will be done follows hallowed be your name. Worship re-orientates the mind to think 20

God's thoughts after him. A mind so formed is more likely to ask for the things that are on God's heart. More importantly, such a heart may find itself the answer to its own prayers. A prayer for justice might lead to actions to bring justice. A prayer for more people to come to know Jesus may raise the courage to tell people about him.

I hope the Year of Prayer may lead to a lasting change in our own praying and an increase in the spiritual temperature and our missional fruitfulness. If you haven't done so already, do join in. You can find resources to help your church and a list of all our key events on the Year of Prayer web page on the Diocesan website.

### +Richard

... any church is replete with little hidey holes where an absent-minded clergyman can place things and mislay them: By Nigel Beeton

### The Vicar's lost his iPad!

The Vicar's lost his iPad — Disaster's come to church! His sermon's on that iPad It's left him in the lurch!

He's been looking for that iPad For most of half an hour. He's searched the chancel and the nave So now he's up the tower!

Oh! Where's he put that iPad? He had it when he came! He's searching high and searching low It's driving him insane!

The angels in the hammer beams For several hundred years Have witnessed proper order But now they're all in tears.

For chaos reigns below them Upon this modern day For everyone is searching now — Both clergyman and lay!

The Vicar found his iPad Tonight. we'll all be sleeping! He sent a message from his phone And set his iPad beeping!

And as he holds his iPad
We feel his happy glow:
But could he not have done that trick
That half-an-hour ago?

The answer comes upon us
That trick he could not do!
For, in the caverns of our church
He'd lost his smartphone, too!

### Deanery of Pontesbury

### DEANERY NEWS

Rural Dean: The Revd Bill Rowell

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

# THOUGHT FOR THE MONTH from Rev Greg Roberts of Ford

When I wrote the March 'Thought for the month' last year I reflected on Lent, fasting, and the spiritual disciples. This year I'm going to look at the saints' days that occur in the month. There's St David's day, of course, on the first of the month,

St Patrick is remembered on 17<sup>th</sup> March, and St Joseph of Nazareth 3 days later. However, the saint that draws my attention is St Chad who died in 672 and the church recalls on March 2<sup>nd</sup>. He is the patron saint of several churches in our region as well as giving his name to the college I attended in Durham.

Chad, his family it seems was Northumbrian nobility, he was trained by St Aidan.

It was Oswald, king of Northumbria who invited Aidan to come from Iona to the island of Lindisfarne, off the north-east coast. St Aidan was the first bishop of Lindisfarne, and was responsible for sending out monks who would walk from village to village patiently explaining Christianity as they went. In this way Christianity spread throughout Northumbria. Chad was taught and sent out by Aidan.

St Chad's life and way of working seems to be a very good example of living according to the different standards urged upon the disciples by Jesus. We can remember that James and John were ambitious and wanted authority when Jesus won the victory they were expecting. Like many people since, they were opportunists and were looking for a comfortable position for themselves. But Jesus had a completely different understanding of authority. He taught the disciples that it was an opportunity to serve, an opportunity to promote the good of others. To serve in this revolutionary manner makes for true greatness.

Chad was called to be bishop of York because it was seen that he was a modest and holy man who travelled on foot from community to community and worked hard in preaching the gospel. At the time the church was having disagreements. So what is new?

The disagreements were about the date of Easter. Chad's ordination was called into question because he had been consecrated by bishops who held an alternative view to that of the new archbishop of Canterbury, Theodore.

On hearing that he was to be removed, he said; "If you consider that I have not been properly consecrated, I willingly resign this charge of which I never thought myself worthy. I undertook it, though unworthy, under obedience." He impressed the archbishop so much by his humility that rather than being allowed to retire back to his monastery he was properly consecrated and became Bishop of Mercia and moved his cathedral to Lichfield. He died on 2<sup>nd</sup> March in 672 and is buried at Lichfield. We give thanks for the life and example of Chad and for all who live their lives in a manner that lifts others up, that seeks to serve, and to follow the example of Christ.

With every Blessing for a holy and positive Lent, The Rev'd Greg Roberts

### Lent Courses in the Deanery

- Revd Bill Rowell lead course on **Different ways of Praying** on Wednesday evenings from 7-8.30pm from 1st to 29th March inclusive, in various homes in his Benefice, Ithe ast one will be an Agape Supper on Wednesday 5th April. Contact Bill on 01938 552064 for exact details.
- Revd Greg Smith lead Pete Greig's course on the Lord's Prayer on Wednesdays from 12noon to 1pm, soup and rolls provided, from 22nd February (Ash Wednesday) to 5th April inclusive in St George's Church, Pontesbury.
- Revd David Moss lead sessions looking at the Great Prayers of the Bible, on Mondays 3pm from 27th February to 3rd April inclusive in Westbury church and on zoom.
- Revd Emma Phillips lead a course on **Living the Beatitudes** on Wednesdays 2-3.30pm from 1st to 29th March inclusive in The Rectory at Longden.
- Revd Greg Roberts a Lent Course on the Lord's Prayer on Thursday evenings 7.30 pm to 9 pm from 23rd February at Ford vicarage or in Ford Church.

# Our Stiperstones Benefice COMMUNITY

# Bits & pieces from Greg:

#### Foodbank

An encouragement to continue to support the work of the foodbanks in Minsterley and Pontesbury after we recently ran out of food at Pontesbury. There are collecting points at St George's, Hope and Holy Trinity.

### St George's Meadow

The newly established meadow in St George's churchyard is growing well. In order to give the green hay seedlings a better chance of flourishing, another cut is planned. We will need volunteers to rake away the mown grass as mulch for the newly planted hedge. Mowing is planned for Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> March at 10.30 am. If you can help, please bring your own rake and wheelbarrow or builders bag.

### Turkey/Syria Earthquake Appeal

We've all been appalled at the terrible earthquake that has killed thousands in Turkey and Syria. One way of responding to this tragedy is via Tearfund. Donations can be made by visiting <a href="https://www.tearfund.org/campaigns/turkey-syria-earthquake-appeal">https://www.tearfund.org/campaigns/turkey-syria-earthquake-appeal</a>

### **Palm Sunday**

This year, as last year, we will be dramatizing the Passion Gospel at St George's on Palm Sunday. This requires a cast of thousands (well twenty anyway). If you would like to take part, having even a nonspeaking part or would like to help out behind the scenes, it's not too late to offer - please speak to Greg asap.

### **Carbon Footprint**

Many thanks to Gerald Worrall for his hard work in calculating the carbon footprint of St George's: just over 21 tonnes of CO2 a year is our best estimate. This is the first step towards reducing the footprint. If you want to undertake this challenge as an individual, then you can visit <a href="https://www.climatestewards.org/carbon-calculators/">https://www.climatestewards.org/carbon-calculators/</a>

### **Lent Lunches**

Lent Lunches commenced on Ash Wednesday at St George's. We will be focusing on the Lord's Prayer as well as enjoying soup and fellowship. There will be an opportunity to donate to Water Aid. All welcome, Wednesdays 12-1pm.

### **Prayer Ministry**

Training is offered to those who would like to know more about Prayer Ministry, Mondays 7pm at Holy Trinity Minsterley. Please contact Susan Lockwood at <a href="mailto:susanlockwood345@btinternet.com">susanlockwood345@btinternet.com</a> if you'd like to join in.

SMILE: If biblical headlines were written by today's secular media...

<u>On Red Sea crossing:</u> WETLANDS TRAMPLED IN LABOUR STRIKE Pursuing environmentalists killed

On David vs. Goliath:

HATF CRIME KILLS BELOVED CHAMPION Psychologist questions influence of rock

On Elijah on Mt. Carmel:

FIRE SENDS RELIGIOUS RIGHT EXTREMIST INTO FRENZY 400 killed

On the birth of Christ:

STABLE OCCUPIED, ANIMALS LEFT HOMELESS Animal Rights activists enraged by insensitive couple

On feeding the 5,000:

PRFACHER STEALS CHILD'S LUNCH Disciples mystified at leader's callous behaviour

On raising Lazarus from the dead:

FUNDAMENTALIST PREACHER RAISES A STINK Will reading now has to be delayed

On healing the 10 lepers:

LOCAL DOCTOR'S PRACTICE RUINED 'Faith Healer' causes bankruptcy

On healing of the Gadarene demoniac: MADMAN'S FRIEND CAUSES STAMPEDE Local farmer's investment lost



### Present

For their elderly vicar's 70<sup>th</sup> birthday, the congregation at St Mary's decided to give him a present of a new suit. The vicar was so moved by the gift that the following Sunday he stood before everyone and began his homily with a tear in his eye, "Today I am preaching to you in my birthday suit."

# Looking at the wider COMMUNITY

# Remembering Sir Christopher Wren by Tim Lenton

It was 300 years ago, on 8<sup>th</sup> March 1723, that English architect Sir Christopher Wren died at the age of 90. Best known for designing St Paul's Cathedral, he was also a ground-breaking anatomist, astronomer and physicist.

A founder of the Royal Society, Wren served as its president from 1680 to 1682 and was highly regarded by such eminent scientists as Isaac Newton and Blaise Pascal. But it is as an architect that he is best known: beside St Paul's, regarded as his masterpiece and completed in 1710, he directed the rebuilding of 52 churches after the Great Fire of London in 1666 – though he did not work alone, heading a team of creative minds that included Nicholas Hawksmoor.

Born at East Knoyle in Wiltshire, Wren was the only surviving son of Christopher Wren the Elder, who became Dean of Windsor. He was a sickly child but lived a long life, despite his family being affected by the Civil Wars that broke out in 1642. He married twice, but both his wives died very early – one of smallpox and the other of tuberculosis. Although Wren lived 90 years, he was married for only nine of them, but had four children.

Two factors may have contributed to Wren's success as an architect: one was basic – his decision to move into that field because of the dearth of architects in the mid-17<sup>th</sup> century; the other was more dramatic – the Great Fire of London, which necessitated so much rebuilding in the city and gave him the opportunity to shine.



Robert Hooke, the scientist and architect who was a friend of Wren, said: "Since the time of Archimedes there scarce ever met in one man in so great perfection such a mechanical hand and so philosophical a mind."



# Save the Date - National Day of Reflection Great Daffodil Appeal 2023

For the third year running, Marie Curie lead the National Day of Reflection on *Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> March*.

It is a unique day for everyone to remember loved ones who have died, and to support people who

are grieving. On the day there will be a minute's silence at noon, a nationwide network of Walls of Reflection, and a series of grief-themed online events.

Taking place on the third anniversary that the UK went into lock-down, the National Day of Reflection raises awareness of the impact of grief on our lives and of the need for better support. Millions of people across the UK – adults as well as children – are grieving now and need support, whether in the workplace, at home, in schools or across communities.

The National Day of Reflection also ties in with the charity's flagship annual fundraising appeal in March – the Great Daffodil Appeal – with people donating and wearing one of their iconic daffodil pin badges.

Every year thousands of supporters from across the UK come together to raise money to support the charity's nurses, doctors, and hospice staff so they can continue to provide expert care to people at end of life, and their families.

More details at: www.mariecurie.org.uk/dayofreflection

### The Bible according to children—

Children's version of biblical stories and events have a charm all their own.

- ~ Adam and Eve were created from an apple tree.
- ~ Noah built an ark, which the animals came on to in pears.
- ~ Lot's wife was a pillar of salt by day, but a ball of fire by night.
- ~ The Egyptians were all drowned in the dessert. Afterwards, Moses went up on Mount Cyanide to get the ten amendments.
  - ~ Samson slayed the Philistines with the axe of the Apostles.

# Your WordSearch PUZZLE for March

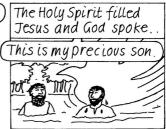
It can be read in the Bible in Jn 1:29-34, Mt3:13-17, Lk3:21-4:13, MK1:9-12

### A short story from the Bible

People came to John to be baptised-washed in the river Jordan-to say sorry for what they had done wrong. Then Jesus came.





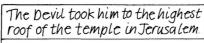










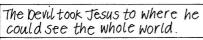




'Why don't you jump? God would make sure His angels would catch you

The Bible says Don't try to manipulate God.









Go away! Only God is to be worshipped





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Spirit
Devil
world
stone
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John
drink

baptise eat sorry bread angels desert worship Jordan

# God in the SCIENCES

Written by Dr Ruth M. Bancewicz, Church Engagement Director at The Faraday Institute for Science and Religion in Cambridge.

# Abucket of tadpoles: Springtime, curiosity, and the Theology of Science

When I was nearly three, I knocked a bucket of tadpoles all over the patio. Those unfortunate creatures must

have been collected to educate my brother and me on where frogs came from, but a toddler can't just stand by and watch. Can I see up close? Or maybe I was 'helpfully' moving it to another place. I just remember doing something I shouldn't have done, and tadpoles on the ground. I was sad that I wouldn't get to see those creatures grow up.

I might have been great at destroying things when I was a child (my family would probably say I still am), but I absolutely love watching living things up close. The more I learn, the more my sense of wonder grows. For a tadpole to become a frog, large sections of its gut, salivary glands and muscles must die, as well as the gills. The cells in those tissues are programmed to curl up and disintegrate, and are swallowed up by a specialised kind of white blood cell. Legs grow from small sacs of cells on the tadpole's body, and one of my textbooks says that 'The nervous system is also remodelled' - which I suspect is a bit of an understatement.

This knowledge removes a little of the mystery of how a tadpole turns into a frog, but there is plenty more to discover. These few details also reveal the cleverness of the process. Metamorphosis is surprisingly common in the animal kingdom. How is that an efficient way to grow up, or is efficiency not the most important thing for an animal?

Scientists are essentially grown-ups who are still very much in touch with their inner two-year-old self. They refuse to stop asking questions, even when finding an answer becomes decidedly more awkward than opening a textbook.

Many scientists are people of faith, and this also drives their questioning. They believe that God created a world that was very good, that the purpose of all Creation is to praise Him, we are made in Gods image, and that we are tasked with looking after Creation. So Christians, of all people, should be enjoying and investigating our surroundings. These are the bones of a Theology of Science which serves some of us very well, and keeps us looking into things like buckets of frogs – that is, until a two-year-old comes and knocks them over.

# God in the ARTS

Michael Burgess continues his look at great works of Christian art.

### 'He gave us eyes to see them': Sandro Botticelli's 'Primavera'



Picture credit: : Sandro Botticelli, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons.

Each month we are exploring a painting that celebrates the glory and wonder of creation. In this month of March the world around us is moving from the cold and harshness of winter to new birth as the earth comes to life again in the season of spring. It is the theme of 'Primavera' by the 15<sup>th</sup> century Florentine artist, Sandro Botticelli. His work in the Sistine Chapel in Rome brought him to the attention of the Medici court, which commissioned this painting in 1482. The Medici dominated the political life of Florence, but Cosimo and his descendants were also great patrons of the arts. Humanism, which debated the place of reason in a world of faith, was the mood of the day in court life, and the work of artists at

that time expressed the human form in all its beauty.

Scholars have never agreed on the exact meaning of 'Primavera,' but it is certainly a celebration of beauty and fertility. We can identify a host of classical figures: Mercury on the left of the canvas separating the clouds so that Spring may come; Zephyr, the west wind, on the right, who is pursuing Chloris; Flora, the goddess of abundance robed in a colourful dress and adorned with flowers. In the centre we see Venus, the goddess of beauty, with a blindfolded Cupid above, preparing to shoot an arrow at the three Graces, whose arms are joined in a stately dance. The setting is a wooded garden where the trees are filled with oranges, myrtle surrounds Venus, and wondrous flowers spring up from the earth.

At first glance the sensuousness and fruitfulness seem almost profane. But we look again and think we see not Venus in the centre, but the Blessed Virgin Mary, whose own fruitfulness gave birth to the Saviour. The three figures by her side could be the Christian virtues of beauty, truth and goodness who dance in her honour, while all around God's creation blossoms forth to bring joy and new life. It is the world of the Song of Solomon, which the early Fathers could only accept as an allegory of Christian love, where the individual soul seeks the Saviour. But that book of the Old Testament was written in praise of the love that moves human life, as much as it moves the universe. And that can only be good because God the creator is good.

The writer invites the beloved to accompany her to the fields and vineyards and find fruits in blossom and plants in bloom: a wilderness transformed by growth and goodness. Just so, we enter the garden of this painting. The characters may be classical, some may be Christian, but as we look we see a creative Love that transforms the winter of death and darkness into light and Spring – the birthday of creation.





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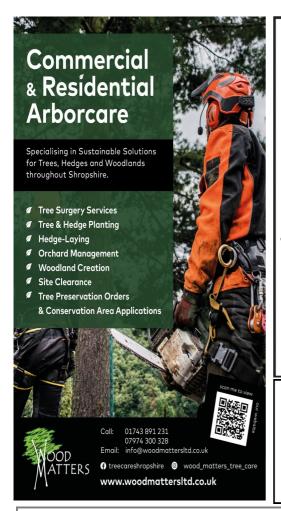












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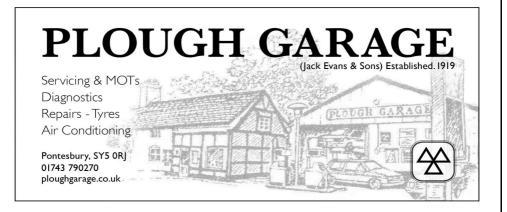
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