

# *St. George's Montezbury*

Magazine 50p



*August 2023*

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Contributions for St. George's Magazine should be given to the Editor 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](mailto:stgsmagazine@googlemail.com)

Items for inclusion in the **Deanery News** to be submitted by 10<sup>th</sup> of previous month to

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## LIFTING UP OUR EYES

*With Richard Lonsdale*

Once in Turkey on holiday I came across a shop selling "Genuine Fakes!".

I am wading through Jean Baudrillard's "Simulacra and Simulation" at present; it's heavy going! The experience is as follows - generally I work through several pages at a time, mainly of total incomprehension before coming across a killer paragraph where I think "brilliant!", and this encourages me to carry on. Fortunately, it is not too large a work.

It's a critique of modern society and how so much of what we find ourselves in is a simulation or simulacra of something that was once real, in fact he goes further and argues that we are actually living within "a fake of a fake" system, the original has long since been lost - I suppose walking down an average town centre may give an example, with the high street chain offering "genuine (insert nationality here) food" or "ye olde English pub" with mock Tudor frontage and fake old fashioned furniture and selling mass produced gassy lager..., in the 90's I seem to remember there was a run of Irish ones... fortunately we have some good pubs selling good ale around here!

The reason I'm interested in this is of course the idea that we fell from the "Real" when we were thrown out of Eden for doing what humans generally do, and how there has been a search to try and create something approximate to the Real ever since - whether through the building of the Tower of Babel, or the creation of the Golden Calf, or in more recent times the huge phallic skyscrapers and worship of money or perhaps it is in our current culture where we all know the thing we are looking at isn't real but we have to pretend that

it is in order to ensure our views and values are seen as suitably progressive – the emperor has no clothes on indeed!

Ultimately all this doesn't satisfy; it frustrates and disappoints, falls short and leads to us reaching for the next thing that bears some similarity to the "Real", which of course means the merry-go-round goes on. The Church certainly isn't immune to this, but we do at least know the truth that God isn't content to leave us in this mess. The coming of Jesus Christ was a breaking into our fake world of the "Real" and if we were to reach out and taste what the Real is like then it should be an antidote to anything fake and simulated for ever. The Psalmist writes "*taste and see that the Lord is good*" and I can personally assure you that it is very good!

## *Transfiguration*

*(Luke 9:28-36)*

Praying on the mountain top  
We saw amazing things,  
Moses and Elijah  
And Jesus, in dazzling white, his face shining.  
The Lawgiver, the Prophet  
And the Lord.  
Written Word, Spoken Word,  
Living Word  
In glorious splendour.  
It was so good to be there,  
On the mountain top.

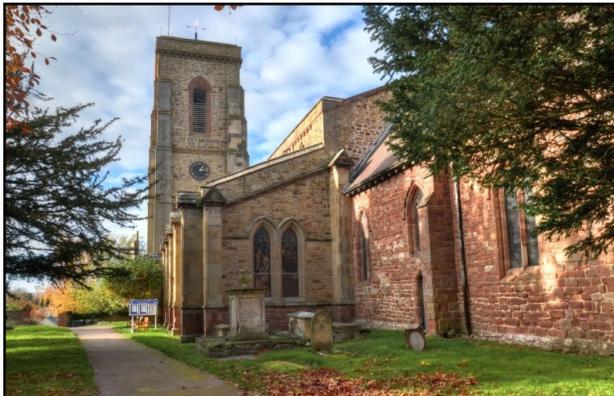
Father, help us  
When we are back down in the valley,  
In the everyday muddle and mess,  
To remember your voice,  
To see through the clouds  
To Jesus, the one you sent  
To complete the Law and the Prophets.  
Help us to rejoice in knowing your Son.  
Tuned in by your Holy Spirit,  
Help us to go on listening.

*By Daphne Kitching*

# 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
<b>6<sup>th</sup> August</b>  The Transfiguration of our Lord 9 <sup>th</sup> Sunday after Trinity	Morning Worship 10.30am	Isaiah.55 1-5 (Romans 9. 1-5) Matthew 14. 13-21
<b>13<sup>th</sup> August</b>  10 <sup>th</sup> Sunday after Trinity	Holy Communion 10:30 am	1 Kings 19. 9-18 (Romans 10. 5-15) Matthew 14. 22-33
<b>20<sup>th</sup> August</b>  11 <sup>th</sup> Sunday after Trinity	Holy Communion 10.30am	Psalm 67 (Romans 11. 1-2a, 29-32) Matthew 15. 21-28
<b>27<sup>th</sup> August</b>  12 <sup>th</sup> Sunday after Trinity	Holy Communion 10.30am	Isaiah. 51.1-6 Romans 12.1-8 Matthew 16. 13-20



# Our Local and Church COMMUNITY



Rea Valley  
foodbank

Everyone is affected by the high cost of energy, food and essential household items. The Rea Valley Foodbank is

here for all those who are unable to meet their food bills and will provide a weekly parcel or nutritionally balanced meals, along with other household goods. Everything you receive is in date and we can help for a period of time until circumstances improve.

You do need a referral to ensure that it takes into account any diet requirements, but it's really easy—just call:

Reverend Greg Smith 07902 794653

or Reverend Richard Lonsdale 07922 830488

Alternatively, GP's and schools can make referrals

**Donations of men's and women's toiletries, carrier bags, pet food and in-date food items. If you can help, please drop donations into either of the churches.**

Our teams give you a warm welcome when you come to either of

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

**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](mailto: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.

# Dates for your Diary ...

- Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> September **Breakfast Bonanza** WER 9 -11 am £10 each tickets from Marianne McCall 07944 333830
- Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> October **Harvest Lunch** after the morning service with secret auction.
- Friday 13<sup>th</sup> to Sun 15<sup>th</sup> October **Art Festival and Bake & Craft Sale**
- Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> November **Bingo, Bangers & Mash** at St George's 7pm
- Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> December **Wreath making** two sessions.
- Fri 8<sup>th</sup> to Sun 10<sup>th</sup> December - **Christmas Tree Festival**
- Friday 15<sup>th</sup> December **Shrewsbury Brass Band Christmas Concert**  
7.30 pm

*Note the dates now, details in due course ....*



## *Bumblebees are happy near churches*

Bumblebees like churchyards. At least, they were the insects most seen during a recent survey of churchyards and burial grounds in England.

It all shows "how valuable, when managed sensitively, many of our churchyards are for bumblebees," said a spokesman for Caring for God's Acre, a conservation charity for UK burial grounds. Such places often offer unique habitats for nature.

The survey was part of the Churches Count on Nature, an opportunity for communities to record plants, insects and animals found in burial grounds and churchyards. After bumblebees, ladybirds and aphids took second and third place.

**CROSSWORD ANSWERS: ACROSS:** 1, John. 3, And James. 8, Near. 9, Omission. 11, Theocratic. 14, Asleep. 15, By-path. 17, Stalingrad. 20, Backbone. 21, Baca. 22, Whose eye. 23, Seth. **DOWN:** 1, Jonathan. 2, Heavenly. 4, No meat. 5, Justifying. 6, Maid. 7, Sins. 10, Acceptable. 12, Marriage. 13, Shadrach. 16, Plenty. 18, A bow. 19, ECHO.



# Looking at GOD

## The Transfiguration

It's an unusual story. One day, Jesus is with three disciples on a high mountain in Galilee, when His appearance dramatically changes. Also, Moses and Elijah suddenly appear, and from a cloud comes the voice of God. What is this all about?

This event was witnessed by James, Peter, and John. They were close friends of Jesus. In the future, they were to become prominent leaders in the Early Church. They needed to see something special that would help them remember Jesus in the difficult years ahead. They had a glimpse of Christ in His divine glory. His face shone like the sun and His clothes turned white as light.

While this was an extraordinary sight for the disciples, it served to encourage Jesus who once had glory and majesty in Heaven. One day He would have it again. But firstly, He had to fulfil His mission: to suffer on the cross and die.

Why were Moses and Elijah standing with Jesus? Moses was the giver of the Law and Elijah represented all the prophets. They had pointed people to the promised Messiah. Jesus was about to complete God's plan of salvation.

God's voice was heard to remind Peter there was no need to build shelters. They were not going to stay on the mountain. God spoke to get the disciples to fix their attention on Jesus. The wonder of the Transfiguration was a short interlude before Jesus had to return to His work and subsequent death on the cross.

This story is a reminder that our times of spiritual blessing have to be followed by down-to-earth commitments and responsibilities. In the same way that Jesus gave His friends a glimpse of His awesome glory, to help them face challenging and traumatic times ahead, our special times in His presence are provided to encourage us and equip us for the trials we may have to face.

Our journey through life may sometimes rise to the peaks but we can't stay on a 'high' all the time – no matter how much we want it! We have to descend to face everyday challenges if we are to fulfil our calling in Christ. From *our* mountain-top experiences we all need to find a balance between times alone with God and serving Him in the company of others.

*The Transfiguration: here, Canon Paul Hardingham considers the same dramatic story from the gospels.*

This month we celebrate Jesus' transfiguration, when Jesus took Peter, John and James with Him up a mountain to pray (Luke 9:28-36). Jesus was transfigured alongside Moses and Elijah: 'As He was praying, the appearance of His face changed, and His clothes became as bright as a flash of lightning.' (29).

Jesus' Transfiguration: Watch!

The disciples' eyes were opened, as Jesus' hidden divinity was revealed. The presence of Moses and Elijah confirmed Him as God's promised Messiah, who fulfilled God's plan and purposes. By foreshadowing the cross, resurrection and ascension, this event powerfully calls us to entrust our lives into Jesus' hands to experience His presence and power.

The Father's Word: Listen!

There came a voice from the cloud covering them: 'This is my Son, whom I have chosen; listen to Him.' (35). God affirmed His love and call on Jesus, as His beloved and chosen Son. This is the second time God spoke audibly about Jesus (cf Luke 3:22), but on this occasion He was speaking for the benefit of the disciples. Do we hear God speaking these same words to us? We listen to what Jesus says to us, knowing that like Him we are deeply loved and accepted by God.

The Disciples Response: Learn!

'The disciples kept this to themselves and did not tell anyone at that time what they had seen' (36). They were impacted by this experience and needed time to reflect on what they had seen and heard about Jesus. Eight days before they were asked by Jesus: 'Who do you say I am?' (Luke 9:20). In the transfiguration their understanding of Jesus was being transformed. As we reflect on Jesus' ministry, to encounter the real Jesus, we are also transformed.

**A Quote:** 'No one who meets Jesus ever stays the same.'  
(Philip Yancey)

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



## Spiritual Disciplines: Rest

*'Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.'* (Matthew 11:28).

Today, the spiritual discipline of *rest* is a challenging one. We are pressured to cram more and more activities into fewer hours. This has been described as *'hurry sickness'* and is an enemy of our spiritual life. August is a month for resting, and so is a good time to look at this discipline.

God instituted the discipline of rest in the creation of the world. He created everything in six days and rested on the seventh (Gen 2:3). He instituted the Sabbath, a weekly day of rest (Lev 23:3). However, it is helpful to draw a distinction between *busyness* and being *hurried*. Busyness is an outward condition, while hurry is about our inner state, resulting from too many competing priorities. Jesus was often busy but never hurried! What questions should we be asking about getting more rest?

### *Balancing Rest and Work:*

What is a helpful rhythm of work and rest in our lives? How can we take seriously the Sabbath principle of having one day a week to rest and not work? How might we use our time differently eg taking a long walk or having an unhurried conversation with a friend?

### *Using Our Leisure Time Creatively:*

When we actually take a break we often end up simply watching TV, surfing the net, shopping unnecessarily or eating when we are not hungry! Can we choose leisure activities that really refresh us? It's not a case of more leisure time, but using the time we have more creatively.

*'The solution to an over busy life is not more time. It's to slow down and simplify our lives around what really matters.'* (The Ruthless Elimination of Hurry: John Mark Comer).



## Reflecting Faith—the Pulpit - part. 2



When you last heard a sermon given from a pulpit, what was your reaction? Whilst pulpits can of themselves be beautiful and stately, intricately carved and decorated, they can also be places of separateness. Rather than ending up helping the congregation to hear and see the preacher better, they can sometimes become a block to doing just that.

And it is not just pulpits. There are other things that can diminish our paying attention to the sermon.

For one thing, in some churches the individual appearance of the minister may be distracting. This is one reason why robes and vestments are worn - to keep 'personality' out of worship; to enable people to concentrate on God, not the person up front.

Then again, there is the increased use of electronic devices in worship. Seeing the preacher preach from an 'electronic' tablet can take some getting used to.

Or what about flower arrangements at the pulpit? Some may be so spectacular that people hardly see or hear the preacher, in the midst of all those blooms.

But the good news is that the dominance of the pulpit can give authority to what is said from it. And as the preacher climbs into it, they can feel a renewed assurance and confidence that they are about to speak God's words and He is with them.

### *This month*

See if you can hear a sermon preached *not* from a pulpit. Does it feel more or less important, connected and/or personal? What other things distract you from hearing and taking on board what the preacher is saying?

*Here we have two different thoughts about the importance of taking time to press the pause button each day...*

*Firstly, Norma Murrain jewellery designer at [www.silverfishjewellery.co.uk](http://www.silverfishjewellery.co.uk) describes the joy of stillness...*

## *Be still and know...*

*"Be still and know that I am God" Psalm 46:10*

Have you ever thought of taking some time out of daily life, to simply 'be still' with God? To hear His voice, enjoy His presence, and perhaps receive His direction for your future? When one lady was told that her friend was "taking some time out to 'be still' and listen to God", she responded with curiosity: "What does His voice sound like?"

For many Christians, the response would be this: "His voice for me is always calming, always reassuring, it always makes me feel overwhelmingly loved. It always gives me a sense of peace, which is deeper than any pain and stronger than any fear. No wonder the Scriptures talk of a 'peace that passes all understanding!'"

God speaks to us individually, through His Word, the Bible. And sometimes, when we are outside, He can also speak to us through His beautiful world.

The blue sky says; "Always Look Up", the Sun says; "Shine," the birds say; "Sing", the trees say; "be fruitful", the flowers say; "consider the Lilies", The open road ahead says; "Go into all the world and preach the Gospel". The gentle rustle of the wind in the trees says; "Though you can't see My face, you can hear Me, see reflections of Me, feel Me, touch Me and know me through all I create, if you just take the time to be still!"





Have you ever considered the abbreviation A.S.A.P.(As Soon As Possible)? Generally, it brings even more hurry and stress into our lives. Yet there is another way to think of A.S.A.P, a way which might help us deal with those difficult times in our daily lives.

When there's work to do, and deadlines to meet, and your colleagues are rushing around, here's what you can do to help: **A.S.A.P. – Always Say a Prayer.**

When your worries mount up and you don't know how you are ever going to cope with what is coming at you: A.S.A.P. – *Always Say a Prayer.*

God knows how stressful our lives can be, and He wants to ease our cares. In the Bible He promises to respond to our calls for help. So – call Him! A.S.A.P.!

***The Water of Life*** By Megan Carter

She came to the well around midday,  
To avoid all the gossip she came alone,  
She met a Man there who told her all things  
Five husbands she had and one not her own.

He asked for a drink and they started to talk,  
A Samaritan woman there with a Jew  
Breaking all barriers to meet her need  
He told her how she could be made new.

The water of life that He would give  
Would mean that she never would thirst again  
This transforming draught He offers to all  
Once tasted you never will be the same.

At Cana He turned the water to wine  
A miracle no-one but He could do  
Just as the water was wondrously changed  
If you drink from this Fount it can happen to you.

# Words and Actions

JESUS HAD MANY FRIENDS - AND HE OFTEN WENT WALKING WITH THEM.



ONCE, ON A JOURNEY, JESUS CALLED AT THE HOME OF MARTHA AND MARY



MARTHA WAS VERY PLEASED TO MEET WITH JESUS, AND SHE MADE HIM WELCOME



MARY WAS VERY EXCITED TOO AND WANTED TO LISTEN TO EVERYTHING JESUS HAD TO SAY



BUT MARTHA WAS NOT VERY IMPRESSED WITH MARY! SHE THOUGHT HER SISTER SHOULD BE HARD AT WORK, NOT SITTING AROUND - JUST LISTENING



LORD, DON'T YOU CARE THAT MARY HAS LEFT ME TO DO ALL THE WORK BY MYSELF?!



MARTHA, YOU ARE WORRIED AND TROUBLED OVER SO MANY THINGS



JESUS TOLD MARTHA THAT THERE ARE FAR MORE IMPORTANT THINGS IN LIFE THAN JUST FUSSING OVER A CLEAN HOUSE!



PERHAPS THE MOST IMPORTANT THING WE CAN LEARN, LIKE MARTHA, IS TO MAKE TIME TO LISTEN TO JESUS.



See Luke 10.38-42

# Looking at the CHURCH Worldwide



## Christian Aid warns thousands at risk after Ukraine floods

Christian Aid has been working “around the clock” with its partners in Ukraine to make sure fresh water supplies are reaching survivors, after the Nova Kakhovka dam was recently destroyed. It is also providing humanitarian supplies to people who are displaced across, or who had to leave, the affected areas of southern Ukraine.

Iryna Dobrohorska, Christian Aid's Ukraine Response Director, said: "The scale of the challenge is huge, especially with the danger of coming under artillery fire."

In its efforts to respond, Christian Aid has renewed its emergency appeal for Ukraine. Funds will go to the charity's partners in Ukraine.

Meanwhile, the full impact of the destruction of the dam is still to be assessed. The UN fears it could be an environmental as well as humanitarian disaster.

More details at: [www.christianaid.org.uk/appeals](http://www.christianaid.org.uk/appeals)

## Tearfund campaign to help victims of drought in Ethiopia



More than 20.1 million people across Ethiopia are without the food they need to survive.

They are in crisis because of the prolonged drought, caused by the failure of five rainy seasons. And because the land is now so dry, the recent brief rains only caused flash flooding, that destroyed more farmland and drought-weakened livestock.

As one herder explains: "I lost all my cows years ago and our daily life is full of hopelessness... I am worried about what to feed my child every day."

Working through its local church partners, Tearfund has been identifying the most vulnerable families, and supporting them by providing emergency cash grants. The charity is also training local people in business skills, to help them reduce their vulnerability to

future crises.

In its current Appeal, the charity says: "A gift of £102 could provide a cash grant for a family to buy what they need most urgently, such as enough food to last them a month."

- ◆ More details at: [www.tearfund.org/campaigns/ethiopia](http://www.tearfund.org/campaigns/ethiopia)

## **Nigeria – the attacks continue**

Release International partner, Archbishop Ben Kwashi, says: "We have come to another season of constant attacks on Christian villages and Christian people in central Nigeria.

"The consistency with which these attacks have gone for nearly 20 years is a sad commentary on the leadership of Nigeria, who do not care about the poor and vulnerable, especially farmers in the villages.

"We as Christians in the Middle Belt in northern Nigeria are asking for concerted prayer because the devastation is beyond human ability to bear."

Paul Robinson, CEO of Release International, says: "This violence is often characterised in the media as clashes between herders and farmers. This ignores the religious dimension behind many of the Fulani attacks, which together have the characteristic of an Islamist jihad."

According to Nigerian NGO Intersociety, 1,080 Christians have been killed in attacks in the first quarter of 2023 alone. In the previous year, 5100 were killed in attacks by Boko Haram, Islamic State West Africa, and Fulani militants.

Release International partners Stefanos Foundation have been conducting trauma healing workshops and providing basic food supplies and toiletries to internally displaced people. According to the UN, more than 3 million Nigerians have been driven from their homes by the violence, into camps for the displaced.

To find out more:

<https://releaseinternational.org/nigeria-campaign-2023/>



## Big anniversary for the World Council of Churches



Seventy-five years ago, on 23<sup>rd</sup> August 1948, the World Council of Churches was founded in Amsterdam.

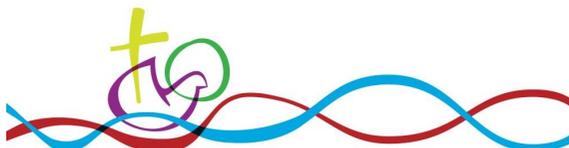
It flowed out of the modern ecumenical movement, which had begun in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. There had been agreement by 1937 to establish a World Council of Churches, but the official inauguration was deferred by the outbreak of the second world war.

In 1948 representatives of 147 churches assembled in Amsterdam to constitute the WCC, which now represents over 50 million Christians and 352 member churches. Though most of the founder members were in Europe or North America, most today are based elsewhere. The Roman Catholic Church is not a member but has a regular working relationship.

The WCC, which stresses that it is not a church and does not give orders or directions to churches, has its headquarters in Geneva but holds assemblies every six to eight years. The most recent was at Karlsruhe, Germany, last year.

Although designed to bring churches together, the WCC has not been universally welcomed by Christians, especially evangelicals, who reacted by joining together to form the World Evangelical Alliance. They are wary of the idea of a 'jumbo-church', as well as a creeping syncretism potentially including all religions.

More recently there have been suggestions of antisemitism lurking in pro-Palestinian remarks, made by the new leader of the WCC, the Revd Jerry Pillay.





# From the Dragon's Den

Almost the end of our 17<sup>th</sup> year of enjoying Little Dragons. Our very 1<sup>st</sup> session saw 9 Little Dragons and their Carers come through the door to enjoy the delights on offer. Now we average around 25 Dragons per session, each one with their Carer(s). Our highest weekly number during this term has been 33 Dragons plus Carers. A little noisy that week!

We count it as a real privilege to entertain these little people as they enjoy working at the craft table, playing with the toys and taking part in the story-time activities and songs.

Our hope is that we will continue to enjoy our good fortune for many years to come.

Joy to everyone, from Val, Frank, Marion E, Marion W, Pat S and Caroline and (not least) from we three...



George,



Uncle Sam



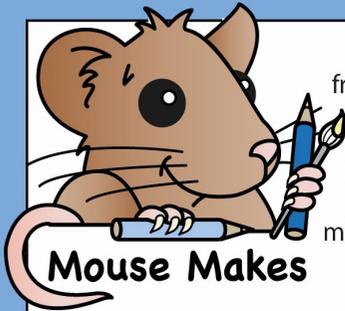
& Idris



## How to build the perfect sandcastle - in 9 easy steps

If you are going to the beach this month, first pay a visit to <https://www.english-heritage.org.uk/visit/inspire-me/blog/blog-posts/how-to-build-the-perfect-sandcastle/>





# Mouse Makes

After Jesus miraculously fed 5,000+ people from two fish and five loaves, he sent his disciples off in a boat across the Sea of Galilee before going up a mountain by himself. Later in the night, as the boat was being blown and buffeted by the wind, Jesus came miraculously walking on the water towards them...

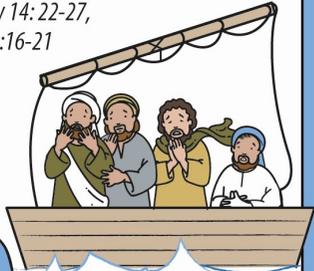
Read the story in: *Matthew 14: 22-27, Mark 6:45-56 or John 6:16-21*

**What did Jesus do when he went up on the mountain?**

\_\_\_\_\_ *Matthew 14:23*

**What was the boat struggling against?**

The \_\_\_\_\_ and the \_\_\_\_\_ *Matthew 14:24*



**What did Jesus say to his disciples?**

Do not be \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ *Matthew 14:27*

**What did the disciples think Jesus was when they saw him walking on the sea?**

A \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ *Matthew 14:26*

**Who walked out on the water to Jesus?**

\_\_\_\_\_ *Matthew 14:29*

**What did Jesus say to Peter?**

Oh you of little \_\_\_\_\_ why do you \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ *Matthew 14:31*



W F W A F R A I D                      Y C K O C S  
 I N O T F E A R W A T E R M R B B O J  
 N N R L A L O N E K I N T O O O E M E  
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JESUS • DISCIPLES • BOAT • OTHER SIDE • CROWDS • MOUNTAIN • EVENING • ALONE • LAND • NIGHT • SEA WALKING • TERRIFIED • FEAR • COME • WATER • SINK • SAVE • INTO • CEASED • WORSHIPED • SON OF GOD

Answer the questions then find them in the word search

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*From the Archdeacon of Ludlow, Fiona Gibson*

There's been a lot of walking around the Diocese recently. Bishop Richard has led walks up high places in each of our deaneries, and led simple services of Holy Communion on the hills, as part of our Year of Prayer. The Golden Valley Pilgrim Way, beginning and ending at our Cathedral, has seen more and more pilgrims walking along its route. Some are doing the full 59 miles, sometimes sleeping overnight by prior arrangement in one of the churches along the way, some just doing the shorter Pilgrim Trail over two or three days, still beginning and ending in our Cathedral. The prayers offered by those pilgrims are an integral part of their pilgrimage. My husband and I will be off to Northumberland soon, a place where we have spent many happy holidays over the years. Tides permitting, we'll probably make the pilgrimage to Holy Island again, walking barefoot across the sandy Pilgrim's Way linking Holy Island with the mainland.

Pilgrimage has a long and honoured tradition among Christians. It used to be known as peregrination, or leaving one's home and wandering for the love of God.

Away from the distractions and comforts of home, in creation, it's often easier to tune into the presence of God. Praying while walking becomes a conversation, as we notice things about our surroundings, ourselves, and God, which the Holy Spirit brings to our attention. We are embodied creatures, and being on the move can release emotions and thoughts that can get 'stuck' in our more sedentary day-to-day existence, all of which can be offered to God in prayer.

Not all of us are physically capable of making a pilgrimage. That need not stop us from entering into the experience either by following a pilgrim trail on YouTube or by taking an 'internal pilgrimage'. I came across this idea in a newsletter sent by someone who runs a retreat centre in Cyprus:

Where have you been in your life? What have you done? What has happened? Whom have you met? Where has life taken you?

Draw a meandering road on a large piece of paper.

Record on the line significant events/times in your life through words/pictures/colour. Begin with the day you were born.

Consider where you sense God was in each of those times - close, absent, in you, in others, etc. Mark this in some way on your path.

Consider with God anything that has come to your attention that you feel needs more pondering. If any of it has been difficult, consider discussing it with a Christian friend and praying together.

Whether your summer pilgrimage is to a local park, your own garden, or along the Camino de Santiago, may you find blessing and joy in the journey.



## Deanery of Pontesbury

### DEANERY NEWS

Rural Dean: **The Revd Bill Rowell**

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

### THOUGHT FOR THE MONTH FROM: Revd Greg Smith

In one of his most famous speeches, in which Shakespeare proclaims that "all the world's a stage", he continues by noting the different ages of man (forgive the use of the masculine – it was the sixteenth century!) One of his most profound observations concerns how life turns full circle when many obtain a second infancy in their dotage. In this modern age of great medical advances, the truth of this appears to have been magnified. Our very oldest citizens often lose the ability to walk that is first mastered at 12 months; and where dementia strikes the ability to reason and articulate. Many of us dread this, although my prayer is that whatever the state of my body or mind, my spirit will never lose its conviction of God's Love for me.

The question arises; how do we minister to those whose ability to reason has been lost or not yet developed? Significantly, the temptation is to treat both age groups equally dismissively (adults with learning disabilities can experience the same level of neglect).

The Gospel, it is sometimes imagined, requires intellectual capacity. For centuries, children were denied access to Holy Communion because they wouldn't be able to understand its mysteries, as if we adults could. I am reminded of the blind man healed by Jesus in John 9 who is interrogated by the Pharisees, frustrating them with his simplistic answers. Later, Jesus himself interviews the man and gains the response: "Lord, I believe" (John 9.38) Jesus demands no more.

I have recently discovered ***Truth be Told***, a wonderful Christian group whose mission it is to bring these two age groups together. Venturing into Care Homes, they take toddler groups, and retell Jesus' parables in a way that both the very young and the very old can appreciate, offering them a simple *truth* at each visit. The session I had the privilege to witness concluded with the truth for today: **I am special**. May we know this as soon as we know anything and then never forget it.

# Our Stiperstones Benefice COMMUNITY

*with 'Bits & Pieces' from Greg ...*

**Revd Fran Brealey** has now started work amongst us. Her regular days off will be Mondays, Fridays and Saturdays, and her contact details are as follows - Email: [revfran@btinternet.com](mailto:revfran@btinternet.com) Phone: 07982 324760

**Congratulations** to Val Butterworth, Allen Marsden and Mary Worrall who have been licensed as Lay Worship Leaders at St George's.

**Foodbank** A couple of the volunteers at Minsterley Foodbank have stood down in recent weeks and it would help if we were able to replace them. Volunteers would be asked to serve on a rota which would mean attending approximately every 3 weeks. Full training will be provided. Anyone interested should speak to Mike Kirk or Greg. There is also a dearth in food being donated while the need ever increases. Please consider whether you can purchase an extra couple of items in your weekly shop.

**Healing Services** In the light of low numbers at Healing Services in recent months, we decided to make the service at Hanwood last month the last one (for now). Thanks to all those who have supported the service over the last year.

**Parish Administrator** We are delighted to announce the appointment of Mrs Kryz Rodgers as the new Parish Administrator for Pontesbury & Minsterley. She may be contacted at [officepontstip@gmail.com](mailto:officepontstip@gmail.com) And we thank Alison Bebb who has administered us so well, keeping us so well organised for a long time.

**Benefice Choir** We are keen to establish a benefice choir to lead worship at Group Services and on other occasions. Please let Greg know if you would like to join.



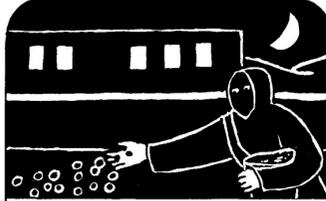
# Bible Bite

## A short story from the Bible

It can be read in the Bible in  
Matthew chapter 13:24-30, 36-43

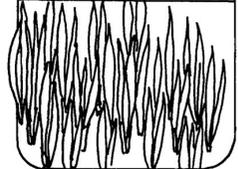
Jesus told this story to help explain  
what his Kingdom, the Kingdom of  
Heaven, is like...

A farmer's workers sowed  
good wheat seed in his field.

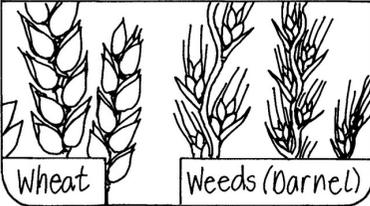


At night an enemy came  
and scattered weed seeds

When the seeds  
sprouted they  
looked the same



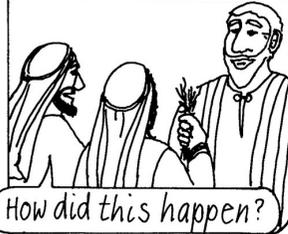
When the plants grew bigger  
the workers spotted the weeds



Wheat

Weeds (Darnel)

They asked the farmer



How did this happen?

An enemy did this



We'll pull  
up the weeds!

No, you might pull up  
some wheat with them.  
Wait until harvest time



You will be able to sort them  
out, and put the wheat in the  
barn... and burn the weeds



People asked



What does  
this story mean?

The field is the world  
and the good seeds are  
the good people



The weed seeds  
are the evil people. At the end  
of time they will be separated.

The angels will bring  
the good people to me  
in heaven.



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

worker  
heaven  
evil  
pull  
spotted  
weeds  
world  
angels

good  
happen  
sort  
wheat  
same  
field  
seeds  
harvest

scattered  
farmer  
enemy  
plants  
people  
darnel  
night  
sprouted



# Looking at you

## *Do you need a new painkiller?*



Do you ever take pain killers? If so, do you take one for your shoulder, and another one for you knee? Of course not! Once the painkiller enters your bloodstream, it goes everywhere, soothing and damping down the pain, and hitting all the right spots.

God works a bit like that on the pain in our lives. He has a prescription for ALL the problem areas of our lives. Most of us carry emotional scars, or a burden, or some heartache, around with us. It may be the trauma of loss, it may be anxiety for our family. It may be uncertainty over our jobs, and our futures.

Whatever it is, God offers us a prescription to help the pain. The psalmist writes: "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble" (Psalm 46:1). Jesus added: "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest."(Matthew 11:28)

This kind of help is real and immediate and there for the asking. We don't have to put up with our dis-ease and struggle alone. God, our heavenly Father, is only a prayer away. Not just twice a day, after meals, but whenever we need Him.

## *Do you love your smartphone too much?*

How much time a day do you spend on your smartphone? According to one app monitoring firm, App Annie, we can spend an average of 4.8 hours a day on it. And so much time is not doing us any good.

As one writer has put it, our smartphone "removes us from the present moment and wastes time that could be more profitably and purposefully spent. Imagine, at the end of

your life, receiving a balance sheet stating the number of your hours on Earth lost to scrolling.”

Scientists explain the attraction of smartphones in this way: responding to the ‘push notification’ rewards you with dopamine, the brain chemical that makes you happy. “The smartphone is the modern-day hypodermic needle, delivering digital dopamine 24/7 for a wired generation,” Dr Anna Lembke, professor of psychiatry and behavioural sciences at Stanford University, California, wrote in her book *Dopamine Nation* in 2021.

Dr Lembke warns: “The scrolling and visual stimuli release dopamine in our brain’s reward pathways, and the way our brain compensates for overstimulation is [by entering] a dopamine deficit state. Once we’re in that state we continue scrolling to try and bring those dopamine levels back up to baseline, so we get into a place where we’re chasing our tail. We’re chasing dopamine.”

*A poem by **Paul Geres** (a nom de plume of a French priest who was in charge of a parish in an industrial city).  
This poem comes from his collection ‘Prayers for Impossible Days’.*

## *No money*

*Lord, I have just balanced my cheque book.  
And now I must turn to you to find calm and peace.  
And dignity as well.  
This dignity which has been eroded for twenty years  
because of the awful worry about ‘making ends meet’.  
This peace which I’m deprived of,  
for fear of not getting through another month.  
This calm which I lose when my small income disappears  
and I never have a penny left.  
What I fear, Lord, is not really poverty....  
....what I’m afraid of is degradation.  
Afraid of no longer thinking of anything but money,  
just because I don’t have any....*

## Looking at the wider COMMUNITY



Tim Lenton reflects ...

### **60 years since "I Have a Dream"**

Sixty years ago, on 28<sup>th</sup> August 1963, Dr Martin Luther King Jr delivered his famous "I Have a Dream" speech from the steps of the Lincoln Memorial during the March on Washington for Jobs and

Freedom. The civil rights rally was attended by about 200,000 supporters, including many A-list film celebrities released temporarily by their studios.

His words influenced the Federal government to take more direct action to create racial equality, in for instance the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Voting Rights Act of 1965 and the Fair Housing Act of 1968.

King had been advised not to use the Dream format at Washington. He had used the idea before, and his adviser, the Revd Wyatt Tee Walker, described it as "hackneyed and trite". The idea was to use a new speech with the theme "normalcy never again". But King was prompted by gospel singer Mahalia Jackson to re-use the Dream idea, and he went ahead with it, much to Walker's dismay. But it had a huge impact and is now regarded as perhaps one of the most influential speeches in American history.

Martin Luther King Jr, born in 1929, was an American Baptist minister who became one of the most prominent leaders in the American civil rights movement from 1955 until his assassination, apparently by James Earl Ray, on 4<sup>th</sup> April 1968, in Memphis, Tennessee.

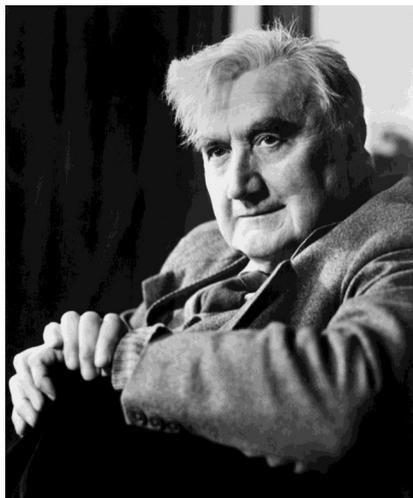
The autopsy revealed that although he was only 39 years old, King "had the heart of a 60-year-old". He had said shortly before being shot that he was not afraid of dying.

On 14<sup>th</sup> October 1964, King had won the Nobel Peace Prize for combating racial inequality through non-violent resistance.

## Also Remembering Ralph Vaughan Williams

It was 65 years ago, on 26<sup>th</sup> August 1958, that the British composer Ralph Vaughan Williams died. Among his most famous compositions are *The Lark Ascending*, *Fantasia on a Theme by Thomas Tallis* and *A Sea Symphony*.

Despite increasing deafness, brought on by exposure to gunfire when he served in the Second World War, Vaughan Williams was still composing into his 80s. He died, aged 85, the night before recording sessions began on his Ninth Symphony.



The son of a vicar, the composer – himself an agnostic, although he edited the English Hymnal in 1904 and wrote several hymn tunes – was born in Down Ampney, Gloucestershire, and was related to Charles Darwin and to the potter Josiah Wedgwood. He played violin and piano and was a keen collector of folk songs, the tunes of which he included in many of his compositions.

Vaughan Williams was married twice: first to Adeline Fisher and after her death in 1951 to the poet Ursula Wood, who was an occasional collaborator on his compositions. He was also a lifelong friend of the composer Gustav Holst.

*The Lark Ascending* – probably Vaughan Williams' most famous piece – was written in 1914, but its premiere was delayed by the First World War. It was eventually given in 1921 by the violinist Marie Hall – for whom Vaughan Williams had written it.

His ashes are interred in Westminster Abbey. His work was almost unique in the variety of music types he employed. It included nine symphonies, concertos for piano, violin, oboe and tuba, five operas, chamber, ballet and film music and songs and song cycles – among other things.

## ... and **Florence Nightingale – nurse, social reformer**

If you have a strong sense of calling from God, then you will well understand Florence Nightingale. At the age of 16 she felt God was calling her to some great lifework, and so she determined to avoid marriage, and thus be available to obey Him.

Florence had been born in Italy in 1820, while her parents were travelling - hence her name. But she grew up at Lea Hurst in Derbyshire. Her parents were Unitarian, but Florence later joined the Anglican Church.

Florence had a strong sense of God's personal presence in her life, and in 1844, when she was 24, Florence came to believe that her calling was to nurse the sick. In 1849 she set off to study nursing in the hospitals of Europe.

It was on 12<sup>th</sup> May, 1850 that she wrote in her diary: 'Today I am 30 – the age Christ began His mission. Now no more childish things. No more love. No more marriage. Now Lord let me think only of Thy will, what Thou willest me to do.'

Later that same year she went to train in the hospital of Alexandria in Egypt, and then the Lutheran Deaconess Institute at Kaiserwerth in Germany. In 1853 she returned to England, and was appointed superintendent of the Hospital for Invalid Gentlewomen in London.

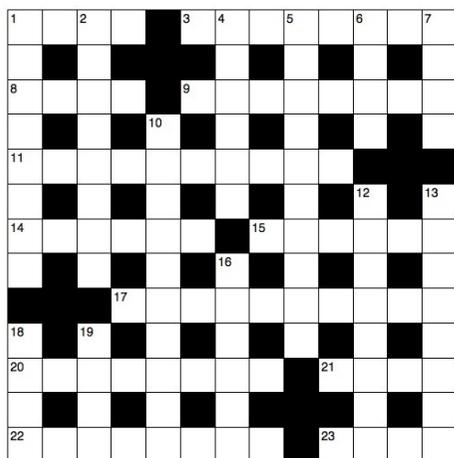
Then the following year, 1854, war broke out in the Crimea. Florence contacted friends in high places, and soon got permission to take 38 nurses to serve at the military hospitals at Scutari in Turkey, and later Balaklava in the Crimea. These hospitals were dreadful places, but with better nursing and better sanitation, the mortality rate among the sick and wounded men soon fell dramatically. When by night, Florence took to patrolling the hospital wards, carrying a dim lamp, the legend of 'the Lady with the Lamp' was born.



After the Crimean war, Florence returned to England determined to establish the first professional nurse training scheme in the country. She found a base at St Thomas' Hospital in London, and through her efforts the stature of nursing gradually rose to become that of a respected medical profession.

But Florence had been working too long and too hard; now her own health broke down and she became an invalid. But she was not forgotten, and the honours rolled in. In 1907 she became the first woman to receive the Order of Merit. Florence died in London on 13<sup>th</sup> August 1910, aged 90, and was buried in St Margaret's, East Wellow, in Hampshire. Her tombstone says simply:  
F.N. 1820 – 1910.

# Your PUZZLES for August



## Across

- 1 and 3 Two of the disciples who witnessed the transfiguration of Jesus (Luke 9:28) (4,3,5)  
 3 See 1 Across  
 8 'Let us draw — to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith' (Hebrews 10:22) (4)  
 9 O Simon is (anag.) (8)  
 11 Form of government under the direct rule of God or his agents (10)  
 14 How Jesus found his disciples when he returned to them after praying in Gethsemane (Luke 22:45) (6)

- 15 In The Pilgrim's Progress, the name of the meadow into which Christian strayed, which led to Doubting Castle (2-4)  
 17 Glad sin rat (anag.) (10)  
 20 Spinal column (Leviticus 3:9) (8)  
 21 Valley of the Balsam Tree with a reputation of being a waterless place (Psalm 84:6) (4)  
 22 'The oracle of Balaam son of Beor, the oracle of one — — sees clearly' (Numbers 24:3) (5,3)  
 23 Adam and Eve's third son (Genesis 4:25) (4)

## Down

- 1 David's great friend (1 Samuel 20:17) (8)  
 2 'The Lord... will bring me safely to his — kingdom' (2 Timothy 4:18) (8)  
 4 'I, Daniel, mourned for three weeks. I ate no choice food; — — or wine touched my lips' (Daniel 10:3) (2,4)  
 5 Seeking to vindicate (Job 32:2) (10)  
 6 Female servant (Isaiah 24:2) (4)  
 7 'For Christ died for — once for all' (1 Peter 3:18) (4)  
 10 'Offering spiritual sacrifices — to God through Jesus Christ' (1 Peter 2:5) (10)  
 12 Jesus said that some people had renounced this 'because of the kingdom of heaven' (Matthew 19:12) (8)  
 13 One of the three men thrown into the furnace for refusing to worship Nebuchadnezzar's golden image (Daniel 3:20) (8)  
 16 'You have — of good things laid up for many years. Take life easy; eat, drink and be merry' (Luke 12:19) (6)  
 18 'There before me was a white horse! Its rider held — — , and he was given a crown' (Revelation 6:2) (1,3)  
 19 Equipment to Charity Hospitals Overseas (1,1,1,1)

**Solution on page 7**

# God in the SCIENCES

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

## *Parable: The Strength of a Seed*

At this time of year, we enjoy the fruits of our gardens, fields and hedgerows: vegetables ripen, crops are harvested, and berries begin to show bright among the leaves. Much of this growth started with a few seeds in spring: the miracle of life coming from small dead-looking things. There is a league table of long-lived seeds. The winners so far are from the narrow-leafed campion, buried by squirrels in the Siberian permafrost over 30,000 years ago. When those seeds finally germinated, they became healthy plants that flowered and produced seeds of their own.

The Bible contains many links between seeds and spiritual growth, and the parable of the sower is the most famous (in Matthew 13). A person may hear or experience something of God which has the potential to germinate into a life of following Him, resulting in the fruit of others coming to know God too. But things can happen that snatch that seed away, killing it before it has finished germinating, or choking its growth.

What about the knowledge of God that gets trampled, churned too deep in the mire of life to receive the warmth and light it needs to develop into faith? Buried seeds don't always die, but they can lie dormant, remaining alive but inactive until the earth is turned over. The possibility of that moment of connecting with something divine, scrap of knowledge, or snatch of conversation resulting in a changed life may seem infinitesimally small, but it's not zero. The seed may be incredibly tough, just waiting for a chance to grow.

The Gospel narrative plays on the fact that it took a long time for the disciples to understand the full implications of Jesus' teaching: a germination process that took many of them three or more years. They could have been discouraged, but Jesus was not. I don't think it's too much of a stretch to draw out of the parable of the sower to include the observation that it can take a long time, sometimes decades, for people to work their way through the various barriers, sticking points, and phases of forgetfulness that may keep them from following through on their spiritual experience. When we finally receive – or are open to – the encouragement, challenge, or experience that helps our faith in Christ grow, we can experience the rich fruit of a transformed life.

# God in the ARTS

Michael Burgess continues his look at great works of Christian art. You can see the image described by googling 'The Golden Fish' by Paul Klee or going to <http://www.nationalgallery.org.uk/paintings/aelbert-cuyv-a-herdsman-with-five-cows-by-a-river>

## 'He gave us eyes to see them': The Golden Fish by Paul Klee

A few years ago, I was sponsored by the Mothers' Union in my diocese to go 'swimming with sharks' at the Blue Planet Aquarium near Chester. The prospect seemed daunting, but it proved to be a magical, memorable experience. When I went down into the water, it was like entering a new world – somehow both alien and attractive at the same time. Manta rays swam lazily by, and small fish



gathered at my feet, inquisitive and waiting to be massaged by falling stones from my hand. The magic of that water-world is caught vividly in this month's painting, 'The Golden Fish' by Paul Klee.

Paul Klee was a Swiss painter who lived in Germany until he was expelled in 1933. He died seven years later, but in his lifetime produced some 9000 works of art, each one displaying inventiveness and versatility. 'The Golden Fish,' painted in 1925, portrays a unique creature gliding serenely through its underwater kingdom. The gold scales, the red fins and the powerful eye provide a sharp contrast to the deep blue sea where other smaller fish are swimming to the edges of the canvas.

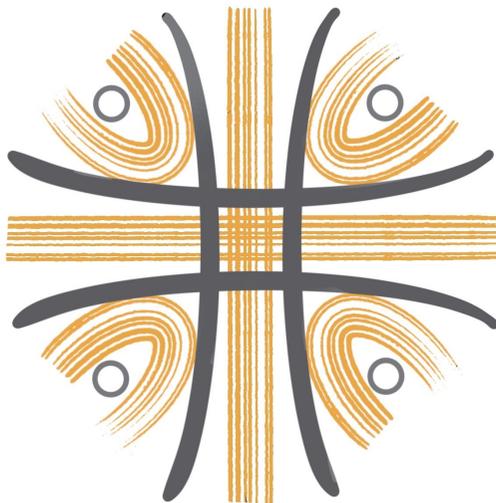
Is the artist showing us that secret, mysterious world that lies beneath the surface of the water, or is it simply an aquarium in his own house? Whichever it is, he is introducing us to a world that we, who live on the solid land beneath our feet, take for granted. Seven-tenths of our world is water, and our planet is really one gigantic aquarium. We can travel to the coasts of our island and see the great sea stretching out before us. It may bring to mind sandcastles and summer holidays, or a boat trip when the choppy waves made us feel queasy, or the memory of pirate stories about galleons and treasure, or the squawk of seagulls over our heads. Here in this painting, Paul Klee is telling us something of the nobility and wonder of this primeval element.

The opening pages of Scripture introduce us to the great waters of

Creation, when the wind of God swept over the face of the deep, and separated the seas from the dry land. On the fifth day God said, 'Let the waters bring forth swarms of living creatures,' and God saw that it was good. Rupert Brooke in his poem, 'Heaven,' imagines that world of fishes and sea creatures pondering what is beyond this element of water, just as we on land ponder the future of our world.

*'Somewhere, beyond Space and Time,  
Is wetter water, slimier slime!  
And there (they trust) there swimmeth  
One Who swam ere rivers were begun,  
Immense, of fishy form and mind,  
Squamous, omnipotent and kind.  
And under that Almighty Fin  
The littlest fish may enter in...  
And in that Heaven of all their wish,  
There shall be no more land, say fish.'*

Poet and painter invite us to ponder the majestic glory of this element of sea and ocean which is part of God's good creation. In 'The Golden Fish' we glimpse something of the wonder of life it contains and find ourselves echoing the psalmist in Psalm 104: 'Here is the immeasurable sea in which move creatures beyond number. Countless are the things thou hast made, O Lord. Thou hast made all by thy wisdom.'





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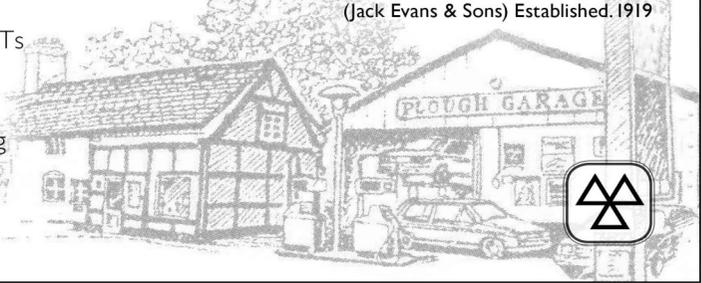
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