

# COMMENT

THE MAGAZINE OF THE CHURCHES IN TRING



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Growing in the message and challenge of God



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For young people in Year 7 and above



Church office

admin@tringbaptistchurch.co.uk

Revd Joe Egan

07521 513493 or joe@tringbaptistchurch.co.uk

Revd Ruth Egan

07521 513494 or ruth@tringbaptistchurch.co.uk

www.tringbaptistchurch.co.uk



## A living parable for the church



Nestled within Utah's Fish Lake National Forest lies a remarkable wonder of nature – the world's largest organism, known as Pando. Derived from the Latin for 'I spread', Pando is not a towering rainforest, but rather a forest of some 47,000 genetically identical aspen trees.

What makes Pando truly extraordinary is not its size, but its unity. Despite appearing as individual trees above ground, every tree in this vast grove is interconnected through a collective root system. This interconnectedness transforms Pando from a mere collection of trees into a single living organism, each tree sharing nutrients and resources with its neighbours.

With its striking white bark and trembling leaves, the aspen is more than just a tree; it serves as a living parable, offering profound lessons for the Christian life and the church.

### Unity in community

Aspen trees are never found in isolation; they grow clumped together, drawing strength from the collective organism. They grow in large groups called 'clones', which are interconnected by a shared root system. Each tree in a clone is genetically identical to the others, essentially making the entire grove one single organism. Similarly, Christian believers are not meant to live as 'Lone Ranger' Christians, but as interconnected members of the body of Christ. Just as a severed hand withers when separated from the body, believers suffer when detached from the community of faith. Our gatherings as local churches are vital for our spiritual health and growth. When we come together, each member plays a unique role in fulfilling the body's purpose. As we prioritise regular fellowship, we strengthen the bonds of unity and fulfil our collective calling to worship, serve, and bear witness to the gospel.

### Nourished by community

Beneath the surface, the aspen trees are connected by a vast underground root system. This interconnectedness allows the trees to share nutrients and support

each other, particularly during challenging conditions. Similarly, believers are interconnected by their shared faith in Christ, providing mutual encouragement, accountability and care. In times of struggle, the church functions as a living organism, coming alongside those in need and bearing one another's burdens. Just as healthy branches nourish weaker ones, believers support and strengthen each other through prayer, love and the proclamation of the gospel.

### Strengthened in community

Aspen trees are also known for their resilience. They are often among the first trees to repopulate areas devastated by wildfire, thanks to their robust root system. Even when the visible trees are burned, the roots remain alive and can quickly send up new shoots, leading to the regeneration of the grove. This resilience offers a powerful lesson for Christians facing trials and tribulations. James 1:2-4 encourages believers, 'Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.' Just as the aspen trees emerge stronger from the fire, our faith is refined and strengthened through challenges.

### Flourishing together

The aspen tree, with its unique characteristics and growth patterns, serves as a profound metaphor for the Christian life. Its interconnected roots remind us of our unity in Christ and the strength we derive from our community of faith. Its resilience in the face of adversity teaches us to

persevere through trials, trusting in God's refining work. And its stunning autumn display calls us to reflect the beauty of Christ in all we do.

As we reflect on the lessons of the aspen tree, let us embrace the beauty and importance of community within the church. Let us commit to cultivating deep roots in Christ and strengthening our connections with one another in our churches. By living in unity and love, we fulfil our calling as members of the body of Christ, bearing witness to his grace and glory in the world.

May we, like the aspen tree, flourish together as a vibrant and resilient community, rooted in Christ and bearing fruit for his kingdom. In doing so, we will not only grow stronger together but also bring glory to our Creator, who designed both the aspens and us for his purposes. 'For just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others.' Romans 12:4-5 (NIV)

Tom Copperwheat  
Akeman Street Baptist Church

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## Editorial



Here we are at summertime again, the issue of *Comment* that covers two months.

I first became involved with *Comment* when Kate Openshaw was

Editor in early 2013, helping to copy-edit and proofread; I became Editor in the summer of 2015. There have been a number of changes since then...

The saddest one is just how many of the people who helped from all the churches have died or moved away (I hope the latter wasn't my fault!). That includes writers, the people who wrote articles, those who delivered the printed copies but also those who subscribe.

The magazine has gone from black and white to colour throughout, from involving only Anglicans and Methodists to all the churches in Tring and the villages, from having 9-10 articles to 35-40, from being designed in Publisher to InDesign, from having more than 20 adverts to very few indeed... and from being 50p to £2.00. Despite that price rise which is huge and more than inflation (help me here, John Whiteman!), we can't keep up with the increasing costs of paper and printing. Everyone else who works on the magazine does so as a volunteer – the printer cannot do this.

I am not about to tell you the cost is going up again. But I am appealing to readers from all the churches and also your friends and neighbours who enjoy hearing about what is going on in Tring –

can you help us encourage more people to subscribe? Can you recommend it to others? By subscribing it helps us know how many to print. When we don't know, we waste copies; and the fewer we print to meet the lessening demand, the more each copy costs. Can you help?

Do you know someone with a story to tell from their time in Tring? Can you interview a person less able to write an article? Were you in the choir when Colin Stevens was director fifty years ago? Can you help?

It's our magazine: it needs to tell our stories, report on our church and charitable news and advertise those events that make Tring special to us.

Can you help?

**The Editor**

## Hermits



Hermits live alone, although they sometimes interact with other people. Hermits can be male or female and can also be called anchorite or anchoress, recluse, ascetic or solitary.

The first known hermit was Paul of Thebes who lived around AD250, but the most well known was Anthony the Great who moved into the Egyptian desert in AD270. Many followed his example and by AD300 there were thousands of monks and nuns moving to become hermits in the desert. They were known as the Desert Fathers and Desert Mothers.

The Desert Fathers proposed three main approaches to monasticism – the life of a hermit, cenobitic (life in a monastery) and semi-hermetic where small groups of two to six monks and nuns lived together but met in larger groups on Sundays for worship. The Desert Fathers were very influential in the spread of Christianity.

By the time of St Benedict around AD500 there were four types of monk or nun, Cenobites (living in a monastery), Hermits, Sarabaites, who were small groups of monks and nuns similar to the semi-hermits, and Land-lopers, who simply moved from one monastery to another, staying for only a few days. Saint

Benedict thought that only Cenobites and Hermits were worthy in any way.

In 1084 the Carthusian order of Monastics was formed. Carthusians live individually in cells like Hermits, but meet together for liturgical worship in a chapel. They consider themselves to be a Communion of Solitaires.

Buddhists and Hindus also have hermits; Islam has no hermits (or monks or nuns) and a solitary life is considered to be anti-Islamic.

In Britain the early hermits were both male and female, and were deeply religious. The most famous is probably Julian of Norwich. She lived a life of an anchoress in a cell attached to St Julian's Church from around 1390. A special service consecrated her and she was then led to her cell attached to the church, and the door filled in. She stayed there until her death around 1414. She wrote books and is believed to be the first woman to do so in England.

By 1580 hermits had become very popular and some were used as entertainment. In the 1590s William and Robert Cecil twice invited Queen Elizabeth to Theobalds House with 'entertainments delivered by a hermit'. Several large estates kept a 'garden hermit' who worked under a fixed contract – although the one at Painshill Park in Cobham only lasted three weeks after being found in a local pub! Such 'hermits' were not religious, but were in reality actors.



There were many well-known religious hermits in Britain from about 1300, one of the first being Richard Rolle 1290-1349 who was famous and wrote 'The Fire of Love' – which is still in print in Penguin. Today there are estimated to be around 200 religious hermits in Britain – and many more non-religious solitaires. An example is Sue Woodcock who moved to a derelict cottage in Yorkshire in 2004. She says she enjoys the life of a hermit as 'It means I can belch as I like. I can wander round in my pyjamas, make as much mess as I like, go to bed when I want, and there are no arguments.'

It is estimated that up to 40% of British households are lived in by only one person, so maybe the non-religious hermit is about to reappear. In Japan many such singles are classed as hikikomori. They live alone in a room and only contact others through social media. There are 550,000 of them according to a government survey. Sadly, what started as a religious movement in Europe and the East, seems to have evolved into a reaction to modern life.

**John Allan**  
High Street Baptist Church

## Retirement reflections



In the Autumn Term of 1999, I arrived in Tring as Deputy Headteacher of Bishop Wood School. It seems incredible to me that I have been in the job for twenty-five years,

and this summer will be my last – I have decided to retire. The timing feels right and I am very comfortable with the decision, but I'm sure I will miss the place terribly and feel like a fish out of water for a time.

There have been so many highlights. Stressful, but ultimately successful inspections, winning football leagues and tournaments, school fayres and plays, wonderful school journeys to Norfolk and the Isle of Wight, day trips to the Wimbledon Tennis Championships, to local pantomimes and the

Hindu Mandir in Neasden. We've had a few celebrity visits over the years too – from 'The Fast Food Rockers' (look them up!) to a recent one by the brilliant Stuart Lawrence (brother of Stephen.)

One particular annual event which I've always enjoyed and for me, has summed up all that is best about the school, is the Lenten Bazaar, or as one child famously wrote it down, the 'Leant and Bizarre'. A quick note home to parents a fortnight or so in advance, and on the big day a whole series of inventive games and stalls appear in school as a fundraising event for the chosen charity of the School Council: children working collaboratively and thinking about others less fortunate than themselves – education in the true sense of the word.

As a teacher who has never done anything else, it is hard to compare, but I suspect there are still few jobs that can compete when it comes to fulfilment. That end of the week/term/year feeling of hard work completed – with a variety of curriculum subjects delivered to hungry minds, some seeds planted for their future lives – is hard to beat and still gives me a buzz.

Nevertheless, it is hard to ignore the fact that teaching has a recruitment and retention crisis. The demands being placed on teachers are becoming too



great and people are voting with their feet. For teachers, I'm sure you could also read NHS workers, police officers, and many more professions in both the public and private sectors. Expectations across society in general seem to be increasing apace, and I worry how long that can continue without it taking a toll on those at the sharp end.

During the last year, people have asked a lot about the changes I have seen in my career. When I started teaching in 1986, there was no National Curriculum, no OFSTED, no SATs tests, very few if any Teaching Assistants, and even INSET Days were only a twinkle in Kenneth Baker's eye. Copying of worksheets was done on a Banda machine and the chalk we wrote on

the board with played havoc with my eczema.

Have children really changed that much though? There is no doubt the advent of technology, and probably the lingering after-effects of Covid-19, have decreased attention spans a bit, and teachers now have to be more skilled and more inventive to keep their pupils engaged at all times. But at Bishop Wood, our pupils are almost all voracious learners, well supported by their parents and fascinated by the wider world and their part in it. That hasn't changed much, if at all, since 1999.

I will miss the enthusiasm of the children, the backing of the parents and the Governors, and all my tireless and dedicated colleagues. I would like to thank, in particular, the support I've received from the three headteachers whom I've worked with over the years: Brian Mather, Linda Hardman and Gary Stanley. To be

an effective headteacher over a long period of time requires a very special combination of skills and characteristics; these three, in their own very different ways, have presided over a happy place that children and adults have enjoyed being a part of.

My plans for the future centre around the first cheap holidays of my life, more time with friends and family, and more time on the golf course and the cricket field. And once I've had a complete decompress for a few months, I wouldn't rule out the odd day or two of supply teaching, just to prove to myself I can still do it!

**Jon Hall**  
Bishop Wood School

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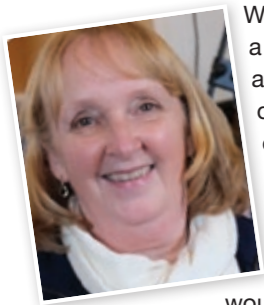
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Applicants will be asked to supply personal financial information to prove their beneficial status.

The average weekly maintenance contribution (equivalent to "rent" for housing benefit purposes) is £107 for a one bedroom property and £126 for a two bedroom property.

If you would like to be considered for the Waiting List, please telephone Elaine Winter, Secretary to the Trustees, on 01442 827913 (weekday office hours only), for an application form or email [info@tringcharities.co.uk](mailto:info@tringcharities.co.uk)

## Life within a smaller church



Whatever the size of a congregation of a church, there are different elements of what can be described as the easy or hard parts. Having previously worked at what

would be considered a 'big' church in the UK, with over 300 people, I saw how easy it was to be lost in the crowd. People could come and go on a Sunday and feel they were unseen. That was at times exactly what some wanted to be, invisible. Maybe they didn't want to get involved and just wanted to turn up for a time of worship and teaching and leave.

Within a smaller church, such as New Mill Baptist Church, that just can't happen. Anyone who is new to us receives a very warm welcome, and hopefully immediately would know that they will be remembered. I trust this isn't overwhelming as multiple people will greet them, and welcome them to join us for refreshments afterwards. At New Mill everyone is known, and pastoral care of them is supported through our small groups or via the deacons calling and visiting.

What could be considered the downside of being small is that there are lots of things that need doing, and few folks with enough energy to do them. We have a significantly big graveyard that needs regular tending. We employ a gardener for a few hours a month, but we need volunteers to help, and so a few times a year we put out invites (via our website or social media) to those who are local to come to help us. We had one of those in May, and will be asking again later in the summer. It was a successful time as our shed was cleared out and given

some needed TLC! Grass was cut and edges strimmed, and ivy taken off some of the gravestones. But it grows back, of course, so if anyone wants a challenge as volunteer gardener, do let me know!

Being small also means we have to make choices about the number of things we can regularly do to reach out to those in our community. Our Community Café has grown over the last months and regularly feeds about twenty-five people on a Thursday a full lunch (soup, main, dessert). We don't have set prices so that anyone is able to join us, and people can give a donation if they are able to. Apart from a main meal, we also have choices of a salad or baked potatoes plus there are always plenty of home-made cakes to enjoy with a coffee or tea should that be what people prefer. It opens at 11.30am for a couple of hours. So, if anyone wants to come over and enjoy good company with lovely food, please know you'd be very welcome. No booking required. We intend to stay open through August but will be closed for the first two weeks in September.



Talking of food, at the end of May we had one of our first events to try to raise money for some needed church upkeep. We had a cream tea followed by a wondrous time of Songs of Praise. The hall filled up within minutes of being open and more chairs had to be found



to accommodate all the visitors. What a wonderful problem to have! Almost everyone came through to the church at 5.00pm and, accompanied by our wonderful organ and keyboard, sang out a whole range of hymns, all chosen by individuals in the congregation. Look out for the adverts for a follow-up event in the autumn as, by popular demand, we will do something similar again.

We will also be putting on other events to raise some funds, such as a film night, a quiz and a themed meal. Please check out our website or Facebook page to find out the details over the next months.

Meanwhile we continue to grow spiritually as Sunday by Sunday we gather to worship God and learn from the Bible. We believe that the Bible is God's word for all people in every time and place and therefore we have a clear focus on learning from it week by week. The few children who come with parents also have time to hear stories from the Bible and have fun with crafts each week in the hall. We meet at 10.30am and you would be very welcome to join us.

Our next plan is hopefully to open up a Toddler Group on a Monday morning. We have been given some funds to enable us to buy some new toys, but our greatest need is some regular helpers so that we can run through term time. We want to be able to offer this support to the mums, dads, carers in the New Mill area so that the little folk can have fun, and learn from the stories and crafts that we would provide. If you feel God is nudging you to help with this, or just want to find out more, please give me a call on 07549 432582.

Clearly being small doesn't stop us being part of God's work in this part of Tring. I'm always reminded when I wish we were bigger that Jesus only had twelve disciples when he started out and look what impact they had, when God empowered them.

**Jacqui Buie**  
 New Mill Baptist Church  
[www.newmillbaptist.org.uk](http://www.newmillbaptist.org.uk)  
[www.facebook.com/newmillbaptist](https://www.facebook.com/newmillbaptist)

## In praise of the Mothers Union



I was talking to someone recently about The Garrick Club, the members' only club in London started by the actor David Garrick in 1831 as a meeting place

for gentlemen involved in the arts. It is still only open to men. I believe the current annual membership fee is £1000 and presumably you pay extra for food and rooms. I am not sure whether it is one of those clubs where you cannot apply, but have to be invited to join? Lots of prestigious people are members, from the arts, politics, business and the church. I am reminded of the quotation from Groucho Marx that I would not want to join any club that would have me as a member.

The person I was talking to compared The Garrick Club to the Mothers' Union. I was speechless. I think he meant that it is about membership and being part of something, and if you are not part of that, then you can feel like an outsider.

But it sent me thinking about how completely different the MU is, and how

proud we should be of that. To be a member of the MU, as we all know, you need to be baptized (but not only from the Church of England – any Christian denomination) and support the aims of the MU – valuing faith and family life in its widest sense, not in a narrow way, as we all know that there is no such thing as an average family; and while it might have taken more time than some would have wanted, we are, unlike the Garrick, open to ALL, whether female or male or any alternative, and it is not dependent on finances or profession or success (whatever that means). We changed to recognise that it was vital that divorced people and men are included. And to be a friend or a supporter, you just have to agree with what we do and want to support it.

Our name is off-putting for some, but we need to remember that we are global and not just British. For me, the 'mother' aspect is very much the mothering that we talk about on the fourth Sunday of Lent (anyone who cares for others), and promoting family life is knowing how important care and love and structure is in children's lives. We could rebrand as much as we wanted, but the aim is the same.

The Garrick Club, whatever they may say, is about power and control and how much business is done behind closed doors. The Mothers Union is not: in this country we have made huge strides in equality (even if we are still not where we should be), and

worldwide it is very different. The MU present I bought for my mother this year was a donation to the work in Papua New Guinea, where they are working on creating communities where women have a voice, instead of the expectation that they sit silently while the men talk about village matters. The MU works with the Clewer Initiative against modern-day slavery, and to combat domestic violence which is still predominantly, although not always, against women; and those are just some of the things we do.

One of the great issues in our world is that when a group starts to speak up, those whose voices have always been heard suddenly feel insecure. We have to learn that listening to those who have not previously been heard does not take anything away from the person who listens, but rather enhances their life also. We have to see with new eyes and learn that there are times when we were, or are, the privileged people, and the times when we were the ones who were downtrodden, which had been the case for women for much of history.

Mary's response to the life-changing news given to her by the angel Gabriel is the Magnificat, the words about changing the world – not by imposing that through decisions made by an elite behind closed doors, but by how the MU works – helping and supporting each other, in ways that might seem very simple but are life changing: to give women a voice in how their community is run; to enable a mother in prison to strengthen her relationship with her child; to speak out against slavery and degradation; to set up credit unions so that £50 can change the life of a family.

It is a very, very long way from The Garrick Club. And it is what we are called to do, and have done, and will do.

**Jane Banister, Tring Team**

### Community Café

**OPEN ON THURSDAYS**

**11.30-1.15**

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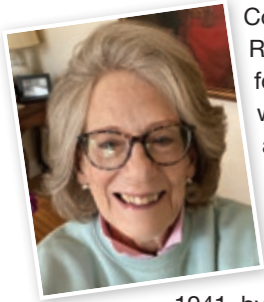
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# Colin Stevens: a lifetime of music and more...



Colin's father, Roland, who worked for the Rothschilds, was a Tring man and his mother, Kathleen, was from London's East End. They were married in

1941, by which time Roland was serving in the Second Herts Army Regiment. Kathleen remained in London until their house was bombed. Then, in 1942, she was evacuated to Tring with Colin's baby sister, Jenny. After the war, Roland and Kathleen remained together in Tring for the rest of their lives and here Colin and his younger brother, Robert, were born.

Colin was educated at Tring Junior Mixed School, the forerunner of Bishop Wood School, which was situated on the High Street where the library car park is now. He was taught by the notorious Miss Baker and his musical education began at the age of 5 with piano lessons from Mrs Wallace, the wife of the owner of the sweet shop on Western Road where there is now a nail bar. He also sang in the choir of St Mary's, Northchurch, where his father was organist and choirmaster.

Colin went on to Hemel Hempstead Grammar School where he was encouraged to pursue a career in music and to apply for a place at Balliol College, Oxford, as an organ scholar. However, Colin had other ideas! Nora Grace, an old friend of the family, had a daughter, Janet, who worked for a Berkhamsted firm of chartered accountants who required an articled clerk and he was keen to take up the opportunity. He left school at 16, was articled for five years and qualified as a Chartered Accountant in 1969.

However, and fortunately, his music was not forgotten.

When Edward Bell retired as organist at St Peter & St Paul's Church in 1963, Canon Lowdell offered Colin the position on the basis that the church would not pay him a salary but would pay for him to have organ tuition at one of the London music colleges. Therefore, at the same time as studying for his accountancy exams, he travelled to Regent's Park every Saturday morning to study the organ with Geoffrey Hanson at Trinity College of Music. Colin was organist at St Peter & St Paul, and latterly also

choirmaster, for twelve years until he was succeeded by Keith Pearce in 1975. When he handed over to Keith, there were thirty-six boys in the choir and ten men. The choir regularly challenged other local church choirs to cricket and football matches. Colin tells me that Tring's achievements in this area were 'not notable'!

Colin met Jane in 1967 at a youth club dance in the dilapidated old YMCA building in Akeman Street. A young Dr Chris Side was the Youth Club Chairman at the time and had encouraged Colin to become the Club Treasurer. Despite the band's unbelievably dreadful and incredibly loud music when they met at that dance in 1967, and the fact that the YMCA building was so run down that it was condemned shortly afterwards, Jane was unfazed and they married in 1971.

*"It's staggering to think that one person would have the dedication, stamina and total commitment of running one choir for 50 years! To have done so with such energy, passion and joviality is testament to Colin's ability to inspire generations of singers over so many decades."*

**Rob Johnston, Co-Director and Choral Manager of the BBC Singers**

An excerpt from the Choral Society minutes of 1971 records that 'Mr and Mrs Roland Stevens informed the Committee that Colin (then the Society's accompanist) was to be married on 24 July 1971 at 2.00pm and hoped that as many Choral Society members as possible would swell the singing. Mr Hollingsworth, Chairman, said he would announce this to the Society before they sang a Requiem.'

Meanwhile, Colin's career as a chartered accountant continued and he found himself working as a partner in the international firm of Grant Thornton where, in 1981, a client in the fast-growing high technology electronics sector asked him to join them as Finance Director to take the firm public on the London Stock Exchange. By 1998, the company had offices all over the world with 3,500 employees and worldwide sales of more than £3 billion.

In 1999, Colin chose to take early retirement, to spend less time travelling and more time with his family and with music. There was a spectacular Victorian-themed farewell party at Highclere Castle to wish him well!



Colin and Jane have four children, Robert, Anna, James and John, who all sang in the church choir and studied musical instruments; Anna and John have pursued careers in music. Colin and Jane are now proud grandparents to their growing family. Music continues to be a huge part of Colin's life.

When his father retired as the conductor of the Choral Society in 1974, Colin was very keen to take over and extend the repertoire and membership. There are now more than eighty members of the choir and new members are always welcome. This year marks a remarkable fifty years of his tenure, directing three concerts a year with choir, soloists and orchestra. These performances are always hugely successful (Colin describes them as 'eventful') and well received.

Colin also directs a small chamber choir, the Icknield Sixteen, a choir founded in Ivinghoe by the late Emyln Jones. The choir is made up of members 'by invitation' who traditionally give two concerts a year.

Colin has accompanied many of The Vale Gilbert and Sullivan Society performances over the last fifty years on piano and he plays regularly for the Ridgeway Chorale, directed by Richard Grylls, who was himself accompanist to the Choral Society for over twenty years.

*"At rehearsals, Colin's ability to mix good humour with precision, discipline and encouragement brings much love and respect from the choir. No matter how demanding the work, we always feel in very safe hands."*

**Rob Allnutt, Chairman of Tring Choral Society**

At the David Evans Court Theatre, he has played in a series of charity concerts for two pianos and continues to enjoy his weekly rehearsal mornings when the house is filled with music as you drink your coffee in the conservatory next to the music room. In conjunction with his brother, Robert, he was musical director for a number of staged musicals, most

notably 'Fiddler on the Roof', 'My Fair Lady' and 'Side by Side by Sondheim'.

Colin has also accompanied countless choirs and musicals for many other local societies, has played the organ for many weddings, funerals and other services in Tring, London and further afield and had the great privilege of touring Holland as organist with the choir of Ely Cathedral and France and Italy with two London choirs.

Back in Tring and Berkhamsted, there have been many riotous Victorian music hall charity evenings with Colin on piano and in the late 1990s he moved on to a new genre with Mike Bernstein when they devised a tribute show to Flanders & Swann. This was to lead to over 250 performances in theatres throughout the UK.

Somehow, Colin has still found time over the years to accompany children and adults in their music exams and, for a time, on Sunday mornings he would offer theory lessons to local teenagers who, he suspects, might have preferred to be doing something else. Fortunately, one of my own children was a willing participant – which says a lot about Colin and young people!

And then there is his work as Chairman of the Trustees of Tring

Charities, a position he has held since 2002. This body was established early in the 18<sup>th</sup> century when it was granted ownership of land in and around Tring, with the proviso that the income from the land should be used to buy bread and coal to be distributed on Maundy Thursday and Christmas Eve from the Church Square in Tring to the poor of the Ancient Parish of Tring.

*"It has been a real privilege for me to have been conducting Tring Choral Society for the last fifty years. I have had the great pleasure of working with an excellent choir, orchestra and professional soloists on a broad range of repertoire including most of the established choral masterpieces and a number of newly commissioned works. I am particularly grateful for the loyalty and commitment shown by so many singers and the help and support freely given to me along the way."*

**Colin Stevens, Musical Director of Tring Choral Society**

The Charity is a member of The Almshouse Association and continues to provide assistance to those in need from the income and management of a portfolio of over thirty properties,

occupied by people with genuine housing needs in Tring and the surrounding villages. The Ancient Parish of Tring originally included the villages of Long Marston, Wilstone and Puttenham and Colin was instrumental in extending this to include Wigginton, Aldbury, Marsworth and Pitstone. The Trustees of Tring Charities also administer the Millenium Education Fund which offers financial support to deserving youngsters through further education.

Colin and Jane have enjoyed a very happy and fulfilled married life together but they have always remembered those in difficult circumstances and have been, quietly and privately, hugely generous. Colin says that Jane has shown amazing tolerance throughout their life together, to enable him to do all he has done and continues to do. It is said that behind every successful man there is a good woman and Jane is testament to that – though she won't like me saying it!

And, finally, to quote from a gift given to him on his retirement: 'Music is enough for a lifetime. A lifetime is not enough for music.'

**Edie Marchant  
St Michael & All Angels, Aston Clinton  
Tring resident and reader of Comment**

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Telephone: Elaine Winter, Secretary to the Trustees  
01442 827913 Email: [info@tringcharities.co.uk](mailto:info@tringcharities.co.uk)

Please note that the closing date is 15 November 2024 to lodge a completed application for grants payable from Autumn 2025.

# Jude the obscure?



The novel by Thomas Hardy called 'Jude the Obscure' is not one I have read (yet?) but it does not seem to be a laugh a minute. I learn

that, when first published, its morals shocked some to the extent that, it is reputed, the then Bishop of Wakefield burnt a copy! However, the title is one that seems particularly fitting for an article on the Epistle in the New Testament that bears his name. Indeed, one scholar has written about it under the title 'The Most Neglected Book in the New Testament'. Certainly, in the lectionaries for the daily Eucharist of the Anglican and Roman Catholic churches, verses from it are only appointed to be read on one weekday in a three-yearly cycle. Otherwise, it is an option on the Feast of St Simon and St Jude.

First, then, who is this Jude? In the heading to the Epistle, he describes himself as 'Jude, a servant of Jesus Christ and brother of James'. His was a common name. After all, there were two apostles with this name, a name variously rendered Judah, Judas or Jude. The first is the Hebrew form, the second Greek, with Jude as a familiar version in English. We tend only to use the Judas version of the name when referring to the betrayer, Judas Iscariot. The name goes back to one of the sons of Jacob who gives his name to one of the tribes of Jacob, alias Israel. As such, Judah features in the genealogies of Jesus in the Gospels of Luke and Matthew. While we do not know which Jude wrote the epistle, or if, indeed, it is just a penname, it is the contents of the letter that are our concern. The question of authorship was a matter judged very differently then from our own times, with our concern for intellectual property, issues of copyright, plagiarism and the like.

The aim of the letter was to combat the spread of dangerous doctrine by false teachers 'not hearing the Spirit'. These 'teachers' do not lead a moral life, the author warns his readers. A distinctive feature of this letter is the assumption readers will know and appreciate references to such apocryphal books as 'The Assumption

of Moses' or the books of Enoch. Here, perhaps, a reminder is needed that the Books of the Apocrypha refer to books described in the Bible as Deuterocanonical Scripture (i.e. of secondary status – in the Bible but on a different level of canonicity) and, as such, not recognised by some Christians. 'Apocryphal Books' is a term used of numerous books bearing the title of biblical figures such as Adam, Enoch, Abraham, Ezra and so on, to Zephaniah. In other words, biblical characters are used as pennames. The standard collection of such books contains over sixty titles!

After the address and greeting, the author tells his readers, 'the beloved' as he calls them, that it is necessary to appeal to them to contend for 'the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints'. ('The faith that was once and for all' is the one familiar phrase in this letter!) He goes on, but without any details, to write about the ungodly who have smuggled themselves in, sneaked in and are now turning grace into licentiousness, that is, sensuality or debauchery. They are setting authority at naught. There is a reference to the archangel Michael fighting with the devil and disputing about the body of Moses. The obscurity and simplicity around the death of Moses and his burial led to speculation and inventions about Michael being deputed to bury Moses. But the devil did his best to prevent him. The original Hebrew could be read as 'and he buried him', 'they buried him' or 'he was buried'. On such obscurity, a story was imposed! So, our author is accusing his opponents of denying God and Christ but without giving details. Rather, he gives three notorious examples of such behaviour. There was the example of the faithless Israelites in the desert; there were 'the sons of God', the angels of Genesis 6 who abandoned heaven for the attractions of 'the daughters of men' (much embellished in later Jewish speculation as to their fate); then Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis 19).

There follow three more examples of notorious characters. First is Cain, the fratricide (Genesis 4); the second is Balaam (Numbers 22) given as an example of one who would do anything for money, though this is not quite fair; and the third is Korah's rebellion (Numbers 16). Finally in this section,

there are colourful comparisons with various natural features such as clouds, trees, waves and so on. This attack concludes with an appeal to prophecy with reference to Enoch. Readers will know that Genesis says of Enoch only that he was the father of Methuselah and that 'he walked with God and he was not; for God took him' (Genesis 5.24). Like Elijah, he did not die but was assumed into heaven. In Jewish tradition he became the subject of legends and, as mentioned earlier, a number of books were given his name. Some of the writings may have influenced New Testament books – the title 'Son of Man' is found in them. Here there is a reference to ideas of coming judgment. The author of Jude clearly valued writings under Enoch's name. Indeed, some early Christian writers treated these books as Scripture. Later they fell into disfavour and Jerome tells us the book of Jude was rejected by many because of the appeal to the witness of an apocryphal book.

So, after attacking false teachers, Jude goes on to encourage his readers to remember the words of the apostles. The author appears not to include himself under this title but rather looks back to their authority for warnings about scoffers and false teachers. They cause division claiming they are the only ones who are not worldly minded. But 'the beloved', as Jude addresses them, are to build up their most holy faith and to continue praying in the Holy Spirit, to keep themselves in God's love and, finally, to look forward to Christ's mercy which leads to eternal life. This, of course, is what all Christians should do, but Jude tells them to have pity on those who are hesitating and to save them by snatching them from the fire. They are also to have 'pity with fear' for those who have been contaminated.

Jude's ending is a doxology – a liturgical type of ending to prayer which uses words familiar in such a context – attributing to God 'glory, majesty, dominion and authority before all time, now and for all ages, Amen'. Interesting as this epistle is, apart from the reference to the faith delivered once and for all, it is easy to see why we hear so little of it read in worship!

**Martin Banister**  
**St Albans Cathedral**

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# One of the proudest moments of my life



In 2015, five years after Anna and I moved to Tring, I was sitting next to Huw Bellis – a big mistake. Huw turned to me and said, ‘You don’t have much to do,

Edmund; would you like to become a governor at Bishop Wood Junior School?’ I didn’t then know Huw as well as I do now, but I think I recognised his subtle humour and also that words don’t emerge from his mouth without first deep engagement with his brain. So, inevitably, I accepted his invitation, despite being apprehensive about how I could fit the considerable time commitment of school governorship with the demands both of a job (I didn’t finally retire for another few years) and all the other tasks a busy and interesting life brings up.

After serving on the governing board for eight years, I stood down this February, and it’s been a fascinating and challenging experience I am so glad to have had. Let me try to persuade you to consider taking it on yourself! There are so many positive features.

Firstly, of course, there is the satisfaction of contributing in some way to all our futures – the education of the rising generation at a vital stage of their development. Second, it isn’t all long (and occasionally boring!) meetings of the governing board, of which one is expected to try to attend twelve a year. Other tasks are involved, and there are many opportunities to get involved in the life of the school.

I came to admire greatly the

dedication and skill of the teaching staff and it was wonderful to have some direct contact with the 8-11-year-olds that Bishop Wood caters for, and to relish their enthusiasm, friendliness, spontaneity and – indeed – tolerance. To which I should add that working with such a great team of hardworking and dedicated governors was itself a pleasure and an education. The board of Bishop Wood contains such a diverse range of talents; one of the many great strengths of Gary Stanley, the headteacher, was to be able to draw on these talents so expertly that we imagined it was our idea to offer them in the first place.

Let me add one more reason why I found being a governor so rewarding. It gave me a much greater insight into the way that a school functions – at least a Church of England junior school in a prosperous town like Tring. I now have an even greater regard for how staff and their senior leadership team have to navigate successfully through the maze of constraints (including the dreaded Ofsted inspections!) that government sets them, at the same time helping to develop lively and enquiring junior citizens with talents much wider than those examined by the various ‘key stages’. This is achieved with a genuine emphasis on the four founding Christian principles which the school proudly adopts – wisdom, hope, community and dignity. Of course, Bishop Wood is helped in this respect by having Huw Bellis as a very active member of the governing board, and by having a large and beautiful sacred building – St Peter & St Paul’s Church – fewer than five minutes’ walk away.

Probably being a governor in an inner city secondary would be more difficult than it was for me, though I’m sure that would be just as interesting. I accept that Bishop Wood is very fortunate in many respects, not least that of being situated in a hectare of grounds. It’s perhaps less fortunate in having to work in decaying buildings which are up to fifty years old, and therefore need constant costly maintenance, and which are difficult to upgrade to current environmental standards. Will the school meet the target set by the Church of England for all its buildings (including schools) – that of achieving ‘carbon neutrality’ by 2030? I’m confident that despite the challenge, Bishop Wood will give it a jolly good try, even with the scarcity of funding. Even these building-related issues had their plus side for me as a retired structural engineer; I did enjoy being called out by Gary one rainy January evening at 8.00pm and working out how to drain several tonnes of rainwater from one of the school’s flat roofs threatened with imminent catastrophe.

So, I hope I may have persuaded you that, despite its considerable demands, being a school governor has many attractions and is very well worth considering. I certainly have no regrets at having accepted Huw’s invitation at a wedding breakfast nearly a decade ago.

Earlier this year, I was hauled up in front of a whole-school end-of-term assembly in church and formally signed off at the end of my term of governorship. It was one of the proudest moments of my life, on a par with anything I achieved in my professional life.

**Edmund Booth, St Peter & St Paul**

## It's only a mac!

So, what do you do when faced with having to eat an elephant and how on earth does this connect to the title?

Being widowed young, at only 50, has been a great challenge. Part of the solution to help keep me sane has been trying to get his things passed over to the right people.

His veteran Victorian piano was sold on to help a young music teacher start teaching music at home.

His brogues have already tripped the light fantastic on the stage at school. His macintosh, his funeral and formal occasion garb has been taken into our school wardrobe to have a new life.

Clinging on to it was a thing for a while and then it became a more rational thing that I could see as being of use elsewhere.

It is not an easy process. Grief is a beast. I would much rather have him here with me, of course. Finding yet another of his items can often floor me. This whole new world of sharp experience has been surreal. Sorting out his shoes got me good and proper. The very wonderful Hannah, my friend and Head of Wardrobe, saved me one night and collected them. A cup of tea and a chat often works a treat. Asking for help is at times not easy but needed.

So, how do you eat an elephant... how do you deal with almighty and overwhelming tasks? One piece at a time, prayerfully, and asking for help to ease the burden.

**Sarah Bell  
Tring Park**



# Letter from Orkney



BOING, BOING, BOING! As I gaze out of my office window, I am transfixed by the lambs racing around our front garden or paddock and

every so often one of them ‘boings’ into the air whilst on the run, hilarious and wonderful to watch: a creature celebrating the pure joy of life. This is something I really ought to do more often. At 80, one (or at least I) becomes prone to navel gazing. Whilst a certain amount of reflection is good, it can get a bit obsessive. I don’t see the lambs wasting their short life doing that and I reckon neither should I. As I tell the lambs, life’s too short – keep cutting my grass.



There was a huge parade through the narrow streets of Stromness yesterday by FIVE pipe bands. What a magnificent array of swirling kilts drums and pipes all to celebrate 200 years of the Royal National Lifeboat Institute RNLI.

This wonderful organisation is very, very special here. Not only do they risk their lives on an almost daily basis in some of the fiercest waters on the British coast, but also act as an ambulance service when the air ambulance (helicopter) is either occupied or cannot get off the ground, which would mean a pretty grim trip for the boat. (We have seventy islands, many with no air strip. You can imagine the support they got. To cap it all, they even had a shout (call out) at 5.00pm just as things were finishing, to a climber falling from ‘The Old Man of Hoy’ sea stack. One year a young visitor tried to nick the RNLI collection box; he really doesn’t know how close he came to being our first vigilante murder victim for many years. Fortunately, he was caught by the police, I believe.

Well, the weather is warming up, we hit 9°C today, being at least a month behind you, summer is only just peering around the door. But I have got my first cut of grass done. Hooray! It’s about 2-3 hours work, even with the sit-on mower. The other half is left to wildlife and sheep. For you nature enthusiasts, we have had the Hen Harrier raiding our small hedge. We keep a colony of Sparrows in it, but they are too canny for him and the Owls. They post two lookouts and at the appropriate signal, they dive into the hedge, leaving our huge predator cursing his luck. The Puffin season will soon be in full swing, and I recently learnt an interesting titbit — the yellow band on the puffins’ multi-coloured beak is luminous and shows the ‘pufflings’ where the parent’s beak is and sand eels, in the dark of their burrow. (Yes, that is what a baby Puffin is called.)



The whales are not being visitor-friendly by their absence. They are here but still shy. I mentioned the Hen Harrier earlier but the huge Blackback Gulls are a sight to be seen hunting for Corvid (Rook family) nests. As we have virtually no trees, birds have evolved to ground or stone wall nesting. Our greatest pest is the Starling, during the nesting season, as they love cars. We have to check our car under the bonnet on every journey because they can rebuild a nest within 45 minutes of us clearing it out and, once an egg is laid, it is then illegal to disturb and (theoretically) you could be prosecuted. There have been numerous car fires as a result of starling nests.

Our first two sets of guests have been and gone. Old hands at Orkney, they know when there will be peace and quiet. We are in Norfolk to celebrate 80 years on this glorious planet with my family, then to Tring for a one-night stand, the first of my retirement tours with all my boater friends and then high-tail the 800 miles home to celebrate with my friends here. July I shall be resting (as they say in the classics).

Love, peace and prayers to you all from Carrie and me.

**Mac Dodge  
Milestone Kirk, Orkney**



# Musalaha visit to Tring, 13 September 2024



Two women from Musalaha will visit Tring and Luton as part of a short UK Tour, to tell us of their current experience in Israel and Palestine.

In June we introduced Hiba Allati. We now introduce Tifferet Oryah who lives on the border with Lebanon. Tifferet is a Project Manager for Women's Groups and the article below uses her own words from the Musalaha website.

## Introducing Tifferet to Tring

Shalom! My name is Tifferet, and I am very excited to join the Musalaha team, especially now, at one of the hardest times this land has known. I live on the border with Lebanon and have been evacuated from my house for over six months.

The meaning of Tifferet in the kabbalah (Jewish mysticism) is unity of opposites, harmony and balance. This name immediately tells other

Israelis that I come from a religious background. Throughout my life, and perhaps thanks to my name, I have questioned and challenged my identity many times, and to be honest, I'm never sure if I had a choice. As an Israeli, my life has always been full of conflict and contradictions. I was born in the West Bank and come from both Orthodox and right-wing society. When I finished my military service, I started a project where I travelled across Israel and the West Bank to Jewish-Israeli families with different religious and political views. I found that in order to figure out who I am, I must meet the 'other'. In the process of reclaiming my Jewish identity, a new journey began on a social and political level. I decided to study the Middle East, Islam & Arabic and discovered perspectives and narratives outside my own community. The more I saw the pain of Palestinian life under Occupation, the more I desired life rather than death for both Israelis and Palestinians in this land.

For the past two years, I've been teaching Israeli youth on the conflict through The Forum for Regional Thinking, with an emphasis on learning about

the Palestinian perspective, and understanding the pain of both sides. In addition, I facilitate women's groups on sex

education, believing women need to discover and raise their voices to make both personal and political changes. I am thrilled to join the Musalaha team as the Israeli Women's Project Manager, combining these two values, and curious to continue my identity journey. May I always ask questions, and may my answers change with me.

**Tifferet Oryah**  
**Musalaha Women's Groups**  
 Supplied by Colin Briant  
 High Street Baptist Church  
<https://musalaha.org>  
<https://www.musalaha.uk>

**Footnote:** In May, BBC's Jeremy Bowen interviewed a father whose daughter died as she was taken into Gaza on 7 October last year. Their previous hope for co-existence was now declared to be impossible. Community pressures are such that people who desire such relationships do so 'by night'.

How can re-engagement be re-established? A number of reconciliation groups from Musalaha have been maintained. Staffing has actually increased. Hiba and Tifferet write quite personally in Musalaha's latest Newsletter 'Confronting Fears'.

A grant application for relationship-building activity will be presented to the British Government later in July. If that fails, other funding bodies will be approached. We invite your prayers.

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# Inclusive Iona



We were lucky enough to have a trip to the Hebrides in May, and especially lucky that the sky was blue for much of the time. A call at Iona was included in our itinerary; it was one of the busier islands that we visited.

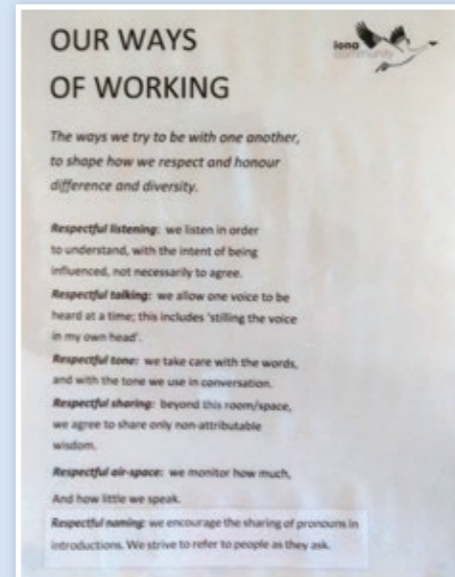
There was quite a throng walking to the iconic abbey, dedicated to St Columba, revered for bringing Christianity to Scotland in the 7<sup>th</sup> century. It is a beautiful building in a peaceful place. The Iona Community thrives as an ecumenical Christian movement working for justice and peace, with members across the world.

I was intrigued to come across this notice, 'Our Ways of Working' posted on the wall in a room used for prayer and discussion. A series of guidelines, each starting with the word 'Respectful', and which would do no harm if shown in any parish gathering. I was struck by the reference to 'stilling the voice in my own head'. But I was also interested to see that an extra guideline had been added to the list recently - 'Respectful naming: we encourage the sharing of pronouns in introductions. We strive to refer to people as they ask.' I was moved and impressed that a community with roots in the 7<sup>th</sup> century is able to update its attitudes in sympathy with modern experiences.

Personally I feel awkward about putting my pronouns on email footers (he/him, by the way). But I am old enough to remember feeling awkward about what was (in about 1970) the novel idea of exchanging the peace with others in the middle of the Sunday service, and now it is second nature, an experience to be enjoyed. So perhaps I'll get there eventually with respectful naming.

You can find out more about Iona at: <https://iona.org.uk/>

**John Whiteman**  
Tring Team



I was very interested to read this article by John with its reference to pronouns. In my own case, this has a different significance. I work with many people



– remotely, by email – from all over the world. Some I have met in person so I know, generally, which pronoun to use. But there are others I have never met and some have ambiguous names. Was Leigh from South Africa, Wenche from Norway, Roman from Australia or Alix from France – he or she? I create a mental image of that person as I am writing to them and then meet them for the first time at a book exhibition and am speechless for a moment when I find that swarthy young man with the designer stubble (in my imagination) is actually a beautiful young woman! Then, of course, because this is who I am, find the words jumping into my mouth to explain my misconception! I could learn from the 'stilling the voice in my own head' advice... Ed.

# Sunflowers



Sunflowers make me happy and relaxed, reminding me of never-ending life. Sunflowers symbolise life, vitality, peace and resilience, which is why they are the beloved symbol of Ukraine. The golden-yellow russet-coloured flowers move gracefully,

following the sun all day long and at night they lie dormant and face east for the sun to rise again. Just like us, when they get old, they start to slow down. They wait to be harvested or for birds, bees or mini beasts to visit, sharing in the feast of pollen and nectar. The seeds are then dispersed, and life begins all over again.

**Polly Eaton**  
High Street Baptist Church





# Everyone was warmly welcomed



'Everyone Welcome!' was the promise made in the promotional material for the Tring Family Fun Day on 11 May – and that promise became a reality on the day itself when the sun truly 'had his hat on'.

Most Family Fun Days for the organising team – like most English summer outdoor events of any kind – usually start around 6.00am with a first cautious peep through the curtains at the glum weather. The next few hours are then usually spent hoping against hope that the mist and mizzle doesn't turn into a full-on downpour by opening time!

Not this Saturday 11 May 2024!

This year the day dawned with a bright, shiny blue May morning full of perfect promise and then just proceeded to get better. We were truly blessed with the perfect May weather.



## The weather was on its best behaviour

And it wasn't just the weather! All the activists and organising teams showed up when they were supposed to; the stalls were packed with tempting goodies; the test runs on the zip-wire went without a hitch and when the guests arrived, everybody turned up in a good mood, just ready to party.

This year we had more stalls with more merchandise and more things for families to try out and enjoy – including not just one but two bouncy slides – and we also had a truly heroic goalie (Phil Dowden) who never stopped saving

the day despite being on guard for the whole of it! (His intended alternate was at the top of the tower making sure all the teddies were happily flight-ready.)



The indoor programme of entertainment was varied and hugely enjoyed (especially the two school choirs from Dundale and Bishop Wood, who brought in their own massive family support groups) and the Award Presentations were very well attended.

The Roland Stevens Award was shared this year by Eve Hughes and Joe Pyefinch, both of Tring School, and presented by Robin Schafer of Tring Music Partnership; The Heritage Award was presented to the whole Cartwright Family for their unstinting support on handling the set-up and logistical support necessary for all the events that go on around the church and churchyard. All know that they simply wouldn't happen without the hard work and dedication

the Cartwrights put into these occasions and their award was enthusiastically applauded.

The whole entertainment programme was compered and presented by Vivianne Child and was greatly enjoyed by those inside the building.

The crowds happily thronging the churchyard outside meanwhile were sustained by the ever-popular presence of Tring Brewery's bar, huge quantities of candy-floss and an endless supply of sausages and burgers from the barbecue team. The Rector's sausages were universally acknowledged as 'best-in-show' and a record number were consumed.



## Enjoying our splendid green space

Even the churchyard was on its best behaviour. The new grass is now firmly established after the turmoil of the just-completed renovation and replacement of the outdated and dysfunctional ancient drainage system. It was the perfect spot for picnicking families to stretch out and enjoy the sunshine. These essential and urgent works cost some £60,000 last year and this was funded entirely by the Friends of Tring Church Heritage (FOTCH) to ensure that events like the Family Fun Day can safely continue to welcome the whole community into our churchyard.



## The heritage heart of Tring

The historic medieval building of St Peter & St Paul in its lovely green churchyard has been welcoming Tring families to gather and celebrate together over more than eight centuries. Like all such buildings it needs quite a lot of TLC and the work on the groundworks over the past year has made it clear that we also need to pay some attention to the walls themselves. Weather and time keep taking their toll and there is some urgent strengthening needed at the east end of the church which features the oldest and tallest walls in Tring. They were built around the time the Magna Carta was being signed at Runnymede and they are a priceless asset for all the people of Tring today.



With good stewardship and generosity, we can make sure that days such as the Family Fun Day of 11 May 2024, when we welcomed well over 1000 people with warmth and fellowship into the heritage heart of Tring, will continue long into the future. We all know that in Tring we have a community that likes to get together and enjoy good fellowship and we also all know that community has a generous heart.

You may well find that you are asked to help 'Save Our Walls' and we know that there will be plenty of willingness to help. After all, It's 'Our town, it's our church and it's our choice'.

Watch this space.



## The future beckons

These are challenging times and there are some big challenges, changes and choices on the near horizon. It is in part the shared memory of days spent together in simple celebration like the Tring Family Fun Day that helps us get through those changes and make wiser choices and decisions. We are an open and welcoming community and we are already planning an even better Tring Family Fun Day for 10 May 2025 – and we need everyone to get involved to make that happen.

We can't promise to better the weather but we can promise that all will be warmly welcomed and 'everyone's included'.

On all our behalf let me offer our thanks and gratitude to all those who planned, produced and performed, served and supported, attended and appreciated and above all enjoyed Tring Family Fun Day 2024.

It was great to be there. See you next year!

**Grahame Senior**  
Tring Team Parish  
The Friends of Tring Church Heritage

# The Eagle and Child



There is a pub in Oxford, just down the road from the Martyrs Memorial, called 'The Eagle and Child' where CS Lewis, his brother Warnie, JRR Tolkien,

Charles Williams and other

writers used to meet on a Tuesday to drink and to discuss their writings. They would try out passages on each other and listen to the comments made to improve 'The Lion the Witch and the Wardrobe', 'The Lord of the Rings' and other famous books. The pub is well known across the world and, while at conferences in Oxford, I have twice been asked by groups of foreign writers to take them to the place. The first was a group of Scandinavian clergy, one of whom went on to become the first female Archbishop of Upsala, the leader of the Lutherans in Sweden. I am sure the fact that she had been to 'The Eagle and Child' with me clinched the job for her. The second was a group of Canadian and American scientists. While I was sitting with this second group, sipping my half of shandy, the topic turned to the talk we had just heard on religious experience. One of the Canadians asked me if I had ever had a 'religious experience'.

'Heavens no!' I replied. 'I belong to the Church of England. We don't go in for any of that sort of stuff.' This got the laugh I hoped for, even if it wasn't true.

I have on a few occasions had what you might call a religious experience, generally connected with nature. In Welsh spirituality there are what are termed 'thin places' where the gap between earth and heaven is thought to be very thin. The

top of Snowdon, or Yr Wyddfa as we are meant to call it these days, is reputed to be one such place. Personally, the last time I was at the summit of Snowdon it seemed that it was closer to the Arctic than heaven. But I have, when walking in the countryside around Tring, on occasions, felt very close to God.

Could I have been kidding myself? Of course.

Does this prove the existence of God? Of course not.

Could I produce this feeling to order? No.

Fifty-six years ago, I was confirmed by the then Bishop of Tonbridge. I can remember very little of the service or the preparation, but I do remember the bishop saying that we should not expect any grand feeling as he laid his hand upon us. We should not expect an experience of the Holy Spirit as the Apostles and others experienced on the Day of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit came upon the followers of Christ 'in a flood', so to speak. That was the ultimate religious experience. St Luke has trouble finding the right words to describe what happened.

'When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them.'

It was difficult to describe, but it was a powerful experience. After this the Apostles and other disciples had a boldness in preaching that they had not had before. They were closer to each other than they were before and they seemed to up their care for the poor and

the sick, both within their community and beyond.

Did it really happen like that? I don't know; I wasn't there. But the story seems to hang together. Now some might say that is a poor standard of proof.

In astronomy we can make some incredibly accurate predictions. I have a book at home which will tell me the time the sun and the moon will rise on each day of the year, down to the minute. But when it comes to the Big Bang, we have to put together a narrative which describes what happened and we compare what we know of the velocity of the galaxies which exist now, the background radiation, the expansion of the universe and our test of truth is – does the story hang together or cohere?

For me, it is like that with the account of the Day of Pentecost, the Big Bang of the Christian church, the church's birthday. The story hangs together and makes sense. I think it happened roughly like that.

The other thing I remember from my Confirmation is that the bishop said that God the Holy Spirit was only a prayer away. God the Holy Spirit is there to strengthen us when we feel weak and to comfort us when we need support. The experience may not be as noisy as the Day of Pentecost; it might be as it was for Elijah on Mount Horeb. You remember the story. Having fled into the wilderness, Elijah heard God not in the earthquake, nor in the wind, nor in the fire, but in the still small voice of calm. That is sometimes how the Holy Spirit comes to us, especially for those of us who do not go in for noisy spiritual experiences.

**Jon Reynolds**  
**Tring Team**

– we are offering breakfast, lunch and dinner (where chatting is as important as the food) – and joining in one of the services (there are a number on offer throughout the day) can also be beneficial. So, continuing the food theme, treat the Quiet Day on 17 August as a menu from which you can pick and choose what you think may nourish. And in the end, that may be just one shared meal. We look forward to seeing you.

**Tim James**  
**St Peter & St Paul**

## The August Quiet Day



First an apology: in my article in June about our next Quiet Day in Puttenham in August, I referred to our guest speaker, Margaret Saunders, as a

Reader – when she is, in fact, a retired priest. Apologies to Margaret and anyone else I may have offended. The Reverend Margaret Saunders will be giving us a short talk on faith in

difficult times, after which she will lead a discussion.

Second, some more information. A Quiet Day starting at 8.00am and ending thirteen hours later at 9.00pm may seem daunting; and I am sure that monks and nuns who follow this pattern of life, day in and day out, sometimes find it daunting. For us there is the possibility of treating the day differently. There is something to be gained from experiencing the whole sweep of the day.

However, eating meals with friends

## Poem of the month



This is one of the best-known of Yeats's poems and among his earliest. 'Innisfree' means 'Heather Island', and Yeats himself explained, in a radio broadcast,

the 'purple glow' (line 7) as the reflection of heather in the water. In three lyrical stanzas the poet describes his longing to leave the city and its greyness and noise and retire to live alone with nature on a remote island. Peace he will find there at all times of day, as detailed in the second verse. Yet, is it a dream or is he really going? The repetition at the beginning of verse 3 seems to emphasise the deep, unfulfilled longing to get away from the roads and drab pavements of the city. The rhymes are clear but unobtrusive and add to the simple evocation of life away from it all. The theme is surely one that appeals to many of us in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

William Butler Yeats was one of the foremost poets and writers at the turn

of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. He was born in 1865 in Ireland, the son of a barrister, who was also a successful portrait painter. His mother belonged to a prosperous merchant

family, so, through both sides of his family, Yeats was connected with the Anglo-Irish Protestants. Yeats preferred at first to identify with the mystical customs and beliefs of pre-Christian Ireland, though later he identified with more contemporary issues. He was educated at schools in London and Dublin, spending summer holidays in Sligo. Later he enrolled at the Metropolitan School of Art in Dublin, where he mixed with other poets and literary figures. He was a prolific poet and writer covering subjects including myth, history, love, death and getting old. In 1889 Yeats met Maud Gonne,

### The Lake of Innisfree

*I will arise and go now, and go to Innisfree,  
And a small cabin build there, of clay and wattle made;  
Nine bean-rows will I have there, a hive for the honey-bee,  
And live alone in the bee-loud glade.  
And I shall have some peace there, for peace comes dropping slow,  
Dropping from the veils of the morning to where the cricket sings;  
There midnight's all a-glimmer, and noon a purple glow,  
And evening full of the linnet's wings.  
I will arise and go now, for always night and day  
I hear lake water lapping with low sounds by the shore;  
While I stand on the roadway, or on the pavements grey,  
I hear it in the deep heart's core.*

**William Butler Yeats, 1890**

an English heiress and ardent political activist to whom he proposed marriage four times over the course of his life. The love was unrequited, however, though she remained the inspiration for much of his poetry. At the age of fifty-two he married 'Georgie', a bride half his age. There were two children of this marriage. He was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1923. He died in 1939 in France where he was initially buried but eleven years later his body was moved back to Ireland.

**Kate Banister**  
**St Julian's, St Albans**

## Jean-Baptiste Vianney, 4 August



On visits to France I had been intrigued (and a little unsettled) by statues of a pale, gaunt priest, looking out from beneath heavy brows. Using the measure of comparing the number and size of statues, he appeared to be more popular than Theresa of Lisieux (a very famous French saint) and only slightly less important than Saint Anne (patron saint of France). When, eventually, I asked who he was, I was told simply that he was the parish priest of Ars, as though that was all I needed to know!

Jean-Baptiste Vianney, the man I now know to be the patron saint of priests, was born into a poor farming family in a village near Lyon, on 8 May 1786. From an early age he knew he was called to the priesthood, but he lacked education. He was 20 years old when he began formal religious study but he struggled to learn Latin. Two years later he was conscripted to fight in Napoleon's armies in Spain. As a seminarian he should have been

exempt fighting but somehow he was missed from the diocesan list of students and so was called up. On the way to join his regiment he became ill and his unit left without him. Considered a deserter, it was 1810 before an imperial decree granted an amnesty to those who had deserted between 1806 and 1810 and he was able to resume his studies. In 1813 he entered a seminary in Lyon, but after one term, having failed his exams, he was asked to leave. However, the Bishop of Grenoble judged that his character and devotion compensated for the deficiencies in his academic qualifications and, in 1815, the bishop ordained Jean-Baptiste priest. In 1818 Jean-Baptiste was sent to minister in the backwater of Ars-sur-Formans.

Jean-Baptiste may have lacked academic learning and he campaigned against drinking, immodest dress and dancing (which he considered such a hotbed of sin that he would pay the fiddler not to turn up and play for dances) but he proved to be an unexpectedly brilliant preacher and had a real talent for spiritual direction and discernment. His reputation spread and by 1845 Jean-Baptiste was spending between sixteen

and eighteen hours a day in the confessional, seeing countless thousands who sought his advice. A special booking office was opened at the railway station in Lyon to deal with branch-line tickets to Ars, since pilgrims were known to have to wait, sometimes for days, to see the Curé.

He died at Ars in 1859, was beatified in 1905 and named as a saint in 1925: not bad going for someone who was thrown out of college for failing exams!

**Linzi James**  
**St Peter & St Paul**



# Tweet of the month



I know I said I wouldn't look at Hummingbirds on my second trip to Colombia but I didn't say I wouldn't talk about them afterwards! When

I checked my records, I had recorded 678 species of bird seen on this trip and of those 66 were Hummingbirds, so almost 10% of the trip total. Of those 66, 25 were birds I hadn't seen before, so almost 16% of my 160 new species were Hummingbirds.

This trip was also special for allowing me finally to see species that I had wanted to see for years. I finally saw the elusive Rufous Potoo and Black Inca, a hummingbird endemic to Colombia, which I had wanted to see since 2020 on my first trip to Colombia and just prior to Covid-19 – talk about fortunate timing with that trip. This bird is mainly black, with a hint of blue on the shoulders and white patches the sides of the neck and under the tail – not the most brightly coloured Hummingbird but still striking and a delight to see.

However, the bird I am going to focus

on is Longuemare's Sunangel, one that I had hoped to see in 2005 on a trip to Venezuela and then again in 2020 in Colombia. I think as much as anything it was the name that captured my imagination. It is only really noteworthy for this exotic sounding name. It is not the largest, or smallest Hummingbird, nor is it the most brightly-coloured, but I really wanted to see it on this trip. It is not a widespread bird and is only found in the eastern Andes of Colombia and adjacent areas in westernmost Venezuela – where it had previously eluded me. It is found between 6,000 and 12,000 feet above sea level in cloud forest and/or elfin forest. Its scientific name is *Heliangelus Clarisse*. The generic name comes from the Greek words for the Sun, helios, and angel, angelos. The specific name Clarisse is after Clarisse Parzudaki, the wife of French bird collector Charles Parzudaki, who was presumably a friend of Gouye de Longuemare, another French bird collector who had first described this hummingbird to the scientific community in 1841.

Unlike the Rufous Potoo, I saw Longuemare's Sunangel fairly easily at the house of a local guide up in the Andes east of Bogota and happily



feeding from a bowl of sugar water on the table next to me. In this picture it is subtly beautiful, but in the right light it has an amethyst-coloured rather than black looking throat and can be iridescent with the best of the Hummingbirds. I was delighted to see this species at last and realised afterwards I was actually seeing a messenger of the light. After all, the Sun is the source of physical light on Earth and, in Greek, angel also means messenger. So literally Sunangel also means 'light messenger'. I'm sure I don't need to join the dots to link this to the 'Messenger of Light' who was born on earth more than 2000 years ago that we all hope to see one day face-to-face.

**Roy Hargreaves**  
**St Peter & St Paul**

# Liberation theology and a reluctant priest



I grew up in a Christian household and both of my parents were committed church goers. Dad, by background, was a non-conformist and Mum an Anglican, though

none of my grandparents had been religious. I don't know where Dad got his faith from. Mum's was a result of her headteacher. She went to a Church of England school and both of her parents died before she finished school. The care she received from her headteacher was transformational.

Mine was a childhood of privilege, a leafy Hampshire village and a private school. It was a great contrast from Mum's who had known genuine poverty and inner-city life. Church was an ever-present aspect of life. We were weekly attendees and both my parents and sister rang the bells. I used to joke I had got ordained to avoid becoming a bell ringer!

The thing which struck me most, though, about family mealtime conversations, was my parents' concern for others, especially the marginalised. I think my faith has always been centred around the awareness of the 'other'. I am not one of those Christians who can talk about a personal relationship with Jesus (never met the chap personally). Instead, it is based on a less tangible but nonetheless very real sense that there is something 'other' beyond ourselves. I cannot get away from this nagging feeling about God being God.

This sense of God always brings me back then to the aspect that I am not the centre of the universe: God is, and therefore care of others is centrally important. As a result, from my mid-teenage years, this nagging sense of God transformed itself into a nagging sense of vocation, and by the sixth form, I was clear that I felt called to being ordained.

So, I did the logical thing. I stopped going to church. I applied to do law at university, but then I failed my A levels rather spectacularly, and ended up doing theology at Lampeter. I wouldn't say that I am a good theologian but I do call myself a theologian and feel very fortunate to have had three years studying academic theology in a secular setting. I, of course, continued to avoid going to church and was without doubt an obnoxious rugby lout.

On graduating, I was forced to ask myself whether I was actually serious

about this vocation business and decided I ought to test it by working for the church. I got a job working for the Missions to Seafarers. I remember being interviewed by Canon Bill Christianson and him commenting that he would look forward to hearing me preach – a potential vicar who didn't believe in Jesus! It was a throw-away comment from him but has lived with me ever since, and I have wrestled with it ever since.

In the small world of the church, Bill also knew Jane Banister well, but this was some years before Jane and I met! A year working in New Orleans and working with seafarers offering loving service convinced me that yes, I was ready to work for the church and so I returned to England working for them for another year to apply to be ordained.

The church process of this was reasonably straightforward; my personal battle less so. I spent many hours sitting on the beach in Seaham, County Durham, wrestling with God. I know my own faults all too well – how could God want me? I came to the conclusion the church must be in a pretty poor state if I were the best on offer. It definitely felt like having to give in to the nagging sense that wouldn't let go. Some describe it as collared not collar. I gave in. There were two years at theological college, onto a training parish and then a year as deacon before being ordained priest, twenty-five years ago now.

So, how then has this background story worked itself out over the years?

Firstly, I have always strived for an 'open' church. My theology is definitely unconventional. I suspect I moderate it a lot to try to preach to others and not just what I think myself. I believe theology should be liberating. It should answer fundamental questions about our identity. It is never restrictive. It breaks my heart when the church is used as control. I wish I had the courage to leave the church over its unacceptable stance on homosexuality. I fail to understand how some read the Bible as restrictive rather than liberating.

On becoming Tring Team Rector, my first decision, with backing from the PCC, was to have St Peter & St Paul's Church open every day. I wrote on the website, 'One of the most important things about St Peter & St Paul's is that it is open every day. This open-ness is more than being a church which is physically open. It is our whole mindset – we are open to God and to questions about God. We take seriously that God is working

in the lives of all people and none of us has all of the answers, but together we paint a picture of God.' I hope this sums up my ministry. We do little things as a ministry team to chip away at this. We were formed by the traditions of the church and want to hold onto them, but equally we need to make this accessible to others. All of our worship books now have a form of communion which is subtly more accessible.

Secondly, I strive for a relaxed church. Despite being from a quintessentially 'church' background, I have never really felt as if I belong. My complete wrestle with God has always made me surprised that I am part of the church. I have therefore always thought that God wants the 'real' us in God's church. My sense of belonging is to a raggle-taggle bunch of pilgrims. I recall in my curacy pointing out to the church wardens that dressing in their three-piece tweed suits wasn't exactly welcoming to the casual visitor or to young people. Everything was far too formal. I know I am abysmally scruffy, but the concept of 'just as I am' is central to my belief. A high point in my ministry was when Joan Cherry hit me over the head with a tray for something I had said or done, and then panicked saying, 'I have just hit the Vicar!' I reassured her she should definitely have done so.

We are one family, relaxed in each other's company, all with our faults. It's fine if you like wearing suits, but honestly: who chooses to wear one when you don't have to? Come as you are!

Thirdly, I am aware of my faults. I, like most priests, am grateful to the many parishioners who like to point them out to me on a regular basis; and even more so, the many more who tolerate us despite these flaws. I am acutely aware that I am painfully introverted and that many people would welcome a warm conversation which is not forthcoming. But there are ways around this. I always hold onto the three classical images of heaven in the Bible: the garden, the city and the banquet. I am happiest in the heavenly garden (well, bleak moorland as a preference) but am aware that the city or the people of God is most important. Solution? Bring the people of God together at the heavenly banquet.

My spiritual journey is a lone journey, wrestling with God and theology. Church, however, is feasting. I am probably happiest as a priest at a BBQ or cooking for the people of God. To me, this is church.

**Huw Bellis, Tring Team**

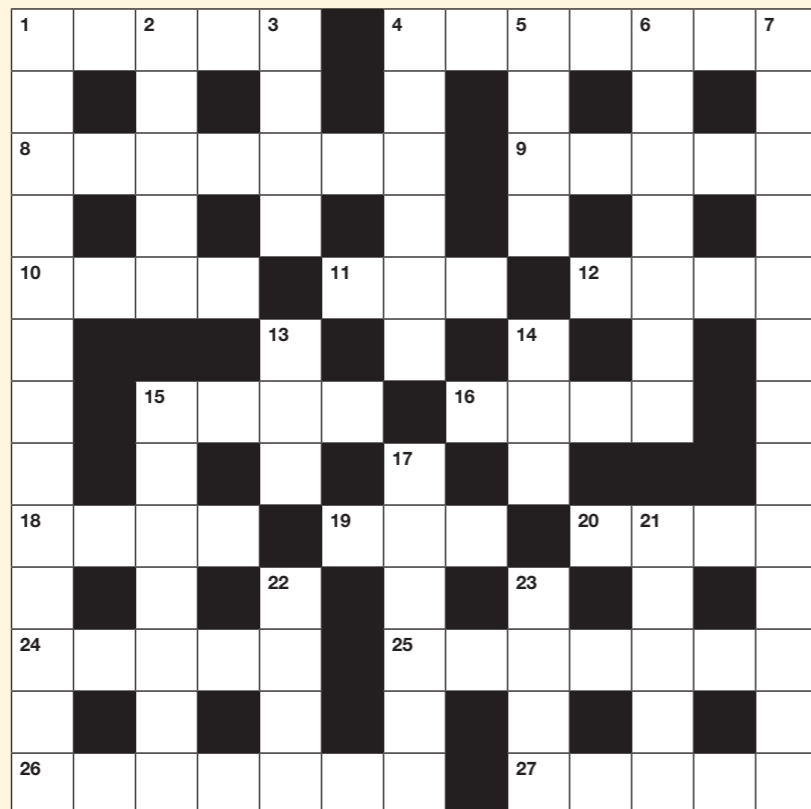
# Crossword

## ACROSS

1. The Good Book (5)
4. Speak of wrongdoing (7)
8. A son of David (7)
9. Rear of the ship (5)
10. Small measurement (4)
11. Repair (3)
12. Fail to hit the target (4)
15. Serene (4)
16. Early name of major saint (4)
18. Unite: combine (4)
19. In good health (3)
20. Encouragement (4)
24. Sublime (5)
25. O.T. Prophet (7)
26. Of this world (7)
27. Stick together (5)

## DOWN

1. The act of blessing (13)
2. Foundation (5)
3. Wiggly fish (4)
4. Decisive act (6)
5. Home of a bird (4)
6. O.T. Prophet (7)
7. Service of rejoicing (5) (2) (6)
13. Everyone (3)
14. Headgear (3)
15. Prayer used on a particular Sunday (7)
17. Sombre (6)
21. Selects (5)
22. A smear (4)
23. Applaud (4)



Answers page 30

# D Day plus six



On 6 June we joined with a large body of the local community in St Peter & St Paul's to remember what happened on the beaches of Normandy eighty years ago.

Skilfully put together by Tring Together, the very moving service was led by Huw Bellis with the help of Pathé News and some members of Grove Road School.

On the 12 June 1944, D Day plus six, my father, serving in the Royal Signals and aged only 24, was parachuted into Normandy. He was lucky not to be involved on D Day itself when so many people died on the beaches of France. But he had been in dangerous situations before. In the Libyan desert he had been driving a Jeep with a friend beside him when it was hit by a German shell. Neither his friend nor the Jeep survived.

My father was told that there were two possible causes for concern regarding the Normandy drop. One is that while they were scheduled to be dropped a few miles from the German lines, in the time it took the plane to fly from Southern England to Normandy, the Wehrmacht could counter-attack leaving them at the mercy of the wrong welcoming committee. The other danger was that, during their flight, the wind could change direction and they would be blown over the line with the same result. On this occasion he was lucky. On one of his subsequent parachute-drops after leave at home in South Wales, he

was again deposited over the French countryside, the wind did indeed change direction and he bounced off the roof of a church, breaking a leg. He described the next period as his best in the war – six weeks of good food and pretty nurses in a French hospital.

In 1983, returning from a Southern Brittany camping holiday with two friends (who now worship at Akeman Street Baptist Church) we decided to head home a day early to visit Mont Saint-Michel and then Omaha Beach, one of the sites of the Allied Landings. We needed a place to stay for one night and (the internet not being available to us) stumbled across a delightful French farm where we were offered beds for the night, a home-cooked meal, wine and a drop of Calvados. Staying at the same place was a German veteran (around the same age as my father) who had come to visit Omaha Beach himself. We all quoted Basil Fawlty – 'Don't mention the war!' to each other (but not in his presence). After a while we got to chat with him. He was in 1944 one of about 120 men stationed to defend a 100-metre section of the Normandy coast. Of those 120 men, only he survived D Day; he spent six months in hospital while they patched up his legs which had been shot to pieces. It was sobering to hear the story of his dreadful injury and the loss of so many of his comrades.

A while back I studied the writings of the great English Quaker astronomer, Sir Arthur Eddington, who proved, as far as anything is proved in science, Einstein's General Theory of Relativity by his observations of the 1919 Solar

Eclipse. As part of that process, I looked into general Quaker beliefs. I have a great respect for their views on pacifism and their war service as stretcher bearers, but I am not a pacifist myself. The Anglican Articles of belief state, in rather old-fashioned English: 'It is lawful for Christian men, at the commandment of the Magistrate, to wear weapons, and serve in the wars. Article 37'.

The great CS Lewis insisted that 'turning the other cheek' was a commandment for personal behaviour, not a stipulation regarding war. But, you may say, does not the Bible tell us to turn our swords into ploughshares? It does. In fact, it tells us twice. In the Book of Micah (4:3) and Isaiah 2:4 it says: 'They shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore.' Turn weapons of war into tools for peace. But it also says in Joel 3:10 that in time of tension the people should do the opposite and 'Beat your ploughshares into swords, and your pruning-hooks into spears'.

We cannot construct a Christian view of war from a few Bible verses but I think we can see that the Hebrew prophets wanted peace but knew that at times you had to prepare for war. The Normandy Landings were such a time, when the use of force was justified against what was then, but not now, a nasty, murdering, antisemitic, fascist regime – as every country is entitled to defend itself. We do well to remember those both living and dead who took part in that enterprise.  
**Jon Reynolds, Tring Team**

## Parish registers

### Baptisms

We welcome these children into our church community and pray for their families.

**William Bliss**  
**Ellie Cartwright**  
**Summer Stringer**  
**Mabel Moore**  
**Rory Turner**  
**Amelia Patterson**  
**George Blunn**  
**Mortimer Brooks**  
**Allfie Bruce**  
**Ottile Wiles**

### Weddings

We offer our congratulations and prayers to these couples as they begin their married lives together.

**Jordan Harrison & Lily Roberts**  
**Gregory James Deer**  
**& Hannah Bryony Brown**

### Funerals

We thank God for the lives of the departed and pray for comfort for those who mourn.

**David Frederick Clarke 80**  
**Jane Hutton 77**  
**William (Bill) George Blackstock Oram 83**  
**John Healing 90**  
**Edward Root 48**  
**John Edmunds 86**  
**Brian Spurgeon 88**

# Tring Park news

We're so proud of alumna Lex Gibbon [@lexgibbon] and her new single 'Audacity'. It's been created with @transportforlondon and @britishtransportpolice to promote their Text 61016 Service – a discrete way to report any behaviour that makes you uncomfortable or to report an incident.

Lex has had a lot of great media interest in this and was interviewed extensively to raise the profile of this service.

The very talented Ben Ring has been working hard to update our pictures at Tring Park School. Here is me in my natural habitat, my Religious Studies classroom. Without doubt, in this first year of widowhood, being in school has been helpful and distracting. Ben was clever in his creative approach. He got the pupils to utterly distract me and make me laugh in order to capture this image which I really like. How many of us do loathe their photos being done? I'm usually firmly in this category, but not with this one at all.

As you can see, behind me are a range of artefacts. Via using them,

I hope to make the Religious Studies teaching interesting, relevant and relatable. Many were found in charity shops when Alex and I were on a sort of secular pilgrimage due to his great passion for steam trains. The latest set came from Walsingham which neatly connected both of our great interests. As a result of studying religion, values and ethics, we teachers

hope that it empowers learners to seek out, understand and express what is important in life, and to question who we are and why we are here.

AQA describes the GCSE course as a time whereby 'Students will be challenged with questions about belief, values, meaning, purpose and truth, enabling them to develop their own attitudes towards religious issues. Students will also gain an appreciation

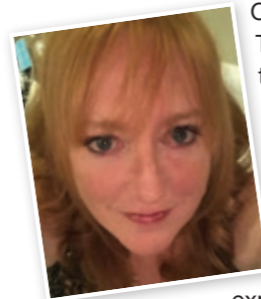


of how religion, philosophy and ethics form the basis of our culture. They will develop analytical and critical thinking skills, the ability to work with abstract ideas, leadership and research skills. All these skills will help prepare them for further study.'

Amen to that!

**Sarah Bell**  
**Tring Park School**

# News from Tring bell tower



On the 23 April, the Tring bellringers had their first ringing tour of the year. This involved members of the bellringing team travelling to other towers to experience the bells

and to add to their tower-grabbing score. A tower-grab is when we visit other churches around the country to ring their bells, adding these churches to our own lists. You may have read about Howard Collings in the last edition of *Comment?* There were six churches on this tour. To comply with Net Zero, we car-shared to make sure we kept our carbon footprint down.

The first church was St Johns, Whitchurch, a beautiful church set in a village location. We all convened in the church where we were greeted by Maisie the dog and her mum. There are six bells here, rung from the ground floor. The bells were lovely to ring; we rang Plain Bob Doubles, and our first attempt at Slapton Doubles.

From Whitchurch we travelled to

Granborough, St John the Baptist. This church offered us a small climb of stairs to a set of five bells. We rang Plain Hunt, Grandsire Doubles and Slapton Doubles, all without cover (no tenor bell keeping time). We then all set off in convoy to East Claydon, another ground-floor ring in a lovely chamber. Here we enjoyed ringing plain Hunt, Plain Bob Doubles and Slapton Doubles. Everyone started to get hungry and look forward to lunch.

Lunch was at The Old Thatched Inn in Adstock: the food and service were amazing. With hunger sated, we headed off to the six bells of St Mary's, Padbury. These were our favourite bells of the day. The ropes were new and much easier to handle with the sallies being fat and fluffy (a sally is the thick part of the rope with coloured stripes; the rest of the rope is called the tail). The main attraction was the video from inside the bell chamber showing the bells in action and how the bells are sited. Here we rang Plain Hunt, Steadman Doubles, Cambridge Doubles, Plain Bob Doubles and Steadman Doubles – a joy to ring.

The next church was All Saints, Soulbury. The ropes were a bit 'flighty', which meant we had to concentrate on



rope handling. St Giles, Cheddington was our last church of the tour. We negotiated a wooden stepladder to the bell tower for the final ring and we had a text from someone in the village saying how nice the bells sounded!

Everyone enjoyed the day. The weather was kind, we visited lovely churches and drove through amazing countryside to get to them. Roll on the next tour!

**Debbie Gilbey**  
**Tring bell tower**



## QUIET DAY AT ST MARY'S CHURCH AND CECILIA HALL, PUTTENHAM SATURDAY 17<sup>TH</sup> AUGUST

For the next Quiet Day on Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> August there is an opportunity again to experience the daily rhythm of monastic prayer. The day's reflection is centred around how we speak about God.

The day will begin at 8.00 with Matins and Lauds and will end at 20.40 with Compline. It will be punctuated with the other monastic offices and at 12 noon there will be a Eucharist. At 13.50 we welcome our guest speaker Rev Margaret Saunders.

We will eat together for breakfast, lunch and dinner, and simple food will be provided. It will be an opportunity to spend the day in God's presence in the beautiful surroundings of St Mary's Puttenham. The whole day is very flexible and you can make it fit your requirements; picking and choosing those parts of the day which you choose to participate in. There is absolutely no requirement to be present from 8.00 to 21.00 – though you may choose to do this. All that we do ask is that when you book you tell us what meals you want to share in so that we can cater appropriately but numbers are not limited. Please click on the link below to book or phone Janet on 01442 824929



[www.tringteamparish.org.uk/news-events](http://www.tringteamparish.org.uk/news-events)

### QUIET DAY: TIMETABLE

THE DAY'S WORSHIP IS ORGANISED AROUND THE THEOLOGY OF CREATION, INCARNATION, DEATH AND RESURRECTION.

THE DAY'S REFLECTION IS CENTRED AROUND HOW WE SPEAK ABOUT GOD

- 8.00 Matins
- 8.15 Lauds
- 8.45 Breakfast
- 9.30 Prime
- 9.45 Terce
- 10.00 Speaking about God: Session 1  
– Speaking of heavenly things (John 3)
- 11.50 Sext
- 12.00 Eucharist
- 12.45 Reflection : Speaking about God: Session 2  
– The Word becomes flesh (John 1)
- 13.00 Lunch
- 13.50 Guest speaker: Rev Margaret Saunders
- 15.00 Walk (optional). 4 mile circular walk via Long Marston
- 17.30 Speaking about God: Session 3  
– An hour with John 1
- 18.30 Vespers
- 19.00 Dinner
- 20.40 Compline
- 21.00 The Great Silence begins and we leave

## The twilight of life



It is possible that quite a number of readers of *Comment* may describe themselves as in the 'old' category. Whether we use the term 'elderly', 'aged' or just 'getting on a bit', there comes a time in most people's life when we know that we are reaching that period, or have reached it. The term 'geriatric' was often used in hospitals but is now not acceptable – which is good as I myself do not want to be described by that term!

Our lives can normally be divided into several periods – childhood and youth; middle age and old age. Maybe the age divisions are not defined because we are all different. Some in their 40s may still feel quite youthful as far as their physical and mental capacities allow them to be, while others may act as if they are a lot older for certain reasons. Then someone in their 80s may be able to do what they have always done until they are forced to slow down.

If God has blessed us with good health and a stable mind, we can rejoice. When the time comes when we feel we have to stop certain things or need a lot of help from others, we can still rejoice and thank God for the blessings we have, despite limitations. The general routine of life varies for everyone in some way or other but we find we cannot do physical things as we used to and maybe, our mental capacities are not the same or we have difficulty in remembering. (I have found that many younger people say the same about memory). When we reach that 'old age' stage we may have to depend on the help others give us or go into a care home. It can be easier for those who have a family living near enough to visit.

At 94, I feel qualified to write about this subject because I know from experience that, although able to cope with most things, I need help from family or friends, especially when needing to travel, with house-cleaning or gardening. Bending and lifting are always challenges as are opening jars etc. I could make a list of 'sufferings' as most old people could, but that is not the purpose of this article.

We are able, and probably often do, look back to experiences of our long life; so maybe we should be asking ourselves

the questions:

'What have I done with my life?'

'Have I enjoyed my life?'

'What would I do differently if I could have my life over again?'

'How much have I allowed God into my life?'

We will all have different answers to these questions. We may feel we have done a lot of good to others or we may feel pleased with what we have done in our working life. It is certainly no good to live with regrets over the past, but to enjoy what we are able to do in the present. If we know God in our lives we can be assured of his forgiveness for our failures. It is better to reflect on what you can do for others and for God now and in the future. It won't help us to sit in an armchair all day (although some have no alternative). At best we can pray for others and maybe talk to those on their own or take an interest in a particular church activity or Christian mission somewhere in the world. We should live in a spirit of 'thankfulness' for the blessings we do have.

In the words of the hymn writer Francis Havergal, 'Take my life and let it be consecrated Lord to Thee', if we have prayed those words many years ago and have served God in the church, we can feel our life has not been wasted. In my own life I have been given the opportunity to work with young people for many years both in church youth clubs and in teaching. Looking back, I often wonder if all that I did made any difference to those young lives. I hope it did.

Sadly, some find life unbearable because of a physical or mental condition or even through loneliness. Others may not be sure what will happen when they do die. For this uncertainty the Christian message has a sure and certain answer

– we need to know God's forgiveness which Jesus made possible when he took the punishment our sins deserve by dying for us; a simple faith and a trust in the promises of God when we die that he will take us to our eternal home. To be able to rest in this assurance makes a lot of difference to our thoughts about

dying and to our contentment in old age.

Before the flood described in the book of Genesis, people lived to a far greater age than we do today. This, for me, is a mystery: what did they do in those hundreds of years, probably thinking it was never going to end? I am sure it would not have done if man had not sinned, because we were meant to live in relationship to our Creator and that had been severed. After the flood, man's life was much shorter, although Abraham lived to 175 and Moses to 120 – but in Psalm 90 we read, 'We finish our days with a moan. The length of our days is 70 years or 80 if we have the strength, yet their span is but trouble and sorrow. Teach us to number our days aright that we may gain a heart of wisdom.'

I find Psalm 71:17-18 encouraging, 'Since my youth, O God, you have taught me and to this day I declare your marvellous deeds. Even when I am old and grey, do not forsake me, O God, till I declare your power to the next generation.'

I am always amazed at the wonderful words which two old people said shortly after Jesus was born. In Luke 2:25-28 Simeon and Anna both spoke about the future of baby Jesus, words which are just as true today.

Whatever age we are, but particularly if we accept the fact that we are old, we know that although our body returns to dust, the soul lives on and Christians can be sure that they live on eternally in heaven in a place Jesus has prepared for them. We may not know what this will be like now, but all will be revealed. 'Now we see through a glass darkly, but then face to face.'

**John Young**  
**Akeman Street Baptist Church**

## COMMENT

The magazine of the Churches in Tring

Please submit your article to the Editor by the 1<sup>st</sup> of the month.

Aim for 500 or 1000 words and please send a head and shoulders colour photo or jpg and any other photos in high resolution.

Contact us at: [comment.magazine@gmail.com](mailto:comment.magazine@gmail.com)



# Old friends in new places



Reaching out to friends old and new with 'walkabout ministry' is one of the most interesting aspects of my ministry 'journey' in recent years.

Relationships with once very active, but now rather retired but still faithful, church members have continued to develop.

As people age and become less physically active they often move away from their original family homes and, in many cases, end up in either dedicated retirement communities or care homes. Over recent years I have had some interesting experiences in a number of situations in which the role of the church delivered through outreach has developed. It's a bit like a spiritual version of Waitrose Home Deliveries: 'We come to You'.

Quite often people who have known each other in their family lives will end up in the same care home or retirement community such as The Furlong, Dunsley Place, Leonard Pulham, Kilfillan House, St Joseph's... the list goes on. I know that most of our Ministry Teams (in St Peter & St Paul's and other churches) have particular connections with particular communities with 'walkabout ministry'.

Reflecting on this aspect of ministry relationships recently, I realised that this form of contact leads to new opportunities to extend the relationship between a particular church and an individual. It also creates opportunities to engage with new people for whom church had not been particularly significant; chances to plant new seeds in different soil. One interesting thing I have noticed is that quite often a relationship that started inside the church building blossoms with services outside and attracts other new encounters. A new seed has been planted and occasionally it can grow into quite a large tree – even a new copse.

## Finding new friends in The Furlong

This phase of ministry started for me in 1999 when my parents moved from their long-term marital home in West Yorkshire to live in a very comfortable flat in the Furlong in Park Road. This development of flats and houses in a lovely corner of Tring Triangle faces Tring Park. They

moved there so that we could look after them better in their later lives than we could at a distance in Yorkshire. My parents loved Tring. In fact, my father often described his six years in Tring as the best time of his life. My mother lived on happily independent in the Furlong until she died at 98. Quite a number of residents were previously active members of St Peter & St Paul's but were no longer able to get to the church.

Over time we developed a monthly service rota of Communion services. This attracted residents like Peggy Cooper and Molly Neale from St Peter & St Paul but also members of the Methodist community of St Martha's. In fact, when my parents died, the flat we had was bought by Frank and Barbara Clarke as their bungalow and garden in Longfield road had become too much to manage. At its height this service would attract up to a dozen residents – many not having been regular churchgoers – who found the open Christian community and the fellowship warm and welcoming. In a sense it became something of a satellite church.

The impact of Covid-19 and the subsequent lockdowns was particularly severe in such communities and for a time the regular services had to be suspended. I am happy to say that these have restarted and we now have a rota which alternates between a service taken by the Methodists, the Baptists and the Anglicans. It brings a strong sense of community continuity in later life.

## Transplanting to Leonard Pulham

Whilst the Furlong was a community where people lived independently in their own homes but enjoyed the support and fellowship of other residents of a similar age and background, the Leonard Pulham Care Home in Halton was a full-service nursing home. It provided expert and compassionate support for retired people who could no longer look after themselves full-time. A number of our church members went there because of its particular reputation for sensitive support.

We discovered that quite a lot of familiar faces from the parish church in Tring were in residence. These included Brian Royle, Joan Hollingsworth and Diane Sandy; subsequently Jean Royle moved in. Many of them had spent some years in the lovely enclave of Dunsley Place when they moved out of their family homes and I was asked to

convene a House Group there. At one time we had Jean Royle, Freda Bianchi, Dorothy Townshend, Madge Mackinlay and Elizabeth Stephenson as members. We were asked to run a kind of outreach group in Leonard Pulham with a monthly communion service. Naturally this was open to all who wished to attend and something about the group dynamic seemed to attract other residents to join in and engage. By the end we would have up to fifteen residents sharing communion... there was a lovely gentle sense of all being 'in it together' between those attending from outside and those who were residents; all felt supported and uplifted by the shared experience. Truly communion – the church active in the community.

Unfortunately, that fellowship and communal spirit was ended by Covid-19 which took a particularly savage toll on the residents. The home subsequently closed its doors permanently.

## Building new community connections

Reflecting on these experiences of extended ministry led me to consider how important the formation and nourishing of house groups is within a church community. That Dunsley Place House Group merged with the one we were running at home and became the Greenways Group (one of the many active groups in our parish). We meet fortnightly (sometimes more frequently in Lent and Advent) and quite often end up discussing what it is that makes this group structure so supportive and valuable to our lives in Christ. In recent times we have spent many of our meetings exploring the epistles and reflecting on the growth and strength of the early church. We were struck by the parallel between these early followers of 'The Way' and our own experiences of being part of a fellowship community. In the same way that those early 'house group' churches in Asia Minor became the building blocks of a much bigger structure in the established churches, we feel sustained by our house group experience. We share an increasingly relaxed and confident fellowship which strengthens and supports our engagement and sense of belonging within the wider church. We are able to explore concepts, scriptures and cultural references with a wide-ranging freedom which is not always possible within the confines of a conventional service.

It makes us appreciate how fortunate

we are to have that fellowship. We reflect on what we might be able to bring to others in our extended community who might have been displaced from the comfort of familiar surroundings and feel cut adrift. Might we find the courage and energy to actually do something about that?

## Does the changing church demographic offer exciting opportunities?

We frequently worry that it seems difficult to attract young people to church, to keep hold of youngsters past teenagerhood, to engage busy full-on families to get involved with us... That difficulty seems part of the current experience of all faith-communities. The self-absorbed materialism of our society is a big challenge. But it is not all bad news. These changes are a mixed blessing.

It is also the case that people are living longer, not feeling 'old' until much later in life, and being encouraged to celebrate the rights and freedoms of the individual rather than their responsibilities to society. People perhaps don't fully

'grow up' until much later when they finally discover their own vulnerability. It may well be that the changing demographic of society as a whole means adjusting our timing. Perhaps becoming a Christian, realising we have responsibilities to the whole community and that it's not 'all about me' is really now a religion best-suited for the latter part of life?

Certainly, today's massive emphasis on the importance of the individual self makes for an awful lot of lonely, isolated people; more and more of us with each decade... It can nowadays seem that when we move away from where we were (in age, stage or location) we simply cease to exist! Our religion is an essentially social one; it is about caring for each other and the community we share in more than for ourselves alone. It is about loving our neighbour as ourselves. The fact that people have moved shouldn't mean we can no longer care for them!

Reflecting on the experiences I have had with different retirement

groups and the way in which so many familiar faces suddenly disappear into retirement communities of some kind, it seems possible there is a new ministry opportunity to be had. Call it 'walkabout ministry' or just being a good neighbour, taking the time to talk to the lonely is quite possibly what that familiar phrase from the grace we share – 'the fellowship of the Holy Spirit' – is all about: being today's church in today's world.

There are lots of opportunities all around us to do just that. I find that quite exciting.

I am sure that all those who minister in any capacity in our various Tring churches share similar experience of extended ministry in care homes and communities. I particularly remember the wonderful work Val Rockall did in St Joseph's. Let us pray that whatever new places we end up in, we always make new friends in Christ.

'The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all, evermore.'

**Grahame Senior, Tring Team**

# Good Friday traditions and other musings

Malcolm Rogers said to me, while I was talking to him on Good Friday, waiting for the Walk of Witness to come down Tring High Street, 'I wonder how many other hamlets, villages, towns, cities or countries hold parades like this?!'

So I put the question on Facebook and one of the groups I'm on (that has 9000 people!) came back like this – plus what I found on Google!

Hitchin has something similar! Bedford and Belper have Good Friday services! The Isle of Sheppey in Kent, Egham in Surrey and Hornchurch in Essex all have similar parades.

Heckmondwike in Yorkshire and Beacon Hill have a service on Easter Sunday!

Then Google tells me that Peterborough, Maidenhead, Soho Road in Birmingham, The dioceses of Hexham and Newcastle, Chesterfield, Christchurch and Dartford all have a Walk of Witness. The parish of St Osmund has a Walk of Witness which starts at the door of Salisbury Cathedral! There are plenty more, too!

Leighton Buzzard has a Wilkes Walk (an annual procession to the Almshouses in memory of Edward Wilkes who founded them in the 17<sup>th</sup> century) which takes place on Rogation Sunday which was on 5 May.

Now for something a little different – believe it or not!

When I went back to church after lockdown, I knew I wouldn't be able to get up the steps to the altar. The Lord said, 'Find someone to take you'. On that occasion a man and his daughter sat behind me so I asked and he said, 'Of course!' I asked him why he had come to church that Sunday morning and he said he didn't know, something compelled him! Not everyone is ideal: some are not sturdy enough or not sure what I require, but we managed! Yes, in St Peter & St Paul's you can have communion brought to you in your seat, but the Lord is trying people to see if they will do this simple task!

So, on another Sunday the Lord sent me to church again. I always try to ask someone different! This young man sat behind me so I asked if he would take me to the altar. I am glad to say he said yes! By the time we got to the steps, I had learned his name was Matt – a lovely young man! When the service was over he came and sat by me. I asked him 'Why did you come to church this morning?' He said he didn't know – something had made him! I said, 'The Lord has sent you because I needed help up those steps!' We both laughed and then he was gone.

I don't want to be a bother to anyone and that's why I don't go to church regularly any more. But I know I

do need help if I go not only to church but anywhere!

We all have problems – I know that. Mine stems back thirty-two years when a car didn't like me doing my job in Christchurch Road. I now have the repercussions! But the good Lord let me get up this morning to fight another day so I try not to dwell on things and positivity goes a long way in helping me!

Following on from Erica's Guy's article about Akeman Street Playgroup in *Comment*, I found some photos from many moons ago: in the first photo I am taking the photo at the back next to my mum, Dulcie Burnett. In the second I am on the right with my son in my arms.

**Sue Gascoine, St Peter & St Paul**



# News from DENS

Access to therapy gives our clients an opportunity to better understand their past experiences, explore emotional responses to different situations and learn how to use these insights to make meaningful progress in their lives.

Looking back to when we introduced in-house mental health services at DENS almost a decade ago, I am so proud of the progress we have made.

During Mental Health Awareness Week we shared exciting information about the development of an industry-leading Therapy Centre at DENS. This is led by our full-time Clinical Psychotherapist, who is supported by a team of Trainee Counsellors undertaking a placement as part of their final year of studies. The new service enables more clients than ever before to access one-to-one or group therapy sessions, where they can be supported for up to one year.

Your donation of £25 could fund a one-to-one therapy session at The Elms hostel, helping someone to navigate past issues and embark on the next positive steps in their life.

## High needs list

Our Foodbank has a good supply of many food, hygiene and household items. However, there are some specific items that we are in need of, such as: jars of cooking sauces, tinned mackerel, tinned ham or corned beef, rice, jams and spreads, nappies size 5-7, baby wipes, carrier bags and deodorants. If you are able to donate any high need items, we would be very grateful.

## Jamie's story

Jamie turned to The Elms hostel after a relationship breakdown with his partner and mother of his children. After several months of support, he moved into one of DENS' Move On properties,

for clients ready to leave the hostel but still requiring regular guidance. During this time, Jamie also volunteered at a local organisation.

Jamie's Key Worker has supported him for over eighteen months. Together, they have navigated some difficult times in his life, while developing a strong rapport and a high level of trust. Sadly, Jamie's relationship with his ex-partner continued to deteriorate over time, and access to his children was irregular. When his children were taken into care, he went to court in an attempt to gain more contact with them. DENS' Key Worker helped Jamie throughout the court process, explaining all the paperwork, the language used in the courtroom and offering moral support.

Jamie had been undertaking regular therapy sessions with DENS' in-house clinical psychotherapist, and she was able to provide a supporting statement detailing the level of counselling support available to him. The court was astounded that he could access this level of therapy so quickly and at no cost. It really helped with the case.

Following the proceedings, Jamie is now allowed regular contact with his children. The court psychotherapist's report highlighted issues from his own childhood that he recognises the need to process, and he is continuing to work his way through these with the help of the DENS Therapy Centre.

'My Key Worker came to support me



at every court date and was my rock. If she wasn't there, I wouldn't have been able to do it,' said Jamie.

At the beginning of this year, Jamie also made a huge leap towards independence when he moved into his own council flat. Jamie has a disability, which creates a number of challenges. His Key Worker has supported him with numerous medical appointments and procedures. They are also working to introduce adaptations to his home to help him continue living there independently.

Reflecting on the support he has received, Jamie said, 'DENS has helped me so much. I'm now all set up in my own flat and it feels like home.'

His Key Worker added, 'Jamie is really positive about his whole journey with DENS and I can see such a difference in his outlook now he is in his forever home.'

[Jamie's name, image and details of his story have been changed to protect his anonymity. Photo sourced from Centre for Homelessness Impact.]

# Five years of fostering



We came to fostering late, when one of us was retired from full-time work; this year marks a milestone for us, five years in and ten children in that time.

Reading the articles by John Young and Edmund Booth made me reflect on what in my life feels as if it has 'made a difference'.

There are many foster carers who started much earlier. Some have families of their own and take in another child (or a sibling group) who dovetails into the ages of children they already have. Some families add younger children to their already growing family. But some carers are single or have no children of their own; there may be a mother and daughter who take on this role or a single sex couple. We meet people from all walks of life and many are from faith communities – the reason why they felt called to care for children in this kind of need.

We started with a respite child, to help out another foster family who needed a break to help in their own family for a short while. We have four grown up sons – so we were delighted to have a little girl to look after! Then we had our first newborn baby – the plan was to be there ready to 'catch' the baby as soon as he was born, but we were 20 minutes too late at the distant hospital. It was still an awe-inspiring, breath-taking moment when we were shown into the room where we were

to spend the night with this tiny newborn baby boy and care for him as if he were our own. You don't forget how to change a nappy but I had forgotten that the first few nappies contain meconium; I was battling with that when two medical professionals entered the room while I was dealing with this sticky, thick, dark green baby poop!

He was followed by premature twin baby girls, another new experience for us, and we have had another newborn whom we had to visit daily in hospital for six weeks before we could bring her home. We have also had a lovely little boy in 'the terrible 2s'. All of these five 'short-term' placements (the shortest for us was nearly six months and the longest nine months, but it can be up to two years) were very special and YES, it is very hard to say goodbye.

We returned to respite care for a while after this and have had one older baby boy (twice) and a toddler of nearly 2. We hope to have more of these during the summer to help out other carers.

Our other new experience was 'Out of Hours' care, which deals with those emergencies that happen when the police or social services are called out and need to place a child after office hours. Every time the phone rings you expect to find a baby is on their way to you, even in the middle of the



night. But when evenings go by and nothing happens, you learn to get on with life until you are needed – with nursery and every size of nappy and bottled milk at the ready... So far, in four weeks of being on the emergency list, we have only been needed once and it was for a sibling group which we were not expecting but were able to accommodate. An hour from the phone call, the children arrived.

Some envy us the babies; others think we are mad! But you can choose the age group you are most suited for. Some only have teenagers...

There are always new people starting and others retiring but there are never enough carers for all the children who need to be looked after. It is the most rewarding job I can think of (even if Jon Hall thinks that is teaching!). We have witnessed the difference it makes to the lives of children. If you (or someone you know) are even a little interested in becoming a carer, do talk to someone about it. You won't regret it! **Annette Reynolds, St Peter & St Paul**

# Blooming marvellous plant sale



The Corpus Christi Gardening Group held a very successful plant sale at the Parish Hall on Saturday 11 May. On offer was a wide selection of vegetables and flowers all grown from seeds, cutting or division locally in peat-free compost and recycled pots.

Those canny gardeners who came early had the best selection to choose from but there were still plenty of plants available at the end of the day too.

Tea, coffee and homemade cake was also on offer and proved to be very popular. After all, gardening is hungry work.

We raised £692.56 to help maintain the gardens at Corpus Christi Church as a space for birds, pollinating insects and other creatures and, of course, for the enjoyment of parishioners and Tring residents.

**Margaret Donnelly  
Corpus Christi**



# Useful contacts

## TRING TEAM PARISH

**Team Rector (Tring & Puttenham)**  
Rev Huw Bellis  
2 The Limes, Station Road  
01442 822170 or  
07411 483229  
huw@tringteamparish.org.uk  
(Day off Thursday)

**School Chaplaincy and Team Vicar**  
(Aldbury, Tring School)  
Rev Michelle Grace  
Aldbury Vicarage  
01442 851200  
michelle@tringteamparish.org.uk  
mgrace@tringschool.org  
(Day off Friday)

**School Chaplaincy and Team Vicar**  
(Tring School, Long Marston, Wilstone)  
Canon Jane Banister  
01442 822170  
jane@tringteamparish.org.uk  
jbanister@tringschool.org

**Diocesan Lay Ministers**  
Jon Reynolds  
01296 662326  
jonreynolds1386@gmail.com

Grahame Senior  
01442 822770  
gsenior@seniorpartners.co.uk

Mike Watkin  
07715 553556  
mike.watkin@btinternet.com

**Parish Co-ordinators**  
Vivianne Child  
01442 826092  
vchild@childassociates.co.uk

**Parish Advisor**  
John Whiteman  
01442 826314  
john@tringteamparish.org.uk

**Church Wardens**  
Gill Kinsey (Tring)  
gillhkinsey@gmail.com

Kate Stratford (Tring)  
01442 826369

Jane Brown (Aldbury)  
01442 851396

Christine Rutter (Puttenham)  
01296 668337

Canon Jane Banister  
(Wilstone)  
01442 822170  
(Day off Thursday)

Judith Weatherill  
(Long Marston)  
jweath76@gmail.com

**Tring Team Administration**  
Administrator  
Trish Dowden  
admin@tringteamparish.org.uk

Janet Goodyer  
pewsheets@tringteamparish.org.uk

**Hall Bookings**  
Janet Goodyer  
01442 824929  
jgoody@ntlworld.com  
tringparishhall@hotmail.com

**Hall Secretary**  
Barbara Anscombe  
01442 828325  
Bandb33@talktalk.net

**Safeguarding**  
Jon Reynolds  
07712 134370  
safeguarding@tringteamparish.org.uk

**ST MARTHA'S METHODIST CHURCH**  
**Minister**  
Rev Rachael Hawkins  
01442 866324  
rachael.hawkins@methodist.org.uk

**Senior Steward**  
Rosemary Berringer  
01442 822305

**AKEMAN STREET BAPTIST CHURCH**  
**Minister**  
Rev Tom Copperwheat  
01442 827881

**Administrator**  
Emma Nash  
01442 827881

**CORPUS CHRISTI ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH**  
**Parochial Administrator**  
Father Joseph Okoro

**Parish Administrator**  
Annabelle Halliday  
01442 823161  
tring@rcdow.org.uk

**HIGH STREET BAPTIST CHURCH**  
**Ministers**  
Joe Egan 07521 513493  
joe@tringbaptistchurch.co.uk

Ruth Egan 07521 513494  
ruth@tringbaptistchurch.co.uk

**Assistant Minister**  
Kevin Rogers  
km\_rogers@outlook.com

**Administration/facilities hire**  
admin@tringbaptistchurch.co.uk  
01442 824054  
**NEW MILL BAPTIST CHURCH**  
**Minister**  
Rev Jackie Buie  
07549 432582  
minister@newmillbaptist.org.uk

**Church Secretary**  
Valerie Carr  
07831 709793  
secretary@newmillbaptist.org.uk


**Hall Hire**  
Andrew Webber  
07773 148706  
treasurer@newmillbaptist.org.uk

**JUSTICE & PEACE GROUP**  
affiliated to  
Churches Together in Tring

**Secretary**  
Michael Demidecki  
07887 980004  
michaeldemidecki@gmail.com  
www.justiceandpeacetring.org

**OUR CHURCHES ONLINE**  
www.tringteamparish.org.uk  
www.tringchurchmusic.org.uk  
www.stmarthas-tring.org.uk  
www.tringbaptistchurch.co.uk  
www.newmillbaptist.org.uk  
www.akemanstreet.org  
www.berkotring.org.uk

## SOCIAL NETWORKING

 Tring Parish

 @revhuw

**COMMENT**  
**Editor**  
Annette Reynolds  
07968 312161  
comment.magazine@gmail.com

**Advertising, Distribution and Treasurer**  
Barbara Anscombe  
01442 828325  
bandb33@talktalk.net

**Design**  
Kev Holt, Ginger Promo

Please contact Barbara Anscombe if you would like to take a subscription to *Comment*: £20.00 for 10 issues each year. The magazine can be posted to you with an additional cost for postage at current rates.

Articles, photos and publicity adverts for the next edition should arrive with the Editor no later than the 1<sup>st</sup> of the previous month.

## COMMENT DEADLINES

1 January  
1 February  
1 March  
1 April  
1 May  
1 June  
1 August  
1 September  
1 October  
1 November

NB There is no magazine for January or August



# What's on in July and August in Tring Parish Church

## Services at Tring Church

### Sunday 7th July

8am Holy Communion traditional language  
10am Communion with craft activity \*\*

### Sunday 14th July

8am Holy Communion traditional language \*\*  
10am Worship for all

### Sunday 21st July

8am Holy Communion traditional language  
10am Communion with craft activity \*\*

### Sunday 28th July

8am Holy Communion traditional language  
10am Communion with craft activity \*\*

### Sunday 4th August

8am Holy Communion traditional language  
10am Communion with craft activity \*\*

### Sunday 11th August

8am Holy Communion traditional language \*\*  
10am Worship for all

### Sunday 18th August

8am Holy Communion traditional language  
10am Communion with craft activity \*\*

### Sunday 25th August

8am Holy Communion traditional language  
10am Communion with craft activity \*\*

\*\* Streamed service on our website and YouTube

## Mid-week Services in Tring

9.15am Tuesdays  
Usually Holy Communion  
10am Thursdays  
Holy Communion in traditional language

## Lots more going on



**Mondays 3.30pm - 5pm**  
Youth Café in term time Toast, chat etc for secondary school kids

## Food Bank

Monday to Friday  
10am - 12noon.  
Drop-off donations and collect food



## Tuesdays 2pm - 4pm Craft and a Cuppa

Drop in for chat, cuppa and bring a craft to do if you would like to



## Social Coffee

Fridays, Saturdays  
10am - 12 noon,  
and after Sunday, Tuesday & Thursday services



## Piano & more series Sundays 21st July and 11th August



3pm for an hour's concert of music followed by refreshments.  
Free but collection for church and piano expenses

## Crossword puzzle answers

From page 20

### ACROSS

1. BIBLE
4. CONFESS
8. ABSALOM
9. STERN
10. INCH
11. FIX
12. MISS
15. CALM
16. SAUL
18. ALLY
19. FIT
20. SPUR
24. IDEAL
25. MALACHI
26. NATURAL
27. PASTE

### DOWN

1. BEATIFICATION
2. BASIC
3. EELS
4. COMMIT
5. NEST
6. EZEKIEL
7. SONGS OF PRAISE
13. ALL
14. CAP
15. COLLECT
17. DISMAL
21. PICKS
22. BLUR
23. CLAP

Everyone is welcome to join us at any of our church services and activities.



**The  
Children's  
Society**

No child  
should feel  
alone

PLEASE JOIN US AT HOME IN THE

# **GREENWAYS GARDEN**

FOR A RELAXED AL FRESCO GET-TOGETHER  
IN SUPPORT OF THE CHILDREN'S SOCIETY

**11.00AM – 3PM**  
**SATURDAY 13TH JULY 2024**

**GREENWAYS, 88 GROVE ROAD, TRING, HERTFORDSHIRE HP23 5PB**



**PLEASE COME AND JOIN US**  
Coffee & Cakes in the morning  
Simple Cheese & Wine Lunch  
(Please book as space is limited)

**A NICE RAFFLE TO REWARD YOU!**  
**FOOD & WINE TO SUSTAIN YOU!**  
**A SALES TABLE TO TEMPT YOU!**  
**GOOD COMPANY TO RELAX YOU!**

**For further details & to Book for Lunch**  
**Please ring Prue & Grahame 01442 822770**