

COMMENT

THE MAGAZINE OF THE CHURCHES IN TRING



High Street Baptist Church - Tring

Growing in the message and challenge of God



For details about our services, prayer meetings and special events visit our website.



Morning worship

Sundays 10.30am

Join us in-person or online with Junior church

Growing in the message and challenge of God.



Church office

Revd Joe Egan

Revd Ruth Egan

admin@tringbaptistchurch.co.uk

07521 513493 or joe@tringbaptistchurch.co.uk

07521 513494 or ruth@tringbaptistchurch.co.uk

www.tringbaptistchurch.co.uk



tringbaptistchurch



High Street Baptist Church

Safety within the challenges of life



I like to think of myself as a relatively organised person. I feel better if I have my ducks in a row, as then I feel more stable or in control of the day's events. If I have a handle on the big picture of what is needed then it's easier to manage small changes as they come along, and inevitably in this role, they do come along!

Within the life of any church community there are the routines of the regular events, which can be put in the calendar at the beginning of the year. Easter does move about a bit from year to year, but we still can tell in advance when it's going to land. These seasonal routines can help many feel a level of stability within the ever-changing world in which we live. Of course, change is inevitable and has always featured in life, but I'm hearing from many that they are seeing more changes, or potential changes, in so many areas of their lives, which bring deep insecurities to the surface.

Because in my 'previous life', as I like to call it, I worked in mental health as a counsellor, offering psychological support to people who travelled and worked overseas, I heard first hand the many challenges that impacted people as they left home to move to a foreign country. We also, as a family, went to live in East Africa with our three small children and found that the multiple changes that brought to our lives were not perhaps as easy or exciting as we may have anticipated they would be. As much as we had prepared for change, the reality of it had unexpected consequences for us.

During my training, and from experience in my role, I learnt that there were key things that would help people manage challenging times of change, particularly when they were outside of their control. One was the availability of people who would in some way walk the challenges with them; to know they were not alone, and that their problems were understood and cared about by others. Then there was the ability to see a purpose, a goal, which would strengthen them to keep going. Managing and keeping control of what you could, in the midst of chaos, also helps. Even the basics of eating regularly, taking rest, giving time to pleasurable activities, all

helped to keep people afloat. Whatever challenges you may be going through in life right now, perhaps recognising these things to bring some stability might be helpful.

During some tough times for us in that period overseas, there were passages of scripture that we would return to as a couple to read, and then talk about with our children with the aim of keeping us steady in life. They helped us see others who had travelled before us and 'survived well'. We read the stories of God's people in the Old and New Testaments and saw how God led people through some exceedingly challenging times. Sometimes God was the one who had told them to go places; others chose to journey trying to leave God behind. But always, if they turned to God in their trouble, God promised to journey with them. He did not promise that life would be easy, but he did promise to be with them within the journey.

In some of our most difficult times, there were passages within the Bible that felt like hope-filled light to us. The psalms particularly were so helpful. I liked to hear the raving of the Psalmists who were going through big challenges. They didn't hold back from telling God how it was, warts and all! Yet having done so, they were often able to hold on to what they truly believed; that God hadn't forgotten them. Psalm 46 is one where the writer talks about the impact of massive world challenges, natural disasters, and wars, and yet articulates that he knows that 'God is our refuge and strength'.

Before I give the impression that we simply read these scriptures and all felt well again and that we were light and happy, I will tell you that was not always the case. I remember talking to God, actually, let me say almost 'ranting' at God, and telling him I'd like help from

people I could see physically, as well as clinging on to the inner belief that he hadn't forgotten us. Well, God was kind, and there were people who came to be with us, others sent letters, others gave gifts, which reminded us of the worldwide family we were a part of. God used his people as a part of helping us along.

In this climate of massive changes, not just climatically, but politically and socially, I think it helps to find, or be reminded of, your anchors in the storms of life. Talking to God or ranting, as I did, is OK. Expressing your pain or fears doesn't make them worse, but somehow clears the thinking. There are often no quick fixes, but as the old saying goes, 'A problem shared is a problem halved'. If, like me, you have a relationship with God, then it's also good to know that you can take anything to him and he will never turn away from you, whatever problems or shame you might bring. You can't shock him with your thoughts, fears, actions. He knows it all already and welcomes you to come closer.

As God's children, he knows we are weak, and will fail so many times, and I'm so thankful that he won't ever be bored with me telling him my troubles, even if I've said them 100 times before.

Also, having experienced just how important it was to have people around me whom I could be honest with, I'd want to be like that to others, to aim to be a listening non-judgemental ear. I know many people here within our church communities of Tring want to be that for others. So, within our fracturing, challenging lives, let's be real with each other, and know that it's OK not to be OK! But also know that God is always there, as the one who neither slumbers nor sleeps. He never has his ear on mute or a silent setting.

Jackie Buie, New Mill Baptist Church

NEW MILL BAPTIST CHURCH

Service on Sundays at 10.30am

Refreshments following the service

With Children's club for up to 5 years during part of the service

Please check our website newmillbaptist.org.uk/nmbc/ or Facebook for up-to-date information: www.facebook.com/newmillbaptist/

Josephine Butler, social reformer, 30 May



Maybe you recall the scene at the end of the film 'Pretty Woman', the one where Richard Gere, to a soundtrack from La Traviata, leaps from a white limousine and, with a red rose between his teeth, scales the fire escape outside Julia Roberts' building to rescue her from a life in the sex industry.

I love a 'happy ever after', but I recognise that this is just a fairy tale. For most sex workers, there is no happy ending and Josephine Butler, champion of the vulnerable, would be scandalised to discover that little has changed in the 120 years since her death.

Josephine was born in Northumberland in 1828. Her father, John Grey, was a strong advocate of social reform and a campaigner against the slave trade and Josephine was brought up with a loathing for injustice. In 1852 Josephine married George Butler who shared her views and who supported her in her life-long vocation to speak up for the abused

and exploited and to work for a change in the sexual double standards of the day. At the time, significant numbers of women had been involved in movements for the abolition of slavery and in temperance and suffrage movements, but Josephine was the first publicly recognised feminist activist in the UK, being openly critical of the sexual behaviour of some men.



Josephine was outraged by the way working class women, prostitutes in particular, were treated and, as well as

helping practically, she travelled widely, inspiring individuals and motivating organisations to take up her cause. She was instrumental in raising the age of sexual consent from 12 to 16; she successfully campaigned for the repeal of the 1864 Contagious Diseases Act which meant that any woman in a designated port or garrison town could be forcibly examined for signs of sexually transmitted disease and she personally investigated and provided evidence to the police in order to expose those who were trafficking children.

At a time when women didn't have the right to vote, Josephine achieved huge social and legal reforms in this country and abroad. The campaigns she directed, against sex trafficking, child prostitution and state-endorsed brothels, continue today.

Linzi James
St Peter & St Paul

Photograph of Josephine Butler by kind permission of the Josephine Butler Memorial Trust. For more information see www.josephinebutler.org.uk

Embracing the mystical



For my own spirituality, the two most important services in the year are really one single service which includes a day-long period of waiting and preparing in the middle of it. The service begins on Good Friday evening, where we symbolically take Jesus down from the cross and lay him in the tomb. Towards the end of this service we say, 'God is present in the tomb of our waiting, creating the costly miracles of good, of love, of grace, of the restoration of all things'. We leave the church in silence.

Holy Saturday then is a day of busyness and preparation, until we meet again in worship on Easter Day. Ideally it is still dark. The birdsong begins the day. We gather, eyes still heavy with sleep, outside of the church and we hear the words from John's Gospel. We then light the new fire and carry all of that light, hope and joy into church. Some churches have this service in the evening of Holy Saturday but I find the connection between sundown on Good Friday and dawn on Easter Day to be the important thing for me. It became even more powerful when Ian Munro recorded himself reading the Gospel (in the dark) for our Easter dawn service in lockdown.

Resurrection in John's Gospel

Along with all of the Gospels, John includes the empty tomb. To this he then adds a number of stories. Starting with Mary Magdalene's encounter with Jesus and concluding with a conversation with Peter, each resurrection account is built around a particular character and a common theological point is made: the necessity to believe in the Risen Christ without sight or touch. It is also important to notice that these resurrection accounts are actually subordinate to John's earlier resurrection teaching. John has already made it clear that the resurrection of Jesus is his transformation from death to glory and this anticipates the transformation which all believers will share in. In particular, early in the Gospel Jesus says:

'Very truly, I tell you, anyone who hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life, and does not come under judgement, but has passed from death to life. Very truly, I tell you, the

hour is coming, and is now here, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live.' John 5:24-25 NRSV

And later at the death of Lazarus we are given this dialogue. 'Martha said to him, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day." Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?"' John 11:24-26 NRSV

The empty tomb

Would you describe the resurrection as a Hollywood blockbuster with dramatic music and an earthshattering moment? Of course, in the Gospels there is never a description of the resurrection itself. There is no moment recorded that the body stirred to life and broke forth from the tomb. The victory over death is not observed but is something which is discovered and observed after the event.

In some ways it begins with the burial and the respectful taking away of the body of Jesus. Note the difference between the Jews, who want the legs of the 'crucified men' to be broken, and Joseph of Arimathea who comes for the 'body of Jesus'. Resurrection is personal. Resurrection comes with the whisper of a name and a message of good news. Jesus' first appearance after his resurrection was to Mary Magdalene. She was a person who, on that Sunday morning, was demoralized and in distress; someone whose evidence had every likelihood of being dismissed in the male-dominated culture of the day. She hears him when he calls her by name. Her response is to call him Lord. There is a change from the earthly 'Jesus' to 'the Lord'. Thomas will take a step further. He will say, 'My Lord and my God'.

A transformed Jesus

Like those on the Emmaus Road in Luke's Gospel, those who encounter him do not recognise Jesus. How will we who have not encountered the earthly Jesus recognise the risen Christ? We notice, too, a progression to Jesus' ascension. It starts with the folded grave clothes. Jesus has left behind the limitations of the world. Jesus tells Mary not to hold onto him. He then appears through a locked door. How will we who have not encountered a physical reality be able to grasp the truth of a risen Christ?

An epilogue

The Gospel comes to an end with the author giving his purpose for writing. He has been selective. He has not used all of the material he has access to. He has selected material to help us believe. The miraculous catch of fish is an opportunity to drive home his point about believing in the risen Christ without sight or touch. Once more the disciples don't immediately recognise Jesus. At the same time, they both know and they don't know. 'Now none of the disciples dared to ask him, "Who are you?" because they knew it was the Lord.' We, too, struggle because we know in our hearts that the resurrection is true and yet we struggle to square it in our minds.

Huw Bellis, Tring Team

Easter reflection

John's Gospel highlights the angels in Jesus' empty tomb, 'one at the head and the other at the feet'. Archbishop Rowan Williams shows the connections that may be made: 'Iconographically, it recalls... the mercy-seat of the ark, flanked by the cherubim'. Israelite tradition held that God dwelt between the cherubim that were mounted on the ark and leant towards each other across the throne or mercy-seat. However, the ark's throne contains no image of God – God is both there and absent, seen and not seen.

Archbishop Rowan calls this a 'paradoxical manifestation'. This paradoxical manifestation is carried forward into the resurrection. We have Mary Magdalene and those on the road to Emmaus failing to recognise the risen Christ. The Jesus whom they previously knew is both there and absent. A fundamental change has taken place. The change is not to deny the reality of the resurrection but to affirm that Jesus has risen into something new, and his rising continues in the looking forward to the ascension.

'Do not hold on to me,' Jesus said to Mary Magdalene. This may be better translated as 'do not keep clinging'. Mary has to let go of her personal relationship with the physical Jesus and embrace the mystical presence, the absence that now inspires the church.

Paul Kennedy,
vicar and member of a Benedictine monastic community

Sharing and caring



In March, Year 8 students at Tring Park School worked creatively on a project creating Easter baskets for the residents and staff of St Joseph's in Tring.

This was part of their community outreach and support for others.

It provided us with some great learning opportunities about the nature of caring as well as an opportunity to talk more about dementia. Like many places, St Joseph's is able to offer specialist support for those with dementia.

Watching the pupils be problem-solvers and team-players as well as project managers has been a real blessing to us, as well as the gifts they made for others.

Sarah Bell
Tring Park



A year in the life of Sustainable Tring



Sustainable Tring is nearly one year old. But its roots go much deeper. It was born out of Tring in Transition (TinT), a long-running community group, and

Sustainable Tring Thing, a brief community concept. The new look Sustainable Tring has grown and morphed over the last year. We campaign to use our collective power to help reduce harm to the environment, strengthen the local economy and seek sustainable energy solutions. We aim to hold councils and corporations to account for and bring about sustainable change wherever possible. We're represented on Tring Town Council's Climate Action Working Group and the Allotments, Environment and Transport Committee. We're part of the global Transition Network and work with other Transition Towns in the area.

Since 'unification', Sustainable Tring has developed a lovely new website

(www.sustainabletring.org.uk) and developed a 'way of doing things' in an effort to be as democratic and inclusive as possible. We aim to encourage people to DO things rather than sit on the sidelines. Rather than a central committee, we operate as a 'hive'. The hive consists of a representative from



each group or project, meeting every couple of months to exchange ideas and plan ahead. We take practical action, run projects and provide information to enable everyone to join in with helping to tackle the challenges our world faces.

Rather than lengthy agendas, we aim to have one or two points for discussion to progress toward collective decisions and action. We share updates about what is happening in groups via short reports which are circulated before the meeting.

We have been heartened by many of the initiatives and projects that have emerged over the last year. One such example is Peter Dobson's litter-picking group – a single event during last year's Great Big Green Week has developed into a regular band of litter pickers making a huge difference to our town environment. New groups and projects emerge, such as seed swaps and thermal imaging, whilst longstanding projects continue, such as Repair Café and Tring Community Garden.

Our AGM (or annual social, as we like to call it) is coming up in May. You are very welcome to come along to find out what's been happening over the last year and to share ideas for the future!

Polly Eaton
High Street Baptist Church



OPEN MEETING All welcome

Wednesday 15 May at 7.30pm
at The Kings Arms, HP23 6BE

All welcome to our annual meeting and social event. Find out what's been happening over the last year and share ideas for the future!

hello@sustainabletring.org.uk

Great Big Green Week 2024

This year, Sustainable Tring and Tring Town Council have joined together to support events throughout Great Big Green Week (8-16 June). We'd love as many people as possible to get involved. If you are a community group, business, school or an individual, why not plan an event or promote a campaign? There are lots of ideas and resources on the website to help you.

For more information about the event and how to get involved visit: <https://www.sustainabletring.org.uk>

Craft and a Cuppa



Meeting every Tuesday afternoon in St Peter & St Paul's Church from 2.00 till 4.00pm, this group started about seven or eight years ago as there was a need

to have more things going on in the church building during the week and keep a presence of people there. There were also one or two people I knew who would benefit from socialising in a group setting – they just needed company.

Huw Bellis was happy to have the church building used in this way so I advertised it and waited to see what would happen. That first week, the first person through the door was Lillian Purse in her late 80s who said, 'Thank you for starting this, I've waited a long time for it!' I asked her if she could knit and she replied she could but she hadn't done so for twenty years! She was willing to give it a try. She started knitting poppies for us as we were then preparing for a big display of poppies in the parish church to commemorate the centenary of the end of WWI. As more joined in, so the group was born.

Although we advertise it as Craft and a Cuppa, the focus is on socialising rather than the craft, and we have some members who don't craft, but they make a good cup of tea. They also help with cutting out and helping with other things needed in church.

We share ideas, patterns, yarn and

knowledge. We have invited each other to other groups and social events. We welcome anyone of any

age regardless of whether they are church members or not. Probably three quarters of our members live alone so they enjoy coming out to mix with friends. The Covid-19 lockdowns were a big blow to us as we really missed the fellowship of being together, but once we had mastered Zoom, we joined together from the comfort of our homes and had 'show and tell' with others. But that didn't help those who didn't 'do' technology. A number of us made face coverings that were sold for church funds. When we were allowed to meet under the rule of six, we had two tables up but had to keep to our own corners!

We have, over the years, welcomed more members, lost some through death and moving away, and we now have twenty-plus on our WhatsApp group. Most weeks we have around fifteen attending. We sometimes go out together for lunch or afternoon tea visits so that's good fun too. There is always room at our table for more people!

What started as a 'not sure if this will work' group has blossomed into a thriving friendship group. Don't take my word for it: these are some of the comments from our members.

'What does this group mean to me? Well, meeting up with old friends and making new friends and getting out of my home.'



'It's lovely to meet new people, sharing skills and learning new things. (Thank you Sue for teaching me to crochet).'

'Mindfulness – both the craft and spending time with such lovely people boosts my mental health.'

'Friendship.'

'A lovely way to meet people if recently moved to the area.'

'Happy place to meet folk, chat and craft together.'

'Even if you are no good at craft, very welcoming, and such a happy place.'

'Very welcoming, kind group of friends.'

'Connecting through craft, nattering over a cuppa with kind and thoughtful friends.'

'For me, it's meeting lovely new people and having a chance to relax. I love that someone makes me a cup of tea – and it keeps me on track with my knitting projects!'

Janet Goodyer
St Peter & St Paul

The daffodils you didn't see

Autumnal days, working beside you was a blessing.

Alex, you were a blessing.

We had such plans for life

And then... and then.

The seasons are passing so swiftly
grief throbs and I'm exhausted half the time.

You haven't seen these daffodils:

Their brightness caught me out.

I sobbed and sobbed...

Prayers do help the aching heart.

Then I get such gifts; such blessings –

Suddenly I feel a nudge to take the plunge.

It is as if I'm compelled to go forward.

It is all about trying and trusting that process.

It is trying to seize the days; trying to seek out the positives.

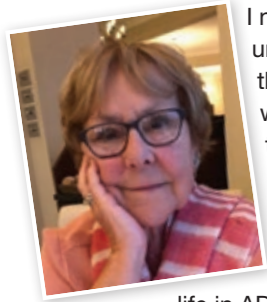
I am finding my way and your endless love still guides me,

And the hope of Easter inspires me.

Sarah Bell, Tring Park



The washing of feet



I never really understood what the washing of feet was about, and that caused me to think... which can be dangerous. It is difficult to judge or compare the life in AD30 when we live in 2024 – but here goes.

In the northern hemisphere, feet, are generally covered. Let's face it, it's colder here than around the Mediterranean Sea.

I'm reminded of my brother-in-law, who has a drawer full of red socks. I once asked: 'Why red socks?' With a straight face he said that it was his token of protest. Though the reason of the protest was a bit vague, I got the feeling it was against the rules of society, i.e. one must wear a dark suit in the office. It reminded me of Roy, my husband, choosing his tie each morning for various appointments. His protest at the unwritten law of the tie being understated was to wear a Disney tie with Mickey mouse on it at major board meetings. I wonder if it made people smile?

Thinking about it, both socks and ties are a visual sign of personal taste and the character of the wearer. I expect their actions gave them satisfaction with their low-key protest at authority, and tongue in cheek humour.

That brings me back to feet, custom and authority.

God, I remember, gave the devil authority over the earth. And in the Bible, Jesus orders the disciples that, if they were not welcome in a village or town, they should shake the dirt (the earth) off their feet, leaving the discord and rejection and possibly sin behind.

For me, the combination of these slotted together made a small puzzle. Now, I can be fanciful, with an over-active imagination, but I do try to see an overall picture.

The holy land is, I imagine, a place that doesn't get much rain, that has

mountains and valleys that are windswept with a hot wind. Everything is dry: the paths and roads are unyielding and stony and hard on the feet. The only green to be seen is irrigated land, and most of the vegetation has, through millennia, adapted to the landscape and climate, like the olive trees.

The Romans are in charge and they rule without pity. Punishment and death under their rule were ever present. The people, of whom there were many nationalities, rubbed together fairly well, probably only mixing when they had to. The Jews mixed less. Their religion, I suspect, separated them for, unlike their neighbours, they worshipped only one God, and they had strict rules about their behaviour and the society they belonged to. Everyone knew their place. And then Jesus came along.

Rules and tradition were bent and broken by Jesus. Suspicion and fear, hope and relief must have confused many people. I can imagine the stories being discussed at the village well. He was a hero, a healer, a visionary to some; to others he was a troublemaker who flouted laws and mixed with the underbelly of society. He even spoke to women and children. Stories and gossip must have followed Jesus on the roads with his disciples.

If you were lucky and very well off, you could possibly have a donkey to carry you, but Roman soldiers and the normal citizens walked everywhere, as did Jesus and his followers. It's little wonder that their feet needed tending and washing.

Back in our world, the custom in many countries when visiting or returning home, is to take off your shoes at the door. I always thought it was to stop dirt from coming into your home. Rugs and carpets were and are expensive, and it's good manners not to dirty a clean tiled or wooden floor or rile the person who had just cleaned it. But there in Palestine, apart from discarding your shoes, the custom was to wash your feet as well.

It must have been wonderful after a hot dusty walk to kick off your sandals and sit while a servant came with warm water and a basin, and (Oh, the joy) of that feeling of clean water passing between your toes; and afterwards, to feel the rough towel stimulating and massaging your feet dry. It sounds good, doesn't?

I wonder if, on that evening when the disciples met, and Jesus insisted on washing their feet, if there was more than one symbolic theme?

He had the authority of God; he had already served two years, caring for the masses. He would have understood what it was like to be under foreign occupation: the herd instinct of the mob, the corruption, the fear, heads and eyes down, pretend that what's happening isn't.

Was the idea of washing their feet to free them of the grime of life; to get rid of the earthliness, the pain and darkness which is a barrier from godliness; the grime and the ungodliness washed away, and the dirty water thrown back into the gutters, where it belonged? Can you imagine a servant coming with water and towel and Jesus saying: 'Leave it. I'll do that.'

Shock must have bounced around the room. The boss was going to wash the very dirtiest part of them. How embarrassing. Hot, red, sweaty feet that probably smelled and maybe had blisters. There must have been disbelief and horror, but Jesus insisted.

Here was a man, full of grace, that called demons from the sick, made the lame walk, now on his knees with a towel around his waist. The lesson was that, no matter how important a person, to give love, simply, is a gift never forgotten, that they must copy him, be like him; to be humble and never be proud.

It must have been difficult for the disciples to understand. Indeed, I am only just starting to understand it myself. He humbled himself, to show them that love is the greatest authority.

Brenda Hurley, St Peter & St Paul

where Jesus prayed asking God to remove his suffering, and the garden of the resurrection where Mary Magdalene mistook Jesus for the gardener. Whichever of these gardens we find ourselves in, Jesus is present.

Michelle Grace, Tring Team

Poem of the month



Here is a short, lyrical and straightforward poem about memory and loss.

The poet is drawn by hearing the song of a bird to remember his past love

with whom he first heard the selfsame song. The clear alliteration cleverly echoes the repetitive notes of birdsong. The first two verses seem to show more of an almost light-hearted appreciation of the song, but the last verse brings us down to a sad acceptance of death and the inevitable sense of loss.

Thomas Hardy (1840-1928), English novelist and poet, was born near Dorchester in Dorset, the son of a stonemason. He grew up with a great love of architecture, and a

strong affection for the Bible and church services although he rejected any systematic Christian belief.

Unable at first to afford a university education, he was apprenticed to a local architect. Later he moved to London and enrolled at King's College to continue his studies. However, he was not happy with city life and moved back to Dorset, eventually to a house he had designed. His first marriage to Emma, which lasted thirty-eight years, was always strained. After Emma's death he married Florence, thirty-eight years his junior, but to the end of his life remained preoccupied with the death of Emma and his treatment of her. He is primarily remembered for his novels, though his output of poems

The Self-Same Song

*A bird bills the selfsame song,
With never a fault in its flow,
That we listened to here those long
Long years ago.*

*A pleasing marvel is how
A strain of such rapturous rote
Should have gone on thus till now
Unchanged in a note!*

*But it's not the selfsame bird
No: perished to dust is he
As also are those who heard –
That song with me.*

Thomas Hardy

was huge (eight volumes in all). On his death in 1928, his cremated remains were buried in Westminster Abbey with great pomp but his heart was buried in his native churchyard in Dorset.

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

Crossword

1	2		3		4		5		6		7	
8								9				
10						11						
					12							
13	14						15		16			17
18			19					20			21	
							22					
23						24						
25										26		

ACROSS

- God (Latin) (4)
- Statue of remembrance (8)
- Home of Jesus (8)
- Half (4)
- Church welcomers (5)
- Changed (7)
- '.....' at the right hand of God (6)
- Support verbally (6)
- Charming (7)
- Pleasantly warm (5)
- Apostle to the Gentiles (4)
- Invade unlawfully (8)
- An opposer of Jesus (8)
- '....' to '....', ashes to ashes (4)

DOWN

- Avoid (5)
- Illumination (7)
- Come together (4)
- O.T. Prophet (8)
- Member of a men's club (5)
- Book of the O.T. (7)
- Local mode of transport (3)
- Tribe occupying Israel (8)
- Message of past memory (7)
- Can't escape (7)
- Attempt (3)
- Of the sun (5)
- Patriarch (5)
- Famous theologian (4)

Answers page 30

Being in the garden

I've found it uplifting once again this Spring getting to grips with the large vicarage garden and finding all the new growth as I've been clearing and cutting and weeding. Children from Aldbury School were in the churchyard recently, looking for signs of new life.

They excitedly showed me what they'd spotted, delighted to have found lots of flowers and insects. (The teacher made sure they avoided the dead pigeon on the path!)

The Easter story includes two gardens, the garden of Gethsemane

Tring's oldest Grade 1 listed building



The rain doesn't just fall on Sundays. The good news is that whatever day it now falls, especially when in heavy volume, it has a reliable route to drain away into the ancient chalk underneath the churchyard of St Peter & St Paul's – rather than escaping through old drains no longer able sustainably to disperse the water away fully from the building risking longer-term and more serious problems.

That problem was solved due to the expanded drainage works and repairs for some existing damage funded to the tune of around £60,000 from our dedicated heritage charity funds. That's a lot of money – but it was a big, one-off job and, as always with a Grade 1 Listed medieval building and an official graveyard, a job that rightly required very careful and sometimes specialised work.

So, when on Saturday 11 May anyone takes part (or even helps out) at one of the activities at the Family Fun Day in the churchyard and church of St Peter & St Paul's, there's a direct link to keeping this central heritage community asset in good condition and more access for now and for future generations. The improved

drainage works wouldn't have happened without money. We wouldn't have the money without the generosity of people giving their time and putting their hand in their pocket to take part. Every spin of the tombola, bouncy slide session, raffle ticket, teddy sent down the zipwire, soft toy or book bought or beat the goalie attempt tried, all directly contributing to making the building and its surroundings safely accessible today and on future days.

These vital large-scale repair and improvement jobs are funded by all the hard work in raising funds, careful stewardship to allow payment now while still building up reserves for foreseen or unforeseen future requirements, and some very generous bequests from some wonderfully generous and community-minded individuals. It isn't something that's obvious every day. Like the wonderful building with all its centuries of history in our community, it's a long-term commitment that evolves over time. Its continued success depends on us making the effort on Family Fun Day, supporting in other ways and on other days, and taking an active interest at different times of the year.

There are many forms of support for this amazing heritage heart of Tring in addition to fundraising. Keeping it open for visitors, cleaning it, managing day-to-day running of the building, dealing with

heating and lighting, flowers and many, many other activities, without which the building wouldn't operate successfully. This is all stewardship of this super-central, super-prominent local heritage asset for the future communities of Tring.

There is also work outside that a varied group of volunteers help out with: mowing the churchyard grass, on top of that newly renovated drainage system. There is a pretty flexible rota (you can swap your turn if needed) with everyone taking a turn every six weeks or so. If you think you could spend a couple of hours mowing or other kinds of gardening if you prefer, to keep the churchyard both looking great for people to walk through, spend time in, look at from the High Street, have lovely wedding photographs, be a haven for wildlife, and so on, we'd be really keen to hear from you. Please contact Barry Ancombe (bandb3@talktalk.net) if you'd like to help with this kind of stewardship in the heritage heart of Tring. You might already be helping care for one of the other common green spaces in Tring round a church or elsewhere and if so, great, and you will know how satisfying it is to make a small but very important and very visible difference, in this way. If not and the idea appeals to you, please do let Barry know!

Richard Abel
St Peter & St Paul

The people in the pew



My husband has often said that if you think the people who go to church are strange, you should go to one of the astronomy groups he attends! But conversations with some longstanding friends recently have given me pause for thought.

In both cases, people who were regular churchgoers, one a Methodist and one a Presbyterian (but that is in no way a reflection on those churches in particular and they are not local people!) stopped attending many years ago because of other worshippers – the people in the pew. The attitude or behaviour – in one case over their judgemental attitude of other people and, in the other, dealing unjustly and uncharitably with a member of the

church – caused Christian people to leave the community to which they belonged and turn their backs on established religion. Both still hold the values they had before and uphold the moral teaching of Jesus in their lives and (as far anyone else can tell) live as Jesus would want them to live, in self-giving service to others. But 'church' is no longer a part of what they do.

I don't believe that anyone in churches of any denomination anywhere is perfect: of course we're not. Being part of a faith community is to acknowledge our failings and weaknesses and to know that we need the forgiveness of Christ and the presence in our lives of the Holy Spirit, to change us and make us more like Jesus. We make mistakes. We let down ourselves and others. We have off-days as well as days when the light of Christ shines through us. But how sad it is that we may stop someone

else from worshipping with us (or in this case, with anyone else either) because of careless or thoughtless words or actions.

A reading of the New Testament would inform us that it was ever thus – Paul's letters to the churches he started always begin with encouragement but go on to point out that their attitude towards others could do with a bit of work! Paul also talks about being a 'stumbling block' to others, and that our attitude to each other should be forgiving, encouraging, not bearing grudges, forbearing, accepting – having a generous heart.

I was humbled listening to the stories, isolated incidents, which stopped these friends from belonging to a faith community for most of their lives. I pray that I may not be the cause of someone else doing the same.

Annette Reynolds
St Peter & St Paul

WILSTONE STICKS
Handcrafted by John Evans

Member of The
BRITISH Stickmakers Guild
www.wilstonesticks.com
Telephone: 01442 822115

Stephen Hearn
TringMarket Auctions
Antique and Fine Art Auctioneers and Valuers. Est. 1982

Our salesrooms continue to attract a wide range of customers from throughout the UK and across the world and we deal with almost everything that comes out of your home whether 17th century or 21st century.

Visit our website and view the sales catalogues with accompanying illustrations, you will find us at www.tringmarketauctions.co.uk

- Valuations for Sale, Probate & Insurance
- Total and Part House Clearance Specialists
- Fine Art and 20th Century Decorative Arts Sales
- Fortnightly Sales of Antique & Modern Furniture and collectables

We provide a full service to meet all your requirements

www.tringmarketauctions.co.uk
The Market Premises, Brook Street, Tring, Hertfordshire HP23 5ED
t: 01442 826446 e: sales@tringmarketauctions.co.uk

"Both children have had a fantastic time at Heirs & Graces Nursery and I have gone to work each day knowing they were safe in your hands."

Heirs & Graces
Day Nursery

A place where
CHILDREN SHINE...

Open from 7.30am until 6pm

Childcare vouchers accepted Free hours scheme accepted
Sited in a beautifully converted Victorian home conveniently located on Tring High Street.
High quality food prepared by our fabulous chef.

Find us on - www.heirsandgracetring.co.uk
Telephone: - 01442 891818
Heirs & Graces Day Nursery, Florence House,
2 Christchurch Road, Tring, Hertfordshire, HP23 4EE

THE TYRE CHANGERS

OUR NEW TYRE CHANGER BASE IS OPEN
Unit 5C Airfield Industrial Estate,
Long Marston HP23 4QR

In addition to our popular **mobile service**, that can visit your home or work, we can now also offer a **drive-in facility** by appointment.

We offer a wide range of **Premium, Mid-range and Budget** tyres at competitive prices and can now accommodate the largest of alloy size and low profile run flats.

Do you need new tyres, or have a puncture?
Please let us know and we will be happy to quote and make an appointment.

Not sure of the condition of your tyres?
We can have a look for you, just get in touch.

Wheel swap needed?
Winter and summer wheel swap also available.

Please call or text on **07746 903 095** or email info@thetyrechangers.co.uk

'I am the Life'



Now we come to 'The Life' in these reflections on the 'I am' sayings of Jesus. Although this was included in the March issue of *Comment* there is much to say

separately about those of the sayings at the beginning of John 14, namely the Way, the Truth and the Life.

I have referred before to the use of these sayings at the beginning of the funeral service. From time to time, I am made aware of how funeral services, or, rather, people's expectations of them, have changed over the sixty years of my ministry.

What is a funeral all about? The change has a lot to do with this word 'Life'. Formerly, there was a stress on the life to come; now it is on the life which has ended. Instead of looking to eternal life 'in sure and certain hope of the resurrection to eternal life through our Lord Jesus Christ', people look back with their various memories of the deceased. People, properly, give thanks for the life which has ended but seem not to think much of the hope of that eternal life. So we can have a variety of bespoke funerals! Yet, I imagine many of the readers of *Comment* are among those who regularly assert in the Creed 'And I look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come'.

What is Jesus saying by describing himself as the Way, the Truth and the Life at the Last Supper? The Prologue of John's Gospel tells us that he is the Word made flesh, and, also, that 'what

has come into being in him was life and the life was the light of all people'. What does 'Life' mean here, and how or why is Jesus described as 'the Life'? To use a familiar phrase, it all depends on what you mean by 'life'. The large Oxford English Dictionary consists of a number of volumes which deal with the meaning of every word in our language. It takes ten columns, divided into numerous sections and sub-sections, to tell us all the meanings and usage of this word life. In a sense we do not need that much information – we know or we think we know what the word means. Yet it is a reminder of how complicated it can be to define a word such as life and to explain its various meanings and usages. For instance, we can compare phrases like 'get a life' with 'to get life'. In the former case the implication is that someone's life is far from satisfactory; it is dull and dreary. In the latter sense the word is used to mean life imprisonment, the deprivation of much of what we value in life. The original Greek word in John's Gospel is ZOE, which give us both the girl's name Zoe, and the scientific study of various (but perhaps not all) forms of life in the science of zoology. What is 'life' then?

We are here particularly concerned with the statement of Jesus 'I am the Life'. As a man walking about in Galilee, going to Jerusalem, talking to his followers – he is living, he has a life, so what does it mean to say he IS life? 'Life' is a favourite word in John's Gospel. He uses it over thirty times in the first half of the book, although only four times in the Farewell Discourses, and the final chapters (ie chapters 13 – 21).

God's word created life in its various forms, as Genesis 1 tells us. He created a variety of living creatures including humans. But, and it is not as clearly explained as we might like, not only humans have life like any other creatures, there is also the tree of life. This seems to mean there was an expectation of more to come after death. Yet in most of the Old Testament there is virtually no mention of life eternal. However, by the time of the New Testament there had developed a belief in the life to come. So, in John's Gospel this is taken for granted. Here we must note the contrast between life and eternal life. Lazarus is raised to this life (and will die again) but Jesus is the Life in the sense that he gives life, that is, eternal life, to those who believe. Indeed, at the end of John 20 we are informed that we have been told enough to believe Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God and that through believing in him, we may have Life in his name. We have been told enough; although in a kind of appendix, John 21, we are told that there are many other things that Jesus did.

For us there is the need to appreciate the present life which God has given us, but also to look to the eternal life which comes to us through belief in his son. He is the living water, the living bread, and, as we shall consider next time, the living vine.

Easter tide is the season for particularly giving thanks that it is in and through Jesus we have the hope of eternal life, even if that, at times, can be difficult to understand or imagine!

Martin Banister
St Alban's Cathedral

Angelic plants for sale!



Every possible container is being used for seeds or for cuttings to grow plants for the upcoming plant sales. No plant is bought for the sale, with all

plants grown from home-collected seeds, locally sourced seeds and from cuttings to make sure they have ZERO miles.

By growing in homemade compost and in recycled pots and containers,

these plants are so green that they are practically angelic! Healthy, too, as they are never stressed by mass-produced growing methods.

The first Plant Sale will be at Jeacock's Orchard on Sunday 28 April 2024, 10.00am till 4.00pm, to support the work of Tring's Justice & Peace Group.

The second Plant Sale will be at Corpus Christi Church Hall on Saturday 11 May, 12.00 midday till 4.00pm, with proceeds funding the maintenance of the gardens at Corpus Christi Church.

Come along! There will be lots of



plants to choose from and you will be doing your bit for the planet.

Margaret Donnelly, Corpus Christi

Church of England finances part 2



Just to recap, I wrote a couple of months ago (February *Comment*, page 20) about the wealth of the Church of England centrally, suggesting that there's no easy

route to a pot of money to pay our running and repair costs in Tring Team Parish. Well, if we can't tap Lambeth for easy money, what about St Albans, the diocese to which the parish belongs? This is a simplified analysis of the diocese' wealth and income, based on the 2022 report of the Diocesan Board of Finance (DBF – 80 plus pages, if you'd rather go to the original source).

St Albans Diocese simple model	
Derived from DBF accounts	
2022 figures	£ millions
Wealth aka balance sheet	
Clergy housing	76
Other buildings	14
Glebe property	29
Investments	58
Cash, net of debts	21
Total wealth	198
Made up of:	
Funds for specific uses (restricted)	15
Endowment funds	157
Unrestricted funds	26
Total funds	198

The first table shows the Diocese' wealth at the end of 2022 (2023 figures are not available yet), a total of some £200 million. Nearly half of that total is

represented by clergy housing and other buildings; so maybe there's a pot of £100m or so belonging, in some sense to the parishes in the St Albans diocese. At the simplest level, with 400 parishes, that's an endowment of £250k per parish. So, to what use is that money put at the moment?

Income & spending 2022	£ millions
Parish share	13
Income from investments	2
Grants & fees	2
Grants for education	2
Profit on sale of property	1
Total income	20
Spending	
Clergy pay, pensions, etc	9
Clergy housing	3
Ministry (ordinands etc)	2
Mission (initiatives)	1
Education	3
Grants to parishes	1
Total	19

The second table shows where the money came from and went to in 2022 (simplifying and netting off some complications in the DBF accounts). Most of the £20m income is from the 'Parish share', payments by parishes which are themselves derived from individual donations. Tring's payment in 2022 was £169k, so some 1.3% of the total. The rest is essentially from investments (plus a government grant for education/schools which is spent on that purpose). Looking at spending, the parish share is almost matched by what is spent paying clergy and providing their housing. The diocese also pays

the costs of ordinands and curates, and makes some grants to individual parishes (£1m in total). Two items are perhaps a source of perplexity if not scepticism within parishes: one is the broad category of Mission initiatives, about £1m of spend on people and specific grants. I would not claim to be qualified to comment on whether they are value for money compared with the money remaining with parishes. The other is support costs, which are spread among the categories of spending, and total about £1.5 million (£0.5m of which is governance and synod costs). Again, easy to snipe at the cost, but the challenge would be to know how to carry out the functions properly at a lesser cost. The diocese manages clergy property, looks after closed churches, it effectively operates a planning approval system (aka faculties), and it supports safeguarding. Opinions might vary as to whether it should have a net zero officer but that reflects a General Synod decision; also, as to the contribution of church growth officers.

Short of a radical redefinition of the role of the diocese, it's hard to see the scope of large cuts. £1 million in savings would (if all applied to the parish share) save Tring Team Parish about £13,000 per year. That helps towards our current level of funding shortfall but is not transformative.

What would you do if you were in charge?

John Whiteman, Tring Team

Parish registers

Baptisms

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

Sienna Rose Slade
Connie Eden Spencer-Paine

Weddings

We offer our congratulations and prayers to this couple as they begin their married life together.

Harry James Daniel Sambrook & Georgia Lauren Garlick

Non-school-shaped people at Dunsley Farm Shop

KC Wex Training have recently taken over The Dunsley Farm shop in Tring after the previous tenants closed in the new year. KC Wex Training was set up by Karen, Lisa and Lewis in 2021 to help support young people with additional needs across Hertfordshire and Buckinghamshire. In 2022 they teamed with Central Training Group to deliver post-16 education across the county in skills such as preparation for adulthood, employability, construction and work experience.

The farm shop was acquired in February this year to help support young people with real-life working opportunities in preparation for the world of work. They have worked hard to re-open the cafeteria to further support working opportunities for local young people. They really benefit from having the practical opportunities to learn, rather than in the traditional

classroom many are used to. Things such as customer service, stock rotation, cooking skills and using a till in real life, are a huge benefit and something that just can't be taught in the classroom.

Alongside the farm shop and café, they also have a 6-acre Care Farm in Wigginton which is a registered community interest company. Here students can access outdoor learning, with animals to care for, including three pigs, horses and chickens. They also have their own allotments where they grow fresh fruit and vegetables to use in cooking classes.

The whole ethos of what we do is to support young people who aren't necessarily 'school' shaped, in a nurturing environment, where they are free to be who they really are. With the use of practical lessons, they can achieve nationally recognised



qualifications and progress onto their next steps, whether this is further education, an apprenticeship or employment.

Our next plan is to start fundraising to enable us to improve the facilities at both the shop and smallholding to enable us to open our doors to more young people. Already a local business started the ball rolling after coming to have coffee and lunch with us in the café – and enjoying the huge enthusiasm of some of our young non-school-shaped people in the workplace!

Lisa Cannone
KC WEX Training

Eco-friendly potato growing



I have been growing potatoes in tyres for many years after I heard gardening guru, Bob Flowerdew, recommend tyres in a Gardeners Question Time programme.

They are space efficient as the voluminous potato plants are contained within the tyres. As the plants grow, you just add another tyre until you have a potato tower, topping up with soil each time the green leaves of the plants

become visible. I tend to go no higher than three tyres.

To harvest, you simply remove a tyre, keeping the remaining tyres in place to protect the potatoes from sunlight. It is a great way to use unwanted tyres and I use the same ones year after year, simply storing them behind the shed until the following season.

Start with cardboard on the ground, placing one tyre on top. Put in 4/5 inches of compost on top of the cardboard, place the chitted potatoes (no more than four in a big SUV tyre) at 12, 3, 6 and 9 o'clock so they are well spaced apart. Cover with more compost to completely



hide the seed potatoes and, as green leaves emerge, keep adding compost until you have reached your desired height.

Plant between March and May but protect from frost.

Margaret Donnelly, Corpus Christi

TRING CHARITIES

(Registered Charity No 207805)

ALMSHOUSES IN TRING

From time to time, one and two-bedroom bungalows become available to let, for people who currently live in Aldbury, Long Marston, Marsworth, Pitstone, Puttenham, Tring, Wigginton or Wilstone.

Applicants, one of whom must be aged 55 or over, must not own their own home or have significant savings.

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

On pilgrimages



Pre-Covid, when we were sorting out the preaching rota in the Tring Team, the priests and lay ministers would meet at the rectory, each person with their

diary, and thrash out the programme for the next three months or so. At one meeting, the rector asked if I could manage a particular Sunday and I explained that I was on a pilgrimage. A member of the clergy, new to the team, thought I said I was on a 'Pilgrimage to Lourdes', the town in south west France, in the foothills of the Pyrenees where, in 1858, the Virgin Mary is said to have appeared to a local woman. This quite surprised the priest, who had already noticed my Protestant tendencies. What I actually said was that I was on a 'Pilgrimage to Lord's', the cricket ground in north west London where Middlesex were playing Yorkshire in the County Championship. Another priest, the late Revd Bill Carpenter, correctly predicted that it would be a good game. By the time you have read this, I will, God and the rain permitting, have repeated the pilgrimage with the same fixture.

In the years BC (before children, that is) my wife and I went on a visit to Israel. As well as a holiday relaxing on the beach with a good book and the wonderfully warm Eastern Mediterranean Sea to

swim in or paddle our feet, we visited the holy sites of Christianity, Judaism and Islam. (We also had a memorable conversation on a very crowded bus about our infertility problems with a Jewish lady who said she would pray for us – no doubt as entertaining for the rest of the bus as it was acutely embarrassing for my wife who was being publicly interrogated). Some, such as the sites in Nazareth, are holy to both Christianity and Islam – here we had a Muslim guide around the Church of the Annunciation. He removed his head scarf out of respect for the birth place, as he saw it, of the prophet Jesus. We learnt a lot but we did not consider it a pilgrimage in that we did not expect to gain any brownie points with God or be healed there. (We were informed, humbled and inspired, but that is not quite the same.) When we came back, people constantly referred to it as a pilgrimage. I don't have any issues with pilgrimage as such, but if people think they will gain credit with God or that God is more likely to hear their prayers at Lourdes (or Bethlehem) than in Tring or in their own home, I think they are likely to be disappointed.

One of my favourite hobbies is talking with atheists. One, following a favourite tactic of Richard Dawkins, complained to me that religious people go on pilgrimages, which he said was futile. I said that the closest I had come to a pilgrimage was cycling to the home of Charles Darwin, one of my heroes for his

work on evolution. This was Down House in Downe, Kent, and my home was seven miles away. This had the desired effect of wrongfooting him. This trip was while I was in the Sixth Form. (I could no more cycle fourteen miles these days than fly to the moon.) This place is well worth a visit.

Once, talking to an audience of faith leaders when I worked for Hertfordshire, I explained how young people did not understand many concepts which people who practise a religion follow, such as going on pilgrimages. I suggested that this might be done by comparing it with such an enterprise as a trip to Graceland, the home of Elvis Presley, in Memphis, Tennessee. (Elvis was undergoing a bit of a revival at that point.) At the end of the session, I was approached by an Imam with a very aggressive-looking beard and I thought I was in trouble for speaking lightly of one of the Five Pillars of Islam. The opposite was true. He came up to agree with me, saying that many young in his community just didn't get the Hajj, the pilgrimage to Mecca which Muslims are encouraged to complete once in a lifetime 'if health and wealth' permit. He liked the idea of comparing pilgrimage with a trip to Graceland or Wembley or (best of all, as his heritage was from Pakistan) Lord's cricket ground.

Jon Reynolds
Tring Team

One small step for a publisher...



I receive many parcels through the post from various couriers and other agencies because I work in book publishing. Blank 'dummies' – it

looks like a book but is white with no text or images – are sent from China to check quality or 'feel' of a book before we decide finally on a format or extent and before we print thousands of copies. Samples of the final finished books are also sent so I can check everything is OK (a Slovenian book with an accidental section of Romanian in it, for example, or a section printed twice or one upside down).

All these parcels, traditionally, were



double or triple wrapped in various kinds of plastic: white sticky bits of polystyrene (the worst!) or layers of bubble wrap (the most recent). I persistently ask the printers to make sure the wrapping they use is NOT plastic and IS recyclable and now they do. We have used two new printers from China this year and finally the



message has got through! The pictures show what they are now using: a soft cardboard blanket. I was more chuffed with the packaging than the book inside... a giant leap for the planet?

Annette Reynolds
St Peter & St Paul

Musings about oneness



March 2024
Comment was very much the springboard for these musings: the fantastic article about 'Bishop Wood Eco-Warriors' by

Edmund Booth, Nicky Bull's book recommendation of 'Braiding Sweetgrass' by Robin Wall Kimmerer and 'Unsteady in Faith?' by Fern Asquith. Isn't *Comment* magazine a wonderful resource for our Christian community? The sharing of news, interesting articles and open honest reflections – I really appreciate the time people spend contributing.

Therefore, this item comes to you with the 'work in progress' caveat. Our faith is not static, we grow, question and develop in our spiritual life. We have moments of conviction and periods of doubt. So whilst these thoughts are not fully formed, I do feel prompted to share where I'm challenged and learning. I'm grateful for this space where we can present such musings, as they might spark conversation and provoke thought.

Eco Church is a tool. It is a mechanism to help churches grow in their care for the planet. It is not a tick box exercise, although boxes are ticked, but rather a shift along a path to more deeply engage with God's creation, to take practical action but, most importantly, to see ourselves as part of creation not above it. Eco Church can start as a special service at Harvest or a Bible study during Lent but lead to weekly intercessory prayers about lament for our world and praise for God's earth and the people and creatures that inhabit it. It can start with toilet twinning but lead to members of the congregation thinking about their water use, installing water butts and campaigning to stop sewage polluting our rivers and seas. It can start with recycled printer paper and lead to a deep understanding of the interconnectedness between us as created beings and how we use the resources God provides.

For me, I first heard of Eco Church when I joined High Street Baptist Church about seven years ago. Slowly and steadily it has focused my mind and changed my spiritual and work life. Nature isn't something we're supposed to look after, it's something we're part of.

We can be tempted to think about only the early chapters of Genesis when

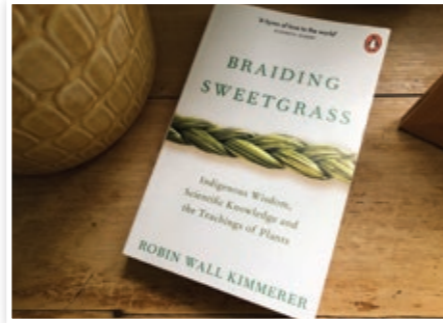
we consider creation care. The familiar 'In the beginning...' verse and regular 'And God saw that it was good' refrain. But these verses are not the complete story. The theme of God's created earth is threaded throughout the Bible. The Psalms, for example, might spring to mind. 'The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it' (Psalm 24:1). Songs of praise and wonder, uplifting at times and full of remorse at others. But there are thousands of words and stories in the Bible, including Jesus' own words to reflect upon. Jesus tells us the second greatest commandment is 'Love your neighbour as yourself' (Mark 12:31). Our neighbours are global. The people who make the clothes we wear, pick the tea and coffee we drink, who live in places where climate change is already impacting on daily life with extreme weather and its consequences. We are connected inherently with other people. But similarly, we are connected deeply and profoundly with nature (God's creation). For me, the connection between our brothers and sisters around the planet has always sat comfortably with care for creation – what we do affects others.



Did you know that Scotland has an Eco Chaplain? Revd David Coleman is a URC minister seconded full-time to Eco Congregation (<https://www.ecocongregationscotland.org/chaplain>) to provide spiritual and theological support to churches in their care for creation. I'm a big fan of his teaching. He has opened my eyes to seeing the references to God's earth and all that lives in it throughout the Bible – not just the first bit. Everything in God's creation is interconnected, interdependent. We are one of the elements of his creation. David is a wise and engaging scholar, capable of examining Scripture to see so much more than the familiar stories. I highly recommend reading his blog to find out about a more learned and deeper understanding of creation care theology.

This theme of oneness and connectedness has been popping up all over the place for me. During Lent I read 'Tarry Awhile' by Selina Stone, the Archbishop of Canterbury's Lent Book for 2024. 'We can often think of ourselves as humanity to be very special, more so than the natural world, for example. And this can mean that we elevate ourselves in ways that are detrimental with the rest of creation' (Stone, p26).

Yes, exactly. This impacts how we see the marvel of creation as a commodity and asset to be exploited rather than a gift to be used with gratitude and respect.



This concept was reiterated in 'Braiding Sweetgrass' written by botanist and author Robin Wall Kimmerer. She brings her Native American Potawatomi heritage and environmental knowledge, as well as her research and scientific qualifications, to this incredibly profound text. She grew up seeing nature and the creatures as interconnected. Giving thanks before pulling up a vegetable to eat or felling a sapling to make a pole for a shelter. How incredibly far we are removed from this attitude of gratitude in our own lifestyle of abundance and ease of access.

Kimmerer explains that in the Potawatomi language, animals and plants are 'who' not 'what'. The river: 'she flows'; the tree: 'he sways in the breeze'. We can greet the creatures and call them by their name: 'Good morning, Blackbird'. In English we're either human, or an object. But in Potawatomi this grammar of animacy means that we have the linguistic structure to speak of the living world as if it were alive, as if it were a person, as if it were our family. This reframing opened my eyes to verses such as Psalm 150:6 'Let everything that has breath praise the Lord. Praise the Lord.'

The decisions we make in the food we eat and other choices we make have an impact on others (also created in the image of God). I often use the phrase that 'climate is a justice issue' – and these words from Selina Stone articulate this far better than I can: 'To speak of

oneness is not to speak of sameness, but of fundamental interdependence and interconnectedness of all creation, which finds its source in God. This is a joyous truth, that my life is bound together with yours, and with all peoples and with all of creation, despite the fact that, in reality, this can mean we might suffer undue pain and oppression when others withhold good from us or do us harm. Our frustration at this gap between the truth

and the reality is an indication, I think, that we know deep down that things should not be this way' (Stone, p48).

Some time ago I recognised that creation isn't just a commodity for us to use. I have also shifted away from the often-used term of 'stewardship' when referring to our response to God's earth but rather highlight that the relationship is more like kinship – being part of the whole of creation. But more recently still,

I have had an 'A ha!' moment about the level of interconnectedness of God's creation and our place within it. We are inextricably linked to God's earth and all who dwell in it. This realisation has far-reaching implications which I am still grappling with (and musing over) today.

Polly Eaton
High Street Baptist Church

Why is the parish church crumbling?



There is always something to do when you are looking after a Grade 1 listed building!

Having addressed many of the findings

of the last quinquennial report in 2020, the Fabric Committee at St Peter & St Paul's turned its attention to how the use of the church might be improved to serve the people of Tring better. Based on feedback from the church reordering survey conducted last year, we have been working with the appointed church architect to develop some concept plans for further discussion and review.

We've also been reviewing and updating the Eco Church questionnaire we completed in 2022. This is an online questionnaire to review environmental performance and engagement in five distinct categories, including: worship and teaching, management of church buildings, management of church land, community and global engagement and lifestyle aspects.

We previously achieved a bronze award, and with further information and updates, we hope this can be improved to a silver or even a gold rating under this scheme.

During the recent very wet winter weather, a number of cracks have become quite noticeable inside St Peter & St Paul's, especially above the altar, and near the plaque by the main south door.

Further investigation of the latter revealed it was in an unsafe condition, and some of it was temporarily removed as shown in the photos to prevent it falling and injuring someone. It may have fallen previously and, due to the wall being very damp, a previous repair had failed. A specialist stone mason

was engaged to repair the monument and check the surrounding area for further safety concerns.



Observations using tell-tale monitors have been ongoing since about 2010 and have shown some structural movement of the vestry. To try to alleviate this, with the support of FOTCH in 2022 and 2023, soakaways were installed to enhance and improve the drainage and ground conditions around the church in this area. However, unfortunately movement of the vestry is still ongoing.

The ground has been subject to two very hot dry summers and the recent very wet winter weather may well have exacerbated the situation. A proposal to underpin locally has been recommended by the Structural Engineer, Robert Tucker.

To review associated concerns with cracks to external walls and some internal partitions, a condition report has recently been completed to identify new cracks that have been observed, as well as the progression of previously noted cracks since the last inspection in 2020. These are on the plan shown here.

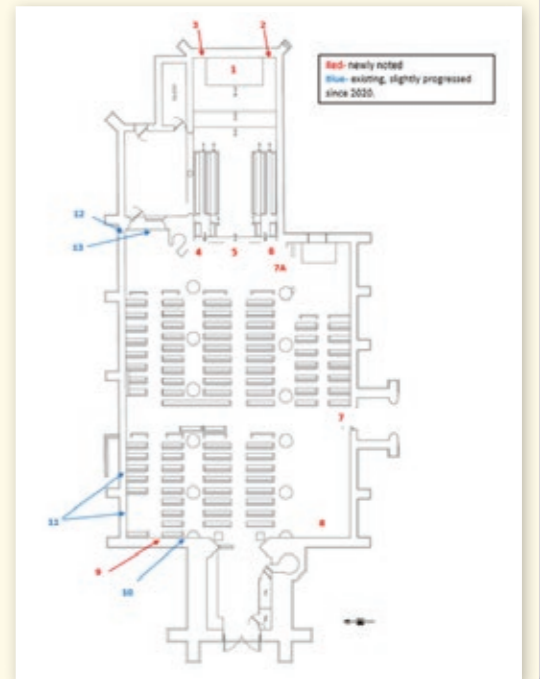
The report makes several recommendations which will

be considered and taken forward by the Fabric Committee. This includes ongoing annual monitoring with photographic records commencing with the next quinquennial due to be carried out in summer 2025 and general making good of plasterwork and redecoration.

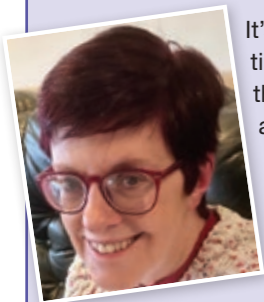
Specific priority recommendations requiring action in 2024 were also noted, including:

- Consulting a structural engineer to obtain a specification for inserting helical bars with resin bonding to secure the structure, making good of plasterwork, and obtaining a faculty agreement for this with the Diocesan Advisory Committee before work is undertaken.
- Removal of failed plasters and replacement with lime plasters
- Lime pointing of void areas and resetting loose flints, exposing the flat faces of the stones to improve water shedding and reduce susceptibility to frost thaw action.

Andrew Kinsey
St Peter & St Paul



Postcard from Orkney



It's a sign of the times, I suppose, that more churches are amalgamating and it's the same in Orkney as much as anywhere.

As ministers retire or move

on to pastures new, it can be difficult to recruit others to replace them. Another issue is, of course, the maintenance of church buildings that have a tendency to crumble gently around their congregations. In the windswept, salty and wet environment of Orkney, it's a testament to past and present communities that a number of church buildings are still standing and functioning. As Milestone Community Church is a modern purpose-built edifice, it is now home to four parishes that were scattered around the island in older church buildings, all of which are now based at Milestone.

There are plans to link even more kirks here within the Church of Scotland, along similar lines to the Tring Team Parish. This means our ministers (Moirra and Kerr) at Milestone Community Church will also hold

services at Stromness Kirk each week, with the intention of them both officiating at Stromness at 10.00am and then scooting over to Milestone to do a repeat performance at 11.15am or so. I understand their responsibilities will also, in time, encompass three or four other churches as well: all quite intense and quite a workload. As a result, the congregations are being asked to step up and help share that load, with people participating more in services, doing the Bible readings, prayers for others (intercessions) and even the occasional reflection (sermon). It is heartening to see quite a number of names on the name sheet asking for volunteers (including mine!) and I've heard in other churches the congregations are also preparing for more participation in order to keep everything going.

Another aspect in which I have become slightly involved is the live Facebook screening of the Sunday Service at Milestone. I have seen there is a live screening of the Sunday Services at St Peter & St Paul and I think it's a wonderful way for folk who can't get to church to still feel part of what's happening. It's gratifying to see the number of views of the service at



Milestone and know it's worth making it available to all. I'm occasionally asked to manage the different camera angles of the service, when appropriate, and ensure everything is still connected. I'm not sure what to do if it isn't, except hope to find someone who does know what to do! If anyone is interested, the services can be found on the Facebook page of the church: search for the Birsay, Harray and Sandwick Church and they're all on there.

So times are changing, as times do, but we pray that with the energy and enthusiasm of many folk, the spiritual life in Orkney will continue to flourish with the strong sense of community which is essential to church life, wherever you are.

Carrie Dodge, Milestone Community Church, Dounby

Irish Soda Bread



A highlight of many social events at Corpus Christi is Irish Soda Bread.

Our recent 'Big Irish Breakfast', celebrated in our hall on Sunday 17 March, was

no exception. For this event we had Soda Bread made by three parishioners, each one different but all equally delicious.

I have asked Paul Wright, one of the Soda Bread bakers, to share his recipe. It is set out below with photos to help you know what the finished bread looks like.



It is so quick and easy that it is our 'go to bread' at home. Delicious with seafood chowder, nice cheese or just on its own with butter.

Ingredients

- 250g plain flour
- 250g wholemeal flour
- 1 teaspoon bicarbonate of soda
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 tablespoon black treacle
- 350ml buttermilk
- (if you can't get buttermilk, add 1 tablespoon of white vinegar to whole milk, stir and leave for 20 minutes)

Method

- Preheat oven to 180C fan.
- Combine the dry ingredients in a large mixing bowl.
- Add the treacle and buttermilk and stir to form a dough.
- The dough should not be sticky on the fingers (add more plain flour if necessary).



- Remove from mixing bowl onto a lightly floured surface.
- Knead a few times and form into a round shape.
- Transfer onto a lightly floured piece of baking parchment on a baking tray.
- Cut a cross on the surface using a knife.
- Bake for 35 minutes.
- Remove from the oven and place on a cooling rack.
- Allow to cool at room temperature.
- Slice and enjoy with butter. Next day it is very tasty toasted.

Margaret Donnelly, Corpus Christi

Church naves



Technically the nave is the main body of the church, the part occupied by the congregation rather than any part reserved for clergy or choir. In early descriptions, any

areas to the side of the central nave were referred to as transepts or side aisles, but modern terminology often calls the main body of the church (including side aisles) the nave, which is separate from the entrance area and any area used for the choir or reserved for communion with an altar. So, you could consider that all churches have a nave, and may have nothing else. I think that all the churches in Tring have an entrance area, a nave and an area used by the choir/ music group and/or table for communion or altar.

In old churches the nave had a vaulted ceiling and the term nave was believed to be derived from the Latin for ship: navis. The vaulted ceiling looked like an upturned ship with a keel. The ship concept also linked to the use of the ship as an image for the church as a whole. Many Scandinavian churches have a model ship hung from the roof as a symbol of the church. In many languages the word for nave and ship are the same.

In early churches, the part of the church used by the priests for communion, the chancel, was the responsibility of the clergy and church

as a whole.

The nave was unconsecrated and the responsibility of the congregation.

The nave was a large open space without any seating, although sometimes a ledge was provided around the

wall for the infirm to lean on. The congregation would stand in this space for services, but the main use of the space was secular.

In early British churches, naves were used as courts to try people, storage areas for the arms which by law every parish had to provide, venues for plays, market places and a meeting place for businesses and civic functions. More details can be found in JG Davies' book, 'The Secular Use of Church Buildings, 1968'.

By the end of the 15th century the nave was often filled with fixed or moveable pews which meant that the nave became a place where the congregation sat during a service and its previous communal use virtually disappeared. The previous uses now took place in other buildings – court houses, theatres and civic buildings.

Nowadays many churches have returned their naves to the medieval use as a public space. Benches and chairs can be stored away and the empty space used for various functions. St James' Church in West Hampstead had



a full time Post Office in the nave from 1914 and Father Andrew Cain was the postmaster! Other churches have had part time Post Offices, farmers' markets and communal meals held in the nave.

I think that all the churches in Tring use their naves for communal purposes to some extent but I wonder whether there is scope for much more use. This is difficult where there are still pews, of course. High Street Baptist Church uses its nave and hall for many communal events and if you include the numbers coming in for the Christmas festival, Book festival and various society events, then maybe 10% of the population of Tring come in at some time or another – very small compared to the medieval use, but at least it is a start! I suspect St Peter & St Paul's attracts a similar percentage. If over 10% of the population of Tring attends a church building for events, then surely this is a starting point for encouraging people to think more about the role of the church in our town.

**John Allan
High Street Baptist Church**

Churches 'Count on Nature', 8-16 June 2024



During Great Big Green Week, we will again be carrying out a survey of wildlife in the five churchyards across the Tring Team Parish.

We will need everyone's help! Last year, people of all ages took part, and we made 365 records of 244 different species, learning about our local wildlife along the way.

So, dust off your binoculars and come along at any time during that week to record what you see in our churchyards for this national survey of wildlife. Information and recording sheets will be available in each church.

**Anne Nobbs
Eco-Church Group**

COMMENT

The magazine of the Churches in Tring



Please submit your article to the Editor by the 1st 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

FESTIVAL OF MUSIC
TRING BIG BAND Extravaganza
 Tring Music Partnership



13th MAY | 7.30PM
 The David Evans Court Theatre at Pendley, Tring

An eclectic evening of jazz featuring Big Band Swing and the Tring Phoenix Big Band with support from the Zebra Jazz Collective.

Tickets from courttheatre.co.uk
 £16 adult / £11 child & student



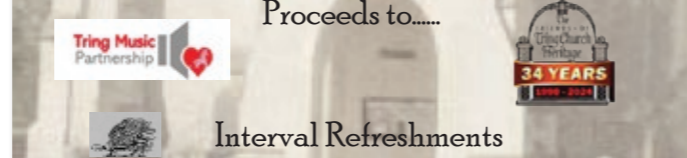
St. Peter & St. Paul's Church, Tring.
 Saturday 11th May, 2024 at 7.30pm.

The Ridgeway Chorale

Presents a concert of short choral pieces, sacred and secular, including items by Bach, Mendelssohn, Stanford & Wilbye, plus modern classics and folk songs.

Richard Grylls - Musical Director
 Colin Stevens - Accompanist
 Miranda Storey - Soloist

FREE admission
 donations please,
 Proceeds to.....



Interval Refreshments

'Desire, Violence and the Human Heart'

Monday 13 May, 7.30 – 9.30pm

The speaker for this webinar will be **The Revd Dr Helen Paynter**, tutor at Bristol Baptist College and director of the Centre for the Study of Bible and Violence.

Helen has recently produced a book: **'Blessed are the Peacemakers – a biblical theology of human violence'** – a fascinating read.

It is my hope that this webinar can also be carried to Israel/Palestine and a response from staff at Musalaha can be offered, as well as an update on their situation.

Look out for Eventbrite details soon!

Do share this event throughout your own networks – they are invited.

Revd Andrew Corsie, Director of Ministry, Willesden Area, Diocese of London

Jane Ducklin
OSTEOPATH

Professional and effective relief of back pain, postural problems and muscle and joint pain

18 Christchurch Road, Tring HP23 4EE
 Tel: 01442 890073 Mob: 07973 188420

Highly qualified and registered with the General Osteopathic Council

Osteopathic Care for all the Family
 Serving Tring since 1995



GCSE & A Level Tutoring
 Biology, Chemistry, Physics

Zoey Child

Recent Cambridge Science graduate, available for face-to-face tutoring in Tring.

Email: imperialoctopus@gmail.com
 Phone: 07462 551560

Tweet of the month



At the end of March I returned from my long trip to Colombia. I saw over 670 species of birds in my 27-day long trip, of which over 160 were species new to me. I also saw a few new mammals and numerous moths and butterflies. I spent time in the north of the country from Riohacha to Barranquilla – with particular emphasis on the Santa Marta mountains – then in the Magdalena Valley and Cordillera Occidental (the eastern arm of the Andes), and finally in Mitú, in the lowland Amazonian basin, not too far from Brazil.

To put what I saw into context on this trip, there have been about 630 species of wild birds recorded in the whole of Britain's recorded history, so I saw about forty more than that in less than four weeks in Colombia! Included in that total are a mindboggling 66 species of hummingbird and also birds I really didn't expect to see at all. One pleasant surprise was also being able to identify an Ovenbird for my first Colombian guide which was a new bird for him. Also, I had wondered if it were possible to

see a Rufous Potoo in Colombia as it was never mentioned or seen on my previous trips to the region. Indeed, the second guide said it felt like a mythical bird in Colombia as he has seen almost 1,700 of the 1,900-plus bird species recorded in Colombia to-date but not come close to seeing one. So, when the local guide for Mitú told him it was possible, I naturally agreed to leave at 3.30am to give us a chance of seeing it. Eventually we DID see it and I then found out that the local guide hadn't seen it before: all three of us were very happy with that.

However, the bird I am going to focus on is one that was hiding in plain sight in Colombia for goodness knows how many years. I give you the Kawall's Parrot. In fact, it wasn't known to science at all until 1904 in Brazil when a Brazilian bird keeper, Nelson Kawall, realised that several of the Mealy Parrots he had been given weren't that at all but a new species. The species was then not recorded in the wild until the 1980s and was found to be locally common in Brazil and considered to be endemic there. Meanwhile for years in Mitú, Colombia, the few local birders and visiting birders had noticed 'funny Mealy Parrots' and thought them to be juvenile



Mealy Parrots. In 2021, though, the coin dropped and the 'funny Mealy Parrots', with more prominent bills and lacking an obvious white eye-ring, were correctly identified as Kawall's Parrot. This species wasn't in my Colombian bird book and so wasn't on my radar. So, I was very pleased to see them easily when we walked out of the hotel late enough for it to be light and early enough for them to not have flown off to the forest that day.

This hidden treasure reminded me of the greatest of all treasures that is hidden in plain sight for some people – the love of God. 'Seek and ye shall find.' So if you haven't done so already, do some seeking and I hope you find it too.

Roy Hargreaves, St Peter & St Paul

News from Tring bell tower

Early in the Spring dawn one Saturday morning, eight of us from Tring Tower set off in various cars on a tower outing to Essex. Our plan was to visit five different churches along with other ringers from the Western District. With anticipation that is part of the pleasure, we planned to see and ring in churches many of us had never been to before. These lovely old churches, built *solí deo gloria*, are part of our rich English heritage.

The first one was St Peter in South Weald, an eight-bell church in a peaceful setting where time seemed to have stood still: no sound but the birds and the wind in the trees.

We were made very welcome and Philip, our own Tower Captain, called the changes exquisitely.

Our next tower was St Augustine in Thorpe Bay, named after one of the most well-known of saints and an influential writer who said, 'Faith is to believe what you do not see and the reward of that faith is to see what you believe'.

The next part of our day's plan was the welcome lunch break, for which we made our own arrangements. Some of us went to Leigh-on Sea and ate our sandwiches there, overlooking the Thames estuary. Then it was up a steep cliff path to St Clement in Leigh-on-Sea, discovering through the echoes of history, another bell tower still carrying on this time-honoured tradition.

The penultimate visit was to St Mary in Prittlewell with its impressive ten-bell tower. There I noticed a wall plaque from 1950 commemorating a Bob Royal rung there for eight hours and twenty-two minutes: 12,740 changes!

Last of all we came to the impressive glass bell tower of St Martin of Tours in Basildon, built on the ground about 50m from the church, a round tower built entirely of glass in a steel frame. Everything inside is visible from the outside, including the bells in the top of



the tower. It's an unusual sensation to ring there – the whole structure shakes and moves as the bells ring, rather as if it were a boat on choppy water (but quite safe, so we were told!).

To round off this delightful day out, we had a well-earned dinner at The Plough in Cuffley.

Johanna Morgan, Tring bell tower

Blessed Carlo Acutis



In Assisi, laid out next to St Francis, is a very modern teenager who has recently been beatified.

Carlo Acutis was born in London in May

1991. He received the sacrament of baptism at the Church of Our Lady of Dolours on Fulham Road in the borough of Kensington and Chelsea. Coincidentally, this was my local church for many years when I lived in London, and so I know it well.

The Acutis family moved home to Milan later that year. At the age of 7, Carlo started school where he attended the Istituto Tommaseo, run by the Marcelline Sisters. At the age of 14, Carlo began secondary school and attended the Leo XIII Classical Lyceum, run by the Jesuits. Testimonies from his teachers and classmates describe how he showed himself to be a 'generous, affectionate and brilliant young man'.

In many ways Carlo lived a normal life that we can relate to. He played sports, had many pets, played the saxophone, had a sweet tooth and enjoyed hiking. Yet, in many ways he was also very devout and holy. From a young age his special faith became evident. At 4 years old Carlo would not pass by a church without asking to enter and blow kisses to Jesus. As he grew up, Carlo developed a special love for Our Lady and St Anthony of Padua. Carlo read the Bible and the biographies of the saints and asked deep questions about faith that astonished his mother.

Carlo's parents were non-practising Catholics and rarely went to mass. In a reversal of the typical pattern, whereby parents drag children to church, it was Carlo who was dragging his parents and relatives to church. His faith perplexed his mother, who recalled 'He was so small, and so sure'. Thus she began her journey of rapprochement to the faith.

He loved computer games (Pokemon and PlayStation), but restricted himself to one hour a week, as he realised that they could take over otherwise. He also loved food. Apparently, his weakness was Nutella. Despite this, he restricted himself to one spoonful per serving. He was a natural joker and enjoyed making people laugh. His school reports state how he could be disruptive. He realised

this and made an effort to change. Together these examples show how Carlo overcame his own struggles, thus cultivating the virtue of temperance.

Carlo came from a wealthy family and found many opportunities for acts of charity towards the poor. With savings from his pocket money, he bought sleeping bags for the homeless. He bought hot drinks to beggars, organised fairs to raise funds for the missions and spent time volunteering at a soup kitchen. In the poor, Carlo saw God's beloved. In this way he followed the example of St Francis.

Carlo had a talent for computer programming, recognised by experienced programmers. He taught himself to code at a young age and dedicated his computer skills to sharing knowledge of the real presence of the Lord in the Eucharist. From the age of 11, he researched the eucharistic miracles in seventeen countries throughout the world, visiting many of the places where they occurred and cataloging them on the internet. The website which he developed can be found at: <http://www.miracolieucaistici.org>.

He also researched the lives of the saints and created several websites, one of which is especially for young saints. At a time when internet safety feels like a constant challenge for parents (given the many online hazards for young people), it is heartening to learn about a young person who has used the internet for something positive.

Such a strong faith in someone so young makes for some interesting observations. For example, he could not understand why sports stadiums were full but churches were empty. He repeatedly said 'They have to see, they have to understand'. Perhaps this is what led him to make a website on Eucharistic miracles.

In Assisi, Carlo felt 'happiest of all', as he had a deep devotion to St Francis. Given his longing to spend time in Assisi, Carlo's parents bought a house there in 2001. Carlo openly desired to be a saint, but joked that 'not exactly like Francis,



who as a penance, fasted six months a year'. His desire to be a saint led him to seek out a spiritual guide (Fr Ilio Carrai) to whom he could confess regularly.

He was especially attracted by the devotion of St Francis to the real presence of Jesus in the Eucharist. Carlo visited the tomb of St Francis regularly to pray to Jesus in the Tabernacle. Carlo spent much time praying in La Verna, where St Francis, in a time of deep personal crisis, had received the stigmata in 1224. On one occasion Carlo spent six weeks there.

In early October 2006, illness suddenly struck. Flu-like symptoms developed, followed by swollen lymph nodes, weight gain and fever. Carlo was taken to the paediatric Clinica de Marchi in Milan where he was diagnosed with acute promyelocytic leukaemia. He told his parents 'I offer what I will have to suffer to the Lord for the Pope and for the Church, to skip purgatory and go straight to heaven'. He was transferred to the hospital of San Gerardo in Monza.

He offered a testimony of faith in his dying days, saying 'I am happy to die because I have lived my life without wasting a minute of those things which do not please God'. When a doctor asked him if he was in pain, he responded 'There are others suffering much more than me'. On 11 October he fell into a coma from a brain hemorrhage caused by the leukaemia. He died the following day, at the age of 15. On 14 October Carlo's funeral was celebrated in his parish church, Santa Maria Segreta in Milan. His mother described the overflowing church 'I have never seen people like this before'. Strangers recounted stories to her about what Carlo had done which she had never heard. Many were immigrants and beggars. Carlo died with a reputation for sanctity. Because he had reached so

many, thousands of letters and e-mails came to his family.

The cause for his canonization was opened in October 2012. A four-year documentary phase followed. In July 2018 Pope Francis signed a decree advancing Carlo's cause to 'Venerable'. In 2019 his body was exhumed and transferred to the Sanctuary of the Renunciation where, 800 years ago, the young Francis stripped himself of his earthly possessions and devoted himself to God. At the entrance to this sanctuary there now hangs a painting depicting St Francis and Carlo together, pointing to Jesus.

Carlo's beatification mass was



celebrated in October 2020, in the midst of the coronavirus pandemic. Even with travel restrictions and social distancing measures, 40,000 people are said to have filed past Carlo's glass tomb.

'The saints of every age are an incarnation of the filial love of Christ' wrote Pope John Paul II. The saints are given to us as intercessors and models of life. Carlo's short life, filled with faith, with hope and with love, is a reminder that holiness is possible at any age. Carlo is a beacon of hope, and an inspiration for young people in particular.

Ide Cremin
Corpus Christi Church

With thanks to 'Blessed Carlo Acutis, 5 steps to being a saint' by Monsignor Anthony Figueiredo (2021)

Stories of love, loyalty, compassion and forgiveness



It's a cold, bright Saturday in February and five of us are guests at our niece's 40th birthday party.

We are meeting up with some family members whom we don't see as often as we would like any more and looking forward to it, but we are outnumbered by younger guests with their many children, who are very excited by the bouncy castle!

After the first hugs and introductions, I am looking for someone to talk to and passed by a young ponytailed man with the tiniest baby I have seen in a while. Within minutes, the tiny infant is in my arms and stays there for at least an hour while I talk to his dad, his mum and various others who come to wonder at someone bringing a week-old baby to such a noisy party. The baby, of course, is oblivious and sleeps through it all.

'What's his name?' is one of the first questions I ask.

'Boaz,' Dad replies.

Now before I tell you what happens next, have you met a Boaz before? Is the name at all familiar? If not, do read the wonderful story of Ruth in your Bible, because Boaz is the great grandfather of King David and an ancestor of Jesus.

'Boaz as in Ruth and Boaz?' I reply.

'Yes!' says Dad. 'You are one of a very small percentage of people who

recognise the name.'

I later saw what he meant because another couple came to chat and the look of bewilderment at the name, the spelling and the explanation was written all over the man's face.

Dad has two other children called Esther and Jonah. It was an easy entry to conversation: the church he attends in Windsor and how he knows Sarah, our niece, which is because his wife is also a paediatrician and used to work with her. Fertility, adoption, fostering (my favourite subjects) continued around the sleeping Boaz when Mum arrived to chat too – and how you need a bigger car when you have three small children.

Now I am not sure about choosing the name Boaz for a child in 2024 but at least Boaz is a good guy in the Bible narrative. (Spoiler alert!) He falls in love with and marries the young, loyal and widowed refugee Ruth, who comes to live in Bethlehem with her widowed mother-in-law, a native of that place. Naomi and Ruth have nothing and benefit from the Foodbank of that time, the gleanings from the farmer's field, the farmer being the kind and generous Boaz. Lots of bad things happen in Naomi's life – the famine that takes her to Moab, the loss of her husband AND her two sons while she lives in a foreign land, followed by poverty – but there is light at the end of the tunnel. Her kind daughter-in-law Ruth does not abandon her and return to her own family and culture but stays with Naomi

to take care of her and is willing to suffer with her whatever happens next. What emerges is love for Ruth and the protection for them both of the big-hearted Boaz, marriage, a son called Obed – and much later, descendants that include the King David of the future.

Esther, of course, is the beautiful, brave and clever young woman who saves the Jews in Persia from genocide after the exile.

Jonah we all know too well and I know other young parents who have named their sons after him. It's become quite popular (along with, apparently, various other Old Testament names such as Caleb, Isaac, Ezra, Asher, Levi, Joel, Elijah, Ezekiel, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Micah and Zacchariah!) but personally, I don't think Jonah is the hero of his story. First he runs away when God asks him to send a message of salvation to the people of Nineveh; then he repents and ask for forgiveness and help from God after he is thrown overboard in a raging storm; later he takes the message God intended – but then: is he happy that God is kind and compassionate and forgives the errant and repentant Assyrians? No! Instead, he sulks and tells God that he is TOO kind and forgiving and wishes God had destroyed them! Well – it's not a name that inspires me!

Annette Reynolds
St Peter & St Paul

Akeman Street Baptist Playgroup



Akeman Street Baptist Playgroup was started in 1976, evolving from Mrs Brown's home playgroup. It was run by a committee of church members, some of whom were parents, headed by David Chapman, Pastor, as Chairman. Forty years later, it is called A.B.C. Pre-School.

The playgroup meets in the schoolroom at the back of Akeman Street Baptist Church in Tring and is a large square, high room, with high windows, so quite light. It has the advantage of several small rooms which lead from it, some with shutters, which can be opened up, a kitchen, cloakrooms and a fairly large entrance hall, big enough for pushchairs and with low coat pegs.

The main disadvantage in the early days was the storage, which was under the pulpit, and with a very low door. It was quite amazing how much was stored in there.

Since then, the storage has been greatly improved and is now in a room which used to be the vestry. At the beginning of each daily session, everything has to be got out and later put away, which is both time consuming and tiring!

There is a large grassed area at the back of the church, now accessed by a door, straight out from the playroom, but in our day, we had to go out through the front door and round the building to get there. At the front of the church are steps where we often had our snack, and where we had to assemble, via the church, for fire practice.

Nowhere was there a really secure place outside, but we always had plenty of adults to make sure everyone was safe and the children loved being able to play outside.

Inside the hall we always had sand, water, paint, dough, puzzles, book corner, home corner, sticking, drawing, small cars, Brio train set, dolls' house and a climbing frame with a slide. Every week we had cooking of some sort, which ranged from cakes and biscuits, salad, soup, sandwiches, pastry, pancakes, hot cross buns, bird cake, etc. This was always very popular and sometimes we ate the results at snack time or the children took it home.

We were originally registered for twenty-five children per session, Monday, Wednesday, Friday, from 9.15 to 11.45am, but later increased to twenty-eight per session, as so many children wanted to come. The original cost was 50p per session, which, of course, had to be increased over the years as we had to have enough staff to run it and to cover the increasing costs of materials.

Children were admitted as soon as they had their 3rd birthday, and their mothers stayed too until the child had settled. They stayed with us until they

went to school as 'rising 5s' so we got to know them and their families really well. We did a certain amount of fundraising for new equipment. We had a 'Sponsored Hush' – amazing how the children managed to keep quiet for fifteen minutes, when they knew we were going to buy some new toys!

One of our mums did 'Webb Ivory' for us for years and we had a Bring-and-Buy Sale every year to finance our Christmas party. We had a stall on the market and got a percentage back from the playgroup photographer. So, over the years we were able to buy some very good equipment. We were also often given things from parents and friends. Our playgroup parents were very supportive and offered to mend things and wash dressing up clothes, so everything was kept in good condition: our standards were high! All parents were welcome at all times, mothers, fathers and sometimes grandparents. As our playgroup is in the middle of the town, many would come in after shopping, or sometimes stay all morning, so we always had plenty of adults, as well as the staff and volunteers.

We had various events during the year: Easter bonnets and a service led by our Pastor, outings to all sorts of places such as Bekonscot Model Village, Mead Open Farm and London Zoo on the one day they opened just for playgroups. It was somewhere different each year. Parents came too, and we all had a great time. We joined in all the events with our local PPA, and went to Teddy Bears' Picnics etc. We had a Harvest Festival and made up small baskets to take to local sheltered housing where the Pastor had a little service for us, and the children gave the baskets out. We went conkering in a local park in the Autumn, visited the Fire Station, and Tring Museum, the Post Office (which was then next door) and the Library. We had a Nativity Play and party every Christmas.

All these things were made possible because we had such good support from our parents, church and many volunteers. We had visitors come in too. Teachers from our local school, dentist, Lollypop Lady, postman, policeman, ambulance, Tufty Club Lady (road safety). We once had a visit from a whole playgroup from one of the villages, which was amazing as our little visitors blended in within

minutes, and they got on as if they had known each other for ever!

From my own point of view, Playgroup was a very positive experience. I made lots of friends, learned more about life than I have at any other time. I learned not to judge people, or 'put them in boxes', and that most parents are doing the best they can for their children, in the circumstances in which they find themselves. It's people that really matter, not things!

'Our' mums are now becoming grandparents and I often see them as I go round Tring and admire the new babies; some of them are even going to our playgroup. Hilary and I went to see one of the girls married last year, which was lovely.

There are now three nurseries in Tring, attached to all the Infant Schools, so children are only at playgroup for a much shorter time. Playgroups were originally started because there was a lack of nurseries, so I suppose they have set out to do what was intended, but I do wonder



15th Birthday Party 1991

– there was something very special going on in playgroups, with the involvement of parents which I think was crucial and I hope has not been lost.

Erica Guy, 1976-1991
St Peter & St Paul's
Hilary Hines, 1976-1996
St John the Baptist, Aldbury

A Musalaha update



Notes from a Jerusalem visitor, mid-March 2024

The city is empty. I feel safe even walking after Friday Prayers.

People are in mourning. Righteous anger is frozen in the ice cold of grief. But it will melt.

Be very clear that the community, social, political, daily life of those living in the Land is fractured, fearful and despairing. People have polarised into factions within factions.

Fear of 'normalisation' in both Jew and Palestinian communities. Brave are those who still engage and dare to trust. We need leadership that births hope, both in the UK and there in the Land.

Are peacemakers willing and still able to engage with the post October 7th world?

Some have left the field, hurt and understandably damaged.

Some secular humanitarians are despairing and desperate to flee to another land.

Others are renewed in their commitment to stay and work for a lasting and just peace.

Nevertheless peacemakers believe they have capacity to expand, and recruit for the future. They feel called by their faith to suffer and die, if needs be, in obedience to their calling of advocating peace and justice. These are the Bonhoeffer saints of our generation.

A sample of ongoing activity, end of March Musalaha report

The Muslim/Christian Young Adults Group in Bethlehem delivered food packages to 118 Muslim and Christian needy families.

Civil Society Israeli/Palestinian Group met in person to share an iftar (the after-fast Ramadan meal). They agreed to meet on a new date to listen to each other and plan small but meaningful ways to stand together against the ongoing violence.

Muslim/Christian Young Adults were trained in Denmark.

For more details see musalaha.org.

The Land, Musalaha and Tring

How can we make sense of what we see and hear? To help us get some feel for life behind the public news, I have presented 'flesh and blood' information to sketch the story of Musalaha in recent editions of *Comment*.

Can we in Tring help?

Pray for the progress of the unusual Grant Application to UK Government to include relationship building into the UK restoration support. Training in Musalaha's Reconciliation for 150 UK leaders is a small section of the bid.

It is very likely that two women from the Land will visit Tring briefly on Friday 13 September as part of a short UK tour to tell the story of relationships across the divide.

Persist in your prayers for peace.

Will we sustain hope? Where is God in this?

Revisit Musalaha's Lament and the Groaning prayer of Romans 8 (see *Comment* February 2024).

Echoing Jesus' most famous teaching, Dr Salim Munayer, Senior Consultant, writes an introduction in their latest Newsletter 'Liberation for the Oppressor'. Towards the end he writes Liberation without reconciliation is revenge. It took me some time to understand this – but I thought you might also find it worth looking at. (Website: Musalaha.org – Publications – Newsletter March 2024)

Colin Briant
High Street Baptist Church
colin.briant@hotmail.com
<https://musalaha.org>
<https://www.musalaha.uk>



10th Birthday Party 1986

Our Lady of the Rosary



During our recent visit to Portugal, we were privileged to attend Mass on Palm Sunday at the Parish Church in Fatima, a little distance from the shrine which

includes the Basilica of Our Lady of the Rosary, and the Chapel of the Apparitions where the Virgin Mary appeared to three shepherd children on 13 May 1917.

At the front near the sanctuary were statues of two of the children who had seen the apparitions: Jacinta Mato and Francisco, her brother. The third child who saw the apparitions, Lucia, was a little older and later lived as a nun until the age of 97. She wrote an account of the apparitions later and the quotations following have been taken from this.

None of the children could read or write when the first apparition happened. Jacinta was 7, Francisco 8 and Lucia 10. They were pasturing their flock of sheep when Our Lady appeared on the top of a holm oak tree and the children were bathed in the light which radiated from her as she spoke to them, telling them when to come again to the same spot.

On 13 July 1917 Our Lady showed them a vision of hell. 'When you pray the rosary, say after each mystery: O my Jesus, forgive us, save us from the fire of hell – lead all souls to Heaven, especially those who are most in need.' Today this is referred to as the Fatima prayer, and many Catholics incorporate it into the rosary as Mary requested. Our Lady asked the children to pray the Rosary every day, in order to obtain peace for the world.

Although the children had decided to keep the apparitions secret, Jacinta had told at home what she had seen and word of the apparitions quickly spread so that more and more people came to the holm oak tree on the appointed days. On 13 October 1917, when a great number of people were present, Our Lady came to the same holm oak tree and said, 'I want to tell you that a chapel is to be built here in my honour. I am the lady of the Rosary. Continue always to pray the Rosary every day...'

Lucia's mother beat her daughter to try to persuade her to go the priest to tell him she had been lying. Many came to interrogate the children. But no

matter how much pressure was applied, they stayed faithful to their account. It was only after the bishop of Leiria-Fatima wrote to Lucia in 1941 that she considered that she had been authorised to reveal the first two parts.

The children's 'secret' was in fact in three parts: the vision of hell; that an even more disastrous war would follow World War I should the world, and in particular Russia, not convert and that if Our Lady's call for repentance went unheeded, Russia would spread terrors through the world, causing loss and persecution of the church. To fulfil Our Lady's request, Pope Pius XII consecrated the whole human race to the Immaculate Heart of Mary on 31 October 1942. On 25 March 1984, Pope John Paul II, with all the bishops of the church, renewed the consecration of the world and Russia.

The third part of the 'secret', although written down in 1944, was not published until 26 June 2000. Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (later Pope Benedict XVI) interpreted the vision as representing the threat of judgement which looms over the world. 'The vision then shows the power which stands opposed to the force of destruction... The Church's path is thus described as a Via Crucis, as a journey through a time of violence, destruction and persecution.'

When, after the attempted assassination of Pope John Paul II on 13 May 1981 (an anniversary of the first apparition) the Pope had the text of the third part of the 'secret' brought to him, he saw in it his own fate. He had been very close to death and explained his survival now in the following words: 'It was a mother's hand that guided the



The three young shepherds of Fatima



The Parish Church, Fatima



Basilica of Our Lady of the Rosary, Fatima



Chapel of the Apparitions, Fatima

bullet's path and in his throes the Pope halted at the threshold of death.'

In 1982 Pope John Paul II came on pilgrimage to Fatima in thanksgiving for having escaped with his life. He gave the bullet to the shrine and it is now embedded in the crown of Our Lady over her statue in the Chapel of the Apparitions, thus marking the very spot where the first apparition had appeared to the children.

Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger concludes, 'The Evil One has power in this world, as we see and experience continually; he has power because our freedom continually lets itself be led away from God. But since God himself took a human heart and thus steered human freedom towards what is good, the freedom to choose evil no longer has the last word. From that time forth, the word that prevails is this: "In the world you will have tribulation, but take heart; I have overcome the world" (John 16:33). The message of Fatima invites us to trust in this promise.'

Michael Demidecki
Corpus Christi Church

In memory of Jane Shardlow

Jane Stevenson, born in 1952 in Uttoxeter, Staffordshire, was raised a Methodist with a strong moral compass, her father Charles proving an inspiration for helping those in need.

Although she found school challenging early on, it was found that this was due to bad vision with a severe astigmatism. Then she was fascinated by the more academic subjects and took a course at university in computer science. She became an incredible computer programmer, meticulous in detail, and could code thousands of lines of code that worked straight off; not a semicolon was forgotten.

She ran the payroll at Kodak, before moving to Granada, then Honeywell, which later became Sopra Steria. She specialised in systems analysis, working closely with customers to convert their business needs into IT systems. This was the work she enjoyed most, the intellectual challenge. Her career took her through various roles, but it was always the most challenging ones she enjoyed the most. She was never far from a puzzle, a sudoku, code word or similar. She spent time working in London for New Zealand Apples, the Police and RAF, although she wasn't allowed to talk about what she did for them.

In August 1981, Mum met Richard at the White Horse in Bourne End. She was smitten. I once asked Mum how she knew Dad was 'the one'. She said it was obvious. When he came round to dinner he was meant to be there, and she never wanted him to leave. A whirlwind romance ensued with a wedding planned just five months later at the Chapel in Uttoxeter. The minister wanted to check she was marrying a morally upstanding man that would uphold the principles of the Methodist Church. When asked for the profession of the groom, Brewer was not quite what he expected to hear, nor that the father of the groom was also a Brewer, or the best man, or that most of his side of the church would be Brewers too. Despite this, they were married on a snowy day in January 1982 and were married for forty-two years.

An MG-B, a honeymoon in the fog in the Lake District and a cocker spaniel on the parcel shelf, was life for the next year and a half, before it was rudely interrupted by the arrival of me. A move

to Tring six months later to a shell of house capable of burning tonnes of coal without ever getting warm, here a happy home was made. There were redundancies, overhauling a house, a precocious little one and a dog that thought she was in charge: but we were a family and I could not have wanted for a happier childhood. She was a wonderful mother who had the patience of a saint dealing with my incessant questions.

In the 90s, Dad was building breweries around the world and had work lined up, mainly in China, but the events of Tiananmen Square led to a severing of diplomatic ties, and his work being cancelled. A beer or two back in The Castle in Tring with Kerr Hill led to a change of tack. A brewery of his own back at home was needed. Mum had recently lost her father and trusted her inheritance to Richard to seed a new endeavour. So, with Richard, Kerr and Jane in 1992, Tring Brewery was born. Later Andrew Jackson came on board and with his drive, the brewery has grown from strength to strength. More than just a brewery, they have a real drive to support the local community, be it with their yearly charity partners, their sponsorship of Tring Carnival week, or the countless bars run for local charities and St Peter & St Paul's. This is Mum's influence in the business manifest, to use the resources you have to help others.



Sailing was originally Dad's hobby but Mum enjoyed it when he took us out in Salcombe harbour, exploring coves and beaches inaccessible from



the land. We met likeminded folk with whom we spent many happy years lighting campfires and singing songs. Later with proper training, we had many wonderful summer holidays mucking about on boats, initially in Greece and Croatia before inevitably buying a share of Octavia, which we would use to explore the south coast of the UK, the Channel Islands, Scilly Isles and down into France. It was during this time we discovered Alderney, which became a special place to both of my parents. Sailing became a big part of Mum's life, an important way to relax, and to explore the world with friends and family.

Accompanying us on all of our sailing trips was Mum's stuffed Gromit cuddly toy, from Wallace and Gromit. Gromit always knew best, but would let Wallace carry on, despite knowing better. Gromit is one step ahead, foreseeing the calamity and being ready to correct it before the inevitable disaster occurs. That was Mum to me, the smartest in the room, but never condescending, always supportive, always one step ahead and ready to catch me when I fell. I gather from others this was how she was to them too, Gromit to a world of Wallaces.

The last few years have been hard, with more than three years of hospital trips and treatment for one cancer and then another. From the diagnosis of pancreatic cancer, she never showed concern for herself, only of those of us she would be leaving behind, including her special grandsons, Bertie and Ted.

She carried always with her a generosity of spirit, to support her family, the people she cared about and her community and that is what she will be remembered for.

Peter Shardlow, son

In memory of Claude William Honey

Claude William Honey was born in May 1927 to Henry and Ethel and joined his brothers Norman and Reginald in the family home in Teddington. This was a period of great turbulence and economic upheaval between WWI and WWII.

Great Britain and England itself was undergoing the last throes of Empire; Europe was descending into chaos. In September 1938, exactly a year before the declaration of war in 1939, Claude, who had passed the 11 plus entrance exam, followed his brother Reginald into Hampton School in West London. This highly regarded Grammar School was located directly below the patch of sky where many of the most spectacular dogfights of the Battle of Britain took place. Some 118 former pupils lost their lives in the war – more than half of them in the RAF. The photograph shows the school assembly in September 1939.



Assembly at Hampton School 1939

As was common at the time, Claude left the school at 14 and went to work in the gardening department of Bentalls in Kingston. His family had a long involvement with the retail world and one branch of it ran a wonderful, traditional grocers in Teddington. He was a diligent scholar, but in those days every wage packet mattered. However, 'Once a Hamptonian always a Hamptonian' was the school motto and Claude lived up to that commitment, always keeping in touch and supporting appeals by the school until the end of last century. His interest in gardening carried actively on right until last year.

He continued to live in southwest London and married his first wife Joan, moving from retail to the insurance industry where his life-long career with the Prudential Assurance started. Claude and Joan divorced in 1971.

Claude and his new wife, June, met

through a love of music. Claude boldly approached the elegant young lady sitting alone during a concert interval in the Royal Festival Hall in 1981. Their marriage in 1982 neatly coincided with Claude's transfer to take over the Aylesbury office of the Prudential Assurance Company in the same year. They moved from the Thames Valley to the Chilterns and a house in Tring.

Claude's career with the Pru lasted until retirement and he was proud of the fact that in May last year he reached the record of having worked for them for thirty-two years but had been comfortable on their pension scheme for an even longer time! Claude never 'lived to work', he always worked to live and they had a happy and comfortable life in their home in Donkey Lane, Tring for over forty years. That home was always a centre of warmth, welcome and hospitality. They both loved people and were truly accomplished hosts.

We first met them in the early 1980s and soon found ourselves frequently at the same dinner tables and parties, mostly at events dedicated in some way or other to fundraising for St Peter & St Paul's and other charities. Food was a big thing with Claude and his dedication to getting recipes just right was legendary. We became involved together in so many events that involved catering that we founded a little group of four foodies. The 'Quatre Cuisiniers' was formed with Eric Hollingsworth, Marc Clift, Claude Honey and myself cooking meals for upwards of 100 at a time. We also travelled with our wives to all the best places, ranging from Le Manoir aux Quatre Saisons to Cliveden and had a high old time together. One event when we hired a stretch limo and gussied ourselves up to the nines to enjoy Paris House was truly memorable – as you can see from the photograph.

At the very centre of our relationships was real friendship that often found us enjoying ourselves in support of one or other of the local causes such as the Friends of Tring Church Heritage – which we founded some thirty-five years ago – and The Children's Society: out of the twenty-five annual Garden Days we have



The Quatre Cuisiniers & their Ladies at Paris House

arranged in our garden, Claude was present at all.

Claude was justly famous for his puddings and much celebrated for his meticulous approach to gardening (which was also about growing fine food!). He was also celebrated for his meticulous sense of dress and dapper appearance, his clothes always elegantly co-ordinated, often in daring shades of cream or pale blue.

Claude was always kind and considerate to others, a man of true Christian faith who believed in serving others and not putting himself first, a gentleman in every sense of the word. Determined but unassuming, he fulfilled his life ambition of 'Doing justly, loving mercy and walking humbly with his God' right to the end, a man who was kind and considerate to every friend and stranger and can perhaps best be described in the words of Homer: 'He lived in a house by the side of the road and was a friend to man'.

Despite the difficulties that assailed him after the loss of his beloved June last summer, Claude lived his life fully to the end, fearlessly embracing fun and fortitude, and celebrating friendship in the face of whatever occurred. I am sure God loved him for it and has welcomed him home. Always friendly and hospitable, always up for some fun, Claude was nonetheless a very private individual who never spoke of his troubles, a real stiff-upper-lip Englishman of the old school. He was independent, self-sufficient and had a quietly purposeful approach to life. He was in every aspect of his life a very particular Christian gentleman.

**Grahame Senior, Tring Team
St Peter & St Paul
and the last Quatre Cuisinier**

In memory of Philippa Segrave Pride

It is with sadness that we share the news that a previous Tring Team Vicar, Reverend Philippa Segrave Pride, has died.

Philippa came to be a Team Vicar when Frank Mercurio was Team Rector in 2002. She was appointed at much the same time as I was appointed to be Team Vicar in Aldbury. She looked after the villages of Long Marston, Wilstone and Puttenham and thus the churches of All Saints, St Cross and St Mary's and lived in the vicarage on Watery Lane.

Being appointed at the same time we spent a fair bit of time together



including walking our dogs (she had a greyhound) or at new incumbent training sessions, including a residential conference.

Philippa's time with us marked a high point in staffing and sadly, we were not able to re-appoint a Team Vicar after she left and our parish was cut from three clergy to two, so it marked the last time that the villages had their own resident vicar.

Philippa's journey and ministry continued from our parish to Hatfield and then Harpenden before she moved, in 2013, to Coquitlam, Canada. Her ministry there began in Christ Church Cathedral, and then two more parish posts until in 2022 she became Executive Archdeacon and Archdeacon



of Vancouver of the Diocese of New Westminster.

On 7 June 2023, a little over a month before her 50th birthday, she announced that she had been diagnosed with advanced breast cancer. The cancer spread to her bones and, after months in hospital, died on 18 March aged 51. She was incredibly proud of her daughter Caitlin.

Huw Bellis, Tring Team

Piano & more series

An hour of music on Sunday afternoons

Music for wind, strings & piano
Members of the Icknield Ensemble

Coleridge Taylor (1875-1912) Nonet
for oboe, clarinet, bassoon, horn, violin, viola, cello, double bass and piano

Franz Berwald (1796-1868) Grand septet
for clarinet, bassoon, horn, violin, viola, cello and bass

Sunday 19th May
at 3pm

followed by tea and refreshments

Tring Parish Church HP23 5AE

Free admission; donations welcomed

For further details see:

piano-and-more.org.uk
or Google "Piano and more, Tring"



**NEW MILL
BAPTIST CHURCH
INVITES YOU
TO JOIN US TO SING**

**SONGS
OF PRAISE**

Sunday 26th May at 5pm

With Refreshments to Follow

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

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
jjgoody@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 Berdinner
01442 822305

AKEMAN STREET BAPTIST CHURCH

Minister
Rev Tom Copperwheat
01442 827881

Administrator

Emma Nash
01442 827881

CORPUS CHRISTI ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

Parish Priest
Father Sean Thornton
seanthornton@rcdow.org.uk

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 1st 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 May in Tring Church

Services at Tring Church

Sunday 5th May

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

Ascension Day Thursday 9th May

10am & 8pm Holy Communion

Sunday 12th May

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

Sunday 19th May

8am Holy Communion traditional language
10am Communion with craft activity **
3pm Piano and More concert

Sunday 26th May

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

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

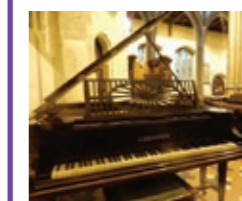


Piano & more series

Sunday May 19th

3pm for an hour's concert of music followed by refreshments.

Free but collection for church and piano expenses



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

www.tringteamparish.org.uk

Crossword puzzle answers

From page 9

ACROSS

- DEUS
- MONUMENT
- NAZARETH
- SEMI
- BELLS
- AMENDED
- SEATED
- ATTEST
- WINSOME
- BALMY
- PAUL
- TRESPASS
- PHARISEE
- DUST

DOWN

- EVADE
- STARLIT
- MEET
- NEHEMIAH
- MASON
- NUMBERS
- BUS
- EDOMITES
- EPITAPH
- TRAPPED
- TRY
- SOLAR
- MOSES
- BEDE

The Friends of Tring Church Heritage proudly present

2024 Tring Family Fun Day

THE TEDDIES FLY AGAIN!



SATURDAY 11TH MAY
11AM - 3PM

**ST PETER & ST PAUL CHURCH
AND CHURCHYARD**

Teddy 'Wings' Zip Wire • Tower Tours
Bouncy Castle • Tring Brewery Bar
Beat the Goalie • Childrens tombola
Choirs & Musical Entertainment Programme
Lunchtime Barbeque • Big Prize Raffle
All Day Refreshments

OPEN TO EVERYONE - ALL WELCOME

Preserving the heart of Tring for future generations to enjoy

**CALLING ALL
FAMILIES!**

ADMISSION FREE



For further information telephone

Grahame Senior on 01442 822770 or Maria Lashley on 07765 420700