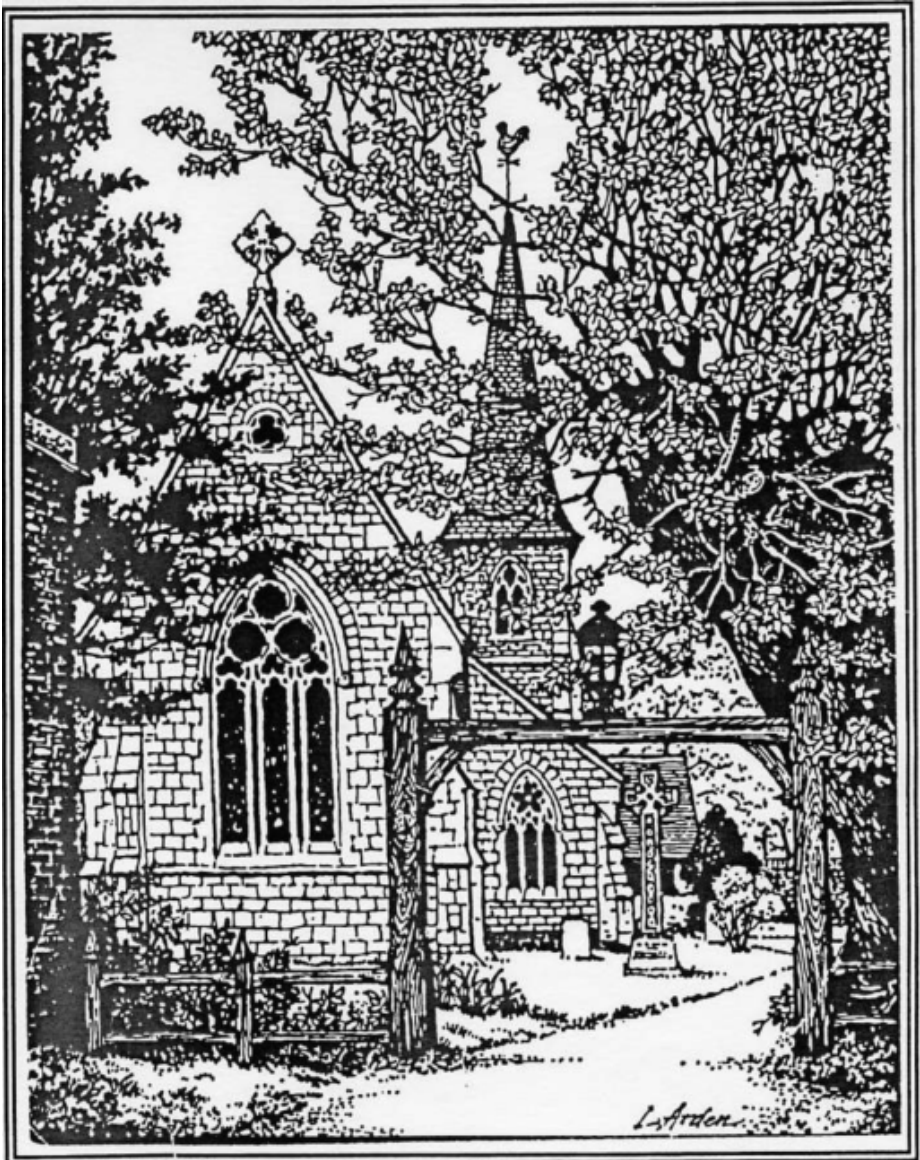


**The Parish Church of
*St. James, North Cray***

**50p
*May, 2020***

(Part of the Bexley Team Ministry)



St JAMES, NORTH CRAY PARISH STAFF

Team Vicar: Reverend Ren Harding 01322 528923
The Vicarage, 6 Tile Kiln Lane,
Joydens Wood, DA5 2BB
renharding@hotmail.co.uk

Lay Reader: David Stevens 020 8300 0867

Church Wardens: Suzy Higgs 020 8302 5719
suzyjhiggs@gmail.com
Maxine Heath 020 8468 7895
maxinejheath@gmail.com

Treasurer: Position vacant

PCC Secretary: Rhonda Collins 020 8300 3797

Sacristan: Stephen Hills 020 8302 7236

Bothy Bookings: Lynne Meads 07966 315518

Parish Safeguarding: Rhonda Collins 020 8300 3797

Magazine Editor: Steve Blake
sblake stjames@virginmedia.com

St James Sunday Service

9.30am

Holy Communion

(All age service with Uniformed Organisations on second Sunday)

TEAM RECTOR'S LETTER MAY 2020



Public Worship Services are suspended but the Church is alive and well and living out the Christian faith looking after the frail, the elderly, and the anxious, praying, and showing all the love we can in a troubled world. Although we have been physically apart, church members have stayed in touch by email, WhatsApp and other technology, by phone calls and by post. We've shared ideas of things we've found inspiring.

I've been encouraged by those of you who joined our special Holy Week & Easter activity of creating a **Sacred Space** in their home, to become a focus of prayer and meditation. You set aside a quiet corner somewhere, a table or shelf, or somewhere outside and placed on it items that enable reflection - a candle, a cross, an open bible, fresh flowers, some stones. Some have added written prayers or poems. You can do this activity alone, or (with suitable adjustments for the age of your children), as a family. One lady has used Lego figures as part of her Sacred Space!

I am encouraged that people have told me that you are continuing with this idea. Each day, or at set times during the day, you light your candle and spend time at your Sacred Space. Some people have used music to help them focus their thoughts. If you would like to share a photo, by WhatsApp, or email, or just ring me or someone else from church, to describe what you have done, please do that. We have also been able to upload photos to some of our websites, so do have a look at those. Let's share our Sacred Space and connect with each other and with God.

Reverend Ren Harding (Team Rector)

contact me at Joydens Wood Vicarage,
6 Tile Kiln Lane, Joydens Wood, Bexley, DA5 2BB
01322-528923 renharding@hotmail.co.uk 07836644782

**DO BE CAREFUL NOT TO LEAVE A CANDLE UNATTENDED OR
HAVE INFLAMMABLE ITEMS CLOSE TO IT!**

FROM MATT HODDER

Hello, my name is Matt Hodder and I am really looking forward to joining the Bexley Team as the new Curate this summer. For the last three years my wife Jen and I, and our two children Zach (4) and Annie (18 months) have been living in Cambridge. I have been studying at Ridley Hall Theological College which has been a great joy, and we are really looking forward to starting this summer. Before training both Jen and I worked in primary schools. I worked as a teaching assistant and used to run the outdoor learning programmes, and Jen was a teacher in Reception and Key Stage 1.

I am thoroughly looking forward to starting in my new role and getting to know many of you over the coming months. Obviously, with the challenging times that we are living in at the moment our introductions might have to be quite creative, but nonetheless it will be great to be a part of the ministry and community with you all.

We are praying for you all during this time and will see you all soon,

Matt

THE BOTHY

Are you looking for a small hall for a function?

**The Bothy (in St James Church Grounds) has all the facilities
you need and can seat 35 people.**

If you need further information please contact

Lynne Meads on 07966 315518

BEXLEY TEAM MINISTRY

“Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God. .”

2 Corinthians 1:10-11 (NIV)

PRACTICAL ADVICE

Wash hands frequently with soap & water or alcohol-based hand rub. It has been suggested that instead of singing Happy Birthday to ensure we wash our hands for long enough - that we say the Lord's Prayer!

Avoid touching eyes, nose & mouth as this can transfer the virus.

Stay informed (but not obsessively so!) on the latest developments about COVID-19. Follow advice given by your own healthcare provider, your national and local public health authority or your employer. National & local authorities have the most up to date information for your area.

A CALL TO PRAYER

Wherever you are, and whatever your personal circumstances, we invite you to pause at midday each day, to join with your brothers and sisters across the Bexley Team Ministry to pray for our churches, our community, our nation and the world. We pray the prayer that unites all Christians, the Lord's Prayer. This is the Traditional version:-

“Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come; thy will be done; on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory; for ever and ever. Amen.”

You may wish to use this prayer written by Malcolm Duncan of Spring Harvest: -

“May you be given the gift of simple faith. When the world around you is full of uncertainty, may God remind you that you are not alone and you do not need to be dominated by fear. May you find peace amidst chaos from God's promises. Hold onto the God who holds you.”

Pray for those infected or in quarantine

Loving Jesus may they feel your power of healing through the care of medical staff. Take away fear, anxiety, and feelings of isolation from people receiving treatment or under quarantine. Protect their families and friends and bring peace to all who love them.

Pray for those at high risk

Dear Lord, we lift to you the elderly and people with chronic health conditions. Protect them from harm and be their comfort in this time of uncertainty.

Adapted from prayers of World Vision

<https://www.worldvision.org/disaster-relief-news-stories/prayer>

WORSHIPPING AT HOME

The following are resources which you may like to use as aids to your own personal prayer and worship. As the weeks progress we will make additions to the list via a weekly newsheet, and will endeavour to make these prayer resources available in paper form in the coming days.

If you have access to the internet this is a good site to visit.
<https://www.churchofengland.org/more/media-centre/coronavirus-covid-19-liturgy-and-prayer-resources>

Radio 4

Prayer for the Day @ 5.43 am – if this is too early for you it can be found at a time to suit you online at bbc.co.uk

Daily Service Monday to Friday @ 9.45 am – on Longwave and DAB

Sunday worship @ 8.10am

Lent Talks Wednesday @ 8.45pm

Radio 3

Choral Evensong Wednesdays at 3.30pm or Sundays at 3pm

Radio 2

Pause for thought at 5.45 am and 9.20 am

Television

Songs of Praise BBC1 Sunday at 1.15pm

Church of England. churchofengland.org

Live Lent Daily Reflections via internet, app or print. Daily Prayer via internet, app or print

The Bishop of Rochester has recorded a podcast, offering a theological reflection on the current situation. He explores where can we find refuge and comfort and how as Christians we can support others. Listen to it here:

<https://soundcloud.com/user-727736776/bishop-james-a-reflection-during-the-coronavirus>

There is an 'Alexa' smart speaker app to be used with a smart speaker
Offers Prayer for the Day,
Enables you to ask the Church of England for Prayers
Enables you to ask questions of the Church of England

Other online resources which may be of interest:
corrymeela.org has under its media tab some interesting and a wide range of short programmes based on biblical texts.

Northumbriacommunity.org has morning, midday and evening prayer for each day of the week.

24-7prayer.com lots of ideas on ways to help you pray and some interesting articles based on journeys of faith

Hillsong Worship - for those who enjoy modern worship there are plenty of YouTube videos

Live streaming services - users can watch live streams of services from a range of churches

[All Hallows by the Tower](#)

[Buckingham Parish Church](#)

[St Nicholas Church, Canvey Island](#)

[St James' Church, Clitheroe](#)

[St Mary's Kenton](#)

Canterbury Cathedral YouTube channel will stream The Daily Eucharist and Evening Prayer each day

Ren, is available to talk to anyone who is feeling the need of a church minister at this time, to talk over a difficult circumstance or to ask for prayer. We also have a resource that can be used at home if you are unable to attend a funeral because of the current restrictions, and a weekly newsletter that is going out on email, with news, reflections and prayers. All you need to do is ring, or email me (see inside cover) and I will do what I can to help, and I can also put you on the circulation list so you receive weekly information. Your email will not be given to anyone else.

Suzy Higgs, Churchwarden

Old things in New Ways

How many times a day do you say The Lord's Prayer?

Washing our hands is a feature of life-in-lockdown and it's great that it's been suggested we say the Lord's Prayer as we do so, to make sure we lather and scrub for the correct length of time. (Others recommend singing *Happy Birthday* or even the modern children's song *Baby Shark* to give the same timing.) So, I am probably saying the Lord's Prayer more often these days!

As Christians, we know the words of the Lord's Prayer so well, that there is a danger of repeating them on automatic pilot. When I am conducting a funeral, however, I ask that the words of the prayer be printed in full on the service sheet, as this familiarity is by no means universal in our society, and anyway, even the best of us can be thrown by the modern, compared to the traditional version. But the words "Our Father..." Undoubtedly prompt us to prayer, and this is the prayer that unites all Christians across the world, the family prayer of the Church.

I was interested then to receive an email from a friend last week, pointing me to an alternative translation, apparently from the ancient Aramaic language, which would have been Jesus' own language.

Here is what she sent me from a Facebook post of Cynthia Bourgeault.

*O Birther! Father-Mother of the Cosmos,
Focus your light within us - make it useful:
Create your reign of unity now -
Your one desire then acts with ours,
as in all light, so in all forms.
Grant what we need each day in bread and insight.
Loose the cords of mistakes binding us,
as we release the strands we hold of others' guilt.
Don't let surface things delude us,
But free us from what holds us back.
From you is born all ruling will, the power and the life to do,
the song that beautifies all, from age to age it renews.
Truly—power to these statements —
may they be the ground from which all my actions grow: Amen.*

This set me off on a bit of an exploration on Google – and I discovered more ‘alternative translations’. This was not an academic exploration, and I confess my Aramaic is a little rusty (!) so I cannot comment on the accuracy of any of them. However, I commend this exercise to you as a source of interest and perhaps inspiration for these strange days. A new way of looking at the familiar is never a bad thing.

This is offered by L Fellows:

*O Thou, the breath, the Light of All
Let this light create a heart-shrine within.
And your counsel rule until the Oneness guides all
Your one desire then acts with ours, as in all light, so in all forms.
Grant what we need each day, in bread and insight.
Loose the cords of mistakes binding us,
As we release the strands we hold of other’s faults.
Don’t let surface things delude us.
But keep us from unripe acts.
To you belongs the ruling mind, the life that can act and do
The song that beautifies all, From age to age it renews
In faith, I will be true.*

This from the New Zealand Anglican Prayer Book

*Eternal Spirit, Earth-maker, Pain-bearer, Life-giver,
Source of all that is and that shall be,
Father and Mother of us all, Loving God, in whom is heaven.
The hallowing of your name echo through the universe!
The way of your justice be followed by the peoples of the world!
Your heavenly will be done by all created beings!
Your commonwealth of peace and freedom
sustain our hope and come on earth.
With the bread we need for today, feed us.
In the hurts we absorb from one another, forgive us.
In times of temptation and test, strengthen us.
From trials too great to endure, spare us.
From the grip of all that is evil, free us.
For you reign in the glory and power that is love,
now and forever. Amen.*

This is quoted from Eva Fogarasi Bálint: -

*"Oh Thou, from whom the breath of life comes,
who fills all realms of sound, light and vibration.
May Your light be experienced in my utmost holiest.
Your Heavenly Domain approaches.
Let Your will come true - in the universe (all that vibrates)
just as on earth (that is material and dense).
Give us wisdom (understanding, assistance) for our daily need,
detach the fetters of faults that bind us, (karma)
like we let go the guilt of others.
Let us not be lost in superficial things (materialism, common
temptations),
but let us be freed from that what keeps us off from our true purpose.
From You comes the all-working will, the lively strength to act,
the song that beautifies all and renews itself from age to age. Amen*

And here, finally is an idea of what the original would have sounded like: - The Prayer to Our Father (Aramaic)

*Abwûn
d'bwaschmâja
Nethkâdasch schmach
Têtê malkuthach.
Nehwê tzevjânach aikâna d'bwaschmâja af b'arha.
Hawvlân lachma d'sûnkanân jaomâna.
Waschboklân chaubên wachtahên aikâna
daf chnân schwoken l'chajjabên.
Wela tachlân l'nesjuna
ela patzân min bischa.
Metol dilachie malkutha wahaila wateschbuchta l'ahlâm almîn.
Amên.*

Ren

BEXLEY TEAM MINISTRY
“EXPLORING CONFIRMATION” 2020



This series of informal sessions is designed to help you discover more about the Christian faith and to explore it in greater depth.

It is also designed to help you to decide whether it might be right for you to take the step of being 'confirmed' as a member of the Anglican Church.

THE CONFIRMATION SERVICE ON 3 MAY HAS BEEN POSTPONED - TBA

The preparation sessions will take place at
The Joydens Wood Vicarage, 6 Tile Kiln Lane
Joydens Wood, DA5 2BB

PLEASE NOTE... Coming to the sessions does NOT commit you to being confirmed. That is your decision nearer the time.

Each of the three sessions will help you to look at some aspects of the Christian faith, and give you plenty of opportunity to bring and share your own questions, doubts, hopes and uncertainties.

Believing	Who is Jesus? The Bible
Belonging	The Eucharist Christian Symbols
Behaving	Prayer and the wider church
	Preparing for the Service

There will be a Rehearsal at St Francis, Petts Wood nearer the time

Reverend Ren Harding (Team Rector)
01322 528923
07836644782



News and Issues



Christians Against Poverty reacts to coronavirus

CAP has temporarily stopped all face-to-face Debt Help visits, community groups and events. It says:

“This is an unprecedented time and we are acutely aware that those living in poverty, suffering with mental ill-health or other vulnerabilities will be most affected by the coronavirus outbreak.”

Because of this, CAP says it is working hard to provide some alternative debt service. “It will likely involve a phone consultation, but we have some compliance and data protection elements to work through.”

Meanwhile, it points out that “the local Church has never been more essential. ... acts of compassion, generosity and love are perfectly do-able and we will play our part in encouraging and facilitating those.

“There is no doubt that this is a difficult time, but we remain confident in the assurance that we have in Jesus. Hope is real, God is good and we place our firm trust in Him at this time, knowing that: ‘There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear...’ 1 John 4:18.”

More help at: <https://capuk.org>

Children’s Society

The Children’s Society has thanked “our fantastic supporters for your kindness and generosity” in recent months, but for the moment it has postponed all volunteering activity.

“Coordinators who are due to open their networks’ boxes in May, June and July will receive a letter to let them know what to do. If you recently completed your collection, but haven’t remitted the funds raised yet, please keep financial donations together with all confidential paperwork (eg box list, addresses, Gift Aid information and box holder registration forms) in a safe and secure place so that others cannot access this.

More information at:

www.childrenssociety.org.uk/coronavirus-information-and-support

Updated guidance for Christian Aid Week (10 – 16 May)

Amanda Khozi Mukwashi, the CEO of Christian Aid, has written to all of those involved in helping with Christian Aid Week this month:

“Many of you will have been planning house-to-house collections and events. Under the current circumstances, sadly, house-to-house collections and delivery-only collections should not go ahead. In particular, along with many churches, events such as Big Brekkies or Lent lunches, where food is shared, cannot go ahead

“We are working on alternative plans that will allow people to take part in Christian Aid Week in different, creative ways – by post, by text and online that strengthen our communities during this challenging time. Christian Aid Week is our single-most important fundraiser, so we would welcome your ideas on how we can creatively show love for our neighbours at home and abroad, as a community.”

Mothers’ Union

Mothers’ Union knows that these are very difficult times for families. “We know that our work and experience in re-building communities and supporting family life is going to be more important than ever once the threat of COVID-19 subsides. Our members will be ready and be some of the first in line to support those around them.” Until then, it welcomes people to stay connected with MU on social media. More details at: <https://www.mothersunion.org/get-involved/our-response-covid-19>

Lambeth postponed

The Lambeth Conference has been rescheduled and will now take place during the summer of 2021. This follows consultation between the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Lambeth Conference Design Group, Primates and trustees of the Lambeth Conference Company. As the website says: “This significant meeting of Anglican bishops and spouses will continue to be planned - with an exciting and engaging programme, being held in the same venue at the University of Kent and Canterbury Cathedral – just one year on.”

More at: <https://www.lambethconference.org>



MEETINGS and Events 2020

Planning for The "Welcome to the Meadows"
Educational Day 19 July 2020
is on hold.



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Florence Nightingale – the founder of modern nursing

By Tim Lenton

Florence Nightingale was born 200 years ago, on 12th May 1820. Best known as the Lady with the Lamp who saved many lives in the hospitals of the Crimean War, she was also a social reformer, a statistician and the founder of modern nursing.

She was named after the Italian city of her birth, but the family moved back to England the following year, and she was brought up in Derbyshire. Here – and elsewhere – she had several experiences that she believed were calls from God to devote her life to the service of others.



She never married, but among her several close friends was Sidney Herbert, who became Secretary of War and helped to make her work in the Crimea possible. Some claim that she reduced the death rate in hospitals there from 42% to 2%. She introduced hand-washing and other hygiene improvements, but she never claimed personal credit for reducing the death rate.

Her work inspired nurses in the American Civil War, and in 1883 she became the first recipient of the Royal Red Cross. In 1907, she was the first woman to be awarded the Order of Merit. She died in 1910. Her image appeared on the reverse of £10 banknotes issued by the Bank of England from 1975 until 1994.

It is a fitting tribute to her that the emergency hospital just opened at the ExCel Centre in London is called the NHS Nightingale Hospital.

ALL IN THE MONTH OF MAY

200 years ago on 11th May 1820 the British Royal Navy sloop HMS Beagle was launched. This was the ship that took the naturalist Charles Darwin on his scientific voyage around the world (1831-36).

Also 200 years ago on 12th May 1820 Florence Nightingale was born. This Italian-born British social reformer and statistician saved thousands of lives and became the founder of modern nursing.

125 years ago on 20th May 1895 R J Mitchell was born. This British aeronautical engineer designed the iconic Supermarine Spitfire fighter plane as well as several racing seaplanes.

90 years ago on 24th May 1930 British aviator Amy Johnson became the first woman to fly solo from England to Australia.

80 years ago on 2nd May 1940 the 1940 Olympic Games in Tokyo, Japan, were cancelled, due to World War II.

Also 80 years ago on 10th May Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain resigned after losing the support of many Conservatives in the House of Commons. He was succeeded by Winston Churchill.

75 years ago on 8th May 1945, VE Day (Victory in Europe), the Second World War in Europe ended.

60 years ago on 23rd May 1960 Israel announced that Nazi Adolf Eichmann had been captured in Argentina. He was responsible for organising the mass murder of Jews in WWII. He was tried, sentenced to death and executed in June 1962.

40 years ago on 5th May 1980 Operation Nimrod took place, when the British SAS stormed the Iranian Embassy in London after a six-day siege.

30 years ago on 22nd May 1990 Max Wall, British music hall, stage, film and TV comedian, and actor died. Acclaimed for his serious roles as well as his comic talents.

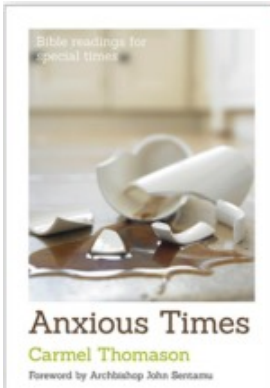
20 years ago on 12th May 2000 the Tate Modern art gallery was opened in London.



Book Mark

Anxious Times – positive help for those facing uncertainty

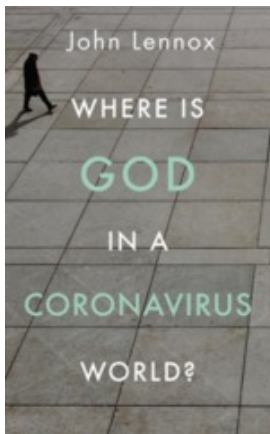
By Carmel Thomason, BRF, £4.99



A book of 24 undated reflections drawing on a range of relevant Bible passages to offer genuine hope and encouragement in anxious times. Encompassing the very human emotions of fear and anxiety, the reflections encourage us to draw comfort and strength from God's Word even in those times when He seems silent to us. This book acknowledges that trust and hope in God's goodness doesn't always come easily, but when embraced we gain the strength to face our fear with courage and confidence.

Where is God in a Coronavirus World?

By John Lennox, The Good Book Company, £2.48



In this short yet profound book, Oxford mathematics professor John Lennox examines the coronavirus in light of various belief systems and shows how the Christian worldview not only helps us to make sense of it, but also offers us a sure and certain hope to cling to.

John Lennox explains: "This book consists of my reflections on what we are experiencing right now...I would invite you, the reader, to view the book like this: we are sitting in a coffee shop (if only we could!) and you have asked me the question on the book cover. I put down my coffee cup and attempt

to give you an honest answer. What follows is what I would try to say in order to convey some comfort, support and hope."

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BIGGIN HILL**

Signs & Symbols By The Rev Dr. Jo White

Reflected Faith: the Gathered Church



Doesn't the simple pleasure of going to church and exchanging the peace at Sunday worship seem long ago now? These days, we are not even allowed into our churches!

But we can take comfort when we think back to the Apostles who were commissioned to build God's Church. After the first Pentecost, what did they do? They didn't rush out and build church buildings. No! Rather the people gathered together, in their own homes.

Clearly, we can't physically 'gather' just now, but we have the technology to 'gather' together, both in real time and at a later time. And it is important to do so. There is something powerful when we pray together rather than alone. Try phoning a friend with the same written prayer and saying it together. How does that feel? Any different from saying it on your own?

So, THE Church, which is alive and well in you and me, will find new ways to be together. After all, the early Christians had the added complication of being persecuted, often to death, for their faith. And yet they persisted.

Perhaps we could each sit at our dining table at a set time, with one or two items before us, such as a small glass of wine, a lit candle, stones, and a cross. Indeed, anything that reminds us of our Risen Saviour. We could then 'share' this time in praying the same prayers and knowing that we are part of an eternal fellowship that is only temporarily divided.

This month: What will you use to reflect and encourage your faith? What items naturally around your home would bring others to your mind, help you to concentrate and allow your spirit to fly with the Holy Spirit? Who will you be connecting with to pray?

WORDSEARCH



Ascension	Prayer	Confusion	Spirit	Tongues
Blessed	Power	Languages	Trinity	Flame
Taken	One	Earth	Father	Joy
Jerusalem	Room	Peter	Son	Praise
Wait	Disciples	Holy	triune	

(Solutions on page 27)

SAVE THE DATE

Sunday 12th July

All Age Service at 9.30 am

A celebration for 75th anniversary of

North Cray Guides and Brownies

All welcome

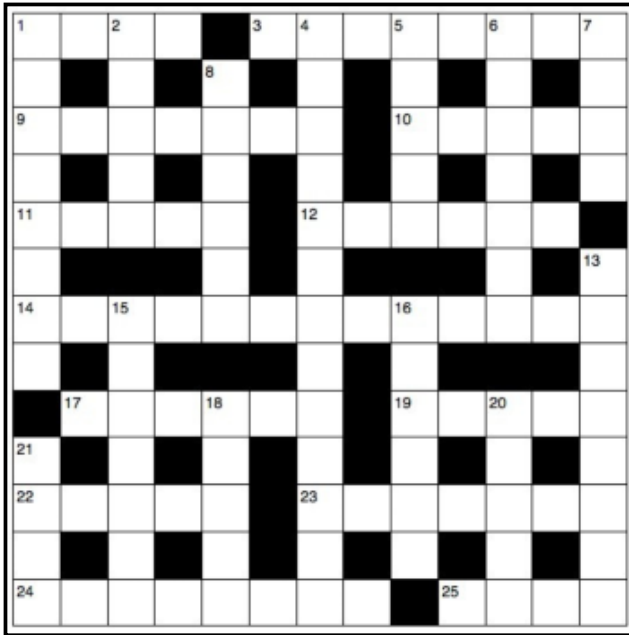
MAY CROSSWORD PUZZLE

Across

- 1 'Therefore let us — passing judgment on one another'
(Romans 14:13) (4)
- 3 'I — — these persons here present' (Marriage service) (4,4)
- 9 According to a prearranged timetable (Numbers 28:3) (7)
- 10 Group of eight (5)
- 11 The cell into which the Philippian jailer put Paul and Silas
(Acts 16:24) (5)
- 12 — Taylor, pioneer missionary to China (6)
- 14 Otherwise known as the Eucharist, Breaking of Bread, the
Lord's Table (4,9)
- 17 'So that after I have preached to others, I — will not be
disqualified for the prize' (1 Corinthians 9:27) (6)
- 19 Attend to (3,2)
- 22 Approximately (Acts 4:4) (5)
- 23 Tea rite (anag.) (7)
- 24 Rule of sovereign (8)
- 25 Test (anag.) (4)

Down

- 1 The name of the street where Judas lived in Damascus an
where Saul of Tarsus stayed (Acts 9:11) (8)
- 2 'The playing of the merry — , sweet singing in the choir' (5)
- 4 'We have been saying that — — was credited to him as
righteous' (Romans 4:9) (8,5)
- 5 Dr Martyn — Jones, famous for his ministry at Westminster
Chapel (5)
- 6 Port at which Paul landed on his way to Rome (Acts 28:13) (7)
- 7 Observe (Ruth 3:4) (4)
- 8 Minister of religion (6)
- 13 'I am — of this man's blood. It is your responsibility'
(Matthew 27:24) (8)



- 15 'Greater love has no one than this, that he — — his life for his friends' (John 15:13) (3,4)
- 16 Archbishop who calculated that the world began in 4004BC (6)
- 18 'No one can — the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit' (John 3:5) (5)
- 20 Establish by law (5)
- 21 Product of Gilead noted for its healing properties
(Jeremiah 46:11) (4) (Solutions on page 28)

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ST JAMES THE LEAST OF ALL



On the tribulations that await a curate in his first parish...

The Rectory

St. James the Least

My dear Nephew Darren

So, your bishop is dropping hints that you should begin to consider a move to having your own parish - "not for ever in green pastures" comes to mind. Do not be too hasty, remember that a curate can do no wrong but a vicar can do no right. As soon as you get your own parish, you will be held accountable not only for everything that goes on inside the church, but also for the goal average of the local football team and the state of the economy. And if it rains for your first Summer Fete, you will be told reproachfully that this never used to happen when Mr X was here.

As you begin to ponder this momentous decision, allow me to give you a few pieces of advice. It will be assumed in the parish that every new incumbent is bound to be worse than his predecessor. The greatest compliment I ever received when leaving a parish came from an elderly parishioner: "I've known six Rectors of this parish; you weren't the worst."

Naturally the church you go to will have asked for a married man between 30 and 35 with a wife who will not have her own job but who wants to devote her entire life working for the parish - and it will be a definite advantage if she is a brilliant organist, professional caterer and fully computer literate. They will expect you to have two children, one of whom should be of primary school age, so he can attend the local Church school, where you will naturally wish to be chairman of governors and coach of the football team.

They will want you to have exceptional talents for attracting young people - but for young people who enjoy the sorts of Services that the present congregation prefer - and you should have the ability to stop a baby crying during Mattins with the briefest of glances. They will

want you to bring "a breath of fresh air" into parish life without changing anything. They will hope you will shun holidays, preach short sermons and be able to run a tight jumble sale.

Your CV is already beginning to look a little thin. If you could acquire a wife and family within the next six months, become an expert flower arranger and qualify as a football referee, chartered accountant and trained electrician and plumber, it would prove very helpful. If in addition, you learned how to service photocopiers, had a mini-bus available for church outings, were an heir to a family firm producing a single malt whisky and could provide reliable horse racing tips, your choice of parishes would be endless.

On the other hand, my advice would be to stop attending all meetings where you know the bishop may be present; out of sight, out of mind. Have your phone disconnected, your letterbox sealed and only appear in public wearing dark glasses and false beard. Keep your head down, lay low, hold on to the charmed life of being a curate for as long as possible. Life will never be better.

Your loving uncle,
Eustace



*Our church warden is not letting
people into the church just now*

GOD AND THE ARTS

By The Rev Michael Burgess

‘He gave us eyes to see them’: early Persian painting of Jonah and whale

The prophet Jonah is mentioned three times in the Gospels when Jesus refers to ‘the sign of Jonah.’ In the Old Testament he was swallowed by a large fish, traditionally a whale, and in its belly for three days and three nights. It is easy to see in that sign a reference



to the death and resurrection of Jesus, but the book is also a powerful allegory of life. The prophet runs away from God, only to encounter a storm and possible shipwreck. He is thrown overboard and swallowed by the whale.

We are living through difficult and anxious days with the coronavirus: we seem to be surrounded by fear and danger, like Jonah. Where, we ask, is our hope and safety amid the storm and threat of breakdown? In his distress Jonah prays to the Lord and places his trust in God. The psalm he utters ends with the words, ‘Deliverance belongs to the Lord.’ As he speaks, the whale spews him on to the safety of dry land.

The story of Jonah is depicted here in this beautiful painting from a 14th century manuscript from Persia. The whale is friendly and smiling, basking in the expanse of blue sea. Jonah is safe: his hope has triumphed, and God has delivered him from danger and possible death.

In 1988 Heathcote Williams wrote a long poem called ‘Whale Nation’ in praise of these mysterious, gifted and intelligent creatures. We hunt

them, we plunder the seas for them. But they are also our friends and guides, and it is easy to neglect those truths. The book ends with examples of whales and dolphins guiding ships and saving human lives. So, we, in the midst of all that worries and perplexes us, can give thanks to God our guide and Saviour, and pray that He will bring us safely through life.

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26th Augustine of Canterbury, apostle to the English

Augustine, a 6th century Italian prior, holds a unique place in British history. He became the 'apostle to the English,' although it was with great reluctance.

In 596 Augustine was chosen by Pope Gregory to head a mission of monks whom he wanted to send to evangelise the Anglo-Saxons. Augustine was not a bold man, and by the time he and his band of priests reached Gaul, they wished to turn back. But Gregory would not hear of it, and he bolstered their confidence by sending some more priests out to them, and by consecrating Augustine bishop. Finally, the little party, now 40 in number, landed at Ebbsfleet, Kent in 597.

It would be fascinating to have a detailed description of that first meeting between Bishop Augustine and Ethelbert, powerful King of Kent. Whatever Augustine said, it must have been effective, for Ethelbert granted the 40 priests permission to stay in a house in Canterbury. He even allowed them to preach to his people, while he himself considered their message of Christianity. His wife, Bertha, was a Christian princess from Paris, but she does not seem to have played any role in the conversion of Kent.

By 601 Ethelbert and many of his people had been baptised Christians. The mission to the English was well underway. More clergy, some books, a few relics and several altar vessels arrived from Rome. At Gregory's wise urging, Augustine decided to consolidate the mission in one small area, rather than try and reach all of Kent. So, Augustine stayed in Canterbury, where he built the cathedral and founded a school. He left only temporarily to establish a see in London.

Also, at Gregory's wise urging, Augustine did not destroy the pagan temples of the people of Kent, but only the idols in them. In this way, familiar rites were taken over and used for the celebration of the Christian feasts. Meanwhile, before his death in 604, Augustine helped Ethelbert to draft the earliest Anglo-Saxon written laws to survive – and so influenced British law for centuries to come.

SOLUTIONS TO CROSSWORD PUZZLE

ACROSS: 1, Stop. 3, Call upon. 9, Regular. 10, Octet. 11, Inner. 12, Hudson. 14, Holy Communion. 17, Myself. 19, See to. 22, About. 23, Iterate. 24, Monarchy. 25, Stet.

DOWN: 1, Straight. 2, Organ. 4, Abraham's faith. 5, Lloyd. 6, Puteoli. 7, Note. 8, Cleric. 13, Innocent. 15, Lay down. 16, Ussher. 18, Enter. 20, Enact. 21, Balm.



WEIGH OVER?

It took me ages to remember that a metre is a yard and a little bit because I learned the old way at school. We still have both metric and imperial measure-ments but it was even harder.

The measurement of silver used as money in the Old Testament is the shekel. But there were two different types of shekel; one, the royal or sanctuary shekel, was heavier than the other one. The light one was use in everyday life, the heavy one contained 2 grams more silver and was used for making Temple offerings. So when you offered the sanctuary shekel you were giving that bit extra to God.



It often seems that people forget to offer their best to God. We offer him our excuses for not doing the things we should, instead of giving him our best. If we have to have two standards in the way we do things, shouldn't we always give the best, to our heavenly Father who loves us so much?

W - QUIZ

All the answers in this Bible quiz begin with the letter W - can you find them all?

1. What Jesus asked the Samaritan woman for? (John, chapter 4)
2. Adam and Eve heard God doing this in the Garden of Eden? (Genesis 3)
3. Ezekiel saw these shining like precious stones? (Ezekiel 1)
4. The colour angels wear? (Acts 1)
5. Joshua brought them down with trumpets? (Joshua 6)
6. Jesus told the servants to fill these? (John 2)
7. It grows with the weeds until the harvest? (Matthew 13)
8. How Elijah went into heaven? (2 Kings 2)



How do you get rid of a white elephant?

Put it in a jumbo sale.



What puts white lines on the sea?

An ocean liner



ANSWERS: 1. water 2. walking 3. wheels 4. white 5. walls of Jericho 6. waterpots or jars 7. wheat 8. whirlwind

FROM THE REGISTERS

Baptisms

-

Weddings

-

Burials

16th March James Taylor

Internment of Ashes

23rd March Tecwyn Jones

Year's mind for May 2019

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