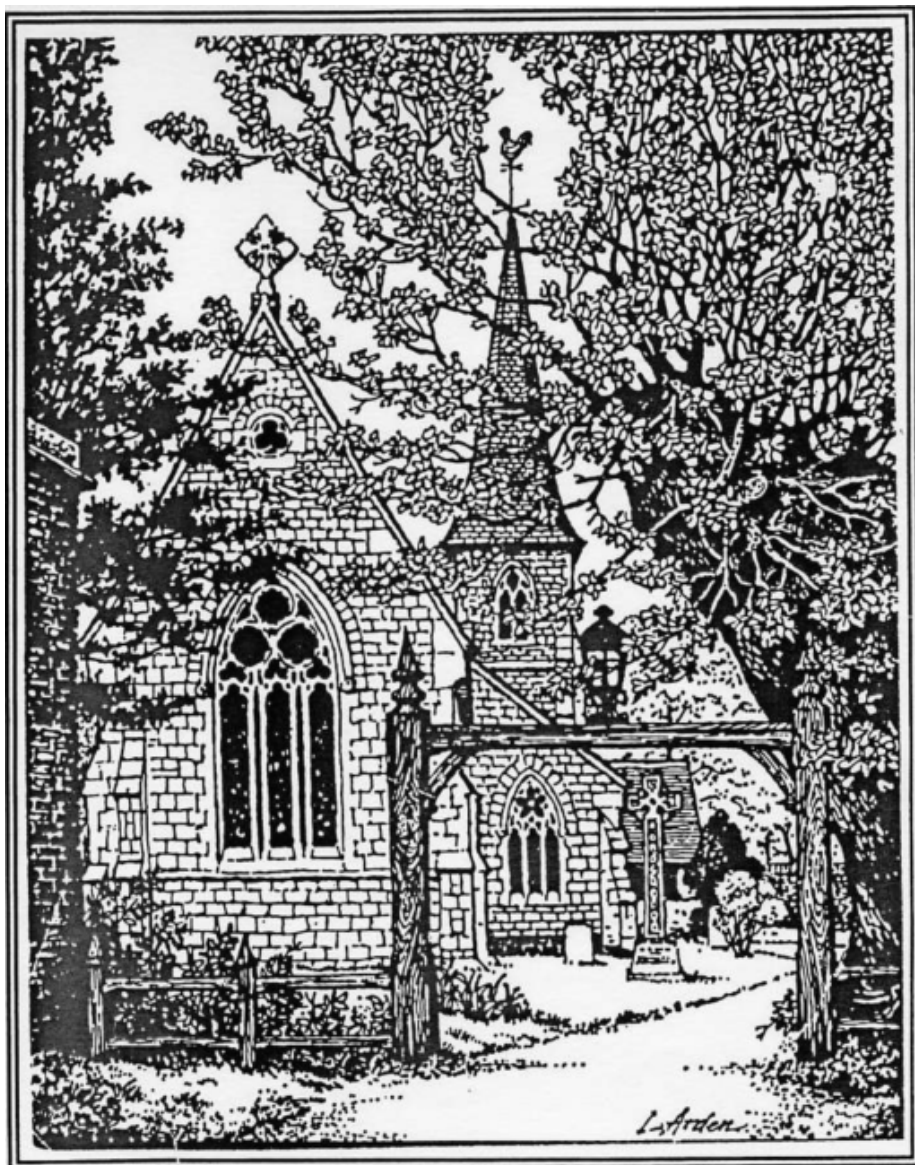


**The Parish Church of  
*St. James, North Cray***

**50p  
*August, 2022***

***(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  
sblakestjames@virginmedia.com

### **St James Sunday Service**

9.30am

Holy Communion

(All age service with Uniformed Organisations on second Sunday)

## TEAM RECTOR'S LETTER AUGUST 2022



As I come to the end of my time as Team Rector of the Bexley Team, and vicar of North Cray, I have been reflecting on the past.

I began my time at North Cray at the end of 2015. My task was to look after St James Church in addition to my existing responsibilities for St Barnabas Church in Joydens Wood, where I had been Vicar since 2011. In 2018 St James and St Barnabas joined with St John's Bexley, and St Mary's Bexley to form one Team, with myself having oversight of all four, working with other clergy. After I leave this month, a new Team Rector will be appointed and there may be some changes in the way the clergy are deployed. For the moment, our extremely capable Associate Priest, Reverend Sue Twynam will manage the day-to-day business of the church, alongside our curate, Reverend Matt Hodder.

I want to thank all those who have worked with me over the last seven years.

First, my warmest thanks go to church members and those who regularly attend our beautiful parish church. Your love and encouragement has been wonderful. There are many tasks that need to be done to keep the church and grounds in good shape, and I am grateful to all those who contribute in practical ways. It has been a pleasure to get to know residents of the local community, representatives of the local uniformed organisations, and the Royal British Legion. And there are many with whom I have had the privilege to walk at life's turning points, baptisms, marriages, funerals.

Each one of you has a special place in my heart, and I pray that God will bring you his comfort and peace in whatever the future may hold.

**Reverend Ren Harding (Team Rector)**

The Vicarage, 6 Tile Kiln Lane, Joydens Wood, Bexley, DA5 2BB  
01322-528923 [renharding@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:renharding@hotmail.co.uk)



### **Morning Prayer**

When morning in russet and saffron clad  
Is mantling the hills in a dew-soft plaid  
To the song of the moorland two-wings glad  
Let my heart upraise;

When light creeps in through the chinks of the door  
When the mist ascends from the mountain floor,  
When the ocean shimmers like burnished ore,  
Let me give Thee praise.

O God of the morning, Christ of the hills,  
O Spirit who all the firmament fills,  
O Trinity blest who all goodness wills,  
Keep us all our days.

From Prayers of the Western Highlanders



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## **The Disasters Emergency Committee (DEC) Ukraine Humanitarian Appeal**

In this month of holidays and summer travel, the crisis in Ukraine simply goes on. More than 13 million people have fled their homes. Millions of families have been separated, people have been injured and killed, and their homes blown up. Critical infrastructure such as health facilities, water supplies and schools have been damaged or destroyed.

The UN estimates over five million people have now fled Ukraine. The refugees have fled to Poland, Romania, Hungary and Moldova, often arriving with only what they could carry.

Another eight million people are displaced within the country. Many older people, and those with disabilities, have no option but to remain in their homes. They are now isolated, unable to access food and basic necessities.

In such a crisis, the DEC charities in Ukraine and neighbouring countries are working hard to meet the needs of people affected by the conflict. They say:

£30 could provide essential hygiene supplies for three people for one month

£50 could provide blankets for four families

£100 could provide emergency food for two families for one month

If you can help, please go to: [www.dec.org.uk](http://www.dec.org.uk)

## SERVICES AND EVENTS FOR AUGUST 2022

### **SUNDAY 31st July**

9.30am

### **Seventh Sunday after Trinity**

Holy Communion - Ren's final service at St James, followed by refreshments.

### **Wednesday 3rd August**

8pm

Team Zoom

### **SUNDAY 7th August**

9.30am

### **Eighth Sunday after Trinity**

Holy Communion

### **Wednesday 10th August**

8pm

Team Zoom

### **SUNDAY 14th August**

9.30am

### **Ninth Sunday after Trinity**

Parade Service

### **Wednesday 17th August**

8pm

Team Zoom

### **SUNDAY 21st August**

9.30am

### **Tenth Sunday after Trinity**

Holy Communion

### **Wednesday 24th August**

8pm

Team Zoom

### **SUNDAY 28th August**

9.30am

### **Eleventh Sunday after Trinity**

Holy Communion

### **Wednesday 31st August**

10am

Team Holy Communion

8pm

Team Zoom

Please contact the Team Rector or a member of the clergy team to be included on the emailing list or see our website for further information.

Also, do contact any of our clergy team if you are concerned, or if you would simply like a chat, or prayer.

## ST JAMES NORTH CRAY SAVE OUR SPIRE

The ancient parish church of St James, North Cray has been there as a focal point for the community through many lifetimes. The building stands through the seasons, and the years, as a reminder of the Church's commitment to God and His love for all people, whether they attend church services or not!

We want to ensure that this precious church building remains open for many years to come. To achieve this, we now need the help of our community!

We are facing a number of significant challenges with the church building, the most pressing of these is our lovely church spire. This is covered with traditional wooden shingles, and we need to replace these urgently.



If you value your parish church, and the part it plays in your community, please do consider making a donation to this work.

Help this beautiful church...Link to our new online giving page:

<https://givealittle.co/campaigns/569e4fec-3e77-4d90-8a0a-94d0726a8974>

Use the QR code above.

Contact me for more information or look on our website



## **GOD CAN WORK FOR YOUR GOOD – EVEN WHEN EVERYTHING SEEMS TO BE AGAINST YOU**

*Dr Herbert McGonigle*

In the story of Joseph in the book of Genesis there is a passage near the end that illustrates how God works in our lives and circumstances in the most remarkable ways.

When Jacob died, his sons feared that their brother Joseph would exact vengeance for the evil they had done to him. When they knelt before Joseph, now a great lord in Egypt, they feared the worst. Joseph's reply was generous and magnanimous. 'You meant evil against me, but God meant it for good' (Gen. 50:20).

Both halves of this sentence tell a great story. The first half, 'You meant evil against me' is a reminder of family favouritism and jealousies that had tragic consequences. Jacob's preferential love for his son Joseph made the boy proud and arrogant and his brothers' jealousy turned to revenge. They sold him to passing desert traders and told their father that a wild beast had killed him.

Joseph was sold into slavery in Egypt but his wise counsel and good conduct made him a valued servant to Potiphar, an Egyptian general. His refusal to compromise with Potiphar's wife landed him in gaol and even when his predictions for others proved true, he was kept in prison.

Brought before the Pharaoh, Joseph's interpretation of dreams brought him release and rapid promotion. When the famine he had predicted struck Egypt, he was made virtually Prime Minister in the land and his scheme of storing crops saved the land. His eleven brothers came to Egypt to buy corn and although Joseph recognised them, they did not recognise him.

Later, when he discovered that his father was still alive, he told his shocked brothers who he was. They trembled with fear but



Joseph was not planning revenge. As he looked back over the hard years of being a slave and in prison, he saw the hand of God in all of it. 'You meant evil against me,' he told his brothers, 'but God meant it for good.'

'But God'! How precious, how wonderful, how providential, how reassuring those two words are! Against all the odds, God was working on Joseph's behalf. In spite of his brothers' cruel hatred, in spite of Potiphar's wife's dangerous solicitations, in spite of being forgotten by those he befriended in prison, Joseph triumphed because through it all God was on his side!

But God is a glowing testimony to God's great plans and purposes for his people. Its New Testament equivalent is when Paul says that 'in everything God works for good for those who love him' (Romans 8:28). The Sovereign Lord of earth and heaven, of time and eternity, of life and death, holds his people secure in every circumstance. One day when we will look back on our lives and on all the things that baffle us now, and often cause us hurt and pain and anguish and doubt, we will say with Joseph, and Paul, and all who have travelled the road of faith – 'but God meant it for good.'

*Dr Herbert McGonigle, formerly Senior Lecturer in Historical Theology and Church History in Nazarene Theological College, Didsbury, Manchester.*

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# News and Issues



## **Ukrainian soldiers treat Bible like ‘a life-saver’**

Since the war broke out more than six months ago, Bible Society has been making the Bible available to soldiers as well as civilians in Ukraine.

Recently, Serhii, the commander of a military unit, told Bible Society colleagues in Ukraine how vital the Bible is to his troops. He said, “It is very important for soldiers to have the Bible. Things are very tough at times and many soldiers are praying to God. “They may have never attended a church before. They may not have believed in God before. But now they are turning to Him. Many of them treat the Bible as a life-saver.

“I have a friend, an officer. He also received a Bible from our chaplain. Sometimes he faces situations that seem to be desperate. He turns to the Bible....and he says, ‘You wouldn’t believe it. Every time I find an answer. The Bible has a way out! I do as the Bible says and everything works well.’”

Serhii added, “So, for those people who are facing enormous pressures on the frontlines, who experience hardship, both physical and moral, when they have this Bible in their pocket, when it gets very hard, a soldier can open it and find words that he needs to hear at that very moment. It is very important. Thank you!”

## **Help Christians in Lebanon survive**

The Barnabas Fund has launched an appeal to help Christians suffering in Lebanon’s deepening financial crisis.

As one of the project partners to Barnabas said: “You can’t imagine how many requests I have for people in need. Especially the elderly, who cannot find work or leave the country. They still must eat and pay medical bills. Yet Lebanon is a nation mired in

economic catastrophe, with inflation at an all-time high, making fuel, medicine and even food unaffordable.”

Lebanon used to rely heavily on Ukraine for imported wheat, as well as vegetable oil and canned meat. Since the onset of the Ukrainian war, these items have become even costlier. The Consumer Price Index for food in Lebanon has risen by over 3,000 percentage points since 2020. Meanwhile, the Lebanese government has been steadily cutting subsidies for fuel and medicine.

If you can help, please go to: <https://www.barnabasfund.org/gb/>

### **Guardians for child asylum seekers**

The Children’s Society is backing a campaign for guardians to be given to help unaccompanied children asylum seekers.

As a spokesman explains, “After their long harrowing journeys to the UK, many children seeking safety arrive here alone. The only thing waiting for them is a difficult and draining

immigration process. With nobody looking out for them, it's tough.”

And so Children’s Society is now supporting a group of young people known as the YLCSC (Youth Led Commission for Separated Children ) who are campaigning to change this. Their aim is for all children who arrive in the UK alone to be given a legal guardian.

This person would be “someone to take them to immigration interviews, make sure they're heard, help them adapt to life in a new country. Guardians give children seeking asylum hope for a brighter future.” More at: [www.childrensociety.org.uk](http://www.childrensociety.org.uk)

## **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.”***



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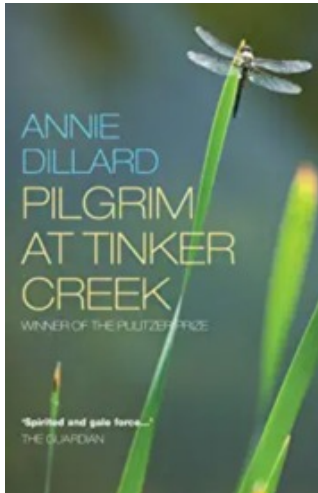


# Book Mark



## **Pilgrim at Tinker Creek**

**By Annie Dillard, Canterbury Press, £12.99**

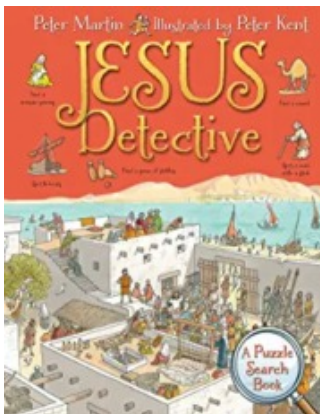


This much-loved classic won the Pulitzer Prize for Literature in 1975. It is a passionate and poetic reflection on the mystery of creation, with its beauty on the one hand and cruelty on the other. It has become a modern American literary classic in the tradition of Thoreau.

Living in solitude in the Blue Ridge Mountains near Roanoke, Virginia, and observing the changing seasons, the flora and fauna, the author reflects on the nature of creation and of the God who set it in motion. The language is memorably beautiful and poetic, and insistently celebratory.

## **Jesus Detective – a puzzle search book**

**By Peter Martin and Peter Kent, Lion Children, £6.99**



Children will enjoy searching the 17 cleverly illustrated scenes of events from the life of Jesus to find the answers to the questions posed on each page. Some puzzles involve looking for details of everyday life, others highlight things that happened in the Bible stories.

The book is particularly good for reluctant readers and visual learners, helping all children gain key insights into the life of Jesus as they super-sleuth their way through the book.

## **THE WAY I SEE IT: Don't just stand there, do nothing!**

**By David Winter**

August is, of course, the great holiday month in Britain. Families, constrained by the school holidays, pay over the odds to arrange a week or two at the seaside or on a Mediterranean beach. Older people and singles breathe a sigh of relief as it seems that half the population has decamped elsewhere and they've got the park, shops and golf course to themselves. Either way, it's a change of routine, a break from the relentless round of the everyday. August, whatever else we may think of it, is different.

We call it a 'holiday' month, or perhaps more accurately a month of holidays. That word is important, because obviously it was once 'holy days', the whole idea of stipulated days of rest being a religious invention. It started with the Jewish 'Sabbath', the seventh day of the week - the one when the Creator, in the biblical story, 'rested' from his work of bringing everything into existence. As a consequence, it was decreed that the seventh day of the week should be a universal day of rest, when human toil was suspended (even for slaves), animals were set free from their daily labour in field or treadmill, and for that precious twenty-four hours there would be space and time to be ourselves.

Jesus said that the 'Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath' - it was never meant to be an irksome burden, but a blessing. It took the ingenuity of religious heresy hunters to turn that glorious opportunity into an impenetrable code of rules. But the principle survived. Most cultures have followed the Jewish example of a weekly day of rest, including of course the Christian translation of the Sabbath to Sunday, the day of the resurrection. There followed, over the long centuries of Christian history, the introduction of many other holy days, to commemorate the saints, or particular events in the life of Jesus - Christmas, Good Friday, Easter, Pentecost and so on. Holy days, like the original Sabbath, gave people time and space to be themselves, to think and pray, to enjoy family and friends and to give thanks to the God who invented the whole idea.

All of this may seem a long way from the modern package holiday, or indeed Sunday as people now experience it in the aisles of IKEA rather than an ancient church. But it doesn't have to be. Wherever we go this month and whatever we do, space and time are likely to be under less pressure than during the other eleven months of the year. It is up to us how we use them, of course, but rest, reflection, meditation and prayer have proven healing qualities. Turning part of our holidays into holy days will probably lower our blood pressure and raise our spirits. Well, it's surely worth a try!



# **MEETINGS and Events 2022**

*Watch this space for  
future events*

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## **Grace – it really is amazing**

*by Lester Amann*

Most of us will know the hymn, *Amazing Grace*, by John Newton. Grace is an essential element of our faith, but what is it, exactly?

In everyday life the word 'grace' has many uses: in the courts, a pardoned person has been 'shown grace'; in the arts, an exquisite dancer moves with beauty and grace; if someone undertakes an unpleasant task cheerfully and willingly, it is done with 'good grace' and composers sometimes add 'grace notes' to their music to enhance the playing of their music.

The biblical use of the word 'grace' is quite different! The New Testament describes grace as God doing something for us that we could not do for ourselves. That 'something' is the free and unearned favour of God towards us. It is God's goodness which removes human inferiority and worthlessness and which raises our status. It pays the debt of sin. Grace welcomes the wretched, the weak and the wayward. It adopts us – homeless orphans – into God's family.

The story of King David and Mephibosheth is a remarkable example of grace. (see 2 Samuel 9:1-13) When David discovered a disabled relative of a former friend, he opened the way for this person to be brought into the royal household. He was accepted into David's family and given the same status as one of his sons.

Similarly, God accepts the unacceptable into His Heavenly Family. He accepts us as we are, regardless of status, health - or any objections we may have! Our gracious God loves us even though we are unlovely, undesirable and unholy.

We must see God's love in the gift of His Son. We can only be thankful that through Christ we have a new relationship with God. It is by His grace we are saved.

In John Newton's famous hymn, he wrote 'grace will lead me home'. Through the grace of God we can be assured of eternal life, joy, peace and security with Christ.

## Remembering Enid Blyton

*By Tim Lenton*



It was 125 years ago, on 11<sup>th</sup> August 1897, that Enid Blyton was born in East Dulwich, South London. This enormously popular British children's writer created Noddy, the Famous Five, and the Secret Seven. She is among the world's bestselling writers, selling more than 600 million copies of her books.

Enid was the daughter of a nature-loving clothing wholesaler, to whom she was very close. He once sat up with her when she was expected to die of whooping cough, determined that she would survive. Her mother was less solicitous. Enid was bright, popular at school and a talented musician, but decided against it as a profession, going into teaching instead.

She married twice – first Hugh Pollock, an editor at a publishing firm who helped her to become established as a writer. They moved to Buckinghamshire and had two daughters, but then divorced in 1942. The following year she married surgeon Kenneth Waters, and they moved in the 1950s to Manor Farm in Dorset, which inspired much of her later work.

Blyton's mystery and adventure stories have clearly defined good and bad characters and are easy to read. They have been criticised for being too simplistic, and more recently for some of the now outdated social attitudes and language. But they remain popular worldwide for their sense of joy and wonder at life.

Several of her books are based on biblical stories, but she had a general rather than personal belief in God. She was brought up as a Baptist, and her children were baptised in the Church of England: towards the end of her life she became interested in Roman Catholicism. She put much energy into charity work, encouraging children to do the same. She died in 1968.

## ALL IN THE MONTH OF AUGUST

200 years ago, on 25<sup>th</sup> August 1822 William Herschel, German-born British astronomer died. He discovered the planet Uranus and infrared radiation, conducted the first deep sky surveys, and was the first president of the Royal Astronomical Society.

125 years ago, on 11<sup>th</sup> August 1897 Enid Blyton was born. This enormously popular British children's writer created Noddy, the Famous Five, and the Secret Seven.

100 years ago, on 2<sup>nd</sup> August 1922 Alexander Graham Bell died. This Scottish-born American audiologist and inventor is credited with developing the first practical telephone.

80 years ago, from 23<sup>rd</sup> August 1942 to 2<sup>nd</sup> February 1943 the Battle of Stalingrad took place. Soviet victory, and the turning point of the war in Europe. Regarded as the largest and bloodiest battle in the history of warfare.

50 years ago, on 1<sup>st</sup> August 1972 the Washington Post newspaper published the first article that exposed US President Richard Nixon's involvement in the Watergate scandal.

25 years ago, on 31<sup>st</sup> August 1997 Diana, Princess of Wales, her companion Dodi Fayed and their driver, died in a car crash in the Place de l'Alma underpass in Paris.

10 years ago, on 25<sup>th</sup> August 2012 Neil Armstrong, American astronaut (Apollo 11) died. He was the first person to walk on the Moon.

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## Reflected Faith Series

*The Rev Dr Jo White*

### Reflected Faith Series: the Awesomeness of God



Church buildings come in all shapes and sizes, and yet they can all be traced back to one of three basic designs.

They all have a Sanctuary which is the main altar or table area, and a Nave where the people stand or today, more usually sit. The simplest plan will have just these two areas.

The next would have a Chancel which is an area between the nave and the sanctuary, often marked by a step or a wooden screen and most often where the choir sits.

The third basic plan is the shape of a cross – cruciform. These churches often have a tower where the four arms meet, rather than it being at one end.

Church plans grew and changed when new worship styles were introduced; e.g. if you want to do processions you will need some space for them, and so aisles were brought about. Every part of the building reflects something of the faith and thinking about God and the practicalities of worshipping Him.

*This month:*

If you can, have a look around the inside of a church building near you. What shape is it? In particular go up close to the sanctuary. In a Church of England building this area is likely to be grander, more highly decorated and even carpeted! The only people 'allowed' into this area are those directly involved in 'celebrating' the Communion or Eucharist. This remembrance or celebration of Christ's body and blood taking place here makes it the most 'holy part' of the church: hence the area is separated from the chancel by a step or an altar rail to alert everyone that this is 'holy ground'.

Many years ago, when I was part of a church visit to India, I had the privilege of preaching – translated by the Bishop! – and was invited to act as his deacon in the sanctuary. As such we were the only two people in the building who removed our shoes on entering the building.

What does this space say to you about how awesome God is?

## WORDSEARCH



Clare	Count	Damiano	Order
Assisi	Renounce	Restored	Itinerant
Prayer	Wealth	delusion	Poverty
Simplicity	Agnes	Poor	Burden
Francis	Church	Religious	release

(Solutions on page 30)

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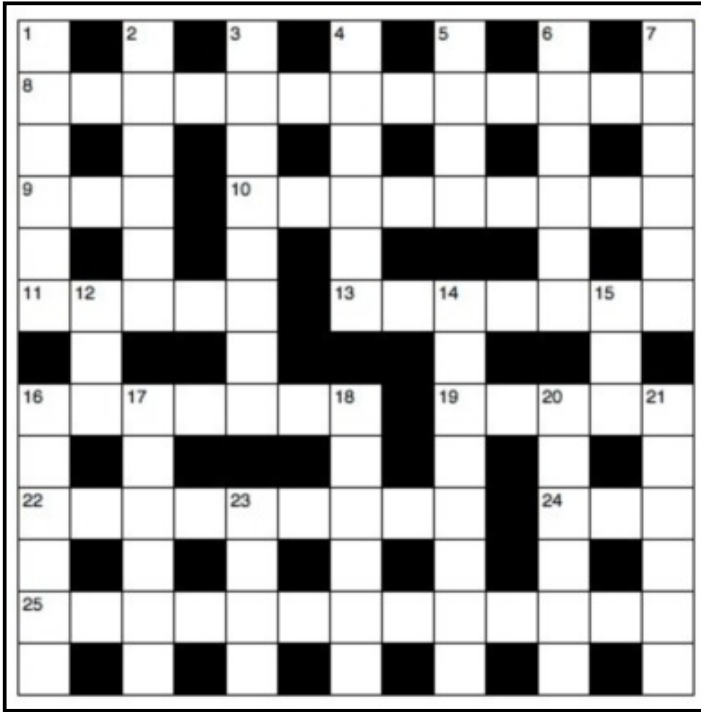
## AUGUST CROSSWORD PUZZLE

### Across

- 8 One of the titles given to the Messiah in Isaiah's prediction (Isaiah 9:6) (6,2,5)
- 9 International Nepal Fellowship (1,1,1)
- 10 Single (1Corinthians7:27)(9)
- 11 Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn's seminal book about Soviet prison camps, The — Archipelago (5)
- 13 Treachery (2Kings11:14)(7)
- 16 Of India (anag.)(2,3,2)
- 19 'God has put us apostles on display at the end of the procession,like men condemned to die in the — ' (1 Corinthians 4:9) (5)
- 22 Follower of a theological system characterized by a strong belief in predestination (9)
- 24 'Put these old rags and worn-out clothes under your arms to—the ropes' (Jeremiah 38:12) (3)
- 25 They brought together all the elders of the Israelites in Egypt (Exodus 4:29) (5,3,5)

### Down

- 1 The season when kings 'go off to war' (2 Samuel 11:1) (6)
- 2 Simon Peter's response to Jesus by the Sea of Galilee: 'Go away from me, Lord; I am a — man' (Luke 5:8) (6)
- 3 Beaten with whips (1 Kings12:11) (8)
- 4 'You shall not — adultery' (Exodus 20:14) (6)
- 5 Encourage (Hebrews 10:24) (4)
- 6 Service of morning prayer in the Church of England (6)
- 7 'Take and eat this in remembrance that Christ died for you, and — — him in your heart by faith with thanksgiving' (4,2)



- 12 Run (anag.)(3)
- 14 Member of 17th-century party that denied the right of autonomy to the Church (8)
- 15 'We will triumph with our tongues; we—our lips'(Psalm12:4) (3)
- 16 Earnings (1Corinthians16:2)(6)
- 17 'I rejoice greatly in the Lord that—you have renewed your concern for me' (Philippians 4:10) (2,4)
- 18 How Paul described Philemon (Philemon 1)(6)
- 20 Multiple territories under the rule of a single state(Daniel11:4)(6)
- 21 'You have been unfaithful; you have married foreign women, —to Israel's guilt' (Ezra 10:10) (6)
- 23 This month(abbrev.)(4)

(Solutions on page 30)

## ST JAMES THE LEAST OF ALL



### **Beware the spell-checker on your special service sheets!**

The Rectory  
St. James the Least

My dear Nephew Darren

As you discovered at your Sunday School Anniversary Service last week, special service sheets can be a mixed blessing. It was unfortunate that the front page welcomed your diocesan “Nishop” (although perhaps a good thing you hadn’t been welcoming a neighbouring “Vicar”) and it was a shame that one of the hymns contained one verse fewer on the sheets than the book the organist was playing to, obliging your congregation to sing the last verse twice – although since in your tradition you seem to repeat choruses endlessly, probably no one noticed anyway. But the regrettable misprint which meant that ranks of primary school children sweetly lisped an obscenity really was too much.

Having said that, computer spell-checkers can cause their own problems. We once let our own system check a Christmas carol sheet and on the night found ourselves obliged to sing “away in a manager”, mangers apparently being unknown to our machine.

If you use special sheets regularly, it seems a law of nature – as with metal coat hangers - that they all intermingle while no one is watching. Thus on Easter Day, half the congregation will have been issued with sheets for Harvest, which will only become obvious once the service begins. The first hymn will be entirely lost while sidesmen scuttle about looking for replacements only to find that there won’t be enough of them anyway and then the second hymn will be lost while others helpfully wander about church donating their sheets to those looking helpless and then trying to find someone to share with.

Never, ever, print on them “Do not take home” as this will only ensure everyone does so. I have sometimes wondered if the instruction “Take



this sheet home for reference” would ensure that they stayed neatly arranged in the pews after the service. And if it is a service where babies are likely to be present, be assured that many of the copies will be returned half chewed and coated with bits of whatever the infant had for breakfast. There must be a market for paper treated with a child-repellent flavour for such occasions.

Anyone who thinks we are an unimaginative nation should visit a church after a special service to see how many places members of congregations can invent to hide the booklets: under kneelers, neatly folded and hidden inside hymn books, among flower arrangements and behind heating pipes so that no one can quite reach them. They then lurk there reproachfully for the next ten years until mice resolve the problem.

No, stick to large, hard bound books. They are resistant to teeth and are too substantial to be hidden in pockets. Their only drawback is that they tend to fall victim to the pull of gravity at the quietest moments.

Your loving uncle,

Eustace



"Due to our failure to secure a holiday-relief organist, the next hymn will also be sung to the tune, *Chopsticks*."

## **GOD AND THE ARTS**

*By The Rev Michael Burgess*

### **We behold the glory**

TQ – Tingle Quotient – is the name given to those things that can produce a tingle down the spine or a frisson of excitement. It could be a piece of music or the sight of an evening sunset at sea or a newborn babe. We look, we hear, and what we look at or hear evokes a sense of wonder and amazement that has an almost physical effect on us. Something sublime unfolds before us producing delight and awe: a hint of glory that leads us to wonder and even to worship.

The monk who lived in cell no 6 at the Dominican convent of San Marco in Florence must have felt that when he entered his room and saw for the first time the fresco of the Transfiguration that Fra Angelico had painted. I am sure the sight would have stopped him in his tracks, just as Peter, James and John were stopped in their tracks as they beheld their Lord transfigured before them on the mount.

From 1436 Fra Angelico painted a whole series of frescoes for the convent from the High Altar to the Chapter House to the cells of the monks. Here in cell no 6 there is a restrained simplicity and directness about the Transfiguration. One of the three disciples looks out towards us, while the other two are caught up in wonder and awe as they look on Jesus with the faces of Moses and Elijah on either side.

Here Fra Angelico is not seeking to impress a wealthy patron: he is providing a focus for devotion and prayer for the monks of his community. The scene speaks to us of that sense of awe and reverence. On 6<sup>th</sup> August we celebrate the feast of the Transfiguration. The Gospel accounts relate that special moment of revelation to the inner group of disciples. The glory shown to them evoked a sense of wonder and marvel, but also a sense of loss. For the glory proved elusive and just out of human reach. The moment of revelation passed, and the disciples had to go down the mount again to meet the crying

needs of the world, all but forgotten when they were with their Lord on the mountain top.

The monk in his cell would ponder the glory of Fra Angelico's fresco, knowing that he would be called from his cell to take up his monastic duties. But the painting would go with him to sustain and nurture his life. It is the same with us: we have moments of glory. But they pass, and we must return to our daily lives. As we look on this month's painting, we sense that glory and wonder which can sustain us through life.



30<sup>th</sup>

## John Bunyan, the writer of *Pilgrim's Progress*

After the Bible, John Bunyan's Christian allegory, the *Pilgrim's Progress*, is one of the most celebrated and widely-read books in the English language. It has been translated into more than 100 languages around the world and keeps its place as a Christian classic.

Bunyan was born on 28 November 1628, at Elstow, near Bedford, England, of a poor family. He had little formal education and his father taught him to be a metal worker. His first wife died young. His second wife, Elizabeth, helped him considerably with his blossoming literary career. His conversion was the result of reading the Bible, and the witness of local Christians. From that time the Bible became the great inspiration of his life. He wrote more than 50 books on Christianity. A Baptist by conviction, he had little time for the Established Church.



Bunyan became a popular preacher, but because of his opposition to the Established Church and because he did not have a Church of England preaching licence, he was imprisoned in 1661. It was in prison that he wrote *Pilgrim's Progress*

*Pilgrim's Progress* is an allegory, using the names of people and places from the Bible to teach spiritual lessons. The vivid and unforgettable imagery in the *Pilgrim's Progress* covers the whole Christian gospel from sin and condemnation all the way through faith, repentance, grace, justification, sanctification, and perseverance to heaven itself.

Bunyan died on 31<sup>st</sup> August 1688. His portrayal of the death of Mr Valiant For Truth is Bunyan at his allegorical best. This brave old soldier of Jesus Christ had received his summons to 'go home.' Calling his friends together he says, "My sword I give to him who shall succeed me in my pilgrimage ... My marks and scars I carry with me, to be a witness for me, that I have fought His battles, Who will now be my rewarder." ... So he passed over, and all the trumpets sounded for him on the other side...'



## ANOTHER CHANCE

The Bible gives us some lovely pictures of how God is always willing to give us another chance. One story you may not know is of Jeremiah and the potter.

Jeremiah was a prophet, a person who gave God's message to the people. One day he watched a potter using a simple wheel to make cooking pots. One of the pots wasn't quite right, but the potter didn't throw it away and start another one. He just squashed it down and started again, this time turning it into a perfect pot. The clay had a second chance to be beautiful and useful.



Jeremiah realised that God was showing him that all of us are in God's hands. God, like the potter, gives us another chance to what we should be.

## GINGERBREAD SHAPES

100 g (4 oz) margarine  
100 g (4 oz) sugar  
275g (10 oz) plain flour  
1 teaspoon bicarbonate of soda  
3 teaspoons ground ginger  
golden syrup

(warmed, about 2 tablespoons)

Heat the oven to 180C (350F, Gas 4) and line a baking tray.

Cream together the margarine. Sift together the dry ingredients and add to the creamed mixture.

Add enough syrup to make a dough.

Now all you have to do is roll out the dough on a floured board and cut it into shapes. You can make gingerbread people or any thing.

If you are not happy with how they look you can, like Jeremiah's potter, squash it and start again.

Put the shapes on the baking tray and cook for 15 minutes. Cool on the tray. Finish with icing, chocolate drops etc.



**What did the gingerbread man put on his bed?**

A baking sheet.

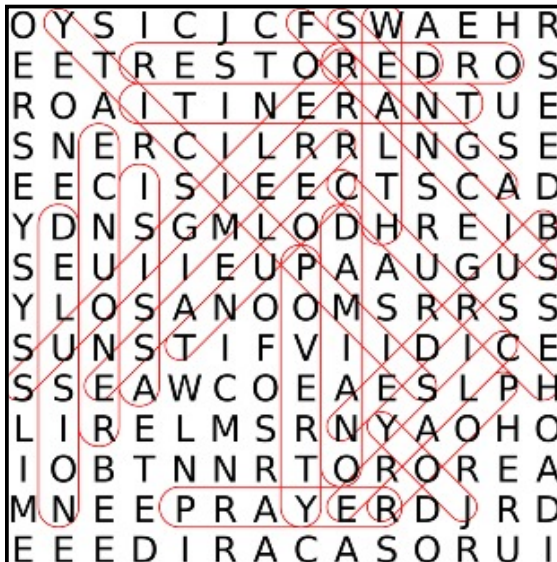
**Why did the gingerbread man go to the doctor?**

Because he was feeling crummy!

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