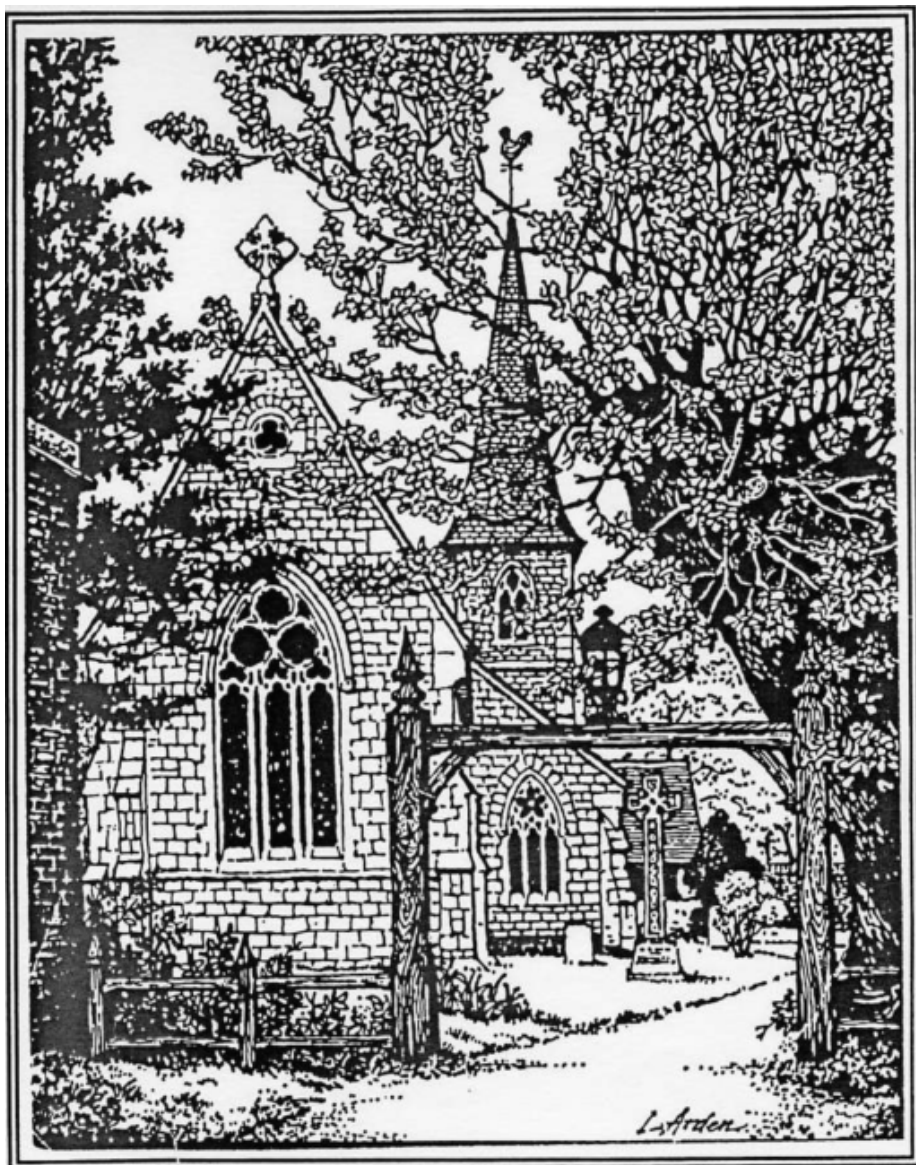


**The Parish Church of** **50p**  
***St. James, North Cray*** ***September, 2021***  
***(Part of the Bexley Team Ministry)***



## 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 SEPTEMBER 2021



Despite the difficulties of the last year, many of you have been able to get to know our Team Curate, Reverend Matt Hodder. When he joined our Team as a Deacon, Rev Matt wrote to introduce himself to us: -

*"I am originally from the Orpington area but lived in Cambridge for the last three years whilst training for ordained ministry at Ridley Hall. I am married to Jen and we have two young children. Before training for ministry I used to work in a primary school as a Teaching Assistant and Forest School teacher. I love being outdoors; whether that's going for walks, spending time in the garden or taking photographs. I am so excited to get to know the people in the parishes of the Bexley Team and be able to share the love of God with the community that we will become a part of."*

Well, a lot has happened in a year! Rev Matt has been instrumental in setting up our monthly Forest Church which is based at St James North Cray but welcomes youngsters from across the Bexley Team. He has been involved in providing Zoom Services and online Children's Church during Lockdown and is committed to enabling these to continue for those who do not feel able to attend church in person. Matt's family have settled into the area and are looking forward to a new addition to their family in the autumn.

Rev Matt will be ordained as a Priest at Rochester Cathedral on Saturday 25 September, and we are delighted that the first time he will preside at a service of Holy Communion will be at St James North Cray the following day, Sunday 26 September at 9.30am.

Congratulations Matt! We look forward to your ministry with us.

### **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](mailto:renharding@hotmail.co.uk)



For Peace

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace.  
Where there is hatred, let me sow love.  
Where there is injury, let me sow pardon.  
Where there is doubt, let me sow faith.  
Where there is despair, let me give hope.  
Where there is darkness, let me give light.  
Where there is sadness, let me give joy.  
O divine master, grant that I may  
not try to be comforted, but to comfort;  
not try to be understood, but to understand;  
not try to be loved, but to love,  
because it is in giving that we receive,  
in forgiving that we are forgiven,  
and in dying that we are born to eternal life.

Francis of Assisi (1182 – 1226)

## **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**

## SERVICES AND EVENTS FOR SEPTEMBER 2021

### SUNDAY 5 September

9.30am Holy Communion

### SUNDAY 12 September

9.30am A Service to mark the Centenary of the Royal British Legion

All are welcome.

Also attending will be members of the North Cray & District RBL branch and leaders and young people from our Uniformed Organisations

### SUNDAY 19 September

9.30am Holy Communion  
3.00pm Forest Church



### Saturday 25 September

11am Ordination as Priest at Rochester Cathedral of Reverend Matt Hodder, Curate of the Bexley Team.  
The service will be livestreamed

### SUNDAY 26 September

9.30am Holy Communion  
Rev Matt will preside at this service.  
Please do come and support him.

There will be music on this link

[www.stjamesnorthcray.org.uk/welcome/music/](http://www.stjamesnorthcray.org.uk/welcome/music/)

We hope you find the music helpful and inspiring.

We continue to make worship available online, on Zoom, or via a phone-in link on Zoom. Details are emailed out each week. 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.

## 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.”***

## **PRACTICAL ADVICE**

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### **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.*

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*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](http://bbc.co.uk)

Daily Service Monday to Friday @ 9.45 am – on Longwave and DAB  
Sunday worship @ 8.10am

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



## Remembering Dante

by Tim Lenton



Dante Alighieri, the Italian ‘supreme poet’, died 700 years ago, on 13<sup>th</sup> September 1321. Regarded as the most important poet of the Middle Ages, he is best known for his *Divine Comedy*, widely considered the greatest literary work in Italian and an influence on such English writers as Chaucer, Milton and Tennyson.

Born in Florence in about 1265 but exiled from the city in 1301 amid political turmoil, Dante – a forerunner of the Renaissance – established the use of the vernacular instead of Latin in literature and helped standardise the Italian language.

His work and life were inspired by his love for Beatrice Portinari, whom he first met as a child: he claimed to be overwhelmed by her beauty. He never knew her closely, and when he was 12 his family arranged for him to marry Gemma, a member of the powerful Donati family. But Beatrice remained his inspiration, appearing in the *Divine Comedy* as a guide and depicted as semi-divine, in the style of a muse-like guardian angel.

The word Comedy does not indicate humour, but belief in an ordered universe: in this case it depicts a pilgrimage from Hell to Paradise, beginning with moral chaos and ending with a vision of God.

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# News and Issues



## **Be careful with Covid, urges Bishop of London**

The Bishop of London, Sarah Mullally, has encouraged churches and individuals to continue to take precautions to protect the vulnerable from Covid-19.

“Many will welcome the possibilities now before us. However, this is a difficult point in the course of the pandemic. Despite vaccination rates, cases are up, hospital admissions are up and long covid remains an ongoing concern. Therefore, our approach needs to be cautious and careful.

“Taking personal responsibility means taking precautions to protect those more vulnerable than we consider ourselves to be. Local church leaders know their communities and their own circumstances, and we will support them making local decisions to keep themselves and their community safe.”

## **Growing number of attacks on Christians in India**

Release International is calling on India to intervene to prevent the growing attacks against Christians accused of fraudulently converting Hindus. In the latest attack, a Hindu mob set about a 23-year-old Christian woman with bamboo clubs and steel rods, threatening to kill her for sharing her faith with a Hindu.

Attacks against Christians are rising as the radical nationalist movement Hindutva grows in influence. Adherents to Hindutva believe that to be Indian is to be Hindu – and nothing else will be tolerated. Under their influence, some eight states have so far passed anti-conversion laws and there are moves to push through a national law to prevent so-called forced conversions. Christians make up less than five per cent of a country which is overwhelmingly Hindu. Religious nationalism is on the rise, and Christians and Muslims alike have been attacked by Hindu militants.

Meanwhile, Christians have suffered particularly in India during the Covid pandemic. Many have been bypassed for food aid. They believe religious nationalism is behind this, which maintains that Christians and Muslims are not true Indians. This comes as more Dalits, the so-called untouchables outside the caste system, are coming to Christ. There are upwards of 200 million Dalits in India. The name

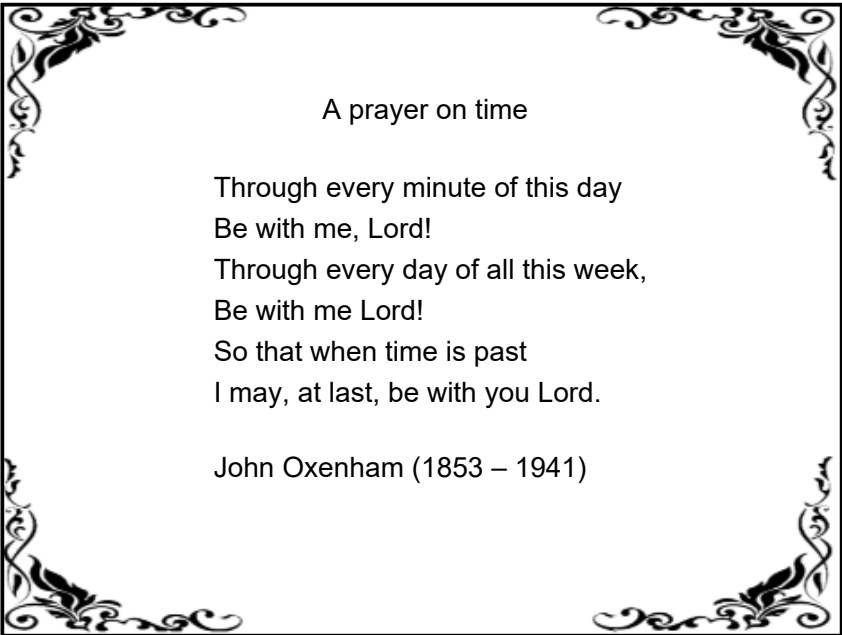
means literally 'broken' or 'scattered'. Release International partner Kumar Swamy is a Dalit by birth. He is the National General Secretary of the All-India Christian Council. As a Dalit, Kumar Swamy was brought up to believe that he was less than human. "I constantly used to hear my mother saying we were untouchables – subhuman was the word she used that we were not human beings.

"Hinduism says there are 330 million gods, but none of these died for a sinner like me. It was only Jesus. It is He who gives me hope. I was told I was created to be less than an animal, but it is Jesus who says, 'No, I created you in My image.' That's why I love Jesus.

"Christianity gives value to human beings. There is a dignity in the gospel, and that's what every Dalit longs to hear. He wants to be treated as a human being."

And that, Swamy believes, is why many of India's underclass are turning to Christ. "Every week, two or three new churches are born. And it's primarily because the Dalits are coming to Jesus Christ in large numbers."

But as more Dalits embrace Christianity, the backlash from Hindu nationalists has increased. Says Kumar Swamy: "There is an accelerated, escalating violence against the Christian community because of the numbers of Dalits coming to the Christian faith."



A prayer on time

Through every minute of this day  
Be with me, Lord!  
Through every day of all this week,  
Be with me Lord!  
So that when time is past  
I may, at last, be with you Lord.

John Oxenham (1853 – 1941)



# **MEETINGS and Events 2021**

**Planning for The "Welcome to the Meadows"  
Educational Day which was scheduled for  
19th July 2020 is on hold.**

## **QUOTES OF THE MONTH**

Ambition is the grand enemy of all peace. -- John Powys

A gnawing conscience keeps the memory terribly alert.  
– W Sangster

Always borrow from a pessimist. He never expects to be repaid.  
– Herbert V Prochnow

A Christian is never in a state of completion but always in a  
process of becoming. -- Martin Luther

I've worked myself up from nothing to a state of extreme poverty.  
-- Groucho Marx

## ALL IN THE MONTH OF SEPTEMBER

700 years ago, on 13<sup>th</sup> Sept 1321 Dante Alighieri, Italian poet, died. Regarded as the most important poet of the Middle Ages. Best known for his *Divine Comedy*.

125 years ago, on 24<sup>th</sup> Sept 1896 F Scott Fitzgerald, American novelist and short story writer, was born. Regarded as one of the greatest American writers of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Best known for his novel *The Great Gatsby*.

100 years ago, on 8<sup>th</sup> Sept 1921 Sir Harry Secombe was born. This Welsh comedian, actor, writer, singer and TV presenter was one of the stars of the 1950s radio series *The Goon Show*.

80 years ago, on 1<sup>st</sup> Sept 1941 Nazi Germany ordered all Jews in Germany and its occupied territories to wear a yellow Star of David badge.

75 years ago, from 20<sup>th</sup> Sept – 5<sup>th</sup> Oct 1946 the first Cannes Film Festival was held.

60 years ago, on 11<sup>th</sup> Sept 1961 the World Wildlife Fund (now the World Wide Fund for Nature) was founded in Switzerland.

50 years ago, on 15<sup>th</sup> Sept 1971 Greenpeace, the international environmental group, was founded in Vancouver.

30 years ago, on 6<sup>th</sup> Sept 1991 the Russian city of Leningrad was renamed St Petersburg, restoring its original name. 25 years ago, on 27<sup>th</sup> Sept 1996, that the Taliban seized control of Kabul, Afghanistan, ousting President Burhanuddin Rabbani, and executing former President Mohammad Najibullah.

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**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.

<b>Believing</b>	Who is Jesus? The Bible
<b>Belonging</b>	The Eucharist Christian Symbols
<b>Behaving</b>	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)  
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07836644782



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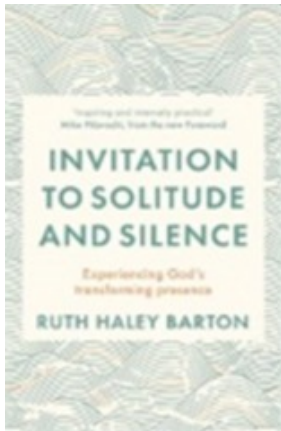
Contact Ian on;  
Phone: 07931 811620  
Email: [davis54@btinternet.com](mailto:davis54@btinternet.com)



# Book Mark

**Invitation to Solitude and Silence - experiencing God's transforming presence**

**By Ruth Haley Barton, SPCK, £9.99 (new edition)**

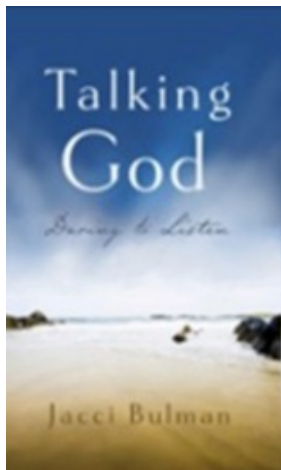


Much of the Christian faith is about words – preaching, teaching, talking with others. But the hectic demands and noise of daily modern life can drown out God's words and keep us from fully meeting Him.

The book explores the power of quietness and stillness in connecting with God. Filled with practical exercises, it will be helpful for anyone looking for spiritual disciplines to help them connect more fully with God and practices to aid their spiritual formation.

**Talking God – Daring to Listen**

**By Jacqui Bulman, Lion Hudson, £9.99**



Listening is a valuable – and often neglected – tool for spiritual learning.

This book invites you to reflect on the personal beliefs many of us hold towards God through listening in on a series of 11 inspiring interviews with people of Christian or 'Jesus-connected' faith.

Each of these dedicated spiritual pilgrims give their response to searching questions about God, Jesus Christ, and Christianity, offering a wide range of perspectives on issues of faith and spiritual truth.



## **World Wide Fund for Nature celebrates 60 years**

*by Tim Lenton*

The World Wildlife Fund (now the World Wide Fund for Nature) was founded 60 years ago in Switzerland, on 11<sup>th</sup> September 1961. It is now believed to be the world's largest conservation group, working in wilderness preservation, and reducing human impact on the environment.

A group of distinguished scientists, conservationists and businessmen, including Sir Peter Scott and Sir Julian Huxley, put the organisation together and chose its original name and the famous panda logo. It changed its name to the World Wide Fund for Nature in the UK and several other countries in 1989, but it still uses the initials WWF all over the world in advertising campaigns.

The late Prince Philip has been President of both the UK and international branches, and he was concerned particularly with encouraging faith communities to involve themselves in the environment. This led to a major conference in Italy in 1986, resulting in huge global publicity and tens of thousands of faith-led environmental initiatives around the world.

Although there has been criticism centring on the placing of environmental issues above human rights in some areas, the WWF now has more than five million supporters worldwide, working in more than 100 countries and supporting around 3,000 projects.

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## **OUR PILGRIM PLACES**

### **HISTORIC CHRISTIAN SITES IN BRITAIN : IONA - PART 2**

*Dr Herbert McGonigle*

In our previous article, we remembered that in 563 a little group of monks from Ireland arrived in Scotland. They were headed by a monk called Columba, and they settled on Iona. Soon the little island was recognised as a centre of Christian spirituality. Columba and his monks established churches and monasteries, ordained priests and appointed monks according to the Celtic faith and customs they had learned in Ireland. Now read on...

Columba was a man of many gifts and talents. He was a preacher, an evangelist, a translator, a scholar and a diplomat. The Pict chieftains respected him and he travelled freely across the country. Traditions about him recount how the tribal chiefs consulted him not only about the faith he preached, but about the education and care of their people and

There are two main accounts of Columba's life and work. About a hundred years after his death one of the Abbots of Iona, Adomnan, wrote *Vita Columbae*, 'Life of Columba,' and Bede, in his *Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, also gave information about him. While both these sources are informative and fascinating, it is often difficult to separate the fact from the fiction. Many miracles are attributed to Columba and it's simply not possible to tell what great works were wrought by Columba in the power of the Spirit and what 'miracles' were invented by sympathetic biographers and historians. What is not in doubt, however, is that Columba was a man of God and while there are questions about how many physical miracles he

performed, there is no question at all that another kind of miracle authenticated Columba's ministry. This was what might be called the ever-present miracle of the gospel of Christ; lives changed from darkness to light and from sin to holiness by the transforming power of the regenerating Holy Spirit.

Columba made a visit back to Ireland late in life and returned to finish his days on his beloved Iona. He died there on June 9, 597, and was buried in the abbey he had founded. It is worth noting that the year in which Columba died on the Scottish island of Iona, 597, was also the year in which Augustine arrived in Kent to bring Roman Christianity to England.

*Dr Herbert McGonigle is Senior Lecturer in Historical Theology & Church History at Nazarene Theological College, Manchester.*



## REFLECTED FAITH

*By the Rev Dr Jo White*

The majority of Sunday morning service in churches throughout the world are based on the Last Supper of Jesus.



At the Passover meal, on the night before His death, Jesus took bread, gave thanks, broke it and gave it to His disciples saying, "*This is My body given for you;*" (Luke 22:19a). He also took wine and passed it to each of them and said, "*This is My blood, given for you.*"

These two elements, the bread and the wine, continue to be the central focus for Christians: doing what Jesus asked us to do, '*Do this in remembrance of me*'. (Luke 22:19b)

What we call this service varies between denominations and even between churches within the same denomination.

It is a way of giving 'thanks' as Jesus did (the word '*Eucharist*' comes from the Greek by way of Latin, and it means 'thanksgiving'), reminding us not only of the tremendous sacrifice that Christ had made on our behalf, but also recalling the love and joy that Jesus brings to the community.

The word '*Communion*' comes from something done with others – the community. It's done with Christ. It's done with other worshippers. In sharing the meal, 'I' becomes 'us'.

The word '*Mass*' comes from the conclusion to the traditional service – which was in Latin: '*Ite, missa est.*' 'Go. You are being sent.' Today we use similar words, 'Go in peace, to love and serve the Lord.'

At the moment many churches, especially the Church of England, are only giving bread to the congregation with the priest alone consuming the wine. So the meaning underlying the taking / the giving of bread is more crucial than ever. In some denominations the bread is literally the 'daily bread', whilst in others it is a 'wafer' or yeast free bread – as was used at the original Passover.

*This month:* Have a look at the bread that is placed into your hands the next time you 'receive'. How does it reflect receiving Christ into your life?

## WORDSEARCH



Kingdom	Sleeping	Master	Let	Barn
Heaven	Grain	Sow	Grow	Burned
Good	Weeds	Gather	Together	
Seed	Enemy	Reap	Harvest	
Field	Servants	Root	Bundles	

Solutions on page 31

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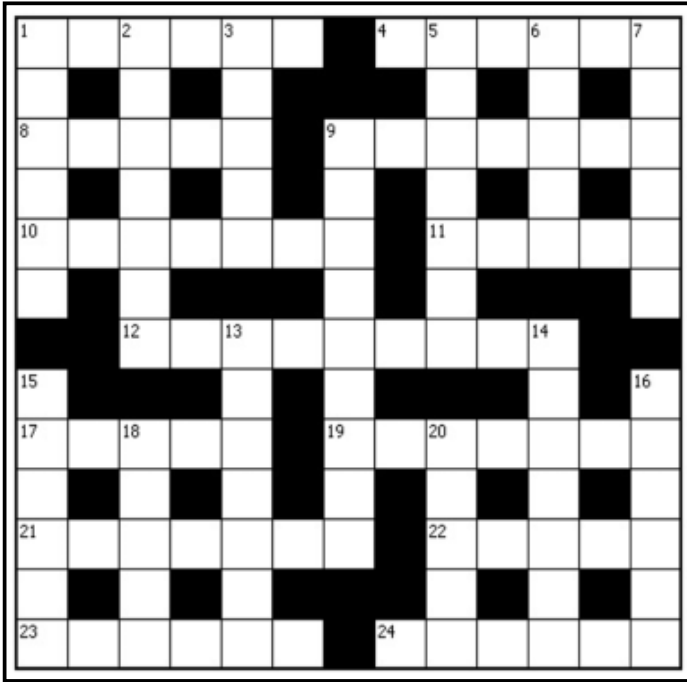
## SEPTEMBER CROSSWORD PUZZLE

### Clues Across

- 1 'Through [Christ] we have gained .... by faith into this grace'  
(Romans 5:2) (6)
- 4 Deprives of sight (Deuteronomy 16:19) (6)
- 8 The words of a hymn do this (mostly) (5)
- 9 Faithful allegiance (1 Chronicles 12:33) (7)
- 10 Belgium's chief port (7)
- 11 Where John was baptizing 'because there was plenty of water'  
(John 3:23) (5)
- 12 Imposing height (Psalm 48:2) (9)
- 17 Jesus'tempter in the wilderness (Mark 1:13) (5)
- 19 Comes between Amos and Jonah (7)
- 21 'Your will be done' ... as it is in heaven' (Matthew 6:10) (2,5)
- 22 Gale (Matthew 8:24) (5)
- 23 Axle, eh? (anag.) (6)
- 24 'Out of the... I cry to you, O Lord' (Psalm 130:1) (6)

### Clues Down

- 1 Popular Christian author and humorist, Plass (6)
- 2 Transparent ice-like mineral (Revelation 4:6) (7)
- 3 Method of compelling surrender by surrounding target of  
attack (2 Chronicles 32:1) (5)
- 5 Expose (Isaiah 52:10) (3,4)
- 6 Lonny (anag.) (5)
- 7 Utterance (1 Timothy 1:15) (6)
- 9 Husband of Deborah, the prophetess (Judges 4:4) (9)
- 13 Burial service (Jeremiah 34:5) (7)
- 14 What Christ threatened to do to the lukewarm church in  
Laodicea (Revelation 3:16) (4,3)



- 15 Simon Peter climbed aboard and dragged the net(John 21:11) (6)  
 16 His response to Jesus' decision to return to Judea was 'Let us also go, that we may die with him' (John 11:16) (6)  
 18 There will be weeping and gnashing of ... (Matthew 8:12) (5)  
 20 Walkway between rows of pews in a church (5)

(Solutions on page 31)

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## ST JAMES THE LEAST OF ALL



### **On the peculiar stains and smells of old choir robes**

The Rectory  
St. James the Least

My dear Nephew Darren

Your withering comments, saying that our choir robes, were “surplice” to requirements did not go down well at last week’s practice. I will concede that Mr Baddeley’s robes smell somewhat kippered and are laced with burns - but you can expect little less from 40 years of enjoying a final cigarette behind a gravestone before the start of Mattins.

Certainly, Mr Timmins’ surplice has that strange series of red and blue polka dots, but that is only because he uses his time in the choir stalls when not singing to catch up on marking his pupils’ essays. And we are only too conscious of Miss Thrupp’s red gash down her front, making it look as if the choirmaster has just stabbed her for coming in one bar too soon – but trying to eat a jam doughnut just before that wedding five years ago was an unwise decision.

But you have no right to disparage choir uniforms. Your own music group’s T-shirts, jeans and baseball caps are no different from our robes – even though, unlike ours, they haven’t seen their way through the death of Queen Victoria, the relief of Mafeking, and two world wars. Our robes are steeped in history – which can have unintended consequences. There has always been keen rivalry between our two tenors. Some weeks ago one was given an elaborate solo, much to the other’s disgust. Come the Service, as Major Clough warbled his way through his party-piece, Admiral Flagg developed an ostentatious cough. In an attempt to silence him, I found a cough sweet in my cassock and gave it to him. After the Service, he commented that it had a strange taste; I pointed out that it was not surprising, as it was in the pocket when I was given the cassock 50 years ago from Canon Ball’s widow after he died.



In an attempt to improve the look of the surplices, Mrs Wigg offered to starch them all. Unfortunately, her enthusiasm is only surpassed by her ineptitude. She worked on the principle that if one packet of starch was good, ten would be better. When the choir arrived the following Sunday, they found twenty surplices standing round the vestry floor looking like a circle of tents at Scout camp. I half suspected that they would sit on the floor in the centre round a fire and roast sausages.

Once the choir had struggled into them, they had to process up the aisle in single file, as they were all about 6 feet wide. The choir stood rigidly throughout the Service, knowing that any rapid movement risked severing a major artery.

But our style of choir dress has one advantage which yours can never equal. Within our choristers' voluminous robes, there is ample space for peppermints, packs of cards, the Sunday newspapers and balls of wool and knitting needles. Your music group must feel utterly bereft during the sermon.

Your loving uncle,  
Eustace



"It's not quite as bad as it looks – they're only withholding payment until we publish our expenses."

## GOD AND THE ARTS

*By The Rev Michael Burgess*

### **Treasures old and treasures new: Marc Chagall in Chichester Cathedral**

Around 1400 a spire was added to the Norman cathedral of Chichester. In 1861, over 400 years later, a boy travelling by train to the city looked out of the window and saw the collapse of that very



spire. It must have been an unnerving sight. Giles Gilbert Scott rebuilt it, and the cathedral, although modest by Norman standards, is a fine, welcoming building. Inside there are many testimonies to its long history, including two glorious Romanesque sculptures depicting the story of Jesus with

Lazarus and his sisters. They were reused as building stones and amazingly recovered intact from behind the choir stalls in 1829.


In the 1960s and 70s Dean Walter Hussey built on an initiative of Bishop George Bell and commissioned a variety of modern works for the cathedral: a tapestry by John Piper, a painting of the risen Lord and Mary Magdalene by Graham Sutherland, and a window by Marc Chagall. More recent works include a Virgin and Child by John Skelton, a bronze statue of St Richard by Philip Jackson, and a memorial to Gustav Holst. This was dedicated in 2009 and has a quotation from the composer's 'Hymn of Jesus': 'The heavenly spheres make music for us.'

The stained glass window by Marc Chagall of 1978 celebrates not heavenly praise, but thanksgiving offered here on Earth. Chagall, who

lived from 1887 to 1985, is regarded as the quintessential Jewish artist of the 20th century. He produced many stained glass windows – for the cathedrals of Metz and Rheims and the church of All Saints, Tudeley. They all celebrate the play and refraction of light on glass with intense, fresh colours, as in this window in Chichester Cathedral. It is based on Psalm 150 and is a kaleidoscope of colour and movement. We can see the instruments mentioned in the psalm: tambourine, pipe, harp and trumpet. There is movement and dance here: people and all creatures great and small uniting to make a joyful noise to the Lord.

Too often our lives are cramped by being critical and negative about the world. Here in this window the mood is positive and creative for praise is at the heart of the Jewish tradition of prayer. In the Hebrew prayer book God is praised and blessed for a variety of things: on drinking wine, on smelling fragrant woods, at the sight of the sea, on seeing trees in blossom, and on meeting wise people. Praise brings light and joy into human hearts. Chagall wrote, 'For me a stained glass window is a transparent partition between my heart and the heart of the world...To read the Bible is to perceive a certain light, and the window has to make this obvious through its simplicity and grace.'

George Herbert in his poem on church windows compares humanity to a 'brittle, crazy glass.' But through God's grace the poet says that we can be like windows where 'doctrine and life, colours and light...combine and mingle.' Chagall shows how that is possible



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## St Birinus – apostle of Wessex

Birinus was a French Benedictine monk who in 634 was made a bishop at Genoa, and sent by Pope Honorius 1 to extend the evangelisation of England. (Augustine had arrived in Canterbury about 35 years before.)



Birinus landed at Hamwic, near Southampton. His original plan was to evangelise Wessex and then penetrate up into the Midlands, where no preacher had ever yet reached. But Birinus soon found the West Saxons so pagan that he

decided to concentrate just on them.

Birinus had little to help him become the apostle to Wessex. So, he simply used what he did have: his own two feet and his voice. He wandered around preaching at every opportunity, trusting in God to help him. And He did: Birinus became known and respected, and soon a big breakthrough occurred: for political reasons the King of Wessex, Cynegils, wanted to convert to Christianity, and he asked Birinus to help him.

So Birinus instructed and baptised King Cynegils, who was then able to marry the daughter of the Christian king of Northumbria, Cyneburg, and in due course Birinus baptised their family as well.

In return, Cynegils gave Birinus the town of Dorchester (upon Thames) to be his diocesan see. It was a perfect location: a Romano-British town right on a road and a river, in the midst of a populated area.

During his 15 years as Bishop of Dorchester, Birinus baptised many people and built churches all over the area, with the king's blessing. Before he died in 650, Birinus dedicated a church at Winchester. It was a glimpse of the future: for Winchester's growing importance made it inevitable that in time it would also become the ecclesiastical centre of the kingdom.



## ST MATTHEW'S DAY 21<sup>st</sup> September

Matthew, sometimes called Levi, was a tax collector for the Romans when he first met Jesus. The job of tax collector was probably one of the most hated ones that a Jew could have. Most tax collectors were despised and treated as outcasts. They charged more tax than was set and lived off the difference. Their fellow Jews rejected them because they mixed with non-Jewish people.

But Jesus picked Matthew as his disciple. Jesus saw Matthew at the tax office; and he said to him "Follow me". And he rose and followed him.' (Matthew chapter 9, verse 9)



Traditionally, the first Gospel is called St Matthew's Gospel but we don't know if he wrote it. What we do know is that Matthew, in lots of people's eyes the most unsuitable disciple, followed Jesus till the end of his days.

## BIBLE Ms

All the answers to this Bible quiz start with the letters M. Some have clues to help you, answers at the bottom of the page. Which M...

1. Was found in the bulrushes?
2. Wrote the second Gospel?
3. Was food found in the desert? (Exodus 16)
4. Was the mother of John Mark? (Acts 12)
5. Is a plant that would make the desert flower? (Isaiah 41)
6. Was the oldest man in the Bible? (Genesis 6)
7. Is the island where Paul was shipwrecked? (Acts 27)
8. With all his angels, fought the dragon? (Revelation 12)
9. Was the elder sister of Moses and Aaron? (Exodus 2)
10. Is the land between the rivers Tigris and Euphrates?



**What is hot, greasy, and makes you feel bad?**

A chip on your shoulder.



ANSWERS: 1.Moses 2.Mark  
3.manna 4.Mary 5.myrrh  
6.Methuselah 7.Malta 8.Michael  
9.Miriam 10.Mesopotamia



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