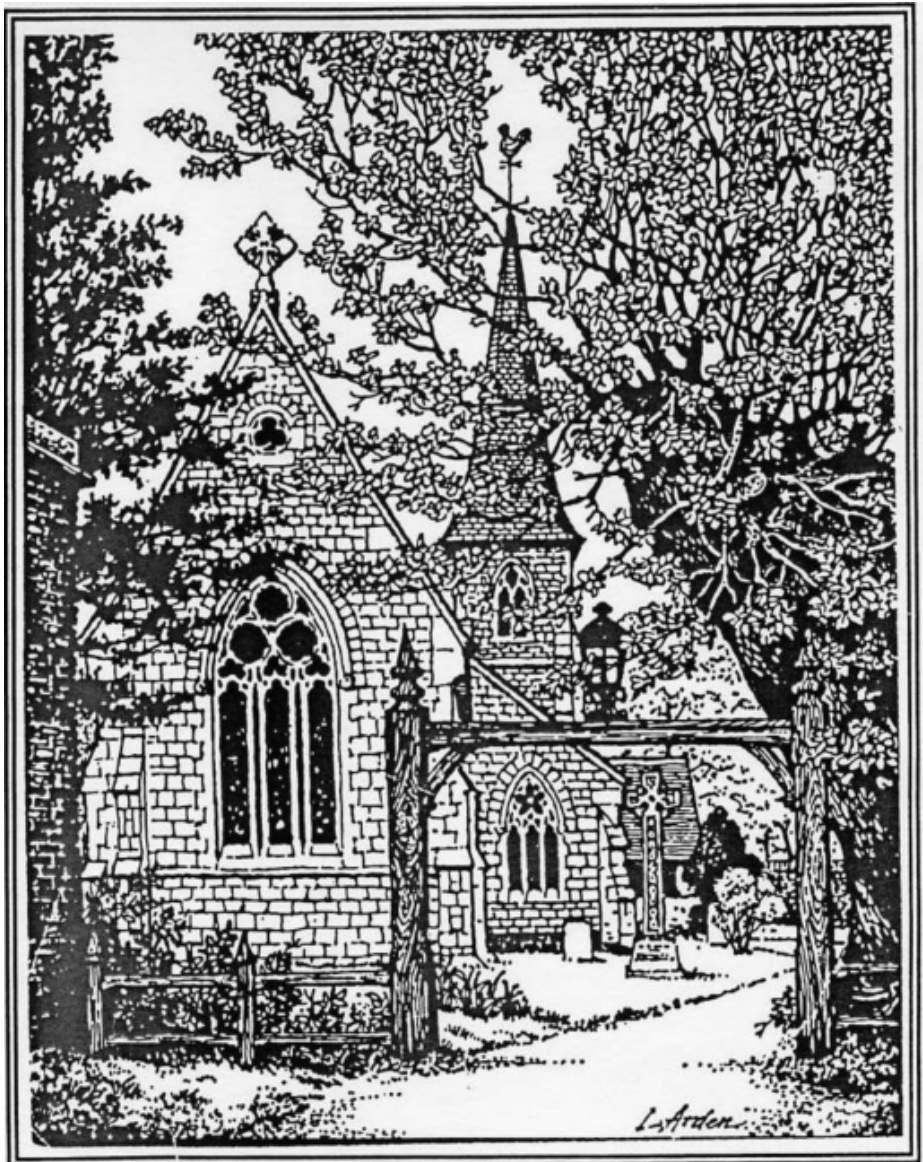


**The Parish Church of
*St. James, North Cray***

**50p
*May, 2019***

(Part of the Bexley Team Ministry)



St JAMES, NORTH CRAY PARISH STAFF

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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

MAY 2019



Those of you who have long memories may remember that I had decided to give up “busy-ness” for Lent. So I take the opportunity now to say thank you to the many that have asked me how it has been going, and another thank you to the few who said that they were joining me in this project!

I want to report back and say that it seems to me to have been one of the most enlightening things I've ever tried to do.

It is my nature to like to get things done! Sorted! Organised! Prepared! With the extra tasks that have been coming my way since the new expanded team has come into being, well the scene was clearly set for me to be running round like the proverbial ‘head-less chicken’.

But because I had announced to various church congregations and community groups that I was ‘giving up busy-ness’ - I knew that people would probably be keeping an eye on me for any signs that I was failing in my self-appointed Lenten discipline. And that was a great spur to keep to it.

Rather to my surprise, the reality was that I did feel much calmer. I developed a strategy. I tried to stop myself if I thought I was about to complain that I was just so, so busy...

I began to notice the moments that tension was building up, and take a few moments to pause and to get things into proper perspective. And I tried very hard to rest in the assurance that our God is a generous God and gives each one of us enough time for us to accomplish all the tasks he requires of us, as well as giving us time for the rest and relaxation he knows we need. If we are overly busy, it probably means we are doing things that were not God's intention for us.

There is an increasing need in our 24/7 society to stop the busy-ness. I am very encouraged that each of the four churches in the Bexley Team offer the means by which this can be done. St John's, Bexley is open for people to come and sit in silence every day. St Mary's,

Bexley opens its doors each Saturday morning. St James, North Cray offers the sanctuary of their beautiful churchyard for those who wish to sit in the beauty of nature, and St Barnabas holds regular quiet days, and prayer meetings.

So this summer, let's Pause, and let's Pray.

Reverend Ren Harding (Team Rector)

contact me at The Vicarage, 6 Tile Kiln Lane

01322-528923

renharding@hotmail.co.uk

God's Creation

God's creation, what a sensation
Myriads of stars all known by name,
Each constellation telling their story,
Bursting with glory, God's power to proclaim.

Beautiful Pleiades, The Bear with its Cubs,
Orion's Belt, all set in the sky
Our planet of blue transfixed in the heavens
Touched with the finger of God from on high.

The sun like a bridegroom rejoices on rising
His course devising from east to west
As he leaves his pavilion in golden splendour
With warmth and light on our earth to bless.

Light from darkness, order from chaos
Land and oceans come into view,
Magnificent Artist, Architect, Builder,
Not only Creator - but a Saviour too.

By Megan Carter

The Truth of the Ascension

By the Rev Paul Hardingham

'While He was blessing them, Jesus left them and was taken up into heaven.' (Luke 24:51).

The Ascension is a hugely neglected festival, which deserves to have a bigger place in our church life. How do we understand it?

The Ascension tells us that Jesus is in control: 'Jesus has gone into heaven and is at God's right hand' (1 Peter 3:22). Jesus occupies the top spot in the universe; the control of our world is in the safe, scarred hands of Jesus. We can offer Him our worship and allegiance, knowing that His plans are better than those of any Prime Minister or President.

The Ascension tells us that God is committed to His world: 'And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with Him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus' (Ephesians 2:6). Jesus did not leave His humanity behind when He ascended, for we are raised with Christ to heaven. Therefore, God is bound to His world and we can trust Him to fulfil His purpose for our lives and world.

The Ascension gives us a job to do: 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations' (Matthew 28:18,19). God's primary means of working in the world is now through us. He commissions for this task at Ascension and equips us at Pentecost. We are called to make disciples, starting in our workplace, family and community.

'Christ has no body now but yours. No hands, no feet on earth but yours. Yours are the eyes through which He looks compassion on this world. Yours are the feet with which He walks to do good. Yours are the hands through which He blesses all the world.' (Teresa of Avila).

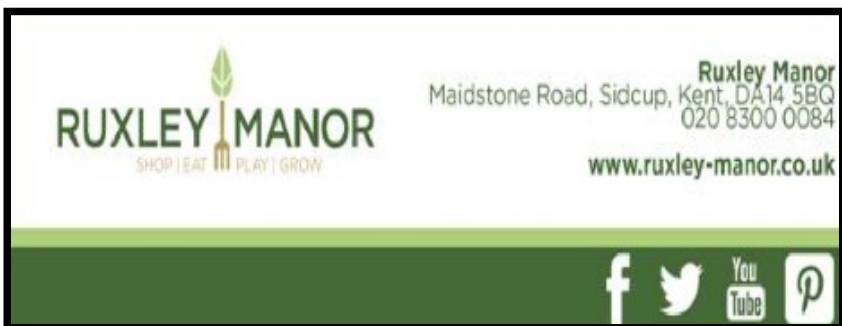
NEWS FROM THE CHURCHWARDENS



Being part of a team has many benefits. You work together, share thoughts, ideas and resources, and make new friendships. During Holy Week St Barnabas Church invited everyone from the Bexley Team churches to join them for supper and Holy Communion on Maundy Thursday. It was wonderful seeing so many people enjoy a simple supper of soup and bread whilst getting to know one another, and then join together in worship, with hymns, readings, prayers and Communion before sitting in silence and watching the altar stripped. The service was so moving and prepared the mind for Good Friday. As we left the church in silence, we all knew we had shared something special.

This month we had to say goodbye to the Reverend Gary Best and his lovely family as Gary completed his curacy at St John's Bexley and left to begin the next exciting phase of his church life as vicar of St Mary's in Shortlands. We will miss Gary and his family but wish them much happiness in their new parish.

Maxine & Suzy, Churchwardens



The Beatitudes - 'Blessed are the Poor in Spirit'

The Rev Paul Hardingham

Jesus begins the Sermon on the Mount with the Beatitudes (Matthew 5:1-12). The word **blessed** describes how we can live under God's blessing. Jesus talks about the 'beautiful attitudes' (Billy Graham) that characterise followers of Jesus. They speak more about 'who we are' than 'what we do' and reflect perfectly the character of Jesus that He wants to develop in us.

'Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.' is the first beatitude (5:3). To be 'poor in spirit' is not simply being poor economically, as the word used means 'being dependent on others for support'. It is the opposite of spiritual pride, recognising that we all fall short of God's standards in our thoughts, words and actions.

It's not just about what we do for God, but what He has done for us through Jesus' death on the cross. As we bring our sin, guilt, shame and failure to Him, in grace He offers us His love, acceptance and forgiveness. We come with empty hands: 'Nothing in my hands I bring, simply to thy cross I cling' (Augustus Toplady).

This is well illustrated by the tax collector in Jesus' parable: 'God have mercy on me, a sinner' (Luke 18:13). It is cry that says 'O God, I am in a mess. I've got nothing to offer. I haven't begun to pray or hear you properly. I am spiritually poor' To those who cry out like this, Jesus says 'theirs is the kingdom of heaven' (v3). The kingdom of God flings open its doors to beggars!

'There is nothing we can do to make God love us more; there is nothing we can do to make God love us less.' (Philip Yancey: What's So Amazing About Grace).

The Call to Maturity

By Tony Horsfall

To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. He is the one we proclaim, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone fully mature in Christ. Colossians 1:27-28

Paul was very clear about the nature of his task. He wanted to see every new believer become mature in their faith. This is what he aimed for, and this was why he worked so hard.

It is often said that if you aim for nothing, you will hit it every time. It is easy in church life to be aimless, to forget what we are about. Here we have a reminder that in all we do our aim is to help those who believe to be fully formed as disciples of Christ. It is not enough that people attend church. We want to see them become strong in their faith as well and to be actively involved in serving God.

But what does it mean to become mature in faith? As human beings we grow and develop, moving from being children to fully grown adults. There are many stages along the way, but we can all tell when a person is 'grown up'. They have left childish things behind and are able to behave in adult ways. Likewise, we are to move on from being babes in Christ to becoming spiritual adults – those whose faith is well grounded and who live out their faith in everyday life.

Another picture might be taken from the world of horticulture. Plants and trees mature over time. They not only grow bigger and stronger but begin to bear fruit. A mature garden is filled with such well-established plants. As Christians we become mature as our lives reflect in increasing measure the likeness of Christ in our speech, behaviour and values.

It is helpful to stop and ask ourselves if we are growing in our faith, both in our understanding and our daily application of what we believe.

The North Cray Neighbourhood Centre



Youth Action Diversity Trust proudly manage the North Cray Neighbourhood Centre in Sidcup where we focus on encouraging youth and family engagement and participation in activities and learning, whilst ensuring that everything we do is inclusive and a whole lot of fun! Our activities cost £3 for young people and between £3 and £5 for adults! We look forward to welcoming you and your family soon!

Play Rangers for 5 to 7 years

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'High 5 Activity Club'
Wednesdays
4pm to 5pm
'ADHD Social Club'

Youth Inclusion for 8 to 11 years

Mondays
5pm to 6pm
'Girls Social Club'
Wednesdays
5:30pm to 6:30pm
'ADHD Social Club'

For Adults

Tuesdays
11am to 12:30pm
Adult Coffee Club
Wednesdays
10:30am to 12noon
Adult Drama Players
Fridays
11am to 1pm
Kingfisher Social Club

YADT Behavioural Support Service

Living in today's world is challenging, and we understand that some young people need extra support to help them get a positive start in life or overcome obstacles along the way. We aim to help young people with the issues that affect them. These can be issues such as anger management, social anxiety, improving confidence and dealing with stress. The one-to-one support service gives young people the freedom and safety to explore issues that affect them. This service is for 8 to 17 year olds. Contact us for more information and fees.

YADT are delighted to be able to offer the Care for the Family Courses under our Behavioural Support Service. These courses are run by our behavioural team who have extensive experience working with families and young people with diverse needs. Courses run throughout the year and include 'Handling Anger in the Family', 'Children with Special Needs - ADHD' and 'Children with Special Needs - Autism'. Courses cost £50 per person or £80 for a couple. Contact us for more information.

Visit our website: www.YouthActionDiversityTrust.co.uk
call us on 0208 308 3862 or email yadt@sky.com



News and Issues



Funding cuts putting children at risk, says charity

Thousands of children are being put at risk as funding for crisis support continues to be scaled back, The Children's Society has warned. The charity said parents were struggling to meet the cost of basics like food, clothing and heating following cuts to welfare schemes that provide help in the form of shopping vouchers, electricity meter top-ups, white goods and cash grants. In a new report, *Nowhere to Turn*, it said the number of people receiving crisis support from the Government had dropped by a staggering 75 per cent since the Government devolved responsibility to councils in 2013. The impact was exacerbated by further funding cuts to local authorities that led to the end of separate cash grants in 2015.

Bishop and MP welcome marriage registration changes by Parliament

Recent changes made by Parliament to allow for mothers' names to be included on marriage certificates have been welcomed by the Bishop of St Albans together with Dame Caroline Spelman MP. Royal Assent was recently received to the Civil Partnerships, Marriages and Deaths (Registration etc) Act following a Private Member's Bill.

Dr Alan Smith, together with Dame Caroline, who is the Second Church Estates Commissioner, said: "The passing of this Bill into law is to be welcomed and marks a significant step forward. After years of tireless work by politicians, faith-leaders and campaigners, we have finally achieved tangible progress towards the equal treatment of both parents."

Prior to this Act, only fathers' names were formerly recorded when marriages were registered, a custom unchanged since 1837. Bishop Smith said: "This clear and historic injustice reflected the time when children and wives were considered property of men and it is high time for this to be corrected."

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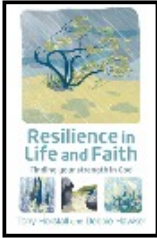


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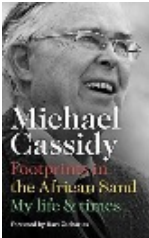
Book Mark



Resilience in Life and Faith - *finding your strength in God* By Tony Horsfall, Debbie Hawker, BRF, £9.99

In 'Resilience in life and faith' Tony Horsfall and Debbie Hawker encourage us to find our strength in God and to prepare ourselves for the challenges that life throws at us in an increasingly difficult world. Through biblical wisdom and psychological insight, they introduce us to the five key areas on which resilience is built – the spiritual, physical, emotional, cognitive and social domains. This is then

illustrated from the lives of biblical characters and contemporary people. This book will be a great resource for anyone coping with the pressures of modern living. It will provide a great resource for counsellors, and those in leadership or working overseas.



Footprints in the African Sand - My Life and Times By Michael Cassidy, SPCK, £16.99

A son of apartheid South Africa, Michael Cassidy appeared an unlikely candidate to lead a team bringing a gospel message of salvation, reconciliation and hope to a continent overturning white rule. But over five decades, and with the support of his extraordinary wife Carol, Michael and his African Enterprise team courageously built up ten national teams and a network of relationships criss-crossing

Africa. Told with inimitable charm and humour, this is a personal story of family, friendship and faith and beautifully demonstrates God's love at work in the turbulence of Africa's recent history.

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John & Charles Wesley: Let's Sing a Hymn

By Canon David Winter

Later this month the Church calendar celebrates the lives of John and Charles Wesley. John's great gift to the Christian cause was the little matter of founding the world-wide movement known as Methodism. His brother Charles had an equally profound impact through his hymns. He actually wrote over 6,000, most of which aren't sung nowadays, but among the ones we do still sing are all-time favourites – 'Love divine, all loves excelling', 'O for a thousand tongues to sing'. 'Jesu lover of my soul', 'Hark the herald angels sing' – and scores more.

40 years ago almost everybody knew quite a lot of hymns, but sadly that's no longer true. Traditional hymns aren't usually sung at school assemblies, not even in church schools, and while the audience for 'Songs of Praise' on BBC TV is substantial, most of those watching are over 50.

With only about ten per cent of the population even irregular church-goers there is inevitably a lack of familiarity with hymns of any kind. Christmas carols are an exception, as is 'Jerusalem' and 'Amazing Grace', because they are frequently heard outside church. Singing hymns is a wonderful experience at its best – just ask a Welsh rugby crowd singing 'Bread of heaven'! It seems a pity to lose it. It's not a bad idea to take ten minutes and think what is your favourite hymn, and why – ancient or modern doesn't matter. Then try singing it in the bath or under the shower – a very purifying experience.

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MEETINGS and Events 2019

20th June at 7.30pm
Church

St James, North Cray

Concert as part of the Old Bexley Music Festival.

* * * * *

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In Praise of Leonardo da Vinci - 1451-1519

By The Rev Michael Burgess

Back in the 1960s, C P Snow's lecture on the two cultures dominated the academic world: science and art faced each other in the arena of knowledge like two mighty opposites. But journey back to Italy in the 15th century and you find no such division. The two worlds of science and the humanities were interwoven, inspiring each other to create works of beauty and wonder, and witnessed by the brilliance and gifts of Leonardo da Vinci.

Here was an artist who painted *The Last Supper* and *Mona Lisa*. But also a scientist who in 7,000 pages of notebooks devised war engines, water mills, spinning machines, and even helicopters. He was the first to depict accurately the human embryo. Walter Isaacson in his biography wrote that da Vinci showed how 'the ability to make connections across disciplinesis a key to innovation, imagination and genius.'

Leonardo came from an insignificant background: he was the illegitimate son of a lawyer and a peasant girl in Tuscany. His father paid for his training, and so he entered the workshop of Verrocchio, excelling as both an artist and a fine mechanical scientist. Exploring the play of shadows and darkness, he created *The Virgin of the Rocks*; analyzing light, he created the chiaroscuro of the *Mona Lisa*; and penning a treatise on movement, he created the battle frenzy of Anghiari. Commissioned to cast a bronze horse as a monument to the Duke of Milan, he became so engrossed by investigating the muscles and tendons of horses and even by how to keep stables clean, that he forgot about the original work.

On his deathbed in the monastery of Amboise in May 1519, he said that he had two regrets: that he was never able to fly and that he never finished that horse. But what he did create endures 500 years later as a testimony to the way in which science and art can together create beauty, and beauty can lead us both to the beauty of the soul and the beauty of God.

SERVICES AND EVENTS FOR MAY 2019

Wednesday 1st May

12.30pm Bexley Team Gentlemen's Lunch at the Three Blackbirds

Thursday 2nd May

10.00am Daytime Housegroup at Joydens Wood Vicarage
7.30pm Adult Confirmation Preparation at Joydens Wood Vicarage

Saturday 4th May

9.30am Open Prayer in St Barnabas Church - a time of quiet reflection

SUNDAY 5th May

9.30am Holy Communion

Tuesday 7th May

Young Peoples' Confirmation Preparation at Holy Redeemer Vicarage

Thursday 9th May

7.30pm Adult Confirmation Preparation at Joydens Wood Vicarage

Saturday 11th May

8.30am Men's Breakfast at St Barnabas
7.00pm 'Maytime Music' Concert at St Mary's

SUNDAY 12th May

9.30am All Age Worship
1.30pm Baptism Service

Tuesday 14th May

Young Peoples' Confirmation Preparation at Holy Redeemer Vicarage

Wednesday 15th May

10am TEAM Communion at St Mary's

Thursday 16th May

10.00am House Communion at 53 Woodlands Park, Joydens Wood

SUNDAY 19th May

9.30am Holy Communion
12.30pm TEAM LUNCH at the King's Head, Bexley Village

Tuesday 21st May

Young Peoples' Confirmation Preparation at Holy Redeemer Vicarage

Thursday 23rd May

7.30pm Adult Confirmation Preparation at Joydens Wood Vicarage

Saturday 25th May

11am – 2pm Joydens Wood Community Fayre at St Barnabas

SUNDAY 26th May

9.30am Holy Communion

4.00pm Sunday @ 4

Wednesday 29th May

8.00pm St James PCC meeting

Thursday 30th May ASCENSION DAY

7.30pm TEAM Ascension Day Service at St Mary's

Bexley Team Gentleman's Lunch on the first Wednesday of the month at 12.30pm at The Anchor, Bridgen Road, Bexley
Further details, Julia Wickham, St John's Bexley, 01322 556686

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Roger Bannister and the four-minute mile

By Tim Lenton.

The first person to run a mile in under four minutes was Roger Bannister, who did it 65 years ago, on 6th May 1954, at the Iffley Road track in Oxford. His time was 3:59.4 – the announcement drowned out by wild applause from the crowd after announcer Norris McWhirter said the word “three”.

Bannister was born in 1929: his father was a Methodist and his mother a Unitarian Sunday school teacher.

His world record lasted for only a few weeks, but because he was the first to achieve what many had thought impossible, he remains a household name. He himself always believed his successful 40-year career practising medicine – he was a neurologist – was a far greater achievement.

He was knighted in 1975 and was Master of Pembroke College, Oxford, from 1985 to 1993. After his marriage to Swedish artist Moyra Elver Jacobsson in 1955 he became friends with the Rector of All Souls’, Langham Place, the Rev Dr John Stott. He was baptised at All Souls: his sponsors were his two friends who had helped him to the four-minute mile – Chris Chataway and Chris Brasher.

One of his four children is the Rev Charlotte Bannister-Parker, an associate priest in Oxford.

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ALL IN THE MONTH OF MAY

500 years ago, on 2nd May 1519 Leonardo Da Vinci, the Italian artist, scientist and inventor, died.

200 years ago, on 24th May 1819 Queen Victoria was born. (She reigned from 1837 to 1901)

100 years ago, on 18th May 1919 Dame Margot Fonteyn, British ballerina, was born. (Died 1991)

80 years ago, on 25th May 1939 Sir Frank Dyson, Astronomer Royal of England and Scotland, died. His observations of the 1919 solar eclipse helped prove Einstein's theory of relativity. He also introduced the Greenwich Time Signal ('pips').

70 years ago, on 5th May 1949 the Council of Europe was founded.

65 years ago, on 6th May 1954 British athlete Roger Bannister became the first person to run a mile in under four minutes. (Three minutes, 59.4 seconds in Oxford.)

Also 65 years ago, on 29th May 1954 British athlete Diane Leather became the first woman to run a five minute mile. (Four minutes, 59.6 seconds in Birmingham.)

40 years ago, on 3rd May 1979 the British General Election was won by the Conservative Party, and Margaret Thatcher became Britain's first female prime minister.

25 years ago, on 6th May 1994 the Channel Tunnel linking England and France was officially opened.

Also 25 years ago, on 10th May 1994 Nelson Mandela was inaugurated as South Africa's first black president after many years of white rule.

20 years ago, on 6th May 1999 the first general elections for the Scottish Parliament and the National Assembly for Wales took place. Donald Dewar became First Minister of Scotland and Alun Michael became First Secretary for Wales.

15 years ago, on 1st May 2004 the following countries joined the European Union: Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia.

Signs & Symbols: Kneeling with body, mind and soul

The Rev Dr Jo White

Some of us prefer to kneel for just about everything in church. People around us might sit - but we are kneelers!



Time may have taken its toll though, and sadly the knees may not be what they were. But if you visit different churches, you will find that not all of them have furniture designed to help you kneel.

Some have the wooden support so close to the pew back that you are 'forced' to perch your rear on the seat in order to physically fit. Others have the gap so wide you cannot reach the seat, so you have to kneel with a straight back. Some don't have anything to kneel on at all.

But why do we kneel in church? In church we're continuing the actions of those in the Bible - both at worship and when addressing Jesus. Just think of all those who knelt before Him to ask forgiveness or healing, or, like the single leper, to give thanksgiving.

In the conscious presence of Almighty God, as we come before Him in worship and supplication, what can we do but we kneel with our body, mind and soul?

Rachael Farmer

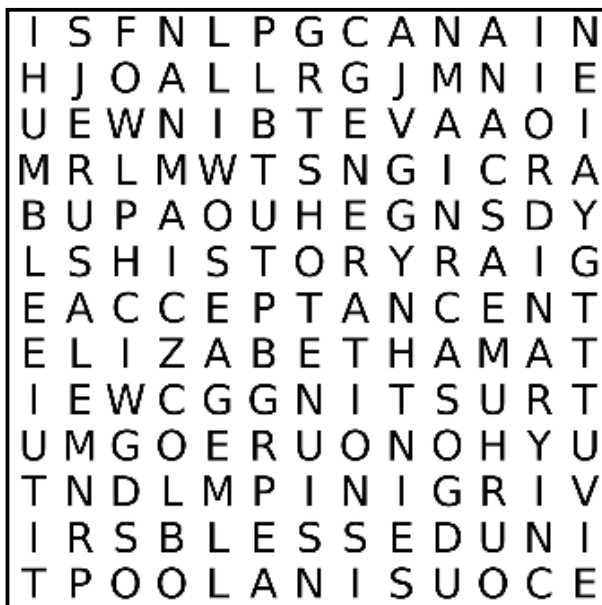
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(Solutions on page 27)

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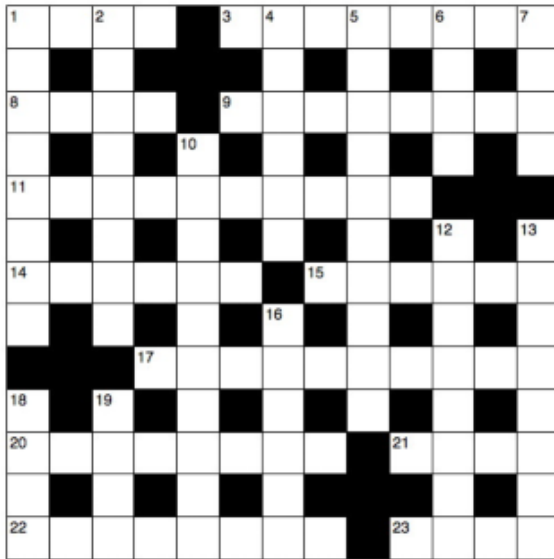
Across

- 1 Infant (Luke 2:12) (4)
- 3 Luis must (anag.) (8)
- 8 What Jesus called the devil (John 8:44) (4)
- 9 'My God, my God, why have you — me?' (Matthew 27:46) (8)
- 11 Anglican form of church government (10)
- 14 'Those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like — ' (Isaiah 40:31) (6)
- 15 Ministers of religion (6)
- 17 Make stronger (1 Thessalonians 3:13) (10)
- 20 Devoutness (1 Timothy 2:2) (8)
- 21 The father of Jesse (Ruth 4:22) (4)
- 22 Pool where Jesus healed a man who had been an invalid for 38 years (John 5:2) (8)
- 23 [Jesus] said to them, " — here and keep watch" (Mark 14:34) (4)

Down

- 1 Follower of Christ (Acts 16:1) (8)
- 2 One of the punishments endured by Paul (2 Corinthians 6:5) (8)
- 4 Soldiers (Exodus 14:9) (6)
- 5 Scholarly study of melody, harmony and rhythm (10)
- 6 'I am God, and there is none — me' (Isaiah 46:9) (4)
- 7 'And how can they preach unless they are — ?' (Romans 10:15) (4)
- 10 Favourable reception (1 Timothy 1:15) (10)
- 12 Hip orbit (anag.) (8)
- 13 End of life (Isaiah 22:14) (5,3)
- 16 'About midnight the sailors — they were approaching land' (Acts 27:27) (6)
- 18 He married Jezebel (1 Kings 16:30–31) (4)
- 19 'According to your great compassion — out my transgressions' (Psalm 51:1) (4)

(Solutions on page 32)



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ST JAMES THE LEAST OF ALL

The Rectory
St. James the Least



My dear Nephew Darren

Your new thermostatically controlled, underwater illuminated baptismal tank with wave simulation, for total immersions sounds rather intimidating. I am slightly surprised you don't have computer generated doves flying overhead in order to add that final touch of authenticity. I would imagine that to perform baptisms in your tank, with all of its computer technology, the clergy need less a degree in theology and more one in electrical engineering.

I do, however, agree with your Vicar's decision to stop the practice of performing these rituals in the river Mersey. I would imagine your newly baptised would emerge from the waters filled with both the Holy Spirit and typhoid. On emerging, they could be provided with a baptismal certificate and a free ride to the hospital for a stomach pump. The river Jordan may have been all very well for John the Baptist, but the river Mersey does seem to lack a certain aesthetic charm.

Had I baptised dear Miss Pemberton in the Mersey last month – at 93 years, taking the decision a little late in life (I did not attempt to hold her in one arm) – being a lady of such proportions, I suspect she would have constituted a shipping hazard.

I appreciate your suggestion that such procedures would look charming on the banks of our local Cotswold stream, but irrespective of our differing theologies, I would not want to be seen by parishioners in my bathing costume. Such apparel may be all very well when I am on holiday somewhere where I am totally unknown, but it hardly seems fitting for an honorary Canon in his parish.

I do concede that baptisms in medieval fonts can have their own particular problems. The plug in our own has never fitted properly, and so after filling it, I know I have precisely 16 minutes and 45 seconds to come to the actual baptism, otherwise the water has disappeared entirely. As I have discovered over the years, it is

impossible to look dignified disappearing into the vestry half way through the Service in order to fetch a second bucket. For baptisms in winter, the presentation from Admiral Barnaby of the small silver hammer has been a great help in order to break the ice which slowly forms across the surface as the service proceeds.

In future, as you and your own candidates luxuriate in this heated baptismal spa, do spare a thought for those of us who maintain the true faith.

Your loving uncle,
Eustace



... to be honest, I am not sure that all the money spent on a data projector was money well spent!

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GOD AND THE ARTS

By the Rev Michael Burgess

Still Life with Strawberries, Gooseberries and Asparagus: Adriaen Coorte

The 6th Sunday of Easter is traditionally Rogation Sunday, when we give thanks for the fruits of the earth and pray for all who work on the land. Rural churches often celebrate nature's cycle from seeds sown to crops harvested with Plough Sunday, Rogationtide, Lammas and Harvest.



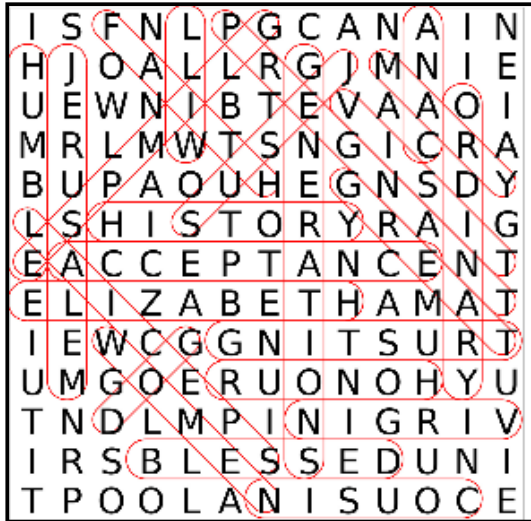
Jesus in His teaching pointed out the miracle of that cycle in the seed – sown in the soil, but springing up to new life; a small beginning that becomes a great plant; a single seed that is multiplied. This month of May marks two seasons in that growth: the harvesting of asparagus and the gathering of strawberries.

They are two signs of the fruitfulness of nature depicted in this beautiful, intimate painting that was given to the National Gallery two years ago by the Dutch collector, Willem van Dedem. It was painted in 1703 by Adriaen Coorte. We know little about him apart from the fact that he lived in Holland and has left us a garland of canvases, all displaying what has been called ‘a wondrous tenderness.’

This painting is an ordinary, unpretentious scene. There is no moral lesson here, no symbolism: simply a depiction of the beauty of creation in miniature. The bowl of strawberries and the bunch of asparagus lie on a stone ledge with some gooseberries and a plum. Each a gift of nature to enjoy and share, and to find there a token of God, the giver of all good things.

‘For everything there is a season,’ and in this month of May with Adriaen Coorte, we give thanks for this bounty of the earth and we pray for farmers and agricultural workers. But more than that – as the hymn tells us, ‘we thank thee then, O Father, for all things bright and good.’

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30th May Ascension Day: 40 Days with the Risen Christ

40 days after Easter comes Ascension Day. These are the 40 days during which the Risen Christ appeared again and again to His disciples, following His death and resurrection. (*Matthew 28; Mark 16; Luke 24; and John 20.*)

The Gospels give us little of Christ's teachings and deeds during those 40 days. Jesus was seen by numerous of His disciples: on the road to Emmaus, by the Sea of Galilee, in houses, etc. He strengthened and encouraged His disciples, and at last opened their eyes to all that the Scriptures had promised about the Messiah. Jesus also told them that as the Father had sent Him, He was now going to send them - to all corners of the earth, as His witnesses.

Luke records the story with great poignancy: "When Jesus had led them out to the vicinity of Bethany, He lifted up His hands - and blessed them."

As Christmas began the story of Jesus' life on earth, so Ascension Day completes it, with His return to His Father in heaven. Jesus' last act on earth was to bless His disciples. He and they had a bond as close as could be: they had just lived through three tumultuous years of public ministry and miracles – persecution and death – and resurrection! 'While He was blessing them, He left them and was taken up into heaven.' (Luke 24:50-1) He was not forsaking them, but merely going on ahead to a kingdom which would also be theirs one day: 'I am ascending to my Father and to your Father, to my God and your God...' (John 20:17)

According to Luke: 'they worshipped Him - and returned to Jerusalem with great joy .And they stayed continually at the temple, praising God.' (Luke 24:52,53)

SOLUTIONS TO CROSSWORD PUZZLE

ACROSS: 1, Baby. 3, Stimulus. 8, Liar. 9, Forsaken. 11, Episcopacy. 14, Eagles. 15, Clergy. 17, Strengthen. 20, Holiness. 21, Obed. 22, Bethesda. 23, Stay.

DOWN: 1, Believer. 2, Beatings. 4, Troops. 5, Musicology. 6, Like. 7, Sent. 10, Acceptance. 12, Prohibit. 13, Dying day. 16, Sensed. 18, Ahab. 19, Blot.



ST AUGUSTINE

Over 1400 years ago, in the year 597, St Augustine led a group of 40 monks to preach the the gospel to the heathen English. The Christian faith had been here before but had been practically wiped out by savage raiders from Denmark and Germany.

St Augustine was sent by Pope Gregory who had seen some English slave boys in Rome and had asked where they came from. On being told that they were Angles, he replied that they were not Angles but angels and became determined that their people should hear the good news of Christ.

The monks he sent landed in Kent and the king of that area, Ethelbert, gave them a house in Canterbury. When Ethelbert was baptised his people followed, and on Christmas Day 587 more than 10,000 people were baptised by Augustine in a local river.

Augustine became the first Archbishop of the English.



CANTERBURY QUIZ

All the answers to these questions are words in the piece about St Augustine – when you have found them all rearrange the letters to give you something that you would see in Canterbury today.

1. Pope Gregory sent him
2. What the English were before
3. The king's name
4. The king gave them a house here
5. Not Angles, but
6. Where 10,000 were baptised
7. The raiders came from Germany and
8. The number that were baptised
9. The monks in Kent

When is water musical?

When it's piping hot.



How can you stop water coming into your house?

Don't pay the water rates.



Answers: 1. Augustine 2. heathen
 3. Ethelbert 4. Canterbury 5. angels 6. river
 7. Denmark 8. ten thousand 9. landed and
 the rearranged letters spell
 CANTHERBURY

FROM THE REGISTERS

Baptisms

14th April

Harry Anthony Birch

Weddings

-

Funerals

-

Interment of Ashes

13th April

Jack Longbon

Year's mind for May 2018

May Day Prayer

Might of the Triune our shield in distress,
The paschal Christ's might with his peace to bless,
Spirit's might, Healer of salvation's state,
The gracious King's might, precious Father great.

The cross of Christ be our shield down today,
The cross of Christ our shield up on our way,
The cross of Christ round be our shield and stay,
Taking at our hands the blessing of May,

At our hands blessing of the Beltane Day.

From an ancient Celtic prayer from Benbecula

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