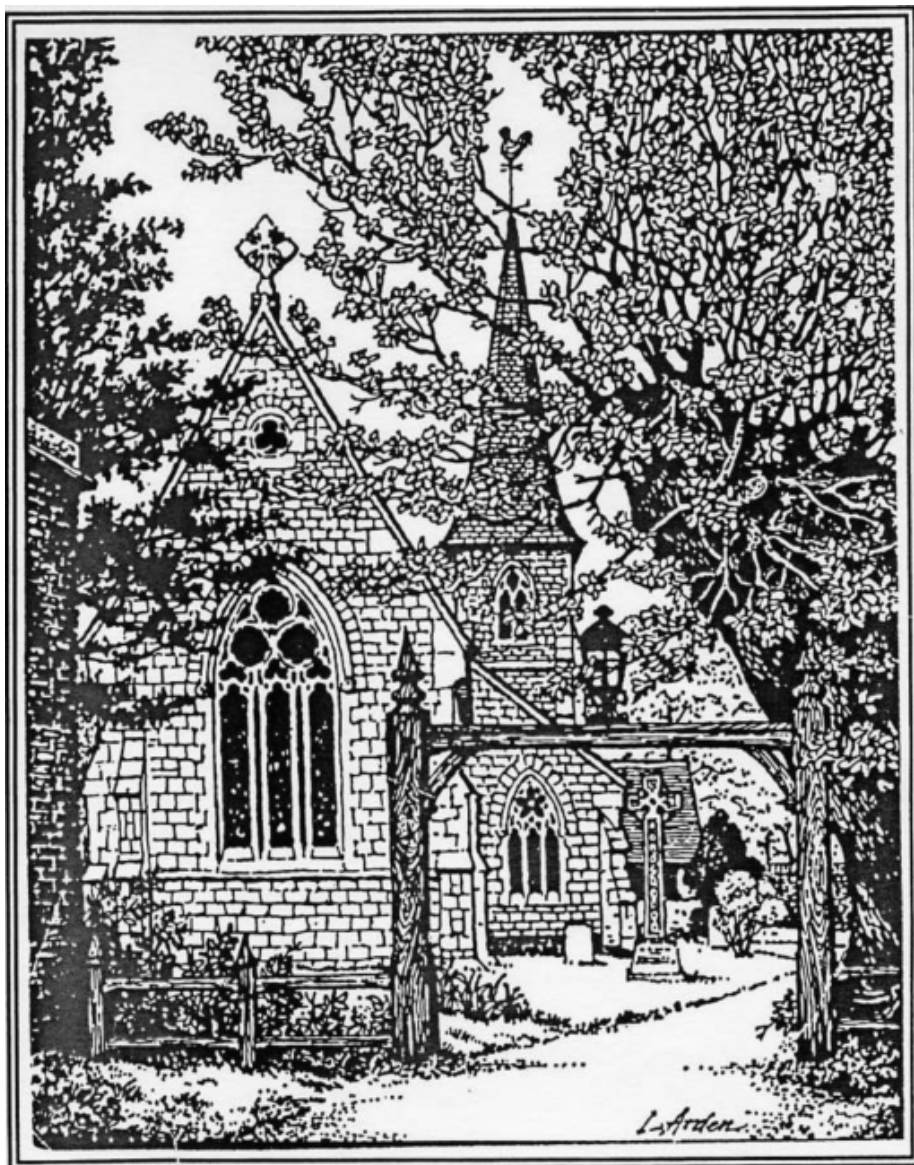


**The Parish Church of
*St. James, North Cray***

50p

January, 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

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

PCC Secretary: Rhonda Collins 020 8300 3797

Sacristan: Stephen Hills 020 8302 7236

Bothy Bookings: Lynne Meads 07966 315518

Parish Safeguarding: Rhonda Collins 020 8300 3797

Magazine Editor: Steve Blake
sblake stjames@virginmedia.com

St James Sunday Service

9.30am

Holy Communion

(All age service with Uniformed Organisations on second Sunday)

LETTER FROM THE LAY READER JANUARY 2021

Reader's reflection at the start of 2021



I am sure I am not alone in really missing the times spent together with our Lord in our lovely church on a Sunday morning:

- Time to pause and relax in fellowship with our friends.
- Time when the portal between earth and heaven parts and we can be nourished and healed by the presence of our Lord.

But for me, lovely as our church may be, it is not a temple to hold and contain the Lord our God.

The temple where our God may dwell on earth does not need a building made of stone and tiles.

The Temple our Lord requires is built from his divine presence in human hearts minds and souls.

'As you come to him the living Stone – rejected by humans but chosen by God and precious to him- you also like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house..' 1 Peter ch. 2 v4-5a.

This temple of the Holy Spirit is in our hearts, in our homes and in the relationships we share with others.

The one thing we need to remember is that Jesus *'The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone 1 Peter ch. 2 v8.* (The cornerstone is the stone at the top of a gothic arch that stops the arch and potentially the whole building collapsing - Those mediaeval stone masons certainly knew a thing or two).

We must never forget it is Jesus who remains the cornerstone of our Spiritual temple as we meet him.

We may not be able to worship God in our church building as the year 2021 begins but most of us will have time on our hands.

Time to spend time in the company of Jesus at home:

- Reading and reflecting on the Bible (Mark's Gospel is a good place to begin)
- Sitting in stillness and contemplation by the light of a candle
- Saying a prayer for yourself, those you love and those in need
- Seeking reconciliation for past and present hurts
- Talking to those around you about the most important things of life

Much as we can help faith to grow in others we cannot give someone else our faith. We each have to discover our own faith for ourself. You can be sure he is sitting by the phone waiting for your call

The true significance of Christmas becomes clear each time one of us opens our hearts to his presence.

This is truly a moment when the portal between heaven and earth parts.

And whatever may be befall us, once the portal between heaven and earth has opened into our lives on earth we can look forward to a future where no portal will separate us from the perpetual presence of God.

In the meanwhile please do your best to keep safe.

We look forward to better times ahead when we can all worship in fellowship in church once again.

David Stevens (Lay Reader)

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 JANUARY 2021

The Team Rector, the Team clergy, and the PCC's of the Parish churches in the Bexley Team have been extremely concerned about the figures for Covid infections in this area. We are mindful of our responsibility for the safety and well-being of those attending worship in our church buildings.

We have therefore, in accordance with Canon Law, sought the permission of the Bishop of Rochester to suspend public worship for the time being.

This permission has been granted until 1 February 2021.

We will continue to circulate worship material via email, and also make worship available online, on Zoom, or via a phone-in link on Zoom.

Saturday 5.30pm Zoom Nightwatch Service
a quiet service of reflection on the week that is past

Sunday 10am Zoom Worship including a bible
-based talk.

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.

May God bless you all at this difficult and worrying time.



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BEXLEY TEAM MINISTRY

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

2 Corinthians 1:10-11 (NIV)

PRACTICAL ADVICE

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

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

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

A CALL TO PRAYER

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

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

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

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

Pray for those infected or in quarantine

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

Pray for those at high risk

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

Adapted from prayers of World Vision

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

WORSHIPPING AT HOME

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

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

Radio 4

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

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

Sunday worship @ 8.10am

Lent Talks Wednesday @ 8.45pm

Radio 3

Choral Evensong Wednesdays at 3.30pm or Sundays at 3pm

Radio 2

Pause for thought at 5.45 am and 9.20 am

Television

Songs of Praise BBC1 Sunday at 1.15pm

Church of England. churchofengland.org

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

[All Hallows by the Tower](#)

[Buckingham Parish Church](#)

[St Nicholas Church, Canvey Island](#)

[St James' Church, Clitheroe](#)

[St Mary's Kenton](#)

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

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

Suzy Higgs, Churchwarden

CHRISTIANS IN ACTION: Mary Slessor (1848 - 1915)



Mary Slessor was born in December 1848 into a wretchedly poor family. Her father was an alcoholic who lost his job as a shoemaker. Mary was the second of seven children, and in 1859 they moved from Aberdeen into the fetid slums of Dundee. Her father and mother worked in the mills, and Mary joined them there when she turned 11.

When Mary's father and both brothers died of pneumonia, Mary's mother struggled on to keep Mary and her two sisters alive. By the time Mary was 14 she was doing a 12-hour day as a jute maker. But life was not all drudgery. Mary's mother was a devout Christian who read the family Bible to her daughters, and also the *Missionary Record*, a monthly publication from the United Presbyterian Church. The stories of the missionaries captivated Mary. When she heard that David Livingstone, the great missionary explorer, had died, she decided that she would follow in his footsteps. She wanted to devote her life to taking the gospel to Africa. She was 25.

In August 1876 the Presbyterians sent her out to Calabar, Nigeria, an area where no European had ever yet set foot. With her red hair and blue eyes, Mary grabbed attention wherever she went, but despite recurring illness and constant danger, Mary settled happily among the tribes. She learned their traditions, quickly becoming fluent in their language, Efik. Soon she won the confidence of their tribal leaders. She taught their children and was soon determined to put an end to some of their barbaric practices, such as the killing of twins (whom they thought were evil).

Over the years Mary put an end to many witchcraft practises, and she adopted every twin child she found abandoned. And she talked endlessly about Jesus Christ, the passion of her life.

Mary was tough – she made long trips through the jungles and took canoes up remote rivers. When her shoes gave out, she went barefoot. Her great passion was to go to ‘the regions beyond’ with the Gospel. She thrived in places and among people who would have terrified most women in her day.

It has been written of her: “Practically singlehanded she tamed and transformed three pagan communities in succession. It is a question if the career of any other woman missionary has been marked by so many strange adventures, daring feats, signal providences, and wonderful achievements.” (Dr Robert H. Glover, *The Progress of World-Wide Missions*.)

When in 1901 Southern Nigeria became a British Protectorate, Mary was appointed the first ever female Magistrate in the British Empire. She became a skilful diplomatic emissary.

She was known for saying: "It is not Mary Slessor, but God and our united prayers that have brought the blessings to Calabar. Christ shall have all the honour and glory for the multitudes saved."

When she finally died of fever in January 1915 the native Christian girls and women wept bitterly: “Our mother is dead. Everybody's mother has left us.”

Mary Slessor once wrote to a friend who had long prayed for her: "I have always said that I have no idea how or why God has carried me over so many funny and hard places, and made these hordes of people submit to me, or why the Government should have given me the privilege of a Magistrate among them, except in answer to prayer made at home for me. It is all beyond my comprehension.”



News and Issues



We must become a ‘simpler, humbler, bolder Church’

The momentous events of 2020 will have a “profound effect” on the future of the Church of England and our wider society, the Archbishops of Canterbury and York have said.

In a recent joint address to the General Synod, Archbishops Justin Welby and Stephen Cottrell said the Church of England must adapt and put its trust in God to become a “simpler, humbler, bolder Church.”

The archbishops’ comments came as they addressed the first online sitting of the General Synod following a legal change to enable it to meet remotely amid the coronavirus restrictions.

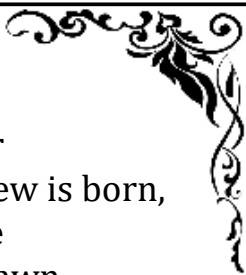
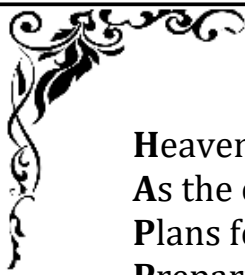
They outlined how the coronavirus pandemic and its economic fallout are providing the backdrop to huge social changes - here and around the world.

Archbishop Justin told Synod: “2020 will be a year that registers in memory and in history. It can be compared with 1929, with 1914, with 1989. “For let us be clear, there is no possibility of changes in society failing to have a profound effect on the shape, calling and experience of mission in the Church.”

Outlining the dramatic events of 2020, he added: “These crises are not signs of the absence of God but calls to recognise the presence of the kingdom and to act in faith and courage, simplifying our life focusing on Jesus Christ, looking outwards to the needy and renewing in our cells our call to wash feet, to serve our society and to be the Church *for* England.”

Archbishop Stephen went on to outline the work of groups set up to discern how the Church of England might respond and change in light of the recent challenges.

He told Synod: “If we put our trust in God, and if we learn to love one another, then I believe we can become a simpler, humbler, bolder Church, better able to live and share the gospel of Jesus Christ.”




Heaven's gift of another year
As the old departs and the new is born,
Plans for a future and a hope
Preparing us for each new dawn.

Yesterday has gone forever,
New days and ventures lie ahead,
Even darkness turns to light
When we make the Lord our head.

Yielding to the Holy Spirit
Ever mindful that He's there,
As we live our lives before Him
Rejoicing in His loving care.

By Megan Carter



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MEETINGS and Events 2021

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

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ALL IN THE MONTH OF JANUARY

500 years ago, on 3rd January 1521 German Protestant reformer Martin Luther was excommunicated from the Roman Catholic Church by Pope Leo X after he refused to recant his writings. A few weeks later, on 23rd January, the Diet of Worms was called by the Holy Roman Empire and ran until 25th May. This imperial assembly culminated in the Edict of the Diet of Worms, which branded Martin Luther as a heretic, and banned his writings.

100 years ago, on 28th January 1921 the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier was installed beneath the Arc de Triomphe in Paris. It honours those who died in WWI (and later also WWII) who were never identified.

80 years ago, on 5th January 1941 Amy Johnson, pioneering British aviator, drowned in the Thames Estuary, aged 37. She had bailed out after her plane ran out of fuel and crashed in adverse weather conditions.

60 years ago, on 20th January 1961 John F Kennedy was inaugurated as the 35th President of the United States.

40 years ago, on 20th January 1981, Ronald Reagan was inaugurated the 40th President of the United States.

30 years ago, 17th January to 28th February, the Gulf War's 'Operation Desert Storm' took place. Invading Iraqi forces were expelled from Kuwait and the Kuwaiti monarchy was restored. It was a decisive coalition victory.

25 years ago, on 27th January 1996 the first Holocaust Remembrance Day was observed in Germany. It became International Holocaust Day in 2005 when it was adopted by the United Nations. It marks the day (27th January 1945) when the Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration/death camp was liberated.

20 years ago, on 31st January 2001 a Scottish court in the Netherlands convicted Abdelbaset al-Megrahi of the bombing of Pan Am Flight 103 over Lockerbie in 1988.

How many more waves? *By Paul Valler*

As the days are dark, and winter still stretches ahead, many of us find the prospect of more restrictions for months to come even harder than when we first went into lockdown.

After nine months of coronavirus, we are emotionally drained. We are financially drained. We are lonely, depressed, frightened, and facing deep uncertainty, from job losses to health problems to relationship breakdown. We are running out of steam, and the virus is still going strong.

There is a strong parallel in all this with the ancient book of Job and his experience of loss and pain. Like Job, we are discovering that we are not always entitled to health, wealth, and happiness; and like Job our suffering inexplicably goes on and on. Like the irritating moralising of Job's comforters, the constant critique of the media only seems to make things worse. And, like Job, our minds are incapable of totally grasping the meaning of all this suffering. We need hope.

Job was deprived of everything, yet even in his despair he never lost his belief that God was there. Occasionally an indestructible hope burst forth like a ray of light in the darkness of his pain. "I know that my redeemer lives, and that in the end He will stand on the earth. And after my skin has been destroyed, yet in my flesh I will see God.' (Job 19:26).

But the truly transformative moment for Job came when, instead of seeing his situation in front of God, he finally *saw God in front of his situation*. Then, even in the intensity of his suffering, the greatness of the Almighty eclipsed the problem. That is the revelation we need.

In this sad and weary time lament is therapeutic, and we can be completely real with our Father in Heaven. Yet in our lament, the path to rekindling true hope lies in the possibility of focusing on the character and immensity of God. Greater is He that is in us than the pandemic that is in the world. Join in with the ancient words of Psalm 42: 'Why are you downcast O my soul? Why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise Him, my Saviour and my God.'

Paul Valler, Chair of the LICC Board (London Institute for Contemporary Christianity.)

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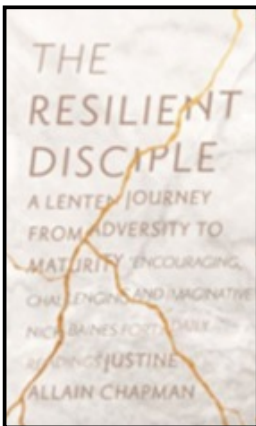
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Book Mark

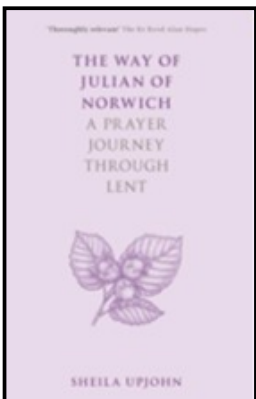
The Resilient Disciple – a Lenten Journey from Adversity to Maturity By Justine Allain Chapman, SPCK, £9.99



Is it possible to respond to the adversities of life by becoming stronger, wiser and more loving? The art of kintsugi ('repairing with gold') not only restores cracked objects but makes them even more beautiful than before. Alone on an 8-day retreat in the Egyptian desert, Justine Allain Chapman experienced first-hand the physical, spiritual and mental struggle many have endured before her.

This vividly written book includes wide ranging prayers and Scripture readings, along with guides to using the material with groups and in preaching and worship.

The Way of Julian of Norwich – a Prayer Journey through Lent By Sheila Upjohn, SPCK, £7.99



Sheila Upjohn explores the 'Revelations of Divine Love' alongside passages from Scripture. She reveals how Julian's fresh perspectives on sin and judgement, anger and forgiveness, the Incarnation and the crucifixion can challenge and enlighten us, six hundred years later, in a world so badly in need of the assurance of God's unconditional love.

This inspirational book by Sheila Upjohn serves as a guide to Julian of Norwich that will deepen the reader's prayer life during Lent and throughout the year. Upjohn transports the reader back to the middle ages in this book about 'Revelations of Divine Love' and Julian of Norwich to give a deeper understanding of Julian who was so often perceived as an outsider.

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The first man to get stopped for speeding

By Tim Lenton

It was 125 years ago, on 28th January 1896, that Walter Arnold of Kent became the first person in the world to be convicted of speeding. The speed limit was 2mph at the time, and a man carrying a red flag had to walk in front of the vehicle. But one day Mr Arnold took off at 8mph, without a flag bearer. He was chased by a policeman on a bicycle for five miles, arrested, and fined one shilling.



Mr Arnold was four times over the rather modest 2mph limit in the streets of Paddock Wood, near Tunbridge Wells in Kent. To achieve this feat today, a driver in most towns or cities would have to be travelling at over 100mph, which is probably a bit excessive.

The speed limit was changed later that same year to 14mph, but there is no record of Mr Arnold getting his money back. Nor is there any evidence that he was endangering life and limb, which used to be the criterion: the 1832 Stage Carriage Act introduced the offence of endangering someone's safety by "furious driving".

Just over 100 years later, the road safety charity Brake reports that male motorists are more than three times as likely as women to having driven at more than 100mph, because 'boy racers' believe they have more talent than the average driver. Police have caught one driver doing 120mph in a 20mph zone, another doing 152mph in a 30mph zone, and one doing an astonishing 180mph on a motorway. As Edmund King, AA president, points out: "Generally men have riskier attitudes towards driving than their female counterparts."

BEXLEY TEAM MINISTRY
“EXPLORING CONFIRMATION” 2020



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

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

**THE CONFIRMATION SERVICE ON 3 MAY HAS BEEN
POSTPONED - TBA**

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

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

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

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

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

Reverend Ren Harding (Team Rector)
01322 528923
07836644782

Struggling towards relinquishment

By Tony Collins

During lockdown the little Methodist chapel to which Pen and I belong has been refurbished. After the builders left, we started putting things straight, and were stunned to realise how much *stuff* we had. Old hymns books. A broken communion set. Paper and defunct pens, stickers and dried glue from Messy Church. Wonky plastic chairs. A portable font. A cassette player. A communion jug from 1864. A spare organ stool. Endless vases. A handsome, heavily carved table that had been donated in memory of someone no one can remember. Not all of it useless, but none of it needed. I didn't win every discussion, but we filled a skip.

Adaptation is the motor of evolution. If we are encumbered with objects – and habits and old stories – we will be less able to change. Churches should not be museums. Much of the problem arises from sentiment. My grandparents were world travellers, mainly in India and the Far East, and my childhood home was filled with trinkets. But one man's heirloom is another's junk, and over the course of the decades I have ditched most of the stuff that dogged my steps. If you value things for their sentimental value, rather than their intrinsic utility or beauty, your heirs will sigh as they open your attic.

This is where relinquishment comes in. Relinquishment empowers love and generosity. You'd have thought the more you have the easier it is to give. In fact, the less you have, the more lightly you sit to everything. This is the principle of the Widow's Mite; those who have relinquished much are more often willing to share.

Relinquishment is the starting point for spiritual growth. What if we've been missing the chance to discover not only who we could have been, but who we at heart really are? What if the nothing we brought and leave with is precisely our birth-right, an instrument of spiritual power? If we remove the possessions and commitments that form our armour, our true selves can emerge. And, once your mother's

ancient sideboard has finally gone, you can break out the vacuum cleaner.

Tony Collins has worked for most of his life as a publisher. He is now a literary agent.

WORDSEARCH



Epiphany	Jesus	Frankincense	Work
Wise	Star	Myrrh	Study
Men	Herod	New	Running
Camels	Worship	Resolutions	Gym
Baby	Gold	Bills	

Solutions on page 29

JANUARY CROSSWORD PUZZLE

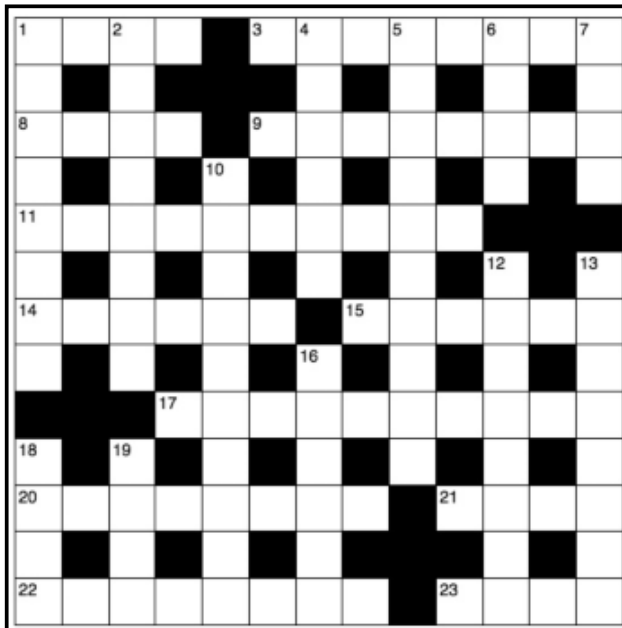
Across

- 1 'Again Peter denied it, and at that moment a — began to crow' (John 18:27) (4)
3 Fetters (Job 33:11) (8)
8 Perform on a musical instrument (1 Samuel 16:23) (4)
9 Paul describes it as 'the third heaven'
(2 Corinthians 12:2–4) (8)
11 Loyally (Deuteronomy 11:13) (10)
14 Hens? Me? (anag.) (6)
15 Not visible (Matthew 6:6) (6)
17 Predicted site of the final great battle (Revelation 16:16) (10)
20 Jacob's youngest son (Genesis 35:18) (8)
21 One of Zophar's eleven sons (1 Chronicles 7:36) (4)
22 For example, London, Paris, Rome (8)
23 United Society for the Propagation of the Gospel (1,1,1,1)

Down

- 1 Favourite church activity: Fellowship round a — — —
(3,2,3)
2 Divinely bestowed powers or talents (8)
4 Pile together (1 Thessalonians 2:16) (4,2)
5 Comanded to justify (John 8:13) (10)
6 Timothy's grandmother (2 Timothy 1:5) (4)
7 Killed (Psalm 78:34) (4)
10 One of Graham Kendrick's best-known songs, — — King (3,7)
12 Indecency (Mark 7:22) (8)
13 Unceasing (Jeremiah 15:18) (8)
16 He prophesied 'the abomination that causes desolation'
(Matthew 24:15) (6)
18 British Board of Film Classification (1,1,1,1)
19 Pans (anag.) (4)

(Solutions on page 30)



With the US Presidential Inauguration in mind

1961: John F Kennedy:

“We observe today not a victory of party, but a celebration of freedom — symbolising an end, as well as a beginning — signifying renewal... Let the word go forth from this time and place, to friend and foe alike, that the torch has been passed to a new generation of Americans.... And so, my fellow Americans: ask not what your country can do for you—ask what you can do for your country.”

1981: Ronald Reagan:

“Can we solve the problems confronting us? Well, the answer is an unequivocal and emphatic ‘yes.’ To paraphrase Winston Churchill, I did not take the oath I have just taken with the intention of presiding over the dissolution of the world's strongest economy...The business of our nation goes forward. These United States are confronted with an economic affliction of great proportions...It threatens to shatter the lives of millions of our people.”

ST JAMES THE LEAST OF ALL



On the art of ringing in the New Year

The Rectory

St. James the Least of All

My dear Nephew Darren

I am afraid you must concede that church bells are not to everyone's taste. The idea of switching on your recorded bells - no matter how digitally enhanced - at midnight in order to welcome in the New Year may have seemed inspired at the time, but considering that most of your inner city parish is Moslem, that you are surrounded on one side by a hospital and another by a care home for the elderly, it is not too surprising that the joyful sound was not well received.

If you really felt threatened by being confronted at the church door by irate nurses at one minute past midnight as you wished them all a Happy New Year, just think of your degree of discomfort were we still to have matrons. Never mind, curates are supposed to make mistakes; the only pity is that you seem to be so well endowed with them.

But to be fair, we too had a small misjudgement on New Year's Eve. Our bell-ringers – who practise the art of campanology, not on operating electronic equipment – have always been something of a trial. They ring with great enthusiasm for half an hour before services each week, but then as we are singing the first hymn, can be seen emerging from the church tower, putting on hats and coats while volubly discussing who made the error in the middle of that morning's grandsire triples.

By the time we reach the prayers, they have reached the porch and can be heard discussing the inadequacies of Miss Timmin's hat. When we come to the Bible reading and they can be heard criticising the rector's sermons, I send the vergers out to tell them to go home.

But New Year's Eve is the high point of their year, as they ring out the old and ring in the new. They meet in the bell tower at 11pm to

have a glass of champagne and then have a period of ringing before further refreshment becomes necessary. By midnight, their enthusiasm somewhat exceeds their accuracy and the village hears the New Year being joyfully welcomed by a set of eight bells being rung in an entirely random order.

This year, I drifted off to sleep with their sound in my ear, to be woken three hours later to hear one bell being mournfully tolled. Since it persisted, I felt obliged to go and find out why – to discover Colonel Bradshaw alone in the bell tower. When the party ended and the ringers trooped out, the Colonel returned to retrieve his hat. The others, ignorant of his absence, then locked the church and went home to their beds. That lone bell was his way of announcing his predicament.

At least I was able to reassure him that his six hour vigil in the church partially made up for his absence from Mattins for the previous twelve months.

Your loving uncle,

Eustace



...Rodney, I've been meaning to have a word with you about your carbon footprint!

GOD AND THE ARTS

By The Rev Michael Burgess

The hidden years

When St Paul wrote about the birth and humanity of Jesus to the Philippians, he described it as an emptying and a humbling. Jesus humbled Himself, he wrote, 'and became obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.' In obedience and love Jesus followed the will of His Father through His ministry from baptism to the cross and Easter beyond.

But what about that period called 'the hidden years', after the Holy Family's return from Egypt? The Gospels tell us of only one event in that period leading up to adulthood: the pilgrimage to Jerusalem when Jesus was 12. For the rest of those 30 years, He lived with Mary and Joseph 'growing in wisdom and in divine and human favour.' Just as He followed His heavenly Father's will in His ministry, so in these growing years He followed the guidance and teaching of Mary and Joseph.

This month's painting highlights one moment in those years of growth: 'St Joseph the Carpenter' by Georges de la Tour.



'Highlights' is the right word, because this painting captures the strong contrast of light and darkness. Georges de la Tour lived from 1593 to 1652 in Lorraine. He was part of a Franciscan-led revival in that area, and this work from the 1640s captures St Joseph and the Christ-Child with Franciscan tenderness and insight.

We can see the tools of Joseph's trade on the ground. He leans over them, hard at work on a piece of

wood. Jesus is sitting by his side, his face lit by the candle, which lights up the carpenter's shop. As well as contrasting light and dark, there is the contrast of young and old, and the thought that the child learning from the old man is also the one who can teach us. De la Tour was particularly fascinated by light and shadows cast by a candle or a lantern. Here the artist shows the candlelight illuminating the face of the child Jesus who will grow up to the Light of the world.

As this New Year begins, we can think back to the light from the Bethlehem manger we celebrated at Christmas. We can look ahead to the light shining from the adult Jesus through His teaching and healing. Here in these hidden years, we can celebrate the light of wisdom and divine favour, as Luke calls them, shining on the face of the child Jesus. We pray for that light to guide us through this New Year. When the way ahead may look dark and uncertain, let us pray that God's light will make clear the path ahead.

SOLUTIONS TO WORDSEARCH



17th

St Anthony of Egypt

Anthony was born in Coma (Upper Egypt) in 251, and at 20 he settled down to the life of a hermit in a deserted fort in Pispir. In 306 Anthony



ended his solitude and began visiting other hermits one of whom was Paul. According to legend, the day they met, a raven provided lunch for them by dropping a loaf of bread nearby.

Anthony was a godly man, and would often pray for people in need. Stories circulated that those he prayed for were healed, and so he became known as a miracle-worker. In 311, when the Roman Emperor Maximinus was persecuting the Christians, Anthony went to Alexandria to encourage the

church there to stand firm. Years later he stoutly defended the Christian faith in disputes with heretics.

Anthony died in 356, but even hundreds of years later he was not forgotten. A medical band of people adopted his name, and thus The Order of Hospitallers of Saint Anthony was founded (c.1100, in La Motte). It became a pilgrimage centre for those suffering from ergotism (called St Anthony's Fire - a serious form of fungi poisoning).

Anthony was a tremendously popular saint throughout the Middle Ages. By then he was seen as the patriarch of monks, and a healer of both men and animals. Anthony even gave us the word 'tantony', a diminutive applied to the smallest pig in a litter, and to the smallest bell in a peal of bells. The early church father, Athanasius, wrote *The Life of Anthony*. This moving biography helped to convert the great Augustine.

SOLUTIONS TO CROSSWORD PUZZLE

ACROSS: 1, Cock. 3, Shackles. 8, Play. 9, Paradise. 11, Faithfully. 14, Enmesh. 15, Unseen. 17, Armageddon. 20, Benjamin. 21, Beri. 22, Capitals. 23, USPG.

DOWN: 1, Cup of tea. 2, Charisma. 4, Heap up. 5, Challenged. 6, Lois. 7, Slew. 10, The Servant. 12, Lewdness. 13, Unending. 16, Daniel. 18, BBFC. 19, Snap.



St WULFSTAN
19th January

St Wulfstan was Bishop of Worcester from 1062-95. He lived during the Norman Conquest of England and was the only Saxon bishop to remain under William the Conqueror.

Wulfstan was a caring and hard-working monk. He rebuilt the cathedral at Worcester, cared for the poor, and struggled to ease the harsh conditions imposed by the Normans on the Saxons. Unlike some priests, he baptised children of the poor without charge. It is said that he never turned away people asking for help.

Wulfstan fought the slave trade in Bristol (slave trading didn't just start with slaves from Africa but had been going on for centuries with slaves from England being sold to Ireland and North Africa).

Wulfstan died whilst washing the feet of 12 poor men during a service in the cathedral. He died as he had lived, serving God and caring for others.

CATHEDRAL SAINTS

Some cathedrals are associated with or dedicated to particular saints. Can you link the saint with the cathedral?

- | | |
|---------------|------------|
| St Giles | Lichfield |
| St Mungo | Ely |
| St Chad | Durham |
| St Etheldreda | Edinburgh |
| St Cuthbert | Winchester |
| St Swithin | Glasgow |



Did you hear about the man who took his car in for a service?

It got stuck in the church doors.

What's green, curly & religious?

Lettuce pray.



What lives in a paper bag and hangs around in French cathedrals?

The lunch-pack of Notre Dame.



Answers: St Giles at Edinburgh, St Mungo at Glasgow, St Chad at Lichfield, St Etheldreda at Ely, St Cuthbert at Durham, St Swithin at Winchester.

FROM THE REGISTERS

Baptisms

-

Weddings

-

Burials

-

Year's mind for January 2019



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ACCESSIBILITY NEEDS

If you are going to attend our church and you have accessibility needs please let us know and we will be happy to make arrangements for you. There is level access to the church and the Bothy and we have a sound loop system and large print orders of service. Please feel free to telephone the Team Vicar Rev Ren Harding who will be happy to discuss the matter with you.

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