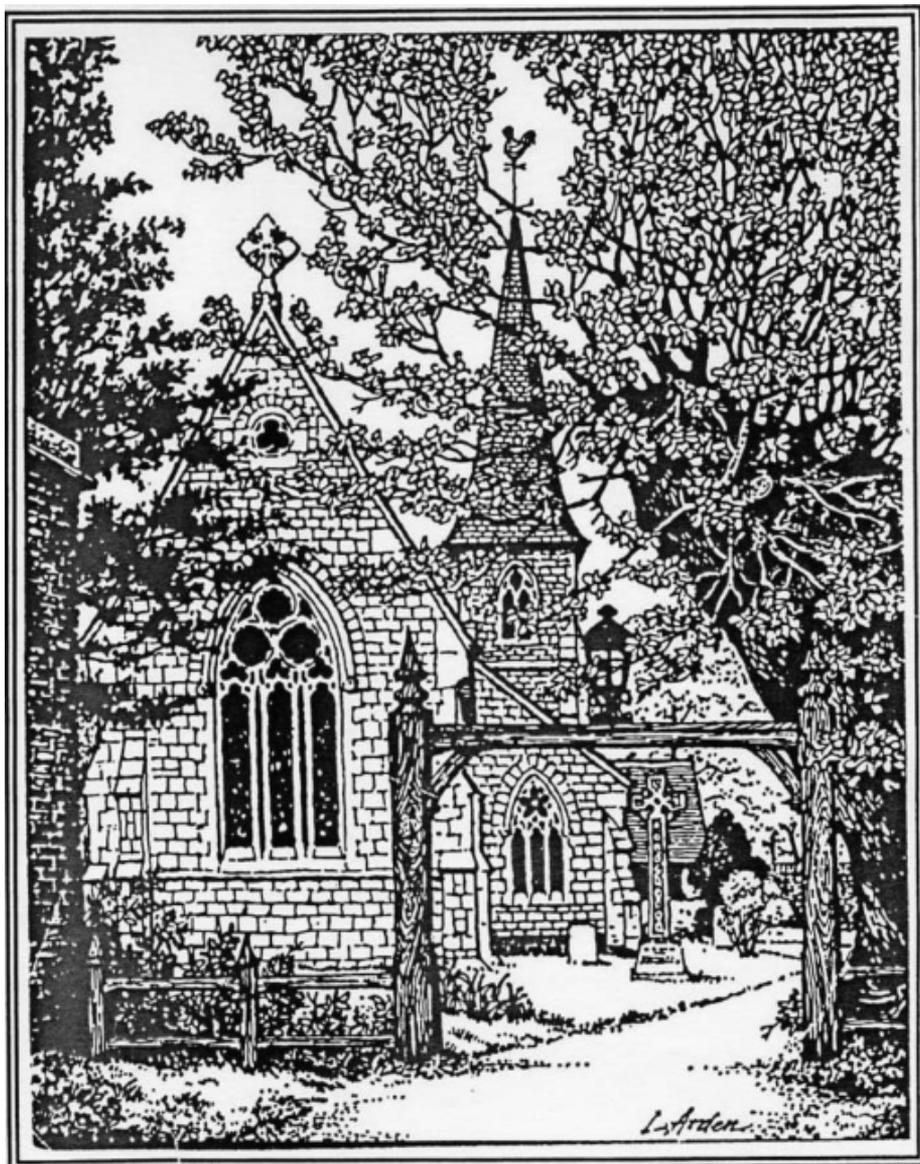


**The Parish Church of
*St. James, North Cray***

**50p
*February, 2022***

(Part of the Bexley Team Ministry)



St JAMES, NORTH CRAY PARISH STAFF

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

Lay Reader: David Stevens 020 8300 0867

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

Treasurer: Position vacant

PCC Secretary: Rhonda Collins 020 8300 3797

Sacristan: Stephen Hills 020 8302 7236

Bothy Bookings: Lynne Meads 07966 315518

Parish Safeguarding: Rhonda Collins 020 8300 3797

Magazine Editor: Steve Blake
sblakestjames@virginmedia.com

St James Sunday Service

9.30am

Holy Communion

(All age service with Uniformed Organisations on second Sunday)

TEAM RECTOR'S LETTER FEBRUARY 2022



The Archdeacon of Bromley and Bexley, the Venerable Paul Wright is retiring in February 2022.

I'm sure Paul would be absolutely delighted by the comment of one member of the congregation that "...surely he isn't old enough to retire!"

There is to be a formal Farewell Evensong Service for Archdeacon Paul in Rochester Cathedral on Sunday 20 February at 3.15pm, that a number of us are attending. This promises to be a very special occasion, as the church choir of St George's, Beckenham are to lead the singing.

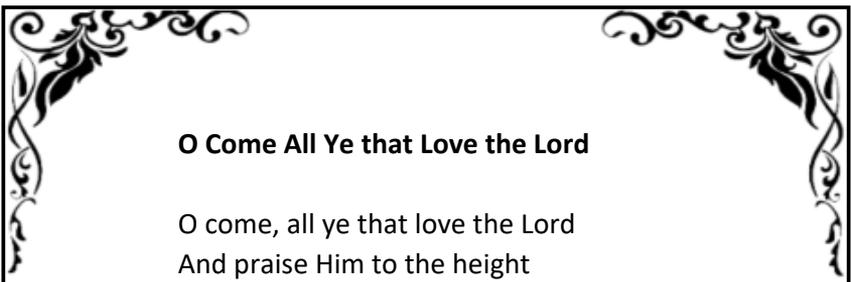
Archdeacon Paul has served the community for many years. He was ordained to the priesthood in 1980 and so has served over forty years as a Priest, mostly in the Diocese of Rochester. During this time, he has been incumbent of a number of churches – St Augustine, Gillingham; St Paulinus, Crayford; St John, Sidcup; and Priest in Charge of St Luke, Bromley Common; St Augustine, Slade Green.

Since 2003 he has offered distinguished service as Archdeacon of Bromley and Bexley. He has steered many local churches through times of change and would be the first to recognise that sometimes change is painful and difficult, even when it is necessary.

On a personal note, I would want to recognise the support that Archdeacon Paul has given to me, and to my family. He will be very much missed. We pray for him, for his wife Jill and for the diocese as they seek to appoint Paul's successor.

Reverend Ren Harding (Team Rector)

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



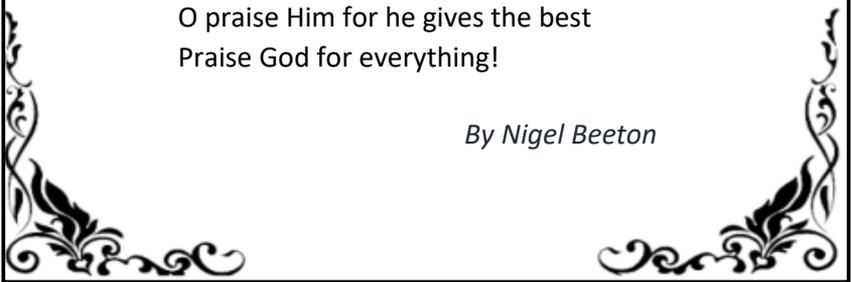
O Come All Ye that Love the Lord

O come, all ye that love the Lord
And praise Him to the height
O praise Him for His powerful word
O praise His acts of might!

With trumpet sound, with harp and string
With tambourine and song,
With flutes and cymbals as we sing
We'll praise Him all day long!

If thou hast breath within thy chest
If thou hast life, then sing!
O praise Him for he gives the best
Praise God for everything!

By Nigel Beeton



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**

SAVE OUR SPIRE

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

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

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

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

Contact me for more information or look on our website

www.stjamesnorthcray.org.uk



SERVICES AND EVENTS FOR FEBRUARY 2022

SUNDAY 6 February

9.30am

Holy Communion

SUNDAY 13 February

9.30am

All Age Service with leaders
and young people from our
Uniformed Organisations
All are welcome

SUNDAY 20 February

9.30am

Holy Communion

3.00pm

Forest Church



The farewell service for Archdeacon Paul Wright will be held in Rochester Cathedral on Sunday 20 February at 3.15pm. Please contact the Team Rector if you would like to go.

SUNDAY 27 February

9.30am

Holy Communion

Wednesday 2 March ASH WEDNESDAY

7.30pm

Bexley Team Ash Wednesday
Service at St James, North
Cray

There will be music on this link

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.”

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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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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

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

More than conquerors: In the depth of the sea!

By Dr Herbert McGonigle

The Bible is very expressive when it comes to speaking about how God can forgive our sins. It uses many descriptions to tell us how our sins are both forgiven and forgotten.

Here is a sample of these great promises. Our sins are 'forgiven,' (Ps. 32:5); 'washed thoroughly' and 'blotted out' (Ps. 51:2, 9); 'forgiven and covered' (Ps. 85:2); 'washed whiter than snow' (Is. 1:18); 'taken away' (Is. 6:7); 'put behind His back' (Is. 38:17); 'laid on Him' (Is. 53:6); 'remembered no more' (Jer. 31:34); 'pardoned' (Jer. 33:8); 'destroyed' (Rom. 6:6); 'purged' (Heb. 1:3) 'borne for us' (1 Pet. 2:24); 'washed away' (Rev. 1:5). What glorious news this is! In Christ we are truly forgiven! Our sins are cancelled! God will not hold our guilty past against us!

The prophet Micah has a very dramatic way of telling us this. He says that God has cast our sins 'into the depths of the sea' (7:19). So how deep is the sea? Far out in the Western Pacific Ocean, two hundred miles from the island of Guam, lies the deepest part of the earth's oceans. It is called the Mariana Trench. It is more than 1500 miles long and over 40 miles wide but it is its depth that is awesome. It plunges down into the ocean bed for some 35,800 feet. By comparison, Everest, the world's highest mountain, is 29,000 feet in height. That means that the Mariana Trench goes lower into the ocean bed than the peak of Everest stretches up to the clouds. At that frightening depth the pressure from the waters above is more than eight tons to the square inch!

While these geographical facts and figures compel our attention, the theology of our forgiveness is even more wonderful! When we are 'in Christ' as His redeemed people, our sins are truly forgiven. God has thrown them into the depth of the sea, never to be resurrected! They are buried forever in the vast abyss of God's unfathomable love and

mercy. What great, good news the gospel brings! Our guilty past is both forgiven and forgotten!

A few months after his evangelical conversion in May 1738, John Wesley went to Herrnhut in Germany. He met the Moravian hymn writer Johann Andreas Rothe. Wesley had learned German and enjoyed singing the Moravian hymns. He translated many of them into English, including one of Rothe's great hymns that includes the lines:

*O Love, Thou bottomless abyss
My sins are swallowed up in Thee
Covered is my unrighteousness
Nor spot of guilt remains on me.
While Jesu's blood through earth and skies
Mercy, free boundless mercy, cries.*

By Dr Herbert McGonigle, former Senior Lecturer in Historical Theology & Church History, Nazarene Theological College, Manchester.

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News and Issues



Churches prepare Platinum Jubilee plans

Churches, Christian charities and youth organisations are working together to celebrate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee over the four-day Bank Holiday from 2nd to 5th June. A new website has been created – www.theplatinumjubilee.com – to provide ideas and resources for communities to celebrate the Queen's 70 years of faith and service. HOPE Together is working with a wide range of partners to help churches around the Commonwealth to mark this special occasion and, in particular, to celebrate the Queen's 70 years of faith and service. As with the Queen's 90th birthday celebrations, HOPE Together and partners will provide a range of ideas and resources for communities, schools, churches and youth organisations.

Dr Rachel Jordan-Wolf, HOPE's executive director, says, "Churches are in an ideal place to bring communities together for these national celebrations."

For more information and resources visit:

Banners, posters and other Platinum Jubilee branded resources will be available from CPO - www.cpo.org.uk/queen-platinum-jubilee

The Platinum Jubilee – Celebration of Faith & Service logos can be downloaded from www.theplatinumjubilee.com

As the four-day Bank Holiday ends at Pentecost, our partners Thy Kingdom Come are also providing a Cheeky Pandas film, song and book for primary school children – with resource packs for home/church/school and community events.

Dioceses to receive nearly £5 million to reach more people with Christian message

A community choir, a church in a working men's club and ministry with children and young people are among projects to receive funding as part of a drive by the Church of England to spread the Christian message to younger and more diverse groups.

Coventry Diocese is to receive £1.25 million in Strategic Development Funding (SDF) for outreach work in parishes serving

estates and suburban areas. The aim is to create 150 new worshipping communities in the diocese by 2030. The funding will support activities such as a community choir, holiday and lunch clubs, pastoral support and Christian enquiry courses.

Separately, a £3.5 million grant has been awarded to Southwell and Nottingham diocese for work to support 40 churches reach children, families and young people over the next five years.

The grants have been awarded as the Church of England outlines priorities in its Vision and Strategy for the future. This includes a goal of doubling the number of children and young people in churches and attracting more diverse congregations.

Digital team wins series of awards for work during pandemic

The Church of England's Digital Team has been praised for 'incredible innovation and initiative' as it won a series of awards for its output during the pandemic.

A special Ash Wednesday Instagram filter, using Virtual Reality techniques, the popular Time to Pray app & podcast and the 2020 Advent and Christmas campaign 'Comfort and Joy' were among areas of work honoured at the annual 'Digital Impact Awards' in London.

Statistics for Mission 2020

The Church of England's Statistics for Mission 2020 report has recently been published. Figures show that more than 9,000 churches offered 'Church at Home' worship, such as online or dial-in services, during the March-July 2020 lockdown.

Attendance figures for services were, as expected, significantly lower than usual, amid legal restrictions because of the Covid-19.

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MEETINGS and Events 2022

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

QUOTES OF THE MONTH

The need of the world is to listen to God. - *Albert Einstein*

A religion that does not begin with repentance is certain to end there, perhaps too late. - *Anon*

You cannot starve a man who is feeding on God's promises. - *Anon*

The Bible has a great deal to say about suffering, and most of it is encouraging. - *A W Tozer*

The self-sufficient do not pray, the self-satisfied will not pray, and the self-righteous cannot pray. - *L Ravenhill*

We talk about heaven being so far away. Yet it is within speaking distance to those who belong there. - *D L Moody*

ALL IN THE MONTH OF FEBRUARY

175 years ago, on 11th Feb 1847 Thomas Edison, American inventor and businessman was born. Best known for inventing the first practical incandescent light bulb, phonograph, movie camera and projector, and many more.

90 years ago, on 27th Feb 1932 British physicist James Chadwick announced his discovery of the neutron subatomic particle in the journal *Nature*. He was awarded the 1935 Nobel Prize for Physics for his discovery.

75 years ago, on 7th Feb 1947 the first of the Dead Sea Scrolls were found in caves in Khirbat Qumran (now in the West Bank, Palestine).

70 years ago, on 6th Feb 1952 Princess Elizabeth ascended the throne following the death of her father, King George VI. She was in Kenya at the time and became the first Sovereign in over 200 years to accede while abroad.

60 years ago, on 20th Feb 1962 John Glenn became the first American astronaut to orbit the Earth. He made three orbits in the space capsule *Friendship 7*.

Also 50 years ago, on 18th Feb 1972 the House of Commons voted narrowly in favour (by eight votes) of joining the Common Market (now the European Union).

25 years ago, on 22nd Feb 1997 scientists at the Roslin Institute in Edinburgh announced that they had successfully cloned a mammal for the first time: a sheep named Dolly.

20 years ago, on 4th Feb 2002 Cancer Research UK was founded. It is the world's largest independent cancer research and awareness charity.

Also 20 years ago, on 19th Feb 2002 NASA's Mars Odyssey space probe began mapping the surface of Mars using a variety of imaging systems. It later discovered huge reservoirs of underground ice.

Loved nonetheless

The Rev Tony Horsfall

Here is a thought on a verse of Scripture from the encounter of Jesus with a man described as a 'rich, young ruler'.

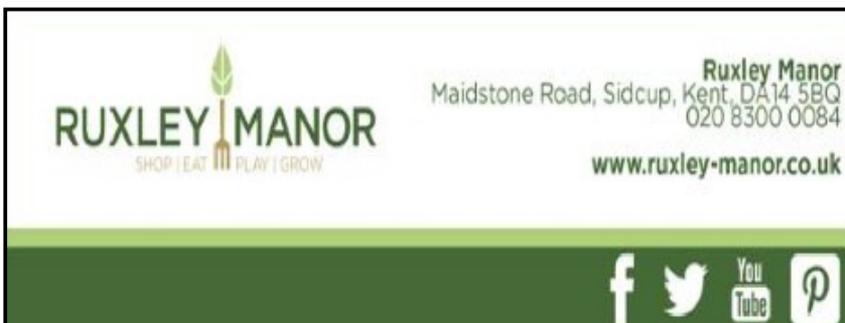
This man was keen to follow Jesus, but when told he must share his wealth with the poor decided it was too much to ask, and he went away sorrowful. In this context we read that, "Jesus, looking at him loved him (Mark 10:21)."

This is a remarkable statement about Jesus, and the nature of divine love, a love that doesn't alter despite the ups and downs of our behaviour. It is constant and unchanging, truly without condition, and unshaken by the unpredictability of human response.

We might have expected to hear Jesus say, 'You foolish man' or 'You stupid boy', but there is no such rebuke, only love. Jesus might have been annoyed, disappointed, exasperated, alarmed, shocked . . . but all we feel is His love for someone who has missed a great opportunity.

What a joy it is to know that Jesus loves us exactly as we are. When He looks at us, nothing is hidden from His gaze. He sees through all our pretence, all our subterfuge, all our attempts to put on a brave front. He knows who I am, completely. And yet He loves me unreservedly and without reservation. Amazing.

Why walk away from a love like that?





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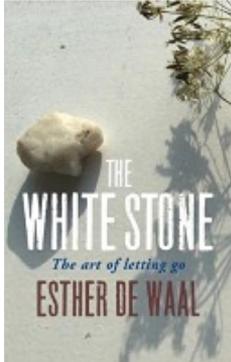


Book Mark



The White Stone – the art of letting go

By Esther De Waal, Canterbury Press, £12.99



Esther reflects on solitude and, following a period of illness, saying goodbye to a family home and the Welsh border landscape she had known for decades which inspired some of her greatest writing, and adjusting to a new city environment. In her characteristic style, she sees everything as a portal into a deeper spiritual understanding.

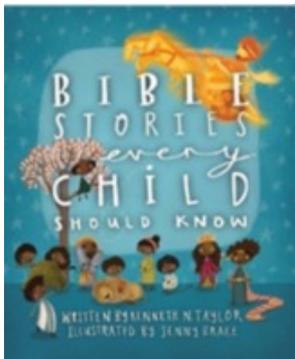
She draws on the wealth of the Christian tradition, especially scripture and the monastic and Celtic spiritualities she knows so well, to help her navigate her way through not only the inevitable sense of loss that accompanies such

change, but also to embrace the new possibilities it brings.

The white stone of the title refers to a small pebble from the river that ran through her garden that she keeps in her pocket, but also strikes a note of hope referring to the new identity promised by God (Revelation 2.17). This is a book of simple, profound wisdom that will speak to many coping with change in their own lives.

Bible Stories Every Child Should Know

By Kenneth B Taylor and Jenny Brake, 10 Publishing, £16.99



Best-selling author Kenneth Taylor was well-known for his faithful retelling of Bible stories in a way which engaged young children.

This newly illustrated collection of more than 120 Bible stories from his Classic Bible Storybook present the truths of the whole Bible in a language that is understandable for children.

Each story has 3-4 comprehension questions to help children easily grasp Biblical concepts.

George Herbert, priest and poet

By Canon David Winter



If we were to name someone prominent from the 17th century, we might mention Rembrandt or Shakespeare. It is unlikely we would remember George Herbert. However, he was a prolific writer, a gifted speaker and musician. His hymns are still sung today.

Herbert was born into a wealthy family in Mid-Wales on 3rd April 1593. His father was a Member of Parliament who died when Herbert was three years old. His mother moved her large family to London where, aged 12, Herbert entered Westminster School. In 1609, his mother remarried, and Herbert left home to be a student at Trinity College, Cambridge.

By the age of 23, Herbert had graduated with two degrees. He was fluent in Latin and Greek and in 1620 was elected as the University's Public Orator. He held this position for seven years, and for a short time was MP in his hometown in Wales.

Although Herbert was securing an illustrious future and his speeches had gained the attention of King James 1, he was restless. He felt God was calling him to the priesthood and much of Herbert's poetry expressed his inner spiritual conflicts.

When the King died in 1625, and two influential patrons also died at about the same time, Herbert responded to God's call on his life and gave up his secular ambitions. He married in 1629 and became a priest in a small Anglican church in Bemerton in Wiltshire.

Here he found inner peace at last, serving God in the local community. His poetic talent continued to flourish along with his musicianship as a skilled lutenist. After only three years as a priest, he died of tuberculosis on 1st March 1633. He was 39.

Some ninety of Herbert's poems have been set to music by such composers as Ralph Vaughan Williams and Benjamin Britten. His most well-known hymns are *Teach me my God and King*, *Let all the world in every corner sing* and *King of glory, king of peace*.

A number of artistic commemorations of Herbert exists in several churches and cathedrals including a stained-glass window in Westminster Abbey and a statue at the front of Salisbury Cathedral.

Reflected Faith Series

The Rev Dr Jo White

Candlemas



There are three reasons for this festival, which is held each year on the second of February.

Firstly, it's the halfway point between the shortest day and the Spring Equinox, so from that date on the daylight hours get longer.

In pre-Christian times, this day was known as the 'Feast of Lights' and celebrated the increase strength of the life-giving sun as Winter gave way to Spring.

Secondly, it's when we remember Mary and Joseph taking their baby Jesus, to the Temple forty days after His birth.

And the third reason? It's directly linked to the name of the feast – Candlemas. It was so named because on that day each year all the candles for the coming year were brought into the church to be blessed at a 'mass'. Remember that candles were important in those days, not only because there were no electric lights; people thought they gave protection against plague and illness and famine.

In many churches on this feast there will be a procession of the whole congregation with lighted candles – often inside the whole building, going into every 'dark' corner. Everyone carries their own lighted candle, which they are encouraged to take home and light there also.

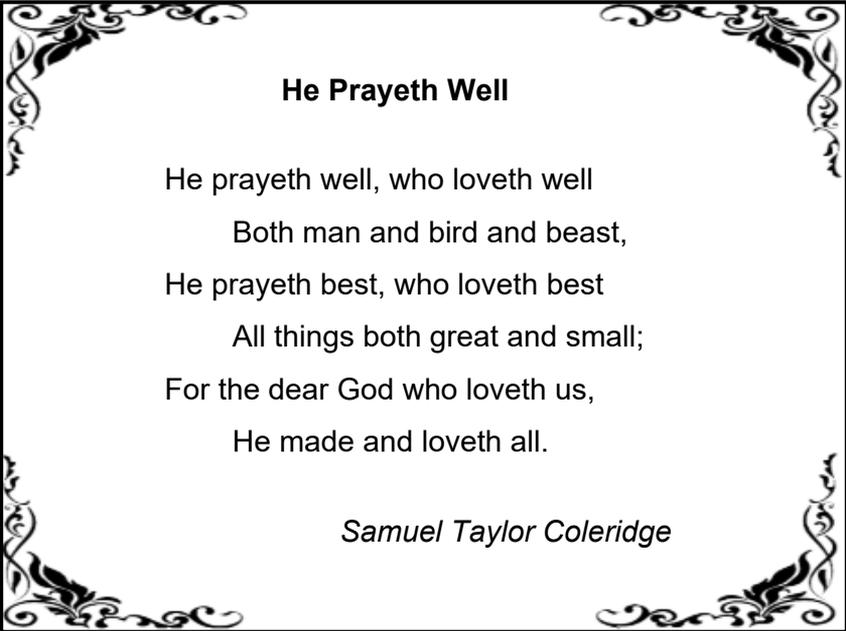
One of the prayers that may be used is this:

*Blessed are you, Lord our God, King of the universe.
You make our darkness to be light.
For with You is the well of life,
and in Your light shall we see light.*

This month:

Christ is often called the 'Light of the World' who came to bring light, hope, and peace into our darkness. Have a think about those places that are dark for you and perhaps you do not like going there or will not go there. Perhaps they are too painful or scary.

Just pause for a short time with a lit candle and imagine Jesus going there for you or with you. Lighting your way. Making it safe. He came to give us life – and life to the full – even in those dark places.



He Prayeth Well

He prayeth well, who loveth well
Both man and bird and beast,
He prayeth best, who loveth best
All things both great and small;
For the dear God who loveth us,
He made and loveth all.

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Sixty years since Glenn orbited Earth

By Tim Lenton



It was 60 years ago, on 20th February 1962, that John Glenn became the first American astronaut to orbit the Earth. He made three orbits in the space capsule Friendship 7, which he named himself.

The three circles of the globe – which lasted just under five hours – made the Presbyterian Christian a hero and a household name – but he was not the first man in space. He was preceded by two Russians, Yuri Gagarin and Gherman Titov, in April and August 1961.

The American launch was postponed four times because of mechanical issues and uncertain weather, and the flight was not without its frightening moments. An apparent problem with the heat shield necessitated a change in plans during the flight, but this turned out to be a relatively insignificant sensor problem.

Glenn was one of the first US astronauts – the Mercury Seven – who were immortalised in Thomas Wolfe’s 1979 book, *The Right Stuff*, which became a film and more recently a TV series.

Glenn, who represented Ohio as a Democratic senator for 25 years from 1974, returned to space in 1998 aboard the space shuttle Discovery, making him the oldest person to fly in space. That mission’s main aim was to study the effects of space flight on older people. He died in 2016, aged 95.

Glenn said that seeing the Earth from orbit stirred in him a tremendous sense of wonder that strengthened his faith, adding: “To look out at this kind of creation out here and not believe in God is to me impossible.”

WORDSEARCH



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Romance	Hearts	boyfriend	angels	Candlemas
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(Solutions on page 32)

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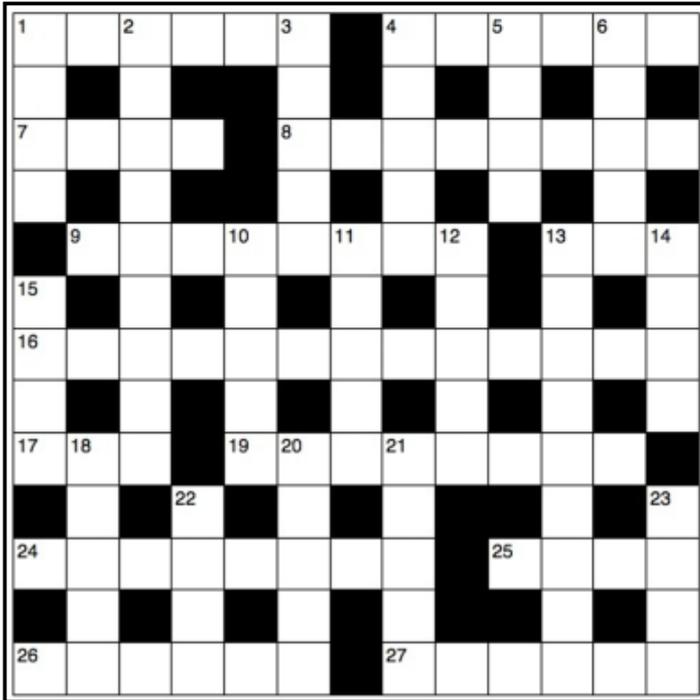
FEBRUARY CROSSWORD PUZZLE

Across

- 1 'If you love those who love you, what — is that to you?'
(Luke 6:32) (6)
- 4 'They threw the ship's — overboard' (Acts 27:19) (6)
- 7 The first murderer (Genesis 4:8) (4)
- 8 He was the head Levite in charge of the singing when the ark of
God was brought back to Jerusalem (1 Chronicles 15:22) (8)
- 9 Samson was noted for this (Judges 16:6) (8)
- 13 Solicit money or food from passers by (Acts 3:2) (3)
- 16 What William Booth's Christian Mission became in 1878 (9,4)
- 17 Alliance of Religions and Conservation (1,1,1)
- 19 'I will praise your name for ever and ever. — — I will praise you'
(Psalm 145:1-2) (5,3)
- 24 Simon had (anag.) (8)
- 25 Desperate (Deuteronomy 28:48) (4)
- 26 Elisha witnessed the boy he was seeking to resuscitate do this
seven times before opening his eyes (2 Kings 4:35) (6)
- 27 The belly and thighs of the statue in Nebuchadnezzar's dream
were made of this (Daniel 2:32) (6)

Down

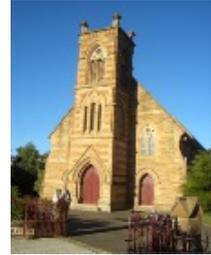
- 1 'Before the — crows, you will disown me three times'
(Matthew 26:75) (4)
- 2 Relating to the books of the Bible between Acts and Revelation (9)
- 3 'They have — the Lord out of the tomb, and we don't know
where they have put him!' (John 20:2) (5)
- 4 Belief (5)
- 5 'Take the following fine spices: ... 250 shekels of fragrant — '
(Exodus 30:23) (4)
- 6 'Do not — Jerusalem, but wait for the gift' (Acts 1:4) (5)
- 10 A seer (anag.) (5)
- 11 'Even there your hand will — me' (Psalm 139:10) (5)
- 12 The wild variety was part of John the Baptist's diet (Mark 1:6) (5)



- 13 A non-Greek speaker who was looked down on by civilized people (Colossians 3:11) (9)
- 14 Famous 1950s musical whose characters included members of
- 16 Across, — and Dolls (4)
- 15 The province from which Paul wrote to the Corinthians (1 Corinthians 16:19) (4)
- 18 'He was standing in the gateway with a linen cord and a measuring — — his hand' (Ezekiel 40:3) (3,2)
- 20 'Today, if you hear his — , do not harden your hearts as you did in the rebellion' (Hebrews 3:15) (5)
- 21 The Jericho prostitute who hid two Israelite spies on the roof of her house (Hebrews 11:31) (5)
- 22 'And now these three remain: faith, — and love. But the greatest of these is love' (1 Corinthians 13:13) (4)
- 23 'God has numbered the days of your reign and brought it to an end' (Daniel 5:26) (4)

(Solutions on page 32)

ST JAMES THE LEAST OF ALL



On why pews are better than chairs

The Rectory
St. James the Least

My dear Nephew Darren

While it was good to see you when you visited us last Sunday, your casual suggestion to our churchwardens that chairs would be far more comfortable than our pews was not well received. You must remember that significant numbers in any congregation firmly believe that the more uncomfortable they are, the holier they must be. Pews, generally designed several centuries ago when legs were shorter and bottoms smaller, are conducive neither to comfort nor sleep - although Colonel Marchington achieves the latter unerringly every Sunday within minutes of arrival.

At least with pews, parishioners can make some pretence at kneeling, adopting that peculiar crouch only ever seen in church life. Attempt that with chairs and you are assured of sending the one in front sliding across the floor with a shriek any banshee would be proud of. Chairs may be all very well in your own church, so you can create space for the delights of liturgical dance and baby clinics, but we prefer something more immovable. Little Miss Thripp has, over the years, created something of a nest where she sits, quietly bringing in cushions, travelling rugs and her own supply of books and peppermints – although we did have to draw the line at the primus stove, since it encouraged Major Hoare to install a drinks cabinet in his pew.

Pews, unlike rows of chairs, also create territorial behaviour. If a visitor should sit in a pew where regulars have sat for the last 50 years, it is regarded as if it were the invasion of Poland. One innocent family once chose the pew where generations of the Psmith family have sat since dinosaurs roamed the land. The Psmiths had no intention of

ceding territory peacefully and so for the whole of Mattins, one pew which should have held 6 people sat 9. When they stood to sing, the line exploded into the aisles on both sides, returning to their compressed state, necessitating staggered shallow breathing, when re-seated.

I will concede, however, that we made one mistake some years ago when the pews were re-varnished without having been fully cleaned first. The result is that every time the congregation stands, the organ is drowned out by the sound of tearing, while coats and jackets reluctantly part company with wood.

No, your congregation may relax in the luxury of padded chairs, but we will stoutly maintain our holy discomfort.

Your loving uncle,
Eustace



It was bad enough your mobile ringing half-way through his sermon, without the ring-tone being the 'Christians Awake' tune!

GOD AND THE ARTS

By The Rev Michael Burgess

Nunc Dimittis

Waiting is a common human experience. Our lives are made up of waiting that leads to encounter, and the waiting requires patience and humility. Milton wrote in his blindness, 'They also serve who only stand and wait' as he wondered what he could do for God's kingdom now that his sight had gone.

Simeon in this month's painting of the 'Presentation of Christ' had been waiting. He belonged to a people who had been waiting for centuries. He was heir to the hopes and dreams of a nation waiting for a better world now that the holy city was in the hands of Roman invaders. With his people he clung to the hope that God would come to bring freedom and a new life. God's chosen one, the Messiah, would bring this about. When it came, there was no fanfare, no warning, just an ordinary family from faraway Nazareth in the Temple, performing the religious duties for the firstborn son. But the waiting led to encounter, and the sight of the new-born child led to insight as Simeon recognised that light and salvation had at last come.

Rembrandt has captured all this in his painting, 'Simeon with the Christ Child in the Temple': the faith and patience, the hope and humility of an old man, a priest, who takes the babe into his arms and blesses God. It was the artist's last painting and left unfinished at his death in 1669. The figure of Mary by Simeon's side may have been painted by another artist at a later stage. It is the aged priest and the new-born babe that impress us as we look: Simeon with his venerable beard and eyes half closed, and the tiny child cradled in his strong arms, looking up intently with his eyes open.

As Rembrandt painted this canvas, was he saying something about his own life? He had not been afraid to paint his portrait at various stages - at 21, at 35, at 53 - a total of 60 portraits covering the span of years.

In this final painting the years have moved on as we see Simeon, mouthing 'Nunc dimittis' with his eyes half closed. Is the waiting over

and the journey coming to an end, so that his eyes will fully close? Or will he open them to see that with the babe in his arms, God has more in store: the promise of a future as they step out together on a new journey?

(Picture published by kind permission of the National Museum, Stockholm.)



17th

Janani Luwum, Archbishop & martyr of Uganda



The Most Reverend Janani Luwum (d 1977) was the Archbishop of Uganda, Rwanda and Burundi and Boga Zaire when 35 years ago this month he was murdered by the dictator Idi Amin. At the time the Church in Uganda was on the verge of centennial celebrations of its birth through the seed of the early Ugandan martyrs, and so Luwum became the first martyr of the second century of Christianity in

Uganda. A statue of him stands in Westminster Abbey London. Janani Luwum was greatly loved in Uganda. He was by all accounts an exceptional leader with a great personal godliness, a holistic vision, pastoral compassion and evangelistic fervour. Janani was born in 1922 at Mucwini in the Kitgum District of Uganda. He spent his childhood and early youth herding goats. Given an opportunity to attend a local school, he learned quickly, and was soon a teacher himself.

Janani Luwum was converted to Christianity on 1st January 1948, started at theological college in Buwalasi the following year, became a deacon in 1955 and was ordained a priest in 1956. He served in the upper Nile Diocese of Uganda and the diocese of Mbale, and was consecrated Bishop of Northern Uganda in 1969 and Archbishop of Uganda in 1974, three years after Idi Amin came to power in a military coup. His death was mourned by millions in East Africa.



A PILGRIM'S PROGRESS

On 18th February 1678, one of the most famous Christian books was published for the first time. It was 'The Pilgrim's Progress' by John Bunyan. The book tells the story of a character called Christian who travels towards the heavenly city, encountering many difficulties and getting led astray, but finally succeeding.



John Bunyan suffered many difficulties in his own life. He was put in prison twice because he refused to stop preaching God's word. His strength of purpose and the story of a pilgrim's journey through the troubles of life have been a source of strength to many people in the years since the book was published.

BIBLE WORDS

Can you find all the answers to this Bible Quiz? All the words begin with the letter **P**. Answers at the bottom of this page.

1. Andrew's brother, one of the disciples.
2. Another name for a king of Egypt.
3. A tribe who fought Saul and David (2 Samuel).
4. The first place in Europe where Paul established a church (Acts 16).
5. The island where St John had his revelations.
6. She travelled with St Paul and was married to Aquila (Acts 18).
7. The Italian port where Paul landed on his way to Rome (Acts 28).
8. The Roman Governor who set Barabbas free (Matthew 27)

NEWSFLASH:

Two prisoners escaped from custody today. One is 7 feet tall, the other is 4 feet 3 inches. The Police are looking high and low for them.

- 1 Peter
- 2 Pharaoh
- 3 Philistines
- 4 Philippi
- 5 Patmos
- 6 Priscilla
- 7 Puteoli
- 8 Pontius Pilate

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THE BEXLEY TEAM CLERGY - POINTS OF CONTACT

Team Rector: Reverend Ren Harding

renharding@hotmail.co.uk 01322 528923 07836644782

Associate Priest: Revd Sue Twynam

susantwynam@btconnect.com 01322 559501 07952 468127

Team Vicar: Reverend Clive Wood

revclivewood@gmail.com 01322 270942 07982 392809

Team Vicar: Reverend Edward Barlow

fr.edwardbarlow@gmail.com 01322 521786

Team Curate: Matt Hodder

matthodder10@gmail.com 07889 873125

For enquiries concerning St Barnabas, Joydens Wood

website www.joydenswoodchurch.co.uk

email - joydenswoodchurch@virginmedia.com

CONTACT the Team Rector

For enquiries concerning St James, North Cray

website www.stjamesnorthcray.org.uk/

CONTACT the Team Rector

For enquiries concerning St John the Evangelist, Bexley

website www.stjohnsbexley.org

CONTACT the Team Vicar: Reverend Edward Barlow

fr.edwardbarlow@gmail.com 01322 521786

For enquiries concerning St Mary the Virgin, Bexley

website www.stmarysbexley.co.uk

CONTACT the Team Vicar: Reverend Clive Wood

revclivewood@gmail.com 07982 392809

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