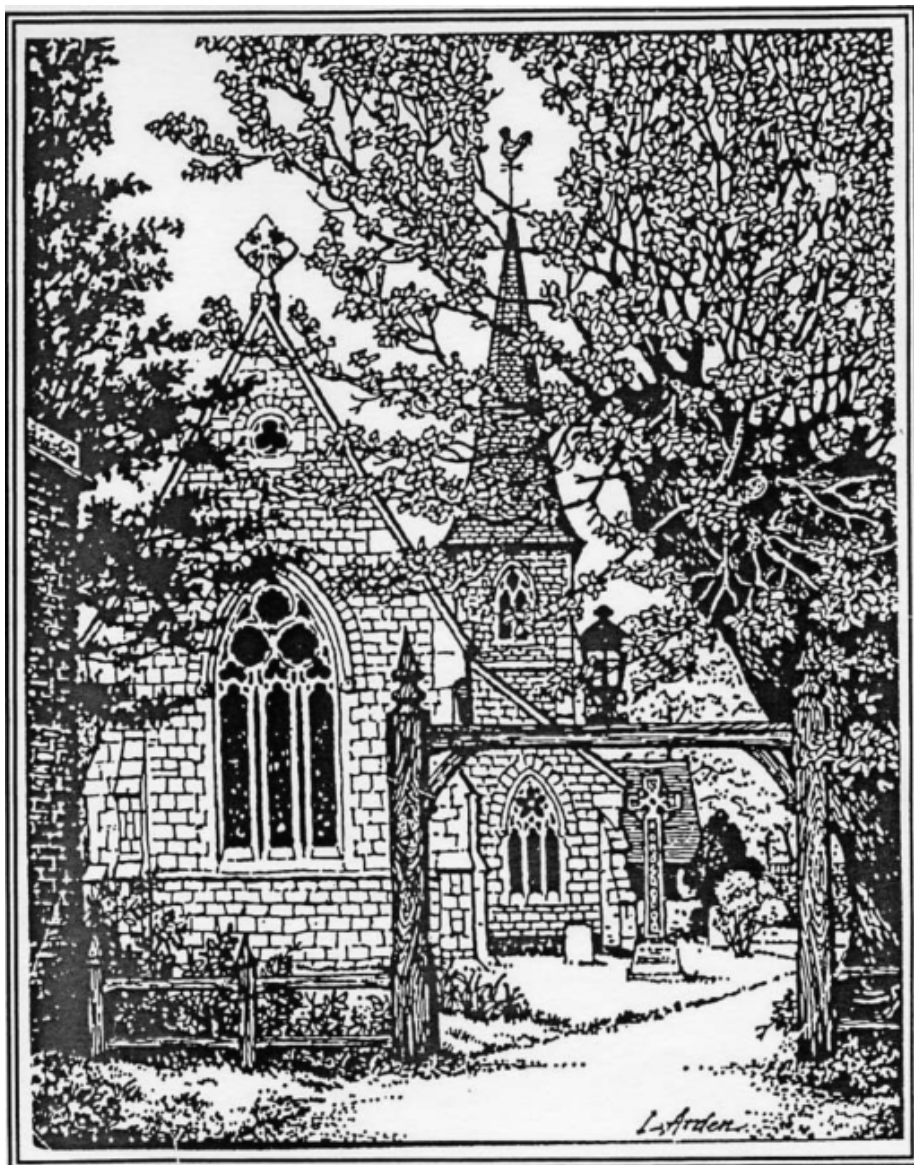


**The Parish Church of
*St. James, North Cray***

**50p
*October, 2021***

(Part of the Bexley Team Ministry)



St JAMES, NORTH CRAY PARISH STAFF

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

Lay Reader: David Stevens 020 8300 0867

Church Wardens: Suzy Higgs 020 8302 5719
suzyjhiggs@gmail.com

Maxine Heath 020 8468 7895
maxinejheath@gmail.com

Treasurer: Position vacant

PCC Secretary: Rhonda Collins 020 8300 3797

Sacristan: Stephen Hills 020 8302 7236

Bothy Bookings: Lynne Meads 07966 315518

Parish Safeguarding: Rhonda Collins 020 8300 3797

Magazine Editor: Steve Blake
sblake stjames@virginmedia.com

St James Sunday Service

9.30am Holy Communion

(All age service with Uniformed Organisations on second Sunday)

TEAM RECTOR'S LETTER OCTOBER 2021



Memories are precious things. Sometimes they can bring joy, at other times they can be painful and poignant.

I want to remind you all about the North Cray community's Festival of Remembrance which will take place on Sunday 7 November (the weekend *before* Remembrance Sunday).

The event begins at St James Church North Cray at 9.30am, with a Service of Commemoration, including Holy Communion using the Book of Common Prayer, a service that would have been very familiar to previous generations. After a moment at the War Memorial in the churchyard, we will walk in procession to the Scouts' Geoffrey Hall, Leafield Lane where there will be a display of stories and memorabilia. The planning group are gathering items and stories for this display. The information they need is the name and what they did during the war times. Any uniforms or paperwork, ration books etc should be labelled so they can be returned to the correct person. The stories (with the writer's permission) will be displayed on the walls of the Geoffrey Hall. All stories will be passed on to the Royal British Legion to keep copies on their website so that these accounts of the war will not forgotten but be held for future generations. (See advert in this magazine). Let me know if you are interested in taking part and I will pass your details onto the organisers.

The St James, North Cray Remembrance Service will happen as usual on Sunday 14 November, with a Parade Service at 9.30am and an 11am Act of Remembrance.

St James Church has been here for the Community of North Cray through many lifetimes. It stands as a reminder of the church's commitment to God and his people. We want to ensure the church building is available for many years to come. Next month, please look out for information about how you can help us to do this!

Reverend Ren Harding (Team Rector)

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



The Pilgrim's Relief

Each one, O God, do thou relieve
In all his suffering on land or sea,
In grief, or wound, or in tears, receive,
To thy peaceful halls his leader be
As day doth fade.

I am weary and weak and chill,
Weary of travelling on land and sea,
Of crossing moor and the foam-white hill,
Grant peace anew of thine ease to me
As day doth fade.

With Jesus to find restfulness
In the blest habitation of peace,
In the paradise of gentleness,
In the fairy-bower of release
Mercy-arrayed.

Prayers of the Western Highlanders



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 OCTOBER 2021

SUNDAY 3 October

9.30am Holy Communion

SUNDAY 10 October

9.30am Harvest Service with leaders and young people from our Uniformed Organisations

All are welcome

SUNDAY 17 October

9.30am Holy Communion
3.00pm Forest Church



SUNDAY 24 October

9.30am Holy Communion

SUNDAY 31 October

9.30am Memorial Service with Holy Communion

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

National Fundraising Day for Animals



A ten-year-old girl has launched a national petition asking the Department for Education to introduce an annual fundraising day for animals in schools across the country.

Bailey Woozeer proposes that World Animal Day, held annually on October 4, would be an ideal opportunity for schools to support both British and international animal welfare charities through events such as non-uniform days.

Schools and animal welfare organisations have quickly given the idea a 'phenomenal' response, and her petition has attracted over 27,000 signatures.

Bailey, from Doncaster, said: "Why are the nationwide fundraising days always about helping humans? Animals are desperate and suffering and many species are nearly extinct. They need our help. Please sign and share my petition, because one school fundraising day a year, for the animals around our planet, is something that should already be happening."

Like most charities, animal welfare organisations have faced a financial crisis during the past 15 months. Their income has been hit by a lack of fundraising events due to social distancing guidelines, charity shop closures during lockdown and donors reassessing their priorities.

To sign the petition, go to: <https://www.change.org/p/department-for-education-introduce-a-yearly-fundraising-day-for-animals-in-schools>
Find out more about World Animal Day and how to get involved: worldanimalday.org.uk



News and Issues



Please help victims of Haiti's earthquake

The Methodist Church in Britain and All We Can have launched a joint appeal in response to the powerful earthquake that recently struck Haiti's Southern Peninsula.

More than 2,000 people were crushed to death in the terrible quake. Thousands more are destitute, their homes destroyed.

"As the Methodist Church in Britain and All We Can stand together to bring hope, we invite you to stand with those affected in Haiti," says the appeal. If you can help, please go to: www.allwecan.org.uk/haiti

New research reveals significant contribution by cathedrals to local economies

A new report has highlighted the hugely positive economic and social impact England's cathedrals have on their cities.

In 2019, England's 42 Anglican cathedrals contributed £235m to their local economies. They provided 6,065 jobs, full time equivalent jobs and volunteering posts for 15,400 people who gave 906,000 hours of their time. They welcomed more than 14.6 million visits, 308,000 by schoolchildren for educational events, and 9.5m from tourists.

In the same year, cathedrals hosted a rich programme of arts, music, heritage and culture – amounting to 9,580 events equivalent to two every three days – as well as providing the venues for film shoots such as *The Crown*, *Doctor Who* and *Avengers: Endgame*.

The cathedrals have also run foodbanks, supported groups for the more vulnerable, the unemployed, and the homeless. They have helped outreach activities in schools, residential homes and hospitals, lunch clubs, parent and toddler groups, as well as community cafes. Also, over two-thirds of cathedrals are part of the A Rocha Eco Church programme, helping the Church of England achieve its carbon reduction targets by 2030.

New Chair for Christian Aid

The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Dr John Sentamu, the former Archbishop of York, will be the next Chair of the board of international development agency Christian Aid. Dr Sentamu – who has been outspoken on issues of poverty and justice in the UK and globally for many years - served as the Archbishop of York from 2005 until 2020. He was created by Her Majesty the Queen, Baron of Lindisfarne in the County of Northumberland and Masooli in the Republic of Uganda. He is a member of the UK Parliament, in the House of Lords.

Born in Kampala, Uganda, Dr Sentamu will be the first person of African descent to take up the position of Chair in Christian Aid's 75-year history.

Dracula isn't here!

A church in North Yorkshire has been trying to convince eager tourists that the vampire's grave is NOT in their churchyard. Recently the church leaders at the Church of St Mary the Virgin, Whitby, even put up a poster in the entrance door which reads: "Please do not ask staff where Dracula's grave is as there isn't one. Thank you."

Whitby inspired Bram Stoker to write his novel, Dracula, in 1897. And it seems that Stoker first came across the name 'Dracula' in Whitby's library. It was another name for the blood-thirsty Romanian ruler, 'Vlad the Impaler'.

St Mary the Virgin stands beside Whitby Abbey, and has a churchyard. This prompts many tourists to ask for the exact location of Dracula's grave, even though of course Dracula never existed.

The grave that *can* be found, however, is that of a man named Swales, who is also mentioned in the book.

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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 OCTOBER

500 years ago, on 11th Oct 1521 Pope Leo X granted the title 'Defender of the Faith' to King Henry VIII of England and Ireland. It recognised the King's defence of the sacrament of marriage, the supremacy of the Pope, and his opposition to the Protestant Reformation and the ideas of Martin Luther. The title has been inherited by British monarchs since then.

80 years ago, from 2nd Oct 1941 to 7th Jan 1942 the Battle of Moscow took place. Nazi Germany launched a massive offensive against the Soviet capital. It was one of the largest and most important battles of World War II. Soviet victory.

75 years ago, on 1st Oct 1946 the International War Crimes Tribunal in Nuremberg ended. 12 Nazi leaders were sentenced to death for war crimes committed during WWII. 10 of them were hanged on 16th October. Hermann Goering committed suicide the night before he was to be hanged.

70 years ago, from 15th to 17th Oct 1951 the first party election broadcasts were televised in the UK. The three main parties, Liberal, Conservative and Labour, were allocated 15 minutes each.

Also 70 years ago, on 31st Oct 1951, zebra crossings were introduced in the UK. The first one was in Slough, Berks.

65 years ago, from 29th Oct to 7th Nov 1956 the Suez Crisis took place. Israel invaded Egypt in an attempt to regain Western control of the Suez Canal and remove President Gamal Abdel Nasser from power. Britain and France joined the invasion but were forced to withdraw by the United Nations, the USA and the USSR. British Prime Minister Anthony Eden resigned in Jan 1957 and Sinai was occupied by Israel until March 1957.

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BEXLEY TEAM MINISTRY
“EXPLORING CONFIRMATION” 2020



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

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

THE CONFIRMATION SERVICE ON 3 MAY HAS BEEN POSTPONED - TBA

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

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

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

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

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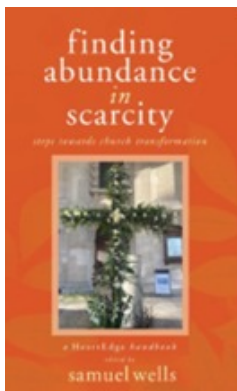
*Tel: 020 8303 9459
Mobile: 07710 431 956*





Book Mark

Finding Abundance in Scarcity – step towards church transformation. By Samuel Wells, Canterbury Press, £13.49



This past 18 months, all churches have had to learn to do things differently during closure due to the coronavirus pandemic.

None has been more imaginative or inventive than London's St Martin in the Fields, working through its HeartEdge programmes. It is now a virtual college, with an impressively varied programme for practitioners.

Here the St Martin's team shares pastoral and practical wisdom on: finding God in lockdown; meeting God and one another online; rediscovering contemplative prayer; facing grief

amidst separation; preaching at such a time as this; singing the Lord's Song in a strange time; hearing Scripture together in difficult times; praying through crisis; creating a community of practitioners; and finding faith at home.

Stories Jesus Told. By Tim Dowley, Candle Books, £15 (for a pack of five)

Here is a book that young children will love. Parents will find it very useful on long car drives, in Sunday school, for awards, and even just on a rainy afternoon at home.



The puzzles and activities are based around the stories Jesus told. They include dot-to-dot, 'spot the difference', colouring, 'match the pairs', 'put the story in the right order', mazes, 'complete the drawing', and 'spot the deliberate mistakes.' At the bottom of each page the Bible story that the activity is from is explained.

Defender of the Faith

By Tim Lenton



It was 500 years ago, on 11th October 1521, that Pope Leo X granted the title 'Defender of the Faith' to King Henry VIII of England and Ireland. It recognised the King's defence of the sacrament of marriage, the supremacy of the Pope, and his opposition to the Protestant Reformation and the ideas of Martin Luther. The title has been inherited by all British monarchs since then.

Ironically, it was only 17 years later that Henry was excommunicated by another Pope, Paul III, because of his divorce from Catherine of Aragon. Even more ironically, this came after Henry had his next queen,

Anne Boleyn, executed. His infatuation with Anne had been the reason he decided excommunication was a price worth paying, in the hope that she would provide him with an heir.

Anne was a keen supporter of Martin Luther, and her influence – and the excommunication – led to the independence of Britain from the Roman Catholic Church, and therefore to the Reformation.

Anne was the mother of Queen Elizabeth I, the strongly Protestant and long-lived sovereign who was in fact the successor that Henry VIII had longed for. It just never occurred to him that it could be a woman.

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CHRISTIANS IN ACTION

By Dr Herbert McGonigle

Elizabeth Fry (1780-1845)



Elizabeth Gurney was born into a family of devout Quakers in Norwich. Her father was a successful factory owner and a partner in the Gurney Bank. Her mother, Catherine Gurney, was a member of the famous Barclay banking family.

It was a sermon that brought Elizabeth to the place of personal faith and commitment to God. She had gone to hear an American Quaker, William Savery, preach in Norwich, and she asked her father to invite him home to dinner. The effect of Savery's sermon and his conversation with Elizabeth changed her life. Later she wrote, 'I think my feelings that night were the most exalted I remember. Suddenly my mind felt clothed with light, as with a garment, and I felt silenced before God. I cried with the heavenly feeling of humility and repentance.'

Elizabeth Gurney recorded her conversion in the language common among Quakers, speaking about the coming of 'the light' and feeling 'silenced' before God.

The immediate results of Elizabeth's conversion were her deep desires to help those in need. She collected clothes from her well-to-do friends and relations and gave them to the poor. She began a systematic visitation of the sick and organised a Sunday School in her home where she taught the children to read. At the age of 20 she married Joseph Fry, the son of a very successful banker and also a Quaker. They set up home in east London and Elizabeth's ministry to the poor continued. She became a preacher among the Quakers

and in 1811 she attended the meeting that set up the British and Foreign Bible Society, the fore-runner of today's Bible Society.

When a friend invited her to visit the women prisoners in Newgate Prison in London, Elizabeth was appalled at what she found. The over-crowding and lack of hygiene facilities made the conditions deplorable and Elizabeth Fry began a campaign of social, moral and religious improvement for the inmates.

She gave evidence in the House of Commons about London prisons, spoke against the death penalty, and used every possible means to bring about prison reforms. Queen Victoria admired Elizabeth's work, met her on a number of occasions and gave money to promote her enterprises.

When Elizabeth Fry died in October 1845, the great work she had begun continued and her name will always be remembered in connection with her concern for the poor and especially for women prisoners. Her conversion was much more than a personal conversion; it set her on the road not only to love God but also to love her neighbour.



St James Church, North Cray
invites you to join us
for our annual

Memorial Service

at 9.30am on Sunday 31 October 2021

*During the Service,
we will be lighting candles
in memory of those who have died.*

REFLECTED FAITH

By the Rev Dr Jo White

Reflected Faith Series: Sacred Things



Last month we thought about the bread we share at the Communion table. But what about any bread that is left over – regardless of the type of bread or wafer used?

During the service the bread and the wine are ‘consecrated’. That is, they are set aside for a specific purpose, in this case to be the body and blood of Christ. Because to

Christians this is so very special, indeed ‘sacred’, we treat the unused bread and wine with special care.

No-one leaves very precious things lying around in case of theft, damage, or misuse. And so it is the same with the consecrated elements of bread and wine. When they have not all been consumed by the congregation, it is important that the surplus is dealt with in ways that honour the meaning that we give and receive from them. In most denominations they are consumed immediately, in others they are returned to the earth or given back to nature.

Sometimes, at the end of a service, you will see that some bread and wine has been deliberately kept aside to take out to those who are sick, or for use at a service where no priest will be present, and this then must be stored. So, the question arises – what vessels will be used?

The ‘pyx’ – literally a box – is the name for the container for the consecrated bread. Its size depends on the amount that it needs to contain; for taking to individuals in their own homes it is usually small enough to fit in the palm of a hand.

Although these can be especially bought from church suppliers, made in a variety of metals with embellishments, precious stones, enamel work and so on, you can actually use any container that fits the purpose.

This month

Have a look around your house and ask yourself, 'What container would I use for a pyx?' And thinking of containers, how about yourself? Do you and your life need a bit of cleaning and polishing to hold the bread? Are you aware how precious you are in God's eyes as you receive the bread? The Bible says that we are the temple of the Holy Spirit – an awesome, sacred calling.

WORDSEARCH



October	creation	variety	starving	help
Harvest	generosity	edible	pray	desperate
thanksgiving	supermarket	choice	give	
bounty	food	endless	charities	
God	vast	millions	eat	

Solutions on page 31

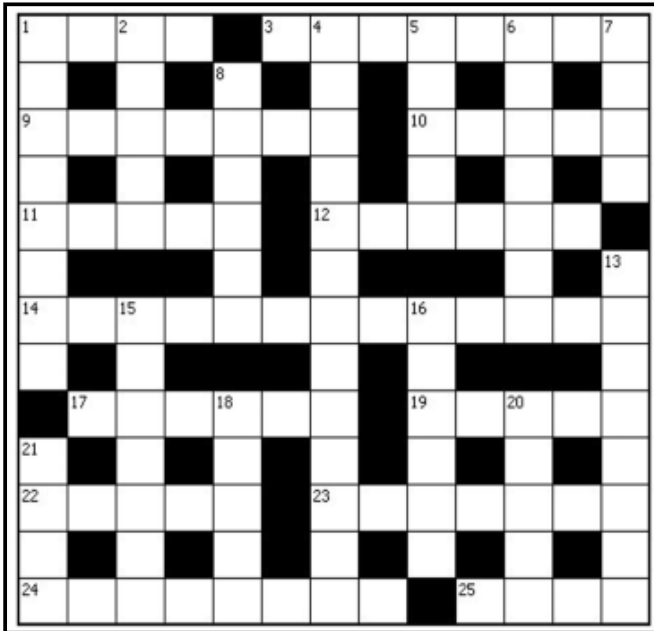
OCTOBER CROSSWORD PUZZLE

Across

- 1 'Those who were standing near Paul said, "You — to insult God's high priest?"' (Acts 23:4) (4)
- 3 They were assigned to guard the tree of life (Genesis 3:24) (8)
- 9 'Elkanah son of Jeroham, the son of Elihu, the — of — , the son of Zuph, an Ephraimite' (1 Samuel 1:1) (3,4)
- 10 Surrender (Joshua 24:23) (5)
- 11 Where American livestock can be reared (5)
- 12 Listen (anag.) (6)
- 14 Alternative name for Kiriath Jearim (2 Samuel 6:2) (6,2,5)
- 17 He founded Westminster Abbey, — the Confessor (6)
- 19 Hebrew word for the place of the dead (5)
- 22 Allies of Persia in the fifth century BC (Esther 1:3) (5)
- 23 Where John Wesley was forced to preach a lot (4,3)
- 24 Rebellion against God; abandonment of religious belief (8)
- 25 Note (anag.) (4)


Down

- 1 Give an account of (Mark 4:30) (8)
- 2 'I — — the path of your commands, for you have set my heart free' (Psalm 119:32) (3,2)
- 4 'He took the ephod, the other — — and the carved image' (Judges 18:20) (9,4)
- 5 'You are a chosen people, a — priesthood' (1 Peter 2:9) (5)
- 6 The meek, the merciful and the mourners are all this (Matthew 5:4–5, 7) (7)
- 7 Musical Instrument Digital Interface (1,1,1,1)
- 8 He was the son of Nun (Deuteronomy 34:9) (6)
- 13 'Let the little — come to me' (Matthew 19:14) (8)
- 15 'About three thousand were — — their number that day' (Acts 2:41) (5,2)







- 16 In John’s vision, the wall of the new Jerusalem was made of this (Revelation 21:18) (6)
- 18 ‘Our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly — a Saviour from there, the Lord Jesus Christ’ (Philippians 3:20) (5)
- 20 ‘Glorify the Lord with me: let us — his name together’ (Psalm 34:3) (5)
- 21 Young Men’s Christian Association (1,1,1,1)

(Solutions on page 31)



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ST JAMES THE LEAST OF ALL



On what to do about swine flu in church

The Rectory

St. James the Least

My dear Nephew Darren

The concern you show for the welfare of your parishioners during the current 'flu epidemic does you credit – although I am unsure of the continued effectiveness of your 'ministry of welcome', when those beaming smiles of your 'welcomers' will be hidden behind surgical masks. And surely, disinfecting the hymn books after each service is a little too enthusiastic? Won't the pages simply dissolve in the end?

Also, must you condemn those with even slight sniffles to sit encased in large plastic bags behind glass screens? That is unlikely to make newcomers feel that they are being warmly greeted. And I have never before heard of passing the peace with gardening gloves on. Won't people think it odd?

Finally, I must observe that obliging your entire congregation to paddle through a disinfectant pool as they leave the church is unusual practise. It will make people feel they are in the public baths – although I concede that the architecture of the two buildings has much in common.

We take a rather more robust attitude to viral attack here at St. James the Least. The use of the chalice was only reluctantly suspended during the Black Death and – apart from the one Sunday when Mrs Clapton lost her teeth in it, has been used at every service since. Colonel Addleshaw is safe from the virus, since it could never survive the alcohol levels in his blood stream and a glare from Lady Millcheam would freeze any unwelcome visitor at a hundred yards.

Dear, romantic Miss Mompesson suggested we hold future services in the open air, but the thought of Mr Charnley losing his wig yet again

in anything greater than a light breeze and the choir looking like galleons in full sail, made the idea unworkable – especially as it would oblige Lord Melchett to sit with everyone else and not in the family pew, where he can read the Sunday papers unobserved by the rest of the congregation.

There have, however, been some unintended benefits to the health scare. It has enabled me to cancel the coming visit of the bishop, explaining that we are far too concerned for his health. Also, as a way of containing the spread of the contagion, I have stopped visiting parishioners and do not allow anyone to call at the rectory. All evening meetings are suspended, I refuse to visit the village school and risk contaminating the children and I have made it clear that not stopping to talk to villagers in the street saves them from being ravaged by the disease.

Should the 'flu epidemic continue for some time, it would be a sadness I could learn to bear.

Your loving uncle,
Eustace



*...if you have been affected by any
of the issues raised in this sermon...*

GOD AND THE ARTS

By The Rev Michael Burgess

'Spread over us the tabernacle of your peace, O God'

For nine days at the end of September Jewish families will have gathered to celebrate the festival of Tabernacles. It is always a happy season as adults and children alike join for their Harvest feast. Many churches will be having their own Harvest Thanksgivings at the beginning of this month. We know this was a custom revived by Parson Hawker in the Victorian period, but its roots lie in that Jewish feast which Jesus Himself knew and celebrated.

Each family erects a tabernacle or tent in the garden or back yard. They will have their meals and spend time there, relaxing with one another. The roof of each tabernacle might have branches of trees covering it, hung with fruits and fragrant flowers. The children decorate the tent with drawings and pictures.



Because it is only a temporary building for that time of the year, and because the roof is fragile, it is a reminder of the journeying of the Israelites in the wilderness when their safety rested on the goodness of God. It was God who watched over the people then. It is God who watches over them now and watches over the earth, so that it is fruitful, providing food for their health and happiness.

This feast is the subject of this month's picture by Simeon Solomon. He was a Jewish artist, born in London in 1840 into a family of artists. He made his own reputation through meeting the Pre-Raphaelites and the poet, Swinburne. Solomon was a colourful character of that period, whose life sadly ended in poverty and alcoholism. But this wood engraving was made early on in his life in 1866. It is part of a series illustrating Jewish customs, which Solomon provided for 'Leisure Hour.'

We see an elderly person on the left making his way into the tent, and at the other side a mother leading her children. The walls outside are adorned with palm branches and inside the tent a feast of fruits and food await them. The young boy seems hesitant, wondering what he will find and clinging to the hand of his mother. But all is well, for inside other members of the family are there to welcome them.

Solomon conveys the domesticity of this feast, and the young boy outside reminds us that Jesus Himself would have celebrated this feast with Mary and Joseph. They would also have gone up to Jerusalem to join the thousands of pilgrims there, as Jesus was to do later in His adult ministry. Each pilgrim would carry a branch of myrtle, palm and willow in one hand and a citrus fruit in the other, symbols of the fruits of the promised land. The air would be full of hosannas and praises to God.

Like the Jewish families at the Feast of Tabernacles, we shall gather for our Harvest Thanksgivings. Like them, we shall thank God for His faithful goodness in the past. Like them, we shall look ahead to the coming of God's kingdom, where God who feeds us now in food and drink will nourish us eternally. Like them, we shall proclaim, 'O taste and see how gracious the Lord is: blessed is the one who trusts in Him.'



Just about the only thing most people know about Francis of Assisi is that he talked to the birds. Church-goers also know the popular hymn based on his famous prayer, 'Make me a channel of your Peace', which was sung at the funeral of Princess Diana.

However, Italy's patron saint, whose feast day is this month (the 4th) was a more complex, and some would say controversial character. His life spanned the end of the 12th and beginning of the 13th centuries. He was born into a very wealthy family, but after what he called his 'conversion' standing before a

crucifix. He renounced all his possessions. In fact, he stripped himself of his of his wealthy garments in a public square in his hometown, Assisi. For the rest of his life he and his followers, including his feminine counterpart. St Claire longed, prayed and worked for a life of simplicity – a lifestyle without luxury or privileges. For the Franciscan brothers and the Poor Claires. This meant no private possessions at all. Francis saw that many poor people without these things, actually seemed to live happier and more fulfilling lives than the ambitious rich. He spoke of a simple life not shaped by money or power but by love and mutual concern. As his hymn says, 'it is in giving of ourselves that we receive'.

Of course, poverty; in our modern western world is seldom a matter of blissful simplicity, as present-day Franciscans recognise. For too many it is a matter of poor diet, over-crowded rooms, rough sleeping and unemployment. The call of today's followers of Francis and Claire is that those who are better-off should 'live more simply, so that others can simply live'. Christians follow a Master who said that He came with 'good news for the poor'. They believe that many of us today can be that good news.



SOMEONE ELSE'S SHOES

One of the many stories that Jesus told was about a shepherd separating his flock into different herds of sheep and goats. Jesus explained that there would be a time when he would sit upon his heavenly throne and, like the shepherd, he would separate people into 2 groups, those who had been selfish and those who had cared for others. You can read about this in St Matthew's Gospel, chapter 25, verses 34 to 40.

There is an old American Indian saying 'Do not judge a person until you have walked a mile in their moccasins' (shoes). Only when we begin to see as others see, feel as they feel, will we be able to understand them and help them. When Jesus told us the story about the sheep and the goats he was teaching us to care for others. Whatever we do to help someone else we are doing for Jesus – and to do that we have to put ourselves in someone else's shoes



WHOSE SHOE?

The answers to this quiz are all things that are also the name of a type of footwear. So can you say which shoe is...

1. A backwards somersault?
2. A line on a ship?
3. A type of snake?
4. An animal used to carry heavy loads?
5. A dagger?
6. An Irish way of speaking?
7. Part of a car?
8. Where you find a judge?
9. Someone who teaches fitness?
10. Used to move water?

Who was the smallest person in the Bible?

He can be found in the Book of Job (more easily if you use a magnifying glass):- Job 2:11 - Bildad the Shuhite (shoe height).



You've got your boots on the wrong feet.

No, these are the only feet I've got.

<p>Answers: 1.flip flop 2.plimsoll 3.moccasin 4.mule 5.stiletto 6.brogue 7.boot 8.court 9.trainer 10.pump</p>
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