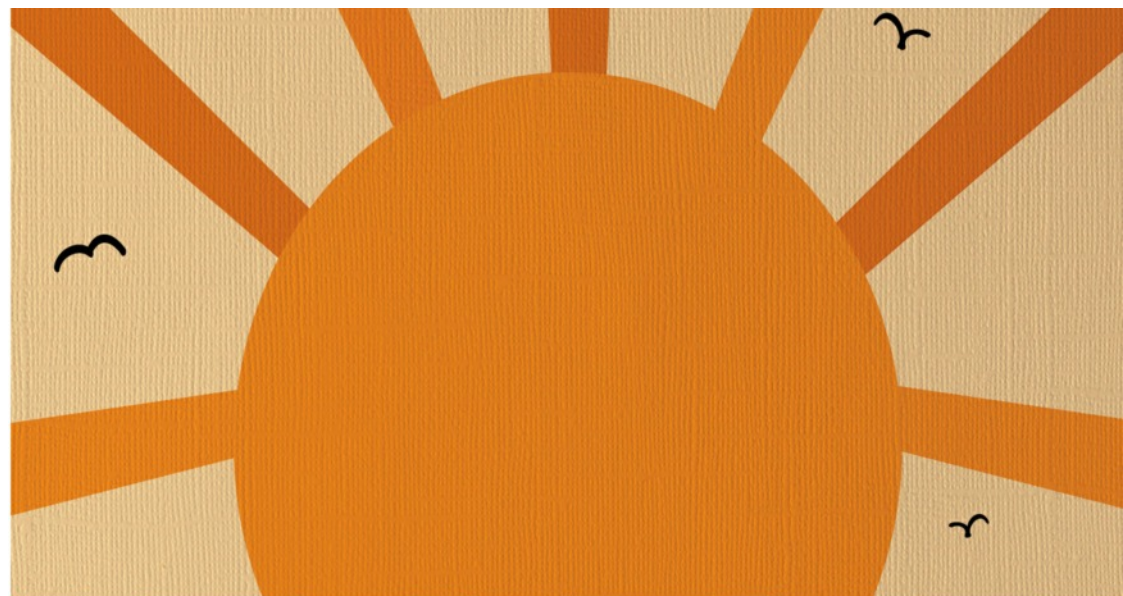


Shirley Parish Magazine

October 2020



*Your mercies
are new every morning;*

*great is your
faithfulness*

lamentations 3:22-23

SHIRLEY PARISH GUIDE

CLERGY

Associate Vicar - Reverend Paul Day

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134 Shakespeare Drive, Shirley B90 2AR

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Parish Office, Church House, Church Road, Shirley, B90 2AX

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email: admin@shirleyparish.co.uk

Parish Website: <https://www.shirleyparishb90.co.uk>

Social Media: [twitter.com/@ParishB90](https://twitter.com/ParishB90)
facebook.com/@AdventureinFaithB90

OUR PARISH PRAYERS



Give to us your people, living God,
A renewed faith and a bold vision
that we may proclaim
the Good News of your Son
with faith that your kingdom will come,
with hope for our community
and with love for Him
who died and rose again
to save us, Jesus Christ our Risen Lord
Amen

God of Mission, who alone brings growth to your Church,
send your Holy Spirit to give vision to our planning,
wisdom to our actions, and power to our witness.
Help our church to grow in numbers, in spiritual commitment to you,
and in service to our local community.
Through Jesus Christ, our Lord.
Amen

OUR CURRENT WORSHIP PATTERN

At St James Church

Sunday at 11am - Short Service of Communion*

Wednesday at 10.30am - Short Service of Communion*

Wednesday 11am to 4pm - Church open for private prayer

Saturday 10am to 4pm - Church open for private prayer

***Numbers are currently limited to 25 so please book your place by telephoning the Parish Office**

At home (times suggested however whenever is convenient for you is fine)

Sunday at 9.30am - Morning Worship on YouTube and on the phone

Sunday at 10.15am - Virtual Coffee via Zoom

Sunday at 7pm (first Sunday of the month) - Reflective Worship on YouTube and on the phone

Thursday at 7pm - Midweek Reflection on YouTube and on the phone

Saturday at 9am - Parish Prayers via Zoom

Third Saturday of the month - Messy Church

The number to dial to listen on the phone is 0121 270 9089

***Please check the weekly pewslip, emails and the website
for any changes to the above***

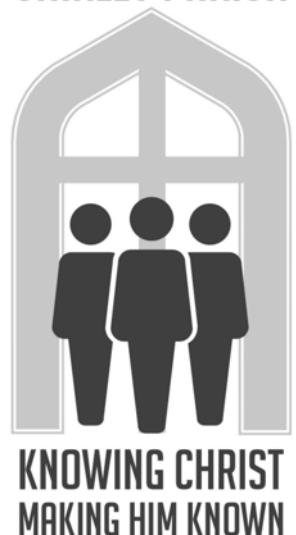
SHIRLEY PARISH



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WE ALL LOVE A GOOD STORY ...

Jesus's teaching is full of stories and picture illustrations – we usually refer to them as parables because they illustrate a moral or spiritual truth. I suspect we all know many of them, and have heard sermons on them countless times.

During October and November our midweek reflections will be taking a closer look at some of the parables – both well known ones and lesser known ones.

Interestingly parables only occur in what we call the synoptic gospels – that is the gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke. These gospels have many similarities, and the general thought is that Matthew and Luke both based their gospels on that of Mark, but also included some other material - some common to both, and some individual. However, there are only a handful of parables that appear in all three gospel accounts and round about two-thirds are only in one of the gospels, including most of the well known stories (Good Samaritans, Prodigal Son, Sheep and Goats, Rich man and Lazarus, Ten virgins).

The parables can be categorised according to their theme:

- Parables of the Kingdom – seeking, hearing, growing
- Parables of loss and redemption
- Parables of love and forgiveness
- Parables of prayer
- Parables about the end times (or eschatology)
- Other parables

We will be taking a couple from each group as we look at them over the next few weeks.

Of course, we are not able to look at all of the parables, but this selection should give us a good feel of what they are about – and what they are not about! I hope you enjoy the series!

Reverend Paul Day



THE FRIENDS OF ST JAMES 100 CLUB

Congratulations to the September winners

£50 - Jan Dalton

£25 - Margaret Foresheew

MIDWEEK REFLECTIONS

Date	Theme	Parables	Bible passages
Thursday 1st October	Kingdom – sowing and growing	The sower The mustard seed The growing seed	Matthew 13:3-9; Mark 4:3-9; Luke 8:5-8 Matthew 13:31-32; Mark 4:30-32; Luke 13:18-19 Mark 4:26-29
Thursday 8th October	Loss and redemption	Lost Coin Lost Sheep Lost Son	Luke 15:8-9 Matthew 18:10-14; Luke 15:4-6 Luke 15:11-32
Thursday 15th October	Love and forgiveness	Good Samaritan	Luke 10:25-37
Thursday 22nd October	Love and forgiveness	Two debtors Unforgiving servant	Luke 7:41-43 Matthew 18:23-35
Thursday 29th October	Prayer	Friend at night Pharisee and Tax Collector	Luke 11:5-8 Luke 18:9-14
Thursday 5th November	End times	Rich Fool	Luke 12:16-21
Thursday 12th November	End times	Ten virgins Faithful servant	Matthew 25:1-13 Matthew 24:42-51; Mark 13:34-37; Luke 12:35-48
Thursday 19th November	Other	Workers in the vineyard	Matthew 20:1-16
Thursday 26th November	Other	Rich Man and Lazarus	Luke 16:19-31

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WAY OF DISCIPLESHIP

I wrote in last month's magazine about the Discipleship course that we would be running from October. For various reasons we have had to change the evening to Thursdays. The first module which we will be covering in Autumn has seven sessions and these will be from **Thursday 15th October until Thursday 26th November** at 7.30pm for about an hour and a half.

What is it about?

This first module is about growing in our relationship with God. It will help us think about questions like – What is a disciple or follower of Jesus? Is it like being an apprentice? How can I become a disciple or apprentice? How can my faith be more alive? What does it mean to grow in faith? What about when things go wrong? How can I know God in my everyday life?

Who is it for?

Anyone who wants to know more about their faith and how it can affect the way they live. Anyone who wants to know God as well as knowing about him. Anyone who wants to follow Jesus. It doesn't matter whether you have been coming to church all your life, or whether you only come occasionally. The important thing is that you are asking questions and are willing to look for the answers.



How do I join in?

We will for the Autumn be meeting over Zoom but hope that in the future we can meet face to face!

The link is **<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/4904334906>**

Please contact me if you would like more details.

Reverend Paul Day



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OUR LOCKDOWN EXPERIENCES

Pat Coward writes ...

During the last four months there were many family birthdays, including two Special Birthdays for the oldies, my 90th and my husband Peter's 95th. A celebratory dinner had been arranged for fifteen family members at a local restaurant in August, but this had to be cancelled due to Covid-19. We couldn't even have our two daughters; their husbands and granddaughter join us in the house, so we decided to have the preordered cream tea and cakes in the garden. The July day dawned cold, wet and windy, so what to do?

Our daughters suggested that as the double garage was the largest 'room' in the house we should use that to satisfy the current regulations. The two cars were put in the road, seats and makeshift tables set out. The double garage door was left open to give us a view of the garden and provide amusement for the passersby. The cream teas were delivered in individual boxes. Peter blew out the five token candles on his celebratory cake, and we all then enjoyed our teas clad in anoraks to keep warm. A memorable, enjoyable and possibly unique 95th celebration.

It was only four weeks of hot sunny weather later that it was my 90th birthday and we had planned to have the same seven family members to a fish and chip lunch in our garden. Once more the weather was wet, windy and dull, and the whole garage experience had to be repeated. Eventually the rain stopped, and we finished the afternoon chatting in the garden.

Finally, as Peter is a steam railway enthusiast, one of our presents from the family was a trip and luncheon on the Severn Valley Railway, where Peter had been a volunteer signaller in the 1970s. It was booked for September, only to be told a few days later that, although trains are running, all meals on the trains had been canceled for this year!

What next?

Ann Blackford writes ...

Lockdown began for us on 23th March. Suddenly it was as though the world had stood still. No aircraft flying overhead and very little traffic going past our house. No Church services, no Flower and Craft Club meetings to look forward to.

Phone calls to friends and family became a priority. The news that Covid 19 was daily claiming many lives was a fear for everyone. Norman and I received the Government letter stating we came into the Sheltered category.

OUR LOCKDOWN EXPERIENCES *continued*

We were fortunate, our next door neighbour and a close friend of our daughter did some of our shopping. People were so kind. However during those early days it was so uplifting to hear and see many more birds in our garden.

The twice weekly Church emails, and the wonderful weekly phone call from Sarah Penfold was, and still is, something to really look forward to.

Then three close friends died, none from Covid. My daughter-in-law Claire contracted the virus but thankfully survived after a worrying period. Due to lockdown I could not attend any of my friend's funerals nor help to look after my grandchildren. I felt helpless. However, I feel sure my husband, faith and prayers, plus Sarah's weekly phone call got me through a very difficult time.

Our daughter and granddaughter live in Cape Town, they too were in lockdown, but we kept in touch with regular FaceTime, so were reassured.

The sunshine arrived so Norman and I wisely used the isolating time doing Spring cleaning, DIY, gardening, sewing, reading and much baking. Norman dismantled an old shed and installed a new one. Daily exercise, be it a walk for me or the exercise bike for Norman, were important periods of the day.

Claire recovered and took over the home schooling of the boys. An extra hurrah for latest technology. We received FaceTime calls, phone calls and lots of text messages. Our youngest grandchild Samuel drew a lovely rainbow with the message "Keep Safe and Thank You NHS". I placed this with a large Teddy Bear (Winnie the Pooh) in our front bay window. Our daughter had made Pooh nearly forty years ago when she was at school.

We, together with neighbours, on Thursday evenings at 8pm stood outside clapping our thanks to the NHS. Then a new neighbour, another Sarah, asked all residents in the road to partake in a socially distanced party on Friday 8th May in remembrance of VE Day. We all decorated our houses with Union Jacks and sat on our drive with picnics and glass of wine or whatever we fancied. With forties music playing we enjoyed, at a safe distance, talking to neighbours, many of whom we had never spoken to before. The weather was perfect. Then there was the wonderful concert from the grounds of Buckingham Palace in the evening; so beautifully done.

In conclusion, special thanks to Paul and Kate who have ensured that St James, Christ the King and St Johns have continued to thrive; albeit with modern technology. Also, I have appreciated the advice and help when it was needed.

... continued over the page

OUR LOCKDOWN EXPERIENCES *continued*

Thank you, Sarah, for your caring phone calls. I am proud to say “I have a lovely new friend”. Also, thank you to the supporting team who have helped with readings, prayers and weekly reflections and are now ensuring our Parish Church is a safe environment to worship in or to visit to offer up a prayer.

Margaret Hill writes ...

You recently asked us to let you know about our activities during lockdown. Well, like many other households, I’ve used some of my time to do some serious de-cluttering and catching up with the unfinished chores which have been on my “to do” list for so long.

Whilst I was de-cluttering the many, many books I have, I came across a small set of books which I used ages ago when I joined a small study group and did a forty day “journey” (meeting once a week, for eight weeks) called “Emotionally Healthy Spirituality”. So, I have done the “journey” again. This time on my own at home.

There are three books in the set. One is a study book to read, one chapter each week. Another is a day by day reading with a Daily Office. This means spending time in silence, stillness and centering before God. Then there is a scripture reading, a devotional with question(s) to consider and finally a prayer followed by a few minutes of silence. There are two Daily Offices, one for morning and another for mid-day or the same ones for mid-day and evening. Depends on your timetable - work, family, children etc. The third book relates mainly to the CD which I do not have so I just use the other two books.

I find the short prayers so beautiful and they use the words which I would struggle to find. These Daily Offices can be five minutes, twenty minutes or however long or short you want.

I think the important part is to centre before God and be still.

Sheila Hodesdon writes - remembering Don

We were married for sixty-six years. We didn’t celebrate the event this year as my husband Don was isolated in a care home where there was a health issue. Their isolation started before the national lockdown – no visiting from the beginning of March.

He sadly passed away in mid-April. The stark reality of Covid-19 hits home when one can’t just be there for a loved one. We hope in the future to be able to celebrate Don’s life-long passion and association with Shirley Band with a concert in church by the band.

OUR LOCKDOWN EXPERIENCES *continued*

Mary Appleby writes ...

March 2020 was a memorable time for us. Early in the month Bob was diagnosed with Giant Cell Arteritis, and was admitted to hospital for urgent, intravenous steroid treatment. He was there for a week, during which time we concentrated on getting him well enough to return home. We were aware that the Coronavirus was spreading in the UK, but at the time, it didn't seem important.

After a week in hospital, Bob was discharged, along with a long list of medication to take. What a blessing that he was back home before the COVID lockdown kicked in! Soon, a letter arrived from the hospital, advising him to self-isolate for twelve weeks, because of his increased risk of infection from the Coronavirus pandemic. Twelve weeks seemed a very long time! We decided that I should self-isolate too, so I would not bring home any infection to Bob. The alternative was to isolate myself from Bob for the duration, which would have been very difficult in our bungalow, and not much fun either!

So began the minefield, shared with so many people also isolating, of obtaining food, though it was not without humour! Having no family close by, we had to order groceries from a supermarket, and we all know how difficult that was. "Getting a slot" for a delivery became the main topic of conversation amongst many of our friends and relatives!! I could spend a whole phone call to my sister and talk of nothing else! However, the government promised to arrange priority slots for vulnerable people, and sure enough, good old Tesco did just that. We had many amusing tales to tell of food deliveries that weren't quite what we expected, like the thirty-six eggs, or the two courgettes that were so huge they could have fed us for a fortnight! Our butcher delivered meat, and our newspaper was also delivered. Anything else we needed could be ordered online. Life was not so bad! We just couldn't go out anywhere.

We were among the lucky ones though. We had a garden to keep us busy, and to relax in. We could keep in touch with friends and family using FaceTime, Zoom, email and of course the phone. Reverend Paul and his team kept in touch with all the congregation, and every Sunday we had recorded a service for us to view on YouTube, followed by a Zoom coffee meeting. It must have taken much organisation, but it was really appreciated. How our IT skills have improved!!! At the beginning of the year not many of us would have known about Zoom and FaceTime.

Now we are well into August, and restrictions are easing. We can get out and about a little, and have friends and family visit us in the garden. ... *continued over the page*

OUR LOCKDOWN EXPERIENCES continued

Life has now become a world of hand sanitiser, face masks and social distancing, crossing the road when you meet someone, with a wave to show it is nothing personal!! How wonderful it will be to relax in company again once a vaccine has been developed! Hopefully that dream will not be too long coming.

Many thanks to these ladies for sharing their stories - if you would like to contribute to a future issue my details are on page 34 - Editor



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HELPING THOSE IN NEED

FOOD BANK: It's now seven months since we went to the Food Bank but we try to keep in touch with those working and volunteering there. The number of clients has increased dramatically as you will have seen reported on television news programmes. The need for donations is as great as ever, maybe more.

The appeal is usually the same – **tinned fruit, long life fruit juice, instant mash, dried milk and small bags of sugar**. Please help if you can. The collecting bins at Waitrose, Tesco's and Sainsbury's are emptied regularly; the donations are taken to our warehouse at Tyseley where they are sorted, dated and packed into parcels ready for distribution. Strong plastic bags are still needed despite the wonderful supply of bags made by Chris Speakman and her team.

ADAVU and NARTHEX will not be holding their pre-Christmas parties this year but we hope to give their families some presents none the less - see below.

Best wishes to you all, *Elizabeth Paice*

Due to the problems both directly and indirectly caused by the Covid virus we are unable to have a **Christmas Gift Tree** as in previous years. But we are conscious that the need for that extra boost at Christmas is as great as ever so we have been considering ways to collect and pass on gifts to the clients of ADAVU and the Narthex. We know that this plan is not ideal but in the circumstances it is the best we can come up with.

In a few weeks time we will include a list of potential gifts in the parish information. It will also have details of the drop off arrangements which will be a drop off day at Church House - probably Saturday 14th November. We are asking you to buy items from the list, if possible to email me and tell me what you have bought. Then wrap them and attach a removable label saying what is inside (with the size where appropriate). After you have dropped them we will sort them and arrange for the two organisations to collect them. If people feel unable to shop it will be possible to make a cash donation and we will shop for them.

The drop off date may seem very early but we need to allow plenty of time for quarantining and distributing the gifts.

Sarah Penfold



MY PRAYER LIFE

My prayer life this year since lockdown has been quite a challenge.

I started off by praying for everyone in the NHS services, the doctors and nurses, carers, paramedics, all the key workers that were keeping the wheels churning so to speak. I prayed for the frail, the lonely, the sick, those affected by this virus, those who had died due to it, also those suffering long term illnesses and the fear they must be feeling in this very strange, unprecedented time.

I was feeling at odds with myself and still do. I am a carer and I should be at the Nursing Home helping and encouraging my co-workers so that we can get through this together, but instead I find myself being at home with Graham isolating with him, due to his terminal illness.

I know I need to be at home with him after all he has only just come out of hospital after a month.

So, I pray about it.

Then we start coming out of lockdown and I find I am being asked to pray for others who are finding it difficult to go out, who have not been to the shops and are not sure what to expect. Talking them through it even following behind them and reassuring them that they are doing everything right, as the older generation worry about cleaning stations and so forth.

Then I began to notice gaps appearing in my prayer life. I was struggling to pray, Black Lives Matter, the horrendous explosion in Lebanon, climate change, and the ongoing news surrounding the coronavirus. I should be praying, and I was praying but somehow couldn't find the words.

I have never been one that can pray just like that, where the words just flow, because when I pray, I talk to God.

So why can't I do that now? I was getting more into a muddle and more and more problems kept coming up. I was lost in my prayers, but I kept on trying to pray but couldn't talk to Him anymore. I still love and trust God, so why can't I pray?

Then I realised I was watching too many reports on all kinds of things and somehow instead of just bringing these thoughts of mine to God, whether they be good or bad or even quite confusing, I was trying to sort them out to bring to Him, after all this is a strange time to be living through, and of course it had affected me more than I cared to admit.

MY PRAYER LIFE *continued*

I am praying to God a bit more regularly again now, but I am not stressing myself out if I find a day where all I can say is 'thank you for this day'.

I have come back to my basics where I simply used to talk to God about a matter close to my heart. It's not what we feel we have to pray about its the fact that we are talking to Him, we are sharing with Him what is in our heart and minds, God knows what's going on and he is active in every situation. I need to rest in Him and not be so hard on myself and whilst writing this I have come to realise that God is still listening to me, after all He simply wants me to talk to Him. Amen.



Denise Smith (Reader)

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FABRIC BAG KITS FOR THE FOODBANK



As always, thank you very much to all our dedicated sewing friends, and to those who have been supplying fabrics and cardboard to make plastic-free bags for the Food Bank. For the time-being, we have so much fabric and card that we are not receiving any more at present.

But we do need more sewing volunteers. If you are interested, please contact me.



Chris Speakman - 0121 705 3580

Mothers' UNION

Crime hurts many people – including the families of prisoners who have ended up in the UK prison system. They are often the forgotten victims, but not by the Mothers' Union (MU).

Instead, the MU's prison work across Britain is extensive, with the aim of keeping hurting families together. It is not simple work, for as prison governors are replaced and new directives come into force, those who work with prisoners and their families must adapt their approach.

MU members provide support to prison visitors by holding short courses so that visitors can get the most out of their time with the prison residents. MU also holds workshops to introduce many of the services that work with prisoners' families.

MU helps support the Family Days held at one prison, and also provides presents for children of prisoners at Christmas time. MU provides tea and a chat with the inmates of one women's prison, as well going-home packs of essential items for when they leave.

MU also supports prison officers, who as key workers have found the last few months particularly challenging. MU's Thank You Key Workers appeal wants to raise funds to provide families of key workers with short breaks or experience days. If you would like to help, please go to:

<https://www.mothersunion.org/thank-you-keyworker-appeal>



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A Sunday School teacher was discussing the Ten Commandments with her five and six-year-olds. After explaining the commandment to 'honour thy father and thy mother', she said: "Is there a commandment that teaches us how to treat our brothers and sisters?"

Without missing a beat, one little boy answered: "Thou shalt not kill."



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NEW LECTERN FALLS WANTED FOR ST JAMES CHURCH



Since our last Operations Committee meeting, when it was agreed that purchasing four Lectern Falls would enhance St James Church, it has been suggested that it would be good if we could make our own.

So, we are now looking for volunteers who are very handy with a sewing machine.

Maybe, it would be a good idea to have two people working together, if someone is not too confident then the other can support her?

Please get in touch with Margaret Foresheew if you are able to help in any way.

OUR PARISH BOOK CLUB - SUMMER READING

For the month of August 2020 the Parish Book Club treated itself to a longer than usual list of possible reads. All of the books were recommended, with a good deal of individual enthusiasm, by our members. Listed here are the books in the order of those that were most read, followed by a flavour of some Book Club members' various responses.



***The Dean's Watch* by Elizabeth Goudge** – set in the eighteenth century and about a friendship between a cathedral dean and an old clockmaker.

'It was a delight to find *The Dean's Watch*. To my shame I'd never read Elizabeth Goudge, but this was an intriguing story of a town, a Cathedral, and a relationship. I'm already looking forward to reading more. It's got substance, subtlety, and class. Not a book to be hurried though. After reading the overview of the town over the centuries, I went back and read it again, to recreate the pleasure.'

'I like this book very much. The main attraction for me is the way that the Dean transforms from a difficult person who can be a bit distant and who 'doesn't understand', into the person who understands others better than they understand themselves. Except that he doesn't transform. What changes is *their* understanding of him. My favourite bit is where the Dean bequeaths his gold pencil to the Butler and the solicitor is thinking that it is a strange thing to do. Then when the Dean dies the Butler is desperate to own one of the last things he touched. I did consider borrowing his Christmas morning sermon ...'

'I love this novel and all its characters, especially Isaac, Job and the Dean himself. I want to make clocks!! Of course, it's set in the best cathedral city – Lincoln.'

'Although I found it fairly hard going near the beginning, I couldn't stop reading'.

'It's a story about how two very shy men, the Dean and the Clockmaker, come to love and be loved by a whole city. A wonderful novel. Totally uplifting and absorbing'.

'I found this book fascinating and thoroughly enjoyed it. It reminded me of the Dickens' books especially *David Copperfield*. It introduced to you the characters the Dean had met over the years and his friendship with each one. It made me think of how often we forget how to live the life of Christ only to remember what we should do in order to recapture our longing for Christ.'

In terms of popularity, it's been a close run thing between *The Dean's Watch* and ***Where the Crawdads Sing* by Delia Owens**.

OUR PARISH BOOK CLUB - SUMMER READING

This second choice follows the story of a young girl who, at the age of seven, is abandoned by her parents and we follow her and her isolated life through to adulthood.

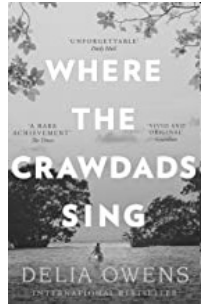
'Brilliant from beginning to end. I loved all the descriptions of the marsh land – the plants, birds, and fish. I could picture the whole story.'

'*Where the Crawdads Sing* was also recommended in the *Church Times* and by my daughter-in-law. A really enjoyable read although the chronology jumped about a bit which I hate.

I'm sure I wasn't the only one willing the jury for a 'not guilty' verdict. But I did find the truth difficult. Raises a lot of questions about inclusion and justice.'

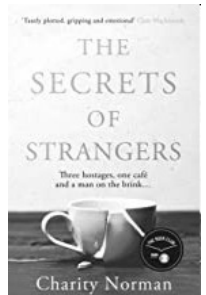
'I recommended *Where the Crawdads Sing* by Delia Owens because I loved it so much. The setting is a place I knew nothing about, so I found the nature of that place absolutely fascinating. The characters were wonderfully written, and the story had me hooked all the way through.'

'I found this book hugely moving. In some ways it reminded me of *To Kill a Mockingbird*.'



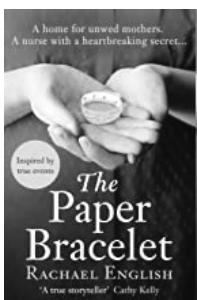
***Deacon King Kong* by James McBride:** set in the New York Projects, gripping, and revealing.

'On the surface this novel is very funny and engaging, but you are aware that there's much more to it. Definitely a 'black lives matter' experience.'



These next two books were read by just one of our members (so far)

- ***The Secrets of Strangers* by Charity Norman** and ***The Paper***



***Bracelet* by Rachel English.** Her responses to both books were:

'I loved them both. I found the story lines to be intriguing and the characters, plots and subplots interwove and supported each other. The revelation of each character's story was captivating and drew me in further to each book. Their stories showed me that anyone can be a victim and a survivor, that lives do overlap, and experiences are shared.

... continued over the page

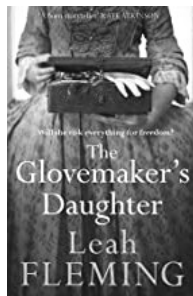
OUR PARISH BOOK CLUB - SUMMER READING

I particularly liked the strong female characters who took charge and moved the plots on. I also like the fact that each book had a 'proper ending' that made me feel that my journey with the characters was worthwhile. I was given a good ending that made me say 'Ah!'

***The Glovemakers Daughter* by Leah Fleming** – read by two of the Book Club – the one who recommended it, and one other. It's about a girl and her family in 1666 who are forced to flee to the New World because of their faith. Obviously, the reader who suggested we read it, liked it very much, but the other reader was less sure:

'I found *The Glovemakers Daughter* a very wordy book, but I did find the history of the Quaker movement so interesting – how its members were ostracised by York Minster and how despite this, they hung onto their beliefs in silence.'

'I found this story interesting as it told of how the Quakers were persecuted and their journey to the New World. I hadn't realised just how much the church had incited people against them. I had a history lesson as well as a good read.'

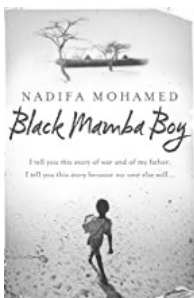


Elena Ferrante
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One of our readers was captivated and diverted by another two novels, not on the original list - **Elena Ferrante's *My Brilliant Friend***, the first of the Neapolitan quartet, and then ***The Story of a New Name*** – 'a rattling good read, the story of two girls growing up in a working-class district of Naples. I can't wait to read the remaining two books of the quartet.'

Elena Ferrante
THE INTERNATIONAL NO. 1 BESTSELLER



Also read and enjoyed this month: **Black Mamba Boy by Nadifa Mohamed** and **The Secret Rooms by Catherine Bailey**.

Coming next for the Book Club ...

One of the group has suggested that each of us revisit a book from our childhood.



Any book we encountered from when we were a toddler to when we were in our late teens.

OUR PARISH BOOK CLUB - SUMMER READING

The idea is to look at the book again and say (write) why that book was (and still is) important – how it changed the way you saw reading, books – and maybe even your own life.

A while ago we did something similar when we each chose a biography that we had enjoyed. The sharing of those books was a delight, and we hope that this return to childhood will work in the same way.

The deadline for responses is **Wednesday 7th October** please.

Ray Speakman

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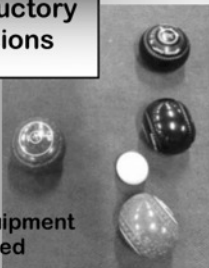
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PS You can also get a Host of Angels Tree decorations – six chocolate angels to hang on your tree, a sticker set and a Christmas activity poster. And some other Meaningful Christmas treats. See www.meaningfulchocolate.co.uk for more details.

If you would like to order one or more Calendars, please let the Parish Office know by **Friday 30th October**, and we will place an order and obtain free delivery. Please make cheques payable to Shirley Parish. (We suggest £4 per calendar to make the sums easier! The small surplus will be added to church funds.)

Kate Day



REFLECTING ON PSALM 90

'War simply aggravates the permanent human situation so that we can no longer ignore it. Human life has always been lived on the edge of a precipice.' (CS Lewis on World War II).

Coronavirus powerfully illustrates this, and Psalm 90 demonstrates a right response to the crisis: *'Teach us to number our days, that we may gain a heart of wisdom.'* (12).

The Shortness of Life

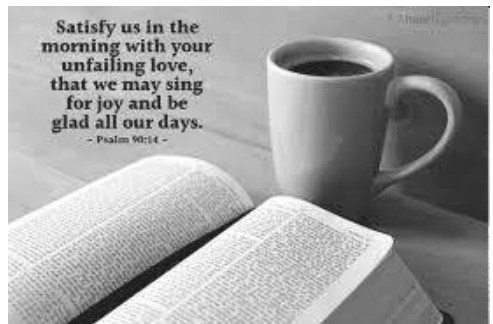
We live as though life will go on forever, but in reality our time on earth is short: *'A thousand years in your sight are like a day that has just gone by'* (4). By contrast God, who inhabits eternity, sees the whole of history in a single moment. How can we see our lives in the light of God, who is *'from everlasting to everlasting'* (2). True wisdom is making sure that we don't waste the time we are given in this life!

The Fragility of Life

Living to 80 years old is definitely an achievement! We know how we wear out in life until we are dust again: *'You turn people back to dust, saying, 'Return to dust, you mortals.'*(3). This is the result of turning from God to sin: *'You have set our iniquities before you'* (8). True wisdom warns us not to trust in our own abilities or seek satisfaction in the things of this world.

The Love of God

During the pandemic, many have lost loved ones, yet if we allow God's love to take hold of our lives, even death can bring us closer to God: *'Satisfy us in the morning with your unfailing love, that we may sing for joy and be glad all our days.'* (14). True wisdom is able to ask: *'May the favour of the Lord our God rest on us'* (17).



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REFLECTED FAITH : MUSIC AND SINGING

Many churches are holding Sunday, weekday and pastoral (Baptism, Wedding and Funeral) services again in their buildings.

However, for most of us no singing is allowed; and this often means no music is being played.

Whilst the churches were closed, one of the key things about worshipping together that people missed was the communal singing and the listening to the organ or other instruments.

If we look at the time taken to sing in each service (approximately a third of the whole service) and the amount musicians are usually paid, we can see the level of importance churches give to singing together.

So, although we understand the science behind the ‘no singing rule’ (breath is exhaled more forcibly so reaches further) it is still very strange to be in our normal church buildings but not to be able to sing.

Singing hymns and songs helps us to learn about our faith, to pray and to express our praise – but what is it about singing *together* that lifts our hearts in our time of worship?

Is it the physical breathing aspects, the sounds we aim to make, or indeed the way our voices join and blend together?

All through the Bible there are passages telling of times of singing: of musicians leading processions towards a place or time of worship.

There are many exhortations in the Psalms to the people to come together, ‘singing with joy and thanksgiving’.

The Bible also talks about a time to put down our instruments and refrain from singing. Let’s hope and pray that our time for restraint will pass quickly and we will soon rejoice together with thanksgiving, joyful and loud singing!

This month: How can you best sing to the Lord? It is usually easier to sing along with a video of people singing than to a recording alone.



Have a look for suitable recordings, videos or programmes to join in with their singing, or perhaps video call a church friend and sing the first verse of a couple of your favourite songs and hymns together?

THIS MONTH'S CROSSWORD

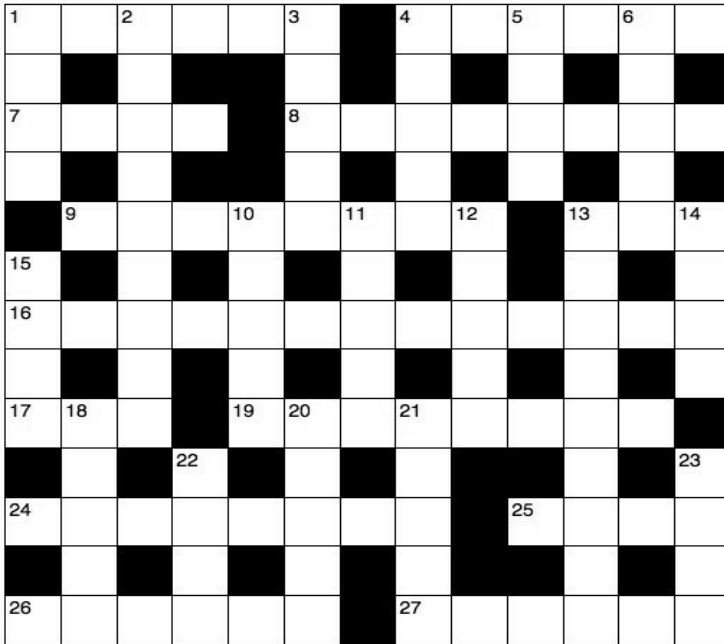
Across

- 1** He must be 'the husband of but one wife and must manage his children and his household well' (1 Timothy 3:12) (6)
- 4** 'For we must all — before the judgement seat of Christ' (2 Corinthians 5:10) (6)
- 7** 'They reeled and staggered like drunken men; they were at their — end' (Psalm 107:27) (4)
- 8** See **19** Across
- 9** It concerned who among the disciples would be the greatest (Luke 9:46) (8)
- 13** Formed by the Jews in Thessalonica to root out Paul and Silas (Acts 17:5) (3)
- 16** 'He has sent me to bind up the — ' (Isaiah 61:1) (6-7)
- 17** Moved rapidly on foot (Matthew 28:8) (3)
- 19** and **8** ' — a great company of the — host appeared with the angel' (Luke 2:13) (8,8)
- 24** Hindrance (Romans 14:13) (8)
- 25** Comes between Luke and Acts (4)
- 26** Empower (Acts 4:29) (6)
- 27** 'Get these out of here! How dare you turn my Father's house into a — !' (John 2:16) (6)

Down

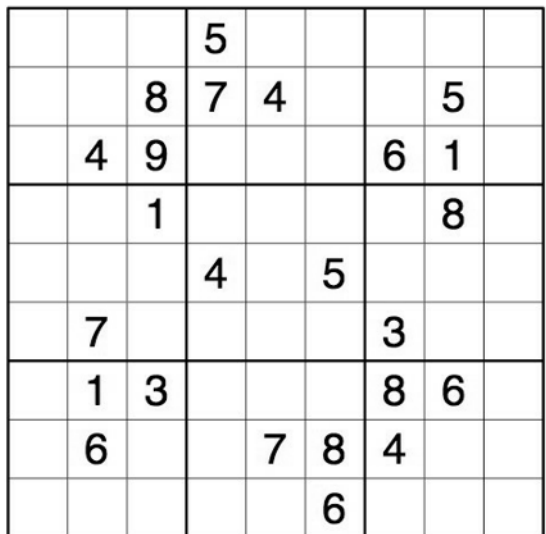
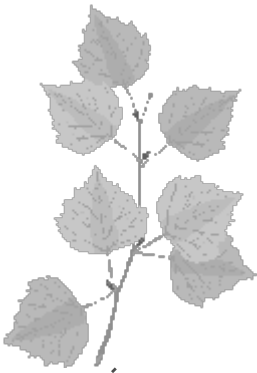
- 1** Sunrise (Psalm 119:147) (4)
- 2** The part of the day when Cornelius the Caesarean centurion had a vision of an angel of God (Acts 10:3) (9)
- 3** He was one of those who returned with Zerubbabel from exile in Babylon to Jerusalem (Nehemiah 7:7) (5)
- 4** 'No one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born — ' (John 3:3) (5)
- 5** Animal hunted or killed as food (Ezekiel 22:25) (4)
- 6** 'He encouraged them — — remain true to the Lord' (Acts 11:23) (3,2)
- 10** Ruses (anag.) (5)
- 11** Jewish priestly vestment (Exodus 28:6) (5)
- 12** Visible sign of what had been there (Daniel 2:35) (5)
- 13** This was the trade of Alexander, who did Paul 'a great deal of harm' (2 Timothy 4:14) (9)
- 14** 'This is my — , which is for you; do this in remembrance of me' (1 Corinthians 11:24) (4)
- 15** One of Noah's great-great-grandsons (Genesis 10:24) (4)
- 18** Traditionally the first British Christian martyr (5)
- 20** Relationship of Ner to Saul (1 Samuel 14:50) (5)

THIS MONTH'S CROSSWORD & SUDOKU



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Three Down, Nine
Across,
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Answers are
on page 31



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21 Jacob had one at a place he named Bethel while on his way to Haran,
fleeing from Esau (Genesis 28:12) (5)

22 Bats (anag.) (4)

23 'You strain out a — but swallow a camel' (Matthew 23:24) (4)

WORDSEARCH : ALL HALLOWS EVE – OR HOLY EVENING

Modern Halloween celebrations have their roots in pre-Christian times. In those long-ago days, on the last night of October, the Druid priests celebrated the Festival of Samhain, or 'Summer's End'. They lit great bonfires and performed magic rites to ward off the dark supernatural powers of oncoming winter. Today, Christians turn to prayer instead of charms to overcome the powers of darkness. And the deeper, true meaning of All Hallows' Eve, should not be forgotten.

As Christians, we all draw closer to Christ when we remember and give thanks for our loved ones and for others who have gone before us through the gates of death.



*Answers are
on page 31*

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PRIESTS
SAMHAIN
SUPERNATURAL
THANKS
TRUE
WINTER

SOME MORE HOLY HOWLERS

These statements were written by children when asked questions about the Old Testament in a Caithness school test. Thanks to Kate Crocker for sharing, more to follow in future issues!

The egyptians were all drowned in the dessert. Afterwards, Moses went up to mount cyanide to get the ten commandments.

The first commandment was when Eve told Adam to eat the apple.

The seventh commandment is thou shalt not admit adultery.

The greatest miricle in the bible is when Joshua told his son to stand still and he obeyed him.



MURPHY'S LAW OR GOD'S LAW?

It's reported that in 1949 Captain Edward Murphy, an engineer working on a project for the United States Air Force, became angry because of a wrongly wired transducer. Scolding the technician responsible, Murphy said, 'If there's any way to do it wrong, he'll find it!' Over time such thinking became known as Murphy's Law. Basically it states, 'Nothing is as easy as it looks. Everything takes longer than you expect, and if anything can go wrong, it will – at the worst possible moment.' How negative! Who would enjoy life if they lived it according to that philosophy? Because they always expected the worst – they'd get it!

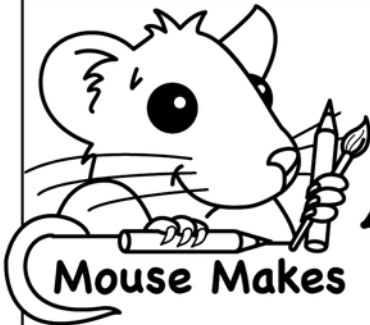
God's law disagrees completely with Murphy's Law. The world may expect Murphy's Law to operate in their lives, but as a redeemed child of God, you need to resist that kind of thinking and embrace God's law. In essence, here's what it says: 'If anything can go right, it will. Nothing is as difficult as it looks. Everything is more rewarding than it appears, and if anything good can happen to anybody, it'll happen to me.'

Think how much more you could enjoy life if your thoughts agreed with God's law, and not Murphy's. The fact is, God has a great life for you – one He wants you to enjoy to the fullest. So instead of blowing everything out of proportion and contradicting God's Word, stand on this promise: 'We know...all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose' (Romans 8:28 NKJV). That's what it means to live by God's law – not Murphy's!

Taken from UCB 'Word For Today'

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"GOD is the **one** who gives seed to those who **plant**, and He gives **bread** for **food**. And GOD will give you spiritual seed and make that seed grow. He will **produce** a great **harvest** from your goodness."

2 Corinthians 9:10

Look out for seeds in the park and garden and in your kitchen store cupboard.



How many different seeds can you find?



Jesus said:
"The kingdom of heaven is like a _____ **seed** that a man took and sowed in his **field**. It is the _____ of all the seeds, but when it has grown it becomes a tree, so that the wild _____ come and nest in its branches."

Read
Matthew
13:31-32

Jesus said:
"You do not need more **faith**. There is no 'more' or 'less' in faith. If you have a bare kernel of faith, say the size of a poppy seed, you could say to this sycamore tree
"Go jump into the lake"
and it would do it."
Luke 17:6

So the one who plants is not important, and the one who **waters** is not important. Only **GOD** is important because He is the one who makes things grow."

1 Corinthians 3:7

Find the words in **bold** on this page in the word search

H A R V E S T W O E S
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PUZZLE ANSWERS

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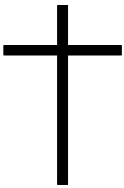
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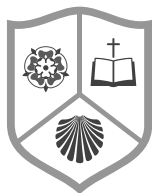
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SHIRLEY PARISH GUIDE *continued*

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