

Shirley Parish Magazine

June 2021



The Kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed - it is the smallest of seeds, but when it grows, it is big enough for the wild birds to come and build nests in its branches.

Matthew 13:31-32

SHIRLEY PARISH GUIDE

CLERGY

Vicar - Reverend Paul Day

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Tel: 0121 537 9672

Reverend Wendy Carter

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SHIRLEY PARISH



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Telephone: 0121 745 8896

email: admin@shirleyparish.co.uk

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

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

facebook.com/@AdventureinFaithB90

YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/ShirleyParishB90>

Services on the telephone: 0121 798 0196

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 WORSHIP

St James Church is open for private prayer on Wednesdays and Saturdays - 10am to 4pm

Thursdays - 3rd, 10th, 17th and 24th June

10.30am Holy Communion in St James Church

Saturdays - 5th, 12th, 19th and 26th June

9am Parish Prayers on Zoom

Sunday 6th June

10.30am Holy Communion in St James Church

6pm Reflective Worship in St John's Church garden

Sunday 13th June

8am Holy Communion in St James Church

10.30am Morning Worship in St James Church

Saturday 19th June

Messy Church

Sunday 20th June

10.30am Holy Communion in St James Church

Sunday 27th June

8am Holy Communion in St James Church

10.30am Morning Worship in St James Church - *SEE PAGE 23*

Services will also be live-streamed onto YouTube and the phoneline (new number - **0121 798 0196**) for you to watch/listen to at home

Please read the weekly pewslip to keep up to date with all the Parish news



THE FRIENDS OF ST JAMES 100 CLUB

Congratulations to the May winners

£50 - Miles Harrison

£25 - David Paice

Members are reminded that subscriptions for the next six months (June to November) are now due.

£13 for six months, £26 for twelve months. Cheques can be posted direct to myself at - 90 Dickens Heath Road, Shirley, B90 1RL or put through the letterbox at the Parish Office, when I will make arrangements to collect them.

Thank you to all members for sending your cheques to me over the past twelve months, your support is greatly appreciated.

Lynda McPherson

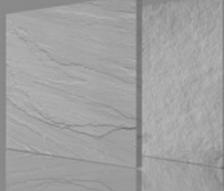


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Mon to Fri 7:30am - 5:30pm
Saturday 8am - 5pm
Sunday 10am - 4pm

JULY & AUGUST 2021 PARISH MAGAZINE

PLEASE SEND INFORMATION & ARTICLES TO THE EDITOR BY

Saturday 12th June

WANTED : CITIZEN SCIENTISTS!

St James's Churchyard, Shirley B90 2AX Nature count 5th to 13th June

It has been estimated that the area of churchyard land in England and Wales is equivalent to an extra national park! Because the land has not been ploughed or developed, it has the potential to support a diverse community of wildlife.

We want to find out what we have in our own two-acre plot and add our findings to the National Diversity Network.

Nature lovers are welcome to visit at any time in the week and log their findings through the iRecord app or on paper.

<https://www.caringforgodsacre.org.uk> and search 'share record'

There will be two meet-ups with identification and recording resources available and a chance to pool observations and share know-how.

Tuesday 8th June – 10am to 12 noon

One active hour, spotting wildflowers, grasses, ferns, lichens, mosses (whatever interests you). One quiet hour watching for birds, insects and mammals (squirrels at least!)

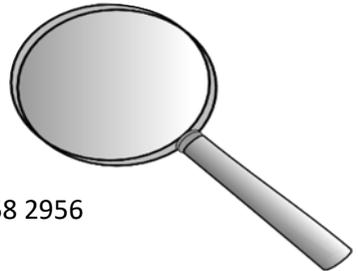
Saturday 12th June – 2pm to 4 pm – the same programme as above

All visitors to the churchyard are asked to be careful of the uneven ground, to respect the graves and to keep to Covid regulations.

Interested?

Contact Kate Crocker -

email: kate_crocker@hotmail.com or phone: 0121 258 2956



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CHURCH HOUSE BACK GARDEN - WE ARE NEARLY THERE!

The aim of this project is to provide an attractive area that the whole parish can use and enjoy.

Work to landscape the back garden of Church House will commence on **June 14th**.

When the work is complete, we will have an area where children can play safely and adults can relax.

So far we have raised £6,439.14. This has come from two grants, donations and the money raised by two jigsaw sales.

We still need to raise a little more money so we can purchase planters and shrubs to make the area attractive to use and to attract wildlife.

Can you help in anyway?!

Can you make a planter?

Can you donate a shrub?

Can you make a small donation to help us complete the project?

We look forward to hearing from you.

Due to the work being carried out, Church House car park will be closed to all from Saturday June 14th for at least a week. We are sorry for any inconvenience.



Linda Pitt and Kate Crocker



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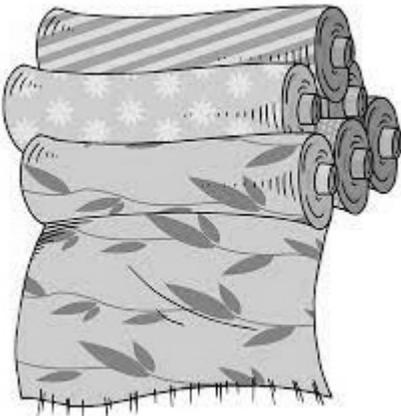
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FABRIC FOR BAGS FOR THE FOOD BANK

A big thank you to all who contribute to this project, either through the giving of material or by the creation of beautiful reusable bags for the Food Bank to help to cut down on the use of plastic.



We have now run low on fabric as we have been sewing well so if you have any spare cotton or linen material - not too thick as this makes sewing difficult for some of our machines - this would be gratefully received please.

Chris Speakman : 0121 705 3580

A PEEK INTO OUR VICAR'S DIARY

There's an old joke my children used to love telling ...

*Why doesn't the vicar look out of the window in the morning?
Because if he did (and it was always he) he'd have nothing to
do in the afternoon.*

Not true of course, but just what does the vicar do all day?

Well, lots actually, but sometimes it's hard to summarise. Here's some notes from my diary for a recent week in case you are interested in the wide range of things that go on.



Monday 26th April

Have a Zoom call with Ellie and Hannah in the morning as we talk about them returning to work in the office, and how the environment can be kept as safe as possible for them.

Take a funeral service in St James Church followed by a burial at Widney Manor. Although only thirty people are permitted in the church building, there must have been a hundred or more outside paying their respects to a much-loved man.

Just back in time for a meeting of the Christ the King Committee in the back garden. It's a joy to be able to meet people in person again – and the weather is fine! We talk about some of the needs of individual members and when Christ the King might get back into the building to worship.

Make sure everything is ready for the weekly printing as Ellie or Hannah always print things on a Tuesday ready for distribution to the Parish.

In the evening chair a meeting (again on Zoom) of Churches Together in Shirley. We discuss the things we can do together when we can meet in numbers again – including the possibility of some kind of community carol singing in Shirley Park next Christmas and a thought that we might hold a post Covid memorial event for the community in the Autumn.

Tuesday 27th April

A meeting this morning of the Trustees of Narthex – the charity that oversees the Foodbank we support. I have been a Trustee for a couple of years – the Trustees formulate the strategic direction of the charity and its work. It's so encouraging to hear how God is working through what is happening – but somewhat depressing that there is so much need out there in the community. The Foodbank has more than doubled its work since the pandemic.

Quick break for a sandwich and then visit Joyce Ferris in St Bernard's Care Home. Need to arrive early to take a Covid test but all is well.

A PEEK INTO OUR VICAR'S DIARY *continued*

It's lovely to see be able to see Joyce again after the visiting restrictions but have to be toggged up in full PPE which makes conversation difficult. Like many people Joyce has suffered over this past year through lack of contact with friends and family.

Straight on to a funeral visit – again in person, suitably socially distanced outside. We talk about Edith who has died - it's so much easier now I can visit again. Phone calls are just not the same.

Back home for a bit of desk work, a couple of phone calls and then an evening meeting (again on Zoom) with the Archdeacon, Area Dean and clergy and wardens from neighbouring parishes talking about the future of ministry in the area.

Wednesday 28th April

Up for our early morning walk and, as has become routine on Wednesdays and Thursdays, delivering some of the weekly envelopes as we go.

Morning spent at the desk. Amongst other things I arrange a meeting with council officers to talk about the possible Churches Together Memorial event, I make a couple of pastoral phone calls and begin to think about the sermon for Sunday 9th May. It sounds like a long way in advance, but it will be needed by Monday to be sent out, and the coming weekend looks busy.

At lunchtime there is an online meeting talking about “worship in the woods”. In the new service pattern, we have a “Forest Church” on each fifth Sunday. This is more than simply worshipping outside – it's using the created world to help us meet with God in new ways. The online meeting gives us a few ideas as we begin to plan for 30th May.

At St James' in the afternoon to spend time with a family as we inter the ashes of a wife, mother and grandmother who will be sorely missed; this was followed by a pastoral chat and a prayer with someone in church and then a quick visit to St John's to take the PA equipment we would need for the outdoor Reflective worship service. A regular Zoom call on alternate Wednesdays is the Council's Community Champions briefing. The Public Health department use this to disseminate information about progress with Covid to the wider community. Thankfully the news is very positive. Answering some emails in the early evening before settling down to look at the crossword.

Thursday 29th April

Would normally meet for prayers (over Zoom of course!) with local church leaders first thing, but the person responsible forgets to set up the meeting (no naming and shaming here).

... continued over the page

A PEEK INTO OUR VICAR'S DIARY *continued*

Spend the morning recording the Morning Worship and Reflective Worship services for Sunday, then editing the video and to include Gill Gough's sermon, Ray Speakman's prayers and various hymns and other music.

All this takes a surprising amount of time.

Afternoon mostly spent on a video call with someone from "Faith Online" who explains how the new equipment to live stream the services straight from church works. Head spinning by the end.

Evening spent making a couple of phone calls and creating the subtitles for one of the service videos for Sunday. Producing these videos takes a considerable time each week which is one of the reasons why we are looking to be able to broadcast services straight from the church building.

Friday 30th April

Day off! A lovely six mile walk in the lanes and paths around Tanworth-in-Arden. Weather very pleasant apart from the thirty minutes when we are having our lunch in the churchyard at Ullenhall in a rain shower.



Saturday 1st May

We begin with the weekly prayer meeting. As usual there are about half a dozen of us present on Zoom and we spend the time praying for things that are planned or happening in the churches, for individuals in particular need and for the wider world. Always uplifting and encouraging.

Then off to see a family about a baptism. We meet in their garden and talk about their lives, their faith and the coming baptism. This is the first of what looks like lots of baptisms planned for the year. We would usually have about twenty or thirty, but with all the cancellations caused by Covid last year it looks likely we will exceed that this year. In normal times we would invite the family to Messy Church and JimmyTots – it's another sadness of lockdown that we cannot do that – yet!

Off to St James to make sure everything is in order for when we have our first service back in the building tomorrow.

Do some more work on next week's sermon in the afternoon – it is almost done now. Every fortnight there is a Zoom meeting of the Shirley Mutual Aid group. This was set up last March to help those who were shielding or isolating with shopping, other jobs and just making phone calls to those on their own. At its peak around sixty volunteers were helping others in the area.

A PEEK INTO OUR VICAR'S DIARY continued

Things have quietened down now of course, and the group – of which I am Chairperson – are looking for other creative ways of keeping this community spirit alive.

Sunday 2nd May

We are back in St James for the morning service at the new time of 10.30am. A good attendance, and a great sermon from Gill Gough. There seems to be a more positive atmosphere than there was when we were in the building in the autumn. Maybe it's the reassurance of having had the vaccination, maybe it's the sense that we really are on the way out of the pandemic now.

As it's the first Sunday in the month we have Reflective Evening Worship at St John's. We are outside in the garden and about twenty people turn up – including some visitors – one of the Chaplains from Heartlands and an Ordinand (trainee vicar) who lives locally and is on placement in Dorridge. It's great to see them. Some light rain at the beginning and we make the mistake of asking people to stand to sing the first hymn (yes we can sing outside!). When it comes to sitting down all the seats are wet! We are fortunate that the rain soon stops and that the rest of the service is in the dry. A great end to the day.

Monday 3rd May

And so, it's back to Monday again. Today is Bank Holiday Monday and we have decided to walk the fourteen miles of the Parish boundary. Despite the very wet weather we have a good day, accompanied by a dozen or so church members at various times and praying for the people, schools, businesses and churches of Shirley. Home before the worst of the weather to a warm shower and dry clothes! (and maybe a glass or two of red wine)

So that's a typical week. Only that no two weeks, no two days are the same. And that's one of the joys of the job!

Reverend Paul Day



RETURNING TO WORSHIP IN OUR CHURCH BUILDINGS

We have been back in the St James building since the start of May, with limited numbers at the moment, but in the hope that soon we will be able to welcome more people to worship together. We are currently planning to begin worshipping in Christ the King and St John's from the start of July.

However, we are very much aware that the last year has taken its toll and many of our congregation members are not as physically able as they were. So here are a couple of ways where the more able amongst us might be able to help.

Firstly, would you be able to offer a lift to church to someone who now finds it hard driving or catching a bus? If so, can you let the Parish Office know. Also, if you need a lift then let them know as well. We will try to match people up!

And secondly, Christ the King Church have to set up the building each week to change an empty school hall into a space where the congregation can gather to worship. Would you be able to help set things up and put things away for a Sunday every month or so? If you think you can please contact the office.

Over the past year it has been a joy to see how we have cared for and looked out for each other – these are some opportunities to continue that care for each other into the future.

Many thanks, *Paul*



This year's

SUMMER FETE

will be on

Saturday 14th August

in St John's Church garden

CARE FOR ST JAMES CHURCHYARD AND ST JOHN'S GARDEN

The PCC of Shirley Parish is committed to caring for both the St James Churchyard and the garden at St John's Church in an ecologically friendly way. This means leaving areas unmown to encourage wildflowers and bees, encouraging birds with bird boxes and feeders, creating woodpiles to attract invertebrates as well as not using any pesticides. We need to be aware that both areas are open to the public and so we have to ensure safety at all times.

In recent months tree surveys have indicated that some trees were unsafe or needed work doing to them to keep them in good health. This has meant that, at St Johns, two large trees have some extensive work done on them and, at St James, four trees will soon require felling. Although we don't like to see trees being felled, we have taken these actions to ensure people can safely use these spaces and so that the remaining trees and plants can continue to thrive. Our hope is to replace these trees in the future, possibly with fruit trees.



DO YOU USE DAILY BIBLE READING NOTES?

I started reading these about four months ago. I can only say it is an interesting read. They deal with aspects of the Bible which you may have forgotten or just didn't know. I have particularly enjoyed the Old Testament extracts, and have read all about Ruth, Daniel, and Nebuchadnezzar. The latter is behind the expression "the writing on the wall"!

So there is a good mix of the familiar and the unfamiliar.

There are comments by experts with each piece which are meant to aid our understanding of it. Of course, you don't have to agree with them!

Richard Hidson



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Please contact Margaret Foreshew if you would like to know more

THE PARABLE OF THE GREAT BANQUET

One thing that we've probably missed over the past year is parties. Well, this month should enable us to party again! Lots of Jesus' parables focus on parties, as they are a picture of the joy, hope and life of the kingdom of God. The parable of the Great Banquet (Luke 14: 15-24) challenges us not to miss out on this.

In Jesus' day, when people accepted an *invitation* to a banquet, they were only told the actual time on the day: '*Come, for everything is now ready*' (17). Jesus' invites each one of us to share in the life of His kingdom.

However, the guests made *excuses* for not coming. At the time, this would have been extremely insulting to the host. They said: '*I have just bought a field; I must try out my new team of oxen; I have just got married*' (18-20). These are all good things in themselves, however they reveal their priorities were elsewhere.

We too can be pre-occupied with our own routines of work, family, retirement, holidays, friends, home, social media, that we forget God's priorities for our lives. Jesus calls for total commitment from His disciples. *What priority in my life is holding me back from accepting His invitation?*

How did the host *respond*? He ordered His servants to '*Go out quickly into the streets and alleys of the town and bring in the poor, the crippled, the blind and the lame.*' (21). He invited the unexpected and unacceptable people to His banquet. Jesus makes the point that *God's kingdom is open to all!* Thinking about our family, friends, colleagues and neighbours, even if they're not like us or show little interest in God: *Are we willing to offer them God's invitation to share His love and life?*

SIT AND BE STILL

If you manage to get into a church building this month, for whatever reason, we are being encouraged to just sit still and breathe in the place. To relish being 'back'!

To sit 'heavily' in that spot. To feel the solidity of the surface you are sitting on. Lean into it. Feel how it supports you. Feel each part of your body where it is touching the chair or pew.

As you sit in the church building – or at home if you are not able to do so – think of all those people in the Bible stories who sat with Jesus. The number of times He taught in the Temple or in a synagogue, or to crowds gathered on a hill. Recall the Last Supper and His friends gathered sitting with Him to eat and share the Passover meal, and then recall the meal with the men from the Emmaus Road. So many meal times with the bold and the weak, the saints and the sinners. With you and me.

The Big Bash!



JESUS OFTEN TOLD STORIES WITH HIDDEN MEANINGS



ONE STORY WAS ABOUT A RICH MAN WHO DECIDED TO HAVE A PARTY

HE SENT OUT LOTS OF INVITATIONS

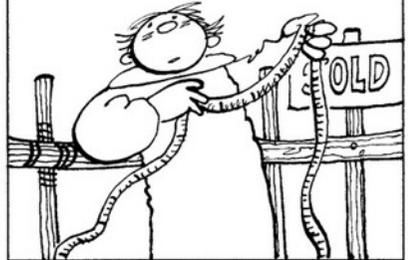


OH! NO!!

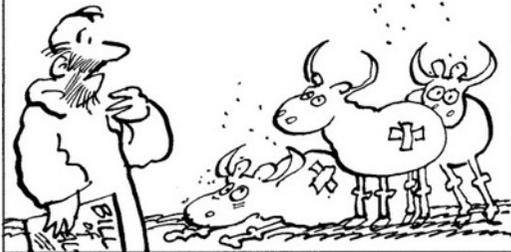


BUT PEOPLE STARTED MAKING EXCUSES

ONE MAN SAID HE HAD BOUGHT A FIELD, BUT NEEDED TO MEASURE IT



ANOTHER MAN SAID HE NEEDED TO TEST DRIVE THE OXEN HE HAS JUST PAID FOR



ANOTHER MAN SAID HE HAD JUST GOT MARRIED - AND HIS WIFE WOULDN'T LET HIM OUT!

SO THE RICH MAN INVITED ALL THE POOR AND NEEDY INSTEAD.



THE PARABLE MEANS WE SHOULDN'T MAKE EXCUSES FOR NOT FOLLOWING JESUS.

SHIRLEY PARISH BOOK CLUB

The Other Side of the Dale by Gervase Phinn.

This is one of those books that strikes quite a few chords for our book club readers. It set off echoes of our own childhoods, of our working lives and the rural places from our past that mean so much to us. Safe to say, everyone liked the book. It made them smile a lot and proved to be the perfect escape from our lives in lockdown.

Some responses:

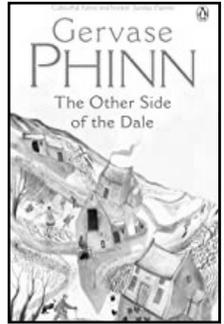
I love reading Gervase Phinn's books; they're such a fun, happy read. The writing is good, the characters a delight and the events he describes, both in the schools he visits and in other aspects of his life, are really amusing and sometimes quite poignant. *The Other Side of the Dale* is a book that makes you feel happy, and makes you want to visit the beautiful Yorkshire Dales! (Sue)

I enjoyed *The Other Side of the Dale*. It was an entertaining read. Each chapter introduced the reader to a different scenario full of colourful descriptions and into the innocent way the minds of young children see and express events. The adult characters and personalities were easily identifiable in real life and helped add to the fun and keep me reading ... and I learned, not to eat too many cream teas. (Meryl)

This trip into the Yorkshire Dales and the lovely schools that those places contain, was hugely entertaining and comforting. It makes the reader feel good about the way schools are run, what the teachers teach and how effectively the children learn. Just the sort of reassurance and diversion we all need during the pandemic. (Ray)

Gervase Phinn's book was a delightful read. I chuckled my way through it. I found the characters believable, enjoyed the anecdotes, his love of people and his descriptions of the Yorkshire countryside – so much so that I will certainly read some more of his stuff. (Jill)

A pleasant, easy read and immensely helpful in conjuring up a picture of the Yorkshire Dales - God's own county! The stories are entertaining, and some do seem familiar! Readers need to appreciate that the book is more fiction than autobiographical. It brings back memories of school days and is exactly right during this time of Covid-19. (Andrew and Sue)



SHIRLEY PARISH BOOK CLUB *continued*

I have just finished reading, and reacquainting myself with, *The Other Side of the Dale* by Gervase Phinn. It is as delightful as it was the first time I read it. His descriptions of time and place and his observation of people is so acute. The down to earth Yorkshire people together with the honesty of children made me burst out laughing many times. Such an uplifting book for these times. "A Rite Good Read".

(Pat)

There was nothing to dislike about this book. It was funny, a bit sentimental and a relaxing, easy read. Perhaps it hit the spot a bit more for the teachers in our parish than it did for me.

(Sarah)

How lovely to read a book where I can relax!!! I enjoyed reading this and had a good laugh at some of the things that the children said and how Gervase was often lost for words. It made a good interlude between the serious books we read.

(Margaret F)

Gervase Phinn's novel does not have a single dull passage. It moves all the time. I found many of his descriptions of schools and the people he encounters there, absolutely true to life – slightly more perfect than my own memories of schools, but recognisably pleasant all the same. A good read. Not a book that needs studying, just enjoying.

(Margaret J)

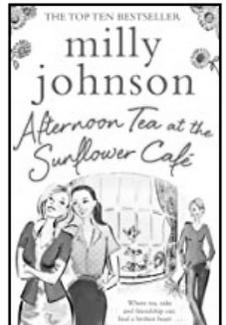
It had been four years since I'd last read *The Other side of the Dale*, so it was fun to look it out from the bookcase and read it again. I enjoyed the light, flowing tale this time as much as I did previously. I love his descriptions of the countryside. He makes me want to go back to the dales!

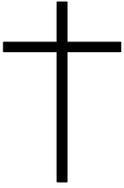
Mind you in all my forty years at the chalk face I never met an inspector like that.

(Mary)

The next book is *Afternoon Tea at the Sunflower Café* by Milly Johnson – which seems to have captured quite a few hearts already!

Ray Speakman





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HELPING PEOPLE IN NEED



FOOD BANK: the current appeal is for toilet rolls, tins of meat soup, dried milk and instant mash.



CLOTHING BANK (at the Narthex): shoes in reasonable condition are always a problem particularly school type shoes for children, all sizes welcome. Recently we had a wonderful delivery of men's shoes size 7 but there is a constant shortage of size 8 and 9, trainers too.

ADAVU: thank you for the generous donations of baby clothes and toiletries for the baby girl born in May to a mother trafficked for sexual exploitation (to pay off her father's debt) who is now safe being supported by Liisa and her team at ADAVU. We were able to give her new-born clothes, baby shampoo, soap and bath liquid, cotton wool, nappies - and a few toys (which I had been hoarding ready for the next Christmas parcels!). Mother and baby are doing well. That completes the four babies due this winter!



As ever there is an appeal for toiletries for the thirty ladies supported by ADAVU. Sarah Penfold is happy to receive them and then pass them on to me.

NARTHEX: we heard the news of the death of Reverend John Self recently. He was Vicar at St John's Sparkhill for many years and Chairman of the Trustees for the Narthex charity. We met him and his wife, Frances, many times over the years and are sad that he enjoyed so few years of retirement. The Narthex was set up by John and Frances when they moved to Sparkhill from Pakistan where he had been working as a missionary, and they brought that spirit with them, helping people whether of his parish, other faiths or those temporarily without means of support in the south east of Birmingham where the population is amongst the top 4% most deprived in the UK. It runs sixteen projects which include the Food Bank, the Resource Centre for Refugees, Support for the Elderly, Domestic Violence victim support, Men's Club and Boys' Club. The Narthex charity is a lasting tribute to both of them, and the support from parishioners in our parish over the years has been much appreciated.

Elizabeth Paice

A PRAYER FOR ENCOURAGEMENT IN JUNE

Father,

At this time of year, we remember Barnabas, a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and faith, who encouraged people to stay true to you - and others to trust you for the first time.

Lord, we have gone through difficult days. The pandemic has taught us that we are not in control. We don't know what each new day might bring. As we move into June and the hope of more normality after the restrictions of Lockdown, we too need encouragement.

Help us to have courage to step forward with confidence and common sense. Most of all help us to stay true to you and to trust you, knowing that you are the security we need, knowing that you will never leave us or forsake us. Help us to be encouraged! In Jesus name, Amen.

by Daphne Kitching

WHEN YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND ...

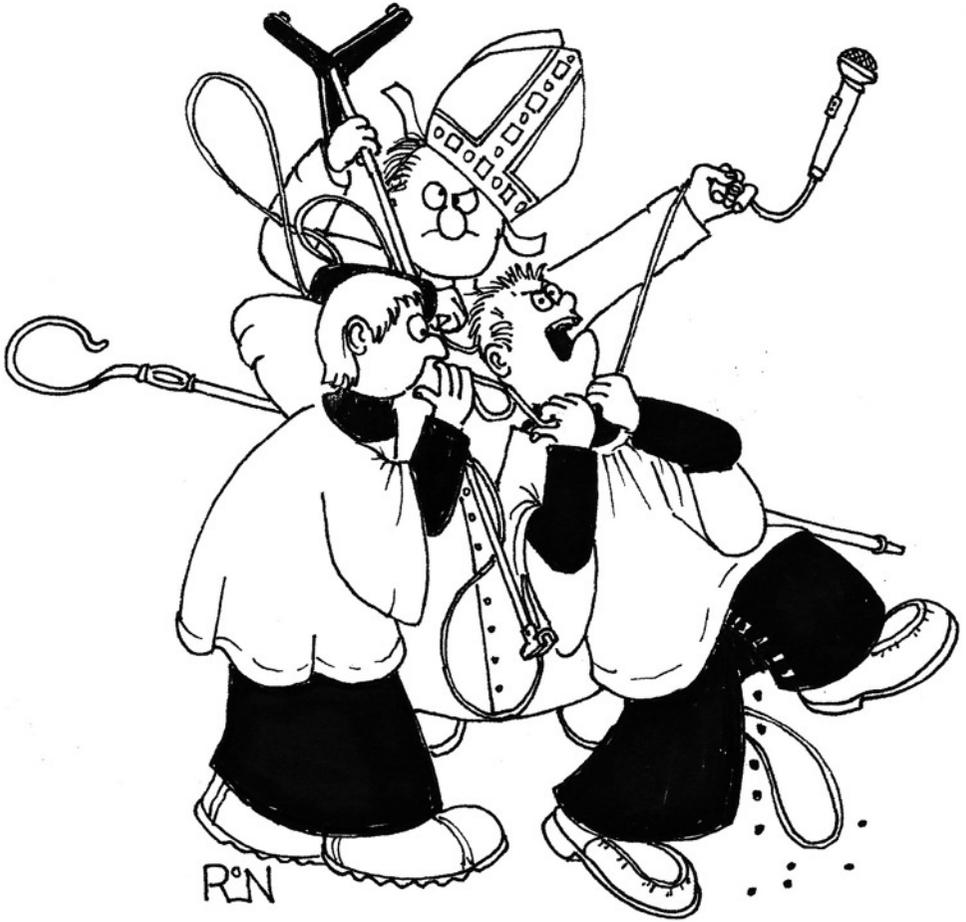
'The secret things belong to the LORD...but the things revealed belong to us.'

Deuteronomy 29:29 NIV

When you don't understand what's happening in your life, start with what you know for sure; namely, that God is good all the time, and His 'love for those who respect him continues forever' (Psalm 103:17 NCV). He's not fickle. He doesn't bless you one day and curse you the next: His 'mercies...are new every morning' (Lamentations 3:22-23 KJV).

But there are things God chooses to reveal to us, and 'secret things' He doesn't – for our own good. Writer Beth Jones says: 'If God keeps a secret from us, it's for our benefit and the benefit of others. For example, He doesn't go around blaming, tattling or disclosing our sins, weaknesses, unbelief, carnality, selfishness or pride to others. When things happen, God knows why...Secret things belong to the Lord. And when He reveals something to us, it's because He wants us to walk in that truth by faith. For example, He reveals His character and His will in His Word...so we can live by faith knowing that He's good, fair, kind, generous, merciful, faithful, gracious, patient, and He's in the saving, healing, redeeming, restoring, sanctifying, and blessing business. Things revealed belong to us.

When we don't know why...here's what we know for sure. God's Word is truer than our circumstances or experiences...and just because He knows everything about us doesn't mean He tells us about everything. We also know that when things look bad, God is still good. He's a giver, not a taker...a blesser, not a curser...and no matter what happens or doesn't happen, at the end of the day – we still win!



After months of lockdown, the Sunday procession probably needed some practise.



IMPROVING YOUR PRAYER LIFE

We hope that you found the 'Thy Kingdom Come' Prayer Journal helpful. The C of E has also recently produced a series of reflections on prayer, and these are some of the tips that were included.

There is no right way, or place or posture for praying. Just the way that is right for you. Feeling comfortable is vital. You don't, for instance, have to kneel down. Sitting in an easy chair or lying on the floor is just as good.

Using set prayers is one of the best ways to get started. If you use your own words, do not worry that they won't be good enough. Even if you find you have no words, offer God your thoughts, even your distractions and anxieties. Give him the time you have set aside.

What images or objects remind you that God is there? Think about how you could make a special place for prayer at home. When you're on the go, you might try carrying something in your pocket or handbag or putting an image on your phone's lock screen.

Could you set yourself an alarm to remind yourself it's time to pray? Think about when you could take a couple of moments in your busy day to check in with God.

Try listing the things you are thankful for in the morning when you get up. Does this sometimes lead you into prayer?

Think about the rhythms and routines of your daily life. Make time for God by discerning where in each day are your times and places for prayer.

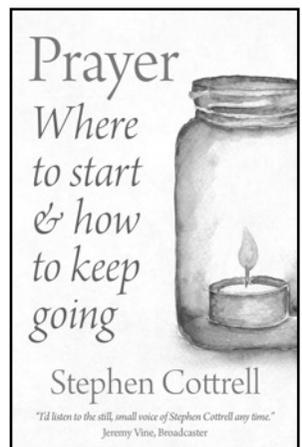
Try giving thanks before a meal – with others or on your own. Keep it short and simple, such as "O Lord, bless this food to our use and us in your service, and keep us ever mindful of the needs of others. Amen."

Are there any other prayers you know by heart? You could try keeping a notebook of new prayers you discover.

The next time you're in a quiet place, listen to the silence. Do you know Psalm 23, "The Lord is my shepherd", which is itself a beautiful prayer? Find a copy of the text, and next time you are feeling sad, read from it.

Could you commit to memory a prayer that will stay with you even (maybe especially) when you feel far from God?

There are plenty of books that you can read about prayer including 'Prayer - Where to start and how to keep going' by Archbishop Stephen Cottrell that this series was based on.



CLIMATE SUNDAY

In September 2020, the Churches Together in Britain and Ireland, together with support from a number of charities, asked churches across the nations to hold Climate Sunday events before 5th September 2021.

These will focus on

Worship - a service focused on creation and the present threat to the planet

Commitment - as a parish and as individuals to do what we can to help

Speaking up - petitioning the government to intensify its efforts to combat global warming

The feedback from the grassroots will be included in a National Climate Sunday event on 5th September 2021 and used to lobby in the weeks leading up to the vital COP26 conference in Glasgow in November.

Our event will take place on

Sunday 27th June at 10.30am in St James Church

It is difficult to give more detail at this point, although we are busy planning, because everything depends on the Covid road map. Please save the date and keep this vital work in your prayers.



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THE BIRMINGHAM CHARTER

Following the publication of the report from the C of E Archbishops' Anti-Racism Taskforce the Bishop of Birmingham has reminded us of our commitment to the Birmingham Charter.

1. We the churches, Christian organisations and followers of Jesus **acknowledge** the issue of racial injustice and its systemic and institutional nature.
2. We commit to challenge **racism confidently** across Birmingham and see it removed from the church and society.
3. We commit to an honest and open **look at ourselves** and our churches and where we are in relation to the issue of racial injustice.
4. We will **pray**: actively encouraging prayer as a group and within and across our churches and neighbourhoods over the issue of racial injustice and disunity.
5. We **repent** – we have caused or ignored hurt, and we pray for a deep healing in our city.
6. We will **engage in conversations** - creating the spaces for open, honest and frank dialogue. We will listen to the voices of our black and all ethnic communities, across the generations and the different parts of our city.
7. We commit to **relationship building** with church and city leaders modelling strong supportive relationships across the city. We will build a culture of honour, openness and support within our churches, neighbourhoods and workplaces.
8. We will bridge the knowledge gap, building a **shared understanding** of what it is like to be black, or of other ethnicity in Birmingham today, understanding the historical context and the damage to their psyche by sustained and systemic racism.
9. We aim for **truth, reconciliation and healing** through open discussions across the city, that understands and acknowledges the hurts of the past and hopes for the future. We will identify actions to bring healing.
10. We will **advocate**; using our influence and understanding to speak up for racial equality and equity in the church and the city. We will inspire changes in structures and cultures to remove racism. We will engage the city's civic leaders as they address this issue.

THE BIRMINGHAM CHARTER *continued*

11. We will build and strengthen **representative leadership**: Creating systems, structures and processes that encourage representative leadership in our churches and organisations. We will actively mentor and encourage young and emerging leaders.
12. We will **take practical action**, developing short, medium and long term plans to equip the wider church to strengthen unity and collaboration and engage the wider community.
13. We will **equip and engage** the wider church with material on theology, and key principles around justice, equity and equality, testimonies and events. We will ensure our actions and narratives are centred very clearly on Jesus, rooted firmly in the word of God and inspired by the Spirit.
14. We will **communicate and dialogue** regularly and clearly, in an engaging and accessible way to ensure the wider church is kept up to date. We will inspire Christians engaged in business, health, education, arts and media and other spheres to be champions for equity, equality and builders of unity.
15. We commit to **being a welcoming city**, a super diverse community where all peoples, whatever their background or ethnicity see that God's people will always provide a home, a community and a generous welcome. We commit to strengthening unity and harmony across the church that we might be one just as the Father and Son are one.

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THIS MONTH'S CROSSWORD

Across

- 1** Military tactic used by Joshua to attack and destroy the city of Ai (Joshua 8:2) (6)
- 4** Place of learning (6)
- 8** 'When Moses' hands grew — , they took a stone and put it under him and he sat on it' (Exodus 17:12) (5)
- 9** Unpleasant auguries of the end of the age, as forecast by Jesus (Matthew 24:7) (7)
- 10** Stronghold to which girls in King Xerxes' harem (including Esther) were taken (Esther 2:8) (7)
- 11** Where Saul went to consult a medium before fighting the Philistines (1 Samuel 28:7) (5)
- 12** Propitiation (Hebrews 2:17) (9)
- 17** Turn away (Jeremiah 11:15) (5)
- 19** So clear (anag.) (7)
- 21** 'I have just got — , so I can't come': one excuse to be absent from the great banquet (Luke 14:20) (7)
- 22** Long weapon with a pointed head used by horsemen (Job 39:23) (5)
- 23** Musical beat (6)
- 24** What the Israelites were told to use to daub blood on their door-frames at the first Passover (Exodus 12:22) (6)

Down

- 1** Fasten (Exodus 28:37) (6)
- 2** Art bite (anag.) (7)
- 3** 'The people of the city were divided; some — with the Jews, others with the apostles' (Acts 14:4) (5)
- 5** Contend (Jeremiah 12:5) (7)
- 6** Possessed (Job 1:3) (5)
- 7** Sheen (Lamentations 4:1) (6)
- 9** 'You love evil rather than good, — rather than speaking the truth' (Psalm 52:3) (9)
- 13** Large flightless bird (Job 39:13) (7)
- 14** They were worth several hundred pounds each (Matthew 25:15) (7)
- 15** 'A — went out to sow his seed' (Matthew 13:3) (6)
- 16** How Jesus described Jairus's daughter when he went into the room where she lay (Mark 5:39) (6)
- 18** The part of the day when the women went to the tomb on the first Easter morning (John 20:1) (5)
- 20** Narrow passageway between buildings (Luke 14:21) (5)

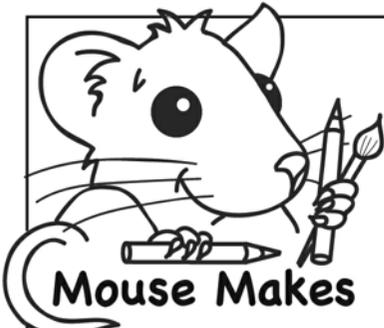
THIS MONTH'S CROSSWORD & SUDOKU

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Answers are on page 31



JESUS HEALS

Who was the first person Jesus healed?
John 4:46-54

Who did Jesus heal from fever?
Mark 1:29-31

How was the the paralysed man brought to Jesus?
Mark 2:1-12

- Jesus **healed** and made the...
- SICK
 - DEAD
 - BLIND
 - DEAF
 - CRIPPLED
 - SINNER
 - MUTE
 - PARALYSED
 - DISABLED
 - ABLE
 - WALK
 - FORGIVEN
 - ALIVE
 - SPEAK
 - MOVE
 - SEE
 - WELL
 - HEAR



Where did the demons ask Jesus to send them when he drove them out?
Mark 5:1-20

How long had the man by the pool been disabled?
John 5:1-15

What did Jesus say made the woman well?
Matthew 9: 20-22



How many men were healed from leprosy?
Luke 17:11-19



What did Jesus heal Bartemaus from?
Mark 10:46-52

Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead, how many days had he been buried?
John 11:1-45

"There are **many** things that Jesus did. If every one of them were written down, I suppose the whole world would not have room for the books that would be written."
John 21:25

ST ALBAN - THE FIRST BRITISH MARTYR

Persecution of Christians worldwide is rising fast, so it is worth remembering St Alban, the first British martyr. Alban was a Roman citizen living in England when the Roman emperor, Diocletian, began a fierce persecution. Soon Alban found a desperate priest on his doorstep, hunted by local soldiers. Alban gave the priest shelter, and within days was converted. When the soldiers arrived, Alban took the priest's place, refused to offer sacrifice to the Roman gods, and was condemned to death. Alban went to his execution on 22nd June 250AD with such serenity that one of the executioners was converted. He died on the site of the Hertfordshire town that now bears his name.



*Answers are
on page 31*

ALBAN
CONDEMNED
CONVERTED
DEATH
DIED
DIOCLETIAN
DOORSTEP
EMPEROR
EXECUTION
GODS
MARTYR
NAME
PERSECUTION
PRIEST
ROMAN
SACRIFICE
SERENITY
SITE
SOLDIERS
TOWN

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H	T	A	E	D	T	S	N	S	L	O	N
E	O	E	P	E	T	E	C	E	M	A	N

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GRAHAM SMITH : 8.12.1951 - 24.4.2021

By the time you are reading this you will all know that the love of my life has gone to the Lord.

Although Graham was calm about his ending and accepted it was soon to be and the faith he had never waned, I had a few questions of the Lord as I watched Graham slipping away from me.

Yes, my faith was still there but I felt like I wasn't able to completely trust in God in the very early hours of the Saturday morning.

I could get my head around the fact that very soon Graham would find peace after a long, long illness so bravely borne by him.

It was the fact that could I trust enough that God would look after him, could I let go of Graham and allow God to guide my future?

So, I started whispering my thoughts out loud to God when making myself a drink, but I didn't get a reply.

I was waiting and praying a mixture of prayers, some for Graham, some for my family and friends.

Still nothing back so I stopped praying and just carried on caring for Graham until 9.40am when I saw him go into God's care.

I sat there for a few minutes in the stillness and then it was at that moment I heard the voice of God say -

"Be still know and know that I am God."

Then the nurse came to do what has to be done and I heard God speaking through her, she said to me we always want to hang onto them, but we have to let go.

I remembered in that split second that Jesus said, "do not cling onto me, but go and tell everyone I am ascending to my Father".

So, I sat there calling family and looking at Graham who was so peaceful, then I knew I have to let him go and although it is going to be hard, God will be with me as Graham himself said "God loves me, how amazing is that?".

So, God's blessings to all who might be struggling with their faith right now.

Love and prayers, *Denise Smith (Reader)*

PARISH FUNERALS - APRIL 2021

6th	Doreen Ruby James	100
9th	Evelyn Flavell	
13th	Elizabeth Ann Cooper	83
14th	Margaret Buck	88
19th	Sheila Mary Berry	91
22nd	Jeanne Mary Shergold	90
26th	Malcolm Norman Sidebotham	70



We are the poorer for his passing, the richer for his life.
 The grip of grief, the lasting of tears not the better for it.
 Yet the brightest of things given without pretence nor sought in recompense.
 Meaningful times so simply shared with great gladness.
 A heartfelt of truth unneeded of obligation, true instinct of love a pleasure in being.
 How spare we are of his leaving, how sound we are by his giving, his nature unbounded.
 Remember what we have had, upset now only in his passing.
 Immediately he goes by, though with thanks enduring.
 God Bless his departed merit in his resting.

Denis Plater

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SHIRLEY PARISH GUIDE *continued*

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