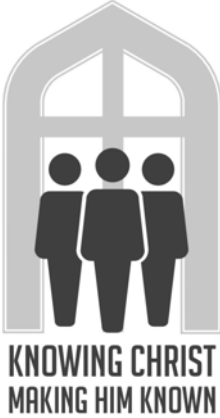


SHIRLEY PARISH

A PRAYER FOR THE PARISH



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

St John's invite you to

*'Tea at
 the Ritz'*

2pm until 4pm

Saturday 9th February 2019

at Church House

Tickets £6 from the Parish Office
 or St John's Committee



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 & JIGSAW
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 EXCHANGE**

**Wednesday
 13th February
 10.30 am
 at St John's
 Church**



GROWING CHURCH



I wonder what you think of when you think of “church”? The building maybe? The organisation that is known as “The Church of England”? The people and activities that are associated with the premises at St James’, Christ the King and St John’s?

How about “the people of God”? The people to whom God has entrusted the Good News of Jesus Christ, and the privilege of working with Him to share it with the people of this parish.

That’s us.

And by and large we are doing a reasonable job of keeping the show on the road, the doors open, the services running. But realistically, if we look at ourselves, we will recognise that many of us are over sixty, and that there are fewer of us now than there were five years ago. Project forwards another five or ten years and the picture looks even less rosy.

So, what do we do? One option is just to carry on as we have been, keep the lights on, and hope that it can keep going long enough to see us through our lives.

The other is to take a long hard look at God, at ourselves and at the world around us, and begin to discern what church might look like if it were to be accessible to a wider range of the people who live locally – people of different ages, backgrounds and experience - as well as to us.

To move from “keeping the church going” to “getting the Church growing”.

This is the challenge which the PCC considered at its December meeting. PCC members were very supportive of the growth approach, and concluded that

- this is not just about numbers. We need to be growing not just **more** followers of Jesus, but more **confident** followers of Jesus;
- this is one of the primary reasons for being church, and that therefore everything we do needs to be looked at in the light of this;
- this is about changing the emphasis, building on where we are now, and taking it forward (not throwing everything out and starting again).

GROWING CHURCH continued

So, taking this forward, if we are to make it a reality, then, like constructing a building, it's imperative that we get the foundations right.

First, foremost, and throughout, **we need to pray**. God invites us to join in God's work - not the other way round. We have to offer ourselves to God and listen to God - to "see what God is doing and then join in".

Secondly, we need to have a clear **vision** of what we aim to do, and a **plan** to help it to happen which everyone has the opportunity to contribute to, and which is owned by us all.

And thirdly, **we all need to be committed** to growing. We are all loved and called by God, we are all important, and we all have a part to play (and God may surprise us!).

Then there are a whole range of things we need to consider

- **Welcome and belonging** - how do we make sure people feel welcome, know how to find out more and/or get involved, and importantly how do we translate that into people feeling that they "belong"?
- **Presence** - the (many) things we do in and for the community where God has placed us. How can we shape those to help to "grow more Christians and more confident Christians"? How can we invite more people to engage with us, and begin to build relationships?
- **Speaking out the gospel and inviting people to respond**. Special events and other occasions where we specifically present the gospel message of love and acceptance, and invite people to find out more.
- **Enquirers/Beginners groups** - where people who express a desire to find out more can explore what we believe, ask questions and make up their own minds.
- **"Growing groups"** where new and established Christians can explore more about what it means to be a follower of Jesus and can begin to discover their own gifts and how they can offer them in God's service. Becoming more confident Christians.
- **Worship** - must always be God-focussed, genuine and heart-felt - but can take a variety of styles. Enriching, not diminishing the way(s) we worship.

... continued over the page

GROWING CHURCH continued

And importantly, we need to address the enablers without which all our plans will struggle

- **Communication** - how do we tell people what we are about, what's going on and invite them to participate? And how do we listen to what they have to say to us?
- **Finance** – are we sufficiently generous in our giving so that we can invest in the resources to help this happen?
- **Buildings, organisation, administration** - how are these helping our mission?

Some of these areas will need to be considered on a Parish basis (e.g. Vision, Presenting the Gospel, Communications, Beginners and Growing groups).

Some will best be addressed on an individual church basis (e.g. Worship, Welcome and Belonging). This will have the added benefit of giving the opportunity for each church to develop and grow more into its own shape and place. More diversity is good!

Some will need to be thought about both at the Parish and individual church level (e.g. Prayer, Presence)

So, there's lots to do, and lots and lots of opportunities for everyone to get involved.

Here's how.

Reverends Peter and Paul will be launching the whole project at the services on **Sunday 3rd February** (Candlemas, the festival of bringing the light of Christ to those who don't yet know him), and the sermons on each Sunday between then and the start of Lent (6th March) will be addressing aspects of the project.

So please make an extra effort to be in church on those Sundays so you can hear what is being said. (If you really, really can't then don't worry – you can download copies of the sermons from the church website at <https://shirleyparishb90.wixsite.com/live/download-a-sermon> or ask for a copy at the Parish Office.)

During Lent there will be further sermons on the topic, plus Lent groups and other opportunities to find out more and input into the Vision and plan. More details on this will follow.

GROWING CHURCH continued

Please pray!

A prayer group is already meeting on Saturday mornings from 8.30am to 9am. You are most welcome to join (see website, notice sheet or ask Parish Office for details), to establish a separate group, or to pray in your own personal prayer time. But please do it!

Please share your thoughts and ideas.

The PCC has asked a small group of people to take the lead on the project, so please speak to one or more of:

Reverend Peter, Reverend Paul, Sarah Penfold, Margaret Foreshow, Denise & Graham Smith, and Kate Day.

PS. Please note, this doesn't mean they will be doing all the work! Just that they will keep the overview of what is happening!

PPS. The new Messy Church at St James is part of the Getting the Church Growing project. Please read the article in this edition of the magazine (page 12) and consider if you could invite or bring someone.



Kate Day



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£50 - Margaret Kew

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'PEOPLE & PLACES'

One of the many things that I value about being a Christian is the way we are taught that God works in the world and through real people in real places. It is a gutsy, practical faith. The two great festivals of Christianity, Easter and Christmas, reveal to us that Jesus is a real person who was born, grew up, preached, taught, healed and occasionally admonished, was executed and then rose to new life. In doing so, Jesus teaches us many lessons and one of them is to take seriously the world we live in, our place in it and the mission of the Church in the world.

PEOPLE & PLACES

The year of grace 2019 promises to be a very testing one for the Diocese of Birmingham and therefore us here in Shirley Parish. The call to mission, and therefore to share the joy of faith in Christ, is going to demand some tough choices. These choices are already under way and are being approached through the initiative called People and Places. There are some very practical aspects to this initiative, involving reassessing the way ministry is offered, the financial support sought through the Common Fund paid by parishes and much, much more.

When I first arrived in Shirley the ratio of clergy to population in the Diocese had remained at 1:10,000 since its foundation. This was a high ratio compared to some other dioceses, but somehow life had gone on. Under People and Places this has been changed to 1:17,000, one of the implications of which concerns the allocation of clergy to parishes when they fall vacant. The commitment to offering ministry to everyone remains, but the way in which this will be done in the future is changing. With two stipendiary clergy, three retired clergy and five readers, as well as a wealth of other gifts, we are well paced to make the most of these challenges. We are also well placed to make the most of the wider possibilities of People and Places and to think and pray hard that the Lord will lead us to innovative approaches to prayer and worship, so that we can grow in numbers and faithfulness. In simple terms, as Shirley continues to grow we need to grow with it.



‘PEOPLE & PLACES’ continued

People and Places is about developing the major element of our commitment to growth: ourselves. We, along with all the people of Shirley, have been called to nothing less than a love affair with the living God through his Son. The clergy, the wider ministry team and the PCC, are committed to finding ways, with everyone currently involved with Shirley Parish, to making this relationship real and lasting. The challenge is this: does coming to worship excite and inspire us? If not, how can we make this happen? If it does, then how can we share this?

People and Places is about solid foundations, so the parish recently held a stewardship campaign. We are still examining the results, and it is not too late to get on board, but it is fair to say that while the heart of any parish is its worshipping community offering prayer, worship and a commitment to discipleship through bible reading and reflection, for all that to happen there have to be sound finances. I remind you of the leaflet handed out in the autumn, in which it was made clear that we are just about ahead financially. Taking into account the major work done on St James's alone, this is a major achievement. But the leaflet also reminded us that these achievements are not an end in themselves. They are a springboard to mission, hence the encouragement to consider our giving and, where possible, to increase it. The Diocese faces huge financial challenges, we are part of the Diocese, so it is no longer enough to make do. Because we are yet to make the impact on Shirley of which we are abundantly capable, it is no longer enough to make do. People and Places encourages us to find ways to encourage mission while making the most of very scarce resources. In one of the better off parts of the Diocese we really have no excuse for not pulling our weight financially which is another way of saying we need to pull our weight spiritually.

The current circumstances have been referred to as a crisis and in a sense this is true. The sense I mean is the original Greek meaning of the word: judgment. If there is a crisis, then it is in the sense of a judgment on the Church's commitment to trusting God and effectiveness in doing all that is necessary to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ. We have nothing to fear from the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, a loving God who remains faithful to those who follow Him. But we do have a responsibility to be practical, to put feet under our prayers. We owe it to the people of Shirley, we owe it to our brothers and sisters across the Diocese, we owe it to ourselves. People and Places is here, it is challenging, and it has far reaching implications for all of us.

... continued over the page

'PEOPLE & PLACES' continued

I thank God that we are well placed to meet those practical and financial challenges.

I pray to God that together we will do just that.

St Patrick's

Some of you will already have heard that Reverend Julie Humphries has announced she is to leave St Patrick's in May. Please pray for Julie and her family as she prepares to take a break from ministry, and for the people of St Patrick's.

Reverend Peter Law-Jones

The People & Places Prayer

Gracious and merciful God

as we pray for the future of the
Church of England - Birmingham,
we thank you that the whole earth,
its people and places,
are equally precious to you.



By your Spirit,

equip us to meet the challenges of these
times with generosity and courage;
hold our fears and uncertainties
in your love,
and grant us the needful gifts of grace
to share your love and reflect your light
throughout our communities



in the name of our Saviour, Jesus Christ,
Amen

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WHAT'S HAPPENING IN FEBRUARY?

This year Chinese New Year falls on the 5th of February and it's the year of the Pig. Zodiac signs are Aquarius and Pisces. February is the second month of the year for us but also, it's the third month of winter. Whether it's a leap year or not it's always the shortest month of the year. We celebrate Valentine's Day, with hearts and flowers and chocolates and I still believe that a woman can propose marriage on that day.

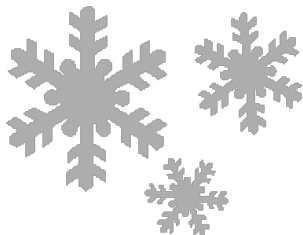


In the church calendar we celebrate Candlemas, (the presentation of Christ in the temple and the purification of Mary) with special readings for the day from Luke's Gospel, from where we read the well-known words of the Nunc Dimittis.

It may be the third month of winter but so far, we have had not too bad a season. It has been cold and damp rather than freezing ice and snow. Not good for the rheumatism but better than being housebound only to find panic buying for those who do manage to get to the shops.

Life at Christ the King continues at a slightly slower pace as we all cope with winter blues, but we are looking forward with enthusiasm to hear the ideas of how to grow our church both in numbers and commitment. A small team has been set up to instigate this project, but it needs to involve every member of every church to play their part for it to be successful. Please pray for the Parish in this venture. One of the first events is a re-launch of the "Four o'clock Log In" - changing from Sunday afternoon to Saturday morning, being renamed Messy Church and held at Church House every third Saturday. New services are being considered and especially new ways to serve the community. Watch this space!

A Quingo Evening is being organised for March to help raise funds for our church work. Again, watch out for the date and time. This is a great opportunity to meet up with friends, past and present.



Let us hope that Spring is just around the corner, but if it is delayed then take time to look and admire each snowflake as it falls for its all part of God's wonderful creation. Enjoy a fabulous, fun-full, fruitful, February.

Gill Gough

FOODBANK, NARTHEX & ADAVU UPDATE



FOOD BANK: this is very much the season of “Heat or Eat” for many of our clients at the Food Bank. The return to school helped some of the children with free school dinners and some schools are supplying free food at the afterschool clubs. But even for some of the families where parents are working,

there are real financial problems not helped by delays with their benefits or the strains of growing children needing new uniforms. At the Food Bank we have emergency supplies of toilet rolls, nappies, toiletries and sanitary products, all of which are greatly appreciated by the folks who attend expecting to be given just food. We even have supplies of pet food! Often the pet can be the sole companion of a desperate person who cares more about their animal than themselves. On the food front we are currently short of **dried milk, tins of wholly meat, cooking oil and instant mash** (and the ever-present need for **strong plastic bags!**).

And there is quiet satisfaction in being able to offer a warm coat, a pair of winter shoes or even a pair of warm socks from the Clothing Bank. The socks are often the ones which came in from the Christmas Gift Tree appeal - very welcome. Currently there are shortages of **women’s winter shoes, sizes 5, 5 1/2 and 6: ladies’ new pants size 12: men’s new boxer shorts sizes S and M: and even more new warm socks for men and women.**

NARTHEX: may I remind you that we are no longer accepting used clothes for the Narthex. If you have some, Margaret Kew would be pleased to have them for Troop Aid, another locally set up charity.

We will put any appeals for the Narthex in the pew slip but on the whole the only donations which we accept are all types of bedding: **sheets, blankets, non-feather duvets (all sizes) and children’s toys** in good condition. We recently visited the tip with a large box: a doll (missing one arm and felt tip scribble on her face which would not scrub off), space shuttle (missing two astronauts and a dog), books (with scribble), baby’s jigsaws (pieces missing), small cars with one wheel missing, etc.



FOODBANK, NARTHEX & ADAVU continued

We went to the Stratford tip where there is a recycling shop at the entrance; we were hunting for a **double buggy, shopping trolley, small suitcase on wheels and a toy garage** in good condition – no luck this time but we will keep looking. Please look for us too!

ADAVU: thank you for the cash donation - I spent it on nappies, hospital supplies, nappy cream and wet wipes – all to go in a layette for a very pregnant young lady who jumped off a lorry on the motorway and ran to safety in just the clothes she was wearing. After our recent visit to see our grandson, his mother sent back some of his early clothes in my suitcase and those too are ready.



As we frequently say, it's unlikely that you will ever meet the people you help but believe me they are very, very grateful.

Best wishes for 2019.



PS. If anyone has any large festive prezziie bags which they don't want to store for twelve months, please may we have them? I'm happy to tuck them away until the next pre-Christmas parties! They are quite pricey to buy and this year we needed over thirty. I can't confidently believe that we shall need fewer next time!

Elizabeth Paice



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SATURDAY MESSY CHURCH

Messy Church now happens twice each month in the Parish. In addition to the well-established Thursday afternoons at Widney School, it is now happening on Saturday mornings in Church House.

It provides an opportunity for families of all shapes and sizes to come together to take part in various craft-based activities, have breakfast and to celebrate God's love.



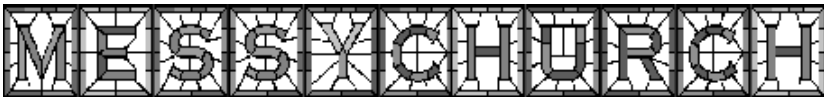
Families could well include you bringing your grandchildren or even great grandchildren; it could be your neighbour and their children coming along with you; it could be you and your nieces and nephews or other family grouping in the widest sense. All ages are welcome.

Over the next few months we will be thinking about how God helps us to make new starts, and we will be holding a special Saturday Messy Church on the day between Good Friday and Easter Day as we think about Jesus' death and resurrection.

Saturday Messy Church is on the 3rd Saturday of each month from 10am to 11.30am.

If you are interested in helping out in any way – from pouring tea to helping with junk modelling or simply chatting with people who come – please have a word with me or Sarah Penfold. We'd love to have you on board.

Reverend Paul Day



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13th December 2018 - Carol Service

This year our Carol Service took place in the afternoon rather than in the evening as previously.



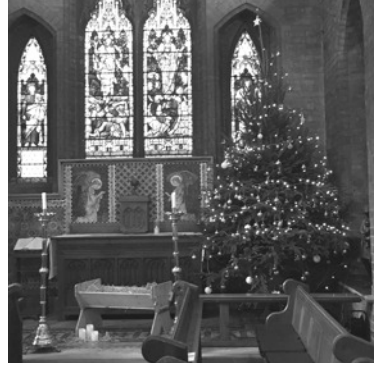
As it was also during the Christmas Tree Festival we were surrounded by beautifully decorated Christmas trees which certainly added to the Christmas atmosphere.

The service consisted of traditional Christmas carols, readings and prayers, and was followed by refreshments. Over thirty members and guests enjoyed this introduction to Christmas.

Sue Guy

THOUGHTS FROM OUR PARISH WARDEN

I was thrilled by the success of our Christmas Tree Festival in December and the ingenuity and artistry of the trees. It was truly a parish-wide effort and brought many people into the Church - locals, former Parishioners, members of the congregation and members of groups who had decorated trees. I had some very interesting conversations while stewarding and learned a lot. Congratulations to everyone who worked so hard to realise this joyful event.



The Christmas season flew by - as it always does after the weeks of waiting and preparation. The New Year brings us exciting opportunities and challenges.

It is good that we are making progress with the churchyard. Thanks to Linda Pitt's careful planning, all dead and dangerous wood has been removed from our beautiful and historic trees. This has provided twigs and logs for my wildlife (insect) shelter and chippings to mulch the gardens and fill dips in the churchyard. There is always work to be done! Litter picking is a particularly colourful experience.

I was raking leaves the other day to make leaf compost (and more homes for beasties) when a young man, walking through the churchyard, stopped and offered to help. He went straight home to fetch gardening tools and did a really good job - at least twice what I could have achieved in the time. It is wonderful to see such goodwill in the community.

It is much more fun working with others and (for safety also) I wonder whether we need to try and work more in little groups rather than alone.

I'd like to echo Margaret's recent notice in the pewslip, thanking all the volunteers who work so incredibly hard throughout the year, giving their talents in so many different ways for the love of the church, its people and the wider community. These are our 'saints' and we are proud and grateful to have them!

The efforts to grow our church are truly inspiring and, judging by the footfall in Church over Advent and Christmas, there is growing interest from the community.

THOUGHTS FROM OUR PARISH WARDEN *continued*

We are fortunate to be led by an imaginative, open minded and deeply committed pastoral team and with prayer and support from all of us, I think 2019 could be a special year for our Parish.

Kate Crocker

LOOKING FORWARD TO WHAT'S COMING UP ...

Although it is only a month ago, Christmas is now forgotten apart from everyone looking at their credit cards bills!!

We are continuing with Tuesday Chat but with one or two changes. It will now be called Tuesday CAF and it will start at 2pm and finish about 3.30pm.

Next is the new Messy Church which will be in place of the Sunday Log-in. This will be on the third Saturday of each month - 10am to 11.30am. Apart from the usual activities breakfast will be served for anyone who wishes to partake. Note that this new Messy Church is not taking the place of the existing one which is held on a Thursday at Widney School.

We are all invited to "Tea at the Ritz" where we can enjoy afternoon tea served by St John's committee. The date is 9th February, 2pm to 4pm and the venue is Church House. Please buy your tickets as soon as possible from the Parish Office.

Our Book Club will be meeting on the 12th February at 7pm in St James Church. I have read books that I thought that I never would. Some make interesting reading while others do not always appeal, but it takes all sorts!!



Following the 'Leading Your Church into Growth' Conference it was agreed at the last PCC meeting to meet once a week to pray about this and how we can move forward.

Margaret Foreshow

OUR PARISH DIARY FOR FEBRUARY 2019

- 2nd THE PRESENTATION OF CHRIST IN THE TEMPLE (CANDLEMAS)
- 3rd The Fourth Sunday after Epiphany**
 10.30am: CTK and St John's Joint Service at Widney School
 7pm: Reflective Evening Worship at St John's Church
- 4th 10.30am: Portershill Drive Holy Communion
- 5th 11am: Pegasus Court Holy Communion
 12noon: Ploughman's Lunch at Church House
 7.30pm: Pastoral Committee Meeting
- 6th 10.45am: Swallows Meadow Holy Communion
 2pm: Mothers' Union AGM
 4pm: Standing Committee Meeting
 7pm: Eucharist and Guild of St Raphael at St James Church
- 9th 2pm: 'Tea at the Ritz' at Church House
- 10th The Fifth Sunday after Epiphany**
 11.30am: The Friends of St James Walking Club
- 11th 11am: Elizabeth House Holy Communion
 12.05pm: Mothers' Union Cathedral Prayers
- 12th 2pm: Tuesday CAF at Church House
 7pm: Shirley Parish Book Club Meeting
 7.30pm: The Friends of St James AGM
- 13th 10.30am: Coffee Morning at St John's Church
 11am: Greenhill Way Holy Communion
- 16th 10am: Messy Church at Church House
 11am: Mothers' Union Festival Service at Birmingham Cathedral
- 17th The Third Sunday Before Lent**
- 19th 10.30am: Mason House Holy Communion
 12noon: Ploughman's Lunch at Church House
 7.30pm: Operations Committee Meeting
- 20th 10.30am: St John's Bible Study and Prayer Group
 10.45am: Swallows Meadow Holy Communion
- 24th The Second Sunday Before Lent**
- 26th 2pm: Tuesday CAF at Church House
- 27th 4pm: Contemplative Prayer at St James Church
- 28th 3.30pm: Messy Church at Widney School

(Please check the weekly pew slips or the website for any changes and additions to the above)

COMING NEXT MONTH ...

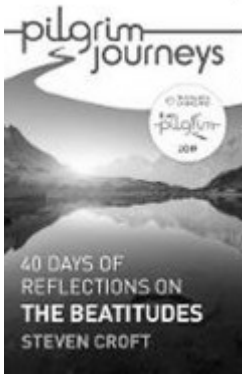
Kate Day will be licensed as a Reader by the Bishop at 11am on **Saturday 2nd March** in Birmingham Cathedral. All are welcome to the service.

Please pray for Kate as she begins her Reader ministry and for us all as we discern together what shape that ministry should take.



The Church of England's 2019 Lent campaign is called 'Lent Pilgrim'

There will be forty daily reflections based on the Beatitudes – to run from Ash Wednesday (**6th March**) until Palm Sunday in -



- A full-colour booklet published by Church House Publishing
- An App for Android and iOS
- A daily email
- A social media campaign
- Daily audio content for smart speakers and on the Church of England website

The reflections have been written by Steven Croft, Bishop of Oxford, and there is an introduction by the Archbishops of Canterbury and York.

Visit <https://www.churchofengland.org/lent> for more information.

MARCH 2019 PARISH MAGAZINE

DEADLINE FOR INFORMATION & ARTICLES - Tuesday 12th February
PUBLICATION DATE - Saturday 23rd February

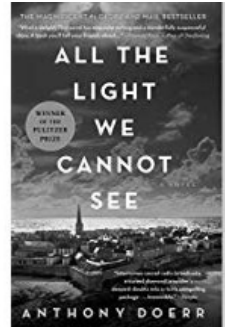
SHIRLEY PARISH BOOK CLUB

Next meeting -

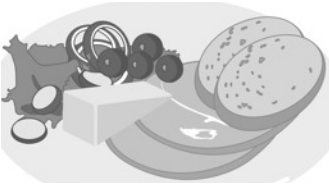
Tuesday 12th February at 7pm
in St James Church

To discuss 'All the Light We Cannot See'
by Anthony Doerr

All welcome!



TUESDAY AFTERNOON FELLOWSHIP



Ploughman's Lunches

5th and 19th February, 12 noon in Church House

Tuesday CAF - tea, crafts, games and chat ...
12th and 26th February, 2pm in Church House

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QUOTES OF THE MONTH - WITH VALENTINE'S DAY AND LOVE IN MIND

It is astonishing how little one feels poverty when he loves. – *Bulwer*

Men should keep their eyes wide open before marriage, and half shut afterward.
– *Madame Scuderi*

Two souls with but a single thought, two hearts that beat as one.
– *E F J von Munch-Bellinghausen*

The Christian is supposed to love his neighbour, and since his wife is his nearest neighbour, she should be his deepest love. – *Martin Luther*

One of the best legacies a father can leave his children is to love their mother.
– *C Neil Strait*



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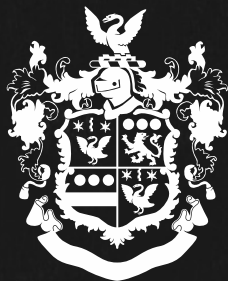
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SIGNS & SYMBOLS : WHY DO WE CROSS OURSELVES?

Do you 'cross' yourself? Do you literally make the sign of the cross over or upon your body?

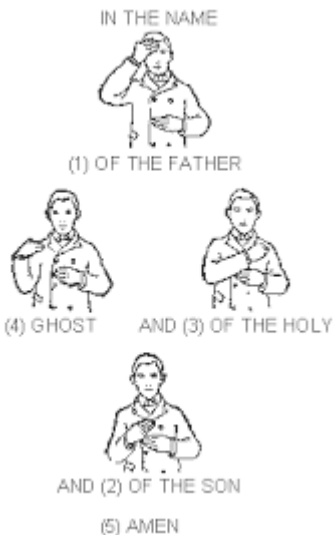
People do this in different ways: some with certain fingers joined together, some touch their right shoulder before the left, some do small contained crosses on their head, lips and chest whilst others do an exaggerated sign extending as low as they can reach and almost wrapping their arms around themselves.

Keep your eyes open one time and look at your fellow congregation members as the priest extends his or her arm to bless them and you'll see many different responses. From keeping their heads bowed, crossing themselves at the same time, to standing quite informally and just watching.

For me it's not really 'how' you do it but rather '*What's it all about?*' If you 'Google' that question you'll get lots of great theologically sound and sometimes deep suggestions.

Let me offer you my personal take on it that has grown to become daily the first thing, last thing and most important prayer of each of my days.

It's an acknowledgement of God's love for me individually and us collectively and how through this we are forgiven and set free to live life to the full – with courage and strength.



As I start at the highest point and descend it reminds me that Jesus, God's own Son came down to earth for love of me and all of us.

As I cover the width of my body I feel His love wrapped around me, surrounding me, encouraging me, strengthening me, enveloping me and all that will take place in my life and the world today. Not a magic protection layer but a recognition of His presence wherever and whatever takes place.

May you be blessed – In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Reverend Dr Jo White

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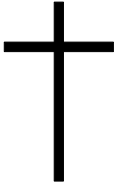
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'AT HOME' IN GOD'S LOVE - John Chapter 15 verse 9

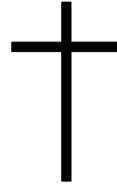
When someone says 'Make yourself at home,' it means you're welcome and accepted. And that's what Jesus means when He says 'Make yourselves at home in my love.' You never *have* been and never *will* be loved by anyone as much as God loves you. The reason you have such a hard time grasping that concept is that you have nothing to compare His love to. Nothing could make God love you more than He does right now, and nothing could make Him love you less. The great irony is that we spend our lives trying to *earn* His love, when it can only be received by *faith*.

John says: 'What marvellous love the Father has extended to us! Just look at it - we're called children of God! That's who we really are. But that's also why the world doesn't recognise us or take us seriously, because it has no idea who he is or what he's up to'. (1 John 3 verses 1-2).

C.S. Lewis wrote: 'God created us to be the objects of His love! Sometimes our actions make us unlovely, but we're never unloved. And because God loves us - we have value. And nobody can take that value away.'



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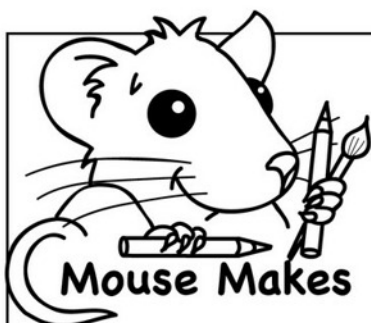
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God's love is...

Change each letter to the letter before it in the alphabet.

"Hpe mpwfe uif xpsme tp nvdi
uibu if hbwf ijt pomz tpo tp
uibu fwfszpof xip cfmjfwft
jo ijn nbz opu ejf cvu
ibwf fufsobm mjgf."
Kpio 3:16



WHAT IS LOVE?

Cross out every other letter to find the Bible verse, then look it up.

OHNKEWJLOSHCNP
CGHUADPBTFEKRA
FJOMUORD
VWEURDSKEV
TOEGNP



How does God show he loves us?

Look at this in a mirror!

zu rōt **evol** zih beworls boG
otni ois yln girl gniēz yd
ew tsrt oz ,blow ert
ēil evst tlgim
miH rgnort
ē:4 nhol 1

HOW LONG IS GOD'S LOVE?

Cross out all the xxx to find out!

xxGxixvxextxhxaxnxkxsxxtxoxxtxhx
exxLxoxrxdx,xfxoxrxxHxexxixxsxg
xoxxoxdx,xxHxixsxsxxtxeaxxdx
fxaxsxtxxlxoxvxeexnxdxu
rxxexsxfxoxrxxexvxxexr.
xpxsaxxllmxmx
1x3x6:1

"The steadfast **love** of
the Lord **never** ceases"
Lamentations 3:22



WORDSEARCH - CANDLEMAS

Candlemas, 2nd February, comes exactly forty days after Christmas. In New Testament times forty days old was an important age for a baby boy: it was when they made their first 'public appearance'. Mary, like all good Jewish mothers, went to the Temple with Jesus, her first male child - to 'present Him to the Lord'. Thus, we have the Festival of the Presentation of Christ in the Temple (Luke Chapter 2 verses 22 to 40). So where does the Candlemas bit come in? Jesus is described in the New Testament as the Light of the World, and early Christians developed the tradition of lighting many candles in celebration of this day.

AFTER
AGE
APPEARANCE
BABY
BOY
CANDLEMAS
CANDLES
CHRISTMAS
DAYS
DESCRIBED
EARLY
FESTIVAL
FIRST
FORTY
IMPORTANT
JEWISH
LIGHT
LIGHTING
MARY
NEW
PRESENTATION
PUBLIC
TEMPLE
TESTAMENT
WORLD

Answers are on page 29



CROSSWORD & SUDOKU

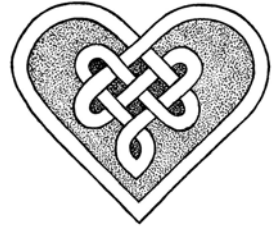
Across

- 1 Salary (Isaiah 19:10) (4)
- 3 Question Jesus asked of those healed of leprosy, 'Were not all ten — ?'
(Luke 17:17) (8)
- 9 Wide, elevated level area of land (Joshua 13:9) (7)
- 10 'So you also must be — , because the Son of Man will come ... when you do
not expect him' (Matthew 24:44) (5)
- 11 '[He] said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." He — — , and his hand was
completely restored' (Luke 6:10) (3,2)
- 12 'Who has gathered up the wind in the — of his hand?' (Proverbs 30:4) (6)
- 14 Not born again (13)
- 17 'Again and again he — the same sacrifices, which can never take away
sins' (Hebrews 10:11) (6)
- 19 Mails (anag.) (5)
- 22 'He — — here; he has risen' (Matthew 28:6) (2,3)
- 23 Defeated (Judges 20:43) (7)
- 24 Soldiers' quarters (Acts 21:34) (8)
- 25 'Pillars of marble' were how the Beloved described those of her Lover
(Song of Songs 5:15) (4)

Down

- 1 Totally destroyed (Genesis 7:23) (5,3)
- 2 What the Philippian jailer was told to do with his prisoners Paul and Silas
(Acts 16:23) (5)
- 4 Object of ridicule (Job 12:4) (8-5)
- 5 In most years, the month in which Easter falls (5)
- 6 For example, Caesarea, Joppa, Tyre, Sidon (7)
- 7 '[Jesus] was in the desert for forty — , being tempted by Satan'
(Mark 1:13) (4)
- 8 'Hallelujah! Salvation and glory and power — to our God'
(Revelation 19:1) (6)
- 13 Mend dots (anag.) (8)
- 15 Purifier (Malachi 3:3) (7)
- 16 Attacked (1 Samuel 27:8) (6)
- 18 The good Samaritan to the innkeeper: 'When I return, I will reimburse you
for any — expense you may have' (Luke 10:35) (5)
- 20 How Matthew described the crowds who followed Jesus (Matthew 4:25) (5)
- 21 For example, one of 25 Across (Judges 19:29) (4)

7		5				1		
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					9	5	4	
9				1				8
			5		8			
6				7				4
	7	3	4					
					3			6
		1				8		3



Answers are on page 29

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1		2			3	4		5		6		7
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9	5	7	6	1	4	3	2	8
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6	1	8	3	7	2	9	5	4
8	7	3	4	6	1	2	9	5
5	2	9	7	8	3	4	1	6
4	6	1	9	2	5	8	7	3

PUZZLE ANSWERS



P	B	P	Y	O	D	E	I	B	P	N	N	M	G
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N	E	N	T	A	G	E	R	A	W	D	M	I	A
A	N	O	I	T	A	T	N	E	S	E	R	P	V
D	E	C	V	R	Y	N	J	L	L	S	H	L	R
A	E	A	A	O	T	E	T	D	T	C	Y	I	I
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27th FEBRUARY - GEORGE HERBERT : PRIEST AND POET

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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	22nd	Beryl Parkes	88



THE BIBLE VERSE OF 2018

A Bible app, YouVersion, has named Isaiah Chapter 41 verse 10 as the most popular verse of 2018.

That verse has been posted, bookmarked, and highlighted more times than any other on the app (which has been downloaded more than 350,000 times around the world).

Isaiah 41:10 reads: 'So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.' The verse also came top in Chile, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Perus, South Africa, Spain and the United States.

But in the UK, for 2018, we preferred Jeremiah Chapter 29 verse 11: 'For I know the plans I have for you,' declares the Lord, 'plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.'

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