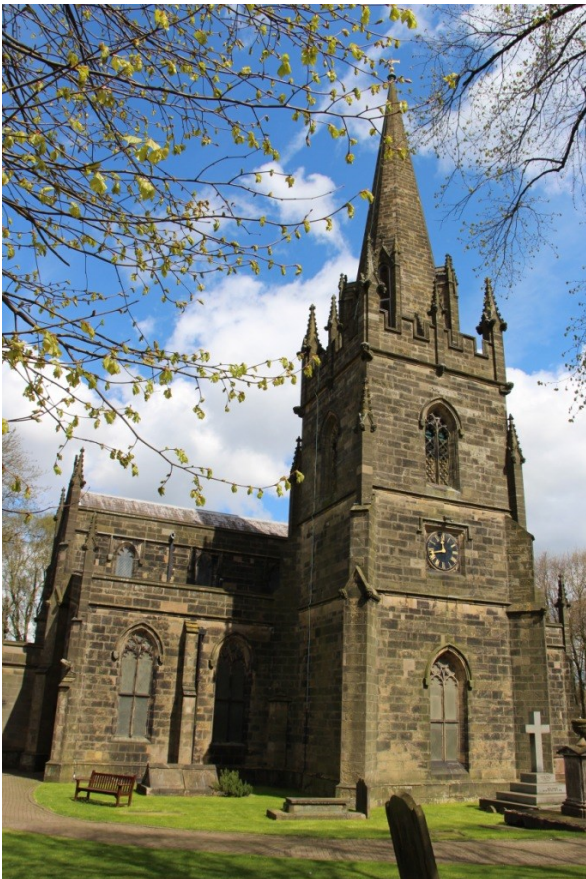


THE BEACON

THE PARISH MAGAZINE OF ALL SAINTS, SEDGLEY
& ST. ANDREW'S THE STRAITS

Registered Charity Number 1179471



Kingdom People
love • compassion • justice • freedom

50p

February 2020

WHO's WHO

Team Rector	Revd Guy Hewlett	01902 295164
Team Vicar	Rev Catherine Mitchell	01902 677897
Licensed Lay Minister	Canon Jan Humphries	01902 661275
Parish Safeguarding Officer	Barbara Baker	01902 882847
Pastoral Care	Tracey Bate	01902 680727
Worship Leader	Suzanne Bradley	01902 880055
Youth Leader/Children's Advocate	Laura Robinson	01902 678572
PCC Secretary	Kath Apperley	01902 663253
Vestry Clerk	Chris Williams	01902 672880
Parish Office information baptisms, weddings, funerals and hall bookings.	Gail Griffiths	01902 540289
Parish Wardens	Keith Tomlinson	01902 673366
	John Anderson	01902 677666
Treasurer	John Anderson	01902 677666
Caretaker	Pam Pugh	07860 256535
Server / Verger	Len Millard	01902 676339
Junior Church	Barbara Price	01902 676591
Brownies	Heather Churm	01902 674709
Ladies' Society	Geraldine Baker	01902 674608
Men's Society	Roger Berry	01902 881374
Mothers' Union	Liz Williams	01902 672880
Noah's Ark	Linda Edwards	01902 672556
Parent & Toddler Group		
Rainbows	Liz Naylor	07827 629648
Web Editor	Martin Jones	01902 884461
Youth Group	Laura Robinson	01902 678572
Bell Ringer	Keith Williams	01902 672585
Organist	Martin Platts	07941 173252

St Andrew's Who's Who

Warden	Paul Cox	
Treasurer	Alan Turner	01902 670938
DCC secretary	Rosemary Reed	01902 679007
Little Angels baby & toddler group	Canon Jan Humphries	
Singing Angels	Claire Cox	07812 010108

Parish Prayers at 9.15am - All are Welcome

Tuesdays at St Andrew, Wednesdays at St Peter and
Thursdays at All Saints.

Altar and Paedestal Flowers

Flowers in memory of their loved ones for February are donated by David and Elaine Melhuish, Len Millard, and Pauline Gregory.

We have a vacant date for 2nd February. Also we are still looking for anyone interested in helping our flower ladies on a Friday morning.

If you can help please contact Linda Watkins Telephone 01902 678830

Funerals

6th	December -	Carol Ann Clayton -	Gornal Wood
6th	December -	Patricia Helen Browne -	Gornal Wood
18th	December -	Edward Calam Barker -	St Peters
19th	December -	Gemma Louise Male -	Gornal Wood
20th	December -	Donald David Venn -	Gornal Wood
30th	December -	Audrey Vera Lillian Guest -	Gornal Wood
3rd	January -	Mavis Hilda Gosling -	St Andrews
6th	January -	Joyce Newton -	Gornal Wood
16th	January -	Beatrice May Massey	Gornal Wood

High Days & Holy Days for February

- 1 Brigid of Ireland – Abbess of Kildare, c 525
- 2 The Presentation of Christ in the Temple/ Candlemas
- 3 Anskar – Archbishop of Hamburg, missionary in Denmark/
Sweden
- 3 Blaise – bishop of Sebastea
- 4 Phileas – Christian bishop/martyr of Egypt
- 6 The Martyrs of Japan – courage amidst persecution
- 8 Kew – or how to tame a wild boar
- 10 Scholastica – or how to get your brother to listen to you
- 11 Caedmon – the poetic shepherd
- 14 St Valentine's Day
- 14 The very first Valentine card – a legend
- 14 St Valentine's Day: a poem
- 15 Thomas Bray: founder of SPCK
- 17 Janani Luwum, Archbishop of Uganda, martyr, 1977
- 22 Margaret of Cortona – sad search for acceptance and love
- 23 Polycarp – the faithful servant who would not deny his Lord
- 24 Matthias the Apostle
- 25 SHROVE TUESDAY: Who's for pancakes?
- 25 SHROVE TUESDAY: Pancake Day
- 26 ASH WEDNESDAY: My memory of the Passover in Jerusalem
- 26 ASH WEDNESDAY: mourning our sins
- 26 ASH WEDNESDAY: a good time to admit you are sorry
- 27 Gabriel Possenti – and the enjoyment of romance
- 27 George Herbert, priest and poet
- 27 The Vicar's a Poet
- 29 Oswald of Worcester

THE BEACON

If you are interested in having the magazine delivered to your home on a regular basis please contact:

Karen Evans: 01902 678056

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admin@allsaintssedgley.co.uk

by

Friday 21st February

and needs to be in Arial typeface, size 18.

Do not send files in pdf format

WEBSITE: www.gornalandsedgley.org.uk

CHURCH OPENING



**Friday mornings from
10.30am to 12.30pm**

The church is open for quiet prayer & coffee and a chat.

VESTRY HOUR

Vestry hour will take place on the first and third Sunday of the month for all enquires on weddings and baptisms from 12 noon to 1pm

A letter from the Archdeacon of Dudley, Nikki Groarke

Lent will soon be upon us, with its opportunities for taking up spiritual disciplines for a season, doing those things which we know deep down are good for our spiritual health, but often struggle to commit to. Our culture is increasingly short-term, getting people to sign up for anything which stretches indefinitely into the future is challenging, but most of us can manage something for six weeks. And the good news is, research shows it takes about six weeks to form a habit!

So which Lenten discipline might we consider in 2020? What is going to be of most benefit for our growth as disciples of Jesus, as kingdom people? For some of us it may be good to take up something new, like joining a Lent study group in our church, or committing to daily bible readings in one of the many excellent resources available. Others will want to fast from something for the entire season, or a day a week. This may be physical fasting from food, or alcohol or chocolate, or perhaps a lifestyle fast, cutting out social media or TV. The key thing is that all these disciplines serve to help us focus more on God, making some space in our lives to pray and listen to him. Perhaps we may simply want to do something we are already doing, but more intentionally and regularly, with more focus, giving a little more time and effort to it.

Discipline is hard work! If our souls, bodies or minds are not stretched by our Lenten endeavours, we are probably not being disciplined enough. I am learning a great deal about physical discipline as I undertake training for running my first marathon at the end of April. The fact that so many lovely supporters are sponsoring me to raise funds for the Children's Society means I have further incentive to keep going, but on a cold and wet day, getting my running shoes on is all about discipline, mind over matter, doing what I have committed to, however it feels. Sometimes it is inconvenient, sometimes it hurts, but I know that I have to keep going, or I will never complete the race before me.

Often when I run, God reveals to me how spiritual disciplines can be similar to physical ones. Routine, habit, consistency are all the staples for health and fitness whether that is in our physical or spiritual life. I will be praying on my ever-longer runs, and using that space away from the phone and email to build my relationship with God, asking him to show me where I need better patterns in my spiritual disciplines to grow closer to him.

My hope is that my new running regime won't stop at the London Marathon finish line, and that (after a suitable rest!), I will maintain my new level of fitness. I hope and pray too that all of us who take up new spiritual disciplines for Lent will build healthy habits which stay with us and help us mature as followers of Jesus will beyond Holy Week. Just like my running, they will require effort, and also appropriate rest.

New research highlights how mission entrepreneurs are being trained

New research carried out by Church Mission Society has explored the relationship between mission, theology and business. And it has found that mission entrepreneurship is having a significant impact, in both churches and across local communities.

'Make Good', part of CMS's training programme, explores the relationship between mission and enterprise, and helps students to set up new missional projects. 76% of those responding to the survey had started missional projects of their own.

One example is the Rev Adam Gompertz, a classic car enthusiast, who wants to build a 'service station' that would not only attract car enthusiasts but provide a community space where families could gather for a good night out – and hear the Christian message.

Jonny Baker, director of mission education at CMS, said: "This research into mission entrepreneurship clearly shows the strong connection between mission and business. If we really want the Church to be good news, working in partnership with local communities for positive transformation, we must invest in programmes such as Make Good, to help build a better world."

From Guy Hewlett

The beginning of Lent is almost upon us. Shrove Tuesday is the 25th February when we will have our parish pancake party at St Andrews – all are welcome, look out for the times.

Ash Wednesday is the 26th of February when we will have a service of Holy Communion at St Peter's at 10 am and at All Saints at 7.30 pm – both services will offer 'ashing'.

Our Lent groups details are elsewhere. Please speak to Guy,

Catherine or Jan if you would like to join a group for this Lent.

The Church of England book 'Times and Seasons' says this of Lent:

“Lent - An Introduction to the Season

Lent may originally have followed Epiphany, just as Jesus' sojourn in the wilderness followed immediately on his baptism, but it soon became firmly attached to Easter, as the principal occasion for baptism and for the reconciliation of those who had been excluded from the Church's fellowship for apostasy or serious faults. This history explains the characteristic notes of Lent – self-examination, penitence, self-denial, study, and preparation for Easter, to which almsgiving has traditionally been added.

Now is the healing time decreed
for sins of heart and word and deed,
when we in humble fear record
the wrong that we have done the Lord.

(Latin, before 12th century)

As the candidates for baptism were instructed in Christian faith, and as penitents prepared themselves, through fasting and penance, to be readmitted to communion, the whole Christian community was invited to join them in the process of study and repentance, the extension of which over forty days would remind them of the forty days that Jesus spent in the wilderness, being tested by Satan.

Ashes are an ancient sign of penitence; from the middle ages it became the custom to begin Lent by being marked in ash with the sign of the cross. The calculation of the forty days has varied considerably in Christian history. It is now usual in the West to count them continuously to the end of Holy Week (not including Sundays), so beginning Lent on the sixth Wednesday before Easter, Ash Wednesday.

Liturgical dress is the simplest possible. Churches are kept bare of flowers and decoration. *Gloria in excelsis* is not used. The Fourth Sunday of Lent (*Laetare* or Refreshment Sunday) was allowed as a day of relief from the rigour of Lent, and the Feast of the Annunciation almost always falls in Lent; these breaks from austerity are the background to the modern observance of Mothering Sunday on the Fourth Sunday of Lent.

As Holy Week approaches, the atmosphere of the season darkens; the readings begin to anticipate the story of Christ's suffering and death, and the reading of the Passion Narrative gave to the Fifth Sunday its name of Passion Sunday. There are many devotional exercises which may be used in Lent and Holy Week outside the set liturgy. The Stations of the Cross, made popular in the West by the Franciscans after they were granted custody of the Christian sites in the Holy Land, are the best known".

As we approach the beginning of Lent at the end of February please take time to consider what you might do to help yourself prepare for Easter day on Sunday the 12th April.

Perhaps consider going to one of our morning 'parish prayers' on Tuesdays at St Andrews, Wednesday at St Peter's and Thursday at All Saints; all at 9.15 am for about 15 minutes. Or perhaps come to the mid-week service of Holy Communion at St Peters on a Wednesday at 10 am – which lasts about 45 minutes.

And don't forget the parish prayer group which will meet on Shrove Tuesday at 7.30 pm, on Tuesday the 10th March at 2.30 pm and Tuesday the 24th March at 7.30 pm; all at All Saints Vicarage.

Try something different and extra this Lent – and perhaps give up chocolate too!!

May your Lent be filled with love and grace and may you come closer to God,

With my prayers for you, **Guy**

Best time for stress? Middle of the day

If you have a stressful confrontation coming up, such as a row with your partner, or at work, try and have it in the middle of the day. That is the time when your body is functioning most efficiently, and when you can best cope with stress.

Both early morning and late evening are never good times for stress, warns one expert on the human body's circadian rhythm. Early morning is when the cardiovascular system is the most responsive and reactive to stress, which is why more serious heart attacks tend to take place in the morning. And of course, stress late at night will badly affect your ability to sleep

MOTHERS' UNION

The Mothers' Union theme for 2020 that focuses members' prayers and actions on particular aspects of our work and faith is:

'Building Hope and Confidence'

"Building hope and confidence" has been placed at the heart of our call to support individuals and families to transform their lives. As we build our hope and confidence in God we will be inspired and equipped to build hope and confidence in others, in both local and global context.

~~~~~

Our January meeting was an opportunity for members to share our first Mothers' Union Communion of the New Year. Guy took a lovely service and spoke about this year's theme and Judith Owen was welcomed into our branch. We enjoyed catching up with each other's news and casting our minds back over the last decade with a short quiz .... and of course the inevitable tea and cakes!

It was with sadness that we heard, just before Christmas, of the death of Mavis Gosling. Mavis was a long serving and dedicated member of the Mothers' Union who will be missed by us all.

Our prayers are with her family at this time.

The AGM is on Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> February at 10.00am in church and it is hoped that all members will be able to attend.

The new Mothers' Union catalogue is now available with Easter cards and gifts as well as the usual cards and items. There will be a chance to look at this at our February meeting and the AGM.

### Dates

|                          |         |                                          |
|--------------------------|---------|------------------------------------------|
| 4 <sup>th</sup> February | 2.30pm  | The Prayer Shawl Ministry, Alison Russon |
| 8 <sup>th</sup> February | 10.00am | AGM in church                            |

**There is no evening meeting in February**

**Liz Williams**

# CHRISTMAS QUIZ

## COMICS & COMICS

- |                                               |                   |
|-----------------------------------------------|-------------------|
| 1 Fashionable chap                            | Dandy             |
| 2 Football King                               | Hotspur           |
| 3 'I wanna tell you a story'                  | Max Bygraves      |
| 4 Posh hat                                    | Topper            |
| 5 John Brown                                  | Billy Connolly    |
| 6 Royal Forest                                | Victoria Wood     |
| 7 Cheeky Chappie                              | Max Miller        |
| 8 Coronation Street character spent time here | Roy of the Rovers |
| 9 Goddess of the hunt                         | Diana             |
| 10 Female Royal                               | Princess          |
| 11 Four candles                               | The Two Ronnies   |
| 12 A shilling for the inhabitant of a priory  | Bob Monkhouse     |
| 13 'Just like that'                           | Tommy Cooper      |
| 14 A First Lady                               | Jackie            |
| 15 Beatles' song                              | Girl              |
| 16 One fired the other                        | Cannon & Ball     |
| 17 Would you share a car with him ?           | Peter Kay         |
| 18 Academic mate                              | School Friend     |
| 19 _____, _____ little star                   | Twinkle           |
| 20 A mad group                                | The Crazy Gang    |
| 21 1 of our 5 a day!                          | Jasper Carrott    |
| 22 He had lots of little followers            | Ken Dodd          |
| 23 They brought sunshine                      | Morecambe & Wise  |
| 24 Large wasp                                 | The Hornet        |
| 25 Andy's mum                                 | Judy              |
| 26 Black Country comedy queen                 | Dolly Allen       |
| 27 'Titter ye not'                            | Frankie Howerd    |
| 28 Recreational time                          | Playhour          |
| 29 'Oggy, oggy, oggy!'                        | Max Boyce         |
| 30 Often on The Road                          | Bob Hope          |
| 31 It was theirs                              | Boy's Own         |
| 32 Lion King                                  | Lenny Henry       |
| 33 His mother-in-law's favourite              | Les Dawson        |
| 34 This is reliable                           | Robin             |

|                                                  |                       |
|--------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| 35 A roamer                                      | Rover                 |
| 36 You may have one of these with a cuppa!       | Bunty                 |
| 37 Opposites                                     | Little & Large        |
| 38 Hesitant buzzers                              | Beezer                |
| 39 Commercial vehicle, threat, stars in this one | Beano                 |
| 40 'Hello Playmates'                             | Arthur Askey          |
| 41 'George, don't do that'                       | Joyce Grenfell        |
| 42 _____-eyed                                    | Eagle                 |
| 43 Speedy                                        | Swift                 |
| 44 Seasonal pair                                 | Mike & Bernie Winters |
| 45 Winner                                        | Victor                |
| 46 An 'attractive' comic                         | Magnet                |
| 47 They went up the hill                         | Jack & Jill           |
| 48 Blemishes, siblings                           | Marx Brothers         |
| 49 Liverpudlian who enjoys a putt                | Jimmy Tarbuck         |
| 50 _____, _____, burning bright                  | Tiger                 |

Congratulations to Barbara Price who won the quiz.

A big thank you to all who supported the Christmas Tree Festival, which raised £459 for the Salvation Army.

## Men and doctors

Men do not like doctors. In fact, eight out of ten men would prefer to endure an illness rather than seek help from their GP. (This will not surprise many wives.)

Despite recent campaigns urging them to take their health seriously, a survey by BUPA has found that 48 per cent of men would only go to the doctor if they absolutely had to. And 39 per cent of men would actually let the pain become unbearable, before they sought any help.

## **Christingle Service December 2018**

On behalf of Children's Society I must thank everyone who made the 2019 Christingle Service such a great success. It is always a delightful occasion both for the children and adults attending.

Special mention is deserved by volunteers who made the Christingles and those people who organised, and the children who took part in, the Nativity play.

The event raised **£ 416.47** which has been forwarded to Children's Society for the ongoing work with children in this area,

If you did not attend the service then I would suggest that you make a date in your diary to be there at the Christingle Service in 2020.

Hon. Secretary Sedgley and District  
Appeals Committee

**Anne Hart**

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### **Have a purpose for your life!**

Mary Slessor was an indomitable Scottish Presbyterian missionary to Calabar, Nigeria in late Victorian times. She not only evangelised three tribes there, but also stopped the widespread practise of killing twins at birth. Her life made a tremendous difference for good to thousands of people.

Concerned about the purposeless lives of some women back in the UK, she advised them, in words which may well be the secret of her own life of blessing: "Gird yourself for the battle outside somewhere and keep your heart young. Give up your whole being to create music somewhere, in the light places and in the dark places, and your life will make melody."

On another occasion she wrote: "Prayer is the greatest power God has put into our hands for service—praying is harder than doing, at least I find it so, but the dynamic lies that way to advance the Kingdom."

## Lent Course 2020 – Faith Pictures

Do you struggle to talk about your faith to friends and family, let alone strangers? Then the **Faith Pictures** course may be for you. The course has been developed by the Church Army to help us to talk about our faith more confidently, in a safe and supportive environment. There are two opportunities, and possibly a third (depending on numbers). One is planned at All Saints Vicarage on Thursday evenings and one on Monday afternoons at St Andrew's hall. Watch out for sign-up sheets in church

|                           | <b>St Andrews<br/>Hall</b> | <b>All Saints<br/>Vicarage</b> |
|---------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------------|
|                           | <b>2:00-3:30</b>           | <b>7:30-9:00</b>               |
| Opening the Conversation  | 24 <sup>th</sup> Feb       | 27 <sup>th</sup> Feb           |
| The Power of the Ordinary | 2 <sup>nd</sup> March      | 5 <sup>th</sup> March          |
| Travellers' Tales         | 9 <sup>th</sup> March      | 12 <sup>th</sup> March         |
| Talking Pictures          | 16 <sup>th</sup> March     | 19 <sup>th</sup> March         |
| Companions of the Journey | 23 <sup>rd</sup> March     | 26 <sup>th</sup> March         |
| Hidden Opportunities      | 30 <sup>th</sup> March     | 2 <sup>nd</sup> April          |

For further information contact **Guy, Catherine** or **Jan**

# Lent Fasting

This month sees the start of Lent, the season of penitence, self-examination and fasting running up to Easter. Fasting can be a neglected discipline, but it plays an important part in the Christian life. Jesus began His earthly ministry by fasting in the wilderness for 40 days and He taught His disciples to fast (i.e. not *if* but *'when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, so that it will not be obvious to others that you are fasting, but only to your Father, who is unseen.'* (Matthew 6:17,18).

## *Why Fast?*

Firstly, giving up something in my life underlines my desire to put God first in my life. Secondly, fasting shows me how much I depend on things other than God in my life, so I can surrender my idols to Him. Thirdly, fasting encourages me to have a deeper hunger and dependency for God in my life. Therefore, fasting gives me space to humbly focus on God for His strength, provision, and wisdom and results in a more intimate relationship with Christ. It also enables the Holy Spirit to reveal my true spiritual condition, leading to brokenness, repentance, and a transformed life, with a heart more attentive to God.

## *How can I fast?*

Usually fasting involves missing one or two meals during the day, although some can't abstain from food for medical reasons. It might also include abstaining or limiting the time I give to television, alcohol or social media. However, Lent can also be a time to embrace new spiritual disciplines e.g. joining a study group, 'random acts of kindness', or giving more time to prayer and Bible study. Whatever you do, make Lent count this year!

*'Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.'* (Matthew 5:6)



## **I believe, help my unbelief**

I was in a discussion recently as to whether or not a Christian can have doubts. The father in Mark's story (9:17-27) speaks for many people. He knew that Jesus *could* heal his son, but just wasn't quite sure *if* He would.

Doubt comes in many forms. It may be intellectual, a form of wrestling with the truth of certain key Christian beliefs like the Virgin Birth or the inerrancy of the Bible. It may be philosophical, a pondering of the problem of evil and why God allows bad things to happen to good people. Sometimes it is spiritual, and doubting whether or not we are saved. Occasionally it is emotional, wondering if we are loveable, if we have any worth or value in God's sight.

Such doubts are painful and debilitating, but true faith does not exclude the possibility of doubt. Indeed, we could say that faith would not be faith if there was not an element of doubt!

Often doubt is a way by which we discover the truth in a deeper way as we wrestle honestly with the questions we have. For many it is a way by which faith grows and matures, leading us to a greater understanding of the mystery of God and the reality that with our finite minds we can never understand everything about God or the way in which He works. Doubt is not the same as unbelief, which is a stubborn refusal to believe what the Bible says to be true. Doubt is more a normal part of faith development and is not to be feared, especially if we bring our questions to God.

The great Methodist minister Dr William Sangster was asked if he ever doubted. "Yes," he replied, "of course I have doubts. But I also doubt my doubts!"

# **New research findings published on clergy Flourishing**

A new set of findings from a 10-year study into the well-being and flourishing of ordained ministers in the Church of England has been recently published.

The Living Ministry programme tracks the progress of groups of clergy ordained in 2006, 2011 and 2015 and women and men who entered training for ordination in 2016, seeking to understand what helps clergy to flourish in ministry.

The latest research from the project includes responses from 579 ordained clergy and 113 people training for ordained ministry in the Church of England.

The quantitative study includes research into physical, mental, relational, financial material, spiritual and vocational well-being, as well as responses to questions about ministerial effectiveness.

The Rt Revd Dr Chris Goldsmith, Director of the Ministry Division of the Church of England said: “This 10-year programme is providing valuable long-term insights into the experiences of our ordained clergy from initial training and curacy and throughout ministry.

“The findings will help inform the dioceses and theological education colleges and courses in their vital work in the selection, formation and long-term support of ordained clergy.”

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## **Adam and Eve**

Adam and Eve had an ideal marriage. He didn't have to hear about all the men she could have married, and she didn't have to hear about the way his mother cooked.

## **Psalm 23 Garden coming to RHS Chelsea**

The Bible Society has announced that “We’re absolutely thrilled to be working with award-winning garden designer Sarah Eberle, to bring Psalm 23 to life at the RHS Chelsea Flower Show in May 2020!”

The Psalm 23 Garden at RHS Chelsea Flower Show 2020, designed by Sarah Eberle, will offer visitors the chance “to stop, reflect, and feel refreshed”.

The Bible Society said: “This powerful psalm, with its visual imagery of green pastures, still waters and the valley of the shadow of death, just cries out to be turned into a garden.

“We hope you’ll love it. And after the Chelsea Flower Show, the garden will find a permanent home at the Winchester Hospice in Hampshire, where it will be a blessing to patients and families.”

The Bible Society says it is also hoping that people will “join us in creating community gardens across the country inspired by the Psalm 23 Garden. You can do this outside your office, in your school grounds, or in your churchyard. Let’s get gardening!”

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## **Church of England appoints National Environment Officer**

Jo Chamberlain has been appointed as the National Environment Officer for the Church of England, taking forward the strategy developed by the Environment Working Group. This is a new post reflecting the Archbishops’ Council’s focus on the environment as a theological and mission priority.

Jo joins the Mission and Public Affairs team from Christian Aid and the Diocese of Sheffield where she volunteers as their Environment Adviser. She will work closely with the Environment Consultant, David Shreeve, and link with the Cathedrals and Church Buildings team where Open and Sustainable Churches Officer, Catherine Ross, forms the third part of a new environment staff ‘hub’.

## **Ladies Society – December meeting**

In December we took the opportunity to get together for a social evening. Having all brought along food to eat and share, we enjoyed discussing our plans for the Christmas period and to look back on the year which had just passed.

Ladies Society meetings continue to be relaxing and enjoyable events and we would all welcome new members to come along to our meetings. We meet on the first Monday of each month at 7.30pm in the social lounge at the rear of the Church Hall.

The next meeting date is subject to some uncertainty because of the development work being carried out on the Church Hall, but it is hoped that we will meet again in February for a quiz night. Please look out for precise information in the pew sheet.

**Karen Evans**

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### **How do you feel about sharing your faith?**

Perhaps you have been ‘gossiping the gospel’ for years? Maybe you even lead a small group, or are passionate about community outreach? Or – perhaps you feel a quiver of panic at the very thought of talking about your faith. Society seems to be hostile, and so you struggle to know how to engage with people who think very differently from you. If you struggle, then here is good news: Bible Society is keen to help you. It has recently launched a new website called Lumino (<https://lumino.bible/>) to do just that.

Lumino aims to support Christians who want to share the good news. It explains the different types of people you are likely to encounter, and their attitudes to the Bible and Christianity. Bible Society has found from research that “an estimated 20% of the population is open to the Bible, open to faith and interested in knowing more. What an exciting opportunity...”

# RESPECT FOR OUR CHURCH

## MARGARET HOLLIS

I am a member of the Ladies Society, the church meeting held 1st Monday in each month.

I suggested that my friend staying with me on a visit from Australia, should go the Friday coffee morning in church.

This day it was also Macmillan Day.

We spent an hour in church, beautiful sunshine shone through stained glass windows. The church looked beautiful, clean, light and very welcoming.

I have since had a message from my friend Wynne which reads:  
I had a great time with you, and what a lovely way to end my stay with a visit to your church.

Not only did it look beautiful but I enjoyed the cakes, tea and the warm atmosphere and kindness of the people there.

Very impressive.

Thank you to everyone concerned.

**Wynne Rose.**

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## Take me out

An elderly single woman died last month. She requested no male pallbearers. In her handwritten instructions for her memorial service, she explained: "They wouldn't take me out while I was alive, so I don't want them to take me out when I'm dead."

## Fearfully and Wonderfully Made

Every person who ever lived was once a sperm and an egg. Those two cells fused together, and in nine months they turned into a living, breathing, human being. Each of us emerged from this same embryonic development process, which is highly complex and organised, but variable enough to turn out a unique individual every time.

If you like order – such as neat piles of stationery, or tidy colour-coded files – you will enjoy this story. One of the most important stages of an embryo's development is when each section of the body, from head to rump, takes on its identity. Each part is told what shape to take, and which limbs or internal organs to grow: legs or arms, lungs or kidneys, and so on.

The most beautiful part of this body-patterning process is that it brings the dimensions of time and space together in such a neat way. The DNA instructions for the procedure, known as genes, are organised in the order in which they are needed during development *which is also* the order in which they appear on the body. No other sets of genes are known to be arranged in such a tidy pattern.

So, as the embryo develops, the tissues near the head end activate the first sets of genes. Those active genes then make all the proteins needed for that part of the body to grow and develop in the right way. The tissues just below the head then switch on the second set of genes, and so on. A wave of activation passes down the embryo, specifying each section of the trunk in turn.

The Wisconsin-based developmental biologist Jeff Hardin often quotes Psalm 139 to express the wonder of embryonic development. The Psalmist did not understand how this process happened, but he knew that it was a marvellous thing. *“For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb...your works are wonderful, I know that full well. My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place, when I was woven together in the depths of the earth.”*

The story of the tidy genes brings out the hidden beauty in the very early stages of embryonic development. The more biologists get to find out about how we came to be born, the more we can say, *“I am fearfully and wonderfully made”!*

## Love in action!

The writer Gary Chapman describes the 5 'love languages' as words of encouragement, quality time, gifts, acts of service and touch. Do you have a preferred 'language of love'?

With the approach of St Valentines' Day, let's ask: what is God's love language? *'Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth.'* (1 John 3:18). God's love is expressed in the word *agape*, which is exclusively found in the New Testament. Greek has a number of words for love e.g. empathetic, friendship or sexual, but *agape* is defined uniquely by Jesus. *'This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down His life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters.'* (1 John 3:16) It provides the model for how we should love others.

*Agape love is self-giving:* it is ready to put the other person first, just as Jesus gave His life for us on the cross by dying in our place. Are we generous with our time, words, money and service to others?

*Agape love takes the initiative:* are we ready to show love to those who don't deserve it? Do we have eyes of compassion to see the needs around us and a heart to reach out to them?

*Agape love is intentional:* are we ready to get close to those in need around us, irrespective of what time we have or how we feel?

The story is told of Jesus asking a little child, *'how much do you love me?'* The child replied *'lots and lots and lots!'* They then asked Jesus how much He loved them. Jesus stretched out His arms wide and said *'I love you this much'*, as they nailed Him to a cross.

## William Blake's engravings of Job

The canticle we call the Benedicite began its life as the *Song of the Three Holy Children*. In the midst of their terrifying ordeal in the burning fiery furnace, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego praise God. They call on the sky above, the seasons, and all that grows and moves on the earth to join them. Their song invites the whales in the sea, the birds of the air and all creatures to echo their praise. Finally, they ask all people who are holy and humble in heart to bless God the creator of all that is.

During this year we are exploring the glory and wonder of creation, especially animals and birds. The song of the Benedicite praising that creation is born of pain and testing. That ordeal is the theme of another book in the Old Testament – Job. We are told that he was an upright, blameless man, but he suffered. That pain tested his faith and he demanded an explanation from God.

The book of Job inspired the visionary work of the poet and painter, William Blake. In 1823 he began creating a series of 22 engravings illustrating Job which were based on earlier water-colours. Plate 13 depicts God answering Job out of the whirlwind. We can read of this in chapters 39-41. God asks Job if he was present at creation. Indeed, can he even begin to understand the marvels of this world – the mountain goat giving birth, a horse running through a meadow, or the eagle soaring in the sky. They praise God like the creatures in the Benedicite by their very being. And finally, God points to Behemoth and Leviathan – the hippopotamus and the crocodile – who are symbols of power and brute strength. They are shown in Plate 15 and fill the orb of the world, just as they dominate creation.

God answers Job with this catalogue of wonders to assure him that He is the Creator, but He does respond to the cry of humanity. Job may not understand the stars above nor the earth beneath his feet, but through meeting God, his life has gained meaning and value. His fortunes are restored, and he ends his days as one of the holy and humble of heart who praise God in the Benedicite. The Three Children of the fiery furnace and Job – they assure us that this world is full of wonders and glory that show the handiwork of God. When we realise that, we will join them in singing hymns of praise and thanksgiving.



## When education for ALL children arrived

150 years ago, on 17<sup>th</sup> February 1870, the Elementary Education Act – commonly known as Forster’s Education Act – was introduced in England and Wales. It provided a framework for the education of all children between five and 12.

Many people objected to the concept of universal education, including the upper classes, who wanted to keep educational privileges for themselves, and employers who feared losing cheap labour. But there was also a feeling that the newly enfranchised classes should be better educated.

The churches in general had doubts about the Act, worrying that they would lose their influence on young people. The Earl of Shaftesbury, 20 years earlier, had feared national education would be “a death warrant to the teaching of the evangelical religion”.

Before 1870, elementary education was provided largely by the Church of England’s National Society and the nonconformist British and Foreign School Society. In fact, in the 15 years after the Act, the number of Church of England schools rose from 6,382 to 11,864, and in the 21<sup>st</sup> century church schools are still flourishing.

After the Act, however, the state did become increasingly involved with further reforms: and after 1880 attendance was made compulsory for

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### Hedges

A hedge around your property is good for you. A recent study has found that the humble hedge, when in full leaf, can cut air pollution around it by up to half.

A recent study by the University of Guildford measured traffic pollutants on either side of a hedge in a park on the road to Guildford. The survey found that the level of particulate pollutions – those tiny particles of soot and other matter that cause illness – was cut by half after the hedge reached full leaf in April.

So – if your home is along a busy road, grow a hedge!

# Church ordered to replace name sign with political slogan

Chinese authorities have forced a church in Jiangxi province to paint over its name and replace it with a communist slogan, “Follow the Party, Obey the Party, and Be Grateful to the Party,” amid increasing attempts by officials to ‘sinicise’ (make Chinese) Christianity.

Late last year The True and Original Source of the Universe church in Ji’an city was also ordered to remove a painting of a biblical figure from a prominent position and replace it with a portrait of China’s President Xi Jinping, surrounded with communist party slogans.

Days later, officials locked the doors and windows and confiscated the keys to the church, which is registered under the state-sanctioned Patriotic Association, preventing the congregation from gaining access for worship.

Elsewhere in Jiangxi province, elderly members of an unofficial house church, operating outside of the Patriotic Association, were told by the authorities in Poyang county that their retirement pensions would be stopped if they continued to gather for worship. Officials also removed crosses and religious banners and replaced them with portraits of President Xi and Chairman Mao Zedong.

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## **Anxious and lonely? Come to church!**

Young people who go to church are less likely to struggle with anxiety than those who do not go to church (22% compared to 33%.) Fewer church goers are also lonely and isolated (16% compared to 31 %) In a survey almost one third of all young people reported feeling sad or depressed; this was compared with 18 per cent among young practising Christians.

The survey is published in The Connected Generation, commissioned by the Barna Group in partnership with World Vision. The full report can be seen at [theconnectedgeneration.com](http://theconnectedgeneration.com).

# Remembering Eric Liddell

## Olympic gold medallist and prisoner of war

Eric Liddell, the Scottish athlete who became a 400-metre Olympic gold medallist in 1924, died 75 years ago, on 21<sup>st</sup> February 1945, in a Japanese internment camp in China. He was 43 and had a brain tumour.

Because of his Christian convictions he had withdrawn from the 100-metre heats in the 1924 Paris Olympics because they took place on a Sunday. He entered the 400-metre heats instead – and won.

He also got bronze in the 200 metres, where he finished ahead of his Jewish team-mate Harold Abrahams, the 100-metre gold medallist. Their story is told in the classic 1981 film, *Chariots of Fire*.

Born in China to missionary parents, Liddell went to boarding school for 12 years at Eltham College, South London, where he continues to be recognised as inspirational. He was always an outstanding sportsman but never failed to put God first. He returned to China after studying pure science at Edinburgh University and married a Canadian missionary, Florence Mackenzie.

While in internment camp, despite his tumour and weakness, he gave hope to others, being seen as a great unifying force. He helped to ease tensions through his selflessness and was admired for the way he forgave his captors.

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## Love in a bag

I asked my nephew whether he bought his wife anything for Valentine's Day, and he said he had bought her a belt and a bag. When I commented that I am sure she would appreciate them, he agreed: "Yes, and hopefully the vacuum cleaner will work better now."

# Church Action on Poverty Sunday – 23<sup>rd</sup> February

Church Action on Poverty Sunday takes place later this month. Many of us want to help the poor, but the challenges are huge.

‘Good News for the poor’ – that was what Jesus promised – and the crowd flocked to hear it. But He didn’t promise to abolish poverty. ‘The poor you always have with you’, He said, and everything we have seen since has proved that He was right.

Two thousand years, many political promises and different regimes, and we still have poor people, often living alongside the conspicuously rich.

‘Good news for the poor’? Not, it appears, in any political or social revolution. Sadly, we have yet to abolish poverty.

But followers of Jesus have been in the forefront of those who have tried to mitigate its consequences. Churches and various individual Christians have been prime movers in the amazing development of Food Banks. The Bradford-based charity ‘Christians against Poverty’ has helped literally tens of thousands of people out of debt. Night shelters for the homeless, schools in the world’s poorest lands and support for drug addicts – these are on the agenda of every Church and that is good news for the poor.

There is so much more to be done, of course, if poverty is ever to be eliminated. But not being able to do it all mustn’t stop us doing what we can.

*So this year, why not do something to support Church Action on Poverty?*

*Details at:*

<http://www.church-poverty.org.uk/sunday/>



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Our side by side service is operating in your area: if you would like to help someone continue to do the things they really enjoy, and help combat the loneliness and social isolation people living with dementia can experience, then please do get in touch. You could really make a difference to someone by helping them stay in touch with their local community.

All our volunteers are given extensive training, and you will be supported by an experienced role manager.

If you would like to know more, please contact Ade Couper, our side by side coordinator on 07885 228891 or by email

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My dear Nephew Darren



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

At least with pews, parishioners can make some pretence at kneeling, adopting that peculiar crouch only ever seen in church life. Attempt that with chairs and you are assured of sending the one in front sliding across the floor with a shriek. Chairs may be all very well in your own church, so you can create space for the delights of liturgical dance and baby clinics, but we prefer something more immovable. Little Miss Thrupp has, over the years, created something of a nest where she sits, quietly bringing in cushions, travelling rugs and her own supply of books and peppermints. As for Major Hoare, I suspect he is installing a drinks cabinet in his pew.

Pews, unlike rows of chairs, also create territorial behaviour. If a visitor should sit in a pew where regulars have sat for the last 50 years, it is regarded as if it were the invasion of Poland. One innocent family once chose the pew where generations of the Psmith family have sat since dinosaurs roamed the land. The Psmiths had no intention of ceding territory peacefully and so for the whole of Mattins, one pew which should have held 6 people sat 9. When they stood to sing, the line exploded into the aisles on both sides, returning to their compressed state, necessitating staggered shallow breathing, when re-seated.

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

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

Your loving uncle,

**Eustace**

---

## **The Leap Year**

The calendar, one year in four  
Gives February a little more  
An extra day! We must be sure!  
To wisely use these hours  
The weather, not as bitter cold;  
The garden weeds have gained no hold;  
The early bulbs start to unfold  
We welcome crocus flowers!  
The sun bestows a little warmth  
The winds turn from the bitter north  
It is the time to sally forth  
From winter sanctuary!  
Tis early spring, season sublime  
So hearken to my little rhyme –  
Enjoy the little extra time  
You have in February!

By **Nigel Beeton**



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## **Eight months since Asia Bibi fled Pakistan, blasphemy laws still cause for concern**

New reports have highlighted continuing concern over Pakistan's blasphemy laws, eight months after Asia Bibi was finally allowed to leave the country.

The reports came from sources as diverse as the US Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) and Humanists International. The USCIRF reports there are still 80 people in Pakistan imprisoned on blasphemy charges. And the latest *Freedom of Thought* Report from Humanists International says that Pakistan remains a 'perennial offender' in imprisoning people for blasphemy – long after the country's Supreme Court discredited the high-profile case against Asia Bibi.

According to the *Freedom of Thought* report: 'The authorities prosecuted a total of 1,170 blasphemy cases between 1987 and 2012, with scores of new cases every year. Civil society reports estimate that in 2017 alone at least 50 individuals were imprisoned on charges of blasphemy, with at least 17 facing possible death sentences.'

And according to *Al Jazeera* more than 70 people have been murdered following blasphemy allegations since 1990.

Last year (2018) Amnesty International reported a large increase in blasphemy cases since the 1980s. "A total of 633 Muslims, 494 Ahmadis, 187 Christians and 21 Hindus have been accused under various provisions on offences related to religion since 1987."

Release International partners believe the number of Christians imprisoned could be far higher. "Given that Christians make up just two per cent of the population, the numbers charged are disproportionately high," says Paul Robinson, the CEO of Release International, which supports persecuted Christians. "Christians are ten times more likely to be accused of religious offences in Pakistan."

# SERVICES FOR THE MONTH

ALL SAINTS - 2ND FEBRUARY - 8AM - HOLY COMMUNION - REVD GUY HEWLETT  
10.30AM - WORSHIP TOGETHER - REVD GUY HEWLETT  
6.30PM - BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER - EVENSONG - REVD CATHERINE MITCHELL  
ST ANDREW - 9.30AM - WORSHIP TOGETHER - CANON JAN HUMPHRIES  
ST PETER - 10.30AM - HOLY COMMUNION - REVD CATHERINE MITCHELL

WEDNESDAY 5TH FEBRUARY - ST PETER 10AM - HOLY COMMUNION - REVD GUY HEWLETT

ALL SAINTS - 9TH FEBRUARY - 8AM - HOLY COMMUNION - REVD CATHERINE MITCHELL  
10.30AM - WORSHIP TOGETHER - CANON JAN HUMPHRIES  
6.30PM - BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER - HOLY COMMUNION - REVD GUY HEWLETT  
ST ANDREW - 9.30AM - HOLY COMMUNION - REVD GUY HEWLETT  
ST PETER - 10.30AM - HOLY COMMUNION - REVD CATHERINE MITCHELL

WEDNESDAY 12TH FEBRUARY - ST PETER 10AM - HOLY COMMUNION - REVD GUY HEWLETT

ALL SAINTS - 16TH FEBRUARY - 8AM - HOLY COMMUNION - REVD GUY HEWLETT  
10.30AM - HOLY COMMUNION - HON CANON JUDITH OLIVER  
6.30PM - BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER - EVENSONG - CANON JAN HUMPHRIES  
ST ANDREW - 9.30AM - WORSHIP TOGETHER - CANON JAN HUMPHRIES  
ST PETER - 10.30AM - HOLY COMMUNION - REVD GUY HEWLETT

WEDNESDAY 19TH FEBRUARY - ST PETER 10AM - HOLY COMMUNION - REVD CATHERINE MITCHELL

ALL SAINTS - 23RD FEBRUARY - 8AM - HOLY COMMUNION - REVD CATHERINE MITCHELL  
10.30AM - HOLY COMMUNION - REVD CATHERINE MITCHELL  
6.30PM - BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER - EVENSONG - REVD CATHERINE MITCHELL  
ST ANDREW - 9.30AM - HOLY COMMUNION - REVD GUY HEWLETT  
ST PETER - 10.30AM - WORSHIP TOGETHER - SUZANNE BRADLEY

## **ASH WEDNESDAY**

WEDNESDAY 26TH FEBRUARY - ST PETER 10AM - HOLY COMMUNION - REVD GUY HEWLETT  
ALL SAINTS - 6.30PM - HOLY COMMUNION - REVD CATHERINE MITCHELL