

THE

CRAYFISHER

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The magazine for the Parish of Cray Valley

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Front Cover Picture: Foxgloves in Chelsfield Lane by Malcolm Hubbard

PARISH LETTER

Beatitudes for a global pandemic

written by Jayne Manfredi. Shared with permission

Blessed are those who stay indoors for they have protected others.

Blessed are the unemployed and the self-employed, for their need of God is great.

Blessed are the corner shopkeepers, for they are the purveyors of scarce things.

Blessed are the delivery drivers and the postal workers, for they are the bringers of essential things.

Blessed are the hospital workers; the ambulance crews, the doctors, the nurses, the care assistants, and the cleaners, for they stand between us and the grave, and the Kingdom of Heaven is surely theirs.

Blessed are the checkout workers, for they have patience and fortitude in the face of overwork and frustration.

Blessed are the refuse collectors, for they will see God despite the mountains of waste.

Blessed are the teachers, for they remain steadfast and constant in disturbing times.

Blessed are the church workers; the deacons, priests and bishops, for they are a comforting presence in a hurting world as they continue to signpost towards God.

Blessed are the single parents, for they are coping alone with their responsibilities and there is no respite.

Blessed are those who are alone, for they are children of God and with Him they will never be lonely.

Blessed are the bereaved, for whom the worst has already happened. They shall be comforted.

Blessed are those who are isolated with their abusers, for one day – we pray - they will know safety.

Blessed are all during this time who have pure hearts; all who still hunger and thirst for justice; all who work for peace and who model mercy. May you know comfort. May you know calm. And may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with us all. Amen.

Jessie x

READINGS FOR SUNDAYS IN AUGUST

Sun 2 nd	Genesis 32.22-31 Romans 9.1-5 GOSPEL Matthew 14.13-21
Sun 9 th	Genesis 37.1-4, 12-28 Romans 10.5-15 GOSPEL Matthew 14.22-33
Sun 16 th	Genesis 45.1-15 Romans 11.1-2a, 29-32 GOSPEL Matthew 15. [10-20] 21-28
Sun 23 rd	Exodus 1.8-2.10 Romans 12.1-8 GOSPEL Matthew 16.13-20
Sun 30 th	Exodus 3.1-15 Romans 12.9-end GOSPEL Matthew 16.21-end

COLLECTS FOR SUNDAYS IN AUGUST 2020

- Sun 2nd Almighty Lord and everlasting God, we beseech you to direct, sanctify and govern both our hearts and bodies in the ways of your laws and the works of your commandments; that through your most mighty protection, both here and ever, we may be preserved in body and soul; through our Lord and saviour Jesus Christ, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God now and for ever: **Amen**
- Sun 9th Almighty God, who sent your Holy Spirit to be the life and light of your Church: open our hearts to the riches of your grace, that we may bring forth the fruit of the Spirit in love and joy and peace; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever: **Amen**
- Sun 16th Let your merciful ears, O Lord, be open to the prayers of your humble servants; and that they may obtain their petitions make them to ask such things as shall please you; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever: **Amen**
- Sun 23rd O God, you declare your almighty power most chiefly in showing mercy and pity: mercifully grant to us such a measure of your grace, that we, running the way of your commandments, may receive your gracious promises, and be made partakers of your heavenly treasure; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever : **Amen**

Sun 30th Almighty and everlasting God, you are always more ready to hear than we to pray and to give more than either we desire or deserve: pour down upon us the abundance of your mercy, forgiving us those things of which our conscience is afraid and giving us those good things which we are not worthy to ask but through the merits and mediation of Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever:
Amen

We are currently unable to meet at our churches for worship and are using other resources to hold our services. If you would like to join us at 10 a.m. on a Sunday morning, please contact Danielle for a copy of the worship material and/or details of how to join our live Zoomed service.

Both churches are open now once a week for private prayer; St Mary's is open on Tuesdays from 10 a.m. until 11 a.m. and likewise for St Andrew's but on Thursday mornings 10 a.m. until 11 a.m.

Details of how we will carry out our APCM will be made available shortly.

**THE DEADLINE FOR THE SEPTEMBER ISSUE OF
THE CRAYFISHER IS TUESDAY 11 AUGUST. PLEASE HAVE
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PARISH PRAYER GROUP

We cannot meet at Muriel's home, but we are still praying for all in need especially at this time.

FRIENDS OF ST MARY'S

For further details contact Tony Lathey 01689 872742

SOCIAL EVENTS

AT ST ANDREW'S AND ST MARY'S IN 2020

Regretfully, our planned Salvation Army Concert, Dinner and Dance and Christmas Fair will be postponed until further notice.



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KNITTING HATS FOR PREMATURE BABIES



A few weeks ago, after our Zoom service one Sunday Tracey from St Mary's said that she is still looking for hats for the premature babies. Have some of you knitters run out of projects? Perhaps you'd like to knit a few more. We can always ask Tracey how she wants them delivered when they are done.

Brenda Smith

A little footnote to the above. Quite a lot of hats have been knitted and Rev. Jane will be collecting them and taking them to Tracey. Please continue to knit as they are very much needed. Thank you to all the knitters.

A LOCKDOWN PROJECT

Nancy has been making masks ... and baking some cakes although for ages there was no flour or baking powder around, so it was a big celebration when our neighbour got some for us!

I've been busy decluttering the house and garage. There is a skip on the front drive where we have put all our useless and unwanted lumber. Hmm by that criterion I shall have to be careful Nancy doesn't put me on it, too!

Best wishes to all, from Jerry.

MAGAZINE SUBSCRIPTIONS

Subscriptions to The Crayfisher are due this month, and if you were unfortunate and missed any magazines during the lockdown, please let me know and your payment can be adjusted. Please see page 24 for details of cost and how to pay. Thank you.

Brenda Smith

A POEM

As the light blue
Comes over the dark
Blue view
I miss the physical place
I call my church
Then I realise
The sky
Is the ornate baroque ceiling painting
The trees are as varied
And more beautiful
Than any stained glass window
The grass is a comfortable
Endless pew
The morning dew
Is my Bread of Heaven
And the birds are the choir,
They sing without a script.
Slowly I understand
That not all things go as planned
But if my Faith
Was as big as my fear
I would never need to shed
A worried tear.

Sian Thomas (one of Rev. Jane's students)
Submitted by Rev. Jane

FOR THE YOUNG AND YOUNG AT HEART

I hadn't heard from anyone about whether they liked the letters from 'Uncle Eustace' so I assumed that no news was good news. Hence another letter.
Brenda Smith

St James the Least of All On the perils of leaving the pulpit

The Rectory
St James the Least

My dear Nephew Darren

When the churches reopen for public worship (whenever that is!) I hope you will come and take Evensong one Sunday. But, thinking of your visit last August, I would prefer you used the pulpit when preaching. How could Colonel Brockle complete 'The Times' crossword and Miss Balmer her knitting with you constantly walking up and down in front of them? They found it most disconcerting, as out of politeness, they were obliged to listen to you. It was a unique experience they do not wish to repeat.

Those few who defy Anglican tradition and sit at the front of the church were also placed in the dilemma of trying to decide whether they should keep turning in their pews as you paraded down the nave and then rotating back to the front as you re-emerged up the side aisle. It did Lady Plumtree's vertigo no good at all. It also allowed people to see that you were wearing suede shoes. For many of our worshippers, the most appalling of heresies are as nothing when compared to brown shoes under a cassock.

I appreciate you made heroic efforts and got your sermon down to 30 minutes, but that is still 20 minutes longer than they anticipated and 29 minutes longer than their attention span.

No, use the pulpit in future; that is the reason why stonemasons 600 years ago put twenty tons of marble in our church in the first place and it would be a shame to disappoint them. It also means that from a distance

of 100 yards and a height of 20 feet, no one can tell that the glass of water I use liberally while preaching is in fact a gin and tonic.

I concede that our pulpit has its dangers. I have known several bishops come to grief as their robes wrap themselves around the newel post as they ascend the steps. One, unable to untangle himself, was obliged to preach while half-way up the steps and with his back to the congregation, while our verger was dispatched to find a pair of scissors.

Perhaps, before your next visit, we may install a mechanical floor in the pulpit, so that after 10 minutes, it slowly lowers you into the crypt while the congregation can get on with singing the last hymn before getting home in decent time.

Your loving uncle,
Eustace

HOLY DAY

4th August: Sithney - the saint who preferred mad dogs to women

You know how some men find women's interest in romance and clothes hard to cope with? Well, Sithney (or Sezni) should be the patron saint of all such men.

According to a Breton folk legend, Sithney was a hermit of long ago, minding his own business, when one day God told him that he was going to make him the patron saint of girls. Sithney was horrified. He foresaw a future where thousands of young women were forever plaguing him to find them good husbands and fine clothes... the thought of it appalled him. So Sithney begged God for some other job, something more peaceful, than dealing with young women. "Very well," said God. "You can look after mad dogs, instead."

Sithney replied cheerfully: "I'd rather have mad dogs than women, any day." And so it was. Since that time, young women have pestered other saints to bring them husbands and fine clothes, while sick and mad dogs have been taken to drink water from the well of St Sezni, patron of Sithney, near Helston in Cornwall.

Why not have a try at the word search. The solution will appear in next month's edition.

a	n	y	o	n	e	h	p	a	i	n	z	m
d	a	p	e	o	p	l	e	m	s	v	l	e
h	e	u	b	c	e	o	n	a	h	k	d	s
o	o	s	t	h	h	a	j	z	l	s	e	e
u	b	c	e	h	q	f	i	e	w	e	k	d
s	l	e	a	r	o	t	r	d	d	r	d	x
e	o	n	l	p	v	r	p	i	d	v	o	j
f	v	t	b	i	e	e	i	a	e	a	z	e
a	e	u	n	d	e	r	s	t	a	n	d	s
i	s	r	a	e	l	v	n	y	y	t	d	u
t	r	i	c	k	y	l	e	a	d	e	r	s
h	r	o	m	a	n	s	z	d	u	l	v	m
q	i	n	v	a	d	e	d	x	o	m	g	k

Romans	Jesus	faith
loves	help	believed
pain	invaded	centurion
healed	friends	authority
asked	understand	house
leaders	amazed	deserves
people	servant	Capernaum
anyone	tricky	Israel

WE MUST BE DETERMINED TO BE ‘ANTI-RACIST’

George Floyd is the latest in a long line of black people who, in recent years, have died at the hands of the police in America. This has led to a global outcry against racism, demanding fairness and equality in interpersonal relationships. But more than this, justice requires us to root out and re-order any system, structure, or narrative which privileges white people over people of colour and their cultures, norms, and perspectives.

Many consider racism against black people to be an American problem, but Britain’s imperial history has given us our own brand. While many white people would publicly denounce overtly racist behaviour, many of our systems are inherently racist and some people remain willing and conscious participants in them.

That’s why it’s not enough to check our unconscious biases. We must be determined to be ‘anti-racist’, to work against the *status quo* wherever it disadvantages black people. This is fundamentally theological: affirming the inherent dignity of all people created in God’s image.

In the UK, recent research demonstrates that black children are twice as likely to live in poverty than white children. Black people face discrimination in employment and health care. They are more likely to be stopped and searched by the police, to get sentenced to prison time and to be given longer sentences than white people. As a country, we have our own stories of excessive force and of the deaths of black people in police custody. Stories that do not end with justice.

These realities are well-known by black people in the UK, including black Christians. Black Brits share the pain of African-Americans suffering under the weight of the same sin and injustice, the same racism.

Yet, the lack of solidarity displayed by many white Christians and leaders has deepened this pain. The unity and witness of the church – as an institution and through its members in society – depend not just on shared faith, but also on shared love and shared burdens. The racial inequities of our churches often fail to speak prophetically to the world – this is a week for lament and repentance.

For those moved to compassion, it's also a time to listen, learn, and practise solidarity with your black brothers and sisters. Action is the way we bring about a new world. A world that cares, principally, for the 'least of these'.

Selina Stone LICC

Selina Stone, tutor and lecturer in Political Theology at St Mellitus College, considers the current outcry against racism. This article comes from the LICC.org.uk website and is offered here by their kind permission. If you would like to see similar articles on 'Connecting with Culture', please go to LICC.org.uk.

CHINESE GOVERNMENT REMOVES 250 CROSSES FROM CHURCHES

Chinese authorities removed 250 more church crosses earlier this year, according to Bitter Winter, an organisation which monitors persecution of Christians.

The crosses were removed from 'Three-Self' churches in Anhui province. The action was part of an on-going and wider campaign aimed at deleting Christian images and replacing them with Communist ones.

One congregation of 100 Christians defended their cross at the historic Gulou Church in Fuyang city. But the next day government officials returned, and it was taken away.

An elder from a Three-Self church in Hanshan county said that to know that crosses were being taken down on many churches "makes us very sad because the cross [is] the primary symbol of our faith. But we don't dare to disobey central government orders: little fish don't eat big fish."

More at: <https://bitterwinter.org>

God in the Arts

THE TRANSFIGURATION – BEHOLDING THE GLORY

TQ – Tingle Quotient – is the name given to those things that can produce a tingle down the spine or a frisson of excitement. It could be a piece of music or the sight of an evening sunset at sea. We look, we hear, and our sense of wonder as something sublime unfolds before us produces delight and awe. We see a hint of glory that can even lead us to worship.

I think the monk who lived in cell no 6 at the Dominican convent of San Marco in Florence must have felt that when he entered his room and saw for the first time the fresco of the Transfiguration that Fra Angelico had painted. I am sure the sight would have stopped him in his tracks, just as Peter, James and John were stopped in their tracks as they beheld their Lord transfigured before them on the mount.

From 1436 Fra Angelico painted a whole series of frescoes for the convent from the High Altar to the Chapter House to the cells of the monks. Here in cell no 6 there is a restrained simplicity and directness about the Transfiguration. One of the three disciples looks out towards us, while the other two are caught up in wonder and awe as they look on Jesus with the faces of Moses and Elijah on either side.

Here Fra Angelico is not seeking to impress a wealthy patron: he is providing a focus for devotion and prayer for the monks of his community. The scene speaks to us of that sense of awe and reverence.

On August 6 we celebrate the feast of the Transfiguration. The Gospel accounts relate that special moment of revelation to the inner group of disciples. The glory shown to them evoked a sense of wonder and marvel, but also a sense of loss. For the glory proved elusive and just out of human reach. The moment of revelation passed, and the disciples had to go down the mount again to meet the crying needs of the world, all but forgotten when they were with their Lord on the mountain top.

The monk in his cell would ponder the glory of Fra Angelico's fresco, knowing that he would be called from his cell to take up his monastic duties. But the painting would go with him to sustain and nurture his life. It is the same with us: we have moments of glory. But they pass, and we must return to our daily lives. As we look on this month's painting, we

sense that glory and wonder which can sustain us through life. As Thomas Jones says in his poem on this episode:

*Like a pearl we hold
Close to our hearts
what we have heard and seen.*

Editor: The Rev Michael Burgess considers 'The Transfiguration' by Fra Angelico. It is found in the Dominican convent of San Marco in Florence. Our graphic is from Wikimedia Commons at:
[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Transfiguration_by_fra_Angelico_\(San_Marco_Cell_6\).jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Transfiguration_by_fra_Angelico_(San_Marco_Cell_6).jpg)

Courtesy of Parish Pump.co.uk

MY LOCKDOWN PROJECT

During the lockdown I decided that the little bag I use for my bingo board and various pens and dabbers looked decidedly scruffy. So, I made a new one in 7-point plastic canvas and different colours of double-knit wool. I have a book of stitches especially for plastic canvas, so I picked a few different stitches and made a very colourful



bag. I lined it and made handles in cream cotton material.

Last year I made a cover, for what was Ken's Bible in white and different shades of blue, which I thought looked very effective. I got the pattern on-line from website called Pinterest.

Linda Sexton

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DAME VERA LYNN

(20th March 1917 – 18th June 2020)

At age 103 Vera Lynn had outlived most of the generation that revered her as a national treasure and inspiration for togetherness in World War Two. Finding stardom at an early age in her twenties it was a brave decision by her to volunteer to be flown to long distance, hot and dangerous far-flung war zones such as Burma, Egypt and India to entertain the Allied troops between 1942 and 1944. She was awarded the Burma Star in 1985. Her last public singing performance was on VE Day 50th anniversary in May 1995.

Our parents and grandparents spoke largely of the 1939 – 1945 war mentioning the blitz, the blackout, doodlebugs, rationing and the threat of German invasion. Situated in Kent and London's 'bomb alley' the Crays were certainly in the thick of it all. But in both the World Wars many of the men of the Crays served bravely in hostile climates and faraway countries in the Far East, including Mesopotamia and the same places where the young Vera Lynn was credited for 'her courage and her contribution to morale'.

Jerry Dowlen



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LOOKING BACK: VE DAY (8th May, 1945)

Many churches held packed thanksgiving services on VE Day. Throughout the day services were held in St Paul's Cathedral, which had survived the Blitz almost unscathed, and an estimated 35,000 people attended. The weather forecast was published for the first time in over five years: 'Wind freshening, warm and sunny at first but rain can be expected later' according to the Daily Mirror. Predictably, (for this was Britain, after all!) it was wrong. By the afternoon in London temperatures reached 75 degrees and the sweltering heat was unseasonal. The crowds began to gather, especially in London. Many converged on Piccadilly and Trafalgar Square. Some church bells also rang, for the first time in years, and were broadcast in the afternoon from 3.20pm until 4pm from York Minster and Bath Cathedral amongst others. Flags seemed to be everywhere. A correspondent from Glasgow reported that residential houses seemed to be 'snowing flags'.

Winston Churchill the Prime Minister lunched with King George at Buckingham Palace and then went to the House of Commons for a short session. The questions were sombre. The Secretary of State for War, Sir James Grigg was non-committal when asked if the recently returned POWs might be sent to the Far East to fight the Japanese. Deputy Prime Minister Clement Attlee (leader of the Labour Party) and Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden were in San Francisco at a conference designed to construct a new world body, the United Nations: they both wished they were home in the UK.

At 3pm Churchill broadcast to the nation from 10 Downing Street. He concluded: 'We may allow ourselves a brief period of rejoicing but let us not forget for a moment the toil and effort that lie ahead.' Many thought they heard Churchill's voice break as he said, 'Advance Britannia' followed by 'God Save the King'.

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THE CRAYFISHER ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION RENEWAL

At last we can print the magazine again. The subscriptions are due in August and details of how to pay are below. Please don't forget to send in your slip whichever way you pay.

Subscription year runs from September 2020 until August 2021.

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