

APRIL/MAY 2011

# THE SPIRE



Easter ● Christian Aid Week ● Religion and the media

# The Spire

St James's Church  
Registered Charity No 1129286

This Spire is produced nine times a year on behalf of the PCC of St James's Church.

We make no charge for this magazine but we hope that you will contribute towards the production costs, enabling us to expand our important outreach across the parish.

If you are a regular reader please consider making an annual donation. Cheques should be made payable to 'The PCC of St James' and sent to Spire Appeal c/o the Parish Office.

Thank you.

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St James's Church is proud to be a Fairtrade church. We use only Fairtrade communion wine, and Fairtrade tea and coffee after services. We also promote Fairtrade

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When you have finished with this magazine please recycle it.

# Welcome

## April/May 2011



As Easter is so late, we shall be celebrating Mothering Sunday when this edition is published and Easter will still be three weeks away. The poor weather has meant that Spring has seemed a long time coming. The snowdrops in the churchyard were the first signs that Spring was on the way!

This edition includes our annual appeal letter. As I reported last month our printer is now able to give us full colour for all our issues. This has made an enormous difference to the magazine and we have received a lot of positive feedback. We are very grateful to the PCC, who have agreed to fund the production of **The Spire** for another three years. This is quite a commitment for the church during difficult economic times so we are always very grateful for contributions towards this cost.

Details of all the Holy Week and Easter Services are on Page 7 and you will receive a warm welcome at any of the services.

A happy Easter to all our readers.

Best wishes

*Janet*

Janet Nunn, Editor

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➔ **AMENDMENTS** to the Editor, please.

## OUR CLERGY



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Revd Peter Vannozzi

Peter was born in Hanwell in 1962, but owes his surname to his Italian great-grandfather who came from

Florence to the UK in the late 19th century.

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### BAPTISM AND WEDDING ENQUIRIES

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## SERVICES FOR APRIL / MAY

### Sundays

8am Holy Communion  
9.30am Parish Communion

### 3 April — 4th Sunday of Lent

#### Mothering Sunday

Holy Communion at 0800 and 1100:

1 Samuel 16.1-13; Ephesians 5.8-14; John 9

All-age Worship and Parade at 0930

### 10 April — 5th Sunday of Lent

Ezekiel 37.1-14; Romans 8.6-11; John 11.1-45

### 17 April — Palm Sunday

Isaiah 50.4-9a; Philippians 2.5-11;

Matthew 27.11-54

### 24 April — Easter Day

Acts 10.34-43; Colossians 3.1-4; John 20.1-18

### 1 May — 2nd Sunday of Easter

Acts 2.14a, 22-32; 1 Peter 1.3-9; John 20.19-end

### 8 May — 3rd Sunday of Easter

Acts 2.14a, 36-41; 1 Peter 1.17-23;

Luke 24.13-35

### 15 May — 4th Sunday of Easter

Acts 2.42-end; 1 Peter 2.19-end; John 10.1-10

### 22 May — 5th Sunday of Easter

Acts 7.55-end; 1 Peter 2.2-10; John 14.1-14

### 29 May — 6th Sunday of Easter

Acts 17.22-32; 1 Peter 3.13-end; John 14.15-21

### Mondays-Fridays

(but not Tuesdays)

9.15am Morning Prayer

### Tuesdays

9.30am Holy Communion

### 1st Wednesday in month

6 April (not 4 May)

7am Holy Communion

### 1st Thursday in month

7 April / 5 May

2pm Holy Communion

### HOLY WEEK

For full details of all Lent and

Easter services and events at

St. James's Church please turn

to Page Seven.



# The Leader Column

THE SPIRE IS AVAILABLE ONLINE EVERY MONTH, AND THERE IS AN EXTENSIVE ARCHIVE

## Easter teaches us the power of change for the better



**Easter triumph, Easter joy, sin alone can this destroy; from sin's power do thou set free souls new-born, O Lord, in thee.**

So goes the fourth verse of an Easter hymn *At the Lamb's high feast we sing*, which will be sung at St. James's on Easter Day.

The words are a nineteenth century translation of a Latin original. The key word here is *new-born*. Easter worship uses the language of newness with great frequency.

Scripture passages reflect a belief that something new had happened at the resurrection of Jesus. Texts of prayers demonstrate a conviction that something has changed. For example, these words are part of the *Preface*, the first section of the Eucharistic Prayer, prayed at every celebration of Holy Communion:

*...by the mystery of his passion Jesus Christ, your risen Son, has conquered the powers of death and hell and restored in men and women the image of your glory. He has placed them once more in paradise and opened to them the gate of life eternal.*

Hymns, too, as above, play their part, and each year a new Easter Candle is prepared and lit as part of Easter worship. It then burns at services throughout the Easter season as a symbol of the risen Christ. New candle, new life.

In practice, though, what does this talk of 'new life' actually mean? It would seem that little ever changed. At the time of writing, there is upheaval in different countries in the Middle East. Protestors want something different from the lives that they currently lead.

Protests for political freedom combine with complaints about the price of food. Politics and economics, never separate, are clearly linked in the hearts and minds of demonstrators. Just as the hopeful shoots of something better begin to emerge, then an old-style dictator rattles his



Peter Vannozzi

sabre, brandishes his arms, and the brief hopes of a people may wither. Religious talk of 'change' at the Easter festival may seem to be all very well, but to have no content in the 'real world.' It certainly cannot compete with the power of money and the force of the bullet. Yet before a pessimistic attitude sets in, it's worth considering something astonishing about human beings: our seemingly endless capacity for renewal.

Now this capacity could be no more than the adaptability of the human species to changing conditions. Or it might reflect the battle to survive of every living creature on the planet. 'Renewal' may be no more than a reflection of the simple processes of life and death, around us all the time. Hope may be vain emotion; yearning for more a folly.

Why protest for freedom? The next tyrant is on the way - if they are stronger than the protesters, they will dominate.

Why work with families who may struggle to bring up their children? The next dysfunctional family is being formed now.

Why try and take care with how I am with people? I'll only blow my top and say the wrong thing again tomorrow.

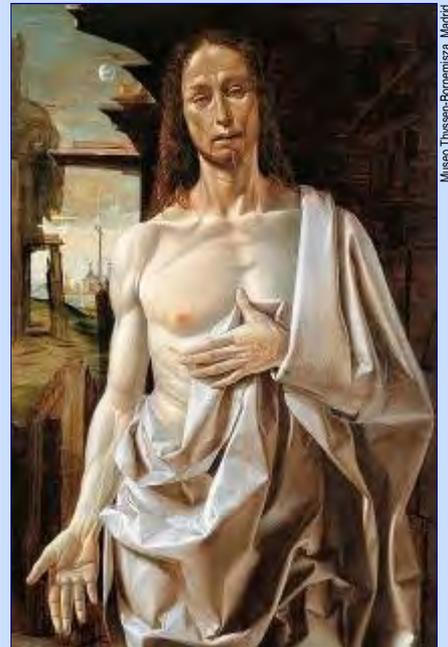
At different levels of the way we human beings function, whether corporately or individually, it's the same old thing — yesterday, today, for ever. Or is it?

Easter tells the story of Jesus who died, but who was raised to a new life. The pattern of Jesus is one that Christians believe can be replicated in human lives. Renewal does not have to be reduced to a material process. Hope does not have to be a foolish delusion. No society has to be oppressive.

No country has to be simply as it is now. The life, death and resurrection of Jesus demonstrate the power of change for the better — renewal that opens up new possibilities, and not only for this life.

**A very happy Easter to you all. This is a celebration of hope, of renewal, of new life, of change. Easter looks towards a better future — a real future.**

## IN THOUGHT AND PRAYER



Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza, Madrid

I came across this picture by chance as I was looking for artistic depictions of the risen Christ. Most show a triumphant Jesus, rising or standing in the tomb. Often he carries a flag of victory in his hand. Frequently Jesus has a golden halo around his head — a sign of holiness. There often is a use of bright light indicating the glory of the resurrection. People may be falling to the ground at the sight: in awe, wonder and fear.

This painting, *The Risen Christ*, by the Italian artist Bartolomeo Suardi, best known as **Bramantino** (c.1456 – c.1530), has none of the usual artistic devices used in depicting the risen Christ, other than the wounds in his hands, feet and side.

Dated to 1490, Bramantino shows us a risen Christ who is distinctly other-worldly. He looks rather strange. Jesus's skin is very pale though the face has more colour. He has the five wounds in his body. The raised veins and attention to detail of the body show that this is a real body. Yet Jesus's eyes are sad and stare beyond the viewer of the painting. The risen Jesus depicted here is elsewhere - he has moved on into a new kind of life. He almost looks detached — ready to move on into another world. I find this painting disturbing — yet very realistic and authentic to the experience that the Gospels describe.

People failed to recognise Jesus initially — especially Mary Magdalen. At Easter it is worth pondering where we might fail to recognise Jesus, because his form is not what we expect. It might be that the qualities we may associate with Jesus — love, compassion, forgiveness, etc. — are displayed through unexpected people and untypical actions.

Take a moment to ponder the painting and to consider your reactions to it. You may then like to use this prayer:

**Risen Christ,**  
for whom no door is locked, no entrance barred:  
open the doors of our hearts,  
that we may seek the good of others  
and walk the joyful road of sacrifice and peace,  
to the praise of God the Father.

## Are you willing to stand for election?

**IN COMMON** with all parishes in the Church of England, St. James's must hold a Meeting of Parisoners for the **Election of Churchwardens** and **Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM)** each year, by 30 April. The APCM has various responsibilities, including receiving a report from the Parochial Church Council (PCC) on its financial activities for the previous calendar year; receiving reports from church committees and other groups and organisations based in, or associated with, the church; electing members of the Parochial Church Council and, this year, members of the Deanery Synod. In addition to the election of two churchwardens, we also have to elect four people to serve on the Parochial Church Council for three years, two people for one year, and four people to serve on the Deanery Synod. (They are also automatically PCC members.) The electorate are those on St. James's Electoral Roll, the nearest we get to a membership list in the Church of England. Please listen out for notices about how to stand for election and do look out for reports that will be displayed in church. **The APCM will follow the Parish Communion on Sunday 10 April.**

■ On 23 February, the **Rev. Debbie Oades** began her new ministry in the Parish of Maybush with St. Jude, Southampton. The Bishop of Southampton, the Rt. Rev. Jonathan Frost, pictured, presided and preached at a service of Licensing in St. Peter's Church, Maybush. About 25 people from St. James's were present to show their support for Debbie, and to pray with her and the people of the churches in the parish.



Debbie will be working with the vicar and the members of the congregations to build up the Church in the parish and to connect with and serve the local community. The bishop spoke of the many challenges facing the Church in Maybush with St. Jude, not least in changing times with less public money available to support some of the neediest in society. Our thoughts and prayers remain with Debbie for her new work.



**Black cotton rich socks** Cotton was featured during Fairtrade Fortnight in March, when we had colourful cotton bunting in church, decorated by young people in the Guides and The Ark. Please look for Fairtrade cotton when shopping or buy these socks from our stall – two pairs for £9.



## King James Bible is 400

**THE KING** James Bible was first published 400 years ago. No other book has influenced the English language as much. It was commissioned by King James I and drew heavily on the work of William Tyndale, one of the first to translate the Bible into English. St James's will mark the milestone on **12 June**, the Feast of Pentecost. There will be a Choral Evensong that day at 6pm in addition to our normal Sunday services. At all three the readings will be taken from the King James Bible, and the Book of Common Prayer will be used.

## Could you give more?

**MANY PARISHIONERS** give regularly to St James's by some form of planned giving, either weekly envelopes or standing order.

We are extremely grateful to all these people. However, it is wise to review, on a regular basis, how much we give to the church.

During May and June people will be encouraged to consider their discipleship in relation to giving. We hope that even in this time of financial uncertainty people will remember all the benefits we have in belonging to this wonderful community of St James's.

## REGISTERS FOR FEBRUARY



### Baptisms

**19** Stella Anne Stayt-Rickard, Hampton Hill

**20** Lily Hattie Hartland-Ord, Hampton



### Funerals

**8** Frank Arthur Hewer, Hampton Wick, 89

**16** Amy Josephine Palfrey, Sunbury on Thames, 80

# The coffee bean and the farmer with a dream



Watch this space: Eladio stands where he hopes to build a school.



For the people of Jinotega, Nicaragua, coffee isn't just a caffeine kick – it is a means of transforming the lives of entire communities. By getting involved in **Christian Aid Week**, you can help to make this transformation possible for other, less fortunate villages.

**F**ive years ago, Eladio Simeón Pineda's community was a group of very poor farm labourers. Then Christian Aid partner Soppexcca offered them credit to establish themselves as coffee farmers and supported them to work together as a cooperative. Eladio and the other members of the La Paz del Tuma co-operative now hope that together they will transform their own community.

Even though the coffee farmers of La Paz del Tuma have only been working with Soppexcca for a short time, their lives are already changing for the better. The credit that Soppexcca gave to Eladio and the other farmers has been vital in getting them started. The co-operative has a community fund that will be used to achieve the dreams that Eladio and his friends once thought were out of their reach.

'I hope one day we will have a school on this land, clean water and latrines,' says Eladio. Eladio knows that transformation is possible. He is driven by the example of a nearby community, where Gustavo



Audilio Acuña is one of the 650 small Nicaraguan coffee farmers supported by Soppexcca. The organisation works with 18 cooperatives in the Jinotega region, helping to transform their lives.

Adolfo Talavera and the members of the Los Alpes cooperative have been supported by Soppexcca for 12 years. In that time, they have successfully worked to establish a school and a health centre for their community.

The hopes of the people of La Paz del Tuma are hopes held for the whole community. Eladio works every day towards his dream of a purpose-built school, clean water and latrines for all the farming families of La Paz del Tuma.

Soppexcca's support for coffee cooperatives like

La Paz del Tuma and Los Alpes allows communities to see a bigger picture, full of possibilities for the future.

Soppexcca is an organisation with a vision. It is passionately committed to helping poor Nicaraguan coffee farmers to beat poverty. Ten years ago, when Soppexcca was established, this seemed impossible, but now Soppexcca is a thriving collective of small cooperatives which helps farmers produce good-quality coffee, market it and put funds back into their own communities. It works with communities to understand their needs and empowers them to make their own visions a reality.

Gustavo Adolfo Talavera, an illiterate coffee farmer, had few prospects until Soppexcca gave him a loan, allowing him to expand his farm and build a small and environmentally sound processing plant.

#### BEANS MEAN HOPE...

- £14 could buy enough coffee seeds to plant a 0.7 hectare plot of coffee and start one farmer on the path out of poverty.
- £2,170 could pay for a processing plant, allowing farmers to process the coffee they have grown and then sell it for a better price.

He had a dream of his children being able to read and write, and be educated. His dream became a reality when Soppexcca helped members of the community get enough resources together, and a group of parents built a school themselves. Ten years ago, education would have seemed an impossible dream for Gustavo, but Soppexcca is enabling his community to dream dreams – and then to do what seems to be impossible.

The Christian life sets us within a story that speaks of transformation where it seems to be impossible; where life is brought to the world. And the gospel stories are clear that life is about more than just survival. The life that Jesus speaks of is abundant life, rich with possibility and hope and promise. For people in Gustavo's community, it is about education and prospects.

Cooperative living is about this abundant life. It is about seeing something achievable beyond oneself and working together to make life better for everyone. Fátima Ismael, Soppexcca's director, says: 'We're not just about bread for today, but also for tomorrow. But we don't just want bread, we want bread and honey and milk.' People like Fátima and Gustavo are seeing the bigger picture – going beyond what seems initially achievable and working together to make it a reality.

Damaris lives with her husband and three children in a one-room shack made of tin and rotting



A brighter future: Young people are benefiting from Soppexcca's agricultural training programme.

wood. Despite the difficulty of their living conditions, Damaris feels that she is very lucky to work for Soppexcca. 'I was in a really bad position – I didn't even have enough money to buy food. Soppexcca started here two years ago and we have not suffered since that moment.'

The good news is that we can be a part of this bigger picture too. When we give our time, money and energy this **Christian Aid Week**, we are looking beyond ourselves and enabling others to do what seems impossible. This bigger picture is the world as it could look if we allowed the kingdom of God to be a reality, if we really believed in abundant life for all.

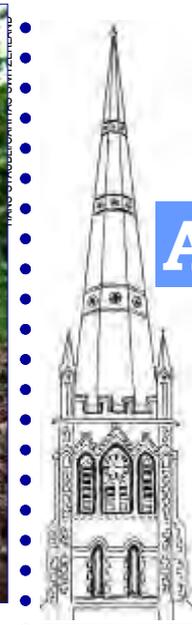
It is the world that Jesus showed us in his life and ministry: a world where we stop living for ourselves and start living for others, a world where we don't put limits on love and justice, a world where the concept of our neighbour is startlingly redefined.

It is a bigger world and it is an unsettling world, but it is a world that allows for transformation in ways that we may never have imagined, to dream dreams and to do what people tell us is impossible. Of course it's about transformation for people like Gustavo. But it is also a world that offers huge transformation to ourselves and to our churches, as we place ourselves in the frame of a bigger picture where the power of love has no limits.

Christian Aid Week is a time to celebrate transformation, and an opportunity to put ourselves in the frame of God's kingdom. Join us, and we'll give you the resources to make the impossible happen. Please give generously when your Christian Aid Week collector comes calling.



At Soppexcca's processing plant, the coffee beans are selected by women



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# Around the Spire

NEWS FROM HAMPTON HILL AND BEYOND

## Treasured memories of Connie Brunt

As St James's Church prepares to remember **Connie Brunt**, the wife of former incumbent the Revd **Rupert Brunt**, we have asked **Connie's** daughter, **Rosalind**, to write about her memories.



On 2 May 1944, Constance Helena Middlemiss married Rupert Hoyle Brunt in St. James's Church. She was a science teacher at Lady Eleanor Holles School and he was priest-in-charge at Mansfield. Neither ever imagined that they would be back there again, seven years later.

After the war, Rupert became vicar of a working-class parish in Nottingham. He had met Con when they were both students at King's College, London, and had been very clear when he married Con that he was not expecting her to become 'a vicar's wife'. Indeed, he encouraged her to take up an offer to do a PhD in evolutionary biology. However, Con wanted a large family and gave birth to three children within five years of their marriage. Rupert became vicar of St. James's in 1951 and a fourth child, Francis (after his saint's day) James (after the new parish) was born in 1953.

Con was one of the main motivators in establishing what would probably now be called a drop-in centre for people going through emotional difficulties. The parish clearly had a strong sense of Rupert and Con as a partnership and when they left the parish in 1980 a lot was said about their 'joint ministry'. Both were early advocates of equality for women in the church and the 'priesthood of the laity'.

When I used to return to the vicarage as an adult, it would take a very long time to walk round Hampton Hill with my mother as so many people would tell her about a particular project or trouble. Con was an empathetic and non-judgmental listener. We children also knew her as a deadpan wit, a dramatic, inventive and accomplished woman. Con held passionate convictions. She was a Christian pacifist, involved in the dialogue between science and religion and her faith was feisty, questioning and ecumenical.

Like Rupert, she was an enthusiast for life and even in her old age, when her memory was poor, loved to hear about her time in Hampton Hill. 'Did I really?' she would say. 'How extraordinary!'

**Helen Taylor, who with husband Alan knew Connie well, adds:** By the time we knew Connie, her children were already teenagers and she was working as a teacher. When the children were smaller, Connie and a few other mothers started the nursery school in the old church hall (now the Greenwood Centre), to which many children, including our own, went. She was also involved in the Sunday School, the Mother's Union and Young Wives.

Connie was a keen gardener in the vicarage garden, where she also kept chickens. St. James's Day was always a big event and Connie would be in the midst of all the activity. She was a great support to Rupert's ministry, although not without her own opinions, and much loved by the congregation.

■ The memorial service for Connie will take place at St James's Church on **Monday 23 May at 2.30pm**. All are welcome.



Go **online** for even more

Join our Sunday School and explore the world!

# Young Spire

## The school that Gustavo built



### One village is lucky, another has this shed for lessons



What is your school like? It almost certainly has a roof, desks and chairs, lighting, heating, books, computers, and maybe a playground. What else would you expect to make it a comfortable and safe place where you can enjoy learning? You could probably come up with a list of other essentials.

Now imagine you lived in Nicaragua, the second poorest country in Latin America. The school in La Paz del Tuma, pictured above, has cold, dusty classrooms. There are no lights or heating and very few books. Their teacher Ivette doesn't just look after one class, but has to race between classes, teaching two at the same time. She said: 'Some children receive their lessons outside. The teachers

don't have blackboards or chairs. We have no toilets, so children have to ask in the nearby houses.'

The children all lend a hand when it comes to cleaning after school. And to top it all, the school building was once used for storing dangerous chemicals. Meriling, pictured below, left, has to sit on the dirty ground for her lessons. Her father, Eladio, is a coffee farmer, whose dream is for his community to have a proper school.

That's just what Gustavo, another coffee farmer, built in Los Alpes, Jinotega with the help of Christian Aid. 'I did not have the chance to go to school,' he explained. 'I tell my children to study and do what I couldn't.' The school is well-

equipped, has 110 pupils and three teachers.

All of this was made possible by coffee beans. Nicaragua has perfect conditions for growing coffee, but many of the people in Los Cerrones didn't have the money for seed and equipment. With Christian Aid's help they formed a co-operative. The coffee they produce is Fairtrade too, further boosting income.

Young Darwin, pictured below, right, attends a school that has all the essentials: proper toilets, clean water, a teacher for each class, indoor classrooms, blackboards and exercise books. It gives him a much better chance of climbing out of poverty.

By supporting Christian Aid, Meriling could have these things too. It is not much to ask, is it?



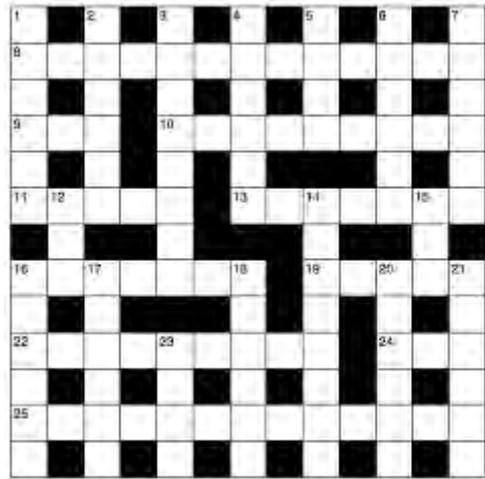
From this...



...to this

# T H E P U Z Z L E R

## Crossword



### Across

- 8 'He poured out his life unto death, and was numbered with the —' (Isaiah 53:12) (13)
- 9 'When they had sung a hymn, they went — to the Mount of Olives (Matthew 26:30) (3)
- 10 Comes between Galatians and Philipians (9)
- 11 'Your heart will — and swell with joy' (Isaiah 60:5) (5)
- 13 Muslim holy month (7)
- 16 Ten ears (anagram) (7)
- 19 Under (poetic abbreviation) (5)
- 22 How Abram described himself to God when he complained that his inheritance would go to a servant (Genesis 15:2) (9)
- 24 'Go to the —, you sluggard' (Proverbs 6:6) (3)
- 25 Debar from receiving Communion (13)

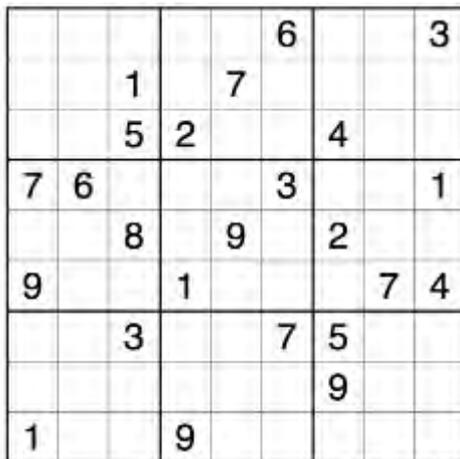
### Down

- 1 My — for His Highest (Oswald Chambers' best-known book) (6)
- 2 Festival of the resurrection (6)
- 3 'His sons will prepare for war and — a great army' (Daniel 11:10) (8)

- 4 'Let not the — string his bow' (Jeremiah 51:3) (6)
- 5 Name of the River Thames in Oxford (4)
- 6 'From then on Judas watched for an opportunity — — him over' (Matthew 26:16) (2,4)
- 7 'But Christ is faithful — — over God's house' (Hebrews 3:6) (2,1,3)
- 12 Long-handled implement used to till the soil (Isaiah 7:25) (3)
- 14 Order to which monks and nuns devote themselves (8)
- 15 Appropriate (Proverbs 15:23) (3)
- 16 I, uncle (anagram.) (6)
- 17 'They gave him — — of broiled fish' (Luke 24:42) (1,5)
- 18 'Weren't there three men that we — — and threw into the fire?' (Daniel 3:24) (4,2)
- 20 Mountain where Noah's ark came to rest (Genesis 8:4) (6)
- 21 'Don't you know that friendship with the world is — towards God?' (James 4:4) (6)
- 23 Prominent architectural feature of large cathedrals such as St Paul's (4)

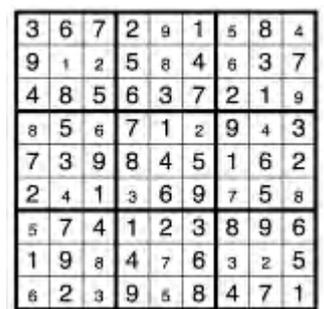
Crossword reproduced courtesy of BRF and John Capon, originally published in *Three Down, Nine Across*, by John Capon (£6.99)

## Sudoku



Complete the grid so that every row, column, and each 3 x 3 box contains every digit from 1 to 9 once.

## Solutions to March puzzles





# What's On



## RELIGION and POLITICS

It was Margaret Thatcher, when leader of the opposition in the 1970s, who wrote about religion and politics: 'The challenge for politics is keeping in balance the two great Christian ideals, the uniqueness of the individual for whom Christ died and the interdependence of the Body of Christ, we are better together.' Add to this a dash of the Holy Spirit — or a bottle of it, according to your taste — and you have a description not only of the beliefs and experience of Christians, but also the basis of our public commitment to the 'just society'.

The word that Jews use when greeting each other and saying goodbye is *Shalom*. It is the word so often used by Jesus when speaking to his friends. *Shalom* means peace, which includes righteousness, justice and mercy, and the 'just society' rather than the 'big society' is surely what we should all be working for together.

## HOLY WEEK and JEWS

Prime Minister Harold Wilson said: 'A week in politics is a long time' and it is the same with Holy Week: as one headline put it: *Seven days which changed the world*.

From the cheering crowds on Palm Sunday to the jeering crowds on Good Friday in such a short time. At the heart of the description of these events in the Gospels is a painful truth for Christians. Matthew's Gospel, leading up to the crucifixion of Christ, describes the crowd as saying: 'Let the responsibility for his death fall on us and our children'.

These words have been used through the centuries to persecute Jews for helping to crucify Christ. Hitler even used words written by Martin Luther to persecute Jews, and close synagogues and schools.

So much has changed in our relationship with Jews, but so much needed to change. Not only in the Gospel accounts, but for centuries Christian writers and speakers have fuelled anti-Semitism. Even today, when Jews meet for worship in their synagogues, there will be members patrolling the perimeters of their property as a protection.

We Christians still have much to answer for, and also much to learn from our Jewish friends and their Hebrew scriptures (what we call the Old Testament).

## CIVIL PARTNERSHIPS

I have long been saddened by how our Church of England has responded to the 'Gay issue' and more recently to their response to Civil Partnerships. People have different views and that I respect, but we have not given 'the dignity of difference', to use the Chief Rabbi's phrase in another context, to people who may have a different sexual orientation from ourselves.

I have always believed that our sexual orientation is largely determined at our birth, i.e. that's the way God made us. What matters is with what integrity and faithfulness we express our sexuality. I have had outstanding priest colleagues, both gay and lesbian, and I know that without them our church would have been immeasurably poorer.

As one diocesan bishop put it: 'Without them we would not have been the Church of England in our inner cities, and many of them working in parishes where I would not last a fortnight.'

## Lent at St James's

### Sunday Sermons

These will explore the relationship between faith and work, and seek a Christian understanding of daily work

### April 3 - Work and the Home

**April 10 God at Work?** Jesus and Occupational Hazards

*Julian Reindorp*

**April 17 The Work of the Cross** *Peter Vannozi*

### Lent Course

Jesus didn't write a will. He left no written instructions. He didn't seem to have a plan. At the end, as he hung dying on the cross, almost all of his followers had abandoned him. By most worldly estimates his ministry was a failure. Nevertheless, his message of reconciliation with God lived on. It is the central message of the Bible. With this good news his disciples changed the world. How did they do it? What else did Jesus leave behind — what is his *legacy of love*? This course addresses these questions.

Groups will meet for the final two sessions on **Mondays** at **2pm** in the Vicarage and at **8pm** at 32 Uxbridge Road:

**April 4 - A power** and **April 11 - A meal**

## Mothering Sunday

*Sunday 3 April, St James's Church and Hall, Hampton Hill*

There will be the usual 8am Holy Communion, and an All-age Worship at 9.30am, followed by Holy Communion at 11am. Between the 8am and 9.30am services, the Sunday School children will cook breakfast, so come early. They will also serve tea/coffee after the 9.30am service.

## Teddington Choral Society

*Saturday 9 April, 7.30pm, Schubert's Mass in G and Geoffrey Bowyer's A Pilgrim's Requiem, St James's Church, Hampton Hill*

The choir will be joined by a full orchestra and professional soloists Lucy Thomas (Soprano) and Martin Johnson (Bass-Baritone). Tenor: Anthony Dowson. Conductor: Geoffrey Bowyer. Orchestra Leader: Denise Todd. Organist: Patrick Martin.

Completed in 1999 and revised in 2005, the requiem features a highly personal selection of texts that have inspired Geoffrey over 55 years as a church organist.

As part of its 60th anniversary celebrations, the choir will be performing the requiem twice in 2011 for the benefit of two worthwhile causes: Prostate Research UK, which receives the takings from the sale of the score; and the Princess Alice Hospice, which will receive the proceeds from the second concert, in October (more details later).

So if you are a budding chorister *come and listen* and then *Come and Sing* this moving work with us as part of the worldwide *Voices for Hospices* event on 8 October.

Tickets £11 (£9 concessions) on door, or by telephoning 020 8977 5986.

## Holy Week and Easter at St James's

*Palm Sunday, April 17:*

**8am** Holy Communion;  
**9.30am** Procession of Palms and Parish Communion;  
**8pm** Compline (Night prayer).

*Monday in Holy Week, April 18: 8pm* Holy Communion

*Tuesday in Holy Week, April 19:*

**9.30am** Holy Communion; **8pm** Way of the Cross

*Wednesday in Holy Week, April 20:*

**7am** Holy Communion; **8pm** Compline

*Maundy Thursday, April 21: 8pm* Liturgy of the Lord's Supper, followed by Watch of Prayer for an hour

*Good Friday, April 22: 10.30am* All-age Worship, followed by hot cross buns; **2pm** Liturgy of Good Friday

*Holy Saturday, April 23: 8pm* Easter Liturgy

*Easter Day, April 24: 8am* Holy Communion;

**9.30am** Parish Communion; **11.30am** Holy Baptism



## St James's APCM AND Parish Lunch NEW

*Sunday 10 April, 11am, St James's Church Hall*

The Annual Parochial Church Meeting is your chance to hear about the past year and examine the accounts. Join us afterwards, from 12.30pm, for **lunch in aid of Christian Aid Week**. Adults £7.50, under 10s £3.50, to include a glass of wine or a soft drink. To join us please add your names to the list on the events board in the south aisle or call Liz Wilmot on 020 8977 9434.

## Visitors' and Visitees' Tea Party

*Tuesday 12 April, 3.00 pm in St James's Church Hall*

The tea party is for the older members of the congregation and those visited by our Pastoral Care Team, who would love to see members of the congregation who can spare the time to come and chat. Everyone is guaranteed a cup of tea and a bun! Some of our visitees are unable to get out much and love to meet people they now rarely see. For more information contact **Liz Butler 020 8977 4227**

## St James's Theatre Group

*Tuesday 22 April, 7.45pm, Corrie, Richmond Theatre, The Green TW9 1QJ*

World premiere of this new comedy play stars **Ken Morley!** Tickets are £17 (a discount on £29.50 full price) There are also discounted tickets for:

Friday 6 May, **To kill a Mockingbird** £16 (£28.50);

Tuesday 14 June, **Yes, Prime Minister**, £16 (£24.50).

To join us please add your name to the lists on the church notice board or telephone Ria Beaumont 020 8943 4336. Transport can be arranged.



'The Sunday School have made a start by jet-washing the west window...'

## Our choir at Charterhouse

**ST JAMES'S** choir will be singing Choral Evensong at Charterhouse on **Saturday 21 May** at 5.30pm.



Charterhouse, founded in 1611, is one of the great historic schools of England and among the most beautiful. If you haven't been, it is an opportunity not to be missed. Memorial Chapel was designed by Sir Giles Gilbert Scott and consecrated in 1927. All are welcome.

■ Charterhouse, Godalming, Surrey GU7 2DX



# Your Voice

Nick Bagge asks whether religion deserves a bad press

## Keeping faith with the media



**P**aedophile priests and cover-ups; Muslim terrorists; women bishops (not to mention gay women bishops); a bishop's opinion about the forthcoming royal marriage — hardly a week goes by without another bad news story about religion. But are Christians here in the UK really being persecuted, and is society ignoring the behaviour of some Muslims for fear of turning peaceful citizens into tomorrow's suicide bombers?

I have spent 20 years reporting for newspapers, television and radio and over the years there have been many changes to the coverage of religion, just as there have been to coverage of the government or the Royal family. Journalists no longer accept that there are 'no-go' areas and are much less reverential. From Prime Minister to Prince, film star to Pope, national figures are being held to account and challenged to explain more and 'spin' less.

Last year the General Synod expressed 'deep concern' about the reduction of religious programming on BBC television and radio. It said that religious programming must remain a 'cornerstone' of the provision that the BBC made to help people understand themselves, but is it that simple? Many years ago I remember reading a story about an Anglican bishop visiting New York. On arrival, a reporter asked him if while there he planned to visit any night clubs. He jokingly replied: 'Are there any night clubs in New York?' Next morning he was somewhat surprised to see that he had made the front page. The headline read: *Bishop's first question: are there any night clubs in New York?* The headline was not untrue, but like so many news stories it had failed to communicate the truth.

For most journalists a 'good' news story is one that gets a strong reaction from the public. Religion is often 'good news' (for which read, weak) unless the media can find a catalyst for confrontation. Much as the Archbishop of Canterbury would like to see the Church portrayed as harmonious, reconciliatory, and profoundly ethical, it isn't hard for the media to pick up on any disharmony, disunity and scandal. The newspaper editors would point out that this is exactly what their readers want to hear about. So religious leaders often feel misrepresented in the media and journalists feel that the leaders do not fully appreciate how the media operate. They are not there to provide free publicity. Reporters want to investigate, uncover and analyse — even if the resulting story causes embarrassment. While the Church values equality in the sight of God, reconciliation and forgiveness, and peace and harmony, those are rarely newsworthy. Journalists want strong personalities, conflicts and out-of-the-ordinary events. With newspaper revenues dwindling as fewer

people buy their copy, those values are unlikely to change.

While churches preach the mystery of faith, journalists want proof. Churches offer an unchanging message, but newspapers look for turmoil — which explains why the Church of England has been in one for generations! The problem is that eternal salvation and spiritual blessings are not sufficiently concrete to make good copy. So journalists ignore the spiritual side of the church. The reporting of Roman Catholic doctrinal pronouncements is very selective — which is why to many people the Pope is chiefly interested in just three things: sex, politics and power.

All this might give the impression that journalists are always in the wrong. That is not true. It took widespread reporting of hundreds of cases of sexual abuse by Roman Catholic priests around the world to prompt record pay-outs and an apology by Pope Benedict XVI to victims in Ireland.

Part of the problem is that few journalists are regular churchgoers. So while religion is increasingly newsworthy, few reporters fully understand it. There have been many recent examples, including mistaking Sikhs for Muslims and confusing Jews with Arabs.

When under pressure reporters needing a quote will pick someone who won't disappoint — even if that person is not representative of their religion. So, how can churches deal with seemingly hostile media? By being 'on message' to use a New Labour term. Media inquiries concerning major stories should be handled centrally so that interview requests are all directed to the same spokesperson. Churches need to reclaim their news and expose or make misinformed and sloppy journalism less common.

**C**hurches cannot, however, rely primarily on secular journalism to communicate to their members. Churches have a responsibility to communicate not only with their own members but with the general public. Greater efforts must be made from both sides to bridge the barriers between churches and the media. Whilst there have been improvements, the Church could do a much better job promoting its views on issues such as divorce, homosexuality, abortion and women bishops — as well as the less contentious ones. It also needs to be realistic. The Church cannot hope for total success. Christ was the perfect communicator, he preached the Gospel without fear or compromise, yet met with misunderstanding and hostility. He told his disciples to expect a similar reception: 'If they persecuted me, they will persecute you.' (John 15:20).

If history teaches us anything, it is that religions have to play the long game. Bad news stories will fade, but the *Light of Truth* never does.



The story behind the hymn

### Thine Be The Glory



Thine be the glory, risen, conquering Son;  
endless is the victory, thou o'er death hast won;  
angels in bright raiment rolled the stone away,  
kept the folded grave clothes where thy body lay.

Refrain:

*Thine be the glory, risen conquering Son,  
Endless is the vict'ry, thou o'er death hast won.*

Lo! Jesus meets us, risen from the tomb;  
Lovingly he greets us, scatters fear and gloom;  
let the Church with gladness, hymns of triumph sing;  
for her Lord now liveth, death hath lost its sting. *Refrain*

No more we doubt thee, glorious Prince of life;  
life is naught without thee; aid us in our strife;  
make us more than conquerors, through thy  
deathless love:  
bring us safe through Jordan to  
thy home above. *Refrain*

This hymn will crown the Easter Day Parish Communion at St. James's as the final hymn at the service. The words were written in French by the Swiss writer **Edmond Budry** (1854–1932), a writer of hymns of his own, and a translator of the works of others.

It is set to the tune of the chorus *See, the Conqu'ring hero comes* from the Handel oratorio *Judas Maccabaeus*. It was translated into English in 1925 by Richard Hoyle. Hoyle was a Baptist minister, working in both the UK and USA, ending his ministry at the Baptist Church in Kingston-upon-Thames.

*Thine be the glory* is a hymn found in Christian hymn books across the denominational divide. It expresses various feelings in response to the resurrection of Jesus, common to all Christians.

First of all, triumph. The tune complements the words, and it gives a strong

sense of a march of victory. Christians see the resurrection of Jesus as indeed a triumph over all that could be thrown at Jesus, even death.

Secondly, joy. The risen Jesus *scatters fear and gloom*. In response, the Church cannot but sing. Thirdly, hope. The hymn expresses a view that Jesus has opened for people the way to be with him for ever. Fourthly, faith. The hymn is a confession of faith for Easter Day, the principal celebration of the greatest Christian festival.

