



**St Mark's Parish Magazine**

**January 2024**



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### **Your Views & Contributions**

Next issue will be available from  
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All contributions to the editor by  
Friday 15 December 2023

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## LETTER FROM THE VICAR

Dear Friends,

Before Christmas I was reading a devotional book *Walking Backwards to Christmas* by the Most Revd Stephen Cottrell, the Archbishop of York. In the introduction, Archbishop Stephen mentioned that people often asked him how he had time to write books, and this is something that I have often wondered. How does he do it? Surely the work of an archbishop must be very pressured? Archbishop Stephen's answer surprised me. Rather than saying that he got up at 6.00 am, or exercised rigid self-discipline, or did the writing on his day off, he said just this: "The only sensible answer I can come up with is that we all find time for the things that really give us joy."



So, I wonder, do we truly find time for the things that give us joy? We can always experience joy when it surprises us – a beam of bright sunlight on a cloudy day or an unexpected visit from a friend – but I don't think we always intentionally go looking for it. Not only that, but what makes joy different from simple happiness?

There seems to be something deeper at work when we find joy. Joy is a spiritual thing. Joy is a prominent theme in the Bible, a response to God's providence, a gift we can ask God for, and one of the fruits of the Holy Spirit at work in us. It isn't rooted in material happiness which will inevitably fail us, but in Christ himself. When that is the case, we can still experience joy even in hard times. Joy is supposed to be one of the mainstays of our lives, not something we glimpse fleetingly. For Archbishop Stephen then, he must feel God to be at work in him when he is writing. That sense of doing something in partnership with God, in that particular moment.

Very few of us will be writers, but I believe that joy is all around us just waiting to be noticed, and that each one of us can experience it more intentionally. If we make no other resolution this year, perhaps we can be more attentive to where we find joy, and then make space for it. If joy is where God is, then it shouldn't be put to one side waiting for our leisure time, but we should allow it to permeate and weave through every day, until it becomes one of the foundations of our lives.

Every blessing and Happy New Year,



## Church News

### Wanted! New Editor

After 5 years editing the Parish Magazine, this is my last issue. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Harry Ingram and Ian Archer for their regular contributions as well as all the other people who have shared articles, recipes and book reviews over the years. I have really enjoyed producing the magazine and I really hope someone can take over, bring some new ideas and keep the magazine running. We are still looking for a volunteer, so if you are able to spare the time to take over the role of Editor or even would just like an idea of what is involved, please contact the Parish Office or myself.

**Helen Starmer**

### Donating to support the work of St Marks



#### PARISHGIVINGSCHEME

Regular donations are so important to our church to enable us to carry out our ministry and to run and maintain our buildings in the knowledge that the funds will be available when required. To make regular giving easier we are part of the Parish Giving Scheme (PGS) which is a national scheme supported by the Diocese.

The PGS is a Direct Debit service, which enables you to give on a monthly, quarterly, or annual basis. We receive 100% of your donation and Gift Aid is automatically claimed for us, which means reduced administration and less work for our Treasurer and Gift Aid Secretary and less queuing for you at the end of a service.

Setting up a regular donation is simple and will help us continue to support the community and offer the services we do today.

Join at: <https://www.parishgiving.org.uk/donors/find-your-parish/reigate-st-mark-reigate/>. If you would prefer to join by telephone or post then please contact Mel Crighton for details.

Thank you.



## **News from the Church of England**

### **Thank you but we should have done more – Bishop responds to COP 28**

A month ago, I wrote about my hopes for COP28. We needed a commitment to phase out fossil fuels, make significant progress with the Loss and Damage Fund, prioritise resilience building for climate vulnerable communities, and create a transition to green development pathways that is just and ambitious.

COP28 has seen some progress on these items. Like a cracked record, I say again: Thank you, but we should have done more.

\$700m has been pledged for the Loss and Damage Fund, with further funding pledges for adaptation and resilience building. Both are a start, but the amounts are not nearly enough to support even the existing schemes in the pipeline to support the poorest and least resilient communities in the world who have pumped the least carbon into the atmosphere.

While it is very significant that the words 'fossil fuels' have made it into the final agreement, it remains disappointing that the parties have failed to agree the most important pledge – the need to completely phase out fossil fuels. The Alliance for Small Island States said: "the process has failed us".

But when will the world wake up to the urgency?

The UK Government's clear position of a phase out of fossil fuels means it can have global moral leadership in this area. Without a phase out of fossil fuels there is no pathway to net zero carbon. Those on the frontline of the climate crisis cannot wait yet another year.

I am inspired by how Jesus spoke of finding the fullness of life, how he reached out to the poorest around him, and how he noticed the beauty of nature. The Church of England has a clear role in continuing to be a place of thanksgiving for our life in Jesus, hope for the poor, and prophetic action to care for our planet.

I urge us all, and particularly world leaders, to remember that the pledges made at COP28 do not have to be the upper limits of our climate action. We can and must reach further. That goal must be a fossil fuel phase out and a re-centring of our priorities towards the care of creation and the poorest people with whom we share this one, beautiful planet.

***The Rt Revd Graham Usher - Bishop of Norwich***



## COP 28

I must ask you to believe that I do not enjoy considering Climate Change (CC) but a few years ago now, magazine readers put CC at the top of their interest table so I respond to that by offering aspects sometimes not emphasised in the press. Optimism in responding to difficult problems is often akin to the alleged reaction by an ostrich to a threat by burying its head in the sand. If I don't look at it, it will go away. Sadly, not true. But it's a reasonable description of the behaviour of some influential members of COP who seem able to control the organisation. Nevertheless, I shall endeavour to arrive at some potentially optimistic developments.

**The Location and Scope of COP:** COP 28 was held at Dubai in the UAR from 30 November to 12 December though pre-meetings were held from 24 to 29 November. Eighty-five thousand people attended from countries, civil society, business, indigenous peoples and others, to share ideas and opinions. There was a vast number of disparate subjects covered, far too long to describe here but they seem to me to form a good basis of understanding for driving on the width of change needed, were it possible to get agreement on the critical issue of stopping the use of fossil fuels. Without a solution there, the rest is redundant.

Wider subjects covered at COP 28 included: driving towards Paris agreement targets, biodiversity, forests, ocean planning (they absorb much of CO<sub>2</sub>), energy transition, funding green transition, water, nuclear energy, fossil fuel subsidies, Loss and Damage Fund, tipping points and much else. I did not spot any reference to worldwide immigration which seems to me a pity, since they are linked subjects but I guess they did not wish to cloud the main issue.

The president of the COP was Sultan Al Jabber, head of the state oil company, who heads their negotiations of oil contracts. Early on he pronounced that "there is no science that suggests that a phasing out of fossil fuels is required to limit global warming to 1.5%." Is it normal for a theoretically neutral president of an international gathering to prejudge the result almost before scientists and others have had their say?

From the outset he also maintained that the outcome of the COP will be the achievement of 1.5% by the middle of the century (I believe it is 1.4% now). Has he had a Pauline-like conversion? Or is his reference to achieving the target of 1.5 degrees Celsius ambiguous, because achieving 1.5 itself is NOT a problem. Should a presidency announce the result of a meeting before the debate? Perhaps so in such monarchies. **Why that location and presidency was chosen is another good question. It is also relevant to the choice of the next location.**

## **COP 28 and its Antecedents.**

So, as I write (on 9 December), the plan by the organisers of COP 28 was pretty plain. The intended outcome appears to be to produce further targets, not to eradicate or reduce fossil fuels in a planned way, but to monitor targets against "emissions" whilst not upsetting the current levels of economic activity. If accepted, this is seemingly to provide a basis for "realistic" action. This might have been sensible twenty-eight years ago but the oil and gas lobby has consistently resisted any change to the status quo. Emission targets have been signed up to, but no plans made for their achievement. There is no penalty for failure nor control over progress. As the continuing growth in world emissions evidences, so far they have succeeded. Laurent Fabius, the French Prime Minister at the time of the Paris agreement, currently forecasts that by 2050 we shall hit not 1.5% but between 2.8 and 3% increase, with disastrous consequences. Massive change is necessary to avoid that. It's interesting that some with past experience but no current responsibility are most likely to come out with the truth.

There has, of course, been some progress towards green fuel. However, in countries such as China and other fossil fuel countries, so far such "green" changes seem to supplement rather than replace fossil fuels since the effects of the latter are still rising. This "too little too late" policy is just another extreme example of "green washing". It seems highly likely that, notwithstanding the achieved understanding by those attending of the dubiety of past members, the plan to defer action will succeed.

## **The Operation of COPs**

COPs are attended by the world's experts on climate with a strong presence from the UN. However, as with previous COPs, the fossil fuel producing countries have ensured a strong lobby by those determined to maintain the use of fossil fuels. This was strongly objected to, at COP 26 in Scotland. Many thought this pro-fossil influence should be excluded. No change has taken place. Currently it is reported that there are 2,500 fossil fuel lobbyists walking the corridors of COP 28. What do they do? Perhaps they mingle to collect information so as to divert decisions. Perhaps they also do business.

Furthermore, OPEC has told its members to: "proactively reject any text or formula that targets energy (fossil fuels) rather than emissions." Targets based on emissions have so far proved ineffective. It seems to me that this is because emissions are "impersonal". Increases cannot be blamed on specific causes. Blame is dispersed. So fossil fuel energy use can go on as before without any identified culprit. On the other hand, structured reduction of production with targets is visibly in the hands of producers, making it easy to see who is responsible for failures.

However, another letter to its members by OPEC has been leaked. It says, "Pressure against fossil fuels may reach tipping point with irreversible consequences at COP 28." They are evidently concerned. Good News?



Another quite different aspect has been aired, presumably by those supporting real action. This is that there will be very severe early impacts from climate change on the Arabian peninsular which will become uninhabitable. That will give rise to international friction (war?). It's a bad state of affairs when we must look to the worst effects of climate change to give rise to some effective action against what, in lip service terms at least, has been identified as the common enemy of mankind. I really cannot see this as good news. As I write (December) to meet our publishing deadline, we still await the formal result of these deliberations.

.....  
**The Conclusion 13 12 23:** The UN released its report on COP 28 on 13 December. The UN Climate Change Executive Secretary said; "Whilst we did not turn the page on the fossil fuel era in Dubai, this outcome is the beginning of the end." But he went on to say that an increase of five degrees would be the death sentence for our species." He also said that the course we are already on, to three degrees, would result in much suffering. This optimism is articulated by most of the press and some of those with knowledge of the present realities. However, some scientists and others, aware of the slow progress over twenty-seven years, and the need to act swiftly and decisively, are more pessimistic. They want action now. Not just words.

However, there are a number of recommendations in the right direction. The further targets by 2030 include: tripling the use of renewables and doubling energy efficiency improvements. Parties are encouraged to make ambitious economy-wide emission reduction targets (to what level?), phasing down of unabated coal power (just what does that mean?), phasing out subsidies with developed countries taking the lead. USD700 million have been committed to the "Loss and Damage Fund". (Previously USD one million was committed but little given). USD12.8 billion from 31 countries was pledged to the Green Climate Fund. And more.

The snag with all such agreements is that everything is voluntary and historically many have been ignored or not responded to. Those with specific interests are able to go on as before with no sanction. In summary, there is almost universal concern about the deteriorating climate, and lots of ideas what to do about it, but what is desperately needed is actions to follow words. Short term self-interest by individuals, organisations and countries is the formidable enemy.

What is clear, is that this is not a time to breathe a sigh of relief and wait for the promised action. This is not the time to leave it to scientists to produce further alternatives and solutions (though we should all hope for this to happen). Now is the time to exert pressure on those whose responsibility it is, such as governments, to lead the process of rapid change away from the use of fossil fuels. I invite my readers to write to me perhaps by Email (see the parish directory) saying, short or long, what you would suggest the individual or others might do, or what organisation you would support to exert such pressure – or even if you think nothing further should be done. If you will do that, I shall let you know what others think.

**Harry Ingram**



## Wellington

Our hour's flight from Auckland ended with rough winds as we landed in Wellington, the Southernmost Capital of the world. At the airport we met Greg and Shayne's lovely daughter Anna, with her baby daughter Madeleine, who had flown to Wellington to meet some friends that weekend. We then drove to the accommodation booked by Greg, a small modern house. I had my own ensuite room. We went out to a local fish and chip shop café. It was excellent but different from those at home.

The next day, 14 October, was the 3<sup>rd</sup> anniversary of Jenny's death. After breakfast, I enjoyed the Weetabix including Kiwi Fruit, and then was driven round Wellington in a hired car in the wind and rain. We visited the lovely Old St Paul's Cathedral which was so much in the style of our Reigate St Mark's and I had seen this with Jenny in 1996, it having been built in about 1850. It had survived several earthquakes. We lunched on crepes and chips, served by a charming English waitress in the Botanical Garden restaurant having viewed the hot house there. On to see a large wind turbine at the top of the hill shrouded in mist and then the government buildings that Shayne had worked in.

The next day, Sunday, after an early breakfast we watched the New Zealand /Ireland rugby match. There was still a high wind but we were taken to see sights, and then parked by a bay next to the landing ground for flights arriving and leaving Wellington. Indeed, the wind was so high that one plane from Fiji tried unsuccessfully to land and so made another circuit to try again, and again failed and so flew the passengers on to Auckland. Here they had to sit in the plane on the runway until ultimately, they could come on to Wellington. We in our parked car were moved slightly by the high winds.

I was then taken to the Wellington Museum and walked round the amazing exhibition of Gallipoli with figures in the Battle presented as statues about three times human size. New Zealanders and Australians lost so many in that battle, my music mistress of that time, her husband and all four of her sons were killed in that part of the 1st World War. I then had an unexpected surprise being driven to the new St Paul's Cathedral for the Sunday afternoon Evensong accompanied by Shayne. It is a beautiful huge modern cathedral and the music was so lovely to listen to.

After this, as if there hadn't already been such lovely surprises that day, I was driven on to meet Charlie, a former colleague of Shayne. Charlie and his friend, Debbie, provided us with a lovely dinner looking out over the nearby lake.

The next day, Monday, I drafted some prayers for my poor nephew, Phillip's Funeral, which would be some three days after my return to England. We watched on TV the South African rugby team beating France and then I was driven to Lowry Bay, Days Bay and Eastbourne to have lunch in a French café there. A new cycle path was being created as New Zealand is very keen on having as many such paths as possible. Eastbourne was where my grandmother was staying in a small hotel during the War.

I was then driven to my old school in Days Bay, Wellesley College, where I had been a boarder between the years 1940 and 1945. My friends had arranged a meeting with the current headmaster, Mike Bain who, came outside and welcomed me as I came out of the car. He guided me and my friends into his study in the front part of the building which looked the same as it had during the War. We discussed my memories and his plans for the future – his aims for his 300 day boys were for them to have "empathy and respect", "perseverance for personal best" and "risk taking in learning". The school song includes "The spirit that is free is the spirit that grows."

Mike Bain then kindly guided me all round the school, introducing me to all the teachers in each classroom. Most of the buildings were new but during the tour I went into the room that had been my dormitory during the War, and I could see where my bed used to be. As we finished the tour, he took me outside and said he had arranged for some 100 of his boys to perform a Haka in my honour. It was superbly done, calls and all, such a proud moment for me to remember always. I really thought it should have been for my dear friend, Ross, who had once been Head boy of the school but had died this year.

We continued our site-seeing including some houses formerly owned by Ross that now need to be sold.

Tuesday was my last day in Wellington. We left in high winds and rain for the ferry to cross the Cook Straits. Putting me in a wheelchair as needing assistance I was, with Greg and Shayne, the first to be taken on board and so had the best seats on the 5<sup>th</sup> deck of the ferry for Picton in the South Island, some 3 hours away. The sea was somewhat rough in the middle part of the journey when waves caused the sea water to splash onto the windows in front of us. Shayne had prepared sandwiches which we were able to enjoy.

*Ian has kindly shared his experience of his trip to New Zealand in four parts. Next month, we can read about his stay in Christchurch.*

**Ian Archer**

## CALENDAR FOR JANUARY 2024

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>Monday 1<sup>st</sup> January</b>    | <b>Naming of Jesus</b>  |
| Thursday 4 <sup>th</sup> January        | 12.45pm Holy Communion (Iona) in Church                             |
| <b>Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> January</b>  | <b>The Epiphany</b>   |
| <b>Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> January</b>    | <b>Baptism of Christ (<i>Green Sunday</i>)</b>                      |
|   | 8.00am Holy Communion (BCP) – <b>in the Hall</b>                    |
|   | 10.00am Sung Eucharist – <b>in the Hall</b> and Online              |
|   | 4.00pm Family Service – <b>in the Hall</b>                          |
| Wednesday 10 <sup>th</sup> January      | 3.25pm T-Time Tales   |
| Thursday 11 <sup>th</sup> January       | 12.45pm Holy Communion (Iona) in Church                             |
| <b>Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> January</b>   | <b>2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Epiphany</b>                            |
|   | 8.00am Holy Communion (BCP) – in Church                             |
|   | 10.00am Sung Eucharist – in Church and Online<br>with Junior Church |
|   | 1.00pm Community Lunch  |
| Wednesday 17 <sup>th</sup> January      | 3.25pm T-Time Tales   |
| Thursday 18 <sup>th</sup> January       | 12.45pm Holy Communion (Iona) in Church                             |
| Saturday 20 <sup>th</sup> January       | 8.00pm Social Ballroom and Latin Dance                              |
| <b>Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> January</b>   | <b>3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Epiphany</b>                            |
|   | 8.00am Holy Communion (BCP) – in Church                             |
|   | 10.00am Sung Eucharist – in Church and Online                       |
|   | 4.00pm Messy Church   |
| Wednesday 24 <sup>th</sup> January      | 3.25pm T-Time Tales   |
| <b>Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> January</b> | <b>Conversion of St Paul</b>  |
|   | 12.45pm Holy Communion (Iona) in Church                             |
| <b>Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> January</b>   | <b>Presentation of Christ in the Temple</b>                         |
|   | 8.00am Holy Communion (BCP) – in Church                             |
|   | 10.00am Sung Eucharist – in Church and Online<br>with Junior Church |
|   | 4.00pm Taizé Prayer   |
| Wednesday 31 <sup>st</sup> January      | 3.25pm T-Time Tales   |

**Please remember that planned services are subject to change at short notice so please check the details on our website or with the Parish Office.**



## CALENDAR FOR FEBRUARY 2024

Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> February      12.45pm Holy Communion (Iona) in Church

**Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> February      2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday before Lent (*Green Sunday*)**  
8.00am    Holy Communion (BCP) – **in the Hall**  
10.00am   Sung Eucharist – **in the Hall** and Online  
4.00pm    Family Service – **in the Hall**

Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> February      3.25pm T-Time Tales

Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> February      12.45pm Holy Communion (Iona) in Church

**Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> February      Sunday before Lent**  
8.00am    Holy Communion (BCP) – in Church  
10.00am   Sung Eucharist – in Church and Online  
              with Junior Church  
1.00pm    Community Lunch

**Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> February Ash Wednesday**

11.00am Holy Communion with Ashing

8.00pm   Holy Communion with Ashing

Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> February      12.45pm Holy Communion (Iona) in Church

Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> February      8.00pm   Social Ballroom and Latin Dance

**Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> February      1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of Lent**  
8.00am    Holy Communion (BCP) – in Church  
10.00am   Sung Eucharist – in Church and Online  
4.00pm    Messy Church

Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> February      3.25pm T-Time Tales

Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> February      12.45pm Holy Communion (Iona) in Church

**Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> February      2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Lent**  
8.00am    Holy Communion (BCP) – in Church  
10.00am   Sung Eucharist – in Church and Online  
              with Junior Church  
4.00pm    Taizé Prayer

Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> February      3.25pm T-Time Tales

Thursday 29<sup>th</sup> February      12.45pm Holy Communion (Iona) in Church

**Please remember that planned services are subject to change at short notice so please check the details on our website or with the Parish Office.**



## **Resolutions**

The New Year is held to be a great time for making resolutions but by the time you read this, New Years Day will have already passed. It is always a good thing to have something to celebrate and the Scots are renowned for doing it at such times, in style. Although my name is Ian, I have no Scottish ancestors that I know about and so have no real affection for the New Year, especially as it falls at a different time in whichever country we are living.

Nevertheless, resolutions then at the beginning of Advent, Lent or on any other day we choose, must be a good thing if those resolutions are good and positive. Even when the trees are bare in mid-winter we can always "Turn over a new leaf."

When I was at work, I had one colleague who boasted that he would give up smoking and so he gave his pipe to someone else. A month or two later he had bought another one, smoking once more. My boss smoked all day until one day he stopped smoking completely without telling anyone. I never saw him smoking ever again.

One Lent I decided as a discipline to give up sugar in my tea and my father said that if I could do it, so could he. By the end of Lent, I was happy from then onwards to enjoy tea without sugar. However, my father found he then didn't like tea with or without sugar.

Jesus, by his death on a cross, has given us forgiveness of our sins so that we can be sure that, whatever our situation, we can start again being reborn with a clean sheet. Of course, if we know we have offended others we must apologise to them and if that is not possible at least share that problem with God in prayer.

Our resolutions, when we make them, should be positive and perhaps it is best to write them down so that in future we can review to what extent we were successful or failing in our efforts. If, as I fear is often the case, we have reverted to old habits, we can, at least start again, hoping we will be able to keep to that renewed resolution.

**Ian Archer**



## **New Year, Volunteer!**

The New Year is a great time to start something fresh, to approach things with renewed energy and excitement. If you are looking for something new for 2024 then why not consider volunteering.

Volunteering, whilst helping others has some great personal benefits too. For example, it can help you build confidence, either from using the skills you have or trying new ones. It can remind you what you are good at and help you develop new skills to extend your circle of comfort.

It can make you feel happier, knowing you are doing something for the benefit of another person or community can give you a warm glow. It feels good to be helpful and is proven to increase dopamine levels, which can reduce stress and make you feel appreciated, it is known as the "helper's high".

You can meet new people and make new friends. Volunteering is an opportunity to meet new people who are interested in a similar cause to you and the act of volunteering together can help bond you, maybe creating new friendships. Having a good social circle is known to increase longevity, which is an added bonus.

At St Mark's, many of the activities and initiatives we offer are run and organised by volunteers, without them, St Mark's wouldn't be able to offer its community as much as it does. However, there is a shortage of volunteers at the moment. We need more people, like you to help out. There are current vacancies at the moment for helper with:

- Community Lunch
- The Parish Magazine
- Junior Church
- Messy Church
- A Deanery Synod representative
- Places on our committees
- And many more...

So, if you have time to spare and you enjoy the community at St Mark's, please consider giving your time to help keep it running and allow us to over the activities we do and in the future more.



## **Watch out for fraud**

According to the Office of National Statistics between 2021 and 2022 cases of fraud and computer misuse increased 25%. Scammers are finding more ways of trying to part us with our money but to be forewarned is to be forearmed. Therefore, I have put together a quick guide on what to watch out for. You can also find out more information at [www.takefive-stopfraud.org.uk](http://www.takefive-stopfraud.org.uk).

Email scam (Phishing) – if you receive an email from a friend, family member or someone else you know asking you to transfer money to them or buy a gift card. Think twice. Their email may have been copied or hacked. Always call that person or speak to them face to face to verify the request.

Mobile phone scam (smishing) – if you get a text message or WhatsApp message from a phone number you don't recognise saying, *'Hi, I have lost my phone/ changed my number'*. Be cautious, especially if it says something like "Hi mum/dad/nan" etc. Someone may have found some basic information about you including the fact you are a parent/grandparent and they may use this to make the message seem convincing. If they ask you to transfer money for them or top-up a mobile phone for example, take this as a warning sign and try and speak to the person by another method of contact such as email or face to face.

Online shopping scam – you may see on social media a brand offering heavily reduced items and too good to be true sales. The advert might link to a website which isn't the usual website for that brand. This is a warning sign. It might have some urgency about it, e.g. offer ends at midnight. If you are interested in the offers and want to see if it is genuine, find the retailers website via Google and then look and see if the offers/discounts are visible from their main website. If it is not a brand you have heard of be very wary of the seller or website. You might find this type of scam when trying to buy tickets for a sold-out event or on holidays or clothing. The scam can look very convincing. It is also worth Googling the name of the brand you are looking to buy followed by scam e.g. Joules clothing scam.

Telephone scams – fraudsters may call you on your telephone pretending to be from a bank, broadband provider, the police, an investment company or a charity or any other business. They may want to get information about you or to get you to make a payment to them. Be very wary of anyone who calls up out of the blue. Feel free to ask them questions to validate who they are and where they are calling from. If they are genuinely your bank or business, they should have some way of proving they are who they say they are. Don't ever give away passwords over the phone and as a general rule, don't make payments over the phone if someone has contacted you.





## Dreams

Do you dream at night, and if you do, do you remember the dream once you wake up? I have heard that some of those who often have vivid dreams keep a notebook by their bedside so they can keep a record of what might otherwise be forgotten.

I dream most nights but soon forget the details unless the dream was more like a nightmare. I dream often of lost keys or other small items that go astray. But dreams often relate to times in the past, being late for work although I retired some 30 years ago, and earlier dreams centred on my time in the Navy in the 1950s. I have dreamed of what seemed funny situations, such as going to work without my trousers on. However, on most occasions I enjoy my dreams and if a dream isn't a happy one and I wake up in the night I can, at least, start a new one. It is great when people we have known in the past but who have died, can play a part in our dreams as if they are still alive. We can even in some dreams talk with them as I did before my son, Andrew's wedding. After a long conversation with my father, who had died some years earlier, ended suddenly when he said, "How can I come to the wedding when you are wearing my morning dress."

But dreams can be important if they are warning of emergencies or messages, perhaps, from the Holy Spirit. In the Bible we come across many times when God's messages came to people by way of dreams. Martin Luther King had dreams, including one we still hope will come true, "That all men be treated equal."

Many of us might have joined in the singing, round Christmas time, of the song: "I'm dreaming of a White Christmas". A coating of snow on the countryside can look very beautiful, but unless we want to go skiing or tobogganing, I guess many of us would prefer to do without the snow with the trouble it can cause on the roads.

I love the song written by Stephen Foster in 1862 which said:

"Beautiful dreamer, Wake unto me,  
Starlight and dewdrops are waiting for thee.  
Sounds of the rude world heard in the day,  
Lulled by the moonlight have all passed away.  
Beautiful dreamer, Queen of my song,  
List while I woo thee with soft melody.  
Gone are the cares of life's busy throng,  
Beautiful dreamer, awake unto me."

**Ian Archer**



## Book Review

This month: The Midnight Library



The Midnight Library written by Matt Haig is the story of a woman called Nora who is struggling with her life. After a day of challenges decides she no longer wants to live.

However, instead of facing the afterlife, she finds herself somewhere between life and death in the Midnight Library. All the books represent a version of her life, infinite combinations of what could of and might have been, if she had made different decisions.

I am sure we have all wondered at some point, what would have happened if I'd said yes to an opportunity or been a little bit braver. In this story Nora gets the chance to 'try out' different lives to see what could have been, using her very large and heavy book of regrets to help her decide what life she'd like to see. She learns how the impact of her decisions have changed the course of her life and also of those who she loves, her mother, father, brother, best friend and fiancé.

This book is incredibly thought provoking as through Nora's experience one can reflect on our own life, the decisions we make and the impact we can have on the lives of others. Small and seemingly unimportant acts can have significant effects on the outcome of other people's decisions and behaviours.

This book had me gripped from the second I started reading until the very last page. I read it at every possible moment and finished it within days because it was so easy and enjoyable to read.

Have you recently read a good book? Tell us about it.  
Email [magazine@stmarksreigate.co.uk](mailto:magazine@stmarksreigate.co.uk) with your book review.



**Readers' Recipes** - Vegan lentil and sweet potato pie (from BBC Good Food)  
Bringing back an old feature this month, as January has now become synonymous with Veganuary, here is a vegan comfort food recipe to get you through a cold and miserable January.

### Ingredients

- 2 onions, 2 carrots & 2 celery sticks, finely chopped
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 4 garlic cloves, crushed
- 200ml red wine (check the label to ensure it's vegan if needed)
- ½ bunch of thyme, leaves picked
- 2 tbsp tomato purée
- 2 tbsp soy sauce
- 2 tsp caster sugar
- 2 tsp red wine vinegar
- 2 x 400g cans cooked green lentils, drained
- 400g can chopped tomatoes



### For the mash topping

- 1kg sweet potatoes, peeled and roughly chopped into 3cm pieces
- 30g vegan margarine
- 2 tsp mustard powder
- 2 tbsp plant-based milk (we used oat milk)
- 2 tsp pumpkin seeds

### Method:

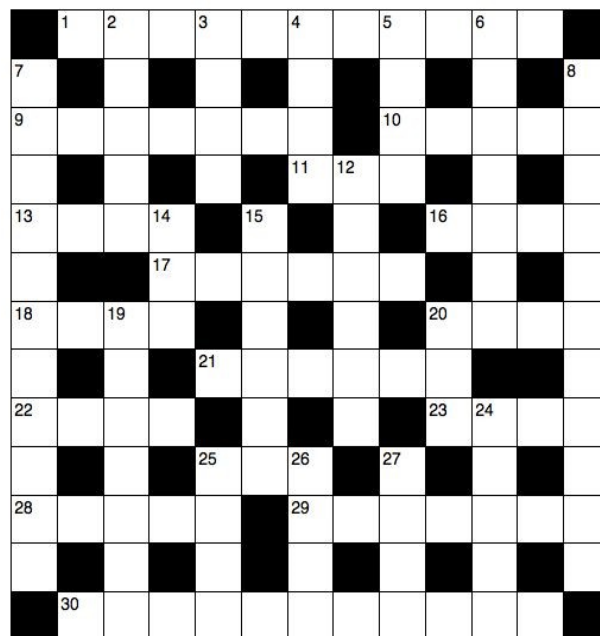
1. Tip the onions, carrots, celery and olive oil into a large saucepan. Cook over a medium heat for 8-10 mins until softened, add the garlic and fry for another minute. Pour in the wine to deglaze the pan and simmer for 2 mins until most of the wine has evaporated.
2. Add the thyme, tomato purée, soy sauce, caster sugar and vinegar to the pan and stir to combine. Tip in the lentils, tomatoes and 100ml water and simmer for 10-12 mins until reduced and thick enough to coat the back of a spoon.
3. Meanwhile, make the mash topping. Bring a large pan of water to the boil, add the sweet potatoes and simmer for 10-15 mins until cooked all the way through. Drain, then add the dairy-free margarine, mustard powder and milk, and mash until smooth along with plenty of salt and pepper.
4. Heat the oven to 200C/180C fan/gas 6. Season the filling and pour it into a 25cm x 20cm x 7cm casserole dish. Top with the mash, covering the edges so the filling doesn't spill out. Add the pumpkin seeds on top and bake for 30-35 mins until golden and bubbling. *Once baked and left to cool, the pie will keep frozen for up to 3 months. Defrost overnight, then reheat in the oven until piping hot.*

# January Crossword

Biblical references are from the New International Version

## Across

- 1 Paul said the wrath of God 'is being revealed from heaven' against this (Romans 1:18) (11)
- 9 Go smite (anag.) (7)
- 10 'But — I have risen, I will go ahead of you into Galilee'(Matthew 26:32) (5)
- 11 'Take and —; this is my body' (Matthew 26:26) (3) 13 Type (2 Thessalonians 2:10) (4)
- 16 'Woe to those who — iniquity' (Micah 2:1) (4)
- 17 'How shall we — if we ignore such a great salvation?' (Hebrews 2:3) (6)
- 18 Opposite of evens (4)
- 20 Previously cited (Latin) (4)
- 21 'There is surely — — of God in this place, and they will kill me because of my wife' (Genesis 20:11) (2,4)
- 22 The Thessalonians were warned to keep away from every brother who was this (2 Thessalonians 3:6) (4)
- 23 Beat (anag.) (4)
- 25 To trouble or afflict (Job 16:3) (3)
- 28 Part of a roof (1 Kings 7:9) (5)
- 29 Attain (Job 5:12) (7)
- 30 Insect noted for its gymnastic ability (Psalm 78:46) (11)



## Down

- 2 Smell (John 11:39) (5)
- 3 Lion's home (Jeremiah 25:38) (4)
- 4 'Jesus Christ is the — yesterday and today and for ever' (Hebrews 13:8) (4)
- 5 Tidy (4)
- 6 Made their home (Genesis 47:27) (7)
- 7 Their task was to carry the curtains of the tabernacle (Numbers 4:25–26) (11)
- 8 Timothy's was called Lois (2 Timothy 1:5) (11)
- 12 The Lover likened the fragrance of the Beloved's breath to these (Song of Songs 7:8) (6)
- 14 Times Educational Supplement (1,1,1)
- 15 Eight-tentacled sea creatures (6)
- 19 'And lead us not into temptation, but — us from the evil one'(Matthew 6:13) (7)
- 20 D.L. Moody's legendary song leader, — D. Sankey (3)
- 24 Rarely used musical note (5)
- 25 'Your will be done on earth — it — in heaven' (Matthew 6:10) (2,2)
- 26 and 27 'The Lord Almighty will — them with a — , as when he struck down Midian at the rock of Oreb' (Isaiah 10:26) (4,4)
- 27 See 26 Down

## December Answers

**ACROSS:** 1 Depend 4 Canopy 7 Beak 8 Irritate 9 Zedekiah 13 Ate 16 Job's comforter 17 NAE  
19 Lang Syne 24 Blockade 25 Five 26 Enigma 27 Drench

**DOWN:** 1 Debt 2 Peaceable 3 Drink 4 Curia 5 Nuts 6 Put it 10 Excel 11 Is man 12 Hoofs  
13 Attention 14 Ezra 15 Ijon 18 Aslan 20 Abana 21 Greed 22 GCMG 23 Leah




## Puzzles

### January Sudoku Puzzle

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

### December Solution

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



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