

**St Mark's Parish Magazine
February 2024**



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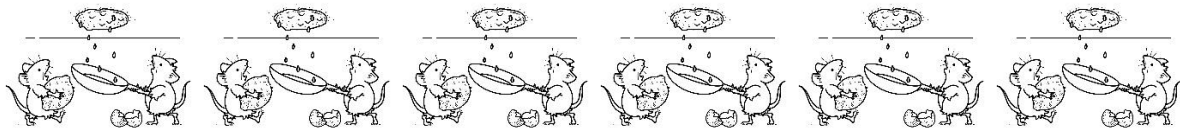
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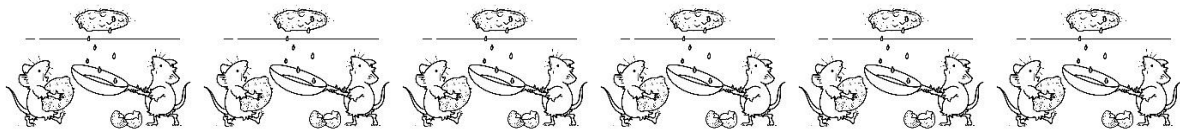


Your Views & Contributions

Next issue will be available from
1 March 2024

All contributions to the editor by
Friday 16 February 2024

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LETTER FROM THE VICAR

Dear Friends,

Wednesday 14 February is Ash Wednesday and the beginning of Lent, the season of penitence, self-examination and fasting running up to Easter. Although the discipline of fasting isn't popular today, Lent is one of the few times when we might consider abstaining from something so that we might focus on God. Fasting should play an important part in the Christian life. Jesus began his earthly ministry by fasting in the wilderness for 40 days and he taught his disciples to fast. In Matthew's gospel he tells them, "when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, so that it will not be obvious to others that you are fasting, but only to your Father, who is unseen." (Matthew 6.17,18). Note he uses the word "when" and not "if".



So why should we fast? Well, firstly, giving up something in our lives shows that we want to put God first in our lives. Secondly, fasting shows us how much we depend on things other than God in our lives. How often when we've had a bad day do we reach for that bar of chocolate or our favourite tippie instead of reaching out to God? Thirdly, fasting encourages us to have a deeper hunger and dependency for God in our lives. Fasting gives space for us to humbly focus on God for his strength, provision, and wisdom and results in a more intimate relationship with Christ. It also enables the Holy Spirit to reveal our true spiritual condition, leading to brokenness, repentance, and a transformed life, with a heart more attentive to God.

Fasting traditionally involves missing one or two meals during the day. Not everyone can do this. For example, some people cannot abstain from regular meals for medical reasons. Fasting can also include abstaining or limiting the time we give to things like television, alcohol or social media. But this year some faith groups are suggesting on social media that we shouldn't be asking people to give up something. Instead, they are suggesting that we do something positive. This has been my practice for a number of years. I see Lent as a time to embrace new spiritual disciplines e.g. joining a study group, giving more time to prayer and Bible study, "random acts of kindness", or keeping a gratitude journal. I particularly like the "random acts of kindness". They can make a huge difference to someone's day. But whatever you do, let's make Lent count this year.

With my best wishes

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mantle". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.



Church News

SMART Programme 2024

SMART meets on the **first Thursday of the month 2.00pm – 4.00pm in St. Mark's Church Hall** (except for those marked *).

SMART is run by **Sarah Cousins**.

We are always happy to welcome new members, arrange lifts to the meetings and help. Please feel free to bring a friend to any of the meetings.

For meetings in the church hall there will be a charge of **£1.00** for tea and coffee etc unless stated otherwise*.

- 1 Feb** **"THINGS I WISH I'D KNOWN AT 18!"** Please come ready to share one thing about life you wish you'd known as a young person.
- 7 Mar** **"SPEAKER: Local author Cherith Baldry"** Celebrated author of books on the New York Times bestseller list, Cherith Baldry will be talking to us about her work and life as a writer.
- 4 April** **"THAT'S ENTERTAINMENT"** Straight from London's West End Not! Bruce and Guest will do their best to entertain you.
- *2 May** **"OUT FOR TEA"** and a chance to browse the plants at Knights Betchworth. Please put your name down early for a lift.
- 6 June** **"SPEAKER: Revd Martin Colton"** Topic to be advised.
- 4 July** **"GETTING TO KNOW YOU"** Bruce will lead a live interview with two of our members.
- *1 Aug** **"OUT FOR TEA"** again at Knights Betchworth. Please put your name down early for a lift.
- 5 Sept** **"HOME REMEDIES"** Please come and share the remedies that you have valued.
- 3 Oct** **"A VOCAL INTERLUDE"** Please come and have fun and sing with Bruce.
- 7 Nov** **"GETTING TO KNOW YOU" Part 2** Two more of our members take the spotlight.
- 5 Dec** **"CHRISTMAS IS COMING!"** Carols and plenty of Christmas fare. Please bring a friend or family member to join in with singing.



Children's Activities

Sunday Activities

4.00pm – 4.45pm Family Church 1st Sunday of the month

A bible story with singing and lots of fun!

10.00am – 11.15am Junior Church 2nd and 4th Sunday of the month

Fun bible led activities whilst the grown-ups are in church

4.00pm – 6.00pm Messy Church 3rd Sunday of the month

Crafts, games, a time to worship and a meal together

Weekday activities

3.25pm – 3.55pm Wednesdays T-Time Tales (term time only)

For the under 7's and their families – coffee, tea, biscuits, a Bible story and fun action songs

Prayer Board



Praying for people in need is an important part of our ministry at St Mark's Church and long may it continue.

There is a prayer board at the NE entrance of St Mark's Church where prayer requests can be pinned onto the board. The person in need will be prayed for by a dedicated team for one month after the date the day you pin your prayer and then removed unless you date them again.



SMOAT OVERSEAS AID CHARITY FUNDRAISER

BINGO

SUNDAY 25TH FEBRUARY

2pm - 4pm

ST MARK'S CHURCH HALL



**A great family game for players
aged 6 to 106**

**£6 a player
or £20 a family of 4**

**Tea, coffee & homemade cakes included
Tombola**



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REIGATE'S OVERSEAS AID TRUST

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News from the Church of England

Bishop Christopher calls for ceasefire 'to end appalling suffering' in Gaza

The Bishop of Southwark, the Rt Revd Christopher Chessun, has spoken of the dire situation facing Christians and others following a pastoral visit to Jerusalem and the West Bank.

Bishop Christopher visited the Diocese of Southwark's companion Anglican Diocese of Jerusalem from 14 to 18 January, as the war in Gaza passed the 100-day mark. During this time, he met with Bishop Hosam, the Anglican Archbishop in Jerusalem as well as priests from Nazareth, Jerusalem and Ramallah. He also visited the Princess Basma Centre and St George's School and talked to their respective Directors, Violette Mubarak and Richard Zananiri. Bishop Christopher also met with His Beatitude Patriarch Theophilos III and with bishops from the Armenian Orthodox Church.

Time was spent listening to individuals from civil society organisations, including Rabbi Michael Marmor (Rabbis for Human Rights), Robi Damelin (Parents Circle), Danny Siederman (Jerusalem Peace Initiative) and Daniel Munayer (Musalaha). The programme was coordinated by Canon Richard Sewell, Dean of St George's College in Jerusalem.

Reflecting on his visit, Bishop Christopher said: "It was humbling to listen to the great pain being felt in Jewish and Palestinian communities. No one I met professed easy solutions, but each showed a determination and commitment to taking whatever steps they can – however provisional – towards a future which allows for the human flourishing and security of both Palestinians and Israelis. Such individuals need our prayers and support."

Speaking about the ongoing war, Bishop Christopher said: "The desperate and devastating cost of the war in Gaza was evident in every conversation – and it is abundantly clear that the heaviest price is being paid by the most vulnerable. I'm clear that continued military action will only intensify this humanitarian catastrophe and make the prospects for peace more distant. As a religious leader, I add my voice to those calling for the release of the hostages and prisoners, and an immediate ceasefire to end this appalling suffering."

Bishop Christopher also reflected on the fragile situation in the West Bank, adding: "My visit to Ramallah underscored the importance of not allowing the war in Gaza to eclipse the suffering of the Palestinian people who struggle with the daily injustices of Israel's occupation. I share the fear of many I spoke to that decisions taken by the

Israeli government since 7 October risk spiraling the West Bank deeper into violence. Israel must not become its own worst enemy, but look to negotiate an end to the occupation of the various Palestinian territories on terms that will ensure the flourishing of both Israelis and Palestinians.”

Speaking of the fragile situation facing Christians, Bishop Christopher said: “During the course of this visit, our brothers and sisters in Christ outlined a very grave situation – one not just of war in Gaza, but ongoing discrimination, harassment and abuse in Israel, the West Bank and Occupied East Jerusalem. It is important that we listen intently to what they are saying, uphold them in our prayers and offer whatever practical support we can to sustain them in their discipleship, mission and ministry where it is becoming increasingly difficult to be Church.”

Speaking of the support that the Diocese of Southwark has provided over the years, Archbishop Hosam said: “For several years now, the Diocese of Jerusalem and Diocese of Southwark have been journeying in partnership of the Gospel through pilgrimages to the Holy Land. We are grateful for the ministry of Bishop Christopher and all those under his care in promoting peace and reconciliation among the nations, especially as most recently manifested in his solidarity visit to Jerusalem this past week.”

During Lent this year, Bishop Christopher is urging churches in Southwark Diocese to pray for and raise funds to support community projects in Jerusalem, Zimbabwe and Southwark.

<https://southwark.anglican.org/news-events/events/lent-call/>





The Heart of the Matter

Just before the New Year Don and Ed had a drink with sandwiches. They had already exchanged news about their Christmas festivities. "How is the baby doing?" asked Don.

"Pretty well really. He only wakes for the one feed during the night but otherwise sleeps through till six o'clock. During the day he is as good as gold. The children vie with each other to hold him and really make a fuss of him. He's a smiley, happy chap. He must take after his mother. Of course, Leslie and I have never been so tired."

"Well, if I catch you asleep at your desk I shall jog your elbow," said Don with a smile. "The office is going quite well but I have trouble on one section," said Ed. "Miss Richardson was late returning from leave and some of her work has built up." "She's the West Indian girl isn't she?" Don responded. "I thought she was showing the qualities for promotion."

"That's right. She used the whole of her remaining leave for a holiday back home. She should have been back before Christmas but she came back only today. It must be five years since she has seen her family and I know that she has regularly sent money to help support her younger siblings. Nevertheless, it's a serious offence and I expect you remember that the inspecting officer (IO) stressed that staff should not overstay their leave and should be reported to Head Office. I guess it's a black mark which will put her promotion back if she does not get the push," said Ed.

"Ah well now, what do the staff think about it?" "Well, funny you should ask that. They are divided. A few think she should be kept to the rules like everyone else, but most seem supportive and did some of her urgent work without being asked when she was away," said Ed.

"I am not surprised," said Don. "She joined here four and a half years ago, well before you came. We had a two-day strike and about half the staff broke the picket line, including Miss Richardson. One morning as she arrived, someone called out "black leg". Apparently, she stopped, turned round and, with a big smile on her face, hitched up her skirt to her knees and waggled her leg in the air. Of course, the picket line dissolved in laughter and after that people were more chatty with her and she joined their association. Anyway, never mind about that. What do you think?"

"On the one hand, I can't afford to be soft and the Inspecting officer clearly expects us to take a hard line here. On the other hand, it's hard for these immigrants to adapt and make their way. She never wanted to leave home. It was a necessity. She is very much a family person with old fashioned values. Even today she has struggled in, I think with the flu and looks awful. She would be devastated to lose her job, especially if she was sacked. She'd have difficulty getting another one." "So?"

“Well, it may affect my own prospects but I think I shall make her take the time from next year’s leave and hope the IO does not spot it when he comes in January.” Ed straightened up as if he had just made the decision.

“OK. So now you have told me, I think we can dispense with worrying about your career. I am glad you have taken that decision especially after the thought you have evidently given it,” said Don. “Management is a strange animal. Many think it stops at making the correct decisions on priorities; devising procedures and making sure they are carried out; running a tight ship in an even-handed way and ignoring the gossip which inevitably occurs amongst the staff. That’s all fine but in my view it requires more. You have to do what you think is right in the particular circumstances, especially where staff are concerned. Then you can sleep in your bed. As it is, so many managers bend the truth to convince the staff and avoid confrontation but, believe me, the staff always finds them out. Then you lose their trust and support. Staff may still work for you but often not with you and that tells when the going gets tough. That’s when they show they appreciate a boss who is straight and cares about their situations. Time we got back to the coal face,” said Don.

Six weeks later the inspection was well in progress when the IO spoke with the assistant manager. He asked some probing questions about the office performance in general and then observed that the manager seemed to visit those on long term sick leave and also obliquely mentioned Miss Richardson. Ed instinctively knew the game was up. He came clean with the late return from leave and how he had dealt with it. To his surprise the IO seemed to know all about it and with a stern face and penetrating eyes, asked the hard question; why?

“I can only say that in all the circumstances I thought it was the right thing to do,” said Ed, and waited for the explosion. Instead the IO, still with a dead pan face, stressed the importance of instructions as a serious guide to behaviour and then said something vague about extenuating circumstances and made some remark about a Romans letter, chapter 6.12-15 being in point. Ed did not understand but evidently he was let off. After the IO had left he mentioned the occurrence to Don, ending with the reference to Romans.

“How funny,” said Don. “You have to bear in mind that these chaps have been through the mill of district charge several times and know what the reality is like. But I still wonder how they get their information. It was probably careless staff talk to his assistant. Romans, eh? Let me think. Perhaps it’s something about the law and justice. That isn’t in the rule book, though perhaps it should be. You might test yourself in the train home by considering the same circumstances except the person concerned is a poor worker and unpopular. Anyway, the IO told me you could be trusted to be straight and understanding with your staff and said he will recommend you for district charge.

Ed did not have the benefit of a classical education nor understand Latin. He wondered where he could look up Romans, but he never did.

Harry Ingram



Christchurch

We arrived in Picton where the gangway was under repair which meant most passengers had to leave the ship by bus. However as I was classified as "needing assistance" the three of us were taken by a carer in a special Land Rover and when reaching land he kindly wheeled me in the rain to the departure place for the coach to Christchurch. When this arrived, I was given front seat next to the driver, the other two just behind. The seating had been booked by Greg.

As we were driven South, the rain stopped and I was able to see the wonderful scenery all around. I had never seen so many lambs in all my life. Of course, for them it was Spring, and so I should have expected this to be so. As we went along the coast, we could see hundreds of seals. The driver gave no commentary, but my lovely friends explained so much to me along the way. We stopped at Kaikura to give the driver a break and so had a lovely tea and cake in a nearby café. There we saw some brilliantly white seagulls enjoying the water in a nearby puddle.

As we approached Christchurch the cloud formations were striking. Despite some cloud cover the wind had reduced and I was able to admire so many lovely houses. We were dropped from the coach in the city centre and happily met by Jeff, Greg and Shayne's son-in-law, who was driving Greg's Peugeot car. With his car restored to him, Geoff took us to a splendid fish and chip supper and then to their home in that part of the world. Their bungalow had been built, as had that of Jeff and Anna, on the site of an old airfield. This was where we were to stay while in Christchurch and was extremely comfortable to come to at the end of an exciting day.

Wednesday was a glorious and sunny day. The morning we spent in their garden where Greg was cutting the lawn and Shayne insisted on doing some laundry including some for me. She then cooked a lovely dinner of chicken with oranges for us to share with their family that lived nearby – Anna, Jeff, Harvey and Madeleine.

Greg then drove me to a hillside with beautiful views of the mountains far away. On this hill they owned some land on which they might be able to build Greg's dream house and further up that hill some land which might one day be built upon by Jeff and Anna. He also took me on a drive up a hill to have a snack at a lovely café called "The Sign of the Kiwi". As we drove on, we saw a car that had almost crashed to the valley below while trying to avoid a barrier.

Towards evening we drove the short distance to Jeff's house where we found Harvey, who was nearly 2 years old, with earmuffs on so he could help his father with some woodwork in their garden. Over dinner we met Jeff's parents, Marcus and Kathryn.

We were told Marcus had suffered from malaria in New Guinea where his parents had been missionaries.

After dinner we were with the family as they prepared the children, Harvey and his 3-month-old sister, Madeleine, for bed. Harvey was extremely active and full of questions and answers and baby Madeleine had had inoculations that day. However their parents were so patient with them and it made me wonder how single parents might manage in such situations. For me I was so privileged to be with them then, and on other nights, and Harvey soon knew me as "Ian".

The next day, Thursday, Greg introduced me to his friend Simeon for a drink. Another friend we met in his home was Charlie, a wine buff with his partner, Avril from Ireland. We sat in Charlie's garden, in the sun, enjoying a glass of wine. However during those 2 days I was driven round Christchurch enabling me to see round their beautiful transitional Cathedral made of giant cardboard tubes which I understand had cores of wood. This was built after their recent earthquake when their cathedral had suffered so badly, the steeple and so much else coming down. This cardboard building was superb and the furniture within it so appropriate.

After this we drove to their River Avon for a pre-booked voyage of half an hour in a punt. When visiting in 1996 I didn't want to punt as we had to have someone else to do it for us. Now I was only grateful as my balance isn't so good. While waiting we watched the ducks. Some of them were quite extraordinary in that they swam under the water along the bottom of the clear river. Our punter, with boater and appropriate clothes, talked to us all the way about the park that we passed through. I had a splendid view as I was seated higher than others at the stern. The river was peaceful without motor launches.

On that day and Friday, we spent much time with Jeff and Anna and their lovely family.

Saturday morning, we were up early to see the rugby match between the All Blacks and Argentina at 8am on Jeff's TV, New Zealand winning 45 – 6. After breakfast with them we packed up at Shayne's house, and left for Mount Cook at 11.30am. Shayne was driving and as always they allowed me the front passenger seat.

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

Ian Archer

CALENDAR FOR FEBRUARY 2024

Thursday 1 st February	2.45pm Holy Communion (Iona) in Church
Sunday 4th February	2nd Sunday before Lent (<i>Green Sunday</i>)
	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 th February	3.25pm T-Time Tales
Thursday 8 th February	12.45pm Holy Communion (Iona) in Church
Sunday 11th 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 14th February	Ash Wednesday
	11.00am Holy Communion with Ashing
	8.00pm Holy Communion with Ashing
Thursday 15 th February	11.00am Lent Course in Church
	12.45pm Holy Communion (Iona) in Church
Saturday 17 th February	8.00pm Social Ballroom and Latin Dance
Sunday 18th February	1st Sunday of Lent
	8.00am Holy Communion (BCP) – in Church
	10.00am Sung Eucharist – in Church and Online
	4.00pm Messy Church
Wednesday 21 st February	3.25pm T-Time Tales
Thursday 22 nd February	11.00am Lent Course in Church
	12.45pm Holy Communion (Iona) in Church
Sunday 25th February	2nd 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 th February	3.25pm T-Time Tales
Thursday 29 th February	11.00am Lent Course in Church
	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.

CALENDAR FOR MARCH 2024

Sunday 3rd March

3rd Sunday of 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 6th March

3.25pm T-Time Tales

Thursday 7th March

11.00am Lent Course in Church

12.45pm Holy Communion (Iona) in Church

Sunday 10th March

4th Sunday of Lent (*Mothering Sunday*)

8.00am Holy Communion (BCP) – in Church

10.00am Sung Eucharist – in Church and Online
with Junior Church

1.00pm Community Lunch

3.25pm T-Time Tales

Wednesday 13th March

11.00am Lent Course in Church

Thursday 14th March

12.45pm Holy Communion (Iona) in Church

Saturday 16th March

8.00pm Social Ballroom and Latin Dance

Sunday 17th March

5th Sunday of Lent (*Passion Sunday*)

8.00am Holy Communion (BCP) – in Church

10.00am Sung Eucharist – in Church and Online

4.00pm Messy Church

Wednesday 20th March

3.25pm T-Time Tales

Thursday 21st March

12.45pm Holy Communion (Iona) in Church
followed by Lent Lunch in Church

Sunday 24th March

Palm Sunday

8.00am Holy Communion (BCP) – in Church

10.00am Sung Eucharist – in Church and Online
with Junior Church

4.00pm Taizé Prayer

Mon 25th – Weds 27th March

Days in Holy Week

8.00pm Stations of the Cross and Compline

Thursday 28th March

Maundy Thursday

8.00pm Sung Eucharist and Watch (until 10.00pm)

Friday 29th March

Good Friday

10.00am Messy Church

1.30pm Liturgy of Good Friday

Saturday 30th March

Holy Saturday

8.00pm Easter Vigil and First Communion of Easter

Sunday 31st March

Easter Sunday

8.00am Holy Communion (BCP) – in Church

10.00am Sung Eucharist – in Church and Online

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.



Responding

I should like to support the appeal for volunteers in last month's magazine. It lays stress on the unintended benefits to the volunteer, directs the needs for St Mark's and ends with an appeal to those with time to spare. I should like to add a further angle.

The need for volunteers is always vital to the life of any church. It's almost an obligation which may not be apparent to those who attend, then leave for home. However, without those willing to give their time to the many activities essential to a healthy church community, the church will struggle. Sidney Baker, who only a few of you will recall, and who was a pillar of this church used to say, "God has no arms or legs." That may seem a curious concept but we all know what he meant. The people are the church, your church.

Take the monthly Community Lunch which provides not only an excellent meal but an occasion for social mixing. We are very lucky to have a volunteer to organise this event month by month. At any time, things can go wrong and he sorts it out. But he needs support. Besides the cooks and others in the kitchen, he needs people to prepare the hall, serve the food and coffee and ideally drivers to bring the house bound. Currently he needs more helpers. Almost anyone can help but where are they?

It is some time now since I did my 'stint' as churchwarden. I can testify that what last month's writer said was true for me, St Mark's then was not in a strong position. Finances were on edge. In the following interregnum several posts became vacant. No one volunteer emerged from the woodwork. Since there were no unsolicited volunteers it fell to the churchwardens to review what the post required, consider who might do it and then make an approach. Not once did anyone respond enthusiastically. So I used to describe the need and the nature of the post to be filled so there was mutual understanding of what was involved and the consequences from not finding a volunteer. All posts were then filled at the first attempt and many went on for many years. Curiously, without much effort, the financial problems disappeared almost on their own.

Once people are engaged personally, they better understand what is involved. I have seen this several times. In place of the "me first" attitude so encouraged by our shopping culture, there is a concern for others, and responding to that brings a new dimension into life. The responder, sometimes beset by the difficulties of what he or she is trying to do, actually gains. Words like service and duty should not be cause for knowing smirks. The capacity for the social and serving activities increases and people become even more committed. It's an upward spiral. A community is born. At an earlier time, this approach produced such activities as SMOAT, the Community Lunch and several others which have not survived.

The steady decline in church attendance through much of the UK, not helped by Covid, can be traced through much of the past several decades. There are many causes including the decline of the parish as a useful unit, growth of entertainment and sporting opportunities and the changes in communication which well surpass parish boundaries. Many of these changes are for the better but they have sometimes left the church sidelined. However, the church can still meet many of the human needs for social contact and care for others. Once that is gone there remains only a sterile, distanced, ineffectual communication.

There used to be a saying that "if you want a volunteer, ask a busy person." That may sound a strange thing to say, but maybe it's true.

Your church needs you!

Harry Ingram



Are the pancakes in the Bible?

Shrove Tuesday or 'Pancake Day' is the day before Lent. In the same way that Advent is a time for us to prepare our hearts for Christmas, Lent is our time of preparation for Easter.

The name comes from the word "shriven" meaning to confess your sins and receive forgiveness. Forgiveness for sins is at the heart of the Easter story and many Christians choose to use Lent as a time to think about their own behaviour and to recommit themselves to God. Some people choose to give up things during the period of lent such as unhealthy foods or treats or dedicate part of Lent to fasting.

Pancakes are a great recipe for using up ingredients. In some countries there is a celebration feast with lots of rich foods before the period of Lent begins. As you make your pancakes why not pray and thank God for all the good and rich things in your life.

A Pancake Prayer

Dear God,

As we prepare our pancakes help us to remember the good and rich things you bless us with each day.

Help us prepare our hearts for Lent and recommit to connecting with you. Show us where there are things that need to be removed from our lives and areas where we need to say sorry to you.

Amen



Body and Soul

Each one of us has a Body and as Christians we believe we have a Soul, too. Both of these can be neglected at our peril throughout our lives. Whatever age we are, we can try to keep fit, but often can want to take the easy way out by not taking sufficient exercise, by overeating, by drink or other efforts to satisfy our wants rather than our needs.

Then, as far as our Souls are concerned, we are in danger of switching off from what our consciences or leadings of the Holy Spirit might otherwise be leading us. It is so much easier to take the easy way out of any situation, not what with later thoughts we think might have been a better way.

Although it is easier to see if someone is physically fit or not, it is more difficult to see how a person is in the spiritual sense. What are their pressing worries today? They can appear to be happy but underneath they can be depressed or even desperate. This can easily be hidden, such as when one asks how a friend is and he or she just says "Good!" or "Fine." I suppose we can only tell if this is all the truth or not, by listening to them more intently and seeing what they say and how they behave.

Each of us can despair when our Bodies don't behave as we would wish, and at times we feel we would rather do without them. It is amazing that any parts of my Body can behave after the 90 years treatment it has had. I can just thank God for those parts that are still going well. If any part of it goes wrong, I am tempted to expect a rapid cure as I feel God, perhaps through modern medicine or surgery might put it right. Illogically I think it must be put it right, and not just in due course, but without delay.

As Christians we need to believe that Jesus was fully human as well as the Son of God and therefore had a Body like every one of us. We know how much he must have suffered for us, especially on the Cross but no doubt at other times in his life. Apart from physical pain he must have had worries about all those he had got to know, so he will have been mentally troubled, too.

How did Jesus cope with the pains and traumas he had to suffer?

We are told that he would go aside to pray and if that was helpful to him, would it not help us, too? As we get older parts of our body don't work so well, but we have to remain thankful for those parts that do.

We must think of our hands. Apart from perhaps putting them together in our thanks to God, have they that day been in any way useful in the service of God and others?

As children we were told to put our hands together in prayer, so perhaps we can do that again when we pray, so that might help us to review their use in the past day.

What about words that we have said or written today? Were they helpful and encouraging for others, or unnecessarily critical or unkind?

Have we given time to others to hear their views? Have we been able to find a time or place to be silent and listen, in case we might hear what God, our maker, might be saying?

I used to go down on my knees to pray but at my age I wonder if I still did that, would I be able to get up again? Perhaps now I need only acknowledge that I am in the presence of my maker and redeemer and worship him as such. Even if life isn't all we might have hoped for, let us just be thankful for what we have, and kind and friendly with all those people we meet.

Also, if we are in pain or trouble, as Christians we can believe that Jesus is there alongside us all the way, and so throughout our lives is concerned for the health of our Body and our Soul.

Ian Archer



Poem

True Love

Broken world,
Broken lives,
Broken hearts
Without hope
Until there, in the Temple,
In that bundle of a baby,
Love provides
Restoration,
According to His word.

Daphne Kitching



Lenten Valentines

This month both Ash Wednesday and Valentine's Day fall on the same day! The link between the two can be summed up in terms of the nature of real love! Lent, beginning on Ash Wednesday, focuses on learning to love God more, as we give him space in our lives. This is what Jesus found when he was led into the desert by the Spirit to be tempted by Satan. (Luke 4.1-13).

Jesus was tempted to turn stones into bread. Yet loving God and his word comes before satisfying physical desires. Satan tempted Jesus to worship him. However, worshipping God is an expression of loving God and serving him. Finally, he was tempted to put God to the test, by jumping off the Temple. Real love for God does not put him to the test, but wants to obey him.

Lent also teaches us how to live out the love of God in practical ways, as we follow Jesus in the way of the Cross. We see this clearly demonstrated in the life and death of Saint Valentine.

Valentine was a Christian who demonstrated the importance of sharing God's love with others. We know little about him, except that he was a priest who lived in the 3rd Century AD and that he was martyred on 14 February. Emperor Claudius felt that soldiers in the Roman Army were distracted from their duty by their wives, and so had attempted to outlaw marriage. It is believed that Valentine married couples in secret, which is why today we celebrate our love for one another on his day.

In trying to understand the meaning of her revelations from God, Julian of Norwich found:

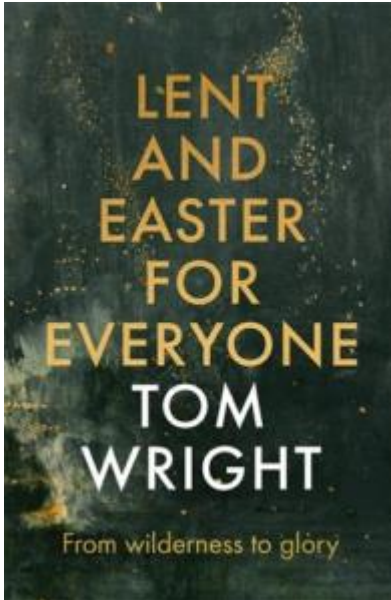
'What, do you wish to know your Lord's meaning in this thing? Know it well, love was his meaning.'

Parish Pump



Book Reviews

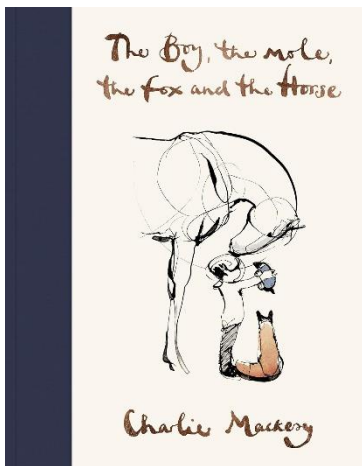
Lent and Easter for Everyone – from Wilderness to Glory



Join **Tom Wright** on a transformative journey through the Gospels, as he explores the life and impact of Jesus. Offering seven weeks' worth of daily readings and reflections, the book enables you to relive Christ's journey – from his temptations in the wilderness to the darkness of the cross and beyond, into the glory of Easter.

Whether used individually or in groups, *Lent and Easter for Everyone* can be a trusted companion, encouraging spiritual growth, deepening understanding, and fostering a renewed sense of hope and purpose in your Christian journey.

The Boy, the mole, the fox and the Horse – The Animated Story By Charlie Mackery



This lovely book was lent to me by my 60-year old son. It looks like a book for children but is clearly for us all.

One quote in it that is so magical is when the mole asks the boy "What do you want to be when you grow up?" "Kind", said the boy.

The author said on the back cover "I made a film with some friends about a boy, a mole, a fox and a horse. I hope this book gives you courage and makes you feel loved."

As a hardback it is priced at £20.00 and is worth every penny of it.

Ian Archer

Have you recently read a good book? Tell us about it.
Email office@stmarksreigate.co.uk with your book review.



Readers' Recipes – *Traditional British Shrove Tuesday Pancakes* (from Christina's Cucina).

Shrove Tuesday Pancakes are a British tradition, better known as the star of Pancake Tuesday. However, they are so delicious, you will want to have them all year long!

Ingredients

- 3/4 cup plus 2 tbsp (100 g) flour
- 1/8 tsp salt
- 1 egg, beaten
- 8 oz (235 ml) milk
- 2 Tbsp of your favourite liqueur, or water
- butter for pan
- lemon wedges and sugar, to serve

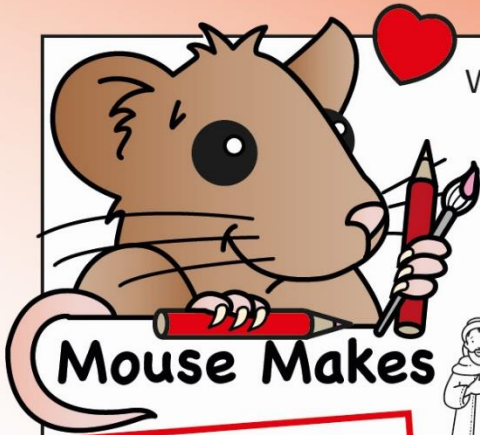


Method

1. Sift the flour and salt into a large bowl; make a well in the middle and add the beaten egg.
2. Stir in half the milk, working in the flour gradually until it begins to form a batter, then beat well and add the rest of the milk and liqueur or water.
3. Pour batter into a jug and let stand for about 15 minutes before making any pancakes, if you have time. When batter has rested, heat a nonstick pan over medium high heat, add a little bit of butter to the centre of the pan, stir the batter then pour in a small amount into the pan then swirl it so that it spreads thinly.
4. Cook for about one minute, then turn and cook the other side for about 30 seconds.
5. Place on a plate, drizzle with juice from a fresh lemon, sprinkle with sugar then roll or fold to eat immediately, or else keep the pancakes on a plate over simmering water to keep warm, then add the lemon juice and sugar. Continue adding a tiny bit of butter to the pan and cook the remaining batter.

Notes

Allowing the batter to rest for a while makes for better results.



Mouse Makes

Who were the first couple?

_____ and _____

Genesis 2:22-25

Who's wife became a pillar of salt because she disobeyed the angel's warning?

_____ Genesis 19:26



Which of Laban's daughters did Jacob love?

_____ Genesis 29:18

Who was Moses' wife?

_____ Exodus 2:21

Who married Boaz to become King David's great-grandmother and a distant relative of Jesus?

_____ Matthew 1:5

Which couple helped the Apostle Paul in his ministry?

_____ and _____ Romans 16:3

FIND THE BIBLE VERSE

Change each letter in this bible verse to the letter **before** it in the alphabet.

XIBU HPE IBT
KPJOFE UPHFUIFS,
MFU OPU NBO
TFQBSBUF.

NBSL
UFO WFSTF
OJOF

CONNECT THE BIBLE COUPLES

- | | |
|-----------|-----------|
| ADAM | ELIZABETH |
| ABRAHAM | MARY |
| ISAAC | HANNAH |
| JACOB | PRISCILLA |
| BOAZ | EVE |
| ZECHARIAH | RUTH |
| ELKANAH | REBEKAH |
| AQUILA | RACHEL |
| JOSEPH | SARAH |

DID YOU KNOW?

King Solomon had **700** wives! They were princesses of royal birth and he loved them all, but his wives caused him to turn away from God
See 1 Kings 11:1-3

E E Z R E E L I Z A B E T H R
S V Q S L R Z J I B O A D A M
R E B E K A H O J R A O Q N O
U I S A A C A S A A Z P R N S
T H A Q N H Z E C H A R I A H
H R U T A E V P O A I E B H I
S A R A H L T H B M A R Y S D
P R I S C I L L A Q U I L A

- ABRAHAM
- ADAM • AQUILA
- BOAZ • ELKANAH
- ELIZABETH
- EVE • HANNAH
- ISAAC • JACOB
- JOSEPH • MARY
- PRISCILLA
- RACHEL
- REBEKAH • RUTH
- SARAH
- ZECHARIAH

February Crossword

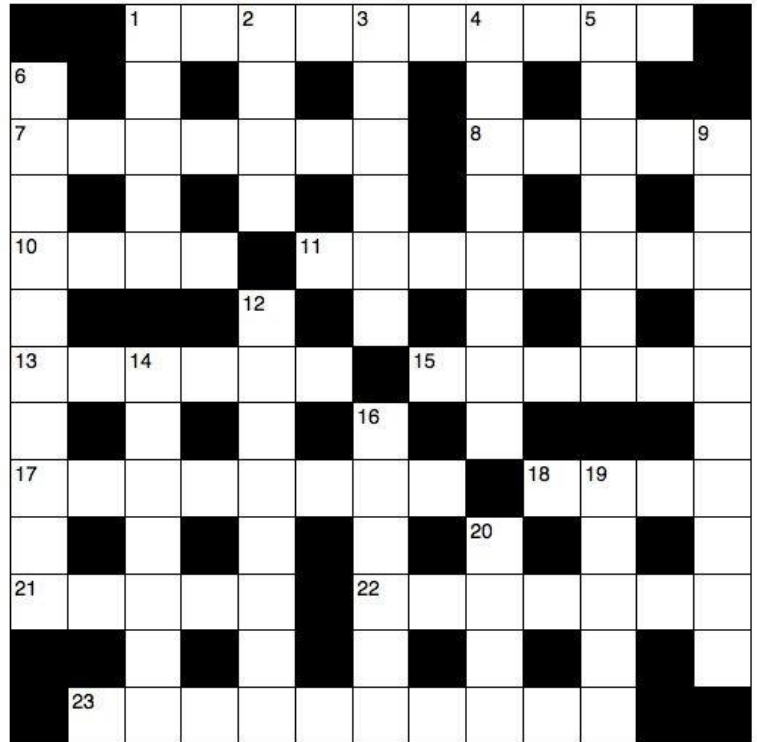
Biblical references are from the New International Version

Across

- 1 Success or wealth (Deuteronomy 28:11) (10)
- 7 Forbidden fruit for Nazirites (Numbers 6:3) (7)
- 8 Concede (Job 27:5) (5)
- 10 Look at (Psalm 48:13) (4)
- 11 Much in evidence after weddings (8)
- 13 Condense (Job 36:27) (6)
- 15 Breakwater (6)
- 17 Give a tan (anag.) (8)
- 18 More usually now called Pentecost,
— Sunday (4)
- 21 After living for 365 years, it was
said of him that 'he walked with
God' (Genesis 5:23–24) (5)
- 22 Trampled (Judges 9:27) (7)
- 23 For example, Miriam, Deborah
(Exodus 15:20; Judges 4:4) (10)

Down

- 1 Arrogance (Proverbs 8:13) (5)
- 2 Roman poet from first century BC
(4)
- 3 So rapt (anag.) (6)
- 4 Declare again (2 Corinthians 2:8) (8)
- 5 Paul's 'fellow worker', to whom he
sent two epistles (Romans 16:21) (7)
- 6 God's foreseeing care and protection
(Job 10:12) (10)
- 9 Traditional form of Roman Catholic Mass (10)
- 12 'The Lord... has given the — of Israel to David and his descendants for ever'
(2 Chronicles 13:5) (8)
- 14 'My soul glorifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my — ' (Luke 1:46–47) (7)
- 16 The central element in Nebuchadnezzar's dream, identified and interpreted by Daniel
(Daniel 2:31) (6)
- 19 'On this rock I will build my church, and the gates of — will not overcome it'
(Matthew 16:18) (5)
- 20 City where Paul was under house arrest for two years (Acts 28:16) (4)



January Answers

ACROSS: 1 Godlessness 9 Egotism 10 After 11 Eat 13 Sort 16 Plan 17 Escape 18 Odds
20 Idem 21 No fear 22 Idle 23 Abet 25 Ail 28 Eaves 29 Achieve 30 Grasshopper

DOWN: 2 Odour 3 Lair 4 Same 5 Neat 6 Settled 7 Gershonites 8 Grandmother 12 Apples
14 TES 15 Octopi 19 Deliver 20 Ira 24 Breve 25 As is 26 Lash 27 Whip

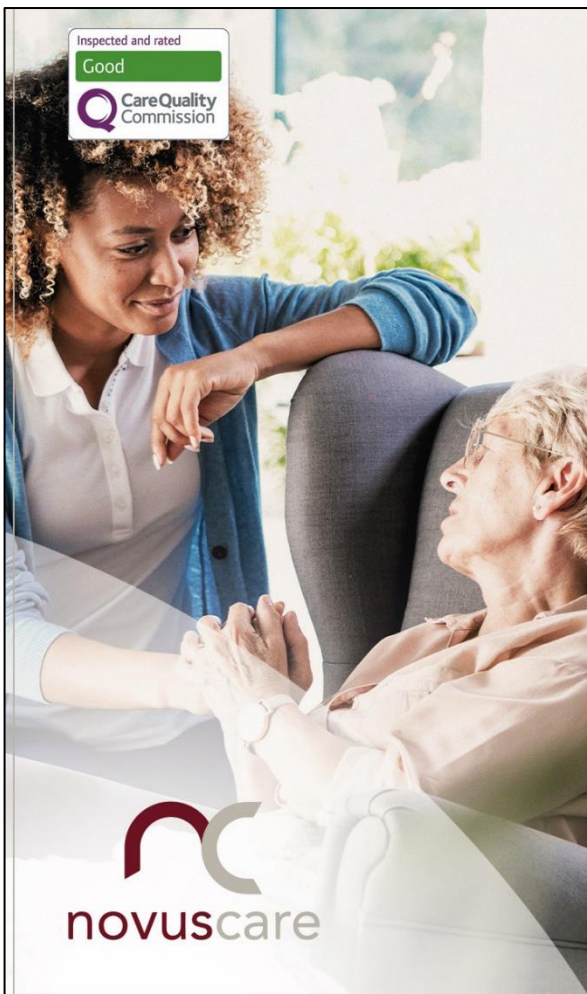
Puzzles

February Sudoku

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

January 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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