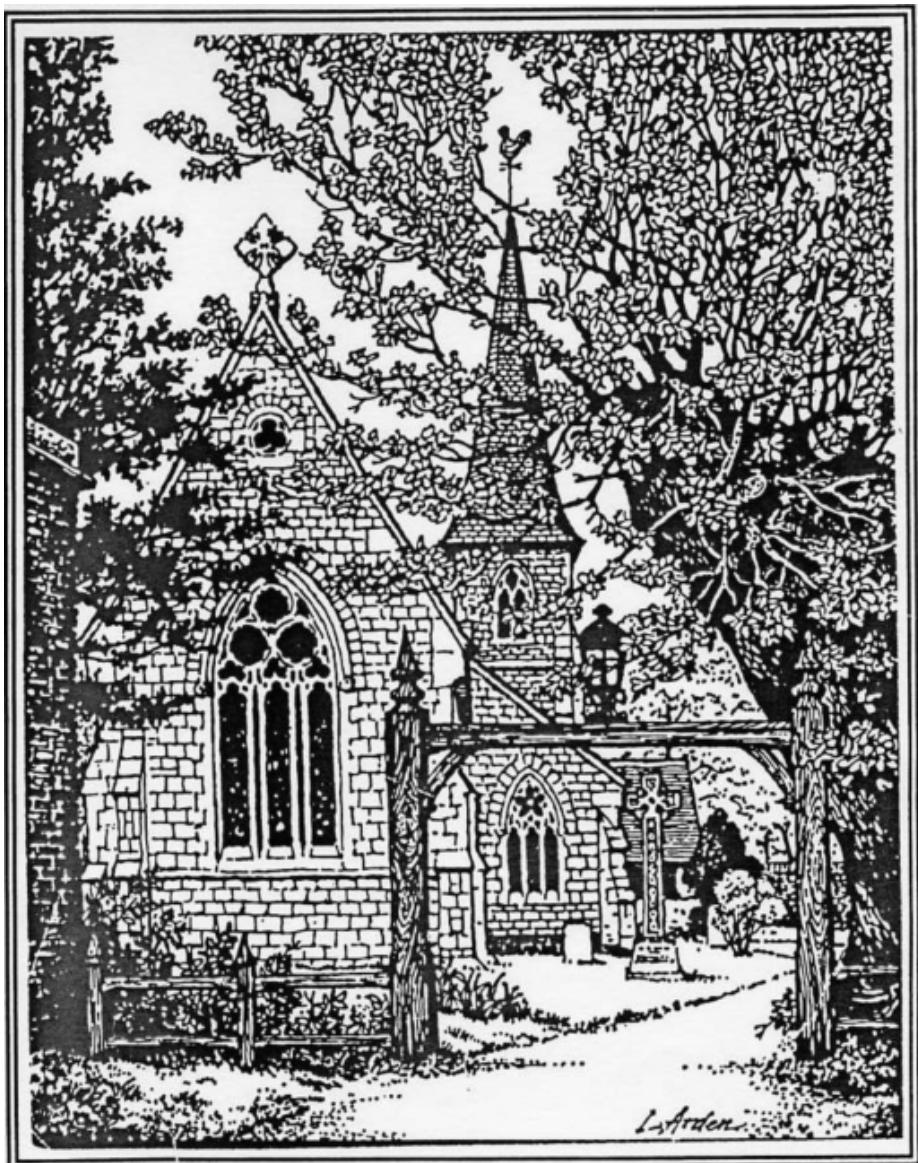


**The Parish Church of
St. James, North Cray**

**50p
July, 2020**

(Part of the Bexley Team Ministry)



St JAMES, NORTH CRAY PARISH STAFF

Team Vicar:	Reverend Ren Harding The Vicarage, 6 Tile Kiln Lane, Joydens Wood, DA5 2BB renharding@hotmail.co.uk	01322 528923
Lay Reader:	David Stevens	020 8300 0867
Church Wardens:	Suzy Higgs suzyjhiggs@gmail.com Maxine Heath maxinejheath@gmail.com	020 8302 5719 020 8468 7895
Treasurer:	Position vacant	
PCC Secretary:	Rhonda Collins	020 8300 3797
Sacristan:	Stephen Hills	020 8302 7236
Bothy Bookings:	Lynne Meads	07966 315518
Parish Safeguarding:	Rhonda Collins	020 8300 3797
Magazine Editor:	Steve Blake sblakestjames@virginmedia.com	
St James Sunday Service		
9.30am	Holy Communion	
(All age service with Uniformed Organisations on second Sunday)		

TEAM RECTOR'S LETTER

JUNE 2020



After three months of complete closure we have been able to open our church buildings, first for private prayer and reflection, and hopefully from Sunday 5 July for public worship (with some limitations). Social Distancing and Hand Hygiene will be observed of course! We currently await confirmation of this.

During Lockdown, Church members have kept in touch through phone calls, email, websites, WhatsApp, Facebook and Zoom. The Bexley Team have produced a weekly Bexley Team News to keep the four churches of the team informed, with a reflection from one of the clergy each week. There have been ideas for music to listen too, and we have shared encouraging words, as well as sad news.

I know many people have also watched services from other churches on TV or on the internet and enriched their experience of worship. We have created 'Sacred Spaces' in our own homes, as focus for our prayers – and I have been delighted by how creative people have been making a special quiet reflective area.

So as we come back, gradually and carefully into our church buildings, let us not lose the connections that we have made, let us make sure that we continue to send those messages of support and encouragement which have blessed us in the past, let us continue to use those Sacred Space indoors for daily prayer, and may God bless each one of us with his grace.

Reverend Ren Harding (Team Rector)

contact me at Joydens Wood Vicarage,

6 Tile Kiln Lane, Joydens Wood, Bexley, DA5 2BB

01322-528923

renharding@hotmail.co.uk

SERVICES AND EVENTS FOR JULY 2020

These times and dates may be changed in line with government guidance. Social Distancing and Hand Hygiene will be observed throughout the church buildings.

SUNDAY 5th July

9.30am A Service of the Word

Sunday 12th July

9.30am A Service of the Word

SUNDAY 19th July

9.30am A Simple Communion Service

SUNDAY 26th July

9.30am A Simple Communion Service for
St James Day

4pm Sunday @ 4 family service at
St Barnabas

Lo, I am with you always

Wide fields of corn along the valleys spread;
The rain and dew mature the swelling vine;
I see the Lord in multiplying bread;
 I see Him turning water into wine;
 I see Him working all the works divine
He wrought when Salem-ward His steps were led;
 The self-same miracles around Him shine;
He feeds the famished; He revives the dead;
He pours the flood of light on darkened eyes;
He chases tears, diseases, fiends away;
His throne is raised upon these orient skies;
His footstool is the pave whereon we pray.

From a poem by John Charles Earle (1749 – 1818)

BEXLEY TEAM MINISTRY

"Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God. ."

2 Corinthians 1:10-11 (NIV)

PRACTICAL ADVICE

Wash hands frequently with soap & water or alcohol-based hand rub. It has been suggested that instead of singing Happy Birthday to ensure we wash our hands for long enough - that we say the Lord's Prayer!

Avoid touching eyes, nose & mouth as this can transfer the virus.

Stay informed (but not obsessively so!) on the latest developments about COVID-19. Follow advice given by your own healthcare provider, your national and local public health authority or your employer. National & local authorities have the most up to date information for your area.

A CALL TO PRAYER

Wherever you are, and whatever your personal circumstances, we invite you to pause at midday each day, to join with your brothers and sisters across the Bexley Team Ministry to pray for our churches, our community, our nation and the world. We pray the prayer that unites all Christians, the Lord's Prayer. This is the Traditional version:-

"Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come; thy will be done; on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory; for ever and ever. Amen."

You may wish to use this prayer written by Malcolm Duncan of Spring Harvest: -

"May you be given the gift of simple faith. When the world around you is full of uncertainty, may God remind you that you are not alone and you do not need to be dominated by fear. May you find peace amidst chaos from God's promises. Hold onto the God who holds you."

Pray for those infected or in quarantine

Loving Jesus may they feel your power of healing through the care of medical staff. Take away fear, anxiety, and feelings of isolation from people receiving treatment or under quarantine. Protect their families and friends and bring peace to all who love them.

Pray for those at high risk

Dear Lord, we lift to you the elderly and people with chronic health conditions. Protect them from harm and be their comfort in this time of uncertainty.

Adapted from prayers of World Vision

<https://www.worldvision.org/disaster-relief-news-stories/prayer>

WORSHIPPING AT HOME

The following are resources which you may like to use as aids to your own personal prayer and worship. As the weeks progress we will make additions to the list via a weekly newsheet, and will endeavour to make these prayer resources available in paper form in the coming days.

If you have access to the internet this is a good site to visit.

<https://www.churchofengland.org/more/media-centre/coronavirus-covid-19-liturgy-and-prayer-resources>

Radio 4

Prayer for the Day @ 5.43 am – if this is too early for you it can be found at a time to suit you online at bbc.co.uk

Daily Service Monday to Friday @ 9.45 am – on Longwave and DAB
Sunday worship @ 8.10am

Lent Talks Wednesday @ 8.45pm

Radio 3

Choral Evensong Wednesdays at 3.30pm or Sundays at 3pm

Radio 2

Pause for thought at 5.45 am and 9.20 am

Television

Songs of Praise BBC1 Sunday at 1.15pm

Church of England. churchofengland.org

Live Lent Daily Reflections via internet, app or print. Daily Prayer via internet, app or print

The Bishop of Rochester has recorded a podcast, offering a theological reflection on the current situation. He explores where can we find refuge and comfort and how as Christians we can support others. Listen to it here:

<https://soundcloud.com/user-727736776/bishop-james-a-reflection-during-the-coronavirus>

There is an 'Alexa' smart speaker app to be used with a smart speaker
Offers Prayer for the Day,

Enables you to ask the Church of England for Prayers

Enables you to ask questions of the Church of England

Other online resources which may be of interest:

corrymeela.org has under its media tab some interesting and a wide range of short programmes based on biblical texts.

Northumbriacommunity.org has morning, midday and evening prayer for each day of the week.

24-7prayer.com lots of ideas on ways to help you pray and some interesting articles based on journeys of faith

Hillsong Worship - for those who enjoy modern worship there are plenty of YouTube videos

Live streaming services - users can watch live streams of services from a range of churches

[All Hallows by the Tower](#)

[Buckingham Parish Church](#)

[St Nicholas Church, Canvey Island](#)

[St James' Church, Clitheroe](#)

[St Mary's Kenton](#)

Canterbury Cathedral YouTube channel will stream The Daily Eucharist and Evening Prayer each day

Ren, is available to talk to anyone who is feeling the need of a church minister at this time, to talk over a difficult circumstance or to ask for prayer. We also have a resource that can be used at home if you are unable to attend a funeral because of the current restrictions, and a weekly newsletter that is going out on email, with news, reflections and prayers. All you need to do is ring, or email me (see inside cover) and I will do what I can to help, and I can also put you on the circulation list so you receive weekly information. Your email will not be given to anyone else.

Suzy Higgs, Churchwarden

The man who created Sherlock Holmes

By Tim Lenton

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, the multi-talented writer who created Sherlock Holmes, the world's most famous detective, died 90 years ago, on 7th July 1930 at his home in Sussex, probably of a heart attack. He was 71.



He had been born in Edinburgh to a prosperous Irish-Catholic family with a dysfunctional father and a loving mother who had a talent for inventing stories. He spent seven years in a Jesuit boarding school in England, which he loathed, and qualified as a medical doctor at the University of Edinburgh. He added 'Conan' to his name at that stage.

He wrote the first Sherlock Holmes story, *A Study in Scarlet*, in 1887. In all, he wrote nearly 60 novels or short stories involving Holmes and his sidekick, Dr Watson. He did not regard

them as his best work – he wrote prolifically on many subjects – but their characterisation and ingenious plotting made them by far the most popular.

He was married twice – first to "gentle and amiable" Louisa Hawkins, the sister of one of his patients, and then, after she died of tuberculosis in 1906, to the "strikingly beautiful" and talented Jean Leckie. Towards the end of his life he developed a strong interest in the occult and spiritualism. He was knighted in 1902.

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**BEXLEY TEAM MINISTRY
“EXPLORING CONFIRMATION” 2020**



This series of informal sessions is designed to help you discover more about the Christian faith and to explore it in greater depth.

It is also designed to help you to decide whether it might be right for you to take the step of being ‘confirmed’ as a member of the Anglican Church.

**THE CONFIRMATION SERVICE ON 3 MAY HAS BEEN
POSTPONED - TBA**

The preparation sessions will take place at
The Joydens Wood Vicarage, 6 Tile Kiln Lane
Joydens Wood, DA5 2BB

PLEASE NOTE... Coming to the sessions does NOT commit you to being confirmed. That is your decision nearer the time.

Each of the three sessions will help you to look at some aspects of the Christian faith, and give you plenty of opportunity to bring and share your own questions, doubts, hopes and uncertainties.

Believing	Who is Jesus? The Bible
Belonging	The EucharistChristian Symbols
Behaving	Prayer and the wider church Preparing for the Service

There will be a Rehearsal at St Francis, Petts Wood nearer the time

Reverend Ren Harding (Team Rector)
01322 528923
07836644782



News and Issues



New Archbishop of York to be confirmed

Bishop Stephen Geoffrey Cottrell will be confirmed as the 98th Archbishop of York this month.

The service, at 11am on Thursday 9th July, will be broadcast entirely via video conference due to the Coronavirus restrictions.

The service, which had been due to take place in York Minster, will be in two parts. A legal ceremony with readings, prayers and music, will be followed by a film marking the start of Bishop Stephen's ministry as Archbishop of York.

Bishop Stephen Cottrell says: "I am looking forward to beginning my ministry as the 98th Archbishop of York. This isn't quite how I imagined it would begin. It is certainly the first time an Archbishop's election will have been confirmed via video conference. But we're all having to re-imagine how we live our lives and how we inhabit the world.

"These are difficult times. My hope is that through this service the love of God that is given us in Jesus Christ will shine out, perhaps even to those who while never attending a service in York Minster, might have a look online

Following in the footsteps of my many predecessors, I look forward to serving our nation and bringing the love and peace of Christ to our world, especially here in the north."

The service will be available on the Church of England website. Arrangements for Bishop Stephen's enthronement service will be announced later in the year.

Gardening Against the Odds?

The Conservation Foundation has relaunched *Gardening Against the Odds* as a virtual network and is getting some excellent interest.

As a result, it may be making a radio series soon, featuring some of the projects it has discovered over the years which show how people combat 'odds' – mental, physical and environmental - by gardening, even when they have no garden.

These people plant seeds which they watch grow, eventually producing growth leading to flowers and fruit. Sometimes they work alone,

sometimes there is an opportunity to share, producing a sense of community. All this is nothing new, but many people are discovering the benefits of gardening as a result of lockdown – discovering how gardening can help combat loneliness and depression with a sense of caring and wellbeing sometimes with life changing results.

This is a very topical issue and so if you have discovered the benefits of gardening recently – or know someone who has – the Conservation Foundation would love to hear from you as soon as possible.

Please contact : davidshreeve@conservationfoundation.co.uk.

Facebook

@gardeningagainsttheodds website<https://conservationfoundation.co.uk/projects/gardening-against-the-odds/>

Online book of remembrance opened at St Paul's

St Paul's Cathedral has launched *Remember Me*, an online book of remembrance for all those who have been living in the UK who have died as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. People of all faiths, beliefs or none are invited to contribute to *Remember Me*.

HRH The Prince of Wales , who recorded a video message, said: "This virtual book of remembrance is here not just to recall our loss and sorrow, but also to be thankful for everything good that those we have loved brought into our lives."

Family, friends and carers of those who have died can submit, free of charge, the name, photograph and a short message in honour of a deceased person via the *Remember Me* website. The deceased person must have been living in the UK. *Remember Me* will be open for entries for as long as needed. It is intended that the *Remember Me* site will become a physical memorial at the Cathedral.

Annual Report for 2019 published by Church Commissioners

The Church Commissioners for England, the endowment fund of the Church of England, have published their Annual Report for 2019.

Key results include:

The Church Commissioners made a positive return of 10% in 2019
Value of Commissioners' investment fund stood at £8.7bn (year end 2019)

Church Commissioners post eleventh successive year of positive returns

The total return averaged over the past 30 years at 8.5% per annum.
The Church Commissioners contributed approximately 15% of the Church's annual running costs.

In 2019 £19.4m was awards in SDF to 11 projects in 11 dioceses.

The NHS – bearing one another's burdens

By the Ven John Barton

“Save the NHS” was the slogan chosen by the British government when the coronavirus began to spread. Meant to evoke public compassion, and compliance with emergency regulations, it sounded as though the NHS was an endangered species. In fact it was the public themselves whose lives were in jeopardy; the National Health Service existed solely for their benefit. The slogan did manage to stir gratitude for a service which had been taken for granted, as well as appreciation of its 1.5+ million staff, many of whom were now putting their own lives at greater risk.

The idea for a countrywide medical service came from the Beveridge Report, instigated by the coalition government during World War II. “Medical treatment covering all requirements will be provided for all citizens by a national health service”, is how it was defined, though it had to wait until 1948 for its implementation to begin.

It was part of a programme for reconstruction, aiming to eliminate Want, Disease, Ignorance, Squalor and Idleness. Sir William Beveridge, who gave his name to the report, was close friends with two other social reformers: R H Tawney, and William Temple, who was to become Archbishop of Canterbury. Today’s Archbishop, Justin Welby, wrote this about the trio: “Drawing on Christian understandings of justice, generosity and human dignity, they described the kind of country that they felt reflected God’s values better.”

St Paul couldn’t have thought he was providing a slogan for a welfare state when he wrote, “Bear one another’s burdens and so fulfil the law of Christ”, but that is a neat summary of the way the National Health Service works. We all pay in when we can and we all benefit when we need.

One estimate of the cost of the NHS today is £158.4 billion, which in real terms is 10 times as much as in 1950. In the meantime, it’s no longer completely free for all. Prescription charges and dental fees have been introduced. The development of ever-more sophisticated

life-saving drugs and medical procedures will inevitably mean higher costs - and a heightened moral dilemma. Must there be further limits to the provision of “medical treatment covering all requirements”?

The colossal task of rebuilding a shattered economy in the years to come may compel the British people to choose between what is essential and what is optional. The Christian principle now sounds particularly demanding: “Bear one another’s burdens and so fulfil the law of Christ”.

When the Pope was declared to be infallible

By Tim Lenton

It was 150 years ago, on 18th July 1870, that the Vatican issued the declaration of Papal Infallibility. It preserved the Pope from the possibility of error when he defined a doctrine concerning faith or morals to be held by the whole Roman Catholic Church.

The dogma of papal infallibility is one that has, not surprisingly, made other parts of the universal Church particularly uncomfortable. But although it was often assumed in the medieval Church and earlier, it was not proclaimed in so many words until the First Vatican Council of 1870. It was then that Pope Pius IX wanted to emphasise his own spiritual authority after he was dethroned as ruler of the Papal States following Italy's reunification. Voting on it took place during a thunderstorm, which some saw as significant.

Papal infallibility applies only when the Pope speaks ‘*ex cathedra*’ – from the chair. After 1870 no such decree was made until in 1950 Pope Pius XII defined the Assumption of Mary – the taking of Mary, body and soul, into heaven at her death – as an article of faith.

Some believe that Pope John Paul II’s declaration in 1994 that women could never be ordained was infallible, but this is disputed.



MEETINGS and Events **2020**

Planning for The "Welcome to the Meadows"
Educational Day 19 July 2020
is on hold.

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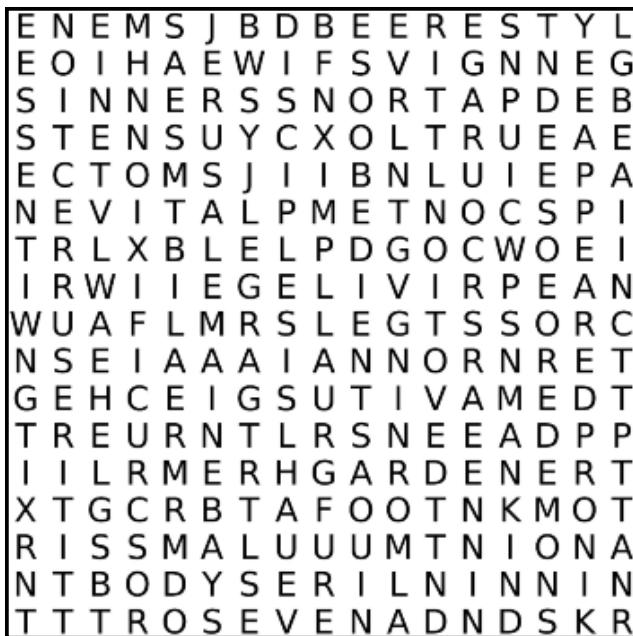
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WORDSEARCH



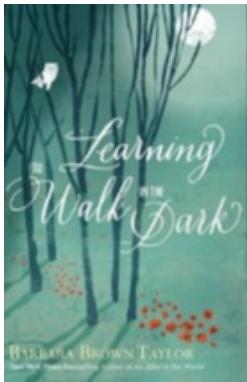
Crucifixion	life	anoint	Mary	mankind	morning	disciples
patron	seven	feet	foot	risen	faithful	return
repentant	demons	follower	cross	appeared	humble	obedient
sinners	Tiberius	courage	tomb	easter	devotion	resurrection
contemplative	Galilee	Jerusalem	body	gardener	privilege	witness

Solutions on page 21



Book Mark

Learning to Walk in the Dark – because God often shows up at night
By Barbara Brown Taylor, Canterbury Press, £12.99



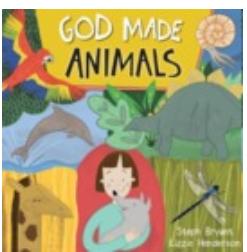
Barbara Brown Taylor explores 'the treasures of darkness' that the Bible speaks about. What can we learn about the ways of God when we cannot see the way ahead, are lost, alone, frightened, not in control or when the world around us seems to have descended into darkness?

Contemporary culture throws many brightly lit distractions at us to divert our attention away from the dark, but Barbara Brown Taylor combines her great grace, sensitivity and insight as a writer and priest with the deep wisdom of the biblical and Christian traditions

to discover how God is more present to our vulnerable, open night-time selves than to our pre-occupied daylight selves.

God Made Animals

By Stephanie Bryant, Elizabeth Henderson, and Steph Marshall, Lion Hudson, £5.99



"God has given us lots of clues about how He made animals. This is how we think He did it..." The 'God Made' series encourages young children to explore and discover more about the world around them, and tells them about the loving God who made it all. Scientific ideas about how everything came to be are simply explained through the lively narrative and amazing illustrations, leaving children full of

wonder at God's creativity, love, and power.

With input from The Faraday Institute for Science and Religion, and fun experiments for curious young scientists to try, this series is an ideal way to help children engage with and celebrate God and His universe.

ALL IN THE MONTH OF JULY

175 years ago, on 4th July 1845 Thomas Barnardo, Irish humanitarian and philanthropist was born. He founded Barnardo's, a charity which cares for vulnerable children and young people.

150 years ago, on 18th July 1870 the Vatican issued the declaration of Papal Infallibility. It preserved the Pope from the possibility of error when he defined a doctrine concerning faith or morals to be held by the whole Catholic Church.

90 years ago, on 7th July 1930 Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, British writer who created the detective Sherlock Holmes, died.

80 years ago, on 10th July 1940 to 31st October 1940: The Battle of Britain took place. British victory.

75 year ago, on 5th July 1945 WWII leader Winston Churchill lost the British General Election to Clement Attlee's Labour Party.

70 years ago, on 5th July 1950 Israel's Knesset passed the Law of Return, which granted all Jews the right to immigrate to Israel.

25 years ago, on 16th July 1995 Amazon.com opened its website to the public.

THE BOTHY

Are you looking for a small hall for a function?

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you need and can seat 35 people.**

If you need further information please contact

Lynne Meads on 07966 315518

Signs & Symbols

By The Revd Dr Jo White

Reflected Faith Series: a ‘Holding Cross’



Many churches today are using social media to hold public services – either together at the same time or uploaded so you can listen and watch at any time and worship in your home when it is convenient for you.

I find that having a ‘prayer space’ when I join, as well as when I pray alone, enables me to enter into that time of holiness quicker and more fruitfully.

It’s like when you physically go to a church building for a service. Your hand holds the door handle and you choose to enter into a sacred space.

Not many of us have the luxury of a separate space where we currently live, and in many ways I prefer not to distinguish prayer life from everyday life. After all, where does one end and the other begin? God is everywhere; in every room in the house. He’s no less in my home or yours than He is in our locked church buildings. He’s with me when I pray and when I eat, or cook, or watch TV and so on.

One item I appreciate is a cross that I can hold. Ideally one that completely fits into my hand.

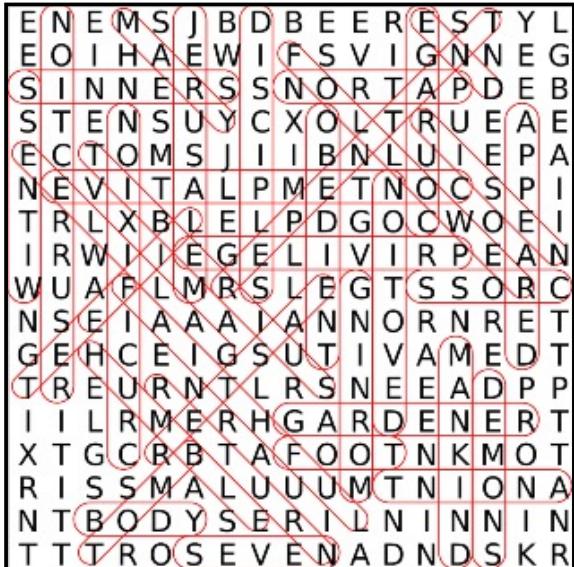
There are wooden ‘Holding Crosses’ that you can make or buy especially for this purpose, but you can use any material. Perhaps you could make one out of felt and stuff it, to give it form and solidity.

I have one made from an old plastic book binding strip, which I cut to size. One piece slots into the other, to form the cross shape.

What I appreciate about the holding cross is its firmness, it reminds me that Christ is my firm foundation; that God is solid and dependable. It reminds me also that whatever happens I will cling to Him. And it tells me that as I hold that cross in my hand so I pray that He will hold me forever, never letting me go or fall.

This month: See what materials you have from which you could make a Holding Cross. What feelings and thoughts come to you as you use it in your prayer and worship time?

SOLUTIONS TO WORDSEARCH



SMILE LINES

Coronavirus

For the first time in history, we can help save the human race by lying in front of the TV and doing nothing. Let's not mess this one up!

Pancakes

A mother was preparing pancakes for her sons, Kevin, five, and Ryan, three. The boys began to argue over who would get the first pancake. Their mother saw the chance for a moral lesson. "If Jesus were sitting here, He would say, 'Let my brother have the first pancake, I can wait.'"

Quick as a wink, Kevin turned to his younger brother and said, "Ryan, you be Jesus!"

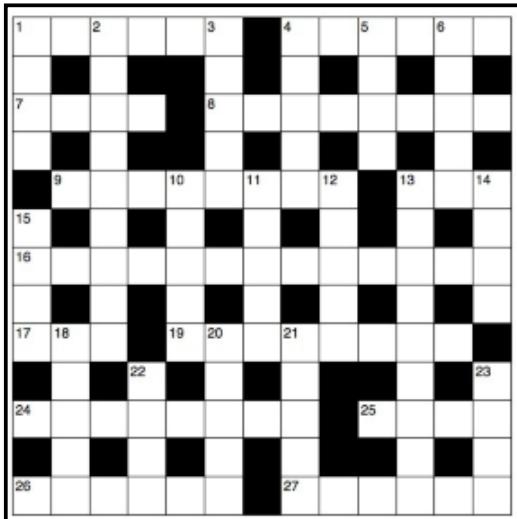
JULY CROSSWORD PUZZLE

Across

- 1 'I pray that out of his glorious — he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being' (Ephesians 3:16) (6)
- 4 'Saul's father Kish and — father Ner were sons of Abiel' (1 Samuel 14:51) (6)
- 7 'Praise the Lord, O my — ' (Psalm 103:1) (4)
- 8 See 5 Down
- 9 Laws (1 Kings 11:33) (8)
- 13 'Who of you by worrying can — a single hour to his life?' (Luke 12:25) (3)
- 16 Artistry (Exodus 31:5) (13)
- 17 'Your young men will see visions, your — men will dream dreams' (Acts 2:17) (3)
- 19 How David described his Lord (Psalm 19:14) (8)
- 24 'If this city is built and its — — restored, you will be left with nothing in Trans-Euphrates' (Ezra 4:16) (5,3)
- 25 'The holy Scriptures, which are able to make you — for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus' (2 Timothy 3:15) (4)
- 26 Intended destination of arrows (Lamentations 3:12) (6)
- 27 Eve hit (anag.) (6)

Down

- 1 'For I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find — for your souls' (Matthew 11:29) (4)
- 2 Where Peter was when he denied Christ three times (Luke 22:55) (9)
- 3 Remarkable early 20th-century Indian evangelist, a convert from Hinduism, — Sundar Singh (5)
- 4 'Now the king had put the officer on whose — — leaned in charge of the gate' (2 Kings 7:17) (3,2)
- 5 and 8 Across The Lover describes this facial feature of the Beloved thus: 'Your — is like the tower of Lebanon looking towards — ' (Song of Songs 7:4) (4,8)
- 6 'Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled — your waist' (Ephesians 6:14) (5)
- 10 Trout (anag.) (5)
- 11 Easily frightened (1 Thessalonians 5:14) (5)



- 12 The ability to perceive (Ecclesiastes 10:3) (5)
13 One of the clans descended from Benjamin (Numbers 26:38) (9)
14 "It is one of the Twelve," he replied, "one who — bread into the bowl with me" (Mark 14:20) (4)
15 Resound (Zephaniah 2:14) (4)
18 Traditional seat of the Dalai Lama (5)
20 Precise (John 4:53) (5)
21 Build (Ezekiel 4:2) (5)
22 Beat harshly (Acts 22:25) (4)
23 Darius, who succeeded Belshazzar as king of the Babylonians, was one (Daniel 5:31) (4)

(Solutions on page 28)

SAVE THE DATE

Sunday 12th July
All Age Service at 9.30 am
A celebration for 75th anniversary of
North Cray Guides and Brownies
All welcome

ST JAMES THE LEAST OF ALL

On the delights of the parish jumble sale
The Rectory
St. James the Least



My dear Nephew Darren

The estimate for re-hanging the bells in our church tower came as something of a shock. The church council discussed fund-raising at length. Someone suggested selling part of the Rectory garden for building, another for getting 200 parishioners to loan £1,000 each, interest-free. Mrs Ffrench suggested holding a jumble sale. The jumble sale won – mainly because it gives everyone an opportunity to see what their neighbours think of as junk.

Expensive articles are brought with an ostentatious show of modesty when everyone is together, sorting donations. Genuine rubbish, such as black and white televisions that broke 20 years ago and cardigans with holes at the elbows are left at the church hall doors in the dead of night.

Before the doors opened, all the helpers were assembled behind piles of clothing, which had they collapsed would have smothered half the congregation. I was unable to see little Miss Faversham, who rarely misses these opportunities to kit herself out with another year's wardrobe. Someone pointed to one table and told me she was in men's clothing. I always had my suspicions.

Once the doors were opened and customers poured in, I got a better appreciation of how the Italians must have felt when they saw Hannibal with his elephants pouring down the sides of the Alps. That is when the mettle of our ladies really shows, haggling over whether something worth £10 goes for 10 or 11p. Those used to riding with hounds seem best able to control the crowds – even if they

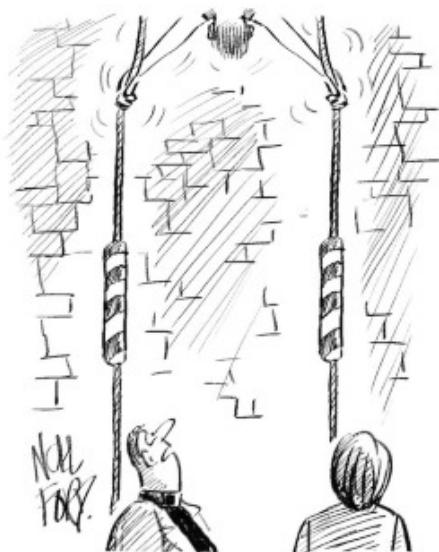
occasionally tend to regard the customers as the fox.

As it happened, the youth club were going pot-holing that day, so most of the teenagers bought complete sets of clothing for 10p which could then be discarded afterwards. I wondered what their caving instructor would think of teenagers arriving dressed in dinner jackets and tweed skirts.

Two days of preparation leads to a battle that is over in less than an hour and we emerge bloodied but unbowed, home for a bath, in the knowledge that the first step to saving the bells has been taken. Only another 2,500 jumble sales and we shall have reached our target. The day was slightly marred when I crossed the church hall car park to see a note stuck on to my car: "Sold – to be collected later".

Your loving uncle,

Eustace



Eric took social distancing while bell ringing very seriously.

GOD AND THE ARTS

By The Rev Michael Burgess

'My Lord and my God'

The calendar allows us to celebrate St Thomas the apostle in this month of July as well as traditionally in December. Thomas is mentioned with the other disciples in all the Gospels, but it is in the fourth Gospel that he moves into the centre of the stage in his own right.

In chapter 14 he queries the words of Jesus that evokes the confession 'I am the way and the truth and the life' from our Lord. Then after the resurrection, when unconvinced by the accounts of the others, Thomas has that memorable and moving encounter with the risen Lord. In chapter 20 Jesus meets him in his doubts and his faith is restored.

'The Incredulity of St Thomas' is the subject of this month's painting by Peter Paul Rubens. Rubens (1577-1640) lived mainly in Antwerp, but his work displays a delight in sumptuous colour and the human form, which he would have learnt from his studies in Italy. Rubens was a good-humoured and genial person, and as a Roman Catholic, he cherished his religion and faith. This painting is from 1614 and is



part of a triptych. The two outer panels portray the patrons who commissioned the work for their chapel in the Franciscan church in Antwerp – Nicholaas Rockox and his wife.

In this central panel, Thomas gazes in wonder at the marked hand of Jesus. He is there with a youthful St John and another disciple, who is looking at the face of the Lord. The light in the canvas comes from the risen body of Jesus, and the disciples move from the shadows into that light as their faith in the risen Lord grows and matures. In a moment, Thomas will raise his head and look up to Jesus. It is a momentous occasion in John's Gospel, for this meeting of master and servant, of Lord and disciple, is not just an exercise in overcoming doubt. It is an affirmation that only God can raise or be raised from death. Only God has the key to life. Thomas recognises Jesus fully and completely as he utters the words 'My Lord and my God.'

John ends his Gospel by saying, Yes, there was this moment of personal encounter, but believing without seeing is testimony to a more profound faith. Then it is not we who are invited to touch our Lord, but Jesus who can touch us. In the painting, one hand is turned towards the disciples, the other reaches out to us. We may come to Jesus, like Thomas, with doubts and concerns, with worry and anxiety. Jesus will meet us in the honesty and openness of our faith to reassure us that He is, as He was for Thomas, the way, the truth and the life – our Lord and our God.

Thomas Dale's poem on 'Unbelieving Thomas' ends with this verse:

“Oh! If the iris of the skies
Transcends the painter's art,
How could he trace to human eyes
The rainbow of the heart;
When love, joy, fear, repentance, shame,
Hope, faith, in swift succession came,
Each claiming there a part;
Each mingling in the tears that flowed,
The words that breathed – ‘My Lord! My God!’”

22nd St Mary Magdalene, the woman with a past

Later this month Christians all over the world will commemorate probably the most unlikely saint in the Bible, Mary Magdalene. There was something in her background that has always fascinated people. All we are told about her ‘past’ is that Jesus had cast ‘seven devils’ out of her, but on that slender if intriguing evidence she has become the patron saint of ‘fallen women’.

Some see her as the woman ‘who was a sinner’ who washed Christ’s feet with her tears at a respectable dinner party. Of that person Jesus remarked that ‘she had been forgiven much’ and consequently ‘loved much’. Whether she was that woman or not, the description perfectly fits her. No one who has heard or read it could surely fail to be moved by her tearful encounter with the risen Jesus in the garden on Easter morning, the man she had taken to be the gardener revealing Himself in one word, Mary, as her beloved Teacher.

The problem with a good story – and hers is as good as it gets – is that people can’t leave it alone. Down the centuries she has been John the Apostle’s fiancée until he left her to follow Christ. She has gone with Jesus’ mother and the same John to live in Ephesus and died there. In art and in literature she has become an alluring, figure, disapproved of by the mother of Jesus. There is no historical evidence whatsoever for any of this. In fact, the Gospels suggest the two Marys were close in their shared devotion to Jesus.

Her popularity is shown in the fact that 187 ancient churches in Britain are dedicated to her, and a college at both Oxford and Cambridge. Whatever the details of her story, we cherish it because it shows that having a ‘past’ is no reason not to have a future.

SOLUTIONS TO CROSSWORD PUZZLE

ACROSS: 1, Riches. 4, Abner's. 7, Soul. 8, Damascus. 9, Statutes. 13, Add. 16, Craftsmanship. 17, Old. 19, Redeemer. 24, Walls are. 25, Wise. 26, Target. 27, Thief.

DOWN: 1, Rest. 2, Courtyard. 3, Sadhu. 4, Arm he. 5, Nose. 6, Round. 10, Tutor. 11, Timid. 12, Sense. 13, Ashbelite. 14, Dips. 15, Echo. 18, Lhasa. 20, Exact. 21, Erect. 22, Flog. 23, Mede.



SAINTS

Did you know that there is a proper word to describe the study of saints and holy people? It is hagiology.

Nearly every job or profession has its own patron saint – even television! St Claire (who lived way before television was imagined: she was born in 1194 and died in 1253) is the patron saint of television. Why? Because at Christmas 1252 she was too ill to go to the church service which was several miles away, yet she had a vision which was so clear that she could describe the whole service in detail.

Did you know that Mary is the most common name for a saint? Even some male saints have had the name!

Did you know that saints' days were printed in red on the calendars used by the Church? That is why we say a special day is a Red Letter Day.



SPECIAL NAMES

The answer to each question is the name of a person in the Bible. When you have all the answers, rearrange the first letter of each name to make the name of a saint who is celebrated in July.



1. He built the Ark (Genesis, chapter 6)
2. One of Israel's greatest prophets (1 Kings 17)
3. He became Ruth's husband (Ruth)
4. Peter knew this centurion (Acts 10)
5. Timothy's mother (2 Timothy 1)
6. Father of Jacob and Esau (Genesis 27)
7. Another name for Dorcas (Acts 9)

A shepherd boy who became a king (1 Samuel 17)



How long did Cain hate his brother?

As long as he was Abel.

Benedict, who is celebrated on 11th July
4. Comelius 5. Eunice 6. Isaac 7. Tabitha
8. David; which, rearranged, spell
Answers: 1. Noah 2. Elijah 3. Boaz

FROM THE REGISTERS

Baptisms

Weddings

Burials

Internment of Ashes

Year's mind for July 2019

11th
24th

*George Clubb
Janet Marjorie Pitts*

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If you are going to attend our church and you have accessibility needs please let us know and we will be happy to make arrangements for you. There is level access to the church and the Bothy and we have a sound loop system and large print orders of service. Please feel free to telephone the Team Vicar Rev Ren Harding who will be happy to discuss the matter with you.

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