



Parish News



February 2021

Dear Friends,

It's a privilege to write this to you from the Lecturer's seat. I honestly couldn't have predicted this even 12 months ago, and I want to take this opportunity to say thanks for the welcome you have given the family and me.

The last few years have involved significant change for the family and me; but we've all had to cope with a huge amount of change recently. Bob Dylan wrote about this universal principle of change in 1964 when he wrote the song *The times they are a changin'*. In many ways, it's a statement of the obvious because, as we well know, responding to change is such a normal part of life. Sometimes, (and I won't be the only one here) I see my children doing something quite independently, and I think, "when did you learn to do that?". They've picked up a skill, something which Ilona and I haven't taught them and couldn't do ourselves, and yet it's become second nature to them. Yet I can still remember the day they were born (not half as clearly as Ilona does!).

The times they are a changin'

I remember one lesson at theological college where we sat round a table and analysed a number of Diocesan straplines, and sitting there, quietly quite proud of Manchester Diocese's "Church for a changing world" strapline, I was surprised to find that it didn't feature in the class's top three. I bet it would now! But it's another acknowledgement that we're at a time of significant change – there's something *unusual* about the amount of change that's happening at the moment. In our own lifetimes, we have seen the changes that the internet, and instant access to the internet through smartphones and other devices has had. 'Best practice' is a constantly evolving science, and in some fields of practice, changes daily.

The times they are a changin'

As I look out of my study window, I can see through the gap in the 100-year-old houses to the flanks of Winter Hill, a geography which hasn't changed all that much in thousands of years. The Winter Hill Race was stopped because it passed through an area of ancient bog-land!

The green and brown fields and moors remind me of Psalm 121,

"I lift up my eyes to the hills - from where will my help come?

My help comes from the Lord; who made heaven and earth."

Timeless words which remind me not just of timeless landscapes and hills and holidays in the Lake District, but of the rock, who is God. The Psalm continues,

“He will not let your foot be moved; he who keeps you will not slumber”.

The ‘Children Changing Places’ project run in the schools in Bolton is a wonderful project which helps children hold tight to their faith and its values at a time when they face huge changes in their lives: the transition from Nursery to Primary School and from Primary to Secondary school - times when it’s especially important to learn how to “hold unswervingly to the hope that we profess” (Hebrews 10.23)

The Collects for Epiphany recognise that “the times they are a changing”, and they also encourage us to never lose sight of our hope in Christ. Through our Christian education and experiences they encourage us to be transformed,

“In Christ, who makes all things new”, and who equips us with “the riches of his grace”. (Collect for 2nd Sunday of Epiphany)

As we look towards Spring and the beginning of Lent with Ash Wednesday on Feb 17th, there are plenty of ways we can journey together and encourage one another with this hope. There’s the Lent book club and a whole host of services and other resources planned. As we look forward to the spring, the vaccine roll-out and the Lenten journey, let us continue to hold unswervingly to the hope that we profess.

With love and best wishes,

Ian

2021 anniversary prayer

Gracious God, as we celebrate the 150th anniversary of the consecration of this church, we give thanks for all who have made it a house of prayer. May we, like St Peter, proclaim with confidence, that Jesus Christ is the Messiah, the Saviour of the world. Bless the on-going work of Bolton Parish Church, as we give thanks for the past, live fully in the present and look with hope to the future. Amen





LENT, HOLY WEEK AND EASTER SERVICES 2021

17th February	Ash Wednesday	
10.30 am	Holy Communion with imposition of ashes	St Philip's
12.15 pm	Holy Communion with imposition of ashes	Bolton Parish Church
7.30 pm	Holy Communion with imposition of ashes	Bolton Parish Church
21st March	Passion Sunday	
6.30pm	Evening Prayer	Bolton Parish Church
28th March	Palm Sunday	
8.00 am	Holy Communion	Bolton Parish Church
9.15 am	Holy Communion	St Philip's
11.00 am	Holy Communion	Bolton Parish Church
6.30 pm	Evening Prayer	Bolton Parish Church
29th March	Monday in Holy Week	
7.30 pm	Compline	St Philip's
30th March	Tuesday in Holy Week	
12.15 pm	Holy Communion	Bolton Parish Church
7.30 pm	Compline	Bolton Parish Church
31st March	Wednesday in Holy Week	
7.30 pm	Compline	St Philip's
1st April	Maundy Thursday	
12.15 pm	Holy Communion	Bolton Parish Church
7.30 pm	Holy Communion and stripping of altar	Bolton Parish Church
7.30 pm	Holy Communion and stripping of altar	St Philip's
2nd April	Good Friday	
2.00 pm	Hour at the Cross	Bolton Parish Church
3rd April	Easter Eve	
8.00 pm	Easter Vigil	Bolton Parish Church
4th April	Easter Day	
8.00 am	Holy Communion	Bolton Parish Church
9.15am	Holy Communion	St Philip's
11.00 am	Holy Communion	Bolton Parish Church
6.30 pm	Evening Prayer	Bolton Parish Church



Parish Church Schools

Canon Slade School, Bradshaw Brow BL2 3BP

Headteacher: Karen Sudworth

Tel: 01204 333343

Bishop Bridgeman Primary School, Rupert Street BL3 6PY

Executive Principal: Canon Jill Pilling

Headteacher: Hafsha Hafeji

Bolton Parish Church Primary School, Chadwick Street BL2 1JN

Headteacher: Angela Worthington

Tel: 01204 333433

Support for others in need

The Covid-19 pandemic has not removed the need for support for others – if anything, it has heightened it. Some things can be recycled to support various charities so please continue to save and bring to church the following items:

- Used postage stamps – Christmas is the best time to collect these.
- Unwanted spectacles.
- Old working mobile phones, tablets and laptops.

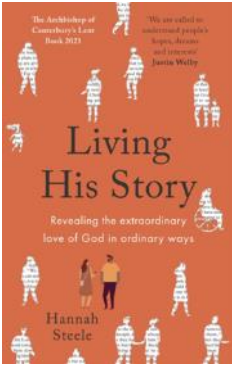
We continue to collect items of food for the grub tub, supporting the work of Urban Outreach.

Please send copy for the March
issue by 20 February to
sigridjcp@gmail.com

or

admin@boltonparishchurch.co.uk

Material for inclusion may also be left at the
back of Church



Lent Book 2021

Once again we are planning a Lent Reading Group which (like our Advent Group in 2020) will be meeting via Zoom. This year's book is

Living His Story : Revealing the extraordinary love of God in ordinary ways: by The Revd Dr Hannah Steele

SPCK Publishing ISBN:9780281085170

This is The Archbishop of Canterbury's Lent Book 2021 and is available to order online and as a Kindle edition. It is also available through the Isaiah 53 Bookshop in Bolton which though closed due to lockdown (at the time of writing), does offer a 'click and collect' service on 01204 532384.

The group will meet online on Monday evenings, 7.30pm – 8.30pm on 15th and 22nd February and 1st, 8th, 15th and 22nd March.

To join, please use the Zoom link below and feel free to share this with others.

Topic: Lent Book Group 2021

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88636737735?pwd=UC9JR2ZsVmRGNG5IMXpPL2lKL2V3UT09>

(although the line is broken as printed here, it needs to be entered as one continuous string of characters)

Meeting ID: 886 3673 7735

Passcode: 607465



From Revd Roy Iddon

Candlemas

It has to be admitted that Christmas is well and truly over, the tree is down, the decorations are safely packed away for another year. The more enterprising among you may have purchased next Christmas' cards, cheaply in the January sales and once Epiphany has passed, we reach the point in the Christian calendar when the next celebration is The Presentation of Christ in the Temple or as it is often called these days Candlemas.

This is the day when we remember Mary and Joseph taking the baby Jesus to the Temple in Jerusalem, forty days after his birth. It was a celebration, a thanksgiving for the child and a blessing of the mother. For us today it is the last revelation of Jesus in this season, in which we remember the Incarnation of Jesus. It is, I like to think, the last epiphany or revelation of the Christmas period, during which Jesus is revealed firstly to the shepherds, then to the Wise Men and finally in the temple to Simeon and Anna, two old people who have been waiting for this revelation for many years.

Mary and Joseph must have been amazed when these two old people came to them in the Temple saying that now that they had seen their baby they could die in peace. They were not going to live long enough to see Jesus grow into a man and none of them knew that he would go on to teach and to preach and to heal, let alone know of his death and

resurrection. Simeon and Anna were truly trusting people. They knew that God would keep his word. They had waited and prayed for this day and has soon as they saw the child, they knew that God's promises had been fulfilled and that the promised Messiah had arrived. The Light of Christ had come into the world.

It is the phrase 'a light to lighten the gentiles' from The Song of Simeon, the Nunc dimittis, that turns this festival into a Celebration of Light.

Jesus is seen as 'the Light of the World', not just a light for the Jews, but for everyone, Jews and gentiles alike, a Light for everyone.

In some churches the new Easter Candle is blessed at Candlemas, as on this day we turn from the season of Christmas towards the season of Lent followed by Passiontide and Good Friday and then Easter comes again and once more we celebrate the Light of Christ coming into the world.

Forty days since Christmas Day and only fifteen to Ash Wednesday. So on this day, as we think of Our Lord Jesus Christ as the Light of the World let us remember the Light of the Good News which he brought to us and also the great sacrifice, which he made for us and for our salvation.

_____.

Nunc dimittis

My time has come, Lord.
My life may cease.
Now grant that I, Lord
May go in peace.

You promised me, Lord,
That I would see
Your Christ, the Saviour,
Who'd set us free.

He is the Light, Lord
You sent to be
A light up-lifted
For all to see.

Your people's glory,
Your people's peace.
He brings salvation,
Now doubts can cease.

Glory to you, Lord
And to your Son
And Holy Spirit,
While ages run.

Fr. Roy.



From the Parish Registers

Funerals

30 December	Stuart Webster
13 January	Neil Pickering
15 January	Joyce Holt
21 January	Ann Adams
22 January	Betty Taylor
25 January	Eileen Scofield
26 January	Mike Abbott



**The First Day of Lent
commonly called
Ash Wednesday**

The Collect

Almighty and everlasting God, who hatest nothing that thou hast made, and dost forgive the sins of all them that are penitent: Create and make in us new and contrite hearts, that we worthily lamenting our sins, and acknowledging our wretchedness, may obtain of thee, the God of all mercy, perfect remission and forgiveness; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Planned giving

When you come to church, please remember to bring your filled planned giving envelopes. If you would like to make your regular giving by standing order (and thank you so much to those who have recently set up standing orders and those who have been doing it that way for years) the account details you need are:

Parish Church

Account Name: Bolton Parish Church PCC Stewardship.

Sort Code: 16-00-06

Account Number: 11816952

St Philip's

Account Name: St. Philip's Parochial Church Council.

Sort Code: 77-02-04

Account Number: 00017505

Bolton Parish Church Online

Email: admin@boltonparishchurch.co.uk

Website: www.boltonparishchurch.co.uk

Details of services, events, newsletters, magazines, important updates etc.

Facebook: www.facebook.com/boltonparishchurch

Official Church Facebook page, with news, photos, and archive of online services and prayers

Facebook: www.facebook.com/MusicAtBoltonParishChurch

News about music, with photos, details of musical events and videos of choir and organ

Twitter: [@StPeterBolton](https://twitter.com/StPeterBolton)

Instagram: [boltonparishchurchimages](https://www.instagram.com/boltonparishchurchimages)

Photos of Bolton Parish Church

An invitation

For Christmas 2020, members of Sunday school made angels which helped to decorate church. Each angel represented a prayer to say thank you for a special person who makes us smile.

Members of Sunday school and the Flower team are now beginning an angel project for January – March 2021. During this time we will be looking towards Easter with hope. The plan is to continue making angels, each one a prayer to say thank you, so that from Easter to Pentecost we will be able to create a wonderful display of angels in church.

Sunday school members have made a magnificent start, but from January 1st we are inviting members of the congregation, friends and families to join us in hope, by making angels for the display, with each angel representing a thank you prayer.

In 2018 the response to a request for crafted poppies was amazing.....from all ages, and with poppies created by knitting, crocheting, paper, crafting and so on. We are hoping for angels of all kinds in the same way, but please can they have white robes.

To get you started:

You can visit <https://www.riponcathedral.org.uk/wing-and-prayer/> to download a template with step-by-step instructions for making an angel like the origami angels in church. There are also ideas and instructions for all levels of skill, and to suit your interests (knitted, crocheted, made with paper plates etc) easily available on the internet, but **please** contact Rose-Marie, Kath or Alison if we can help.



A prayer of hope:

Teach us good Lord, to pray in faith,
and to live in hope,
that we may go out into your world,
confident in that same hope,
and filled with the good news of Jesus
Christ.

To Him be the glory, now and forever,

Amen

A man moved into a tiny hamlet. On the following day, he decided to visit the village pub, where he promptly ordered three beers. The barman looked a little surprised, but served the man three beers, which he drank quietly at a table, alone. The next evening the man came in again and ordered three beers. Soon the entire village was whispering about the Man Who Orders Three Beers.

Eventually, the barman brought up the subject on behalf of the villagers. “I don’t mean to pry, but people around here are wondering why you always order three beers.”

The man explained, “You see, I have two brothers, and one went to America, and the other to Australia. We promised each other that we would always order an extra two beers whenever we drank as a way of keeping up the family bond.”

The barman, and soon the entire village, was pleased with this answer, and the Man Who Orders Three Beers became a local celebrity, with outsiders also coming to the hamlet to watch him order and drink.

Then, one day, the man came in and ordered only two beers. The bartender poured them with a heavy heart. This continued for the rest of the evening – each time he ordered just two beers. Word flew around the village and prayers were offered for the soul of one of the brothers.

The next day, the barman said to the man, “The villagers and I want to offer our condolences to you for the death of one of your brothers. We couldn’t help but notice the two beers...”

The man pondered for a moment, then replied, “You’ll be happy to hear that my two brothers are alive and well... It’s just that I’ve decided to give up drinking for Lent.”



Yes, I have given up chocolate for Lent-
all this is for afterwards!

Composer Quiz Answers

1. Liszt
2. Korngold
3. Bizet
4. Parry
5. Barber
6. Glass
7. Coates
8. Birtwistle
9. Walton
10. Rameau
11. Warlock
12. Sullivan
13. Finzi
14. Albinoni
15. Bartok
16. Vivaldi
17. Bliss
18. Schumann (the more obscure composer ‘Soler’ would also fit)
19. Ives
20. Beethoven
21. Borodin
22. Purcell
23. Jacob
24. Scarlatti
25. Berlioz

BCP Glossary

The Prayer Book Society has produced a glossary, which is reproduced below. The glossary can be downloaded from:

www.pbs.org.uk/a-prayer-book-glossary/a-prayer-book-glossary and is also available in the form of a card (designed to be used as a bookmark), which can be ordered by sending a stamped addressed standard-sized DL (220 mm x 110 mm) envelope, marked 'GLOSSARY', to The Prayer Book Society, The Studio, Copyhold Farm, Lady Grove, Goring Heath, Reading RG8 7RT

Comfort; Comfortable - from the late Latin *confortare*, to strengthen, to make strong; to be strengthened. *e.g.* "Hear what **comfortable** words our Saviour Christ saith."

Concord - agreement between people.

Convenient - appropriate. *e.g.* "It is convenient that the new married persons should receive Holy Communion."

Conversation - public conduct or behaviour. *e.g.* "examine your lives and conversations by the rule of God's commandments."

Curate - any priest who has 'cure' of souls in a particular place, normally a parish. *e.g.* "as the Curate by his discretion shall appoint."

Froward - perverse, contrary. *e.g.* Ps 18.26, Ps 101.5

Ghost; Ghostly - from Old English *gāst* (German, *Geist*) Spirit; spiritual. *e.g.* "...together with ghostly counsel and advice."

Graven - carved, hand-made. *e.g.* "Thou shalt not make to thyself any graven image."

Holpen - past tense of 'to help'. *e.g.* "He remembering his mercy hath holpen His servant Israel."

Indifferently - impartially.

Intolerable- from Latin *intolerabilis*, cannot be borne.

Lively - living. *e.g.* "a reasonable, holy, and lively sacrifice unto thee."

Magnify - to glorify, to praise greatly. *e.g.* "My soul doth magnify the Lord."

Man/Men - an inclusive term for all human beings. *e.g.* "Who for us men, and for our salvation came down from heaven..."

Meet - appropriate, fitting. *e.g.* "It is meet and right so to do."

Militant - the Church on earth, those still 'fighting the good fight of faith' (from the Latin *militans*) as opposed to the Church Triumphant in Heaven. *e.g.* "Let us pray for the whole state of Christ's Church militant here in earth."

Miserable - pitiable, in need of mercy. *e.g.* "But thou, O Lord, have

mercy upon us, miserable offenders.”

Oblation - from the late Latin *oblatio*, (from *offerre*, *oblatum*, to offer), offering. *e.g.* “alms and oblations”, “his one oblation of himself once offered.”

Only - often means ‘alone’. *e.g.* “Almighty God...of whose only gift it cometh...” (Collect for Trinity XIII.)

Prevent - go before. *e.g.* “Prevent us O Lord, in all our doings with thy most gracious favour.”

Profession - a declaration of belief in something. *e.g.* “Baptism representeth unto us our profession; which is, to follow the example of our Saviour Christ.”

Propitiate; Propitiation - to win or gain the favour of; a sacrifice which turns aside God’s wrath *e.g.* “he is the propitiation for our sins.”

Quick; Quicken - living; to make alive. *e.g.* “the quick and the dead.”

Remission - forgiveness and absolution. *e.g.* “Create and make in us new and contrite hearts, that we...may obtain of thee the God of all mercy, perfect remission...”

Sabaoth - in Hebrew, “hosts” or “armies.” *e.g.* “To thee Cherubim and Seraphim : continually do cry, Holy, Holy, Holy : Lord God of Sabaoth.”

Satisfaction - fulfilling an obligation incurred. *e.g.* “ye shall reconcile yourselves unto them; being ready to make restitution and satisfaction”, “a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction, for the sins of the whole world.”

Suffer - (1) to endure pain. (2) to tolerate or allow. *e.g.* “Suffer the little children to come unto me.”

Supplication - humble and earnest petition. *e.g.* “Almighty God, who hast given us grace at this time with one accord to make our common supplications unto thee...”

Tempt; Temptation - test; testing. *e.g.* “when your fathers tempted me”, “lead us not into temptation.”

Travail - painful or laborious effort; to endure such. *e.g.* “Come unto me all ye that travail...”

Very - true. *e.g.* “Very God of very God.”

Vouchsafe - to grant readily, to show gracious willingness. *e.g.* “Vouchsafe, O Lord : to keep us this day without sin.”

Vulgar - easily understandable. *e.g.* “in the vulgar tongue.”

Worthily - with due devotion or reverence, deservedly or appropriately. *e.g.* “we, worthily lamenting our sins, and acknowledging our wretchedness...”

Flower News

Simple displays of candles and foliage had been in place during Advent, with additions of gold for Christmas. At the beginning of January, a busy morning saw the removal of gold, the refreshing of greenery and the addition of winter berries to the candle arrangements.

Restrictions meant that only one member of the team could be working, but supplies of fresh holly and ivy had already been provided. Altar arrangements were created using white chrysanthemums, roses and alstroemeria, and at the end of the month simple displays of white roses were used. Candles and tea lights on window ledges and in the south porch were kept, to be relit for Candlemas.

The beautiful display of the angels of hope created by members of Sunday school remained in church during January. (Please see the article about the angels elsewhere in the magazine).

With grateful thanks for donations received during January.

Flower Team



Sixty Years in BPC Choir

Tenor Peter Pemrick celebrates a special anniversary this month - on 26 February, it will be 60 years since he joined the Choir.

His first visit to Bolton Parish Church occurred early in September 1948 at the age of eleven.

Peter takes up the story...

I was in my first year at the newly named Canon Slade Grammar School which was formerly the Church Institute School. During my first weeks there I had my eyes opened to the glories of the Parish Church, as term always began with a service in what was then a very dark and gloomy building. To my young eyes, it seemed very large and crammed with pews. The reason for the darkness was because the interior stonework was just as black as the exterior. The building did however fill me with a sense of awe because of its great size and the height of the soaring pillars. The stained glass windows also fascinated me (and still do!) and when I heard the organ it brought the building alive. I had never heard such a mighty instrument before.

Moving on to 1961, Peter, now a young man of 23, was looking for a choir, having previously sung in the choirs of St Martin-in-the-Fields, London, and St Augustine, Tonge Moor. He began to think about Bolton Parish Church and his schooldays there, and decided to seek out the organist and choirmaster.

Peter describes what happened next:

He was William Morgan, then only 29 years old and a superb organist. After a short audition (one verse of a hymn) he seemed satisfied and invited me to the next choir practice (which was, as ever, Thursday night).

Having sung bass in the choir at St Augustine's I sang the bass line in my first days at Bolton Parish Church but it was not long before Mr Morgan suggested that I could sing the tenor line (choirs have always been short of tenors!) and so I did just that and have been singing tenor in the choir ever since.

My very first service in Bolton Parish Church choir stalls took place on 26 February 1961 and here we are, all these years later! I have always

loved singing choral music, and in such beautiful acoustics as Bolton Parish Church possesses it is sheer joy.

Finally, some of you may remember I received an award from the Royal School of Church Music in October 2011 for fifty years continuous service in the choir. I was slightly embarrassed by this. Why you may ask? Because it seems wrong to get an award for something you have really enjoyed doing!



A choir photo from the late 1960s. Back: Peter Pemrick, William Morgan, Jack Shippobottom, Tom Hoyle. Front: Mary Waters (now Winstanley), Cath Wharton (Hale), Kath Bray (Chapman), Jenni Barnes (Lomax)



Left: Peter receives his Royal School of Church Music certificate and medal for 50 years of service in Bolton Parish Church Choir from the Late Gordon Appleton, R.S.C.M. Music Advisor for the North of England and Director of the Northern Cathedral Singers.

We were saddened to hear of Gordon's death (at the organ) on Easter Day 2018. He enjoyed coming to see us and sent a very nice letter afterwards which included the following *"I was very impressed with the music (organ and choir) and the dignified liturgy. I thought it was an excellent sermon too. It was a privilege to be there to recognise Peter's achievement and thank you for the warm welcome."* (Barrie was presiding and Matt was preaching)

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Lent is when I
determine which
addictions I may
still have some
control over.



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**We support Royal School for the Blind, Church Road,
Wavertree, LIVERPOOL L15 6TQ**



Over **60** churches, schools, organisations and community groups donated either money or items for the hampers (that doesn't include the huge number of individuals who also donated – so many it's hard to keep track).

This was the highest level of generosity we have ever seen for the project. Many groups smashed their targets (some by over 1,000 of what they expected) and all of our costs were covered!

384 hampers for individuals and **1,181** family hampers.

That's 1,181 savoy cabbages, 1,339 chickens, 1,749 blocks of cheese and 2,565 selection boxes!

Over **260** different volunteers making boxes, packing boxes, stickering, helping on distribution day and delivering!

We were amazed at the response, with volunteering being booked up within just a few days.

Not only did we see huge generosity for Christmas Dinner on Jesus, but we were also overwhelmed with the donations that came into the Food Hub.

In the week leading up to Christmas, we saw as much food donated as in the entire four-week period of harvest!



The Last Word

A new monthly feature where we get to know each other a little better through a series of questions .

This month: Ian Darbyshire .

Do you come from Bolton? (if not...where? And what brought you to Bolton?) I'm from Lancashire, and I've lived in Bolton for about 15 years.

What brought you to Bolton?

I moved here to be closer to work.

What is your main occupation?

I'm a civil servant.

How long have you been coming to Bolton Parish Church?

Since about 2011/2012.

What first brought you to Bolton Parish Church?

Easter brought me in, and the impulsion to return regularly to worship, to formal worship. I remember the strong and dramatic impression at the first Maundy Thursday service I attended here, at the Stripping of the Altars, as the symbol of the cross is removed, and the church falls into darkness, 'and they all forsook him, and fled'. It struck me as an image of a world from which Christianity and its symbols had been removed, and therefore gave a sense of the overwhelming importance of what the church holds in its keeping.

What's your favourite piece of music? and can you explain why?

One of my favourites is Olivier Messiaen's Turangalîla Symphony. Messiaen explained that 'Turangalîla' is a Sanskrit word comprising two words with complex meanings. Briefly, 'Lîla' refers to the divine action upon the cosmos, also Love; and 'Turanga' is time that runs,

'like a galloping horse'. The word thus means all at once 'love song, hymn to joy, time, movement, rhythm, life and death'. He did not restrict himself much in his subject matter. It sounds quite extraordinary, too: exuberant, colourful, tender, mysterious. Some people think it's a ridiculous piece (apparently Stravinsky said all one needed to write it was enough manuscript paper), but I've loved it ever since I first heard it as a schoolboy.

What book(s) are you reading at the moment?

On and off over the last year or so I've been reading Clarendon's History of the Rebellion (it's quite long). Lord Clarendon - Edward Hyde - was an adviser to Charles I during the civil wars and Lord Chancellor at the Restoration. It is the most wonderful history, with a rolling opening sentence (which echoes the opening of Richard Hooker's Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity), a vividness about the narration (though there are some detours), and sharp analysis of character and motivation in various pen-portraits of those involved; there is a strong sense that you are hearing from someone who was in the midst of it all. I started but didn't finish reading it years ago with a library copy when I was at university, and a chance discovery in an Inverness bookshop of a seven-volume copy has allowed me to resume it (I started at the beginning again)!

What's your favourite hymn? Why?

The Day of Resurrection I like, for the joy of Easter Day after the darkness of the Passion. I also like St Patrick's Breastplate ('I bind unto myself today'), though I think I've only sung it once in a church service; there aren't many March 17ths in a year, I suppose.

I'll also mention one of my favourite uses of a hymn. There is a motet by Vaughan Williams, 'Lord Thou Hast Been Our Refuge', in which 'O God Our Help in Ages Past' is woven beautifully into the music (the motet is a setting of Psalm 90, on which of course the hymn is also based).

Is there a passage of scripture or liturgy which you keep coming back to, which grabs you, or encourages you?

I find that the liturgy and its interrelationship with scripture - the one shedding light on the other - is constantly surprising me. Like light casting different shadows or reflections, the words reveal different senses and emphases at different times. I think liturgical worship touches on something very deep, and you become aware after the practise of it for a while that it has been sending out roots which are burrowing away into the deepest parts, almost without you realizing it; or so it seems to me, anyway. It can say uncompromising things, but at the same time there is a gentleness, with full awareness of and compensation for our frailty, always calling us back.

One of the things I love about Evening Prayer is saying - or hearing when it is marvellous choral Evensong - the Psalms, as part of the progression through the service from Old Testament to New, whereby they and everything else become illuminated by that 'light to lighten the Gentiles'. The language makes one sit up at times, too. Psalm 39 v.12 once hit me in the pit of the stomach with 'When thou with rebukes dost chasten man for sin, thou makest his beauty to consume away, like as it were a moth fretting a garment'; an unflinching reflection of our perishable nature, yet expressed in beautiful language. 'And now Lord what is my hope: truly my hope is even in thee'.

Similarly, I was struck last year by the collect for Sunday before Lent, 'pour into our hearts that most excellent gift of charity ... without which whosoever liveth is counted dead before thee', a definition of life and death in terms unbounded by space or time.

If you could visit any place in the world, where would that be? And why?

The forests of Papua New Guinea in order to see the Birds of Paradise, those strange birds with such improbable-looking plumes, fans of feathers, extravagant colours and courtship dances.

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