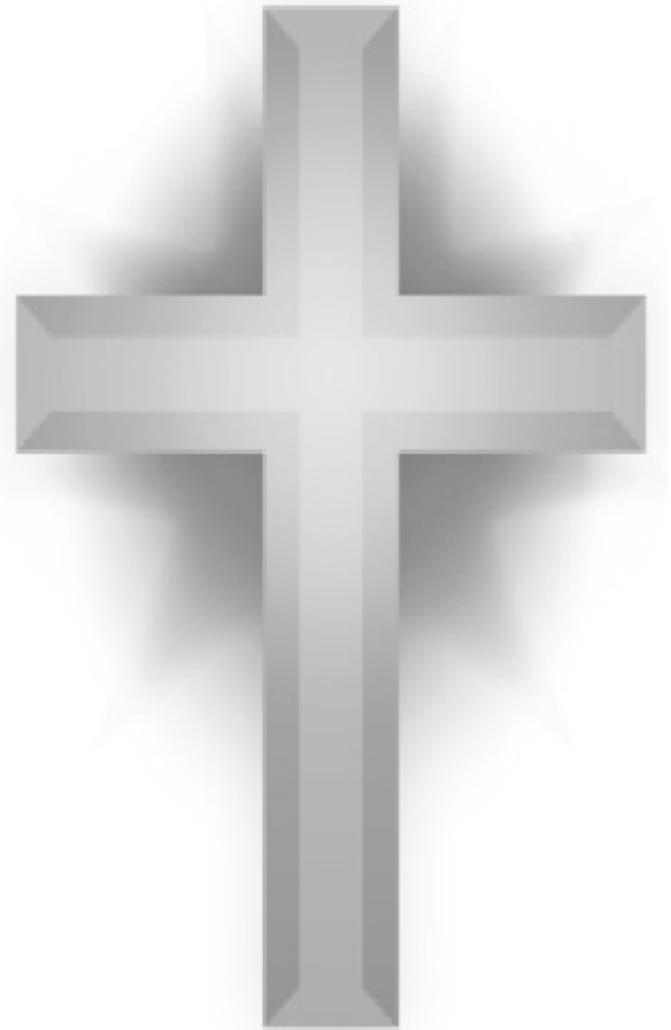
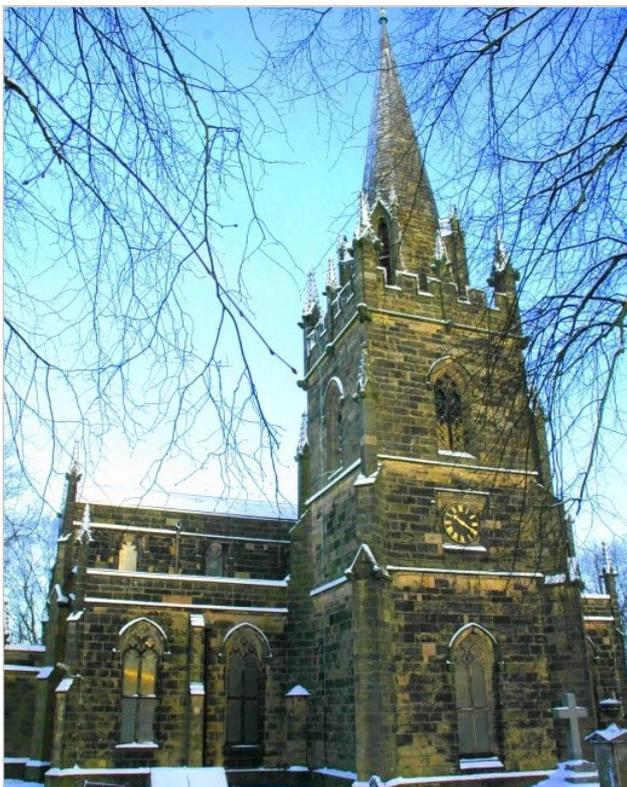


# THE BEACON

THE PARISH MAGAZINE OF ALL SAINTS, SEDGLEY  
& ST.ANDREW'S THE STRAITS



50p

APRIL 2018

## WHO's WHO

Team Rector	Revd Guy Hewlett	01902 295164
Team Vicar	Catherine Mitchell	01902 677897
Licensed Lay Minister	Canon Jan Humphries	01902 661275
Pastoral Care	Tracey Bate	01902 680727
Worship Leader	Suzanne Bradley	01902 880055
Youth Leader	Laura Robinson	01902 678572
PCC Secretary	Chris Williams	01902 672880
Parish Office information baptisms, weddings, funerals and hall bookings.	Gail Griffiths	01902 540289
Parish Wardens	Keith Tomlinson John Anderson	01902 673366 01902 677666
Treasurer	John Anderson	01902 677666
Caretaker	Dave Bell	07933 204132
Server / Verger	Len Millard	01902 676339
Junior Church	Barbara Price	01902 676591
Brownies	Heather Churm	01902 674709
Ladies' Society	Geraldine Baker	01902 674608
Men's Society	Roger Berry	01902 881374
Mothers' Union	Liz Williams	01902 672880
Noah's Ark Parent & Toddler Group	Linda Edwards	01902 672556
Rainbows	Liz Naylor	07827 629648
Web Editor	Martin Jones	01902 884461
Youth Group	Laura Robinson	01902 678572
Bell Ringer	Keith Williams	01902 672585
Organist	Martin Platts	07941 173252

# DIARY DATES FOR APRIL 2018

## Dates for Diary

### Mothers Union

April 10th, 2.30pm, That 4 Letter Word - Val Rushton

April 17th, 7.30pm, 7.15pm communion followed by PC to Priest - The  
Revd Guy Hewlett

### Mens Society

April 16th, Tell Them of Us - Barbara Price

Every Monday afternoon the Salvation Army meet in the meeting room and on the third Monday of the month there is a Singing by Heart Group for Dementia in the main hall. All are welcome. For more details please contact Margaret Hollis on 07957 112393.

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## Baptisms

18th March - All Saints' - Connor Mason

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## Funerals in March

John Lester -	1st March -	91 - All Saints'
Ronald Spencer -	22nd March -	94 - Gornal Wood
Maud Evelyn Hill -	27th March -	94 - St Andrews
Jean Doreen Evans -	28th March -	86 - Gornal Wood
Margaret Mary Kendrick -	29th March -	84 - St Andrews

# High Days & Holy Days for April

1 EASTER - the most joyful day of the year Easter faith

Jesus' appearances after His Resurrection

Why Easter will never go away

2 Hugh of Grenoble - the saint who fought corruption and built hospitals

5 Vincent Ferrer - Dominican who opposed a Pope and brought grace to sinners

9 April Lady Day - the Annunciation

12 Zeno of Verona - the more things change....

13 Carpus, Papyrus and Agathonice - martyrs of the Early Persecuted Church

21 Anselm - the man who proved there is a God

24 St George - our patron saint who isn't English

24 St George of the Golden Legend

24 St George and Hiccup and the dragon

\*NEW 27 Tertullian - the fierce firebrand of the Early Church

27 Zita the servant girl of Lucca

28 Peter Chanel - missionary and martyr in the South Pacific 1841

29 Mark - disciple, apostle, writer of the second gospel

29 Catherine of Siena - or, how to survive in a large family

# THE BEACON

If you are interested in having the magazine delivered to your home on a regular basis please contact:

Keith Tomlinson : tel. 01902 673366.

**The Beacon** is published ten times a year and the cost for the year is £5. A larger typeface version of The Beacon can be provided on request.

Articles for the May magazine need to be sent to:

admin@allsaintssedgley.co.uk

by

**Friday 20th April**

and needs to be in Arial typeface, size 18.

WEBSITE: [www.gornalandsedgley.org.uk](http://www.gornalandsedgley.org.uk)

## CHURCH OPENING



**Friday mornings from  
10.30am to 12.30pm**

The church is open for quiet prayer & coffee and a chat.

## VESTRY HOUR

If you know anyone who wishes to enquire about weddings or baptisms, please tell them that from 1st February, the Vestry Hour will only be held on the first and third Sundays in each month, from 12noon to 1.00pm.

# Kingdom People

Love, compassion, justice and freedom; these are the values that will bring about the kingdom of God on Earth.

Clergy Report from Guy and Catherine as presented to our Annual Church Meeting.

The Parish of Gornal and Sedgley is in a time of change. Following a long clergy vacancy, during which the people of the 3 churches worked hard to continue the work of the church in the parish, a new ministry team has been formed with the appointment of the Reverend Catherine Mitchell as the new Team Vicar and the Reverend Guy Hewlett as the new Team Rector and the continuing pastoral ministry of our Licensed Lay Minister, Canon Jan Humphries. We have been very blessed by the incredible amount of hard work and ministry that so many have and are contributing to God's work in this place.

Catherine and Guy are licensed across the whole parish. Whilst the team has been settling in we have been exploring how this works out in practice. In these first months there have been a number of significant projects. We are registering as a charity with the Charity Commission, a legal requirement. We have been working on the St Peter building project with the Diocese and the St Peter DCC. There a number of significant governance projects including a change in the legalisation with regard to Data Protection (GDPR). We have been exploring home groups and are pleased we have three Lent Groups and hope in the future to develop our small group structure. We hope this will include in the near future the opportunity for us all to do the Alpha Course.

As part of the Diocese of Worcester's 2020 Vision Group, set up by the Bishop's Council to discern what God's vision is for the diocese, the Diocese launched the Kingdom People in 2011. Our DCC and the PCC have decided to adopt Kingdom People which Bishop John commended to the Diocese.

Kingdom People, with its emphasis on the Gospel main stays of love, compassion, justice and freedom, and the signs of the Kingdom, which describe 8 characteristics of a Kingdom People church which is healthy, give us a structure to formulate the mission of the parish. Over the coming months we will be exploring the characteristics and looking at how we full fill them at the moment and then we will explore how we can develop the parish and each of our churches so that we are in a position to grow.

We are at an exciting phase of the ministry of the parish but there is a great deal of work to do. Not least of all we need to ensure that we are stable in our financial resources for mission and so will need to explore again stewardship but also we will need to ensure that our buildings are fit for purpose – a significant piece of work has already been done on this.

Please read through the 8 characteristics below and prayerfully reflect on how you believe we fare when compared to them.

**Revd Guy Hewlett** - Team Rector

**Revd Catherine Mitchell** -Team Vicar

The eight characteristics of a Kingdom People Church.

1. Deeply rooted in prayer and study of the scriptures there is recognition of the importance of prayer and a spontaneous desire for it. People are encouraged to develop and grow in their personal discipline of prayer and devotion the church's programme includes opportunities for prayer and reflection such as quiet days and retreats in prayer precedes as well as accompanies all of the church's work.

2. Renewed and transformed by regular worship there is an expectation that people will meet with God in worship and be transformed by the experience worship expresses the whole of life: its ups and its downs, hopes and fears, politics and problems reflection and stillness are encouraged through effective use of time and space people talk about worship in a positive way.

3. Equipped to witness to the Gospel of love, compassion, justice and freedom people are encouraged to tell their stories of what God has done and is doing in their lives an enquirers group or course is regularly offered for those wanting to know more about the Christian faith time is set aside for specific events that share the gospel with those on the fringe or outside the church people are encouraged, trained and equipped to be effective in their witness to God and his Kingdom.

4. Dedicated to helping children and young people to belong and be nurtured in faith provision is made for children and young people to learn about the Christian faith during the Sunday services the church makes the most of opportunities to engage with children and young people in schools and colleges children and young people are involved in the life of the church (from decision making to ministry and mission) there is a strategy for engaging with un-churched children and young people.

5. Devoted to growing deeply as disciples, offering our time, talents and money to God discipleship training embraces the whole of life - personal habits and public commitments, thoughts and actions relationships are nurtured so that people feel accepted and are helped to grow in faith and be effective in action the church's programme includes provision for small groups, mentoring, short courses and Bible study people are encouraged to give sacrificially of their time, energy and resources.

6. Resourced and released to minister to others the church and its people are open to the Spirit's leading about what they should be and do the different gifts and experiences of all are valued and given expression in and beyond the life of the church all ministries are exercised within a collaborative team in which mutual support and accountability are encouraged vocations to authorised, licensed and ordained ministries are prayed for and encouraged.

7. Ready to engage with and serve our community the church has an outward looking focus and engages with the whole of life and with the wider community the church works in partnership with others in order to meet the needs of local people (especially the poor) the church is passionate and prophetic about love, compassion, justice and freedom, locally and globally occasional offices such as weddings, baptisms and funerals make sense of life and communicate faith.

8. Committed to making our buildings fit for purpose as a spiritual and community resource the church building is accessible during daylight hours prayers are offered in the church building on a daily basis buildings have been sensitively adapted so that they offer hospitality to all kinds of groups, meetings and activities there is a strategy for encouraging and welcoming visitors to the church.

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## **Read us a Bible Story!**

Do you have any spare time in which you might visit your local primary school? Bible Society is looking for volunteers to help run their Open the Book scheme in schools across the country. In the UK, two out of five children have never had the Bible read to them. You could change that for your local children!

More than 15,000 volunteer storytellers have already signed up, but many more are needed. To put it simply, if your local school does not yet have an Open the Book group, then you are needed. Details at: <https://www.biblesociety.org.uk/get-involved/open-the-book/>

## Mothers' Union

Our Diocesan President Liz, came to our afternoon meeting in March to tell us about her and her husband Bob's visit to one of our link diocese, West Ankola, in Uganda. Liz was to speak at an open-air event at which there were 5000 Mothers' Union members, bishops and clergy. It was amazing to see the members, all in MU dress, singing and dancing and praising God, many members having travelled to be at the event with their baby under one arm and a sleeping bag under the other. Liz told the members there about the work we do in the Worcester Diocese and ended by getting everyone to turn to the person next to them and pray with them – truly 'United in Prayer', the Mothers' Union theme that year. Members in Uganda are all women and they were surprised to find that we have members who are men, one being Liz's husband Bob. Liz had been told before her visit that she would return a different person. This was certainly true, it had been an unforgettable experience.

We held our Wave of Prayer service last month. This was an opportunity for members to remember, and hold in their prayers, our link dioceses of Port Elizabeth in South Africa, West Ankola in Uganda, The Nomadic Mission and Ekiti-Kwara in Nigeria and The Episcopal Church in the Phillipines. Thanks to Jan for her address.

'Lipservice or Action' was the title of the talk Rosemary Moss gave to our evening group. The definition of 'lipservice' is 'support expressed but not put into practice.' Rosemary asked us several questions to consider which were not for discussion but for us to think about privately such as; 'Do we agree with an idea but not follow it up with action?' 'Do we sit on the sidelines?' 'Do we get involved with projects?'. We thought about the work of Street Pastors, the Food Bank and New Beginnings, how people supporting such projects are doing so through action. There are, of course, those who are unable physically and financially to do what they used to, but support such work by prayer, which is invaluable. As we 'Walk in the Footsteps of Mary Sumner' may we do so with action and prayer. Thank you Rosemary for giving us food for thought.

Our Lenten Project this year is to provide items for 'Starter Packs' for the Women's Refuge. Lists of the items needed are on the Mothers' Union noticeboards at All Saints' and at St Andrew's. There are boxes, in the narthex at All Saints' and at the back of church at St Andrew's, in which to place items during Lent. The Coffee Morning and Collection will be at All Saints' on Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> April.

The Mothers' Union Deanery Festival is on Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> June, 7.30pm at All Saints' Church, Sedgley.

The Mothers' Union summer outing is to Stratford – upon – Avon on Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> June. Anyone wishing to go please contact Liz Williams 01902 672880.

## Dates

10<sup>th</sup> April 2.30pm That 4 Letter Word, Val Rushton

17<sup>th</sup> April 7.15pm Communion followed by 'From PC to Priest',  
Revd Guy Hewlett

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## How passion flowers got their name

Why is the passion flower known as the passion flower? This beautiful climbing plant that grows in many of our gardens is not native to the UK, but comes from South America. It was first discovered Spanish missionaries working there, centuries ago. Drawings were sent back to Europe, and in 1609 an Italian priest interpreted the flower to represent the crucifixion, otherwise known as the Passion.

He decided that the five petals and five sepals could represent the ten disciples who remained steadfast (Judas and Peter both abandoned Jesus). The corona could be seen as Jesus' crown of thorns. The stigma could be seen as the cross or nails, and the five stamens could be seen as the number of wounds Jesus received.

## Ladies' Society

On an earlier trip to Ashwood's, Geraldine noticed a book about local sportsmen and took a look. Later she chatted to Elaine who told her that the book by Terry Church had an article about her father who had played for the Albion, and that the author also gave various talks. So this led to Terry Church entertaining us at our March meeting with a talk entitled, "Radio and TV in the 50's and 60s."

From the beginning Terry gave the feel of a man with a keen sense of humour, mixing facts with amusing stories.

He recalled the radio programmes of the era when there was only a choice of either the Home Service or Light Programme. He mocked the continual time announcements, saying he used the radio as his clock!

Some of us recalled either ourselves or our parents listening to Housewife's Choice, Family Favourites and Billy Cotton. I clearly remember listening to the quiz show, "Have a go" with Wilfred Pickles and the catch phrase, "Give him the money Barney". I also recalled the pianist of the show, an accomplished lady, Violet Carson, perhaps better known as Ena Sharples of Coronation Street.

Some folk listened to Radio Luxembourg's Smash Hits.

As television developed so radio producers had to up their game to keep their audience, so some producers such as those of The Archers, had a dramatic episode when Grace Archer died in a stables fire. This attracted 8 million listeners! Success, as many still follow the programme today.

Desert Island Discs has survived the years, even presented by a local girl, Sue Lawley.

Terry has made his own selection including works of Tom Jones, Eric Clapton and Abide with me; perhaps an idea to follow in an idle moment?

Coloured T.V. and the remote control revolutionised this media in the 60's and programmes like Emergency Ward Ten and Doctor Kildare were avidly watched. What woman did not swoon over the handsome Richard Chamberlain?

Crackerjack and Top of the Pops were popular. Our very own Geraldine took part in the latter!

So a delve into the past evoked memories of times past. Thank you Terry for an interesting presentation.

There is no April meeting as it is Easter. There is however, a theatre visit to see, "Half a Sixpence", at the Dormston Mill Theatre. Hope to see many of you there.

**Anne Wakefield.**

---

## **Breathing Deep - life in the Spirit of Easter**

By Ian Adams, Canterbury Press, £8.99

Here is a gentle yet profound guide to seeing the world in the power of the Resurrection. Ian Adams draws on the Gospel stories of the resurrection of Jesus to create 40 'invitations', each one offering a path for the Resurrection to reshape how we live.

They challenge us to live in the spirit of Resurrection, when everything seems to gravitate towards death and destruction. The resurrection of Jesus has always been understood as a glimpse into the true nature of reality. This powerful series of daily meditations invites us to step into the new world brought about by the first Easter.

# **The road to Emmaus - one of the best short stories in the world**

The story of the two disciples walking the road between Jerusalem and Emmaus on the first Easter day is 'one of the immortal short stories of the world' (W. Barclay). Their encounter with the risen Christ is also a model for how we can meet him in our lives. (You can find the story in Luke 24: 13 -35)

**Hearts Opened.** The disciples displayed 'downcast' faces (17), as their hearts were preoccupied with grief. They felt let down by God, as well as bewildered by all they had heard. No doubt their emotions prevented them from recognising Jesus walking with them, even though their hearts burned within them. Despite our feelings, Jesus is still with us in situations of loss or desolation, as well as when we feel let down by God or other people.

**Minds Opened.** Although this pair knew the Scriptures, they didn't understand what they said about the Christ. Therefore, Jesus opened their minds to make sense of the events they were experiencing. The Holy Spirit also brings God's word alive for us, as He challenges our preconceptions about Jesus.

**Eyes Opened** The couple only recognised Jesus when He broke the bread as they ate together. The turning point came when they invited Jesus into their home, and allowed Him to take charge. If we are to recognise Jesus' presence with us, we need to open our lives to Him. What part does Holy Communion play in this?

Open eyes, minds and hearts will lead to open mouths. Having discovered Jesus, the disciples can't keep the news to themselves. The Christian message is never truly ours until we have opened our mouths and shared it with others!

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# God is able to bless us abundantly

Paul Hardingham

'And God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work.' (2 Corinthians 9:8).

How generous are we, on a scale between Scrooge and Bill Gates? Let's not forget that we have a God who is able to out-give us on all levels!

A God who blesses: Paul reminds the Corinthians that we have a generous God, who meet our needs, even when we don't deserve it. This is demonstrated by the grace of God seen in the death and resurrection of his Son, 'Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift!' (15).

A Response of blessing: Paul calls for generosity as a response to God's grace, as the Corinthians were reluctant to support the Christians experiencing famine in Jerusalem. He uses an agricultural picture to make the point: 'Remember this: whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously.'(6).

We sow sparingly when we hold on to what we have and put our needs first. However, by sowing generously we share God's heart and bless others, by using our time, money and talents to serve them.

'Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.'(7). We should consider carefully what to give, but to do it cheerfully (lit hilariously!). With God, the more we give, the more we bless others and are blessed ourselves!

Has this been true in our own experience? A farmer was known for his generosity; when asked why this was he replied, 'I keep shovelling into God's bin and He keeps shovelling into mine, but God has the bigger shovel!'

# **The return of hope**

Editor: Canon David Winter

This month starts with Easter, which is a lovely thought. Whatever else, Easter speaks of new life, of fresh starts and the return of hope.

The whole traditional story is about darkness defeated by a light which can never be extinguished. That's why, in our hemisphere, Easter seems to fit in well with the changing season. Fresh flowers in the graveyard match the Easter hymns inside the church: 'The Lord of life is risen today/ Bring flowers of song to strew his way'.

It's a strange fact that all through the long history of mankind, despite the evidence of our eyes, people have stubbornly refused to believe that death is the end. They buried their dead with food and implements they would need in the next life, whatever name they gave it - Valhalla, the Elysian Fields, Abraham's Bosom or Nirvana. Jesus called it 'the kingdom of heaven' or 'eternal life'. The very idea of heaven is beyond our comprehension, because we can't image a life not lived in our familiar dimensions of space, time and physicality. But God lives beyond time and space, and Jesus said He is 'Spirit'.

It's good that there are some things to believe in which we cannot possibly understand now. Although one day, St Paul said, we shall. Until then we trust, and Easter hymns and flowers are signs of the annual return of hope.

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## **Cure**

A Sunday School teacher asked her pupils 'Does anyone know any of the miracles that Jesus performed?' One youngster put his hand up and said 'Yes, He cured people who had leopards.'



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## Is there a seconder?

Brothers and sisters, choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will turn this responsibility over to them and will give our attention to prayer and the ministry of the word. This proposal pleased the whole group. They chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit; also Philip, Procorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas from Antioch, a convert to Judaism. 6 They presented these men to the apostles, who prayed and laid their hands on them. Acts 6 3-6

Most of us have been at church meetings where, after a long debate, the chair says, "Let's vote on it. Do we have a proposer? Who will second it?" Have you ever wondered why we need a seconder when it is clear that the meeting has just agreed to do something? Why is it necessary to have a proposer and seconder? It is arguable that if you have a motion that is clearly worded and recorded, then there is no room for doubt, in theory at least.

As far as I can tell there is no legal necessity to have a proposer or seconder. You only have to have this if the rules or constitution of a society, company or organisation insist on it. That is generally not the case for churches. The historical background to this rule lies in the rules of parliamentary procedure which were adopted in some other meetings. The purpose is to prevent a long debate on a topic of interest to only one person.

It is a convention or habit rather than a necessity. But it does not do any harm and adds a sense of formality to meetings.

As always this is a light-hearted look at a legal topic and if in doubt get proper advice.

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## **Baptism - Its purpose, practice and power**

By Michael Green, LionHudson, £6.99

"Therefore, go make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." Baptism: as an infant, as a believer and by the Holy Spirit. Michael Green provides a bold, clear examination of the different approaches, examining the biblical evidence and teaching for each one.

Common ground between the churches is emphasised, and the author's conviction of the validity and benefits of infant baptism, in appropriate circumstances, is presented with energy and thoroughness. This popular account has helped many to a deeper understanding of the real significance of baptism.

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Titus: “I hope my family can eat well and not struggle like we do now. I want my children to have a good education”

Charles: “ I want to leave something that can give my grandchildren a better life. Providing for my family is my motivation”

Julia: “ People did not understand why we farmed this land, but now we are succeeding they see it is possible to make a better life”

**Sarah Powell**

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## **A Christian Pioneer for Women**

**Canon David Winter remembers a very special lady...**

During this year's celebration of 'votes for women' - well, some women, to start with - a hundred years ago, the BBC ran a public poll to nominate the one woman who had made 'the most difference'.

People were nominated from different sectors of society - the arts, business, fashion, politics and so on - but unless I missed it there was no nomination for such a revolutionary figure in the world of religion.

So let me nominate one: Catherine Bramwell Booth. She was the granddaughter of William Booth, the founder of the Salvation Army, the first religious group to give women an equal role in leadership. Catherine was duly commissioned as an officer in the Army, rising to the rank of Commissioner - about the same as a bishop, I suppose.

In the sixties and seventies she became a media favourite, appearing on TV shows like Parkinson's and being voted 'Speaker of the Year' by the Guild of Toastmasters - although she, of course, was a life-long teetotaller. By then she was in her nineties, but still had an infectious sense of humour and an attractive media personality. All the while, though, she was committed to the Army's social and support work for women.

Three times she was nominated as General (archbishop, as one might say) of the Salvation Army, but she agreed that it would be wrong to appear to establish a Booth 'dynasty'. She lived to 104, long enough to see the arrival of women ministers in the Free Churches but ten years before Anglican women achieved it. William Booth had once said that 'some of my best men are women', which was, I suppose, a contemporary way of saying that they were equals. Actually, the amazing Catherine Bramwell Booth outshone them all!

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## **With the end of one tax year and the start of a new one in mind....**

Penny: a pound after taxes.

Economist: a person who can tell you what is going to happen next month and explain later why it didn't.

Economic forecast: 'Business will be either better or worse.' - Calvin Coolidge

Things never seem so bad if you know your neighbour is having a worse time.

Most families don't mind paying the piper if they can do it on their credit card.

The art of taxation consists in so plucking the goose as to obtain the largest number of feathers with the least possible amount of hissing.

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## **With church AGMs and life in general in mind....**

If you want to kill any idea in the world today, get a committee working on it. - C F Kettering

Regardless of how many items there are on the agenda, a committee meeting takes the same amount of time. - H.V. Prochnow

Minimise friction and create harmony. You can get friction for nothing, but harmony costs courtesy and self-control. - Anon

Flattery is a device for getting somebody to pay attention to what you're saying. - F P Jones

Kindness is the true revealer of a person's greatness. - Anon

# Stephen Hawking

I was saddened to hear of the recent death of Professor Stephen Hawking. Not only was he one of the scientific greats, alongside such figures as Newton and Einstein, but he was also a man of courage who fought motor neurone disease for an unbelievable 50 years.

His scientific breakthrough came in 1970 when, together with his colleague Roger Penrose, he published a paper showing, solely by mathematical techniques, that the universe had a beginning in what became known as the 'Big Bang'. This was not a universally acclaimed finding since it was deeply upsetting to atheists and Marxists in particular, because it gave room for belief in a creator God. However, in 1965 American astronomers Arno Penzias and Robert Wilson had observed unexplained radiation coming from outside the solar system. This was experimental evidence of the phenomenon that Hawking and Penrose showed five years later to be something that could be explained mathematically.

Hawking's popular recognition, however, came not from his amazing scientific discovery but from his famous book 'A brief history of time' published in 1988. The fact that it sold an amazing 10 million copies probably owes a lot to Peter Guzzardi who edited the book and made it more comprehensible.

When I first read the book in the mid-1990s I was amazed. As a chemist by profession I had never taken much interest in astronomy or understood modern physics. The most striking thing about his book as far as I was concerned was that it completely redefined the common human experience of time. We experience time as a constant unchangeable dimension. We measure it ultimately in seconds – a sixtieth of a sixtieth of a twenty fourth of the time it takes the earth to rotate. We cannot vary the length of a second, it is always the same – or is it?

By the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century scientists believe that the physics of that time, based on Newton's equations, fully explained the operation of the universe. However, during the latter half of that century this certainty became undermined by fresh discoveries by scientists such as James Clerk Maxwell, Albert Michelson and Edward Morley.

The real bombshell was provided by Albert Einstein whose general theory of relativity published in 1915 put an end to the idea of absolute time. This was demonstrated much later, in 1962, when two extremely accurate clocks were positioned respectively at the top and bottom of a water tower. The clock at the bottom was found to run slower as a result of the difference in gravity experienced.

To my mind the most fascinating conclusion to which this discovery leads is that it is possible to define places in the universes where time does not exist, known as 'singularities'. These are places where the pull of gravity is so strong that it sucks in all matter as well as light and - most difficult to comprehend - time. But such singularities have actually been found to exist in places where stars have collapsed to form 'black holes'. Not only that but this evidence supports the view that the universe grew from a singularity some 14.7 billion years ago.

Now our normal human experience finds it almost impossible to comprehend this – a situation where time does not exist. But as Christians we have heard this sort of thing before in a different context – our idea of our immortal God for who time does not exist. If the concept that the source of the universe could be a singularity where time does not exist is correct then it seems to echo our faith. Also the question of what happened before the creation of the universe becomes a nonsense one. There was no 'before' before the Big Bang because time did not exist - only a timeless God existed. It was possibly Stephen Hawking who once said 'Once upon a time there was no time'

So the march of science, it could be argued, has given mankind an insight into the mysteries of the eternal God that were not available to the human race until recently. We have long rejoiced at the marvellous first words of St. John's Gospel. To non-believers they must have seemed non-sensical.

Perhaps it is best to finish on a quote often attributed to Stephen Hawking. 'Once upon a time there was no time'

**Tony Hart**

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## **Beware too much technology too young**

How do you get a normal nine-year-old to sit perfectly still for 7.25 hours a day? Put him or her in front of a television. And, over time, watch his or her health deteriorate.

Such is the message from a recent study on children and obesity. A group of European child-health experts have found a strong link between obesity and prolonged exposure to media and technology during children's formative years.

Today's toddlers spend an hour a day watching TV, but this rises 'dramatically' to 7.25 hours by the time they reach nine, and as they become more engrossed in other types of media.

A recent study published in the journal *Acta Paediatrica*, names these trends as contributing to childhood obesity levels, which have surged at an 'alarming rate' over the past 25 years. It is reckoned that 19 per cent of European children and adolescents are overweight.



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# **SERVICES FOR THE MONTH**

## **APRIL 2018**

1st April - Easter Sunday - All Saints' 8am - The Revd Guy Hewlett  
10.30am - The Revd Guy Hewlett  
6.30pm - Evensong - Canon Jan Humphries

St Andrew's - 9.30am - The Revd Judith Oliver

St Peter's - 10.30am - The Revd Catherine Mitchell

8th April - All Saints' - 8am - The Revd Catherine Mitchell  
10.30am - Worship for All - Canon Jan Humphries  
6.30pm - Evensong - The Revd Catherine Mitchell

St Andrew's - 9.30am - The Revd Guy Hewlett

St Peter's - 10.30am - The Revd Catherine Mitchell

15th April - All Saints' - 8am - The Revd Guy Hewlett  
10.30am - The Revd Guy Hewlett  
6.30pm - Evensong - The Revd Guy Hewlett

St Andrew's - 9.30am - Worship for All - Con Jan Humphries

St Peter's - 10.30am - The Revd Judith Oliver

22nd April - All Saints' - 8am - The Revd Catherine Mitchell  
6.30pm - Compline - Canon Jan Humphries

St Andrews - 9.30am - Team Service to include APCM

29th April - All Saints' - 8am - The Revd Guy Hewlett  
10.30am - Confirmation Service  
6.30pm - Healing Service - The Revd Guy Hewlett