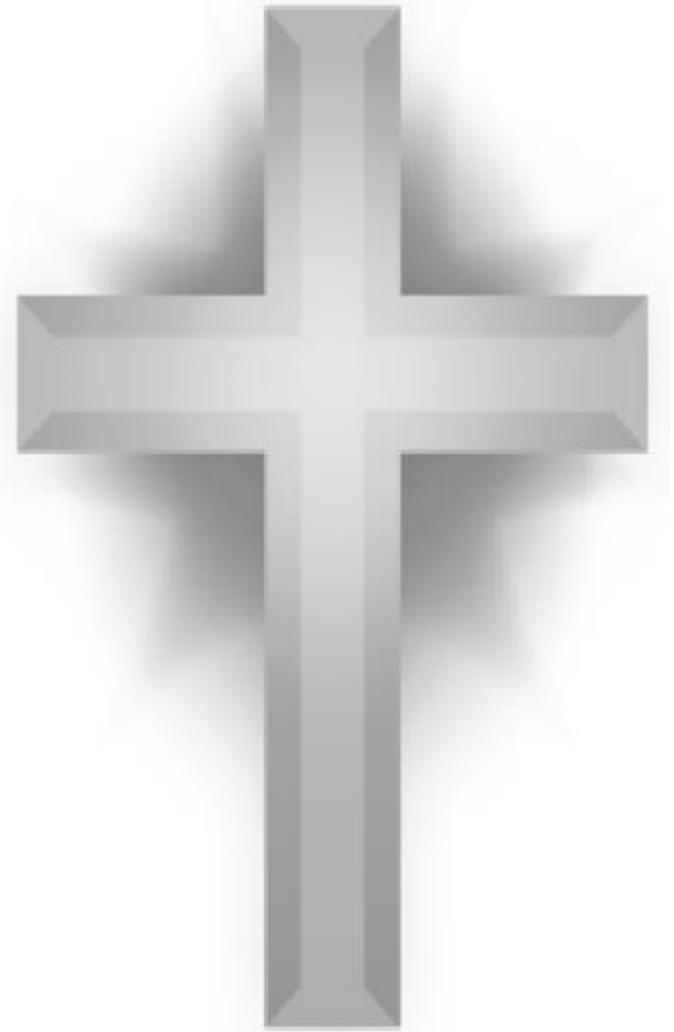
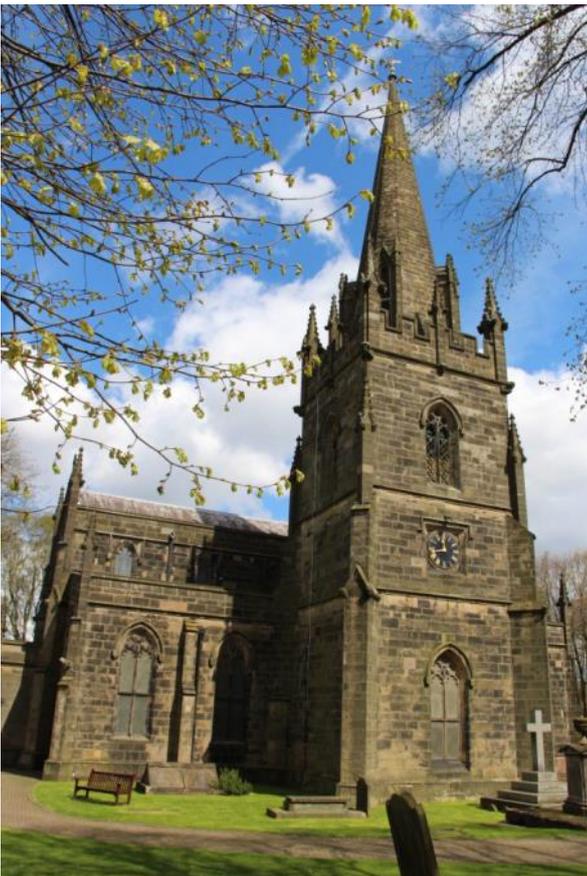


THE BEACON

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

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50p

April 2020

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Team Vicar	Rev Catherine Mitchell	01902 677897
Licensed Lay Minister	Canon Jan Humphries	01902 661275
Parish Safeguarding Officer	Barbara Baker	01902 882847
Pastoral Care	Tracey Bate	01902 680727
Worship Leader	Suzanne Bradley	01902 880055
Youth Leader/Children's Advocate	Laura Robinson	01902 678572
PCC Secretary	Kath Apperley	01902 663253
Vestry Clerk	Chris Williams	01902 672880
Parish Office information baptisms, weddings, funerals and hall bookings.	Gail Griffiths	01902 540289
Parish Wardens	Keith Tomlinson	01902 673366
	John Anderson	01902 677666
Treasurer	John Anderson	01902 677666
Caretaker	Pam Pugh	07860 256535
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	Linda Edwards	01902 672556
Parent & Toddler Group		
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

St Andrew's Who's Who

Warden	Paul Cox	
Treasurer	Alan Turner	01902 670938
DCC secretary	Rosemary Reed	01902 679007
Little Angels baby & toddler group	Canon Jan Humphries	
Singing Angels	Claire Cox	07812 010108

Parish Prayers at 9.15am - All are Welcome

Tuesdays at St Andrew, Wednesdays at St Peter and
Thursdays at All Saints.

Funerals

5th March - Edwin Phillip Daniels - All Saints

10th March - Maureen Violet Davies - Gornal Wood

17th March - Sheila Gillian Burke - All Saints

High Days & Holy Days for April

- 1 Fooling around
- 1 April Fool's Day
- 2 Hugh of Grenoble – the saint who fought corruption
- 3 Richard of Chichester – wanting God more clearly, dearly and nearly
- 5 Vincent Ferrer – preacher with heart for evangelism
- 5 Palm Sunday
- 5-12 April – Passion Week
- 9 Maundy Thursday
- 12 EASTER – various articles
- 12 The 'Other Mary'
- 12 Zeno of Verona – the more things change....
- 13 Carpus, Papyrus and Agathonice – martyrs of the Early Church
- 21 Anselm – the man who proved there is a God
- 23 St George – our patron saint who isn't English
- 23 St George of the Golden Legend
- 23 St George and Hiccup and the dragon
- 25 Mark – disciple, apostle, writer of the second gospel
- 27 Tertullian – the fierce firebrand
- 27 Zita – the long-suffering servant girl
- 28 Peter Chanel – missionary and martyr in the South Pacific 1841
- 29 Catherine of Siena – 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:

Karen Evans: 01902 678056

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admin@allsaintssedgley.co.uk

by

Friday 17th April

and needs to be in Arial typeface, size 18.

Do not send files in pdf format

WEBSITE: www.gornalandsedgley.org.uk



From the National Church of England

The Archbishops of Canterbury and York have called for Church of England churches to put public worship on hold and become a “different sort of church” in the coming months to face the challenge of coronavirus.

In a joint letter, Archbishops Justin Welby and John Sentamu said it was now necessary to put public services on hold until further notice. But they said that far from having to “shut up shop”, the Church of England must face the challenge by becoming a radically different kind of church rooted in prayer and serving others.

It comes after the Government announced unprecedented peacetime measures to try to control the spread of the virus, with restrictions on public gatherings, transport and working.

The Archbishops expressed the desire that church buildings may, where practical, remain open as places of prayer for the community, observing social distancing recommendations.

They also invited clergy to maintain the ancient pattern of daily prayer and, where possible, the eucharist – live streaming their worship if they have the resources to do so.

And they urged congregations to be in the forefront of providing practical care and support for the most poor and the most vulnerable during the crisis.

“Being a part of the Church of England is going to look very different in the days ahead,” they wrote.

“Our life is going to be less characterised by attendance at church on Sunday, and more characterised by the prayer and service we offer each day.

“We may not be able to pray with people in the ways that we are used to, but we can certainly pray for people. And we can certainly offer practical care and support.

“Please do carry on supporting the local foodbank and buy extra provisions for it. Ensure the night shelters wherever possible are kept open. There are many very encouraging schemes happening right across our country in communities to focus on caring for the most vulnerable and do continue to play your part in those. "Then by our service, and by our love, Jesus Christ will be made known, and the hope of the gospel – a hope that can counter fear and isolation - will spread across our land.”

They added: “This is a defining moment for the Church of England. Are we truly a church for all, or just the church for ourselves.

“We urge you sisters and brothers to become a different sort of church in these coming months: hopeful and rooted in the offering of prayer and praise and overflowing in service to the world.”

The archbishops have joined other church leaders in calling for a day of prayer and action this Sunday (Mothering Sunday) particularly remembering those who are sick or anxious and all involved in health and emergency services.

Further information on what the suspension of public worship will mean will be available as soon as possible on the Church of England website. This page will be regularly updated.

The Church will be providing a range of resources to enable people to continue to walk with God at this difficult time. This includes #LiveLent daily reflections, prayer for the day audio and text and Alexa and Google Home smart speaker apps.

In the days and weeks ahead, the Church will be significantly expanding this output with audio of a simple daytime prayer and night prayer

service, more video content and some live-streaming, new mental health reflections to support people, and webinars to help churches stream

sermons, events and make the most of social media. The aim will be to make as much as possible available in simple downloadable and printable

formats for those who can't easily access the technology.

Letter from the Bishop of Worcester

As I write this piece, the stockmarkets have crashed and fear is beginning to mount as the number of coronavirus cases in the UK has risen to over 300. It is difficult to predict where we'll be by the time you read this and it's important that we continue to heed official advice. Alongside this, the Bishop of St Alban's has come up with four 'golden rules' for Christians which we won't hear from the Government. I commend them to you:

Golden Rule One. Each one of us can think about how we can protect and support our neighbours. So much of the public rhetoric is sowing fear about the danger of other people. So, while ensuring you take all the official precautions, offer help and reassurance to others – and don't demonise anyone or any group.

Golden Rule Two: Think about who may be suffering most. For those of us who are healthy there is much less to worry about, but the elderly, the housebound and those with chronic health conditions may be very anxious. Could your church do an audit of vulnerable people and share out the responsibility to phone them each day? There's nothing like a friendly voice to offer solace when someone is worried. A smile can bring cheer, even on the phone. If you visit, follow all the official precautions.

Golden Rule Three. Don't give into panic and start hoarding food. There is plenty to go around, so practise the Christian discipline of sharing. Ask your neighbours what they need and do your best to help them get it. If you are self-isolating you will of course need some supplies.

Golden Rule Four. Live today to the full. None of us ever know what the future holds. In the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 6. 25 – 34), Jesus challenged his followers to live each day fully and not be afraid. Every time we are tempted to give in to fear we need to make a conscious choice to respond in trust and openness.

To that I would add; don't forget to pray and remember, as we approach Easter, the wonderful truth that lies at the heart of our faith, that perfect love casts out fear. (1 John 4.18)

+John

From Guy Hewlett:

Jesus Stills the Storm (Matthew 8. 23-27)

23 And when he got into the boat, his disciples followed him. 24 A gale arose on the lake, so great that the boat was being swamped by the waves; but he was asleep. 25 And they went and woke him up, saying, 'Lord, save us! We are perishing!' 26 And he said to them, 'Why are you afraid, you of little faith?' Then he got up and rebuked the winds and the sea; and there was a dead calm. 27 They were amazed, saying, 'What sort of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him?'

We are in a very real storm created by the Coronavirus and the illness it leads to, Covid-19. As the virus has spread around the world so many people are facing not only the illness but also some serious financial consequences.

And for many of us there is a horrible anxiety and even fear. Our cry may be the same as the disciples in the boat, 'Lord, save us! We are perishing! As you read the scripture above notice that Jesus was always in the boat with the disciples and he is with you and me now, wherever you are reading this.

The disciples called on Jesus and woke him up. Jesus knew that they were not perishing, not least of all because he was with them. But he responded to them and rebuked the winds and the sea; and there was dead calm.

In the quiet of your heart hold onto Jesus and call on His name and know he is with you and hears your prayers.

Let Him calm your fears with the blessed assurance of His love in the midst of life and know that all will be well; all manner of things will be well.

"In his love God wraps us and holds us. He enfolds us for love and will never let us go." From the feast day of Mother Julian of Norwich.

When I want to still myself and be calm and quiet, I often use a very ancient and simple prayer, the Jesus Prayer, repeated over and over: Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me a sinner.

May God bless you and give you his peace at this difficult time. We are not alone.

Do not hesitate to call me if you want a chat or to pray over the phone. With my love and prayers in Christ,

Guy

Words of comfort from Julian of Norwich:

“All shall be well, and all manner of thing shall be well.”

Let's plant a tree

We could ask our local council to plant a tree on our street. So advises the Royal Horticultural Society (RHS) who has recently announced that the majority of the Britain in Bloom finalists are in urban areas.

This is the competition's 56th year, and rather than simply judging on the beauty of the flowers planted, towns are this year winning points for increasing the number of trees in their centres.

Each of the 70 finalists will be visited by a pair of RHS judges in August, who will decide the winners of medals, categories and the Champion of Champions. Of these 70 finalists, nearly two-thirds are in urban areas where trees and plants have been used to regenerate high streets. Leeds, Blackburn, and Paddington, London, are among the 10 finalists that have been 'greening' their central shopping and business hubs.

So – in the meantime, why don't we ask the local council about planting that tree?

The Hymn Blessed Assurance - Many of you will know this hymn. It has been a source of comfort for many written by Fanny J Crosby (1820 – 1915). You can read it as a prayer.

Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine
O what a foretaste of glory divine!
Heir of salvation, purchase of God;
Born of His Spirit, washed in His blood.

*This is my story, this is my song
Praising my Saviour all the day long;
This is my story, this is my song,
Praising my Saviour all the day long*

Perfect submission, perfect delight,
Visions of rapture now burst on my sight;
Angels descending, bring from above
Echoes of mercy, whispers of love.

This is my story ...

Perfect submission, all is at rest,
I in my Saviour am happy and blest;
Watching and waiting, looking above,
Filled with His goodness, lost in His love.

This is my story ...

Don't break'em

There was a very gracious lady who was mailing an old family Bible to her brother in another part of the country. "Is there anything breakable in here?" asked the postal clerk.

The lady paused for a moment. "Only the Ten Commandments," she said politely.

MOTHERS' UNION

At the time of writing we are facing an unprecedented situation in our country. Many of us are self-isolating resulting in our Mothers' Union meetings being suspended. We do not know how long this situation will last but rest assured we will keep in touch with members throughout this anxious time.

Our Lenten Project will obviously be put on hold until later in the year. Jean Swift has sent the following which is a prayer focus for each day, using the first letter of each day of the week as a guide.

You may find this helpful.

Sunday – Scriptures

Pray by using scriptures like: Psalm 91:1-5; Psalm 121: 5-8; John 14:27; Phil 4: 6-7; 2Tim:1:7.

Let us align our prayers with God's Word

Monday - Medical Personnel

Being at the forefront of the fight against coronavirus they need prayers of Protection, Strength, Alertness and Endurance.

Tuesday - Truth

Accurate reports are a must in these perilous times. Pray that truthful bulletins and correct information will drown the proliferation of fake news and falsehoods.

Wednesday - Wisdom

Government leaders need great wisdom as they develop and implement necessary guidelines, measures and strategies to protect their people and nation. Pray for our leaders at this time.

Thursday - Triumph

Scientists the world over are busy working in their labs to find an antidote to coronavirus. Pray for their work and that they will be triumphant soon.

Friday - Faith

The World Health Organisation has declared coronavirus a pandemic. Pray that we will trust in God through faith and be a source of help and encouragement to others.

Saturday - Sick

Pray for all who have contracted coronavirus, for their complete healing and recovery.

I pray that you all keep well. Take care and don't hesitate to ring if you want a chat or I can help in any way.

God Bless
Liz

Why did Jesus die?

'God proved His love on the Cross. When Christ hung, and bled, and died, it was God saying to the world, 'I love you.' (Billy Graham).

God showed His love for us, when Jesus dealt with the problem of our sin on the cross. *'He himself bore our sins in His body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by His wounds you have been healed'* (1 Peter 2:24). Jesus died in our place to bear our sin and guilt, to pay the full penalty for our sin and to set us free from death.

In the 75th anniversary year of the liberation of the Auschwitz Concentration Camp, it's appropriate to remember the story of Fr Maximilian Kolbe, a Polish priest imprisoned in Auschwitz. On 31st July 1941 a prisoner escaped from the camp and in response the authorities selected ten men to die in the starvation bunker.

One of the men, Francis Gajinisdek, cried, *'My poor wife and my children. They'll never see me again!'* Then Kolbe stepped forward and said, *"I'm a Catholic priest. I don't have a wife and children and I am willing to die instead of this man."* He followed the other nine into the bunker. Remarkably he got the prisoners praying and singing hymns and transformed the atmosphere in the bunker. He was the last person to die and after two weeks he was given a lethal injection and died at the age of 47.

Jesus' death was even more amazing than this, because He didn't simply die for one man, but for every individual in the world. If you or I had been the only person in the world, Jesus Christ would still have died in our place. *'Hallelujah, what a Saviour'!!*

How does your church help the community?

Churches, chapels and meeting houses in the UK are being asked to take part in a new online survey to help find out the value that they add to local communities.

Data from the survey will be used in a new research study being carried out by the National Churches Trust, the UK's church buildings support charity. It is looking into the social and economic benefits that churches provide to local communities and to the UK more generally.

The new research will build on a similar study, undertaken in 2010, which looked at the physical condition of places of worship and also the way they are managed and funded.

The survey is available online www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/YGQZNQS and the deadline for completion is Wednesday 4th March 2020.

Eddie Tulasiewicz, Head of Communications and Public Affairs for the National Churches Trust said:

“Ten years on from our pioneering survey about the UK's churches, which sought to understand not just the physical condition of places of worship but also the way they are managed, funded and used by their communities, we are asking churches, chapels and meeting houses to help us by providing up to date information to help us understand what may have changed since 2010.”

“The data will help inform a new research study we are carrying out into the benefits churches play in supporting local people, as well as being places that carry out and host activities and services that meet the needs of the local community.”

Ladies Society – March meeting

For our February meeting we had anticipated a talk by The Salvation Army about the work that they do locally and nationally. Unfortunately the speaker did not attend which was a disappointment to us all.

We therefore had a brief discussion of the Ladies Society Income and Expenditure Account which was tabled by Jenny and then enjoyed tea/ coffee and biscuits and a good chat.

I look forward to seeing you at our March meeting when we will be holding a Bring and Buy Sale – please bring along anything that you no longer have use for in the home!

Karen Evans

Dear Friends

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you all for the constant prayers, comforting cards, flowers and phone calls I received during my illness. It has been many months of treatment but now I have had the wonderful news that my lymphoma has gone.

I know that the Lord Jesus was with me all the time and my prayers were answered daily. With the support of my husband John, my family, friends and Guy I am now able to praise the Lord every day.

May God Bless you all.

Jean Hopkins

What God looks like

An infants' teacher was observing her classroom of children while they drew. One little girl was working away furiously, and so she asked her what the drawing was. The girl replied, "I'm drawing God."

The teacher paused and said, "But no one knows what God looks like." Without missing a beat, the little girl replied, "They will in a minute."

Psalm 22: Why have you forsaken me?

'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?' (Psalm 22:1 & Matt 27:46). *Where is God?* is a common question voiced today and shared by Jesus on the cross on the first Good Friday. This question is answered in the psalm, as we look through the lens of Jesus' crucifixion.

It is a real question: Both David and Jesus question God about the pain and darkness of their experience. It is a real question for all suffer, yet they are still able to hold onto a God of love, who has their lives in His hands: *'Yet you are enthroned as the Holy One; you are the one Israel praises.'* (3).

It requires faith to ask: Their complaint about the apparent absence of God is not a sign of losing faith in Him. David remembers those who have trusted God in the past and been saved from their troubles: *'In you our ancestors put their trust; they trusted and You delivered them.'* (4). Just like Jesus on the cross, we are able to entrust ourselves *'to Him who judges justly.'* (1 Peter 2:23).

It is answered in experience: When David cried out to God, he experienced his deliverance: *'For He has not despised or scorned the suffering of the afflicted one; He has not hidden His face from him but has listened to his cry for help.'*(24). As a result, David was able to praise God and witness to His faithfulness.

The fulfilment of these verses are seen in Jesus' resurrection, which we celebrate on Easter Sunday. He was vindicated by God and has become the source of life and hope for all who trust themselves to Him. In answer to the question *'Where is God?'*, we hear the answer, *'Look to the cross of Jesus!'*

Reflected Faith: the role of the Sacristan

The traditional marks on an altar are five crosses representing either the five wounds of Christ or perhaps more matter-of-factly, Christ at the centre of what holds up the table – and indeed what holds our lives.. This month let's consider the work of the person responsible for preparing the altar for worship.

So often when we arrive in church, everything is already set up for the service and by the time we've drunk our coffee afterwards it's all cleared away – as if some altar fairies come in the dark and do it all very quietly. Well, in fact that's exactly what happens! Except that rather than fairies this is the job of the Sacristan.

A busy priest with many churches may conduct several services on a Sunday and so rely on the altar to have been prepared before their arrival.

There are set ways of preparing all altars so that, wherever you go to worship, the same things should be found and folded/laid in the same ways.

This not only helps in times of business, but principally it allows all who conduct or serve at the altar to engage with the words of the service, rather than get distracted by wondering 'where so and so' is today. Some churches are more stringent than others in their preciseness, but there is a minimum level of acceptability. Otherwise the priest must spend time before the service checking everything is 'right' – or getting an inconvenient surprise when something is missing!

When the 'moment' comes in the Eucharistic prayer at the words, 'We break this bread', you should be able to hear the sharp 'snap' at the break. Making sure that the wafer is crisp enough is the responsibility of the Sacristan.

The story is told about one church where the wafer tended to go a bit soft – until the Sacristan began putting it on the radiator for a few minutes beforehand, until they were 'dry enough to snap'.

Another solution, of course, would have been to find an airtight container...

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A Gospel to give away at Easter

When 800 non-Christians were interviewed about reading a Bible, those aged 18-50 wanted a quality, magazine version of a gospel. So, HOPE Together and Biblica have joined forces to publish Mark's Gospel in a stunning image-filled format that makes a great Easter gift.

Dr Rachel Jordan-Wolfe, assistant director of HOPE Together, took the lead in the publishing project. Quoting the Talking Jesus research, she said, "27% of practising Christians said that reading the Bible was key in their coming to faith. We want to give more people that chance, so we hope that Christians will give away this Gospel to help people discover Jesus for themselves.

"More of the younger generations are interested in the life of Jesus than you imagine, so give them a Gospel designed for them," she adds. Families often come to church together at Easter, with grandparents bringing their adult children and teenage grandchildren. The 108-page version of Mark's Gospel is great to give as a gift and easy to read.

Those with questions are invited to visit Christianity.org.uk to find out more.

Trevor Wilson, UK Partnerships Manager at Biblica said, "One of the most exciting things we do at Biblica is develop new and creative formats of Bible text to help people read and engage with it whether they are picking it up first time or the one hundredth time. God's Word is as alive and active today as it was when it was first written down. Individuals and communities are being impacted across our country as they read God's Word today. We believe it should be presented in ways that make it accessible and relevant for everyone."

Copies are available in packs of five for £5 plus p&p from the HOPE Together shop (hopetogether.org.uk/shop)

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William Wordsworth – the ‘Church of England pantheist’

William Wordsworth, the Romantic poet always associated with the Lake District, was born 250 years ago, on 7th April 1770. He was Poet Laureate from 1843 to 1850, though he produced no new poetry during that period.

In his youth Wordsworth travelled in France and came to share the radical politics of the French Revolution. He also fell in love with Annette Vallon, by whom he had a daughter in 1792. They were kept apart by the difficult relationship between England and France, but eventually met again, and the poet supported his daughter, though he married Mary Hutchinson, a friend of his beloved sister and muse, Dorothy. He had five children with Mary, three of whom predeceased them.

Wordsworth’s political views soon softened, and he never rejected Christianity. He has been described as a “Church of England pantheist” and saw himself as a people’s poet. He produced Lyrical Ballads in 1798 with his friend Samuel Taylor Coleridge, who inspired his last great poem, The Prelude.

Many Christians, especially those in the Anglo-Catholic movement, deeply admired Wordsworth. During his later years and in the next generation, he was regarded as a defender of the Faith. He himself seemed content that many found his poetry helpful in trying times.

The Lord is my Shepherd

A Sunday school teacher decided to have her young class memorise one of the most quoted passages in the Bible, Psalm 23. She gave the youngsters a month to learn the Psalm, but little Charles did not find it easy to memorise much of anything.

On the day that the children were scheduled to recite Psalm 23 in front of the congregation, Charles stepped up to the microphone and began proudly, “The Lord is my Shepherd....” He knew that much, but the rest of the Psalm suddenly deserted him. So he concluded bravely: “... and that’s all I need to know.”

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Euros, koruna, yuan, or dollars in the collection plate

You would be surprised at how many different coins end up in church collection plates. Euros and obsolete pound coins can jostle alongside American dollars, Czech koruna and even pesos from Chile. It just shows where some people go on holiday!

In Bible times the Jewish people also had a collection, but it was not voluntary; they called it the Temple Tax. Jews had to pay the Temple Tax by using a coin called a half shekel. They could not just use the change they already had in their pockets, because foreign coins would be 'unclean', and anyway, pockets had not been invented. So instead the Temple Tax was paid in shekels, because they were made to a reliable quality of weight and fineness of silver metal.

This led to a roaring trade for the moneychangers, who would take the worshipper's coins and change them into shekels, less a handsome profit. The moneychangers would have shouted out their exchange rates, which would be distracting for people going there to pray. They were preventing the people from praying and worshipping by overcharging and squabbling for business. No wonder Jesus got angry with them! Back to our peaceful collections in church, we should welcome the funny foreign coins. Lots of us have jars of coins from holidays abroad, and these could even be a way of raising money for the church. There are some companies which will take unwanted foreign coins for cash. Even junk coins have a small scrap value, as does broken silver or gold jewellery.

Passionflower

Why is the passionflower called the passionflower? This beautiful climbing plant that grows in many of our gardens, was discovered in South America by Spanish missionaries 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.

The five petals and five sepals represent the 10 disciples who remained steadfast (Judas and Peter both abandoned Jesus). The corona is the crown of thorns. The stigma is the cross or nails, and the five stamens are the number of wounds Jesus received.



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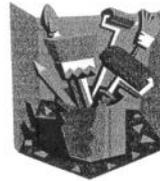
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Orchards – easier than you might think!

There has been much talk recently about planting trees. Planting new trees has always been a good idea, but now more than ever this could be a very important thing to do.

Way back when we were about to have a General Election, each political party was offering to plant millions of trees in exchange for our votes. The Tory Party was actually being quite conservative with its promise, which should mean us seeing over 80,000, give or take the odd sapling, being planted every day.

Let's leave the mega planting plans to the powers that be and think what we, in our parish could do – with limited resources of all kinds.

Remember orchards? Did you know that it only takes five trees to make an orchard? That's a fact I've only just discovered and so here's an opportunity for nearly every church to do its bit in the great tree planting scheme of things.

And what better than a fruit tree to remind Christians of the Church year? After the winter months of it resting through frosts and storms come the buds heralding a new spring and new life. Then the blossom to gladden our hearts and next the arrival of fruit and the harvest. What young peoples' group needs a wildlife video when it has a fruit tree?

And what joy for members of the congregation to collect the fruit for jam making. Already I can see treasurers getting interested at the thought of that potential income towards the latest energy bills.

Think about it – could you help create an orchard? Plantings could be memorials to the recently departed and what a brilliant way to go! – being remembered in a memorial orchard and be part of new life every year.

Remember there are permissions and faculties covering church land and orchard trees need looking after rather, more than other types of tree, but they can also be planted in tubs where there is no land. If you think your church could grow an orchard of at least five fruit trees do let me know – I will be delighted to hear from you.

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THANK YOU

Re: The late Rachael Burton

Audrey, Clare, David and Rachael's children James & Charlotte thank everyone who sent cards and messages of condolence on the tragic loss of my daughter. Also thanks to all who came to the funeral. It is wonderful to know one has so much support at this most difficult and sad time.

Thanks to all who donated to Mary Stevens Hospice, a grand total of £1540 was raised in her memory.

May god bless you all

Audrey

Sarah Powell

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My dear Nephew Darren



Your decision to place a notice board outside your church seems a good one – and its design in blue plastic with luminous red detachable letters seems entirely in keeping with the aesthetics of your building. Make sure that it is lockable, however, as an innocent notice saying ‘all are welcome’ may be modified by a devotee of anagrams to say something far less polite by the following day.

We recently replaced ours, which had disappeared shortly before last bonfire night. That the Scouts’ bonfire had a board which closely resembled our old one in its centre was, I am sure, a complete coincidence. The Venture Scouts’ collective smirk during the following week’s Parade Service did give one pause for thought, and the Cubs’ collapse into helpless laughter at the chorus ‘So light up the fire and let the flames burn’ only increased suspicion.

On reflection, you may not have been wise to use your notice board to tell everyone your holiday dates. Certainly, various local burglars were tripping over each other inside the vicarage while you were away. However, the note the last one left you, saying that next time he broke in, he would bring *you* something, since you had so little left, was quite touching.

Inevitably, now that your church has a notice board, there will be open warfare over who is allowed to display notices on it. Will the Slimmers Club be seen as biblical? Why is the Ladies Guild notice twice as large as all the others? And do remember that while everyone will want space to display their notices, no one will ever remove them once the event is over. Plaintive announcements of Christmas parties in April or of Summer Fetes in November only serve to take people down memory lane.

Here's the best way to manage a notice board: create that panacea for all problems: a sub-committee. These poor people only ever exist in order to get the clergy out of tight corners and to make sure that matters are discussed at such inordinate length that every issue eventually dies a natural death. And if even that fails, you could have a quiet word with our Scouts before next year's bonfire night.

Your loving uncle,

Eustace

The great Raphael

Five hundred years ago, on 6th April 1520, Italian Renaissance artist and architect Raphael died in Rome of an unknown illness. He was 37.

Born Raffaello Sanzio at Urbino, he was orphaned at the age of 11 and led something of a nomadic life. He was immersed in neoplatonic philosophy, as was the pre-Reformation Church of his time, which combined wealth, intrigue and political power, often to the detriment of spiritual coherence.

Raphael's work, however, was of the highest quality. Best known for his Madonnas and for his large figure compositions in the Vatican, he achieved tremendous clarity and lucidity, trying to develop a calmer, more accessible style than Leonardo da Vinci and Michelangelo.

He spent his early years in various North Italian centres, then absorbed a great deal from the artistic hub of Florence before spending a celebrity-style last 12 years in Rome, working for two Popes. He eventually put together an impressive – possibly uniquely large – workshop of 50 pupils and assistants.

He never married, but was deeply attached to 'La Fornarina' – Margherita Luti, the daughter of a baker from Siena. His grand funeral was attended by large crowds: four cardinals in purple carried his body, and he was buried at the Pantheon, at his own request



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A Display of Power

To a world that seeks to show power through explosives, military might, and physical force, Good Friday makes little sense.

A man, hanging on a cross. A man, who claimed to be the Son of God, nailed to a tree. Naked, broken, and dying. Forsaken. Passers-by mock Him: 'Save yourself! Come down from the cross, if you are the Son of God!' (Matthew 27:40). But with no word of complaint, no attempt to fight back, an innocent man accepts a death penalty.

Is this power? The world says no. Power is loud, it is ferocious, and it visibly wins. It is often selfish and seeks advantage over those who are weak and helpless. That is what we see when governments and corporations seeking to show their power at the expense of other people.

Is there really power to be found in the broken and bleeding body of a dying man? The world says no.

But Good Friday tells a different story. This broken and bleeding body of a dying man turns any earthly ideas of power upside down and inside out, as salvation and redemption are found in the most unlikely of places. Power is found in sacrifice, humility, and death. Power is found in a man, hanging on a cross. Naked, broken, and dying. Forsaken. Power is found here, at Calvary.

Today, we preach Christ crucified, 'a stumbling block to the Jews and foolishness to the Gentiles' (1 Corinthians 1:23). The power of the Cross can certainly make little sense to us and our world, so set in our ways. The Cross comes in direct contradiction to everything we hear and see about power on a daily basis. It speaks not of explosives, military might, and physical force, but of love, forgiveness, and the laying down of one's life. A stumbling block and foolishness perhaps, but also a better way to live.

May we seek to show something of Christ's subversive power in our words, lives, and actions, this Good Friday and beyond.

May you experience the powerful love of our Father God, along with the peace and joy that comes from knowing that Jesus died and rose again.

As we explore what it means to do church differently, we will continue to send you electronically the Sunday Readings for your personal use.

If you are aware of people at the moment who may benefit from receiving this readers sheet, please let us know.

Currently all church services and groups including all children's and young people groups are postponed until we receive new advice from the Church of England and the government.

Please Stay In and Stay Safe.