

Pray for the Church of England

This week Salisbury Diocese and Bradford Deanery welcomed a new Rector to Melksham. We pray (as Bishop Andrew did in the licensing service) that Charlie Thompson and his family will have all 'the needful gifts of grace' for this new ministry. You could feel his excitement, and that of the Parish, at all the possibilities this new appointment holds.

Conversely, after the service someone remarked to me, 'I really struggle with the institution (of the church) and all that hierarchy... I sometimes feel more at home with people outside the church!' It made me ponder again all that's good about the Church of England... and all that's not so good! And ask; how will it fare in the post-COVID world?

At the same time, elections are currently taking place for the new General Synod which will meet for the next five years and discuss matters of finance (whether the church can continue to provide ministry in every parish in the land), mission (the challenge of making new disciples in rural, urban and new housing areas), reaching the next generation of unchurched children and young people, big issues of the day (such as poverty, climate justice, slavery and refugees)... and the 'elephant in the room' that won't go away: human sexuality.

On the positive side, the Church of England has been around for a long time and has roots, stability and a bank of wisdom and experience to draw on. It has a long track record of being present in every place, quietly helping people to pray, be kind to others, and meet the big events of life (such as birth, marriage, sickness and death) with faith, hope and love. It has forms of worship, honed over time, which if not always dynamic and exciting, can keep us grounded in difficult times (such as the pandemic we have just lived through). And it has a leadership structure which is far from perfect but does seem to work as well as any other, balancing top-down with bottom-up, centralised with local power.

On a personal note, the Church of England has trained, housed, paid and given me a context for ministry for getting on for 40 years. It would be ungrateful in the extreme not to feel a certain loyalty and indebtedness to this institution. But that is where the problem lies... the C of E is an institution, a large organisation with its own traditions and bureaucracy, holding together a very diverse group of people. It is a 'broad church'!

All that means it's hard for the Church to move quickly and respond to fast changing times – although it has travelled a long way in the time I've been part of it and, in my opinion, responded remarkably well to the COVID crisis. People who feel the urgency of mission and want to be able to respond quickly to new opportunities tend to feel frustrated when the church is unable to move at their pace. On the other hand, it does provide a platform for new mission initiatives, a harbour from which evangelistic voyagers can set sail.

On balance I believe the positives outweigh the negatives and, as for me, I will be sticking with the C of E! However, we need to pray for it – its bishops, clergy, synods and parishes – as we face the unprecedented challenges of this time.

Allan

A Habit of a Lifetime!

Following on from Allan's sermon on 26 September I would just like to add a couple of things

When Geoff and I became Christians some 40 years ago, at about the same time but coming from slightly different directions we very quickly got the message of tithing which was consolidated by the words of the offering prayer in the Communion service:

*All things come from you,
and of your own do we give you*

Although I can't remember an actual sermon I guess we also got teaching on this – not sure whether it was by way of a sermon or home group teaching, or possibly both.

10% seemed to be quite a lot to give but we thought it the right thing to do, and as Allan said it does become a habit.

We have now been members of 3 churches, one in Woodley, near Reading; Meole Brace near Shrewsbury; and now here in Trowbridge – and each one has done a major building/development project. Perhaps if we ever move from Trowbridge we will ensure that the local church is not considering major work!!

When we were asked to give to the project in Woodley, we prayed about what we could give as a young family with only one wage earner (as was the norm at that time) and we both felt that God was telling us to give 50% of the relatively small amount of savings we had.

We have never regretted decisions on giving, and we consider 10% to be the minimum. This enables us to support other causes as well as our local church, and God has honoured that. And now we both have state pensions we are able to give 13 times a year, as we get our state pensions 4 weekly, rather than calendar monthly.

As Treasurer, of course, I know the overall picture of our finances and it was suggested to me that I write something in this magazine to let members know the financial position in the church.

Over the last 18 months we have obviously lost a lot of income from not being able to hire out our rooms and churches, but the good news is that many of our users – and even a few new ones – are now using our premises. Unfortunately our biggest rental income came from the pre-school which has now sadly closed down.

While our income was reduced to nil from rentals insurance, staff costs, deanery share and ongoing maintenance costs continued, as well as needing to continue to heat our buildings while they were empty to avoid problems of damp. You

may not be aware but our total insurance bill for two churches and the hall and rooms comes is just over £8,000 a year.

We are currently looking at a deficit over the year of about £13,000. This does include the unbudgeted cost of livestreaming equipment – something that we didn't need in the past but is seen as much more necessary now. There is also a roof repair that needs to be done at a cost of approx. £12k, although we hope we may get some grant money towards this cost.

We do have reserves, but we had to use a significant amount from reserves in 2020. Under Charity Commission law we do need to have sufficient monies to cover 3 months of expenditure. As a PCC we are aware of this and we will still be ok with reserves this year, but we can't go on relying on our reserves.

Pat

See the letter on pages 8 – 10 to see where the diocese fits in with our costs

Update on St John's Church, West Ashton

Have you been “Strictly-fied” yet? It's great to have some light entertainment and to see all the glitz and glitter again!

St John's has not seen any glitter but welcomed a new babe who was christened at the end of August. September saw the start of two services a month, with singing of hymns and a somewhat more relaxed approach in church now that the Government Covid restrictions have eased.

However, if anyone wishes to continue wearing a mask or sit two metres apart, that's fine too.

The Ride and Stride Annual Event was held on the 11 Sept, a huge thank you to all those who became stewards for the day. St John's had six visitors during the event.

The field gates have been treated ready for the winter.

Sunday 19 September saw two new factors within the church.

1. A new addition to the porch – A Prayer/Remembrance Tree. Folk can take a card leaf and write a message; a prayer; or some words to remember a loved one, then affix to the tree.

These messages will be periodically offered to God by being placed on the altar.

2. The giving of communion wine saw the use of disposable thimble glasses and a new wine carrier tray. Plus the congregation were allowed to come to the altar to take the bread and wine; it was a special moment after such a long time of being prohibited on leaving your pew.

The churchyard squirrels have been very industrious, as they have been collecting horse chestnut conkers and burying them everywhere – bless them! The wasps and bees have left us but the moles are back leaving their tell-tale mounds of soil, they do work hard!

Our next two services will be: Sunday, 10 October - 10.30 am - Harvest Festival Service and 17 October (Holy Communion) 10.30am.

Why don't you come along and see us and join in the Harvest Worship. St John's will not be holding a Sunday Harvest Lunch, so no produce auction. However, if you would like to bring tinned food, this will be taken to the Trowbridge Foodbank for distribution to the needy.

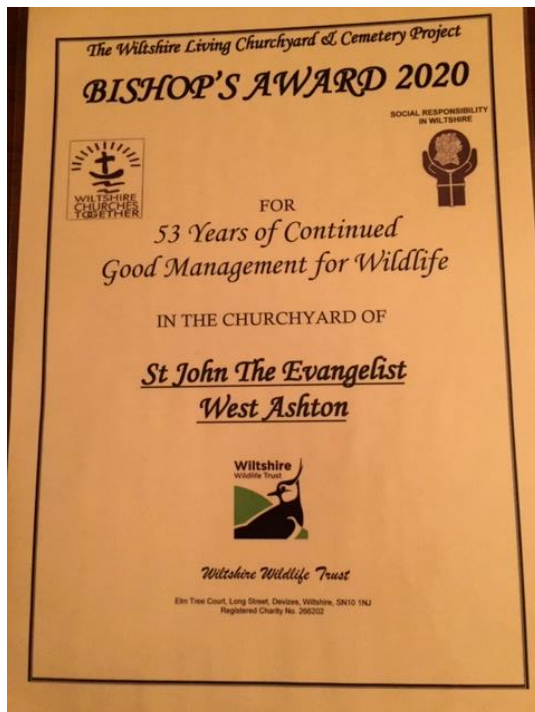
Harvest Thanksgiving is a fairly modern addition to the church calendar. Its origins are usually traced to the adaptation in 1843 of Lammas Day by the Revd.



R.S.Hawker, a priest in Cornwall. He chose the first Sunday in October as a Christian response to coincide with the traditional but largely secular “harvest home” celebration but there is some evidence to suggest that a thanksgiving for the harvest was already a relatively widespread practice. An annual church celebration of the harvest certainly established itself rapidly with great popularity and was first recognized officially in the Church of England in 1862.

Moving forward, St John’s Christmas Concert has had the green light, Allan with the PCC and the choir are happy that it goes ahead. So book the date, Friday, 3 December, St John’s Christmas Concert, 7.30pm, - full details next month. A little intrigue – it may have a military element!

Finally, may St John’s extend its sincere condolences to Marjory and family for the sad loss of Brian. He was a kind friend to St J’s, auditing the books and on occasions, visiting us in West Ashton. May he rest in peace.



Generous Giving as an Investment!

Last month the Salisbury Diocese launched its Generous Giving Campaign. The last 18 months has seen an unprecedented interruption to our church services and all the fund-raising activities that are such a part of community life, offering the opportunity to meet and chat in our otherwise rather busy lives.

We, as church members, have been deprived of such cheerful events for all these months and can perhaps begin to look forward to normal life returning.

But the effect on Diocesan finances will be much longer lasting. It is fair to say that few members of the church and certainly even less the general public, have any real appreciation of how our churches exist financially. And apart from criticisms of the Church Commissioners and Bishops, little is reported on how the Church of England holds it together and the role of the Dioceses in that.

So firstly, let me clarify what our Diocese of Salisbury does not pay for. It does not contribute to or receive income from Salisbury Cathedral, this being a separate charity and funded by the National Church. Nor does it pay for our Diocesan or Suffragan Bishops who are also funded by the National Church.

What the Diocese does pay for, amounted to £14.5 million in 2020.

Of that, £9.4 million went to 'Direct Ministerial Costs'; the stipends, national insurance, housing, pensions and expenses of all our clergy, currently 193 posts.

A further £3.4 million went to Ministerial support for on-going clergy, ordinand and lay training, church buildings, pastoral governance, legal services, overseas mission and work with children and young people. Together, therefore, what can be termed 'Parish Ministry', amounted to £12.8 million or 88% of total expenditure.

We do like to point at the assumed enormous costs of Salisbury. Other than 'Parish Ministry', the total administrative costs were £942k, a mere 6.5% of total expenditure. And yes, an amount goes to the National Church of £580k or 4%, but some of that comes back in the form of grants, costs of safeguarding, etc.

And its income? Well in 2020 it totalled £13 million, of which £9.6 million or 74% came from the parishes in payments of Parish Share – so only just covering the 'Direct Ministerial Costs'. A further £1.8 million came from parochial fees, the National Church and other grants and donations.

Investment income and rental income amounted to a further £1.6 million. So 'Parish Ministry' was covered.

But with an expenditure of £14.5 million and an income of £13 million, a deficit of £1.5 million was the result. This is not sustainable. The Diocese froze and reduced its administrative and salary costs, it sold some investments and is having to review its most significant cost, the numbers of stipendiary clergy posts needed. It has the second highest ratio of Stipendiary clergy to population in the country – and I for one want to see that maintained as far as is possible.

So, the importance of Parish Share becomes apparent. It contributes hugely, although not entirely, to Parish Ministry. This is an amount that every parish is required to send to Salisbury based on the number of members of each church. It averages out at £440 per member per year, £8.50 a week.

A shortfall in payment of Share will inevitably result in a reduction of Clergy posts.

In 2020 due to the pandemic and the reduced income that so many parishes suffered, the collection of Share across the Diocese was under 90% of what was budgeted (although 96% in our Deanery!). Many dipped into reserves to do so, but at under 90% of what was budgeted that was a shortfall of over £1 million, two thirds of that deficit.

Parish Share is not optional, nor is it a tax. It is an investment in people, the most important asset that this Diocese and the Church of England has. Our buildings without clergy are unimaginable, glorious and beautiful as they may be.

So may I suggest that when you are asked to consider your giving you look at it in this way – as an investment.

And generously – and why not cheerfully?

As the 2nd letter of Paul to the Corinthians, Chapter 9 reads: ‘the one who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and the one who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each of you must give as you have made up your mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver’.

David, Bradford Deanery Treasurer

Harvest Gifts

Jill from the storehouse was amazed at the amount of food Kay and I took to them after our Harvest Service. Both our car boot and the back seat were filled with cans, packets etc, and we had to borrow their trolley to get it to their door.



They asked us to thank everyone for their contributions.

See their website or facebook page for full details of tins, packets and toiletries which they are able to include in their hampers.

They also said that they are now getting ready for Christmas would you believe. They are looking at providing hampers for families and would particularly welcome financial donations towards these.

Update on Winter

We haven't had any update on Winter recently, but she was 2 years old on 19 September and this picture was posted on facebook showing her with her birthday pressie from her foster carers.

We had hoped to have a new puppy by now, but it looks unlikely until at least November, which is shame but we will appreciate it more when we do. There is a shortage of puppies due to the Guide Dogs breeding programme being put on hold during lockdown – they only normally use puppies from their own breeding programme but because they have so many people wanting trained dogs, they are now going to breeders outside of their programme who are Kennel Club registered



We're Going On A Study Hunt!

Please pray for those of our young people who have gone off to University for the first time, that they will meet new friends and enjoy life in such lovely places:

Maddie: studying International Tourism and Airline Management at Edinburgh Napier

Sophie: studying Geography at Durham

Lydiar: studying at Management and Marketing at Exeter

Adam: studying Environmental Science at Plymouth

And pray for Jess as she is working as a Health Care Assistant at the RUH, prior to Uni next year.

Note from Editor: if we have missed anybody out my apologies, but let me know and we will include them next month



Thank you

Thank you all so much for the very thoughtful and generous gifts I received on leaving my job as Church Administrator.

In case you don't know, I was given £100 in garden vouchers (someone knows me well!), £55 in cash, and the promise of two David Austin roses called "Grace" and "Peace" arriving in November.

I feel very, very spoiled. Thank you.



Ruth

Safe Families in Trowbridge

Safe Families is a Christian charity which is committed to working with, and through the local church to offer support, hope and belonging to improve the lives of those in our communities. From September, we have been asked by Wiltshire Council to support families in Trowbridge. We do this by connecting volunteers from churches with families that are feeling alone to build relationships that bring encouragement and hope. We provide all the training, support and safeguarding to volunteers so there is no financial or administrative burden on churches.

Do have a look at our website where you will find a number of short videos giving examples of how we work – particularly look at Tam's story

Every blessing

Shirley, Family Support Manager

Midweek Communion

The monthly spoken Communion Service on the second Wednesday of each month has now resumed. The next one will be on 13 October in St. Thomas' Church with refreshments afterwards in the church rooms for those who wish to partake.

Seating for the service will be very widely spaced and you are welcome to wear a mask if you wish.

The Difference

Christian Outreach Radio Show

Radio Bath

DAB Radio for Bath and West Wiltshire

The Difference

Sunday 4.00 to 6.00 pm

If you like the music of Christian Artists: Toby Mac; Brandon Heath; Amy Grant; Mary Mary; Danny Gokey; Sarah Reeves; and Stars Go Dim alongside favourites like: Coldplay; Adele; Imagine Dragons; Dua Lipa; and Jess Glyn 'The Difference' could be the show for you.

Included in the show: Our 'Praise on the Couch' Song; details of Online Church Services in the Bath and West Wilts area; A 'Sunday Smiler' song. Also a 'God's Great Dancefloor' track

Town Chaplains

Are you a people person?

Are you interested in the Trowbridge community?

If so you may like to consider joining the Trowbridge Town Chaplaincy team.

We are an interdenominational group who visit shops and businesses across the town centre every Wednesday morning (market day) and have conversations with staff, asking about their wellbeing, and encouraging them in their work place.

Over the past four years, we have experienced many situations, where our presence has been appreciated, with quotes like, *"Thanks for listening- my problem last week has got sorted out"* and *"Can you find out for me?"* along with people sharing with us the high and low points in their lives. It is a real privilege.

Our aim is to share the love of Christ through expressing concern and respect for all, and so build up our local community. Our "tagline" is-- *Among you, with you, for you, a caring listening ear.*

Our team members are from various churches in the area and offer a couple of hours at least once a month. We have expanded our area and are now looking for two additional members. It is a very rewarding role and so if you would like to consider exploring this further, please email maree.farrimond@btinternet.com or leave a message on 07821582244 or 01225 755372

Thanks very much

Maree and Bob

Threads Through Creation – Spectacular Scenes in Fabric

Exhibition by Jacqui Parkinson.

Naomi and I enjoyed seeing these works of art in Salisbury Cathedral recently, and thought I'd share a few images with you all. The artists calls it "a visual retelling of the (Genesis) story." There are 12 panels, each of which is approximately 12 foot tall! What I found most interesting was the detail within each piece; for example, outlines of living creatures in the purple spiral, which feature on the initial panel called In The Beginning.



They are certainly an imaginative retelling of The Creation Story, and if the exhibition is touring near here again, I would recommend visiting.

<https://www.jacqui-textile.com/>



Anita.

Desert Island Discs, St Thomas' Style

As a welcome question at Cell group recently we were asked to think of two songs, which could be songs we just liked or better still that had a memory attached to them. Also a book to take along with the usual Bible and Complete Works of Shakespeare and a luxury item – one that could work on a desert island that is unlikely to have mains power.



My choices were: 'She Loves You' by the Beatles reminds me of the fun of that era and the fun of being 15 year old at school. My second song choice was 'My Cherie Amour' by Stevie Wonder – this was song played constantly at a coffee shop near our hotel in Torquay, when Geoff and I were on honeymoon. My book would be a survival book by Bear Grylls and if possible, I would like a collection of Dickens books rather than the Shakespeare collection, and my luxury item would be a wind up radio.

Geoff's songs would be 'You Raise Me Up' by Brian Kennedy and 'O Perfect Love', just because the words and tunes are so powerful; his book would be a survival book by Ray Mears - although personally as long as he had his luxury item of a very big knife to chop down trees and protect himself from any dangers I think Geoff would survive very well, he is very resourceful.

Martin chose 'Everybody Wants to Rule the World' by Tears for Fears as this reminds him of his first trip to the US and working on a summer camp. His second choice would be U2's 'Sunday Bloody Sunday' a live recording from Red Rocks which is just a standout track to him. His book would be Bill Bryson's 'A Short History of Nealy Everything' the only book he hasn't got round to finishing. And he couldn't decide on the luxury item.

Val: chose 'yesterday' by the Beatles, and 'streets of London' by Ralph McTell; her book would be 'Lord of the Rings', and her luxury would be a never ending supply of chocolate.

Ivor chose :’Norwegian Wood’ by the Beatles (*they were popular, weren’t they – obviously an age-thing!*) His book was ‘Pickwick Papers’ by Charles Dickens and his luxury a multitool.

Janet chose: ‘Edition Speciale’ by Francis Cabrel, discovered on year abroad and a recording of ‘And Can It Be’. Her book would be ‘Busman’s Honeymoon’ by Dorothy L Sayers and she was undecided about the luxury item, either a guitar which she could learn to play or a tool box for hut building

And Gordon and Celia responded to this question as follows

Gordon: ‘Who knows where the time goes’ by Sandy Denny. Gordon considers her to be the best ever English female singer/songwriter - even 40 years after her premature death; and “The Traveller” by Clifford T Ward. He wrote many clever songs but often they were regarded as too intellectual for the 1970’s/1980’s pop scene. His book would be ‘The Brontës’ by Juliet Barker. Fascinating book about the Brontë family with over 800 pages. As I am a slow reader by the time he reached the end again he would have forgotten the beginning.
Luxury item - something to play my records on.

Celia; ‘You were always on my Mind’ by Willie Nelson. Interesting phrasing which meant that it was almost impossible for anyone to duet with him!, and ‘Running Scared’ by Roy Orbison. Fond memories of being in the audience and hearing him end his live concerts with this song. Her book would be ‘Rebecca’ by Daphne du Maurier. She never tires of this book even though she knows what is coming next. As she don’t want any Shakespeare stuff Celia asks if she can have ‘My Cousin Rachel’ by Daphne du Maurier as well? *Not sure about that one Celia!!* Her luxury item would be her own pillow.

I think we can get out of that, that Shakespeare wasn’t very popular!!!

MENUNITED-Trowbridge

MEN'S BREAKFAST

Saturday November 6th - 8.15 for 8.30 start - 10.30am

Trowbridge RFC Doric Park, Hilperton TROWBRIDGE BA14 6JB

Guest Speaker: Rev Prof Philip McCormack

Philip is a Baptist minister – 10 years in engineering at Harland and Wolff shipbuilders, was followed by 4 years as a Baptist Minister in Belfast. In 1997 he joined the army as an Army Chaplain - serving time in Iraq and Afghanistan, he knows first-hand the dangers faced by chaplains standing alongside the troops in the front line.



Changing his career in 2018, he is now on the front line as Principal of Spurgeon's Theological College in London.

Philip last came to us in October 2015 when he was based at Land Warfare Garrison, Warminster and he was very well received. So it is great that he is able to return to us. It promises to be a very good morning

Numbers are limited because of Covid-19

You need to book in early - before end of October

Cost: £12.00 payable at the club

We prefer you to book in via the website:

<https://www.menunited-ba14.co.uk>

Kadugli: Peace Primary School

This is a special letter to do with the running costs of Peace Primary School in Kadugli.

Education in Sudan is not free, as it is here, so Peace Primary School has to raise income by charging fees, and these fees pay, among other things, the salaries of the teachers. It has always been intended that Peace Primary School should meet its own costs, and this is the plan for next year. This year, however, there are special considerations arising from the creation of the kindergarten to whose building we contributed. The school and kindergarten needs to recruit four new teachers at a cost of \$5,000 (about £3,700).

In addition, the school wishes to be able to waive the fees for the poorest children and orphans, and this year there are 30 of them. The fees are \$50 each, a total of \$1,500 or about £1,100.

In short, the school needs about £4,800. We do not have this sum in our account.

Our deanery Sudan Link Committee is prepared to pay £3,300 towards the cost of recruiting the teachers, but we think the payment of the school fees is a matter for the churches and people of the deanery, which is why I am writing to you now. I must in fairness point out that this appeal is for this year's fees, but it is a need which will arise every year.

I am asking you therefore if you and your church would contribute towards the payment of the fees of these poor and sometimes orphaned children this year. I would also ask you to consider whether you would continue to do this in following years.

I have quoted fees of \$50 per child; at current rates of exchange this would be about £37. Rates of exchange fluctuate, and I have not allowed for banking charges for making transfers. May I suggest £40 to £45 would be more realistic.

I shall be grateful if you are able to give these children your support, and to do so very soon as the start of the new term is imminent.

For ease of transfer, please send the money to Bradford Deanery's bank account and we will collect the money and arrange its transfer to Kadugli.

Or a cheque made payable to Bradford Deanery Synod to me.

Every blessing to each of you.

John J, Bradford Deanery Lay Chairman