

# STAMP

SUMMER 2023 MAGAZINE

ISSUE 59



THE PARISH OF ST MARY & ST PAUL  
HEMEL HEMPSTEAD



Cover :The Revd Canon John Williams in the Chapel of the Holy Spirit in St Mary's Church on 28<sup>th</sup> June 2023, the actual day of the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of his priestly ordination.

*Photo: Jeff Wallis*

## IN THIS ISSUE

From the Editor. . . . .	3
Canon John's Silver Jubilee . . . . .	4
Though we are many . . . . .	6
Art in the Nave . . . . .	7
Evensong at St Paul's Cathedral . . . . .	9
Listen, have you ever phoned the Samaritans? . . . . .	10
Hemel Old Town Beer Festival . . . . .	13
St James the Least. . . . .	16
Random Smiles . . . . .	17
UK Langa Township Pre-School Trust . . . . .	18
Editor's interview . . . . .	20
God and the Arts . . . . .	24
God in the Sciences . . . . .	26
Visit of Zimbabwe Mothers' Union Group . . . . .	28
The Parish of St Mary & St Paul. . . . .	28

## FROM THE EDITOR

We have an issue of StoMP magazine for each season, following the sequence of the equinoxes and the solstices, so on this basis Spring Equinox, starting 19-23 March, Summer Solstice, starting June 20-22, Autumn Equinox, starting 21-24 September, Winter Solstice, starting 20-22 December.

However, an official source states the seasons in the Northern Hemisphere as follows: Spring 1 March–31 May, Summer 1 June–31 August, Autumn 1 September–30 November, Winter 1 December–28 February.

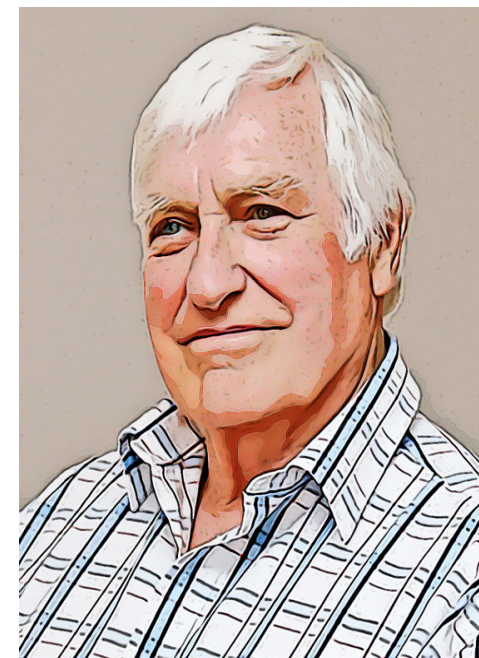
To complicate further, in the Uk September feels like Summer, but November feels like Winter.

What has this got to do with STOMP? It is about when each issue is published and what it is called. We have tended to publish at the back end of equinox/solstice based seasons, which reasonably is said to confuse some people.

The answer in future would be to publish as follows: Spring week 1 in March, Summer week 1 in June, Autumn week 1 in September, Winter week 1 in December. We would like to make this change straight away and have decided to facilitate the change as follows.

This Issue 59 (Summer!) published in first week this September, and Issues 60 and 61 to be a combined Autumn and Winter edition to be published in the first week in December. Then we will publish edition 62, Spring in the first week of March 24.

*Gordon*





# CANON JOHN'S SILVER JUBILEE

On 28<sup>th</sup> June 2023 Canon John reached the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his ordination to the priesthood and on the following Sunday we celebrated the event with him at a special evening service at St Mary's. The Right Reverend Rob Wickham, Bishop of Edmonton, who was a contemporary of John's at theological college, preached and presided at the service.



*Bishop Rob with current and past clergy from the Deanery and the Hemel Hempstead Team ministry.*



*Bishop Rob recalled some anecdotes from his time as a contemporary of John at theological college.*



*After the service John was presented with a Humeral Veil, a vestment worn around the shoulders and over the hands by a priest holding a sacred vessel*



## THOUGH WE ARE MANY ...



From the end of the service at St Paul's 6 August 2023:

As we come to the end of our time together in church today we remember the other things we can learn from today's theme and the feeding of the 5,000 especially when we gather together to break bread and pour wine; although we didn't have communion today, but normally when we meet we pour wine and break bread and share.

We take a small amount of bread and a small amount of wine and we share it together. But have you ever thought about how that goes through the whole world.

We always say a communion prayer, "though we are many, we are one body because we all share in one bread". Sometimes people have said to me after a service when there had been only a few of us there, "well there are only 10 or 15 of us here but you said 'though we are many we are one body we all share in one bread', we are not many are we?"

But we are thinking of all of the Christians throughout the world who are sharing bread and wine on a Sunday in small amounts, but making a big difference. And we think of all the people throughout all ages for 2,000 years who have shared bread and wine and made a difference with that small sharing and we think about all of the people who will ever share bread and wine after our Lord's command whether they are living or departed or yet to come, we are united in that celebration.

That's why we say "though we are many". When we say that at the breaking of the bread it reminds us of the miracle of Jesus feeding the 5,000 with the food of the Kingdom. So we won't be discouraged sometimes when we come together and we are few in number because we have seen how small things can make a big difference.

Canon John

## ART IN THE NAVE



*Some warm sunshine but plenty of clouds, cold winds and rain too didn't encourage the numbers we had hoped for. But lots of cards, prints and paintings were purchased not to mention the number of teas, coffees and delicious cakes consumed.*

*Too early to report the financial outcome, more in our next issue.*

*Meanwhile many thanks to all who set up, stewarded, wrapped the purchases, made the cakes, ran the refreshments, and took it all down afterwards.*





## EVENSONG AT ST PAUL'S CATHEDRAL

Having promised ourselves a day in London for months, the decision was finally made when I mentioned to Gordon that I had never been inside St Paul's Cathedral. So to make the visit extra special we planned to attend Evensong. Our day started with pouring rain and disrupted rail travel but not to be deterred we continued with our plan. It turned out to be a lovely sunny day and everything was just as we had hoped.

The Cathedral choir sang beautifully and we were fortunate to be able to sit in the choir stalls to listen to their angel voices resounding around the magnificent building. It was a truly magical and tranquil end to a wonderful day.

*Rosina Gaddes*

*Words from the Cathedral's service booklet:*

### **Evensong**

Christian worship has been offered to God on this site for over 1400 years.

Visitors worshipping with us today, become a part of this living tradition of prayer and thanksgiving and are most welcome.

### **A Guide to Evensong**

Evensong at St Paul's Cathedral is a tiny fragment of something else: it is part of the worship which is offered to God by Christian people every hour of the day and night, in every part of the world.

When worshippers come to Evensong here, it is as if they are dropping in on a conversation already in progress – a conversation between God and his people which began long before we were born and which will continue long after our deaths.

For a brief moment, you step into the continual stream of worship which is being offered today and which will be offered to the end of time. You are one with those who worship here on earth and in heaven.

Evensong is drawn almost entirely from the Bible. Its primary purpose is to proclaim the wonderful works of God in history and in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Its secondary purpose is to evoke from the worshipper a response of praise, penitence, prayer, and obedience.

Much of the English of the service is the language spoken and written by our ancestors more than four hundred years ago.

It may sound old-fashioned but its meaning is not out of date.



# LISTEN, HAVE YOU EVER PHONED THE SAMARITANS?



How do you think of Samaritans? We are all familiar with the Good Samaritan who looked after the traveller who got beaten up by thieves and we all hear sound bites on the news that Samaritans have said something about suicides going up or down or whatever. But have you ever telephoned the Samaritans and spoken to one. They have a free number 116 123.

Some years ago they had a strap line 'Whatever you are going through, we will go through it with you', and I think their new Mission Statement is on the same lines which just about sums up the service they offer 24 hours of every day and 365 days each year.

People think of them as a suicide prevention service, and of course they are concerned with suicide,

but suicide is best prevented by starting to talk long before life has got that bad. So they are pleased to be called whenever life is beginning to press down.

As with every walk of life Samaritans come in all shapes and sizes but the thing that they have in common is that they have been taught to be good listeners and they have plenty of empathy.

The saying goes that 'a trouble shared is a trouble halved' and I hope that you have found that if you can tell someone, who really listens, about the challenges that you are facing, that it really helps you to sort things out for yourself – and that is the whole essence of the service that Samaritans offers. No unwanted advice or stories of how they have had the same problem or all the other ways we fail people. They just listen, and if you know how to really listen you will also know how it can help the world to go round.

I was inspired to write this piece by receiving the Annual Report from our local Samaritans group and being inspired by the joy that, it seemed to me, radiated from it. Here are some examples:-

Our Branch, based in Watford, has been around for almost 55 years and is dedicated to bringing the magic of Samaritans to the communities of South West Herts - and what a community that is. We are grateful for a steady flow of people who wish to volunteer, not only on our phone line, but also on our webchat service, and in Outreach which takes Samaritans into our local community - in schools, in HM Prison The Mount, on local train stations and in hospitals, at Herts Pride and at other events. Not to mention helping to keep the Branch running in a myriad of support and leadership roles.

*And* - Our volunteers are an amazing crowd. You don't need to have been through a particular life experience or be from a certain walk of life. What all our volunteers have in common is a shared desire to be alongside anyone who is struggling to cope and to reduce suicide.

*And* - Many Listening Volunteers juggle Samaritan shifts, work and other responsibilities to be able to contribute their time. As a Support Volunteer, I make sure the kitchen is clean and the refreshments are kept well stocked to enable them to continue their valuable work.

## SAMARITANS CONT'D.

I think StoMP Magazine has included the following poem before, but I think it can never be read too often, so enjoy and remember. You too can be a Samaritan whenever you give someone your time and really listen to them.

### LISTEN

When I ask you to listen to me,  
And you begin to tell me why I shouldn't feel that way,  
You are trampling on my feelings.

When I ask you to listen to me,  
And you feel that you have to do something to solve my problem,  
You have failed me, strange as that may seem.

When I ask you to listen to me,  
And you start giving me advice,  
You have not done what I asked.

Listen.

All I ask is that you listen,  
Not to talk or do – just listen,  
And I can do for myself, I am not helpless,  
Maybe discouraged and faltering, but not helpless.  
When you do something for me that I can and need to do for myself,  
You add to my fear and weakness.

So please listen and just hear me.  
And if you want to talk,  
Wait a minute for your turn,  
And I will listen to you

*Robin Woodd*



A beer festival in church, who would have thought of doing that? Well actually, it's not that unusual, Kings Langley have had one and Grantham has had one for several years now.

So, looking for the next big event in church Canon John, as a CAMRA member, approached the Mid Chilterns branch of CAMRA to suggest that they might use the church for a festival.

For those of you that don't know CAMRA is the Campaign for Real Ale, whose aims are to promote the production and availability of quality real ale, cider and perry. How it does this in part is to run beer festivals on a not-for-profit basis, but in the hope, funds can be raised to help with

campaigns and the lobbying of the government. It supports branches in staging festivals by providing guidance, verifying plans, providing loans to buy beer, hire fencing and toilets and also provides equipment; coolers, taps, bars, boots, and hoists, to name but a few, at no cost.

So, with help from Joe from the Old Town market and ex-councillor Rob, Beauchamp work started on the Dacorum Event Safety Group form. This would give us permission to put up fencing and block the access through the church yard. Along with this was the initial plan which CAMRA would need to approve.



*On the Sunday, the festival was opened by Bishop Jane seen here with Jared Ward-Brickett, Chairman of Mid-Chilterns CAMRA, and Canon John*



These proved to be the key documents and without them there would be no festival. Both took longer than expected whilst supporting evidence was obtained.

After that the list of things to design and find started to grow; our logo, designed by Jeff Wallis, posters, glasses program, beer list, volunteers, security, first aider.

The setup started on the Sunday before as the items from the children's corner were moved out. Monday saw the back of the church completely cleared, and it looked very much as it does now. Tuesday saw the CAMRA equipment arrive, along with beers and 'stillage' (the racks to hold the casks), lent to us from Tring Brewery, and the festival glasses. Wednesday saw the fencing arrive and erected, and Thursday the portable toilets arrived. That left a very busy Friday morning tidying up and frantically preparing signage.

Then at 12:00 on Friday we opened! After a short time, the Mayor of Dacorum, Councillor William Allen, arrived and officially opened the event. There was a steady stream of people throughout the afternoon and evening. It was a really good atmosphere. In the evening people sat in the pews, somehow, I didn't see that happening, listened to the musicians, and even joined in at times.

On Saturday the rain came down! People were in the pews again, well there was no shelter outside, but yet another great atmosphere inside. Roger Protz, a legend of the beer world, opened the festival, and gave a short talk.



*'Man of God at the feet of the Man of Beer'*

The rain sadly had an effect on numbers as people were staying at home, and did not venture out in the evening.

Sunday, and the weather was bright and sunny again. The Bishop of Hertford, Reverend Dr Jane Mainwaring, opened the day's festival having taken the 9:30 service.

Whilst the sun was out sadly numbers were still a bit low. Monday was take down day. It's rather amazing how quickly you can undo what has taken days to erect.

Things went smoothly and the church was soon back to how it is today.

Everybody agreed it was a really good atmosphere and that they enjoyed it.

The unused beer tokens – people buy tokens and then use them at the bar instead of cash – were donated to Liberty Tea Rooms to the tune of £111.25.

Will we be doing it again? Well, the dates for next year are already booked in the calendar, but we need to have the conversation with the CAMRA team as they will need to do most of the hard work.

Oh, and did it make any money? Yes, it did, exactly how much is still being worked on.

*Brian Crawley*



*One for the bellringers Brian?*



*Canon John with the Mayor of Dacorum, Councillor William Allen who opened the Festival on the first day.*



# ST JAMES THE LEAST

## On the absurdity of a vicar ever retiring

*The Revd Dr Gary Bowness continues his tongue-in-cheek letters from Uncle Eustace, an elderly Anglo-Catholic vicar to Darren, his nephew, a low-church curate, recently ordained*



The Rectory  
St James the Least

My dear Nephew Darren

Beware of being invited by bishops to drop round for a chat. My first mistake was to answer the phone when he rang; what are answerphones for, but to avoid having to talk to anyone - ever. My second mistake was not to be able to think of a meeting I had to attend -preferably on another planet - on the day he suggested.

I therefore found myself in his study this morning, waiting for the point of the meeting while we negotiated the obligatory five minutes discussing the weather and his summer holiday in France. I made it quite clear that I had been far too busy to swan off to foreign parts – although I suspect the implication of what I said passed him by.

We then got to the point. He was toying with the thought of my retirement and linking us with the adjoining parish of St Agatha's. I patiently explained, using simple words and speaking slowly for his benefit, that at 85 and with 40 years at St James the Least of All behind me, I was just getting into my stride and that the vicar of St Agatha's, a stripling at 63, had nowhere near enough experience to organise the hymn list, let alone two parishes. This, too, seemed to drift somewhere above his head.

He had clearly done his homework. There were already plans for my Queen Anne rectory to be sold and my five acres of garden be turned into a housing estate. This news would be received by our parishioners with as much equanimity as if they were told that Buckingham Palace was to be converted into a sports centre.

The matter, I was told, was confidential – which meant that I only relayed the news to one parishioner at a time. By the end of the day everyone in the village knew, and a counter attack was being planned. Inevitably, the most outraged were those who never attend church. People do so love having a church not to go to. Congregations have soared, gardeners are being brought in to tidy the rectory grounds, and the church council is now well attended. The latter is a mixed blessing, as I always think that the time to get worried is when people start to turn up to meetings.

It may surprise our bishop, but the threat of a merger has been the greatest impetus to mission outreach we've had in years. Retirement indeed! I'm sure Zadok was never asked about his pension plans.

Your loving uncle, Eustace



---

## RANDOM SMILES

- Lecturing is transferring information from the notes of the lecturer to the notes of the students without passing through the minds of either.
- When I was young, I was poor. But after several years of hard work, I am no longer young.
- People say 60 is the new 40. The policeman who just pulled me over didn't agree.
- Scientists have finally discovered exactly how much sleep a human being needs ... just five minutes more
- I know, I know, when people see a cat's litter box, they say, "Oh, have you got a cat?". But someday, *just once*, I want to say, "No, it's for visitors."
- Mother to young daughter after first day at school: "Well, dear, what did they teach you today?" Daughter: "Not much. I've got to go back again tomorrow."

# UK LANGA TOWNSHIP PRE-SCHOOL TRUST



## Gordon writes,

The particular aim of the LTPT SHOP project is to enable the Langa Early Child Development Forum to have a building to work from on behalf of the pre-schools and creches serving 5,000 children aged 1-6 in Langa Township. To enable this Cheltenham College Partnerships, Charity and Community has made a significant donation, which is being built up further by other donations over the coming months.

In recent months I have met and have been discussing SHOP with Chris Beech, who now has relocated from Norfolk to Cape Town. Chris sees SHOP in the wider context of a strategy and plans, which aim to significantly improve learning and personal development for many children as they prepare for primary school education.

The development of the Langa ECD Forum would be central to achieving this ambition. Chris, earlier the Managing Director of building and construction companies in Cape Town, in retirement from 2015 became the project and development manager within the Newlands Rotary Club programme of support for creches and pre-schools in Langa.

That programme has now ended but Chris intends to continue the work linking with his local contacts and taking the lead for LTPT in Cape Town on the SHOP project. It has been a blessing to have come across Chris Beech, given his deep experience and his commitment to causes such as economic empowerment and the education of young children.



Yet another blessing has emerged in recent weeks following contact with Gary Clueit, who is a 'technology entrepreneur, investor, maker and philanthropist' based in the Isle of Man.

Following e-mail correspondence and a Team meeting, I met Gary in London for several hours. His name may be familiar to you through our reports on 'The One World Challenge' in recent LTPT newsletters.

The Gary Clueit Foundation has a particular focus on Africa, South of the Sahara, the empowerment of women, education and sustainability. I have asked Gary whether, 'you and your foundation would like to be a partner in our SHOP project, somehow, as a sponsor, as a funder or a co-driver' and the response to this has been positive. Meeting Gary I sensed empathy and synergy and I hope that we can work together on SHOP.

## Langa Christmas Card 2023



The Langa Christmas Card for this year shows Nomonde Pre-School children joyously waving the 2022 LTPT Christmas card to send their regards, best wishes and thanks to all their supporters for this Christmas and 2024.

The cards will be available shortly from Gordon - it would be helpful to know in advance if you would like to order some. There is no postage charge for orders in the UK and the minimum order is 10, with envelopes of course. The charge for 10 is £3.50.



## EDITOR'S INTERVIEW

An important context for this interview is the period 1972 to 2023, during which Tara's life can be considered during two phases, 1972 to 2002 in Zimbabwe and 2002 to 2023 in England.

Tara was born in 1972 in the town of Mutare once known as Umtali in colonial times. This industrious city, located in the province of Manicaland boasts of one of the major train and road links to the neighbouring country of Mozambique forming one of the largest economic backbones of the city. Of the ten provinces in Zimbabwe, Manicaland is the second largest in terms of population. Located in the eastern part of the country, it is privy to hot and humid summers, and cool to mild winters given its variety of altitudes.

Tara was the last of twelve children born to her parents. The first ten were girls, and the eleventh was a boy. Her dad faced two questions, first are you happy to have so many girls; the second, why are you educating those girls when they are going to get married? His answer to the first was that the girls would make him wealthy through marriage and they would look after him in later years. To the second, his answer was that every child needs to be educated.



A clerk in Government service in Mutare he had a large house in the village for the family and a smaller house in the town. It was a great sadness to Tara and the family when he passed away when she was aged only five. This first phase in Tara's life was lived against a violent and troubled backdrop. Rhodesia became an independent but unrecognised country in 1970, its status until 1980. This was time of Harold Macmillan's continuing 'wind of change in Africa'.



The quarter of a million people in Rhodesia of European descent wanted to maintain their power and position, the six million Africans were not represented in Government. In the 1960's Zapu/Zipra, (Moscow influenced) and Zanu/ Zanla (Beijing influenced) moved the 'liberation struggle' into the Bush War, taking on Government forces. Little Tara and her family were in the middle of this, suspected by all sides as being on the other's side. Her Dad after all was a Government servant but the family lived in a big house in a village in the war zone, seen to be a useful harbour for militants!

Tara remembers interrogations from both sides, and helicopters approaching, her mother 'shouting run, run', and fleeing to safety and seeing bombs falling near the village. The running stopped, Mum said 'we are not running anymore', and the fear lessened in 1977 when her father died. Nobody from Zanu/Zapu could now point the finger and threaten them as a 'Government family'. Bad times continued, however, because as white rule ended the transition to new authority gradually led to the ruin of the economy of Zimbabwe, a country in which the acceptable currency for business became the US\$, inflation hit the roof, and exports and investment fell away.

What then about Tara during this these times? She became educated; school until the age of 18, qualifying then to proceed in 1990 to three years of training in Harare to be a nurse, followed sometime later by an 18 - month course in midwifery. Her command of English all this time was a major asset. As English was the official language of Government despite Ndebele and Shona being popular native languages, 'nobody could get a decent job if they did not have English', The 12 years to 2002 saw her working in a large hospital in Harare, in village hospitals and

community clinics, in general nursing and midwifery both in the public and the private sectors. By 2000 Tara was beginning to feel adventurous and thinking of pursuing a long-standing ambition to nurse in England, influenced by her late sister who was also a Provincial Nursing Officer in Mutare, Zimbabwe. There were two problems, the thought of leaving her mother and the need to find a sponsor in England to enable her to get a visa and working permit. On the edge of leaving in 2001, she missed the chance, needing to look after her mother who passed away in 2002. A very kind friend gave up her sponsorship to Tara, who ended up working in a care home in Devon for two years and thereby starting the second phase of her life.

Towards the end of the two years Tara felt the need to work in a big hospital and saw an advert about the opening of a new ward in Hemel Hempstead Hospital. Applying, successfully, she was thwarted on arrival to find that accommodation thought to be with the job did not happen. Her wandering then started: B and B in Alexandra Road, renting elsewhere, into the Old Town, then setting up home in Highfield and finally moving to Warners End. There she lives with her 21-year old daughter Kuda and 14-year old Matthew. Kuda is studying bioscience in London, but her eldest son, 26-year old Takudzwa is studying biomedicine in Zimbabwe. Many people had left Zimbabwe, and these included her sister who lives in Reading and another sister living in Bracknell.



*Tara with her family, Tara and son Matthew on left and daughter Kuda on right with central, a sister with husband and four children.*

Now, she has an ideal job, based in Watford working for NHS Professional, with flexible working hours at her choice, different assignments and plenty of variety in work places and people. She does not miss Zimbabwe and dreads what violence next week's election will bring to the country again.

Asking Tara about her faith, she explained that she grew up with this through her mother who, wherever Tara was living would ask, 'why don't you got church?' With her Mum 'it was church, church, church'.

Even in the later stages of her life, when her mobility was greatly reduced, services were held in her village home rather than the usual town venue. Her mother passing away, her church question is still with Tara. So always with Matthew, and sometimes with Kuda, she comes to St Paul's. because on a wander through Highfield she had met Revd Chandy Perera who introduced her to us at St Paul's. Since then she has given much to us, still does and we love to see her and Matthew come through the door most Sundays.

Tara likes to walk a lot but this is more difficult these days because of COVID, work pressures and being poorly in 2021. She reads widely, her favourite author being Danielle Steele. She does read books for teenagers, this is to support and check up on Matthew as she is deeply keen for him to be well

read! With no TV because of poor reception in her part of Warners End she enjoys the radio programmes. Now, along with Matthew a British citizen, Tara loves it in England, the friendliness of the people, the freedom, the safety, the wide choice of goods and services. The variety of cuisine, the valleys, hills, slopes and greenery remind her of home. Offered the chance to live in Watford she turned this down, staying here is just right for her. It has been riveting to listen to Tara and to review so many aspects of her interesting life. She has fought her way through tough times and through her education, determination and drive she has become a highly regarded and valued member of our community.

Thank you very much Tara for deciding all those years ago to fly off to England and with Matthew for becoming citizens of the United Kingdom. I get the impression that Matthew is going to join you in the medical profession.

*GG 20 August*



# GOD AND THE ARTS

Michael Burgess continues his look at great works of Christian art. You can see the image described by googling 'Vase of Flowers' by Jan Davidsz de Heem.



Jan Davidsz de Heem, via Wikimedia Commons

## **'He gave us eyes to see them': Flowers – the beauty of the Lord**

In this month of September, we give thanks for God's blessings in all that the earth yields us. Those blessings are focused in this wonderful painting of Jan Davidsz de Heem. He was born in Utrecht in Holland in 1606 and studied art under his father's guidance. De Heem then moved to Antwerp, where for the rest of his life he created paintings of such beauty and depth that one of them – a portrait of Prince William III surrounded by blossoms and fruits - received the highest price ever paid for a painting at that time.

In the 'Vase of Flowers' de Heem has gathered together a bouquet of variegated flowers and plants for our delight. Time stands still in his painting in two ways. First, these thirty-one blooms could never have flowered at the same time, but through the magical touch of the artist, they do for us. Caught on canvas, they are as fresh and vibrant as the day they were painted in 1645.

But there are signs that the gifts of nature do wither and die, as we look closely and see on the marble slab a snail. Nearby is a salamander eyeing his next meal as a spider hangs on a thread from one of the flowers. In the centre, another snail looks at his food, the beautiful and rare red and white tulips. Yet we look again and see also signs of new life: the reeds of wheat are symbols of the Eucharistic bread; the caterpillar and butterfly on the striking white poppy at the top are signs of resurrection; and the peas in their pod and the blackberries mark out the fruitfulness of creation.

The artist shows us a glorious range of flowers - some well-known, others more exotic and brought back to Holland through the colonial expansion of the 16th century. Tulips and poppies dominate, but to the left are some small-scented roses. Each is a testimony to the beauty and goodness of the world we live in.

A 100 years later, Christopher Smart wrote in 'Jubilate Agno': 'For the flowers are great blessings...for the flower glorifies God...for the flowers are peculiarly the poetry of Christ.'

And 200 years later Gerard Manley Hopkins wrote: 'I do not think I have ever seen anything more beautiful than the bluebell I have been looking at. I know the beauty of our Lord by it.'

And we, in our own century, can echo poet and painter as we praise God, the author of such flowers and plants that make up a world of 'all things bright and beautiful.'



# GOD IN THE SCIENCES

---

*This series is written by Dr Ruth M Bancewicz, who is Church Engagement Director at The Faraday Institute for Science and Religion in Cambridge. Ruth writes on the positive relationship between Science and Christian faith.*



## **How can a Christian be a scientist?**

I used to ask this question as a student. I wondered why. Eventually I met a good number of successful scientists who were sincere Christians, and I learned that science and faith are a great combination. Dr Francis Collins, former Director of the project to decode the whole of human DNA, wrote that it is “possible for the scientist-believer to be intellectually fulfilled and spiritually alive, both worshipping God and using the tools of science to uncover some of the awesome mysteries of His creation.” So, what do people like this make of the opportunities and challenges of a life in science?

Although our beliefs may affect what we notice about the world and how we interpret our data, they don’t affect the outcome of the experiments themselves. If a Muslim and a Christian drop the same ball from the same height under identical conditions, it will fall at the same speed. This means that a scientist can be respected by her colleagues for doing good work, regardless of what she believes and what her colleagues think of her worldview.

Science is an exercise in observing and measuring things, and coming up with general principles about the way things are. The world has been declared by God to be ‘very good’ (see chapter one and two of Genesis), and exploring it is a way to express our gratitude to Him. Scientific discoveries can also bring a sense of awe and wonder that feeds into our worship.

Some people don’t want to get involved in certain lines of research because of ethical concerns. On the other hand, there are many issues that make Christians want to get stuck into new research that will help care for people and the rest of creation, such as medical research, ecology or developing appropriate technologies.

Organisations such as Christians in Science and the Faraday Institute gather together scientists who are also people of faith, and others who are interested in the subject. They come from a wide range of backgrounds, and express their beliefs in a variety of different ways. What they have in common is the conviction that you don’t have to choose between science and God. As the young people in our churches prepare to return to their studies let’s encourage them that science (along with many other fields) is a great way to serve God.



## VISIT OF ZIMBABWE MOTHERS' UNION GROUP



*Introduced by Sister Patricia, the Zimbabwean Mothers Union from North London joined us for a joyous and uplifting service. At the end, swaying, they sang for us. Afterwards with great conviviality we shared each other's food and drinks.*

### THE PARISH OF ST MARY & ST PAUL

#### **The Clergy**

The Revd Canon John Williams  
currently on ESL  
The Revd Dr. Luke Geoghegan  
The Revd Canon Richard Leslie

#### **Parish Office**

Norma Howie 07901 359117  
admin@stmaryandstpaulhemel.org.uk

#### **Church Wardens - St Mary's**

Rosamund Russell Tel: 01442 217754  
stmarychurchwarden@stmaryandstpaulhemel.org.uk  
Emmeline Lambert Tel: 01442 268705  
stmarychurchwarden@stmaryandstpaulhemel.org.uk

#### **Church Wardens - St Paul's**

Gordon Gaddes Tel: 01442 257920  
stpaulchurchwarden@stmaryandstpaulhemel.org.uk  
Rosina Gaddes Tel 07720 897037  
stpaulchurchwarden@stmaryandstpaulhemel.org.uk

#### **Hall Bookings:**

For St Mary's and St Paul's Halls:  
Norma Howie 07901 359117  
admin@stmaryandstpaulhemel.org.uk

#### **StOMP Magazine**

Editor: Gordon Gaddes  
Design: Jeff Wallis  
hello@stmaryandstpaulhemel.org.uk

[www.stmaryandstpaulhemel.org.uk](http://www.stmaryandstpaulhemel.org.uk)

Reg. Charity no 1130644

