

Astley, Tyldesley and Mosley Common



TeamMagazine

September - October 2021



Then sings my soul...

“HOW
GREAT
THOU ART”



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Magazine:

This is now combined with the team churches and has changed size and frequency. It is published every 2 months throughout the year in this format.

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Dear Readers

First may we, well actually I, that is Andrea, apologise for the muddled appearance and mixed-up information of the last edition of the magazine. Something seems to have happened to the documents in the email between my computer and the printers that made a mess of my careful layouts and savings. I have to say that computers have a vendetta against me, honestly, they banned me from the computing room at Uni until after 9 at night cause I kept crashing the mainframe, and my computer programming.....not going to say what happened there!!

As we move into Autumn with all its thanksgiving for the Harvest and our beautiful planet, we are aware of our care and compassion for all of God's bountiful gifts and pray that we approach the future in a responsible and thoughtful manner as guardians of God's creation.

Yours Andrea Taziker and Michelle Lewthwaite

DISCLAIMER

Please note that any views, thoughts, and opinions expressed in this magazine belong solely to the person who has contributed the associated article, and not necessarily to the Team Ministry or Editorial team, or to any other group or individual.

Revd Martin Cox

Team Rector, Astley, Tyldesley and Mosley Common Team Ministry

Relationships are key to Christian Community and they grow as we learn to strip off our outer defences and use our gifts and abilities unselfconsciously. *Phil Stone*

REFLECTIONS - NATURE'S PARADOX - A SEASON OF SADNESS, JOY AND HOPE

As I sit writing this reflection, I'm watching the birds feasting on the elderberries from the tree outside my window. There are signs that nature is gearing up for the next season all around as tiny apples appear on trees and blackberry bushes begin to bear fruit for foraging.

At a time when many of us are still anticipating our 'summer holidays', autumn is fast approaching on its heels.

Technically, there are two start dates for autumn. Astronomically it can fall one day either side of the 21st September and is marked by the equinox – when daylight and dark hours are equal. This year it falls on the 22nd September. However, meteorologically the weather scientists split the year into quarters based on annual temperature cycles. By this method, autumn begins on the 1st September and runs until 30th November.

It might not necessarily feel like autumn on these specific dates - warm weather may give the impression of an extended summer, or icy blasts can seem like the early onset of winter. But many changes in nature happen around these times to indicate autumn. It's certainly felt like it at times over the past week and I'm holding onto the hope of the predicted mini heatwave for the end of August and my own holiday.

During autumn we're entering into the latter stages of Ordinary Time in the church calendar. A time which falls outside the two great seasons of Christmastide and Eastertide, or their respective preparatory seasons of Advent and Lent.

Autumn is actually one of my favourite times of year but I also consider it to be a bit of a contradiction or paradox.

September brings the academic 'New Year' but it feels strange somehow without the precursor of Christmas and the incarnation. There's the excitement of the new but a sense of loss for the long days of summer.

There's the dying leaves falling from the trees joined by a rich harvest of fruits, ripe for the picking; the longer dark nights contrasted by the bluer daylight skies surrounding the resplendent colours of nature.

Autumn is the season of abundance and harvest as well as the season of death and decay. A majesty that draws us into a real paradox that invites us to ponder the mystery of life and death.

As Christians we enter into the greatest paradox that is the life and death of our Lord Jesus Christ because in the life and teachings of Jesus we find perhaps the clearest evidence of God's upside-down kingdom, where the weak are strong, the poor are rich and the meek inherit the earth.

Jesus, a servant king who is fully human and yet fully divine, tells us that "the last shall be first and the first shall be last" (Matthew 20:16). He tells us to love our enemies and to turn the

other cheek, that we must lose our life to gain it and that a dying grain of wheat will produce many seeds. To name a few.

Again and again, Jesus turned conventional expectations on their head, pointing to a deeper morality and a richer reality. He draws us into the mystery of faith, to contemplate what it means to be a part of the bigger picture that is creation. Even in death, Jesus brings life and hope.

Through the mystery and wonder of all its contradictions, even in the death and decay, beauty, abundance and life are common place during autumn. It's this that I love, this majesty that gladdens my heart, this that brings me closer to our living, loving, gracious God.

I'll leave you with a blessing by Ruth Burgess from The Iona Community, on lingering in summer as the earth turns towards autumn 2021.

A blessing, God.
A blessing on ordinary time.
A blessing on the commonplace.
A blessing on the common life.
A blessing.
A wondering.
A hope,
a sadness
and a joy.

Revd Debbie Clarke



Debbie's ordination at Manchester Cathedral 3rd July 2021

POST LOCKDOWN

To the relief of us all we have seen the restrictions on our lives lifted in recent weeks. However, we are all being asked to remain cautious as we continue to navigate our way through the pandemic. We continue to hold in our prayers all those who work in the health and social care sectors as well as those who have been affected by COVID-19.

So what are we entitled to do? We can now sing in churches. Hooray!! We can share together in refreshments after worship. In doing so we would encourage you to maintain a degree of social distancing and to wear a face covering, although this is no longer mandatory. I remain committed to ensuring that our approach promotes the welfare of us all as we enter the autumn and winter months.

We can also resume baptisms in our parishes. There are over 60 (yes, 60) baptisms for us to arrange over the next few months. This will involve Saturday and Sunday baptisms at St George's and St John's given that we can't use St Stephen's for the time being. I have put in place a reduced number of attendees at these services in line with my commitment to ensure that we do all that we can to ensure the welfare of us all going forward.

So, please do continue to be vigilant. Please continue to be patient as we move forward. And please continue to pray for the churchwardens and members of the local ministry team as we work together on this range of important matters in our common life together.

Revd Martin Cox

Team Rector

Keep us, good Lord,
under the shadow of your mercy.
Sustain and support the anxious,
be with those who care for the sick,
and lift up all who are brought low;
that we may find comfort
knowing that nothing can separate
us from your love
in Christ Jesus our Lord.
Amen.

ATMC service rota - September and October 2021

Date	St Stephen's	St George's	St John's
3rd September <i>[Friday]</i>		1.30pm Wedding	
5th September	Team Eucharist	-	Service of the Word
10th September <i>[Friday]</i>		4.00pm Wedding	
12th September	Service of the Word	Team Eucharist	-
16th September	10.00am <i>Thursday not Sunday Holy Communion -venue tbc</i>		
19th September	-	Service of the Word	Team Eucharist
25th September <i>[Saturday]</i>		1.00pm Wedding	
26th September	Team Eucharist	10am <i>St George's Central School Harvest service</i>	Service of the Word
3rd October	Service of the Word	Team Eucharist	-
7th October	10.00am <i>Team Thursday not Sunday Holy Communion - venue tbc</i>		
10th October	-	Service of the Word	Team Eucharist
17th October	Team Eucharist		Service of the Word
24th October	Service of the Word	Team Eucharist	-
28th October	10.00am <i>Team Thursday not Sunday Holy Communion - venue tbc</i>		
31st October	-	Service of the Word	Team Eucharist

The service rota continues to follow the established 3 weekly pattern of each church having a Team Eucharist followed by a Service of the Word then no service. Any changes to this pattern will be announced in church notices and shared on Websites, Facebook pages, and A Church Near You.

When the Local Ministry Team meets at the beginning of September [after the magazine has gone to print] they will be discussing plans for baptisms so dates cannot be included in the service rota. We are currently trying to manage a backlog of approximately 70 baptisms as a consequence of Lockdown. It is important that we balance our responsibility to provide baptism ministry as well as a responsibility to care for clergy, churchwardens and others who volunteer their time to support this area of our ministry. Please hold in your prayers in the coming months those conducting baptisms and for the children being baptised in our churches and their families.

A Summary of the Document;

'TRANSFORMING MANCHESTER DIOCESE BRIEFING ON THE PROPOSALS FOR MISSION COMMUNITIES'.

December 2020 (updated July 2021)

The document Transforming Manchester Diocese was shaped by the Bishop's Leadership Team over summer 2020 and presented to Bishop's Council on 22 September. It has now been published for wider consultation and is available on the diocesan website.

The concept of Mission Communities was prompted by the immediate challenges presented by the coronavirus pandemic, as well as the challenges we were already facing.

The challenges brought by the Covid-19 Pandemic lead us to realise that change is necessary to be a Church for a different world. The number of people attending our churches continues to fall, and the Diocese of Manchester incurred an operating deficit of over £1m in 2019, mainly because our churches were not able to meet their parish share commitments.

We are seeking to become a more missionally and financially sustainable diocese. This includes new deanery arrangements with the move from 20 to 7 deaneries and the appointment of full-time Area Deans from June 2021 together with changes at deanery level.

Strategies already in place.

Growing

Our growth strategy is centred on **Fresh and Refresh** with new resourcing churches across the diocese to attract new members, particularly young adults, planting new congregations and fresh expressions of church. We encourage our existing churches to maintain a consistent outward focus to create pathways for newcomers to find faith.

We provide our clergy, lay leaders and chaplains with relevant training so they have the skills to grow healthy and vibrant faith communities comprising all ages, including children and their families.

Nurturing

We are increasing vocations to have a new, diverse generation of leaders with the instincts and skills to grow new faith communities, enabling all of us to deepen, share and live out our faith through our participation in the national Discipleship Learning Community.

Serving

We seek to be an environmentally sustainable church through programmes such as eco-church, eco-schools and the energy footprint tool.

Fit for Mission

Our digital church presence and online worship has been serving our congregations in lockdown and will continue to reach out further. Additional training and support is available to every parish.

We are working to develop a culture of Christ-like generosity and to increase giving levels in our churches, to enable them to flourish, thrive and be sustainable.

The proposals for Mission Communities arise out of the firm conviction that we need to organise ourselves differently to grow the Church of the future, developing the skills and talents of our existing and new ordained and lay leaders so that our parish system is able to flourish as the basis for our future survival and growth.

By 2030 we want to be a growing church, focused on discipleship and evangelism, serving individuals and communities across our diocese. Our work together grows out of Jesus's Great Commandment which is to 'love the Lord your God...and love your neighbour as yourself.'*(Matthew 22:36-40)* ... and out of His Great Commission, 'to go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and the Son and of the Holy Spirit' *(Matthew 28:19-20)*.

Our vision is for our mission communities:

- to have a missional leader working with a diverse team with a range of skills made up of a number of other stipendiary posts and other named focal leaders, including lay leaders, readers and self-supporting ordained ministers who are all supporting multiple congregations;
- these may have a variety of expressions and traditions of church taking place at different times and in different venues and also virtually, which are attractive to a wide range of people of all ages;
- these are accountable to each other as well as their local congregations and all working to encourage and support our church members in deepening and sharing their faith as well as engaging with key local partners.

This way of working will enable us to people grow in their faith and serving our local communities, support new and diverse ways of working in mission and enable all church members to live out and share their faith. We must identify ordained and lay leaders who will challenge the existing ways of working, to upskill and re-skill in order to create a culture of prayer, discernment, theological reflection and expectation.

Bringing our existing parishes together will provide opportunities to re-think and re-focus our efforts while supporting our existing missionally strong and healthy churches and asking what the future holds for our most fragile churches given current and future levels of parish income.

Timescale

Consultations have taken place, focussing on broad principles (page 12 and 13 of main report), which were agreed by Bishop's Council and Diocesan Synod during the Spring of 2021. Consultations are now taking place regarding the boundaries of the new Mission Communities. It is proposed that the former Deanery of Leigh forms a single Mission Community in the new Deanery of Salford and Leigh. Mission Community boundaries will be agreed by November with a view to Mission Communities coming into being initially on an informal basis from the beginning of January 2022.

Conclusion

We live in a time of huge challenge and great opportunity which will only bear fruit if we face up to our challenges boldly, head-on, and with urgency.

The hardest part of the challenge is that such a change will require those of us who like things the way they are now, to take decisions that mean the future will be different for future generations.

This is a hard ask. But we believe that the ask is coming from God himself. He will bless us - our challenge is to allow him.

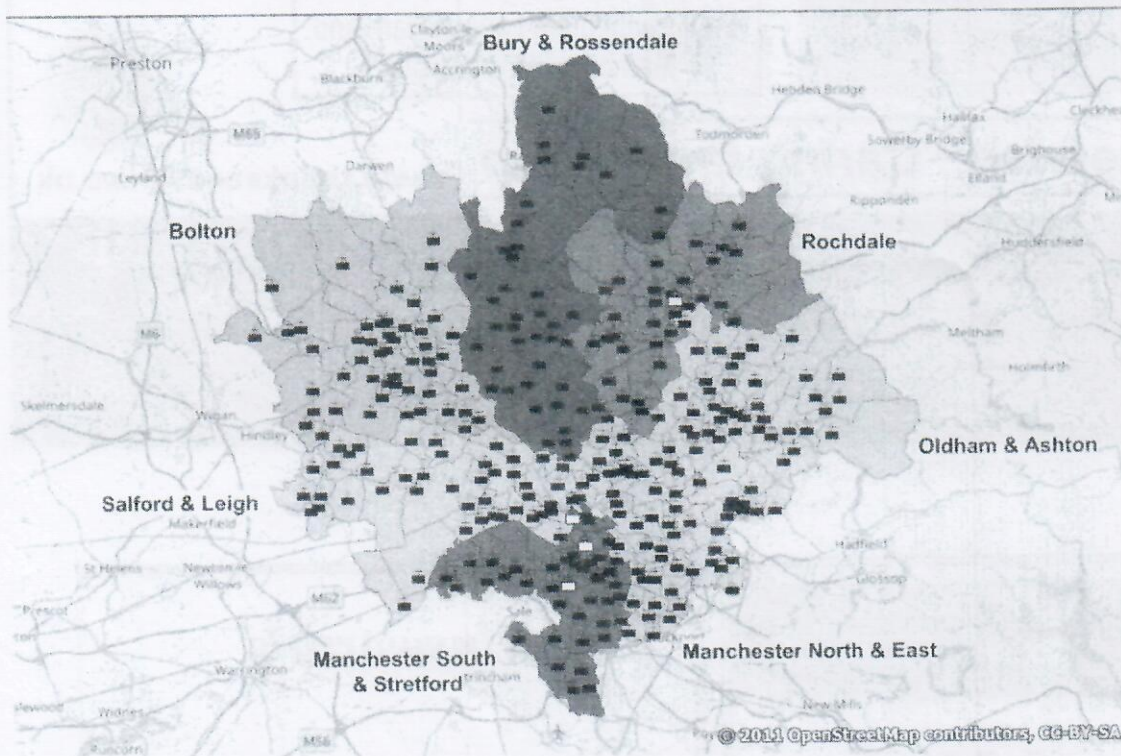
MBC

See:

<https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=962571217550389> ... diocesan vision of church for a different world (Sept 2020)

<https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=795222457688264> ... inspiring vision (April 2021)

<https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=293086898865787> feedback and next steps (March 2021)



New Area Deans. L-R Helen Scanlan, Rachel Mann, Simon Cook, Nick Watson, Colin Pearson, Karen Smeeton. With Bishop David Walker.



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MISSION COMMUNITIES - IN THE DEANERY OF SALFORD AND LEIGH

Dear all

Clergy from across the former Leigh Deanery recently met, virtually, with the Revd Colin Pearson, the Area Dean of the newly formed Deanery of Salford and Leigh.

We spent most of our time talking through the mission communities proposals. The immediate timetable is for the Mission Community boundaries to be agreed by November and for Mission Communities to come into effect, albeit informally in the first instance, at the beginning of January 2022. The proposal for the former Deanery of Leigh to be a single Mission Community appears to be the favoured option. There are potential difficulties with this option, but there will be difficulties with all options as this represents significant and real change in our approach to parish ministry.

There is much to be worked through in the next few years. Colin will be holding two meetings on Thursday 16th September for our proposed Mission Community. At this point Colin hopes that these two meetings will be in person and will be at a venue to be advised. However, there is the caveat that circumstances may mean that these are on-line meetings.

Invitees to these two meetings are as follows:

2.00pm to 3.30pm: Clergy, Readers, ALMs, Churchwardens

7.30pm to 9.00pm: Open meeting for all PCC members and any who were unable to attend the afternoon session.

I plan to invite Colin to meet with us at a joint PCC meeting following the meetings on 16th September so that we can discuss with him any issues that occur to any of us after the opening meetings.

Please do continue to keep the transition to mission communities and members of the local ministry team in your prayers as we work together to take these proposals forward. There will be opportunities for us to pray together in the coming months. Will have an opportunity to do so at All Saints, Bedford on Tuesday 31st August, which is being organised on our behalf by Deb and Robert and our thanks go to them for making these arrangements.

With prayers

Martin

Revd Martin Cox
Associate Priest St Thomas and All Saints', Bedford:
Team Rector Astley, Tyldesley and Mosley Common Team Ministry

UPDATE ON ST STEPHEN`S CHURCH BUILDING - 11th Aug 2021

St Stephen`s Church has been closed to public worship since April 2021 due to a number of unforeseen building issues that have arisen alongside the continued leaks over the sanctuary.

Since April members of the PCC at St Stephen`s have endeavoured to find ways to:-

1. Establish the history of building work in the Church from a decade of PCC minutes.
2. Resolve the current building issues and find a way forward.
3. Consult with the Diocese.
4. Obtain advice from those connected to the construction industry.
5. Obtain legal advice.

It has taken time for all this information to be collated but we have now received a response to the legal advice requested. The advice has highlighted significant questions that the PCC now have to address and the cost implications that may be incurred in the next phase. An extraordinary meeting of the PCC is scheduled for 14th September 2021 to discuss the legal position we find ourselves in and, once that meeting has been held, we should be in a better position to provide more information to you.

We hope this helps with understanding the current position.

Revd Martin Cox, Team Rector
Elaine Dickinson, Church Warden



Our team ministry has raised a total of £240 in donations for Christian Aid week . This includes contributions from St Stephen`s school.

Thanks go to everyone who contributed and to Linda Leese who organised getting the funds to the charity.



Michelle Lewthwaite

A bit of a rant ...by Iain Hodcroft

Elsewhere in the magazine you will find updated information about Mission Partnerships.

This piece is written with a tone of exasperation following several recent conversations about 'ordinary parishioners' not knowing what is being planned or why these new plans are necessary.

William Temple former Bishop of Manchester and Archbishop of Canterbury once said the Church of England is the only society that exists for the benefit of those who are NOT its members. ... and yet so much of our physical and emotional energy can be wasted on smoothing ruffled feathers and massaging members' egos.

I guess I adhere to the 'Great Commission' – found in several passages in the Gospel of Matthew, where Jesus urges his apostles to make "disciples of all the nations" and "baptise" them. I understand a disciple in its simplest form means a follower of Jesus and I interpret being commissioned as meaning spreading the Christian message. (I've not done a lot of baptising!)

The Great Commission terminology of course comes much later in Christian history, but still probably underpins much of the church's understanding of mission – even though many scholars argue over concepts and constructs, and there is a school of thought that propounds that religious diversity is a reality to be celebrated, not an obstacle to be overcome. Given the complex history of missionary activity, the meaning of the Great Commission will continue to be a subject of debate as Christianity confronts a rapidly changing world. And it's that local rapidly changing world that we need to be mindful of ...

Again, simplified to my understanding, Jesus' two key commandments (to me) are to Love God and Love my neighbour. One implies worship and coming together as church, the other implies ensuring my neighbours needs are noted, and wherever possible, attended to. This is why I am a community activist. It's really easy to fit these activities – worship and service – into Mission Partnerships, or Mission Communities ...

A controversial idea

I expect 'ordinary parishioners' both to show interest in and take responsibility for their own Christian growth; and to engage with others in tackling some of life's difficult questions. Difficult questions are easy

- why do we see fewer people coming to our church?
- Why do we struggle to balance our church accounts?
- Why is the number of stipendiary (paid) clergy having to reduce?
- Why is so much energy spent on maintaining buildings?

Is it really controversial to expect everyone (even ordinary parishioners) to take part in finding answers to these difficult questions? I struggle with people who 'religiously' attend worship, expecting a liturgical service that has little changed in 40 years, using an order, a form and language which non-churched visitors do not understand, do not feel particularly comfortable with, and all too often as a consequence do not feel very welcomed, and so never return unless it's for rite of passage or life events, such as baptisms, marriages or funerals.

Yes, we should continue 'traditional' liturgies, they have their place within the Church of England. But, we also need to continue developing alternative forms of worship, designed to meet the needs of others, what the diocese (still) calls 'fresh expressions' (even though many of them have been around now for at least 20 years). We know that 'Messy Church, Stepping Out and Families at Four' attract families with younger children. We now need to develop a form of service that will retain these families as they change and grow.

This needs both ministerial and lay energy, enthusiasm and time – for planning, development, delivery and review.

This at a time when clergy resources are reducing. Many people have experience of industry, commerce, professions and vocations that focus on 'people' and have some understanding of the stresses that 'dealing with people' can generate. Clergy ministry can be the epitome of 'stressful', especially when funeral ministry can be so demanding and so unpredictable.

I have proposed that there should be one (traditional) team Eucharist service each week from Autumn 2021 – this would rotate around our three churches. (Yes, St Thomas and All Saints will probably continue to hold a weekly service – but they sit under the diocesan banner of the Bishop of Beverley, not Manchester ... and, life is unfair!) This will, however allow our local ministry team the developmental space to offer new forms of witness and worship throughout the week, in a range of venues.

I struggle with buildings ... my church is not constrained by walls, whether they are 200 years old and listed, badly cracked and moving uphill or 1960s concrete and potentially condemned. I am not constrained by geography. I can usually find a group of Christians with whom I feel comfortable even though they may worship in a different manner. I am not precious about my church building. I struggle with trying to maintain institutions that are no longer fit for purpose or sufficiently resourced for us to be able to manage effectively. I struggle with the exorbitant amount of time, energy and effort that goes into fundraising to maintain buildings, and successfully diverting us away from mission.

None of this is new. If 'ordinary parishioners' have not grasped this yet ... it's because they do not listen ... or do not 'hear'. I have lost count of the numbers of meetings I've been to regarding mission action planning and mission communities – at working group, parish, team and deanery level during the last 5 or 6 years. I've lost count of the number of times I've heard Martin tell us about diocesan finances, the consequent reducing number of clergy and what this means for us.

Parishioners should know what is being proposed for 'super deaneries' and why ... PCC members, wardens and clergy have been involved all the way ... and should have been sharing ... they would almost certainly say they have been sharing ... with 'ordinary parishioners'. Documents and proposals have been produced and made available throughout the process.

The key message from our new Area Dean is that we must/will become more 'Kingdom' oriented and less 'my church' oriented – (this isn't exactly what he says – I've interpreted it to make my point!) – but who is going to argue with a 'Kingdom' orientation? I would love someone to respond in a future issue and tell me why I'm wrong in my assertions ...

Clergy, wardens and PCC members will know that meetings to consider the proposals for how Mission Communities are envisaged are scheduled for Thursday 16th September.

I am happy to host a meeting in St George's Church, the week before these planned meetings, on Thursday 9th September at 7.00pm for anyone (including 'ordinary parishioners') who still 'doesn't know what is going on' – where issues concerning mission communities can be addressed, questions can be raised, concerns shared, hopes for the future expressed etc.

Please let me know, should you wish to attend.

Iain Hodcroft 23rd July 2021

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POETRY CAN MAKE THE WORLD A BETTER PLACE

Poet Matt Sowerby harnesses the power and resolve of people in poverty

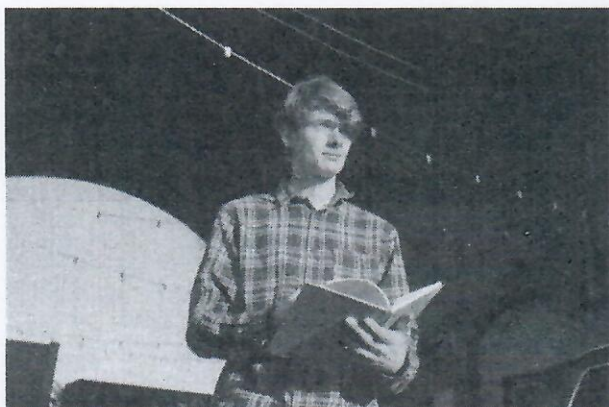
Matt, still a young man, started using his skills in writing poetry as a route to social justice when he became involved in the End Hunger UK campaign (2017/18). From there, he hasn't looked back.

In 2020, he was poet in digital residence at Church Action on Poverty, and worked with fantastic campaigners around the country to produce "Same Boat?" - a powerful anthology of poems based upon poverty and the pandemic.

Church Action on Poverty supporters might recognise Matt, as he is the July feature in our 2021 'Dignity, Agency, Power' calendar. Recently, Matt and CAP's Food Power officer, Ben Pearson, caught up on Zoom, and you can listen to the conversation on our latest podcast - available to download or stream below.

For those of you able to follow up on this, the link is: <https://anchor.fm/casttoendpoverty/episodes/Poetry--power-and-art-in-a-pandemic-e13dm60>

In the podcast, Matt tells how and why he became involved in social justice movements.



He tells listeners: "I'm really interested in the way that poetry can be activism and poetry can make the world a better place. I think especially in this sector, there are some things that are so unjust you feel you need to do something about it."

He says: "There's a very thin line between making something, and making a change, so I think it does teach us something about our agency and the ways we can make a difference in the world, the more we engage in the arts."

Matt talks about the number of people who became creative at the start of the pandemic, turning to the arts as a vital response to the crisis. He talks also of poetry as having the power to fossilise the feelings of a particular moment, and he and Ben talk of the empowering force of the *Same Boat?* anthology.

Matt says: "The feedback I got was that it did mean so much to so many people, to engage in the process but also to be able to say 'I am a published poet' at the end of that and to know that for the rest of their lives, that that is part of who they are."

Originator: Liam Purcell, Church Action on Poverty via IH

In 2017, Matt was 1st prize winner (16-18 category) in the

End Hunger UK challenge on the Young Poets Network.

This is his winning poem



**Church Action
on Poverty**

Give us this day our daily bread – Matt Sowerby

Give us this day our daily bread

So said the underfed,
Give us it because the baby's half-dead
Because when Susie's heading to the bank
She doesn't mean NatWest –
There wouldn't be any point anyway.
They have cropped the Lord's Prayer.
They want one thing from the Divine:
Daily bread, hence why
When we talk about poverty
We call it the breadline
Where £1.85
Means you're buying some red wine
And the Daily Mail's headlines
Invade minds like head lice.
And on the corner near Home Bargains
Aidan sits on the paves.
He'll gladly accept your coppers
But is desperate for change,
Tin cans and plastic bags lovingly arranged.
He tells me:
"This is a food fight.
This here is the Hunger Games."
And little Benny's tummy is rumbling
He calls out to eat something
And Mummy's coming
But in her hands she's carrying nothing
And he's crying again,
Off he goes,
Though little does he know
His mum hasn't eaten for three days in a
row.
Sometimes
I hope that I'm seeing
Fake news on the television
Because what I'm seeing is so shocking
That I want it to be fiction,
Then I hear complaints
From my mates

When a packet of grapes
Is out of their price ranges.

And I don't mean to make this an issue of
religion
But with prices like high rises
These fruits remain forbidden.

I'm not a cynic
But it is ridiculous when the 1%
Are still fattened up like chickens.
How is this still a problem in Britain?
How here do eight million
Still struggle to get food into the kitchen
And why are those worst affected
Including one in five children?

Yet the issues are still hidden.
These stories remain unwritten
And nobody's listening.

But the thing with Pandora's box
Is that there's still hope within it.

And that hope is from the times
I've seen people supporting their
neighbours,

Even those normally cautious with their
wages,

And yet when I see people collecting
donations

It's not the suits that are paying up,
It's the teenagers.

Unreported acts of bravery
Every day by the nameless.

So forget God
Because I reckon

Five thousand can be fed
Without divine intervention.

So give us this day our daily bread

Or at least give us the means
Because we'll manage the rest.



- For the very young, or those who are themselves not in the best of health. Pray that they will seek or be offered the support and respite that they themselves need.
- September is Alzheimer's Awareness month. Pray for all those who suffer from dementia in its many forms and for those who look after them. Pray for a better understanding of the condition throughout society.
- In October our churches will be celebrating Harvest. Remember to be thankful for the hard work of farmers, growers and food producers across the world and to pray for those areas where the harvest is poor. Ask that God will guide us in His ways so that we can help ensure that nobody goes hungry. Thank him for the charities and aid agencies who work tirelessly to ensure a fairer distribution of food throughout the world that He has created.
- Remember in your prayers all those from across our Team who have worked so hard to keep our churches active throughout the pandemic.

Contributed by Sara Yarwood



ST STEPHEN'S INTERCESSION ROTA

I'm hoping to reintroduce a rota of people who would be willing to prepare and lead intercessions during our services.

Previous members of the group and new volunteers would all be welcome and guidance is available if needed! If you'd like to be involved please catch me after a service or email me at spy61@btinternet.com.

Thank you
Sara Yarwood

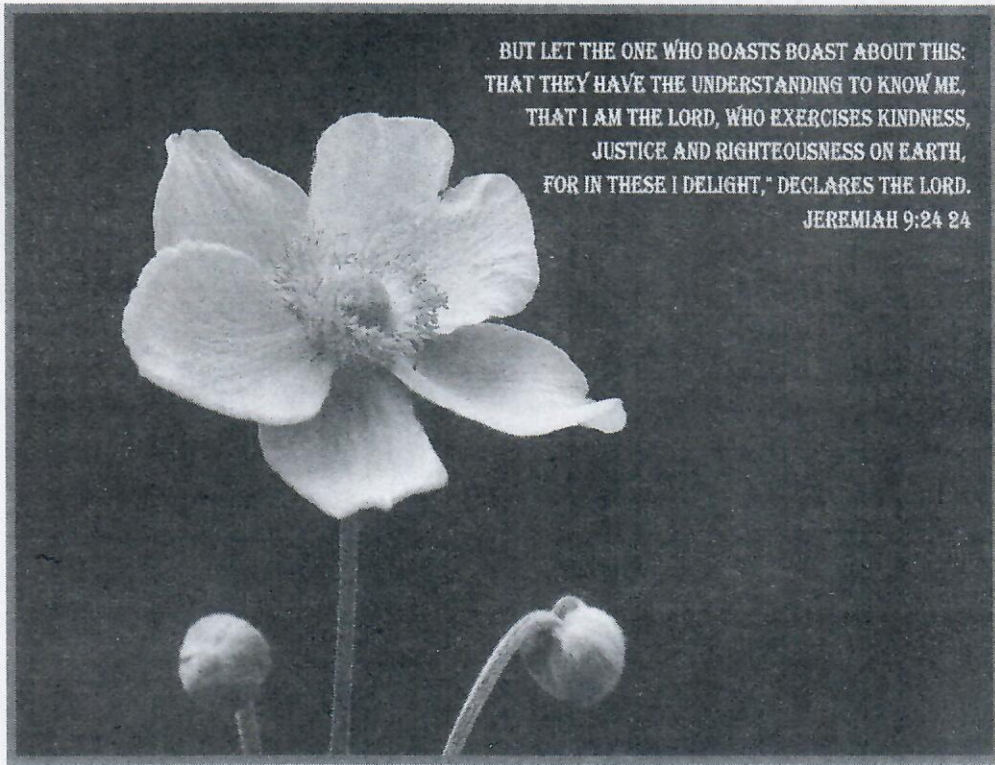


Photo Courtesy of Chirs Saunders



REFLECTION BY MAYA ANGELOU

My faith is tested many times every day,
and more times than I'd like to confess,
I'm unable to keep the faith aloft.
If a promise is not kept, or if a secret is betrayed,
or if I experience long-lasting pain,
I begin to doubt God and God's love.
I fall into the chasm of disbelief and I cry out in despair.
But then the Spirit lifts me up again,
and once more I am secured in faith.
I don't know how that happens,
save when I cry out earnestly I am answered immediately
and am returned to faithfulness.
I am once again filled with Spirit
and firmly planted on solid ground.

Contributed by Gail Craven

PRAYERS FOR HARVEST THANKSGIVING

For our daily food,
and for those whose work and skill
bring your good gifts to us,
we bring our thanks, good Lord:

For the light and shades of the changing seasons,
and their variety and dependability;
for new life and growth out of barrenness and decay;
we bring our thanks, good Lord.

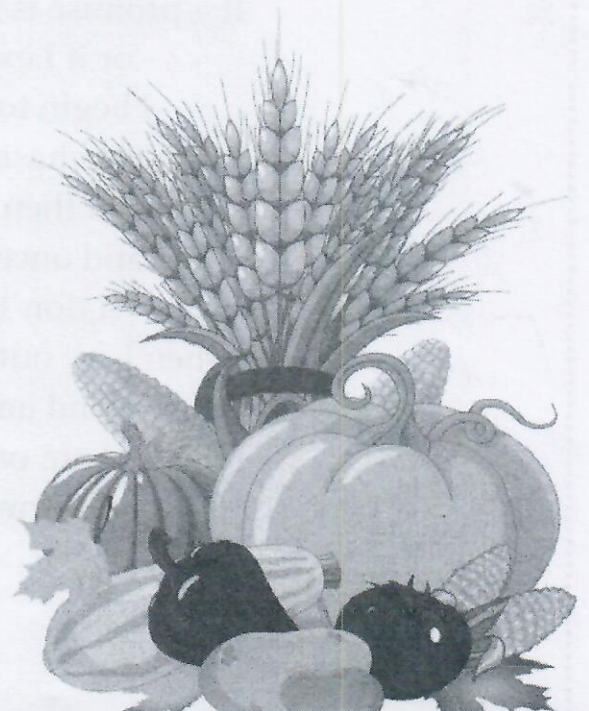
Let us offer our prayers to God for the life of the world
and for all God's people in their daily life and work.

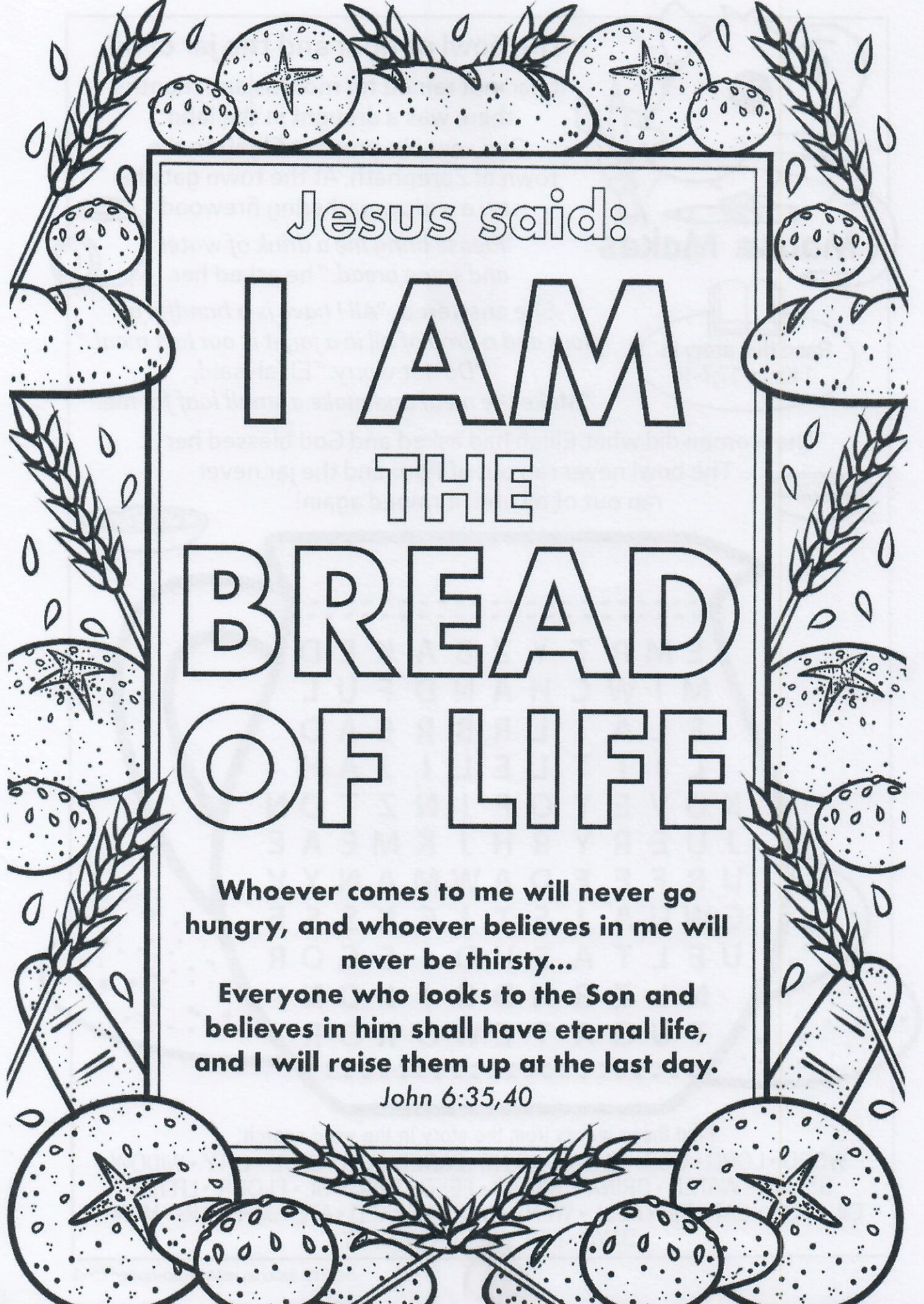
We pray for all through whom we receive sustenance and life;
for farmers and agricultural workers,
for packers, distributors and company boards;
as you have so ordered our life that we depend upon each other,
enable us by your grace to seek the well-being of others before
our own.

Let us pray to God, the Lord of the harvest,
that he will bring to fruition all that he desires for his creation.
Lord of creation,
we see that the fields are ripe for harvesting:
we pray for your Church,
that it may be ready to gather fruit for eternal life.

You have created the universe by your eternal Word,
we pray for the world,
that we may honour and share its resources,
and live in reverence for the creation
and in harmony with one another.

**Lord of the harvest,
in your mercy hear us. Amen**





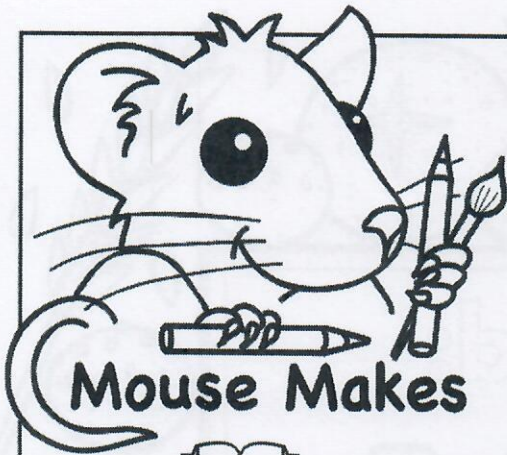
Jesus said:

**I AM
THE
BREAD
OF LIFE**

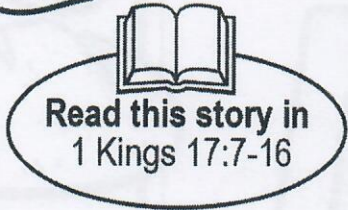
Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty...

Everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise them up at the last day.

John 6:35,40




Mouse Makes



The bowl of flour and the jar of oil

It had not rained for months and months, there was a drought in the land. God sent His prophet **Elijah** to the town of Zarephath. At the town gate he saw a widow gathering firewood.

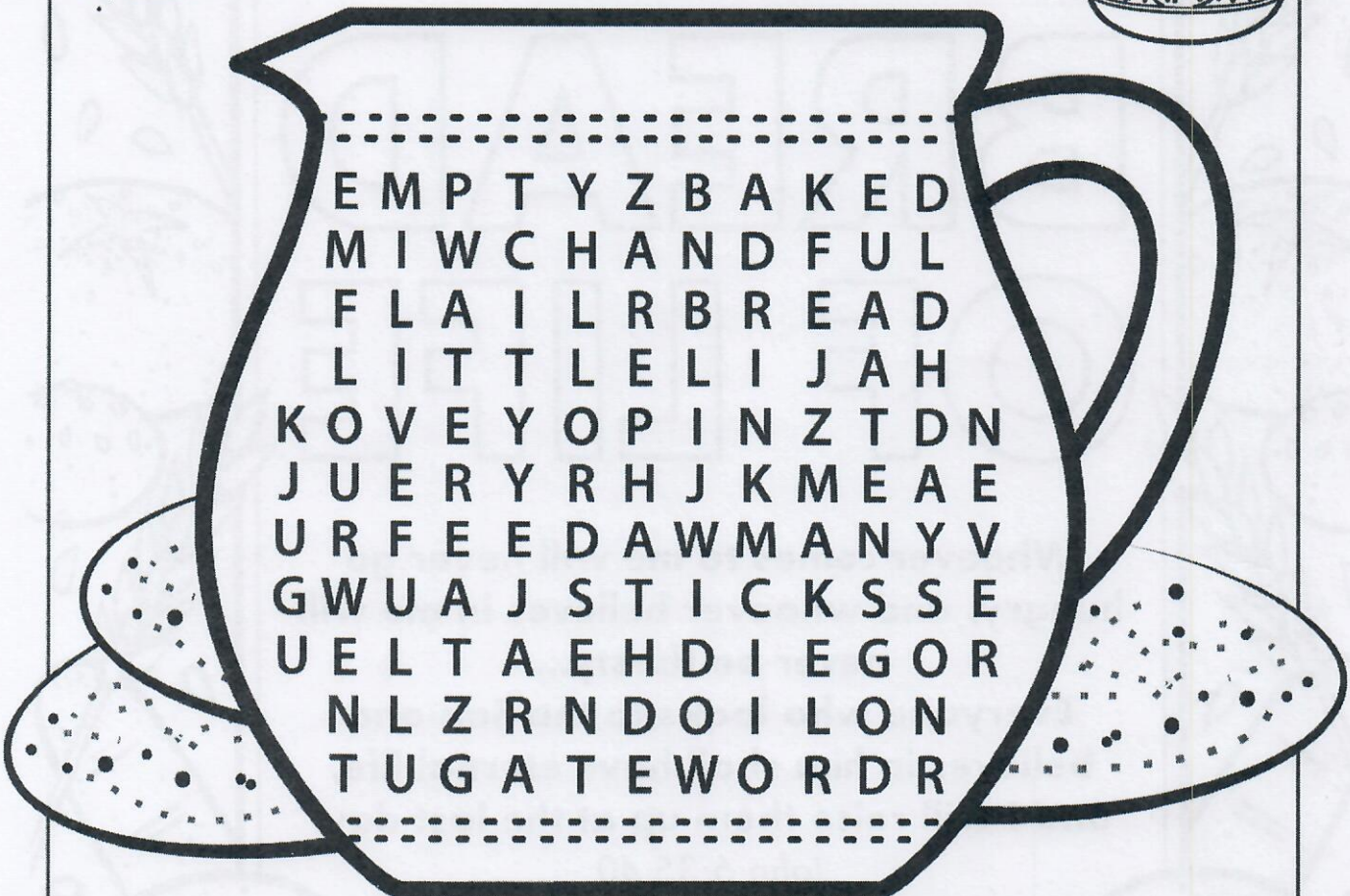
"Please bring me a drink of water and some bread." he asked her. 

She answered "All I have is a handful of flour and a drop of oil in a jar, it is our last meal."

"Do not worry." Elijah said, "Make the meal and make a small loaf for me."

The woman did what Elijah had asked and God blessed her ...

... The bowl never ran out of flour and the jar never ran out of oil until it rained again!



Find these words from the story in the word search:

- WORD • LORD • GOD • ELIJAH • SENT • ZAREPHATH • GATE • CITY • WIDOW
- STICKS • WATER • DRINK • BREAD • FEED • HANDFUL • FLOUR • LITTLE
- OIL • SON • EAT • DIE • FULL • WENT • MAKE • BAKED • ATE • JAR • JUG • MANY
- DAYS • LIVE • NEVER • EMPTY

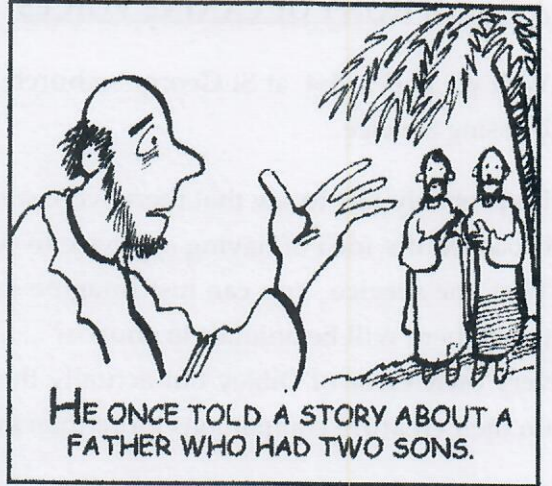
The tale of the Two Sons



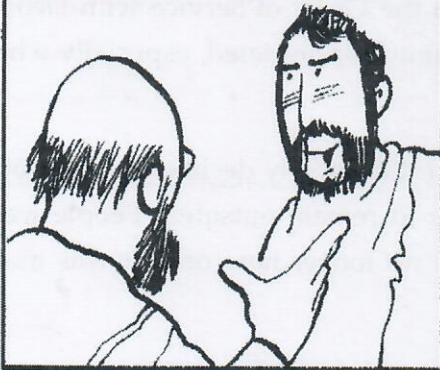
JESUS OFTEN TOLD STORIES WITH HIDDEN MEANINGS



HE ONCE TOLD A STORY ABOUT A FATHER WHO HAD TWO SONS.



THE FATHER WENT TO HIS OLDER SON AND ASKED HIM TO WORK IN THE VINEYARD



'NO I WON'T' SAID THE OLDER SON...



...BUT THEN HE CHANGED HIS MIND AND WENT AND HELPED.

THE FATHER THEN WENT TO HIS YOUNGER SON AND ASKED HIM TO HELP IN THE VINEYARD TOO.



'OF COURSE I WILL!' SAID THE YOUNGER SON. BUT HE PROMPTLY FORGOT ALL ABOUT IT...

...AND DIDN'T DO A STROKE OF WORK!



'WHICH ONE DID WHAT HIS FATHER WANTED?' ASKED JESUS...



'WHICH DO YOU THINK IT WAS?'



A CACOPHONY OF CANINE VOICES

Well we had a '1st' at St George's church on the afternoon of 15th August - Revd Debbie Clarke led a Pet Blessing Service.

It's probably fair to say that there were some sharp intakes of breath and much hesitation when Debbie first broached the idea of having a service to celebrate our creature companions and asked if St George's would 'host' the service. You can just imagine the reactions.....'what do you mean a pet service?'.....'you don't mean there will be animals in church?''they'll be outside won't they?' We joked about Debbie being our very own Vicar of Dibley but actually there was a serious point to the proposal: many people have relied on their creature companions more than ever during the Lockdown and Debbie wanted to celebrate that.

I guess we are always up for a bit of a challenge so some willing volunteers were recruited to help on the day - we had a small task force on standby to respond to any 'oops moments' with a range of cleaning products. Posters and flyers were designed and distributed round our team churches, local shops and on Facebook and websites. Amy Hodcroft took on the task of working on the Order of Service with Debbie turning it into a PowerPoint to be screened: her technical support was much appreciated, especially when solving a technical problem an hour before the service was due to start.

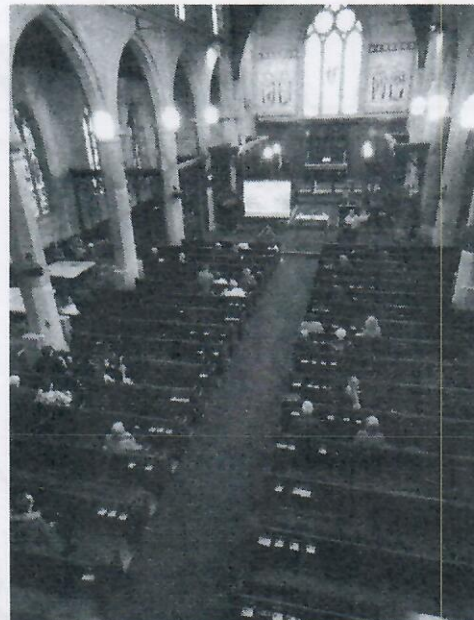
We had no idea whether anyone would turn up on the day, although I did politely decline the offer of a cow being brought - to be fair I said it was welcome but would have to remain outside!!. People were encouraged to bring a picture of a special pet, especially if they were no longer here or if it was more practical than bringing their creature companions.

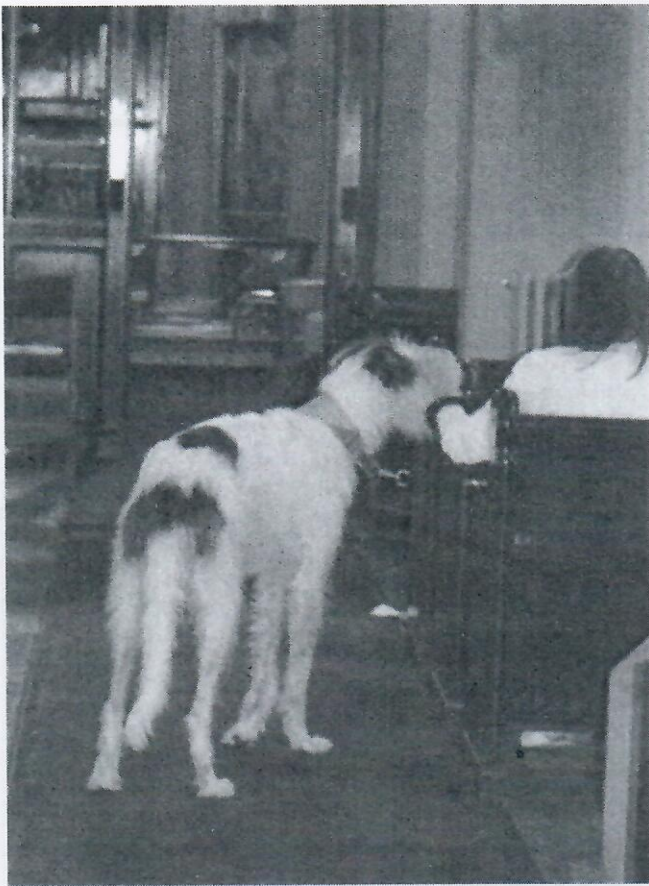
On the day we were extremely grateful to the 30 adults, 6 children, 13 dogsand tub of African Snails who came along! Thanks are also extended to the local representatives from the Cats Protection and RSPCA who attended with lots of information, stickers and gift bags to give away.

After the short service there was an opportunity for people to share refreshments and socialise. All the dogs in attendance behaved impeccably - some were a little more vocal than others at times but there were no scraps and no 'accidents'. There was a lovely atmosphere and it seems like it was a well received event. We have been asked if it could be an annual event.....watch this space!! 😊

Susie Mallon

A few images from the day:





Lord God, who made the earth
and every living creature,
help us to treat with compassion
the animals entrusted to our care,
that they may not suffer from our
neglect nor become victims
of any cruelty;
and grant that in caring for them
we may find a deeper understanding of
Your love for creation, through Jesus
Christ, our Lord.

Amen.

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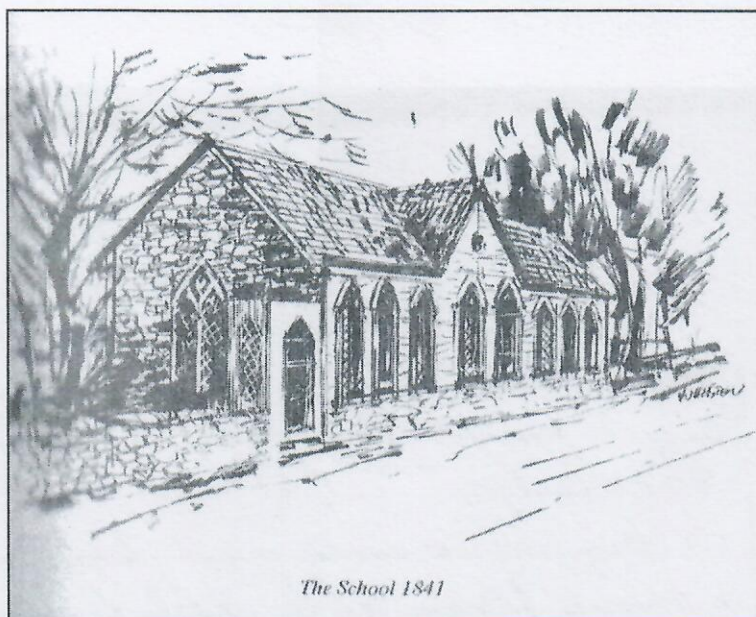


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Plans 



BACK TO SCHOOL - ST STEPHEN'S DAY SCHOOL

As our school children are preparing to resume their studies this month I thought it would be interesting to take a look at some very old records held at St Stephen's Primary School which relate to a journal kept by the Reverend Alfred Hewlett when he was manager of the local Day School which was situated near the old church on Church Road (roughly where the 4 shops are now).



The Reverend Alfred Hewlett was vicar at St Stephens church between 1831 -1837 and also between 1840-1885. He had worked hard to get agreement to, and funding for, a new Astley Day School to be built, having taught the local school children in the totally unsuitable tithe barn, next to the vicarage, for several years already. The building of the new school was completed under his watchful eye and was finished within 20 days - quite an impressive achievement. When the school was officially opened in November 1841 he was appointed manager and kept a school log book which sheds some light on what his role involved and what subjects the children studied. At this time the school was only open to boys and it had no benefit of double glazing or radiators as schools have today so it can't have been a very inviting place. The attendance figures were almost entirely dependent on the weather. The log book entries show that the educational activities also did little to recommend the school and reveals how these impacted on the funding it received from the state.

SAMPLE OF LOG BOOK ENTRIES FROM 1865

February 14th Tuesday - day fine but cold- one boy left. Rearranged 3 classes to equalise them.

February 16th Thursday- a very cold day but attendance good.

February 22nd - Wednesday - introduced mental arithmetic in class 1 and class 2.

February 24th - Friday - a stormy wintry week causing a low average in attendance all week.

March 1st - Wednesday - decided that all who are absent 1 month in succession without sufficient reason shall be crossed off from the rolls.

March 6th - Monday - sent 3 boys into J.S. to learn to read- they do not know all their letters.

March 7th - Tuesday - introduced the spelling, as well as correction of mistakes, in dictation to the 2nd and 3rd classes.

March 10th - Friday - received this week reports of the school which on the whole are quite satisfactory. Of the number of scholars presented for examination in 5 standards 96 per cent passed. Total amount of grants for the boys was 44 pounds, 19 shillings and 8 pence.

1867
56

March 27 W. - recd. from government the following report for Boys' School for Gr 766 & 767: -
"This school is hardly equal to last year, & some improvement should be made particularly in the Religious Knowledge"

My Lords will next year look for a more favourable report upon the Boys' School, especially upon the Religious Knowledge (Article 52(a)).
More of the scholars qualified by attendance under Article 40(b) should be presented for examination.

Alfred Hewlett
Manager

" 28 Th. - a cold day - 5 class keeps low
" 29 Th. - thro' sickness - nr. fair.

April - 1 M - one boy entered
2 F - one boy left gone to Mr. S.
3 W - one boy returned & one free sch. gone to Mr. S.
4 Th - made a little change these days
5 F - in arrangement of classes.

SAMPLE OF LOG BOOK ENTRIES FROM 1870

March 14th - Monday -Four boys admitted or re-entered.

March 15th - Tuesday - Attendance good.

March 21st - Monday - Woman came complaining that her boy Tom Fox had been kicked by John Bleakley and Edward Short.

March 22nd - Tuesday. The report of the school arrived from the Committee of Council today and was as follows,

"Boys` school. The Boys have passed a fair examination in the elementary subjects and answer intelligently in Scripture and Geography. They would probably be less restless if the windows were more frequently opened."

SAMPLE OF A LOG BOOK ENTRY FROM 1873

April 4th - The report from Her Majesty`s School Inspectors reads as follows,

"The condition of this school is in no way satisfactory. Its organisation is defective, its discipline weak, and its instruction most imperfect. The master appears to have no power of rightly ordering it, judging from the boys conduct, many of whom did not know their classes. Radical changes are necessary to make the school a real means of educating the boys who attend it. The expenditure of money upon it under present circumstances is little better than waste."

A SAMPLE OF LOG BOOK ENTRIES FROM 1879

May 5th - Monday - Admitted two boys from the Infant School. Withdrawn - John Thomas Craig, William Joseph Craig and James Craig to be sent to the Roman Catholic School in Tyldesley.

May 6th -Tuesday - Admitted Charles Glover who had been to Ellenbrook School, and Thomas Webster from the Infants` school.

May 12th - Monday - Withdrawn- Martin Gannon. Admitted Allan Grundy from the Infants` School.

May 19th - Monday - Admitted Thomas Pendlebury.

May 23rd - Friday - Mr Hilton, the School Attendance officer, visited the school, and took the names of some irregular scholars.

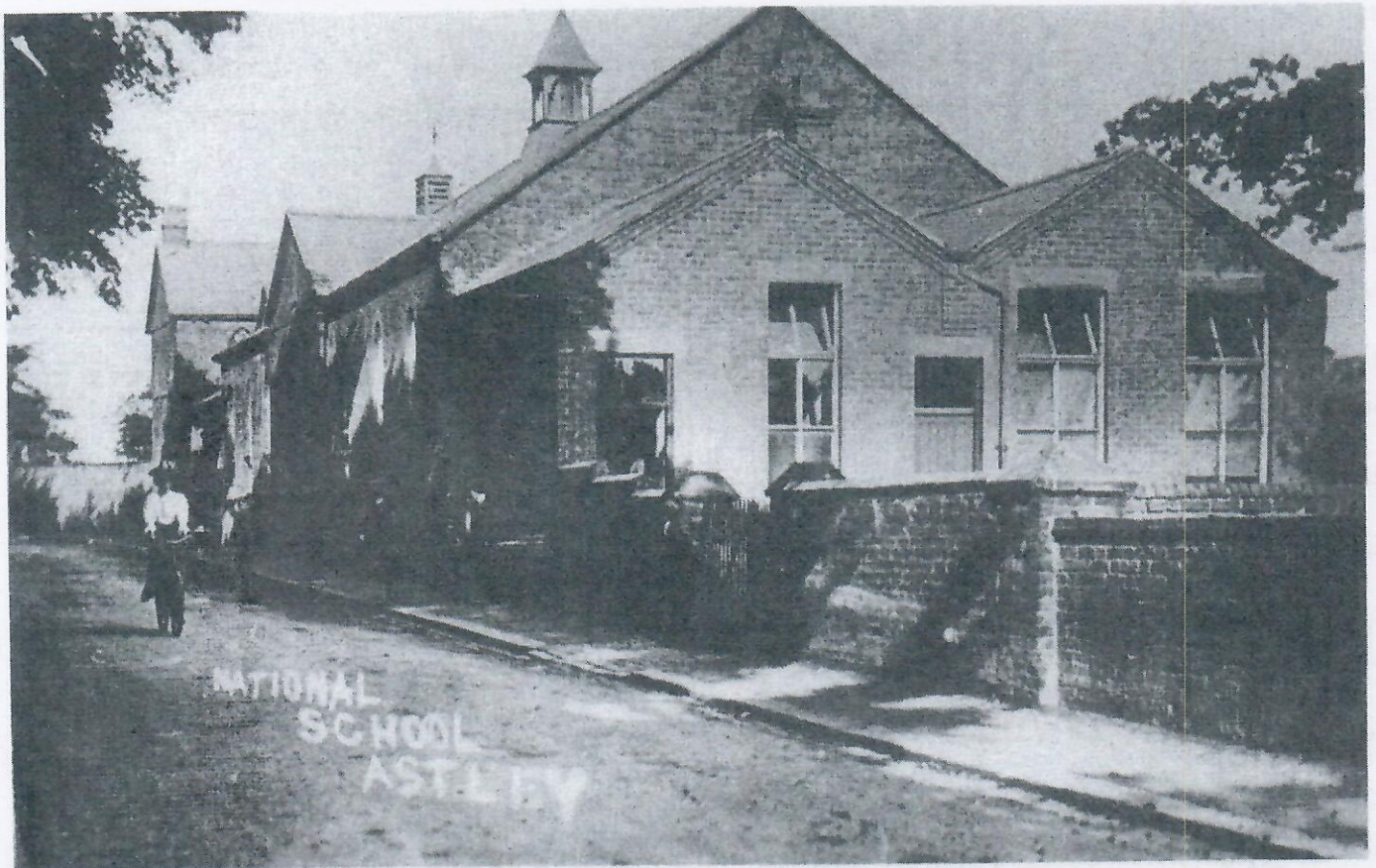
June 2nd - received report of HM Inspectors as follows.

"Good order is maintained in this school but the instruction generally is feeble. The first standard were particularly poor at long point, their reading being thoroughly bad, the spelling of the third standard, the composition of the fifth and sixth standards and the arithmetic of the third and fourth standards are all below average. Out of 52 examined 19 passed in Geography and 24 in Grammar, 17 of the latter belonging to the 2nd standard. The singing lacked harmony. The school must improve during the current year."

J Ward, A Farnworth, S A Shaw and E Taylor have passed fairly but Ward should attend to Euclid (maths), Farnworth and Taylor to composition and writing and Shaw to map drawing and writing."

At this time it was general practice to use some of the older pupils to teach the younger ones and so we find that the teaching staff of the school was made up of Mr Samuel Greene (Certified Teacher), Joseph Ward (a pupil teacher) and Thomas Smith (a pupil teacher). Of course Alfred Hewlett remained as the School Manager. The Inspectors' reports continued to point out failures for several more years and in 1881 they recommended that the annual maintenance grant, given by the state to the school, should be cut by one tenth due to the continued "deficient instruction."

The Day school was not quite the success which the Reverend Alfred Hewlett had hoped it would be during his tenure as manager. As well as criticism of the educational standards there were also issues with the building work which had been completed so quickly. It transpired that the building had a serious flaw in its construction. The long walls of the North and South sides had a series of gothic-shaped lancet windows in them. However, the heavy joists which spanned the ceiling were not placed between these windows, which would have been the strongest places of the walls, instead the joists rested on top of the window arches, which were the weakest points. It is quite a miracle that the school survived for over a hundred years. But survive it did, and over the years, hundreds of local children were educated in what came to be known as the National School. It was propped up with heavy wooden stakes for many years to keep it stable but was demolished in 1967 when the plans for the current St Stephen's school were well underway.



The National School, c. 1900, was demolished in 1967. It is now the site of three shops and some private houses.

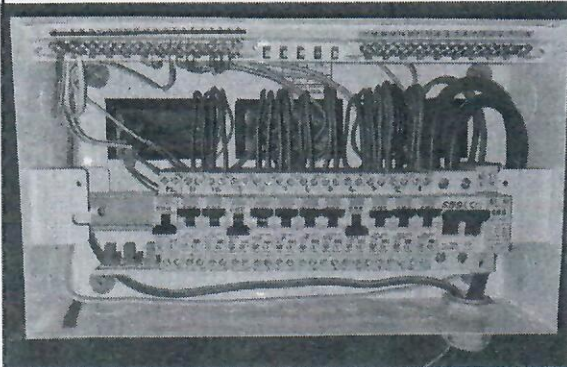
Contributed by Michelle Lewthwaite

Acknowledgement - some extracts taken from Bells and Pomegranates by Rev. William King

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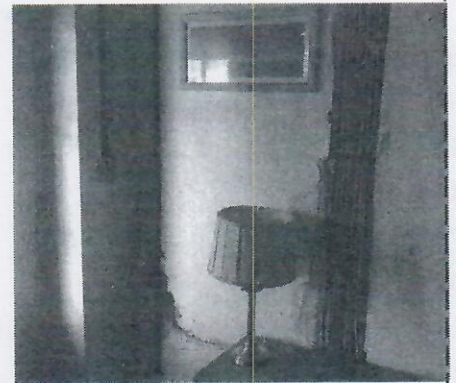
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St Georges News

The following funerals took place in St. George's Church during August 2021; Mrs Joan Dewhurst, Mrs Aileen Aldred, Mrs Margaret Jenkinson and Reggie Hays, aged 4 years old.

Our sincere condolences go to their families and friends with the assurance of our prayers.

We were saddened to hear of the death of our dear friend Mrs Lilian Grime who was a much loved and well-respected member of our Christian family at St. George's. Lilian attended the Sunday morning Eucharist services for many, many years until ill-health prevented her from doing so.

We will be forever grateful for her ministry to our Church along with her late friend Margaret Alliband in organising raffles for the Christmas Fayre and numerous other events and for serving refreshments after the Sunday morning services, and for their great sense of humour.

Lilian passed away at Hillcrest on 30th July 2021 and her funeral took place in her beloved St. George's on Friday 13th August 2021. We offer our sincere condolences and the assurance of her prayers to her sons Raymond, Norman and other members of her family and friends.

Names from the Memorial Book

September

3rd 1984 James Taylor
4th 1982 Selina Mary Colloby
4th 2009 Jean Hale
7th 1989 Eric Horn
9th 1999 Mary Kennedy
10th 2003 Reginald (Reg) John Buller
11th 1991 Harold Worthington
14th 2003 Lilian Ridings
14th 2007 Bertha Taylor
15th 1975 Stanley Hadcroft
15th 1989 Dorothy Wright
16th 2012 Malveen Hurt
16th 2013 Harry Berry
17th 1998 Annie Taylor
18th 2005 Fred Lockett
22nd 1951 Peter Howcroft
23rd 1998 Iain West
23rd 2011 Mary Duckworth
24th 2005 Harry Twist
27th 1988 Annie Markland
27th 2002 Agnes Preston
27th 2009 George Redmond
30th 1988 Thomas Coop
30th 2014 William Thompson Jack

October

2nd 1977 Alan John Kay
6th 2001 Paul Smith
6th 2003 Michael Maye
7th 2003 Richard Tomlinson
8th 1977 James Henry Gendall
8th 1979 John Henry Egerton
12th 2013 Kathleen Howell
13th 1993 Joseph Clementson
13th 2017 Hazel Hodcroft
14th 1981 Kathleen Hilton
14th 1945 Jacqueline Davies
15th 1993 Frank Hulme
17th 2004 John Hadcroft
17th 2012 Bertha Rigby
18th 2007 Daniel Poyner Horrocks
19th 1990 Derek Rigby
20th 1987 Harold Murgatroyd
21st 1990 Melvyn Clementson
21st 1994 John Collier
21st 1998 James Roberts
21st 2011 Eric Harper
24th 2005 Minnie Pearson
25th 1994 Martha "Patty" Fairhurst
28th 1993 Hilda Worthington
31st 1983 Mona Greenhough
31st 2001 Tom Manning

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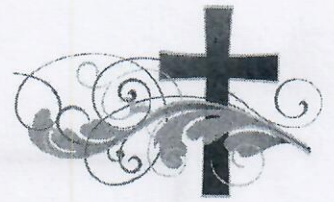
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BITS AND PIECES



"Humour is near to godliness and love to laughter"
Sister Jane of Sisters of the Love of God

How to Explain Cricket to a Foreigner

You have two sides: one out in the field, the other in

Each man that's in the side that's in goes out - and when he's out he comes in and the next man goes in until he's out.

When they are all out, the side that's out comes in and the side that's been in goes out and tries to get those coming in out.

Sometimes you get men still in and not out.

When both sides have been in and out including the not outs - that's the end of the game.

It's really quite simple.

From Redhorn Parishes - Wiltshire - contributed by Michael Williamson

Why?

Why do men's clothes have buttons on the right while women's clothes have buttons on the left?

Because..... when buttons were invented, they were very expensive and worn mainly by the rich. Since most people are right-handed, it is easier to push buttons on the right through holes on the left. Because wealthy women were dressed by maids, dressmakers put the buttons on the maid's right! And that is where women's buttons have remained ever since.

From Redhorn Parishes - Wiltshire - contributed by Michael Williamson

HEALTH AND SAFETY

When the corona virus pandemic is over you are advised to wear your face mask backwards for two months i.e ear to ear behind your head. This **WILL** correct your ear position



Contributed by Michael Williamson

Decision of a Lifetime

I feel that when you think about it we live in very unsettled times today. People confused or worried about changing attitudes. There is frustration and division in society. Perhaps a general unhappiness and irritation and desire to blame, especially others and not ourselves! Guidelines are blurred, religion is side-lined. Is there a babble of conflicting opinions or just a ghastly void born of apathy to replace them? What are we expected to make of it all?

To an appeal, how can we know the way, Jesus said "I am the way and the truth and the life" (John ch14 v6). We have a hope firm and clear held out to us. We don't need to search and in fact we'd be pretty useless if we tried. God has come to us, the eternal and spiritual has met the temporary and material. "For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith – and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God – not by works, so that no one can boast" (Ephesians ch2 v8-9)

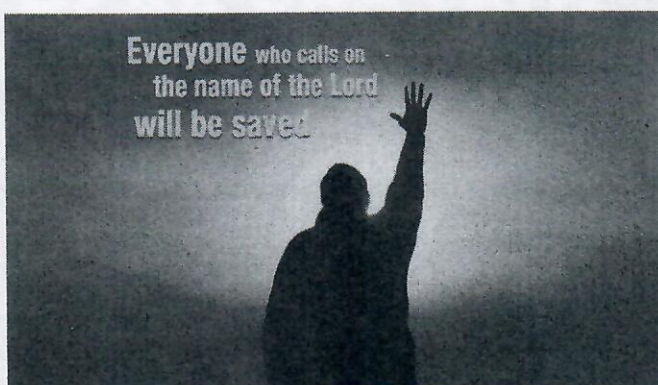
In fact trying to lead a good and fulfilled life by joining activities and other enterprises is not the point here. "For there is one God and one mediator between God and human beings, Christ Jesus, himself human, who gave himself as a ransom for all people" (1 Timothy ch2 v5). Basically we need to face our sin – that gnawing worrying truth that we sense and know we are "missing the mark". It's frightening to look back at what evil and wicked thoughts lurk inside and deeds done that hurt others

Our first need is the humility to admit our inadequacy before God and be forgiven. He accepts us and we are confident in Him. Jesus has come to draw us back to our God and our purpose and joy in life according to His will "And by that will, we have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once and for all" (Hebrews ch10 v10) He offered Himself for us. He died for us. He could; because of his unique nature. We see God in Him. The more we look to Him, the more we see God. So He can forgive us, restore us, heal us and bring us His peace. "He was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that bought us peace was on him and by his wounds we are healed" (Isaiah ch53 v5)

The decision to accept the call of Jesus and go with Him is the decision of a lifetime. Why not make it now? "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved" (Romans ch10 v13) A quiet prayer in the stillness of your own interior life – Lord Jesus I come for your new life – is the beginning. We are our own worst enemies. At the end of every day and of every project that we attempt or every crossroads or every big decision in our lives we judge ourselves. Certainly at the End there is Judgement. "Just as people are destined to die once, and after that to face judgement" (Hebrews ch9 v27). So be serious for a moment and ask Jesus, God's way to lead us to a restored and fulfilled life, to embrace you.

The confidence and joy He brings is enormous. The journey you sense He is guiding you on is thrilling. Pray now, turn in life to accept His call. Don't forget to tell someone and don't forget you need food for your journey. Try the Scripture Union Bible reading notes, for a regular quiet moment of reflection each day.

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Michael

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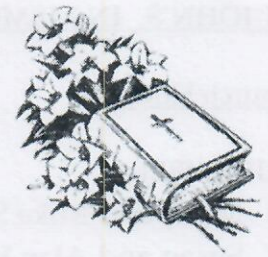
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ST STEPHENS, ASTLEY; FROM THE BOOK OF REMEMBRANCE



September

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Alice Parry
William Tooley
Evelyn Steele
Stefan Fedden
Betty Jones
Mary Ball
Dennis Wadsworth
Jean Aldred
Bill Dyson
Jack Unsworth
Nellie Speakman

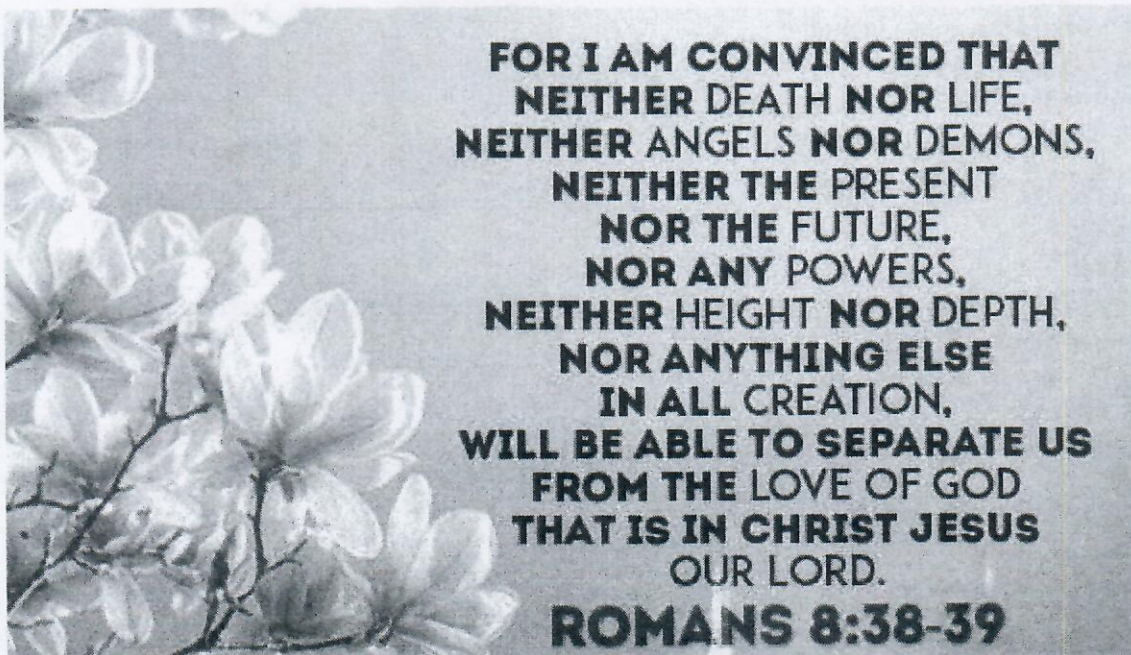
October

Maggie Mansley
Fred Broom
Revd William King
Alice Hurst
Margery Shaw
Ada Greenhalgh
Kathleen Jowett
Dorothy Charnock
Ellen Cunliffe
Joan Middleton
Betty Worthington
Joyce Potter
Joan Hulme
Alice Owen
Joyce Marsh
Elsie Broom

It was brought to my notice that the entries from the Book of Remembrance in the last magazine were headed up May and June. The actual listing of names were for the months of July and August but during the editing/printing process the headings had been changed and 2 names had been accidentally deleted from the list. So with apologies to the families concerned the missing deceased are remembered below.

July Alfred Quick

August Peter Unsworth



ST JOHN'S. IN MEMORY

Church Flowers

SEPTEMBER

- 5 Marie and Mike Stuckey in memory of her parents
12 Susan and Alan Howarth
19 Glenys Robinson and family in memory of Eddie
26 Ann and Tony Smith in memory of Walter James Smith

OCTOBER

- 3 Christine and David Barnes in memory of Terry Connor and Eddie Kershaw
10 Betty Hartley in memory of Eric
17 Maureen and Tom Knox in memory of Johanna Tilson
24 Ann Hilton in memory of Edith Hilton
31 Andrea Taziker and Alan Goddard in memory of Margaret Goddard nee Cooper

From the Book of Remembrance

September

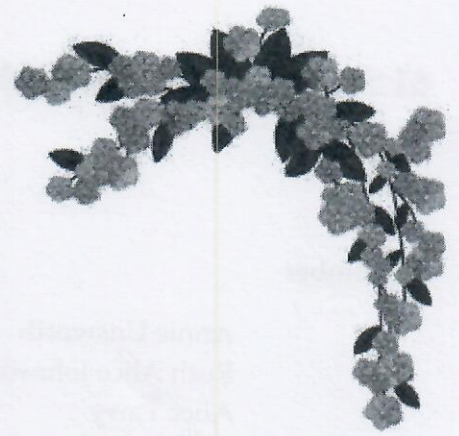
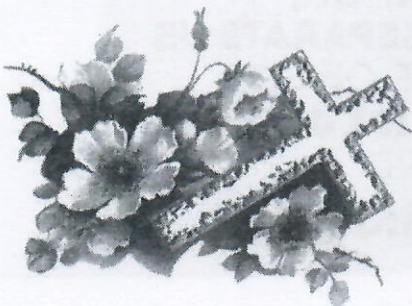
2nd 1997	Brian Bayliss
2nd 2004	Jean Scanlon
3rd 1964	William Hulme
3rd 1965	William Mann
3rd 1995	Leslie Fenwick
5th 1994	Thomas McWalters
5th 1997	Brian Neville Baylis
8th 2001	Mary Forbes
9th 1946	Thomas Cooper
12th 1994	Albert Williamson
12th 2009	Edith Emma Brookes
18th 2004	Walter James Smith
22nd 2000	Edward Henry Robinson
23rd 1987	Eric Brobbin
24th 1990	Sarah Agnes Gaskell
25th 1984	Emily Aldred
27th 1982	Mary Ann Owens (Brobbin)
28th 1960	Harold Weaver Millard
30th 1973	Lorraine Sahrman

October

1st 1979	Norman Webster
4th 1977	George Deakin
8th 2002	Beatrice Mann
10th 1916	Jessie Millard
10th 1993	Annie Stevens
10th 2005	Eddie Kelshaw
11th 2019	Norah McWalter
13th 1988	Jean Deakin
14th 1986	James Turner
15th 1978	Francis Duckworth
15th 1990	Ellen Diggle
16th 1992	Eric Albert Hartley
18th 1995	Terry Connor
28th 1976	George Hilton
29th 1987	Mark Bartram

"Miss no single opportunity of making some small sacrifice, here by a smiling look, there by a kindly word, always doing the smallest right and doing it all with love"

Therese of Lisieux



The bible tells a story of 4 lepers caught outside a city by a besieging army. The city was starving and desperate for food. The lepers decided to risk death by approaching the army for food, for they said they were going to die anyway. As they went, gradually they sensed something wrong - all was quiet. There was no army there. They had fled in a panic leaving their tents, food and treasure. The lepers were overjoyed at their good fortune – but then, after a while, they realised the city didn't know and they were starving, so they went back and told them.

Then they said to each other "We're not doing right. This is a day of good news and we are keeping it to ourselves" (2 Kings ch7 v9). We have such good news we want to share it. This should be our guiding principle in children's work.

Last year the Scripture Union launched its framework scheme "Revealing Jesus". It stems from the sad realisation that 95% of British children have no direct contact with a church. It consists of a clear framework loose enough to link up children's work anywhere. People feel not alone, better equipped and get ideas that help. Children need to be contacted, come through to a faith in Jesus and be part of a growth community. The SU "Revealing Jesus" framework, launched in 2020, seeks to help churches do that.

So the sense of a journey is fostered where "faith guides" are attached all the way. The idea is to use what churches already know and help them to be more confident. The plan is: first connect – where the child is contacted, perhaps brought along to an event, or if unattached included in some activity introduced on the street. Second explore, where the youngster finds out about who Jesus is. Third respond where an idea is given how a person can commit themselves as a follower of Jesus. And then fourth grow, where fellowship with others, belonging and sharing is developed. Alongside are the helpers and mentors and known faith guides who encourage the youth all the way through. People to co-ordinate and provide a link with SU are called Mission Enablers. They relate to the faith guides and give ideas and support.

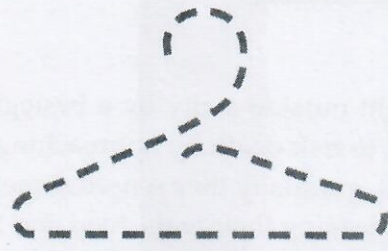
Each church signs up to the "Revealing Jesus" framework and registers their Faith Guides (or just one). They should catch the vision and be supported and equipped with resources, training events and knowledge and experience. The whole church benefits.

SU also has Mission Partners who are semi-independent charities working with children and associated with SU. There are 21 of these in the North including one in Greater Manchester which hosted a Youth Evangelism Conference this year.

Hotspots so far seem to be Liverpool, South Lancashire and Tyneside for recruiting Faith Guides. Tyneside run a detached youth programme in Byker and Walker. Kirby (Liverpool area) distributed the SU Easter booklet. "Jesus died for me" this year and was one of several who used QR codes to help families explore "In Search of Easter". In Darlington a grow community has run throughout lockdown. This has shown how valuable a Faith Guide is to journey with young people as they grow in their faith in Jesus.

I think most church helpers and leaders would value being linked with other groups for youth work (being in touch, using resources, getting new ideas and help). It's all encouragement in a world tempted to lose heart, in fact the framework SU "Revealing Jesus" in stages with Faith Guides and grow communities is an excellent plan.

Michael Williamson



Bon Bon's
Childrenswear

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Collect**

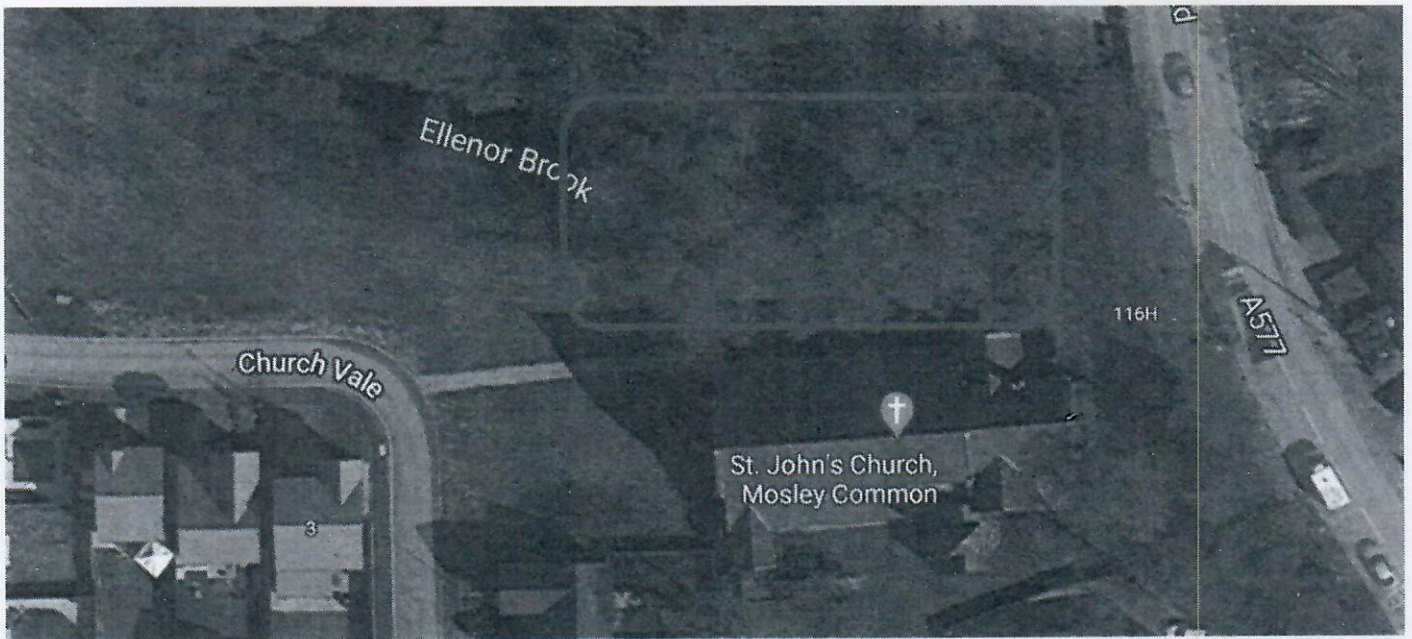
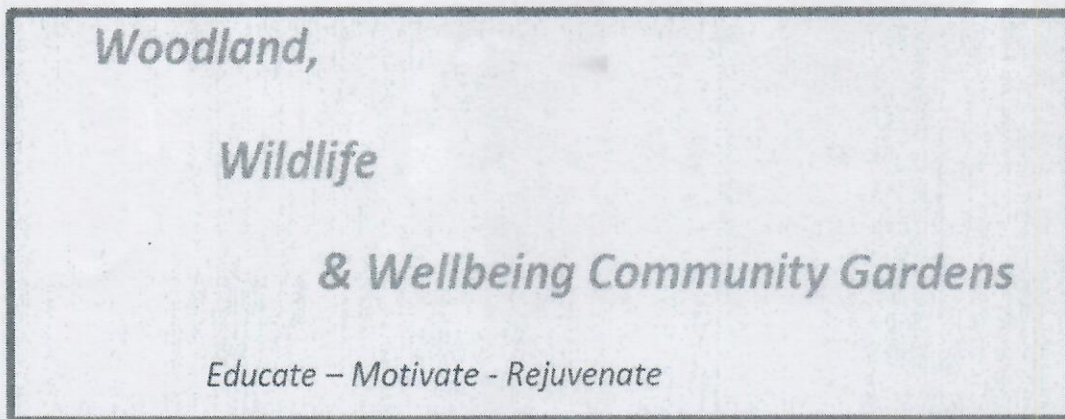
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ST JOHN'S MOSLEY COMMON



After around five years of planning, we are about to get the first phase of our Woodland, Wildlife and Wellbeing (WWW) community garden underway on the land of the north of St John's church, next to the brook.

We had a vision and plan to connect the new housing developments at the back of St John's church with the rest of the community with a path so people could access church, the existing shops along with new retail and community facilities on the land formally occupied by Maxilead of the other side of Mosley Common road.

Julian Hartley, our previous vicar, worked with Eccleston Homes, the builders who constructed some of the homes behind church, to create a path to the rear of St John's land.

Following the construction of the path, we opened up a route through the wooded area so people could walk through to Mosley Common Road. This path is now regularly used by shoppers, walkers and cyclists. We also recently opened the gate to shorten the route to the shops. Unfortunately the route gets very muddy in the winter so it needs a proper surface.

The plan was to obtain the necessary permissions and funding to provide a purpose built path and thanks to the work of our local councillor, Barry Taylor and Tom Clay from Maxilead, we now have agreement to construct a proper path and work will start in late July and should be complete in around a week. We are so grateful to them of the provision of this path. Once this work is complete, we will be able to begin to apply for funding for us to realise our bigger vision for the area.



We have a plan to provide a community space for all to use. We want to enhance the existing environment to make it more accessible with multiple features.

The land will have space for our local school and community to use raised beds for growing food and 'incredible edibles'. We will provide bug hotels and woodpiles to encourage insects and wildlife. It would be great to grow a wildflower meadow at the back of church to encourage bees. There will be a seating area where you can stop, relax and reflect. Getting into a natural space is proven to help us with our wellbeing. We also want to look at starting to apply for Eco church status, using this project as a focus.

There are lots of other ideas, but in order to realise this vision, we need to get a team of people together to plan and apply for additional funding so we can buy the essentials we need and make the site secure. We also need help from volunteers in the community to get work started to clear and replant the area.



If you are interested in helping, please contact myself, Nick Hardman at St John's church. Please see our Facebook page or church website www.mosleycommonchurch.org.uk for more details and dates of future planning meetings and working parties.

Nick Hardman (July 2021) Project Lead

LATEST NEWS FROM ANDREA AND ANDREW YOUNG, UMN

Andrew says - can you believe it? We are more than halfway through 2021. Here in the UK we are moving slowly to a more relaxed way of dealing with Covid-19, but a lot of countries are still struggling with new waves of the virus that continues to devastate health services and the financial well-being of many daily labourers. This is particular the case in Nepal, though the current wave is slowly receding and some relaxing of lockdown has begun. Without the infrastructure of more developed countries many in Nepal continue to suffer. If that were not enough, the arrival of a heavy monsoon has caused flooding in some areas and landslides in other places. UMN, through its hospital and community work are supporting, where they can, those suffering from the Coronavirus pandemic with aid going to local services in the areas we work in.

Every five years UMN needs to review its General Agreement with the Nepal Government and , thankfully, after 12 months negotiation this has just been signed. We can celebrate, but there is a second phase of agreements in that the Project Agreements need to be confirmed with the government as well and it is these that have the visa posts attached. Please pray that these agreements are ratified soon as this will help us to know if we can get a visa post to continue working.

Working remotely has become the norm for many and we, too, have had to learn the necessary skills. We are very grateful that online facilities have developed so much in the last few years. Our biggest project has been the development of a Staff Support Group to help UMN staff through these difficult days with Covid. We are a group of 4 Nepalis and 4 expats and are now offering listening opportunities to individuals in need, stressed out by the current situation and also running self-care sessions to give basic training to all staff so they can develop their own stress reducing activities. We thank God for what appears to be a well-received service amongst staff.

Andrea has heard that she has passed her first semester exams for Tribhuvan University. Her work for an MA in Counselling Psychology continues with on-line classes most nights, between 2 and 5am! Please pray for strength and wisdom for Andrea.



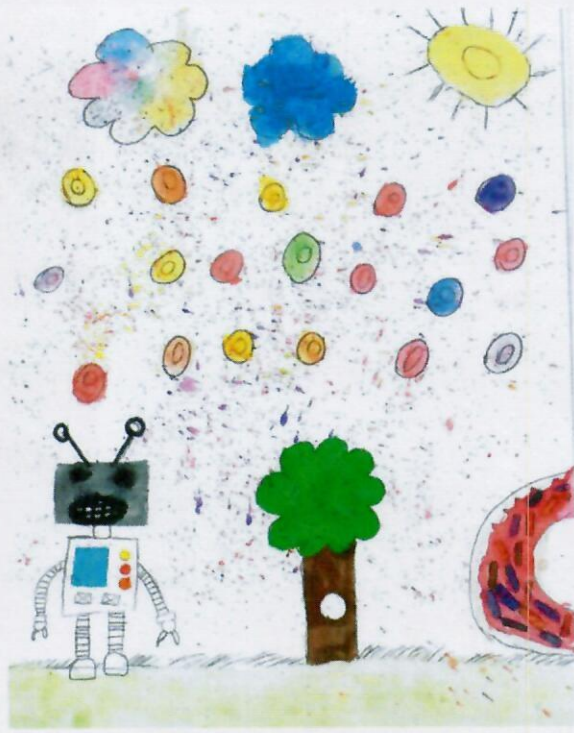
It will be really good if we are back to Nepal for the end of August and we could start working in the same time zone as our friends and colleagues in Nepal. Please pray for us as we plan and prepare for this to happen as soon as possible.

God's peace, Andrew and Andrea

Jean Williamson



Ellie Year 4



Tallulah Year 4



Kate Year 2



Kate Year 2



Olivia Year 4



Lucy Year 4

All pictures kindly donated by children from St Stephen`s CE Primary School