



Pauline's Message

Awareness

I wonder just how much awareness we have of our world. When I say world, what I really mean is those things that that we might miss in our everyday lives. I try to make myself aware of nature. And I particularly love the seasonal changes that happen. I find that easy to do. But then there are more specific things. Personally, as I get older, I notice the changes in my body and mind, I need to rest more, I notice the changes in children and how they grow so fast, I notice that drivers are less patient these days. I also believe that it is important to have a mind that notices even the little things that are happening around us and to us. One of the great questions that we ask is 'Where have you seen God at work?'. I believe it causes us to be attentive to what is going on around us and to acknowledge that God is actually at work at all times. We just have to name it.

February is an interesting month as it has the fewest days of any month in the year, and of course we look forward towards spring, my most favourite of all seasons. Could it be that this month offers us a time of rest and rejuvenation for the bustling spring and summer months ahead? A time to reflect, and what better way to prepare ourselves for [Lent](#) (which arrives in February this year) than to ponder a few inspirational saints whose feasts we celebrate this month and some fun awareness days. Perhaps we may find a kindred spirit in one or two of them and adopt their intercession throughout the year.

St. Brigid of Ireland - A contemporary of St. Patrick (who likely baptised her mother) Brigid was named after a Celtic goddess. Her story is fascinating, as she was born of a slave woman (who was a Christian) and the woman's master. She was incredibly beautiful, so much so that her father set up an arranged marriage for her and a bard. She refused, having vowed her virginity to Christ, so she prayed to be made physically unattractive (which was granted) until she made her permanent vows. St. Brigid notably founded two monasteries, one in Kildare that was deliberately built above a shrine to the Celtic goddess of her namesake.

. . . . continued in next column

SAINTS *alive*

In this way, she continued St. Patrick's mission of baptising pagan icons. St. Brigid is the patron of new-borns, cattle, dairymaids and midwives. Her feast day is February 1st.



On the same day February 1st - **Dignity Action Day #DAD2023** is an annual opportunity for health and social care workers, and members of the public to uphold people's rights to dignity and provide a truly memorable day for people who use care services.

St Valentine

Almost everyone in western culture celebrates Valentine's Day, though unfortunately without considering the fact that he was a saint.

While there is a paucity of factual information about St. Valentine, we do know that he was born in third century Rome and was martyred after refusing to denounce his Catholic faith.

It's likely the association between the saint and courtly love occurred as a result of baptising the pagan holiday, Lupercalia, in the eighteenth century.

Because his feast day is celebrated on February 14, that is what unofficially made St. Valentine the patron saint of happy marriages, engaged couples, young people, and love.



LGBT History Month takes place for the whole of February each year. LGBT History Month is a whole month dedicated to promoting LGBT equality.

And finally **'Wear Red'** day on February 3rd. Support Children's Heart Surgery Fund on the first Friday in February and help children and adults born with congenital heart disease.



Whatever you do this month, be aware that you are known and loved by God who sent his Son Jesus Christ to be with us now and always.

Reverend Pauline Cummins

CHURCH SERVICES IN FEBRUARY

Sunday 5th February

9.15am – All-age Service at St Mary's

10.45am – All-age Service at SS&SJ

(Followed by a short service of Holy Communion)

7pm – Prayers to end the day on Facebook

Sunday 12th February

9.15am – Holy Communion at St Mary's

10.45am – Holy Communion at SS&SJ

7pm – Prayers to end the day on Facebook

Sunday 19th February

9.15am – Holy Communion at St Mary's

10.45am – Morning Worship at SS&SJ

7pm – Prayers to end the day on Facebook

Wednesday 22nd February

7.30pm – Ash Wednesday Holy Communion at St. Mary's

Sunday 26th February

9.15am – Holy Communion at St Mary's

10.45am – Holy Communion at SS&SJ

7pm – Prayers to end the day on Facebook

Prayers to start the day:

At 9am Monday – Thursday as follows:

Monday – St Simon and St Jude's

Tuesday – St Mary's

Wednesday – Facebook (Holy Communion on 3rd Wednesday of the month)

Thursday – St Mary's

QUIZ . . . QUIZ . . . QUIZ . . . QUIZ . . . QUIZ

On page three there is an item about new year resolutions and whether we have kept them which in this case we have not! We said there would be no further quiz until one of you submitted one or some form of puzzle but this early in 2023 we have had to break our word. It's a mix of some simpler questions and others that might test your knowledge of The Bible. See how you do and whether or not you think you can do better, please think about a quiz or puzzle of your own.

1. What is the last word in the Old Testament?
2. By which previous name was Paul of Tarsus known?
3. Whose wife was turned into a pillar of salt when she looked back?
4. Who is said to have lived on a diet of locusts and wild honey?
5. How many years did Noah live for after the flood?
6. Only three angels are named in The Bible. Michael and Lucifer are two, who is the other?
7. The book of Esther is unique because it does not mention which word?
8. The Bible was written in three languages, Hebrew, Koine Greek and which other?
9. Who made the first translation of The Bible into English in 1382?
10. Name the longest book of The Bible with 150 chapters?
11. In what city was Jesus born?
12. Who took the place of Judas in the 12 disciples?
13. Who was the elder brother of Moses?
14. What kind of wood was Noah's ark built from?
15. Who, following Moses' death, became the leader of the children of Israel?

LUCKY NUMBERS

St. Mary's Subscription Club

Winning numbers and cash prizes in the St Mary's Subscription Club draws were as follows:

NOVEMBER: 1st £40 87, 2nd £25 114, 3rd £15 40, 4th £10 195 and 5th £10 142

DECEMBER: 1st £40 164, 2nd £25 20, 3rd £15 41, 4th £10 93 and 5th £10 63

The next draw is on January 28th and will take place at the coffee morning run by EFFF and will have 'Winter Warmers' as its theme. The coffee mornings are held on the last Saturday of each month in Elvesthorpe Village Hall from 10am to 11.30am and include refreshments with home-made cakes and other treats.

If you wish to get in touch please contact the church office:

Parish Church Office St Simon & St Jude Church Hall
High Street

Earl Shilton

Leicestershire LE9 7DH

01455 843961

parishchurch@gmx.co.uk

If you would like to contact one of our church ministers their contact details are as follows:

Revd Martin Castle (Priest-in-charge) – 07759 002660

revdmartincastle@gmx.com

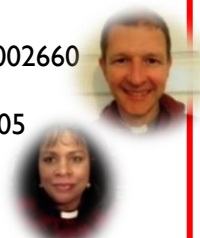
Revd Pauline Cummins (Curate) – 07703 614905

revpdcummins@gmail.com

You can also visit our websites at:

SS&SJ - <https://www.achurchnearyou.com/church/5345/>

St Mary's - <https://www.achurchnearyou.com/church/5346/>



HOW THEY PRAISED HIM

“When I Survey The Wondrous Cross”

For the second in our new series on the writers of some of the most popular hymns we look at Isaac Watts who composed over 600 of which the one above has been rated among the greatest.

Born in Southampton in 1674, Watts was a sickly and unattractive child but very precocious, learning Latin aged four, Greek at nine, French when 11 and Hebrew at 13.

He was also keen on poetry and spoke in rhyme and meter, a trait which annoyed his father who resorted on one occasion to spanking him at which through his tears Isaac pleaded: “O father, do some pity take and I will no more verses make.”

When he was 15 Isaac objected to the strict versions of Old Testament psalms sung line after repeated line in many churches, claiming: “The singing of God’s praise is the part of worship highest in heaven and its performance among us is the worst on earth.”

Challenged by his dad, a Congregational deacon, to “give us something better”, Isaac who became a minister, began writing his extensive catalogue which earned him the title “the father of English hymnody”.

Among them was “When I Survey The Wondrous Cross” said by Matthew Arnold to be “the very best English hymn”.

One commentator wrote: “It seems to me as if Isaac Watts wrote this text as if he were standing at the foot of Jesus’ cross, together with the disciple John, the faithful women, Jesus’ mother, the Roman soldiers and the excited shouting mob.

“With him I cannot help but marvel at the incredulity of the scene – the ‘prince of heaven’ nailed to a tree by sinful men, Jesus dying for me...”

By Isaac Watts

HOW RESOLVED ARE YOU STILL?

Did you make any new year resolutions and, if so, how are you doing keeping them?

The activist Shane Claibourne learned from Mother Teresa how to put his faith into practice. He established a community called The Simple Way in Philadelphia and 10 years ago made these 13 resolutions, the main principles of each are worth considering – if not all he said.

1. Do for one person what I wish I could do for everybody but can’t.
2. Practice resurrection – make ugly things beautiful and look for God in unlikely places.
3. Interrupt death – do something to break the patterns of violence, bullying, war, capital punishment and other mean and ugly things.
4. Give more money away than I keep.
5. Write letters and notes to people, letting them know I am thankful for them. Write a note asking for forgiveness from someone I need to ask
6. Do something really nice that no one sees or knows about.
7. Compliment someone I have a hard time doing so – and mean it.
8. Pause before every potential crisis and ask: “Will this matter in five years?”
9. Get outdoors more often, enjoy more things like fireflies and shooting stars. Take someone to the beach or mountains for their first time.
10. Learn a skill – like welding and use it for something redemptive like turning a machine gun into a farm tool.
11. Rather than emphasising the best of myself and finding the worst in others, work on the worst in myself and look for the best in others.
12. Be aware – and beware – of blessings. Do something to abstain or delay gratification and do something to indulge in a gift of God. Do something to end inequality and move the world towards God’s dream for every person to have “this day our daily bread.”
13. Believe in miracles – and live in a way that might necessitate one.

NEW YEAR RESOLUTIONS

HAPPY NEW YEAR FROM THE VINE

Manager Jessica Harrison says: "Happy new year from everyone at The Vine. We hope you had a blessed Christmas and were able to spend time with friends and family."

If you are reading this in time, during January there is a small sale of selected Christmas ornaments and books so drop in to bag a bargain.

"Keep us in mind as a warm and friendly space when you are in town – despite the cost of living crisis we are aiming to keep our prices low so that we still offer good value. We look forward to seeing you soon," adds Jessica.

The Vine is a Christian bookshop and coffee bar off The Borough, Hinckley up the slope by the United Reformed Church.



What's coming up in 2023

Here are some key events in the life of our churches for 2023 that have been confirmed so far. Watch this space for more details:

One of the big events at St Simon & St Jude this year will be the official opening of the refurbished parish hall on High Street, Earl Shilton including The Valerie Suite meeting room on the first floor.

No date has been set yet for the event but it is only fitting that Tracy Wales, the woman responsible for steering through the £100,000 facelift and improvements will be returning with her family from their new home in Blackpool to carry out the ceremony.

The building is almost unrecognisable from the dated and run down centre that it was and that is all down to Tracy who made it a personal goal to achieve.

Watch out for an announcement of the date and join in with the celebrations.

DECLARING A FAITH

Almost two-thirds of those in the Hinckley and Bosworth borough who took part in a county survey identified themselves as being Christian.

Just over 64% made the declaration in the Leicestershire Joint Strategic Needs Assessment for 2018 to 2021 but in the last of those years only about 2,500 people in the area – a much lower figure for the percentage population – regularly went to church on a Sunday.

Of course figures can be open to a number of interpretations, writes Mitch Irving, I belong to a club but the number of times in any year that I go in other than to pay the subs is only about two or three at the most.

However there is something about declaring our faith other than wearing a cross or simply hoping others will recognise what we are from the way we conduct ourselves and our lives which is what until recently was all I did, adds Mitch.

While there was much not to admire in the BBC I pre-Christmas series The Traitors, notably the lies and scheming, there were a few chords similar to Christ's betrayal like a "kiss of death". In the programme all the contestants were trying to win not 30 or 40 pieces of silver but a share of tens of thousands of pounds.

There were up to three undeclared "traitors" who the others were trying to eliminate and thus deny them the prize by voting in a round table discussion after which the traitors could "murder" someone they thought was on their case.

After the vote the banished person had to reveal their identity and one of the best things about it was when the person said: "I am a faithful".

How often do you do that and is it time to be proud of what we are?



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