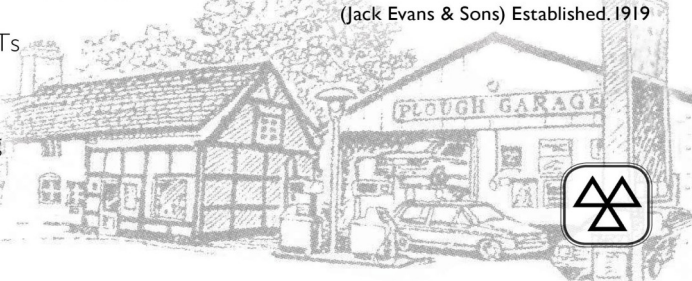


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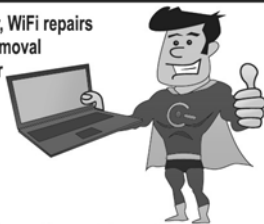
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Magazine 50p



**October 2025**

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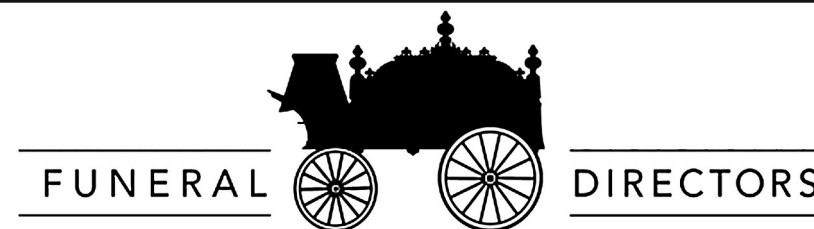
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 Send e-mail & attachments to [stgsmagazine@googlemail.com](mailto:stgsmagazine@googlemail.com)

Items for inclusion in the **Deanery News** should be sent by the **10<sup>th</sup>** of the **previous month** to Ann Jones  
[annmorganjones456@gmail.com](mailto:annmorganjones456@gmail.com)

*QUOTE: Be united with other Christians.  
 A wall with loose bricks is not good.  
 The bricks must be cemented together.  
 —Corrie ten Boom*



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## LIFTING UP OUR EYES

With Rev. Fran Brealey

During October we will be celebrating Harvest in our churches, both at our services and as we enjoy Harvest Lunches and Suppers. Special care will be taken in decorating our buildings with fruit, flowers and vegetables, and we will sing the old favourites, 'We Plough the Fields' and 'Come Ye thankful People Come!'.

It is one of the joys of living in a rural area that we are very aware of the appearance of the fields changing through the year, as they are ploughed, planted, and harvested. Farmers in our communities, whether they are growing crops or managing stock, have to cope with the vagaries of the weather and the markets to produce what we eat and use. Harvest is a time to give thanks for the business of farming, in all its variety, and to pray for those involved in it. We may sing 'all is safely gathered in', but the work doesn't stop with the Harvest.

Our Harvest events also remind us that God is the creator of all that grows, and all that is harvested. The Bible describes this in the poem that is the first chapter of Genesis. It depicts a world that is desolate and chaotic, being brought into beautiful order, as God speaks things into being. What God makes is very good. God gives names to light and day, moon and stars, just as later the human will give names to the animals and birds. Adam's role is to govern or manage creation on God's behalf, so that all the world may be blessed.

At Messy Church last month at Holy Trinity, Minsterley, we thought about the harvest which is described in the book of Ruth. Rich farmer Boaz complies with God's law and leaves some of his crop at the edges of his fields for the poor of the community to collect or 'glean'. As a result the destitute woman Ruth is able to feed herself and her mother in law. Notice Boaz doesn't give his leftovers, the gleaning takes place while the harvest is still going on, and Boaz does not yet know how much he will make for himself. What might the concept of gleaning look like for us? Might it mean deciding how much to give away first, before all our other needs and wants crowd in?



Might it mean adding some tins for the foodbank to our basket, before we get to the checkout? Or setting aside some time each week to help others, before our diary fills up?

One of the Harvest songs sung in primary schools is the Harvest Samba, and it sums up these two themes of thankfulness and sharing very well. Google it if you haven't heard it, it's great fun!

*Cabbages and greens, broccoli and beans,  
Cauliflower and roasted potatoes, taste so good to me!  
Apricots and plums, ripened in the sun,  
Oranges and yellow bananas, good for everyone!  
It's another Harvest Festival, when we bring our fruit and vegetables,  
'Cause we want to share the best of all, the good things we've been given.  
It's another opportunity to be grateful for the food we eat,  
with a celebration to say 'thank you' to God the Father.*

Rev Fran

### Prayer for October 2025 *By Daphne Kitching*

Dear Lord,

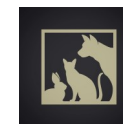
In this autumn season, when the harvest is gathered, we thank You for Your provision for us. We have so much, and yet we see terrible images of starving children on our televisions and smartphones and in our newspapers. Lord, prompt us to do what we can to change things, whether that is by writing a letter or email to someone with influence, or by contributing in some way to aid agencies.

Lord, we ask You to touch the hearts of those leaders of nations whose decisions cause such hunger and suffering. Soften those hard hearts, Lord. Fill them with Your compassion. May there be a new harvest of love - and a kinder world.  
In Jesus' name, Amen.

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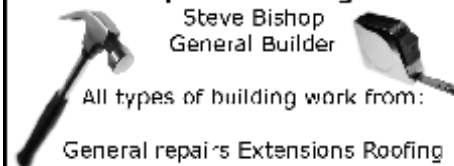
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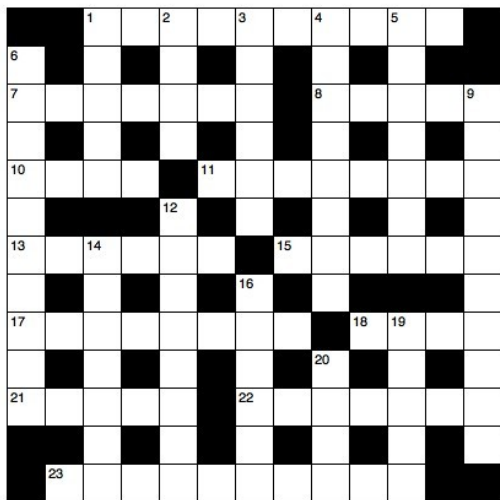
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## This month's CROSSWORD PUZZLE ...



### Across

**1** He was replaced as king of Judah by his uncle Mattaniah (2 Kings 24:17) (10)

**7** 'Let us fix our eyes on Jesus... who for the joy set before him — the cross' (Hebrews 12:2) (7)

**8** Relieved (5)

**10** Impetuous (Acts 19:36) (4)

**11** Surprised and alarmed (Luke 24:37) (8)

**13** 'It is — for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for the rich to enter the kingdom of God' (Mark 10:25) (6)

**15** Directions for the conduct of a church service (6)

**17** One of the acts of the sinful nature (Galatians 5:19) (8)

**18** and **20** Down 'She began to wet his — with her tears. Then she wiped them with her — ' (Luke 7:38) (4,4)

**21** 'We will all be changed, in a flash, in the twinkling of an — , — the last trumpet' (1 Corinthians 15:51–52) (3,2)

**22** 'But he replied, "Lord, I am — — go with you to prison and to death"' (Luke 22:33) (5,2)

**23** Third person of the Trinity (2 Corinthians 13:14) (4,6)

### Down

**1** He betrayed Jesus (Matthew 27:3) (5)

**2** Paul's assurance to the Philippian jailer: 'Don't — yourself! We are all here!' (Acts 16:28) (4)

**3** 'Fear God and keep his commandments, for this — the whole — of-man' (Ecclesiastes 12:13) (2,4)

**4** The sort of giver God loves (2 Corinthians 9:7) (8)

**5** Sun rail (anag.) (7)

**6** Naboth, the ill-fated vineyard owner, was one (1 Kings 21:1) (10)

**9** Paul said of young widows, 'When their sensual desires overcome their — to Christ, they want to marry' (1 Timothy 5:11) (10)

**12** This was how Joseph of Arimathea practised his discipleship 'because he feared the Jews' (John 19:38) (8)

**14** Mop ruse (anag.) (7)

**16** Foment (Philippians 1:17) (4,2)

**19** Where Joseph and Mary escaped to with the baby Jesus (Matthew 2:14) (5)

**20** See 18 Across

## Readings and Services for this MONTH

Here are the Sunday Service details, and the readings which you may enjoy at home if you are unable to join a church service this month.

Date	Service	Readings
3 <sup>rd</sup> October	Messy Church 3.30pm	
5 <sup>th</sup> October 16 <sup>th</sup> Sunday after Trinity	Holy Communion 10.30am	Habakkuk 1.1-4; 2.1-4 2 Timothy 1.1-14 Luke 17.5-10
7 <sup>th</sup> October	Tea Service 2.30pm	
12 <sup>th</sup> October 17 <sup>th</sup> Sunday after Trinity	Morning Worship without Communion but with Children's Church 10.30am	2 Kings 5. 1-3, 7-15c 2 Timothy 2. 8-15 Luke 17. 11-19
19 <sup>th</sup> October 18 <sup>th</sup> Sunday after Trinity <b>Harvest</b>	Holy Communion and Children's Church 10.30am	Psalms 121 2 Timothy 3. 14- 4.5 Luke 18. 1-8
26 <sup>th</sup> October Bible Sunday	All Age family Worship 10.30am	Psalms 119. 129-136 Romans 15. 1-6 Luke 13.16-24



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Please contact Mary Worrall  
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All information given is given in confidence.



## Monthly Tea Service

(not August)

1st Tuesday afternoon

2.30pm to 4pm

St George's Church,  
Pontesbury.

A moment of prayer,  
A short Holy Communion followed by tea and cake

**Stuart Carter**

at

**Habberley Village Hall**

**7.00pm Friday 7<sup>th</sup> November**

**An evening of songs**

**some old, some new, some to make you  
smile, or wonder, or sing along.**

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→ food, keeping track of the money, and attending volunteer and committee meetings.

And, most importantly, thanks to all those who come across the threshold to use the foodbank, and stay for a coffee and chat. We understand how difficult it can be to take that first step. We really do appreciate your kind words and support, and the introductions to others who you know are facing difficult times.

**To use the Foodbank, or find out more:** Call Greg Smith 07902 794653 or Richard 07922 830488, see our website: <https://reavalleyfoodbank.co.uk/> or Facebook.



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 If you want your dream to be.  
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 Do few things but do them well.  
 Heartfelt work grows purely.  
 If you want to live life free  
 Take your time go slowly.  
 Do few things but do them well.

Heartfelt work grows purely.  
 Day by day, stone by stone  
 Build your secret slowly.  
 Day by day, you'll grow too.  
 You'll know heaven's glory.  
 If you want to live life free  
 Take your time go slowly.  
 If you want your dream to be  
 Take your time, go slowly.

*'Little Church' by Donovan Leitch*



***One year of our Foodbank being run  
 by local people for local people***

A year has passed since we decided to go independent and run the foodbank ourselves. Previously, the Barnabas Centre brought us food parcels and took back food donated locally. We really couldn't have got this far without the help of people across the Rea Valley. We do appreciate your support and want to thank everyone, including:

All those who donate food and other items, the schools and churches who give from their Harvest Festival celebrations, as well as the GP practice staff who've donated items at Christmas.

People who give every month from their bank account. This is a vital source of income enabling us to buy items in response to our users' needs.

Our Parish Councils, local charities and organisations, and others who have given the proceeds from their amazing fundraising efforts.

The hosts of the food collection points, the Pontesbury Co-op and Londgen Village Stores, and the great team at Worthen Village Hall.

The shops who accept our Christmas food vouchers – Gawain at Smith's the Butchers, and the team at Hignetts, as well as the One Stop at Pontesbury, who are so helpful to our volunteers.

Those that refer people in need to us - local clergy, schools and nurseries, GP practices and housing providers, plus people in the community who spread the word about our service.

Finally, we also want to thank our fantastic team of volunteers who open up the Foodbank every week at our two venues and deliver to those who are house-bound. They also beaver away behind the scenes, running the store, purchasing



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October 2<sup>nd</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup>, 16<sup>th</sup>, 23<sup>rd</sup>  
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This 2025 event took place last month. While some of the intrepid walkers managed all of the 6.5 mile walk through Shrewsbury, others joined for part of the route. At every one of the 11 churches visited



they were delighted to receive a very warm and friendly welcome. Over £500 was raised to support St. George's church and the Historic Churches fund.



St George's Church  
Pontesbury

**Christmas Theme**

**QUIZ TIME!**

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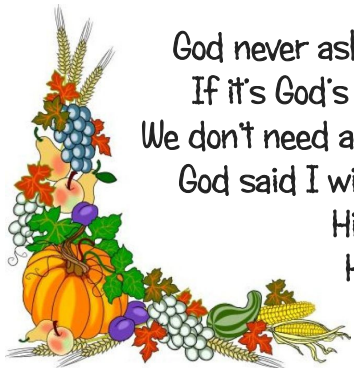
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Pause for THOUGHT with  
Isaiah chapter 41 verse 10:

Do not fear, for I am with you. Do not be dismayed  
for I am your God.



God never asks us to carry the weight alone.  
If it's God's plan, it will unfold in His time.  
We don't need all the answers, we just need faith.  
God said I will hold you and strengthen you.  
His timing is perfect.  
His love never fails.  
Anon.

## Deanery of Pontesbury

### DEANERY NEWS

Rural Dean: **The Revd Greg Smith**

telephone: 07902 794653 • email: rectorpontstip@gmail.com

Thought for the Month from Rev Stephen Griffiths

Dear Friends,

It is very good to be here in Pontesbury Deanery as Rector of the Ford Group of Parishes. Thank you for your warm welcome. We (me and Cally, and our children Jonathan, Alex and Lizzie) are settling in well and enjoying exploring the local area. Before moving here we lived in Oakham, Rutland, where I was Team Rector of a rural group of parishes and the small county town of Oakham. We have exchanged one lovely part of England for another, and I am grateful for the opportunity to live and serve in another rural setting. As some of you may know I have a dual role as Assistant Archdeacon of Ludlow. The role has been designed so that I can play a full part in the life of Pontesbury Deanery without any Archdeaconry duties here. Family life and ministry keep me busy, but when I have spare time I usually do something related to music, gardening, pubs, or walking.

The past few weeks have been a series of 'firsts' - first Sunday in the new parishes, first day at a new school for the children, first Deanery Synod, first visit to Hignett's, etc. There is a joy in new experiences but also a challenge - forming new relationships and finding new patterns of life take time. It takes a while to get used to new journeys and adapt to what God provides in the next season of life (whether that is a move, or a change in circumstances, health, relationships or work). At Ford Church we have a lovely quiet Morning Prayer on Wednesdays (9am) using the Northumbria Community liturgy. Today's meditation helped me take stock of all this. So I share this with you (on the next page), as you face whatever changes have come or are coming your way.

With love in Christ,



Our harvest services should reflect this attitude of generosity because it points to what is at the heart of our faith that God has given us new life in Jesus freely and without condition. This is the grace of God at work in our lives. However, as Christians we are also called to work in God's harvest field. Jesus in his teaching told the disciples that they were called to be labourers in the Kingdom.

"When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful, but the labourers are few; therefore, pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out labourers into his harvest."

Matthew 9:36-38

As disciples we are called to share the good news of the Kingdom and to help bring in God's harvest of new followers of Jesus. These are the disciples that Jesus calls us to make in the Great Commission, and it is part of our role not simply to make converts but to mentor and coach the next generation. We need to see the harvest not just in terms of crops, fruit and vegetables but as a spiritual reality that sees us offer the story of Jesus to a world in need.

*The Venerable Derek Chedzey - Archdeacon of Hereford*

And now – *PAUSE* - for a poem celebrating the glories of the season...

### *Autumn Glades* by Nigel Beeton

We stroll through leafy autumn glades,  
An amber carpet 'neath our shoes;  
As Nature's summer beauty fades  
She clothes herself in golden hues.

They also warm the southern breeze,  
Which comes upon us, as it may,  
Releasing crispy, ochre leaves  
To gently patter on our way.

The stillness of October days,  
The chillness of a frosty dawn,  
Yet autumn sunshine's slanting rays  
Caress us with their glowing warmth.

Soon, soon comes winter's icy grip,  
Of freezing wind and driving snow,  
But, just for now, we'll gladly slip  
Through gentle autumn's golden glow.



## Looking at GOD

### *Abiding in Jesus*

This is the time of year for many churches to hold their Harvest Festival services. No doubt, there will be displays of food, some bought with others grown in gardens and allotments. While gardeners can have pleasure growing fruit and vegetables it can be hard work tending to them and dealing with pests.

Jesus knew about the care given to vines. In John 15:1-8 Jesus compared Himself to a vine and referred to God as the gardener. These verses are both challenging and reassuring. In this parable, God is responsible for pruning the vine. He sees what parts are useful and what parts are useless. The unproductive parts are cut away, so that growth is encouraged. Jesus is telling us that God will prune our lives, not to harm us, but to encourage our spiritual growth.

God's pruning cuts away wrong attitudes and wasteful behaviour, all of which serve no useful purpose in our lives. This pruning is required so that we become more fruitful. And the fruit God wants is love, joy, patience etc. (see Galatians 5:22-23) These holy qualities are intended to influence the world to change it from the bad to all that is good.

To encourage its growth, a vine has to be regularly cut back. The effect looks drastic, but essential. When God cuts away the dead wood in our lives He does it because He knows how our lives can grow. The pruning knives are in the hands of our Father God who only desires the best for us. This pruning process can be painful, but Jesus says that it is vital if the Holy Spirit is to flow through us to produce the fruit that God wants.

Also in this parable, Jesus said He was the vine, and we are the branches. We have no existence apart from Jesus. We can do nothing for God on our own and must be joined to Jesus. In the same way a vine utilises the life-giving sap to flow into the branches, so we need the Holy Spirit to flow His life into us. It is only by remaining in Jesus can He give us the inner resources for an effective fruit-producing life.

Jesus said 'Abide in Me' (John 15:4 King James Version). Abiding speaks of sustenance, being upheld and supported, enduring and withstanding. So, if we are to reap a harvest of holiness, may we be prepared for God's pruning, and continue to abide in Jesus, our Lord and Saviour.



Canon Paul Hardingham continues:

### What's the Big Idea? An Introduction to the Books of the New Testament: Galatians

Paul's letter to the Galatians has been described as the 'Magna Carta of Christian Liberty', because it emphasises the freedom that we have through faith in Jesus Christ. Paul vigorously defends the truth that people are justified ('made right with God') by faith in Jesus Christ alone. Our standing with God is not determined by what we do, but by dependence on what Christ has done.

It is generally believed that Paul wrote this letter in 48/9AD to the churches in the southern area of Galatia, which he planted on his first missionary journey. It was written before the Council of Jerusalem (Acts 15), making it the earliest of Paul's letters.

Paul is dealing with Jewish-Christians (or Judaizers) who were advocating ceremonial practices of the Jewish law, including circumcision, in addition to faith in Christ as the means of salvation. They were undermining Paul's authority as an apostle, by asserting that his gospel didn't agree with the apostles in Jerusalem.

In response, Paul defends his apostolic authority and presents the true gospel, by emphasising the unique importance of Christ and His cross in salvation. He argues that 'a person is justified not by the works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ' (2:16). He appeals especially to the examples of Abraham (3:6-9) and Hagar and Sarah (4:21-31), who stand in contrast as being a 'slave' under the law and 'free' in Christ.

*'It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery.'* (5:1). We are justified through faith alone and it is by faith alone that we live out our new life in the freedom of the Spirit.



### Thoughts from the Venerable Derek Chedzey - Archdeacon of Hereford



Harvest - as I drove out of Hereford, I was struck by the hard work that is going on in the countryside around the city.

Straw is being collected from the fields, in

some places silage is being cut and in others harvesting continues. When we were in Devon the celebration of Harvest took place across our villages from the end of August through to early October. Here in Hereford the pattern is similar, and our rural multi parish benefices are now beginning to celebrate Harvest.

The modern harvest festival celebrations that we know today was introduced in the Cornish parish of Morwenstow in 1843 by Rev Robert Hawker. Hawker was quite the eccentric and also on occasions was reputed to have dressed up as a mermaid! He invited his parishioners to a Harvest service as he wanted to give thanks to God for providing such plenty. However, this was to counter the festivities and merriment of much more ancient pagan celebrations, and he was keen to turn his parishioners towards a Christian celebration of harvest. The Christian Harvest celebrations that Hawker wanted to connect with were based on what he saw in the Old Testament, and he drew on the Jewish festival of Sukkot or feast of Tabernacles.

"You shall keep the Feast of Harvest, of the first fruits of your labour, of what you sow in the field. You shall keep the Feast of Ingathering at the end of the year, when you gather in from the field the fruit of your labour." (Exodus 23:16)

Even today with modern farming methods it is still an opportunity to give thanks to God for his provision for us and an opportunity to share with generosity the riches we have received. Paul was very clear in his teaching that generosity begins in our hearts and is a reflection of the gratitude we have towards God for what he has done for us. Generosity is not something we have to be coerced into but instead it is something freely given. We perhaps need this reminder because our wealth and belongings ultimately belong to God, and we are simply stewards of what we have.

"So, I thought it necessary to urge the brothers to go on ahead to you and arrange in advance for the gift you have promised, so that it may be ready as a willing gift, not as an exaction. The point is this: whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver." (2 Corinthians 9:5-7)

As we remember St Luke this month, let's note that one of the major themes in his gospel is prayer. Jesus tells the *Parable of the Friend at Midnight* (Luke 11:5-8) in the context of teaching His disciples to pray (1).

### Pray Shamelessly:

In the parable a man approaches his friend at midnight and asking: 'Friend, lend me three loaves, for a friend of mine has arrived on a journey, and I have nothing to set before him' (5-6). Despite the hour, the rules of hospitality mean that this is not an unreasonable request. Jesus says, 'though he will not get up and give him anything because he is his friend, yet because of the man's boldness he will rise and give him whatever he needs' (8). Jesus is telling us to approach our heavenly Father in 'shameless boldness' with our needs. As adopted children we should have no hesitancy in coming to talk with our Father. It is not God who is reluctant to answer, but we to ask. Do we pray with shameless boldness?

### Pray Persistently:

Like children we should be persistent in our requests: 'Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you.' (9). All three verbs indicate a continual habit: 'Keep on asking...seeking...knocking'. We will not be content simply to ask once and then move on. Jesus tells us to bring our prayers to God persistently. Do we give up too easily in prayer?

### Pray Expectantly:

'For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened.' (10). Are we expectant in our prayers, believing that God delights in meeting our requests? Why not begin this adventure of prayer today!



**Mouse Makes**

This is **Psalm 150**, a song of praise to God, it tells us why and how to worship God. How do you praise and worship God?

**Praise** God in His Temple,  
**Praise** Him in His mighty heavens.  
**Praise** Him for His acts of power,  
**Praise** Him for his surpassing greatness.

**Praise Him** with the sounding trumpet,  
**Praise Him** with the harp and lyre,  
**Praise Him** with tambourine and dancing,  
**Praise Him** with the clash of cymbals,  
**Praise Him** with the resounding cymbals.  
 Let everything that has breath  
**PRAISE THE LORD!**

P K G C Y M B A L S A  
 O L R H E A V E N S B  
 W T E M P L E T U A R  
 E T A M B O U R I N E  
 R H T L U T E U A C A  
 D A N C I N G M P T T  
 R R E P I P E P R U H  
 U P S F L U T E A A H  
 M D S G O D E T I R O  
 S T S T R I N G S Y R  
 O Y L E D L Y R E Y N

PRAISE • GOD • TEMPLE • HEAVENS • SANCTUARY • POWER • GREATNESS  
 TRUMPET • HORN • PIPE • FLUTE • HARP • LYRE • LUTE • STRINGS  
 TAMBOURINE • DANCING • CYMBALS • DRUMS • BREATH • LORD



The Revd Dr Jo White considers ....

## Reflecting Faith: Glory to God

For the last few months we've been looking at the way that church services are put together.

Last time we looked at how we begin by recognising how great and amazing God is, and therefore apologise for all the things we've done wrong – or should have done and haven't – in the light of His 'perfection'.

We then receive God's forgiveness.



At this point, recognising how gracious and forgiving God is, we are asked to rise from our knees and stand together to give 'Glory to God'. Known in Latin as *'The Gloria'*.

You will recognise those words from those spoken by the angels announcing the birth of Christ to the shepherds on the hills over Bethlehem:

"Glory to God in the highest, and peace on earth to people of good will" (Luke 2:15)

Traditionally this 'angelic hymn' has been sung and begins with praise to God the Father. It then asks for the mercy from God the Son, the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world.



The final lines soar into the blinding mystery of the Trinity: 'Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God the Father'. Because it is so full of joy it is not included in worship during Advent and Lent.

This hymn dates back to the third century of the Church. Tradition holds that it was first composed as a prayer in the East, and then translated to Latin by Saint Hilary of Poitiers around the year 360.

Because this hymn is so special over the years there have been limitations on who was allowed to sing or recite it. At first it was only bishops and then in the 11th century priests were allowed to do so.

Now we all sing or say it together. That means we take our place in our Christian heritage alongside those angels singing or saying it each week. What a privilege!



*This month*

Next time you go to a Sunday church service think about those angels as you stand to say or sing 'The Gloria'. Can you feel their wings alongside you?



## In the News

### Vatican seeks to become world's first carbon-neutral state

The Vatican has signed an agreement with Italy over a 100-million-euro project which will make it fully reliant on solar energy.

The Vatican will obtain its electricity from a new agrivoltaics plant at Santa Maria di Galeria. The 1000-acre site north of Rome is currently home to Vatican Radio's transmission towers. The agreement was signed by the Vatican's Secretary for Relations with States, Archbishop Paul Gallagher, and the Italian Ambassador to the Holy See, Francesco Di Nitto.

The Vatican says the project has been designed to "to respect the natural landscape, minimise the environmental impact, and protect the cultural and archaeological heritage".

The initiative has been hailed as proof of strong bilateral relations between the Holy See and Italy, "reflecting a shared commitment to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change". The Vatican will donate any excess electricity to the local community.

Papal appeals against climate change and environmental degradation were a feature of the 12-year pontificate of the late Pope Francis, who unveiled plans for the Santa Maria project in an apostolic letter, *Fratello Sole*, last year.

### Spurgeon's College collapses

Spurgeon's College, the well-known Baptist theological college in south London, recently closed with immediate effect.

Founded by the celebrated Baptist preacher Charles Haddon Spurgeon in 1856, the college has trained thousands of Baptist ministers for ordination for nearly 170 years. But in early August, a brief statement from the Board of Trustees said that a partnership with a charitable foundation who had "provided vital financial support and offered assurances to both the College and the Office for Students of continued funding" had been "unexpectedly terminated" without warning on 21<sup>st</sup> July.

## Looking at YOU

Time to make your will ?????

Been putting off writing or updating your Will? Next month the charity Will Aid's 'Make a Will Month' will offer you the opportunity to put your affairs in order, secure your loved one's future and give to charities helping those in need.

Participating solicitors are inviting people to contact them to book appointments for November, when they will prepare basic Wills without charging their normal fee. All that they will ask in return is that clients consider making a voluntary donation to Will Aid. The suggested donation is just £120 for a single Will, or £200 for a pair of mirror Wills.

The money raised is shared by nine UK charities: namely ActionAid, Age UK, British Red Cross, Christian Aid, Crisis, NSPCC, SCIAF (Scotland) and Trocaire (N. Ireland).

As many as half of all UK adults in the UK don't have a Will. They have not made any legally valid provision for what they would like to happen after their death. This can lead to a great deal of stress and uncertainty, as well as financial hardship, for those left behind.

Even if you have a Will, it is important to keep it up to date. Experts recommend routinely reviewing a Will every three to five years, and making a new Will as soon as significant family changes occur.

*More details at <https://www.willaid.org.uk/register>. Please book early as solicitors tend to fill their appointments very quickly.*

Where two or three are gathered...

A lady was describing the small attendance at her local church. "We were so few last Sunday that when the vicar began 'Dearly beloved,' I blushed."



## High Days and Holy Days—2<sup>nd</sup> October - Guardian Angels, keeping an eye on us

The teaching of Jesus encourages us to believe in guardian angels. He once said, 'See that you do not look down on one of these little ones. For I tell you that their angels in heaven always see the face of my Father in heaven.' (Matthew 18:10)

The existence of angels was suggested in various Old Testament texts, Jesus mentioned them explicitly, and the early Christians accepted their existence and work (Acts 12:15).

In England, devotion to the angels, both in Anglo-Saxon times and later, was strong. In modern times, the great American evangelist Billy Graham has written an entire book on the existence and work of angels.

Alcuin described them as intercessors (in the 11th century Leofric Missal); Herbert of Losinga, bishop of Norwich (d 1119) specially praised them, and his contemporary, Reginald of Canterbury, wrote prayers in their honour.

Honorius Augustodunensis (d 1151) clarified the existing belief of the time by asserting that each human soul, when infused into the body, is entrusted to the particular care of a single angel, who protects both body and soul and offers prayers to God.

For many centuries Christendom was satisfied with the feast of St Michael (and all Angels), but the special feast of the Guardian Angels was introduced in Austria, Spain and Portugal in the 15th – 16th centuries. Guardian Angels were then seen as guardians of particular towns or regions, or of each individual. Pope Clement X made the feast day universal in 1607, fixing its date to 2<sup>nd</sup> October.



‘Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, bless the bed that I lie on’ - my grandma taught me that one. At least it meant I never forgot the names of the writers of the four Gospels. This month Luke, the writer of the third of them, has his feast day – 18<sup>th</sup> October.

He was, we learn from the letters of St Paul, a ‘physician’ - an educated man and probably the only one of the writers of the New Testament who was not a Jew. In modern terms, he was Turkish. Paul took him as one of his missionary team on a long journey around the Middle East, and they clearly became close friends. Under house arrest later in his life Paul could write, ‘only Luke is with me’.

However, it is his Gospel which has established him as a major figure in the history of the Christian Church. Mark’s Gospel may have more drama, Matthew’s more prophetic background and John’s a more profound sense of the mystery of the divine, but Luke offers us a Jesus who is utterly and believably real. This man turned no one away, reserved his harshest words for hypocrites and religious grandees, cared for the marginalised, the poor, the persecuted, the handicapped and the sinful. His Gospel is full of people we can recognise - indeed, in whom we can often recognise ourselves.

He was also a masterly storyteller. Try, for instance, the story of the Prodigal Son (Luke 15:11-32). Read it (this time) not as a sacred text but as a brilliant piece of story-telling: subtle repetitions (‘your son, this brother of yours’), believable characters, drama and profound emotion. There is the older brother, so cynical about his sibling’s alleged reformation, the ‘prodigal’ himself, so hesitant about throwing himself on his father’s mercy after the folly of his earlier behaviour, and there is the father, of course, abandoning the dignity of his role in the family and actually running to welcome his wretched son’s return.

There are more women in Luke’s Gospel than in any of the others, but also more poor people, more lepers, more ‘sinners’ and tax-collectors, more ‘outsiders’ who are shown to be ‘inside’ the love of Christ. This, for many of

*Dr Ruth Bancewicz, based at The Faraday Institute for Science and Religion in Cambridge, writes on the positive relationship between Science and Christian faith.*

## Continuing the Celebration!

On 6<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> October this year many people around the world will be celebrating the Jewish festival of Tabernacles. They will celebrate the Harvest, and also remember God bringing the Israelites out of Egypt and through 40 years in the desert.

The book of Deuteronomy contains a description of what Tabernacles was like back then. “Celebrate... for seven days. Be joyful... you, your sons and daughters, your male and female servants, and the Levites, the foreigners, the fatherless and the widows who live in your towns.”

These festivals were not just a celebration, but also an expression of gratitude to God: “celebrate the festival to the Lord your God...For the Lord your God will bless you in all your harvest and in all the work of your hands, and your joy will be complete.” Tabernacles was a proper holiday—2 whole days off normal work and seven days of feasting.



Farming looks very different today. Few of us have had to sweat long hours over crops, so we’re not as ready for a rest and a party as our ancestors were at this time of year. That might be even more the case in future, as the agri-tech revolution unfolds. For example, small autonomous tractors are already becoming available that do less damage to the soil and make better use of steep or oddly shaped fields.

Many arable farms already hire contractors to do the routine work with large specialist GPS-equipped machinery. In future years those people might find themselves using very different kinds of high-tech kit, acting more as land-management advisors, helping farmers to gather data and to find ways of improving soil quality, biodiversity and the water cycle.



I’m very grateful for the food that arrives on my shelves. Instead of worrying about whether or not we earned it, our modern-day Tabernacles or Harvest celebration could include ways of encouraging those involved in agriculture and developing new agricultural technologies, as well as enjoying how we can learn about and benefit from God’s creation through Science.

So, after you celebrate Harvest at church, why not follow up with a trip to a local farm this month? Why not learn from the ancient Israelites, and follow up with a meal together? It stands to reason that those of us who live in countries where food is plentiful and cheap could do with being more generous in our gratitude and giving. Should we throw better parties? Probably!



moments before. The resulting explosion could have easily taken their lives. But once again, by what they all believe was God's hand, they were spared.

"Reflecting on the events, Pastor Evgeniy was asked if he ever felt hatred or the desire for revenge. His answer was quiet, but unshakable.

*'No. I just understand. I understand the pain. I understand the fear. But if we don't bring light into this darkness, who will?'*

"For Evgeniy, war is not a reason to harden the heart—it's a call to deeper compassion. Even as drones fly overhead and homes crumble, he continues his ministry, bringing food, prayer, and humanity into places others flee from.

"This is what faith looks like in the ruins. It looks like a small group in bright vests, carrying hope into danger. It looks like a pastor who chooses grace over vengeance. And it looks like a God who protects, even when the bombs fall close."

Since the talks involving the US and a possible ceasefire, the local leaders testify that instead of de-escalation, they've experienced a significant rise in attacks and shelling.

Transform Europe Network (TEN) asks Christians in the UK:

Please pray for pastors and church teams, exhausted by serving many people on the frontline.

Pray for those who are confused, discouraged and angry, even with each other. Pray for healing and comfort from the Holy Spirit. Churches in Ukraine do all they can to reconcile local people, but it is getting harder and harder.

Mothers are afraid that their teenage sons will be taken away for conscription, which has become increasingly aggressive. This also causes men to run away from home and so many families are fractured and deeply stressed as the war grinds on.

*More details at: <https://ten-uk.org>*

*The feast day of John Henry Newman is 9<sup>th</sup> October. His great work 'The Dream of Gerontius' has become a very well-loved hymn...*

### **Praise to the Holiest in the height**

*By John Henry Newman*



Praise to the Holiest in the height,  
And in the depth be praise,  
In all His words most wonderful,  
Most sure in all His ways.

O loving wisdom of our God!  
When all was sin and shame,  
A second Adam to the fight  
And to the rescue came...

And in the garden secretly,  
And on the cross on high,  
Should teach His brethren, and inspire  
To suffer and to die.

Praise to the Holiest in the height,  
And in the depth be praise,  
In all His words most wonderful,  
Most sure in all His ways....

### ***And now here are a few SMILES ....***

#### **Dear Lord,**

*So far today, I am doing all right. I have not gossiped, lost my temper, been greedy, grumpy, nasty, selfish, or self-indulgent. I have not whined, complained, or cursed. I have not charged on my credit card or eaten any chocolate. However, I am going to get out of bed in a few minutes, and I will need a lot more help after that! Amen.*

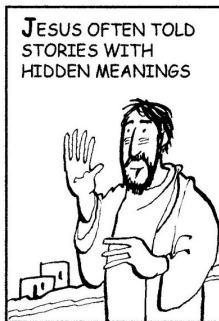
#### **Who is God?**

*During a youth service, the minister asked if anyone could tell her who God is. One youngster waved a hand, and ventured: "Isn't God the man who saves the King?"*

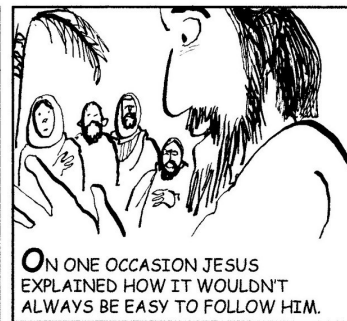
#### **Bye bye**

*Our lay preacher is from France and occasionally amuses us with using words slightly out of context. One morning, coming to the end of a long sermon, he solemnly assured us: "Just a few more words, and then I will definitely de cease."*

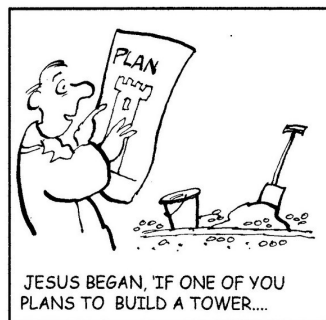
# The tale of the Tower Builder



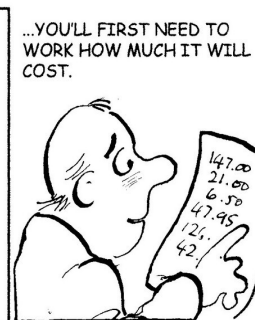
JESUS OFTEN TOLD STORIES WITH HIDDEN MEANINGS



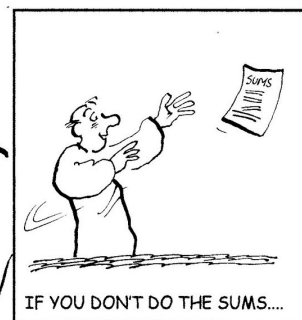
ON ONE OCCASION JESUS EXPLAINED HOW IT WOULDN'T ALWAYS BE EASY TO FOLLOW HIM.



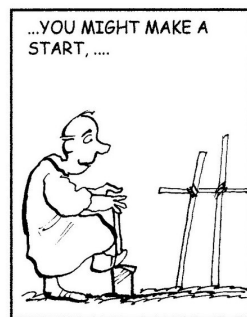
JESUS BEGAN, 'IF ONE OF YOU PLANS TO BUILD A TOWER....'



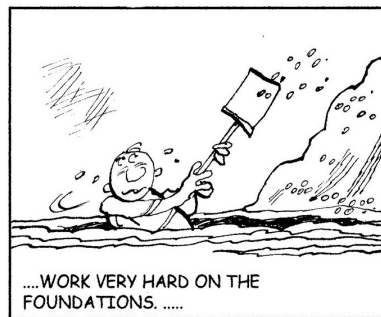
...YOU'LL FIRST NEED TO WORK HOW MUCH IT WILL COST.



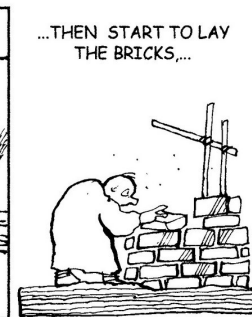
IF YOU DON'T DO THE SUMS....



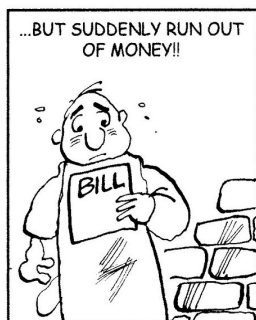
...YOU MIGHT MAKE A START, ....



....WORK VERY HARD ON THE FOUNDATIONS. ....



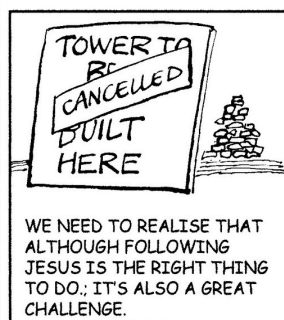
...THEN START TO LAY THE BRICKS....



...BUT SUDDENLY RUN OUT OF MONEY!!



THEN PEOPLE WILL LAUGH AT YOU!"



WE NEED TO REALISE THAT ALTHOUGH FOLLOWING JESUS IS THE RIGHT THING TO DO, IT'S ALSO A GREAT CHALLENGE.

## Looking at CHURCH, at home and worldwide

### Being a pastor in the Ukraine

Pastors in the Ukraine are continuing to minister to their beleaguered congregations, bringing comfort and hope into the most frightening and desperate war-torn situations.

So says Transform Europe Network, a Christian ministry which serves alongside indigenous Christians in Eastern Europe and the Balkans. In a recent report, it gives an update from one of its partners on the ground:

"Pastor Evgeniy serves in the war-torn Kherson region of south-eastern Ukraine. Since 2022, he and a small group of volunteers have brought food, comfort, and hope to people living amid the destruction.

"Evgeniy and his team recently came to a village that had been shelled. One family's home was reduced to rubble, and their vital documents were buried. The team arrived in bright, civilian clothing, deliberately chosen to identify them as volunteers, not military. As they began to pull back the rubble, they remained calm, focussing on their priority to help the family escape.

"40 minutes later, the volunteers heard and saw a reconnaissance drone circling above them. They couldn't tell who it belonged to, but its presence was ominous. Then came a different sound — sharper, lower, and closer. A small military drone was heading straight for them. In a moment that could only be described as divine intervention, the drone clipped a tree branch and crashed to the ground next to the team's car.

"The team cautiously approached the drone, still twitching and sparking. Minutes later, a second drone appeared. It aimed for the fallen drone, possibly to trigger an explosion by striking the first. But it too missed its target — crashing about six meters from the car, hitting a nearby concrete wall rather than the group. No one was injured.

"But the volunteers knew then that they were under attack. They gathered their tools, helped the family into the vehicle, and drove away. Just seconds after they left, a third drone struck — right where their car had been parked