

INSPIRE

**The monthly magazine
for the Parish of
St John The Baptist, Frome**



OCTOBER 2025

The parish of Frome Selwood
in the Frome Local Ministry Group

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October 2025

LEARN THE HISTORY AND MEANING OF CLERICAL DRESS

FASHIONABLE FAITH

*AN EXHIBITION OF VESTMENTS WITH
CONCLUDING TALK & CATWALK!*

ST JOHN'S CHURCH
FROME



SATURDAY 25TH OCTOBER

OPEN EXHIBITION: 10AM–2PM (FREE)

CONCLUDING EVENTS: 2PM (£6 ONLINE, £7 ON THE DAY)



See page 20 for more about vestments.

You can also reserve your place for the talk by speaking to Janet Caudwell

The Vicar's View

And we are back! Yes, after a two month hiatus we are pleased to report that the 'Inspire' magazine is back. But it's not just the magazine that is back: I am sure we are all thrilled to welcome back the choir after their summer holidays. The children are back in school, and the whole church is preparing for some pretty big events coming up in the next few months – it can all feel like a new and fresh start. At the same time, however, it can also feel like an end: the sun is setting increasingly quickly, the leaves are beginning to fall, and all of us are possibly thinking about the ways we can start to tie up the loose ends of the year, prepare the house and store up the domestic necessities before the frantic work of preparing for friends and family at Christmas truly begins.

I have felt this as I announced recently that precisely one year ago my call to St John's was announced. In some ways it feels like my first year of ministry here is winding up. In another, as I have begun to see new people come into the church and share their gifts, as I have got to know the established congregation and hear something of their desires and motivations, I feel like my ministry is only just beginning as we make plans and dream dreams that will take us into the future. It feels like society too has reached this autumnal stage of progress, I think throughout everyone there is a clear sense that the systems and institutions of the present just are not working and, no matter who or where you are, change is being talked about everywhere. The leaves of our current NHS, our social support, our councils, government and industry are all beginning to turn shades of orange and brown on the branch, and I for one wait to see, A) when they may fall, but also, B) will they die to bring new and better life come spring.

In such a time as this, the role and need of Christians has never been greater. Through out our media, our councils and our global politics, people are being asked to choose between their ideals and what is practically achievable, between the right and the expedient, between what our conscience dictates and what preceding generations have tied us into. In these spiralling narratives of loss and gain, only the

Christian has, through their life and faith, ideals that are not divorced from reality, a conscience that is not possession only for those who can afford it, a free pass on doing the right that is not offered to those who can plead limited resources or information. In Jesus Christ the harsh realities of the world and the dream-like hope of the Kingdom met on the cross, and the Kingdom conquered the world. In Jesus life, with all its complexities and aspirations, looked on the compromises, self-interests and violence, the myriad forms of death with which the human soul is increasingly limited and refused to bow down. In Jesus, love refused to be limited, diminished or destroyed.

What I am trying to say is: Christians, we are back! And we are back in a big way! While prince and politician implode in scandal and failure to live up to their self-imposed, unforgiving standards, only Christians can stand and say the sin is measured by the depths of God's mercy, not the depths of fallibility to which human nature can fall. While charismatic speakers try to inspire divisions within our humanity and society, all in the name of protecting our society, only Christians have a true reason and mission to unite all people and call them brother. While those in authority seem to suggest that the only way to survive is through servile bowing down to the forces and people beyond our control, only Christians can proclaim with confidence and hope that Christ, and Christ alone, is king.

The world now knows it is not ok – the world is looking, is eager for salvation. We are back – in people seeking faith to carry them through the oncoming winter, in people misusing the faith to try and hasten the winter through inciting mistrust and grievance, in people exploring the faith, because they realise they were made for the spring. But whatever the reason, the spotlight is on us, the people are eager, and we are back, and we who are reborn through Christmas, who look forward to Easter, must not let this opportunity to make a difference in the world go to waste. Good people, our world has reached the season of autumn. As Christians, will we go out and reap the harvest?

Yours in Christ,

Rev. Seamus Hargrave

Dear readers

Thank you to everyone who responded to our recent request for feedback about *Inspire*. Your suggestions have been extremely helpful, and you'll notice some changes in this edition as a result.

A fresh look The most obvious change is our new cover. We plan to update the photo with the seasons, bringing a fresh feel to the magazine every few months.

A new name? After 25 years as *Inspire*, we've been wondering whether it's time for a new title. We haven't yet found one that feels quite right – so we'd love to hear your ideas.

Format changes In response to feedback we'll now offer the emailed magazine in two formats: single-page view (ideal for smartphones) and double-page spreads (the traditional version).

Content changes

Another clear message from the feedback was to drop the puzzles. We've followed that advice, but if you miss them, let us know! We may occasionally include a sudoku or word search if there's demand. You also suggested a variety of new topics, and we hope to introduce some of them over the next few editions. These include:

- updates on the churchyard changes;
- church finances explained;
- parishioners' travel stories;
- cooking and baking recipes (don't worry, Rosemary – we're not asking you to return to this task!);
- articles in the spirit of the much-loved *Getting to Know You* series written by Maurice Dobbs until his death in 2019.

If you'd like to contribute to any of these ideas we'd be delighted to hear from you. Please do keep your thoughts coming in. We're open to new ideas—and to new contributors!

Thank you, as always, for your support. We look forward to hearing from you. With best wishes.

Mandy and Karolyn

From the Editor



Harvest Festival

When you gather in the harvest of your land, you must not completely harvest the corner of your field, and you must not gather up the gleanings of your harvest. You must leave them for the poor and the resident foreigner. I am the Lord your God.

[Leviticus 23:22]

Harvest 2025 was, for me, the year of six Harvest Festivals! As I write this I still have two more: St John's School in church and the final one at St Katharine's East Woodlands. It's a good job I enjoy Harvest Festivals!

Although these services were held in very different venues—the Dissenters' Chapel, St Andrew's Mells, St John's school hall, Marshfield Ward at the Community Hospital—there were the usual common elements.

We sang joyful Harvest hymns: usually *We plough the fields and scatter*, but *Cauliflowers fluffy* at the school service. There were displays of fruit and vegetables. But, of course, nowadays the predominant display is of food for the Food Bank.

I have frequently reflected that whereas in the past Harvest Festivals were all about giving thanks, and possibly showing off the largest marrow and the most beautiful flower arrangement, now the theme is: yes we give thanks, but we show our gratitude by acknowledging that others do not share our good fortune, and useful food staples are donated to the Food Bank.

Over the years I have taken so many Harvest Festivals that it is difficult to find a new angle and I was so grateful that the book selected for our October Book Group was *English Pastoral* by James Rebanks. I had read his other books, but as I read this on holiday I realised that his survey of English farming in the last sixty years or so was deeply personal to me. I was part of that story.

So that was my sermon sorted for all the services which need sermons. It ought really to have sorted out my Reflection for the week of St John's Church Harvest Festival, and I spent a long time carefully honing a precis of my sermon, only to find out much later that I had submitted the sermon in full instead (apologies to any of you who read it).

Rebanks quotes the Leviticus verse towards the end of his book, and it can be interpreted as an instruction to us all to be careful, thoughtful and unselfish; to consider those with whom we share the earth—the birds, insects and mammals, the trees, the hedges, the soil itself and all our common humanity.

Some memories from Harvest 2025:

- Singing *We plough the fields and scatter a capella*, by request, at the bedside of a patient in Marshfield Ward who was unable to join us for our service.
- The bread! Robin, who used to be at the Old Bake House in Cheap Street and who always supplied out Harvest Sheaf loaf, kept arriving at my house with cottage loaves and buns because he knew I was doing a series of Harvest Festivals. Rosemary took the Harvest Sheaf which appeared in St John's church and is keeping it in her freezer so that it can appear for the school service and at St Katharine's (there is lot of recycling going on this year!)
- The Sunflower Nursery, tiny children in hi-viz jackets, proudly bringing their gifts for the Food Bank.
- The really jolly Harvest Brunch in St John's following the service there – as always there was Feeding of the 5000 moment as everyone shared an eclectic variety of food—oh those puddings!

- Clambering up into the high wooden pulpit in the Dissenter's Chapel (rescued from Portway Methodist Chapel). This is one of the additional hazards of Readership which they don't tell you about in Reader training—extremely dodgy pulpits.
- The box of food for the foodbank generously and unexpectedly given by Marshfield Ward.

I rather like this prayer which I found this year. It acknowledges the fact that we *all* have Harvests in our lives (not necessarily involving combine harvesters).

Lord we give thanks for the changing of the seasons,
for autumn, for the fullness of harvest and the promise of rebirth and renewal,
for the fulfilment of work, for goals achieved, for targets met and projects delivered.

Help us to celebrate what we have achieved.

Give us discipline to review our efforts and the wisdom to learn from our mistakes.

Inspire us to plan ahead.

We ask this in the sure knowledge of the resurrection, the transformation of death to new life, and the building of your kingdom **Amen**

Janet Caudwell



Twinning celebrations

Sunday 14 September saw St John's giving a warm welcome to visitors from Château Gontier, Frome's twin town in the Mayenne. On 20th September 50 years ago the Mayors of Château Gontier and Frome signed a Twinning Document outside St John's to



cement the friendship in a more formal link, so it was fitting to mark the celebration of that event in the same place! But it was more than just a signing of a document – St John's was so welcoming of our French visitors – the organ played the Marseillaise, translations of Rosemary's most appropriate sermon on Pilgrimages were provided for the visitors, and the intercessions and other prayers were also in French – thanks to the help of Bishop Rob Martin.

In all the speeches reference was made to the friendship, understanding and common aspirations of our two countries – in spite of the Brexit hiccup! As Peter Bardgett said in his speech of 50 years ago, "Twinning is not really about building and councils and mayors but about people." When he ended his speech with "May I wish success to the Twinning of our two towns in the years to come", I wonder if he envisaged a 50-year link!

On that occasion the Mayor of Château Gontier outlined the history of our two countries when relations have not always been happy – quite brutal in fact. Perhaps that gives us some hope for the future – albeit some way off. If France and Britain can be friends after such a turbulent history, perhaps there is hope in Ukraine and Palestine – however long it takes.

Finally may I, personally and on behalf of the Twinning Association, thank Rev Seamus for his enthusiastic support of the event, for



organising such a joyful and memorable event, ensuring St John's fulfils its central roles in the town of Frome, and to all of you who supported him and gave us such a happy occasion.

Dinah Bardgett



St John's Church Autumn Fair

Saturday 18th October

10am to 2pm

Cakes & Refreshments – Tombola & Raffle

Books, Jewellery, Crafts – Bric-a-brac & Toys

Donations of all goods would be very welcome.

In advance of the day please put donations behind the

South Porch curtain or bring in on Friday 17th October.

Please contact Mandy (467828) if you would like us to collect your donations.

Please bring perishable items in on the morning of the sale.

And do please support us on the day!



Procedure for responding to safeguarding concerns or allegations

Eds: Safeguarding is of great importance, and the following is the procedure approved by the PCC at their last meeting.

- ♦ Safeguarding is the highest priority at Frome St John the Baptist Church. Safeguarding refers to the range of plans and activities that are put in place to protect children and adults who may be vulnerable to abuse and neglect from being exploited or harmed.
- ♦ The PCC has appointed Mr Steve Smith as the Parish Safeguarding Officer.
- ♦ If you have any safeguarding concerns relating to an individual, or a person has confided in you about abuse, contact Steve Smith in the first instance, before you discuss it with anyone else. His telephone number is 07548 250805 or email: smith.steve.71@icloud.com. Do this as soon as possible and within 24 hours.
- ♦ Do not make any allegations to anyone else or confront an individual.
- ♦ If you are unable to get in contact with Steve, or the allegation relates to him, contact the Vicar on 01373 433933 or rev.seamushargrave@stjohnsfrome.com

Approved by St John's PCC, 17 June 2025



Open Morning
Wednesday 15th October
9.15am to 10.30am

Our church school is delighted to open its doors to parents looking for Reception places for September 2026

Email the office to book a space
01373 462251
office @stjohns frome.co.uk

Bulb planting

The Gardening team are planning to plant daffodil bulbs in the churchyard in October. Tuesday 14th October 10am-12 noon. If raining then Tuesday 21st October same time. Tools provided. Come and join Tony, Lydia, Kathryn and Morag in beautifying God's Acre. All very welcome.



Prayers for the Dead

November is the month set aside for prayer and remembrance of the departed. On November 2nd both Morning Eucharist and Evening Prayer will be set aside to pray for the departed. Anyone wishing a particular person to be remembered is invited to take home a paper leaf (or leaves) and write the names of the deceased on them. Please bring them with you to the Morning Eucharist.

Christmas Lunch

Saturday December 13th

Bennett Centre

12.00 for 12.30pm

2 course meal *

Tea & Coffee

***Vegetarian option**



Tickets £15 (£10 for a child under 10)

available from Peter Connew 01373 474158,
 bennettbooking1@gmail.com or from Mandy or Peter in church



Notes from the PCC, September 2025

The PCC (Parochial Church Council) met on 17 September. The main topics discussed were these:

Garden plans for churchyard: Lydia Lloyd from the gardening group introduced the group's proposals for the north churchyard; the intention was to make the area attractive to people seeking quiet, and to include plants local to Somerset, including herbs. Liaison was needed with Somerset Council, which is in charge of management of the closed churchyard, and with the Diocese.

Bells: There was a discussion about possible options for work on the bells, following a meeting with the Diocesan Tower adviser. The works would be expensive, but the key intention was to make the current (very difficult) set of bells easier for ringers to manage.

Building issues: Several building and repair issues were discussed, including the Ken Chapel reredos, rainwater getting into the north aisle and the glazed west doors. Re the statue of Our Lady in the Lady Chapel, a vote of the congregation had been held after the Sunday morning service on 17 August, with the preferred option being a new floor plinth for the statue – funding would be needed.

Archdeacon's Visit: Plans were being finalised for 19 and 21 October.

Church Archives: Progress on sorting out the church records, with help from Frome Museum, was discussed.

Risk Register: An updated risk register was approved and a revised Disaster Response Plan noted.

Complaints Policy: A new formal Complaints Policy was approved.

Next meeting: the next PCC would be on 19 November.

Angela Pater, PCC Secretary.

Archdeacon's Visitation

On Sunday 19th October our Archdeacon, the Venerable Anne Gell, will preside and preach at Holy Eucharist.

She wants to meet as many people from the church as possible and hear their thoughts on the parish and diocese, so do, please, attend if you can.

Shoebbox Appeal 2025



We're delighted that St John's will be taking part in this year's Shoebbox Appeal run by *House of Opportunity* in Salisbury. The filled shoeboxes will be delivered to people in need across South-Eastern Europe.

Leaflets with full details on how to fill a shoebox will be available in church soon, and boxes can be made up for children (from birth to 15 years) and for adults. A list of suggested donation items will also be displayed in church. There are several ways to take part:

- Make up boxes yourselves with friends and family and bring the completed boxes into church for collection.
- Join in activity workshops when we will be decorating boxes and filling several boxes as a group donation —look out for the dates on the weekly sheet.
- Donate empty shoeboxes, decorative wrapping paper and small gifts to go in the group boxes.

All donations and completed shoeboxes should be brought to church by **Sunday 23rd November**. The charity will collect the boxes on Monday 24th November. Any questions, please contact me at compassrose@live.co.uk.

Alison Henderson

Calling all crafters!



It's that time of year again! Last year at our December mini-market the Craft group raised over £250 towards developing our Cosy Corner, which has been very successful in providing an area for families. This year, we intend to do something similar, and proceeds will go to maintaining the Corner and the development of the Church Garden. We would really value your help in this. We meet in the church on alternate Thursdays, 2pm to 4pm. Everyone welcome. For further details please contact Judith on 01373 465312 or turn up for one of our meetings. Next one 16th October.

Links in a Golden Chain 14

Katherine of Alexandria

Many of us will have childhood memories of the story of this courageous woman from the experience of the catherine-wheel in firework displays and the explanation of its name from her story of martyrdom in the early days of the church.



The name is spelt in English with either a C or a K but the root of the name is the Greek word *kathara*, meaning clear or pure. We derive the word cathartic from this. Her story embodies a clearness of thought and purity of commitment to her Christian faith. We have to say that the gruesome details of her death were embellished over time and depicted in art over centuries. The core of the story is that she was an intelligent and beautiful woman of a noble family who challenged the emperor Maxentius over the issue of idol worship, and defeated the arguments of philosophers who attempted to maintain the emperor's stance. He demanded that she marry him, and on her refusal to do this and to deny her faith she was tortured and then executed.

The legend varies in detail but it is thought that she did not die on a wheel. She was tortured on the spiked wheel that we may have seen depicted in paintings. It allegedly fell to pieces, and she was not harmed. Soldiers who witnessed this were converted, but were executed for this action. Her actual martyrdom was accomplished by her beheading. Other miraculous occurrence followed her death which was followed by her being carried by angels to the desert of Mount Sinai, where a monastery was later established, and remains there to this day.

These legends illustrate the power of sensational narrative to take hold in communities. This has often assured the remembrance of significant and heroic acts. We need to take care to focus on the essence of Katherine's commitment to the faith and not to be

distracted by the more theatrical aspects of the story. We might also learn a lesson relevant to our own times as we may struggle to gain clarity over social and political issues through the fog of alarmist or sensational reports in the media.

Katherine of Alexandria, with her name implying clarity of purpose and purity of life, has given inspiration to parents through the ages in the naming of daughters. Apart from the Princess of Wales, a living example of public service, there have been other Christian saints who bear the name. The church remembers Katherine of Bologna, Katherine of Genoa, Katherine of Siena, Katherine Labouré, and Katherine dei Ricci. More of them in later contributions!

To any of you who bear the name you may rejoice in sharing it with so many heroic women who have witnessed to Christ and served his people.

Kevin Tingay

Frome RBL coach trip to the National Memorial Arboretum

Wednesday 15th October

Leave from Memorial Theatre at 08.30

Returning to Frome at approx 20.30

£25 per person. Entry to the Arboretum is free.



150 acres of beautiful woodland and gardens
and over 400 memorials

To book, contact Jane Norris by Sunday 5th October:

jane.norris9@gmail.com 077762 08531

News from other churches

St Katharine's, East Woodlands

Sunday 5 October - 11.15am Morning Service with Harvest Festival

Donated produce will be sold after the service and the balance donated locally.

Sunday, 19th October at 11.15 am Holy Communion, including the baptism of Olivia. We join her parents Helena and Simon and proud grandpa Bill Rendall in this lovely family occasion.

Tuesday, 28th October at 4.00 pm Evening Prayers with Revd Jo.

East Woodlands Village Hall

Cream Teas: The total amount raised was £2,400, to be shared between the church and the Village Hall. What a magnificent result! Hats off to Vivienne Kenney and the team of volunteers.

Pop up Pub: 7pm onwards Fri 3rd October and Fri 7th November.

The Woodlanders Variety Show: Mon 6th – Fri 10th October at 7.45pm and Sat 11th October Matinee at 2.00pm.

Box Office: 07510 919573. Seating at tables and chairs (not in rows), licensed bar, raffle. www.thewoodlanders.biz

Coffee Morning at the Village Hall: Tuesday 21st October 10.30am to 12 noon. Raffle. Do please join us. **Pam Chapman**



A musical evening with
LAST WEDNESDAY

Choral concert

Saturday 8th November
6.30pm for 7pm start

St Giles Church, Leigh on Mendip BA3 5QJ

includes William Byrd, Mass for three Voices and selections from Tallis, Palestrina and other Christmas motets



Tickets £10 including seasonal snacks
tinyurl.com/folc2025
Dave Mattick 01373 812734
or by email: folcleigh@gmail.com



Learn to Play Bridge?

If you've ever thought about learning how to play Bridge or returning to the game after years away from it, Frome Bridge Club's forthcoming teaching programme could be what you're looking for.

Friendly lessons for beginners, improvers and intermediate level bridge players will get underway at the club's Frome HQ in the first week of October, at a cost of just £3 per week. The weekly sessions on Thursday mornings or Tuesday evenings are aimed at all ages and levels and provide a comprehensive introduction to the game for those who've never played it before, as well as top-up lessons for those with some previous knowledge. No card game experience is required, and the lessons – including play practice – are an opportunity to meet new people whilst acquiring a skill that provides a good workout for the brain.

Frome Bridge Club is affiliated to the English Bridge Union and those delivering the lessons are all experienced bridge players. Each week, some 50+ beginners and more experienced players travel from 20-plus miles around Frome to join the lessons for what is a very social, as well as educational, occasion. Coffee, tea and biscuits are provided.

The lessons take place in the Wesley Methodist Church, Wesley Slope, Frome, BA11 1HA. For more information, please contact: **John Perry** on **01373 467508** / jp007g9418@blueyonder.co.uk or **Elaine Rutland** on **07809 163705** and/or visit: www.bridgewebs.com/frome

Frome Bridge Club

Friendly lessons and play for all standards

Beginners, improvers and returners to the game all welcome

Teaching sessions Tuesday evenings and Thursday mornings

Competitive play Monday evenings
Just £3 per session

Contact:

John 01373 467508
Elaine 07809 163705

www.bridgewebs.com/frome

SERVICES at ST JOHN's – OCTOBER 2025

Regular weekly services in October

Sundays

8.45am Online service via Zoom – contact admin for link & code

10.00am Choral Eucharist*

* Sun 19 Oct Preacher Ven. Anne Gell

* Sun 26 Oct Preacher Kate Mayo

*Sun 2 Nov Requiem Mass – All Souls Day

5.00pm Evening worship in the Lady Chapel:

Week 1: Evening Prayer

Week 2: Benediction and Evening Prayer

Week 3: Come and Sing Evensong

Week 4: Holy Hour

Week 5: Flexible Fifth

Mondays

8.45am Morning Prayer in the Ken Chapel

Fridays

12.30pm Lunchtime Eucharist in the Lady Chapel

Saturdays

5.00pm Evening Eucharist in the Lady Chapel

Additional services in October & early November

Sat 18 October 9.00am Mattins – St Luke

Tues 28 October 12.30pm Eucharist – SS Simon and Jude

Sat 1 November 5pm Eucharist – All Saints Day

Sun 2 November 4pm Service with Reading of Names followed by Compline

DIARY DATES – OCTOBER 2025

October

Thurs	2	2pm-4pm	Craft & Conversation
Fri	3	2pm	Visiting bellringers
Sat	4	9am	United Prayer at St John's Reader Day in Wells
Sun	5	11.15 to 2pm	Cafe and Mini-market
Mon	6	7pm	St John's Women's Group
Tue	7	7pm	Confirmation class (final session)
Wed	8	9.15am	Selwood welcome service
Sat	11	10.30am	Intercessions team meets
Tue	14	10am	Bulb planting in churchyard
Tue	14	7pm	Standing committee
Thurs	16	2pm-4pm	Craft & Conversation
Sat	18	10am-2pm	Autumn Fair
Sun	19	10am	Archdeacon visit
Tue	21	Afternoon	Archdeacon visit
Sat	25	10am to 2pm	'Fashionable Faith' Display, Talk & Show
Sun	26		Clocks go back
Tue	28	11am	Julian meeting
Thurs	30	2pm-4pm	Craft & Conversation
Fri	31	2pm	Hospital Service

November

Sat	1	9am	United Prayer at St John's
Sun	2	11.15 to 2pm	Cafe and Mini-market

Second Saturday volunteer team meetings

Next one: Sat 11 October at 10.30am

Intercessions team meets

St John's Café and Mini Market – 11.15am to 2pm

First Sunday of the month:

Sunday 5th October; Sunday 2nd November



Vestments

Fashion and Faith – two words that, in a number of minds, might seem axiomatically opposed. Jesus, in the gospels, seemed to have little time for textile finery: “Everything [the pharisees] do is done to attract attention, like wearing broader headbands and longer tassels.” (Matt 23:5). In

commanding his disciples to go out and evangelise, he says “Take no haversack, no sandals” (Luke 10:4), and in another place he commands them to sell their cloaks, which means there go my kitten heels and silk copes. This theme has run through Christianity: many people have seen Christian faith at odds with their dress, whether it is the moralising friars who offered indulgences to young children to follow women wearing the Hennin and shout insults, all the while decorating their own habits and vestments, it should be said, or the puritans whose buckled hats and sober black and white dress became so distinctive in Colonial England as the puritans tried to demonstrate the folly of using fashion to express individuality or religious identity.

It's interesting that, in the wider context of the bible, fashion gets a significant amount of consideration: Joseph is given his technicoloured dream coat; God, in Exodus, commands Moses to make Aaron and his priests vestments “to give dignity and magnificence”; Exodus dedicates a surprising amount of thought to the robes that priests should wear, almost as though this narrative of freedom should show outwardly as well and inwardly. In Revelation there seems to be no end of talk about the “white robes” of the saints paradoxically “washed white in the blood of the lamb”. (Rev:7:4) On the whole, the bible seems to accept distinctions in dress, not only as an inevitable human trait, but as a way of witnessing to the world. St John the Baptist witnesses to his role in the narrative of salvation by wearing a shirt of camel hair (Matt 3:4); people recognise the sincerity of his message by his outward wearing clothing as well as inward life. Jesus, too, dressed distinctively to witness to his unique mission: at the crucifixion his seamless garment (Jn:19:22) was considered so

noteworthy and valuable that the Roman soldiers cast lots to decide who should own it. It seems hard to suggest, then, that Jesus was opposed to people wearing their faith on their sleeve, as it were. Jesus’s own criticism of the Pharisees seems less aimed at the wearing of special robes themselves, and more at not doing the moral and religious work to justify them. He will later refer to them as “marble tombs” – pretty on the outside but corrupt on the inside. That is where the distinction lies – not that Christians shouldn’t look distinctive but that those who dress as Christians should be prepared to live as Christians; those who wear the cross should be prepared to carry it also.

Most early Christians, when they met together for worship, would have worn the traditional vestments of the synagogue. Then as the Church and Synagogue diverged, and the Church encountered new cultures, and developed different systems of symbols and meanings, the vestments slowly changed and developed, keeping their feet rooted in the tomes and fashion of the first century, but developing to witness the new and evolving faith of Christianity. It should be noted that, whilst the Reformation raged long and hard about vestments, and the dress of ministers within the Anglican Church, there was never any real question that priests – in the streets or at the altar – dress distinctively from society; the question was simply what the distinctive dress should look like. There was a desire for greater sobriety and to visually witness to the ‘Reform’ that had taken place, by a shake-up of the expected visuals of the Church. There remained, however, a constant desire to have, in the present world, a visible reminder to the people, not just of a different world, with different values and pace but also a quick and easy way to identify a community servant, much as you might want to identify easily and quickly a doctor or a policeman. A few days ago I watched the funeral of a very famous non-conformist American. As I watched the funeral taking place in a football stadium, and watched the pastors in their tailored suits, all talking in ways that seemed half self-promotion, half political rally, no cross on clothes or stage, no image to point beyond the present, I realised, that without the visual, it is easy for

Christianity to slip into being just an extension of the systems and institutions that rule this world and keep us chained to the mundane. I give thanks for vestments, for rituals, for arcane symbols. They stop our worship being colonised by politics, by self-centredness, and force us to leave the mediocrity of our present and for a second dwell in heaven, to imagine a world, unlike our own, where Jesus is king and the Gospel is law. Together, they make visible the world we one day hope to join and open a space for us, where the powers of the present world mean nothing, and the reign of Christ can inspire us.

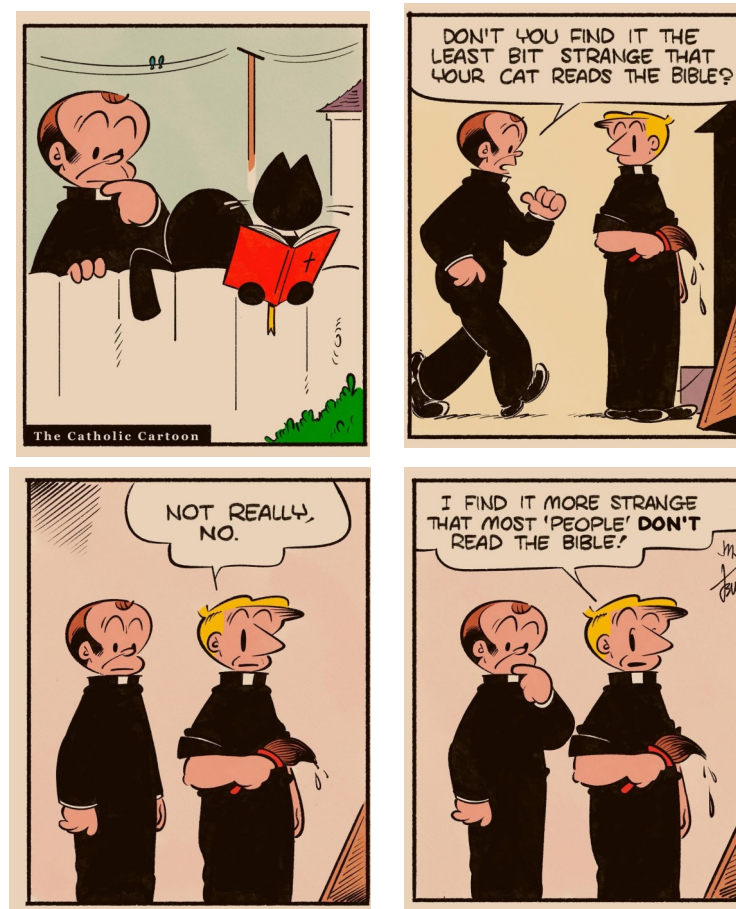
Christians are called to be witnesses to the world of a life and truth beyond the mundane, to be the Church visible, to make Christ visible in the places where indifference or ignorance might keep him invisible. Priests in their uncompromising commitment to slimming black, their donning of forgiving, yet ill-fitting robes, and general use of clothing items centuries behind the modern trend do this in a very visible way, but all Christians too can share in this visible witness in smaller ways: a simple cross around the neck, a religious medal on a jacket or cardigan, silently praying the rosary as you walk down a street. All these can, at times, speak subtly and more profoundly to the wearers' underlying faith and hope than any numbers of words. Perhaps a person seeing your cross will give added depth to the conversation and give them confidence to ask you about Jesus and your faith, as well as reminding you of the person you are called to be in the world. It also, increasingly importantly, claims the cross, in a world where the cross can increasingly be used politically and falsely, for its intended purpose of lighting the world, giving hope to others and expressing the depths of God's love.

One thing you will have probably gathered from your time in St John's is that we do rather like dressing up. Indeed, since my arrival, you might feel that the dressing up is now at a level that is rivalling the catwalks of Milan! And yet, for all the glamour, these things are there to speak of something deeper; each item of the St John's and the wider clerical wardrobe has a hidden history of how it evolved, what it means and how it roots our worship and life in the Church catholic with its 2000 years of tradition and history.

If you would like to learn more about the different robes of St John's and Christian ministry, and have fun doing it, then St John's will be hosting a day called 'Fashionable Faith', on Saturday 25th October, with an open exhibition between 10am and 2pm, and a talk and catwalk at 2pm which will be ticketed. Tickets cost £6 online or by reserving your place with Janet Caudwell in advance, or £7 on the door on the day. To book online use this QR code or follow this link: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/fashionable-faith-tickets-1679661335269>



**Yours in Christ,
Rev. Seamus Hargrave**



Falmouth Church

Dedicated to King Charles the Martyr (KCM)

Few English churches are dedicated to a king of England: Falmouth has one. Before 1540 there were few people in Falmouth, but Henry VIII built forts to guard the entrance to Carrick Roads: Pendennis and St Mawes Castle. During the Civil War of 1642-1646, Pendennis Castle was the last place to surrender to Cromwell's forces, and it was from Pendennis that the future Charles II fled to France, promising 'to build a chapel for public worship, and when the war ceases, to send an able and conscientious chaplain to preach the word of God'.

So in 1665, after the restoration, a church was built about a mile from Pendennis and dedicated to Charles I King and Martyr. It then became one of the most altered parish churches in England, as Falmouth grew from a tiny hamlet to the bustling port and tourist destination it is today. Originally, the building was only 66 feet square. In the 1680s and 1690s a chancel was built at the east end, galleries constructed and the lowest part of the tower built. In 1703, the first organ was installed. In 1738, the tower was raised and acquired a 12-hundredweight bell (later replaced by an 8-bell carillon).

By 1813, the population had grown to over 7,000, so the chancel was enlarged, the church lengthened to the east by nearly a third, and the chancel was then rebuilt. The fabric slowly got worse during the 19th century, and in 1896 another major reconstruction began. The three pitched roofs and the galleries were removed and the walls were raised to allow three new barred ceilings with ornamental plaster-work to be installed. Subsequent improvements included a new organ chamber in 1915. Electric lighting was introduced in 1907 and in 1936 a baptistry formed.

The Rev. William John Coope was rector from 1838 to 1869. He was the pioneer of Tractarianism in Cornwall, in almost the same way as Vicar Bennett changed the churchmanship and structure of St John's in Frome. When studying at Oxford Coope had been greatly influenced by the Oxford



Movement. When he came to Falmouth the church was in a poor state of repair. He introduced changes in ritual in accordance with Tractarian ideas. Coope was the author of many publications which emphasised the catholicity of the Church of England. The church was much improved during his time: there were new vestries, a north porch, stained glass east window and a new reredos and pulpit. There was initially some opposition to Coope's practices but this was eventually overcome.

I was able to visit the church as it is today during a recent short break in Cornwall. I found a pretty thriving community where the musical tradition has recently been revived and a new organ installed. The church has also renovated a nearby building as a modern church hall, used for all sorts of community activities.

Music forms an important part of the outreach of the church today. There is an excellent acoustic, and regular concerts are held. During August, when I was there, it hosted the Grand Finale of the Enys chamber music festival (16 young musicians playing strings, harp, woodwind and French horn in various combinations.) For most of the rest of the year there are regular concerts ranging from organ recitals, folk groups, to flamenco guitar, string trios and Sea Shanties. The present organ is the 4th since 1703: it is by Lance Foy of Truro and is suitably grand with three manuals, a pedal organ and 51 speaking stops with a full complement of couplers and pistons.

There are three choirs: the KCM choir that sings at church services: the KCM Singers, for those who can't come every week, who sing madrigals, church music and gospel songs, and The Following Seas, who, as befits a port, sing Sea Shanties: not always easy when arranged for double choir in eight parts.

There are only five other churches dedicated to King Charles I in England, one each in Kent, Suffolk, Derbyshire, Hertfordshire and Shropshire. The Church of England deleted the feast day in 1859 but restored it, although not as a red-letter day (ie a more important day), in the 20th century.

As a consequence of the Black Lives Matter movement and following the toppling of the Colston statue and the renaming of the Colston Hall

in Bristol, many people sought to remove all references to slave traders from public view. Falmouth Church has a large memorial to Thomas Corker, a 17th century slave trader. This has caused a number of problems. Many want the memorial destroyed; some want it moved:



others covered up: there are practical difficulties with each solution and a good deal of heat has been generated by people with opposing views on this matter.

Nothing has yet been decided with the latest being a referral to an eminent historian of the slave trade with experience of similar dilemmas for her solution. I wonder if St John's may be fortunate that we have no such scandals in our history. Perhaps the solution is the one I found in my travels in Zanzibar, where the Anglican Cathedral was built on the former slave market. Create a monument to the slaves themselves.

Chris Lewis

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A Woman Like Alice:

Someone to be remembered

Alice's family was like Jane Austen's: several hundred years of upper middle class living in the South of England, generally attending private schools. They usually chose Oxford as their university, although the medical side preferred The London Hospital in Whitechapel. They tended to marry cousins, as there were not many other suitable families around to find partners. This led to a quite narrow gene pool, which meant that many of them grew up to be very eccentric.

On the male side there were lots of clergymen, some doctors, a few lawyers, a headmaster who had played rugby for Scotland; I recall one stockbroker. The family was generally non-militaristic, but in wartime they became staunch patriots and joined the colours. In the First World War, four brothers died from the same family, leaving the one remaining sister, Birdie, alone, inheriting all her parents' property and money but condemned to lifelong spinsterhood, as all her male friends had been killed. In this way she was just like Jane's sister Cassandra, whose fiancé died of fever when working as a chaplain in the West Indies during the Napoleonic wars.

Alice was born early in the 20th century. Her parents were cousins, her father a doctor in a small town near Portsmouth, her mother an eccentric lady whose main role in life was to have three children - two boys before Alice - and to see to the flowers in the local church. The two brothers went to public school, then Oxford, then studied for the priesthood at Mirfield. Alice went to St Swithun's school in Winchester, but her father died suddenly, the money ran out, and Alice stayed at home with her education threatened.

Her headmistress attended the funeral, and having found out there was no family money, volunteered not only to pay Alice's fees herself, but to put her up in a spare room in her house. After all, she said, Alice stands a very good chance of going to Oxford. She was right: after three years of staying with the head, Alice won a scholarship to Lady



Margaret Hall to study history. A full grant was arranged on the understanding that Alice became a teacher after she graduated. At Oxford Alice rubbed shoulders with people like Hugh Gaitskell, later leader of the Labour Party, and Ivor Bulmer-Thomas, a minister in Atlee's 1945 government. She excelled, not only in her studies but also on the athletic field; she became captain of the university hockey team, as well as playing lacrosse for Oxford, ending as a double blue. Meanwhile her clergy brothers both chose unusual ministries, the elder running a poor riverside parish in London and the younger working as a miner in Kent, as well as being a chaplain to the Kent coal industry.

Alice now moved to teach in a private girls' school in SE London, where she made a great number of life-long friends, but her heart wasn't in it. Looking to do something more caring she became a social worker. In those days, social workers tended to be from upper class families prepared to work in the slums. There was little funding: money was raised through the social worker trying to tap her friends/relations/rich people in general for money. Alice's main job was to write letters explaining how, for example, a particular disadvantaged family in, say, Rotherhithe needed money to buy their children shoes so that they could go to school. She was only moderately successful at this and, meeting a cousin who was a doctor, she found that as a graduate, she could re-train to be a nurse in just a few months and then get a job at The London Hospital. This was what she had been waiting for: Alice soon became the terror of the wards, got promoted to sister and then acting matron by the beginning of the war. Doctors, nurses and patients did what she said: she and everyone else felt she had found her niche and would rise quickly to become matron of a large London hospital. Which is why everyone was so surprised by what happened next.

At the start of 1941, the Germans continued to bomb the industrial area around The London Hospital, where Alice worked. The blackout of all buildings was essential and Alice was insistent on the heavy curtains being tightly drawn. But a young male warden, part of the Friends Ambulance Unit, noticed a small light and came in to tell the

nurses off. Alice was furious: she took it out on him; he was insistent; the curtains were redrawn. More argument followed. The nurses were astonished to hear Alice invite him to come back any time to check all was well. He did: every night for two weeks. By that time, he and Alice were firmly in love, never mind he was ten years younger than her, from the North and a conscientious objector.

Alice gave in her notice. They were soon married at the Friends Meeting House in Charing Cross Road and found a flat near London Bridge Station. Four children followed, despite Alice being over 40. She never nursed again, but two of her children followed her into nursing. After the war, her husband returned to his work as a journalist but later became a parish priest. Alice's older brother, despite the fact that his church had been destroyed in the blitz, stayed on, unpaid, in his vicarage: her younger brother changed to become a Catholic priest, claiming his Mirfield training was much better than that from the English College in Rome.

For much of her life Alice was against women priests, but she changed her mind later and toyed with the idea herself. She took a theological diploma in her 70s but died before the first women's ordination. After her death her brother said she would have made a better bishop than those he had worked under, both catholic and protestant.

Chris Lewis




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Inspired to Read

***The Children of Men* by P.D. James**

At our September meeting the book group discussed science-fiction, and we all brought along books we had read from this genre. I think I'm right in saying that none of us is a particularly avid reader of sci-fi, and it was an interesting exercise to choose books and then explore common ground between them. There was a wide range of books brought to the table, prompting the first question of the evening: Just what is meant by "Sci-fi"? When we first considered the topic I think many of us had remembered reading books by John Wyndham or H.G. Wells when we were younger, but just a little research revealed a vast array of authors and books that are classified as "sci-fi", including some quite surprising ones. You only have to walk into a bookshop or the library to see whole sections devoted to sci-fi, often coupled with fantasy. When I was trying to choose what to read I looked on the internet and found a 'Penguin/Random House' list of the best science fiction books (<https://www.penguinrandomhouse.com/the-read-down/best-sci-fi-books>) at the top of which was George Orwell's *1984* and went on to include books by Margaret Atwood, Douglas Adams and Matt Haig, some of which I had previously read, but hadn't really thought of as sci-fi. Further research led me to the Wikipedia page, only to read that: *science fiction's precise definition has long been disputed among authors, critics, scholars, and readers.*

Among the books brought to the meeting were: John Wyndham: *The Day of the Triffids* – "He's a good writer"; Robert Harris: *The Second Sleep* – the writer of historical fiction turning his attention to a future in which civilisation as we know it has broken down; China Miéville's *The City and the City*, "weird fiction – it sort of gets better"; and Lois Lowry's *The Giver* – a book aimed at young adults in which an apparently utopian society turns out to be rather different!

A common theme running through several books that I explored was that of a future, post apocalypse world in which the dominant power



lay in some kind of religious belief; where memories of past civilisation were revered and preserved by a quasi-religious body. But probably the most disturbing books were those which depicted a future that was only too plausible given the current state of world affairs.

I have chosen to review a book written by P.D. James, an author better-known for her murder mysteries. *The Children of Men* was published in 1992, but set in 2021 – futuristic at its time of publication, but now a disturbing picture of what might happen if current trends of falling birth-rates were to continue unabated. The scene is set in the opening paragraph: *Early this morning, 1 January 2021, ... the last human being to be born on earth was killed in a pub brawl ... aged twenty-five years, two months and twelve days.* What would happen if the global human population suddenly became infertile? P.D. James creates a horribly believable world where there are no young people: empty schools and universities, an arrogant and out of control generation of 25 year-old ‘omegas’ who can see no point in preserving the niceties of civilisation. As the population dwindles, the country’s infrastructure crumbles, law and order breaks down and the elderly and infirm have become such a burden on the remaining population that they are forced into mass suicides. And then: a miracle – a woman is found to be pregnant and the second half of the book describes the efforts made by her friends to protect her and ensure the safe birth of her child. I won’t say any more, except that the final section was decidedly allegorical. It wasn’t a comfortable read, but I found myself gripped by the unfolding story, and would recommend it to anyone who wanted to try some dystopian fiction.

When we next meet, at the beginning of October we will be discussing a very different book, *English Pastoral* by James Rebanks, a book I realise that I reviewed for this column back in 2022. I am looking forward to discussing it with the other members of the book group; I hope it makes as much impact on them as it did on me!

Our plans for November have changed as we realise that in her anniversary year we ought to do something to commemorate Jane

Austen, so our meeting on 5th November will be “All things Austen”. If you have an interest in books and would like to join the group, please get in touch with Rosemary: rosemarymccormick@hotmail.com.

Rosemary McCormick

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ACROSS: 1, Amazed. 4, Others. 8, Peter. 9, Zebedee. 10, Accuser. 11, Endue. 12, Scripture. 17, Shrub. 19, Abashed. 21, Foolish. 22, Upset. 23, Loathe. 24, Lesser.
 DOWN: 1, Appeal. 2, Attacks. 3, Earns. 5, Tableau. 6, Ended. 7, Shekel. 9, Zarephath. 13, Rubbish. 14, Ephesus. 15, Useful. 16, Editor. 18, Rhoda. 20, Abuse.

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Printer: Karolyn Curle

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			Readers	Prayers	Sidespersons	Chalice
Sunday 5 October Sixteenth after Trinity	8.45am Zoom Service <u>10.00am Holy Communion</u>	Habakkuk 1.1-5; 2.1-4 Psalm 37. 1-9 2 Timothy 1.1-14 Luke 17.5-10	N McCormick B Essex	Rev Seamus	C Holland K Gurr B Essex	J Davies
Sunday 12 October Seventeenth after Trinity	8.45am Zoom Service <u>10.00am Holy Communion</u>	2 Kings 5.1-3, 7-15c Psalm 111 2 Timothy 2.8-15 Luke 17.11-19	C Harrison C Holland	J Caudwell	J Bruges M Veakins	C Holland
Sunday 19 October Eighteenth after Trinity	8.45am Zoom Service <u>10.00am Holy Communion</u>	Genesis 32.22-31 Psalm 121 2 Timothy 3.14-4.5 Luke 18.1-8	J Arnall-Culliford A Barr-Sim	J Bruges	C Holland J Davies	A Crook
Sunday 26 October Nineteenth after Trinity	8.45am Zoom Service <u>10.00am Holy Communion</u>	Ecclesiasticus 35.12-17 Psalm 84.1-7 2 Timothy 4.6-8, 16-18 Luke 18.9-14	E Gilbert S Smith	A Henderson	A Crook W Jennings	J Davies
Sunday 2 November All Souls Day Fourth before Advent	8.45am Zoom Service <u>10.00am Holy Communion</u>	Isaiah 25:6-9 Romans 5:5-11 Luke 7:11-17	R McCormick S Caden	Rev Seamus	B Essex D Bardgett M Smitherman	C Holland
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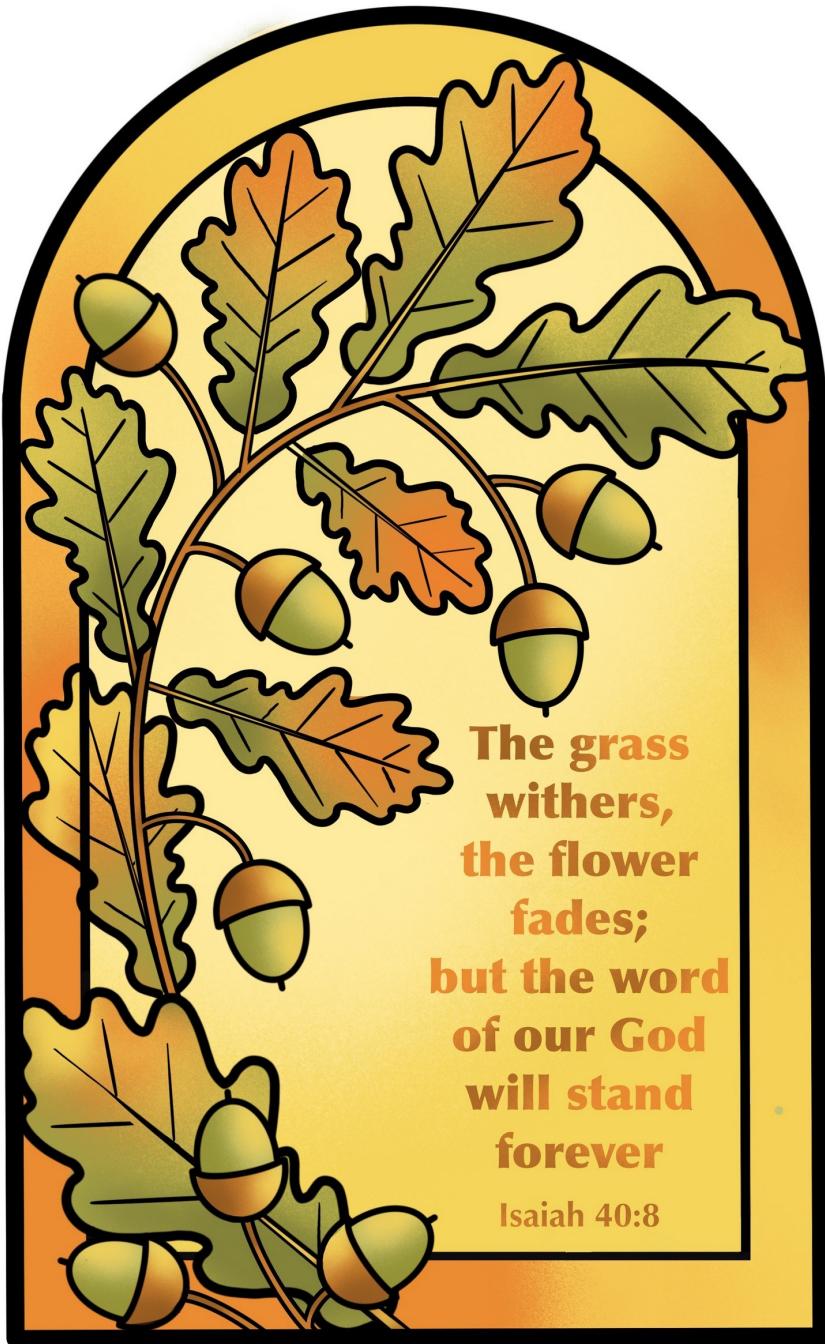
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**The grass
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will stand
forever**

Isaiah 40:8