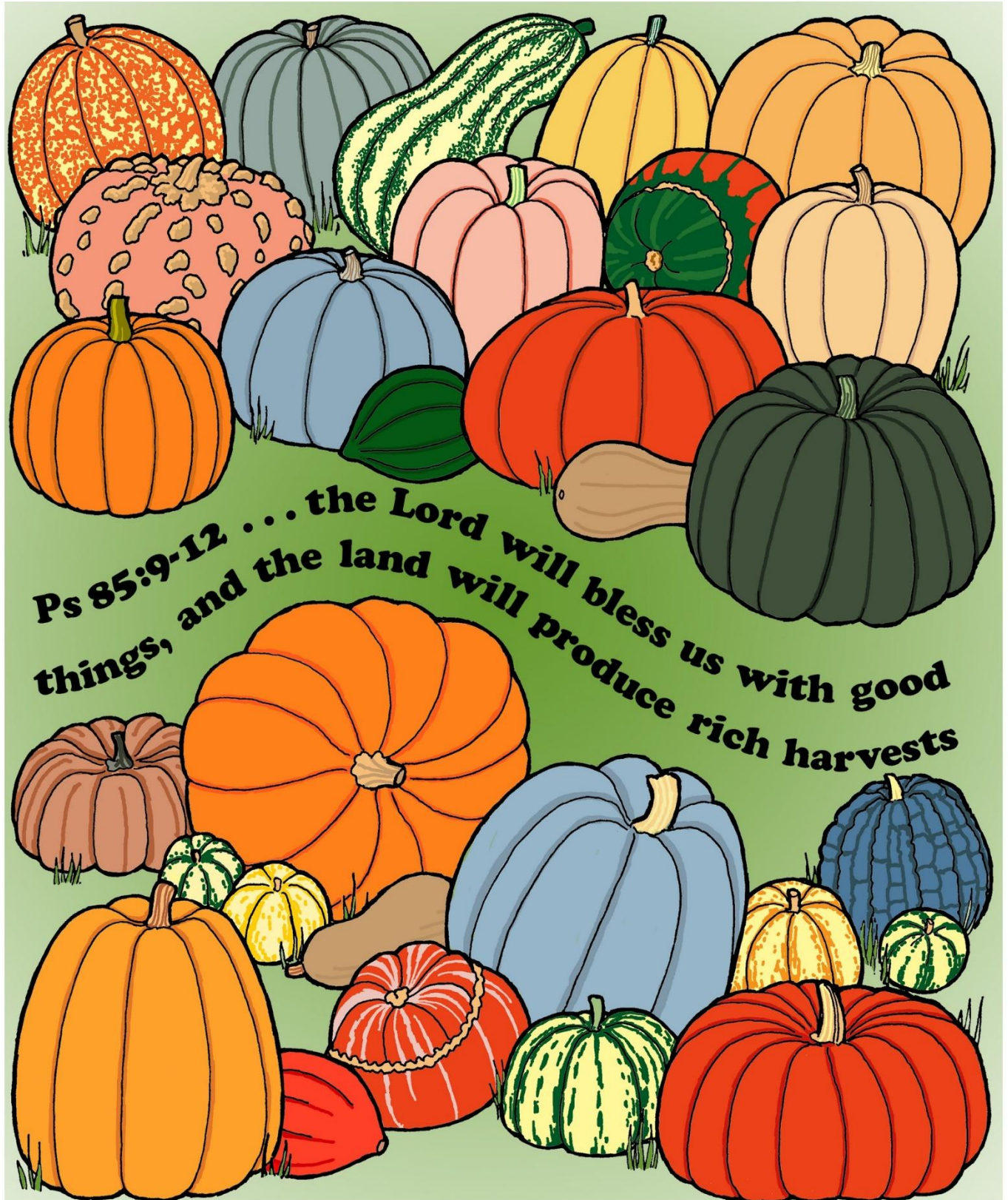


Rushall Parish News October 2025

Newsletter for the Churches of
St. Michael the Archangel and Christ the King
Rushall

Free online. 30p print copy



Some useful numbers

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See our website www.Rushallparish.org or
our Facebook page RushallParish for regular
updates.



*...if you have been affected by any
of the issues raised in this sermon...*

750 years ago, on 27th Oct
1275 that the city of
Amsterdam in the Netherlands
is traditionally considered to
have been founded.

The church is a workshop, not a
dormitory. – Alexander MacLaren

Please send any articles for the
November magazine to Colin at
colinsuch01@gmail.com by Friday
24th October.

Canon Paul Hardingham continues his series on the books of the Bible.

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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.

“One does not live by bread alone”

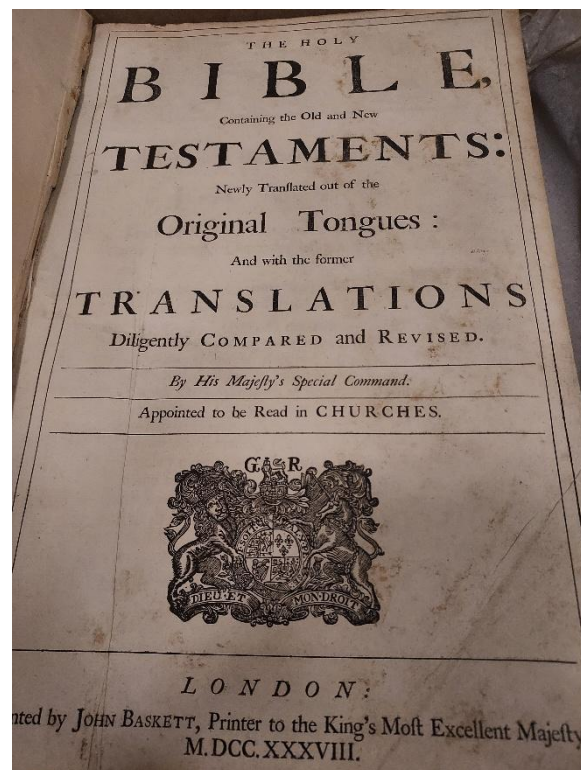
October begins with our celebration of harvest festival. An occasion in which we remember the wonder of creation and the bounty of God’s goodness.

There are many themes contained in harvest: the beauty of creation and our responsibility to it with recognition of the damage that we do to the environment and to our fellow creatures, the food we eat and those who produce it recognising the farmers who struggle against climate change to grow crops, the distributors and vendors whilst remembering those who cannot afford to buy food and rely on foodbanks whilst recognising how much we waste.

The month then concludes with Bible Sunday on October 26th. We give thanks on that day for the gift of Holy Scriptures through which God has revealed himself to the world.

Our own Bible study series on the Book of Acts of the Apostles has now finished and seems to have been enjoyed by those who took part in it. I am hoping to offer two more sessions between now and Christmas.

We are reminded that not only do we need physical food for the body but also spiritual food for the soul. And just as we need different types of food for a healthy body, so too do we need different types of spiritual food; worship, individual prayer, Bible reading and meditation.



Just as we do with our physical food we give thanks for our spiritual food, so we give thanks for those who were inspired by the Holy Spirit to write, edit and translate our scriptures, those who print and distribute Bibles across the world, including the Bible Society and those who preach and teach the scriptures.

We also remember how we can waste the scriptures; we often read them but don't ponder them, we fail to explore them; it's as if we gulp down the passage rather than savour it and taste the different flavours that it contains.

We are blessed with an abundance of food of all kinds – both physical and spiritual. May we celebrate both, give thanks for it, enjoy it and share it with others so that all may “Taste and see that the Lord is good”.

Colin

1st October

Theresa of Lisieux - making the most of life

Theresa of Lisieux (1873-97) should be the patron saint of teenage girls and young women who want to make the most of their lives, despite being constrained by family and school or work.

Theresa grew up in a strict, devout Roman Catholic middle-class family in France, one of four sisters. Her father was a watch-maker. Like her sisters, she entered a Carmelite convent at 15, and stayed there. She was never able to go anywhere, do anything extraordinary, or hold any responsibility. She died at the age of 24 of tuberculosis. Yet this quiet young Carmelite nun became so nationally popular that she was declared patroness of France 50 years after her death. Not bad for someone who didn't get out much!

So how did Theresa do it? By not intending to do it at all. Theresa never set out to become famous: instead, she quietly determined in her spirit to seek God, and, having found Him, to honour Him in her life, to live as closely as she could to the teaching in the gospels.

The result was a life so spiritually radiant that her convent asked her to write a short spiritual autobiography of her pilgrimage. Theresa obliged with 'L'Histoire d'une Ame', which soon became so popular that it was translated into most European languages and several Asiatic ones. Theresa also prayed for people who were ill, and there are many reports of miraculous healings that took place in answer.

After Theresa died in 1897, her book just went on selling. People found the artless sweet simplicity of her observations on her pilgrimage as a Christian compelling. Theresa reminded people of what Christianity was really all about: simple but utter devotion to Christ, not endless outward observance of religion. Theresa helped many in the Roman Catholic Church in France to remember the first principles of their faith.



Lost in translation

Sign on a door in Istanbul: American dentist – 2nd floor. Teeth extracted by a new Methodist.

M&M: Monty and Matty

We've had some lovely walks now that Monty is able to walk further (though his leg is still not fully recovered and we're off back to the vet in a couple of weeks).

Still, in the meantime we're making the most of it. There have been lots of squirrels waiting for us to bark at them (they must have been missing us!)



We've seen some of the deer around again and a couple of stags with their antlers. The ponies are still in the field; the foal is growing up though often we find him asleep as we walk past so we keep our distance so as not to wake him up.

There has finally been a lull in the fireworks that go off. They seemed to be happening every night at one time (even at 1.30am much to the servant's annoyance.) However for the past couple of weeks it has been quiet though the servant says it is the lull before the storm as bonfire night is coming up soon.

Talking of storms it has been a bit windy but that hasn't stopped us going out. No frost yet for us in the morning but there's plenty of time.

Hopefully we'll see you out and about,

Lots of woofs,

Monty and Matty

The Prayer for Holy Love

1 Thessalonians 3:12, 13, runs: 'May the Lord ...establish your hearts unblameable in holiness.' Paul's first letter to the Thessalonian church, dating from about 51 AD, is generally regarded as the first book in the New Testament to have been written. That means that this prayer is the first New Testament prayer to have been composed.

Paul has already highly commended the genuine spiritual experience and character of these new Christians. He thanked God for their faith, love and hope, 1:3; they were examples to others, 1:7; their faith in God was being widely spoken about, 1:8; and having turned from idolatry they were now serving the true God and expecting Christ's Second Coming, 1:9, 10. It is for these new and enthusiastic believers that Paul now prays.

The prayer asks for two great blessings for these Christians. First that they may abound in love toward each other and to the world, and then that their conduct will be characterised by holy living. What a model prayer this is for Christians in every age! Note Paul's words, 'may the Lord make you increase and abound in love' (v.12). This is not merely asking that these believers will love one another, but that their love will be full and overflowing.

Perhaps Paul is recalling that Jesus said the world would recognise His disciples by their love toward one another (John 13:35). But this love, the essence of Christian experience, is not narrow or parochial. Paul prayed that their love would abound not only to each other but also 'to all men.' What a picture of what His church should be! All of us who claim to be His people should be known by our love for one another and for the world for which He died.

Then comes the second request in the prayer, that their hearts will be 'established unblameable in holiness.' (v.13). The word translated 'established' means to be fixed, to be settled, indicating constant character. In this world no Christian can be faultless, but by His grace and mercy we are called to be blameless. In the prayer Paul brings together the condition of our hearts – overflowing in love, and the quality of our conduct – steadfast in holy living. What a combination of holy love, a reflection of what Jesus was!

One other aspect of this prayer is worth noting. When Paul prays that the love of these Christians will abound to each other, he adds that this is how he feels about them; 'as we do to you' (v.12). Likewise, in 2:10 Paul says the Thessalonians are witnesses of His holy, righteous and blameless conduct among them.

The love and holiness for which Paul prays for these believers can be seen in his own life and work. Surely the most pressing need in all our congregations is that all of us as Christ's disciples will consistently bear witness to His love controlling our hearts and our conduct.

Gardening Notes for October

Having bemoaned the state of the garden last month, I have to confess to being too pessimistic. After a couple of days away in mid-September we returned to find the lawn had completed its regreening and many plants had started throwing a few new flowers with foliage enlivened. With some sparkling days, after the rainy period, the gardens had their normal settled early autumn feel. A few more weeks to enjoy before the end of the season. Those perennials that turn brown can be cut right down and those maintaining green can be trimmed.

At the end of the month the more tender items in pots can be removed to a cold greenhouse or at least to the shelter of the house walls. Mulching is recommended for any plants in the borders likely to be affected by frost. Personally I have never been successful with fleecing which also looks unattractive and subject to winds. Storing any remaining fleece usually ends with it being shredded by mice.

Leaf gathering starts in earnest at the end of the month and continues for subsequent months after the brown bin collections cease. Those who are enthusiastic enough to make leaf mould just need to fill black plastic bags, water the contents and punch holes in the bags. Storing for about twelve months will result in some very useful soil improver, although a warning the contents of many bags does not go very far!

If necessary spring bulbs can now be added to the garden and there are now many more varieties extending the time span for flowering. I opt for smaller varieties in borders and confine the larger types to places where the dying leaves will not be so visible among other plants which will grow taller and disguise the old leaves which are with us for many weeks.

This is a good time to plant new shrubs and trees and there could be some bargains to be had where excess stock is sold off.
Best wishes for an enjoyable month,

Ann

6th October William Tyndale, Bible translator and Reformation martyr

This month is the 500th anniversary of the beginning of the Reformation, and so a good time to pay tribute to an outstanding English scholar, translator and martyr of the Reformation.

William Tyndale (c. 1494 - 6th October 1536) was born near Gloucester, and studied at Oxford and Cambridge. He could speak seven languages, and was proficient in ancient Hebrew and Greek. As a priest, his abilities would have taken him a long way, but by 1523 Tyndale's only desire was to translate the Bible, so that English men and women could read it for themselves. It became his life's passion.

For Tyndale had rediscovered a vital doctrine that the Church had been ignoring: that of justification by faith. He had found it when reading Erasmus's Greek edition of the New Testament. In fact, his life's work was well summed up in some words of his mentor, Erasmus: "Christ desires His mysteries to be published abroad as widely as possible. I would that [the Gospels and the epistles of Paul] were translated into all languages, of all Christian people, and that they might be read and known."

Tyndale's translation was the first Bible to be published in English, the first to draw directly from Hebrew and Greek texts, and the first English translation to take advantage of the printing press.

It was to cost him his life. For Tyndale's work was seen as a direct challenge to the power of both the Roman Catholic Church and the laws of England in maintaining the Church's position.

When the authorities had tried to stop his translation, Tyndale fled to Hamburg, Wittenberg, Cologne, and finally to the Lutheran city of Worms. It was there, in 1525, his New Testament emerged. It was quickly smuggled into England, and King Henry VIII, Cardinal Wolsey, and others, were furious.

Tyndale moved on to Antwerp, where for nine more years he continued his work. Then in May 1535 he was betrayed, arrested, and jailed in a castle near Brussels. Tied to the stake for strangulation and burning, his dying prayer was that the King of England's eyes would be opened. Sure enough, two years later King Henry authorised the Great Bible for the Church of England, which relied largely on Tyndale's work.

Not only that, but in 1611, the 54 scholars who produced the King James Bible drew very heavily from Tyndale. Even today we honour him: in 2002, Tyndale was placed at number 26 in the BBC's poll of 100 Greatest Britons.

Share a little light this Halloween

Some parents aren't sure quite what to feel about Hallowe'en – is it just harmless fun, or are there aspects of it that don't fit in with how we want to see the world?

A child's christening service is very honest about the reality of good and evil, and Hallowe'en can be a good time to talk about those things and how the love of Jesus can be a 'Light in the darkness' for everyone.

The word 'hallowe'en' actually means 'the eve of all hallows' day' – in other words, the night before the church's festival celebrating All Saints. A Saint is sometimes thought to be an exceptionally holy person – someone really special, who did extraordinary things because of their faith in God.

The famous saints are all amazing examples of what it's like to live God's way. But in the Bible, St Paul calls all Christians saints – a saint is simply a friend of God, who seeks to live their life according to God's purposes. When someone is christened, they truly become a Saint, so All Saints' Day is a celebration of the whole family of God.

If you'd like to mark Hallowe'en, these are some ideas that will bless others as well as being fun too.

What's happening in church? We have a special service for All Souls Day – a time when we remember our loved ones who have died. Our "Candles of Remembrance" service at 6.30pm on Sunday 2nd November (All Souls' Day) gives an opportunity to go and light a candle to remember someone – even small children grieve in their own way and may find comfort in this simple action.

Why not pop into your local church, or look up on our website, to find out what's happening in your local area?

Carve a pumpkin. Did you know that gargoyles (the scary looking faces carved in stone on churches) were originally made in medieval times to scare away evil spirits? The pumpkins with scary faces carved into them at Hallowe'en are a bit like that.

But Christians believe that you can't fight evil with evil – you can only fight evil with good, and that good will always win in the end. So why not see if you can carve a friendly looking pumpkin this year, as a sign that you and your family are going to be a force for good this Hallowe'en? (And you can always use the offcuts from your pumpkin to make delicious soup!)

You can do the same with Hallowe'en costumes. Superheroes make a great, positive alternative to scary witches and ghosts.

Give a treat. Not everyone is comfortable with the idea of children going round to neighbours' and just asking for treats. But if you don't want them to miss out on something their friends are doing, why not have a family baking session, and take a tray of cookies with you if you go out with them? Even little children can help stick a smiley face on an iced biscuit. That way, you have something lovely to give away to your neighbours, too!

Safety first. Many children's fancy dress costumes are highly flammable. Please, don't ever use real candles around your front door or in your pumpkins; use the small battery-powered candles instead. If you can afford to buy a multi-pack of these electric candles, you could lend them to your friends and neighbours.

Say a goodnight prayer. Even if you've steered clear of scary costumes, and even if your child has loved the evening, it can be reassuring to have a goodnight prayer that reminds them that love, and light, and good, are always going to be stronger than fear and evil.

The ancient service of Compline (Night Prayer) has been used as this reminder for centuries, and many of its prayers are still well known today: *'Visit this place, O Lord, we pray and drive far from it all snares of the enemy; let Your holy angels dwell with us to preserve us in peace; and let Your blessing be upon us always, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.'*

Or, in a simpler children's version: *'Be with us, Lord, and take away all fear, may your angels protect us and give us peace. And bless us always. Amen.'* You can use these lovely prayers any time when you need a reminder that God is with you – especially at the end of a difficult day, or when something sad has happened, or when your family is worried about something.

Article taken from www.churchofenglandchristenings.org with permission.

DEMENTIA

CO-ORDINATOR

St Michael the Archangel,
Leigh Road, Rushall, WS4 2DS

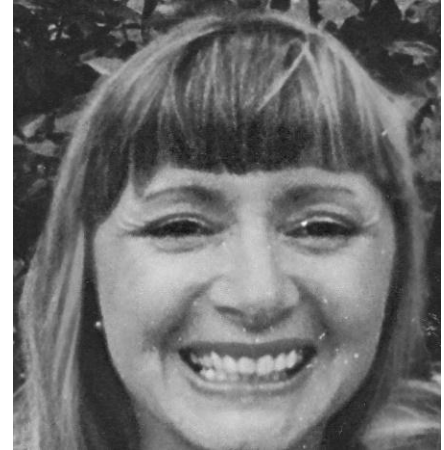
And

Christ the King, Lichfield Road,
Walsall, WS4 1HB

NAME: Carol Beckwith

PHONE: 07971 977464

EMAIL: carolbeckwith@hotmail.com



Hello, I'm Carol, the Dementia Co-ordinator for our churches.

- **SOMEONE TO SPEAK TO:** I'm here for a conversation if you have concerns about memory loss or dementia, or if you are living with dementia or caring for someone who has dementia.
- **SHARING INFORMATION:** I'm happy to share information about local groups and resources available to people living with dementia and their families/carers. Have a word if you'd like to know more: I may be able to signpost you on to something locally that you may find helpful.
- **PRAYERS:** I will pray for people affected by dementia and will ensure that they are prayed for regularly in our church services.

The Memory Café

Tuesday 28th October 2pm – 4pm in St. Michael's Community Hall



Dementia friendly but open to
anyone who'd love to come for
a chat and refreshments,
Come along and join us

God in the Arts

Lucas Cranach's 'Adam and Eve'

In October we traditionally give thanks for the good gifts of God's creation at harvest time. In the readings for our worship, we often return to that original goodness in the Garden of Eden, described for us in the opening chapters of Genesis. We glimpse that scene of paradisaal harmony in Lucas Cranach's painting 'Adam and Eve.' It shows a wonderful menagerie of birds and animals around the couple, all unaware that the harmony will be shattered as Adam takes the apple from Eve.



'Lucas Cranach's 'Adam and Eve, public domain'

One version of this painting is in the Courtauld Gallery of Somerset House in London. It is a large, neoclassical building by the Strand in the centre of the city. In the summer months 55 fountains play in the courtyard outside, while in the winter people skate on the ice rink. Somerset House was built on the site of a Tudor palace and dates from the 18th century. It is now a centre for the visual arts with an impressive collection of paintings.

Lucas Cranach, this month's artist, was born in 1472 in what is now Bavaria. He became a court painter to the Electors of Saxony until his death in 1553. Cranach was a close friend of Martin Luther, but also had Catholic patrons. Like the Electors, they marvelled at his mastery of landscape and animals. In this painting we are invited into the garden to look on all the beauty and wonder there. Among the animals we can see a hog, a lion (although Cranach would never have seen a lion in the flesh), a sheep, and a stag, a symbol of Christ. There are birds as well, including a pair of partridges, who traditionally represent the power of love, but also deceit. The roe deer drinking from the pool in the foreground is a reminder of Psalm 42 and the soul thirsting for God. But dominating the scene is that moment of turning from God: there is a glorious tree, laden with fruit, and in front Adam and Eve, whose hands clutch an apple, while the serpent slithers down the trunk in a moment of triumph.

The painting is reminiscent of medieval tapestries and, like them, has a beguiling quality. All is beautiful and harmonious: it is Isaiah's vision of the lion lying down with the lamb amid the fruitfulness of nature and the oneness of creation. As we look on, we know that the defiance of God and the temptation to eat will lose this paradise. But we also know that creation will be redeemed by another fruit. Around Adam and Eve are the vine and grapes: they represent the Eucharist, the gift of Christ's body and blood.

The fruit of the tree in the painting leads to a fall from grace, but the fruit from that other tree, the vine, will redeem and lift humanity again to share in the bread and wine, the gifts of creation given at harvest and shared at every Holy Communion.

Out and about walking, driving and visiting

The Cotswolds.

We had two nights away in the Cotswolds recently and decided to get the most out of the three days by staying not too far away from home.

Wanting to be near Chipping Camden, one of our favourite walking areas, we settled on the Fleece Inn at Bretforton which is between Evesham and Chipping Camden.

The property is owned by the National Trust but run independently by a brewery. The Inn proved to be a fascinating place. Originally built as a long house on the time of Chaucer, the building was over 70 years old when the Lancastrians had their final defeat at the battle of Tewkesbury in the Wars of the Roses and 200 years old at the time of the Gunpowder Plot. The last private owner Miss Lola Taplin was a direct descendent of the man who built the inn, living there all her life and passing away in 1977 by the fire in the snug. The Inn was bequeathed to the National Trust, the first pub in the country to be owned by a charity. A spark from a chimney fire to the thatch in 2004 however the building was saved from total destruction.

The pub is filled with ancient artifacts and furniture such as curved high-backed settles. A huge collection of pewter ware is on display and china and ornaments are everywhere.

We had the Master's Bedroom (the only guest room) which turned out to be very small with just room for a bed, two side tables and table for coffee / tea making, plus a shower room. The sloping beam windowsill resulted in items falling off. Walking past each other was quite tricky.

The pub has many entertainments, folk nights, Celtic music nights, Morris dancing and also hosts weddings in the Barn.

We would certainly go to eat there again if in the area. The food was excellent and served in cosy areas with log fires, they are particularly noted for their pies. The staff were very welcoming and reserved a table for residents.

It was certainly an experience falling asleep to the sound of Celtic music or a folk singer in the bar below but I am not sure I would stay there again maybe wanting a few more home comforts,

Ann

10 Francis Borgia – ‘the Jesuits’ second founder’

Here is a saint for you if you have lost the person you love. Here is a saint for you if you would not let your wealth and security stop you from doing something daringly good with your life.

Francis Borgia (1510 – 72) certainly began with it ‘all’. He was the son of a duke, the great-grandson of Pope Alexander VI, and also of King Ferdinand V of Aragon. He was a fast-tracker in his career: by 18 he was recognised at the Emperor’s court, and by 19 he was Viceroy of all Catalonia. Soon he was made Duke of Gandia, and then discovered that his magistrates were corrupt. The first big crisis of his life had arrived.

Francis suppressed the corruption – and paid the price. He was scorned at court. So he retired to his estate, and instead of planning revenge, planned for more good: he began a Dominican foundation and restored a hospital for his grateful people. Then in 1546 the second crisis of his life hit him: his wife died, leaving him and their eight children stricken with grief. Instead of remarrying, or turning to warfare, Francis resigned his dukedom in favour of his son, and secretly joined the Society of Jesus.

Francis tried hard to conceal his rank, but his ability could not be hidden. After his ordination, his experience in governing all of Catalonia was put to good use – he was made Commissary for Spain and Portugal, where he founded many colleges and other houses. By 1561 he was called to Rome, and in 1565 he was elected General of the Jesuits.

For the remaining seven years of his life, Francis stirred up a whirlwind: reforming the lives of Christians throughout Europe by inspiring and supporting his clergy. He was so zealous that he has been called the Jesuits’ second founder. He helped found what would become the Gregorian University in Rome, established a new province in Poland, began missionary work in the Americas, and organised relief for the plague-stricken of Rome. When he finally collapsed, worn out with hard work, he prayed for each of his children and grandchildren in turn, blessing them with a thankful heart before he died.

Francis Borgia was born to worldly greatness, but achieved personal greatness by his indifference to wealth and power: about all he loved God, and wanted to serve Jesus Christ in whatever way presented itself.

10th October: Thomas Traherne - lover of nature

Thomas Traherne (1636 - 1674) is a good saint for anyone who loves our planet, and who wants to preserve Creation. This 17th century poet and clergyman wrote extensively about his love for nature, seeing in it a reflection of the glory of God.

Traherne was not of a literary family, for his father was either a shoemaker or innkeeper in Hereford. But Traherne did well at the Hereford Cathedral School and went on to Brasenose College Oxford. From there he became rector of Credenhill near Hereford in 1657, and ten years later was appointed to be the private chaplain to Sir Orlando Bridgeman, the Lord Keeper of the Great Seal to King Charles II, who lived at Teddington.

Throughout his years at Credenhill and then Teddington, Traherne led a simple and devout life, and his friendliness drew people to him. He was described as “one of the most pious ingenious men that ever I was acquainted with”, and being of “cheerful and sprightly Temper”, ready to do “all good Offices to his Friends, and Charitable to the Poor almost beyond his ability”. Aside from his beloved books, he seems to have possessed very little.

Instead, he poured his energy into his writings, which had an intense, mystical, metaphysical spirituality. His poems and prose frequently mention the glory of Creation, and his intimate relationship with God, for whom he had an ardent, childlike love. Traherne has been compared to later poets such as William Blake, Walt Whitman and Gerard Manley Hopkins, and his love for nature has been seen as very similar to the Romantic movement, though he lived two centuries earlier. He is best known for his *Centuries of Meditations*, which has been described as “one of the finest prose-poems in our language.” Lost for many years, and then finally first published in 1908, it was a favourite of the Trappist monk Thomas Merton, the Christian humanist Dorothy Sayers, and the writer C.S. Lewis, among others. C.S. Lewis considered *Centuries of Meditations* “almost the most beautiful book in English.”

Traherne died in 1674, and is buried in St Mary's Teddington, under the church's reading desk. Today he is counted as one of the leading 17th-century devotional poets.

Increase in attacks on cats and wild birds

The RSPCA has warned pet owners to be 'extra vigilant' after a 30 per cent increase in airgun attacks against cats.

One cat was shot five times in the leg and belly. Another had her spine fractured by a bullet. As one owner demanded: "How could someone do this to a poor, defenceless animal?"

But recent data from the RSPCA' reveals hundreds of such incidents against pets over the past three years, involving air guns, catapults and crossbows. Kent and Greater London has had the most, followed by Durham, Essex, Cheshire, Hampshire, West Midlands, Greater Manchester, Somerset and West Yorkshire.

A spokesman for the RSPCA said: "It is unspeakably cruel and totally unacceptable to shoot animals for fun – or to harm them for target practice."

But wood pigeons and swans have also being often targeted. As one resident in Kent said: "It's just ridiculous how bad it's getting. You'll see an average kid here wanting to throw stones at a bird for absolutely no reason whatsoever, and the thing is they seem to have no fear of anything. They're very nasty individuals."



Animal Welfare Sunday

This year, Animal Welfare Sunday falls on Sunday 5th October, which is the nearest Sunday to St Francis' feast day on Saturday 4th. It is a good opportunity to thank God for the animals, and to consider how we might help them.

Christians have been involved in animal welfare reform throughout history. For example, even the RSPCA – the first animal protection society, was founded by an Anglican priest – the Revd Arthur Broome. But many well-known Christians such as C S Lewis, John Wesley and William Wilberforce also spoke out against animal cruelty. As the Psalmist says in Psalm 148, animals in their amazing variety of species were all created for the glory of God and to praise His name. They were not created for our exploitation and domination.

But sadly, Creation has been abused, and it continues to be abused today. The economics of providing us with low-cost chicken, pork, beef and milk can too often result in cruelty towards millions of animals.

These days, The Anglican Society for the Welfare of Animals works to raise awareness of animal welfare issues within the Anglican Church and the wider Christian community. If you want to help the welfare of animals in some way, please visit: www.aswa.org.uk

Recipe

Roast Sausage and Squash with Mustard and sage

Ingredients

To serve 4

8 pork sausages

One large red onion cut into wedges

300g butternut squash cut into wedges

Few sage leaves

1 tbsp olive oil

2 tsp plain flour

200ml chicken stock

2 tbsp wholegrain mustard

1. Heat oven to 200 degrees / gas 6
2. Put sausages in a large roasting tin with onion, squash and sage. Drizzle over the olive oil and toss together.
3. Roast for 40 to 50 minutes turning occasionally until the sausages are golden and the squash is tender.
4. Transfer to warm serving plates.
5. Having drained any excess oil from the pan. using medium heat, mix flour into stock and pour the mixture into tin scrapping any bits from bottom. Stir in mustard and simmer gently for 5 minutes until thickened.
6. Pour over sausages and serve with mashed potato and cauliflower or broccoli.

Ann

19th October brings Health and Care Sunday 2025

Health and Care Sunday is an initiative of Christian healthcare organisations in the UK and Ireland. It aims to give local churches an annual opportunity to affirm and support the work done by the members of their congregation and local community who work in health and social care.

Most churches include someone who is a doctor, nurse, care assistant, social care worker, occupational therapist, hospital administrator, porter, cleaner, ward secretary, laboratory staff or chaplain, as well as people serving in many other roles.

This is an opportunity for our church to pray for them and encourage them as they work in health and social care in our community.

Health + Care Sunday is sponsored by the Christian Medical Fellowship (CMF) and held on the Sunday closest to St Luke's Day (18th October).

More info at:

<https://www.cmf.org.uk/health-and-care-sunday>

Surge in violent attacks on A&E nurses

18th October is the feast day of St Luke, who is the patron saint of physicians. So this is a good month to pray for those in the NHS...

A&E nurses face an increasing barrage of punches, kicks and spitting - and having weapons aimed at them. One was even threatened with an acid attack.

The violence has been blamed on enforced long waits in A&E departments, corridor care, and chronic staffing problems.

The Royal College of Nursing report that the number of attacks has doubled in five years, from 2093 cases in 2019, to 4054 in 2024.

One senior charge nurse in the East Midlands said: "Even patients you would expect to be placid are becoming irate because of just how long they have to wait. So, you can only imagine the behaviour of those who are already prone to violence." She herself has been punched in the face by a "drunken six-foot-two bloke."

A senior sister in an A&E in east London was knocked unconscious after being punched in the head by a patient. "The violence is awful," she said. "And it's just constant. Nurses, doctors, receptionists – none of us feels safe."

Another nurse said: "It's not going to help with our retention and recruitment if you think you're going to be clobbered every shift."

The RCN warns that such attacks lead to both physical and mental scarring, lengthy time off and sometimes staff never returning.



People who sing their own praises usually do so without accompaniment.
– Anon

Send your love with these flowers

A flower used by Victorians when they wanted to send a ‘hidden message’ of love is making a big comeback.

It is the aster. It’s popularity in bouquets has quadrupled in two years. Sales at Tesco alone have soared by nearly 350 per cent.

And no wonder: asters are vivid, fast-growing British flowers with a good vase life. They come in blue, purple, pink, dark pink, red and white – all with a bright yellow centre. They originally came from Japan and are related to dahlias and chrysanthemums.

The Victorians believed that asters symbolised love, patience, wisdom, elegance and grace. That made asters a sure winner for bearing discreet messages of affection.

More than five million were grown in the UK this year, so there must be a lot of love about!

Younger drivers and older drivers

Drivers aged 17 to 24 are twice as likely to be killed or seriously injured as those aged over 70. So says recent data from the Department for Transport.

But there has also been a rise in the likelihood of serious accidents involving drivers aged 86 or over.

Police data reveals that older drivers are more likely to cause accidents by failing to look properly. Young drivers who cause accidents are often found to be drunk or high on drugs.

Meanwhile, the Government is preparing to introduce compulsory eye tests for the over-70s. This has been greeted with relief by driving agencies.

One commented that it is “totally inadequate” that drivers aged over 70 “can self-certify that they can see.” He remembered a case where it was found that an older driver who caused a death had self-certified his eyesight as being fine, when he could barely see his own steering wheel.

Plastic carrier bags

This year marks ten years since England introduced the 5p charge for single-use plastic carrier bags. The charge has had a dramatic effect – with a reduction of 98% in sales.

In 2014, 7.6 billion single-use plastic bags were sold in the UK. By 2023, 133 million single-use bags had been sold in the major supermarkets. The average person in the UK now buys only about two single-use plastic bags per year.

Continuing the Celebration!

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

The biblical book of Deuteronomy contains a description of what Tabernacles should have been 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, with two whole days off normal work and seven days of feasting.

Farming looks very different today. Very few of us have had to sweat long hours over crops, so we’re not as ready for (or deserving of) 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 it up with a trip to a local farm this month? Why not learn from the ancient Israelites, and follow it 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 proportionately more generous in our gratitude and giving. Should we throw better parties? Probably!

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

11th October James the Deacon

James the Deacon is the saint for any lay person who has stepped in to lead their church when the clergy are far away.

In fact, an historian has called James the Deacon ‘the one heroic figure’ in the Roman mission to Northumbria. No wonder – in a time of political chaos, with the king murdered and even the bishop fleeing for safety, James the Deacon stood firm.

It had begun when Pope Gregory the Great sent Paulinus, Bishop of York, to take Roman Christianity to Northumbria. James the Deacon, almost certainly an Italian, was among those who went with Paulinus.

The mission began well, and Edwin the king of Northumbria was converted. Roman Christianity in Northumbria took root and began to grow. But then in 633 Edwin fell in battle with Penda, the ruthless pagan king of Mercia. A pagan backlash began. The queen and her son fled for Kent, with the bishop Paulinus going south with them.

All that was left of Roman Christianity in Northumbria was James, now a solitary deacon.

But James was made of stern stuff, and despite the danger from Penda, James stayed on at a village near Catterick, often risking his life as he cared for the Christians, and continued to preach the gospel.

His success was discovered when the Northumbrian mission returned five to ten years later, and found an active Christian community still in Northumbria. James had been a faithful servant.

After Penda died, and Christian rule was re-established in Northumbria, James turned to teaching music, especially Gregorian Chant, to the fledgling churches in the region. Bede praised him for his honour and integrity. James was present at the Synod of Whitby in 664, which met to discuss the differences between the Celtic Northumbrian Church of the North, and the Roman Church of the South.

When James died sometime after 671, he was deeply mourned by the ordinary Christians of Northumbria, both Celtic and Roman. He had never deserted them.

24th Oct Felix of Thibiuca - the man who would not give up his Bible

Do you value your Bible? If so, Felix of Thibiuca (247 – 303) is a good patron saint for you. The year was 303, and Diocletian was emperor in Rome. In February of that year he decided that Christians were NOT a good thing. So he issued an edict: all copies of the Christian Scriptures and all liturgical books were to be surrendered and burnt. Diocletian had decided to 'wind up' this upstart religion.

The persecution began in Rome. By June of that year, the edict had reached North Africa, and Thibiuca, where Felix was bishop. Felix was arrested and interrogated. Yes, he said, he did have a copy of the Scriptures. No, he said, he would not hand them over.

Felix was a highly respected bishop, and even the authorities were loath to take immediate action against him. So they gave him three days grace to see sense, and back down. But Felix prayed and became only more certain that this was a conflict between the commandments of God and the commandments of men.

At the end of the three days Felix was referred to the proconsul. He still refused to hand over his Scriptures. His last words in public were memorable "God, I thank you. I have passed 56 years in this world. I have preserved my chastity; I have observed the Gospels; I have preached the faith and the truth. Lord God of heaven and earth, Jesus Christ, I bend my neck as a sacrifice for you, who abides for ever." He was condemned to be beheaded at Carthage, and became one of the first martyrs to die under Diocletian.

Needless to say, Diocletian did not succeed in destroying the Scriptures. Today there are hundreds of millions of copies around the world, and this month, Sunday, 23rd October, Christians will thank God for the Scriptures when they celebrate Bible Sunday.

On what those adverts from parishes wanting clergy REALLY mean...

The Rectory
St James the Least



My dear Nephew Darren

So, you are being encouraged to look at adverts for parishes for that happy day when you will have charge of your own church. You wonder if you should look to moving to another part of the country; I suspect it may be better if you look to moving to another planet, as your reputation may not yet have travelled that far.

Reading the specifications that parishes provide, giving a picture of life in their community, need to be read in the same way as estate agents' specifications for houses for sale. Both demonstrate a triumph of optimism over reality. Let me help you decode some of the statements you will find:

"We look to grow our Sunday School" – We do not have a Sunday School.

"We have an enthusiastic choir" – We have a choir totally out of control.

"Our youth group is always eager to learn" - Our youth group experiments with some strange substances.

"The new incumbent should be sympathetic to our musical tradition"- The new incumbent must be able to play the organ as well as lead the Services.

"While cherishing our traditions, we see the need for change" – We always see the need for change, but alter anything at your peril.

"Plans for church renovations are in hand" – The building is in imminent danger of collapse.

"We have a large range of church groups" – You will have to run a large range of church groups singlehandedly.

"The vicarage is being refurbished" – The vicarage is a death trap. Its rising damp and dangerous electrics will not be fixed for many months yet.

"There is opportunity for developing ecumenical relations" – No one in living memory has ever spoken to clergy of other denominations in our town.

"The new incumbent should have a sense of humour" – He or she will need it when reading this specification.

My dear nephew, *caveat emptor*. Let the buyer beware!

Your loving uncle,
Eustace

Bible Bite

A short story from the Bible

It can be read in the Bible in
Judges 6:36 - 7:8, 16-22

God had told Gideon he would drive the
Midianite invaders out of His country.
32000 men had come to fight with Gideon.

Gideon asked God for proof.



God did as Gideon had asked.



Could you show me again, but with the wool dry and the ground wet?



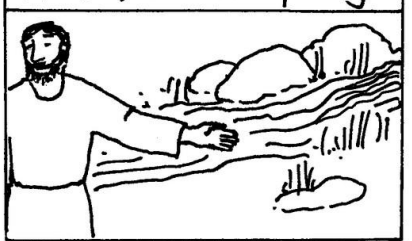
God said The army is too big. They will think that they beat the Midianites, not Me.



So Gideon sent home all who were afraid - 22000 of them



There were still too many, so Gideon told them to drink from the spring.



300 scooped up water to drink, and the rest were sent home.



Each man was given a jar with a lit torch in it and a horn.



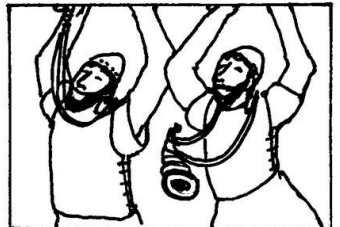
That night they surrounded the Midianite camp.



At the signal, they blew the trumpets, smashed the jars and shouted a war cry



The Midianites were so shocked they attacked each other, and then ran



The Israelites won without having to do any fighting.

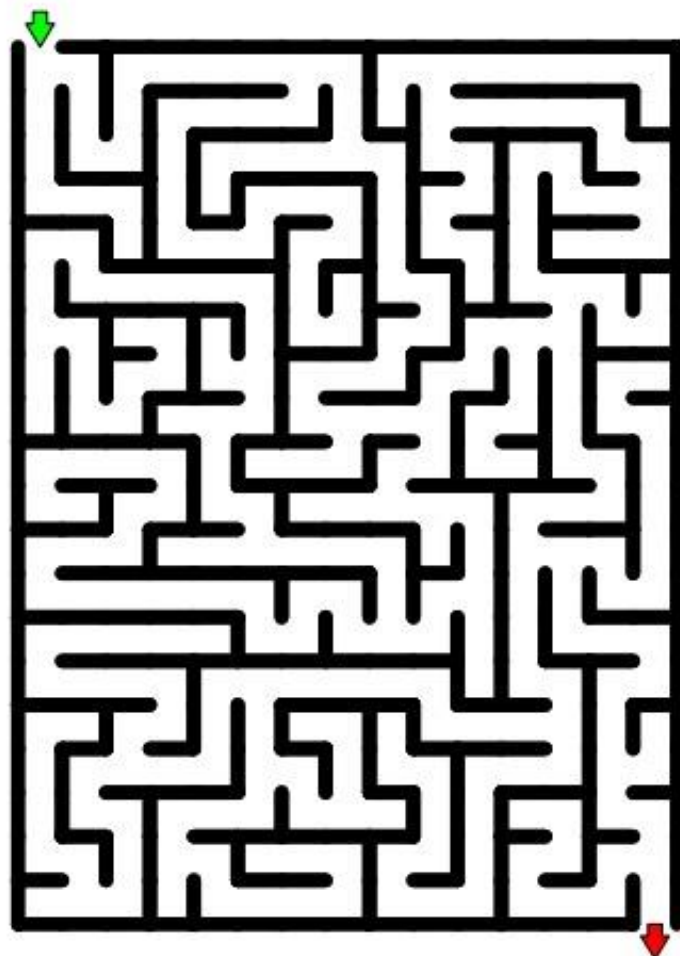
September's Solution

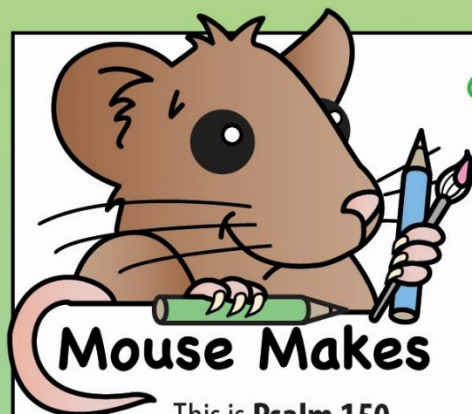
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Can you solve
the maze?





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!

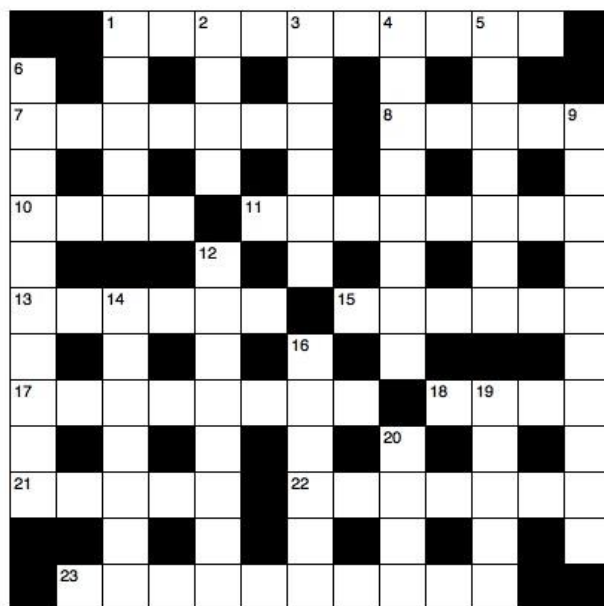
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O	Y	L	E	D	L	Y	R	E	Y	N

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

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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

September's answers:

ACROSS 1, Also. 3, Offering. 9, The Magi. 10, Rules. 11, Soper. 12, Help me. 14, Isaac and Jacob. 17, Scorch. 19, In man. 22, Loads. 23, Inertia. 24, Vicinity. 25, Belt.

DOWN: 1, Artistic. 2, Sleep. 4, Faith in Christ. 5, Enrol. 6, Islamic. 7, Gasp. 8, Fabric. 13, Abundant. 15, Archaic. 16, Jailer. 18, Resin. 20, Mitre. 21, Slav.