

Rushall Parish News

November
2025

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

Free online. 30p print copy



Lord Jesus Christ,
you are the true King of peace.
In you alone is found freedom.
Please free our world from
conflict.

Bring unity to troubled nations,
unity amongst all people.
And let Your glorious peace
reign in every heart.

Some useful numbers

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



"Goodness! is it time for Christmas Fair organising, carol service planning and nativity play rehearsals already?!"

God wants spiritual fruit, not
religious nuts. – Anon

60 years ago, on 9th November
1965 that the death penalty
was abolished in the UK.

Please send any articles for the
December magazine to Colin at
colinsuch01@gmail.com by Friday
21st November.

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

What's the Big Idea? - An Introduction to the Books of the New Testament: Ephesians

Paul wrote the letter of Ephesians around AD 60, while in prison at Rome. It was probably a circular letter to be read in the house churches of Ephesus and the local area. Paul founded the church over a period of three years (Acts 19:1-20:1) between 52-55 AD. Ephesus was the leading city and commercial centre in the region, famous for its temple to the goddess Artemis (Diana).

Paul's aim in writing his letter was to help his readers understand the dimensions of God's purpose and grace for them and His eternal plan for the church. The believers needed to understand their status '*in Christ*' and the call to live a life worthy of Christ. Ephesians is divided into two halves: chapters 1-3 concern theological issues, while chapters 4-6 deal with the practical outworking of faith.

Having shown God's purpose for the church, Paul shows how God has reconciled individuals to Himself by grace (2:1-10). He has reconciled people to each other by breaking down the barriers through Christ's death (2:11-22). This is the '*mystery*' revealed by Paul (3:1-13) and he shows how Christ's gifts promote unity and maturity (4:1-16). The believer's new life stands in contrast to the old way of life without Christ (4:17-6:20).

The great overarching theme of the letter is that we are rescued by God not just for our personal benefit, but to bring praise and glory to Him in our lives: '*He made known to us the mystery of His will according to His good pleasure, which He purposed in Christ, to be put into effect when the times reach their fulfilment – to bring unity to all things in heaven and on earth under Christ.*' (1:9,10).

“Lord for the years..”

Crickey, in October 21 years ago I was installed as the vicar of Rushall, the very word “installed” makes me sound like a piece of furniture. If I were, I suppose I would be considered “vintage” rather than “antique”.



So here I am, my 21st anniversary over and another church year drawing to its close ready to roll into a new year and another Christmas. So much has happened over the past 21 years and yet so much stays the same.

There are so many faces in our church congregations who weren't here back in 2004, but there are still many who were. Of the latter many of them were doing various jobs in the church and still are when perhaps they could do with some new faces taking some of the strain.

We have yet another restoration project underway, this time on the tower, a never-ending round of maintenance works it seems. Our services continue at their usual times throughout the week as they have done through all these years.

There are so many memories from these years, the pilgrimages we've shared and the worship offered.

Most of all it is the people that I have served through these years that I hold in my heart. Through times of joy and sorrow I have been privileged to share in so many lives and for some (often non-church people) I am their family vicar rather than the parish priest.

All of this sounds as if I'm thinking of leaving – I'm not! The hymn in the title above is not “The day thou gavest, Lord, is ended” but “Lord for the years” and that hymn ends, “past put behind us, for the future take us: Lord of our lives, to live for Christ alone”.

I am very grateful the last 21 years but there are still new things to do as vicar of Rushall, new challenges to face and a church to serve that is constantly changing and so for the years past, the present and for the future I give my thanks.

Colin

1st November All Saints' Day – the feast day of all the redeemed

All Saints, or All Hallows, is the feast of all the redeemed, known and unknown, who are now in heaven. When the English Reformation took place, the number of saints in the calendar was drastically reduced, with the result that All Saints' Day stood out with a prominence that it had never had before.

This feast day first began in the East, perhaps as early as the 5th century, as commemorating 'the martyrs of the whole world'. A Northern English 9th century calendar named All Hallows as a principal feast, and such it has remained. Down the centuries devotional writers have seen in it the fulfilment of Pentecost and indeed of Christ's redemptive sacrifice and resurrection.

The saints do not belong to any religious tradition, and their lives and witness to Christ can be appreciated by all Christians. Richard Baxter, writing in the 17th century, wrote the following:

He wants not friends that hath thy love,
 And made converse and walk with thee,
And with thy saints here and above,
 With whom for ever I must be...

As for my friends, they are not lost;
 The several vessels of thy fleet,
Though parted now, by tempests tost,
 Shall safely in thy haven meet....

The heavenly hosts, world without end,
 Shall be my company above;
And thou, my best and surest Friend,
 Who shall divide me from thy love?*

1,255 ancient English churches were dedicated to All Saints - a number only surpassed by those dedicated to the Virgin Mary.

**(Maurice Frost (ed.), Historical Companion to Hymns Ancient and Modern (London: Clowes, 1962), no. 274, verses 1,3,6.*



There are two kinds of people in the world. There are those who wake up in the morning and say, "Good morning, Lord," and there are those who wake up in the morning and say, "Good Lord, it's morning."

M&M: Monty and Matty

Monty has been back to the vet who has said that, as regards to the surgery, his leg is now fully healed. All that needs to be done now is to build up the muscles that have wasted away a little over the past months. We think that this gives us every excuse to demand the servant takes us out as often as possible and we're taking every advantage of the fact.

The stair gate is now packed away and we can go upstairs for the first time since May. Our duvets are on the landing for bedtime and we have got quickly back into our routine at night of staying downstairs for a

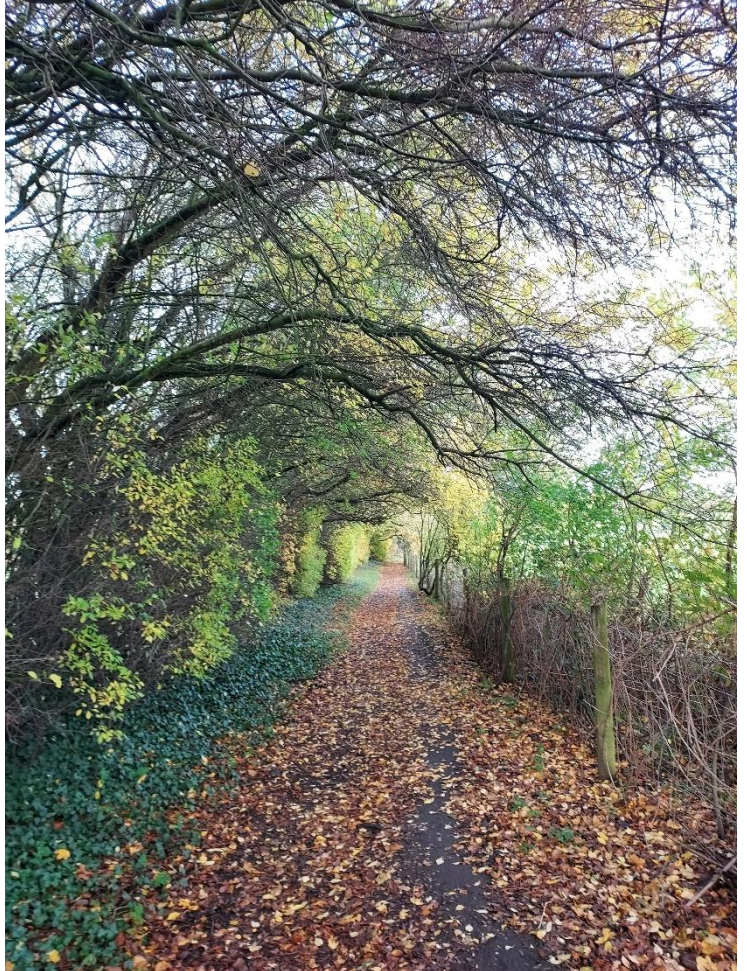
while and then coming upstairs during the night to sleep on our duvets and greet the servant when he wakes up.

Our walks around the Lime Pits are exciting as ever. The squirrels are busy running around collecting nuts that they will forget where they buried them. The foals are in the field and often have a little run round as we walk through the field and the owl sits inside the trunk of the tree watching us from above.

We say help to everyone we meet though for some reason most of them don't have treats to give us – which is most remiss of them. Still, the servant always has a pocketful.

Lots of woofs,

Monty and Matty



Praying With the Prayers of the Bible: when your prayer is not answered

2 Cor. 12:8; 'Three times I asked the Lord about this ...*but...*'

Paul is talking about one of the most mysterious and one of the most baffling aspects of prayer – when God does not say yes.

On the face of it, Paul's prayer was very modest. For some time he had been troubled by 'a thorn in the flesh.' He doesn't tell us what the 'thorn' was and down the centuries theologians and commentators have made suggestions. Most of them have thought that the affliction was physical because Paul says it was 'in the flesh.' Some have suggested that he suffered from epileptic fits which caused him to fall down, while others have suggested that he was laid low by constant fevers or that he had very poor eyesight, the last based on his remarks in Galatians 6:11. But in spite of this great servant of the Lord praying earnestly three times that the thorn would be removed, God did not answer as Paul expected. A number of things in this passage (verses 7-10) are very helpful to all of us in the matter of prayer.

First, although God's answer was not what Paul asked for, God did answer him. God is never indifferent to the prayers we utter from the depth of our heart. Unlike the idol Baal in the Old Testament story about Elijah, (1 Kings 18) the God and Father of our Lord Jesus is not on a journey, nor is he busy elsewhere, nor is he sleeping. He hears our prayers and our cries when we come to Him in our need and pain and distress.

Second, although Paul did not get the answer he wanted, God made him a wonderful promise. He said, 'My grace is sufficient for you' (v.9). This was not what Paul asked for, yet what a promise it was! God said in effect. 'I will not take the thorn away – but my daily grace is all-sufficient.' In spite of the thorn, Paul will triumph. When God gives us all-sufficient grace, it will take care of everything in our lives.

Thirdly, Paul learnt that God's wonderful grace meant that in his weakness 'the power of Christ' (v.9) would be with him, the power that would make him effective and fruitful in his ministry.

Fourthly, this experience taught Paul that he could be 'content with weaknesses and insults' (v.10) because it was for Christ's sake, and when he is weak in himself, he is strong in Christ (v.10).

So what about unanswered prayer? Unless our prayer was selfish and not for our good in the first place, God does answer our cry. When the answer is not what we expected, then it means that our loving Father has something for us even better and more important than what we asked for.

Gardening Notes for November

It is that time again as the clocks go back and the hot days of summer are just a fading memory.

However the gardens have recovered after the ravages of the prolonged dry spell and are still giving some colour to enjoy.

We have a north facing border which gets very little sun and is partially shaded by hazel trees. Some shrubs are dotted along including Sorbias which have delicate and pretty leaves but do not appreciate hot dry weather and respond by dropping their leaves only regaining a few when conditions cool. There is a hazel contortus (perhaps not a logical choice as Hazel's are above!). Also a variegated fatsia along with an Escallonia these in total do not give much colour. Underneath the ground was carpeted with vinca (Periwinkle) and ivy. Ground cover is all very well but fallen leaves are very difficult to extract. I decided to clear the ground at least as much as possible and look for perennials to fill in the gaps and give a little colour. On a recent visit to Hidcote Gardens we called in at nearby Kiftsgate Court plant sales which do not involve paying for garden entrance. It was the last week of their opening. Guided by the labelling of plants which were described as hardy and tolerant of partial shade. We bought perennials which were mostly salvias of the taller and more woody varieties. We have added two new shrubs which both flower, weiglia in the spring and viburnum tinus in the autumn. I shall report next year as to whether this plan was a success or a complete disaster. The one salvia which is possibly the least likely to survive is Salvia Patens but it was difficult to resist because of the fabulous vivid blue colour of the flowers .A sad task is the gradual removal of our conical box bushes which came in pots from our other house and thrived well in the ground on the four corners of the patio .Along with countless others they have now succumbed to box blight and need to be dug up . Now is the ideal time to plant tulips either in the ground or pots, always hoping the squirrels are not watching.

It seems possible that roses may continue to flower into the early winter so I will hold off the first pruning until next month.

There is no need to mention the coming task of dealing with leaf fall, the evidence is all around us!

Ann

Time to remember the Persecuted Church – 2nd November

Have you ever felt frightened to go to church? Afraid that someone might see you and report you to the authorities?

380 million Christians around the world have that anxiety, because one in seven Christians worldwide live in countries with high levels of persecution. That includes one in five in Africa and one in seven in Asia. These Christians make up the Persecuted Church, and live with the threat of discrimination, violence, imprisonment, and even death.

To support these suffering Christians, The International Day of Prayer for the Persecuted Church (IDOP) is held each year in November. It is a good month to choose, because November is the month of remembrance – not only of our armed forces on Remembrance Sunday, but also of all Christian saints and martyrs who have given their lives for Christ, on All Saints Day and All Souls Day.

And so, on 2nd November thousands of Christians in churches across the UK will pray for the Persecuted Church worldwide. They will also send practical help through supporting well-established UK organisations such as Open Doors, Release International and Christian Solidarity Worldwide. These work to advocate for persecuted Christians in the UN and to advocate with national governments. They also distribute humanitarian aid to the affected communities around the world.

If you would like to join in this year, Open Doors, Release International, Christian Solidarity Worldwide (CSW), and International Christian Concern offer you digital resource packs containing prayer guides, information about specific regions of persecution, and materials for church services, home groups, and children's activities.

Meanwhile, here are some things to consider (figures from Open Doors):

Worldwide, at least 4,476 Christians were killed last year for their faith. Nigeria alone accounted for 3,100 of them. Other countries in sub-Saharan Africa have seen rising numbers of Christian deaths.

Worldwide, at least 4,744 Christians were detained. They were arrested and detained without trial. Some were then sentenced and imprisoned for following Jesus. In India alone, 1,629 Christians were detained without trial and another 547 were sentenced to prison. Believers were incarcerated for their faith in Eritrea, Bangladesh, Iran amongst others.

Worldwide, at least 210,000 Christians were driven from their homes last year and forced into hiding. Again, almost half of these were in Nigeria, where militant Islamism is on the rise.

As for individual countries, in Algeria alone last year, *all* the Protestant churches were ordered to close, or were forced to stop regular services. In Mexico, where organised crime is rampant, any Christians who protest at the violence become themselves a target for abduction and murder. In Kyrgyzstan, violence against Christians is also on the rise, as the authoritarian government further represses religious freedom.

Persecuted Christians – the story of what one woman in Nigeria faced

Asabe's life was turned upside down and devastated in one appalling, never-to-be-forgotten night earlier this year.

The Nigerian wife and mother's home was viciously attacked by Fulani Islamists, who slaughtered one of her sons and set fire to their house, killing other family members in the process.

In total, more than 50 men, women and children were killed in the evening attack on Zike village in Nigeria's Plateau State. The Fulani raiders were armed with guns and machetes.

Asabe's home was one of the first to be targeted. The family was awoken by gunshots. The attackers forced their way into the home, dragged Asabe's 14-year-old son Jerry outside and, in Asabe's words, 'killed him like a goat.'

They then ransacked the house, before setting fire to it—with the rest of the family still inside. As the fire took hold, Asabe tried to stop her six-year-old daughter Joanne from crying, fearful as she was that the militants would return and kill them all.

But then, as they were trapped inside and the heat of the blaze became unbearable, she encouraged her daughter to cry, reasoning that if the attackers returned and killed them it would be a quicker, less painful death. Thankfully, other villagers heard the cries and came to the rescue.

Asabe's husband, Moses, was taken to hospital, but later died from his burn injuries. Their ten-year-old son James was another victim, having died in the fire. Asabe's mother-in-law, Talatu has been left with badly burned hands.

Many other Christian communities have suffered this year in violent raids by Islamist Fulani herdsmen.

Release International partners have been aiding Asabe and what remains of her family, providing practical and medical care. "I want to say thank you and God bless you," Asabe said, when Release International staff and Nigerian partners met her recently. Mum and daughter continue to wear protective coverings over burns on their arms.

After the attack, one of Release International's partners in Nigeria conducted a funeral service for 51 victims, who were buried in a mass grave just outside the village. Other Release International partners have provided food and essentials packs to the struggling, grieving families.

3rd November: Richard Hooker – priest, apologist, teacher

Richard Hooker lived at a critical time for the Church of England. He became one of the most important English theologians of the 16th century.

He provided the Church of England with a theological method which combined the claims of revelation, reason, and tradition. Traditionally, he has been credited as the originator of the Anglican *via media* – the middle way between Protestantism and Catholicism.

Hooker was born near Exeter around 1554, educated at Corpus Christi College Oxford, and was then made fellow there in 1577, and deputy professor of Hebrew in 1579. In 1581 he was ordained, and later appointed as Rector of Drayton Beauchamp.

In 1585 Hooker was appointed Master of the Temple Church in London, but returned to rural ministry six years later, first at Boscombe in Wiltshire, and then at Bishopsbourne in Kent, where he died in 1600.

The 1580s and 1590s were a time of bitter theological disputes between the Church of England, after the 1559 Elizabethan Settlement of the C of E, and the growing Puritan party within the Church.

Hooker was implacably against Puritanism, and set about refuting it, and defending the Church of England in his magisterial eight-volume book *On the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity*.

The book has been called "probably the first great work of philosophy and theology to be written in English." In it Hooker set out to demonstrate the superiority of episcopacy in the C of E, as opposed to bringing in the presbyterian system that the Puritans wanted.

Anglicanism, he said, was rooted in both Scripture and tradition, as suited a Church both Catholic and Reformed. And as human reason is a gift from God, he argued that this, too, was a vital element in interpreting both Scripture and tradition.

So, Richard Hooker was the first real apologist for Anglicanism. His contribution to Anglican thought was so huge that down the centuries he has won the backing of all wings of the Church: the evangelicals, Anglo-Catholics, and central churchmen.

DEMENTIA

CO-ORDINATOR

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

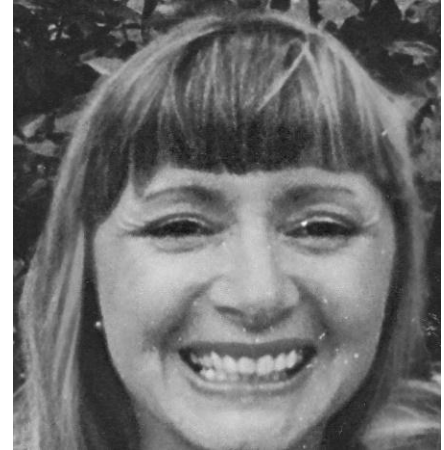
And

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 25th November 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 'He gave us eyes to see them':

Zubaran's 'Jacob and his twelve sons'

In the Old Testament the story of Jacob is a vivid saga of struggle and conflict: Jacob vies with his brother Esau, he has a difficult time with Laban, there are tensions in his family, and finally he wrestles with a divine stranger. And yet in the book of Genesis his days end with promises from God: he will be blessed with descendants, a land, fruitfulness and the assurance of God's presence with him. He is given a new name and a new destiny as 'Israel.' We sense all this struggle and blessing in a remarkable series of thirteen paintings, 'Jacob and his twelve sons' by the Spanish artist, Francisco Zubarán.

They hang in the dining room of Auckland Castle at Bishop Auckland. Bishop Auckland grew as a thriving market town and then in the industrial age became the centre of the Durham coal industry. It was also the site for the prince bishop of Durham's palace. In the medieval period the bishop was as powerful as the monarch of the land, with an army that rivalled the king's own forces. Auckland Castle became the country seat for the prince bishops, and in the 18th century Bishop Richard Trevor made the palace more Gothic before. To mark the 1753 Act that allowed Jews to be naturalized, portraits of Jacob and his sons by Zubarán for £124.



Zubarán normally painted monks and saints, and this particular series was meant for the colonies. But they were seized by pirates and then sold to a London merchant. The one depicting Benjamin was bought by Lord Ancaster, and so Bishop Trevor was only able to buy twelve. He commissioned Arthur Pond, a jobbing painter, to make an exact copy of Benjamin to complete his set. The series of canvases, each eight feet tall, was in the news recently when there was a possibility they might be sold. They were saved by a Trust, now dedicated to developing the site of the Castle, which includes not just the dining room, where the paintings hang, but a very fine chapel of St Peter, a throne room, and beautiful gardens.

Jacob and his sons are each painted against the daylight sky, and each has its individual characteristics. Judah for instance is clad in a brown and gold garment with a gold circlet crowning his head as the ancestor of King David and Joseph, the husband of Mary. Gad is a strong soldier. Jacob, the father of these twelve sons, is a bearded old man, bowed down with the weight, not just of his years of struggle, but perhaps also the burden of destiny laid on his shoulders as both a blessing and a responsibility. For in the Old Testament, we learn that God often chooses the ones overlooked by the world: the young boy David above his more likely brothers, Isaac above Ishmael, and in the saga behind these impressive paintings of Zubarán, Jacob, the second born son, but here blessed as the father of God's people.

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.

A little addendum to last month's article about the Fleece Inn. We enquired in the restaurant about the circles painted on the floor around the base of the fire dogs and we were told that they were there to scare off witches by disorientating them when they attempted to come down chimneys. Something from many centuries ago!

For those with younger children or grandchildren I happened to see a news item in that Twycross Zoo are installing a brand-new mile long trail of illuminated animal models in the style of a traditional Chinese lantern display. It looked to be very colourful, perhaps reminiscent of the better days of the Walsall Illuminations.

Also more and more National Trust properties are planning lighted garden trails for the Festive season in addition to the displays in various houses.

Ann



Take it easy on those country roads

Country roads may look inviting to drive, but the statistics tell a different story. For collisions on rural roads are around four times more likely to result in a fatality.

Such is the finding of the NFU Mutual Rural Road Safety Report 2024. It found that in 2023, an average of one in every 32 collisions on rural highways resulted in a death, compared to one in every 122 on urban roads. Overall, more than 18 people died on rural roads each week in 2023.

So - what is wrong? It seems it is the sheer number of hazards which motorists may face on a rural road. These include blind corners, narrow roads, road quality, poor visibility, cyclists, pedestrians, horse riders, mud and debris, loose livestock, agricultural vehicles, unexpected road or field entrances, impatient drivers, and Sat-Navs sending people down unsuitable roads.

It all adds up to one simple message: be careful and expect the unexpected on country roads.

6th November

William Temple: Archbishop of Canterbury

During the Second World War, Winston Churchill was Britain's Prime Minister. At the same time, William Temple was Archbishop of Canterbury. While Churchill led the country against Germany, Temple encouraged the British people to trust the Lord for their deliverance and strength. Like Churchill, Temple was a great leader, a gifted orator and a prolific writer. He was also a theologian and social activist. Temple was born on 15th October 1881 in Exeter, Devon. He was educated at Rugby School and Balliol College, Oxford, from 1900 to 1904. He loved the music of Bach; the poetry of Browning and Shelley, and Shakespeare. He was an avid reader and possessed a near-photographic memory.

He became president of the Oxford Union and after graduation, was a lecturer in philosophy at Queen's College, Oxford. He was a member of the debating society and was a skilled and balanced debater. Following his ordination in 1909, and priesting in 1910, Temple was headmaster of Repton School for four years. He married Frances Anson in 1916. They were childless.

From 1921-29 Temple was Bishop of Manchester. During this time he was seen as a pioneer of the Ecumenical Movement and gradually became a national figure. In 1926 he urged the British government to seek a negotiated agreement to the General Strike.

Temple excelled as a moderator; a teacher and a preacher and his appointment as Archbishop of York (1929-40) was a popular one. His influence also led to the formation of the British Council of Churches and the World Council of Churches. During the 2nd World War he jointly founded the Council of Christians and Jews to combat anti-Semitism and other forms of prejudice in Britain.

As Archbishop of Canterbury (1942-44) Temple became an outspoken advocate of social reform and became involved in the campaign against unemployment, poverty and poor housing. He believed in the rights of all people, whether rich or poor, and was a leading force for social justice. He was grounded in the problems of the working man and in his book *Christianity and Social Order* (1942) he shared his vision for all to have access to healthcare, education and decent housing. His radical thinking and activism played a foundational role in the formation of the British Welfare State.

Temple died aged 63 at Westgate-on-Sea, Kent on 26th October 1944. He was the first Primate of All England to be cremated and his ashes were buried in the cloister garden of Canterbury Cathedral. He is the last Archbishop of Canterbury to have died while in office.

9th November - Margery Kempe

Here is a saint for any out-spoken, emotional person who also struggles with depression and human failings in the quest to live their best life.

Margery Kempe was born in 1373, the daughter of a wealthy businessman in King's Lynn. She married John Kempe and had 14 children. She described herself as "not lettrid", for she could not read or write.

Margery Kempe was far from the usual 'saint' of the Late Medieval Ages. She was not a recluse. She had not defended her virginity. She was not a submissive wife. Instead, she must have been stormy to live with, as she was known to be very emotional, and at times, very rude. In fact, her emotion engagement with the liturgy deeply unsettled the established local clergy, who distrusted her flare-ups.

Margery began her spiritual pilgrimage with depression - probably brought on by the birth of her first child. She was so ill that she had been forcibly locked away in a room by her spiritual director, when she saw a vision of Jesus. He said to her: "Daughter why have you forsaken Me? I never forsook you." Margery was then reassured that her depressive guilt and fear were misplaced, and that Jesus was actually welcoming her into a personal relationship with Himself.

In 1436 Margery dictated her famous book, 'The Book of Margery Kempe'. It was a sort of spiritual autobiography, and for centuries only edited bits of it were published for people to read. Then in 1934 a complete manuscript was found, and it led to a re-evaluation of Margery herself.

After years of being remembered as a devout mystic, Margery emerged as a more complete, more human woman from these pages. She loved clothes. She envied other people. She sometimes had fantasies, and sometimes few scruples. But she was also honest in her growing relationship with Christ, and finally found in Him a fulfilment she could find nowhere else. That fulfilment helped her on her journey to gradual transformation.

She has been called 'the embodiment of an honest soul on a quest for God.' She died in 1440, aged 67, a good age in those days.

Does a dog cut the risk of childhood asthma?

Could having a dog help your child to develop better lung function? A recent study says yes.

Research from the Hospital for Sick Children in Toronto has found that children who've been exposed to higher levels of the dog allergen *Can f1* may even have their risk of childhood asthma cut in half.

As one doctor explained: "Asthma is a very common chronic respiratory illness in children, with the highest rates in the first four years of life. It is caused by complex interactions between genetic factors and the environment, including infections, allergies and air pollution. Children spend most of their time indoors, so in this research we wanted to study allergens in the home.

"We examined pet allergens from dogs and cats. We found that, while cat allergens showed no association, exposure to dog allergens was linked to improved lung function and a reduced risk of asthma.

"This suggests that early exposure to dog allergens could prevent sensitisation, perhaps by altering the nasal microbiome – the mixture of microbes living inside the nose – or by some effect on the immune system.

"This study suggests that babies who grow up around dogs may have a lower risk of developing asthma. This is potentially good news for families with pet dogs; however, we need to know more about this link and how living with pets affects children's developing lungs in the longer term."



Leaf some green stuff in the garden

The clocks have gone back, and we are putting our gardens to sleep for the winter. But this autumn, when you tidy up, do not tidy away too much. Many insects and wild creatures will be relying on some ground cover or hideaway to call 'home' for the winter. Several piles of twigs or pruning, left around your garden in discreet places, will provide a great winter 'snugs' for toads, grass snakes and other small garden inhabitants. 'Spent' seed heads provide cover and food for birds over the winter. Above all, before you light any bonfires on 5th November, take care there are no hibernating hedgehogs inside!

Recipe

Lord Lichfield's Christmas Pudding

At the risk of repeating a recipe included in previous year's magazines , with ' stir up Sunday ' approaching here is a recipe which I have found to very successful and incidentally is suitable for vegetarians as it uses butter rather than suet (although vegetable suet is available) . This was taken from an article in one of the erstwhile free papers

Ingredients

8 oz of butter or margarine
8 oz of soft dark brown sugar
3 eggs beaten
2 oz black treacle
3 oz of S.R. flour
A pinch of salt
Half tsp of cinnamon powder
Half tsp ground mixed spice
Half tsp freshly ground nutmeg
Finely grated rind of one lemon and one orange
Juice half lemon and one orange
8 oz fresh brown bread crumbs
8 oz sultanas
8 oz raisins
8 oz currants
2 oz mixed peel
1 oz flaked almonds or 2 oz of grounds
2 tbs sherry

1. Beat butter until soft, add sugar and cream until fluffy.
 2. Gradually beat in the eggs and then the treacle.
 3. Sieve the flour, salt and spices together and fold into the mixture with rinds, juices, breadcrumbs, fruit, peel and sherry.
 4. Mix thoroughly and make a wish!
 4. Almost fill two 2lb greased pudding bowls and cover with greaseproof paper and foil.
 5. Leave overnight and then steam for 5 hours cool and recover bowls.
 6. Store in a cool place (under the right conditions the second pudding should keep to the following year)
 7. To serve steam for 2-3 hours and serve with lighted brandy, custard, cream or brandy butter or all three at once!
- Ann

I'm proud to announce that I have completed the first item on my bucket list. I have the bucket.

Sullivan – of Gilbert and Sullivan

Some 125 years ago, on 22nd November 1900, Arthur Sullivan, the British composer, died. Best known for his collaborations with the dramatist W S Gilbert on light operas including *HMS Pinafore* and *The Pirates of Penzance*, he also wrote the music to the hymn *Onward, Christian Soldiers*.

Sullivan was born in 1832 in Lambeth. His Irish-born father Thomas was a military bandmaster, clarinettist and music teacher who, from 1845 to 1857 was based at the Royal Military College, Sandhurst, where his son became proficient on many of the band's instruments and composed an anthem, *By the Waters of Babylon*, when he was eight.

Arthur was drawn to classical and spiritual music of various kinds, and his huge success with Gilbert was awkward for him, as he often felt – encouraged by certain reviewers and others – that he was “capable of higher art”. He was knighted by Queen Victoria in 1883, and the musical establishment felt this should end his involvement with comic opera.

Sullivan was inclined to agree, but he was also aware of the quality - and popularity - of his work with Gilbert. He had told an American reporter in 1879: "His ideas are as suggestive for music as they are quaint and laughable. His numbers ... always give me musical ideas."

By 1885 the duo had completed *The Mikado*, their most successful work, which ran for 672 performances.

Sullivan never married, though he had close relationships with a number of women, including the American socialite and singer Fanny Ronalds. He was devoted to his mother and also to his nephews and nieces after his brother Fred died at an early age.

Persistent kidney disease often meant that Sullivan had to conduct sitting down. He died of heart failure following bronchitis. His *Te Deum Laudamus* was performed posthumously.



Silence is often misinterpreted but never misquoted. – Anon

For how many minutes can you concentrate?

Most of us can watch television for only about 15 minutes, or read a book for about 14 minutes, before we lose our concentration. Most of us blame our social media notifications as the reason.

A recent survey by Perspectus Global for Lingo by Abbott, found that Instagram, Facebook, WhatsApp and message alerts were named as the main culprits.

Overall, it seems we can focus for only 11 minutes on a virtual work call, or 13 minutes in a face-to-face meeting, or 12 minutes writing a work email.

We even seem to lose concentration at family gatherings, after only 14 minutes. Overall, four in five of us say that we get distracted easily, and that we lose our focus around eight times each day.

What about you? Why not take up the challenge, and 'time' your losses of concentration for a day?

Help our woodlands

If you've been admiring the glories of autumn, and have any time to spare, why not consider volunteering to help the Woodland Trust, the UK's leading woodland conservation charity?

The Trust looks after more than 1,000 woods and groups of woods. The Trust also campaigns to protect and save more ancient woodland from destructive development. It always needs volunteers to help in a wide variety of ways. For details, visit:

<https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk>



Put together a Memory Book

Do you have grandchildren? Then this winter, during those long dark days, why not spend some time putting together a sort of scrapbook of memories to pass on to them?

Things you might like include could be: where you lived when you were a child; what your school was like, what games you most enjoyed, who your best buddies were, what pets you had, what your first job was, and how you met your partner. What was your first car, and where was your first home as an adult? Add a selection of photographs that you have from the past.



Growing old is inevitable, growing UP is optional. – *Anon*

Wonder and Worship

“I was travelling, and out early in the morning: at first there was a vast fog; but, by the time that I was seven or eight miles from home towards the coast, the sun broke out into a delicate warm day. We were then on a large heath or common, and I could discern, as the mist began to break away, great numbers of swallows (*hirundines rusticae*) clustering on the stunted shrubs and bushes, as if they had roosted there all night. As soon as the air became clear and pleasant they all were on the wing at once; and, by a placid and easy flight, proceeded on southward towards the sea”.

How many church leaders today have time to enjoy their surroundings? Gilbert White was a vicar who became famous for his observations about the flora and fauna of his parish. His letters about the local wildlife through the seasons were so beautifully written that they are still in print today, more than 200 years after they were first published as *The Natural History and Antiquities of Selbourne*.

White is a great example of someone who saw science and faith in harmony. He writes that he hopes his readers will be inspired to “pay a more ready attention to the wonders of the Creation”. His stories are often so vivid that he gets away with packing in quite a bit of scientific detail, painting a more accurate picture of the wonderful events he observed as he travelled around the countryside. White’s book is one of the classics of nature writing, and there’s even an apocryphal story online that this is one of the most printed books in the country, after the Bible and Shakespeare.

White may have been one of those people with a capacity for endless activity, or perhaps he took rather more care over natural history than his vocation. Either way, I do think that anyone - from the parish priest to the youngest member of the congregation - could learn from his appreciation of creation. It is well worth spending ten minutes every now and again staring into a bush, pond or tree - especially in winter when it’s easy to hurry indoors and put the kettle on. Experiencing wildlife first-hand is wonderful fuel for our worship of God and care for His creation. As Psalm 111 says, “Great are the works of the Lord; they are pondered by all who delight in them” (NIV).

*(White’s book can be downloaded for free at <http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/1408>)

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

22nd November: St Cecilia - patron saint of musicians

If you are going to any concerts before Christmas, spare a thought for St Cecilia - the patron saint of musicians.

Cecilia is one of the most famous of the Roman martyrs of the 2nd century. As far as is known, she was born a noble lady of Rome who, despite her vow of virginity, was forced to marry an older pagan nobleman named Valerian. During the wedding, as the musicians played, Cecilia sat apart singing to God in her heart, and for that she was later declared the saint of musicians

When the time came for her marriage to be consummated, Cecilia told Valerian that watching over her was an angel of the Lord, who would punish him if he sexually violated her but would love him if he respected her virginity.

Understandably startled by this, Valerian then asked to see the angel for himself. Cecilia replied that to do so, he must go to the third milestone on the Via Appia and be baptised by the Bishop of Rome. Valerian seems to have been a good-natured husband, because the story goes that he followed her suggestion, was baptised a Christian, and sure enough, saw the angel protecting his wife.

Being a Christian in those days was dangerous, and when the next wave of Roman persecutions began, Valerian and Cecilia were among those arrested. It is said that they died at the hands of the Roman prefect Turcius Almachius, perhaps in Sicily sometime between 176 and 180 AD.

One story goes that Cecilia was struck on the neck with a sword, and as she lay dying, asked that her house be converted into a church. Certainly an early Roman Christian church, Santa Cecilia, was founded in the fourth century in the Trastevere section of Rome, reputedly on the site of the house in which she lived.

In the centuries since then, a number of musical compositions have been dedicated to her, and her feast day has become the occasion for many concerts and musical festivals.

St Cecilia is frequently depicted playing a viola, a small organ, or other musical instrument.

30th November Andrew (d. c.60) – patron saint of Scotland

The apostle Andrew is patron saint of Scotland. According to the gospel of Matthew, Andrew and his brother Simon Peter were the very first two disciples whom Jesus called. 'Come, follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.' (Matt 4:18,19)

Without more ado, they obeyed. 'At once they left their nets and followed him.' The story is touching for the simple but total faith that they had in Jesus.

Whenever the gospels mention the disciples, Andrew's name is always in the first four. Rather than a boisterous leader of men (like Peter), he seems to have been an approachable person who wanted to help people.

It was Andrew who helped introduce a group of Greeks to Jesus (John 12:20-2) and Andrew who offered Jesus the five small barley loaves and two small fishes when Jesus challenged them to feed the five thousand. (John 6:8) His faith in Jesus over small things was richly rewarded, and this faithful, kindly Galilean fisherman turned disciple went on to become one of the 12 apostles of the Christian Church.

Andrew never settled back in Capernaum by Galilee. Instead, his 'fishing for men' seems to have taken him far. One ancient tradition links him with Greece, where both Scythia and Epirus claimed him as their apostle. Another place in Greece, Patras in Achaia, claimed to be the place where Andrew was eventually martyred.

Like Jesus, he was crucified, but the story goes that during the two days it took him to die, he preached earnestly to the people about Jesus. Andrew was not afraid of death on a cross – he had seen it before, and knew one thing for certain: because of Jesus, there was nothing but eternal life ahead of him.

In the West, Andrew's feast-day was universal from the 6th century, and hundreds of churches were named after him in Italy, France and England. But how did he end up as patron saint of Scotland?

Well, according to one ancient legend, his relics were taken from Patras to Scotland in the 8th century, and ended up in Fife, where a church dedicated to him was built and became a centre for evangelisation and later pilgrimage. As Andrew was the only apostle to make it as far as Scotland, he was chosen as patron saint.

But Andrew did not stay in Scotland. After the fall of Constantinople in 1204, it is said that the Crusaders took his relics to Amalfi. From there the despot Thomas Palaeologus sent his head to the pope in Rome in 1461 – where it became one of the most treasured possessions of St Peters - until it was sent to the church in Constantinople by Paul VI.

On what it takes to be an ordinand

The Rectory
St James the Least



My dear Nephew Darren

I was intrigued that you have been nurturing someone called Dave who is considering ordination. Since Dave had never travelled outside the city, your decision to send him to me was understandable. Sadly, I don't think he is cut out for the ministry.

We did our best. In a fit of hospitality, the Colonel invited this Dave to stay at the Lodge, and to join his Saturday pheasant shoot as a beater. But Dave said firmly that he was against beating any kind of bird and abhors all kinds of murder. It seems young Dave is a vegetarian! You might have warned us. The Colonel is now concerned that Dave is connected in some way with the Green Party. You cannot be too careful these days.

Then Miss Saxby and Miss Tarby stepped in. They enjoy mushrooming, and kindly took young Dave off to the woods. It is not their fault that they are a bit deaf and so did not hear his cries of distress when he lost them among all the trees. They just assumed he had gone back to the Colonel's, and so of course they did not organise a search party until much later. Fortunately, the church warden's spaniel has a keen nose and found Dave before midnight. During all that time, Dave seemed to have had nothing better to do than slide about on fallen leaves and trip over hidden logs in the dark. He was even babbling about having heard a crying ghost. We feared he might be delirious but then realised he meant the local owl. He also seemed surprised by the darkness and asked how we manage without any streetlights at all in the parish. We explained the obvious - we simply follow the example of the well-refreshed when leaving the pub, and feel our way along the walls.

On Sunday morning Dave rushed into the church to warn me that there were several loose sheep in the churchyard. I decided then that he should return to the safety of the city. There was no point in letting him near most of our church ladies, who would have savaged him on sight.

The visit only proves the obvious: potential ordinands should be carnivorous, cricketing fly-fishers, most at home in well-worn tweeds and preferably accompanied by a muddy dog. How else will they get along with normal folk?

Your loving uncle,
Eustace

Bible Bite

A short story from the Bible

It can be read in the Bible in
Matthew 7:7-11, Luke 11:5-13

To teach about praying, and God's good gifts, Jesus told this story - 'If you have a visitor arrive in the middle of the night..'



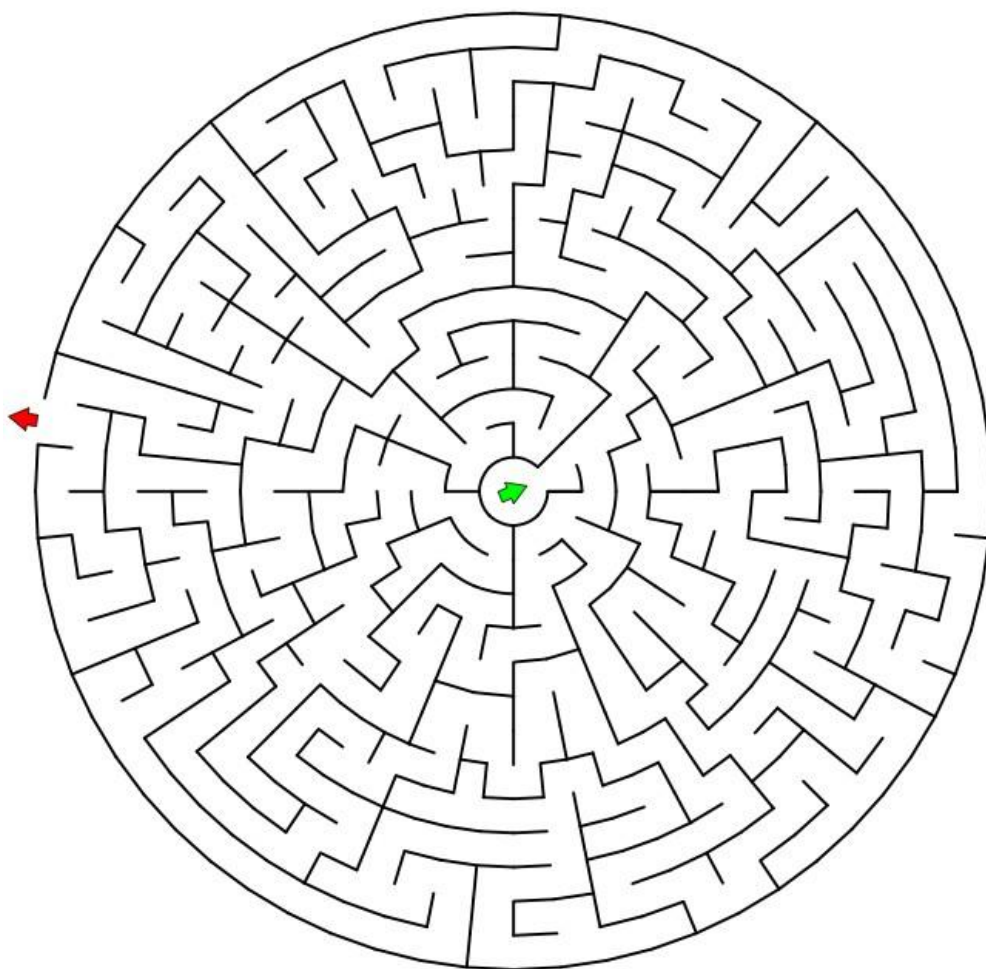
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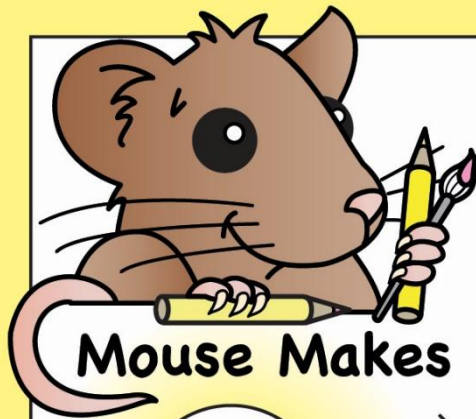
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October's Solution

2	6	5	1	9	7	8	4	3
4	8	7	6	5	3	9	1	2
9	1	3	8	4	2	5	6	7
8	5	2	4	3	6	7	9	1
3	9	6	7	1	5	2	8	4
7	4	1	2	8	9	3	5	6
5	2	8	3	6	1	4	7	9
6	3	9	5	7	4	1	2	8
1	7	4	9	2	8	6	3	5

Can you solve
the maze?





LIGHT IN THE DARKNESS

Advent Sunday this year falls on 30th November.

ADVENT is a time to celebrate the ARRIVAL of Jesus, God's Son, our Saviour. We look forward with HOPE, we give thanks for God's LOVE and the PEACE and JOY we have in Jesus.



Read:
Isaiah 40:5
What shall be revealed?



Read:
LUKE 2:10-11
Who is 'God's news of great joy' for?



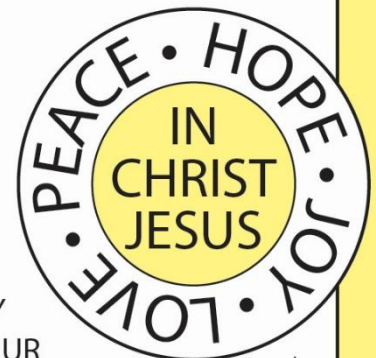
Read:
John 3:16
How did God show He loves us?



Read:
Romans 5:1-2
Through who do we have peace with God?

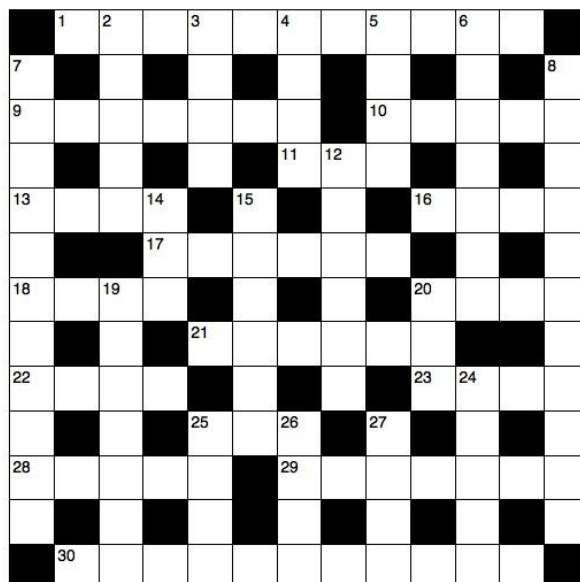
L G L O R Y E M P R O M I S E
S O K J Y A A R R I V A L W F
A D V E N T G O O D N E W S O
V P L S V L I R P S V P C A R
I E I U I O F C H R I S T H T
O A G S U V T M E S S A G E O
U C H O P E O P C A N D L E L
R E T U R N J O Y T W D B E D

ADVENT • ARRIVAL • HOPE • JOY • LOVE • PEACE • GOD • GLORY
MESSAGE • PROMISE • PROPHECY • FORETOLD • JESUS • SAVIOUR
CHRIST • GIFT • GOOD NEWS • RETURN • CANDLE • LIGHT



Across

- 1 The sixth disciple (Matthew 10:3) (11)
 9 'And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the — — ' (Matthew 6:13) (4,3)
 10 Love intensely (Song of Songs 1:4) (5)
 11 From Mt Carmel to Jezreel, Elijah — all the way (1 Kings 18:46) (3)
 13 One of the Midianite leaders who was captured and killed after Gideon's victory in the valley near Moreh (Judges 7:25) (4)
 16 Metallic element (4)
 17 At line (anag.) (6)
 18 'Cursed is everyone who is — on a tree' (Galatians 3:13) (4)
 20 Where Samson killed a thousand Philistines with a donkey's jawbone (Judges 15:14) (4)
 21 He succeeded Moses (Deuteronomy 34:9) (6)
 22 'When he saw him, he took — on him' (Luke 10:33) (4)
 23 'For — is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction' (Matthew 7:13) (4)
 25 'The god of this — has blinded the minds of unbelievers' (2 Corinthians 4:4) (3)
 28 Fear or terror (Psalm 31:22) (5)
 29 'We, who are many, are one body, for we all — of the one loaf' (1 Corinthians 10:17) (7)
 30 Assyrian ruler assassinated by his sons while worshipping his god Nisroch (2 Kings 19:37) (11)



Down

- 2 'For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made — ' (1 Corinthians 15:22) (5)
 3 'After supper he — the cup' (1 Corinthians 11:25) (4)
 4 The request of a man of Macedonia in Paul's vision: 'Come — to Macedonia and help us' (Acts 16:9) (4)
 5 He disobeyed his father Judah by refusing to impregnate his dead brother's wife (Genesis 38:9) (4)
 6 I veto me (anag.) (7)
 7 Fourth king of Judah (1 Kings 15:24) (11)
 8 Priest of God Most High, who blessed Abram (Genesis 14:18) (11)
 12 'I have made you — — for the Gentiles' (Acts 13:47) (1,5)
 14 Implore (1 Samuel 15:25) (3)
 15 'Out of the eater, something to eat; out of the — , something sweet' (Judges 14:14) (6)
 19 'I am the most ignorant of men; I do — — a man's understanding' (Proverbs 30:2) (3,4)
 20 'Sin shall not be your master, because you are not under — , but under grace' (Romans 6:14) (3)
 24 Native of, say, Baghdad (5)
 25 The last word in the Bible (Revelation 22:21) (4)
 26 Heroic tale (4)
 27 'Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you — ' (John 8:32) (4)

October's answers:

ACROSS 1, Jehoiachin. 7, Endured. 8, Eased. 10, Rash. 11, Startled. 13, Easier. 15, Rubric. 17, Impurity. 18, Feet. 21, Eye at. 22, Ready to. 23, Holy Spirit.

DOWN: 1, Judas. 2, Harm. 3, Is duty. 4, Cheerful. 5, Insular. 6, Jezreelite. 9, Dedication. 12, Secretly. 14, Supremo. 16, Stir up. 19, Egypt. 20, Hair.