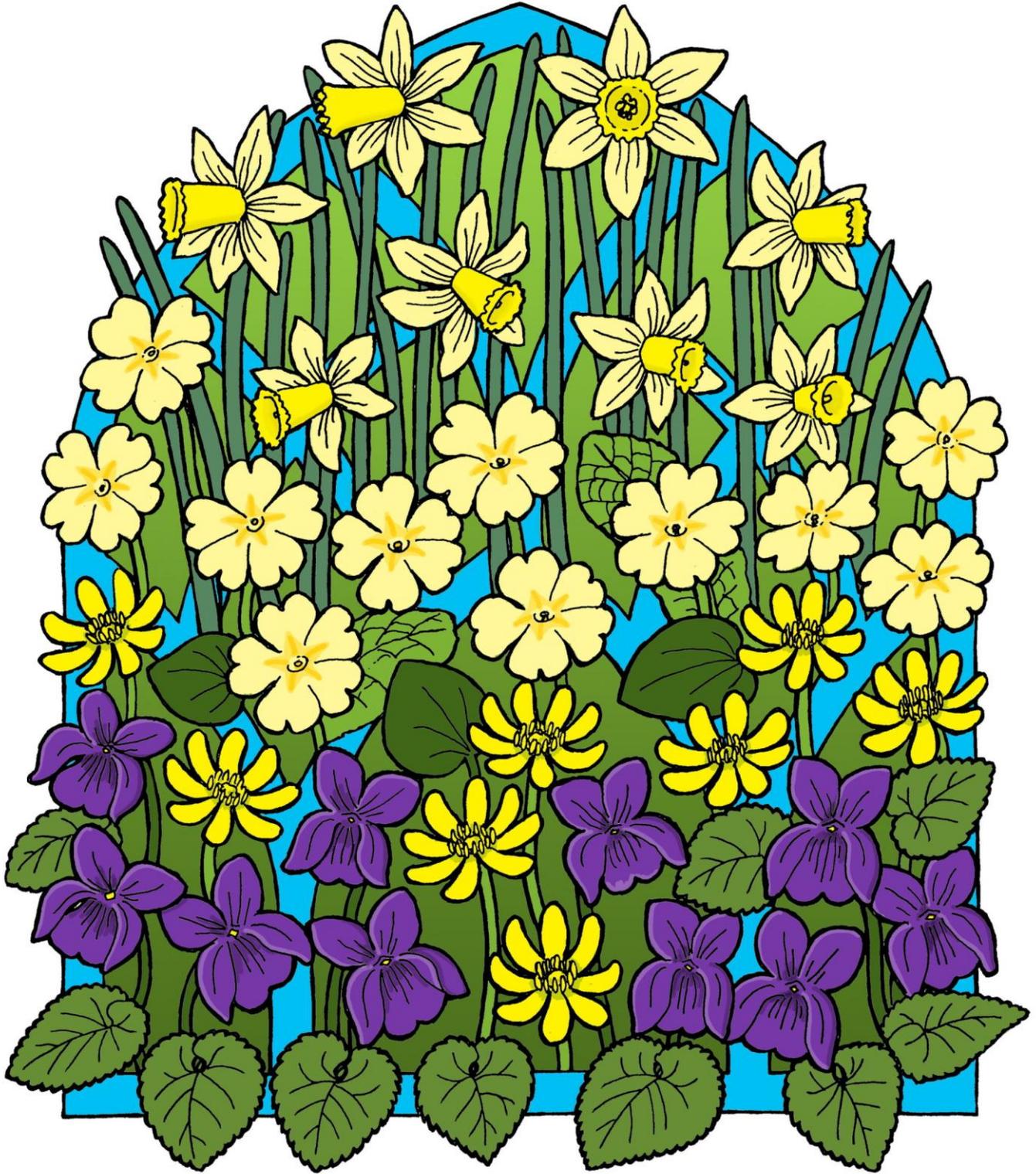


Rushall Parish News

March 2026

Free online. 30p print copy

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



The flowers are blooming, the time of birdsong has come!

Song of
Songs 2:12

Some useful numbers

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Lay Reader & Dementia Lead
Mrs Carol Beckwith Tel: 01922 648138

Churchwardens:
Mr Bob Barnard
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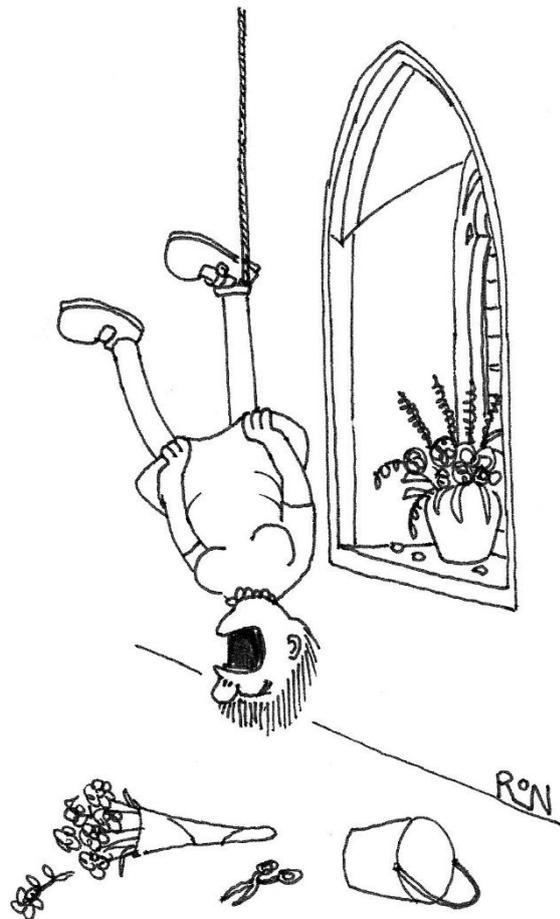
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Wedding Enquiries:
Mrs Glenys Barnard
Tel: 01922 624943
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See our website www.Rushallparish.org or our Facebook page RushallParish for regular updates.

150 years ago, on 10th March 1876 that the world's first telephone call was made. Alexander Grham Bell used his telephone to call his assistant, Thomas Watson, after spilling acid in his laboratory. The first words ever spoken on a telephone were: "Mr Watson, come here. I want you."



Mrs Stebbings always did the flowers in the South Window, as Mrs Todger soon learned

Going to church doesn't make you a Christian any more than standing in a garage makes you a car. – Anon

Please send any articles for the April magazine to Colin at colinsuch01@gmail.com by Friday 20th March.

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

What's the Big Idea? - An Introduction to the Old Testament: Jeremiah

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Jeremiah is described as *'a true, honest, and God-revealing companion for the worst of times.'* (Eugene Peterson). He was a priest from the village of Anathoth, near Jerusalem. His ministry to Judah began in 626 B.C. and continued until after the fall of Jerusalem in 586 B.C. Jeremiah brought a message of judgment and hope: *'See, I have set you this day over the nations and over the kingdoms, to root out and to pull down, to destroy and to throw down, to build and to plant.'* (1:10).

During Jeremiah's ministry, Judah had rejected the Lord for idols (2:13). They claimed to be God's people, yet they refused to heed God's word by refusing to be corrected and following false prophets who spoke what the people wanted to hear. Therefore, Jeremiah was the prophet of judgement. He called Judah to repent, but they refused (6:16-17). However, he also brought a message of hope. He preached that they should trust God (9:23-24) and that a faithful remnant would be restored to the land (23:3; 31:7-9). Jeremiah was a reluctant prophet, who felt compelled to speak God's word (20:9). His life was characterised by sorrow, *'O my Comforter in sorrow, my heart is faint within me.'* (8: 18). His people continually refused to listen to him, rewarding his labour with rejection and persecution.

Much of Jeremiah's message remains relevant today, because we still fall into idolatry, whether it is wealth, talents or social standing. Sin requires repentance and restoration; obedience brings blessings and joy with it. However, Jeremiah also points to Christ, as the one who makes this possible. He showed great compassion for His people and shed tears for them. He suffered their ingratitude, but still forgave them.

Time to wake up!

Spring is in the air – and indeed meteorological spring begins on March 1st whilst we have to wait until 20th March for astronomical spring to start. We can even see that the days are longer – despite the seemingly never-ending rain clouds that fill the skies.

The daffodils in the churchyard are all bursting into flower and the wild garlic is growing well and will soon be ready to use (leaves in salad or wild garlic butter or wild garlic pesto will be my choice).

In the fields the hawthorn and blackthorn are springing into flower and soon showers of white blossom will be an addition to my walks. All around us life is bursting into view and the earth is waking up. I must admit I'm longing to get into the garden but it is far too wet at the moment (but as it's another month before the garden waste bin collection starts I shouldn't be too impatient).

The church is also beginning to spring into new life. New people have joined our congregations; new ideas are contributing to our social



events, others are exploring what they think God is calling them to do in the life of the church (from ordained and lay ministry to cleaning and cake making).

By the end of the month we shall have a new archbishop and hopefully new vision in and for the church.

As a church we are looking at how we can reach out into our community and seen to be an active part of the community and, hopefully, an important part of the community. An easy way to do that is to tell people about our church and invite them to come and see for themselves. We need to be excited about our church enough to want to tell others, so let's put a spring in our step and in our church life as we look forward with joy and hope.

1st March - On St David's Day, why the leeks?

St David's Day, and it's time for the Welsh to wear proudly wear a leek or daffodil.

Shakespeare refers to the custom In Henry V, Act 5 Sc.1, where Gower berates Pistol for mocking at "an ancient tradition begun upon an honourable respect and worn as a memorable trophy of predeceased valour."

According to some sources, the wearing of leeks may be based on a legend that Welsh archers fought bravely at the Battle of Crecy in a field of leeks and, as a reminder of their bravery and loyalty, the Welsh began to wear a leek in their caps every St David's Day. The legend, true or not, could be a source of the 'honourable respect' which the Welsh had for their valorous archers.☒

We do know that David - or Dafydd - of Pembrokeshire was a monk and bishop of the 6th century. In the 12th century he was made patron of Wales, and he has the honour of being the only Welsh saint to be canonised and culted in the Western Church. Tradition has it that he was austere with himself, and generous with others - living on water and vegetables (leeks, perhaps?!) and devoting himself to works of mercy. He was much loved.

In art, St David is usually depicted in Episcopal vestments, standing on a mound with a dove at his shoulder, in memory of his share at an important Synod for the Welsh Church, the Synod of Brevi.



2nd March: Chad, the recycled bishop

Chad should be the patron saint of any modern bishop whose consecration is questioned by another bishop. Chad was consecrated a bishop, then deposed - and then re-consecrated!

It all began about the middle of the 7th century, when Oswiu, King of Northumbria, made Chad the bishop of the Northumbrian see. But due to a scarcity of appropriate bishops, two dubious bishops did the job of consecrating him. This led to Theodore, Archbishop of Canterbury, deciding to depose him about three years later.

Chad took his dismissal with good heart, and peacefully retired. But then Theodore had second thoughts: Chad was of excellent character: humble, devout, and zealous. So, Theodore re-consecrated him - to be the first bishop of the Mercians. Second time around, Chad was a great success - again.

When Chad died in about 672AD, he was quickly venerated as a saint. People took a great fancy to his bones, believing that they would bring healing. Even today, four large bones, dating from the 7th century, and believed to be Chad's, are in the R.C. cathedral in Birmingham and in our cathedral in Lichfield.

Bishops today may still argue about consecration, but they are unlikely to have their bones disturbed.

M&M: Monty and Matty

It's still muddy for our walks (and the servant is still wearing his wellies despite our suggestion to go barefoot!)

There are changes, however. Blossoms are appearing on the trees, a sign perhaps that spring is coming.



We still see lots of vandalism around the Lime Pits. Why can't people take their rubbish home with them? We've also seen where people on bikes have cut through and demolished fences in the fields to push their bikes through as if they own the place and the livestock that their keeping in don't matter. Mind you bikes on the road are a nuisance too. It seems that nobody bothers to have bells anymore to warn us when they're coming up from behind – and then they're surprised when we bark at them as they pass, wouldn't you if someone crept up behind you and frightened you?

No change in the garden though, it's still under water and we're still making paw print patterns on the floor when we come in. The servant still keeps saying he wants to start work in the garden but he can't – we don't see why, the water's not very deep! We can see a difference at either end of the day now, it's lighter for longer. Perhaps we will start having an evening walk some days? We'll have a word with him and see what he thinks.

Lots of woofs,
Monty and Matty

5th March: Eusebius, friend of St Jerome

Eusebius is the saint for you if you believe in the Bible, and also in providing hospitality. He was born of a good family in Cremona, Italy, in the fourth century, and felt called to become a monk. As Eusebius was ascetic by nature, he sought out St Jerome in Rome, who advocated an austere lifestyle for monks. They became life-long friends. At that time, Jerome was secretary to Pope Damasus, who commissioned him to produce for the Western church a translation of the Bible in Latin.

It was a time when Christian theologians were defending the faith from various heresies which had arisen concerning the nature of God. Eusebius was a loyal friend of Jerome, and so became involved in Jerome's theological disputes against various heresies.

When the Pope died in 384, Jerome decided to leave for the Holy Land. Eusebius begged to accompany him. At Antioch, they were joined by two female friends of Jerome's and together they made a pilgrimage to all the places connected with the earthly life of Jesus. Later, they decided to make their home in Bethlehem, where Jerome continued with writing, studying, and overseeing a monastery.

Jerome noticed that the vast number of pilgrims to Bethlehem were extremely poor, so he decided to build a hostel for them. Eusebius was sent to Croatia and Italy to raise money for the building project. He even sold his own property at Cremona to help with finances.

Meanwhile, the theological disputes continued, and it seems that Jerome next sent Eusebius to Rome, to support Pope Anastasius I.

In 400AD, Eusebius may have returned to his native Cremona, or else to Bethlehem to become the abbot of the church there. One (unproven) tradition credits him with founding the abbey of Guadalupe in Spain. Another late tradition credits him with raising three men from the dead - an event painted twice by Italian Renaissance painter Raphael Sanzio.

Wherever Eusebius spent his last years, he continued to support Jerome's interests, and they regularly corresponded on theology. Eusebius died in 423 and it is thought he is buried alongside Jerome in Bethlehem.

Gardening Notes for March

Having been so wet in late winter it seems that the gardening year will surely be late starting.

Finally the snowdrops came into full flower and had a soggy time of it. March should bring an abundance of daffodils which are so much more prolific in public places and roadsides and no less in our churchyard.

Hellebores and perennials such as pulmonia with its spotted leaves and blue flowers, sometimes mixed with pink, are early spots of colour. The pulmonia is a good flower for early foraging bees. Unfailingly the mixed purples of the hellebores come up as the 'Lenten Lilies' and added to this are the attractive lemon flowered varieties which also seem to be very reliable.

This is the time when we can feel that planting seeds is now the order of the day especially if warm places are available for germination. Few of us will have a heated greenhouse but a kitchen windowsill or a heated propagator is probably better.

Definitely it is the time to start off sweet peas in deep pots if possible. Special deep plastic tube trays are around. I think the old idea of using cardboard tubes seems unlikely to succeed as frequent watering could cause collapse.

New shoots on perennial plants can now be cleared of last season's old leaves.

If red cornus (dogwood) has shoots a few years old coppicing at this time will allow new growth and these new shoots will show better colour. The first cut of the grass seems to be on hold as the ground will take time to dry out, however some good spring weather must be on the way with winter behind us,

Ann

Remembering the Hindenburg

Ninety years ago, on 4th March 1936, the German airship *Hindenburg* made its first flight. It was the largest airship ever constructed, and when it was destroyed in a fire in May 1937, it ended the era of airship travel.

Airships had been developed from balloons – the first attempt at lighter-than-air travel pioneered in 1783 by the Montgolfier brothers – because they could be steered using rudders and engines. Representing advances in science, engineering and exploration, they fascinated creative minds.

Foremost among them was Ferdinand von Zeppelin, who founded the Zeppelin Company that designed and built the *Hindenburg*.

The causes of the crash were primarily the fragile nature of airships, their use of highly flammable hydrogen gas and combustible construction material, and in the case of the *Hindenburg*, the fact that it was attempting to land during a thunderstorm at Lakehurst, New Jersey. Thirteen passengers, 22 crew members and one ground worker died. The horrific fire was caught live on camera. Not surprisingly, it heralded the end of the airship era as far as commercial aviation was concerned.

However, that was also hastened by the destruction of the British-made R101 nearly seven years earlier, when it crash-landed safely in France during its maiden flight – again during bad weather – but immediately burst into flames and incinerated 48 of the 54 people on board.

The Church of The Holy Family and St Michael at Kesgrave in Suffolk was constructed in memory of Squadron Leader Michael Rope and those who died with him in the blaze. He was an early and successful designer of airships who worked on the R101 at Cardington in Bedfordshire.

Airships exist today in advanced and safer form. Their ability to land almost anywhere and carry large payloads makes them useful for observation and providing humanitarian aid in disaster-hit areas.

Walsall Almshouses

Lench's Trust, Head Office, 80 Ridgacre Road, Birmingham, B32 2AQ



Welcome to Margaret Coloquhoun Chavasse

The Chavasse family name is widely recognised with Francis Chavasse becoming the second Bishop of Liverpool and the founder of St Peter's College in Oxford. Margaret's father was Horace Chavasse vicar of Rushall, the two charming properties pictured above were erected in 1886 as a tribute to her mother and father. Margaret Coloquhoun Chavasse sadly passed away in 1930.

These two charming pre-war properties are in the historic village of Rushall first mentioned in the Domesday Book and comprise of two one bed roomed semi-detached bungalows situated on Lichfield Road. Whilst they are positioned on a busy road they offer a haven of peace with garden spaces to the rear of each bungalow. There is ample parking close by and in the surrounding area.

The location of the bungalows allows access to a wide range of shops and facilities within walking distance and good public transport links offer

easy access to the town of Walsall which is 2.3 miles away and all the amenities on offer there. Today, Rushall is still described as a village with swathes of rural land and yet still it provides everything that is required to provide for modern living.

Assistance with access to benefits is available for successful applicants.

All repairs are undertaken by the Lench's Trust maintenance team and subject to the maintenance policy which is available to all residents.

There is a dedicated out of hours emergency repairs service to assist residents with emergencies that occur outside of normal office hours.

If you would like to join our waiting list, then please contact Jayne McGettrick on 0121 426 0455 ext. 332 or via email at jayne.mcgettrick@lenchs-trust.co.uk.

The Charity called the Margaret Colquhoun Chavasse Almshouses

A residence will soon be available for persons in need who are not less than 60 years of age and who have at any time prior to the date of appointment resided in the Ecclesiastical Parish of St. Michael, Rushall for a period or periods amounting in total to not less than five years. Preference will be given to members of the Church of England, and subject thereto, to married couples.

For more details contact the vicar, Colin.



Prayer is asking for rain. Faith is carrying an umbrella. – *Anon*

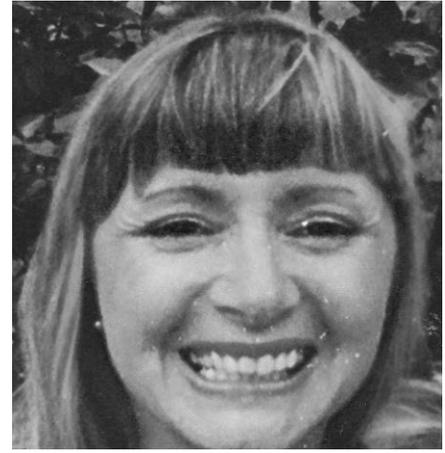
DEMENTIA

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 31st March 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

15th March – Mothers and children

Whatever our childhood was like, it was formational. We learned from our earthly parents, good things ideally, although not everyone's childhood is great.

In the Bible, St Paul refers to the importance of up-bringing and of spiritual heritage. When he greets Timothy in his second letter to him, he calls him his 'Dear Son', praises his 'genuine faith' and then goes on:

"You share the faith that first filled your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice. And I know that same faith continues strong in you."

Timothy's childhood had been rooted in the Old Testament scriptures that he had been taught by his mother and grandmother. Their example had set him on the right path, until he was old enough to choose for himself to follow Jesus.

Physically, we when we are young, we need nurturing by mothers and fathers. Spiritually it is the same. When we come to faith, we need spiritual mothers and father to help us grow into maturity as God's adopted children.

We also need spiritual sustenance: regularly reading the Bible, spending time in God's presence in prayer, and worshipping with the family of the Church.

God – our heavenly parent provides our personal nurturing through prayer and the Bible, but He also gives us each other, to encourage and share our experiences of his faithfulness.

However imperfect our earthly upbringing was, *God is a good, good Father*, a perfect parent who will only teach us *good* things. And gradually, as the fruit of the Holy Spirit ripens in us, we will become more like Jesus. We will gain more of the family likeness!

Is there someone in your life who has helped you to grow spiritually? This Mothering Sunday, thank God for them.

Is there someone your life whom you have 'mothered' or 'fathered' along the way? This Mothering Sunday, pray for them.

Out and about walking, driving and visiting: A visit to Broadway Tower.

Above the town of Broadway a long drive on the right is signposted to the privately owned site including Broadway Tower. There is a paid for carpark and a café with a good area of outdoor seating for warmer summer days taking in the magnificent views. In good weather weekends are quite crowded with many families and dogs.

The interior of the cafe on the ground floor can be a place of muddy boots and dogs, however a few tables upstairs overlooking the ground floor are dog free and more comfortable. Main meals have been largely discontinued but there is a reasonable choice of paninis etc and good cake, a little on the expensive side but tasty and well presented, this is of course just the trend of rising prices and, of course, this is the Cotswolds.

The shop has a small gift section while more gifts and clothes are available at another shop and cafe a little way down the hill.

There are several small circular walks around the site and for the more ambitious a track leads down to the village with a fairly steep return.

The Tower is open for visitors for which you now have to pay a small fee as a couple rooms have been decorated and furnished. Then the climb to the roof affords panoramic views.

It is a short drive down the famous Fish Hill, full of sweeping steep bends, to take you into Broadway. Possibly Broadway is one of the most touristy towns in the Cotswolds, however a walk up and down the High Street is pleasant with plenty of shops, galleries and places for refreshments.

Retracing your steps towards the top of the town there is an array of large, interesting properties to view,
Ann



Carbon Fast
for Lent



Climate Stewards



JOIN THE CLIMATE STEWARDS CARBON FAST 2026!

40 DAYS OF CLIMATE ACTION CHALLENGES

WANT TO TAKE PRACTICAL ACTION THIS LENT TO CARE FOR CREATION AND REDUCE YOUR CARBON FOOTPRINT?

WHAT IS A CARBON FAST?

GIVING UP UNSUSTAINABLE CONSUMPTION PRACTICES TO REDUCE OUR CARBON FOOTPRINT—AND IN DOING SO, LEARNING TO LIVE LIGHTLY ON GOD’S EARTH.

SCAN QR CODE TO JOIN



WHY DO THIS?

BY STARTING TO REDUCE OUR CONSUMPTION AT LENT, AND CONTINUING WITH THOUGHTFUL LIVING THROUGH THE YEAR, WE ARE CARING FOR CREATION, A RESPONSIBILITY ENTRUSTED TO US BY GOD.



FAST TO HELP PEOPLE AND PLANET TO FLOURISH

WEEKLY THEMES:

- WEEK 1: CREATION CARE
- WEEK 2: CONSUMERISM / SHOPPING
- WEEK 3: MONEY / INVESTMENTS
- WEEK 4: FOOD WASTE / MEAT & DAIRY
- WEEK 5: TRANSPORT / DRIVING
- WEEK 6: ENERGY / ELECTRICITY / GAS
- WEEK 7: SOCIAL MEDIA

WHAT IS INVOLVED?

- 7 TOPICS WITH 3 CHALLENGE LEVELS
- WEEKLY REFLECTION ON CREATION CARE
- SHARE YOUR PROGRESS WITH US - EMAIL AND SOCIAL MEDIA

TO JOIN - SIGN UP VIA QR CODE FOR WEEKLY EMAIL AND TIPS!

A Short Article Exploring the Place of the Creed in Christian Faith and Living: Focusing on God the Father and Creator

In our journey of faith as Christians we recite, at least weekly, the Apostles or Nicene Creed, declaring our belief in the Triune God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. In this short article we are focusing on God the Father our creator, and how this is of practical value to Christian living. The Nicene Creed was written by the early Church in 325 and revised in Constantinople in 381 to incorporate the Holy Spirit as worshipped and glorified with the Father and the Son. It has been since the second century however that the Creeds affirm our belief in 'God the Father (Almighty)', and principally in his capacity as 'Father and creator of the universe'. The Creed is our Christian 'rule of faith'. In this Christian doctrine, the Creed, we acknowledge God of creation, which refers to God who, by love, power, and wisdom are absolute and unimaginable, and bring into being things distinct from himself. Creation is the beginning of God's Revelation of himself, in which his reality is manifested to his creatures in their very coming to be and continuing in existence. It is the basis of all other Christian doctrines and is pronounced in the first line of the Nicene Creed: 'I believe in one God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible'. The Creed isn't a set of abstract doctrines but serves as a roadmap for practical Christian living. Understanding God as our Father, Jesus as our Redeemer, and the Holy Spirit as our Sustainer transforms our world view and daily interactions. It's an invitation to live out our faith. This isn't a mere theological abstraction but a cornerstone with profound implication pivotal to our relationship with the Triune God Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer.

In the chaos of life, understanding God as our Father provides us with a stable anchor. It was Jesus who calls God 'Abba, Father' (Mark 14:36). It means we are not individual souls, aimlessly wondering the world alone, but gives us a family and sense of belonging. Recognising that God is our loving Father fostering a sense of identity and purpose. We are not random creations but intentionally created by a caring Creator. This knowledge influences our self-worth, relationships, and decisions, grounding us in the security of divine love. At the start of the Creed we confesses trust in God the Father who is 'maker of heaven and earth' but what does this mean. It is a rather ambiguous term. In much of theological literature the analogy of a potter developing something out of clay is used to be understood God crafting something out of nothing, or creating out of nothing', in Latin, *creatio ex nihilo*. *Ex nihilo* is the doctrine that claims matter is not eternal but had to be created by some divine creative act. In our every day lives whether we chose to believe it or not it is difficult to conceptualise. To middle age thinkers, the idea of something coming from nothing was absurd, unscientific, and illogical.

We can see many references in the Bible where God is declared as the 'Father almighty' and '*maker of heaven and earth*', as in the following Biblical passages; 'I believe in God, the Father almighty (Isaiah 44:6; 45:5), Creator of heaven and earth (Genesis 1:1; John 1:1-3; Acts 14:15)'. Finding confirmation of this in the bible affirms what we say in the Creed, and gives the use of those words the justification.

Relating this foundational statement in the Creed to practical value in our Christian lives and living there are, in my view several things we can take away from reflecting on God the Father, creator of all things, including the creation of man and woman. First, whether we want to accept it or not we are living in a period of climate change caused by human activity and harmful to the planet, disturbing our weather systems and thus causing natural disasters. As Christians we have a responsibility to care for God's creation and be mindful of this. We are custodians of God's creation, as it says in Genesis 2:15; 'The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it'. So, what practical things can we takeaway, and what can we do? Perhaps we can spread the word on how to care for our environment, on use of plastics, recycling, energy consumption (looking at how we can reduce our carbon footprint).

We can also be mindful of the 5th Mark of Mission as purported by the Church of England, which 'strives to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth'

In terms of every day practical matters concerning God the creator, several organisations have been set up to acknowledge the importance of this, such as 'God's Acre', a charitable organisation helping to preserve nature around churchyards, and 'A Rocha' who have set up an Eco Church initiative. They claim that the Eco Church is a 'learning community of churches of all shapes and sizes. It provides a framework to support your church and its leadership to take practical action on caring for God's earth'. In addition to this it offers toolkits and resources, online events, prayer forums and occasional conferences, reminding us that we are all part of God's creation.

In summary it is difficult to address and include the many philosophical debates concerning God the Father and creation, but in addition to creation in the sense of the nature, we as human beings were also created by God, in his image, as in Genesis; 'on the sixth day animals that live on the land and finally humans, made in the image of God were created'. More recently the debate on human identity, sexuality, relationships and marriage are pertinent and ongoing in the Church of England. Some argue that they present the Church with challenging times as traditional views change, and have radical implications for conventional Christian beliefs, but in a society where justice, diversity, equality and inclusion are widely accepted we need to find ways and think how we can embed the values in our Christian faith and living.

Recipe

At the risk of repeating this recipe it is so appropriate for this time of the year and delicious as long as you like marzipan. My family actually prefer this to Christmas cake as do I.

Simnel Cake

A 7 in round cake tin should be greased and lined with parchment paper. Set oven at 150C /Gas 2

Ingredients

6oz softened butter
6oz soft brown sugar
3 eggs
6oz plain flour
3tp mixed spice
1tp baking powder
2tb milk
10oz mixed dried fruit
2oz glace cherries chopped (if liked)
1oz mixed peel
Finely grated rind of a lemon
2oz ground almonds

To decorate

1lb almond paste
1tb sieved apricot jam
1 egg white and 4-6oz icing sugar
Mini eggs

Method

Put all the ingredients together in a large bowl and beat together until well blended.

Place half mixture in the tin and level top.

Having divided the marzipan into 3 roll out one portion to fit tin and place on cake mixture.

Add remaining cake mixture and smooth the top.

Bake until cooked approximately two and half hours, then cool on a wire rack

Remove cold cake from tin and brush top with apricot jam and then roll another portion of marzipan to fit top. Pinch up the edges of marzipan.

Use last portion of marzipan to make eleven balls (one for each of Jesus's disciples except Judas Iscariot). Place these evenly around the edge.

Make an icing with egg white and icing sugar and pour on top of cake.

When nearly set place mini eggs or coloured foil eggs in centre of the top and maybe add a fluffy chicken.

This cake keeps well like Christmas cake and the gooey marzipan in the centre of the cake is rather delicious!

Ann

26th March: Harriet Monsell – compassion and humour

The daughters of baronets don't usually choose to work with prostitutes and orphans, but Harriet Monsell was no ordinary woman.

She was born in 1811 into one of Ireland's oldest families. Her father, Sir Edward O'Brien, was 4th Baronet of Dromoland, and represented his county Clare in Parliament. Harriet married Charles Monsell, an Anglican clergyman connected with the Oxford Movement, and they moved to Derry, where his father was Archdeacon. But Charles developed tuberculosis, and soon he and Harriet were sent to the milder climate of Naples.

When Charles died in 1850, Harriet moved to England and continued her connection with the Oxford Movement. She also began working among former prostitutes and unwed mothers. Soon Harriet, along with two other women, decided to profess religious vows, and dedicate their lives to caring for the poor and needy. Inspired by John the Baptist's call to penitence, in 1852 they took the name of the Community of St John Baptist, of which Harriet became the Mother Superior.

They were one of the first Anglican religious orders since the Reformation, and because much of their work was in the Berkshire town of Clewer, they were often called the 'Clewer Sisters'.

Within five years their work had gone from caring for about 30 marginalised women to dedicating a building that would house about 80 such women. Mother Harriet guided the work with endless energy and extensive correspondence. The work grew to include 40 institutions, ranging from mission houses to orphanages, schools and hospitals.

Mother Harriet was much loved for her "strength of character, firmness of faith, an infectious sense of humour, a gift for listening, and a magnetism which none could resist," according to one admirer. She had to retire in 1875 for health reasons, but maintained an interest in the work until her death on Easter Sunday March 1883.

Why big, wet licks from a dog can help a teenager's mental health

Teenagers who kiss their dog or are occasionally licked by their pet are happier, according to a recent study. They have even been found to have better mental health than those who do not have a dog.

Why should this be? It seems to all come down to the gut. Research has found that teenagers in homes with a dog have a specific gut bacteria constitution, known as the microbiome, which boosts mental wellbeing.

Gut bacteria samples from teenagers were analysed and the participants also underwent psychological assessment. Tests showed that those with dogs had healthier scores, and that their microbiome was rich in certain bacteria.

When the dog-influenced bacteria were injected into mice in a lab, even the rodents became more social and engaged more with other mice.

The study's author, Prof Takefumi Kikusui, of Azabu University in Japan, said that although dog ownership provides a sense of security through simple interaction, "the most interesting finding from this study is that bacteria promoting prosociality, or empathy, were discovered in the microbiomes of adolescent children who keep dogs."

Afternoon tea, anyone?

Do you take afternoon tea? Ever wondered where it started? The custom seems to date back to the mid-19th century, and the seventh Duchess of Bedford, Anna Russell. The Duchess got hungry at about 4pm each day, calling it "that sinking feeling". As it was still four hours until dinner (at 8pm), she began to have sandwiches or a small cake with some tea. Her friends thought this was marvellous, and the idea spread quickly through (hungry) upper class circles.

Soon, it seems, everyone in England was looking forward to Afternoon Tea, and a great British tradition was born. Though, during the last century, the sandwiches and cake gave way to biscuits, still we reached for the teapot each afternoon. Not so much anymore, it seems. In the last five years, sales of tea and biscuits have dropped. Perhaps we are drinking coffee? The research was done by retail analysts Mintel.

Record number of young adults join ministry experience year

A record number of young adults have joined a year-long placement scheme to experience ministry in the Church of England.

The Ministry Experience Scheme (MES) intake this year is 121, the largest the scheme has had since it was founded more than a decade ago. This year's total means that more than 1,000 young adults, including this year's intake, have been part of the Scheme since it was set up in 2013.

A Bucket of Tadpoles: Springtime, Curiosity, and the Theology of Science

When I was nearly three, I knocked a bucket of tadpoles all over the patio. Those unfortunate creatures must have been collected to educate my brother and I on where frogs came from, but a toddler can't just stand by and watch. Can I see up close? Or maybe I was 'helpfully' moving it to another place. I just remember doing something I shouldn't have done, and tadpoles on the ground. I was sad that I wouldn't get to see those creatures grow up.

I might have been great at destroying things when I was a child (my family would probably say I still am), but I absolutely love watching living things up close. The more I learn, the more my sense of wonder grows. For a tadpole to become a frog, large sections of its gut, salivary glands and muscles must die, as well as the gills. The cells in those tissues are programmed to curl up and disintegrate, and are then swallowed up by a specialised kind of white blood cell. Legs grow from small sacs of cells on the tadpole's body, and one of my textbooks says that 'The nervous system is also remodelled' - which I suspect is a bit of an understatement.

This knowledge removes a little of the mystery of how a tadpole turns into a frog, but there is plenty more to discover. These few details also reveal the cleverness of the process. Metamorphosis is surprisingly common in the animal kingdom. How is that an efficient way to grow up, or is efficiency not the most important thing for an animal?

Scientists are essentially grown-ups who are still very much in touch with their inner two-year-old. They refuse to stop asking questions, even when finding an answer becomes decidedly more awkward than opening a textbook.

Many scientists are people of faith, and this also drives their questioning. They believe that God created a world that was very good, that the purpose of all Creation is to praise Him, that we are made in God's image, and that we are tasked with looking after Creation. So Christians, of all people, should be enjoying and investigating our surroundings. These are the bones of a theology of science which serves some of us very well, and keeps us looking into things like buckets of frogs - that is, until a two-year-old comes and knocks them over.

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.

When women become mothers... tracing a pregnancy

March brings us not only Mothering Sunday, but also the Annunciation of the Incarnation -when the angel Gabriel told Mary that she would become pregnant with the Christ child. (25th March, exactly nine months before Christmas).

Mary was overwhelmed with joy and love, as are millions of women when they realise their child is on the way.

Of course, Mary knew very little of just how her baby was growing within her. Today, modern science provides some fascinating details... here is one such description.

By end of the first month

Size: Quarter of an inch.

Development: The baby is called an embryo at this stage. The heart has started to beat, but so far it has only one chamber. There is a simple spinal cord, and the eyes and ears are beginning to show. The foetus is growing about 1/125th of an inch a day. (See Psalm 139: 11-14)

By end of the second month

Size: 1 and 1/8th inch

Development: The embryo is now technically a foetus, and its face and features are forming. The muscles are starting to move, and the limbs are starting to differentiate. The internal organs are starting to develop. (See Psalm 139: 15-18)

By end of the third month

Size: 3 inches

Development: The foetus has arms, hands and fingers, legs feet and toes. The ears appear, the eyes are developing, and the face begins to look human. The lips open and close. The doctor may hear a faint heartbeat. Blood cells are produced by the liver and spleen. (See Isaiah 49: 15-16)

By end of the fourth month

Size: 4 inches

Development: Distinct heartbeat, gristle changing to bone, ribs visible, eyes, ears and nose more human shape, eyebrows present. Foetus can frown, squint and grimace. (See Isaiah 44: 2-4)

At end of fifth month

Size: 7 inches

Development: Mother begins to feel first kicks. Eyes still closed, hair appears, ears nearly complete and baby now hearing the mother. (See Psalm 121)

At end of sixth month

Size: 11-14 inches.

Development: Eyelashes are forming, fingernails growing. Baby hears clearly and may move to the rhythm of mother's body. Also, the rudiments of language are being laid down. Can respond to music. (See Luke 1: 36-44)

The last three months are important in intrauterine bonding; the foetus may be able to feel the mother's emotions. Future baby's sleep patterns may be influenced by her sleeping patterns now.

At end of seventh month

Size: 14 -17 inches.

Development: If born now, it has a chance of surviving. Lungs maturing, eyelids separating and eyes open. (See Psalm 128:1-5)

End of eight month

Size: 16-18 inches

Development: Baby growing and gaining weight. Very good chance of survival. By the 32nd week, the neural circuits in brain are as advanced as a newborn, so a great deal of conscious awareness. Sleeping and waking now distinct states. (See Philippians 4: 4-8)

End of ninth month

Size: 20 inches on average. 7 pounds on average

Development: All systems are complete and growing. Now is a good time to pray that everything goes well at the birth. (See John 16:21-22, Matthew 18:1-5)

As it says in the Psalms, we are 'wonderfully made'!

On how to run a church council meeting

The Rectory
St James the Least



My dear Nephew Darren

Clearly, the sight of your vicar running out of the room halfway through your last church council meeting, saying he should have stayed as a traffic warden, where he was universally liked, has unnerved you. It would have unnerved me too, since a universally popular traffic warden is an exceptional creature.

But perhaps it is necessary to give you some advice for the day when you do have to chair your first church council meeting.

1. Consider every agenda issue carefully beforehand and decide what you would like to do. Then, at the meeting, consult widely, listen to every opinion, weigh all the arguments, and then do precisely what you had decided before the meeting ever took place.
2. Never, ever, let council members discuss hymns, which avoids getting blood on the carpets.
3. Arrange the seating in rows, all facing the front, so that everyone must respond directly to you. The last thing you want is for council members to be able to discuss matters freely with one another.
4. Start smoking a pipe. At those times when you are faced with an issue when you really are unsure of how to respond, taking out your pipe, dismantling it, searching for a pipe cleaner, squinting down the stem to see if it is clean, mopping out the goo in the bowl, searching for your tobacco pouch, filling the pipe, tamping it down, asking if you can borrow matches and attempting to light it several times over, will give you more than sufficient time to formulate a reply. Once you have perfected the routine, the silence will have been so protracted, that most of the committee will have long forgotten what the question was anyway.
5. If someone is talking too long, consult your diary, noisily and obsessively, about next month's appointments, or write a note to a committee member who is at the back of the room and get it passed to him. The speaker should soon get the message.

These are the simpler techniques of committee management. The advanced procedures must wait until you are strong enough to bear them.

Your loving uncle,
Eustace

Bible Bite

A short story from the Bible

It can be read in the Bible in
Matthew 25: 14-30

Jesus told a story to help his disciples
to be ready for the end of time. 'A
rich man was about to go on a journey...'

He gave his servants money
to look after, depending on
what they could do.

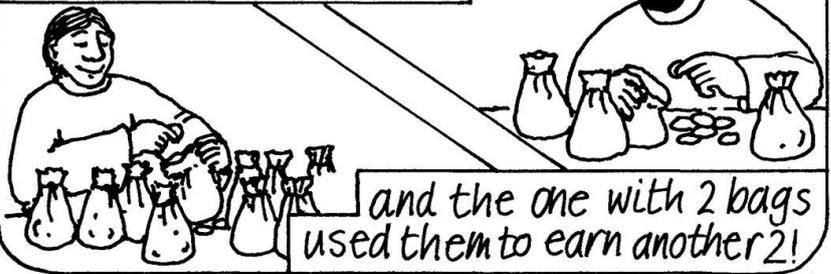


He gave 5 bags of coins to the
first, 2 to the second, and 1 to the third.

As soon as he had gone,
the first two servants
started to work.



The one with 5 bags of coins
used them to earn 5 more,



and the one with 2 bags
used them to earn another 2!

The third servant dug a
hole and buried his bag.



When
the master
came back,
he called
his
servants
to him...



The first two showed him they
had doubled his money, and he
was very happy with them.



You are a hard man
who expects us to work. I
was afraid so I just hid it.

If you knew what I
expected, why didn't
you do it?



Get out of here!



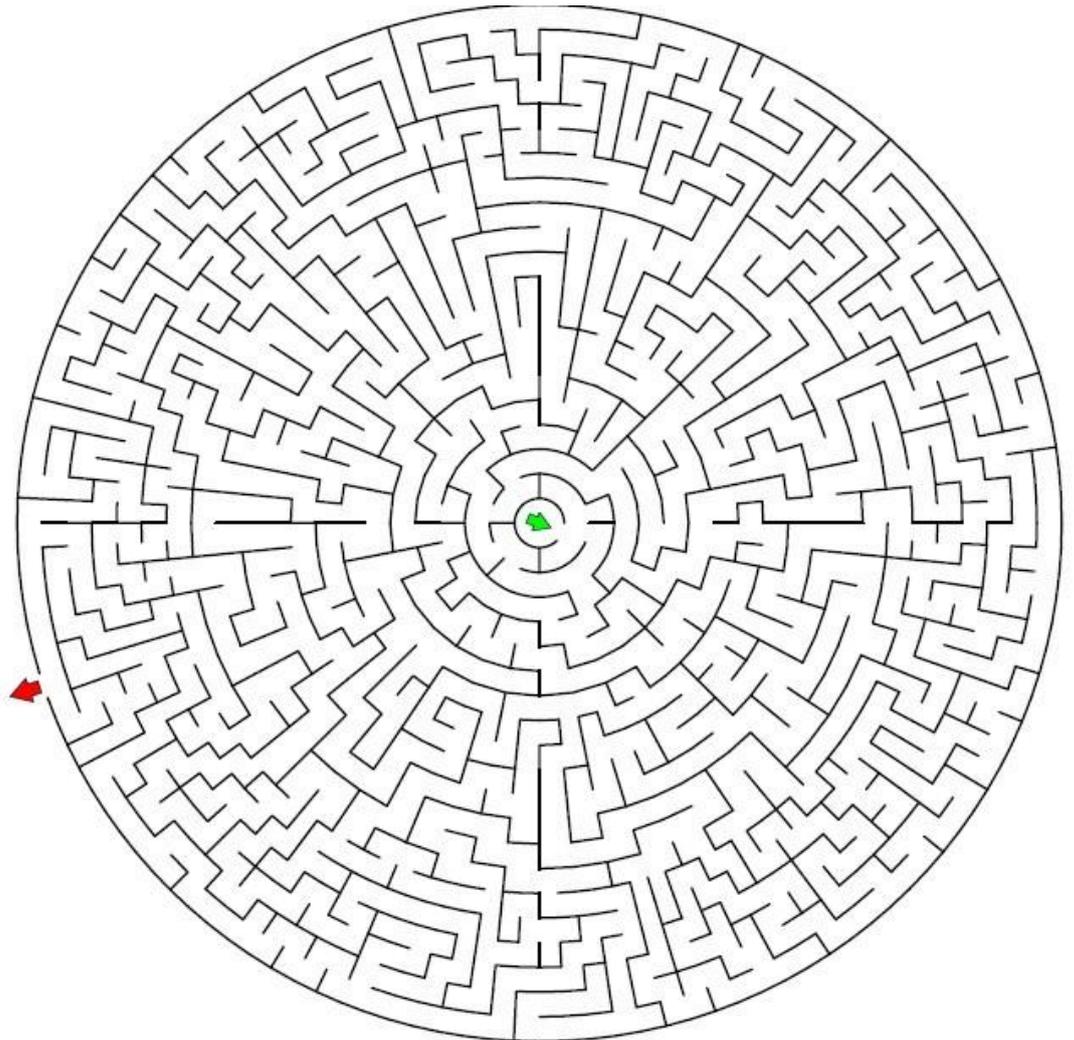
February's Solution

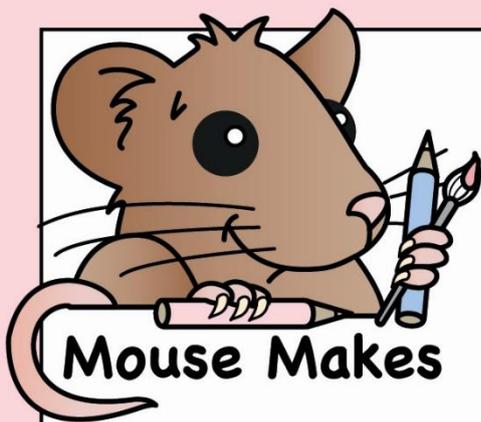
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7	8	2	9	6	5	4	3	1
5	9	3	1	8	7	2	4	6
2	6	7	4	5	3	1	8	9
8	4	1	2	9	6	3	5	7

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Can you solve
the maze?





The Bible has many stories of mothers who had great faith in God. With their love, care, encouragement and prayers their children grew up to be great people of God.



Who saved her baby by putting him in a basket in the river?

Exodus 2:1-3 and 6:20

Who was 90 years old when she had her son Isaac?
Genesis 17:19



Whose prayers for a child were answered by God?
1 Samuel 1:20

Who had two sons called Cain and Abel?
Genesis 4:1-2

Across

3. **Obed's** mother

Matthew 1:5

4. **John's** mother

Luke 1:57-60

7. **Reuben's** mother

Genesis 29:32

8. **Joseph's** mother

Genesis 30:22-24

9. **Jesus' mother**

Acts 1:14

Down

1. **Boaz's** mother

Matthew 1:5

2. **Solomon's** mother

1 Kings 1:11

4. **Timothy's** mother

2 Timothy 1:5

5. **Ishmael's** mother

Genesis 16:15

6. **Jacob and Esau's** mother

Genesis 25:21-26

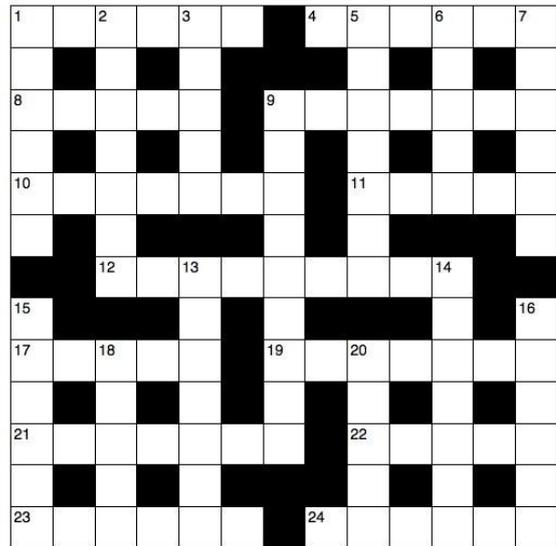


Answer the questions then put them into the crossword

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Across

- 1 Arouse (Song of Songs 2:7) (6)
4 Extinguish (Isaiah 1:31) (6)
8 "They — —," you will say, "but I'm not hurt!"
(Proverbs 23:35) (3,2)
9 Unhappiness (Nehemiah 2:2) (7)
10 Jewish (7)
11 Dirge (anag.) (5)
12 'A truthful witness gives honest —, but a false
witness tells lies' (Proverbs 12:17) (9)
17 Paul quoted from the second one in his address in
the synagogue at Pisidian Antioch (Acts 13:33) (5)
19 'Do not use your freedom to — the sinful nature'
(Galatians 5:13) (7)
21 'As you can see, he has done nothing to — death'
(Luke 23:15) (7)
22 Name applied by Isaiah to Jerusalem (Isaiah 29:1)
(5)
23 'All the people — — one man, saying, "None of us will go home"' (Judges 20:8) (4,2)
24 Lazarus, who was carried by angels to Abraham's side when he died, was one (Luke 16:20) (6)



Down

- 1 Appalled (Job 26:11) (6)
2 'In an — to escape from the ship, the sailors let the lifeboat down into the sea' (Acts 27:30) (7)
3 Expel (Acts 18:16) (5)
5 'But I have a baptism to —, and how distressed I am until it is completed!' (Luke 12:50) (7)
6 'Of the increase of his government and peace there will be — —' (Isaiah 9:7) (2,3)
7 Hurry (Psalm 119:60) (6)
9 'For I desire mercy, not —, and acknowledgement of God rather than burnt offerings' (Hosea 6:6) (9)
13 One of its towns was Sychar, where Jesus met a woman at Jacob's well (John 4:5) (7)
14 Shouting (Acts 7:57) (7)
15 Arachnid (Isaiah 59:5) (6)
16 One of Paul's first converts in Philippi was Lydia, a — in purple cloth (Acts 16:14) (6)
18 Donkeys (5)
20 Raked (anag.) (5)

February's answers:

ACROSS 1, Credit. 4, Tackle. 7, Cain. 8, Kenaniah. 9, Strength. 13, Beg. 16, Salvation Army. 17, ARC.
19, Every day. 24, Admonish. 25, Dire. 26, Sneeze. 27, Bronze.

DOWN: 1, Cock. 2, Epistolical. 3, Taken. 4, Tenet. 5, Cane. 6, Leave. 10, Erase. 11, Guide. 12, Honey.
13, Barbarian. 14, Guys. 15, Asia. 18, Rod in. 20, Voice. 21, Rahab. 22, Hope. 23, Mene.