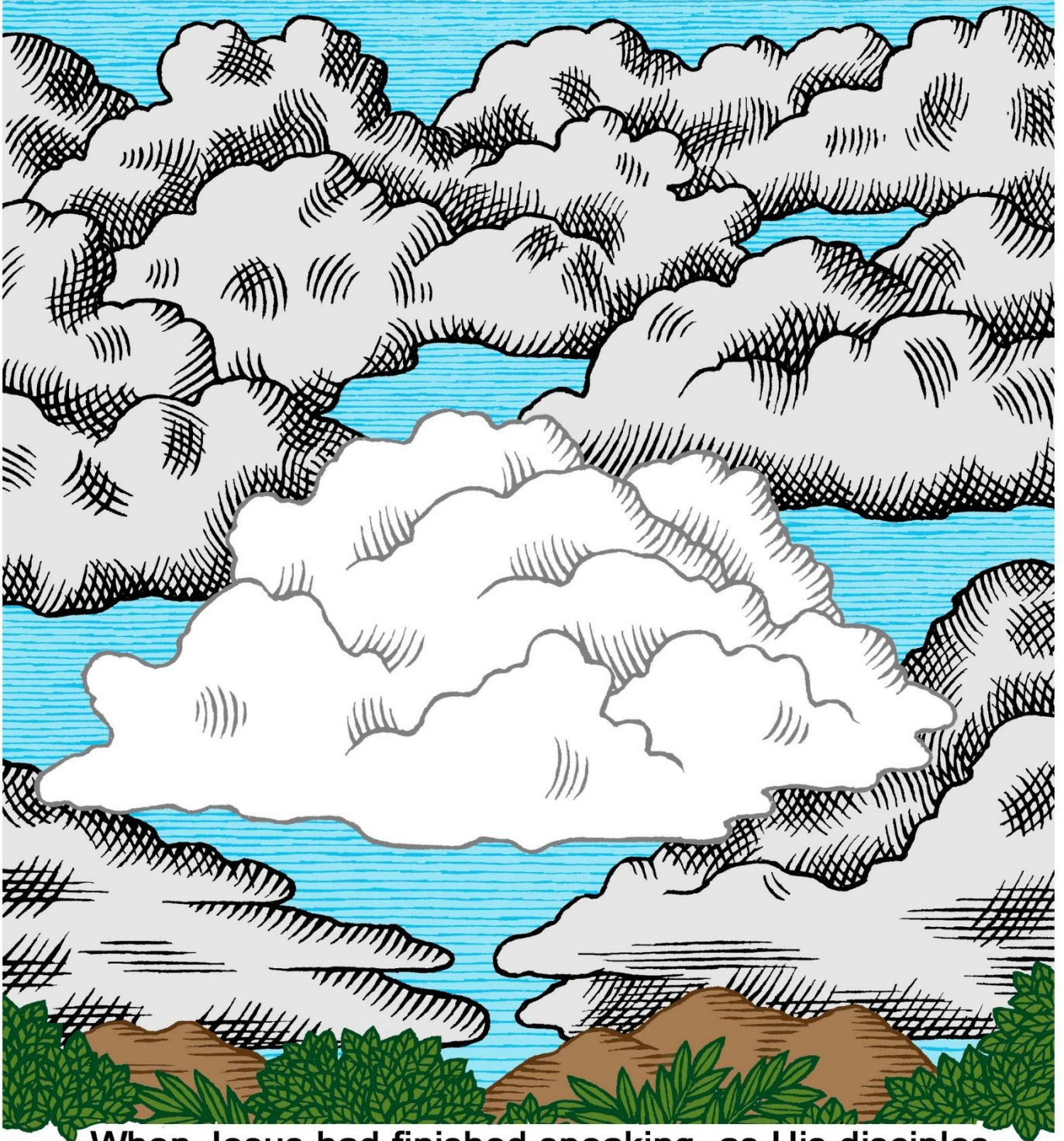


Rushall Parish News

May 2026

Free online. 30p print copy

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



... When Jesus had finished speaking, as His disciples watched intently, He was taken up into heaven and a cloud hid Him from their sight. Acts 1:7-9

Some useful numbers

Vicar: Revd Colin Such Tel: 01922 624677
Email colinsuch01@gmail.com

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

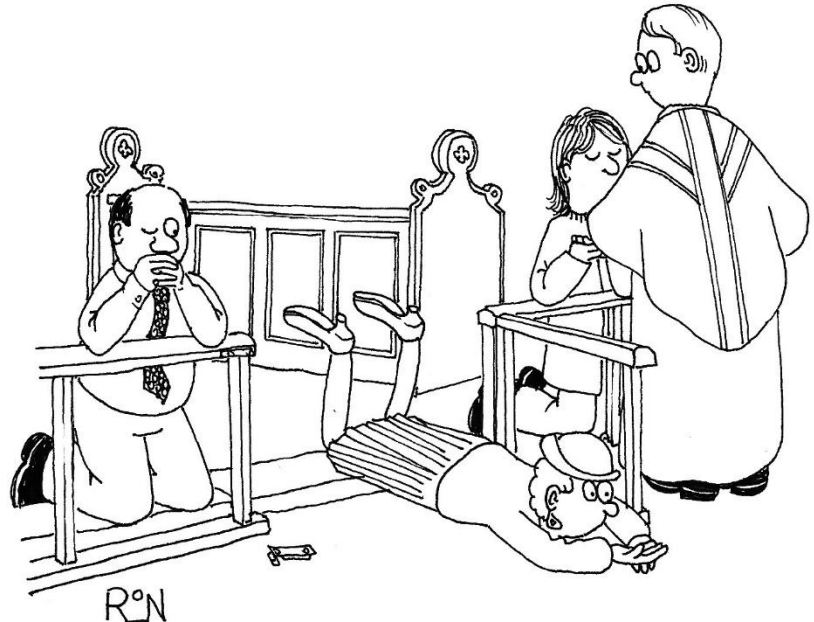
Churchwardens:
Mr Bob Barnard
Tel: 01922 624943
Mrs Jan Firth (Lay Reader)
Tel: 01922 449089

Safeguarding Officer:
Mrs Gill Clark
Tel: 01922 624583

To hire the hall:
Mrs Gill Clark
Tel: 01922 624583.
Email clagilli@aol.com

Wedding Enquiries:
Contact the vicar

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



Terry made a note to fix the bolt

200 years ago, on 29th May 1826 that Ebenezer Butterick, American tailor was born. He and his wife invented tissue paper dress patterns in multiple sizes, and thereby revolutionised home dressmaking.

There are two sides to every question, and a politician usually takes both. – Anon

Please send any articles for the June magazine to Colin at colinsuch01@gmail.com by Friday 22nd May.

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

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

This month's Contents:

Ezekiel	3
Vicar's Letter	4
May Day	5
M&M	6
Pentecost	7
Gardening Notes	8
Ascension Day	9
Bishop of Guildford	10
Our dementia advisor	12
St. Matthias	13
Out and about	14
Notice of vestry meeting	15
Notice of Annual Parochial	
Church Meeting	16
Recipe	18
St. Aldhelm	19
The 1926 strike	20
God in the sciences	21
National Biscuit Day	22
Josephine Butler	23
St. James the Least	24
Bible Bites	25
Puzzles	26
Mouse Makes	27
Crossword	28

Ezekiel was a prophet who proclaimed judgment to God's people in the 6th century BC. He was among the group of Jews exiled in Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar. Ezekiel received his call when he was 30 years old through a vision of the glory of God. His ministry finished 22 years later with a vision of the restored Temple in Jerusalem.

Ezekiel spoke to a community forced from its home, who had broken faith with God. He presents a God who rules over all people and history. He is a God who desires to be known and acknowledged (*'then they will know that I am the Lord'*). As a priest, Ezekiel was deeply concerned with the holiness of God. This call to holy living includes an emphasis on individual responsibility (chapter 18), which is a significant milestone in biblical thought.

Ezekiel offers a vision of true hope for those who have undergone judgment. He promises a restored Temple as a sign of God's presence among his people. He also promises a future *'prince'* who will rule with justice and restore God's relationship with his people (34:23-4).

In restoring them morally and spiritually, God promises to use them to bring light to the Gentiles. They will demonstrate the holiness of God's name, because they will know him from the heart. This is the promise that is fulfilled in Jesus and made possible for us:

'I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws.' (36: 26-27).

Election Time

It's election time again – and there are two lots of elections taking place this month. On May 7th our church hall was used as a polling station for local residents to come and cast their vote for who they want to represent them on the local council. Ten days later on Sunday 17th May we will vote for our churchwardens, deanery synod representatives and Parochial Church Councillors who will help guide our church through the next 12 months.

I do wonder how people will approach the elections. Hopefully, as they walk through the churchyard past the graves of those of generations past who lie at rest and see the bluebells and forget-me-nots and hear the birds singing, they will ask themselves which of the candidates will serve our community best; building upon the heritage of generations past, value the environment that is under threat in so many ways and seek to bring all in our community together to work for the future that lies before us.



As to our own church elections we too will seek to build on the foundations of past generations. Twice in the past earlier generations have demolished and rebuilt our church to better serve the people of their day. We don't have the option of following that particular example, but what we can do is build on the foundations laid; to reach out to our community in new ways, through digital and social media, through social events and different worship and Bible study opportunities.

In both elections we seek people of vision, of sacrificial service and of love for the people they seek to serve. May God guide us in our thinking and in our voting.

Colin

1st May - May Day: unbridled merriment

May is the month when the ancient pagans used to get up to 'all sorts'! The Romans held their festival to honour the mother-goddess Maia, goddess of nature and growth. (May is named after her.) The early Celts celebrated the feast of Beltane, in honour of the sun god, Beli.

For centuries in 'Olde England' the people went mad in May. After the hardship of winter, and hunger of early Spring, May was a time of indulgence and unbridled merriment. One Philip Stubbes, writing in 1583, was scandalised: 'for what kissing and bussing, what smooching and slabbering one of another, is not practised?'

Henry VIII went 'maying' on many occasions. Then folk would stay out all night in the dark rain-warm thickets and return in the morning for dancing on the green around the May pole, archery, vaulting, wrestling, and evening bonfires.

The Protestant reformers took a strong stand against May Day, and in 1644 May Day was abolished altogether. Many May poles came down - only to go up again at the Restoration, when the first May Day of King Charles's reign was 'the happiest Mayday that hath been many a year in England', according to Pepys.

May Day to most people today brings vague folk memories of a young Queen of the May decorated with garlands and streamers and flowers, a May Pole to weave, Morris dancing, and the intricacies of well dressing at Tissington in Derbyshire.

May Day is a medley of natural themes such as sunrise, the advent of summer, growth in nature, and - since 1833 - Robert Owen's vision of a millennium in the future, beginning on May Day, when there would be no more poverty, injustice or cruelty, but harmony and friendship. This is why, in modern times, May Day has become Labour Day, which honours the dignity of workers. And until recently, in communist countries May Day processions were in honour of the achievement of Marxism.

There has never been a Christian content to May Day, but nevertheless there is the well-known 6am service on the top of Magdalen Tower at Oxford where a choir sings in the dawn of May Day.

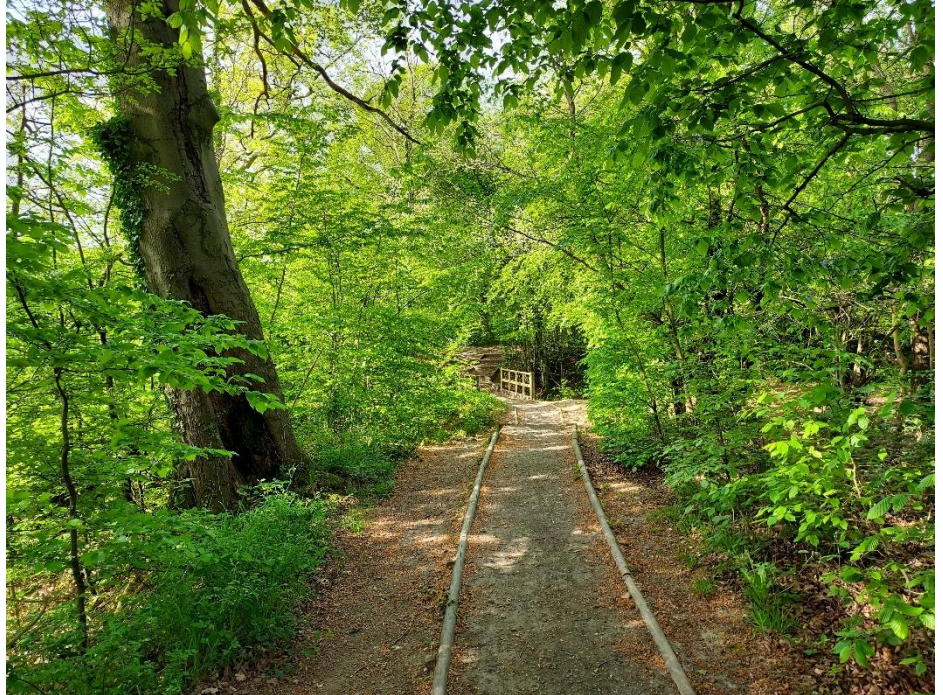
An old May carol includes the lines:

*The life of man is but a span, it flourishes like a flower
We are here today and gone tomorrow - we are dead within an hour.*

There is something of a sadness about it, both in words and tune, as there is about all purely sensuous joy. For May Day is not Easter, and the joys it represents have always been earth-bound and fleeting.

M&M: Monty and Matty

We will be nine years old this month, and although we don't feel any older the servant reckons that we're beginning to show our age. Alright, there are a few creaks when we get up and we're a bit stiff for a while, but apart from that we don't think we're doing too bad.



So another year is rolling past. All of a sudden spring has fully sprung. Fresh green leaves are everywhere and the mud has all gone. Birds are singing everywhere and we see a fair few people who are out birdwatching. This year we've seen many more people out walking than in previous years; parents with their children, others with their dogs (some of whom we like and others we have a barking match with) or others out taking pictures or out fishing. It's nice to see others making the most of the outdoors, though the servant says it's a lot easier when there's no one around.

So, we might be nine this month but for us every day is a new day. The walk might take us down the same path but there are always new smells to sniff, new things to see and possibly new people we can greet to see if they've got treats for us (normally they haven't). Still – there's always hope!

Lots of woofs,
Monty and Matty

50 days after Easter

Pentecost. The word means '50 days after Easter'. It's the celebration of the gift of the Holy Spirit as recorded in Acts chapter 2, and it's the birthday of the Church. So far so good; but beyond this, things get a bit hazy for some of us. We are familiar with the idea of God the good Father, and we've heard and read of all that Jesus - God the Son - said and did. But the Holy Spirit? *Who He?!*

The images used of the Holy Spirit in scripture can be a bit of a barrier to understanding. Words like 'spirit' 'wind' 'flame' 'breath' are all a bit elusive, and they possibly leave us with a feeling that in trying to understand the Holy Spirit we're chasing rainbows. But if we dig a little deeper, we can see that these images speak of an unhindered force which can be powerful and yet gentle, cleansing and free.

The Bible is full of images of the Holy Spirit. There is 'dove', as seen on many Christmas cards and in stained glass windows. It's usually white. A white dove image speaks of gentleness and purity, unfettered as it wings its way across the sky.

Then there's the more difficult word 'advocate'. Someone who speaks up for us, comes alongside us, someone to aid us in times of need. We could go on with different images which tell us more of the character of the Holy Spirit, but there are two key things to remember. Firstly, this is the spirit of Jesus. All that Jesus was in earthly form, the Holy Spirit is to us now. Jesus is no longer among us as He was two thousand years ago, but the Holy Spirit makes Him available to us now.

Which brings us to the second point; the Holy Spirit is given by the good Father to us, His children - giving us, as it were, an injection of Jesus' personality, wisdom and holiness, enabling us to serve as Jesus did, enabling us, as Mother Teresa put it, 'to do little things with great love'.

The first Pentecost set the young Church in Jerusalem off on a great adventure which culminated in today's world where one in three people worldwide say they are Christians. It could be a great adventure for us as we ask God, the good Father, to gift us with the Spirit of Jesus. Let's do it!

By the Revd Roy Shaw, a retired but active priest in the diocese of York, where he is a spiritual director

Gardening Notes for May

May is one of the loveliest months everything being fresh in Spring green, early flowering shrubs and flowers beginning to appear and the gaps being filled by bluebells.

Lilac will follow on after camellias, the later take care of themselves but would benefit from a dose of sequestered iron to help keep leaves green. It was heartening to hear early bees among

the flowers while weeding, the most popular plants for bees at present are comfrey and pulmonia. Comfrey while not exciting is a good plant to fill an odd corner and if you can stand the smell leaves in a bucket of water can eventually be strained to leave a free liquid feed

Having planted five pots of aubrieta a few years ago optimistically to grow over a wall at last one plant is thriving nicely. Now we are trying to establish eriginon the tiny daisy which flowers prolifically on rock faces particularly at the seaside despite failing in the past. These observations remind me how much better nature does these things!

The large salvias which we planted last autumn, sold as frost hardy, have all been lost to the winter although new shrubs in the north facing shady area, piers rubra, viburnum tinus and weigela have fared fine. In this shaded north facing border the new plan is to try and grow some of the new varieties of foxgloves and these are available in the small perennial ranges being well established plants and we are assured that they will flower this season. We are also trying a camassia in this shaded position. One that we had at the front was dug up during the electrical upgrade in our road and produced no blooms last year but this year has the most buds ever, the garden is always a source of surprises.

Sweetpea seedlings can be planted out this month, however my seeds are spindly so next year I might just buy a pot of bushy plants from the supermarket for the price of a packet of seeds.

It is very exciting to see plants emerging we had actually forgotten were there, so we continue to enjoy the garden especially on sunny days,

Ann

Ascension Day: 40 Days with the Risen Christ

40 days after Easter comes Ascension Day. These are the 40 days during which the Risen Christ appeared again and again to His disciples, following His death and resurrection. (*Matthew 28; Mark 16; Luke 24; and John 20.*)

The Gospels give us little of Christ's teachings and deeds during those 40 days. Jesus was seen by numerous of His disciples: on the road to Emmaus, by the Sea of Galilee, in houses, etc. He strengthened and encouraged His disciples, and at last opened their eyes to all that the Scriptures had promised about the Messiah. Jesus also told them that as the Father had sent Him, He was now going to send them - to all corners of the earth, as His witnesses.

Surely the most tender, moving 'farewell' in history took place on Ascension Day. Luke records the story with great poignancy: 'When Jesus had led them out to the vicinity of Bethany, He lifted up His hands - and blessed them.'

As Christmas began the story of Jesus' life on earth, so Ascension Day completes it, with His return to His Father in heaven. Jesus' last act on earth was to bless His disciples. He and they had a bond as close as could be: they had just lived through three tumultuous years of public ministry and miracles – persecution and death – and resurrection!

Just as we part from our nearest and dearest by still looking at them with love and memories in our eyes, so exactly did Jesus: 'While He was blessing them, He left them and was taken up into heaven.' (Luke 24:50-1) He was not forsaking them, but merely going on ahead to a kingdom which would also be theirs one day: 'I am ascending to my Father and to your Father, to my God and your God...' (John 20:17)

The disciples were surely the most favoured folk in history. Imagine being one of the last few people on earth to be face to face with Jesus, and have Him look on you with love. No wonder then that Luke goes on: 'they worshipped Him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy. And they stayed continually at the temple, praising God.' (Luke 24:52,53)

No wonder they praised God! They knew they would see Jesus again one day! 'I am going to prepare a place for you... I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.' (John 14:2,3) In the meantime, Jesus had work for them to do: to take the Gospel to every nation on earth.

How a dying bishop said farewell to his diocese

The Bishop of Guildford, the Rt Revd Andrew Watson, was diagnosed with aggressive and untreatable cancer of the pancreas on 10th February this year.

After he was told that he had less than a month to live, Bishop Andrew wrote a letter to his diocese, to say goodbye and to reassure them. He wrote:

“Only our good Lord knows exactly how long I have left, of course. But the conversation with my doctor – together with a sense that I am getting a little weaker by the day - means that my main focus now is on 'cheerfully persisting towards a good death.'

Yesterday I signed a deed of delegation, handing over the interim leadership of the diocese to our dear Bishop Paul. I'm sorry that that means I will no longer be honouring my existing commitments...

I don't fear the prospect of dying, and find to my relief that my faith in the resurrection of the body and the life everlasting' has only grown stronger over the past few weeks. I've sometimes had private worries that, when faced with the starkness of a terminal diagnosis, my faith in the Risen Christ might falter. Well, it hasn't. Or better still, God hasn't faltered. Quite the reverse.

Nor do I feel short-changed by what's happening. Of course, I have grumpy patches when I'm in pain, or not sleeping properly. (I'm only a saint in St Paul's most generous definition of the term!) But I still consider myself as deeply blessed to have been born into such a loving family, to have met with Christ as a teenager, to have spent nearly 40 years of my life so joyfully married to the 'wife of my youth', to have raised four remarkable children (all equally remarkably partnered), and to have been entrusted with a series of fulfilling ministries within my beloved Church of England.

Of all the closing words to St Paul's various letters to individuals and to church communities, perhaps the one I value most comes right at the end of his first letter to the Church at Thessalonica. We sense that the apostle is running out of parchment, and wanting to cram as much as he can into the last few inches; and he does a great job from my perspective, beautifully articulating so much of what I would want to say in what may well prove to be my last message to the Diocese of Guildford.

Could I encourage you to read these words quietly and prayerfully - so that each one of us, lay and ordained, might be freshly inspired to embrace God's call on our lives with renewed vigour and gratitude:

'We appeal to you, brothers and sisters, to respect those who labour among you and have charge of you in the Lord and admonish you; esteem them very highly in love because of their work. Be at peace among yourselves. And we urge you, brothers and sisters, to admonish the idlers, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with all of them. See that none of you repays evil for evil, but always seek to do good to one another and to all. Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. Do not quench the Spirit. Do not despise prophecies, but test everything; hold fast to what is good; abstain from every form of evil.

May the God of peace Himself sanctify you entirely, and may your spirit and soul and body be kept sound and blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. The one who calls you is faithful, and He will do this. Brothers and sisters, pray for us. Greet all the brothers and sisters with a holy kiss. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.'

Bishop Andrew died, aged 64, on 2nd March.

A Christian is never in a state of completion but always in a process of becoming. – *Martin Luther*

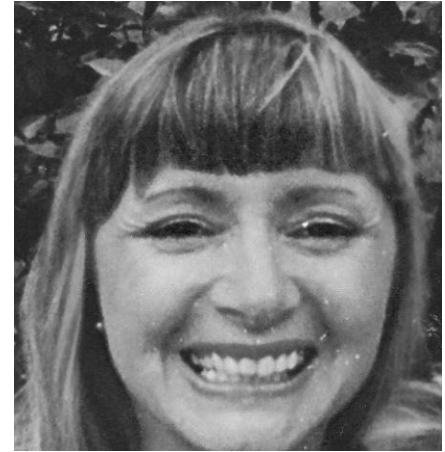
DEMENTIA

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 26th May 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 May - St Matthias, the replacement apostle

If you're saying to yourself, 'Who?' you'll be in good company. May 15th is the feast day of St Matthias the Apostle, and in describing him thus we have said just about all there is to know about him. He gets just one mention in the Bible, in the first chapter of Acts, immediately prior to the day of Pentecost, where it tells us that he was elected to take the place in the ranks of the twelve apostles recently vacated by the betrayer Judas Iscariot.

Eusebius, in the fourth century, says in his history of the apostolic era that Matthias was one of the 70 disciples sent out by Jesus (Luke 10:1), and that seems reasonable. When it was necessary to fill the vacancy among the apostles it would be natural to turn to someone who had followed Jesus from earlier years, as well as being a witness of the resurrection. Two names were suggested and prayed over. Then the apostles cast lots, following the Old Testament practice of the high priest's Urim and Thummim, one assumes. When they did, 'the lot fell on Matthias'.

Casting lots to fill vacancies on committees or councils, or even to appoint bishops, might seem to us to be rather risky. The Victorian preacher Campbell Morgan even suggested, that the 11 acted in haste and pre-empted God's choice of Saul (later known as Paul), who at that time was busy persecuting the Church, arresting Christians and having them thrown into prison. He hadn't yet travelled the Damascus Road.

Be that as it may, Matthias was elected, and for us he can stand for all those excellent, consistent, reliable and faithful servants of Christ who never make a headline, not even in the parish magazine. Yet still he was chosen because he could be a 'witness', and so are we.

Doubtless he fulfilled that responsibility admirably, without, as we say, 'setting the Thames on fire'. Let's salute him on his day - the 'Unknown Apostle'.

Out and about walking, driving and visiting:

We often overlook our local areas for a pleasant stroll and one of these is very well known to a gentleman we see around with two border collies and often wearing a dog collar!

Walking towards Aldridge along Mellish Road the canal can be accessed either from the footpath off Stencils Road or the public footpath opposite to the Dilke. Tracts lead to the canal and turning left the entrance to the Lime Pitts is reached or bypassing this there is the possibility of a drink in the garden of the Manor Arms in licencing hours and maybe one of their snacks cobs.

A circuit of the Lime Pitts can be achieved in either direction clockwise or anticlockwise and going forward at the end of a large lake. The track at the side the fields passes the historical Rushall Hall dating from the 16th century and reaches a stile to a footpath past the churchyard and into Leigh Road. We have been lucky enough to see an occasional kingfisher on one of the lakes which was a rare treat. As well some horses there is an established group of roe deer, tawny owls are present and the less welcome non-native parakeets. Wildlife on our doorsteps,
Ann



Beware bread for ducks

The Canal & River Trust, which looks after Britain's waterways, has warned that bread is 'junk food' for ducks. It can lead to excessive droppings, which spread disease. If bread is left to rot, it can trigger noxious odours which can kill fish and encourage algae, as well as rats and mice. So – what DO ducks eat? Try corn, peas, lettuce and seeds.



THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND

NOTICE OF A MEETING OF THE PARISHIONERS FOR THE ELECTION OF CHURCHWARDENS

Parish of St. Michael the Archangel with Christ the King, Rushall

A meeting for the election of churchwardens will be held in

The Church Hall, Leigh Road, Walsall WS4 2HE

On the 17th day of May 2026 at 12 noon

This meeting may be attended by—

1. the persons whose names are entered on the church electoral roll of the parish; and
2. the persons resident in the parish whose names are entered on a register of local government electors by reason of such residence.

Under section 5A of the Churchwardens' Measure 2001*, an appeal against the election of a churchwarden may be made by any person entitled to take part in this meeting or by a candidate in the election. An appeal may be made against the election of any person on any of the following grounds:

1. That the person was not duly elected,
2. That the person was not qualified to be a candidate at the time of election, or
3. That before the election was held, the person misrepresented a material fact in connection with the election.
4. That the conduct of the election was such as to affect its outcome of the election.
5. That it has been determined on an appeal (under Rule 57 of the Church Representation Rules) that an error was made in the roll, or the question is awaiting determination on an appeal, and the error would or might be material to the result of the election.
6. That a vote which was allowed should have been disallowed, or that a vote which was disallowed should have been allowed, but only if the allowance or disallowance of the vote would or might be material to the result of the election.

Any person who wishes to make an appeal—

1. Must do so in writing,
2. Must give brief particulars of the grounds of the appeal, and
3. May be accompanied by written submissions.
4. Notice of an appeal must be given to the lay chair of the deanery synod.

On an appeal under this section, a person who was declared elected but whose election is or may be affected by the appeal is to be regarded for all purposes as elected pending the determination of the appeal.

Signed

Minister (or, under section 5(2) of the Churchwardens' Measure 2001, a churchwarden)

Dated 28th April 2026

In this Notice, "parish" means an ecclesiastical parish.

NOTICE OF ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING

Parish of St. Michael the Archangel with Christ the King; Rushall

The Annual Parochial Church Meeting will be held in the church hall
on the seventeenth day of May 2026 at 12.10pm

For election of parochial representatives of the laity as follows—

To the Deanery Synod 3 representatives.¹

To the Parochial Church Council 9 representatives.

For the appointment of the Independent Examiner or Auditor.

For the consideration of:

(a) a report on changes to the Roll since the last annual parochial church meeting OR² a report on the numbers entered on the new Roll;

(b) an Annual Report on the proceedings of the parochial church council and the activities of the parish generally;

(c) the financial statements of the council for the year ending on the 31st December preceding the meeting;

(d) the annual fabric report under section 50 of the Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction and Care of Churches Measure 2018;

(e) a report of the proceedings of the deanery synod; and

(f) other matters of parochial or general Church interest.

In this Notice, 'parish' means an ecclesiastical parish.

Signed: _____

Minister of the parish³

¹ To be included in a year which parochial representatives of the laity are to be elected to the Deanery Synod.

² To be included in a year when a new Church Electoral Roll is prepared. Delete as applicable.

³ Or vice-chair of the parochial church council as the case may be (see rule M19(2) of the Church Representation Rules).

Notes

1. Every lay person whose name is entered on the Church Electoral Roll of the parish (and no other person) is entitled to vote at the election of parochial representatives of the laity.
2. A person is qualified to be elected a parochial representative of the laity if –
 - (a) his or her name is entered on the Church Electoral Roll of the parish and, unless he or is under 18, has been entered there for at least the preceding six months;
 - (b) he or she is an actual communicant (which means that he has received Communion according to the use of the Church of England or of a Church in communion with the Church of England at least three times during the twelve months preceding the date of the election);
 - (c) he or she is at least 16; and
 - (d) he or she is not disqualified as referred to in paragraph 3 of these Notes.
3. (1) A person is disqualified from being nominated, chosen or elected or from serving as a churchwarden or a member of a parochial church council, a district church council or a joint council if the person is disqualified from being a trustee of a charity (and the disqualification is not subject to a waiver which permits membership of a parochial church council, district church council or joint council).

(2) A person is disqualified from being nominated, chosen or elected or from serving as a member of a parochial church council, a district church council, a joint council or a deanery synod if the person is included in a barred list (within the meaning of the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006).

(3) A person is disqualified from being nominated, chosen or elected or from serving as a member of a parochial church council, a district church council, a joint council or a deanery synod if the person has been convicted of an offence mentioned in Schedule 1 to the Children and Young Persons Act 1933 (with that expression being construed in accordance with Rule 71(2) of the Church Representation Rules).

(4) A person's disqualification under sub-paragraph (3) may be waived by the bishop of the diocese by giving the person notice in writing.

(5) A person is disqualified from being nominated, chosen or elected or from serving as a member of a parochial church council if the person has been disqualified from holding office under section 10(6) of the Incumbent (Vacation of Benefices) Measure 1977.
4. ⁴ A scheme is in operation in this parish which provides that any person entitled to vote in the elections of parochial representatives of the laity to the parochial church council or to the deanery synod or to both may apply on the appropriate form to the Minister of the parish (or other person signing below) for a postal vote. The completed form must be received before the commencement of the annual parochial church meeting.

⁴ This paragraph should be deleted if no scheme for postal voting is in operation in the parish.

Recipe

Toffee Top Cherry Cake

This moist almond cake is one my favourite cakes. Be sure not to use a loose bottomed tin otherwise a very messy oven could result! Line the tin to be used well in order to remove the cooked cake. This cake keeps well and the topping makes a delicious addition.

Ingredients

Use a 8in square tin
4oz flaked almonds
8oz glace cherries halved
8oz butter
8oz caster sugar
3 eggs beaten
4oz SR flour
2oz ground almonds
1tsp baking powder
1tsp almond essence

1. Sprinkle the almonds and cherries over the lined base of the tin.
2. Melt 2oz of the butter with 2oz of the sugar and then pour over the base.
3. Beat the remaining butter and sugar until light and fluffy, beat in eggs then mix in flour, baking powder, ground almonds and almond essence.
4. Spoon mixture into tin and level the top.
5. Bake in a preheated oven at 160 degrees / gas 3 for approximately 45 minutes.
6. Cool in tin and then turn out onto a wire rack until cold

Ann

Small plates are better

How large are your dinner plates? If you replace 12" plates with 10" plates you could end up eating between 16 and 22 per cent less food. That could mean a loss of two stone over a year. The study at Cambridge University concluded: "Helping people to avoid 'over-serving' themselves or others with larger portions of food or drink is likely to ...help reduce their risk of overeating."

Don't drive when sad

You've seen those motorway signs warning you not to drive when you are tired. But now it seems you are far more likely to crash your car if you drive when you are sad, or when you are angry, or when you are agitated.

A study has found that a healthy emotional state is hugely important for your safety at the wheel; being sad, mad or upset can increase your likelihood of a crash by nearly ten-fold. That compares with fatigue making a crash only three times more likely, while talking on a mobile phone doubles the risk.

Having children in your back seat is a very low risk, and chatting to your passenger or moving to music barely raises the risk at all. The study was carried out at Virginia Tech.

25th May - Aldhelm, unconventional Bishop of Sherborne

Aldhelm is the saint for you if you are intelligent but unconventional.

Aldhelm was born in 640, into a family closely related to Ine, the King of Wessex. Educated at the monastic community in Malmesbury in Wiltshire, he went for further study in Canterbury. He proved a brilliant student and was sent back to Malmesbury as Abbot.

So far, so good. Aldhelm even demonstrated a great talent for administration, and helped with the reforms of Archbishop Theodore, who was trying to sort out the considerable confusion that the church had fallen into.

But Aldhelm also had his 'funny ways'. Towards other men of education, he wrote scholarly letters that were so full of similes and metaphors as to be incomprehensible. He also wrote highly complex riddles on biblical themes.

Aldhelm went to the other extreme when trying to communicate with the poor and illiterate. He wrote hymns and sang them to the people while strumming on a harp. He would begin preaching a sermon, and then break off to clown around and sing bits of songs to the people.

He must have grabbed the attention of the Archbishop again, because in 705 Aldhelm was made first Bishop of Sherborne.



28th May - Gizur of Iceland

If you have ever cruised to Iceland, you'll know just how far off the beaten track it is. You may wonder how anybody in ancient times managed to survive all those miles of icy water to even find the place.

But it seems that Irish hermits in the early Middle Ages did find it, and so first brought Christianity to its shores. Then by the tenth century Norway had sent in missionaries, and the struggle was on for the Faith of Iceland, between paganism and Christianity. And so, the scene was set for the life and work of Gizur of Iceland.

Gizur came from a Christian Icelandic family – both his grandfather and father were bishops. Gizur seems to have been greatly respected: Harold Hadrada, the Norwegian military leader, described Gizur as fit to be either a king, a leader of Vikings, or a bishop.

Gizur chose to become a bishop and played a key role in the establishment of Christianity in Iceland. Not only did he manage to grow the church and then organise its neat division into two dioceses, he seems to have been involved in the development of its sagas, poetry and history, as well as explorations of Greenland and Newfoundland.

But Gizur's biggest moment came before he was a bishop. He was chosen by the Icelandic people to be the one to choose whether Iceland would remain pagan, or would adopt Christianity. After some time in seclusion, Gizur announced that there should be Christian religion, but Icelandic law. Thus, Christian worship was officially established, but people were permitted to worship their heathen gods in private, and to abandon any unwanted infants to perish of the cold. (These concessions were abolished within a few years, as the people absorbed Christian values.)

Remembering the General Strike of 1926

One hundred years ago, from 4th to 12th May 1926, there was a General Strike in the UK. It was called by the Trades Union Congress (TUC) in support of 1.2 million coal miners. The strike lasted nine days, but had little effect in the long term.

The aim was to force the Conservative government, led by Stanley Baldwin, to stop dramatic wage cuts for hard-hit miners and to improve their working conditions. The country came to a temporary standstill, but then the strike collapsed, though the miners stayed out for another seven months without achieving anything. The Archbishop of Canterbury, the Scottish-born Rt Revd Randall Davidson, a conciliatory figure within the Church and Christianity generally, spoke out against the strike but called on the Government – unsuccessfully – to improve working conditions for miners, and to subsidise the mines so that wages could be increased.

He wanted to make his appeal known to the public on radio, but the BBC refused to broadcast it, though it was backed by an interdenominational group of church leaders, one of whom told Davidson: “For the first time in my life it has been possible to feel that the Christian forces in this country were united and courageous.”

National Smile Month - 11th May – 11th June

National Smile Month is 50 years old this year. It is the UK’s largest and longest-running campaign to promote good oral health, aiming to encourage people to brush twice a day with fluoride toothpaste, to cut down on sugar, and to visit the dentist regularly. Organised by the British Dental Health Foundation, the website offers the following snippets:

Some fun facts about your teeth:

- It takes 43 muscles to frown, but only 17 to smile.
- Some people pick their teeth with keys, earrings, bank notes and even screwdrivers!
- The going rate given by the tooth fairy these days is £2 to £5
- 61% of us have been attracted to someone by their smile alone
- 24% of us would share our toothbrush with our partner, but only 6% of us would share our toothbrush with a celebrity (?!)
- Two thirds of us have less respect for a boss with bad breath.

The Nation’s favourite churches, and favourite stained-glass window

The East Window in Carlisle Cathedral has been declared the nation’s favourite stained-glass window (in a recent survey by the Association of English Cathedrals).

As our favourite church, there is no one clear winner, but the following 10 churches consistently high as among the most loved in the country, according to data from the National Churches Trust:

St Paul’s Cathedral London; York Minster; Coventry Cathedral; St Mary’s Redcliffe, Bristol; Shrine of our Lady of Walsingham; Durham Cathedral; Lincoln Cathedral; St Bride Fleet Street; and Tundergarth Parish Church.

God in the Sciences - Humility

A few years ago, I visited the Smithsonian Museum's Hall of Human Origins. Our guide, the curator of anthropology, was keen to help Christians understand his research. Whatever you make of the evidence for human evolution, the fact remains that other species a bit like us were around before we came on the scene – or in the case of Neanderthals, at the same time.

Part of the exhibit included lifelike reconstructions of the face and hair of several different hominins, displayed on pillars at the right height for each species. So, I could crouch down to 'meet' *Homo floresiensis* or stand tall to look into the eyes of *Homo heidelbergensis*. Most of these – beings? creatures? – were on other branches of the evolutionary tree to us, and we share a common ancestor much further back. I did, however, feel as if I was meeting my forebears.

As I walked between the statues I asked myself, "Why us?" There's evidence that Neanderthals used symbolism as we do, and also buried their dead. Did they have the potential to evolve to a point where they could do similar things to us? The curator explained how, as the ice ages came and went, human beings moved around but other species appear to have stayed put and suffered the consequences – they just weren't ready yet for that big change. As I took in the displays about how we began to gather socially around a fire, make music or write, I felt humbled. We managed to adapt, but we could so easily have disappeared with the rest.

In his book *The Message of Creation*, theologian David Wilkinson shares his view that being made in the image of God has nothing to do with our own cleverness or abilities, but instead it is a gift. God created us on purpose (I believe through the long slow process of evolution) and chose to enter into a relationship with us, making us His representatives on earth.

Thankfully I don't have to figure out how to interact with other human-like hominins today. I do, however, have an equal share in humankind's God-given commission to tend and keep creation. Am I ready to go further than ensuring my own species' survival - not necessarily because we have evolved further than our ice-age ancestors, but because I have one of the 'new hearts' promised in Ezekiel 11:19? Can I work together, in a true spirit of humility, with people from all over the world to ensure the full diversity of life can flourish?

**For resources on this question, try the [Faraday Institute](#), [BioLogos](#), and [Christians in Science](#).*

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.

National Biscuit Day – 29th May

Did you know that Britain is the country with the highest biscuit consumption in the world?

According to industry research, we each eat about 500 biscuits a year. And the great biscuit dunking debate - over which biscuit holds up best when dipped in tea - can spark surprisingly passionate discussion.

Biscuits have been part of our daily lives for centuries. Their dose of sweet, tasty comfort is loved by 2-year-olds and 90-year-olds, and every age in between.

And so National Biscuit Day is held each year to honour this beloved snack. Our national favourite seems to be the chocolate digestive, followed by shortbread and chocolate fingers. But don't underestimate the appeal of custard creams, hobnobs, chocolate chip and oatmeal cookies!

The McVitie's Digestive, first produced in 1892, is one of the most iconic biscuits in British history. Today, it remains a bestseller alongside other classics like the Rich Tea, the Bourbon, and the Jammie Dodger.

The word 'biscuit' comes from the Latin *panis biscotus*, meaning 'twice-cooked bread'. In Roman times, flour-based provisions were baked twice, to remove moisture, making them durable enough for long journeys. Ancient Egyptian sailors and Roman soldiers relied on these early biscuits as a portable, long-lasting food source.

The transformation from practical sustenance to sweet treat began around the seventh century, when Persian bakers added eggs, butter, cream, and eventually sugar and honey to their recipes, creating some of the earliest cookies in history. By the Middle Ages, biscuits had spread across Europe, with each region developing its own favourite.

The Industrial Revolution brought mass production to the biscuit world. British firms like McVitie's, Huntley and Palmers, and Carr's produced biscuits on an unprecedented scale. In 1831, Huntley and Palmers even invented the decorative biscuit tin, which not only kept biscuits fresh but also made them an attractive gift item.

30th May: Josephine Butler, social reformer for women

Josephine Butler is the 'saint' for anyone who believes in social justice. This remarkable 19th century clergyman's wife became a renowned campaigner for women's rights and for putting a halt to human trafficking.

Josephine was born in Northumberland in 1828, the daughter of a wealthy family of liberal politics and committed Christian faith. They had already been deeply involved in the abolition of slavery and the extension of the franchise. Such notions of equality instilled into Josephine a passionate desire to combat social injustice.

In 1852 Josephine married George Butler, the son of the Headmaster of Harrow, who shared her views. George was ordained in 1854 and they moved first to Oxford and then to Cheltenham. In 1863 tragedy struck when their daughter Eva fell to her death.

Josephine's grief found expression a few years later, when in 1865 George had become Headmaster of Liverpool College, and the couple were settling in Liverpool. Josephine was horrified at the lives of destitute women in Liverpool, and so she founded a 'home' to care for them, as well as a hostel to train them for suitable work. In 1869 she agreed to head a campaign against the Contagious Diseases Act of 1866, and by 1871 she had addressed a Royal Commission, explaining how this Act brutalised these women, already trapped in the slavery of prostitution. She got the Act rescinded.

By 1882, when George had become a Residentiary Canon of Winchester Cathedral, Josephine had not only founded a refuge for recovering prostitutes in Winchester, but she had also begun to fight sex trafficking across the world. This included freeing British girls from Belgian brothels. By 1885 Josephine had exposed the white slave trade in London, and had persuaded Parliament to increase the age of consent for girls from 13 to 16, and to penalise those engaged in the transport of women for profit. In 1890 her husband George died, but Josephine continued her work until retirement to Northumberland, where she died in 1906.

All in all, Josephine Butler's deep Christian compassion transformed the lives of many tens of thousands of suffering women. She has been described as one of the most important early members of the feminist movement.

On dealing with summer fetes

The Rectory
St James the Least



My dear Nephew Darren

So, you are beginning to plan your first Summer Fete in your new parish. That you appear to be looking forward to it shows how little you know about them.

Parishes hold Summer Fetes so that their clergy can preach more meaningfully on purgatory. Their ostensible purpose is to raise money for the church - which is wholly illogical. The parish could double the money raised if the Fete were dropped, none of the endless preparations made, if everyone spent a pleasant afternoon in their own gardens and each person simply donated £20 to the church instead. But we still feel obliged to go to endless trouble, making ourselves miserable so we can show each other what a good time we are having. That it generally pours seems to make the entire event even more grimly satisfying.

No, the real reasons for a Summer Fete are twofold. First, it gives the entire parish the chance to inspect the Rector's garden. Whatever state it is in, it will cause disapproval. If it is poorly kept, then I am clearly being ungrateful for having three acres of lawn to enjoy. Mowing it each week should be one of my delights; what else would I do with a whole day off each week anyway? The hand mower, kindly given by Colonel French is assumed to be quite adequate - and rumour has it that I need to lose weight anyway. The mower was presented to me when the Colonel bought his own gardener a sit-on motor mower - which is of a size and opulence that makes me assume it has a drinks cabinet and satellite navigation.

The second reason for a Fete comes as a special perk for the organisers. It gives them a chance to inspect the inside of the Rectory. Under the pretence of looking for a little more sugar, they can systematically inspect all the kitchen cupboards and comment on their contents. By the end of the day, the whole parish will know what marmalade I spread on my toast, that I use unnecessarily expensive washing powder, and where I have unsuccessfully tried to hide the gin.

The details of what then happens while the Fete is in progress must wait until my next letter, when we will have had our own. It is now time for Evensong, drinks with Major Mallet and his wife, and then a quiet evening with a good book, while I toy with other possible hiding places for the gin this year.

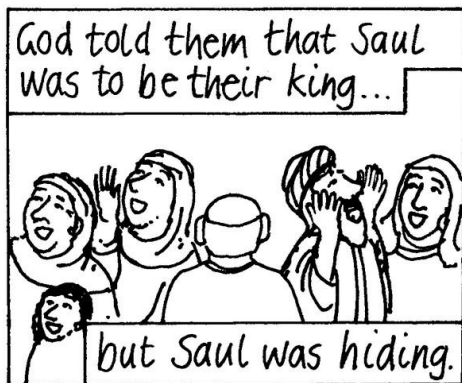
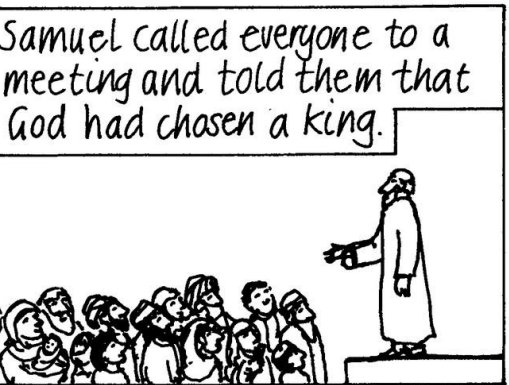
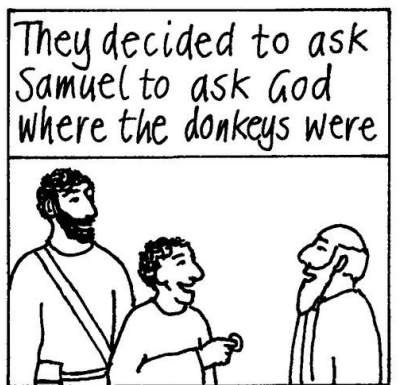
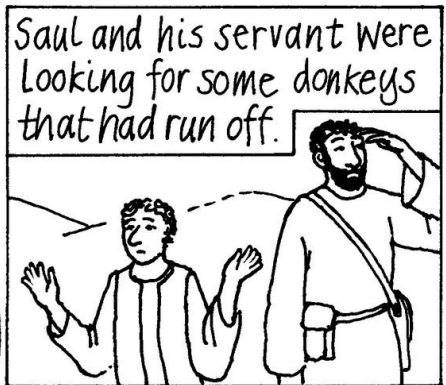
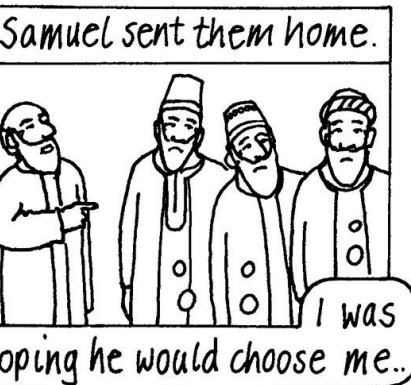
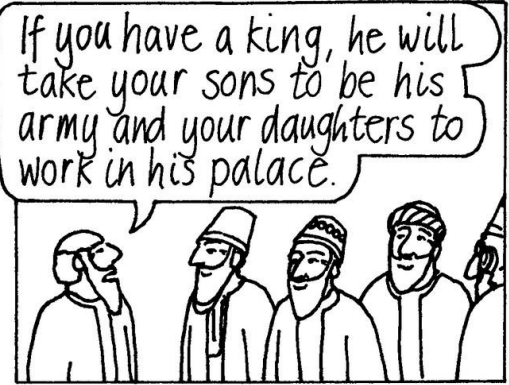
Your loving uncle,
Eustace

Bible Bite

A short story from the Bible

It can be read in the Bible in
Samuel 8:1-10:1, 17-24

Samuel had been a good leader of Israel
but he was now old. The leaders of the
twelve tribes came to talk to him...

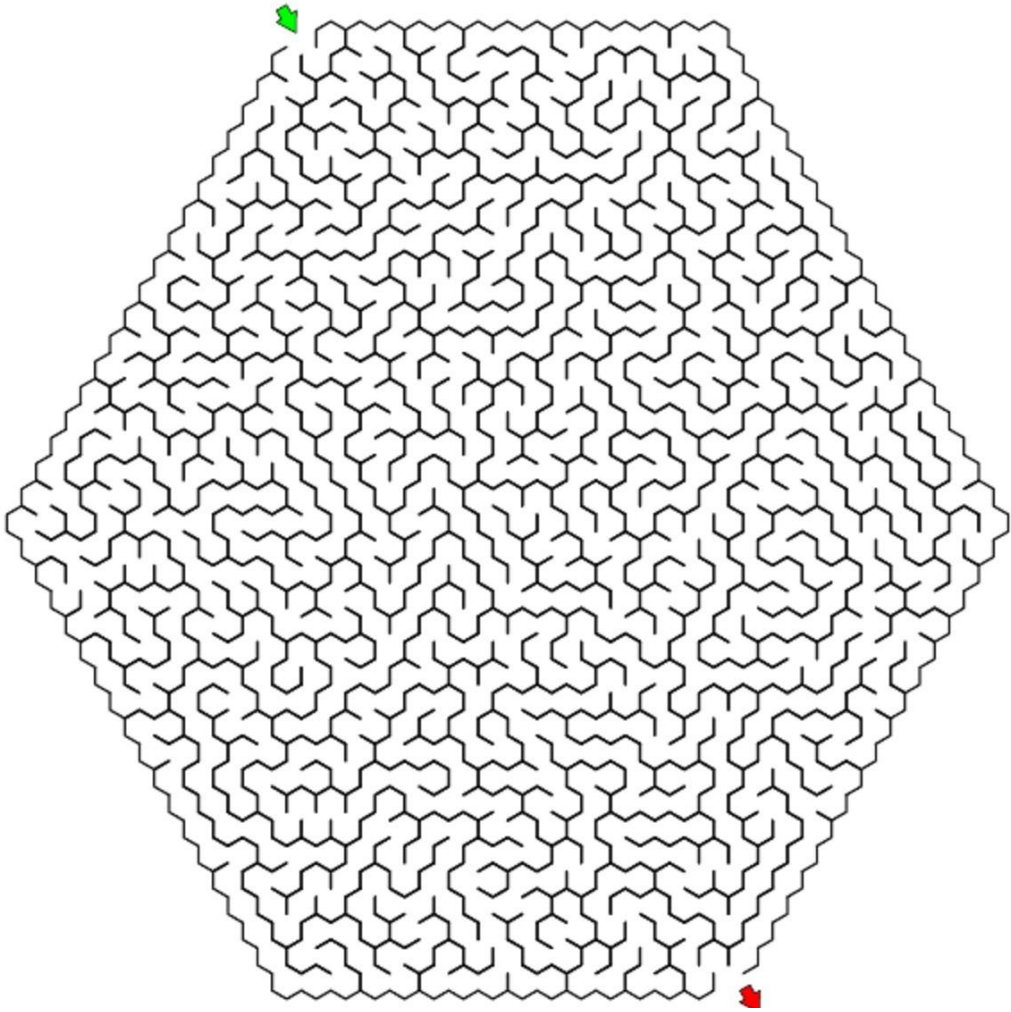


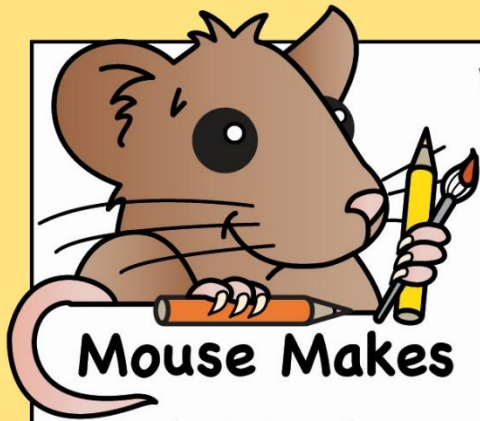
April's Solution

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

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

Can you solve
the maze?





WHO IS THE HOLY SPIRIT?

The Spirit of

 Genesis 1:2

The

 of the Father.
 Acts 1:4

The Spirit of
 A _____
 Romans 8:15

H _____
 John 14:26

The Spirit of

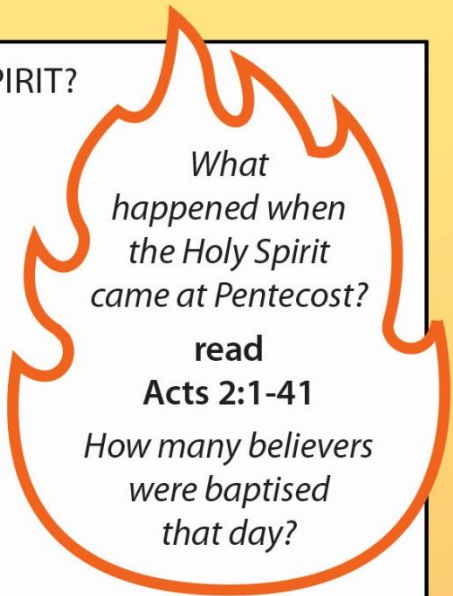
 John 16:13

The Spirit of

 Acts 16:7

The Fruit of the Spirit
 Galatians 5:22-23

___ O ___
 ___ Y ___
 ___ C ___
 ___ T ___
 ___ I ___
 ___ N ___
 S ___
 ___ N ___



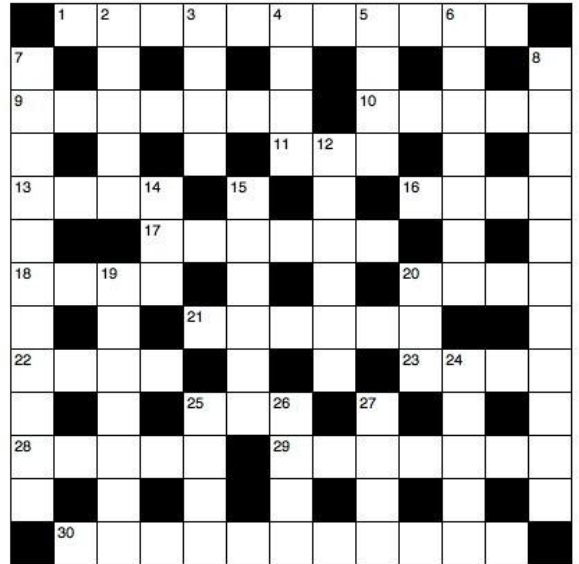
D G C O M F O R T E R L C
 K E O N P P E A C E G O D
 I N U F A K J D H J R R F
 N T N A T L O V E O A D H
 D L S I I O H O L Y C D L
 N E E T E A I C P L E E G
 E N L H N D E A E D E B L
 S E L F C O N T R O L J O
 S N O P E P T E A C H E R
 J S R J O T R U T H F S Y
 R S P I R I T I L U I U K
 K P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

Look up the Bible verses and fill in the missing words. Look for them in the word search then look for these words below.

- HOLY • SPIRIT • COUNSELLOR • COMFORTER
- ADVOCATE • TEACHER • LORD • PROMISE
- GLORY • GRACE • FAITH • DOVE • FIRE • WIND

Across

- 1 Overpowered (Deuteronomy 11:4) (11)
9 'The — are mantled with corn' (Psalm 65:13) (7)
10 'Each man—a sword to his side' (Exodus 32:27) (5)
11 On the death of Jesus the curtain in the temple was torn from— to bottom (Matthew 27:51) (3)
13 Stagger (Isaiah 28:7) (4)
16 'Anyone, then, who knows the good he ought— —and doesn't do it, sins' (James 4:17) (2,2)
17 Stir up or provoke (Acts 13:50) (6)
18 Burden (Luke 11:46) (4)
20 'As far as the east is from the—, so far has he removed our transgressions from us' (Psalm 103:12) (4)
21 Sign (Luke 23:38) (6)
22 'After that, Jesus poured water into a basin and began to—his disciples' feet' (John 13:5) (4)
23 The nature of the seven ears of corn which swallowed up the good ears in Pharaoh's dream (Genesis 41:23) (4)
25 Has (anag.) (3)
28 'This is the account of Shem, Ham and Japheth, —sons' (Genesis 10:1) (5)
29 'I will...make them drunk, so that they...sleep for—and— awake' (Jeremiah 51:39) (4,3)
30 Paul said of him, 'he often refreshes me and is not ashamed of my chains' (2 Timothy 1:16) (11)



Down

- 2 Worth (Matthew 13:46) (5)
3 'A bruised — He will not break' (Matthew 12:20) (4)
4 'Suddenly a great company of the heavenly — appeared with the angel' (Luke 2:13) (4)
5 Slip (anag.) (4)
6 'Take an awl and push it through his — — into the door, and he will become your servant for life' (Deuteronomy 15:17) (3,4)
7 Bountiful (2 Corinthians 8:2) (11)
8 'Therefore, as we have —, let us do good to all people' (Galatians 6:10) (11)
12 Acquire (2 Timothy 2:10) (6)
14 Container cover (Numbers 19:15) (3)
15 'He...became obedient to death, even death on— —!' (Philippians 2:8) (1,5)
19 Refrain (1 Peter 2:11) (7)
20 'She began to—his feet with her tears' (Luke 7:38) (3)
24 One who worships Brahma, Vishnu or Shiva (5)
25 'Give to everyone who—you' (Luke 6:30) (4)
26 'I lift up my eyes to the hills; where does my—come from?' (Psalm 121:1) (4)
27 One of those whom the Lord said would be taken from Jerusalem and Judah as judgment on them (Isaiah 3:2) (4)

April's answers:

ACROSS 1, Cosmic. 4, Thomas. 8, In his. 9, Delaiah. 10, Falwell. 11, Water. 12, Recovered. 17, Sidon. 19, Radiant. 21, Centaur. 22, Broil. 23, Eleven. 24, Prison.
DOWN: 1, Cliffs. 2, Scholar. 3, Issue. 5, Holy war. 6, Moist. 7, Sphere. 9, Deliverer. 13, Candace. 14, Deacons. 15, Psyche. 16, Stolen. 18, Dance. 20, Debar.