

Rushall Parish News September 2026

Free online. 30p print copy

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



Some useful numbers

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



...I take it our local supermarket has a rather good
offer on tinned peas at the moment!

65 years ago, on
11th September 1961, that the
World Wildlife Fund (now the
World Wide Fund for Nature)
was founded in Switzerland.
Nowadays it is the world's
largest conservation
organisation, operating in nearly
100 countries with over 35
million supporters.

A friend is someone who reaches
for your hand but touches your
heart. – Anon

Please send any articles for the
October magazine to Colin at
colinsuch01@gmail.com by Friday
25th September.

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

What's the Big Idea? - an Introduction to the Books of the Old Testament: Daniel

This month we return to looking at Old Testament books. The book of Daniel describes his life in Babylon during the sixth century B.C., when he served both Babylonian and Persian rulers.

As a teenager, Daniel and his three friends were deported in 605 B.C. to Babylon, where he lived for over 70 years. They were trained as officials in King Nebuchadnezzar's court for three years. Their names and diets were changed to reflect Babylonian culture and take away their Jewish identity. However, Daniel and his friends showed the superiority of their Jewish diet and gained the favour of the king.

Chapters 1-6 are largely narrative, with Daniel and his friends (renamed Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego) demonstrating that God is in control. The three friends refused to worship the pagan Babylonian gods and were thrown into a fiery furnace. However, they emerged unharmed because of God's miraculous protection. He also delivered Daniel from a den of lions when he refused to worship the Persian king Darius. Daniel also interpreted several visions and dreams for King Nebuchadnezzar and Belshazzar. The second half of the book (chaps.7-12) consists of a series of visions, which show that God is in control of history.

The book affirms that God is the sovereign ruler of the world and rewards His faithful servants, as expressed by Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego: *'If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to save us from it, and He will rescue us from your hand, O king. But even if He does not, we want you to know, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up.'* (Daniel 3: 17,18)

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“One more step along the world I go”

There is a saying in Italy (so I am told) that says, “One pope dies, you make another”. It means something similar to “There are plenty more fish in the sea” or “The show will go on”, in other words the world continues on regardless of something that has happened. Well Bishop Michael is not the Pope (or ever claimed to be!) but as he retires this month steps have begun to find his successor. (So far in my ministry I’ve seen three bishops of Lichfield come and go and I’m on my third Bishop of Wolverhampton.) Each one has brought new gifts and insights to the role and it will be interesting to see what the next Bishop of Lichfield brings with him or her.

Bishop Michael ends his ministry as Bishop of Lichfield and Chair of the Church of England’s Liturgical Commission with the introduction of the new “Feast of Thanksgiving for Creation in Christ”. We shall be observing this feast in our cluster service here in Rushall on September 9th with a guest speaker in the service from A Rocha, the charity that awards Eco Status to churches. The service is at 7.30pm on Wednesday 9th September in St. Michael’s and we would love you to come if you can.

A few days before that, on Friday 4th September Bishop Michael will be at St. Michael’s at 8.30am to begin a two day “Eco Pilgrimage” in which he will visit Eco Award churches on his way to Lichfield.

The task of appointing the next bishop will take some time (unlike the election of the Pope!) as the Vacancy in See Committee must prepare a statement of needs that then goes to the Crown Nominations Committee who make the nominations to go to the prime minister. (For the avoidance of doubt I have said I’m not interested!)

Whoever is appointed we will welcome them with anticipation for the future as we give thanks for the past.

Our journey of faith continues (as does our journey through life and through the world) and as we walk together we give thanks for the gifts that others bring as they walk with us and for the wonders of the world and creation.



Colin

2nd Sept The New Guinea Martyrs of 1942

The Anglican Church in Australia still honours the New Guinea Martyrs of 1942. These brave men and women, 10 Australians and two Papuans, refused to leave their missionary work on the island as the Japanese military forces advanced. As one tribute to them put it: *'They knowing full well the risk, elected to stay with their flock.'*

The missionaries were serving the people of Papua New Guinea as Christian priests, teachers, workers and medical nurses. All twelve were unarmed as they were going about their normal missionary work. They were killed for no reason at all, but to preempt any possibility that they might be a danger to the Japanese in the future. Or perhaps they were killed out of some vague Japanese hatred of Australian Christians, who were poles apart from the then fanatical Emperor-worship that enveloped the whole military strategy of Japan

The martyrs were:

In Gona, on the NE coast of Papua:
May Hayman (medical sister), and Mavis Parkinson (teacher):
both bayoneted to death.

In villages inland from Gona:
Vivian Redlich (priest),
Margery Brenchley (medical sister),
Lillar Lashmar (teacher),
Henry Holland, (priest),
John Duffill (carpenter): all beheaded.
Also, Lucian Tapiedi, an indigenous Papuan: axed to death. (A statue of Tapiedi now stands as a memorial above the West Door of Westminster Abbey.)

Outer islands:
John Barge (priest), Bernard Moore (priest), boat sunk.

In open sea: Henry Mathews (priest), Leslie Gariadi (Papuan assistant): boat sunk and men machine-gunned in water.

Today the Church also remembers the more than 300 church workers of all churches who were killed in 1942, during the Japanese occupation of Papua New Guinea.

M&M: Monty and Matty

Poor Monty!

Instead of simply relaxing like everyone else through the summer he's been prodded, shaved, operated on and then dressed in a jump suit, stopped from playing and not allowed to go on his usual walk for some weeks. Meanwhile Matty has been by his side and quite understanding (except when trying to steal his dinner when he's not looking).

It all began with a CT scan that revealed some worrying signs, an ultrasound and some tests a couple of weeks later showed some nodules that we think are harmless but also a cancerous growth. A week later the tumour was removed and the jump suit and restricted regime imposed to aid recovery.

We now have another ultrasound in the next few days to see whether the cancer has spread or if it has all been removed.

And yet Monty and Matty are not in the least worried. Each day is, as always, a brand-new day and a new beginning, new things to sniff, new opportunities to explore and new attempts to force the servant to come outside and throw the stick despite the heat. The day begins with waggy tails and a dash to the breakfast bowls to watch the servant prepare the food, then a rest while he joins others for morning prayer. Then it's time for a walk and time to explore. Another rest until snack time at lunch then hopefully another walk if it's not too hot before preparing for tea. It's a busy life full of fun and anticipation.

We're hoping, obviously for good news from the tests but whatever happens we will continue to take one day at a time and every day is a gift to be enjoyed and lived to the full.

Lots of woofs,
Monty and Matty

AGNUS DEI: A reflection by Jonathan Prigg

I recently visited the National Gallery in London to attend among other exhibitions the major retrospective of the Spanish artist Francisco de Zubaran. Although there were several outstanding depictions of our LORD Jesus Christ on the cross the painting that stood out from the many masterpieces was his depiction of The Agnus Dei.



Francisco de Zubaran (7.11.1598 to 27.8.1664) was born in Fuente de Cantos on the Extremadura region of Spain and moved to study and work in Seville in 1614 and spent the majority of his career there. Only later after the great plague that killed half the population, of Seville, including his son Juan, that he moved to Madrid in 1658. The majority of his paintings were of a religious nature, made predominantly for the church. His father was a textile merchant and it is his knowledge of the textures of clothing that he depicts in his paintings that time and again takes your breath away.

In fact it was his depiction of the lambs wool on The Agnus Dei that first caught my attention. He painted several versions of this painting but The Prado's version in the exhibition is to my mind the greatest. Besides being trussed up its the look on the lambs face that also struck me. As I'm sure you all know Agnus Dei is Latin for the Lamb of God and the look of acceptance on the lambs face that conveyed to me it's acceptance as a sacrifice to expiate human sins. Just as our LORD Jesus Christ accepted his sacrifice for our sins by being crucified on the cross. The whole painting brought home to me the meaning of The Agnus Dei in our Sunday service and the image is one that will stay with me for ever.

Overall the stunning exhibition really made me understand what a major artist Zubaran was and every bit a master artist as his contemporaries Murillo and Valazquez

Gardening Notes for September

What a summer this has been. From the destruction of the countryside and green spaces, the devastating loss of property and to the many problems for farmers and farming.

On a small domestic scale, gardens have had one of the worst summers in most people's memories. Shrubs have died, trees have lost their leaves and perennials have just curled up! The lawn succumbed to the two most recent heatwaves. We are aware that lawns will more than likely recover once there is significant rain. I think our rhododendrons have died and maybe the skimmias. We live in hope that some of the shrubs and perennials have roots that have survived below ground and next year we will see what comes up. I have cut all the foliage from the perennials which have gone over or just gone brown down to the ground and will assess what is left next spring. The borders look strangely bare.

Also it is useful to assess what is left in a green state and to try to adjust future planting to those plants more resistant to the droughts we are forecast to experience in future years.

Conscious of the shortage of water supplies we have confined our watering only to the pots and containers where there is still what is about the only colour left in the garden.

Collecting leaves had started as early as August this year as the trees shut down so that what water is available helps to keep them alive.

It is noticeable that roses have had an early second flush and seem to be relatively resistant to drought.

We can only hope for some useful rain and then there will be a chance to plant bulbs for next Spring's display and see a greening of the land again.

Ann

Samuel - the exceptional man who put the crown on David's head

The Bible contains descriptions of many kinds of leaders. These men (and sometimes women) were responsible for the well-being of groups of people. Moses led the Israelites out of Egypt. Joshua led the wilderness wanderers into the Promised Land. Gideon, Ezra and Nehemiah led people to fight against their enemies and improved their moral and spiritual lives.

While these people may be familiar to us, the Bible also mentions other individuals who had different leadership responsibilities. Some fulfilled their positions readily while others, like Joseph and Esther, gradually became aware of their roles and achieved the purposes God had for them.

As a baby, Samuel was dedicated to the service of God. While a young boy, God spoke directly to him. Samuel grew up gaining favour with both God and men. At an early age, God was with Samuel and made everything that Samuel said come true.

Samuel became the ruler of Israel. His style of leadership was based on godliness, fairness and good organisation. He settled disputes, served as a judge and banned pagan gods from the land.

When Samuel became old, the people became restless. They demanded to have a king to rule over them. God reluctantly agreed. Under God's guidance, Samuel chose Saul. Unfortunately, Saul failed to lead the people in the way of God. So, Samuel was directed by God to anoint David - to be the next king of Israel.

Samuel, it appears, was acutely aware of his responsibility to be a good leader. He was a man of good reputation but his obedience to God brought about difficulty, uncertainty and hardship. He wanted Saul to be a good leader, but Saul failed to live up to his high calling. Samuel was deeply upset and departed from the king's presence. He knew that a bad leader would bring about the nation's downfall.

Nevertheless, Samuel treated Saul with respect and courtesy. He understood the principle of submission to God-ordained authority. He was loyal to Saul, even though he turned out to be a bad leader.

Samuel's grief over Saul's failure is a reminder for us to pray for our leaders on a regular basis (whether or not they fall short in their official capacity!) We need God to provide us with leaders who are trustworthy and honourable. Let's pray for good leaders that they may enhance truth, peace and justice throughout the world.

An Old Dog Tries New Tricks on the High Street By Keith Lawrence

You have probably spotted me and my wife, Elaine, sitting in our usual corner at the Walsall Costa Coffee of a Tuesday morning, right after we have finished our weekly errands. For as long as I can remember, our routine was set in stone. Elaine is a woman who appreciates consistency —she orders her trusty hot Americano with a splash of cold milk, without fail, every single visit. However, at the beginning of the summer I had a sudden moment of curiosity. Looking at the colourful menu boards behind the counter, I decided it was high time I stepped out of my comfort zone and sampled some of these modern cold drinks. Armed with my loyalty card, I embarked on a grand tour of contemporary beverages. For those wishing to try something refreshing after the Sunday service, here is my honest report.

1. Iced Peach Tea

Keith's Verdict: This was an absolute delight. It tasted just like a proper summer afternoon. It is terribly refreshing, and though Elaine thought it was a bit too chilled for a breezy Tuesday, I found it went down a treat. A real winner for the warmer months.

Photo: A lovely glass of amber tea. In the background, Elaine is sensibly sticking to her hot mug and a slice of toast.



2. Iced Cappuccino



Keith's Verdict: A bit of a modern twist on an old favourite. They serve the espresso chilled over ice, topped with a thick layer of cold milk foam. It gave me a rather silly white moustache, which Elaine found highly amusing. It is very pleasant, if a bit messy to drink.

Photo: A tall glass of iced coffee topped with a thick layer of frothy white foam.

3. Tropical Mango Bubble Frappe

Keith's Verdict: I must admit I was a bit sceptical of this one. It features small spheres of mango juice at the bottom that pop in your mouth. Once I got used to it, I found it marvellous fun. It is very sweet, fruity, and thoroughly enjoyable.

Photo: A bright yellow, blended beverage served with a wide paper straw designed for the juice bubbles.



4. Strawberry Coconut Iced Latte

Keith's Verdict: This one was a bit too exotic for my simple palate. It has a strong taste of coconut mixed with coffee and strawberry syrup. It reminded me of the sun lotion we used on holiday in Weymouth years ago. It is nice, but perhaps not quite what I want with my morning paper.

Photo: An attractive, layered drink showing distinct bands of red strawberry sauce, white milk, and dark espresso.



5. Iced Strawberry Frappe

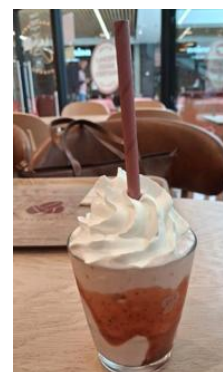
Keith's Verdict: This was heaven in a cup. It is not really coffee at all, but rather a grand, creamy strawberry milkshake. It took me right back to the old milk bars of my youth in the 1950s. I polished it off in record time. Absolutely delicious.

Photo: A thick pink blended drink topped with a generous mountain of whipped cream.

6. Iced Whipped Latte

Keith's Verdict: A very elegant drink where the cold coffee sits beneath a heavy cloud of whipped milk. It is a bit of a struggle to drink without getting a nose full of foam, making it feel a little too fussy for a casual Tuesday morning in the Midlands.

Photo: A rich layer of dark espresso balancing beneath a deep, frothy white topping.



7. Sweet Ube Iced Matcha

Keith's Verdict: Do not let the unusual colours put you off. It looks remarkably bright green with a purple base, but it was surprisingly lovely. It blends Japanese green tea with a sweet purple yam, resulting in a very smooth, creamy, vanilla-like flavour. A very pleasant surprise.

Photo: A striking green tea beverage resting on a vivid purple base.

Continued on page 13

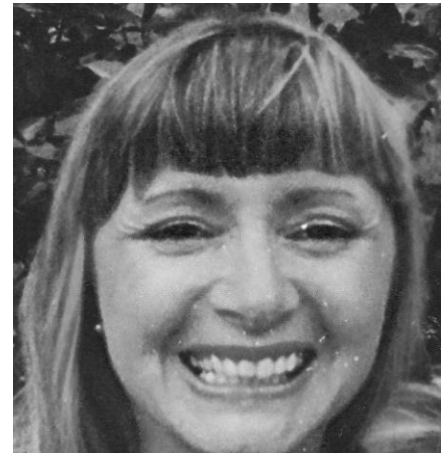
DEMENTIA

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 29th September 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

8. Iced Salted Caramel Frappe

Keith's Verdict: Putting salt in a sweet coffee drink seems an unusual trend, but it works surprisingly well. It is incredibly rich and sweet—more like a liquid dessert than a morning pick me-up. A bit too heavy for an everyday choice, but our grandchildren would adore it.

Photo: A blended beige coffee drink with ribbons of dark caramel sauce running down the sides of the glass.



9. Apple and Kiwi Refresher

Keith's Verdict: Good heavens, this one has some kick. It is incredibly sharp, tart, and zesty. It cleared the cobwebs away instantly. It is a bit too vibrant for a quiet sit-down, but it certainly wakes you up.

Photo: A translucent, bright green fruit drink featuring a slice of dried citrus floating on top

A Brief Excursion to Lichfield

Caffè Nero Americano (The Detour)

Keith's Verdict: During a day trip to Lichfield, feeling a bit overwhelmed by all my cold drink adventures, I admitted defeat and ordered a plain, hot Americano. It was strong, hot, and dependable. However, Elaine tasted it and pointed out it tasted exactly like our usual coffee back in Walsall, meaning the entire bus journey was, financially speaking, rather unnecessary!

In Conclusion

Ten drinks later, and my compulsory experiment is over. I have survived the popping bubbles, the purple yams, and the mountains of whipped cream. I might be eighty years old, but it is nice to know I can still surprise myself—and Elaine—every now and again.

If you see us out in town next week, do come and say hello. I might just be brave enough to order another strawberry milkshake, while Elaine sits contentedly opposite me, nursing her hot Americano.

Out and about walking, driving and visiting:

Biddulph Grange

The National Trust property in North Staffordshire is north of Stoke-on-Trent.

Chose a day when it is for dry as there are no house tours. There is however a teashop, a shop and a second-hand bookshop.

The Victorian gardens were designed as a series of rooms based on different countries and styles of garden. Particularly impressive is the Chinese water garden and a series of tunnels and grottos lead from one to another.

The style of this unusual garden would make it interesting even to children.

We have not visited it for many but there was an annual impressive collection of dahlias.

Although it is a fair way to go for a day out there is plenty of interest to make it worthwhile. The gardens are open daily,

Ann



Hope for All Creation - a theological response to the environmental crises By the House of Bishops, CHP, £12.99

Hope for All Creation presents a theological vision by which members of the Church of England might think, reflect and act in response to the current environmental crises, in partnership with other denominations and all people of good will. Drawing on a rich history of Anglican theological reflection on the environment, it takes forward this tradition to inform the Church of England's care for creation. It does so at a time when humanity's disruption of the Earth seems on the threshold of the catastrophes earlier reports warned of. It also seeks to deepen the Church's vision of creation and human responsibility and to articulate more fully God's reconciliation of all things in Christ and the hope for the redemption and renewal he provides.

Finally, it offers a vision of how Christians can seek to live in a reconciled relationship with other creatures in the light of this hope and integrate this fully into Christian mission and discipleship. Hope for All Creation is a teaching document from the House of Bishops of the Church of England and features a Foreword by the Archbishops of Canterbury and York.



4th Sept St Birinus – apostle of Wessex. Died 650

Did you ever feel that God was calling you to do something big for Him, even though you were not quite sure of the details? If so, Birinus is the saint for you.

He was a French Benedictine monk who in 634 was made a bishop at Genoa, and sent by Pope Honorius 1 to extend the evangelisation of England. (Augustine had arrived in Canterbury about 35 years before.)

Birinus landed at Hamwic, near Southampton. His original plan was to evangelise Wessex and then penetrate up into the Midlands, where no preacher had ever yet reached. But Birinus soon found the West Saxons so pagan that he decided to concentrate just on them.

Birinus had little to help him become the apostle to Wessex. So, he simply used what he did have: his own two feet and his voice. He wandered around preaching at every opportunity, trusting in God to help him. And He did: Birinus became known and respected, and soon a big breakthrough occurred: for political reasons the King of Wessex, Cyneigils, wanted to convert to Christianity, and he asked Birinus to help him.

So Birinus instructed and baptised King Cyneigils, who was then able to marry the Christian king of Northumbria's daughter, Cyneburg, and in due course Birinus baptised their family as well.

In return, Cyneigils gave Birinus the town of Dorchester (upon Thames) to be his diocesan see. It was a perfect location: a Romano-British town right on a road and a river, in the midst of a populated area.

During his 15 years as Bishop of Dorchester, Birinus baptised many people and built churches all over the area, with the king's blessing.

Before he died in 650, Birinus dedicated a church at Winchester. It was a glimpse of the future: for Winchester's growing importance made it inevitable that in time it would also become the ecclesiastical centre of the kingdom.

6th Sept: Captain Allen Gardiner – founder of SAMS

Captain Allen Gardiner is a saint for anyone who refuses to give up on their calling. For this courageous and indomitable man founded what became the South American Mission Society, though he sacrificed his own life in the process.

Gardiner had not started out to be a missionary. Born in 1704, he had left Berkshire to embark on a naval career which took him to Cape Town, Ceylon, India, Malaysia and China. But the death of his first wife in 1834 caused him to turn back to Christianity. He left the navy and became missionary.

With his second wife, Elizabeth, Allen Gardiner felt called to South America. But from 1838 onwards he faced implacable opposition from the authorities there, both secular and religious. His efforts to evangelise among the Chilean Mapuches - which included a family journey of 1000 miles overland by pack mule from Buenos Aires to Santiago and Concepción - met with hostility. So, in 1842 he settled on the Falklands, and tried to reach the Patagonian Indians. By 1844 he had founded the Patagonian Mission, because no other British Christian society felt able to take on responsibility for his work.

Next, Gardiner reached out to the Bolivian Indians of the Gran Chaco. But again, he was repulsed. So, he then decided on a bold attempt to evangelise the Indians of Tierra del Fuego.

He tried to raise the funds for a 120-ton schooner, which would have provided him with a secure base near Picton Island. But in the end, he could only manage two 26-foot launches, the *Pioneer* and *Speedwell*. Nevertheless, in December 1850 Gardiner and six other men sailed to Picton Island. But again, nothing went well. Fierce weather, Indian hostility, a series of errors and logistical problems led to disease and finally disaster. By March 1851 the group had had to flee for their lives. They sailed eastwards to Spaniard Harbour, a bay at the mouth of Cooks River. Here they waited in vain for fresh stores to arrive, and by September all six men had died of starvation.

Gardiner's journal, water-damaged but readable, was found in his hand the following year by the crew of HMS Dido, and includes the plea to God, "Let not this mission fail", and this prayer:

"Grant O Lord, that we may be instrumental in commencing this great and blessed work; but should Thou see fit in Thy providence to hedge up our way, and that we should even languish and die here, I beseech Thee to raise up others and to send forth labourers into this harvest..."

The work of the South American Society in the subsequent 160 years and the growth of the Anglican Churches of South America are God's answer to that prayer. Gardiner had to face many failures in his life, but his solid, resolute faith is an inspiration.

***'He gave us eyes to see them'
– the church bells***

'Summoned by Bells' is the title of John Betjeman's poetic autobiography, where he describes how bells summoned him to school and to church. Bells announcing the joy of weddings and Sunday services; and also marking out times of sadness and the death of loved ones.



One of the strangest bell-towers is at St Augustine's Church, Brookland in Kent, north-east of Rye. It was originally built in the medieval period, and now stands as a triple coned, wooden, octagonal tower detached from the church, and clad with shingles in 1936.

The story is that the tower looked down at a beautiful bride about to marry an unpleasant groom: it was such a surprise that the tower jumped off the church in shock. The truth is that the church was built on marshy ground, and a stronger foundation was needed for the bells. And so the tower was built north of the church.

Like all belfries and steeples, it is an impressive witness to the place of bells in human life and work: as time-keepers, announcing both festive occasions and emergencies, and calling people away from more worldly pursuits to worship. That is why bells have always been blessed at their installation for their true function is to ring out the harmony of heaven.

The tenor bell at Warburton Church in Cheshire is inscribed with the words, 'I bid you to the house of prayer. St Werburgh's hallowed name I bear. Good folk draw near and humbly pray, as prayed that saint in olden day.' As a little boy, John Betjeman would listen to the bells with his teddy bear, Archibald. 'I heard the church bells hollowing out the sky, deep beyond deep, like never-ending stars.' For him, for the people of Brookland, and for all of us, the bells were like stars lighting up the sky with faith and joy and praise.

Recipe

Sweet Potato Soup

I have not got on very well using sweet potato as an ordinary vegetable but we have enjoyed it as a soup.

Ingredients

1 Large sweet potato - chopped

One onion

Two carrots

A little garlic if liked (very lazy chopped garlic in a jar is very useful)

A small amount of grated ginger

A small amount of chilli flakes

according to taste

About a litre of vegetable stock

Black pepper

Fresh cream

1. Gently fry the onion in olive oil
2. Add garlic, chopped carrots, ginger
Add chopped potato and fry gently for a few minutes.
3. Add stock and bring to boil then simmer for approximately 20 minutes until potato is cooked.
4. Add chilli flakes sparingly and black pepper.
5. Blitz until smooth and swirl in fresh cream and croutons to serve.

Ann

How often should you change your sheets?

Ever wonder that?

When the question was put to various sleep coaches and sheet manufacturers, they came up with a variety of things to consider.

Once a week is thought to be good practise by many, but no more than twice a week, or you risk putting unnecessary wear and tear on your bedlinen.

Do you bath at night or in the morning? It matters, because that determines how much dust and sweat you will be taking to bed with you each night.

Do your pets sleep with you? In that case you may wish to change your bedding more than once a week. They may be leaving the odd flea, tick and certainly some fur in your bed.

Do you have allergies? If they include dust mites, it may be worth changing your bed every three to four days. Allergy UK advises a 60 degree wash to kill dust mites.

And finally, don't rush to make your bed each morning. Instead, pull back the sheets, open the window, and give it some time to air.

9th September - Charles Fuge Lowder, 'slum priest'

The slums of the East End of London in the 1800s were not for the faint-hearted. Hopelessly overcrowded, with open running sewers in the streets, the slums bred disease, crime, and violence. Infant mortality soared, and labourers were often dead by the age of 19.

Everyone who could do so, avoided the slums of Victorian London.

Everyone except for one man. Charles Fuge Lowder was surely the most unlikely resident of the slums imaginable. Born in Bath in 1820, he had grown up as the son of a prosperous banker and been educated at Exeter College in Oxford.

Ordained in 1843, Lowder ministered in the West Country before moving to Pimlico in London. Here he helped found the Society of the Holy Cross, 'to defend and strengthen the spiritual life of the clergy, to defend the faith of the Church, and to carry on and aid Mission work both at home and abroad.'

And it was here, in due course, that the slums of East London caught Lowder's attention.

He had read a life of St Vincent de Paul and had been inspired by it to also do urban mission. And so, in 1856, he moved across London, to become curate of St George's in the East End. That would have been bad enough, but his job was to run the St George's Mission in Wapping, at that time one of the worst slum areas of the whole East End.

Lowder's courage and sense of calling to such loathsome streets were nothing short of heroic. Especially as he took on the job not for a few weeks, but as a way of life.

For Lowder believed that 'mission' should not be a short-lived campaign, but instead a permanent Christian presence in an area where the Church had no previous foothold. That was certainly true of the reeking, crime-infested streets of Wapping.

And so it was that St George's Mission in Wapping began with a single room, and a priest determined to bring the love of Christ to some of the most unlovely-people in London. As the years went by, the mission grew into renting a local iron church, and then eventually it moved into its own brick-built building. And during those years the local people learned to respect and love the man who lived so kindly and sacrificially among them, called him Father Lowder, and seeking his help in the calamities of their lives – especially the East End cholera outbreak.

Father Lowder's efforts were recognised when in 1866 a new parish, St Peter's London Docks, was carved out of St George's parish, with Lowder as first vicar.

14 years later, in 1880, Lowder finally resigned. 24 years of hard labour in the slums had taken its toll, and his health was gone. He retired to Chislehurst, where he soon died.

Many thousands of mourners attended his large funeral in the East End, wanting to remember the priest who had loved them and served them so faithfully. Lowder had become the most famous 'slum priest' of Victorian London.

14th Sept Holy Cross Day

On Holy Cross Day the Church celebrates the Cross as a symbol of triumph, as the sign of Christ's victory over death. Holy Cross Day goes right back to 14 September 335, and we have the mother of a Roman Emperor to thank for it.

Helena was a devout Christian, and after her son, Constantine, was converted, they agreed that she should travel from Rome to Israel, and seek out the places of special significance to Christians.

Of course, much of Jerusalem had been destroyed by the Romans around 135 AD. But even so, Helena finally located what she believed to be the sites of the Crucifixion and of the Burial (and modern archaeologists think she may well be correct). The sites were so close together that she built one large church over them - the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.

That church, built in honour of the Cross, was dedicated on 14 September 335. The sign of the Cross has been used by Christians since early times. Tertullian, writing his *De Corona* (3:2) around AD 211, noted that Christians seldom did anything significant without making the sign of the cross.

What is its significance? Well, people often put their initials or some sort of personal mark on something to show that it belongs to them. The Cross is the personal mark of our Lord Jesus Christ, and we mark it on ourselves as a sign that we belong to him. Even in the book of Revelation, we read that the servants of God are 'sealed' or 'marked' on their foreheads as a sign that they are His.

A preacher once put it this way: if you were explaining to someone how to make a cross, you would say: "Draw an I." That is you standing before the Lord, saying, 'here I am'. Then cancel that vertical stroke with a horizontal stroke – as if to say: "Lord, I abandon my self-will and make you the centre of my life instead. I abandon myself to your love and service."

On Holy Cross Day, we recall Jesus' wonderful promise: "And when I am lifted up, I will draw all men unto me." (John 12:32)

All roads lead to the cross (eventually)

I suspect we all know the saying “All roads lead to Rome” and our regular congregation members know all too well my love of the City of Rome; the food, wine, history, art, culture and just the atmosphere of the place makes me want to go back time and time again. There is just so much to see that even after several visits I’ve only just scratched the surface.

There are so many connections that can be made when visiting places in Rome that you can lose yourself in journeys in history with surprising twists and turns that can occupy your mind and imagination for hours as you wander around a monument or church.

In the two pages before this one we have seen how Charles Fuge Lowder helped found the Society of the Holy Cross and that September 14th is Holy Cross Day. Inspired by this I thought I’d share a story of two places in Rome connected by the Cross.

This is the exterior of St. John Lateran, the only Roman Catholic Archbasilica in the world. It is the cathedral of Rome and inside is the Pope’s throne. Founded in 324 it is the oldest church in Rome and is the mother church of all Roman Catholic churches in the world. It is built over the site of the barracks of the imperial cavalry bodyguards and next to it was a palace.



By the early 300’s the palace (Lateran Palace) was known as the House of Fausta and in 307 Fausta became the second wife of the Emperor Constantine (who later encouraged Fausta’s father Maximian to commit suicide) and the palace then came into his hands.

In 326 Constantine ordered the execution of his son Crispus (from his first marriage to Minervina) by poison and shortly afterwards had Fausta put to death (some say through locking her in an overheated bath) – rumours are that the two had an incestuous affair but there is no firm evidence for this and their names were erased from all official records. (The palace had already been given by Constantine to the Bishop of Rome and was dedicated by Pope Sylvester I in 324).

Back to Fausta – it was rumoured by some that Fausta was put to death by Constantine in an attempt to appease his mother Helena who had been shocked

shocked by the murder of Crispus.

In her grief and guilt for her part in Fausta's death, Helena made a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. While in the Holy Land Helena built or beautified the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem and the Church of Eleona (The "Our Father" church) on the mount of Olives. She is also attributed with the discovery of the True Cross, on the site of which Constantine ordered the building of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.



In 328 Helena returned home from the Holy Land to her palace at Palazzo Sessoriano, so named as the imperial council had used to meet in the large hall. Helena had the hall converted into a basilica which housed some of the relics of the passion brought back by her. She also brought back soil from Jerusalem which was scattered over the floor of the basilica, hence its name of

the Basilica di Santa Croce in Gerusalemme (The Holy Cross in Jerusalem) and the convention began that the basilica is part of Jerusalem (as an embassy is part of the country it represents) and so when standing inside one is considered to be in Jerusalem itself.

Helena died around 330 with her son at her side. The basilica became one of the major destinations for pilgrims, especially penitents, and in the middle ages popes used to walk barefoot from St. John Lateran to Holy Cross in Jerusalem on Good Friday to venerate the relic of the passion (which is incorporated into our Good Friday Liturgy with our "Veneration of the Cross").

The more recent history of the basilica is less edifying. The attached Cistercian monastery was shut down by Pope Benedict in 2011; the abbot, a former flamboyant fashion designer from Milan, had already been moved, one of the nuns, a former lap dancer, had led other nuns in dance performances during religious ceremonies while the lifestyle of the monks was considered to be "not in keeping with that of a monk" with financial and liturgical issues.

The basilica stands still (and is open to all) as a place of prayer and worship whilst from the ceiling of the chapel of the relics a mosaic of a rare smiling Christ looks down as he bestows a blessing, "Father forgive them, they do not know what they are doing" he prayed from the cross – I suspect that same prayer is needed today!

Colin

24th Sept St Gerard Sagredo – church planting in the 11th century

It's amazing how little some things change down the centuries. Take the life of Gerard Sagredo, for instance. He left his 'comfort zone' of home and church because he felt God's calling on his life. He travelled abroad and taught in order to earn his living in a non-Christian country. In his spare time he shared his faith with the people he met, and gradually some were converted. Soon he had 'planted' a little church.

Gerard's life sounds like that of a western missionary in parts of the developing world today. In fact, he was an 11th century monk from Venice. He was the prior of San Giorgio Maggiore, but gave up the security in order to attempt the pilgrimage to Jerusalem. But God stopped Gerard when he reached Hungary, for King Stephen not only welcomed him, but pressed him to become tutor to his son.

Gerard agreed, and soon he had converted a group of people around him. In those days monks didn't just plant churches – they planted entire 'sees' of the church, and so the see of Csanad was established, with Gerard as its first bishop.

But the problems of then and now seem surprisingly similar. Gerard Sagredo worked in the face of growing hostility from local people of other faiths, and half-hearted commitment from some of his own converts. Nearly 1,000 years later, Christian missionaries all over the world are still facing the same two struggles.

Sadly, the next bit of the story is also all too familiar: King Stephen died, and the new people in power hated Christians. In 1038 persecution began. In 1046 Gerard was attacked in the street, and stoned. A lance was thrust through him. His body was then hurled into the Danube. Gerard Sagredo had become a martyr of the Persecuted Church.

The non-Christians killed Gerard that day, but they did not kill Christianity. In the years to come many more thousands of Christians would die, while the church grew, not shrank. Meanwhile, Venice paid homage to her first ever martyr by translating some of his relics back to the island of Murano in 1333.

On what clergy should wear on their feet

The Rectory
St James the Least

My dear Nephew Darren



Thank you for sending me the photograph of you having your face painted at your parish's 'Fun Day' - although I can't help feeling that to label an event 'fun' is the most effective way of draining it of all amusement whatsoever. Why on earth can't parishes continue with the traditional title of 'Crowning of the Rose Queen and Fete', equally traditionally grimly enjoyed to the accompaniment of thunder and torrential rain.

However, the one thing that caused me the greatest concern in your photo was the fact that you were wearing sandals. Sandals are *only* to be worn by Franciscan monks (without socks) and holidaymakers on Blackpool promenade (regrettably, generally with socks). I know that you will argue that Jesus wore sandals. This was mainly because reliable pairs of brogues had yet to be invented, but also because He lived in a hot, dry country. We live in a cold, wet one.

The only appropriate colour for footwear for a parish priest is black, and the only appropriate material is leather - although I will concede that can create difficulties. Wet leather shoes and polished marble sanctuary floors are a potentially lethal combination.

I well remember as a curate when old Canon Griffith entered the Sanctuary, having just got drenched coming from the Rectory. His feet moved across the marble floor some miles per hour faster than the rest of his body. Had he landed face down, the congregation may have assumed he was reverently prostrating himself before the altar. But lying in a supine position, staring in a dazed state at the rafters, only conveyed inappropriate indolence, when he should be at work.

However, do not take the alternative of wearing crepe soles. I suspect your present church will be fully carpeted - it seems to go with your sort of theology - and there will be no problem. But crepe soles and any sort of polished stone floor are a truly disastrous mixture. The slightest movement will make it sound as if you are being followed by a swarm of demented frogs.

Your loving uncle,
Eustace

Bible Bite

A short story from the Bible

It can be read in the Bible in
Matthew 12:1-14, Luke 6:1-11

The Pharisees watched Jesus to see if he broke any of God's laws, or the rules they had made up to stop the laws being broken.

Jesus' disciples were hungry so they picked some wheat from a field as they walked.



The Pharisees said to Jesus



Why are your disciples harvesting on the Sabbath? That is against the rules!

But King David broke the rules when he ate the bread that was only for the priests*



*1 Sam 21:1-6

And priests are allowed to work in the temple on the Sabbath*



*Num 28:9

Don't you understand when God says 'Keeping rules doesn't make up for not having kindness'?*



*Hos 6:6

If you understood, you would know my disciples did nothing wrong.



The Pharisees followed Jesus to the meeting place



There was a man with a crippled hand.

The Pharisees wanted to accuse Jesus of breaking rules, so they asked him a trick question.



Is it right to heal someone on the Sabbath?

If your sheep fell into a ditch on the Sabbath you would lift it out.



People are worth far more than sheep, so it is right to do good on the Sabbath



Hold out your hand.



.. and it was healed!

The Pharisees left and made plans.



We will kill him.

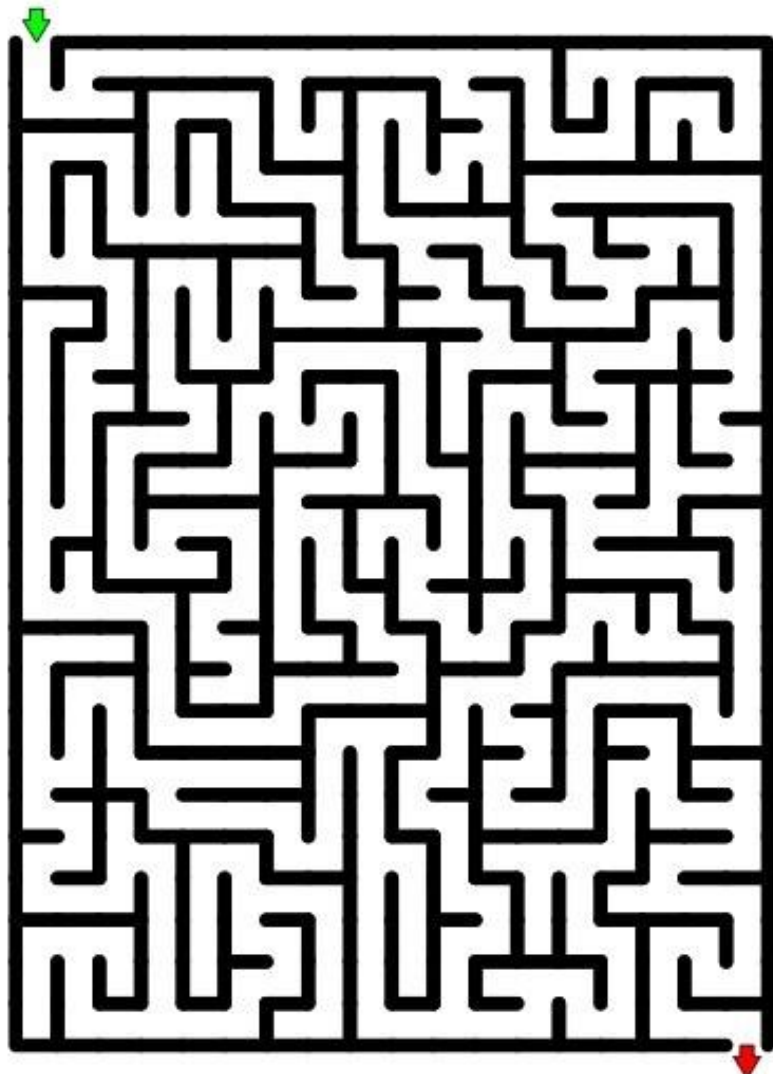
July's Solution

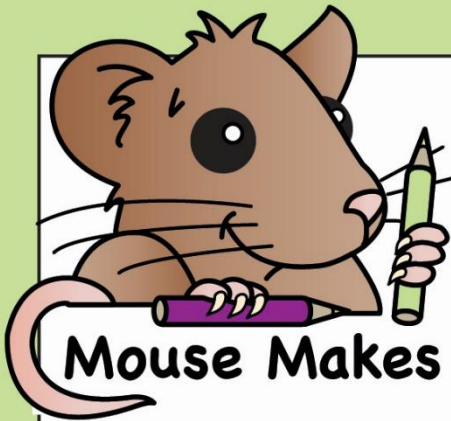
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Can you solve
the maze?





THE TRUE VINE

Who is the vine?

John 15:1

What does Jesus ask us to do?

"Go and bear

John 15:16

What happens to the branches that do not remain in the vine?

Thrown into the

and

John 15:6



READ
John 15:1-17

How many times does Jesus use the word FRUIT?

What does Jesus command?

To one another.

John 15:12,17

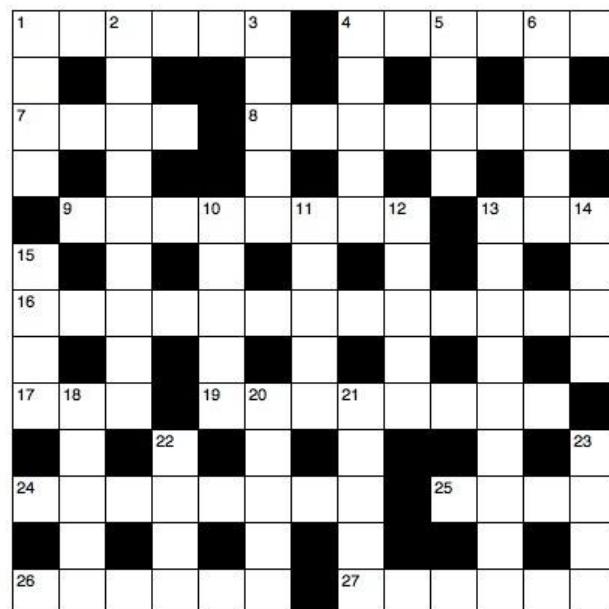
How many times does Jesus command us to LOVE one another?

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

JESUS • I AM • TRUE • VINE • FATHER
GARDENER • FRUIT • FRUITFUL
BRANCH • PRUNES • CUT • WITHERS
CLEAN • THROWN AWAY • FIRE • BURNS
REMAIN • ABIDE • DISCIPLES • JOY

Across

- 1 'Unless the Lord builds the house, its builders — in vain' (Psalm 127:1) (6)
 4 Season of the year (Psalm 84:6) (6)
 7 'My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death. — here and keep watch with me' (Matthew 26:38) (4)
 8 It came over the whole land from the sixth to the ninth hour on the first Good Friday (Luke 23:44) (8)
 9 Paul invariably did this in the synagogues he visited on his missionary journeys (Acts 17:2) (8)
 13 'It is God who works in you to will and to — according to his good purpose' (Philippians 2:13) (3)
 16 Members of the Church of Scotland (13)
 17 'Now when he saw the crowds, he went up on a mountain side and — down' (Matthew 5:1) (3)
 19 Mock(Luke14:29)(8)
 24 Disgrace(Psalm44:13)(8)
 25 First month of the Hebrew calendar (Exodus13:4)(4)
 26 Christianity of the Britons before Augustine arrived from Rome(6)
 27 Mean (Numbers 35:23)(6)



Down

- 1 'Whoever finds his life will — it' (Matthew 10:39) (4)
 2 'My lord the king, let the — — on me and on my father's family, and let the king and his throne be without guilt' (2 Samuel 14:9) (5,4)
 3 O raid (anag.) (5)
 4 'If two of you on earth — about anything you ask for, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven' (Matthew 18:19) (5)
 5 Take care of (1 Samuel 17:15) (4)
 6 What the older son heard as he came near the house the day his prodigal brother came home (Luke 15:25) (5)
 10 'Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with — judgment' (Romans 12:3) (5)
 11 Do ten(anag.)(5)
 12 Architectural style first used in Greek temples in the sixth century BC (5)
 13 Capable of being used(1Kings7:36)(9)
 14 'Each one should — his own actions'(Galatians6:4)(4)
 15 Among the items imported by Solomon's fleet of trading ships (1 Kings 10:22) (4)
 18 'But I am afraid that just — — was deceived by the serpent's cunning, your minds may somehow be led astray' (2 Corinthians 11:3) (2,3)
 20 Outstanding 18th-century hymn writer, — Watts(5)
 21 One of the four sons of Asher(Genesis46:17)(5)
 22 Be distressed(Proverbs24:19)(4)
 23 He was the father of Gaal, who threatened rebellion against Abimelech (Judges 9:28) (4)

July's answers:

ACROSS 1, Wife. 3, To battle. 8, Obal. 9, Disciple. 11, Bitterness. 14, Niacin. 15, Attain. 17, Passionate. 20, Tertiary. 21, Meet. 22, Weakness. 23, Deer.

DOWN1, Woodbine. 2, Feast day. 4, Orient. 5, Accusation. 6, Type. 7, Eyes. 10, Dedication. 12, Gadarene. 13, Ancestor. 16, Esdras. 18, Stew. 19, Area..