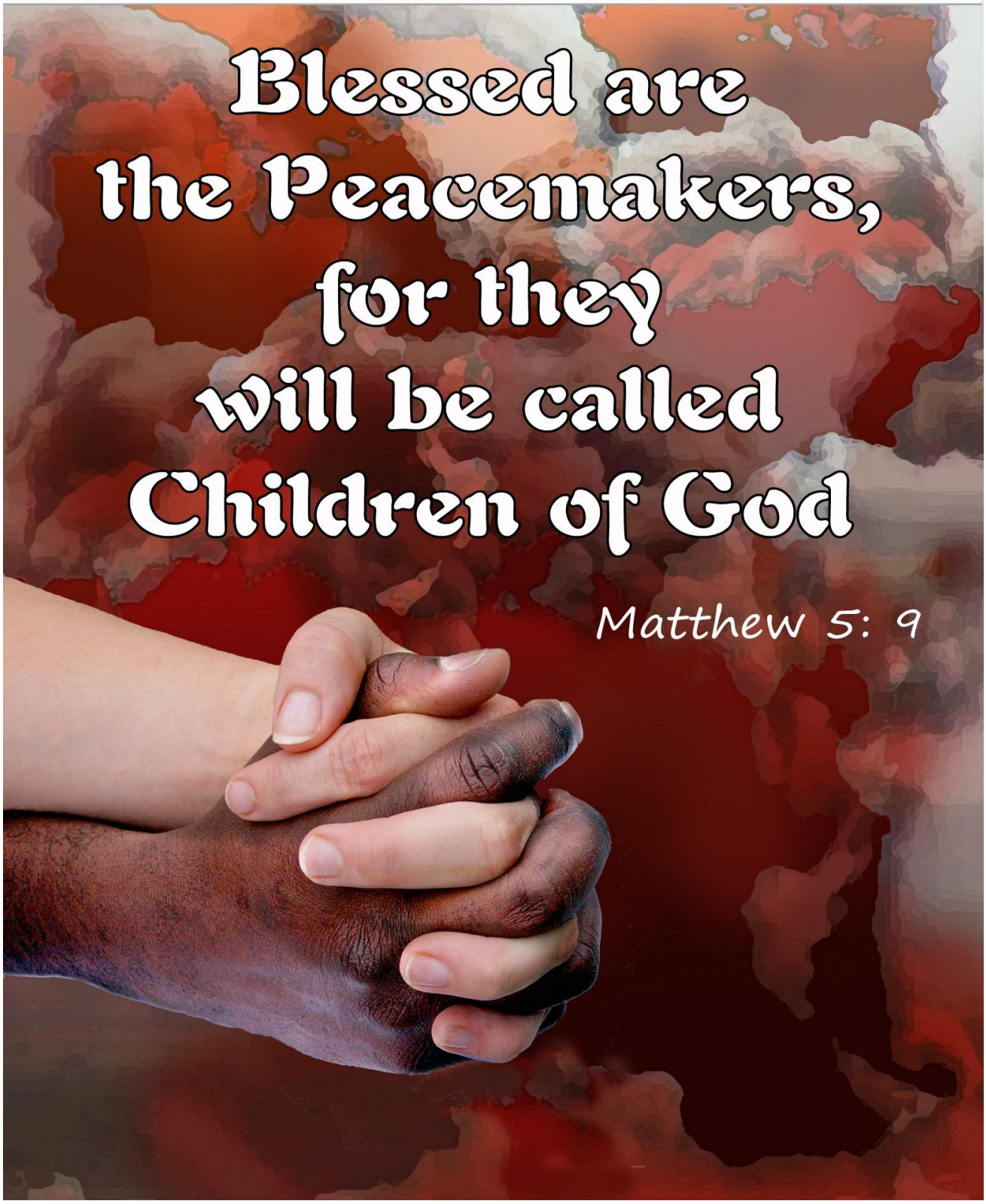
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Rushall Parish News

November 2026

Free online. 30p print copy

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



Some useful numbers

Vicar: Revd Colin Such Tel: 01922 624677
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Lay Reader & Dementia Lead
Mrs Carol Beckwith Tel: 01922 648138

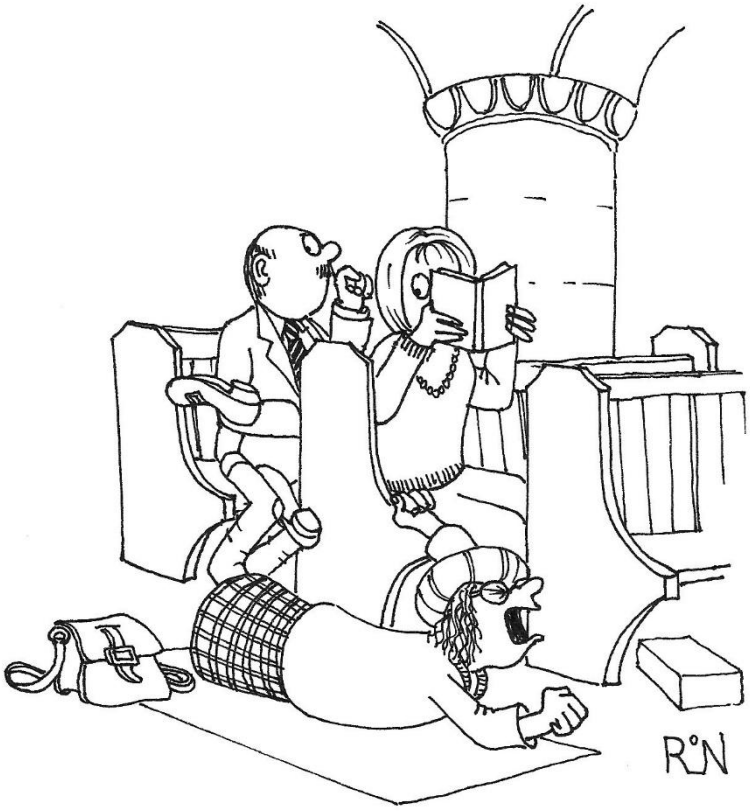
Churchwardens:
Mr Bob Barnard
Tel: 01922 624943
Mrs Jan Firth (Lay Reader)
Tel: 01922 860226

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.



Somebody sat in Minnie Hyssop's pew

400 years ago, on 18th November 1626 that St Peter's Basilica in the Vatican City was completed. It is the largest church in the world (measured by its interior).

If a man's religion does not affect his use of money, that man's religion is vain. – *H Martin*

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

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

What's the Big Idea? - an introduction to 1 Timothy

This month we look again at the books of the New Testament. Paul wrote to Timothy, *'my true son in the faith'* (2), as leader of the church in Ephesus. Timothy had a Greek father and Jewish Christian mother (Acts 16:1). Paul led him to faith during his first visit to Lystra and on his second visit invited Timothy to join him on his travels. He circumcised Timothy so that his Greek ancestry would not be a liability to working with the Jews (Acts 16:3). Although somewhat timid and often unwell, Timothy was a faithful servant of the Lord and Paul.

Paul writes his letter to challenge false teaching and to give instruction on aspects of church life, including worship, the appointment of leaders, and their attitude to money.

Paul gave Timothy authorisation to challenge the false teachers in the church. They taught a strong emphasis on Jewish myths and genealogies and were legalistic about Jewish laws. They also taught that the resurrection had already come and Christians no longer needed to look to Christ's coming, judgment, and resurrection of the dead. They were so immersed in speculative controversies that they neglected the very core of the Christian faith. Not an unfamiliar situation today!

Therefore, like Timothy, we are called to enable the church to bring glory to God: *'But you, man of God, flee from all this, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance and gentleness. Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called when you made your good confession in the presence of many witnesses.'* (6:11,12)

November

The name of this month indicates that this used to be the ninth month of the year. The Welsh name means "slaughter" whilst the Old English name preserves the heathen variant of "Sacrifice month" as this was the month when livestock was slaughtered as they couldn't be fed through the coming winter months.

Nicholas Breton writing in 1626 wrote "The Butcher, after a good bargain drinks a health to the Grasier (the herdsman): the Cook and the Comfitmaker (confectionery of dried fruits and spices), make ready for Christmas …. A lock to the cupboard keeps a bit for need …. Butter and Cheese begin to raise their prices, and Kitchen stuff is a commodity that every man is not acquainted with."

It doesn't seem much different to the world today, rising prices and the threat of shortages have been in the news lately with the government suggesting that people stock up with three days' worth of food and water in case of emergency. Yet, of course, the world is much different than it was 400 years ago when Breton was writing. The world may have changed but it seems to me that people haven't and neither have our needs. Of course, most of us have many things we couldn't possibly do without – how often do we suddenly realise we haven't picked up our mobile phone or put on a watch and feel that we're lacking something vital?

The government when suggesting that we should be prepared for any emergency (whether of cyber attack disrupting our modern structures of society or storms leaving us without power) recommended three days' worth of food and water and a clockwork radio.

In other words, all of our modern technology, our gadgets and push button style of life are worthless when faced with power shortages and floods.

Breton wrote of ordinary people stocking up their larders for the hard winter months to come when fresh food would be scarce. St. Paul writing to Timothy wrote "if we have food and clothing, we will be content with these" and the same holds true today for those who know the true worth of things.

Another thing that hasn't changed through the years is our need of God and his love for us. November sees the start of "The Kingdom" season as we contemplate God's kingdom of righteousness and love. November may still be a time to stock up for the winter but the kingdom season is a time to check our store of righteousness and love for the only constant thing in life is God and his promise to be with us always.

Colin

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

All Saints, or All Hallows, is the feast of all the redeemed, known and unknown, who are now in heaven. When the English Reformation took place, the number of saints in the calendar was drastically reduced, with the result that All Saints' Day stood out with a prominence that it had never had before.
This feast day first began in the East, perhaps as early as the 5th century, as commemorating 'the martyrs of the whole world'. A Northern English 9th century calendar named All Hallows as a principal feast, and such it has remained. Down the centuries devotional writers have seen in it the fulfilment of Pentecost and indeed of Christ's redemptive sacrifice and resurrection.
The saints do not belong to any religious tradition, and their lives and witness to Christ can be appreciated by all Christians. Richard Baxter, writing in the 17th century, wrote the following:
He wants not friends that hath thy love,
And made converse and walk with thee,
And with thy saints here and above,
With whom for ever I must be...

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

The heavenly hosts, world without end,
Shall be my company above;
And thou, my best and surest Friend,
Who shall divide me from thy love?*
1,255 ancient English churches were dedicated to All Saints - a number only surpassed by those dedicated to the Virgin Mary.
**(Maurice Frost (ed.), Historical Companion to Hymns Ancient and Modern (London: Clowes, 1962), no. 274, verses 1,3,6.*

2nd November All Souls' Day – a time of reckoning with the past

The early Church was slow to dedicate a liturgical day to offering prayers and masses to commemorate the faithful departed. But in time prayers were offered on behalf of dead monks, that they might attain 'the Beatific Vision' through purification, which the Church later described as Purgatory. Odilo, the powerful abbot of Cluny, (d 1049) decreed that All Souls' Day should follow the feast of All Saints' Day.
At least four ancient English dedications are known, the most famous of which are All Souls College, Oxford and the church in Langham Place in London.
In bygone centuries All Souls' Day was certainly uncomfortable for anyone who had wronged a person who had then died. For it was believed that souls in purgatory could appear on earth on this day, in the form of ghosts, witches or toads, to haunt anyone who had wronged them in life. On a more cheerful note, it was also believed that you could help the dead on this day by almsgiving in cash or in kind. Some of these beliefs seem to have been caught up in the popular customs of Hallowe'en.
When the Reformation came, the Protestants disregarded the idea of Purgatory, and this feast day remained with the Roman Catholic Church.

M&M:
Monty and Matty



It's getting darker earlier now – not that it stops us telling the servant to let us out so that we can bark our greetings to other dogs in the neighbourhood. One or two of our regular barking friends have moved away but some new barks have arrived in their place.
We have a short bark to each other and then the servant calls us back in. We don't know why he insists on calling us in – it's not as if it's quiet in the evenings as fireworks seem to be going off all the time. It used to be just a few nights a year that we would hear them but now it seems to be a surprise when there aren't fireworks (we just wonder how people afford them!)

There are lots of leaves on the ground now when we take our walks and different types of mushrooms in the hedgerows. Plenty of things for us to sniff at and the squirrels seem busier than ever. We've got wet a few times on our walks but we get a good rub down with a towel afterwards and settle down for a doze.

The servant hasn't put the heating on yet – he says it's too expensive so he's making do with jumpers and fleeces. We don't mind as we have fur coats and are quite happy snuggling up on the sofas. Winter doesn't seem too bad so far!

Lots of woofs,
Monty and Matty

God of the mountains, God of the valleys

Where were you when I laid the earth's foundation? Tell me, if you understand. Who marked off its dimensions? Surely you know! Who stretched a measuring line across it? On what were its footings set, or who laid its cornerstone ... The earth takes shape like clay under a seal; its features stand out like those of a garment… Have you journeyed to the springs of the sea or walked in the recesses of the deep?
Job 38:4–7, 14, 16 (NIV)

These verses from the biblical book of Job focus on the Earth, from the top of the highest mountains to the deepest valleys of the sea floor. Job used to have a very comfortable life, but lost everything: health, children, and much of his property. He can see no obvious reason for this terrible turn of events, so he demands an answer from God, asking "What have I done to you…? Why have you made me your target?"

There is no direct reply to Job's question, but instead a long conversation with his friends who assume (wrongly) that he must be being punished for doing something very bad. When God finally speaks, He draws Job's attention to his surroundings. The sun, moon and stars, the immensity of land and sea, the creatures that inhabit them, and the processes that produce weather are a wonderful display of God's creative power. God is the origin and sustainer of all these things, and they are far beyond anything humankind could produce, fully understand or imagine – even today.

The things we do know about the processes described in Job can help us appreciate how marvellous they are. Mountains are produced by the movement of the Earth's rocky crust over great periods of time. Erosion by weathering or glaciers then grinds down those rocks to produce the mineral component of soil.

Considering the wider perspective of creation can help restore our sense of who we are, who God is, and where we fit into His purposes. God speaks to Job in the midst of his suffering, lifting his eyes to the power and creativity of his Maker. Only after this theology lesson are Job's practical needs addressed. What will life be like for us over the coming months? A constant check on our own thinking – reminding ourselves of the bigger picture of God's plans and purposes – might be just what we need to help us keep going.

This series is written by Dr Ruth M Bancewicz, who is Church Engagement Director at The Faraday Institute for Science and Religion in Cambridge. Ruth writes on the positive relationship between Science and Christian faith.
This article drew very directly on the writing of Prof Bob White in New Daylight (BRF, Sept-Dec 2020), and the input of a Bible study group based in Cambridge.

Gardening Notes for November

The month of October has given us an unexpected bonus in the form of green lawns with rapid regrowth filing the bare patches. As many of us will have noticed some of our plants are now producing their flowers, particularly salvias.

A shrub which has now shot into abundant flowers in our garden is the Buddleia Globosa. However many shrubs are still looking very dead. I have mostly cut them back to a point of possible growth. Some look from the inside of the branches as though they might be alive and if there are leaves next year there will be no flowers for a season. If there is eventually failure of particularly Rhododendrons and skimmias we are going to try a couple of Hibiscus shrubs.

A very useful tool gifted to me by one of our sons is called "lithium pruning shears", they are more accurately electric secateurs capable of cutting through stems of over one inch. They are very quick in operation so it is best to keep the other hand well out of the way!

As the weather has now reverted to normal seasonal trends it is still a good time to plant hedging shrubs and trees.

Leaf fall seems somewhat delayed and so the extended brown bin collection dates will be useful for the next couple of months of clearing up.

We hope that there will be enough fine weather for the remaining autumn tasks,

Ann

Sign outside a church:
Come in and pray today. Beat the Christmas rush!

News from our former curate Peter

A New Chapter in Ministry: Moving to Rochester Cathedral



Dear Friends,

I am writing to share some exciting news about the next step in my ministry journey. Beginning this December, I will be taking up a new role as Chaplain for Young People and Families (Minor Canon) at Rochester Cathedral!

Yes, at 6ft 8in, I am well aware of the irony in the title "Minor Canon"—and rest assured, I'll be doing my very best to ensure I stay a Minor Canon rather than a loose cannon!

While transitions are always bittersweet, I am deeply thankful for how God has led this process and for the wonderful opportunity to serve in such a historic and vibrant community.

Where I'm Going

Rochester Cathedral is the second oldest cathedral in England, rooted in a long tradition of prayer, learning, and hospitality. Located in Kent on the River Medway, it serves as a central hub of worship and community life for the local area and the wider Diocese of Rochester.

What I'll Be Doing

In this full-time role, I will be joining the cathedral clergy team to share in the daily pattern of worship, preaching, and pastoral care across the congregation. My primary focus, however, will be revitalising and leading the cathedral's work with children, youth, and young families.

My day-to-day ministry will involve:

* Supporting & Growing Sunday Club: Working alongside an existing team of dedicated lay leaders to nurture Sunday morning activities for children.

* Building Youth & Young Adult Groups: Creating dedicated fellowship and discipleship spaces for teenagers and young adults.

* Family Engagement: Helping parents and families grow in their faith together, supporting baptism and confirmation preparation, and developing intergenerational worship.

* Community & Schools Outreach: Connecting with local schools and collaborating on community initiatives across the region.

How You Can Pray
As I pack up and prepare for this transition in December, I would be so grateful for your continued prayers:

* For the Transition: Pray for a smooth move to Rochester, efficient packing (and finding doorways tall enough!), and a settled start in a new home and environment.

* For the Cathedral Team & Families: Pray for the clergy, staff, and volunteer leaders as they prepare to welcome me, and for the young people and families we will be reaching.

* For Wisdom & Fruitfulness: Pray that God grants wisdom, energy, and inspiration as we build relationships and encourage young disciples in their faith journey.

Thank you all so much for your love, support, and encouragement over the years. I look forward to keeping in touch and sharing updates as this new season unfolds!

With every blessing,

Peter

General Synod opens – for the 11th time
There is a new General Synod beginning this month. Its term will run from 2026 to 2031.
It is the 11th since the first General Synod began in 1970, following the Synodical Government Measure of 1969.

The new General Synod has lots to debate and decide. Here are just some key issues:

Identity and relationships: Since the conclusion of the formal Living in Love and Faith (LLF) programme, new consultative groups will manage the work regarding same-sex relationship and marriage guidance.

Clergy care: There is a growing concern for the wellbeing of our clergy. It is felt they need stronger support packages, better pensions and improved care for themselves.

Safeguarding is still a top priority. The new General Synod will discuss and implement the strict new Clergy Conduct Measures (CCM) and responses to independent safeguarding recommendations.

Social & Environment: These problems are still growing, and so debates will address achieving net-zero carbon goals, protecting nature on church land, and reducing the polarisation in our society.

Are vicars slowly disappearing?

There are certainly some worrying statistics out there. Such as:

There are 8,368 retired priests holding permission to officiate.
But there are only 6,682 clergy in paid (stipendiary) positions, and 2,440 in self-supporting, unpaid roles.

Nearly half of the current 6,682 paid priests are aged over 55. They all retire at 70. But numbers of new entrants in training dropped from 591 in 2020 to 442 by 2025.

Where is this all headed? Worse case, by 2033, there could be only 5,400 full-time priests. That is 40 per cent of what the number was in 2000.

These sobering predictions come in a recent report by the campaign group Save the Parish. It argues that the decline has left the C of E at real risk of no longer being "a Christian presence in every community."

So, Save the Parish is calling on the C of E to "commit to a model that will support a young person in stipendiary ministry for their lifetime." It does not want a reduction in full-time paid clerical positions to save money, and it wants to lift the retirement age of 70.

Also, the report says that the Church should measure ministers' success on the "numbers of lives touched, funeral by funeral, cup of tea by cup of tea".



1st November - International Day of Prayer for the Persecuted Church

More than 360 million Christians worldwide face persecution in their home countries. This includes harassment, detention, legal restrictions, violence, torture, and even death for their faith in Jesus.

The Bible tells us to pray for those who are persecuted, as if we were ourselves mistreated. It says that if one member of the Body of Christ suffers, we all suffer (1 Cor. 12:26).

And so it is that for more than two decades the World Evangelical Alliance has organised the International Day of Prayer for the Persecuted Church (IDOP). It has become a global event uniting hundreds of millions of Christians worldwide.

The day is held on the first Sunday in November, in order to align it with the liturgical season of All Hallowtide, which remembers both Christian saints and martyrs.

The IDOP is also supported by Open Doors, The Voice of the Martyrs, and Christian Solidarity Worldwide (CSM), among others. More details at: https://idop.org/web/

MEMORY CAFE - AND AFTERNOON OF FRIENDSHIP AND CREATIVITY!



Our Memory Cafe meeting on Tuesday 27th October was once again a lovely afternoon of friendship, conversation and, of course, plenty of tea, coffee and delicious cakes!

This month we were delighted to welcome Maggie, a volunteer with GraceCares a wonderful not-for-profit organisation which refurbishes care equipment, giving it a new lease of life and making it available at around half the cost of buying new. GraceCares also provides valuable support to unpaid carers and older people through grants and practical assistance. What a worthwhile organisation, making such a difference to people's lives!

Maggie certainly kept us busy! She arrived armed with stones, colourful pens and lots of imaginative ideas to inspire us to have a go at stone painting. Well, who would have thought we had so many budding artists amongst us? There was certainly no shortage of creativity as everyone set about decorating their stones with colourful designs. It was wonderful to see everyone's imagination come to life, and we were all rather impressed with our artistic talents!

The afternoon simply flew by, with plenty of laughter, chatter and encouragement along the way. We also had a few familiar faces who, although unable to stay for the afternoon, popped in just to say hello. It was so lovely to see them, and it reminded us that the Memory Cafe is about much more than our monthly activities. It's about friendship, companionship and knowing there is always a warm welcome waiting.

And, of course, no Memory Cafe afternoon would be complete without our regular quiz! Expertly put together each month by Joan, it is always a lovely way to round off our afternoon, giving us the opportunity to put our thinking caps on and exercise those little grey cells! Our grateful thanks go to Joan for the time thought and effort, she puts into preparing the questions and helping to make our gatherings so enjoyable. Our grateful thanks also go To Maggie for giving her time so generously, providing all the materials and making the afternoon such an enjoyable and memorable occasion.

Our next and final meeting for this year will be on Tuesday 24th November, from 2pm to 4pm in the Church Hall, when we will be welcoming the Ukuele Band, who will be entertaining us with music and, no doubt, giving us the opportunity to sing along to a few familiar tunes! So please put the date in your diary and come along to join us, whether you are a regular visitor, haven't been for a while, or would simply like to see what we are all about, we would love to see you.

There is always time for a friendly chat, a cup of tea or coffee, a slice of cake and, most importantly, a little companionship.

Those giant autumn house spiders

We've all been there – quietly relaxing at home, when suddenly a HUGE thing with LONG legs scuttles right by you. You can't help but jump, and if you are normal, scream.

What just scared you was a fully grown adult male *Eratigena atrica*. They are among the largest spiders in Central and Northern Europe.

It has not just come in from the cold. It has been living warm and cosy, hidden in your house for weeks. Now it has left its dark hiding spot to race across your carpets and walls and bed with a definite purpose in mind: it is looking for love.

For autumn is mating time for the big spiders, and there are also females living in your house, safe and secure in cracks, lofts and behind furniture.

If you think giant house spiders are big, you are right. With a body length of 1.6cm, their leg span can commonly reach up to 7.5 cm. And heaven help you if you find you are sharing your house with a cardinal spider (*Tegenaria parietina)* – their bodies are up to 2cm long, and their long hairy legs can span up to 12cm. If *that* thing runs down the couch towards you, you'll notice it! And giant house spiders are fast. They can hit speeds of up to half a metre per second.

The good news is that giant house spiders are as scared of you as you are of them. They are disease-free, and their bite is extremely rare and harmless. They even pay their rent by eating your flies, mosquitoes, and other small bugs.

So, try and be kind to them, and let them live with you – they don't like the cold outside very much. Just lift your feet as they gallop across the carpet…

Out and about walking, driving and visiting:
Bakewell

Last year I wrote about the excellent Monday General Market in Bakewell (incidentally the Hotter School stall is back with excellent bargains). However it was too late to mention the Christmas markets so this year the dates are Saturday 14th and Sunday 15th November from 9am to 5pm. Also on Sunday 29th November there is the Christmas Sparkle Market in its seventh year. For one day only this an indoor event from 10am to 4pm held in the Agricultural Business Centre DE45 1AH and is free. For any little ones Father Christmas is around at both events!

The two car parks just across the bridges over the picturesque River Wye have an advance booking facility which can be booked at 'YourParkingSpace' details online.

Ann

New resources for the Franciscan octocentenary

If you like St Francis of Assisi, you will enjoy visiting a new digital platform that has been launched especially to mark the 800th anniversary of St Francis's death.

It is called *Preserving Assisi*, and includes ultra-high-resolution photography, 3D surveying, immersive virtual tours and a digital archive. There are more than 27,000 photos and 12TB of data, including an almost eight-gigapixel image of Lorenzetti's *Crucifixion*.

More at: *preserving-assisi.haltadefinizione.com*

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

6th November William Temple: Archbishop of Canterbury

During the Second World War, Winston Churchill was Britain's Prime Minister. At the same time, William Temple was Archbishop of Canterbury. While Churchill led the country against Germany, Temple encouraged the British people to trust the Lord for their deliverance and strength. Like Churchill, Temple was a great leader, a gifted orator and a prolific writer. He was also a theologian and social activist. Temple was born on 15th October 1881 in Exeter, Devon. He was educated at Rugby School and Balliol College, Oxford, from 1900 to1904. He loved the music of Bach; the poetry of Browning and Shelley, and Shakespeare. He was an avid reader and possessed a near-photographic memory.

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

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

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

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

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

9th November - Margery Kempe

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Recipe
Fresh Cream Rum Truffles

A new recipe I found. Every year I make rum truffles or fresh cream truffles with Amaretto for Christmas; this new recipe seems quite economical and helps to counteract the soaring prices and shrinkflation of chocolate products.

Ingredients

One rounded tablespoon of golden syrup
2oz sieved cocoa
2oz butter
2 tablespoons double cream
4 tablespoons rum (if using flavouring instead of rum may need to reduce icing sugar slightly)
12oz icing sugar, sieved
Chocolate strands or drinking chocolate

Method:

Put syrup, butter and cream in a pan.
Simmer until melted and well blended.
Then bring to boil.
Remove from heat and add the rum and the icing sugar
Beat until smooth.
Chill the mixture, a short time in the freezer works well.
While mixture is still workable, roll by hand into small balls, roll in decoration and put in small paper cases. makes 35-45 depending on your generosity!
Keep in fridge or if making them early, freeze in an airtight box and take out a few minutes before serving.

Enjoy, Ann

Good news about dog theft

The only good news there can possibly be about dog theft is that it is going down, and finally this is true.

After a horrific spike in thefts during the COVID-19, when due to 2020 lockdowns it seemed that everyone wanted a puppy, things have now settled down. According to pet insurance data and police figures, recorded thefts have dropped by more than 20%.

The new Pet Abduction Act of 2024 made pet theft a specific criminal offence, although criminals still target popular breeds like French Bulldogs, Dachshunds, and Staffordshire Bull Terriers.

So, it pays to keep your dog safe. Make sure your garden is securely locked, never leave your dog alone outside a shop or in your car, and ensure your microchip details are up to date. Finally, take some clear photographs of your dog, from different angles, and record any unusual or distinguishing features they may have.

Baptism of Christ by Piero della Francesca



I was at the National Gallery recently and after visiting the excellent new Renoir exhibition I went upstairs to the Sainsbury Wing galleries to revisit one of my favourite pictures in the National Gallery by Piero della Francesca (C 1415/20 - 1492) namely The Baptism of Christ painted about 1437/45 .Piero was a Tuscan artist born in Sansepolcro and is one of the masters of the Renaissance. He was a mathematician and did a lot of work on proportion in art so that a painting would have a single vanishing point , one of the hallmarks of great Renaissance art.
I not only love the order and serenity of Piero's painting but it also reminds me of a study holiday many years ago following the so called 'Piero trail' around Tuscany, Umbria and ending in Milan , seeing where his paintings are now and where he worked and who is patrons were.
The painting is a depiction of Christ being baptised by John the Baptist in the River Jordan as told in Matthew 3 :16 ' And when Jesus was baptised, immediately he went up from the water , and behold, the heavens were opened to him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming to rest on him; and behold , a voice from heaven said, 'This is my beloved son, with whom I am well pleased.'
As well as this wonderful picture the National Gallery has a depiction of the Nativity by Piero as well as a gorgeous painting of our church's saint , Saint Michael. A visit to the Piero gallery is always a blessing to behold.

Jonathan

On a church noticeboard:

Come in and pray today. Beat the Christmas rush!

10th November: Leo the Great – Pope who rescued the doctrine of the Incarnation

How do you think of Jesus? As the Lord of lords in glory? Or as a human baby soon to be born in Bethlehem? November brings the glorious climax of the church year with the Sunday of Christ the King on 22nd November – only to begin a new 'year' a week later, with Advent. So, the ways in which the Church speaks of Jesus this month could not be more dramatically different.

How can Jesus be both God and Man? Trying to get your head around the Incarnation is not easy, and so this is a good month to remember Leo the Great (d 461). In the 5th century, he 'rescued' the doctrine of the Incarnation at a time when the Church was really struggling with the onslaught of various attacks.

Leo, a deacon of Tuscan descent, became Pope at a time when Rome was reeling under repeated assault by the barbarians. As well as trying to patch up the material and spiritual damage they had done, Leo faced an even more deadly attack: the Church was being torn apart on the inside. There were various heresies raging, each trying to claim that their view of the person of Christ was the only right one.
Between the barbarians on the outside and the distortions of Manichaeism, Priscillianism, and Pelagianism on the inside, Leo was not in for an easy time. Yet this man of indomitable energy and devotion to duty pressed on. Leo was pope for 20 tumultuous years, but undoubtedly the most important contribution that he made was at a famous church council.

It was the Council of Chalcedon, in 451 – often regarded as a highlight in Christian history. Leo presented a dogmatic letter (or Tome) to the Council. He wrote with remarkable clarity of thought and understanding. Jesus Christ, said Leo, is one Person, the Divine Word. In Jesus the two natures, the divine and the human, are permanently united without confusion or mixture.

When the Council read this document, it was exclaimed: 'Peter has spoken by Leo.' Leo's understanding was seen to encompass all the Bible teaching on the subject of who Jesus was. It became thenceforth part of the official teaching of the Christian Church.

Could a cemetery – or churchyard – surprise you?

A while back, I found a strange connection between the cemetery, opposite the church where I minister, and my hometown.

I discovered that a former head curator of the world-renowned Kew Gardens in west London was buried in the cemetery – and that one of his lasting achievements was to plant a line of trees along the gardens' Thames embankment.

Why? To hide unsightly views of industrial Brentford – where I was brought up – from visitors to the gardens.

Back then, Brentford was the site of one of London's largest gas production plants and its pungent smell drifted across the area. I was christened in a church that nestled among the gasworks.

Today, Brentford is a thriving west London suburb that even boasts a Premier League football team.

Cemeteries and churchyards can be places of encounter and surprise. Places too that speak of history, of community, of nature and of the spiritual.

My local municipal cemetery has graves dating from the 1880s, including more than 200 war graves and a memorial, built after the First World War. Walking among the numerous graves, you can see reminders of people who lived lives very different to our own.

Well-known people buried there include Samuel Ryder, who founded golf's Ryder Cup, and was a prominent local churchman.

The cemetery, like all cemeteries, also speaks of the breadth of the local community, with people of different nationalities and faiths buried within its grounds.

Humour sometimes features on the inscriptions. One of my favourite gravestones reads, "I can only please one person a day – today is not your day. Tomorrow doesn't look good either!"

The cemetery is a green oasis in a busy urban suburb. Take just a few steps away from the busy road, and you are in a nature reserve, with many birds, trees and plants, plus squirrels and other animals.

And, of course, the cemetery is a spiritual place, where many people go to remember their loved ones, perhaps to pray and reflect. Early morning in the cemetery is always a special time for me, where I can feel close to God.

If you are looking for somewhere to experience history, community, nature and the spiritual, then consider paying a visit to a cemetery or churchyard near you. It may just surprise you.

By the Revd Peter Crumpler, a Church of England priest in St Albans, Herts, and a former communications director for the C of E.

St Peter's 400th anniversary

Four hundred years ago, on 18th November 1626, St Peter's Basilica in the Vatican City was completed. It is the largest church in the world (measured by its interior).



Planned at first by Pope Nicholas V in the 15th century, its construction started on 18th April 1506, under Pope Julius II. The idea was to replace a 4th century church – Old St Peter's Basilica – built by the Emperor Constantine, supposedly on the site of Peter's martyrdom and burial. The new building took 120 years to finish.

Its dome, designed by Michelangelo, rises to a height of almost 450 feet from the floor of the Basilica to the top of its external cross and is the tallest dome in the world.

The original design of the Italian Renaissance church was created by Donato Bramante, with additional features by Carlo Maderno and Gian Lorenzo Bernini.

Despite its size and prominence, St Peter's Basilica is not the Pope's official seat and does not rank first of the major basilicas of Rome. That honour goes to the Pope's Cathedral, the Archbasilica of St John Lateran, which is also seen as the mother church of all churches in communion with the Catholic Church, despite being located outside Vatican City.

Nevertheless St Peter's functions for most purposes as the Pope's principal church, because nearly all Papal liturgies and ceremonies take place there: this is because of its location within Vatican City, its size, and the convenience of being close to the Papal residence. The liturgies at which the Pope presides draw congregations of up to 80,000 people.

It also contains the ancient "Chair of Saint Peter", a gift to Pope John VIII from Holy Roman Emperor Charles the Bald in 875 which, despite its dubious pedigree, is used to symbolise the line of apostolic succession.

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

James Hannington could have had a most comfortable and respectable life, safe in the peaceful English county of Sussex. Born in Hurstpierpoint in 1847, he'd worked in business and the army before theological study at Oxford and two curacies. Then he was appointed minister of St George's Chapel in Hurstpierpoint in 1875. Still only 27, Hannington had it made for life.

But something had happened to Hannington during his first curacy at Martinhoe in Devon. His cultural Christianity had been transformed by an intense conversion experience to the risen Christ, and with it, his hunger for spreading the Gospel had grown.

In 1882, he was disturbed and challenged to hear news of the deaths of several missionaries who had been serving in Buganda (now a part of Uganda). After prayer, Hannington decided that taking the gospel to Buganda-Uganda was the true calling of God on his life, and so he applied to the Church Missionary Society, and was sent out.

Arriving on the coast of East Africa, Hannington began the long trek inland to Buganda, but was overcome by dysentery and fever. The CMS recalled him before he died, and it was not until two years later, in 1884, that they allowed him to go back, this time as Bishop of the newly created Diocese of Eastern Equatorial Africa. Hannington was a great success. A colleague at the time wrote: "He was beloved by every missionary. There was never a bishop who could be so firm, and at the same time, so kind and considerate."

Then came July 1885, and Hannington decided to venture into Buganda. He'd heard that the new Kabaka, Mwanga, had been persecuting the Christians, and wanted to encourage his flock there. Disregarding the danger, he set out with a small party from the diocese. But as Hannington's party approached the Kabaka's home village, they were stopped by a local chief. Mwanga sent word that they should all be killed, and so Hannington and his group were speared to death on 29th October 1885.

Hannington was the most high-profile Christian martyr in Uganda until Idi Amin killed Archbishop Janani Luwum in Kampala in 1977.

On working with young people



The Rectory
St James the Least

My dear Nephew Darren

It is quite natural for you curates to enjoy working with young people in your parishes; church youth clubs were created in order to keep the newly ordained off the streets in the evenings. But be assured you will grow out of it. I consent to baptise babies and prepare teenagers for confirmation, but beyond that my contact with this alien life form is kept to an absolute minimum.

Dear Miss Thrush runs our weekly Pram Service - whose sole purpose seems to be to give young mothers an opportunity to discuss the ever-changing liaisons within the village, while their offspring shred hymn books and destroy the flower arrangements. I drop in from time to time in order to check that the more mobile haven't found where we hide the matches. An infant equipped with that knowledge can so easily become a teenage pyromaniac.

I can give you little advice on your youth group. When I was a curate, the major activity seemed to be to teach them how to wear gas masks, although today I imagine there is more concern about protecting them from other sorts of exotic chemicals. Also, I suspect you are kept busy keeping the young out of the darker corners of the churchyard as they develop their anatomical knowledge – a past-time still enthusiastically pursued by each new generation.

You clearly find your monthly Youth Service a deeply enriching experience. As far as I am concerned, if such a liturgy had been necessary, then Cranmer would have provided us with one. Endlessly repeated choruses accompanied by a guitar would make me warm to the Quakers. I am sure St Paul's services would have been much enriched with Hymns Ancient and Modern. The disciples in hiding in Jerusalem were not even able to sing accompanied by an organ, which must have greatly dispirited them. I also feel that our Verger would be unable to cope with organising the strobe lighting and dry ice effects. It takes him all his time to remember to light the candles on the altar.

On this matter we must differ. You must worship God in your way, and I in His.

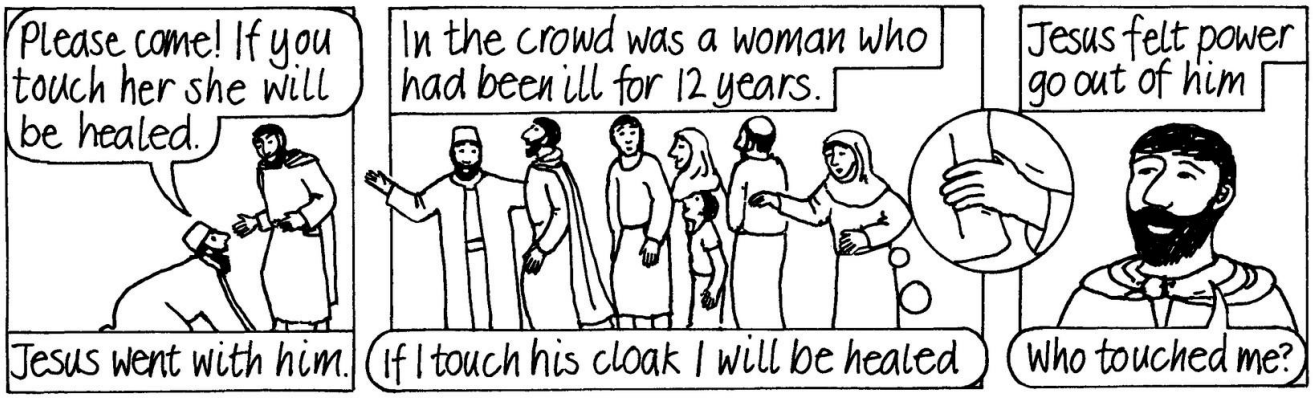
Your loving uncle,
Eustace

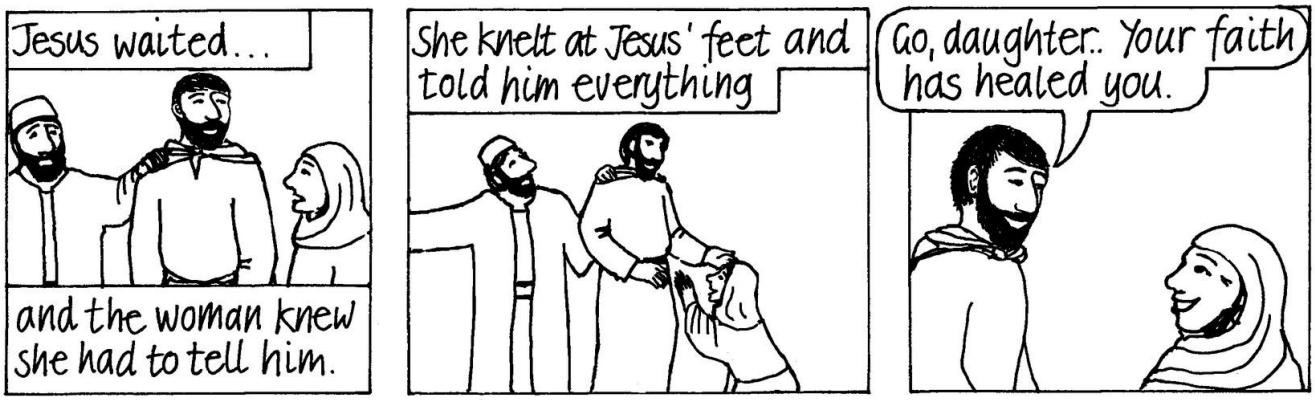
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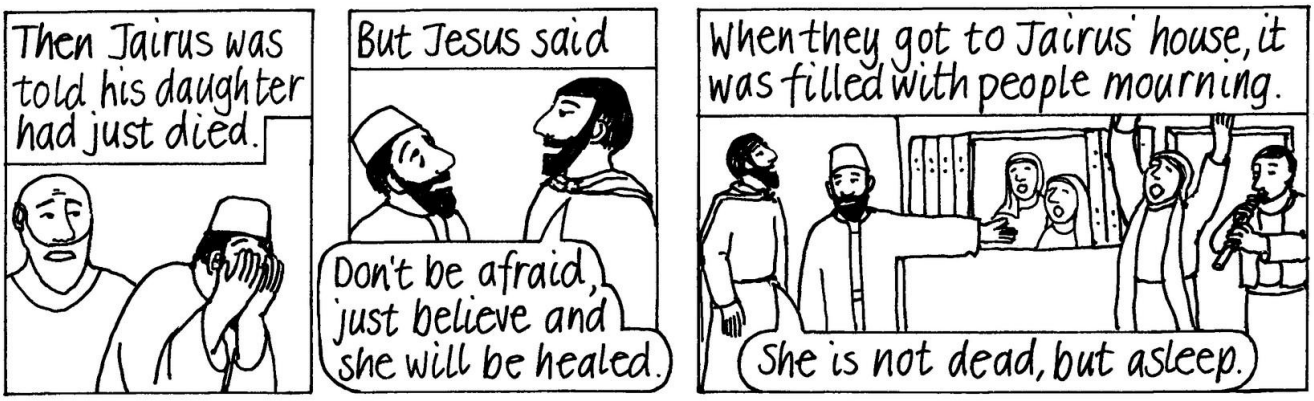
A short story from the Bible

It can be read in the Bible in Lk 8:40-56, Mt 9:18-26, Mk 5:21-43

Jairus, a town leader, had a 12 year old daughter who was ill and about to die. He came to Jesus and knelt at his feet...









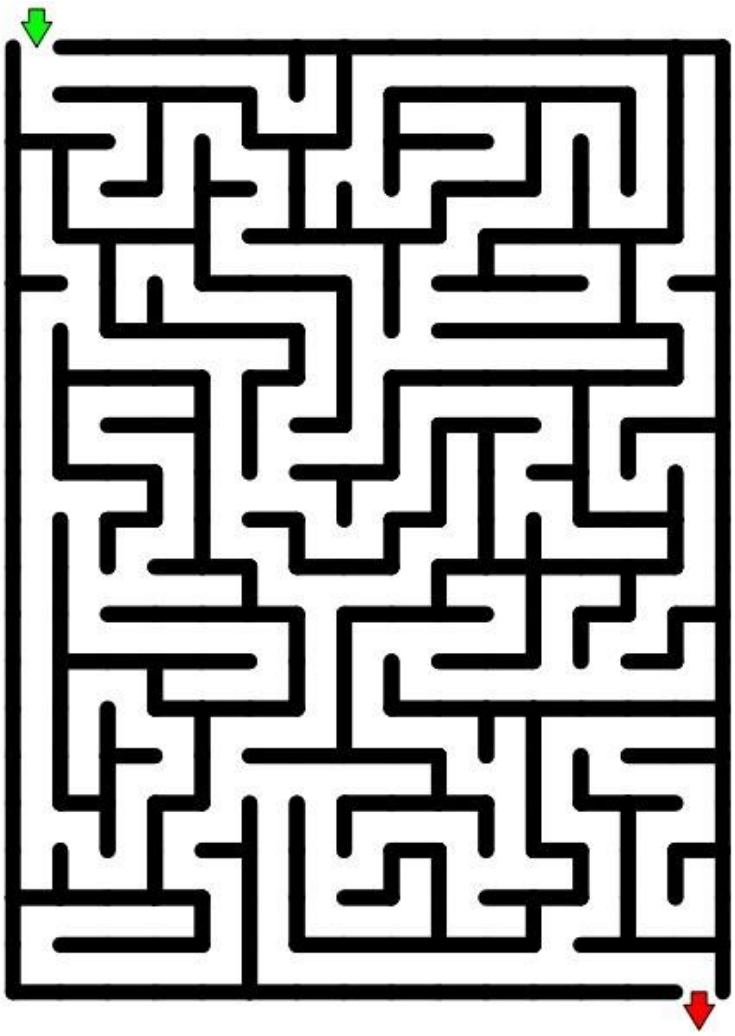
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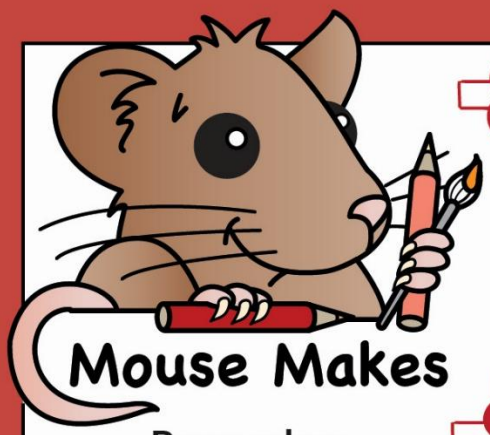
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October's Solution

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

Can you solve the maze?





Mouse Makes

Remembrance Sunday is the day we remember the sacrifice of those who gave their lives so that we could live in peace, it mirrors what Christ did for us when he gave his life so that we could live in peace with God.

Remember
the words Jesus said:
"It is more blessed to give than to receive."
Colossians 3:25

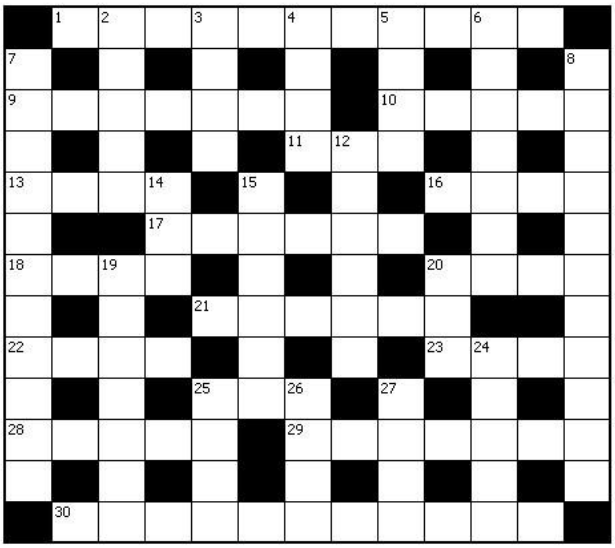
Jesus said:
"No one can have greater love than to give his life for his friends."
John 15:13

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

REMEMBRANCE • PROTECT • DEFEND • SACRIFICE • SELFLESS • SERVICE
BRAVERY • VALOUR • HONOUR • COURAGE • HEROISM • LOYAL • REGARD
RESPECT • THANKFUL • MEMORIAL • TRIBUTE • COMMEND • ARMISTICE • PEACE

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Across



1 and 20 Down 'Lord of all _, Lord of all _, whose trust, ever child-like, no cares could destroy'(11,3)
9 Mosesí question to a fighting Hebrew labourer: 'Why are you _ your fellow Hebrew?" (Exodus 2:13) (7)
10 Acclaimed cellist who contracted multiple sclerosis at the height of her fame, Jacqueline _ (2,3)
11 'At even _ the sun was set, the sick, O Lord, around thee lay'(3)
13 A descendant of Gad (xNumbers 26:16) (4)
16 'Do not leave Jerusalem, but _ for the gift my Father promised' (Acts 1:4) (4)
17 Clambers (Jeremiah 48:44) (6)
18 Peter's response to questioning by the Sanhedrin: 'We must _God rather than men!'(Acts 5:29) (4)
20 Christian paraplegic author, artist and campaigner, _ Eareckson Tada (4)
21 Bird partial to the nests of other birds (6)
22 'Such large crowds gathered round him that he got into a boat and sat _ _ '(Matthew 13:2) (2,2)
23 Infectious tropical disease (4)
25 Tree (3)
28 'No fear of me should _ you, nor should my hand be heavy upon you'(Job 33:7) (5)
29 For example, to Titus, Timothy or Philemon (7)
30 Week beginning with Pentecost Sunday, according to the Church's calendar (11)

Down

2 'O Jerusalem _ how _I have longed to gather your children together' Matthew 23:37) (5)
3 Way out (4)
4 Exhort (Romans 12:1) (4)
5 Done (anag.) (4)
6 Highest of the four voice-parts in a choir (7)
7 Concerning the study of God (11)
8 Uniquely, it has Abbey, Cathedral and Chapel (11)
12 Admonish (Matthew 16:22) (6)
14 Frozen (3)
15 Established form of religious ceremony (6)
19 Inscription often found on gravestones (7)
20 See 1 Across
24 Behaved (Joshua 7:1) (5)
25 Time (anag.) (4)
26 Lists choice of meals (4)
27 'For the wages of sin is death, but the _ of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord'(Romans 6:23) (4)

October's answers:

ACROSS 1 dare; 3 cherubim; 9 son Tohu; 10 yield; 11 ranch; 12 enlist; 14 Baalah of Judah; 17 Edward; 19 Sheol; 22 media; 23 open air; 24 apostasy; 25 Eton

DOWN 1 describe; 2 run in; 4 household gods; 5 royal; 6 blessed; 7 MIDI; 8 Joshua; 13 children; 15 added to; 16 Jasper; 18 await; 20 exalt; 21 YMCA