

SPS

De Trinitate

Slimbridge, St. John

Purton, St. John

Sharpness, St. Andrew

MARCH 2021



50p

Trinitate 2

MINISTRY TEAM

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**For Baptisms, Confirmations, Home Communions,
Wedding Arrangements etc...**

Please contact the Vicar.

Benefice Website: www.heuristika.co.uk/lfgdiscussion/

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Vacancy - Slimbridge Warden

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Parish Diary - March 2020

(1st) SUNDAY 7th - LENT 3

9.00am	1662 Prayer Book Communion	St. John's, Slimbridge
9.30am	Morning Prayer	St. John's, Purton
10.00am	Holy Communion	St. John's, Slimbridge
11.00am	Morning Prayer	St. Andrew's, Sharpness

(2nd) SUNDAY 14th - MOTHERING SUNDAY

9.30am	Morning Prayer	St. John's, Purton
10.00am	Holy Communion	St. John's, Slimbridge
11.00am	Holy Communion	St. Andrew's, Sharpness

(3rd) SUNDAY 21st - LENT 5

9.30am	Holy Communion	St. John's, Purton
10.00am	Morning Prayer	St. John's, Slimbridge
11.00am	Informal Communion Service	St. Andrew's, Sharpness

(4th) SUNDAY - 28th - PALM SUNDAY

10.00am	Benefice Communion	St. John's, Purton
	<i>No Services at Slimbridge or Sharpness Today!</i>	

APRIL

SUNDAY 4th - EASTER DAY

9.00am	1662 Prayer Book Communion	St. John's, Slimbridge
9.30am	Holy Communion	St. John's, Purton
10.00am	Holy Communion	St. John's, Slimbridge
11.00am	Holy Communion	St. Andrew's, Sharpness

PLEASE NOTE...

ALL SERVICES CURRENTLY SUSPENDED

**SUNDAY WORSHIP IN CHURCH RESTARTS
ON EASTER DAY**

Lockdown Easing – The 4-Step Plan

In the first step of the Prime Minister's roadmap, all pupils in England's schools are expected to return to class from 8 March, with mass testing and wider use of face masks in secondary schools.

There will be a further easing on 29 March, with groups of up to six people or two households allowed to gather in parks and gardens. Formally organised outdoor sports - for adults and under 18s - can also restart and will not be subject to the gathering's limits.

Within the Benefice we shall return to Sunday worship in church – although still under Covid restrictions – on Easter Sunday (4th April).

Shops, hairdressers, gyms and outdoor hospitality, as well as self-contained holiday accommodation, could reopen on 12 April. A review of international leisure travel restrictions could also be announced.

From 17 May, two households or a group of six may be able to meet indoors in a pub or other hospitality venue such as restaurants.

Cinemas, museums, hotels, performances and sporting events will also reopen, with up to 30 people able to attend weddings, receptions, funerals and wakes.

The final step from 21 June will potentially see all legal limits on social contact removed, with the final closed sectors of the economy reopened - such as nightclubs.

The year is 2016 and in London, a huge street party is taking place, for it is June and Queen Elizabeth is celebrating her official ninetieth birthday.

Ten thousand guests, including representatives of the six hundred charities of which the Queen is patron, are enjoying the carnival atmosphere - the festivities are being shared with millions across the world via television. Countless others across the Commonwealth are holding their own celebrations, including many churches, which held events for the whole community over the weekend.

These celebrations were planned well in advance, just as Jesus' journey into Jerusalem on the first Palm Sunday was planned. According to Matthew, Jesus sent a couple of disciples to collect a donkey which would be waiting for them in a specific location. If they were challenged, they had a coded message to ensure they were not hindered. These plans enabled the

events of Palm Sunday to take place.

Throughout his Gospel, Matthew is at pains to link back to Old Testament prophecies to

show that Jesus is the expected Messiah. In

this case he links the use of a donkey to Zechariah 9:9.

Zechariah uses the similar Hebrew words for

both "donkey" and "colt" - a

technique of Hebrew poetry that added emphasis. The

writer of Matthew is so

keen to make sure that readers get the connection

that he feels obliged to use both

words too - so he has Jesus apparently riding a donkey and a colt at the same time. The other Gospel writers are satisfied with just "donkey".

This is the only occasion in the Gospels where Jesus would appear to have made advance preparations, and the only occasion on which we're told that he rides. So why did Jesus apparently make elaborate preparations to ride into Jerusa-

Personally Speaking

"Look, your king is coming to you, humble, and mounted on a donkey."

(Matthew 21:5)

PALM SUNDAY

lem? Presumably he was physically demonstrating a powerful message – that he was indeed the king coming in peace, as prophesied by Zechariah. Certainly, the crowd went wild with excitement, spreading their cloaks on the road – a centuries-old way of acclaiming a king (2 Kings 9:13) – and waving palm branches, crying, “Hosanna to the Son of David” – a well known title for Israel’s Messiah. It was the beginning of Passover week, when the city would be full and the Roman presence very obvious, because trouble from fervent nationalists would be expected. So, by riding into Jerusalem on a donkey, Jesus may also have been emphasising the difference between earthly rulers such as Pilate or Herod, who rode on splendid mounts or in elaborate chariots, and God’s servant king, who came humbly and in peace. It may have been a deliberately subversive act of passive defiance against the establishment. This may also have been a way for Jesus to quietly announce his presence to those in Jerusalem who had never heard of him. Most of his ministry had been in rural Galilee, and now he needed to make himself known in the capital city with its religious centre, the Temple.

Crowds, then as now, do not always react as predicted. Jesus may not have expected quite the nationalistic fervour which accompanied his entry into Jerusalem, for it soon became apparent that the crowds were expecting a Messiah who would liberate them from Roman rule. When this did not happen, the crowds soon turned-on Jesus.

Although Jesus was hugely popular with ordinary people, he never allowed public opinion to determine his actions. No matter what the crowd thought and no matter what the cost to him, Jesus maintained his own integrity and did what was right. We too are called to do what is right, no matter what public opinion dictates or what the cost to ourselves. We can only do that if, like Jesus, we cling onto God, always keeping faith and maintaining our own integrity.



Historical Snippets

*Taken from the Parish archives
held at St Johns Church Slimbridge;*

*Years ago, each of the local parish churches submitted their news to a publication called 'The Parish Magazine'. Contributors came from quite a large area including: Lower Cam; Coaley; Eastington; Frocester; North Nibley; Stinchcome; and *Slymbridge. It was printed by: O. E. Hill, Cam, Gloucestershire, for the cost of 2d (tuppence) per copy.*

*This month's historical snippet is taken from **March 1947***

**Slymbridge is the old-fashioned spelling for Slimbridge.*

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Rector; Rev. W. H. Thomas, M.A.

Church Wardens; Mr. J. Wherrett and Mr. W. P. Hill.

The Rector earnestly desires to be informed in all cases of sickness and sorrow.

My dear People,

First in these notes we print in large letters, the Lenten Motto for all church people and especially communicants:

***' WORSHIP IN CHURCH AT ONE SERVICE (AT LEAST)
EVERY SUNDAY THROUGHOUT THE SEASON OF LENT!***

Make the above rule for yourself and KEEP IT!

Dates to Remember:

16th March (Mid Lent) Mothering Sunday.

M.U. members make their communion together (8 – 10.30am)

20th March: (Thursday) Diocesan Conference, Guild Hall Gloucester.

25th March: (Tuesday)

10.15am: Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Holy Communion

3pm: Service of Re-affirmation and Re-dedication (Combined)

M.U. and Y.W.)

30th March: Palm Sunday:

8am Holy Communion;

10.30am Blessing and distribution of Palm Sunday Crosses
followed by Procession and Holy Eucharist

6.30pm Evensong and procession.

Lent mid-week services:

Every Wednesday at 7.30pm a short service of Compline, followed by reading of Lent book.

Good Friday devotions:

12 – 3pm Conductor, Rev. L.C. Hodges, Vicar of Coaley.

Notes:

Even a brief account of the Christmas carol singing of the Choir had to be deterred until now owing to lack of printing space. The effort was much enjoyed by those taking part, and, judging by remarks heard, was very highly appreciated by all parishioners. The financial result was excellent. Mr. J. Whittard, the treasurer, reporting the receipt of £19 3s 0d towards the cost of the new hymn books, Chant books and Psalters for the choir. The ones in use were purchased about 20 years ago and have been in constant use ever since, and some of them have become very dilapidated and need replacing. We thank, most cordially, all who helped in this splendid effort.

Deaths:

We express our sympathy with the relatives of the late:

Arthur Augustus Workman; Sydney Smart; Charles Hicks; Dennis Henry Cuff; Peter Meadows; and Daniel Henry Theyers.

May God grant them Peace, Light and refreshment.

Marriage:

Our best wishes to Mr & Mrs. J. Moss (*Nee Margaret Stockwell*) on the occasion of their marriage. We are very glad that they will be able to reside in the Parish.

Your friend and Rector

Rev W H Thomas M.A.

Our archives containing these magazines can be viewed by mutual arrangement with the Vicar, Church Warden or any member of the PCC but not to be taken away.

David Carrington

Wear your daffodil and unite in memory

This month sees the 35th anniversary of the Great Daffodil Appeal...

Marie Curie, the UK's leading end-of-life care charity will this year celebrate their 35th annual Great Daffodil Appeal, which is held every March across the UK. The money raised from this appeal enables the charity to continue their vital work providing care and support to people living with a terminal illness and their families.

The coronavirus continues to have a devastating effect on Marie Curie's fundraising, as activities up and down the country have had to be cancelled. However, there's still lots of ways people can get involved, with things like the Step into Spring Challenge in March where people walk 10,000 steps a day, they can host a virtual collection or buy and wear one of the charity's iconic daffodils in memory of a loved one.

This year will be even more special as the charity encourages the nation to come together to reflect, grieve and remember for a National Day of Reflection. Tuesday 23rd March 2021 will mark one year since the UK first went into a nationwide lockdown and Marie Curie is inviting the nation to unite and remember those who died and show support and solidarity for those who have been bereaved. The charity knows how important it is for people to grieve and the emotional and psychological impact of not being able to say goodbye properly and grieving in isolation can have.

Due to the pandemic, Marie Curie won't have their normal collections on the street, so donations are more important than ever. To support the Great Daffodil Appeal, you can donate at www.mariecurie.org.uk/daffodil or you can buy your daffodil pin in store at a number of high street stores.



For those of us fortunate enough to have gardens one reliable source of joy and pleasure over the past dark months has been the birds visiting our gardens. I even saw goldfinches in mine, they are not common visitors but it's lovely to see them when they come! They really are spectacular birds!

The Goldfinch

*A flash of yellow, gold, and red
Dancing in our flower bed
Flocked together, bringing charm
Their joyful song restoring calm.*

*Through centuries since times of old
We've always loved their plumage bold;
As they gathered round to feed
Seeking grubs, and thistle seed.*

*So, go ahead, and plant some thistles
You will see, among the bristles.
Golden birds who dance and dart
Bringing joy to warm your heart.*

By Nigel Beeton

From the Registers - January 2021

	<u>Attendance</u>	<u>Gift Aid</u>	<u>Envelopes</u>	<u>Cash</u>
<u>Sharpness:</u>	0	£140	£65	£0
Bonus Ball:				£295.00
Fund Raising:				£ 15.00
Magazine Subscriptions:				£122.00
PCC Fees:				£ 50.00
Misc:				£ 9.63
		INCOME	EXPENDITURE	SURPLUS (+ / -)
For the Month:		£696.63	£326.90	+£369.73

From 1st Jan. 2021 St. Andrew's has received **£369.73** more than it has spent

<u>Purton:</u>	0	£60	£60	£0
PCC Fees:				£ 50.00
Misc:				£ 9.63
		INCOME	EXPENDITURE	SURPLUS (+ / -)
For the Month:		£179.62	£200.61	-£20.99

From 1st Jan. 2021 St. John's has spent **£20.99** more than it has received

<u>Slimbridge:</u>	0	£375	£0	£0
PCC Fees:				£100.00
Tax Refund:				£3294.97
		INCOME	EXPENDITURE	SURPLUS (+ / -)
For the Month:		£3,769.97	£291.42	+£3478.55

From 1st Jan. 2021 St. John's has received **£3,478.55** more than it has spent

My thanks to all of you who continue to support our churches
through these very trying times

Close Attention to Text

Written by Margaret Whipp

John 6:16-27

When evening came, his disciples went down to the lake, got into a boat, and started across the lake to Capernaum. It was now dark, and Jesus had not yet come to them. The lake became rough because a strong wind was blowing. When they had rowed about three or four miles, they saw Jesus walking on the lake and coming near the boat, and they were terrified. But he said to them, 'It is I; do not be afraid.' Then they wanted to take him into the boat, and immediately the boat reached the land towards which they were going.

The next day the crowd that had stayed on the other side of the lake saw that there had been only one boat there. They also saw that Jesus had not got into the boat with his disciples, but that his disciples had gone away alone. Then some boats from Tiberias came near the place where they had eaten the bread after the Lord had given thanks. So when the crowd saw that neither Jesus nor his disciples were there, they themselves got into the boats and went to Capernaum looking for Jesus.

When they found him on the other side of the lake, they said to him, 'Rabbi, when did you come here?' Jesus answered them, 'Very truly, I tell you, you are looking for me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate your fill of the loaves. Do not work for the food that perishes, but for the food that endures for eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you. For it is on him that God the Father has set his seal.'



Four words, in the vivid Greek narration of this drama, tell us everything we need to know about Jesus. "I AM; FEAR NOT". Into the midst of the storm, Jesus comes, bearing divine reassurance and peace.

Hebrew literature is full of dark stories about the region of the sea. In graphic detail, Psalm 77 describes one of those elemental storms: 'the clouds poured out water, the skies thundered; your arrows flashed on every side' (Psalm 77:17). Meditating on God's power to redeem, the Psalm recalls how the Lord strode through mighty waters, making a path through the heaving seas. The imagery is unforgettable and the meaning unambiguous: the one who walks through stormy seas is none other than the almighty Lord himself.

Did the disciples begin to grasp this? The story tells how, they crossed the sea in their small boat, it grew dark, such that they could not see Jesus. Surprised by the ferocity of the storm, they became suddenly aware of the nearness of the Lord: yet, even then, they were terrified and hesitated to take him into the boat. Buffeted by anxious times, all Christians know these archetypal fears. When we are overwhelmed by forces too strong for us, even in the pitch of night, Christ comes close - to reassure, speak peace, step right into our lives, to guide us to our safe haven. 'It is I; do not be afraid'.

Almighty God,
who Son Jesus Christ fasted forty days in the wilderness,
and was tempted as we are, yet without sin:
give us grace to discipline ourselves in obedience to your Spirit:
and, as you know our weakness,
so may we know your power to save. Amen.



Red Letter Days

Cuthbert, beloved monk and bishop of Lindisfarne ~ 20th March

Cuthbert of Lindisfarne (c 634-87) has long been northern England's favourite saint. It is easy to see why: Cuthbert was holy, humble, peaceable, prayerful, faithful in friendship, winsome, and really kind.

Cuthbert was born into a fairly well-off Anglo-Saxon family, and he became a monk at Melrose in 651. He and another monk, Eata, were sent to start a monastery at Ripon, but Alcfrith, who owned the land, insisted that they adopt the Roman customs, which Cuthbert's Celtic church did not allow. So, Cuthbert and Eata quietly returned to Melrose, where Cuthbert became prior in about 661. Then came the Synod of Whitby in 663/4, and the Celtic Church formally decided to adopt the Roman customs. After this, Cuthbert was sent on to Lindisfarne as prior, where he sensitively introduced the new ways, and won over the monks there.

Cuthbert was very much loved at Lindisfarne. His zeal was evident in his constant preaching, teaching, and visiting of the people. He was also said to have gifts of prophecy and healing. Occasionally, Cuthbert reached 'people overload'. Then he would retreat to a tiny islet called Inner Farne, where he could pray in total seclusion. When, to his horror, he was told he had been made Bishop of Hexham, he immediately 'swapped' sees with Eata, and stayed on at Lindisfarne as Bishop. Sadly, Cuthbert died on little Inner Farne, only two years later, on 20 March, 687.

Cuthbert was buried at Lindisfarne, but that is not the end of his story. For it was only now that his travels began. After the Vikings destroyed Lindisfarne in 875, several monks dug him up and set out to find Cuthbert a final, and safe, resting place. For the next 120 years Cuthbert was deposited in various monasteries around the north of England and southwest Scotland. Finally, in 999, Cuthbert was allowed to rest in Durham, where a Saxon church was built over his shrine.

All that travel must have done him good; when his body was exhumed to be put into the 'new' Norman Cathedral in Durham in 1104, it was said to be still in perfect tact, and 'incorrupt'.

Mothering Sunday & Mother Church

The Fourth Sunday in Lent was called 'Mid-Lent' or 'Refreshment Sunday', when the rigors of Lent were relaxed more than was normal for a feast day. It is called Mothering Sunday as a reference to the Epistle reading for the Day (Galatians 4:21-31). The Lenten Epistles follow from each other with teaching about our life as Christians and how we are to follow Christ.

On Mid-Lent Sunday the Epistle talks of bondage and freedom; the bondage of the Law and the Old Covenant as compared to the freedom in Christ, "the promised one", and the New Covenant. Verse 26 reads "But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all." We gain our freedom from Christ and, as it was seen before the Reformation, the Church.

Thus, Mothering Sunday is about the freedom that we gain through the promise of Jesus Christ delivered through our Mother the Church. People were encouraged to go to their 'Mother Church' (their home church or their home Cathedral) to worship and give thanks. Hence apprentices, and others, went home for the weekend and often brought gifts (or accumulated pay) home to their family.

On the other hand, Mother's Day is a secular festival invented in 1904 and is celebrated on the 2nd Sunday in May in most countries in the world. The UK seems to be the exception. In recent years Mothering Sunday has been hijacked to take the place of a special, secular day to give thanks for our mothers.



Smile for a While!

Bishop

A little girl told her mother, "We went to a confirmation service at the cathedral and I saw the bishop. Now I know what a crook looks like!"



From a parish newsletter:

'Children are normally collected during the Offertory Hymn'



Bend

I got a package envelope in the mail the other day that had written on the front, 'Photographs: Do Not Bend.

Underneath the postman had written: "Oh yes they do."



Little old lady seeks handsome young man

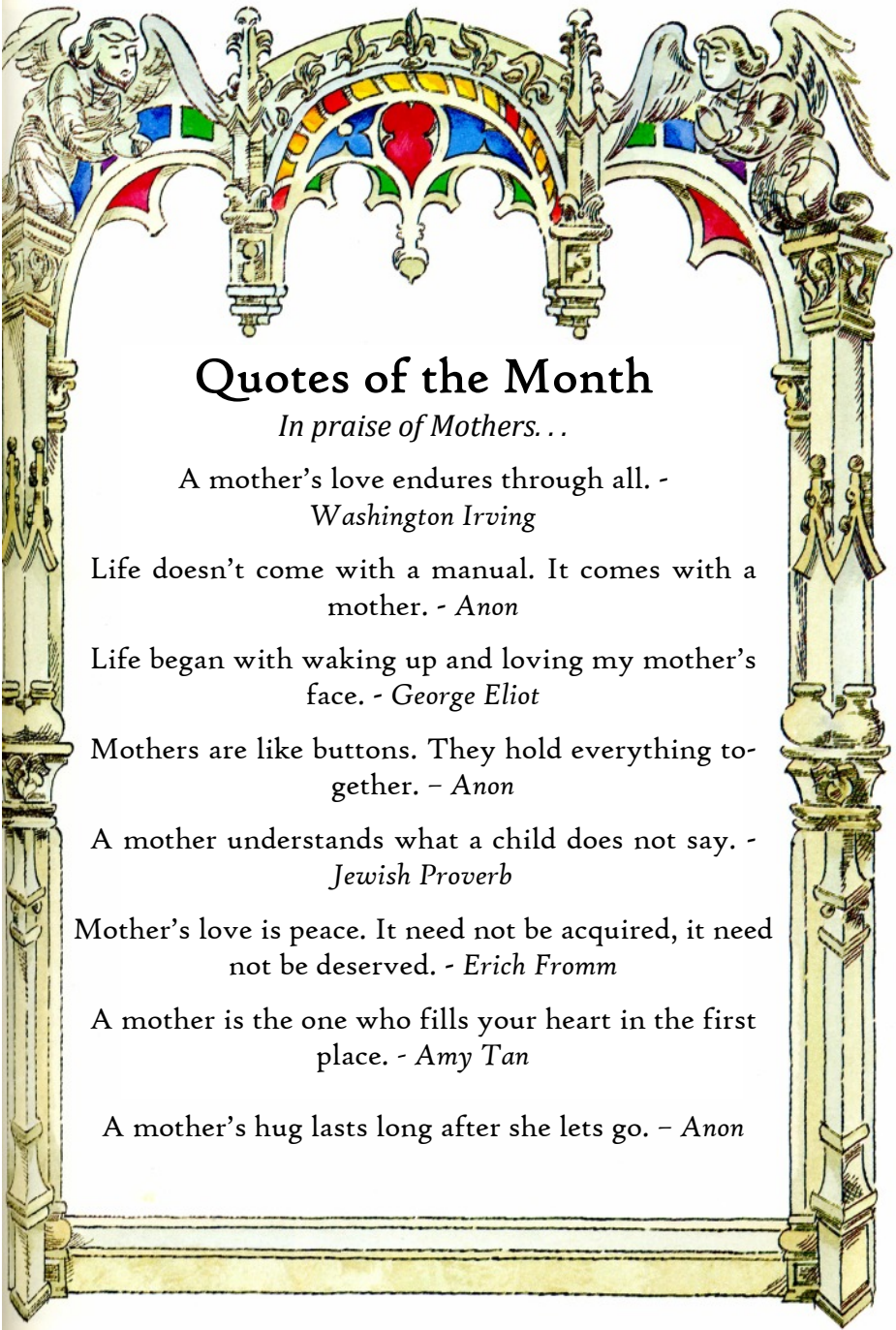
An advert appeared in a student newspaper of a university: "Sweet little old lady wishes to correspond with good-looking university student - especially a six-footer with brown eyes, answering to initials J.A.D." It was signed: "his mother."



Knock knock

A conscientious minister decided to get acquainted with a new family in his church and so he visited them one Spring evening. After his knock on the door, a lilting voice from within called out, "Is that you, Angel?"

"No," replied the minister. "But I'm from the same department."



Quotes of the Month

In praise of Mothers...

A mother's love endures through all. -
Washington Irving

Life doesn't come with a manual. It comes with a
mother. - *Anon*

Life began with waking up and loving my mother's
face. - *George Eliot*

Mothers are like buttons. They hold everything to-
gether. - *Anon*

A mother understands what a child does not say. -
Jewish Proverb

Mother's love is peace. It need not be acquired, it need
not be deserved. - *Erich Fromm*

A mother is the one who fills your heart in the first
place. - *Amy Tan*

A mother's hug lasts long after she lets go. - *Anon*

The story behind ...LOVE DIVINE

*Love divine, all loves excelling,
Joy of heaven, to earth come down,
Fix in us thy humble dwelling,
All thy faithful mercies crown.
Jesu, thou art all compassion,
Pure unbounded love thou art;
Visit us with thy salvation,
Enter every trembling heart.*

‘Love Divine’ is one of Charles Wesley's finest and is definitely one of the nation's most popular hymns - perhaps because it dwells upon the idea of God as Love, a concept unusual in hymns of earlier times. It is also one of the top five hymns in the BBC's *Songs of Praise* countdown and it's right that it should be up there with ‘Guide Me O Thou Great Redeemer’, ‘The Day Thou Gavest’ and ‘Dear Lord and Father of Mankind’.

Charles Wesley wrote around 6000 hymns - I know what you're thinking, he didn't get out much! -but he did, he was a traveling preacher. Legend has it that he scribbled down hymn ideas on little cards that he carried with him as he rode. Once a horse threw him off and this is what he wrote in his diary: “My companion thought I had broken my neck, but my leg was only bruised, my hand sprained and my head stunned, which spoiled my making hymn's the next day”. He was definitely someone who took his hymns seriously!

One of the many stories about Charles Wesley reveals a small part of the creative process that went into the writing of ‘Love Divine’. It is said that he was inspired to write the hymn after hearing a popular song, ‘The Song of Venus’, written in 1691 by John Dryden for his play ‘King Arthur’ set to music by Henry Purcell.

These lyrics of a classical kind:

*Fairest Isle, all Isles excelling,
Seat of pleasures, and of loves;
Venus here will choose her dwelling,
and forsake her Cyprian grooves.*

Trinitate 19

Wesley slowly turned into a Christian welcoming
of the divine in our lives:

*Love divine, all loves excelling,
Joy of heaven, to earth come down,
Fix in us thy humble dwelling,
All thy faithful mercies crown.*

St John's Church, Slimbridge

**Cake & Produce
Stall**

**Saturday 3th April
10.30-12.00**

**Socially distanced in
Slimbridge Churchyard,**

Out of the Silence . . .

The monthly journal of the journey of a Priest, Contemplative and Community Chaplain in lock-down!

During recent times I've been mining my current journal for material for this magazine article but as we approach the anniversary of the COVID situation (thank God none of us knew at the beginning how long it would go on) I decided to compare what I was writing and feeling, offering to God and praying about, then and now. I begin then in 2020 as lock-down loomed, then chose a day recently when everything just seemed too much and finally one where God's words of hope penetrated the gloom, the day I wrote this in fact.

Tuesday 17th March 2020

This is probably (hopefully) the nearest many of us will ever get to knowing what it's like to be at war. Last evening our Government (quite rightly I'm sure) declared war on a virus. A war intended to save lives from a ruthless enemy – but there will be casualties I fear, businesses small and large going under and loss of life, not all perhaps to the virus itself. We are in a state of siege – each household to refrain (voluntarily for now) from all unnecessary social contact – no pubs, no meetings, theatres, concerts, no restaurants no sporting events we await the instruction from our Bishops and Senior Clerics from other faiths but it is certain that corporate, public worship will be suspended as everything else shuts down. But . . . we are much more fortunate here than those in big towns and cities as we have nearby spaces to get out into whilst keeping 'social distance'!!! So though it feels a fearful time we are not being bombed, we are not sending out our menfolk to die, we do not have food rationing (yet?!)) and most important of all we do none of what we have to do alone!

“For you are with us,
your rod and staff, they comfort us.” Psalm 23

and what is more the ducks across the road are back!!!

“. . . we rejoice in the gift of your saving help,
sustain us with your bountiful Spirit
and open our lips to sing your praise.”

from Lent Morning Prayer

Trinitate 21

I nearly didn't write the last line because it's tempting to concentrate only on praying for help but praise and ducks, are positive and life giving things – they and it are also sustaining gifts from God.

The prayer at the end of Psalm 6 seems appropriate in so many ways,
“Lord, Jesus Christ
. . . may the tears of your earthly life be balm for all who weep,
the prayers of your pilgrimage give strength to all who suffer,
for your mercy's sake. Amen”

Tuesday 23rd February 2021

I'm so glad that today's psalms are 42 and 43 for after a poor night's sleep they say exactly what I'm feeling.

“Why are you so full of heaviness , O my soul
and why are you so disquieted within me?”

Everything yesterday and even now seemed to put me into a state of stress and anxiety out of all proportion to any minor cause (Why has Paul's Christmas camera stopped working? Why haven't I had my vaccination yet? Why do I feel like this with no real reason?) and both psalms give the same response, not an explanation, not an answer, but a call to faith

“O put your trust in God;
for I will yet give him thanks,
who is the help of my countenance and my God.”

and from Sheldon Morning Prayer,

“Out of the deeps I cry to you, O God . . .
. . . give me a candle of the Spirit, O Lord.”

As so often happens this journal becomes a prayer and is answered,

“The Lord will give his loving-kindness in the daytime. . . “
Psalm 42

Thursday 25th February 2021

It's 6 o'clock and a long line of light etches the meeting of hills and sky – the light IS coming, the darkness has NOT overcome it and never will, Lord, as you hold this precariously balanced globe in the palm of your hand.

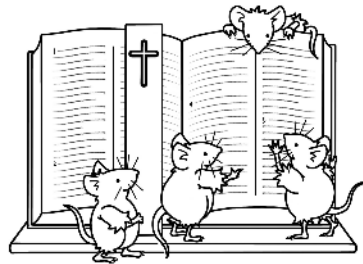
Lots of work to do today; funeral services to write and plan, household tasks of ironing and cooking, writing next month's magazine article, numerous actions consequent on Boris's latest COVID announcements – but also our daily walk and gardening in the first sunshine of the coming Spring. This day is a gift from you complete with the offer of your presence, your company and your guidance, Lord. What a free and unencumbered gift.

The line of light is now casting a rose tinted glow across the underside of the clouds that stretch towards me – they look like upside down ripples on a lake. Here and there through splits and slashes the pale egg-shell blue of the new day beckons temptingly. Another free and unencumbered gift.

The first week of Lent is done, the days stretch ahead through Spring, ever brightening, ever warming, towards Easter – the great, the greatest, celebration of the triumph of hope and love over the apparently insoluble conditions of the human race. It runs together this year with the slow and steady celebration of the triumph of hope and love (and hard work), both human and divine, over the apparently insoluble problem of the pandemic. The words I keep stuck in my prayer book for this season ring out like early morning bells welcoming the sunrise and the promise of day.

“Trust steadily in God,
hope unswervingly,
love extravagantly!”

*More next month
With love and many blessings
Mary Tucker*

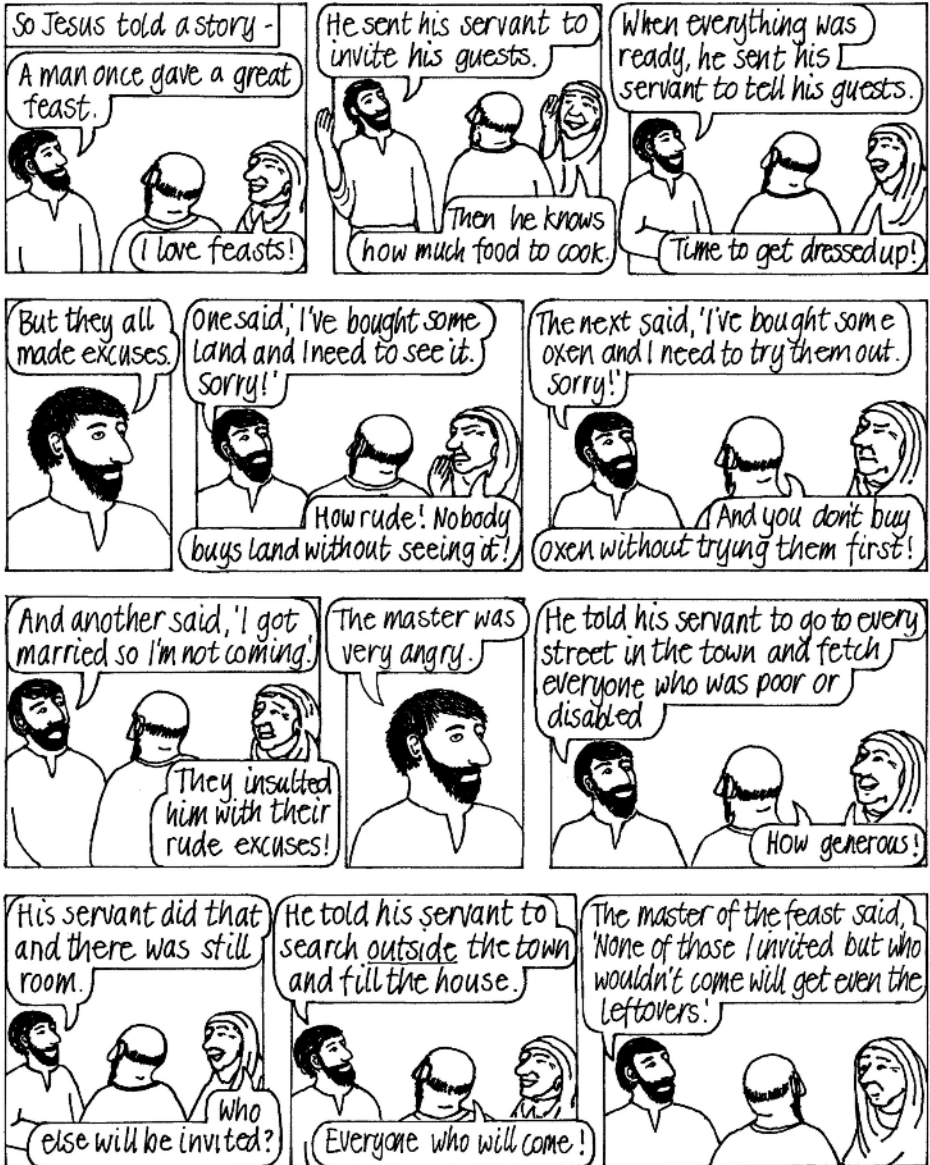


Bible Bite

A short story from the Bible

It can be read in the Bible in Luke chapter 14 verses 15-24

Jesus was at a dinner when one guest said how good it would be to be at God's feast for His people at the end of time.



THE WAY I SEE IT!

Rev Dr. Jane Leach considers the importance of names. . .

So the bookies are giving odds on the name that Princess Eugenie will choose for her baby son, and whether or not the Queen will like it... And whether or not you're interested in royal baby names, the business of naming is a serious matter – an act that expresses a bond and perhaps a hope. The hope that the child will live up to something, or carry the memory of someone, or simply that their name will be a good fit for this unique person whose personality is yet to unfold. Whatever their origins our names are a deeply personal matter.

They abound with resonances of culture and family, and of personal association and memory. Sometimes these are resonances we want to claim, and sometimes we want to distance ourselves from them, and yet whatever name we embrace, we care about it being spelled correctly and pronounced correctly and that's why it's so easy to insult someone by refusing to learn to say their name. Kamala Harris must be very used to this by now, and she is not alone because naming – both the act of giving a name and the act of addressing someone by name – are acts of power.

We can claim power over the other in name giving - as enslaved people on plantations found that their African names had been replaced with those of their owners - or, we can empower others by seeking to hear and understand their names – the name Kamala (Comma-la) means lotus flower in Sanskrit – a plant that unfolds above the surface but has deep roots.

Many religious traditions recognise that naming is powerful because it's not just a social matter, it's also an existential one. In the biblical tradition names sometimes reveal the character of the players – like Jacob, which means cheat - who after a wrestling match with God was re-named, Israel – a name that offered a different future to a man who had previously lived up to a bad name.

In the eighth century BC, as the prophet Isaiah addressed the plight of those in exile in Babylon who were living in a reality defined by

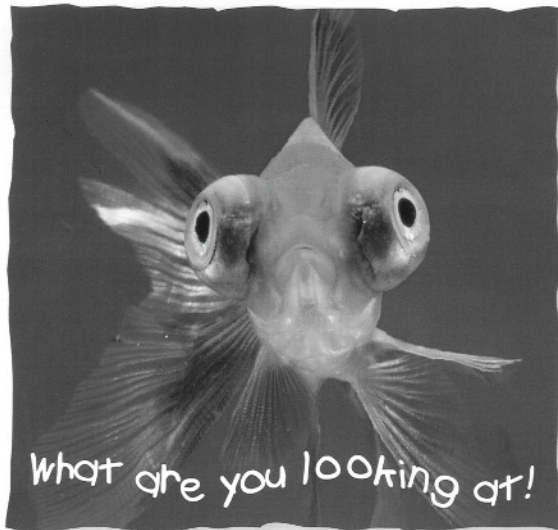
others, he declared that the names of God's children are inscribed on the palms of God's hands, implying, that whatever the names others call us, or even that we may find ourselves living up to, there is a deeper calling to pay attention to, a name that belongs to us, that references our sacred value and unique identity.

For those, across the ages, whose opportunities for self-determination have been limited, this has been and remains a source of comfort and strength - the belief that our real names are known and are not forgotten; that our existence matters; that we have deep roots that one day may have the chance to flower above the surface; that there is hope that one day we will be heard.

(Footnote - Baby's name is August Philip Hawke)

† † † † † † † †

Creature Feature



A Continuing Rhyming History of Britain House of Stuart 1603 - 1714

The Treaty of
Ryswick
1897

The Allies won Nine Years War:
But what the hell had it been for?
Some forty millions had been spent
In battles on the Continent
Because the wretched man was Dutch!
The two sides disagreed so much
That William almost packed and went:

Act of Settlement
1701

So now the Act of Settlement
Was passed, in order to define
A sensible monarchic line,
It also put a total ban

The Law still applies
today

On any who weren't Anglican.

Queen Anne
1702-14

Anne, Mary's sister, took the throne,
Though married, she would rule alone
(Her consort, Denmark's Prince, turned out
To be a Royal lager-lout,
Unlike his sober forebear, who
Spending hours puzzling things through),
Nor did the product of her womb
Delight her, for it was the tomb
Of sixteen souls - or their brief share
Of life before our killing air.

William Duke of
Gloucester
1689-1700

The one who did survive his birth
Was still a child when laid in earth.

James Muirden

The Willow Trust Update

As most of you know Sharpness PCC supports The Willow Trust Charity. I recently had a lovely email from Liz Rowland the Trust Administrator, she hopes that we are all keeping in good health with this current lockdown.

Even though they are still unable to provide such amazing days on the water for all disabled children, adults and carers, there is still ongoing costs to keep the boats in safe working order such as, Insurance costs, moorings, salaries, surveys, life rafting servicing, licences and much more. The Trust cannot wait to have these two beautiful boats up and running on the canal, bringing so much joy and hope into the lives of the guests. The day makes so much difference to the families, as this maybe the only time they get to go out and experience a boat trip and to give hope and support to the carers and families too, who this also effects on a day-to-day basis.

The trust is very thankful for our ongoing monthly donations. Some of you may already know that Liz Rowland has been part of The Willow Trust for some 32 years and she now feels the time is right for her to retire.

During her time at The Willow Trust she has been so happy and inspirational which has been brought to her by the lives of the guests. There have been over 200,000 guests in the time she has been part of this charity and all the guests come free of charge with the thanks from the people who donate monies to this worthwhile charity.

The Trustees have appointed Sophie Wolfe Murray who is the daughter of Liz and they will work closely together when she starts this job at the beginning of March 2021. This will give her adequate time to settle into The Willow Trust way of life. Liz will still be available to help with advice and remain in an active role, although she will no longer be employed by the Trust.

Katrina Bailey
Sharpness PCC Charity Co-ordinator



BONUS BALL SWEEPSTAKE



**February
WINNERS**

Mary Sollars 06



Katrina & Peter Bailey 48



Carole Clift 10



Percy Langford 20



**YOU HAVE TO BE IN IT
TO WIN IT!**

*Thousands of Pounds Won
Thousands of Pounds Raised
for Sharpness Church*



All numbers are currently in play!



THANK YOU!



LETTERS TO UNCLE EUSTACE

On how to deflect those staff appraisals

The Rectory
St. James the Least

My dear Nephew Darren

So, your vicar has introduced staff appraisal for all the officers who work for your church, including yourself. It seems a very dangerous innovation; as far as I am concerned, ministry is only successful when parishioners have no idea what the clergy get up to.

I imagine that he will look at the number of services you take in a year. Funerals can only be increased if you resort to murder, which is likely to be frowned on – although I have been sorely tempted during endless church council meetings. Perhaps if you take a flask of water wherever you go and if you find a baby unattended, you could resort to a spontaneous baptism. That would get your numbers up, even if returning mothers may marvel at the highly localised and brief shower that seemed to have taken place over the pram.

Visiting targets are easily increased. Compile a list of when parishioners will be out and call on those days; a card through their letterbox will prove to your vicar that you were there. Should they happen to be in, mention that you are collecting for the organ fund and they will immediately excuse themselves for an important appointment. You are then free to move on to clock another visit.

Your vicar is also bound to want to see the congregation increasing. This is not sustainable, and you should put a stop to such ambitions at once. It is easily done. All you have to do is to approach your friends at the local football club and bribe them with your homemade beer to come along to church several Sunday mornings in a row. If you give them enough beer BEFORE the service, they will be likely to make just enough muted disruption as to leave your vicar a bit rattled, and thinking that perhaps after all, ‘less’ is ‘more’ when it comes to the congregation.

But whatever you do, make sure that you never preach a better sermon than he does. You don’t want anyone thanking you at the door for your ‘so interesting sermon’ in front of him, when they have been sleeping through his sermons for years. If you offend the vicar this way, he will take swift revenge, and ask you to organise the parish summer fete.

Your loving uncle

PUZZLE PAGE

r	x	w	g	l	a	n	d	y	e	c	a
m	y	h	o	u	s	e	r	n	x	g	n
b	d	s	m	u	i	o	o	u	c	e	g
w	j	d	s	r	t	y	j	i	u	n	r
q	a	e	r	s	r	n	r	n	s	e	y
u	j	a	l	e	f	t	o	v	e	r	s
f	m	v	v	r	s	g	a	i	s	o	o
e	g	e	h	v	t	s	u	t	r	u	x
a	o	z	w	a	r	g	e	e	o	s	e
s	d	i	n	n	e	r	d	d	s	w	n
t	m	a	s	t	e	r	u	d	e	t	n
b	o	u	g	h	t	i	m	e	f	a	m

dinner

land

time

generous

guest

street

invited

angry

story

bought

feast

everyone

dressed

God

house

master

excuses

Jesus

married

servant

rude

oxen

town

leftovers



Sue Gibson School of Gardening

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Backpage Picture



Here is a great night picture of Gloucester Cathedral looking down on the newly completed phase one of the 'Project Pilgrim'. Over the next decade the cathedral will be transformed in three phases as it continues to meet the needs of a modern community. Looking down majestically is the tower that has been part of the city landscape for over 900 years.

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A an electronic version of this magazine is available in pdf - contact Bill Boon for details.