



Our busy Prime Minister, as well as having to read hundreds of Brexit documents, still finds time to read her Parish Magazine!

Things you are unlikely to hear in church

“Excuse me, but it’s my turn to sit in the front pew.”

“I was so enthralled that I never noticed the sermon went 25 minutes over time.”

“Personally, I find witnessing about my faith much more enjoyable than golf.”

“I’ve decided to give the church the £200 a month I’ve been spending on fashion.”

“I shall volunteer to be a permanent teacher for the Sunday School class.”

“Forget about the agreed stipend, let’s pay our vicars so they can live like we do.”

“I love it when we sing hymns I’ve never heard before.”

“Vicar, we’d like to send you to a Bible seminar in the Bahamas.”

“Nothing inspires me more than our annual stewardship campaign.”



Dear Friends,

Last month I talked a bit about what was coming up at General Synod. Because of my holiday I am writing this just after I have returned home, and I thought I would simply share what I would have said had I been called to speak in the debate on the Health Service. It bears a passing resemblance to a sermon on the same theme on July 1st. The motion was one about supporting the health service. Aneurin Bevan said this,

“No society can legitimately call itself civilized if a sick person is denied medical aid because of lack of means.”

The founding principle that no one should be turned away, no one should be lost.

The report on sustainability, in its section on the workforce states

“Those who work in the NHS and adult social care are the lifeblood of the organisations they serve. The NHS is dependent on a reliable supply of appropriately skilled and highly motivated individuals to meet the ever-increasing demand for care.”

The dedicated workforce of the NHS includes a huge number of people not only from this country but also from overseas. Without them the stresses and strains on the NHS will continue to mount. How will the sustainability of the health service be affected by the continuing negative focus on immigration? Will people want to come here if they feel that they will be made to feel unwelcome?

But it works in reverse too. I have never been so grateful for EU reciprocal health care arrangements as last year when our daughter was seriously ill when we were on holiday in Italy. At hospital, all we had to do was to show a passport and her EHIC card and we had access to excellent health care. The medical treatment, operations, scans and nursing care were magnificent and the welcome to us, feeling hugely vulnerable facing fearful news in a foreign country was exemplary. We were not turned away or denied treatment. Many of the people treating her had spent significant amounts of time working in the NHS during their training and development. They went far further than they had to enable us to feel safe and to progress things forward for further treatment here in this country, for which we are also grateful. The experience was one of grace and welcome for the outsider, loving service and skilful attention to the medical need. I really hope that EU tourists in this country would find such a welcome on the same basis.

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The stories of Jairus' daughter and the woman with flow of blood remind us that healthcare is about more than the administration of drugs or carrying out operations. We are in the worlds of both Health and Social Care. Consideration of the patient in their wider social network, the effect that physical illness has on mental health or mental distress on physical well-being need to be taken into account. Jesus points us to good health-care practice and is a model of integration. Bevan's vision was that no-one should be turned away, that all were welcome. To sustain the NHS and social care in their complex matrix of activity the highest quality workforce is needed so let's support the motion with real zeal.

Priscilla



YOUR CHURCH NEEDS
YOU

During June we focussed on the gifts we have and that we can bring to the life of the church as well as the ways in which we can take our faith out into the places where we are in the week. There is now a real opportunity for someone to step up and be a real help.

Geoff Bennett has been the treasurer here for about 20 years and feels that he has earned the right to hang up his calculator. He has given notice that when his current PCC term expires in 2020 he will not be standing again and wishes to relinquish the role. If someone were to come alongside him now as Assistant Treasurer, it would both reduce his workload and enable someone to learn the ropes. You do not have to be an accountant and there is training and support available from the diocesan staff. If you are happy with numbers and money, then please have a word with Geoff to find out what the role involves.

Priscilla

Ten things we probably never knew about waistcoats

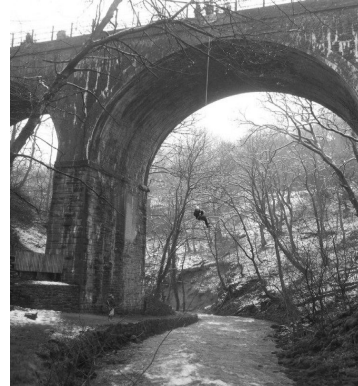
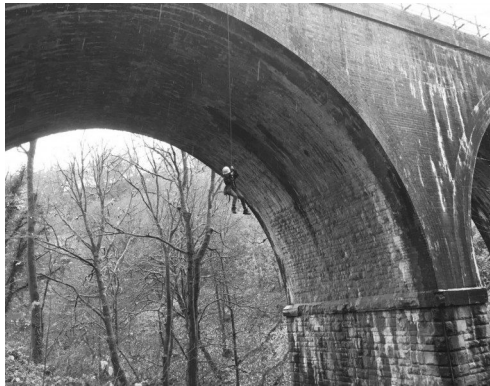


Following the lead set by England manager Gareth Southgate, waistcoats have come back into fashion recently, so here are some facts about this example of sartorial elegance.

1. Waistcoats first became fashionable in England after being worn by King Charles II in the 1660s.
2. On October 8, 1666, Samuel Pepys wrote in diary: "The King hath yesterday in Council declared his resolution of setting a fashion for clothes, which he will never alter. It will be a vest, I know not well how."
3. He went on: "It is to teach the nobility thrift, and will do good."
4. The word waistcoat dates back to 1519.
5. King Charles I was recorded to have worn a waistcoat at his execution.
6. Waistcoats were introduced to England by Sir Robert Shirley (1581-1628), who had seen them worn at the Persian court of Shah Abbas.
7. According to the sartorial rules of British Dressage, "A fitted waistcoat may be worn when permission has been granted not to wear coats."
8. Marks & Spencer waistcoat sales are reported to have more than doubled during the World Cup.
9. Edward VII popularised the habit of leaving a waistcoat's bottom button undone.
10. Gareth Southgate, with perfect waistcoat etiquette, always leaves his bottom button undone.

Going down to help to raise young people up.

Early in September, I shall be abseiling 100 ft down from Miller’s Dale viaduct in the Peak District. This is on a disused railway line called the Monsal Trail which is now open after 40 years of restoration work.



I am raising money for the Church Army, and in particular for the Amber Project. This is a project in Cardiff which supports young people who have experienced self-harm and drug related problems.



The Church Army put their faith in to action through their commitment to positive social action and empowering others.

“Church Army exists both to talk to people about Jesus and bring them to faith in Jesus but it also does this extraordinary work of serving the poor and the poorest parts of the country and that speaks to the value of human beings.” - Archbishop Justin Welby.

If you would like to sponsor me, please sign one of my sponsor forms during the next few weeks .

Peter Stokes



Funerals in Church

29th June Heather Thompson
2nd July Linda Talbot

Funerals at the Crematorium

28th June Paul Draper
6th July Eva Campbell

FACTS AND FIGURES

Week Beginning	Communicants	Loose Plate £	Planned Giving £	Gift Aid £
June 17	81	50.46	100.31	25.00
June 24	77	134.35	689.00	2.00
July 1	74	69.00	202.48	2.00
July 8	37	46.20	50.44	26.40
July 15	70	96.40	144.00	10.00
Standing Orders			662.50	21.42
Parish Giving			1379.00	544.75

Aspects of life at St Faith and St Laurence

Morning prayer – is normally said Monday to Thursday and Saturday at 8.15 am in the Lady Chapel. We use Common Worship Daily Prayer, all are welcome to come and join in.

Reflections A chance to meet together over a cuppa and reflect on the Gospel reading for the previous Sunday. A group meets on Mondays from 1.45-3pm Venues are listed in the Programme of the month.

Task Groups – The church has a number of task groups enabling areas of church life. These are listed in the magazine with the contact details of the chairs. If you would like to be a part of a groups please contact the relevant chair or Priscilla. All are welcome to join.

Stay and Play meets on Thursday between 9.30 and 11am in the Hall to give a chance for people with young children to meet and the children to play. All are welcome. Cost £1.50 per family.

Sunday Club meets on the first, third and fourth Sundays of each month except during the holidays. We hold an extra Sunday Club on days when there is a baptism. All are welcome to join in hearing and experiencing a Bible Story and learning together about what it means for our daily lives.

Messy Church takes place on the first Saturday of each month, most months. A chance for children and parents/ carers to have an informal time of worship, and discovering about a Bible story through song, craft, listening, cooking and so much more. Dates are published in advance and all are welcome to come along.

Planned Giving helps people make giving regular. You decide how much you can afford to give. You can join the envelope scheme weekly or monthly or pay by Standing Order or annually by cheque. Income tax payers are asked to Gift Aid their giving, so the Church can reclaim the tax on their donations at no extra cost to the donors. For details, contact Jackie Taylor.

The Parish Giving Scheme is another way that you can give at no extra cost to yourself. It reduces paperwork and increases cash flow for us. Details are available from Geoff Bennett or Priscilla.

We support **Recycling**. We have a special collection on the first Sunday of every month when we collect **ALUMINIUM cans and foil** which can be sold and the money raised is donated to our Mission Partners in Chile (through USPG) Local supermarkets have battery recycling facilities in this area. Pauline Sitford (427 7005).

The Main Altar Kneeler

When you come up to the Communion rail and kneel, do you ever look at the beautiful kneeler that you are kneeling on? At the back of the Church, on the big table, there's a book all about the kneelers. Here's what it says about the Altar Rail kneeler:

“The main altar kneeler depicts, in three sections, Psalm 148 – a psalm of praise and exultation conjuring up wonderful pictorial images. It commemorates Joe Poiner (1924-1978), a member of the choir for many years. It was worked by his daughter Jill, also a loyal chorister, with help from his widow, Pat.”

Recently, I spent some time in the church alone, reading the Psalm and finding the relevant scenes on the kneeler. I invite you to do the same. Here is Psalm 148

Praise the Lord!

Praise the Lord from the heavens; praise him in the heights!

Praise him, all his angels; praise him, all his host!

Praise him, sun and moon; praise him, all you shining stars!

Praise him, you highest heavens, and you waters above the heavens!

Let them praise the name of the Lord, for he commanded and they were created.

He established them for ever and ever; he fixed their bounds, which cannot be passed.

Praise the Lord from the earth, you sea monsters and all deeps, fire and hail, snow and frost, stormy wind fulfilling his command!

Mountains and all hills, fruit trees and all cedars!

Wild animals and all cattle, creeping things and flying birds!

Kings of the earth and all peoples, princes and all rulers of the earth!

Young men and women alike, old and young together!

Let them praise the name of the Lord, for his name alone is exalted;

his glory is above earth and heaven.

He has raised up a horn for his people, praise for all his faithful,

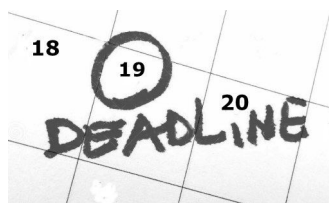
for the people of Israel who are close to him.

Praise the Lord!

So, next time you are kneeling at the Altar rail at a Holy Communion Service, you may wish to look at what you are kneeling on!

Christine Terry.

The deadline for material for the next magazine is **AUGUST 19th**



Possibly as a result of the recent unaccustomed heat, there has been a reduction in the flow of church-related material. As ever, articles reflecting all aspects of our church and community life, and all shades of opinion, are very welcome.

Ten Other Commandments

An unknown author shares his wisdom:

1. You shall not worry, for worry is the most unproductive of all human activities.
2. You shall not be fearful, for most of the things you fear will never come to pass.
3. You shall not carry grudges, for they are the heaviest of all life's burdens.
4. You shall face each problem as it comes. You can only handle one at a time anyway.
5. You shall not take problems to bed with you, for they make very poor bedfellows.
6. You shall not borrow other people's problems. They can better care for them than you can.
7. You shall not try to relive yesterday for good or ill, it is forever gone. Concentrate on what is happening in your life and be happy now!
8. You shall try to be a good listener, for only when you listen do you hear ideas different from your own.
9. You shall not become 'bogged down' by frustration, for 90% of it is rooted in self-pity and will only interfere with positive action.
10. You shall count your blessings, never overlooking the small ones, for a lot of small blessings add up to a big one.

Home Communion We have a team of lay people trained and able to bring Home Communion usually on a monthly basis. This is for those who are unable to come to church long term. If the situation is more temporary for example after an operation you can also receive communion, usually from Priscilla. In either case please contact Priscilla.

Traidcraft

Traidcraft sells a range of fairly traded food, cards, clothes and accessories. We use Traidcraft tea and coffee and everything we buy helps fight poverty and supports our church. You can order seasonal gifts through the church at Christmas time when catalogues will be available. Any questions, please ask Ruth Jeavons or Bronwen Jones.

'easyfundraising'

Next time you shop online, think of St Faith and St Laurence and raise free donations with 3,000+ retailers:

<https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/stfaithandstlaurence>

Women's Fellowship meets on the first Monday of the month from March to December. Meetings are held in the Committee Room 7.30 for 8pm. We have talks on a variety of subjects. See Programme of the Month for details.

Prayer Ministry Team

Prayer ministry is offered during the 10am Communion on Sundays. People can receive prayer for themselves or for any situation that is important to them. It takes place in the Lady Chapel during the distribution of communion.

Service with no name

This takes place on the first Thursday in the month in church at 7.30pm.

Foodbank

We collect food for the Quinton and Oldbury Foodbank. There is a box in church and food can be placed there at any time. The list of things that are needed is in church and in the hall. Food is distributed from St Boniface Church on Wednesdays and Paul and Barney's place on Fridays. Vouchers are required to receive food.

Choir and Music.

Choir Practice takes place weekly, normally on Thursdays 6-7pm. Anyone interested in singing in the choir should contact Simon Palmer, Organist & Choirmaster. (Contact details on page cover) We also like to encourage instrumentalists to perform in church, either in services or in concerts.

Call in for Coffee time together over a cuppa on a Wednesday morning from 10.30 -12.00. if needed we can arrange for someone to collect you and then take you home. Please ring Pauline Sitford (427 7005). If you are passing, do call in, or bring a friend, all are welcome.

Sharing our stories

Some of our places of worship are sparsely attended these days. So if the proverbial Martian came down to earth now and asked, 'Where do the crowds congregate to see the great human drama symbolically enacted?' I think you'd have to say: a football stadium. That's where a ritual is performed, where masses of people feel the collective effervescence that sociologists might say is the essence of religious experience, where we invest our faith in our side against the world, a faith sometimes sorely tried, but once in a while richly rewarded.

The World Cup which as just ended in Russia, is a magical event when it rolls round every four years. It is the defining tournament in every player or manager's career and consequently there is no tournament more full of emotion and intrigue than the World Cup.

We can all think of great moments, depending on your nationality! Last minute winners, rivals being vanquished or for the select few, finals being won. (I was fortunate to be at Wembley the only time England won it in 1966)

We can also all remember moments of controversy, pain or heartache. The World Cup is full of many different stories, often told and sung about for years after.

As Christians though, as much as we may love the World Cup, we do think there is an even greater event worth thinking about. The same words we use to talk about the World Cup, can also all be applied to the amazing story of Jesus Christ. Expectation, Passion, Controversy, Commitment, Pain and Victory.

More than once during this World Cup, England's manager Gareth Southgate urged his players to "write their own stories".

I think that phase had its greatest power in freeing a new generation of players from an inherited narrative of failure. For years, the institution that they represent and embody — the England football team — kept losing in the same way. Witness the familiar sinking feeling experienced by millions when England conceded a late goal against Columbia, then missed a penalty in the shoot-out.

But it is God's story that we proclaim afresh in each generation. We should encourage each other to nurture habits that free us to write our own stories as part of God's story. Such habits could include training for tasks that many might dread: being with the afflicted; sharing all we have; and talking about God in public.

As we form habits for these outward-looking tasks, it is worth recognising a lesson that the England team's story can teach us. This is that we are seeking to spread the gospel in a country hungry for a new narrative, eager to belong to a bigger, more hopeful story.

Seeds sown and scattered

You may recall that just over a year ago I wrote about the closure of a historic Methodist Chapel further up the valley. Sad to say, the chapel in our village also closed in June of this year. I went along to the final service - lovely as it was, understandably and inevitably there were a few tears from those with deep roots in that place. Whilst my mother was an Anglican, many of her family were members of this chapel and so I have always felt a connection to it, albeit at arm's length. Somewhere in a cupboard in the house there are a couple of pictures - one of me as a page boy at a wedding there and an almost identical picture of my son fulfilling the same role a generation

The chapel was opened in 1828 but at one stage there were four chapels in the village, plus the Anglican Church. Of course in the C 19th the lead mines here were still working. The census of 2011 gives the population of this village as 448 but believe it or not, the church magazine dated August 1878 records that *The Church of England School was examined by H.M. Inspector of Schools on May 31st to June 3rd, when 277 children were passed.... and the school favourably reported on.* The village school is no more and the children are bussed to other places.

There was a long and noble link between Methodism and both agricultural and industrial working communities; Methodism was linked to the formation of reformist groups and trade union movements. John Wesley's practice of encouraging working people to become lay-preachers, alongside their paid jobs, gave them valuable experience of public speaking. Later some of these went on to become trade union leaders and were instrumental in the formation of the Labour Party in the late nineteenth century. But back to the village chapel.

The minister spoke sensitively and thoughtfully about the rich legacy of the local worshipping community over the generations and drew attention to all the seeds of faith that had been sown; and 'scattered' to other places both in the valley and beyond.

One of the Biblical references she drew upon is one of my favourites, albeit a rather hard message. "The grass withers, the flower fades; but the word of our God will stand for ever." (Isaiah; 40:8)

It is a time of considerable change in all churches and we have to accept that there will be some *withering and fading*. But with death comes resurrection. Just one example - a major initiative in the Anglican Church (as many readers will know) is the development of church planting and the advent of so called 'Resource Churches'. If I am honest, I am not sure I feel totally comfortable with this, but the truth is, it does seem to work! God's word will stand forever and is manifesting itself in new ways. Let us: focus on the resurrection.

Bishop's Comment: Stewardship and Engagement

The Church of England has a formidable track record in ethical investment and engagement with owners and asset managers. This expertise comes from exercising responsibility for the Church's historic endowment and its purposes in providing pensions, support for poor parishes and the basic needs of bishops and Cathedrals. To achieve this, we set a minimum return of 5% plus inflation. As relatively large charitable funds, the Church Commissioners and Pensions Boards have a strong voice with others in engaging, for example, with company boards and their annual general meetings. Of course there are already no-go areas for Church funds such as gambling, armaments, alcohol, tobacco and pornography.

There is currently a sophisticated approach to the environment, whose urgent need for sustainability affects the planet and all its inhabitants. Concern for the climate has generated a remarkably successful Transition Pathway Initiative led by the Church of England, in collaboration with the Environment Agency and the London School of Economics, with over £7 trillion of assets already signed up to aim towards the Paris Accord for carbon reduction. In a related area, thermal coal production has been targeted. Challenging new protocols for carbon reduction and the transition to a low carbon economy are being offered across the oil and gas industries. Some advocates want to make fossil fuels a no-go area right now. While the desire to take a principled stand and the fear of a rapidly changing climate are understandable, I am sure that this is the time to stay engaged rather than withdraw. The leadership of Exxon, Shell and BP, to mention but three of the giants, are listening to the public and their shareholders and taking major decisions to look beyond fossil fuel to new sources of energy.

There is also growing combined engagement by Anglicans, Roman Catholics and Methodists with the world-wide mining sector. The stewardship of responsible business is not an easy task. In the past month I have had the opportunity to meet three chairpersons of major companies. With one I discussed the dilemma of tobacco as a vital livelihood cash crop in Malawi. Another I heard had sold all their coal mines. The third had envisioned his multinational as an energy supplier rather than an old fashioned oil company.

The transition to a world economy without the disastrous effects of carbon will take at least a generation. Some of our Anglican partners in the poorest parts of the world will be dependent on carbon for some time if they are to have the economic growth we in the West have enjoyed from the same source. Now is the not for disinvestment but for reinvestment of effort in promoting the tools of accountability, such as the TPI, and face-to-face encounter in managing transformation to a low carbon world.

This is a moment for shared stewardship and mutual responsibility for rapid change as Christians with other asset owners take the lead in working across the power bases to make sure the world has a sustainable future and acceptable standard of living for all.

A striking feature of successive England games this time, was how many people wanted to watch them in community — in fan-zones, in pubs, and on packed sofas. Lives more commonly lived on individual devices, have re-encountered the collective experience of joy, sorrow, and a greater whole. It is for us to take this inspiration and relate it to God's redeeming narrative of love for the world. I believe that there is an appetite out there for transforming stories — stories like our own, written in freedom from the past, embracing a hope-filled future.

So even though I was sad about losing against Croatia, I'd like to propose a vote of thanks to the England team, who did so well, and succeeded in the noble cause of cheering us all up, at a time when we really needed it.

Although football is in the end just a game, the England team embodied certain values that apply much more widely. First, they played like a team. They weren't a group of individualists trying to impress us with how good they individually are. They worked together; their discipline was strong; their main concern was with the team as a whole. We could do with more of that everywhere today. (Dare I mention Brexit?)

Second, they knew their success mattered to the country as a whole. We saw on TV thousands watching the games. They came from every ethnicity, yet they were knitted together in the most inclusive way. It was national identity without nationalism, and it was good to see.

And third, there was the manager, Gareth Southgate, who's not only brought back the waistcoat but also courtesy, kindness, hard work, and simple plain decency. He didn't exaggerate, didn't emote, he gave thanks and praise to everyone, and reminded us of a great forgotten truth, that the really effective leaders are those who combine personal humility with fierce ambition for those they lead.

So, no, religion isn't a game, and football isn't a religion, although the late Bill Shankly used to say, football isn't a matter of life and death; it's much more serious than that. But the England side did give us back some English pride, and reminded us of some real spiritual truths: that the team is bigger than the players; that the game is bigger than the team; and that occasionally for a nation to roar its applause when someone scores a goal is just plain good for the soul.

Some say that Christianity is dying: because many churches are low on attendees on ordinary Sundays. I prefer to say that Christianity is *diversifying*: that the good news is taking on new shapes and forms in the world around us, that the gospel gene is creating new life in new ways all the time. We just need to keep our eyes open for signs of it.

Peter Stokes

Prayer of the month

At this time of the year, many people take their holidays. August has always been seen as the holiday month even for the Church of England!! We need our holidays and relaxation time more than ever! It would seem we are a generation of busy people working hard but hardly living. Getting enough rest and relaxation is often at the bottom of our priority lists. It is important to ask God for his help if life seems to be spiralling out of control. Prayer can then become top of the priority list! Choose to make prayer a priority every day. Talk with God, trust in him, and rest on the inside even as you work. Powerful prayer begins as you release your cares, connect with God, and allow him to work through you! A happy and restful August.

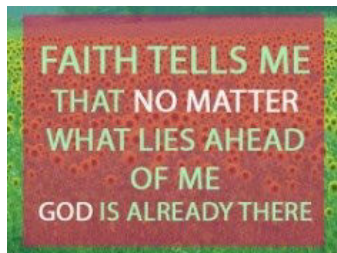
Before Prayer

**I weave a silence on my lips,
I weave a silence into my hand,
I close my ears to distractions,
I close my eyes to attentions,
I close my heart to temptations.**

**Calm me O Lord as you stilled the storm,
Still me O Lord, keep me from harm.
Let all the tumult within me cease,
Enfold me Lord in your peace.**

Amen

Celtic Traditional



Sally Griffiths

Bishop David in the Queen's Birthday Honours list

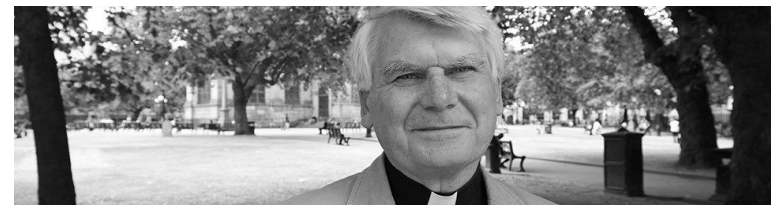


Bishop David is to be awarded a KCMG (Knight Commander of the Order of St Michael and St George) honour in the Queen's Birthday Honours list. KCMGs are specifically awarded to diplomats and people serving the UK abroad.

The list published by the Cabinet Office on the 9th of June includes the following: "The Rt Rev David URQUHART, Bishop of Birmingham and Prelate of the Order of St Michael and George. For services to international relations"

Bishop David, who is the Archbishop's Envoy to China, will be appointed to the Order at a ceremony in October 2018. The Order's motto is *Auspicium melioris ævi* (Latin for "Token of a better age").

Archdeacon of Birmingham to retire



The Ven Hayward Osborne is retiring from his post as Archdeacon of Birmingham, formally at the end of October. A service to mark his achievement of 45 years of ordained stipendiary ministry in the Church of England will be held on Sunday 30th September 2018, his last actual working day, in Birmingham Cathedral at 6.30pm, to which all are welcome.

Hayward has been involved in every aspect of the Church's life and an essential mainstay in Church of England Birmingham. He has been a wise, loyal, reliable and prayerful support to me throughout my time as Bishop. Hayward will, typically, be working as usual over the remaining few months and thereafter continue to have a link with us as Chair of the St Martin's Trustees.

+David Birmingham

COVER STORY



This month's cover is of St Clement Danes Church in London. It is the Central Church of the Royal Air Force who are celebrating their 100th anniversary this year. Re-consecrated in 1958 as a perpetual shrine of remembrance to those who have died in service in the RAF, it is a living church prayed in and visited throughout the year by thousands of people seeking solace and reflection.

Located right in the middle of London, St Clement Danes has some characteristics that set it apart from normal parish churches. This includes a grade 1 listed status, a large number of visitors, professional musicians and many high profile services. It has one of the best church organs in London and a beautifully maintained set of working bells.

It is famous as the Oranges and Lemons church from the traditional nursery rhyme and the bells ring the tune throughout the day.

St Clement Danes is a memorial church to those who have lost their lives whilst serving in the RAF; and they commemorate over 150 000 people by name in their Books of Remembrance.

As well as holding the Books of Remembrance, the church also contains over a thousand slate squadron and unit badges in the floor. Many Colours and squadron standards are laid up in the building. The glass display cases feature many interesting RAF items that have been donated to the Central Church, as well as the ancient silver treasurers from the old parish.

The church organ, built by Harrison and Harrison, was gifted by the USAF, the lectern by the RAAAF, the sanctuary flooring from the people of the Netherlands and the font (in the crypt) from the Royal Norwegian Air Force. On the pew ends you can find the cartouches of Chiefs of the Air Staff – and if you are lucky, a member of staff may demonstrate the telescopic nature of the pews – which extend by an extra 50%.

There are boards containing names of those who have won Victoria and George Crosses –as well as memorial boards commemorate RAF Chaplains, RAF Mountain Rescue volunteers, and air crew involved in search and rescue duties who have died on operations.

The first church was thought to have been built by Danes in the 9th century, giving rise to the second part of the church's name. The exact origins are unclear, with several versions of the foundation differing in details.

Certainty in an Uncertain World

Many years ago, I remember my Grandma saying, 'Whatever is the world coming to'. As a teenager, I found it amusing that my Grandma found the 20th Century world so difficult to understand, that some events somehow threw her off-balance. I wonder what she'd make of the 21st Century and the many changes that have taken place since she died. However events over the past few months may have left some of us, rather like my Grandma, wondering what the world is coming to. It may be the political uncertainty and turmoil of Brexit and Donald Trump as president of the USA; the continuing conflict in Syria, Iraq and elsewhere; or recent natural disasters, but the world seems to be an uncertain, unpredictable and often dangerous place. It is almost as if our ability to understand the world has been through some seismic shock so that, if we are not careful, it can undermine our optimism for the future.

An ancient Chinese curse says: 'may you live in interesting times', with the word 'interesting' implying difficult or uncertain. I think many journalists or commentators today would classify recent global history as 'interesting'. Because we are now much more globally aware than we were even 20 years ago, all this 'interesting' news is often immediately available world-wide, almost in real time as it happens.

Perhaps we should remember that the world has always been unpredictable and uncertain. History, no matter how far back you go, has plenty of examples of turmoil, conflict and political uncertainty. This was as true of 1st century Palestine and the world of Jesus and his disciples as it is for us today. Their country was occupied by a foreign army, with puppet rulers intent on securing obedience to Rome, often at any cost. With religious and political division, safety and security were by no means certain. Yet out of that world and environment came a tangible and human reminder of the certainties of God's promises. Indeed there came the new promises that we as Christians have as the basis of our faith.

Our modern world is far from ideal. Often things that happen are difficult to understand, but as Lamentations 3 reminds us: 'The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning ...'

In amongst the human uncertainty of our world, let us try to hold on to the certainty of God's steadfast and unconditional love. For us, as for all the Christians who have come before us, keeping sight of God's promises will enable us to face uncertainty with confidence and optimism instead of despair and despondency.

Martyn Lawson

Saint of the month

Tuesday 28 August is the feast day for one of the most august saints who was, also one of the most influential Christian writers in the history of the Church — the aptly named **Saint Augustine of Hippo (354 – 430)**.

He lived and wrote in a time of social and spiritual chaos. The Roman Empire was collapsing, the world was about to slide into the dark ages and the Church was under serious threat from both heresies within and paganism without.

His writings helped the Church to avoid perversions of Christianity, to stand strong and unafraid among the violent tumult of the times and they still influence Christians today.

Augustine was born at Tagaste, in modern Algeria. His father was a pagan, but his mother, Monica, a Christian. After studying rhetoric at Carthage to become a lawyer, Augustine became a philosopher. He abandoned Christianity for Manichaeism, a religion that see life as divided neatly between good or evil, light or dark, or love and hate with no alternatives. He lived with a mistress for 15 years and moved to Rome, then Milan, to teach rhetoric.

After a long interior conflict, vividly described in *The Confessions*, Augustine was converted and baptised a Christian in 386-7. He returned to Africa in 388, joined some friends in establishing a quasimonastic life and ordained a priest in 391. Four years later Augustine became coadjutor-bishop of Hippo and from 396 until his death in 430 he ruled the diocese alone. He had a brilliant mind, an ardent temperament and a gift for mystical insights. Soon his understanding of the Christian revelation was pouring forth in his many voluminous writings.

His best known work is *The Confessions* that included 11 books, *The sermons on the Gospel* and *Epistle of John*, the *De Trinitate*, and the *De Civitate Dei* or *City of God*. This tackles the opposition between Christianity and the 'world' and represents the first Christian philosophy of history.

Other works tackled various heresies: Manichaeism, Pelagianism, or Donatism, and led Augustine to develop his thoughts on creation, grace, sacraments and the Church.

Augustine's massive influence on Christianity has mainly been for the good. Few others have written with such depth on love, the Holy Trinity and the Psalms. Many of the prayers he wrote are still being published in prayer books today, an example being *Blessed are all your saints* that asks God to watch over us through the ups and downs of our lives.

Wed 22	10.30 am	Call in for Coffee	Committee Room
	11.00 am	Holy Communion <i>Ezekiel 34.1-11; Matthew 20.1-16</i>	Lady Chapel
Thu 23	9.30 am	Stay and Play	Hall
SUN 26	THIRTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY		
	8.00 am	Holy Communion <i>Joshua 24.1-2a, 14-18; ; Ephesians 6.10-20; John 6.56-69</i>	
	10.00 am	Family Communion <i>Readings as at 8am</i>	
	6.30 pm	Evensong <i>Psalms 116.10-end Exodus 4.27-5.1; Hebrews 13.16-21</i>	
Wed 29	10.30 am	Call in for Coffee	Committee Room
	11.00 am	Holy Communion <i>2 Thessalonians 1.1-5, 11-end; Matthew 23.13-22</i>	Lady Chapel
Thu 30	9.30 am	Stay and Play	Hall

Words for today

In the mid-1960s, a Japanese woman named Taki Miyashina wrote a striking version of Psalm 23. We know the original well; it is frequently quoted at funerals: "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want..." But her translation of this familiar Scripture is fitting for a world caught up in busyness. It suits our world today, too. On 4th May 1965, Reverend Eric Frost broadcast this unique translation from London. Let the words speak to us.

The Lord is my pace-setter, I shall not rush,
 He makes me stop and rest for quiet intervals.
 He provides me with images of stillness, which restore my serenity.
 He leads me in ways of efficiency through calmness of mind,
 And His guidance is peace.
 Even though I have a great many things to accomplish each day,
 I will not fret for His presence is here.
 His timelessness, His all-importance will keep me in balance.
 He prepares refreshment and renewal in the midst of my activity.
 By anointing my mind with His oils of tranquility;
 My cup of joyous energy overflows.
 Surely harmony and effectiveness shall be the fruits of my hours.
 For I shall walk in the pace of my Lord and dwell in His house forever.

PROGRAMME FOR AUGUST

Wed 1	10.30 am	Call in for Coffee	Committee Room
	11.00 am	Holy Communion <i>Jeremiah 15.10, 16-end; Matthew 13.44-46</i>	Lady Chapel
Thu 2	9.30 am	Stay and Play	Hall

SUN 5 TENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

8.00 am	Holy Communion <i>Exodus 16.2-4, 9-15; Ephesians 4.1-6; John 6.24-35</i>
10.00 am	Family Communion <i>Readings as at 8am</i>
6.30 pm	Evensong <i>Psalms 88.1-10; Job 28; Hebrews 11.17-31</i>

Wed 8	10.30 am	Call in for Coffee	Committee Room
	11.00 am	Holy Communion <i>Jeremiah 31.1-7; Matthew 15.21-28</i>	Lady Chapel
Thu 9	9.30 am	Stay and Play	Hall

SUN 12 ELEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

8.00 am	Holy Communion <i>1 Kings 19.4-8; Ephesians 4.25-5.2; John 6.35, 41-51</i>
10.00 am	Morning Praise
6.30 pm	Sung Eucharist <i>Readings as at 8am</i>

Wed 15	10.30 am	Call in for Coffee	Committee Room
	11.00 am	Holy Communion <i>Isaiah 61.10-end; Luke 1.46-55</i>	Lady Chapel
Thu 16	9.30 am	Stay and Play	Hall

SUN 19 TWELTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

8.00 am	Holy Communion <i>Proverbs 9.1-6; Ephesians 5.15-20; John 6.51-58</i>
10.00 am	Family Communion <i>Readings as at 8am</i>
6.30 pm	Evensong <i>Psalms 100; Exodus 2.23-3.10; Hebrews 13.1-15</i>

'So what do you do vicar?'

Some of the longest job descriptions belong to rural Church of England clergy. 'So what do you do?' 'I'm the Rector of Aldwincle, Clopton, Pilton, Stoke Doyle, Thorpe Achurch, Titchmarsh and Wadenhoe.' Every one of these place names evokes an ancient Pevsner-worthy church, smelling of candlewax, damp hymn books and brass polish. Though many villages no longer have a shop or a pub, most do still have a parish church used for regular services — even if only on the first and third Sunday of the month. You push open the creaky door, and last Sunday's hymns are still up on the hymn board

The role of country clergy (in history) was a remarkably loose one. Piety was not necessarily a requirement, or even an expectation. Ordination in the Church of England required a university degree, but most ministers read classics and didn't study divinity at all, and so had no training in how to preach, provide inspiration or solace or otherwise offer meaningful Christian support. Many didn't even bother composing sermons, but just bought a big book of prepared sermons and read one out once a week. The effect was to create a class of well-educated, wealthy people who had immense amounts of time on their hands. In consequence many of them began, quite spontaneously, to do remarkable things. Never in history have a group of people engaged in a broader range of creditable activities for which they were not in any sense actually employed.

George Bayldon, a vicar in a remote corner of Yorkshire, had such poor attendances at his services that he converted half his church into a henhouse, but became a self-taught authority in linguistics and compiled the world's first dictionary of Icelandic.

Not far away, Laurence Sterne, vicar of a parish near York, wrote popular novels, of which 'The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman', is much the best remembered.

Edmund Cartwright, rector of a rural parish in Leicestershire, invented the power loom, which in effect made the Industrial Revolution truly industrial; by the time of the Great Exhibition, over 250,000 of his looms were in use in England alone.

In Devon, the Reverend Jack Russell bred the terrier that shares his name, while in Oxford the Reverend William Buckland wrote the first scientific description of dinosaurs and, not incidentally, became the world's leading authority on coprolites -fossilized faeces.

The Reverend George Garrett, of Manchester, invented the submarine. The ship was called the 'Resurgam', meaning 'I shall rise again', which proved to be a slightly unfortunate name as it sank in a storm in the Irish Sea three months after it was launched in 1878.