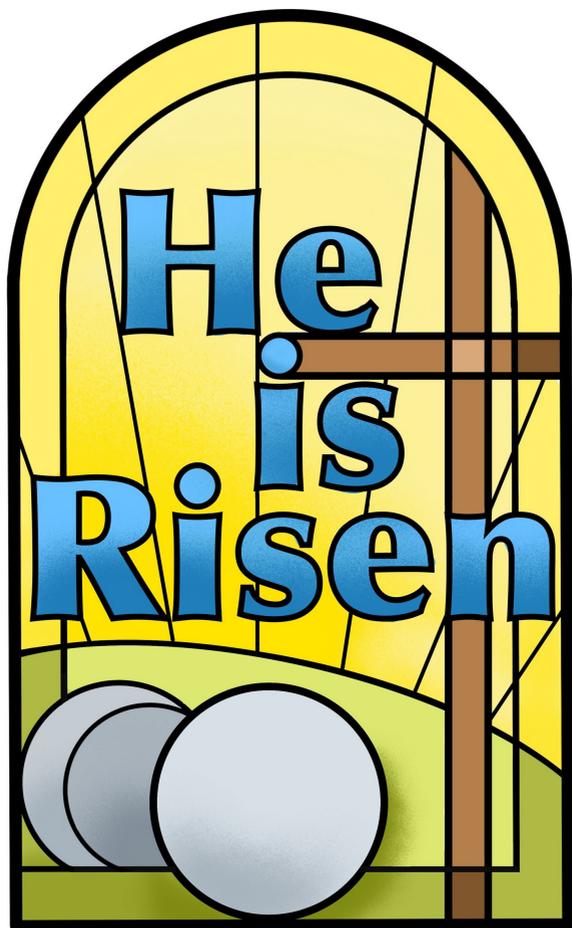


Church News
for the Parishes of
Bromham, Oakley and Stagsden



April 2026



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**Welcome to
Church News in
Bromham, Oakley and Stagsden**

Find us at: www.bromhambenefice.org

 **facebook** Benefice of Bromham, Oakley & Stagsden

Clergy:

Vicar: Revd Catherine Wilson 825665
vicar@bromhambenefice.org
Assistant Priest: Revd Di Harpham 07973 953744
Associate Minister: Revd Petra Yates - revpetra@bromhambenefice.org
07504 118405

Benefice Administration

Website &.....} Administrator 07494 069540
Wedding.....} (Mon & Thurs 9.30 -12.00: Tues, 9.30am -1.00pm
organisation..}
Fees Accounts...} administrator@bromhambenefice.org
Safeguarding Officer - Judith Denyer 07981 928522

Parish News

Editor Mr Edward Jones stowensnews@btinternet.com 826551
Distribution Mrs B Cryer 825463
07767 272584

Pew Leaflet Sarah Smale, as Administrator

Who's Who in Bromham

Church Officers

Churchwarden Ms T Woodcock 07766 118258
PCC Secretary Mrs Vivien Butler 407351
PCC Treasurer Mrs Sarah Smale 07957 126145

Organist & Choirmaster Mr David P Williams

Messy Church for pre-school children (birth - 4yrs) & their carers
Mrs R Farquhar 307996

Altar Guild Mrs M Parrott 824402

Who's Who in Bromham cont....

Children & Young	}Emma Harrison	07752 186808
People's work	}Rene Farquhar	307996
Electoral Roll	Mrs Rene Farquhar	307996
Ringers	Mr Robert Jones	881741
Thursday Prayer Gp	Mrs C Wisson	306833
Friends of St Owen's:		
Secretary:	Mr David Butler	407351
website:	www.bromhambenefice.org/ friends-of-st-owens	

Who's Who in Oakley

Church Officers

Churchwardens	Mr G Palmer	07710 462535
	Mrs H Worley	262166
PCC Secretary	Katrina Hyden	07908 987959
	oakleypccsecretary@bromhambenefice.org	
PCC Treasurer	Mrs S Ball	ls.ball@btinternet.com
Organist & Choirmaster - contact	Jenny Sudworth	822859
Messy Church for pre-school children (birth - 4yrs) & their carers		
	Revd Catherine Wilson	825665
St Mary's Ringers	Mr Bill Sellars	823473

Who's Who in Stagsden

Church Officers

Churchwarden	} Post holders names not published	
PCC Treasurer	} please contact through Revd Di Harpham	07973 953744
PCC Secretary	Caroline Heaton	
Ringers	Mr Richard Brown	823289
Flowers Team	please contact through Revd Di Harpha	07973 953744

If you know of further details for this page, or have information or articles to publish please send all material to the Editor by post or (preferably) by email - see details on page 3.

The Editor thanks Contributors and Advertisers for their material with acknowledgements to the "Parish Pump" website. Nevertheless, views expressed, and goods and services advertised are not endorsed by the PCC. **Please send material for publication to the Editor by the 22nd of the month.**



Principal Services in the Benefice

<u>Thurs 2nd April</u>	<u>Maundy Thursday</u>
6.30pm	Maundy Thursday Meal + Holy Communion (Bromham)
<u>Fri 3rd April</u>	<u>Good Friday</u>
2.00pm	Good Friday Service (Bromham)
2.00pm	Good Friday Service + Communion (Oakley)
<u>5th April</u>	<u>Easter Sunday</u>
9.00am	Holy Communion (Stagsden)
10.30am	All-Age Easter Communion (Bromham)
10.30am	All-Age Easter Communion (Oakley)
<u>12th April</u>	<u>2nd Sunday of Easter</u>
9.00am	Holy Communion (Stagsden)
10.30am	Holy Communion (Oakley)
6.00pm	Evensong (Oakley)
<u>19th April</u>	<u>3rd Sunday of Easter</u>
9.00am	Holy Communion (Stagsden)
10.30am	Holy Communion (Bromham)
<u>26th April</u>	<u>4th Sunday of Easter</u>
9.00am	Holy Communion (Bromham)
10.30am	Holy Communion (Oakley)

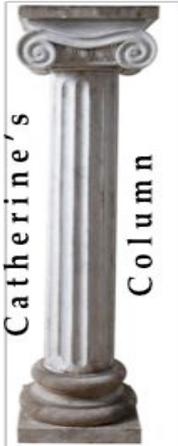
Weekday Services

Messy Church (Bromham & Oakley) closed during school holidays

Tuesdays (1st and 3rd of the month)

11.30am Holy Communion (Bromham FR)

NB 10.30 church services are streamed via Zoom for those who find it difficult to attend in person (details on website www.bromhambenefice.org)



From the Vicarage

Winter may yet pay us another visit before finally leaving, but it has been very pleasant to enjoy a definite taste of spring in the past few days. The warm sunshine and gentle breeze have encouraged blossom and bulbs to put on a lovely display for us, trees are budding and

birds singing, and we can look ahead to all the growth just about to happen. In winter nature rests and resets itself, so that come this time of year it feels like a whole new start.

By the time you read this, our new Archbishop of Canterbury, Sarah Mullally, will have been formally installed in Canterbury Cathedral. As I write, she is on a pilgrimage walking the 87 miles from London, where she has been Bishop up to now, along the Becket Camino to Canterbury, symbolically travelling from one city to the next as she moves from one role to another. This is a new beginning for the Church of England not only with a new Archbishop but with our first female Archbishop; a historic and joyful moment.

At the same time, the new Bishop of St Albans has just been announced, and Bishop Andrew Rumsey will be coming from Salisbury Diocese back to our Diocese where he was born to start a new stage in his ministry. He is likely to be welcomed and installed sometime in September, and hopefully he will visit all corners of his new Diocese before too long. We look forward to meeting him and you can learn more about him on page 10.

Here in our three churches, we are planning our Benefice Awayday on Saturday April 18th. We are not travelling as far as Archbishop Sarah or Bishop Andrew – just over the river to Clapham in fact – but we will be looking for wisdom for the next stage of our journey as a Christian community and as individuals. With the guidance of Revd Nick Smith (Church Growth Officer for Bedfordshire), we will discuss our aims and vision for the Benefice as a whole, so that we can move forward together in the same direction. Exactly how we do that will vary from parish to parish, and each PCC will be able to decide their own actions, but we will be going in the same direction, with a new shared vision for the way ahead.

However, the greatest ‘new beginning’ anyone can experience is that of leaving behind a life centred on pleasing ourselves, and starting a new life of following Jesus and living in his way. Made possible by Jesus’ death on the cross on Good Friday, it’s the start of a journey full of hope, challenges and blessings. As we celebrate the joy of Easter Sunday and Jesus’ resurrection, we are reminded that with him we too can know life with God, and face the future with confidence.

‘If anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see everything has become new!’

2 Corinthians 5.17

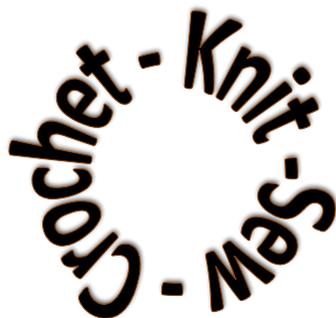
Catherine Wilson

All the armies that ever marched, and all the navies that ever were built, and all the parliaments that ever sat, and all the kings that ever reigned, put together, have not affected the life of mankind on this earth as powerfully as has that one solitary life. – James A Francis



Next meeting - **Thurs 23rd April**
at 2.30pm

For further info contact Tessa Woodcock
07766 118258



Sewing Group
1st and 3rd Wednesday
afternoons 2pm - 4pm in
St Owen's Church
Fellowship Room.
Contact Margaret 824402

St Owen's Altar Guild

Decorating St Owens Church for Easter will take place on Holy Saturday 4th April from 10am. Anyone who would like to help will be most welcome. Donations for the purchase of flowers will be gratefully received.

Margaret Parrott

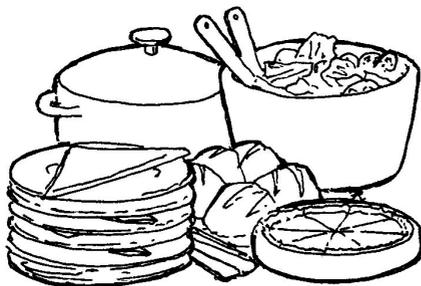
First Friday Coffee Morning

Next coffee morning on **Fri 1st May**

10.30am- 12.30pm

in St Owen's Fellowship Room, Bromham.





Fellowship Lunch
at St Owen's
Next event
Sunday 7th June
at 1230

Please note, we are taking a break in April and May

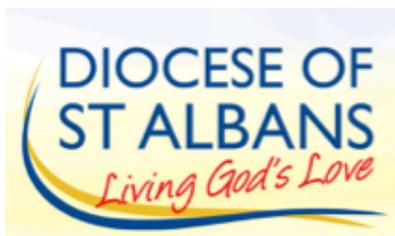
Lent giving – our Benefice charity for Lent is **Impact** – which offers ‘fun, interactive activities to help schools deliver the faith curriculum’. A plate for donations is in each church until Easter. For more info see www.impactbedford.org.uk.



- If you haven't been confirmed (made your baptism promises for yourself as an adult) and would like to explore what this means, please talk to Catherine.
-



‘Messy Church for All’
at Oakley Methodist Church
on 3rd Tuesday in the month
Next event 21st April
3.30 till 5.30pm
Contact 824504 or
mcarr49@hotmail.com



Bishop of St Albans Designate
Rt Revd Andrew Rumsey

On Thursday 19th March it was announced from Downing Street that HM the King had approved the appointment of the Rt Revd Andrew Rumsey, currently Suffragan Bishop of Ramsbury in the Diocese of Salisbury, to be the next Bishop of St Albans.

Bishop Andrew returns to the diocese in which he was born and baptised, where his father served as a parish priest, and where he spent his early life. He described the announcement as “a homecoming” and said he was thrilled to be joining a “fine team” and humbled to follow “good and godly predecessors”.

As Bishop of Ramsbury he was responsible for the Wiltshire parts of the Diocese of Salisbury (as well as one parish in Dorset and four in Hampshire).

Bishop Andrew was educated first at the University of Reading and then at Kings College, London. He trained for

Continued on next page

ordination at Ridley Hall, Cambridge.

He served his title at Harrow in the Diocese of London and was Vicar of Gipsy Hill in the Diocese of Southwark. He was appointed Rector of Oxted and Tandridge in 2011 and became Team Rector in 2014. More recently he was made lead bishop for church and cathedral buildings, sharing the role with the Bishop of Bristol, the Rt Revd Viv Faull.

Bishop Andrew comes from a long line of parish clergy: he is married to Rebecca and they have three children. Alongside his episcopal ministry, he is known for his writing on place and belonging, including *Parish: An Anglican Theology of Place* (2017) and *English Grounds: A Pastoral Journal* (2022). He is also a musician with a longstanding interest in song writing and popular music. As a singer-songwriter; his latest album, *Evensongs*, was recorded live in the 12th-century church of All Saints, Ham, where he and his collaborators set out to capture the natural sounds and character of a summer's day in the building.

Bishop Andrew will move to the Diocese with his wife, Rebecca, and their family later this year. Asking for prayers as they prepare for the transition, he said, "Please know that I will be praying for you, and I ask you to pray for me and our family as we prepare for all that lies ahead."

Date for your Diary?

'Living as a Human in an AI world'

a talk by Revd Canon Dr Tim Bull

Thurs 4th June at Deanery Synod

more information next month

Maundy Thursday, time to wash feet

Maundy Thursday is famous for two things. The first is one of the final acts that Jesus did before His death: the washing of His own disciples' feet (see John 13). Jesus washed His disciples' feet for a purpose: "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another." His disciples were to love through service, not domination, of one another.

In Latin, the opening phrase of this sentence is '*mandatum novum do vobis*'. The word 'mundy' is thus a corruption of the Latin 'mandatum' (or command). The ceremony of the 'washing of the feet' of members of the congregation came to be an important part of the liturgy (regular worship) of the medieval church, symbolising the humility of the clergy, in obedience to the example of Christ.

But Thursday was also important because it was on that night that Jesus first introduced the Lord's Supper, or what we nowadays call Holy Communion.

Jesus and His close friends had met in a secret upper room to share the Passover meal together - for the last time. And there Jesus transformed the Passover into the Lord's Supper, saying, 'this is my body' and 'this is my blood' as He, the Lamb of God, prepared to die for the sins of the whole world. John's gospel makes it clear that the Last Supper took place the evening BEFORE the regular Passover meal, and that later Jesus died at the same time that the Passover lambs were killed.

Parish Pump website

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

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

The Book of Lamentations consists of five laments over the destruction of Jerusalem and the exile of Judah's leading inhabitants to Babylon. Tradition ascribes the book to Jeremiah, who witnessed Jerusalem's destruction in 586 BC. Each lament is an *acrostic* i.e. each verse begins in order with a different letter of the Hebrew alphabet (except the fifth).

The themes of the laments can be summarised as follows: Jerusalem in Agony (1); the LORD's Anger (2); Judah's complaint against Adversity (3); Jerusalem's Anxiety (4); and Judah's prayer to the Almighty (5). Lamentations portrays the overwhelming sense of loss that accompanied the destruction of the city, along with its Temple with its worship and sacrifices. However, the book is not simply concerned about Jerusalem's destruction, but for the lessons that can be learned from it.

Jeremiah sees the Babylonians as human agents of God's judgment upon Judah's sin. It was God Himself who destroyed the city and temple. However, God's action was not arbitrary, for the people had deliberately sinned against Him and broken their covenant with Him. Although the people's tears and cries for vengeance are understandable, God looks for a sincere heartfelt sorrow from the people. The book begins with lament, *'How deserted lies the city, once so full of people! How like a widow is she who once was great among the nations!'* (1:1), but finishes with repentance, *'Restore us to yourself, Lord, that we may return; renew our days as of old'* (5:21).

However, in the middle of the book there is a reminder of

Continued on next page

God's goodness and faithfulness: *'Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed, for His compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.'* (3:22-23).

Easter morning, the 'Other' Mary

As the traditional Easter story is rehearsed again this month, you may notice that there is one name that frequently occurs. It is that of the 'other' Mary – not the mother of Jesus, but Mary of Magdalene, who stood by her at the cross and became the first person actually to meet the risen Christ.

That's quite a record for a woman who, the Gospels tell us, had been delivered by Jesus from 'seven devils' – New Testament language for some dark and horrible affliction of body, mind or spirit. As a result, her devotion to Him was total and her grief at His death overwhelming.

In church history Mary Magdalene became the 'fallen woman' a harlot who was rescued and forgiven by Jesus but there is no evidence to prove she was a 'fallen woman' but the contrast is sublime, Mary the virgin mother, the symbol of purity. Mary Magdalene, the scarlet woman who was saved and forgiven, the symbol of redemption. Surely, we all fall somewhere between those two extremes.

The dark cloud from which she was delivered may have been sexual, we are not told. What we do know is that the two Marys stood together at the cross, the Blessed Virgin and the woman rescued from who knows what darkness and despair.

The second great moment for her was as unexpected as it was momentous. She had gone with other women to the tomb of Jesus and found it empty. An angelic figure told them that Jesus was not there, He had risen – and the others drifted off.

But Mary stayed, reluctant to leave it like that. She became aware of a man nearby, whom she took to be the gardener. She explained to him that the body of 'her Lord' had been taken away and she didn't know where to find Him.

The man simply said her name 'Mary' and she instantly realised it *was* Jesus. She made to hug Him, but He told her not to touch Him because His resurrection was not yet complete. She was, however, to go to the disciples and tell them she had met Him. She did – but they wouldn't believe her.

Her words – 'I have seen the Lord' – echo down the centuries, the very beating heart of the Christian gospel.

Parish Pump website

The refusal to forgive and be forgiven lies at the root of a great deal of sickness. - *Anon*



St Owen's Open Church

We are hoping to be able to have St Owen's open one Saturday morning a month for people to drop in. We are looking for volunteers who could spend a couple of hours in the church in pairs, so that this can happen. If you would be willing to do this, please talk to Tessa. 07766 118258

Bromham Benefice Away-Day

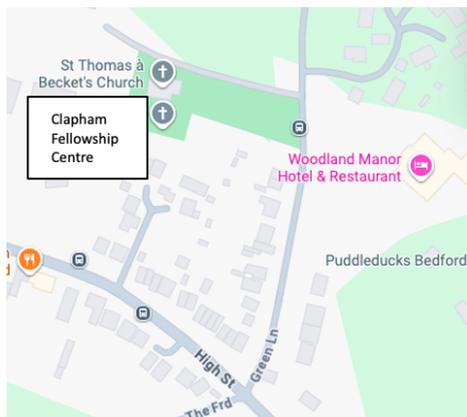


Yes, that would be nice wouldn't it! But Clapham is a bit more convenient!! So.....
.....you are invited to join members of our PCCs for a day trip to.....

Clapham Fellowship Centre on Saturday 18th April 10.30am to mid afternoon

- to discuss our aims for the future as a Benefice and as individual parishes
- to develop priorities for the next 2 years

Look out for the Sign-Up sheet in each church



God in the Arts

Rev Michael Burgess continues his procession through a church building, this month pausing to consider the significance of the screen at the east end.

‘He gave us eyes to see them’ – the screen at the east end

“I am the light of the world,” our Lord says in St John’s Gospel. He is the One who can bring sight and insight to those born blind, and vision to those who feel they live in a world of darkness. In Him is the glory of God and life for all people. That radiant glory greets those who visit Wymondham Abbey in Norfolk and look down the main aisle to see the wondrous screen at the east end depicting Christ in majesty surrounded by our Lady and the saints.

Ironically, the history of the Abbey in the Middle Ages was one of darkness and conflict, where disagreement severed the harmony of monks and townspeople.

The Abbey was dissolved in the 16th century, but then restored to its former



Wikimedia Commons: Evelyn Simak / Wymondham Abbey - the chancel)

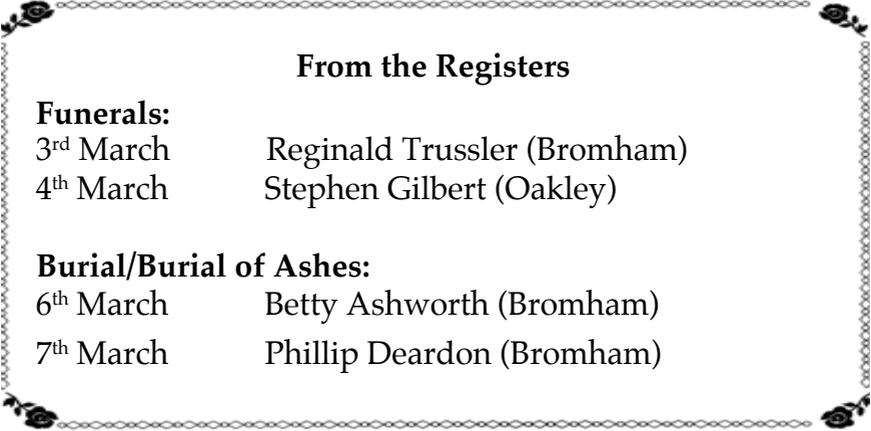
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glory in the early 20th century. Ninian Comper began working on the screen in 1922, and it was completed in 1934.

In front of the screen is a large altar with a crucifix and six tall, stately candlesticks. Their lights are signs of Jesus the Light proclaimed by the dazzling central figure on the screen behind. Originally candlesticks would have stood on the ground before the altar, or lamps were hung above. In the 14th century candles were placed on the altar.

Aesthetic judgement will vary from person to person, and some may find tall candlesticks like these obtrusive, detracting from the sacrament of the altar. Whatever their size, when lit they announce that Jesus is the true light, who welcomes everyone to find nourishment and guidance for life's pilgrimage in communion at that table. Here at Wymondham Abbey I think the pilgrim visitor will find that the beauty and grace of these altar furnishings complement the great mystery of divine light celebrated in Ninian Comper's masterpiece.

Parish Pump website



From the Registers

Funerals:

3 rd March	Reginald Trussler (Bromham)
4 th March	Stephen Gilbert (Oakley)

Burial/Burial of Ashes:

6 th March	Betty Ashworth (Bromham)
7 th March	Phillip Deardon (Bromham)

Cantamus

J.S. Bach: Motets

Komm Jesu, Komm.

Lobet dem HERRN.

And works celebrating the
400th anniversary of the death of John Dowland and
450th anniversary of the birth of Thomas Weelkes.

St. Peter de MERTON
Church, Bedford

On

Sunday 12th April 2026

At 3:00p.m.

Conductor: Gary Mudd

Tickets: £10.00 on the door.

All Ticket Proceeds to St Peter's Church

Rehome Christian books with Book Aid

Would you be glad to make some space on your bookshelves? Book Aid can use those Christian books and any good-condition Bibles you no longer read. They will send them to places where there is a famine of Christian literature, particularly in Africa and Asia, where they will be resold at affordable prices.

I am going to a national collection point in Barnard Castle in early May. There they will be sorted and sent on to Book Aid's outlets as appropriate. Some will be sold in the UK to help the costs of transport to Africa, etc. Book Aid cannot take Bible-reading notes or heavily-underlined books.

If you have books to donate, do get in touch. Tel: 01234 823810.

Gillian Foster, 29 Dovehouse Close, Bromham.

**The
Children's
Society**

Charity Reg No.
221124

As a Benefice we support the work of The Children's Society (see childrenssociety.org.uk): some people have collecting boxes at home, and when we have a Christingle service the money raised there is also for the Children's Society.

Our reps in Oakley and Stagsden have stepped down, and we are looking for someone to take this on. Its not an onerous task – once a year collecting boxes, counting and paying in the cash, and then returning empty boxes to be refilled. Talk to Anne Rooke for more information 01234 602718.

The Seven Deadly Sins: Envy

'A heart at peace gives life to the body, but envy rots the bones.' (Proverbs 14:30).

This month we are looking at the Deadly Sin of *envy*. As a consuming desire to have what others have got, it's a major source of unhappiness.

It is different to jealousy: *'Envy is wanting something that someone else has. Jealousy is the fear of losing something you already have to someone else'* (Brene Brown). We can envy things like wealth, looks and, possessions, resulting in resentment, bitterness and anger. The pursuit of possessing what others have will always leave us empty and dissatisfied, as the use of social media demonstrates.

How do we overcome envy in our lives?

Gratitude: 'Give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus'. (1 Thessalonians 5:18). A grateful heart has no room for envy, when we focus on God's love for us and what He has given us, rather than looking at others' gifts and opportunities. God has created us uniquely to be the people we are and different to others. As a result, we are better able to rejoice with those who rejoice and weep with those who weep.

Trust: 'And God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work.' (2 Corinthians 9:8). One of the chief causes of envy is FOMO: Fear of Missing Out! We can trust that God knows everything that we need and so we don't need to worry about missing out. By entrusting our lives to Him, we can confidently depend on God meeting all our needs.

Is God truly enough for me? *'The Lord is my shepherd, I lack nothing.'* (Psalm 23:1).
Parish Pump website

Jesus' granny

The little boy came home from his first day at Sunday School and casually told his mother that his Sunday school teacher was Jesus' granny. Astonished, his mother asked: "Whatever makes you think that?"

"Well, it's pretty obvious," said her son. "She never stopped talking about Him all morning. She told us Jesus is smarter and stronger and better-behaved than anyone else she knows. She even showed us a picture of Him."



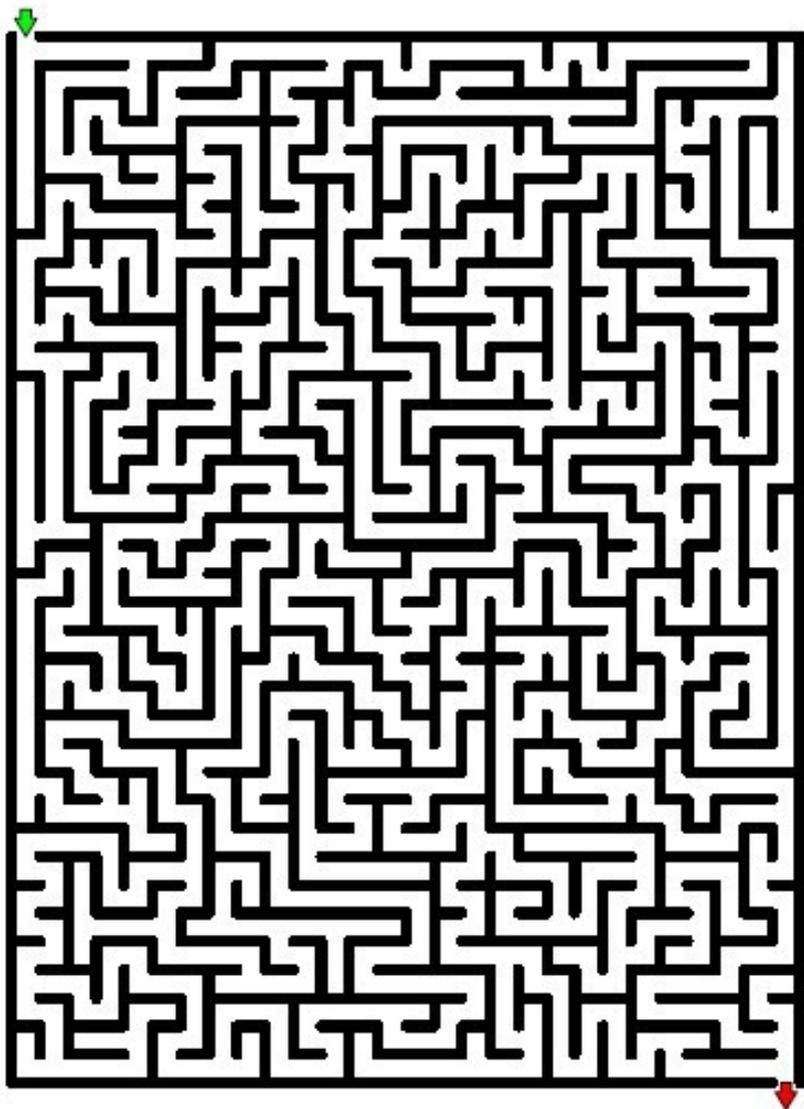
Sudoku - Easy

Solution on page 33

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

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Can you find your way from top to bottom?



The nice thing about becoming forgetful is that you can hide your own Easter eggs.

For younger readers.....

Bible Bite

A short story from the Bible

It can be read in the Bible in Luke 22:24, John 13: 3-17

Jesus and his disciples were celebrating the Passover with the special meal. The disciples were bickering again.

I'm most important because I've known him the longest

But I'm the oldest!

I've given up the most to follow him!

There was a reason why no-one wanted to be the least important - the roads were mud and everyone's feet got very dirty.

It was the job of the least important servant to wash everyone's feet...

The disciples didn't have a servant, and none of them wanted to do the feet washing...

Jesus took off his outer robe and tied a towel around his waist.

He filled a large bowl with water and started washing the disciples' feet.

Peter couldn't believe what he was seeing!

Are you really going to wash my feet?

You will understand later why I am doing this.

I can't ever let you serve me like this!

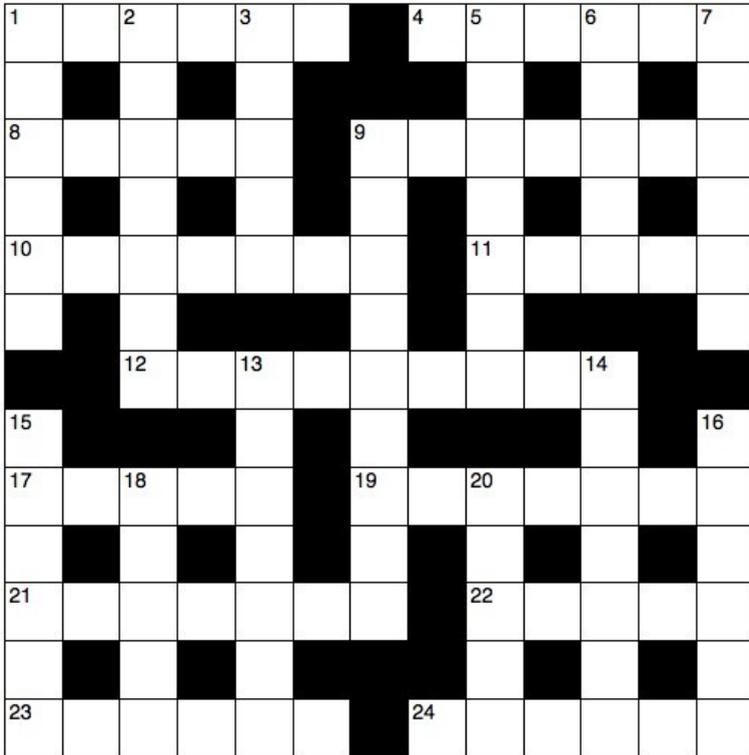
If you don't let me, you will no longer be my disciple

Then wash all of me!

If you've had a bath, then you only need your feet washing!

Once Jesus had washed all their feet, he put his robe back on and sat down.

Do you understand why, your teacher, did this? I am setting you the example of how you are to serve each other. Do it, and God will bless you.



Across

- 1 Relating to the whole universe (6)
- 4 The disciple who made the remark in 8 Across
(John 20:24) (6)
- 8 'Unless I see the nail marks — — hands, I will not believe it' (John 20:25) (2,3)
- 9 He urged King Jehoiakim not to burn the scroll containing Jeremiah's message (Jeremiah 36:25) (7)
- 10 Baptist minister and controversial founder of America's Moral Majority, Jerry — (7)
- 11 'Look, here is — . Why shouldn't I be baptized?'
(Acts 8:36) (5)

- 12 Repossessed (Genesis 14:16) (9)
 17 Port from which Paul sailed on his last journey to Rome (Acts 27:3–4) (5)
 19 ‘Moses was not aware that his face was — because he had spoken with the Lord’ (Exodus 34:29) (7)
 21 Roonwit, C.S. Lewis’s half-man, half-horse (7)
 22 Grill (Luke 24:42) (5)
 23 ‘The lot fell to Matthias; so he was added to the — apostles’ (Acts 1:26) (6)
 24 ‘I was sick and you looked after me, I was in — and you came to visit me’ (Matthew 25:36) (6)

Down

- 1 Coastal rockfaces (Psalm 141:6) (6)
 2 Academic (1 Corinthians 1:20) (7)
 3 Publish (Daniel 6:26) (5)
 5 For example, the Crusades (4,3)
 6 11 Across is certainly this (5)
 7 He reps (anag.) (6)
 9 Liberator (Psalm 18:2) (9)
 13 Man who asked the question in 11 Across was in charge of all her treasury (Acts 8:27) (7)
 14 They must be ‘worthy of respect, sincere, not indulging in much wine’ (1 Timothy 3:8) (7)
 15 The human mind or soul (6)
 16 ‘O Lord, while precious children starve, the tools of war increase; their bread is — ’ (Graham Kendrick) (6)
 18 ‘We played the flute for you, and you did not — ’ (Matthew 11:17) (5)
 20 Bared (anag.) (5)

Solution on page 33

Letter from St James the Least of All

Ed: The Revd Dr Gary Bowness continues his tongue-in-cheek letters from 'Uncle Eustace'...

On the perils of small study groups



The Rectory

St James the Least of All

My dear Nephew Darren

So, you are about to run an Alpha course in your parish; I am sure your bishop will be delighted. I remember him from my Oxford days. He was just starting his course as a gangly undergraduate when I was finishing my doctorate on Eusebius.

I recall him as a keen rugby player who took early morning dips in the Isis, who led intense discussions on Saint Paul's theology of 'the body' over cups of cocoa in the evenings in his rooms and who spent his holidays laying paths for the National Trust in the Lake District while lodging in Youth Hostels. He's exactly the sort of person who will empathise with your ministry – hearty, enthusiastic and overflowing with compassionate intensity. We were not close friends.

We tend not to go in for those sorts of things, here at St James the Least of All, preferring matters a little more relaxed and understated. If we ever do hold discussion groups (and they are a regrettable necessity during Lent), they always start with a good lunch, finishing with coffee and one of Mrs French's

Continued on next page

excellent Madeira cakes. Once we have removed from the table, those who manage to stay awake will start to tackle the chosen topic.

However, we always seem to veer off to discussing more interesting matters, such as why Colonel Chorley is never allowed to sing solos in the choir anymore, or who moved Mrs Cholmondeley's flower arrangement from the font the previous week. Apparently, she has given notice that her weekly contributions on the plate will be much reduced unless an appropriate apology is received.

These matters may not seem as important to you as deciding what the 'white stone' in Revelation 4 is all about, but let me assure you that to members of our congregation, knowing why the second verse of the National Anthem is no longer sung at our Remembrance Services is of pivotal importance.

At 2.30pm we wake up those who have enjoyed an hour's slumber and totter off home, knowing we have once again done our bit for faith in the parish.

I am sure your own group will also return home after your sessions - even if a digestive biscuit and weak tea is all that has been offered - invigorated and braced to tackle the heathen in the parish. We all take our pleasures in different ways.

Your loving uncle,

Eustace

Economic definitions:

A recession is a period in which you tighten your belt.

A depression is a time in which you have no belt to tighten.

When you have no trousers to hold up, it's a panic.

Book Reviews

The PCC Strikes Back – more Dave Walker Guide to the Church Cartoons

By Dave Walker, Canterbury Press, £10.99

Dave Walker, cartoonist, cyclist, web editor and former church and youth worker is the UK'S most shrewd observer of the quirks of church life.

His distinctive *Guide to the Church* cartoons appear weekly in the Church Times, and have made their way into books and calendars, and on to mugs, tea-towels and T-shirts. This ninth collection includes, among other things: - those new church chairs – rejected designs. - some handy suggestions for the church app – a hierarchy of needs for when you get locked in the church

Dare to be True – George Herbert: Verse and Prose

By Wendy Cope, SPCK, £16.99

A fresh and affectionate celebration of George Herbert - the greatest devotional poet in the English language - introduced by award-winning poet Wendy Cope.

Herbert's verse, playful in form yet profound in reflection, continues to speak across the centuries, uniting poetic artistry with questions of meaning, belief and the human condition. Cope situates him within the rich world of 17th-century literature and faith. As T. S. Eliot once wrote, Herbert is "a major poet" and in this volume, readers will see why. From his celebrated poem *Love (III)* - described by Simone Weil as "the most beautiful poem in the world" - to lesser-known works revealing his honesty and humour, this collection invites a new generation to rediscover the clarity, depth and craftsmanship of Herbert's voice.

Perfect for readers of poetry, literary history, and those drawn to reflections on art, faith and human experience.

Continued on next page

Stories of the Saints

By Margaret McAllister, SPCK, £12.99

A beautifully illustrated children's book featuring 12 inspiring stories of Christian saints, ideal for ages 7 to 11. From Saint Peter and Saint Paul to Saint Francis of Assisi, Saint Teresa of Avila, Saint Bernadette, Padre Pio, and more, each story brings to life the courage, faith, and compassion of these beloved saints.

Lively and vivid, some tales are told in the first person, others through onlookers' eyes, with each story including extra information about the saint's life. Graceful illustrations, inspired by ancient art and architecture, make every page a visual delight. Perfect for young readers, families, and Sunday schools, this faith-based collection inspires children with stories of heroism, kindness, and devotion.

To Hell's Mouth and Back: pilgrimage, suffering and hope
By Trystan Owain Hughes, BRF, £9.99

After a gruelling 140-mile pilgrimage walking across the rugged terrain of North Wales, Trystan Owain Hughes finds himself facing another, very different pilgrimage as he recovers from a serious injury sustained on the walk.

In *To Hell's Mouth and Back* he explores his experience of suffering, considering how God can redeem and transform pain and disability, and examines how common experiences of pilgrimage are echoed in the challenges of our life journeys. Along the way, the reader is led to consider the journeys we all face, as we search for God's presence and hope in our joys and pains.

Parish Pump website

Prayer is more than meditation. In meditation the source of strength is one's self. When one prays he goes to a source of strength greater than his own. - *Anon*



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Solution to puzzle on
page 23

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

Solution to puzzle
on page 26

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

Dawn chorus

If you sleep with your bedroom window open, you will know all about the dawn chorus around now. The birds are busy establishing their territorial rights, and the 'early birds' have probably already selected a nest site and started building.

The blackbird builds a solid cup of twigs, plant stems and leaves, lined with a thick skin of mud covered with finer grasses and leaves. The long-tailed tit forms a soft hollow ball of mosses, hair and wool, with a tiny hole as entrance. The wrens do it differently, with the male wren sometimes building several nests before his finicky mate will accept one. He gets his revenge, though, because he sometimes installs a second wife in one of the rejected sites!



All in the month of April

It was:

125 years ago, on 15th April 1901 that Joe Davis, snooker and billiards player was born. He co-founded the World Snooker Championship in 1927 and won the first 15 championships.

100 years ago, on 21st April 1926 that Queen Elizabeth II was born.

80 years ago, on 2nd April 1946 that Sue Townsend, writer and humourist, was born. Best known for her *Adrian Mole* series of novels.

75 years ago, on 17th April 1951 that the Peak District National Park was established. It was Britain's first National Park.

65 years ago, on 12th April 1961 that Soviet cosmonaut Yuri Gagarin became the first person in space and the first person to orbit the Earth.

50 years ago, on 3rd April 1976 that the UK won the 1976 Eurovision Song Contest with *Save Your Kisses for Me* by Brotherhood of Man.

40 years ago, on 17th April 1986 that TV journalist John McCarthy was kidnapped in Beirut, Lebanon by the militant group Islamic Jihad. Released 1991.

Also 40 years ago, on 24th April 1986 that Wallis Simpson, Duchess of Windsor and American wife of Prince Edward, formerly King Edward VIII, died.

25 years ago, on 7th April 2001 that NASA launched its Mars Odyssey spacecraft to search for evidence of water and volcanic activity on Mars. It found water and ice below the surface.

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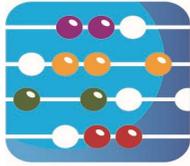
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