

Church News

for the Parishes of
Bromham, Oakley and Stagsden



February 2026

Bedford Carers

Maria O'Byrne

melita564@hotmail.com

Tel. 07817 191820



Domiciliary Care Companionship Housekeeping

Outings/Shopping Providing simple meals

Overnight stay and/or Personal Care if or when required

DBS checked Experienced References

Full Drivers Licence Liability Insurance

Member of NACAS & Registered with Bedford Borough Council



OAKLEY RURAL DAY CENTRE FOR THE ELDERLY

*The Old School, Lovell Road, Oakley,
MK43 7RX*

Charity Number: 1060283

We provide a fun filled day of activities, games and good old conversation.

Day includes refreshments and a two course lunch.

Whether you live in Oakley, Bromham or Stagsden you can be sure of a warm welcome at any of our sessions.

For details contact Lynne Tuesday to Thursday on
01234 824935 or **Mobile:** 07733 227374

Website: www.oakleyruraldaycentre.weebly.com

Email: oakleyruraldaycentre@yahoo.com

**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

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			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	www.friendsof stowens.org	
Secretary:	Mr David Butler	407351



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
918691		

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

1st February

9.00am Candlemas
Holy Communion (Oakley)
10.30am Holy Communion (Bromham)

8th February

9.00am 2nd Sunday before Lent
Holy Communion (Bromham)
10.30am LEP Service (Oakley Methodist)
3.30pm Evensong (Bromham)

15th February

9.00am Sunday before Lent
Holy Communion (Bromham)
10.30am Holy Communion (Bromham)

Wednesday 18th February Ash Wednesday

10.30am Holy Communion (Bromham)

22nd February

9.00am 1st Sunday of Lent
Holy Communion (Bromham)
10.30am Holy Communion (Oakley)

Weekday Services

Mondays

11.30am Messy Church (Bromham)

Tuesdays (1st and 3rd of the month)

11.30am Holy Communion (Bromham FR)

Thursdays

10.00am Messy Church (Oakley)

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

What do blueberries, lemon, sultanas, maple syrup, sugar and chocolate spread have in common? They are all possible fillings for the pancakes we enjoy making on Shrove Tuesday of course!

What is your favourite – do you opt for the traditional lemon and sugar, or prefer something more unusual? These options are all sweet of course – pancakes with bolognese, or grated cheese and tomato, or roasted peppers and onions are also very tasty.

This month Shrove Tuesday falls on February 17th, as we mark what was traditionally a day to enjoy eating rich, fatty foods before the Lenten fast began the following day, on Ash Wednesday. Pancake races, and pancake tossing competitions take place in some communities; some of the younger people in our churches will meet for a Pancake Party on Feb 17th. They will enjoy mixing up the batter, cooking it, and trying to toss their pancake, and then will consume the result with their choice(s) of filling (not limited to those listed above!).

If there are many options for the fillings, the essential components of a pancake don't change. I found a reflection on pancake ingredients which made me think:

- Flour is a staple food, the basic ingredient for some of our cooking. Many people across the world don't have even the basics to eat – what can we do to share our plenty with them?
- Salt – just a tiny pinch – makes things taste better, even helps us to heal. Jesus says we need to be like salt, making the world a better place. How can we do that?
- Milk is good for us and builds strong bones. Who do you know who needs strength (mental, physical or spiritual) at the moment?
- Eggs are a symbol of new life, and we look forward to the spring, to new growth and opportunities. How are we growing as Christians, is there something we can do to encourage that process?
- A whisk! We mix all these ingredients together to make the batter; we are all a mix of our own gifts and talents, and our weaknesses – but God uses us and changes us into people who can make a difference in his name.

Maybe some of those ideas could inspire us all as we prepare, cook and enjoy our pancakes this year, and anticipate the 40 days of Lent that lie ahead. Whether we choose to 'give up' rich food, or alcohol, or chocolate for Lent, or 'take up' doing something like more exercise, going to a Lent group, or an extra daily act of kindness, may we all grow in faith in that time. 'Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see' (Hebrews 11.1)

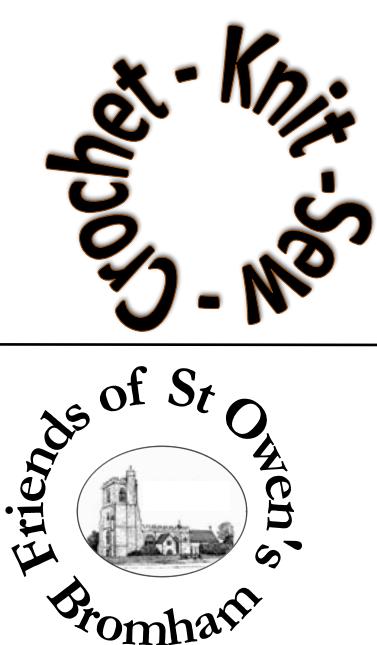
And meanwhile, enjoy your pancakes. Lemon and sugar, anyone...?

Catherine Wilson



Next meeting - Thursday 26th February
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.

Annual General Meeting

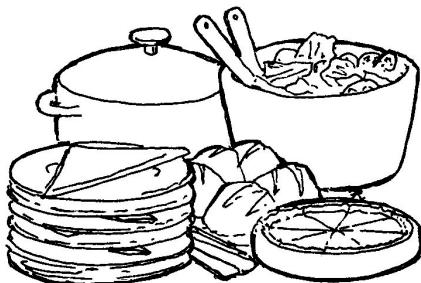
Thursday 12th February
at 7.30 pm
Fellowship Room at St Owen's

First Friday Coffee Morning

Next coffee morning on Fri 6th February
11am- 1pm

in St Owen's Fellowship Room, Bromham.





Fellowship Lunch

at St Owen's

Next event

Sunday 1st February

at 1230

Bring some food to share and enjoy the company of others as we eat together. All welcome no matter where you live.

More information from Vivien Butler 407351



PLUS!!

Join us for more family fun,
craft, activities and food
next time...

Monday February 16th 2026
11.30am–1.30pm
St Owen's Church, Bromham

Children must come with an adult. Free event.

www.bromhambenefice.org



'Messy Church for All'

at Oakley Methodist Church

on 3rd Tuesday in the month

3.30 till 5.30pm

Contact 824504 or
mcarr49@hotmail.com



THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND

Introducing Dame Sarah Mullally - the 106th Archbishop of Canterbury

The Rt Revd and Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE officially became Archbishop of Canterbury on 28th January 2026, when she was legally confirmed at St Paul's Cathedral.

Most people know that she had been Bishop of London for several years, and that she is the first woman to ever become Archbishop of Canterbury. But what else do you know about her?

1. She was born in Woking in 1962, and is one of four children, with two sisters and one brother.
2. She attended Winston Churchill Comprehensive School and Woking Sixth Form College. She went on to South Bank Polytechnic and Heythrop College, University of London
3. She worked as a nurse in the National Health Service, which she has described as "an opportunity to reflect the love of God". She specialised as a cancer nurse and became a ward sister at Westminster Hospital, before being made Director of Nursing at Chelsea and Westminster Hospital.
4. In 1999, at the age of 37, she was appointed the Government's Chief Nursing Officer for England in the Department of Health. She was the youngest person ever to be appointed to the post.
5. She had become a Christian at the age of 16. While working as the Chief Nursing Officer for England, she discerned a call to ordination and entered training ministry at the South

Continued on next page

East Institute for Theological Education.

6. She was ordained in 2001 and served her curacy in St Saviour's Battersea Fields, initially as a self-supporting minister, before leaving her government post in 2004.
7. In 2012 she was installed as Canon Treasurer at Salisbury Cathedral and three years later took the role as Suffragan Bishop of Crediton in the Diocese of Exeter, the fourth woman to become a Bishop in the Church of England.
8. On 12th May 2018, Bishop Sarah was installed as the 133rd Bishop of London at St Paul's Cathedral, the first woman to hold the role.
9. Bishop Sarah sits in the House of Lords as one of the Lords Spirituals, having been introduced on 24th May 2018. Her maiden speech paid tribute to the NHS on its 70th anniversary, telling the Lords: "I am the Bishop I am today because of that first vocation to nursing, and compassion and healing are constants at the heart of who I am."
10. As Bishop of London, she led the Church of England's Living in Love and Faith process from 2020 to 2023.
11. She has served on the Church's National Safeguarding Steering Group and is also Lead Bishop for Health and Social Care issues and has played a key role in the ongoing debates on assisted dying.
15. Archbishop Sarah is married to Eamonn, an Irish-born IT and Enterprise Architect who enjoys beekeeping and volunteering as a London tourist guide. The couple have two grown-up children, Liam and Grace.
18. She is Chair of Christian Aid.
19. She has spoken openly about her dyslexia, describing her difficulties with writing and reading.

Canon Paul Hardingham continues his series on the Bible.

What's the Big Idea? - An Introduction to the Old Testament: Isaiah

Isaiah is often regarded as the greatest of the prophets. His name means '*The Lord saves*' and he began his 50-year ministry in 740 BC when King Uzziah died (6:1). Many scholars challenge the claim that Isaiah wrote the entire book, however there are striking verbal parallels between chapters 1–39 and 40–66.

Isaiah spoke during the stormy period marking the expansion of the Assyrian empire and the decline of Israel. The Assyrians destroyed the northern kingdom in 721. Judah was left to decide whether they would make alliances with other kingdoms or rely on God to protect them. Isaiah warns Judah that her sin would bring captivity in Babylon, which eventually took place in 586.

Isaiah sees the Messiah coming from the line of David. He speaks of a new temple being established (ch2); a child born with a new kingdom (ch9) and judging differently to other kings (ch11) as well as the nature of His suffering (ch53). The '*suffering servant*' (chapters 42–53) also applies to Israel as a nation, who are called to be a '*light for the Gentiles*' (42:6). Not surprisingly Jesus applies Isaiah's words to His own life and ministry. eg Is 61:1 quoted in Luke 4:18. Throughout his book Isaiah presents the full dimensions of God's judgment and salvation as '*the Holy One of Israel*' (6:1), as well as the '*Sovereign Lord*' far above all nations (40:15–24).

Isaiah looks forward to the promise of a new city of Zion (chs 60–66), in which the people offer praise to the Holy One of Israel. '*Behold, I will create new heavens and a new earth. The former things will not be remembered, nor will they come to mind.*' (65:17).

God in the Arts

'He gave us eyes to see them' - The Church Font

Last month we stood at the doorway of a church in West Yorkshire. Open the door of that church or any church and the first thing to greet our eyes is the font. It marks the beginning of Christian life in the church. Many fonts have fine carvings of the seven sacraments that nourish the Christian. Others are octagonal in shape: a reminder of Noah and his seven family members saved in the ark from the Flood.

This month's font is a symbol of the ship sailing the seas of life. It is in St George's Church, Anstey, in Hertfordshire. Around the font are carved mermen - mythical, pagan creatures that belong to a pre-Christian age which the newly baptised is called on to renounce. When it was carved in the 11th-12th centuries, baptism occurred within eight days of birth. Babies would be immersed three



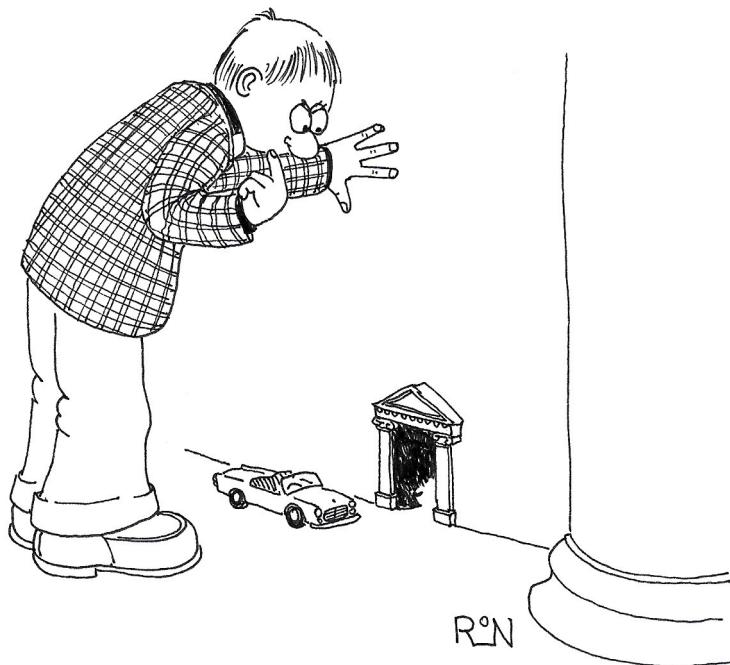
The famous mermen font at St George's Church, Anstey, by Michael Garlick, via Wikimedia Commons

times into the waters of the font: dying to the old life symbolised by the mermen, and rising to new life, to be clothed in a white robe and given a lighted candle as a guide through life. They would then grow up in the church, moving from that west end through the upturned boat of the nave to the altar at the east end.

Continued on next page

That movement is a sign of the pilgrimage we are all called to make. Like a journey on the seas of this world, we may sail through tranquil waters and peaceful days. There may be times when the skies are cloudy and the waters stormy. Martin Luther, when he was faced by struggles like that in his life, would say the words 'I am baptised' to strengthen and reassure himself. 'I am baptised' we can say as we travel in faith, knowing that there is always a light to guide and a goal that is sure and eternal.

Revd Michael Burgess



*...and yet the Church Mice still put it about
that they were poor*

Candlemas, The Presentation of Christ in the Temple

In bygone centuries, Christians said their last farewells to the Christmas season on Candlemas, 2nd February. This is exactly 40 days after Christmas Day itself.

In New Testament times 40 days old was an important age for a baby boy: it was when they made their first 'public appearance'. Mary, like all good Jewish mothers, went to the Temple with Jesus, her first male child - to 'present Him to the Lord'. At the same time, she, as a new mother, was 'purified'. Thus, we have the Festival of the Presentation of Christ in the Temple.

So, where does the Candlemas bit come in? Jesus is described in the New Testament as the Light of the World, and early Christians developed the tradition of lighting many candles in celebration of this day. The Church also fell into the custom of blessing the year's supply of candles for the church on this day - hence the name, Candlemas.

The story of how Candlemas began can be found in Luke 2:22-40. Simeon's great declaration of faith and recognition of who Jesus was is of course found in the Nunc Dimittis, which is embedded in the Office of Evening Prayer in the West. But in medieval times, the Nunc Dimittis was mostly used just on this day, during the distribution of candles before the Eucharist. Only gradually did it win a place in the daily prayer life of the Church.

Parish Pump website

A Lenten reflection:

I am so busy at this present time I cannot do with less than four hours each day in the presence of God. - *Martin Luther*

Bromham Benefice Away-Day



Yes, that would be nice wouldn't it! But Clapham is a bit more convenient!! So.....

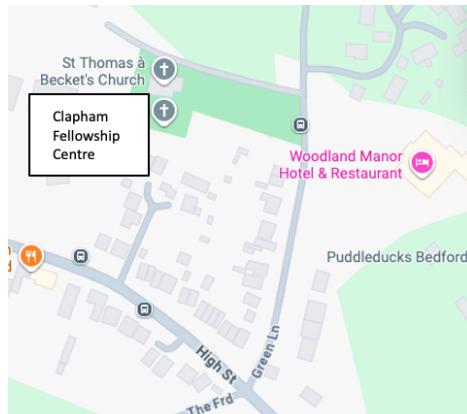
.....you are invited to join members of our PCCs for a day trip to.....

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



What about it this Lent?

Whatever it is that you are planning NOT to do, how about DOING something different, maybe new.

We are planning a series of **5 sessions** to follow the Pilgrim Course on 'Church and Kingdom'. A Pilgimage is best done in company so why not join us either in person or on Zoom.

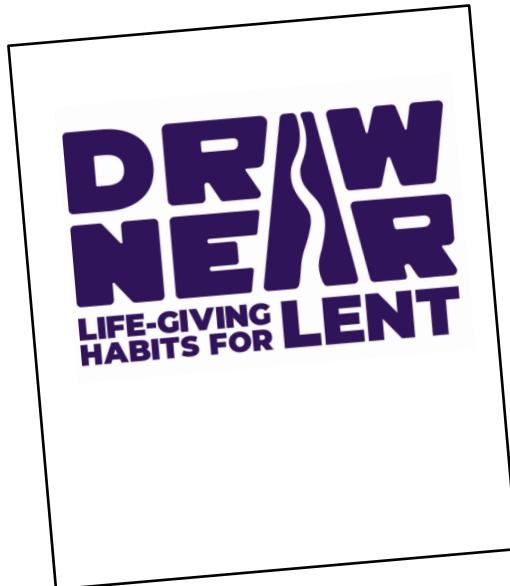
You are welcome to join us, either:

Monday afternoons 2.00pm - 3.30pm beginning on Feb 23rd at St Owen's Fellowship Room, or:

Wednesday evenings on Zoom from 7.00pm beginning on Feb 25th.

Alternatively:

The C of E Lenten Booklet of 40 readings will be available at a price of £2.50



No man ever said, at the end of his days, 'I have read my Bible too much, I have thought of God too much, I have prayed too much, I have been too careful with my soul.'

J C Ryle (1816-1900) first Anglican Bishop of Liverpool

Tales from a Sabbatical III – People

The first two of my Sabbatical reflections, back in the Autumn, focused on Projects I was involved with, and Places I had visited. For this final instalment I'm going to write about some of the People I spent time with – some I have known for very many years, others who I had one short encounter with, and some who were part of a particular section of my three months away.

Falling into that latter group were the couple I stayed with in East London, during my time with London City Mission. Friends of our son from his church, but the same age as me, they were so generous with their hospitality and their home became my home for a month. We enjoyed discussing theology, women in leadership, church governance, Sunday's sermon, and how to navigate London transport, among other things – we encouraged each other and I very much appreciated their company.

While with LCM, I was assigned to the East London Team – five workers each doing their own projects, and led by Keri. Their sense of calling was deeply challenging: they had a great passion to share Jesus with people who don't yet know him, and to serve the marginalised and vulnerable. They are known as 'missionaries' at LCM and that does describe what they do, taking the gospel into places where Christianity is barely known and seeking opportunities to talk about Jesus as they work to help the communities with basic needs. They were very inspiring people.

During my shorter 'organised' time away, I went to a Biblical Studies Summer School in Cambridge, where for 2 weeks I studied and lived with a group of people varying from retired academics to more ordinary folk like me, all of us with our

Continued on next page

own stories and experiences. I got to know two trainee Lay Readers, and we sat over meals together, discussed the lectures, and shared our experiences of life, church and family. We had a great teacher in the 'Beginner's NT Greek' small group – he was kind, went at our pace and didn't make it too complicated! He also started every session by helping us to pray the Lord's Prayer in NT Greek together, which set us off in the right direction.

Looking through the journal I kept, lots of names jump out as single encounters – Mohammed and his wife Azmit needing help phoning about their council housing; Deborah a fellow retreatant at Lee Abbey; a young Mum Anita with a baby who wasn't sleeping; Shane the minister at Hope Church in Vauxhall; Stefan from Iran; Yulia from Russia. And many more whose names I didn't record but who were part of my time away because our paths crossed briefly at some point.

One of the great joys of my Sabbatical was to have more time available to spend with family and friends, including meeting up with a school friend I haven't seen for some years, a friend from our church in Margate, and a couple Tim and I met through the Christian children's summer camps we used to run. I had whole weekends with my Mum, and lots of time with our grandson and his parents in London as well as with the other two of our children who live in the UK. These were all precious times to spend with others.

My three months flew past very quickly, full of interesting and often challenging experiences. At times it was quite an adventure, but at the end, it was good to be back at home and in church, with much to reflect on!

Catherine

Remembering the work of L S Lowry

Fifty years ago, on 23rd February 1976, the artist L S Lowry died of pneumonia. He was known primarily for his bleak industrial landscapes of north-west England, populated with matchstick men, but he also painted original and striking seascapes and impressive portraits.

Laurence Stephen Lowry was born on 1st November 1887 in Stretford. His father worked for an estate agent and his mother was an organist, playing at the local church. Laurence went to Sunday school, but as life later turned difficult, his faith became shadowy. After leaving school he became a rent collector for the Pall Mall Property Company and stayed there until his retirement in 1952. This led to some dismissing him as a "Sunday painter".

Lowry's life was restricted by his family debts and his mother, for whom he took responsibility after his father died. He tried hard to please her, but she showed no appreciation for the quality of his art, looking instead for a middle-class respectable life. He became a solitary figure and never married.

Lowry remains popular as an artist, with many imitators, but he never formally taught or gathered a group of followers around him. He holds the record for rejecting British honours —five, including a knighthood (1968). A collection of his work is



Continued on next page

on display in The Lowry, an impressive purpose-built art gallery on Salford Quays.

During his life he made about 1,000 paintings and over 8,000 drawings. His works often sell for millions of pounds. Buried in Manchester next to his parents, he left an estate valued at £298,459, plus artwork, to Carol Ann Lowry (no relation), whose family he befriended when she was 13, after she asked for help with her own development as an artist.

Parish Pump website

Some observations on living ...

When you were born, you cried and the world rejoiced.
Live your life so that when you die, the world cries and
you rejoice. - *Native American saying*

We make a living by what we get; we make a life by what
we give. - *Winston Churchill*

From the Registers

Funerals:

20th January	Hilda Brodie (Bromham)
21st January	Peggy Farr (Bromham)

Burials/Burial of Ashes:

10th January	Nigel Bailey (Bromham)
19th January	Barry Worker (Oakley)
31st January	Hannah Heaney (Bromham)

Service at Crematorium:

27th January	Margaret Bates (Bromham)
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FRIENDS OF ST OWEN'S 100 CLUB PRIZE WINNERS

JANUARY 2026

1st prize	Jenny Hope
2nd prize	Margaret Parrott
3rd prize	Lorna Holland
4th prize	Julie Stanley
5th prize	John Franklin

Yes! Five Prizes. With more members we can offer more prizes.

How people fast during Lent

Many of us fast during Lent. It seems that the kind of fast you undertake may be connected to your denomination. A recent survey by the charity Green Christian found the following:
94% Black Majority Churchgoers give up all food for a set time.

85% of Orthodox churchgoers cut out specific foods and / or drinks.

83% of Pentecostal churches give up all food for a set time.

79% of Roman Catholics cut out specific foods and / or drinks.

76% of New Churches give up all food for a set time.

57% of C of E cut out specific foods and / or drinks

30% or less of Presbyterians, Methodists, and Baptists cut out specific foods and / or drinks.

Parish Pump website



Next meeting

Saturday 14th February

5 - 6.30pm

The Fellowship Centre
Clapham
MK41 6ER

NB: no January meeting

The Rules of Marriage

Here is a real-life answer from an 8yr old child:

Question: How can a stranger tell if two people are married?

You might have to guess, based on whether they seem to be yelling at the same kids.

- Derrick, age 8

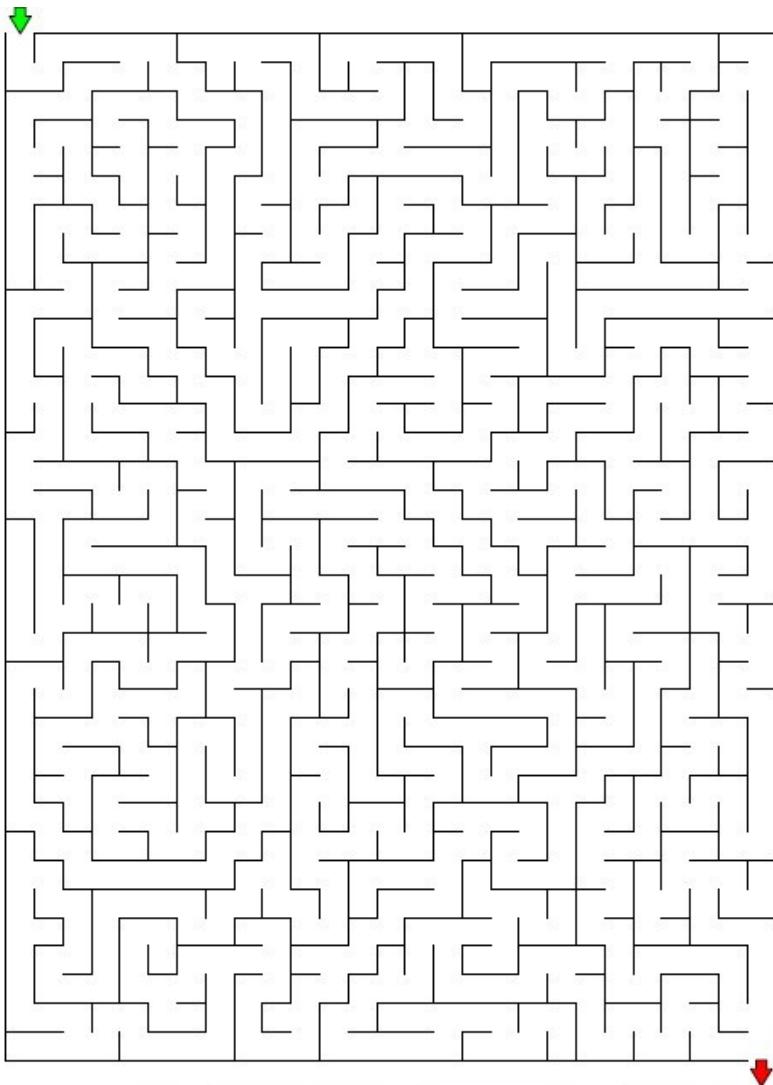
**Sudoku -
Medium**

Solution on
page 33

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

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Can you find your way from top to bottom?



For younger readers.....

The Big Bash!



JESUS OFTEN TOLD STORIES WITH HIDDEN MEANINGS



ONE STORY WAS ABOUT A RICH MAN WHO DECIDED TO HAVE A PARTY

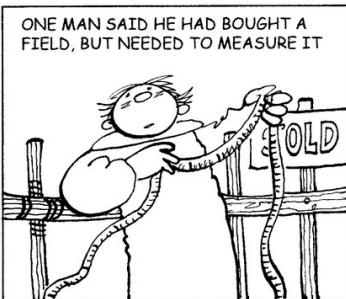


HE SENT OUT LOTS OF INVITATIONS



OH! NO!!

BUT PEOPLE STARTED MAKING EXCUSES



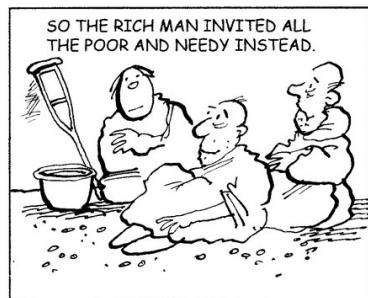
ONE MAN SAID HE HAD BOUGHT A FIELD, BUT NEEDED TO MEASURE IT



ANOTHER MAN SAID HE NEEDED TO TEST DRIVE THE OXEN HE HAS JUST PAID FOR



ANOTHER MAN SAID HE HAD JUST GOT MARRIED - AND HIS WIFE WOULDN'T LET HIM OUT!

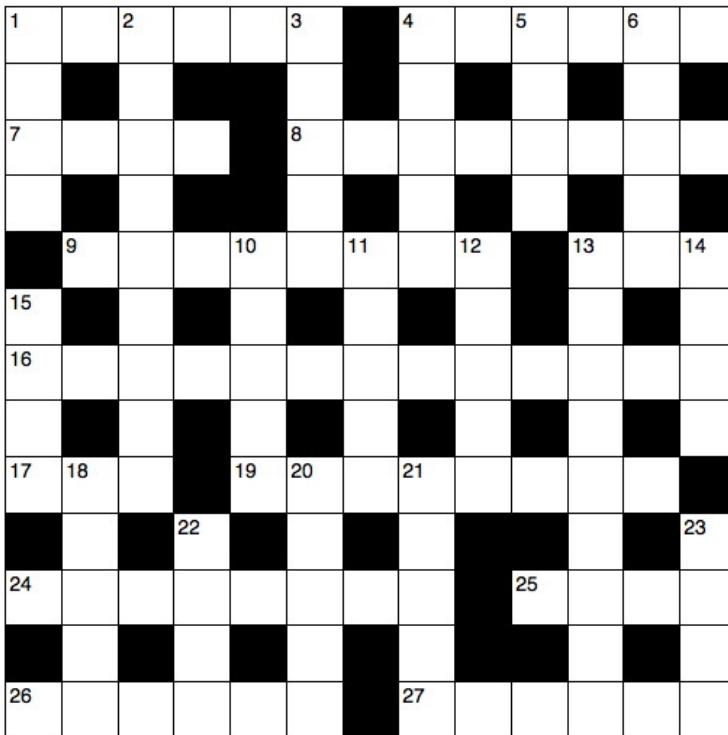


SO THE RICH MAN INVITED ALL THE POOR AND NEEDY INSTEAD.



YES - I CAN COME TO YOUR PARTY

THE PARABLE MEANS WE SHOULDN'T MAKE EXCUSES FOR NOT FOLLOWING JESUS.



Across

- 1 'If you love those who love you, what — is that to you?' (Luke 6:32) (6)
- 4 'They threw the ship's — overboard' (Acts 27:19) (6)
- 7 The first murderer (Genesis 4:8) (4)
- 8 He was the head Levite in charge of the singing when the ark of God was brought back to Jerusalem (1 Chronicles 15:22) (8)
- 9 Samson was noted for this (Judges 16:6) (8)
- 13 Solicit money or food from passers by (Acts 3:2) (3)
- 16 What William Booth's Christian Mission became in 1878 (9,4)
- 17 Alliance of Religions and Conservation (1,1,1)
- 19 'I will praise your name for ever and ever. — — I will praise you' (Psalm 145:1-2) (5,3)
- 24 Simon had (anag.) (8)
- 25 Desperate (Deuteronomy 28:48) (4)

26 Elisha witnessed the boy he was seeking to resuscitate do this seven times before opening his eyes (2 Kings 4:35) (6)

27 The belly and thighs of the statue in Nebuchadnezzar's dream were made of this (Daniel 2:32) (6)

Down

1 'Before the — crows, you will disown me three times' (Matthew 26:75) (4)

2 Relating to the books of the Bible between Acts and Revelation (9)

3 'They have — the Lord out of the tomb, and we don't know where they have put him!' (John 20:2) (5)

4 Belief (5)

5 'Take the following fine spices: ... 250 shekels of fragrant —' (Exodus 30:23) (4)

6 'Do not — Jerusalem, but wait for the gift' (Acts 1:4) (5)

10 A seer (anag.) (5)

11 'Even there your hand will — me' (Psalm 139:10) (5)

12 The wild variety was part of John the Baptist's diet (Mark 1:6) (5)

13 A non-Greek speaker who was looked down on by civilized people (Colossians 3:11) (9)

14 Famous 1950s musical whose characters included members of 16 Across, — and Dolls (4)

15 The province from which Paul wrote to the Corinthians (1 Corinthians 16:19) (4)

18 'He was standing in the gateway with a linen cord and a measuring — — his hand' (Ezekiel 40:3) (3,2)

20 'Today, if you hear his — , do not harden your hearts as you did in the rebellion' (Hebrews 3:15) (5)

21 The Jericho prostitute who hid two Israelite spies on the roof of her house (Hebrews 11:31) (5)

22 'And now these three remain: faith, — and love. But the greatest of these is love' (1 Corinthians 13:13) (4)

23 'God has numbered the days of your reign and brought it to an end' (Daniel 5:26) (4)

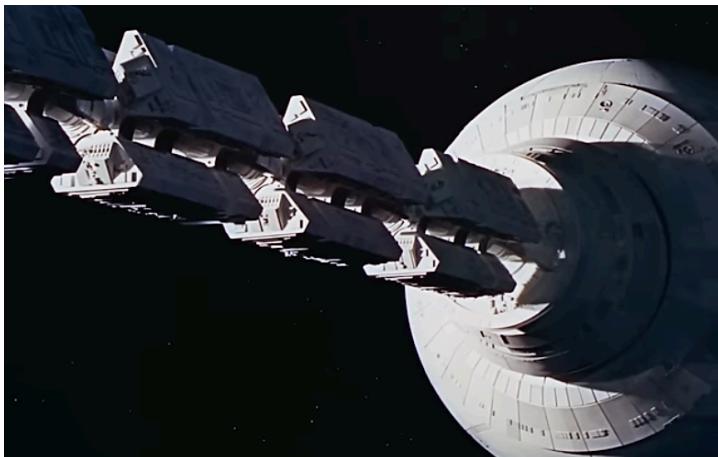
Solution on page 33

Editor: Article by the Revd Roy Shaw, a retired but active priest in the diocese of York, where he is a spiritual director.

The staggering vision of '2001 A Space Odyssey'

I recently saw an excerpt from the film '2001 A Space Odyssey', and had to remind myself that it was released in the early summer of 1968. I was so enthralled and mystified by the film that I saw it twice that year, and it's still staggering in its realisation.

No computer-generated imagery back then; it was all shot with realistic models of spaceships, slow-spinning space-



stations, lunar bases, star-scapes, against the blackness of space. It recreated all the stuff needed to make people believe that what they saw on the screen was credible as a vision of what, in 1968, lay 30 years ahead. Painstaking, detailed and exact camerawork obviously played a big part, too. One critic has even said that the scenes in the space station and the space ships, especially of the humans piloting or guiding those machines, look more credible than anything NASA put out.

Continued on next page

'2001' still takes my breath away nearly sixty years later. It looks soooo convincing! Now, here's the confession bit; I haven't really grasped the ending, when Dave (the astronaut we've followed throughout the film) reaches out to embrace the future as a star-child. At least, I think that's what the ending is about, but I still have questions.

All this has parallels with our faith, at least for some of us. Christian faith offers us a vision, and a staggering one at that, where we can embrace the future with hope, even though we've no clear sense of the ending beyond our earthly pilgrimage. We are given some clues in the Scriptures and the words of Jesus, but much of it is hidden from us.

And as we live out our faith, committing our ways to God each day, I trust we have discovered it is a credible faith, one that keeps us keeping on through the yearly cycle of Christmas, Lent, Holy Week, Easter, Pentecost, Advent. 'God is with us', 'God is for us', 'God is in us', 'God is near us' All those truths, experienced day by day, are staggering, and take a lifetime to digest. We don't know all the answers, but we have enough to go on to trust God in the here and now.

Are there films, tv series, books, maybe a magazine article, which have cast some light on your pilgrim path? Which have helped you follow God with more understanding? What comes to mind? Give thanks for all the ways God leads you on the daily path.

And another child's view of marriage:

It's OK for girls to be single but not for boys. Boys need someone to clean up after them. - Anita, age 9

Thomas Bray, founder of SPCK

Thomas Bray, who is remembered on 15th February, was once called a 'Great Small Man', with good reason. This diminutive 18th century English clergyman (1658 – 1730) not only helped to establish the Church of England in Maryland, but he was also founder of the Society for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge (SPCK) in 1698 and the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts (USPG) in 1701.

Those are long names for societies whose aim was to get Christian books and resources into the hands of those who desperately needed them. For the early 18th century was not an easy time for poor clergymen: books were expensive, and many of them had few, or none to guide them in their ministry. And so, Thomas Bray, who had been educated at Oxford, joined with some other clergy friends to help them.

After a trip to assess the needs of the young Episcopal Church in Maryland (he was sent by the Bishop of London), Bray became rector of St Botolph's, Aldgate in London in 1708. From here he served his parish, and through SPCK eventually established 80 parish libraries in England and a further 39 in the Colonies. SPCK and USPG worked by asking learned authors to donate copies of their books. They also appealed to merchants to the foreign plantations for financial help in establishing the libraries.

Thomas Bray's life has affected hundreds of thousands of people over three centuries. Not only was his work in America the first major coordinated effort to establish libraries in the New World, but SPCK is still one of our leading UK Christian publishing houses today.

As if that was not enough, Bray also worked to help poor debtors emigrate to better lives, and homeless children to get

Continued on next page

care in England. He helped feed prisoners at Newgate prison in London and joined in the political fight against slavery. He also supported outreaches to Africans and Native Americans in their home countries. When he died on 15th February 1730, thousands mourned him. A great small man indeed!

Parish Pump website

A religious upbringing helps your health in later life

Elderly people who had a religious upbringing have been found to be physically healthier, according to a recent study.

Scientists believe that one reason may be that they did not use drugs, cigarettes or alcohol when they were young. The data found that such people are reporting fewer difficulties with daily activities such as dressing or washing.

The study looked at older people across Europe, and the results were published in the journal Social Science and Medicine.

Many children in Europe who grew up after the Second World War had families who attended church on a regular basis, and who had Christian moral beliefs and values. For many children, this provided a sense of meaning in life, and a sense of belonging. They felt more 'connected', and hence more mentally and physically stable.

Parish Pump website

Hymns for Professionals

Dentist - Crown Him with many crowns

Contractors - The Church's one foundation

Golfers - There is a green hill far away

Librarians - Let all mortal flesh keep silent



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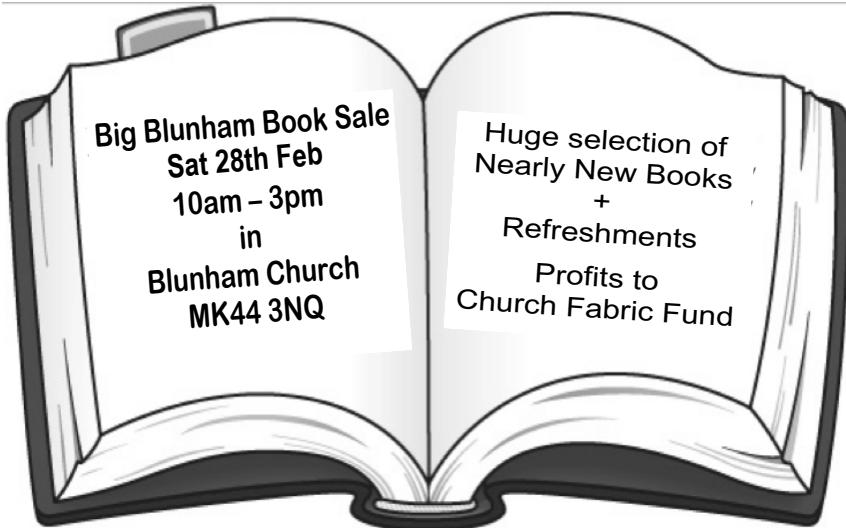
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Solution to puzzle on
page 23

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

Solution to puzzle
on page 26

C	R	E	D	I	T		T	A	C	K	L	E
O		P		A	E	A	E					
CA	I	N		K	E	N	A	N	I	A	H	
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S	A	L	V	A	T	I	O	N	A	R	M	Y
I	I	S	D	E		B						
A	R	C	E	V	E	R	Y	D	A			
	O	H	O	E		R						
A	D	M	O	N	I	S	H	D	I	R	E	
I	P	C	A						A	A	N	
S	N	E	E	Z	E			B	R	O	N	Z

Can you get across the pedestrian crossing in time?

Have you ever had to hurry to make it to safely across the street because the pedestrian crossing light is about to turn red again?

If so, you are not alone. A recent study has found that pedestrian crossing timings are simply too brief for many elderly people and especially those with mobility problems.

The length of time given at crossing points usually assumes a walking speed of 1.2m per second. But the study found that the average speed of adults aged over 65 is only 0.77m per second.

So more than half of older people need to increase their normal walking speed by about 50 per cent, just to reach the other curb safely.

One of the researchers said: "This isn't just a safety issue – it's potentially a barrier to independence, physical activity, and social connection, all of which often decline in later life."

Another said: "Allowing enough time to cross the road can boost confidence, support independence, and help them remain engaged in their communities, all key to a better quality of life."

The study was published in the journal *Age and Ageing*

Thoughts on Marriage

Marriage requires falling in love many times – always with the same person.- *Anon*

Marriage is like hitting a golf ball, turning somersaults, or eating with chopsticks; it looks so easy till you try it. - *Helen Rowland*

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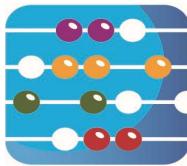
God made us

A little girl sitting on her grandfather's lap reached up to touch his wrinkled cheek. "Grandpa, did God make you?"

"Yes, sweetheart," he answered, "God made me a long time ago."

"Oh," she paused. "Grandpa, did God make me too?"

Her grandfather assured her that He had. Feeling his wrinkled cheek again, she observed, "God's getting better at it, isn't He?"



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