

Church News

for the Parishes of
Bromham, Oakley and Stagsden



May 2026



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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.**



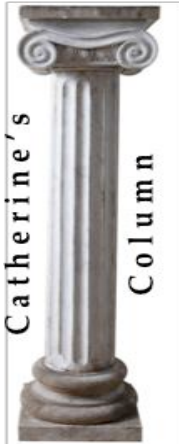
Principal Services in the Benefice

<u>3rd May</u>	<u>5th Sunday of Easter</u>
9.00am	Holy Communion (Oakley)
10.30am	Holy Communion (Bromham)
<u>10th May</u>	<u>6th Sunday of Easter</u>
9.00am	Holy Communion (Stagsden)
10.30am	Local Ecumenical Service (Oakley Methodist)
6.00pm	Evensong (Bromham)
<u>14th May</u>	<u>Ascension Day</u> - see also page 13
10.30am	Service of the Word (Bromham)
7.30pm	Deanery Service including Confirmation (St Peter's, Sharnbrook)
<u>17th May</u>	<u>7th Sunday of Easter</u>
9.00am	Holy Communion (Stagsden)
10.30am	Holy Communion (Bromham)
<u>24th May</u>	<u>Pentecost</u>
9.00am	Holy Communion (Bromham)
10.30am	Holy Communion (Oakley)
<u>31st May</u>	<u>Trinity Sunday</u>
10.30am	Holy Communion (Stagsden)

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

In Jeremiah 29 v11 it says “ ‘For I know the plans I have for you’, declares the Lord, ‘plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future’ ”. It’s a promise that calls us to step into the

future with courage and assurance, believing that God holds us in his hand, and will go with us each step of the way.

When we look at the world around us, we may struggle to feel confident for the future. Global warming and climate change, a multiplication of international conflicts, political and economic uncertainty – in such a rapidly-changing world it can be easy to be hesitant or uncertain about what lies ahead, for our country and for us as individuals. We need to hear the verse from Jeremiah!

His words are particularly apposite as we say farewell to Petra, ahead of her move to Norfolk in early May with her husband Charlie. Leaving the town they have been settled in for around 30 years is a big step, and while they know Norfolk and have had their new home there for a little while, it will be sad for them to leave Bedford – and for Petra to leave our Benefice where she has shared so

much with us. It has been a great joy to see her grow in ministry from her ordination, but we know that this is part of God's plan for her, and that He has a new challenge for her in their new location.

It is part of God's plan for us too – so as we begin a new chapter in the life of our Benefice, we are asking him to be showing us the way ahead. Maybe some will feel prompted to explore a different way of being part of the church here, by offering to do something new. There may be activities we need to lay down, and ideas to consider for alternative options.

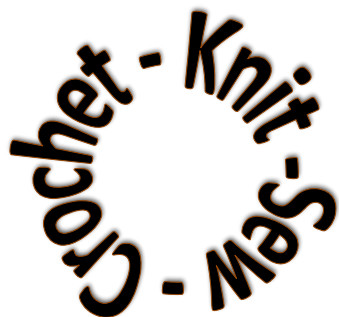
As part of this discerning of the next steps for our Benefice as we look to follow God's plans for us in our villages, a group of about 20 of us met on April 18th in Clapham Fellowship Centre; led by Revd Nick Smith we began prayerfully to reflect on a 'vision' for the whole Benefice – what are we about as churches, and what we hope to work towards. Our vision statement will be short and memorable, and will summarise what we hope for – it will shape what we do and what we plan for. I hope that by the APCMs in Bromham and Oakley in May we will have a vision to share, so that we go forward with purpose and intention.

As we look to the future, we can be confident that God is with us in this next chapter, and that he has good and hopeful plans for his church here. Our task is to see how we can be part of them.

Catherine Wilson



Next meeting - **Thurs 28th May**
at 2.30pm with Guest Speaker
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

Save the Date!

Sat 27 June at St Owen's - Unisong Concert in aid of
Dwell Well Support & Bromham Good Neighbours Scheme.

Sat 11 July at St Owen's - Performance of Words and Music
by Edward Jones & David Williams in aid of FoSO plus
optional Cream Tea!

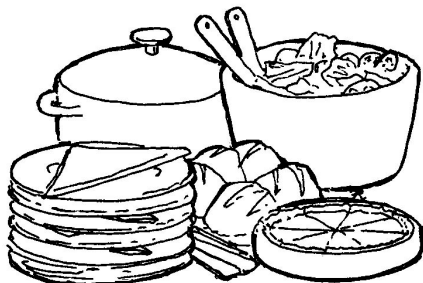
First Friday Coffee Morning

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

Could these helping hands be yours?

Forthcoming events in need of help:

Sat 27 June at St Owen's:

Unisong Summer Concert
needs refreshment servers

Sat 11 July at St Owen's:

FoSO concert of words and music
needs food and servers for cream teas

Sun 12th July: Bromham Show needs servers to keep Show Committee refreshed.

Contact Elaine (826702) or Edward (826551)



'Messy Church for All'
at Oakley Methodist Church
on 3rd Tuesday in the month

Next event 19th May

3.30 till 5.30pm

Contact 824504 or
mcarr49@hotmail.com



THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND



Archbishop Sarah Mullally issued a statement, on 16th April, in which she proclaimed that she stood in solidarity with Pope Leo XIV in his calls for peace.

“I stand with my brother in Christ, His Holiness Pope Leo XIV, in his courageous call for a kingdom of peace. As innocent people are killed and displaced, families torn apart, and futures destroyed, the human cost of war is incalculable. It is the calling of every Christian – and of all people of faith and goodwill – to work and pray for peace. We must also urge all those entrusted with political authority to pursue every possible peaceful and just means of resolving conflict.

“As I prepare to visit Rome later this month* to meet and pray with Pope Leo, I am mindful of his call to keep our eyes open to the suffering of the world, and our gaze fixed on our crucified and risen Lord Jesus Christ – the image of the invisible God, in whose image and likeness every human being is made. In him, we recognise that we are children of the one Father and members of a single human family. Prayer is not an escape from the world, nor a turning away from injustice; rather, it is a turning towards God in the midst of it, confronting evil, seeking God’s will, and becoming instruments of transformation and peace.

** The visit took place during the week of 27th April Continued on next page*

“As Christians, we are called to stand in solidarity with all who suffer, and to respond with compassion and love. Christ’s self-giving life, lived for the sake of others, reminds us that the command to love God with all our heart is inseparable from the call to love our neighbour as ourselves, especially the neighbour who suffers, who is displaced, who lives in fear, and who longs for peace. Time spent with Anglican Primates from across the Communion at my installation in Canterbury was a reminder of how many conflicts continue beyond the front pages of our news, yet demand no less our concern and prayer.

“Our shared humanity has long inspired peacemakers across generations, whether Christian or not. That vision gave rise to the United Nations, founded amidst the ashes of the Second World War. Many decades on, our generation must recommit itself to its Charter, upholding human rights, international law, and the dignity and worth of every human life. As the Pope has recalled, we echo the words of Pope Paul VI on his first visit to the United Nations: ‘No more war.’

“I therefore urge Anglicans across the Church of England and the Anglican Communion to join with His Holiness in raising our voices for peace and justice throughout the world. Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace, blesses the peacemakers and calls them children of God. In a time marked by hatred, division, and violence, may we be steadfast in that calling – witnesses to hope, agents of reconciliation, and bearers of God’s peace in a wounded world.”

The Spirit-filled life is not a special, deluxe edition of Christianity. It is part and parcel of the total plan of God for His people. - *A W Tozer 1897-1963, an American pastor and writer.*

Petra's Farewell



Rev. Petra 'in full flow'!
and as we will remember her

On Sunday 26th April we said 'Farewell' to Petra Yates at a service held in St Mary's, Oakley.

After 3 & a half years with us as deacon, curate and associate minister, the call to her and her husband to the wilds of Norfolk became irresistible.

Her joyful and thoughtful ministry was laced with fun and frequent mentions of cake!

God bless you and keep you
Petra and Charlie.

Ascension Day Thursday May 14th

10.30am Service to mark Ascension Day (Bromham)

This service will be lead by Al Morrow and will also mark the start of the 'Thy Kingdom Come' season which runs during the 10 days from Ascension Day to Pentecost, and is a time when we are encouraged to name 5 people we would love to see come to know God for themselves, and to pray for them each day.

7.30pm Deanery Holy Communion (Sharnbrook)

We welcome Bishop Rob Wickham as our guest preacher, and he will also confirm two candidates from the Deanery and celebrate communion. This was a wonderful service last year - everyone is welcome to come along again!

'Living as a Human in an AI world'

a talk by Revd Canon Dr Tim Bull

Thurs 4th June at Deanery Synod

Bletsoe Village Hall at 7.30pm

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is transforming our lives and reshaping our future. It raises profound questions in the areas of ethics, truth, privacy, creativity and what it means to be human.

Should we embrace this technology with open arms or approach it with caution? How might AI inform or challenge Christian faith? How should we live in a world of AI?

Whether you're an enthusiast or just curious – and whether you're a believer or not – this session will open your eyes to new ways of thinking and give you plenty to ponder. We will be guided in our exploration by the Revd Canon Dr Tim Bull.

Continued on next page

Tim has been described as “a true polymath” with PhDs in both computer science and theology. Before ordination he worked as a chartered software engineer, and during his ministry he has taught in the areas of preaching, leadership and Christian ethics. He is a residentiary canon at St Albans Cathedral, a member of the Church of England's Mission and Public Affairs Council, and a founder of the AI Christian Partnership.

Tim's talk on AI was "really accessible, brilliantly communicated, engaging and downright fun, and the students absolutely loved it. They have been talking about it ever since!"
— A Theological College Principal



An intriguing subject brilliantly addressed by Revd Canon Dr Tim Bull. It costs nothing to come and listen!

Our Benefice Vision

At a very enjoyable day on Saturday 18th April with Rev Nick Smith, we made good progress towards discerning a vision statement for the Benefice.

The next step is to share some of the process and get input from those who weren't there. So, on **Sunday 3rd May**, instead of a sermon we will be focusing on thinking about our aims, hopes and vision! Please do come long, we want this to be a shared vision for everyone, don't miss out on being involved.

Revd Catherine

Pentecost - not a Ghost but a Gift

We used to call it Whitsun – ‘White Sunday’ because long ago children marched to church in white on that day. There are no processions nowadays, and we’ve even changed its name. It’s now ‘Pentecost’, which is more accurate but needs explaining.

Pentecost marks a vital event in Christian history. It is celebrated 50 days after Easter. The year Jesus was crucified (which took place at the Passover), the remnant of His followers, just 120 of them, were together in an upper room in Jerusalem. They were afraid to show their faces in case the authorities arrested them. But on the day of Passover, they had an amazing collective experience.

They described it in terms of wind and fire, a great surge of spiritual energy and confidence. Afraid no longer, they burst out on to the streets where crowds were gathering for the festival, led by Peter they began to tell them about Jesus and His resurrection. As they did so, although many of the people in the crowd were foreigners who spoke other languages, everyone heard them in their own tongue. Peter told them that what they were seeing was the fulfilment of an old prophecy when God would pour out His Spirit on the human race, men and women, young and old.

As a result of His words and the extraordinary spectacle, 3,000 people believed and were baptised in the name of Jesus. They were the nucleus of what in 100 years would be a Church that would turn history upside down. For Christians Pentecost is in effect the birthday of the Church.

Many people find the whole idea of the Holy Spirit mysterious and elusive. It wasn’t helped by the earlier title ‘Holy Ghost’. The spirit is not spiritually a ‘ghost’ but a precious gift.

Parish Pump website

Dunstan: the abbot who restored monastic life in England

Dunstan (909-988 AD) stands out as an example of what just one person can achieve when they follow the call of God on their life. He is celebrated on 19th May each year.

Dunstan was born near Glastonbury, of a noble family with royal connections and church connections; his uncle was Archbishop of Canterbury. But in 935, at the age of 26, he was accused of 'studying the vain poems of the pagans' – and expelled from court. He nearly married, but instead made private monastic vows and was ordained a priest by Elphege, bishop of Winchester. Dunstan felt God's call on his life and responded. That decision was to shape English history.

Not at first, however. For Dunstan began his priestly life by simply returning to Glastonbury and living as a hermit. He painted, embroidered and did metalwork. But when in 939 Edmund became king of Wessex, he recalled Dunstan and made him abbot of Glastonbury. The monastic life of the country was all but dead; the Danish invasions and the hostility of local magnates had seen to that. Dunstan set out to change all this, and went on to restore monastic life in England, under the Rule of St Benedict.

Down the years, Dunstan saw kings come and go: Edmund, Edred, Edgar, Edward. Under King Edgar Dunstan was made bishop of Worcester in 957, bishop of London in 959, and Archbishop of Canterbury in 960. Thus was born a fruitful collaboration between King and Archbishop which was to reform the Church in England. Monastic orders began to thrive once more. After the Conquest, the days of Dunstan would be looked back on as the 'golden age'.

Dunstan was zealous for the faith. He taught, prayed, fasted, repaired churches, acted as judge, inspired national laws of

Continued on next page

the land, made sure taxes were paid, and encouraged his monks in their manuscripts and prayers. He remained active right to the end of his life: he preached three times on Ascension Day 988, and died two days later, on 19 May, aged nearly 80.

They wrote of him: he was without doubt “chief of all the saints who rest at Christ Church” (Canterbury). It has been well said that the 10th century gave shape to English history, and Dunstan gave shape to the 10th century.

Parish Pump website

The Revd Dr Jo White continues her series on aspects of Christianity.

Reflected Faith Series: The Creed (Part 1)

There are various sections that make up a Communion service. While different denominations, and different styles of churches even within the same denomination, may do things differently, generally speaking they all include the same foundational elements.

So, after the Bible readings, and then sermon, what follows next?

In Common Worship (CW) we ‘immediately’ jump to our feet and proclaim our faith!

If you follow the Book of Common Prayer (BCP), the Creed comes between the Gospel reading and the sermon – which is my excuse for forgetting to say it more than once when I’ve conducted the latter service first (if you get what I mean) on a Sunday morning.

The question is, ‘Why is it placed here?’ Wouldn’t it make

Continued on next page

more sense to have it at or close to the beginning of a service; so that we can be sure everyone in the congregation is on the same page, so to speak.

Or why not at the end, just before we go out into the world taking our faith with us?

Why here?

When (BCP) it follows directly after the Gospel reading, it's as though having heard the words of Jesus we rush to say 'I believe that. I believe in who said it. And I believe in ... etc etc.' Rather like after your favourite team has scored a goal!

Where we've had the sermon first (CW), it's as though the 'explanation and contextualisation' by the preacher makes it so plain that we can do nothing less than join together and reaffirm our baptismal faith.

This month

Pause for a moment before you say the Creed next time and consider where in your service it is placed. What has encouraged you to be able to say it from your heart? Was there a word, phrase or sentence that particularly gripped you and prompted you to your feet? Or was it just words written on the service sheet with a direction to stand?

From the Registers

Baptism:

19th April Elsie Ann Harris (Bromham)

Burial of Ashes:

23rd April Brian Leeson (Oakley)



Christian Aid Week - 10th to 16th May

It's that time of year again – when Christians across the country raise funds for Christian Aid's programmes, which help those suffering poverty and injustice worldwide.

Since 1957, Christian Aid Week has brought faith and action together to help families survive poverty and violence, and communities rebuild after crisis.

It says: "This is all thanks to the amazing support of churches, communities and individuals who choose to walk, run, bake, dance, make, and do whatever it takes to help make lasting change.

"Through our locally led work with partners around the world who are rooted in their communities to lead change, your valuable support will help communities ravaged by poverty and the effects of the climate crisis.

Christian Aid welcomes anyone who would like to be involved this year in raising support. And there are various ways to take part:

- Give online at www.christianaid.org.uk or through collections.
- Fundraise with friends, family, colleagues or your community.
- Take part through your church with worship, prayer and events.
- Volunteer locally to support Christian Aid Week activities.

God in the Arts

Ed: Have you ever thought how an actual church building might provide a series of visual aids to spiritual meditation? The Rev Michael Burgess continues his procession through a church building, this month pausing to consider the significance of the church windows.

'He gave us eyes to see them' – Stained Glass windows

You may know the story of the little girl with her family during a guided tour around a cathedral. As the bright sun streamed through one of the windows, she asked the guide who were the people depicted there. "Those are the saints," he replied. Later that evening the girl told her mummy, "I know who the saints are." "Do you, dear? Who are they?" the mother asked. The little girl replied: "They are the people who let the light shine through."

When the summer sun rises, its light catches the east window of a church I look after. It shines through the figures and colours of the Annunciation scene to bathe the chancel in a warm glow. Later as the sun sets, it shines once again through the west window showing Christ surrounded by angels, with the same wonderful effect. They are two stained glass windows by the Victorian designer, Kempe.

But in St Mary's Church, Fairford in Gloucestershire, there are an incredible 28 windows of medieval glass that have survived the centuries and continue to astonish the visitor.

As the sun catches this array of windows, the colours take on a new, vibrant life. We see scenes in the life of our Lord and our Lady, Old Testament prophets, New Testament apostles and the communion of saints. The eye moves round and we reach the west window portraying Christ in majesty and the

Continued on next page

day of judgement. This great work has been attributed to the royal glazier, Barnard Flower, who was influenced by the late medieval illuminated prayer books. The windows are a living witness to his skill and faith.



St Mary's Fairford

George Herbert has a poem that calls us to shine out like the church windows. It is easy, he says, to be "brittle crazy glass", but in God's good grace we can become like a window where colours and light, belief and life can combine and mingle to radiate out into the world.

The Windows (verse 1)

Lord, how can man preach thy eternal word?

He is a brittle, crazy glass

Yet in thy temple thou dost him afford

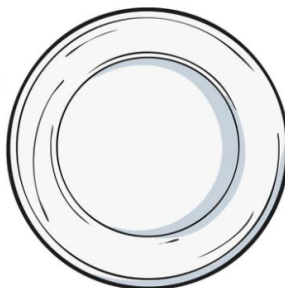
This glorious and transcendent place,

To be a window, through thy grace.

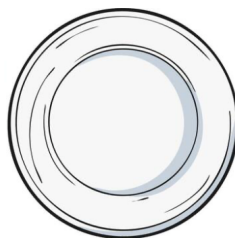
George Herbert (1593 – 1633)

Small plates are better

How large are your dinner plates? If you replace 12" plates with 10" plates you could end up eating between 16 and 22 per cent less food. That could mean a loss of two stone over a year.



The study at Cambridge University concluded: "Helping people to avoid 'over-serving' themselves or others with larger portions of food or drink is likely to ...help reduce their risk of overeating." *Parish Pump website*

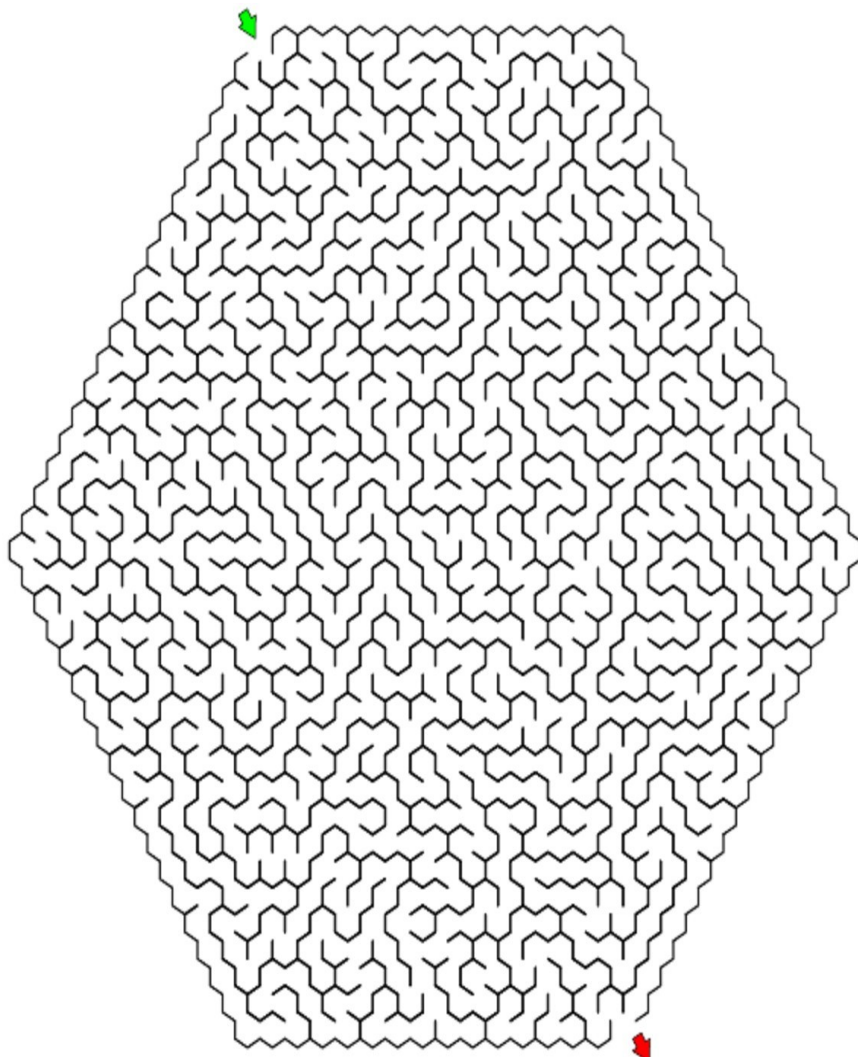


Sudoku - Medium

Solution on
page 33

8				4				5
5		7			8		6	
	4			5			2	
					9	3		2
9				1				7
4		1	7					
	8			9			7	
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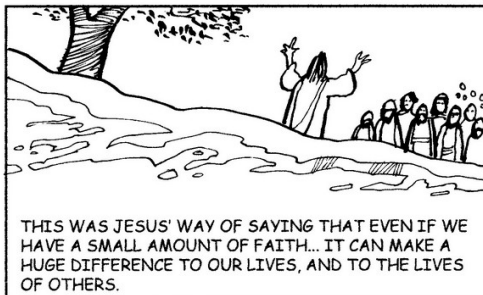
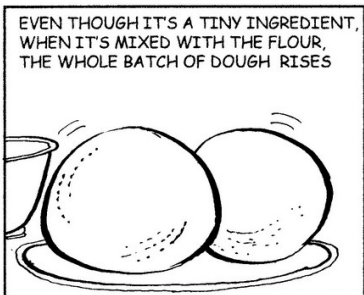
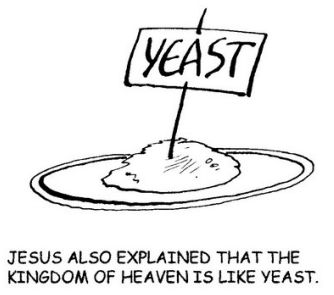
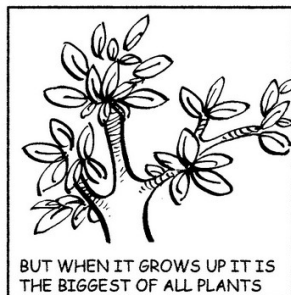
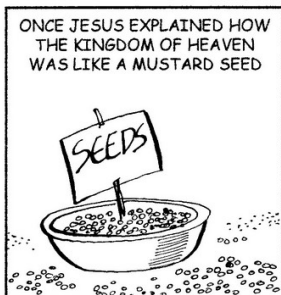
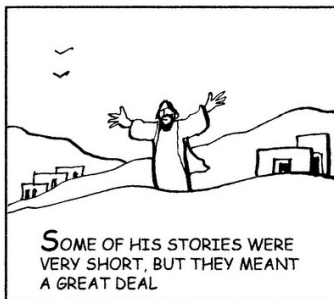
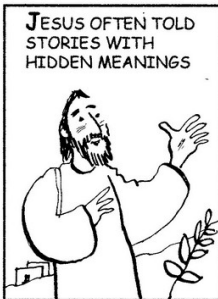
Can you find your way from top to bottom?

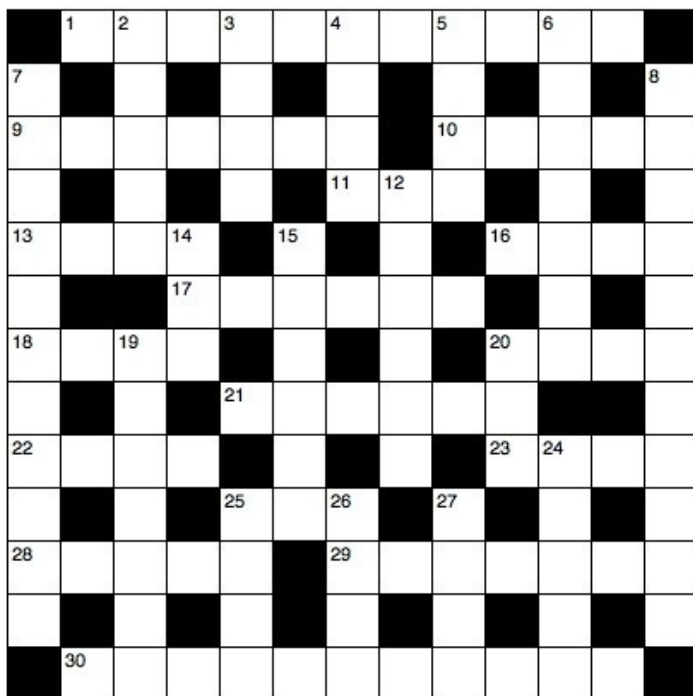


Prodigal son - one who left his home behind but took everything else.

For younger readers.....

The tale of the Mustard Seed & the tale of the Yeast





Across

- 1 Overpowered (Deuteronomy 11:4) (11)
 9 'The — are mantled with corn' (Psalm 65:13) (7)
 10 'Each man—a sword to his side' (Exodus 32:27) (5)
 11 On the death of Jesus the curtain in the temple was torn from— to bottom (Matthew 27:51) (3)
 13 Stagger (Isaiah 28:7) (4)
 16 'Anyone, then, who knows the good he ought—and doesn't do it, sins' (James 4:17) (2,2)
 17 Stir up or provoke (Acts13:50) (6)
 18 Burden (Luke11:46) (4)
 20 'As far as the east is from the—, so far has he removed our transgressions from us' (Psalm 103:12) (4)
 21 Sign (Luke23:38) (6)
 22 'After that, Jesus poured water into a basin and began to—his disciples' feet' (John 13:5) (4)

23 The nature of the seven ears of corn which swallowed up the good ears in Pharaoh's dream (Genesis 41:23) (4)

25 Has (anag.) (3)

28 'This is the account of Shem, Ham and Japheth, — sons' (Genesis 10:1) (5)

29 'I will...make them drunk, so that they...sleep for—and—awake' (Jeremiah 51:39) (4,3)

30 Paul said of him, 'he often refreshes me and is not ashamed of my chains' (2 Timothy 1:16) (11)

Down

2 Worth (Matthew 13:46) (5)

3 'A bruised — He will not break' (Matthew 12:20) (4)

4 'Suddenly a great company of the heavenly — appeared with the angel' (Luke 2:13) (4)

5 Slip (anag.) (4)

6 'Take an awl and push it through his — — into the door, and he will become your servant for life' (Deuteronomy 15:17) (3,4)

7 Bountiful (2 Corinthians 8:2) (11)

8 'Therefore, as we have —, let us do good to all people' (Galatians 6:10) (11)

12 Acquire (2 Timothy 2:10) (6)

14 Container cover (Numbers 19:15) (3)

15 'He...became obedient to death, even death on —!' (Philippians 2:8) (1,5)

19 Refrain (1 Peter 2:11) (7)

20 'She began to—his feet with her tears' (Luke 7:38) (3)

24 One who worships Brahma, Vishnu or Shiva (5)

25 'Give to everyone who—you' (Luke 6:30) (4)

26 'I lift up my eyes to the hills; where does my—come from?' (Psalm 121:1) (4)

27 One of those whom the Lord said would be taken from Jerusalem and Judah as judgment on them (Isaiah 3:2) (4)

Solution on page 33

Editor: 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: Ezekiel

Ezekiel was a prophet who proclaimed judgment to God's people in the 6th century BC. He was among the group of Jews exiled in Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar. Ezekiel received his call when he was 30 years old through a vision of the glory of God. His ministry finished 22 years later with a vision of the restored Temple in Jerusalem.

Ezekiel spoke to a community forced from its home, who had broken faith with God. He presents a God who rules over all people and history. He is a God who desires to be known and acknowledged (*'then they will know that I am the Lord'*). As a priest, Ezekiel was deeply concerned with the holiness of God. This call to holy living includes an emphasis on individual responsibility (chapter 18), which is a significant milestone in biblical thought.

Ezekiel offers a vision of true hope for those who have undergone judgment. He promises a restored Temple as a sign of God's presence among his people. He also promises a future *'prince'* who will rule with justice and restore God's relationship with his people (34:23-4).

In restoring them morally and spiritually, God promises to use them to bring light to the Gentiles. They will demonstrate the holiness of God's name, because they will know him from the heart. This is the promise that is fulfilled in Jesus and made possible for us:

'I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws.' (36: 26-27).

God in the Sciences

This series is written by Dr Ruth M Bancewicz, who is Church Engagement Director at The Faraday Institute for Science and Religion in Cambridge. Ruth writes on the positive relationship between Science and Christian faith.

Humility

A few years ago, I visited the Smithsonian Museum's Hall of Human Origins. Our guide, the curator of anthropology, was keen to help Christians understand his research. Whatever you make of the evidence for human evolution, the fact remains that other species a bit like us were around before we came on the scene – or in the case of Neanderthals, at the same time.

Part of the exhibit included lifelike reconstructions of the face and hair of several different hominins, displayed on pillars at the right height for each species. So, I could crouch down to 'meet' *Homo floresiensis* or stand tall to look into the eyes of *Homo heidelbergensis*. Most of these – beings? creatures? – were on other branches of the evolutionary tree to us, and we share a common ancestor much further back. I did, however, feel as if I was meeting my forebears.

As I walked between the statues I asked myself, "Why us?" There's evidence that Neanderthals used symbolism as we do, and also buried their dead. Did they have the potential to evolve to a point where they could do similar things to us? The curator explained how, as the ice ages came and went, human beings moved around but other species appear to have stayed put and suffered the consequences – they just weren't ready yet for that big change. As I took in the displays about how we began to gather socially around a fire, make music or write, I felt humbled. We managed to adapt, but we

Continued on next page

could so easily have disappeared with the rest.

In his book *The Message of Creation*, theologian David Wilkinson shares his view that being made in the image of God has nothing to do with our own cleverness or abilities, but instead it is a gift. God created us on purpose (I believe through the long slow process of evolution) and chose to enter into a relationship with us, making us His representatives on earth.

Thankfully I don't have to figure out how to interact with other human-like hominins today. I do, however, have an equal share in humankind's God-given commission to tend and keep creation. Am I ready to go further than ensuring my own species' survival - not necessarily because we have evolved further than our ice-age ancestors, but because I have one of the 'new hearts' promised in Ezekiel 11:19? Can I work together, in a true spirit of humility, with people from all over the world to ensure the full diversity of life can flourish?

**For resources on this question, try the Faraday Institute, BioLogos, and Christians in Science.*

Editor: some observations on our walk with God

Life can become once more a grand adventure if we will surrender it to God.... He brings one adventure to an end, only to open another to us. ...with Him we must be ready for anything. - *Paul Tournier*

Humility is the beginning of true intelligence - *John Calvin*

A Christian is never in a state of completion but always in a process of becoming. - *Martin Luther*

All in the month of May It was:

250 years ago, on 4th May 1776 that Rhode Island became the first of the Thirteen Colonies to renounce allegiance to the British Crown and instead, to declare independence.

175 years ago, from 1st May to 15th October 1851 that the Great Exhibition was held in The Crystal Palace, Hyde Park. More than 10,000 exhibitors attended what is regarded as the first World's Fair.

100 years ago, on 4th to 12th May 1926 that the UK's General Strike was held. The Trade Union Congress (TUC) called a General Strike in support of 1.2 million coal miners. The strike lasted nine days, and had little effect.

90 years ago, on 7th May 1936 that British aviator Amy Johnson made the fastest-ever (at that time) solo flight from England to Cape Town.

75 years ago, on 3rd May 1951 that the Festival of Britain and the Royal Festival Hall in London were opened.

70 years ago, on 24th May 1956 that the first Eurovision Song Contest was held in Lugano, Switzerland. It was won by Switzerland.

60 years ago, on 30th May 1966 that British racing driver Graham Hill won the 1966 Indianapolis 500. He was the only driver in history to win the 'triple crown of motor racing': the Formula One World Championship, the 24 Hours of Le Mans, and the Indianapolis 500.

40 years ago, on 9th May 1986 that Tenzing Norgay (Sherpa Tenzing), died. This Tibetan/Nepalese mountaineer had been with Sir Edmund Hillary of New Zealand when in 1953 they became the first people to reach the summit of Mount Everest.



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Solution to puzzle
on page 26

Solution to puzzle on
page 23

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The Great Exhibition that started the V & A

Some 175 years ago, from 1st May to 15th October 1851, the Great Exhibition was held in The Crystal Palace, Hyde Park. More than 10,000 exhibitors attended what is regarded as the first World's Fair.

Prince Albert was an enthusiastic promoter of the exhibition, which was described by some as a reaction to the successful French Industrial Exposition of 1844: he described it as a display of divine providence, though some religious writers took the opposite view, describing it as worldly and even ungodly with its emphasis on human achievement. Others welcomed it as an opportunity to evangelise.

Queen Victoria was an Exhibition enthusiast, visiting three times with her family and 34 times on her own. In fact, six million people – equivalent to a third of the population of Britain at the time – paid it a visit. The average daily

attendance was 42,831, with a peak of 109,915 on 7th October. The Baptist preacher Thomas Cook, in a landmark achievement for his embryonic company, arranged travel there for more than 150,000.

The event made a surplus of £186,000 – worth about £30 million today. This was used to found the Victoria and Albert Museum, the Science Museum and the Natural History Museum.



The original Crystal Palace, constructed of cast iron and plate glass, was built specifically to house the Exhibition – consisting mainly of examples of technology developed in the Industrial Revolution. Designed by Joseph Paxton, it was three times the size of St Paul’s Cathedral and boasted the greatest area of glass ever seen in a building.

After the Exhibition, the Palace was rebuilt near the affluent South London suburb of Sydenham Hill and stood there until it was burnt down in November 1936. The nearby residential area was renamed Crystal Palace.

Tim Lenton – Parish Pump website



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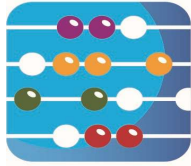
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