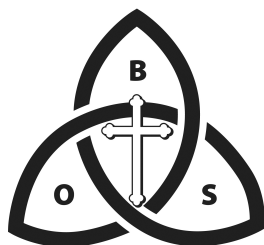


Church News

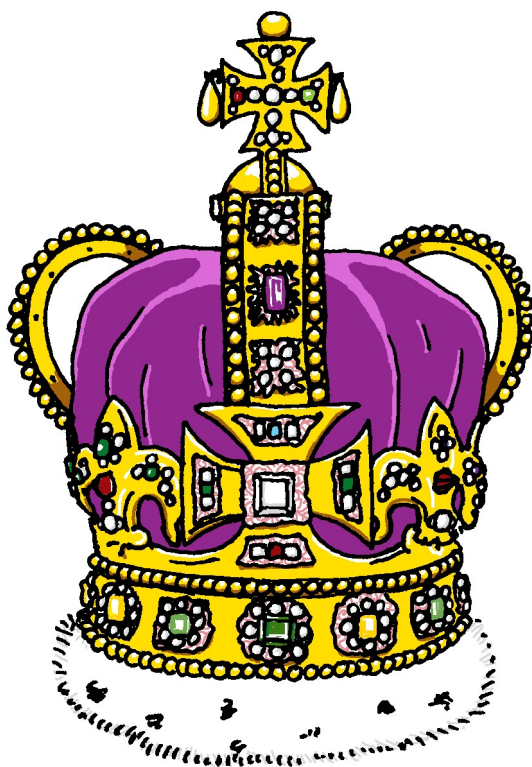
for the Parishes of
Bromham, Oakley and Stagsden



God
Save
the
King

.....

Head of our
Nation
and
Church



May 2023



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Clergy:

Curate: Revd Petra Yates - curate@bromhambenefice.org 07504 118405

Safeguarding Officer - Judith Denyer 07981 928522

07767 272584

PCC Treasurer Mrs Emma Harrison 823121

Altar Guild Mrs M Parrott 824402

Who's Who in Bromham cont....

Children & Young	}Carol Jones	823307
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
	 facebook Friends of St Owens	

Who's Who in Oakley

Church Officers

Churchwardens	Mr G Palmer	07710 462535
	Mrs H Worley	262166
PCC Secretary	Mrs C Ord	823477
PCC Treasurer	Mrs S Ball	823133
Organist & Choirmaster - contact Jenny Sudworth		822859
Messy Church for pre-school children (birth - 4yrs) & their carers	Revd Catherine Wilson	825665
Flowers	Mrs A Rolph	824849
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 thru Revd Di Harpham	918691
PCC Secretary	Caroline Heaton	
Ringers	Mr Richard Brown	823289
Flowers Team	please contact thru Revd Di Harpham	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

7th May

9.00am

10.30am

10.30am

5th Sunday of Easter

Holy Communion (Oakley)

LEP service to mark the Coronation

Coronation Celebration with Holy
Communion (Bromham)

14th May

9.00am

10.30am

6.00pm

6th Sunday of Easter

Holy Communion (Stagsden)

Holy Communion (Bromham)

Evensong (Bromham)

Thurs 18th May

7.30pm

Ascension Day

Deanery Service at St Peter's Sharnbrook

21st May

9.00am

10.30am

4.30pm

7th Sunday of Easter

Holy Communion (Stagsden)

Holy Communion (Bromham)

Wild Church (Bromham Scout Site)

28th May

9.00am

10.30am

6.00pm

Pentecost

Holy Communion (Bromham)

Holy Communion (Oakley)

Evensong (Oakley)

Weekday Services

Mondays

11.30am

Messy Church (Bromham)

Thursdays

10.00am

Messy Church (Oakley)

Tuesdays (1st and 3rd of the month)

11.30am

Holy Communion (Bromham

Fellowship Room)

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

We are approaching a rather royal month in May, as preparations gear up for the coronations of King Charles III and Queen Camilla.

On a national level there will be both the spectacle of the ancient service with all its pageantry and symbolism on Saturday 6th, and by contrast the Coronation concert at Windsor Castle on Sunday 7th, where modern celebrities will entertain those who were able to get a ticket or who watch on television. And finally on Monday 8th, we will all enjoy an extra Bank Holiday.

Locally there will no doubt be street parties and other celebrations, including services to mark the Coronation in both St Owen's and St Mary's on the Sunday morning. We'll be having our own 'Coronation Big Lunch' at St Owen's at around 12.15pm after the morning service, when we will have a royal-themed Fellowship Lunch for anyone who'd like to join us. Just bring a plate of food you enjoy, to share with others – you could bring a friend or neighbour too, especially if they would be on their own otherwise.

This is all to celebrate a new monarch and his consort – 'Charlie's getting a new hat' is one way the coronation has

been described! But while we may sing heartily 'long to reign over us', and 'paying homage' to the new monarch is part of the ceremony, we know that in our democratic political system King Charles III actually has little real power.

If like me you have been following the readings in the 'Daily Prayers for the Coronation' booklet, you will have seen the comment on Day 15 which noted that the five parts of the coronation regalia (ring, crown, orb, sceptre and rod) each incorporate a cross. The ring is marked with a cross, the others have a cross on top, 'symbolising the authority of Christ'. Central in the pomp and ceremony of the coronation service is the reminder that Jesus is the King over all Kings, the one from whom all power comes. His model of kingship is that of a servant, and the cross is the ultimate expression of that service as he died in the place of his people.

Later in this royal month, the church celebrates Ascension Day (May 18th), when Jesus returned to heaven to take his place and reign as king in glory: the crown of thorns replaced by something much more splendid, and the humiliation of his death giving way to the worship of angels. One day, we believe, he will return to earth as its judge and King, and 'at the name of Jesus every knee will bow'.

Two Kings, both celebrated this month: one with earthly glory and status, the other with heavenly power and authority over the whole universe. As we welcome our new King, we worship our eternal Sovereign: 'The Lord is King! Let the earth rejoice... the heavens proclaim his righteousness; and all the peoples behold his glory'. (Psalm 97 vv1,6).

Catherine Wilson

The Coronation of King Charles III

On 6th May His Majesty King Charles III will be crowned alongside Camilla, The Queen Consort, in Westminster Abbey. How can we pray for him, as he approaches this important event? Paul says: *'I urge, then, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness.'* (1 Timothy 2:1,2).

For God's presence - to guide every aspect of King Charles' life as he prepares for his Coronation and future roles. At his Accession, he was proclaimed Defender of the Faith, the Supreme Governor of the Church of England. Charles has talked about *'the Sovereign's particular relationship and responsibility towards the Church of England - the Church in which my own faith is so deeply rooted.'*

For God's wisdom - as he provides leadership that will honour God and promote the wellbeing of our society. King Solomon prayed for wisdom for himself: *'So give your servant a discerning heart to govern your people and to distinguish between right and wrong.'* (1 Kings 3:9).

For God's love - to strengthen all relationships within the Royal Family; for reconciliation, understanding, forgiveness and good communication.

For God's purpose - to be fulfilled through the work of the King and Queen Consort and their family in the years to come. He has said: *'and whatever may be your background or beliefs, I shall endeavour to serve you with loyalty, respect and love, as I have throughout my life.'*

Canon Paul Hardingham: Parish Pump website

A Prayer for the new King:

Everlasting God, we pray for our new King.

Bless his reign and the life of our nation.

Help us to work together so that truth and justice,

harmony and fairness flourish among us;

through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.



Coronation Fellowship Lunch

When? Following the 1030 service on
7th May

Where? The Fellowship Room
at St Owen's

What? Bring some food to share

What if? Can't bring anything - don't worry
there is usually plenty to go round



The fruit of the Spirit is not excitement or orthodoxy:
it is character. – GB Duncan



The next link up will be on Thursday 11th May at 2.30pm in the Fellowship Room at St Owen's Church.

We will be having a quiz and tea and you are invited to bring your friends and make up teams of 4 - 6 on the day.

For your diary:- on 8th June we will be having a meal out; more information and bookings with me later.

Do get in touch if you would like to join us - 822949

Anne Tombs

Easter Monday at St Owen's

The Open Event at St Owen's raised £429.38 which will go to help with the running of the church. Grateful thanks to the many supporters and helpers who provided food and drink, the raffle and sales tables.

Frances Bulmer

Remember, remember Photo ID

If you are planning to VOTE in the forthcoming local and mayoral elections you **MUST** take with you some form of Photo ID or you will not be given a ballot paper.

Acceptable forms of ID include: passport, photocard driving licence, a Blue Badge, older person's bus pass, disabled person's bus pass. You can still use your ID even if it has expired provided that you still look like the photo. It is now too late to apply for a Voter Authority Certificate for the May elections. **Full details at www.gov.uk and search for "election photo ID"**



For a farmer in Malawi, like Jen, pigeon peas are the stuff that dreams are made of - read on

All Jen Bishop wants is to give her children an education. But, like so many farmers in Malawi, she's battling a crisis that could crush her dreams. Rising temperatures are causing droughts and cyclones that ruin crops year after year. Food is so scarce that 1 in 3 children have stunted growth. Now prices have doubled and Jen is struggling to afford fuel and school fees.

Two of Jen's sons have won rare college places but she can only afford to send one. Every day Chimwemwe cycles 30km to study while his brother, Matthews, stays home - his dreams on hold.

In Christian Aid Week, 14-20 May, will you help a family like Jen's to transform their lives forever?

Pigeon peas are a food that can be farmed in the harshest conditions. In a land stricken by merciless droughts, they are a ray of hope. By producing and selling baked goods made from the peas, Jen can transform her family's future. In Christian Aid Week, you can help a farming family turn their dreams into reality. By sharing whatever you can, you could help buy seeds, equipment and training in drought-proof agriculture.

Please give now and help turn peas into prospects!

You can donate online at caweek.org/peas or by cheque payable to Christian Aid sent to Christian Aid Week, Christian Aid, 35-41 Lower Marsh, London SE1 7RL

If you pay tax, please use the Gift Aid form on the next page

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Christian Aid

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Title ----- First name or initial(s) -----

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You may contact supporter enquiries at info@christian-aid.org or call **01925 573 769** remember to include your full name and address



If a vicar asks you for money...

If you are contacted by a clergyman asking you for money, beware! It could be a scammer. Scammers have been impersonating various clergy, including even the Archbishop of York, to ask priests and other church people to buy them Amazon vouchers and online gift cards.

The scammers use either emails or texts, and their message is along the lines: "I have a request I need you to handle discreetly." They then say: "I am currently busy in a prayer meeting, so no calls – just reply to my email." Then the message asks the intended victim to send them financial help, usually in the form of vouchers or gift cards.

The police reckon that the scammers have trawled church websites for the contact details of clergy and parish officials. At least one person is believed to have been fooled – and lost £1000 in a scam.

As diocesan spokesman said: "It seems this is a national trend." The police are looking into it, and meanwhile, advising people that: "Clergy will *never* ask you to give them money, vouchers, or personal banking details directly, even to help someone in need.... it is a scam."

From the Registers

Baptism:

23rd April Theodore William Hall (Bromham)

Funerals:

20th April Allison Frossell (Stagsden)

25th April Joan Jordan (Bromham)

Burial of Ashes:

27th April Michael Creamer (Oakley)

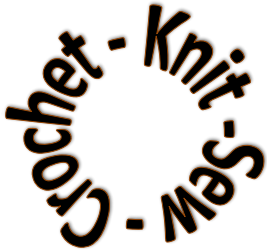
Book Review

The You God Planned - Don't Let Anything or Anyone Hold You Back by Steve Goss, SPCK, £7.99 (Second Edition)

Once we have become Christians, how do we become the people God is calling us to be? How do we know what God is calling us to be anyway? Are the goals we have for our lives in line with His goals? How on earth do we stop other people getting in the way of our growth to fruitfulness? And how do we avoid getting in their way?

The You God Planned answers these questions and shows how we can play our part in the Church.

Sewing Group



For those who wish to get together and do hand sewing, crochet or knitting. To take place on 1st and 3rd Wednesday afternoons 2pm to 4pm in the Fellowship Room at St Owen's Church.

Further information from Frances on 07470 032296

AMIGO - Next Event

Thursday 22nd June 2023

A guided tour of part of London led by our superb guide Charlie de Wet is to be arranged. Details to follow.

More information, if required, from John Dixon: Tel 01234 824959 or e-mail jwdixon30@gmail.com

Philip, the apostle with common sense

Is there someone in church whom you respect for their spirituality and common sense combined? Someone you feel easy about approaching to ask questions? That person's patron saint should be Philip who is remembered on 1st May.

Philip came from Bethsaida and was a disciple of Jesus from early on. He knew how to lead others to Jesus; he brought Nathanael (or Bartholomew) to Him in a calm, kindly way. He knew how to do some financial forecasting: at the feeding of the 5,000 it was he who pointed out that without divine help, even 200 pennyworths of bread wasn't going to feed that crowd.

He was the one whom the Greeks approached when they wanted to ask Jesus to show them the Father but didn't quite have the nerve to approach Jesus directly. People had confidence in Philip's spirituality, common sense, and kindness. Such a person is a gift to any church! In art, the Apostle Philip has been represented either with a cross, or with loaves of bread.

Where did Jesus go at the Ascension?

In Salvador Dali's picture of Jesus' ascension all you can see are his feet! As we celebrate the event this month, it prompts the question '*where did Jesus go?*' Peter says Jesus '*has gone into heaven and is at God's right hand*' (1 Peter 3:22). However, the New Testament tells us three things about what Jesus is doing at the Father's side.

At Pentecost Peter said that Jesus is '*exalted to the right hand of God, He has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit and has poured out what you now see and hear...*' "*The Lord said to my Lord: 'Sit at my right hand'*" (Acts 2: 33-4). Peter is affirming

Jesus' position of authority and power at the heart of the universe. By pouring out the gift of the Holy Spirit upon us, Jesus gives us a foretaste of the life of heaven ie eternal life, forgiveness, healing, release and God's provision for our lives.

When Stephen, the first Christian martyr, was being stoned to death by the Jewish authorities he points out, *'I see heaven open and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God.'* (Acts 7:56). Our experience of heaven is only ever partial, as we live with the reality of suffering and setbacks. However, Jesus is still on the throne! We are called to trust him daily.

The Bible also tells us that *'Christ Jesus who died....is interceding for us.'* (Romans 8:34, cf Hebrews 7:25). Even when we don't know how to pray, we have the assurance that Jesus is already praying for us! He knows our needs even better than we do ourselves, so when we feel condemned or defeated in our Christian lives, we have somebody on our side!

The Ascension reminds us that the risen Jesus lives in the immediate presence of God, and both transcends and embraces our present experience. This truth lies at the heart of the *up* language used to describe the event.

'Heaven relates to earth tangentially so that the One who is in heaven can be present simultaneously anywhere and everywhere on earth: the ascension therefore means that Jesus is available, accessible, without people having to travel to a particular spot on the earth to find Him.' (Tom Wright).

Parish Pump website

Before Pentecost the disciples found it hard to do easy things; after Pentecost, they found it easy to do hard things.
- AJ Gordon



'Messy Church for All' continues this school year!

Do come and join us next on Tuesday 16th May



After school from around 3.30pm till 5.30pm
Oakley Methodist Church, High Street, Oakley MK43 7RQ

Future Dates:
June 20th

All ages welcome - all children accompanied.
If possible, please do let us know that you can come
01234 824504 mcarr49@hotmail.com

***Sessions for pre-schoolers meet every Thursday
in term time from 10am -11.45am at St Mary's Church***

Safeguarding Training opportunity

Every Church has a responsibility to make sure that we take appropriate care of all who attend, especially children and young people, and vulnerable adults. All members of our PCCs have been attending safeguarding training online or in person to ensure they are up-to-date.

However, while the responsibility rests legally with PCC members, it is down to every one of us to be aware of possible problems, and to know what to do should we have a concern. We are holding an in-person training session on **Tuesday May 9th at 10.30am** in St Owen's Fellowship Room, when our Benefice Safeguarding Co-ordinator Judith Denyer will lead us through the C of E's 'Basic Awareness' training session, and there will be refreshments. People who help with some church activities (eg making the coffee at Messy Church) will receive an invitation – but anyone who is interested to find out more is welcome to come along. The session should last about one and half hours in total. It would help us to know if you would like to attend – please contact Judith on 07981 928522 or email safeguarding@bromhambenefice.org

Worshipping online looks set to carry on

We still enjoy 'going to church' online. In fact, recent viewing figures for the CofE's national online services reveal that they continue to receive about 150,000 views a week. Overall, in 2022, they attracted more than eight million views; and this may be an underestimate since research shows 20% of viewers watched with at least one other person.

As one vicar has said, "Worship online has made such an enormous difference... now we live-stream absolutely everything, and I'm really passionate about that."

Can you answer 10 questions about King Charles III?

(Answers on page 20)

1. He was born at 9.14pm on 14th November, to Princess Elizabeth and Prince Philip, at Buckingham Palace in London.
2. He has been heir-apparent to the throne since he was years old.
3. He is the first monarch in British history to have earned a university degree. From 1967 to 1970 he studied history at University.
4. He can speak He spent two months learning the language in 1969, as he prepared to become the Prince of Wales. He still speaks it today.
5. He is a qualified and diver. While serving in the military in the 1970s, he trained on jets and helicopters and became a confident diver.
6. He is a keen watercolour painter, a published author, and a music lover, who played the at university. He has done some TV: making a guest appearance on Coronation Street, and presenting the BBC weather forecast.
7. As Prince of Wales, he founded nearly charities. Together, they raise £140million each year for good causes. He is passionate about the environment, speaking out against plastic pollution as early as 1970. He has planted many trees during royal engagements.
8. Aged, King Charles III is the oldest monarch ever to be crowned in British history. He became King on 8th September 2022, after the death of his mother, the Queen, in Balmoral.
9. As head of the Commonwealth, King Charles III is monarch of each of the 14 Commonwealth realms: Antigua & Barbuda, Australia, Bahamas, Belize,

Canada, Grenada, Jamaica, New Zealand, Papau New Guinea, Saint Kitts & Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent & the Grenadines, the Solomon Islands, and Tuvalu. As King, he's also the only person in the UK who can travel abroad in the Commonwealth without a and drive without a licence.

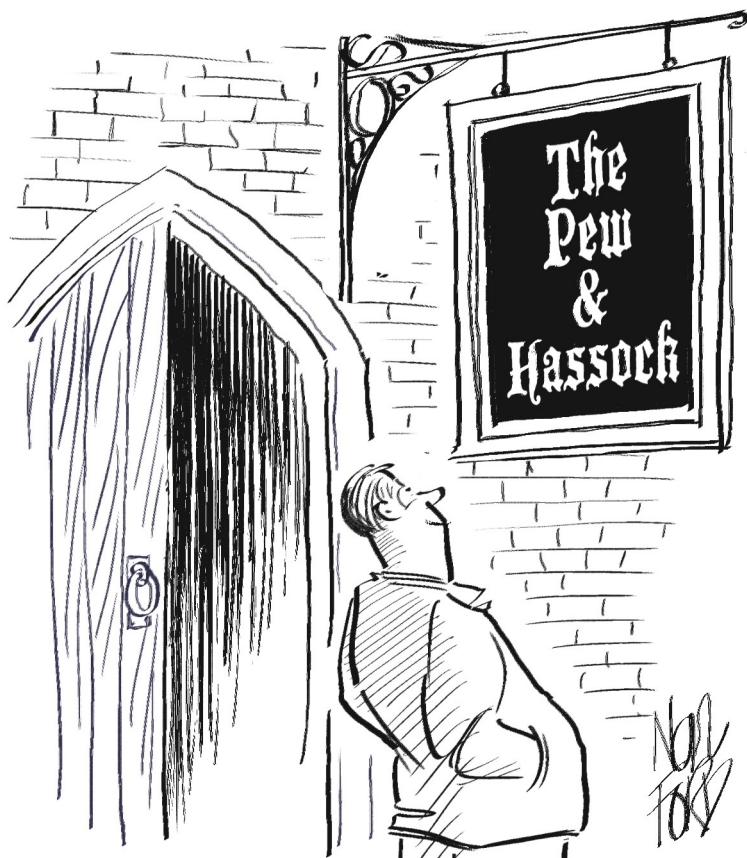
10. King Charles III has two children, Princes William and Harry, and five grandchildren. Prince is next in line to become King and was named the Prince of Wales in 2022.

When children meet the Bible, the result can be unpredictable. As in these answers to a school chaplain's efforts to teach RE....

- ~ The Kingdom of God is no ordinary place like the bathroom at home.
- ~ Jesus said: If you want to divorce your wife leave a note for her on the table.
- ~ Jesus healed a man with a weathered hand.
- ~ Some of the seed from the sower was curried off by Satan.
- ~ The last verses of Mark's gospel were written later by a unanimous person.
- ~ Jesus first proclaimed the gospel to the Jews: He told them to make love to each other.
- ~ An altar is a stall for candles.
- ~ An example of Holy Orders are the Ten Commandments.
- ~ An epistle is the wife of an apostle.

6. Cello. 7. 20. 8. 73. 9. Passport. 10. William.
1. 1948. 2. Three. 3. Cambridge. 4. Welsh. 5. Pilot

Answers



Changing the name from 'St Mark's Parish Church', resulted in a big increase in the number of men attending services

Five exercises that clergy should avoid – at all costs

Beating your head against the wall; climbing the walls; beating your own drum; dragging your heels; jumping to conclusions; grasping at straws; fishing for compliments; throwing your weight around; passing the buck; using clichés.

How come it takes so little time for a child who is afraid of the dark, to become a teenager who wants to stay out all night?

Sudoku -
easy

Solution on
page 31

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

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FRIENDS OF ST OWEN'S 100 CLUB PRIZE WINNERS

APRIL 2023

First Prize: Pearl Nicholson

Second Prize: Katina Louca

Third Prize: Heather Fawcett

Fourth Prize: Flora Dawson

Fifth Prize: Jo Clarke

Book Review

God is Everywhere - by Patricia J Murphy, Lion Books, £7.99

This heart-warming picture book introduces young children to the reassuring messages found in Bible verses. Each of three Bible verses are woven into a lyrical narrative, with key repetitive phrases, and then applied to young children's daily lives.

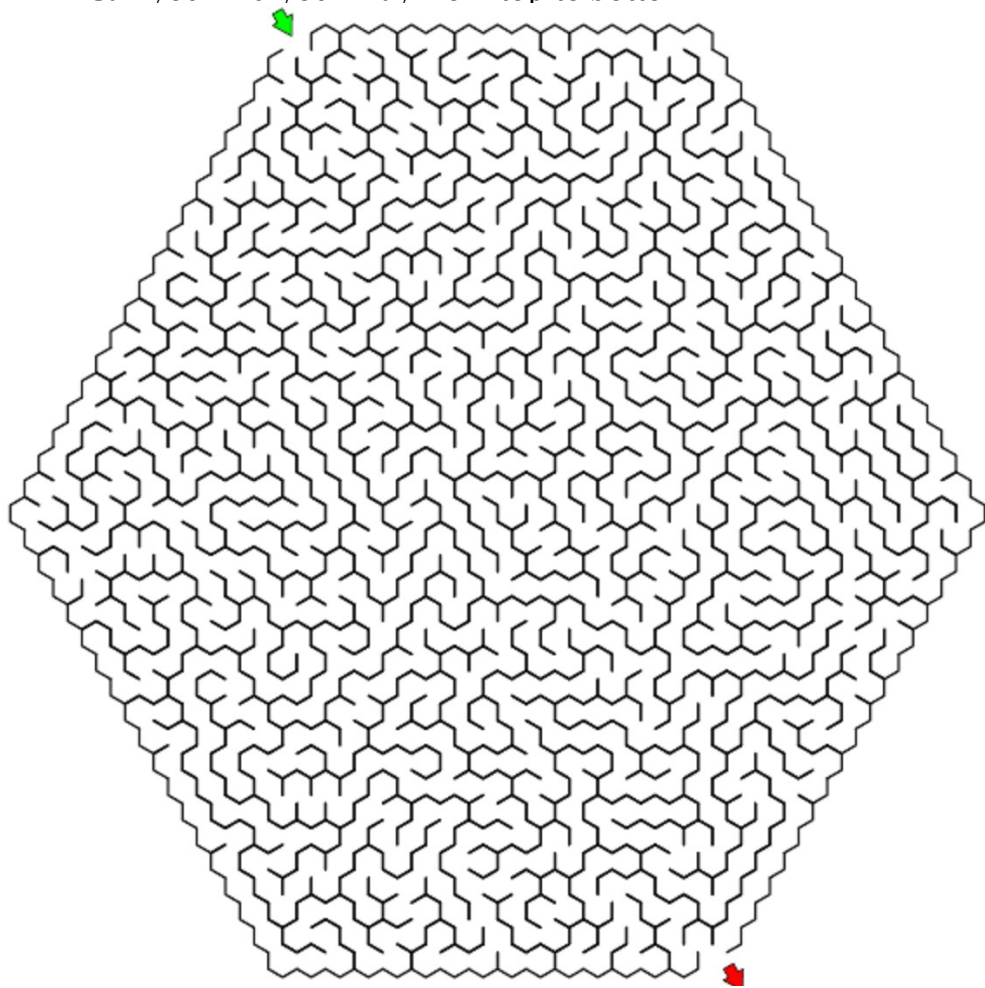
The Bible verses are based on: You are a Child of God Memory verse: "See how very much our Father loves us, for he calls us his children, and that is what we are!" (1 John 3 verse 1) Never Fear, God is Near! Memory verse: Do not be afraid or discouraged. For the LORD your God is with you wherever you go." (Joshua 1 verse 9) Love God, Love All. Memory verse: Jesus replied, "You must love the LORD your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind... Love your neighbour as yourself." (Matthew 22 verses 37, 39)

Beautiful story-telling illustrations showing activities of young children's everyday lives at home, at school, and out and about.

Parish Pump website

It is not our responsibility 'to make people Christians' and get them baptised into a particular denomination, but rather to help people decide to follow Jesus and His radical message. Maybe this is why the New Testament writers only use 'Christian' three times, but use 'disciple' on 269 occasions! - Tom Getman, World Vision International

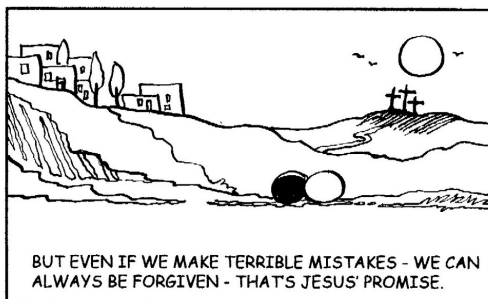
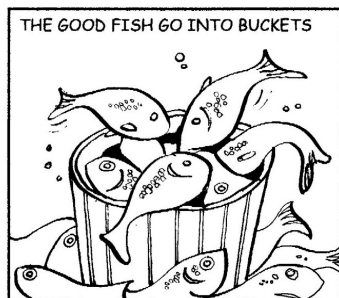
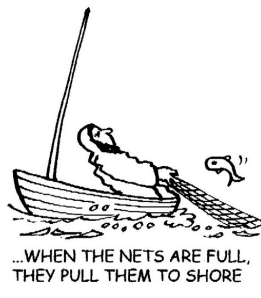
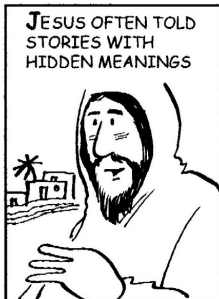
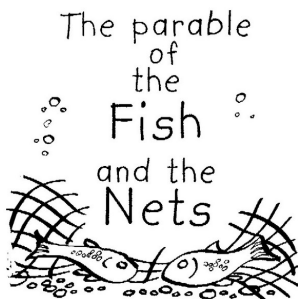
Can you find your way from top to bottom?

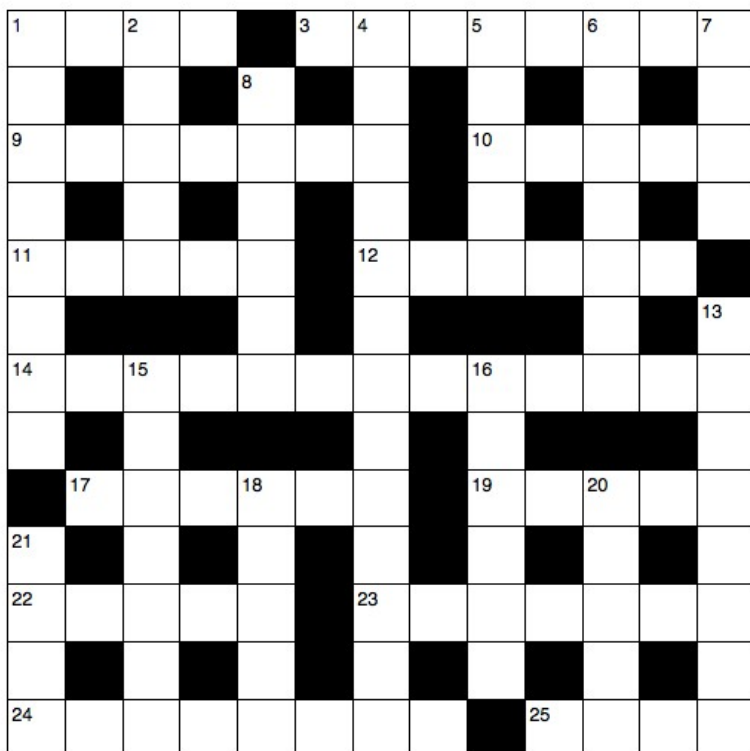


When you talk, you only repeat what you already know, but if you listen you may learn something. - Amish* school proverb.

**The Amish people are Christian church fellowships with German and Alsatian (French) origin mostly now living in USA and Canada who keep separation from many aspects of the modern world.*

For younger readers.....





Across

- 1 'Therefore let us — passing judgment on one another' (Romans 14:13) (4)
- 3 'I — — these persons here present' (Marriage service) (4,4)
- 9 According to a prearranged timetable (Numbers 28:3) (7)
- 10 Group of eight (5)
- 11 The cell into which the Philippian jailer put Paul and Silas (Acts 16:24) (5)
- 12 — Taylor, pioneer missionary to China (6)
- 14 Otherwise known as the Eucharist, Breaking of Bread, the Lord's Table (4,9)

- 17 'So that after I have preached to others, I — will not be disqualified for the prize' (1 Corinthians 9:27) (6)
- 19 Attend to (3,2)
- 22 Approximately (Acts 4:4) (5)
- 23 Tea rite (anag.) (7)
- 24 Rule of sovereign (8)
- 25 Test (anag.) (4)

Down

- 1 The name of the street where Judas lived in Damascus and where Saul of Tarsus stayed (Acts 9:11) (8)
- 2 'The playing of the merry — , sweet singing in the choir' (5)
- 4 'We have been saying that — — was credited to him as righteous' (Romans 4:9) (8,5)
- 5 Dr Martyn — Jones, famous for his ministry at Westminster Chapel (5)
- 6 Port at which Paul landed on his way to Rome (Acts 28:13) (7)
- 7 Observe (Ruth 3:4) (4)
- 8 Minister of religion (6)
- 13 'I am — of this man's blood. It is your responsibility' (Matthew 27:24) (8)
- 15 'Greater love has no one than this, that he — — his life for his friends' (John 15:13) (3,4)
- 16 Archbishop who calculated that the world began in 4004BC (6)
- 18 'No one can — the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit' (John 3:5) (5)
- 20 Establish by law (5)
- 21 Product of Gilead noted for its healing properties (Jeremiah 46:11) (4)

Solution on page 31

God and the Arts

Michael Burgess continues his look at great works of Christian art. The painting hangs in the National Gallery in London.

‘The Madonna of the Meadow’ by Giovanni Bellini

Each year as we look at Creation we see the cycle of the seasons. The earth comes alive in spring, blossoms and bears fruit in summer, gives up its goodness and glory in autumn, and seems to die in the sleep of cold winter. Each of those seasons has its moods and feelings, which we find mirrored in the turn of human life.

The joy of spring and summer go hand in hand with the sadness and resignation of autumn and winter in all that life brings us. When we look at our Lady in the Gospels, and this month of May is Mary’s month, we see that mixture of joy and sadness.

In the Annunciation and at Christmas we share in the wonder and happiness of motherhood and new birth. A Son is born, but that birth brings anxiety and strain. Those strange words of Simeon in the Temple, losing the child in Jerusalem, watching her son grow, only to be rejected and crucified – these experiences brought Mary heartache and sorrow. But her maternal love sustains her through it all, and Mary is with the disciples at the glorious moment of Pentecost.

This range of moods in creation and in the life of Mary is caught up in the painting, ‘The Madonna of the Meadow’ by Giovanni Bellini. He came from a family of Renaissance painters, and this work was created around



1500. It now hangs in the National Gallery in London. The background is full of the details of the world of nature and everyday life. We see some cows grazing and others resting. A farmer tends the livestock on one side of the painting, while a herdsman relaxes on the other. Mary in the centre is part of that creation with the blue of her robe like the sky above, while the russet shades beneath that blue mirror the earth on which she rests.

As we look more closely, we can see some disturbing signs of 'nature red in tooth and claw.' There is a bird to our left – perhaps a crane or egret – that is fighting with a snake. Above, on the top of a tall, thin, leafless tree there is another bird as black as death. We look at the babe sleeping in His mother's arms and sense His vulnerability for all her protective love. Some 30 years later Mary will cradle her Son in that same pose as His body is taken down from the cross: that heart-rending moment we know as the Pietà.

The Venetian landscape is like a peaceful May afternoon where spring is dissolving into high summer amid those contented signs of a clear sky and cows grazing. The serpent and the raven tell us that struggle and death can easily invade that scene. But they somehow pale into insignificance as we ponder that luminous affirmation of new life in the mother and child that dominate the canvas. They proclaim life; they proclaim life after death. The babe sleeping in Mary's arms will wake and grow through the seasons of life. Too soon we know His body will hang on a barren tree like the one where that bird of death perches. But that cycle of birth and spring leading to death and winter will be transformed as His risen body will walk into another landscape – the garden of Easter where the leaves never wither and the sky never darkens, for in that resurrection joy, all is life and light and life eternal.



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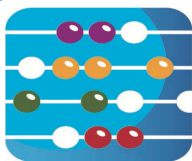
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Solution to puzzle
on page 22

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

Solution to puzzle
on page 26

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



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Remembering David Livingstone – missionary and explorer

It was 150 years ago, on 1st May 1873, that David Livingstone, the Scottish missionary and explorer, died. He was best known for his search for the sources of the Nile, and for going missing (and being found by the American journalist Henry Morton Stanley) in the wilds of Africa.

Livingstone was born in Blantyre, near Glasgow, and died of malaria and dysentery in what is now Chipundu, Zambia. He was the first European to cross the African continent from west to east and to discover the Zambesi River, the Victoria Falls and many major lakes.

His mother and father were both strict Christians, and the family was poor: he was one of seven children brought up on the top floor of a tenement. But he felt called to be a medical missionary in China; so he spent two years studying to become a doctor and was accepted by the London Missionary Society.

But the political situation in China prevented his going there, and a meeting with Robert Moffat, a well-known Scottish missionary in southern Africa, persuaded Livingstone that he should go to Africa instead. He arrived in Cape Town in 1841. He felt that Christianity, commerce and civilisation were destined to open up Africa, and he was strongly against slavery, often clashing with the Boers and Portuguese because of their treatment of the Africans.

He was awarded a gold medal and money by the British Royal Geographical Society for the first European sighting of Lake Ngami, now a birdlife conservation area in Botswana. He also found fame through the publication in 1857 of his *Missionary Travels and Researches in South Africa*, which sold more than 70,000 copies, bringing a vastly improved lifestyle for his wife Mary (Moffat's talented daughter), who had put up with his repeated absences. *Tim Lenton - Parish Pump*

Walk 10,000 steps a day – a health myth?

This goal has been a popular mantra for years, and it has even been adopted by the World Health Organisation. But the number was chosen arbitrarily in a Japanese boardroom in the 1960s. The company, Yamasa, simply dreamt up the figure in its effort to promote the world's first step counter, ahead of the Tokyo 1964 Olympics.

Instead, recent studies, including one at the University of Alabama, have found that taking between just 6,000 to 8,000 steps a day may be fine. And even if you take far less than that, then just adding an extra 500 steps a day will bring you significant health benefits. Research does suggest that it is not a great idea to take less than 5,000 steps a day.

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Ed - by my reckoning, taking the average step as 80cm that means no less than 4km a day. Some of this will be in daily chores around the house but with Spring on our doorsteps you might care to take advantage of the better weather to improve your health.

Adam and Eve's true nationality?

A Brit, a Frenchman and a Russian were viewing a painting of Adam and Eve frolicking in the Garden of Eden. "Look at that garden they are maintaining so well," mused the Brit. "They must be British."

"Nonsense," the Frenchman disagreed. "They're naked, and so beautiful. Clearly, they are French."

"Ah, but no clothes, no shoes, no shelter," the Russian pointed out, "they have only an apple to eat, and they're being told this is paradise. They are Russian."

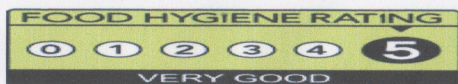


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