

THE PARISH CHURCH OF

ST JOHN



THE DIVINE

BROOKLANDS • SALE



50p

October 2020

From the Editor

Another month and another twist to the lockdown story. I did once think that I had a reasonable grasp of things but am no longer convinced. What are the rules that I need to follow to comply with the law on Covid and do I have to follow the guidance rules that some local authorities have also issued on top of them. We are told that ignorance of the law is no excuse but in these times maybe confusion over the law ought to be a fair defence. As the sands shift underneath us we need to look for solid ground. We find it in Jesus who in Matthew 7:24 says, “Anyone who listens to my teaching and follows it is wise, like a person who builds a house on solid rock. Though the rain comes in torrents and the floodwaters rise and the winds beat against that house, it won’t collapse because it is built on bedrock”. So in a world where we cannot plan simple things more than a few days ahead we can at least rely on one unchanging truth.

And we can rely on the magazine providing some interesting reading. Richard discusses how the Harvest Festival will be celebrated this year. There is a huge need for donations and although church attendance is limited please do consider contributing even if you won’t actually be in church. Or, even better, make a cash donation to the Trussell Trust. If you can’t make it to Church we provide a handy guide to a DIY Harvest Festival. Richard also raises the thorny issue of money which echoes a similar plea a century ago in our archive feature. Nothing really changes does it? Isabel provides us with a lovely reflection on her spiritual lockdown journey and John Tallis gives us another sort of journey we can consider post lockdown. The Thursday morning coffee mornings are considered by Peter Roberts and there is a piece on National Prisons Week which occurs in October. Add in Sharon’s Saint (two this month) and the usual rib ticklers and October’s magazine is complete.

Autumn is a glorious season with gorgeous colour and light. Nature’s last hurrah before it beds down for the Winter. I pray that, despite the restrictions, you will find some joy in this season.

The Editor

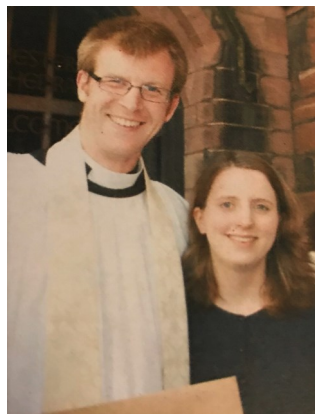
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**October
2020**

Richard writes...

The leaves are changing, the nights are drawing in, and my pumpkins have turned from green to bright orange. All of this means one thing: Autumn has arrived, my favourite season! As September begins the church's liturgical calendar marks the Season of Creation and in October we shall be celebrating our Harvest Festival. It will undoubtedly look quite different from previous years, but we shall be collecting food for the foodbank.



Harvest is a time to think say thank you to God for the abundance that we enjoy, but it is also a time to pause and think about how we use our resources, and explore opportunities to campaign for social and environmental justice. The environment is a resource that God has provided to us to steward and enjoy. When I visited Melanesia a few years ago I learned first-hand the devastating human impact that climate change is having upon the Pacific Islands.

In the early days of the current crisis there was much talk about how it was having a positive impact on the environment with fewer cars on the road, less pollution, and so on. As life begins to return to normal for so many people, we need to keep in mind our vocation to care for the environment and be faithful stewards of God's resources. One small example would be to reduce our plastic waste by using re-usable face masks rather than disposable ones.

At the end of October we will be holding our Annual Meeting of Church Members and in November we'll be publishing our budget for 2021. As we reflect on how we use our resources, it is worth keeping in mind that the current crisis has had a significant financial impact upon St John's. We have been unable to rent out our church hall or scout hut for six months. We've also been unable to hold our Garden Party or our Winter Fair, and Good as New has not been operating. Whilst these events are not run to raise funds for the parish, nevertheless they do make a sizable contribution to the finances of our parish. In 2019 they raised £10,497, accounting for 10% of our parish income.

Good as New: £5,118
Garden Party: £2,273
Winter Fair: £3,106

How could you help? Perhaps you could reflect on these questions:

How much would you have typically spent at Good as New each week?

How much would you have spent at the Garden Party?

How much would you normally have spent at the Winter Fair?

It could be quite possible that you may have spent between £3 to £5 at Good as New each week which would equate to around £13 to £20 per month and then around £10 at the Garden Party and another £10 at the Winter Fair. If this were the case then it's the equivalent of around £160 which, if Gift Aided, would be worth in the region of £200!

If I may, could I invite you to consider whether you are in the position to make a one-off gift to St John's as we continue to weather the storm? Perhaps you could join our planned giving scheme and make a monthly contribution to support our mission and ministry here in Brooklands?

I fully recognise that your answer to the above may be no. Everyone's circumstances are different and so many people have been significantly affected by the crisis, but if you are in a position to give then this would be greatly appreciated as we begin to look ahead to 2021.

Many of us have been enjoying our gardens during lockdown and as we look ahead to next year, one idea I have would be for us to use the flowers, fruit and vegetables we have grown at our Harvest Festival. Watch this space! But in the meantime, here are some things we can look forward to during October:

On **4th October** we'll be holding our **Harvest Festival**. Please could you fill a shoe box of tinned food and drop it off at the vicarage at least 72 hours before the Sunday so it can be safely quarantined.

On the **31st October** we'll be running our **Pumpkin Party at Home**. Due to current Covid-19 restrictions we're unlikely to be able to hold our annual Pumpkin Party as we normally would. This year we're putting together packs with plenty of ideas and suggestions to help you run your own Pumpkin Party at home. If you'd like to receive a pack please contact me and I will send one out to you.

Finally, over the past number of weeks I have mentioned that we're creating a variety of **Connect Groups** in the parish. Connect Groups are the best way to belong to our church family and provide an opportunity to connect with God, with others, and with our local community. We're in the process of creating a variety of groups so that everyone has an opportunity to belong so I'd encourage you to sign up ASAP! You can do this online or by contact me directly.

Richard

From the Archives

Oct 1920

The October 1920 magazine began with reference to the fact that holidays were over and that people were preparing for winter. It seems that at the time there was a major coal strike threatened and the magazine reported the fact that there appeared to be an amicable settlement possible. This would avoid a lot of suffering and prayers were asked for this to happen. (Ed. Note Sadly there was a mining strike the following year. During the War years the coal industry had been nationalised but it was returned to the former owners in the midst of a huge slump in demand. After a three month strike the miners were forced to return to work with a one third reduction in pay, which was a worse deal than had been available when the strike commenced. Industrial peace was shortlived as the General Strike of 1926 was soon to come.)

As now, finance was still a big issue. The Harvest Thanksgiving Service was shortly to take place and was linked with a plea for further financial assistance to the Church. The PCC had estimated a deficit of £100 for the year and was asking that at the Harvest Festival additional Thanksgiving offerings would be gifted. The envelope scheme was proving popular and while it was hoped that that would increase annual income there would still be a deficit for the year. That deficit would be increased due to the need to repair the organ. A not inconsiderable amount of £800 was estimated as being needed to make the necessary repairs. Some of the money to fund this would come from the Bazaar due in November. Regular readers will remember the excitement that this was generating and requests had gone out to stall holders to make sure that they were ready for this big event.

October 1970

Reverend Buckley's October letter was on the subject of prayer. He used the words of William Temple (former Archbishop of Canturbury and Bishop of Manchester) to explain how prayer was something more than wishful thinking. It was speaking to God and required the mind to be focused on God. He provided a quote from William Temple to illustrate this.



“We are not, in our prayers, trying to suggest to God something he has not thought of. That would plainly be ridiculous. Nor are we trying to change his mind. That would be an enterprise blasphemous in the attempt, and calamitous in the accomplishment. He knows what we want before we ask it. Then why ask? Why? ...because the worst of all diseases of the soul is forgetfulness of God; and if everything that we need came to us while we forgot God, we should only be confirmed in our forgetfulness of him.”

Elsewhere in the magazine there was some Church news. The Mothers' Union 'at home' raised £17 and 10 shillings for the Mothers Union' overseas work. There was also a report on the first meeting of the Men's Society, annual subscription 5 shillings. We are told that this was also attended by some of the men from Saint Anne's church who provided a reciprocal invitation to hear a talk on 'Rome with slides'!. The magazine also showed that there had been some anguished discussions about the Christmas Fair. The Fair Committee wanted to make public their decision that there would be no 'absurd price reductions' at the end of the day. They felt it 'no encouragement to people who had spent long hours in making something for the Fair to see it disappearing for a pittance'. It was decided that anything left over would be donated to Oxfam or some other charity. Stall holders were also warned that no item could be sold before the opening time. Obviously there were some naughty stallholders last year!

Saints Crispin and Crispinian

Little is known about Crispin and Crispinian, they were probably Roman. Their cult grew up around Soissons, due to their relics being translated to there. Shoemakers by trade, they operated in Gaul, preaching and selling shoes to avoid relying on alms. Legend has it that they escaped to England, to avoid persecution, where they lived in Faversham. The house they lived in was situated on the site of the Swan Inn. An altar in Faversham church is said to have belonged to Crispin and Crispinian. They are also mentioned in Shakespeare's Henry V. Being martyred circa 285, they are the patron saints of shoemakers, cobblers and leather workers.

Feast day 25 October



Saints Crispin and Crispinian



Do It Yourself Harvest festival

As Autumn approaches our thoughts inevitably turn to the Harvest Festival. Hands up those who remember wrapping up a box of foodstuffs in tinfoil for taking up to the altar. This year with reduced numbers in Church, the absence of our uniformed organisations and the need to quarantine tins of peas for three days, the Harvest celebrations will be somewhat muted. So, why not do it yourself with the magazine's handy DIY guide to Harvest Festivals.

As we all know, the Harvest Festival has a number of essential components-

- Thankfulness
- Harvest decorations
- An offering
- Some stonking good hymns

So, what is stopping you doing that at home? Even better, pass this onto friends and family and get them to join in the fun.

Begin with some 'thankfulness'. It is traditional to say thanks to those who produce our food but this year we have cause to thank the whole food chain for seeing us through the early weeks of the pandemic. It seems a distant memory since we had to go out hunting for loo roll and there was more chance seeing an albatross than a bag of bread flour. During the panic, and facing what were health risks, lots of people, many on minimum wage, stepped up to deliver. So, let's include supermarket workers and delivery drivers in our prayers.

You can make your own Harvest decorations. Whether that is an artfully staged installation of tinned goods or a basket of vegetables and the last flowers from your garden just make something. Then photograph it and send it to the magazine and we will put the images in the online version next month.

Richard has described how you can make an offering through Church but you can also make one by cash (<https://www.trusselltrust.org/get-help/find-a-foodbank/wythenshawe/>) or donate food via one of the baskets in most supermarkets.

To complete the picture sing along to 'We Plough the Fields and Scatter' or 'Come Ye Thankful People Come'. Search on youtube and there are plenty of versions.

There we have it. A DIY Harvest. Enjoy. But do remember that as well as celebrating God's bounty we are also considering our role as stewards of the planet. Maybe then resolve over the next year to make a positive contribution to reduce your environmental footprint: reduce food waste; turn off a few lights (please darling); try and walk a little more; and use fewer disposables. Happy Harvest.

The Venerable Alan Wolstencroft

It is with sadness that we have to report the recent death of Canon Alan Wolstencroft, who was Vicar of St Johns from 1980-1991. Following a period of ill health, he died on 16th September. Alan served his whole life in the Diocese ending as a Residentiary Canon at Manchester Cathedral. He remained active in church affairs well into retirement. Parishioners from that time will remember him with affection. Our prayers are with his wife, Christine, and the family.

<https://www.manchester.anglican.org/news/2020/09/16/ven-alan-wolstencroft-rip/>



God in the Arts

The Revd Michael Burgess continues his series on animals and birds as seen in art and scripture... this month he considers 'St Francis of Assisi preaching to the fish' by Luc-Olivier Merson.

On 4th October we give thanks for one of the most loved saints in the church - Francis of Assisi. He died in 1226, but his example and witness have lived on to inspire Christians through the centuries.

His was a life focused on the crib and the cross, Lady Poverty and the stigmata, suffering and transfiguration. But also, it was a life marked by a deep love of creation: St Francis had a special nearness to all creatures great and small. As we read the stories of Thomas of Celano, we learn how he tamed a wolf in Gubbio, how swallows would chirp and fly around his head, how his faithful donkey wept as the saint approached death, and in this month's painting, how fish would come to the shore to hear him preach. Thomas relates how Francis returned some fish that had been caught to the water, telling them not to be caught again. They lingered near the boat, listening to the saint until he gave them permission to leave.

The sermon to the fish is portrayed in this work by Luc-Olivier Merson, a French artist who lived from 1846 to 1920. He is better known for his work with designs for banknotes, postage stamps, and the basilica of Sacré - Coeur in Montmartre. Here in this canvas, we see St Francis with followers young and old, a faithful dog and the fish at the water's edge.

What was the saint telling them? I think that they were loved and valued as part of the rich tapestry of God's creation, and they must return that love. It is the mood of the Benedicite where all things that move in the earth, the skies and the seas are exhorted to praise the Lord and magnify him forever. St Francis captures that mood in his own Canticle of the Sun.

In the weeks and months of lockdown many of us have had the time to look afresh at our relationship with the world of nature as we have journeyed through the seasons of spring and summer. We have learnt to wonder at the richness and variety of creation. We need to take that lesson into the 'new normal' as restrictions are gradually relaxed. The clock and the complexity of life may easily take over again, but St Francis is inviting us to journey with him in simplicity and joy as we praise God with all His creatures:

*'Let all things their Creator bless
and worship Him in humbleness.'*



St John's Coffee Mornings a Success Story

Before my retirement in 1999, Valerie and I made occasional visits to the Thursday coffee mornings at Saint John's and we're very impressed with the welcome we received, the bonhomie - and the bargains! The initial idea of coffee with a "Mini Market" was, I understand, the brainchild of Sheila Hunter, both to raise funds for the church organ appeal and as a social event appealing especially to the lonely elderly parishioners. 20th May 1993 saw the doors open and the activities commence.

Under the titles of "Good as New" and "Seconds to Spare" the events became a great success, some five stalls eventually becoming established. These sold tea, coffee and cakes, books, clothes and bedding, Bric- a-Brac with toys and DIY, the latter becoming a sort of "bargain basement". The financial achievement of the venture is realised when we note the total of £262,485.33 has been raised for church funds.

The financial side was not the only purpose of the coffee mornings. On the social side, the pleasure of those attending was considerable. With the pianist playing pleasant background music-many loved tunes from the 50s and 60s included, the mainly older people chatting away happily, a wonderful atmosphere prevailed. This was especially so when a raffle was organised and a bewildering selection of many prizes was distributed to the lucky winners. These gatherings also gave opportunity for discussing any problems, with church officials present and a Police Support Officer and Councillor occasionally joined us.

My own involvement started in 1999 when, newly retired, I offered my services. Rex Collins asked if I could help on the tea and coffee stall, where a lady was wishing to stand down due to health problems. I accepted and have been pouring tea and coffee ever since, and seeing the array of delicious homemade cakes, baked by a willing band of helpers.

Time passes and in more recent years the attendance has fallen with younger folk not replacing our losses. Proceedings came to an abrupt halt on 16th March 2020 with the corona virus pandemic. Will we be able to restart? Well, social distancing will make it difficult, and the, by now, high age profile (to put it diplomatically) of many of the helpers could also be a problem. However one should never say "Never".



I feel we can look back with pride and thank all the many who gave so much time and effort to achieve so much success. Of the founder members just Pamela Tallis is with us, and has faithfully looked after the clothes for 27 years. To give all names would be almost impossible, but we always felt our “Captain” to be Llew. His constant hard work, week by week was inspirational and must be recorded. Incidentally, on the very few occasions he was unable to join us, I was able to tell people cheerfully we’re clueless this week!

Peter Roberts

December Edition

As readers will know, December marks the last ever St John’s Parish Magazine. The intention is to commemorate all there is about St John’s, so if there is anything you ever wanted to say, this is your final chance. That might be about one of the organisations, some memory or even a wish for Christmas or 2021. Contributions please to the Editor at brooklandsmag@gmail.com by end October. Or if you don’t use email please call on 07805 849481.

October Baptismal Anniversaries

13th October James Jagger



Attentive Listening...

As I write, it is now six months since the spread of the coronavirus led to our country in lockdown. What a journey that has been for all of us! I wonder how you are feeling today. In telephone conversations I have had recently, it seems we are all going through waves of mixed emotions. A few weeks ago, Sue and I joined Durham Cathedral's online Quiet Day on the Feast of the Transfiguration. In the final address of the day, the Dean shared his thoughts and feelings:

"As we journey together through this extraordinary time of pandemic, I confess to feeling overwhelmed at times. It's been the sheer barrage of news, 24/7, a constant background noise. Not so much a hum, as a continuous scream of anxiety, fear, blame, anger ... wearying, depressing, shocking and exhausting as time has gone on."

As someone trained to attend to what God is saying in and through the world, he began to think more closely about attentive listening, attending and listening. Alongside his overwhelming experience of the understandable focus of the world's media on the pandemic, he found himself listening to a different voice ...a voice coming from the environment in which he lived. This was the theme of his talk .."Attentive Listening".

Durham Cathedral's position is spectacular, high up on a rocky promontory on the River Wear. The Dean described in the most beautiful detail the journey of the river, from its source high in the Pennines, to its arrival in Durham, and continuing to wend its way onwards until heading out to sea at Wearmouth. This fantastic landscape carved out through the force of nature in the river is home to a succession of spiritual landmarks, like signposts along a path, a pilgrimage through the tradition of the northern saints. It was easy to imagine we were actually there, overwhelmed by the beauty, joy and wonder of God's creation. (I sensed that Sue's suggestion many months ago that we should walk the way of St Cuthbert, may soon be back on her agenda!) This quiet and peaceful journey took us away for a time from the worries, fears and concerns of the ongoing pandemic.

On our quiet day, I spent time reflecting on how I have coped with life since lockdown began. As I'm sure many would agree, the warm sunny weather we experienced in the first few months certainly helped. I tried to get out for a walk to get some exercise and fresh air most days, usually very early! I still enjoy my first cup of tea of the day in the garden, although I now need more layers over my jammies! (Our garden is not overlooked!) This is the time I feel closest to God. Often I have lots to say, but sometimes it's enough just to be still.

I feel blessed that throughout this difficult time I have been able to join with many others near and far in worship and prayer online. I have attended worship more often than I ever could in person, and in so doing I have been sustained spiritually beyond all I might have imagined.

I like to journal, but since March, I have also found pleasure in taking pictures of plants, flowers and trees as they changed with the seasons ... in noticing and taking time to look more carefully at patterns, colours, textures and intricate detail ... in learning to identify different birds and their songs ... in being surprised to come across a creature of God unexpectedly, most recently a very handsome fox appearing from behind the shed. After a few seconds of eye to eye contact he wandered off next door.

The Dean suggested that attentive listening can help us in an extraordinary way.

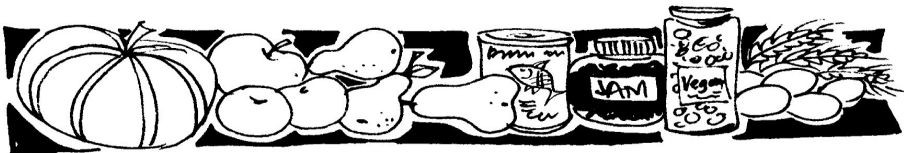
“This is the kind of attentiveness that reminds us that these good gifts of God in creation are not new, they haven’t suddenly appeared, it’s simply that I have now paid them attention. I’ve attended to their being. And in attending to this beauty, the pain and anguish of the current time is transformed, not forgotten but set within context.”

God speaks to us in so many different ways. I have found great comfort and reassurance through words of scripture. The lectionary readings from recent weeks have provided many texts to hold on to! *“Take heart, it is I; do not be afraid.”* As Jesus spoke to his frightened disciples in the midst of the storm on Lake Galilee, he is speaking to us too, and St Paul reminds us in his letter to the Romans that *‘nothing in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus, our Lord!’*

Meeting up with friends in the park, when restrictions allowed, has been another blessing. As a church family, keeping in touch by phone or online has helped us to care for each other. In listening and in sharing, anxieties and concerns have been eased.

May we continue to be attentive listeners as we journey on together.

Isabel



Places to visit after lock-down: ancient churchyard yew trees

John Tallis asks

What do you know about the history of Christianity in Wales? Did you know that 52 years before Saint Augustine arrived in Canterbury (in A.D. 597) carrying the Christian message from Rome, delegates from all over Wales had met at a remote village in Cardiganshire (Llanddewi Brefi) to discuss the way forward for Christianity in Wales? You may know that when the two parties eventually met, one of the sticking points for co-operation was the date of Easter. But the differences were much more fundamental than that.

The Celtic Christianity that was flourishing in Wales relied heavily on the desire for a solitary life, where one was alone with God, and not one where society was ever-present, organised and regimented. The hundreds of villages throughout Wales today with names beginning with 'Llan' and followed by an obscure Saint's name, started life as remote and personal refuges (often in a cave or beneath a yew tree) in the wilderness that was Wales then. To these refuges, like-minded disciples were gradually drawn, often initially to seek herbal remedies for illnesses, and then settled nearby. It was here that the saint was buried (often beneath 'his' yew tree).

Many herbal remedies then were based on the healing properties of the leaves and berries of the yew tree (which were also highly poisonous if used improperly). Because of its curative properties, its ability to retain its leaves throughout the year, and, above all, its longevity, the yew was regarded as a sacred tree in early Christian Wales. There are more old yew trees still surviving in Wales than anywhere else in the world; and these old trees are concentrated in the border counties of Denbighshire, Wrexham, Powys and Monmouthshire (and to a lesser extent in the corresponding English counties of Cheshire, Shropshire and Herefordshire). More than 150 yew trees with a trunk girth (circumference) of 17 feet or more occur here. The largest trees have massive hollow trunks which need five persons with outstretched arms and standing finger-tip-to finger-tip to encircle them.

There has been growing interest in old yew trees in the last 40 years, ever since an eccentric ex-soldier called Allen Meredith had recurrent dreams in which he was haunted by the impending demise of these magnificent trees because of lack of interest in them. He cycled all over England and Wales hunting out old yew trees and seeking information about them; and, by arousing the support of television personality David Bellamy, bringing them to public notice. Many of the oldest yew trees now have plaques displayed by them, or certificates on display within the church, with suggested ages for these trees.

These ages range from about 1,500 years old to more than 4,000 - making them the oldest trees in Britain, and among the oldest living things in the world. 'Impossible', say the sceptics (pointing to the lack of any firm scientific evidence). Some visionaries, on the other hand, have even suggested that the star which shone on Bethlehem also shone on the yew tree at Bettws Newydd (Monmouthshire); and that, according to a letter to *The Times*, allegedly from the Darley Dale Yew, Derbyshire, "my age is fabulous, and learned naturalists now calculate that I must have been born 300 years before the gospel was planted in this country". Less credible are the claims that the Defynnog Yew in Powys "might have watched the Hebrews' flight from slavery long before David's psalms were sung"; and even that the Ashbrittle Yew in Somerset was already mature when Stonehenge was in use.

However fanciful these statements may seem, what does seem probable is that the oldest yew trees date back to the coming of Celtic Christianity to Wales - and that seeking out the oldest, and biggest, yew trees is somehow to follow in the footsteps of the earliest Christian missionaries. All these trees are in the churchyards of churches which are dedicated in many cases to these missionaries. Most missionary saints (the 'hermits') have only one or two churches dedicated to them; but a small number are remembered in several or many churches. These are the true 'missionaries', travelling many miles on foot or by boat to spread the (Celtic) Christian message. Saint David is the best-known of these (and has the most churches dedicated to him); but others are Saint Illtyd, Saint Teilo, Saint Cadog, Saint Padarn, Saint Deiniol, Saint Dyfrig and Saint Beuno. Have you heard of any of them? Why don't you, after lockdown is over and the churches are open again, seek out some of these churches, look for possible old yew trees in their churchyards, and meditate on these intrepid, but little-known, Celtic Saints? Some of the best yew churches are given below.

My last word is from the plaque next to the old yew tree at Darley Dale in Derbyshire (not a true Celtic yew, but a very persuasive one). "There can be little doubt that this grand old tree has given shelter to the early Britons when planning the construction of the dwellings which they erected not many yards to the west of this tree; and has witnessed the host of Christian worshippers who from that day to this have been borne under its hoary limbs to the baptismal font, and then upon men's shoulders to their last sleeping place beneath the tree, in the soil that gave it birth."

Some yew churches to visit: Eastham (Cheshire); Gresford (Wrexham); Llansilin (Powys); Nantglyn and Llangwm (Denbighshire); Llangernyw and Pennant Melangell (Conwy); Church Preen and Hope Bagot (Shropshire); and (the best) Linton (Herefordshire).

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Prisons Week 11-17 October

Prisons or being captive feature on a number of occasions in the Bible. Joseph was briefly placed in a pit before eventually ending up in an Egyptian prison. Various other Old Testament characters found themselves locked up and in the New Testament, Paul was regularly incarcerated. Indeed many of letters were written while he was imprisoned. Around the world there are many people locked away for their Christian beliefs. Fortunately that does not happen here, although in the UK we do imprison a lot of people. England and Wales has the highest per capita rate of imprisonment in Europe with 143 per 100,000 population. As you read this ponder on which country you think has the highest rate in the world? England and Wales also has a jail occupancy rate of 112.7%, which means it has 112 people in cells built for 100 across the estate. Being kind to prisoners is not currently flavour of the month politically and so it shouldn't be. After all they all bad 'uns and they wouldn't be banged up if they weren't would they? And yet, meet a few and they seem just normal men and women who have made bad decisions and are often more in need of help than punishment. Yes, there are people who do merit being locked up to protect the rest of us, but far fewer than you would think.

Prison Fellowship (PF) is an organisation that follows the Biblical imperative to go into prisons. In Matthew 25: 34-40 Jesus tells his disciples that, among other things, visiting someone in prison was the same as if they were visiting him there. The writer of Hebrews in chapter 13:3 requires us to remember those in prison as if you were with them. The PF strap line is 'We believe that no one is beyond hope' and then asks, 'do you?'. PF volunteers believe this through delivering a range of programmes. The biggest is the 'Sycamore Tree' course which normally runs in over 60 prisons and aims to get prisoners to take responsibility for their actions by understanding the harm they have caused. Because of Covid, volunteers cannot currently enter prisons but there are signs that is changing. In a response to this, PF launched 'Prayerline', a service whereby prisoners can request prayers for specific things. These are passed on to a prayer team who then spend time representing these men and women before God. Reading some of these requests dispels many of the myths about prison and prisoners. Many relate to prisoners' children, often mentioning that they are in care. Finally, as we come towards Christmas, there is 'Angel Tree'. This is a scheme whereby volunteers buy gifts on behalf of parents in prison and send them to their children. Each prisoner can write a message and it is as if the parent has provided the gift.

Like many other charities, PF is struggling so do please hold them in your prayers or even consider a donation. Have a look at the website <https://prisonfellowship.org.uk/> it contains lots of information and an introductory video. And the answer to the poser earlier? The USA which imprisons 655 people per 100,000.



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And in case you thought there were no funnies...

Some Quickies

I went to the new Indian restaurant. I ordered their special Pelican Madras. The bill was huge.

Nothing embarrasses a psychic more than throwing them a surprise party.

My friend keeps saying, "It could be worse, you could be stuck in the ground in a hole full of water". I know he means well.

I hear proofreading is being abolished... is nothing scared

My friend thinks he's a chocolate orange. I'm worried he's going to be sectioned.

I got really hot decorating my front room. The paint tin said put on three coats.

I've been teaching my four year old Spanish during lockdown but he still can't pronounce the Spanish for please. I think that's poor for four.

I just saw a local burglar kicking his own front door in. I asked him what he was doing. He replied, "Working from home."

The police officer asked me where I had been between 5 and 6. He seemed irritated when I answered "kindergarten."

The cable repairman was on my street and asked me what time it was. I told him it was between 1:00 pm and 5:00 pm.

It's now been a year since my herb garden was stolen. Where did all the thyme go?

Mrs Editor

Mrs Editor sent me a text last week. "Your wonderful", it said. So I replied, "No, you're wonderful". She was very happy. Should I tell her I was only correcting her grammar?

One from Sharon

A couple died and went to heaven. After being there a week, Saint Peter called to see how they were getting on. "Very nicely. Thank you." They said. When Saint Peter had gone. The husband said to the wife, "If you hadn't insisted on all that health food. We could have enjoyed this much sooner".

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Adders: A Postscript

Readers may remember one of last month's jokes about some snakes not being able to go forth and multiply because they were adders. How we all laughed. Peter Roberts provides a satisfying conclusion to the sorry tale. It seemed that, after some thought, Noah chopped up some trees for the poor creatures and, lo and behold, when he next visited them, lots of baby adders. How was this possible you ask? They used logs! Peter thinks nobody under 40 will get this.

Online Version

The online version has full colour and some added content. Do take a look and please pass on the link to friends and family via whatever social media you use. It can be found on the Church website.

Stjohnsbrooklands.org.uk and look under the 'Contacts and Links' tab..

The Parish Church of

St. John the Divine, Brooklands

*In the Deanery of Withington, In the Diocese of Manchester,
In the Province of York*

Website: www.stjohnsbrooklands.org.uk

Due to current restrictions, normal Sunday Services are suspended but opportunities to worship both in the Church building and online are available. Booking and online access details are given in the weekly notice sheet. If you do not receive this then please contact Rev. Richard Sherratt by email vicarbrooklands@gmail.com

9.30am A spoken Communion in Church.

Unfortunately due to Covid restrictions this is by ticket only. A link to book is sent out in the weekly update.

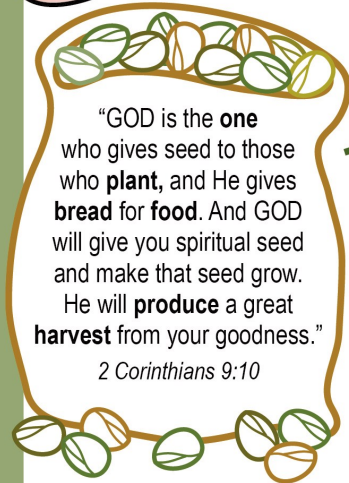
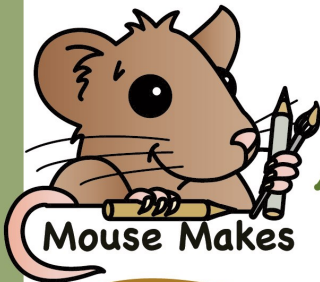
10.30am Online worship.

11.15am Zoom Coffee.

If you wish to pray privately in Church please contact Richard.

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"GOD is the **one** who gives seed to those who **plant**, and He gives **bread** for **food**. And GOD will give you spiritual seed and make that seed grow. He will **produce** a great **harvest** from your goodness."
2 Corinthians 9:10

Look out for seeds in the park and garden and in your kitchen store cupboard.

How many different seeds can you find?

Jesus said:
 "The kingdom of heaven is like a _____ **seed** that a man took and sowed in his **field**. It is the _____ of all the seeds, but when it has grown it becomes a tree, so that the wild _____ come and nest in its branches."

Read Matthew 13:31-32

Jesus said:
 "You do not need more **faith**. There is no 'more' or 'less' in faith. If you have a bare kernel of faith, say the size of a poppy seed, you could say to this sycamore tree
 "Go jump into the lake" and it would do it."
Luke 17:6

So the one who plants is not important, and the one who **waters** is not important. Only **GOD** is important because He is the one who makes things grow."
1 Corinthians 3:7

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

Find the words in **bold** on this page in the word search

