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St Peters Braunstone



Holy Apostles

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Together



Grow
Together



St Anne



St Margaret

Pray
Together



Be
Together



St Paul and St Augustine

Mission Partnership



Who's Who in the Benefice

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For more information go to the web site at
www.stanneschurchleicester.wordpress.com

or

www.stpaulscommunity.co.uk



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In This Months Magazine

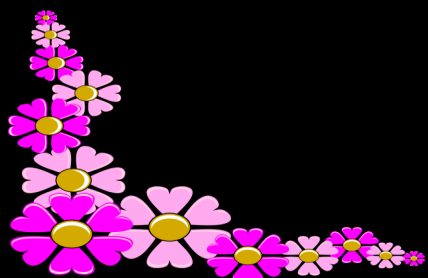


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Claire Wilson
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St. Margaret's Church

Coffee Morning 10am-12noon
Every First Saturday of the Month
Come for a cuppa, a chat and a
few stalls to see



PASTORAL LETTER

July is normally a month for endings, the end of the academic year, and the beginning of the long summer holidays. But this month I also want to think about beginnings as well as the endings.

Last month, I travelled to Hove to attend the Licensing of my best friend Catriona. She has just moved from York Minster to Hove to become the Vicar of All Saints Church. While I will miss visiting York and staying in The Close with a view of the Minster spires from my bedroom window. I enjoyed visiting Hove, and I am looking forward to getting to know the area a bit more.

The licensing service marks the beginning of a new ministry. At Ordination as a Deacon, Priest and every new post, clergy get a physical piece of paper, with the bishop's seal on it, giving us official permission to take services and do all the other things that we do on a day-to-day basis. And it is not just clergy who hold licenses to minister. Lay ministers, including Readers, Pastoral Assistants and Evangelists are also commissioned by the bishop on behalf of the church too.

While this seems a rather formal and strange aspect of the Church of England it has a long tradition in the church. If we look at the book of Acts, we can see time and again how the church and apostles identified new ministries and minsters through prayer and discernment. We might use job application forms and interviews these days, but they are still prayerful processes of discernment.

While God is a God of new beginnings, in that he offers a chance to start over fresh with mercy and forgiveness. God also does not throw away what has gone before. God takes our past triumphs and tragedies and builds upon that for the Kingdom of God. Just as God used all of Paul's past experiences as a Pharisee, his knowledge of the Torah, his rhetorical ability, his passion for the God of Israel to found and support churches across the Mediterranean. God will use all of Catriona's past experiences in York as she begins her new ministry in Hove.

So, whatever you are doing in July and August, coming to the end of something or preparing for the beginning of something new, never forget that in God, all things are possible, and whatever has gone before will be transformed into something new and Godly.

With love in Christ
Rev'd Liz Wilson

SEA SUNDAY – 14TH JULY

Look around your home. How much of the contents of your bedroom, kitchen, living room and even garage came to you over the seas, via the great merchant ships? What would your home be like without them?

Yet when did you last give a thought to the people who bring them to you?

It is a curious fact that seafarers are one of the most important, and yet invisible, people groups in our society. We depend on them to bring us more than 90% of the world's goods and fuels, yet we rarely even remember their existence.

It suddenly makes Sea Sunday seem a very good idea: an annual opportunity to give thanks for the 1.89 million seafarers of the world, and to pray for their personal well-being. For going to sea is a lonely occupation. It separates families for up to nine months on end. It is also one of the world's most dangerous occupations, with physically demanding work as well as the threat of piracy, shipwreck and even abandonment.

So this Sea Sunday, let's pause and give thanks to God for the seafarers of the world. Let's remember how their work so enriches our lives. Let's pray for them, for their families, and let's support the organisations that offer them care and support through their chaplaincy work.

One such is The Mission to Seafarers, which has Seafarers Centres in 50 countries, and offers not only practical support such as access to Wi-Fi and a place to relax, but also emotional and spiritual aid through its ordained Port Chaplains, who are constantly visiting the ships.

A PRAYER FOR SEA SUNDAY

A prayer of praise Almighty God, Creator; All things, from the greatest to the smallest owe their origin to You. As we look at the sea in all its moods, And think of the life that it contains We are reminded of how wonderful You are.

We consider the mighty waves, And we remember Your power; We think of the countless creatures Who make their homes in or on or beneath the waves, And we wonder at Your generosity; We think of rock pools, filled with life, And we marvel at Your attention to detail.

We think of the ocean depths, And we realise that there is no end to Your knowledge and understanding. Yet even the sea, in all its variety and richness Only gives us a glimpse of how marvellous You are In every possible way.

Gracious God, for all that You are, And for all that You will be. We praise Your Holy Name. **Amen.**



Available in Church or 07887657227

First and Third Saturday of the month, 10.30am, Allotment Prayers at Boynton Road Allotments

SERVICES FOR AUGUST

Sunday 4 August (Tenth Sunday after Trinity)

9.30am Eucharist, St Anne's
11.00am Eucharist, St Paul and St Augustine's
11.00am Benefice Telephone Church, Tel. 033 3113 3356,
Room no. 72775483#, Pin no. 1459#
6.00pm Patronal Festival Evensong, St Anne's

Sunday 11 August (Eleventh Sunday after Trinity)

9.30am All Age Worship, St Anne's
11.00am Communion by Extension, St Paul and St Augustine's
11.00am Benefice Telephone Church, Tel. 033 3113 3356,
Room no. 72775483#, Pin no. 1459#
6.00pm BCP Communion, St Anne's

Saturday 17 August

4.00pm Messy Church, St Anne's Hall and Church

Sunday 18 August (Twelfth Sunday after Trinity)

9.30am Eucharist, St Anne's
11.00am Eucharist, St Paul and St Augustine's
11.00am Benefice Telephone Church, Tel. 033 3113 3356,
Room no. 72775483#, Pin no. 1459#
6.00pm Evensong, St Anne's

Sunday 25 August (Thirteenth Sunday after Trinity)

9.30am All Age Eucharist, St Anne's
11.00am Eucharist, St Paul and St Augustine's
11.00am Benefice Telephone Church, Tel. 033 3113 3356,
Room no. 72775483#, Pin no. 1459#
3.00pm Community Sing, St Paul and St Augustine's
6.00pm Evensong, St Anne's

**Every Wednesday 9.30am Eucharist, St Anne's and 4.00pm Trinity Meditation,
St Paul and St Augustine's**

Every Thursday 9.30am Eucharist, St Paul and St Augustine's

Third Wednesday and Thursday of the month, 9.30am, Healing Eucharist

**First and Third Saturday of the month, 10.30am, Allotment Prayers at Boynton
Road Allotments**

TABLE TOP SALE



10 AM - 1 PM

REFRESHMENTS AVAILABLE!

SATURDAY JULY 13TH

& AUGUST 10TH

**ST PAUL'S & ST AUGUSTINE'S WORSHIP CENTRE
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**TUESDAY 10AM WEEKLY
COFFEE MORNING**

COMMUNITY



TOGETHER

**ST PAULS & ST AUGUSTINES
WORSHIP CENTRE**

**WEDNESDAY 2PM WEEKLY
COMMUNITY HUB**



COMMUNITY SONGS OF PRAISE



3 pm Sunday 25th August

COME AND JOIN US! REFRESHMENTS TO FOLLOW!

ST PAUL'S & ST AUGUSTINE'S WORSHIP CENTRE

READINGS FOR JULY AND AUGUST

The reference underlined are the readings for St Anne's and Benefice Telephone Church

Date	First Reading	Psalm	Second Reading	Gospel
7 July Benefice Eucharist/ TC	2 Sam 5:1-5, 9-10 Jer 20:1-11a	48 64	<u>2 Cor 12:2-20</u> Rom 14:1-17	<u>Mark 6:1-13</u>
Evensong				
14 July All Age Worship/ Eucharist/TC/ BCP Communion	2 Sam 6:1-5, 12b-19	24	<u>Eph 1:3-14</u>	<u>Mark 6: 14-29</u>
21 July Eucharist/TC	2 Sam 7:1- 14a	89:20- 37	Eph 2:11-end	<u>Mark 6: 30-34, 53-end</u>
Evensong	Job 13:13 - 14:6	73: 21-end	Heb 2:5-end	
28 July Patronal Festival/ TC	<u>Jer 3:14-17</u>			<u>Matt 13:18- 23</u>
Evensong	Job 28	88:1-10	Heb 11:17-31	
4 August Eucharist/TC	2 Sam 11:26 – 12:13a	51:1-13	<u>Eph 4:1-16</u>	<u>John 6:24- 35</u>
Patronal Festival Evensong	Ezek 43:17- end	94	Jam 4:13 – 5:6	
11 August All Age Worship/ Eucharist/TC BCP Eucharist	2 Sam 18:5-9, 155, 31-33	130	<u>Eph 4:25 – 5:2</u>	<u>John 6:35, 41-51</u>
18 August Eucharist/TC	1 Kings 2:10- 12, 3:3-14	111	<u>Eph 5:15-20</u>	<u>John 6:51- 58</u>
Evensong	Exod 2:23 – 3:10	100	Heb 13:1-15	
25 August Eucharist/TC	1 Kings 8:22- 30, 41-43	84	<u>Eph 6:10-20</u>	<u>John 6:56- 69</u>
Evensong	Exod 4:27 – 5:1	116: 10-end	Heb 13:16-21	

The Blessed Trinity



**A Service of Meditation
St Paul's with St Augustine's
starts Wednesday 4.00pm**

ST PAUL'S WITH ST AUGUSTINE'S FUNDRAISING PAGE

The Table Top Sale held on June 8th raised £796 including pre-sales of homemade and sales from the Community Hub) for Church funds with £110 being sent in support of the work of RAINBOWS (see RAINBOWS page on Website) and £110 in Contribution to Leicester Diocese.

The next Table Top Sales will be held on Saturday 13th July and Saturday 10th August

Any donations for the forthcoming Table Top Sale will be gratefully received – contact Dave 07800746121

The MAY 100 Fund draw took place after the service on 26th MAY.

Winning Number

£50 92

Congratulations to the winner

WOULD YOU LIKE TO JOIN THE 100 FUND?

The following numbers are available:-

1, 12, 14, 18, 23, 27, 34, 38, 40, 41, 45, 48, 49, 51, 52, 73, 76, 79, 84, 85, 89, 91, 96, 97, 98 and 99.

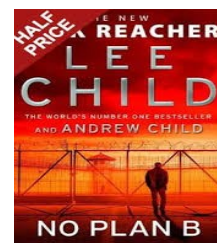
*If you are interested in joining the 100 Fund then please contact Dave on 07800746121 or email dave1960king@hotmail.com

The winner of the JUNE 100 Fund draw due to be held on Sunday 30th JUNE will be announced in September's magazine along with the winners of the July 100 fund draw.

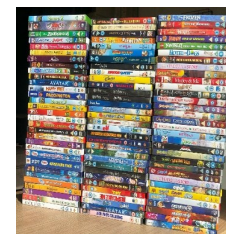
“APPEAL”

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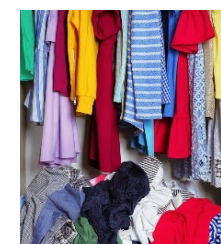
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SIDESPERSION'S ROTA

Date	Name	Name
July 7th	Winifred Gibson	Rosamund Knighton
July 14th	Jean Dean	George Wilson
July 21st	Paul Ward	Sally Morris
July 28th	Rachel Spiers	
August 4th	Gail Inskip	Ellen Bateman
August 11th	Jan Gough	Richard Davey
August 18th	Ann Bing	Sheila Skertchley
August 25th	Judith Knox	Lesley Orriss
September 1st	Winifred Gibson	Rosamund Knighton
September 8th	Jean Dean	
September 15th	Paul Ward	Sally Morris
September 22nd	Rachel Spiers	
September 29th	Gail Inskip	Ellen Bateman

Any problems, please contact
Eunice Lowe Tel: 0116 2852317 or eunicelowe@icloud.com

SUDOKU

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



Meets in St Anne's Church between 4pm and 6pm
Interested put the dates in your diary

20TH JULY –Messy Church

17TH AUGUST –Messy Church

21ST SEPTEMBER – Messy Church

19TH OCTOBER –Messy Church

16TH NOVEMBER –Christmas Messy Church

21ST DECEMBER – Christmas Messy Church



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and your family*

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FOR YOUR SUPPORT**



EVE RAISED £1,500

BENEFICE STUDY DAY

Please put Saturday 26th October in your diary.

This is the day we have booked for our second Benefice Study Day when the churches of the Benefice spend the day studying and worshipping together.

We had our first Benefice Study Day last September and are repeating this in October this year.

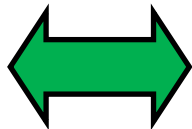
The day will run from 10:00am until 4:00pm with tea and coffee beforehand at 9:45am.

We will be meeting at Wygggeston's on Hinckley Road.

The focus for the day is "The Kingdom of God" and there will be a range of sessions organised by our ministry team. There will be refreshments available during the day and a bring and share lunch. We will end our day by celebrating the Eucharist together.

We invite you to join us and be a part of this important day for our Benefice.

John Andrews



DEADLINES

The deadlines for the next three issues are:

September Issue
October Issue
November Issue

Wednesday 14th August 2024
Wednesday 11th September 2024
Wednesday 9th October 2024

Contributions accepted in person, by post or by email.

Contact details
Address
E-mail

Paul Henry
24 Clarefield Road
pen2link@btinternet.com

All contributions are welcome. Contributions can be submitted at ANY time before the deadline, so please do not feel you have to wait until then if you have something to contribute.

If you have something that is for a particular issue and the previous deadline(s) have not passed please make sure you mark it with the issue in which you would like it to appear. If you would like something to be in several issues please also mark it accordingly.

For items sent by email please try to use the following:

Send all items regardless of size, as an attachment, not in the body of the email. (This saves a lot of time!!!!)

Set the page to A4 with margins of 2cm all round.

Set the font to 12pt and Arial.

Where possible send files in the word format .doc (open office can save to this format just as Word can)

Thank you

FINDING THE MAGAZINE ON THE WEBSITE:

In your browser go to <https://stpaulscommunity.co.uk>
Click on Publications and down load the magazine

In your browser go to <https://stanneschurchleicester.wordpress.com/>

Click on Resources and Items of Interest

Go down and Click on the Link

Scroll down until you get to: Please click on the link below to see a pdf of copies of The LINK magazine.

Then click on the month you want to read.

WEDNESDAY CLUB PROGRAMME 2024
1ST WEDNESDAY OF EACH MONTH
ST. ANNE'S HALL, LETCHWORTH ROAD
AT 2.30pm



JULY 3rd NO MEETING, SUMMER BREAK
AUG 7TH Bee Keeping
SEP 4th Lunch Fish & Chips 12.30pm
OCT 2nd Bring & Buy
NOV 6th TBA
DEC 4th Christmas Celebration TBA

Just come along on the day, or contact

Lesley 07757 335879 or Hilary 07970 075039

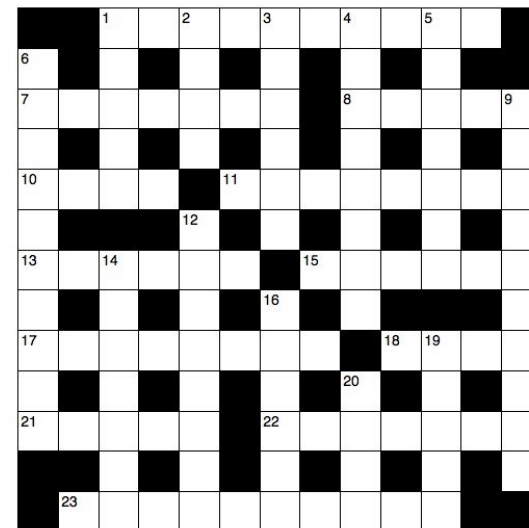
KNIT AND NATTER

The knit and natter meetings is on the 4th Tuesday of each month at 1.30pm.

We look forward to seeing everyone that used to come before the pandemic took hold.

If you know of anyone who you think would enjoy an afternoon of friendship, and to just come along for a chat, please do invite them along.

They will be made very welcome.



Across

- 1 Relating to the Jewish day of rest (10)
- 7 Point of view (Matthew 22:17) (7)
- 8 20th-century Brethren philanthropist whose construction company became one of the UK's biggest, Sir John — (5)
- 10 Girl's name (4)
- 11 Peter was accused of being one in the courtyard of the high priest's house (Luke 22:59) (8)
- 13 The fifth of the 'seven churches' (Revelation 3:1-6) (6)
- 15 'Now the famine was — in Samaria' (1 Kings 18:2) (6)
- 17 Banned by the seventh Commandment (Exodus 20:14) (8)
- 18 Insect most closely associated with itching (1 Samuel 24:14) (4)
- 21 Bantu tribe which gives its name to tiny landlocked country in southern Africa (5)
- 22 Familiar material in churches that use an overhead projector (7)
- 23 Last book of the Bible (10)

Down

- 1 The young David's favourite weapon (1 Samuel 17:40) (5)
- 2 'Your vats will — over with new wine' (Proverbs 3:10) (4)
- 3 Once yearly (Exodus 30:10) (6)
- 4 Milled it (anag.) (3-5)
- 5 Region north of Damascus of which Lysanias was tetrarch (Luke 3:1) (7)
- 6 Comes between Philippians and 1 Thessalonians (10)
- 9 Lake where the first disciples were called (Luke 5:1-11) (10)
- 12 Abusive outburst (8)
- 14 Are loud (anag.) (7)
- 16 Printing errors (6)
- 19 'Take my yoke upon you and — from me' (Matthew 11:29) (5)
- 20 Jacob's third son (Genesis 29:34) (4)

ST JAMES THE LEAST OF ALL

On the Perils of 'Standing in' for Another Vicar

The Rectory
St James the Least

My dear Nephew Darren

You should not complain about doing duty in other churches when their clergy are on holiday. It is only in other churches that you will be appreciated. Beatification only comes from your own church on the day you leave – which is a way of firing a shot across the bows of your successor. I remember being greeted by a churchwarden on my first day here at St James the Least of All with the encouraging words: 'I've seen six Rectors of this parish; each one was worse than the last.' As the years have gone by, I am sure I will have entirely fulfilled his expectations.

No; when you visit another church, you will be told all the many defects of their own vicar, and whatever *you* do will be praised. Store up these memories for the day you return to your own patch – when you will then be told how outstanding your own temporary replacement has been and how congregations thrived in your absence.

Naturally, this gives you the right to make similar remarks about your own congregation in the churches you visit. Unfavourable comparisons with the bell ringers, vergers and congregational singing in your home patch to the superb standards in the church you're temporarily serving will be much appreciated. Just make sure that the church you are staffing is sufficiently far from your own that word will not get back to your home team.

It is a mistake I made only once. After filling in for a colleague, I happened to complement the choir on the singing of the anthem. Unknown to me, a tenor was the second cousin of my organist, who received a rather embellished story that I had compared my own choir back home unfavourably with theirs. On my return the following Sunday, all the hymns were played fortissimo and at double speed and the choir in rotation dropped hymn books throughout my sermon.

Inevitably, when you staff another church, you will be told: 'It's the normal Service.' It will be *nothing of the sort*. Hymns will appear in unexpected places, Sunday schools will enter and leave (and enter again) apparently at random, objects will be brought to you to be read from, placed on the altar or blessed - just as you were about to try and find the pulpit. In any case, wherever you are standing, you will find you should have been standing somewhere else. But not to worry - most mistakes will be forgiven – provided your sermon is short.

So - enjoy your visits to other churches. And above all, make sure that your temporary replacement is so spectacularly incompetent that your own people will welcome you back with open arms on your return.

Your loving uncle,
Eustace



ST. ANNE'S MOTHERS' UNION

DIARY NOTES FOR JULY & AUGUST



When Lesley suggested that we had a "Songs of Praise" for our June Meeting, she had been unaware that the previous Sunday was RSCM Sunday; so we had something of a dress rehearsal (on Sunday) for our own Songs of Praise at our June Meeting! Some 24 of us met in Church to sing our favourite hymns and as a bonus, our accompanist was Geoffrey. It was lovely to have him back at St. Anne's, playing (on the piano) those familiar tunes. I can assure those of you who weren't with us, that he has lost none of his musical touch! Thank you, Geoffrey! And enjoy that rather large bar of Dairymilk! Afterwards we all went back over to the Hall where the tables were set out for tea and at least five sorts of chocolate cake made by the Committee.

Now for this month, on the 9th July, we are going to indulge in total relaxation - Tea and Chat! So do come along as there is always something to talk about, (for example, the Preloved and Vintage Sale that will have happened on Saturday, 29th June - always a source of rich anecdotes!)

Looking ahead, another relaxing day for our August Meeting, when we are invited to tea (and more chat!) in Ann and Robert's garden.

Wednesday, 3rd July at 9-30 am. Corporate Communion

Tuesday, 9th July at 2-30 pm. Tea and Chat in the Hall

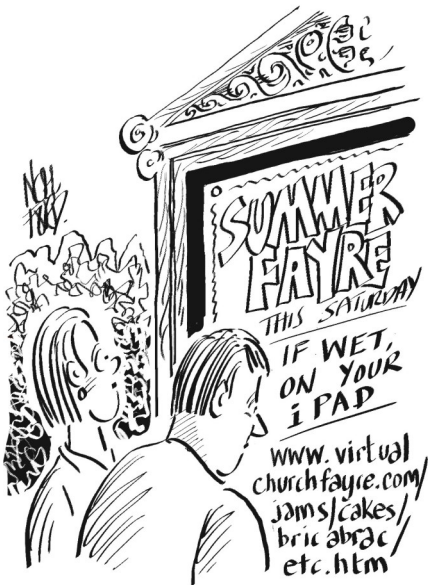
Wednesday, 7th August at 9-30 am. Corporate Communion

Tuesday, 13th August at 2-30 pm. Tea, Cakes and Chat in Ann and Robert's Garden

And looking further ahead to September - Autumn beckons, the nights will be drawing in, and we shall, as usual, be starting the new MU Year with our Annual Service on Tuesday, 10th September!

Mavis Walker
mavis55walker@gmail.com

Cartoons



Gary sang a solo

Friday Coffee Morning



At the Hall at St Anne's

Every Friday coffee from 10am to 12noon.

All welcome for friendly get together of coffee and chat. Catch up with friends.



HOLY DAYS FOR JULY & AUGUST

July	
3	St Thomas the Apostle – confused and doubting
11	Benedict - author of the famous Rule
15	St Swithun (or Swithin) - saint for a rainy day
22	St Mary Magdalene - patron of repentant sinners
25	St James the Great
25	St Christopher - patron saint of motorists
26	St Anne - Mother of Mary
31	St Ignatius Loyola
August	
5	Oswald – a king with faith, courage and humility
6	The Transfiguration of Jesus
9	Mary Sumner – founder of the Mothers' Union
11	Clare - prayer and simplicity
15	The Blessed Virgin Mary
29	Beheading of St John the Baptist
31	Aidan - the great Celtic saint of Lindisfarne

9th August Mary Sumner, founder of the Mothers' Union

The Mothers' Union was founded in 1876. Since then, it has accomplished a staggering amount in that time, and nowadays numbers more than four million members, doing good work in 83 countries. That is a far cry from the modest circle of prayer for mothers who cared about family life, which is how it all began with a rector's wife, Mary Sumner.

Mary was born in late 1828 in Swinton, near Manchester. When she was four, her family moved to Herefordshire. Mary's father, Thomas Heywood, was a banker and historian. Her mother has been described as a woman of "faith, charm and sympathy" – qualities which Mary certainly inherited. Mrs Heywood also held informal 'mothers' meetings' at her home, to encourage local women. Those meetings may well have inspired Mary's later work.

Mary was educated at home, spoke three foreign languages, and sang well. While in her late teens, on a visit to Rome she met George Sumner, a son of the Bishop of Winchester. It was a well-connected family: George's uncle became Archbishop of Canterbury, and his second cousin was William Wilberforce. Mary and George married in July 1848, soon after his ordination. They moved to Old Alresford in 1851 and had three children: Margaret, Louise and George. Mary dedicated herself to raising her children and supporting her husband's ministry by providing music and Bible classes.

When in 1876 Mary's eldest daughter Margaret, gave birth, Mary was reminded how difficult she had found the burden of motherhood. Soon she decided to hold a meeting to which she invited the local women not only of her own class, but also all the village mothers. Her aim was to find out if women could be brought together to offer each other prayer and mutual support in their roles as wives and mothers. That meeting at Old Alresford Rectory was the inaugural meeting of the Mothers' Union.

For 11 years, the Mothers' Union was limited to Old Alresford. Then in 1885 the Bishop of Newcastle invited Mary to address the women churchgoers of the Portsmouth Church Congress, some 20 miles away. Mary gave a passionate speech about the poor state of national morality, and the vital need for women to use their vocation as mothers to change the nation for the better. A number of the women present went back to their parishes to found mothers' meetings on Sumner's pattern. Soon, the Mothers' Union spread to the dioceses of Ely, Exeter, Hereford, Lichfield and Newcastle.

By 1892, there were already 60,000 members in 28 dioceses, and by 1900 there were 169,000 members. By the time Mary died in 1921, she had seen MU cross the seas and become an international organisation of prayer and good purpose.

WHAT'S THE BIG IDEA?

An Introduction to Old Testament books: 1 & 2 Samuel

1 & 2 Samuel was originally a single work, which focuses on Samuel, Saul and David, around 1,000 BC, mid-way between Abraham and Jesus. It was Samuel who established the monarchy in Israel after the period of the judges. He was commanded by God to give the people a king, although their request is seen as a rejection of God's rule over Israel (8:7). The people simply wanted to be like other nations, however their king was still subject to God's law and the word of the prophet. Although Samuel anointed Saul, he soon showed an unwillingness to submit to these requirements, leading to his rejection as king (15:23). God chose David as Saul's successor, and 1 Samuel depicts David's years of waiting until the right time arrived to claim the throne.

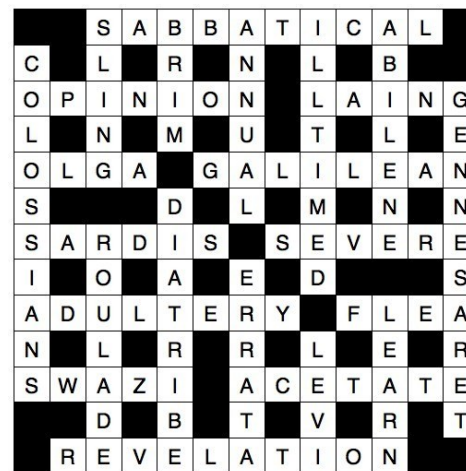
2 Samuel depicts David's rule, in which the nation prospers and its enemies are defeated. The promise of the perfect king is fulfilled in Jesus Himself, as David's descendant. The second half of the book depicts the darker side of David's reign, describing his weaknesses and failures, including his adultery with Bathsheba and the rebellion of his son Absalom.

Nevertheless, David remained a man after God's own heart: *'The LORD does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart.'* (1 Samuel 16:7). The characters in this book are not always great examples of faith, however, *'They do not show us how we should live but how in fact we do live, authenticating the reality of our daily experience as the stuff that God uses to work his purposes of salvation in us and in the world.'* (Eugene Peterson).

'In its artful telling of this 'outsider' widow, uprooted and obscure, who turns out to be the great-grandmother of David and the ancestor of Jesus, the book of Ruth makes it possible for each of us to understand ourselves, however ordinary, as irreplaceable in the full telling of God's story.' (Eugene Peterson).



PUZZLE ANSWERS



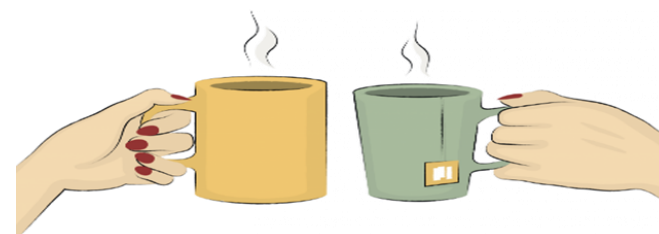
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COMMUNITY LITTER PICKING TEAM



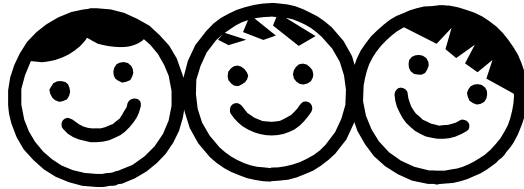
MEET: 11.00 AM TUESDAY 2ND & 23RD JULY
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FREE REFRESHMENTS

SMILE LINES



When Radio encounters the Bible

A dramatist employed to write stories from the Bible in radio form was astonished at the end of a broadcast to hear the announcer say, 'Will Cain kill Abel? Tune in at the same time tomorrow and find out



Don't go far!

The minister went to the bank and asked for a statement of his account, adding: "We want to know how far afield we can go for our holiday." Handing him his statement the cashier enquired very gently: "Have you got a field at the back of your garden, sir?"



Hole for one

A golfing priest, after having been beaten by an elderly parishioner, returned to the clubhouse somewhat depressed. "Cheer up," said the layman. Remember, you'll eventually be burying me some day." "Yes," said the priest. "But even then, it will be your hole!"



Parable of the Month



‘GLORIOUS THE SONG WHEN GOD’S THE THEME’: J S BACH’S JOY AND DANCE

In 1956 a small novel by a German writer, Johannes Rüber, appeared in an English translation. It was called ‘Bach and the Heavenly Choir’ and tells of Pope Gregory XIX’s desire to elevate Bach to the ranks of the saints. To bring together the Lutheran bishop and his own cardinals, he organises a great Bach festival in Rome. At the festival he announces his plan and the reasoning behind it: that in J S Bach ‘faith has become music.’

In that realisation lies the grace and glory of Bach’s achievement, and why we treasure his works today. The irony is that the bulk of his music was never published in his lifetime. The six Brandenburg Concerti, beautifully copied out and offered, were never performed and the music put in a cupboard. His music in all probability would have been lost for ever had it not been for a young Mendelssohn, who just happened to find a manuscript of the St Matthew Passion in his music teacher’s house. He recognised it for its brilliancy and beauty and ordered a massive search to unearth the decaying manuscripts.

So much of Bach’s music was inspired by his joy in believing. Just consider one of the six motets, ‘Jesu, meine Freude’ (Jesus, my joy). It was probably written for a memorial service in July 1723. In his other works, Freude, or ‘joy’, releases new movement. In this motet, the word is kept within the constraints of the chorale melody that acts as a framework for the motet. The word that brings a joyous release is Geist, Spirit – when it appears, then each voice joins in the chase as notes spill over the page and into our ears, proclaiming the inspiration of God’s Spirit in human life.

This spirit of joy helps us realise that what makes Bach’s music so vital and rewarding is that total sense of movement and dance. Wilfred Mellers wrote a book ‘Bach and the Dance of God,’ showing how so much of Bach’s music is dance-inspired from lively gavottes to more stately sarabandes that can be heard in both the instrumental and choral music. Widor, like Bach a great organist, wrote that ‘For me Bach is the greatest of preachers.’

And what does he preach? That in the end, all is dance and life in the power of God’s Spirit. In ‘Jesu, meine Freude’ as in all his music we hear and relish the movement and pulse of his compositions that open up for us a world where all is joy and dance. That is how Dante ended his vision of Paradise, where everything is movement and dance, and what moves the sun and the other stars is love.

GOD IN THE SCIENCES

Exploring the Big Questions: Scientists and Theologians Share Their Views

It’s important to have debates about science and Christian faith and to dig into the hot topics, but we can’t exist solely on a diet of controversy. I find it helpful, at times, to simply enjoy the wonders revealed by science and the big questions they raise about meaning and purpose. What’s the universe for? What do you do with your feelings of awe and wonder? Where do we get our sense of the value of the living world from? I had the privilege of meeting a group of Christian scientists and theologians who shared thoughts about these big questions, and will share some of their thoughts here.

The Oxford-based theologian Alister McGrath shared that “science is wonderful at asking questions. Some of those questions can be answered, but very often when you do answer them, they simply open up yet more questions. But of course, there are some more fundamental questions I think science simply cannot answer...questions like, ‘Why am I here?’”

Rhoda Hawkins, a physicist at Sheffield University, has had a similar experience. “I never cease to be amazed at quite how impressive the world is, and how impressive the mechanisms are for how things work...It really is beautiful in many ways, and it leads me to think about God. I’m not saying that I have any proof, but I’m saying that by looking at the world around me it tells me more about God and it leads me to worship Him.”

Another scientist who appreciates beauty is Jeff Hardin, who explained that “studying the wonders of the living world is an exercise in art appreciation. For me, God is the creator of everything... so the joy of discovery is also the joy of appreciating the world that God has made...and leads me to thank God for the amazing world that we have to enjoy and to explore.”

I will close with some words from Jeff Schloss, who – like the others quoted above – finds that Christian faith makes science more satisfying for him. “Once I became a Christian...I had the sense that I was studying the marvels of the natural world, which are marvellous in their own right but become more profoundly engaging and enticing when one thinks that you’re studying the works of God.” Perhaps if we can spend more time listening to people like this, our discussions about science and faith will also be richer and deeper.

Quotes from videos on www.wondersofthelivingworld.org