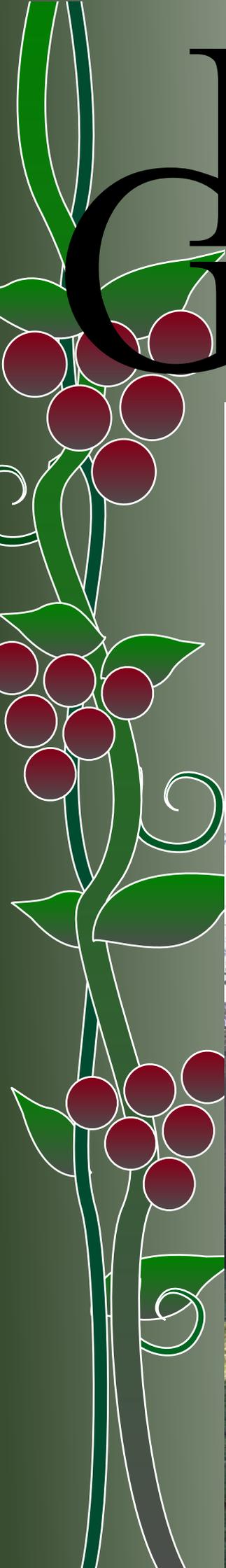


Parish Grapevine

A monthly round-up of
news, views, events
and services at
St George's, Heaviley,
SK2 6NU,
and St Gabriel's, Adswood
in the
Parish of St George, Stockport.
www.stgeorgestockport.org.uk



Who's Who in the Parish of St George, Stockport

| | | | | | |
|--------------------------------------|--|---|---|---------------------------------|---|
| Vicar | Rev. Canon Elaine Chegwin Hall <i>vicar@stgeorgestockport.org.uk</i> 456 9382 | Praise and Play | Parish Office 480 2453 For 0-4s and their carers. Meet every Monday in term time, 9-11 in church. Story time at 10am. | Choir | James Hibbert 07365 519207 <i>actingdirectorofmusic@gmail.com</i> Practise Thursdays 7.30-9pm in the vestry. Sing on Sundays at 10.15am and 4pm services. |
| Assistant Curate | Rev. Dr Janine Arnott <i>rev.janinearnott@outlook.com</i> 612 1048 | St Gabriel's | | Church Cleaners | Dorothy Walton 483 3088 Meet on 1st Tuesday of every month 9.30-12 noon. |
| Readers | Michael Coupe (Emeritus) 612 0222 Peter Hall 456 9382 | Messy Church | Rev. Canon Elaine Chegwin Hall 456 9382 For children and their parents. Meet occasionally, usually Saturday mornings. | Church Flowers | Marjorie Lees 483 3676 Jean Hayden (<i>donations</i>) 483 2367 |
| Pastoral Worker | Audrey Manzano 494 7054 | Uniformed Groups with connections to St George's | | Church Gardeners | Stan Berry 439 4641 <i>(mobile: 07786 548204)</i> Meet on Tuesdays 9.30-12.30. |
| Churchwardens | Andrew Regan 440 0408 Hazel Jenkins 483 4679 | Rainbows | Trisha Brown 07403 353 175 Sue Kirkland 07854 101 918 For girls aged 5-7. Meet Fridays 6.15-7.30pm in the Parish Room. | Coffee Mornings (Weds) | Olwen Smith 483 6548 Wednesdays from 10.30am in the Parish Room. |
| PCC Secretary | Andrea Webb Reilly 07400 883938 | Brownies | Rachel Lockett 775 2755 Voni Walker 07956 674 241 For girls aged 7-10. Meet Thursdays 6.30-8pm in the Parish Room. | Cursillo | Irene Hinde 456 1892 Usually meet on last Wednesday of the month. 7.30pm at different venues. |
| PCC Treasurer | Steven Kelly 439 9458 | Guides | Heather Worth 07894 507 466 For girls aged 10-14. Meet Thursdays 7.30-9pm in the Parish Room. | Handbells | Debbie Heaton 07981 331 758 Play for All-Age and Taizé services, plus other special events. Ringers of all ages (with or without experience) always welcome. Rehearsals in church arranged around the ringers' availability. |
| Parish Office | Marion McCall 480 2453 | Beavers | Bill Frith 439 3232 For boys and girls ages 6 and 7 Meet Fridays 6-7pm at rear of Trinity Methodist Church. | Linen Guild | Pat Rigley 487 1999 Maintain the church's linen. |
| Magazine Editor | Richard Parr 439 8644 | Cubs | Bill Frith 439 3232 For boys and girls ages 8-10½. Meet Fridays 7.15-8.45pm at rear of Trinity Methodist Church. | Magazine Editorial Group | Richard Parr 439 8644 Meet monthly to plan future issues. |
| Safeguarding co-ordinator | Will Hesson 480 0630 | Scouts | Elizabeth Goodred <i>Elizabeth.goodred@stockportscouts.org.uk</i> For boys and girls ages 10½-14. Meet Wednesdays 7-9pm at rear of Trinity Methodist Church. | Mothers' Union | Pat Durnall 483 4837 Meet on 2nd Monday of the month in church at 2.15pm. |
| Website | www.stgeorgestockport.org.uk | | | Singing Group | James Hibbert 07365 519207 <i>actingdirectorofmusic@gmail.com</i> Sing about once a month at the All-Age Service, with one practice beforehand. All welcome. |
| Webmaster | Peter Hall 456 9382 | | | | |
| St George's Primary School | | | | | |
| Headteacher | Deborah Grindrod 480 8657 | | | | |
| St George's Deputy Wardens | | | | | |
| | John Hardy 01663 764 462 Will Hesson 480 0630 | | | | |
| Verger | Ian Staley 456 3093 | | | | |
| Director of Music | James Hibbert 07480 111 179 <i>actingdirectorofmusic@gmail.com</i> | | | | |
| Bookings for Parish Rooms | | | | | |
| | Parish Office or 480 2453 Judith Swift 483 8681 | | | | |
| St Gabriel's | | | | | |
| Secretary | John Sutcliffe 286 2301 | | | | |
| Bookings | Parish Office 480 2453 | | | | |
| Children's Activities | | | | | |
| St George's Children's Corner | | | | | |
| | Available for children (and parents) during services. Equipped with books, crayons and soft toys. | | | | |
| Sunday Club | Louise Clark 483 3703 For children of nursery and school age. Meet during the 10.15am Parish Communion service most weeks during term time. | Other Groups and Activities | | | |
| Junior Choir | James Hibbert 07365 519207 Practise 6.30-7.30 on Thursdays in the vestry; sing on Sundays for 10.15am service. | St George's Bell ringers | Anne Mayes 485 6477 Practise Mondays 7.45-9pm. Ring on Sundays 9.45-10.15am. Meet in the tower. | | |
| | | Bible Reading Fellowship Notes | Janet Neilson 483 9025 Notes are ordered on request. | | |
| | | Bible Study Groups | <i>contact the clergy</i> Study groups and courses are arranged from time to time. | | |
| | | Chancel Guild | Edna Tootell 483 5753 Meet on 2nd Tuesday of every month, 9.30-12 noon to care for the chancel. | | |

Front cover photo
Heaven's Gate, in Wiltshire
(photo by Louise Clark)

From the Editor:

Dear Readers,

'IT IS FAIR to say that we find ourselves in uncharted waters'. These were the opening words of a full-page Tesco advert in this morning's paper, and they probably sum up the feelings of most of us. From what seemed at first to be a comparatively minor outbreak in one Chinese city, we have, with terrible rapidity, been plunged into a world-wide pandemic that is increasingly affecting all our lives. How long the crisis will last, and how many people will be ill and possibly die, are all unknowns at the moment. The future is uncertain and seems bleak and cheerless. Our Easter celebrations will, with the best will in the world, be different this year.

And yet... already there have been so many positive signs, despite the fears, suffering, and selfish stockpiling by some. Elderly and vulnerable people are being cared for by volunteers as well as by family and friends; online groups are organising singalongs, and neighbours in flats with balconies are dancing, practising aerobics, and even organising distance bingo! The best is being brought out in so many people.

I ended last month's editorial with Jesus's words from Matthew's Gospel, "I am with you always, even to the end of the age." There is a wonderful account told by one of my heroes, the Antarctic explorer, Sir Ernest Shackleton, of an incident in his expedition to become the first to cross Antarctica. Their ship, the *Endurance*, became trapped in the pack ice of the Weddell Sea, stranding the expedition on the ice. When, after many months, the ship was eventually crushed by the ice, "We are homeless and adrift on the sea ice" as a member of the crew wrote in his diary. The temperature was minus 15 and they were 350 miles from the nearest land. They remained on the ice for a further five months before they were able to launch the three ship's boats they had salvaged from *Endurance*. After seven days of sailing through fog, blizzards, and huge seas, they finally reached land on what was called Elephant Island. Shackleton then decided on the desperate plan of sailing the largest of the open boats 800 miles to try and reach the nearest inhabited land, South Georgia.

This voyage, in the *James Caird*, is an epic story in its own right. Amazingly, the six men, including Shackleton, made it despite sixty-foot waves, and made safe landing after 17 days. "It was", wrote Shackleton with true British understatement, "a splendid moment." But they were still

on the wrong side of the island from the only human habitation, a whaling station, separated from their landfall by high mountains, glaciers and cliffs – all uncharted. Shackleton decided he must try to cross the island, and he and two other men set out across the snow and ice, with three days' provisions for each man, but no modern climbing footwear, clothing or equipment. Towards the end of their journey, exhausted and sleepless, they made the decision to risk sliding down a long snow slope, whose bottom was only a pool of darkness. They survived what turned out to be a 1500 feet descent, trudged on, and finally heard the sound of the whistle from the whaling station, the first sign of other human beings they had heard for well over a year. They had not even been certain that the station was still occupied.

When they eventually reached the whaling station, they were filthy, with matted hair clotted with salt, and their clothes in tatters. Children who saw them first ran away in terror! But they had made it, and a Chilean ship, which Shackleton insisted on sailing with, found the rest of the party on Elephant Island, "All well", as they called out delightedly to their rescuers.

When the party set out on their attempt to reach Elephant Island, most of their possessions were left on the ice. Shackleton, however, carefully tore out pages from the ship's Bible to take with him: the twenty-third Psalm, and verses from Job which began with, 'Out of whose womb came the ice? And the hoary frost of Heaven, who hath gendered it?' Much later, when describing the awful trek across South Georgia, he and his two companions remembered the strange feeling they all had that there was another person with them, whose presence they felt so strongly that at one stage they held out the tiny portion of rations they had to share with him! And once they knew they were safe and could see the whaling station below them, they reported that both feeling and presence vanished.

"Be sure of this, I am with you always".

As the Psalmist writes, in Psalm 42, 'Why am I discouraged? Why is my heart so sad? I will put my hope in God! I will praise him again – my saviour and my God!'

May the Lord be with you all and keep you all safe in these difficult weeks and months.

With love from all the *Grapevine* team.

What's Where... see page 5!

Please note: Grapevine magazine will be published in **digital form only** during the current coronavirus restrictions. Copies can be downloaded from our website at www.stgeorgestockport.org.uk

Coronavirus restrictions

See page 7 for details of online services and events for Easter and Holy Week during the current coronavirus restrictions.

Please see also the Church of England coronavirus guidance for churches, which is updated frequently and has a direct link from the home page at www.churchofengland.org



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Interested? Contact the Editor:

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Elaine writes:

"Alexa, can you turn the heating up to 24 degrees?"

"Temperature set to 24 degrees" answers the small flat disk in the corner of the room and the rooms start to warm up.

Amazing. How have I managed to exist so far, without the tender ministrations of our technological friends which communicate through a smart speaker? But I have.

I can check on the weather by looking outside and can make a considered decision as to whether I need a raincoat and umbrella or sunhat and glasses.

I can lock my own doors, switch on my own lights and can play the kind of music I like by simply getting up.

I can see the advantage of such a device for those who are less abled. It could be useful to have things around the house operated remotely. However, I feel there is something sad about having your technological friend read a bedtime story to your child instead of snuggling up, doing all the voices of the characters and making every precious bonding moment count.

I had my first encounter with "Alexa" recently and it was a bit of fun choosing songs, asking questions and seeing if "she" knew the punch lines to jokes.

Our grandson, aged three, joined in the excitement and, without prompting, announced "Alexa, play Pentatonix", an a capella group he's particularly fond of. We smiled, in the way that adults do when we don't expect things to work. Within minutes, we had a rousing rendition of "Jolene", much to Aneurin's delight and our astonishment.

Buoyed up by his recent success, he shouted, "Alexa, tidy up the toys." There was no response... and Mary Poppins was not available to help either.

Sometimes we call out to God in the expectation of a clear, concise answer – preferably one that suits us – in a timescale which works around us and with an outcome that occurs for us with no strings attached.

It made me wonder about the expectations of the disciples as they journeyed with Jesus over the short years of his earthly ministry. They called out to him as and when they needed, and he was there. Whilst they didn't always appreciate or expect the response they received, there was some reassurance in him simply being present with them.

Following his harrowing death on the cross they struggled to cope with the loss of his presence. They were desperate for answers; crippled by grief; striving to find a way forward without the one who loved them unconditionally.

They were confused and disorientated and when they realised that Jesus rose from the dead on that glorious first Easter morning there was a lot for them to take in.

Things weren't the same. Physically things were so very different despite his appearances over the following days. The disciples needed comfort; they needed direction; they needed assurances that they weren't on their own, and Jesus said he would send them a comforter, God's Holy Spirit, to be with them.

We can't see Jesus now as the disciples could, but we can and do encounter his Holy Spirit. We can experience the power of his risen presence. We can acknowledge his fruits. We can recognise his voice within the clamour of our busy lives so that when we call to him in prayer, he will answer in ways which we might never be able to imagine.

God hears us, much better than our electronic friends, so we can speak freely with him without reservation, knowing that he will respond in ways that will be life enhancing, especially as we rejoice in the new life of this season of Easter.

Jesus is risen! He is risen indeed. Alleluia!

With every blessing

Elaine

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Parish News Roundup

Holy Baptism

None last month

Holy Matrimony

None last month

Funerals

6th Feb Elizabeth Smith
 24th Feb Lee Henderson
 25th Feb Derek Schofield
 11thMar Lilian Smith
 18th Mar Elizabeth Coupe (burial of ashes)

Floodlighting:

29th Feb in memory of Ian Graham Flitcroft

Flowers in church were by:

Main Altar Flowers

1st Mar from Kate Stephenson and family – remembering Barry and all our loved ones
 8th Mar from Dorothy and Brian Walton – in loving memory of their parents
 15th Mar from Joan and Jim Izard – for their parents
 22nd Mar from John and Betty Atkinson – In memory of Joyce and Jack
 29th Mar from Mike and José Westwood – in memory of Edith Holehouse

Lady Chapel

8th Mar from David Gittings – for Margaret

Mothers' Union

Our meeting on 6th April is now cancelled in accordance with the current guidelines. We will keep you informed when we are able to meet again. Keep safe and well.

José Westwood.

Foundation Governor at St George's Church of England Primary School, Stockport

We need to fill two Foundation Governor places at our lovely Church School.

Foundation Governors have a vital role in supporting and developing the

Parish News Roundup

Christian foundation of the school. Such governors must be regular church attenders as well as having an interest in schools.

They have a specific responsibility in terms of monitoring and developing the Christian distinctiveness of our church schools as well as a concern for standards.

No special qualifications are needed and we are grateful to have people with a broad range of experience in work and in life. It would be useful but not essential if applicants have any particular skills in change management, HR, financial planning or facilities management.

Training is available for all governors and this governing board has an expectation that those new to being a governor attend free induction training.

Please contact Elaine either by phone 0161 456 9382 or email Vicar@stgeorgestockport.org.uk

Prayer Chain

The concept of the prayer chain is well established in many churches and it

Parish News Roundup

works alongside that informal network whereby friends pray for each other when in particular need. The prayer chain does not seek to undermine or replace those arrangements but seeks to offer a means of instant prayer which is generated and spread as quickly as possible so that the person or situation is lifted up in prayer before God.

The prayer chain adds to the prayerful support and care for each other in our church and enables us to offer our concern and love for those outside our fellowship. It becomes a means of outreach in its widest form as the love and concern of God reaches out, through our prayers, into the community. It is also confidential.

We welcome other members to join this ministry. Please speak to Elaine in the first instance.

May 2020

Grapevine magazine dates:

Deadline copy date: **Fri 17th Apr**
Committee meeting: **Tue 21st Apr**

Frances Farrar

Peter and I went to see Frances in her new home. It was a joyous treat to be with her and the care staff have very much taken her to their heart – one saying, "I could take her home with me". We had a lovely morning

and it was good to see that she had settled in. Should people wish to be in touch, they can do so at:

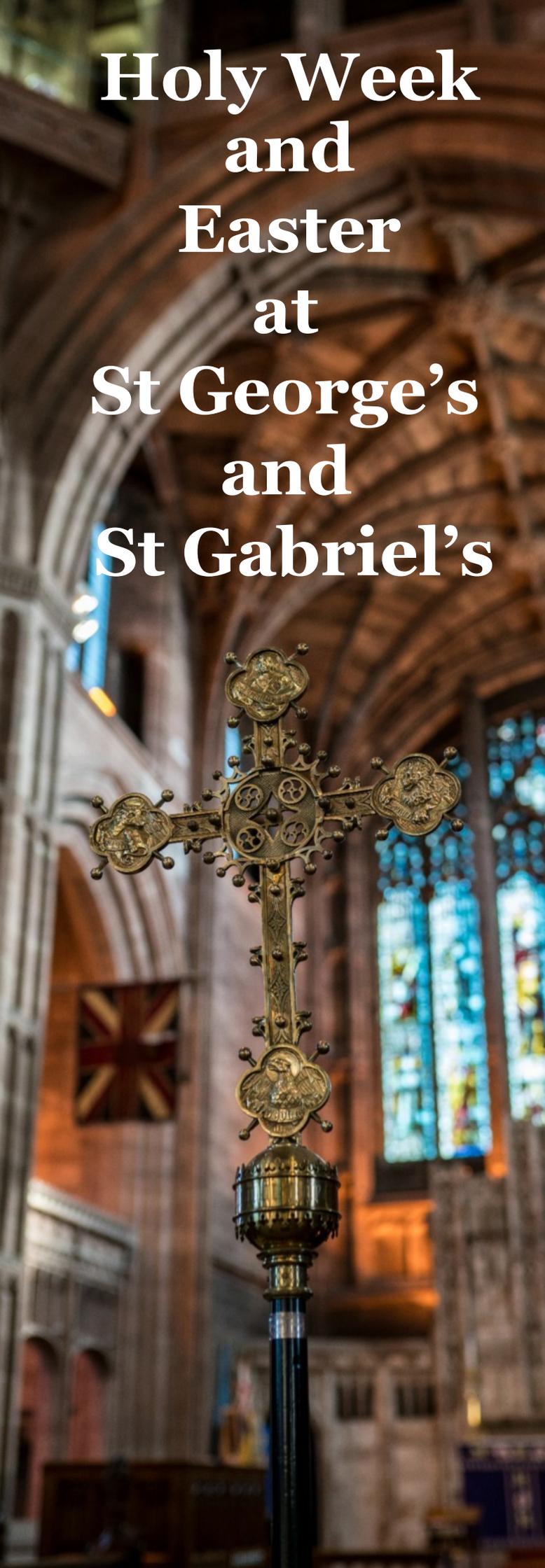
MHA Charnwood House,
77 Beake Ave,
Coventry CV6 3AQ .

Please remember to either send a

photo of yourself or be specific as to how you fit into Frances' life so it helps with conversation. As you will appreciate, a reply won't be possible.

Thanks,
Elaine





Holy Week and Easter at St George's and St Gabriel's

Live Streamed Services and Events for Holy Week and Easter

Whilst our Church buildings are closed, the real church and its people are very much engaging with and sharing the Good News of Jesus Christ. Please do join us.

All of the services and events below will be streamed live on Facebook. Please search for our Facebook page @stgeorgeschurchstockport to find us. The services and events can also be played back on demand after the live stream has ended.

Please see also page 23 for regular live streamed services after Easter.

Palm Sunday 5th April

10.15am Special service of Holy Communion

1pm Virtual Messy church for children and their families

5pm Story time for children

9pm Compline – a said, reflective service as we prepare to wind down for the day.

Monday 6th April

9.30am Morning Prayer

1pm Virtual Messy church for children and their families

7.30pm Taizé-style service

Tuesday 7th April

9.30am Morning Prayer

1pm Virtual Messy church for children and their families

7.30pm Journey of the Cross

Wednesday 8th April

9.30am Morning Prayer

1pm Virtual Messy church for children and their families

7.30pm Tenebrae Service – a reflective service in candlelight

Maundy Thursday 9th April

9.30am Morning Prayer

7.30pm Communion Service

Good Friday 10th April

9.30am Morning Prayer

1pm Virtual Messy church for children and their families

2pm Good Friday Journey

Easter Eve 11th April

1pm Virtual Messy church for children and their families

7.30pm A Service of Light and renewal of baptism vows

Easter Day 12th April *Jesus is risen – He is risen indeed. Alleluia!*

10.15am Special service of Holy Communion

1pm Virtual Messy church for children and their families

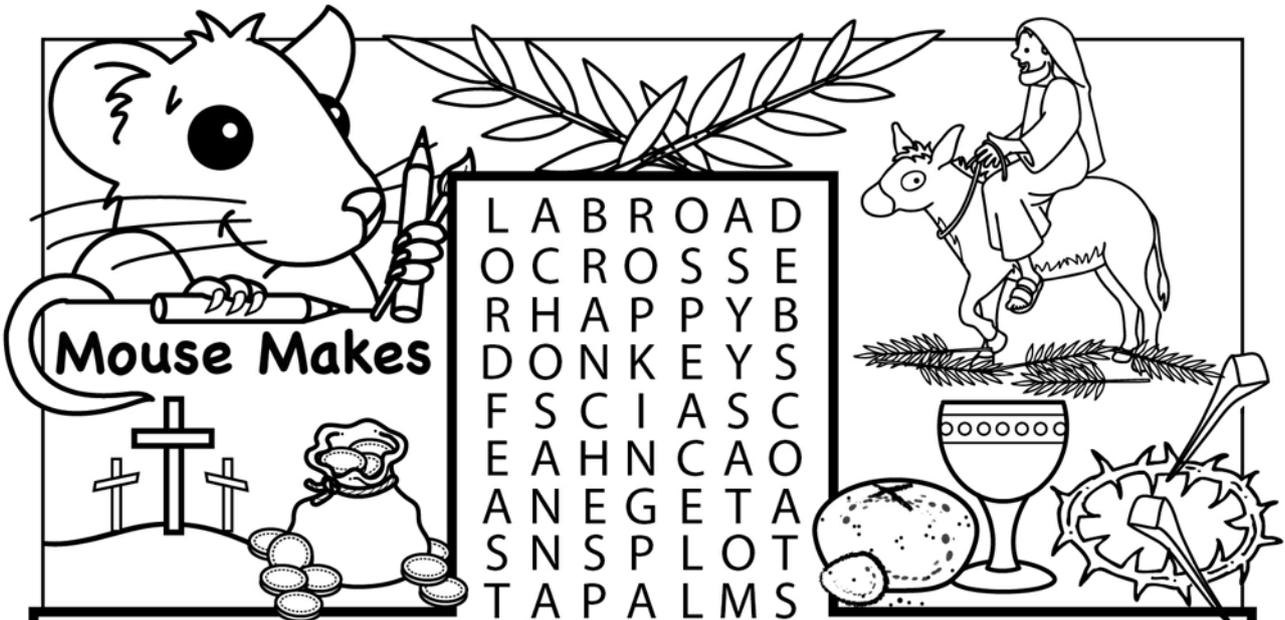
5pm Story time for children

9pm Compline – a said, reflective service.



STOCKPORT GRAMMAR SCHOOL

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-  DISCIPLES • ROOM • PASSOVER
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- WINE • SON • MAN • BLOOD • CUP
- MEAL • JEWS • PLOT • KILL • COINS
- GETHSEMANE • PRAY • WILL
- BETRAY • KISS • ARREST • MESSIAH
- CHRIST • CRUCIFY • JESUS • CROWN
- THORNS • ROBE • TREE • NAILS
-  CROSS • SPIRIT • DARKNESS
- TEMPLE • DEATH • LOTS • DICE
- TOMB • STONE • LINEN • BODY
- BURY • GUARD • THREE DAYS
- DAWN • MORNING • ANGEL • TELL
- HEAVEN • GOOD NEWS • LORD
- GOD • RAISED • JOY • PEACE
- PRAISE • SAVIOUR • EASTER 

Stockport Grammar Eco-Committee deliver Downing Street petition

EIGHTEEN ECO-COMMITTEE members from Stockport Grammar's Junior and Senior School travelled to 10 Downing Street to hand over a petition focused on reducing carbon emissions.

The petition has amassed over 800 signatures and urges the government to adopt emission-reducing ideas including more tree planting. The eco-committee hope to have a response from the government in the next few months.

Whilst the pupils were in the capital they spent the day exploring a variety of sustainability-themed attractions including the Royal Academy of Arts, to see the Eco-Visionaries exhibition, and the London Aquarium where the children could read more about the conservation and protection of marine wildlife.



Speaking about the trip, Lower Sixth student Rabeeah-Nuur Mohammed said: "Visiting the Eco-Visionaries exhibition at the Royal Academy was an eye-opening experience that very effectively showcased the

consequences and imminent dangers of the climate crisis.

"My highlight was being able to hand in our petition to 10 Downing Street, an opportunity I will always be grateful for and cherish for the rest of my life."

Junior School teacher Miss Sarah Knowles added: "The passion and enthusiasm of the children was evident and it brought children from all ages together, exposing them to many ideas which we will continue to discuss over the next few months – providing a focus for the school to help towards gaining our Eco-Schools Green Flag Award."

Duties of Parochial Church Council (PCC) Members

What is the PCC?

The Parochial Church Council (PCC) is responsible for supporting the vicar in the running and management of the parish of St George, Stockport.

Who is on the PCC?

St George's PCC consists of up to 15 elected lay members. The following other people are also automatically on the relevant PCC by virtue of their office, namely:

- the clergy of the parish
- those elected to represent St George's on the Deanery Synod or Diocesan Synod
- the churchwardens

How are PCC lay members elected?

They are elected at the Annual Parochial Church Meeting which is on **Sunday 26th April after the morning service which on this occasion will start at 10am.** We appoint the Churchwardens for the next year and the members of the PCC for a three-year term.

To be eligible to serve on the PCC you have to

- be aged 16+
- have received communion in the Church of England at least three times in the last 12 months

- have been on the church electoral roll for at least six months (unless you are under 18)

What do PCC members do?

PCC members have significant responsibility for the local mission of the church and they are also charity trustees. They have to accept ultimate responsibility for directing the affairs of their PCC, ensuring that it is financially solvent and well run, and delivering its charitable outcomes. PCC members generally also serve on a PCC sub-committee. These sub-committees typically meet once a quarter.

How often does the PCC meet?

St George's PCC currently meets six times a year. April is taken up by the Annual Parochial Church Meeting. The meetings are held in the evening from 7.30pm-9.30pm.

What happens at the meetings?

The agenda and meeting papers are circulated about a week in advance. The meeting is chaired either by the vicar or the lay chair. The topics on the agenda are discussed and votes taken where formal decisions are required. Meeting minutes are taken and circulated by the PCC Secretary.

If you are interested in becoming a PCC member or sidesperson (welcome steward) please speak to Elaine or the churchwardens as soon as possible.

Transfiguration: Glory and Suffering

A sermon preached for the Transfiguration of Christ by Kim Regan

Our readings today have a lot to say about the glory and the splendour and the majesty of God: God in a "devouring fire" on Mount Sinai and God bringing about the transfiguration of Christ; God's voice from the cloud saying, "This is my Son, the beloved; with him I am well pleased. Listen to him." God's voice is so astounding that all three men – Peter, James and John – fall to the ground in terror. That, it would seem, is the only appropriate response to an encounter with the Almighty.

In my training I am often asked whether I am low church or high church and the truth is I love it all. In my opinion, high church services with all their incense, symbolism and ceremony, which often includes a moment where the priest prostrates him or herself – I mean actually lies down flat on the floor – I really think that kind of service shows the mystery, majesty and holiness of God more than a low church service. On the other hand, a low church service shows the other side of God, the God with us, as near to us as our breath, the God we consider our Friend. Theologians call these two ends of the spectrum God transcendent and God immanent; the God who is above and beyond us and the God who is with us. (Nicky Gumbel, *The Bible in One Year*, 2019, p. 67).

Does it ever strike you as strange – and marvellous – that the Master of the Universe numbers all the hairs on your head? That is what Jesus said in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke.

A few hundred years ago when science was still in its infancy, great men of learning came up with an image of God that was like a clock maker. He set up a system of natural laws and forces like gravity and electromagnetism, wound up the universe and stood back, taking little further interest. This meant that the way we lived as people and the practice of prayer had little purpose and meaning. But now the tide is turning and more and more theologians are recognising God immanent, God with us. The God of small things. (The God of Small Things by Arundhati Roy, winner of the Booker prize 1997. I haven't read it, I just like the title.)

Have you heard of the butterfly effect? It's a theory that suggests that a butterfly flapping its wings in Mexico at just the right point in space/time can cause a hurricane in China. With this way of looking at the universe everything matters, everything we think, do, say or pray matters. Everything that happens to us matters to someone somewhere... (Google "The butterfly effect.")

Take a look at the collect for a moment:

Almighty Father,
Whose son was revealed in majesty
Before he suffered death on the cross:
Give us grace to perceive his glory,

That we may be strengthened to suffer with him
And be changed into his likeness, from glory to glory.

So... suffering... again suffering.

This event, the transfiguration, is seen as marking a turning point in Jesus' ministry. These are the days when he sets his sights on Jerusalem. (Jane Williams, *Lost for words*, 2009, pp118-119; Rosalind Brown, *Fresh from the Word*, 2016, pp34-35).

Apparently, the transfiguration takes place just six days after Jesus tells his disciples about his impending suffering and death, six days after he tells them – and by extension us – that they must take up their cross and follow him.

Although Peter, James and John might not have realised the full significance of the transfiguration until much later, it did help seal in their minds Jesus' identity as the Messiah, the one spoken about in the law and the prophets. That is why Moses and Elijah were there speaking with Jesus. They represent the law and the prophets.

So what of suffering? Know the feeling? No one escapes it. Whether through bereavement, illness, poverty, isolation and loneliness, or any other of the shocking, unpredictable and overwhelming misfortunes that come upon us – or even just the little daily nasties – we've all felt it. Even people who appear to lead charmed lives must, from time to time feel the pang of suffering. We suffer for ourselves, we suffer for our parents and spouses, for our children, and for all our friends and neighbours. And after all, who could live in a world where there are people sleeping rough on our streets, where there are refugees fleeing evil regimes for their lives, where there are people of our faith being persecuted for it – and not feel some pain?

As the sixteenth and seventeenth century priest and poet, George Herbert, wrote, "I cried when I was born and every day shows why." Our experiences of suffering show why we need to rely on our transcendent God who has it all under control and our Immanent and incarnate Christ as friend.

I turn to the story of a contemporary of George Herbert, famous English poet, scholar, soldier and priest, John Donne, who lived in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

He was for about ten years the Dean of St Paul's Cathedral in London. Despite some of his obvious success, he was a man of great suffering who wrote about it in his poetry and prose. His life was difficult from the outset. He was born a Catholic in a fiercely Protestant England. As a youth he rebelled against the Church and lived a reckless and promiscuous life. Eventually, he met a beautiful woman called Anne, whom he married. Her father, who was a very powerful and important man, had John Donne

and the priest who performed the wedding ceremony thrown into prison. Donne then wrote what was perhaps his "pithiest" poem: "John Donne, Anne Donne, Undone."

After his release from prison, Donne decided to become a priest, which he considered a true calling. After earning a Divinity Degree from Cambridge, Donne put aside his poetry to devote himself full-time to the work of a parish priest.

The year after Donne took on his first church, his wife Anne died. By that time, she had given birth to 12 children, 5 of whom had died in infancy. Donne took her funeral service himself and chose for his text words from the book of Lamentations, "Lo, I am the man that hath seen affliction."

Donne vowed never to remarry, fearing that a step-mother might bring his children further grief. He took on most of the housework himself and used much of his meagre income to pay for additional outside help.

Somehow, despite his difficult beginnings, Donne found himself appointed to the position of Dean of St Paul's Cathedral in 1621.

Although the Great Plague didn't take place until some decades later, illness was already rife in London when Donne took office at St Paul's. Many were leaving London to escape illness at that time, but Donne stayed where he was, ministering to many sick and dying people. He had by that time started writing poetry and prose again. He became ill himself at one point, and wrote about it bravely in one of his collections of writings.

Tragedy taught Donne to re-examine his life. He found that the circumstances that had most marred his life were the source of his greatest spiritual growth. As Christian writer, Philip Yancey, put it, "Trials had purged sin and developed character; poverty had taught him dependence on God; failure and public disgrace had helped cure him of pride and ambition. A definite pattern emerged: pain could be transformed and even redeemed, and apparent evil sometimes results in actual good. Suffering not removed may serve as God's tool."

Eventually, Donne suffered another illness, this time one which would take his life. At the age of 58, as death approached, he told a friend who recorded his words, "I cannot claim innocency of life, especially of my youth, but I am to be judged by a merciful God, who is not willing to see what I have done amiss. And though of myself I have nothing to present to him but sins and misery, yet I know He looks upon me not as I am of myself, but as I am in my Saviour... I am therefore full of inexpressible joy, and shall die in peace."

As one looks at the grand narrative of the Bible, one might be tempted to ask, "If the Israelites and now we as Christians are the people of promise, the people in line to inherit the land of milk and honey and the people to be invited to the great wedding feast of the Lamb, why have we had to endure so much suffering? Why was Joseph

sold into slavery? Why was Jesus crucified? Why did Paul write us letters while in prison and in chains?" (Samuel Wells, *The Heart of it all*, (2019).

Although it is generally accepted that the Fall of Adam and Eve is what has brought us here, no one has offered us a completely satisfactory answer to this question of suffering. Job explored the problem of suffering in his conversations with God, but emerged only a little wiser and with no satisfactory explanations.

The American writer and journalist, Philip Yancey, and the now-deceased Dutch priest, Henri Nouwen, have both written extensively about suffering, why it exists and how to bear it. Our time does not allow me to address the why in any depth, but I will attempt to say a little about how to bear it.

Nouwen writes: "Think of all your defeats, setbacks and little deaths, not as YOUR pain, but THE pain." In other words, not your own pain but the pain of the world and the pain of Christ crucified. You can link your own pain up with Christ's and share his suffering and let him share yours. This gives your pain meaning. (Henri Nouwen, *The Inner Voice of Love*).

Yancey writes: in suffering we "learn the pattern of transformed pain."

In Christ's death God turned the worst thing that could happen into the final victory over evil and death." (Philip Yancey, *Where is God when it hurts?*).

(Herbert and Donne from Philip Yancey, *Soul Survivor*, 2003, chapter on John Donne)

Going back to our three readings and the collect we see that a transcendent God is ultimately in control as we face our trials which will be transformed from glory into glory. As Christians we can turn to pivotal moments in the Bible, moments like the transfiguration, the baptism of Christ, and the Resurrection, moments that highlight the majesty and the transcendence of God, to give us the courage and strength we need for our journeys through the difficult moments of life. And we have God with us – Emmanuel – the immanent and incarnate Christ who suffers with us in our trials. One of my favourite illustrations of this is in the Psalms, where the writer says, "You have collected all my tears in your bottle."

If we have to suffer – and so it seems we must – it helps to know that God sees, God knows, God understands and God, in Christ, suffers with us. At some level our personal suffering matters and has meaning and significance, like a butterfly flapping its wings in Mexico. In God's Kingdom everything is joined up: it all matters.

A little prayer:

Our heavenly Father, you are great and you are good. Help us to remember that no matter how difficult the road ahead might seem, we have Jesus with us and we know that ultimately you have everything under control. Teach us to trust you a little more each day. Amen.

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Sudoku puzzle: easy

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| 3 | | 9 | 7 | | 4 | | 8 |
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| 5 | 4 | 7 | 3 | | | | |
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Sudoku puzzle: intermediate

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| | | 9 | | | 3 | 1 | 2 |
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| | 3 | 6 | 8 | | | 9 | |
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(Answers to all puzzles are on p. 23)

Crossword

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| 23 | | | | | | | | | 24 | | | |

Across

- 1 Relating to the whole universe (6)
- 4 The disciple who made the remark in 8 Across (John 20:24) (6)
- 8 'Unless I see the nail marks -- hands, I will not believe it' (John 20:25) (2,3)
- 9 He urged King Jehoiakim not to burn the scroll containing Jeremiah's message (Jeremiah 36:25) (7)
- 10 Baptist minister and controversial founder of America's Moral Majority, Jerry -- (7)
- 11 'Look, here is --. Why shouldn't I be baptized?' (Acts 8:36) (5)
- 12 Repossessed (Genesis 14:16) (9)
- 17 Port from which Paul sailed on his last journey to Rome (Acts 27:3-4) (5)
- 19 'Moses was not aware that his face was -- because he had spoken with the Lord' (Exodus 34:29) (7)
- 21 Roonwit, C.S. Lewis's half-man, half-horse (7)
- 22 Grill (Luke 24:42) (5)

- 23 'The lot fell to Matthias; so he was added to the -- apostles' (Acts 1:26) (6)
- 24 'I was sick and you looked after me, I was in -- and you came to visit me' (Matthew 25:36) (6)

Down

- 1 Coastal rockfaces (Psalm 141:6) (6)
- 2 Academic (1 Corinthians 1:20) (7)
- 3 Publish (Daniel 6:26) (5)
- 5 For example, the Crusades (4,3)
- 6 11 Across is certainly this (5)
- 7 He reps (anag.) (6)
- 9 Liberator (Psalm 18:2) (9)
- 13 Man who asked the question in 11 Across was in charge of all her treasury (Acts 8:27) (7)
- 14 They must be 'worthy of respect, sincere, not indulging in much wine' (1 Timothy 3:8) (7)
- 15 The human mind or soul (6)
- 16 'O Lord, while precious children starve, the tools of war increase; their bread is --' (Graham Kendrick) (6)
- 18 'We played the flute for you, and you did not --' (Matthew 11:17) (5)
- 20 Bared (anag.) (5)



Helen went to church three weeks running, so she was co-opted to the P.C.C.

Service to celebrate the life of Derek Schofield

4th January 1930 – 26th January 2020

THE service took place on Tuesday, 25th February 2020, at St George's Church, was conducted by the vicar, Revd Canon Elaine Chegwin Hall, and attended by friends and family from all over the UK and many parts of Europe. You may not recognise the name, Derek Schofield, as he was not a member of the St George's congregation, but in the table tennis world he was an international star.

Respected, revered and a formidable opponent – his speed around the table and his agility were to be feared. In his youth, and before he met Doreen Ridgway, who was to become his wife and doubles partner, he was partnered by Lorna Antrobus, a member of the St George's congregation and an excellent table tennis player herself. She recalls that to win any match against Derek was a considerable feather in your cap and she managed it only once, but has never forgotten it!

Elaine spoke of the love Derek's family and friends had for him, as was evident from the many who attended the service. He loved table tennis and was a passionate and enthusiastic player and shared that passion with emerging players, encouraging them, giving them the opportunity to develop and have a go.

Derek was an example of what could be done when age was not a barrier. He worked hard and played hard, and his determination to succeed and to encourage others to develop in table tennis has impacted on people from all over the world. They have a lot to thank him for.

Derek's younger son, Neil, spoke on behalf of the family:

This is a story of a cheeky little lad from Oldham, trying to make his way in the world, finding happiness and eventually forging an enviable sporting career which many of us could only dream of.

Derek's first encounter with table tennis was at Tiviot Dale church, so, at the age of 17, he went to see what it was all about. The Stockport champion was Bert Airey, and it wasn't long before Derek got the 'bug' for playing the game which eventually became such a big part of his life.

There was no secret to Derek's success over the years as he was always fit, because he put in the practice. As any player who came up against Derek will know, his anticipation around the table was second to none, his

footwork was amazing and his control of that little white ball was excellent.

Table tennis not only gave Derek huge sporting success and many lifelong friends, but also introduced him to Doreen, a 16-year old who had come from school to watch the 1956 English Open Championships at Belle Vue, Manchester. It took a while before their first real date, at the Three Shires Restaurant in Stockport, but they became engaged in September 1960, just before the table tennis season started, of course, and were married on New Year's Eve the same year. Throughout their married life they played in tournaments and the trophies kept rolling in, and every weekend it seemed more were being added to the collection. It got to a point where they donated boxes full

of them to schools and sports clubs so that they could be presented again. But in 1978 at a Stockport Committee Award Dinner at the Deanwater Hotel, Derek won the Fred Perry Award for Sports Personality of the year. The trophy still sits proudly on the mantelpiece in the hall, and in 1994 Derek and Doreen were presented with the Sir Stanley Matthews trophy for services to table tennis.



Latterly, Derek and Doreen were instrumental in establishing the Veterans Table Tennis tournaments which took them all over the world, and the family are very proud of all their achievements. Derek was a fierce competitor and very hard to beat at table tennis, but no-one had a bad word to say about him. A true sportsman in every sense.

Sadly, Derek was diagnosed with Alzheimer's in October 2014, which is a degenerating illness, and it was sad to see Derek deteriorate over the last five years. But he made it past his 90th birthday, which was a huge milestone in the circumstances. He was very proud of his family – Lynn, John, Neil and Jill and their partners, and his grandchildren and great-grandchildren. We will always be proud of him and miss him.

Hymns: Dear Lord and Father of Mankind
The Lord's my shepherd, I'll not want
Praise my soul, the King of Heaven

Reading: 1 Corinthians 13:4-13

Rosie Stead

Vulnerability

Holy Week and Easter

IF I JUDGE correctly, no matter how much food and toilet paper you have stashed away at the moment, you are feeling bewildered and vulnerable. Although, admittedly, you are not in the extreme situation that Jesus was in during the last stretch of his life, you know now how quickly situations change. You know now what it means to lose control of the circumstances that surround your life and the lives of your loved ones. Perhaps it is beginning to dawn on you how little actual control you ever had over the things going on around you. Perhaps you have been a doer – an achiever – if not now, then in the past, and you are now beginning to learn what it is to be at the mercy of other people and circumstances beyond your control. Perhaps you will begin to realise how you have been taking God’s good gifts – your health, your freedom, the abundance of food and other supplies, and things like democracy and public order – for granted.

Suffering comes to us all, which enables us, if only in some vague sense, to fathom what Jesus did when he voluntarily took suffering upon himself. And the cross speaks to certain dispositions in the hearts of everyone, those feelings of dissatisfaction, guilt and loneliness that afflict us all to some degree on even the best and brightest of days. As St Augustine wrote, “Our hearts are restless until they find their rest in You.”

Quoting the well known atheist Bertrand Russell, Michael Mayne writes:

The centre of me is always and eternally a terrible pain. A curious wild pain – a searching for something beyond what the world contains, something transfigured and infinite – the beautiful vision – God. I do not find it, I do not think it is to be found – but the love of it is my life. It’s the passionate love for a ghost. (1)

There you have it, an unquenchable thirst for God that can only be satisfied by the “living water” of Christ.

The world situation dominated by the coronavirus that we now find ourselves in, though regrettable, may be the

best preparation for Lent and Holy Week that we have seen in years, for it highlights our vulnerability and complete dependence upon God – “for our daily bread” as the Lord’s Prayer expresses it.

The Resurrection, on one level, signals a complete regime change, a reversal of Good Friday. It reveals Christ triumphant, making possible the gift of eternal life and the one perfect sacrifice of himself on the cross for the forgiveness of sins. After the temple curtain is torn in two it heralds a new age where people can have free access to God through Christ rather than through the mediation of priests. On another level, however, it underscores a new dependence on the model of the suffering servant, the Christ of Holy Week, who exercises his kingship in meekness and vulnerability. Jesus’ followers are to imitate him by “taking up their crosses and following him”, and “losing their lives” to gain them.

Ultimately, this way of living models the “self-giving love” of God. As Michael Mayne writes, “...the life and death of Jesus are the definitive account of the word ‘love’, the only one that avoids the bogus and the sentimental. From the first moment to the last, the life of Jesus is one of self-giving love.”(2)

The Jesus way is the way of self-sacrifice, the way of forgiveness, the way of putting others’ needs above our own. To do this is to take risks and make oneself vulnerable. And vulnerability leads to complete dependence on God. So take hold of this vulnerability and embrace it. Ultimately, and eternally, it’s the only thing you’ve got going for you.

Kim Regan

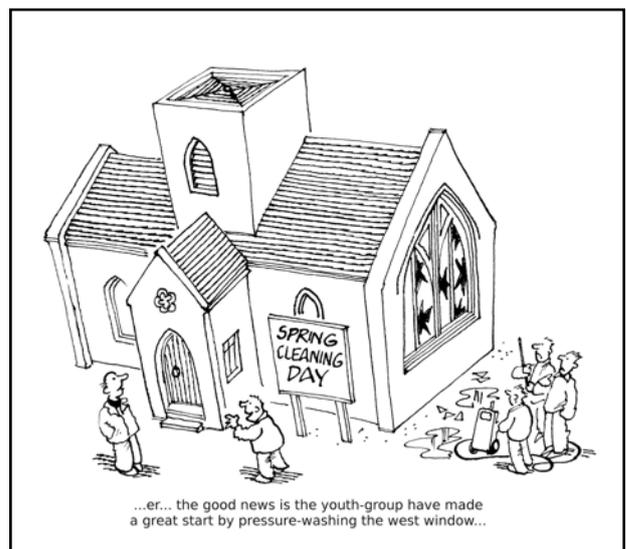
(1) Mayne, Michael, (2017), *Dust That Dreams of Glory*, Norwich: Canterbury Press. (p. 73).

(2) Mayne, Michael, (2018), *Alleluia Is Our Song*, Norwich: Canterbury Press. (p.67).

Quite a thought!

ACCORDING TO a posting on Facebook, a mother received a note from her children’s school, asking parents to please ensure that they “satanise” their children’s hands before sending them to school!

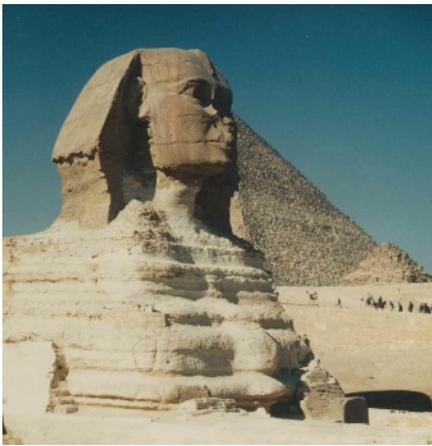
contributed by Angela Foulkes



The Last Surviving Ancient Wonder

STANDING IN THE warm sand in the early morning sunshine, I contemplated, and not for the first time, the huge blocks of weathered limestone, laid in perfect symmetry before me, forming a veritable mountain blocking out the sky.

I first had the privilege of visiting the Fourth Dynasty 'Great Pyramid' of King Khufu at Giza more than forty years ago, and on that occasion had been persuaded, by a former army acquaintance, to accompany him the following morning to climb to the top, more than 481ft high, to watch the sun rise. The following morning, while still dark – it was New Year's Day 1974 – we ascended on hands and knees up the centre of the west face, hoping that no-one had seen us.



Khafre Sphinx with Khufu Pyramid

the red orb appear, 'The God Ra in his Solar Boat'.

Twelve miles to the south stood the Third Dynasty stone 'Step Pyramid' of Djoser and the later Pyramid of Teti at Saqqara. Beyond them lay Dahshur and the two giant Pyramids of Sneferu, the immediate predecessor of Khufu, probably his father. To the north west lay the western ridge of Abu Rawash, with its badly ruined Pyramid of Djedefre, the half brother of Khufu, and below the ruined site, which was Djedefre's 'house of eternity' until the Romans used it as a limestone quarry in order to build their fortress, which is now in the smog of nearby Cairo.

Directly below us to the south was the incredibly sharp outline of the casing stones of the Khafre Pyramid, successor to Khufu at Giza, while again to the east ran the causeway towards the Nile, at the end of which lay the tail end of the Khafre Sphinx in its shallow quarry.

Then we tackled the forty-minute descent, ready for some breakfast at the Mena House Hotel. The flat bread, fig jam and coffee were very welcome and, strange to relate, I have always enjoyed fig jam ever since that morning. Later the same day we paid our admission and entered the Pyramid's substructure by means of the ancient robbers' entrance, and marvelled, like so many others before us, at the civil engineering expertise of the so-called 'Grand Gallery', sloping upwards through the



West face of Khufu Pyramid

substructure, with its interlocking ceiling slabs for spreading the superincumbent load, bearing down on the angled ceiling. The centre of gravity of the whole Pyramid lies at the top step which leads through a missing portcullis slot, into the uppermost of the three chambers, with its 20-ton ceiling slabs, now all cracked, but still in situ.

Khufu's Pyramid is not only the largest of Egypt and Sudan's 130 pyramids, it is also the most accurate in design and construction, with a base length of 756ft and four sides angled at $51^{\circ}52'$. It is also the perfect prism. In theory a circumscribed sphere would touch all four sides and its base and it

is positioned exactly on the four cardinal points, allowing for the earth's precession since 2750BC, when designed, we have to assume by the legendary astronomer/engineer, Imhotep, during the reign of Third Dynasty King Djoser, who built the 'Step Pyramid' of Saqqara, and understood the earth's precession with the Pole Star.



View south from Khufu Pyramid

However, on this present occasion, 45 years later, in company with my travelling companion, we had left a literally freezing London the previous day for a three-day stay in Cairo, before travelling upstream by boat for a further ten days, taking in many of the lesser-known sites en route, through Middle Egypt, including the Red and White Monasteries of Coptic Monk, Shenuti, near the Coptic city of Sohag.

Then I was suddenly awakened from my reverie by a nudge in the ribs from my companion, and a reminder that we had plenty more to see.

To be continued...

James Battay

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Parish visiting in New Zealand

DAVE AND I were very lucky to spend several weeks in New Zealand at the beginning of this year. As we prepared to cross from South to North Island, I contacted Tril Sutherland to see if we could come and see her. For several days there was no reply and then I got a text message from Peter Hall telling me that she had rung the vicarage as her iPad had eaten my email, never to be seen again! I rang her while we were still on South Island and when I said 'Hello Tril, it's Hazel Jenkins', the reply of 'Hurrah' came in a familiar voice.



(Photograph by Barbara – Mountain View resident)

So we arrived in our motorhome on the appointed day and just as she had done for Elaine and Peter, she was sitting on her walker, reserving a prime parking spot! She lives in a beautiful apartment in Mountain View Retirement Village, although, as she pointed out, only six apartments have actually got a view of the mountain. The village has its own library, swimming pool, hospital area, café, communal lounges as well as a very comprehensive programme of activities. Tril took us round on a guided tour and it will come as no surprise that, wherever we went, everybody knew her and was keen to say hello to her friends from England.

Tril is as lively as ever, has part of her bedroom set up with her sewing machine, eats Sunday lunch in the café as it's difficult to do a roast in her kitchenette, and is generally very settled. Her daughter Cara looks after the garden on her patio to make sure she has a lovely sitting-



Tril's patio area

out area and her son Graham visits from Germany twice a year. She was very keen to hear all the news and gossip from St George's and sends her love to everyone. We had a super day with her and I'm thinking of booking my place at Mountain View for about 15 years' time!!

Hazel Jenkins



The mini allotments behind Tril and Dave, some vegies (kiwi spelling) are for anyone, other bits are private



New Zealand fern trees, just the other side of the fence



Divine Café at Mountain View Retirement Village. The cook DOES make exceptional Angel Cakes!

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Exchanging the Peace

ALTHOUGH IT is something we have done in services for some time, the threat of transmitting the COVID-19 virus has caused some rethinking of precisely what we do when we exchange the Peace during the present situation. Various 'bumps' and 'nudges' seem to have come into use, and also friendly waves; even just a spoken "Peace be with you", without any accompanying physical gesture, can be entirely effective in expressing what we want to convey. No doubt we will adopt our natural preferences until such time as the virus ceases to be a problem.

The debate put me in mind of an incident of which my father (an Anglican clergyman) told me with much amusement. During his last incumbency, of three villages to the west of Stafford, he was also an assistant chaplain at Stafford prison. While officiating at a Communion

service in the prison chapel, at the appointed moment, he invited the congregation with the customary "let us exchange a sign of peace". One of the inmates turned to his neighbour, thumbed his nose and blew a raspberry. I think my father had difficulty in preventing himself from laughing out loud!

It is unlikely that such a gesture will catch on as an alternative to a handshake but, as we will perhaps appreciate, the exchange of a mildly rude gesture between friends or relatives can, in particular circumstances, actually be construed as one of affection. Nevertheless, I'm not going to try it in a service any time soon!

Andrew Mayes

Recipe of the month: Lamb Steaks with Herbs and Lemon

As I write this there is panic buying in supermarkets with some items becoming totally unavailable, and I hope that this will have subsided by the time you consider making this recipe.

2 medium onions, chopped
100g/4oz carrots, chopped finely
4 cloves garlic, peeled and crushed or finely grated
1 tablespoon olive oil
25g/1oz butter
4 lamb steaks
1 teasp dried oregano
3 tablespoons tomato purée
2 level teasp castor sugar
1 lemon
175ml/6 fl oz vegetable stock
freshly milled pepper
3 tablespoons chopped fresh parsley

Heat the oil and butter in a large frying pan (one with a lid) add the lamb steaks and brown them on both sides. Remove to a plate.

Add the chopped onion and carrot to the hot oil/butter, stir in the garlic. Lower the heat, cover the pan and cook until the vegetables are softened, about 10 mins. Stir in the oregano.

Meanwhile, in a small bowl mix together the tomato purée and the sugar. Remove the lemon rind thinly with a sharp knife or vegetable peeler, squeeze out the juice and add to the bowl with the vegetable stock. Return the lamb steaks to the pan and pour over the tomato mixture. Bring to a simmer, season with pepper, cover and cook gently for 40 mins.

While it cooks, finely chop the lemon rind and mix with the chopped parsley; sprinkle over the lamb just before serving.

Pamela Ferguson

St George's floodlighting – sponsorship request form (Please return to the treasurer, Steven Kelly, 5 Holly Road, Bramhall, SK7 1HH).



Name Phone no

Date of evening requested £10 or £..... donation enclosed (Please make cheques payable to St George's Stockport PCC)

Reason for request (if appropriate)

If you are a taxpayer and would like the church to reclaim the tax on your donation please also complete the following Gift Aid declaration:

I want to Gift Aid my donation of £..... to St George's Church, Stockport. I am a UK taxpayer and understand that if I pay less Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax in the current tax year than the amount of Gift Aid claimed on all my donations it is my responsibility to pay any difference.

Title..... First name or initial(s).....Surname.....

Home address:.....

Brian Robinson is commissioned as a Diocesan Reader in Northern Ireland

WE ARE PROUD to have Brian on our electoral roll as he visits us when he comes over to see his daughter. As you can see, he has recently been made diocesan reader and is holding things in the vacancy. You may have seen his contribution last week which explored psalm 121 with the mountains in the background:

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/806p1ondku23154/21-03-2020%20Psalm%20121%20Tamlaghtard.mp4?dl=0>

Brian Robinson

Congratulations on your Commissioning as a Diocesan Reader.

Brian, please tell our readers something about your faith journey to your Commissioning as Diocesan Reader.

About ten years ago on a lovely summer's evening, I sat on the concrete steps of a church chatting to the Rector, just a few feet from an open grave. In the midst of the chaos that was my late father-in-law's wake and funeral preparations, there was a moment of calm, a moment of peacefulness and a sense of normality. That evening was the beginning of a wonderful journey that has led me to where I am today. I had always believed that there was a God, a creator, a greater being, but my true journey into my spiritual faith began that evening. In my heart, I truly believe that God used that evening to change my life from what it was then to where it is now, and that He used the Rector that evening as a conduit to guide me on the first step to today.

Please tell us a little about a person (living or dead) who has had an influence on your life.

My (now retired) Rector Rev. Canon David Ferry - he and I used to have some great chats at the Rectory when I was assisting with admin etc. but those 5 minute conversations were never 5 minutes! David - and my great friend Cecil Ross who sadly was called home last year - were both first class mentors during my course.

What book are you reading at the moment and why would you recommend it?

To be honest, I am not a great "casual" reader, more of a "reader by necessity". I am currently using a great wee study guide as part of our

Bible Study Fellowship "The I Am Sayings of Christ" by Douglas Connelly. It certainly helps the reader think more about the person of Jesus. I also enjoy "The Bible Speaks Today" series "The Message of ..." By John Stott - a great commentary-type resource for background for sermon preparations.

What's the best advice you've received?

Don't volunteer to answer Katie McAteer's questions for n:vision! Seriously though - remember to make time for family and self. I work full-time in Coolkeeragh, as well as being a Diocesan Reader. There is a considerable amount of time taken up with Parish duties during our current vacancy so "time out" is important to prevent "burn out".

If you had a time machine what era would you like to visit and why?

The Sermon on the Mount - that initial teaching by Jesus must have been an amazing experience for all those who were there. Imagine hearing Christ setting out His stall for the first time, directly from the great Teacher Himself - His own words - not the recording by Matthew - God's own vision for mankind brought to us by God's own Son.

If you could change one thing about yourself, what would it be and why?

I suppose I could say that I wish this journey could have begun earlier - and in better circumstances - but God knows the plans He has for us. I know the changes that have happened in my life over the last ten years and can't help but wonder where the journey may have led me, had the timing been different!



Who would you like to be locked inside a church with and why?

This has happened accidentally (thanks Margaret)... I'd like to be with Harry Ferguson - the engineer who invented the tractor three-point linkage, and the first man to fly in Ireland (actually in my home Parish on Magilligan Strand in 1909). I had the privilege of getting to see the replica "Ferguson Flyer" plane test flight a couple of years back. I would love to hear his thoughts on the changes in farming and engineering since his death in 1960.

What is your favourite Easter Egg?

It has to be Cadbury's Creme Eggs!
How do you eat yours?



Director of Music's report

St George's Choir

I'D LIKE to begin by thanking the choir for all of their hard work, commitment and service to the parish choir over the last year. It was a very busy year for the church and the workload of the choir has increased considerably as a result.

Notable services and events during the last year:

The highlight of the last 12 months for me was our visit to sing choral evensong at the cathedral in St Asaph. We were immediately invited back again to sing there this year by the canon precentor, although I have put that offer on the back burner as I'd like to broaden our horizons further over the course of the next year.

Charles Bird's baptism on Mothering Sunday was a very enjoyable and hugely successful service from a musical point of view. It was the first time in many years that we've sung a fully choral Eucharist setting at the morning parish Communion. The feedback received from the congregation was extremely positive on that occasion.

On Ascension Day we hosted a deanery confirmation service for the churches of Stockport Deanery. This was the final service outside of the cathedral that the outgoing Bishop of Chester presided at before his retirement. I was again very pleased with the standard of singing at the service and we were able to give a very good impression of ourselves to the other churches in the deanery. Congratulations go to those choir members who were confirmed on that occasion.

It seems like a lifetime ago that we performed the Mass for Peace and Reconciliation. Thanks must go to Andrew Mayes and Chris Dawson for organising the whole event. I must also thank Debbie Heaton and Carol Condliffe for their exceptional work in training the augmented choir in preparation for the event.

On the last Sunday of the summer term we sang our second Sunday morning choral Eucharist of the year as we remembered the battle of St Julien.

For the Heritage Open Day in September we decided to scrap the service of choral evensong, which has never been very well attended, in favour of choral matins at 11am on the day. Despite a smaller choir than I'd hoped, the service was very well received and the standard of

music performed was very good. Choral matins will take place again in September this year for Heritage Day. The service seemed much more popular, and I was pleased with the congregational turnout.

Another enjoyable occasion for the choir was singing at the RSCM Chester Area Festival at the cathedral, with other choirs from across the diocese, the first time for many years that we've taken part in the event.

The final major event of the year, other than our own carol services, was the Chester Diocesan Journey into Light service. As I've already mentioned regarding the deanery confirmation service, when the choir is singing for this kind of service I always feel it's important to give a good impression of the standard of music at St George's, especially to visitors from other churches.

Advent, Christmas and Epiphany 2019/20 were a resounding success and we have received an abundance of compliments from those who attended the three carol services over that period.

In general, I think that the standard of singing at services and rehearsals has improved tremendously over the last year.

I'd like to note the considerable level of support we have received from two former Directors of Music here at St George's, firstly, Roger Briscoe, and more frequently in recent months, Andrew Dean. Having such talented organists willing to come and support the choir makes my life so much easier.

Looking ahead:

We have a number of exciting ventures planned around our regular Sunday services over the coming months.

Blackburn Cathedral Evensong (May 2020)

Chester Cathedral RSCM Area Festival (Autumn)

Manchester Cathedral Weekend (Last weekend in August 2021)

James Hibbert
Director of Music

Puzzle solutions

Easy Sudoku solution:

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

Intermediate Sudoku solution:

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

Crossword

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

Church Service Times

REGULAR SERVICES AT ST GEORGE'S:

All churches are closed for the present, following government restrictions due to coronavirus. During this time, we are streaming services live on the internet as follows:

Sunday

10.15am Home Communion (streamed live via Facebook, and available afterwards for catch up)

Monday to Friday

9.30am Morning Prayer (streamed live via Facebook, and available afterwards for catch up)

Our Facebook page for the live-streamed services is @stgeorgeschurchstockport

SERVICES AT ST GABRIEL'S:

Details of occasional and Festival services are published on a notice outside St Gabriel's.

Baptisms, Banns and Marriage bookings:

Please contact the vicar (telephone: 0161 456 9382 or email: vicar@stgeorgestockport.org.uk).

Ever Wondered What Happens to those Used Postage Stamps?

Well, read on...

A lady in London called Jenny receives 80 items of post a day containing stamps, postcards and foreign currency. Stamps are sorted by hand into around 90 different categories, so every stamp has to be looked at. Each category has a different market value, depending on the type, origin, age or face value of the stamps. Sorted stamps sell for as much as £75/kg. Some are sorted into regions: Europe, Asia, Africa, Scandinavia, Commonwealth, South America etc., whilst other, less common, stamps are kept as individual countries: Nepal, Falkland Islands, Maldives, Cyprus, etc., etc. The GB stamps are sorted into reigns, pictorials, definitives, high and low values, regionals, Channel Islands and the common 1st and 2nd class. Then everything is separated into on- and off-paper. This all takes ages! Once sorted, the stamps are circulated to a band of collectors, around 30 of them. They take what they want and pay a minimum of 10p a stamp. Many of these collectors are interested in specific countries or regions and have submitted 'wants list' to Jenny so she can look out for these stamps whilst sorting.

She has collectors all over the country so sends out theirs by post. Needless to say, the vast majority of stamps are the everyday standard post which are not circulated but go direct to the dealer. She has asked that I keep these separated from foreign or GB pictorial stamps. First Day Covers, Presentation Packs, not on wants lists, and collections are taken to car boot sales where Jenny has a large following and attracts much interest on the day. Following that, the stamps are taken to a dealer who is also a Dogs Trust member. Jenny says all this takes a considerable amount of time and her house is a paper warehouse for three out of every four weeks until she clears out to a dealer, usually 180-200kg at a time. All the money, every penny, goes to Dogs Trust. It cost £6000 to maintain just one kennel for a year and Jenny's project is to provide somewhere for the dogs to call 'home'.

So please do continue to save your stamps, postcards and spare foreign coins and banknotes and I will see that they are sent off to this incredibly dedicated lady.

Kate Stephenson



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