

The Parish Magazine of St. Mary in Penwortham

Welcome to this November edition.

We hope you like our new logo above. It was designed by one of our PCC members Jude Duffy and it captures the spirit of St Mary's beautifully. The format of the magazine has had to change from this month onwards because Microsoft no longer support Publisher which we have used for many years. So please bear with us while we get to grips with the new system.

November is also the month of Remembrance when we meet as a community to remember all those men and women who gave their lives in the service of our nation. We should also remember those who suffered injuries both physical and mental. We thank the Royal British Legion and other service charities who help servicemen and women and their families to cope with the many difficulties death and injury bring. On November 8th we will assemble at the War Memorial at 10.40 am for the annual Service of Remembrance.

They shall not grow old as we that are left grow old. Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn. At the going down of the Sun and in the morning, we will remember them.

November also brings Guy Fawkes night and with it lots of fireworks and the odd bonfire, though not so many as there used to be. Our pets don't look forward to it though, so please keep your pets safe,

November brings us beautiful Autumn colours, falling leaves, misty mornings and colder weather as nature retreats for the winter. Autumn has its own particular delights so why not get out there and take in all that nature has to offer.

"So dull and dark are the November days.
The lazy mist high up the evening curled,
And now the morn quite hides in smoke and haze;
The place we occupy seems all the world."
- John Clare, *November*



St. Mary's News

Vacancy or Interregnum—What's Happening?

We have completed and approved our Parish Profile and our advertisement for a new Vicar has been published to the wider Church of England. We must now await any interest. The first possible date we can interview any one is 10th November.

In the meantime, we continue being supported by the Area Dean and visiting clergy. The worship pattern for November is:

NOVEMBER

1st (ALL SAINTS DAY)
8.15 Morning Prayer – led by the Churchwardens
10.15 Holy Communion – Archdeacon Jane Atkinson

8th REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY
8.15 Holy Communion –Archdeacon Jane Atkinson
10.15 NO SERVICE assemble at Penwortham War Memorial at 10.40 am for the Annual Service of Remembrance.

15th
8.15 Holy Communion – Revd Pat Belshaw
10.15 Holy Communion – Revd David Dickinson

22nd
8.15 Morning Prayer- led by the Churchwarden
10.15 Holy Communion – Revd Calum Crombie

29th
8.15 Holy Communion – Revd Calum Crombie
10.15 Morning Prayer led by Churchwardens

Throughout the Vacancy the churchwardens will continue to liaise with our Area Dean the Rev'd. Hannah Boyd to ensure services continue.
If you have any queries or concerns, please contact any of the churchwardens.

St. Mary's News

Vicarage

The vicarage on Cop Lane has now been sold. A new property has been purchased by the diocese for the new incumbent whenever he or she takes up office. It is a modern 4-bedroom detached house with an office for church use. All costs associated with the sale of the old vicarage and the new property have been paid for by the diocese and not by the parish.

Dates for your diary

Tuesday 1st December at 6pm Howick CE School Carol Service and Presentation of Bibles
Monday 14th December at 6.00pm Cop Lane CE School Carols Service
Sunday 20th December at 6.30pm in church. Festival of 9 Lessons and Carols
Thursday 24th December (Christmas Eve) at 6pm. Christingle.
Thursday 24th December (Christmas Eve) at 11.30pm. Midnight Communion led by the Revd Michael Woods
Friday 25th December (Christmas Day) at 10.15 am Holy Communion led by the Bishop of Burnley, the Rt Rev Joseph Kennedy.

Churchyard

Work continues rebuilding the wall at the far east side of the Lych Gate and reinstalling the railings. It is anticipated that this will be complete by the end of November. Now that the ground has settled once again it will be then the task of the monumental masons to reinstate the headstones.

Clock

We are pursuing work on repairing the clock. It will need a new electric motor and to fit this the hands will need to be removed. It's a bigger job than you would imagine.

I would rather sleep in the southern corner of a little country churchyard than in the tomb of the Capulets. (Edmund Burke)

PENWORTHAM FOODBANK
PENWORTHAM COMMUNITY CENTRE
KINGSFOLD DRIVE, PR1 9EQ

EVERY FRIDAY**
BETWEEN 0930 AND NOON

DONATIONS OF NON-PERISHABLE FOODS ARE URGENTLY REQUIRED
We thank all who have donated food in the past but we need further supplies: particularly pasta, pasta sauce, tins of soup, tins of baked beans and canned fruit

BRING YOUR DONATIONS TO CHURCH, OR TO THE FOODBANK ON A FRIDAY MORNING

OR

ARRANGE A BANK TRANSFER/STANDING ORDER* TO:
Account name: Churches Together in Penwortham
Sort Code: 30-96-85 Account No: 00415955 (Lloyds Bank)

OR

MAKE A DONATION (cheque or cash) *
*We are registered for Gift Aid so if you are able to make a financial donation and are a UK taxpayer then please let us have your contact details so we can arrange for a Gift Aid form to be sent to you.

Diocesan News

Events at the Cathedral

Table for the Nation

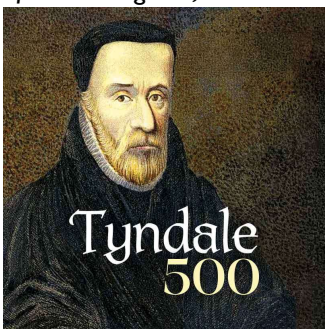
A stunning 13m table made from ancient, fossilised oak will be on display at Blackburn Cathedral from May 2026 for an entire year.



What is the Table?
Created from a section of the nation's most significant tree - a gigantic 5,000 year old Fenland Black Oak - the 13m table is made from ancient, fossilised oak and is a masterpiece of craftsmanship. Unlike anything seen before, 'A Table for the Nation' gives us a unique insight into the scale and majesty of our ancient high forests. The installation is accompanied by a fascinating exhibition detailing the entire process from trunk to Table.

Tyndale 500

This exhibition brings together the story of Tyndale's translation, the turbulent world of Tudor England, and the extraordinary technology of the early printing press.



At its heart is be a rare original 1535 edition of Tyndale's English New Testament (on loan from the British Library) - a 500-year-old printed witness to the moment Scripture began to travel widely in the language of the people. First printed in 1526, it was a decisive moment in the story of English Christianity, public worship, and the English language itself.

I perceived how that it was impossible to establish the lay people in any truth except the Scripture were plainly laid before their eyes in their mother tongue.

William Tyndale

Diocesan News

Work should be for everyone a place of dignity' - Bishop Philip's latest Radio 4 Thought for the Day

The Bishop of Blackburn, Rt Rev Philip North, delivered his latest 'Thought for the Day' on Radio 4 this week.

It can't have been an easy weekend for Katie Zacharia. After being appointed to her dream job of White House Press Secretary, she lasted only five days. There's no doubt she made some mistakes and was at best cagey about her legal qualifications. But I have to admit to feeling a dose of sympathy for a woman whose reputation has been so completely and publicly shredded by the world's media.

Zacharia's plight points to a regular pattern. Recruiting is a tricky business and inevitably some appointments go wrong. When things don't work out, we instinctively blame the employee and point the finger at them. But what about the people who actually did the hiring in the first place? They hold the power. They are the ones who configured the post and made the choice. And surely with that power should come some responsibility.



My job involves a lot of recruiting and so I draw inspiration from the Bible which is filled with stories of a God who calls people and gives them tasks. And by any human standard, God makes some very weird appointments. The murderer Moses to lead his people out of slavery. The harlot Rahab to protect his people in Jericho. The impulsive and boastful Peter to be the rock upon which to build his church.

But even when everything seemed to be going wrong, God did not abandon those he had called. He remained responsible for the choices he had made and it was his faithfulness that enabled such people to use their gifts to the full and make a difference.

For me, this demonstrates that those who choose and appoint others need to pay attention to how they use the power they hold. Many recruiters do this well, but in recent months I have spoken to countless young adults who

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are disillusioned by the employment market. Their problem is not that it is competitive - they expect that. What drives them to despair is the way some recruiters seem to them to abuse their power.

They apply for jobs and never hear back. They labour over CVs only to find their precious work judged only by an AI bot. They attend interviews but are never informed of the result. The whole process undermines their gifts and leaves them feeling humiliated and despairing.

But work should be for everyone a place of dignity. Behind every job application, there lies a precious and beloved human being. If we want a society to which all can contribute, then those who hold power over the lives of others need to use it with wisdom and compassion.

Services held for Authorised and Licensed Lay Ministers (ALMs and LLMs)

More than 50 people from churches across Lancashire gathered at Blackburn Cathedral this week to be commissioned or recommissioned as Authorised Lay Ministers (ALMs), equipping them to serve their local parishes in a wide range of ministries**.**

The service was led by the Rt Rev Dr Jill Duff, Bishop of Lancaster. Bishop Jill is pictured above with the group of ALMs following the commissioning service, alongside the Rt Rev Philip North, Bishop of Blackburn.Introduced across the Diocese in 2021, Authorised Lay Ministry is one of several pathways that enable lay people to develop and exercise their gifts in the life and mission of the Church. Each ALM undertakes training for a specific ministry role within their own church and community, before being authorised to serve in that area.



During the service, the ALMs were commissioned by their parish priests for the ministries to which they have been called. Authorised Lay Ministry complements the work of Licensed Lay Ministers (LLMs), whose ministry typically spans a broader range of responsibilities within parish life.

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For more information about Authorised Lay Ministry in the Diocese of Blackburn, including details of how to become an ALM and a short introductory video, visit this page (add and check link). https://www.blackburn.anglican.org/authorised-lay-ministry

Church News

Bishop of Newcastle responds as MPs reject Assisted Dying Bill

Following the vote in the House of Commons against giving Second Reading to the Terminally Ill Adults (End of Life) Bill, the Bishop of Newcastle, Dr Helen-Ann Hartley, said: "I am relieved that the Assisted Dying Bill has been defeated. "I recognise the deeply personal nature of this debate and acknowledge all those who will be affected by its outcome.

"I am pleased that MPs have taken seriously the detailed scrutiny applied to the Bill in the House of Lords, work in which I was privileged to participate as a member of the Select Committee.

"I hope that the decision now affords us space for reflection, but also for action: a clear and sustained commitment to improving palliative and end-of-life care, alongside the social care on which so many people and families depend.

"These are urgent matters, and they must now receive the attention and investment they deserve."

Growing number of churches moving away from oil and gas amid rising energy prices

An increasing number of Church of England parishes, some of them in the most rural areas of the country, are moving away from oil and gas and improving their energy efficiency as they brace for rising energy bills this winter. A match funding pilot scheme from the Church of England's Net Zero Carbon Programme for churches to pay for work such as under pew

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heating, LED lighting, insulation, electrical upgrades and small solar panel and battery storage schemes has been expanded after it exceeded its targets.

Give to Go Green will be expanded to all 42 of the Church of England's dioceses after £938,000 – exceeding targets – was raised by 127 churches to help pay for work to cut their carbon emissions and increase energy efficiency. The total was boosted by an additional £830,000 of match funding from the Church of England's Net Zero Carbon programme.

Julian Atkins, the Church of England's Net Zero Carbon Programme Director, said: "Across the country, parishes are taking action in ways that make sense for their own buildings and communities – raising money locally, making buildings more energy efficient and finding other practical solutions to reduce carbon emissions.

"We are deeply grateful to all our many committed volunteers who make this possible. Our role through the national Net Zero Carbon Programme is to create the conditions and provide the funding and expertise to help them do that.

"For many churches, this is about much more than reducing carbon. It is about creating warmer, more welcoming buildings that can serve their communities well, while using resources wisely and, where possible, reducing energy costs so that more can be invested in mission and ministry."

Kirk school matron who died in the Holocaust recognised at Auschwitz

The name of a Scottish woman who died in the Holocaust after refusing to abandon Jewish children in her care has been added to a special memorial wall at Auschwitz.

Jane Haining, the matron of a Church boarding school, is recognised in a renewed section of the Auschwitz Birkenau Memorial and Museum's main exhibition, which is devoted to hundreds of prisoners for whom no registration photographs were taken.

Originally from Dunscore in Dumfries and Galloway, Miss Haining was the matron at the Scottish Mission School in Budapest, Hungary from 1932-1944.

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It had around 400 day and boarder pupils aged from six to 16 years old, a mixture of Jewish and Christian girls.
Miss Haining helped keep the children safe for more than four years after the war broke out in 1939 until she was betrayed by the cook's son-in-law, whom she scolded for taking scarce food meant for the girls, some of whom were orphans or abandoned by their parents.
She was determined to stick to her post and had repeatedly ignored Church of Scotland requests to return home, saying: 'If these children need me in days of sunshine, how much more do they need me in days of darkness?'
Miss Haining was arrested by German officers in April 1944, and former pupil Agnes Rostas said her haunting last words to sobbing children were: "Don't worry, I'll be back by lunch."
But the kind-hearted Scot never returned to the school. She was transported along with Hungarian Jews to Auschwitz on 14 May 1944.
Miss Haining was 47 and it is widely accepted that she died in a gas chamber and her remains remain on the Auschwitz site.

Next Primate's Meeting to take place in Johannesburg early next year

The Archbishop of Canterbury has called her first Primates' Meeting.
It will take place in Johannesburg from 28th February to 5th March 2027, and it will be hosted by the Anglican Church of Southern Africa.
The gathering of Primates will explore mission, service, and advocacy. Also on the agenda will be peace and reconciliation, migration and the refugee crisis, the environment and safeguarding.

Matters of Faith

Lest We Forget

'In Flanders' fields the poppies blow between the crosses, row on row, that mark our place: and in the sky the larks, still bravely singing, fly scarce heard amid the guns below.'

Matters of Faith

This is the first verse of John McCrae's poem, first published in Punch magazine in 1915. It soon came to symbolise the sacrifice of all who died in World War One. Today, the poppy remains an important symbol of all those who have sacrificed their lives in conflicts over the years. But why do we remember them?

'They will beat their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not take up sword against nation, nor will they train for war anymore.' (Micah 4:3). Writing 700 years before Christ, Micah spoke at the time when Samaria was captured due to the invasion of Assyria. However, he prophesied a future of hope, a world where nations would come together in peace rather than war. His words are fulfilled in the kingdom of God established by Jesus.

Our understanding of *peace* is more than simply the absence of conflict. It is about building relationships between people, communities and nations, founded on love and justice for all. As we remember those who have died in war, we should look practically at how we can build such relationships, beginning with our own families, colleagues and neighbours. *'We will walk in the name of the Lord our God for ever and ever.'* (Micah 4:5). Let us ask God's Spirit to make us people of peace, justice and compassion for today's world.

Editor: Canon Paul Hardingham continues his series on the books of the Bible.

What's the Big Idea? - an introduction to 1 Timothy

This month we look again at the books of the New Testament. Paul wrote to Timothy, *'my true son in the faith'* (2), as leader of the church in Ephesus. Timothy had a Greek father and Jewish Christian mother (Acts 16:1). Paul led him to faith during his first visit to Lystra and on his second visit invited Timothy to join him on his travels. He circumcised Timothy so that his Greek ancestry would not be a liability to working with the Jews (Acts 16:3). Although somewhat timid and often unwell, Timothy was a faithful servant of the Lord and Paul.

Paul writes his letter to challenge false teaching and to give instruction on aspects of church life, including worship, the appointment of leaders, and their attitude to money.

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Paul gave Timothy authorisation to challenge the false teachers in the church. They taught a strong emphasis on Jewish myths and genealogies and were legalistic about Jewish laws. They also taught that the resurrection had already come and Christians no longer needed to look to Christ's coming, judgment, and resurrection of the dead. They were so immersed in speculative

controversies that they neglected the very core of the Christian faith. Not an unfamiliar situation today!

Therefore, like Timothy, we are called to enable the church to bring glory to God: *'But you, man of God, flee from all this, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance and gentleness. Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called when you made your good confession in the presence of many witnesses.'* (6:11,12)

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

Reflected Faith Series: Bread and wine

Last time we reflected on the time of bringing forward our 'collection' money. In many churches at the same time the wine and bread are also brought forward by members of the congregation for use during the Eucharist celebration.

This bringing of the bread and wine during the Offertory Procession isn't just a practical matter as these are required, but is a symbolic act representing the people deliberately coming forward to the 'holiest' of places and offering their daily work and lives to God.

In the earliest days of the church, actual food and wine was brought from the peoples' homes for the service and to distribute to the poor afterwards.

In orthodox churches there are often two types of 'bread.' One that is consecrated and given to communicants and another kept within the main body of the church, alongside plastic bags, for folk to take a piece home to share with their family and friends; which mimics this earlier action.

In the Church of England, and in many other denominations, when the bread and wine have been consecrated, they are considered to be set aside explicitly for the purpose of human consumption and therefore all must be consumed, either during or immediately after the service. This is normally done by the priest but can happen by any communicant member that the priest has asked.

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Because of this it's important that the priest knows how many communicants there are likely to be. Too much wine consecrated can have a detrimental effect if one has to drive to another church!
For myself, churches have communicated this to me in various ways: in a suburban church we had a board up high at the back of the nave with large numbers placed there by a Churchwarden who had counted folk as they entered. In a large village church the number was whispered to me by a person bringing up the elements, whilst nowadays in small local village churches you will often see me stop and count!

In praise of oranges

Do you like oranges? Big? small? easy to peel? or a bit more difficult to get into? They are delicious!
Except – when they are not. All orange lovers will know that disappointing moment when they have begun to peel what looks like a perfect orange, only to find that inside it is rotten, marbled black and blemished.
It's a good picture of how we can live our lives. We can be seemingly perfect on the outside, but hiding, at least sometimes, some very dark parts, which we would not like our nearest and dearest to know about, let alone broadcast to the world at large. So it is good to know that we have a God who loves to lighten our darkness, to forgive our sin, and to set us on a right path, clean and whole.
But there's another side to oranges, too. Sometimes our patient peeling is rewarded by the most succulent sweetness; so much so we manage a long 'mmmmmmm' as the juice overflows at the side of our mouths. It's a reminder of the invitation in Psalm 34 to 'taste and see that the Lord is good'.
For the Christian faith is strong on food symbols to help explain how good God is. He is 'sweeter than honey in the honeycomb' says Psalm 19. He gave the Israelites a "land of milk and honey". And of course, the bread and wine we take for our comfort at a Holy Communion service comes most readily to mind. It's a foretaste of heaven, portrayed as a great feast.
A feast - it's such an attractive image, with universal appeal - to foodies, to the starving, to those who will no longer have to think about their figure, to the poor- and the invitation is to all. That's you, and me.

Matters of Faith

God's invitation is to let Him nourish us day by day. Is there a hunger in you to explore that simple invitation 'Taste and see that the Lord is good'? May God bless you as you feed on Him in your heart by faith, with thanksgiving.

What are you built on?

"Lengthen your cords, strengthen your stakes. For you will spread out to the right and to the left…" Isaiah 54: 2, 3

How strong and flexible are you, as a person? Did you know that the Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco can move up to 20 feet in either direction as its centre? It's built to sway – to absorb and accommodate vast daily stresses and heat. But it always comes back to its true centre, because it is built on a vast system of steel and concrete that sinks down, down into a solid rock foundation far below in the Pacific.

Each of us needs to be anchored like that - onto a sure foundation. Without it, we will be at the mercy of the storms and strong tides of life. Burdens and flying debris from other people's lives will knock us off balance.

That foundation for us is Jesus. How is your relationship with Him? Is it solid? Is it deep enough to hold you steady on your course as 2026 draws to a close? Jesus urges us to 'abide' in Him. It takes time to get to know Him. The Bible is His message to us; prayer is our message back to Him, and more: for if we draw close to Him, He promises to draw close to us, too.

Miscellaneous

Are you lighting fireworks on Bonfire Night?

If you are planning to set off fireworks at home on Bonfire Night, you may wish to review the Fireworks Code, to help keep you and your family and guests safe….

- Only buy fireworks marked BS 7114.
- Don't drink alcohol if you are the one setting off fireworks.
- Keep fireworks in a closed box.
- Follow the instructions on each firework.
- Light at arm's length, using a taper.

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• Stand well back.
• Never go near a firework that has been lit. Even if it hasn't gone off, it could still explode.
• Never put fireworks in your pocket or throw them.
• Always supervise children around fireworks.

• Light sparklers one at a time and wear gloves.
• Never give sparklers to a child under five. They burn incredibly hot, and can cause severe burns.
• Keep pets indoors

The cost of a Bonfire Night party

Burning your money is one way to describe a fireworks party. But they can also be a fun way of socialising. Here are some of the recent trends:

In the UK, we spend an average of £100 to £300 on fireworks alone, if we hold a private garden party. If we increase that to a fully hosted or catered events, expect to spend from. £500 to £700.

For your standard DIY back-garden display (Category F2 fireworks, requiring an 8-metre safety distance) can cost anywhere from £50 to £250, depending on the variety of single-ignition 'cakes' (barrages), rockets and what you do about the final finale.

According to confused.com, we spend on average more than a £100 on hot dogs, jacket potatoes and burgers. Then it is about £67 on decorations and lights, £64 on party bags and novelties, and maybe £64 for a cake.

Those giant autumn house spiders

We've all been there – quietly relaxing at home, when suddenly a HUGE thing with LONG legs scuttles right by you. You can't help but jump, and if you are normal, scream.

What just scared you was a fully grown adult male *Eratigena atrica*. They are among the largest spiders in Central and Northern Europe.

It has not just come in from the cold. It has been living warm and cosy, hidden in your house for weeks. Now it has left its dark hiding spot to race across your carpets and walls and bed with a definite purpose in mind: it is looking for love.

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For autumn is mating time for the big spiders, and there are also females living in your house, safe and secure in cracks, lofts and behind furniture.
If you think giant house spiders are big, you are right. With a body length of 1.6cm, their leg span can commonly reach up to 7.5 cm. And heaven help you if you find you are sharing your house with a cardinal spider (*Tegenaria parietina)* – their bodies are up to 2cm long, and their long hairy legs can span up to 12cm. If *that* thing runs down the couch towards you, you'll notice it! And giant house spiders are fast. They can hit speeds of up to half a metre per second.
The good news is that giant house spiders are as scared of you as you are of them. They are disease-free, and their bite is extremely rare and harmless. They even pay their rent by eating your flies, mosquitoes, and other small bugs. So, try and be kind to them, and let them live with you – they don't like the cold outside very much. Just lift your feet as they gallop across the carpet…

Good news about dog theft

The only good news there can possibly be about dog theft is that it is going down, and finally this is true.
After a horrific spike in thefts during the COVID-19, when due to 2020 lockdowns it seemed that everyone wanted a puppy, things have now settled down. According to pet insurance data and police figures, recorded thefts have dropped by more than 20%.
The new Pet Abduction Act of 2024 made pet theft a specific criminal offence, although criminals still target popular breeds like French Bulldogs, Dachshunds, and Staffordshire Bull Terriers.
So, it pays to keep your dog safe. Make sure your garden is securely locked, never leave your dog alone outside a shop or in your car, and ensure your microchip details are up to date. Finally, take some clear photographs of your dog, from different angles, and record any unusual or distinguishing features they may have.

Money is like muck, no good unless it is spread. - *Francis Bacon*

Miscellaneous

God in the Arts

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

'He gave us eyes to see them' – the altar

In 'The Temple' the reader travels through the poems of George Herbert and makes a pilgrimage through the church to arrive finally at the altar where Love bids us welcome to make our communion.

For the poet and for us, the altar is a sign of Christ: His presence in the sacrament of His body and blood. At the Reformation stone altars gave way to wooden holy tables, but in 1972 a stone altar was created for a London church that was designed not only as a sign of Christ, but as a reminder of the Dome



of the Rock in Jerusalem – the place where Abraham was ready to offer Isaac. The altar is a focus of offering. Its sculptor was Henry Moore who began his work 300 years after Sir Christopher Wren designed the new church of St Stephen, Walbrook in 1672. Neither Wren nor Moore were afraid of innovation and experiment. As a result, Wren created one of the most beautiful of London churches, famous and admired throughout Europe, with its central dome carried on 12 columns. His concern was that in worship all should hear and see, just as Moore's concern was to show the altar at the heart of the church, and consequently a church that is at the heart of the city.

The placing of that altar led to a lengthy court case in 1987, and opinions may still vary over this marriage of stone and building. But it remains as a focus for offering and worship, just as the church of St Stephen stands nearly 350 years after it was rebuilt. Both take us in faith and prayer to an earlier age when Jesus shared a meal with His disciples in the Upper Room. We rejoice that the same Jesus welcomes us to the Eucharist now at this altar of St Stephen and at the altars of all our churches.

Miscellaneous

God in the Sciences

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

God of the mountains, God of the valleys

Where were you when I laid the earth's foundation? Tell me, if you understand. Who marked off its dimensions? Surely you know! Who stretched a measuring line across it? On what were its footings set, or who laid its cornerstone ... The earth takes shape like clay under a seal; its features stand out like those of a garment… Have you journeyed to the springs of the sea or walked in the recesses of the deep?

Job 38:4–7, 14, 16 (NIV)

These verses from the biblical book of Job focus on the Earth, from the top of the highest mountains to the deepest valleys of the sea floor. Job used to have a very comfortable life, but lost everything: health, children, and much of his property. He can see no obvious reason for this terrible turn of events, so he demands an answer from God, asking "What have I done to you…? Why have you made me your target?"

There is no direct reply to Job's question, but instead a long conversation with his friends who assume (wrongly) that he must be being punished for doing something very bad. When God finally speaks, He draws Job's attention to his surroundings. The sun, moon and stars, the immensity of land and sea, the creatures that inhabit them, and the processes that produce weather are a wonderful display of God's creative power. God is the origin and sustainer of all these things, and they are far beyond anything humankind could produce, fully understand or imagine – even today.

The things we do know about the processes described in Job can help us appreciate how marvellous they are. Mountains are produced by the movement of the Earth's rocky crust over great periods of time. Erosion by weathering or glaciers then grinds down those rocks to produce the mineral component of soil.

Considering the wider perspective of creation can help restore our sense of who we are, who God is, and where we fit into His purposes. God speaks to Job in the midst of his suffering, lifting his eyes to the power and creativity of his Maker. Only after this theology lesson are Job's practical needs addressed.

What will life be like for us over the coming months? A constant check on our own thinking – reminding ourselves of the bigger picture of God's plans and purposes – might be just what we need to help us keep going.

This article drew very directly on the writing of Prof Bob White in New Daylight (BRF, Sept-Dec 2020), and the input of a Bible study group based in Cambridge.

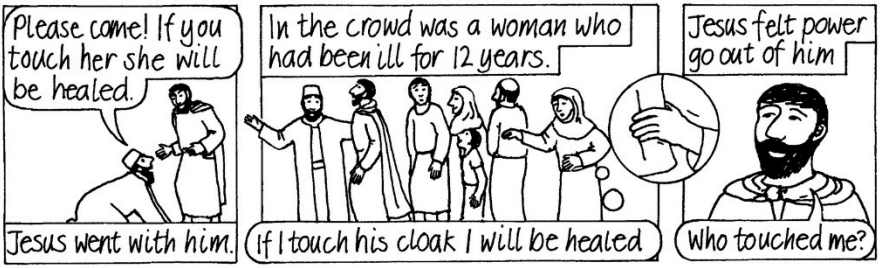


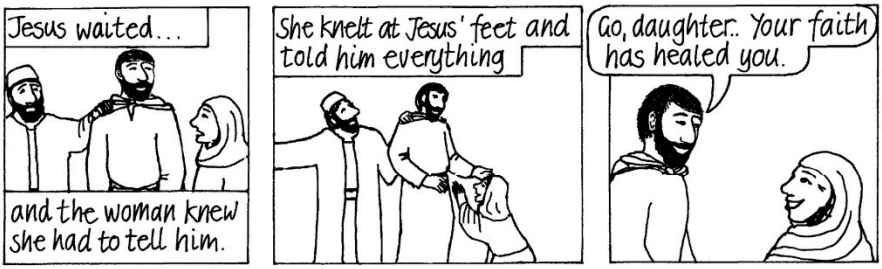
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A short story from the Bible

It can be read in the Bible in Lk 8:40-56, Mt 9:18-26, Mk 5:21-43

Jairus, a town leader, had a 12 year old daughter who was ill and about to die. He came to Jesus and knelt at his feet...









Miscellaneous

All in the month of NOVEMBER

It was:

400 years ago, on 18th November 1626 that St Peter's Basilica in the Vatican City was completed. It is the largest church in the world (measured by its interior).

175 years ago, on 13th November 1851 that the first telegraph service between London and Paris began operating.

150 years ago, on 1st November 1876 that the North Sea Canal in the Netherlands was officially opened. It links Amsterdam to the North Sea.

125 years ago, on 12th November 1901 that German physicist Wilhelm Roentgen was awarded the first Nobel Prize in Physics, for discovering X-rays.

100 years ago, on 15th November 1926 that the Balfour Declaration was approved by the delegates to the Imperial Conference of 1926. It declared that the UK and its Dominions in the British Empire were equal in status.

90 years ago, on 30th November 1936 that the Crystal Palace in London was destroyed by a fire.

75 years ago, on 2nd November 1951 that the Suez Crisis began. 6,000 British troops arrived in Fayid, Egypt, to quell unrest in the Canal Zone. It was the biggest airlift of troops since WW2.

70 years ago, on 11th November 1956 that the Hungarian Revolution ended after its uprising was brutally supressed by the Soviet Union.

60 years ago, on 22nd November 1966 that the first chess match between two computers took place, between the USA and Russia. The Soviet Union's computer won.

40 years ago, on 22nd November 1986 that the American boxer Mike Tyson became the youngest-ever WBC world heavy-weight champion, at the age of 20.

30 years ago, on 18th November 1996 that the Channel Tunnel fire took place when a truck caught fire while on board a Heavy Goods Vehicle shuttle travelling through the tunnel. It caused considerable damage and the tunnel was closed for six months for repairs. There was another serious fire in September 2008.

Miscellaneous

Also 30 years ago, that on 30th November England officially returned the Stone of Scone to Scotland after 700 years. It was the coronation stone of the Scottish and later English and British monarchs. It is now on permanent display in Perth Museum.
10 years ago, on 4th November 2016 that the Paris Agreement on Climate Change came into effect.
Also 10 years ago, on 7th November 2016 that Leonard Cohen, Canadian folk/soft rock singer, songwriter and poet died.
Also 10 years ago, on 8th November 2016 that Donald Trump was elected as 45th President of the USA.

Editor: by Tim Lenton

Remembering Leonard Cohen – poet and singer
Ten years ago, on 7th November 2016, Leonard Cohen, Canadian folk/soft rock singer, songwriter and poet died.
He was born into a well-off Jewish family in Montreal that was said to claim direct descent from Aaron – the name Cohen meaning priest. Bob Dylan once observed that Cohen wrote songs that were really prayers.
Before he was a singer Cohen was a poet and a novelist. Two collections – *Let Us Compare Mythologies* in 1956 and *Spice-Box of Earth* in 1961– brought him acclaim as a poet, and this was enhanced by two novels, *The Favourite Game* and *Beautiful Losers,* in the early 1960s.
He had already moved to the Greek island of Hydra in 1960, where he met the Norwegian Marianne Ihlen, who became his muse. Later he was the long-time companion – though not husband – of Suzanne Elrod, who he met in a lift in Manhattan in 1968. They had two children: Adam, also a singer-songwriter, and Lorca, a photographer.
Somewhat confusingly, Cohen's early song *Suzanne*, on his 1967 debut album, *The Songs of Leonard Cohen*, referred to a different woman, the wife of a friend. Though some people mysteriously described his distinctive baritone voice as "depressing", many others found his performances and his songs magical, compelling and full of spiritual and physical depth. Songs like *Hallelujah* and *You Want it Darker*, with its use of the Hebrew word *hineni* (here I am), implying total availability to God, meant much to practising Jews and Christians.

Miscellaneous

Cohen spent seven years in a Buddhist monastery in the 1990s, and afterwards lost much of his life savings through financial betrayal by his former manager. Following that, at the age of 71 he embarked on a global tour that was a massive success. He was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 2008, and two years later was honoured with a lifetime achievement Grammy.

National Tree Week – 21st to 29th November

It really is time to appreciate our trees. Did you know:

That the UK has 123,000 ancient and veteran trees, and more ancient oak trees than the rest of Europe combined?

Or that trees help us feel better? Studies have found that exposure to forests generally reduces our mental and physical stress, anxiety, and depression.

Or that 95% of land carbon in the UK is stored in soil, and trees help put it there? When wood and leaves fall, their carbon gets stored in the soil.

Or that hedgerows alongside our roads can reduce air pollution exposure by up to 63%?

No wonder that each year the Tree Council and its partners bring together the conservation sector, volunteers and tree-lovers to mark the start of the annual tree planting season. Together, they plant thousands of trees and hedgerows, to celebrate these "magnificent mainstays" of our landscape.

And we need more trees. Sadly, only 13% of the UK's total land area is covered in trees. That's compared to an average of 46% in Europe. In England, the figure is just 10%.

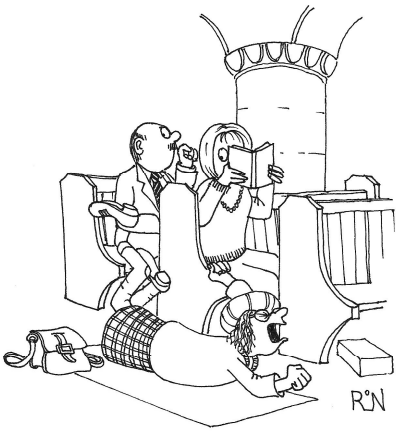
On the plus side, there are more than 80 community tree nurseries in the UK, growing an estimated 250,000 trees a year, often from locally collected seed, and which are given away or sold at minimal cost.

Observations on life

The only thing that wakes you up faster than coffee is spilled coffee.

About the only thing that comes to us without effort is old age.

Poems



Somebody sat in Minnie Hyssop's pew



The vicar's alternative to traditional after-service coffee was having a dramatic effect on male church attendance

Feedback Fatigue

Whene'er we place an order
For goods or merry tune,
There's one thing to be sure of –
The questions follow soon!

How did you like your purchase?
From one to five – please score!
How easy were your searches?
Will you return once more?

Or will you recommend us
To family or friend?
The questions that they send us
They never seem to end!

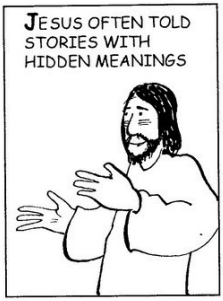
For feedback they are thirsting
"For quality", they say.
With questions they are bursting!
They pour in every day!

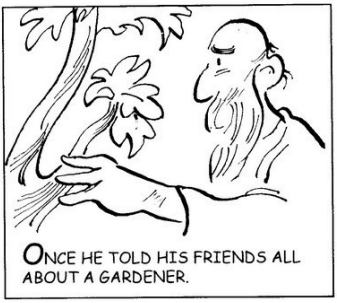
Our time is cast asunder -
"Five minutes it will take!"
But then we have to wonder –

What difference will it make?
For what is really galling
Despite their questionnaires;
Their service? Still appalling!
For no-one *really* cares!

By Nigel Beeton

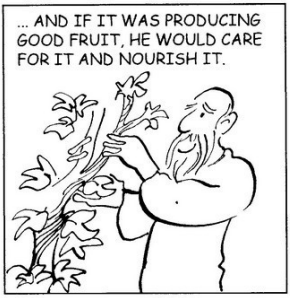
The gardener and the Vine



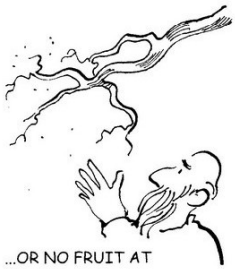




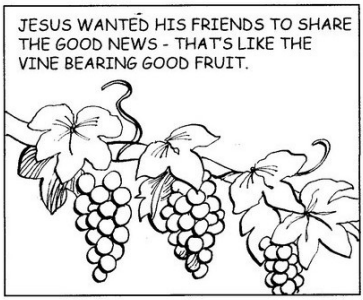


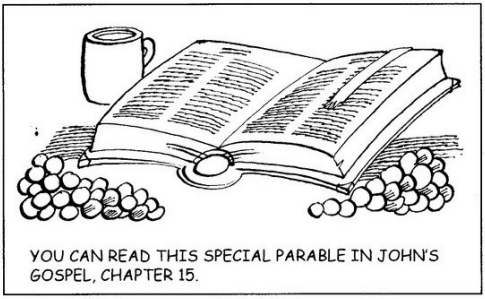












Smile – it's good for you

Explaining those words used in church
BULLETIN: Your receipt for attending a service.

PROCESSION: The ceremonial formation at the beginning of service, consisting of altar servers, the celebrant, and late parishioners looking for seats.

USHERS: The only people in the parish who don't understand the seating capacity of a pew.

PEW: A medieval torture device still found in many churches.

CHOIR: A group of people whose singing allows the rest of the congregation to lip-sync.

HYMN: A song of praise, often sung three octaves higher than the congregation's range.

AMEN: The only part of a prayer that everyone knows.

HYMN, RECESSIONAL: The last song, often sung a little more quietly, since some of the people have already left.

Like God
My grandson was visiting one day when he said, "Grandma, I always think of how you and God are alike."
Mentally polishing my halo, I asked, "How is that, then?"
"You're both just SO old," he replied.

Story
It was Dad's turn to read young Jamie a bedtime story. After 20 minutes, Mum called up the stairs, "Is he asleep?"

Young Jamie called softly back, "Yes, finally."

Smile – it's good for you

Cats and teenagers

Neither teenagers nor cats turn their heads when you call them by name.
No matter how much you do for them, it is never enough.
Cats rarely deign to walk with you when outside, and the same is true of teenagers.
No cat or teenager shares your taste in music.
Cats and teenagers can suddenly get 'hissy', without any known cause.
Cats and teenagers can lie on the living-room sofa for hours on end without moving, barely breathing.
Cats have nine lives. Teenagers live as if they did.
Cats and teenagers yawn in exactly the same manner, communicating that ultimate human ecstasy - utter boredom.
Cats and teenagers do not improve anyone's furniture.
Cats and teenagers are known to creep home at all hours of the night. Neither will tell you where they've been.
So, if you must raise teenagers, it is a good idea to follow instructions as for cats:
Just put food out at regular intervals and do not make any sudden moves in their direction. When they make up their minds, they will finally come to you for some affection and comfort, and it will be a triumphant moment for all concerned.

Loan

Letter home from college: "Thank you so-o-o-o much for the student loans to get me through college. I don't think I can ever repay you."

Can't scare me

My wife and I were watching the gorillas at the zoo when several of them charged at the enclosure fence, yelling terribly, rolling their eyes around, and clenching their fists. They looked quite terrifying. The crowd scattered except for one frail, elderly lady, who did not bat an eye. Later, my wife asked how she had kept her composure. "Oh, easy," she said cheerfully. "You see, I used to run the youth group at my local church."