

St Helen's Magazine

July 2021

50p



St Helen's Church

Ashby-de-la-Zouch



Loving God, loving others, loving the world

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Giving

You can make donations to the work of St Helen's via our website - <https://www.sthelensashby.net/Groups/327469/Giving.aspx>

Editor Writes ...

If you are wondering what this month's front cover means, let me tell you straight away that it started as an illustration for Revd Mary's letter over the page but, after I'd created it, I thought it was a strong visual with which to start the whole magazine.



I always hope an eye-catching cover will attract people who haven't become regular readers of our magazine to pick it up and try it. And now we are printing again, rather than being almost entirely on-line, it's something for me to consider. Fishermen know all about making lures and bait which have visual appeal, and on-line, 'click bait' consists of tantalising headlines to draw you in to click on a story. So, can I tempt you with Margaret Jacques's 'Edge-lands' on page 6 or Wendy Freer's 'Pudding Bag' on page 18?

A news headline which grabbed my attention this month was 'Humpback whale gulps and spits out Cape Cod lobsterman.' Intrigued, and reminded, of course, of Jonah and his big fish, I had to read more. Apparently the poor fisherman was diving when he ended up in the whale's mouth for about 30-40 seconds. It all happened off Provincetown, Massachusetts. Anyone else read that and think, 'massive chew-sets'? Just me? In similar awful-joke vein, on page 27 there are more 'Jokes to help us to not miss Revd Stewart too much.' (Please do send in your jokes if you have any which might help.)

It can be very strange the things you find yourself typing in to Google Search, but I had to check whether a whale really can swallow a human. It appears that you have nothing to fear if you find yourself in the mouth of a humpback whale even though it's a marine giant. Reassuringly, of the 90 known whale species on Earth, the only one with a throat large enough to swallow a human is a sperm whale. They grow to 65 feet in length, and have large oesophaguses to allow them to feed on larger prey such as giant squid, which they sometimes swallow whole. Squid as much as 46 feet long have been found inside a sperm whale's stomach! There's a story of a big fish in an unexpected pool on page 5.

I also learned that most people, even Cape Cod lobstermen, are never going to get a chance to even see a sperm whale in real life let alone have a Jonah-style close encounter because, although they are widely distributed around the world, they live mostly in the open ocean, and regularly spend their time at depths of over 10,000 feet. We'd better not have that on our eye-spy bucket list then. But some of us raised our eyes for an unexpected sighting during a service in June - see page 17.

Jill Chapman .




Revd Mary Writes ...

Dear Friends

Anyone for tennis? - or football, cricket, swimming, shooting, pole-valutting, or dressage-ing for that matter! What a busy sporting month we have ahead of us: the long-awaited return of Wimbledon, the nail-biting finish to the Euros (with requisite Eng-er-land agonies, no doubt), the launch of the Olympics, the anticipation of the Paralympics and through it all the slow and steady innings of England's fixtures with Sri Lanka and Pakistan.

Are you ready? - remote-control arm suitably limbered up ready for you to change channels to keep abreast of simultaneous events? energy drinks stockpiled to help you cope with the time difference with Japan? vocal exercises underway for all that screaming at the TV? (And if you're really not a sports fan, I hope your subscription to Netflix is up to date!)

There is something really moving about sportswomen and men right at the top of their game; moving, because we know that the moment of glory is resting on months, years, of early morning training, finely calibrated diets, rigorous self-control and, often, blood, sweat and tears. To be the best in Europe, or in the world, requires utter discipline for mind and body - the brain's ability to harness anxiety as a skilled rider might a wild horse, every muscle as finely- tuned as a concert grand piano. And then there's the support team that remains largely unseen but absolutely vital - the physio, the running partner, the dietitian, the sports psychologist, faithful family and friends cheering the star on and on and on from damp, inglorious school fixtures to Olympic immortality.

In his first letter to the Corinthians, Paul writes about the church - the people who make up the church rather than the building - as a body; as each person finding their part in the body as an eye, or an ear, or a big toe, or a lung, and then playing that part to the full. We need each other, Paul writes, to play our parts, even if that part is as unseen as a sports psychologist for an athlete, or a kit man for a footballer. It doesn't matter if your part is behind the scenes or even pretty unglamorous, Paul writes; you still have to play it.

I wonder whether you've found your part in the body of the church? - whether you've trained and disciplined yourself for that part with the focus and dedicated of an elite athlete? As you watch a month-long-sport-a-thon could you be pondering this - the part that you are called to play, that you're uniquely made to fit?

Eng-er-land might let us down, Team GB will have its ups and downs - but rather than just being a spectator - exulted or crest-fallen - why not come onto the pitch, onto the field of our ministry and mission and play your part?

Yours, ever in training,

Mary

Roll up, roll up, buy your Big Issue here!

I can just imagine the shoppers of Cambridge doing a double take when their usual Big Issue seller wasn't at his regular place one day a couple of weeks ago - wasn't his replacement strangely familiar? Well, he definitely was. They might have struggled to place him when they saw him out of context, but it was none other than the Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby!

The actual vendor, Lee Welham, and the Archbishop had struck up a friendship over the previous weeks, when the Archbishop was on study leave in Cambridge. It seems Lee, a market trader before he became a Big Issue vendor, has a salesman's persuasive gifts, because Archbishop Justin agreed to put on the Big Issue company uniform of red cap and tabard, and spend 40 minutes getting a glimpse of what it's like selling the Big Issue magazine.

You can read Justin Welby's interview with the Big Issue on their website (<https://www.bigissue.com/latest/when-the-archbishop-of-canterbury-sold-the-big-issue>) which includes the Archbishop and Lee Welham's fascinating discussion of Jesus' homelessness, and speculation as to whether he could be classed as a 'sofa-surfer.'



Edge-lands

As many of you will know Allan and I have been worshipping with you on-line for well over a year now, and since March this year I have joined the Flagstaff Family Ministry Team as a retired Priest (PTO). In the past 3 months it has been good to be able to see some of you face to face now restrictions are being carefully lifted.

I was ordained in 2003, and spent the final 9 years of my full-time ministry as the Rector of Morton, Stonebroom and Shirland up in North East Derbyshire. When I retired, in 2016, we moved to Melbourne where, immediately prior to ordination, I had been a Reader. Before his retirement Allan was a Maintenance Controller for East Midlands Trains (as it was then) and our daughter, Kathryn, sailed out of the nest years ago and serves in the Royal Navy. As a family we all love the great outdoors.

Melbourne, is of course, on the very edge of Derby Diocese, so in joining you on the adjacent edge of Leicester Diocese is not a great leap. Edges have meant a great deal to me in my life. I was brought up close to the banks of the Rivers Trent and Erewash. (My ancestors on my dad's maternal grandparent's side were bargees, then later lock-keepers and ferry (wo)men.) I love the water, rivers, seas, fields, escarpments, and mountains. Our Rectory in Shirland was on a hilltop on the A61 as it ploughs its way north along the north/south ridge. Looking east from our front windows were the regeneration villages of the NE Derbys coalfields including two of my parishes and looking west from the back windows we could see into the Peak District with Crich Stand on the immediate skyline and High Ordish towards the right.



In some ways ministry in Shirland was on the edge; the edge of the Coalfields and the edge of the Peak District. My patch contained many areas of complete and utter deprivation and yet with pockets of affluence. In scripture we will find that most of Jesus' ministry was on the edge. Geographically it was in hills, mountains, lakeside and on the waters of Galilee and sometimes Samaria and not in the midst of the larger places. His ministry was also on the edge of some people's comfort zones and it often tipped people right over the edge of their comfort.

The Covid pandemic has not only brought us to an edge, but tipped us over it, and whilst we all try to recover some semblance of normality as restrictions are lifted, some things will never be the same again. As a church, and the body of Christ, we need to look towards the future. A future which might look and feel slightly different. One which might challenge us in different ways to the past. But we can be re-assured that when we come to an edge and look out apprehensively, what we see is Galilee, and that is where Jesus is waiting. Waiting for us to respond in worship, and in ministry. Maybe in new and different ways. Maybe out of our usual comfort zones but always with Jesus leading us if we continue to trust him and to place our lives in his hands.

We look forward to supporting you as together with Jesus, we begin to make preparations to build the Kingdom of God in the post pandemic world that is emerging around us. Please do feel free to include us.

Margaret & Allan Jacques



Grow Your Own Sunflowers

Have you collected your 'Grow Your Own Sunflowers' kit yet?

The kit contains everything you might expect - a terracotta pot, potting compost, instructions and, of course, some sunflower seeds. But, as if growing your own sunflowers wasn't excitement enough, there are also a couple of extra surprise items which will make it even more fun!

They' bags are available in church, which is open for Wednesday and Sunday services and for the Isolation Creation exhibition.

And please, as well as taking a kit yourself, please do take extra kits for anyone else you know who would enjoy this.



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Notice board**

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jokes, book reviews,
photos etc to
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(Oh ... & responses to
the discussion on p 11)

Thanks

St Helen's Church & Community Heritage Centre

Isolation Creation EXHIBITION

Over the last fourteen months, whilst
our lives have been physically restricted,
creativity & imagination
have been let loose!

On

• June 26th & 27th

• July 3rd & 4th

• July 10th & 11th

come & see what's been sewn, carved,
photographed, filmed, drawn, découpage,
painted, written, woven, moulded, papier-mâché,
knitted, patch-worked, macramé, mosaiced or
crocheted to brighten up the darkness we've
all been living through.

10-4 on Saturdays

12-4 on Sundays

★ We look forward to seeing you! ★

uch, Leics, LE65 1AA

www.athclensashby.net

Open Garden

Alan and Alison Cross are opening their
Warwick Glen Garden
to the public for charity

- 3rd and 4th of July 2021
- 10.00-16.00
- 29, Willesley Road, LE65 2QA.



Foodbank Shopping List

Long life fruit juice
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Toilet rolls
Long life sponge puddings
Instant mash
Penguins or Kit Kats

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Let US build your dream garden or maintain it

Should we be ditching titles?

This summer's Church of England General Synod, which will be taking place between 9th and 12th July, is to hear a motion calling for titles such as Reverend to be dropped.

The motion is being tabled by Rev James Dudley-Smith, a vicar from Somerset, who says the titles lead to a greater culture of deference within the church.

The Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse found that a culture of deference towards clergy was a factor in cases of abuse within a church context. It described a form of clericalism leading to people believing that the moral authority of clergy was beyond reproach.

The title 'Reverend' derives from the Latin, describing a person who should be held in reverence, and titles within the Church of England have been used for centuries depicting a hierarchical structure. As well as Reverend they include , "Venerable" for an Archdeacon, "Very Reverend" for a Dean, "Right Reverend" for a Bishop and the "Most Reverend" for an Archbishop.

Any thoughts? As comedian Mrs Merton used to say, 'Let's have a debate.'

Jill Chapman

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St Helen's Churchyard

Part 3: What is the future of the churchyard?

(warning: this deals with the issue of reuse of graves, which some may find difficult to read.)

Imagine St Helen's without its churchyard. Hard, isn't it? The view of the church from Upper Church Street is one many of us see regularly; the churchyard gives the building space. People walk along the pathways daily as a way of getting to the town. It is hard to imagine it hemmed in with buildings, as St Paul's Cathedral and many city churches are.

We have seen how, in the pre-Reformation period, the churchyard had many roles, some of which are surprising to us in the 21st century. Others remain the same: worshippers walk through the churchyard to enter the church; parents bring their children for baptism; brides walk from the gates to the north door before their marriage. The medieval churchyard was a place for preaching and processions: we occasionally do that today, though not often. It was important for community socialising, with fairs and markets; today's church fetes sometimes spill out of the door. We no longer have a brewhouse or indulge in Church Ales as a method of fundraising – though some might think that an idea worth resurrecting!

We have seen that the churchyard is no longer a place of burial, but could that change? In September 2013, the BBC reported that it had conducted a survey which suggested that almost half of England's cemeteries could run out of space within the next 20 years. This has led to renewed calls for legislation to allow graves to be reused, a live – if quiet – issue in Parliament. At present there is space in our town cemetery, but that won't be true for ever. England is unusual in having embraced cremation – around 75% of people choose to be cremated, much higher than any other country – but the production of carbon dioxide is an issue for climate change, so that, too, could change. In fact, the idea that a grave is the 'final' resting place dates back only to the Victorian era. The Church of England has always allowed reuse of graves, one consequence of the lack of markings or a plan of earlier burials. Ronald Blythe reports the words of William Russ, the gravedigger, in his 1960s classic 'Akenfield', based on a Suffolk village:

"Village folk have been buried over and over again in the same little bits of Churchyard. You have to throw somebody out to get somebody in – three or four sometimes. I always put all the bones back so that they lie tidy-like just under the new person. They're soon all one. The parson said to me, 'How is it that you get so many in one grave?' and I always tell him that I must have disturbed a plague pit. Parson will believe anything."

If the choice was to bury your loved one in a graveyard with space but miles

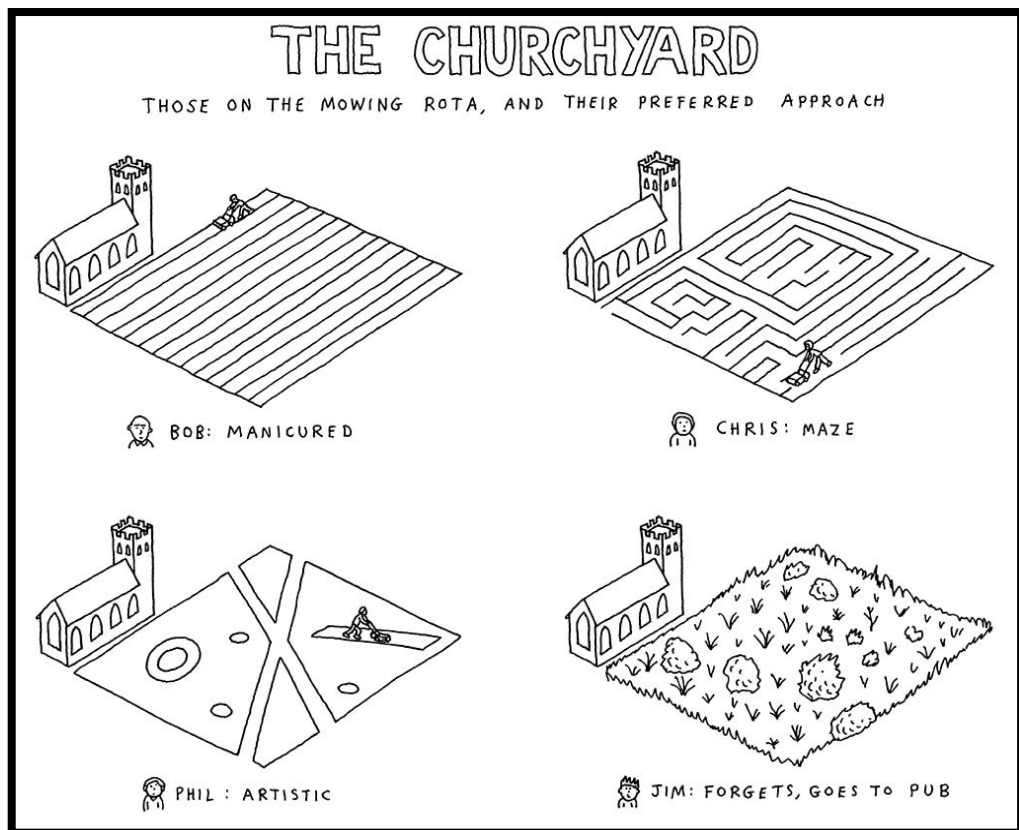
from your home, or to reopen old graves in your churchyard, which would you choose? Does it help to know that there have been thousands of unknown burials in the churchyard at St Helen's since the earliest church?

While you walk through the churchyard considering this question, notice also the wildlife found there. St Helen's churchyard isn't rich in wildlife, unlike some rural churchyards, because it is regularly mown. But it is a green space; there are birds; the celandines and violets grow in profusion in the spring; and the little corners where the grass has grown longer are worth a closer look. Churchyards are important for wildlife, even in a city, and have been called 'God's Acre' since the 17th century.

Let's leave the last word to Thomas Gray, in a verse from his 'Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard':

*Beneath those rugged elms, that yew-tree shade,
Where heaves the turf in many a mould'ring heap
Each in his narrow cell for ever laid,
The rude forefathers of the hamlet sleep.*

Anne Heaton



The Christian Year

On the 14th of July the Church of England remembers with thanksgiving the life and work of the priest-poet John Keble. Keble who was part of the Oxford Movement. This comprised High Church members of the Church of England, and eventually developed into Anglo-Catholicism. They argued for the reinstatement of some older Christian traditions of faith and their inclusion into Anglican liturgy and theology.

John Keble was ordained in 1815, and in 1827 published, anonymously, a little volume of poetry which gave a poem for every Sunday of the Church Year, called 'The Christian Year'. It turned out to be quite simply the most popular book of verse in the nineteenth century, and went through 95 editions in Keble's life time. Some of its poems have become well known hymns, such as for example 'New Every morning is the love':

New every morning is the love
our wakening and uprising prove;
through sleep and darkness safely brought,
restored to life and power and thought.

New mercies, each returning day,
hover around us while we pray;
new perils past, new sins forgiven,
new thoughts of God, new hopes of heaven.

If on our daily course our mind
be set to hallow all we find,
new treasures still, of countless price,
God will provide for sacrifice.

The trivial round, the common task,
will furnish all we need to ask,
room to deny ourselves, a road
to bring us daily nearer God.

Only, O Lord, in thy dear love
fit us for perfect rest above;
and help us, this and every day,
to live more nearly as we pray

In the Church of England hymn singing was not an integral part of Orders of Service until the early 19th century, and hymns, as opposed to metrical psalms, were not officially sanctioned. But the Oxford Movement was important in bringing about change. The growing popularity of hymns inspired the publication of more than 100 hymnals during the period 1810–



1850. In January 1859 a committee came together to bring order to a chaotic situation. John Keble, recommended there should be a comprehensive hymn-book, and the committee agreed it would be a companion to the Book of Common Prayer. The first trial edition of *Hymns Ancient and Modern* was published in 1860.

Because of the Oxford Movement wanting to recover what they saw as the lost treasures of service books of the ancient Greek and Latin churches, Greek, Latin and even German hymns in translation entered the mainstream of English hymnody.

Hymns Ancient and Modern experienced immediate and overwhelming success, becoming

possibly the most popular English hymnal ever published.

A priest-poet of today, Malcolm Guite, has said he was partly inspired by Keble's 'The Christian Year' to write his book of poems, 'Sounding the Seasons; seventy sonnets for the Christian Year', This is the opening poem of that book:

Tramelled in time, we live with hints and guesses
Turning the wheel of each returning year,
But in between our failures and successes
We sometimes glimpse the Love that casts out fear,
Sometimes the heart remembers its own reasons
And breathes a Sanctus as we tell our story,
Tracing the tracks of grace, sounding the seasons
That lead at last through time to timeless glory.

From the first yearnings for a Saviours birth
To the full joy of knowing sins forgiven
We gather as His church on Gods's good earth
To share an echo of the choirs of heaven
I share these hints, returning what was lent,
Turning to praise each 'moment's monument'.

Jill Chapman

Our Worship



We worship together on-line via Facebook on the Flagstaff Family of Churches' page.

You can catch up with our services later, on the St Helen's Church website (www.sthelensashby.net), simply by clicking on the relevant date on the Online Services and Readings page, under the Church Life tab.

Service Pattern

- All-Age Service -First Sunday of the month
10.30am (on-line only)
- Holy Communion - Second, third and fourth Sundays of the month
10.30am
Within the St Helen's church building & on-line
- Holy Communion within others of our Flagstaff Family of Churches' buildings - Sunday afternoons
4.00pm
1st Sunday:
Isley Walton
2nd Sunday:
Coleorton
3rd Sunday:
Staunton Harold
4th Sunday:
Breedon

Due to the government's Covid-19 precautionary restrictions numbers within our church buildings are limited. It is necessary to book places for any of the Sunday services in advance. Please email sthelensashby@gmail.com

- Holy Communion - Wednesdays
10am
Within the St Helen's church building & on-line
- Parish Prayers - Saturdays
9.30am
Within the St Helen's church building

The church building is now open daily, dawn till dusk.

From the Albums ...

The St Helen's choir sang at an evensong service at Isley Walton to rededicate the church tower. The splendid occasion even had a 'flypast' by this amazing aeroplane!



& 'Isolation Creation' got off to a great start at the end of June. The good news is there are two July weekends when you can enjoy this wonderful exhibition (details of opening times on page 9) and there will be more photos of the event in next month's magazine.



pudding Bag

People often wonder where Pudding Bag Productions got its rather odd name. The answer is simple; it is the name of our house, Pudding Bag Cottage. That begs the question (and we're often asked it) where did your house get that name?

An actual pudding bag, as many of you will know, is a muslin bag in which puddings, such as Christmas pudding, were steamed or boiled. In geographical terms, it is an expression confined to the East Midlands and parts of Eastern England, meaning a dead end or cul-de-sac. Again, many of you will know that cul-de-sac is French for the bottom of a bag, in other words, a dead end or somewhere with only one way in and out. If you look up Pudding Bag Lane in a road atlas or online map you will find at least half a dozen in Leicestershire, Lincolnshire and even one in Warwickshire. They will all be cul-de-sacs or dead ends. The first known use of the term cul-de-sac in English was in an anatomical sense in 1738. The first known use to mean a blind alley or road was about 1800. The term Pudding Bag with reference to a road may be much older in origin but there is no recorded first known use.

This still leaves the question of why our house is called Pudding Bag Cottage since it stands on a main road, Wood Street. Well, to one side of our house is an old courtyard, one of many in Wood Street and Market Street. The court would have been known officially by its number at one time, but locals had long since dubbed it Pudding Bag Yard, and of course, our house takes its name from that.

Now, our house is interesting in its own right but let's leave that to another time and stick with Pudding Bag Yard. It currently contains two cottages. Neither are very big but each of them was once two cottages. They must have been little more than one room up and one room down and, what is more, there were another four such cottages in the yard at one time. In 1851, there were 41 people living in seven of the houses, one house being uninhabited. Most of the houses were dreadfully overcrowded. Two of them had eight inhabitants and another had seven. In one of the largest households lived a bricklayer with his wife, a glover, his eldest daughter, a glover (they would have been working at home) and five more children not working. In another lived a fishmonger with his wife and five children. He was the only member of the family in employment.

By the turn of the century, things had hardly improved. Although there were now 29 people living in the court, they occupied only six houses, numbers 2 and 5 being unoccupied, and there was still one household with eight occupants and one with seven. In one house lived a general labourer with his wife and 6 children, the eldest 14. None working.

If anything, conditions had worsened by 1911 when there were only five houses inhabited but 33 people living there. Two of the houses were occupied by branches of the same family, the two heads being probably brothers judging by their ages. In number 2 lived one brother with his wife and five children all under the age of nine. Next door in number 3 lived the other brother with his wife, seven children, another brother and a nephew – eleven adults in all in such a tiny cottage!

It is hard for us to imagine now what life must have been like in such living conditions. No doubt there were no indoor sanitary facilities. A former neighbour, now deceased, told us that there had once been a row of latrines in the yard. Not surprisingly, a few years later, some of the cottages were condemned as unfit for human habitation. Copies of the demolition orders are in Ashby Museum. The remaining four cottages were converted into two houses but the back wall of two of the previous dwellings still stands and forms part of a garden wall, a reminder of different times a hundred years ago.

Wendy Freer



The Lord's Prayer

Last month we had two versions of the Lord's Prayer which were translated by religious studies scholar Neil Douglas-Klotz. He went back to the original ancient language of Aramaic to make his translations, because this was the language Jesus would have spoken. By the time the New Testament got recorded, it was in Greek, then Latin, and much later, English.

According to Douglas-Klotz Aramaic is a language with layers of meaning, where one word or phrase has several possible literal translations. Therefore, in his book, *Prayers of the Cosmos: Reflections on the Original Meaning of Jesus' Words* he includes a number of versions rather than limiting himself to one definitive version. Here's another example of his poetic translations:

Bible: KJV: (Our Father which art in heaven)

Aramaic: Abwoon d'bwashmaya

Translation: O Thou! The Breathing Life of all, Creator of the Shimmering Sound that touches us.

Bible: KJV: (Hallowed be thy name.)

Aramaic: Nethqadash shmakh

Translation: Help us breathe one holy breath feeling only you—this creates a shrine inside, in wholeness.

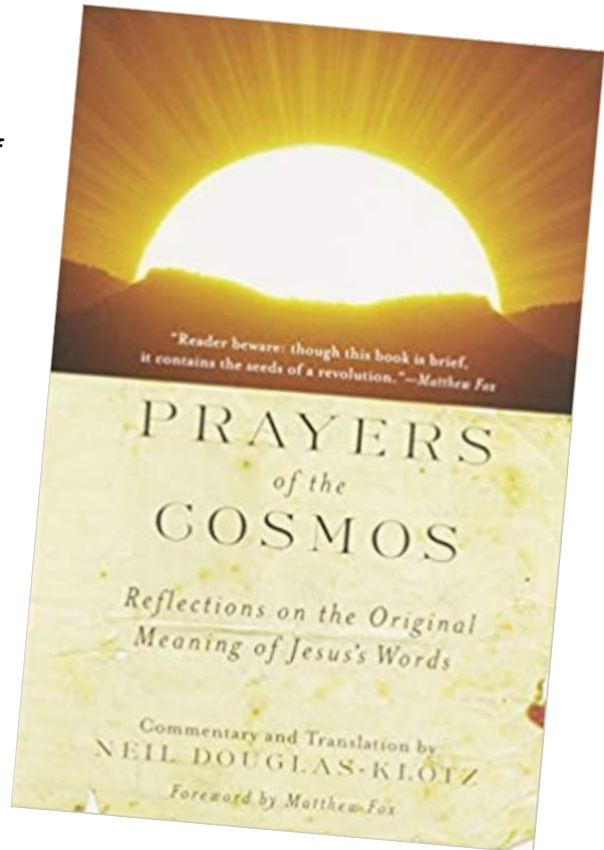
Bible: KJV: (Thy kingdom come)

Aramaic: Teytey malkuthakh

Translation: Desire with and through us the rule of universal fruitfulness onto the earth.

Bible: KJV: (Thy will be done in earth; as it is in heaven.)

Aramaic: Nehwey tzevyananch aykanna d'bwahmaya aph b'arha



Translation: Create in me a divine cooperation-from many selves, one voice, one action.

Bible: KJV: (Give us this day our daily bread.)

Aramaic: Hawvlan lachma d'sunqanan yaomana

Translation: Grant what we need each day in bread and insight; substance for the call of growing life.

Bible: KJV: (And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.)

Aramaic: Wahboqlan khaubayn (wakhtahayn) aykanna daph khnan shbwoqan l'khayyabayn.

Translation: Erase the inner marks our failures make, just as we scrub our hearts of others' faults.

Bible: KJV: (And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.)

Aramaic: Wela tahlan l'nesyuna Ela patzan min bisha

Translation: Deceived neither by the outer nor the inner-free us to walk your path with joy.

Bible: KJV: (For Thine is the kingdom, & the power, & the glory, forever. Amen)

Aramaic: Metol dilakhie malkutha wahayla wateshbukhta l'ahlam almin. Ameyn

Translation: From you is born all ruling will, the power and life to do, the song that beautifies all-from age to age it renews.

O Thou! The Breathing Life of all,
Creator of the Shimmering Sound that touches us.

Help us breathe one holy breath feeling only you - this creates a shrine inside, in wholeness.

Desire with and through us the rule of universal fruitfulness onto the earth.

Create in me a divine cooperation - from many selves, one voice, one action.

Grant what we need each day in bread and insight; substance for the call of growing life.

Erase the inner marks our failures make, just as we scrub our hearts of others' faults.

Deceived neither by the outer nor the inner - free us to walk your path with joy.

From you is born all ruling will, the power and life to do, the song that beautifies all-from age to age it renews.

Mothers' UNION

Christian care for families

Mothers' Union Supports Refugees in Norfolk:

Marie-Lyse's story

To mark Refugee Week 14-20 June 2021, the Mothers' Union website featured the story of Marie-Lyse Numuhoza MBE, herself a refugee, who came to the UK from Rwanda and has now become a prominent member of Mothers' Union.

She has worked hard to ensure provision for refugees in Norfolk and gives talks about her experiences around the country. Her own refugee story starts in the civil war in Rwanda in 1994 when she was just a child:

'Back home, I saw so much suffering and killing, it was really, really painful and scary'.

Surviving the Rwandan genocide was the beginning of a journey to a different life in the UK for Marie-Lyse but not one without its own challenges. Once settled in England she became all too aware of the dangers of raising children in London. Working in the community with young people ... was to open her eyes to the perils of her new environment.

Wanting a safer situation to raise children in, Marie-Lyse left the big city for the charms of rural Norfolk. Yet in Norwich she was subject to racial mistreatment and found it difficult to settle. She only knew one other family and as the months went on she was getting increasingly lonely. Being an upbeat and out-going person, this wasn't the life she wanted for herself and her young family.

By good fortune ... she attended an event ... where she encountered a Mothers' Union stall. Becoming engrossed in conversation over the shared importance of prayer she felt that these people were welcoming her into the community. ... It soon became apparent Marie-Lyse had skills and talents that could be honed by the movement. Marie-Lyse herself commented:

'They didn't see me as a stranger, they saw me as somebody who has come here to add on to the work that they are doing in terms of working with young families.'

A short while later, they asked if she would like to become a member and her response was of course 'Yes!'. It wasn't long before she joined the

Board of Trustees for Norwich MU and this further increased her feeling of empowerment.

When the question of whether the locality should provide for refugees from the Syrian civil war, and people were weighing up the pros and cons of involvement, Marie-Lyse and the Mothers' Union were unanimous in their support of the cause. They did a march in the city of Norwich and lobbied the local authority to support refugees.

In terms of financial support, the branches volunteered to put funds into a refugee resettlement programme. So now in Norwich there is a specific resettlement programme part sponsored by Mothers' Union which provides bedding, teddy bears, welcome messages and the basic necessities for a new home.

In its entirety, Marie-Lyse's story shows how Mothers' Union provides a welcoming support network for people in their time of need. Yet also important is an awareness of the encouragement the movement gives to individuals on a spiritual level. In terms of personal change, the various Mothers' Union groups have helped Marie-Lyse to develop in her own faith. She now views the wider movement as a sisterhood:

'I view Mothers' Union members as my friends and sisters ... we all pray together and work together to make Norfolk a welcoming and special place for new people who arrive to settle here.'

As can be seen from this, Mothers' Union lifts up and supports refugees, helping them to find solace and security in a new society. This is definitely worth celebrating!

Beryl Stephens





Rock Solid - while all else isn't

To nick Paul the Apostle's words 'My goal is that <Rock Solid> may be encouraged in heart and united in love, so that they may have the full riches of complete understanding, in order that they may know the mystery of God, namely, Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. (Colossians 2:2&3)

Local school / college terms are coming to an end with, for some, the unpredictable, uncharted, Covid dominated end to their phase of education or school careers. For decades school children have ended their phase of education or school career with familiar, tested exams or assessments. Not any more. Schools, colleges and teachers are receiving instructions and advice as they go along and the shifting ground on which they work combined with their desire to be faithful to their pupils and students is not a recipe for serenity.

Please pray for teachers, tutors, schools, colleges, students and pupils, that they would know grace and peace as they complete this academic year.

Pray for our young people for whom the situation is stirring them to anxiety, that they have opportunities for times of rest, fun and refreshment of their knowledge of a Good Shepherd who can be best appreciated during the tough times.

Vernon



Football - Gently does it

At the beginning of June I was stand up paddle boarding - SUPing.

SUPing is standing on a float. There's very little friction between you and the water. If someone knocks you, you usually lose balance, composure, dryness... You have to come alongside people gently if you want them to

stay dry and like you.

The Bible calls God's Spirit the paraclete which means, 'one who comes alongside' and also relates how he came down from heaven and remained on Jesus like a dove. Doves are gentle birds, easily put to flight. How does our relationship with the Holy Spirit compare with Jesus?

At football I am (gently) trying to get the lads to become more aware of our unhealthy fear of God's Spirit. And our loss of love, joy, peace... as a result.

Please pray we would all become more courageously quiet and submissive to God's Spirit. Pray we would be blessed by his tender, powerful touch.

The return of a player who hasn't played with us for a long time has changed dynamics rather - particularly when it comes to language and sense of humour. Things became more profane and toxic. Please pray we will be able to uphold an atmosphere of respect - respect for each other, our humanity and for God - when it comes to the words we use and the jokes we share. I'm sure that this is a big part of the reason why the lads return week on week - they enjoy going home feeling more respected and respectful. Pray that the lads will recognise the value in moral standards and pray that I will be able to challenge them on this without appearing to be another condemning voice. Pray they will hear the truthful, powerful word of God and feel the warmth of his love.

The owners / administrators of the pitches we use have told us that this week will be the last (for 6 weeks) that we'll be able to use the their pitch. They're to be renewed so will out of action over the school summer holidays. This is splendid news long term - we will have a spanking new surface to play on and hopefully higher perimeter fences (so fewer escaping balls to fetch) - but short term this is a bit of a bother. We will be moved to one of their considerably smaller ball courts. Will they big enough to accommodate the numbers attending over the summer? How many players will we have over the summer?

Please will you thank the one who knows the answer to both these questions for blessing our weekly sessions, for providing for us and for knowing what we need before we ask. And please will you continue to ask him to bless these young men with his truth and love.

Vernon

Innit Together

There is something surreal about knowing someone has been violently killed close to where you live - on the ground you regularly walk - without seeing or hearing it happen. The shock, the uncertainty around how to respond and how one should respond, the attempts to read how other people are being affected, the fear or the confusion at not being afraid...

For some who join us at Innit together - our Zoom meeting for local young people, the above is their experience as they approach the end of their school year. This is in addition to all COVID-19 has brought. Much is shaky.

Please continue praying for this group of young people; that during our times together we would be reminded that whilst God leaves us with plenty of uncertainty, for him there is no uncertainty. Pray we would trust him and enter into his rest.

Pray for those who are personally affected by these horrible events. Pray for Innit Together, that they would be able to testify to God's reliable goodness and his shepherdly love.

We are thankful for your prayers which make you part of the team of servants of these youth for Christ.

The Innit Together Team
(Katie, Kate, Vernon & Becky)

Sk8ers

Sk8ers has changed over the years; certainly in the last five years we've gone from mainly a boys youth group, ranging from ages 11 to 16, to currently being a group of mainly girls aged 11 to 14. It really keeps on our toes! Making us, as youth workers, seek out new ways to reach this particular age group and find what motivates them and encourages them to keep coming each week. At the moment it would seem just being available to listen, maybe play a game of pool and offer tea and chat (with lots of lovely Greggs goodies of course), is exactly what this group is seeking.

Please pray for this group of young people, that during our chats they glimpse a little of Jesus and his heart for them. Please also pray for the Sk8ers that have gone before, and the situations they find themselves in now; whether in work, seeking work or on young apprenticeships and in further education, or perhaps wandering in a wilderness, thinking 'what now?'. Please pray that other Christians come around all of our young people, and water the seeds that have been sown faithfully by others; that the Sk8ers may know God, and trust in him for all their needs.

The Sk8ers team
(Katie, Kate & Vernon)

Jokes to help us to not miss Revd Stewart too much

- some one-liners this month

Q. Why did the choir cross the road?

A. To get to a professional sporting event so they could sing without restriction.

Q. What was the choir director's view on the pandemic?

A. He realised singing loudly when wearing a mask wasn't his forte.

Q. What happens when too many youngsters turn up on Sunday morning meaning we have more than the permitted 6 singers?

A. We're in a lot of treble.

Q. How do you know it's a tenor waiting to be let in through the vestry door?

A. They can't find the key and don't know when to come in.

Q. Why do they call it the novel coronavirus?

A. It's a long story ...

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Quotes for the Month

'You are fearfully and wonderfully made - and God Adores You.'
Pastor John Pavlovitz, God Adores You Facebook page, June 2nd

'I, of course, trust and have trusted many Conservatives and know there are many honourable people in that party.'

Rt Revd Dr Joanna Penberthy, a statement after criticism for her tweets on Twitter, June 3rd

'I have just spent a queasy half-hour ritually defacing my marriage registers.'

Revd John Wall, Diary, Church Times, June 4th

'Boris Johnson might have assumed that his most profound change to the British constitution was to secure Brexit but as Britain's first Catholic prime minister he has also prompted a rethink on the link between religion and politics.'

The Times, Announcing Bishops Will Fall to Someone Else Now PM's a Catholic, June 6th

'Self control is a fruit of the Holy Spirit according to the Bible. I've rarely walked in that orchard.'

Revd Gary Cadge, Christian Misfit Community, Facebook, June 8th

'Church window nearly smashed'

News headline, QI, BBC 2, June 8th

'Sometimes the best evangelism is simply telling someone you're a Christian and then not being a complete jerk.'

John Pavlovitz, Progressive Christianity Facebook page, June 9th

'Love lies at the heart of patient dreaming.'

Rt Revd Nick Baines, Pause for Thought, Zoe Ball's programme on BBC Radio 2, June 9th

'The Government sits on the shoulders of our Saviour and not on the shoulders of the G7'

Right Reverend Philip Mounstephen, Bishop of Truro, June 10th

'God' and 'Jesus Christ' listed alongside 'butt' and 'jerk' as acceptable [words] in 'U' rated films'

Premier Christian News item on British Board of Film Classification, June 11th

'Broken bells and a broken church, Heart that hurts is a heart that works, From a broken place, That's where the victory's won.'

Lyrics from the official UEFA EURO 2020 song written by Bono, June 11th

'This post might suit a 'gig-economy' priest with other sources of income.'

Church Times job advert, June 14th

'When faith came I stopped feeling existential angst. I felt, ahh, we're not alone.'

Revd Richard Coles, Letter to my Younger Self, The Big Issue on-line, June 14th

'How do we learn to pray? By praying.'

Archbishop of Canterbury's Facebook page, June 15th

'Why is he allowed to go down to his local pub and sing Roll Out The Barrel but he can't go into his local church and sing Guide Me O My Great Redeemer?'

Lord Cormack questioning Lord Bethel, House of Lords debate, June 15th

'I know for sure [that God exists]. Every day you wake up, you just look around and you don't need to look any further than what you see.'

England footballer Rahim Sterling quoted on Premier's Facebook page, June 23rd

'Lads we've cracked it. If the clergy play football during the service then the congregation and choir can all sing.'

In quires and places where they meme, Facebook, June 23rd

'The arc of the moral universe keeps on bending towards justice. The world beyond the church has set the moral agenda ... [and] find the community of faith to be wanting.'

Bishop Paul Bayes speech at Mosaic, June 26th

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