



Ryburn

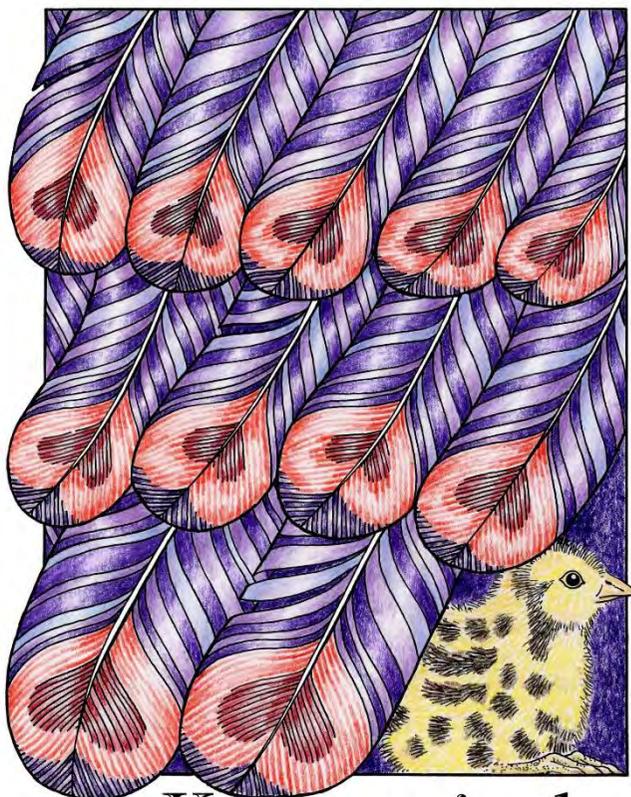
BENEFICE

The Churches of:
St Luke's Norland,
St Peter's Sowerby
St Mary's
Cottonstones,

Connected



February
2021



shelter of your wings Ps 17:8

Keep me in the

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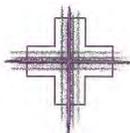
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An Invitation from our Archbishops of York and Canterbury



In response to reaching the terrible milestone of 100,000 deaths from Covid-19, the Archbishop's invite all to call on God in Prayer. Starting on 1 February, we invite you to set aside time every evening to pray, particularly at 6pm each day. More than ever, this is a time when we need to love each other. Prayer is an expression of love.





How can you get involved?

Use our free resources to pray for our nation every day at 6pm.

[Visit our website](#)

We remember before God those who have died and we pray that God's love will surround all who mourn them, now and always

Gracious God,
as we remember before you the thousands who have died,
surround us and all who mourn with your strong compassion.
Be gentle with us in our grief,
protect us from despair,
and give us grace to persevere
and face the future with hope
in Jesus Christ our risen Lord.

Amen.

[Invite family and friends to join in](#)

Find us on social media



Visit our websites

[Church of England](#) | [A Church Near You](#)

Church Services suspended until further notice

Sunday worship services in our Churches are again suspended as we observe the latest lockdown measures.

Those wishing to use the building for a time of private prayer, please contact one of the following people for access:

St Mary's Cottonstones: Mr Jim Skelsey 01422 822 936; 07719 897 467

St Luke's Norland: Mrs. Lynne Wheale 07415 683 221 or Mrs. Jennifer Hallos 07769 688 395

St Peter's Sowerby: Mr Ken Cuttle 07824 886 847

Those wishing to book a wedding or funeral please contact the Vicar for further details.

Thank you.

A prayer for all those affected by the Coronavirus

Keep us good Lord, under the shadow of your mercy. Sustain and support the anxious, be with those who care for the sick, and lift up all who are brought low; that we may find comfort knowing that nothing can separate us from your love, in Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.

Don't forget to look us up on the web:

www.ryburnbenefice.org



SaintPeter's Church Sowerby

*For Funerals, and other matters
please contact the Vicar:*

Vicar: Revd Jeanette Roberts tel 01422 646 371

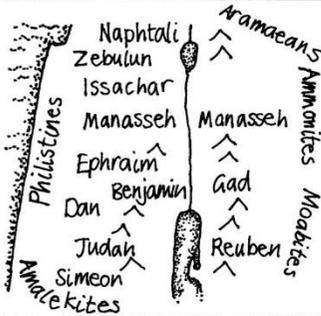
jeanette.roberts@leeds.anglican.org

Bible Bite

A short story from the Bible

It can be read in the Bible in Josh 13:8-20:48
1 Sam 31:1-5, 2 Sam 2:4-24, 3:12, 17-27, 4:5:1-5

When the Jews reached the place that God had promised them, each tribe was given land to live in. But they were surrounded by enemies..



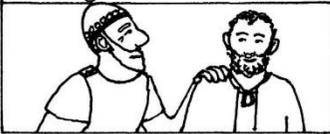
King Saul and two of his sons died fighting the Philistines.



David was made king of the southern tribe of Judah.



But Saul's army commander, Abner, took Saul's last son, Ishbosheth, north and made him king of the rest of Israel.



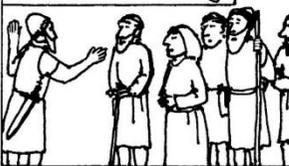
Joab was David's commander. The two armies fought and Abner killed Joab's brother.



Ishbosheth was a poor king and Abner decided to join David.



Abner persuaded all of the northern tribes to have David as king.



Abner came for a secret meeting with David.



So Joab tricked Abner into another meeting and killed him.



Then two men sneaked into Ishbosheth's house and killed him as he had a nap.



They expected a reward from David but he was very angry because they had murdered Ishbosheth.



So David became king over all of Israel.



Hello God ...

A Prayer for Light

Fountain of light, source of light,
Hear our prayer.
Drive away from us the shadow of sin.
Seek us, kindly light.
You, who created us in holiness,
Who condemned our sin,
Who redeemed us from our sin,
Sustain us by your power.
Pour your gentle light into our dull minds,
Filling our heads with holy thoughts.
Pour your glorious light into our cold breasts,
Kindling holy love within our hearts.
From horror, lust and fear,
Guard us while we sleep.
And if we cannot sleep,
Let our eyes behold your heavenly host.

By Alcuin of York, c. 735 – 804, was later abbot of Tours.

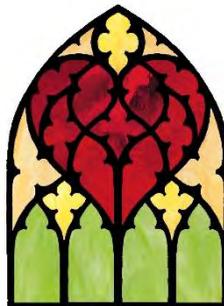
The woe of war

Christ, why do you allow wars and massacres on earth? By what mysterious judgement do you allow innocent people to be cruelly slaughtered? I cannot know. I can only find assurance in the promise that Your people will find peace in heaven, where no one makes war. As gold is purified by fire, so You purify souls by these bodily tribulations, making them ready to be received about the stars in Your heavenly home.

By Alcuin of York

It's all in the spelling...

G - God
R - Ran
A - Alongside
C - Carrying
E - Everything



Love Is...

As we mark Valentines' Day this month, it's good to ask the question: *what does real love look like?*

The Apostle Paul says: *'Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonour others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails.'* (1 Corinthians 13: 4-8).

Love is unconditional:

At heart, love is not just feelings but action! Paul talks here about unconditional love, using the word *agape*, which demonstrated in God's love for us: *'We love, because He first loved us.'* (1 John 4:19).

Love is forgiving:

According to the film *Love Story*, *'Love means never having to say you're sorry.'* This is rarely true in our experience! According to Paul, love is being ready to forgive others and *'keeping no record of wrongs'* (5). We can only forgive others because we know God forgiveness in our own lives.

Love is sacrificial:

Paul says that *agape* love is not selfish or self-seeking, but selfless and self-sacrificial, putting the needs of other people first. This is modelled by Jesus giving His life for us on the cross. Take the words from 1 Corinthians and instead of the word *love*, substitute your own name. Now substitute the word *Jesus*. This is the Jesus who is available to you to make your love for others grow and flourish.

Someone once compared love being like a group of porcupines huddling together on a cold night. The closer they get, the more they jab and hurt each other. *'To love at all is to be vulnerable.'* (C S Lewis).

Canon Paul Hardingham

Norland Church

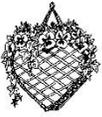


On March 6th 2021 St Luke's church will be **155 years old**

The church was built to serve the township of Norland and cost £900 to build. Despite a heavy snowfall on the day of the opening there was a large congregation. A disappointment was that the Bishop of Ripon was unable to attend because of illness

Sixteen clergymen from the surrounding districts were present and Archdeacon Musgrove, the vicar of Halifax preached the sermon and conducted the communion service

Jenny Longbottom.



Describe what love is

J R Miller (1840-1912) was considered by many to be the most gifted devotional writer of his generation. His book 'In Green Pastures' was much loved. Here is J R Miller's paraphrase of the famous 'love' passage in 1 Corinthians 13:

Love thinks no evil. It does not suspect unkindness in kindly deeds. It does not imagine an enemy in every friend. It does not fear insincerity in sincere professions of esteem. It does not impugn others' motives nor discount their acts.

On the other hand, it overlooks foibles and hides the multitude of faults that belong to every human being, even to those who are the holiest and the best. Love believes in the good that is in people and tries to think of them always at their best, not at their worst.

It looks, too, at the possibilities that are in people, what they may become through divine love and grace, and not merely at what they now are. It is wonderful how seeing through love's eyes changes the whole face of earthly life, transfiguring it. If the heart be filled with suspicion, distrust, and doubt of people, the world grows very ugly. But love sees brightness, beauty and hope everywhere.

It is not enough to love - you need to be loved

Sometimes we can be inclined to give and give and give to others - without asking anything in return. We may think that this is a sign of generosity - of great strength. But it can also be one of pride - we want to be seen as the one who does not need help. Or it can be a sign of very low self-esteem - we do not think we are worth receiving anything from others.

Whatever the reason, when we keep giving, without also receiving, we put ourselves in danger - we will burn out quickly. It is as important to know when we need to TAKE attention and care, as when we need to give it to others. If you do not pay careful attention

to your own needs - whether physical, emotional, mental or spiritual - you will not last the distance.

If you want to remain a joyful giver for years to come, you need also to be a joyful taker and accept God's love, given to you through other people.

Lent, of course, is a time for spiritual self-examination. This may encourage you

Have you done something which haunts you?

Do you ever worry that your past failings mean that God will not accept you now? Some of us have done many things which we regret, things that have caused us, or others, great pain.

We've given our children short shrift, we've betrayed our marriage partners, we've been dishonest at work, we've been ruthlessly greedy and ambitious, no matter what the cost to anyone else. And now the memory of the wrong we've done lingers, and makes us ashamed. Our past failings make us very reluctant to turn to God. Why should He forgive the damage we have done?

If you think this way, then you have a big surprise waiting for you: God isn't like that. You haven't yet encountered His GRACE. God knows all about you, and most of all He knows you need His help. Jesus said that He came into the world to reach sinners, to help anyone who turns to Him in true repentance to find forgiveness, and a new start.

You can't do anything to turn yourself into a good person. But you don't have to. All that God asks of you is that you turn to Jesus in prayer, and say you are sorry, and ask Him to forgive you, and to put His Spirit within you. Then you find His GRACE - which means His loving-kindness, beginning in YOUR life. Just try it.

Today let God begin to set you free from the past!



'Being there' for prisoners during Covid-19



Surely the most severe form of lockdown this past year has been in our prisons. Prisoners have been left in their cells for up to 23 hours a day, with all activities suspended.

Whereas prayer and chapel services usually provide some outlet for prisoners, even these were halted. That meant that many prisoners with personal problems and anxieties were left with no one to turn to for help.

In response, Prison Fellowship launched *Prayer Line*. It is a telephone service with a freephone number, where prisoners have been requesting prayers for something personal by leaving their request as an anonymous recorded message.

The messages have then been picked up by PF staff, distributed to PF volunteer prayer groups, and faithfully prayed for.

The requests for help have ranged from prayers for the victims of the prisoner's crime, to the prisoner's family, themselves, and other prisoners.

If you want to know more visit: prisonfellowship.org.uk

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Disperse them

A young clergyman, fresh out of training, thought it would help him better understand the harsh realities his future congregations faced if he first took a job as a policeman for several months. He passed the physical examination; then came the oral exam to test his ability to act quickly and wisely in an emergency. Among other questions he was asked, "What would you do to disperse a frenzied crowd?"

He thought for a moment and then said, "I would pass an offering plate." He got the job.

High Days and Holy Days

3rd Feb: Anskar, the busy evangelist

Anskar (801-865) should be the patron saint of any Christian who loves doing mission... and who discovers that evangelists meet the most amazing people, and that their lives are full of surprises.... It was the 9th century, and Anskar had grown up in a noble family in Amiens. He decided to forsake it all in order to become a monk. It may have sounded dull to his non-Christian acquaintances, but it opened a life of international adventure and a lasting achievement that has affected millions down the centuries.

Anskar began by going to Picardie and becoming a monk. Soon he felt called to Corvey (Westphalia) where he began apostolic work - or in modern parlance, evangelism and church planting. But that was just the start. For here Anskar met the king of Denmark (as one does). King Harold was in temporary exile, and during his stay in Westphalia, had become a Christian. When the time came, he persuaded Anskar to return to Denmark with him, and under his royal patronage to evangelise Denmark. The trip was a success, and then in 832 Anskar was made Bishop of Hamburg.

When the Vikings sacked Hamburg in 845, another unexpected opportunity came Anskar's way. The Pope made him archbishop of both Hamburg and Bremen, with some responsibility over Denmark, Norway and Sweden. It was an enormous job, but Anskar was up to it. He seems to have worked around the clock, establishing schools, giving great sums to the poor, and preaching the Gospel at every opportunity. Somehow, he even found time to tackle the Viking slave-trade, and somewhat diminish this cruel practice.

But Anskar's most lasting success was as a Christian missionary to Denmark, whose patron he became. It is said that he dressed austerely, ate only simple food, and added short personal prayers to each psalm in his psalter, thus contributing to a form of devotion that soon became widespread. He died and was buried at Bremen.

16th Feb: Shrove Tuesday, Pancake Day

Ever wonder why we eat pancakes just before Lent? The tradition dates back to Anglo-Saxon times, when Christians spent Lent in repentance and severe fasting.

So, on the Tuesday before Ash Wednesday, the church bell would summon them to confession, where they would be 'shriven', or absolved from their sins, which gives us *Shrove* Tuesday. At home, they would then eat up their last eggs and fat, and making a pancake was the easiest way to do this. For the next 47 days, they pretty well starved themselves.

Pancakes feature in cookery books as far back as 1439, and today's pancake races are in remembrance of a panicked woman back in 1445 in Olney, Buckinghamshire. She was making pancakes when she heard the shriving bell calling her to confession. Afraid she'd be late, she ran to the church in a panic, still in her apron, and still holding the pan.

Flipping pancakes is also centuries old. A poem from Pasquill's Palin in 1619 runs: "And every man and maide doe take their turne, And tosse their Pancakes up for feare they burne."

Some people have noted that the ingredients of pancakes can be used to highlight four significant things about this time of year:

- eggs stand for creation;
- flour is the staff of life;
- salt keeps things wholesome;
- milk stands for purity.

Shrove Tuesday is always 47 days before Easter Sunday and falls between 3rd February and 9th March.

This year Shrove Tuesday is on 16th February. Happy tossing!





22nd Feb: Margaret of Cortona; sad search for acceptance and love

Did you have a miserable childhood? Were your parents more absorbed in themselves than in you? Later, looking for love, did you fall for the wrong man? Perhaps you now have children of your own, and struggle to raise them. If you feel your life has been 'wrong-footed' from the start, and that there is no way of 'putting it right' now, then Margaret of Cortona (c. 1247–97) is a saint for you.

She was born the daughter of a small farmer in Tuscany way back in 1247. Her mother died in her childhood, and a jealous stepmother moved in, who distanced her from her father's love. Lonely and vulnerable, Margaret was then seduced by a knight of Montepulciano. He did not offer marriage, and so she lived as his mistress for nine years, hanging on to the only affection she had ever known. She even bore him a son. Then one day her knight was murdered by persons unknown. Margaret's life was in crisis.

What happened next seems to indicate that Margaret was desperate to 'put her life right', in the only way she knew how. She gave away the riches that the knight had left her, and returned to her father and step-mother, humbly seeking forgiveness and reconciliation. They, who had let her down in the first place, slammed the door in her face. Margaret then sought out the Franciscans and became a penitent. She was desperate for kindness, forgiveness and peace in her sad life.

What happened next is a tragic example of how the church can let people down. For when Margaret turned to the Franciscans in repentance, they did not tell her the wonderful news: that indeed she could be forgiven, because Jesus had already paid the price to 'redeem' her. Instead, they told her a lie: that she would have to 'earn' forgiveness by on-going acts of abasement and severe mortifications. She was never told the simple truth: that God loved her, and lavished forgiveness on her.

And so, the final tragedy of Margaret's life began: for years and years she practised severe acts of self-abasement: starvation, sleeplessness, the daily torment of hair-shirts. She was never told that all this was pointless, that her sins had been gladly forgiven her because Jesus had died for them on the cross.

There is nothing so broken in our lives that almighty God cannot fix it. At whatever point we turn to Him; He accepts us just as we are. Forgiveness is just the beginning of the good things that God wants to give us. He wants to begin a life-long work of restoration and healing in our lives.

Poor Margaret never found that out in this life. So, she must have had the most wonderful, almighty surprise when at 50 she died, and woke up in heaven.

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Mountains make you feel better

The natural environment can make a real impact on your mood. Mountains can leave you feeling more optimistic, while the ocean can help boost your inspiration.



A recent study at Goldsmiths University of London found that water is most effective at increasing positive emotions, such as happiness and inspiration. Woodlands can help you forget your worries, and fields and meadows can enhance your energy levels.

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Fox

I called the RSPCA today to report I had just found a suitcase in the woods containing a fox and four cubs. "That's terrible," she said. "Are they moving?"

"I'm not sure, to be honest," I replied, "But that would explain the suitcase."

Want to feel better? Cuddle your pet

If you think you feel better after cuddling your dog or cat, there is a good reason: you really *do* feel better.

After only three minutes of cuddling your pet, your levels of oxytocin, the ‘love’ hormone, increase, according to a recent study from Australia’s Monash University. And just five minutes of cuddling will also raise your levels of the two wellbeing and happiness hormones, endorphin and dopamine. So says a recent report in the *Journal of Psychosomatic Research*.

In her recent book, *Your Pet, Your Pill*, vet Margit Gabriele Muller says that caressing a dog or other pet provides exactly the same health benefits as skin-on-skin contact with another human. The hormones that are released “are the same as when you’re breastfeeding or cuddling a partner.”

Furthermore, a study at Liverpool University last year found that dog owners are four times more likely to be fit than other people.

#####

National Nest box Week – time to help your garden birds

Our birds are short of nesting holes, and no wonder: gardens, parks and woodland are much neater than they used to be, and modern homes offer few crannies for nest building.

National Nest box Week, which is celebrated from 14th February each year, aims to encourage us to put up more nest boxes, and to consider planting shrubs or trees with fruit that birds eat. These can make all the difference to birds struggling to survive, especially blue tits, great tits, house sparrows, robins and starlings.

The British Trust for Ornithology (BTO) offers a variety of ideas for building and placing nest boxes. Go to:

<https://www.nestboxweek.com>



Church Action on Poverty Sunday, 21st February

This month you can join churches around the UK in prayer, giving and action, on behalf of those who are struggling with poverty. Society should be “founded on compassion and justice, where all people are able to exercise dignity, agency and power,” says Church Action on Poverty.

For free resources to encourage prayer and fund-raising, go to: www.church-poverty.org.uk/sunday/.

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New measures to protect children online

David Pickup, a solicitor, considers scam emails.

The Government is to give the communications regulator Ofcom new powers to protect children and adults when they are using the internet.

An Online Harms Bill will be introduced later this year, with the intention of allowing Ofcom to block access to online services that fail to properly protect children and other users. Giants like Facebook and Instagram could also be fined large sums if they fail to take proper action against posts that were legal but still harmful. That would include pornography accessible to children, bullying, and disinformation, such as fake claims about vaccinations.

The Digital Secretary, Oliver Dowden, says that the legislation should be in force by 2022. He said: “A 13-year-old should no longer be able to access pornographic images on Twitter; YouTube will not be allowed to recommend videos promoting terrorist ideologies; and anti-Semitic hate crimes will need to be removed without delay.”



Do me a favour? *The Revd Peter Crumpler, a Church of England priest in St Albans, Herts, and a former communications director for the C of E, considers the growing problem of fake news.*

I just had an email from a clergyman, saying, “Hi” and asking me to do him “a favor”. I replied to say yes, of course. I then began to wonder why he had not said what sort of favour it was, and why he was asking me.

I decided to telephone him and find why he had not explained. His wife answered and said: “Is it about the fake email?” I could tell from her tone of voice that I was not the first caller.

This was a scam of some sort and probably the favour was to send money. The same day someone else in the same parish had their accounts hacked. The email addresses used were correct, but if had looked carefully I would have noticed he would not spell “favour” like that and not say “hi”.

This all makes me quite cross, because these scammers are playing on church members’ kindness. A friend of mine also got the email and was upset that someone else was in trouble. We need to be aware of the risks and look out for messages of any kind which seem strange.

Criminals target churches and pretend to send emails from people in authority such as clergy, churchwardens or treasurers. They prey on our credulity and charity.

What should we do?

If you get a telephone call or email you and you are not sure if it is genuine, use another form of communication to check.

It is a crime, so report it to the authorities. If it is connected to a church, tell your diocese or governing body.

The scammers must have got these addresses from somewhere. How easy would it be to get a list of the names and addresses of your minister, leaders and treasurer?

Lastly, carry on being generous and kind. These scammers should not stop us.

Truth at risk of being auctioned to the highest bidder – Archbishop

Truth is becoming a commodity, up for auction to the highest bidder, says Archbishop of York Stephen Cottrell in a recent article published in Radio Times.

Lamenting the decline of truth in public life, the Archbishop explains “The echo chambers of social media and the fake news that often goes with it have led us to mistrust and cynicism.

“In other parts of the world, even news channels seem to be mouthpieces of certain political parties or vested interests.”

Commenting on the US Presidential election, Archbishop Cottrell says “Look at how divided and mistrustful of each other the people of that nation have become. Most alarming of all, there seems to be no common understanding of what is true or who can be trusted. Truth itself seems to have become a commodity, bought by the highest bidder.”

The Archbishop’s words echo those of former President Barack Obama, who told the BBC that the US was more sharply divided now than when Donald Trump won election four years ago.

Using the term ‘truth decay’ to describe a rise in conspiracy theories and disinformation in the US, Barack Obama said, “I think at some point it's going to require a combination of regulation and standards within industries to get us back to the point where we at least recognise a common set of facts before we start arguing about what we should do about those facts.”

The Archbishop of York, who took up the post last July, is warning that the divisions in the US could come to the UK. He believes that the BBC and other UK ‘public service broadcasting’ channels like Channel 4 have a vital role in holding the country together.

He says “I know that there are many across the country who feel that during this terrible pandemic year, others have been favoured at their expense. The vision of the united but diverse nation that we see on TV programmes such as ‘Gogglebox’ is not always what we see around us.”

The Archbishop is worried that the rise and spending power of US broadcasting giants Netflix and Amazon places “our British way of doing broadcasting under threat. A voracious, unchecked market may just sweep it away. Even some of our own politicians don’t always see this.”

#####

February Crossword

Across

8 Interrogated (Acts 12:19) (5-8)

9 ‘Burn it in a wood fire on the — heap’ (Leviticus 4:12) (3)

10 Tobit, Judith, Baruch and the books of Esdras and the Maccabees are part of it (9)

11 Science fiction (abbrev.) (3-2)

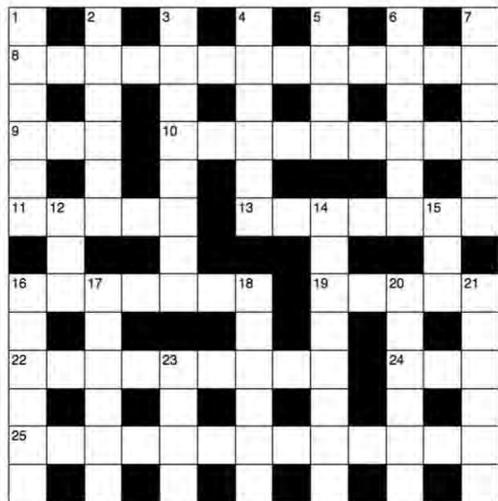
13 Clay pit (anag.) (7)

16 Went to (John 4:46) (7)

19 ‘Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to — your bodies as living sacrifices’ (Romans 12:1) (5)

22 David’s plea to God concerning those referred to in 14 Down: ‘On — — let them escape’ (Psalm 56:7) (2,7)

24 Royal Automobile Club (1,1,1) 25 How the book of Ezekiel refers to God more than 200 times (Ezekiel 2:4) (9,4)



Down

- 1 Seas (Proverbs 8:24) (6)
- 2 One of the sons of Eli the priest, killed in battle by the Philistines (1 Samuel 4:11) (6)
- 3 Specialist in the study of the Muslim religion (8)
- 4 'Do not rebuke an older man harshly, but — him as if he were your father' (1 Timothy 5:1) (6)
- 5 One of Esau's grandsons (Genesis 36:11) (4)
- 6 Taking a chance (colloq.) (2,4)
- 7 God's instructions to the Israelites concerning grain offerings: ' — salt to — your offerings' (Leviticus 2:13) (3,3)
- 12 Confederation of British Industry (1,1,1)
- 14 'All day long they twist my words; they are always — to harm me' (Psalm 56:5) (8)
- 15 The crowd's reaction to Jesus bringing back to life a widow's son in Nain (Luke 7:16) (3)
- 16 Disappear (Psalm 104:35) (6)
- 17 How Jeremiah was likely to die if he wasn't rescued from the cistern where he was imprisoned (Jeremiah 38:9) (6)
- 18 What the prophets do to a wall, with whitewash (Ezekiel 13:10, RSV) (4,2)
- 20 Made by a plough (Job 39:10) (6)
- 21 Noah was relieved when the flood waters continued to — (Genesis 8:5) (6)
- 23 Jesus gave the Twelve the power and authority to do this to diseases (Luke 9:1) (4)

#####

Pray with grannie

A small boy went to church with his grandmother and joined her when she quietly slipped off the pew to kneel and pray. He even copied her example of burying her face in her hands. But after a few seconds his curiosity got the better of him. "Who are we hiding from, grannie?"

Open Doors welcomes Fiona Bruce as PM’s Special Envoy on Freedom of Religion

Fiona Bruce, MP for Congleton, has recently been appointed as the new Special Envoy for Freedom of Religion or Belief (FoRB).

Bruce has long been a supporter of the work of Open Doors, including attending the World Watch List parliamentary launch, visiting an Open Doors exhibition highlighting the plight of Yazidi women in Iraq, and regularly raising the issue of persecuted believers to the House of Commons.

She said: “My post will be placed at the service of some of the most vulnerable people across the world.” She listed just some of the “continuing large scale horrors taking place “ – such as those against Uighur Muslims in China, Rohingya Muslims in Myanmar and Yazidis in Iraq. She agreed with “the late and much respected former Chief Rabbi, Jonathan Sacks” when he had stated: ‘the persecution of Christians throughout much of the Middle East, sub-Saharan Africa and Asia, and elsewhere, is one of the crimes against humanity of our time’.

Fiona Bruce said: “These are some of the most deeply concerning issues of our generation, on which it will be a privilege to engage as Special Envoy, both nationally and internationally.”

Fiona Bruce has been a friend of Open Doors for many years, and is “a real champion for freedom of religion and belief,” says Henrietta Blyth, CEO of Open Doors UK and Ireland.

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Eyesight

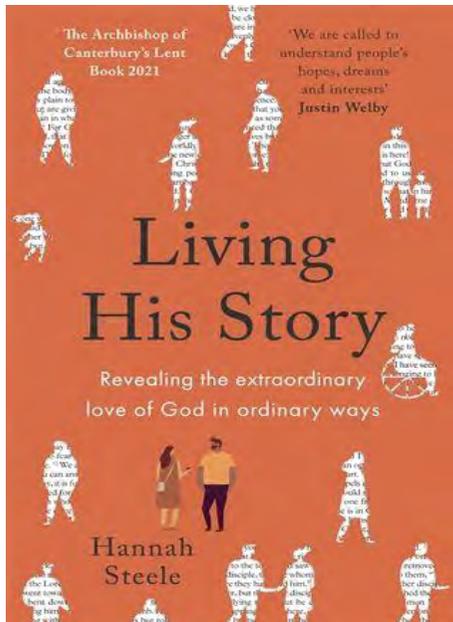
A man went to his doctor to say that his eyesight was getting worse. The doctor asked the man to look out the window and to tell him what he saw. “I see the sun,” the man replied. The doctor replied: “Just how much farther do you want to see?”

Book Review

Living His Story – revealing the extraordinary love of God in ordinary ways

The Archbishop of Canterbury's Lent Book 2021

By Hannah Steele, SPCK, £7.99



The Archbishop of Canterbury's Lent Book 2021, *Living His Story*, explores evangelism as a way of sharing God's love with people. How can we convey the love of God to our neighbours in a post-Christian world that has largely forgotten the gospel of Jesus Christ?

Hannah Steele uncovers liberating and practical ways of sharing the gospel story afresh. With warmth and encouragement, she shows us how we can live Jesus' story in our own lives simply by being the people God made us and allowing

people to be drawn to him through our natural gifts.

Living His Story is a Lent devotional that will change the way you think about evangelism, show how ideally suited it is for the world we live in and fill you with confidence in sharing God's love with the people around you.

Set out in six sessions to take you through Lent, the book can be used as a single study for individuals or small groups to prepare for Easter. It will help you find space to see evangelism from a new practical perspective.



"Don't worry, I'm not getting Covid - I didn't realise the sign meant a low door..."

2020 Crossword Solution

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

God in Creation



I find that watching buds swelling on trees and plants during the winter months gives me a tremendous sense of hope. We may all need some need extra hope for 2021, after the events of 2020. By the time you read this a number of us may have been fortunate enough to receive a COVID vaccine, but all of us will probably still be under various kinds of restrictions. After creation's winter shut-down, the sight of tiny flowers poking out of brown earth may be more important than ever.

Getting outdoors during daylight hours, enjoying green spaces and getting some fresh air and exercise are great ways to keep ourselves healthy at any time of year. A psychologist colleague wrote, "Attending to the details of nature can also inspire awe, which has been linked to positive mood and increased life satisfaction." I expect it is this sense of awe that makes it easier for many of us to connect with God outdoors. Helping ourselves and others to thrive is a good start to 2021, but it is also vital to have hope for the future. The COVID-19 pandemic was caused by an animal virus jumping into the human population. Diseases like this are not 'natural disasters', but are almost certainly caused by environmental destruction and poor farming practices – either from greed or the desperation born of poverty. Part of the answer to the current crisis is for us to care for all of Creation, both human and everything else, with God's help.

Our ultimate hope is in God's promise that He will bring about a new heavens and new earth. We can look forward to the day when Creation will be fully redeemed and liberated from evil. The Greek word used to describe the new creation is the same as that used to describe someone who becomes a Christian, whose humanity is restored and renewed.

So, one source of hope for 2021 is that we can enjoy both caring for and meeting God in Creation. But the parts of Creation that we find most beautiful, giving us a sense of awe and helping us to worship, are also a reminder that there is something much better to come.

By Ruth Banciewicz, Church Engagement Director, The Faraday Institute for Science and Religion, Cambridge.

And Finally.....

Miscellaneous observations on modern life

- As any member of a church committee will tell you, after all is said and done, there's a lot more said than done.
- I used to eat a lot of natural foods until I learned that most people die of natural causes.
- Give a man a fish and he will eat for a day. Teach him how to fish, and he will sit in a boat and drink lager all day.
- If I wanted to hear the pitter-patter of little feet, I'd put shoes on my cat.
- If you tell the truth, you don't have to remember anything.
- Good judgment comes from bad experience, and a lot of that comes from bad judgment.
- A closed mouth gathers no foot.
- Most cars on our roads have only one occupant, usually the driver.' (BBC reporter)
- I really don't mind getting older, but my body is taking it badly.
- I thought getting old would take longer.
- Cleaning is just putting stuff in less obvious places.

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Cut off date for items for the next issue is 15th of the next month.

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