

LETTER FROM THE MINISTER

Dear Friends,

I write this in the 1st week of March, the start of our Lenten journey with Jesus towards Jerusalem. The trouble is it only seems like yesterday that we were in the thick of Christmas decorations and our celebrations of the nativity. Jesus is still an infant in our minds and not the challenging, disruptive, disturbing man who managed to annoy the religious and secular authorities so much they killed him.

I have often thought it would be easier if our remembrances of Easter happened much later in the year, so that we had chance to think about Jesus' life and teaching, his healings, his confrontations and challenges to religious people of his day and secular authorities. If that happened maybe we would be more ready for Holy Week.

Maybe too we would have a better more rounded understanding of Jesus' life not just his death. Many down through the last 2000 years in the Church have believed that Jesus was born only to die. I struggle with that notion; Jesus is more than just a sacrificial lamb - his life and ministry mean much more than that.

Was the cross of Easter inevitable?

Probably because once Jesus began his ministry it was clear that his proclamation of the Kingdom of God would be at odds with both the religious and the secular rulers of his

day. He was demanding that people put God first and self interest second; he was saying that the old message of God in what we call the Old Testament could not be ignored - we have to love justice seek mercy and walk humbly before our God. Jesus was making it quite clear that acting religious was nowhere near enough, the gospel of hope and grace had to change the way money was spent and choices about life were made.

Those first century Jews and Romans were disturbed to hear that this man saying he was the Son of God was telling them that love and respect for your enemies and not just your friends and allies was the hallmark of those who love God.

Yet I think even today that message could get a person killed.

But Jesus wasn't born just to die; he was born to tell jokes, laugh and cry, to love and be loved. To touch and be touched; to be held and to hold; to taste and savour food; to live the kind of life that we live. He was born to be fully human so that we might recognise the beauty and joy of being human.

He was born so that we might understand just how incredible we are in God's sight. Born so that the whole world might understand that God loves all of this creation more than we could ever imagine; to proclaim the Kingdom of God – the message of welcome grace and justice for all.

I pray that as we journey toward Easter we won't lose sight of the life of Jesus; the revolutionary fully human, fully divine life of Jesus our friend and Saviour.

Don't reduce him to be just a sacrifice.

Yours in Christ, Joe
Rev'd. Joseph N. Adams

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## NOTES FROM THE VESTRY

Your stewards team has, as always, tried to work very hard, to ensure that things run smoothly and that you look forward to worshipping at Wimpole Road. We have regular meetings, and we make sure that the many important dates in the church calendar have been catered for. If anyone has a matter which is of concern to them to do with the 'running' of the church and would like the stewards to discuss this, please let one of us know, and it will be dealt with at the next meeting.

A recent service taken by the Worship Leaders took 3 subjects and gave a short talk on all three. It was one of the Sundays that gale force winds and heavy rain meant that we had a smaller congregation than usual, but boy, it was so warm and welcoming inside!

The three subjects were Together, Love, and Unity. Each of these subjects were extremely powerful, and gave lots of food for thought. It was impressive and a pleasure to listen to. If you missed it and would like to have a copy of what was said, please see Edward, Graham or Christine.

The first subject 'Together', concentrated on the importance of team working, which is vital in so many walks of life; work, play, socialising, business and much more. We are fortunate to witness some excellent examples of team working here at Wimpole Road and indeed the Local Arrangement Service taken by the Worship Leaders, is a clear example.

In the following paragraph, I would suggest that you will instantly recognise other examples.

I have in front of me a copy of two of the very informative recent notices, printed and distributed by Alison each week. I never cease to be amazed at the amount of social activities, fund raising ideas, pastoral and community opportunities as well as other things that go on regularly.

I think as a church we should be very pleased at the progress that has been made, and in particular the 'networking' that we have striven to demonstrate over the last few years, of which we can now see clear results. I see this as examples of interconnecting groups or systems, trying some new ideas, and embracing changes not thought about in depth very much, previously.

I'm particularly thinking of the weekly Coffee Morning, which has attracted people from the area who are needy, lonely, hungry, etc. A small group of helpers, (who would not want to be named,) are involved with this project week after week, and the attendance has increased, as everyone is made very welcome. This has resulted in acting as a life-line to some, being able to help some

needy groups of people, and also to bring people from around the New Town area into an act of worship at our church.

A regular 'Uniform Exchange', 'Help with the Internet', the 'Make Lunch' project - all these, and others have been enjoyed within the last 18 months. Why not spend a little time to familiarise yourself with just exactly what is on each week in our church, and perhaps you may find that you could help in some small way that you would find enjoyable. Maybe 'join the teamwork', and become part of what is going on.

Our new minister Joe, and his partner Dave, have been warmly welcomed and have quickly become part of our church family. Sometimes we have enjoyed a different type of worship as well as a different way of looking at things that currently exist. We certainly have had many vibrant, sincere and thought provoking issues to think about.

Our Family Carol Service was extremely well attended. We enjoyed a slight change of format and sang some different tunes, to familiar carols. I am a great believer in the saying that we cannot keep doing the same thing (s) and expect different results! How do we view change? Do we think we should leave things as they have always been? This feels comfortable, and has served us well hasn't it?

Those of us at a recent baptism, led by our minister Joe, could not fail to be impressed by the clearly delighted response of the baptism party.

Other occasions that stand out for me the last 3 months include the funeral at Holland-on-sea Methodist Church of Rita Jakeman, a lovely lady, who had not been coming to Wimpole Road very long, but had made a wonderful impact on all who had any contact with her! Her funeral service reflected this, I believe there were approx. 20 people from our church who had travelled from this area to attend.

As always, over the 3 months since the last 'Notes from the Vestry', there have been many sad occasions and many joyous ones. Please remember everyone in your prayers, who have suffered a bereavement in this time, or are struggling with an illness or a medical condition that badly affects the quality of their life. At this present time, we think particularly of the family of Christine James who died recently, and had been a member and a regular worshipper at our church for many years.

Every family has its problems, many that cannot be seen. If you have a concern in any way, then it is of concern to us, the church as a whole. I believe that we are known as a caring church. If there is something that you would like prayed about, please feel free to mention it to Joe, or a steward or worship leader. This will be treated in utmost confidentiality, and it is always a great comfort to know that someone else cares.

***Margaret Clubb***

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***The following recipes have been
submitted by our friend Angelo –
some more in the next issue!***

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## GOD SPEED THE PLOUGH

By early January, our normal lives will resume after the break for Christmas and New Year. Many will have returned to work, school or college. Twelfth Night marks the traditional end of the festivities. The next day was a kind of back to work day.

In the past in rural communities, when most people worked on the land, this shift was honoured when the plough was brought into the church to be blessed on the nearest Sunday to that date, often called 'Plough Sunday'. 'God Speed the Plough' – expressing a wish for prosperity in the year ahead – was the phrase at the heart of the Plough Sunday ceremony.

The line can also be found in songs and on cider jugs and beer jugs from medieval times to the 19<sup>th</sup> century. This is because the festival continued the following day, with a plough being dragged around the village. Workers went from door to door, seeking contributions (plough money) for a celebration in the tavern that evening.

Today we still share with our forebears the desire to ask for God's blessing on our enterprise. And that can be on the land and the seed that's sowed, with the hope of a good harvest: or on our study and the hope of good exam results or our business and the hope of a profitable year.

Christians understand blessing – as in the 'Praise God Speed the Plough' – as willing good things for someone/or something. But this is not just wishful thinking – it is God's as well. When we bless something, we're asking God – who is the source of all good things – to look kindly on the things we bless, whether that's ploughs and garden tools or pens and laptops.

*{Reverend Lydia Smith – team vicar – St. John the Baptist Church, Laver-de-la-Haye}*

### **“WHEN HE SAW THE MAN, HE FELT COMPASSION FOR HIM”**

It has become an unavoidable fact that homelessness in the UK has grown massively since 2010. There is a housing crisis because we do not have affordable housing, housing available for rent, let alone to buy.

Most people aren't homeless because they have drug addictions or alcohol abuse, but because a simple change happened to their circumstances and the cost of their housing was too high for them to fix the problem. There, but for the grace of God, go I.

How then, as Christians, do we respond to this? Our God tells us to, 'Love mercy, seek justice, and walk humbly with our God', in Micah 6:8.

'Love mercy' means to look at a person on the street and not blame them for being a drug user (most people only get into drugs, or develop mental health problems, after being made homeless). Help the homeless person, regardless of why he or she is homeless. Give him or her a cup of coffee, a hot sandwich, a smile and advice where to go for the Foodbank, a night shelter and the Soup Run.

Secondly, seek justice for that person and for all homeless people. 'Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute', says Proverbs 31:8.

Thirdly, walk humbly with our God. In the parable of the Good Samaritan Luke 10:33 says, 'The Samaritan came along, and when he saw the man, he felt compassion for him'.

By walking humbly with our God, you can love homeless people because God has first loved us. And if you are reading this and you are homeless, know that Jesus has been homeless too, and his heart breaks with love for you.

*{This article appeared in 'The Magazine', a Church of England publication from the Diocese of Norwich, written by Julia Wheeler, a solicitor working for the charity, 'Shelter'. She worships at Broadgrace Church in Coltishall.}*

## PRAYER CORNER

Dear Heavenly Father,

We thank you for the gifts you give to each one of us.

We thank you for Jesus, your greatest gift.

During these weeks of Lent we remember Jesus' journey to the cross. Help us Lord to reflect on this time, that we may come nearer to Jesus, until we reach Easter Day and rejoice with him. Amen

## LOTTERY GRANT TO FUND COMMUNITY HUB

A community meeting place is to be created inside St. Stephen's Church in Great Wigborough thanks to a £92,800 grant from the National Lottery Heritage Fund.

The nave of the Grade II Listed building will be turned into a focal point for local people, helping to reduce social isolation in the rural location. It will attract new visitors and celebrate the heritage of the church, as well as the natural beauty of the surrounding countryside.

The project will involve replacing the uneven damaged floor of the nave to provide a firm level surface, lowering the porch floor to create step-free access and redecoration. The grant will also fund the appointment of a heritage officer to deliver a programme of activities for visitors, designed to explore the architectural heritage of the church.

These activities will also highlight the environmental heritage of the church's setting and its location between Abberton reservoir and the salt marshes that form part of the Blackwater Estuary. Both sites offer an important haven for birds and wildlife, attracting many visitors to the area.

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Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness, where for forty days he was tempted by the devil.
{Luke 4: 1-2.}

**Almighty God,
whose son Jesus Christ
fasted forty days in the wilderness
and was tempted as we are, yet without sin,
give us grace to discipline ourselves
in obedience to your Spirit;
and, as you know our weaknesses,
so may we know your power to save.**

Amen
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## HELPING THE HOMELESS

'Soupahero' is a new start-up enterprise that will see homeless people employed to sell soup from a specially made bike. The 'Soupahero' business will initially operate in London food markets. Two local women have set up a new group to support homeless people in and around Colchester and Mersea.

The group, named 'Mersea and Colchester Help for Homeless', will collect essential items, such as coats, blankets, toiletries and sleeping bags, to deliver to the Soup Kitchen at a church in Colchester. The items are then distributed among those who need them.

London charity 'Accumulate', which works with young people without a roof over their heads, is fundraising to create the world's first graphic novel produced entirely by young people affected by homelessness. All profits will go back into the charity.

Launched in 1995, the 'Hope Project' provides year-round support to dog owners by working with homelessness hostels and day centres to encourage them to accept people with dogs. The charity also helps with the cost of veterinary treatment for any dog whose owner is homeless. A blacksmith's forge could help homeless people to get creative while learning a new trade.

The homelessness charity 'Emmaus Norfolk and Waveney' has launched a fundraising appeal to build an on-site forge. Based in Ditchingham, the charity now hopes to open the 'Orchard Forge' on their site, which includes a second-hand shop, café and up-cycling workshop. 'Emmaus' has set goals for the 'Orchard Forge' project and donations will go towards training 'Emmaus' residents, building the forge and equipping the site with tools and workbenches.

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***'The fullness of joy
is to behold God in all'***
{Julian of Norwich 1342 – 1416}
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## RAIL NEWS

- Railway historians in Leeds have uncovered evidence proving the existence of a locomotive depot as early as 1815. All locomotives built from 1804 onwards would presumably have required some form of cover from the elements, but it is extremely unlikely any documented evidence exists for such structures prior to 1815.
- The locomotive ‘Mayflower’ will pay homage to the ship of the same name in September when it heads a commemorative rail tour from London to Plymouth and Penzance to mark the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the sailing of the Pilgrim Fathers to the Americas.
- Transport for London has launched a consultation into the latest plans to extend the Bakerloo Line into south-east London. Views are being sought on proposals for the tunnel routes, tunnelling work-sites and, also, whether to extend the line beyond Lewisham or not. The proposed extension would run from Elephant and Castle to Lewisham via Old Kent Road and New Cross Gate. It will help meet the needs of the capital’s population, which is forecast to exceed 10 million people by 2030.
- Robin sells ‘The Big Issue’ in Weston-Super-Mare. He loves his train set and this was featured in an article in the magazine. *“I got into model railways again about a year ago because it was a bit of relaxation. I love it. A model railway is never finished in my eyes. You can always find something new to do with it, add more trees or a bit of shrubbery here or there. Personally, I’d like to create Clapham Junction but I’ve only got a one bedroom flat and that would be 17 platforms, so I don’t think the missus would let me get away with that”.*
- Following completion of the works on the Wherry Lines in east Norfolk the line between Reedham, Berney Arms and Yarmouth will re-open. Trains provide the main access to the Berney Arms area in the heart of the Norfolk Broads, on the banks of the Rivers Waveney and Yare, where there are almost no roads and no alternative public transport. The short platform at Berney Arms is at its busiest on summer Sundays, when more trains call than at any other time for the benefit of visitors to the nearby bird sanctuary.
- In his excellent book ‘The Fens’ the author, Francis Pryor, mentions the small village of Helpston in Cambridgeshire and the railway line from Peterborough to Stamford, opened in 1846 and in particular the level crossing, which today causes huge delays, as it also included the much busier East Coast main line from Peterborough to Grantham and Retford. Helpston was also the birthplace of the poet John Clare, whose body is buried in the churchyard of St. Botolph’s Church.
- *And from our railway correspondent in Happisburgh, Norfolk:* ‘Report dated 8 January 2020 – trains in Norfolk have been awful over the past 6 weeks or so. Abellio have new trains, but they have not been triggering signals before level crossings, resulting in buses between Cromer and Sheringham for weeks, and a 20 mph crawl from North Walsham to Norwich, with a man with a red flag (I kid you not!) at every level crossing. Services to Lowestoft have been disrupted, as they have, I believe, between Ipswich and Ely, also.
- The government has commissioned a review of the railways led by Keith



Williams, the former chief executive of British Airways, which is likely to lead to the ditching of the franchise system in favour of more stringent targets for private tour operators and a system in which the government receives fare income directly.

- The Railway Heritage Awards for 2019 were presented at a ceremony in London on 4 December, and this year the committee and candidates welcomed a royal guest to mark the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of this annual event. HRH the Princess Royal was presented with a copy of the book 'Restoration Rewarded', which covers the history of the awards, with illustrations and details of successful projects from the last 4 decades. A special 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary award was made to the project that marked the single most significant contribution to the preservation of Britain's railway heritage. The winning project was the work undertaken at St. Pancras and Kings Cross Stations as well as the redevelopment of the former goods yards close by.
- Staff at Birmingham New Street Station welcomed 350 homeless and vulnerable people to a festive banquet on Christmas Eve. The event built on the success of the previous year, when 200 homeless people enjoyed a festive party at New Street.
- Who was the greatest steam chief mechanical engineer of all time – Richard Trevithick, George Stephenson, George Jackson Churchward, Nigel Gresley, William Stanier, Oliver Bulleid, or Robert Riddles?

*Observations and opinions to the editorial team.*

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**'Where others see but the dawn coming over
the hill, I see the soul of God shouting for joy.
{William Blake}**
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## THURSDAY CIRCLE

The Christmas related part of our programme started on 21 November, when Michael Topple gave us some 'Advent Thoughts', based around Advent hymns of which we sang a verse or two, accompanied at the piano by David Tibbetts-Chaplin. A most enjoyable evening - thanks to Michael and David.

The following week 16 of us had a very pleasant Christmas meal at 'The Cricketers' in Eight Ash Green, very capably arranged by our Outings Secretary, Jane Clubb.

On Saturday 30 November Pat Farrow (Stallholder) and her team had two tables at the Community Christmas Craft Fayre and raised around £100 for Thursday Circle funds.

5 December was a most enjoyable evening of festive fun, when we read seasonal verses and stories. In particular Norma, Margaret and Bev caused great amusement when they gave a dramatic reading of 'A Politically Correct Snow White'. David Ablewhite kindly stepped in to accompany us at the piano for seasonal songs.

12 December, our last meeting prior to the Christmas/New Year break, took the form of a traditional Carol Service, followed by seasonal refreshments. The carols were accompanied at the piano by Alison Ablewhite, who had kindly volunteered to do so.

In mid January 10 members spent a pleasant afternoon having a cream tea at 'Small Talk Tea Rooms' in the town.

Our first meeting of 2020 was a New Year Party with ample food provided

by those attending and followed by a sing-along with Shirley Anne.

February started with me giving a talk on Father Dolling, a slum missionary who my aunt mistakenly thought was related to our family.

The following week was the Annual General Meeting and an opportunity to plan our Anniversary Service on 19 April, with the speaker Rachel Allen.

February ended with two evenings of poetry. The first, lead by me, saw individuals reading well-known poems interspersed with singing traditional songs, like 'What shall we do with the drunken sailor?' The second was Pat Farrow reading her father's wartime poems - her talents are clearly inherited!

Looking ahead to March we have David Tibbetts-Chaplin giving a Victorian Magic Lantern Show; Sir Bob Russell, speaking on the High Stewards of Colchester; a Quiz Evening raising money for EACH and Chris Farndell, speaking about photography.

Doris Bird has served as a Vice President since 2000. She first came to the Thursday Circle in 1961, and over the years has served in various roles as required = Hospital Visitor; Secretary; Registrar; and Vice President.

In appreciation of her past services, at the recent AGM members unanimously decided to elect Doris as an Honorary Vice President. At the Sunday morning service on 1 March, Rev. Joe Adams presented Doris with a card and 'thank you' present. Congratulations Doris, and well done!

Please come and support us either every week or whenever you see a topic that interests you! If you know of anyone,

male or female, who might enjoy our evenings, please do invite them to come along as we are always glad to welcome potential new members.

*Joan Gomer Secretary*

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CHRISTMAS CRAFT FAYRE - THANKS

Dear Readers,

I'm writing this (a little late I fear) but to be printed in the 'Winter' issue by the deadline would have been far too early, as none of us knew then what the outcome of our Christmas Fayre would be!

So now, after we all know it was a resounding success. I would like to say this:

Thank you to Andrew and Edward, who decided to give us two tables instead of one, once they saw just how much had been donated in our Thursday Circle cupboard!

Yes, many thanks to everyone for your generous gifts to sell - books, children's toys, candles, knitwear and hand-made soft teddies, jewellery and far too many other items to mention.

Also thank you to Val for giving us that huge teddy and coming in early to show me the 'Name the Teddy' lottery!

Thanks also to Jane (who always volunteers) for coming in early when we heard that Jean couldn't make it because he had injured her leg. Pauline (industrious as ever) was a great help - pricing many items for us and selling lots! My oldest daughter, Tina, also came in to help us.

I must also include dear Juliet who, unexpectedly, carried in most of the bags from the parlour cupboard into the church for us - a great help!

We were given a lovely spot, near the piano and our lovely Christmas Tree. It was quite magical and put us all in the Christmas spirit.

Many thanks to John Richards, who always buys my hand-made Christmas cards, featuring prints of my paintings or collages.

Lastly and most important, thanks to all those who bought items from our stall.

Pat Farrow (appointed stall holder)

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*Two poems from Pat Farrow:*  
**A DIFFERENT MAN**  
**(for Wimpole Road Church)**

Our new Reverend Joe Adams –  
what a lovely fellow.  
All sound and stalwart,  
warm and mellow.

Sunday December the 22<sup>nd</sup>,  
our Family Carol Service night  
was a great success –  
we all agree – alright!

With our heavenly choir in harmony  
and like every festive year –  
the Boxted Silver Band  
played their music loud and clear.

At first our Joe  
gave us all a puzzle –  
with different tunes to our favourite carols –  
to some of us was quite a tussle!

However, as the night wore on –  
we began to warm to that idea,  
singing ‘While Shepherds watched their Flocks’  
to the tune of ‘Ilkley Moor bar t’at!

With merry smiles  
and clapping hands  
we all enjoyed this festive time,  
with happy choir and happy band.

So, thank you Joe, for that uplifting feeling,  
with readings, Christmas Tree, and flowers –  
the true meaning is in the words not tunes,  
and brought us joy for hours and hours.

**THE POWER OF A LETTER**

The power of a letter  
is a wonderful thing.  
You cannot imagine the joy  
that one brings.

I know some of you think  
writing letters is hard,  
but, it’s not so bad.  
When you send someone a card,

Just a few more lines to write,  
then they will reveal –  
saying what you’ve been doing  
or just how you feel.

Like the excitement you get when  
your Christmas cards come through the post.  
Sending texts and e-mails is easy,  
but, really what I enjoy most –

Is hearing from someone you love,  
who now lives a long way away.  
So return them a letter –  
it’ll brighten their day.

A ‘phone call is lovely,  
but, not quite the same –  
‘cause a letter you can read,  
over and over again!

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2020 VISION

Have you got used to writing 2020 yet? It's an impossibly unreal date; it makes me feel as though I'm living in the future.

The annual technology exhibition, the Consumer Electronics Show (CES) is full of the most amazing inventions, bringing the future more into focus.

Some of them, like driverless cars, really are a sneak preview of what life may be like in a few years' time - others not so much. Samsung has unveiled a robot that resembles a large yellow tennis ball, which follows you about. On hand to take photos at those special moments and remind you about your fitness regime, it still appears to have its limitations. Like the original Daleks, one commentator said, it may well struggle with stairs. It seems the machines are not taking over just yet.

But technology isn't limited to the fun stuff or the scary things. Human creativity is engaged in exploring how technology can address the serious issues that face the planet. So CES has presentations on what technology can do to help us cope with the effects of climate change. Then there are the wellbeing technologies designed to improve our eating habits or to combat loneliness.

And these are good aspirations. But I wonder how far technology can fix things for us. Human flourishing surely depends on more than that. For me, this where faith comes in. because at its heart, it deals with how we relate to each other and how we relate to God.

Through our connection with God, we have a promise for the future – real life now and life beyond this life. And it's reassuring to remember that the Christian tradition pictures life beyond now in ways that are concrete and relational – a banquet, a city, a home. They point to a new order of being, a new way of connecting with each other.

It is not people being replaced by robots, but created life finally reaching maturity.

*{Reverend Lydia Smith – team vicar –
St. John the Baptist Church, Layer-de-la-Haye}*

**'Our sense of joy is the way we lean
into the future and have a longing for
something beyond ourselves'.**

{Christine Elliott}

ENGINEER AND BAPTIST PREACHER

English inventor Thomas Newcomen created the first practical steam engine in 1712.

He is among a number of engineers who have changed history and who are remembered in road names on the Severalls Business Park in Colchester.

Newcomen was an ironmonger by trade and a Baptist lay preacher by calling. Born in Dartmouth, Devon in 1664 his engineering talent gave him the opportunity to try and find ways to pump out water from flooding in coal and tin mines, which was a major problem at that time.

His business specialised in designing, manufacturing and selling tools for the mining industry but he was also a lay preacher and teaching elder in the local Baptist church.

After 1710 he became pastor of a local group of Baptists and it was his connection with the Baptist church at Bromsgrove, which led to his invention of a steam engine.

A father and son who were engineers, worshipped at the same church. Newcomen and his partner, John Calley, built the first successful engine at the Conygree Coalworks near Dudley in the West Midlands.

Little is known of Newcomen in later life and after his death in 1729 he was buried at the non-conformist cemetery at Bunhill Fields in London. By 1723 about 125 of Newcomen's engines had been installed in most of the important mining districts of Britain and Europe.

The engines were used without much alteration for the next 75 years. A full size replica of his working steam engine is at the Black Country Living Museum near Birmingham.

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**'If you do a good job for others,  
you heal yourself at the same time,  
because a dose of joy is a spiritual cure'.**

***{Dietrich Bonhoeffer}***

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THE WIMPOLE BEARS

It was a cold Saturday in January when the Wimpole Bears decided to visit Ipswich to see Noah's Ark. When they arrived at the Park and Ride in Ipswich they found some friends from Colchester who were also going to visit the Ark.

The Ark was moored at the Orwell Quay and as they walked along the water front they were surprised to see how big the Ark was, although this was only half the size of the real Noah's Ark.

There were lots of people making their way along and quite a large queue was forming. As they entered the Ark they could see lots of animals, some very tall giraffes, who needed two floors for their very long necks; some monkeys, who were hanging over the rails and two very friendly zebras.

Apart from the animals there was, of course, Noah, his wife and their three sons. Walking around the Ark they found several characters from the Bible. There was Adam and Eve in the middle of the Garden of Eden and then they found baby Moses hidden in the basket in the water.

Further round there was David and Goliath and Solomon, the wise king with the story of the two mothers and the one baby.

There were some other groups around the Ark: a Boy Scout group, who were enjoying a picnic and a group of young people from one of the Ipswich churches.

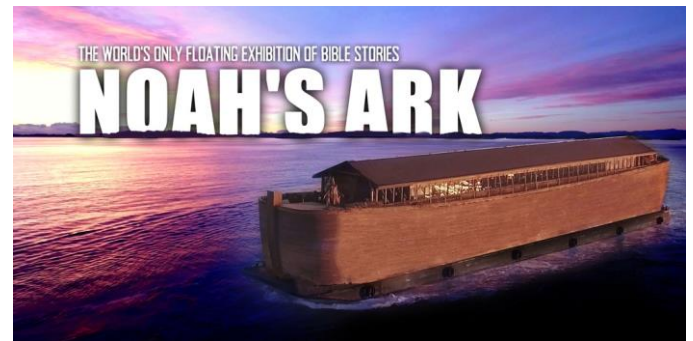
The models of the characters were very life-like, mostly carved from wood. The Ark was built some years ago by a Dutchman, and it has travelled through European waterways.

Many who visit it may not always know of the Bible stories, which are hidden within, so the Ark is like a floating Bible story book.

The Bears had thoroughly enjoyed their time and when they came away a few hours later there were still lots of people waiting to go in.

The Bears wish you all a very happy Easter and look forward to seeing you in the next newsletter.

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## WORSHIP ON THE WATER

The Diocese of London has invested £650,000 in converting a barge into a river-going church. The church will initially be moored at the 'Here East' campus at the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park.

The diocese hopes the floating chapel, names 'genesis', will foster a big enough gathering of worshippers for a permanent church to be built on vacant land. The plan is to move the church between regeneration sites in London – Sweetwater, Eastwick and Hackney Wick – over the course of its 25 year lifespan, developing links with growing canal-side communities and reaching out to former churchgoers who have moved away from their old parishes.

Research by the diocese concluded that worshippers would walk no more than 1.5 miles to reach a church, of which there are often few near the new developments.

A spokesman for the architects said, *"It's the first time anything like this has been done on such a scale. You can just tell it's going to be amazing."*

*A long-term plan with a long-term future. May God bless the worship boat, 'Genesis', and all who 'sail' with her."*

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SHELTER FROM THE STORM

A letter from 'The Big Issue' 20 January – 26 January, 2020:

'In your most recent issues (January 6-12) there is criticism of the Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, for being 'out of touch', due to the way he raised concerns about homelessness from inside a 'vast study inside Lambeth Palace'.

Perhaps the writer is unaware that when the Syrian crisis hit its peak in 2016, Justin Welby volunteered to take in a Syrian refugee family and house them in a property within the grounds of Lambeth Palace itself.

He did this long before anyone else came forward and offered to do the same. He doesn't shout about it, because he isn't one to boast. It was only reported briefly in the press at the time.

Another reality, which is often under-reported, is how Christians are on the forefront of tackling homelessness and many other social issues.

Almost every Foodbank in this country is Christian run, for example, according to the Cinnamon Network; 1.8 million Christian volunteers run 210,000 social action projects in the UK; and the value of the time given by the UK church and faith groups to their communities each year is worth an incredible £3.6bn.'

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## **WHALE OF FORTUNE**

As vast areas of Europe are affected by more flooding and wildfires burn in the United States and Australia, our best hope for slowing the climate crisis may live under the sea.

Ever since 1986, *Star Trek IV: the Voyage Home*, we've known the importance of saving the whales. But apart from being environmentally sound, it makes good economic sense.

The International Monetary Fund has calculated how much a great whale, including species like humpback, fin, sperm and blue, is worth – not in terms of oil and blubber, but their positive impact on our planet. Our cetacean saviours are worth over £1.5 million each over their lifetime, meaning the global population of whales are worth up to £1 trillion in total.

Here's how it's estimated. It turns out that the circle of life linking some of the biggest and smallest creatures also keep us alive.

Whales feed on plankton – microscopic creatures that combined produce 50% of the oxygen we need to breathe. Although whales guzzle them by the tonne, phytoplankton is more abundant around whale populations, as they feed on the iron and nitrogen found in whale waste.

Phytoplankton captures 37 billion tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>, the equivalent of four Amazon rainforests. More whales would mean more phytoplankton. The market price of carbon dioxide, added to other economic benefits like how they encourage fish stocks for the fishing industry and ecotourism, allowed scientists to work out whales monetary value.

There are around 1-3 million great whales in the oceans today, but that figure is a tiny percentage of previous populations.

If numbers were returned to pre-hunting levels it is calculated that 1.7 billion tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions could be absorbed, which is a small but sizeable chunk of the roughly 40 billion tonnes humans are currently discharging into the atmosphere each year.

~~~~~

A VISION (written during World War II in Egypt)

'Twas night, the darkest of them all,
no glimmering star or e'en a lantern glow.
'Twas bitter cold and chill as 'neath our truck we
lay,
with our great coats for a pillow and the sand for
France's hay.

From the darkness boomed a distant gun,
and the thud of booted feet,
while the wild dogs howled
and the wind blew loud,
as exhausted we fell asleep.

Sudden I woke with fearful start,
as tho' at an alien sound,
and my body was bathed in a clammy sweat,
and a bright light shone around.

Before me lay a golden road,
as far as the eye could see,
while on either side were glistening palms
with a sphinx 'side every tree.

Looming o'er were the pyramids vast, and shining
white,
while coming down the avenue was a strange and
beauteous sight.
'Twas Isis, Queen Nefertiti or Cleopatra p'haps,
dressed and helmed in shimmering green with
serpent epaulettes.

I gasped affrightened and in awe,
and held my breath,
for what I saw was not a queen of Egypt's fame,
but you, dear heart, in all but name.

I beckoned, called, then wept aloud,
for dark had fallen like a shroud.
'Twas then I realised the mean'
of that vision I had seen.

To me it proved where e'er I be,
in skies above, on land or sea,
your love will always comfort me.

*{This poem was written by my father, Charles
Neville Crawford to my mother Freda.
He was a Staff Sergeant during World War II in
France and Egypt.}*

Pat Farrow

THE WORK OF A WYCLIFFE BIBLE TRANSLATOR

*" Winding through the streets full of
bazaars, bustling crowds, street food and
children playing, we eventually pull up to the side
of a nondescript house and are shown down into
the basement, where I will be living quietly for
the next few days.*

*Below ground are a few basic rooms with
some beds and a washroom, but most importantly
a makeshift meeting room.*

*I've been invited to observe a translation
workshop in the country where I live, a sensitive
country of West Asia, where followers of Jesus
are persecuted. Every day for the next week, a
small group of local believers will gather
together along with a number of people from
Wycliffe for a short intensive workshop on the
translation of the Gospel of John. I feel very
privileged to be allowed to join them.*

*Foreigners attract attention here and are
viewed with suspicion by many people. If the
local translators were to be seen spending time
with foreigners, their witness would be
compromised. They are known in their
communities as 'Followers of ISA' (Followers of
Jesus) and they face opposition for their beliefs.*

*We seek to serve these 'Followers of
Jesus' by working alongside them to check the
quality and accuracy of the translation, while
also encouraging them in their life of
discipleship.*

*There aren't many translation workers
from overseas in this country due to the many
obstacles, but I haven't been sent out here alone.*

*I have churches and individuals back in
the UK supporting and praying for me regularly,
and I can meet, pray and work with the handful of
other overseas people who are also here in my
city.*

*After some days down in the basement,
I'm reintroduced to the sights and sounds that
were all blocked out. I'm inspired to keep
working hard with my language learning and I'm
reminded of the need to pray for God to raise up
workers to meet the needs, like the guys I've been
so encouraged to spend the last few days with."*

~~~~~

## DUTHIE'S DIARY

**Wednesday 18 December** and a day I and my brother, Michael, will remember for a very, very long time.

It is the day we are off to Old Trafford to watch Colchester United play the mighty Manchester United in the quarter final of the EFL Carabao Cup. Bobby Charlton called Old Trafford 'A Theatre of Dreams' and we were dreaming of an upset.

I was up early to give me plenty of time to get ready and to make sure I remembered my football scarf, my sandwiches (lovingly made by Christine), wagon wheels, a banana, a book and a magazine to read on the coach.

Having said 'Goodbye' to my dear wife I made my way to pick up my brother and together we drove to the JobServe Community Stadium.

We were quite early but the time went by quickly as the coaches started to arrive. Familiar names - Kings Coaches, Roman Coaches, Felixstowe Travel, Horizon and Just Go Holidays had all supplied their coaches for such a special occasion. The excitement was building even before we had all climbed aboard our allocated coach.

As Colchester Manager, John McGreal said, *"For little old Colchester to draw Manchester United at Old Trafford is a huge, huge stage. If we can't enjoy this, we can't enjoy anything in the game"*.

Coach 'A', our coach for the rest of the day was at the back of the line. We found ourselves a good seat and settled down for the long trip to Manchester. The chosen route took us along the A2, before taking the A120 to Braintree and Stansted before joining the M11.

Since knowing my friends Simon and Michael I have become interested in trucks and throughout the journey I tried to identify the hundreds of lorries that we passed on the way.

Scania's seemed the most popular followed by Daf and Volvo but I did see one of the latest Mercedes Actros. Apart from lorries I did spot a pair of red kites soaring high in the sky above the motorway.

From the M11 it was the A14 before we turned north on to the M6 toll road. Our first stop was a service area on the M6 and I must admit I was ready for the opportunity to stretch my legs.

With twenty 50/53 seater coaches arriving at approximately the same time the place was packed with Colchester United supporters. We were able to have a drink and a look in W. H. Smith before climbing back on board.

The final leg proved to be quite slow as we approached Manchester and the roads leading to Old Trafford. It was 6.30 p.m. when we arrived at the stadium, seven hours since leaving Colchester.

The atmosphere outside the ground was amazing. People were taking photographs of the United Trinity statue featuring three former legends - George Best, Denis Law and Bobby Charlton.

We met Donovan Black (Donny) - the Anglia News sports reporter and had a chat. He is a lovely man - Christine likes him a lot. As we had only had our sandwiches to eat my brother treated me to a tray of chips. They were very good and nice and hot.

Michael bought a souvenir scarf from the seller, Raymond, and programmes

and a magazine from the kiosk in the corner.

Everyone we met was very friendly and seemed genuinely pleased to see football supporters making the long journey north from Colchester.

We entered the ground through entrance E32 and climbed a flight of steps to Block E333, Row 8, Seat 108. We had an amazing view of the pitch and waited for the two teams to appear from the player's tunnel.

At 7.55 p.m. the players walked out in front of nearly 58,000 fans. The game kicked off at 8 o'clock and Manchester United pushed forward from the start. Their Manager, Ole Gunnar Solskjaer, had fielded a strong side including Harry Maguire, Marcus Rashford, Luke Shaw, Anthony Martial and Juan Mata.

However Colchester's experienced defence maintained their discipline and in an entertaining first half denied Manchester United's talented players any goal scoring opportunities and with the score 0-0 at half-time we were 'dreaming' of an unexpected victory.

But within 6 minutes of the second half Marcus Rashford jinked his way past two of our defenders before hitting an unstoppable shot into the top corner. Two goals followed to take Manchester United to a 3 goal advantage.

Colchester continued to fight their way back into the game but the home side finished the match as comfortable winners.

As we clapped our team at the end we all agreed it had been a great day out.

The coaches left Old Trafford at 10.30 p.m. and following a short break on the way home we were back at the

Community Stadium at 4 o'clock Thursday morning.

Personally I must say a big thank you to the Anderson family, Jackie, Rob and Richard for their help in organising what turned out to be a day none of us will ever forget.

Until the next time - Liverpool at Anfield, perhaps!

~~~~~

MEMORY MAN

Dave, a lifelong Liverpool fan, is touring the United States on holiday and stops off in a remote bar in the hills of Nevada. He (Dave) is chatting to the barman when he sees an old native Indian man sitting in the corner, dressed in his tribal clothes.

*"Who's the man over there?" asks Dave.
"That's the memory man", replied the barman.
"He knows everything. He can remember any facts.
Go over and ask him a question".*

So Dave wanders over and asks,
*"Who won the 1965 FA Cup Final?"
"Liverpool", replies the memory man.*

Dave is amazed.
*"And who did they beat?"
"Leeds", comes the immediate reply.
"And the score?"
"2-1".*

Dave tries something more difficult.
*"Who scored the winning goal?"
The Indian man does not even hesitate.
"Ian St. John".*

Dave returns home and tells his family and friends about his interesting encounter and makes up his mind to return to America and pay his respects to the amazing man.

Ten years later he has saved up enough money and returns to Nevada. After weeks of searching Dave finds the memory man living in a cave up in the mountains.

Dave steps forward, bows and greets the native Indian man in his traditional native tongue.
"How".

The memory man squints at Dave, recognises him and replies,
"Diving header inside the six yard box!"

‘UNITED FOR UNITED’

Saturday 8 February and Colchester are at home to Plymouth Argyle. It must be a year of celebration in Plymouth as it was 400 years ago that the Pilgrim Fathers set sail from Plymouth for a new life in America.

Among the crowd of 4,728 were several friends from Wimpole Road. Our minister, Joe, was making his first visit to the JobServe Community Stadium and our good friend and our former minister John Allison was also there with us.

Before the game we met up with Pauline and Jackie, who had been busy taking bookings for the next two away trips to Port Vale and Salford City. Inside the ground Norman, my brother Michael and me introduced Joe to our seafaring friend, Nick.

Before the game started I handed out wagon wheels to Joe, John, Norman, Michael and Nick and kept one back for me.

At half-time with Colchester winning 3-0 we were pleased to see Mark and Anthony. Mark did say and I quote, *“That Colchester’s first half performance was like watching Brazil at their peak!”*

Jean another loyal Colchester supporter and a friend from Wimpole Road was making her first appearance at the ground since November. Well done Jean, what a comeback.

The match ended in a well-deserved 3-0 win for the U’s, but it was meeting up with Pauline, Jackie, Joe, John, Mark, Anthony, Norman and Michael and knowing that Jean was also there that really made the day extra special.

Why not come along and see what a Saturday afternoon watching Colchester ‘Brazil’ United is really like.

To quote the headlines in the ‘Plymouth Herald’: ‘Plymouth Argyle given torrid time by rampant Colchester United’. What more can you say!

GAMES CAN HELP THINKING SKILLS

We have all known for a number of years now that stimulating the brain through the playing of games is good for your mental health as well as

your mental wellbeing. But now it’s been confirmed, people who play games such as cards and board games are more likely to stay mentally sharp in later life, a recent study suggests.

Those who regularly played non-digital games score better on memory and thinking tests in their 70’s, the research found. The study also found that a behaviour change in later life could still make a difference.

Psychologists at the University of Edinburgh who undertook the study tested more than 1,000 people aged 70 for memory, problem solving, thinking speed and general thinking ability. The participants then repeated the same thinking tests every three years until aged 79. The group were also asked how often they played games like cards, chess, bingo or crosswords, at ages 70 and 76.

Researchers used statistical models to analyse the relationship between a person’s level of game playing and their thinking skills. The team also took into account the results of an intelligence test that the participants sat when they were 11 years old.

They also considered lifestyle factors, such as education, socio-economic status and activity levels. People who increased game playing in later years were found to have experienced fewer declines in thinking skills in their seventies, particularly in memory function and thinking speed.

Researchers say the findings help to better understand what kinds of lifestyles and behaviours might be associated with better outcomes for cognitive health in later life.

The study may also help people make decisions about how best to protect their thinking skills as they age. For those in their 70’s or beyond, another message seems to be that playing non-digital games may be a positive behaviour in terms of reducing cognitive decline.

{From an article in ‘Mature Times’}

The first day of Lent is called Ash Wednesday – the name comes from the tradition of putting a small cross of ash on people’s foreheads at church services, as a sign of mourning and repentance.

R.H.S. CHELSEA FLOWER SHOW

Around 188,000 people actually visit the show but that's a tiny fraction of those who engage with it in some way. According to the Royal Horticultural Society, around 462 million people will see some coverage.

That's why the 'Bible Society' is sponsoring a garden at the 2020 show.

The society's 'Psalm 23 Garden' is created by garden designer Sarah Eberle, who will be bringing the text of 'The Lord is my Shepherd' with its references to 'green pastures' and 'still waters' to life.

After the show the garden will be re-created in the grounds of Winchester Hospice to provide a haven for patients and their families, and somewhere they can go to be still, to think, to pray and to reflect on the presence of God.

The society is also encouraging schools, churches and community centres to use any spare lane they have to create their own Psalm 23 gardens.

In order to make a Psalm 23 garden, you only need four elements from Sarah Eberle's design: water, meadow, a tree and somewhere to sit.

The Bible Society have asked people to pray for this project, that God will use it to make his word come alive in people's hearts.

Could you create a Psalm 23 garden?

BEE KIND

One third of the UK bee population has disappeared in the last decade. Given that bees are responsible for pollinating a third of the world's food crops their decline is not only sad but it has serious consequences for the global food chain.

Gardens and allotments can be 'pollinator hotspots' attracting more than 10 times the number of bees found in parks or nature reserves.

Even corners of the garden, with everyday buttercups and dandelions can be attractive. We can make our gardens bee-friendly by planting different shapes of flowers and by varying their flowering period we can ensure that there's always something in bloom.

A dish of water is always a welcome sight for thirsty bees, as are places to shelter from the wind, such as bug hotels.

Britain's bees face tough conditions but by making our gardens bee-friendly we could make a world of difference.

SPRING

Letting us feel the softness of Spring
in a beautiful surge of rebirth,
comes the joy of life awakening
all over the tired earth.

He's shown us the path
his feet have trod.

He beckons us to follow behind him.

He tells us to knock and he'll open the
door –

to seek and we'll surely find him.

He has given his word, if we only hear
that he will be there – beside us
and given the gift of his tender love
to comfort and help and guide us.

NATIONAL TRUST TO PLANT MILLIONS OF TREES

The National Trust has announced plans for a huge expansion of trees as part of its efforts to achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2030. The charity said it aims to plant 20 million trees on its land over the next decade to help tackle the climate crisis.

The project, which will cost the trust £90m - £100m, was announced on Thursday 9 January to mark its 125th anniversary. Work is already underway at places such as Northwood in the South Downs, Hampshire, where 13,000 trees have been planted by volunteers. Much of the woodland in Northwood was felled during the two world wars, leaving parts disconnected from each other.

The National Trust said its new woods would vary enormously depending on site and local circumstances.

‘Our lives are overcrowded,
over excited,

over strained.

We all want quiet,
we all want beauty,

we all need space.

Unless we have it,
we cannot reach

that sense of quiet

in which whispers
of better things

come to us gently.'

*{Words of Octavia Hill, co-founder of the
National Trust 125 years ago.}*

WHERE'S THE CHAPEL?

My parents were Methodist preachers, and as part of the youth club, several of us took up local preaching in our teens. We were keen to spread the gospel and now in my mid-eighties, I smile to think how naïve we were. We lived in a rural area near Doncaster, with many small chapels scattered across the district.

I was delivering sermons at the age of 15 and was what is called a ‘preacher on note’.

I often took a few teenage friends out with me to help to lead services. This particular Sunday evening, two lasses and two lads, who were even younger, joined me and off we cycled to lead worship in the tiny hamlet of Thorpe in Balne.

It was a beautiful summer evening, and when we arrived we saw a few farms and cottages straggling along a track, but no chapel in sight.

We cycled up and down that road, but our search was in vain. Then we saw a chap leaning on a farmyard gate and stopped to ask him.

“Ya see yon place with the Post Office box on the wall?” he answered. “That’s it”.

What we thought was a Post Office was the chapel! There were no windows, and just a central door. We propped our trusty steeds against the wall and went in. it was a plain, rectangular room, with a few benches and a sort of box affair that served as a pulpit.

Just before 6 p.m., our congregation of 5 elderly locals arrived, the youngest introducing herself as Miss Spittlehouse, our organist.

We felt very nervous and intimidated as no words of welcome came, one of my assistants announced the first hymn and we blundered on, feeling far from convinced about things, kept alert by the vigorous thumpings of Miss Spittlehouse. Then something happened that I have never again encountered in 70 years of preaching.

Fortunately, it occurred during the last hymn when, as our organist pounded away, it was just too much for the old instrument.

There were two loud claps, and the organ went dead. Both pedal straps had snapped, bringing an early benediction.

Four of our congregation departed immediately, and we all felt a bit flat about the service but were cheered somewhat as we made for our bicycles and Miss Spittlehouse remarked, “*You’ve done well. Come again!*”

{Thanks to Beryl Leech for finding this article in the magazine, 'This England'}

FINDING MY WAY

'Twas a murky, lurky, foggy day,
'twas very hard to find my way.
Confusing my vision, obscuring my view –
which way to go? I hadn't a clue.

Wearing my mac (I couldn't be fussy)
the skeleton trees looked all fuzzy, wuzzy,
everything was distorted, unclear.
'Twas the worst ever day of the worst ever year!

My senses were heightened,
then my faith was enlightened –
I called out to God, *"Please show me the way?"*
Then I came to a signpost and started to pray.

*"Dear Lord, thank you, now I'm not lost.
I can find my way home – without any cost."*
The mist started lifting, then out came the sun,
my path was now clear – the Lord's job was done!

Pat Farrow

~~~~~

## A JOURNEY

The earth and air are alive as I arrive  
to begin this summer journey.

Food is thriving from a seed,  
food for sheep upon the fields,  
food for birds and food for bees,  
food for you and food for me.

Colours of the rainbow are here before my eyes,  
cloaks of green upon the trees  
and scent of flowers on the breeze,  
the sounds of summer everywhere.

Birds are building in these trees  
and hedgerows here and there  
where balls of life will soon appear,  
miracles of birth from a tiny sphere.

My journey now is at an end,  
I muse awhile, and am aware that these,  
and all of God's creations,  
are here for you and I to share.

*{From 'In Touch', the Methodist Church,  
Witney}*

~~~~~

ALL SAINTS AND ALL SOULS A LAST BEATITUDE

And blessed are the ones we overlook,
the faithful servers on the coffee rota,
the ones who hold no candle, bell or book,
but keep the books and tally up the quota,
the gentle souls who come to 'do the
flowers',
the quiet ones who organise the fete,
church sitters who give up their weekday
hours,
doorkeepers who may open heaven's gate.

God knows the depths that often go
unspoken,
amongst the shy, the quiet, and the kind
or the slow healing of a heart long broken
placing each flowers so for a year's mind
invisible on earth without a voice
in heaven their angels glory and rejoice.

{Taken from 'Sounding the Seasons'}

~~~~~

## THE PERFECT CHURCH

If you should find the prefect church,  
without one fault or smear,  
for goodness sake don't join that church,  
you'll spoil the atmosphere!

But since no perfect church exists,  
where people never sin,  
let's cease in looking for that church  
and love the one we're in!

~~~~~

**Holy Week commemorates the last
week of the earthly life of Jesus before
his crucifixion on Good Friday up to
his resurrection on Easter Sunday.**

**It begins with Palm Sunday, which
celebrates Jesus' triumphal arrival in
Jerusalem for the Jewish festival of
Passover.**

~~~~~

## A LETTER TO CHURCHES IN THE EU

In an 'open letter' from churches in Britain to churches in member states of the European Union, church leaders in the UK said:

*"Our churches have contributed to and been enriched by the Christian tradition in Europe for centuries. The early evangelists to these islands came with the Roman Empire. They were followed by the missions of St. Augustine of Canterbury and St. Columba of Iona.*

*The faith of Christians in these islands has from the earliest days had its roots in the European church. The impact of the Reformation in Germany, Switzerland and the Netherlands has contributed significantly to the churches, societies and nations of our islands, an impact that is still felt to this day.*

*We have congregations of our churches in many cities in Europe and we maintain close fellowship with partner churches across our continent. We are, and will always be, European churches, as part of the worldwide church.*

*The diminishing of political ties and accountability will not affect or impede our commitment to our partners in other parts of Europe. We will continue to play a full and active part in Europe.*

*Our churches will continue to promote the values we share with you, to promote peace and protect human rights and dignity.*

*We will continue to pursue the concerns we share with you, to ensure the welfare of all citizens and that our governments are held to account for issues about security, freedom and the sharing of prosperity.*

*We will continue to work with you on the great challenges of our time, how European nations respond to forced migration and how we adapt and respond to the climate crisis.*

*We will continue to remain committed to the principles of solidarity, that have bound us together for many years and to which we must hold firm in a time of increasing xenophobia, religious discrimination, wealth inequality and national self-interest.*

*We have appreciated your support and interest in our situation in recent years and we ask you to stay with us as we learn what our future holds and how we can work together to*

*offer hope and reconciliation to all our communities as we seek to follow Jesus in our everyday living.*

*Please pray for us, as we will pray for you. For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ.*

*For in the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body – Jews or Greeks, slaves or free – and we were all made to drink of one Spirit."*

The 'open letter' was signed by the Reverend Dr. Barbara Glasson and Professor Clive Marsh (President and Vice-President of the Methodist Conference; the Reverend David Mayne (Moderator of Council, Baptist Union of Great Britain); the Rt. Rev. Colin Sinclair (Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland); the Reverend Nigel Uden and Mr Derek Estill (Moderators of the General Assembly of the United Reformed Church).

***{From the 'Methodist Recorder' dated  
Friday 31 January 2020.}***

## FOR OUR ASTRONOMERS AND PHYSICISTS

The latest set of Royal Mail stamps feature visions of the universe. From the first observations of the moon with a telescope in 1609 to providing expertise and equipment for deep space missions today, Britain has a long history of astronomical investigation.

For 200 years now, the Royal Astronomical Society has encouraged and promoted the study of the universe and closely related branches of science.

The subjects of the individual stamps, with a short description are:

- 1<sup>st</sup>. Class – pulsars are rapidly rotating neutron stars
- 1<sup>st</sup>. Class – black holes are super-dense regions of space
- 2<sup>nd</sup>. Class – cat's eye nebula is composed of dust and gas
- 2<sup>nd</sup>. Class – Enceladus has geysers of water, ice and vapour
- £1.55 – Jupiter's auroras are the strongest in the solar system
- £1.55 – gravitational lensing occurs when gravity bends light
- £1.60 – 67P is a comet made of rock, ice and dust
- £1.60 – Cygnus A galaxy is a powerful source of radio waves

## THE BREAKFAST BOOK CLUB

Literary charity, 'Give a Book', is championing an initiative that feeds kids' bodies and minds. Since 2013 breakfast book clubs have been set up in more than 30 schools in disadvantaged areas, where a higher than average number of pupils receive free school meals.

The breakfast book clubs are dealing with a problem caused by multiple factors. School budgets are stretched tighter than ever and it is not a mandatory requirement for schools to have libraries, so many do without. At the same time local authorities are likely to have made cuts to or even closed public libraries, further restricting access to books.

'Give a Book' works with publishers to buy books at a discounted rate and although some donations are used they try to send new books. The charity sends the books to the schools along with notepads and stationery. It's all about giving children who wouldn't otherwise have much access to books the opportunity to read them and to instil a love of reading.

'Give a Book' aims to start five new breakfast book clubs per year, while refreshing the stock of those already established. Studies show that encouraging reading for pleasure enhances learning in all sorts of ways.

There are always more schools asking for assistance than 'Give a Book' can help, and providing libraries and access to books is still impossible for many schools and children.

*"Libraries are more than just books; they represent what it means to be truly human. They contain the minds of our ancestors as well as the latest thinking of contemporary minds. We need our libraries as they are shining beacons of knowledge, sharing and inclusive communities.*

*So what's so special about a public library? Well, for starters, they are a free and accessible community resource – something that is becoming ever scarcer. When working well, they can be a vibrant community hub for education, digital inclusion, workforce development, community engagement and more".*

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- Until 20 June 2020 – 'Childhood in Dickensian London', a free exhibition at the Senate House Library, University of London, Malet Street, London WC1. *"In the little world in which children have their existence, whosoever brings them up, there is nothing so finely perceived and so finely felt as injustice". {Charles Dickens, 'Great Expectations'}.}*

~~~~~

## BOOK CLUB

For our January and February meetings we read and discussed 'Ross' and 'Demelza' by Winston Graham, the first two books in the 'Poldark' series. The Peckstons remembered a Poldark mine from their family holidays in Cornwall. It is Cornwall's only completely underground tin mine and is a tourist attraction near Helston.

For February some of also read 'The Silent Patient' by Alex Michaelides, this is a thriller with an unexpected twist right at the end! For March we are reading 'The Family Upstairs' by Lisa Jewell.

It appears there are members of the community who would welcome a day-time book club and so from March we will meet on the first Monday morning of each month at 9.30 a.m. instead of the third Tuesday evening.

New members are always welcome!

**Joan Gomer**

~~~~~

PRAYER OF APOLOGY

For all the times you supported me with strength and love – Thank you.

For all the times I forgot to say it – I Love You.

For all the times I did or said or thought the wrong thing – I am sorry.

Dear Lord, I want you to know that you are always right here in my heart, where you belong.

Amen

~~~~~

## ECCLESIASTICAL HUMOUR

The very nervous bridegroom, when asked in the wedding service, *"Wilt thou take this woman to be thy lawful wedded wife?"* replied tremblingly, *"I wilt"*.

~~~~~

A clergyman was asked to preach at a church where long sermons were the usual thing. He prepared a long address and found that, on delivery, it came out rather shorter than he had intended.

He apologised to the congregation and explained that his dog had come into his study while he was preparing his talk and must have chewed up some pages.

After the service, the verger came up to the preacher and said quietly,
"That's a very useful dog of yours. Do you think you could let our vicar have one of its pups?"

~~~~~

A bishop was staying in a posh hotel and the new page boy was being sent up to his room. *"What shall I say?"* asked the boy nervously. *"Just knock on the door, and when he answers, say 'It's the boy, m'lord'"*, he was told. In great trepidation, the boy went up, rehearsing his little speech all the way. He then knocked on the door and said, *"It's the Lord, m'boy"*.

~~~~~

A vicar once dreamed that he was on the way to heaven - before him there stretched a long flight of stairs. As he started to go up, he was given a piece of chalk and told he must put a chalk mark on each of the steps for each sin that he had committed. He began the slow walk upwards. When he was about half-way he met the bishop coming down. When the vicar enquired why his lordship was returning, the bishop answered, *"I'm just going back to get some more chalk"*.

~~~~~

Some monks were only allowed to speak once in every 4 years. At the end of four years one said, *"I don't like the porridge we get here"*. Four years later, another said, *"I don't like it either"*.

After a further four years, the monastery cook said,

*"If I hear any more of this constant complaining, I shall resign"*.

~~~~~

WORDS OF PRAISE AND WONDER

A new song that stretches back
and reaches forward,
yet sings in present joy.
A song of praise, a song of love.

How shall I understand this thing
that comes from ancient times
and moves through me and onward.
He put a new song in my mouth.

New to me,
to God, ancient, everlasting.
Gloria, Gloria, Gloria.

A new song – what was wrong with the old one?
Gone flat and stale in hurt and pain and
confusion.

Grown cold with doubt and fear and failure.
I thank you for the difficult times,
how else could I sing your new song.
I will forget again, the joy of this new song.

But when it too grows stale
you will remind me of your love
and joy will spring again,
drawn from depths deeper than before

and I will praise your name
with notes that soar higher and lighter
anchored deeper, stronger.

M. Wyllie 2008

~~~~~



## ASH WEDNESDAY

*by Jim Burklo*

On my forehead,  
A sign of the cross,  
Smudged in ash from the fire  
That burned down  
the McMansion of my hubris,

And, with it,  
The money I should have given away,  
The television I used to numb my senses,  
The carpet I should have been called on,  
The doors I should have opened to others,

The envelopes I should have used  
To send letters of love,  
The wise books I shelved prominently  
So that others would think I had read them.

The blank places in my photo albums  
Where my darker moments should have  
been remembered,  
The calendars where visits with the people  
who needed me most  
Should have been scheduled,

The couch of my complacency,  
The lounge-chair of my laziness,  
The shirts I stuffed with my pride,  
The moccasins I should have traded with  
others  
So we could have walked miles in them.

On my forehead,  
A sign of the crossroad  
Where I can turn from the way of ruin  
To the way of life.

~~~~~

PALM SUNDAY

It was Passover, a time to give thanks and praise,
a time to remember, how a nation was saved.
And the healer was coming excited men said;
he'd make the blind see and raise some from the
dead.

They cut down branches, and laid them down,
over the rough and stony ground.
Leaves for the children to wave when he came,
and to keep themselves cool in the heat of the
day.

The streets were crowded and yet still more came,
waiting for Jesus, the miracle man.
Then he rode on a donkey into the town,
over the palm leaves, which lay on the ground.

Some of the crowd didn't know his name,
but they cheered and shouted just the same.
They welcomed him into Jerusalem,
a special man who was one of them.

Some he had cured were in the crowd;
they waved their arms and shouted out loud.
"Welcome Jesus our King, and our Lord,"
Jesus just smiled but said not a word.

Only he knew what lay ahead,
a sword in the side, and thorns on his head.
A different crowd will surround him then.
Angry voices shouting, "*Crucify him!*"

Norma Peckston

~~~~~

## EASTER

### God's Gift to the World

Touching the hearts  
that were hard and cold.  
Opening the eyes that were blind,  
comes God's wonderful gift  
at Easter time –  
salvation for all mankind.

~~~~~

THE BEGINNING AND THE END

As a babe he was laid
in a borrowed cradle,
and when he grew
gave a message from God.

Love and respect your
friend and neighbour;
help where you can
to share their load.

In God's eyes
we are all his children.
Rich or poor,
we all play our part.

God doesn't see
a rich man's clothing,
he only sees
what's in his heart.

But there were those
who feared this message,
planned his death
with their hearts of stone.

Stood and watched
as he was dying,
satisfied
their work was done.

As a babe he was laid
in a borrowed cradle.
As a man he was laid
in a borrowed tomb.

Norma Peckston

~~~~~

## NEW LIFE

It's springtime and the earth is waking,  
drowsy from its winter sleep.

Hedgehogs, dormice, slowly crawling,  
from dead leaves piled in a heap.

Underneath the ground small creatures  
busy with their daily lives.

Up above the birds are nesting,  
bees are stirring in their hives.

All the trees will soon be covered  
with many shades of green.

Primroses, daffodils and bluebells,  
very soon will all be seen.

Every year the springtime gives us  
the promise of new life to come,

and this miracle reminds us  
that Jesus died, but lives again.

*Norma Peckston*

~~~~~  
This joyful Eastertide
away with sin and sadness!
our Lord, the crucified
has filled our hearts with gladness:

*Had Christ, who once was slain,
not burst his three-day prison
our faith would be in vain
but now has Christ arisen,
arisen, arisen, arisen.*

G R Woodward

~~~~~

## SPECIAL EVENTS AND SERVICES

Thursday 9 April  
7.00 p.m.

### THURSDAY CIRCLE MAUNDYTHURSDAY SUPPER AND SERVICE

Friday 10 April  
3.00 p.m.

### GOOD FRIDAY REFLECTIVE SERVICE

Sunday 12 April  
11.00 a.m.

### EASTER SUNDAY HOLY COMMUNION

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6.30 p.m.

HOLY COMMUNION

Sunday 31 May
10.30 a.m.

OUTDOOR PENTECOST SERVICE with St. Stephen's

SUNDAY SERVICE

11.00 am

SUNDAY KID'S CLUB

*For children and young people
between the ages of 3 yrs & 15 yrs.*

*1st Sunday of the month,
during worship.*

WEEKDAY & EVENING MEETINGS

MONDAYS:

| | |
|----------------------|-----------------|
| <i>Toddler Group</i> | <i>12.45 pm</i> |
| <i>Beavers</i> | <i>6.00 pm</i> |
| <i>Brownies</i> | <i>6.30 pm</i> |

WEDNESDAYS:

| | |
|--------------------------|------------------|
| <i>Indoor Bowls Club</i> | <i>2.00 p.m.</i> |
| <i>Rainbows</i> | <i>5.00 p.m.</i> |

THURSDAYS:

| | |
|------------------------|----------------|
| <i>Thursday Circle</i> | <i>7.00 pm</i> |
|------------------------|----------------|

FRIDAYS:

| | |
|-----------------------|----------------|
| <i>Choir Practice</i> | <i>6.30 pm</i> |
| <i>Cub Scouts</i> | <i>6.30 pm</i> |

EDITORS: *Graham Duthie, Christine Duthie
and Alison Ablewhite*

Visit our website at:

www.wimpoleroadchurch.org.uk

WORLD LINK

Mount Zion Society of the Methodist Church in
Korle Gonno in Accra, Ghana.