

September 2021
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SAINTS ALIVE

Then sings my soul...

“HOW
GREAT
THOU ART”



ALL
SAINTS

The Parish Magazine
of All Saints' Parish Church,
Cheadle Hulme

INFORMATION PAGE

SUNDAY SERVICES

8.00am Holy Communion (2nd in month)

10.00am Parish Eucharist

6.30pm Evensong

WEEKDAY SERVICES

Holy Communion

Thursday 10.00am.

Holy Days to be announced.

Matins

Daily at 9.00am.

CONFESSION AND SPIRITUAL COUNSELLING

By arrangement with the Clergy.

ARRANGEMENTS FOR BAPTISMS, BANNINGS AND WEDDINGS

All enquiries to Rev'd Sarah Hancock
(485 3455).

MOTHERS' UNION

Corporate Communion 10.00am on the
2nd Thursday in Church. Details of all
meetings are in Saints Alive and weekly
notices. See Notice Board.

MENS' SOCIETY

Monthly meetings on the 1st Thursday,
September to May, at 7.30pm in the
Meeting Room.

Chairman: Mr Bradley Torbitt (486 9387).

Secretary: Mr Mike Parry (485 7886).

FRIDAY CLUB

Fortnightly meetings on Friday evening
usually in the Meeting Room at 7.30pm.

Open to women of all age groups.

Chairman is Lily Mitchelhill (485 5187)

Secretary is Julia Ball (440 8647)

JAMES GROUP

The James Group exists to encourage the
Church's ministry of healing, and the practice
of regular intercession for the sick.

The branch meets monthly to say an Office
of Intercession: there is also a monthly
Corporate Communion. For further information
please contact: The Secretary: Pat Yates
(485 4546).

BIBLE READING FELLOWSHIP

Secretary: Mrs Julia Ball (440 8647).

UNIFORMED ORGANISATIONS

Cubs: (7th Cheadle Hulme) Meet on a Friday
6.30pm - 8.00pm at Thorn Grove.

Contact: Andrew Thompson

email:andy.thompson@theadlescouts.org.uk

Beavers: (7th Cheadle Hulme)

Meet on a Friday 6.00pm - 7.15pm in the

Parish Rooms. Contact: Kirstie Stamp

email:kirstie.stamp@theadlescouts.org.uk

Brownies: (11th Cheadle Hulme)

Meet on a Monday 6.00pm - 7.15pm at

Thorn Grove. Contact: Jo Taylor

brownow11theadlehulme@yahoo.com

Rainbows: (2nd Cheadle Hulme)

Meet on a Monday 6.00pm - 7.00pm



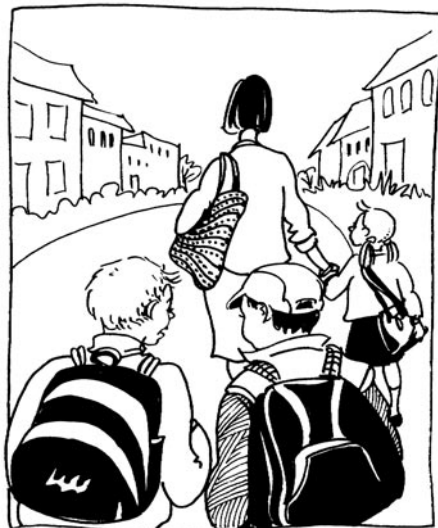
VICAR'S LETTER

Dear friends,

A new school term is about to begin. Excitement, anticipation and some trepidations are probably the mixture of emotions that are being experienced. It feels like a long time since attending school has had any sense of rhythm and structure. For those who are starting for the first time and those who are yet to experience truly what a school year is like. It's hard to find a firm foundation when all around keeps changing. The passage that I think about when life is like this is the one from Hebrews 3 verse 8:

Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever

To know that the love of Jesus for us never changes brings great comfort to me when I see constant change around me. I love a new challenge – as long as it's not climbing up a mountain! I like to figure out how to do something new, it offers different challenges, thinking, problem-solving. However, there comes a point where if I do it too much, or I experience too much change all at once I feel overwhelmed with all the new information that needs to be sorted and processed. How much more so when we are in a pandemic. Experiencing something never experienced before for us. And how much more so when you are faced with something completely new like a new school.



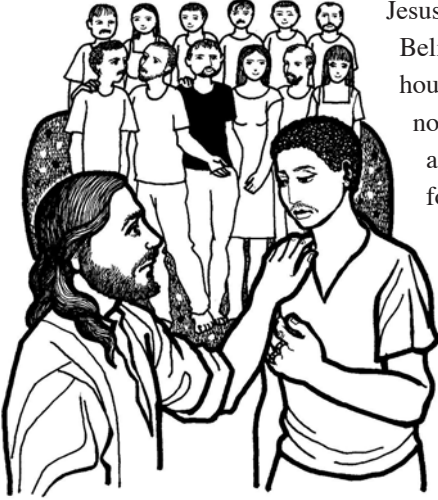
This term I will be praying for all those young ones who will be starting a new school. I will be praying for the adults that care for those young ones as you help them to adjust to a new way of life for a while. I will be praying for all the teaching staff who will be adjusting yet again to a new way of schooling. I thank all those at the schools who have worked hard to make sure that learning can still happen throughout this pandemic, and I pray that you will all know that when life changes dramatically and things can feel uncertain that the promise of the love of Jesus and the person of Jesus are still the same yesterday, today and will be tomorrow.

God bless

Revd Sarah Hancock

**COPY DEADLINE FOR OCTOBER - SEPTEMBER 6TH
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Let Jesus Christ find you



Jesus said, 'Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house there are many dwelling-places. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, so that where I am, there you may be also.' John 14:1-6

We come to church regularly to meet God. But actually, God comes to meet us. He comes to us personally through His Word; and in Holy Communion, Jesus arrives under cover of bread and wine, saying 'this is My body; this is My blood'.

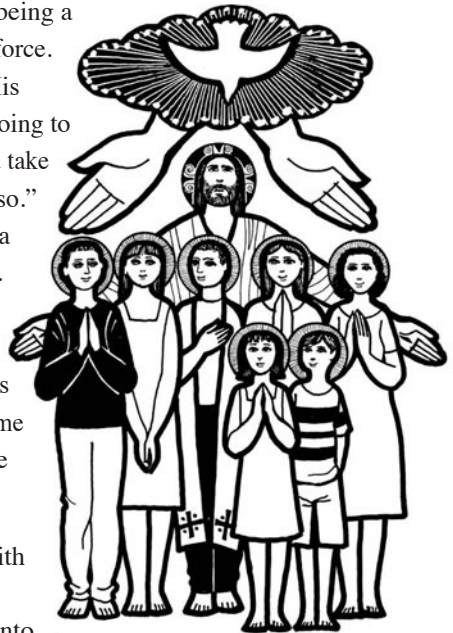
The whole Bible is the story of God searching for us, not the other way round. It begins with Adam and Eve running away and hiding, and that's how it continues to this day. But it ends with a dramatic vision of reunion. In the meantime, humanity is invited to stop, turn round, and face God who is in pursuit. 'Turning round' is what 'repentance' means.

Becoming a Christian is letting Christ find us; being a Christian is becoming an apprentice in His workforce. Not long before His crucifixion, Jesus taught His apprentices about His death – and theirs. "I'm going to prepare a place for you, and I will come again and take you to myself, so that where I am you may be also."

When we contemplate dying, it may seem like a journey into the dark. But we will not go alone. Never alone. As we reach out into the darkness, Christ is reaching out to us. Just as He has been reaching out to us throughout our lives, so He is there to grasp us as we breathe our last. "I will come again and will take you to myself, so that where I am, there you may be also."

For the disciple, death is a union – a reunion with Christ. It's the most natural thing in the world. So, we pray that at our end, we may reach out into

the darkness, to find we are grasped by the One who has already prepared a place for us.



The Parable of the Sower

This month we are looking at the Parable of the Sower (Mark 4:1-20). It's the story of a farmer who sowed his seed in different type of soils. These represent the different responses of the heart to God's Word (v15-20):

1) The hard heart: 'like seed along the path...as soon as they hear it, Satan comes and takes away the word that was sown in them.' (15). Some people, when they hear the message, get distracted eg social media, work or relationships. Personal priorities prevent them from hearing God.

2) The shallow heart: 'like seed sown on rocky places...since they have no root, they last only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, they quickly fall away.' (16,17). These are the people whose heart isn't open to the message. When things become uncomfortable or discouraging, they are ready to quit.

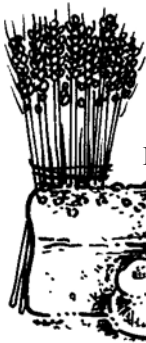
3) The crowded heart: 'like seed sown among thorns...but the worries of this life, the deceitfulness of wealth and the desires for other things come in and choke the word, making it unfruitful.' (18,19). This soil is most relevant for us today. People crave status, comfort, security and personal desires alongside the things of God. It's a heart that is worried about life getting out of control!

4) The open heart: 'like seed sown on good soil, hear the word, accept it, and produce a crop – some thirty, some sixty, some a hundred times what was sown.' (20). This represents the open heart that listens and accepts Jesus's word, and is ready to follow Him however difficult things become.

What kind of soil is our heart? Are we hard, shallow, crowded or open? Do we have a heart of faith to follow Jesus in every aspect of our lives?



Thanking God for our blessings



Our winter barley ripened quickly this year, and soon the combine harvesters were rolling here on the Northumberland / Scottish Border. As the first trailer load of grain came into the shed, I ran my hands through the golden grains, offering a short prayer of thankfulness as I savoured the smell of fresh cut barley. It was a good harvest.

I've often reflected on the Old Testament festival of the Firstfruits, where the Israelites offered the very first sheaf of the spring harvest to God (Leviticus 23:9-14). I think this act required great faith, as they trusted God for a fruitful harvest to

come, something that was far from certain, given their utter dependence on the weather.

I'm not sure about you, but I'm always up for giving thanks after the event. I'll sing 'Come ye thankful people come' and rejoice that "all is safely gathered in", but am I able to trust with anticipation for what is yet to come?

The festival of the Firstfruits reminded God's people that everything they had came from Him. I am reminded that I must learn (and relearn) to trust in God, who has proven His faithfulness to me, over and over again.

Perhaps right now as a church community or an individual you're waiting for a certain event, standing on the cusp of a new initiative, praying for a certain outcome or anticipating a long-held vision becoming reality.

Let's all keep trusting that whatever the challenge, however things turn out, irrespective of what we anticipate, God is going before us and has secured the Firstfruits of an even greater harvest through Jesus, as He rose from the dead.

Just as the grain offering to God in the Old Testament anticipated a harvest to come, Paul reminds us that Jesus' victory anticipates an even greater bodily resurrection and eternal peace (1 Corinthians 15:20-22).

As we continue our journey with Jesus through the challenges of each day, let's do so with a deepening faith and trust. In the meantime, bring on the harvest – I'll see you on the other side!



Reflected Faith Series: the Bread we eat

The majority of Sunday morning services in churches throughout the world are based on the Last Supper of Jesus.

At the Passover meal, on the night before His death, Jesus took bread, gave thanks, broke it and gave it to His disciples saying, “This is My body given for you;” (Luke 22:19a). He also took wine and passed it to each of them and said, “This is My blood, given for you.”



These two elements, the bread and the wine, continue to be the central focus for Christians: doing what Jesus asked us to do, ‘Do this in remembrance of me’. (Luke 22:19b)

What we call this service varies between denominations and even between churches within the same denomination.

It is a way of giving ‘thanks’ as Jesus did (the word ‘Eucharist’ comes from the Greek by way of Latin, and it means ‘thanksgiving’), reminding us not only of the tremendous sacrifice that Christ had made on our behalf, but also recalling the love and joy that Jesus brings to the community.

The word ‘Communion’ comes from something done with others – the community. It’s done with Christ. It’s done with other worshippers. In sharing the meal, ‘I’ becomes ‘us’. The word ‘Mass’ comes from the conclusion to the traditional service – which was in Latin: ‘Ite, missa est.’ ‘Go. You are being sent.’ Today we use similar words, ‘Go in peace, to love and serve the Lord.’

At the moment many churches, especially the Church of England, are only giving bread to the congregation with the priest alone consuming the wine. So the meaning underlying the taking / the giving of bread is more crucial than ever. In some denominations the bread is literally the ‘daily bread’, whilst in others it is a ‘wafer’ or yeast free bread – as was used at the original Passover.

This month: Have a look at the bread that is placed into your hands the next time you ‘receive’. How does it reflect receiving Christ into your life?

Lord God, take pity on me. During my infancy I ignored You; During my boyhood I had no interest in You. During my adolescence I pursued vain pleasures. But now, Lord Jesus, I crave Your mercy. I want to know You, I want to understand Your truth, I want to feel Your joy. Richard Rolle (c 1300 – 1349) Hermit in Yorkshire



Becoming new

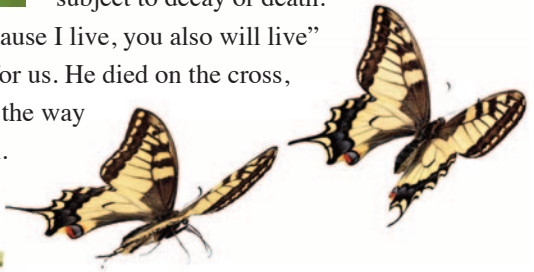
When a caterpillar changes into a butterfly, it's hard to believe it's the same creature. But at both stages of its life, it has a body that is perfectly suited to living in a particular environment.

This insect can help us understand the afterlife and the significance of the resurrected Jesus. Paul, on his journeys, discovered that some members of the church in Corinth were confused about life after death. So, Paul, wrote a lengthy letter to them to explain the importance of the resurrection of Jesus, and how it affects our future existence. Paul doesn't mention caterpillars and butterflies but describes a seed becoming a plant. By just looking at an individual seed there is no knowing what it is going to look like! But out of its death comes a beautiful new life form.



Paul points out that all living beings have a body that enables them to live in a particular environment. There are earthly bodies for living in a physical world and a spiritual body for living in the heavenly realms. And so God will give to us a new spiritual body to enable us to live with Him in heaven. Of course, all butterflies eventually die, but in our resurrected body we will not be subject to decay or death.

How do we know this? Jesus said: "Because I live, you also will live" (John 14:19). Jesus pioneered the way for us. He died on the cross, arose from the grave, and so opened up the way for all believers in Him to go to Heaven. Thanks be to God!



Do all the good you can, by all the means you can, in all the ways you can, in all the places you can, at all the times you can, to all the people you can, as long as ever you can. John Wesley

*We never grow closer to God when we just live life.
It takes deliberate pursuit and attentiveness.* Francis Chan

If you spend your whole life waiting for the storm, you'll never enjoy the sunshine.

Morris L. West

Two thirds of churches in UK plan to keep streaming online

Almost two thirds of UK churches plan to carry on streaming online, even after restrictions lift.

According to a survey by the insurance group Ecclesiastical and The Bible Society, 93% of churches have used new ways to keep in touch with their congregation and over two in five churches (43%) saw an increase in attendance as a result.

Live streaming has undoubtedly helped churches keep their services going during the pandemic, but this research suggests most, 62%, would like the new habit to stay.

In the survey, 93% said that they had used the video platform Zoom since March 2020, while others used Facebook (60%), YouTube (5%) and Microsoft Teams (1%) to stream to their congregation.

Over two in five of the churches who had used these new channels said that they had seen an increase in attendance against their usual numbers, leading most to say they will carry on streaming after lockdown ends.

As one vicar in Norfolk said, “At the height of the pandemic we were getting over a hundred visits to our Facebook page a day, ten times as many as beforehand.

“By using social media we’ve been able to reach many more people than ever came through the actual church door each week, so it’s definitely something we’re looking to continue offering. There is certainly more hope now than there was this time last year and we look forward to the Lord leading us from this difficult time into freedom and new beginnings.”



Harry, a genius for buffoonery

One hundred years ago, on 8th September 1921, Sir Harry Secombe was born in Swansea.

The comedian, actor, writer, singer and TV presenter was one of the stars of the anarchic 1950s radio series, *The Goon Show*.

His family belonged to St Thomas Church, and his elder brother, Fred, became a Church of Wales priest. Later in life Sir Harry became a presenter of religious programmes, such as the BBC's *Songs of Praise* and ITV's *Highway*.

He met Spike Milligan during the war in North Africa and later bumped into him again at the

Windmill Theatre, where he was doing comedy routines. There they also met Peter Sellers and Michael Bentine – forming the team that eventually produced *The Goon Show*.

A natural clown with a “genius for buffoonery”, Harry was the focus, and he moved on to star in a series of films, including *Oliver!*

He was also a talented and popular tenor. He was knighted in 1981, referring to himself as Sir Cumference in reference to his size – he was later forced to diet for medical reasons, and died at the age of 79 of prostate cancer. His tombstone bears the inscription “To know him is to love him”.



Remembering Dante

Dante Alighieri, the Italian ‘supreme poet’, died 700 years ago, on 13th September 1321. Regarded as the most important poet of the Middle Ages, he is best known for his *Divine Comedy*, widely considered the greatest literary work in Italian and an influence on such English writers as Chaucer, Milton and Tennyson.

Born in Florence in about 1265 but exiled from the city in 1301 amid political turmoil, Dante – a forerunner of the Renaissance – established the use of the vernacular instead of Latin in literature and helped standardise the Italian language.

His work and life were inspired by his love for Beatrice Portinari, whom he first met as a child: he claimed to be overwhelmed by her beauty. He never knew her closely, and when he was 12 his family arranged for him to marry Gemma, a member of the powerful Donati family. But Beatrice remained his inspiration, appearing in the *Divine Comedy* as a guide and depicted as semi-divine, in the style of a muse-like guardian angel.

The word *Comedy* does not indicate humour, but belief in an ordered universe: in this case it depicts a pilgrimage from Hell to Paradise, beginning with moral chaos and ending with a vision of God.

Hope: 4 key passages from the New Testament to give us courage in dark times

Some words are so intrinsic to Christian faith that it's sometimes easy to skip over them when we see them. Love and faith spring to mind. Another word which looms large is hope. There are times when the world feels hopeless. The great gift we can bring as a Church is to offer some hope.

In the Bible, hope isn't merely optimism or a positive attitude. If anything, hope is a concept that acknowledges just how bad the world can be, and even so chooses to believe that things can, and will, be better. Here are four key passages on hope from the New Testament:

Romans 5: 1-5

Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we boast in the hope of the glory of God. Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.

1 John 3: 1-3

See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him. Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when Christ appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. All who have this hope in him purify themselves, just as he is pure.

Hebrews 6: 16-20

People swear by someone greater than themselves, and the oath confirms what is said and puts an end to all argument. Because God wanted to make the unchanging nature of his purpose very clear to the heirs of what was promised, he confirmed it with an oath. God did this so that, by two unchangeable things in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have fled to take hold of the hope set before us may be greatly encouraged. We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure. It enters the inner sanctuary behind the curtain, where our forerunner, Jesus, has entered on our behalf. He has become a high priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek.

Ephesians 1: 17-19

I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better. I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people, and his incomparably great power for us who believe.

Five things we've learnt about Truth in the pandemic

I'm involved in a project rooted in the Church of England's St Albans diocese, north of London. We bring together people from a range of backgrounds and faiths to address the question 'Where is Truth now?' A vital issue for us from recent months has been 'How has truth fared during the pandemic? Here are five key points.

Truth can save your life. Knowing the truth about the Covid-19 virus and vaccines gave vital protection during the pandemic. The advice of scientists and health professionals has been widely sought out and debated. But we've also seen a rise in conspiracy theories, anti-vaccination campaigns and growing confusion as people challenge the extent of the pandemic, and whether Covid-19 is really a threat. Social media algorithms stand accused of spreading misinformation faster than reliable facts and corrections.

Truth comes from trust. Knowing who to trust is one of the fastest growing challenges facing anyone wanting to know more about the pandemic and its causes. While faith in doctors and scientists is generally good, trust in politicians has remained low, and scepticism and confusion are growing.

Truth can be found on your doorstep – but not always. Local information has become more important, especially during lockdowns. But with local newspapers and radio in decline, neighbourhood social media networks have been taking their place, spreading information – not all of it verifiable and sometimes incorrect. Often, it's fear that drives our response to the stories we read. We eagerly consume stories of a new 'threat' from Covid or scapegoating people not keeping to the lockdown rules. We respond emotionally, 'with our gut' – rather than our brain or intellect.

Truth has to be valued and protected. Reliable, trusted journalism has been at a premium. ITV News journalist Julie Etchingham defended the role of the media during Covid-19. The presenter, a practising Roman Catholic, explained: "Many in our front-line services and the wider public are demanding answers. We are there on their behalf." In December 2020, Yorkshire Post editor James Mitchinson, published his response to a reader who believed social media posts over his newspaper's reports. The open letter, headlined 'Do not believe a stranger on social media who disappears into the night' sets out the contrast between verified public interest journalism and disinformation posted online.

Truth can be complicated – and that's ok. Throughout the pandemic, politicians have spoken about 'following the science.' This, they said, has guided their decision making. Yet scientists can have a range of views, based on similar research findings. It's in the discussion and debate that scientific truth arises. People accept that 'scientific evidence' is not always straightforward. We know that truth can be complicated, from our own daily lives. So politicians who level with their electors about the complexity of the decisions are often received with more credibility.

In continuing to ask the question "Where is Truth Now?" our modest project is helping to keep the conversation going – and encouraging others to do the same.

Name above all Names

Name above all Names, what's in a name?

Jesus, Messiah, He's coming again,
Alpha, Omega, Beginning and End,
Apostle and High Priest, the sinners
Friend.

Walking on water, calming the storm,
God incarnate calling us home
Creator, the I Am, nailed to a tree
Lion of Judah dying for me.

Risen, the Victor, conquering King
Coming with clouds redemption to bring
To gather His bride for heaven above
To reign with the Lamb whose name is
Love.

Megan Carter



Night Sanctification

Father, bless me and my body keep,
Father, bless me in my soul;
Father, bless me through this night of
sleep,
In my body and my soul.

Father, bless me as I live my days,
Father, bless me in my creed;
Father, bless me in my binding ways,
To my life and to my creed.

Father, sanctify to me my speech,
Father, sanctify my heart;
Father, sanctify my portion each,
In my speech and in my heart.

From Poems of the Western Highlanders

Sheep's Tale

(Luke 15:1-7)

I didn't know I was lost,
Just thought I'd try a new path,
Walk a different way for a while.
After all, the rest of the flock
Seemed so comfortable, so sure of
themselves.

I'd sometimes felt alone
Even with the ninety-nine all around me.
Then there was my voice – always one
bleat behind,

And just because I sat behind that
particular bush
Where the ewes always congregate,
I got pushed to the edge of the flock.
So, yes, I'd strayed a bit,
But I wouldn't say I was lost exactly,
Just wandering.

That was until night fell, and I fell
Deep into danger, far from the flock,
Lonely and yes, lost now
And wanting so much to go home,
Not knowing how, needing help,
And the night so dark.

Then out of darkness His voice of light,
Searching, His arms of rescue, saving,
His heart of love, rejoicing
Because He found me, my Shepherd.
He came to look for me.

Daphne Kitching



Making the most of your time



September is the time of year when we get back to normal routine after the summer break. It's an opportunity to ask how God wants us to make the most of the time He gives us. Although we can't always choose how we use our time, we can control our attitude towards it. How can we use our time wisely?

Firstly, see time is a gift from God. Each day is an opportunity to know God better and serve Him. Time isn't inexhaustible, as someday our time on earth will end. 'Teach us to number our days, that we may gain a heart of wisdom.' (Psalm 90:12).

The first thing we can do when we awake is thank God for the gift of

another day. Secondly, commit your time to God. Time is not to be wasted, but to be used for God's glory. We are accountable to

God for the way that we use our time: 'Be very careful, then, how you live – not as unwise but as wise, making the most

of every opportunity' (Ephesians 5:15,16). We should ask

God to help us organise our time more wisely, to reflect

His concerns. Thirdly, set aside time for God, others and ourselves. How often can we go through a whole day

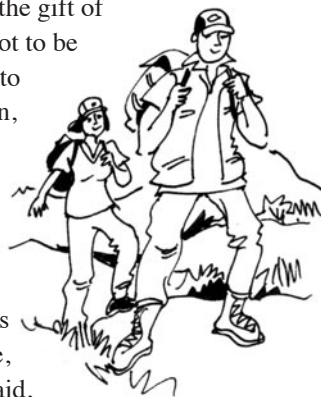
without thinking about God or ignoring someone who needs our help? This is because we relegate God to our spare time,

so He ends up at the bottom of our list of priorities. Jesus said, 'Seek first His kingdom and His righteousness' (Matthew 6:33). If we prioritise our time

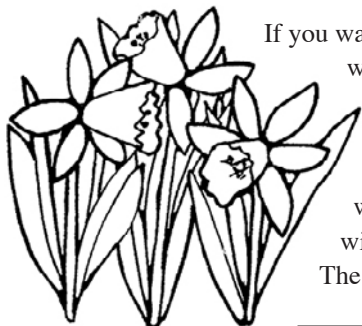
for God, people and our needs, the rest of life will fit around them.

'I have so much to do today that I shall spend the first three hours in prayer.'

(Martin Luther).



Give nature two hours a week



If you want to improve your health and higher psychological well-being, spend at least 120 minutes a week in a park, woodland, country park, beach or elsewhere in nature. Recent research at Exeter University found that people who spend at least two hours a week walking among trees, listening to birdsong, and engaging with nature have lower stress and blood pressure.

The study was published in the journal *Scientific Reports*.

Celebrations of human worth

It was a priest, Francis Meres, a man well acquainted with the literary scene, who, in his *Wit's Treasury* of 1598, praises Shakespeare as a poet as well as a playwright, referring to his “sugared sonnets among his private friends”. It was not until 1609, however, when Shakespeare was 45 and a well-known author of about 30 plays, that his sonnets were first printed as a collection.

We don't know how well they went down, sonnets by then being perhaps a little out of fashion, but, over time, they became (though sometimes difficult) deeply loved, admired, studied, stored, and recited by generations. Written over 20 years of Shakespeare's life, although groups of the sonnets have overlapping themes or echoes of each other in sound or focus, they do not form one continuous sequence. Each can be enjoyed in itself: invitations into the intimacies of humanity's relationship with time and with itself; with the human heart, desire, and sexuality; and the range of passions and confusions that fill our restless nights and hidden days.

Some casually think that the sonnets are only about love — and the sonnets are, indeed, about love, from many angles and in many forms — but they are about so many more things, also. It is debated whether the sonnets are transparently autobiographical and, as Wordsworth believed, were the key with which Shakespeare “unlocked his heart”. What is very clear, however, is that they remain a key that can unlock our hearts. As we read them, again and again, sometimes struggling to comprehend, we persist because, although we can't always make immediate sense of them, we know that they are making patient sense of us.

So close do they intrude into both the far corners and the horizons of our hearts that they remain worthy of whispering — words and breath in mysterious partnership, making ourselves visible to ourselves; meditative exercises for a distillation we so often long for and yet can't find. Similar things, of course, are often said of the parables of Jesus. One in Luke's Gospel (12.16-21) is about a man who has forgotten that the best things in life are never things. Like many of us, he seems to have been taken over by the addiction to accumulate, possessed by possession, leaving him with plenty to live with but not so much to live for. He addresses his soul: “Soul,” he says, “take thine ease, eat, drink, be merry.” Book that cruise.

Sonnet 146 also addresses the soul, but, you feel, further down the line, after it has learned that life is not for beginners and that its losses — whether of love, health, or the people we love most — hurt; and provide a different lens to see through. Shakespeare addresses the soul, but now it is “Poor soul”. He registers the “pine within”; sees how, although life is “so short a lease”, he paints the walls of himself while inside he crumbles apart. For God's sake, you can almost hear him say to himself, get your act together: “Buy terms divine in selling hours of dross; Within be fed, without be rich no more.” The insight is shared by the Gospel: “A man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.” (*Continued on page 14*)

(Continued from page 13) One of the many things that we have learned from the pandemic we are living through is that the virus does not discriminate; it has left low-paid workers in makeshift mortuaries, and the monarch herself isolated in her pew of mourning. Shakespeare's contemporary dramatist, Thomas Dekker, noted the same about the plague of their time. In the grave, he wrote, "Servant and master, foul and fair One livery wear, and fellows are." Husbands, wives, children, old and young, are led to the grave, "as if", he says, "they had gone to one bed".

Sonnet 60 has its eyes and heart open to the fact that life is fragile and short. In Jesus's parable, it is at night that God requires the man's soul; in the 1609 publication of this sonnet, the second line "so do our minutes hasten to their end" sees "minutes" spelled with an extra "i", playing with a French pun, perhaps, turning minute into "minuit(e)" - midnight. So do our midnights hasten, and our souls are required. We have been given the gift of our being. The gift we can give back is our becoming. So, the bell strikes and we are asked just that: "Who have you become?"

In the sonnet, we "crawl to maturity", and then Time "feeds on the rarities of nature's truth" and takes away the gift it gave to us. But it is the sonnet's couplet that gives us something we need urgently to believe, in our own bruised times, and which also, for me, summarises something of the very gift of Shakespeare himself. That sonnet is, we think, addressed to the "fair youth". And yet it is not outrageous to read it as addressed to us all: "And yet to times in hope my verse shall stand, Praising thy worth, despite his cruel hand." Or, "To futures only yet dreamed of, this poetry remains, Voicing your worth despite all the cruelties of time."

Shakespeare's work, his plays and poems, always, it seems to me, praises our worth as human beings, celebrates our dignity in all our mystery and mess; and, though only too aware of the cruel hand, both of time and of many tortured human beings, he never gives up on us, but, often against the odds, still praises our worth. We have seen this worth: the elderly lady touching the hand of her daughter through a window; the man saying goodbye to his family as a nurse holds his phone; the sacrifice made by the carers and healers; the tireless work of the scientist; the son in India desperately looking for oxygen to save his mother; the wide, unstoppable hug that reunites parents with their son with learning disabilities at his care home. All tell us, and all praise our worth, your worth, as the person you are.

I thank Shakespeare for many things: the beauty and adventure of language; the door he props open in our psyche; that sixth sense of his; the point precision; and the layered ambiguities of his diagnosis of our human condition. But, most of all, I thank him that he praises and upholds and celebrates our worth, despite everything. Our moment needs his monument, but, "to times in hope", it needs his compassionate imagination and his humane sympathies more than ever.

This is an abridged version of the sermon given at this year's Shakespeare service, A Moment's Monument, in Holy Trinity, Stratford-upon-Avon, by Canon Mark Oakley, Dean of St John's College, Cambridge.

Enter all the angels, led by Michael

What is an angel? Easy, people think: a shining figure with glorious wings, who appears from time to time to do some mighty work for God or bring a very special message from him.

Well, that's right in one sense (apart from the wings, which owe more to stained glass windows than the Bible). But the fact that not all 'angels' in the Bible are 'glorious' or 'shining' should make us hesitate to categorise them in this spectacular way. After all, the three apparently ordinary men who visited Abraham and Sarah to tell them that she would have a son even though she was long past child-bearing age had none of those outward embellishments. Nevertheless, Abraham recognised them as divine messengers. The Bible is full of angels, from the early chapters of Genesis to the last chapter of Revelation, and often they had a key role in crucial events. It seems, from just two instances, that Michael was their leader, an 'archangel'. In many stained glass windows he's seen with a sword, because in a vision in Revelation he led the angelic host who fought and defeated Satan and his army.

In the Gospels, an angel of the Lord appeared to Zechariah in the Temple, to tell him that his elderly wife was to have a son, the forerunner of the Messiah, John the Baptist. An angel – Gabriel – appeared to Mary to tell her that she would be the mother of the Messiah, the Son of God. An angel appeared 'in a dream' to Joseph, the village carpenter in Nazareth, to tell him to go ahead and marry his fiancée, Mary, and later – also in a dream – warned him not to go back to Bethlehem. A 'young man', whom we take to have been an angel, was sitting in the empty tomb on Easter morning, waiting to tell the startled women that Jesus wasn't there – He had risen (Mark 16:5).

Without going into every biblical reference to angels, those should be sufficient to show that the word covers an enormous diversity of experience. So the Letter to the Hebrews speaks of those who practice hospitality as sometimes 'entertaining angels unawares'. Sometimes people recognised angels for who they were, and sometimes they didn't. Angels, quite simply, are God's agents or emissaries, messengers and ministers of His will. Sometimes they are human; sometimes they seem to be spiritual beings. Perhaps we could even say that anyone, in any situation, who is at that moment God's 'messenger' to us, or serves us graciously, is an 'angel'. So, when we say, 'Oh, be an angel and pop up to the chemist for my prescription', we may be nearer the heart of the matter than we think!



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September Prayer

Dear Lord,
September – the month of new beginnings for many, as summer fades and school and college terms start.

After such a strange time of restrictions, hopes of freedom, with warnings to be cautious, it is hard to know what to expect this September. We can't know what lies ahead, Lord, but we can trust you to see us through whatever it turns out to be.

Thank you for your promise, I will never leave you or forsake you... (Hebrews 13:5) Help us to hold fast to that promise, to keep trusting you – and to be thankful for each September day.

In Jesus' name. Amen. *Daphne Kitching*



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ALL SAINTS CRAFT GROUP

The Craft Group meets on the 2nd and 4th Wednesdays at 2.30pm in the Church Meeting Room. We learn new skills and practise old ones. Tea/coffee, biscuits and good company are always on offer. **Please join us when meetings begin again.**

All are welcome. For further details please contact Frances Pickett on 0161 439 8890.



All Saints' Website and Facebook



Keep up to date with news and events on the All Saints' website. Find out about our charity work, community groups and listen to recent sermons.



Please contact Sarah Ball on: comms@allsaintsheadleholme.org.uk with any stories and updates.

Find All Saints' on Facebook at: <https://www.facebook.com/AllSaintsCH/> and "Like" us to get notifications about our news and events.



Church Open

**Saturday Coffee Mornings have been postponed
for the immediate future.**



MEN'S SOCIETY

Monthly meetings on the first Thursday, September to May, at 7.30pm in the Meeting Room (unless otherwise stated). After the talk there is a short question and answer session followed by tea, coffee and biscuits.

Due to the implementation of measures to combat the Coronavirus pandemic all meetings have been cancelled. Further details will be posted when available.

Although this group is attended by men, if you are interested in hearing any of the speakers you will be most welcome to come along.

Chairman: Bradley Torbitt (0161 486 9387)

Secretary: Mike Parry (0161 485 7886)

Learning lessons from a graveyard

If you're looking for a quiet oasis away from the bustle and busyness of everyday life, there's a place where nature, heritage and the life histories of hundreds of local people are on peaceful display. Take a walk in your local cemetery.

The chances are it's a place where nature abounds, where socially-distant peace can be found, and you can meditate on the deeper issues of life. It's true that graveyards seldom feature in most people's favourite places to visit. Many find them morbid, reminding them of their own mortality.

Or they can prompt memories of loved ones no longer with us, and the sadness overcomes the happy memories of the life shared together. Others simply rush past cemeteries or graveyards, without even noticing that they are there.

But walk among the gravestones, read the inscriptions and you find the stories of people's lives. Samuel Ryder, the Hertfordshire seed merchant who devised the United States v Europe Ryder Cup golf tournament, is buried in the cemetery opposite the church where I minister. When I visited recently, someone had left golf balls on his grave. In the same cemetery, there are more than 200 plain white graves of local and Commonwealth service people who died during the two world wars, and a memorial to the many local soldiers who died in the First World War.

To wander around any cemetery or graveyard is to enter into the lives of generations of families. To see the grave of the still-born baby close to the child who died in infancy, both near to the grandmother who died in her nineties. The husband and wife who died within months of each other, are alongside the wife who outlived her spouse by decades. I'm always struck by how people are described. Most are defined by their family relationships – beloved grandfather, grandmother, father, mother, wife, husband, son or daughter. Others are described by their roles in life – actress, golf professional or for the war graves, by their ranks. How long, I wonder, had the young men and women been in uniform before meeting their deaths – and being remembered ever after as soldiers?

In some cases, it may have been just a few months.

What, I find myself asking, would I like to have written on my gravestone? How would each of us like to be remembered? How can long lives be summed up in the few words you can fit on a gravestone?

And what is it that we are doing in life that will be of lasting value? Cemeteries are places that can make you consider your own life and think about what is important in it. Many Christian funerals begin with the words of Jesus Christ, 'I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die.'

It is a promise I hold to as I walk the paths around the graves.

The Revd Peter Crumpler is associate minister at St Paul's Church, Fleetville, St Albans



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Wilson Carlile, founder of the Church Army (26th September)

Wilson Carlile was born in Brixton in 1847, and did not set out to become an evangelist. Instead, he was brilliant at both languages and music, and excelled as a businessman. That is, until an economic recession and serious illness brought him crashing down and finished his career, aged only 31.

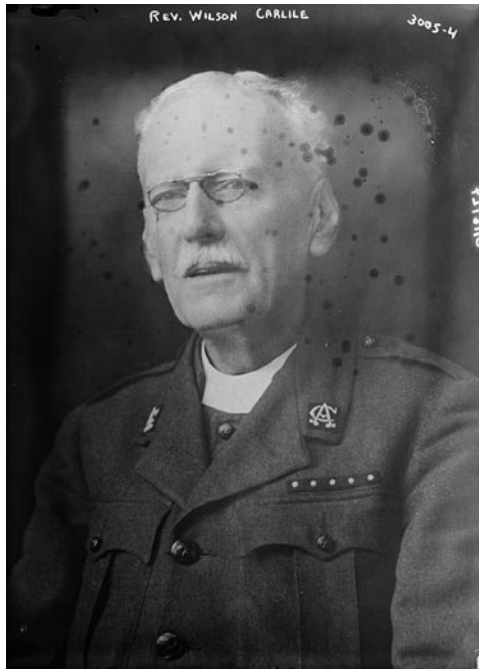
A serious breakdown followed, when he questioned everything that he had been attempting in life. This search for a new meaning brought him to Jesus Christ and turned his world upside down. He later wrote:

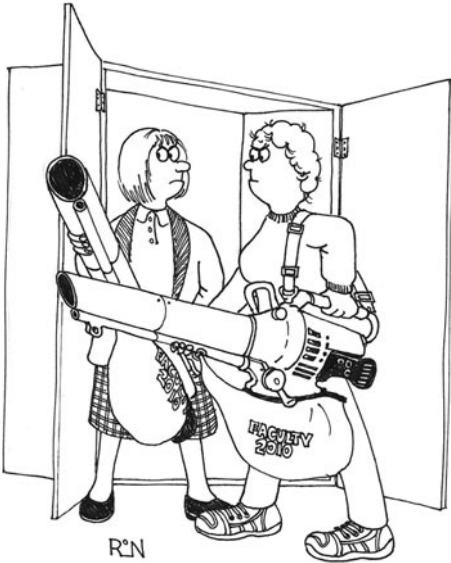
“I have seen the crucified and risen Lord as truly as if He had made Himself visible to me bodily sight. That is for me the conclusive evidence of His existence. He touched my heart and old desires and hope left it. In their place came the new thought that I might serve Him and His poor and suffering brethren.”

Wilson approached two Christians whose passion for ministry was already well known: the Americans evangelists Moody and Sanky, who were at that time in England. Wilson attended their meetings and supplied music via his harmonium. In return, he learned a lot about effective outdoors evangelism. Carlile then prepared himself for a life of ministry. He was confirmed into the Church of England, studied at the London College of Divinity, ordained in 1880 and served his curacy at St Mary Abbots in Kensington. But Carlile wanted more than comfortable parish life, and soon began outdoor preaching again. He wanted to reach the poor, unchurched, of the community.

Carlile left Kensington to work in a slum mission, and by 1882 he was busy uniting the local Anglican parish missions into one organisation. Here his business skills in planning and organising proved invaluable, and soon he had founded the ‘Church Army.’ He then founded two training colleges, to train both men and women evangelists. After slight hesitation, the Church of England agreed to incorporate the Church Army into its structure, and even created the office of Evangelist for the Church Army captains and sisters.

In the years that followed, Church Army has done great work in evangelism, as well as in social and moral welfare. It helped support the troops during World War 1. Carlile remained honorary chief secretary until retirement in 1926. He died in 1942.





*Shifting the cobwebs in the North aisle
required a faculty*



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We are now open again for worship

We are once again, open for worship. Initially this will be on Sundays at 10.00am and on Wednesdays at 12.30pm. Thank you all so much for your understanding during the lockdown. We understand that for many this is still a difficult period. If you would like prayers or simply a conversation please contact me: Rev Sarah on 0161 485 3455, or email: @allsaintsheadleholme.org.uk. Alternatively, call one of our wonderful Churchwardens, John Ackerley 0161 486 1419 and Janet Ashman on 0161 485 7969. Stay safe and God bless, Rev Sarah Hancock



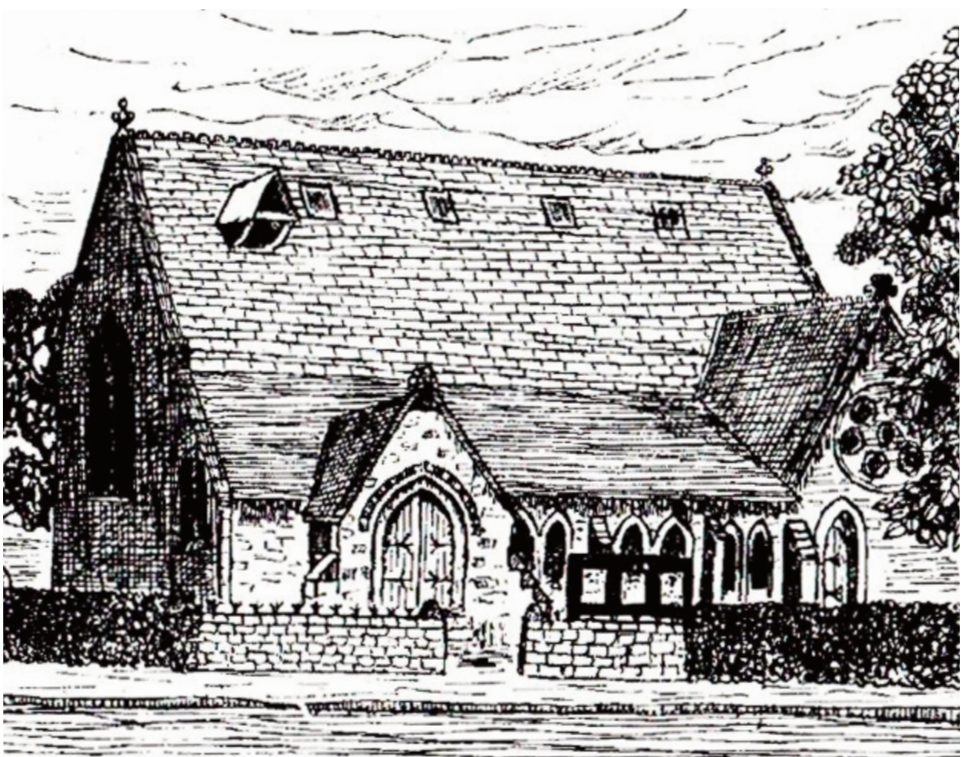
Hildegard, Abbess of Bingen, Visionary, 1179, September 17th. Artist Unknown

BAPTISMS

We welcome into the family of the Church:
August 1 Ada Hardman

CHRISTIAN FUNERALS

We give thanks for the lives of the following:
July 20 Mildred Whittaker August 11 Jean Sharp August 13 Margaret Gray
August 17 Joyce Hallam August 19 Samuel Davenport
24



Christian Stewardship

The Parish practises the principles of Christian Stewardship in its giving for the work of God. If you are interested to learn more about it please contact the Recorder, Kate Hughes (485 1010), the Vicar or the Churchwardens. The giving of time and talents is encouraged, If you wish to help in some capacity in the Church services or organisations, in improving or maintaining the Church fabric or grounds, or in visiting and helping the sick or housebound, please speak to the Clergy or the Churchwardens.



All Saints Cheadle Hulme

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The Rev'd Janet Owens (Retired) (312 4683)

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Mr Michael Aiers (439 7692)

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*Mr John Ackerley (486 1419)

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(485 2596)

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Parish Magazine Editor: Mr Rhys Davenport (485 6772) Email: seed.design@mail.com

Website and Social Media: *Ms Sarah Ball Email: comms@allsaintsheadleulme.org.uk

Parish Magazine Secretary and Treasurer:
Mrs Chris Spencer (485 8282)

Deanery Synod Representatives: *Mrs Julia Ball (440 8647)

*Miss Irene Walton (439 6096)

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