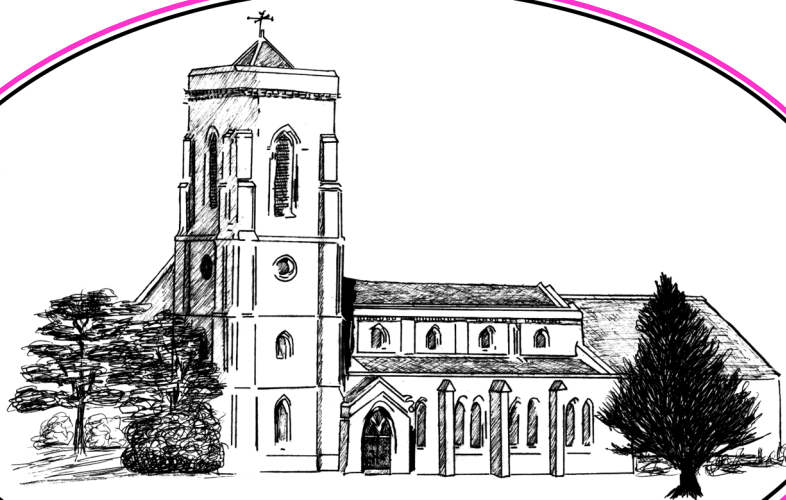


# *St. George's Montezbury*

Magazine 50p



*July 2023*

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Dame Edith Sitwell, when asked why she had come to faith,  
said she had looked at the pattern of a frosted flower on a windowpane..  
She had studied shells, feathers, petals and grasses; and she knew  
without a doubt there must be a cause..  
"I have come to believe that the cause is God."

Contributions for St. George's Magazine should be in by  
the **15<sup>th</sup>** of the **previous month**. It may not be possible to include until  
the following month contributions which are received after this date.

Send e-mail & attachments to stgsmagazine@googlemail.com

Items for inclusion in the Deanery News to be submitted by 10<sup>th</sup> of previous month to Alison  
Bebb - Keepers Cottage, Cruckmeole, Shrewsbury, SY5 8JN

Telephone: 01743 860158

email: alisonbebb5@gmail.com



## *LIFTING UP OUR EYES*

*With Pam Bickley*

Many years ago when living in Telford, I applied to be a magistrate. I was turned down because – as my husband was a prison officer, I would be influenced by him and the job he did. Les was angry; I was angry but my friends and work colleagues couldn't stop laughing. As they said at the time, they just don't know you both.

I've been thinking about it because of the television and newspaper adverts about coercion within relationships – where one partner controls the other in every aspect of their life. It's extremely damaging and can lead to severe mental, emotional and physical health problems.

I witnessed a member of staff become a victim to this. What started as a loving relationship, developed into one where she was distanced from her family and friends. The only release she had was when she was at work and even that stopped when she had her first child and he persuaded her not to return after maternity leave. Eventually her family intervened. They got her and the child out; took out a restraining order against the husband and with medical help, she gradually returned to being the woman we all knew.

Why I am thinking about all this? Well, one of the blessings of being a priest is that I conduct weddings and I want all the couples who get married in our churches to live happy and healthy lives. I'm not naïve – I realise we all have our difficulties; being married isn't always easy. But being married offers so much joy too. I think being part of a couple means that as well as loving each other, we need to have mutual respect. No one partner is better than the other. There are times when one has to be stronger for the other; supporting the other and encouraging them but always with respect and trust.

Every couple I marry gets a bible (always one that has been donated



by a congregation member). I want them to remember that as they were married in the sight of God, that He is with them always. That loving constant who shares their joy and sorrows. God does not condone coercion or abuse within a relationship; He wants us to live as equals within a marriage; trusting and respecting each other all the days of our lives.

I wish all our couples getting married this year a long and happy life together;  
With blessings

**Pam**



### **A prayer for July**

Loving Father,

July brings long days and summer pleasures, for many, but not for all. Lord, we pray for those who are finding life to be a struggle; for families with no hope of a holiday this year; for parents who don't know how they will feed their children during the upcoming long school break; for those who are lonely, or discouraged, or isolated, or afraid.

Lord, we pray for justice and compassion from those in positions of power and responsibility.

And please Lord, show *us* how to help, how to be part of the solution. May we, as your children, reflect your loving kindness wherever we can. May your Kingdom come on earth, through us.

In Jesus' name.  
Amen



# Readings and Services for this MONTH

Here are the Sunday Service details, and the readings which you may enjoy at home if you are unable to join a church service this month.

Date	Service	Readings
2 <sup>nd</sup> July 4 <sup>th</sup> Sunday after Trinity	Morning Worship 10.30am	(Jeremiah 28. 5-9) Romans 6.12-end Matthew 10. 40-end
4 <sup>th</sup> July	Tea Service 2.30pm	
9 <sup>th</sup> July 5 <sup>th</sup> Sunday after Trinity	Holy Communion 10.30am	Psalms 145. 8-15 (Romans 7.15-25a) Matthew 11.16-19,25-30
16 <sup>th</sup> July 6 <sup>th</sup> Sunday after Trinity	Holy Communion 10.30am	(Isaiah 55. 10-13) Romans 8. 1-11 Matthew 13. 1-9,18-23
23 <sup>rd</sup> July 7 <sup>th</sup> Sunday after Trinity	Holy Communion 10.30am	(Psalm 86 11-end) Romans 8. 12-25 Matthew 13.24-30,36-43
30 <sup>th</sup> July 8 <sup>th</sup> Sunday after Trinity <b>Group Service St. George`s</b>	Holy Communion 10.30am	Psalms 119. 129-136 (Romans 8. 26-39) Matthew 13. 32-33,44-52



# Our Local and Church COMMUNITY



Rea Valley  
foodbank

Rea Valley Food Bank is here to support you. You do need a referral to ensure that your parcel meets the

needs of you and your family and that it takes into account any diet requirements, but it's really easy - just call:

Reverend Greg Smith 07902 794653

or Reverend Richard Lonsdale 07922 830488

Your collection points are:

Holy Trinity Church, Minsterley, Tuesdays, 10am-12.00

St George's Church, Pontesbury, Thursdays, 10am-12.00

Financial donations are also welcome, enabling us to buy essential items : [support@reavalleyfoodbank.co.uk](mailto:support@reavalleyfoodbank.co.uk) for more info.

***Donations of fresh fruit and vegetables are always welcome, as are a variety of other 'usual' goods.***

Our next Repair Cafe is on  
Saturday 8th July  
10.00 - 12.00hrs



***OASIS*** *FREE lunch & companionship for anyone living in Pontesbury, Minsterley and surrounding villages, who has been recently bereaved...  
...on the 2nd & 4th Tuesdays every month, 12pm - 1.30pm  
Minsterley Methodist Chapel, Horsebridge Rd, Minsterley.  
Transport is Available—Friends & Family are Welcome too.*

Contact Heather Ryder for more information, at  
[ryder928@btinternet.com](mailto:ryder928@btinternet.com) or 01743 790359

***St. George's PARISH VISITORS*** Would you, or someone you know, appreciate some help or a phone call? Maybe you're feeling lonely, isolated, in need of support and friendship?  
*St. George's Church has a team of friendly people who would love to **phone** or **visit** you - **if we can help, we will !***  
Call in confidence: Phone **Marion Elliott 01743 792256**

***St. George's Prayer Chain*** is a small group of people who believe that prayer can make a difference. Each person within the group offers daily prayer for anyone who asks for prayer.

If you yourself or someone you know needs special prayer for any reason, please contact

**Rev. Shirley Small 01743 791885.**

All information given is given in confidence.  
A name is enough if that is all you wish to give.

# Looking at GOD

By Canon Paul Hardingham ...

## Mary Magdalene



Six Marys are mentioned in the New Testament, including Mary Magdalene, who is remembered this month in the church's calendar. What can we learn from Mary's story?

### ***We don't have to be defined by our past:***

When Jesus encountered Mary, He cast seven demons out of her (Luke 8:2). As a result, her life was transformed and she became a follower of Jesus. Her life as a disciple was no longer defined by the person she had been before. Like Mary, we don't have to let our past without Christ dictate how we see ourselves today.

### ***Put Jesus at the centre of our world:***

Along with some of the women who had been cured of evil spirits and diseases (Luke 8:1-3), Mary followed Jesus and His disciples and supported them in ministry. She was there at the cross (Matthew 27:55-56) and one of the first to the tomb on the Sunday (Matthew 28:1; Mark 16:1 and John 20:1-18). Like Mary, we are called to serve Jesus as dedicated disciples.

### ***Jesus uses the weakest in the world:***

Mary is a great example of Paul's words: '*But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong.*' (1 Corinthians 1:27). At a time when women were regarded as second-class citizens with no real autonomy, Jesus had a special compassion and care for women. Alongside Mary, the women's witness to the resurrection was taken seriously.

We should be careful not to dismiss the things that don't follow our expectations, because Jesus doesn't always do what we expect! He delights in working out His plans through unlikely people and in surprising ways. He did this through Mary, and if we let Him, He can do it through us!

## **Time Choices** by Daphne Kitching

(Lk 10:38-42)

Martha is distracted,  
too busy  
preparing for the needs of the day.  
Not enough time... not enough time.

Mary is focused,  
taking time to meet the needs of the heart.  
Sitting still,  
seeing through the paraphernalia of every day  
with a new clarity that changes her world.  
Mary listens to Jesus.  
She chooses life.

There is time...there is time.  
We all have our life time.  
What will we choose?

## **Graduation?**

There were so many graduates waiting to receive their degrees that day, that speed was of the essence. Presenting their diplomas, therefore, the Chancellor simply smiled and said:

**"Congratulations, keep moving."**

Actually, that is good advice for all of life, and for your Christian life as well.

If you've discovered the reality of God's love for yourself, you deserve congratulations, for in a very real sense, you have arrived...*but keep moving!* - there is so much *more* that God has in store for you! St Paul in 2<sup>nd</sup> Timothy said: "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. *Now there is in store for me* the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day...."

So, wherever *you* have reached in your own faith pilgrimage,  
***congratulations, but keep moving!***

*Canon Paul Hardingham continues a series on the spiritual disciplines that help us to grow and deepen our faith.*



## *Spiritual Practices: Solitude*

*'Solitude is a time when we withdraw from the company of others in order to give God our undivided attention' (John Ortberg).*

The spiritual discipline of *solitude* is about spending time alone with God, to grow in relationship with Him and hear Him more clearly. This practice was a priority in Jesus' life and ministry, especially at crucial moments eg' *Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where He prayed*' (Mark 1:35).

Solitude is not so much about what we *do* as what we *don't* do! If we want to hear God, we need to consciously shut out the external noise in our lives and focus on the quiet inside us. If we are honest, this can be a real struggle. We want to do it, but other things can so easily get in the way: distractions, tiredness, jobs that need doing, wandering thoughts etc. Solitude gives us an opportunity to enjoy God's presence, as somebody who we really want to spend time with.

Richard Foster (*'Celebration of Discipline'*) suggests some ways in which we might grow in this discipline:

*'Little solitudes'*: small everyday moments to seek inner silence eg, coffee times, travelling to work and time spent outside.

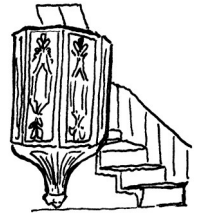
*Quiet place*: having specific places where we go be quiet, eg a room or special chair in our home.

*Retreat*: organising a retreat where we can have time in silence and solitude.

We need to plan carefully how we use our time with God, including silent listening, meditating on Scripture, prayer, journaling, taking a meditative walk, or listening to a worship CD.

*'If we possess inward solitude we do not fear being alone, for we know that we are not alone.'* (Richard Foster)

## *Reflecting Faith—the Pulpit*



The pulpit is one of the four most obvious pieces of 'furniture' in a church; the others being the lectern, altar and the font.

Today the pulpit is generally the place where the preacher stands to give the sermon during a service.

It is generally raised higher than the chairs or pews, so the preacher can be seen more easily by the congregation. Pulpits often have a 'sounding' board canopy above them, so that the words may 'resound' more audibly.

The pulpit may be simple or heavily ornamented; engraved with pictures and/or words in a creative manner. There are examples of some pulpits which require the preacher to climb up over a dozen steps to reach the preaching platform, while others have only five or six steps.

In Anglican churches they are likely to be situated between the nave, where the congregation sits, and the chancel, where the choir or church leaders sit. In Methodist chapels, pulpits are normally centrally placed, often above the altar.

Today pulpits are generally used just for preaching, but in bygone generations, it was used for all sorts of announcements. Without any microphones, it was better to use a raised area from which to address people.

So the pulpits were used not only by priests for preaching, but also by the churchwardens for notices. The pulpit was also where Marriage Banns were called, excommunications were pronounced, and indulgences were advertised.


In fact, pulpits were not much used for sermons before the Reformation! This is because the clergy in those days were required to preach a mere four times a year.

Most commonly, the pulpit was used for the bidding prayers. These, partly in English, were said for the leaders of the Church, the King, the governing orders, the people, special needs, and, finally, for those parishioners who had paid to have their names read out.

### *This month*

Have a close look at a pulpit in a church near you, and if possible, listen to a sermon being preached from it. What does both the pulpit itself and the sermon being said from it reflect about your faith?

# The tale of the Tower Builder



JESUS OFTEN TOLD  
STORIES WITH  
HIDDEN MEANINGS



ON ONE OCCASION JESUS  
EXPLAINED HOW IT WOULDN'T  
ALWAYS BE EASY TO FOLLOW HIM.



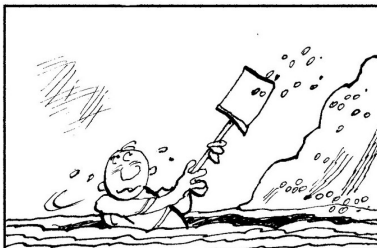
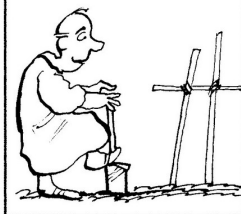
JESUS BEGAN, IF ONE OF YOU  
PLANS TO BUILD A TOWER....

...YOU'LL FIRST NEED TO  
WORK HOW MUCH IT WILL  
COST.



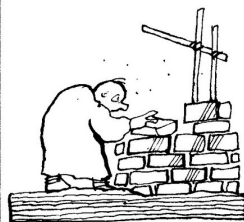
IF YOU DON'T DO THE SUMS....

...YOU MIGHT MAKE A  
START,....

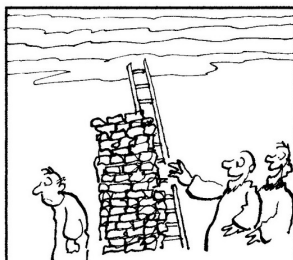
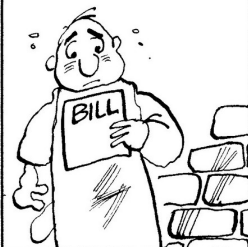


...WORK VERY HARD ON THE  
FOUNDATIONS. ....

...THEN START TO LAY  
THE BRICKS,...



...BUT SUDDENLY RUN OUT  
OF MONEY!!



THEN PEOPLE WILL LAUGH  
AT YOU!!



WE NEED TO REALISE THAT  
ALTHOUGH FOLLOWING  
JESUS IS THE RIGHT THING  
TO DO, IT'S ALSO A GREAT  
CHALLENGE.



## God's Garden

Plant three rows of peas:

Peas of mind  
Peas of heart  
Peas of soul

Plant three rows of squash:

Squash gossip  
Squash grumbling  
Squash selfishness

Plant three rows of lettuce:

Lettuce be faithful  
Lettuce be obedient  
Lettuce love one another

Plant three rows of turnips:

Turnip for services  
Turnip for meetings  
Turnip to help one another

Plant three rows of thyme:

Thyme for God  
Thyme for Bible study  
Thyme for prayer.

Finally –

Water freely with patience,  
Cultivate with love,  
And remember –  
you will only reap what you sow.





Some famous hymns of praise and thanksgiving were written in astonishing circumstances of pain and distress. 'Now Thank We All Our God' is no exception.

### *The story behind the HYMN:*

## *Now Thank We All Our God*

*Now thank we all our God  
With heart and hands and voices,  
Who wondrous things hath done,  
In whom His world rejoices;  
Who, from our mother's arms,  
Hath blessed us on our way  
With countless gifts of love,  
And still is ours today.*

*Oh may this bounteous God  
Through all our life be near us,  
With ever joyful hearts  
And blessed peace to cheer us;  
And keep us in His grace,  
And guide us when perplexed,  
And free us from all ills  
In this world and the next.*

*All praise and thanks to God  
The Father now be given,  
The Son, and Him who reigns  
With them in highest heaven,  
The one eternal God,  
Whom earth and heaven adore;  
For thus it was, is now,  
And shall be evermore.*

*By Martin Rinkart*

The joy and serenity of this hymn are staggering, when you learn the circumstances in which it was written. Martin Rinkart was a pastor at Eilenberg, Saxony, during the terrible Thirty Years' War (1618-1648).

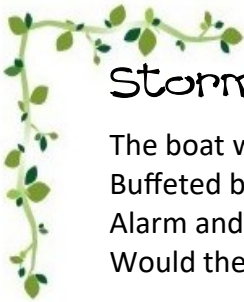
As a walled city, Eilenberg offered some protection to the inhabitants. No wonder that political and military refugees of all sorts poured into the city, making it dangerously overcrowded. Soon the water supply was fouled, the sanitation overwhelmed, and the food ran out – leaving people famished and diseased.

In 1637 a terrible pestilence swept through the city, killing some

8,000 people, including Rinkart's beloved wife. By that time Rinkart was the only minister left in Eilenberg, because the others had either died or fled for their lives. Rinkart alone conducted the burial services for 4480 people, sometimes taking as many as 40 to 50 funerals a day!

Eilenberge was besieged and overrun three times – once by the Austrian army and twice by the Swedes. When a Swedish general demanded the town pay him 30,000 thalers, Martin Rinkart pleaded that the impoverished city could never meet such a levy, but the general scorned him. At that, Rinkart turned to his companions and said: 'Come, my children, we can find no mercy with man; let us take refuge with God.' On his knees there and then, Rinkart led his friends in a fervent prayer and in the singing of a hymn. The Swedish commander was so moved that he decided that the levy be not 30,000 thalers, but instead 1,350 thalers.

Somehow, out of the hell of the Thirty Years War came this lovely hymn of peace and total trust in God. Martin Rinkart had had to dig deep into his faith to survive, and the result was utter, serene dependence on God – despite chaos and destruction all around.



## Storms of Life *By Megan Carter*

The boat was tossed from side to side  
Buffeted by the wind and rain,  
Alarm and panic filled their hearts  
Would they ever reach the shore again?

The sky was dark and looking out  
They thought they saw a ghost appear,  
Transfixed with horror, what could it be  
Treading on water and drawing near?

Their hearts were stilled as hope arose  
As they heard the voice of the One they knew,  
'Do not be afraid, this storm will pass'  
And the sea grew calm and the wind withdrew.

When storms of life assail our boat  
And our hearts are filled with dread and fear,  
Remember the One who treads the waves,  
He sees our plight – He's drawing near.



# Looking at the CHURCH Worldwide

## Churches burn in India

More than 100 churches have been burned down in the recent ethnic violence in Manipur, north-east India, according to a partner in India of the charity Open Doors. One report told of mobs also attacking Christian homes and burning them.

The number of dead and injured is difficult to verify, but the BBC has referred to official reports of 60 dead, 200 injured and tens of thousands displaced.

Clashes between the different ethnic groups in the state date back many years. More than half of the population are Meitei, a largely Hindu group. The two main tribal groups are Naga and Kuki, who are mostly Christian.

## Refugees in the UK – another story

**How are refugees who have come to the UK getting along?**

*This month we continue our short series, with another story from the Revd Stephen Crofts in Cheriton:*

Aziz came to us in the shadow of a friend, Habib, who was looking for a church to go to. They had fled Iran, because they dared support the unrest against the government in the days before the news broke about MahsaAmini – the young woman who died in prison after her arrest for wearing her hijab improperly.

They had both left families behind. One day Aziz told us his family had arrived elsewhere in the UK but the migration system didn't seem to want to reunite them. We leaned on a charity who knew what to do. It took some weeks, but they managed to reunite the family. The day he showed me the letter authorising his move, the last day we would see him, I spotted him turn to the altar, head bowed, tears flowing.

A week later, he sent us photos of himself with his family, a smile on his face I had never seen in his time with us. He has now found a church and is encouraging others join him.

## *Pray-over-the-phone service is looking for pray-ers. Could you help?*

Many years ago, a couple who listened to the UCB Christian radio station wanted to be able to offer prayer to any who wanted to receive it. They found some phone lines, shared the number, and people began to call. Many years later, UCB now receives hundreds of calls every day and more than 100,000 a year. Since Covid the number has increased.

All kinds of people call up. Many ask for a prayer for healing. Others want prayer for a difficult situation or relationship. Some are in a crisis or are lonely. Some want to share an answer to prayer. Some have mental health challenges and need compassion and support. Some want prayer for faith.

Prayerline volunteers give a couple of hours a week, and are set up with a simple system from home so that they can be available for any who call. They are supported by a team at UCB's main office in Stoke. You may have prayed for a friend, or for someone at church. Or you may have had someone pray for you. It can make a tremendous difference in people's lives.

Like the Samaritans, there is training and a selection process, so that those answering the phone are able to listen well to the complexities and vulnerabilities of different personal situations. But unlike the Samaritans, it is not a counselling service. It simply offers prayers using verses from Scripture.

Those who have volunteered have said it has helped them give hope and solace to callers, grow in their use of Scripture in prayer, be stretched and trained in their spiritual life and found a network with the same calling and compassion. One said this: "I have been a Prayerline volunteer for a number of years. I have received far more than I have given."

- ♦ If you know someone who would benefit from calling Prayerline, the number is 01782 36 3000
- ♦ *If you would be interested in finding out more about volunteering with Prayerline, or you know someone who might be interested, go to: [www.ucb.co.uk/pray](http://www.ucb.co.uk/pray)*



## *Life-changing Audio Bibles for people with sight loss*

At the end of 2021, Torch took “a leap of faith” and ordered 1,000 Pathway audio Bible players containing the New Testament and Psalms read by the actor David Suchet.

Knowing the power of Scripture to change lives, they planned to “give these Bibles for free to anyone in the UK losing their sight. 16 months later, all of these Bible players have been sent out and the stories coming back are so amazing that Torch has ordered 1,000 more.”

Gayle-Ann told us “It is my friend...with me wherever, it is just so convenient. I have read the New Testament, but the way this is read is just easily understood”.

Kenneth wouldn't have called himself a Christian, and hasn't enjoyed audio books, but ‘I like listening to the Pathway. I'm really listening to the New Testament now, not just odd verses. I'm realising what it all means.’

Losing sight can be a time of real questioning and searching, so what better gift can a newly blind person receive than the Word of God?

Torch is encouraging anyone who is living with sight loss to contact them for a free audio Bible at [www.torchtrust.org/pathway](http://www.torchtrust.org/pathway) , or by calling 01858 438260.

Most of the first 1,000 players were sponsored by individuals, churches or trusts. Torch is also seeking people to donate £20 to cover the cost of sending out one of the new audio Bibles.





# From the Dragon's Den

Until Covid struck it has always been our practice to allow any Little Dragon who is celebrating a birthday to choose either George, Uncle Sam or Idris to hold during story time and until the end of the day's session.

Now that life is safer – somewhat – 'we three' are up for grabs for the birthday child. How lovely it was this last week to see Uncle Sam being wheeled up and down the aisle and round the West End Room, cosily enjoying a ride in the pram, complete with pretty pillow and eiderdown. He looked very content and, no doubt, George and Idris were very envious. A little while later, Uncle Sam was enjoying a ride on a tricycle, carefully held in position by his proud carer-for-the-day, who was enjoying her 3<sup>rd</sup> birthday treat.

How we enjoy little treats which help to make our day special. I wonder what your choice of treat would be!

Joy to everyone, from Val and from we three:



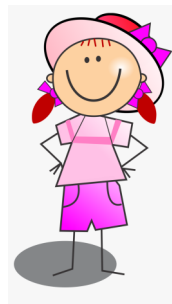
George,



Uncle Sam



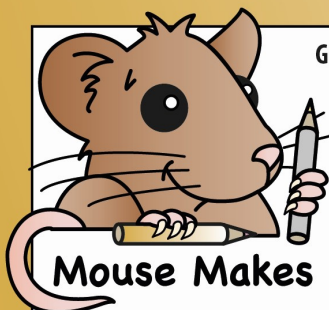
& Idris



We spend most of our lives conjugating three verbs:  
to want, to have and to do.

But none of these verbs has any ultimate significance until it is transcended  
by and included in the fundamental verb – **to be**.

*– Evelyn Underhill. English writer.*



## Mouse Makes

Where did Goliath  
come from?



1 Samuel 17:4

How tall was Goliath?



\_\_\_\_\_ cubits.  
1 Samuel 17:4

What was Goliath's  
armour made of?

1 Samuel 17:5,6

What weapons did  
Goliath carry?

a JAVELIN,

a \_\_\_\_\_

and a \_\_\_\_\_

1 Samuel 17:45

How many stones  
did David take from  
the stream?



1 Samuel 17:40



Where did David's stone  
hit Goliath? On his

1 Samuel 17:49

**Goliath**, the champion of the Philistine army, taunted the Israelites.  
"Choose a man to fight with me and if he kills me  
then we will be your servants!"



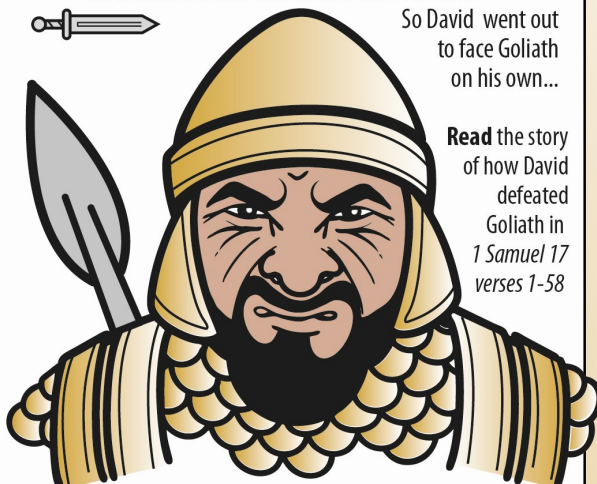
The Israelites were afraid, but **David**, a shepherd boy who had  
come to bring food to his brothers on the battlefield said:

"The **Lord** who delivered me from the lion and bear  
will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine."



So David went out  
to face Goliath  
on his own...

Read the story  
of how David  
defeated  
Goliath in  
1 Samuel 17  
verses 1-58



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

ISRAEL • SAUL • DAVID • LORD • GOD • PHILISTINES • BATTLE • CAMP  
CHAMPION • GOLIATH • HELMET • ARMOUR • JAVELIN • SHIELD • FIGHT • BEAR  
LION • SHEPHERD • STAFF • STONES • BAG • SLING • STRUCK • HIT • FELL • GROUND





*From Bishop Richard of Hereford*

Dear Friends,

June marked the 25th anniversary of Refugee Week (19 – 25<sup>th</sup> June). People were invited to celebrate what compassion looks like in action so, I was proud to support the launch of a fundraising campaign, set up by our Diocesan Mothers Union. They are supporting those who are seeking asylum who are currently housed at The Three Counties Hotel in Hereford. They are raising cash to offer each person the dignity of choosing basic clothing items.

Asylum Seekers are the real face of refugees in our midst – ‘the stranger.’ They flee their countries of origin often in fear, searching for something better, the freedom to live and eventually contribute through work. They find themselves in a strange place, reliant on the mercy and generosity of others – us.

I was reminded how vulnerable we are when we rely on the generosity of others during my recent visit to Nuremberg. The kindness and generosity of my hosts were gratefully received, and I am thankful for our strong links of friendship with the German diocese of Nuremberg which have stood the test of time for over 30 years.

I was there, visiting the Evangelical Lutheran Churches biennial Kirchentag. Despite being post-Brexit, I was warmly welcomed, and Bishop Elizabeth and her husband made our stay easy. Even with our different languages, cultures and histories, we are genuinely brothers and sisters through our shared faith in Jesus Christ.

It is a healthy part of Christian discipleship to get out of our comfort zone. To be in Germany, a country I am not that familiar with, forced a certain dependence. My hosts gave me accommodation, fed me and provided a huge amount of inside information to help enrich my stay.

There is a rich tradition of such Christian hospitality going back to the earliest times, particularly to foreigners and strangers. In Deuteronomy 10 we read, *“the great God mighty and awesome, who shows no partiality and accepts no bribes. He defends the cause of the fatherless and the widow and loves the foreigner residing among you, giving them food and clothing. And you are to love those who are foreigners, for you, yourself were foreigners in Egypt.”*

We have an opportunity to offer such hospitality to people who have arrived in our midst and live out the commandment in Deuteronomy 10. The writer of Deuteronomy doesn’t speculate on whether the foreigners were smuggled into Israel slung under a camel. The sole criterion to help was the need.

I am very proud of our Diocesan Mothers Union who are seeking to provide support to our refugee friends. You can still give to the clothing appeal by arranging a retiring collection at a service and donating the proceeds online, or if you can donate directly, please give what you can. All the details are on the website. Please be generous.



## Deanery of Pontesbury

### DEANERY NEWS

Rural Dean: **The Revd Bill Rowell**

telephone: 01938 552064 • email: [wkrowell@btinternet.com](mailto:wkrowell@btinternet.com)

### *THOUGHT FOR THE MONTH FROM: Revd Graham Phillips*

How are your prayers going? Bishop Richard has declared this to be a year of prayer for the Hereford Diocese, and as we are half-way through the year (yes, my friends when you read this the longest day will have happened!) it is a good time to take a pause, reflect and evaluate how we are doing. The Revd Bill Rowell wrote in the January magazine that he was hoping to spend more time listening to God, Mark Hackney in February encouraged us to worship with the Gathering at Marton Village Hall on the last Tuesday of each month (it is a very special time). Last month Pam Bickley encouraged us to dance - I did a dance workshop on the Diocesan prayer day at Craven Arms and found it very worshipful and engaging - there is a group that meets in Shrewsbury and I commend it to you. (Ask me for details.)

During this year I am following up my 30 day retreat with further days learning more about the Ignatian way of life - it is so rich and full of wisdom. Yet I need to be disciplined to follow it through - there is always something to distract me, some tasks that must be done and even tasks that I do that actually turn out not to be necessary - is that your experience too? In previous years I have picked up the leaves outside our boundary fence along the public footpath that runs into Longden school playing field but this year I did not have time and to my delight they are rotting down very quickly. A lesson learnt and a reminder to let go of the 'oughts' in my life. I wonder what 'oughts' keep you from engaging more deeply with God?

The story of Mary and Martha (Luke 10.38-42) reminds me of the need to be intentionally focussed on Jesus. Can you do that? Can you commit the time to do that? My experience is that when we do God always turns up. During this year, The Revd Nick Helm is offering a Week of accompanied prayer - this starts with an introduction and then each person meets with a spiritual guide 2 or 3 times in the week. Bishop Richard has written that when he was an incumbent, those who did this found it to be the most significant week in their spiritual journey to date.

Do contact Nick on [nick@hereford.anglican.org](mailto:nick@hereford.anglican.org) to arrange it. Make that or one of the other encouragements your intentional time with Jesus. May God meet with you in this year of prayer.

## *Our Stiperstones Benefice COMMUNITY* *with 'Bits & Pieces' from Greg and others ...*

We have welcomed **Revd Fran Brealey** to our Pontesbury and Stiperstones group of churches. Her ministry will be mainly with the Shelve/Hope churches and her regular days off will be Monday, Friday and Saturday.

Our curate Revd **Richard Lonsdale** will be ordained priest at Hereford Cathedral on Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> July at 10 am.

**Westbury Summer Fete.** Saturday 1st July 2pm.

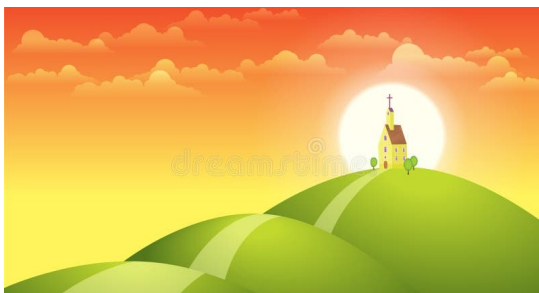
The **annual service at Mitchell's Fold Stone Circle:** Sunday 2nd July, 6.00 pm (Stapeley Common, Middleton-in-Chirbury parish).

**Ichthus Bible study**—2.30pm on 4th July at Brookfield, Waterwheel.  
Study this week is Matthew 11:16-19,25-30 and Romans 7:15-25.

**Summer evening concert and Supper** – Saturday 8 July 7.30pm at Middleton Church, Priestweston. Music for strings including Vivaldi, Smetana & Holst. Tickets cost £15 from 01938 561245 – 03330 144051 or on the door.

**Trelystan fete:** One of the best traditional country fetes around - Saturday 22nd July, 2.00 pm in the grounds of St Mary's, Trelystan.

**The Gathering.** The last Tuesday of every month in Marton Village Hall, an evening of praise and worship. 7pm refreshments for a 7.30pm start.



# Looking at you

## *How to keep young, as you grow older*

When the US President Joe Biden announced that he was running for re-election, many of us thought he was too old. He will be 86 by the end of 2028. Trump will be 82. How could either of them run the United States at such an age?

The argument about Biden and Trump will doubtless carry on, but meanwhile, there is some encouragement for the rest of us who are ageing.

A 2012 study by the University of Edinburgh found that only about a quarter of the cognitive changes that occur as we age are determined by genetics. The other three quarters are based on our life-style choices.

**Firstly**, choose to **exercise**. When you exercise in any way, you are not just making your body fit, you are also improving your brain health. This is because exercise promotes the release of a cell-making protein in the brain called BDNF (brain-derived neurotrophic factor), which is linked to learning and memory.

**Secondly**, choose to retain a sense of **control and purpose** in your life. We can't all influence world politics, but we can each of us can act for the general good of the people around us. In 2022, researchers in the US found that people who have a greater sense of purpose in life not only live longer, but have fewer health problems, including depression, blood pressure problems and heart attacks.

**Thirdly**, choose to set yourself some **realistic personal goals**, no matter how small. Research shows that setting a goal – even just to lose weight, or tidy the garden, can make you feel immediately more worthwhile.

**Fourthly**, choose to keep spending **time with other people**. Remaining sociable in old age is vital – we are social animals and really do need those meaningful relationships.

**Fifthly**, choose to follow activities that allow you to **keep learning** – perhaps take up a hobby such gardening, or even begin a foreign language.

# *Looking at the wider COMMUNITY*

Two articles from *Tim Lenton, our community reporter ...*

## *In appreciation of William Byrd*

Four hundred years ago, on 4<sup>th</sup> July 1623, William Byrd, the English Renaissance composer, died. Regarded as one of the greatest of all British composers, he is best known for his sacred music.

However, he wrote in many of the forms current in England at the time, and his many-faceted but unique music is still popular today, having received a resurgence of enthusiasm in the past century.

Byrd was born into a musical and quite wealthy London merchant family, and became a pupil of Thomas Tallis at the Chapel Royal, whose mainly vocal music has also survived to the present day.

Byrd became a Roman Catholic in the 1570s, when it was dangerous to do so, but he was so admired by the music-loving Queen Elizabeth that she gave him protection. Even so, he was still fined heavily for refusal to attend Anglican services – as was his wife Juliana Birley, with whom he had a long marriage, producing at least seven children.

Byrd did compose sacred music for Anglican services – two of his pieces were used in the Coronation service this year. His total output of about 470 compositions were distinctive, but he raised church anthems and the Anglican service setting to new heights, together with consort songs – some perhaps using the poems of Norfolk landowner Sir Edward Paston.

Despite being in some ways an awkward man, frequently involved in legal disputes, he was respected by musicians and non-musicians alike, known for his integrity and loyalty. He died at an advanced age (no-one is sure of his birth date) at the London home of the Earl of Worcester.

## *75 years of the National Health Service*

It was 75 years ago, on 5<sup>th</sup> July 1948, that the National Health Service (NHS) began operating – formally opened at the Park Hospital in Manchester, now renamed Trafford General.

The National Health Service Act provided for the establishment of a comprehensive health service for England and Wales. (Separate

legislation was produced for Scotland and Northern Ireland.)

The Minister of Health at the time was Labour firebrand Aneurin Bevan, but the NHS came into being through the efforts of many others as well – notably Conservative Sir Henry Willink, who was Minister of Health in the Coalition government in 1944. His White Paper laid down all the basic elements of an NHS – that no-one was excluded, and that healthcare was free and based on need, not the ability to pay.

But the origins of the NHS went back many years, starting perhaps in the early 1900s, with socialist Beatrice Webb's Minority Report of the Royal Commission on the Poor Law. It aimed to get away from the workhouse system, where those with no resources were expected to look after themselves. The report was dismissed by the Liberal government.

Strong ideas in the same vein had also come from biochemist Dr Benjamin Moore, from Liverpool, who is also credited with first use of the words "National Health Service". A novel called *The Citadel* by D J Cronin (also a doctor) drew attention to the inadequacies of health care at the time of its publication in 1937.

In the end, the NHS was based to a large extent on the Beveridge Report, published in 1942. William Beveridge was a Liberal politician, economist and social reformer who also had a strong interest in eugenics – the aim of improving the human race by controlling reproduction.



## Diabetes timebomb: NHS to offer 'soup and shakes' diet

The NHS is to roll out a 'soup and shakes' diet across the UK, aimed at the tens of thousands of patients who are fighting Type 2 diabetes.

Health officials said every part of the country will be offering the regime by next March, as the NHS tries to tackle what has been

called Britain's 'diabetes timebomb'.

Pilot schemes report an average of two stone in weight loss in three months. Clinical trials seem to show that this will be enough to reverse about half of diabetes cases. The 'soups and shakes' diet is a 'total diet replacement' product, which aims to deliver 800 to 900 calories a day for 12 weeks.

Professor Jonathan Valabhji, the NHS England's national clinical director for diabetes and obesity, says: "Research is clear that weight loss, where indicated, goes a long way to helping people stay well and avoiding preventable illness, and in many cases, it can be the trigger for putting Type 2 diabetes into remission.

## *The sweet smell of rain*

Have you ever noticed the sweet, fresh smell after a downpour of rain? That 'smell of rain' is called petrichor, and it fascinates scientists.



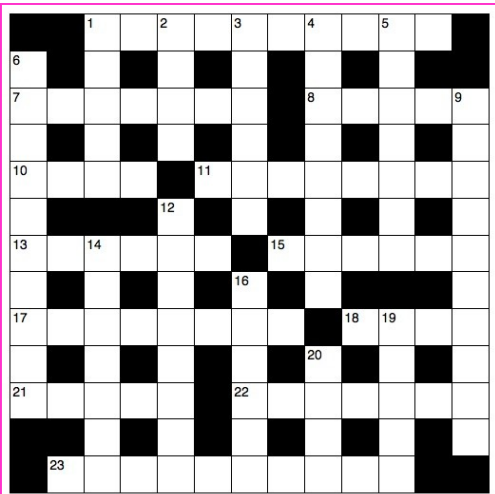
It was back in 1965 that scientists first named it. Petrichor comes from the Greek for stone, 'petra', and the golden fluid flowing through the veins of the immortals, 'ichor'.

Petrichor is produced when raindrops form air pockets on the rocks and soil, and softly force the release of aromatic chemicals trapped there. The petrichor-scented compounds drift upwards into the atmosphere as a gas, like a glass of champagne.

The odour itself comes mainly from a chemical called geosmin, which is made by bacteria in soil. Geosmin is made by soil microbes, to fend off hungry worms. Geosmin is highly pungent, and even just five parts per trillion can be picked up by the human nose.



# Your PUZZLES for July



## Across

- 1 Relating to the Jewish day of rest (10)  
 7 Point of view (Matthew 22:17) (7)  
 8 20th-century Brethren philanthropist whose construction company became one of the UK's biggest, Sir John — (5)  
 10 Girl's name (4)  
 11 Peter was accused of being one in the courtyard of the high priest's house (Luke 22:59) (8)  
 13 The fifth of the 'seven churches' (Revelation 3:1-6) (6)  
 15 'Now the famine was — in Samaria' (1 Kings 18:2) (6)

- 17 Banned by the seventh Commandment (Exodus 20:14) (8)  
 18 Insect most closely associated with itching (1 Samuel 24:14) (4)  
 21 Bantu tribe which gives its name to tiny landlocked country in southern Africa (5)  
 22 Familiar material in churches that use an overhead projector (7)  
 23 Last book of the Bible (10)

## Down

- 1 The young David's favourite weapon (1 Samuel 17:40) (5)  
 2 'Your vats will — over with new wine' (Proverbs 3:10) (4)  
 3 Once yearly (Exodus 30:10) (6)  
 4 Milled it (anag.) (3-5)  
 5 Region north of Damascus of which Lysanias was tetrarch (Luke 3:1) (7)  
 6 Comes between Philippians and 1 Thessalonians (10)  
 9 Lake where the first disciples were called (Luke 5:1-11) (10)  
 12 Abusive outburst (8)  
 14 Are loud (anag.) (7)  
 16 Printing errors (6)  
 19 'Take my yoke upon you and — from me' (Matthew 11:29) (5)  
 20 Jacob's third son (Genesis 29:34) (4)

**ACROSS:** 1, Sabbatical, 7, Opinion, 8, Laing, 10, Olga, 11, Gallilean, 13, Sardis, 15, Severe, 17, Adultery, 18, Flea, 21, Swazi, 22, Acetate, 23, Revelation.  
**DOWN:** 1, Sling, 2, Brim, 3, Annual, 4, Ill-timed, 5, Abilene, 6, Colossians, 9, Gennesaret, 12, Diatribe, 14, Roulade, 16, Errata, 19, Learn, 20, Levi.

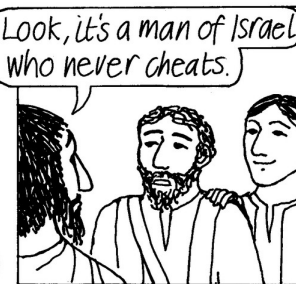
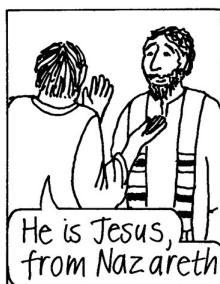
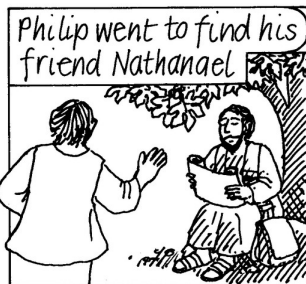


# Bible Bite

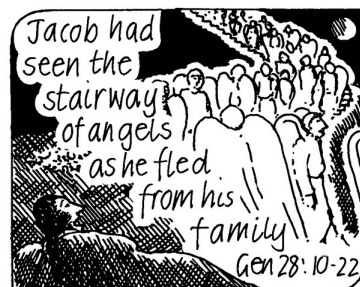
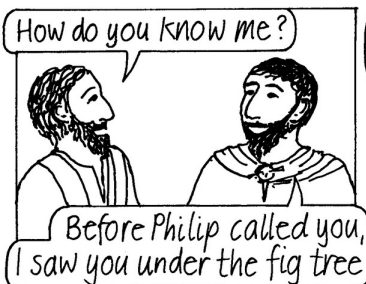
## A short story from the Bible

It can be read in the Bible in  
John chapter 1 verses 35 - 51

After Jesus had called Peter and  
Andrew to be his disciples, he went  
to find their friend Philip...



Background: the ancestor  
of the Israelites was Jacob,  
whose name meant 'Grasper'  
or 'Cheat', and who cheated  
his father and brother. God  
gave him a new start and  
a new name - Israel -  
'Prince of God'. Gen 25, 27, 32





Come and See ... Bible Bite Wordsearch grid

f	m	l	p	c	k	h	j	q	t	x	m
i	s	o	n	o	t	d	b	a	g	a	g
g	i	p	r	m	p	o	e	n	c	o	d
x	s	a	r	e	o	h	l	g	o	o	d
n	t	x	b	i	c	s	i	e	z	t	b
n	a	t	h	a	n	a	e	l	g	g	j
k	i	z	d	u	a	c	v	s	i	j	e
i	r	s	a	f	r	i	e	n	d	p	s
n	w	i	s	r	a	e	l	h	g	e	u
g	a	l	s	h	e	a	v	e	n	s	s
p	y	l	j	c	y	t	r	e	e	b	b
k	v	y	p	r	o	p	h	e	t	e	n

- |          |           |        |
|----------|-----------|--------|
| come     | good      | fig    |
| stairway | prophet   | more   |
| tree     | Nazareth  | Prince |
| son      | Nathanael | Jacob  |
| Moses    | friend    | angels |
| Philip   | King      | God    |
| cheat    | silly     | Jesus  |
| believe  | Israel    | heaven |

# God in the SCIENCES

Written by Dr Ruth M. Bancewicz, Church Engagement  
Director at The Faraday Institute for Science and Religion in Cambridge.

## *A Scientist Reflects: Suffering and the Image of God*

During the cost-of-living crisis, Food Banks have become a necessity for many desperate families. When they are given food, people reveal a variety of emotions: from relief, happiness, and hope, to quiet sadness, resignation, and desperation. Most often they display a mixture of several of these feelings at the same time.

I believe that our cries for answers at times like this, and our deep longing for things to be better, kinder, more just, less painful and chaotic, are a sign that we are made in the image of God. The Bible describes God creating men and women, instructing them to rule over the earth, and giving them the freedom to choose what they will do. The world God made was described as “very good”, but human wrongdoing caused a rift between people and God, and also between us and the rest of creation.

From a scientist’s perspective, it seems that the *potential* for accidents, disease and death – for both animals and humans – may have been part of God’s very good creation, and there was a real threat of famine, albeit far rarer than in our current mismanaged version of creation? How would we have managed life in what Genesis describes as an un-subdued world if our relationship with God hadn’t broken down, and evil hadn’t been unleashed? Maybe painful experiences would have been experienced as challenges that brought us closer to each other and to God, rather than bringing us the experience of suffering (which I would define more particularly as involving distress, isolation and fear)? Of course, these are theoretical questions that no one can answer, but perhaps they are worth exploring.

God has already responded to suffering at a root level by taking it on Himself. Through His death and resurrection, Jesus broke the power of sin and death. We do not yet see the final results of those decisive actions – the end of suffering for all those who trust Him – but we can already feel their impact. For example, many people have experienced the wonderful effect, either in their own lives or by receiving kindness from others, which is described by these words: “I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I

will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh" (Ezekiel 36:26).

Some of the people who receive food are, in the words of one community leader, "really desperate", but yet they still trust God to meet their needs. My hope is that the worldwide Church will, with God's help, be part of the answer to their prayers – demonstrating our true status as people made in the image of God.

## God in the ARTS

Michael Burgess continues his look at great works of Christian art. You can see the image described by googling 'Herdsman with Cows by a River' by Albert Cuyp or going to <http://www.nationalgallery.org.uk/paintings/aelbert-cuyp-a-herdsman-with-five-cows-by-a-river>.

*'He gave us eyes to see them':*

*'Herdsman with Cows by a River' by Albert Cuyp*

'What is this life, if full of care, we have no time to stand and stare?'

Those words of W H Davies provide the theme for this year. The paintings chosen celebrate creation in all its wonder and diversity, and we are encouraged to take time to look anew and so become aware of the author of that creation. But this month it is the other way around as we sense the animals looking at us in 'Herdsman with Cows by a River' painted in 1650 by the Dutch artist, Albert Cuyp.

It is a very ordinary scene of nature. Yet there is a radiance and a tranquillity that strike us as we see the herd of cows standing in the still waters. Around them there is a lot of movement: birds fly in the sky, boats are sailing off into the sunset and two fishermen are busy at their work to the left of the canvas. But the cows and their herdsman are quiet and contented, relishing this moment of the day closing, and contemplating the world going by. And two of those cows seem to be looking out into our own world. In many of Albert Cuyp's paintings the sun bathes each scene in a golden

light. Here the clouds are gathering in the sky as the sun sinks down in the west, but there is still a glowing calmness brought by the light of the sky above.

In this month of July we are probably planning holidays. Some holidays can be a frenetic rush, others are those occasions when we simply sit back and relax, letting what we see around us bring refreshment and renewal. It is the way we are encouraged to savour the joy and delight of Scripture in what is called *lectio divina*. Monastic teachers compared it to cows grazing in the field. They pointed to four stages: *Lectio* – we take a bite of scripture; *Meditatio* – we chew on that word; *Oratio* – we savour its flavour and nourishment; and *Contemplatio* – we digest its goodness to feed body and soul.

The herd of cows in Albert Cuyp's painting have spent the day doing just that – grazing and ruminating in the fields nearby. The herdsman has brought them to the river to relax in the water. Soon they will take the journey home to the farm and the safety of the cowshed. Tomorrow will bring them the opportunity to graze anew in the gift of another day. Walt Whitman wrote in one of his poems, 'I think I could turn and live with animals, they are so placid and self-contain'd, I stand and look at them long and long.' As we stand and look at the cows in this painting, perhaps we may realise that whether at work or on holiday, in Sunday worship or Bible reading at home, God can feed us through His world around and in His word in Scripture. As long as we take the time and the care to savour the delights that He offers us.





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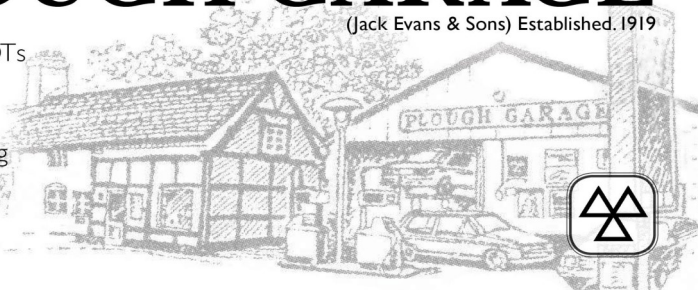
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