

Saints ALIVE

The magazine of:
All Saints, Leighton Buzzard
St. Nicholas, Hockliffe
St. Michael's, Eggington
St. Michael and All Angels,
Billington
The Good Shepherd, Sandhills

February 2024

70p

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The Coffee Shop
needs you

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at 7pm in aid of ASPT



All Saints Leighton Buzzard

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In Vacancy

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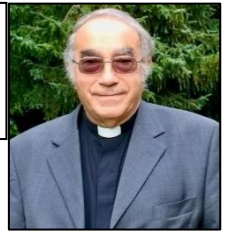
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Lent - Think positive

by Canon Malcolm Grant



The traditional approach to Lent often seems to be depressing: dull violet frontals and vestments, no flowers in church, statues, pictures and ornaments covered, and often the music we use, all tend to drag the mood down. If Easter falls in March (as it does this year), we start Lent in the dark, short days of winter, which adds a further sombre tint to everything. And it's all encapsulated in the challenge to "give up something for Lent".

Lent is meant to be a challenge to all of us to grow to be (a little) more like Jesus. That's the main objective. Jesus's call to discipleship is always "Follow me", with the double meaning of "come with me" and "imitate me". But we are so easily distracted, discouraged and weak-willed that we need the help of others to keep us on the right path: that's why we have this corporate effort. If you are aware of some weakness in your own life, some harmful habit, or a tendency to do what you know is wrong, then Lent is an obvious opportunity to do something to address the problem, while being able to draw encouragement from the knowledge that other people you know will be doing something similar.

It is always better to have a positive focus to inspire you, so start by identifying what you want to achieve, and how you plan to attain it. Don't give up sweets or chocolates or cakes simply as a begrudging act of self-denial, but rather as a way of losing weight, or as an element in adopting a healthier life-style, or of saving money to give to a deserving cause. Have a clear goal to aim for and avoid the obvious occasions of temptation – otherwise the lure of the sweets will just grow stronger and stronger.

Even better is to focus on taking up a worthwhile new project, rather than just giving up a "naughty pleasure". Could you do more to help other people – family, neighbours, volunteer to help a charity – even at the cost of missing a favourite television programme? Are you aware of a local need which is looking for help? – then, why not give it a try?

Some folk find it helpful to read a suitable book during Lent to gain new insights and deepen our understanding – or join others in a discussion group to explore contemporary issues. You could always ask your priest to recommend something.

Embrace Lent as an opportunity for growth – that's why a positive attitude is helpful. It is a gift of time to help us grow closer to Jesus – and what could be a better goal than that?

Have a good Lent – enjoy it, rather than just endure it!

Canon Malcolm.

Our present pattern of services across the Ouzel Valley Team

All Saints

Sundays:

8am Holy Communion

9.30am Parish Eucharist

11.30am (usual pattern but can vary occasionally)

1st Sunday: Messy Mass

3rd Sunday: All Age Service

2nd & 4th Sunday: Holy Baptism

6pm Evening Prayer

1st Sunday: Choral Evensong Plus

3rd Sunday: Sung with hymns

(NO choir) followed by Benediction

2nd & 4th Sunday: Said Evensong

Weekdays:

Holy Communion

7.30pm Tuesday

(Service of Healing on 3rd Tuesday)

10.00am Thursday

9.00am Saturday

St. Barnabas, Linslade

Sundays:

8am Said Eucharist

10am Parish Eucharist

6pm Evensong

www.stbarnabaslinslade.uk

St. Leonard's, Heath & Reach

Sundays:

8am: Holy Communion

11am Holy Communion (in church & via Zoom)

1st Sundays: Family Service

Tuesdays: 7pm Holy Communion

Morning Prayer via Zoom:

9.00am Monday - Saturday

www.saintleonardschurch.com

St. Michael's, Eggington

9.30am 1st & 3rd Sundays: Holy Communion

St. Nicholas', Hockliffe

9.30am 2nd Sundays: Family Communion

4th Sundays: Holy Communion

St. Michael's and All Angels, Billington

11.15am Holy Communion

Good Shepherd, Astral Park Sports & Community Centre, Johnson Drive, Sandhills, LU7 4AY:

Sundays at 9.45am:

1st Sunday: Holy Communion & CGS Juniors

2nd Sunday: 'In the Community', at Astral Park

3rd Sunday: Family Service

4th Sunday: Bring and share breakfast and Holy Communion

Free pop-up café every Sunday from 9.45am

Sunday Saints: for age 3+ year olds, meets during 9.30am Sunday service at All Saints.

All Saints Toddler Time: All Saints every Wednesday during term time, at 9.30am & at 1.30pm. £1.50 per parent / carer & child; 50p extra per child; refreshments included.

Leighton Young Singers Club: for children in Years 2-6, meets on Fridays at 6.30 - 7.30pm.

Bereavement Café: a support group offering friendship and understanding.

1st Sunday of the month, 2.30-4pm The Spire Coffee Shop, All Saints

Choir Practice: Friday evenings, 6.45 trebles; 7.30 adults.

Bellringers: Practice on Monday, 7.30 - 9.30pm.

Spire Coffee Shop: Tuesday, Friday & Saturday 10am - 2pm.

Contact Details on Page 2.

News Roundup

Have you renewed your Saints Alive subscription yet? If not, Stephen Jury would be pleased to hear from you. Subscriptions are being held at last year's price (£7), except for those who receive it by post (£16 to cover the 75p stamps, envelopes and labels. The cost of postage is now being increased twice a year).

*** **

Please remember there is a scheme in place with regard to meeting the Religious Affiliation criteria in support of an application to Pulford School. Please collect a pack from the office. For more information, please speak to either Mother Kirsty, Lindsay Bevis or Jo Waller.



Worth a smile

While we were working at a men's clothing store, a customer asked my colleague to help her pick out a tie that would make her husband's blue eyes stand out. "Ma'am," he explained, "any tie will make blue eyes stand out, if you tie it tight enough."



Grandchildren don't make a man feel old; it's the knowledge that he's married to a grandmother.



Last night our WiFi stopped working, so I had to spend a few hours with my family. They seem like good people.



I like long walks, especially when taken by people who annoy me.



A wife texted her husband on a cold winter morning: "Windows frozen." Her husband texted back: "Pour some lukewarm water over it." The wife texted back five minutes later: "Computer's completely not working now."



A little girl became restless as the preacher's sermon dragged on and on. Finally, she leaned over to her mother and whispered, "Mummy, if we give him some money now, will he let us go?"



Nothing ruins your Friday like realising it's only Wednesday.



"Next Sunday I think I'll do a new take on the Parable of the Virgins and the Oil."

Parish Registers

Holy Matrimony, December:

No Weddings

'Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate'

Holy Baptism, December:

No Baptisms

'One Lord, one faith, one baptism'

R.I.P. December:

1: Evelyn Amos at Crownhill; 14: Canon John Payne-Cook at All Saints; 18: Heather Morgan at Berton; 21: Gary Hargreaves at All Saints; 29: Brian Willett at All Saints

'Everyone who lives and believes in me will never die'

Years Mind, February:

1: Christopher Blackbird Taylor, Trevor Lunnon; 3: Frank Audas; 4: Ted Summerfield; 6: Thomas Nash; 7: Annie Turney, Yiu To Lau, Lilian Baines; 9: George Waudby; 11: Stanley Boyce, Doreen Perry, Cyril Hyde; 12: Frederick Bester; 13: Mary Yirrell; 14: John Olds, Ida Kempson; 15: Nina Bolton, Winifred Turner, Gillian Marchant, Cyril Cawood; 17: Joan Bloxham; 18: Bessie Scraggs; 20: Frank Bates; 21: Pamela Gilbert, Ivy Wood, Margaret Marsh; 23: Dorothy Collor, Lilian Cowley, Madge Vincent, Denver Child; 26: Elsie Bates, Peggy King, Irene Scott; 27: Tom Skevington, Ivy Francis



LEIGHTON BUZZARD MUSIC

LIVE PROFESSIONAL CONCERTS

Leighton Buzzard Library Theatre, Lake St, LB. LU7 1RX

Saturday 10th February 2024 at 7.30pm

ARTESIAN STRING QUARTET

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(Making Music Selected Artists)

Programme :

Fanny Hensel (née Mendelssohn) Quartet

Webern: Langsamer Satz

Caroline Shaw: Punctum

Haydn: Quartet in F, Op 50 No5

Please note: Book via TicketSource or at the door.

Please see links on the website, www.lbmusic.co.uk

Leighton Buzzard Music is a registered charity no: 1183681



Pulford VA Lower School

Head Teacher: Rev'd Dave Heather, MBE

Office Manager: Mrs Alison Quick

Tel: 01525 372188

Website: www.pulfordschool.org

A church school for
a whole community



The start of any New Year brings with it moments of peace and reflection of the year that has passed before, as well as hopes and prayers for the year ahead. At Pulford School, we have much on which to reflect from what was an exceptionally busy period in the run up to Christmas.

Mrs Major wrote about the scheduled programme of Christmas activities in the December/January edition. In addition to these wonderful moments of celebration, the school was subject to its first Ofsted inspection in 13 years and a Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) conducted by the Church of England Education Office, which both took place in the same week in November 2023. Needless to say, the demands on staff at Pulford were acute, but we were all so delighted with the outcomes of both inspections!

Both inspections found that our school is a great place to learn. As a governor, and parent, I was particularly delighted to read in Ofsted's report:

"The school values of faith, hope and love permeate the school and underpin everything it does. Pupils see the school as a family that they are all part of. Anyone new to the school gets a warm welcome and quickly feels part of the 'family'. Pupils are kind and supportive to each other".

The SIAMS report had very similar conclusions, finding that:

"the school's biblically rooted Christian vision guides and directs all aspects of its work. It is the golden thread by which all its actions are planned evaluated and adapted.... Strong links with the local parish church means the children's [collective worship] is shared in both places, further strengthening community links."

Both reports can be found on the Pulford School website (www.pulfordschool.org) should you wish to read the findings in more detail.

And so in marking this New Year, on the first anniversary of my appointment as a Foundation Governor at the School, I take this moment to reflect on how proud I am of our school and the tireless work of its staff, who give so much of themselves for the pupils and the wider community. And I hope and pray that in the midst of the daily challenges we all face, that moments of joy, celebration and wonder as told through the Christmas story and demonstrated in the findings of both our inspections lift us all.

Emma Daniel

The SIAMS report also says: Pre-school pupils enjoy singing 'Allelujah' – as indeed they should. We join with them – well done to all at Pulford.

Allelujah indeed. [Ed.]



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On a musical note.....



The story of Allegri's Miserere by Ed. Newton-Rex

How Mozart, the Vatican, and centuries of mistakes resulted in one of the greatest pieces of music ever written.

In 1638, a singer in the Sistine Chapel Choir composed a setting of Psalm 51 to be sung there during Holy Week. That singer was Gregorio Allegri, and his setting, now commonly known as *Miserere*, is one of the most beautiful pieces of music ever written.

But not only is the version we sing today significantly different from Allegri's original manuscript — if it weren't for one particularly precocious 14-year-old, it may never have been heard outside the Vatican's walls.

Allegri's *Miserere* was the last and the most popular of twelve different settings of the same text written for the Vatican over 120 years. It was so good that, to preserve the sense of mystery around the music, the Pope forbade anyone from transcribing it, on pain of excommunication. Only three copies were made: one each for the Holy Roman Emperor, the King of Portugal, and an eminent music scholar — but these versions were so simplified from the original that the King of Portugal actually complained. The Pope wanted to keep its genius a secret — and so it remained for over 100 years.

What the Pope hadn't planned for was Leopold Mozart's trip to Rome in 1770; and, more specifically, the attendance of his 14-year-old son, Wolfgang Amadeus.

The Mozarts popped into the Wednesday service at the Vatican, at which the *Miserere* was being performed. A couple of hours later, back at home, the young Wolfgang proceeded to transcribe the entire piece from memory. He went back on Friday to make a couple of corrections — and the Vatican's secret was out.

Later on in their travels, the Mozarts bumped into British music historian Dr Charles Burney. They passed on the manuscript to Dr Burney, who took it to London; and it was published there in 1771.

But that wasn't the end of the story. In 1831, Felix Mendelssohn decided to make his own transcription — and the version he heard happened to be sung higher than originally intended (a fourth higher, to be precise).

This wouldn't have been of much consequence had it not been for an innocent mistake made 50 years later. When the first edition of Grove's Musical Dictionary was being put together in 1880, a small section of Mendelssohn's higher transcription was accidentally inserted into a passage of the *Miserere* being used to illustrate an article. This mistake was then reproduced in various editions over the next century, eventually becoming the accepted version. And the result is the most famous and probably the most moving passage of the piece — a beautiful top C sung by a treble soloist, pretty much the highest note found in the entire choral repertoire.

This fabulous piece will be sung at the 8pm service on Ash Wednesday in All Saints.

Calendar of Events



7th February

Lunch Club in the North Transept, All Saints 1pm.

Tickets £6.00 available from the Coffee Shop.



Tapas Evening in the North Transept, All Saints 7pm.

Tickets £15.00 available from the Parish Office.

All proceeds to cancer charities.



4th February

Candlemas Services as usual at All Saints including **Messy Mass** 11.30am;

Festal Evensong for Candlemas 6pm.

Bereavement Support Café Coffee Shop, All Saints 2.30pm – 4pm

14th February

Ash Wednesday All Saints Holy Communion 10am,

Sung Eucharist 8pm



16th February

Crafty Natter All Saints 1.30pm - 3.30pm



18th February

Services as usual at All Saints including All Age Communion 11.30am

2nd March

Quiz Night, Eggington Village Hall 7pm.

Tickets £8 from Angela Dyer 210240.



All Saints Preservation Trust
invite you to our fundraising

CEILIDH

Saturday March 2nd at
Pulford School

Ticket price £12.50 to include Ploughman's
Family tickets on request

Dancing to commence at 7pm

Bring your own drinks and glasses

Snacks and soft drinks available - cash only



For tickets, please email
enquiry@allsaintspreservationtrust.org
or call 01525 370987





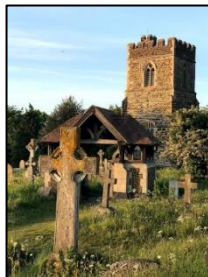
History all around us, shaping the worshipping community in The Ouzel Valley

Ask most regular churchgoers what they expect of their Vicar or Rector, and they will probably tell you that they would like a person who cares for their spiritual and pastoral needs; someone who is seen and known within their local community. Many clergy would share in that vision of what parish life should be like, but is it a realistic one? The ideal that each parish should exclusively have its own vicar was only ever achieved for a short time during the Victorian era. Both before and since many parishes have had to share their clergy and have been linked together in a variety of permutations when pastoral reorganisation has been deemed necessary for various reasons.



Twenty years ago, the parishes of Linslade and Heath and Reach each had their own priest and the former was in a different diocese. The Vicar of Leighton Buzzard, together with one or two assistant curates, also had responsibility for Eggington, Billington and Hockliffe. There were several factors which signalled the need for changes to be made.

1. The population of each parish was of vastly different sizes and, consequently, so was the perceived workload for the clergy, especially regarding pastoral and administrative oversight, as well as the number of baptisms, weddings, and funerals to be conducted.
2. Whilst the county boundary that bisected the town had been moved to incorporate Linslade into Bedfordshire, the diocesan boundaries had remained the same. This meant that clergy serving in the town rarely met together because they were in different ecclesiastical jurisdictions.
3. The proposed eastern expansion to the town would exacerbate all the above even further and made a priority of the need for mission initiatives to be implemented within the new housing areas.



This month: The Formation of the Ouzel Valley Team Ministry

The solution proposed was that all the parishes should be incorporated into a new ecclesiastical structure, the Ouzel Valley Team Ministry. When inaugurated, each of the churches was to retain its PCC and wardens, and a Team Council was to be established to oversee the ways in which mutual support and cooperation could be encouraged. The team was to be staffed by four stipendiary clergy; a Team Rector who exercised “light touch” oversight and three Team Vicars. Each priest was to have a focused responsibility for one or more parishes and one of them had a specific mission brief. There was also the option for a curate in training to be appointed for a set period.

This is the ecclesiastical structure that was put in place nearly twenty years ago but the real relevance of what was envisaged is encapsulated in the word “team”. It was hoped that, while parishes would retain their identity and overall integrity, it would engender a stronger sense of cohesion and of mutual support, across the parochial boundaries, both on the part of congregation members and the clergy. It would allow clergy workloads to be alleviated so that no one felt too overburdened. It meant that greater use could be made of an individual’s specific gifts and skills to the mutual enrichment of all. Cross-parish collaboration would enable new initiatives to be started in areas such as marriage and baptism preparation, bereavement visiting, programmes of study and spiritual nurture. It would streamline parochial administration. It would enable a more effective engagement within our new and existing neighbourhoods.

This was the vision behind the establishment of the Ouzel Valley Team Ministry. Seventeen years on, is that vision still providing the motivation for its existence? This is for you to decide.



Fr. Grant Fellows

Good Shepherd, Sandhills

Vicar: Rev'd Steve Marsh

Tel: 01525 838450

Churchwardens:

Stuart Blofeld; Katharine Reedy



**CHURCH of the
GOOD SHEPHERD**

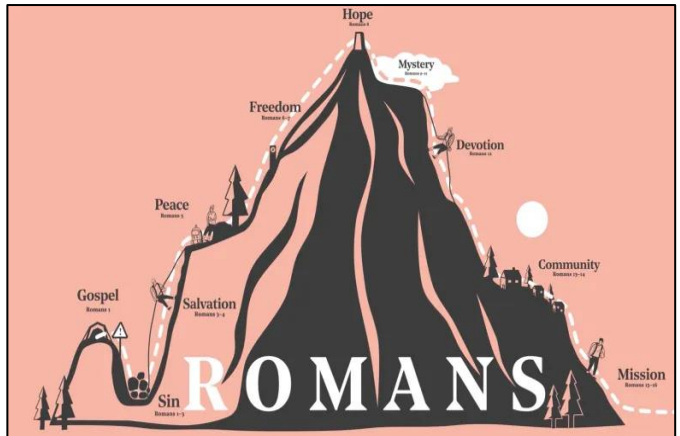
Being inspired by Romans

In our weekly homegroup we are currently studying the letter to the Romans, using a course produced by the Bible Society: <https://www.biblesociety.org.uk/resources/the-romans-course/>

Although written long ago, this book has plenty to say to us in our lives now. Some of the most uplifting and hopeful words in the Bible are in Romans.

The course, developed and presented by Andrew Ollerton, includes video footage from the beautiful city of Rome, to help us put the teaching in context (and also dream about our next holiday).

A helpful overview is given of how the letter is structured, using the metaphor of climbing a mountain and the course follows this journey. At the time of writing, having engaged with the gospel, sin, salvation, peace and freedom, we have made it to the top of the mountain and are taking in the hope-filled panorama in chapter 8.



Comments from some of those who are studying the course:

“A well-presented, well-researched and good grounding in a complex letter.”

“It felt as if he were writing to me today and that he knows me and anticipates my responses to his writings.”

“The addition of filming in Rome, enacting the letter delivery context using an actress to play Phoebe and the interplay between video and group questions are all very helpful.”

“We can be real about our lives and who we are - Jesus loves us anyway and nothing can separate us from God’s love.”

“Not so very long ago when I was just starting to explore Faith I asked the question ‘How do you know if you are a Christian?’ Perhaps now Romans has gone a long way towards answering that.”

Katharine Reedy

St. Nicholas, Hockliffe

Vicar: Rev'd Noel McGeeney

Tel: 01525 237633

Churchwardens:

Brian Speller: 210565; Tom Ware



We have just celebrated the Incarnation of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ and I am resting on this First Sunday of Christmas 2023 contemplating the incoming year 2024. What will the New Year hold for St Nicholas Church? I draw encouragement from the sustained strength of Café Church. It was wonderful then to share with around 100 other people as we joined for our annual service Carols by Candlelight. There were so many young people, including some of those from Café Church. What a great occasion for some of them to be involved leading upfront with the singing of Away in a Manger. The Church looked beautiful too. Thanks to Carol and her team for the beautiful flower arrangements that decked out all the window cills. We extend our thanks to Canon Malcolm who led our worship for Midnight Mass this year.

We are also grateful for Paul and Julia who once again opened their home to parishioners from the Team to join in St Nick's Supper on 2nd December. A wonderful time was had by all those who attended, with the marvellous amount of £850 being raised towards Church funds. Thank you to all those who prepared and served food and washed up afterwards.

By the time you read this article we will have celebrated the Feast of The Presentation of Christ in the Temple (Candlemas). As the season of Epiphany ends, we approach the beginning of Lent with Ash Wednesday falling this year on 14th February. Lent is one of those penitential seasons in the Liturgical Calendar when we have the opportunity to prepare ourselves spiritually as our journeys of faith draw us towards Christ's Passion, Death and Resurrection. Some of you may have decided on what your Lenten observance will look like, whether you have chosen a book or signed up for one of the discussion groups around the Team.

I would like to introduce you to a simple prayer that you may wish to include with your own prayers during Lent. It is called the Jesus Prayer which some of you may have already discovered: *'Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me.'* Typically, it is prayed in repetition, and, over the years, some Christians have included the additional words *'a sinner'* at the end. I was drawn to it through my daily prayer using 'Pray as you Go' produced by Jesuit Ministries (The Society of Jesus).



Last September I made my Retreat to Launde Abbey where we focused on the Jesus Prayer using prayer ropes, a bit like a Rosary. A typical prayer rope would have 33 knots, symbolising the years of Christ's life. Commonly used in Coptic and Orthodox Churches, they have become more common in the West as a method of prayer enabling focussing and stilling of the mind.

Geoff Marchant

St. Michael & All Angels, Billington

Vicar: Rev'd Steve Marsh

Tel: 01525 838450

Churchwardens:

Sandra Brewin 373644; Julia Haviland 850380



During Advent several people wrote a post for a WhatsApp Advent group and I am quoting one of them.

“Under the title of ‘Unsung Heroes’, a conversation I had recently got me thinking more about Joseph aka Jesus’s father. And it seemed to me, he doesn’t get anywhere near the props he deserves for stepping up to raise the Son of God. I know he is a saint now, but from what I can see that happened 800 years after he died.

Just imagine these days finding out your fiancé is suddenly pregnant, but she swears that she has been impregnated by God. Awkward to say the least, and I think many men would jump. Not Joseph though. He believed her and stuck by her, a big deal in those days when nobody would have batted an eyelid if he had abandoned her or worse.

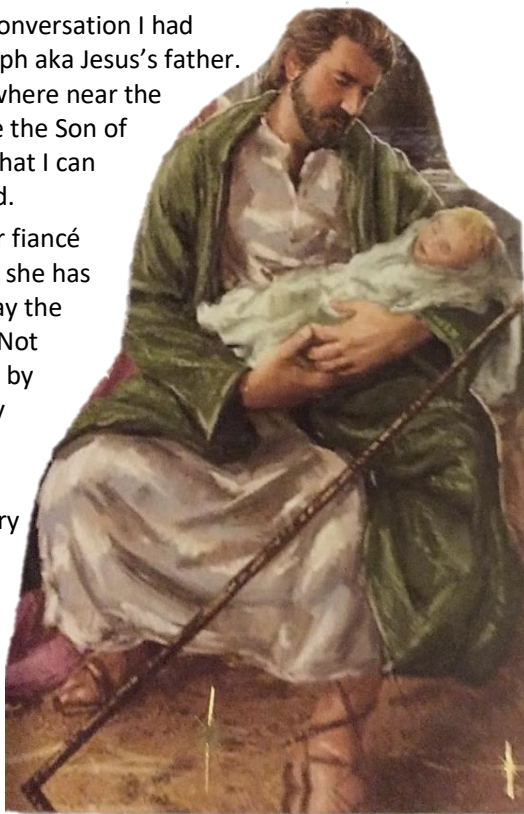
Not only that, he ensured that both Mary and Jesus made it to Egypt to escape from an infanticidal king; and he taught his son a trade.

Seems like, behind the scenes, blue collar Joseph inculcated compassion and wisdom. From what I understand, beyond the Nativity part, Joseph doesn’t get much of a mention in the Bible.

But reading between the lines it is clear that this honourable guy paved the way for Jesus to get on with his divine business of spreading light and radical love throughout his own lifetime.

Big shouts for Joseph, an example to all Dads.”

In Billington we have our own unsung hero. Ginny Reilly tirelessly and anonymously to many, regularly searches the village hedgerows, ditches and pavements for litter, picking it up with a litter picker and disposing of it, in appropriate bins. It is very rare to find litter on the village green and this is due to Ginny. All in Billington are very grateful to her and many of us could follow her example.



St. Michael's, Eggington

Vicar: Rev'd Noel McGeeney

Tel: 01525 237633

Church Officers:

Carol Hart 384634; Paul Brown 751861



As this magazine's new centrefold series "History all around us", is starting with the formation of the Ouzel Valley Team, here is a reflection on the changing pattern of worship in Eggington, from a long time villager and occasional member of the congregation.

"History is not a static thing; it is the record of an ever-changing scene. History is made by each and everyone every second. So the worshipping community of the Ouzel Valley continually has the power to shape itself. When I was a boy, Eggington had a Congregational Chapel, a Methodist Chapel, and of course St Michael's. All three denominations had reasonable but slowly declining congregations, each keeping itself to itself. So even in such a small community, people worshipping the same God and believing in the same Christian Principles stayed apart because of the man-made dogma of organized religion. I cannot think that Jesus would have been impressed.

But that was the history that they created, and which ended in their demise. St Michael's, possibly by virtue of having the majority of followers and the backing of a much richer CofE behind it alone remains as the Spiritual Focus. But St Michael's today struggles to get posteriors onto pews and only with the efforts of a dedicated few, struggles to survive.

Social history is moving on. People do not feel the need for regular worship and have new pastimes more enticing than Sunday worship. This evolution of social history cannot be turned back and to thrive the Worshipping Community has to catch the new wind and sail forward and make new history. People still feel the need for a Spiritual Focus to be there if they need it. People in these confusing and uncertain times are showing an increasing need to experience a regular feeling of community, to get together and not feel alone. There must of course be time allowed for the traditionalist believers to worship. But like it or not the Church must realize the people of today do not, in the main, want the liturgy bound Church of the past. They want joy, positivity, music, energy, levity, brevity, prayer more relevant to today, nourishment for the spirit, time to take stock, guidance, and encouragement as to as to how we can together go forward to help others and make a difference.

Cake and coffee also help. I always imagine this was the scene of Jesus preaching to the thousands in Galilee, followed by loaves and fishes. Jesus' overriding message was for LOVE, FORGIVENESS AND PEACE. He seems very distant at the moment."

Harry Sear



QUIZ NIGHT in Eggington VH. 7pm Sat 2nd March.
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COFFEE SHOP CALLING:

THE QUESTION:

How much did the coffee shop give towards Church Funds in 2023?

THE ANSWER:

£35,000.

Shall we shout that a bit louder?

£35,000!

Plus, it pays for serviettes, toilet paper and ALL cleaning materials used in the church. Not an insignificant monetary contribution, we think you will agree.

However, the coffee shop was not opened purely for financial gain, but more importantly to provide a pleasant and friendly place for visitors to the Church to have light refreshments, and an informal meeting place for Church members and friends.

THE CONUNDRUM:

We are extremely short of regular coffee shop volunteers, especially for a Friday, although there are a few slots on a Tuesday and for a Saturday afternoon. The shifts are generally for 2½hrs either between 9:30 & 12:00 or 12:00 & 2:30, once a fortnight, but any offers are welcomed.

If we are unable to find at least 3 new volunteers for a Friday (preferably more) the Friday Coffee Shop will CLOSE.

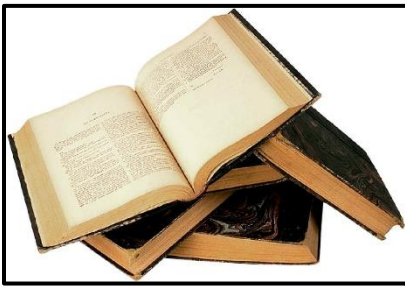
This means that the church would need to find an extra £12,000 to balance the books. So, by donating your time, you will be supporting the church at no financial cost to yourself, as well as providing a welcoming face to visitors.

Volunteers do not have to be All Saints church goers. We have volunteers from other churches in the Ouzel Valley Team as well as people who have appreciated the pleasant surroundings and friendship that they have encountered when visiting the coffee shop themselves.

If you are interested in supporting this ministry by helping in the coffee shop, or perhaps by baking a cake, please give your name and telephone contact details into the office, or to one of the managers.

THE COFFEE SHOP NEEDS YOU





Biblical Genres

*A series exploring
the different kinds of writing in the bible.*

This month:

The Law ...

by Rev'd Dr. Bernard Minton

Ah, the Law. Nobody's favourite topic! No-one likes having their freedom curtailed, and St Paul seems to suggest that the Law even brings sin and death! Which, if you've ever tried to read all the five Biblical books of the Law, seems entirely possible! If it doesn't bring death, it certainly brings both blood and boredom, a most unwelcome combination!

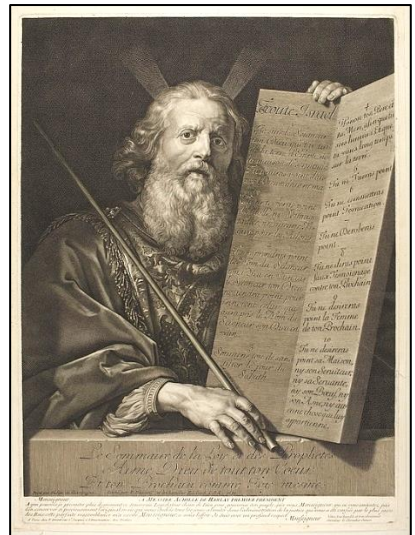
Of course, when Christians talk of 'the books of the Law', we mean two related things. One is the first five books of the Bible, which are known in Hebrew as the Torah, and are considered by Jews to be the most holy part of Scripture.

But 'the Law' itself is wider than just that, because it includes all the laws that God gave to His children to govern how they should live, both within and beyond the Bible. Also of course some of those five Biblical books contain history and narrative, not just legal rules.

The first book – Genesis – is almost all history (or mythology, if you prefer), while Exodus and Numbers are about half and half, and Leviticus and Deuteronomy are virtually all 'law'. But the history in these first five books (the story of what happened) also counts as part of the Law, because a lot of it from Exodus onwards is about Moses (who traditionally wrote these first five books) and everything that God did and revealed through him.

Now, the Law really is a gracious and loving gift of God, to help us hear and follow His call. But that isn't how Christians think of it, because both Christians and Jews are so good at twisting what God gives us. We so easily turn His grace into our own cleverness and personal glory, making God's gifts into ways of judging each other. The Corinthians did it with Spiritual gifts in the New Testament, and many Jewish Pharisees and Sadducees did it with the Law in Jesus' day. But God gave His children the Law in the first place to help them live lives of holiness and thus make space for Him.

Unfortunately, over time, as St Paul testifies, the Law became a barrier. It became a way of turning grace (what God does for us) into 'works' (what we do for God). It



became a way of imagining that we earn God's favour by our own behaviour, rather than because He loves us. This wasn't what the Law was meant to do but, human nature being what it is, we turned a gift into a judgmental straitjacket that created barriers and restrictions between God and most of His children.

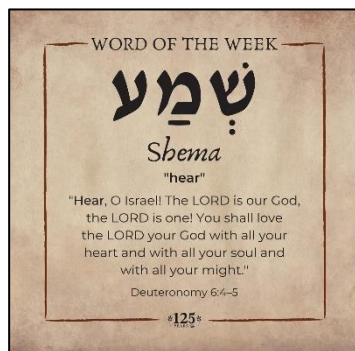
This is why Jesus spent so much time arguing with self-appointed guardians of the Law about the ways in which they were misrepresenting God. They didn't like this very much, and it became one of the reasons why they were so keen to crucify Him! Mention of Jesus reminds us that Christians believe that God has given us a greater gift than the Law; He has come Himself in Jesus, to embody and perfect the Law. But the Law itself is not therefore rendered useless or obsolete: it has simply been fulfilled or consummated. It still has worth and value. The Law is still God's reminder that the whole of our life, day and night, is holy and precious to Him, and that we should try every second of every day, to live lives of love and service.

But it is also true that, in a sense, the Law is a vain effort: no matter how big it gets (and it is very big indeed – 'the Law' for Jews includes not just the five Biblical books, but also all the sixty or more volumes of commentary upon it called the Talmud), it can never be all-encompassing. Human life is just too various to be entirely circumscribed in words. So instead Christians no longer have the Law as our chief guide: as St Paul insists, we live by and in the Spirit, by whom we are guided, rather than by the words of the Law. (This is true for many Jews as well: for them, the Law is a continuing conversation between God and His children).

But we are all still prone to sin. And the problem with inspiration (being guided by the Spirit) is that because we are still selfish sinners, we are very prone to distorting the Spirit, just as much as we twist the Law. 'God told me to do it' is not always a proper defence; often we say in reply, 'Oh no He didn't'. This means that we still need law to govern how we live and behave towards each other, because we are not very good at listening to the Spirit, and we need law for when we disagree. If we had no law, then Bishops, Vicars, or Churchwardens could do whatever they liked: surely a nightmare scenario!

Nowadays we see that the Law is not the end of God's commandments, but only the beginning. Law must always evolve, but underneath it is the basic principle of the Spirit, which is summed up as well in the two Great Commandments that are called the Summary of the Law (also called the Shema, meaning "Hear"): that we should love the Lord our God, and our neighbours as ourselves.

Father Bernard



Talmud = Mishnah + Gemara.

Mishnah = written compendium of the oral torah (c200AD).

Gemara = commentary on the torah and mishnah (63 books) c500 AD.



Repair Café Leighton Buzzard



Did you know that Leighton Buzzard is now part of the repair revolution with the opening in March 2023 of the town's first ever monthly Repair Cafe run by local community group "Totally Leighton Buzzard".

These are free community events where people come together to repair small household items. Collectively as a group we have looked at over 244 items of which 138 have been fixed and a further 71 are repairable. We have prevented 258 kilos in waste and prevented 1,459 kilos in CO2 emissions (which is same as 2533 days of non-stop TV watching!).

After a successful first year, Leighton Buzzard's Repair Cafe is now back for a second year.

In 2024, the group will be holding monthly events every 4th Saturday of the month from January to November (with a break in August) from 10.30am to 1.30pm at the Royal British Legion, Bossard Hall, LU7 1DA. At the first event on 27 January 2024, local Leighton BuzzCycles will also be available to fix bikes.

Visitors are welcome to bring their broken or faulty items – such as household electrical and mechanical repairs or textiles repairs. Volunteer repairers share their practical knowledge and help to try mending and repairing. Refreshments are provided; we always welcome new volunteers; and donations are welcome.

We encourage attendees to book to attend (if they can) at <https://repaircafe.leightonbuzzard.org> (but also accept walk-ins). Everyone needs to accept a disclaimer and be aware that we are not a shop. We triage items on the day and you might need to wait for an available repairer.

Following the success of the Repair Cafe, the Totally Leighton Buzzard group is also looking to set up a Library of Things to provide a community repository and loaning of items across the town. We are currently actively looking for a free storage space to get this project off the ground. Please get in touch if you can offer a suitable venue to kickstart this project.

**REPAIR CAFE LB
2024 DATES**

JAN 27	FEB 24	MAR 23	APR 27	MAY 25
JUN 22	JUL 27	SEP 28	OCT 26	NOV 23

CHANGE OF VENUE FOR 2024

The Repair Cafe will now be held in the Royal British Legion, Bossard Hall, West St, Leighton Buzzard LU7 1DA

- Events run from 10.30-1.30
- Free to attend; donations welcome
- Bring 1 portable item
- Cake and refreshments available
- To volunteer let us know!

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