

# 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*

**November 2024**

**70p**

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War Memorial

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Townsend

Mothers' Union is involved  
in 2 global events, doing  
their bit to improve the lot  
of women worldwide



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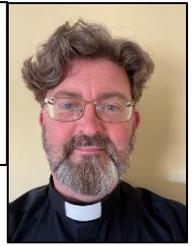
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# ***How to get your daily fix - of Dopamine or the Holy Spirit?***

***By Rev'd Steve Marsh***



The most valuable commodity in our culture today is our attention. The media, advertisers and social media companies, are all fighting for our attention with their 'weapons of mass distraction'.

The most powerful weapon in this battle for our attention is the mobile phone. It is always there, ready to fight for and grab even the smallest amount of our attention with texts, notifications, social media posts and adverts, all offering us a quick Dopamine hit. Dopamine is a complex hormone and neurotransmitter which plays a major role in how we feel pleasure and feed our reward system. When you do something that feels good, your brain releases a rush of Dopamine. Social media seeks to administer a constant stream of Dopamine hits to keep your attention. This fight for our attention can have an impact on our spirituality and our relationship with God. In the spare moment, in which we could offer up a prayer, or grab a quiet time of reflection, our phones will offer up a quick Dopamine hit instead.

Like most things, in moderation and under control, the mobile phone and social media apps have a positive side, enabling people and communities to feel connected and informed. Used correctly the mobile phone and social media apps can also aid our spirituality.

At the moment I use an app called 'Pray As You Go' for my Morning Prayer. This is normally 10-15mins, features a song for the day, a scripture and then leads you through an Examen prompting you with reflective questions to help you engage with the scripture.

As a Minister, 99% of the faith related gatherings I go to, I am leading. On the 'Pray As You Go' app, presenters read the scripture and lead the Examen. Having the presenters lead Morning Prayer is a real treat for me, meaning that I am receiving, rather than giving, at the start of my day.

There are a variety of Christian Faith and Spirituality apps across all the traditions within the Christian Faith. One that is particularly popular is the 'Bible in a Year' app, with daily readings and a thought for the day. The Church of England currently have two apps. The 'Daily Prayer' app presents the traditional Daily Prayer Offices, and their new 'Everyday Faith' app offers a daily Bible reading, reflection and prayer often on a theme or a seasonal topic.

When you have a spare moment, planned or unexpected, don't let the 'weapons of mass distraction' easily win the fight for your attention. Seek out some of these Christian faith and spirituality apps, see which ones work best for you and rather than getting a Dopamine hit, get a Holy Spirit hit instead.

***Rev'd Steve Marsh***

## ***Our present pattern of services across the Ouzel Valley Team***

### **All Saints**

#### **Sundays:**

8.00am Holy Communion

9.30am Parish Eucharist

11.30am (usual pattern but can vary occasionally)

1<sup>st</sup> Sunday: Messy Mass

3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday: All Age Service

2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday: Holy Baptism

6.00pm Evening Prayer

1<sup>st</sup> Sunday: Choral Evensong Plus

3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday: Sung with hymns  
(NO choir) followed by Benediction

2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday: Said Evensong

#### **Weekdays:**

#### **Holy Communion**

10.00am Thursday

9.00am Saturday

*(Service of Healing on 4<sup>th</sup> Saturday each month)*

#### **Morning Prayer:**

9.00am Tuesday – Friday in the Chancel

### **St. Barnabas, Linslade**

#### **Sundays:**

8.00am Said Eucharist

10.00am Parish Eucharist

6.00pm Evensong

[www.stbarnabaslinslade.uk](http://www.stbarnabaslinslade.uk)

### **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:**

1<sup>st</sup> Sunday: Holy Communion & CGS Juniors

2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday: 'Chapel Time':

*Lead reflection and discussion*

3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday: Holy Communion & CGS Juniors

4<sup>th</sup> Sunday: 'Morning Break':

*Informal service with sermon and discussion.*

Free pop-up café every Sunday from 9.45am

*Community Cafe every Wednesday at Astral Park  
10am - 12noon with a Music, Rhythm and Rhyme  
session from 10am - 10:30am.*

### **St. Leonard's, Heath & Reach**

#### **Sundays:**

8.00am 1<sup>st</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> Sundays: Holy Communion

11.00am Holy Communion

1<sup>st</sup> Sundays: Family Service

**Tuesdays:** 7.00pm Holy Communion

#### **Morning Prayer via Zoom:**

9.00am Monday – Saturday

[www.saintleonardschurch.com](http://www.saintleonardschurch.com)

### **St. Michael's, Eggington**

9.30am 1<sup>st</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> Sundays: Holy Communion

4<sup>th</sup> Sundays: Café Church 3-4pm

### **St. Nicholas', Hockliffe**

9.30am 2<sup>nd</sup> Sundays: Family Communion

4<sup>th</sup> Sundays: Holy Communion

**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.

1<sup>st</sup> 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 only, 10am - 2pm.

*Contact Details on Page 2.*

## 16 Days of Activism against Gender Based Violence 25th November - 10th December

1 in 3 women will suffer from gender-based violence in their lifetime.  
1 in 7 children will have lived with domestic violence at some point in their childhood.  
Each year Mothers' Union joins with 6000 other organisations in 185 countries in the **United Nations' '16 Days of Activism'** to end gender-based violence and abuse.

The 16 days begin on 25<sup>th</sup> November, "International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women", and continue until "International Human Rights Day" on 10<sup>th</sup> December. The campaign highlights all forms of gender-based violence and abuse, calling for its elimination.

MU in St Albans diocese supports 4 refugees by providing Christmas and Easter gifts for children and start up packs of domestic items (kettle, pans, utensils, bedding and towels etc) when women are able to move into their own home. This year our toddlers plus siblings raised over £170 to help those living in refuges.

See [www.mothersunion.org](http://www.mothersunion.org) for more information about how MU is working to change attitudes and behaviour around the world through the "Empower Her" campaign (see P 22), and the "Rise Up" campaign against domestic abuse in the UK.

*Alison Dobbie*



### *Worth a smile*

We were celebrating the 100th anniversary of our church, and several former pastors and the bishop were in attendance. At one point, our minister had the children gather at the altar for a talk about the importance of the day. He began by asking, "Does anyone know what the bishop does?"

There was silence. Finally, one little boy ventured: "He's the one you can move diagonally."



A little girl was watching her daddy repair his tractor. She asked her mother, "What happens to old tractors when they finally stop working?"

Sighing, her mother answered: "Someone sells them to your father, dear."



A woman telephoned her Bank and spoke to the official who looked after her holdings. "I want to make some changes," she said.

The official needed more details. "Are you interested in Conversion or Redemption?" he asked. "Good heavens", came the reply. "I must have got the wrong number. I wanted the Bank of England, not the Church of England."

# Parish Registers

## Holy Matrimony, September:

7: Samuel Roberts & Anna Ottomar at All Saints

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

## Holy Baptism, September:

No baptisms

*'One Lord, one faith, one baptism'*

## R.I.P. September:

10: Michael Read at Crownhill; 12: Sheila Wadd at Oakfield Gardens Crematorium;

13: Anthony Peerman at St. Barnabas; 17: Maximilian Szuca at All Saints

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

## Years Mind, November:

1: Christopher Austin; 2: Doris Pughe; 3: Geoffrey Price;

4: Laurie Thompson, Revd. Len Lack; 5: Alistair Grant; 9: Charles Wallace;

10: Andrew Audas, Alistair Cursons, Geoffrey Stopford, Evelyn Amos;

11: Harold Palmer, Margaret Prewett; 13: Edith Palmer; 14: Leah Perrott, Harry Jones;

15: Michael Munford; 16: Iain Smith; 17: Ray Croxford;

18: Eileen Sandifer, Canon John Payne-Cook; 19: Jim Jury, Snowie Mead;

23: Bessie Plummer, Revd. Peter Lymbery, Gillian Macfarlane; 24: Donna Perry;

28: Derek Dykes; 29: Joan Bester, Heather Morgan; 30: Rosemary Forsyth



## LEIGHTON BUZZARD MUSIC

LIVE PROFESSIONAL CONCERTS

Leighton Buzzard Library Theatre

Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2024 at 7.30pm

**Ben Tarlton, cello,  
& Dominic Degavino, piano**

### PROGRAMME

Beethoven's Sonata in A major Op.69

Debussy's Cello Sonata

Janacek's Pohadka

Brahms' Sonata no.2 in F major



Tickets online from [www.leightonbuzzardlibrarytheatre.co.uk](http://www.leightonbuzzardlibrarytheatre.co.uk)

or in person from the Box Office, Tuesdays, Thursdays & Fridays 10am - 12pm or at the door.

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](http://www.pulfordschool.org)**

A church school for  
a whole community



## ***Governor's Perspective:***

### ***Visiting Author Inspires Young Writers at Pulford Lower School***

It was a joy to witness the excitement generated by the recent visit from local children's author, Nicola Baker, who came to Pulford Lower School to share her book *Rescuing Ruby*.



Organised in partnership with Our Bookshop Tring, the event aimed to ignite a love of writing among our students, and I had the privilege of seeing it through my own 7-year-old daughter's eyes. This marks the third or fourth author my daughter has met at Pulford, each one offering new insights and inspiration.

Nicola Baker's book, based on life on a farm, stirred my daughter's imagination as she eagerly shared what she had learned about animals and rural life, contrasting it with our own. These moments remind us of the beauty in God's creation, how different lives and perspectives can enrich our own. I could see how much the author's visit fed her love for reading and writing, deepening her understanding of the world around her.

This event also aligned beautifully with the efforts of our staff, whose dedication to nurturing students' creative writing skills reflects the belief that every child has God-given potential. Hearing from a professional author helps build their confidence and encourages them to explore the gifts they have been given.

Thanks to the support of Our Bookshop Tring, students were able to purchase signed copies of the book, extending this inspiration beyond the classroom. Reading a chapter with my daughter each evening has been a privilege, watching her imagination grow in new and wonderful ways.



***Beci Morley***



## The Gentleman Gardener

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BSc., AMCST  
Ryecroft, Plantation Road, Leighton  
Buzzard, LU7 3HT

**01525 377384, or 07774 901293**  
email: eileennaples50@outlook.com

## St Leonard’s Church Hall Heath and Reach

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stleonardheath@gmail.com



36 High Street, Leighton  
Buzzard, Beds, LU7 1EA  
01525 372 204

## *Selections*

*Pet, gift and garden.  
Household, kitchen tools and  
electrical items.  
Calor Gas, DIY and repairs.  
Memorial.*



*selections\_pet\_garden*

# *On a musical note.....*



## *Music for Remembrance Sunday*

We often sing a particular anthem on Remembrance Sunday for the civic service at 11am. By Peter Aston, it's called *"So they gave their bodies to the commonwealth"*.

This year, I originally chose *"In paradisum"* from Fauré's requiem for a change, but had to abandon that for various reasons and we will now sing the Aston again.

English composer, conductor and academic Peter Aston was born in Birmingham on 5<sup>th</sup> October 1938 and studied first at the Birmingham School of Music and then at York University, where he lectured in music in the newly established music department.

He was professor of music at the University of East Anglia for a quarter of a century from 1974, and was subsequently awarded the title Emeritus Professor of composition. Whilst in Norwich he was a Lay Canon at the cathedral and founded the Norwich Festival of Contemporary Church Music. He was invited by Britten to conduct the Aldeburgh Festival Singers.

The text of this anthem is part of a funeral oration by Pericles, a prominent Athenian politician, delivered near the start of the Peloponnesian War (431-404 BC).



*"So they gave their bodies to the commonwealth  
and received praise that will never die,  
and a home in the minds of men.  
Their story lives on without visible symbol,  
woven into the stuff of other men's lives."*



As well as praising the dead for their valour, Pericles reflects on themes of freedom, liberality and equal justice under the law.

Aston uses descending arpeggio motifs in a haunting musical reference to the Last Post, the bugle call used at Commonwealth military funerals and commemorations of those who have fallen in war.

See if you can spot these motifs as you listen. Also, listen out for the passage towards the end *"and received praise that will never die"*, where the choir is unaccompanied for a short while and you will feel discomfort at the dissonance between the treble/alto and tenor/bass lines.

What do you think this is meant to convey? Answers on a postcard.

**Paul Dickens**



# Calendar of Events 2024

**1<sup>st</sup> November**

**All Saints' Day** Morning Prayer, All Saints 9am

**2<sup>nd</sup> November**

**Commemoration of All Souls** All Souls' Service, All Saints 4pm



**3<sup>rd</sup> November**

**All Saints' Sunday Services as usual**  
**including Messy Mass** All Saints 11.30am

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



**Festal Evensong** All Saints  
**NOTE THE SPECIAL TIME OF 5pm**  
followed by soup and fireworks



**6<sup>th</sup> November**

**Lunch Club** in the North Transept, All Saints 1pm.  
Tickets £6.00 available from the Coffee Shop.



**10<sup>th</sup> November**

**Remembrance Sunday Services as usual**  
**including Remembrance Service** All Saints 11am



**11<sup>th</sup> November**

**Schools Remembrance Service** War Memorial 11am

**15<sup>th</sup> November**

**Crafty Natter** All Saints 1.30pm



**23<sup>rd</sup> November**

**Festive Fayre** All Saints 10am-2pm

**25<sup>th</sup> November - 10<sup>th</sup> December**

**Mothers' Union 16 Days of Activism against Gender Based Violence**



**1<sup>st</sup> December**

**Advent Sunday Services as usual**  
**including Messy Mass Toy Service** All Saints 11.30am  
**Bereavement Support Café** Coffee Shop, All Saints 2.30pm – 4pm  
**Advent Carol Service** All Saints 6pm



**ALL SAINTS PARISH CHURCH  
LEIGHTON BUZZARD**

# **FESTIVE FAYRE**

**Come and enjoy the festivities  
in our beautiful 13<sup>th</sup> century church**

**ALL WELCOME**

**Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> November 10.00am to 2.00pm**



**Craft Stalls - Food Stalls**

**Tombola - Cake Stall - Raffle**

**Refreshments available in our Coffee Shop  
Plus much more**

**Free Entry - Stalls cash only**



*on ...*

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

The Imperial War Graves Commission decision early in the First World War not to bring home the bodies of those killed meant that the families of the dead had nowhere to mourn them. As a result, after the war every town and village who lost members of their community erected a memorial inscribed with their names so their sacrifice would never be forgotten.

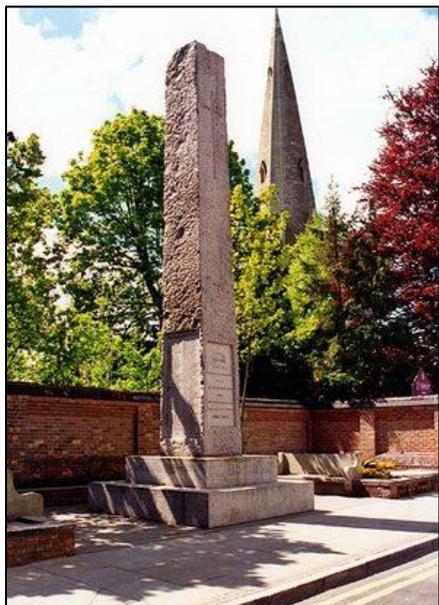
Leighton Buzzard, which had a population of 6,782 at the start of the war lost 171 men in the conflict. In 1918 a war memorial committee was set up to decide on a suitable memorial and a site for it.



One of the members was Robert Richmond, chairman of the magistrates and a Bedfordshire County Councillor, who also lost two sons in the war. He was sent by the committee to visit Messrs. Farmer and Brindley in Westminster in London who had designed what was then one of the few war memorials in the country - the Boer War Memorial of the Bedfordshire Regiment in Bedford.

Mr Brindley apparently pointed out a block of granite that had been lying unused in his yard for nearly 50 years. It was reputed to be the largest single piece of granite ever quarried in Britain and came from Shap in Cumbria. The block was 25 feet 3 inches high and 3 feet 2 inches square, weighing 22 tons. Richmond decided that would be a suitable memorial and the committee agreed.

# Leighton Buzzard War Memorial



It was brought to Leighton Buzzard, presumably by barge on the Grand Union Canal. There was a lot of discussion about its location. It had to be prominent but not in the middle of the road where it would become hazard to traffic. The vicar of All Saints Church, the Rev'd G.F. Hills, offered a bit of his garden on the edge of Church Square.

The monolith, with its newly carved names, was erected over three days using block and tackle. Underneath it, in a bolt hole, a metal tube was placed containing the silver and copper coinage of the time. The monolith and its transport to Leighton cost £1,000.



On November 11, 1920, exactly two years after the Armistice, Church Square was filled with people when the memorial was officially unveiled. The families of the fallen were in a special enclosure at the front. Lord Amptill, who performed the opening ceremony, gave a speech in which he surprisingly acknowledged that there was widespread dismay at the outcome of the war. He mentioned specifically the "terrible sight" of demobbed soldier heroes begging for bread because they could not find jobs.

*Paul Brown*

# ALL SAINTS TIDE

ALL SAINTS SUNDAY  
PATRONAL FESTIVAL  
3<sup>rd</sup> NOVEMBER

8.00am Service

9.30am Service

11.30am Messy Mass

5.00pm FESTAL EVENSONG  
Followed by fireworks  
soup and hotdogs  
ALL WELCOME

All Saints Day  
Morning Prayer  
Friday 1<sup>st</sup> Nov - 9.00am

All Souls Service  
Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> Nov - 4.00pm



## St. Nick's Supper 7th December at 7.30pm at Hockliffe Grange

Tickets £15 in aid of  
St. Nicholas Church,  
Hockliffe  
include supper, wine,  
music and good company.  
Booking essential - please  
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[juliaedickens@gmail.com](mailto:juliaedickens@gmail.com)  
07791 394284 OR 01525 210210

# BILLINGTON CRAFT FAIR

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ALL SAINTS  
PARISH CHURCH

## ADVENT PROCESSION

*Music and Readings  
for Advent*

Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> December 6.00pm



*Begin your preparation for Christmas*

## **St. Nicholas, Hockliffe**

**Vicar: Rev'd Noel McGeeney**

**Tel: 01525 237633**

**Churchwardens:**

**Brian Speller: 210565; Tom Ware**



### ***A Flood is "An Act of God".***

In the last week of September rain came and Bedfordshire received a month's average rainfall in one night. Hockliffe had never seen rain like it in living memory: the brook burst its banks; the drainage system, built in 1924, could not cope and the inundation of rainwater and foul water began flowing down the A5.



Drivers didn't adapt their driving to the conditions: garden walls, and garage doors were knocked down, damaged by the tsunami of huge "bow-waves" created by trucks and articulated lorries speeding through the flooding water. Homes were flooded.

In Genesis chapters 6-9 Noah had to build an ark for safety and survival.

Many people see that flood as God punishing the world. However, the flood was not an act of wanton destruction by a capricious God. God was acting to restore goodness and kindness to his creation.

In Hockliffe, on that tempestuous night we were able to see much goodness and kindness: people wading through the foul floodwaters to check that neighbours were safe; people offering sandbags; the use of water pumping equipment.

A lady called Sue, who is new to Hockliffe, lost everything in the flood. She was in desperate need for some help to clear her cottage. Unfortunately, she doesn't have any insurance so could not call on them. She had lost everything including all her photos of her children and late mother. Members of the village turned out in force to take rubbish to the tip, to clean and refurbish; gave furniture and other household essentials; a local flooring company has offered to carpet the ground floor, free of charge.

This what Sue had to say: *"Five months ago I moved to village knowing nobody. Today I saw community spirit that I thought no longer existed, once more I say thank you for all your help. Sue."*

The flood in Hockliffe has been the cause of much despair, frustration and financial loss to many people in the village. However, the September flood showed that many people in Hockliffe have huge hearts, manifested by the care and concern they have shown to others.

The flood may not have restored goodness in the world, but the story of Sue shows that there is plenty of goodness in hearts of the people of Hockliffe.

***Roger Spalding***

## ***St. Michael & All Angels, Billington***

***Vicar: Rev'd Steve Marsh***

***Tel: 01525 838450***

***Churchwardens:***

***Julia Haviland 850380; Tina Thompson 378411***



Last month Geoff Haviland reported on the sad death of one of Billington's most loved and admired residents Anne Farmer. This month, on 2<sup>nd</sup> October Anne's funeral took place in the Sacred Heart Catholic Church in Leighton Buzzard. The service included a requiem mass conducted by Father John. The church was packed with friends and family of Anne, demonstrating the love which people had for her and acknowledging how much she will be missed. Moving tributes were given by Anne's nephew, her great nephew, and a close family friend.

On 22<sup>nd</sup> September several ladies of the congregation united to bake scones and cakes for our cream tea. Tables were set out in the churchyard in the hope of rain keeping off. It didn't. All the tables were brought back in by David Thompson who had collected them from the Village Hall. Some people had bravely parked at the Village Hall and toiled up the hill in torrential rain. We do thank all those who helped with this event and those who loyally supported it. The bad weather certainly gave participants an appetite as all the goodies were eaten.

Like many churches, our Harvest Festival was held on the 6<sup>th</sup> October. One of the readings was part of the intriguing story of Ruth from the Old Testament. It has often occurred to me that the dear old Boaz had more on his mind than just helping out a young widow. Nevertheless, his good deeds were recognised by God as he was an ancient ancestor of Jesus. Do read the story when you have time.

After the service we all enjoyed a superb ploughman's lunch, put together by Tina Thompson and others. Harvest donations were taken to the Dunstable Food Bank, and monetary donations divided between the Bishop's Harvest appeal and the Church.

This year's Harvest Appeal supports The Leprosy Mission in their work in Sri Lanka, in particular working with Kaveri Kala Manram (KKM), founded by Reverend Joshua.



A vital part of KKM's work is making sure that families affected by leprosy have enough nutritious food to eat and the opportunity to sell surplus fruit and vegetables that they have grown to provide a good income. Rev. Joshua also brings people affected by leprosy together for community meals, where they can learn more about food and nutrition.



*Looking forward to Christmas:*

*22<sup>nd</sup> December 6pm Carols by Candlelight*

*24<sup>th</sup> December 11.15pm: First Communion of Christmas*

*There will be no service at Billington on Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> December*

***Sandra Brewin***

## ***St. Michael's, Eggington***

***Vicar: Rev'd Noel McGeeney***

***Tel: 01525 237633***

***Church Officers:***

***Carol Hart 384634; Paul Brown 751861***



Many of us have been fortunate enough to have our holidays this year & Steve and I are currently on ours - a nice cruise to Naples, Rome, Mykonos Santorini and Izmir.

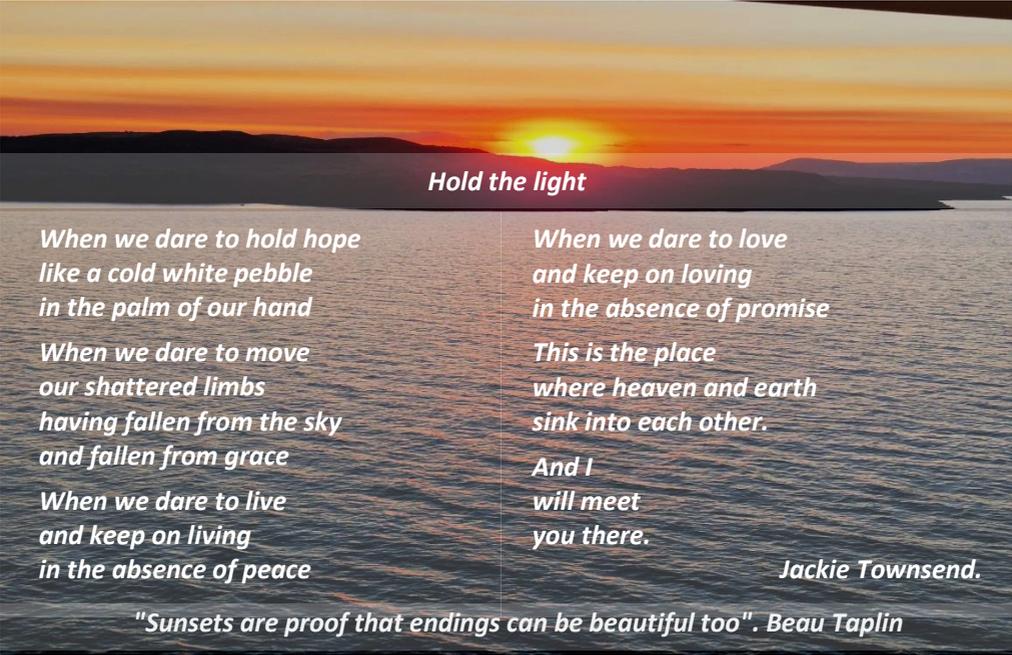
Every evening we watch the sun go down. In all my life I have never seen such astounding colours, and I find it a time for deep reflection.

There's so much anger in the world, with the wars in Gaza, Israel, Iran & not forgetting the Ukraine.

I have a close friend whose son is fighting in Gaza. She herself is a doctor there, & prays for her son's safety every day, living in hope that she never sees him as a patient. Once again, my safe life here in Eggington makes me think: "what if that was my life? How would I cope."

The only thing we have in common is that we both watch the sun go down and pray for a new day, a better day.

The world is indeed a beautiful place but war, politics, greed & the environment are destroying it. Then I turn to my own life once again, and realise how lucky we are and how we create a safe environment for ourselves often living in our own little bubble.



### ***Hold the light***

***When we dare to hold hope  
like a cold white pebble  
in the palm of our hand***

***When we dare to move  
our shattered limbs  
having fallen from the sky  
and fallen from grace***

***When we dare to live  
and keep on living  
in the absence of peace***

***When we dare to love  
and keep on loving  
in the absence of promise***

***This is the place  
where heaven and earth  
sink into each other.***

***And I  
will meet  
you there.***

***Jackie Townsend.***

***"Sunsets are proof that endings can be beautiful too". Beau Taplin***



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*Editor: The Revd Dr Gary Bowness continues his tongue-in-cheek letters from 'Uncle Eustace'...*

## ***On the perils of being a school governor***



The Rectory  
St James the Least of all

My dear Nephew Darren

I was interested to hear that from this academic year, your vicar has asked you to take his place as a school governor. A whole new world of exciting meetings is about to open up to you. Naturally, you will have been told that the governors only meet three times a year. You will probably not have been told that you will also be expected to be on at least two sub-committees, where you will be immediately asked to become secretary, as a way of getting to know the job. Add on training days, parents' evenings, sports days, school socials, end of term services, charity events and accompanying classes on days out and you will begin to realise that your vicar's suggestion was not as innocent as you may have thought.

Remember, too, that all meetings require you sit on chairs designed for five-year-olds. You will then spend countless hours going through a 40-item agenda, trying to look dignified with your knees somewhere round your ears while drawing up school plans as if they were the Normandy landing. Be prepared to receive paperwork measured by the hundredweight; entire rainforests have been obliterated by your education authority sending what they seem to think is vital information; it does, however, make good cat litter.

Most meetings will be so full of acronyms that for the first few years you will have the feeling that conversation is taking place in a language that may bear a passing resemblance to English, but isn't. There is little point in trying to learn what they all mean because before too long, they will all be replaced by another set anyway, which will be equally incomprehensible.

Your computer abilities will be expected to be far beyond what anyone over the age of 30 could ever be expected to achieve; if you sink without trace, ask a seven-year-old, who will soon put you right.

You will also be encouraged to attend training days; I strongly suggest you select all-day events, as at least you will get a lunch out of it. You needn't bother to arrive on time, since the first hour will be spent with everyone introducing themselves and you can leave early, as the final hour will go on filling in evaluation forms.

Just keep reminding yourself that your term of office is a mere five years; you may even get remission for good behaviour.

***Your loving uncle,  
Eustace***

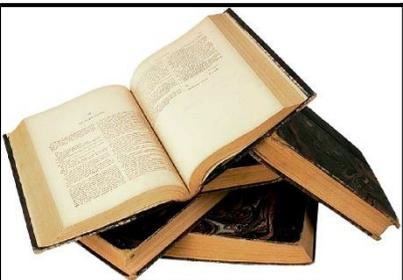
# ***Biblical Genres***

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

*This month:*

## ***The Epistles ...***

***by Rev'd Noel McGeeney***



As 21st century Christians we need to remind ourselves that the Epistles were written for 1<sup>st</sup> century audiences. The epistles were written to specific communities to address challenges or false teachings that arose and needed to be addressed. So we read them keeping in mind what is being addressed in a particular community at a particular time. I have the NRSV copy of the bible and each chapter in the epistles has a heading which helps to understand the point the author is making. Paul uses rhetoric, as in Ephesians 6:10-20, where it reads like a general rallying his troops to stand firm and hold the line.

At the time when Paul and other authors in the New Testament composed their letters, a typical letter averaged only 87 words - even more brief than 3 John (222 words) or Philemon (338 words). Even intellectuals' literary letters to peers were of limited length - e.g., Cicero's averaged about 300 words and Seneca's 1000 words.

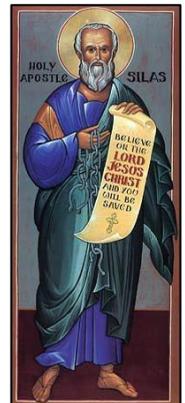
By contrast Paul's longest surviving letter, Romans, is more than 7000 words! (In antiquity, the price of a scribe and writing materials meant that producing a letter of this length could cost in the region of fifteen thousand pounds at present day costs.)

The word '*epistle*' comes from the Greek word '*epistol*' meaning a letter or a message. Epistles were written primarily as a written communication during the time of the New Testament. For example, Paul, Peter and John wrote epistles or letters to churches and individuals, such as Timothy, Titus, and Philemon.

An epistle was a letter written on a scroll most often dictated by an author to a scribe and then reviewed by the author before being delivered by a trustworthy messenger. 1st Peter, for example, mentions Silvanus or Silus, in 1st Peter 5:12. Timothy, Paul's close associate, was involved in writing down and delivering Paul's letters. Even so Paul verifies in each letter he writes that he is the author.

Epistles follow a recognisable template. For example, Paul's letters begin with an introduction where he identifies himself to his audience. He mentions any known associates and associations and gives a greeting. The introduction of an epistle is followed by the main body of the letter and concludes with a blessing and a personal note to individuals in the church he is addressing.

Epistles in the Scriptures are only found in the New Testament which contains 21 such letters, extending from Romans to Jude. 13 epistles are written by the apostle Paul.



Saint Silas

These are Romans, 1st and 2nd Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1st and 2nd Thessalonians, 1st and 2nd Timothy, Titus and Philemon.



Within the Paulian epistles are a group of letters known as the “Prison Epistles”. These are the Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians and Philemon. These epistles were written during Paul’s 2nd year under house arrest in Rome which Acts 28:30 tells us about. The Pastoral Epistles, 1st and 2nd Timothy and Titus, were written to church leaders and these include teaching focused on worship services and church order in the early church.

Following Paul’s epistles are general epistles known as the catholic epistles. These are written to a universal audience. These include Hebrews, James, 1st and 2nd Peter, 1st, 2nd and 3rd John and Jude. We don’t know who the author of Hebrews is.

The epistle of James is one of the earliest New Testament books and this was written by James, the half-brother of Jesus. Peter wrote 1st and 2nd Peter. John, the same author of the gospel of John, and Revelation, wrote 1st to 3rd John. Jude was written by Jude, another half-brother of Jesus. All these letters are inspired by the Holy Spirit and are preserved as part of the New Testament writings today.

God speaks through the Word of God. He sent his epistle in the person of the Lord Jesus to accomplish his now finished work. After this Jesus ascended to Heaven where he is now our high priest, our advocate and our intercessor. Jesus has given his people his love letter which is his revealed word. The apostles sent letters to churches to instruct the people there. Even so a letter is not very personal and so the Lord Jesus sends the Holy Spirit who uses the word of God in the life of Christians to help us walk in the Grace of God.

Philippians 2:1-11, imitating Christ’s humility, is an excellent summary from the Epistles of Paul’s Theology. I also share with you Ephesians 3:14-21 an insight into Paul’s spirituality.

As you study the epistles don’t skip over the introduction which is so critical to understand the audience being addressed. Additionally notice the structure of Paul’s argument, for example in Romans. He uses ‘therefore’ to highlight truths he’s already discussed and then he builds on them. These transition phrases help readers of the epistle understand the flow of the argument of the book. They also help readers understand the purpose of the book and so much more.

So as you read the epistles ask the Lord, through the Holy Spirit, to help you understand not only the meaning and the application of the biblical text. Also ask the Lord, through the Holy Spirit, to help you grow in skill in understanding his revealed word which tells you about his revealed plan and his revealed will for his Glory.

***Fr. Noel McGeeney***

I knew that the Mothers' Union ran successful literacy and finance programmes, enabling over 200,000 women to take ownership of their lives and change the communities around them. These women can write, budget for their families, start a business and earn income. They understand the value of education and are sending their children to school. These women are participating in their churches, and communities in leadership roles.

Karungi, from Democratic Republic of Congo says, *"I thank God for this literacy programme. I didn't know how to read and write. When I started this learning, I started to have peace."*

However, I was shocked to read that 480 million women around the world cannot read and write. This means that millions of adults cannot register the birth of their child, read a medicine packet, or apply for a job. They are excluded from so much.

Illiteracy doesn't make sense!

We all agree that access to education for children is a fundamental human right. But there are millions of women who missed being taught to read and write for a variety of reasons: because their parents could not afford to send them to school, or because of wars, or having to drop out of school due to menstruation or not having someone to escort them.

The MU literacy programme is recognised as a catalyst for personal growth as well as lifting up communities by empowering women to read, improve hygiene, join savings groups and seek elected positions.

One participant from Burundi explained *"to become a learner is to take the first step onto the ladder leading to greater capacity, respect within the family, and esteem in the community."* The impact is seen beyond individuals, and influences entire communities. Violence and abuse have reduced as women are enabled to administer and manage their own affairs and take on leadership roles in their communities. The women are no longer dependant but are seen as valuable members of their communities.

Mothers' Union in UK want to work with the new government to ensure that they prioritise women's education, regardless of their age.

**To join our campaign or for more information go to [mothersunion.org/empowerher](https://mothersunion.org/empowerher)**

**Alison Dobbie**





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