



St Mark's Parish Magazine
February 2023



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Your Views & Contributions

Next issue will be available from
5 March 2023

All contributions to the editor by
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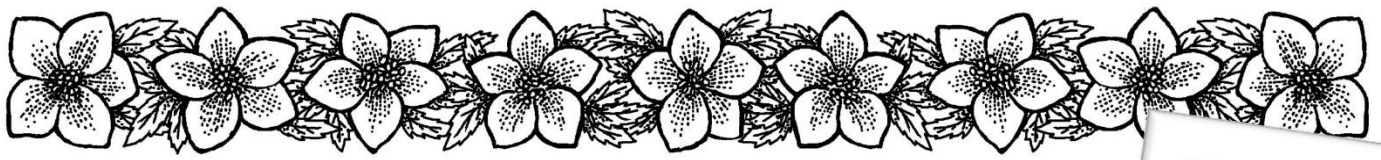
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LETTER FROM THE VICAR

Dear Friends,

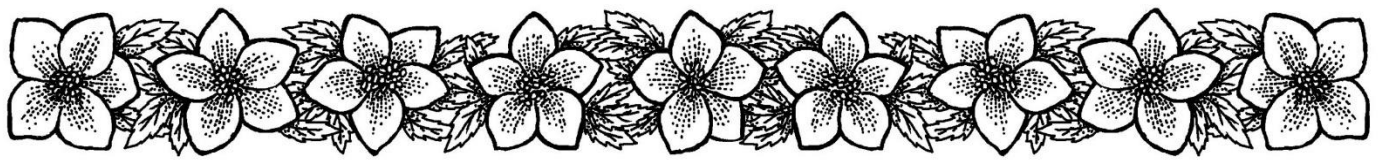
February can be a gloomy grey month. Yet amongst this greyness the occasional sunny day and the growth of the early spring flowers bring bursts of light and colour, as the cover of this month's magazine so vividly shows. In the ordinary days after Christmas and before Easter we get those brighter days too. One such day is Valentine's Day – the day where many people celebrate love.

Yet the story of St Valentine himself may not seem at first to be as bright as we might have hoped. St Valentine was a third century Roman saint associated with the tradition of courtly love. As you can read in books about the Middle Ages, the story goes that St Valentine refused to deny his love for Christ before the Roman Emperor. So, because of this, the Emperor had Valentine's head chopped off. However, before Valentine's head was toppled, the story goes on to reveal that in an act of love and compassion, Valentine restored the sight and hearing of his own executioner's daughter.

This is far removed from the vast industry of cards and gifts that have built up around St Valentine's Day, when expressions of love matter. It is at the centre of Valentine's story that we find a surprising depth and expression of love; a love that Valentine found and was inspired to follow and make his own. The love of God offered to him through Jesus. A love through which Jesus offered compassion to a world that would crucify him. A love that Valentine would share with those who jailed and executed him. A love in which Jesus would find the courage to stand up for whom he loved; each one of us, just as Valentine had the courage to stand up to the Emperor, for his love of Christ.

I hope that this Valentine's Day you will be embraced by God's love and the love of those around you. And if this Valentine's Day you intend to lose your head over love for someone special, then I pray that the Lord will bless that love, with the depth, compassion and courage displayed by St Valentine, but even more importantly, through the love God expressed in the gift of his Son Jesus. A gift that says, "I love you." So, this Valentine's Day, if the cards don't come and you're left with a feeling of unloved disappointment, I pray that you will remember the gift of true love that is Jesus, and know that whether it is Valentine's Day or not, in him, you are truly loved.

Every blessing



Laughter

I suppose we all have a sense of humour but we don't all laugh at the same things. To burst out laughing is a great relief at times, although much of what we laugh at is at the expense or the misfortune of someone else. Clowns and comedians like Norman Wisdom make many of us laugh when they trip up or fall over, but at least we know they have done that on purpose. Some people make us laugh by the face they pull or by their repartee or amusing voices.

It is interesting that babies soon develop a sense of humour, smiling first and later finding things so funny they, too might discover the joy of laughter.



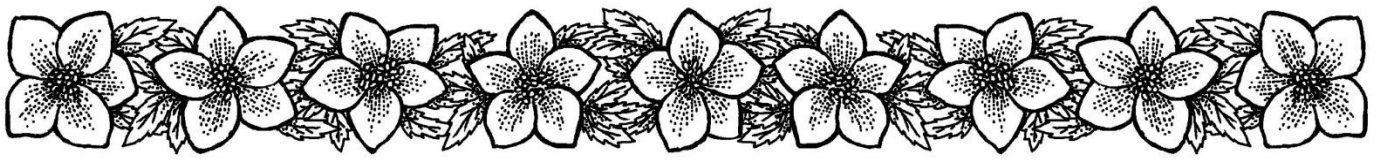
We must, of course, be in a mood for a laugh and there are times when humour is not what is required.

Of course it is unkind to laugh at other people in trouble, but it is good to encourage others to laugh at ourselves. It is interesting that laughter, like sadness or distress, can bring some of us to tears. Those two symptoms must have something in common. Some troubles we get into do not seem funny to us at the time, but later we might think they were funny after all.

On occasions we can find ourselves in great difficulty when we see something as really funny but are too embarrassed to laugh, such as in church. I remember years ago when our niece, Judy and nephew, Tim, acted a serious Nativity play in the lounge for the rest of the family. Tim took the part of the 3 wise men. It was so funny but none of us could laugh until they were out of the room preparing the next scene.

We don't read of laughter much in the Bible but I feel sure Jesus had some laughs with his disciples, and others. In the old musical "Godspell" Jesus was portrayed as a clown and at one time one of the Canons in Southwark Cathedral was a clown and put his messages across, dressed as such. His name was Roly Bain and with Patrick Forbes wrote the book "Clowning Glory" as a resource book for clowns of all ages. As clowns they were a great resource for children, whatever their age, and adults as well.

Ian Archer



The Language of Love

Valentine's Day reminds us of the importance of expressing our love to those close to us. But how can we go beyond simply offering flowers and a card? Jesus says: "*A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another*" (John 13.34). How can we express love like Jesus in our everyday relationships to our partner, children, neighbours or work colleagues?

Listening

We need to listen to others, just as Jesus did. He asked questions of people and waited for them to process their answer. According to James, "*everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry*" (James 1.19). How well do we listen to others? How often do we find ourselves already thinking of what we want to say before somebody's finished speaking? Listening takes time; don't rush it!

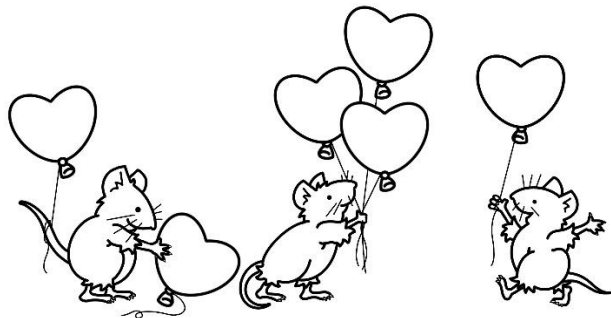
Touching

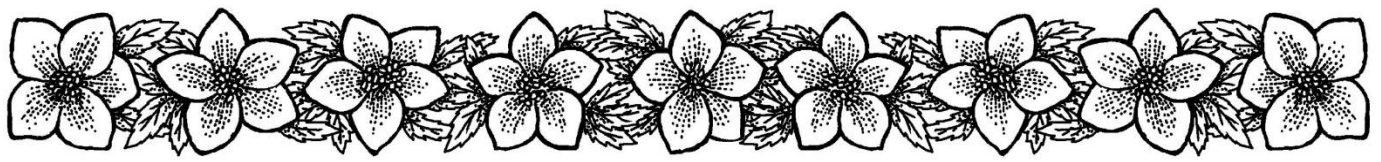
Jesus reached out to touch the untouchables in his world, including lepers, the sick and children. This was completely out of character for rabbis of his day. For us today, a warm handshake may be of value. Of course, it should always be an *appropriate* touch – helpful for the other person, not just for ourselves.

Speaking

Jesus' conversation was always full of grace and truth (John 1.14). Do we speak words of *grace*, by offering comfort, giving encouragement or expressing care and concern? However, we should also be ready to speak words of *truth*, in asking for forgiveness, seeking reconciliation or addressing conflict. As St Paul urges us, don't avoid: "*speaking the truth in love*".

Where is the challenge for us in expressing love this Valentine's Day?





News from the Church of England

Archbishop of Canterbury FC lace up for green campaign alongside Premier League stars

The Archbishop of Canterbury's football team will host a 'green' football match as part of a national campaign to raise awareness of the Climate Crisis with football the focus for practical steps to reduce carbon.

More than 80 top football clubs will join forces against climate change in the world's biggest football campaign to protect our world, 'Green Football Weekend'.

The Green Football Weekend campaign will culminate in fixtures to be played across the country on the weekend of 3-5 February.

Clubs across the top divisions are battling it out for the coveted Green Football Cup. But unlike other tournaments, it's fan action that will decide who takes the Cup home, with fans scoring 'green goals' for their club by taking climate-friendly actions – from eating a vegetarian meal to turning the thermostat down one degree or taking a shorter shower.

The competition will culminate in Green Football Weekend on 3-5 February, when clubs will join fans in implementing changes by making their fixtures 'greener games', and some teams will wear green armbands to show their support for protecting our world.

Ahead of this, the Archbishop of Canterbury's Football Team laced up their boots on Saturday 21st January. Their opponents were the 'Heaven Help Us' Football Team. Heaven Help Us is a nationwide interfaith community using sport to allow faith communities to positively engage through activity and creates a forum where identities and differences can be celebrated rather than becoming divisive.

During the game and its preparations, the teams participated in several 'green goals' including taking public transport or walking to the match, eating a vegetarian meal, and bringing their own water bottles and coffee cups.

In February 2020, the Church of England committed to a target of reaching net-zero carbon by 2030, with churches, schools and buildings beginning to show progress, as shown by a [report](#) published before Christmas.

The Archbishop of Canterbury FC was founded by Revd Pouya Heidari, a former professional player in Iran, and played its first game in February 2020. It is formed of clergy and ministers from around the Church of England.

Anyone can participate in the Green Football Weekend campaign. Fans can choose their activities and register their goals at greenfootballweekend.com.

The campaign, which is set to become an annual event, is backed by more than 30 major supporters, including the FA, the EFL, the WSL, the National Trust, RSPB and the Church of England.

The Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, said "I'm so pleased that ABC FC is supporting the Green Football Weekend.

"Football is a wonderful way to bring people together around a shared passion and purpose – and there is no greater goal than addressing the climate crisis together.

"For me as a Christian, following Jesus has to mean tackling climate change: it's about loving our neighbour and protecting the world that God has created.

"I'll be praying for all the teams taking part in the Green Football Weekend campaign, and praying too that it inspires fans and communities to score plenty of 'green goals' along the way."

Full article available on the Church of England website.

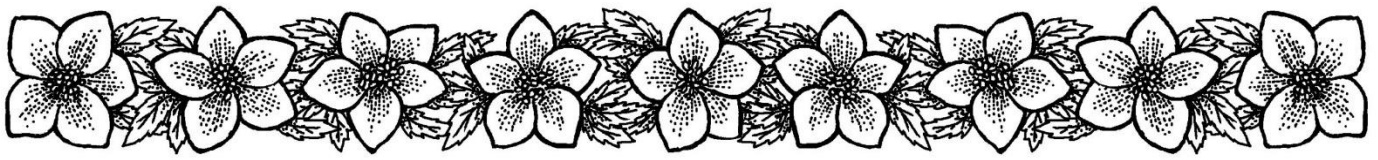
It's a small world

Over sixty years ago Chris and I used to take in students in the summer to supplement my income and help them learn English. One surprise was a tall handsome Swiss boy who spoke English fluently and excelled at other subjects including music. He played the piano but resisted my attempts to get him to play for us. When finally I succeeded he looked hard and long at the keyboard as if it might be different in the UK. Then, after a few tentative notes he thrust forth so that classical music flowed from his fingers like water.

Later he learned to speak three Chinese dialects and held appointments with the Swiss government there and also with Swiss banks. We keep in touch at Christmas by card and phone.

Today we had our conversation and I learned that he had been on his "PCC" for forty years and unsurprisingly was his church organist. Then he mentioned that he finds our magazine most interesting and reads it every month; this also took my breath away. It's a small world.

Harry Ingram



Hints about prayer this Lent

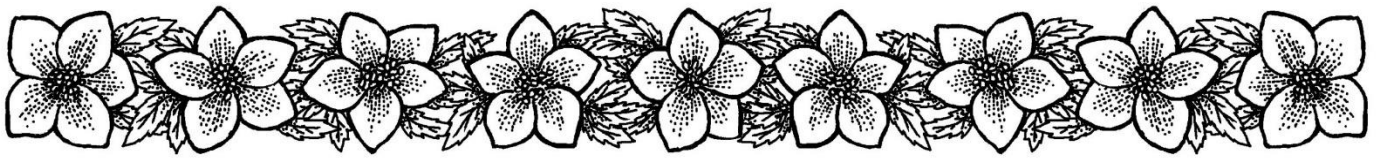
Prayer is instinctive for human beings, even those who don't regard themselves as religious. You are standing at a bus stop in the wind and the rain, thinking "I do hope the bus will come soon." It's an inner yearning. It defies logic: either the bus is coming, or it isn't. But we all do it. It's instinctive and it's the raw material of prayer. Hoping for something better is basic. Like all instincts, it needs to be trained.

To whom do we pray? What you pray, and the way you do it will be shaped by your view of God. Christian prayers are fashioned by what we know of Jesus and what he taught about prayer.

We pray by invitation. Again and again, Jesus encouraged his companions to pray. A couple of his parables on the subject have been misinterpreted as instructions to persuade a resistant God to do what we want. Have a look at Luke 18, verses 1-8, about a widow whose perseverance finally persuaded an unwilling judge to rule in her favour. The lesson is that God is *not* like that! Similarly, an unwelcome neighbour who persistently calls for help in the middle of the night gets what he wants (Luke 11.5-13). The lesson? If tenacious lobbying can overcome human unwillingness, *how much more* our gracious God will heed his children's cry.

Pushing at an open door. Jesus is already praying for us. So, when we start to pray, we step on to an already moving staircase. Sometimes prayer seems tougher than it need be. Jesus invited us to be linked to him, in the way an inexperienced bullock is yoked to a mature ox. Have a look at Matthew 11.28-29, which concludes "for my yoke is easy and my burden is light". When Marion Bartoli unexpectedly won the 2013 Women's Wimbledon final, she said "I believe if you put all your heart and effort into everything you are doing, then God is there to help you."

Is your prayer on the right lines? Try adding "for Christ's sake" at the end. "Please let my marrow win the Gardening Club competition"? No. "Not my will but yours" is the key. So when praying, don't give God instructions, just report for duty.



Bishop Rosemarie writes:

The end of January in the Christian calendar mops up the last vestiges of the Christmas and Epiphany Season, and after the service of Candlemas, in some churches the figures from the Christmas tableau will finally be packed away. Our gaze then moves from the crib to the cross, as the journey from Christmas joins with the journey towards Easter. Before we get there however, there are a few weeks of what is euphemistically called ordinary time.



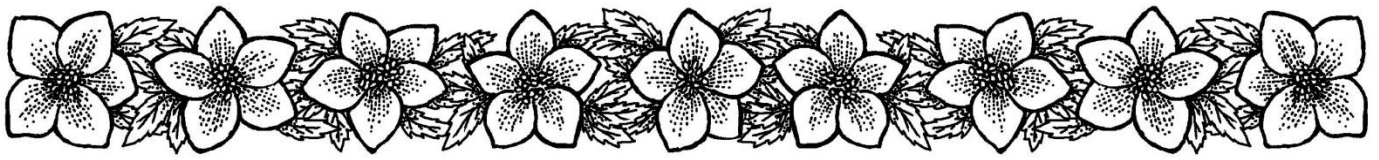
That word ordinary was much in my mind on January 27 as we commemorated the ordinary people who were very much a part of the extraordinary horrors of the Shoah, the genocidal murder of over 6 million Jewish people and millions of others ordinary people deemed subhuman by the Nazi power regime. Sometimes when we review extraordinary events from the perspective of history, we too easily forget that those involved, both victims and perpetrators, were ordinary people for the most – just like us.

Over these next few weeks of ordinary time, a number of events will take place, some so taken for granted we often overlook their effect on us and the world around and others much more extraordinary and impactful. The days will slowly brighten, the new buds of spring will break forth, the birdsong more voluble as they return from foreign climes. New ministries, lay and ordained, will begin in our churches, and in the Kingston Area, we particularly pray for the new bishop of Kingston, Bishop Martin, who will be consecrated on Candlemas day. Gold will give way to green, and then to purple as we move towards Lent. We will once again hear the call to ordinary people, fisherfolk, tax collectors and sinners, to follow the God made manifest in Christ, on the road and to the cross.

But all that is yet to come, and for now, we enter February still looking to the light that has come to lighten the gentiles: "A glory dawns in every dark place, the light of Christ, the fullness of grace".

+Rosemarie Gordon

Bishop Rosemarie will be leading our worship and preaching at the 10am Service on Sunday 19th February. Please come and meet her in person in her first visit to the parish.



Weather

In this country we have always been able to start a conversation with a comment on the weather, as it is so variable. However this might become more difficult if we continue to get long periods of drought, or rain, or freezing conditions, as the situation no longer changes quickly enough and is not a pleasant subject to start with.

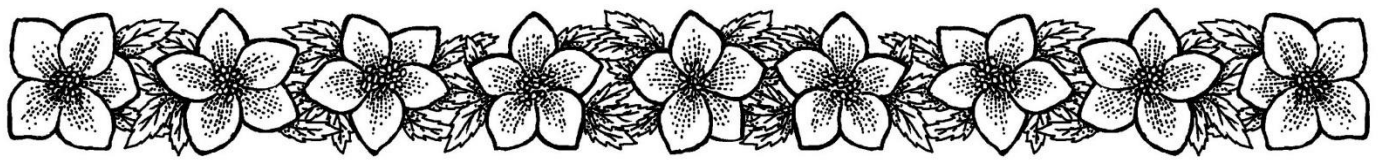
Although we might believe that God is providing whatever weather we are having, we now can see the effect on our weather systems of global warming, not God's fault, but ours.

If, as often seems to be the case, the weather does not suit us as we would wish, it might suit others, such as farmers, better. Also it seems to me to be like driving on the motorway when there is a traffic jam in the other direction. Part of us is sympathetic for them and part is just grateful that we are all right going this way. So, when we hear of bad weather up north we partly sympathise with those enduring such troubles but are just glad it isn't us.

We might also be tempted from time to time to spoil what would be good news now by saying that the forecast for the future is terrible. But perhaps that does not just apply to the weather. Even if we can find some good news on the television we can, as pessimists, qualify our delight by saying worse news is sure to come. I suppose most of us want to be optimists, but we can't always think that way.

People of my advanced age remember times when we didn't worry about being too cold or too hot. We were brought up without central heating or air conditioning which is now available not only in houses, but in all forms of transport and entertainment. This year we have once again been brought face to face with the cost of such universal heating and cooling, and maybe many of us will have to, for the present, suffer more from what we see as inclement weather and find something else to start our conversations with others.

Ian Archer



Ukraine – one year on

On 24th February 2022, Russia invaded Ukraine without warning. Ukraine had been part of the Soviet Union 1922-1991 and even before that had been overshadowed and often overpowered by its larger neighbour. In 1932 millions of Ukrainians were deliberately starved to death in a famine, contrived by Joseph Stalin. This genocide, or Holodomor, is commemorated every year on the fourth Saturday in November.

The area had been overrun for centuries by successive external forces, until absorbed by Russia. In 1991, when the USSR was dissolved, Ukraine voted for independence, by a huge majority. There are still pro-Russian minorities in the East of the country, as there were in Crimea before 2014, when it was annexed by Russia.

In the last 12 months, one-quarter of the civilian population of Ukraine has been displaced, with 5+ million refugees escaping for temporary sanctuary in other countries. 95% of them are women and children. They have had to learn new languages (and a new script), find jobs and schools, and become accustomed to foreign cultures. When it seems safe, they want to return home and some have already done so.

The UK government, in partnership with County and District Councils, launched the Homes for Ukraine scheme last year. Would-be homes were inspected, and prospective hosts checked out for suitability and safety. A young Ukrainian woman lived in my home for six months before returning to Kyiv. In that time my pantry and fridge made room for bulgar wheat, lots of mushrooms and Salo, which is the name for slabs of cold cured pork fat, and much tastier than it sounds!

Most Ukrainians count themselves as Christian, including a number of Greek-Catholics, but the majority belong to what was the Russian Orthodox Church, and is now the independent Ukrainian Orthodox Church. The two churches separated after the Moscow patriarchate backed President Putin.

The Archbishop of Canterbury visited Kyiv in December and had to take cover in a bomb shelter when air raid warnings were sounded. He said the people of the West needed to realise the costs of this war were not short term, adding "there must be no way in which we force peace on Ukraine ... Peace is always better than war. But there are times when justice demands the defeat of an evil invasion."

One year on there is still an urgent need for British people to open their homes to Ukrainian refugees.



St Mark's Church Centre, Alma Road, RH2 0DA

Fridays 10.00am – 12.00pm

(except 30 December) until the end of March 2023

Tea and
Coffee and a
warm space
to meet
others

**All are
welcome**



CALENDAR FOR FEBRUARY 2023

Wednesday 1 st February	3.25pm	T-Time Tales
Thursday 2 nd February	12.45pm	Holy Communion (Iona) in Church
Friday 3 rd February	10.00am	Warm Space in the Hall

Sunday 5th February	3rd Sunday before Lent (<i>Green Sunday</i>)
	8.00am Holy Communion (BCP) – in the Hall
	10.00am Sung Eucharist – in the Hall and Online
	4.00pm Family Service – in the Hall

Wednesday 8 th February	3.25pm	T-Time Tales
Thursday 9 th February	12.45pm	Holy Communion (Iona) in Church
Friday 10 th February	10.00am	Warm Space in the Hall

Sunday 12th February	2nd Sunday before Lent
	8.00am Holy Communion (BCP) – in Church
	10.00am Sung Eucharist – in Church and Online with Junior Church

Thursday 16 th February	12.45pm	Holy Communion (Iona) in Church
Friday 17 th February	10.00am	Warm Space in the Hall
Saturday 18 th February	8.00pm	Social Ballroom and Latin Dance in the Hall

Sunday 19th February	Sunday before Lent
	8.00am Holy Communion (BCP) – in Church
	10.00am Sung Eucharist – in Church and Online Bishop Rosemarie will be with us
	4.00pm Messy Church

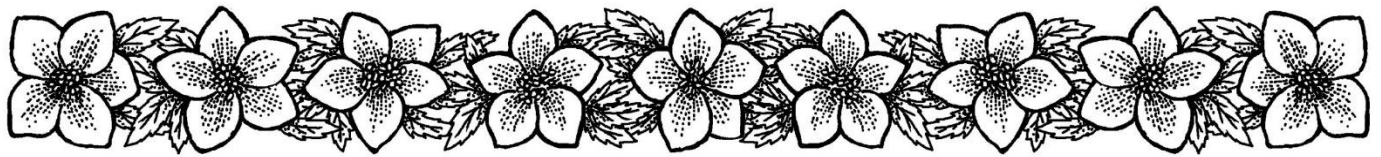
Wednesday 22nd Feb	Ash Wednesday	
	11.00am Holy Communion with Ashing	
	3.25pm T-Time Tales	
	8.00pm Sung Eucharist with Ashing	
Thursday 23 rd February	12.45pm	Holy Communion (Iona) in Church
Friday 24 th February	10.00am	Warm Space in the Hall

Sunday 26th February	1st Sunday of Lent
	8.00am Holy Communion (BCP) – in Church
	10.00am Sung Eucharist – in Church and Online with Junior Church
	6.00pm Taizé Prayer

Please remember that planned services are subject to change at short notice so please check the details on our website or with the Parish Office.

CALENDAR FOR MARCH 2023

Wednesday 1st March	St David – Patron of Wales 3.25pm T-Time Tales 8.00pm Lent Course – on Zoom
Thursday 2 nd March	11.00am Lent Course in Church 12.45pm Holy Communion (Iona) in Church
Friday 3 rd March	10.00am Warm Space in the Hall
Sunday 5th March	2nd Sunday of Lent (<i>Green Sunday</i>) 8.00am Holy Communion (BCP) – in the Hall 10.00am Sung Eucharist – in the Hall and Online 4.00pm Family Service – in the Hall
Wednesday 8 th March	3.25pm T-Time Tales 8.00pm Lent Course – on Zoom
Thursday 9 th March	11.00am Lent Course in Church 12.45pm Holy Communion (Iona) in Church
Friday 10 th March	10.00am Warm Space in the Hall
Sunday 12th March	3rd Sunday of Lent 8.00am Holy Communion (BCP) – in Church 10.00am Sung Eucharist – in Church and Online with Junior Church
Wednesday 15 th March	3.25pm T-Time Tales
Thursday 16 th March	12.45pm Holy Communion (Iona) in Church
Friday 17th March	St Patrick – Patron of Ireland 10.00am Warm Space in the Hall
Saturday 18 th March	8.00pm Social Ballroom and Latin Dance in the Hall
Sunday 19th March	4th Sunday of Lent (<i>Mothering Sunday</i>) 8.00am Holy Communion (BCP) – in Church 10.00am Sung Eucharist – in Church and Online 4.00pm Messy Church
Wednesday 22 nd March	3.25pm T-Time Tales 8.00pm Lent Course – on Zoom
Thursday 23 rd March	11.00am Lent Course in Church 12.45pm Holy Communion (Iona) in Church
Friday 24 th March	10.00am Warm Space in the Hall
Saturday 25th March	The Annunciation
Sunday 26th March	5th Sunday of Lent 8.00am Holy Communion (BCP) – in Church 10.00am Sung Eucharist – in Church and Online with Junior Church
Wednesday 29 th March	6.00pm Taizé Prayer 3.25pm T-Time Tales
Thursday 30 th March	8.00pm Lent Course – on Zoom 11.00am Lent Course in Church 12.45pm Holy Communion (Iona) in Church
Friday 31 st March	10.00am Warm Space in the Hall



Lent Course 2023: A Place For Us



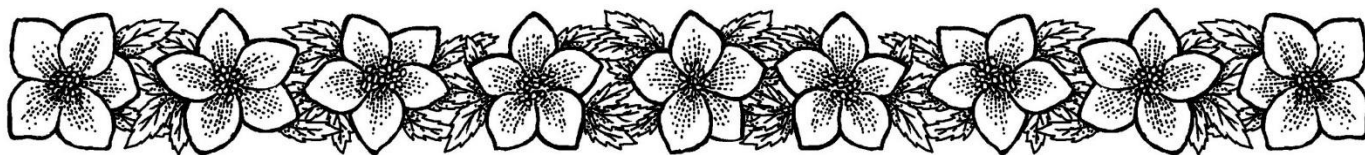
This Lent, as a Parish, we will be following a new Lent Course written by Lavinia Byrne and Jane McBride. *A Place For Us* is an original course based on the recent film production of *West Side Story* directed by Steven Spielberg and featuring the songs of Stephen Sondheim and Leonard Bernstein of the original stage musical and earlier film version.

Through study and discussion of key scenes from the movie, related to Lent passages from scripture, Lavinia Byrne and Jane McBride help us to reflect on fear, love, betrayal, death and reconciliation.

For each session, preparatory material including a Gospel reading is provided for each participant to reflect on the themes before meeting together. The group sessions will include a clip from the film, together with discussion points and questions.

The sessions will be on: Wednesday evenings at 8.00pm on Zoom (link available from the Parish Office), repeated on Thursday mornings at 11.00am in Church beginning Wednesday 1st March and Thursday 2nd March.

If you wish to join either the Wednesday or Thursday groups, please contact the Parish Office.



Part 1: An Unexceptional Life

(Editor's Note: Any similarity between anyone, or any organisation living, dead or defunct in these stories is purely accidental or more likely a trick of your fertile imagination.)

Fred's early education was fragmented by the war and especially the Blitz so it was something of a surprise when having been rejected by his first choice he found himself in 1945 at a grammar school. There was no conversion. His interest was still mainly in sport; rugby, cricket, athletics and cross country running. Even there, although he was always someone you wanted in the team, his results were mediocre. Except that is when at his desk during class. There he achieved tries and centuries and contemplated the next fixture, but learned to think quickly when interrupted by the intrusive questioning from the teacher. He was happy to be middle of his class. But after four years he realised that soon he would need to find a job and that inspired him to give more attention to academia and the approaching General Schools Exams.

There was a Parents' Evening and the next day the conversation in class was around who would be trying for the sixth form and maybe university. There were very few. But it emerged that his parents had easily been persuaded that this should include him only they had forgotten to pass it on. So now he was perplexed: had the master confused him with someone else, but also a sense of escape: work postponed! That year his efforts had been rewarded by a coming second in Maths and first by a good margin in English. This latter was another surprise for all since he was a slow reader and hated grammar. Perhaps the papers had been mixed up.

The curriculum offered in the sixth form meant he had to drop both Maths and English but continue with his worst subject French. Occasionally he almost enjoyed his studies especially writing history essays, but cricket and rugby still came first and he was strong armed into the chess team which was short. Going to uni. was now on the cards with a lot of pressure from the staff. At the LSE interview he was offered a place, apparently not grudgingly, but advised to go to Nottingham where Professor Tew was well respected and "living away from home would be good for you." That sounded like a dose of unpalatable medicine.

At first he found the level a bit high till he understood that so many he was competing with had been heavily coached at school, whereas at his school the Form Master had made plain from the outset that if those in his class were to prosper, it would be by their own efforts and not his. So he was used to setting his own standards and targets and working to them. He made the third fifteen and sometimes played for the first

eleven, but sport was now second to his subjects and in his third year he became obsessed with Economics and often led the seminars. His argumentative streak stood him in good stead. His professor expressed his sympathy that he had been unable to award Fred a first. But Fred already knew that only one first had been given in economics since the university advanced from college status to set its own degrees, a few years before the war. Today, on average, 37% get firsts.

True to form he had only in his third year began to occasionally wonder how he might earn a living. First he had two years National Service but it was as well to have something to start with when one came out. Over coffee, Prof. Tew floated the advantage of the Inland Revenue. It could lead to a top post in a large company. So, after Finals, back to revision for the Public Service Exams, and interviews. He nearly gave the whole idea up when cross examined on economics by a lunatic who persistently failed to understand that $C+I=Y$ and $C + S =Y$ and that investment generated savings and not the other way round. How thick can you get? Unfortunately he made that clear. That may have ruled him out for the Admin but he accepted a place in the Inland Revenue.

He then forgot it all and played a part in an army training wing. Demobbed, he found himself working in the local tax office and struggling with the huge memory requirements of the internal exams. In two weeks he was expected to read, understand and then learn 240 tax cases. He failed both his first and second level exams. Whilst he had never felt an academic he had always managed to get through exams and his degree quality had been quite good so this was something of an humiliation. It also cost him over two years through the need to re-sit. Should he try elsewhere? But district work went well and he was sent on district charge at the first opportunity.

At his induction interview from his somewhat geriatric and distant new boss, who persistently got his name wrong he received the best advice of his life: "be yourself." That sounds juvenile but he was to observe the stresses created in others who tried to be what they were not. Nevertheless, in management as well as his interviews there was a lot to learn about others as well as his own self. At the end of four years he was judged to be a success and time for experience at head office. It came about this way.

One morning a gravel voice on the phone announced that he was wanted the next day at Room 101 West Wing of Somerset House at nine o'clock. Fred protested that he already had an interview at that time. The gravelly voice responded, "I thought I was clear. You will be at room 101 at nine o'clock and don't be late." End of conversation. Fred phoned a friend at Personnel which was later termed "Human resources," presumably to make clear whose side it was on. "That was Percy," his friend said. "No one ever disobeys Percy. He can get quite nasty even when there is nothing wrong!"

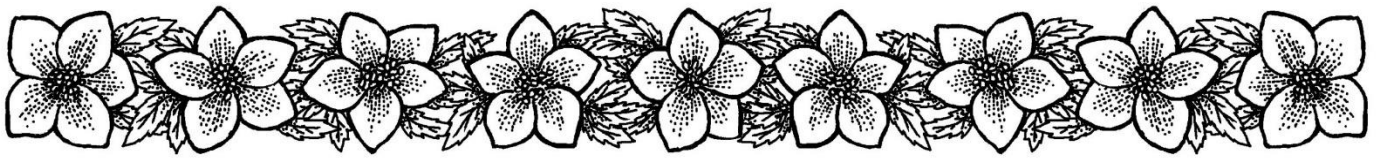
At ten to nine at Room 101 his friend said all he knew was that Fred was to see the Deputy Chief Inspector (DCI). At 9.00, a grizzled face looked round the door. "I see you are in time," and withdrew. "That was Percy. He's an acquired taste," said his friend, "if you last that long!"

The DCI was quite different. "If you had your choice, which department would you choose to serve in?" "Er, um, I suppose Enquiry Branch." "What with those thugs? Surely you can do better than that." No answer, several of his friends were in Enquiry Branch and though direct Scots, could hardly be termed "thugs!".

The DCI continued: "Well, Lord Fulton has decided that ..." The new boy interrupted: "that there shall be no real or psychological barriers to the recruitment of HM Inspectors of Taxes." The DCI was impressed. "How did you know that? Has 101 been leaky?" Fred, now more at ease: "I picked it up through the AIT (Association of HM Inspectors of Taxes), of which I am secretary, and which thinks it may be worth a modest pay claim" said Fred." "Well, there is to be a new post at PSRB (Public Service Recruitment Board) and you will fill it. Percy will give you the details. Don't let me down." Back to 101 to find where Percy had his lair.

Hopefully to be continued next month.

Harry Ingram



Vanity

Am I a vain person? I don't admire myself in any mirror and am just a little horrified at my appearance after nearly 90 years in which I have been wearing out.

Maybe we can find how vain we are by comparing ourselves to animals. Dogs are not usually too proud of their appearance. However in my youth my parents had 2 golden retrievers that had been puppies from the same litter. One was more handsome than the other and he knew it. On the one occasion when he was too slow to get through the door the tip of his tail was nipped and he was most offended.

Cats are especially vain creatures and so often can be seen preening themselves to look at their best. In Paul Gallico's book *Jennie*, a boy turned into a cat and had to learn how to hesitate before entering a room and to preen himself as necessary.

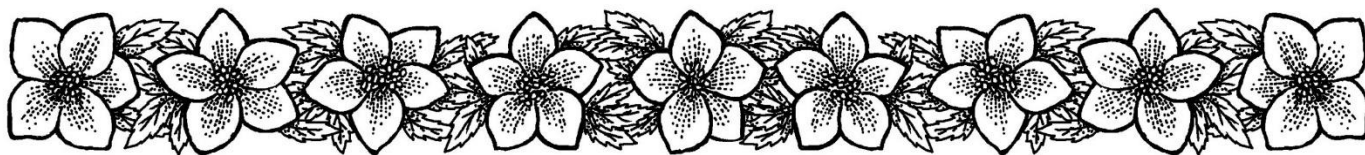
I like to be "properly" dressed for special occasions but I don't see that as vanity but a respect for others that I am with.

When I was an articled clerk in the City in the 1950s I went to London on the train wearing a suit, a tie and starched collars, a black bowler hat and carried a rolled up umbrella. At that time many did the same. A Swedish friend photographed me in this rig and without my permission the photo was later on display in a camera shop in Sweden. I enclose a copy of a Christmas card painted for me when I cycled to the station in Fleet.



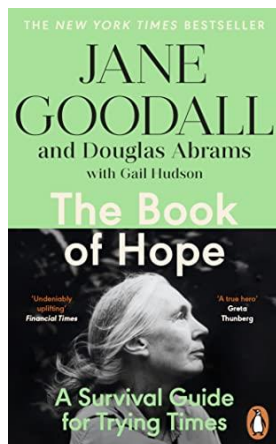
Thinking of people in general, perhaps most of us are not quite satisfied with our appearance and would like to have it changed in a small or even larger way.

Dustin Hoffman in directing the lovely film "Quartet" realised that most of the actors were Old Age pensioners. By mistake he looked at his mobile phone the wrong way round and saw himself as he really was, and suddenly appreciated how old he was, too. Perhaps if we see ourselves the wrong way round on our phones we will surprise ourselves, too.



Book Review

This month we review: The Book of Hope



As I searched through Waterstones looking for my next book to read, I came across this book. My son had been learning about Jane Goodall at school and all I really knew about her was she was the chimpanzee lady but this book caught my eye.

A book of hope, post-Christmas; worn out and feeling the winter blues, 'a survival guide for trying times' felt like just what I needed, so I picked it up.

This book is written as a conversation between Douglas Abrams and Jane Goodall giving an insight into her views and feelings on hope and the four reasons she believes we should be hopeful about the future of the planet, even in the face of the climate crisis, loss of biodiversity and political unrest.

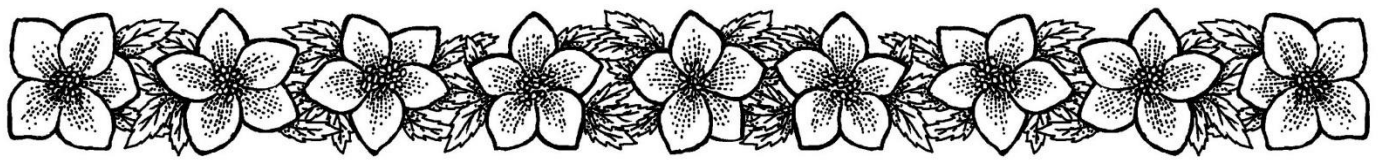
She goes on to explain that human intelligence, the resilience of nature, the power of young people and the indomitable human spirit give us reasons to be optimistic. Jane gives examples and stories from her own experience and talks about some of the amazing people and initiatives which are going on to fight for our future.

Throughout this book of intimate conversation, I felt like I was sitting with Jane, beside a fireplace or curled up with her dog, listening to her talk and tell stories about her life. I felt comforted and safe, like an invited guest into her home and life, listening like one might listen to a grandparent talk about their personal memories and experiences.

A lady of nearly 90, she still works hard for her causes and travels around the world teaching and educating people about conversation and the climate crisis. She is formidable and an inspiration. She has so much passion and energy, even compared to me over 50 years her junior.

Jane is clearly someone with love and compassion in her heart and this book has given me hope for the future and encouragement to do better.

Have you recently read a good book? Tell us about it. Email magazinestnarkreigate@gmail.com with your book review.



Reader recipes

If you are looking for something new for breakfast, a new way to start the day with added gusto. Take a look at this recipe.

Overnight oats

Ingredients:-

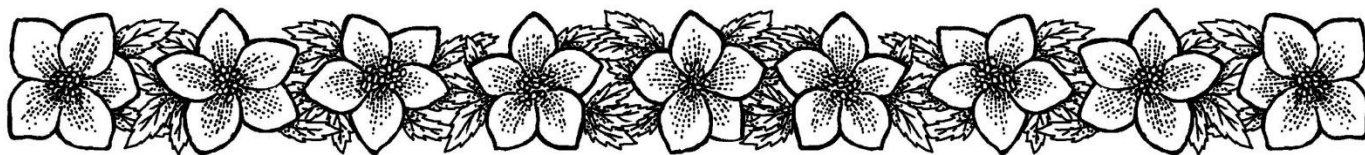
- ¼ tsp ground cinnamon
- 50g rolled porridge oats
- 1 tbsp of chia seeds
- 1 tsp of cacao powder (or cocoa)
- 100 ml of milk
- 2 tbsp natural yogurt
- 50g mixed berries
- drizzle of honey
- ½ tbsp nut butter (we used almond)



Method:-

1. The night before serving, stir the cinnamon, chia seeds and cacao powder and 100ml of milk into your oats with a pinch of salt.
2. The next day, loosen with a little more water (or milk) if needed. Top with the yogurt, berries, a drizzle of honey and the nut butter.

Recipe adapted from Good Food magazine. If you have a recipe you'd like to share email us at magazine@stmarksreigate.co.uk.



Breathe Deep

Now here's a trick that you probably haven't tried before: next time you forget something, try taking some deep breaths.

It seems that inhaling stimulates our brain, creating electrical activity where emotions, memory and smells are processed. In a recent American study, individuals were able to identify a face two seconds more quickly if they were breathing in through the nose, rather than breathing out.

The study was carried out at North-western University in Chicago, and it may also explain why we breath rapidly when afraid. "If you are in a panic state, you spend proportionally more time inhaling. Faster breathing could have a positive impact on brain function and result in faster response times."

Puzzles

February Sudoku Puzzle

1	9					5		8
	2	6		3	8	1		9
8				7		4		
				9				6
3	4		8		6		1	7
2				1				
		4		8				1
7		3	9	2		6	5	
6		2					8	3

January Solution

3	4	9	5	8	1	6	2	7
8	2	6	3	7	4	1	9	5
7	5	1	6	9	2	3	8	4
4	9	3	7	2	8	5	1	6
1	8	5	9	3	6	7	4	2
2	6	7	4	1	5	9	3	8
9	3	4	8	6	7	2	5	1
5	7	2	1	4	9	8	6	3
6	1	8	2	5	3	4	7	9

February Crossword

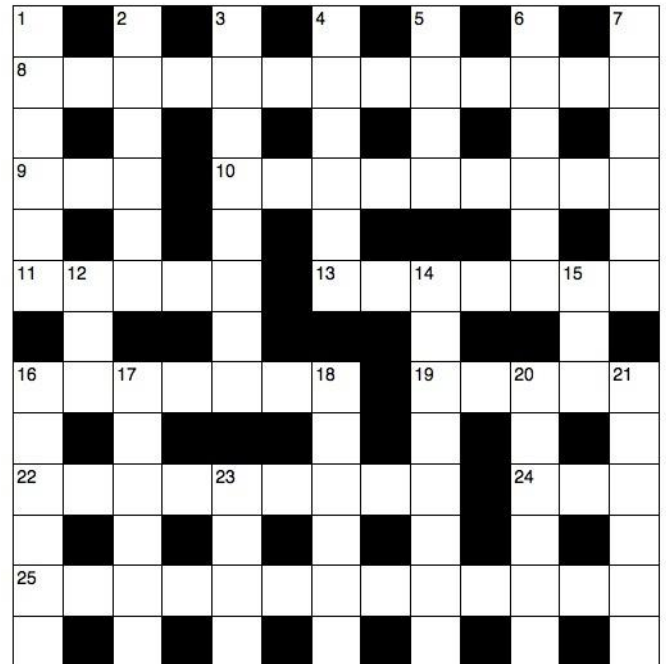
Biblical references are from the New International Version

Across

- 8 Interrogated (Acts 12:19) (5-8)
 9 'Burn it in a wood fire on the — heap' (Leviticus 4:12) (3)
 10 Tobit, Judith, Baruch and the books of Esdras and the Maccabees are part of it (9)
 11 Science fiction (abbrev.) (3-2)
 13 Clay pit (anag.) (7)
 16 Went to (John 4:46) (7)
 19 'Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to — your bodies as living sacrifices' (Romans 12:1) (5)
 22 David's plea to God concerning those referred to in 14 Down: 'On — — let them escape' (Psalm 56:7) (2,7)
 24 Royal Automobile Club (1,1,1) 25 How the book of Ezekiel refers to God more than 200 times (Ezekiel 2:4) (9,4)

Down

- 1 Seas (Proverbs 8:24) (6)
 2 One of the sons of Eli the priest, killed in battle by the Philistines (1 Samuel 4:11) (6)
 3 Specialist in the study of the Muslim religion (8)
 4 'Do not rebuke an older man harshly, but — him as if he were your father' (1 Timothy 5:1) (6)
 5 One of Esau's grandsons (Genesis 36:11) (4)
 6 Taking a chance (colloq.) (2,4)
 7 God's instructions to the Israelites concerning grain offerings: ' — salt to — your offerings' (Leviticus 2:13) (3,3)
 12 Confederation of British Industry (1,1,1)
 14 'All day long they twist my words; they are always — to harm me' (Psalm 56:5) (8)
 15 The crowd's reaction to Jesus bringing back to life a widow's son in Nain (Luke 7:16) (3)
 16 Disappear (Psalm 104:35) (6)
 17 How Jeremiah was likely to die if he wasn't rescued from the cistern where he was imprisoned (Jeremiah 38:9) (6)
 18 What the prophets do to a wall, with whitewash (Ezekiel 13:10, RSV) (4,2)
 20 Made by a plough (Job 39:10) (6)
 21 Noah was relieved when the flood waters continued to — (Genesis 8:5) (6)
 23 Jesus gave the Twelve the power and authority to do this to diseases (Luke 9:1) (4)



January answers

ACROSS: 1 Cock 3 Shackles 8 Play 9 Paradise 11 Faithfully 14 Enmesh 15 Unseen
 17 Armageddon 20 Benjamin 21 Beri 22 Capitals 23 USPG

DOWN: 1 Cup of tea 2 Charisma 4 Heap up 5 Challenged 6 Lois 7 Slew 10 The Servant
 12 Lewdness 13 Unending 16 Daniel 18 BBFC 19 Snap



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