

# Crosstalk 60p

The Parish Magazine of St Bartholomew with St Chad  
[www.thurstaston.org.uk](http://www.thurstaston.org.uk)



THE CHURCH  
OF ENGLAND  
Diocese of Chester

Now these three continue . . .



Of these, the greatest is . . . 1 Cor 13:13

## "Cross Talk Subscription for 2024 is £6"

These are now due for 2024. If you see your deliverer please pay them.

Alternatively either post a cheque for £6.00 payable to Thurstaston PCC,  
to St Chad's Church Office, Roslin Road, Irby, CH61 3UH

or pay on-line at 40.52.40 00018674,  
putting your surname and mag subs as reference.

- I live in the parish and would like (to continue) to have Cross Talk delivered to my house. I enclose £6.00
- I don't live in the parish and would like (to continue) to have Cross Talk posted to my house. I enclose £16.00 (£6.00 subscription + £10.00 postage)
- I would like to pick up my reserved copy of CrossTalk from Church. (*Please indicate whether St Chad's or St Bartholomew's*). I enclose £6.00
- I no longer wish to have Cross Talk delivered/posted to my house

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Tel. No. (optional) \_\_\_\_\_

St Bartholomew and St Chad takes its duty and obligation to protect all extremely seriously. We have adopted the national Church of England's robust procedures and guidelines. You can find out more about the national policies and procedures at [www.churchofengland.org/safeguarding](http://www.churchofengland.org/safeguarding)

**Safeguarding is  
Everyone's  
Responsibility**

\*\*\*\*\*  
\* "Your magazine needs you" \*  
\* Please send your contributions \*  
\* (eg. Poems. Prayers, interesting \*  
\* articles etc.,) \*  
\* to office@thurstaston.org.uk \*  
\*\*\*\*\*

.....  
The views and opinions expressed  
in the articles in this magazine are  
those of the author(s) and do not  
necessarily reflect the views or  
opinions of the editor, the Rector  
or the PCC.  
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### **Baptisms**

**28th January- Zoe Pollock**

### **Weddings**

### **Funerals**

**22nd December - Martyn Smith**

## Vision Sunday Feedback

The PCC is really grateful to everyone who completed the Vision Sunday Feedback sheets. Immediate responses are scattered through this magazine. The PCC is reflecting upon some of the other feedback (around social action and Sunday services) and working on others (actively looking for a toilet solution at St Bartholomew's, working on building stronger links with school).

See pages 5, 9, 10, 11, 12, 14, 15, 36

If you have been given a copy of this magazine in church or at an event and would like to receive it regularly, please contact the parish office. It is also available on the parish website.

## From Your Rector

### Life on a spin



Many years ago, at the Pleasure Beach at Blackpool, there **was a certain 'ride' or amusement that was strictly for the physically fit.** It consisted of a flat wooden disc about 20 feet in diameter and set at an angle of 45 degrees in the floor. When it began to rotate, the aim was to get to the centre where there was a pole. As the disc rotated faster and faster, everyone who failed to get to the pole got flung off. Nowadays **there's probably a European Community regulation banning it as far too dangerous!**

The principle of the game was a basic law of physics. When any wheel rotates, the outer rim moves fastest of all. Half way to the centre and you are moving a lot more slowly. **And, at least theoretically, at the absolute centre will be a point which is totally still.** That's why anyone who reached that pole could stand there quite comfortably.

**The church's season of Lent begins this month (Feb 14th). It's generally thought of as being a time for giving up chocolate, wine, whatever. But it's really a time to remind us that in our own rapidly spinning world, God is the still centre.**

All around God is motion, sound, change and decay – galaxies circling, seasons and years rotating, life developing and decaying. And at the still centre, where there is no variableness, is God, the same yesterday, today and forever.

Only about seven weeks ago Christians worldwide were thinking of God getting involved in a special way in the ever moving and changing life of the world. And one great characteristic of Jesus was His stillness. Busy, harassed, injured people found someone with neither clever chat nor idle gossip, neither vulgar boasting nor loud opinion. His life always seemed to rotate round a still central point, which gave Him balance and authority.

**"Be still then and know that I am God" wrote the Psalmist. Lent is a time for us to try and do just that – to find the still centre of God in our own individual lives.**

**Of course, we're all of us very much in the world, and must live our lives in all of its busyness. But it may do none of us any harm to be a little more silent than we often are – quick to listen and slow to speak. And the more silent spaces we give ourselves, the more we'll give that still, small voice within each one of us the chance to be heard.**

Jane

## Vision Sunday Feedback "BOOK RECOMMENDATIONS"

### Lydia - A Story

I was loaned this book and read it on New Year's Day. I was totally gripped and read front cover to back cover in one six hour session - not something I do very often! I would highly recommend this book, which reads as a novel, whilst shedding light on the Biblical story behind the letter to the Philippians.

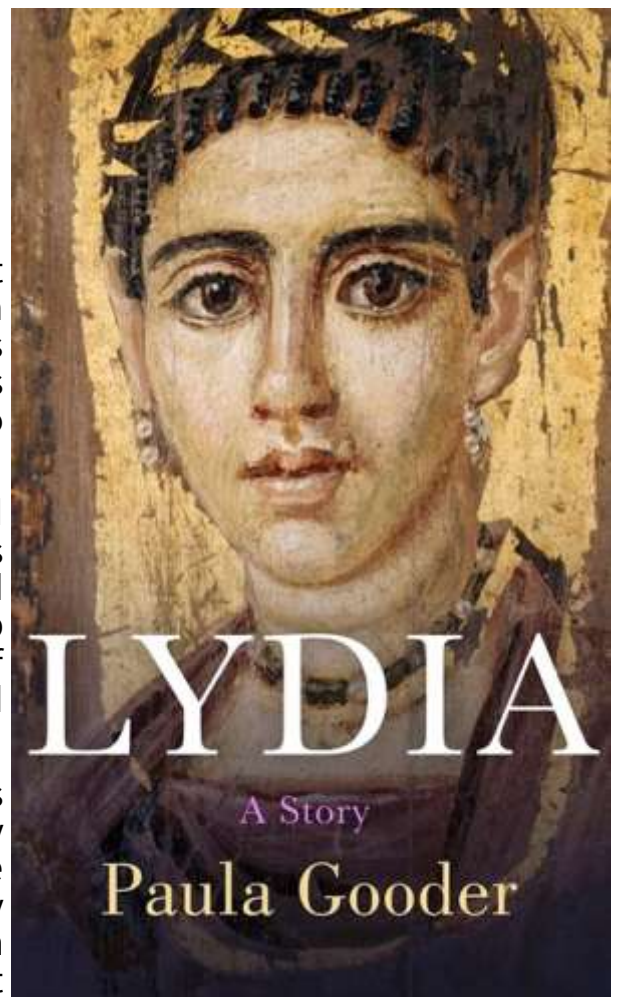
Revd Jane

- ✓ A great read for fans of Biblical fiction
- ✓ Paula Gooder infuses Lydia's story with rich Biblical insight
- ✓ You'll be immersed in the world of the New Testament

The New Testament tells us very little about Lydia, a seller of purple cloth who was living in Philippi when she met the apostle Paul on his second missionary journey. And yet she is considered the first recorded convert to Christianity in Europe.

In her second work of fiction, Biblical scholar and popular author and speaker Paula Gooder tells Lydia's story - who she was, the life she lived and her first-century faith - and in doing so opens up Paul's letter to the Philippians, giving a sense of the cultural and historical pressures that shaped Paul's thinking, and the faith of the early church.

Written in the gripping style of Gerd Theissen's *The Shadow of the Galilean*, and similarly rigorously researched, this is a book for everyone and anyone who wants to engage more deeply and imaginatively with Paul's theology - from one of the UK's foremost New Testament scholars.



ISBN: 978-1-444-79205-8

Dr Paula Gooder is Canon Chancellor at St Paul's Cathedral, London, and a writer and lecturer in Biblical Studies. Her passion is to ignite people's enthusiasm for reading the Bible today, by presenting the best of biblical scholarship in an accessible and interesting way. She is the author of over twenty books.



## A message from Ailsa



Hello everyone,

I hope you all had a wonderful Christmas; I don't know about you, but it already seems a long way away as we now begin to look towards Easter – I am sure like me you will have already seen, and perhaps even enjoyed the array of cream and other eggs replacing rows of wrapping paper and Christmas candy.



I had an unusual start to my ministry at Thurstaston. Having said farewell to my former Parish, St Michael's in Newton, I was released from work early so was able to join Jane for Morning Prayer and some services slightly earlier than we had planned – and on one breezy morning found myself diverted to St Chad's whilst on the way to St Bart's. I would like to say I was led by the spirit to St Chad's however it could very well have been I wasn't exactly sure of which church to pitch at. Anyway, upon the fortuitous, as it turned out, arrival at St Chad's I was greeted by the car park being completely covered in litter, and following my sharp turnaround in the direction of Barts, enjoyed the service there before returning to the crime scene with Jane, and myself having recruited husband, Derek, en route.



The culprit was indeed an upturned wheely bin and so my first ministry at Thurstaston was litter picking – to clear the debris prior to the carol service that evening. I was unable to attend but feel certain a suitable “Womble” song would have gone well alongside the Carols!

I had a wonderful welcome to the Parish through my licensing service on

the 18<sup>th</sup> December where The Bishop of Birkenhead, Julie Conalty gave her blessing for my new ministry to begin. It was a truly wonderful and memorable, if slightly emotional (let's not let the Regimental Sergeant Major back on base get wind of that!) occasion where I was able to meet some of you. I was even welcomed by my regimental flag which I found deeply touching.



I was also joined by some of my previous congregation, local clergy including my previous incumbent, Rev Cheryl Coverly, some of those whom I was ordained with as well as friends some of whom had travelled very long distances. I was somewhat disappointed I was unable to bring my grumpy Scottish Terrier Hamish, but I am sure he would have got far more attention so perhaps best leave that for a later date!



I am very grateful for all the hard work that went into setting up, those who contributed during the service and those who cleared up afterwards and of course to Jane – especially for that wonderful cake, which I very much enjoyed clearing up myself.

I returned to work in early January and would ask please for your prayers. My job is often challenging, and I never know what each day will hold.

Over 100 of my soldiers and officers continue to be deployed in Poland where they endure sub-zero temperatures so, please pray especially for all those in “A Squadron”.

May I wish you all a very Happy and peaceful New Year.

Blessings,

*Ailsa*



# How about doing nothing, absolutely nothing for Lent?

Do you struggle each year to think about what you might give up for lent? Lent is not all about deprivation and going without.

Lent is a period of 40 days during which Christians all over the world remember the events leading up to and including the death of Jesus whose life and teachings are the foundation of our faith. Primarily it is not about a time to "give up" or deny ourselves but the themes of lent - forgiveness, sin, temptation, sacrifice - lend themselves well to this. I often struggle to think "what will I give up this year?" But why not start something!

So this year I invite you to *pause*, to stop at a point in your day. For just five minutes. *Give up* your busyness and start to stop - for five minutes each day through lent as you pause; as you stop. Why not put the kettle on!

I invite you to join me to "pause for lent" as I journey through the forty days. Each day throughout lent (not necessarily at the same time), I will post on our Facebook page a "Lenten pause" where I will light a candle, stop and hope you can join me in a very short reflection and a theme for the day. Stop, pause and reflect this Lent with the Padre. I'll see you there!



Details: St Bartholomew's with St Chad's Facebook Page  
<https://www.facebook.com/stchadsstbarts/>

When: Starting 14th February and daily through Lent

With Revd Ailsa



## Vision Sunday Feedback

### **“BIBLE READING PLANS, SMALL GROUPS/COURSES, DISCUSSION GROUPS, BIBLE WORKSHOPS, BOOK CLUB”**



TABLE TALK FOR EASTER  
11.30am - **12.30pm at St Chad's**  
WEDNESDAYS IN LENT

14th, 21st, 28th Feb, 6th, 13th, 20th March

*(You are welcome to bring your sandwiches with you,  
Hot drinks provided)*

Table Talk provides an opportunity to take part in meaningful conversations about the things that really matter. Gather around a table to talk, laugh, be understood and get to know another's point of view.

The themes we will explore are:-

**Hope:** Can tomorrow be better than today?

**Evil:** Why do some people do evil things?

**Justice:** What does justice mean?

**Forgiveness:** Is forgiveness good for you?

**Suffering:** Why do bad things happen to good people?

**Death:** Is this it?

### A GROUP LENT COURSE BASED ON THE BOOK OF JONAH

7.45-**9.00pm at St Chad's (Extension)**

WEDNESDAYS IN LENT

14th, 21st, 28th Feb, 6th, 13th, 20th March

You will need a copy of the book:-

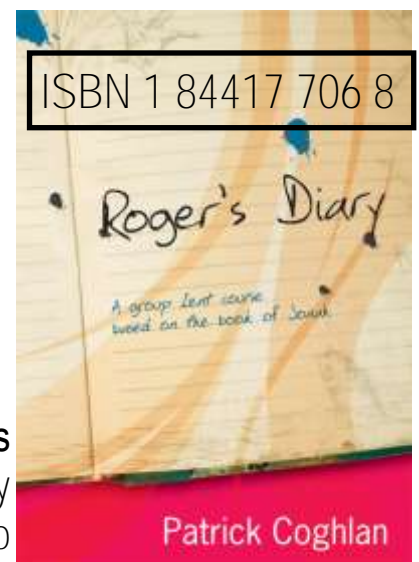
**“Roger's Diary” by Patrick Coghlan**

*Available from various book sellers online - new and second hand -  
quick google search should enable you to find a copy.*

Roger's diary is a series of imaginative and sometimes humorous resources to help groups prayerfully, reflectively and in the power of the Holy Spirit seek what God is saying to them through the book of Jonah.

The six sessions of this group Lent course look at the nature of God and how that affects our personal Christian journey. The sessions are: **Called to serve, Hard times, Crying out to God, A fresh start, True Repentance, Loved and Valued.**

It would be helpful if you bring a notebook and your Bible to these sessions. We can lend you a Bible if you don't have one, or forget to bring yours.



Vision Sunday Feedback  
"COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES. MORE SOCIAL EVENTS,  
NON CHURCH ACTIVITIES FOR ALL, FAMILY EVENTS"

**Community and social events dates for Diary**  
**All at St Chad's unless otherwise indicated**

**February Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> 8pm** - see page 11 for more information  
**Pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostella** – hear all about the journey and experiences along the way

**March Friday 15<sup>th</sup> 8pm** - see page 12 for more information  
**ARTY PARTY** by Rebecca le Brocq

**April Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> 8pm**



Hear all about this worthy charity and purchase cakes in aid of the charity funds

**May Saturday 11<sup>th</sup>**

**Ness Gardens** – meet 10am St Chads Carpark and share cars  
For a day out at the Gardens - weather permitting

**June 1<sup>st</sup>**

**Walk to Hilbre Island** – Details yet to be confirmed and weather permitting

**July date to be confirmed**

**Guide Dogs Demo** - in St Chad's garden  
- weather permitting



**August/September Saturday mornings**

**Summer Saturdays St Chad's Garden** – details to follow

**August Saturday 24<sup>th</sup>**

**Ready Teddy Go!** St Bartholomew's Day Teddy parachute from St Bartholomew's church spire.



## Come and hear Cheryl Goddard talk about her experience of Pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostella 8pm Thurs. 8th Feb. at St Chad's

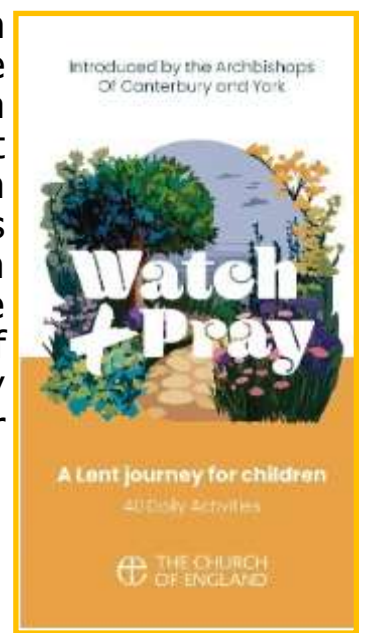
Cheryl will share her experience of a two week walk from Leon in Spain walking approximately 200 miles west to Santiago de Compostella, reflecting on the necessity for preparation, the discipline that is required, the spiritual aspect and daily routine. The talk will be illustrated with photographs.

### Vision Sunday Feedback

## “BOOK RECOMMENDATIONS”, “MORE FOR CHILDREN”



For each day of Lent, the Watch and Pray booklet offers a Bible verse, a short reflection, an idea for 'watching', and a prayer. It invites us to seek God in both familiar and unfamiliar places this Lent: in darkness and in quiet; in movement and migration; in the healing and transforming work of the Spirit; in the weeping of Holy Week and in the joy of Easter morning.



Revd Jane has 10 copies of each of these booklets.

The Adult one is £3.00  
The Children's one is £1.25

Please let Revd Jane know if you would like to buy one.

Further copies can be obtained from <https://chbookshop.hymnsam.co.uk/>

**For those who wish to go deeper - The Archbishop's Book for Lent 2024 on the same theme is called "Tarry Awhile: Wisdom from Black Spirituality for People of Faith".**

### Vision Sunday Feedback

## “FOODBANK”



You can make donations to Foodbank by placing items (non perishable food and toiletries) in the box by the office door at St Chad's.

# ARTY PARTY

BY REBECCA LE BROCCQ



**Friday 8pm**

**15 March**

**St Chad's Hall**

Following a guided tutorial (all art supplies provided),  
by the end of the night you will have created your  
own acrylic painting on canvas for you to take home  
as a reminder of your fantastic night.

**Price is £18.00 payable on booking.  
Wine, hot drinks & snacks provided.**

**Book via Church Office**

**open Tuesday to Thursday mornings**

**call 0151 648 8169**

**or email [office@thurstaston.org.uk](mailto:office@thurstaston.org.uk)**

**\*\*\* Places limited book early \*\*\***

**St Chad's Roslin Road, Irby CH61 3UH**

# Discovery by Luxmuralis

**Chester Cathedral**

**Wed 21st - Sat 24th Feb.**

**Adults £9.50**

**Under 16's £6.00**

**Book Tickets at**

**[https://chestercathedral.com/events/  
event/10764/2024/02/22](https://chestercathedral.com/events/event/10764/2024/02/22)**



Revd Jane has booked a ticket for 5.45pm on Thursday 22nd February and plans to go to Pizza Express afterwards (7.00pm). You would be welcome to join her - please purchase your own ticket, and let Revd Jane know BY SUNDAY 11th FEBRUARY that you have done so indicating whether you would like to join her at Pizza Express afterwards. Revd Jane will book a table at Pizza Express for all who wish to go.

**You may of course choose to book on another day or time if that's easier for you.**

Discovery is a spectacular immersive journey for people to walk through and explore the Cathedral in a new light. It invites you to fully immerse yourself in the artwork, and consider what humans have achieved in our place in the world.

The installation will give you the opportunity to ponder our relationship with the planet Earth and beyond. Installations of sound and light art that will take you on a journey through space, see galaxies emerge above you and to explore humanities ambition to adventure beyond.

Visitors have the chance to see original footage of the rocket launch, explore the creation story and the Big Bang within the sacred space, then view the final image of Earth as if looking back from space under a galaxy of stars.

Other elements of Discovery are designed to enable people to explore and contemplate the contributions of science and human understanding of the physical world around us.

The artwork will explore chemistry and biology and interpret artistically the scale of molecules cells and DNA as well as exploring the history of science and its contributions to humanity, while reflecting upon famous scientists past and present.

The architectural beauty of Chester Cathedral will be exposed and enhanced by the artwork projected throughout as you walk through the light artworks and installations.

**The artistic collaboration known as 'Luxmuralis' which means 'light murals' in Latin,** create large scale,site specific installations taking art and creativity to varied spaces across the UK and Europe.

## Vision Sunday Feedback

**“AWAY DAYS COST MONEY - CAN THEY BE FREE OR SUBSIDISED”**

Anyone fancy a Retreat or Quiet Day?

Ever wanted to try a Retreat or Quiet Day and not been sure about going on your own? A small group are going to Foxhill for an Advent Retreat with Bishop Sam, and another small group to the Quiet Day on Bible Journalling. If you'd like to come let Revd Jane know and she'll send you a booking form. If the cost is prohibitive, Foxhill have a bursary fund, you can contact them directly by emailing [foxhill@chester.anglican.org](mailto:foxhill@chester.anglican.org)

All Foxhill events can be found here:-  
<https://www.foxhillchester.co.uk/whats-on/>

29<sup>th</sup>  
November  
- 1st  
December

### **Advent Retreat - *Longing for Light***

led by the Rt Revd. Sam Corley,  
Bishop of Stockport

Ahead of all the busyness of Christmas,  
a chance to step aside in order to be  
renewed in hope as we reflect on how  
the coming of God in Christ  
is good news for all the world.

£220pp

Saturday  
18<sup>th</sup>  
May

### **Bible Art Journalling**

Pam Robinson

An introduction to Bible art journaling,  
suitable for absolute beginners.

Seek to draw closer to God as you work  
with mixed media and messy art.  
Through the day we'll think about blessings  
- how God has blessed us and how we can  
be a blessing to others.

£30pp

No artistic ability necessary  
- you can't make mistakes!

Vision Sunday Feedback  
"COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES. MORE SOCIAL EVENTS,  
NON CHURCH ACTIVITIES FOR ALL"

A warm welcome  
at the  
**Warm Hub**

Every Tuesday 9.30am - 12.30pm

**Open to everyone, so please drop in!**

**St. Chad's Church, Roslin Road, Irby CH61 3UH  
0151 648 8169**

**Guest speaker  
on 4th Tuesday of the month  
Talks start at 10.30a.m.**

**Tuesday 27th February 2024**

***Meet Roy the Barn Owl***

*Roy will be accompanied by a team of adults (including Matthew Smale) from the Royden Project which is a Social Services centre for adults with a Learning Disability based at the walled garden in Royden Park. The team has been learning falconry skills and they, with Duncan their care leader, will be demonstrating how to fly Roy. Roy has been trained for several years now and is often taken to schools to demonstrate her (!) skills. We can provide a separate room for anyone not comfortable with a bird flying free.*



**The Warm Hub  
belongs to a  
growing national  
network of  
Places of Welcome**



## Jigsaw Library

Over the time that Warm Hub has been operating, we have been gifted many jigsaws. While we always have a jigsaw in progress at Warm Hub, there are many waiting for us to use in the future. Rather than these jigsaws just piling up, with the winter nights ahead we would like to make these jigsaws available for individuals to borrow and then return to us. We can't vouch that all the jigsaws are complete as they are donated to us but if you would like to borrow one then we can make them available on a Tuesday morning when the Warm Hub is open – 9.30 to 12.30 at St Chad's

Susan Smale and Cheryl Goddard



## Ruth's Reflections

Hi everyone, can I wish you all a belated Happy New Year. I can't believe that it is 2024! It doesn't seem long since 2000 and all the talk of the Millennium Bug!

I hope that you all had a good Christmas, I had a lovely time, Christmas Eve I spent with my eldest daughter and family as she was working Christmas Day and Boxing Day. Christmas Day started off with ringing for the service which I went to. I have to say I was quite sad to see so few people there. I just hoped that a lot had gone to the Midnight Service. Following the service I went home and having a bit of time to kill before I went out again I (and don't laugh) I did some housework! I then went to my other daughter's for Christmas Dinner, cooked by her husband, who is a trained chef, so as you can imagine it was superb! I ate far too much and didn't eat again until about 10.00pm when I had a very light snack.

Boxing Day I had friends round which was lovely, so the following few days were very quiet and I felt lonely. It made me think about the people who have no-one and had spent all Christmas alone and made me realise how lucky I am.

Now the holiday time is over and things have returned to normal and I am enjoying getting out again, I went ringing a couple of nights ago which was great although it was freezing in the tower!

I have been trying to get out with my camera but the weather has stopped me a few times, I am definitely a fair weather photographer.

The weather has also stopped me doing much in the garden which, like most gardens is looking a bit bedraggled. I am looking forward to getting out in it again, so roll on spring.

Although this year is only a few weeks old I have had a few problems, so I hope 2024 improves. Both the underfloor heating and the central heating packed up on the same day! Luckily they were both fixed quickly, but it was very cold until they were. You can imagine the frantic conversation I had with God, with the result that I was able to deal with things rationally and calmly.

Well I must stop now and sign off. Take care and stay safe everyone.

Ruth.





# Mouse Makes

Who were the first couple?  
 \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_

Genesis 2:22-25

Who's wife became a pillar of salt because she disobeyed the angel's warning?  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Genesis 19:26



Which of Laban's daughters did Jacob love?  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Genesis 29:18

Who was Moses' wife?  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Exodus 2:21

Who married Boaz to become King David's great-grandmother and a distant relative of Jesus?  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Matthew 1:5



Which couple helped the Apostle Paul in his ministry?  
 \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_

Romans 16:3

**FIND THE BIBLE VERSE**  
 Change each letter in this bible verse to the letter **before** it in the alphabet.

XIBU HPE IBT  
 KPJOFE UPHFUIFS,  
 MFU OPU NBO  
 TFQBSBUF.

NBSL  
 UFO WFSTF  
 OJOF

**DID YOU KNOW?**  
 King Solomon had **700** wives!  
 They were princesses of royal birth and he loved them all, but his wives caused him to turn away from God  
 See 1 Kings 11:1-3

**CONNECT THE BIBLE COUPLES**

ADAM	ELIZABETH
ABRAHAM	MARY
ISAAC	HANNAH
JACOB	PRISCILLA
BOAZ	EVE
ZECHARIAH	RUTH
ELKANAH	REBEKAH
AQUILA	RACHEL
JOSEPH	SARAH

E	E	Z	R	E	E	L	I	Z	A	B	E	T	H	R	ABRAHAM
S	V	Q	S	L	R	Z	J	I	B	O	A	D	A	M	ADAM • AQUILA
R	E	B	E	K	A	H	O	J	R	A	O	Q	N	O	BOAZ • ELKANAH
U	I	S	A	A	C	A	S	A	A	Z	P	R	N	S	ELIZABETH
T	H	A	Q	N	H	Z	E	C	H	A	R	I	A	H	EVE • HANNAH
H	R	U	T	A	E	V	P	O	A	I	E	B	H	I	ISAAC • JACOB
S	A	R	A	H	L	T	H	B	M	A	R	Y	S	D	JOSEPH • MARY
P	R	I	S	C	I	L	L	A	Q	U	I	L	A		PRISCILLA
															RACHEL
															REBEKAH • RUTH
															SARAH
															ZECHARIAH

20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Year

# SUNDAYS @ 2

Please join us for a relaxed and informal evening of dialogue with our special guest. Refreshments will be served from 6.30pm until 7.00pm when we will move on to the main event: a conversation with a person who has a fascinating story to tell.

Sunday 4th February

**Mark Tanner**  
**Bishop of Chester**

Bishop Mark has been Bishop of Chester for almost four years and has responsibility for over 260 churches. His thirty years in full-time church leadership have taken him on a wide variety of assignments including army chaplaincy and blood bike adventures.



Mark leads the Church of England on a number of key areas working closely with the Archbishop of Canterbury. He will be talking through significant and topical issues facing our churches and our nation.

St Mary's, Church Road, Upton CH49 6JZ  
6:30pm - 8:00pm Admission free

[www.stm-upton.org.uk](http://www.stm-upton.org.uk)



# Irby Heart Bomb

## Hearts for everyone

## Put up hearts everywhere

## Join in the joy

## Everyone is Loved

## February 10<sup>th</sup> – March 2<sup>nd</sup>



# What's the Big Idea?

## An Introduction to the Books of the Bible: Genesis

This is the first of a new series aimed at providing an overview of the Bible. This month we consider the first book, Genesis.

As the title suggests, Genesis is primarily about beginnings. In chapters 1-11, it records **the creation of the heavens and the earth and human beings; marriage and family; sin's effect on society and the world.** The following chapters record God's dealings with Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph, and their families. In this story of the Patriarchs we see God establishing a people called to bless the world, as He blesses them.

The book of Genesis is key to understanding the whole Bible. It is supremely about relationships; the relationships between God and the created order, God and human beings, and between human beings themselves. Fundamentally man has been created in the image of God, so that he can relate to God in a personal way: *'God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them'* (1:27). However, Genesis plots how this relationship was broken by sin, when Adam and Eve disobeyed God, resulting in the fall of human beings and the created order. By creating people with free will, God risked the possibility that they might reject Him. This is inherent in His love for human beings.

In Genesis, God enters into covenants with the world (the rainbow following the flood) and with Abraham and his descendants (circumcision), pledging His love and faithfulness to them and calling them to respond to Him in faith. It reminds us that God is fundamental to living. Without a sense of the centrality of **God's place in our lives, we can never get our lives right.**

### Genesis Beginnings



Whenever you look at this picture you will be reminded that Genesis is the first or Number One book in the Bible. Right in the centre of its name is a 'Big N' so you remember the Keyword – 'Big N ings' or '**Beginnings**'. Genesis is a Greek word that means origins or beginnings.

The first 11 chapters of Genesis describe the four major events of creation, fall, flood and finally nations as the world's population spreads everywhere after their single language becomes many causing a babble of languages at the Tower of Babel. Genesis records the very first covenant, temptation, eviction, murder, rainfall, cruising and moving house!

The final 39 chapters are about the four patriarchs. Abraham who has his name changed; Isaac who has twin sons who are far from identical; Jacob who has twelve sons and a name change; and Joseph, Jacob's favourite son, who prospers in the land of Egypt.

# What's the Big Idea?

## An Introduction to the Books of the Bible: Exodus

This month we are looking at Exodus, the second book of the Old Testament. Its name means **departure**, reminding us that Israel's flight out of slavery in Egypt is the major focus of the book.

Exodus is a book of two halves! The first part (chapters 1-19 & 32-34) is the story of an oppressed people who are delivered from slavery into a life of freedom. The second half (chapters 20-31 & 35-40) consists of detailed instructions about the life and worship of **God's people**. The book introduces us to their salvation or deliverance, as story. God's promises to Abraham are fulfilled as the people journey to the Promised Land. He also renews His covenant with them at Sinai, expressed in the Ten Commandments (20: 1-17).

At the heart of Exodus is the person of God Himself. In chapter 3 God reveals His name as YHWH or 'I am who I am' (3:14) to Moses. This is the name by which God is known throughout the Old Testament, expressed in the title 'the LORD'. To know God's name is to know Him, as well as His character ie His justice, truthfulness, mercy, faithfulness and holiness. He is the God who controls history, delivering the people out of Egypt, while the death of the Passover lamb points us to Jesus' death on the cross (1 Corinthians 5:7).

God's promises of help remain true for us today: 'Do not be afraid. Stand firm and you will see the deliverance the LORD will bring you today' Exodus 14:13.

'This Exodus story continues to be a major means that God uses to draw men and women in trouble out of the mess of history into the kingdom of salvation.' (Eugene Peterson).



### Exodus Exit

Our picture shows a nation leaving Egypt through an Exit sign that also reminds you of the red blood of the Passover, the Red Sea and the shape of the red bricks made without straw by the Hebrew slaves. 'Exit' is the Keyword to remind you of the book of Exodus that describes the Children of Israel leaving Egypt. Exodus comes from two Greek words that mean the 'road out'. In the picture we also have reminders of the plague of frogs, the staff of Moses and the reeds where the baby Moses was hidden.

During their 400 years in Egypt the family of Jacob grows into the nation of Israel. Under their leader Moses they witness ten plagues as the Pharaoh is implored to "Let My people go!" The final plague results in the Passover and they leave, to be guided by a pillar of cloud and a pillar of fire. They see the Red Sea miraculously divide as they journey on to Mount Sinai where they receive the Law on two tablets of stone written by God Himself. They build a Tabernacle as a portable place to worship God.

## Quiz on the Book of Exodus

How well do you know what happened in Exodus? Try this quiz! (Answers page 24)

- Who rescued Moses from the basket in the bulrushes?
  - Pharaoh's daughter
  - Pharaoh's maid
  - Pharaoh's wife
- How many plagues did God send on Egypt?
  - 5
  - 10
  - 15
- What was the second plague?
  - frogs
  - water turned to blood
  - locusts
- What is the name of the sea the Israelites crossed to escape the Egyptians?
  - Dead Sea
  - Black Sea
  - Red Sea
- At what place did the Israelites arrive to find the water was too bitter to drink and God made it sweet?
  - Marah
  - Elim
  - Horeb
- Which bird did God provide for meat in the wilderness?
  - pigeon
  - quail
  - turtledove
- What guided the Israelites through the wilderness?
  - a star in the sky
  - Moses had visions telling him where to lead the people
  - a pillar of cloud and of fire
- When there was no water to drink, how did Moses provide it?
  - from earthen jars
  - from his rod
  - from a rock
- On which mountain were the Israelites given the Ten Commandments
  - Mt. Sinai
  - Mt. Nebo
  - Mt. of Olives
- What is the seventh commandment?
  - Thou shalt not covet
  - Thou shalt not commit adultery
  - Thou shalt not bear false witness
- What was on top of the Ark of the Covenant?
  - two cherubim
  - candlestick
  - Aaron's rod
- What compelled the Israelites to form and worship the golden calf
  - they wanted to make a statue to the Lord
  - they made it as a symbol of their freedom from slavery
  - they didn't know what had happened to Moses
- What was the name of a man who was given the Spirit of God, to enable him to become a good craftsman, and assist with the building of the tabernacle?
  - Caleb
  - Bezaleel
  - Buz
- Who was Moses' successor?
  - Joshua
  - Caleb
  - Aaron
- For how many years did the Israelites wander in the wilderness?
  - 20 years
  - 30 years
  - 40 years

## Reflected Faith January – Faith: God’s Acre - by Revd Jo White

I thought we’d spend a few months at the start of this New Year considering the outside of a church building, and the gardens around it.

For many churches this will include a churchyard, though not necessarily. If your church does stand in a churchyard, then it may be what is known as a ‘closed’ one, meaning that burials and interments no longer take place other than within an existing family grave. An ‘open’ churchyard is one where burials and interments are still able to take place.

The maintenance for open churchyards is the responsibility of the church, whilst once closed (which, for Church of England churches, has to be agreed by Parliament) the maintenance is passed to the local or parish civil council.

These days, with the many financial cutbacks, Councils often try to refuse to take on a churchyard. But as it is a statutory obligation, they have no choice, and many will simply reduce the number of grass-cutting sessions to fit their slimmed budget.

Churchyards have not always looked as they do today, with memorial stones of varying shapes and sizes. Originally, they were simply left grassed and in towns this became one of the few green areas. People were buried there without any permanent marker being placed, nor any other official record of placement kept.

The thinking was that their life here on earth had ended and the person was now with God in heaven. Only those people in ‘God’s kingdom’ would be allowed to be buried in the consecrated grounds, so anyone who had taken their own life, or unbaptised babies, would not be allowed.

Church buildings are usually built facing east - the place of the rising sun - and the people’s entrance is on the south wall. This gives access to the churchyard from the south, and in European countries that means your first experience of entering the churchyard and the building is on its sunny side.

It was common practise to bury to the south of the church, as this was the lighter and warmer side. The richer and more influential folk would request to go as near to the altar - the Holy of Holies - as possible; even if that was outside the building itself.

Over the course of time folk wanted - and richer folk could afford - a marker for where their loved one lay. This idea of having a permanent marker reflected the attitudes at the time, of visiting the place of rest specifically marked. Not just to know where to visit and even bring a picnic for the family on a good weather day, especially in working busy town areas; but also, to recognise the importance of their loved one’s life.

### *This month*

*Try and visit a churchyard with very old memorials. Have a look at all the different materials, styles, wording and embellishments. What message do they give to you?*



## Reflected Faith February - Memorial Stones

Last month we began to look at the outside of the church building. When you last visited a churchyard with very old memorials, what did you notice?

The oldest stones probably just had the name of the person, date of death and perhaps their age.

But the slightly more recent stones may well have included where the person had been born, lived, and who they had married. These stones probably belonged to the wealthier people, as they needed to be large, to include all this information!

As for the poorer folk, as cheaper stone became available, they also wanted to mark their loved one's place of rest, even with just the bare details.

With the advent of the railways, a firm in Scotland started a business for shaping the stone with recessing, into which a local stone mason would be able to carve the words. This is why you will see many similar shaped stones in every churchyard in England, Wales and Scotland for that period.

In different areas of the country, both locally sourced stones and the availability of the stonemason create very different looks – whilst within that area are many reproductions.

Also, the 'floweriness' of the inscriptions grew over the years. What started with just the name of the person later had added before the name, 'With affection', then 'With great affection', then, 'Greatly loved' and so on. It was almost as if people were trying to outdo each other on who loves who most.

Meanwhile, by the early 20<sup>th</sup> century many churchyards were 'full', and if adjoining land was available this was consecrated, but otherwise separate land was purchased – which became a 'cemetery' and was usually not the responsibility of the church.

A churchyard, on the other hand, is by definition under the auspices of 'the church', whether open or closed.

Because people continued to want to be interred in 'holy land', eventually all cemeteries were set aside and consecrated by and for the different religions and denominations, reflecting the needs of the local communities.

### This month

Think about where you'd like to have as *your* final resting place. Whether you choose cremation or burial, is being in a set-aside 'holy place' important to you and to those who will visit?

## God in the Sciences January:

### A Scientist's Letter to Christians: Have power, love and self-control

It has now been four years since the pandemic began to seep into Western consciousness. Dr Francis Collins, a leader in medical research in the US, spoke early in the pandemic about his faith and his hope in God to help us through that time. He expressed the grief that so many were experiencing, and described an intensity of scientific work he had never experienced before. He also shared his conviction that he was in exactly the right place back in 2020 - serving God with science. Throughout the pandemic, he held on tight to the words of Paul in 2 Timothy 1:7, 'for God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control.'



#### Power

In 2 Timothy the apostle Paul encourages his friend to 'fan into flame the gift of God' that is in him. I am thankful that scientists like Francis used their own particular talents to understand this virus, and to help prevent or treat infection. The things they discovered are not just useful, but at times also display the beauty and wonder of God's creation.

#### Love

A scientist shows their love for God, for people and for the rest of creation through their work in the lab. One scientist described his experiences to me: "I study God's fingerprints in His creation to learn more of Him and the world He placed us in and to learn how we should take care of it and each other...I pray for inspiration and insight into how His creation works...and that He provides the opportunities to give the glory to Him."

#### Self-Control

It is largely our own and others' selfish actions that can turn one animal's friendly virus into our own species' personal nightmare. Thankfully Jesus' suffering, death and resurrection are the solution to evil. Our ultimate and certain hope is that one day all Creation will be renewed. We can also have hope that God is with us in our suffering. When we respond in positive ways to painful events, that is evidence that Jesus is alive and working in our lives.

Science will not solve all our problems, but with God's help and wisdom we can use the tools of science to serve Him and love others.



## God in the Sciences February: Celebrating the now and future Creation

I find that watching buds swelling on trees and plants during the winter months gives me a tremendous sense of hope. After creation's winter shutdown, the sight of tiny flowers poking out of brown earth may be more important than ever.

Getting outdoors during daylight hours, enjoying green spaces and getting some fresh air and exercise are great ways to keep ourselves healthy at any time of year. A psychologist colleague wrote, "Attending to the details of nature can also inspire awe, which has been linked to positive mood and increased life satisfaction." I expect it is this sense of awe that makes it easier for many of us to connect with God outdoors.

Helping ourselves and others to thrive is a good start to 2024, but it is also vital to have hope for the future. In the face of climate change, we urgently need to care for all of Creation, both human and everything else, with God's help.

Our ultimate hope is in God's promise that He will bring about a new heaven and a new earth. We can look forward to the day when Creation will be fully redeemed and liberated from evil. The Greek word used to describe the new creation is the same as that used to describe someone who becomes a Christian, whose humanity is restored and renewed. There will be continuity between the old and new earth as it is cleansed and purified, surpassing and perfecting what has gone before. There will also be some discontinuity, as there will be no more suffering or death.

So, one source of hope for 2024 is that we can enjoy both caring for and meeting God in Creation. But the parts of Creation that we find most beautiful, giving us a sense of awe and helping us to worship, are also a reminder that there is something much better to come.

*By Ruth Bancewicz, Church Engagement Director, The Faraday Institute for Science and Religion, Cambridge*



## God in Music January: 'Glorious the song when God's the theme'

Editor: The Rev Michael Burgess begins a year-long series looking at great works of Christian music.

Those words of the 18<sup>th</sup> century poet Christopher Smart remind us how faith and music have always gone hand in hand, faith inspiring the music and music expressing the faith. In this series we shall consider 12 pieces of music inspired by the Christian faith, beginning from its roots in the Old Testament.

Among the earliest references to music in the Old Testament is the song of Moses and the Israelites, thanking God for Israel's deliverance in Exodus. There is also the music of the shofar, the ram's horn, proclaiming God's jubilee in Leviticus.

Hebrew music came into its own when performed in the temple. A small choir, using mostly strings and a harp, would sing from the psalms, that incredible collection of 150 hymns of praise God. All human life is found in the psalter, and inevitably they passed into Christian worship, through the monastic daily office of prayer and praise.

Possibly Psalm 23, 'The Lord is my shepherd,' is the most loved of the Psalms. St Francis of Assisi sang it on his way to visit the sultan. Most of us know the tune 'Crimond', while Howard Goodall's setting became the theme music for 'The Vicar of Dibley.'

Leonard Bernstein's setting of Psalm 23, the 'Chichester Psalms,' set six psalms in their original Hebrew for solo voice, choir and orchestra. The middle movement begins with a boy soprano, or countertenor, singing a beautiful melody to the opening words of Psalm 23. Bernstein's melody has a bluesy, Jewish feel, and is accompanied by a harp, as we remember David playing the lyre.

Suddenly the men's voices interrupt the soloist's song of trust with the words of Psalm 2, 'Why do the nations so furiously rage together?' But their outburst cannot halt the serene outpouring of the soloist which sounds out clear and strong amid the threat of war and division.

The movement leaves us with the melody of 'Adonai ro-i' in our heads and hearts, assuring us that, because the Lord *is* our shepherd, we need not fear, even in the darkest valley. Even when the world hurls the threats of Psalm 2 at us, God's goodness and mercy *will* follow us all the days of our life.



## God in Music February : the Nunc Dimittis

Editor: The Rev Michael Burgess begins a year-long series looking at great works of Christian music.

St Luke tells us in his Gospel that the angels sang praises to God at the birth of Jesus, and he has given us three poems that have become part of Christian song: the *Magnificat*, the *Benedictus* and the *Nunc Dimittis*.

The first two are full of praise and rejoicing. The last comes as Mary and Joseph fulfil the Law of Moses and bring the child Jesus to Jerusalem. In the temple they meet Simeon and Anna. Simeon represents each of us who can look back over life with gratitude in the face of death as he says, 'Lord, now lettest Thou thy servant depart in peace.' It is a story that has inspired preachers and artists, and also composers.

In the Christian Church these words of the *Nunc Dimittis* have become part of worship at the end of each day, not just the end of life. Cathedral and parish church choirs have sung settings of these words in that great tradition of Anglican choral music at Evensong – settings that have captured the sense of quiet resignation, but also conveyed the glory of the light that is Jesus shining for all people. Rachmaninov's setting is part of his Vespers, the night-long vigil sung in the Russian Orthodox Church on the eve of great feasts.



Rachmaninov composed the work (and it comprises 15 pieces) at great speed, but even so, the Vespers are now seen as one of the great masterpieces of religious music.

This was no more so than in his beautiful setting of the 5<sup>th</sup> canticle, the *Nunc Dimittis*. Just 36 bars long, it begins with a rocking, undulating figure in the upper voices. A solo tenor enters as the voice of Simeon, and it ends with the basses moving down to a low B flat: 'a sigh of wonder and resignation on the threshold of eternal rest and peace,' one critic has called it.

Rachmaninov later recalled, "After I played the passage at the end of the 5<sup>th</sup> canticle where the basses slowly descend to that low note, the conductor shook his head, saying, 'Now where on earth will we find such basses? They are as rare as asparagus at Christmas!' Nevertheless, he did find them." It was one of the composer's favourite pieces, and he asked for it to be sung at his funeral in the hope that it would send his 'ship of death gently towards the unknown region.'"

On 2<sup>nd</sup> February we shall hear these words as part of the Gospel on the feast of Candlemas. Simeon prays them because his cup is now overflowing. He has looked on the salvation of God. Music allows us to look on that glory and salvation also, and Rachmaninov, in his moving setting, has captured the calm trust of that moment, which shines out like the brightness of the light of Jesus.

February is the month of romance. Millions of Valentine cards will be sent in the next week or two, as we celebrate our romantic love for that special person in our lives. But there are other kinds of love to celebrate: and on Candlemas we remember Mary and Joseph taking their baby son to the temple to present Him to God. Jesus' whole life was a loving present to us from God. Through His death for us on the cross, and His resurrection, His love can now transform anyone's life. Romances can die, but God's love for us is always there. But it won't do us much good – unless we accept it!

Valentine  
 Rose  
 Romance  
 Love  
 Present  
 Restaurant  
 Hearts  
 Kiss  
 hug  
 girlfriend  
 boyfriend  
 Fiancé  
 worship  
 repentance  
 angels  
 Baby  
 temple  
 Mary  
 Candlemas  
 presentation



Answers to Exodus Quiz - page 17

Question 1: a (Pharaoh's daughter), Question 2: b (10), Question 3: b (Water turned to blood), Question 4: c (Red Sea)  
 Question 5: a (Marah), Question 6: b (Quail), Question 7: c (A pillar of cloud and of fire), Question 8: c (From a rock)  
 Question 9: a (Mt. Sinai), Question 10: b (Thou shalt not commit adultery), Question 11: a (Two cherubim),  
 Question 12: c (They didn't know what had happened to Moses), Question 13: b (Bezaleel), Question 14: a (Joshua)  
 Question 15: c (40)

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## FEBRUARY 2024 SERVICES

Morning Prayer St Chad's Prayer Room 9.00am MOST Mondays, Wednesdays & Fridays  
(check with Revd Jane for cancellations due to other meetings or commitments)

EVERY Wednesday 10.30am HC at St Chads

Sun 4th February 9.00am BCP Communion at St Bartholomew's  
10.30am Holy Communion at St Bartholomew's

Sun 11th February 9.00am BCP Communion at St Bartholomew's  
10.30am All Age service at St Chad's

Wednesday 14th February - ASH WEDNESDAY - 10.30am HC at St Chad's

Sun 18th February 9.00am BCP Communion at St Bartholomew's  
10.30am Morning Worship at St Bartholomew's

Sun 25th February 9.00am BCP Communion at St Bartholomew's  
10.30am Communion with Junior church at St Chad's

Sun 3rd March 9.00am BCP Communion at St Bartholomew's  
10.30am Holy Communion at St Bartholomew's

Vision Sunday Feedback

"TODDLER GROUP"

### St. Chad's Tots and Tinies

St Chad's Church (Roslin Road, Irby)

Every Thursday 9.30-11.30am  
(Term Time Only)

£1.50 for one Adult and one child - All Welcome  
Additional children £1.00  
Additional Adults £0.50

Play,  
Learn  
and  
Grow...  
Together!

Parents/Carers will be responsible for their child(ren) during the sessions

For further information please contact Allison via the Parish Office 648 8169

