

Parish News



St Mary's Church, Saffron Walden

St John, Little Walden and St James, Sewards End

Part of Saffron Walden & Villages Team Ministry

May 2022

FREE



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Following the success of the Fair Trade stall at St Mary's in March when we sold items worth £200, we are pleased to let you know that there will be a Fair Trade stall after the 10 am service on the first Sunday of each month. The next stall will be on **1st May** and after that on **5th June, 3rd July and 7th August**.

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Alison Trew & Hazel Colebrooke

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PARISH NEWS - EDITORIAL DEADLINE

The deadline for contributions for each issue is the 1st Sunday of the previous month. Hence, the deadline for the **June** issue is **Sunday 1st May**.

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St Mary's Church Website:

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The Rector's Letter

From The Rev'd Jeremy Trew

Jeremy writes...

I'm writing this in between preparing for our Easter services. This is the greatest of Christian festivals and one of the busiest times of year for clergy. Yes, we really are expected to work more than one day of the week. The cheek of it!



Looking out of my study window I can see the garden springing to life and hear the distant wail of a lawnmower calling its faithful to that regular summer ritual of holding back the tide of nature. It will be good not to have any major festivals for a few months and instead turn my attention to other tasks, even the garden.

It would be good, if that were the case, but it is not. During this month we mark the Ascension, the time when the risen Jesus ascended to the Father. Ascension is actually a hugely important event in the Christian story: Jesus is born at Christmas, dies and rises at Easter, and ascends at Ascension (obvious when you think about it).

For Christians its significance is that the story can now continue with a new chapter: Pentecost, and the birth of the Church, becomes possible. In these events the task that Jesus took upon himself in his teaching and serving is transferred to a new body of people, the Church, who are ordained by God to carry on that task until Jesus returns again.

The work of Jesus is, at least in theory, the work the Church tries to do today. Okay, sometimes we get it wrong, even disastrously so. More often we think that Sunday is the task of the Church, when actually it is our day off, the time when we gather together to be refreshed in our faith so that we can continue in God's work the rest of the week. Ultimately, the true meaning of this Christian faith is conveyed, not in our ceremonies and sermons, but in our daily living each day. That's a demanding task but one, as Ascension and Pentecost remind us, we do not struggle with alone.

Yours
Jeremy



The Changing

Reflections of Mary (Mark 16: v1-8)

Our eyes seeing the same mountains,
The gentle touching of our hands,
Simply breathing the same air,
Pleasures unrecognised till now,
Gone....

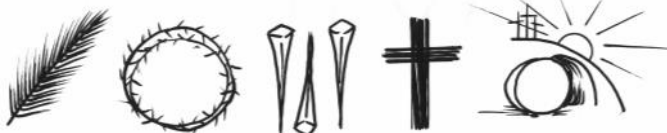
In the changing.

In the certainty of our grieving,
You surprise us, Lord,
You are not where we know that you should be.
In the moving of the stone, Lord,
You surprise us,
In our sorrow, we don't see Your victory.

But you told us, Lord,
Prepared us for the changing,
In your grace, foretold the triumph of Your death.
In the changing from despair to resurrection
You surprise us and transform us
By rebirth.

Our opened eyes can see beyond the mountains,
Now we're held forever in Your arms,
The air we breathe is Your life-giving Spirit,
Gloriously given.....
In the changing.

Daphne Kitching
(ParishPump)



Easter was a Zeitenwende too!

Germany, 50% of whose gas comes from Russia, is facing a massive energy crisis. Its other primary sources of energy are lignite, a particularly polluting form of fossilised peat, and coal. Austria imports 65% of its gas from Russia and Poland 70%. They are major contributors to the £217 million that Europe sends to Russia every day which funds their appalling war in Ukraine. Something has got to change.



Germans have a word for this sort of change: *Zeitenwende*. The changing of eras. The turning from one epoch and entering another. Just as Easter was.

The Resurrection of Christ was a *Zeitenwende* for the whole world. But in many ways, the change is still a 'work in progress'. There are still the mighty who need to be put down from their seats; the hungry still need to be fed with good things and the proud still need to be scattered in the imagination of their hearts.

Europe has learned its mistake in thinking that trading with Putin might help bring Russia into the democratic fold of nations. It merely empowered him and gave him licence to behave with ever greater narcissistic megalomania. So now European leaders find themselves going cap in hand to the leaders of Qatar, which has been repeatedly accused of sponsoring terrorism or turning a blind eye to terrorist finance; to Saudi Arabia, whose leader was responsible for 81 executions in March, in complete defiance of international standards of justice and humanity and was responsible for the grotesque murder of journalist Jamal Khashoggi, and to Dubai, whose princess Latifa was abducted in the Arabian Sea in 2018, and whose first daughter, Shamsa, was abducted from Cambridge in 2000. Neither of them has been seen since.

There seems to me to be a pattern here between immense fossil fuel wealth and frighteningly unethical, if not corrupt, behaviours. But herein lies the opportunity of our *Zeitenwende*:

We could turn to a world in which every country is self-sufficient in clean, renewable energy and we no longer have to trade with dictators and kleptocrats. A world where we don't have to sell them armaments in order to balance our immense spending on oil. A world where most energy is generated locally and is owned by communities, especially in Africa and India, where they can leap-frog

the need for massive electricity and gas grid systems owned by faceless multinationals and derive direct benefits from God's gifts of sunlight and wind.

It almost sounds like Eden! The problem is getting there.

For now, the race is on to get Liquefied Natural Gas shipped unsustainably from the US, Venezuela (another corrupt state) and the Middle East. But LNG terminals will have to be built first. Germany will increase its levels of coal and lignite extraction, with the consequent increases in Greenhouse Gas emissions. This crisis is set against the backdrop of the calamity described in this year's IPCC report, which painted an ever more vivid and urgent picture of the damage we are doing to our own prospects of survival on this planet. The frightening announcement of temperature rises of 30-40 °C at the poles is a stark warning that the emergency is accelerating and that there is no instant 'OFF' switch available once we finally decide to take the threat seriously.

I only hope that we take the right turning at this Zeitenwende, and that the terrible suffering in Ukraine forces governments to take the decisions they have been avoiding for decades.

Edward Gildea, Eco Team Leader





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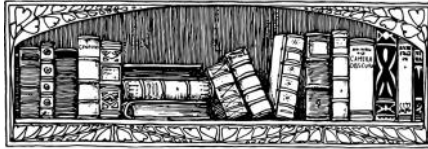
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The Book Club has been reading C J Sansom's *Lamentation*

The Book Club met on 25th March to discuss C. J. Sansom's 2014 novel *Lamentation*, a part of the lengthy Shardlake series of historical novels set in Tudor England. This is the sixth novel in the saga, and none of us was able to say whether it was necessary to have read the earlier ones in order to be able to follow the story – on balance, it appeared that this novel and its characters could stand on its own. Matthew Shardlake is a (fictional) London-based barrister, who uses his intelligence and his contacts to carry out what we would now call detective work, in an era before policing became established and before the criminal law was laid down by Acts of Parliament. He works on commission for real historical figures, (in this book, for Henry VIII's final wife Catherine Parr,) enabling the author to discourse on the politics and personalities of that tumultuous epoch. It is Hilary Mantel country, but a considerably easier read.

The upheavals of the Reformation made for an uncomfortable period of religious intolerance and bigotry. For the King himself, the split with Rome was of greater political and diplomatic significance than theological, and he doesn't appear to have minded too much about the religious beliefs of his children, all of whom were eventually to accede to the throne. But for lesser mortals, the dangers of an incautious remark were very real, and the book opens with a graphic description of Anne Askew (another real historical figure) being burnt at the stake. Modern authors (or their publishers) expect a certain amount of harrowing detail, but fortunately this is not a book that should give too many nightmares. Life in Henry's London must have been uncomfortably brutal and C. J. Sansom captures this well, but he also makes clear how kind, generous and tolerant Shardlake was to his household servants.

For our group (depleted by illness and concern about local Covid levels), the main interest of our meeting, having first agreed how much we'd all been gripped by the story, was learning about the real characters in the novel. Fortunately, our host had a copy of the Dictionary of National Biography to hand, so we could learn more about Catherine Parr (married 4 times, but died aged only 36 in childbirth), Richard Rich (buried at Felsted), Anne of Cleves (remained in England for the remainder of her life after the annulment of her ill-fated marriage to Henry), and several other figures from *Lamentation*.

Our next book will be *Notes from a Small Island* by Bill Bryson.

John Pickthorn

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Muniments Room

Archive Group

A monthly record of
pieces of interest
from our past
Parish Magazines

For this issue I have jumped ahead to May 1928 as the previous months did not hold very much of interest, as the saga of work on the church roof continued. As you will now read, things are back to 'normal'.

My dear Parishioners,

The restoration of the Chancel by the lay-rector has now been completed and we hope all danger from collapse of the roof timbers has been averted. The Parochial Church Council wisely took advantage of the presence of scaffolding to have the dingy walls thoroughly cleaned and distempered at comparatively small expense and also to block up various cracks through which it is believed unwelcome bats descended upon us. These operations necessarily involved a good deal of dust and dirt and compelled us to anticipate the annual cleaning by some three or four months. When that too is finished we may firmly hope that no further disturbance of choir, clergy and congregation will take place for many years to come and that we may be free for some considerable time from structural repairs on the scale of 1927 and 1928.

Our Easter and Good Friday services were all well attended and the choir acquitted itself with no little credit. The blowing apparatus of the organ was giving the organist some anxiety and the P.C.C. has appointed a sub-committee to consider whether by electricity or otherwise some better method of blowing cannot be substituted. Happily however the threatened stoppage did not happen and Easter was observed with musical dignity.

Yours very sincerely,
L. Hughes

Canon Chris Bishop. Archivist



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From the Registers

Baptisms

6th March: Willis Jack Macdonald
20th March: Benedict Louis Chaffey-Ford
27th March: India Rose Bicknell

Weddings

9th April: James Hesketh and Zoe Bull (St Mary's Church)

Prayer for the month *provided by the Prayer Team*

We bring before you, O Lord,
the troubles and perils of people and nations,
the sighing of prisoners and those held captive,
the sorrows of the bereaved,
the plight of refugees,
the helplessness of the weak,
the despondency of the weary,
the failing powers of the elderly.

O Lord, draw near to each one,
for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen



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Mothers' UNION

Hilary Walker was invited to give us a talk entitled "My Path to Ordination" at the Mothers' Union Meeting on 10th March 2022. Hilary had a late calling to ministry in the Church of England. She was brought up as an Anglican and went through the process of Sunday School, Church Parades with Brownies and Guides, church and confirmation.

She was an only child and when she went to college at 18, she felt very immature. Whilst at college she attended a local church, where nobody spoke and most of the congregation were elderly. She wondered why she was there – and gave up! There followed thirty-five years in the wilderness doing her own thing, with the occasional change of church of different varieties.

A school offered her a job-share teaching position which she took, and she worked with someone who was effectively a brilliant evangelist and would encourage her to ask questions. This led to her attendance at Cambridge Community Church, an Alpha course and becoming a busy church member.

She still felt a niggle, a feeling of needing a change. After a word with Gill Lovegrove, she decided to attend St Mary's Church in Saffron Walden. Although she is a teacher by profession, she didn't feel very confident but after meeting David Tomlinson for a chat, and enjoying the church music, she felt she had found a home.

About this time, a little voice said, "I want you to go into Ministry"; and it kept on. Eventually, feeling a little too old, she spoke to Michael Lovegrove and a meeting with David Tomlinson enabled her to get started.

A very slow process followed, of meetings with the Local Vocations Advisor, Area Ordination Advisor and the Diocesan Director of Ordinands. Then followed a lot of work leading up to the Bishop's Advisory Panel weekend, thankfully taking place on Zoom and enabling it to be done on-line. At last Bishop Roger gave her the good news that she could start the Eastern Regional Ministry Course in Cambridge.

Hilary is doing a part-time, three-year course in two years, meaning hard work and lots of preparation. She is now one third of the way through, and her goal is to become a locally deployed minister for the Saffron Walden and Team Ministry (aka a supply or relief vicar) and Mothers' Union members are sure she will be an asset to the Team.

Helen Eyles

Calendar for May 2022

This calendar is provisional and subject to change due to Covid restrictions. See The Grapevine or the church website for the latest information particularly for streaming of services.

St Mary's, Saffron Walden

All services now take place in church unless shown otherwise. One service in church each Sunday is also streamed on YouTube [Y]: details on the church website.

Sunday 1 May

- 8am BCP Holy Communion
- 10am 1st Sunday Communion [Y] * (see note below)
- 6.30pm H2H Youth-led Service for All

Thursday 5 May

- 1pm Service with Prayers for Wholeness & Healing

Sunday 8 May

- 8am BCP Holy Communion
- 10am Holy Communion [Y]
- 11.30am Annual Parochial Church Meeting
- 6.30pm Choral Evensong

Saturday 14 May

- 10.30am Mayor-Making Service

Sunday 15 May

- 8am BCP Holy Communion [Y]
- 10am Family Service
- 6.30pm Evening Communion with Prayers for Wholeness and Healing

Sunday 22 May

- 8am BCP Holy Communion
- 10am Holy Communion [Y]
- 6.30pm Evening Prayer

Ascension Day Thursday 26 May

- 2pm Mothers' Union Deanery Service
- 7.30pm Choral Eucharist



* A more informal celebration of Holy Communion, giving us a chance to try new things. During this time our children's group, Team JC, meets nearby in the Parish Rooms and joins us just before we receive communion. The service lasts about an hour and a quarter and refreshments are served afterwards.



Friday 27 May to Sunday 29 May
Weekend Away

Sunday 29 May

8am BCP Holy Communion
10am Holy Communion [Y]
6.30pm Taizé Service

Regular weekday services at St Mary's

Tuesdays

5pm Evening Prayer by Zoom, see weekly bulletin for login details

Wednesdays

8am Morning Prayer
9.30am Holy Communion

St James', Swards End

Sunday 8 May

9.30am Holy Communion

Sunday 22 May

9.30am Morning Praise



St John's, Little Walden

Sunday 8 May

11.15am Family Service

Sunday 22 May

11.15am Holy Communion



Meeting God at the Movies

Humans are creatures who love to hear and tell stories; our brains seem to be hardwired for this way of communicating. Western literature and theatre have long fed our insatiable appetite for story and drama; all stories have the power to captivate readers and hearers, leaving a lasting



impression. Preachers know the power of a true story to engage a flagging congregation and rekindle attention. And of course, the Bible writers knew this too: much of God's word comes to us in story form, both tragic and heroic, with the power to fire our imaginations and inspire faith. For the most part the great storytellers of English literature, like Shakespeare, George Eliot, or Charles Dickens, who all shed such light on our human condition, are becoming minority reading, perhaps fading with our memories of distant school days. We live now in the age of moving images, whether on the big screen or the iPad. It is the scriptwriters, film makers and actors who are the storytellers of our time.

At every priest's ordination, the candidate is reminded that the Church is charged to proclaim the gospel afresh to each new generation. If we are to do that now, then we must engage fully with contemporary visual culture. That will mean thinking about the films we watch from a Christian perspective, seeing how they can speak to us about our own beliefs and how they might help us to communicate gospel truths to others today. The Swiss theologian, Karl Barth, once advised that it was important to keep the Bible in one hand and a newspaper in the other, but then to interpret the news through the lens of the Bible. If that is true, then it stands to reason that we should seek to bring our film-going into dialogue with our scriptures. And just as some of us really do enjoy reading and may value a regular Book Club get-together over coffee, so there is likely to be genuine value and pleasure in joining with others to discuss a good film.

Those who attend homegroups might enjoy doing this during one or more of their regular sessions, just for a bit of a change. There is now a rich resource of materials available to help groups bring a particular film into conversation with the Bible. These have usually been designed for the weeks of Lent, but can easily be used at other times of the year. Hilary Brand has been a pioneer in this field, producing a number of useful studies. Her first was *Christ and the*

Chocolaterie (2002), which looks at the film *Chocolat*, and another is *Finding a Voice* (2011), inspired by *The King's Speech*. Tim Heaton has produced *The Naturalist and The Christ* (2011), a challenging look at evolution through the film *Creation*, based on the life of Charles Darwin. Also, *The Long Road to Heaven* (2013), which charts the progress of a motley group walking The Camino de Santiago, in the film *The Way*. I have run all these with church groups and found that they attract more than 'the usual suspects' for Lent groups and have generated lively discussion of gospel-related themes. More recent offerings are Rachel Mann's *Still Standing* (2020) which reflects on the life of Elton John as depicted in the film *Rocketman*, and Rose Hudson-Wilkin's *The Room Where it Happened* (2021), the first course to draw on a musical (*Hamilton*). The films involved don't need to be overtly Christian, indeed my own modest attempt, *Thoughts of God* (2022), has as its two central characters an atheist and a Hindu. However, these films all lend themselves to prompting some of the big questions of life about identity, truth, salvation, and so on.

Naturally we don't need to wait for someone to write a course before a group can talk about a film. It will certainly help if someone comes prepared with good starter questions to give the evening a Godward direction, and perhaps suggests a Bible passage that will fit the occasion. Films based on true stories are often the best. Examples might be *The Mercy* (2017); *Goodbye Christopher Robin* (2017), *The Dig* (2021), or my own favourite *The Queen of Katwe* (2016). But others might easily work: *Great Expectations* (2012 or 1946); *Atonement* (2007); *The Aftermath* (2019) - the list goes on!

The Bible Society's *Reel Issues* project (now sadly defunct) was a great resource for any fledgling Film Club. A simple Internet search today will find its helpful framework of questions for use with any film, and it is even possible to find some of their old resources addressing particular films. The group should try to tease out the issues the film raises and explore them with a Christian mind. Which characters attract or repel; does the film support or challenge the group's values; does the Bible seem to have anything to say on these matters; how would group members wish to act if they were in a certain character's shoes?

Film, like any other form of art, can carry meaning and truth, revealing ourselves to ourselves, like a reflection in a mirror. When we empathise with a film's characters, seeing situations through their eyes, then our thoughts turn to the pains, joys, and puzzles of being human. When this is done alongside an encounter with scripture, spiritual growth can occur, particularly in conversation with others. Why not give it a go?

Andy Colebrooke

YOUin**thePEW** interviewed by Chris Bishop

Lawrence Gooderham

Lawrence's family origins were in Suffolk near Debenham where they had lived for at least two hundred years. His grandfather left Suffolk for London in the 1880's, like so many others, during the agricultural depression brought about by the opening up of the prairies in North America, to grow corn. So his father was born in Tottenham and he in 1935 at Harpenden in Hertfordshire.

Anne and Lawrence were married at St John's Loughton in 1961 and because, even in those days the Central Line was very crowded and his work as an actuary would be close to Liverpool Street they bought a cottage in Little Walden so as to be able to travel on the main line.

Having spent ten years as a choirboy he was devoted to the Church of England so he immediately joined St John's Chapel of Ease where he soon became pro-warden and a member of St Mary's PCC. When they moved to Saffron Walden in 1967 he worshipped regularly at St Mary's, of his children, Sally was baptised at Little Walden and Catherine and Timothy at St Mary's.

He quickly became a sidesman and John Dawkins persuaded him to join The Friends of the Church and become Secretary. In 1982 he became Chairman, just before Peter Harlow became Rector and became a deputy warden and took over the secretaryship of the DCC during Hamish Walker's sabbatical. In 1992 he became Churchwarden, a position which he held for seven years.

One of the things which has given him great pleasure has been the formation of the men's group, breakfasts, lunches, suppers and walks, originally instigated by Jeremy Collingwood and ably carried on by Bill Rose and others. This has given the opportunity of making new friends and added much to the spirit of companionship in our congregation.

His most memorable events have been the Remembrance Sunday services where people from the whole town have been packed into the Church. Also the Good Friday Walks through the town with members of other churches witnessing to our faith.

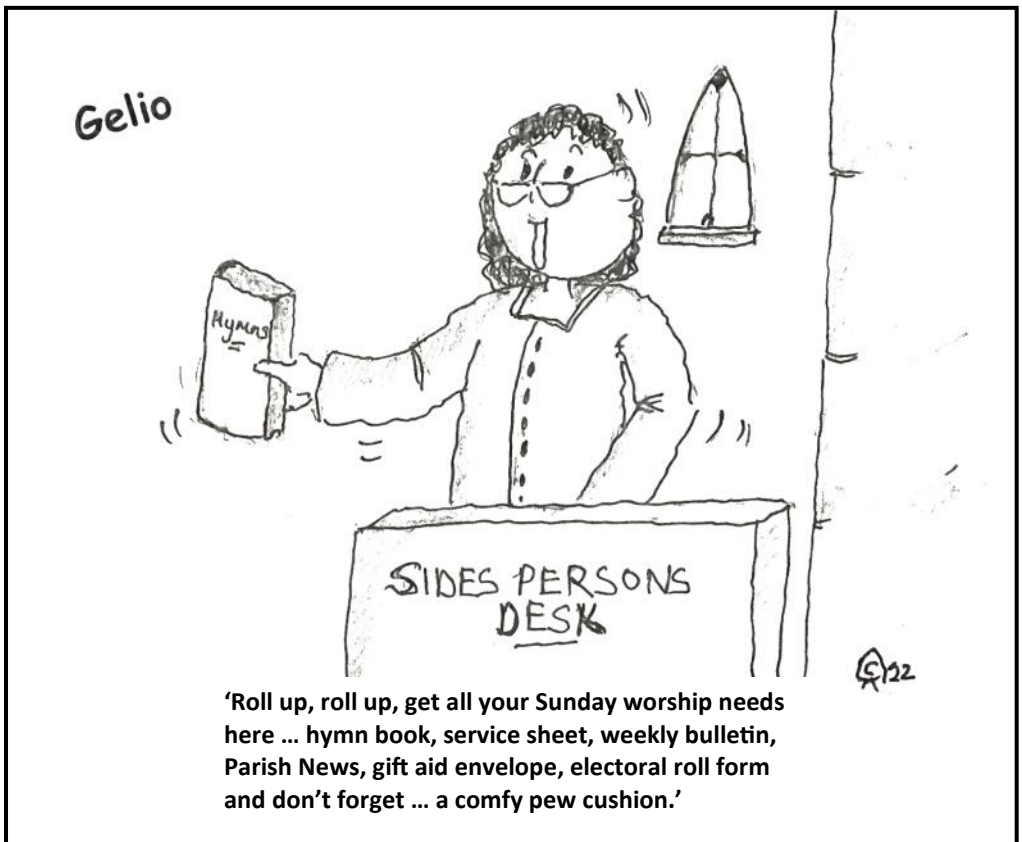
Being Chairman of the Friends has been his main contribution to the Church. He has a wonderful committee and since Pamela's taken over as secretary she has worked tirelessly to promote the Friends which somebody once said was acting like a secret society! The Ladies Sewing Circle is associated



with the Friends and is good to see how much we together have been able to add to the look of the church.

But above all he has felt the wonderful support and love that being a member of this church has blessed him with over the years. He could not imagine how otherwise he could have coped with the loss of his wife and son. St Mary's is very special.

For many years Lawrence was a member of the London Stock Exchange whose motto was 'Dictum Meum Pactum' - My word is my bond. He would like this on his coat of arms and hope he could live up to it.



Paula Winter shares a memory

Many years ago, when our children were small, they were having fun in the dressing-up drawer. Our 4 year old son found an old black mini dress of mine, put it on, full length of course on him, and said to his siblings 'Look, I'm the vicar!'

Smile Lines...

I told my carpenter I didn't want carpeted steps. He gave me a blank stair.

An invisible man married an invisible woman. The kids were nothing to look at either.

I took my new girlfriend out on our first date to the ice rink, and entry was half price. She called me a cheap skate.

I have a chicken proof lawn. It's impeccable.



Letter from New South Wales

Lesley Green shares a letter she received from Australia some years ago.

When planning a trip to Britain last year, we couldn't help noticing that so many of the places we would probably pass through had names which we knew because of their associations with hymn tunes. This intrigued us and we found as many as we could - Thaxted, Rockingham and Helmsley - to name just a few. Our holiday now became a 'Hymn Tune Crawl' as we researched, where possible, why the tunes were given these names.

The very first tune on our journey was Saffron Walden ('Just as I am') and as we left the church of St Mary in the deepening dusk, we passed a cottage with a sign 'Organist' on the door, and through the lighted window we couldn't help but see the organist playing.

In her Christmas card to me my dear friend put this precious memory into words: -

The Organist

Do you recall that autumn dusk at
 Saffron Walden
 As we left the church,
 then lingered on the way,
 For we heard an organ's deep,
 rich tones resounding
 Bringing further joy
 to end the day?
 Remember how you spied
 the tiny cottage
 Whence flowed the glorious,
 thrilling sounds
 And there beside
 the lighted window
 The organ keys beneath
 the gifted hands?
 There, in that moment,
 as we stood
 Those hands, though unaware,
 Bestowed an evening blessing
 And a memory to share.

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MU Meeting Report 13.1.22 – Rufus Barnes in Israel

The Mothers' Union was given a fascinating talk by Rufus Barnes entitled 'Visiting and Living in Israel'. He and his wife lived in Jerusalem for six months in 1991. They were able to maintain a daily routine as inhabitants, visiting the busy markets selling colourful and appetising foods at a reasonable price.

It is a vibrant place inhabited by people of different nationalities including Christians, Armenians, Jews and Muslims living in very distinct quarters. The lands of the middle east are very similar to each other, but in Israel, there is always an undercurrent of problems which can make visitors feel uneasy. However, the ancient buildings and places of worship, street musicians and even beggars give it a very special atmosphere.

Rufus' significant memories include a performance of the Messiah, sung in Hebrew with everyone standing for the 'Hallelujah Chorus'. There was a river boat trip with Samoan Christians who sang choruses as the anchor was dropped in the middle of the sea and an Armenian Boy Scout Pipe Band. He also found the visits to the old city were outstanding.

Rufus has taken people on tour to visit Biblical places as far as Caesarea Philippi, located 25 miles north of the Sea of Galilee, famous for its grotto and one of the largest springs feeding the River Jordan. They also visited the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, where Jesus' body was laid. In Jerusalem, they visited the Jaffa Gate, where in 1917, General Allenby walked through when the British occupied Palestine following 400 years of Turkish rule.

The late Jeremy Collingwood would prepare appropriate Bible readings for the different places visited on the trips, enhancing their meaning, all adding to the tour. On one occasion, they encountered a group of local people who were saying most unpleasant things about tourists. Much to their surprise, one of our tour members, Sheilah Girgis-Hannah, was able to remonstrate with them in fluent Arabic. Well done, Sheilah!

Some of our members have experienced these tours and have found them very interesting and moving, so if you ever have the opportunity, do go.

Helen Eyles

St Mary's Music News



6 March was a big day for some of the newest members of the Junior Choir, as it was their first appearance at a regular morning service with the Senior Choir. The two groups have now started rehearsing together, and will be singing together as a full choir on Palm Sunday.

The Concert for Ukraine on 12 March raised nearly £5,000 for the British Red Cross, UNICEF and WITH Ukraine. It was put together at very short notice (less than 3 hours rehearsal for the choir), but nevertheless included a programme featuring Mozart, Holst, Handel, Fauré, Ireland, and Vaughan Williams, to name but a few. Choral solos were performed by members of the choir, with performances of Chopin's Mazurka in A minor by choral scholar Eleanor on the piano and J S Bach's Fantasia in G minor by organ scholar Yechan. The SMMA is very grateful to Andrew Malcolm for stepping in as emergency conductor, alongside Jeremy Allen who also underpinned the performance as organist.

Even the youngest musicians have been supporting Ukraine with a video of Taizé chant O Lord hear my prayer, masterminded by Lizzie Bennett. There is a link to both these delightful performances on the church website.

Meanwhile, it has been all change on the SMMA committee. After 3 decades of service, including the last 9 years as Chairman, Bron Ferland has finally stood down. At the AGM in March Oli referred to her energy, dynamism and drive. Bron herself described the choir as an extension of her family, and we have all seen her in action as guide, philosopher, friend and mother hen! She will be a very hard act to follow, but Hannah Razzell has

bravely taken up the challenge. Meanwhile, Bron has agreed to stay on as music administrator. The SMMA is also very pleased to welcome long time chorister Ellie Beare as a new committee member.

Mozart's Requiem will be the centrepiece of the SMMA's Devotional Offering on Good Friday, 15 April. The choir will be joined by the East Anglia Chamber Orchestra. The evening will also feature a Kyrie by Ukrainian composer Myroslav Skoryk, which the choir have been singing in services, and Lotti's Crucifixus. Good Friday will be the first time that the Junior and Senior Choirs will be singing together at a big choral event since the start of the pandemic. We are all looking forward to it, and to joining in the Easter worship as a complete SMMA family.

Otilie Lefever



God in the Sciences



Humility

A few years ago I visited the Smithsonian Museum's Hall of Human Origins. Our guide, the curator of anthropology, was keen to help Christians understand his research. Whatever you make of the evidence for human evolution, the fact remains that other species a bit like us were around before we came on the scene – or in the case of Neanderthals, at the same time.

Part of the exhibit included lifelike reconstructions of the face and hair of several different hominins, displayed on pillars at the right height for each species. So I could crouch down to 'meet' *Homo floresiensis* or stand tall to look into the eyes of *Homo heidelbergensis*. Most of these – beings? creatures? – were on other branches of the evolutionary tree to us, and we share a common ancestor much further back. I did, however, feel as if I was meeting my forebears.

As I walked between the statues I asked myself, "Why us?" There's evidence that Neanderthals used symbolism as we do, and also buried their dead. Did they have the potential to evolve to a point where they could do similar things to us? The curator explained how, as the ice ages came and went, human beings moved around but other species appear to have stayed put and suffered the consequences – they just weren't ready yet for that big change. As I took in the displays about how we began to gather socially around a fire, make music or write, I felt humbled. We managed to adapt, but we could so easily have disappeared with the rest.

In his book *The Message of Creation*, theologian David Wilkinson shares his view that being made in the image of God has nothing to do with our own cleverness or abilities, but is a gift. God created us on purpose (I

believe through the long slow process of evolution) and chose to enter into a relationship with us, making us His representatives on earth.

Thankfully I don't have to figure out how to interact with other human-like hominins today. I do, however, have an equal share in humankind's God-given commission to tend and keep creation. Am I ready to go further than ensuring my own species' survival - not necessarily because we have evolved further than our ice-age ancestors, but because I have one of the 'new hearts' promised in Ezekiel 11:19? Can I work together, in a true spirit of humility, with people from all over the world to ensure the full diversity of life can flourish?

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



From the editor...

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Many thanks in anticipation!



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God in the Arts

A meal to remember!

When we gather with other Christians to celebrate the Eucharist and to make our communion, we are remembering that special meal Jesus shared with His disciples on the eve of His arrest and death. But do we



always appreciate what we are doing? Sometimes the monotony of repetition and distractions will get in the way. We fail to recognise Christ's gift at communion for what it truly is.

In the 15th century the prosperous burghers of the Flemish town of Louvain commissioned the artist Dirk Bouts to paint a special altarpiece devoted to the Eucharist for the church of St Peter. Dirk Bouts, with his imagination, portrayed the Last Supper in a room looking out to his own town of Louvain. The faces of the servers in the room and the cooks looking through the hatch were modelled on the burghers who commissioned the work.

Other faces are modelled on theologians at the new university who visited the artist. They wanted to ensure he kept his theological feet on the ground while his imagination took flight. And so around the scene of the Last Supper, Bouts has painted Old Testament scenes foreshadowing that holy communion: Melchizedek offering bread and wine in return for Abraham's offering, the eating of the first Passover, the gathering of the manna in the wilderness, and Elijah wakened by the angel to eat and drink before setting out for Horeb. Signs of sacrifice, the Passover of the old covenant, daily food and food for the journey – all key aspects of the communion we celebrate and share in.

Just as the theological faculty reminded Dirk Bouts of all these facets, so the artist is reminding us of the richness of the distinctive meal we have as Christians. When we see the bread and wine taken up and offered, we remember not only the Last Supper, when Jesus fed His disciples with the sacrifice of His life, but those occasions when God reached out to feed His people of old. We rejoice that the food our Lord gives us in the Eucharist feeds us now and enables us to make our journey through life to the eternal banquet offered in the heavenly kingdom.

The Rev'd Michael Burgess (ParishPump)

The Last Supper (1464–68) by Dirk Bouts, St Peter's Church, Louvain.

**PRAY FOR
UKRAINE**