

The Vicar Writes...

Dear Friends

"Follow me", Jesus said to him and Levi got up, left everything and followed him. Luke 5.27-28

Matthew was a tough, shrewd, cynical tax collector, a man willing to accept deep unpopularity in his pursuit of wealth. It's strange that he gave up everything to follow Jesus.

We might suggest that Matthew was drawn by Jesus' charismatic personality, some unseen force that he could not resist. However, Jesus never forced himself on anyone. Many people met Jesus and turned away, apparently unaffected by him. Matthew too could have said no.

Perhaps it was the fact that Jesus was willing to take him as a friend, accept him as he was. Jesus made no accusations, no recriminations. Matthew wasn't used to that. He was accustomed to being disliked and had learned to shrug it off, superficially at least, and pretend it did not matter. Jesus gave him a simple invitation and offered it with love. "Follow me. Come as you are".

The same is true for us; we are chosen not because we are better, more intelligent, harder working or even more enthusiastic, but because he loves us. It is a plain and unconditional fact. We sometimes find it hard to accept. We would rather work for his love so that we can think we have earned it, but we don't earn it, Jesus simply gives it and accepts us as we are.

Matthew deserved nothing. His lifestyle had made him unacceptable to most people, but that wasn't the point, Jesus offered him and offers us unconditional love. Paul Tillich, the theologian, once wrote:

"We need the courage to accept that we are accepted in spite of being unacceptable".

God welcomes us, not because of anything we've done or are, but because he loves us. That is the truth and we can take it or leave it, and even if we choose to leave it, he still loves us.

With all good wishes

Andrew

THE ROYAL MOTOR YACHT CLUB **SERVICE OF THE SEA**

Please come and join us for this Service of the Sea on Sunday 17th February at 6.00 pm where our preacher will be the Rt. Rev'd Karen Gorham, Bishop of Sherborne.



Thomas Bray: founder of SPCK

Thomas Bray was once called a “Great Small Man”, with good reason. This diminutive 18th century English clergyman (1658 – 1730) not only helped to establish the Church of England in Maryland, but he was also founder of the Society for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge (SPCK) in 1698 and the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts (USPG) in 1701.



Those are long names for societies whose aim was to get Christian books and resources into the hands of those who desperately needed them. For the early 18th century was not an easy time for poor clergymen: books were expensive, and many of them had few, or none to guide them in their ministry. And so Thomas Bray, who had been educated at Oxford, joined with some other clergy friends to help them.

After a trip to assess the needs of the young Episcopal Church in Maryland (he was sent by the Bishop of London), Bray became rector of St Botolph's, Aldgate in London in 1708. From here he served his parish, and through SPCK eventually established 80 parish libraries in England and a further 39 in the Colonies. SPCK and USPG worked by asking learned authors to donate copies of their books. They also appealed to merchants to the foreign plantations for financial help in establishing the libraries.

Thomas Bray's life has affected hundreds of thousands of people over three centuries. Not only was his work in America the first major coordinated effort to establish libraries in the New World, but SPCK is still one of our

leading UK Christian publishing houses today. As if that was not enough, Bray also worked to help poor debtors emigrate to better lives, and homeless children to get care in England. He helped feed prisoners at Newgate prison in London and joined in the political fight against slavery. He also supported outreaches to Africans and Native Americans in their home countries.

When he died on 15th February 1730, thousands mourned him. A great small man indeed!

THE VICAR'S A POET!

On 27th February the Church Calendar celebrates George Herbert. For those who are muttering 'never heard of him', just think of the hymn 'Let all the world/ In every corner sing', which he wrote, along with several other hymns which are still popular, even if they are well over 300 years old.

In the course of his short life he was a graduate of Cambridge University, a favoured politician of King James, a distinguished poet of the so-called 'metaphysical' school, and a much-loved parish priest at Bemerton, in Wiltshire.

He was born in Wales but grew up in a wealthy family in England. As a student he felt called to ordination, but when he graduated he was drawn instead into the government of the time. As a protégé of King James (yes, the one of the 'King James Bible') he could have pursued a career in government, but that youthful call persisted and after a while he turned instead to the ministry of the Church of England.

It was an era when many clergy were absentee incumbents, paying someone else to do the parish work while they lived

elsewhere, but Herbert set himself to be a true parish priest, noted for his pastoral care and practical support of his parishioners. The whole of his ministry was fulfilled in that one parish, until he died at 39 from what we would now call tuberculosis.

It is of course his hymns for which he is chiefly remembered today, though his Collected Poems are also regarded as jewels of English poetry.

Organised rain?

Recently the weather men and women have taken to talking about 'organised' rain to be expected following drizzle on western parts. It's nonsense, of course. Rain isn't 'organised', it isn't 'tame'. Like all our weather it happens because of vast natural laws of nature, and there's precious little we can do about it. Pleasant summer sun can set fire to forests. The rain that nourishes our crops can turn to storms and floods. It's the disorganisation, or unpredictability, of weather that catches our attention.



The Psalms in the Bible are full of descriptions about the weather – the lightning and thunder, the gentle spring rain, the baking heat of midday and 'the barren and dry land where there is no water'. The weather is part of the mystery and unpredictability of life; the constantly moving background of life on earth.

In truth, it is the price we pay for living in our beautiful world, with its lakes and marshlands, deserts and rivers. It is the world we have from our Creator – green and pleasant sometimes, and wild and scary at others. The world is not a ‘tame’ place.

The Bible seems to think we should take the good with the bad – even the weather of February. As Psalm 148 says: ‘Praise the Lord from the earth...fire and hail, snow and mist, stormy wind fulfilling his word!’

Or, as our grandmothers used to say: ‘Whether the weather be cold or whether the weather be hot, we’ll weather the weather whatever the weather, whether we like it – or not!’

The Rev'd Canon David Winter

NEW DIOCESEAN SECRETARY FOR THE DIOCESE OF SALISBURY



David Pain started his new role of Diocesan Secretary and Chief Executive after twenty years at Christian Aid. He leads a team at Church House Salisbury, supporting the work of over 450 parishes in Wiltshire, Dorset, Hampshire

and Devon.

The Bishop of Salisbury, Nicholas Holtam, says, “David emerged from a strong field of applicants as the right person to be our next Diocesan Secretary. His past

experience will be useful and he comes with a strong set of skills.

“He has a heart for the Church here in this Diocese, where his late father was a priest and his mother still lives. In that sense this is a vocational appointment. We very much look forward to his starting in the New Year.”

David grew up in a vicarage in Bristol and Guildford dioceses. His father later moved into the Diocese of Salisbury, and was a clergyman in Melksham and the Urchfont/ Redhorn Team and, in retirement, Bradenstoke and Dorchester.

David was one of the Directors at Christian Aid. He led the team which worked with supporters and churches across Britain and was responsible for Christian Aid’s fundraising, communications and advocacy campaigns. Prior to that, he led Christian Aid’s work across the African continent.

Earlier in his career he worked for the Diocese of Worcester where he was Principal Officer of the Board for Mission. He says, “I am delighted to have the opportunity to work in the Diocese of Salisbury. I’m looking forward to meeting people across the diocese and working together to make choices about the future.

“The vision of a thriving Christian presence in every community is an inspiring one; we will need to work together to be creative and imaginative to make this sustainable. “We are called to be agents of change, responding to God’s invitation to transformation and enabling all to live a fullness of life.”

The Chairman of the Diocesan Board of Finance, Nigel Salisbury, explains, “I am delighted that David has joined the team as Diocesan Secretary. After so many successful years in post it was always going to be difficult to replace

Lucinda Herklots but David emerged as an extremely strong candidate from a very strong field.

"He brings huge spiritual energy and wide management experience to this critical strategic leadership role".

The current Diocesan Secretary, Lucinda Herklots, stepped down in November after nearly 15 years in the post. Lucinda says, "Being Diocesan Secretary has been a brilliant job; varied and interesting. I have enjoyed its challenges, and working with colleagues here. I wish David all the best as he takes over and makes the role his own."

David lives in Winchester with his wife, Kate and two teenage children. He is a member of St Paul's Church in Winchester. He enjoys cooking, cycling and spending time with friends and family. He started his new post at the beginning of January.

SHINE JESUS SHINE

At the flick of a switch or a press of a button we can illuminate our homes with all kinds of gadgets. City life has street lights everywhere and if we need a light for dark places we can use a torch.

Life for people in Bible days must have been so different. The darkness was something to be feared. Anyone in the open at night was vulnerable to attack, not only by robbers and thieves but also by animals.

The Bible often mentions darkness to be a symbol for evil, whether real or imaginary. The Old Testament records watchmen on the walls of a city or large town who were employed to protect the inhabitants. Watchmen were

impatient for the sunrise and a psalmist thinks of his soul waiting on God to deliver him, like the watchman waiting for the dawn. (Psalm 130:6)

The Bible often associates darkness for inappropriate behaviour, problems, difficulties, wrong-doing and malevolence. Darkness can also mean a wrong course of action, wilfulness and stupidity. When the Scriptures speak of *light* this shows up what is amiss with our lives. Light can reveal a problem and show the way to avoid or overcome it.

The prophet Isaiah wrote about people walking in darkness and seeing a great light. This in turn would change their lives for the better. He was describing the coming of Jesus who would be a light for us. He would come to reveal everything that is wrong with us, and to be the means to bring us a new life, a new purpose and a new future. He would break the power of sin and death and make it possible for everyone to be reconciled to God.

In a world that needs to see the healing and saving light of Jesus, we are called to be lights of hope, peace and love. What we do and what we say matters. Our actions and words should point people to our heavenly Father. Sometimes this is difficult and sometimes we fail. But we still should try to be like the psalmist who, while thinking about God, said *Your word is a lamp to guide me and a light for my path.*(Psalm 119:105)

Lester Amann





CALENDAR FOR FEBRUARY

Fri 1st 10.30 am

Coffee Morning in hall

CANDLEMAS

Sun 3rd 8.00 am
10.30 am
6.00 pm

Holy Communion
Parish Communion *with the
Rev'd Canon Jeremy Oakes*
Evening Prayer

Wed 6th 10.30 am

Holy Communion *at St. Nicolas*

Thurs 7th 10.00 am

Parish Art Group

Fri 8th 9.30 am

Baby Group

FOURTH BEFORE LENT

Sun 10th 8.00 am
10.30 am
6.00 pm

Holy Communion
Matins *(Sunday Club in hall)*
Evening Prayer

Wed 13th 10.30 am

Holy Communion *at St. Nicolas*

Fri 15th 10.30 am

Coffee Morning in hall

THIRD BEFORE LENT

Sun 17th 8.00 am
9.30 am
10.30 am
6.00 pm

Holy Communion
Family Service
Parish Communion
Service of the Sea with
the Royal Motor Yacht Club
where our preacher will be
the Rt. Rev'd Karen
Gorham, Bishop of
Sherborne

Wed	20 th	10.30 am	Holy Communion <i>at St. Nicolas</i>
Thurs	21 st	10.00 am	Parish Art Group
		3.30 pm	Magazine collation
Fri	22 nd	9.30 am	Baby Group

SECOND BEFORE LENT

Sun	24 th	8.00 am	Holy Communion
		10.30 am	Matins (<i>Sunday Club in hall</i>)
		6.00 pm	Evening Prayer
Tues	26 th	10.00 am	Craft Group <i>in hall</i>
Wed	27 th	10.30 am	Holy Communion <i>at St. Nicolas</i>

MARCH

Fri	1 st	10.30 am	<i>Coffee Morning in hall</i>
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SUNDAY NEXT BEFORE LENT

Sun	3 rd	8.00 am	Holy Communion
		10.30 am	Parish Communion
		6.00 pm	Evening Prayer

All in the month of February

It was:

200 years ago, on 14th Feb 1819 that Christopher Sholes, American inventor was born. He developed one of the first typewriters and invented the QWERTY keyboard.

150 years ago, on 14th Feb 1869 that Charles Thomson Rees Wilson, Scottish physicist was born. Winner of the 1927 Nobel Prize in Physics for inventing the cloud chamber.

100 years ago, on 26th Feb 1919 that the Grand Canyon National Park was established in Arizona.



SUNDAY READINGS **IN FEBRUARY**

Sunday 3rd February – CANDLEMAS

OLD TESTAMENT: Malachi 3.1-5

Malachi portrays man's encounter with God as a time of trial and judgement in which our shortcomings are exposed and commitment to the Lord tested.

NEW TESTAMENT: Hebrews 2.14-end

Christ liberates us from the power of death and enables us to choose life. Christ enables us to reject temptation with him and thereby live.

GOSPEL: Luke 2.22-40

Jesus' unique identity and importance is confirmed by the testimony of Simeon and Anna.

Sunday 10th February – Fourth Sunday before Lent

OLD TESTAMENT: Isaiah 6.1-8

Isaiah is commissioned by God to go out to the people and speak God's word to them.

NEW TESTAMENT: Luke 5.1-11

Luke describes how Jesus called the first disciples to follow him.

Sunday 17th February – Third Sunday before Lent

OLD TESTAMENT: Jeremiah 17.5-10

Jeremiah affirms that those who trust in the Lord will be rewarded with many blessings.

NEW TESTAMENT: 1 Corinthians 15.12-20

Paul states that if Christ has not been raised then our preaching and our faith is useless.

GOSPEL: Luke 6.17-26

Jesus teaches his disciples by giving them the beatitudes.

Sunday 24th February - Second Sunday before Lent

OLD TESTAMENT: Genesis 2.4-9, 15-end

We have a description of the creation and God giving Adam Eve as a companion.

NEW TESTAMENT: Luke 8.22-25

Jesus calms the storm.

Sunday 3rd March - Sunday next before Lent

OLD TESTAMENT: Exodus 34.29-end

Moses comes down from Mount Sinai with the commandments and his face radiant from his meeting with God.

NEW TESTAMENT: 2 Corinthians 3.12-4.2

Following on from the Old Testament lesson, unlike Moses, we do not need to cover our faces with a veil. We reflect God's glory by his spirit.

GOSPEL: John 12.27-36

Jesus predicts his death and God affirms the divinity of Christ. He will be glorified by death.

TO MAKE YOU SMILE

Manner of speaking

'Are your father and your mother in?' asked the vicar when the small boy opened the door.

'They was in,' said the youngster. 'But they is out.'

'They was in. They is out. Where's your grammar, young man?'

'She's gone upstairs, for a nap.'

VALENTINE'S DAY - 14TH FEBRUARY

There are two confusing things about this day of romance and anonymous love-cards strewn with lace, cupids and ribbon: firstly, there seems to have been two different Valentines in the 4th century – one a priest martyred on the Flaminian Way, under the emperor Claudius, the other a bishop of Terni martyred at Rome. And neither seems to have had any clear connection with lovers or courting couples.



So why has Valentine become the patron saint of romantic love? By Chaucer's time the link was assumed to be because on these saints' day - 14 February – the birds are supposed to pair. Or perhaps the custom of seeking a partner on St Valentine's Day is a surviving scrap of the old Roman Lupercalia festival, which took place in the middle of February. One of the Roman gods honoured during this Festival was Pan, the god of nature. Another was Juno, the goddess of women and marriage. During the Lupercalia it was a

popular custom for young men to draw the name of a young unmarried woman from a name-box. The two would then be partners or 'sweethearts' during the time of the celebrations. Even modern Valentine decorations bear an ancient symbol of love – Roman cupids with their bows and love-arrows.

There are no churches in England dedicated to Valentine, but since 1835 his relics have been claimed by the Carmelite church in Dublin.

THE SNOWDROP (CANDLEMAS BELLS)



Snowdrops have long been associated with mid to late winter and are one of the first flowers of the New Year. They are able to force their way through frozen ground due to hardening of the leaf tips. The flowers open when there are few if any insects around to pollinate them.

The most usual method of reproduction is by division of the bulbs and only rarely by seed. Snowdrops favour damp soils and colonies frequently develop along the sides of streams and ditches. Whether this is due to the bulbs being carried by flood water or not is unclear as many sites are on drier ground. Most of the West Country sites are on calcareous (containing lime) soils.

There is debate about whether snowdrops were brought from Northern Brittany where they grow naturally, or whether there are natural colonies in south west England. However there is a strong link between religious buildings, the remains of ancient ruins of churches, abbeys and definitely in one case the site of a roman villa in Painswick, Gloucestershire.

The Catholic Church has for centuries linked snowdrops to Candlemas (2nd February) which is the feast of the Purification of the Virgin Mary. Often bunches of the flowers have been used to decorate the church. Large country houses frequently have a collection, such as Kingston Lacey and around the remains of Shaftesbury Abbey. In Gloucestershire the Rococo Gardens at Painswick, Colesbourne Park and Rodmarton Manor open their grounds for the public to enjoy the display from mid January to April.

CANDLEMAS

In bygone centuries, Christians said their last farewells to the Christmas season on Candlemas, 2 February. This is exactly 40 days after Christmas Day itself.

In New Testament times 40 days old was an important age for a baby boy: it was when they made their first 'public appearance'. Mary, like all good Jewish mothers, went to the Temple with Jesus, her first male child – to 'present Him to the Lord'. At the same time, she, as a new mother, was 'purified'. Thus, we have the Festival of the Presentation of Christ in the Temple.

So where does the Candlemas bit come in? Jesus is described in the New Testament as the Light of the World, and early Christians developed the tradition of lighting many candles in celebration of this day. The Church also fell into the custom of blessing the year's supply of candles for the church on this day – hence the name, Candlemas.

The story of how Candlemas began can be found in Luke 2:22-40. Simeon's great declaration of faith and recognition of who Jesus was is of course found in the Nunc Dimittis, which is embedded in the Office of Evening Prayer in the West. But in medieval times, the Nunc Dimittis was mostly used just on this day, during the distribution of candles before the Eucharist. Only gradually did it win a place in the daily prayer life of the Church.

My Grandmother's Glass and Me follows the journey of Sally and her granddaughter, Lily, as they visit all 48 sites of Sally's glass in public ecclesiastical buildings in the U.K. A funny and touching account of a granddaughter's exploration of her grandmother's life, that provides a unique commentary on a truly remarkable career spanning three decades.

We thought you might be interested in this book as our west window was created by Sally Scott for the millennium. It uses a technique employing both traditional engraving and selective sand blasting. It was dedicated by the Bishop of Sherborne at the Patronal Festival Eucharist in August 1999. On the mountain of transfiguration, the disciples were shown the glory of God that affirmed Jesus as the fulfilment of Old Testament prophecy and expectation. This we celebrate each year on the feast day of the Transfiguration of our Lord on or near August 6th. If you would like to buy a copy of this book please see Andrew. The cost will be £20 plus p & p.

The Bible verse of 2018

A Bible app, YouVersion, has named Isaiah 41:10 as the most popular verse of 2018.

That verse has been posted, bookmarked, and highlighted more times than any other on the app (which has been downloaded more than 350,000 times around the world). Isaiah 41:10 reads: 'So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.' The verse also came top in Chile, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Perus, South Africa, Spain and the United States.

But in the UK, for 2018, we preferred Jeremiah 29:11: 'For I know the plans I have for you,' declares the Lord, 'plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.'

Nigerian Christians under relentless attack

Release International relates the following true story:

Gyang, a 27-year old Nigerian Christian is a student at the Department of Civil Engineering at the University of Jos. A few weeks ago Gyang saw a post on Facebook about how his village had come under attack from Fulani militants. Almost immediately he called home to speak to his father, the Rev Adamu Gyang, but his father's phone was switched off.

Sensing something was wrong, he called his mother, but her phone was switched off too. A few minutes later he called a friend who told him that both his parents, his three younger siblings and his grandmother were dead. They were among many villagers who had been killed in the village when the militants arrived one evening. During that dreadful night the Fulani burned 95 homes. Most of the village's crops that were almost ready to harvest were also destroyed. Now Gyang is the only surviving member of his family of seven.

Unfortunately, this situation is all too common in parts of Nigeria, where the persecution and killing of Christians is on the increase. But it is not just in Nigeria. In Eritrea, Pakistan, Somalia, Kenya, Egypt and India Christians are also being murdered for their faith. Often, those who are left behind find it hard to keep going.

If you want to help the survivors of these attacks, who desperately need food, shelter, medicines and spiritual encouragement, go to <https://cafdonate.cafonline.org>

Zacchaeus

A chap named Zacchaeus was short
Too short to see Jesus, so thought
In order to see,
He'd climb up a tree
And in Jesus' sight he was caught.
'Zacchaeus! Come down from your tree!
I'm coming to dinner, you see!'
He went for His dinner
To the home of a sinner!
(A sinner like you and like me.)
Zacchaeus, the worst of the worst,
To such as him Jesus came first
The sinner lamented
And then he repented,
And so he was no longer cursed!

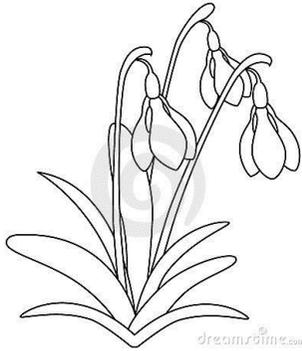
By Nigel Beeton

FROM THE REGISTERS

There are no entries for the Registers this month.

ALTAR FLOWERS

Sunday 3 rd February	Rozanne Parsons
Sunday 10 th February	Rozanne Parsons
Sunday 17 th February	Jette Fletcher
Sunday 24 th February	Jette Fletcher



MAGAZINE DEADLINE

The deadline for the March edition of the
Church Magazine is
Friday 15th February