

# The Vicar Writes...

Dear Friends

J.B. Phillips writes "Christ made no promise that those who followed him would enjoy special immunity from pain and sorrow - nor did he himself experience such immunity.

He did, however, promise enough joy and courage, enough love and confidence in God to enable those who went his way to do far more than survive".

People are often tempted to explain suffering in terms of "the will of God". Not only can this evoke anger and frustration, but it is false. "God's will" is not a label that can be put on unhappy situations. God wants to bring joy, not pain, peace, not war, healing, not suffering. Therefore, we must be willing to ask ourselves where, in the midst of pain and suffering, we can discern the loving presence of God. The presence of God can be seen in those around us, those who support and uphold us in our most difficult times. Our families, friends and neighbours who ensure that we are not alone. It is also important that as a community we reach out to those in need, that we are aware of those who are suffering and need our help. In our society today we have lost something of the concern for others. We have become more concerned with our own lives, our houses, our family, our needs and we can so easily neglect those who live around us.

We give thanks for those who offer support, time and themselves to others. We can all take an interest in our neighbours, be concerned for their health and wellbeing

and, by so doing, we can alleviate some of the suffering and pain in our world.

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 16<sup>th</sup> February at 6.00 pm.*



## **MATTHIAS THE APOSTLE - THE CHOSEN ONE** (24<sup>th</sup> February)

Have you ever been in the position where someone is desperately needed – and you fit the bill perfectly? It is almost as if all your miscellaneous qualifications that never made much sense before now make PERFECT sense. And you sense that you have been chosen by God for the task.... If so, then Matthias is definitely the patron saint for you! Matthias came into the picture shortly after the suicide of Judas. The early church was missing an apostle, and so the remaining 11 apostles prayed for guidance on who to choose as a replacement for this key role.

The qualifications for the job were specialised: the person had to have been a follower of Christ from his Baptism to his Ascension, and a witness of the Resurrection. There were two possibilities: Joseph Barsabas and Matthias. How to choose?

Again, Matthias' experience may mirror yours: the decision was out of his hands, and up to others. In this case, the apostles drew straws – and the 'lot' fell to Matthias. He had been chosen to replace Judas! The tragedy of Judas' betrayal had led to an opportunity for service by Matthias – and he was well prepared for the task. Are you prepared for any task that God might suddenly open before you? Like the other apostles, Matthias had been in Jerusalem and had received the gift of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, and he went on to do a good job. It is said he preached the Good News first in Judea, and then maybe in Cappadocia and by the Caspian Sea. It is thought he was martyred by the axe or halberd, and his relics eventually ended up being taken to Rome by the empress Helen. Matthias is an encouragement to us to be faithful in small things – because you never know what the future might hold!

## **ASH WEDNESDAY - 26<sup>th</sup> February**

Lent begins with Ash Wednesday. But why 'Ash' Wednesday? The reason has to do with getting things right between you and God, and the tradition goes right back to the Old Testament.

In the Old Testament, the Israelites often sinned. When they finally came to their senses, and saw their evil ways as God saw them, they could do nothing but repent in sorrow. They mourned for the damage and evil they had done. As part of this repentance, they covered their heads with ashes. For the Israelites, putting ashes on your head, and even rending your clothes, was an outward sign of their heart-felt repentance and acknowledgement of sin. (See Genesis 18:27; 2 Samuel 13:19; Job 2:8, 30:19; Isaiah 58:5; Jeremiah 6:26; Jonah 3:6)

In the very early Christian Church, the yearly 'class' of penitents had ashes sprinkled over them at the beginning of Lent. They were turning to God for the first time, and mourning their sins. But soon many other Christians wanted to take part in the custom, and to do so at the very start of Lent. They heeded Joel's call to 'rend your hearts and not your garments' (Joel 2:12-19). Ash Wednesday became known as either the 'beginning of the fast' or 'the day of the ashes'.

The collect for today goes back to the Prayer Book, and stresses the penitential character of the day. It encourages us with the reminder of the readiness of God to forgive us and to renew us.

The Bible readings for today are often Joel 2:1-2, 12-18, Matthew 6: 1-6, 16 - 21 and Paul's moving catalogue of suffering, "as having nothing and yet possessing everything." (2 Corinthians 5:20b - 6:10)

The actual custom of 'ashing' was abolished at the Reformation, though the old name for the day remained. Today, throughout the Church of England, receiving the mark of ashes on one's forehead is optional. Certainly the mark of ashes on the forehead reminds people of their mortality: "Remember that you are dust and to dust you will return..." (Genesis 3:19)

The late medieval custom was to burn the branches used on Palm Sunday in the previous year in order to create the ashes for today.

The Collect for Ash Wednesday is:

*Almighty and everlasting God, you hate nothing that you have made and forgive the sins of all those who are penitent: Create and make in us new and contrite hearts that we, worthily lamenting our sins and acknowledging our wretchedness, may receive from you, the God of all mercy, perfect remission and forgiveness; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.*

## **NEWSROUND**

### **Psalm 23 Garden coming to RHS Chelsea -**

The Bible Society has announced that "We're absolutely thrilled to be working with award-winning garden designer Sarah Eberle, to bring Psalm 23 to life at the RHS Chelsea Flower Show in May 2020!"

The Psalm 23 Garden at RHS Chelsea Flower Show 2020, designed by Sarah Eberle, will offer visitors the chance "to stop, reflect, and feel refreshed".

The Bible Society said: "This powerful psalm, with its visual imagery of green pastures, still waters and the valley of the shadow of death, just cries out to be turned into a garden. "We hope you'll love it. And after the Chelsea Flower Show, the garden will find a permanent home at the Winchester Hospice in Hampshire, where it will be a blessing to patients and families."

The Bible Society says it is also hoping that people will "join us in creating community gardens across the country inspired by the Psalm 23 Garden. You can do this outside your office, in your school grounds, or in your churchyard. Let's get gardening!"

## **Church of England appoints National Environment Officer -**

Jo Chamberlain has been appointed as the National Environment Officer for the Church of England, taking forward the strategy developed by the Environment Working Group. This is a new post reflecting the Archbishops' Council's focus on the environment as a theological and mission priority.

Jo joins the Mission and Public Affairs team from Christian Aid and the Diocese of Sheffield where she volunteers as their Environment Adviser. She will work closely with the Environment Consultant, David Shreeve, and link with the Cathedrals and Church Buildings team where Open and Sustainable Churches Officer, Catherine Ross, forms the third part of a new environment staff 'hub'.

Dear all,

This is the second part of the talk which we heard in November at the local churches together evening service. The first part can be found in the January magazine, or if you've missed it, email me at [revthomaspelham@gmail.com](mailto:revthomaspelham@gmail.com). The talk is about psalm 19, which the person who gave the talk described as showing us two books; the book of nature, and the book of law (religion). In this part of the talk, he describes how science might go about looking at the book of nature.

Tom

## Part 2

When I was a young boy we went on holiday every year to my grandmother's house, where I would eagerly study a book called *The Wonder Book of Why and What*. There I learned much about the world, and to me the title sums up how we learn about the world and our place in it: we wonder **What** is out there in the world, and we wonder **Why** it is.

These questions are very different, and we miss the point if we think that by recording **What** we see in nature, and building models in our mind of **How** it works, we are also understanding **Why** it is so. I heard a story from the preacher Richard Forster that demonstrates this point:

*A professor was showing a visitor round his science lab, and the visitor saw a beaker of water boiling over a Bunsen burner. He asked why the water was boiling, and the professor explained that the heat from the burning gas was warming the water.*

*The visitor asked again; why it was boiling?*

*And he heard about how the water turns into water vapour but has to make bubbles at nucleation centres to escape from the liquid.*

*Yes, but why is it boiling?*

*At this point the lab technician walked in, and asked if the water for his tea was boiling yet.*

Often **Why** is a much simpler question than What or How, but much more illuminating! **Why** looks for a purpose, a meaning, a significance to ourselves. Scientific **What** explanations are cold and factual, and offer us no hope or help. Science never offers evidence that prove or disprove God, such thoughts are quite outside its realm of competence. But this Psalm gives us a rounded vision, how we can study the Book of Nature to understand **What** the universe is, And **also** study the Scriptures to understand **Why**.

Science is a wonderful intellectual edifice for understanding the Book of Nature, relying on careful observation, building a mental model called a theory or a conjecture, and predicting new measurements based on that model. If a scientific model does not fit the observations, then it is plain **wrong**. If it offers no predictions, then in the words of the physicist Wolfgang Pauli it is “not **even** wrong”! If the predictions work, the model is accepted as a working model. It may work for a while, then need adjusting or replacing in the light of new evidence. (Often the old model remains as a simplified model for teaching purposes.)

Challenge, doubt and failure are the lifeblood that drives scientific understanding forward. Some of the best publicised latest cosmological models, including Dark Matter and Dark Energy, are in the balance of scrutiny and doubt right now. They are currently under deep challenge because the best experiments have failed to find the predicted evidence, and the models may need rethinking. So we are right to question and challenge scientific theories, but we must do it within their own intellectual framework. We cannot say “it is only a theory”, as some say of Darwinian evolution, because such theories, built upon evidence and challenge, are the bedrock of the scientific method. We cannot say “I have a document from three thousand years ago that gives a different explanation”, Because that is a different sort of evidence in a different framework. And we can NOT say “I have a science of evolution based on divine revelation” because that is not repeatable or testable, it is not science, it is not even wrong. No scientist will begin to consider such challenges, they will only think you fail to understand science.

So now we have seen a little of the methods by which we understand the Book of Nature. From such study we gain an

increasing sense of **wonder** at what we see around us, Starting with looking up at the sky with the glorious Sun, the night sky with its stars and planets, and reaching ever deeper understanding with better observations and better instruments.

Who cannot feel wonder at such knowledge?

I recently attended a few scientific talks that gave me a new sense of wonder at the latest theories. For instance, please raise your hand if you are wearing any gold on it, such as a wedding or engagement ring. This was picked out by the psalmist as having special value among God's creation. Did you ever wonder where that gold comes from?

(And I don't mean a gold mine, or South Africa!)

Our world and our bodies are made of stardust from a heavy burnt-out star which explodes destructively in what we know as a supernova. That stardust can only contain elements up to the atomic weight of Iron.

But every atom of gold, and platinum, and most neutron-rich heavy nuclei are from a far more exotic source.

Gold comes from the rare and awesome collision of **two** neutron stars, two super-dense lumps of neutron matter resulting from two supernova star explosions. That collision can literally be felt across the universe, but one happened very near where we are now in the Galaxy. And it produced the nuclei of heavy elements, neutron spray exploding like popcorn into atomic matter as it is released from gravity, which condensed into a dusty cloud, which became our solar system, and us, and our wedding rings, and even a gift to a baby in a manger two thousand years ago!

That is our latest understanding, linked to the detection of these events as gravity waves with LIGO just 2 years ago.

Now perhaps you will look at that gold ring in a new light!



## CALENDAR FOR FEBRUARY

### CANDLEMAS

Sun	2	8.00 am 10.30 am 6.00 pm	Holy Communion Parish Communion Service of Darkness and Light for Candlemas
Wed	5	10.30 am	Holy Communion <i>at St. Nicolas</i>
Thurs	6	10.00 am	Parish Art Group
Fri	7	10.30 am 10.30 am	<b>NO COFFEE GROUP</b> Funeral of Elizabeth Thring

### THIRD SUNDAY BEFORE LENT

Sun	9	8.00 am 10.30 am 6.00 pm	Holy Communion Matins ( <i>Sunday Club in hall</i> ) Evening Prayer
Wed	12	10.30 am 2.00 pm	Holy Communion <i>at St. Nicolas</i> Bible Study Group <i>in hall</i>
Fri	14	9.30 am	Baby Group

### SECOND SUNDAY BEFORE LENT

Sun	16	8.00 am 9.30 am 10.30 am 6.00 pm	Holy Communion Family Service Parish Communion RMYC Service of the Sea
Wed	19	10.30 am	Holy Communion <i>at St. Nicolas</i>
Thurs	20	10.00 am 3.30 pm 5.00 pm	Parish Art Group Magazine collation PCC Meeting

Fri 21 10.30 am **Coffee Morning in hall**

**SUNDAY NEXT BEFORE LENT**

Sun 23 8.00 am Holy Communion  
10.30 am Matins (*Sunday Club in hall*)  
6.00 pm Evening Prayer

Tues 25 10.00 am Craft Group  
7.00 pm Open Deanery Synod with  
the Bishop of Salisbury on  
the environment at  
St. George's church hall,  
Oakdale

Wed 26 10.30 am Holy Communion for Ash  
Wednesday *at St. Nicolas*  
2.00 pm Bible Study Group *in hall*

Fri 28 9.30 am Baby Group  
5.00 pm **Lent Devotion** *in church*

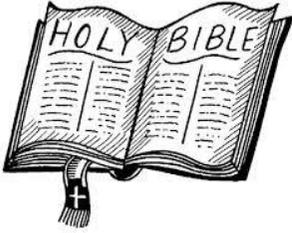
**LENT 1**

Sun 1 8.00 am Holy Communion  
10.30 am Parish Communion  
6.00 pm Evening Prayer

Wed 4 10.30 am Holy Communion *at St. Nicolas*  
5.00 pm **Lent Devotion** *in church*

Thurs 5 10.00 am Parish Art Group

Fri 6 10.30 am **Coffee Morning in hall**  
5.00 pm **Lent Devotion** *in church*



## **SUNDAY READINGS IN** **FEBRUARY**

### **Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> 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 9<sup>th</sup> February - Third Sunday before Lent**

OLD TESTAMENT: Isaiah 58.1-9

*The outward display of ritual fasting is hypocritical if it is not supported by appropriate deeds. True fasting is feeding the hungry and sheltering the homeless.*

NEW TESTAMENT: Matthew 5.13-20

*Jesus tells his disciples to be witnesses of God's will to all men. He tells them to practice and teach the law and they will enter the kingdom of heaven.*

### **Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> February - Second Sunday before Lent**

OLD TESTAMENT: Genesis 1.1-2.3

*The first chronological account of the creation of the world and its inhabitants places mankind created in God's image and ruling over all other creatures.*

NEW TESTAMENT: Romans 8.18-25

*Paul considers that the present sufferings that he and the early church are experiencing are nothing compared to the world to come.*

GOSPEL: Matthew 6.25-end

*Jesus emphasises the importance of trust in the life of faith. God will provide the material necessities to those whose hearts are in tune with spiritual values.*

### **Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> February - Sunday next before Lent**

OLD TESTAMENT: Exodus 24.12-end

*Moses went up onto cloud covered Mount Sinai as commanded by God to receive the tablets of stone and stayed there for forty days and forty nights.*

NEW TESTAMENT: Matthew 17.1-9

*Matthew describes the events surrounding the transfiguration of Jesus high up on a mountain in front of three of the disciples.*

### **Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> March - Lent 1**

OLD TESTAMENT: Genesis 2.15-17; 3.1-7

*God places man and later woman in the Garden of Eden, forbidding them to eat from the tree of knowledge of good and evil but they disobey.*

NEW TESTAMENT: Romans 5.12-19

*Paul considers the fact that death and sin reigned supreme from the time of Adam until we were justified by the grace of Christ.*

GOSPEL: Matthew 4.1-11

*The conflict between Jesus and Satan is presented as the symbol of our struggle to choose between life and death.*

## **Silence**

The din and hoopla is over now  
Behind us on the shores of Time  
The mid-winter hype, heavy and harsh  
False and facile and fading fast

`Till only the Word is left  
Burnished bright and gleaming true  
Not loud, but ever quieter and softer  
Diminuendo upon diminuendo fading fast

But now I hear the Silence  
Wordlessly and gently speaking to me  
Embracing me with Love  
And telling me I am not alone

Freely given to all  
To you, and you, and you  
A Silence louder than any noise  
Deeper than any pit you fall in

Bathing us all in Love  
Unlimited, unqualified, Eternal  
The deep Silence waiting for us all  
Joyful, patient, forgiving

We wrapped in all of Him  
And He wrapped in all of us.

*John McGill: February, 2020.*

# **‘Symphony with the Stars’ Charity Gala Concert**

22<sup>nd</sup> February at 7pm

An operatic and choral spectacular, starring  
Claire Rutter - soprano and Diana Montague - mezzo soprano  
Huw Montague Rendall – baritone  
Sam Hanson – organ and piano and the Tumlyn Brass

## **The Bournemouth Symphony Chorus**

The Bournemouth Symphony Youth Chorus

Gavin Carr – Conductor

David Rendall – Master of Ceremonies

I was glad (Parry), West Side Story medley/Candide (Bernstein)  
Arias/duets/trios by Mozart, Gluck, Saint-Saens, Verdi, Puccini  
The National Anthem (Gordon Jacob, with brass fanfare)

**Venue: the stunning brand new Arts and Leisure Centre at  
Talbot Heath School, Bournemouth – the Steam HUB**  
*the first external event*

**Tickets £25 can be obtained from Graham Luker or  
EVENT-BRITE [www.eventbrite.co.uk](http://www.eventbrite.co.uk)**

Easy free parking / Bar Black tie optional / preferred  
*Generously sponsored by Mike and Heather Slade*

***‘Get out the glad rags and come and enjoy a wonderful evening of  
music with international soloists in a stunning new theatre’***

# ANNE FRANK

Anne Frank, the Dutch Jewish diarist and Holocaust victim, died 75 years ago, in February 1945, in Bergen-Belsen concentration camp at the age of 15 – probably from typhus. She is known for writing *The Diary of a Young Girl*, an account of how she and seven others were hidden in a secret annex to escape the Nazis.

The group had been arrested the previous August, and only Anne's father Otto survived the war. At first it was believed they had been betrayed, but it is now thought possible that they were discovered by accident.



The *Diary*, which Anne – who was born in Germany – started writing at the age of 13, is the story of how ordinary people risked their lives to help those in need, but it says little about the unclear relationship the Dutch had with Nazi Germany. Up to 80% of the Dutch Jewish population were killed during the war – the second highest percentage after Poland.

The diary, which had been kept safe by Otto's secretary, Miep Gies, was published in English in 1952 and has since been translated into more than 60 languages. The Anne Frank House, a museum in Amsterdam, opened in May 1960. Asteroid 5535 Annefrank was named in Anne's honour in 1995.

## **SHROVE TUESDAY - WHO'S FOR PANCAKES!**

Why do we have pancakes on Shrove Tuesday, or Pancake Day, as we call it today? And what is Shrove Tuesday? And why do thousands of people feel it rewarding to race along a street somewhere tossing pancakes from their frying pans as they go?

Well, the answer to the first question is that it is the day before Lent begins and for well over a thousand years that has meant it was the last chance to enjoy meat, fat and other tasty dishes until Easter Day. The 'Lent Fast' was widely and strictly observed. The food in the larder wouldn't keep for six weeks so it had to be eaten. With all these rich foods no wonder the French call it 'Fatty Tuesday' – Mardi Gras.

So, what have pancake races got to do with all this solemnity? 'Shrove' is an old word for 'forgiven' and in those days to prepare for the rigours of Lent people would want to confess and seek forgiveness – not quite what you want at a party. The answer is quite simply enjoying yourself while you can! So, on Shrove Tuesday this year let's have some fun and make it last as long as possible. The most convincing (and amusing) of the explanations of pancake races is of outwitting the Sexton who rang the curfew bell that marked the start of Lent. He was reluctant to do it while the race was unfinished. So, the revelry caused by dropped pancakes, postponed the inevitable. Since the Reformation it has not been so rigorously observed in Britain, but still people will resolve to 'give up something for Lent'. Six weeks is about right as a duration and Sunday has always been exempt but make the most of those pancakes. They may well not reappear until April 12th!

*David Winter*

## **OSWALD OF WORCESTER - the saint for Leap Year (29<sup>th</sup> February)**

There is a saint for Leap Year: He is St Oswald of Worcester, who died on 29th February 992. His family story was extraordinary, and full of some surprising 'leaps', all by itself. It provides a tantalising glimpse of what happened to at least one of those pagan Viking warriors who settled in Anglo-Saxon Britain.

For Oswald's great-uncle had come to England c 865, as part of the 'Great Heathen Army' of Viking invaders. But his son, Oswald's uncle, Oda, forsook paganism, and not only converted to Christianity, but actually ended up as Archbishop of Canterbury. From there, Oda was in a position to help his nephew, Oswald, which he did. Oda sent young Oswald to be educated at the abbey of Fleury, then a great centre of learning. There Oswald absorbed the Benedictine ideals which would guide his later life and work. Back in England, he became bishop of Worcester in 961, and with the support of King Edgar, eagerly joined in major reforms of the Anglo-Saxon church.

In 972 Oswald was made Archbishop of York, and seems to have taken a great interest in renewing the church in the Danelaw. He founded Ramsey Abbey, which became one of the great Fenland monasteries.

Oswald was popular as an archbishop, and always washed the feet of the poor every Lent. On 29th February 992 he had just completed this service at Worcester when he collapsed and died. In later years, Worcester adopted both him and Wulfstan to be its two chief saints: they flank the tomb of King John, which is before the high altar in the cathedral.

## **TO MAKE YOU SMILE**

### **Adam and Eve**

Adam and Eve had an ideal marriage. He didn't have to hear about all the men she could have married, and she didn't have to hear about the way his mother cooked.

### **Take me out**

An elderly single woman died last month. She requested no male pallbearers. In her handwritten instructions for her memorial service, she explained: "They wouldn't take me out while I was alive, so I don't want them to take me out when I'm dead."

### **Love in a bag**

I asked my nephew whether he bought his wife anything for Valentine's Day, and he said he had bought her a belt and a bag. When I commented that I am sure she would appreciate them, he agreed: "Yes, and hopefully the vacuum cleaner will work better now."

### **Lost in translation**

Two American preachers were visiting in Germany and attended Sunday services. Since they couldn't speak German, they decided to do as the man sitting in front of them did.

A few minutes into the service the preacher from the pulpit said something and the man in front of them stood, and they stood also. The congregation burst into laughter. They then sat down when the man did.

At the end of the service, they met the pastor and found that he spoke English. They asked him why everyone laughed so much when they stood?

The pastor explained that he had announced that they would have a christening service that evening, and would the father of the child please rise.

## **FROM THE REGISTERS**

### **Baptism**

5<sup>th</sup> January                      Xavier Jago Hobday

### **Funerals**

14<sup>th</sup> January                      Jean Muriel Elcock (92)  
27<sup>th</sup> January                      Shelagh Holden (87)  
7<sup>th</sup> February                       Elizabeth Thring

## **ALTAR FLOWERS**

2<sup>nd</sup> February                      Susanne King  
9<sup>th</sup> February                       Susanne King  
16<sup>th</sup> February                      Jette Fletcher  
23<sup>rd</sup> February                      Jette Fletcher

## **MAGAZINE DEADLINE**

The deadline for the March issue of the  
Church magazine is  
**Friday 14<sup>th</sup> February**