

# The Vicar Writes...

Dear Friends

Recently the Archbishop of Canterbury sent a message to his clergy. Was it a message of support or hope? No, it was a message to take your clip board and investigate if your church had monuments to slave traders and the like. I know it is a controversial subject, but are we really going to remove monuments, or in some cases whole parts of church buildings, because of the history of the past? The early church, whilst not promoting such things as slavery did not condemn it. Shall we stop reading Paul because of this and his views towards women? I hope we are all able to read and understand things in their historical context. The world and the media says that is not possible.

I think the message the church should be giving now, more than at any other time, is a spiritual one. People continue to live in fear and isolation and our response is you can worship online! Why not? Worship, going to church, is about fellowship. It is about us gathering together to worship God, but also to relate to and care for one another. We have seen that we cannot do that through a screen, we as humans need physical contact. G.P. surgeries have shown the same enthusiasm for online consultations. What is missing is that casual comment as the patient leaves which highlights the real problem and not being able to physically touch and find out what the underlying condition is. In Jesus' ministry we see the importance of touch and physical contact especially to the leper and the outcast. Hopefully, once we are all vaccinated, we will be willing to embrace one another once again.

In praying, we hand over those, for whom we can do nothing else, to the father who loves them more than we ever could. We hand over our own fears and weaknesses too and, in that very act, we make ourselves available to help in the fulfilling of some of our requests. It is our minds that have to be changed in prayer, not God's.

"Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee, because he trusteth in thee."

With all good wishes  
Andrew

### **THE STORY BEHIND THE HYMN: *Lord for the Years***

*Lord, for the years your love has kept and guided,  
urged and inspired us, cheered us on our way,  
sought us and saved us, pardoned and provided:  
Lord for the years, we bring our thanks today.*

*Lord, for that word, the word of life which fires us,  
speaks to our hearts and sets our souls ablaze,  
teaches and trains, rebukes us and inspires us:  
Lord of the word, receive your people's praise.*

*Lord, for our hopes, the dreams of all our living,  
Christ and his kingdom one united aim;  
Rulers and peoples bound in high thanksgiving,  
Lord of our hopes, our trust is in your Name. ...*

This well-loved hymn was written in 1967 by the Revd Timothy Dudley Smith, who later became Bishop of Thetford. He later confessed: "I wrote it on a train when I

was very pressed for time. I'm thankful if something I write gets picked up, but I suspect anyone who does something in a rush later regrets that they didn't find time to apply the sandpaper a bit more!"

Dudley Smith had been asked to write a hymn for the centenary service of the Children's Special Service Mission, now Scripture Union, in St Paul's Cathedral. His commission was to write words that could be fitted to Jean Sibelius's *Finlandia*, as it was to be accompanied by an orchestra with this tune in their repertoire. And so – 'Lord for the years' was written. Dudley Smith need not have worried about lack of time – his lyrics were a 'hit' in the cathedral on the day, and went on to become so well-loved that George Carey chose the hymn to be sung at his consecration as Bishop of Bath and Wells, and then again later, in 1991, at his consecration as Archbishop in Canterbury Cathedral. The hymn continued to be widely sung and loved, until in 2002 Timothy Dudley Smith was asked to write an extra verse for it so that it could even be sung around the time of the Queen's Golden Jubilee. Many of the words in the hymn are true for the Queen herself, as she celebrates her 95th birthday this month. She does indeed thank God 'for the years your love has kept and guided, urged and inspired us, cheered us on our way'... And so indeed the 'extra' verse added for the Queen has also held true:

*Lord for our hopes, the dreams of all our living,  
Christ and his kingdom one united aim,  
Rulers and peoples bound in high thanksgiving,  
Lord of our hopes, our trust is in your Name.*

*(Andrew and I love this hymn! I think we've chosen it for all the momentous occasions in our lives, including Andrew's licensing service here at the Transfiguration.)*

## **BARNABAS THE ENCOURAGER**

This month we remember the life of St Barnabas. His real name was Joseph, a wealthy Levite from Cyprus. However, he is known by his nickname '*Son of Encouragement*' (Acts 4:36). Throughout Acts we see him encouraging others in different ways.

He was an example of *generous giving* (Acts 4:36-7), when he sold property and offered the money to the church for those in need. In the midst of a caring and sharing community, he was singled out as a symbol of generosity. Are we prepared to be generous to those in need around us?

He later *encouraged a new Christian* in the person of Paul (Acts 9:27). After Paul's conversion and aware of his reputation, Barnabas came alongside him and brought him into the fellowship of the church. Are we ready to help those who are new in the faith to find a place in our church?

Finally, Barnabas was sent to the church in Antioch where he '*saw the evidence of the grace of God*' (Acts 11:23). It was a church which brought Jewish and Gentile believers together for the first time. Like Barnabas, do we rejoice when we see God doing new things in people's lives? Are we also willing to embrace these things and facilitate change?

Encouragement is one of the spiritual gifts in the New Testament (Romans 12:8). It can be greatly undervalued, but it is still crucial in growing the church. Like Barnabas, will we nurture gifting; strengthen the doubters and those tempted to give up; show generosity to God's people and beyond and will we strengthen people to move beyond their own comfort zones to help those in need?

Be prepared to ask the following questions: 'Are there people alongside us who will encourage us?' and 'How can we be encouragers to others?'

*The Rev'd Canon Paul Hardingham*

## **GARDEN NEWS!**

**Beware Japanese Knotweed** - This month could see a sudden bumper appearance of the notorious garden pest, Japanese knotweed. The Royal Horticultural Society (RHS) experts have warned that the April frosts either delayed or killed other plants who would have helped keep it in check. Unfortunately, the pest is very hardy, and will not have been killed off. The plant grows up to 2.1 metres (7ft) tall and can destroy the foundations of houses and run riot in gardens. It can even devalue property, and lead to the refusal of mortgages on the land.

**Home alone wanting a gnome** - Do you yearn for a garden gnome? You are not the only one. Since last year's lockdown, garden centres have been reporting a 'massive upswing' in ornament sales, due to people being forced to spend more time in their gardens. Gnomes top the list of most-wanted ornaments, with a near 100 per cent increase in sales over the past two years. There was even a gnome crisis a while back, when the Suez Canal got jammed, and thousands of gnomes on their way to UK gardens could not get through.

**Gardening really is good for you** - According to a recent study conducted by the Royal Horticultural Society (RHS) and two universities, people who garden every day have

well-being scores 6.6 per cent higher, and stress levels 4.2 per cent lower than those who do not garden at all.

Dr Lauriane Chalmin-Pui, RHS well-being fellow and lead author says, "The evidence overwhelmingly suggests that the more frequently you garden, the greater the health benefits.

"In fact, gardening every day has the same positive impact on your well-being as undertaking regular, vigorous exercise like cycling or running.

"Gardening is like effortless exercise: it doesn't feel as strenuous as going to the gym, but we can expend similar amounts of energy."

## **A PRINCE'S LEGACY ON MATTERS OF FAITH**

Just when we thought the last word had been written about the late Duke of Edinburgh, it emerged that he had a genuine interest in theology. That dashing young naval officer, who became the Queen's dutiful consort and accompanied her to thousands of church services, was someone who listened intently to sermons, thought through what was being said, and then asked questions.

Every Sunday when the royal couple were at Sandringham, a diocesan bishop was invited to preach in the parish church. Afterwards, they were grilled by the Duke who, we are told by one of them, showed that he "wanted to be intellectually and spiritually engaged". That's a polite way of saying he wasn't prepared to swallow what came out of the pulpit if he wasn't convinced by it.

Some Christians are suspicious of people who probe the faith. Should it not be taken on trust? Who are we to question the Almighty? For others, doubt hovers uninvited.

Honest doubt won't settle for unbelief but will continue to persevere with its enquiries. The Russian writer and philosopher Fyodor Dostoyevsky wrote: "It is not as a child that I believe and confess Jesus Christ. My hosanna is born of a furnace of doubt." Dostoyevsky had lived a turbulent life, both personally and publicly, and wrestled mentally with himself and God. Some people are like that.

Prince Philip had been baptised into the Greek Orthodox Church and was received into the Church of England just before his marriage. He organised much of his own funeral, and if you followed it, you will remember how traditional it was. Many of the prayers were from the 17th Century Book of Common Prayer, the hymns were more ancient than modern, and the Bible readings confidently proclaimed the magnificence of God's Creation and Jesus' teaching about the resurrection. These are basic to Christianity and it was from such a foundation that he was able to explore.

So, if you wake up one morning questioning everything you have believed, take it as a spur to dig deeper and ask questions. Be encouraged by Philip, who shunned a second-hand faith because he wanted to know the truth for himself.

The next time you hear a sermon which you can't understand or disagree with, don't let the preacher get away with it. And if, in your private conversations with God, you find yourself praying, 'Lord, I believe; help my unbelief,' you won't be the first. See Mark 9, verse 24.

*The Ven John Barton*



From the first planning meeting, we have welcomed some new helpers and, as ever, requests were made for others to come forward. Please give all helpers your support and respond to requests for items for sale if you can (which should be delivered in good time for pricing and preparation.) *Please remember that this is a Fête and not a jumble sale!* As always, assistance will be required in setting up and dismantling the stalls.

<b><u>STALL</u></b>	<b><u>STALLHOLDER</u></b>	<b><u>TEL</u></b>
Books	Perry Jeandren	706107
Raffle	Michael Wright	707735
White Elephant	Graham Luker	723305
Handbags	Tessa Yeoman	707629
Jewellery	Nina Crane	376325
Flower Guild Stall	Susanne King	707265
Home Produce & cakes		
Toys	Julie Bailey	701020
Bottle Tombola	Andrew O'Brien	700341
Teas/Cakes/Kitchen	Wendy Bales	709850
Crafts	Joanne O'Brien	700341
Car Park	Richard Goodall	
Gate		
Treasurer	Michael Wright	707735

## *Just a note about the fete stalls!*

Book Stall: Paperback and hardback books needed, but only novels please.

Cakes both for the Home Produce Stall and for

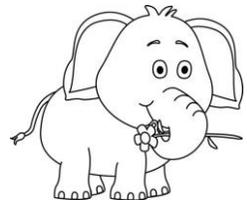
Refreshments: just normal size cakes please, no elaborate cakes. Cupcakes welcome!

Jewellery: Please give any items of jewellery to Nina or leave with Joanne in the office.

## **The needs of a White Elephant**

New bric-a-brac stock is required for the upcoming fete. Items such as ornaments, tea sets, crockery and general household goods would be helpful.

Please remember this is not a jumble sale and I am unable to sell electrical items of any kind and I mean anything with a plug on it – telephones, chargers, printers, table lamps. Please do not bring mirrors, curtains, cushions, air beds, duvets or large pictures. Space is restricted and it is not a dumping ground. Please do not be put off, but I know from many years of running the stall that large items are left behind and then have to be cleared elsewhere. If you are having a clear out and find things that you could pass on that you would be happy to purchase yourself then please bring them along before the day.



*Graham Luker* the moaning white elephant. I will pick up if necessary, telephone 723305.



# June

## CALENDAR FOR JUNE

Wed	2	10.30 am	Holy Communion <i>at St. Nicolas</i>
Fri	4	10.30 am	<b>Coffee morning in hall</b>
<b>TRINITY 1</b>			
Sun	6	8.00 am 10.30 am	Holy Communion Parish Communion
Wed	9	10.30 am	Holy Communion <i>at St. Nicolas</i>
Thurs	10	12 noon	Wedding of Andrew Allan & Katherine Coe
Fri	11	9.30 am	Mums and Toddlers
<b>TRINITY 2</b>			
Sun	13	8.00 am 10.30 am	Holy Communion Matins
Wed	16	10.30 am	Holy Communion <i>at St. Nicolas</i>
Fri	18	10.30 am	<b>Coffee morning in hall</b>
<b>TRINITY 3</b>			
Sun	20	8.00 am 9.30 am 10.30 am	Holy Communion Family Service Parish Communion
Wed	23	10.30 am	Holy Communion <i>at St. Nicolas</i>
Thurs	24	3.30 pm	Magazine collation
Fri	25	9.30 am	Mums and Toddlers

#### TRINITY 4

Sun	27	8.00 am 10.30 am	Holy Communion Matins
Tues	29	10.00 am	<b>Craft Group restarts</b>
Wed	30	10.30 am	Holy Communion <i>at St. Nicolas</i>

### **A NOTE ABOUT EVENING PRAYER**

*We will be restarting Evening Prayer on the first Sunday of each month at 6.00 p.m. Our first service will be on Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> July.*

### **TO MAKE YOU SMILE....**

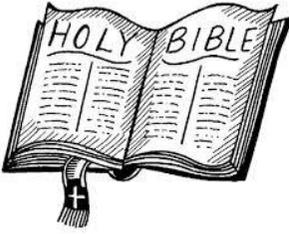
#### **Neighbourhood Watch**

In one small rural village the local vet also led the local Neighbourhood Watch group. Late one night the phone rang, and his wife answered. An agitated voice inquired, "Is your husband there?"



"He is, but tell me, do you need him as the vet or the Neighbourhood Watch?" the wife asked.

"Both!" was the reply. "We can't get our dog's mouth open, and there's a burglar in it!"



## **SUNDAY READINGS IN** **JUNE**

### **Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> June - Trinity 1**

OLD TESTAMENT: Genesis 3.8-15

*The fall of man is an ongoing human condition which poisons the atmosphere between God and his people, causing enmity between the Creator and his creation.*

NEW TESTAMENT: 2 Corinthians 4.13 – 5.1

*Life in the risen Christ is distinguished by inward renewal, boundless grace and steadfast faith – a new body of the Spirit to replace that of the flesh.*

GOSPEL: Mark 3.20-end

*To those who said he was possessed by demons Jesus replied in parables: those who blaspheme against the Holy Spirit are guilty of eternal sin.*

### **Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> June - Trinity 2**

OLD TESTAMENT: Ezekiel 17.22-end

*The Lord speaks of his power to make a dried up tree flourish and a green tree wither.*

NEW TESTAMENT: Mark 4.26-34

*Jesus only speaks to the crowd using parables but when alone with the disciples he explains everything.*

### **Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> June – TRINITY 3**

OLD TESTAMENT: Job 38.1-11

*The Lord speaks to Job, questioning him about his knowledge and understanding of how the world was created.*

NEW TESTAMENT: 2 Corinthians 6.1-13

*It is God's gifts of endurance, truth, patience, kindness and innocence that assure the survival and growth of a small and vulnerable church.*

GOSPEL: Mark 4.35-end

*The disciples are afraid of the power of Jesus – that he can calm wind and waves and save them from drowning.*

### **Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> June – TRINITY 4**

OLD TESTAMENT: Wisdom of Solomon 1.13-15 & 2.23-24

*God created us in his image as a force for good and eternal life. Only those who walk with the devil experience death.*

GOSPEL: Mark 5.21-end

*Jesus heals a sick woman who has faith and seemingly brings a sick girl back from the dead, astonishing the people around him.*

## **Sit and Be Still**

How do you 'sit' in church? I'm a wriggler and change my position on the seat often. I cross one leg over the other, then swap them over, stretch them out, then cross them at the ankles. I do the same with my arms. I lean one way and then the other.

In other words, 'I'm a fidget.' But having been absent from a church building for so long, I wanted to think this month about simply *sitting and being still* before the Lord.

I'm well aware we've done little else this last 18 months – but if you manage to get into a church building, for whatever reason I'd like to encourage us all to just sit still and breathe in the place. To relish being 'back'!

To sit 'heavily' in that spot. To feel the solidity of the surface you are sitting on. Lean into it. Feel how it supports you. Feel each part of your body where it is touching the chair or pew.

Look around you at all the distinctive seating set aside for the different participants of the church: the choir, the worship leader, a deacon or curate, the priest and so on. In an Anglican church there will be a chair especially dedicated for the use of the Bishop.

However plain or fancy each piece of furniture is within your building, they all have the same purpose. To hold the person and keep them safe.

*This month:*

As you sit in the church building – or at home if you are not able to do so – think of all those people in the Bible stories who sat with Jesus. The number of times He taught in the Temple or in a synagogue, or to crowds gathered on a hill. Recall the Last Supper and His friends gathered sitting with Him to eat and share the Passover meal, and then recall the meal with the men from the Emmaus Road. So many meal times with the bold and the weak, the saints and the sinners. With you and me.

*The Rev'd Dr. Jo White*

## **MUSINGS ON THE TRINITY**

As a layman, I am plodding my weary way towards my hundredth birthday and not far from Pentecost, Whit Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> May, thus my thoughts, if acceptable, might be added to those of the intelligent people who have strengthened us in our parish magazine and also in the Bible Reading Fellowship daily notes. These are published at four monthly intervals and Bob Steele kindly supplies me and others with them.

So what do I think of the Trinity? God in three persons - no problem! The BRF take the usual step of engaging twelve different Christian scientists who each wrote a daily passage from the Bible about our creator God instead of over a week or fortnight. These scientists' brilliant explanations are in "New Daylight", 1<sup>st</sup> September 2020 - 12<sup>th</sup> September 2020. God in three persons is a God of many parts - human and otherwise. In prayer I am appealing to all parts. God there before the universe - see Gospel of John 8 v.58. Jesus answers (as God) "before Abraham was, I am". The arrival of living creatures (e.g. dinosaurs) just another side to God and then likewise humans created in God's image - in other words with at least one of God's attributes - loving kindness. Another attribute of God is anger and punishment - see the prophets' stories in the Old Testament.

God gave me at least two of his attributes; anger and loving kindness and also the freedom of choice as to which one to use.

God is thus a SUPER SCIENTIST and as to his purpose I am not qualified to ever suggest an answer. The dictionaries of the world would not contain any suitable words of explanation and my brain is not elastic enough to offer an answer. The Bible hints that I won't find an answer

because I am not intended to. I must rely solely on the promise of the Kingdom of Heaven to all believers who try to tread in the footsteps of Jesus Christ. If I attempt to believe in something else, then what? The explanation I grew up with is logical and acceptable.

*Geoff Hayward*

## **THE THIRTY-NINE ARTICLES CONTINUED**

### **XVI. OF SIN AFTER BAPTISM**

*NOT every deadly sin willingly committed after Baptism is sin against the Holy Ghost, and unpardonable. Wherefore the grant of repentance is not to be denied to such as fall into sin after Baptism. After we have received the Holy Ghost, we may depart from grace given, and fall into sin, and by the grace of God we may arise again, and amend our lives. And therefore they are to be condemned, which say, they can no more sin as long as they live here, or deny the place of forgiveness to such as truly repent.*

As with many of these articles, there is a very long history behind article 16 – and, indeed, an Augustinian debate at the heart of it. During the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> century a sect of Christians called The Donatists flourished in North Africa. They were, in part, formed from the rump of a church left over after the state persecution of Christianity by the Romans under the Emperor Decius (250-251). At this time a large number of Christians, including a number of the clergy, under threat of torture and death, formally apostatized, handing over their scriptures and returning to the worship of, and sacrifice to, the divinity of the Emperor. After the persecution many of these clergy and lay people recanted and wished to re-join the Church – the Donatist sect refused them re-entry, and continued to refuse to

accept the validity of the Catholic church which allowed them back because they believed that the sacraments of the clergy -tainted by their actions in the persecution - were invalid. This situation continued for many decades. But this article – and the arguments of Augustine – maintain that even after baptism, sin – even deadly sin – is pardonable, and, even further, that to claim that either we *can* be, or *need* to be (in order to receive salvation) sinless after baptism is to be condemned. All sins can, and must be forgiven if there is true repentance. Obviously it is best not to sin, if we can avoid it – but when we do, Jesus is ready to pick us back up, dust us off, and continue to walk beside us in our earthly journey.

### ***XVII. OF PREDESTINATION AND ELECTION***

*PREDESTINATION to Life is the everlasting purpose of God, whereby (before the foundations of the world were laid) he hath constantly decreed by his counsel secret to us, to deliver from curse and damnation those whom he hath chosen in Christ out of mankind, and to bring them by Christ to everlasting salvation, as vessels made to honour. Wherefore, they which be endued with so excellent a benefit of God be called according to God's purpose by his Spirit working in due season: they through Grace obey the calling: they be justified freely: they be made sons of God by adoption: they be made like the image of his only-begotten Son Jesus Christ: they walk religiously in good works, and at length, by God's mercy, they attain to everlasting felicity.*

*As the godly consideration of Predestination, and our Election in Christ, is full of sweet, pleasant, and unspeakable comfort to godly persons, and such as feel in themselves the working of the Spirit of Christ, mortifying the works of the flesh, and their earthly members, and drawing up their mind to high and heavenly things, as well because it doth greatly establish and confirm their faith of*

*eternal Salvation to be enjoyed through Christ, as because it doth fervently kindle their love towards God: So, for curious and carnal persons, lacking the Spirit of Christ, to have continually before their eyes the sentence of God's Predestination, is a most dangerous downfall, whereby the Devil doth thrust them either into desperation, or into wretchlessness of most unclean living, no less perilous than desperation.*

*Furthermore, we must receive God's promises in such wise, as they be generally set forth to us in holy Scripture: and, in our doings, that Will of God is to be followed, which we have expressly declared unto us in the Word of God.*

Article 17 is one of the big contentious ones, as well as being the longest of the articles, and perhaps where some of the influence of Calvinism is most appreciable on the doctrine of the Church of England. Predestination and Election are thorny issues, and they remain part of fierce debate through to this day. What then does this article say?

To start with, it defines Predestination and Election: Predestination is the idea that God has, before the world begun, called people to everlasting life, to be *made sons of God by adoption*. Election is the state of that predestination: those who are elected, or chosen.

However, anticipating some of those thorny debates, the article does suggest caution: Whilst the knowledge that we are chosen by God and saved in Christ is *of sweet, pleasant, and unspeakable comfort to godly persons*, it is also, to those who are not in Christ (but who may yet be called by God) a potential source of downfall: "If I haven't been chosen what is the point" they might ask, and continue in sin, or give up caring – and thus not respond to the call of God.

What the article does not claim is who might be saved and who might not be saved: only God, and the individual concerned, can know that – it's not a stick to beat people with, nor something to be smug about.

In one sense, Predestination is a problem because we are incapable of seeing the bigger picture: God is outside of time, so knows who will respond to the call of Christ since before the world began. We have already established in prior articles that it is necessary for the grace of God to be working in someone in order for them to grow close to God in order to attain salvation. However, if it is necessary for God to have a part, through grace, in salvation then it is the case that God must have had some element of choice in the matter, otherwise God has no freedom of will. If God has elected to choose to give grace to some people, as not all people are Christian. As God knows the future, the choice must have been predetermined from our perspective. Moving away from this perspective either limits the freedom of God to act as he will (which means, for a believer, he hasn't really chosen *you*, God must just be a sort of mindless benevolence), or it removes from us the necessity of God's grace in our own salvation (and so we could attain salvation without God's help) neither of which are satisfactory solutions.

### TO MAKE YOU SMILE .....

Our elderly vicar was very devout, but sometimes lost his place during the service. One Sunday as we reached the Creed there was a long silence, so the curate went across to him and gently touched his arm. "I believe in God," she whispered.

The vicar smiled back happily. "Oh so do I, so do I!"

## **FROM THE REGISTERS**

### **Funeral**

21<sup>st</sup> May David Walter Francis Parsons (91)

## **ALTAR FLOWERS**

Sunday 6 <sup>th</sup> June	Jette Fletcher
Sunday 13 <sup>th</sup> June	Jette Fletcher
Sunday 20 <sup>th</sup> June	Grace Martin
Sunday 27 <sup>th</sup> June	Grace Martin



## **MAGAZINE DEADLINE**

The deadline for the July issue of the  
Church Magazine is  
**Friday 18<sup>th</sup> June**