

The *Rocket*

January 2021, 'Happy New Year'

The Magazine for the Parish of
St Ann, Rainhill



The Lord God says, “Stand at the crossroads and look, and ask for the eternal paths, where the good way is; walk in it and you will find rest for your souls.” Jer 6:16



Happy New Year, a Year of Hope

The first words on this page of the 'NEW style Rocket' in 2013, are as relevant in January 2021, as they were then.

And I said to the man who stood at the gate of the year,
"Give me a light that I may tread safely into the unknown"

And he replied:

"Go out into the darkness and put your hand into the hand of God
That shall be to you better than light and safer than a known way."



In these winter editions while we are still in some sort of lockdown hibernation, we are looking back as to how we have coped during these extraordinary months. My photo shows me at my little desk smothered in the forms for the magazine deliverers to fill in at the end of year. My lap top is hiding underneath. Keeping me in line is Sven the reindeer from the film 'Frozen'. I love reindeers and my grandchildren bought him for me.

He is a great help as 2020 has been a most challenging year.

As I stated above the 'NEW' Rocket arrived in January 2013 with Anna & Michael Leyden being instrumental in the Rocket magazine moving forward in its new design. I was part of the team. Michael was curate and Anna was a reader at the time and as part of our looking back, we will see where they are on their life journey.

Shoots are popping through in my garden tubs, signs of hope and new life in 2021.

Delphine



Finding a Way Into 2021

As we enter the New Year of 2021, many people will be keen to put the old year of 2020 behind them. “Let’s get things back to normal”, many are saying. But for many others, 2020 has changed them, they are not the same people they were. Some have discovered a new vocation, a greater connection with their neighbours and the wider community. Some have suffered bereavements and redundancy and navigating this year will be difficult. “Normal” may not be possible for many and there will be challenges ahead whatever situation we are in.



In all these changes God has remained at work in our community, calling people to a greater depth of love and faith and creating a hunger to know more.

As I write this, we are listening to the voice of the prophet Isaiah that forms the part of many familiar readings in carol services across Advent. One of those readings is quoted by John the Baptist to explain his mission “I am one calling in the wilderness, make straight the way of the Lord.”

John called people to respond and step out of their comfort zone and make the journey to hear what he had to say and he quoted the words of the prophet Isaiah. God speaks in the wilderness, a place of flight, struggle, lostness and hunger, but also one of new beginnings and birth. In the story of the Exodus, the people flee slavery into the wilderness and experience all sorts of lack; but it was also the place where they were formed as the people of God.

Isaiah goes on, “Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill made low; the uneven ground will become smooth, and the rugged land a plain.”

When Isaiah was written, the people had been sent into exile and were returning to the land of their fathers, travelling hopefully, but uncertain of what would lie ahead of them. They wondered who they were and what lay in store for them. Isaiah spoke God's words of hope and encouragement to them, they were still his people, the ones who he had called and he would still be with them.

God promises to go ahead, to remove the obstacles, flatten the land, create a highway and open the way for the people to return but they still have to make the journey.

Isaiah reminds the people to step out in faith. Isaiah was written for just such a time as we are in at the moment. We don't know what the future will hold but we know who holds the future.

May you know God's blessing this year whatever challenges lie ahead.

God Bless

Alan



God, you have comforted your people,
making paths where there seemed no path.

You have lifted up valleys,
relieved droughts,

and made high places low.

You have gathered your people
in the eternal place of love.

You speak to our hearts,
and you forgive us for our wandering ways.

Your light and love and faithfulness and work
are true, ever true, always lasting.

We praise you, for the goodness you are,
and the pathways you make before us.

Amen.



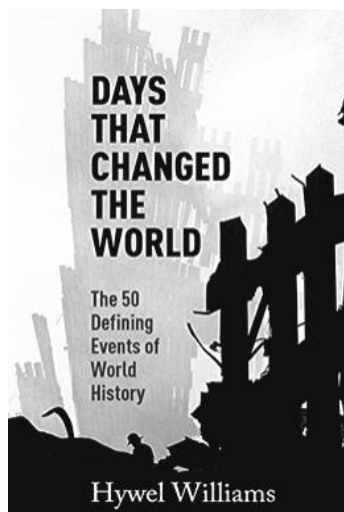
LIVERPOOL / MANCHESTER RIVALRY

On my bookshelf is a volume entitled "Days That Changed The World" - the fifty defining events of world history. Number 27 recalls 15th September 1830 The Opening of the Liverpool-Manchester Railway.

It heralded the dawn of the railway age and linked two competitors in Britain's Industrial Revolution. Following on from the Rainhill Trials the previous year, won by George Stephenson's Rocket, this new passenger service was now the future for travel. Steam power would start to bring great changes both on land and on sea.

Knowing the rivalry, especially on the football pitch, between Liverpool and Manchester, it seems strange to celebrate how these two great cities were linked in the eyes of the world. My late brother-in-law worked on building the M62 that now links Liverpool and Manchester. They used to joke that he was responsible for letting the scousers out of Liverpool. When I started as Bishop of Lancaster I would sometimes get a call on a Monday morning from one of my clergy, a Manchester United supporter, offering me some counselling when Liverpool had lost. It was all good banter and a long way from some of the bigotry and hatred that can easily develop.

In the bible the apostle, Paul talks about a 'dividing wall of hostility.' He was referring to the enmity between humankind and God and enmity between Gentiles and Jews. He goes on to describe how it is possible through the work of Jesus Christ to see alienation give way to reconciliation and hostility give way to peace. The wall of hostility is hard to break down with disobedient humankind on one side and God's hatred of sin on the other. We were powerless to bridge the gap no matter how good we tried to be. God's solution was the cross. Only in this way could guilt and disobedience be removed, a new attitude created and God's love and honour satisfied.



This story of Jesus on the cross emphasises that at a particular moment in history God reckoned to Christ's account what previously was held against us. As the hymn "There is a Green Hill Faraway puts it:-

"There was no other good enough
To pay the price of sin,
He only could unlock the gate of heaven,
And let us in."

Reconciliation is a gift that Christ purchased by his death. It is not automatic, but it is there to be received. Yet it is possible to be able to draw close to a Holy God, to belong to a family of brothers and sisters with access to our Heavenly Father. Such family love can transcend the bitterest of rivalries.

The cross or crucifixion of Jesus is also in the book "Days That Changed The World ." It seemed crazy that a man dying on a cross should be to Christians a key to forgiveness and new life. In taking the sinner's place on that cross Jesus became as totally accountable for sin as if he was totally responsible for it. Christianity is a faith about a cross. It is hard to comprehend. It's the place where humankind did its worst by killing the innocent Son of God. Yet it is also the place where God showed how much He loved us. If, as was possible, Jesus had not gone through with this agony we could have pointed to a limit to God's love. As someone pointed out, "It was his love not the nails that held him there." All focused on that old wooden cross.

Frank Ferneyhough in his book, "Liverpool and Manchester Railway 1830-1980 comments, "On Rainhill Station is to be seen a large notice board proclaiming the Rocket's success of 1829. Finding nothing exceptional at the station, visitors have been known to exclaim, "Oh is this the Rainhill?" Yet the Rainhill Trials spawned a revolution in steam-powered locomotives and railway transport. Likewise the crucifixion of Jesus Christ was the dawn of the Christian Era. A picture of vicious hatred yet at the same time the key to love and forgiveness.

+Geoff



Unexpectedly Fulfilling Prayers

At the end of November, St Ann's Centre was closed as we were in tier 3, until 2nd December. The church was the point of collection for the deliverers of the December Rocket magazines. Lynn Bishop and I kept the church open so that the magazines could be collected.

I was on my own in church and walked down the aisle, into one of the front pews, for private prayer. I took the 'morning and evening prayer during Advent' booklet with me, which was delivered with the December Rocket. I don't know what I expected to find but it would pass the time while I was doing my stint in church.

I opened the leaflet. *'You may wish to light a candle or listen to a reflective piece of music while praying'* were one of the first lines I read. I had already lit candles for my family which were available because of the private prayer sessions and Lynn had left a CD player for me with lovely Christmas music playing, so I was on my way. The opening sentences were:

O Lord, open our lips
And our mouth shall proclaim your praise.

The words similar to the evensong words that I had loved in my younger years. I read on through to the Daily Bible readings and as the day was Saturday, the reading was from Luke chapter 1, where Mary hears from the Angel Gabriel, that the Holy Spirit will come upon her. She replied, that she is the servant of the Lord and let it be with her according to His word.

Earlier that morning I had discussed with Alan that Ian and I would deliver that same reading at the Carol Service.

Far from passing the time, the booklet was a revelation to how fortunate I was to have our wonderful church all to myself, candles lit, music playing and a lovely booklet for me to follow through and engage in morning prayer, the day before Advent Sunday. I hope you found the booklet as fulfilling as I did, all through Advent.

Delphine

ALPHA. COURSE



Here is a challenge. Why not join us in 2021 on Monday evenings beginning 18th January for an 11 week Alpha Course on line. Each Monday from 8-9pm we will have a short testimony, a talk and some discussion. This course will explore the Christian faith together. Talks will cover topics such as 'Who is Jesus,' 'How can we have faith,' 'Why and How do I Pray?' 'How does God guide us?' There is no obligation to say anything and there's nothing you can't say (seriously). There will be opportunity to hear from others and to contribute in an honest, friendly and open environment.

In a previous church where I was a vicar I led quite a few Alpha Courses and this is what a young dad, called John, wrote after one of them;-

"I have been coming to church for over four years. I have been attending Sunday services but just felt I was going through the motions of worship and praise. I would leave church with a feeling of emptiness and I felt alone and unloved, because I could not find my relationship with God. But all that changed when I went on an Alpha Course. The turning point for me was the Holy Spirit away day. I experienced the presence of the Holy Spirit for myself through prayer. I left there with the feeling of such love, peace and confidence in God which you could not surpass. I later read a book, After Alpha by Michael Green. In it was an extract which could have been directed at me. It said, 'It is OK living your life within the Christian picture frame but if you have not got the photograph of Jesus in the centre, you have not got the complete picture.' But through Alpha I know my picture is now complete.'

Come and join us to see what Alpha can do for you. It would help us if you could let us know you'd like to come. Contact our vicar, Alan or our curate, Lynne (their details are on page 34) or me on 07809618385. geoff.s.pearson@outlook.com



Epiphany for today

This month we celebrate Epiphany, when we remember the Magi from the East who followed a star to find the baby Jesus: *‘Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews?’* (Matthew 2:1).

At the start of a New Year, amid the uncertainty of the pandemic, are we asking the same question? The gifts they offered show us how we can find Him in the uncertainty of the coming year: *‘they bowed down and worshipped Him...and presented Him with gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh.’* (2:11).

The *gift of gold* reflects that the Magi saw in the baby a king, destined to rule over us all. In this coming year we need to remember that Jesus is on the throne, the seat of power and authority in the whole universe. Will we crown Him king of our lives and dedicate all that we are and do to Him?

The *gift of frankincense* reflects that the visitors saw not just an earthly king, but God in human flesh. Incense symbolises the prayers of God’s people and so this gift reminds us that God is worthy of our worship and prayer. Will we offer our praise and prayer, as we seek God to guide us through the uncertainties of this time?

The *gift of myrrh* reflects that these astrologers saw beyond the baby’s birth and life, to His death which would secure life for all. Jesus was offered myrrh on the cross and was a spice used in His tomb. As we face the sufferings of this New Year, we can be confident that Jesus knows and understands our experience. Are we ready to trust Him?

*‘Glorious now behold Him arise, King and God and Sacrifice!
Heav’n sings Hallelujah: Hallelujah the earth replies.’* (‘We Three Kings’).

Time to prepare for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity: 18th - 25th January

This year’s Week of Prayer for Christian Unity has been prepared by the Monastic Community of Grandchamp in Switzerland. The theme, “Abide in my love and you shall bear much fruit”, is based on John 15:1-17 and expresses this Community’s vocation to prayer, reconciliation and unity in the Church and the human family.

For 2021, the sisters are inviting churches across the world to enter into their tradition of prayer and silence that is rooted in the ancient traditions of the Church catholic.

Today the community has 50 sisters, spanning different generations, Church traditions, countries and continents. In their diversity the sisters are a living parable of communion.

Each year Christian Aid provides the 'Week of Prayer for Christian Unity' with 'Go and Do' action points for each of the daily reflections - linking into the important work of Christian Aid in the relief of poverty and advocacy of justice.

More at: <https://ctbi.org.uk/go-and-do-week-of-prayer-for-christian-unity-2021/>

Holocaust Memorial Day calls for 'light in the darkness' of today

It was 25 years ago this month, on 27th January 1996, that the first Holocaust Remembrance Day was observed in Germany. It became International Holocaust Day in 2005 when it was adopted by the United Nations. It marks the day (27th January 1945) when the Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration/death camp was liberated.



HOLOCAUST
MEMORIAL
DAY 27/1

The theme for Holocaust Memorial Day (HMD) in 2021 is '**Be the light in the darkness**'. The aim is to encourage people to "reflect on the depths humanity can sink to, but also the ways individuals and communities resisted that darkness to 'be the light' before, during and after genocide."

HMD is encouraging people to heed the 'Be the light in the darkness' theme as a call to action. "The utterly unprecedented times through which we are living currently are showing the very best of which humanity is capable but also - in some of the abuse and conspiracy theories being spread on social media - the much darker side of our world as well.

"We can all stand in solidarity. We can choose to '**be the light in the darkness**' in a variety of ways and places - at home, in public, and online." More at: www.hmd.org.uk parish pump



2021

Will lockdown be extended
The days are all the same,
I do not know what date it is -
The days I cannot name!

I know I'm getting older now
But this is just not fair,
I cannot do the things I did
Not even cut my hair.

So get me vaccinated
And then I will grow old
But in the way I want to -
Not having to be told!

So here's to 2021
And vaccines will be here
And we'll go out and celebrate ...
Here's to a Happy New Year!

Thanks to all who make the Rocket appear, with items which make us smile and articles which give our minds things to think about and give us information we never knew!

Hilary Boyle

Thank you Hilary for the brilliant poem and the kind words which Lynn and I will take with grateful thanks, as we move into yet another year of unknown challenges.

The Rocket Team

From the Parish Register

Baptisms

‘Our welcome
and prayers’
11th October
Arley,
son of Mihaela &
Andrew Lewis



Baptisms

‘Our welcome
and prayers’
25th October
Freddie Paul,
son of Rebecca &
Liam Pearson

Funerals ‘Our sympathy and prayers’

10th	November	Dorothy Case
11th	November	Winifred Anthony
16th	November	Wendy Ann Tittensor
16th	November	Jean McTear
30th	November	Ollie Watkinson
30th	November	William Stubbs



Christingle on zoom



WhatsApp was the place to go to find everyone's comments on the two services on 6th December.

Pam Samson thanked everyone for all the hard work and preparation for the Christingle Services. Jenny

(top Left) thanked everyone for the lovely Christingle Service.

Rebecca (top middle) also attended the afternoon service and thanked everyone too. Paula Bolton-Maggs (top right) found it good fun to make a Christingle. Kirstie took a lovely photo of her daughter, and thanked everyone for the afternoon service.

Nicky's girls enjoyed the morning service as the lovely photo shows. Well done everybody.



Margaret Lutner didn't have an orange and used a satsuma so it's very small!!



Thank you Pam for writing to the Rocket... here is a photo in my 'Kitchen Church' ready with my Communion wine, little container for bread, candle, Bible and my Tablet all at hand each Sunday for the YouTube service at 9am from St Ann's. I miss the services in church very much, especially as moving to St Helens last year I only had 7 months attending St Ann's before we were in Lockdown. So I was only just getting to know people when it happened. However, like many, I am so very thankful for the wonderful efforts of everyone involved with our online services. They have given me such comfort, joy, Bible teaching and company during these difficult times and I don't think I'd have coped without all the spiritual leadership and encouragement through all our online activities. So well done and thank you. However, let's move into 2021 with hope that all our churches will be back to some sort of normal this year. Happy New Year, from Pam





Anna & Michael Leyden, Where are they now?

In October Michael's wife Anna was ordained Deacon, in Chester Cathedral. She will be serving her curacy at Christ Church, Chester. Her ordination was slightly different in that there were vastly reduced numbers



attending and everything was under strict Covid rules. There was still an intimate feeling to it but it also lacked the whole people of God being present physically in Chester Cathedral. However many were able to watch the service on line.

Meanwhile Michael's gifts continue to be recognised and he has recently been appointed as the first Dean of Emmanuel Theological College. This new college follows the merging of three institutions including St. Mellitus where

Michael previously was in charge. So Michael is now responsible for part-time and full-time formational and vocational training for lay and ordained leaders of the Church of England across the North West. The first intake of this new venture will be September 2021.

This excellent leader will continue to help students turn the world upside down.





+Geoff wrote the words on the opposite page with hands on knowledge as he led the retreat Anna attended before her ordination and preached at the cathedral during Anna's Ordination Service as the photo shows.

I am so surprised at how tall Eliana and Simeon are. It was 2014 when Anna & Michael left us for rural Cheshire. They are now settled in Chester.

We send them our blessings for 2021 and beyond. Delphine



Rainhill's Sandstone - Ann Slater- Rainhill Remembered

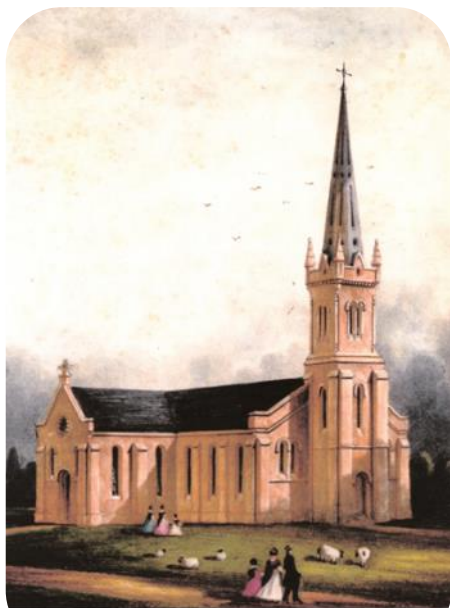
As you walk along Warrington Road or Mill Lane or many of the side roads, you will notice the walls and gateposts are made of the warm red sandstone supplied by local quarries.

During the 19th century, many buildings in Rainhill were constructed from carved blocks of sandstone rather than from bricks.



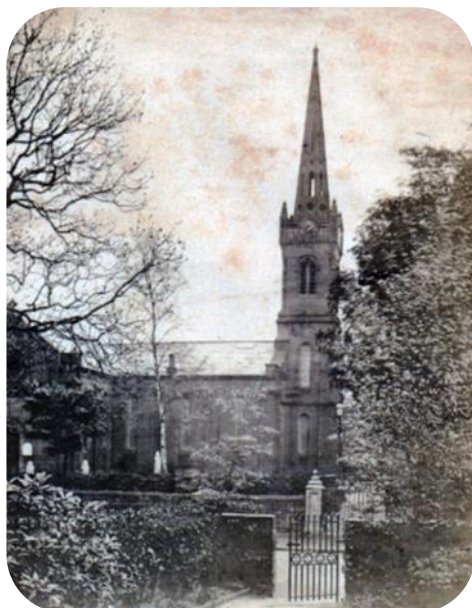
In 1836 there was an appeal for money to build a parish church in Rainhill. Mr James Owen*, who owned a large area of land called Lawton's Estate, generously gave the land and quarried sandstone for the church.

ST ANN'S CHURCH: Our present stone building has been modified and extended several times. Sadly the carved stone steeple had to be removed in the 1940's for safety reasons.



First Enlargement. 1843.

Architect's drawing



St Ann's Church 1900
(courtesy of Kit Syder)

St Ann's School now St Ann's Millennium Centre

In 1840, a piece of land adjoining St Ann's Church was conveyed by the vicar, Rev. Brierley, to trustees so that a school could be built for the children of the parish. It would be used on Sundays for religious instruction, and on weekdays for teaching reading, writing and arithmetic. The first building was of 'dressed stone' - regular smooth neatly fitting blocks' However there was soon a need to expand and the hastily-built extension to the original school building is made of roughly cut uneven stones.



St Bartholomew's Church

In 1838, Bartholomew Bretherton, a wealthy Roman Catholic, 'spared no expense' in erecting St Bartholomew's Church at the Stoops. He sent an architect to Rome and the church is designed in the neo-classical style. Enormous precisely cut blocks of sandstone from Bretherton's own quarry were used for the building and the facade has six tall stone columns. Bartholomew's daughter Mary added the ornate and imposing gateway just before her death in 1883.



St Bartholomew's Church.
Photo by Derek Houghton



Gateway to St Bartholomew's Church (*postcard courtesy of the late Tom Rolt*)



MothersUNION
Christian care for families



Kindness and Giving

Rev'd Lynn said, "Thank you so much people of St Ann's! Thanks to you, 22 families who are in need will be able to receive gifts this Christmas. There will be 22 very happy children this Christmas". The presents we gave were donated to the children of Thatto Heath via St Matthews Centre and Safe Families for Children. They do a great job and its only by partnering with them that we are able to give to those children.

The photo opposite shows some of the wonderful gifts that came into our church for the children, by the parishioners of Rainhill. More gifts have come in since the photo was taken, and at the time of writing they are still arriving. The blessings of Christmas to you all.



In early December I popped into Church to pick up the donations the Mothers' Union had given for Ravenhead Foyer all through the lockdown months, though the Foyer could not accept our donations, even though they were in dire need. Now we are in tier 2 they can accept our donations and their residency is filling up. The photos show me in church and Lynn from the Foyer and I unfortunately standing in front of and hiding some of our bags of donations.

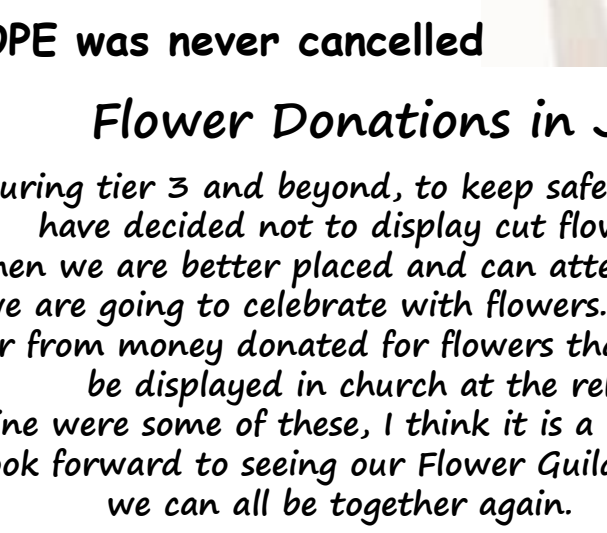
At present they have nothing as administration for each resident is very slow. Words cannot describe the joy on Lynn's face as our gifts arrived. I could only see her eyes but I knew. She was delighted and so grateful as she is unable to do anything for her charges and will be full by Christmas.

We are still collecting Christmas presents for them, which I will take later in December, and the Foyer will wrap them. Well Done Mothers' Union, we're still here.

A Happy New Year to you all from Susan Stott and our Committee. We may be meeting in March, watch this space!!

Delphine

Not EVERYTHING was Cancelled



Sunshine was never cancelled
Rain was never cancelled
Rainbows were never cancelled
The seasons were never cancelled
Nature was never cancelled
Imagination was never cancelled
Conversations were never cancelled
Laughter was never cancelled
Reading was never cancelled
Music was never cancelled
Personal devotion was never cancelled
Personal prayer was never cancelled
Kindness was never cancelled
Love was never cancelled
HOPE was never cancelled

Flower Donations in January

During tier 3 and beyond, to keep safe, the Flower Guild, have decided not to display cut flowers in church. When we are better placed and can attend church together we are going to celebrate with flowers. These will be paid for from money donated for flowers that were not able to be displayed in church at the relevant time. Mine were some of these, I think it is a wonderful idea and look forward to seeing our Flower Guild's splendour when we can all be together again. Delphine

THE *ROCKET* DEADLINE FOR FEBRUARY submissions is FRIDAY 15th JANUARY

Our Award Winning *Rocket* magazine is enhanced by your articles, photos and poems which are especially welcome from all parishioners and churches in the parish.

Please email your submissions to: therocketmag@gmail.com or drop them in at St Ann's Centre or leave them in the red folder at the back of church. Thank you!

DISTRIBUTERS PLEASE NOTE : The February magazines will be in St Ann's Centre for a week from 29th January, please try to pick them up. If you cannot pick them up during this time, they will be delivered to you. Thank you

THE *ROCKET* SUBSCRIPTIONS

New Subscribers, each issue of *The Rocket* costs 50p, with 11 issues each year. But did you know you can subscribe for just £5 a year? For more details contact: therocketmag@gmail.com

St Ann's 100 Club Draw

Drawn on Wednesday 2nd December 2020

1st Prize	£92.50	Mrs Norma Baker	No. 44
2nd Prize	£70	Mrs Audrey Shone	No. 53
3rd Prize	£50	Fair Traders	No. 87
4th Prize	£30	Mr Fred Hurst	No. 85

Heritage Fund £242.50 97 members

Next draw: In January

Why not join us; forms are available at the back of church or from the Parish Office; see Christine Howson.

There are various ways to pay, monthly, 6 or 12 monthly by cash or standing order. You can also have more than one number.



I have been kindly sent via Jill Brown, a booklet by the Mothers' Union of Holy Trinity Church, Formby. 'A Lockdown Anthology 2020' with contributions from members. On page 10 there is a recipe which may break your New Years Resolution. It is for...

Chocolate and Banana Cake

Recommended by Dorothy Leah

6oz granulated sugar
6oz margarine
2 large, very ripe bananas
1/2 teaspoon vanilla essence
10oz self-raising flour
1/2 level teaspoon bicarbonate of soda
1/2 level teaspoon salt
3 eggs
2oz chocolate chips
Walnuts (optional)

Prepare cool oven 325F/160C/140Cfan/Gas 3

Grease and line an 8" cake tin

1 Melt margarine and sugar in a pan over a low heat until margarine has just melted.

Remove pan from heat

2 Peel bananas, weigh 8oz and mash with vanilla essence until smooth.

3 Sift flour, salt and bicarb. into pan and mix with wooden spoon.

4 Beat eggs, add to the pan with banana and mix well.

5 Stir in the choc chips. Do not over mix.

The instructions do not give any cooking times. 'BBC food' states 45 minutes as did other recipes.

Leave to cool then wrap in foil. Leave 2-3 days for flavour to develop. (No chance in my house, it would be lucky if it lasted long enough to go cool!!!)

It is a great booklet I will dip into it again, thanks Jill.

Delphine

St Paul, the first Christian intellectual

This month, on 25th January, the Church celebrates probably the most famous conversion of all. At least, what happened to a young man called Saul on the road to Damascus has become a byword for all instant conversions - what is known as a 'damascene' moment. Saul was a devout Jew, a Pharisee, a student of Gamaliel and a fierce critic of the followers of Jesus, then a very new sect on the religious scene.

On his way to Damascus to start a purge of Christians in that city, he was blinded by a bright light and heard a voice saying, 'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?' He asked the identity of the voice, and was told: 'Jesus, whom you are persecuting'. Stunned by the experience, he followed further instructions which led him to a Christian man in Damascus, who prayed with him. As he did, Saul's sight was restored.

The experience convinced Paul that Jesus - crucified in Jerusalem four or five years earlier - was in fact the Messiah and had risen from the dead. After a period of instruction, Saul was baptised and took the name Paul. At first, some Christians were wary about the reality of his conversion, but over a period of time he was accepted and indeed eventually recognised as an 'apostle', a 'special messenger' of Jesus Christ.

His intellectual stature and leadership gifts quickly marked him out, and within a few years he became a leading figure in the emerging Christian Church, preaching and founding churches all over the Middle East, largely of Gentile converts. He was eventually martyred in Rome, probably in 65AD.

Paul was the first intellectual of the Christian Church, the man who was able to set the events of the life and teaching of Jesus, and especially His death and resurrection, into a coherent theology, with its roots very clearly in the Jewish faith of his own upbringing.

Many people think of Paul as a rather negative, narrow misogynist, but even a quick reading of his letters actually reveals a person of great warmth, who evoked enormous affection and devotion from others. 'You would have plucked out your eyes and given them to me!' he writes to the Christians at Galatia. As for the charge that Paul disliked women, even a quick read of his letters will reveal how large a role women played in his churches. In terms of the first century, St Paul was a dangerous liberal! So, all in all, the amazing Paul of Tarsus deserves a bit of celebrating on 25th January.

parish pump

Wordsearch

The Christmas story carries on into the New Year, with Epiphany and the arrival of the Wise Men, led by the Star in the East. Through the eyes of faith, they saw Messiah in that small baby, and worshipped him, giving gifts that foresaw his life and work. New Year is also a time of new beginnings for us - resolutions about diets and paying the bills and doing better at work... Happy New Year!

Epiphany

Wise

Men

Camels

Baby

Jesus

Star

Herod

Worship

Gold

Frankincense

Myrrh

New

Resolutions

Bills

Work

Study

Running

Gym

W	H	R	N	A	M	E	R	H	E	B	O
G	I	N	L	B	B	L	Y	Y	W	J	E
N	W	S	C	S	M	D	B	C	R	E	W
L	H	O	E	J	N	A	Y	A	U	S	I
N	E	W	R	P	B	P	N	M	N	U	S
F	R	A	N	K	I	N	C	E	N	S	E
E	O	M	M	H	L	P	M	L	I	T	L
M	D	Y	S	M	L	G	H	S	N	U	G
R	G	R	T	O	S	L	D	A	G	D	O
L	O	H	A	E	R	N	A	E	N	Y	L
W	A	H	R	N	N	R	S	S	R	Y	D
R	E	S	O	L	U	T	I	O	N	S	I



The Bible Garden Part 4 - The Humble Vegetable

While exotic fruits, fragrant herbs and wheat and barley are often mentioned in the Bible there is little in the way of the humble vegetable, although according to the book of Numbers 11:5 they were part of the common diet: '*... remember the fish, which we ate in Egypt for nothing; the cucumbers and the melons, and the leeks, and the onions, and the garlic...*'

No Bible garden will be complete without vegetables and now is a good time to prepare for next year's crop. In my Bible garden I have grown leeks, onions, garlic, ridge cucumbers – which are what Bible scholars think the book of Numbers is referring to – and broad beans. The latter are not mentioned by name in the Bible, but Bible scholars believe they were 'the pods' the prodigal son shared with the pigs (*Luke 15:11-32*). In Biblical times broad beans were considered to be food for the poor, but if you pick them when they are young and cook them fresh from the garden they are a very good early vegetable to enjoy.

This coming year I am planning to grow melons for the first time in my Bible Garden, and I may include ridge cucumbers again, but because they take up a huge amount of space I have not grown them for a few years.

Broad bean seeds can be sown in the autumn although I have found they are targeted by the local pigeons which destroy the entire crop, so I tend to sow them in early spring when the pigeons seem to have more important things on their mind! Also, as a member of my family suffers from ornithophobia - a fear of birds - this means I have to be extra careful about growing plants that attract them. If I sow them in the autumn I've found that the best protection is a plastic cloche which not only makes it difficult for the birds, but saves the young plants from frost damage.

Onion sets and garlic cloves can also be sown in late autumn but I have found in my part of the world spring sowings always do better. Leek seeds are also best sown in early spring and transplanted in late summer. When harvesting leeks, it is best to leave them until after the first winter frost as they always taste better then. If you don't like eating leeks and onions let them run to seed and you will have a spectacular display of flowers in your Bible garden!

Bob Peters, Association of Church Editors

The Whole Armour of God. Ephesians chapter 6 verses 10-18

¹⁰ Finally, build up your strength in union with the Lord and by means of his mighty power. ¹¹ Put on all the armour that God gives you, so that you will be able to stand up against the Devil's evil tricks. ¹² For we are not fighting against human beings but against the wicked spiritual forces in the heavenly world, the rulers, authorities, and cosmic powers of this dark age. ¹³ So put on God's armour now! Then when the evil day comes, you will be able to resist the enemy's attacks; and after fighting to the end, you will still hold your ground.

¹⁴ So stand ready, with truth as a belt tight around your waist, with righteousness as your breastplate, ¹⁵ and as your shoes the readiness to announce the Good News of peace. ¹⁶ At all times carry faith as a shield; for with it you will be able to put out all

the burning arrows shot by the Evil One. ¹⁷ And accept salvation as a helmet, and the word of God as the sword which the Spirit gives you. ¹⁸ Do all this in prayer, asking for God's help. Pray on every occasion, as the Spirit leads. For this reason keep alert and never give up; pray always for all God's people.



Ryan was delighted with the cloak, but not so sure about the face mask



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