



CROSSROADS

The Family Magazine of St Hilda's, Ashford, Middlesex

No. 710 June 2020

Free - but donations welcome!

THE LORD bless you
and KEEP you; THE
LORD make His face
shine upon you,
AND BE GRACIOUS TO
you; THE LORD lift
up His COUNTENANCE
upon you, AND GIVE
you PEACE.

The Parish of **St Hilda, Ashford** in the Diocese of London
Charity Reg. No. 1134119

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*An item submitted after the deadline
may be accepted for inclusion IF the
Editor has been informed by the dead-
line that the item is on its way.*

**When is the Vicar not available
in June?**

Every Saturday: day off

WANTED

Your contributions!

Thank you, Christina, for your article. No-one else has provided input to this magazine, so I am especially grateful for our subscription to Parish Pump. This is YOUR magazine - it won't exist for long unless you help with it!

The deadline for the July/August edition has been extended until Sunday 14th June

Ed

'HOW LONG, O LORD?' – THE LAMENT OF PSALM 13

As we struggle with the effects of the global coronavirus pandemic, we might echo the words of Psalm 13: *'How long, Lord? Will you forget me forever?'* It is one of a number of lament psalms, where the psalmist cries out in pain, because he feels abandoned by God. In our current circumstances, these psalms enable us talk to God about our fears and frustrations, while renewing our confidence in Him. What does Psalm 13 say?

Bring your complaint to God: The psalmist brings his pain and questions to God: *'How long must I wrestle with my thoughts and day after day have sorrow in my heart?'* (2). He is open with God about his complaints, despite the anger he feels.

Ask boldly for His help: He goes on to ask for God's help: *'Look on me and answer, Lord my God. Give light to my eyes, or I will sleep in death, and my enemy will say, 'I have overcome him...'* (3–4). While avoiding despair (*'there's no hope'*) or denial (*'everything's fine'*), the psalmist is confident in God's power to deliver.

Choose to trust Him: *'But I trust in your unfailing love; my heart rejoices in your salvation. I will sing the Lord's praise, for He has been good to me.'* (5–6). The lament is a journey to the point of renewing our trust in God in the brokenness of our life.

The psalms of lament (eg. Psalms 10, 22 and 77) give us a prayer language for dark times. They enable us to be honest with God about what is happening to us and remind us that God has not abandoned us. He is a God who is both sovereign and good.

'Laments turn toward God when sorrow tempts you to run from Him.'

the Rev Paul Hardingham

A PIPE-ORGAN OF SIMILAR VINTAGE TO ST. HILDA'S – 1876 by LEWIS

An article in 'The Organists Review' of particular interest was a story about 3 year old 'Noah' taken by his parents to visit Salisbury Cathedral. Inevitably, young Noah slips his parent's clutches getting lost in the Salisbury organ loft(s). Yet true to the mystery and magic of pipe-organs, wonderful organ music is witnessed!

Realistically, images often reflect musicians spending years learning, practising and playing the highly complex 'King of Instruments.' Today, this box of whistles comes in various types emulating differing organ-building vintages.

Importantly, St Hilda's still has its pipe-organ built in 1876 by C.S. Lewis (*not the author! Ed*). Yet surprisingly, our two manual organ has some history in common with the mighty 1877 'Father' Henry Willis four manual pipe-organ in Salisbury Cathedral.

'Father' Henry Willis developed an awesome reputation for playing, and building, English organs across the Victorian era. Born in London on 27th April 1821, (199 years ago today), he lived 80 years.

Henry Willis and Sons, from 1845 and in business today, left over 1000 new, or rebuilt, playable pipe-organs in British churches. Including the 'biggest' organ with 70 speaking stops, built for the Great Exhibition (1851); though subsequently reduced and installed in Winchester Cathedral. Similar Cathedral instruments include St Paul's, Canterbury, Coventry, Durham, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Gloucester, Hereford, Lincoln, the Albert Hall and St George's, Liverpool, among notable others.

With Samuel S. Wesley, Father Willis developed innovative engineering like the 'pedal-board;' a manual played by the feet. His piston buttons were a significant invention. Pressing a piston invokes selected blocks of stops (sending wind into sounding pipes) useful as Organist's have insufficient fingers for effectual use with comprehensive instruments.

As the 'foremost' organ builder then, Father Willis incorporated smaller organ builders into his family firm. That included C.S. Lewis who built St Hilda's pipe-organ. Indeed, I have traced our pipe-organ to 1913 when part of Henry Willis inventory. They installed it in St Hilda's with an inexpensive hiring agreement, probably because pipe-organs are better used than stored.

The downside to instruments combining tensioned wires, leathers, moving parts like bellows, crafted sound boards and timbers susceptible to humidity, hot and/or cold temperatures, dust and now electrics, is they require regular maintenance. Expert overhauls at about 30 year intervals with half-yearly tuning, and careful use, being vital.

St Hilda's is lucky that our organ-builders, BC Shepherd (John and Eric), are one of only two recognised expert firms around London. They know our instrument from 1965 when working on it with their father. Photographs are available! Fascinatingly, I have also spoken to a local organ-builder from Compton's who did some extension work in 1954. Other than that, and some recent urgent repairs, remarka-

bly St Hilda's pipe-organ is mostly unaltered since 1876.

Differently, Salisbury Cathedral's large pipe-organ, built on either side of the quire, accommodates thousands of pipes, 65 stops and many moving mechanical parts. The organ console is still aloft!

Most pipes are 8 feet long, though some shorter and even tiny; with 13 at 16 feet and 2 of 32 feet long – unheard of in smaller organs.

Unsurprisingly this 'Willis' has undergone periodic modernisation since 1877, and recently had a comprehensive restoration. Thus in 2019, it took 3 months to dismantle Salisbury's pipe-organ transporting

all parts to Harrison and Harrison; the internationally renowned organ builders based in Durham.

There are splendid photographs at <https://www.salisburycathedral.org.uk/gallery/father-willis-organ-restoration-1#.XqhDK3iSnIU>

Re-installed in early 2020; 'voicing' to a well-tuned pipe-organ with pedal-board took 3 months. A re-dedication Organ Festival concert is planned though delayed by pandemic restrictions.

Indispensably, thank goodness for grants, donations and dedicated congregations supporting amazing church instruments as part of musical history.

Noah is, of course, now an Organist!



*Christina A Veasey
Music Director & Organist*

RESOURCES FOR LOCKDOWN

#FAITHATHOME AIMS TO MAKE PRAYER A HOUSEHOLD HABIT

The Church of England has recently launched #FaithAtHome, a new programme which it is hoped will “make prayer a household habit once again.”

[#FaithAtHome](#) will feature weekly video content to help families to talk about faith and pray together. The videos will be led by children, young people, staff and school leaders from across the country.

The #FaithAtHome programme will run for an initial 11 weeks, until the end of July, and can be accessed at churchofengland.org/faithathome. It will explore themes including courage, patience, generosity, resilience, love and hope.

The Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, said: “The aim of these resources is to offer simple ways for families and households to approach complex and difficult topics, such as illness, fear and bereavement. The coronavirus pandemic has forced people to confront difficult and painful questions that none of us can explore on our own.

“My hope and prayer is that #FaithAtHome will not only equip children and young people to engage with difficult questions, but also inspire them.”

The Church of England’s Chief Education Officer, Nigel Genders said: "Home is the new normal, and faith at home is a habit we need to rediscover. #FaithAtHome will offer people of all ages and faith backgrounds a chance to pause, think and reflect, and to rebuild lost habits of prayer and faithful reflection in the home.”

MOTHERS’ UNION OFFERS RANGE OF RESOURCES



The Mothers’ Union has made a very practical response to the coronavirus.

As their website explains, “We know that our work and experience in re-building communities and supporting family life is going to be more important than ever once the threat of COVID-19 subsides. Our members will be some of the first in line to support those around them.”

In the meantime, MU has drawn together a range of resources to “help nurture our members and their friends and neighbours through this challenging time.” The resources will “help combat feelings of loneliness, to nourish faith and to help you continue to feel connected to your friends and community.”

These include: rainbows, prayer cards, prayer resources, puzzles resources, and Bible study resources. More info at: <https://www.mothersunion.org>

OVER 6,000 CALLS IN FIRST 48 HOURS TO DAILY HOPE

A free phone line offering hymns, prayers, and reflections 24 hours a day while church buildings are closed because of the coronavirus received more than 6,000 calls in the first 48 hours.

The Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, recently launched ‘Daily Hope’ as a simple new way to bring worship and prayer into people’s homes, during the lock-down period.

The line – which is available 24 hours a day on 0800 804 8044 – has been set up particularly with those unable to join online church services in mind.

The service is supported by the Church of England nationally as well as through the Connections group based at Holy Trinity Claygate in Surrey and the Christian charity Faith in Later Life.

Within 48 hours the line had received more than 6,000 calls from across the country, with many being referred by friends, family or members. Calls have so far spanned more than 50,000 minutes, with some of those accessing the service listening to the music, prayers and reflections for up to 50 minutes at a time.

The Revd Canon Dave Male, the Church of England’s Director of Evangelism and Discipleship, said: “The volume of calls shows that Daily Hope is meeting a need.

“We have a duty in these strange and difficult times to find new ways of bringing prayer and worship to people wherever they are, and this is one more way of helping people to connect with God from their own homes.

“This is such a simple idea – planned and launched all within a few short weeks by a small dedicated team – but I pray it will bring real comfort, hope and inspiration to people at this time.”

Callers to the line hear a short greeting from the Archbishop before being able to choose from a range of options, including hymns, prayers, reflections and advice on COVID-19.

Options available include materials also made available digitally by the Church of England’s Communications team such as [Prayer During the Day and Night Prayer](#), updated daily, from Common Worship, and a recording of the Church of England [weekly national online service](#).



CHRISTIANS AND THE BUBONIC PLAGUE OF LONDON

Most of the clergy in the City of London had fled the Great Plague in 1665, but the Reverend Richard Peirson stayed behind to look after the parishioners of St Bride's Church, Fleet Street, where he was Rector. The parish was densely populated and the pandemic was catastrophic. The church's register records 636 burials that year in the month of September alone, with 43 interred in one day.

Houses of infected people were marked with a red cross on the door, with occupants kept inside for 40 days. Handcarts were pulled along the city streets to cart away the bodies; the drivers' cries of "Bring out your dead", became etched in the memories of subsequent generations. Relatives were banned from attending funerals.

The official count numbered 68,596 deaths in London alone, but other estimates suggested two or three times that number. Bubonic plague – for that is what it was – was incurable. Poor people were fatalistic about it but complained that even their 'spiritual physicians' had abandoned them. Clergy of the Church of England were often supplanted by non-conformist preachers.

It wasn't just the St Bride's Rector who put his life in jeopardy by staying at his post. While most wealthy people, along with King Charles II and his court, escaped the plague-ridden city, Churchwarden Henry Clarke also chose to remain at the church. When he succumbed to the illness, his brother William took over. William survived for a fortnight.

Plague cases continued to occur sporadically at a modest rate until mid-1666. That year the Great Fire of London destroyed St Bride's Church and much of the City of London. It was rebuilt to a design by Christopher Wren, but almost obliterated once more in 1940 during World War II before being restored yet again.

Today's Rector, Canon Alison Joyce, says that compared with her predecessor Richard Peirson, she has it easy. Like everyone else, she is confined by the lockdown rules to her Rectory next to the church. But her pastoral work continues, and she collates sermons and archive music to create a Sunday webcast service. Alison writes, "these days it is a ministry of telephone calls, emails and Facetime. I offer such practical help and support to the vulnerable as I can . . . I keep a candle burning before our main altar and continue a ministry of prayer."

Alison says she is surprised when people regard the faith as a kind of celestial insurance policy against bad things happening to them. The first followers of Jesus knew that in dedicating their lives to following the crucified and risen Christ, their discipleship would take them into the very heart of darkness, not away from it.

She adds, "Hope is no hope at all unless it can engage with utter despair and meaninglessness."

The Ven John Barton

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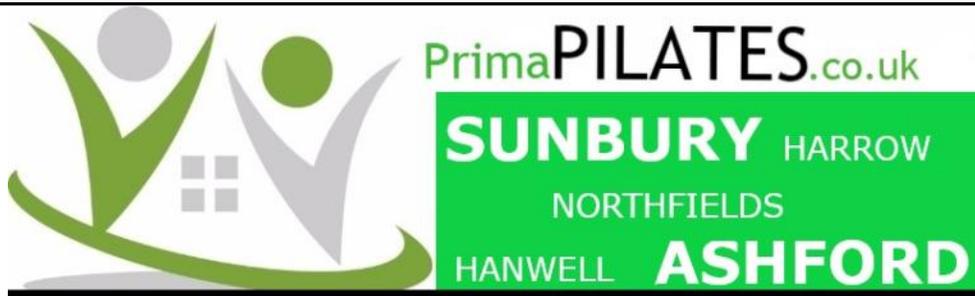
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TRINITY SUNDAY - 7th June

Trying to explain the doctrine of the Trinity has kept many a theologian busy down the centuries. One helpful picture is to imagine the sun shining in the sky. The sun itself – way out there in space, and unapproachable in its fiery majesty – is the Father. The light that flows from it, which gives us life and illuminates all our lives, is the Son. The heat that flows from it, and which gives us all the energy to move and grow, is the Holy Spirit. You cannot have the sun without its light and its heat. The light and the heat are from the sun, are *of* the sun, and yet are also distinct in themselves, with their own roles to play.

The Bible makes clear that God is One God, who is disclosed in three persons: Father, Son (Jesus Christ) and Holy Spirit. For example:

Deuteronomy 6:4: ‘Hear O Israel, The Lord our God, the Lord is one.’

Isaiah 45:22: ‘Turn to me and be saved... for I am God, and there is no other.’

Genesis 1:1-2: ‘In the beginning God created.... and the Spirit of God was hovering...’

Judges 14:6: ‘The Spirit of the Lord came upon him in power...’

John 1:1-3: ‘In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through Him all things were made; without Him nothing was made that has been made.’

Luke 24:49 actually manages to squeeze the whole Trinity into one sentence. Jesus tells His disciples: ‘I am going to send you what **my Father** has promised; but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power (**the Holy Spirit**) from on high.’

In other words, the sun eternally gives off light and heat, and whenever we turn to its brilliant light, we find that the warmth and life there as well.



O may God shield me, and may God fill,
O may God watch me, and may God hold;
O may God bring me where peace is still,
To the King's land, eternity's fold.
Praise to the Father, praise to the Son,
Praise to the Spirit, the Three in One.

From The Creed Prayer, poems of the Western Highlanders

No wonder that the doctrine of the Trinity is inexplicable, seeing that the nature of God is incomprehensible. Our faith must assent to what our reason cannot comprehend, otherwise we can never be Christians. - *Francis Burkitt, theologian*

Thousands of the ablest minds of the centuries have pondered this problem and no man has been able to explain it; who then invented it? What man can invent, man can explain: what man cannot explain, man cannot have. It must be a revelation. - *GH Lang, theologian*

JUSTIN MARTYR, FIRST EVER CHRISTIAN PHILOSOPHER - 1st June

Justin Martyr (c. 100 – 165), is regarded as the first ever Christian philosopher. He was born at Nablus, Samaria, to parents of Greek origin, and was well educated in rhetoric, poetry and history before he turned to philosophy. He studied at Ephesus and Alexandria and tried the schools of the Stoics, the Pythagoreans, and the Platonists. Then in c 130 Justin became a Christian, and never looked back. His long search for truth was satisfied by the Bible, and above all by Christ, the Word of God.

This apologist and martyr is known as the most important early ‘apologist’. He went on to offer a reasoned defence for Christianity, explaining that it was the fulfilment of the Old Testament prophecies. Justin’s aim was evangelism: he thought that pagans would turn to Christianity if they were made aware of Christian doctrine and practice.

Justin’s martyrdom took place in the reign of Marcus Aurelius, along with six other believers. At his trial, whose authentic record survives, he clearly confessed his Christian beliefs, refused to sacrifice to the gods, and accepted suffering and death. As he had previously said to the emperor: “You can kill us, but not hurt us.”

WILLIAM OF YORK, A VICTIM OF INJUSTICE - 8th June

Have you ever been the victim of someone else’s malice and ambition? Then William of York (d 1154) is the saint for you. William Fitzherbert was born into a noble family, with royal connections. He was also smart – appointed treasurer of York at a young age, and also as a chaplain to King Stephen. But none of it went to his head - he was loved for his kind, amiable and easy-going personality.

Then in 1140 Thurston, the archbishop of York, died. The canons of York knew whom they wanted, and with royal support William was made Thurston’s successor. Yet all was not well: a disappointed minority hated him and had the support of powerful men. William was accused of simony, and of being unchaste. The row brought in the Pope and several bishops, and William was cleared. Yet still – all was not well. That Pope died, and the new Pope was a Cistercian, who preferred the enemies of William. And so he was deposed.

Yet William seems to have taken all this malice and power-grabbing in his stride. He simply retired to Winchester to live as a devout monk until 1153. Then that year several of his key enemies died, and he was restored as archbishop to York. At last all looked good for him – and he made a triumphant return to York in 1154. But then – disaster struck again: a few days later William was dead - poison was strongly suspected. He was buried in his cathedral, miracles were reported at his tomb. He was regarded as both the victim of grave injustice and as a saint. In 1421 the famous St William window was made; depicting his life and miracles and death in 62 scenes.

EVELYN UNDERHILL, MYSTICAL WRITER OF THE 20TH CENTURY - 15th June

For anyone interested in Christian mysticism, Evelyn Underhill may be a good place to begin. She died on 10th June 1941 after a life full of remarkable achievements: author of more than 30 books that explored the intersection between the spiritual and the physical, the first woman ever to lecture to the CofE clergy, the first woman to conduct spiritual retreats for the Church, the first woman to establish ecumenical links between churches, and one of the first women theologians to lecture in English universities. Evelyn was also an award-winning bookbinder.

Born in 1875, the daughter of a barrister from Wolverhampton, and then wife to a childhood friend, also a barrister, Evelyn moved in cultured, educated circles, and travelled widely each summer along the Mediterranean – both her father and husband were keen yachting enthusiasts.

Evelyn's inner, spiritual journey was more complex: from agnosticism to theism, on to Neoplatonism and then Roman Catholicism she went, until in 1921 she became an Anglican - with a later fascination for the Greek Orthodox church. Her daily life was one of reading, writing, and doing various forms of religious work, from visiting the poor to counselling people in trouble.

Her spiritual search began in childhood, after a number of "abrupt experiences of the peaceful, undifferentiated plane of reality—like the 'still desert' of the mystic—in which there was no multiplicity nor need of explanation". Trying to understand these mystical experiences sparked her passion and lifelong quest.

Evelyn became one of the most widely read writers on mysticism in the first half of the 20th century. Her greatest book, *Mysticism: A Study of the Nature and Development of Man's Spiritual Consciousness*, was published in 1911, and is romantic, engaged, and theoretical rather than historical or scientific. While writing it she came into contact with Baron Friedrich von Hugel, who became her spiritual mentor for many years. He gradually steered her away from mysticism and towards a more Christocentric view of reality.

During World War I Evelyn worked in naval intelligence, but in later years became a Christian pacifist.

SUMMER SOLSTICE: THE LONGEST DAY OF THE YEAR - 20th June

June, of course is the month of the summer solstice, the month of the Sun. *Sol + stice* come from two Latin words meaning 'sun' and 'to stand still'. As the days lengthen, the sun rises higher and higher until it seems to stand still in the sky. The Summer Solstice results in the longest day and the shortest night of the year. The Northern Hemisphere celebrates in June, and the Southern Hemisphere celebrates in December.

WHERE ARE OUR FATHERS?

21st June is Father's Day, and last year four in ten fathers failed to see their children on Father's Day.

Now there may be perfectly good reasons for this – Father's Day is not as 'big' as Mother's Day, and fathers may well be seeing their children just fine on other days.

But a survey commissioned by the campaign group Fathers 4 Justice (F4J) has also found that one in five fathers who do not live with their children fear losing, or have lost, contact with their children. Many of these 'separated' fathers experience mental health issues after being denied access to their children.

At a time when depression and male suicide is on the increase, is there anything that we as a church can do to help local families who are struggling with these issues?

THE DAY THEY FIRST CLIMBED ANNAPURNA

The first successful ascent of a mountain over 8,000 metres high was achieved just 70 years ago this month, on 3rd June 1950, when Annapurna in the Himalayas was climbed by a French expedition led by Maurice Herzog. Annapurna is the tenth highest mountain in the world.

It was just three years before the first ascent of Everest. Annapurna was a largely unknown mountain, and the team first had to find a way to reach it, and then survey a possible ascent route before doing the actual climb – an amazing achievement in one season.

The team had originally intended to climb the slightly higher Dhaulagiri, but when they saw it, they decided it was impractical. They went on to climb Annapurna without oxygen and survived extreme conditions which resulted in the two summiting climbers, Herzog and Louis Lachenal, suffering severe frostbite and surviving an avalanche on the descent.

At the summit the excitable Herzog said: "Never have I felt happiness like this, so intense and pure." Lachenal, who had been reluctant to make the final attempt, said he felt "a painful sense of emptiness."

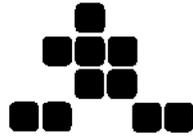
This was the first mountain summit attempt that Nepal had permitted: afterwards the Maharajah of Nepal greeted the climbers as national heroes.

Tim Lenton

The good thing about prayer is that there's only one way to go wrong, and that's *not* to do it. If prayer at its simplest level is listening to God and talking to Him, you don't need long books to tell you how to do it. - Anon

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TERRY WAITE - ON COPING WITH LOCKDOWN

Terry Waite spent four years in solitary confinement in Beirut. He says: “In isolation, it is easy to become introspective and depressed. All of us, when we are honest and examine ourselves critically, will discover things about ourselves of which we are not especially proud. I had to learn how to grow a greater acceptance of myself and work towards a deeper inner harmony.

“.... Today in lockdown, it’s important to keep yourself well. Don’t slob around all day in pyjamas and a dressing gown. Dress properly and develop a routine. It’s important to have a structure – get up at a certain time, eat regular meals and so on.

“If you have faith, then that will give you resources to draw on”, especially if you know some hymns, psalms and prayers by heart. “When I was captured, they were there to call on.”

DON'T OVERDO THE EXERCISE

During this period of staying so much at home, how much exercise is good?

According to immunologists, regular bouts of moderate-intensity exercise can help build our resistance to infection. “Regular moderate exercise ensures that our lymph, which is the circulatory system of our immune cells, keeps flowing,” says Dr Jenna Macciochi, of the University of Sussex.

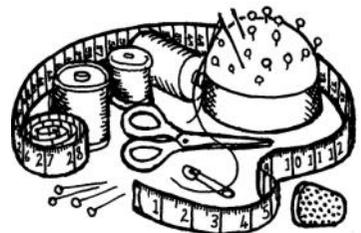
Regular moderate exercise can also improve our sleep, help control weight, and prevent muscle loss. Some experts suggest that mild to moderate is for 20 – 45 minutes up to three times a week. However, avoid exerting to exhaustion, which decreases your immunity.



MEND AND MAKE DO

According to handicraft expert Kirstie Allsopp, a missing button was the number one reason why 350,000 tonnes of wearable clothing may end up in UK landfill this year.

But that was before lockdown. Now you have time to make do – and mend! Rescue and reuse your clothes. After all, it saves money and the planet.



REFUGEE WEEK - 15th-21st June

As the annual ‘Refugee Week’ approaches, various Christian relief agencies and campaign groups warn that coronavirus could have a catastrophic impact on the refugees whom they are trying to help.

First, the big picture: according to the UNHCR, “we are currently witnessing the highest levels of displacement on record. An unprecedented **70.8 million** people around the world have been forced from home. Among them are nearly **25.9 million refugees**, over half of whom are **under the age of 18.**”

Refugees are especially vulnerable, as their usual homes of makeshift tents or flimsy shelters are over-crowded and without clean water or sanitation, making social distancing and isolation impossible. Also, many refugees are already suffering under-lying health conditions and mental health issues.

As the head of the Humanitarian Division at Christian Aid, Nick Guttman, also points out: “Refugees are some of the most vulnerable people in the world. Access to medical facilities is limited and the destabilisation of the global economy is likely to have an impact on their livelihoods and the flow of humanitarian aid.” He warns that it is only a “matter of time” before it reaches the countries with a high number of refugees: Bangladesh, Syria, Lebanon, Nigeria, Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

Tearfund has highlighted the problem of warning the one million Rohingya people, crowded in camps in Bangladesh. “There is no internet provision in the camps and the mobile network is currently suspended, so getting the message out about the dangers of the virus relies on word of mouth.”

Meanwhile, Open Doors is concerned for the plight of the Pygmy people in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Many fled their rainforest after persecution by Islamist rebels, and are now living in camps, where they are extremely vulnerable to the virus.

Leprosy Mission has warned that India “faces a human timebomb, waiting to explode.” Communities affected by leprosy, malnutrition, overcrowded living conditions and poor sanitation, make “ideal breeding ground for the spread of coronavirus. Social distancing and isolation are impossible in the densely populated areas.”

NIGERIA – SLAUGHTER CONTINUES DURING TIME OF LOCKDOWN

Fulani militants have continued to carry out attacks against Christians in Plateau State Nigeria, despite the coronavirus lockdown. In the latest attack, at a village near the capital of Jos, extremists murdered two five-year-old children and a three-year-old infant.

Release International, which supports persecuted Christians around the world, has again been calling on the Nigerian government to take urgent steps to protect its vulnerable Christian communities from attack – even as they face the new threat of the coronavirus.

A BIBLICAL PLAGUE OF LOCUSTS

A new wave of crop-eating locusts has been devastating East Africa, just as communities are also dealing with an increase of coronavirus cases.

At the start of 2020, Ethiopia and Somalia faced the biggest invasion of the insects in 25 years – and the worst in Kenya and Uganda for 70 years. The locusts also reached parts of South Sudan, where millions of people are already suffering from severe food shortages amid conflict and political instability.

The latest plague could be 20 times larger. The UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), is calling it ‘an unprecedented threat’ to food supplies and jobs. Yet tackling the locusts will be even harder now that coronavirus has forced governments to close their borders. With severely reduced air travel and cargo shipping, pesticides from Europe and Asia can’t get into the countries – and to the farmers – that need them. Tearfund is asking governments to recognise activities responding to the locust swarms as essential services, so that they can continue despite the restrictions on travel.

‘The locust plague, together with the coronavirus pandemic, could mean all the work Tearfund supports communities with is on the brink of collapsing,’ says Ephraim Tsegay, Tearfund’s Country Director for Ethiopia. ‘If the second wave of locusts is not prevented before it inflicts further damage, more people will be forced to leave their homes to find food, land for their animals to graze, and an income elsewhere. It will also make people more vulnerable to coronavirus.’

CORONAVIRUS CASES IN AFRICA INCREASING SHARPLY

Christian Aid has warned that time is running out to prevent coronavirus overwhelming health systems across Africa.

As coronavirus infections rise sharply across the continent, and with African countries lacking the specialist equipment or staff to cope with a pandemic, the international development agency is calling for the cancellation of debt repayments from African countries this year, so that money can be freed up and spent instead on saving lives.

As the poorest continent in the world, Africa is least equipped to provide the specialist care necessary to treat people infected with coronavirus. According to the World Health Organisation there are less than 2,000 ventilators and 5,000 intensive care unit beds across the entire Africa region.

Patrick Watt, Christian Aid’s Director of Policy, Public Affairs and Campaigns, said: “Debt repayments falling due this year should be cancelled in full if we want African countries to have a fighting chance of limiting the spread of coronavirus, and surviving the hit to their economies.

“It is completely perverse that dozens of the world’s poorest countries are expected to pay debts to wealthy creditors in the midst of the biggest global health challenge in a generation, and the worst economic downturn since the 1930s. At this moment, cancelling the debt is a matter of life and death.”

NO PLASTIC PLEASE, WE'RE THE NATIONAL TRUST

The National Trust is going to get rid of its plastic membership cards. Replacing the five million membership cards with a paper alternative will save 12.5 tons of plastic each year.

The new cards will be made from a strong and durable paper, with a water-based coating. The cards will be recyclable and compostable.

The National Trust also has plans to almost completely remove single-use plastics from its sites by 2022. It has already replaced all disposable food packaging with compostable products. Next, it wants to remove plastic drinks bottles and eliminate plastic packaging from its shops.



NATURE OUT AND ABOUT

The lockdown this Spring at least gave Nature a brief respite. Wild goats, herds of deer, sparrowhawks, stoats, snakes, badgers, spawning toads and songbirds all seemed to have enjoyed the peace and quiet.

We, in turn, have enjoyed watching them from our windows. As Mark Thompson, a presenter on *Stargazing Live*, said, “This lockdown is giving people a chance not just to connect with our families, but also to connect with Nature around us. It has given us the change to recalibrate.”

“The coronavirus is about dying tomorrow. With climate change, we’re talking about my grandchildren dying.” - *Sir David Attenborough*

“The Covid-19 pandemic will, in the long term, prove a mere chapter in human history. And then (when) the world comes back to life, Sir David Attenborough (and others) will keep fighting to save it.” - *Joe Shute, journalist*

We should all be concerned about the future – because we will have to spend the rest of our lives there. - *Charles Kettering, writer*

A Canticle for Brother Sun

Praised be You, My Lord, in all Your creatures,
Especially Sir Brother Sun,
Who makes the day and enlightens us through You.
He is lovely and radiant and grand;
And he heralds You, his Most High Lord.

St Francis of Assisi

ST SOFA'S

We worship at St Sofa's now
Since Covid came to stay
We don't dress up or do our hair
But still we come to pray!

Our Vicar is a clever chap
A Zoom with his IT
And so we sit down ev'ry week
And meet up virtually!

Our Parish Church stands empty
With praise she does not ring;
But still her people gather round
To pray, and praise, and sing!

The virus is a nasty thing
Yet it has helped us see
The church is NOT a building
But folk like you and me!

Nigel and Carol Beeton

What time of day was Adam created?
Just a little before Eve.

Who was the fastest runner in the race?
Adam. He was first in the human race.

Did Eve ever have a date with Adam?
No — just an apple.

Why didn't they play cards on the Ark?
Because Noah was always standing on
the deck

Why didn't Noah ever go fishing?
He only had two worms.

Why couldn't Jonah trust the ocean?
He just knew there was something
fishy about it.

Our Mission Prayer:

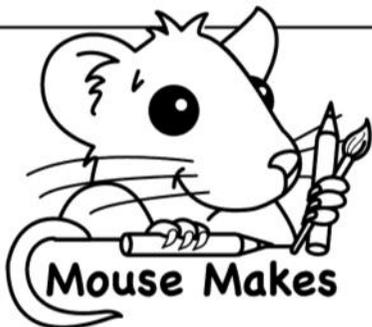
*Bless our Community.
Make its people;
Strong in Faith,
Steadfast in Hope,
And Generous in Love.
Amen.*

WANTED: used British and
foreign stamps for Princess
Alice Hospice, trimmed ¼" all
round. Place in box at back of
church or give them to

Pauline Milton



Where was the social distancing?



Mouse Makes

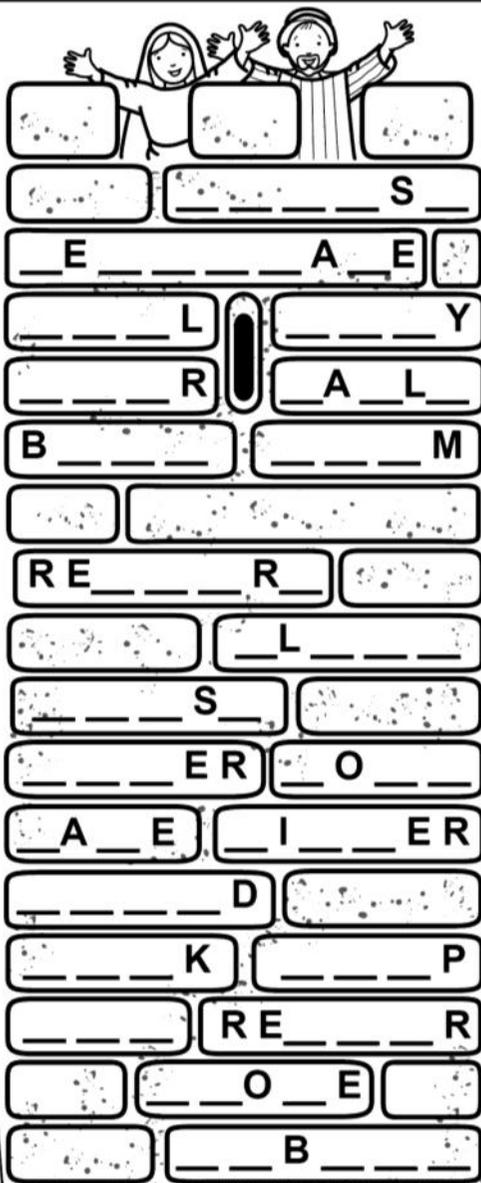
When Nehemiah heard that the walls of Jerusalem were in ruins he sat down and wept. For days he fasted and prayed before God.

Finally the opportunity came for him to return to Jerusalem to rebuild the walls, but it was not going to be easy...

READ Nehemiah's story in the *Old Testament* book of **Nehemiah**, chapters 1-7

Here is Nehemiah's list of all the things that needed to be done to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem. Fill in the missing gaps on the tower to help rebuild the wall.

- | | |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> PRAY | <input type="checkbox"/> GATE |
| <input type="checkbox"/> RUBBLE | <input type="checkbox"/> BEAM |
| <input type="checkbox"/> REPAIR | <input type="checkbox"/> BOLT |
| <input type="checkbox"/> RESTORE | <input type="checkbox"/> BAR |
| <input type="checkbox"/> BUILD | <input type="checkbox"/> STEP |
| <input type="checkbox"/> WORK | <input type="checkbox"/> TOWER |
| <input type="checkbox"/> STONE | <input type="checkbox"/> HOUSE |
| <input type="checkbox"/> TIMBER | <input type="checkbox"/> POOL |
| <input type="checkbox"/> WALLS | <input type="checkbox"/> FINISH |
| <input type="checkbox"/> FLOOR | <input type="checkbox"/> DEDICATE |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ROOF | <input type="checkbox"/> DOOR |
| <input type="checkbox"/> CELEBRATE | |



How many gates were repaired?
Who re-built them?

How long did it take to finish the walls?

HOLMES & DAUGHTERS

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