

THE

CRAYFISHER

July 2020

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The magazine for the Parish of Cray Valley

No.62

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Front Cover Picture: Landscape by Barbara Vance

PARISH LETTER

God's word... sharper than a two-edged sword

The children sat cross-legged, hands in their laps eyes rivetted on the Sunday school teacher. Under their arms was a tightly held bible. The game was 'drawn swords'. And before you worry the name comes from the title of this article.

Eyes rivetted and silence, waiting for a bible reference from the teacher, and then, the command: 'Draw Swords'. Instantly bibles are whipped out, and little fingers scramble to find the verse. The winner jumps up and reads it out. It was a great game and a brilliant way to learn my way around the bible.

Much has been made in past weeks about Donald Trump's holding of a bible. You may have seen the clip from the late late show hosted by James Cordon. He invited his dad Malcolm, a onetime Christian book salesman, to give a bible-holding demonstration: under the arm to pull out quickly and return if it's not wanted; held close to the heart, a precious gift; sandwiched between outstretched hands like taking an oath; held open resting in two hands an offering of love. It was beautifully done and got me thinking about how we read our bibles today.

Is your bible in lockdown, or is it out regularly? How do you like to hold your bible? I like mine open. Of course we may have electronic versions and they are brilliant, but not the same as actually holding the book and turning the pages. I expect some of us have bibles which carry deep significance – they are precious gifts to remind us of a special person or occasion. The words they contain, the word of God, is even more precious and life-giving and we need to feed on it.

There are lots of ways to read the bible, what is important is that we do read it. Here are some ideas:

Look up the readings for the Sunday zoom service and read the whole chapter not just the bit given of the service.

Find a psalm that really speaks to you: try some of these 4, 8, 23, 34, 42, 48, 121, 134, 150

Choose a New Testament letter and imagine it is being written to our parish or to you: Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians or Colossians would be great a great choice

Down load the Church of England Daily prayer app and read what thousands of other Christians are reading every day:
https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.aimermedia.dailyprayer&hl=en_GB

However you read, let's get our bibles out of lockdown and place them in open hands so we can enjoy God's word, sharper than a two-edged sword. Read slowly and savour the good news God has for us. So, get your bible, hold it tightly under your arm, sit comfortably (you don't have to be cross-legged on the floor) Are you ready.... Here are three references for you:

John 3:16 Draw Swords!

Hebrews 4:12.... Draw Swords!

Psalm 37: 1-8.... Draw Swords! (this is Malcolm Cordon's favourite passage)

How about sharing your favourite verses with the WhatsApp group?

Here is the clip of Malcom Cordon, or just type 'Malcom Cordon Bible holding' into Google and it should come up
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mZv8GQX8EII>

Blessed reading, Rev Jane

READINGS FOR SUNDAYS IN JULY

Sun 5th **FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY**

Genesis 24. 34-38, 42-49, 58-67

Romans 7. 15-25a

GOSPEL: Matthew 11. 16-19, 25-30

Sun 12th **FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY**

Genesis 25. 19-end

Romans 8. 1-11

GOSPEL: Matthew 13. 1-9, 18-23

Sun 19th **SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY**

Genesis 28. 10-19a

Romans 8. 12-25

GOSPEL: Matthew 13. 24-30, 36-43

Sun 26th **SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY**

Genesis 29. 15-28

Romans 8. 26-end

GOSPEL: Matthew 13. 31-33, 44-52

COLLECTS FOR SUNDAYS IN JULY 2020

Sun 5th

O God, the protector of all who trust in you,
without whom nothing is strong, nothing is holy:
increase and multiply upon us your mercy;
that with you as our ruler and guide
we may so pass through things temporal
that we lose not our hold on things eternal;
grant this, heavenly Father,
for our Lord Jesus Christ's sake,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever: **Amen**

Sun 12th

Almighty and everlasting God,
by whose Spirit the whole body of the Church
is governed and sanctified:
hear our prayer which we offer for all your faithful people,
that in their vocation and ministry
they may serve you in holiness and truth
to the glory of your name;
through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever: **Amen**

Sun 19th

Merciful God, you have prepared for those who love you
such good things as pass our understanding:
pour into our hearts such love toward you that we,
loving you in all things and above all things,
may obtain your promises,
which exceed all that we can desire;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever: **Amen**

Sun 26th

Lord of all power and might,
the author and give of all good things:
graft in our hearts the love of your name,
increase in us true religion,
nourish us with all goodness,
and of your great mercy keep us in the same;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever: **Amen**

PLEASE NOTE THAT BOTH CHURCHES ARE CLOSED DUE TO CORONAVIRUS UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE. WE ARE TRYING TO PROVIDE MATERIAL SO PEOPLE CAN JOIN TOGETHER AND WORSHIP AT 10AM ON SUNDAYS (OR WHEN CONVENIENT). PLEASE CONTACT DANIELLE AT THE PARISH OFFICE IF YOU ARE NOT RECEIVING THE WORSHIP MATERIAL. ALL SOCIAL EVENTS TOO ARE ON HOLD. WE WILL RESUME AS SOON AS POSSIBLE

PLEASE NOTE

Sunday 26 April was our APCM but unfortunately due to the current Coronavirus situation, this has been put on hold for the time being. You will be informed when this is to take place. As always, please attend if possible. It is your chance to have a say in how your church is being managed.

THE DEADLINE FOR THE AUGUST ISSUE OF THE CRAYFISHER IS TUESDAY 14 JULY. PLEASE HAVE YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS IN BY THIS DATE – ANYTHING RECEIVED AFTER THIS DATE WILL BE HELD OVER UNTIL THE NEXT ISSUE



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REGULAR SERVICES ACROSS THE PARISH

Even though we cannot join together in church at these times, we can still pray for our world, those in need and one another.

If you are able, why not join us on Zoom on your phone, iPad, laptop or other device, for our Sunday worship. If you would like to join and haven't done so already, please let Danielle know and she will send you the link each week. (See page 2 for details of how to contact Danielle at the Parish Office). The service starts around 10 o'clock so log on a little beforehand so that everyone is ready to start. We still have our coffee and chat time at the end of the service, so you can catch up with everyone then.

PARISH PRAYER GROUP

We cannot meet at Muriel's home, but we are still praying for all in need especially at this time.

ST. MARY'S CHURCH OPEN HOUSE

St Mary's Church will be opening its doors again this year, details from Peter or Terry.

FRIENDS OF ST MARY'S

For further details contact Tony Lathey 01689 872742

SOCIAL EVENTS

AT ST ANDREW'S AND ST MARY'S IN 2020

PLEASE SEE NOTICE BOARDS AND LISTEN FOR NOTICES
TO GET THE FULL DETAILS

PLEASE LOOK OUT FOR MORE EVENTS TO COME

DATE

17 October

28 November

EVENT

Annual Dinner

Christmas Fair

VENUE

St Andrew's

St Mary's

PLEASE NOTE THAT ALL OF THE SOCIAL EVENTS AND OTHER ACTIVITIES ARE POSTPONED FOR THE TIME BEING. YOU WILL BE INFORMED WHEN WE ARE ABLE TO RUN THEM. THE INFORMATION IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE, SO PLEASE CHECK WITH THE PARISH OFFICE AND/OR THE CHURCH WEBSITE FOR FURTHER UPDATES.

NEW POEMS 2020

Many of our British leading poets have written poems about the coronavirus lockdown. These are in characteristic style: Pam Ayers – light humour; Carol Ann Duffy – the raw emotion of a worried mother; Roger McGough – wry and reflective ('We must opt for optimism').

I have been most impressed with the variety and the quality of the poems that I have seen from members of our local Croft Poetry Club. It is fascinating to see how sharply a poet's mind can work and how deeply a poet can see. Here are short extracts from four new poems 2020:

Now every day is Sunday. The sun rises and it sets.

We get out of bed, go for a walk. Yes, that's as good as it gets.

[Beverley Gillard]

'Mum, we know you're all alone,

so shut your eyes and feel our arms around you

as we're sending lots of cuddles down the phone.' [Christine Pope]

I take in all the sights and sounds and smells
and solitude that fill this time and place. [Douglas Hall]

Even as the chaos of the virus looms, locked up in our rooms,
I still see what no one else does: amidst the doom and gloom
I zoom all the way to the moon. [Doubra Fufeyin]

And here is a haiku (5 – 7 – 5 syllables) by Lisa Winton:

News saddens daily
Will total freedom return?
How will this change us?

Jerry Dowlen



Courtesy of Parish Pump.co.uk



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CALL TO GLORY SO SOON

Ayodeji Bamdele Babington died on March 19th, 2020. He was buried in All Saints' Church Cemetery on Thursday, 4th June 2020. Rev. Jessie conducted the service which was attended by his family and friends, and broadcast on the internet for those still in lockdown. There were beautiful tributes from his family, friends and colleagues.

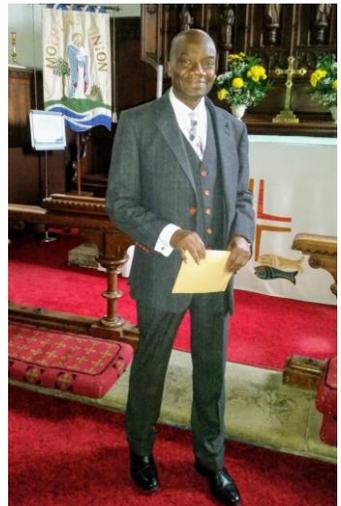
To everyone who knew Anthony, his death came as a great shock and because of the Lockdown many from the Cray Parish couldn't attend or pay their respects.

Anthony had been a member and server of St. Mary's Church for many years. He has given much energy and time as a previous member of the PCC and to the everyday running of the church, often without thought for himself after working a night shift caring for patients at Homerton Hospital.

He will be greatly missed for his generous spirit and friendliness, his Christian faith and love for mankind. He has generously provided JaM (Sunday School) with expensive items, such as a television (for watching DVDs) and CD player and come to the aid of the church with the necessary refrigerator.

Anthony has served Jesus to his very end. R.I.P.

We are hoping a memorial service for Anthony will take place after the Lockdown has finished.



Jackie Cook

New for 2020

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WHAT HAVE YOU ALL BEEN UP TO DURING LOCKDOWN?

Back in our May issue, quite a few people sent in photos of what they had been doing or making during the lockdown. It was so good to see, I wondered if now we are a couple of months or so down the line what you had all been up to. I have been doing some dressmaking which I haven't attempted for many, many years. As you will see from the photos, they didn't turn out too bad – not perfect as I'm a bit out of practise, but they are good enough to wear as everyday dresses but not for 'best'. I managed to get all three garments from one pattern, so I thought that was pretty good value. Let's see some more photos of what you have been making or doing to keep yourselves busy. It would be nice to see.





At my daughter's suggestion, because the dress has red spots, I put a contrasting red zip in the back. All I need now are some nice new red shoes to go with it and more importantly somewhere to go to wear them.

Brenda Smith

KNITTING PREMATURE BABY HATS

A few weeks ago, after our Zoom service one Sunday Tracey from St Mary's said that she is still looking for hats for the premature babies. Have some of you knitters run out of projects? Perhaps you'd like to knit a few more. We can always ask Tracey how she wants them delivered when they are done.

Brenda Smith



FOR THE YOUNG AND YOUNG AT HEART

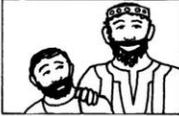
Bible Bite

A short story from the Bible

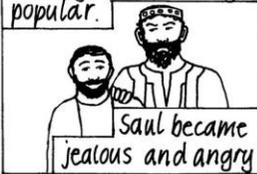
It can be read in the Bible in
1 Samuel 24

God chose Saul to be the King of Israel,
but Saul chose to disobey Him. God said
that the next king would not be Saul's son.

Saul didn't know
that God had
chosen David to
be the next king.



David was very successful
as a fighter and very
popular.



David had to go on the run and
hide.



One day, Saul
and his army
were in En-Gedi.
Saul needed to
pee, so he went
into a sheep
fold built next
to a cave...

David and his men were hiding at the
back of the cave!



David crept over and
cut a piece off Saul's
robe.



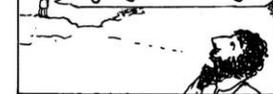
Then David felt bad.



David waited until Saul
was far enough away
then he shouted to him.



Your majesty, I could have
killed you today, but I
knew it was wrong. I want
to prove to you I'm not
trying to harm you.



David, you are better than
me. I would have killed you
but you were kind.



Now I know you will be
the next king, but please
look after my family.



David promised, and
Saul and his army
went home.



Editor: The Revd Dr Gary Bowness continues his tongue-in-cheek letters from 'Uncle Eustace' ... this was written before lockdown.



Beware the spell-checker on your special service sheets!

The Rectory
St James the Least

My dear Nephew Darren

When producing material for your magazine or church services, beware the computer spell-checker. We once let our own system check a Christmas carol sheet and, on the night, found ourselves obliged to sing “away in a manager”, mangers apparently being unknown to our machine.

If you use special sheets regularly, it seems a law of nature – as with metal coat hangers - that they all intermingle while no one is watching. Thus, on Easter Day, half the congregation will have been issued with sheets for Harvest, which will only become obvious once the service begins. The first hymn will be entirely lost while sidesmen scuttle about looking for replacements only to find that there won't be enough of them anyway and then the second hymn will be lost while others helpfully wander about church donating their sheets to those looking helpless and then trying to find someone to share with.

Never, ever, print on them ‘Do not take home’ as this will only ensure everyone does so. I have sometimes wondered if the instruction ‘Take this sheet home for reference’ would ensure that they stayed neatly arranged in the pews after the service. And if it is a service where babies are likely to be present, be assured that many of the copies will be returned half chewed and coated with bits of whatever the infant had for breakfast. There must be a market for paper treated with a child-repellent flavour for such occasions.

Anyone who thinks we are an unimaginative nation should visit a church after a special service to see how many places members of congregations can invent to hide the booklets: under kneelers, neatly folded and hidden

inside hymn books, among flower arrangements and behind heating pipes so that no one can quite reach them. They then lurk there reproachfully for the next ten years until mice solve the problem.

No, stick to large, hard bound books. They are resistant to teeth and are too substantial to be hidden in pockets. Their only drawback is that they tend to fall victim to the pull of gravity at the quietest moments.

Your loving uncle,
Eustace

Courtesy of Parish Pump.co.uk

Up to now I haven't included stories of 'Uncle Eustace'. If you enjoy this one, I will look for more in the future. Please do let me know.

Brenda Smith



Michael Cresswell - Electrician

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HIGH DAYS AND HOLY DAYS

15th July - St Swithun (or Swithin), saint for a rainy day

St Swithun is apparently the saint you can blame for rainy summers. It is said that if it rains on his special day, 15th July, it will then rain for 40 days after that. It all began when Swithun was made Bishop of Winchester in 852 by King Ethelwulf of Wessex. It was an important posting: Winchester was the capital of Wessex, and during the 10 years Swithun was there, Wessex became the most important kingdom of England.

During his life, instead of washing out people's summer holidays, and damping down their spirits, Swithun seems to have done a lot of good. He was famous for his charitable gifts and for his energy in getting churches built. When he was dying in 862, he asked that he be buried in the cemetery of the Old Minster, just outside the west door.

If he had been left there in peace, who knows how many rainy summers the English may have been spared over the last 1000 years. But, no, it was decided to move Swithun. By now, the 960s, Winchester had become the first monastic cathedral chapter in England, and the newly installed monks wanted Swithun in the cathedral with them. So finally, on 15 July 971, his bones were dug up and Swithun was translated into the cathedral.

That same day many people claimed to have had miraculous cures. Certainly everyone got wet, for the heavens opened. The unusually heavy rain that day, and on the days following, was attributed to the power of St Swithun. Swithun was moved again in 1093, into the new Winchester cathedral. His shrine was a popular place of pilgrimage throughout the middle ages. The shrine was destroyed during the Reformation and restored in 1962. There are 58 ancient dedications to Swithun in England.

22nd July The 'Other' Mary

As the traditional Easter story is remembered again this month, you may notice that there is one name that frequently occurs. It is that of the 'other' Mary – not the mother of Jesus but Mary of Magdala, who stood by her at the cross and became the first human being, male or female, actually to meet the risen Christ. That's quite a record for a woman who,

the Gospels tell us, had been delivered by Jesus from ‘seven devils’. As a result, her devotion to Him was total and her grief at His death overwhelming.

In church history Mary Magdalene became the ‘fallen woman’, a harlot who was rescued and forgiven by Jesus. And while there is no evidence to prove she was a ‘fallen woman’, the contrast is sublime: Mary the virgin mother, the symbol of purity and Mary Magdalene, the scarlet woman who was saved and forgiven, the symbol of redemption. Surely, we all fall somewhere between those two extremes.

What we do know is that the two Marys stood together at the cross, the Blessed Virgin and the woman rescued from who knows what darkness and despair.

The second great moment for her was as unexpected as it was momentous. She had gone with other women to the tomb of Jesus and found it empty. An angelic figure told them that Jesus was not there, He had risen – and the others drifted off. But Mary stayed, reluctant to leave it like that. She became aware of a man nearby, whom she took to be the gardener. She explained to Him that the body of ‘her Lord’ had been taken away and she didn’t know where to find Him.

The man simply said her name ‘Mary’ and she instantly realised it was Jesus. She made to hug Him, but He told her not to touch Him because His resurrection was not yet complete. She was, however, to go to the male disciples and tell them she had met Him. She did – but they couldn’t believe her.

Her words – ‘I have seen the Lord’ – echo down the centuries, the very beating heart of the Christian gospel.

Courtesy of Parish Pump.co.uk

BURRSWOOD

The weekly Zoom healing services are continuing Thursdays at 11.30 am. If anyone is interested in joining in, I can forward a copy of the invitation email from David Hanes who hosts the services.

Malcolm Hubbard.

Are you suffering from any of the following conditions?

**Back pain : Neck pain : Sciatica : Shoulder pain :
Tension : Migraine**

Or other types of headache?

Joint pains: Generalised aches and pains :

Sports injuries : Muscle spasms and cramps

Rotator cuff injuries, disease or disorders

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