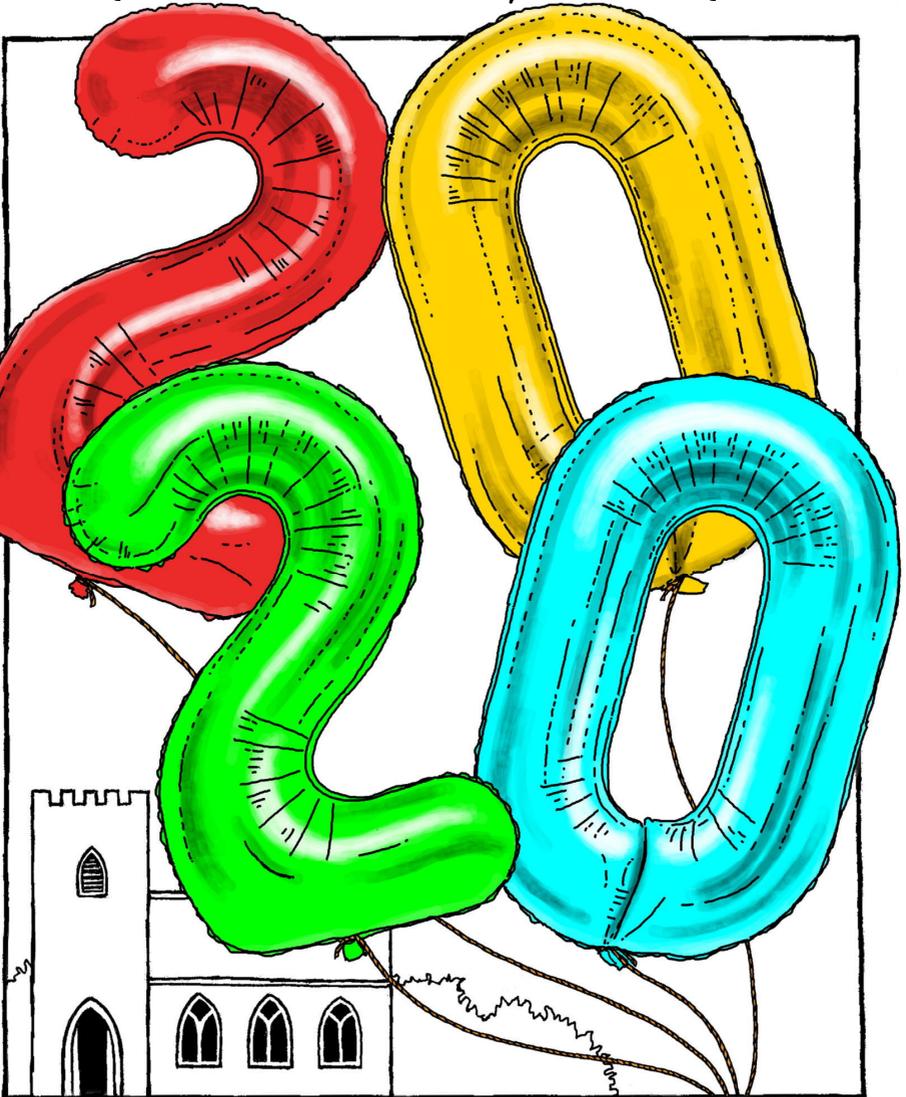


2020

January
2020

St Michael's, Oulton.



Services and Events January 2020.

Sunday 5th January—Epiphany.

10:00am Morning Worship led Jackie Makower with Jill Pirrie preaching.

Sides persons: Karen Langfield and Carol Keightley.

St Michael's Women's Own.

Please note there will not be a meeting of the Women's Own this month. Monthly meetings will resume on February 6th.

Sunday 12th January: Baptism of Christ.

10:00am Holy Communion led by Jackie Makower with the Rev. Helen Jary preaching.

Sides persons: Elissa Norman and Stella Saunders.

Sunday 19th January—The Second Sunday of Epiphany.

10:00 am : Holy Communion led by Jill Pirrie or Debbie Allsop with The Venerable David Hayden preaching.

Sides Persons: Carol Keightley and Carolyn Woodcock.

Monday 20th January: Knit and Natter Group.

1:30pm: Meet at 1, Elmhurst Avenue, Oulton Broad.

Sunday 26th January: The Third Sunday of Epiphany

World Leprosy Sunday.

10:00am: Holy Communion. The Holy Eucharist led by Canon Malory Makower and led by Jackie Makower with Debbie Allsop preaching.

Sides Persons: Tim Jones and Jane Boyce.

Monday 27th January—PCC Meeting.

7:00pm to be held at St Mark's Rectory.

'If time permits, please join us for a cup of tea or coffee following the service.'

Famous Christians.

One of the minor drawbacks of running a stall at the annual Church Christmas fare is that sometimes you miss out on picking up one of the numerous bargains to be found on the other stalls. At the last coffee morning in November having cleared the bottle stall and cashed up the takings I belatedly made my way to the bookstall where Margaret was busily packing the unsold books away. Amongst those remaining on the table was an ancient tome with a time stained cover entitled 'John Ploughman's Talk 'and was written by C. H. Spurgeon. It was a typical Victorian tract offering cautionary advice on matters such as the result of idleness; words of wisdom for wives and the folly of foppish preachers appearance, which went on to warn the coquettish cleric, 'who when measuring himself by his looking glass may please a few silly girls, but neither God nor man will long put up with him! Pretty regulated stuff.

Some of the dispensed advice would no doubt annoy the modern day political correctness brigade, but take away some of the dated puritanical dogma and much of the advice was practical and sensible such as, "It is not how much we have, but how much we enjoy, which makes happiness".

So, who was this C. H. Spurgeon? Time to refer to Google.

It transpires that Charles Haddon Spurgeon was born in Kelvedon, Essex in 1834. His conversion from nominal Anglicanism came on 6 January 1850, at age 15. On his way to a scheduled appointment, a snow-storm forced him to cut short his intended journey and to turn into a Primitive Methodist chapel in Artillery Street, Colchester where, he claimed, God opened his heart to the salvation message. The text that moved him was Isaiah 45:22 – "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth, for I am God, and there is none else." Later that year on 4 April 1850, he was admitted to the church at Newmarket. In 1854, just four years after his conversion, Spurgeon, then only 20, became pastor of London's famed New Park Street



Church (formerly pastored by the famous Baptist theologian John Gill).

Spurgeon was to become one of England's best-known preachers for most of the second half of the nineteenth century. The congregation quickly outgrew their building, and moved to Exeter Hall, then to Surrey Music Hall. In these venues Spurgeon frequently preached to audiences numbering more than 10,000—all in the days before electronic amplification. In 1861 the congregation moved permanently to the newly constructed Metropolitan Tabernacle in Southwark.

Spurgeon was not averse to causing controversy and in 1887 the Tabernacle disaffiliated itself from the Baptist Union. He was also strongly opposed the owning of slaves. He lost support from the Southern Baptists, sales of his sermons dropped to a few, and he received scores of threatening and insulting letters as a consequence.

Spurgeon suffered ill health toward the end of his life, afflicted by a combination of rheumatism, gout and Bright's disease. He often recuperated in France, where he died on 31 January 1892. He enjoyed cigars and smoked a "F. P Del Rio y Ca." in his last days according to his grandson. Spurgeon was survived by his wife and sons. His remains were buried at West Norwood Cemetery in London, where the tomb is still visited by admirers.

C. H. Spurgeon Quotes:

‘True prayer is neither a mere mental exercise nor a vocal performance. It is far deeper than that - it is spiritual transaction with the Creator of Heaven and Earth.’

Charles Spurgeon

‘By perseverance the snail reached the ark.’

Charles Spurgeon

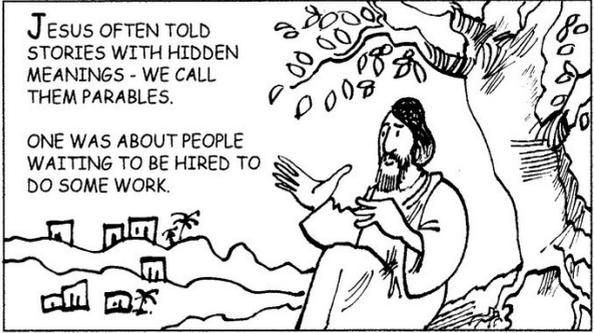


The Hired Workers



JESUS OFTEN TOLD STORIES WITH HIDDEN MEANINGS - WE CALL THEM PARABLES.

ONE WAS ABOUT PEOPLE WAITING TO BE HIRED TO DO SOME WORK.



A HOUSEHOLDER HIRED A GROUP OF WORKERS FROM THE MARKET PLACE, FIRST THING IN THE MORNING. HE AGREED UPON A FAIR WAGE.



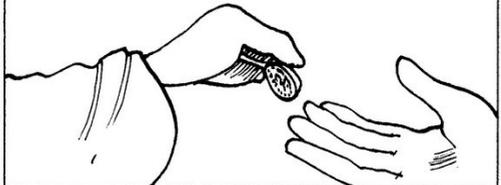
A BIT LATER ON THE HOUSEHOLDER RETURNED TO THE MARKET PLACE AND HIRED SOME MORE WORKERS.



HE RETURNED SEVERAL TIMES DURING THE DAY, EACH TIME HIRING MORE WORKERS. HE EVEN HIRED SOME PEOPLE JUST AS THE SUN WAS SETTING!



WHEN THE DAY WAS OVER THE HOUSEHOLDER BEGAN TO PAY THE WORKERS, STARTING WITH THOSE WHO HAD ONLY JUST ARRIVED. HE PAID EVERYONE THE SAME.



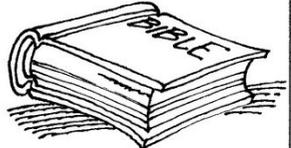
THIS UPSET THOSE WHO HAD WORKED ALL DAY. THEY THOUGHT THEY SHOULD GET MORE.



BUT THEY WERE BEING PAID WHAT THEY HAD AGREED AT THE START OF THE DAY.



JESUS CONCLUDED "SO THOSE WHO ARE LAST WILL BE FIRST, AND THOSE WHO ARE FIRST WILL BE LAST" - IT'S A HARD PARABLE!



see Matthew 20:1-16

‘Don’t grumble - always look on the bright side of life’

It’s funny how we can find ourselves grumbling about the cold grey days of winter, while 12,000 miles away my family in far flung Australia are complaining *‘heatedly’* about sweltering in 40c temperatures! There’s just no pleasing some people.

January tends to be the month when we yearn for the first signs of spring. We notice that little by little the days start to draw out. Take heart, as winter has the habit of gradually creeping in on us, and as sure as eggs are eggs, it will equally creep away giving way to spring.

That aside January can be a slightly woeful month what with the Christmas and new year celebrations behind us and we find ourselves faced with those yearly bills that have an untimely habit of dropping on our door mats. But there are things that we can do to make even the dullest of days a bit



more cheerful. Why not send off for a seed catalogue and chose your plant and vegetable seeds for later planting. There again why not consider planning a winter weekend away, somewhere different – not too far and not too expensive. The change will do you good. But then don’t forget to feed the birds at this time of year, natural food will be in short supply and they will be grateful for the supplements you provide and they make great viewing as they congregate around the feeders. How about dropping a line or email to those old friends you haven’t spoken to in a while, I’m sure they would love to hear from you and catch up on all the family news. For the more adventurous of you, why not write your life story – it doesn’t have to *‘War and Peace’* but an account of your life

that your children and grandchildren can look back on with interest in the years to come. But if you chose none of these things, why not find the time to quietly pray to God for your countless blessings.

Dear God,

Thank you for your amazing power and work in our lives, thank you for your goodness and for your blessings over us. Thank you that you can bring hope through even the toughest of times, strengthening us for your purposes. Thank you for your great love and care. Thank you for your mercy and grace. Thank you that you are always with us and will never leave us. Thank

you for your incredible sacrifice so that we might have freedom and life. Forgive us for when we don't thank you enough, for who you are, for all that you do, for all that you've given. Help us to set our eyes and our hearts on you



afresh. Renew our spirits, fill us with your peace and joy. We love you and we need you, this day and every day. We give you praise and thanks, for You alone are worthy!

In Jesus' Name,

Amen.

Oh, by the way, I noticed in the garden this morning that the spring bulbs are beginning to come through. Things are looking up!

The Rectory

St James the Least of All



My dear Nephew Darren

Your idea for our two churches to hold a combined New Year's Day walk was an admirable one, although I could sense a certain clash of cultures when your party arrived at the starting point with boots, waterproofs and GPS equipment. Our own group, rather anticipating tottering between tea shops, with a little light shopping in between, sported tweed suits, shopping bags and furred umbrellas.

Even the two sets of dogs seemed bemused with one another, with your Westies and King Charles spaniels making enough noise to scare all the wildlife in the county, and our Retrievers puzzled why the pheasants were not dropping from the sky. Dear Miss Mill's miniature poodle, with the painted toenails, will probably need life-long counselling; the furthest she had walked previously was from her bed to beside the dining room table.



The electronic navigation equipment brought by members of your group made me think that if only the wise men had had these blessings, they wouldn't have had to follow anything as unreliable as a star. Although I

suppose that instead of gold, frankincense and myrrh, they would then have arrived with an MP3 player, a mobile phone which would have been obsolete before Jesus' first birthday and a CD of Madonna's greatest hits.

I do concede that our two congregations learned much from one another. Our ladies were most interested to hear about the latest in personal trainers, while yours discovered how to bring a pan of jam to a rolling boil. Your men seemed impressed to hear of squirrel shooting while ours gathered useful tips for caravanning abroad. And poor Miss Mill's poodle learned that the great outdoors was a parallel and hostile universe.

By mid-afternoon, however, the balance of power shifted. When the leader of the walk from your group lost his SatNav, our members felt the need to assert themselves. The gentlemen navigated using wind direction, moss on trees and angles of the sun, while our ladies, with tweed skirts furled somewhat higher than one would have wished, showed yours how to wade through peat bog without complaining.

Perhaps town and country really can learn from one another. But if Major Bullock's wife arrives for Mattins next Sunday sporting the latest gym gear, you will have much to answer for.

Your loving uncle,
Eustace

Where babies come from.

For weeks a six-year old lad kept telling his teacher about the baby brother or sister that was expected at his house. Then one day the mother allowed the boy to feel the movements of the unborn child. The six-year old was obviously impressed but made no comment. Furthermore, he stopped telling his teacher about the impending event.

The teacher finally took the little boy aside one day, and asked: "James, whatever has become of that baby brother or sister you were expecting at home?" James burst into tears and confessed, "I think Mummy ate it!"

Caring for God's World

The National Trust was founded in January 1895, 125 years ago, to 'promote the permanent preservation for the benefit of the nation of lands and tenements (including buildings) of beauty or historic interest and as regards lands for their natural aspect features, animal and plant life.' This concern for our world raises an important question at the start of this New Year: Why should we care for our planet?



The first reason is that God told us to care for His creation, as good stewards, not abusing it for selfish ends: 'Then God said, 'Let us make

mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.' (Genesis 1.28).

Secondly, the material world matters to God, for He made it 'very good' (Genesis 1:31) and sustains it all the time: 'in Him all things hold together' (Colossians 1:17). To neglect or spoil the environment is damaging what is precious to God.

Thirdly, at the end of time the cosmos will be re-created as the 'new heavens and new earth' (Revelation 21:1). This will establish the fullness of life that God intended for His whole creation; when He will dwell with His people and all creation will worship Him.

There are lots of simple ways in which we set about caring for our world this year eg. walking to church, switching the TV off stand-by, insulating our homes, driving a smaller car or cutting down on eating meat. The hope of a renewed Creation doesn't mean abandoning such simple actions today. 'If I knew Jesus would return tomorrow, I would plant a tree today.' (Martin Luther).

Facing both ways

January gets its name from the Roman god Janus, the god of beginnings and transitions, of gates and doorways. Traditionally Janus had two faces, one looking to the past and one to the future. It reminds us that as we start a new year we can look back to the past with gratitude and to the future with expectation.

In his hymn, 'How good is the God we adore', Joseph Hart (1712-1768) speaks about God as our faithful, unchangeable friend and finishes with this beautiful thought: 'We'll praise Him for all that is past, and trust Him for all that's to come.' This seems to be a good posture to take as we enter 2020.

First, we can look back on the year that is gone and give thanks for all the blessings that we have experienced. Thankfulness is really a choice. None of us will have had a perfect year, and many of us will have had some dark days indeed, but if we look carefully enough, we will see that there were also many wonderful days and golden moments. Let's choose to focus on those and to acknowledge the work of God in our lives. For what are you grateful as you look back to 2019?



Second, we can put our faith in God for all that is to come. None of us know the future. We will have our hopes and our dreams, and have made our plans for the year ahead, but no-one can guarantee they will come to pass. There will be surprises for sure, both good (we never expected that!) and bad (I didn't see that coming!). How wonderful then to have a God who knows the future and in whose hands we are safe, no matter what comes to pass. Let's choose to place our trust in Him as 2020 unfolds. What are you most looking forward to as you peer ahead of you this year?

Relationships, Sex and Health Education – now a Charter from C of E

The Church of England has published a Charter and resources to support schools in delivering Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE). The Charter features eight commitments which all schools, Church of England and others, can sign-up to prior to the new guidelines becoming law in autumn 2020.

The Church of England’s lead Bishop for Education, Stephen Conway said in April 2019 that RSHE would require a shared duty of care between parents and schools, with the contents of the curriculum discussed and clearly communicated in advance.



To enable this, a skeleton agenda for parents’ meetings has also been published, together with a framework for school staff discussion, a policy template and activities and prayers.

The eight commitments include delivering the curriculum as a professional and identifiable part of Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE), building resilience of pupils, promoting healthy relationships, using honest and medically accurate information, meeting individual requirements including special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and seeking pupils’ views to make teaching relevant to their lives.

Launching the resources Stephen Conway, who is Bishop of Ely and the Church’s lead Bishop for Education, said: “We are very pleased to be offering this Charter and companion resources which can help all schools foster an inclusive and faith-sensitive approach to Relationships, Sex and Health Education.

“While delivery of these topics has not been without contention in recent

other damaging online and real-world interactions, and we must commit to teaching this vital part of the curriculum in a way which affords dignity and shows respect to all.

“It is our ambition that these resources will give primary schools in particular the confidence to develop an age-appropriate sex education provision in partnership with parents, guardians and carers, while recognising this is a decision for each school to make.

“As all schools must uphold the protected characteristics of the Equalities Act, this Charter is not just for Church of England Schools, but can be of value to any school as it seeks to be clear and intentional about a faith-sensitive approach to Relationships and Sex Education.

The Charter and companion resources, published by the Church of England’s Education Department, can be downloaded from the Church of England website. <https://www.churchofengland.org/more/>

World Leprosy Sunday - 26th January

World Leprosy Day aims to raise awareness and knowledge of this horrific disease. The good news is that nowadays, it can in fact be cured, and so it is vital to change attitudes that stigmatise the people affected.

Many churches and groups across the country including St. Michael’s will hold their own local Leprosy Sunday sometime between 26 January and 26 April 2020. They will look back to the gospel of Matthew, when just after delivering the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus was approached by a man with leprosy. The leper knelt before Him and pleaded for help.

Matthew tells us: ‘Jesus reached out His hand and touched the man. “I am willing,” Jesus said. “Be clean!” Immediately he was cleansed of his leprosy.’ (Matthew 8:3).

For resources go to: www.leprosymission.org

Editor—For those of you who have Leprosy Mission boxes at home, Debbie will be calling these in the next week or so.

Pause for thought.

John Worsfold continue his account of the work of Wilson Carlile and Church Army.

Church army was founded by Wilson Carlile in 1882. The men he gathered around him were given a proper and thorough training lasting the same time as an ordained theologian would train for the priesthood. Gradually more men came forward for training. At that time all the Church Army officers were lay men. After completing their training church army officers were sent to the very poorest places in England. Some of the first to venture forth were sent to Lowestoft to work amongst the fishermen on the fish-market spreading the good news of Jesus. With the Bishop of Norwich's blessing, the first officers were sent to work with the clergy at St Margaret's in Lowestoft. All Church Army evangelists wore a black uniform. There are records telling us that the first officers came to Saint Margaret's round about 1886/87. Apart from working with the fishermen they operated each evening in the parish conducting Bible studies and evening services. On Saturdays they ran a social evening. This went on week after week and the places were packed.

St. Margaret's has a mission church in Roman Hill built for people who couldn't get to St Margaret's. In or around 1888 a Church Army officer was sent to look after the Mission Church which became at that point Saint Andrews Church in its own right, but still remained part of St. Margaret's parish. Lowestoft is



one of the few places in the UK where there has been a church army presence for over 100 years. There are now only two remaining Church Army personnel in Lowestoft, John Worsfold and Christine Leech. The work of Church Army continues throughout the country. In November 1889 Wilson

Carlile opened the first Church Army shelter. It is worth noting that Church Army were the pioneers in ministering to people's bodies and minds while attempting to save people souls. It was felt indeed, incongruous to preach to the shivering and half starved, whose primary need was warmth and food. Gradually Church Army opened hundreds of hostels both for men and later for women. The first shelter was established near Marylebone Road London. Church Army still have the largest hostel for women in England and probably in Europe still situated in Marylebone Road. Wilson Carlisle was full of vision and explained the scheme that he had in mind.

"It is our hope that some of those who stand the test of willingness to work hard will be able to proceed to a country farm near London, where they can be still further tried as to their sincere desire to stand an even severer labour test. We trust that it may be possible later, to emigrate the most suitable as agricultural labourers to Canada and other colonies where there is unlimited scope."

Since its foundation, Church Army have opened and cared for those in most need. Today our hostels have offered 45,000 bed spaces every year and re-settle nearly 100 people into independent living.

Church Army run the largest hostel for women, who are either living on the streets or who have nowhere to live. Women are taught different crafts and when ready found independent accommodation. Some women stay a week or two whilst others stay much longer until the time is right for them to leave. Church Army also run a residential care unit for young single people living on the streets, these youngsters are found work and stay until they are ready to move on to independent living.

Church Army also have a home for those who self-harm. Last year they received 165 referrals from such troubled young people. We also offer care to young people who suffer from misappropriation of substances such as glues, gases and aerosols.

Most people in Lowestoft will have heard of or know about Harleston House were for over 50 years we have cared for older people. In Harleston House people were given very high-quality physical and mental care and also our speciality was to offer much needed spiritual care. Some older people who

had stopped going to church when leaving school found out they needed to find God again and throughout my time at Harleston House 22 to 24 residents out of 25 began regularly attending services held in the home. Harleston House had very strong links with the parish of Saint Margaret's but it also had strong links with the Norwich Diocese. Bishop Knott (1985-1999) on his pilgrimage around the Diocese came to Harleston House for lunch. Here is what he said about the Church Army home in Lowestoft.

“This was followed by another old people’s lunch, this time at Harleston House which is run by the Church Army. This was different to other such lunches and visits to old people’s homes for two reasons; the food was excellent and not excessive and of all the old people’s homes I have visited, this was the happiest, with a group of 25 very contented people. It was well run by John Worsfold, a former Franciscan friar, and Christine Leech, the matron, both large in body and spirit. After lunch, much to my surprise, I was presented with gifts, a Church Army plate commemorating 50 years patronage by the Queen Mother and a framed sermon with a brass plate. It was in fact the sermon preached at my consecration at St. Pauls on St. Luke’s day in 1977, by Father Michael S.S.F. John had obviously done so much research and knowing Michael well from his days as a Franciscan, had obtained a copy of the sermon. It was a moving and marvellous gift. It was a happy time and afterwards I visited an old lady dying upstairs. A marvellous feature of this place is that people can come here and know that they can remain here until they die. The care in every sense is of a very high quality and it was interesting that a number of people talked to me about Harleston House as “my home” and meant it”.



Next time I will tell you more about the work of Church Army in Lowestoft and in the UK to this present day.

Science and Miracles

We live in a world where we can expect the sun to rise tomorrow and the milk to pour out of the bottle when we tilt it over our cereal. But for God, the properties of matter and the biological processes that we know and read about in text-books are simply the usual ways He works. If He chooses to do something unexpected to demonstrate something about His character, His relationship with us, and His purposes, then He will.

A group of 14 UK-based science Professors wrote to the Times in 1984, saying that “We gladly accept the Virgin Birth, the gospel miracles, and the Resurrection of Christ as historical events. We know that we are representative of many other scientists who are also Christians standing in the historical tradition of the churches.” For the non-believer, I would suggest a thought experiment: if God exists, why should He be bound by the same laws of physics as us?

Professor Christine Done is an Astrophysicist at the University of Durham. In the book *True Scientists, True Faith'* (Monarch, 2014) she writes: “Even when I was an atheist I used to get cross at discussions...on how all Jesus’s miracles could be physically explained. To me, once you have believed in a God, a supernatural being, then it’s obvious that supernatural stuff could happen, since any God who can make the physical universe and its laws can presumably suspend those laws in any time and way He chooses.”

There are also miracles which appear to be a case of wonderful timing. The wind blew all night and the Israelites crossed the Red Sea on dry land, for example. The biblical writers don’t seem especially interested in distinguishing between wonders that seem to break the usual rules of how things happen and those that don’t.

Many in Jesus’ audiences were not won over by His wonders. Most of the people in the crowds who ate the food He produced out of nowhere were quite happy to turn on Him when the religious authorities decided He was dangerous. We can only make sense of something unexpected, such as an answer to prayer for healing, in the context of a growing relationship with God. The exciting task for a Christian is to explain what this interaction looks like, and to demonstrate what ‘your kingdom come’ looks like in our communities. God works through us in words, works and wonders.

Dr. Ruth M. Bancewicz,

I'll Sing to that!

Did you hear about the Methodist chapel where the new minister and the organist were not getting along. As time went by this began to spill over into the worship service.

One week the minister preached on commitment and how we all should dedicate ourselves to the service of God. The organist played: 'We Shall not be Moved'.

The next week the minister preached on tithing and how we all should gladly give to the work of the Lord. The organist responded with: 'Jesus Paid it All'.

The third week the minister preached on gossiping and how we should all watch our tongues. The organist played all verses of: 'I Love to Tell the Story'.

By now the minister had become very discouraged with the situation, and the following Sunday told his congregation that he was considering resigning. The organist closed the service with: 'O Why Not Tonight?'

As it came to pass, the minister did indeed resign. The following Sunday he informed the church that it was Jesus who had led him there and it was Jesus who was taking him away. The organist then outdid himself with: 'What a Friend We Have in Jesus.'

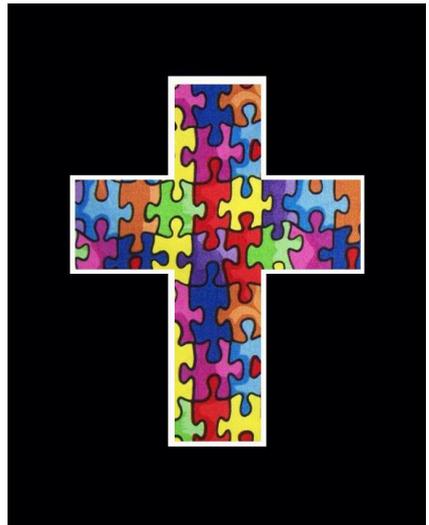


And finally..

Lis and I stayed in a cottage in Sutton-under-Whitestone Cliffe near the North York Moors last November. The weather meant that some days we came back earlier than we had planned and we took on the challenge of completing a jigsaw that was left for guests.

Some of you are probably experts at jigsaws and can even tackle ones in 3D, or ones without a picture to guide you, or where everything looks almost the same, but I prefer to keep the little hair I have so am kinder to myself by getting jigsaws that look possible to solve. I had not worked on a jigsaw for quite a few years and now I have the luxury of a special folder so I can put the partly completed jigsaw away without taking over the table as meals are also important to me.

Sometimes our lives are chaotic and don't seem to make sense like the separate 1000 pieces of a jigsaw. Can we trust God while all this is going on? With Jesus as Lord we know that one day everything will come together with Him in the new heaven and new earth. But also the jigsaw can speak to us now in this New Year and New Team Ministry with our New Team Rector, Helen, for whom we thank God. Each piece in a jigsaw puzzle is important. Perhaps you have had a second hand jigsaw and you cannot find the piece and the jigsaw is spoilt as you realise that pieces are missing. We will all have an important role to play in the growth of our new team and the way we come together, like a beautiful jigsaw, that we are able to be a blessing not only to others in our churches but also to the wider community as well.



David Hayden

Wise Men

*Once there were some wise men,
They didn't know the way,
But they were looking for it.
They followed the star.*

*They were scholars, they were searchers,
Who didn't know the truth,
But they were looking for it.
They followed the star.*

*Although they were wise, they were puzzled,
They didn't know the meaning of life,
But they were looking for it.
They followed the star.
The star stopped over Jesus.*

*They were wise men,
They were wise men looking for
The way, the truth and the meaning of life.
They found Jesus.*

By Daphne Kitching



If you have any contributions for the next monthly edition of the 'Pew News'
please send your material to Robin Keightley

robinkeightley175@btinternet.com