



# *The Shell*



The Magazine of St James the Greater  
Leicester

Autumn 2020

## **SUNDAY WORSHIP**

8.30 am Holy Communion    10.30 am Choral Eucharist  
6.30 pm Choral Evensong & Sermon  
6.00 in Lent

## **MIDWEEK HOLY COMMUNION**

10.30 am Thursdays  
MORNING PRAYER  
9 am Tuesday-Friday

Until the COVID-19 situation becomes clearer up-to-date service information can be found on the weekly newsheet on the website [www.stjamesthegreater.org.uk](http://www.stjamesthegreater.org.uk) which is update every Friday.

## **MINISTRY TEAM**

Vicar

Revd Andrew Quigley MA (Oxon) MTh

0116 254 4113

Associate Non-Stipendiary Priest

Revd Jane Sharp

Honorary Associate Priests

Revd David Clark BA

Very Revd Dr Derek Hole Hon LLD Hon DLitt

Readers

Mr David Brunning MA (Oxon)

Mrs Pam Howe

Angela Jagger BA PhD

Pastoral Assistant

Miss Vicky Roe BPhil.Ed MA

Sacristan

Sheila Roberts MA

*For further information please contact:*

*Church Office, St James Hall, St James Terrace, Leicester LE2 INA*

*[office@stjamesthegreater.org.uk](mailto:office@stjamesthegreater.org.uk)    0116 254 2111*

## From the Editor's Desk



Well, what a Summer we have had of it; heatwaves, floods and, of course, the great lockdown! I like to think that I have a tidy mind — although a visitor taking a look at my study might take the view that my body does not obviously follow the dictates of my mind—and the constant changes of the lockdown regulations have left me more than a little confused. We have had the curious situation where the people of Leicester and those of Oadby have been governed by different rules. I have observed inhabitants of these two places meeting (suitably distanced, of course) at the Oadby tram shed, where these two settlements share a common boundary, shouting greetings to one another.

At St James, where our congregation is geographically widely spread, we have been doubly affected being caught between local government lockdown rules and those of the Church of England. However, I think we can be well satisfied by the way that we have risen to the challenge. Our spiritual life together has been wonderfully supported by the virtual services that have been provided on the church website by members of our fellowship and I think it is fair to say that St James the Greater is still a worshipping community. But I am sure that we are all praying for the day when things will be back to normal even though this might be sometime yet: I gather that the current buzz phrase is 'new normal'!

During the lockdown I have very busy, not only in putting *The Shell* together but in helping others with various projects. I have

been researching a family tree for a friend which has turned out to be a very interesting exercise involving, among other things, untangling of a very complicated 19<sup>th</sup> century will and a consequent high court case with over 50 defendants!

Another task has involved helping a friend to put together a book. You will be able to imagine the magnitude of this task when I tell you that the book is turning out to be several hundred pages long!

Fortunately it has been possible to conduct these labours from home, sat at my computer, without having to wander into the big wide world.

I know that many of you have been able to keep in touch with one another by virtual means such as Skype and Zoom. But there are, of course, many of our fellowship who don't have computers or are not comfortable with using them. I have found that a telephone call to someone who has otherwise been isolated has been greatly appreciated. So pick up the 'phone and chat; it's surprising how quickly the time goes!

Many people have contributed to this issue, for which much thanks, so there is a gratifying number of pages. Please keep up the good work for the next issue the copy date for which is 16 November.

Graham Jagger

[editor@stjamesthegreater.org.uk](mailto:editor@stjamesthegreater.org.uk)

## The Vicar writes ...



In the last issue I wrote about the Before and the After. I don't know about you, but I find it's getting hard to remember the Before. Equally, it is clear that it will still be many months, maybe years, until we can safely say we are in the After. But at the moment we are heading into that long-anticipated period. Lockdowns are tentatively easing, even here in Leicester. Churches like St James will once again resound to the voice of prayer, the reading of scripture, the expression of our hope and faith, even if it is somewhat muffled behind masks.

When you read this we will probably be in the Season of Creation, or Creationtide, running from September until 6<sup>th</sup> October. As I mentioned last time, many have found solace, refreshment and healing in a new found connection to the natural world through lockdown. As our voices and the noises of normal life were quietened, the sound of the birds, the whisper of the wind spoke afresh. Stars shone brighter in undimmed skies and it seemed as if while our civilisation held its breath, the rest of God's creation took a deep sigh of much needed air.

In turn many of us discovered again, or for the first time, how creation can help our recreation – our being re-created, made again. And through all this scientists and campaigners have reminded us that the desperate plight of our world has not ended just because some shops closed for a few months. The destruction of the habitat and the traffic in wild creatures that brings us new zoonotic viruses like Covid-19 has not stopped. The toxins we pump into the air that worsen the symptoms of Covid (and may help spread it) have only briefly and slightly lessened. Above all, if you've seen the tide of discarded masks and gloves littering our streets and parks, you know that the human

failure behind all these problems has not gone away.

With all that in mind, Creationtide is a time for repentance, yet it is also a time for thanksgiving. Many of us will have reasons to give thanks to God for the bounty of the natural world we have enjoyed in lockdown, even if it was just a peaceful moment in a garden or park away from the grim blare of headlines and briefings. If we are fortunate enough to have large or productive gardens we may be beginning to enjoy the blessing of harvest – fruit and vegetables (whilst the vicarage garden remains largely productive of a certain invasive species...).

Through lockdown many of us have lost community – unable to socialize, visit, shop or worship in ways we previously have. Even a casual encounter on the street has become that awkward dance with social distancing. As we begin to rebuild community here at St James, once again worshipping together, Creationtide reminds us of another, vital, dimension to our community – the web of all living things, the family of all beings filled with the divine breath. Those who keep pets will know the closeness of relationship we can have with other creatures – they feel like members of our family. For St Francis, whose feast day closes the season of Creation, that relationship was keenly felt with all the natural world, and he famously found brother and sisters in sun and moon, even in death.

I have been reading a book about the psychology of responding to climate change. One of the reactions (notoriously) is denial. The book points out that this is similar to our response to death – we delay, bargain, deny. It won't happen to us. It won't happen yet. It won't happen if we do this, or don't do that. Coronavirus has tragically exposed millions to

the sorrow and loss of death, even in wealthy, comfortable countries that were particularly good at denial (of both death and climate change).

Climate change, pollution, and other consequences of our environmental destruction already kill more people than Covid-19 has, and those losses will only get

worse. Now, sometime after the Before, but not yet having entered the After, we face a chance, and a choice. As opportunities to travel, to shop, to socialize and work return, we can enact that choice, and in this season we can pray that we continue to be refreshed, re-created, in that precious creation.

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## How well do you know your hymn book?

Regular worshippers know the words of many hymns by heart but how many know the names of the tunes? The object of this Autumn's quiz is to identify the first line of the hymns which are usually sung to these tunes. *Please note that members of the music department are not allowed to enter!*

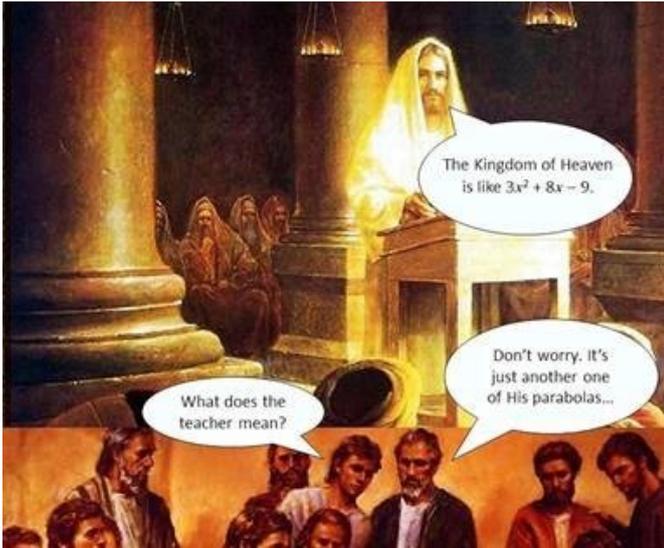
Cornwall	Melita
Gerontius	Hannover
Eventide	Gospal
Binchester	Rockingham
St Clement	Angel Voices
St Anne	Westminster Abbey
Alberta	Song1
Rievaulx	Servant Song
Abbot's Leigh	Be still
Monk's Gate	Melcombe
St Fulbert	Adeste Fideles
Guiting Power	Paderborn

## Ship of Fools ...

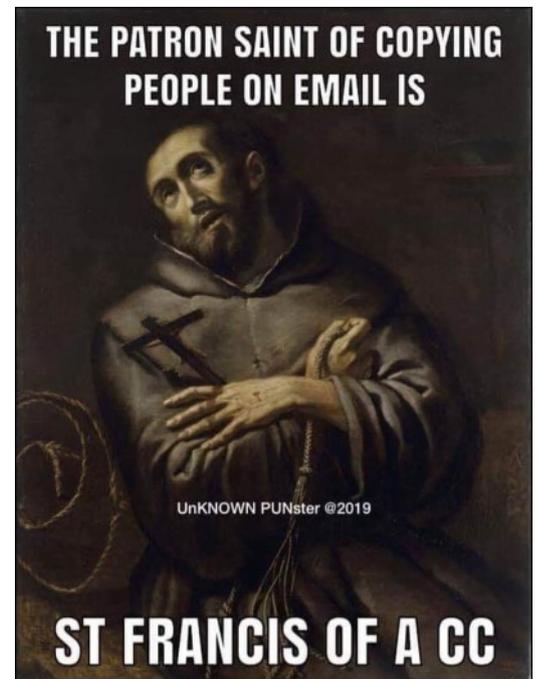


*Be aware! She can move in any direction.*





A friend of mine was in front of me coming out of church one day, and the vicar was standing at the door, as always, to shake hands with the worshippers. He grabbed my friend by the hand and pulled him aside. The vicar said to him, "You need to join the army of the Lord." My friend replied, "I'm already in the army of the Lord, Father." So the vicar inquired, "Then how come I only see you at Christmas and at Easter?" My friend whispered back, "I'm in the secret service."



# Autumn Recipes

These recipes are taken from *My Choice Recipe Book* written by members of St James the Greater. [Uncertain date but probably 1960s or 70s. Ed.]

## Chicken Hunter Style

*4 chicken joints*  
*seasoned flour*  
*2 oz. butter*  
*1 chopped onion*  
*15 oz. peeled tomatoes*  
*¼ pint white wine*  
*Salt and pepper*  
*1 bay leaf*  
*1 level teaspoon caster sugar*  
*chopped parsley*  
*4 oz. button mushrooms*

Coat chicken joints in seasoned flour. Fry in butter until golden. Place in ovenproof casserole. Gently fry onion until soft. Add to casserole with tomatoes, wine, seasoning, bay leaf and sugar. Cover and cook at Gas Mk. 4 for 1½ hours or until tender, adding mushrooms 10 minutes before end. Remove bay leaf. Garnish with chopped parsley.

*Marie Hall*

## Walnut & Date Loaf

*1 lb plain flour*  
*Pinch of salt*  
*½ lb sugar*  
*½ lb margarine*  
*1 lb chopped dates*  
*2 oz. walnuts*  
*1 teaspoon bicarbonate of soda*  
*2 teaspoons baking powder*  
*1 pint milk*

Mix baking powder, bicarbonate of soda, flour and salt. Rub in margarine, add dates, nuts and sugar. Mix to a stiff paste with milk. Place in two 2 lb loaf tins. Bake Gas Mk. 4/350°F for 1½ hours. Freezes well.

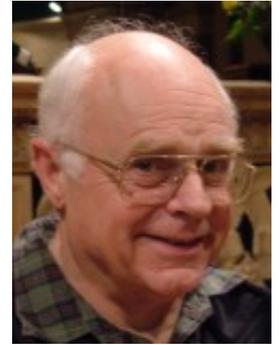
*Jean Quick*

## David Clark reviews ...

### ***Resurrecting Easter – How the West lost and the East kept the original Easter Vision***

**John Dominic Crossan & Sarah Sexton Crossan**

**Harper Collins 2018**



This is a beautiful and fascinating book, enhancing our understanding of one of the most elusive of religious claims: that Jesus Christ rose from the dead. It is both research project and detective journey to seek out the icons of the resurrection during a fourteen-year period of visits to sacred sites in the Mediterranean; tours conducted by the authors and the theologians Marcus and Marianne Borg.

I hope this book will not offend the sensibilities of Muslims. We live in a world where images abound, and are essential for commerce and entertainment. Observant Muslims presumably share personal photographs of relatives and friends, and yet, lurking somewhere, there is the *fiq* prohibition of images. Where is the line which must not be crossed? Pictures of the Prophet are not allowed, yet I have seen beautiful Persian pictures of Gibreel dictating to Muhammad (on whom be peace), whose face is usually obscured. So we have an ambiguity which is problematic for me, because this book is all about the sacred images of Jesus Christ, Adam and Eve, and sundry other significant figures from our shared history. And I am a visual person with artistic inclinations.

There are two foundational concepts to this book. The first is that unlike all other incidents recorded about Jesus' life and death, there is no description in the Second Testament of his resurrection (Grk.: Anastasis). Nor could there be. There were no eye-witnesses in the sealed tomb where he was laid. All further evidence of the resurrection of Jesus is in his twelve enigmatic appearances recorded by the

Gospel writers, and a mystical appearance recorded by St Paul.

The second is that the Christian Church encouraged artists to use their imagination and depict in pictorial form the events of Christ's life, death and resurrection, as well as significant scenes from the First Testament. Every picture tells a story. The wonderful frescos of Piero della Francesca in Florence and the dramatically imagined pictures of Rembrandt, including his pen-and-ink sketches, come to mind. There is a dramatic pen and ink sketch by Rembrandt showing the moment when Jesus disappears from the supper with two disciples at Emmaus (Luke 24:31). Copies of all these are widespread.

Another necessary explanation before you read on is that modern Christian theology of the Resurrection sees this salvific event not only as an historic and a future event, but something which happens in the here and now. Rich examples of this are given in Harry Williams' exciting book *True Resurrection*.

The view of the Eastern churches that has developed is that icons are visual theology. Namely, that the sacred icons, which are created according to highly disciplined regulation and tradition, convey many truths about God, especially through Jesus Christ. A whole way of worship has been developed through the use of icons and every Eastern Orthodox Church has its Iconostasis, a screen between the main body of the church and the sanctuary. Of course, this has liturgical, devotional and educational functions.

Christian imagination eventually developed a direct image of Christ's Resurrection in two divergent versions: firstly, the individual Anastasis tradition of Christ alone; and secondly, by 700 C.E., the universal tradition. The first shows Jesus rising out of a sarcophagus holding a cross. The second shows Christ reaching out a hand to Adam and Eve on either side of him, leading them out of the grave, which represents a prison, and death. Also at the foot of these icons, there is a dark cavern containing the crossed gates of hell/Hades, which Christ is trampling down.

The authors raise questions and attempt answers. Which image is truest to the New Testament and the Gospel conception of Easter? Is Christ's resurrection an historical event or theological interpretation? A myth or a parable? A symbol or a metaphor? How can this event influence or change the whole human race, not just forward in time, but backward to its beginning? Does it tell of humanity's liberation from death, past, present and future – in what sense? It is important to follow the authors' argument throughout the 13 chapters, but I'm not being a spoiler if I tell you that 'Yes' is the obvious answer to their main question, 'Should not the combined individual and universal vision be the dominant Easter theology for the depth of the Christian imagination?'

Chapter 2 reviews the earliest examples of Christ's individual resurrection, often symbolised by a formalised version of the Constantinian standard in the middle of carvings which include the adjacent figures of the guards at the tomb of Christ. Interestingly, 250 versions of this image in stone carvings have been found in Ireland dating from 850-950 C.E.

Chapter 3 shows the origins of the image of the 'cave' (tomb) of the resurrection in the building unearthed in Jerusalem by Queen Helena, mother of Constantine, and alleged finder of the true cross. Here, and in the next two chapters (4 & 5), we discover

images of Christ leading out the spirits of the dead, beginning with 'Adam, representing all of humanity, already in heaven in Anastasis as the universal resurrection, the communal divinization of all humanity' (p.64). The gospel source for the images of both Old Testament prophets and New Testament saints is Matthew 27:51b-53: 'The tombs also were opened, and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised.'

Later illustrations of the universal resurrection are to be found in the margins of illuminated scrolls of 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> century Psalters, which are described and lavishly illustrated in chapter 7 (mainly in Europe) and chapter 8 (in the ancient Psalters in the monasteries of Mount Athos, Greece). Many verses in the Psalms speak of God arising to rescue his people (Ps 10:12) and praying God to 'take me out of the net that is hidden for me, for you are my refuge.' (Ps 31:4-5) And interesting too that the Psalter (*zabur*), is especially honoured in the Qur'an: Sura 4:163 – 'Surely We have inspired you as we inspired Noah and the prophets after him ... and we gave David the Psalms (*zabur*).'

The final chapter (13) of this book contains a paean to Hope.

All great religions offer humanity parables bigger than themselves. So also here. When Christ, rising from the dead after being executed for non-violent resistance and violent imperial injustice, grasps the hands of Adam and Eve, he creates a parable of possibility and a metaphor of hope for all of humanity's redemption.

Even though Christ is crucified for his nonviolent resistance, this Crucifixion and Resurrection imagery challenges our species to redeem our world and save our earth by transcending the escalatory violence we create as civilizations normal trajectory. And the universal resurrection imagery makes it clear that we are all involved in this process. Nonviolent resistance is alone capable of saving us from species death by detouring human evolution along a different trajectory

from the violent spiral of inevitable self-destruction. (p.186)

The authors go on to conclude ‘this book’s celebration of Anastasis iconography’ by referring to their visit to Moscow in 2015, less than two weeks after the May Day military parade, commemorating ‘the Russian victory in the Great Patriotic War of 1941-45 (known elsewhere as World War II, 1939-45)’. Included is a Reuters parade photo (p.187) with tanks and a great phalanx of military personnel. Fascinatingly, one of the entrances to this square is called the Resurrection Gate. By it there is a large mosaic on the wall. The authors describe this photo as ‘the military image of salvation by death’, and the mosaic as ‘the Anastasis image of salvation *from* death.’ The implication is that the universal resurrection of Christ means that humanity is freed to choose life, rather than follow the inclination to death.

It is not to be supposed that the Anastasis image is exclusive to the Eastern Churches. Icons have become increasingly important to churches in the West, and icon writers are busy. (Generally speaking, icons are ‘written’, not painted.) Even Protestant churches, which are traditionally wary of anything which might be perceived as idolatrous, are introducing them. The Epilogue to former Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams’ excellent short book ‘God with Us’ is the text of a sermon at the Eucharist in St Andrew’s Holborn, London, during which a new icon of the resurrection (by a sister of the monastery of Vallechiara ) was blessed.

Williams’ interpretation of the Anastasis in contemporary terms is a brilliant exposition of the power of this image. I recognise that the icon in St Andrew’s Holborn is based on the myth of the Descent into Hell (Hades). This myth is most clearly and dramatically expressed in the apocryphal Gospel of Nicodemus, chapters 15-20. This is a 4<sup>th</sup>

century imaginary speculation about what the Risen Christ did in the time between his exit from the tomb and appearances recorded in the canonical gospels. The idea that Christ descended into Hades/Hell and called forth the spirits of the dead is an extension of two verses in the 1<sup>st</sup> Letter of Peter. In 3:18 and 4:6, the writer asserts that Christ ‘in the spirit’ went ‘and made a proclamation to the spirits in prison’. But Williams focuses rather on other features of the icon: ‘What this icon says to us is that the bedrock of what is going on in the resurrection of Jesus Christ is the remaking of creation itself’. He observes that ‘the resurrection is not the happy ending of the story of Jesus: it’s the story of the word of God speaking in the heart of darkness to bring life out of *nothing* and to bring the human race into existence as the carriers of his image and his likeness.’ (op.cit. p.101)

Adam and Eve in the icon have aged! Time has moved on. The Resurrection of Christ is retro-active as well as going forward. God ‘doesn’t wave a wand and make them young again’. ‘The re-creation, the new beginning of resurrection, is *more* wonderful because it is the planting of newness and freshness, beauty and vision and glory, in faces like yours and mine, in lives like yours and mine, in Adam and Eve as they are there depicted. And that is why the resurrection is good news for those in the midst of what seems to be incurable, intractable pain or failure, in the middle of a world or experience, where, practically speaking there seems so little hope.’ (op. cit. p.103/4.)

This profoundly theological emphasis must be a word for our Covid 19-ridden times. Fear of infection stalks the whole earth, and Christ is inspiring us all to cast out fear, to take courage from the presence of the Risen Christ – God in us – Emmanuel, and live our lives to the full in his image despite the plague.

# Memories of the 41st Leicester - part 1

## William Woolley writes of his time as a Cub Scout

Alison Hurst's article in the Autumn 2019 issue of *The Shell* inspired a delve into the archives as Scouting was an important part of my life for over forty years and my successful career as an adult was due in no small measure to the training I received as a boy in the 41st.

I attended my first Pack meeting in November 1957. The Group had a hut on the church car park where St James Hall stands now.

Akela was Mavis Johnson, Kaa was Joyce Broughton and there were two other assistants called Chil and Bagheera but I don't remember hearing their real names. Because I had come with Roger Young (who lived just up the road from me) I was placed in the White Six with him. The Sixer was Trevor Day and other names I remember were Dominic and Martin Field, Roger Townell, Graham Fortey, John Lee and Ian Myring.

Mavis resigned shortly afterwards but I met her again a couple of years later when she examined Martin Field and myself for our House Orderly badges. Dave Billett joined the team as Kim and Shirley Hammond as Rann but after she married Mick Maine they moved to another group.

I became Sixer of the White Six and gained my Leaping Wolf badge. I went up to Scouts in 1960.

This is the only photo I can find of my Wolf Cub days. I'm on the left with Stewart Ward on the right just before we went to a meeting in 1959.



# How did an airport get its name?

Andrew Gill provides an answer



## STORY NUMBER ONE

Many years ago, Al Capone virtually owned Chicago. Capone wasn't famous for anything heroic. He was notorious for enmeshing the windy city in everything from bootlegged booze, protection rackets, vice to murder.

Capone had a lawyer nicknamed "Easy Eddie." He was Capone's lawyer for a good reason. Eddie was very good! In fact, Eddie's skill at legal manoeuvring kept Big Al out of jail for a long time. To show his appreciation, Capone paid him very well.

Eddie did have one soft spot, however. He had originally left his wife and family in St. Louis, Missouri, to move to Chicago to work for the mob. He had a son that he loved dearly. Eddie saw to it that his young son had clothes, cars, and a good education. Nothing was withheld.

Despite his involvement with organised crime, Eddie even tried to teach him right from wrong. Eddie wanted his son to be a better man than he was.

Yet, with all his wealth and influence, there were two things he couldn't give his son; he couldn't pass on a good name or a good example.

One day, Easy Eddie reached a

difficult decision. He wanted to rectify wrongs he had done. He decided he would go to the authorities and tell the truth about Al "Scarface" Capone, clean up his tarnished name, and offer his son some resemblance of integrity. To do this, he would have to testify against The Mob, and he knew that the cost would be great. So, he testified.

Within the year, Easy Eddie's life ended in a blaze of gunfire on a lonely Chicago Street. But in his eyes, he had given his son the greatest gift he had to offer, at the greatest price he could ever pay. Police removed from his pockets a rosary, a crucifix, a religious medallion, and a poem clipped from a magazine.

The poem read:

### The Clock of Life

The clock of life is wound but once,  
And no man has the power  
To tell just when the hands will stop  
At late or early hour

Today, only is our own.  
So live, love and toil with a will.  
Place no faith in tomorrow,  
For the clock may soon be still.

Robert H Smith



## STORY NUMBER TWO

World War II produced many heroes. One such man was Lieutenant Commander Butch O'Hare.

He was a fighter pilot assigned to the aircraft carrier Lexington in the South Pacific.

One day his entire squadron was sent on a mission. After he was airborne, he looked at his fuel gauge and realized that someone had forgotten to top up his fuel tank.

He would not have enough fuel to complete his mission and get back to his ship.

His flight leader told him to return to the carrier. Reluctantly, he dropped out of formation and headed back to the fleet.

As he was returning to the mother ship, he saw something that turned his blood cold; a squadron of Japanese aircraft was speeding its way toward the American-fleet.

The American fighters were on a sortie, and the fleet was all but defenceless. He couldn't reach his squadron and bring them back in time to save the fleet. Nor could he warn the fleet of the approaching danger. There was only one thing to do. He must somehow divert them from the fleet.

Laying aside all thoughts of personal safety, he did all he could to disrupt the Japanese formation.

Finally, the exasperated Japanese squadron took off in another direction. Deeply relieved, Butch O'Hare and his tattered fighter limped back to the carrier.

Upon arrival, he reported in and related the event surrounding his return. The film from the gun-camera mounted on his plane told the tale. It showed the extent of Butch's daring attempt to protect his fleet. He had, in fact, destroyed five enemy aircraft. This took place on February 20, 1942, and for that action Butch became the Navy's first Ace of WWII, and the first Naval Aviator to win the Medal of Honour.

A year later Butch was killed in aerial combat at the age of 29. His hometown would not allow the memory of this WW II hero to fade, and today, O'Hare airport in Chicago is named in tribute to the courage of this great man.

So, if you ever find yourself at O'Hare International, give some thought to visiting Butch's memorial displaying his statue and his Medal of Honour. It's located between Terminals 1 and 2.

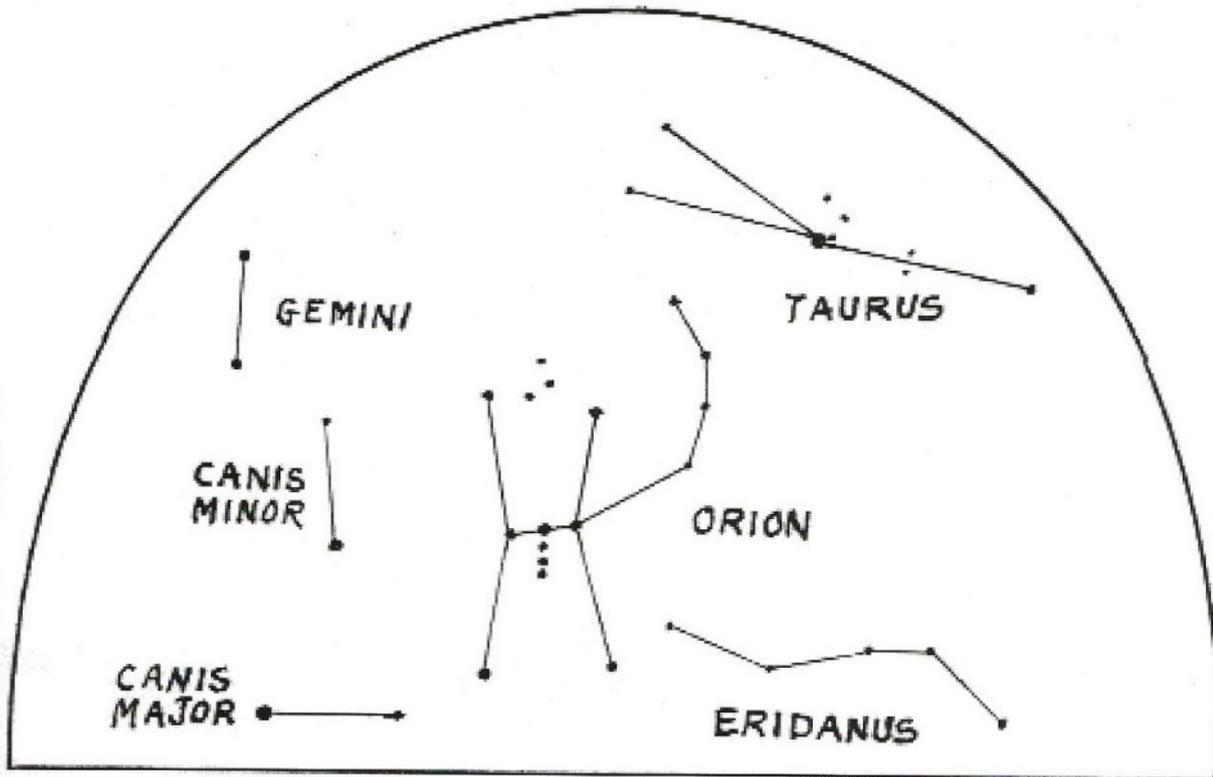
*SO, WHAT DO THESE TWO STORIES  
HAVE TO DO WITH EACH OTHER?*

**Butch O'Hare was "Easy Eddie's" son.**

# Church Tour

## A series of articles about significant features of the church — No. 2

Here is a description, written by David McDermott and taken from Alan McWhirr's book *Century to Millennium — St James the Greater, Leicester 1899-1999*, of the constellations in the ceiling of the Lady Chapel apse.



The six constellations depicted here can be seen in December if the observer faces south. Orion, the Mighty Hunter, whose outline is defined by its seven bright stars, is the most magnificent constellation of all. The Sword, hanging vertically from the Belt contains the Great Orion Nebula, which can be seen by the naked eye as a faint 'cloud'. Above Orion and to the right lies the Bull (Taurus). The bright reddish star in this constellation is called Aldebaran, the Eye of the Bull. It is also the principal star of the 'V' shaped group called the Hyades. On the opposite side of Orion note the Twins (Gemini), a pair of stars of almost equal magnitude. Below Taurus the faint stars depicts part of the constellation Eridanus, a river mentioned in Greek mythology.

Finally, to the left of Orion we see his two faithful dogs; below the Twins two stars form the Lesser Dog (Canis Minor) whose bright star is called Procyon, and below Orion part of the constellation of the Greater Dog (Canis Major) is seen near the horizon. The dazzling white star in Canis Major is Sirius, the brightest star in our sky. Nine light years distant, it far outshines its fellows and presents an object of ethereal beauty beyond compare.

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# Sweet Singing in the Choir



The 1980s was musically a rich time of men and boys' in the choir of St James the Greater. Most boys auditioned for entry at the age of 7 and 8 years old and stayed the full course until they graduated to the back rows. Amongst these many immensely talented boys was Andrew Kirk, who not only followed the well-established choral path but took a liking to the organ and began lessons at the age of 14. By the age of 18, he was the organ scholar at St James and gained an Oxford Organ Scholarship (Pembroke College) - and as they say – the rest is history! [Tim Lees]

The three 'Virtual Choral Evensongs' sung by St James the Greater Choir since lockdown are really impressive – amongst the best I have seen and heard. I would like to pay tribute to Matt Haynes and the choir for their hard work. The biggest vote of thanks must be saved for Andy Judge, for the many, many hours that go into editing the audio and video elements. It takes someone extremely patient and technically proficient to achieve those excellent results. At the time of writing, these services have attracted over 6000 views. How many normal sized Evensong congregations might it take to make up those numbers?

There has been a bewildering choice of worship to join in the past few months – from BBC TV Sunday Morning Worship at Bangor, Hereford and St David's Cathedrals – well put together (and one I found helpful in the first few months), various Radio broadcasts, through to live and pre-recorded services from local parishes, presented through YouTube channels and other on-line formats.

I wonder how many different offerings you might have dipped in and out of? Churches who provided the brave option of live worship had to contend with the inevitable 'technical-glitch' problem solving on the spot! It is sometimes hard to keep watching when things go wrong, especially when we are used to smooth, well-ordered liturgy in normal times. We could also take the opportunity to travel to other churches, other faiths/denominations, and a wide spectrum of different styles of worship across the world. I expect that many decisions of how to continue the worshipping life of the church had to be taken fairly quickly. I wonder if those same decisions would be taken again with the

benefit of hindsight?

Good resources on a church

website to keep people in touch has been encouraging, along with telephone contacts and dial-in worship for those who might not be able to obtain online access. I certainly used some of the recommendations from the weekly St James newsletter, as well as sharing the Jackson's 'biscuit crumb quiz', which was really popular with our choristers of all ages and our children's church!

My connection with St James goes back to May 1979, when I joined the choir under the inspiring leadership of Tim Lees. It was a wonderful musical education. I'm grateful to have spent 30 years working in church music since then. I have been Director of Music & Organist at St Mary Redcliffe Church, Bristol since 2003. We have a broadly similar music tradition to St James the Greater, with three Sunday choral services (9.30am Sung Eucharist, 11.15am Choral Matins and 6.30pm Choral Evensong).

It was decided early on in lockdown that we would only livestream the Eucharist at a later time of 10am. I had already recorded 20 hymns on the church organ by the eve of lockdown, but in those early weeks, the musical links didn't always work in the live services. Our vicar's laptop and Wi-Fi had to be upgraded to make the livestreaming from the vicarage study more successful!

For Pentecost Sunday, we would normally have a big civic service 'Rush Sunday' (named from the rushes and herbs

which are spread on the floor of the church), which is attended by the city council, dating back to 1493. This year was one of the very few occasions in the past 527 years when that service did not take place in church. We produced three virtual choir videos – one from the choristers, one from the back rows, and one from our university choral scholars. Each singer recorded to a backing track, which were then assembled and edited by a colleague who is a recording engineer, much like Andy Judge did at St James.

At the time of writing, our 'livestreamed' Eucharist includes pre-recorded hymns on the organ, with a few sung contributions from the choir (mp3 tracks) and some organ music. It's a compromise, but it feels reasonably close to our normal style of worship and this will continue in the short term. The restrictions on any form of singing in church (hymns included) is more of a problem. A short midday said communion service has recently been introduced on Sundays for those who wish to receive the sacrament in church.

St Mary Redcliffe choirs have continued to meet for practices and chat on a weekly basis by zoom. Many of you will know that it's not possible to easily sing together on-line, so it's a question of 'mute all choristers' and either teach them by singing yourself or by using a backing track. Zoom can work well with a solo singer and we have sung a few Complines with allotted solo lines. Who would have thought a year ago that we might be having after service coffee by zoom with breakout rooms?

For the future, what will the 'new normal' be? I have a feeling that in many churches, this break in continuity is now a time to reflect and review. In the news recently has been the surprising story of disbanding of the choir at Sheffield Cathedral, alongside financial deficits in many cathedrals and churches. I wonder at my church whether our lockdown time of 10am Eucharist rather than 9.30am will stay – what may then happen then to Choral Matins? Like St

James, especially in the winter months, is 6.30pm rather late for Evensong? It's interesting that most Cathedrals have their Sunday Evensong sometime between 3 and 4pm but the majority of parish churches still keep to a later time.

Recruitment to the choirs - two years ago at St Mary Redcliffe, we had 20 boys on the books, alongside a separate choir of 16 girls. However, we will be down to 10 boys by the end of 2020, as we will have had six voice changes this year! It's not been possible to recruit any new choristers in the past four months, although we hope to expand our online recruitment methods very soon.

I expect that when church choirs are allowed to sing again, rehearsal spaces will have to be carefully looked at (good ventilation, social distancing etc). Other areas in the church apart from the choir stalls may need to be used. With a 2m spacing, we could only get 6 singers in our choir stalls! Which choir should we use – it might be easier to get the adults together, but if the children don't sing in church for a long time, will they get out of the habit?

What will Advent and Christmas look and sound like this year? One of my strongest memories from being a chorister at St James is of the wonderful Advent Procession. December is a busy month for all churches – will we need to have shorter and more simple carol services, but more of them, so we can fit in more people safely? What if there's another wave of the pandemic? There are so many questions that it's difficult to find the answers!

'Sweet singing in the choir' is a very precious thing and I hope that this tradition is able to continue at St James the Greater and in other churches for a long time to come. I'm really grateful for all those special opportunities that came my way through joining the choir over 40 years ago! I still cherish the fond memories and the way it has enriched and influenced my life.

Andrew Kirk

## Edwin Tscharke – 'God's Maverick' 1918 - 2000

*"Christ first, others second, self third"*

Edwin Gerhard Tscharke was a Lutheran missionary, hospital administrator, health educator and physician. He was born into a Lutheran, German speaking, family at Neales Flat in the Barossa Valley, South Australia, on 25 December 1918. When he was about ten years' old he developed a secret wish to become a doctor, but the family circumstances were such that it was not possible for him to continue on to high school. His family were devoted Christians and strong members of the Lutheran Church and Ed felt called to become a missionary. He left school at twelve and worked as a farm labourer, using some of the money he earned to buy music lessons. He was a naturally gifted musician and when his money ran out he continued to teach himself music theory and counterpoint, at fifteen he became the organist in the local church. Still determined to become a missionary, but not able to achieve his ambition of medical work, he read in the *Lutheran Herald* that carpenters were needed by mission stations in New Guinea and central Australia. Telling his boss that he had decided to become a lay missionary, he looked for someone in the nearest town to teach him carpentry. He got a labouring job with a builder/carpenter who agreed to give him carpentry lessons at night. His evenings were spent studying carpentry books and books on music theory by paraffin lamp. He chose carpentry because there were no other options – he needed something useful to offer the church and academic paths were closed to him. He carefully assembled his own tool kit in a handmade chest and was single minded in his purpose, not showing interest in any sport or leisure activities.

Ed's uncle was director of the Lutheran Mission at Finschhafen in New Guinea. This was the first mainland settlement in Kaiser Wilhelmsland – the name given to the northern half of what is now Papua New

Guinea – when it was claimed by Germany in 1884. Therefore, although the Mission Station had been taken over by Australian and American staff after the first World War, it retained close links with Germany and many of the Australian staff were German speaking. This had a significant effect on Ed Tscharke's future as many of the staff were interned in 1939 and some mission stations were so under staffed they had to close and were desperate for newcomers. Ed was the only recruit to the Lutheran mission field in 1941. Arriving in New Guinea, he was horrified to learn that some missionaries in Finschhafen had formed a pro Nazi group before being interned. He was sent to work under his uncle managing the coconut plantations and supervising the labourers, filling at least two roles left by the internees – he never worked a single day as a carpenter!

In 1942, during the invasion of New Guinea by the Japanese, he served with the New Guinea Volunteer Rifles. His unit, all of them sick with dysentery, malaria and malnutrition, survived a retreat overland to Port Moresby via the Bulldog Trail – a track reported to be longer and more difficult than the infamous Kokoda Track. With five minutes notice to collect important belongings, he carried his Bible, organ sheet music, and a theory book on harmony and counterpoint. The men were written off by the army as 'lost in action', and when they finally arrived at Port Moresby, were nicknamed 'the lost legion'.

While recuperating in Australia, Ed completed an army educational correspondence course in Anatomy Physiology for X-ray Technology through the University of Melbourne. He returned to New Guinea in 1943, and undertook a six weeks' long training course in Tropical Medicine, from which he graduated as a Medical Assistant. He was posted to several different army hospitals in New Guinea, before being discharged from the Army in 1946.

The following year he was sent by the Lutheran Church to the island of Karkar, off the coast of Madang in New Guinea, with the instruction 'go to Karkar, build a hospital, and

work in it'. This instruction included finding his own building materials but no funding! He spent many days scavenging and dismantling buildings and equipment left behind by American forces on the mainland – including many hours extracting enough bent nails to fill two kegs. His 300 tonne hoard of stuff was amassed on the wharf at Madang where missionaries going to other stations decided he had too much and could share. The timber was all carefully inspected by the master builder in charge who declared it to be 'firewood' – giving rise to the slogan 'Tscharke's Rubbish'.

It is a little misleading to call Karkar an island, as it is in fact one large volcano, with a central crater but with very fertile soil on the slopes. When he arrived, there were no medical facilities. Tropical diseases were rife, particularly yaws, malaria, TB, infected tropical ulcers – underage pregnancy was also a problem. Mortality rates were high from disease and accidents. On the evening of his first day on Karkar a local boat arrived with a patient – a man with half his scalp, ear attached, hanging off – 'we hear the doctor has arrived'. Ed said 'I suppose that is me' and set to sewing up and repairing the wound by the light of a hurricane lamp. Throughout the following years he continued to deal with any and every situation, sometimes performing operations with the textbook open beside him and tackling quite difficult feats such as sewing up a liver and conducting post-mortems.

In 1966, In order to involve the local community in health care, a training school for nurses and first aid post orderlies, who could staff outpost medical centres, was set up. A community health system was developed whereby the local people paid a small amount of money each month to cover all their medical needs. This approach in involving the local community in primary health care was acclaimed in 1984 by a World Health Organisation representative as being 30 years ahead of the rest of the world in relation to providing health care in third world countries.

When the time came for the Tscharkes'

to leave Karkar, about two thousand people attended his farewell which was conducted like a huge funeral feast for an important man. Amongst the presentation items, were fitches of timber from a large tree where Ed used to stop and rest when riding his bicycle round the island – it fell down when he decided to leave. These fitches were passed on to his friends.

By the time Ed retired after forty one years on the island, he had established a 200 bed District Hospital at Gaubin and he had been instrumental in controlling the diseases which had so badly affected the population on his arrival. He wrote a number of manuals, texts and teaching guides, aimed at providing relevant information to the indigenous people. In addition to this, his letters and the medical records he meticulously maintained over the years have been recognised by academic bodies and individuals as a valuable primary resource for research purposes. His papers are kept in the National Library of Australia

During his time on Karkar, he performed many medical and surgical procedures, although he had no formal qualifications. The skill and expertise he developed in this area were recognised in 1989, when he was awarded an honorary degree of Doctor of Medicine by the University of Papua New Guinea. Tabitha, his wife, was very supportive and also made her own contribution to the establishment of primary health care facilities on the island, joining him in teaching sessions and conducting mother and baby clinics.



Contributed by Dorothy Lusmore who lived in Papua New Guinea for over 30 years.

# You wouldn't believe it!

**Some children from a Caithness school were asked questions about the Old and New Testaments. The following 25 statements were some of their answers.**

1. In the first book of the bible, Guinness. god got tired of creating the world so he took the sabbath off.
2. Adam and eve were created from an apple tree. Noah's wife was Joan of ark. Noah built and ark and the animals came on in pears.
3. Lots wife was a pillar of salt during the day, but a ball of fire during the night.
4. The jews were a proud people and throughout history they had trouble with unsympathetic genitals.
5. Sampson was a strongman who let himself be led astray by a Jezebel like Delilah.
6. Samson slayed the philistines with the axe of the apostles.
7. Moses led the jews to the red sea where they made unleavened bread, which is bread without any ingredients.
8. The egyptians were all drowned in the dessert. Afterwards, Moses went up to mount cyanide to get the ten commandments.
9. The first commandment was when Eve told Adam to eat the apple.
10. The seventh commandment is thou shalt not admit adultery.
11. Moses died before he ever reached canada then Joshua led the hebrews in the battle of geritol.
12. The greatest miricle in the bible is when Joshua told his son to stand still and he obeyed him.
13. David was a hebrew king who was skilled at playing the liar. He fought the Finkelsteins, a race of people who lived in biblical times.
14. Solomon, one of Davids sons, had 300 wives and 700 porcupines.
15. When Mary heard she was the mother of Jesus, she sang the magna carta.
16. When the three wise guys from the east side arrived they found Jesus in the manager.
17. Jesus was born because Mary had an immaculate contraption.
18. St. John the blacksmith dumped water on his head.
19. Jesus enunciated the golden rule, which says to do unto others before they do one to you. He also explained a man doth not live by sweat alone.
20. It was a miricle when Jesus rose from the dead and managed to get the tombstone off the entrance.
21. The people who followed the lord were called the 12 decibels.
22. The epistels were the wives of the apostles.
23. One of the oppossums was St. Matthew who was also a taximan.
24. St. Paul cavorted to christianity, he preached holy acrimony, which is another name for marraige.
25. Christians have only one spouse. This is called monotony.

# Life in a Virtual World

**In his first blog, Peter Pay, who was inducted as the Moderator of the United Reformed Church General Assembly on 11 July, reflects on how much of our lives now takes place digitally, but how God remains ever present.**

Much of my life seems to have become virtual. Two years ago, I watched my election as Moderator at General Assembly virtually whilst in hospital. Then, on 11 July the URC held its first digital General Assembly and I was inducted virtually as Moderator of the URC General Assembly. I have a five-month-old grandson who I have only met virtually. I go to virtual meetings and councils, virtual worship and virtual family get-togethers and celebrations. I shop virtually, manage my finances virtually and do my giving virtually. I have doctor's appointments virtually. I could even do cooking virtually using delivery services if I wished.

There are some pluses: we can join meetings and go to worship anywhere without having to travel, which benefits the environment; we can link up with folk who we would struggle to see physically; information and news are easily accessible and instant, and correspondence is also potentially much easier and quicker.

But what we all miss most is the physical, face to face contact. We miss the informal chats, the body language, the handshakes the hugs. We miss the physical care. We miss being and singing together. We miss social and cultural events and

activities.

This all causes me to reflect on my relationship with God. In many respects this could also be described as virtual as I have never physically met Him, although I have frequently felt his presence. Yet, I know that my relationship with the Lord is far from limited despite this. He is always accessible. His presence, His guidance is very real. In my prayers I can always "have a chat". He is always there. His Spirit is still present at our virtual meetings and certainly at our virtual worship in the same way as before.

Some of you may find the present restrictions difficult. You may long to "get back to normal", although perhaps not the old "normal". I certainly long to be in a worshipping community again, singing praise to Him although I recognise that may take time. Yet whatever happens, I continue to hold that special virtual relationship with my Lord as something precious that will remain with me.

God bless you

*This entry was posted in [Moderators' blog on July 29, 2020 by urcmedia.](#)*

# Last Quarter's Puzzles

The four cathedrals—no one won the prize for four correct answers



Zenkov Cathedral, Almaty, Kazakhstan



Sheffield Cathedral



Smolny Cathedral, St Petersburg, Russia



Berlin Cathedral, Germany

## Hidden books ...

*The names of the hidden books are underlined here and yes, there are sixteen of them!*

I came upon this remarkable paragraph and having read it several times realised that there were sixteen books of the Bible hidden in the text. I know not if it was by design or purely a fluke. I challenged my friends to find the sixteen and some kept looking so hard for the facts they became confused and questioned the truth of the statement. Some queried the correct numbers and a few were in a jam especially as the names of the books were not capitalised. To others it was too big a job. To some a complete revelation. I must confess I found it a most fascinating search especially when I had completed the task. Yes, there are some really difficult ones to spot. You may require some judges to help you. I will admit it usually takes some time to find the sixteenth, and there will be some loud lamentations when it is discovered. One friend says she brews a cup of tea to help her concentrate. See how well you can compete. Relax now, for there really are sixteen books of the Bible hidden here!

# Muslims and Their Faith

The fourth in a series on other faiths by Angela Jagger



In the last edition of *The Shell* I wrote something about Jews. Jews, Christians, and Muslims have often been said to be members of a 'family' of faiths, so it is appropriate to write about Muslims next. The 'family' that is referred to is that of the great Old Testament figure of Abraham to whom Jews, Christians and Muslims all look back. All in some way see themselves as inheritors of the promises made by God to him.

*God is most Great!*

*I bear witness that there is no god but God.*

*I bear witness that Muhammad is the Messenger of God.*

*Come to prayer.*

*Come to success.*

*God is most Great!*

*There is no god but God.*

These are the words (in Arabic with repetition of the phrases) which will be the first words a baby hears whispered in its ears by its father and which sets the scene for the rest of life as a Muslim. They are the words of the *Adhan*, the call to prayer five times a day when Muslims are expected to purify themselves, turn in the direction of Mecca and follow a prescribed ritual of prayers and prostration. This may be done in a mosque (the *masjid* or place of prostration) or in



any place that is clean. In addition to the set prayers there may well be individual free prayer. If you have the opportunity to visit a mosque and witness the prayers you will find it a moving occasion, with a profound sense of the unity of all present taking part in the worship of God.

Muslims have sometimes been called 'the people of the point.' The 'point' is a way of expressing the oneness of God and also the ideal oneness of the

Inside the Masjid Umar in Evington Road. Note the texts from the Qur'an written at the base of the dome, the arch-shaped niche that indicates the direction of prayer, with the adjacent pulpit from which the Friday sermon is given.



The Bismillah in Arabic. 'In the name of God the merciful, the Compassionate'. This phrase is said before many actions such as before eating, or before reading from the Qur'an. The dot under the first letter (on the right) defines it as a letter B. It is sometimes said to be 'the point', a sign of the oneness of God.

community, united in prayer towards one point.

Embedded in the call to prayer is the statement of faith of Muslims, the *Shahadah* (one of what are called the five pillars of Islam), the belief that there is only one God and that Muhammad is his messenger. If anyone can say this with real intention in the presence of a Muslim then that is an indication that he or she has become Muslim, submitting themselves to

the will of God. Muslims believe that this is the natural condition of a human being and so they do not speak of converting to Islam, but rather reverting. Human beings have been given responsibility for caring for the creation and this can be expressed through living a balanced life.

Central to Islam is the affirmation that there is only one God. *Allah* is simply the Arabic word for God and Muslims believe that this one God has spoken throughout the ages via his prophets and messengers seen among those they call the People of the Book, including Jews and Christians. Each messenger has been the vehicle for that communication in a book, Moses through the Torah, Jesus through the Gospel, and the final messenger Muhammad through the Qur'an. Down the ages some errors are thought to have crept into the Torah and the Gospel, and so the Qur'an as the final book is taken as definitive. The Qur'an is very different from the Bible as it tends not to include stories about individuals, but rather assumes its readers know about them and they can be alluded to tangentially. So those we know as Old Testament prophets are accepted and a number of other figures are also seen as prophets, such as Adam, Noah and David. The Qur'an is thought by most Muslims to be the very words of God and individual sections were sent down from heaven to Muhammad as they fitted different situations over a twenty-year period. A key difference between Muslim and Christian ideas is that whereas for a Christian the supreme communication of God is in a person, for Muslims it is in a book, so it is more appropriate to compare the Qur'an with the person of Jesus than with the Bible.

Muhammad was born and brought up in Mecca and received his first revelation when he was about forty. When he found he could make no headway with his message in Mecca he fled to Medina in the year 622, also in the Arabian Peninsula, where he set up a community of followers. The Muslim calendar dates from this event. Verses in the Qur'an do not come in chronological order and so Muslim scholars spend considerable effort identifying the context in which they were received. What are seen as Meccan verses often convey spiritual teaching,

such as challenging the idolatry of Muhammad's contemporaries, whereas the Medinan verses have much in the way of practical advice for ordering the community.

So if the Qur'an has little about the life of Muhammad how do we know about him? There are additional collections of stories (*hadith*) about his life and teachings and these were carefully passed down through the generations. The customs (*sunnah*) of the Prophet are seen as a model for ethical behaviour and although there is no suggestion at all that Muhammad was divine, he is held in the utmost honour. Muslims see in his life a model for both spirituality and justice. True worship of God must work itself out in care for others.

Other pillars of Islam as well as prayer are that of charitable giving, fasting, especially the annual fast at Ramadan, and pilgrimage, for all who are able, to Mecca itself where key events in the lives of Abraham, Ishmael and Muhammad took place. The pillars are seen as essentially spiritual disciplines – forgiveness for sins is usually sought on the pilgrimage to Mecca, whilst Ramadan with its very strict fasting reminds the practitioner of how the poor may be hungry and is a spur for raising money for charitable causes, over and above the basic requirement of giving an annual percentage of one's wealth.

Whereas the ideal for all Muslims is that the community is one, in practice as with all religions, divisions have emerged, and it is important to appreciate a few of the basic differences. There are two main, what might be called umbrella groupings, Sunni and Shi'ah each with a variety of traditions within them.

The basic division goes back to the time immediately after the death of Muhammad. He had returned to Mecca in 630 with those who had become Muslims and this time was accepted, setting up Mecca as the centre of prayer, but he died only two years later. The community thought it important to have a successor (*Caliph*) to Muhammad but there was disagreement as to how to choose that person. The majority (Sunni) looked to those who had been companions of the Prophet and to his customs (*sunnah*) including the idea he had taught of the importance of consensus in decision making. A consensus emerged among the majority and the first Caliph Abu Bakr was chosen because of his piety and closeness to the Prophet. Most Muslims in Leicester are Sunni, but this includes different groupings and mosques may well cater either for those of a particular way of practice or whose origin is from particular geographical areas. Two groups in Leicester are the Deobandi and Barelvi both of which trace their origins to particular towns in India in the nineteenth century.

A smaller party (*Shi'ah*) however thought the succession to the Prophet should be through Muhammad's family. He had no direct male heir but the nearest relation was Ali, so the party of Ali (*Shi'at Ali*) was formed, but there was conflict between the two groups.

Standards of ethical and social behaviour are important to Muslims and these standards are expressed in what has been termed *shari'ah*. The outsider might see this as a rigid code of law, but there is much flexibility within the *shari'ah*. The original meaning is a pathway and the word was especially used to describe a pathway through the desert to an oasis seen on the horizon. Thus, it is a help on the way in the spiritual life. There are several

traditional schools of thought within *shari'ah* and individual Muslims are free to choose which school they follow. In Sunni Islam, the role of scholars, often local, is important in helping the ordinary Muslim to apply the teachings to themselves and a scholarly opinion (*fatwa*) may be sought. In Shi'ah Islam there is a more top down hierarchical approach. In the years after Ali there were a number of direct successors who might give rulings for the whole community. Different lines of descent demarked different groupings but following the ending of these lines, the approach of having individual spiritual leaders has continued. More conservative Sunnis see the elevation of an individual as against the spirit of Islam which is based on the equality of all before God.

One other important group which has also influenced others such as the Barelvi are the Sufis. Sufism is primarily a movement which encourages a mystical approach in prayer, but teaches various practices, such as the remembrance of the presence of God by the constant repetition of his name, or by music or dance. There are many Sufi orders who usually follow the teaching of a well-known spiritual guide, often referred to as Shaykh. The graves of such guides, who are seen very much as saints may become centres of pilgrimage, though some more conservative Muslims do not approve of this practice.

One of the greatest is the thirteenth century poet Rumi, whose shrine in Konya (Iconium) in Turkey I was privileged to visit with a group of Christians and Muslims in 2007. Quotations from his poetry were commonly on display. Perhaps most well known is his call to the love of God:

*Come, come, whoever you are,  
wanderer, worshiper, lover of leaving,  
it doesn't matter.  
Ours is not a caravan of despair.  
Come, even if you have broken your vow a hundred times.  
Come, come again, come.*

But going back through various quotations I wonder if the following is particularly apt for our times?

*Accepting everything as truth is foolishness,  
But assuming everything as false is tyranny!*

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*The etiquette in visiting a mosque is to dress modestly, wearing long loose garments and be prepared to cover your head. As you enter remove shoes whilst still on the mat at the door (it is usually big enough to accommodate this) so that you do not step onto the carpet with shoes on. There are usually racks where they can be placed. Stand at the back or side of the prayer hall whilst prayers take place. Avoid sitting with your feet in the direction of prayer.*

*It is best to arrange a visit in advance, but mosques also often have open days when you can just turn up.*

# Life in Lockdown

Vicky Roe writes ...



When the national lockdown was introduced in Britain on 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2020, I felt something of a shock, even though the rising number of infections and the action taken by other countries had indicated that such a measure might become necessary here. Overnight everything stopped or closed down, except essential services. The streets and skies were eerily quiet. Social interaction was restricted to electronic methods only. This experience gave me a deeper insight into the plight of Christians living in the many countries where meeting together for worship is difficult or impossible, faith in Jesus can lead to persecution and often must be kept secret for fear of being killed. The loss of freedom makes us value it all the more.

Living behind St. James the Greater Church, I felt like an anchorite, connected to the church but unable to enter it. So I adopted the practices of an anchorite, structuring my day around praying the Daily Office, reading, Bible study, work and music, but with the added benefits of being able to go out for walks or to the shops. At first, I found Sundays the most difficult, since that was when I would have met many people, so I felt their absence more acutely on that day. Once online services were established by cathedrals and churches, I kept Sunday special by joining in the services from Guildford Cathedral and Leicester Cathedral and St. James Church, as well as broadcasts on TV and radio.

As Pastoral Assistant, it pained me to be unable to fulfil my ministry of visiting and taking Home Communion to others. I tried to support them with telephone calls and information about the church, particularly for those who were not able to access the Internet provision. The Church of England's 'Daily Hope' Freephone telephone line (0800 804 8044) proved to be a real blessing to many of them and to me as well. I also made a ministry out of smiling and saying 'Good morning' or 'Good afternoon' to people during my exercise walks on Victoria Park, because I thought if they lived alone, that might be the only human contact they had all day. Most of the people responded positively, if they didn't have headphones in their ears!

The large amount of extra time has allowed me to catch up on the summer cleaning and many of the 'C' category jobs that had been waiting, in some cases years, to be done. I have also listened to more music on the radio, have done a lot more piano practice and singing to keep my voice in shape, in the hope that one day we will be allowed to sing again in churches. I have also kept track of the Covid-19 statistics and been saddened by the suffering and loss, including to people I know personally.

With the diary largely being a blank and few things to look forward to, I have found it easier to be 'in the moment' and live one day at a time. Indeed, I try not to think too much

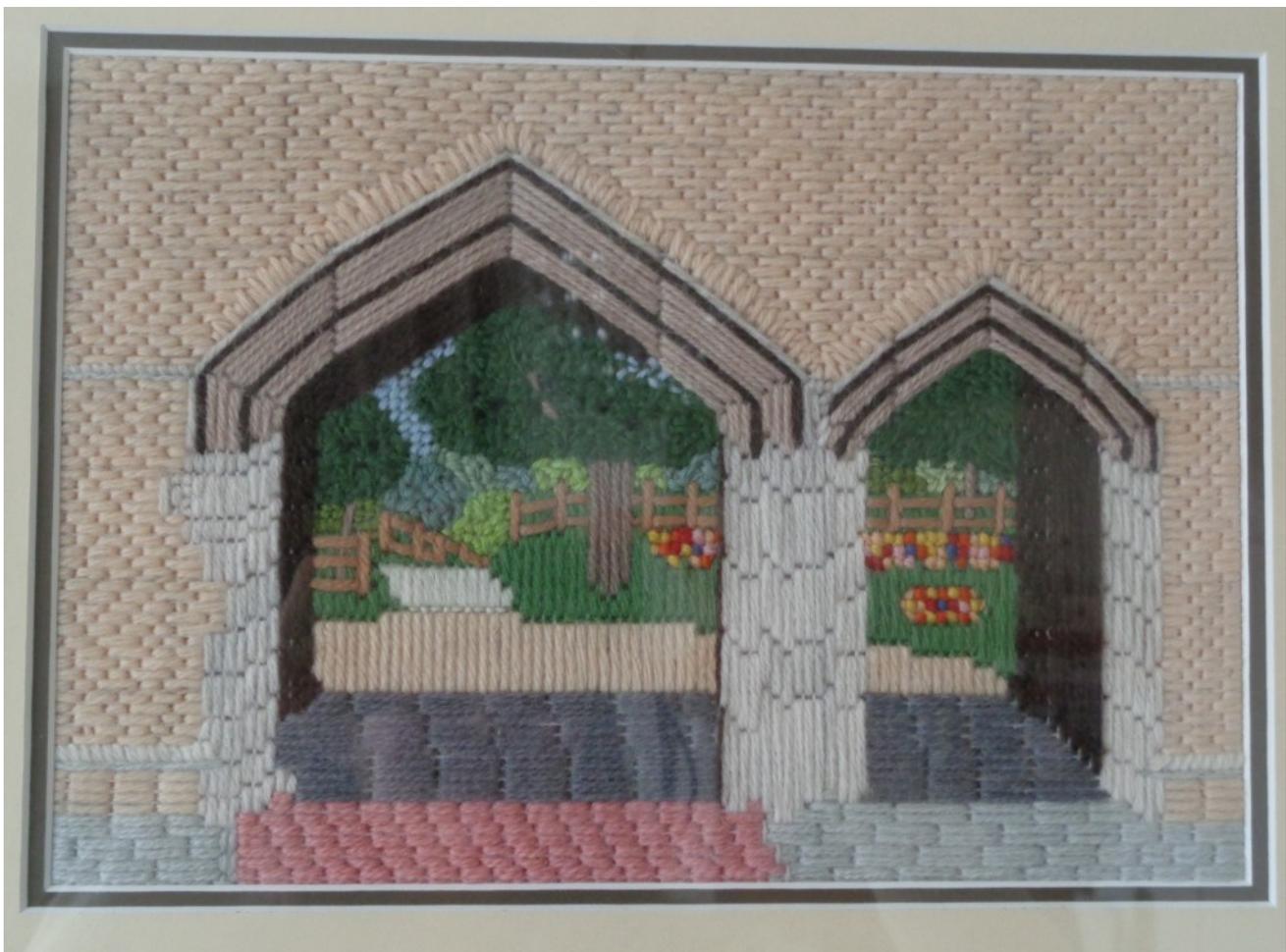
about what the future may hold, to avoid catastrophizing and the risk of falling into depression. Being grateful for what God has given me each day keeps me sane – the beauty of nature, the birds and flowers in my garden, music to lift my spirits, the contacts from family and friends concerned for my welfare.

Every pandemic in history has changed society in some way – the Black Death in the mid-14<sup>th</sup> Century brought an end to the Feudal system – and I have no doubt that Coronavirus will bring changes, too. What they will all be is impossible to say yet.

Some years ago, I went on an ‘Embroidery and Prayer’ retreat at Bishop Woodford House in Ely. Whilst there, I designed and made a tapestry picture of the Porta, the huge gateway into the medieval

buildings around the Cathedral. From outside, it is not possible to see what lies beyond the pathway under the gate and down into the parkland. Only by traversing it does the view open out and the direction become clear, with the Cathedral to the left and the path leading down to the river ahead. That image seems to me like a symbol of our current situation as we come out of lockdown and move into the next phase of this Coronavirus pandemic.

We do not know the future, but we do know the One who holds the future, the One who is “the Alpha and the Omega, who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty” (Revelation 1:8). He is also the One who promised, “I am with you always, to the very end of the age.” (Matthew 28:20)



# Memories of Japan

**The Very Reverend Derek Hole, Provost Emeritus of Leicester, recounts his memories of VJ Day**



Like many of you, I watched the service to mark the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of VJ Day. I had very good reasons for doing so, one of which was associated with St James the Greater. As most of you know, I was born and brought up in Plymouth and have vivid memories of the War, particularly the blitz. When it was over, including war with Japan in the August of 1945, our next door neighbour returned home, having been a prisoner-of-war in Japan. Early on he called to see my father. Instead of sitting in a chair I remember him sitting down on his haunches, for he had been forced to spend a lot of time as a prisoner in that position. He had been very badly treated by the Japanese. I never saw him again, for he died shortly after his visit to our home.

We skip the years. My sister's father-in-law, Harold Herman, had also been a prisoner of the Japanese. He was a Chief Petty Officer on HMS Repulse, which had been sent to Singapore. The ship did not have modern anti-aircraft guns and succumbed to numerous torpedo and bomb attacks. The ship sank, turning turtle, and Harold broke his leg before landing in the water. He was picked up by one of the escorting destroyers and returned to Singapore. He was in the hospital with his leg in plaster when Singapore surrendered to the Japanese. The Japanese

troops entered the hospital and bayoneted to death all the doctors, nurses and patients in the first ward they came across. They entered the second ward where Harold was a patient and started to do the same. However, for some unknown reason, they stopped and Harold Herman was able to continue his recovery. As soon as his leg had healed he was sent north to work on the infamous Burma Siam railway. It was Japan's intention to build a railway to enable them to invade Burma and India. The conditions the prisoners worked under were appalling. They worked from dawn to dusk in unspeakable heat with one cup of rice a day and water obtained from drains or rivers. Men were falling ill through malnutrition, many of whom died. John's mother did not know whether her husband had been killed when the ship went down in the fighting for Singapore before the surrender. Although very ill, John's father Harold was one of the fortunate ones who did survive and he was sent to Poona, a hill station in India, to recuperate. This meant that he did not return to the United Kingdom until the beginning of 1946. All the women in the street gave their food rations to the couple so Harold's wife could try to build her husband up. Unfortunately that was the worst thing that could have happened because his body could

not tolerate much food, and Harold Herman became very ill. He was taken to a hospital for tropical diseases in Dorset where he made a full recovery. His son John was born after the war and married my sister in 1974. They have two delightful sons whom some of you have met.

When I became Vicar of St James the Greater in 1973, one of the many people I met was Frank Barfoot. He was a committed member of the congregation and came to Evensong each Sunday evening. He was not an easy person and always ready to pick an argument with me. Over a period of time I got to know him and a lot about him. He, too, had been a prisoner-of-war of the Japanese for three and a half years and was mentally affected by what had happened to him and what he saw happen to others, including the Japanese guards crucifying a prisoner! Frank had also worked on the infamous Burma railway and returned home a physical and mental wreck. His wife Vera did not recognise him when she went to meet him and take him home. He told me that through all that he went through he hung on to God and his faith. But his mind had been terribly affected and relationships became difficult. I was at the receiving end of those situations more times than I care to remember. The effect of persecution during those three and a half years never left him and the persecution

complex would rear its ugly head from time to time and his tortured mind would overflow into all other relationships and nothing would be right and nobody would be right. He clung on to his faith during those difficult years and the Services at St James the Greater brought him much consolation.

Bearing all this in mind I decided that I would spend my last fortnight as Provost of Leicester in Japan, to see the something of the country and meet the people. Through Bishop Richard Rutt the Diocese had twinned with Yokohama and, while visiting, I preached in the Cathedral there. Among the places I visited were Tokyo, and Nagasaki where the second atomic bomb had been dropped. Wherever I went I was received with great courtesy, kindness, and generous hospitality, a very different Japan from those dreadful war years. The visit brought healing to my mind, remembering what had happened to the three people I have mentioned in this article.

We must never forget the past, nor the men who died at Japanese hands during the war and their families, too. That is why the remembrance was so meaningful on Sunday 16 August, in the presence of the Prince of Wales and the Duchess of Cornwall. As people say, 'you have to move on'. But we must never forget, and must pray that such a situation will never arise again.

# Calendar of Services and Events

Until the COVID-19 situation becomes clearer up-to-date service information can be found on the weekly newssheet on the website

[www.stjamesthegreater.org.uk](http://www.stjamesthegreater.org.uk) which is updated every Friday.

## *Commemorative Flowers*



It is hoped that the St James's tradition of donating commemorative flowers will resume later in the year.

## What's on ...

**The following regular events are temporarily suspended until the COVID-19 lockdown is lifted.**

<b>Sundays</b>	Sunday Club in school term time Contact: Church Office	10.30	Hall
<b>Sunday</b>	Coffee Organiser: Liz Turner		Hall
<b>Thursdays</b>	St James's Singers Director: Michael Rule	19.30 alternate Thursdays	Ashman Music Room
<b>Fridays</b>	Boys' and Girls' Choir Practice Full Choir Practice Director: Matthew Haynes	18.00 19.30	Ashman Music Room

## Who's who ...

<b>Churchwardens</b>	Simon Edwards	Phil Jones
<b>Deputy Wardens</b>	Janet Burton Paul Jenkins	David Kibert April Rule
<b>Church Administrator</b>	Annabel Cowley	<a href="mailto:office@stjamesthegreater.org.uk">office@stjamesthegreater.org.uk</a>
<b>Treasurer</b>	Alastair Jackson	<a href="mailto:office@stjamesthegreater.org.uk">office@stjamesthegreater.org.uk</a>
<b>Director of Music</b>	Matthew Haynes	<a href="mailto:dom@stjamesthegreater.org.uk">dom@stjamesthegreater.org.uk</a>
<b>Organist and Associate Director of Music</b>	Michael Rule	<a href="mailto:organist@stjamesthegreater.org.uk">organist@stjamesthegreater.org.uk</a>
<b>Flower Guild Coordinator</b>	Julia Walker	<a href="mailto:juliabentom350@outlook.com">juliabentom350@outlook.com</a>
<b>Parish Safeguarding Officer</b>	Vicky Roe	<a href="mailto:pastoral.assistant@stjamesthegreater.org.uk">pastoral.assistant@stjamesthegreater.org.uk</a> 0116 255 2108
<b>Head Server</b>	Emma-Jane Hunt	<a href="mailto:ej_finn00@hotmail.com">ej_finn00@hotmail.com</a>
<b>The Shell Editor</b>	Graham Jagger	<a href="mailto:editor@stjamesthegreater.org.uk">editor@stjamesthegreater.org.uk</a>
<b>Bldg Services Coordinator</b>	Tony Chizema	<a href="mailto:bsc@stjamesthegreater.org.uk">bsc@stjamesthegreater.org.uk</a> 07852 161337