

# St Helen's Magazine

February 2021



St Helen's Church

Ashby-de-la-Zouch



Loving God, loving others, loving the world

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## Editor Writes ...

I wonder why when we feel sad we feel blue? I've been reading about some scientists who unexpectedly created a new blue pigment a few years ago, with which they were well-pleased even though they called it the rather uninspiring YInMn. Understandably, when Crayola decided to include it in the crayons they manufacture, they held a competition to rename it – it is now known as 'Bluetiful'. AYFC's team aren't feeling blue or seeing red, despite so much which is unexpected. Read about some of the bluetiful things they're up to on page 30. Anyone for pond tennis?



It's a good job this new blue wasn't discovered thousands of years ago because ancient languages, including Greek and Hebrew, didn't have a word for blue. Apparently it's been found that in every language studied around the world, the first colour words are for black and for white, or dark and light. Universally, the next word for a colour to come into existence was red, the colour of blood and wine.

After red, yellow appears, and later, green (though in a couple of languages, yellow and green switch places). The last primary colour to appear in every language is blue. So from studying ancient texts it can seem like colours came into existence over time. However, what probably happened is that it's our ability to notice them which develops over time. The theory is that because blue doesn't appear much in nature there was no word for it, and without a word for it people didn't naturally see it. This feels like the kind of confounding of accepted wisdoms we hear each week on TV's QI programme. Wendy Freer has an unexpected tale to tell on page 12. And our Archbishops are asking people without a faith to pray - see page 28.

There's been another exciting colour discovery in the news recently - some fragments of fabric dyed with royal purple dating from the time of King David and King Solomon have been found in southern Israel. Radiocarbon dating has confirmed them to be from approximately 1000 BC. The remnants were discovered in the Timna Valley, an ancient copper production district where jewellery finds might have been a more likely discovery - see a piece of jewellery which has its own remarkable story on page 14.

Purple cloth would have been very prestigious, not only because of its beauty and its resistance to fading, but also because of the process of manufacture - the dye is found in minute quantities in the bodies of molluscs which live in the Mediterranean, more than 180 miles from Timna. This most highly-valued of all dyes often cost more than gold. On page 16 Jen Gilchrist reminds us how small acts of kindness can be more precious than gold, and Revd Mary is considering the golden moments which can hearten us overleaf.

*Jill Chapman*



# Revd Mary Writes ...

**D**ear Friends

I am writing to you very nearly at the 11th hour - at 6pm on 31<sup>st</sup> January - having just come in from yet another dog-walk-in-the-dark (poor Freya). The trouble is that the daylight is so fleeting at this time of year that, by the time I've finished work for the day, the sun has set and the town is blanketed in dark once again.

This evening, though, I noticed a difference, at the beginning of my walk, at least. For when I set out just before 5pm it wasn't quite dark; a line of brightness still highlighting the horizon. And that wasn't all I noticed, for in the loamy duvet at the foot of my neighbours' hedges and softening the bases of the gravestones in St Helen's churchyards - snowdrops!

How heartening both of these sights were - the day, not quite extinguished; the triumph of the tiny flowers over the apparent stranglehold of winter. Both said: 'This darkness, this cold, will not have the final



word. This is not over. This is *to be continued*.'

February, of course, *is* still winter. It can be bitterly-cold. Some days, the darkness barely seems to go off shift. And yet in small, quiet ways, it beckons us forward; promises us longer days; brighter gardens; the return of ebullient birdsong. February's defiant message is '*to be continued*....'

How much we need to remember this now, in the umpteenth week of lockdown, in this life-interrupted: that this is a pause, not an ending; an interval between acts, not curtain-down. Yes, we still have some weeks to go before we are completely through this pandemic - difficult weeks for most, tragic weeks for many - and yet progress is being made; more people are being vaccinated; more vaccines are being approved. Our life together, in such hiatus now, is not over but, *to be continued*.

Many years ago now - perhaps as many as twenty - my best friend and I were out shopping just before Easter and both bought several copies of the same Easter card. The illustration was of three empty crosses on the skyline and a little placard in front which read 'To be continued.'

It reminded us both of the hope and the triumph of the Christian story: that just when the world seems darkest, when the loss seems greatest, when the defeat feels final, the odds overwhelming - then it is not 'The End' but 'to be continued.' We may feel like we're living on Good Friday but - resurrection Sunday's coming!

My friends, take heart. Scan February's horizon for the lengthening of the light, look in the hedgerows and in the branches for Spring's advance-party. Defy the darkness, challenge the lie that we are never going to emerge from this. Let this be our battle-cry: 'To be continued!'

Much love

**Mary**

## David's Crown

**I**n last month's magazine we had an article about poet Malcolm Guite's latest poetry collection, David's Crown. In his blog he has written of how, since its publication he has had a number of enquiries about the symbolism in the cover illustration. It is by the same artist, Rebecca Merry, who did the cover for another collection of Malcolm Guite's poetry, called Sounding the Seasons. David's Crown is subtitled 'Sounding the Psalms' and the poet sees them as companion volumes, both being a sequence of poems, one in response to the full circle of the Christian Year from Advent to the feast of Christ the King, the other taking you through the complete cycle of the 150 psalms.

In making the new design for David's Crown Guite asked the artist to



reprise some of the motifs used in the earlier design, but also to add some new ones concentrating particularly on the *Corona Spinea*, the crown of thorns. Guite says the illustration represents Christ's passion and compassion with us in our own Corona crisis, but also blossoming into roses, the sign of his eternal love.

There is also a motif of prayer beads in the design, comprising five 'decades' or groups of 10 beads. This was included because the original chaplets or 'coronas' of beads were first used in the early church for counting off the psalms themselves, or short prayers based on the psalms, before they later became associated with Mary and became the 'rosary'. In David's Crown the poems are what the poet describes as 'a corona of psalm-prayer-poems - a new psalmic rosary, each poem a fingered bead of prayer'.

The cover design also alludes to King David - the wounded hands at each side of the Sounding the Seasons design have become David's hands in the new design, one holding a lyre, the other a sceptre with the star of David.

There is also going to be a launch event/webinar of Malcolm Guite's new book on Feb 11<sup>th</sup> at 7pm. It will be completely free and you can register for it at <https://canterburypress.hymnsam.co.uk/events>





## February Shopping List

- . Sponge puddings- longlife
- . Tinned potatoes
- . Tinned Vegetables
- . Tinned custard
- . Coffee
- . Tea
- . UHT milk particularly full fat and semi skimmed
- . Chocolate treats such as penguins, clubs etc
- . Squash

**At present we do not need Tinned Soup or Pasta**

To donate:

Items can be left in the boxes in the porches of Holy Trinity, the Congregational Church, the Co-ops throughout Tamworth, or Sainsburies in Melbourne.

Opening times:

Tues -9.30am to 11.30am at Ashby Congregational church  
Thurs - 9.30am to 11.30am at St Stephen's church Woodville  
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**Thank you for your support.**

**Chris Lewis**

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## Archbishop of Canterbury receives Covid-19 vaccine

The Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby received his first dose of the Covid-19 vaccine in mid January. He was eligible to receive the vaccine as a healthcare chaplaincy volunteer at the central London St Thomas' Hospital, which is just opposite his Lambeth palace official residence. He has been volunteering at the hospital during the pandemic, offering spiritual care and support to patients, staff and visitors as part of the NHS chaplaincy team.

Archbishop Justin said, "I want to encourage everyone to get the Covid-19 vaccine when they are invited. Staff across the NHS, and health workers across the world, are under immense pressure on the front lines of this pandemic. They deserve not just our admiration but our support – and getting the vaccine when we have the opportunity is something we can all do to help relieve the burden on them."



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# Christian Aid's Prophetic Activist Scheme

The Prophetic Activist Scheme is currently recruiting its next group of participants. This is a scheme which is aimed at equipping young adult Christians (aged 18 - 30) in campaigning and activism, particularly on issues of climate justice, working, as they describe it, 'in solidarity with the world's poorest and most vulnerable.' This is done by means of a 9 month programme which includes, amongst other things, mentoring by experienced campaigners, two weekends away (online), and regular webinars to build skills. Participants also explore such things as the Biblical call to live justly and righteously, how to speak truth to power, and ways of fighting against poverty. Anyone who wishes to apply can do so on-line at [www.christianaid.org.uk/get-involved/campaigns/propheticactivist#](http://www.christianaid.org.uk/get-involved/campaigns/propheticactivist#)

The 2020 cohort of Prophetic Activists' training culminated in them taking part in a climate justice campaign calling the government to stop funding fossil fuels, and calling for the end of fossil fuel extraction by 2021. As well as awareness-raising they, along with Campaigners from CAFOD, Friends of the Earth, Tearfund, Global Justice Now, and Oil Change International, delivered a petition of over 71,000 names to Downing Street at the beginning of December.

Currently, British taxpayers' money is being used to fund fossil fuel 'dirty energy' overseas. While richer countries such as the UK are switching to cleaner, renewable energy at home, they are, at the same time, propping up fossil fuel expansion in poorer nations. The UK department of Export Finance increased its funding of overseas fossil fuel projects to £2bn in 2018, which was eleven times greater than in 2017. This funding means that the communities who are already living with the consequences of the climate crisis will, in addition, face the problems increased fossil fuel extraction brings.



# The Ashby Elections Riot of 1865 - Part 1

If you thought the recent riots in Washington over election results could never have happened here – read on!

Before the General Election of December 1918, polling in the UK did not take place on one day only. In 1865 Polling took place between 11<sup>th</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> July.

Three candidates were standing for the two seats available in the North Leicestershire Division. Charles Frewen, Conservative, Lord John Manners (of Belvoir Castle, later became Duke of Rutland ), Conservative, and Edward Hartopp, Conservative. So, not much of a choice you might think, but more of them next month.

On Monday 24<sup>th</sup> July, the polling booths were set up in Ashby Town Hall, referred to in one newspaper as “the market shambles”. No disturbance was expected in this “usually quiet town” and so only six or eight police officers were on duty.

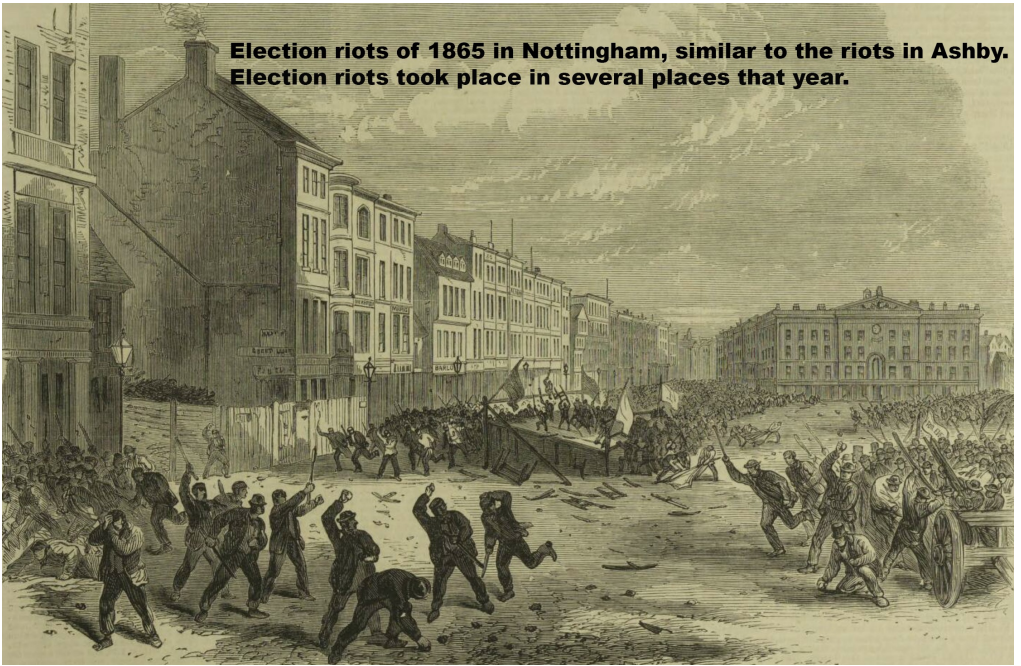
A crowd of people came into the town who were described in the Nottingham Guardian as “a host of roughs from the colliery districts, many supposed to belong to Swadlincote, and who had participated in a like disturbance at that place on Saturday last, when the polling for South Derbyshire took place.”

Unlike today, the ballot was not secret and votes were counted and made public at intervals during the day. By ten o’ clock in the morning, the mob’s preferred candidate, Charles Frewen, was lagging behind in the polls. The mob, many of whom were said to have been in a “staggering state of intoxication”, gathered in front of the Town Hall and began shouting “Frewen for ever!”. They yelled and hooted at those coming to vote for Manners and Hartopp (the ballot wasn’t secret remember), shook their fists in the faces of those arriving in carriages and tore placards off the walls. The police, under the command of Inspector Ward, tried to put a stop to the disturbance, but the unruly crowd then began throwing stones. The market hall had a glass roof and the people at the polling booths had to run to protect themselves from injury.

The crowd then turned their attention to Rev Greasley of Coleorton who was coming to vote, and he had to take refuge in a nearby house. The crowd surrounded the house, smashed windows and demanded that Rev Greasley be given up to them. He managed to escape to Mr Grundy’s shop and then through “a back way to the workhouse, where he remained in perfect safety until late in the evening.”

Meanwhile, the police had managed to disperse the mob but it was reinforced by some “most desperate characters” who arrived shouting and

**Election riots of 1865 in Nottingham, similar to the riots in Ashby. Election riots took place in several places that year.**



throwing stones in all directions. A carriage, belonging to a Mr Worthington of Newton Park, Burton on Trent, arrived, pulled by four horses and with two postilions wearing blue jackets. They tried to enter the town by driving past the fountain (on the Bath Grounds?) to the back part of the town, but the crowd rushed through various passages to surround and attack the drivers. The horses “reared and plunged in a frightful manner”. One broke loose and ran off; the other three ran away with the carriage towards Smisby but all were stopped and brought back.

The rioters then returned to Market Street and resumed their stone throwing, hitting several policemen and others on the head and causing serious injuries. Some of the rioters armed themselves with staves, pieces of rope, mops and broom handles and began fighting the police. Others appeared at the windows of public houses and threw brick ends, ginger-beer and other glass bottles onto the heads of police and others below. Missiles were flung at police from entries so that the force then directed their attention to chasing the “ruffians” through the yards.

Inspector Ward then telegraphed Mr Goodyer, chief constable, asking for reinforcements. Eventually these arrived from a variety of sources, Loughborough, Leicester, Derby, Wooden Box, Syston and Chesterfield, amounting to about 60 officers in total. The Leicester contingent arrived at about 5pm by a special train arranged by Mr Goodyer and more from elsewhere arrived around 7pm and 9pm. A small group from Derby got out by mistake at Moira and had to come on from there. When the Leicester

men arrived, they were formed up to make a “grand assault” in Market Street. Serious fighting broke out with “many persons being hurt and much blood spilt”.

Around 9pm, magistrates ordered the police to clear the streets and public houses before darkness came, and this they managed to do. A police officer was posted at the end of every entry and a line of officers stood at the top of Market Street. They made a charge down the street, driving the mob before them and by eleven o'clock quietness prevailed.

Polling resumed at 10 am the next day with around 100 police officers in attendance, but there was no more trouble and only a few voters turned up. The Leicester police left by the 6.20pm train and some of the county force were withdrawn later in the evening.

Next month, read more about what the candidates had stood for that caused so much trouble, and what happened to the rioters later.

**Wendy Freer**

## The Hill We Climb

**I**n last month's magazine we read about the African American poet, Paul Laurence Dunbar, and learnt that he wrote the famous line, “I know why the caged bird sings”, better known as the title of the first volume of autobiography of poet Maya Angelou.

On 20<sup>th</sup> January, many of us sat entranced by another young African American poet, who was performing the poem she'd written for the inauguration of President Joe Biden. And you may have noticed the very striking ring she was wearing on her right hand – it was in the shape of a caged bird.

The poet was 22 year old Amanda Gorman, the USA's first-ever youth poet laureate. She delivered her work, *The Hill We Climb*, to the dignitaries present in Washington DC and a watching global audience, becoming the youngest poet ever to perform at a presidential inauguration. The poem itself was strong, poignant, and





beautifully paced, and she suddenly found herself quite a celebrity. She has three books topping bestseller lists - even though one of them isn't expected to be released until September.

It wasn't just the poem itself which attracted praise and admiration, but her commanding delivery of it. So it's surprising to discover that up until a few years ago she struggled to overcome a speech impediment. For much of her life, including when she was still an undergraduate at Harvard, Gorman had trouble pronouncing the letter "R." She has explained how music from the hit musical Hamilton helped her to overcome it - she'd listen on repeat to, and rap along with, the song "Aaron Burr, Sir" because she said it was "packed with 'R's"

Overcoming a speech impediment is something she shares with the new American President.

Gorman finished writing the poem on the night of January 6<sup>th</sup>, after a mob of Trump supporters stormed the U.S. Capitol. She included a reference to Micah 4:4, which says 'Everyone will sit under their own vine and under their own fig tree, and no one will make them afraid.'

The full poem is too long to be included here, but this is how it begins:

When day comes we ask ourselves,  
where can we find light in this never-ending shade?  
The loss we carry,  
a sea we must wade  
We've braved the belly of the beast  
We've learned that quiet isn't always peace  
And the norms and notions  
of what just is  
Isn't always just-ice

And here is the beautiful final stanza

When day comes we step out of the shade,  
afame and unafraid  
The new dawn blooms as we free it  
For there is always light,  
if only we're brave enough to see it  
If only we're brave enough to be it

To see Amanda Gorman delivering the full five minutes of the entire poem at the inauguration, go to <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jp9pyMqnBzk>

**Jill Chapman**

# When the Song of the Angels Is Stilled

by Howard Thurman

When the song of the angels is stilled,  
When the star in the sky is gone,  
When the kings and the princes are home,  
When the shepherds are back with their flocks,  
The work of Christmas begins:  
To find the lost,  
To heal the broken,  
To feed the hungry,  
To release the prisoner,  
To rebuild the nations,  
To bring peace among people,  
To make music in the heart.

## The Servant Heart

On one of the occasions I moved away from Ashby I went to work on Salisbury Plain. I was part of a GP surgery where I worked as a Health Care Assistant whilst I waited for my re-registration with the Nursing and Midwifery Council. I was working with and for friends who were also part of a small charismatic house church, and to start with I lived in community with them in their house. The original suggestion was that I could rent a cottage just down the road which they were doing up for a young couple in the church who were about to get married but when that fell through I thought I should find somewhere else by myself.

I happened on a little cottage in the Woodford Valley with the River Avon flowing past the back door. It was unfurnished so I transported my furniture down to Wiltshire, (which turned out to be an extremely traumatic venture which is too long a tale to go into for this piece). Finally getting the contents into the house at around midnight.

The next morning I discovered that the washing machine had been put in to the space under the worktop in the kitchen but was jammed on the lino underneath. It was not plugged in, and stuck out at an angle into the fairly small kitchen making an obstacle, which was neither useful nor decorative.

The next day I mentioned this at work. My friend said “ Oh one of the boys could come and help you” and my heart sang. But day after day nothing happened. I was unable to wash my clothes, it was difficult to negotiate around it, and it was completely immovable without another pair of hands.

The following week I mentioned this to another colleague who was not part

of the church. “Oh Stu and I can come tomorrow and help you” was her instant response. The next day they turned up. Stu was a long distance lorry driver who with a quick shove moved the immovable object, plumbed it in and moved it back under the work counter. I had never met him before, I had worked with his wife for a couple of months, but they were not ‘ friends’, (though they became so!)

On my return to Ashby I was glad to be reunited with my friends both at St. Helen’s and in the town. There was a new couple who had arrived at church. I did not know them particularly well but one day the man observed that he had seen me up a step ladder in my front garden trimming my hedge and told me I shouldn’t do that without someone hold the ladder. I was about to explain that there wasn’t anyone else in the house who could do that when he said “Next time you need to trim the hedge let me know and I’ll come and hold it for you”. Thank you Alan Sedgman. R.I.P.

**Jen Gilchrist**



And I have been a constant example of how you can help those in need by working hard. You should remember the words of the Lord Jesus: ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive.’  
Acts of the Apostles 20:35 NLT

# Our Worship



We worship together on-line via Facebook on the Flagstaff Family of Churches' page.

You can catch up with all our services later, on the St Helen's Church website ([www.sthelensashby.net](http://www.sthelensashby.net)), simply by clicking on the relevant date on the Online Services and Readings page, under the Church Life tab.

All the services we have had since the initial lockdown began in March 2020 are still available!

Orders of service for the acts of worship, and a hymn sheet for each Sunday service, are available on the same website page.

## Service Pattern

### Tuesdays and Thursdays

8am Prayer for the Day—our current theme is 'Desert Island Hymns'

### Wednesdays

10am Holy Communion (Live)

### Sundays

10.30am Holy Communion (Live)

### Saturdays



A simple time of prayer and Bible reading on Zoom at 9.30am for 45 minutes.

The Zoom link is <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86050040052?pwd=TDUrVEdBbHFTVTh3MWxMQUw1VEZOUT09>

## Coming up in February

### 7<sup>th</sup> February

10.30am Revd Mary leads an All-Age worship intriguingly titled 'Hundreds and Thousands' - it includes a shout-out for anyone who has a birthday in January or February so let Revd Mary know in advance

4.00pm Revd Rob leads a simple service of Holy Communion on the Flagstaff Family of Churches Facebook page

# Lent 2021

## Ash Wednesday

10am Holy Communion (Live on Facebook)

7.30pm Holy Communion (Live on Facebook)

## Sundays & Tuesdays

During Lent we will be asking ourselves the questions, 'What is the church? What is it for?'

~Sunday Sermons

Each week one of our preachers will take a different image for the church and explore it

~Team Talk Tuesdays (Lent Course) -

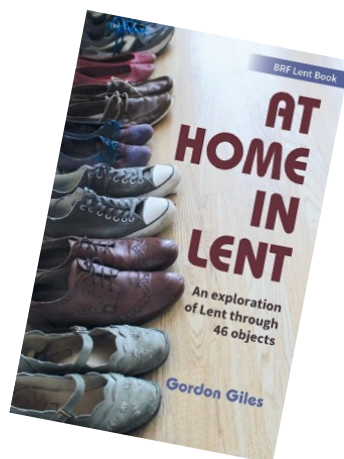
Each following Tuesday from 7.30-9.00pm, we'll dig deeper into that topic together through Bible study, discussion, prayer and worship.

The sessions are:

- Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> and Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> February -  
The Bride of Christ - a worshipping community
- Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> and Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> March -  
The Body of Christ - an active community
- Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> and Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> March -  
The Family of Christ - a supportive community
- Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> and Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> March -  
The Servant of Christ - a serving community
- Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> and Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> March -  
The Herald of Christ - a proclaiming community

## Daily reflections

Recommended reading is 'At Home in Lent: an exploration of Lent through 46 objects' by Gordon Giles. There is a reading for each day in Lent, inspired by an object from the home.



# Going Shopping in Ashby

Did you know that it's still possible to support the local small businesses of Ashby, even though they, and you, are locked down? Many of them have websites, and it is even possible to have a virtual experience of browsing shop windows, by going to the Ashby Market Street Online page of Facebook. Our favourite fair-trade shop, Fair2All, is one of the shops you can find there, and you'll see that Mandy has some wonderful bamboo socks in all sorts of exciting designs just now.



## More News of Bishop Guli

Bishop Guli Francis-Dehqani will be the Church of England's new Bishop for Housing. Two years ago Archbishop Justin Welby set up a commission to explore how the Church can help resolve our housing crisis and strengthen our communities. That commission will report in late February. Bishop Guli will take up the new role later this year when she becomes Bishop of Chelmsford.

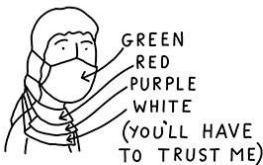
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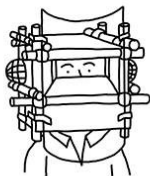
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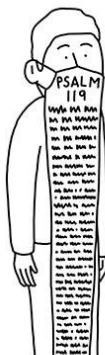
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# Together @ Lent

It is traditional to give something up for Lent. This year why not take something up instead with our Together at Lent challenge. Take on one of these challenges for each of the 40 days of Lent (take a day off each Sunday!) and commit to spending time together as a family with God.

You can complete them in any order and colour them in as you go.

Read a favourite Bible story.	Look through family photos together. Thank God for the happy memories.	Encourage one another with kind words.	Phone a family friend and remind them they are loved!	Pray for your friends.	Play a board game together.	Write a letter of encouragement to somebody in your church.	Be still before God.
Pray for your teachers.	Plant some seeds together.	Spend some time waiting and listening to God together.	Pray for another country.	Wash one another's feet	Build a den together and hang out with God.	Dance to a favourite worship song.	Use toys to act out a story from the Bible.
Sing a favourite worship song together.	Pray for your neighbours.	Give a gift to bless somebody.	Have a Bible race – who can find John 3:16 the fastest?	Draw a picture of a perfect world.	Pray for keyworkers.	Play hide and seek together.	Go for a walk in God's wonderful creation.
Draw a picture of Jesus.	Act out a story from the Bible together.	Memorise a Bible verse together.	Pray for the government and those in power.	Put an encouraging message for others in your window.	Encourage one another with words of truth.	Donate to and pray for your local food bank.	Make a joyful noise to the Lord!
Share your hopes and dreams for 2021.	Pray for your church leaders.	Pray with another family via video call.	Give to and pray for the work of a charity.	Read a Psalm.	Write a letter of encouragement to someone who blesses you.	Pray for one another.	Write a song together.

# Changemakers Conference: Real People, Real Change

Christian Aid are holding a new online Conference this year, ahead of their annual Christian Aid week in May. It will be on the 22<sup>nd</sup> to 26<sup>th</sup> February, and its aim is to help equip and inspire supporters. There'll be a range of sessions to opt into at the time or to watch later.

On the next few pages is an overview of the sessions. To book, please go to <https://www.christianaid.org.uk/get-involved/events/changemakers-conference-programme> and find the session. Click on the Green "Register" button and follow the steps

	Monday 22 <sup>nd</sup>
To Start the day 8.45am	
Morning 10.00am	
Lunchtime 12.00 midday	<b>Conference Launch – Changemakers Real People, Real Change 1 hr (Paul Furbey)</b> Changemaker – Simply put: a <b>person</b> who takes creative action to solve a social problem. Can you help change the world in 2021? Hear directly from our partners in Kenya, hear how they're making lasting change. Find out how you can support them. Hear how you can be a changemaker in 2021. Come along to our conference launch and meet. Real people, Real change.
Early Afternoon 2.00pm	<b>Just Scripture: 1.5hrs (Brad Frey) (60 max)</b> Just Scripture connects communities from across the world online, to dialogue about a passage of Scripture and how it can equip and inspire them to take action on injustice
Late Afternoon 4.00pm	<b>Getting the most out of digital fundraising: 1.5 hours (Chris Morris)</b> We know how much you've adapted to help us in these strange times and moved quickly to use a range of our digital fundraising platforms and opportunities. This session will aim to equip you with all the key skills and knowledge you need to ace your use of social media, e-envelope, Facebook Fundraising and even create simple digital content! We'll also give an overview of how the CA team goes about its digital fundraising across the year - to give you some top tips from other tools and channels you might like to try. And we'll give you a view to the future and what our fundraising might look like over the next few years
Evening 7.30pm	<b>Supporting Christian Aid in Emergencies 1.5 hrs (Atim Henshaw and Bex Turner)</b> Join us as we discuss the impact of our emergency response to disasters worldwide and how you can get involved.

Tuesday 23 <sup>rd</sup>	Wednesday 24 <sup>th</sup>
<b>Prayer for climate: 30mins (Sarah Rowe)</b> Part of the prayer chain for climate justice	<b>Prayer with our partners: 30mins (Brad Frey)</b> Connecting with Christian Aid partners in prayer
<b>The Kingdom of God and the Power and Meaning of the Prophetic Gesture: 1.5 hrs Dr Mark Johnson – (max 50)</b> A look at some of the thinking that underpins our commitment to Global Justice and the way in which it can be imaginatively conveyed and prophetically acted upon.	<b>“Sorry I’ve no cash on me” 1 hr (Laura Jones)</b> With less cash in our pockets, and extra measures now needed to handle cash safely, surely there’s an easier way to take donations at services and fundraising events? There is! Come along to find out about QR codes, card devices, personalised fundraising pages and more. This session will give you all you need to raise more and with less effort. It’s a win win!
<b>How telling your story well can inspire others: 1 hr (Tom Wyke)</b> Have you ever stopped to reflect on why you do what you do? Sharing our own story of why we support Christian Aid is a powerful way to inspire others to give, act and pray. Come along and explore how to better tell your story.	<b>New Generations: How is Christian Aid engaging children and young people? (Richard Baker and Josh Greer) 1.5 hrs</b> Inspired by the vision, energy and leadership that we have seen in children and young people in the face of injustice, this session explores how Christian Aid is engaging a new generation of courageous advocates for change in schools and churches. With opportunities to learn more about the resources we provide, the session will explore the ways in which we support children and young people in their learning and how we help to amplify their voices. It will appeal to all who have any kind of role or interest in supporting children and young people in schools and churches.
<b>The Solidarity Sessions Part 1 Faith and Activism (Jess Hall) 1.5hrs (max 50)</b> How do we stand in solidarity with our sisters and brothers in the struggle against extreme poverty? Join us as we launch the Solidarity Sessions 2021 and get equipped for action. In this inaugural session we’ll explore how public prayer can be an act of solidarity and change. Leave with practical ideas to take away and try out with your church community.	<b>Promoting your event: 1 hrs Emma Nutbrown /Dyfed Roberts (30 people max)</b> How to help raise the profile of your Christian Aid event in the local media. Tips from a former journalist and PR specialist in Christian Aid’s media team to help you feel confident about approaching local news outlets
<b>Virtual Fundraising: 1 hr (Laura Jones)</b> Twelve months ago, few of us knew what a zoom room was! Even when we get to our “new normal” virtual events will still be with us. Whether you feel daunted or excited by the idea of hosting a virtual event, this session will give you all you need. We will share successful virtual events since lockdown, and ingredients for success for your own virtual fundraiser.	<b>Doing good, feeling good 1 hr (Bex Turner)</b> As we move forward into 2021, what can we do to keep our mental, emotional and spiritual health up? Join us for a session where we look not only at doing good at Christian Aid Week but also feeling good and having all round better wellbeing
<b>East Midlands Supporter Gathering (Repeated Friday at 10am 1.5 hrs (Jez Gowers-Cromie)</b> Meet other Christian Aid supporters from across your region, to share fundraising ideas and successes, and explore opportunities to partner with our work this Christian Aid Week and beyond.	<b>The solidarity sessions Part 2 Skills for Campaigning and Activism (Jess Hall/ Luke Harman) 1.5hrs (max 50 places)</b> How do we stand in solidarity with our sisters and brothers in the struggle against extreme poverty? Join us for the Solidarity Sessions 2021 and get equipped for action. In this session we’ll look at some practical campaign skills to try out at your church in 2021.

	Thursday 25 <sup>th</sup>	Friday 26 <sup>th</sup>
<b>To Start the day</b> 8.45am	<b>Praying for our world: 30mins (Helen Howe)</b> Prayers to 'Build back better' post Covid	<b>Prayer with our partners: 30mins (Brad Frey)</b> Connecting with Christian Aid partners in prayer
<b>Morning</b> 10.00am	<b>Exploring the intersections of climate justice and racial justice</b> <b>1hr (Sarah Jane)</b> Why are some communities more affected by climate change than others and how can our actions make a positive difference? A space to find out more about our landmark report on communities bearing the brunt of climate change. Collectively explore the connections between race and the climate, ally-ship and the power of our shared actions for positive change.	<b>East Midlands Supporter Gathering (Repeated Tuesday at 7.30pm): 1.5 hrs (Jez Gowers-Cromie)</b> Meet other Christian Aid supporters from across your region, to share fundraising ideas and successes, and explore opportunities to partner with our work this Christian Aid Week and beyond.
<b>Lunch time</b> 12.00 midday	<b>Christian Aid Week innovators: 1 hr (Laura Jones)</b> We love rebels! This session is a celebration of Christian Aid Week done differently. We will share some amazing real and innovative fundraising from churches across the UK. The bad news is they aren't likely to work for you, as what they all have in common is that they were born out of their own unique community and context. The good news is that in this session we will use innovation tools to help you tap into your local context and start your own Christian Aid Week rebellion!	<b>Conference Close – Changemakers Real People, Real Change (Bex Turner and CSET) 1 hr</b> Join our Director of Fundraising and Supporter Engagement Nick Georgiadis and Christian Aid colleagues as we celebrate our week together with you. Revisit what it is to be a Changemaker and how you can use the workshops over the week to make a difference to those living in poverty this Christian Aid Week.
<b>Early After-noon</b> 2.00pm	<b>Climate Justice 2021: (Luke Harmon / Sarah Rowe)</b> <b>1.5hrs (max 50)</b> 2021 is crucial in the journey towards climate justice, so how can we help make it a reality? As the UK prepares to host the G7 this summer and the UN climate talks (COP26) in November, find out how you and your church can push for ambitious outcomes that promote justice	
<b>Late After-noon</b> 4.00pm	<b>Just Scripture: 1.5hrs (Brad Frey) (60 max)</b> Just Scripture connects communities from across the world online, to dialogue about a passage of Scripture and how it can equip and inspire them to take action on injustice	
<b>Evening</b> 7.30pm	<b>Volunteer Speaker Training: (Charlotte Scott) 1.5hrs</b> A chance for a deep dive into scripture through the lens of our Christian Aid Week stories. We will look together at the lectionary passages set for Christian Aid Week to help form ideas for sermons and talks. There will also be a chance to talk to other volunteer speakers in smaller groups and share experiences of things that have worked well and creative ideas for services which are gathered in person and virtually leaving you equipped to speak in Christian Aid Week.	

## Through all the changing scenes of life

When Judith shared her choice of 'Desert Island Hymn' for Prayer For The Day recently, this was what she chose:

Through all the changing scenes of life,  
in trouble and in joy,  
the praises of my God shall still  
my heart and tongue employ.

O magnify the Lord with me,  
with me exalt his name;  
when in distress, to him I called  
he to my rescue came.

The hosts of God encamp around  
the dwellings of the just;  
his saving help he gives to all  
who in his mercy trust.

O taste his goodness, prove his love;  
experience will decide  
how blessed they are, and only they,  
who in his truth confide.

Fear him, you saints, and you will then  
have nothing else to fear;  
his service shall be your delight,  
your needs shall be his care.

To Father, Son and Spirit, praise!  
To God whom we adore  
be worship, glory, power and love,  
both now and evermore!

As Judith pointed out, this hymn is from the end of the seventeenth century, so has been sung for 300 years. And paraphrasing, as it does, Psalm 34, a psalm attributed to David, means the original words date back 3000 years. Clearly it contains truths which have stood the test of time, and it continues to bring peace and reassurance to us to this day. Thank you for bringing it to mind, Judith.

**Jill Chapman**

# Mothers' UNION

## Christian care for families

### Disaster Risk Reduction

Although we hear and use the term 'natural disaster', the act that causes the disaster is known as a 'natural hazard'. Disasters follow immediately after natural hazards such as earthquakes, hurricanes or floods. While natural hazards cannot be prevented, the impact of any subsequent disaster can be minimised through Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR). The UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR) has reported that the trends of disasters are increasingly worrying in their nature, frequency and severity. Rapid population growth, environmental and climate change mean more and more people are at risk, often in the poorest countries in the world.

Unlike emergency aid and relief, DRR is a longer-term intervention, best delivered at community level by grassroots organisations embedded in the community. Local Mothers' Union members have built high levels of trust over time within communities. They are uniquely placed to work collaboratively with communities to understand the short-term and long-term risks from natural hazards, and to help identify ways communities can respond and adapt. MU is there before the disaster hits and remains long after relief efforts have finished, to help rebuild communities and protect them from future disasters through DRR.

For example, in Madagascar, MU has been working closely with





● communities to increase resilience. People there experience great  
● uncertainty, suffering from both drought, due to climate change, and  
● flooding due to cyclones, which bring devastation each year to some  
● areas. One diocese is addressing the issue of environmental  
● preservation, using a plant called Vetiver, a relative of sorghum, which is  
● fast growing, and preserves the soil during the rainy season. When the  
● Vetiver plants are uprooted, trees are planted in the same place -  
● specifically trees that fertilise the soil and which store water in their  
● trunks. The trees will also provide a physical barrier at cyclone time.  
● Furthermore, Vetiver can support livelihoods: it can be used as cattle  
● food, as well as material for roofing houses, and to make ropes and  
● handicrafts to sell. Oil extracted from Vetiver roots is used in  
● aromatherapy and skincare products.

● This is one example of how MU is working with communities to prepare  
● them for disasters, whilst also helping families transform their own lives.

● *The above is taken from an article by Adam Sach, MU Head of*  
● *Fundraising and Communications, featured in the Autumn 2019 edition of*  
● *the MU magazine Families First.*

● **Beryl Stephens**



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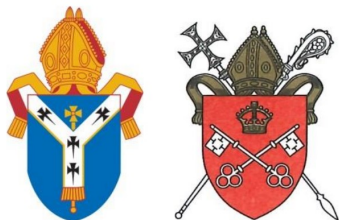
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# Reflecting on the Enormity of the Pandemic

In an open letter, our Archbishops of Canterbury and York, Justin Welby and Stephen Cottrell, have invited people to “reflect on the enormity of this pandemic” and engage in a daily prayer as an “expression of love”, regardless of whether they have faith or not.



*To the nation*

*26 January 2021*

*Dear friends*

*As we reach the terrible milestone of 100,000 deaths from Covid-19, we invite everyone in our nation to pause as we reflect on the enormity of this pandemic.*

*100,000 isn't just an abstract figure. Each number is a person: someone we loved and someone who loved us. We also believe that each of these people was known to God and cherished by God.*

*We write to you then in consolation, but also in encouragement, and ultimately in the hope of Jesus Christ. The God who comes to us in Jesus knew grief and suffering himself. On the cross, Jesus shares the weight of our sadness.*

*We therefore encourage everyone who is feeling scared, or lost or isolated to cast their fears on God. We also know that poorer communities, minority ethnic communities and those living with disabilities have been afflicted disproportionately and cry out for the healing of these inequalities. During this pandemic, we encourage everyone to do all they can to live within the guidelines and constraints given by government following the advice of the Chief Medical Officer and Chief Scientific Adviser. We show our commitment, care and love for one another by ensuring we do everything we can to stop the virus spreading.*

*None of this is easy. Very many of us are experiencing isolation, loneliness, anxiety and despondency like never before. Many people have lost their livelihoods. Our economy struggles. Also, the necessary restrictions we live with have also prevented us from being alongside*

*loved ones as they died, or even at their graveside. All grief profoundly affects us, but this pandemic grief is so hard.*

*Therefore, we need to support each other. We do this by following the guidelines. But we also do it by reaching out to each other with care and kindness.*

*One thing we can all do is pray. We hope it is some consolation to know that the church prays for the life of our nation every day. Whether you're someone of faith, or not, we invite you to call on God in prayer. Starting on 1 February we invite you to set aside time every evening to pray, particularly at 6pm each day. More than ever, this is a time when we need to love each other. Prayer is an expression of love. A number of resources will be made available on our website.*

*Finally, we write of hope. We are grateful for the hope we have because of the service of our NHS and social care staff. What a blessing and lifeline for our nation. We are grateful for the service given in local communities by clergy, other frontline workers and so many good neighbours. We are grateful for the hope of the vaccine. It is a testimony to the God-given wisdom and gifts of scientists and researchers. We urge everyone to take the vaccine as soon as it is offered to you.*

*Most of all, we have hope because God raised Jesus from the dead. This is the Christian hope that we will be celebrating at Easter. We live in the hope that we will share in his resurrection. Death doesn't have the last word. In God's kingdom, every tear will be wiped away.*

*Please be assured of our prayers. Please join us.*

*+ Paul Carter*      *+ Stephen Ebor*

## **A Prayer for Those Who Mourn**

**G**racious God,  
as we remember before you the thousands who have died,  
surround us and all who mourn with your strong compassion.  
Be gentle with us in our grief,  
protect us from despair,  
and give us grace to persevere  
and face the future with hope  
in Jesus Christ our risen Lord.  
Amen.



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**YOUTH  
FOR CHRIST**

## Mentoring online

Am I alone in thinking; it's been an amazing the skills we've all been learning during lockdown? And I start by praising God for allowing my brain to take it all in and put it to good use for His Glory!

I have been able to move my mentoring in Ivanhoe online with parents' permission (and the use of their phones!), to call my young ladies once a week for 30 minutes. We catch up on home news - I've met some adorable new pets - talk about what's going well (or not) at school, and check in with each other about how we are feeling and what we hope for the future.

Last week we reflected on how they had grown emotionally since we met. One young person whom was so anxious and hated school so much she had to be dragged in crying most days - now gets herself up at 7.30 am each morning and is completing her work at home without being pushed! Praise God.

Points for prayer: the photo above is what I sent to each of my mentees this week - personalised for them, to remind them they are well thought of. Please pray for one of our young people who finds this so hard to hear and believe.

Thank you for praying for us and God bless you,

**Katie**



## Youth For Christ Conference

At the beginning of January we were in conference but not at Conference. For the past couple of decades we have, as a team, got together with other Youth For Christ centres from around the country to worship, pray, eat, chat, think and learn together at national Conference. This year's Conference never got onto the calendar for obvious, virus related reasons. Instead we got together with other centres via electronic cleverness for a couple of sessions. We'll also beginning to meet as the Ashby team (again, with the help of IT). Please pray for us as we seek to become wiser, better informed, better fuelled, more faithful servants of local young people for Christ. And thank God for technology and this opportunity to wait on and wait for the

LORD. Please continue to pray for local young people - that they will know God offering them certainty when no one else can.

I wait for the Lord, my whole being waits,  
and in his word I put my hope.  
I wait for the Lord  
more than watchmen wait for the morning,  
more than watchmen wait for the morning

Psalm 130: 5&6

## **Pond Tennis**

We have paused our Rock Solid meetings, having studied the National Youth Agency's advice to youth workers who have in turn liaised with the government.

School and college for the Rock Solid young people is now at home via platforms like Zoom and Teams and through weird inventions called parents. As one of those parents I can testify that this is an experience demanding the development of many new skills and approaches. Please pray for the home relationships of Rock Solid. Pray that however much strain is experienced between young people and parents that this season will result in enhanced mutual understanding and appreciation.

As we look forward and seek to pray and plan faithfully please pray that we would be sensitive, wise, bold, inventive and adaptable in the way we serve these young people. It might seem that we are constrained in what we can do but so are these young people and that seems to be, in some cases, stirring a new appetite to connect with people and a readiness to engage with them via digital communication media. As well as the challenge of learning new technical skills there are also the safeguarding, GDPR and social challenges of attempting to facilitate supportive online community. Yesterday I witnessed a teacher put 3 children in a break out room and leave them with a question to discuss. After five or ten minutes no one had said anything. Novelty can be daunting. They only stayed because they had little alternative. Some attempts to foster relationships fail. Most young people have almost unlimited freedom to choose with whom and how they connect online. Clearly this is potentially very dangerous. Equally clear is what a significant opportunity it is for the Church.

If you'd like to watch an example of an attempt to serve the group see the below link.

Thanks for your prayers.

**Vernon**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AgFQsXMewuo&feature=youtu.be>

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## Quotes for the Month

'May your choices this year be driven by your hopes rather than your fears.'

*Rev'd Steve Chalke, Twitter, January 1<sup>st</sup>*

'Amen, and a-woman'

*Pastor Emanuel Cleaver finishing a public prayer in Congress, January 3<sup>rd</sup>*

'The tradition that it is bad luck to keep decorations up after Twelfth Night ... may derive from the medieval notion that decorations left up after Candlemas eve would become possessed by goblins.'

*Dr Michael Carter, senior properties historian at English Heritage, January 5<sup>th</sup>*

'Day 1 of clearing the house and garage. So far: Made breakfast; Took out Xmas tree; Looked hopelessly into garage; Said Rosary; Went back on Twitter.'

*Gerrardus, Twitter, January 6<sup>th</sup>*

'Epiphany is the day we throw out those Quality Street that are never going to be eaten.'

*Rev'd Tom Buchanan, Twitter, January 6<sup>th</sup>*

'Christian Concern: "Never in our history before have our churches been forced to close – not during wars, plagues or famines." Well, true, but never before have we had a pandemic when we understood how virus transmission actually happens. This is Daft.'

*Father ChrisDidymus, Twitter, January 6<sup>th</sup>*

'It took 20 years for me to become a Christian.'

*Farifteh Robb, Church Times, January 6<sup>th</sup>*

'If you've ever had to get folks who like anthems and folks who like contemporary gospel music to work together, you can do anything.'

*Rev'd Raphael Warnock, elected Georgia's first black US senator, January 6<sup>th</sup>*



'As pro-Trump supporters stormed the US Capitol, President-elect Joe Biden's campaign team hosted a prayer event... [and] quoted civil rights leader Martin Luther Jr: "I have decided to stick with love. Hate is too great a burden to bear." '

*Premier Christian News, January 7<sup>th</sup>*

'After we've said our prayers, checked the news, shaken our heads over it, turned off the TV commentators in despair and disgust, we suddenly remember someone who needs the help we just read about. Then we ask ourselves what we really stand for, and what we've done to prove it. At that moment we either become prophets, or simply churchgoers. That is the question we must all ask ourselves. "What are YOU going to do about it?"'

*Sister Joan Chittister, Super Soul Sunday, The God Article on Facebook, January 11<sup>th</sup>*

'Fisheries minister did not read Brexit bill as she was busy at nativity.'

*The Guardian headline, January 13<sup>th</sup>*

'Paul, an educated Greek-speaking citizen of the Roman Empire, probably had a good idea of the range of human loves and relationships; but even if he had not, God certainly did.'

*Dr Kirsten Birkett, What did Paul know of same-sex relationships?, Church Society, Jan 15<sup>th</sup>*

'Courage doesn't always roar. Sometimes courage is the little voice at the end of the day that says, "I'll try again tomorrow"' - Mary Anne Radmacher

*Revd Steve Chalke, Twitter, January 16<sup>th</sup>*

"“I wish it need not have happened in my time,” said Frodo. “So do I,” said Gandalf, “and so do all who live to see such times. But that is not for them to decide. All we have to decide is what to do with the time that is given us.”" - J.R.R. Tolkien

*@Chorister9, Twitter, January 19<sup>th</sup>*

'Theology is not just speaking or wrestling; it is also helping us dream a little bit of the future God has for us. It is pondering the actual, imagining the possible.'

*Danté Stewart, Religion News Service January 21<sup>st</sup>*

'Housing is an issue of justice, which Jesus cares about intimately.'

*Most Revd Justin Welby, National Housing Summit - Summit Shorts, January 21<sup>st</sup>*

'I think the best chance the Government has of easing lockdown restrictions by Easter is to move Good Friday to September.'

*Keith Burge, Twitter, January 22<sup>nd</sup>*

'This is the beauty of our faith, not that we once were bad but now we're good, but that softly and tenderly Jesus is calling us. Again and again.'

*Revd Nadia Bolz-Weber's sermon, House for All Sinners & Saints, January 24<sup>th</sup>*

'I pray for our politicians each day. There will be things they've got wrong, because they're human. They're deeply, deeply human.'

*Justin Welby, BBC radio 4 Today programme, January 26<sup>th</sup>*

'Fr Bill was an intense presence. His listening released truth in the people he met.'

*Right Revd Paul Bayes, Church Times, January 29<sup>th</sup>*

'The churches' conversations on love & faith, which so many are still pleased to call "debates", will continue for a good while yet. Human lives will continue to be pressed like flowers between the covers of one book or another.'

*Right Revd Paul Bayes, Church Times, January 29<sup>th</sup>*

'God loves the lepers, the tax collectors and the prostitutes. He loves the Gadarene demoniac and the little children. He loves the unseen and the underrepresented. Part of our role in the world is to love the misfits and oddities too. Think on this today: In reaching out to the misfit we so often become healed ourselves.'

*Pastor Gary Cadge, Christian Misfit Community, Facebook, January 30<sup>th</sup>*

'The NHS has been described as the closest we have to a national religion.'

*Grayson Perry, Art Club on Channel 4, January 31<sup>st</sup>*

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JP SPRINGTHORPE & C<sup>o</sup>

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