

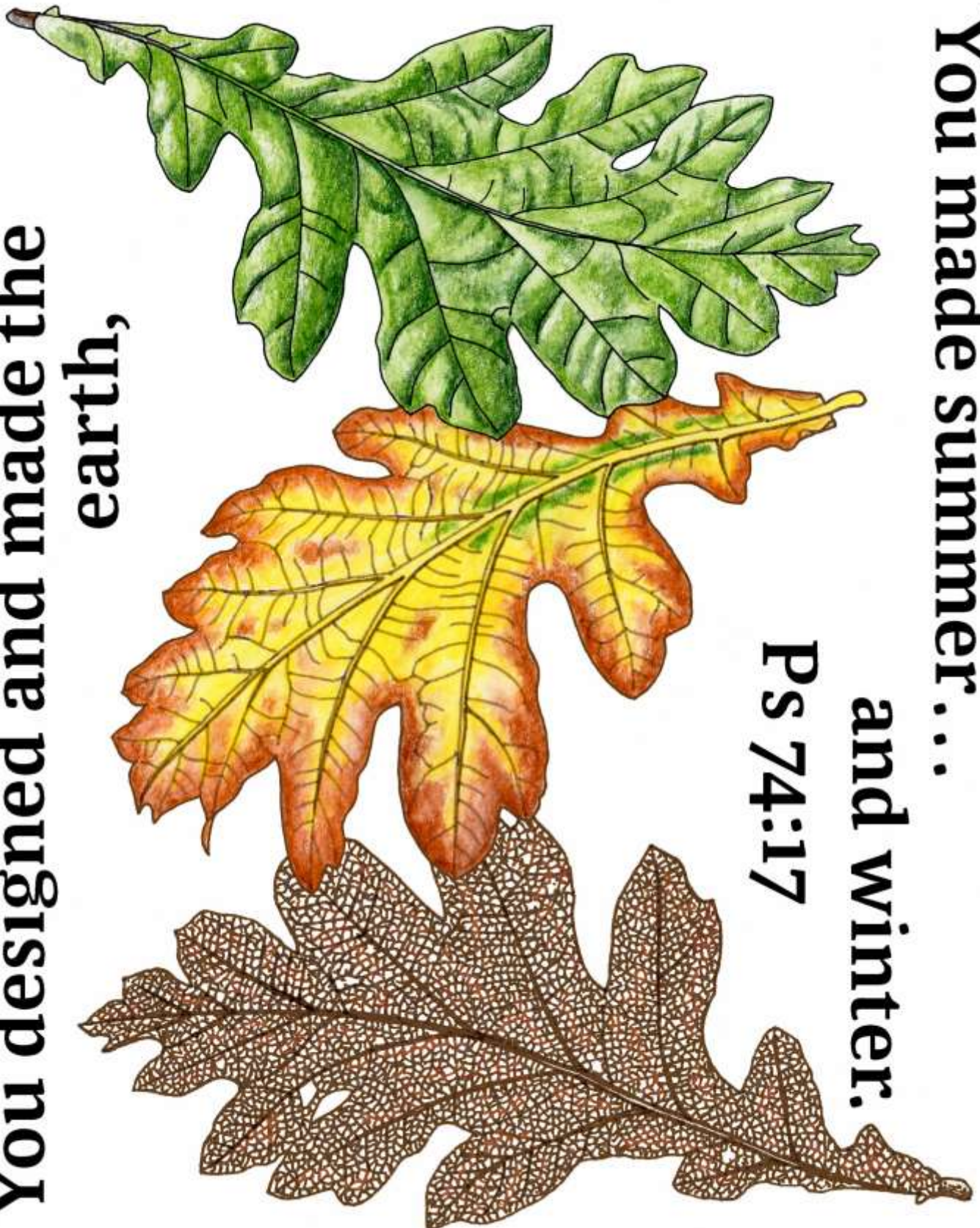
Crosstalk 60p

The Parish Magazine of St Bartholomew with St Chad
www.thurstaston.org.uk



October 2023

**You designed and made the
earth,**



**Ps 74:17
and winter.**

You made summer...



Can you please return any children's society boxes to Jean Heath for counting. They can be returned to St Chad's or St Bartholomew's or to Jean, 'Barnstables', 233 Irby Road, CH61 2XF.

If anyone would like them collecting, then please phone Jean on 648 6015 to arrange a convenient time.

St Bartholomew and St Chad takes its duty and obligation to protect all extremely seriously. We have adopted the national Church of England's robust procedures and guidelines. You can find out more about the national policies and procedures at www.churchofengland.org/safeguarding

**Safeguarding is
Everyone's
Responsibility**

 * "Your magazine needs you" *
 * Please send your contributions *
 * (eg. Poems. Prayers, interesting *
 * articles etc.,) *
 * to office@thurstaston.org.uk *

.....
 The views and opinions expressed
 in the articles in this magazine are
 those of the author(s) and do not
 necessarily reflect the views or
 opinions of the editor, the Rector
 or the PCC.

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Baptisms

Weddings

Funerals

16th August - Tony Fletcher
31st August - Patricia Hughes

From Your Rector

At the recent coronation the King was given a Bible with the words 'the most valuable thing that this world affords'. As Bible Sunday is celebrated this month, let's ask why we should read the Bible?

The Bible isn't a single book, but a library of 66 books, composed by some 44 writers over 1500 years in a range of styles including history, poetry, prophecy, letters and apocalyptic (looking the end times). Despite having a number of different writers, it claims one authority - God Himself! *'All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work'* (2 Timothy 3:16). The Bible is inspired ('the word of God in the words of men') and equips us to live for God in every aspect of our lives. We also have the promise of the Holy Spirit to guide us when we read: *'when the Spirit of truth comes, He will guide you into all truth'* (John 16:13).

How should we read the Bible? Let's consider the following guidelines:

Right time: We need a regular routine, which will meet our needs. This will vary according to our circumstances e.g. a mum at home with young children, somebody with a demanding job or a retired person.

Right Place: We need to find a space where we can be undisturbed (e.g. lounge, bedroom, train or kitchen).

Right Version: We need a version of the Bible which we can readily understand and use. A number of versions are available (e.g. NRSV, The Message), as well as Bible apps we can access on our phone.

Right Help: Reading notes also help us to understand a passage and apply it to our lives.

Let's get reading!!

Revd Jane

PS. See next page - Why not book a ticket for Riding Lights: INSPIRED ... The Word Into Action - a show that's alive with insight and wonder. We want every audience member to leave with a renewed sense of the riches to be found in their Bible and a hunger to know more.

I have been to several productions by Riding Lights over the years and they have always been excellent. If you book a ticket (see info in the image below) and want to share lifts please let me know and I'll try and co-ordinate this.

Revd Jane (648 1816)

RIDING LIGHTS THEATRE COMPANY presents

INSPIRED... THE WORD INTO ACTION

"Dynamic and Hilarious... We loved it!"

RIDING LIGHTS THEATRE COMPANY BIBLE SOCIETY

THURSDAY 9 NOVEMBER, 7:30PM

THE LIGHTHOUSE CHURCH
TELEGRAPH ROAD, HESWALL, CH60 0AJ

ADULT £12 CHILD (UNDER 18S) £6
BOX OFFICE <https://bit.ly/inspiredlighthouse> / 0151 342 3471

RIDING LIGHTS THEATRE COMPANY presents

INSPIRED... THE WORD INTO ACTION

"Bringing the Bible alive... and brilliant!"

Riding Lights is delighted to be supported by Bible Society to bring you **INSPIRED... The Word Into Action** – a show that's alive with insight and wonder. Leaving every audience member with a renewed sense of the riches to be found in their Bible and a hunger to know more.

Starting in the gorgeous gardens of Eden (an area of outstanding natural beauty) and ascending via any number of historic people, heritage sites, **INSPIRED** brings you blockbusting stories about men, women and God before finishing with an amazing wide-screen glimpse into the end of time.

Hold onto your seats and enjoy vivid extracts exploding into action as the Word gets down to Earth and mixes it with human beings. There's wit, wisdom, faith and folly, as well as... a remarkable Welsh gift to the world.

"Funny, straight-talking and great entertainment"

In classic Riding Lights style, with vitality, respect and some glorious humour, you can look forward to fabulous jewels from the big book, as well as less familiar gems from parts that perplex or inspire the church today.

Riding Lights is raring to take you on a whirlwind adventure through this No. 1 best-selling library and out the other side into 2023!

TICKETS

www.ridinglights.org/inspired #INSPIRED2023

Riding Lights is a limited company registered in England and Wales (No. 3079264) and a charity registered with Charity Commission (No. 1107142). Registered Office at: 100, The...

Photography Presentation

Monday 23 October 8pm

St Chad's, Roslin Road, Irby CH61 3UH



"A Year of Photography"

Local photographer, Roger Ellison returns by popular demand to talk us through some of his recent photos. He will entertain us with a wonderful evening of beautiful scenes and wildlife captured, along with some interesting tales. Plus, he shows us some unexpected and more unusual assignments that challenged his photography.

Admission £2 which includes refreshments.

A selection of cards and prints will also be on sale.

Enquiries to Church Office Tel: 648 8169

Prisons Week - 8th to 14th October

Prisoners and their families need help, if they are to really repair and rebuild their lives.

And so it is that Prisons Week has been growing steadily, year by year. It currently has **25 Christian denominations and organisations working together to use “all our skills and gifts to see God’s kingdom come and His peace be established in a place of suffering and weeping.”**

Prisons Week is supported by the Church of England, the Catholic Church, the Free Churches Group, and the Salvation Army. It is also supported by the prison ministry organisations including Prison Fellowship, Prison Advice and Care Trust, and Caring for Prison Leavers. Other supporting organisations include Bible Society, the Mothers Union, and Youth for Christ.

**8TH - 14TH
OCTOBER
2023**

**THE HEAVENS
DECLARE THE
GLORY OF
GOD, SO...**

**LOOK
UP** **PSALM
19:1**

WWW.PRISONSWEEK.ORG
[@PRISONSWEEK](https://twitter.com/PRISONSWEEK)
[#PRISONSWEEK](https://hashtage.com/PRISONSWEEK)

PRISONSWEEK
A WEEK OF PRAYER

The week-long campaign each October aims to provide Christians across the country with information, expertise, resources, and encouragement for this particular, and challenging, area of ministry.

For anyone, or any group, who would like to support Prisons ministry, there are several campaign resources available at their website.

Above all, Prisons Week urges individual Christians to pray for prisoners and their families, that their lives might be rebuilt and renewed.

Prisons Week describes its aim as “relieving the human suffering caused by crime and imprisonment.” For more info, please visit:

www.prisonswEEK.org



Season of REMEMBERING

The Rectory,
77 Thingwall Rd
Irby,
Wirral
CH61 3UB

16th September 2023

I am writing to invite you (and any extended family members or friends) to our All Souls' Day Service which will be on Sunday 29th October at 6.30pm at St Chad's Church, Roslin Rd, Irby, CH61 3UB. The service will be quiet and reflective. It will be a time to remember those who have died over the past year and in previous years, and an opportunity to say thank you to God for the good times we shared with them throughout their lives.

During the service we will be reading out a list of names of those we would like to remember. If you would like someone (or people) to be mentioned by name, please fill out the form below and bring it with you to the service.

Yours sincerely,

Revd Jane Turner

All Souls' Day Service 2023

Person/People to be Remembered (First name/s and Surname/s):

Date/s they died _____

Your Name _____

Your Address _____

Your Email/phone number _____

Loss AND HOPE

St. Chad's Tots and Tinies

St Chad's Church (Roslin Road, Irby)



Every Thursday 9.30-11.30am
(Term Time Only)

£1.50 for one Adult and one child - All Welcome

Additional children £1.00
Additional Adults £0.50



Parents/Carers will be responsible for their child(ren) during the sessions

For further information please contact **Allison** via the Parish Office 648 8169



The Leprosy Mission
England and Wales

Following the most interesting talk from the representative of The Leprosy Mission, we have some Leprosy Mission Catalogues in circulation selling Christmas Cards, fairly traded gifts, plus much more. Catalogues are available at every church service with an order form inside. By purchasing from the catalogue you will be supporting Leprosy Mission as one of our nominated Harvest Festival charities. If you wish to make a purchase Cheryl is collating orders. We encourage you to look through the catalogue to support Leprosy Mission. **Complete the official order form and return the catalogue for further circulation with your completed order form and cash to either Revd Jane or Cheryl. The closing date for orders is Sunday 15th October.** If your order is £60 or more you may wish to order direct as this will not incur postage, but if you wish Cheryl to add your order to the bulk purchase she will be happy to deal with it for you.

Christmas

Bazaar

Sat 18 Nov

1 – 3.30pm

Trade and charity stalls

Christmas gifts galore

Santa's Grotto

St Chad's Roslin Road CH61 3UH

The **Christmas Bazaar** this year is on
Saturday 18 November 1 – 3.30pm.

It is planned to have trade and charity stalls selling all sorts of Christmas goodies and gifts, plus a grotto, children's stalls, cakes, refreshments, raffle and second hand books.

Please collect any books, children's soft toys and raffle prizes and drop off inside St Chad's outside the church office.

If you can help set up/clear away or can help on a stall please let me know your name and contact details

Thanks ,

Julie DeBoorder

07599186893 / Jules2121jule@gmail.com

**7.30pm Wednesday
29th November**

**Kings Church,
Victoria Fields,
Birkenhead, CH42 0PF**

Tickets £6.00

An Evening with
ROB PARSONS
Reflections on the Journey

Revd Jane is going to this. You can buy your own ticket from the link below - which also details how to request a complimentary ticket if you cannot afford the £6.00:-
<https://www.careforthefamily.org.uk/events/tourevents/an-evening-with-rob-parsons/>
If you don't do online and would like Revd Jane to buy you a ticket please ask.
If you do buy your own ticket,
please let Revd Jane know and we can then plan to car share.

From the boy described as 'making no use of what little ability he has,' to an international best-selling author and speaker, Rob Parsons has a lifetime's experience of overcoming obstacles.

He recalls the time when his father told him, 'People like us don't become lawyers,' and the teacher who said even his best wasn't good enough.

Yet with the help of the people who believed he could be more, he learnt how to grow through the challenges of life.

Join Rob on a journey through the decades as he reflects on a life mixed with laughter and tears, and draws on vivid stories from childhood, right through to the present day.

He'll tap into a wealth of experience to help us make the best of our circumstances, gifts, opportunities – and perhaps most of all – our relationships.

In *An Evening with Rob Parsons*, we invite you to pull up a chair and settle in for a poignant night of storytelling that will reawaken your purpose and stay with you long after you head home.

You'll hear about:

- Escaping from imposter syndrome
- Finding hope beyond shattered dreams
- Avoiding the labels others put on you
- Enduring the hard times you just can't fix
- Why tomorrow doesn't have to be like yesterday

Is it for you?

Whether you're sixteen and leaving school or sixty-five and heading for retirement, this event is for everyone! From relationships to work, study to homelife, and finances to mental wellbeing, Rob has learnt many lessons from life that will help you whatever stage you're at.

We're Supporting:



forum
It's all about you

**Christmas Appeal
2023**

Forum Housing Association provides supported accommodation to single young people and vulnerable adults, who are homeless or seeking independence.

We offer a range of accommodation in Wirral and Cheshire.



How you can help...

Gift Bags

Items UNWRAPPED can include: a hand towel, facecloth, toothbrush, toothpaste, shower gel, shampoo, shaving gel, deodorant, socks, mug, body spray, chocolate, sweets, gloves, hats, scarves, novelty gifts such as puzzles, pens etc

Thank You for your support! www.forumhousing.co.uk |  [@ForumHousing](https://twitter.com/ForumHousing)

Please note that Forum Housing are usually supporting more males than females.

Any items which you wish to donate (a single item is fine, as together we can make whole gift bags) need to be dropped off at church or the parish office **by Sunday 19th November** so that they can be delivered to Forum Housing in time to be included in the gifts for the Forum Housing Residents.

If you prefer to make a financial donation, the details can be obtained from the parish office, along with a Gift Aid form (if appropriate).

Ruth's Reflections

Hello again, it seems such a long time since I wrote anything. I hope you all had a lovely summer in spite of the unusual weather. I must admit I found the recent hot and humid weather very uncomfortable and tended to stay inside where it was relatively cool.

Now that Autumn has arrived most of the usual activities have resumed, including the weekly meetings with the Photographic Society, although the fortnightly Zoom meetings we had were really great.

My sister came to stay a couple of weeks ago, we had a lovely time as we hadn't been together for ages. We went for a long walk along Hoylake Prom, it was sunny but very windy. Sarah really enjoyed it, very different to where she is from. She lives just outside Tring, which is the town furthest from any coast in the UK. We also ate out a lot and enjoyed some really nice meals, surprisingly I didn't put on any weight!

I went with several other members of the WI to Southport Flower Show, another lovely day and an interesting time looking at all the different plants and show gardens. you could easily spend a lot of money there, I didn't, but I came away with a lot of ideas. My garden has looked lovely this summer, some plants are maturing and starting to fill up the gaps while the bedding plants provided a lot of colour. it is looking a bit

bedraggled after the rain and I will have to do some tidying up before the winter. I have had a lot of tomatoes from a couple of plants, but the cucumbers didn't do so well.



Ringing has been a bit depleted lately, due to holidays, illness/ injuries and family commitments. Hopefully it will pick up soon, although it would be nice if we could ring every Sunday at St Barts.

My family are keeping fairly well at the moment and my grandsons are doing well in their chosen careers. I am so proud of them. My health has improved at last, my neck and shoulder pain is liveable with and I can do most of what I want. In fact I decorated my hall over the Bank Holiday weekend.

Well I must stop now, I am off to a garden centre with the WI this afternoon!

Take care and stay safe everyone.

Ruth.

Reflecting Faith: – pews and chairs

Most of us think of pews as having been installed at the same time the church building was built, with occasional upgrades over time. But that's not the case.

Originally church floors consisted of little more than stone flags or beaten earth on which grasses or rushes were lain as a renewable winter covering for cleanliness and insulation. Each year, in late summer, the old and rotten rushes were cleared out and new ones taken to the churches in carts. There are still a number of English towns, in particular in the north of England, that celebrate 'Rushbearing' each year.

The people stood for all the services. However, it was recognised that the infirm and elderly needed support, and stone benches - often backless - were placed by the walls for them. It was not until the Protestant Reformation in the 1500s that wooden pews were introduced for everyone to be able to be seated.

Naturally, people being people, there were pews and then there were *pews!*

Society was organised in classes or hierarchies and the richer and more important folk had the best seats near the front so they could hear what the priest was saying and watch the service.

One's place to sit was arranged by your place in Society, so the poorer and least important were at the back.

Sermons alone could be lengthy; two hours was not unusual, and if you could pay for privacy to doze off and some form of personal heating for winters, then clearly that made sense.



Seating in churches

In many 'old' churches and cathedrals today the original wooden seats or pews have been completely removed. They have been replaced by moveable chairs, to enable the space to become very flexible. In this way concerts and exhibitions can more easily take place.

But where does the priest or worship leader sit?

Often there will be a special chair or 'stall' set aside for them. In older churches, you may find as many as three.

The first is a 'prayer stall' between the choir stalls and the nave. From here the priest will conduct the majority of the first section of the Sunday service, and during the week will use this stall for their morning and evening public office.

There is likely to be also a chair for them in the sanctuary, and in older church buildings you will see in the chancel area some seats (sedilia) set into the wall. Depending on the size of the original parish, these vary from being a single plain seat for the priest alone to something quite ornate: seating up to four people. They even come stepped, so that the people are sitting at different heights.

In medieval times, during Mass, the priest was the celebrant, the deacon read the Gospel and the sub-deacon read the Epistle. They would be seated in the sedilia while the Creed and Gloria were being sung, giving them a time of rest during a long ceremony.

Where the seats are at different heights, the priest would have sat on the highest one, nearest the altar. Later when Chantry endowments provided some churches with several clergy in full orders, the seats were all made at one level. Where there are four seats, the last would have been for the clerk.

In many churches nowadays, you have to look very carefully for these seats, as over time they have been rearranged, and sometimes even the floor around them has been raised so they no longer look like seats.

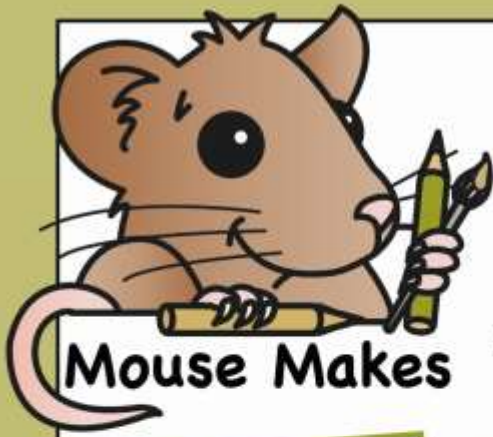
More modern churches also need somewhere for the priests and deacons to sit, and often you will find very fine chairs placed near the altar for them.

This month

Have a look at the seating in a church near you. Are all the chairs or pews the same? Are some more elaborately decorated or larger? Is there a difference between the pews in the nave for the congregation and those for the choir and different again in the sanctuary? Does any of this reflect your faith?

What happens when the bishop comes to your church? Where does s/he sit? How do you know? What does the formality or informality of these chairs say about the way your church thinks about these roles?





Mouse Makes

What food did God supply for his people in the wilderness?

_____ and _____

Numbers 11:7-9 and 31

After Elijah came to visit, what never ran out?

_____ and _____

1 Kings 17:14

What food did the ravens feed Elijah?

_____ and _____

1 Kings 17:6

What food did John the Baptist eat in the wilderness?

_____ and _____

Matthew 3:4

What did the boy give Jesus to feed 5,000 people?

Five _____

and two _____
John 6:9

CONNECT THE BIBLE FOOD PAIRS

- | | |
|---------|-------|
| MANNA | HONEY |
| OIL | WINE |
| WATER | FISH |
| LOCUSTS | QUAIL |
| LOAVES | FLOUR |

What drink ran out at the wedding?

_____ and what did Jesus use to make more?

John 2:3 and 7

FIND THE BIBLE VERSE

Change each letter in this bible verse to the letter **before** it in the alphabet.

NBO TIBMM OPU
MJWF PO CSFBE
BMPOF, CVU PO
FWFSZ XPSE UIBU
DPNFT GSPN UIF
NPVUI PG HPE.

NBUUIFX 4:4

DID YOU KNOW?

As Lot escaped Sodom with his family an angel told him not to stop or look back, but Lot's wife did look back and became a pillar of salt.

READ Genesis 19 v15-26

E B R E A D H O N E Y Q J S F
L O A V E S G Q W A T E R C I
M Q I W M F R U I T F I S H G
E U S H A L A A N O L I V E S
A I I E N O I I E G R A P E S
T L N A N U N L O C U S T S Y
M U S T A R D E I H D A T E S
E V E G E T A B L E S A L T H

Find the words below and the answers to the questions all in the word search

- OLIVES • CHEESE
- FIGS • DATES
- MUSTARD
- RAISINS • WHEAT
- SALT • GRAIN
- FRUIT • GRAPES
- VEGETABLES

To St Luke, whose feast-day is 18th October, we owe a beautifully written gospel as well as the Book of Acts. He was a Greek physician and faithful travelling companion to St Paul. Under house arrest near the end of his life Paul noted, 'only Luke is with me'. Luke's gospel focuses on the compassion of Christ, and offers us moving parables, such as the Good Samaritan and Prodigal Son. Women figure more prominently in Luke's gospel than in any other: look out for the extended story of the Virgin Birth, and stories of Mary, Elizabeth, and the woman who was a sinner. His gospel also features more poor people, more lepers, more 'sinners', who are all shown to be 'inside' the love of Christ. In Acts, Luke skilfully links sacred and profane history, as subsequent archaeology has shown. He tells of how the early Christians moved away from Jerusalem into the pagan world, and especially on to Rome.

Luke
 physician
 companion
 house
 arrest

Paul
 compassion
 parables
 Good
 Samaritan

Prodigal
 Son
 women
 Virgin
 Birth

poor
 lepers
 sacred
 profane
 pagan

early
 Christians
 Jerusalem
 Rome

| | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| J | W | L | U | A | P | R | R | O | N | A | A | S |
| O | O | L | R | P | R | O | D | I | G | A | L | C |
| E | M | N | U | E | A | R | L | Y | I | N | R | C |
| M | E | P | C | K | M | R | E | E | S | S | D | N |
| O | N | R | H | M | E | L | A | S | U | R | E | J |
| R | R | O | R | Y | T | S | A | B | T | E | R | M |
| O | O | F | I | A | S | M | U | V | L | P | C | I |
| O | G | A | S | N | A | I | I | O | N | E | A | P |
| P | T | N | T | R | A | R | C | O | H | L | S | R |
| G | N | E | I | M | G | P | B | I | R | T | H | I |
| E | N | T | A | I | P | Y | M | P | A | G | A | N |
| O | A | O | N | A | R | D | O | O | G | N | B | G |
| N | O | I | S | S | A | P | M | O | C | A | O | A |

God in the Sciences: September and October articles



How can a Christian be a scientist?

I used to ask this question as a student. I wondered what it was like to have a career in

science, and how being a Christian might make a difference. Eventually I met a good number of successful scientists who were sincere Christians, and I learned that science and faith are a great combination. Dr Francis Collins, former Director of the project to decode the whole of human DNA, wrote that it is “possible for the scientist-believer to be intellectually fulfilled and spiritually alive, both worshipping God and using the tools of science to uncover some of the awesome mysteries of His creation.” So, what do people like this make of the opportunities and challenges of a life in science?

Although our beliefs may affect what we notice about the world and how we interpret our data, they don’t affect the outcome of the experiments themselves. If a Muslim and a Christian drop the same ball from the same height under identical conditions, it will fall at the same speed. This means that a scientist can be respected by her colleagues for doing good work, regardless of what she believes and what her colleagues think of her worldview.

Science is an exercise in observing and measuring things, and coming up with general principles about the way things are. The world has been declared by God to be ‘very good’ (see chapter one and two of Genesis), and exploring it is a way to express our gratitude to Him. Scientific discoveries can also bring a sense of awe and wonder that feeds into our worship.

Some people don’t want to get involved in certain lines of research because of ethical concerns. On the other hand, there are many issues that make Christians want to get stuck into new research that will help care for people and the rest of creation, such as medical research, ecology or developing appropriate technologies.

Organisations such as Christians in Science and the Faraday Institute gather together scientists who are also people of faith, and others who are interested in the subject. They come from a wide range of backgrounds, and express their beliefs in a variety of different ways. What they have in common is the conviction that you don’t have to choose between science and God. As the young people in our churches prepare to return to their studies, online if not in person, let’s encourage them that science (along with many other fields) is a great way to serve God.

Do the Bible and Science contradict each other?

For the Christian, the Bible is God's Word to us; it tells us about His character and creative purposes, how He has related to people in the past, and His promises for the future. Science is a specific way of studying the world, exploring the physical properties of things – a wonderful way to explore God's creation. So, the question to ask if the Bible and Science seem to be contradicting each other is, have we made a mistake in interpreting one or the other?

Science is very good at answering certain types of questions: 'What size is it?', 'How fast does it travel?', 'What is it made of?', and so on. Questions like 'What's it for?', 'What should I do with it?', and 'What's it worth?' can't be answered using scientific methods. Some of the misunderstanding in discussions of Science and Religion come from not recognising the limits of science.

It's also important to recognise what the Bible is, and what sorts of questions it can answer. The Bible was written well before people began to investigate the world in ways we would recognise as scientific. Of course, people in the Ancient Near East were studying the world around them, observing the movements of the stars, the processes of life and death that happened all around them, the seasons, the behaviour of physical objects, and so on. But they did not study the mechanisms underlying these things systematically using the tools of science, and they did not see or describe the world in scientific terms – not because they weren't intelligent, but because Science, as we know it, wasn't happening at that time.

Instead, the biblical writers used words that were commonly used in their own cultures to record events, share truth and wisdom, and tell stories that convey deep truth about God's character. If we want to understand God's intention in inspiring these words, we need to do some careful work to connect with those ancient writers and find out what they meant, before we can discover what those words mean to us today.

These principles can help us have far more fruitful conversations about Science and Christian faith. If we allow any apparent conflict between Science and the Bible to fuel our search for understanding, not only will we learn as individuals, but we will be able to draw others into a conversation that is relevant to wider society today.

God and the Arts: September and October

'Still Life with Lemons, Oranges and a Rose'



The weekday eucharist in a parish church, with only a handful of worshippers present, can be a great contrast to the bustle and liveliness of Sunday services. It can offer you a quiet time to focus on the gifts of bread and wine offered on the altar. This month's painting of 1633 is an opportunity to focus on the gifts that have been offered at the altar of *this* table, in 'Still Life with Lemons, Oranges and a Rose' by Francisco Zurbarán. He was a contemporary of the more famous Velázquez and worked in Seville until his death in 1664.

There is something quite special and evocative in the arrangement of fruits and flowers – two highly polished plates, one bearing the citrons (not lemons as the title tells us), the other a cup of water and a rose. In the centre there is a basket with oranges and orange blossom. Against the dark background we sense the cool tones of the plates and cup, and the warmth of fruits and flowers.

There is a curious balance and poise here, and some critics have suggested a Trinitarian allusion in the three groups so deliberately placed on the table. Others have pointed to the rose and water as symbols of our Lady, and the fruit and blossom as signs of the new life of Easter. A devout Spanish Catholic in the 17th century would have noticed these allusions, but they may be too fanciful, as X-rays have shown that Zurbarán painted out another plate which simply contained sweet, candied potatoes.

What he has portrayed is an allegory of the senses. We can almost smell the fragrance of orange blossom and the tanginess of the fruits. We want to reach out to touch and taste. But no, we must look and ponder the offering of these gifts for our delight, and simply give thanks for the artist who has shown us something of the sacramental beauty of creation in them.

Flowers – the beauty of the Lord

In this month of September, we give thanks for God's blessings in all that the earth yields us. Those blessings are focused in this wonderful painting of Jan Davidsz de Heem. He was born in Utrecht in Holland in 1606 and studied art under his father's guidance. De Heem then moved to Antwerp, where for the rest of his life he created paintings of such beauty and depth that one of them – a portrait of Prince William III surrounded by blossoms and fruits - received the highest price ever paid for a painting at that time.

In the 'Vase of Flowers' de Heem has gathered together a bouquet of variegated flowers and plants for our delight. Time stands still in his painting in two ways. First, these thirty-one blooms could never have flowered at the same time, but through the magical touch of the artist, they do for us. Caught on canvas, they are as fresh and vibrant as the day they were painted in 1645.

But there are signs that the gifts of nature do wither and die, as we look closely and see on the marble slab a snail. Nearby is a salamander eyeing his next meal as a spider hangs on a thread from one of the flowers. In the centre, another snail looks at his food, the beautiful and rare red and white tulips. Yet we look again and see also signs of new life: the reeds of wheat are symbols of the Eucharistic bread; the caterpillar and butterfly on the striking white poppy at the top are signs of resurrection; and the peas in their pod and the blackberries mark out the fruitfulness of creation.

The artist shows us a glorious range of flowers - some well-known, others more exotic and brought back to Holland through the colonial expansion of the 16th century. Tulips and poppies dominate, but to the left are some small-scented roses. Each is a testimony to the beauty and goodness of the world we live in.

A 100 years later, Christopher Smart wrote in 'Jubilate Agno': 'For the flowers are great blessings...for the flower glorifies God...for the flowers are peculiarly the poetry of Christ.'

And 200 years later Gerard Manley Hopkins wrote: 'I do not think I have ever seen anything more beautiful than the bluebell I have been looking at. I know the beauty of our Lord by it.'

And we, in our own century, can echo poet and painter as we praise God, the author of such flowers and plants that make up a world of 'all things bright and beautiful.'



Spiritual Disciplines: Service

'Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you.' (John 13: 14-15).

We are all familiar with those requests for more to *'serve on a team'* at church, whether the coffee rota or with the children. However, these can hinder our understanding of the spiritual discipline of service.

The discipline of service involves learning from Jesus' example, when He washed the disciples' feet. Like His disciples, we are all called to take the place of a servant and be willing to serve those around us. Richard Foster in *'Celebration of Discipline'* contrasts *'self-righteous service'*, human effort wanting to impress others and be rewarded, with *'true service'*, which is rooted in our relationship with Jesus and delights in the service itself.

In his book, Richard Foster highlights the value of small, everyday sacrificial acts of service which flow from the place of being a servant: *'service is not a list of things to do, though in it we discover things to do. It is not a code of ethics, but a way of living.'* He goes on to highlight a number of acts of service, including: hiddenness (working behind the scenes); small acts of service; guarding the reputation of others; being willing to be served ourselves; practising hospitality; listening and bearing the burdens of each other. We need to pray for wisdom and discernment, so that we know when to say *'yes'* and *'no'* to serving. If we say *'yes'* too much we can easily find ourselves becoming bitter or burned out!

Why not make it your prayer each morning: *'Lord Jesus, if it would please You, bring me someone today who I can serve?'*



A decorative border of small pumpkin icons surrounds the text.

As Halloween approaches...

Have you ever wondered what a Christian is to make of the unseen world of evil and the occult? Where do evil spirits come from, anyway?

The Bible takes the unseen world of evil spirits very seriously indeed. It tells us clearly that evil spirits were once part of the created angelic order (Genesis 6). They were not created as evil beings, for all of God's original creation was good (Genesis 3:1). The Bible relates how a number of angels, headed by Satan, or Lucifer, rebelled against God's authority and fell (Isaiah 14:12-15; Ezekiel 28:11-19).

Satan, who disguised himself as the serpent in Eden, is leader of the fallen angels, and opposes himself to God. But evil and good are not co-equal! Thus, the idea of 'dualism' (belief in the equal and permanent existence of evil alongside the good) has no place in the Bible. Unlike goodness, evil has a beginning and an end. Satan's final destruction is already assured (Revelation 12:12; 20:10).

So, what is the world of the occult, then? The word 'occult' comes from the Latin: *occultus*, 'secret', 'hidden', and is our intrusion into the forbidden territory of superstition, fortune telling, magic and spiritism. Its downfall one day is promised us through Jesus. His early ministry established a bridgehead against the evil unseen world: no wonder the hostile, and sometimes violent, reaction of the demons! (Mark 1:23-27; 32-34).

But Jesus had no fear of demons, and neither should you, if you are a Christian. Further, it is important not to become obsessed with the unseen world – **don't let it intimidate or fascinate** you. Occult films can have deeply disturbing after-effects on people. Avoid them. A Christian has better things to think about.

While the occult world is certainly there, we are wise not to imagine, as some do, that every sin we commit, every bad habit, illness or misfortune we meet is due directly to an attack on us by Satan himself, and that therefore we need to be 'exorcised'. Terrible damage has been done in this regard by Christians who mean well but who are uninformed.

The kingdom of spirits is real, but so too is Christ's authority. Before Christ, the spirits shrink and retreat. Magic spells and charms have no power over the true Christian (provided we do not open ourselves to their influence) for "the One who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world." (1 John 4:4)

If ever you are frightened by anything occult, remember some sound biblical advice: resist the devil, and he will flee from you. (James 4:7). But remember, a Christian has no business dealing in anything occult. All occultism is to be ruthlessly shunned (eg Leviticus 19:31; 20:6; 1 Samuel 28; 1 Chronicles 10:13; Isaiah 8:19,20; Acts 19:18-20.)

The demonic world is very real, very powerful, but it is also already doomed and defeated. (Colossians 2:15; Hebrews 2:14,15). Why? Because the death of Jesus Christ has achieved this victory.

So – **be confident in Christ, but not complacent in your everyday life.** Satan's kingdom is alive and well in this present world, and it will still not admit its defeat at the Cross. The final destruction of all things occult will not come until the return of Christ.

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Advanced notice of Christmas Service Arrangements as agreed at PCC Meeting on 18th September.

Sunday 17th December

9.00am BCP Communion at St Bartholomew's
10.30am Morning Worship at St Bartholomew's
6.30pm Carol Service with Christingles at St Chad's

Christmas Eve – SUNDAY 24th December

9am BCP Communion at St Bartholomew's
10.30am All-Age Nativity Service at St Chad's
11.15pm Midnight HC at St Bartholomew's

Christmas Day – Monday 25th December

10.00am Holy Communion at St Bartholomew's

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We also have a Twitter Feed:-

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Did you know.....

.....back in the year 1976, a committee based at St Chad's Church was trying to raise funds for the RNLI.

They decided to hold an exhibition of paintings by local Irby residents. The exhibition was so successful that the artists decided to join together to form an "Irby Artists Association".

....and the rest, as they say, is history!

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For more information, contact the Chair:

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| | | Adoption Society Representative Mrs Chris Rostock 648 1112 |

Baptisms and Weddings

To arrange a baptism or wedding, please telephone the Rector,
Revd Jane Turner on 0151 648 1816
or the Church office on 0151 648 8169.

RECTOR: [Revd Jane Turner](mailto:rector@thurstaston.org.uk) PLEASE NOTE: Rector's Rest Day - Tuesday
The Rectory, 77 Thingwall Road, Irby, Wirral, CH61 3UB
Telephone: 0151 648 1816 (Day off Tuesday) E-mail: rector@thurstaston.org.uk

CHURCH OFFICE: Mrs K Butler St Chad's Church, Roslin Road, Irby, CH61 3UH
Telephone: 0151 648 8169. E-mail: office@thurstaston.org.uk
OPEN TUESDAY, WEDNESDAY & THURSDAY 9.30am - 12.30pm (term time)

PARISH WEBSITE: www.thurstaston.org.uk

OCTOBER 2023 SERVICES

Morning Prayer St Chad's Prayer Room 9.00am MOST Mondays, Wednesdays & Fridays
(check with Revd Jane for cancellations due to other meetings or commitments)

EVERY Wednesday 10.30am HC at St Chads

- Sun 1st October 9.00am BCP Communion at St Bartholomew's
10.30am Holy Communion at St Bartholomew's
- Sun 8th October 9.00am BCP Communion at St Bartholomew's
10.30am All Age service at St Chad's
- Sun 15th October 9.00am BCP Communion at St Bartholomew's
10.30am Morning Worship at St Bartholomew's
- Sun 22nd October 9.00am BCP Communion at St Bartholomew's
10.30am Communion with Junior church at St Chad's
- Sun 29th October 9.00am BCP Communion at St Bartholomew's
10.30am Holy Communion at St Bartholomew's
- Sun 5th November 9.00am BCP Communion at St Bartholomew's
10.30am Communion at St Chad's
- Sun 12th November 9.00am BCP Communion at St Bartholomew's
Remembrance Sun. 10.15am Traditional Service at St Barts
with Bishop Mark 10.55am Act of Remembrance at the War Memorial
11.05am All-Age Service at St Barts

Don't Forget the Clocks go back on
Sunday 29th October

