

St Mary's Parish Magazine



September - October 2020

50p

A prayer of thanksgiving in these difficult times

For the health workers tending the seriously ill

For the scientists working on a vaccination

For the researchers analysing data and identifying trends

For the media outlets working to communicate reality

For the supermarket workers, hygiene and sanitation providers

For the good news stories of recoveries and effective planning

For the singing from balconies by locked-down communities

For the recognition that isolation doesn't need to mean loneliness

For the notes through letterboxes offering help and support

For the internet and telephones and technology that connects

For the awakened appreciation of what is truly important

Thanks be to God.

Tony King

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Footnote:

Copies of the magazine can be posted to your home or friends and relations. Subscription rates are £6.50 for a year (6 editions), including postage. Please contact the Parish Office.

REFLECTIONS

One phrase that has become part of our vocabulary over the past few months has been ***'the new normal'***. In February it seemed unthinkable that social distancing would mean we could not give our grandchildren a hug; that offices would be empty as people were strongly encouraged to work from home, or that schools, churches, and almost all shops would be shut down. Although the situation may have eased a little, it seems likely that we will still be living subject to restrictions that are unprecedented in the modern era.

It is quite frightening. People have done their best to encourage each other in whatever way they can. Over the last three months I have been inundated with email 'thoughts for the day', videos, jokes and poems; all valid in their way but nothing seemed to me very reassuring. However, during a Zoom service a couple of weeks ago, one particular reading from Isaiah 43 caused me to stop and think:

***Remember not the former things nor consider the things of old.
Behold I am doing a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?***

I wondered what the new things were that God was doing? Nothing could convince me that God had sent the virus deliberately. We are all part of the same creation including us humans and yes, even viruses – a creation which has inbuilt means of renewal, change and evolution. How we live within that creation has consequences.

We may well ask ourselves what are we supposed to be doing now when the goalposts seem to have moved so significantly. Well perhaps God is calling us to use the time to stop, look and listen, to seek out the lessons that can be drawn from our situation today.

I guess the disciples found themselves in a similar position following the crucifixion. Only a few days earlier, as Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a donkey, the crowds had greeted him with "Hosanna, blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord". Now the doors were securely bolted for

fear of the authorities. It was not until the risen Lord came into the locked room that they began to realise that there was to be a **new way** of living, a **new way** of being followers of Jesus.

Maybe we too have to try to perceive what our new circumstances mean for us. Have we discovered what is really necessary for living a contented life? How many of the ‘must haves’ are **really** necessary? Who are the essential people in our communities and the life of our nation?

Perhaps God is pointing the way forward and asking whether we really want to keep living the former ways, or are we going to have the faith and courage to act on our new insights? Can we tackle all the injustice issues that have been made so much more apparent by Covid-19.



It will take conviction and fortitude to confront the way we have used and abused our environment; to support, but also to challenge, our government to do the right thing. And **we** need to be willing to be changed ourselves. But, just as Jesus gave the disciples what they needed to step out

into the new way so he will give us what we need too.

Doreen Mills

Reader at St Mary's

MICHAELMAS

Michaelmas, or the Feast of Michael and All Angels, is celebrated on the 29th of September every year. As it falls near the equinox, the day is associated with the beginning of autumn and the shortening of days; in England, it is one of the “quarter days”.

There are traditionally four “quarter days” in a year (Lady Day (25th March), Midsummer (24th June), Michaelmas (29th September) and Christmas (25th December)). They are spaced three months apart, on

religious festivals, usually close to the solstices or equinoxes. They were the four dates on which servants were hired, rents due or leases begun. It used to be said that harvest had to be completed by Michaelmas, almost like the marking of the end of the productive season and the beginning of the new cycle of farming. It was the time at which new servants were hired or land was exchanged and debts were paid. This is how it came to be for Michaelmas to be the time for electing magistrates and also the beginning of legal and university terms.



St Michael is one of the principal angelic warriors, protector against the dark of the night and the Archangel who fought against Satan and his evil angels. As Michaelmas is the time that the darker nights and colder days begin – the edge into winter – the celebration of Michaelmas is associated with encouraging protection during these dark months. It was believed that negative forces were stronger in darkness and so families would require stronger defences during the later months of the year.

Traditionally, in the British Isles, a well fattened goose, fed on the stubble from the fields after the harvest, is eaten to protect against financial need in the family for the next year; and as the saying goes:

*“Eat a goose on Michaelmas Day,
Want not for money all the year”.*

Sometimes the day was also known as “Goose Day” and goose fairs were held. Even now, the famous Nottingham Goose Fair is still held on or around the 3rd of October. Part of the reason goose is eaten is that it was said that when Queen Elizabeth I heard of the defeat of the Armada, she was dining on goose and resolved to eat it on Michaelmas Day. Others followed suit. It could also have developed through the role of Michaelmas Day as the debts were due; tenants requiring a delay in payment may have tried to persuade their landlords with gifts of geese!

In Scotland, St Michael’s Bannock, or Struan Micheil (a large scone-like cake) is also created. This used to be made from cereals grown on the family’s land during the year, representing the fruits of the fields, and is

cooked on a lamb skin, representing the fruit of the flocks. The cereals are also moistened with sheep's milk, as sheep are deemed the most sacred of animals. As the Struan is created by the eldest daughter of the family, the following is said:

*“Progeny and prosperity of family, Mystery of Michael,
Protection of the Trinity”*

Through the celebration of the day in this way, the prosperity and wealth of the family is supported for the coming year. The custom of celebrating Michaelmas Day as the last day of harvest was broken when Henry VIII split from the Catholic Church; instead, it is Harvest Festival that is celebrated now.

In British folklore, Old Michaelmas Day, 10th October, is the last day that blackberries should be picked. It is said that on this day, when Lucifer was expelled from Heaven, he fell from the skies, straight onto a blackberry bush. He then cursed the fruit, scorched them with his fiery breath, spat and stamped on them and made them unfit for consumption! And so the Irish proverb goes:

“On Michaelmas Day the devil puts his foot on blackberries”.

The Michaelmas Daisy, which flowers late in the growing season between late August and early October, provides colour and warmth to gardens at a time when the majority of flowers are coming to an end. As suggested by the saying below, the daisy is probably associated with this celebration because, as mentioned previously, St Michael is celebrated as a protector from darkness and evil, just as the daisy fights against the advancing gloom of Autumn and Winter.

*“The Michaelmas Daisies, among dede weeds,
Bloom for St Michael’s valorous deeds.
And seems the last of flowers that stood,
Till the feast of St. Simon and St. Jude.”*

(The Feast of St. Simon and Jude is 28 October)

The act of giving a Michaelmas Daisy symbolises saying farewell, perhaps in the same way as Michaelmas Day is seen to say farewell to the productive year and welcome in the new cycle.

Ben Johnson

A SERMON FROM AUGUST

In his accounts of Jesus' two miraculous feedings Matthew doesn't make this clear but it's likely that the two meals are deeply symbolic. The feeding of the 5,000 shows Jesus sharing food with the People of God called from slavery in Egypt, which is the story told in the 5 books of Moses. Whilst the feeding of the 4,000 illustrates Jesus sharing food with a new People of God – the gentiles called from the 4 corners of the earth.

As well as looking back deeply into Israel's story of exodus and exile, of prophetic and priestly forerunners, these two stories also look forward to themes that we've touched on a great deal as we've faced the challenges that Coronavirus has placed upon us. These meals are pointing towards Jesus' Last Supper, which is a precursor of the Eucharist and which, in turn, looks forward to the ultimate, heavenly banquet.

When we sit down to eat with Jesus on a deserted shoreline, atop a mountain, at a wedding feast, in an upper room, or at Holy Communion, we're always in the present moment listening to those stories yet also looking back and looking forward. For Jesus the heavenly banquet in God's presence won't just be for the great and the good, and for those who expect to attend. It'll be for those who were looked down upon, those on the margins and those who'd been excluded by polite, religious society.

It was these folk to whom Jesus was speaking, proclaiming the good news of God's kingdom and sharing food. When we went into lockdown, our online worship was an agape service, which reflected Jesus practice of sharing a table with those he met. In some sense, for us, the online agape service was a form of Maundy Thursday. We are now in a time of waiting, as things continue to change, settle and resolve – a kind of Good Friday time.

We will return to celebrating Holy Communion and the Easter Sunday of the Eucharist will dawn once more. However, we need to find a steady moment for that to happen and even now – with the advent of masks being required in churches – significant changes are still happening and ongoing.

The plan is to begin communion again in September when we can look at things in a calm, stable and sustainable manner.

In the meantime, as we all wait in *this present moment*, maybe a prayer will help:

*You keep us waiting.
You, the God of all time,
want us to wait for the right time in which to discover:
who we are, where we must go,
who will be with us, and what we must do.
So, thank you Lord...for this waiting time.*

*You keep us looking.
You, the God of all space:
want us to look in the predictable and the unforeseen places for
signs of hope,
for people who are without hope,
for visions of a better world that will appear among the
disappointments of the world we know.
So, thank you Lord...for this looking time.*

*You keep us loving.
You, the God whose name is love,
want us to be like you:
to love those without love and those who're hard to love;
to love without jealousy or design or threat,
and, most difficult of all, to love ourselves.
So, thank you Lord...for this loving time.*

*In the name of the One who is with us waiting, looking and loving.
Amen*

God be with you

Vaughan

The Revd Vaughan Roberts

AUTUMN LEAVES

It looks like Autumn is sneaking in a bit early this year in the forested mountains of my home. Tiny splashes of red, yellow, and orange are appearing on tree after tree here. It is so beautiful. It is almost like a thousand angels with paint brushes are flying over the forests on these early September nights spreading both colour and joy.

Seeing all of the beauty and colour of these wonderful Autumn leaves has made me decide to do something that I haven't done in a few years. It will probably be a few more months before I can do it, but I am going to jump in a pile of Autumn leaves again. I am going to dance in them and hear them crunch under my feet. I am going to lay down in them and feel them brush up against my face. I am going to smell them and let them invigorate my being. I am going to play in them with both the heart of a child and the appreciation of an adult. I am going to enjoy these glorious gifts from God with all my heart, all my soul, and all my mind.

It doesn't matter if you are eight, forty, or eighty four, it is never too late to enjoy a beautiful Autumn. It is never too late to play in the leaves. It is never too late to laugh like a child. It is never too late to gaze with wonder and awe at this beautiful world that we have been blessed to live in. It is never too late to fully live your life.



May you live your own life as beautifully and wonderfully as a forest full of Autumn leaves then. May you share the colour of your heart and light of your soul with everyone you meet. May you bless this whole world with your kindness, goodness, and oneness with God. May you live a life of such giving, sharing, and caring that even after you pass from this world what you did and who you were will continue to nourish the hearts and souls of those still here. May you live in love and joy today, tomorrow, and forever and may you always remember to jump in the leaves.

Joseph J. Mazzella

GIVE US OUR ELEVEN DAYS!

The eleven days referred to here are the 'lost' 11 days of September 1752, skipped when Britain changed over from the Julian calendar to the Gregorian calendar, bringing us into line with most of Europe.

The Gregorian calendar is today's international calendar, named after the man who first introduced it in February 1582, Pope Gregory XIII.

Before 1752, Britain and her Empire followed the Julian calendar, first implemented by Julius Caesar in 46 B.C. However this calendar had an inbuilt error of 1 day every 128 years, due to a miscalculation of the solar year by 11 minutes. This affected the date of Easter, traditionally observed on March 21, as it began to move further away from the spring equinox with each passing year.

To get over this problem, the Gregorian calendar was introduced. This is a solar calendar, based on a 365-day year divided into 12 months. Each month consists of either 30 or 31 days with one month, February, consisting of 28 days. A leap year every 4 years adds an extra day to February making it 29 days long.

First to adopt the new calendar in 1582 were France, Italy, Poland, Portugal and Spain. Turkey was the last country to officially switch to the new system on January 1st, 1927.

The Calendar (New Style) Act 1750 introduced the Gregorian calendar to the British Empire, bringing Britain into line with most of Western Europe.

Its introduction was not straightforward. It meant that the year 1751 was a short year, lasting just 282 days from 25th March (New Year in the Julian calendar) to 31st December. The year 1752 then began on 1 January.

There remained the problem of aligning the calendar in use in England with that in use in Europe. It was necessary to correct it by 11 days: the 'lost days'. It was decided that Wednesday 2nd September 1752 would be followed by Thursday 14th September 1752.

The changing of the calendar was indeed one of the issues debated in the election campaign of 1754 between the Whigs and the Tories.

It is also true that when the British government decided to alter the calendar and skip these 11 days, many people mistakenly believed that

their lives would be shortened by 11 days. People were also unhappy and suspicious at the moving of saint's days and holy days, including the date of Easter. Many people also objected to the imposition of what they saw as a 'popish' calendar.

However, most historians now believe that these protests never happened. You could say that the calendar rioters were the late Georgian equivalent of an urban myth or fake news!

Not everyone was unhappy about the new calendar. According to W.M. Jamieson in his book, 'Murders Myths and Monuments of North Staffordshire', there is a tale about one William Willett of Endon. Always keen on a joke, he apparently wagered that he could dance non-stop for 12 days and 12 nights. On the evening of September 2nd 1752, he started to jig around the village and continued all through the night. The next morning, September 14th by the new calendar, he stopped dancing and claimed his bets!

Footnote:

Have you have ever wondered why the tax year in Britain starts on the unlikely date of 6th April, rather than 1st January?

The official start of the year on the Julian calendar used to be Lady Day (25th March), and this was also the official start of the tax year. However the introduction of the new calendar and the loss of the eleven days in 1752 meant this date was changed to 5th April in 1753, to avoid losing 11 days of tax revenue. Another change was made to the date in 1800, as this would have been a leap year in the Julian calendar but not in the new Gregorian calendar. So again the tax year was extended and the start date changed to 6th April where it remains to this day.

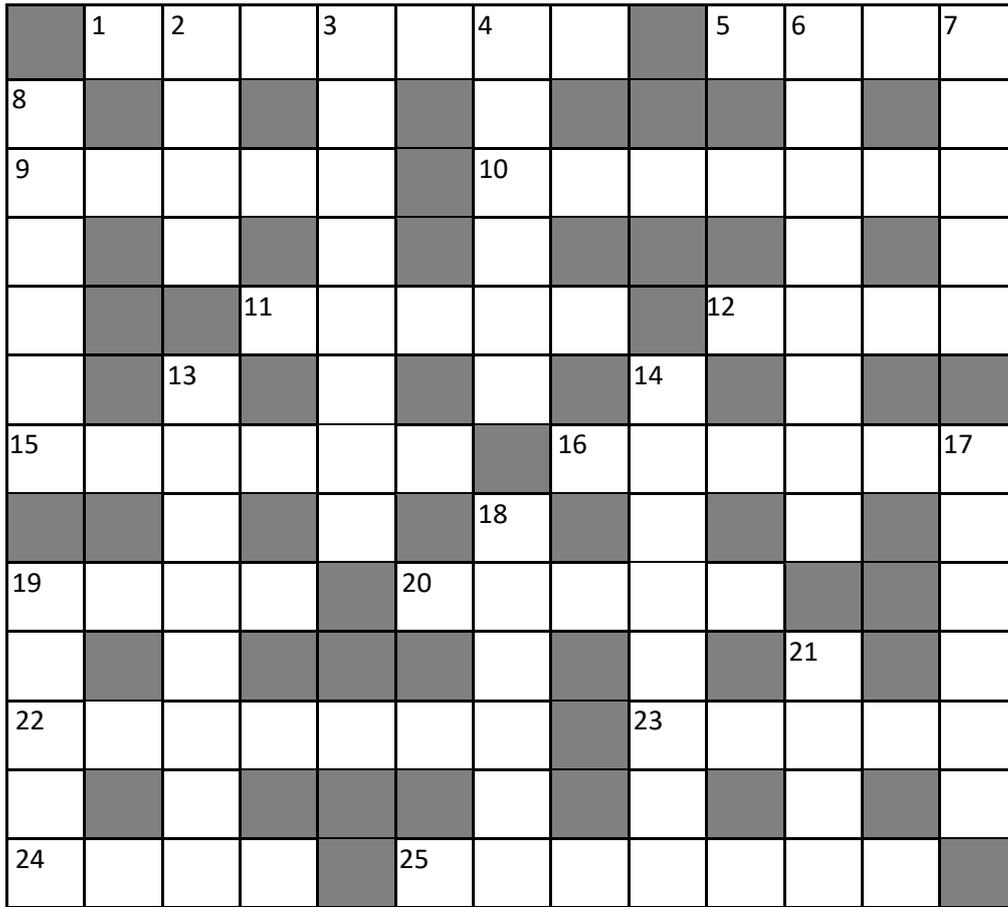
Ben Johnson

RELIGIOUS TOLERANCE

We must respect the other fellow's religion, but only in the sense and to the extent that we respect his theory that his wife is beautiful and his children smart.

H L Mencken

NEVER A CROSSWORD!



ACROSS

1. Governing body that operates by the book? (7)
5. Sign for the wise men? The rodents are back! (4)
9. Beer with very soft additives – it's tempting! (5)
10. Trials or pacts. (7)
11. A smug sort of sage. (5)
12. Goddess passing through Oxford. (4)
15. Computer delivered by Moses? (6)
16. Story of Jesus' life provided by Hugo Spelman. (6)
19. Leap about when the bells ring. (4)
20. Youngster gets left behind in Babylon. (5)
22. A letter for the French getting off piste. (7)
23. Love, change direction, and embellish. (5)
24. A prophetess, whichever way you look at it. (4)
25. Where to read a lesson – left of centre thereabouts. (7)

DOWN

2. Bob's optimism? (4)
3. Sick lepers get at clerics. (8)
4. Is this book a bit of a departure? (6)
6. Patterns providing part of the church's floorplan. (8)
7. Doesn't move when the choir's not singing! (5)
8. Catholic has baby food at first. (6)
13. Ex-pupil has classical language but with zero offering. (8)
14. A promise: not able to get the cooker in! (8)
17. A somewhat mental expression of grief. (6)
18. Fast way to look after cardinals. (6)
19. Kelpie takes part in a religious scene. (5)
21. Sounds as if we're in favour of these horsemen! (4)

THOUGHT FOR FOOD

Autumn glazed pork chops

Something to ease you into the Autumn

Ingredients

- 4 boneless pork chops
- ¼ teaspoon freshly ground pepper
- ¼ cup apple juice or cider
- ½ cup whole cranberry sauce
- 2 tablespoons honey
- 2 tablespoons orange juice concentrate
- ¼ teaspoon ground ginger
- ⅛ teaspoon ground nutmeg



Preparation time: 10 minutes

Cook: 15 minutes

Serves 4

Spray a large non-stick skillet with non-stick coating. Heat over medium-high heat. Sprinkle both sides of chops with pepper. Brown chops on each side in hot skillet. Add apple juice/cider. Cover tightly; cook over low heat for 5-6 minutes or until chops are just done. Drain off juices. In a small bowl combine cranberry sauce, honey, orange juice concentrate, ginger and nutmeg. Pour over chops. Cook for 1 to 2 minutes, until heated through.

Serve with seasonal vegetables and, of course, a glass or two of a nice chilled dry white wine or cider if you prefer!

AUTUMN'S DESCENT

In dusty blues and rustic hues
Her steps at first descend
Then her hand sweeps all the land
As glorious colours blend
And, as we gaze at autumn's blaze
Which sets the world a-fire
It's like a breath of Heaven on earth
To calm us and inspire.

The red and gold that we behold
O'er-takes the green and brown
And each hillside so far and wide
Is decked in autumn's gown
The geese that fly across the sky
In spite of autumn's smile
Have felt the call of chilling fall
Within each lofty mile.

Man can't use or ever choose
This perfect artistry
Although they've have tried with skilful pride
To paint her pure beauty
For up above a God of love
Is in perfect control
His touch will crown this glorious gown
Which claims all nature's soul.

Janet Martin



CHURCH NEWSLETTER TYPOS

Barbara remains in the hospital and needs blood donors for more transfusions. She is also having trouble sleeping and requests tapes of the vicar's sermons.

Irving Benson and Jessie Carter were married on October 24th in the church. So ends a friendship that began in their school days.

Scouts are saving aluminium cans, bottles, and other items to be recycled. Proceeds will be used to cripple children.

Please place your donation in the envelope along with the deceased person you want remembered.

Attend and you will hear an excellent speaker and have a healthy lunch.

The church will host an evening of fine dining, superb entertainment, and gracious hostility.

The associate minister unveiled the church's new tithing campaign slogan last Sunday: "I Upped My Pledge - Up Yours."

AND FINALLY

CROSSWORD SOLUTION

ACROSS 1 Chapter 5 Star 9 Apple 10 Ordeals 11 Magus 12 Isis 15 Tablet
16 Gospel 19 Peal 20 Babel 22 Epistle 23 Adorn 24 Anna 25 Lectern

DOWN 2 Hope 3 Prelates 4 Exodus 6 Transept 7 Rests 8 Papist 13 Oblation
14 Covenant 17 Lament 18 Carene 19 Pieta 21 Four

Who's Where in The Warwick Team

Contacts in our partner churches in the Warwick Team include:

<u>All Saints</u>	
Revd Diane Thompson (Team Vicar)	492073
<u>St Nicholas</u>	
Revd Linda Duckers (Team Vicar)	496209
<u>St Paul's</u>	
Revd Jonathan Hearne (Team Vicar)	419814

ST MARY'S CONTACT NUMBERS

Revd Dr Vaughan Roberts (Team Rector)	492909
Parish Office	403940
Doreen Mills (Reader)	494692
Oliver Hancock (Director of Music)	403940
Gail Guest (Church Warden)	885421
John Luxton (Church Warden)	07740 046718
David Benson (Deputy Church Warden)	882207
Godfrey Hill (Deputy Church Warden)	02476 464432
Bell Ringers	492783
1 st Warwick St Mary's Rainbows/Brownies/Guides	403185
Choir	403940
Friends of St Mary's Choir	07549 534339
Collegium	498851
St Mary's Scholars	403940
St Mary's Study Group	07799 682872
Flowers	857351
Church Guides	403940
Gift Shop	403940
Sunday School	312861
Friends of St Mary's Church	419991
St Mary's Guild of Servers	07713 997769
Sidesmen	882207
Churches Together in Warwick	428420
Guild of Ex Choristers gec@stmaryswarwick.org.uk	740181
Tony King (Magazine Editor)	497349

Church Council Members

The Rector, the Reader and Church Wardens	
John Adams (Treasurer)	07925 005389
Vicky Bartholomew (Secretary)	403449
David Clark	465081
Grahame Edmonds	
Alan Faulkner	
Desmond Jack	495795
Gill James (Synod member)	842024
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Joy Nugent (Synod member)	852565
Carol Warren	493940