

Brookfield News

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Forgive One Another

‘Everyone says forgiveness is a lovely idea, until they have something to forgive.’ (C S Lewis).

As we look at the challenge of forgiving one another, let’s remember Paul’s words, ‘Forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.’ (Col 3:13). What do the four ‘gives’ of forgiveness look like in the Christian community?

God gave His Son for us: Paul’s word for forgiveness carries the meaning ‘be gracious’, as an expression of God’s grace i.e. His unconditional love and acceptance of us. This is demonstrated on the Cross, when God who gave

His Son to die for us. Therefore, forgiveness is not dependent on anything we do, but on what God has done for us!

God gave us life in Jesus: Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is.’ (1). Paul reminds us that Christians have new life and forgiveness through their relationship with Christ. It is His forgiveness that releases us from the resentment and bitterness eg ‘anger, rage, malice, slander’ (8). We can only really forgive others, when we know God’s forgiveness ourselves.

We give forgiveness to others: Forgiveness is never easy, as it

requires effort and prayer. On the one hand, it is a choice we make; a decision of the heart to release others, and let go bitterness and revenge. On the other hand, it can be a process, in which we have to keep on forgiving others. In answer to Peter, who wanted to know how often to forgive, Jesus said, ‘I tell you, not seven times, but 77’ (Matt 18: 22). It can take time (if at all!) to achieve reconciliation.

God gives perfect forgiveness: How often do we can find ourselves saying, ‘I’ll forgive, but I can’t forget or things will never be the same again?’ We forgive often on a limited and conditional basis, while God’s forgiveness is perfect, ‘For I will forgive their wickedness

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Services

Sundays

11.00am Sung Eucharist

"Sunday Supplement" the children's activity takes place every Sunday in the sacristy during the service

Weekday Services

Said Eucharist

Tuesday 7.30pm

Wednesday 9.30am

Friday 7.30am

Saints' & Holy Days

Sunday 16th August

Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary

11.00am Parish Mass

Fr Guy will be away from 7th - 17th August

Sunday 9th August the Preacher and Celebrant will be Fr. Tom Steel

Sunday 16th August the preacher and Celebrant will be Canon John Beckwith

Clergy Day off: Fr. Guy is off duty on Monday but don't hesitate to call him in emergencies.

The Vicar is usually available in the Vicarage, 85 Dartmouth Park Road, from 8:00pm until 9:00pm on Tuesdays for the purpose of interviews, arranging Baptisms, reading of Banns and Weddings etc. he is also available to hear confessions then or by appointment.

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and will remember their sins no more.' (Jer 31:34). Like God, it's not simply a matter of forgetting, but choosing not to remember. This involves not dwelling on resentment or hurts, but wishing people well, rather than seeking revenge.

A young Christian confessed his sin to God and promised not to do it again. An hour later he was back, 'God, I've done it again!' he said. 'Done what?' replied God.

Blessings

The student was writing to the head of the mission in England who had founded his local school in the African bush. He wanted to end with a blessing, 'May heaven preserve you.'

Not being quite confident of his English, he looked up the word 'preserve'. When the letter reached the head of the mission, it ended with the words: "And may Heaven pickle you."

The dangers of familiarity

“Where did this man get these things?... Isn't this the carpenter?... And they took offence at Him.’ (Mark 6: 2,3)

This account of the rejection of Jesus by the people He'd grown up with exposes a common fallacy. Too often unbelieving individuals have said, “Well, it was all right for people who saw Jesus during His life on earth. Naturally if I could see Him for myself, then of course I could believe.”

Nazareth - the home of Jesus for 30 years - has, for the most part, never believed in Him. There would have been items made for its inhabitants at the carpenter's shop. It might have been thought that householders - after Christ's resurrection - would have reverently brought out doors, tables, chairs and cabinets made by “the carpenter's son,” and said with

wonder, ‘Why, Jesus actually made that cot for my baby!’

But no. One of the values of this account by Mark is that it helpfully brings to light the sheer normality of Jesus' earthly family life; He had half brothers and sisters. Indeed two of His brothers - James and Jude - were to write part of the New Testament. Each described themselves humbly as a ‘servant’ of Jesus Christ.

At the unbelief of His own township, Jesus is said to have been ‘amazed’ (v.6) Only once again does the same Greek word occur in the New Testament. When in Luke 7:9 a Roman centurion demonstrates his faith in the Lord, Christ is “amazed” at the faith of this heathen gentile and declares, ‘I have not found such great faith, even in Israel.’

It's something about the famil-

ilarity and easy access of the love and power of God that can blind someone to the urgency of personal response. You can be living next door to a church that is brimming with the transfiguring love of the gospel, and never darken its doors.

Nazareth's penalty was that nothing much was going to happen for its people, except for ‘a few sick people’ (v. 5).

Preachers! Bible class leaders! Speakers to young and old alike! We're to seize on Jesus' amazement in the face of unbelief - and help our hearers to learn from Nazareth the ever-growing solemnity of what may happen when you take offence at the carpenter's son who was to be universal world Saviour:

FIRST, the familiar becomes despised....

THEN, God's power becomes withdrawn....

FINALLY, the door becomes closed

Where is God?

Sometimes unbelievers ask that, with contempt. Other times, believers ask it, when feeling overwhelmed by tragedy, trial or sorrow. What does the Bible tell us?

God is above His people: ‘I will say of the Lord, “He is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust.....He will cover you with his feathers, and under His wings you will find refuge.”’ Psalm 91:2,4

God is beneath His people: ‘The eternal God is your refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms.’ Deuteronomy 33:27

Before His people: ‘By day the Lord went ahead of them in a pillar of cloud to guide them on their way...’ Exodus 13:21

Behind His people: ‘Whether you turn to the right or to the left, your ears will hear a voice behind you, saying, “This is the way; walk in it.”’ Isaiah 30:21

Around His people: The angel of the Lord encamps around those who fear Him, and He delivers them. Psalm 34:7

With His people: ‘So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen

you and help you; I will uphold you with My righteous hand.’ Isaiah 41:10

Within His people: ‘Jesus said, “If anyone comes to Me, he will obey My teaching. My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him.”’ John 14:23

So - God is all around you, and Jesus promised that He would never leave us or forsake us.

THE ARTIST IN THE WAR ± AND THE WAR ARTIST

by David Winter

A few years ago I lived for a while in the beautiful Berkshire village of Cookham on the banks of the Thames. In the main street there is the Spencer Gallery, commemorating Cookham's most famous son, the artist Sir Stanley Spencer, who died in 1959.

He was (like my own father) a medical orderly in the Great War, though in Salonika, not France. In the Second World War he was made an official 'War Artist'. The young Spencer created many paintings capturing life at the front in the first of those wars, including a striking one entitled 'The Dressing Station', showing the horse drawn ambulances lining up (as at a modern A&E) to hand their patients over to the medics. That, and many other powerful evocations of life in the war zones, is part of the heritage of the Sandham Memorial Chapel, near Newbury.

The chapel was bought by the Sandham family to commemorate a son who was killed in the Great War. They commissioned Spencer to create a visionary array of murals capturing the life of the ordinary soldier (and his officers) to 'commemorate the forgotten dead'. Visitors might notice (though I had to be told to look out for it) that amongst them all there is not a single weapon. These are men facing danger together, washing their clothes, cleaning their equipment and caring for the wounded – but not actually handling a gun or firing a shot. At the east end of the chapel is a main 'altar-piece', showing the risen Christ in the distance

but all around him the resurrection of the soldiers who have been slain.

Resurrection was a great theme of Spencer's work. His most famous painting, 'Resurrection in Cookham Churchyard', shows parishioners emerging from their graves, to be welcomed by the figure of Jesus, standing in the porch of the church. Much of his best work reflected the life and people of Cookham, often acting out a biblical scene. The exceptions are his war paintings from both conflicts. Like many people who lived through the two World Wars, they were defining events in his life.

There are older people in Cookham today who remember him, a somewhat eccentric figure wheeling his pram converted into a portable art station, complete with easel and paints, as he toured the area in search of suitable subjects. He made much of his living as a fine portrait painter, but his great reputation rests on a remarkable range of paintings in a modern style which capture forever the spirit of an age that is now past.

The Cookham Gallery is open at weekends and bank holidays. 'Resurrection in Cookham Churchyard' is in the Tate Gallery, London. The Sandham Memorial Chapel is operated by the National Trust. Visitors must pre-book (it only holds 25 people) – phone 01635 278394. You could combine a visit with one to Highclere Castle nearby (alias Downton Abbey!).

Syrian refugees: appeal aims to lighten Lebanon's load

Imagine an area the size of Devon and Cornwall coping with more than a million new residents – traumatised by war and most with nowhere habitable to live. That's the nightmare facing the tiny country of Lebanon, now trying to deal with a Syrian refugee crisis – leaving it with the highest concentration of refugees per capita in the world.

Lebanon's problem is worse than many realise. Despite being the same size as Devon and Cornwall combined, its normal population is around 4.5 million, about two-and-a-half times the population of the two English counties. Lebanon's existing population density is second only to Gaza in the Middle East. The influx of refugees has increased its population by over a quarter, placing an enormous strain on the local economy and society.

Embrace the Middle East, a Christian charity tackling poverty and injustice in the Middle East, has launched its summer appeal to help Syrian refugees in the overwhelmed country. Aid is given out in food vouchers and also mattresses, which can serve as a table for meals, a sofa for sitting on and a bed for sleep.

Jeremy Moodey, CEO of Embrace, said: "The millions of Syrians who have fled their country's devastating civil war have become the world's forgotten refugees." More details of Embrace's appeal at: <http://www.embraceme.org/appeal>

“Dear Friends...”

From the Vicars Desk

As I write this letter the Consecration is taking place in Canterbury Cathedral of three Bishops including Rachel Treweek who has been the Archdeacon of Hackney and is now to be the Bishop of Gloucester. I know and respect her greatly as she has also been the Archdeacon of Northolt and in that capacity I worked with her on an appointment of a parish priest in the Willesden Area. I have also got to know her well on the Bishops Council and Diocesan Finance Committee. After a rather turbulent period with successive Bishops getting themselves into trouble I am sure that in Rachel they will have a pastorally sensitive and very able Bishop.

It has now been announced that our new Bishop, Fr Rob Wickham, together with the new Bishop of Kensington and the Bishop of Islington who will have a role in church growth not just here in London but throughout the country together with the Bishop of Maidstone will all be consecrated in Canterbury on September 23rd. Unfortunately this will mean that tickets will be very restricted because of space and wherever the service is conducted in the Cathedral at least half the congregation will be in the wrong half of the cathedral! Why the Archbishop has decided to hold the service in the most unhelpful place I cannot imagine, but sadly we are stuck with it. I am told that there will be a service of welcome at some point which will be more accessible!

Elsewhere in the Magazine you will find two articles about Syrian Christians. The Syrian Christian community goes back to earliest times with St Paul's conversion on the road to Damascus and the story of Annanias being commissioned to go and lay hands on him. Sadly this community made up of various churches is now under serious threat to its very existence. At the last meeting to the Diocesan Synod we had a motion from the Deanery of Westminster St Marlebone expressing the great concern that folk in that Deanery feel for the persecuted fellow Christians and urging the Synod to press politicians to take action. Many of the refugees we see turning up in Italy and Greece are from this community who are being systematically persecuted for their faith. It is reckoned that within five years they will be extinct in their homeland.

So what can we realistically do? Well despite the obvious political difficulties we surely could offer hospitality in our land to some of these folk, and seek to assist those who wish to settle in lands closer to their own. It is hard for us to imagine what it would be like to be forced out of our homes because we were Christians. It has not happened here since the 8th century when the Norse warriors attacked from the east. We need to be much more sympathetic to their plight and encourage our politicians to act accordingly.

Lastly I want to give you an advance reminder of our Patronal

Festival which comes up on Tuesday September 8th. This year will be a bit different as we have Bishop Robert Ladds who was the Bishop of Whitby before retirement coming to conduct a Confirmation. We have two younger candidates, and hopefully one adult. I do hope that you will all do your best to come to support them as they take this big step in their lives as they commit themselves to life long discipleship. We will of course have supper in the Vicarage afterwards for everybody to enjoy together. Lots of donations of food will be needed and welcome. I am sure that Ruth Godwin will be looking for offers very soon.

If you are going away this month I do hope that you will enjoy some rest and reinvigoration from the pressures of life in our city, and return renewed to work for the mission of our parish.

Your Parish Priest

Best position for effective prayer

Three clergy sat discussing the best positions for prayer while a telephone repairman worked nearby. “Kneeling is definitely best,” claimed one priest. “No,” another contended. “I get the best results standing with my hands outstretched to Heaven.”

“You’re both wrong,” the third insisted. “The most effective prayer position is lying prostrate, face down on the floor.”

The repairman could contain himself no longer. “Sorry,” he blurted out, “but the best praying I ever did was hanging upside down from a telephone pole.”

In Darkest England Then ± the birth of the Salvation Army

It was 150 years ago this summer that a couple of free-lance evangelists who had been ministering in the poorest parts of London founded what they called the 'Salvation Army'

They were William and Catherine Booth - right from the start this particular army would be happy with the idea not just of female soldiers but of women as officers. Their mission was to the poorest and the most neglected parts of a huge city, in which enormous wealth lived a few streets away from the most appalling poverty.

William Booth wrote a book, *In Darkest England Now*, which awakened the public conscience to the conditions in which millions of people were living in the growing cities of the industrial revolution. Overcrowded and squalid houses, filthy streets, petty crime and larceny endemic and - Booth's top-line anxiety - cheap alcohol playing havoc with family budgets and

family life. Before the wage-earner got home on a Friday night, he had very often spent a large part of his wages in one of the gin-houses which were everywhere. It might all look quite jovial and matey in 'Oliver!', but in truth it was 'Christmas Carol' without the turkey.

In that setting the Booths and their helpers preached the Gospel. But they did much more: they cared for the people, setting up centres where problems could be addressed, food could be provided and children clothed. They didn't just preach the gospel; they lived it.

The new movement adopted a military-style uniform and its ministers were given quasi-military ranks. They saw themselves as an army fighting the horrors of poverty, despair and degradation in our big cities. Their presence at times provoked violent counter demonstrations, sometimes encouraged by those whose trade was affected by their opposition to cheap alco-

hol. Yet rapidly the Army grew - the great dramatist George Bernard Shaw even wrote a play about it, 'Major Barbara'.

The Salvation Army is still with us, of course, now highly respected. William and Catherine Booth are commemorated in the Church of England's Calendar, and the movement founded in the slums of Victorian London now works world-wide. They led the way in recognising the leadership potential of women in the Church - many readers will remember the charismatic Catherine Bramwell Booth from the sixties and seventies.

Most of us at some time have come across their red-top style evangelistic newspaper the *War Cry*, still sold in many pubs up and down the land. They are the only denomination to have a universally recognised nick-name ('Sally Army'). And - the sincerest form of flattery - the Anglican Church created its 'Church Army' to mirror the Salvation Army's work and priorities. Happy 150th, Sally!

Operation Safe Havens: Evacuating Syrian Christians in danger

In the summer of 1683 the Ottoman army was besieging Vienna, and Christian Europe trembled in fear of a Muslim invasion and take-over. But the Polish army, led by their King John III Sobieski, joined with the forces of the Holy Roman Empire to defeat the Ottomans in battle on 11th September. The battle is noted for the largest cavalry charge in history, in which the Polish Hussars had a major role.

The Battle of Vienna marked the end of the Ottoman expansion into Europe and is considered a

turning point in history. It was the intervention of Poland that saved the day for European Christians.

As today the advancing forces of Islamic State menace the Christians of Syria, again Poland has led the way in decisive action to save Christians. The Polish government has agreed to give visas to Syrian Christian families so they can resettle in Poland. And Syria's President Assad recently announced that he would not stand in their way if they wished to leave their homeland.

And so Barnabas Fund is working with the Polish government, the Polish charity Esther Foundation, and local Polish churches to rescue Syrian Christians. Through Operation Safe Havens the Barnabas Fund is flying them to Poland and paying for their basic needs for one year, while Polish churches welcome them, and help them to find accommodation and jobs.

If you would like to play a part in getting Syrian Christians to safety, go to: <https://barnabasfund.org/appeals/Operation-Safe-Havens-Rescuing-Christia...>

Archbishop of Canterbury joins faith leaders in call for urgent action on climate change

Faith leaders in Britain have pledged to fast and pray for the success of key international negotiations over climate change in a new declaration warning of the “huge challenge” facing the world over global warming.

Representatives of the major faiths, including the Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby, said climate change has already hit the poorest of the world hardest and urgent action is needed now to protect future generations.

In the newly-launched Lambeth Declaration, signatories call on faith communities to recognise the

pressing need to make the transition to a low carbon economy.

The call comes ahead of the international climate change talks in Paris this December where negotiators from more than 190 nations will gather to discuss a new global agreement on climate change, aimed at limiting greenhouse gas emissions from 2020 when current commitments run out.

The Declaration, signed by the Archbishops of Canterbury and York and other faith leaders in the UK, warns that world leaders must agree to reduce emissions to avoid average temperatures rising

beyond 2 degrees Centigrade, widely considered to be the threshold above which it is considered that the impacts of climate change will be most severe. The original Declaration was hosted by former Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams and signed by faith leaders in 2009 ahead of the Climate Summit in Copenhagen.

Signatories include representatives from the Muslim, Sikh and Jewish communities as well as the Catholic Church in England and Wales, Methodist Conference and other denominations and faiths, with more leaders continuing to sign the Declaration.

'O happy band of pilgrims' ± when the path is challenging

The pilgrim path is not always the walk by quiet waters and through green meadows. St Paul tells us to run with perseverance the race that is set before us, and we do need to travel through life with that tenacity.

Basil Hume wrote in his book 'To be a Pilgrim': 'The way is often rough for a pilgrim and hard going, but pilgrims must keep going resolutely and courageously.' In the last article in this occasional series, we saw how we can travel on pilgrimage in the company of others, and so support and learn from one another.

However, we may choose to travel alone, in order to learn more about our true selves and how we as individuals respond to the demands of the journey. In the film, 'Wild' Reese Witherspoon walks the Pacific Cresta Trail alone. In that pilgrimage she encounters the beauties and the perils of the trail,

but in the challenge of her loneliness, she finds the need to turn to the kindness of strangers for help and guidance.

In March of last year, I visited Amsterdam for the annual celebration of the miracle of the host in 1345. The Saturday evening Eucharist concluded with an hour long procession through the streets of that busy city. It was not a journey taken alone, for there were about a hundred of us. But it was a procession conducted in complete silence. We made our way through the bustling night life in all its colour and variety. That journey together was a challenge – a challenge to trust in the leaders, who were taking us through unfamiliar and even threatening parts of the city; and a challenge not to judge others around, but to hold them in silent prayer.

Each pilgrimage comes with a challenge: it may be the sheer physical-

ity of the journey, or it may be the inward journey as we plumb the depths of our true selves. We may notice physical changes – wearing out boots and shoe leather on the roads that take us to the holy places, feeling the ache of limbs and the burden of our luggage, enduring the rigours of the weather with the burning sun and the biting wind and rain.

But we may also notice important changes within: perhaps a sense of peace and unity with the world and people, perhaps a more tolerant understanding of our own weaknesses and foibles, perhaps a desire to live life more fully and more faithfully. Basil Hume assures us that for all the rough paths we have to take, whether alone or with others, whether in speech or in silence, the crucial thing is to keep looking for the right way. 'There is one who is on the look-out to guide us: it is the Son of God, who is the way, the truth and the life.'

St Laurence of Rome ± and the gridiron Feast day 10th August

Laurence was a deacon of the Church in Rome, and martyred in 258. His story is found in the very ancient Depositio Martyrum, which tells us that he was closely associated with Pope Sixtus II, who was martyred just a few days before him during the persecution of the Emperor Valerian. We also know that he was much loved for his almsgiving.

St Cyprian, the Bishop of Carthage, relates how the Roman authorities had taken to confiscating all the goods of any Christians they discovered, and then putting the Christians to death. And so it was in August of 258, after Sixtus was martyred, that they demanded of Laurence the wealth of the Church

in Rome. He asked for three days to gather it together. During that time he worked quickly, to distribute as much of it as possible to the poor in Rome. On the third day, he presented himself to the prefect of Rome, taking along a small delegation of the poor and crippled. He told the prefect that these people were the true treasures of the Church, and that 'The Church is truly rich, far richer than your emperor.' This did not go down well with the prefect, and Laurence was condemned to a martyr's death.

It was Laurence, of course who is famous for being roasted alive on a gridiron, and telling his captors to 'turn him over' when he was done on one side. The story has

no historic basis, as the weapon of capital punishment at the time was the sword for decapitation. It is thought by many scholars that the roasting on the gridiron story came about because of a simple spelling mistake by a monk in copying the history years later: the accidental omission of the letter 'p' would have been enough. This is because the customary formula for announcing the death of a martyr was 'passus est' (he suffered/was martyred). If you leave off the 'p' you get 'assus est' - he was roasted. Only - he wasn't!

Free speech

We live in a free country where a man can say what he thinks, as long as he isn't afraid of his wife, his neighbours, his employer, his customers or the government.

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On why the parish goes to war over pumpkin-growing

From The Rectory
St. James the Least

My dear Nephew Darren

Anyone who thinks that the English are a peaceful race has obviously never organised the annual pumpkin growing competition. Very regrettably, one of the Pilgrim Fathers sent a handful of pumpkin seeds to a relation in this parish in the 17th century and ever since, the church has been obliged to hold an annual competition to see who can grow the largest. I suspect some of the original recipients of those seeds still compete. There is a certain irony that the church, which is supposed to promote peace and harmony, sponsors the most war-like activity in the annual calendar.

Mobilisation starts at the beginning of the year when seeds are planted. From that moment on, every other potential entrant is regarded as the Enemy. Once seedlings are planted out, then heavy armaments are placed at boundaries to deter possible invasion. By late Spring, paranoia has taken over and rumours begin to circulate of espionage and sinister undetectable herbicides. Anyone in the village with a beard is looked on with deep suspicion.

In the weeks before the competition, homes, partners and children are abandoned, as contestants talk to their pumpkins by day and snuggle up with them at night. Should bad weather arrive at this point, then I am blamed for not having prayed sufficiently fervently for sunshine and light rain. If only I had such influence.

On the day before the show, tables are put out and woe betide anyone who places their cake stand where Mrs Cholmondeley has put her tea urn for the past 25 years; she now believes she has squatters rights to that place and any challenge to her claim would probably result in litigation.

I find this competitive spirit a little bemusing, as for the last 25 years, the Earl of Stowe has always won first prize. That his mother, the Dowager Countess, is the judge, is, I am sure, pure coincidence. That she has arrived for the past three years with a white stick and accompanied by a golden Labrador does, however, raise doubts.

To award the Earl any prize at all does seem a little unfair, when the only time he ever gets mud on his boots is when he falls off his horse while hunting. I suspect he would be hard pressed to find where the kitchen garden is on his estate. But to give any credit to his gardening staff would be seen as bad form, so we all keep quiet.

It has been tentatively suggested that another judge should be appointed, but no one has so far had the courage to step forward. They may have the privilege of nominating the winner, but would also have to face a twelve month period of hatred from all those who were not successful. Christmas card lists will be amended. Families may have sat next to them in church for generations, but would suddenly find it more congenial to worship in another part of the church. Letters would be strangely mis-delivered and the butcher's boy would suddenly deliver lamb when pork had

been ordered. Who could dare to take on such a poisoned chalice?

Your loving uncle,

Eustace

Bored is good

This will cheer you up this summer when your children mope around the house saying that they are bored: apparently a bit of boredom is good for them.

So says a senior educationalist, Julia Robinson, who has encouraged parents NOT to force their children into too many activities. Instead, they must be allowed to become bored, so that they can have time to be reflective and calm. Too many pursuits such as music lessons, sport and online learning could result in a generation of manic, anxiety-ridden adults, she warns. Writing in *Attain*, the IAPS magazine, she points out that happiness does not come from a "regime of unrealistic multitasking, running oneself ragged with an exhausting programme of endless... activities."

Another educationalist urged that children need "downtime.... They have the right to be bored, to give them the stimulus to be inventive, resourceful and self-reliant – all important life skills."

From a church news-sheet:

The vicar is away on holiday for two weeks. Massages can be given to the curate.

When the vicar won Wimbledon

80 years ago this month, on 21st Aug 1935, the Rev John Hartley, the British tennis champion, died. He was the world's number one player in 1879 and 1880, when he won Wimbledon both years. He was the only clergyman to ever win Wimbledon. Here Richard Bewes, a keen tennis man, looks back on Hartley's life...

"Lawn Tennis," wrote J.B. Priestley, "is a name with the mildest associations. It suggests a companion pastime to croquet, a late-Victorian thing, bright with petticoats and delicately clouded with curates."

So it seemed with the development of Wimbledon's All England Lawn Tennis Club from its beginnings in 1869 as a Croquet Club, at which "Gentlemen are requested not to play in their shirt sleeves when ladies are present." However, with the addition of tennis courts to the grounds, the new game gained ascendancy, and the first Wimbledon Tennis Championships took place in 1877.

It was at the third tournament, of 1879, that the Rev J.T. Hartley, vicar of Burneston in Yorkshire, won the All-Comers Gentlemen's Singles out of an entry of 45 competitors at Wimbledon, and repeated the feat the following year. On the middle Sunday of the tournament, he was obliged to dash back to Yorkshire to deliver his church sermon before returning once again to complete his triumph.

Never again was a clergyman to win Wimbledon (though in my own dreams I have appeared in the final a number of times).

Many of the early players were

highly idiosyncratic. In the 1921 quarter-finals Randolph Lycett was playing Zenzo Shimidzu on one of the hottest days in memory. During the third set, Lycett had to be revived with gin every time he changed ends. In the fifth set, muzzy and staggering, he ordered a bottle of champagne to be brought out onto the Centre Court, and he consumed the last drop of it as the umpire called, "Shimidzu leads by nine games to eight in the final set." The gallery hardly knew whether to object or sympathise when Lycett dropped his racket, and then on hands and knees crawled round in search of it. To most people's relief, Shimidzu won.

Today a Bosnian, Novak Djokovic, as world's Number One, leads a dazzling array of players who - almost universally - see Wimbledon as 'the big W' that can seemingly make a man or woman immortal.

I was once rung by an American church pastor who was to pass through Britain for one day only. "I'll be your host," I assured him. "Where can I take you in London?" He was very direct. "More than even seeing the Crown Jewels, I would like to see the Centre Court at Wimbledon."

"Leave it to me!" I responded. "I KNOW A MAN." The man was Chris Gorringer, the CEO of the All England Club - the man we would see on TV, holding the winner's trophy, before it was handed to the new Champion on Finals Day. Over the years I had come to know him.

I KNOW A MAN. That was the secret. As a tennis clergyman myself I can't resist wanting to do a

Rev JT Hartley - perhaps only in reminding of what he stood for - that there is indeed a Man we can come to know; the CEO not simply of some tennis courts, but of the Central Court that governs the whole universe and puts meaning, divine friendship and eternal forgiveness into all of our existence. He is universal Champion of our salvation and His Name is Jesus Christ. Know Him - and your smallest prayer gets you to the Centre.... of everything.

This article first appeared in the July 2015 issue of 'Connection' - the magazine of Christ Church, Virginia Water, Surrey

What is the priority of most people as they face the end of life?

According to a recent survey, nowadays very few Britons turn to God, even in the face of imminent death. Instead, 33 per cent want to be pain-free, and 17 per cent want their friends and family with them. One in seven worry about maintaining their dignity. Only five per cent of people would like to know that their religious or spiritual needs are being met.

In fact, a full 60 per cent of people questioned ranked religious needs as the very last of their priorities when facing the end of life.

The survey was carried out by Dying Matters, a coalition of 16,000 hospices charities, care homes and others working with people who are preparing for death. It also found that the vast majority of people in the UK (72 per cent) think death is still a taboo subject, with people uncomfortable discussing dying or bereavement.

Hymns and Readings

August 2nd Trinity 9

Readings Exodus 16: 2-4 & 9-15

Psalm 78

Ephesians 4: 1-16

John 6: 24-35

Hymns 345 Christ is the King! O friends rejoice
468 Through the night of doubt
302 O thou who at the eucharist didst pray
297 Lord Jesus Christ

Sidesperson: Elizabeth Oyedemi

Readers: Ruth Godwin, Rob Nesbitt

Intercessions: Carol Kenning

August 9th Trinity 10

Readings 1 Kings 19: 4-8

Psalm 34

Ephesians 4: 25-5: 2

John 6: 35 & 41-51

Hymns 414 O for closer walk with thee
Make me a channel of your peace
271 Alleluia sing to Jesus
331 Abide with me

Sidesperson: Monica Sarpong

Readers: Carol Kenning, Stephen Nicoll

Intercessions: Lucy Boyd

16th August Trinity 11

Readings Proverbs 9: 1-6

Psalm 34

Ephesians 5: 15-20

John 6: 51-58

Hymns 232 Awake my soul and with the sun
416 O God of Bethel
134 The head that once was crowned
with thorns
394 Let all the world in every corner sing

Sidesperson: Rob Nesbitt

Readers: Denise Sealy, Jenny Kauntze

Intercessions: Ian MacGregor

23rd August Trinity 12

Readings: Joshua 24: 1-2 & 14-18

Psalm: 34

Ephesians 6: 10-20

John 6: 56-69

Hymns 449 Soldiers of Christ
200 Jesus calls us o'er the tumult
374 How sweet the name of Jesus
453 Stand up stand up for Jesus

Sidesperson: Bill Saunders

Readers: Mark Williams, Nick Bethune

Intercessions: Nicky Pittam

August 30th Trinity 13

Readings Deuteronomy 4: 1-2 & 6-9

Psalm 15

James 1: 17-end

Mark 7: 1-8 14-15 & 21-23

Hymns 456 Teach me my God and king
407 Lord thy word abideth
285 For the beauty of the earth
311 We pray thee heavenly Father

Sidesperson: Mark Williams

Readers: Lucy Boyd, Nicky Pittam

Intercessions: Bill Saunders

Give Him a Call!

The phone was a great invention. How easy it is to press a few numbers on our small devices and speak to someone the other side of the world. There was a time when a phone in a home was a luxury item. Now, it seems, we take it for granted that we have a gadget in our pocket enabling us to contact anyone, at any time, in any place.

However, how many times have you wanted to speak to someone, only to be given a recorded message giving a variety of options? Then you have to wait in a queue for ages before your call is answered. Sometimes a voice informs you 'your call is important to us' ... but meanwhile you are left waiting, listening to endless music.

Yes, a phone may be useful in all kinds of circumstances, but they can also be very frustrating! So, it's good to know that God can be contacted immediately we need Him. There is no celestial call centre where our messages are delayed or referred. With prayer we can call on God directly. This service is free with no charges. He hears our every call and we can be confident that our Creator will answer us in ways which are only for our good.

'When you pray, I will answer you. When you call to me, I will respond.' (Isaiah 58:9)

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For your prayers

PRAYER CALENDAR FOR MONTH OF AUGUST 2015

2nd York Rise
9th Those who live outside the parish
and worship at St Mary's
16th Bellgate Mews
23rd Boscastle Road
30th Chetwynd Road

SAINTS & HOLY DAYS

2nd Trinity 9
4th St John Vianney
5th St Oswald

6th **Transfiguration of Our Lord**
8th St Dominic
9th Trinity 10
10th St Laurence
11th St Clare
14th Maximilian Kolbe
15th Assumption of the BVM
16th Trinity 11
20th St Bernard of Clairvaux
23rd Trinity 12
24th St Bartholomew
27th St Monica
28th St Augustine of Hippo
29th Beheading of John the Baptist
30th Trinity 13
31st St Aidan