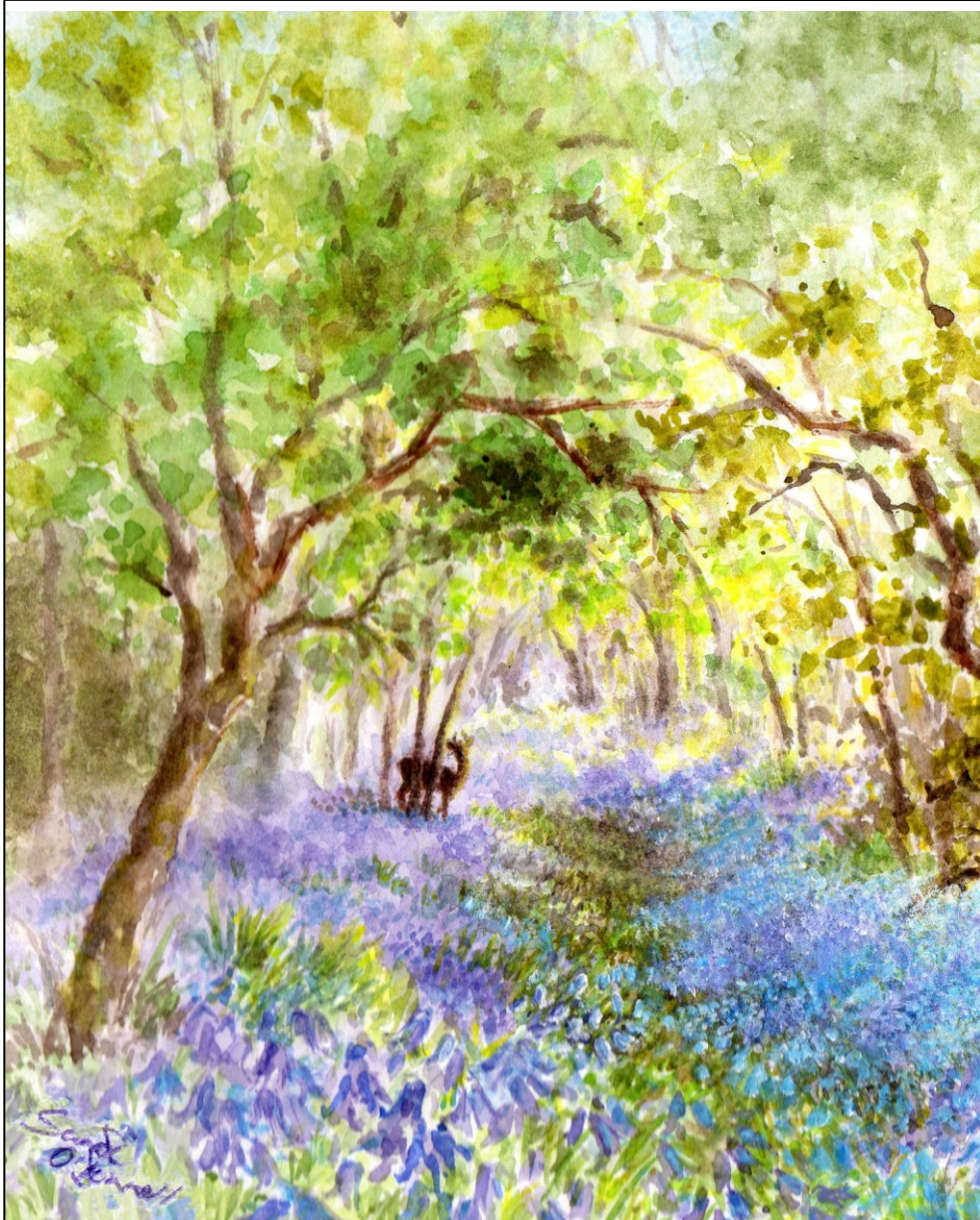


NURSLING & ROWNHAMS

Twin Spires News

Web Edition

May 2022



twinspires

St Boniface St John's
Nursling & Rownhams



St John's Church (SO16 8AH) is in Horns Drove, Rownhams.
St Boniface Church (SO16 0YB) is in Church Lane, Nursling.

The Parish Office is usually staffed Monday to Friday 9.30am to 11.30am (excluding public holidays) and, during the Covid-19 situation, it is sometimes staffed remotely, so please do not call into the office in person.

However, the answer machine and email are checked regularly.

Telephone: 023 8073 8293. email: office@twinspires.org.uk

Our website is www.twinspires.org.uk

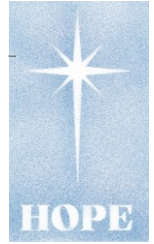
This magazine is available to read on our website. If you would like to have your own printed copy of Twin Spires News, it is available from either of our church buildings, price 60p per copy or £6 for 1 year (Jan to Dec). Copies may be delivered free within the area, by arrangement. There are a number of ways you can donate to church funds (outlined on page 25). Bank Transfer is the preferred method and there is also a **DONATE** button on the church website, which offers a very simple option for any one-off on-line gifts.

Registered Charity Number 1130927

Cover Image: Deer at Grove Place Blue Bell Woods, by Sandi O'Donnell

Verse of the Month

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing,
so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.
(Isaiah 41:10 NRSVA)



Dear Friends,

Last month on the first day of spring, the day really felt like a spring day. The weather was nice and there was a sense of optimism. But then the weather changed again. We've had endless cold snaps, frost at night, strong winds, cold days. In fact, you can get a combination of these in any one day. The weather seems fickle, unable to settle and move effortlessly into a nice warm spring. The weather seems to fit the state many of us are feeling at the moment. Unsettled, mixed and unpredictable.

The garage needs a huge tidy out – there are still unpacked boxes in there from our move into the vicarage nearly three years ago – many recycling centres run before it's sorted out. The spring-cleaning instinct is bubbling up, to get the garden tidied to get jobs done, but I struggle to find the energy to respond to do anything about it all.

No doubt some of the symptoms of long Covid play a part, fatigue being one. Our Covid battle is supposed to be over, but we all know that it is not. Fourth boosters are rolling out for the most vulnerable and we are still wearing masks in church. I am aware of more people with Covid than at any time previously. Many people have symptoms, some for the second or third time.

In talking to many people, I get the impression that so many of us are also now experiencing exhaustion: physical, emotional and spiritual. After two years, we have got used to living on the edge of fear and grief and distress, and there seems to be no end in sight. Meanwhile, difficult memories are etched in our brains. I am still disturbed by the impact of not being allowed to pray in church for months, being unable to undertake hospital visits, even to this day. The blow of so few people in our churches and the sense of abandonment that has been felt by so many.

It has been two years of anxiety of fear and trauma. All of this leaves a legacy. School learning has been affected due to both pupil and staff absences. We still don't know the true cost of interrupted school, of lonely childhoods in small flats, of care homes with no visitors, of important anniversaries missed, of carers and nurses and doctors putting themselves on the front line and witnessing such horrors, of friends and relatives dying alone, and funerals with few mourners. All this manifests itself in the form of unexpected bursts of emotion, strange sensations,

interrupted sleep patterns and vivid dreams, and unwanted daydreams. The burden is heavy on many: teachers, doctors and nurses, carers, and, of course families, particularly parents.

The term that we often use is 'burnout', suggesting what is left after a devastating fire. Burnout is depletion, less than, an impairment of resilience, a loss of inner resources even when most outer ones appear to be repaired or restored. Burnout is a sickness of the spirit, when it can no longer respond to the demands of the will. There is no immediate solution, because this condition needs time as much as it needs rest.

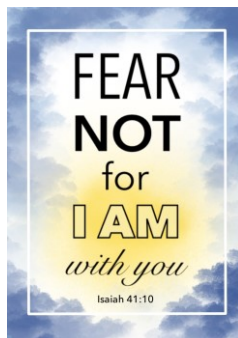
But there are things that help and things that don't help. Tolerance and love and concern for others, listening and being available. Taking time to rest, to recover and to process are all important. Cracking on as if nothing has happened is less helpful and perhaps not so good for the spirit.

When I first arrived in the parish just before the pandemic started, I had plans for a vision day and ideas and new initiatives to consider. Those initiatives have taken a very different form as we have tried to get through the last two years with online offerings at the centre of church life. There will be opportunities to start new things in good time, but for now we need to recover and take stock.

'**This too will pass**' is a Persian proverb for hard times. The phrase suggests there is indeed a natural cycle at work in our lives, our work environment, wars in Europe, our planet: an endless flow of evolution and transformation. Spring turns into summer, turns into autumn, into winter, and into spring again. What comes up, eventually goes down and prepares to rise again, like ocean waves.

Recovery does happen, God willing we will all be able to gain some ground towards normality in the months ahead. And yet, recovery cannot be scheduled, or forced, or even willed. Nevertheless, we do have good grounds for hope. Isaiah 41:10 reminds us, '**Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.**' (ESV)

There is always renewal in God's creation, Easter reminds us of that. Buds of new life will emerge even if they are shy and green. It is in God we trust for wholeness – Revelation reminds us that the Lord 'is making everything new' and in him we must trust for transformation from the darkness of winter to the new life and hope that Spring heralds.

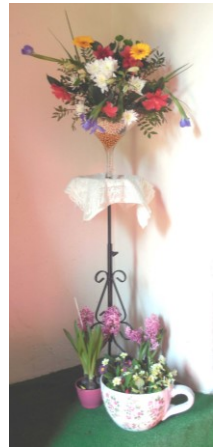


Rev Graeme

St Boniface Church News

Mothering Sunday

Thank you to Pat Wootten and Christine Owen for making our Mothering Sunday very special. Window displays reflected the theme 'An invitation to afternoon tea'. Below are photos of some of the Mothering Sunday floral displays at St Boniface Church, taken by Frank Wright. Small posies of flowers prepared by the flower team were given out at the end of the service.



Jubilee Sunday

This year Jubilee **Sunday 5th June** coincides with **St Boniface Day**. Following the 11am service on that day, a commemorative tree will be planted in the church grounds.

A Murder Mystery Set in Nursling

Gill Jones was a very talented member of St Boniface flower team. She moved to Birmingham with husband Ian and sons Nathanael and Samuel. Gill has just completed her second book entitled 'A Secondary Source of Death'. Set in the reign of King Aethelbald, there is a cameo of the monastery at Nursling and a preface as if written by St Boniface himself, chastising the king. We are excited to learn that she has dedicated the book to our St Boniface Friday Gang.

Well done Gill for completing the second book in her Red Brick Mysteries series and thank-you from all the Friday Gang.

Avis Wood

Leslie Norman Stride 'Les' **14th June 1930 – 16th March 2022**

Les was a very friendly, quiet, unassuming, down-to-earth, diminutive man who, for many years, grew the most amazing dahlias in his garden, in Maybush (some of them dinner-plate size), especially for St Boniface Church. It was always a delight during the summer months to see such wonderful blooms in the church windows. They really were top quality.

Many years ago, Les and his son Clifford provided the vestry carpet, putting in a raised floor, to take it off the stone floor underneath. This was in place until 2017 when the Mille Monument was refurbished and a new carpet was fitted. He also refurbished the Altar candlesticks.

He worked tirelessly at St Boniface Church, over a long period of time; he cleaned and vacuumed the church, along with Glenda, his late wife, and he also polished all the brass – and there is a lot there!



In 2016 he moved to Codford to be with his son Clifford, and therefore St Boniface Church saw him less frequently. By 2019 his health began to decline which meant he was not able to use his work bench or do gardening, two of his passions.

The congregation at St Boniface Church have a lot to thank Les for – and a lot to remember him by. He will be sadly missed by those who knew and worked with him.

Angela Wright



Following April's restart of the **Nursling & Rownhams Friendship Club**, we are pleased to share the entertainment organised for May:

- 5th May Cheryl Brennan (popular Singer)
- 12th May Quizzes with prizes: general knowledge & 'pub' style
- 19th May Braishfield Ukelele Music Society
- 26th May Longlea Singers (popular classics)

We meet every Thursday between 2.15 - 3.45pm in the Village Hall, in Nursling Street. The cost is £2 per meeting, including light refreshments.

There's no need to book in advance, or to commit to attending every week, please do come along on the day, you will be made very welcome! Or to find out more, please contact Sheila or Alan on 023 8073 2440 or by email:

alanandsheilab@gmail.com

Alan Bulpit

Our Vision: As a Church Community We Seek to:

Encourage everyone to grow to be more like Jesus, following Him at all stages of their lives;	Be open to being church in new ways and new places, while affirming and strengthening the old where it is still serving us well;	Bear Witness to the God in whom we believe by serving in our working, social and community lives, following the example of Jesus;	Strive to make the best use of all that God has given us to build up His Kingdom.
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We offer a **mini-recycling centre** at St John's Church for the following items



- Plastic milk bottle tops (clean, not foil)
- Inkjet cartridges (not laser cartridges)
- Used postage stamps, ideally with a 1cm margin.

Spring Cleaning Rownhams Style

Happily, the April litter picking session on Saturday 2nd April fell within the general period of ‘Clean for the Queen’ effort to improve local environments. Also, the weather had been dry enough in the preceding weeks to allow our intrepid ditch clearance team to access the ditch between the Glebe and Rownhams Lane without getting wet feet.

‘The Ditch Gang’



The clear out was long overdue, so it was particularly satisfying to get it done. Let’s hope the ditch stays clear in future. In particular, we hope the person with a taste for distinctive blue dog poo disposal bags (pictured) would stop lobbing them out of usual reach. It’s a truly disgusting habit.



It was wonderful to see so many people, of all ages working for the general good. We hope you had fun as well as helping out. We will tackle another “grot spot” on Saturday May 7th at 10.30am. If you know of somewhere that needs a clean-up, please let us know via the Parish Office office@twinspires.org.uk 023 8073 8293

It's great to have accompanied children coming along, and don't forget the stout footwear and gloves, so we can so a really good job.

Mary Carter and Marion Swinerd

Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)

You may have heard the news in early April that the United Nations IPCC report said that to avoid the global temperature rising by more than 1.5C we need our carbon emissions to peak in 2025 and to fall rapidly after that. That's only 3 years away! Yet in a recent visit from representatives from the Diocesan Advisory Committee we were advised that we would be very unlikely to be given planning permission to put solar panels on our south facing church roof because of the visual effect – despite the fact that it is ideally positioned to generate electricity.

You may be glad about this but several of us thought that this was proof that, even as an organisation aiming for net zero carbon emissions by 2030, we have still not grasped the urgency of the situation.

The IPCC have suggested some ways in which we can still tackle climate change. I've summarised my understanding of what they have said below:

- ✓ Stop using fossil fuels and instead spend money on clean energy solutions (sun, wind etc) which are now cheaper than fossil fuels.
- ✓ Reduce our demand for energy by encouraging low carbon diets (less meat and dairy), eliminating food waste, walking, cycling and using public transport more, driving electric vehicles and buying less 'stuff'
- ✓ Soak up as much carbon dioxide as we can from the atmosphere by not cutting down trees; planting new trees; changing agricultural practices and by working on other carbon capture technologies.
- ✓ The wealthiest 10% of people contribute about 40% of greenhouse gas emissions. The IPECC suggest that the very rich should become models of low carbon lifestyles, investing in low-carbon businesses and advocating for stringent climate policies.



Creation Care
Encouraging households
to care for God's world

A lot of this needs government action, but if you want to know what you can do as an individual or household do look at creationcare.org.uk

We plan to hand out any certificates gained at a creation themed service in the autumn.

Claire Thompson



Churches Count on Nature

Churches and cathedrals across the country are preparing for the annual Churches Count on Nature event. The ‘citizen science’ event, set to run between 4th – 12th June (the same week as ‘Love Your Burial Ground Week’) will welcome people to churchyards and encourage them to record what animals and plants they see. That data will then be collated on the biological records hub, the National Biodiversity Network.

Last year more than 540 activities and events were organised by churches across the country. People submitted 17,232 recorded pieces of data on wildlife they saw, with more than 1,500 species recorded. ‘Love Your Burial Ground Week’ resulted in over 1,700 new wildlife records. More than 4,000 people got involved.

Churchyards and gardens have been called an ‘incredible home of biodiversity, making up thousands of acres of green oases in every community of the country’. Last year, hundreds of parishes got their local community searching for insects and plants in their open spaces.

As the Bishop of Norwich has pointed out: ‘The Gospels are full of stories of the growth of seeds, the choking of thistles, the beauty of lilies and the fruitfulness of trees. We have the privilege and responsibility to care for the earth and to tread gently on it. The Churches Count on Nature is a great opportunity to help people understand their local environment and that biodiversity is essential for the processes that support all life on earth, including humans.’

Churches Count on Nature is jointly run by the conservation charities A Rocha UK, Caring for God’s Acre together with the Church of England and the Church in Wales. Andy Lester, from A Rocha UK, said ‘Churches Count on Nature is a unique opportunity for those who love their churchyards and church spaces to take part in the largest ever nature count. With nature still in decline nationwide this count will provide valuable data on what is happening to wildlife. In turn that will help us to collectively work to take targeted action for nature’s recovery.’

Last year, many parishes used Churches Count on Nature as an opportunity to reach out to their local community. 540 groups organised events. With over 20,000 churchyards and other burial grounds across England and Wales, these special places are seen as crucial havens for wildlife.

Parish Pump

Evidence for Truth: Noah and the Flood

Rev Jim Stanley-Smith has written a series of studies, concentrating on the stories of Adam and Noah, to show that they are historically reliable and that Moses wrote them (as editor) in about 1500BC. This month's article looks at Noah and the Flood in Genesis 6 - 9.

Many commentaries, even today, regard the accounts in Genesis largely as myth and also being written many centuries later. My title 'Evidence for Truth' comes from Victor Pearce's series of books, with the first book 'Science' (1), covering the early chapters of Genesis.

When the Lord saw how wicked people were all the time, He decided to destroy them. But he was pleased with Noah. (6:1-8). These chapters can be viewed in three sections:

- The Lord gives instructions to Noah (6:9-22)
- The Lord with Noah in the Ark (7:1-24)
- The Lord ends the flood (8:1-22)

Noah's Ark, at 135 x 22 x 13 meters, has similar ratios to 19th century liners. But in Babylonian accounts, the vessel is pictured as a cube. Noah would take with him the family names and memories on tablets from Adam onwards.

Pearce gives much worldwide evidence of a massive flood in about 5000BC. The most striking evidence is with Lake Titicaca (in the Andes) which has sea water and Tiahuanaco – its seaport - at 12,000 feet above sea level, with agricultural terraces and its buildings made from huge blocks of stone.

The reason for this change in altitude was a result of a change of the earth's axis in 5000BC. It might have been a comet strike in the Bay of Mexico. Pearce found 'sea benches' stretching north and south for hundreds of miles from there, indicating that the change in axis was sudden, with the equatorial bulge of sea water (12,000 feet) moving north with the equator.

Pearce says that at this time the whole volume of the oceans (3 times more than the continents) would be continuing their course north east (1,000 mph at the equator), when the land mass suddenly changed its axis by 18 degrees. The flood was thundering over the continents and all the underground waters were added to it. But the seas would flood into the Middle East more steadily, to fill up the Mesopotamian plain and then rise to cover the mountains of Iran and Turkey. It took 5 months to reach its peak above the mountains, but 7 months to recede – a catastrophe bigger than the world has ever known! All pre-flood animals were swept away, while

whale bones were found on the plains of Alabama. A mammoth was found in Siberia with fresh grass in its mouth (having been frozen solid instantly).

In 5000BC, the Black Sea, previously a freshwater lake, was inundated with sea water and Ninevah had nine feet of flood deposits. The BBC reported that there was a tsunami in 5000BC covering the coasts of the Shetland Islands and north east of England. Also this was when England was separated from the continent.

David Attenborough presented a programme about a 'Sahara Apocalypse' in 5000BC, changing that green landscape into desert, with the sudden of change of axis and the equator 'moving' south.

Noah's Ark

Ron Wyatt in his 2015 YouTube video, describes his visit to the Ark site in 1987. The Ark was on the mountain top with a monument to the 8 (Noah and his 3 sons and wives) and the 'Valley of the Eight' was where they lived.

In 1948 there was an earthquake and mudslide and the Ark slid down, and was stopped by a rock. In 1978 there were some further earthquakes, revealing more of the Ark.

As reported in his book, 'The Discovery of Noah's Ark' (2), David Fasold, together with Ron Wyatt, measured the Ark with a Molecular Frequency scanner and streams of tape were laid on the surface of the Ark where traces of metal were found, covering the whole surface from bow to stern (the exact measurements in Genesis 6:15). The detailed graphical images in the book extend down to the base of the Ark, bearing the vertical walls or poles of cedar and floorboards of cypress for the three storeys and main deck.



The roof of the Ark was sloping inwards with an opening to the sky for rainwater to flow down into containers for freshwater for everybody, plus for washing the floors into the central hull pool and into the sea. Fasold also shows pictures of heavy drogue stones, designed to keep the Ark facing into the wind.

References:

Rev Jim Stanley Smith

- (1). Victor Pearce, 'Evidence for Truth, Vol 1: Science', Eagle, 1998
- (2). David Fasold, 'The Discovery of Noah's Ark', Sidgwick & Jackson, 1988

Humility

A few years ago I visited the Smithsonian Museum's Hall of Human Origins. Our guide, the curator of anthropology, was keen to help Christians understand his research. Whatever you make of the evidence for human evolution, the fact remains that other species a bit like us were around before we came on the scene – or in the case of Neanderthals, at the same time.

Part of the exhibit included lifelike reconstructions of the face and hair of several different hominins, displayed on pillars at the right height for each species. So I could crouch down to 'meet' *Homo floresiensis* or stand tall to look into the eyes of *Homo heidelbergensis*. Most of these – beings? creatures? – were on other branches of the evolutionary tree to us and we share a common ancestor much further back. I did, however, feel as if I was meeting my forebears.

As I walked between the statues I asked myself, "Why us?" There's evidence that Neanderthals used symbolism as we do, and also buried their dead. Did they have the potential to evolve to a point where they could do similar things to us? The curator explained how, as the ice ages came and went, human beings moved around but other species appear to have stayed put and suffered the consequences – they just weren't ready yet for that big change. As I took in the displays about how we began to gather socially around a fire, make music or write, I felt humbled. We managed to adapt, but we could so easily have disappeared with the rest.

In his book *The Message of Creation*, theologian David Wilkinson shares his view that being made in the image of God has nothing to do with our own cleverness or abilities, but is a gift. God created us on purpose (I believe through the long slow process of evolution) and chose to enter into a relationship with us, making us His representatives on earth.

Thankfully I don't have to figure out how to interact with other human-like hominins today. I do, however, have an equal share in humankind's God-given commission to tend and keep creation. Am I ready to go further than ensuring my own species' survival - not necessarily because we have evolved further than our ice-age ancestors, but because I have one of the 'new hearts' promised in Ezekiel 11:19? Can I work together, in a true spirit of humility, with people from all over the world to ensure the full diversity of life can flourish?

Dr Ruth M Bancewicz, Faraday Institute for Science & Religion

Church Services in May

For services in our church buildings, we continue to review and respect coronavirus restrictions: face coverings, hand sanitising, social distancing. Full details are outlined on our website in [Graeme's latest Pastoral Letter/Vicar's Blog of 14th February](#), with a copy displayed at each Church.

Our 10am services, unless outdoors, are also streamed online via [YouTube](#) and can be found on the website www.twinspires.org.uk. Follow the links by expanding the + sign next to the relevant day. Please see the news sheet and website for details and variations. We offer a **Crèche** at St John's Church during the 10am service on the 2nd and 4th Sundays of each month.

+ Sunday 1st May – 3rd Sunday of Easter

10am [Twinspires@10Together](#) outside St John's Church Hall (weather permitting).

11am Morning Prayer in St Boniface Church

6.30pm Holy Communion in St John's Church



+ Sunday 8th May – 4th Sunday of Easter

10am Holy Communion in St John's Church (+ Crèche) also livestreamed via [YouTube](#)

11am Morning Prayer in St Boniface Church

6.30pm Evening Service in St John's Church



+ Sunday 15th May – 5th Sunday of Easter

10am Morning Service in St John's Church, also livestreamed via [YouTube](#).

11am Holy Communion in St Boniface Church

6.30pm Evening Service in St John's Church

+ Sunday 22nd May – 6th Sunday of Easter

10am Morning Praise in St John's Church (+ Crèche) also livestreamed via [YouTube](#)

11am Morning Prayer in St Boniface Church

6.30pm Evening Service in St John's Church

+ Thursday 26th May – Ascension Day

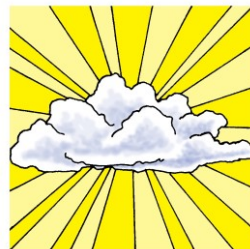
11am Holy Communion in St John's Church

+ Sunday 29th May – 7th Sunday of Easter

10am Morning Praise in St John's Church, also livestreamed via [YouTube](#)

11am Morning Prayer in St Boniface Church

6.30pm Evening Service in St John's Church



What's On During the Week

All the links can be found on the website: www.twinspires.org.uk.
Follow the links by expanding the + sign on the relevant day.

Weekdays – Morning Prayer streamed on [Zoom](#) or Facebook.

Via [Zoom](#) at **9.30am** on **Mondays** and **Tuesdays**

Via [Zoom](#) at **9am** on **Wednesdays** (open prayer) and **Fridays**

Visit www.twinspires.org.uk for the [Morning Prayer Zoom Link](#)

Meeting ID: 112 879 792 Password: 107871

Via **Facebook** at **10am** on **Thursdays**:

<https://www.facebook.com/NurslingAndRownhams/live/>

Mondays 7-8.15pm **MORE** for ages 11-16

Contact the youth team: youth@twinspires.org.uk

Tuesdays 7.30pm **Alpha** Course on [Zoom](#)

New Alpha course starting soon, contact the office for details

Wednesdays 7.00 - 7.45am Early Morning Prayer in St John's Church

St John's Church is open most Wednesday mornings from 10am for personal prayer

Wednesdays 7.30pm Virtual Bible Study group on [Zoom](#)

Thursdays 2.15-3.45pm Nursling & Rownhams

Friendship Club in the Village Hall, Nursling (see page 7)

Thursdays 8-9pm, **CONNECT!** on [Zoom](#) for young adults.

First & third **Thursdays** 10am – midday

Coffee Break (5th & 19th May) (See page 16)

Fridays 9.30am-2.30pm **Recreational walk**

Meet in St John's Church car park, approximately 5 miles, bring a packed lunch and mid-morning snack/coffee.

Saturday 7th May 9.30am – **Virtual Vestry Vigil** on [Zoom](#)

Saturday 7th May 10.30-11.30am – **Litter pick** (See page 8)

Meeting location, once decided, will be advertised on the church website

Saturday 14th May 8.30am – **Men's Monthly Breakfast**

At the Balmoral Inn, Nursling. Please let Mike Bunce know if you are coming, by Thurs **12th May**, so he can confirm numbers.





Dates for Your Diary



+ Contributions for Next Month's Twin Spires Magazine by 6 pm, Sunday 8th May 2022

Preferably by email to twinspiresnews@live.co.uk or,
alternatively, to: Mary Carter, 12 Horsebridge Way (paper copy).
Please check you receive an acknowledgement of your email.

- + **Wednesday 11th May 7pm APCM in St John's Church and also via Zoom (Please note revised date)**
 - + **Thursday 26th May Ascension Day Holy Communion**
11am in St John's Church
 - + **4th – 12th June - Churches Count on Nature Event** (see page 10).
 - + **Saturday 18th June 8.30am– Men's Monthly Breakfast**
(from June 'Men's Breakfast' will be on the 3rd Saturday each month)
-



It's been so good to welcome several new friends to Coffee Break in recent months alongside our old friends. We meet each month on the 1st and 3rd Thursdays at the Community Centre in Horns Drove.

It's a friendly gathering, a chance to meet for coffee, cake and a chat, time for carers, or those they care for, to take a break. We continue to move forward with caution, so in order to protect the more vulnerable, we would recommend that, for now, masks are worn.

This month we meet on May 5th & 19th between 10am and midday.

(If you are in need of a lift, please contact Glennis on 023 80 736173).

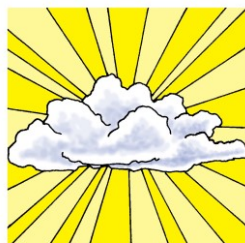
The Coffee Break Team



We are happy to receive foreign currency (notes and coins) and 'out of circulation' UK notes and coins, which we are able to convert into funds for our churches. They don't have to be legal tender now. Periodically we send off 'our stash' for conversion. Our most recent batch raised £111.74! So it's well worth doing, **thank you!** Look out for the '**Funny Money**' Box in church.

The Ascension

On 26th May, we remember the Ascension. It's a somewhat neglected Christian festival, taking place on a Thursday, 40 days after Easter. However, this phrase is used in 3 different contexts in the New Testament.



Sitting at God's right hand - Jesus occupies a position of power and authority at the centre of the universe, '*exalted to the right hand of God*' (Acts 2:33). This position was secured by His death and resurrection, enabling us to experience the life of heaven, including eternal life, forgiveness, healing and the power to transform lives and communities. Is this our expectation and experience?

Standing at God's right hand - Our experience of heaven is only partial because of the presence of suffering and disappointment in our lives. Stephen, the first Christian martyr, saw Jesus '*standing at the right hand of God*' (Acts 7:56), when being stoned to death. Do we see that Jesus is on the throne and has a purpose for our lives, even when we are going through setbacks and difficulties? As a result of Stephen's death, the church grew and the apostle Paul was impacted. Where do we see the fruit of the suffering in our lives?

Praying at God's right hand - Finally, we are told that Jesus is '*interceding for us*' at God's right hand (Romans 8:34 and Hebrews 7:25). Jesus is on our side at the heart of the universe and fully knows our needs when praying for us. Even when we don't know how to pray, we have the assurance that Jesus is already praying for us! He is for us, even when we feel defeated by the wrong things in our lives.

In Salvador Dali's picture of Jesus' ascension all you can see are his feet! As we celebrate the event this month, it prompts the question '**where did Jesus go?**' Peter says Jesus '*has gone into heaven and is at God's right hand*' (1 Peter 3:22).

The Ascension reminds us that the risen Jesus lives in the immediate presence of God, and both transcends and embraces our present experience. This truth lies at the heart of the *up* language used to describe the event.

'Heaven relates to earth tangentially so that the One who is in heaven can be present simultaneously anywhere and everywhere on earth: the Ascension therefore means that Jesus is available, accessible, without people having to travel to a particular spot on the earth to find Him.' (Tom Wright).

Parish Pump

Charity Urges People in Energy Crisis to Seek Free Debt Help

The national debt help charity, Christians Against Poverty (CAP), is busy responding to people hit by the recent energy price cap rise, which will see households paying around 50% more for their energy bills



Low-income households, says CAP, 'are already struggling to afford the basics they need to live with dignity.' In just the first two months of this year, the charity saw requests for emergency fuel vouchers double, compared to the first two months of 2021. The charity has also delivered over £23,000 worth of crisis support, which includes emergency fuel vouchers, food shops and essential items.

CAP is in regular contact with suppliers, Ofgem and the Government to help them understand the impact these increases are having on the people it supports. It also wants to hear from people in need: 'With the expected increases in energy costs running into October and beyond, it's more important than ever that people who are struggling don't wait until their debts get out of hand.'

If you are struggling with debt and need free help, get in contact with CAP today on 0800 328 0006 or visit capuk.org.



'It's not as picturesque as the old steeple but it's saving a fortune in electricity bills!'

Religious Persecution on the Rise

Muslims are having a hard time in India at the hands of the militantly Hindu Prime Minister Modi, described by India's Supreme Court as a modern-day Nero. In China, Muslims may be subjected to indoctrination classes by the government. And we remember with horror the genocide of Rohingya Muslims by the militantly Buddhist army of Myanmar (Burma). Most fled to Bangladesh, which now houses the world's largest refugee camp.

It is less well known that among the Rohingya people is another persecuted minority. Christian Rohingyas are not only ill-treated by the Burmese, but also by Muslims of their own ethnicity. Looking at religious persecution worldwide, far more Christians suffer than any others - mainly as a result of Muslim antagonism.

Although Coptic Christians lived in Egypt centuries before Islam arrived, they are subject to "growing religious intolerance" according to Human Rights Watch. Hundreds have been killed, churches sacked, businesses destroyed. A steady stream of Christian women and girls are abducted. The same happens in Nigeria, where girls are taken from school by Boko Haram, which means 'Western education is forbidden'. There, and in neighbouring countries, the nomadic Fulani militia are targeting non-Muslim communities, particularly Christians. Al Shabbab is another terrorist group waging jihad against the supposed enemies of Islam in North and East Africa.

In Morocco, Christian men are arrested and fined for having a Bible or discussing Christianity with a Muslim. Women who become Christians may be expelled from their homes or forced to marry non-Christians. Even in a moderate country like Jordan, Muslims are not allowed to convert, and Christian men are prohibited from marrying Muslim women (but not the other way round). Tunisia also bans conversion, as does Libya. It is impossible to live openly as a Christian in Afghanistan: even before the Taliban took over, converts had to flee the country or be killed.

Christians are at risk in Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq...the list goes on. If you want to help persecuted Christians, get in touch with one of the charities which supports them:

**CSW everyone
free to believe**

Christian Solidarity Worldwide, PO Box 99, New Malden, Surrey, KT3 3YF. <https://www.csw.org.uk/home.htm>

 **OpenDoors**

*Open Doors, PO Box 6, Witney, Oxon, OX29 6WG:
<https://www.opendoorsuk.org>*

The Ven John Barton

Copies of the Open Doors 2022 Watch List (the 50 worst countries in which to be a Christian) are available in St John's Church.

Vision for New Kimbilio Day Centre



13 years ago, we opened a small outreach centre for street children in a Church building in Lubumbashi, DR Congo. We had around 20 children on that first session. That work has grown over the years and we're now reaching over 250 children a day through our outreach centre, four homes and primary school.

The Kimbilio outreach centre currently provides a safe place for girls and boys living on the streets. We provide food, health care, clean water to drink, showers, and carers who spend time with the children, get to know them and try to reconnect them with their families.

However, we have a challenge, the church, which was generously given rent free since 2009, needs their building back, so we need to find alternative premises. We have a vision to build a purpose-built community outreach centre for street children and to support families at risk of breakdown. A rare empty plot of land is up for sale on the other side of the road from our current location and would make an ideal site for us to build. The cost of the land is £40,000. There will then be additional costs for the construction.

Over the last 13 years the Kimbilio Day Centre has literally changed the lives of thousands of children for the better and has undoubtedly saved children's lives through the swift provision of medical care. Supporting the building of this outreach centre will be an investment in bringing change, hope and new life to many vulnerable children on the streets in DR Congo.

We would love your support if you're able. Please spread the word. And a huge thank you to those who have already given! We have already raised over £7,000 and have had an additional pledge of £8,000. This is a tremendous start to our appeal to buy land, on which to build an outreach centre for street children in Lubumbashi!

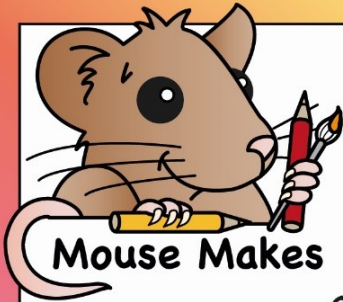
We look forward to bringing you updates as the project develops. I leave you with an image of one of the girls at Kimbilio and the picture she made with Kimbilio's inspirational art teacher Joel Kidindwe. She told Joel that the picture represents for her **hope, education and love**.



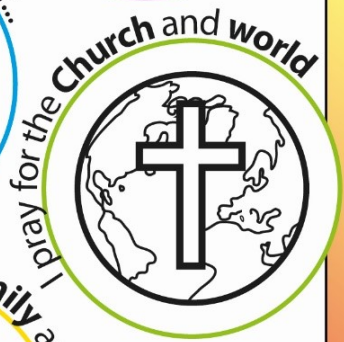
With many thanks,

Ian Harvey, Director, Congo Children Trust

www.globalgiving.org/projects/fulfil-vision-for-multipurpose-street-kids-centre/



"Give thanks to the Lord for He is good, His love endures forever"
Psalm 136:1



Jesus said,
"This, then, is how you should pray:
Our
_____ in _____ hallowed be your
_____ your
_____ come,
your _____ be done, on
_____ as it
is in _____.
Give us this day our daily _____.
And _____
us our _____,
as we also have forgiven our debtors.
And _____ us not into temptation, but _____ us from the _____ one."

Read Matthew 6:9-13 to fill in the words.

"Never stop praying."
1 Thessalonians 5:17

"Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God."
Philippians 4:6

A Prayer for Ukraine



Lord, we pray for Ukraine, a nation in which 70% of the population call themselves Christian.

You, Lord, make wars cease to the end of the earth; you break bows, shatter spears, and burn shields with fire (Psalm 46:9).

And so, we ask you now to save the lives of many people in Ukraine. De-escalate this crisis. We hear of wars and rumours of wars (Matt. 24:6), but you Lord are our rock, our fortress and our deliverer. Our hope is in you. And so we address the nations now.

In the name of Jesus we say: 'Be still and know God! He is exalted among the nations; He shall be exalted in the earth'. (Psalm 46:10).

Kyrie eleison – Lord have mercy.

Ukraine

War

Cease

Earth

Break

Bows

Shatter

Spears

Burn

Shields

Fire

Save

many

Lives

Crisis

Lord

Our

Rock

Fortress

Deliverer

Hope

In

You

Be

Still

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



From the Registers



Baptisms	‘One Lord, one faith, one baptism’	<i>(Ephesians 4:5)</i>
20 March	Sienna Violet Herbert	<i>St Boniface</i>
20 March	Parker David Frampton	<i>St John’s</i>
Funerals	‘Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep’	<i>(1 Cor 15:20)</i>
29 March	Charles John Vella (62)	<i>Interred at St John’s</i>
11 April	Sidney Hatch (93)	<i>Interred at St John’s</i>



Prayer of the Month

Dear Father in Heaven,

As we thank you for May, this most beautiful of months, we are aware that not everything in your world is beautiful; not every attitude or action is beautiful, or kind, or just.

There is so much pain and suffering in the world that we can sometimes feel overwhelmed. Help us, Lord to remember that Jesus came to bring all this brokenness together, to bring reconciliation and wholeness. Thank you that by His life, death and resurrection, Jesus overcame death for ever. Thank you that He ascended into heaven so that the Holy Spirit could come to live in believers, to give strength and power and resilience, so that Your work goes on.

Thank you that nothing in all creation - no evil attacks, no illness, no human powers, no circumstances at all - can ever separate us from Your love.

We will not be overwhelmed as we keep our eyes on You.

We may not always understand, but we acknowledge You to be the Lord, who reigns over all - and we are thankful.

In Jesus name. Amen.

Daphne Kitching

Suggestions for your Prayers

Continue to pray about the war in Ukraine; for the people affected by the violence; for those in leadership positions; for God's power and love to be revealed through the church; for the wider global impact and for peace.



Give thank for those willing to open their homes to a refugee. Pray that God will bless them in their hospitality and give them love for their guest(s). Pray that they will be well matched.

Pray for our PCC members. Give thanks for the time they all give especially the wardens, treasurer and secretary. Pray that they will be aware of God's help and be supported by the rest of the church. Pray that they will all have wisdom as they make decisions on our behalf and that they will find this period of service rewarding.

Remember all those taking exams this month and next. That they will have good health and concentration and that they will be able to do their best. Pray that they will not feel too stressed by the exams. Pray for those teaching at all levels that they will know how best to help pupils make up what they have missed through the pandemic.

Pray for all the couples who decide to have a wedding in one of our churches. That our members will be helpful and friendly towards them and that it would be a good experience for them. Pray that as they do the Alpha course, the Holy Spirit will be at work in their lives.

Please pray for the work of Southampton City Mission as the cost of living increases and the number of people needing their help grows. Pray that they will have the volunteers and resources they need to help. Pray too that God will bless the volunteers leading 'Question of Faith' RE days in schools. That they will be able to communicate well with the children.



Pray that governments will take very seriously the recent UN Intergovernmental Panel for Climate Change report that carbon emissions need to peak in 2025 at the latest and reduce quickly from there. Pray that they will take urgent action.

Regular giving through one of the available schemes is encouraged as this helps the PCC fund its mission and ministry. Please consider using the Parish Giving Scheme www.parishgiving.org.uk This is a direct debit system that reduces the administrative burden locally but still ensures that all of your donation, together with any gift aid recoverable, reaches this parish. The dedicated telephone number is **0333 002 1271**. Donors will need their parish's PGS Code which is: **PGS Parish Code 416012141** The Parish of Nursling with Rownhams in the Diocese of Winchester.



More information on how to give is available from the Office and the church website. There is also a [link](#) for one-off donations, look for the donate button on our website.

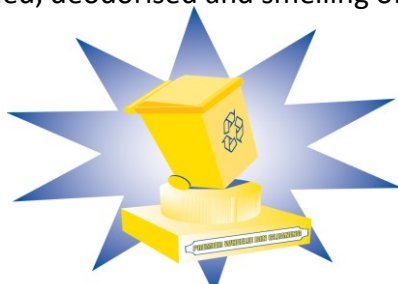
DONATE

PCC Legacy Policy Nursling and Rownhams PCC welcomes gifts in wills, however large or small. We will use such gifts to make a difference to the work of the church (eg by funding development projects in the parish, whether buildings, equipment or staff). We will consult with the executors to identify the sorts of projects the donor would have liked

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