

The Louth Herald

The magazine of the Team Parish of Louth

60p

MARCH 2012



You will see this letter towards the beginning of the season of Lent and the season of Lent is an invitation to go on a journey – a journey from where we are today to the joy of Easter.

The idea of a life as jour-

ney is a very popular one in our culture at this time. Just think of all the TV programmes in which people are sent a journey of adventure and challenge. The plot is always the same – a group of people usually set against each – journey from an unpromising beginning, through tears and frustration, to the goal of performance or selection.

The season of Lent, forty days long, was originally a fast, a journey of discovery for people preparing to be baptised on Easter Eve. Later it became linked with the period Jesus spent in the wilderness preparing for his ministry.

Today Christians are invited to make a special effort in Lent to learn more about God and more about ourselves during 40 days and nights. We are called to pray, to fast and to think carefully about their Christian lives. By doing this, we are able to share a little of the experience of Jesus during those 40 days of testing in the wilderness.

Let us pray that we may all have a good Lent and a joyful Easter.

+Christopher Lincoln:

PCC Highlights

Louth Parochial Church Council met on Thursday 16 February 2012 with 19 members present.

Members agreed that the **Service Schedule** rota is working much more smoothly now. One small change in the pattern has been requested and will be considered for the quarter beginning in April.

Peta Hill agreed to start up the **Valuing People Committee** as no nomination for Chair had been received. She intends to stand down in due course. If you are interested in chairing or joining this group – and you do not have to be a PCC member to do so – please talk to Peta or to Jennifer Goodwin.

The outline timetable for **recruitment of Stephen Holdaway's successor** is now: advertise late March, interview April or early May, appoint probably September. The time lapse is due to the need for the Bishop of Grimsby to consult with various parties, including the PCC, about a legal technicality. A small team has been working on the required **Parish Profile and Statement of Needs** to be sent to possible applicants, and you will be able to view this, when completed, on a new **Parish Website**. It will be well worth seeing.

The Discipleship Committee has planned three **Holy Week Services** to be held, as usual, in the three village churches. Details of these are published on page 3 of the Herald. They are warmly recommended as local church members known to many of you will be talking about how their faith supports them in their work for the Church.

The **Parish Annual General meeting** will take place on Thursday 19 February, at 7.30 pm at Trinity Centre. This meeting is not restricted to PCC members: if you are on the electoral roll of any church in the Team Parish of Louth you are warmly invited.

Jennifer Goodwin



I had the pleasure of photographing Sue Oliver before she left the town. Sue had a similar ankle operation to myself and I know the pain she has had to endure during her recuperation. We all bear pain in different ways. Some find it hard, some bare it more easily. However, it is pain and can be debilitating to us. I was talking to a friend this afternoon (Monday 6th), she has recovered from Cancer and I from 7 months of recuperation. I was bemoaning the slush and ice along with the ankle problem. She agreed with me BUT also said... "well, we could be dead but we are alive". These little reminders are there to give us a nudge in the right direction and give God thanks that we are alive and able to get about. So next time I complain about my problems I shall remember my friends words and **Give Thanks**.

Stuart

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HOLY TRINITY
MOTHERS UNION –
A MEMORY TO
TREASURE.

After struggling for the three years, I have regretfully had to close Holy Trinity Mothers Union down, I am so sorry.

I did write to each member to try and save it. We did think we could run another year, but unfortunately since three members have died and the treasurer could not carry on, so I could not see my way clear to continue.

Our three members, Joyce Kirby, Esme Dunn and Margaret Mitchel, who died in the last few months, were very Faithful members who hardly missed a meeting and gave their all. They were always willing to help; I will treasure their support and companionship. We offer our condolences to their families.

Mothers Union has been a great part of my life this past eleven years. We have achieved so much together, helped with anything when asked, especially the Church.

We have attended the combined M.U. Services at Lincoln Cathedral, carrying our Banners. One particular service stands out. It was the African Drummers leading us out into the sunshine, Banners flying and all dancing on the grass, what a wonderful time.

Our Branch had two successful visits to London, staying at a Mary Summers house for the weekend, visiting the popular tourist spots. We wore our badges with pride. We met some interesting people; a young boy who was helping at the London eye said "my Mother is a Mothers Union Member, have you come far?" So began a long conversation. He told us he was hoping to go to University then go abroad to Africa. Later, at Buckingham Palace, we met three ladies from India, all in national Costume,

and enjoyed a cup of tea with them.

We have taken quite a few families to Skegness for the day. Skegness M.U. Branch always helped out and invited us to tea, which was very much appreciated. On the way back we would often call in at Alford Mill.

I think one outstanding event was the visit of the Mothers Union Worldwide President, Rosemary Kempself, to St James Church. We were very proud to be included in her tour. The Rev. Daphne King and our Area Chaplin took the service. We were supported by Canon Stephen Holdaway, the Mayor and Mayress of Louth, Councillor Fran Treanor and his wife, Jane.

All that is left to say are my thanks to Daphne King, area Chaplin, Rev. Ian Partridge and to Canon Stephen Holdaway for his guidance, the Organists who have played for the services and the congregations who have supported us.

To the special few members left I can't thank you enough. You have given me your help, kindness, comfort, loyalty and friendship – friends forever. One more thank you to Julie who has been our treasurer these last few years (not an easy job) – thank you everyone who has helped us, I hope you will remember the good times spent in the Mothers Union and thank God for his goodness and love.

I am heartbroken at the moment, I can't leave it all behind so I am joining the Diocesan Branch so will be able to give you news if you wish.

**God Bless you all and
THANK YOU.**

Marjorie

PS There will be a closing down service later this year.

**THIS MAY STRIKE A
CHORD WITH A FEW OF
YOU READERS!**

If my body was a car, this is the time I would be thinking about trading it in for a newer model. I've got bumps and dents and scratches in my finish and my paint job is getting a little dull but that's not the worst of it.

My headlights are out of focus and it's especially hard to see things up close

My traction is not as graceful as it once was. I slip and slide and skid and bump into things even in the best of weather.

My whitewalls are stained with varicose veins.

It takes me hours to reach my maximum speed. My fuel rate burns inefficiently.

But here's the worst of it --

Almost every time I sneeze, cough or sputter, either my radiator leaks or my exhaust backfires!

Dear Mr Cameron.

Please find below our suggestion for fixing the UK's economy. Instead of giving billions of pounds to banks that will squander the money on lavish parties and unearned bonuses, use the following plan. You can call it the Patriotic Retirement Plan: There are about 10 million people over 50 in the work force. Pay them £1 million each severance for early retirement with the following stipulations:

1) They MUST retire.

Ten million job openings - unemployment fixed

2) They MUST buy a new British car.

Ten million cars ordered - Car Industry fixed

3) They MUST either buy a house or pay off their mortgage - Housing Crisis fixed

4) They MUST send their kids to school/college/university - Crime rate fixed

Sermon by Rev Langley
Mackrell-Hey the new
Chair of Church Together
in Louth & District

The Churches Together Theme for this year is 'We will all be changed'. I want to do two things. I want to explore how God calls us to embrace change – despite the fact that accepting change is not always easy. I also want to say something about how as we change, we should become more willing to work together as Christians and Churches.

God calls us to embrace change. To be a Christian is to put your faith in Jesus and follow Him. It is not possible to do this unless we can embrace change. Some things are certain and will never change; God loves us. God will never leave us or forsake us. We can find 'a peace that surpasses all understanding' no matter what challenges we face. We have been given the gift of eternal life. But despite these certainties, the disciples have to embrace change and adapt - the gospel begins with the challenge to change; to be open to God, seek his presence in our lives and to repent, to change our ways and turn our lives around. Yet not all change is easy to embrace. It is even harder if you lose sight of what is certain. If you lose your grip on certainty, you are left free falling into uncertainty – and the helplessness and anxiety that rushes up inside of us.

There are no easy lessons for the disciples as they travel with Jesus. They are learning constantly about how the scriptures should be lived out and what it means to trust in Him. If you are the type of person who likes to know precisely what is happening and when, then sorry to disappoint, but there does not seem to be much of an itinerary. If you

are the kind of person who likes to see a strategy before committing, then sorry to disappoint, it does not seem to be there apart from in the broadest terms – the context is constantly changing. When I read the gospels what strikes me is just how Jesus teaching is a mix of proactive and reactive – proactive where he preaches to the crowds – and often provokes a response – 'Zaccheus, I am coming to your house for tea' or when he approaches the Samaritan woman, and reactive, on those occasions where he responds to a question like, 'Who is my neighbour' or ministers to those who have sought exorcism and healing. Whatever approach he takes, my point is that the disciples have no idea of what is about to happen and what lies ahead of them each day – and so they have to be open to a measure of uncertainty and change. Beyond this the disciples have to be open to correction and changing their approach to certain situations; and so we too must be open to the Spirit as He points out our failings so that he can correct them. The disciples must also accept that there will be times when they will struggle to see where Jesus is leading. In his teaching Jesus could be at the very least confrontational – and at the very worst, antagonistic – which left the disciples questioning how anything good could come from such conflict. And then there were the times when Jesus spoke about the fact that he would die. How could this be? For the disciples, it must have felt as if the sand beneath their feet was shifting as they struggled to make progress.

One of the most touching episodes I can think of, where the disciples struggled to embrace change is the dialogue between Jesus and the disciples as He tries to help them come to terms

with the fact that he will have to leave them and that they know the way to the place that I am going. I love Thomas' response and I always read it with a sense of frustration - 'Lord we do not know where you are going, how do we know the way?' Jesus replies I am the Way, the Truth and the Life, no one comes to the Father except by me. Jesus reassures them about the truth of the resurrection - and of the fact that they will be reunited in heaven – and promises peace. We will all be changed. Change is part of life. It is not possible to be a Christian without being open to change. Know what is certain, what will never change – and then you can cope with whatever life throws at you. Hold on to the wrong thing at your peril. Zaccheus is such a wonderful character. He had no doubt compromised himself in the eyes of his countrymen. He had no doubt constructed his own world in which he could survive. But it was not enough and Jesus offered more. When Jesus spoke to Him he had no hesitation. Jesus speaks to you today. Jesus longs to change your life – for the better. Will you respond?

God calls us to work together. The second thing is that as we journey in faith we are becoming more Christlike. And as we become more Christlike we will become more united in vision and purpose, since once again, following the passion discourses, Jesus prayed to the Father for His disciples to be One, just as he and the Father were One. Being one is not so much something that we are commanded to do. It is something that should come naturally as we become more like Jesus.

In the last year Churches Together has asked itself the question, why should Churches work Together? What is our answer to

someone who is reluctant to go beyond the boundaries of their own Church? The responses that were returned from a survey came from two angles and were reassuring. What people said came from one of two positions - there was the theological view - remembering Jesus prayer for His disciples that they might be one - and then there was a practical view - that we should work together because as Christians - and Churches Together we can achieve more working in partnership than going it alone. At first I was slightly sceptical about this view - if felt heavily secular, as if it had just come off the football pitch - but as I reflected it began to have more weight. The fact that well managed teams of people can do more than individuals is irrefutable. What turned it for me was this. God calls us to follow Jesus and to be part of His Kingdom. God calls us to share the gospel in word and action - to reach out and meet the needs of those who are suffering or lost. If by working together we can be more effective in this than if we work alone, then the only way to honour God and honour our calling is to work together. To do anything else is to dishonour God.

In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.
Amen

St James Church

Please note St James Church will be open daily from Monday 2nd April between 10.30 am and 4.00 pm, Mondays to Saturdays.

The Shop, Coffee Shop and Guides will be available from that date.

Mothering Sunday. I do get rather annoyed with the retail trade for hijacking such days as Mothering Sunday and turning it into Mothers Day. Now I have nothing against mothers, I had a super one and we should celebrate them BUT really the day is all to do with the Mother Church. We claim to be a Christian Nation, but I sometimes wonder if the Church actually remembers this. We sadly hear little from our leaders, well I don't. Perhaps those of you who attend church on a regular basis do.

Trying to find a Christmas card at a Super Market which celebrates Christ's Mass is nigh on impossible. And where, pray, did father's day come from? As a child I don't remember there being one! Again don't get me wrong we should celebrate our Dads just like our Mums but all this commercialism. Sorry it's not for me.

Have you noticed how Halloween has grown out of all proportions?

I could go on but I won't. I've had my rant and these are my views and no one else's. And just so you don't get the wrong idea below is a **prayer** for all **Mothers**.


Dear Lord, look down with gracious favour upon the mothers of this world. Grant to them the joy of knowing that their work is appreciated by us and smiled on by You, Who loves all those who work for children.

Amen

Do you have an event or important piece of news about your Church? YES! then why not let me know and I will put it in the Herald for you.
Email stuart@clara.net

ST JAMES'S GUILD
Meet at Church House
at 2.15pm
on
TUESDAY 13th MARCH
HOSTESS
Eileen Robinson

HOLY TRINITY MOTHERS' UNION
MARCH— NO MEETING
See page 3 for details
For further details, please ring Marjorie Barnes on 602031



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What we can do if governments won't



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questions from his experiences as a local
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campaigner.

**Wednesday 14th March 6.00pm
at the University of Lincoln**

Registration 5.30pm

Refreshments

Alexis Rowell was for four years a councillor in the
London Borough of Camden, becoming Chair of the
council's all-party Sustainability Task Force. In February
2010 he won "Sustainability Councillor of the Year". He
was Council's Coordinator for the 10:10 Campaign. He's
the author of "Communities, Councils and Carbon - what
we can do if governments won't" (Green Books, 2010).
Alexis helps run Transition Bethel and the Camden
Climate Action Network. He has post-graduate diplomas
in journalism, an MBA from INSEAD Business School and
an MSc in Food Policy. He set up callatthecarbon.co.uk



More details from gg2011t1t1t1@btconnect.com OR
the University Events Office events@lincoln.ac.uk or 01522 811706

A Guide to Officers and Organisers

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	Mrs Peta Hill	610752
Parish Wardens		
	Charles Dobson	604632
	Eileen Byrne	605371
Parish Treasurer	Mike Crosby	
PCC Secretary	Jennifer Goodwin	605254
Be A Friend Co-ordinator		
	Gill Fraser	07890629062

ST JAMES'S

Church Wardens		
	Paul Clifford	607181
	Robert Haynes	603118
DCC Secretary	Mary Haynes	603118
Treasurer	Robert Haynes	363348
Verger	Kate Clarke	604597
Asst. Verger	Alan Durrant	
Director of Music		
	Lisa Taylor	077705500958
Sacristan/Head Server		
	Kim Thompson	600828

Bellringers' Tower Captain

	Mick Day	603998
Electoral Roll	Mary Haynes	603118
Gift Aid Secretary		
	Martin Chatterton	601964
Stewardship Recorder		
	David Neal	
Church Flowers	Jennifer Goodwin	605254

Friends of St James's Church, Secretary

	June Barber	604595
Church Shop	Mary Haynes	603118
Coffee Shop	Jennifer Goodwin	605254
Church Guides	Stuart Sizer	604624
Church Bookings		
	Kate Clarke	604597
Church House Bookings		
	Pam Ledger	603157
Sunday School	Janet Humberstone	602878
Brownies, 5 th Louth		
	Jackie Farrow	604745

St James's Guild for Women

	Nancy Loft	603580
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HOLY TRINITY and TRINITY CENTRE

Verger	Richard Leese	605803
Bookings	Richard Leese	605803
Church Flowers	Janet Rodgers	610378

ST MICHAEL'S AND ALL ANGELS

Church Wardens		
	Brian Luckwell	607619
	Marie Vincent	328149
DCC Secretary	John Scammell	
Treasurer	Sylvia Luckwell	607619
Verger	Sheila Williets	603513
Organist	Janet McKee	605426 327256
Head Server	John Atkinson	604404
Electoral Roll	Bob Frankum	354262
Church Flowers	Sheila Williets	603513
Church House Bookings & Caretaker		
	Sheila Williets	603513
Churches Together		
	Beryl Dunham	608428
Bible Society	Philip Smith	608428
Social	Mrs M Sharp	604104

St ANDREW STEWTON

Church Wardens		
	Dorothy Mansfield	327533
	Eileen Byrne	605371
DCC Secretary	Jane Rushby	327606
Treasurer	David Gelsthorpe	602521
Electoral Roll	Dorothy Mansfield	327533

ALL SAINTS', SOUTH ELKINGTON

Church Wardens		
	Charles Dobson	604632
	John Myres	607331
Verger	Jill Day	603998
Treasurer	Caroline Blenkhorn	
Secretary	Amy Jobe	606348
Organist		
Church Flowers	Peeby Myres	607331
Instit. Lettings	Jennifer Nelson	603386
Electoral Roll	Amy Jobe	606348

ST MARTIN'S, WELTON LE WOLD

Church Wardens		
	Jim Cave	610275
	David Wormell	604210
DCC Secretary	David Dickinson	604217
Treasurer	Peter Taylor	609280
Organists		
	David Wormell	604210
	David Dickinson	604217
Bellringers'	Derek Wright	603545
Electoral Roll	Lesley Smith	603959
Church Flowers	Dawn Taylor	609280
Herald Distribtn.		
	Peter Taylor	609280

The Parish Team

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Team Vicar
with responsibility for
Legbourne and Woldmarsh

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Rev. Robert Mansfield

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Mike Crosby
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Parish Secretary

Jennifer Goodwin Tel: 605254
jaggoodwin@btinternet.com

SERVICES FOR MARCH 2012

MARCH 4TH - LENT 2

9.30am	ST MICHAELS	COMMUNION
10am	ST JAMES	COMMUNION
11am	STEWTON	COMMUNION
3pm	ST MICHAELS	BAPTISMS
6pm	ST JAMES	CHORAL EVENSONG

MARCH 11TH - LENT 2

9.30am	ST MICHAELS	COMMUNION
10am	ST JAMES	COMMUNION
11am	WELTON	MORNING PRAYER
6pm	ST JAMES	EVENSONG

MARCH 18TH MOTHERING SUNDAY

9.30am	ST MICHAELS	COMMUNION
10am	ST JAMES	COMMUNION
11am	ELKINGTON	COMMUNION AND BAPTISM
11am	STEWTON	MORNING PRAYER
11am	TRINITY	COMMUNION
6pm	St JAMES	CHORAL EVENSONG

MARCH 25RD LENT 5

9.30am	ST MICHAELS	COMMUNION
10am	ST JAMES	COMMUNION
11am	WELTON	COMMUNION
6pm	ST JAMES	SUNG EUCHARIST

Once again please be aware that there may be other services not listed above. I have included all those I have been given, however, I understand that the Tuesday 11am BCP Communion services are still taking place. The first Tuesday in the month at Trinity and the rest at St James. My advice is to look at Church notice boards and the individual weekly notices, particularly for St James.

**The Deanery Office, 6 Ugate,
is open every Wednesday evening
between 6.00 and 7.00 pm
for the booking of
Baptisms and Weddings and for consultations
with the Clergy.**

Holy Week Services in the Villages.

**Monday 2nd April 7.00 pm
Welton le Wold - St Martin
Speaker - David Margerson.**

**Tuesday 3rd April 7.00 pm
Stewton — St Andrews
Speaker — Rev Sue Allison.**

**Wednesday 4th April 7.00 pm
Sth. Elkington - All Saints
Speaker - Kim Thompson.**

Each speaker will give a brief talk on
their work for the Church.

These services are not a Communion

REGISTERS

Christenings

15 Jan	Alfie Quinn Hand
5 Feb	James Henry Showler Taylor Mabel Jane Cron Koadi Lee Hook
26 Feb	Florence Lula Poppy Makinson-Sanders

Weddings/Blessings

14 Jan	Robert James Cone to Kerri-Anne Wright
25 Feb	Martin & Bridget Jee (Blessing)

Funerals

4 Jan	Kathleen May Robinson
5 Jan	John Butterworth
6 Jan	Ann Marie King Sharna Kingswood
9 Jan	Paul Finch
20 Jan	Jean Patricia Reeks
25 Jan	Maurice Walker
27 Jan	Gwenneth Isabel Clarkson
30 Jan	John Diffill
6 Feb	Ada Margaret Mitchell
7 Feb	Billy Cross
9 Feb	Peter Smith
10 Feb	John James Marks
20 Feb	Irene Mabel McCluskey
22 Feb	Susan Ann Smith
23 Feb	Rosemary Lindop

Wordsearch



See how many of these words you can find.

Advent
Altar
Baptism
Bethlehem
Chalice
Choir
Communion
Confirmation
Creation
Creed
Crucifix
Disciple

Easter
Eucharist
Fishermen
God
Gospels
Heaven
Herald
Host
Hymn
Jesus
Lectern
Lent

Organ
Our Father
Prayer
Risen
Sacraments
Sing
St James Church
Vestments
Vicar
Virgin Mary

WOMEN'S WORLD DAY OF PRAYER

FRIDAY 2 MARCH 2012

Let Justice Prevail

On Friday 2nd March, over 3 million people worldwide will be praying and worshipping together during an annual day of prayer, using a service prepared by Christian women of Malaysia.

This year the Louth service will be at Nichol Hill Methodist Church Centre at 2.00 pm. The speaker will be Sylvia Pounds.

Refreshments will be served under the Tower after the service.

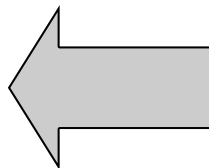
Although organised and led by women, this is essentially a day of prayer for **EVERBODY** and all are welcome to attend.

This month Marie has compiled a word search for you to try. It should help to while away March until the clocks go forward on Sunday 26th March.

The answers are on page 12.

No cheating.

**PLEASE NOTE THE
CHANGE OF
VENUE FROM
ST JAMES TO
NICHOL HILL.**



St Andrew's Church Stewton
invites you to join us for
Afternoon Tea

at
Trinity Church Centre, Louth
on
Sunday March 25th

2.30pm to 5pm
(last serving 5pm)

*Meet your friends for generous servings of freshly made sandwiches
and a selection of homemade cakes with unlimited tea and coffee
while you enjoy gentle background music*

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Louth and
District
Seniors' Forum

The senior's Forum have a meeting on Friday, 2nd March from 10 am – 12 noon. All over 50s are most welcome to come along. It will be held in the ConocoPhillips Room above Louth Library from 10 am – 12 noon.

Energy Best Deal is the topic for the first speaker. Mark Egan from the Citizens Advice Bureau will show us how to get the best tariff for electricity and gas. He will be followed by Dr Neal Parkes, a local GP, who will give an update about the **Urgent Care Centre (A&E)** at Louth Hospital. There will be plenty time for questions.

Teas will be served up until the meeting starts at 10 am. **Enquiries louthseniors@yahoo.co.uk or 07974 880157.**

On April 6th 2012 a crime was committed...

The Vigil



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April 6th & 7th, Monk's Dyke School, 7:30pm

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If you are unable to come, e-mail revlmh@btconnect.com or call 01507 604216.

Hello,

As I write, I have just heard Richard Dawkins on the radio publicizing the results of a poll commissioned by his organization. He is drawing attention to Christians not spending enough time going to church, reading the Bible and praying. His frustration is that those who record themselves as Christian on the census form are not what he would consider to be proper Christians. This contrasted somewhat with a book I have been reading in preparation for Lent, 'The Faith of the English' by Nigel Rooms. From Nigel Rooms perspective English Christian spirituality is worth talking about because unless everyone is involved in a conversation about Englishness then its only extremist groups that have their voices heard. For him a very important strand in English spirituality is expressed in this verse.

"The kiss of the sun for pardon, The song of birds for mirth, One is nearer God's heart in a garden, Than anywhere else on Earth." (Dorothy Gurney 1858-1932)

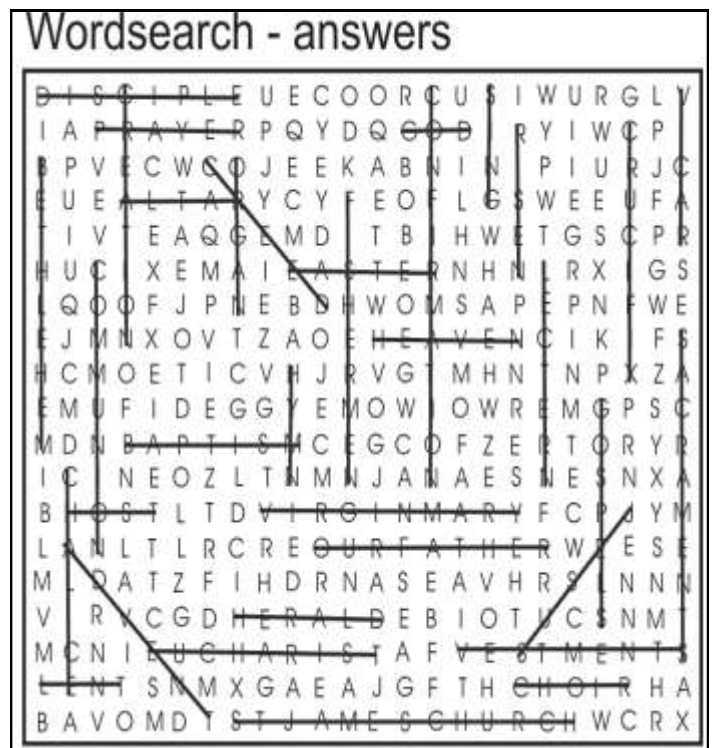
In this verse is a strong sense of relationship with God; a relationship that is fiercely independent of other people. I have a sense that it is a position that has come to the fore because a generation remember being made to go to church and listen to the preacher; made to say their prayers; made to put up with people they didn't much like because church was part of respectability. As a reaction to that comes a swift, "I can be a Christian without any of that, I can be close to God in my garden." In keeping with a good tradition within the Church of England I want to say both have their place. A healthy spirituality does have relationship with God at its heart but this relationship can grow through sharing the journey with other people. The people we share the journey with are our Church; the Bible is a record of people's struggles to understand God stretching out over thousands of years. I often hear that people have stopped worshipping in church because other worshippers have disappointed them in some way. However, the idea of a church being a group of people

with all the answers has never been part of my picture of what church is. Instead, returning to this idea of struggle, I see church as people struggling together learning from each other's weaknesses and strengths. There isn't room within that picture to start asking who the proper Christians are, we're all in it together.

I would love it if people as well as having a heartfelt relationship personal with God were to turn more towards the observances of Christianity that Richard Dawkins mentioned. Not because I want people to live up to a label but because I believe we can all find something of value in reading the Bible and worshipping together. So if you are a person who would tick the box Christian but haven't read from the Bible at home lately why not look up the Gospel of Mark in the index and spend some time reading a short account of Jesus life; why not come along to a church service and find out where some other folks are in their own journeys. Not because it's the proper thing to do but because they can enhance our relationship with God.

God Bless,

Revd. Lorraine



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YOU NEED HANDS

By Pat Whistler

“Cometh the hour, cometh the man”, an expression aptly descriptive of Her Majesty’s late father, the reluctant King. Reader(s?) will be familiar with the portrayal of the last King George in that excellent British film, *The King’s Speech*. How this leads on to this bi-month’s rambling treatise of hands will, I hope, become clear.

Fathers among us know the strength a man can draw from a small hand pressed into a large one, and the late King George was, I suspect, no exception. He and our present Queen were very close, and sixty years ago as these words are written, he died; to her it was unexpected, happening much sooner than she might have feared, and she was at that moment elevated to be the Nation’s head, and its Hand.

My late father, who was a Consul-General at the end of his career, met the Queen on two occasions, and while His Highness the Duke of Edinburgh was characteristically abrasive, all Mum could say afterwards, was “the Queen always says the wrong thing to your father.” This referred to HM’s remarkable capacity for observation and for combining it with appropriate comments.

On both those occasions Dad would have shaken a gloved hand. He had that handshake in common with every Prime Minister since Churchill, Presidents and First Ladies of most of the world’s countries, Mayors, Councillors, CBE’s and OBE’s galore, and countless thousands of others in the last sixty years.

So, what of this right hand of our monarch? It has been used to sign Acts of Parliament, treaties, centenarians’ birthday cards, and a myriad important documents. Those who have shaken it have

the right to feel a sense of privilege, gloved though that hand may have been. It is not the clunking fist of which Gordon Brown boasted, nor the magical grip of a Yehudi Menuhin, a Liam O’Flynn or a Jimi Hendrix. To our knowledge it has no such intrinsic power, in literal terms. Our ruler is no brain surgeon or painter of note (at least, as far as we know- she is entitled to a private life)

Figuratively, the hand is another matter. Watching the first instalment of Andrew Marr’s thoughtful documentary in this Jubilee year, I was struck by the effect our Queen had on those in Canadian and Welsh streets and on the site of the Twin Towers atrocity in New York, on the people who fleetingly held that hand in theirs. To them it was an affirmation of shared humanity. They smiled, felt better. They were glad to be dealing with a VIP who cared enough to go out into the streets and meet them.

That hand is warm and friendly, not just to those lining the highways or attending the planting of a symbolic tree, but to whole countries, Commonwealth or otherwise. It has helped to grow invisible but important bonds between nations. It has been a healing and sealing hand, symbolic of a goodwill we should feel, even if we don’t, towards our fellow man abroad.

It is also a strong hand, unflinching on the tiller of State, even though unseen. Often in our darkest times, the nation has looked to our Queen. The role of leader is not the same as that of ruler; though she holds the title of monarch, she has taken on the leadership function with considerable skill and quiet determination. She leads by example, imposing upon herself a punishing routine and a discipline which her uncle, the last King Edward, avoided. We in the milling throng cannot know if she has

experienced depression, exasperation or even despair, but as she is human and not a megalomaniac (unlike some of her ministers lately) we can presume that she probably has. She has not deviated one iota from her duty as she perceives it.

It is a cool hand on the nation’s brow, when it is all getting a bit silly, as it did when poor Princess Diana went, first off the rails and subsequently to her death. The Queen respected the nation’s upset state and behaved with great dignity and restraint. This is so characteristic of this remarkable lady that it was not much commented upon; but then, we don’t do we, we are British and in many ways reflect her image.

The theatrical aspect is terrific. As a former serviceman (part-time) I have an inkling of just how magnificent British ceremonial is – you will especially notice this when you see our foreign counterparts, slouching raggedly along to the discordant tooting and braying of really awful bands. Our leader sits a horse exceedingly well.

As regards the constitutional position, don’t get me started. We do not have a perfect, Utopian governmental system. If you know a country which has, please leave now and go there. Our system is, in theory, a mess, like the music of Bach or the paintings of Picasso, or indeed our British railway, telephone and water systems. Like these, in practice, it works, which is why I am not a republican like some of my fierce friends. Of course, if you want Kim Jong Un, try North Korea. If you like continuous election campaigns to decide the issue between idiots, there is the USA.

So, for this author at least, this year’s prayer is God save the Queen.



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The last date for submission of articles for the April Herald is Wednesday 21st March 2012.

The Herald should be in Church by lunch time on Wednesday 28th March.

You can send articles to my e-mail address which is: stuart@clara.net or stuartsize@talktalk.net