

**St Mary's Church**  
**Stotfold & Fairfield Parish Church**  
Church Road  
Stotfold SG5 4NE  
[www.stotfoldchurch.org.uk](http://www.stotfoldchurch.org.uk)  
Charity No: 1131275

Spring  
2021

# *Parish Magazine*




**Tuesday 23 March will be the 1st anniversary  
of the UK Government's measures to stem the  
coronavirus pandemic by a 'lockdown'.**

**Our Church will therefore be open for you to visit for  
a time of quiet or private prayer or reflection or to light a candle.  
on Tuesday 23 March from 9am to 6pm.**

**Morning Prayer will be held as usual at 9am  
and prayers will be said on the hour.**

***This also coincides with the Marie Curie Day of Reflection***

## **St Mary's Prayer Wall of Reflection**

 From Sunday 21 March until Easter Day  
we are inviting you to tie a ribbon to our gates,  
which lead from our churchyard to our church hall,  
as a symbol of your prayer of remembrance, thanksgiving or praise.

Bring your own ribbon or ribbons are available.  
In celebration of Easter these gates will also be decorated with flowers.

**All these symbols of your prayers  
will then remain in place for a number of weeks.**



### ***Stotfold & Fairfield Parish Church Welcomes All***

Unfortunately our Easter Day service this year will be ticketed only.  
Contact [stotfoldparishchurch@gmail.com](mailto:stotfoldparishchurch@gmail.com) or 01462 625637 for a ticket.

For current information on our services: [stotfoldchurch.org.uk](http://stotfoldchurch.org.uk)  
To receive the Weekly Messenger email: [stotfoldparishchurch@gmail.com](mailto:stotfoldparishchurch@gmail.com)



Does it sometimes feel like you are standing on the edge of a barren wilderness, looking longingly at a promising new land that you hope to enter soon?

Moses and the Jewish people had such a longing to enter the Promised Land. They had been exiles in Egypt for 400 years before Moses led them out of slavery. However, instead of leaving Egypt and heading straight for the Promised Land, they spent 40 years in a barren wilderness to re-discover how to be reliant on God and not Pharaoh for their wants and needs.

The lockdowns of the past year have been something of a wilderness experience. The period of the pandemic has been a reminder that neither we, nor the state, has total control over our lives. Ultimately we are dependent on God, who teaches us to love one another.

Jesus Christ came into our world as a visible example of how we should love God, love our neighbours and love ourselves.

Jesus Christ died and was raised to new life so that we can have an abundant life today in Him by living according to God's values and one day live a new life in heaven.

As we approach Easter morning, what can the example of Jesus Christ rising from the darkness of the tomb teach us about how to live a risen life?

Once the lockdown ends and as we begin to meet people again, what lessons might the Risen Christ have for us?

When the Risen Christ first appeared to the disciples in the locked room, he didn't begin by telling them off for abandoning him after his arrest. Instead, he forgave them. He said "Peace be with you." He then commissioned the disciples to forgive the sins of others. Once lockdown ends, is there someone you need to forgive?

The third time the Risen Christ appeared to his disciples they were in a boat fishing and he cooked breakfast on the beach. Afterwards, Jesus asked Peter three times "do you love me?" In response to Peter's affirmations of his love, Jesus told Peter, "if you truly love me, feed my sheep." One of the meanings of the word "love" in that ancient culture was to do something for another person. Love in that context was an action word, not an emotion.

At one point during the lockdown 19% of adults surveyed said there were serving or helping others with actions like shopping or errands. Once this lockdown ends, are there ways you can show love through action?

Come Easter Morning I invite you to celebrate the abundant life Jesus Christ offers us today and in the life to come.

*Bill*



*Ryan was delighted with the cloak, but not so sure about the face mask*

## Divine Intervention?

A little boy was playing outside with his mother's broom in the garden. That night his mother realised her broom was still missing and asked her son to go out and bring it in.

When the little boy confessed he was afraid of the dark, his mother tried to comfort him: 'The Lord is out there too, don't be afraid.'

Hesitantly, the little boy opened the back door and peered out. He called softly: 'Lord, please will you pass me the broom?'

**Quote:** When we take least notice of our good deeds ourselves, God takes most notice of them. – *Matthew Henry*

## Marie Curie Day of Reflection

Since the first UK lockdown began in 2020, hundreds of thousands of people have died which is one of the reasons why our Church is open on the 1st anniversary of 23rd March. Too many lives have been cut short and millions have been bereaved.



**Join in the national minute of silence at 12 noon** to honour those who have died and reflect on the challenges we have overcome.

### Shine a light at 8pm.

At 8pm there will be another minute's silence for people to come together to light up the night. Stand outside with a light – a candle, a torch, even your phone - to remember someone who's died and show your support to people going through a bereavement. Alternatively you can shine a light in your window for everyone to see.

Share what you do on social media using #DayOfReflection.

[www.mariecurie.org.uk](http://www.mariecurie.org.uk)

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## Mountains Make You Feel Better

The natural environment can make a real impact on your mood. Mountains can leave you feeling more optimistic, while the ocean can help boost your inspiration.



A recent study at Goldsmiths University of London found that water is most effective at increasing positive emotions, such as happiness and inspiration. Woodlands can help you forget your worries, and fields and meadows can enhance your energy levels.

## Luxury Easter Hamper Draw

Have you bought your tickets for our draw taking place on Wednesday 24th March?

Tickets are £5 each and in addition to the hamper there is also a 2nd prize of a bottle of wine and an incredibly large tin of Italian biscuits plus a 3rd prize of another box of biscuits.

To purchase a ticket please contact Alison on 01462 625637 or email [stotfoldparishchurch@gmail.com](mailto:stotfoldparishchurch@gmail.com)



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## **New Bishop for the Environment appointed by Archbishop of Canterbury**

The Bishop of Norwich, Graham Usher, is to lead the Church of England's Environment Programme with a charge to lead bold, deliberate, collaborative action across the Church to tackle the grave existential crises of climate change and biodiversity loss.

Bishop Graham will work with the Mission and Public Affairs department of the Church of England, continuing the commitment to net-zero carbon impacts across the Church of England by 2030 set by General Synod in February 2020.

The Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, said: "This will be a key year for the UK's approach to climate change internationally." In June, the UK will host the G7. In November, Glasgow will host COP26. The Environment Bill will be coming to Parliament. "Now is the time for bold, deliberate, collaborative action."

Bishop Graham said: "Responding to the climate and biodiversity crises is not a luxury in the ministry of the Church, but an urgent imperative for our mission."

Churches are being encouraged to raise their voice to speak up about the need to tackle climate change across the whole of society through the Climate Sunday initiative, starting by holding their own climate focused service.



...Rodney, I've been meaning to have a word  
with you about your carbon footprint!



**Creationtide or the Season of Creation  
is the period in the annual church calendar,  
from 1st September to 4th October,  
dedicated to God as Creator and Sustainer of all life.**

In the year leading up to the UN global climate change talks in November 2021 (COP26), the Church of England are encouraging churches to hold a special Climate Sunday service or event, to make a commitment to tackle climate change, and to raise their voices to call on world leaders to do the same.



The culmination of the campaign will be a national Climate Sunday event on Sunday 5 September 2021, to share church commitments and pray for bold action and courageous leadership at COP26.

Climate Sunday is organised by Churches Together in Britain and Ireland with support from Operation Noah and other charities including CAFOD, Christian Aid, Tearfund and A Rocha UK.

### **Biodiversity Poem**

When I was born I was given a ball  
(the ball was blue and green)  
My mom said share and take good care  
It belongs to others too  
Keep it clean. Keep the green parts green  
Try not to get the blue parts bluer  
If you love this ball it will never grow old  
In fact it may grow newer  
So I did that all and I did some more  
Because I love this ball a lot  
And I hope that you will love it too  
It's the only ball we've got.



**These are bleak times. We live not just with a global pandemic, but accelerating climate change and species loss. Is there hope? And can A Rocha UK realistically make a difference?**

The answer is a resounding 'yes' to both – if we have confidence in what we know, humility about what we don't, openness to work with others, and the faith to go where we believe God is pointing us.

A Rocha UK was founded twenty years ago as a local Christian conservation project in a deprived and multi-ethnic area of Southall, west London. That work goes on, based at our Wolf Fields reserve. But who would have dreamed that A Rocha UK would now be leading a fast growing network of Christian organisations committed to managing their land for nature, with Partners in Action in all four UK nations? Or that we would be facilitating an Eco Church movement of more than 3,100 local churches in England and Wales, learning how to care for creation in all they do. Or that we would be hosting an 'online community' – the phrase hadn't even been invented 20 years ago – of 'Wild Christians' caring for nature. Of course, there have been hard times and setbacks too. But we are amazed at where God has led, and often carried, us.

But we also grieve, as we believe God grieves, for the loss of species; and we long for a stable climate and clean oceans unpolluted with plastic. It is his creation, after all. And we are not blind to the immense challenges ahead if humanity is to halt and even reverse this damage. Time is extremely short to avoid runaway climate change or mass extinction of species. The UK itself is one of the most nature-poor countries in Europe while the pandemic has exposed how vital access to nature is for mental health – as well as how unevenly this is distributed between the poor and better off in the UK. And scientists are warning that we should expect more pandemics of 'animal' viruses unless we restore animal habitats.

So, where is our hope? In a faithful loving God, yes. And in seeds we believe he has planted and will grow. For example: In the UK a fast-growing number of churches, denominations and networks now recognise the importance of caring for creation in the whole mission of the church. With more than 50,000 worshipping communities in the UK – with all our buildings, land, people, prayer etc – Christians and churches have truly colossal potential to make and demonstrate change in every corner of the land.

There is much greater willingness than previously for Christian organisations to collaborate with secular and those of other faiths, around the environment, offering a way to build community and defuse conflict in the process. There is much greater public awareness of the need for urgent action to prevent environmental disaster, and the younger generation – the future leaders – are demanding it.

**[www.arocha.org.uk](http://www.arocha.org.uk)**





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## Easter Faith in Atheist Russia

Three years after the Russian Revolution of 1917, a great anti-God rally was arranged in Kiev. The powerful orator Bukharin was sent from Moscow, and for an hour he demolished the Christian faith with argument, abuse and ridicule. At the end there was silence.

Then a man rose and asked to speak. He was a priest of the Russian Orthodox Church. He went and stood next to Bukharin. Facing the people, he raised his arms and spoke just three triumphant words: 'Christ is risen!'

At once the entire assembly rose to their feet and gave the joyful response, 'He is risen indeed!' It was a devastating moment for an atheist politician, who had no answer to give to this ancient Easter liturgy.

## Stotfold Parish Church

As part of our commitment to being good stewards of the environment we have committed to purchasing electricity that is 100% generated from renewable sources as accredited by OFGEM through the Parish Buying Energy Basket from 1 October 2020 to 30 September 2021.



***The Lord God took the man and put him in the  
Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it.***

GENESIS 2:15



## Glass Recycling

Did you know that unfortunately, drinking glasses cannot be recycled because they contain added chemicals?



The chemicals are needed so that this type of glass can be tougher to hold both hot and cold beverages, but that also means the glass has a different melting point than the types of glass typically put in recycling bins. Therefore, if drinking glass was added to the recycling process, the final product would break.

Therefore other than bottles and jars, glass should be placed in your general waste bin so as not to contaminate the recyclable load.

## St Mary's Online for Children

We are SO looking forward to the time, hopefully before too long, when our Little Angels babies and toddlers group can meet once again in the Church Hall. In the meantime we are continuing online every Thursday morning in term time. You can find our livestream on FaceBook at St Mary's Babies & Toddlers (and all previous videos). We have half an hour together including familiar (and some new) songs and usually a story half way through.

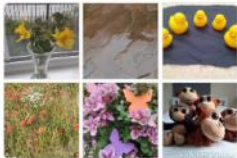
For slightly older children we have started Little Angels PLUS! - also on Thursday mornings with fun songs for slightly older children.

Email us at [littleangelsstotfold@outlook.com](mailto:littleangelsstotfold@outlook.com) if you'd like us to let you know when we're back together in the Hall or to request songs or to sing happy birthday on the Thursday morning .

Send message  
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Community

### Photos

See all



### Videos

See all



We also have our regular Sunday afternoon Tea Time Praise family worship time - normally in the Church (including crafts and tea!) but currently on Zoom.

Let us know if you'd like an invite.

A few weeks ago we received our first payment from AmazonSmile so a big thank you to all of you who have supported us, If using Amazon please use AmazonSmile at <https://smile.amazon.co.uk/ch/1131275-0> and Amazon donates 0.5% of the net purchase value of many products to The Parochial Church Council Of The Ecclesiastical Parish Of St. Mary The Virgin, Stotfold, at no cost to you.

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Should you already donate to a charity and wish to change to ourselves just click the charity you currently support on your header and click change charity. Unfortunately, we have a very long charity name 'The Parochial Church Council of The Ecclesiastical Parish Of St. Mary The Virgin, Stotfold' and so the easiest way to find us is to search Stotfold and we come up as one of the options.

To support us in future you just need to remember to go to [smile.amazon.co.uk](https://smile.amazon.co.uk) whenever you wish to place an order, or why not bookmark this as Amazon Smile which then makes it all so simple.

### **How to make a paper 'Palm Cross'**

These have been such strange times and many have learnt new skills, from home schooling their children, home baking, becoming proficient gardeners., learning to paint, becoming an avid knitter, starting to write, playing music or brushing up their skills on the computer on Zoom.

In my case not many of my skills changed. I have never been dextrous with 'craft' or music but on the Saturday prior to Palm Sunday last year I found myself making my own Palm Cross by following the instructions of Jan from Sunday Club at St Albans Abbey, at over 70 I was probably one of the oldest participants that day!

Obviously this year many of our churches are open but if anyone would like to make one either for themselves or with their children or grandchildren Jan can still be found at: <https://youtu.be/0k8IVvZ4DUA>.



***Alison Collis***

## **Holy Week and Easter Services 2021**

### **28 March Sunday – Palm Sunday – (British Summer Time Begins)**

9.00am Morning Prayer  
10.00am Parish Communion  
6.00pm Stations of the Cross

### **29 March Monday**

7.30pm Reflection with music, followed by service of Compline

### **30 March Tuesday**

7.30pm Reflection with music, followed by service of Compline

### **31 March Wednesday**

9.45am Holy Communion  
7.30pm Tenebrae – A service of shadows. 'Begins with the church in candlelight, with as many candles as there are readings, and ends with the service in darkness.

### **1 April Maundy Thursday**

7.30pm Communion service.

### **2 April Good Friday**

2.00pm Hour before the Cross

### **3 April Easter Eve**

7.30pm Service of Light and Renewal of Baptism Vows

### **4 April Easter Day**

10.00am Parish Communion, Stotfold

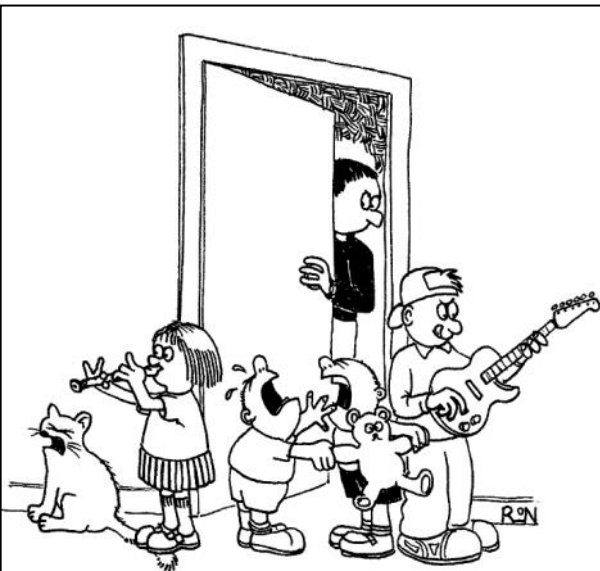
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*Kevin took himself off to his study to pray for peace*



## National Flower Arranging Day

**7th May 2021**

The members of NAFAS are using their homes to firstly mark the day but maybe more importantly to give a little cheer and sign of hope, maybe remembering the saying 'If you hold a flower close to your heart you will see only beauty and hope.'

[www.nafas.org.uk](http://www.nafas.org.uk)



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***And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose. Romans 8:28***

To all PCC members, when you next attend a PCC meeting, which is probably more likely to be by zoom than in person, you could say "Happy 100<sup>th</sup> Birthday!" to your colleagues. It is a hundred years since The Parochial Church Councils (Powers) Measure 1921 which was an important stage in the birth of PCCs.

During the First World War army chaplains found that many men who thought of themselves as church goers were ignorant of the basics of religion. This led to a new interest in mission for the church. There were national days of prayer during the war and in 1915 there was a National Mission of Repentance and Hope. The public were more in the mood for victory than repentance. After the Armistice there was a desire for change in the national church and this led to a discussion about the links with the state.

There was a concern that Parliament was often slow to enact laws for the church and many people felt the national church should have more authority to govern itself. The setting up of Parochial Church Councils was part of that process. In the past a lot of local secular administration had been the responsibility of churchwardens in the vestry meetings. Gradually their functions were passed to local councils. Most of their remaining powers were transferred to PCCs by The Parochial Church Councils (Powers) Measure 1921.

The purpose behind these new councils was to give the laity a more prominent role in parish life to go alongside the deaconry, diocesan and national councils which became the synods and have an important role in church life. Some conservative clerics were concerned at this reform and felt that congregations would pick and choose clergy or object to a new incumbent chosen by a patron. The process of starting PCCs to share in decision making in parishes was widely accepted but a few older incumbents and those in more rural areas, failed to do either out of reluctance or ignorance.

A leading churchman in the reform movement was William Temple who became leader of the 'Life and Liberty movement' which hugely influenced the move towards democratic government in the Church of England. He was Bishop of Manchester in the 1920s, Archbishop of York from 1929 to 1942 and Archbishop of Canterbury (1942-4). He had been a secretary of the National Mission of Repentance and Hope in 1916 and became chairman and joint leader with H. R. (Dick) Sheppard of the Life and Liberty movement. 'We demand liberty for the Church of England' he declared at a meeting in July 1917.



One difficult issue was what level of commitment to church life enabled a person to be eligible to serve on a church council. It was decided that anyone on the electoral roll whether they attended services or communion regularly could participate. The then Bishop of Oxford resigned over the issue because he thought that councils must only be made up of committed regular communicants.

The next Bishop of Oxford in his monthly diocesan magazine endorsed the principle of democracy and reassured people that it was a not negative step or would limit the powers of clergy or wardens. He encouraged the congregations to consider how to use each other's gifts. In Aylesbury the idea of the new PCCs had been discussed as early as 1918. It was felt that they would support the clergy particularly with financial issues.

It is strange to think that the proposal for clergy and congregation to work together for the benefit of the church could be controversial. The birth of PCCs was a major step in the life of the church. I wonder what the next one hundred years will bring?

***The Revd Peter Crumpler, a Church of England priest in St Albans,  
and a former communications director for the CofE.***

Churchwardens have been around since the 13th Century and legally 'own' the movable contents of the church. They are meant to maintain order in the church and churchyard, with the assistance of their staves, if necessary. In the event of serious disorder today, a mobile phone might be a safer instrument, with staves reserved for ceremonial occasions!

***Excerpt from an article by Ven John Barton***

## **Do you have any old pairs of glasses lurking in drawers or other hideaways?**

There is a box in the north aisle for any unwanted spectacles so that we can send them to Zimbabwe where they are really needed.



## **Used UK & Foreign Stamps**

We are now supporting MND, a charity supported by Keryle Rutherford and family in memory of Iain.



The MND Association is a charity focused on improving access to care, research and campaigning for people affected by motor neurone disease. Please either give your used stamps to Keryle or alternatively leave in the basket on the shelf by our north door.

## **Science and Society: How Can We Approach New Ethical Issues?**

Science tells us how the world works, and technology offers applications of that knowledge, but neither can tell us what we *ought* to do. All scientific discoveries or new technologies can be used to either help or harm others. For example, a smartphone can be used to stay in touch but also enables bullying.

It is important to get past our initial reactions: the 'yuk!' or 'wow!' These feelings may well change once we learn more about the science and other factors behind a new development.

Ethical thinking can be divided into three main categories. The **consequentialist** approach is demonstrated in Proverbs, when Wisdom calls young men to consider the outcome of their actions. Utilitarianism is a form of consequentialist ethic that tries to maximise the greatest good for the largest number of people affected, but unchecked it leaves minorities out in the cold.

**Duty or law-based** ethics start with intrinsic values, asking what is the correct course of action, or our duty? These values might be God-given, such as the ten commandments, or worked out by human reason. It is possible, however, to do harm while obeying the law, especially if someone asks 'What can I get away with?' Also, what happens when rules collide? For example, who should be treated first when resources are limited?

**Virtue ethics** are about building character, growing in wisdom and the fruit of the Spirit. There are plenty of biblical principles to guide virtuous living, such as the idea that we are 'made in the image of God' which supports the value of every human life (e.g., Genesis 1:26–27, Genesis 9:6, James 3:9–10), but the right decision can vary depending on circumstances

So how can we make ethical decisions about new technologies? **The five Cs** bring together a number of different types of ethical thinking into a helpful framework for decision-making.

**Clarify** the facts and key questions.

**Consider** our choices: what could we achieve?

**Constraints:** External - what must we do?; Internal - how should we behave?

**Compare** the pros and cons of each approach.

**Choose** what is best, with all parties in mind.

Finally, we have to recognise that the information available to us will change over time, our knowledge of God and His word will keep growing, and we cannot avoid making mistakes - so our ethical decisions will need to be revisited and revised from time to time.

***This series is written by Dr Ruth M Bancewicz, who is Church Engagement Director at The Faraday Institute for Science and Religion in Cambridge. Ruth writes on the positive relationship between Science and Christian faith.***

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## The Goldfinch

A flash of yellow, gold, and red  
Dancing in our flower bed  
Flocked together, bringing charm  
Their joyful song restoring calm.

Through centuries since times of old  
We've always loved their plumage bold;  
As they gathered round to feed  
Seeking grubs, and thistle seed.

So, go ahead, and plant some thistles  
You will see, among the bristles.  
Golden birds who dance and dart  
Bringing joy to warm your heart.

*By Nigel Beeton*



## Who Said That?

I've always believed there is a certain divine scheme of things. I'm not quite able to explain how my election happened or why I'm here, apart from believing it is part of God's plan for me.

*Ronald Reagan*



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### **New Lead Bishop for Housing**

Dr Guli Francis-Dehqani has become the Church of England's Lead Bishop for Housing, to spearhead the Church's efforts to help ease the UK's crippling housing crisis.

Bishop Guli, currently the Bishop of Loughborough, will take up the new role later this year when she becomes Bishop of Chelmsford. The new post will involve leading efforts to implement the recommendations of the Archbishop of Canterbury's Commission on Housing, Church and Community, which was published in late February.

### **Observation on Modern Life**

If you think the problem is bad now, just wait until we have solved it.  
(Arthur Kassep)



**‘He gave us eyes to see them’:  
Murillo’s ‘St John the Baptist with the Lamb’**

The nursery rhymes we learnt as children often focused on lambs: Mary had a little lamb, Baa baa black sheep, Little Bo-Peep and Little Boy Blue. They come to mind in springtime when we see lambs in the field jumping for joy or bleating as they run to the ewes for warmth and safety.

Murillo, a 17th century artist from Seville, had that world of childhood in mind when he painted ‘St John the Baptist with the Lamb.’ He looks back to the little child of Isaiah 11 leading the animals, but also we are called to think of the adult John the Baptist, who sees Jesus walking by and exclaims, “Look, here is the Lamb of God.” In the painting, St John is a child with his arms around the lamb. He stands on rocky ground with a reed cross at his feet that has the words ‘Behold the Lamb of God’ on the ribbon.



The painting hangs in the National Gallery, and it certainly lacks the strength and brilliance of other Spanish artists. But Murillo is telling us how the drama of salvation is played out by children and lambs. He is inviting us to look from that world of childhood to another part of Isaiah’s prophecy, where he talks of the Messiah led like a lamb to the slaughter. We enter that drama of salvation in Holy Week. On Good Friday Jesus was led to His crucifixion, just as the lambs were being killed for the Passover.

We think of the world of Old Testament sacrifice, where the high priest on the day of Atonement would enter the Holy of Holies and sacrifice a ram. And we focus on Jesus who is for us both priest and sacrifice, and realise that there is a divine chemistry at work that leads us from Good Friday to Easter Day.

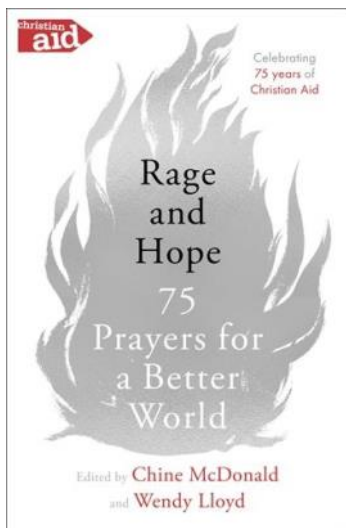
The writer of Hebrews meditates on this theme and proclaims that in Jesus we have a high priest of the good things that have come - eternal redemption. We are invited to appropriate that great gift for ourselves in this Holy Week of our salvation. So, we journey from the childhood days of Murillo’s painting to Calvary and the Easter garden. And we can also journey beyond to the heavenly city, where Revelation tells us that all the nations walk by the light of that Lamb - the Lamb of God.

***The Revd Michael Burgess***

**Who Said That?**

Our Lord has written the promise of the resurrection, not in books alone,  
but in every leaf in springtime. – Martin Luther

## **Rage & Hope: 75 Prayers for a Better World** *a new book to mark Christian Aid's 75th anniversary*



Commemorating 75 years of Christian Aid, this new publication is a prayer book like no other. Full of defiance and determination, it is an invitation to join Christian Aid and followers of Jesus around the world in a united chorus of Rage and Hope.

Bringing together voices from different contexts and cultures around the world, this is a collection of prayers of lament for the injustices of the world, and prayers of hope for the world we want to see. With a foreword from Walter Brueggemann, one of the world's leading theologians, it also features contributions from writer Rhidian Brook, Professor Robert Beckford, John Bell, Bishop Rachel Treweek and Bishop Paul Butler.

**The world is broken, full of injustice and inequality,  
but despite everything, we hope.**



[www.christianaid.org.uk](http://www.christianaid.org.uk)

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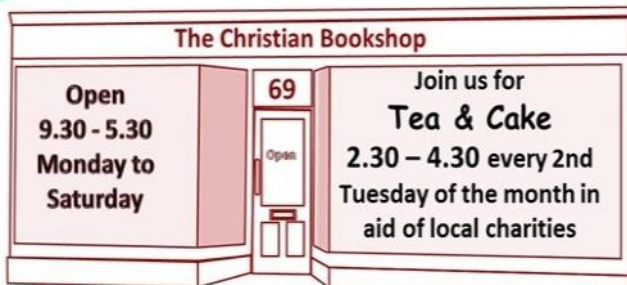
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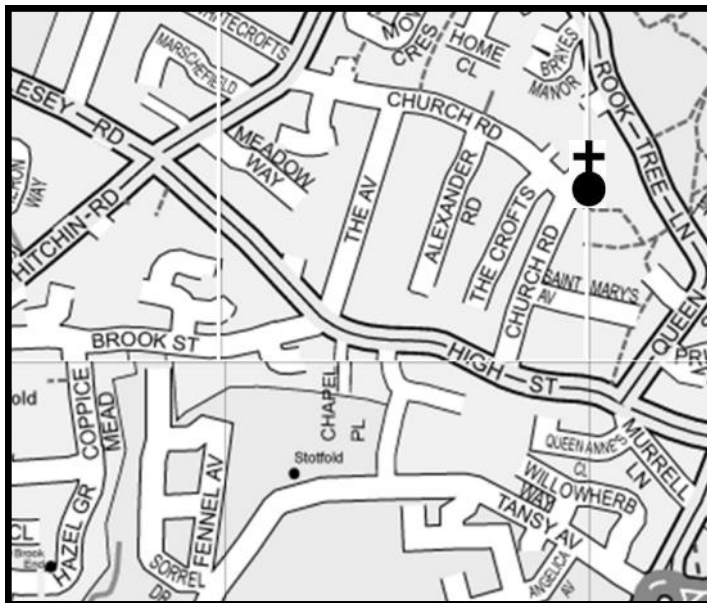
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