



**St Mary's Church**  
**Stotfold & Fairfield Parish Church**  
**Church Road**  
**Stotfold SG5 4NE**

**www.stotfoldchurch.org.uk**  
**Charity No: 1131275**

Summer  
2021

# *Parish Magazine*



The Beds & Herts Historic Churches Trust organise a sponsored Bike 'n Hike whose aim is to raise money both for the Trust and for the participating churches. Half of every cyclist's and walker's sponsor money goes to the Trust and half goes to the church of their choice.



This year's sponsored Bike 'n' Hike is taking place on Saturday 11th September and if you are interested in taking part, whether individually or as part of our group, please contact Jane Hyde on 730305.

The church is currently open for services on Sundays and Wednesdays and for Daily Morning Prayer and we have set an open period on Wednesday afternoon when people can drop in for their own quiet reflection and prayer.

Prior to the pandemic St Mary's was open every day to the public and we hope to return to that pattern before too long. We are delighted that so many couples have decided to exchange their wedding vows in their local Parish church this year. It is also a great joy that families have made plans to bring their children to be Christened.

We look forward to the day when we can restart our Community Coffee Mornings, the physical version of our Little Angels baby and toddler group, our monthly Fellowship Lunch and can also hold many of our normal social events. Look out for announcements on our website.

Meanwhile, please 'Save the Date' of the weekend of 11/12 December 2021 as we do hope to be able to host our community's traditional Christmas Festival once again.

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

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)



If this is the first time you are reading our quarterly magazine for St Mary's Church, welcome! I hope it will give you a taste of how the church is active and alive in our communities.

St Mary's is part of the Church of England and is the local parish church for Stotfold and Fairfield.

This parish magazine is distributed to paid subscribers and also on a rolling basis we deliver copies to residents through Stotfold and Fairfield.

If you would like additional information about your parish church, you can visit our website, [www.stotfoldchurch.org.uk](http://www.stotfoldchurch.org.uk). You can also sign up to our electronic newsletter, the Weekly Messenger, by contacting us at [stotfoldparishchurch@gmail.com](mailto:stotfoldparishchurch@gmail.com).

As your local parish church, as well as being open to all for worship and private prayer, we hold Christenings, weddings and funeral services for the residents of Stotfold and Fairfield.

Throughout the pandemic we have been physically meeting for worship services in Church on Sundays and Wednesdays for much of the year.

As summer approaches we will be busy restarting Christenings and weddings. We have an unusually large number of weddings planned for this year, so please contact me soon if you are still considering a 2021 wedding.

If you have any questions about Christenings, weddings or funerals, please phone me on 730218 or Revd Graham on 625270. We hold Christenings on the fourth Sunday of each month at 2.30pm and 3.30pm.

If you are new to Stotfold and haven't visited your beautiful and historic parish church, I encourage you to do so. Historically the doors have been open seven days a week, but we've had to limit our hours due to the pandemic. Currently we are open to visitors on Wednesday afternoons, but check our website to see when we begin expanding our hours. I can also unlock the church upon request.

Most importantly, I invite you to experience the living church by coming to one of our services.

*Bill*

## Sit and Be Still

How do you 'sit' in church? I'm a wriggler and change my position on the seat often. I cross one leg over the other, then swap them over, stretch them out, then cross them at the ankles. I do the same with my arms. I lean one way and then the other. In other words, 'I'm a fidget.' But having been absent from a church building for so long, I wanted to think this month about simply *sitting and being still* before the Lord.

I'm well aware we've done little else this last 18 months – but if you manage to get into a church building, for whatever reason I'd like to encourage us all to just sit still and breathe in the place. To relish being 'back'! To sit 'heavily' in that spot. To feel the solidity of the surface you are sitting on. Lean into it. Feel how it supports you. Feel each part of your body where it is touching the chair or pew.

Look around you at all the distinctive seating set aside for the different participants of the church: the choir, the worship leader, a deacon or curate, the priest and so on. In an Anglican church there will be a chair especially dedicated for the use of the Bishop. However plain or fancy each piece of furniture is within your building, they all have the same purpose. To hold the person and keep them safe.

As you sit in the church building – or at home if you are not able to do so – think of all those people in the Bible stories who sat with Jesus. The number of times He taught in the Temple or in a synagogue, or to crowds gathered on a hill. Recall the Last Supper and His friends gathered sitting with Him to eat and share the Passover meal, and then recall the meal with the men from the Emmaus Road. So many meal times with the bold and the weak, the saints and the sinners. With you and me.

***The Revd Dr Jo White***

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## **Home Alone, Wanting a Gnome**

Do you yearn for a garden gnome? You are not the only one.

Since last year's lockdown, garden centres have been reporting a 'massive upswing' in ornament sales, due to people being forced to spend more time in their gardens. Gnomes top the list of most-wanted ornaments, with a near 100 per cent increase in sales over the past two years.

There was even a gnome crisis a while back, when the Suez Canal got jammed, and thousands of gnomes on their way to UK gardens could not get through.

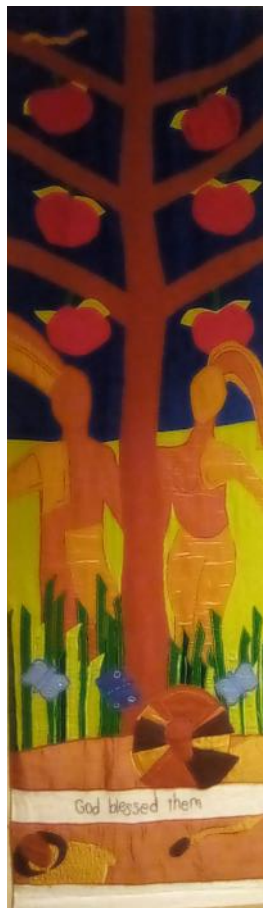




In 2006, the Deo Gloria Trust commissioned textile artist Jacqui Parkinson to create the first of a series of hand-stitched exhibitions which would travel around the cathedrals and churches of England. There are now a series of twelve stand-alone exhibitions. Pictures of a number of these textile art hangings from a display entitled Creation are included in this magazine.

For more information, visit [www.cathedralexhibition.org.uk](http://www.cathedralexhibition.org.uk)

**Psalm 24:1** *The earth is the LORD's and all that is in it, the world, and those who live in it; (NRSV)*



### **Smile Line - What did I do with the car?**

As I left a meeting at our church, I could not find my car keys. They were not in my pockets. They were not in the church. Then I thought – I've left them in the car! As I burst through the doors of the church, my heart sank: the church car park was empty.

With a heavy heart I called the police, confessed that I had left my keys in the car, and that it had been stolen. Then I made the really difficult call, and told my wife that the car had been stolen. There was a little gasp. "You did not have the car. I dropped you off. Remember?"

My heart sang as relief flooded through me. "Of course! Thank God! Well, come get me quick – I am already running late... what is keeping you?"

My wife replied with ominous calm: "What's keeping me? I'll tell you what's keeping me. The police are here. They think I've stolen the car..."



## Ribbons taken down from Prayer Wall

During the six weeks from Sunday 21st March just under 400 ribbons have been tied to our Prayer Wall symbolising prayers of remembrance, thanksgiving or praise. These have all now been untied and have been placed in a box under the altar in the chancel.

They will be kept there until the Annual Memorial Service on 31 October.

### ***The Nunc dimittis (The Song of Simeon):***

Save us, O Lord, while waking,  
and guard us while sleeping,  
that awake we may watch with Christ  
and asleep may rest in peace.



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## On the Hill

by Louisa Adjoa Parker

And I climbed to the top of the hill  
and stood still, surveying the land  
as if it was mine, and the earth  
was green velvet dotted with pearls  
and the wind nudged at my spine  
and nipped at my ears, and a truth  
came to me that the world wasn't ours  
but we belong to the earth  
and we belong to these hours  
and the choices we make now  
matter more than before  
and my feet grew white roots  
that touched the earth's core  
and my shoulders grew wings  
and I found I could fly  
and the wind carried me higher  
till my head brushed the sky  
and as my roots trailed beneath me  
in a white twisted dance  
I looked up at the stars  
as though in a trance  
and began falling towards  
green velvet dotted with pearls  
and the wind stroked my cheeks  
and the wind, like a hand,  
cradled me gently,  
before placing me back on the land.



# Climate Sunday

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 this 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.

## **The beginnings of Boots the Chemist**

Jesse Boot, the British pharmacist and philanthropist, died 90 years ago, on 13<sup>th</sup> June 1931. He turned the Boots Company started by his father John – a former agricultural worker – into a chain of chemists branded 'Chemists to the Nation'.

The 1<sup>st</sup> Baron Trent, as Jesse became in 1929, sold his controlling interest to American investors in 1920, but Boots continues to be a familiar name to all Britons. Ironically John Boot had offered his close friend and business associate John Harston the opportunity of going into business with him, but Harston had felt it was not a good investment.

Jesse Boot was a great benefactor to the City of Nottingham. He gave land for what is now the University of Nottingham and was presented with the Freedom of the City of Nottingham in 1920.

He met his wife, Florence Rowe, in a Wesleyan Chapel in Jersey while he was recuperating from illness. She was also an astute businesswoman, who helped to develop the Boots business, and her home island of Jersey benefited from the couple's generosity. After her husband's death she commissioned the glass artist René Lalique to refit the Anglican church of St Matthew there as a memorial to him.



## **Smile Line - The Puppies**

A client brought a litter of Golden Retriever puppies to the local veterinary clinic for inoculations and worming. As the look-alike pups tumbled over and under one another in their box, the experienced vet realised it would be difficult to tell which had been treated and which hadn't. So, the vet turned on the water tap, wet her fingers and gently moistened each dog's head as she finished giving it the necessary shots.

After the fourth puppy, the vet noticed her hitherto talkative client had grown silent and was looking rather reverent. As the animal doctor sprinkled the last pup's head, the owner leaned forward and whispered, "Thank you so much. I hadn't realised you baptised them, too."

## **Quotes**

The reason some people know the solution is because they created the problem. *Kelly Fordyce*

Fashion: A form of ugliness so intolerable that we have to alter it every six months. *Oscar Wilde*



**The Church Commissioners for England** have announced their goal to reduce the carbon intensity of their investment portfolio by 25% by 2025.

The Church Commissioners have therefore committed to “increasing engagement activity with the highest emitting companies in our portfolio, as well as with our investment managers across all asset classes.”

They go on: “We are also increasing our policy work in the build-up to COP26 and beyond. This includes Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), Deforestation and the Green Recovery.”

The 2025 target includes the Commissioners’ public equities and real estate portfolio.



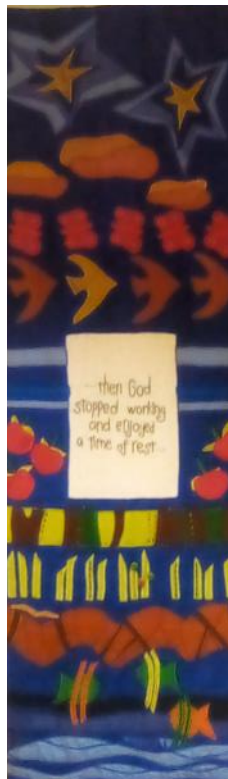
**ENVIRONMENT**

### **Where are our birds?**

British birds are in big trouble. 80 per cent of our most popular species are in severe decline, according to recent data from the RSPB’s annual Big Garden Birdwatch.

The world’s largest wildlife survey has found that 16 out of the 20 most spotted garden birds have been in decline since 2020. There are now concerns about the greenfinch and chaffinch, which were seen in their lowest ever numbers this year.

The top five birds seen in people’s gardens were: house sparrows, blue tits, starlings, blackbirds and wood pigeons. Only robins, blackbirds, carrion crows and the song thrush grew in number in 2020.



### **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.



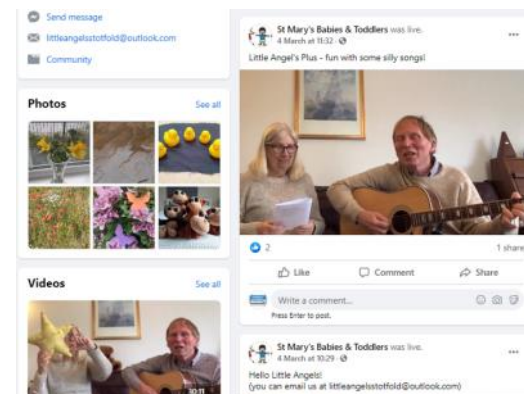
***The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it.***

GENESIS 2:15



## St Mary's Little Angels & Little Angels Plus - Online

Hopefully it will not be too long before our Little Angels babies and toddler group can meet once again in the Church Hall. However, 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  
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 .



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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.

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## Wonders of the Living World

What are the best metaphors we could use to describe biological things? You might be used to hearing phrases like “your genetic blueprint” or “survival of the fittest”, but are they helpful or even accurate? Some of these words fail to capture the wonder and joy of understanding something new about the nature of living organisms.

I learned that one researcher was using the phrase ‘The Snuggle for Existence’ as a way to convey the idea, familiar to biologists, that cooperation is at the heart of the living world. For example, every cell more complex than a bacterium contains minute energy factories, each one containing their own piece of DNA – which makes them a sort of miniature cell, hidden away inside the larger host cell. These ‘mitochondria’, as biologists call them, turn raw materials from the host into chemical energy. In this way, everyone benefits: the mitochondria now have a safe a place to live, and the host receives the energy it needs. There are many more examples of organisms working together to produce something that is more than the sum of its parts, where often the individual parts could not survive on their own.

‘The Map of Life’ is a way of describing the regularities we see in biological processes. Eyes, legs and wings have emerged in the living world again and again, and why not? If the properties of light and gravity remain constant, we should expect living things to find the same solutions to seeing or getting around. When we look at these organisms’ family trees, we see they share a common ancestor that had no eyes, or no wings. These structures have developed completely independently, or you could say that the paths of the living world have converged on the same solution. That’s not to say they had a conscious goal, but that the world has certain properties, and those properties have channelled biological processes in certain directions.

None of these stories give us definite evidence for God. Science simply provides data, which can often be interpreted in several different ways. Perhaps the world just happens to be full of mathematical regularities, maybe there’s an overarching physical law we don’t yet understand, or perhaps there are multiple universes and ours happens to be the one in which life has arisen. But I believe that the observations scientists make about the living world are compatible with the existence of the God described by Christian faith.

More at [wondersofthelivingworld.org](http://wondersofthelivingworld.org).

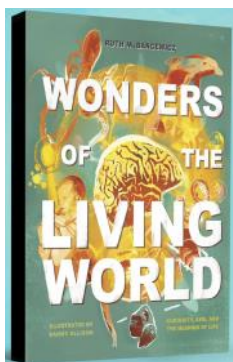
*Written by Dr Ruth M Bancewicz, who is Church Engagement Director at The Faraday Institute for Science and Religion in Cambridge.*

## **Wonders of the Living World: Curiosity, awe and the meaning of life**

The living world is beautiful, intricate, and highly ordered. Organisms flourish across virtually every location on earth, and biological scientists are constantly discovering more about them. These findings spark awe in those who study the natural world, and also raise questions about the meaning of what we see. What's so special about life? Why are we here? Where is it all heading?

Encounter the living world, from individual molecules to whole ecosystems, through the eyes of six scientists who are also people of faith. Drawing on the work of two theologians, we will explore their research and their beliefs, testing the claim that the discoveries of science are consistent with the existence of a powerful, purposeful God.

Every area of science is accessible for an audience of non-scientists, so long as it is explained at the right pace, in a relevant way. This colour illustrated book, *Wonders of the Living World: Curiosity, awe and the meaning of life* (£19.99) is published this month and is suitable for ages 16+.



### **Online Launch: 14th June, 7.30 - 8.30pm**

Meet some of the scientists and theologians who have contributed to this beautifully illustrated book and its accompanying resources. Writer Dr Ruth Bancewicz, theologian Dr Hilary Marlow, biologist and philosopher Prof Jeff Schloss, marine biologist Cara Parrett, physicist Rhoda Hawkins, and biochemist Prof Stephen Freeland will be present.

**50% discount on copies of the book  
for all participants**

**To register: [wondersofthelivingworld.org](http://wondersofthelivingworld.org)**

"This is a wonderful book about wonder. In the presence of the world's top scientists this will lead you into a new excitement and appreciation of the natural world. And for some it may lead to worship."

*Revd Professor David Wilkinson, Principal of St John's College, Durham*

"This beautifully produced book by Ruth Bancewicz really draws us into the excitement of scientific discovery. It's lively combination of cutting edge research and the personal stories of the scientists shows us as well how science and faith can be friends not foes, each in their own way leading us into the wonder of the world we live in. A great read for a young adult and a great gift too for anyone wondering how faith and science fit together. "

*Rt Revd Dr David Thompson, former Bishop of Huntingdon*

**For further information, details and articles on this project visit  
[www.wondersofthelivingworld.org](http://www.wondersofthelivingworld.org)**



## **Give a Compliment**

We all like to receive a compliment from time to time. As Robert Orben, former script writer for President Gerald R. Ford once said, "A compliment is verbal sunshine."

Another American, Leo Buscaglia once observed: "Too often we underestimate the power of a touch, a smile, a kind word, a listening ear, an honest compliment, or the smallest act of caring, all of which have the potential to turn someone's life around."



At a funeral service, nice things are usually said of the deceased. While these comments are comforting for the relatives, did the same folks ever bother to say these kind things to the person themselves, when they were alive, to show them how much they were appreciated?

Sadly, not everyone seems able to compliment others. Perhaps they never received compliments when they were young, or perhaps they feel that to compliment someone else is to somehow put themselves down. For whatever reason, such people miss out on a whole lot of pleasure in life.

Whenever we see something that is worthy of a compliment, why not give it, and bring 'a little verbal sunshine' into someone else's life!

*By Colin Hammacott*



## **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.

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## My Garden?

I thought I owned a garden  
A lovely place to be  
A bird said, "Beg your pardon,  
"This land belongs to me!"

A squirrel dropped a nut on me  
Which wasn't what I'd planned  
"Get lost!", said he,  
"for can't you see  
"You trespass on my land?"

A pheasant flapped  
and squawked so loud  
I scarce could hear me think!  
"Get off my ground,  
for two's a crowd!"  
He kicked up such a stink!

The wild-life around me  
So loudly do protest!  
They growl and screech  
till I can see  
That I am just a guest!

*By Nigel Beeton*

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*Fulbert of Chartres (c.970–1028), the son of a peasant family in northern France, rose to become Bishop of Chartres, renowned for his brilliant sermons. A powerful man, but his prayers reveal his keen appreciation of just how fleeting worldly success can be....*

### **God's Care**

How brief is our span of life compared with the time since You created the universe. How tiny we are compared with the enormity of Your universe. ...yet during every minute and ever second of our lives You are present, within and around us. You give your whole and undivided attention to each and every one of us. Our concerns are Your concerns. And You are infinitely patient with our stupidity. I thank you with all my heart....

### **Smile Lines**

#### **Chicken run**

Idealistic politician: "I dream of a better tomorrow where chickens can cross the road and not have their motives questioned."

#### **Observation on daily life:**

You know you're into middle age when you realise that caution is the only thing you care to exercise.



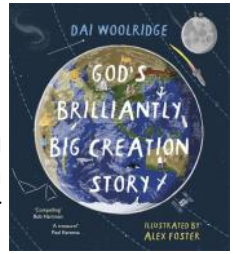
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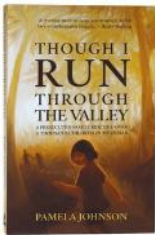
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## **God's Brilliantly Big Creation Story** **By Dai Woolridge, Bible Society, £6.99**

Here's a good way to introduce young children (aged three to six) to the Genesis creation account. Written with rhythm and rhyme, the book covers the awe-inspiring journey through the days of Creation, and it is full of fun and beautiful imagery, from the vastness of the solar system to the immediacy of small animals.



The book would be good for reading aloud to preschool-aged children, and for use with children starting to learn to read. It will help parents looking for a fun, fresh way to introduce children to the Christian faith.



## **Though I Run Through the Valley** **By Pamela Johnson, Authentic, £9.99**

Amid decades of war and political strife in Myanmar one family has fought back with their weapon of choice – the Bible. Three generations of Emmerline's family have been living out their love for God by rescuing children who have been orphaned, abandoned or made destitute by their country's upheaval.

Daring to trust God, the family has made many sacrifices to provide a home for orphans so that the children of Myanmar can hope for a better future. Read this, and you will better understand what it was like being a Christian in a predominantly Buddhist Myanmar at a time of ethnic cleansing and military dictatorship.

Royalties from the sale of this book will go to Vision Beyond Borders and the Daw Gyi Daw Nge Orphanage.

# **RAY'S OF SUNSHINE**

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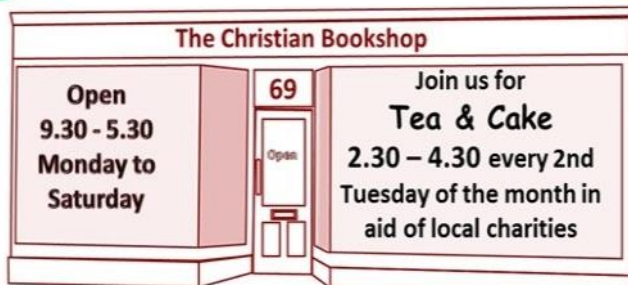
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"It is not you that shapes God  
It is God that shapes you.  
If then you are the work of God  
Await the hand of the artist who does  
All things in due season.  
Offer him your heart,  
Soft and tractable...  
Let the clay be moist  
Lest you go hard  
And lose the imprint of his fingers."

**Bishop Irenaeus**

## Job 12:10 (NRSV)

In his hand is the life of every  
living thing and the breath of  
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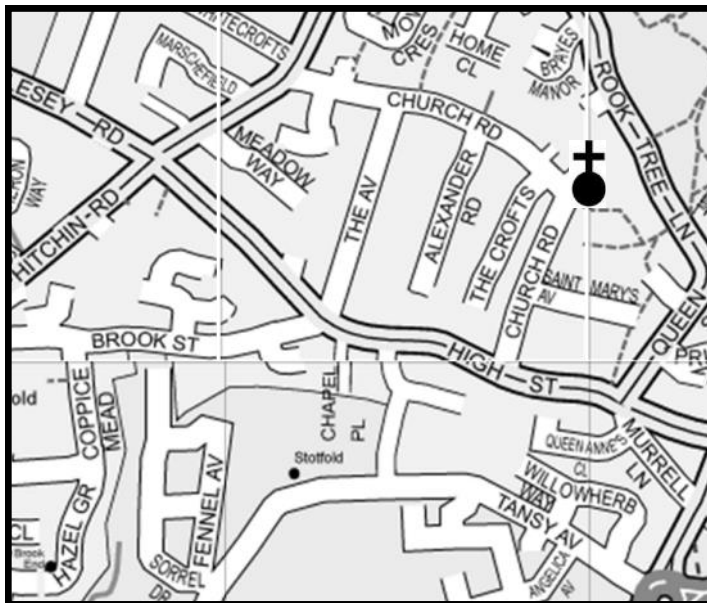
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