

Steyning Parish Church

1 Vicarage Lane,
Steyning BN44 3YL

Vicar: The Revd Mark Heather LLB BA

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Church Services

The choir and music group at Steyning will be on holiday during August.

St Andrew's & St Cuthman's

Every Sunday

8:00am 1662 Holy Communion Service

9:30am Sung Eucharist

6:00pm Evening Service (Reflections on 1st Sunday - see below)

St James's

10:30am Second Sunday Family Service (Holy Baptism)

Fourth Sunday Holy Communion

Wednesdays at St Andrew's & St Cuthman's

11:30am Midweek Eucharist

Reflections is a quiet, evening service. This month it is held on Sunday, August 6, and is entitled The Transfiguration, "This Is my Son, Listen to Him" (Lk 9:35). Come and spend some time reflecting and listening in the quiet and calm of this beautiful church.

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Parish Administrator: Pat McMullan.



Pastoral Letter

Dear Friends,

August is a time to pause, to slow down. A time when our choir has its summer holiday and members of the Music Group tend to be away. Children and families are on holiday and churches have fewer meetings and, while good weather in England is never guaranteed, there are more opportunities for outside recreation.

The word 'recreation' can be rich with meaning. Whilst I tend to associate it with certain late Victorian innovations that we must not take for granted – playing fields set apart in urban areas for relaxation and enjoyment, and the widespread introduction of industrial holidays when mills and factories were closed, the term 'recreation' has been in use since medieval times. At one time it tended to refer to recovery from all illness but it has spiritual connotations too. Baptism is a start of a journey that should mean being continually *re-created* and the Feast of Christ's Transfiguration (see pages 23 and 24) reminds us that all of us are called to reflect God's glory, being potentially transformed by redemption and forgiveness into more loving people.

This month's magazine touches on all these themes and offers suggestions that might bring us closer to God – if we find time to stop, to pause, and to be renewed in faith and hope and love.

Fr Mark

FROM THE EDITOR:

As we acknowledge the huge impact on everyone in Ukraine now that this war is in its second year, our thoughts and prayers continue to be with them all, and their leaders. We hold before God those families who have found refuge within Steyning and Ashurst including all those who worship with us.

Do please send in your contributions because what you do or think or see is of much interest to our readers.

As always, the address for your articles, pictures etc:

steyningchurchmag@gmail.com

So many interesting articles this month, but I do want to pick out P10 where Canon Nigel shares his sermon with us, celebrating and reflecting on his 40 years of ministry. P25 brings a new article from Laura Gosset at Greening Steyning, and we look forward to more news about the church bank and churchyard.

Sunday Notices

The weekly Sunday notices sent from the Parish Office gives all the information about services, news and events. There is also the list of those needing our prayers. If you would like to receive the Sunday notices contact: office@steyningparishchurch.org or ring 01903 813276

To add any new prayer requests contact:
prayers@steyningparishchurch.org
or ring 01903 813276

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Prayer diary for August

Sunday 6 August The Transfiguration of our Lord

Sunday 13 August The Tenth Sunday after Trinity

Tuesday 15 August The Blessed Virgin Mary

Almighty God, who looked upon the lowliness of the Blessed Virgin Mary and chose her to be the mother of your only Son: grant that we who are redeemed by his blood may share with her in the glory of your eternal kingdom; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

Sunday 20 August The Eleventh Sunday after Trinity

Thursday 24 August Bartholomew the Apostle

Almighty and everlasting God, who gave to your apostle Bartholomew grace truly to believe and to preach your word: grant that your Church may love that word which he believed and may faithfully preach and receive the same; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

Sunday 27 August The Twelfth Sunday after Trinity

God of mercy,
who in your great love
drew your Son from the depths of the
Pit,
bring your people from death to life,
that we may rejoice in your compassion
and praise you now and for ever.

Gracious God, we praise you for your
faithfulness
and pray that every nation may find
your blessing
in the face of Jesus Christ our Lord.



Parish Registers

Holy Matrimony

1 July Andrew Belbin and Hannah Powel (at Ashurst)

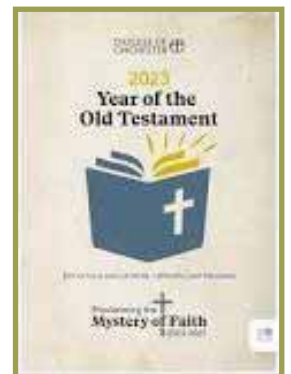
15 July William Harry Strivens and Jasmine Jade Becker-Jones

Funeral

18 July Raymond Thomas Cooper (d. 19 April 2023)

Sound-bites of Psalms

I loved the thought Fr Mark gave us last month that Jesus knew the Psalms by heart—they were part of his DNA. He would have said them in the temple and in his prayers, and often when he talked to his followers and listeners he referred to them but using his own words. In the New Testament the Gospel writers use a number of Psalms to articulate their understanding of his actions. If you use the table Fr Mark gave us all on P3 of the July magazine you will begin to know, through repetition, some beautiful Psalms and they will be part of your sustaining, spiritual DNA.



For many people August is the time for holidays and journeying. Families can be scattered and this can be a difficult time if you are worried about any family member making a journey of any kind, even if it is for a short period. The community of any size of family is a blessing, and so it is for the church family - the coming together to pray as one body is a joy and then we are sent out to share that blessing with others, to be departing pilgrims. Psalm 133 tells us that the unity of God's people brings blessings in great abundance.

In the weekday housegroups (listed on the inside back pages) a Bible passage may well be read and the question the leader asks is "does anyone have a phrase or passage that stands out for them?" We should not take a Bible phrase out of

context, but I would like to take some phrases from various Psalms in the hope I can draw you into reading more than a single Psalm I might talk about.

Psalm 34 *“I will bless the Lord at all times; his praise shall continually be in my mouth” v1*

Praising God is straightforward when life is jogging along nicely and we have not much to worry or disturb us, but here we are encouraged to bless the Lord at all times. To praise Him when life is tough through illness or grief and there seems darkness and hopelessness ahead, but later in the Psalm (v18) we are reminded that he is near the broken-hearted and will save those whose spirit feels crushed. All shall be well.

Psalm 55 *“O that I had wings like a dove! I would fly away and be at rest;” v6*

One of my earliest memories of music from our gramophone was Ernest Lough singing “O for the Wings of a Dove” by F Mendelssohn, in the clearest of boy soprano voices. David, the author of this Psalm, is in the middle of a power struggle and cries out to God for peace because the pain of the relational issues he was dealing with was huge and he just wanted to flee. If you cannot humanly fix a problem, what is it you might want to do? Just get away from the problem? But move on through the psalm and David concludes that the sanctuary he seeks is God himself v26 “But I will trust in you.”

Psalm 92 *“It is good to give thanks to the Lord, to sing praises to your name;” v1*

There is a saying attributed to St Augustine “He who sings prays twice.” Many Psalms speak of music and singing and playing instruments, and it is a true blessing that Steyning Parish Church has such a wonderful choir and music group who sing for God at our services. When they sing they make way for the congregation to enter into worship so everyone can offer praise to God; they are not giving a concert or using their talent for their own benefit. To sing is a gift, so let us give thanks to the Lord.

Psalm 142 *“I cry aloud to the Lord; I lift up my voice to the Lord for mercy. I pour out before him my complaint; before him I tell my trouble.” v1,2*

Many a teenager will be heard to say “No one understands me” or perhaps will clam up because inside they believe “no one knows what I am going through”. Adults will

hopefully have a really good friend they can unload to, seeking wisdom and advice to help them through a difficult time. In this Psalm, David reminds us that no one knows us like God knows us because he is always there, listening and watching over us. Because God is a God of mercy and compassion He is the one worth talking to when all the chips seem to be down.. We can tell Him anything and He will love us and be there for us 100%. He craves a relationship with us.

My last quote is this:

Psalm 19 "May the words of my mouth and this meditation of my heart be pleasing in your sight, Lord, my Rock and my Redeemer." v14

I've chosen this just because I love it, and because we hear it so often in church as the prayer before the sermon. It says it all.

I could talk each month about verses from the Psalms, not just because there are many that are so well known, but they all talk about personal experiences and emotions. They talk about music and worship; anxiety and sorrow; desperation and joy; life and death; gratitude and hope; faith and love; praise and thanksgiving. You will surely find a Psalm that will talk to you where you are, echo your feelings and move you on to build your friendship with God, your rock and your redeemer.

Chris Fitton

Prayer Points for August

- Many families are on holiday and making journeys, and we pray for all who drive and have responsibilities for passengers.
- For all who live and work in Croft Meadow and Primrose Court.
- For all bringing in the harvests, and for farmers where harvests have failed.
- For all who work with asylum seekers and for social justice for all.
- Remember someone in need of a time of rest and recuperation.
- For Steyning Health Centre. For all who work there and those who visit who are in need of help and guidance.





Pause and Pray for Peace

Lord we ask for peace for those who need peace, reconciliation for those who need reconciliation and comfort for all who don't know what tomorrow will bring. Lord may your Kingdom come, and your will be done.

We pray that people still in Ukraine will be protected from the violence; that there will be provision of essential food, power and clean water; for vulnerable people who cannot flee.

That refugees will find safe places to stay. For healing for people who are wounded or have experienced trauma; and comfort for those who are grieving. We pray that international leaders will know wisdom and understanding, strength, courage and compassion.

Ukrainian citizens ask that we pray:

- That God would intervene in the situation and stop the violence
- For God's wisdom for the presidents and authorities of both countries
- That God will care for those who are in danger, especially for Ukrainian people who have lost their loved ones, for His comfort and protection over them and the church

Please also pray for Russia:

- That God will comfort Russian families who have lost their beloved ones

"Dearest Lord, you know what our hearts crave and you know what is best for us. In your goodness, bring us comfort, peace and the help we need. Bless all those who pour themselves out for their brothers and sisters, and bless all that they do. Lord have mercy on us all. Amen."

Coryn,

from One Voice in Prayer

O Lord God, we pray for peace and love in all the nations, among all the people that all wars and hatred will end.

We pray for those who suffer from war, injustice, and intolerance, for the children, young people, the poor and neglected ones. We pray for peace in our life, lands, nations, families and in our hearts. Lord give us world peace, we ask your mercy in the name of our Lord, Jesus Christ.

Pinterest

Celebrate with Christ –

40 years on

Lord Jesus Christ who calls us, give us the will, the ears and the heart to hear and to respond to your gracious love, through Christ Our Lord. Amen

And, so, the news has broken this week that the South Korean form of calculating dates and ages has changed. When a child is born in South Korea, at the moment they're born at the age of one. Every first of January a year is added to people's age. Now that means, therefore, by my calculation that if a child is born on 31 December, the following day they're two years old!

Okay. Dates are really quite significant and they're really important in the stories that we tell. Yes, they are only dates but they are quite important. For instance, today, in 1920, my Mum would have been born. Had she lived she would be 103 today.

But there are other dates which I think are significant too. I love music, and I discovered this week that William Byrd died on 4 July 1623. That's (counts on fingers), well, that's quite a long time ago.

Jill and I have just come back from Leipzig where, not quite by accident, we ended up in St Thomas Church, which was the Church of J S Bach, on the last day of the Bach Festival, which was celebrating 300 years to the month when he became Thomas Kantor - a job for life – (there's no escape once you're in), and he changed and revolutionized music forever. So that was on 1 June 1723.

Both my parents were there at my ordination 40 years ago, but let's put that into some kind of perspective.

I was going to celebrate very quietly, but somehow news seems to have got out. I'm not quite sure who's to blame for that, but certainly it has. But my 40 years is very short really. Canon Paul Rampton celebrates 50 years from being made Deacon this year, and later this year Fr Ray, who I'm delighted is here this morning, celebrates some 65 years. So, I have got quite a way to go. Well, let's see if I can do that by Korean counting. (Counts on fingers) If I add one year of teaching and ten years at the BBC, that makes...well, it's getting close anyway, don't you think?

I remember when I was ordained, or rather before I was ordained, Jill and I went rather nervously to an Easter Day lunch with my parents, my brother and various other members of the family and I said - when my brother announced that he was thinking of changing his job - "Well, I think I might be changing mine as well, leaving the BBC and going into the church". There was a stunned silence, and after a suitable pause my Dad said, "There's no money in it, you know, son". He's proved there, as always, to be right!

But it is a matter of perspective because in 40 years time nobody will remember me. All vicars end up as names on boards. Notice that retired clergy don't actually get to hang on boards because

we're are so close to our expiry date that there's no point in putting us up on boards anyway. So, people will look at the names on the boards in years to come and think 'I wonder who that was, what were they like?' Well, I don't know.

Who is it that God calls and why? This isn't about me but it's about the God who calls me. I'm just simply one example - no more than that.

What does God look for? Well, someone whose strengths and weaknesses he can use in his service and in the service of others. Someone whose gifts he can develop. Someone, above all, who will listen because it's no good God calling if we don't actually listen or choose to listen to what God says.

Someone, too, who learns to know themselves. I think I now know pretty well my strengths and my weaknesses, my many failures - the times that I've hurt other people sometimes really very profoundly, and for all of those I'm deeply sorry.

But it's God who loves me despite all that, because I am me and he still chooses to use whatever strengths he may have given me in his service.

And much of my life, perhaps, has been spent trying to tip the balance in God's favour.

But God doesn't call saints. He calls ordinary people to do sometimes extraordinary things. And it's a sense of wonder to me that he ever called me - the boy who refused to be confirmed at school; the man who on a London tube train had a 'St Paul on the road to Damascus' experience at the age of 28.

But he did and I've never looked back and God has certainly never looked back. In truth, he'd probably been calling me for many, many years, it was just that I was deaf to what he was saying to me.

And in the years of ministry since it has been, as every priest will tell you, a huge, huge privilege to sit at the bedsides of those who are dying. To be there and available to all of those who are in need, in whatever shape or form that may take. To help mark and to celebrate the important moments of life. To answer, to explain, to exhort, and sometimes to do what I love to do, to preach.

But ordination – what is it? Well, another word for it I suppose would be vocation.

I can remember on the day of our ordination travelling with four others, all in black cassocks and wearing shirts with collars on for the first time, feeling very strange and travelling from Ipswich to Bury St Edmunds and thinking if the police stop us now what exactly will we say?

Here we were like a bunch of black crows going to ordination. We tried to gee each other up, to give each other courage but it was hard to do.

We'd had a rehearsal with a fearsome Provost (Deans of cathedrals were called Provosts in those days) where he had marked out a 'V' shape, "Seven on one side - you stand on the dot, you don't move from it; seven on the other, stand on the dot, you don't move from it. You, you're wearing trainers. Go home and change." And that happened. He was fierce indeed.

So, the ordination was going to be a doddle by comparison with going through

the rehearsal with the Provost I can tell you.

What is vocation, though? Well, it's living out of baptism. And if you think about it, the moment at which Jesus was baptized and a voice came from Heaven saying, "This is my Son in whom I am well pleased," and the Holy Spirit, according to some accounts, descended at that moment, is the closest that we come to seeing Jesus ordained for his future ministry.

And we're all called in that sort of way.

For me, well, what gifts have I got? Well, I've no idea really but I suppose communication is one of them. Leaving the BBC on my last day, somebody in the lift said, "Nigel, why on earth are you leaving and going into the Church?" and the glib answer came to my lips, which I've lived out ever since and it turned out to be true, "Well, it's still communication, just of another kind". And, yes, certainly that has proved to be true. A sense of humour, I think for me, is important to deploy. Now, you may not think so, and I apologize if ever I've cracked a joke that you don't like, but there we are. And it's written on my theological college reports, "Nigel needs a creative ministry". I'm not quite sure what that meant, but it turned out to be true too.

But that Gospel reading we heard is all about welcome; Jesus saying to the disciples, "If people welcome you, what they're really doing is welcoming me, and welcoming the one who sent me. And what's more, if they welcome a prophet in a prophet's name, then they'll receive a prophet's reward. In fact, even

if they give a cup of cold water to one of these 'little ones' (which was another name for the disciples), then they won't lose their reward.

Sometimes we do good by stealth and we don't even know we're doing it, which is probably the best way because then that's up to God – he takes the glory and not us. Somebody once said to me, "If anybody says to you, 'very nice sermon Vicar' at the door as they go, you say, 'thank you, I'll pass it on'."

But I was ordained on St Thomas's Day, which is actually tomorrow, the third of July, and I think that was for a reason.

Thomas is one of my great heroes. I don't think he should ever be called 'doubting Thomas'. He should really have been called 'I would quite like to be certain and check this out for myself Thomas', because that's actually what he did. He was a man of enormous courage. He said, when Jesus was called to go and see Lazarus who was very ill and in fact had died before he arrived there, "Let's go with him and die in Jerusalem if we must." But that's what he did.

It was Thomas who was the first to fall on his knees and to say, "My Lord and my God", in the upper room. A remarkable man, Thomas, and I'm delighted to share his day with him. He takes pre-eminence but I am quite happy to follow on behind.

So, what exactly then is a priest?

Well, it's somebody who is willing, I think, to be challenged, to have courage, resilience and faith, no matter what. And there will be brickbats thrown at Vicars - I don't know whether Fr Mark is immune to all that, I don't know, but occasionally

that does happen and you have to take it in the name of the God who loves you and calls you, and will protect you and defend you.

This story is not actually my story. It's God's story and we all have that story to tell. In my case I've been part of God's story for just these last 40 years or by Korean counting (counts on fingers) - a little more than that - if I count from the day that I committed my life to Christ, then perhaps it's nearer 47, 48 years and I can keep going a little bit and

see if I can maybe add a few more, I don't know.

We are here for a reason, and I'm here for a season, but God is here for all time. He welcomes me in the name of Christ, just as he welcomes you. We are all called, we all need to listen, we need to respond, we need to live out our calling, our conversion, live out of our baptismal vows, live above all in the name of Christ.

Amen

Canon Nigel Hartley



Thank you, Barbara Strong, for sending in this photograph showing beautiful Leonardslee Gardens in the June sunshine.

Send in your July photo for the September magazine. Maybe a picture of your garden.

St Andrew's Men's Society

is a meeting of a group of male members of Steyning Parish Church and guests. We meet in the Penfold Hall, beginning with a glass or two of wine and nibbles. Then we enjoy a talk. Do come and join us.



SAMS

**Our next meeting:
John Stoy will talk on
The Life of Nelson**

**Date: Tuesday 26 September
Doors open at 3:45 for 4:00 start
Any enquiries please to Leonard Warner
(01903 812752)**

Community coffee

**Do come and join us
on a Wednesday morning any time between
10am and 11.30am.**

Several of our visitors go across to the Church in time for the Wednesday morning service, but there are always plenty of people wishing to chat until the coffee mugs are empty and we don't finish until 11.30.



What a wonderful celebration of Gavin's 75th birthday at the coffee morning at Penfold Hall on 5 July. Balloons, banners and superb chocolate cake and delicious fresh coffee and tea was enjoyed by all, especially our Parkour group to which Gavin used to belong. Gavin said it was the best birthday he had had and more people should use this venue for celebrations. In fact we have a 70th this coming week, too!!

*Many thanks
to all the
volunteers.*

Jackie Flowers-Leek

**COME IN ... PLEASE
JOIN THE TEAM FOR A COFFEE OR TEA AND A CHAT ON
WEDNESDAY MORNING
10-11:30 IN THE PENFOLD HALL**



Christian Aid

The fundraising for Christian Aid has been very successful, giving lots of opportunities for people in the Steyning and District Churches Together to be involved. We started fundraising at the Rogation service at Ashurst - **many thanks** to the high standard set by cake bakers of Ashurst and the generosity of the congregation. I am sure that the uplifting service together with good sunny weather helped to raise everyone's spirits!

The Christian Aid Coffee Morning on Saturday 20 May included an excellent selection of professionally raised plants, many of them were made available at cost price and even less, when the suppliers knew we were raising money for Christian Aid. **Many thanks** to Robert Hill Snook for this. We had a second plant stall of plants donated by local amateur gardeners. They ranged from foxgloves to indoor plants such as tradescantia. These plants were sold by volunteers on the day and also at the Hub cafe.

Thanks also to Simon Knowles for his cards. **A big thank you** to Elaine Hyde who also donated hand made cards and manned the card stall throughout the morning. **Many thanks also** for the raffle prizes that were donated by members of our church and the following local businesses:- Steyning CO OP, Miller Phoenix Home, Steyning Book Shop, Knights Budgens and Steyning Stationers.

Thanks to the many cake bakers for the coffee morning who made a mouth-watering selection of cakes. The volunteers on the day made copious cups of tea and coffee and served them with an amazing variety of slices of cakes. There were also cakes to buy and take home, these proved to be very popular. There were fifteen volunteers beavering away in the kitchen as well as in the Penfold Hall. They did an excellent job as everything seemed to run smoothly.

At the moment our fund raising total, including some generous donations from our congregation, is £1189.40.

What a brilliant effort.

Elizabeth Brown

Boyd Pendennis

I have been asked to speak about and celebrate my father's life. Boyd was 94 when he passed so as there is a lot of life to cover I will talk about those things which were important to him.

Firstly, and above all, he met my mother Elma when he was a Police Officer in Nyasaland - like him she was in Africa seeking a new challenge. The family rumour was that they met when he stopped her for speeding on the wild streets of Zomba - needless to say he denied this!



However marriage in my mother's home in Aberdeenshire followed. Initial married life and then two sons followed during 15 years in Nyasaland.

They were soulmates for over 50 years of marriage and our mother was a huge part of Boyd's life even after she passed away 13 years ago.

Family was the most important thing in his life. Michael, myself, our partners, three grandchildren - Lizzie, Andrew and Callum - two great grandchildren and the golden boy himself - Paul his grandson in law. In addition, he had great affection for his family in Australia and Scotland.

At work Boyd was always adventurous and started out with a stint in the army initially as a Squaddie then as an officer in the Royal Welch Fusiliers. He left the army, and after a further two years of boredom in an insurance company he joined the Colonial Police Force. He chose to join the Nyasaland force once qualified. This started a love affair with Nyasaland a country known as the Warm Heart of Africa.

My parents loved their time there and made many, many friends all of whom they kept in touch with for many years after leaving what became Malawi. Boyd was an active member of the Nyasaland Police Association when they returned to the UK. His friends and memories of Africa were so, so important to him.

After Nyasaland my father retrained and spent many years working for the NHS.

His retirement was very active - he played lots of golf and also went on walking holidays and generally loved a good walk. For decades he was a dedicated fan of Brighton and Hove Albion. I had the pleasure and honour of going with him to his first match at the Goldstone Ground. As a 12-year-old I assumed that Brighton always scored seven goals in a match and that either Peter Ward or Ian Mellor scored a hat trick. Reality soon kicked in but we still supported them in the dark days of playing in Gillingham and the Withdean Stadium. However the glory days have finally returned to Brighton much to the delight of Boyd.

Even after my mother passed away my father stayed active and this included regular Friday trips to the Chequers Inn with the Friday Boys - men of a certain age with strong opinions and a love for coffee and whiskey.

Finally you may have been aware that Boyd was a proud Cornishman - he occasionally mentioned it to anyone who would listen. He visited and stayed across the entire county on many, many occasions but particularly his favourite place was the Isles of Scilly. I think we will all remember his passion for Cornwall and despite his great love of Classical music he asked for a particular Cornish folk song to be played here this afternoon. It is beautiful and moving and Boyd hopes you enjoy it.

After Jonathan delivered his father's eulogy, the congregation in church listened to a recording of 'Cornwall my home', played by 'The Countrymen'. The Wake after the service took place at the Chequer Inn, the meeting place of the 'Friday Boys'.

Jonathan Pendennis

Thank you

THANK YOU from Jenny Toomey

I would like to thank everybody who came to Martin's funeral, supported the family and gave the wonderful donations to St Barnabas Hospice. I have appreciated all the friendship and help given to me.

With love,

Jenny

Help please with coffee cups

Good News - the Kingdom paper coffee cups we use for church coffee are fully compostable but **NOT** recyclable. This means we all have to be careful where we put the used cups.

We need some help from you. Please would you take your cup home after church and place it **ONLY** in your **BROWN** top garden refuse bin. Cups must **not** go in your Blue recycling bin. Also, please note, they will not break down in your home compost bin.

For those who do not have a brown top garden bin, we will have a collection box available in church. Please **do not** put the cups in the Horsham District Council waste bin by the church porch.

Composting the cups helps us to be a greener ECO church.

With our thanks,

ECO Church Team

The Good Shepherd Series

by Gillian Venton (accompanist at St James Ashurst)



For those seeking a relaxing and uplifting summer read, here's introducing the Good Shepherd Series, a cluster of novels rooted in Sussex. The books were inspired by the worship life of the Shoreham Beach church where the author was christened, and where family members have gathered for worship, weddings, christenings and funerals for more than half a century. Book 7, titled *The Christening*, was published this June on Kindle with the paperback edition available on Amazon.

In this series, everyday folk from an English parish church explore life and love together. Meeting at studies and as part of a unified church community, they take courage and comfort from the Bible as they apply its words to their daily lives and the faith-shaking challenges they encounter along the way. Despite much happiness and humour as the characters interact, some are dealing with profound trauma and tragedy, trying to move from darkness to light to find the deep abiding peace and healing that Jesus promised. 'Come on in ... Love is an open door.'

Dr Larry Culliford's Amazon review of the first book, for which the author was deeply grateful as an admirer of his unsurpassable writings on psychology and spirituality, provides an excellent summation of the content and character of the books:

'An enjoyable and uplifting read. I worried initially about remembering all the names that cropped up in the first few pages, but the characters immediately seemed authentic and therefore memorable. In addition, this dynamic, well-integrated and supportive church house group forms the hub of a wider network among the people of this apparently thriving Sussex community, making it easier to grasp who relates to whom and in what way they interact.'

Without affectation or embarrassment, the book tells an enviably wholesome and healthy story that, nevertheless, faces squarely up to a number of difficult issues.

These include the effects on a faithful husband and their infant daughter when a woman becomes profoundly depressed after childbirth, the testing of lifelong friendships when someone succumbs to the ravages of alcoholism, problems of loneliness, and of loss related to ageing.

All the tales are magically interwoven as the weekly group participants - through regular prayer, silent meditation and the contemplation of scripture - discover the necessary calm, resilience, wisdom and compassion to provide both practical and psychological help to each other and to those in need elsewhere. They thus demonstrate a heartening and exemplary degree of mutual awareness, of mature sensitivity and basic human kindness that extends charitably outwards throughout the parish.

This is a 'parochial' story in the best sense. People struggle, survive and grow, through enduring and overcoming many of life's everyday challenges. We are treated to some light-touch, subtle, homely and wise Christian apologetics, reassuring to Christian readers, and perhaps also usefully explanatory and intriguing for people of other faith traditions, as well as for people who are not religious at all. At heart, the message seems to be, 'It's all about selfless love'. Whether you prefer 'humanitarian' rather than 'spiritual' as a description of the values espoused by this, the welcome first book of a trilogy, seems to make little difference. There is much to enjoy and learn from 'The Bible Study', whoever you may be and whatever you may like to think. As one character discovers reassuringly, 'You do not have to believe to belong', and belonging to such a group of what might realistically be called 'soulmates' would clearly be something special, to be treasured. Reading Gillian Venton's rare and memorable account of some genuinely good people, trying their best, has been life-enhancing, and I'm looking forward already to the second instalment.'

Many of you will remember the Revd Bernard and Ann Coote who lived in Steyning for many years before moving to Hove to live next door to their family.

Sadly, Ann died in July after a short time in hospital.

Rest eternal grant unto her O Lord, and may light perpetual shine upon her.

Our love and prayers for all the family at this time.

Saint of the month

FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE,

NURSE AND SOCIAL REFORMER (1820-1910)



Born in Florence whilst her parents were touring Italy in 1820, Florence was named after the city. She was raised in Derbyshire and brought up in the Unitarian Church, later joining the Church of England but with personal beliefs which were far from orthodox. At the age of sixteen she felt called by God for some form of service which made her decide to remain single.

She came to believe that her calling was to nurse the sick and, in 1849, she went to Alexandria in Egypt studying nursing practice. This was followed by study at the Lutheran Deaconess Institute at Kaiserswerth in Germany. In 1853 she became superintendent of the Hospital for Invalid Gentlewomen in London.

After the outbreak of the Crimean War in 1854, Florence used her parents' influential contacts to allow her to take 38 nurses to serve at the military hospital in Scutari and later at Balaklava in the Crimea. She soon improved both nursing care and simple sanitation which greatly reduced the mortality rate. At night she would often patrol the wards carrying a lamp to check that all was well which led to the legend of "the lady with the lamp". Recent commentators have asserted that her Crimean War achievements were exaggerated by the Victorian media, but critics agree the importance of her later work in professionalising nursing for women.

At the end of the war Florence started the first professional nursing training in England at St Thomas's Hospital in London. However, under the strain of ceaseless work her own health broke down and she was an invalid for the rest of her life. She received many honours, becoming the first woman to receive the Order of Merit. She died in August 1910 aged 90 and was buried at East Wellow, Hampshire, her relatives having turned down an offer from Westminster Abbey for burial in the precincts.

In the Church's calendar she is commemorated on 13 August, the date of her death; this date is also known as International Nurses Day.

Does it Matter?

I seem to remember that in the old days, when I was younger, August was often referred to as the Silly Season. Nothing much seemed to happen in the world and the papers and news were full of trivial occasions and incidents that wouldn't have been noticed at other times. Anything would do to fill the gap. Nowadays, of course, things go on all day and all night and non-stop; but it used to be a time for the less important, when you could pause to draw breath. That being so, I thought this might be a month for the trivial. If you want to be serious, stop now.

A recent family conversation turned to sharing the words and phrases that seem to creep into fashion and just irritate for no particular reason. None of them really matters, at any rate not much to anyone else, but they seem to take hold of every-day habit, and I thought I'd write about some of them because they intrude. One of my children complained, "Dad, I have to read everything twice; once to note the grammar and spelling howlers, and then again, to see what is actually being said"! You may have your own personal list, different from mine, and I know how you feel! Here goes...

They still say "hopefully" when they mean I hope that; they say "meet up with" when they mean meet; they say "outside of" when they mean outside; they say "hundred per cent" when they mean yes; they say they are doing something "for you", when they mean now; they say "you know" every other sentence when asked something, when you don't know and they would be better off drawing breath or shutting up; so many of them use "data" as single when it is a plural, and "none" as a plural when it's single; even the best newsreaders have started telling you that the other correspondent is "there" when you both know they are somewhere else; they keep saying "unique" when they mean special; the local newsreaders still say "I'll see you in half an hour" when they can't see us at all and they mean we will be able to see them.

You probably have your own personal dislikes; mine are largely unimportant. They do show I have a respect for the use of language; they also show that I have become a querulous and pedantic old fuss-pot! Why not?

But there is one catch-phrase that I think does matter and it concerns me very much when I hear "The Bible says".

The bible is a title given to a collection of about 80 books, like paperbacks lined up

on a bookshelf; we all have those. Some of the Bible books are heavyweight, some are little more than single sheets; some are in the wrong order, some have got pages in the wrong order; some are different versions of the same story; one changes language half way through and gets in the wrong section. All of them were written by the wise men of their time for their time. All of them were considered important by wise people as being special, though it took a good many hundred years for the final selection to be made and there are still different content lists undecided to this day. All the books reflect the thinking of their own times, not one of them contains any magic spells – though I suppose the Witch of Endor might object! And there have been those in history who have used the Bible as a magic oracle, sticking a pin in for the answer!

Ancient Greece wanted answers about the future, and went to an Oracle, Delphi being the famous one. They got devious answers, which they misunderstood, until it was too late; the Romans used to stick a pin in the works of Vergil with equally unhelpful results; and there were and are people who treat the bible in the same way. They would do better to say “my bookcase tells me” rather than pick’n’mix odd verses to suit their own prejudices, which to my thinking verges on breaking the second commandment.

Can we think of, and use the Bible as a Maintenance Manual, rather than a construction kit to make our own Christian, or a book of spells to shape our own future?

Senex

AT THE JULY OPEN GARDENS THE STRONG WINDS DID NOT DETER YOU OR YOUR KINDNESS AND GENEROUSITY. THANK YOU ALL FOR HELPING TO RAISE £631 FOR CHESTNUT TREE HOUSE AND THE CHILDREN'S SOCIETY.

Jill and Roger Brown, Chris and David Fitton

Flowers in Church

Steyping Church Flowers in August

August 5

Margaret Tully

August 12 & 19

Penny Warner and Louise Wheeler

August 26

Lulu Lane

Carol McKechnie



The Transfiguration

The feast of the Transfiguration of our Lord falls on Sunday August 6, and the account of this event can be found in three gospels, Matthew, Mark and Luke. Below shows a parallel study of the three texts.

Matt 17. 1-9	Mark 9.2-9	Luke 9 28-36
<p>1 Six days later,</p> <p>Jesus took with him Peter and James and his brother John</p> <p>and led them up a high mountain by themselves.</p>	<p>2 Six days later,</p> <p>Jesus took with him Peter and James and John.</p> <p>and led them up a high mountain apart, by themselves</p>	<p>28 Now about eight days after these sayings Jesus took with him Peter and John and James</p> <p>and went up on the mountain to pray</p> <p>29 And while he was praying</p>
<p>2 And he was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became dazzling white.</p>	<p>And he was transfigured before them,</p> <p>3 and his clothes became dazzling white, such as no one on earth could bleach them.</p>	<p>The appearance of his face changed,</p> <p>and his clothes became dazzling white.</p>
<p>3 Suddenly there appeared to them Moses and Elijah, talking with him</p>	<p>4 And there appeared to them Elijah with Moses, who were talking with Jesus.</p>	<p>30 Suddenly they saw two men, Moses and Elijah, talking with him. 31 They appeared in glory and were speaking of his departure, which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem. 32 Now Peter and his companions were weighed down with sleep; but since they had stayed awake, they saw his glory and the two men who stood with him.</p>

<p>4 Then Peter said to Jesus, "Lord, it is good for us to be here; if you wish, I will make three dwellings here, one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah"</p>	<p>5 Then Peter said to Jesus, "Rabbi, it is good for us to be here; let us make three dwellings, one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah." 6 He did not know what to say, for they were terrified.</p>	<p>33 Just as they were leaving Peter said to Jesus, "Master, it is good for us to be here; let us make three dwellings, one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah" not knowing what he said.</p>
<p>5 While he was still speaking a bright cloud overshadowed them,</p>	<p>7 Then a cloud overshadowed them,</p>	<p>34 While he was saying this, a cloud came and overshadowed them; and they were terrified as they entered the cloud.</p>
<p>And from the cloud a voice said, "This is my beloved Son; with him I am well pleased; listen to him!" 6 When the disciples heard this, they fell to the ground and were overcome by fear. 7 But Jesus came and touched them, saying, "Get up and do not be afraid."</p>	<p>and from the cloud there came a voice, "This is my beloved Son; listen to him!"</p>	<p>35 Then from the cloud came a voice that said, "This is my Son, my Chosen; listen to him!"</p>
<p>8 And when they looked up, they saw no one except Jesus himself alone.</p>	<p>8 Suddenly when they looked around, they saw no one with them any more, but only Jesus.</p>	<p>36 When the voice had spoken, Jesus was found alone.</p>
<p>9 As they were coming down the mountain, Jesus ordered them, "Tell no one about the vision until after the Son of Man has been raised from the dead."</p>	<p>9 As they were coming down the mountain, he ordered them to tell no one about what they had seen, until after the Son of Man had been raised from the dead. 10 So they kept the matter to themselves, questioning what this rising from the dead could mean.</p>	<p>And they kept silent and those days told no one any of the things they had seen.</p>



The Beauty of Wildflowers



Laura Gosset is a member of Greening Steyning's biodiversity team. This month she talks us through their Life on the Verge project and why wildflowers are so important for us all.



Greening Steyning's *Life on the Verge* project is working to increase the diversity of plants and wildflowers on our verges. These currently unused spaces along our roads could be home to cowslips, yarrow, orchids and many other plants which form the basis of local food chains.

Pollinating and plant-eating insects rely on diversity to survive, grass alone will not sustain them. In turn they pollinate our gardens and allotments and support a host of bird and mammal species which we are privileged enough to live alongside.

At first an un-mown verge can look a little untidy with plants that may, in other circumstances, be called weeds. However, over time they will start to develop with new and interesting flowering plants which are so vital to our local wildlife.

We achieve this change very simply by reducing how often the verges are cut, to once, or possibly twice a year, and removing the cuttings when they are cut. Removing the cuttings helps to reduce the fertility of the soil which will limit the growth of grass and support wildflowers.

One of the projects we have started is the verge at the top of Shooting Field, adjacent to the churchyard. This project will enhance and support the work being carried out by the amazing Churchyard Group inside the churchyard itself and the plans to work on the steep bank in front of our wall. It is early days, but we hope to have verges and other spaces that bring wildflowers, butterflies and bees into the heart of our community.



Laura Gosset

The Way It Was

I've never walked the South Downs
Way before
And after the first day, boy! Was I sore.
But with new friends galore
And such walking support
I was hooked - all I wanted was more.

Slowly the aches and pains subsided.
These walkers, fast and slow, are sure
divided.

Bikers, us and marathon runners could
have collided
But care towards each was provided
And, safely, we all returned to where
we resided.

Now, you may think walking the Way is
a piece of cake
But distance of over one hundred miles
is at stake.

One foot in front of the other is what it
will take,
Blisters, I hear, Oh, for pity's sake!
Just enjoy the magnificent views, feel
strong, do not quake.

Up and down twenty-two hills,
Some with views of attractive windmills.
But, if this is all getting too much, take
the pills,
Or we could stop at a café and fill up
their tills
Whilst awaiting the time for the coach
driver's skills.

Hey look! Is that the end in sight, or not
quite?

I thought it was levelling, but there's one
more height.

Some of my muscles feel looser and
others just tight.

Still we've reached the end and there's a
drink and a bite.

Will you be going next time? Yes, I think
I might.

Jackie Flowers-Leek



The Bishop of Montego Bay visits Steyning Grammar School

On Monday 19 June the Right Revd Leon Golding, Bishop of Montego Bay in Jamaica came to Steyning Grammar School to have supper with the students of the Boarding House and speak to them on the occasion of the 75th anniversary of the ship *Empire Windrush* arriving in Britain. The Bishop was the guest of the Diocese for a week of preaching engagements to highlight the Windrush anniversary including preaching at the cathedral.

Bishop Leon was born in the UK but, he told the students, he never felt at home either in the UK or Jamaica because of the attitude of the locals in both countries. He said that 900 were invited to come from the Caribbean to help rebuild Britain after World War II but their invaluable contribution was not recognised by many in the UK. They were part of the British Empire, had British passports and considered themselves to be British citizens. They settled here and started families here but never 'belonged'.

The bishop said that the hope was that his visit to the UK and other similar events would enable us to build a Britain in which people of all colours would be accepted and treated equally and that the contribution made by people of colour would be affirmed and celebrated.

His address was received enthusiastically by the hundred or so boarders of all nationalities who were present. Also present were the Deputy Head, Sisters from the Towers, school governors and members of the Diocesan Racial Justice team.



Brian Hanson (Governor nominated by the Diocese)

It's good to remember?

Today we talk about making memories. I do with my family especially when one of us reaches a significant birthday or anniversary. Canon Nigel in his sermon is remembering the time he was called to the priesthood and to be ordained, and I hope you all have many good memories you can recall. The older we get the more we tend to remember the past and relive certain events, some good, and some not so good.

Each of you kindly reading this page of the magazine (though I think the Plants page is more interesting) will remember the time of Lockdown (I do not wish to comment on any government concerns that are hitting the news). Many people resolved to make various changes of life style because they had better family time or they did not want to destroy the planet further and so on. Joe Wicks was with us every day and I know my family had him as their teacher for exercise and yoga. Try and remember you, three years ago. You will have upsetting memories if you were ill or isolated and lonely; you will have stressful memories if you were juggling work at home and the children; you might have peaceful memories of times that you were able to pray and be with our Lord. And you will have many memories that fall in between.

Care abounded. Care for others and doing all we could for the vulnerable. Care for ourselves - our bodies and minds and spirits - all these more precious than ever. There is a physical prayer I came across somewhere, and use, which I will share with you - if I remember it correctly!

Awaiting God - sit with your hands upwardly cupped on your lap, just quietly awaiting God's presence

Allowing God - still sitting, raise you hands upwards keeping your hands cupped allowing God's presence to come.

Accepting God - keep sitting and move your hands down to cover your heart accepting as a gift whatever may, or may not come.

Attending to God - still sitting stretch out your hands palms upwards, ready to do whatever you are called to do.

There is a figure of Antony Gormley in the flooded crypt at Winchester Cathedral; he has his hands cupped, awaiting God.

Plants of the Garden from the Bible

Garlic Allium Sativum Numbers 11:5

During the exodus some complained about the luxuries they lost in following God - "We remember the fish we ate in Egypt - the cucumbers, the melons, the leeks, the onions and the garlic - but now our strength is dried up, and there is nothing at all but this manna to look at".

Grape Vine Vitis Vinifera Genesis 9:12; John 15: 1-6

Jesus Said, "I am the True Vine". He used familiar everyday things for his parables and a Grape Vine was probably close at hand when he spoke these words.

In winter the branches lose their leaves and then the Vine is pruned if it is to flourish again and bear fruit.

As the cut-off branches are fruitless, useless and dead away from the parent plant, so are Christians who are not abiding in Jesus Christ and thus sharing in his life.

Tips for August

1. Kill weeds by hoeing them, but wait for a dry day for the sun to burn them off.
2. Stake tall perennials and Lilies with bamboo canes to prevent wind damage.
3. Remove any finished hardy annuals if you don't want them to self-seed everywhere.
4. Plant Autumn bulbs such as Colchicums, Sternbergia and Nerines in pots and borders.
5. Cut back herbs now to encourage fresh tasty growth.
6. Continue dividing clumps of bearded Iris. This gives them time to form roots and flower buds for next year.
7. Water evergreen shrubs, eg. Camellias and Rhododendrons thoroughly to make sure next year's buds develop well.
8. Mow meadows now to help scatter established wildflower seeds.



Add more joy from your green space by taking lots of photographs. They will be a great uplifting reminder during the winter months.

Robert Hill-Snook

Recipe for August

DAMSON MESS

Ingredients

- 8 pre made meringue nests (bought or your own home made ones)
- 300g of damsons
- 75g of caster sugar
- 400ml double cream

Method

1. Place the damsons and the sugar in a small saucepan over a low heat. When the fruit has completely broken down, pass it through a sieve into a small bowl. Discard the stones and skins. Leave to cool.
2. When you are ready to serve, whip the cream until soft peaks form and break up the meringue into bite-size pieces.
3. Loosely fold the meringue into the cream and add a spoonful to a glass serving dish, or individual glasses.
4. Drizzle over some damson sauce and add another layer of cream and meringue mix. Repeat, alternating with meringue and sauce until you have filled the dish or individual glasses.
Top with damson sauce.
Serve immediately.



Grace before dinner

Prayers before meals are a simple way to find a moment to reflect on the day and give thanks to God and we can also remember that our blessings come from God.

God is great and God is good

Let us thank Him for our food

By his blessings we are fed

Give us Lord our daily bread. Amen



Water Shrew

I love Jaws, the 1975 movie which sent three men out into the Atlantic in a fishing boat in search of a Great White Shark. There's another aquatic monster hunting in the ponds and shallow streams of Sussex. But to find a Water Shrew...you're gonna need a smaller boat.

Water Shrews weigh 15g and measure just 16cm. Unlike other shrews they have an amazing ability to swim and hunt under-water. They're covered in dense fur – vital insulation against the cold and wet. This sleek wetsuit also traps air bubbles, transforming the shrew into a furry Aero helping it stay buoyant. Powerful, extra hairy hind feet propel this tiny torpedo through the water.

Water Shrews and Great White Sharks have a common feature that sets them apart from their close relatives. They both have a striking demarcation between their dark upperparts and their white underparts. Looking from above, their black backs blend with the pond bottom or seabed. From below, their pale bellies make them invisible in the sunlit water. It's a submarine survival strategy that helps conceal both hunters and hunted. And the Water Shrew is both.

With sharp, red-tipped fangs, a Water Shrew's jaws are as fearsome as any shark's. But the Water Shrew has a trick up its teeth. It's Britain's only venomous mammal. When it bites it injects a stupefying saliva which subdues its victims. In Jaws, the grizzled skipper Quint (Robert Shaw) relates the chilling true tale of the torpedoed WW11 cruiser Indianapolis, which sank leaving hundreds of sailors adrift in shark-infested waters. Well, my mate Barry was bitten by a Water Shrew in Newhaven and his finger went all tingly for about two hours. OK, it doesn't exactly compare, but the fact that a tiny shrew can make such an impact on a human is pretty impressive. Slice open a dead shrew's stomach and rummage inside and you'll find bits of beetle legs, snail shells, and fishbones. If the shrew goes without a meal for more than an hour it will die. What we are dealing with here is a perfect engine, an eating machine. All this machine does is swim and eat and make little shrews. Between April and September, the mating of the shrew can produce 2-3 litters of 3-15 young. They live a fast, brief life. Few of them will survive for more than a year.

The best way to see a Water Shrew is to sit by a Sussex stream as the sun sets. Bring a couple of friends and some Apricot Brandy, share some tall tales, and wait for a shrew to strike.

Michael Blencowe

Just for Families

Talk Together and make a Psalm

Here are some Psalm line starters for you to make your own Psalm. Use however many lines you wish, and add anything you wish too. These thoughts are based on a theme, "Psalm of Thanksgiving" and you may wish to repeat phrases because there will be more than one thing to write about.

A Psalm of Thanks

By: _____

Thank you God for _____

You made _____ and _____

You help me by _____

Please help my Mum/Dad _____

Lord, I want to tell you that _____

Lord, you are _____ and _____

I know you love me because _____

Psalm 4:8

"In peace I
will lie
down and
sleep"



Colour in
this
peacefully
sleeping
bear
picture

Anagram for August

The anagram for August is:
ELEPHANT DAY

REMEMBER: All words to have three or more letters, but only use each letter once. NO capitalised words and NO plurals.

12 August is a day to bring attention to the urgent plight of Asian and African elephants. They need to thrive under protection in sustainable environments.

Church Directory for Steyning

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wardens@steyningparishchurch.org

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Bill Thomson 810392

Deputy Warden: Judie Thomson 810392

CHURCH COUNCIL

Hon. Treasurer: John Edwards

812544

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ELECTORAL ROLL OFFICER

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BELL RINGING

Geoff Goodman, Secretary

812853

BIBLE NOTES

Jennifer Smeed

813276

CHURCH FLOWERS

Carol McKechnie

812258

STUDY & HOUSE GROUPS

Tuesday mornings: The Penfold Group

812220

Tuesday mornings: Grove House Home Group

814551

Wednesday evening: Study Group

417385

PRAYER GROUP

Mary Travers prayer@steyningparishchurch.org

813276

HOLY DUSTERS

c/o Churchwardens

SAFEGUARDING TEAM

Mrs Christine Aubrey

879986

Mrs Fiona Aiton

07703 236170

Ms Carol Mitchell

At weddings, funerals and baptisms Steyning Parish Church can offer additional facilities with the sound system. Contact 01903 813276

- Play your own recorded music from a CD, disc or USB memory stick.
- Facility to record an audio of a service or event

Church Directory for Ashurst

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ELECTORAL ROLL OFFICER

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BIBLE NOTES

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CHURCH OPENING TIMES

Both of our parish churches, St James's and St Andrew's & St Cuthman's
are open every day.

St Andrew's and St Cuthman's is locked at 5pm BST.

THE PARISH OFFICE in the Penfold Hall

813276

Parish Office, Penfold Hall, Church Street, Steyning BN44 3YB

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Saturday 5 August 2023

Email address: steyningchurchmag@gmail.com

