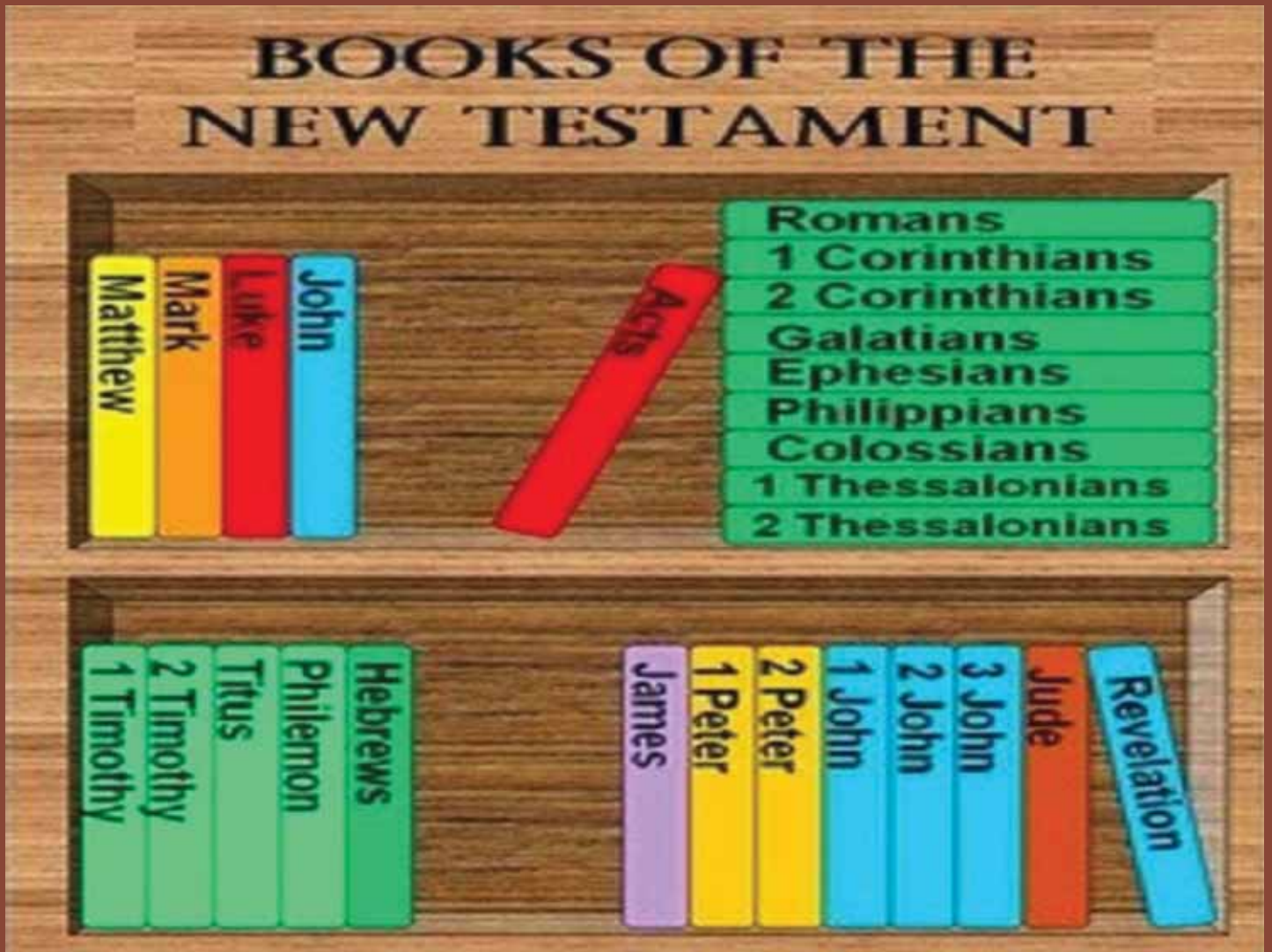


JANUARY 2024

FREE



Church Magazine

Steyning and Ashurst

Steyning Parish Church

1 Vicarage Lane,
Steyning BN44 3YL

Vicar: The Revd Mark Heather LLB BA

879877

vicarofsteyning@gmail.com or rectorofashurst@gmail.com

Church Services

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 Epiphanytide

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, January 7 and is entitled *Pathways to God*.

Monday 1 January we invite you to join us for a "Welcome the New Year" service in Steyning Parish Church at **10:30 am** followed by sherry or soft drink.

No choral evensong in January because of the ecumenical service at the Methodist Church. (see page 19 for more details)

Parish Office Address:

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office@steyningparishchurch.org

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Parish Administrator: Pat McMullan.

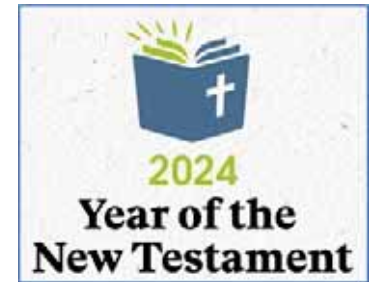


Pastoral Letter

Dear Friends,

At the Eucharist, when the priest takes the chalice, we hear how Jesus described the cup of communion as

'the new covenant'. These words come from St Paul's first letter to the Corinthians (11:25, paralleled in the synoptic Gospel accounts of the last supper – Matthew 26:28, Mark 14:24, Luke 22:20). In older versions of the Bible, and the Book of Common Prayer the translation is slightly different, 'of the New Testament'. This turn of phrase is what gives us the well-known name for the second and shorter part of our Bibles.



This 'New Covenant' is the radical equivalent of the older one, made by God, revealed as Yahweh with the Israelites through Moses. This was the basis for all the Hebrew scriptures – law, prophets, history and psalms, but it was the old dispensation. This was not so much replaced as fulfilled by Jesus, in the series of events that began at the last supper and ended with his crucifixion, resurrection and ascension. The New Testament has this title because its purpose is to outline how this covenant works, and what it means for the followers of Jesus.

The Hebrew word usually translated as 'Covenant' has the same final and binding connotations as a last will and testament - a solemn commitment guaranteeing promises and obligations.

Last year our Diocese celebrated the Year of the Old Testament and this is the Year of the New. During this year there will be opportunities to reflect on the genres that comprise our New Testament, gospels, letters and sermons ('epistles'), not to mention the concluding apocalypse (Revelation), but our editorial this month rightly focuses on the overall message that makes us inheritors of this new and 'better covenant' (Hebrews 7:22) – see pages 6 to 8.

As we read the New Testament this year, let's remember that it's far more than a library of books, for an explanation for living, sometimes comforting and affirming, often perplexing and alarming, not always easy to understand but always compelling.

Fr Mark

FROM THE EDITOR:

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

Page 10 acknowledges our love and deep concern for The Holy Land and all the Bible lands.

As we begin a New Year together have a think about 2024 being the Year of the New Testament.

The Star is Maureen's second article for us. Thank you - keep an eye out for more this year.

Don't miss the box telling us to save the date for the wonderful Hanover Band in church.

Do please continue to send in your contributions in 2024 because what you do or think or see is of much interest to our readers.

steyningchurchmag@gmail.com

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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The Vicar and Churchwardens wish all the readers of this magazine a Blessed New Year and peace throughout 2024.

Prayer Diary for January

Monday 1 January

Naming and Circumcision of Jesus

Almighty God, whose blessed Son was circumcised in obedience to the law for our sake and given the Name that is now above every name: give us grace faithfully to bear his Name, to worship him in the freedom of the Spirit, and to proclaim him as the Saviour of the world; who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

Sunday 7 January

Epiphany (transferred from 6 January)

O God, who by the leading of a star manifested your only Son to the peoples of the earth: mercifully grant that we, who know you now by faith, may at last behold your glory face to face; 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 14 January

Second Sunday of Epiphany

Sunday 21 January

Third Sunday of Epiphany

Thursday 25 January

Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 18 - 25 Jan

Almighty God, who caused the light of the gospel to shine throughout the world through the preaching of your servant Saint Paul; grant that we who celebrate his wonderful conversion may follow him in bearing witness to your truth; 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 28 January

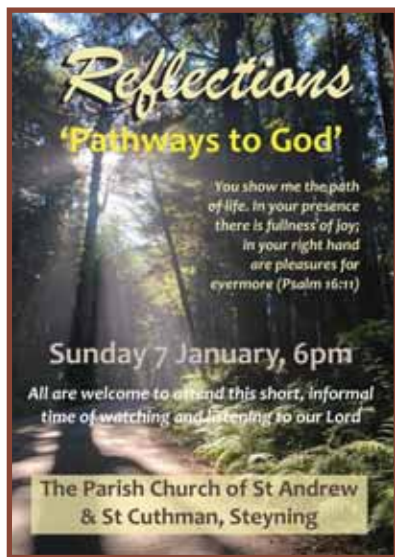
**Presentation of Christ (Candlemas)
(transferred from 2 February)**

Almighty and ever-living God, clothed in majesty, whose beloved Son was this day presented in the Temple, in substance of our flesh: grant that we may be presented to you with pure and clean hearts, by your Son Jesus Christ our Lord.

Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity is traditionally observed from 18 to 25 January – the octave of St Peter and St Paul.

The parable of the Good Samaritan never seems to lose its power to challenge indifference to suffering and to inspire solidarity. It is a story about crossing boundaries that calls our attention to the bonds that unite the whole human family.



Parish Registers

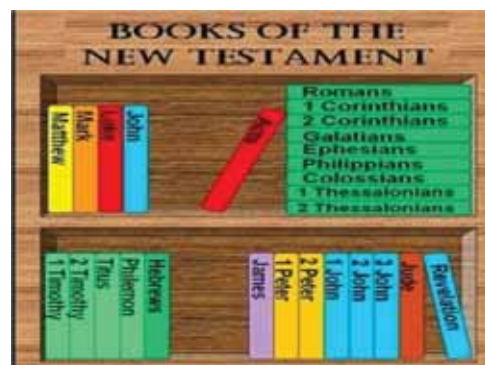
Funeral

6 December

Robert Benjamin (Ben) McGuire
(d. 29 November 2023)

The New Testament

The part of the Bible called the New Testament consists of many books, just as in the Old Testament, and the picture shows them divided into different sections. Together they tell of the coming of the Son of God to win forgiveness and salvation for the whole world. The Gospels show the life of Jesus through the story of his birth and then on to his life of important words, instructions, teachings and miracles, through to his death on the cross for our sins and his resurrection from the dead. After his resurrection we are told of his ascension into heaven and his promise to return. All this is told in the four first books called the Gospels.



We then go on to hear of the coming of the Holy Spirit and the beginning of the church. This set of books tells us of the growth of the church throughout the world particularly through inspiring letters to help churches deal with certain problems they were having, and instructing the Christians on how to live. The final book is one of prophecy and encouragement for us all.

The words used by each of the authors are inspired by God through the Holy Spirit; Paul wrote in his letter to Timothy "All Scripture is God-breathed" *2 Timothy 16*. God-breathed means inspired as it is translated from Greek. The whole of the New Testament was written in Greek as this was the language that was understood and used throughout the world at the time of the first century. One verse in the Gospel of John, chapter 20 verse 31, sums up the whole message of the New Testament,

"But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name."

That has probably been the quickest helicopter ride I have ever taken over the books of the New Testament! Why? Because the thought that keeps returning to me is that I would like to say something about the central messages of the New Testament rather than spend time on its history. The following thoughts come to mind because I am writing this at the end of the Church Year, and also looking forward to all that January has to offer.

Through the life and teachings of Jesus we find ourselves caught up in the story and the saving grace He offers us through the cross. In the Bible we hear the word Kingdom or King often, and in life today we say "Thy Kingdom come" in the third line of the Lord's Prayer that Jesus taught us. "Thy Kingdom come" refers to the kingdom of God coming on earth to make a new world order.

Jesus' life is framed by kingship. Shortly after his birth, celebrated at Christmas, three kings search out the new-born King of the Jews. This event is celebrated at Epiphany on 6 January. At the end of Jesus' life on earth, at the crucifixion, there is a notice hammered into the top of his cross echoing the same promise "This is the King of the Jews". Jesus didn't ever say he was the King of the Jews, instead he always pointed to the kingdom of God. He said the kingdom of God is like the mystery of the seed sown by the farmer who watched it grow alongside the weeds, and all are there together in God's field. Here we see that the kingdom is about us as well as those all around us, working out our lives together, but all able to access the victory and the grace of the cross. Through that grace from the cross and the message from the Gospels we can learn how heaven's rule can come to earth; the challenge to us all is actually living it.

The hardest questions today - as always - are: Why has this or that tragedy happened, or Why has the world gone so wrong with upsetting stories coming at us day by day? I do not have the answers. But, if we look to the Gospel narratives we find that Jesus is showing love and justice; forgiveness and peace; touch and listening; obedience and prayer ... and so on ... and others catch on. So these are the characteristics I want to try to live by, and hope that they will spread to others. Reading the New Testament will help us understand what our Lord and King wants of us within this world we do not understand.

One life lived with the Gospel as his guiding light is Archbishop Oscar Romero of El Salvador. He was killed for criticising his government for their brutal suppression, and for the continuing historical inequalities. He spoke up for the vulnerable:

*"Let us not tire of preaching love; it is the force that will overcome the world.
Let us not tire of preaching love; Though we see that waves of violence succeed in
drowning the fire of Christian love, love must win out; it is the only thing that can."*

Romero insisted that all are entitled to love and respect because we are all in the same world (God's field) together; it doesn't matter how great and powerful or how much struggling or vulnerability human beings show, our role is one of peaceful witness to the love of God. It is only in this way that will we continue to see a glimpse of God's kingdom.

In our diocese, this new Church Year is to be called *The Year of The New Testament*. There are many ways you could decide to be a part of this year and rediscover the Gospel narratives. The writings of Luke or the letters of Paul showing the spread of Christianity and the assurance that God is with us and blesses us, will create another section that you can rediscover. The final Book of Revelation, for me, is the hardest book of all in the New Testament, but it does reaffirm that Christ is King and is alive and is above all earthly powers and people. Revelation confirms that we cannot comprehend many things and certainly not the many great questions or things that will lie ahead for each one of us, but for now and all time, there will be blessings for all who keep Jesus' words close to their heart. For now, join me and sing the words of this beautiful hymn, giving us strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow.

*"Great is Thy faithfulness" O God my Father,
There is no shadow of turning with Thee;
Thou changest not, Thy compassions, they
fail not
As Thou hast been Thou forever will be,*

*"Great is Thy faithfulness" "Great is Thy faith-
fulness"
Morning by morning new mercies I see;
All I have needed Thy hand hath provided
"Great is Thy faithfulness," Lord unto me!*

*Summer and winter and springtime and
harvest,*

*Sun, moon and stars in their courses
above,*

*Join with all nature in manifold witness
To Thy great faithfulness, mercy and love.*

*Pardon for sin and a peace that endureth
Thy own dear presence to cheer and to
guide;*

*Strength for today and bright hope for
tomorrow,*

*Blessings all mine, with ten thousand
beside!*

Chris Fitton

Memorial Garden



On Remembrance Sunday in November last year these crosses were placed in the new garden as a special memory to loved ones who have died in conflict.

The new garden is to be found just by the lychgate at Steyning Parish Church. You are very welcome to visit and pay your respects.

Many people have been completely overwhelmed by the news from Gaza and Israel, and almost don't even want to put the news on.

I think we all share this deep grief for peoples' lives that have been so devastated, but part of our faith is to stand beside those in pain, even though we are at a distance crying out to God.

In the December magazine there was a good article about the situation, and some points it made are helpful:

Pray for peace and an end to violence, and that the world leaders can have influence in that region.

Pray for the safety of all people who just want to go about their daily lives; for any who are working to bring relief and assistance; for access to food and water, electricity and medicines.

Pray for strength and hope for all churches and Christian communities, and for hope especially at Christmastide.

With God all things are possible (Matt 19:26)

Prayers for Times of Crisis

in Jerusalem and all the Holy Land

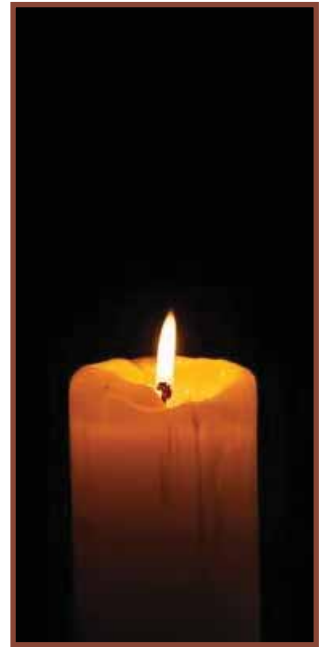
God of light and salvation, our refuge and our strength,
We pray for the people of Israel and Palestine amid the escalating violence.

We pray for those killed and injured in southern Israel. May your rod and staff comfort them. We pray for those who are grieving, may they know your ever present help.

We pray for the protection of those who have been taken hostage by Hamas. As they walk through this dark valley may they fear no evil.

We pray for all the civilians of Gaza. May they know that their help comes from the Maker of heaven and earth.

And we pray for those in leadership in Gaza and Israel. May you guide them along the right paths. We ask all this in union with Christ and trusting in the power of your Holy Spirit.



Heavenly Father, we pray for the many people whose lives have been torn apart by conflict in Gaza and Israel. We pray especially for those who have died, those who are grieving, the injured and those now without food, shelter or medical supplies. Strengthen and support the work of all relief organisations.

Ely Cathedral

*Almighty God,
Father of all mercies and giver of all comfort,
deal graciously with those who mourn,
that they may cast every care on you,
and know the consolation of your love.
Remember, O Lord, those who are sick or suffer
pain, especially those who have been injured.
Comfort them by your presence,
sustain them by your promises,
and grant to all who have been affected,
your peace.*

Bind up the broken hearted,
give grace to those seeking to end the spiral of violence,
grant wisdom to those seeking peaceful ways to resolve age old conflicts;
and give us the prayers, words, and perseverance needed
to make our discipleship, our efforts for peace and justice count.



Pray for Ukraine and World 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 the people of Russia:

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

We remember how Jesus resisted being co-opted into the religious and political uprisings of competing empires. We remember how He spoke to heal the sick, calm the storm and raise the dead. We too pray that the name of God would not be invoked in destructive nationalistic ways. We pray for powerful words and miraculous actions – for de-escalation, peace and justice, repentance and restoration.

On earth as it is in heaven, and for our faithful witness until then,
Amen.

New Wooden Gate



On a very wet and windy morning in November there was a crowd of adults and young people from Steyning Grammar School and the community admiring a wonderful new wooden gate.

We had gathered to celebrate the opening of this new gate positioned off Mouse Lane at the entrance to the Steyning Downland Scheme.

The pupils had carved a variety of woodland creatures and features such as squirrels, hedgehogs, ladybirds, mice, acorns and toadstools. The idea of these lovely carvings was to engage the children with the local countryside and to welcome people as they enter the Steyning Downland Scheme.

There was also on display an iron sculptured firepit which the young students had helped to craft at the forge which they have at school. It will be installed behind the rifle range targets.

Jill Brown

Save the Date

You may remember that we were privileged to enjoy a wonderful performance of The Messiah by **The Hanover Band** last year. You may like to know that they will be returning to us on **Saturday 22 June 2024** to perform all six of Bach's Brandenburg Concertos. This should be a very special occasion on, hopefully, a warm summer's day.

Just a thought ...

THE STAR

I read of many people who have a 'bucket list' of things they would like to do/achieve before they die. I don't happen to be one of them although I do understand those who have. However, a recent chat with one of our sons made me sit up!

He was saying that a while ago, on holiday in Morocco, he and his wife went up into the Atlas Mountains to 'Stargaze'. The sight was unimaginable - millions of sparkling dots seemingly near enough to almost envelop them. One of those never to be forgotten experiences, a touch of the Heavens.

This led to me thinking of the Shepherds in their fields outside Bethlehem. It would have been a nightly experience for them. An experience so familiar it was simply a part of their lives. Not only would they have been watching their flocks but, in the darkness, would have been looking up and noticing any changes in the night sky. So ... imagine their reaction when an Angel appeared! Terrified! They were even told to go to Bethlehem where a baby had been born who was Christ the Lord! And - lying in a manger! The 'shock' didn't end there! Suddenly the sky was filled with Angels praising God and singing 'Glory to God, Peace on Earth'. They must have been so overwhelmed that they, almost without thinking, but in obedience to what the Angel had told them left their flocks, went to Bethlehem and found the Babe, just as the Angel had said. The account is so familiar that I had never considered the Shepherds reaction to such a wonderful thing. And God first chose to reveal His new born Son, Jesus to those simple uncomplicated Shepherds.

A short time later 'Three wise men from the East' were also looking up, always studying the stars, their movements, their significance. Then one night a New Star appeared; they felt compelled to follow it. This star didn't twinkle and was larger than those around it; and so they too were led to Bethlehem, a long journey, to the New Born Baby, Jesus. Trusting, believing, listening, and in obedience when God told them to return a different way, and not to speak to Herod.

How often do we look up, around us, or into the perfect formation of a flower? Really looking, with thoughtful awareness. Next summer find an Astringia bloom. Nothing large or showy, but each small flower composed of many tiny, tiny, perfect flowers. I only discovered them a few years ago after a lifetime of my love of gardening - couldn't stop looking!!

What are we all missing, especially the young, their eyes fixed to phones, computers, etc? Technology certainly has a necessary place in our current society, but what are we missing when we don't think of looking up, out, and into the wonders of God's Creation?

Just a thought ... for those able, on a clear night, go to a remote place and quietly 'Stargaze'. It's possible we might have been missing something.

Maureen Jones.

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.

Elizabeth Brown and the Coffee Team

**COME IN ...
PLEASE
JOIN THE TEAM
FOR A COFFEE**

Prayer Points for January

- For a happy and healthy New Year for ourselves, our neighbours and for our friends and loved ones.
- For those who are ill and for those for whom the New Year will be one of concern and worry.
- For those who are blind or partially sighted.
- For all those who are educating our young people. The teachers, support staff, governors and volunteers. Pray that more may volunteer at the local schools.
- For the PCC group hoping to appoint a new Family and Children's worker this year. Pray for all the candidates.
- That as we pray for peace we may remember the Holocaust and all its victims and those caught up in the genocide.
- For all who live and work in College Hill and The Crescent.



Reading the Signs of the Times

COP 28, CLIMATE CHANGE AND US

In one of the short stories told by Jesus, he tells those who challenge him that they are good at weather forecasting, but not much good at understanding their true situation. "You know how to interpret the appearance of the sky, but you cannot interpret the signs of the times". (Matthew 14:3 NRSV) There are increasing signs that we are not even appreciating what the weather is telling us or the urgency of our situation. Each year the big conference on climate change comes round, each year it features briefly as the top news story. Each year we miss another last chance to save the planet, it seems. The key terms are UNFCCC (UN Framework Convention on Climate Change) and CoP (Conference of the Parties) – nations of the world who are signatories to the Convention.

T.S. Eliot said: 'Humankind cannot bear too much reality'. However, there are teachers who can help us. Two good guides are the Pope and the weather. In 2015, he published an encyclical *Laudato si* ("Praise be"), a major document on climate change. He also boiled down the message to the ten commandments on climate change. To give you a taste, Pope Francis argues that we should think of future generations, use alternative energy sources and consider the effect of pollution on the poor. He also says we should educate ourselves and believe we can make a difference.

The weather is increasingly dramatic and violent. As well as global heating, we have more frequent and extreme hurricanes and storms; droughts and floods; and an alarming global loss of flora and fauna.

Last year (July 2023) the UN Secretary-General argued that we had gone beyond global warming and that the "era of global boiling" has arrived. Such dramatic language can make us feel powerless, but it should make us sit up and take notice. The World Resources Institute found that the world is off track in 41 out of 42 indicators for getting on track to keep within 1.5 degrees of global warming. The exception is the rapid growth in electric car sales. The UN's Global Stocktake 2023 (the first of its kind) calculates that global greenhouse gas emissions must peak by 2025, then decline by 43% by 2030 to meet the 1.5 degree maximum global warming target by 2030.

Because of the timing of the CoP conference, convened in the United Arab Emirates at the end of November, and church magazine deadlines, I cannot tell you (writing earlier in November) what happened at the meeting and what was agreed. I hope you watched and listened to the news or read about it. Christian Aid who attended the conference had four major asks:

- Fully to resource the Loss and Damage Fund and to make its leadership representative of the countries which have lost most through climate change.
- To agree new and additional finance in addition, based on need, beyond 2025.
- To agree (spot the alliteration) a "fast, fair, forever fossil fuel phase out".
- Strong implementation of the principle "make polluters pay".

Our government has gone cool on climate change. As The Observer headline stated in an editorial before the CoP meeting: "UK turning its back on chance to lead climate fight". (12.11.23) But recently the appointment of Lord Cameron as Foreign Secretary came with the promise of mobilizing billions more pounds for climate and development priorities. We will see if this promise is realized.

Why is this article in the church magazine? Our congregation has already set out on the journey and gained an EcoChurch Award. Greening Steyning is active locally. This is a General Election year and the climate issue should play an important role in our decision who to vote for.

Why is climate change a Christian concern? My answer is as follows: Firstly the doctrine of creation - Genesis tells us that God created everything and "saw that it was good". The Psalmist tells us: "The earth is the Lord's and all that is in it, the world and those who live in it". (Psalm 24:1 NRSV) Secondly, following Jesus in discerning "the signs of the times". Finally, our understanding of salvation - what or who gets saved? St Paul in Romans 8:21 states that "the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and will obtain the glory of the children of God." I have no idea how this will be realized, but I am convinced that we have not begun to exhaust the promise of this verse.

We should look after our earthly home as good stewards. If God saw that creation was good and "the earth is the Lord's", it is not ours to destroy.

Roger Williamson

Resources on Climate Change on next page

Resources on Climate Change

Laudato si <https://cafod.org.uk/pray/laudato-si-encyclical>

The Pope's 10 commandments <https://edition.cnn.com/2015/06/18/world/pope-10-commandments-climate-change/index.html>

CoP28 UAE Nov-Dec. 2023 <https://www.cop28.com/>

World Resources Institute, <https://www.wri.org/research/state-climate-action-2023>

Global Stocktake <https://unfccc.int/topics/global-stocktake/>

Hannah Malcolm, *Words for a Dying World: Stories of Grief and Courage from the Global Church*, SCM Press

Christian Aid and climate justice <https://www.christianaid.org.uk/get-involved/campaigns/campaign-climate-justice>

Greening Steyning <https://www.facebook.com/GreeningSteyning/>
<https://www.instagram.com/greeningsteyning/?hl=en>

EcoChurch <https://ecochurch.arocha.org.uk/>

Unto us a Son is given

Answers

1. *Isaiah 9:7*
2. *2 Samuel 7:12*
3. *Micah 5:2*
4. *Hosea 11:1*
5. *Zechariah 9:9*
6. *Isaiah 53:5-7*
7. *Psalms 34:20*
8. *Isaiah 53:12*

The Arts Society

Charles Dickens,

The Man & His Life Through His Characters

A talk by Bertie Pearce

Monday 8 January 2024 at 10am The Steyning Centre,
Largely self-educated, Dickens became the greatest writer of his age producing 15 major novels and countless short stories and articles. In this lecture Bertie looks at the life and places of Dickens through his wonderful array of characters. The talk is interspersed with readings of his works.

Bertie has a BA (Hons) in Drama from Manchester University, and a Diploma Internationale from the École Internationale du Théâtre, Jacques Lecoq. A member of the Inner Magic Circle, with Gold Star, Bertie has toured the world with a magic cabaret show and a one man show entitled All Aboard.

Free to members; visitors £10 donation

Think for a moment.

Ships are safe in harbours. But that is not what they were designed for.

And a smile

I enjoy beekeeping. I don't do it for the money ... it's the buzz.

Stuart Stevens 1938 - 2023

Stuart or to many of you, "Skip", or even a couple of you have known as "Steve" was a lovely, true gentle man. To his elder daughters he was perhaps a rather strict father, who didn't like makeup being worn at school or indeed using the church yard to change into red high heels after leaving the house in flats...

Stuart was born on 1 October 1938 in Wandsworth London. He was the eldest of four, growing up with three sisters. His mother was Ethel Stevens and Stuart was already seven years old when he met his father for the first time. Leslie had been an Officer in the army and away at war. Stuart was evacuated to Haywards Heath with his sisters and he loved playing in the woods for days on end, building camps and enjoying nature and the animals.

The family moved to Bournemouth and then on to Steyning and Stuart found music. He played guitar in a band called The StenTones who would practise in Stuarts parents' house, which was too much for them, so they moved sessions down on the river or up in an isolated farm.

It was farming that lead Stuart into a life of working with his hands.

In 1958 he worked for Mr Reginald Howe at Charlton Court Steyning, out in the fields. Whilst on a bus from Brighton to Steyning Stuart met Sheila. Their love grew and after duly courting they married.

The couple set up home in Rodmell, East Sussex and they were blessed with the arrival of Sarah. Stuart worked at Starley's as a contract ploughman, and the family moved to Upper Beeding. With the arrival of Lesley, Stuart put farming aside and became a postman. He had a brain that could remember every house name in Upper Beeding and even being knocked off his bike didn't stop him being the best postman that he could be.

Stuart ran the Upper Beeding Football club and the youth club. As a fine tribute, the football club kept a one-minute silence for him and wore black armbands.

In 1974 Rebecca and Richard joined the family. That was not small detail but another blessing.

Stuart did much for the community. He was not just known for football, youth clubs and scouting, he was Chair of Upper Beeding bowling club, loved his dogs, the outdoors life, and growing roses. He cycled everywhere. I think of Stuart as the man who dedicated his life to Christ. Who had served as Churchwarden, and I will always think of him at St Botolph's.

God had special purposes for Stuart. He enriched many of our lives. His life was enriched by the love of his children, his grandchildren of whom he was ever so proud of, by Shelia and later Helen. To Helen we pause and give thanks for her love of him, some twenty years of her dedication of supporting and caring for Stuart and for the life they enjoyed together. His tireless giving of his time to other people was acknowledged by being awarded the British Empire Medal.

Sadly, Stuart suffered with Parkinson's disease which some of his grandchildren found hard to understand. Stuart lived a life of love, and it is with hearts of love that we know he rests in the love of God.

*I & Stuart's family say thank you for the prayers, love, support, cards & letters.
They have given me so much comfort.*

Helen Cosham

Saint of the month

AGNES, CHILD MARTYR OF ROME, 304

Agnes was a victim of the persecution of the Emperor Diocletian in his attempt to wipe out Christians and Christianity from the Roman Empire. The most intense attack happened in 303-4 when many Christians were tortured and put to death.

Agnes openly declared herself as a Christian and held to her faith during torture. At the age of twelve or thirteen she refused to marry in order to dedicate her life to Christ. She was threatened with being pressed into prostitution but, despite this, maintained her faith and, after further torture, was ritually stabbed through the neck being left to bleed to death. It is said that the ferocity of her martyrdom so shocked Roman society that she was one of the last martyrs of the Diocletian Persecution.

She was buried in the cemetery of the Via Nomentana in Rome. During the reign of the Emperor Constantine, some twenty five years after her death, a basilica was erected over her grave and a relief of her is carved on a marble slab which dates from the fourth century.

Her feast day is 21 January and her emblem is a lamb because of the resemblance of her name to the Latin for lamb (agnus). On her feast, the lambs which produce the wool from which the pallia presented to new archbishops are woven, are blessed.

Steyning and District Churches Together

As a Christian community the Steyning and District Churches Together, SDCT, worshiped together at the Advent Darkness to Light service in St Andrew and St Cuthman's church on the first Sunday in Advent.

**In 2024 everyone is invited to worship together
with an Agape service at 4pm with a light supper
at the Steyning Methodist Church
on Sunday 21 January.**

If you have any questions please contact Elizabeth Brown

“...hear them read ...”

Somebody asked, who chooses the bits of Bible we read on Sundays and why?

Every Sunday we are offered at least four bits of Bible to choose from in a three year cycle. This year Mark is the resident Gospel,

The old Prayer Book only had two readings for each Sunday and the same each year. Those readings didn't seem to follow any system; at any rate, I can't see one. There are the obvious choices for the Big Days – Christmas, Easter etc. – but the rest seem to have no logical scheme. A fellow student suggested that Archbishop Cranmer and his wife sat down one day in 1549, he with a pack of gospel bits and she with a pack of other New Testament bits. They shuffled and then dealt them out in pairs, and that was the lectionary! It has always seemed to me to be as likely as any other theory.

But not now, not for us, we have a system!

Let's start with the Gospel which is **the** most important reading of the lot, where it all starts and where we all begin. When I was a lad we were written down as absent from church if we were so late that we missed hearing the Gospel; it didn't count as being there!

Nowadays we stand for the Gospel out of respect for the subject and to be ready to take it out into the world; it's our marching orders. Years ago the Gospel was read facing North which is where the early church thought the heathen lived; these days the heathen are out in the street so the Gospel is read down towards the exit door.

Each of the three years has its own gospel, this year it's Mark. John doesn't have a year to himself, I don't know quite why, but we read bits of John this year to make up for the fact that Mark didn't write enough to fill the empty Sundays of 'Ordinary Time'. It's a good thing for us to become familiar with what the author thinks and writes and what he wants us to pay attention to.

Most people think Mark was the first gospel to be written; Luke and Matthew quote large bits of him almost word for word. He starts with Jesus' baptism, so he doesn't get read at Christmas – no Baby Jesus stories!

Mark is always short and to the point, he never tidies things up or tries to be 'reverent'. For example, the shining white robes at the Transfiguration were compared with Fullers (the lower class equivalent of the laundrette for us) in Mark; too vulgar for the other two writers! Look out for examples as we go through the year. The first part of Mark is a story which I think of as 'The Cat Amongst The Pigeons' – Jesus

speaking and acting with Authority and acting with great Power no matter who is there or who is upset. But, all that changes when he is handed over in the Garden of Gethsemane; from there on he does nothing and hardly says anything, and when he does nobody takes any notice. Does Mark mean us to be prepared to put up with ill-treatment, persecution and insult?

His style and language can tell us quite a bit about him and his work. He wrote for non-Jews, the Gentiles, and therefore has to explain Jewish customs and words; he seems to have thought in Latin and written in Greek; his gospel ends very oddly; either the last page was lost or he was interrupted and never got back to finish it; what happened?

He seems very careful to choose and edit tales which would help his readers 30 or 40 years after the actual event, which should encourage us to apply the gospel stories to our present times.

But there are other different ways in which we can think about the Sunday gospel.:
What actually happened?

What did the people there think was happening?

What did the writer want his readers to know?

What did he assume they knew anyhow?

What should we today think and understand?

And, last and hardest:

Why did the people who chose the passage for us start and stop where they did?

Sometimes the last question is the worst of all, which is why it's worth reading the bits before and after the set bit to see what it's all about.

I'll try and look at the other readings another month and, if I'm spared, look at Luke next year when he comes round.

Senex

Steyning History Society

Wednesday, 10 January 2024

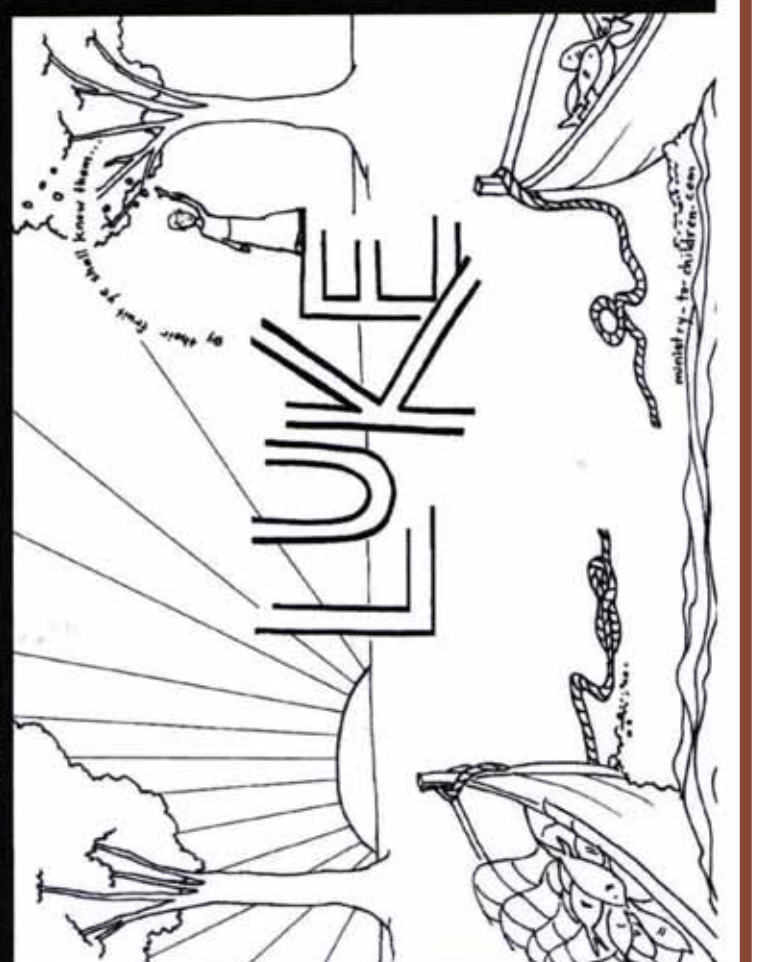
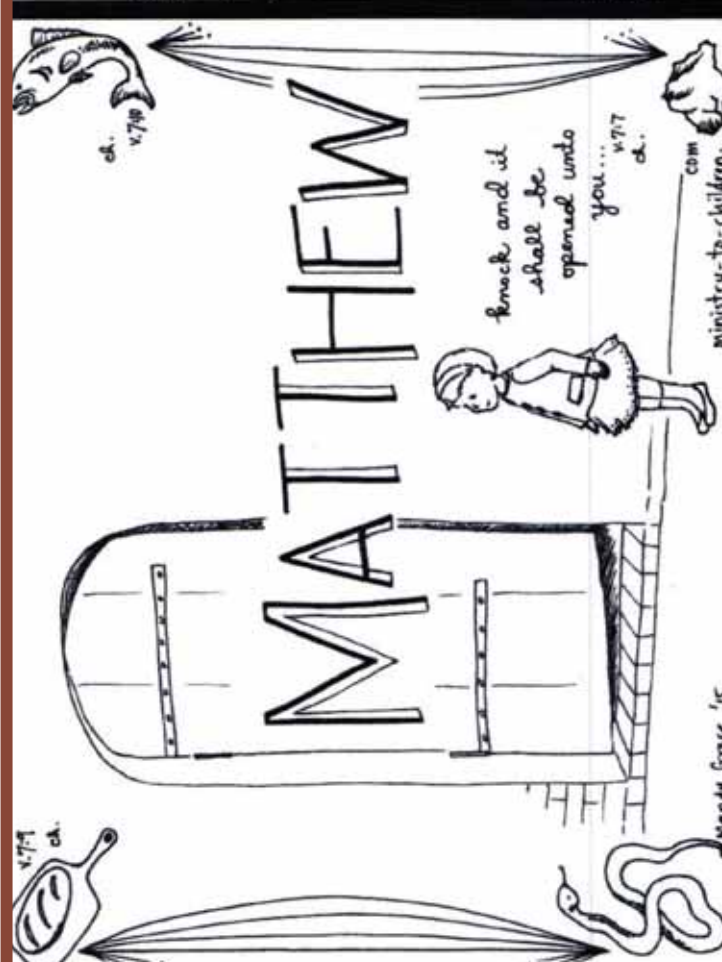
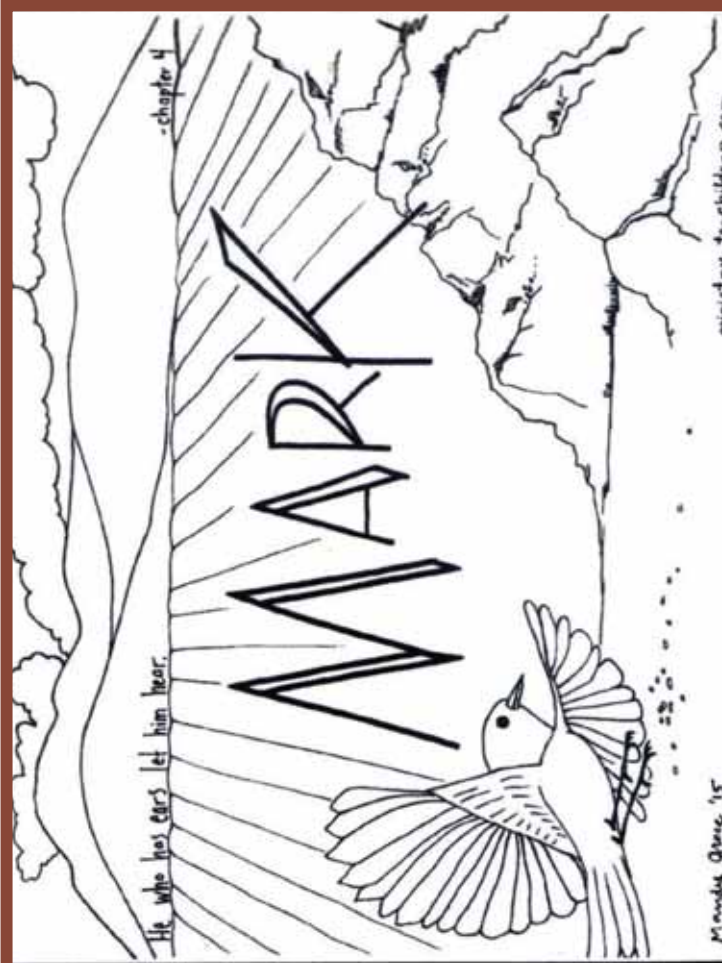
Steyning Centre, Coombe Court

7:30 p.m. for a 7:45 p.m. start

H.M.S. King Alfred – Training the Wartime Navy in Hove and Lancing By Brian Lavery

Visitors are welcome - £5 per person.






Colour in the Gospel Illustrations



Books of the New Testament

Word Search



Find the following words in the puzzle.
Words are hidden     and .

ACTS
COLOSSIANS
CORINTHIANS
EPHESIANS
GALATIANS
HEBREWS
JAMES

JOHN
JUDE
LUKE
MARK
MATTHEW
PETER
PHILEMON

PHILIPPIANS
REVELATION
ROMANS
THESSALONIANS
TIMOTHY
TITUS

Anagram for January

Twenty-four

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

If you are a towny you may have some fortune with this!!

HAPPY NEW YEAR

Recipe for January

Croissants and marmalade bread-and-butter pudding

Ingredients

400ml double cream

200ml milk

4 medium free-range egg yolks

2-3 tbsp caster sugar

50ml Grand Marnier or other orange-flavoured liqueur

8 croissants, split in half

8 tbsp marmalade

100g dark chocolate, chopped



Method

1. Heat the cream and milk in a pan until almost boiling. Remove from the heat. In a bowl, beat the egg yolks and sugar, then pour the cream over, stirring. Add the Grand Marnier and set aside.

2. Butter a 1.5-litre ovenproof dish. Spread each croissant half with marmalade, then layer in the dish, sprinkling with chocolate. Pour the custard over and leave to soak for 15 minutes.

3. Preheat the oven to 180°C/fan160°C/gas 4. Bake for 25-30 minutes until softly set and golden.

- Remember as you eat all those who are hungry on the streets
- Remember as you eat the community kitchens around the world providing hot meals.
- Remember as you eat to thank God for bringing light into the world through Jesus.

I got you under my skin

I like to think that most of us are good neighbours to the wild animals we share this planet with. We feed the birds, grow flowers in the garden for bees and butterflies. But if wildlife gets too close or, heaven forbid, enters our houses we're reaching for the fly spray or a rolled-up newspaper. I get plenty of people complaining to me about home-invading wildlife as if I'm some sort of envoy for the animal kingdom. Yet while they moan about clothes moths in their wardrobe, I just stand there smiling, reassured by the knowledge that these people have wildlife living right under their noses. Well, to be more precise, right in their noses.

OK, I warn you now: after reading this article some of you will be scouring your face with a Brillo pad. But it's time to face the facts. Your face is crawling with animals. You, yes you, have face mites. And there's no 'might' about it – research has shown that 100% of adults have them. Our faces are one big nature reserve for mites: from your mountainous nose and skin pore caves to your eyelash jungles. In fact, our faces are home to two different species. *Demodex folliculorum* thrive in your eyelashes while *Demodex brevis* lurk in your pores. They're feeding on dead skin cells and oils but don't harm us – a commensal parasite.

Before you run to the bathroom mirror, these guys are tiny. I'm not going to lie to you, they're not pretty (unless you think a microscopic 8-legged slug is pretty) and under high-powered microscopes they look like something you'd encounter in a galaxy far, far away. The egg and larval stages last two weeks and you'll probably be relieved to hear that the adults live for just five days and then die. And it's right about here you'll realise that these things are constantly mating on your face. You can scrub and scrub but you can't wash away the hard truth: you're just a mammal. And like dogs, cows, orangutans and meerkats we're the perfect hosts for a range of parasites.

Personally, I've grown quite fond of my little pets – despite never being able to see them. When I go to bed at night, I imagine Clarence the Demodex, climbing from his pore, going for a wander across my cheek and hoping to meet a girlfriend. But instead he meets his nemesis Evil Arthur and a mite fight ensues until ...well, you get the idea. There are hundreds of these little adventures happening on your face every night. Sweet dreams.

Michael Blencowe

BOOKS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT



John 20 26-31

Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!"

Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe."

Thomas said to him, "My Lord and my God!"

Then Jesus told him, "Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."

Jesus performed many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book.

But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.