

# Church Magazine



FEBRUARY 2024

Steyning and Ashurst

# Steyning Parish Church

1 Vicarage Lane,  
Steyning BN44 3YL

**Vicar:** The Revd Mark Heather LLB BA

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## Church Services

### **St Andrew's & St Cuthman's**

Every Sunday

8:00am 1662 Holy Communion Service

9:30am Sung Eucharist Music Group Eucharist on 18 February

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

Choral Evensong on 18 February

### **St James's**

10:30am Second Sunday Family Service for the Start of Lent

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, February 4 and is entitled "Love is Everything".

### **Special services in February**

**St Cuthman Patronal Festival** 9:30 Eucharist on 4 February

**Ash Wednesday** 14 February

Details of all Services to be found on page 19

### **Parish Office Address:**

**Penfold Hall, Church Street, Steyning, BN44 3YB Tel: 813276**

**office@steyningparishchurch.org**

**www.steyningparishchurch.org**

Parish Administrator: Pat McMullan.

**Parish Office open:** Tuesday - Friday 10am - midday



## Pastoral Letter

Dear Friends,

What does it mean to be happy? Each of us might have a slightly different answer to this question, and the answer may vary according to our mood. A pessimist might start by reflecting on what unhappiness feels like and imagining the opposite. Extroverts might start with being with other people. Those used to interior reflection might start by describing what it means to find inner peace.

Jesus however offers us a very direct, if confusing, answer to the question and, according to Matthew's Gospel (5:1-12), the topic is so important that he begins his famous 'Sermon on the Mount' by addressing it: *Happy are the destitute in spirit ... Happy are those who mourn .... Happy are those who hunger ... Happy are those who are persecuted ...* – and so on. Luke's Gospel offers a slightly different description (6:20-38).

The word 'happy' in the above translation, more familiar to us as 'blessed' (see back cover), means much more than a superficial feeling of well-being. It describes someone who enjoys a privilege of some kind; indeed all the blessings and benefits of God's own Kingdom. The word (*makarios*) is used widely in the New Testament, and mostly in the words of Jesus himself.

Our Lent Course this year will give us a chance to focus on the deliberately self-contradictory nature of the Beatitudes – what we might call Jesus' 'Happiness Index' I hope you might be free to join us for the introductory session on Shrove Tuesday. Meanwhile, as we ponder the quotations from the theologians of the early church over pages 6 to 9, maybe all of us can think about what it is that we can do this coming Lent to make us more like Jesus, 'gentle and humble in heart' and so find rest for our souls (see Matthew 11:29).

*Fr Mark*

**THINKING ABOUT JOINING A LENT COURSE?**

**COME TO THE INTRODUCTORY SESSION**

**ON TUESDAY 13 FEBRUARY 10:30 - NOON**

**IN THE PENFOLD HALL. MORE DETAILS PAGE 5**

## FROM THE EDITOR:

As we acknowledge the huge impact on everyone in Ukraine now that this war is in its third 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.

We extend our love and deep concern for The Holy Land and all the Bible lands.

Lent is early this year and so on 14 February we celebrate Ash Wednesday. During Lent, there will be groups coming together to study The Beatitudes. (see Lent Course) The front page picture is entitled The Sermon on the Mount and comes from Rumania.

Thanks for your pictures.



Please read the tribute to Gavin who was, for many years, the Editor of this magazine.

Do please continue to send in your contributions.

[steyningchurchmag@gmail.com](mailto: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](mailto:office@steyningparishchurch.org) or ring 01903 813276

To add any new prayer requests contact:

[prayers@steyningparishchurch.org](mailto:prayers@steyningparishchurch.org)

or ring 01903 813276

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# Prayer Diary for February

**Sunday 4 February**

**The Second Sunday before Lent**

**Thursday 8 February**

**St Cuthman's Day**

Loving Father, who filled Cuthman with a love of the Gospel and the desire to make you a house in this place for your glory: inspire us, who honour his memory, to build up your church in hope and faith and love; as we look for the day when we and all your saints will fill your heavenly temple with our praises; through him who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

*St Cuthman Patronal Festival will be celebrated on Sunday 4 February.*

**Sunday 11 February**

**The Sunday next before Lent**

Almighty Father, whose Son was revealed in majesty before he suffered death upon the cross: give us grace to perceive his glory, that we may be strengthened to suffer with him and be changed into his likeness, from glory to glory.

**Wednesday 14 February Ash Wednesday**

Almighty and everlasting God, you hate nothing that you have made and forgive the sins of all who are penitent: create and make in us new and contrite hearts that we, worthily lamenting our sins and acknowledging our wretchedness, may receive from you, the God of all mercy, perfect remission and forgiveness: 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 18 February**

**The First Sunday of Lent**

**Wednesday 21, Friday 23, Saturday 24 February**

**Ember Days**

**Sunday 25 February**

**The Second Sunday of Lent**

## LENT COURSE

**You all are invited to the introductory session of the Lent Course focussing on discussing the Beatitudes.**

**Introductory Session - Tuesday 13 February 10:30 - noon** in the Penfold Hall. No need to book, just walk in and join in.

There are some groups ready to follow the course after this session, so you may like to join one or be part of the creation of another group. Please talk to Fr Mark or a Churchwarden.





# Parish Registers

## Funerals

**10 January 2024**

Gavin Clement Flowers-Leek  
d.17 December 2023

**11 January 2024**

Heather Nisbett  
d. 25 December 2023

## The Beatitudes

For most people reading this magazine the title *The Beatitudes* will be well known, and yet some may not have done much more than read them and know that they are important foundations for our faith and therefore try to live by them. During Lent we all are invited to attend discussion sessions learning from each other and through a course, we can discover more about what the Beatitudes mean to us, and for the world today. (See Pages 3 and 5 for details).

In recent times much has been written about the Beatitudes for you to delve into on the internet, so I would like to pass on some thoughts copied from some of the Fathers of the Church - ancient Christian writers.



This picture is from The Orthodox Peace Fellowship web site from Romania

*“Seeing the crowds, he went up on the mountain, and when he sat down his disciples came to him. And he opened his mouth and taught them saying: Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”*

*St. Jerome:* Do not imagine that poverty is bred by necessity. For he added “in spirit” so you would understand blessedness to be humility and not poverty. “Blessed are the poor in spirit,” who on account of the Holy Spirit are poor by willing freely to be so.

*St. Hilary of Arles:* The Lord taught by way of example, that the glory of human ambition must be left behind when he said, "*The Lord your God shall you adore and him only shall you serve.*" And when he announced through the prophets that he would choose a people humble and in awe of his words, he introduced the perfect Beatitude as humility of spirit. Therefore he defines those who are inspired as people aware that they are in possession of the heavenly kingdom. Nothing belongs to anyone as being properly one's own, but all have the same things by the gift of a single parent. They have been given the first things needed to come into life and have been supplied with the means to use them.

*"Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted."*

*St. John Chrysostom:* The sorrow [of those who mourn] is of a special kind. Jesus did not designate them simply as sad but as intensely grieving. Therefore he did not say "they that sorrow" but "they that mourn." This Beatitude is designed to draw believers toward a Christian disposition. Those who grieve for someone else - their child or wife or any other lost relation - have no fondness for gain or pleasure during the period of their sorrow. They do not aim at glory. They are not provoked by insults nor led captive by envy nor beset by any other passion. Their grief alone occupies the whole of their attention.

*St Chromatius:* He (Jesus) is speaking of those blessed persons who do not cease to mourn over the iniquity of the world or the offenses of sinners with a pious, duty-bound sentiment. To those who mourn righteously, therefore, they will receive, and not undeservedly, the consolation of eternal rejoicing promised by the Lord.

*"Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth."*

*St. Chromatius:* The meek are those who are gentle, humble and unassuming, simple in faith, and patient in the face of every affront. Imbued with the precepts of the gospel, they imitate the meekness of the Lord, who says, "*Learn from me, for I am meek and humble of heart.*"

*St. Augustine:* "Inherit the earth" ...means the land promised in the psalm: "You are my hope, my portion in the land of the living." It signifies the solidity and stability of a perpetual inheritance. The soul, because of its good disposition, is at rest as though in its own place, like a body on the earth, and is fed with its own food there, like a body from the earth. This is the peaceful life of the saints. The meek are those who submit to wickedness and do not resist evil but overcome evil with good. Let the haughty therefore quarrel and contend for earthly and temporal things

*“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.”*

*Origen of Alexandria:* The Lord was born as wisdom from God for us, and as justice and sanctification and redemption. He is “the bread that comes down from heaven” and “living water,” for which the great David himself thirsted. He said in one of his psalms, “My soul has thirsted for you, even for the living God; when shall I come and appear before the face of God?” “I shall behold your face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied in beholding your glory.” This then, in my estimation, is the true virtue, the good unmingled with any lesser good, that is, God, the virtue that covers the heavens.

*“Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy”*

*St. Chromatius:* By a great number of witnesses indeed, just as many in the Old Testament as the New, we are called by the Lord to show compassion. But as a shortcut to faith we deem enough and more than enough what the Lord himself in the passage at hand expresses with his own voice, saying, “Blessed are the compassionate, for God will have compassion for them.” The Lord of compassion says that the compassionate are blessed. No one can obtain God’s compassion unless that one is also compassionate. In another passage Jesus said, “Be compassionate, just as your Father who is in the heavens is compassionate.”

*“Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.”*

*St. Augustine:* To behold God is the end and purpose of all our loving activity.... Whatever we do, whatever good deeds we perform, whatever we strive to accomplish, whatever we laudably yearn for, whatever we blamelessly desire, we shall no longer be seeking any of those things when we reach the vision of God. Indeed, what would one search for when one has God before one’s eyes? Or what would satisfy one who would not be satisfied with God? Yes, we wish to see God. Who does not have this desire? We strive to see God. We are on fire with the desire of seeing God... Let the eyes be sound, and that light will be full of joy. If your eyes are blind, that light itself will be a torment. Unless your heart is pure, you will not be permitted to see what cannot be seen unless the heart be pure.

*Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God”*

*St. Chromatius:* The peacemakers are those who, standing apart from the stumbling block of disagreement and discord, guard the affection of fraternal love and the peace of the church under the unity of the universal faith. And the Lord in the Gospel, particularly urges his disciples to guard this peace, saying, “I give you my peace; I leave you my peace.”



*“Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when men revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so men persecuted the prophets who were before you.”*

*St. John Chrysostom:* Don’t be discouraged if you don’t hear the kingdom of heaven granted with every single Beatitude. For even if Jesus names the rewards differently, he still puts all of them in the kingdom of heaven. For in fact he says, “Those who mourn will be comforted, and those who show mercy will receive mercy, and those pure in heart will see God, and the peacemakers will be called sons of God.” In all these things the blessed One does nothing but hint at the kingdom of heaven. For people who enjoy these things will certainly reach the kingdom of heaven. So do not suppose that the reward of the kingdom of heaven belongs only to the poor in spirit. It also belongs to those who hunger for justice, and to the meek and to all these blessed others without exception. For he set his blessing upon all these things to keep you from expecting something belonging to this material world.

*St John Chrysostom 347-407*

*St Chromatius ?-407*

*St Augustine 354-430*

*Origen of Alexandria 185-253*

*St Hilary of Arles 403-449*

*St Jerome 342-420*

This gives us wonderful hope which is summed up in the Beatitudes. We are truly blessed as we live out our Christian life in the love, presence and peace of God, and in right relationships with others. This blessing, this joy can sustain us through all adversity.

*Chris Fitton*

## *Just for Families*

What would your Beatitudes be? Maybe some of the ones above use very complicated words for all of you, so perhaps put your eight beatitudes into modern sentences.

Think together what you would say are the eight most important things for you to live by to bring happiness and peace in your lives and in your family.

Maybe adults could think how it will work for them at university or at work.

What changes might this mean to you all for your lives?

# 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.



### Times of crisis

Lord, may we respond by faith to what we hear,  
and use our mouths to share who you are.

May we tell of your good deeds and love,  
and inspire faith in those around us.

Help us to have compassion for those in need,  
and respond in love with acts of generosity

Amen

*Methodist prayer*

*Humble yourselves,  
therefore, under the  
mighty hand of God so  
that at the proper time he  
may exalt you, casting all  
your anxieties on him,  
because he cares for you."*

**1 Peter 5:6-7**

"Your kingdom come, Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven." Jesus was praying that God's grace, mercy, peace, justice, goodness, and love would reign on earth.



# *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

## Serenity Prayer

God grant me the serenity  
To accept the things I cannot change;  
Courage to change the things I can;  
And wisdom to know the difference.  
Living one day at a time;  
Enjoying one moment at a time;  
Accepting hardships as the pathway to  
peace;

Taking, as He did, this sinful world  
As it is, not as I would have it;  
Trusting that He will make all things right  
If I surrender to His Will;  
So that I may be reasonably happy in this  
life  
And supremely happy with Him  
Forever and ever in the next.

*Amen*

# Thank you!

I hope you recognise all these people! Did you know that they got together in October and November to put together the Christingle service and the Crib services so the Christmas message of love, light, joy and peace reached many families in



Steyning and the surrounding area? At both Crib services children and young people acted out the story of the birth of the Son of God and the church was packed at both services, and all rejoiced to see so many families and children join in. Over 500 people attended. The outreach of the Christingle service was a little smaller, about 70 people came to listen, join in and discover through music and poetry read by young people, the uses of light and the meaning of Jesus as the light of the world. They loved their Christingle oranges too!

None of these people do all this very hard work for thanks, but their motivation is to provide the mission and outreach that is at the heart of all that our church does for our Lord. For that and for all this talented group collectively have done, a sincere Thank you, to each one.

## Church Flowers

3 & 10 February Elizabeth Brown

*Thank you, to all the church Flower Team who decorated the church so amazingly well for Christmas. We have received many appreciative thanks.*

*Thanks also to Derek Crush for supplying the tree; to Ben Warner for erecting and subsequently removing the tree; lastly to those who came to dismantle everything.*

*Carol McKechnie*

## 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 ...*

## NEW LIFE ON DREARY DAYS

In the January magazine, I was suggesting we look up to the stars which may help us think about the wonder of God's creation. Now it might help us to also look down. Down beyond our phones! Look at the earth, the soil - what do you see?

We hear people say 'I dread February, the worst month, had enough of winter and all the gloomy grey days!' Yes, it can be gloomy and grey, damp and cold -

BUT

let's look downwards to see a different aspect of this month.

After a mild, albeit wet, winter the bulbs are happily pushing up - new life emerging, signs of spring around the corner. Isn't that wonderful!

We had Primroses in flower in November, one Daffodil on Christmas Day, and now more and more bulbs appearing, and all we had to do was push them into the soil, wait, and watch!

It's not always easy to 'count our blessings' and be grateful, but shall we give it a go? Some of us are lonely, some in pain, disabled. Life can be hard, but God watches over us. We are all an important part of his creation and he loves each and every one of us.

New Life is all around us, but we have to look down to be aware of it.

Then we need to Listen - the birds are beginning to sing again. Look up at the trees - buds are beginning to form - then February won't seem so dreary, we will be noticing the beginning of Spring and the longer days.

When it rains think of the parched lands throughout the world. People, animals, and crops are dying from lack of water.

Here, our reservoirs are recovering, replenishing. When we think of that then February won't seem to be so damp and wet and we may begin to see rain as a blessing. Give thanks for it, and smile!

*Maureen Jones*

# Prayer Points for February

- For all who work for the abolition of slavery in this and other countries
- For all who are sold and used as slaves.
- For a change of heart for those who hate; hate themselves or hate others because of colour, culture or religion.
- For all who celebrate St Valentine's Day; giving thanks for all who show love through acts of kindness and consideration.
- Giving thanks for our pets; their friendship and love
- For the PCC group progressing the appointment of a Family and Children's Worker
- For all who live and work in Maudlin Park, Maudlin Close, Maudlin Lane and Annington Road.
- For all who run B&Bs in Steyning and district.



## 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**

## The Steyning Society

**Friday February 16th at 7pm for 7:30.**      The Steyning Centre  
**Clock Towers of Sussex**  
**by Kevin Newman**



Kevin has published several books, such as Pond Puddings and Sussex Smokies, and his next book, A-Z of Worthing, will be published in 2024.

The doors are open at 19:00 and there will be wine or sparkling elderflower (monetary donations welcome) on arrival.

**Talk will begin at 19:30.**

Free to members and £5 guests.

All very welcome to attend.

# *Christmas Day at Steyning Parish*

## *Church*



These photographs, taken by Jim Lang, show a few of the flower arrangements that adorned Steyning Parish Church for Christmastide. The Crib scene greeted you as you entered the church, with the Magi some distance away, on their journey, waiting for Epiphany to come and visit the new-born baby, Jesus.



# St Cuthman's Prayer



Cuthman and his mother stopped at Steyning because the rope that was tied to the cart broke. Cuthman decided this was a sign from God to stop there and build a church, so he addressed the Lord: "Father Almighty, you have brought my wanderings to an end; now enable me to begin this work. For who am I Lord, that I should build a house to thy name? If I rely on myself, it will be of no avail, but it is you who will assist me. You have given me the desire to be a builder; make up for my lack of skill, and bring the work of building this holy house to its completion."

*ST CUTHMAN'S DAY, THURSDAY 8 FEBRUARY*

## Happiness

I was listening to the radio this morning and there was a very thought provoking talk entitled "What is Happiness?" This made me think a lot about what happiness meant to me and what the actual feeling was like. They also made the comment that, across the world - wherever you may be, and you ask a parent what they would most like for their child, they will say... For them to be happy. What a uniting thought.

The Beatitudes, the theme of this magazine, offer a reminder that hope will come if we quieten ourselves and give our hearts to God's grace and in our lives follow His guidance. I believe that if we can put into practice the principles Jesus has taught us in the Beatitudes, we can experience happiness and peace in our lives - even if those challenges or struggles come along.

The Beatitudes show us a way of living; Jesus set out eight simple statements highlighting how we should strive to live. (See the back page)

To be humble and generous, to show mercy and forgiveness, are perhaps the ones that stand out for me, and the ones I really have to work hard at.

People have embraced these messages throughout the world, and we can find examples in literature, art, films, laws, culture, etc. Happiness and joy and a purpose in life will be found if we can follow this guidance.

*Chris Fitton*





At the start of December our practitioners Jacqui and Phillipa were thrilled to be invited to HRH The Princess of Wales' Together at Christmas carol concert at Westminster Abbey. The concert recognised all those who support children and families in communities across the UK, so it was an honour for all of us at FSW to be represented.



## The Arts Society

A talk by Sarah Lenton

The Steyning Centre

**The Life & Times of Puccini**  
**Monday 12 February 2024 at 10am**

Puccini only completed six major operas, which include Madam Butterfly, Tosca and La Bohème – the shows that keep most opera houses afloat. Puccini was a theatre man, a fine stage director, a man who practically invented the cross-fade dawn effect – and yet left a pile of unfinished works behind him. This lecture explores why such a popular and successful composer had such a baffling career, and how his experience exemplifies the turbulent changes of the 20th century artistic world.

Sarah has spent her working life in the theatre: with the Royal Opera House, English National Opera, Glyndebourne Festival Opera. She writes programme articles, radio and play scripts, gives lectures and broadcasts for BBC Radios 3 and 4.

Free to members; visitors £10 donation

[steyning@theartsociety.org](mailto:steyning@theartsociety.org)

**From 1 February Steyning Parish Church Office**  
**will be Open Tuesday to Friday every week**  
**from 10.00 am until 12.00 pm**  
**01903 813276    [office@steyningparishchurch.org](mailto:office@steyningparishchurch.org)**

# Dr Alec Frank 1939 - 2023

Alexander John Martin Frank was born on February 24 1939, in Cuckfield, West Sussex. He was the middle child of parents Oliver and Doris, and brother to Clem and Andrew. He was brought up in a happy home in Haywards Heath and as a very young boy remembered some of the war years, and soldiers marching near the house.

He attended Sharrow school before joining his elder brother at Kingswood in Bath as a boarder. Alec, as he was always known, really enjoyed life at Kingswood and Bath became a favourite haunt throughout his life. In his school days, he was a keen scout, loved the outdoors and weekend camping trips. He was also a fine tennis player, later captaining Barts medical school. It was as a student there that he met Anne Elizabeth Marr via mutual friends. Six months later they were married. They honeymooned in Ibiza, without their luggage, which had been lost by the airline - much to the chagrin of his new wife.

His happy go lucky nature and ease with people probably helped him pass his practical medical exams, which he was convinced he'd failed, which of course he didn't.

After stints as a houseman in Winchester and Shoreham-by-Sea, he landed a job as a GP in Steyning, settling there to start his career and a family.

He was a brilliant father. Always there, he was hugely supportive and rarely for a man of his generation, emotionally engaged. That made him easy to talk to. Always curious about people, he had an innate ability to listen and was never judgemental. Well, ok, he was a few times, such as when he discovered that we'd drunk his

whisky and replaced it with cold tea.

He was also a big party person. Other than family, there was nothing he liked more than a room full of people, some he didn't know, but soon would - such was his infectious charm. Like his father, he believed in family holidays, often hiring long narrow boats during half terms or at Easter to unwind - gently gliding down a canal at a few miles per hour. In the summer, he'd take us away to the Dordogne, and one special year to Corsica. The less said about a week in the driving Welsh rain of Port Dinorwic the better.

After Alec retired from Steyning Health Centre where he had been very fulfilled as a GP and made very good friends with his colleagues, he and Liz left Steyning and moved to Lewes High Street. Alec spent many years working for the Helen Bamber Foundation and Victims of Torture charity which he found immensely satisfying.

Lewes life suited him and Lizzie well and they were very happy there seeing friends, walking, choir, The Speakers Festival and visiting London. He continued to go to Glydnebourne and the opera whenever he could, the music thrilled him.

Later in life Alec became ill and sadly died of cancer in November 2023 in his lovely flat in Southover, just six months after Lizzie whom he adored for almost 60 years of happily married life. He will be missed by many friends across Sussex and of course his three children.



*Susie Frank*

# Ash Wednesday

This year Ash Wednesday joins with St Valentine on 14 February, and this may be particularly difficult for some. The words that come with St Valentine are perhaps, "I love you" and the words to be heard on Ash Wednesday are "Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return".

Quite a contrast. But both sentences penetrate our hearts and our souls in quite different ways, and what of our responses?

With love we look to our feelings, our futures, our hopes and times to come that are about joy, happiness, togetherness and plans. Ash, the dust our Lord asks us to remember reminds us of our beginnings and our endings, of funerals, sadnesses and the certainty of our mortality.

Yes, we are dust, and to dust we shall return... that is certain, but what runs in continuum is that Jesus came to get His hands dirty with all our humanity, our sins and our failures. The cross of ash that can be placed on your forehead at a service on Ash Wednesday will be made from the Palm Crosses of last year's Palm Sunday, reminding us of many things:

we are invited to examine our hearts and minds;

we are invited to confront our sin, to forgive the wrong doings of others, and to release the hard stones of judgement we hold so tightly in our hands;

we are invited to consider the ash as a cross that is etched into our foreheads for Lent, even though it is visibly easily rubbed away, and it will let those words linger through the next 40 days;

we are invited to remember that we are created from dust to be loved and transformed by God who is the life giving breath, and is the one who can forgive and administer justice.

## **ASH WEDNESDAY SERVICES**

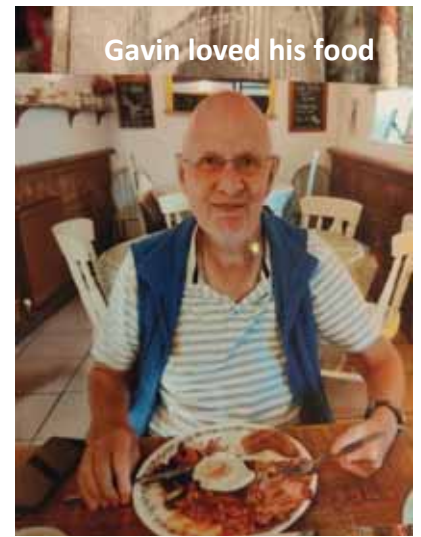
**There will be two Eucharist Services with imposition of ashes, on Wednesday 14 February, Ash Wednesday.**

**11:30am in Steyning Parish Church**

**7pm in Steyning Parish Church**

# Gavin Flowers-Leek

Gavin was born on 5th July, 1948, the exact day the NHS was created, something of which he was inordinately proud and before his 'health blip' had seldom made any use of their services! He was the eldest of five children, three boys and two girls and his sister, Jane, commented that they seemed to have had an amazing childhood, although at the time it just felt normal to them. Post war times were hard for many but most Sundays the family would head off to places like Dovedale in the Peak District, the Clee Hills in Shropshire and more often to Black Rock Sands in North Wales. Halfway, their Dad would cook bacon sandwiches on a small primus stove at the edge of a reservoir and their Mom, a legendary cook, would always supply a big picnic lunch. On board was the obligatory cricket set, kite made from brown paper, canes and glue, Lilos which became so heavy when wet that it was a three-man job to get them back up the beach, knitted swimwear and usually one grandparent! Also a convoy of cars carrying aunts, uncles and cousins .. Fun family times!



Aged 11 Gavin attended Willenhall Comprehensive but struggled at first with the social aspect of such a large school. However, he left with three A levels in Maths, Pure Maths and Physics and headed to Bangor University. Little did he know then



that he would go on to be married three times, have four children, ten grandchildren, a successful career in IT with a number of multi-nationals and live much of his adult life on another continent! Deciding that university life was not for him he left and started working for a local company called Rubery Owen who manufactured car parts. They were just moving their accounts to a computer which was the size of a small house and was cutting edge. His career had began!

During these years Gavin's passions were motorbikes, his guitar, on which he was competently self taught and biggest of all car rallying. Every weekend was spent in every conceivable part of the UK but eventually he decided to move his young family to South Africa.

Gavin takes up the story in his own words:

*"In the mid-90s I took up Ballroom and Latin dancing at a dance cafe outside*



*Johannesburg where they specialised in Argentinean Tango and I became passionate about it. The bonus, of course, was meeting Jackie a few years later, as a dance partner, after having given up on ever having someone else with whom to share my life. I proposed the day I landed back in the UK (February 14) and we had a red wedding in September 2005 at the Church of The Good Shepherd, Shoreham Beach complete with a Red Arrows fly-past and a barbecue in our Worthing front garden afterwards on the best summer day.*

*We taught Argentinean Tango for seven years and performed at the Brighton Festival. I started my own PC Support business and, together with Jackie's Pilates business, where we often swapped clients, we made a good life for ourselves making lots of friends, many of them through church. Jackie dragged me kicking and screaming into having fun, embracing overseas holidays and generally making lots of happy memories. Having my son, Mike, and his family back in the UK was an unexpected pleasure and Jackie's children and their families welcomed me into their lives.*

*Jackie has cajoled me into believing in the benefits of a healthy diet and exercise (not forgetting the sage tea every morning) and more recently put up with some mood swings that have been notable even for me! But mostly my life has given me more fun than you can shake a stick at and somehow I seem to have enjoyed life more, the older I got!"*



I would just like to end by saying that Gavin was an extremely caring and much loved brother, son, dad and husband and a huge thank you to the many people who have sent cards, messages and prayers with not only such an out-pouring of love and support for us but also for the many beautiful words in tribute to their very special connection with Gavin and the very positive impact he has made on so many people's lives.

*Jackie Flowers-Leek*

*May I add a tribute please. As readers of this magazine you also have much to be thankful for, because Gavin was the Editor for many years, and I a proof-reader, but he handed over his job just before Covid, to take away some of the stress and pressure from his life. He continued to quietly help so many other aspects of the church life especially where technology was concerned. The recent church lighting project, led by Jim Lang, was hugely supported by Gavin, and he was, rightly, so proud of this. Thank you Gavin*

# Saint of the month

## LAURENCE, ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY d 619

Laurence was one of Augustine's companions sent by Pope Gregory to evangelise the Anglo Saxons in 596/7. Augustine sent him back to Rome in 599 to report on their work and to deliver some questions to the Pope from Augustine concerning the organisation of the Church in Kent. Laurence brought back the answers in 601.

Augustine chose Laurence as his successor as Archbishop of Canterbury in 604. Laurence continued with the mission finding it more difficult because of British resistance. King Ethelbert's son, Edbald, married his stepmother and refused to give support to the Christian mission in Kent when Laurence condemned the marriage. Laurence's fellow monks, Mellitus and Justus, moved temporarily to Gaul because of the pagan backlash and Laurence planned to follow them. However, according to Bede, he had a vision of St Peter who told him not to be a coward and continue the mission in Kent.

Soon after this, Edbald became a Christian which gave Laurence the freedom to preach the Gospel leading to a more rapid expansion of the Church. After fifteen years as Archbishop, Laurence became ill and died on 2nd February 619. He was buried in the monastery of Ss Peter & Paul (later called St Augustine's) Canterbury which he had consecrated in 613.



St Augustine's Abbey, Canterbury - gravestone of Laurence, second Archbishop of Canterbury

He became regarded as a saint and was given 3 February as his Feast Day.

# *The Legacy of Slavery*

“...THERE IS NO LONGER SLAVE OR FREE” (GALATIANS 3:28)

## THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND AND THE LEGACY OF SLAVERY

When I was a young evangelical in the Christian Union at university, the abolition of slavery was held up as a paradigm for Christian action in politics. As we learnt it, slavery was abolished by Wilberforce and a few evangelical friends in the Clapham Sect. No mention of rebellions by enslaved people, or the economics of the slave trade, or why it took so long to get around to abolishing it.

Of course, at that point, I had not read the book **Capitalism and Slavery** by Eric Williams, a brilliant Caribbean student who later became the first Prime Minister of Trinidad. I did not know what he revealed as early as 1944: “To the very end the Bishop of Exeter retained his 655 slaves, for whom he received over £12,700 compensation in 1834.” (p.43) Note, it was the slave owners, not enslaved people themselves who were compensated. Further: “The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel prohibited Christian instruction to its slaves in Barbados, and branded ‘Society’ on its new slaves to distinguish them from those of the laity...” (p.42)

I had also not yet read Walter Rodney’s book **How Europe Underdeveloped Africa** on the triangular trade – goods to trade for slaves in West Africa; slaves to the Caribbean, Brazil and the Americas; sugar, cotton, tobacco and rum back to the UK and other European countries. I had not understood how vital this trade was in providing the investment capital which made the British industrial revolution possible. For a balanced view of slavery through the ages and how, for example, the Atlantic slave trade was different from slavery in the classical world, James Walvin’s **A Short History of Slavery** is an excellent compilation of contemporary texts with a short and astute commentary.

The story is still being told the old way – for example, in the 2006 film “Amazing Grace” on Wilberforce, with the claim on the DVD cover: “One voice changed the lives of millions”.

However, there are also other voices today. I was pleasantly surprised when I learnt of the decision of the Church Commissioners to set aside a new fund of £100 million for “investment, research and engagement”. Four elements of its work are: 1) impact investment; 2) grant funding “for communities adversely impacted by historic slavery”; 3) further research on the involvement of the Church of England in historic slavery and 4) for the Church Commissioners “as a responsible investor to

address and combat modern slavery and human rights violations". As the Archbishop of Canterbury said: "The full report lays bare the links of the Church Commissioners' predecessor fund with transatlantic chattel slavery." (Quotes from Press release 10.1.23) Chattel slavery is treating enslaved people and their descendants as property which can be bought and sold and exploited as unpaid labour.

The Church Commissioners' predecessor fund was an endowment called Queen Anne's Bounty from 1704. This fund, which had among its purposes supporting clergy and poorer parishes, invested heavily in the South Sea Company, which in turn was linked to the major slaving enterprise the Royal African Company.

Why has it taken so long for the Church of England to see that it was wrong to live off historical investments in the slave trade? There is a long answer and a short answer to that. The long answer would require a detailed study of the economic interests; opposition by those most affected – enslaved people; public pressure; and the economic viability of slavery in different periods of history. Britain abolished her part in the slave trade in 1807 and subsequently the British role in owning slaves in 1834. But only now, nearly 200 years later, has this seemed to be a problem for the Church Commissioners – and the Church of England.

Still, better late than never and this is a serious piece of research work and the commitment of a major sum of money. It does raise questions about how ethical awareness of issues changes – we do not have to keep slaves just because they did in Old Testament and New Testament times. Nor do we have to carry on benefitting from the investment in slavery.

The short answer is that of Martin Luther King, Nobel Prize laureate and great campaigner for social justice: "The church should be a headlight, not a taillight." Let us hope that the Church Commissioners' initiative is widely understood and marks both a true change of heart and support for those who are committed to positive action.

*Roger Williamson*

## Resources

<https://www.churchofengland.org/about/leadership-and-governance/church-commissioners-england/who-we-are/church-commissioners-links> - a helpful short film on the Church Commissioners, this research and what they are seeking to do through it. They have also provided a set of Frequently Asked Questions [https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2023-03/church-commissioners-research-into-historic-links-to-transatlantic-slavery-website-faq\\_0.pdf](https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2023-03/church-commissioners-research-into-historic-links-to-transatlantic-slavery-website-faq_0.pdf)

The 10.1.23 Press Release and a link to the Full Report can be found here.

<https://www.churchofengland.org/media-and-news/press-releases/church-commissioners-publishes-full-report-historic-links> It is well worth reading the press release first as the full report is a detailed research report.



# *“...hear them read ...” Part 2*

## THE EPISTLES

Every Sunday we are offered at least four readings to choose from, nowadays in a three-year cycle. In the January magazine I was thinking about the Gospel, now I turn to the other New Testament readings, which used to be called the Epistle because mostly we read from Paul's letters to the churches. We have been asked by our diocese to pay special attention to the New Testament all this year, so I'll try to obey!

This is only about the Sundays in “Ordinary Time”, that is when we are not caught up in the “Big” festival seasons, when the readings are chosen to fit in with the festival. In Ordinary Time we read through an epistle, or most of it, and it's not supposed to fit the Gospel theme, though sometimes it does, but I think it's just chance not on purpose.

However, when we read through an epistle it's important to remember it's not a formal statement of church belief as from a council or a “summit”, but simply what the writer thought mattered at the time for the people he was writing to. In the old ritual – when I was young! – the epistle was always read facing East because it was thought to be directed at the Bishop as good advice on how to guide and monitor his church. Epistles are sort of case histories about particular situations in a local church, they are maintenance and repair manuals not construction kits.

Paul gets most attention because he wrote more than anyone else and the New Testament puts his letters in order of length, and generally he is trying to sort out problems in the church communities he founded. “To the Romans” is the exception because he had not yet been there and he wanted to show he was “respectable” so that they would welcome him when he arrives and not think he was interfering – which of course he was! Look up Acts 28 v 15. On the whole I think the early Christians seem to have been a right awkward lot – but then what's new?

The other epistles are a mixed bunch. James is full of good sense; when I was a junior curate my churchwarden gave me much good advice, including “if ever you are stuck for a sermon read a chapter of James from the pulpit; if you read a modern translation no-one will recognise it and they'll think you've done well!”

John is gentle and kind. Peter is a baptism sermon with a bit at the end to turn it into a letter to support a persecuted church; the mood changes, even in English, at

chapter 4 verse 12. Hebrews is a (long!) sermon about the Eucharist with a top and tail to turn it into a letter.

And I suppose we ought to know there are other letters which didn't make it into the New Testament. It would be good if they gave us one or two of them to read in our three-year cycle – there should be room now for the reserve team to play.

And then there's Revelation which starts off with a brief comment about the state of play in the 7 churches of Asia Minor and then swamps us in a vision of the last days. Better to enjoy it than try to untangle it bit by bit; it's a dream not a coded message.

Senex

## Before



*Huge thanks go to Roger Brown and Simon Knowles for their love, care and skills repairing this bench.*

## After



*Please sit and enjoy being in the churchyard. It is on the path by the entrance to Gatewick, and is very comfy. The next job is to build up the ground level under the seat.*

## Anagram for February

**The anagram for this month is:**

**CUTHMANTIDE**

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

*An eleven letter word should give lots of fun to find those elusive eight or nine letter words.*

*GOOD LUCK, AND HAVE FUN!!*

# South Sudan

It is with trepidation that I write about South Sudan as I am sure you will know far more about the country than I, but my thoughts have turned to the people there as this month we are asked to think and pray for those caught in slavery and especially where there is child abuse.

I know that Sudan and South Sudan have hit the news headlines for various reasons, on and off throughout my life time, mainly because of conflicts. Conflicts also bring cease fire agreements, but none had any great effect until a Comprehensive Peace Agreement was made in 2005 which promised South Sudan that a referendum on independence would be held in six years time. This actually happened in 2011 with the result that South Sudan clearly wished to become completely independent.

The River Nile is the dominant physical feature of South Sudan, with all rivers and streams draining into the Nile. The climate is tropical with wet and dry seasons and during the dry season winds blow across the plains and will bring no rain. The Southern area tends to have less rain than the rest of the country. The wild life is wonderful and numerous, both bird life and animals, reptiles and insects, with a few beautiful and well-kept National Parks and reserves. English is the language that is taught in schools and is the official working language.

There are, however, a few worrying trends in this country. About two-fifths of the population are under 15 years old; life expectancy is much lower than the world average, and that of neighbouring countries; it is among the poorest and least developed countries in the world; only a small proportion of the population has access to electricity. All these trends require our prayers, but this is the one that caught my eye:

South Sudan has the worlds fifth highest prevalence of child marriage and about a third of the girls in the country become pregnant before turning 15. *UNICEF*

When girls become pregnant before their bodies are ready, they often suffer complications during pregnancy and childbirth, endangering both mother and child.

- Pray for this harmful practice of child marriage to end.
- Pray for healing for all who have suffered physical and mental abuse.
- Pray that the girls in this country become valued as God values them.

# Recipe for February

## GLUTEN-FREE BREAD

When I became gluten-free some years ago I found it difficult to buy any nice bread. So after researching many recipes, I decided to make my own version which I thought you might like to try.

Makes 2 loaves and 6 rolls

*Roger and Jill Brown*

### Ingredients:

- 3 medium eggs, separated
- 7 fl oz vegetable oil
- 1pt milk
- 1.5 lb gluten free bread flour
- 2 sachets dried yeast
- 3 tsp salt
- 1 1/2 tsp Xanthum gum
- 3 tbsp caster sugar



### Method

Grease and line loaf tins, bottom and sides. Grease 6 sections in a muffin tray.  
Oven temp. 140°C/ fan 120°C/ gas 1.

1. In a large mixing bowl whisk the egg whites until stiff. Add yolks, and whisk gently.
2. Add the yeast, salt, Xanthum gum and caster sugar. Whisk to combine.
3. Add half the sieved flour and the milk. Whisk to mix.
4. Add the vegetable oil and the rest of the flour. As it starts to get too stiff to whisk, use a large spoon. Mix thoroughly.
5. You can then add Sunflower or any other seeds. About 2 tbsp.
6. Fill 6 sections of the muffin tin, then spoon all the rest evenly between the 2 loaf tins, pushing the mix into the corners. Then level off.
7. Cover with an oiled plastic bag to prevent the top drying out, and put in a warm place to rise for 1-1.5 hrs
8. Cook the rolls for 20-25 mins until brown. Then remove from tin and put on cooling rack.
9. Cook the bread for 1 hour, then remove from tin and put on cooling rack.

It keeps fresh for about 4 days, so keep some out and freeze the rest.



Once upon a time, the British people were divided. Impassioned debates raged throughout the land, truth and common sense became distorted, and the public rose up and demanded an answer. How did the toad get inside that rock?

In 1898, two burly workmen in a chalk quarry near Lewes cracked open a hollow chunk of flint. The solid rock, formed 85 million years ago, split open to reveal an airtight cavity at its core. To the quarrymen's amazement, entombed within the ancient flint was a dead toad.



'Toad-in-the-hole' hysteria soon hit the headlines. It seemed like every month the newspapers reported how someone had split open a rock and found a toad inside. Some of these toads had already croaked but others would inexplicably still be alive and hopping. The Victorian world was thrown into theological and philosophical panic. Clergymen preached that the Creator had placed the eternal amphibians in rocks at the dawn of time. Subscribers to Darwin's new theory of evolution were perplexed. Charles Dickens wrote of his bewilderment, while others believed it was simply sorcery. Scientists began burying living toads in sealed boxes to investigate the unfortunate animal's longevity.

The Lewes toad of 1898 is the world's only surviving artefact of the entombed toad craze. It now resides in Brighton's incredible Booth Museum of Natural History – one of my favourite places in the whole world. Amongst the many awe-inspiring exhibits at The Booth, you'll find a special cabinet dedicated to curiosities. In it, lying reverentially on a bed of maroon felt, there is 'Probably the most famous toad in the world'. Admittedly when it comes to world-famous toads it's not a particularly crowded field, with only Toad of Toad Hall to contest the title. Alongside the original oval of cleft flint sits the shrivelled body of the infamous amphibian. The whole surreal exhibit is like a Kinder Surprise designed by Hieronymus Bosch.



But this cracked up flint isn't all it's cracked up to be. The Lewes toad was originally presented to the Brighton and Hove Natural History and Philosophical Society by Charles Dawson. That's the same Charles Dawson who would soon be sticking some Orangutan teeth on a human skull and declaring he had discovered the 'missing link' at Piltdown, near Uckfield. In 1953, Dawson would be unmasked as a fraudster and the

whole 'toad-in-the-hole' phenomenon would come crashing down, dismissed as poppycock.

*Michael Blencowe*



## *The Beatitudes*

**The Beatitudes are found in Matthew 5:3-12 (compare Luke 6:20-23):**

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they will be filled.

Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.

Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God.

Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. Rejoice and be glad because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

*(NIV)*