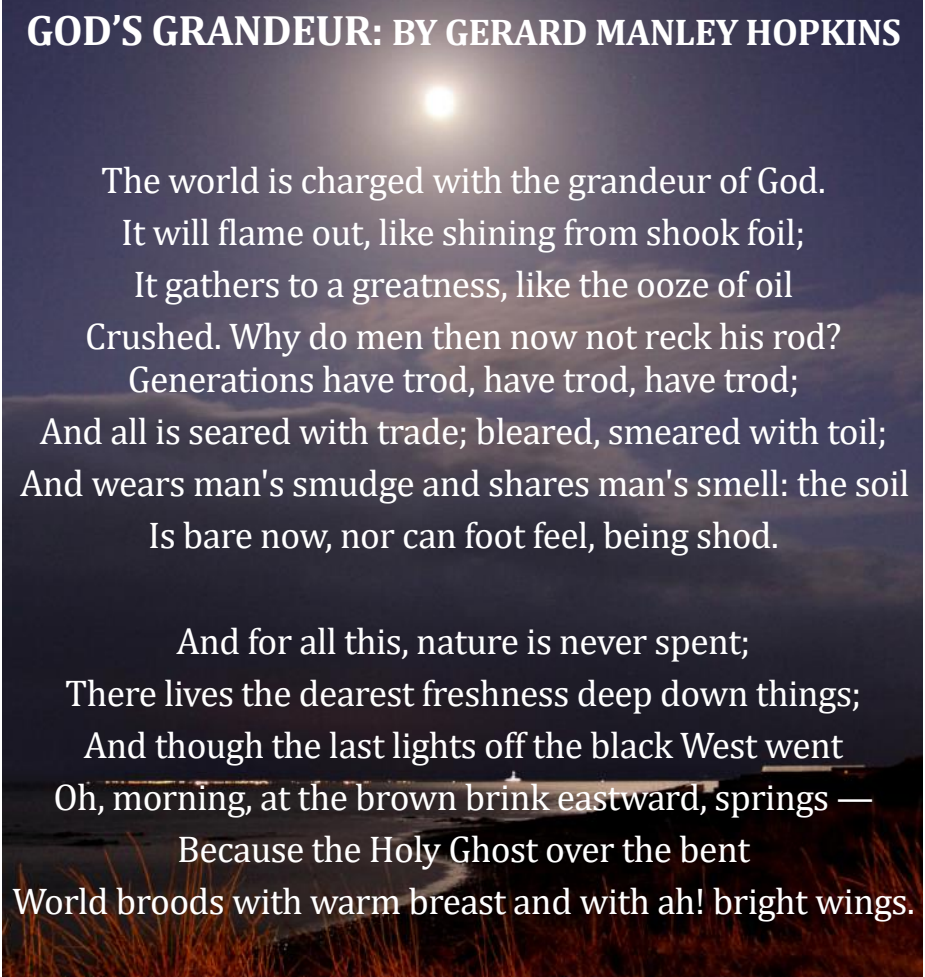


## **GOD'S GRANDEUR: BY GERARD MANLEY HOPKINS**



The world is charged with the grandeur of God.  
It will flame out, like shining from shook foil;  
It gathers to a greatness, like the ooze of oil  
Crushed. Why do men then now not reckon his rod?  
Generations have trod, have trod, have trod;  
And all is seared with trade; bleared, smeared with toil;  
And wears man's smudge and shares man's smell: the soil  
Is bare now, nor can foot feel, being shod.

And for all this, nature is never spent;  
There lives the dearest freshness deep down things;  
And though the last lights off the black West went  
Oh, morning, at the brown brink eastward, springs —  
Because the Holy Ghost over the bent  
World broods with warm breast and with ah! bright wings.

### **SERVING THE PARISHES OF**

**ALL SAINTS'**  
Baschurch

**HOLY TRINITY**  
Weston Lullingfields

**ST MARY'S**  
Hordley

**50p**  
Per issue



**OPEN GARDEN**  
**at Broome Farm,**  
**Tetchill,**  
**SY12 9BA**  
**On Sunday**  
**2nd June**  
**from 1pm to 5pm**

*By kind invitation of John Willis*

Admission £5 in aid of Shropshire Historic Churches Trust and St Mary's Church Hordley

Tea and Cake, Plants

Visit also the 11th Century St Mary's Church (SY12 9BB)

## **Editorial**

Welcome, dear Readers, to the May 2024 issue of Church Family News. Our front cover this month features a poem by Gerard Manley Hopkins, celebrating the regenerative power of the creator spirit working in nature, of which there is evidence around us even in this wettest and chilliest of springs (the background picture is of moonlight over a bay in east Scotland). In her message this month (p.4), Linda Cox reminds of the work of the Holy Spirit, at the beginning of creation, in human life and in the birth of the church at Pentecost.

Elsewhere, read about slow worms (p. 12), the struggles of farmers are having this year even to sow crops (p. 19), the successful Ukrainian Evening at All Saints (p. 11), connecting churches with the wider community (p. 13) and an article by Anita Weeks, focusing on the Buddhist Festival of Vesak (p. 21). Happy reading!

*Roger Paul (Editor)*

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## SUBMISSIONS FOR MAGAZINE

Please send your stories, pictures or notices for the next issue by

**15th May 2024**

to the CFN email address:

**churchfamilynews.bwlh@btinternet.com**

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## FROM THE CLERGY

Dear Friends,

This month sees us celebrating several festivals: Ascension Day when Jesus returns to heaven. Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit descends on those gathered in Jerusalem, and Trinity Sunday, when we celebrate the mystery that is the Holy Trinity: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. It's a busy month, but many of these festivals seem to pass people by. This month I want to write about Pentecost and the coming of the Holy Spirit.

I'm hoping by the time you read this that we may be seeing a little more sunshine and feeling some warmth in it. It is remarkable the difference sunshine makes to us as people, let alone the rest of creation. When the sun shines people's heads tend to raise, you see more smiles on faces, and they seem less stressed and more enthusiastic about life. Why is that? There may be many reasons but one might be because light gives us energy. It is well known that our bodies need vitamin D especially our bones and muscles and that a lack of it can affect our health. The sun gives us that vitamin D and in turn gives us energy. You might say the sun 'fires us up'.

In the same way our spiritual lives need that spark, we need 'setting on fire for God,' metaphorically speaking that is. Jesus promised after ascending to heaven that he would not leave us alone, that he would send someone to be with us always. That someone was the Holy Spirit, the third person of the Trinity. God's Spirit was present at the time of creation, Genesis tells us 'The Spirit hovered over the water'. It is God's Spirit that equips us, that energises us for action.

On the Day of Pentecost when Jesus' followers were gathered in Jerusalem there came the sound of a mighty wind and tongues of fire rested on each of them and they were filled with the Holy Spirit. We are not told what that felt like, maybe it felt like an almighty burst of energy that had them awake, alert and ready to go. What we are told is that they

began to speak in other tongues and all those who were gathered could hear them speak in their own language.

Peter the disciple who denied knowing Jesus not once, but three times, stood up to speak about repentance and the Good News of Christ. People heard and believed and 3,000 people were added to the Church that day.

It would be amazing if that was to happen in our churches and our communities, it has been known in the past and there is no reason why it shouldn't now. At our Baptism and Confirmation, we pray for the Holy Spirit to come and fill us and as Christians we should be praying for that all the time, because we constantly need the Holy Spirit to fill and equip us for God's work. Whatever we do in God's name we do not do in our own strength but in God's and it is the Holy Spirit that gives us strength and wisdom.

One gentleman a few years ago told me how he experienced the Holy Spirit at his confirmation service. He said he was 'tingling' all over and felt warm and when he looked at the Bishop there was a glow around her. Others have likened it to the 'Ready Brek' advert. They felt on fire and glowing. The Holy Spirit is powerful and is our power supply enabling us to do what God's calls us to do.

As churches, we are being called to grow our churches, for them to reflect the diversity of our communities. We need help to do that, the help of the Holy Spirit.

When we are set on 'fire' for God amazing things happen.

As we celebrate the coming of the Holy Spirit this Pentecost let us pray for us to be filled anew and to be set on fire for God. May we be enthused and energised to go out with confidence and help others come to know the God who created us and loves us.

*Linda*

## FROM THE REGISTERS

### Baptisms

On Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> March 2024  
at All Saints' Baschurch  
**Ieuan Rhodri Parkinson Guy**

### Funerals

Monday 8<sup>th</sup> April 2024  
at All Saints' Baschurch  
**Leonard Gough** aged 93 years

Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> April 2024  
at All Saints' Baschurch  
**William 'Bill' Price** aged 103 years

Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2024  
at Emstrey Crematorium  
**Enid Whiston** aged 92 years

Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> April 2024  
at Emstry Crematorium  
**John Powell** aged 79 years.

### Burial of Ashes

Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> April 2024  
at Holy Trinity, Weston Lullingfields  
**Meryl Dovaston**

**Easter Flowers**  
at Weston Lullingfield  
*Photo by John Russell*



## CONFIRMATION 2024

The Confirmation Service this year for Ellesmere Deanery is booked for Sunday October 20<sup>th</sup> at 4pm in All Saints' Baschurch.

We will be running confirmation classes for adults and young people from June onwards. The exact starting date, time and place, will be decided once we know who wishes to take part in these sessions.

If this is something you are thinking about then please get in touch with the Rector sooner rather than later for a conversation.

[linda@allsaintsbaschurch.com](mailto:linda@allsaintsbaschurch.com)

01939 260305

# HORDLEY NEWS

## **April Showers!**

At last, in the middle of April, the weather shows some signs of improving. After such a wet and gloomy winter, it is almost a surprise to see how the hedges, trees and gardens are returning to life and colour, as if things were normal! The fields, however, remain in such a waterlogged condition that one feels upset for the farmers who are unable to get on with their seasonal work.

We thought that March was wet, but by now, on the 15<sup>th</sup> April, the rainfall this month is more than that recorded in Ellesmere during the whole of March (88 mm as opposed to 82 mm).

## **Church Organ**

In church we are enjoying hearing the organ on a regular monthly basis, and are grateful to Paul West for the music he provides.

## **Open Garden at Broome Farm Sunday 2nd June**

The date that is much in the mind of at least one of our churchwardens is Sunday June 2<sup>nd</sup> when Broome Farm Garden will be open in aid of the Shropshire Historic Churches Trust and St Mary's. Please come and invite your friends.

Members of the congregation are encouraged to help in providing the many necessary cakes for the teas and also any spare plants for sale on the stall.

Also open will be the church where Meryl Batho's delightful paintings will be displayed, alongside the communion-rail kneelers which were stitched using her designs. There will also be an information leaflet describing other features of this approximately 900 year-old building (see notice on the inside front cover (p. 2)).

## **Lottery Winner**

The winner of the Hordley Lottery in April was Mr Edward Jones with number 33.

## BASCHURCH NEWS

### CHILDREN'S SOCIETY HOME COLLECTION BOXES



**The  
Children's  
Society**

The Children's Society continues to support children and young people through their most serious life challenges. The Society works with young people who have suffered years of abuse, who

have run away from home or are struggling with mental health issues; looks out for young carers and those who are at risk of being groomed by criminal groups; and helps young refugees who have no one else to turn to in this country.

One of its important funding streams is from the generous donations of people who have Children's Society Home Collection Boxes, a scheme which has been going almost from the founding of the Society over a hundred years ago. We are very grateful to **Pauline Nelson** for organising the Children's Society Home Collection Boxes at All Saints over recent years. Pauline has now handed over this important role to **Robina Smith**.

It's approaching that time of year when the proceeds of the Home Collection Boxes are collected together. If you have a Collection Box at home, please empty the contents into a sturdy envelope clearly marked with your name, and pass it on to Robina. Envelopes may be given to her at the Sunday morning services at All Saints up to 23<sup>rd</sup> June, or dropped in to her home address at Holly Grove, Church Lane, Baschurch.

If you need any information about the Children's Society Home Collection Boxes or would like to join the scheme, and be a Home Collection Box donor, please contact **Robina on 07889 178165**.

Thank you again to Pauline and all those who support the Children's Society in any way.



## CHRISTIAN AID WEEK 12-18 MAY 2024



For over 75 years Christian Aid has sought to eradicate poverty around the world and offer assistance in humanitarian emergencies. Today they are supporting families in all the troubled areas of our world.

All Saints Church has long supported their work and this year during Christian Aid week invites members of the congregation to donate, if they are able. **Collection envelopes will be in the pews at all services during the week 12-18 May** and any money donated used to further the invaluable work of the charity.

## BASCHURCH GARDEN TRAIL

**SUNDAY 23 JUNE 2024, 2-5 PM**



We're happy to announce that a Baschurch Garden Trail will take place in Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> June from 2-5 pm. Registration will be at All Saint's church where you pick up a map and pay £5 registration fee that will go to Shropshire Mental Health Support charity.

Each garden is completely different and will be walking distance from the church where there will be plants for sale at various gardens. Tea, coffee & cake can be enjoyed back at All Saint's church after garden trail is completed. We hope you can come and join us on this fabulous adventure!

## ALL SAINTS "100 CLUB" WINNERS

**May 2024** No 110 Sophie Gasser No 127 Ian Morton  
No 139 Helen Edwards

# All Saints' Programme of Future Social Events

Event	Dates	Venue
Open Garden Event	23rd June	All Saints Church
Church Fete	6th July - 12:00 until 4:00pm	Village Green
Joint Harvest Evening Meal	28th September - 6pm	Weston Lullingfields Village Hall
RBL Orthopedic Male Voice Choir and Of One Accord	19th October	All Saints Church
Quiz night	October TBC	TBC
Christmas Social	TBC	TBC
Christmas Tree Festival	30th November & 1st December	All Saints Church

**Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> May**

## Trinity Sunday

The day when we celebrate the three Persons of God:

Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

It is the Patronal Festival for

**Holy Trinity Church, Weston Lullingfields**

Come and help us celebrate with a 'Songs of Praise'  
and refreshments

**9.30am at Holy Trinity Church**

All are welcome



## UKRAINE EVENING

On 16 March a fundraising evening was held at All Saints Church. Members of Shropshire Supports Ukraine worked very hard to make the event informative and entertaining.

Emotions ranged from sadness, listening to the human stories of the people still there, watching video footage of what their lives are like now, to pleasure watching a mother (Oksana) and daughter (Maria) dance traditional dances and a young mother (Tonia) sing beautifully some Ukrainian songs about the troubles they are facing. All very moving.

Ukrainian crafts were on display and a delicious Ukrainian hot buffet, plus desserts, was available for everyone to enjoy.

A sum of £2,000 was raised thanks to all who attended plus donations/gifts. Information regarding Shropshire Supports Ukraine and their events/work can be found on Facebook.



*There are more pictures to see on inside front page (p. 2)*



## Seeking Slowworms

There's often a secret to be found within a churchyard or cemetery, slowworms may be living there, rarely seen by visitors as they tend to hide within the vegetation and don't emerge to bask in the sun like other reptiles. Slowworms are not particularly

slow and they are not worms, neither are they snakes. They are actually lizards without legs and, when warmed up and active can be pretty nippy! Slowworms hunt in hidden places such as compost heaps, thick vegetation at the base of a wall or hedge and within piles of logs or stones. They catch slower moving prey like slugs and can 'drop' their tails to escape predators, a characteristic of all lizards.

May is a good time to look for them and the easiest way to do this is to put out some pieces of old roofing material, about 50cm square. You can use corrugated tin, but this can have sharp edges, onduline is better and a supplier may give you some offcuts for free. Following a conversation with those who manage the site, place a few of these squares in areas that catch the morning sun and are away from paths, perhaps in rougher vegetation such as tussocky grass. Slowworms will go under the squares to warm up in the mornings before going out to hunt and may be there at any time of day in colder weather.

Check the squares about once a week, lifting one side carefully and looking underneath. Try and check between 8:00 and 10:00am for best results as this is when the animals are warming up. You may be rewarded by a slowworm and also many other creatures such as worms, beetles or woodlice. Why not take a quick picture as the square is lifted, before too much scurries or slithers off! It may take animals a while to find the squares so be patient, having more squares gives a better chance of seeing slowworms.



Churchyards and cemeteries are havens for reptiles and also amphibians such as frogs, toads and newts and we're collecting information to better understand just how important they are for these animals. Please take a photo using the iNaturalist app or let us know what you've seen via email if you don't use iNaturalist. You can keep checking for slowworms from April or May through to September. Why not include a peep under the square as part of a Churches Count on Nature event during Love Your Burial Ground week - 8<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> June.

All the best, Harriet

*Diocesan Churchyard Environmental Advisor*, [harriet@cfga.org.uk](mailto:harriet@cfga.org.uk),  
[www.caringforgodsacre.org.uk](http://www.caringforgodsacre.org.uk) - individuals and groups in the diocese receive 20% members discount on all CfGA materials. Use the discount code **diomem22**



## **Pioneering Parishes**

### **PIONEERING PARISHES—CREATIVELY CONNECTING CHURCH AND COMMU- NITY**

Maybe you have a great idea for how your parish church could connect more with its local community, but you don't know how to make this vision a reality? Maybe you'd love to be more focused on mission, but your church seems to be using up all their energy on supporting day-to-day ministry? Or maybe you find the term 'pioneering' rather mysterious and question its relevance to parish life?

The Pioneering Parishes programme enables participants with questions just like these to discover how to become more outward looking, moving energy from inside the church to mission within our parish communities. Through involvement in a series of webinars and learning spaces, connection and conversation with parishioners, pioneers and priests will help explore how pioneering is integral to parish life. Clergy and congregation members will be inspired and

equipped to shift church culture to enable the cure of souls to be extended into all the parish.

Pioneering Parishes is a project run through the Church Mission Society (CMS) and led by a team that deeply understands and inhabits both pioneering and parish ministry. Lichfield Diocese is excited to be partnering with Pioneering Parishes from April 2024 to facilitate the delivery of on-line webinars and in-house training, supporting the development of fresh expressions and new worshipping communities across city, urban and rural settings.

The Pioneering Parishes team facilitates a series of 90-minute webinars for individuals from parishes or, even better, groups can sign up and explore ideas and learning together. One story describes how churches in Cosham, Portsmouth, set up a community larder; the Vicar, Revd Amy Webb saying of Pioneering Parishes “the training ... helped us to develop a ‘let’s give it a go’ attitude and challenged us to set about changing the culture of our church, which over time had become very inward looking.

“This then meant that during the pandemic, when a secular charity asked us if we would be willing to set up and run a food pantry in a local park, we felt able to say yes. And we said ‘yes’ without us having any financial or human resources to speak of, or any firm plan as to how this would be possible.

“Step by step we worked it out. This was our opportunity to be the body of Christ out in our community, to share the love of God, build relationships and see what might develop from that’.”

For more stories and information about the First Steps introductory Course, go to the Pioneering Parishes website <https://churchmissionsociety.org/stories/feeding-hearts-and-souls-as-well-as-tummies/>.

*Catherine Matlock (Diocesan Pioneer Mission Enabler)*

# SERVICES IN MAY 2024

## **Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> May – 6<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter**

**8am** – **NO** service – apologies for this

**9.30am** Worship for All – Holy Trinity, Weston Lullingfields

**11am** Common Worship Holy Communion – All Saints' Baschurch

**Readings:** Acts 10:44-end & John 15:9-17

## **Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> May**

**Deanery Ascension Day Service** – St Matthew's Criftings **7.30pm**

## **Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> May – 7<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter**

**9.15am** Worship for All – St Mary's Hordley

**11am** CW Holy Communion – All Saints' Baschurch

**6.30pm** Contemporary Service – All Saints' Baschurch

**Readings:** Acts 1:15-17, 21-end & John 17:6-19

## **Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> May – Pentecost**

**8am** BCP Holy Communion (said service) - All Saints' Baschurch

**9.30am** CW Holy Communion – Holy Trinity, Weston Lullingfields

**11am** CW Holy Communion – All Saints' Baschurch

**Readings:** Acts 2:1-21 & John 15:26-27; 16:4b-15

## **Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> May – Trinity Sunday**

**9.15am** CW Holy Communion – St Mary's Hordley

**9.30am** Patronal Festival 'Songs of Praise' - Holy Trinity,  
Weston Lullingfields

**11am** CW Holy Communion – All Saints' Baschurch

**4pm** Forest Church – All Saints' Baschurch

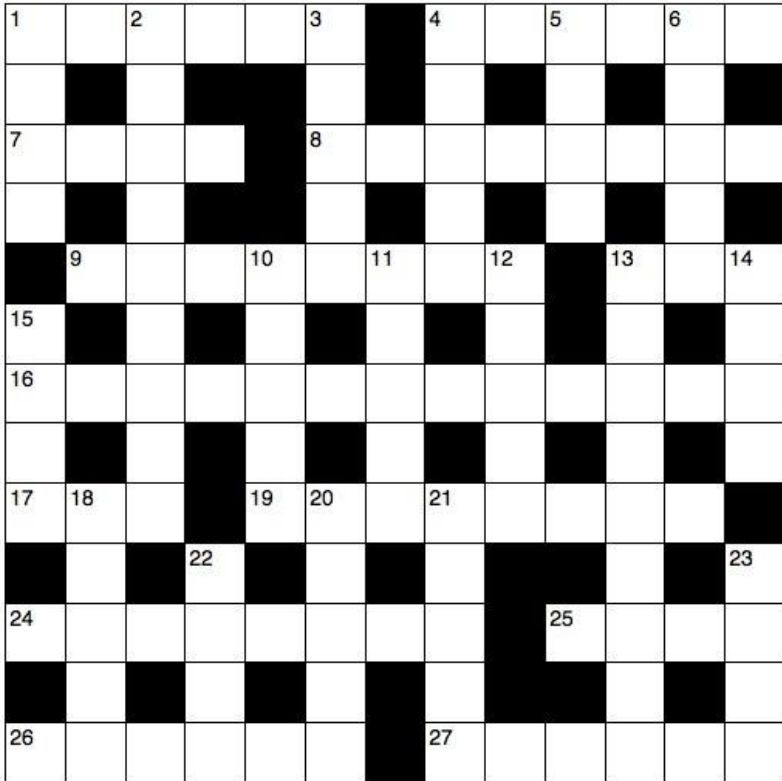
**Readings:** Isaiah 6:1-8 & Romans 8:12-17 & John 3:1-17

## DAILY NEW TESTAMENT READINGS IN MAY

<b>DAT</b>	<b>READING</b>	<b>DATE</b>	<b>READING</b>
<b>1</b>	James 1:1 - 12	<b>17</b>	Luke 8:40-end
<b>2</b>	Luke 5:27 - end	<b>18</b>	Luke 9:1-17
<b>3</b>	Luke 6:1 - 11	<b>19</b>	1 Corinthians 12:4-13
<b>4</b>	Luke 6: 12 - 26	<b>20</b>	Luke 9:18-27
<b>5</b>	John 21:1-1	<b>21</b>	Luke 9:28-36
<b>6</b>	Luke 6:27-38	<b>22</b>	Luke 9:37-50
<b>7</b>	Luke 6:39-end	<b>23</b>	Luke 9:51-end
<b>8</b>	Luke 7:1-10	<b>24</b>	Luke 10:1-16
<b>9</b>	Hebrews 7:26-end	<b>25</b>	Luke 10:17-24
<b>10</b>	Luke 7: 11-17	<b>26</b>	2 Corinthians 13:11-
<b>11</b>	Luke 7:18-35	<b>27</b>	Luke 10:25-37
<b>12</b>	Revelation 14:1-13	<b>28</b>	Luke 10:38-end
<b>13</b>	Luke 7:36-end	<b>29</b>	Luke 11:1-13
<b>14</b>	Acts 2:37-end	<b>30</b>	Luke 11:14-28
<b>15</b>	Luke 8:16-25	<b>31</b>	Mark3:31-end
<b>16</b>	Luke 8:26-39		



# CROSSWORD



## Crossword Clues (answers on page 22)

### Across

- 1 One who owes money, goods or services (Isaiah 24:2) (6)
- 4 'A good measure, pressed down, — together and running over' (Luke 6:38) (6)
- 7 Continuous dull pain (Proverbs 14:13) (4)
- 8 This bread contains yeast (Amos 4:5) (8)
- 9 'But take heart! I have — the world' (John 16:33) (8)
- 13 And the rest (abbrev.) (3)
- 16 What Paul was accused of by Tertullus, the high priest's lawyer, in his trial before Felix (Acts 24:5) (13)

- 17 Rap (anag.) (3)  
 19 Founder of the Jesuits in 1534 (8)  
 24 'For where your — is, there your heart will be also' (Luke 12:34) (8)  
 25 The first word written on the wall during King Belshazzar's great banquet (Daniel 5:25) (4)  
 26 'We all, like sheep, have gone — ' (Isaiah 53:6) (6)  
 27 One was given in honour of Jesus in Bethany (John 12:2) (6)

### **Down**

- 1 'The blind receive sight, the lame walk, the — hear, the dead are raised' (Luke 7:22) (4)  
 2 Conduct (Colossians 1:21) (9)  
 3 In the Catholic and Orthodox traditions, the body of a saint or his belongings, venerated as holy (5)  
 4 'Like a — of locusts men pounce on it' (Isaiah 33:4) (5)  
 5 Very old (Genesis 44:20) (4)  
 6 In Calvinist theology, one who is predestined by God to receive salvation (5)  
 10 How Nicodemus addressed Jesus when he visited him one night (John 3:2) (5)  
 11 Sea (Psalm 148:7) (5)  
 12 'I will — you, my God the King; I will praise your name for ever and ever' (Psalm 145:1) (5)  
 13 One of the groups of philosophers that Paul met in Athens, who disagreed with his teaching about the resurrection (Acts 17:18) (9)  
 14 Barred enclosure (Ezekiel 19:9) (4)  
 15 'Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in — with the Spirit' (Galatians 5:25) (4)  
 18 Cares (anag.) (5)  
 20 Garish (Ezekiel 16:16) (5)  
 21 'So God said to Noah, "I am going to put — — to all people"' (Genesis 6:13) (2,3)  
 22 Just (2 Corinthians 6:13) (4)  
 23 'The — of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge' (Proverbs 1:7) (4)

## ITS RAINING, ITS POURING

Here is a revised edition of a popular springtime hymn, sent in by Edward Jones, churchwarden at Hordley. Sing it to the well known tune, *Wir Pflugen*.

We plough the fields and drill  
the good seed in the ground  
but its all wet and soggy,  
it rots and can't be found.  
It seems to keep on raining  
and we're all quite depressed,  
but we all keep on smiling  
and count ourselves as blest.



*All good gifts around us are sent from heaven above,  
so thank the Lord, O thank the Lord, for rain and shine and love.*



It keeps raining in the springtime,  
and the dancing daffodil  
counts every ray of sunshine  
to help its life fulfill.  
The birds all in the tree tops  
tweeting loud and trill  
watch black clouds roll over,  
raining lots more still.

The butterflies and insects  
think, "When will the sun shine through,  
we need our dry umbrellas  
to seek the plants we chew."  
Well now the sun has come out  
just for a day or two,  
and we are all excited  
as lots of work we do.



# PICTURE PARABLE

The tale of  
the  
Mustard  
Seed  
& the tale of the  
Yeast

JESUS OFTEN TOLD  
STORIES WITH  
HIDDEN MEANINGS



SOME OF HIS STORIES WERE  
VERY SHORT, BUT THEY MEANT  
A GREAT DEAL

ONCE JESUS EXPLAINED HOW  
THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN  
WAS LIKE A MUSTARD SEED

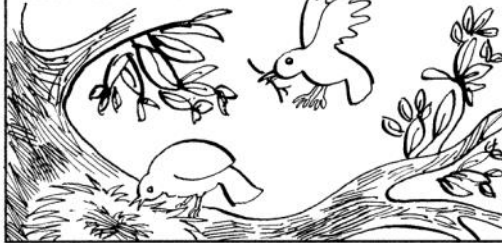


IT IS ONE OF THE SMALLEST  
OF SEEDS...



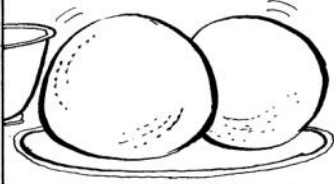
BUT WHEN IT GROWS UP IT IS  
THE BIGGEST OF ALL PLANTS

IT BECOMES A TREE, SO THAT BIRDS COME AND MAKE  
THEIR NESTS IN THE BRANCHES



JESUS ALSO EXPLAINED THAT THE  
KINGDOM OF HEAVEN IS LIKE YEAST.

EVEN THOUGH IT'S A TINY INGREDIENT,  
WHEN IT'S MIXED WITH THE FLOUR,  
THE WHOLE BATCH OF DOUGH RISES



THIS WAS JESUS' WAY OF SAYING THAT EVEN IF WE  
HAVE A SMALL AMOUNT OF FAITH... IT CAN MAKE A  
HUGE DIFFERENCE TO OUR LIVES, AND TO THE LIVES  
OF OTHERS.

## MEETING OTHER FAITHS

Many years ago, when I taught Religious Education in a comprehensive school, we put a lot of emphasis on learning about the major world faiths, including Islam, Judaism, Hinduism and Buddhism. The students responded very well to an empathetic approach—trying to understand what it is like to follow a particular faith.

Now, in the present state of affairs, it seems even more important for there to be empathy and understanding between all people of faith. In my own experience, I have found meeting with people of different faiths overwhelmingly positive—from a chance conversation on a bench in Manchester Railway Station with a young Jewish student, studying at a strict orthodox Jewish college, to a meeting in Parliament of faith representatives around the subject of assisted dying: there is always something to learn, to cherish and to be challenged by.

In the following article, Anita Weeks tells us about **Vesak Day**, an important Buddhist Festival, and its relevance to all of us today.

*Editor*

### THE BUDDHIST FESTIVAL, VESAK DAY

The 23<sup>rd</sup> May is Vesak Day, the most important of Buddhist festivals. Vesak Day commemorates the birth of the Buddha, his experience of finding enlightenment and his death.

On the surface there are similarities between Buddhism and Christianity. Fundamental teachings of Buddhism are peace, compassion and kindness to others, all of which were taught too by Jesus. Just as Christianity diverged into different denominations, so Buddhism has a variety of schools and sects. Orthodox Christians and Catholic Christians celebrate the same festivals on different days, and Buddhists of different traditions celebrate Vesak on different days. Buddha is an honorific title (“the awakened one”) and Jesus of Nazareth was given the title, “Messiah”.

There are, though, profound differences. Buddhism is not a religion, but a way of life people are urged to follow. The Buddha was a

man, not a god – he died at about 80, according to tradition, of dysentery or food poisoning.

Both Christians and Buddhists celebrate festivals by giving gifts. But Vesak is very different from the traditions which have grown up around Christmas of a period of preparation (Advent) followed by feasting, giving presents to family and friends and being generous to others. At Vesak Buddhists are enjoined to put aside their own needs, desires and appetites. Vesak is a day on which to make a special effort to bring happiness to others, particularly those less fortunate than oneself. Buddhists mark Vesak by giving gifts to strangers, making donations, volunteering, feeding others, and doing work for others.

Many of us listening to news bulletins will have heard Antonio Guterres, the United Nations Secretary-General, speaking about the Israel – Gaza war (for a recent report of what he has said go to: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-68646159> ). This is what Antonio Guterres said to mark last year's Vesak Day, and his words are even more relevant today:-

*“At this time of strife, the Buddha’s teachings of tolerance compassion and service to humanity are a source of solace and strength. As we navigate the path to a better future, let us seize the spirit of Vesak.”*

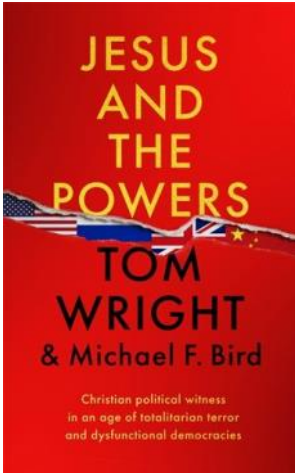
Anita Weeks

### CROSSWORD ANSWERS

**ACROSS:** 1, Debtor. 4, Shaken. 7, Ache. 8, Leavened. 9, Overcome. 13, Etc. 16, Troublemaking. 17, Par. 19, Ignatius. 24, Treasure. 25, Mene. 26, Astray. 27, Dinner.

**DOWN:** 1, Deaf. 2, Behaviour. 3, Relic. 4, Swarm. 5, Aged. 6, Elect. 10, Rabbi. 11, Ocean. 12, Exalt. 13, Epicurean. 14, Cage. 15, Step. 18, Acres. 20, Gaudy. 21, An end. 22, Fair. 23, Fear.

## BOOK REVIEWS



### **Jesus and the Powers: Christian Political Witness in an Age of Totalitarian**

### **Terror and Dysfunctional Democracies**

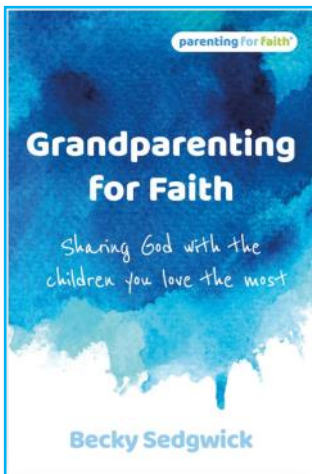
**By Tom Wright, SPCK, £12.99**

Tom Wright and Michael F. Bird join forces to ask: How can Christians engage with the turbulent politics of our times while remaining true to the teaching of Jesus?

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**By Becky Sedgwick, BRF, £9.99**

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*All Saints Churchyard, photo by Martyn Lake*