

Malvern Priory Magazine



The Parish Church of St. Mary & St. Michael

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April 2011

From the Vicarage

Chocolate Eggs and Jesus Risen!

Dear Friends,

It was C.S. Lewis who once preached a sermon in which he described Easter with the memorable phrase “chocolate eggs and Jesus risen”! However, for many, the link between the two is not obvious. That’s why, this year, it is especially encouraging that several major supermarkets (including three in Malvern – no ads, but two are close to the Priory!) have agreed to stock the Real Easter Egg, the UK’s first and only Fairtrade charity [Easter](#) egg to mention Jesus on the box.

The Meaningful [Chocolate](#) Company says it developed the product with the help of bishops, schools and parents. It adds that of the 80 million Easter eggs sold every year, the Real Easter Egg is the only one that explains the Christian understanding of the Easter festival on the box. The packaging tells customers: “Easter is all about cute bunnies, fluffy chicks and eating too much chocolate, right? Well, not quite. We happen to think it’s a bit more meaningful than that. That’s because billions of people all over the world believe that Jesus died on the cross on Good Friday, then rose again three days later ... on Easter Sunday. Actually, many believe that chocolate eggs represent the boulder that sealed his tomb.”

As well as clearly explaining the message of Easter, sales of the Real Easter Egg will also benefit two charities. [Traidcraft Exchange](#) receives 30p from every egg sold, and [Baby Lifeline](#) will receive 10% of the Real Easter Egg net profits. Another good reason for choosing the Real Easter Egg. As a ‘chocoholic’ myself, I’m certainly looking forward later this month to enjoying this real taste of Easter!

Over the next few weeks, you and I are especially encouraged to remember the events of the first Holy Week and Easter. Events that have changed history into His-story. Good News of how Christ’s faithful and loving obedience unto death have won a once-and-for-all victory over our greatest enemies – sin and death. Now that’s something to celebrate – Chocolate Eggs and Jesus Risen!

Wishing you every blessing in Christ Crucified and Risen,



John Barr, Vicar

Priory People

We have been informed that John Neville (husband of the late Nancy), formerly of Colwall, died on Monday 28th February. Longer established members of the Priory will remember John and Nancy with great affection and thankfulness. John looked after Nancy, following her stroke, with great devotion. It was lovely that he was able to join us in the Priory for a service towards the end of last year.

– o0o –

Priory Pastoral Care Team

The Priory is a church that recognises the importance of pastoral care. While much loving care and support is offered ‘informally’ by Priory people on a one-to-one basis, we also try to find ways of ‘formally’ working together, as we seek to embody Christ’s compassion, and to be channels of His blessing to those around us.

Some pastoral care is very practical, for example the range of help offered by the Priory Care Scheme, or by the presence of local Priory contacts through the Priory Area Links Scheme. Other pastoral care seeks to support those in need through the power of prayer, for example through the Prayer Vine and Sunday Prayer Ministry.

Over recent months, there has been a growing sense that we need to focus on developing another aspect of pastoral care. This would be more ‘in depth’ care provided by those with particular pastoral gifts and training (e.g. in the area of listening), who would make themselves available to journey with those who are going through an especially vulnerable time in their lives (e.g. bereavement).

At its meeting in January, the PCC approved the formation of a Pastoral Care Team. The role of this team was summed up as follows: to seek out those who need support; to connect; to listen; to be available; to journey with people. Members of the team would meet together on a regular basis with the Priory clergy, and the Vicar would oversee the team’s recruitment and support. As well as Mary, Peter, and myself, the other team members at present are Margaret Fenton, Trisha Hutchison, John Tanner, Sally Taylor, and Rosemary Webster. Trisha has agreed to act as the Pastoral Care Team Coordinator, the first port of call for anyone who seeks pastoral support, whether for themselves, or for someone else. Trisha may be contacted through the Parish Office.

Please pray for those involved in this team, and please do have a word with me if you sense that God might be nudging you to join us.

John Barr

Junior Chorister Promotions & Awards

Presented on 6th March 2011

At the Sunday morning service on 6th March the following Junior Choristers received their Promotions and Awards – medals and certificates.

Admission to the Choir and Junior Bible, completion of White Level of RSCM Training

Rebecca Darnborough Morgan Farrier

Light Blue Level of RSCM Training

Beth Wolff Grace Browning Natasha Knight

Dark Blue level of RSCM training

Amelia Canning Molly Stokes Peter Cotton
Sarah Maxfield-Phillips

Red Level of RSCM training and the Jack Lewis Award for dedication to the choir

Jessica Reeves

Congratulations to all these Junior Choristers.

Annual Parochial Church Meeting 2011

Great Malvern Priory

Tuesday 12th April at 7.30pm

Review of the past year

Election of six new PCC members
Nomination forms at the back of the church

Your chance to ask questions
(it would be helpful to know of these in advance if possible)

Christine Wells PCC Secretary

Issues of Science and Faith

Following the very successful series of Science and Faith talks last April, and the great interest shown in the subject by both scientists and non-scientists alike, a discussion group will start after Easter. It will be led by one of last year's speakers, our very own Dr. Chris Oliver. The overall title will be as above, but each meeting will consider a different aspect of science, and how it relates to the Christian faith. Chris will start each session off, then open it to discussion. Everyone is welcome – scientist or non-scientist, Priory member or non-Priory member, Christian or non-Christian. They will not be lectures but rather explorations. All the meetings will be in the Guesten Room, in the Lyttelton Rooms, at 7.30 pm. The dates and subjects will be as follows:

1. Thursday May 19th What is Truth?
2. Thursday June 16th Cosmology and Creation
3. Thursday July 14th Evolution and Creation
4. Date tba Time and Eternity
5. Date tba Brain, Mind and Soul
6. Date tba Ethics and Ecology

Also note the date Saturday 24th September at 7.30 pm in the Priory when Sir John Houghton will give the first Walcher Lecture on Science and Faith. As former head of the Met Office his topic will relate to the climate and the environment. He will also be our preacher the next day.

– o0o –

Dust if You Must

Dust if you must, but wouldn't it be better
To paint a picture, or write a letter,
Bake a cake, or plant a seed;
Ponder the difference between want and need?

Dust if you must, but there's not much time,
With rivers to swim, and mountains to climb;
Music to hear, and books to read;
Friends to cherish, and life to lead.

Dust if you must, but the world's out there
With the sun in your eyes, and the wind in your hair;
A flutter of snow, a shower of rain,
This day will not come round again.

Dust if you must, but bear in mind,
Old age will come and it's not kind.
And when you go (and go you must)
You yourself will make more dust.

Anon

Thought for the Month

It is almost fifty years to the month since the death of the great British conductor, Sir Thomas Beecham. There are numerous stories about things he said and did – many of them quite unsuitable to be printed here! – but I recently heard one anecdote that made me smile. In the 1958 F.A. Cup final, Manchester United were set to play Bolton Wanderers. Not long prior to that, Beecham was in a rehearsal when he turned to his orchestra and said, “Gentlemen, I want your advice. I am going to the Cup final and inadvertently I let it be known that my sympathies lie with Manchester United. This morning I received a letter from Bolton Wanderers, reminding me that I am their Patron.” (There followed a great uproar from the orchestra).

It is easy, so often, to forget who we are and whom we represent. If we are known to represent something, and we behave in a manner that represents it badly, we find ourselves in trouble. It seems to me that this is so often the way with the Christian faith. Do we live our lives in the light of what we believe? The Methodist minister, Leslie Weatherhead, wrote that preaching is not, primarily, about telling people things they don't know; rather, it is about getting people to believe *in their hearts* that to which they have already subscribed. If all Christian people were to believe in their hearts what they accept in their minds, the Church would have an impact far greater than anything we see at present.

St. Paul writes, ‘Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus’ (Philippians 2.5). God has revealed Himself to us in Jesus Christ, and if we are to accept His invitation to follow Him then we must try to be like Him. Lent is a good time to take a step back for self-examination and penitence. The verb ‘to repent’ literally means ‘to change your mind.’ If we change our minds about our sin, then we are taking the first step towards following Christ. So, this Lent, let us remember who we are and whom we represent. We are the Church, and we represent the God who loved us so much that He gave His only Son, for our sins, upon the cross.

Peter Edwards, Curate

Coffee Morning

Saturday 9th April at 10.30 am

All are invited to a Coffee Morning
organised by the Priory Welcome Group

The venue is 4 Severn Drive
and it will be hosted by Marje Stanton-Hyde

Come along and meet Priory friends

“Breaking Through”

**A Concert on April 30th at 8 pm in the Priory
Featuring the trio Brief Encounter and harpist Sarah Taylor**

This is a concert in aid of the charity Breakthrough Breast Cancer. One in eight women in Britain will get breast cancer. Breakthrough is a pioneering charity which is changing the future through research and education. Its aim is to remove the fear of breast cancer for good. Established in London in 1999, the research centre was the first of its kind in the UK.

It now networks with other international research centres, sharing information, and so greatly increasing the effectiveness of research. Last October we had the privilege of visiting the centre, and were given a conducted tour of the various laboratories, each researching a different aspect of breast cancer – genetic and the human genome, the generational survey, apoptosis (try saying that!), why cancers spread. It was an inspiring and exciting visit, and in several areas they are on the brink of significant breakthroughs. One such was announced in the press just recently.

So, do come to the concert. Enjoy a happy evening of excellent music. Enjoy a glass of wine or soft drink. And all for the price of £8 (£6 for concessions). All the proceeds will go to Breakthrough Breast Cancer. And who knows? It might make a real difference to your life, or that of someone close to you. Tickets from the Parish Office or on the door.

Rosemary Webster

– o0o –

Some people are kind, polite and sweet-spirited – until you try to sit in their pew.

Many folks want to serve God, but only as advisers.

It is easier to preach ten sermons than to live one.

The good Lord didn't create anything without a purpose – but mosquitoes come close.

When you get to your wit's end, you'll find God lives there.

Cairo Calling

Dear Friends

“Blessed be Egypt my people” (Isaiah 19:25)

We are proud to be here in Egypt to see what has taken place. After living in Egypt for nearly seven years it has been refreshing to see the youth of the nation grasping at a future where they have more control of their destiny.

How the Revolution looked from our perspective

Here in our home, the excitement of the first Friday of full protests was soured by a battle at the end of our road. Eventually the army secured the area, but a lot of cars were torched and a number of people died. There was heavy shooting – we could see the tracer fire from our balcony – but we never felt in danger as we weren't protesting, and there was no anti-foreigner sentiment. The next day was all about the looters – we heard awful things about thousands of prisoners escaping and roaming Cairo. The whole street was blocked off after dark with groups of neighbours staying up all night to check on who was coming into our neighbourhood during curfew. That was possibly the worst night for us.

A few days later it seemed calm enough for Chris to go to Tahrir Square though that was when pro-government protestors stormed the square with camels and horses and the violence seemed to go on for the rest of the day. Seeing that on the TV from here probably looked just as bad as it did from where you were, so we often needed to go out onto the balcony to see that actually all was well in this part of town.

As you probably know by now, it all ended with the President finally resigning on 11th Feb. People burst into the streets for a wild night of jubilation, we've really seen nothing like it! The following day the five of us went into Tahrir Square – definitely the highlight of our entire time here in Egypt.

ETC

The ETC has an uncertain future. The centre operates well only when there are foreigners around – and there are very few left now. Most of our Arabic students have left, and some of our English teachers. It will be an uphill struggle for the rest of this year to get the place back on a secure financial footing. We would value your prayers for the centre and the Egyptian staff.

On a more positive note...

Living through this has given us a renewed sense of purpose and love for the people here. We've been especially encouraged by the many scenes of Christians and Muslims standing together through all of this. You might have seen images of Christians 'protecting' Muslims as they prayed in Tahrir, and vice versa! All over the city, there are posters of crosses and crescents, with the slogan 'We are all Egyptians'. Amazing!

So, we say to you too, please continue to pray for this country. We know that, unless people's hearts are changed by the Holy Spirit, all hope of a real 'reformation of life-style' to which many Egyptians now aspire, will be impossible to achieve. There has never been a time when God's voice is more needed.

Chris, Angela, Anna, Isaac and Noah

The proceeds from the produce stall on April 17th will go to support the Chorltons.

The latest Link Letter from the Chorltons is available now at the back of the church.

Coffee Morning in aid of CMS (Church Mission Society)

on Saturday 9th April 10.00-12noon

at 25 Richmond Road, Malvern Link.

Cakes, Preserves, Books, Cards, Gifts, Raffle,

Bric-a-Brac, Bring & Buy, Plants

All are welcome

Who's who in the Priory

Meet Sarah Bevan



When and why did you come to Malvern?

I came to Malvern in 1978 to join my first husband who worked at RSRE. I trained in Bristol as a social worker with Hereford and Worcester County Council and worked in Pershore for a couple of years after I qualified.

Why did you come to the Priory?

I grew up in London in a non-Christian family although I remember being taken to Sunday-school. As a teenager I went to a Methodist church with friends, but then had many years without church connections. In 1992 I met Elizabeth Brewitt-Taylor during a parenting course, which led me to co-lead further courses with her. She encouraged me to join her house group. From there I started coming to the Priory in 1994, and was confirmed in 1997.

How would you describe your relationship with God?

The more time I spend with the Lord, the closer the relationship becomes. I don't actually hear Him talking to me but I get images, sensations, powerful emotions, urges and nudges that allow me to see his plan for me. I have to admit I don't always spend enough time with the Lord, and I recognise that that is where things become more difficult for me. When I am troubled and spend time quietly with the Lord, I can feel the warmth of His arms around me.

What is your favourite scripture?

John 3:16 *For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life* (NIV), because that was such a huge sacrifice, His only child and the promise that comes from that, that He saves us and gives us eternal life is immense and almost beyond understanding. It demonstrates the depth, width and immensity of God's love for His creation. This verse touches me very deeply.

What is your favourite hymn?

No. 317 in our hymn books. *Shine Jesus shine. Blaze Spirit blaze* speaks of the

fire of the Holy Spirit in us, *Flow river flow* speaks of God's unending mercy towards us. I always get a lift when I go into the church and see 317 on the hymn board!

What are your interests?

Knitting; Jewellery making; Reading; Singing; Walking; Swimming; and Pottery.

What are you passionate about?

I am passionate about the people Jesus made time to be with: the outsiders, the sick, the poor, and the homeless. I worked at MHHYAT (Malvern Hills Homeless Young Adults Trust, now Malvern Hills Foyer) for about four years, during which time I really valued the opportunities to talk to the young people about my relationship with the Lord. I love working with young people.

I am also passionate about the Lord's creation. I feel strongly our Christian responsibility to be good stewards of the creation, which has led me to be part of the new group set up to look at the Diocesan Environmental Strategy.

Have you any desires?

I would love to travel more as I've only been to Europe. I would like to be healthier in order to work more with the people I am passionate about.

What is your role in the Priory?

I am a Pathfinder leader. I sing with the Praise Group. I am a member of the Social Responsibility and Action Group. I am a member of the newly formed Environmental Group.

Sylviane Outram

Gershwin in the Priory? - YES!!
Gershwin and Spitfires on the organ? - YES!!
Be treated to a thrill at the next
MALVERN PRIORY ORGAN RECITAL
on
Saturday, 16 April, 12.00 noon
by
Ben Sheen

Ben's exciting programme includes Walton's *'Spitfire' Prelude and Fugue* and a Fantasy on Gershwin themes as well as works by Schumann, Liszt, Thalben-Ball and Wammes. Ben Sheen, Senior Organ Scholar at Christ Church Cathedral, Oxford, is one of the brightest young organists of his generation. In 2003, he became the youngest person ever to give an organ recital in the Cathedral at the age of just 13. He has since given recitals across the UK, including Liverpool Cathedral, Westminster Abbey and York Minster and also recital tours to the USA, Australia and Germany.

Look out for his full programme in publicity material and on the website:
www.malvernprioryorgan.org.uk

Large video screen projection.

Retiring collection for Priory funds

Junior Choristers' Concert

Saturday 12th February 2011 was decision time. Whether to head for the Malvern Theatres to listen to Verdi's Requiem (with Sir Willard White as bass soloist) or to go to the Priory junior choristers' concert. Decision made, I arrived at the Lyttelton Rooms to take my seat in a hall full of performers (17 junior choristers) and audience (anxious parents, relatives and supporters).

This annual event has always been a great success, and this evening's performance promised to be no exception. Unfortunately David Iliff, our choirmaster, had been called away unexpectedly at short notice, but Jonathan Darnborough stepped into the breach and ably acted as Master of Ceremonies for the evening.

The concert started with a demonstration of the art of hand bell ringing (particularly difficult with the old set of hand bells we possess), followed by solo items from the choristers on instruments including piano, classical guitar, bassoon, flute, saxophone, trumpet and voice. Each performance received enthusiastic applause from the audience, and by the time of the interval parents were able to relax and, with everyone else, enjoy the ploughman's supper provided by members of the Choirs' Association Committee.

The second part of the concert was excerpts from *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*, sung by the choristers – conducted by Jonathan and accompanied on the piano by Ron Ward. This was an enthusiastic and spirited rendition, all the more remarkable for the fact that the performance was given after only three rehearsals because of delays in receiving the musical scores.

When the prolonged applause eventually stopped, Jenny Cooke gave a vote of thanks to all concerned for such an enjoyable evening. It is always impressive to see the range of musical talent demonstrated by our junior choristers. We are indeed fortunate to have such a group of dedicated young people helping to lead our worship at the Priory.

Full time score: Junior choristers 1, Verdi 0.

Alistair Sawers

Malvern Priory Lunchbox Reports

Malvern College Chamber Orchestra and Choir

It has become an annual and much anticipated event when Iain Sloan brings his music students to the Priory to play to Lunchbox each year; on this occasion he was joined by Steve McDade, Head of Strings and Michael Phillips on the organ.

The concert included works by Purcell, Bach and Karl Jenkins. It started with 'Joshua fit de battle of Jericho' – a suitably stirring introduction, but maybe lacking some of the bass resonance of the traditional negro spiritual. The concluding piece was 'Ave Verum' the last complete composition by Mozart, which was played with appropriate sensitivity.

Iain explained that the singers and instrumentalists were drawn from every year in the school and met once a week to practice their repertoire; their music work had also to take its place among the many other activities of the College – not least their academic work.

He reminded the audience of over one hundred and twenty that the College is staging two concerts this term – both of which are open to the public.

The Prayer Book Society

The dissolution of the monasteries in 1547 had a major effect on the social life of the country as large numbers of monasteries and other religious institutions were wound up and their wealth and staff distributed round the country.

The effect in Malvern was serious as the Priory was dissolved and the monks left to find civilian jobs – the town did not recover its prosperity for a hundred years. Though not fully appreciated at the time, there were beneficial effects of the break with Rome – the religious establishment had to have a major rethink in how the church was organised and that has shaped the development of the Anglican Church since. It also promoted the use of English as the language of services, the Bible and Prayer Book. 2011 is the 400th anniversary of the King James Bible and 2012 is the 350th anniversary of Book of Common Prayer.

Rev Neil Patterson was a Trustee of the Prayer Book Society and is now the Chairman of the Hereford Branch; he is also Rector for six churches near Ross-on-Wye.

He visited Malvern on Thursday 3rd March to talk to Lunchbox about the PBS and the history of the Prayer Book. He explained that the use of the book had suffered two eclipses – one in the reign of Queen Mary and the second under the Commonwealth – but had emerged unscathed. It has also undergone four possible revisions, the most recent in 1927, but had survived with only minor changes.

Malvern Priory like most Church of England churches uses the Book of Common Prayer for some services while accommodating a range of service preferences in the course of each week.

Roger Sutton



The Bishop's Letter – from Bishop David

In my days as a young vicar, a senior colleague asked me a direct and tricky question. “Suppose”, he said, “that the pub on the High Street were to be turned into a lap-dancing establishment, would you want to protest outside with a placard, or go in and offer yourself as Chaplain?” Fortunately it was a purely hypothetical question, but it came back to me recently as I listened to a presentation on ethical investment.

The Church of England, through the Church Commissioners and the Pensions Board, invests money in a range of shares and assets. Like any other shareholder both bodies want the best return for their investment. But they do want that investment to aid and support the mission of the Church, not to undermine it. The church institutions have long refused to invest in companies producing certain types of armaments, and in those that derive significant incomes from tobacco, alcohol, doorstep lending, or “adult” entertainment.

Refusing to hold stocks in certain parts of the market is a vital part of being an ethical investor. But on its own it's a blunt weapon. It can feel a bit like Pontius Pilate – washing our hands of the evil going on, but doing nothing to stop it.

So alongside disinvestment an even more important aspect of how the church institutions use their capital wisely is the practice of constructive and active engagement with companies. A big shareholder can ask awkward questions, and can challenge directors over their policies and practices. Does this company take its environmental responsibilities seriously? Does that one treat its workforce with dignity? Whilst disinvestment allows us to feel morally superior, constructive engagement gives us a chance of actually making a difference or persuading someone to change.

And that takes us back to the heart of what living a Christian life is all about. All too often we set ourselves up as people who don't do certain things – usually things that wider society considers not to be a problem. All too rarely are we seen as people constructively engaged in making the world around us a better place. The irony is that we claim to follow a man who was never criticised for staying aloof and apart but was regularly challenged for spending time with disreputable company, challenging them through his constructive engagement to become what God had created them to be.

Twenty five years ago I ducked the question my colleague asked me, but maybe a better response, then and now, would be to say “I'd be with Jesus”.

Heavenly Father, Whose son was held to the cross not by nails but by love, Grant that we may know in our hearts your love for us; And, knowing that love, may persevere in time of trial, That, for love's sake our lives and our communities may grow into the likeness of your Kingdom, And your name may be glorified throughout the earth.



Vocations — God's call to you..?

Next month we have an opportunity to celebrate Vocations Sunday (May 15th). This is an opportunity for celebrating God's call to all Christians to be faithful. All Christians have a 'vocation', or 'calling', because all Christians are called by God to serve him. By listening for God when we read the Bible, or pray, or worship, or when we talk with other people, each of us can begin to discern more clearly the nature of that vocation. Where God calls us, and to what sort of ministry can, of course, change over the years.

ALMtraining
being a community learning to serve

Our vocation can be worked out in so many ways – through our employment or voluntary work or through our relationships with family, friends, and wider community. But for some it might be the daunting thought that God has a specific task in mind.....Who me?!

Sometimes a person might get a feeling of being nudged in a particular direction: interesting 'coincidences' seem to happen, friends or colleagues, or people at church say things that resonate with something deep within. When a person moves his or her life in that direction there is often a sense that this is 'right'.

Although all Christians have a vocation, some are called to exercise particular roles of leadership and responsibility within the Church. These may be in support of the parish as Accredited Lay Ministers, administrators, youth leaders, or pastoral visitors, for example. A person may look to become a Reader, exercising a ministry as a preacher and teacher. Some are called to be ordained, working for the Church in a variety of different ways.

What happens when faithful people hear and answer this call? Through the Authorised Lay Ministry programme, Polly Smith, who trained as a parish administrator in Kidderminster is undertaking important work with the churches' directory and website which is making a significant contribution to communications across the area. Jane Twigg, who volunteers as a worship leader, is putting a lot of care and thoughtfulness into her work in a particular part of Sunday worship at Holy Trinity, Trimpley.

In Stourbridge Cathy Knight and Val Charles are beginning to work in bereavement ministry, visiting families alongside the vicar. Wendy Gwynne and Val Homer are called to baptism ministry and are becoming the faces that people know as they come to church for the first time.



Their ministry has been welcomed as a 'breath of fresh air'. If you would like to explore where God may be leading you, you might like to have a chat with ►

your own vicar, or else get in touch with Ron Hesketh, the Diocesan Vocations Officer, or Georgina Byrne, the Diocesan Director of Ordinands. Or explore the Diocesan website, (in particular the Ministry and Training Pages). We would be delighted to help you listen for where God might be leading you in the future.

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Memo From God

To: YOU
Date: TODAY
From: THE BOSS
Subject YOURSELF
Reference: LIFE

I am God. Today I will be handling all of your problems. Please remember that I do not need your help.

If life happens to deliver a situation to you that you cannot handle, do not attempt to resolve it. Kindly put it in the SFGTD (something for God to do) box. All situations will be resolved, but in My time, not yours.

Once the matter is placed into the box, do not hold onto it by worrying about it. Instead, focus on all the wonderful things that are present in your life now.

If you find yourself stuck in traffic; Don't despair. There are people in this world for whom driving is an unheard of privilege.

Should you have a bad day at work; Think of the man who has been out of work for years.

Should you despair over a relationship gone bad; Think of the person who has never known what it's like to love and be loved in return.

Should you grieve the passing of another weekend; Think of the woman in dire straits, working twelve hours a day, seven days a week to feed her children.

Should your car break down, leaving you miles away from assistance; Think of the paraplegic who would love the opportunity to take that walk.

Should you notice a new grey hair in the mirror; Think of the cancer patient in chemo who wishes she had hair to examine.

Should you find yourself at a loss and pondering what is life all about, asking what is my purpose? Be thankful. There are those who didn't live long enough to get the opportunity.

Should you find yourself the victim of other people's bitterness, ignorance, smallness or insecurities; Remember, things could be worse. You could be one of them!

Contributed by Delysia Barker

On the best way to run a church council meeting

The Rectory, St. James the Least of All

My dear Nephew Darren

Thank you for inviting me to speak at your church council yesterday. I began to suspect that my theme of why Eusebius's dislike of Sabellianism led to his condemnation at the Council of Antioch in 324 was a little misjudged, when the only question I was asked afterwards was if I knew what Eusebius's favourite colour was.

I never realised how much technology was needed these days when people meet to discuss church matters. Your treasurer's power point presentation was most impressive; it was just unfortunate that the electricity cut rendered him speechless and his pie charts invisible. To equip every member with a laptop computer, so that paper is now redundant is probably a good thing, since you seem to have so many briefing documents, diocesan reports and internet downloads to circulate. However, sitting at the back, I could not help noticing that most of your committee spent their time playing computer games, reading e-mails and in one case, looking at material it is better not to describe.

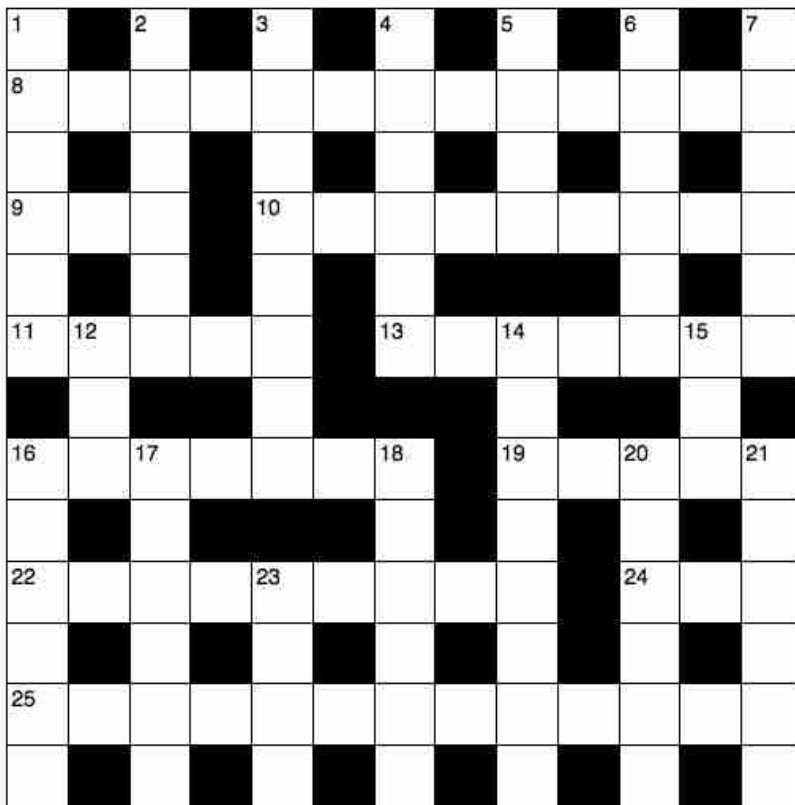
For the secretary to type the minutes as the meeting progressed, so people could collect them on their way out was only marred by paper getting jammed in the printer, so that everyone took home minutes looking as if they had recently held fish and chips.

Our meetings tend to be a little more traditional. Since the church hall floor seems to have been carved out of permafrost, our meetings circulate round members' houses. This introduces a nice element of competition, as each host tries to outdo the previous one in the standard and quantity of cakes. Meetings at Colonel Drinkwater's – a more inappropriate name one cannot imagine – are the shortest, since we are always promised wine once the meeting is over. It is remarkable how unanimity is achieved on every subject in minutes and nothing appears under "any other business".

Mrs Eddington never sends out minutes – largely because she can rarely decipher the notes she takes – and simply reads out what she can remember at the next meeting. Last month, she accidentally left them at home and brought her shopping list by mistake, so gamely read that out instead. This led to a lively discussion on whether carrots from our local shop were better than those at the supermarket and when it was found out she intended to use them in a venison casserole, endless recipes were keenly debated.

We leave well fed, having caught up on village gossip, untroubled by points of order or sub committee reports. And the lack of any minutes means that I can then make all decisions myself between meetings. I think you will find our system has much to be commended.

Your loving uncle,
Eustace



March 2011 Solution



Across

- 8 'He poured out his life unto death, and was numbered with the — ' (Isaiah 53:12) (13)
- 9 'When they had sung a hymn, they went — to the Mount of Olives (Matthew 26:30) (3)
- 10 Comes between Galatians and Philipians (9)
- 11 'Your heart will — and swell with joy' (Isaiah 60:5) (5)
- 13 Muslim holy month (7)
- 16 Ten ears (anag.) (7)
- 19 Under (poetic abbrev.) (5)
- 22 How Abram described himself to God when he complained that his inheritance would pass to a servant (Genesis 15:2) (9)
- 24 'Go to the — , you sluggard' (Proverbs 6:6) (3)
- 25 Debar from receiving Communion (13)

Down

- 1 My — for His Highest (Oswald Chambers' best-known book) (6)
- 2 Festival of the resurrection (6)
- 3 'His sons will prepare for war and — a great army' (Daniel 11:10) (8)
- 4 'Let not the — string his bow' (Jeremiah 51:3) (6)
- 5 Name of the River Thames in and around Oxford (4)
- 6 'From then on Judas watched for an opportunity — — him over' (Matthew 26:16) (2,4)
- 7 'But Christ is faithful — — — over God's house' (Hebrews 3:6) (2,1,3)
- 12 Long-handled implement used to till the soil (Isaiah 7:25) (3)
- 14 Order to which monks and nuns devote themselves (8)
- 15 Appropriate (Proverbs 15:23) (3)
- 16 I, uncle (anag.) (6)
- 17 'They gave him — — of broiled fish' (Luke 24:42) (1,5)
- 18 'Weren't there three men that we — — and threw into the fire?' (Daniel 3:24) (4,2)
- 20 Mountain where Noah's ark came to rest (Genesis 8:4) (6)
- 21 'Don't you know that friendship with the world is — towards God?' (James 4:4) (6)
- 23 Prominent architectural feature of large cathedrals such as St Paul's (4)

