

Great Malvern Priory, February 2010

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Roly the Clown

There was a very good turn out at the Priory for Roly the Clown, Anglican Priest and Professional Clown, with people attending from many denominations and none, from near and far. Unsurprisingly most of the audience were the young, with a Parent or Guardian in tow. The Slapstick entertainment was all the more delightful for its setting, in the middle of the Priory, and managed to combine serious and solemn messages with merriment and laughter.

Needless to say the children loved it. George, 5, thought that Roly was 'very funny' and spent much of the time either laughing or in awe of the seemingly dangerous and exciting manoeuvres undertaken by Roly Bain with his various clowning props and accoutrements. In and amongst all of the merriment was his witness to the truth of Christ and the gentle, loving and hopeful messages of the gospel.

Roly was both playful and profound, funny and sad, holy and joyful. His messages ran deep and will survive with longevity, and a smile, in those that attended. We were very fortunate to have an award winning and international performer of both stage and screen on our doorstep and would like to express many thanks to all of those who organised and contributed to the event.

George (5) and Tim (43) Wolff

From the Vicarage

1085 – 2010 : Celebrating 925 years of His Story at the Priory

Dear Friends,

Hopefully you will have gathered by now – or you certainly should after reading the articles in this month's magazine! – that 2010 is a special year in the life of the Priory. The Worcester Monastic Annals state that in 1085, the monk Aldwyn was encouraged by Wulstan, the Bishop of Worcester, to persevere in founding a monastery on the eastern slopes of the Malvern Hills with these words: "Believe me, if you knew what piety God will arise in that place you would rejoice indeed." The story of the founding of Malvern Priory, and the life of faith inspired by God in this place down the centuries since then, bears eloquent testimony to the prophetic truth of Wulstan's words.

Those words encourage us to rejoice at what God has brought about through the lives of His people in this place – in other words, to celebrate His Story at the Priory. It is a story in which God's constant faithfulness has redeemed the frequent failure and fickleness of His people. By God's grace, the Church of Christ has grown and developed down the ages, just as Malvern itself has grown and developed. And the Priory continues to stand at the centre of Malvern, a living sign of God's presence, and home to a people who seek - in the words of our Priory Vision Statement – 'to be a community which responds to God's love in worship, welcomes all in the name of Jesus Christ, and reaches out in the power of the Spirit.'

We do well to celebrate the story which the Priory tells – His Story of faith in us, hope through us, and love for us. So may this year's celebration be inspiring and uplifting for all who share in it, and be a blessing to Malvern. And may a prayer of Benedict, whose Rule was followed at the Priory while it was a monastic community, express our longing to grow in the life of faith: 'O Gracious and Holy Father, give us wisdom to perceive you, diligence to seek You, patience to wait for You, eyes to behold You, a heart to meditate upon You, and a life to proclaim You, through the power of the Spirit of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.'

Wishing you every blessing in Christ, who is the same yesterday, today, and forever,

John Barr, Vicar

Priory People

Ethel Weeks 1922 – 2009

“We had newcomers at the House Group this evening” said Marcel. “A lovely couple called Reg and Ethel, just moved to Malvern from Coventry”. That was in 1992. The following week I was there, and so began a friendship with the “new people”.

Reg and Ethel were a most loving couple, and we always thought of them together. Sadly Reg died in 2004, and Ethel had to carry on alone. For Ethel her family meant so much. Her daughter Elaine lived nearby, and she and her husband were a tremendous support. Her son and family were in Shropshire, not too far away. Ethel took a great interest in her grandchildren: Elaine’s Andrew and Helen, and John’s twin girls. What an excitement that was, when the twins arrived; and then there were the great-grandchildren! Her family was her pride and delight.

We were always impressed by the breadth of Ethel’s interests and the energy with which she pursued them. She easily made friends, was a member of the Priory Women’s Fellowship, the Mother’s Union at Christchurch, the W.I. and the Over Sixties Club.

She was always busy with lovely handicrafts - embroidery, crochet and knitting. I still have some mats she crocheted, and members of the Women’s Fellowship remember the cosy mittens she knitted and sold for a favourite charity.

Ethel had a strong Christian faith, and rejoiced in two trips to the Holy Land (one led by Julian Charley). These were cherished memories.

We thank God for her life and remember her with affection.

Helen Deriaz

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Miss Catherine Olive Moody 1920 – 2009

Catherine Moody was a prominent Malvern resident; she was a respected artist, teacher of painting, poet and writer. She lived in Malvern for most of her life. Her father, an artist and portrait painter of note, was Head of the Malvern School of Art from 1935.

Catherine Moody trained initially under her father, later at the Royal College of Art; she succeeded her father as Head of the Malvern School of Art on his retirement in 1962. She continued to paint and to research aspects of painting and of local history until almost the end of her life, with the aid of various helpers, in spite of growing limitations of health and eyesight.

She had a very lively and enquiring mind. She held salons and symposia at her home on aspects of art and philosophy; a late one was on green energy, and, given the streams on the Malvern Hills, hydro-electricity was not forgotten. She

was an encourager of talent, this continuing long after her official retirement in 1980.

She had a great interest in people and an amazing memory, was generous and most hospitable. She was a member of the Pastel Society, Life President of the Malvern Art Club, member of the Malvern Writers' Circle, and founded the Malvern Architectural Society, initially partly to research the work of Elgar's friend, Troyte Griffith. She wrote "The Silhouette of Malvern" in 1953 to explain the importance and significance of Malvern's Victorian architecture, and to campaign for its preservation, in which she was in the forefront of architectural conservation. The book was illustrated with her drawings, including one of her painting of the drawing room at Eastnor Castle, which she was very proud to have had the opportunity to do.

She was also interested in the geology of the Malvern Hills, and in how they were formed. She wrote a hymn for the millennium, which was performed at the Priors to music by David Cooper. This, and her choice of hymns for her funeral, showed her faith. Her funeral was attended by, amongst others, former pupils, helpers in her art work, members of the Art Club, as well as friends, of which she had made many. The main tribute was by Charles Morgan.

J. E. C. Peters

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What Shall I Give Up For Lent?

It is a perennial question that most of us ask each Lent, for me giving up chocolates for Lent is a useless exercise because I only begin to consume them at Eastertide, a short lived discipline.

It has now become a question of what can I give God that can become worthwhile. The answer, for me, was my time, and that is how it has remained. Space for God, a time apart with Him with just a Bible pen and note book. This can be anything from five minutes to one hour, usually at the beginning of the day. The discipline is getting up that bit earlier to be still in the presence of God and wait upon Him. Wait for the Holy Spirit to move. Some times a word will be heard, a bible passage to look up and sometimes just nothing but waiting, being still from the strains and stresses of today's living, and that can be quite healing in itself.

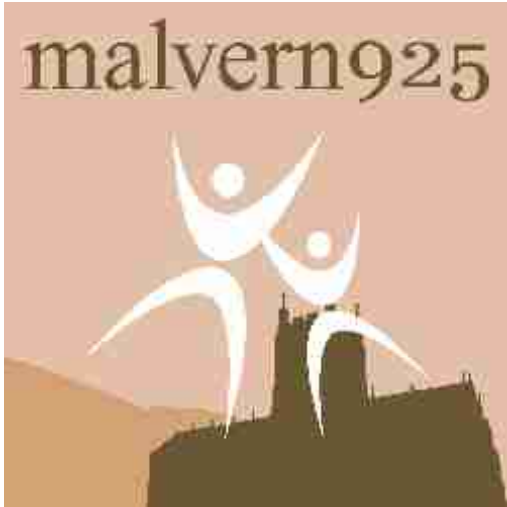
A prayer

Speak, Lord, in the stillness,
While I wait on thee;
Hush my heart to listen
In expectancy.

Thelma Scott

Malvern 925

Why 925? This year, 2010, is the 925th year since Aldwyn, a monk from Worcester who was living as a hermit on the wild, forested slopes of the Malvern Hills, founded a priory here. He had wanted to move on, to travel, to go on a



pilgrimage to Jerusalem, but Wulstan, Bishop of Worcester, persuaded him to stay. “Do not, I beg you, go anywhere, but remain in your place; believe me you would wonder if you knew what I know, how much God is about to perform through you in that place.” So, with Wulstan’s encouragement, and a charter from William the Conqueror, Aldwyn and a group of men began work on the building which still stands today. We can look back over 925 years and see just how much God has “performed through Aldwyn in this place”. Is that not reason to celebrate?

And why “Malvern” 925, rather than “Priory” 925? Because the town of Malvern grew up around the Priory, and over the centuries has looked to the Priory as the heart of the community. But likewise the Priory has looked to the people of Malvern for its support and, at times, very existence. It has been a two-way relationship, a symbiosis. As we celebrate 925 years of the Priory’s history, so also we celebrate 925 years of Malvern’s existence. This interdependence will be highlighted and celebrated in the Son et Lumiere in November.

In a way our 925 celebrations this year are an excuse. They are an excuse for pure celebration. An excuse for a party – and why not? After all, who of us will be around to celebrate the 950th anniversary (not to mention our millennium!)? But, more than that, they are an opportunity to witness to the worship, the prayer, the faith, the faithfulness to God, of many people over the centuries until today. The very stones of the Priory are soaked with the prayers of the faithful. But, even more, our celebrations witness to the faithfulness of God to His people. The God who gave Aldwyn the vision, and courage, and skill to found this Priory church is the same God Who today, in our so very different world, gives His people vision and faith. The massive stone pillars of the Priory, which stand today as firm as 925 years ago, are a symbol of our Christian heritage, which nothing can or will destroy.

This month’s magazine highlights a number of the main events that will be taking place this year. The “925” leaflet with details of all the year’s events, is enclosed with this magazine, and is also available at the back of church. Please distribute them to friends and neighbours. Those on the organising committee hope that you will support and enjoy a feast of celebrations this year.

David Webster

A Celebration of Science and Faith

April 19th – 27th

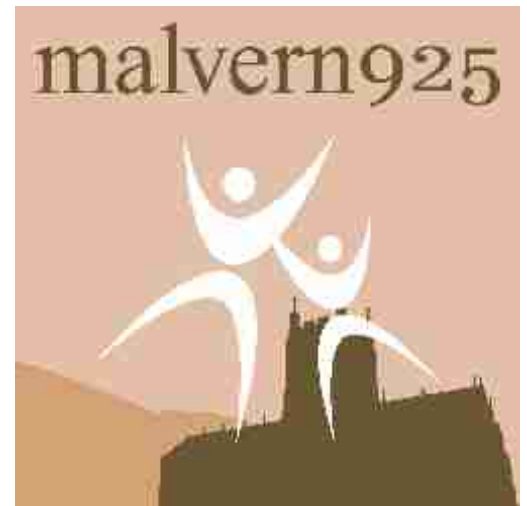
Malvern Priory has a link with science which goes right back to the second Prior, Walcher. To quote Katherine Well's Tour Guide, Walcher was "a very learned man, the first in the western world to record the use of the astrolabe. He also translated a book from Arabic into Latin, so influencing the introduction of Arabic numerals in Europe. As early as 1091 or 92 he observed an eclipse in Italy, and worked out the difference in longitude of England by discovering the time at which the same eclipse was observed here in Malvern." He was a scientist ahead of his time, and, according to the inscription on the lid of his tomb in St. Anne's chapel, was "an acute Philosopher, and able Astrologer, a Geometrician and Mathematician, a pious Christian and a humble monk."

Malvern's links with science since World War 2 are evident. Apart from the development of radar many other ground-breaking scientific advances have occurred in Malvern over the last 70 years. So has modern science, according to the likes of Richard Dawkins, made faith superfluous? Or can one be, like Walcher of old, a person of faith and a scientist at the same time?

Over a period of 8 days in April we have a galaxy of outstanding scientists coming to speak about their science and their Christian faith – and how they reconcile the two, and find them complementary, not contradictory. We are very fortunate indeed to have such outstanding speakers, and it is a rare opportunity really not to be missed.

Prof. Antony Hewish (astronomer and Nobel prize winner); Prof. Sir Gihlean Prance (botanist, and former Director of Kew Gardens); Prof. Edward Evans (neuroscientist, and developer of the cochlear implant); the Rev'd Dr John Polkinghorne (physicist, Templeton prize winner, and one of the world's best known authorities on science and religion); and our very own Dr Chris Oliver (physicist, and visiting professor to U.C. London and Rome) – each will share their insights from their particular perspective. John Polkinghorne will also preach in the Priory on the Sunday, and will conduct a special Sixth Formers' seminar, open to all sixth formers, in St. Edmund's Hall, Malvern College, on the Saturday afternoon.

In this age of scepticism and secularism it will be good to hear scientists of such stature who are not ashamed "to confess the faith", and who will be ready to hear and discuss our questions. Unfortunately Prior Walcher is unavailable that week!



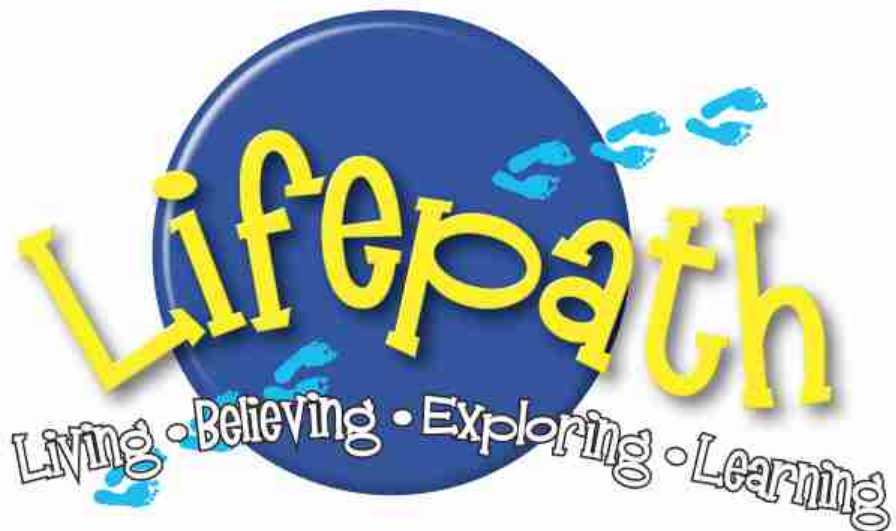
Lifepath is happening again in the Priory in 2010!



Malvern with youngsters.

Lifepath Malvern – inspired by the Scripture Union Lifepath project – began in the Priory in 2008. Over the past two years, it has attracted growing numbers of children from local Primary Schools (though ‘local’ has included some who have chosen to join us from as far afield as Bromyard!). This year we are planning to increase our capacity – inviting new schools as well as those who have already taken part. This means

we shall also need more volunteers to help. Helping can start now - for example, we need white sheets to make Monk’s habits! Above all, please start to pray for Lifepath in this our anniversary year; pray especially at this stage for the Steering Group doing the planning and for the booking information as it goes out to schools, and for those preparing to lead activity workshops. May Lifepath enable future generations to discover more about the story of Christian faith in Malvern and relate it to their own journey through life.



In this year when we celebrate 925 years since the foundation of Malvern Priory by Aldwyn and his fellow Benedictine monks, how appropriate it is to share the story of their life and faith with local schoolchildren.

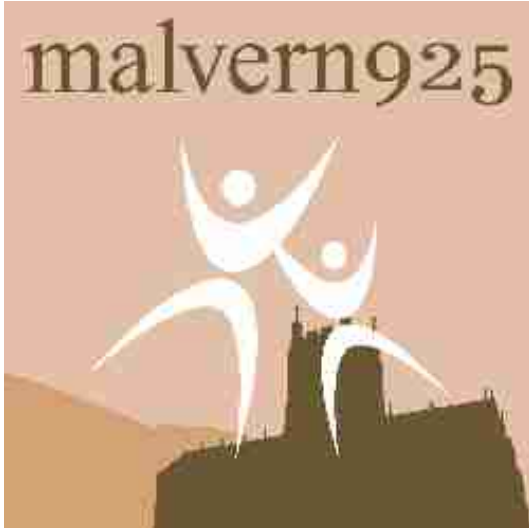
In this year of thanksgiving for the ways in which the presence of the Priory has enriched the life of our local community, how wonderful that part of this involves sharing the story of the Christian church in

LIFEPATH MALVERN 3: 21st – 25th June 2010
Commissioning Service in the Priory: 6.30 pm Sunday 20th June

For more information, contact Mary Barr

Lee Abbey 2010 July 2nd – 4th

As part of our 925 celebrations the Priory has booked the whole of Lee Abbey for this summer weekend. It promises to be a highlight of our celebrations. Those who have been to Lee Abbey need no further encouragement. If you have never been then let me tempt you!



Near Lynton in north Devon, Lee Abbey is set in its own secluded valley, with 280 acres of land overlooking the rugged north Devon coast. The grounds sweep down to a private bay, Lee Bay. It is an idyllic setting, with endless opportunity to explore the estate, or walk the coastal path or nearby Exmoor. The Community itself comprises 90 people from 15 nations, bringing many gifts and experiences to share.

We shall have a programme led by members of the Lee Abbey Community – including activity groups for the children. All past experience of Lee Abbey points to our sessions being really helpful and spiritually enriching. But there will also be plenty of time to “be”, and to enjoy the surrounds. And no session is compulsory – everyone is free to do their own thing. One ingredient of the weekend that is sure to be there is fun and laughter.

It is an ideal opportunity to get to know one another better, with time to talk. For those relatively new to the Priory this is invaluable. But even old-timers discover things about one another that they never knew. And we can all grow together in our knowledge of our Lord, and our commitment to follow Him. There is something very special about getting away together – away from our usual setting, where we meet briefly, like snooker balls, on a Sunday, or at meetings. At Lee Abbey we shall have time - time to be together and to be with God.

On past visits to Lee Abbey, when I have ended a full and happy day with “Christ in Quiet” in the lovely chapel, I have thought “If only this weekend could go on .. and on!” Do join us! You won’t regret it!

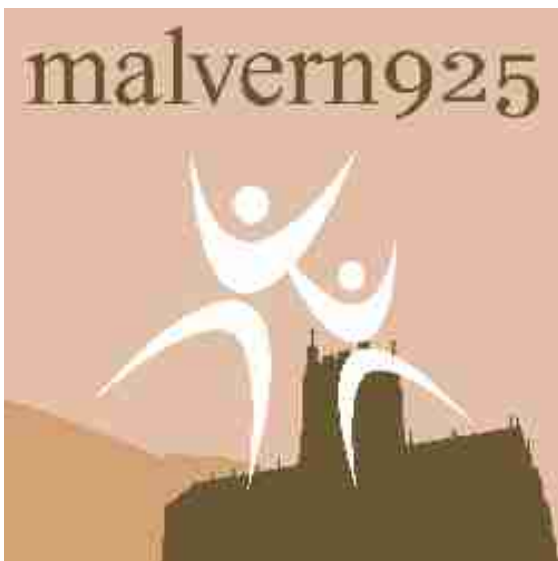
Places are filling steadily, and although we have taken over the whole of Lee Abbey there is not unlimited space. It is time now to get serious about booking if you have not already done so.

More information and booking forms from David and Rosemary Webster.

Son et Lumiere – “Light and Dark”

Having been asked to research the history of the Priory for the son et lumiere, there's a lot to celebrate. And the raison d'être of the whole shebang (French and Gaelic there I think) is very much consonant with our history: to invite the community of Malvern to come to a series of parties to celebrate the joint life of the town and the church. Some parties remind us of our connections with science – the 12th century Prior-astronomer Walcher, Darwin, the Radar Establishment – some with poetry and literature – and some with pure fun. And we want the town to come along - people who pass the Priory every day on their way to work, or once a week when they shop, but who may have only stepped inside once or twice in their lives. And at the end of the festivities, we want to be seen at the heart of the community, hosting heritage events, exhibitions, music, plays, recitals...

Without the founding of the Priory the town would not have been here. The population centre was Hanley (Han – Leigh, or Han's Place in Anglo Saxon) where King John founded a castle in the Royal Chase. All that remains of that are grassy embankments and a flat green lawn. But we're still here, thriving, because of the Town. Without the donations from each of the 125 families of “Muche Malverne” in 1542, the Priory would only be a memory, pulled down and its stone sold to line the coffers of Henry VIII's empty exchequer. Even we who worship



here don't know the extraordinary stories; the riots against Charles I's enclosure of the Chase, the bravery of the monks at the time of the Great Death; the story of the Fornicator and the Embezzler. But I won't tell you too much, as all this and much more can be seen and heard in our son et lumiere, *Light and Dark*, in November 2010. Which is where I come in.

Occasionally you get asked to do a dream job. I love history, poetry and theatre. So being asked to research the story of the Priory and the community of “Muche Malverne” that grew up around it, was irresistible, particularly since it became clear early on in the project that Malvern's own William Langland, the 14th century poet who wrote *Piers Plowman*, ought to become our narrator, and that the script ought therefore to be in verse.

Did you know there was a window built in the fifteenth century, with a sill lower than all others, to enable the local leper colony to look in? That the original Norman church was built in barely two decades, whereas the fifteenth century rebuilding took almost a century to complete? That there were chapels extending beyond the present walls? That Henry VII stayed at the Guest House? Did you

wonder why the south aisle is narrower than the north aisle, or know that the Norman Tower threatened to fall over and demolish the old church? If you knew some of this, I bet there's more you don't. It's just our church, and we love it, and shiver in it, and see the sun shine in in glorious technicolour - (d'you know how John de Ledbury funded all that wonderful mediaeval glass, or how the Great East Window got broken?) And we forget to listen to sermons, caught up in its beauty, (tut, tut).

There's too much material to cover, and over the next months I shall be selecting what to include. The son et lumiere will be a series of episodes, recorded on tape by professional radio actors, playing a whole range of characters including the Lollard knight who was Shakespeare's model for Sir John Falstaff, Charles Darwin, Bishops and Saints, and not a few sinners. During these episodes, local performers will re-enact the episodes, and between episodes there will be a newly commissioned score from local composer Nick Blunn, sung and played by local choirs and musicians celebrating our home grown talent, while a spectacular light show plays on the walls of the nave and choir. So, you see, it's unmissable.

As with all of the events in *Malvern 925*, you are cordially invited to come and be entertained, informed, moved and amused. And please, please, please, remember we wish to host this for Malvern, not just the Town, but the District. Bring family, bring friends, bring strangers if you so wish. We were known for our hospitality all the way through the Middle Ages; famous for it. We were better at it than Worcester, or Hereford. It is a good thing to be known for, so let's be known for it again. Drag 'em in kicking and screaming: we promise to give them a party worth gate crashing. But come. It's good to know the tradition you belong to; the passion that's contained in these stones; the tradition and passion we could do to emulate, reaching out to support the community that supports us.

Rob Swinton (Writer and Director of the Son et Lumiere)

Christianity Explored

This seven session course is for anyone who would like to investigate Christianity, or just brush up on the basics. It is an opportunity to explore who Jesus is, as He walks off the pages of Mark's Gospel.

The seven meetings will be held in the Priory Vicarage running from 2.00 - 3.30 pm on the Wednesday afternoons of February 3rd, 10th, and 24th, and March 10th, 17th, 24th, and 31st.

Each session will include two DVD talks, a short refreshment break, as well as time for any questions and discussion (or just to simply listen).

To find out more, and/or to book a place (numbers are limited), please contact John Barr via the Feedback page.

The Alpha Course

When I was a child I used to attend church once a month with the Girl's Brigade. My parents weren't religious and I was never baptised. I attended a church school and gained a vague knowledge of Bible stories but there my knowledge ended.

In 2004, I met Dylan, my husband. He regularly attended the Priory and I joined him and his family there on many occasions. The more I went, the more I wanted to know and learn. After marrying, we had our son, Ben, in 2008. We had him baptised and I knew I wanted God in my life too.

Having heard how an Alpha course had been a much needed turning point in my husband's life (a few years prior to us meeting!!), I contemplated signing up when I saw that the Priory was running a course. With Dylan's support and his offer to accompany me, I decided to go. The course ran for ten consecutive Wednesday evenings, with an "Away Day" on a Saturday, mid way through the course.

Apprehensively, I arrived for our first meeting. We were a group of approximately twenty people, of varied ages. We started the evening with a delicious home cooked meal, exchanging polite chit-chat with each other. As the weeks progressed friendships were made and grew over these mealtimes. After eating we'd all sit down to watch a DVD with Nicky Gumbel talking us through various subjects based on the Christian Faith, covering "Who is Jesus?", "How does God Guide us?" and "Who is the Holy Spirit?" to name just a few.

Nicky's talks were easy to comprehend and he used some wonderful analogies to support his points.

After each DVD we'd break into smaller groups for discussion. For many, this wasn't their first Alpha course. Some members of the group were able to quote the Bible readily, whilst I could quote nothing. During that first session I wondered if I was out of my depth trying to join in these discussions but everyone was so open and honest that I realised I wasn't the only one feeling like that. Our group leaders, David Webster and Chris Oliver, were fantastic. They made sure everyone was included and was a part of the group, without us being "forced" to contribute.

I found both the DVDs and discussion groups extremely informative and as one session ended I looked forward to the next one, wanting to learn more. However the six days in between the sessions were great for reflection and thought. I learnt so much from the course. It answered questions that I hadn't even realised I needed to ask.... Who or what is the Holy Spirit? What is "speaking in tongues"? I also learnt a lot from the other members of our group, who spoke so truthfully about their faith and their lives.

Having now completed the course I know I need to learn more, to continue on this journey, strengthening my faith. Indeed, Dylan and I are looking forward to starting a new house group with fellow members from our course. In time I know I'll get

baptised.

I would recommend the Alpha course to everybody, whether you're an existing member of the Priory family and/or you're wanting to learn more about the Christian Faith.

Finally, I would like to thank everyone who enabled the course to go ahead, including all those involved in providing wonderful meals every week and to Chris and David for their time, guidance, leadership, knowledge and so much more.

Tracey Farrier

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BBC Appeal – Sunday March 7th Radio 4

Is it a record? Not since 1924 has the “wireless” had an appeal for the rural and farming community. Now, on Sunday March 7th a nationwide appeal will go out on behalf of the Arthur Rank Centre. Little known but a hugely influential Christian organisation at Stoneleigh, Warwickshire, staffed by Methodists, Anglicans, Baptists and others, it helps several organisations who support rural life, farming and country churches. The centre, started by J. Arthur Rank, the film tycoon and a convinced Methodist, does lots more besides.

Just before Christmas the “Farmers Guardian” ran a series on 3 “Unsung Heroes” of rural life. Their work does not hit the limelight but people like Brian Warren, a Devon farmer and convinced Christian, Canon Alan Robinson the agricultural chaplain for Lincolnshire (he’s a Methodist by the way) and The Rev’d Barbara Clutton who has a care in Warwickshire for farmers and village people each have scores of thankful folk who they have helped when disaster struck.

Shoppers are paying more attention to where their food comes from and how much good it will do them. British food is often produced at great personal cost by farmers, their families and people who work for them. The appeal will tell you more.

**So tune in to Radio 4 on Sunday, March 7th at 7.55am & 9.26pm
or Thursday 11th at 3.27pm.**

Local Contacts:

The Rev’d Robert Barlow Worcestershire Chaplain for Agriculture & Rural Life

and Member of Priory congregation Canon Peter Lawrence

A Date For Your Diary

The Friends of Malvern Priory Coffee Morning

Saturday 13 March 10.00 am to 12 noon at 20 Priory Road

Fill your freezers with cakes for this worthy cause!

Offers of help will be gratefully accepted.

LENT CALENDAR

Put this calendar somewhere you can see it every day through Lent. Lent is a time for fasting, prayer and almsgiving, so we try to give up, pray and reach out to others each day of Lent. Remember: Sundays are not part of Lent.

Monday

Tuesday

This week we think about love.

This week we think about friendship and compassion.

22 February

Fast from thinking of yourself – put your friends first!



23 February

Pray that you will be a good and genuine friend.



This week we think about happiness and kindness.

1 March

Fast from unhappiness – bring a smile to others today!



2 March

Pray for anyone who is feeling sad today.



This week we think about peace and self-denial.

8 March

Fast from anger – don't get into any arguments today.



9 March

Pray for places in the world that are experiencing war or conflict.



This week we think about prayerfulness and forgiveness.

15 March

Fast from television – spend some time in prayer instead.



16 March

Pray for the first people (other than your family) that you see today.



This week we think about justice and families.

22 March

Fast from greed: avoid snacks today and just drink water.



23 March

Pray for those who do not have clean water and sanitation.



This Holy Week we think about faithfulness and service.

29 March

Fast from any worries, concerns and doubts you may have.



30 March

Pray that your faith in God will grow stronger this Holy Week.



Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

Saturday

17 February
ASH WEDNESDAY
Begin Lent by listing all the people you love.

18 February
Fast from being negative or unkind.

19 February
Pray that you will be positive and loving today.

20 February
Give some time to the people you love.

24 February
Give some words of praise and appreciation to your friends.

25 February
Fast from a luxury today – could be your mobile, mp3 player or favourite treat.

26 February
Pray for people who live in poverty.

27 February
Give some of your pocket money or allowance to charity.

3 March
Give a smile to everyone you meet – tell them your favourite joke!

4 March
Fast from putting your own interests first.

5 March
Pray for your community – that it will be a place where people look out for each other.

6 March
Give someone a helping hand.

10 March
Give peace a chance – see where you can be a peacemaker today.

11 March
Fast from meat and fish: go veggie for the day.

12 March
Pray, as you fast, for people who will go hungry today.

13 March
Give some thought to the people who produce your food.

17 March
Give at least ten minutes in your day to being still and quiet.

18 March
Fast from holding grudges and feeling bitter.

19 March
Pray that God's forgiveness will be in your heart.

20 March
Give a thought to anyone you've fallen out with: can you make peace with them today?

24 March
Give any change you have to an aid agency that works overseas.

25 March
Fast from family disputes or rivalries.

26 March
Pray that those closest to you will be filled with love and goodness.

27 March
Give a distant relation a call – especially if you've not spoken to them for a while.

31 March
Give some time to reflecting on God's word today.

1 April
Fast from expecting other people to do things for you.

2 April
GOOD FRIDAY
Pray that you will put others before yourself.

3 April
Give some of your time to doing something for others.

Ponderings On The Epiphany

The visit of the Magi - Time of Revelation

The traditional interpretation of the gifts carried by the seekers for the new-born King of the Jews are well-known: Gold for a King; Frankincense for deity - "God with us"; Myrrh for a death, and death comes to all . . . except God, for God cannot die! So they were an amazing revelation of a unique and Life-Saving event. However, the visit was the precursor of the existential life-saving event that took Mary and Joseph and the toddler, Jesus, into Egypt. Were Joseph's many dreams given to him through his close proximity to deity, to God becoming flesh? But what then of those gifts?

Joseph has been warned in a dream of encroaching danger, of the imperative need to seek refuge in Egypt out of danger's way. Imagine even today if you or I were unexpectedly called to go and live in Chile, New Zealand or Japan. For many of us, in spite of credit cards, the need to find the necessary funds could be crippling. But God had provided the means for Joseph and Mary. I do not believe that in those days for a poor family the gold and frankincense and myrrh would have been hoarded and kept as childhood memorabilia. I believe that they were seen as God's provision for an emergency, as His provision for the needs of the way, to cover the costs of the journey and to provide income while they were in exile. They would be following the ancient 'trade route' and frankincense was a valuable, marketable commodity.

So what is the point of saying something that cuts across deeply held religious beliefs? It is contained very simply in one of the earliest names of God - JEHOVAH-JIREH, "The-Lord-will-provide" or, as The Message renders this, "God-sees-to-it" (Gen22:14).

In Malvern Priory in the past few weeks we have seen the truth of this in the provision of all the necessary funds for the new chairs while some of us were still sorting out how we could put enough together to finance one chair! We have seen it on a vast scale. Therefore, I must say to myself and would say to others, "Why are you fearful, do you have no faith?" (Mark4:40) The details of what I fear are irrelevant if I believe and am trusting in the One Who Calms the Storm, in the One who provides the resources for seemingly horrendous material needs by placing in the hands of Joseph and Mary all that they would need as they fled from home into alien territory.

Therefore, even though 2010 could be worse than 2009, . . . or 2008, or our own particular crisis year, God will provide. Let us ask for that faith which having seen, or not yet seen, believes and trusts.

Sue Appleby

Who's who in the Priory

Meet John and Elizabeth Gilbert



When did you come to Malvern?

John: We actually live over the border in Cradley, and have been living there since 1972 when I was appointed deputy head of St. John's Worcester Primary School. Elizabeth was a peripatetic music teacher for the county.

Why did you come to the Priory?

We came in 1983 because we needed lively meaningful youth groups for our children Katharine and Simon.

How would you describe your relationship with God?

John: God sets the pattern for our lives and gives us a foundation on which everything is based. The Christian faith as presented in the Priory is particularly meaningful because it offers worship in so many different ways. I come from a high church background and Elizabeth from a mixture of nonconformist and evangelical Anglican background.

Elizabeth: *"Seek ye first the kingdom of God and all these things shall be added unto you"* Is a guiding light for me and ties in with what John said.

What do you do in the Priory?

Elizabeth: Serving the chalice as an administrator. Intercessor, and reading the lessons in the services.

John: I am a welcomer and also read the lessons.

Do you have a favourite hymn or chorus?

Elizabeth: I have dozens of them, all Methodist because of the good tunes!

John: We both love "O thou who camest from above". It was one of our wedding hymns. The tune *Hereford* by Samuel S Wesley gained particular significance as we live in the county and have sung in the Hereford contingent of many Three Choirs festivals over the years.

1. *O thou who camest from above
the fire celestial to impart
kindle a flame of sacred love
on the mean altar of my heart.*

2. *There let it for thy glory burn
with inextinguishable blaze,
and trembling to its source return
in humble prayer and fervent praise.*

3. *Jesus, confirm my heart's desire
to work and speak and think for thee;
still let me guard the holy fire
and still stir up the gift in me.*

4. *Ready for all thy perfect will
my acts of faith and love repeat
till death thy endless mercies seal,
and make the sacrifice complete.*
Charles Wesley

Do you have a favourite scripture?

Elizabeth: Romans 8:28-39, because all situations in life are covered. There is the certainty of God looking after you. In 1943 when I was seven an American soldier stationed near Teignmouth who my father invited home gave us a plaque with "*All things work together for good to them that love God*" (verse 28) on it in sparkly writing. This has always stayed with me.

"In quietness and in confidence shall be your strength" Is 30:15, which was my college motto. The fact that it was an Anglican college helped me towards joining the Anglican church which I had always wanted to do, having occasionally attended St. James Teignmouth with my grandparents.

John: "...*underneath are the everlasting arms.*" Deut 33:27, because I realized in life I am not sufficient of myself, and it reminds me that I am not alone, and I can always have support from the Lord, which has been proved to me on many occasions.

What are you passionate about?

John: Railways. I support some preserved steam railways and am a member of the group which in 2008 produced a brand new and very large steam locomotive *Tornado*. Classical and Jazz music, both listening and choral singing.

Elizabeth: Classical music. I play violin and viola, especially in chamber music groups informally with many different friends. In Chandos symphony orchestra I have played second violin since 1979. I share John's passion for railways in a supportive role.

Both: Mountains and fell walking, especially in Austria, and travel. Since 2000 we have been lucky enough to pay five visits to New Zealand, which we loved.

Do you have any desires?

Elizabeth; I would love to be able to afford a really good violin.

John: I would like my singing voice to go on forever, and to see Britain's main railways electrified before I pop my clogs!

Sylviane Outram

Boxing Day Walk

The aim of the Boxing Day Walk was to avoid contributing to the Priory Prayer Vine. Geoff had checked the entire route not 24 hours earlier, but the partial frost overnight had re-arranged the hazards. However, all 19 participants were successful; the 4 four-footed companions were free of any anxiety.

We went up the Seven Dwarves' Staircase behind the Clock Tower, and came out high on the North Hill. With ice underfoot (frequently) and clear sky above we enjoyed the pastel green and blue view and the opportunity for conversation, winding round to the top of Happy Valley and back by Ivy Scar Rock and returned to the welcome of Dorothy's lovely mince pies and hot coffee at Woodgate.

Thanks to Geoff and Dorothy Fearnough for organising yet once again this rather special and particular Christmas treat.

Edwina Hawker

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Priory Organ Recitals

The six recitals in 2009 raised about £1700 for the Priory. The total attendance was about 650. The total raised since 2005, when I started to organise the Organ Recitals, is about £8000 (including a contribution from the sales of the Organ Rebuilding DVD). Thanks to all who supported the recitals and those who helped in many ways.

For 2010 we have five recitals at two-monthly intervals and there are some familiar names including Nicholas Woods, Priory Organist 1996-9 and Andrew Millington (Exeter Cathedral) whose father, Tom, was a Priory chorister for 77 years. Please look out for the flyers at the back of the Priory.

Geoff Fearnough

Our first recital of 2010!

Saturday, 27 February, 12.00 noon

Nicholas Woods
Priory Organist, 1996-9

Popular English Organ Music of yesteryear.
Lollipops by Hollins, Cocker, Howells, Stanford, Sumsion, Walton,
Vaughan Williams and Whitlock.

Full programme on the website: www.malvernprioryorgan.org.uk

Large video screen projection

Retiring collection for Priory funds

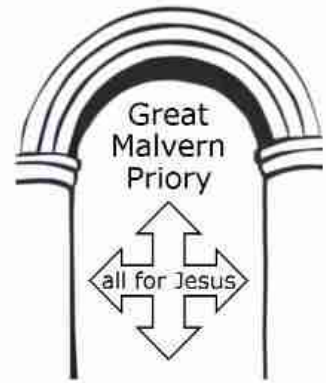
Lunch Box In The Priory

Thursday Lunchtimes from 12.30 – 1.30 pm

Bring your own lunch. Talk/Concert starts at 1 pm

Tea/Coffee available.

Everyone very welcome to come along with friends.



- February 11th Concert by Malvern College including the Jazz Band
- February 25th The Benedictine Rule Talk by the Abbot of Burford Priory – see below
- March 11th Concert by Malvern St. James
- March 25th “Go West” Talk by Sandy Marchant
The Story of the Teme Valley Pilgrimage Project

Background to “The Benedictine Rule Talk”

One of the claims of the ‘reformers’ at the Dissolution of the Monasteries in the 16th century was that they wanted to give back to the people of England the treasures that had been locked up in the monasteries.

Most of the material treasures found their way into the King’s coffers and the land was divided out amongst his supporters, but what of the ‘spiritual treasures’? Ask almost any monk or nun what they most value about the monastic life and they will put well towards the top of their list ‘the recitation of the Divine Office’. The ‘reformers’ took the monastic Office and simplified it into the two Prayer Book services of Morning and Evening Prayer, in English rather than in Latin, and ordered that it be recited daily in every Parish Church or Chapel, and that the curate “shall cause a bell to be tolled thereunto a convenient time before he begin, that the people may come to hear God’s Word, and to pray with him.”

In his short talk Abbot Stuart will take a brief look at how this ‘treasure’ was received by the Church, and go on to share something of his experience of the Divine Office in parish life (he was a parish priest for 20 years before becoming a monk) and its place in a modern Benedictine Community.

What he is really looking forward to is the conversation that will flow from the questions and comments of the folk who are able to be there.

Roger Sutton

Women's World Day of Prayer

In March over three million people will be taking part in an annual day of prayer. It will begin with a service held in the Queen Salote Girls' School in Tonga and continue as a wave of prayer across the world, finishing 35 hours later in Western Samoa. The service this year has been prepared by the women of Cameroon.

The Republic of Cameroon is said to be "Africa in Miniature". It is a country of great cultural diversity, with more than 240 ethnic groups and languages. Many challenges have to be faced as its people try to move into a modern age without losing their distinctive characteristics, but they are still able to praise God with joy and exuberance.

The services have traditionally been prepared by women, but anyone is welcome to attend.

This year in Malvern they will take place on **Friday 5th March:**

2.00 p.m. at Holy Trinity, Link Top

7.30 p.m. at the Friends' Meeting House, Orchard Road

Slides of Cameroon will be shown at 12.30 p.m. in Holy Trinity Lower Parish Hall. Bring your own sandwiches. Tea and Coffee provided.

The speaker at both services will be Canon Stella Vernon who is a member of the National Committee of the Women's World Day of Prayer in Britain.

"Let everything that has breath, praise the Lord."

Elizabeth Deeks

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Tongues lead to faith in Willesden

A true story from *Doing what Jesus did*, with thanks to Matthew Grayshon

A secretary, quiet, unobtrusive, a member of Oak Tree Anglican Fellowship in north London – suddenly in church one day her voice was heard rising above the hymn. As the hymn ended, she continued to sing. Everyone listened in silence. Eventually she finished and sat down. An Iranian came forward, visiting the church with his wife, and said that she had been singing a beautiful song in High Persian to 'the prince of heaven'. 'Who is the prince of heaven?', he asked. Laughing, they explained. The Iranian committed his life to Christ. Afterwards he asked the secretary, 'Where did you learn my language?' He had been a university lecturer, and High Persian is used only amongst the highly educated. She of course had no knowledge of High Persian or anything like it; she was singing in the language of heaven.

Susan Wray

Book Review

“Votewise Now!”, edited by Rose Lynas - £8.99

If you think that today’s political issues are remote from God’s revealed way then you should read this book. It is published by SPCK for the Jubilee Centre whose slogan is “a Biblical vision for public life”. Ten experts who are also Christians take an issue each (e.g. the Economy or Health Care), explain how they see it from God’s point of view, relate this to current issues and suggest how a Christian should respond. This all in 8 or 9 pages each! There follows a 3 page article from a representative of each of the three main political parties arguing why you should vote for them.

In her introduction Rose Lynas shows how Christians, as “a light to the nations around us” should be working with God to resolve conflict, restore relationships, working for justice and just solutions in all situations. The book is timed to be helpful in the lead-up to the general election but it is much more than that. Each of the experts includes a list of references for ‘further reading’. The book is an encouragement to all of us to help our elected leaders in a direction of which God would approve – to help them take a long term view in the better interests of society as a whole.

The expert writing on “The Environment”, is Dr Hilary Marlowe who is actively involved in the Christian charity ‘A Rocha’. We in the Priory supported this charity when David Payne was its Managing Director. Dr Marlowe lists a number of difficult questions which could be useful in talking to our parliamentary candidates. She also mentions a survey carried out in 2007 which asked leading environmentalists and scientists which of 50 things would ‘save the planet’. In second place they put faith groups - “It’s time the world’s faith groups reminded us we have a duty to restore and maintain the ecological balance of the planet”.

The “Tax and Benefits” chapter is one of the most practical and the one on “Housing” presents the current situation very well. The chapter on “Employment” highlights the fact that a quarter of hourly paid employees earn insufficient to keep them out of poverty unless they work long hours each week. The UK has the longest working hours in Europe and three-quarters of working families experience some weekend work with half having at least one member who works regularly at weekends. For the “Christian response” you must read the book.

In the chapter on “Criminal Justice” I was impressed by the statement that biblical justice is transformative. “It is a saving action by God that puts things right”. The author admits that the topic is too complex for all of the different aspects to be covered in his short account but highlights three large areas which, in his view, need to be addressed at the next election.

The book is on sale at the Great Malvern Priory Shop.

John Maycock

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Message From St. Katharina's New Pastor

**Pastor Ulrike Reichardt sends greetings to the Priory Church.
Here are some translated extracts from her letter.**

Dear Malvern Friends and dear brother John Barr,

Thank you very much for your kind greetings at the start of my service here in Wolmirstedt!

I was delighted by your wishes of blessing and by the bond across the miles. I have been minister in the parish of St. Katharina since 1st November. I am thankful for the church's warm reception. The inauguration service which I shared with the new director of music Gerhard Noetzel was very moving.

I grew up in East Germany, where my life was always defined by being a Christian in an atheistic environment. Everything we Christians did or said was political. That shaped me. Even now, 20 years after the fall of the Berlin wall, I see it as a huge gift that I can speak openly and freely about my life and my faith, and can engage in open discussion with other people.

After studying theology and education, I was minister in Suhl / Thüringen for 12 years. Alongside my ministerial duties I undertook some social work and led the pastoral care at a Family Centre, where we engaged in community education for the socially disadvantaged and those on a low income.

I find fewer of these problems in Wolmirstedt, but I bring with me the experience of talking about faith in a secular field.

I would like to help the church to grow inwardly stronger. Together we want to open the way to discover – like the Bethlehem shepherds – the light of Jesus for our life. It would also be good to find a language that speaks to people outside the church.

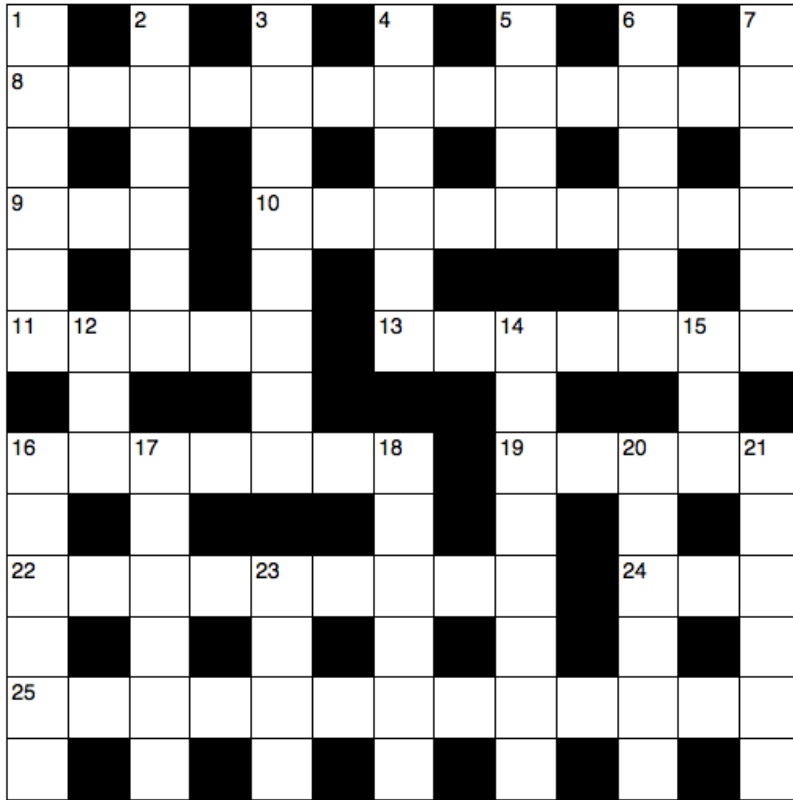
I was very grateful to hear of the partnership between our churches. I look forward to some many-faceted meetings and I am determined to deepen my knowledge of English. I am sure that we will have a lot to tell each other when we meet in Malvern or Wolmirstedt.

I wish you all a blessed Christmas time, and a New Year of confidence and hope.

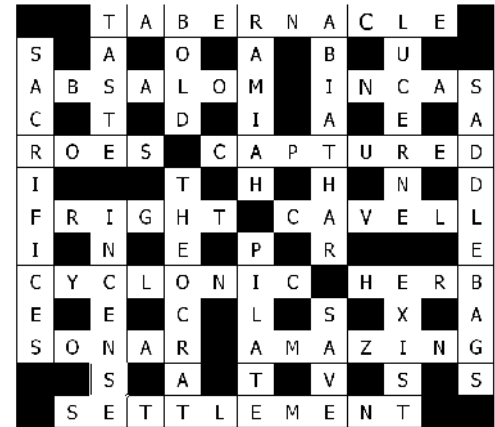
Best wishes,

Ulrike Reichardt

Crossword February 2010



December / January Solution



Across

- 8 Interrogated (Acts 12:19) (5-8)
- 9 'Burn it in a wood fire on the — heap' (Leviticus 4:12) (3)
- 10 Tobit, Judith, Baruch and the books of Esdras and the Maccabees are part of it (9)
- 11 Science fiction (abbrev.) (3-2)
- 13 Clay pit (anag.) (7)
- 16 Went to (John 4:46) (7)
- 19 'Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to — your bodies as living sacrifices' (Romans 12:1) (5)
- 22 David's plea to God concerning those referred to in 14 Down: 'On — — let them escape' (Psalm 56:7) (2,7)
- 24 Royal Automobile Club (1,1,1)
- 25 How the book of Ezekiel refers to God more than 200 times (Ezekiel 2:4) (9,4)

Down

- 1 Seas (Proverbs 8:24) (6)
- 2 One of the sons of Eli the priest, killed in battle by the Philistines (1 Samuel 4:11) (6)
- 3 Specialist in the study of the Muslim religion (8)
- 4 'Do not rebuke an older man harshly, but — him as if he were your father' (1 Timothy 5:1) (6)
- 5 One of Esau's grandsons (Genesis 36:11) (4)
- 6 Taking a chance (colloq.) (2,4)
- 7 God's instructions to the Israelites concerning grain offerings: ' — salt to — your offerings' (Leviticus 2:13) (3,3)
- 12 Confederation of British Industry (1,1,1)
- 14 'All day long they twist my words; they are always — to harm me' (Psalm 56:5) (8)
- 15 The crowd's reaction to Jesus bringing back to life a widow's son in Nain (Luke 7:16) (3)
- 16 Disappear (Psalm 104:35) (6)
- 17 How Jeremiah was likely to die if he wasn't rescued from the cistern where he was imprisoned (Jeremiah 38:9) (6)
- 18 What the prophets do to a wall, with whitewash (Ezekiel 13:10, RSV) (4,2)
- 20 Made by a plough (Job 39:10) (6)
- 21 Noah was relieved when the flood waters continued to — (Genesis 8:5) (6)
- 23 Jesus gave the Twelve the power and authority to do this to diseases (Luke 9:1) (4)

