

June and July 2020



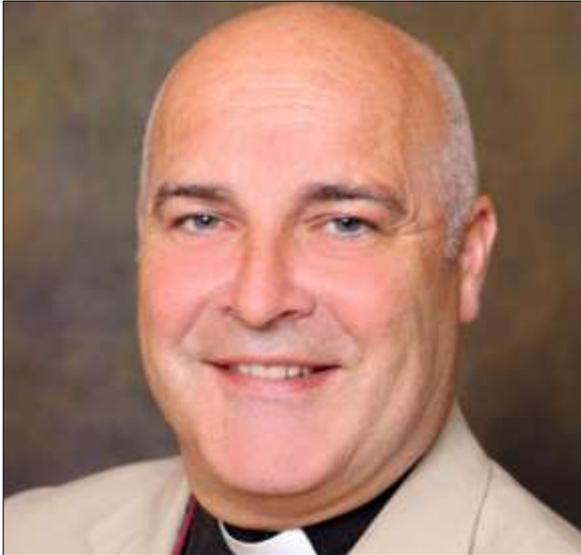
GRIDIRON

The Magazine of the Parish Church of
Saint Laurence Upminster

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Corpus Christi, 11th June



Farewell to Bishop Stephen

The Daily Telegraph reported on the appointment of Bishop Stephen to succeed Archbishop John Sentamu at York.

Stephen Cottrell, Bishop of Chelmsford, a father of three, said “I will receive the baton from Archbishop Sentamu. These aren’t just big shoes to fill, but a big heart and a big vision. However, I am not daunted. Archbishop Sentamu and I have

worked together in mission on many occasions and I hope to build on the work he has pioneered.

Working alongside The Archbishop of Canterbury, I hope to help the church be more joyful and more effective in sharing the gospel and bringing hope and unity to the nation.

Although I was born and grew up in Essex (Leigh-on-Sea), I lived and served in Huddersfield for nine years. I know and love the north of England. Two of our children were born there.

I look forward to returning and being a voice for the north, sharing the liberating good news of the gospel and helping to address the discrepancies of wealth and opportunity that too often favour the south.”

The Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, has welcomed the appointment and said “I am delighted that the Rt Revd Stephen Cottrell has been nominated to become the next Archbishop of York. Archbishop Sentamu’s ministry has been extraordinarily significant; in Bishop Stephen there is a worthy successor.”

Archbishop Sentamu said of Bishop Stephen “He has the gospel in his belly and a tiger in his tank. I am glad he is returning to the northern province where he with others developed the Emmaus course for evangelism, nurture and discipleship. His greatest passion is to share the gospel with everyone in a friendly and accessible way.

His nomination has gladdened my heart and he can rely on my prayers. He and Rebecca will find a warm welcome here at Bishopthorpe and throughout the northern province.”

Stephen Cottrell was educated at the Polytechnic of Central London and trained for the ministry at St Stephen's House, Oxford. He served his title at Christ Church and St Paul's, Forest Hill, in the Diocese of Southwark and was ordained priest in 1985. He studied for an MA with St Mellitus College, which was awarded through Middlesex University.

In 1988, the Rt Revd Cottrell was appointed Priest-in-Charge at St Winifred's in the Diocese of Chichester, with the additional role of Assistant Director of Pastoral Studies and Tutor in Apologetics at Chichester Theological College. In 1993 he was appointed Diocesan Missioner and Bishop's Chaplain for Evangelism in the Diocese of Wakefield, and in 1998 took up the role of Springboard Missioner and Consultant in Evangelism.

In 2001, the Rt Revd Cottrell was appointed the Vice Dean and Canon Pastor of Peterborough Cathedral. He became Bishop of Reading in 2004 and Bishop of Chelmsford in 2010.

He is married to Rebecca and they have three sons. Bishop Stephen is well known for his very readable books, including 'The Things He Carried', 'The Nail', 'The Things He Did' and 'Christ in the Wilderness: reflections on the paintings of Stanley Spencer'.

Thy Kingdom Come 2020

Once again, Christians around the world are called to a particular focus of prayer during the period between Ascension Day and Pentecost, praying that more people would come to a realisation of faith.

Although public activities are not possible this year, people are encouraged to incorporate this focus into their prayer at home. Ideas for supplementing prayer at home, including an augmented reality games/video map for families, can be found here: <https://www.thykingdomcome.global/resources>

In previous years we have marked this time with a prayer walk in conjunction with other churches. If you are going out for exercise, you may like to do this as an individual or household this year, holding in prayer the places and people that you see.





From Fr Roy

'*Ordinary Time resumes*'. This is the greeting in the lectionary on the day after Pentecost. This year Ordinary Time resumes on Monday 1st June. But just what is Ordinary Time?

Put simply, Ordinary Time is that period outside the distinctive seasons of the liturgical year. These seasons are Advent, Christmas, Epiphany, Lent and Easter. In total, Ordinary Time occupies more than half of each year, totalling about thirty-three weeks. There is a short period of Ordinary Time between Candlemas and Ash Wednesday: next year this will last for just two weeks. The main period of Ordinary Time begins on the day after Pentecost and lasts until Advent. As an added complication, though, the November weeks from All Saints to the Sunday before Advent, Christ the King, are now thought of as Kingdom Season.

The original Latin words for the season are *Tempus Per Annum* or '*time throughout the year*'. Ordinary Time falls outside the special liturgical seasons in which the church commemorates the incarnation, crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus Christ. During Ordinary Time however, the church's liturgy reflects many aspects of the mystery of Christ. These weeks may be called Ordinary Time, but they are by no means run-of-the-mill. Certainly, we should not see Ordinary Time as being a less important part of the liturgical year. It is not a time to sit back and take things a bit easier in our worship or our prayers.

In fact, a number of important celebrations fall within Ordinary Time. The long summer period begins with Trinity. Later during Ordinary Time are the celebrations of Corpus Christi, Harvest Festival and of course our own Patronal Festival, the feast day of St Laurence. Throughout the year, the church continues to celebrate the lives of many individual saints, as well as those special occasions in the life of the church, our local community and the nation.

The liturgy during Ordinary Time follows its own pattern. The lectionary often offers two sets of readings for Sundays, one of which is designed to enable the preacher to develop a theme over several weeks. These readings, though, are sometimes interrupted by major feasts which displace the regular lessons and liturgy. A good example this year will be the feast of St Laurence, which will replace the normal Sunday readings.

During Ordinary Time the liturgical colour is green and, on most Sundays and at weekday masses, the priest wears green vestments. This is quite appropriate as green is the most ordinary, that is to say commonly occurring, colour in the natural environment.

Ordinary Time resumes. This year, of course, Ordinary Time may be far from 'ordinary'. As I write this, we remain in 'lockdown' trying to limit the spread of the coronavirus. We cannot meet in Church. We cannot worship together but we can still follow the readings and offer our prayers to God wherever we happen to be on Sunday morning.

Perhaps by the time you read this, things will have changed. We may have re-opened our Church, or at least we may know when that might happen. Ordinary Time resumes as spring gives way to summer. It will end as autumn gives way to winter. Or national life may be very different by then. Whatever the situation, Ordinary Time is not a dull time. It is a time for us to celebrate and explore, in greater detail, the mysteries of Christ in all their fullness.

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Tribute to Don Pusey

by Doreen Hagan



We were all very sad to hear of the passing of Don Pusey, a member of St Laurence Church Choir for five years. I am honoured to have been asked to write a tribute to Don.

I had known him personally for those five years as a member of the choir and as a friend. He and his family were active members of St Laurence Church for many years. He was a lovely, kind man who always had a smile for everyone. He had a very dry sense of humour and I found him very funny at times. He was a keen follower of Tottenham Football team and loved, and was very knowledgeable, about all sports.

He was very much a family man who was very involved in the lives of his children and grandchildren. His family were very musical and his children were members of the church choir when they were growing up. He was always talking about them and very proud of what they had all achieved. I, personally, will miss his presence, standing behind me in the choir and hearing his sweet tenor voice.

He was always cheerful and polite and a real gentleman. I remember when he first joined the choir and we could not find a cassock to fit him, as he was not a particularly tall man. The cassocks were all far too long and I had to cut a lot of material off and sew a large hem in order for his to fit him! We laughed and joked about this.

I am very sorry, and am sure I speak on behalf of all the choir, that we could not attend his funeral in these times, to support his family and pay tribute to him. However, we do hope to honour his memory in some way in the future when we all return to church. Don will be very sadly missed as a valuable member of the St Laurence Church Choir, and as a friend, and all our thoughts and prayers are with his family at this sad time.

Christopher Scarf, RIP

by Chris Mowat

Just about the time when the last edition of Gridiron was going to press, we were notified of the death of Christopher (Chris) Scarf, a former Director of Music here at St Laurence.

Chris took up the post as Director of Music approximately 25 plus years ago, succeeding Ray Johnston who had left for pastures new. He and his wife Margaret and son Peter had moved to Upminster from Dunstable where he had been Master of Music at Dunstable Priory. Following the move, Chris became Head of Music at the Sacred Heart of Mary Girls' School and Margaret taught Religious Studies at the Coopers' Company and Coborn School.

He was an accomplished organist having, in his early years, graduated from Wadham College, Oxford, and then become Assistant Organist at Ely Cathedral under the great Dr Arthur Wills. When he took up the reins at St Laurence, the choir had a good number of boy trebles, which is somewhat of a rarity now in choirs up and down the country. He directed the choir in a hearty and enthusiastic manner and was always mindful of the place of music in the liturgy. His interests led him to study for an MA in Liturgical Music at the then Anglia Polytechnic University and he went on to write a book on 'The Ideal Kingship in the Writings of Charles Williams, C.S. Lewis and J.R.R. Tolkien: Divine Kingship is reflected in Middle-Earth'. He was a great Tolkien fan.

He was always happy to join in and I can remember a superb rendition he did of Alan Bennett's sketch "My Brother Esau is an hairy man, but I myself am a smooth man ..." at a Parish Social. His preaching talents were clearly something he did not pursue in another life!

When he and Margaret retired from teaching, they moved to Torquay where he became organist at St Marychurch before retiring completely. They kept in touch with Upminster, as I believe they would travel up from Devon to go to the dentist. I last saw him through the window of Pizza Express one Thursday evening, enjoying a meal with friends.

He continued the musical tradition of St Laurence during his many years with us and he gave his musical talents for the benefit of so many.

We send our condolences to Margaret and Peter – there is no doubt he is now adding to the music in Heaven.



From the Editors

I hope you, our readers, will appreciate that this issue of *Gridiron* will be different to normal, as it was with the last, which was altered literally on going to print. I would still like you to enjoy reading and find inspiration from some of the prayers and articles that are published. And I hope that you can remember each day and night to pause, lift up your hands and hearts to unite with God's Church over all the earth, through faith, worship and prayer. Thank you and God bless.

Joanne Chapman, Editor

August and September Magazine Deadline

Items for inclusion in the **August and September** edition of *Gridiron* should reach the editorial team by **3rd July**. We would prefer to receive items by e-mail at gridiron@upminsterparish.co.uk. Paper copy is acceptable but should be submitted to us as early as possible. The **August and September** Magazine will be on sale from **26th July**.

Best Laid Plans

We had various activities planned for this summer to raise money for the necessary update of our church premises, but coronavirus stepped in, and at the time of writing there is no end in sight. Not only are the events on hold, but also our church is closed, with all that entails.



However, our Building Improvement Project continues, with our target currently £700,000. Every little helps. Coins in jam jars, cheques made payable to 'PCC of Upminster', etc. sent to the Rectory, posted to the Parish Office or just kept safely until all is open again. We'll get there.

At the Annual Parochial Church Meeting, held on 15th March, the meeting voted in favour of considering Lottery funding for the project. As mentioned previously, we have approached a professional bid writer in the hope that he/she will help us to apply for this and other funding. The next step is to meet with the potential bid writer and introduce him/her to the project but this process has been delayed by coronavirus.

VE Day

by Christine Clifford

On 8th May 1945 there was national rejoicing. Hitler was dead, the Nazis defeated - no more bombs over Britain, no more casualties on the Home Front, no more blackout! Our area had suffered. It was close to Hornchurch Aerodrome; the Thames and the railway line from Southend provided route markers for enemy planes heading for London; these same planes discharged surplus bombs



over Upminster before heading back to Germany. V1 and V2 rockets had wreaked havoc, the last attack in Upminster in mid-March damaging 11 houses in Waldegrave Gardens and killing 5 people.

Many people headed for central London where work stopped and there were crowds in the streets, which later collected outside Buckingham Palace. Closer to home there were flags, street parties, dancing, and bonfires with effigies of Hitler on top. The parties were mainly for children. Furniture was brought out from the houses, and tables and chairs set out in long rows, toddlers in high chairs, wirelesses brought out, spam, jelly, ice cream and pop served - all such treats after nearly six years of war and rationing. Teenagers, many relieved that they wouldn't be called up, danced the night away, some having little memory of when or how they got home.

So the nation gave thanks, but these thanks were tempered by the knowledge of so many mourning their losses, of many men still far from home, of fighting still continuing in the Far East - VJ Day was in mid-August.

The May Bank Holiday on Friday 8th May 2020 was meant to be a national commemoration of the day, 75 years ago, when the Second World War officially ended in Europe. There were to be church services, street parties, interviews with those who experienced it, much of this shown on TV. Only the interviews happened, and then many from the homes of participants, courtesy of computer links. But we will remember.

Time and Space for God

An extract from 'Some Daily Prayers for Church of England People' from the 2010 edition published by SPCK

The essence of prayer is God, who gives Himself to us all the time, whether we are aware of it or not. The essence of life, or the point of life, is to be united to God, and we can only do that as we allow God space in our lives to 'pray in us'.

When we set aside time to pray, God comes to us at the depth of our being, beyond conscious experience, so that He can clothe us head to foot in His holiness.

But our times of prayer, whether it is personal or corporate, is not a time when we 'perform' in order to please God, but time when we come to Him in our spiritual poverty, our lack, ready to let love do its work in us. Prayer truly is God's work; all we can do is allow God the time and space to be about His business.

From 'Pocket Prayers - The Classic Collection' from the 2009 edition published by Church House Publishing

Make us worthy, Lord, to serve our fellow-men
throughout the world who live and die in poverty or hunger.
Give them, through our hands this day their daily bread,
and by our understanding love, give peace and joy.

Mother Teresa of Calcutta

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Continuing Church from our homes

Since no longer meeting together in person, society has turned to technology to keep communities together. Its use has enabled millions to remain connected with family and friends, work or receive schooling, hold meetings and participate in worship, all whilst at home. One video I saw called it 'comfy church'.

Churches quickly responded with many individual parishes streaming daily offices and Sunday worship. The Church of England collaborated to produce an online vigil throughout the night of Easter Eve. If you have not yet had a look then go to <https://www.rumoursofhope.co.uk/> - it's well worth a look.

The Archbishop of Canterbury has recently launched a free national phone line for those without internet connection. 'Daily Hope' offers music, prayers and reflections as well as full worship services at the end of a telephone line. The line is available 24 hours a day and callers will hear a special greeting from the Archbishop before being able to choose from a range of options, including hymns, prayers, reflections and advice on COVID-19. The number is **0800 804 8044** and calls are free.

Church of England material is also available at:

soundcloud.com/the-church-of-england/sets/time-to-pray

www.churchofengland.org/more/media-centre/church-online

www.thykingdomcome.global

St Laurence material at:

www.soundcloud.com/upminsterparish

www.youtube.com/channel/UCLBb6-cKUD2WqcXaCOX1AzA

www.facebook.com/upminsterstlaurence/

Radio and TV on most Sundays:

8.10am BBC Radio 4 'Sunday Worship'

10.45am BBC 1 TV 'Sunday Worship'

1.15pm BBC 1 TV 'Songs of Praise'

3.00pm BBC Radio 3 'Choral Evensong' (repeated Wednesday at 3.30pm)

Some interesting material at:

www.premierchristianradio.com/Shows/Weekday/Ask-NT-Wright-Anything

Beyond Death and Dying

The following is from a leaflet produced by 'Gospel Imprint', who describe themselves as 'the fresh voice in Anglicanism sharing free resources with all Christians who are seeking to learn, worship and witness to the generosity of the Kingdom of God.' See www.gospelimprint.com

The time around someone dying can be very busy for those left behind. Registering the death, getting pieces of paper in order, visits to the undertaker and from the clergy - all have to be juggled at a time when there seem to be a thousand other things to do.

The funeral itself can be stressful: setting the right tone, hoping all will go to plan, skating (not always successfully) over the cracks in relationships, families and memories.

Then after the funeral it can be devastatingly quiet. The phones, which did not seem to stop ringing, have gone silent. The avalanche of people, cards, flowers, and other tributes has stopped. It can be lonely. People seem to avoid you. If they do meet you they seem to be grasping for the right words. Bereavement can make you feel isolated and sad.

This is the time beyond death and dying, a time when the full impact of what has happened hits home. There are many distractions and temptations that present themselves but time and again you come back to the isolation. Into the midst of all this can come some unwelcome if not unexpected guests: your emotions. The trouble with them is that you cannot predict their nature - tears, anger, frustration, depression, and plain numbness - or the time of their arrival. These can vary, sometimes because of the very circumstances of a death.

What does the Christian faith have to offer at times like this? A word of warning: just saying what follows may not make it true for you, and someone else saying it can be annoying.

However, the story of Jesus is one of accompaniment. No one need ever be alone. How can that be? It is a story told in three parts.

First, Jesus was born as one of us. That means something amazing. The all-powerful God, beyond everything and in everything at the same time, was born as a helpless child. By this we can know that God came to share and knows about our life.

Second, Jesus was betrayed to suffer and die a miserable death on the cross at Calvary just outside the city of Jerusalem. That means God knows about pain, suffering and death. This is not an intellectual comprehension. He understands because he went through them in human flesh.

The third aspect is captured in the events of Easter Sunday, events remembered and celebrated by Christians each Sunday and every time they break bread in Holy Communion. Easter marks not only Jesus overcoming death and coming back to life but his staying alive and being with us forever, in our earthly lives and after our deaths.

In the loneliness of grief and mourning that message of hope can feel a long way away. Yet it is there and remains for us, understood like this: God reaches out to each and every one of us in love. It applies to those who have died in the past, to those of us here now, and to all of us forever.

Prayer, difficult as it may seem, can help too. You can ask the priest who took the funeral to pray for you. Or you might like to join other Christians at prayer, especially when they gather to celebrate in the Eucharist the three aspects of the Jesus story: his life, his death, and his life beyond death and dying.

Some traditional prayers, such as the Lord's Prayer or the Hail Mary, can be helpful. Or even ones you make up yourself to hold before God the person you love and see no longer.

The following simple prayers might be useful.

- Rest eternal grant unto (say the person's name), O Lord, and let light perpetual shine upon them.
- Abide with us, Lord Jesus, so that we may abide with you.
- Father of all, we pray to you for those we love but see no longer: grant them your peace; let light perpetual shine upon them; and in your loving wisdom and almighty power, work in them the good purpose of your perfect will; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

This Stations of the Cross poster was made by the St Laurence Adventurers' groups, before 'Lockdown' began, to be displayed in church...



...and while at home, they made some Good Friday craft items. Thank you for sharing them with us.



Giving for Life - Living a Generous Life



Generous giving of our Labour: The challenge to give generously is much wider than money. Christians seek to focus their whole lives on serving God, and we may be called to serve by giving our labour (our time, skills and experience), whether that is full-time or part-time work, or in a voluntary role.

it may well be that we're called to serve in contexts other than the Church - as teachers, medical professionals, carers or in many other professions. Outside of paid work, church members provide a significant proportion of volunteering in the UK - that enables so many of our charities and community groups to function. As we give of our labour, whether in the Church or outside of it, many also find that they, too, are blessed.

Reflect: In the area of giving of time and labour, where are you currently serving God? Might he be calling you to serve differently?

Generous in our Interactions: Sometimes it's easier to be generous in the large things, when we might take time to consider and pray through our response.

As we live out our lives moment by moment, we can be on auto-pilot, with our instincts and values governing our interactions with the people and situations we encounter. Do they lead to us being generous drivers or courteous pedestrians? When we shop, do we consider being generous to those who have made or sell the goods we buy - buying fairtrade for example, or not always seeking the lowest possible price? Do we take the opportunity to brighten peoples' lives with a smile or a kind word?

Reflect: For a day or two, note where your instincts have led you - to generosity or to be somewhat self-centered. You might pray that the Holy Spirit would help you to be generous in the daily interactions of life.

Generosity with our Finances: Whether we're living comfortably, or struggling to get by, we're called to give financially too. How much we are able to give will clearly vary, but it is often those on the lowest incomes who are the most sacrificial of givers. As Christians, the more we are blessed with, the more we are called to give away.

In his second letter to the Corinthians, Paul encourages them to 'excel in the grace of giving' in talking about the collection for the needy Church in Jerusalem (2 Cor. 8:1-15). This means that our financial giving needs to be a

heart response as well as a head decision. As with all aspects of our giving, we are challenged to give freely and joyfully in response to the love, grace and mercy we have received from the Lord.

Reflect: Take stock of your own financial giving. You might like to note your regular giving, and the one-off gifts that you've made recently. Pause to pray about the level of your generosity in relation to your income.

Generous giving of our Expertise: One of the joys of being a part of God's family is that he has blessed us all with different skills and abilities, personalities and gifts. St Paul describes this as being part of the Body in 1 Corinthians, Chapter 12 – 'Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ. Now you are the Body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.' (vs. 12 & 27)

Those gifts and abilities can be contributed to our life together as a Church, but they can also be given in all sorts of areas outside of the Church.

Reflect: What gifts, expertise and abilities has the Holy Spirit given you? How are you contributing these? How might you give these?

If we are to live generously, we will be called into many aspects of giving - time, money, hospitality, and more. So four questions to reflect on our generosity:

L - Labour - in what ways am I giving my time and my labour, whether paid or unpaid?

I - Interactions - am I generous in the small things of life, my daily interactions with other people?

F - Finance - when I set my giving in the context of my income, is the percentage I'm giving away a realistic amount?

E - Expertise - In what ways do I share the skills, gifts and experience I've been given to benefit others, and the Church?

Spend some time reflecting on these, and pray that the Spirit would help you focus on the next step for you in living generously.

Dearest Lord, teach me to be generous; teach me to serve you as you deserve; to give and not to count the cost.

St Ignatius of Loyola (1491-1556)

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Who Will Throw the First Stone?

From BBC Radio 4's 'Prayer for the Day' on 6th March 2008 by Mary Stallard

Sometimes it's the words that are never said that have the greatest power to influence our lives or change us. The worse telling off I ever received as a child was utterly silent. Just remembering it makes me shiver. My friend's mother caught me out doing something we both knew was definitely not allowed, but she said nothing. She looked at me, took my hand, and walked me home. All the way there I thought about what she'd do; I was sure she'd go and speak to my parents. But she didn't: she left me at the front door. For the next few days I waited, in some panic, for my punishment: it never came. I don't believe she ever told anyone. It was a clever response on her part. Nothing else could have made me think so seriously about my behaviour as her silence.

One of the most interesting stories about Jesus tells of his refusal to speak in the face of wrongdoing. A woman who was accused of adultery was brought to him and the teachers of the law wanted Jesus to sanction her stoning. Jesus gave them no answer. He kept them waiting while he bent down and drew in the dust. Eventually he said "Let the one who is without sin throw the first stone", and resumed his silence. The people all drifted away, the elders first, and Jesus and the woman were left alone. He famously told her that he did not condemn her and that she should "...go and sin no more."

Perhaps more significant than Jesus's interaction with this woman is his encounter with the angry crowd. He prompted those who felt heated to reflect on their own actions and he did this without attacking or accusing them. The greatest repentance in this story belongs to the crowd who put down their stones and walked away from violence.



Spirit of integrity, may we find you in the silence we encounter today. If we are tempted to words or actions which may hurt others, guide us instead toward that which builds up and heals. Amen.

Power to the People

by Joanne Chapman

www.everwideningcircles.com is a website dedicated to positive news stories from around the world. One story 'Make the World Better with Your Next Run to the Grocery Store' gave rise to this article.



Earlier this year a visiting preacher talked about global climate change. Subsequently I began making small changes each time I went shopping. I purchased household items and clothes made from natural materials instead of synthetic. The resources used to make them are renewable and they can all be composted when worn out, so no waste. I also started to purposefully look for eco-labels on items and buy groceries that were certified. Of course my small changes will most likely go unnoticed in the worldwide scheme of things, but, just imagine if every household made the same changes...

Some may say this approach is too passive, but I'm no eco-warrior; I don't want to march in a demonstration or sign a petition. For me, making a difference means starting with 'the man in the mirror' - to quote Michael Jackson - and 'make a change'. After all, everything I do has some kind of impact, even just breathing. Singularly I am not likely to make any noticeable difference just by what I purchase - or rather what I don't, but many together can.

There are specialist organizations now working with producers to identify the impact their businesses have and to help them improve; all I needed to do was look for their 'eco-labels'. One example of consumer power is the 'Dolphin Safe' label. It was estimated that as many as 100,000 dolphins were dying in tuna nets each year in the late 1980s, but now, reported dolphin deaths have declined to less than 2,000 per year. This change is down to the Dolphin Safe Programme and also to each person who chose to buy items displaying that label. When suppliers see what consumers are buying they must adjust to accommodate; otherwise they will fail in that marketplace.

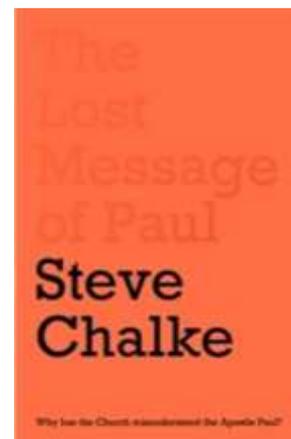
We all need to shop, which means we can all contribute. It only needs to happen once for new habits to start forming, then, before we know it, they are habits. When 'God created... He saw that it was good.' Surely that is all the motivation we need?

To find a whole library of eco-labels go to www.ecolabelindex.com

St Paul: An Incredible Life - And Misunderstood?

Book Review: 'The Lost Message of Paul' by Steve Chalke. SPCK Publishing 2019

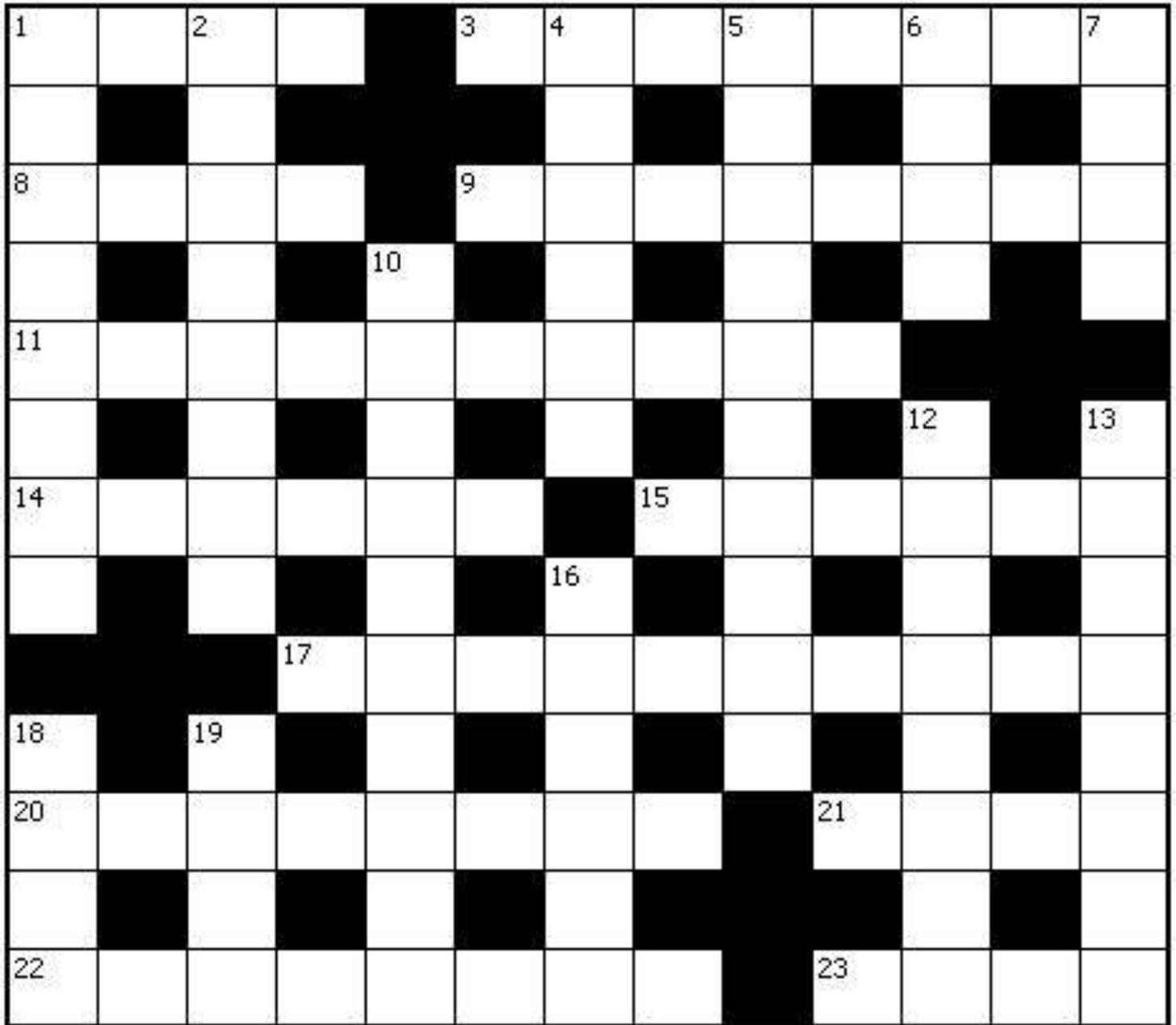
Steve Chalke is a well known Christian broadcaster, author, justice campaigner, social entrepreneur and a former UN Special Advisor on Human Trafficking. In 1985 he founded the Oasis Trust with a vision to build inclusive local communities where everyone is given the opportunity to make a contribution and to achieve their God-given potential. Oasis is now one of the largest charities in the UK, as well as working in a host of other countries to provide housing, education, healthcare and various other community building initiatives.



Steve holds a MBE, an number of honorary fellowships and a doctorate from Staffordshire University, all awarded for his work in social inclusion and justice. He is a Baptist Minister and leads the Oasis Church and charity from their base close to Waterloo Station.

Paul was an amazing evangelist, and his life was one of total commitment to spreading Christ's message and correcting problems in the early Christian Church. Paul, in his own words from 2 Corinthians 11:23-30, describes some of his adventures: "I have worked much harder, been in prison more frequently, been flogged more severely, and been exposed to death again and again. Five times I have received from the Jews the forty lashes minus one. Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was belted with stones, three times I was shipwrecked, I spent a night and a day in the open sea, I have been constantly on the move. I have been in danger from rivers, in danger from bandits, in danger from my fellow Jews, in danger from Gentiles, in danger in the city, in danger in the country, in danger at sea and in danger from false believers. I have laboured and toiled and have often gone without sleep; I have known hunger and thirst and have gone without food; I have been cold and naked. Besides everything else, I face daily the pressure of my concern for all the churches. Who is weak, and I do not feel weak? Who is led into sin, and I do not inwardly burn?" Paul was later shipwrecked again towards the end of his life on his way to Rome to face trial (Acts 27).

This is a fascinating book, setting the message of Paul's revelation of Christ in the context of his own time. This is a very accessible and readable book, no heavy theology and highly recommended.



Across

- 1 See 23 Across
- 3 Where the thief on the cross was told he would be, with Jesus (Luke 23:43) (8)
- 8 Invalid (4)
- 9 Blasphemed (Ezekiel 36:20) (8)
- 11 Adhering to the letter of the law rather than its spirit (Philippians 3:6) (10)
- 14 Shut (Ecclesiastes 12:4) (6)
- 15 'This is how it will be with anyone who ___ up things for himself but is not rich towards God' (Luke 12:21) (6)
- 17 Mary on Isis (anag.) (10)
- 20 Agreement (Hebrews 9:15) (8)

21 Native of, say, Bangkok (4)

22 Deaf fort (anag.) (5-3)

23 and 1 Across

'The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of ___ to work it and take ___ of it' (Genesis 2:15) (4,4)

Down

1 Struggle between opposing forces (Habakkuk 1:3) (8)

2 James defined this as 'looking after orphans and widows in their distress and keeping oneself from being polluted by the world' (James 1:27) (8)

4 'The one I kiss is the man; ___ him' (Matthew 26:48) (6)

5 'Be joyful in hope, patient in ____, faithful in prayer' (Romans 12:12) (10)

6 St Columba's burial place (4)

7 Swirling current of water (4)

10 Loyalty (Isaiah 19:18) (10)

12 'God was pleased through the foolishness of what was ____, to save those who believe' (1 Corinthians 1:21) (8)

13 Camp where the angel of the Lord slew 185,000 men one night (2 Kings 19:35) (8)

16 'There is still ____ ____ ____ Jonathan; he is crippled in both feet' (2 Samuel 9:3) (1,3,2)

18 David Livingstone was one (4)

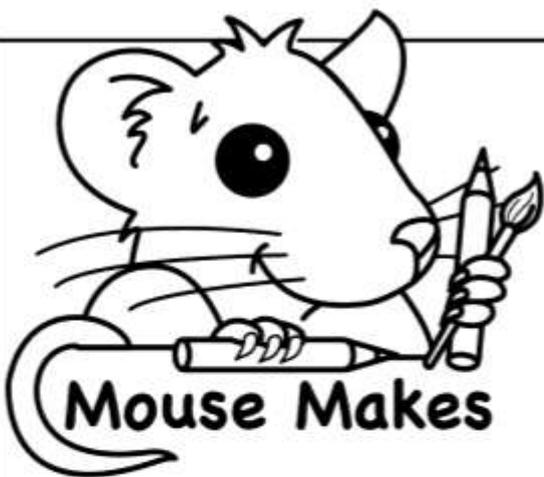
19 Driver and Vehicle Licensing Authority (1,1,1,1)

Answers to the March and April crossword.

ACROSS: 1, Planet. 4, Rugged. 7, True. 8, Augustus. 9, Attitude. 13, Bed. 16, Participation. 17, War. 19, Hillside. 24, Baldhead. 25, Bede. 26, Census. 27, Arisen.

DOWN: 1, Path. 2, Adulterer. 3, Tract. 4, Rigid. 5, Gust. 6, Exude. 10, Irish. 11, Uriel. 12, Esau's. 13, Blindness. 14, Deny. 15, Spew. 18, Awake. 20, Ideas. 21, Lydia. 22, Odes. 23, Lean.

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Mouse Makes

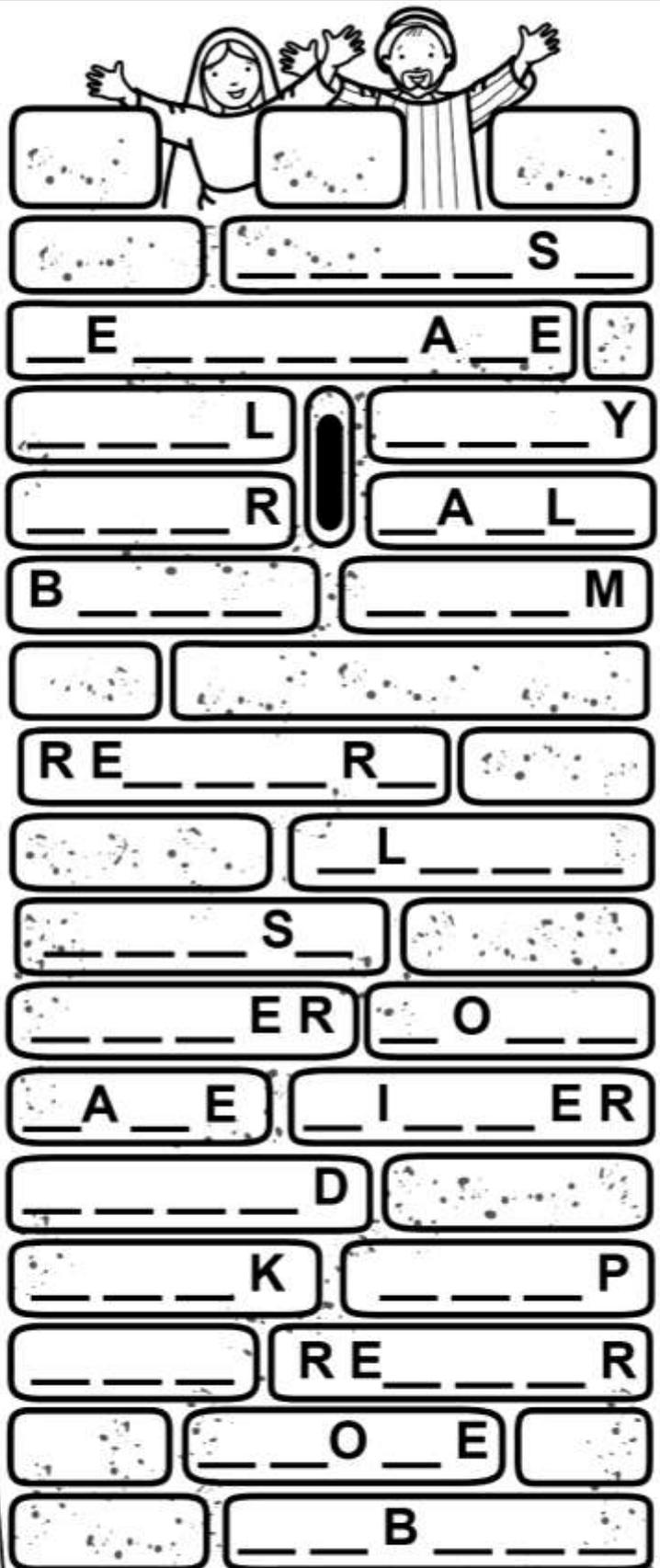
When Nehemiah heard that the walls of Jerusalem were in ruins he sat down and wept. For days he fasted and prayed before God.

Finally the opportunity came for him to return to Jerusalem to rebuild the walls, but it was not going to be easy...

READ Nehemiah's story in the *Old Testament* book of **Nehemiah**, chapters 1-7

Here is Nehemiah's list of all the things that needed to be done to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem. Fill in the missing gaps on the tower to help rebuild the wall.

- | | |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> PRAY | <input type="checkbox"/> GATE |
| <input type="checkbox"/> RUBBLE | <input type="checkbox"/> BEAM |
| <input type="checkbox"/> REPAIR | <input type="checkbox"/> BOLT |
| <input type="checkbox"/> RESTORE | <input type="checkbox"/> BAR |
| <input type="checkbox"/> BUILD | <input type="checkbox"/> STEP |
| <input type="checkbox"/> WORK | <input type="checkbox"/> TOWER |
| <input type="checkbox"/> STONE | <input type="checkbox"/> HOUSE |
| <input type="checkbox"/> TIMBER | <input type="checkbox"/> POOL |
| <input type="checkbox"/> WALLS | <input type="checkbox"/> FINISH |
| <input type="checkbox"/> FLOOR | <input type="checkbox"/> DEDICATE |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ROOF | <input type="checkbox"/> DOOR |
| <input type="checkbox"/> CELEBRATE | |



How many gates were repaired?
Who re-built them?

How long did it take to finish the walls?

Kerry Shipley is a minister at the Church of the Good Shepherd, Collier Row and a leader of the current Course in Christian Studies. The following is taken from a collection of her poems and ponderings 'Thoughts along the way.'

Lord of all creation

Lord of all creation, we look with awe at the beauty and diversity of the world you have made.

In it we see all the aspects of your character and imagine how you drew the sweeps of sand and sea,

The intensity of the colours of flowers and fish, the splendours of mountains and waterfalls, rivers and plains.

We look at the intricacies of life in all of the many forms you created.

All creation proclaims your glory, your love, your attention to details, your immanence, your vastness, your care and compassion.

We are the reflection of all that you are, designed to show the glory of your nature to others.

The world worships you with abandonment – it does not try; it simply is what you created it to be.

May we, too, worship you with the same abandonment, not to try but simply to be what you created us to be – a reflection of all that you are.



And Finally... Something a little light-hearted

- A non-conformist pastor was a strong prohibitionist and had a large placard erected outside his chapel which read 'Drink is your enemy!' Overnight someone added the words 'Love your enemies!'.
- During the Second World War a complaint was made that Winston Churchill had not given the country enough spiritual guidance. When Churchill heard of this he was indignant. 'Since I became Prime Minister,' he said, 'I have appointed not less than six new bishops. What more do they want?'
- During a period of drought a preacher summoned his congregation to attend a special service at which they would all pray for rain. When they were all assembled, he mounted the pulpit and addressed them sadly, 'Brothers and sisters,' he said, 'how can we ask the Lord for rain unless we have faith? I notice that none of you has brought an umbrella.'
- A preacher asked all those of his congregation who wished to go to Heaven to stand up. All rose except one man. Then he asked all those of them to stand who wanted to go to the other place. Nobody moved. Much puzzled, the preacher stared down at the non-co-operator. 'Where do you want to go?' he asked. 'Nowhere', was the reply. 'I like it here.'
- Post Office clerk to old lady posting a parcel containing a Bible: 'Anything breakable in it, Ma'am?' 'Only the Ten Commandments', she replied.
- 'When you and your wife quarrel, does she get hysterical?' 'Worse, she gets historical.'
- Old lady to verger: 'Could you please find me a place near the pulpit?' 'Certainly, madam. Do you find it difficult to hear unless you sit in the front of the Church?' 'Yes, it's because of the agnostics. They're terrible in this church!'
- Some male and female teenagers were shown the sentence 'Woman without her man is a savage' and were asked how it should be punctuated. The boys said it required no punctuation, but the girls punctuated it thus - 'Woman! Without her, man is a savage.'
- If you give a man a fish, he will eat for a day. But if you teach a man to fish, he will bore you to death with endless fishing stories and photos of himself holding a fish, on Facebook.



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