

August and September
2021



GRIDIRON

The Magazine of the Parish Church of
Saint Laurence Upminster

£1



Patronal Festival, Sunday 8th August

Service times

Said Mass	Sunday 09.30	Wednesday 11.00
Said Evensong	Sunday	18.30 via Zoom
Private Prayer	Sunday	15:00 – 16.30
Private Prayer	Thursday	10.00 – 12 noon

At the time of printing we are in the process of responding to changes in Covid-19 restrictions but are yet to clarify exactly what will be happening at St Laurence. The latest information, when known, will be publicised in 'Porchtalk', on the church Facebook page, the website and via our weekly email list. If you do not have access to these places or wish to check the latest situation, please contact Joanne (parish.office@upminsterparish.co.uk) or phone one of the clergy (numbers on inside back page). Thank you.

Baptisms and Wedding Banns

These are administered during public services.
Please contact the Parish Office to make arrangements.

Confessions

By appointment with the clergy.

Please inform the Parish Office, Revd Susannah or Fr Roy of anyone who is ill or in need of a pastoral visit. See back pages for useful telephone numbers.



St Laurence Church Ride & Stride and Heritage Open Day Saturday 11th September 2021

**For details and information contact Rob Brabner
on 01708 457578 or robertbrabner@icloud.com**



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From the Rector

I write this towards the end of June, when we are still waiting to hear how and when the pandemic restrictions will ease. Hopefully, by the time you read this in August, we will be able to interact more freely. Yet, of course, 'freedom' will mean different things to different people. For some it will be a return to life as usual; for many, the effects of the pandemic will continue to persist for months or even years to come, and those effects or other things that have happened during the past eighteen months will mean that they cannot live as freely as they could prior to lockdown.

During this month we celebrate our patron saint, Laurence – someone who willingly gave up his freedom in the service of others because he knew himself to be free in Christ. His role as a deacon in the early church in Rome, serving the needs of the poor, frail and sick, brought him into conflict with the Roman authorities, and ultimately to a painful death. Yet Laurence, in common with many early Christian martyrs, knew that though he might be imprisoned and killed for his witness, the freedom granted through Christ's death and resurrection is eternal.

For Christians, freedom is a gift given in Christ, and a gift that can be used to help us to bear one another's burdens. At different times in our lives, we will all know different degrees of freedom, and different burdens. Following the example of Laurence, seeing where we can use our freedom to help to liberate others can be an important part of what it means for us to follow Jesus. It might be something as simple as being a listening ear for someone who feels burdened by isolation, doing a practical task for someone who is rushed off their feet, or praying for someone who is finding it hard to pray themselves.

As we reflect on the post-pandemic shape of our lives, this, the Collect for the Third Sunday after Trinity, may be a helpful prayer: Almighty God, you have broken the tyranny of sin and have sent the Spirit of your Son into our hearts whereby we call you Father: give us grace to dedicate our freedom to your service, that we and all creation may be brought to the glorious liberty of the children of God; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

With my prayers and best wishes, Susannah.



From the Editors

The abruptness of lockdown, whether agreeable or not, was enforced on everyone. Some people fared well and others not and many are mourning the death of family or friends.

As I edit this issue I find myself concerned about the weeks ahead. I know how dangerous the Covid-19 virus is, how contagious and how indiscriminate it is. Now that the time is nearing when I will need to start mixing with other people again, I find I have many concerns. Yet, however hard I may find it, however much I may want to stay isolated, I know I cannot remain so indefinitely, and I know, too, that if I rely on God for support and put my trust in him, I will find my way.

When people come together to help and support each other the gentle, healing and loving ways of God are revealed. We cannot keep apart forever and if the broken and the poor are the treasures of the Church* then those are the treasures we, as the Church, need to surround ourselves with – we may even be the treasures ourselves as we come with our own brokenness and poverty into God's loving embrace.

Joanne Chapman, Editor.

From the Parish Registers

BAPTISM

We welcome into the family of the church and pray for:

6th June Amelia Beaman

13th June Henry Brown



October and November Magazine Deadline

Items for inclusion in the October and November edition of *Gridiron* should reach the editorial team by **Friday 3rd September**. 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 **October and November Magazine** will be on sale from **Sunday 26th September**.

**Laurence, deacon, martyr, 258, gave the Church's treasured possessions to the poor people of Rome then presented the same people as the true treasures to the Roman authorities.*

From the archives – how times change! *by Chris Mowat*



We are so lucky at St Laurence to have a church choir and organist to enable the longstanding musical tradition to continue – very many churches have no live music but rely on pre-recorded CDs etc.


Over the years the number of voices in the Choir has fluctuated but it has never, in recent times, equalled what it was in 1928. It was almost a mini-choral society as per the photograph!

In 1888 the then organist (a George West) gave a receipt, to the churchwarden, (a Mr Hitch), for his annual fee of £5 'for services rendered as Organist of the Parish Church'. Not quite the recommended level as per the Royal School of Church Music!

Going back even further in time, I found a receipt from a Mr Drew dated 1849 given to the Churchwardens for 'the catching of 10 moles' in the period January to May.

Upminster
7th July 1888

Received of Mr G. Hitch Churchwarden
the sum of Five pounds for Services
rendered as Organist of Parish Church
Xmas 1886 to Xmas 1887
£5. - - -

Geo West 

These days we do not have problems with moles in the churchyard, thank goodness, as that would cause even greater problems to those who cut the grass!

1849 To the Church Wardens of
From J. A. The Parish of Upminster
to James Drew
May - To Latching 10 Moles - 3-4

Received J. A. Drew

Life does move on.

Scouting Memories

by Lance Jackson

Chris Mowat's recent article entitled 'Dens' brought back many memories of immediately after the war when I returned from evacuation in North Wales. Living in a Welsh-speaking family my English vocabulary was very limited; in fact it was so bad that the education authorities allowed me to take my 11-plus six months later than normal.

Joining the Cubs under Fr Ottoway we assembled in the Old Boys' School in Station Road where I rose to the rank of Sixer. Soon after I moved up to the Scouts, which was quite a maturing experience. Cyril Brannigan, Colin Dancy and Dave (Mush) Griffiths did their best in trying to make sensible citizens of us. We were trained to stand up straight, dress properly, respect our elders and to be punctual at all times.

Being vertically challenged, 'Tumbling' and 'British Bulldog' were two pretty frightening exercises for me. The former involved being carried on the back of a larger boy and pulling another off the back of the opposition. Tumbling was simply leaping over the backs of fellow Scouts who were crouching in a row, then somersaulting and landing on the mattress.

My first Summer Camp was at Lyme Regis. The trekcart was loaded with ex-army bell tents. Cooking utensils and food all went by train with twenty or so boys and Rector Hyla. Being my first Summer Camp, I and other new boys were subjected to a blacking ceremony. This involved lying on the trekcart and being covered with black boot polish and given a nickname. The removal of said polish in the nearby stream was not an enjoyable experience.

When our patrol was on cookhouse duty the youngest was allocated the porridge dixey to clean. Finding wood for the fire was another chore, but we all enjoyed the sing-songs around the fire before turning in for the night.

I remember the camp at Salcot-Verley when Fr O'Hallohan took six of us in his Morris Minor. It was a cold weekend but enjoyable. The Rangers and Guides were in the next field but we were not allowed to fraternize.

A Mr Creasy was hired to take on a bugle and drum band and we rehearsed in the Rover Den. Church Parade required the band to march around Upminster before the services.



The Dens were each allocated to a patrol and they had to be kept spotless and were frequently inspected.

Happy memories. The troop is still going strong and helping to make decent young men and women into responsible citizens. Thank goodness for adults who give up their time to lead them.

St Laurence Church Building Improvement Project

Paraphrasing the Scottish poet, Robbie Burns: 'Best laid plans often go awry'. That sums up the situation we find ourselves in regarding making improvements to our church building. It was hoped that by now we'd be well into fundraising, getting grants and making progress with the project, but Covid-19 struck and everything was on hold. As Susannah reported at the 2021 ACPM:



'As 2020 unfolded we all became aware of the huge financial impact which the pandemic was going to have on many sectors of society - including, of course, the charitable sector and those who help to fund it. It is likely that fundraising and securing bids will be considerably harder in the wake of the pandemic.'

Thus the fundraising committee and PCC have been exploring other options. After an inspection, our architect has confirmed that it would be possible to repair and refurbish the sacristy and choir vestry, instead of re-building them. So now we are looking at doing these repairs and at making better use of some spaces in the church, for the benefit of the congregation, community groups and visitors - the starting point of Fr Michael Hore's thinking. An accessible toilet in the church is still an important item in these plans.

Please remember our project in your prayers, and make any donations you can - all are very gratefully received.

If you wish to donate, you may do so online at:

<https://www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/stlaurencerestorationproject>

Now the church is open, there are envelopes available for donations. Cheques should be made payable to 'St Laurence Church Restoration Appeal'

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Prayerwalk21

Hope for Every Home, part of HOPE Together, has recently launched OIKOS, a new prayer walking app, as part of Prayerwalk21. You can find the app free in your app store under OIKOS Outreach.

Hope says that: 'During Covid and lockdown God has taken His church out of the building, reconnected people with their local communities and mobilised us through our daily walk. Now the invitation is to turn the daily walk into a prayer walk. Over the next year the Prayerwalk21 challenge is to pray for the people in every street, every road, and every lane in the UK.'

The OIKOS app is simple to use. To pin a prayer, use your finger to move the map to where you want to pray and tap the screen. You can also pin a 'share' when you have shared faith through a caring action, an invitation, or a conversation for example.

Praying for the people in every street, every road, every lane in the UK is huge but it starts with each of us stepping outside our front doors and praying as part of our day to day lives. There are resources available on the Hope for Every Home website to support you at www.hopeforeveryhome.org.

So, as part of Prayerwalk21, download the OIKOS app. Pray as you walk your local streets and get your friends involved too!

Thank You, Lord, for the gift of each new day, wherever we may be. Thank You that by Your grace, we share all our days with You, secure in all circumstances, when we put our trust in Your precious son, Jesus Christ. In His name we pray. Amen.
by Daphne Kitching

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The Church Recording Society



Church Recording was launched by NADFAS (National Association of Decorative and Fine Arts) in 1973 in response to the challenge from the V&A: 'would it be possible for groups of volunteers to acquire the expertise to record and archive the artefacts inside churches to a professional standard?'.

NADFAS became 'The Arts Society' in 2017 but has subsequently decided not to continue recording details of churches throughout the country - St Laurence Church was recorded back in the year 2000.

To fill the gap a new society, 'The Church Recording Society', has been born, once again a society dependent on volunteers. The name may have changed but the ethos remains the same: 'to provide full and researched records of the interiors and artefacts found inside churches for the benefit of the churches, their communities and various relevant archive bodies.'

When a church has been recorded three copies are prepared, the church retains a copy, the diocese another and The Church Recording Society the third. The record is prepared by volunteers concentrating on the various subjects i.e. stained glass and windows; bells; organ; woodwork; memorials; vestments and altar fabrics; etc.

At St Laurence the record is kept in the Parish Office and is available for consultation via the Rector and the Parish Administrator, Joanne. As with all churches the records do need to be updated from time to time as changes occur.

If anyone in the parish is interested in getting involved with Church Recording please do talk to Rob Brabner, who is a volunteer. Although currently on hold he hopes to get back to work in the autumn to continue recording at the City Church of St Katharine Cree. If you do not wish to travel so far there are more local churches that may need help.

For more detailed information visit: www.churchrecordingsociety.org.uk



Marriage Registers

by Christine Clifford

In May this year, changes were made to how marriages are recorded, the first significant ones since the system for the registration of Births, Marriages and Deaths was set up in 1837. At that time you could only marry in the Church of England or a Register Office, with separate arrangements for Jews and Quakers, and these were recorded in Marriage Registers held by the parish or the local Registry Office: or in the presence of a registrar for Roman Catholics and Non-Conformists. The Church Times report on the changes, headed 'Marriage registers go digital - though not paperless', stated: 'Clergy no longer have responsibility for registering marriages in church, but are required to complete a marriage document and return it to the registrar, who will enter it on a digital database. Canon law dictates, however, that clergy must also continue to keep a physical register.'

Requirements for the formal recording of all marriages had been laid down in 1539 by Henry VIII. At first just the names were recorded in books of blank pages, closely written and mixed up with baptisms and burials, e.g.

Marriage of Thomas Clarke of Aynho and Miriam Borton of Aynho 22 June 1581

Gradually the requirements changed so that the three events were recorded in separate books, and the parish where bride and groom lived was recorded. By 1812 printed books had come into use, names of witnesses were recorded, and whether the marriage took place after banns or by licence, e.g.

John Ayres of this parish, bachelor and farmer, and Elizabeth Gibbs of this parish, spinster, were married in this church by licence with consent of the parties this first day of May in the year One thousand eight hundred and twenty by me (name of officiant).

This marriage was solemnized between us (signatures of groom and bride)

In the presence of (two witnesses signed)

Note: many at the time were illiterate and not able to sign their names, so made their mark.

After July 1837 the addresses of bride and groom were included, as well as the names and occupations of their fathers, in other words the familiar format in use until 4th May this year. These changes were very helpful to family historians, when faced with more than one possibility for a marriage of an ancestor. My great-grandfather's mother's name was Sophia, a popular name

in mid-Victorian England, and each of her five sons named a daughter after their mother; having their father's name and occupation made all the difference. Now the names of the mothers may be recorded, as well as those of step-parents. Couples will still have to sign a marriage document during the service, and this has to be returned to the register office within 21 days. Once this document has been processed, a marriage certificate will be issued to the couple.



Archdeacon's Visitation

In the evening of 23rd June representatives from the parishes in the Havering Deanery met together with our Archdeacon, The Venerable Chris Burke, for the annual visitation service, held this year at St Edward's Church in Romford. The Archdeacon's Visitation is an ancient convention dating back to the early days of the Church of England. This year the service was one of Choral Evensong and our worship was enhanced by a small choir. Sadly, of course, there could be no congregational singing.

The most important part of the service is directed toward the Church Wardens of the various parishes. Firstly, retiring Wardens were thanked for their work in a very difficult year. Then new and continuing Wardens were 'sworn in' by the Archdeacon and commissioned for the work in the year ahead. Susannah and I were able to accompany and support our Church Warden, Jean Keen, as she made her promises. We offer Jean our thanks for all she has done at St. Laurence during this past difficult year with all the changes we have all had to endure. Please pray for her and for her work as Warden in the coming year.

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I love to go a-wandering... Some of our parishioners have been enjoying the great outdoors this June whatever the weather!



'Bluebells' - Chris and Nancy Mowat at Franks Wood on the edge of Upminster

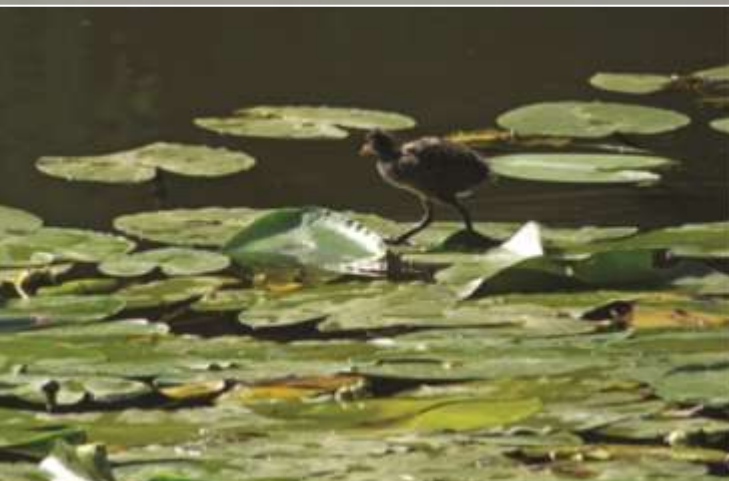
'Swans' – Joanne Chapman at Kennington Park Lake, Aveley



'Walking in the rain' - Hannah and Arlette Wiggins



'Life on a Lilly pad' - Rob Brabner at Parklands



Tadlows, 251 Corbets Tey Road

by Rob Brabner



One of the more unusual survivors of old Upminster is Tadlows situated on the east side of Corbets Tey Road, south of Cranston Park Avenue, on the corner of the modern Tadlows Close. The building is listed Grade II and Historic England date it from 'probably 1791'.

The entry from 'The Story of Upminster - Book 3 - Historic Buildings (II)', published in April 1958, describes the building's history but fails to mention that it was rebuilt in the 1790s. The previous building was clearly a well-established farmhouse which was later was to be incorporated into the Gaynes Manor Estate.

Tadlows stands about 15 yards south of the junction of Cranston Park Avenue and Corbets Tey Road. It was so called from an occupant in 1790. In 1704 it was called Rolfs and contained 40 acres; in 1720 it was called Peacock's. Sir James Esdaile bought it from John Mayor when there were 60 acres of land belonging to it, probably extending to Gaynes Cross. It was afterwards owned by James Nokes (who built the Windmill) when it contained only 20 acres, then by Edward Dawson of Aldcliff Hall, Lancashire, from whom it was purchased by

Revd George Clayton (the Congregational Minister) and was later incorporated into the Gaynes Estate. In June 1874 it was purchased by H.A. Gilliat of Gaynes.

The name of Tadlows is believed to have been acquired from the name of a friend and employee of Sir James Esdaile who occupied the property. He has also been described as the gardener at Gaynes Estate.

The Story of Upminster has an interesting footnote: A sales bill of 1955 describes the property as 'Second floor, 2 spacious bedrooms, landing and wide stairs which lead to the first floor containing three bedrooms and the main landing and stairs which lead to sixth bedroom.' The ground floor is described as 'having a side entrance hall with door leading to a large cellar, two recreation rooms, two kitchens, scullery and usual services.' The house 'stood on a plot having a frontage of approximately 70 feet and 140 feet deep.' It was offered for a price of '£1,850 freehold'. One suspects that the market price these days may be a little higher!

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The Village Church without a Village

by Rob Brabner



St Mary's Church, Buttsbury, lies between Ingatestone and Stock on the Ingatestone Road, overlooking the Wid valley. It is situated in a beautiful and isolated location. Although nothing is known of the original village of Buttsbury, which is believed to have been around or close to the church, its high position

indicates the likely placing of the village. Did it disappear during the 'Black Death' in the 14th century?

The church had a long association with the nuns from St Leonard at Stratford. They regularly came to stay and worship here and theirs was a particularly wealthy and influential convent. The first Rector of Stock Church was a monk from Buttsbury. The parish of Buttsbury, at one time, seems to have had more prominence than Stock, a situation now completely reversed. Buttsbury was incorporated into the benefice of Margaretting with Mountnessing and Buttsbury in 2004.

I visited in early June when most churches were still under Covid restrictions, so I was delighted to find the church open for visitors and private prayer.

St Mary's sits in a delightful churchyard. It has an attractive, bright interior, a short late 15th century nave, a chancel rebuilt in brick but now cemented and a brick west tower with a typical Essex weatherboarded belfry (one bell). The two aisles have East windows with reticulated tracery. All the windows have plain glazing as the stained glass that was in there sustained unrepairable bomb damage in WW2.

The nave roof is high and the crown-post roof in the chancel must have been retained when the rest was rebuilt. The doors are of particular interest: the north door has been identified by Cecil Hewitt* as being of Anglo-Saxon construction with characteristic riveting around the circular inner ledges (partly obscured by late Norman planking), of the same date as the high quality serpent-type ironwork; the door must have had some alterations as it now fits into a pointed Gothic arch. The South door (main entrance) is 14th century and as with the North door, has a small grille 'for the inspection of would-be entrants'.

St Mary's has a roof plank on display which shows part of a medieval painting which includes half an angel. Sadly, I expect the other half must have flown off!

The interior wooden War Memorial claims to be unique as all those who served in the Great War are recorded and not just those who did not come back.

This is a very attractive little church that still holds services and is lovingly maintained. I presume the congregation are from Stock and Ingatestone but it's good to know that such a remote church can still welcome a passing pilgrim.

**The late Cecil Hewitt was a world-renowned expert on church wood and timber work and completely revised dating techniques - he included St Laurence Church Tower as one of the Essex towers in his treatise. Reference: Essex Churches and Chapels: a select guide by the Friends of Essex Churches Trust published by Paul Watkins Publishing 1996 with information from Buttsbury Church website.*

Beautiful Countryside

According to Natural England, thorny scrubs and floodplains should be seen as more beautiful than manicured fields.

Tony Juniper, chair of Natural England, which is the government's adviser for the natural environment, has said a 'cultural revolution' is necessary to help people appreciate the beauty of a messy countryside.



He strongly supports the increasing popularity of 'rewilding' projects which have become a popular way for land managers to give nature a chance. He believes that rewilding can help to heal degraded landscapes and provide better habitat for wildlife.

Tony Juniper has said that the 'orderliness' of much of our British countryside, with neat stone walls, sheep-grazed fields and villages, has often created 'ecological deserts' for wildlife, who starve. 'To ensure our future security, it will be necessary for us to let nature take back some control.'

A post-Brexit plan to reward farmers and other land managers for improving water quality and helping plants and wildlife is expected to replace the EU's Common Agricultural Policy.

Image: Nigel Cox / East Tilbury Marshes / CC BY-SA 2.0

Out of Step

by Kerry Shipley

It's alright to be a misfit,
It's okay to be out of step,
It's good to march to a different drum.

To go to parties, to laugh and sing,
To live on the edge of the inside,
To hold on to the outer ring.

To be off-centre,
To be out of sync,
To be left-footed
in a right-handed world.

To subvert the normal,
to break the rules,
To welcome the different,
To give to all.

To welcome change,
To bring hope and healing,
To be a light in the dark.

To step outside of your comfort zone,
To sing old songs to a brand new tune,
To scatter love everywhere.

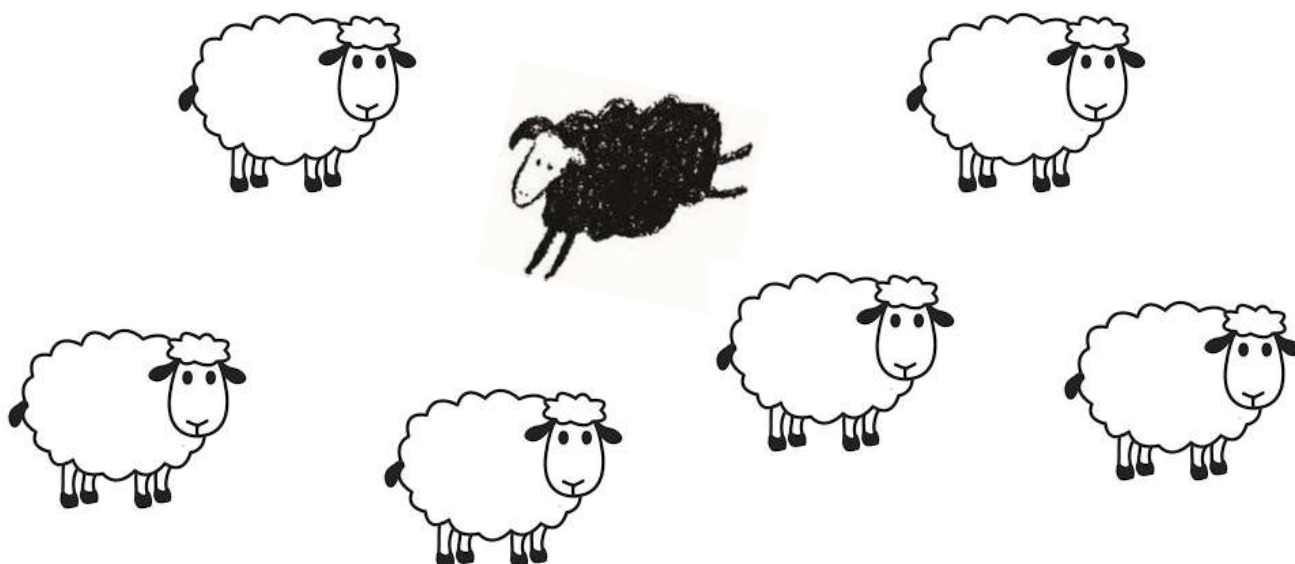
To live in abandonment
to a greater dream,
To listen for the voice of heaven,
To embody it here on earth.

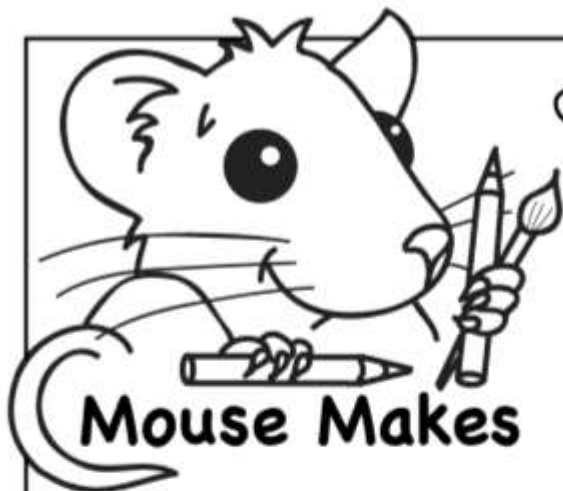
To stand out in the crowd,
to not be seen,
To die to self,
To live in joy.

To tell a new story,
To see with new eyes,
To sweep away lies
and speak the truth.

To jump in the water and swim
upstream,
To be a fool,
To give your life away.

So it's alright to be a misfit,
It's okay to be out of step,
It's good to march to a different drum,
Because that's what Jesus did.





IN THE BEGINNING ...



What did God create in the beginning?

___ V ___
and ___ H ___



What was the first thing God said on the first day?

"Let there be

___ G ___



What did God separate on the second day to create heaven?

___ T ___

How many great lights did God create in the heavens?

What grew on the dry land?

___ N ___ and

___ E ___



READ
Genesis
1:31

B S E A S O N S S
E D A Y F L W O M A N
D L A N D O I A N A C I F
S T H R E E U G T E N R A I O
M V S K Y N R H E A V E N S F
U G O O D I T T R E U A I H R
L Y S I X G W F I V E T M G U
T E A R T H O P S E A I A R I
I A W C A T T L E N A O L O T
P R V E G E T A T I O N S U F
L S X U M O R N I N G E E N U
Y U K F R U I T H G O D E D L
X H U M A N S O B I R D S
F O O D Y H T R E E S
C R E A T U R E S

What did God create to fly above the earth?

___ D ___

What did God make after all the creatures?

___ A ___

Find the answers to the questions in the word search then find all these words too:

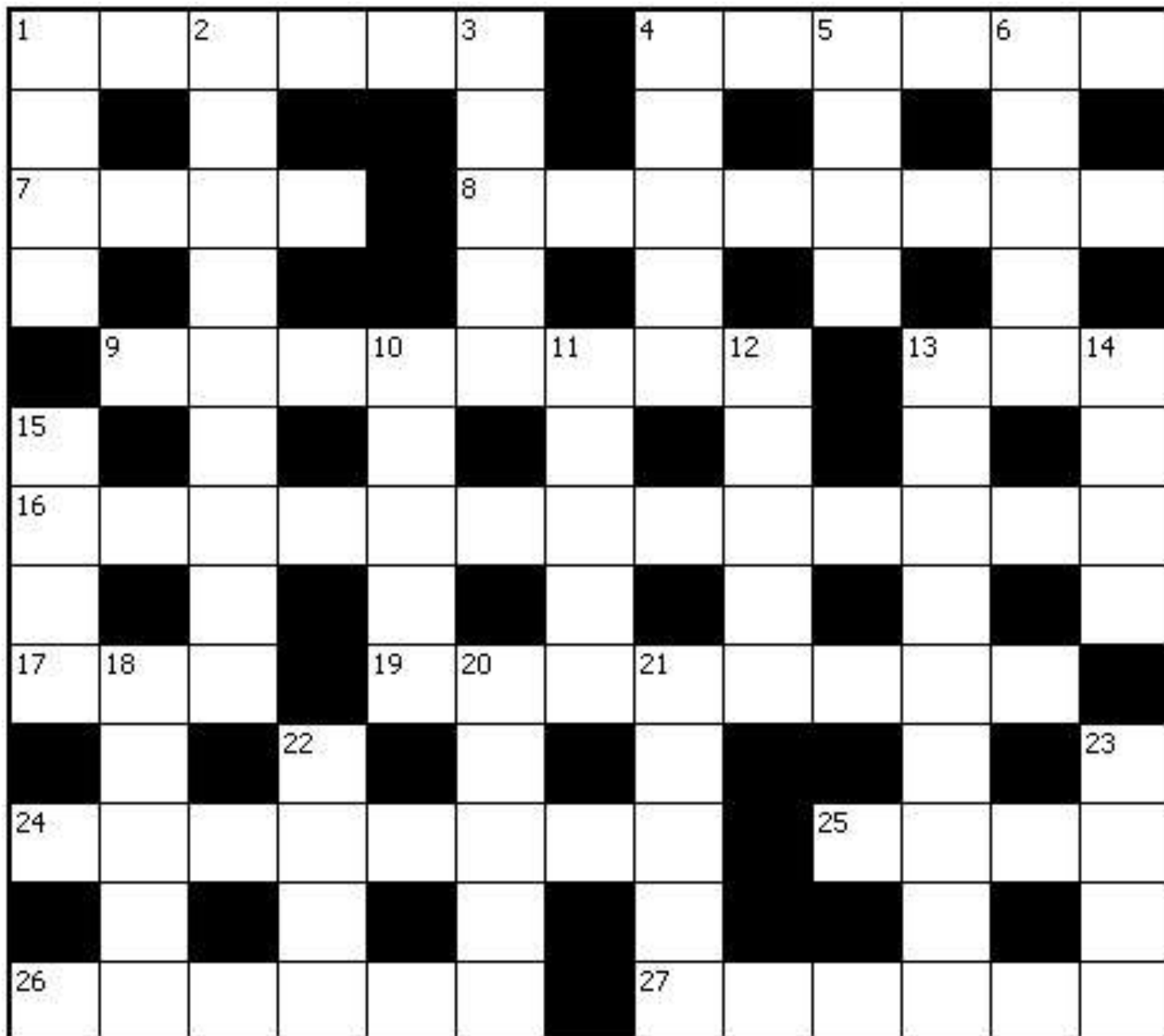


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WOMAN • FRUITFUL • MULTIPLY • FOOD • SIX • GOD • SAW • GOOD





Across

- 1 Of Moses (6)
- 4 'You have been weighed on the ___ and found wanting' (Daniel 5:27) (6)
- 7 Where Jesus performed the first of his miraculous signs (John 2:11) (4)
- 8 Roman emperor who ordered all the Jews to leave Rome (Acts 18:2) (8)
- 9 Member of a conservative Jewish party in the Sanhedrin which believed there was no resurrection (Acts 23:8) (8)
- 13 South London Mission (1,1,1)
- 16 Sure of one's own ability (2 Corinthians 11:17) (4-9)
- 17 'At this the man's face fell He went away ___ , because he had great wealth' (Mark 10:22) (3)
- 19 Airs used (anag.) (8)

- 24 'The Lord is my ____, I shall not be in want' (Psalm 23:1) (8)
 25 'He has sent me to ____ up the broken-hearted' (Isaiah 61:1) (4)
 26 At or towards the rear of a ship (6)
 27 Cross-carrying evangelist and world traveller, ____ Blessitt (6)

Down

- 1 Ridicule (Luke 18:32) (4)
 2 Encased in strapped-on light shoes (Song of Songs 7:1) (9)
 3 Cambridge Inter-Collegiate Christian Union (1,1,1,1,1)
 4 'Father, give me my ____ of your estate' (Luke 15:12) (5)
 5 Assistant (4)
 6 On a par (John 5:18) (5)
 10 Credo (anag.) (5)
 11 Beaten with a rod (5)
 12 The fourth of Job's 'comforters', who deferred making his contribution because of his junior status (Job 32:6) (5)
 13 Chosen as a temple attendant, he was described by Ezra as 'a capable man' (Ezra 8:18) (9)
 14 'Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where ____ and rust destroy' (Matthew 6:19) (4)
 15 Employs (4)
 18 Associated with penitence for sins, along with sackcloth (Matthew 11:21) (5)
 20 Association of South-East Asian Nations (1,1,1,1,1)
 21 Sub-continent to which Baptist missionary pioneer William Carey devoted his life (5)
 22 Recess at east end of a church (4)
 23 One of the nine sons of Beriah (1 Chronicles 8:15) (4)

Answers to the June and July crossword

ACROSS: 1 Ambush; 4 School; 8 Tired; 9 Famines; 10 Citadel; 11 Endor; 12 Atonement; 17 Avert; 19 Oracles; 21 Married; 22 Lance; 23 Rhythm; 24 Hyssop. **DOWN:** 1 Attach; 2 Biretta; 3 Sided; 5 Compete; 6 Owned; 7 Lustre; 9 Falsehood; 13 Ostrich; 14 Talents; 15 Farmer; 16 Asleep; 18 Early; 20 Alley

...And so to Bed

by Mark Coffey

'Fatigue,' said Benjamin Franklin, 'is the best pillow.' Apparently rats sleep for up to 14 hours a day, while elephants and giraffes need only three or four hours a night - that's an hour less kip than Winston Churchill's reported average, though he was an advocate of the afternoon nap.

Aware that, by definition, one cannot consciously enjoy the sensation of sleeping, the philosopher Montaigne had his servant wake him in his chateau so that he could have a good go at it as he fell asleep all over again. Marcel Proust had the first part of his classic work 'In Search of Lost Time' rejected by publishers for taking thirty pages to describe the observations of an insomniac trying to get to sleep. And the Bible even records one, Eutychus, falling out of a window as he dozed off during a sermon of St Paul. Fortunately, the apostolic prayers were heard and he recovered.

Neurological studies have observed volunteer sleepers in brain scanners, and there is some evidence to suggest that as the mind relaxes, a process of clearing up the clutter of our emotions from the previous day goes on. So there's every reason to cut the caffeine intake, get right away from the PC and to relax with a good read, or even Radio 4, before you hit the hay. In our hectic world of apparently ever-increasing productivity, there is wisdom in the words of Jesus who said 'Do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.'

Eternally watchful God who never sleeps or slumbers, we thank You for the gift of sleep; for its renewal and the reminder that, mercifully, there are limitations on the demands of each day. Amen.

Originally broadcast on Radio 4 on 9th February 2010. 'Prayer for the Day Volume II' published by Watkins, an imprint of Watkins Media Ltd in 2016.

And Finally...

A devout old shepherd lost his favourite Bible while he was out looking for a wayward lamb. Three weeks later a sheep walked up to him carrying the Bible in its mouth. The shepherd could not believe his eyes. He took the precious book out of the sheep's mouth, raised his eyes heavenward and exclaimed 'It's a miracle!' 'Not really,' said the sheep, 'your name is written inside the cover.'

Q: Who was the smartest man in the Bible? A: Abraham - he knew a Lot!



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