

50p

May 2023

**GREETINGS
FROM
LUDLOW
METHODIST
CHURCH**



The Coronation of King Charles III, Saturday 6th May

Dear Friends

Day by day, plans and details emerge as preparations continue to be made for the forthcoming Coronation of our King and Queen.

You may have missed that one part of the preparation has already taken place on 3rd March in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem (the site where by tradition Jesus was crucified, buried and rose again). There, oil which came from olives grown on the Mount of Olives was consecrated by the Patriarch of Jerusalem, ready for anointing the King and Queen.

Whether or not we are comfortable with religious symbols, or are worried by any implication that these particular drops of oil convey a special power, we can all surely rejoice at the public statement that our new King's leading of our nation is in some way connected with the teachings, the sacrifice, the victory and the hope of Jesus. The anointing is a reminder of the living presence of Christ with Charles, shaping his kingship. I am confident that amidst the pomp and ceremony, this significance will not go un-noticed for him.



The amazing thing for us is that, although we may make an awful lot less fuss about it, that miraculous presence of the risen Christ is stamped upon us too. We regularly share in the sacrament of Holy Communion to visibly convey the truth. We are God's chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, without robes or crown but endowed with the immense privilege of living lives not alone but with a risen Saviour, known through his Spirit. We too are consecrated for a purpose, endowed wisdom and strength because we belong to Him. Jesus of Bethlehem, Galilee, Golgotha, the Empty Tomb, the Mount of Olives is ours.

If you choose to watch the Coronation and see the moment of the King's anointing, you may choose to support him in prayer, and you might remember – God's done that for me too!

God bless

Kim

Automation

Our creator ordained that we should be good at devising ways to make life easier, whether a piece of flint to open a shell or the wheel to save dragging heavy sledges. Today we invent machines which can do our work for us, particularly any repetitive jobs. Arkwright's Spinning Jenny both speeded things up and reduced drudgery, but it put people out of work, so it naturally was opposed; however, the Luddites were never going to stem the tide of 'progress'. In TV programs like 'In the factory' we see pictures of production lines with robots assembling cars, packing food or other goods and we are seeing a steadily reducing need for human hands, more jobs lost. The first time I was called upon to design a fully automatic machine it was put to work 24 hours a day, spitting out components even overnight while the factory was closed. I was only joining a long line of folk developing machines which work tirelessly, do not stop for lunch, a toilet break, a smoke, or a chat with a colleague. Or go on strike.

Along came the computer. Tasks which took hours of work by highly trained persons are done in seconds by a computer program. A whole new class of workers find themselves redundant. Instead of sitting in an office dictating to a shorthand typist who will type up our letter we can even sit at home and use our computer and printer. In my experience the composition will be much improved by the ease of reviewing and changing what we are trying to say. This present offering is a case in point, being reviewed and amended, and much improved, by contributions from my wife.

AI - Artificial Intelligence, by saving and analysing what we do 'on-line,' can mimic us in lots of ways, sometimes helpful "based on your choice of books you may be interested in..." but sometimes downright dangerous, certainly misleading. It appears to be able to write an essay for you that fools even the experts. There is probably someone who has been awarded a University Degree on the strength of a Chatbot thesis. Could our computers one day make us redundant? Become so good at running things that humans are not needed? We hope not, but our children certainly face a future very, very different from ours, and an economy which somehow supports a population of non-workers.

We were created to be relational people and outside science fiction (one thinks of Mary Shelley's Frankenstein, or the radio play 'Robots') it is hard to visualise even the most advanced device knowing the joys that human life (and even, it seems, some animal life) can bring. Early Methodism had its weekly Class Groups, and all kinds of volunteering is valued partly for the friendships and love to which they can lead. We are, after all, 'made in the image of God', who is love itself. We rejoice with St. Paul that "nothing in all creation – not even AI - can separate us from the love of God in Jesus Christ".

Maurice Coleman

A summary of the Ludlow Food Bank March Report

Showing God's love to people in crisis

If you know someone we could help get them to contact us via a professional such as Connexus, Ludlow Foyer, Citizens Advice, GP, a Church, Hands Together, the Domestic Abuse Team, Social worker or school. We don't check on each applicant's circumstances, as this has been done by those who refer people to us.

So far this year we have given out 201 food parcels which fed 484 people for at least a week, so with repeats, we have fed 379 different people.. By this time last year we had given out 202 parcels. Thank you for your donation of money, food or time.

We can only give to our clients because you give to us.

We have helped 131 single people, 140 couples, 172 children and 41 dependent adults. We have helped 18 homeless people, given 11 parcels to Ukrainian refugees and 1 to a victim of domestic violence. We have fed 37 cats and 49 dogs. As this month sees an increase in the minimum wage and benefits so we hope to see a drop in demand.

The most common need for a parcel is not the delay in receiving benefit payments, but of working people whose wages do not cover their bills. This is a real change as in the past the main reason was delays in benefit payment. Other reasons include health issues, and homelessness.

82 % of those we helped live in the town although we helped some in Craven Arms, Tenbury, Clee Hill and some of the villages.

We also give out one voucher for each person in a family, including babies, redeemable at local butchers, bakers and greengrocers. This gives people the dignity of choice and supports local shops. We are very grateful for the support of local supermarkets and shops, including Aldi, Tesco, Myriad Organics, One Stop, Applegreen, Blue Cross, Sainsbury's, Spar and Teme Leisure.

We are now run the Fuel Poverty Fund which 'tops up' people's energy cards or keys. If you would like to donate some or all of your winter fuel payment to this fund the details are below.

In addition to the food items you donate so far this year we have also spent over £7,000 on food and over £6,000 to redeem vouchers.

The monthly Open Table event is a success, with people enjoying a chat over a hot drink and piece of cake in a warm space. There is also the chance to get some professional advice.

There are lots of volunteering opportunities such as making up parcels, shopping, collecting or delivering, cooking, stock control and helping grant application, so if you would like to help contact Ruth Davies at foodparcelsatlbc@gmail.com or ring 07896 706 109.

Ludlow is not just your street, but also home to real people in genuine need. THANK YOU for your prayerful support and for putting an extra item in your shopping to leave in one of the collecting points around town or in the church vestibule.

Fuel Poverty Fund Sort code 40-30-30, account number 01274554, the account is in the name of Ludlow Baptist Church and please mark the back of your cheque 'fuel poverty fund'.

Ruth Davies



Changing the name from 'St Mark's Parish Church', resulted in a big increase in the number of men attending services

1st May - May Day: unbridled merriment

May is the month when the ancient pagans used to get up to 'all sorts'! The Romans held their festival to honour the mother-goddess Maia, goddess of nature and growth. (May is named after her.) The early Celts celebrated the feast of Beltane, in honour of the sun god, Beli. For centuries in 'Olde England' the people went mad in May. After the hardship of winter, and hunger of early Spring, May was a time of indulgence and unbridled merriment. One Philip Stubbes, writing in 1583, was scandalised: 'for what kissing and bussing, what smooching and slabbering one of another, is not practised?'

Henry VIII went 'maying' on many occasions. Then folk would stay out all night in the dark rain-warm thickets and return in the morning for dancing on the green around the May pole, archery, vaulting, wrestling, and evening bonfires. The Protestant reformers took a strong stand against May Day, and in 1644 May Day was abolished altogether. Many May poles came down - only to go up again at the Restoration, when the first May Day of King Charles's reign was 'the happiest Mayday that hath been many a year in England', according to Pepys.

May Day to most people today brings vague folk memories of a young Queen of the May decorated with garlands and streamers and flowers, a May Pole to weave, Morris dancing, and the intricacies of well dressing at Tissington in Derbyshire. May Day is a medley of natural themes such as sunrise, the advent of summer, growth in nature, and - since 1833 - Robert Owen's vision of a millennium in the future, beginning on May Day, when there would be no more poverty, injustice or cruelty, but harmony and friendship. This is why, in modern times, May Day has become Labour Day, which honours the dignity of workers. And until recently, in communist countries May Day processions were in honour of the achievement of Marxism. There has never been a Christian content to May Day, but nevertheless there is the well-known 6am service on the top of Magdalen Tower at Oxford where a choir sings in the dawn of May Day.

An old May carol includes the lines:

*The life of man is but a span, it flourishes like a flower
We are here today and gone tomorrow - we are dead within an hour.*

There is something of a sadness about it, both in words and tune, as there is about all purely sensuous joy. For May Day is not Easter, and the joys it represents have always been earth-bound and fleeting.

Christian Aid

'Did you enjoy your family's visit?' 'Yes thanks, except the cooker broke down - cooking for seven - no power - total nightmare.' We can all identify with that. We have cookers and expect that a flick of the switch gives us power. How is it in some other parts of the world? In 2015 Christian Aid recognised that in Nigeria there were communities without appropriate appliances for cooking, until Ruth Munter, a widow living in the Amper community, bought an ICS (Improved Cooker Stove). Its purchase reduced what she needed to spend on firewood by 60%. She was able to put the money saved towards her daughter's education - prior to this, any spare money had been needed to feed her 3 children. Now she had money to grow vegetables for her family as well as for selling. Additionally, the cooker needed less firewood, and they burn less than an open fire, with fewer smoke emissions. Rita noticed a significant difference on the effect on her eyes. 'Using ICS has really improved my health in terms of eye problems I had when I was using the old method. Now that I use ICS my eyes feel better.' Another project participant Esther commented 'Using ICS has allowed me more time to attend to my grinding business and make money.'

70% of Nigeria's 170million people rely on traditional fuel wood stores for cooking and heating despite the health dangers they pose. Initially ICS demonstrators and trained volunteers played a big role in helping women like Rita and Esther to decide to buy a stove. Christian Aid worked with their partners in Nigeria to improve the health of poor and marginalised households through the adoption of an ICS. The project aimed to:

1. Increase awareness and knowledge of the benefits when using an ICS through consistent and relevant information and training.
2. Support the emergence of active cooking stove markets, ensuring availability at affordable prices where women had opportunities for setting up small businesses in cook stove commercialisation.

Once established, Christian Aid expanded the project within the Plateau state as well as into neighbouring states. The long-term aim is to replicate the scheme across the whole country with the potential to end energy poverty and its associated deadly health and safety implications. An excellent example of how our donations are used.

We, in common with most churches in the area, are holding a retiring collection during Christian Aid week or please give direct via the Christian Aid website. Next up is the summer coffee morning at St Laurence's – the date for your diary is Thursday August 10. See you there. Thank you for your continuing support.

I happened across an interview with Gyles Brandreth about Easter and he was asked, knowing his love of poetry, what his favourite poem was. He said he had too many but eventually read this one, well worth repeating despite the sixteenth century language.

Sonnet 68 - Easter

Edmund Spenser

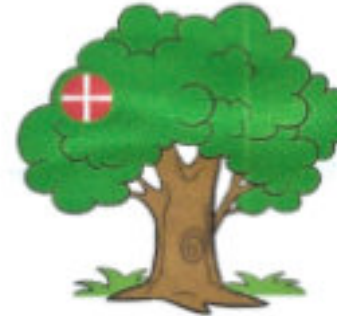
Most glorious Lord of life, that on this day,
Didst make thy triumph over death and sin:
And having harrow'd hell didst bring away
Captivity thence captive, us to win:
This joyous day, dear Lord, with joy begin,
And grant that we for whom thou didst die,
Being with thy dear blood clean wash'd from sin,
May live for ever in felicity.
And that thy love we weighing worthily,
May likewise love thee for the same again:
And for thy sake, that all like dear didst buy,
With love may one another entertain,
So let us love, dear love, like as we ought,
Love is the lesson which the Lord us taught.

John Eadie

Green Pages

A round-up of environmental and climate-change news

*including useful advice about what we can do
and our progress as an Eco-Church*



May 2023

Eco Church Gold Award?

A while ago Ludlow Methodist Church achieved the Eco Church Silver Award, the certificate celebrating this is displayed in the cafe area.

The Gold Award is still in our sights and we would like YOU to be part of this effort. Eco Church has several sections: Worship and teaching; Management of church buildings; Management of church land; Community and global engagement; Lifestyle.

In order to qualify for an Award we must attain the required standard in each of the areas. As featured in a recent 'Green Pages' we are hoping to develop the garden at the front of the cottage to be bird and bee friendly and encourage bio-diversity on our site. We hope to get that started in the autumn. The other section that needs work for the gold award is the church buildings – calculating our carbon footprint and seeing if we have managed to reduce it at all, deciding how to offset our carbon excess, and other things such as changing lighting to LED and improving insulation. Some of these things would be very expensive and some are not possible with our building, so decisions will be needed.

In order to get a Gold Award, as well as ticking the appropriate boxes, an Assessor will visit to check what we have been doing to care for creation and looking towards a zero carbon future. We will arrange a meeting soon to go through the survey and discuss the issues. All are welcome and we hope to get a good number of people together to work on this.

Going Peat-Free in our Gardens

Our homes and gardens have a big role to play in the fight against climate change, and one important thing we can do is to keep our gardens peat free!

Peat stores more carbon per acre than trees do. The peatbogs that lie on the north Shropshire border store over 24 million tonnes of carbon that would otherwise be released into the atmosphere and contribute to climate change. These bogs are now being restored and are fully protected – restoring the peat creates additional depth of peat which in turn stores even more carbon. But the same isn't true for other bogs around Britain, which are under continued pressure due to the huge demand for peat-based gardening products.

Peat has been a major ingredient of garden compost for many years. This peat is dug out of wild places, damaging some of the last remaining peatlands in both the UK and overseas in places like Eastern Europe. This process also releases carbon into the atmosphere, accelerating climate change. Sadly, more than 94% of the UK's lowland peat bogs have been destroyed or damaged, and a wealth of wildlife has disappeared along with it. This vital habitat isn't replaced.

The Shropshire Meres and Mosses have been declared a 'Nature Improvement Area' in order to recognise its landscape character of international importance. This area is a mosaic of wetland types, most notably the Meres and lowland peat bogs (known locally as Mosses) that rival the Lake District and Norfolk Broads in their extent and ecological diversity.

Mosses were formed when flooded shallow hollows, created by retreating glaciers 12,000 years ago, became gradually overgrown with Sphagnum moss which absorbs and acidifies rainwater. Dead plant material is pickled in the acidic water which then forms peat and creates lowland bogs. Only specialised plants and animals can survive on this water-logged peat surface; like the carnivorous sundew plant and the rare white-faced darter dragonfly. Fenns, Whixall and Bettisfield Mosses began growing from Wem Moss and extend to nearly 1,000 acres. Together they are the third largest lowland bog in Britain.

At one time the whole area, including Whixall, would have been an expanse of wetlands surrounding the Mosses. Meres are deep glacial hollows giving them different characteristics to lakes. Some you can hardly avoid (e.g. Ellesmere), but most are hidden away in the hollows of this hummocky post-glacial landscape. Turn off the main roads, down narrow lanes and take to footpaths across the fields to discover these hidden gems. Together these Meres and Mosses and their distinctive wildlife have created an internationally important and richly diverse landscape.

For those interested in the extent of our Methodist Circuit, Welsh End and Bettisfield chapels are in the Mosses area, up in the far north of the circuit.

London Rewilding Projects

Rewilding is the practice of restoring eco-systems to the point where nature can take care of itself, and that includes making the city Green again.

Citizen Zoo (a conservation group focused on community) is working with the Beaver Trust to identify potential sites to reintroduce beavers to London. Among the benefits that beavers bring to our urban habitats are their ability to reduce flood risks, improve water quality, and boost biodiversity. The city of London could see beavers return within two years. The group also plans to introduce water voles, which have lost around 97 percent of their original population in the last 30 years. The voles will be released into their new habitat next spring, bringing numerous benefits to the ecosystem.



Following the most recent seal pupping season, researchers from the Zoological Society of London reported that the Thames was home to 2,866 grey seals and 797 harbour seals. Marine biologists use marine mammals as a barometer of the river's health, with stable numbers indicating good water quality and reliable fish stocks. Despite being protected, seals face many threats, including disease, marine litter, entanglement in abandoned fishing gear and dangers from ship traffic. The thriving seals demonstrate how far the Thames has come since 1950, when it was declared "biologically dead." The Thames is full of life; the water quality has dramatically improved, and with it, the wildlife that belongs there.

Despite this, London's waterways are in a disgraceful state; pollution, sewage, plastic, and oil are all getting swept into the capital's rivers. Thankfully citizens are passionate about improving them. One group has identified the potential for more than 1,000 wetland habitats to be created or rehabilitated. These habitats are being built in collaboration with several local authorities. Besides providing an excellent place for animals, they also act as a sort of filter, preventing plastic waste from entering rivers, storing carbon, breaking down pollutants, and slowing water flows to the main river, reducing flood risk.

The rewilding of London's rivers aims to not only reverse nature's decline but also to become more resilient to the changing climate. We must ensure that our rivers and homes are adapted for the future climate. Recent weather events, such as flooding, are becoming more common and are a symptom that our rivers aren't adapted to the climate.

Grant Brown Happy Eco News

Do you love knitting or crocheting?

Perhaps you've always wanted to learn, or would you like to make your own rather than buying mass produced? Sarah Berry, a member of Ludlow 21, has started an exciting new initiative called 'Knit Zero'.

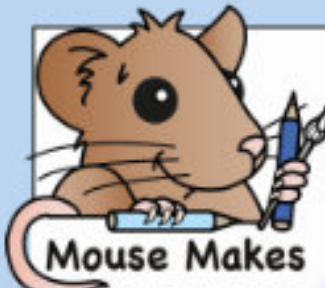
Knit Zero is a café/pub get-together for knitters, crocheters and learners, with a focus on using climate-friendly fibres, and on sharing practical skills for climate resilience, as well as patterns, ideas, cake, etc.

There are two sessions a week: Mondays 7.00-9.00 pm at The Rose and Crown, and Fridays 2.30-4.00 pm at Bill's Kitchen; and when the weather warms up we'll be able to meet outdoors. Sarah will be on hand for practical support if it's wanted (She was previously employed as a textile crafts tutor, and she has published knitting and crochet patterns).

Please contact Sarah if you'd like to come along, by phone 07729 050289 or email: berrysar@googlemail.com



The Green Pages of the Ludlow Methodist Church monthly magazine are brought to you by the Caring for Creation Group. For more information about the group please contact Elizabeth Wright.



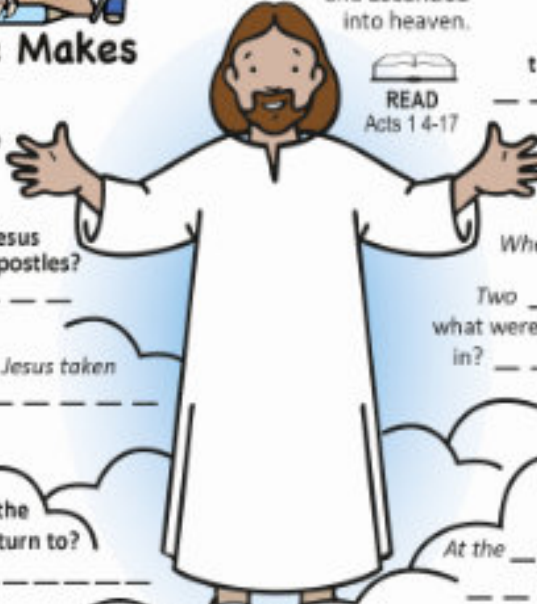
Mouse Makes

Find the answers in the word search

Forty days after His resurrection Jesus appeared to the Apostles one last time. He told them that the Holy Spirit would come, then He blessed them and ascended into heaven.

What did Jesus say that the Holy Spirit would give the Apostles?

to be Jesus' witnesses. Acts 1:8



READ
Acts 1 4-17

What did Jesus from the Apostles?
a _____
Acts 1:9

Where was Jesus taken up to?
Luke 24:51

Where did the Apostles return to?
Acts 1:12

Who appeared to the Apostles?
Two _____ and what were they dressed in?
Acts 1:10

Where is Jesus seated?
At the _____ of God.
Mark 16:19

W	G	A	C	J	S	A	P	O	S	T	L	E	S	D	C	M	P
I	A	B	L	E	S	S	E	D	H	E	A	V	E	N	H	E	R
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JESUS • CHRIST • FORTY DAYS • APOSTLES • ASCENSION • TAKEN • LOOKING
SKY • RETURN • BLESSED • WORSHIPPED • JOY • PRAYER • GOD • SAT
GATHERED • WITNESSES • HOLY SPIRIT

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The Coronation of King Charles III

On 6th May His Majesty King Charles III will be crowned alongside Camilla, The Queen Consort, in Westminster Abbey. How can we pray for him, as he approaches this important event? Paul says: *'I urge, then, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness.'* (1 Timothy 2:1,2).

For God's presence - to guide every aspect of King Charles' life as he prepares for his Coronation and future roles. At his Accession, he was proclaimed Defender of the Faith, the Supreme Governor of the Church of England. Charles has talked about *'the Sovereign's particular relationship and responsibility towards the Church of England - the Church in which my own faith is so deeply rooted.'*

For God's wisdom - as he provides leadership that will honour God and promote the wellbeing of our society. King Solomon prayed for wisdom for himself: *'So give your servant a discerning heart to govern your people and to distinguish between right and wrong.'* (1 Kings 3:9).

For God's love - to strengthen all relationships within the Royal Family; for reconciliation, understanding, forgiveness and good communication.

For God's purpose - to be fulfilled through the work of the King and Queen Consort and their family in the years to come. He has said: *'and whatever may be your background or beliefs, I shall endeavour to serve you with loyalty, respect and love, as I have throughout my life.'*

A Prayer for the new King:

Everlasting God, we pray for our new King. Bless his reign and the life of our nation. Help us to work together so that truth and justice, harmony and fairness flourish among us; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

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4		1	7					
	8			9			7	
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With the Local Elections in mind this month:

1. If you want to find out what's wrong with a man or woman, elect them to public office.
2. There are two sides to every question, and if you want to be popular, you take both.
3. Experience is something you don't get until just after you need it.

The poor will always be with you.....

A jar of very expensive ointment is broken open to anoint Jesus, and Judas, the group's treasurer (well, he carried the cash bag) and therefore, it was said, had a vested interest in such things, protests that it could have been sold and the money given to the poor. Our Lord's response – there will be plenty of opportunities to support the poor. I am about to leave you, but the poor will still be poor and still need your help. Jesus' meaning is quite clear, but take these words out of context, as many have done, and they can mean the opposite. There will always be the poor, it's part of the natural order of things, so why bother?

Well, it's certainly part of the natural order, for God has created a world in which predatory species (including human) survive by killing and eating the weaker ones, a world where even within each community there is a 'pecking order', where "it's only natural" the those gifted with ability and ambition will rise to the top, especially if they happen to be in the right place at the right time – for it's also true that some things just happen.

But Jesus most certainly did not mean that it is all right for some to become obscenely rich while others are desperately poor. One who recognised this was Andrew Carnegie, born in Dunfermline, emigrated to America and became extremely wealthy, though it's on record that his workers were badly exploited to help him achieve this. However, "To die rich, is to die disgraced" he said, and spent years donating his wealth to worthy causes, among others his birthplace. They usually have the Carnegie name attached though, and as Jesus said of the hypocrites, "They have their reward".

It's encouraging to see some of our wealthiest folk picking up the theme and making an endeavour not merely to dispose of money but make a real effort to see that it gets to those who need it most. So much of our aid is diverted to other, less worthy uses. I find it pleasing that Bill Gates is travelling around the world looking for such projects and making personal contact with them.

Our South African friends took us along to the town rubbish dump to see what they did amongst the folk who live there, in rudimentary shelters, made from what others have discarded, scraping some sort of living by recycling what could be sold. No lack of ambition when men walk great distances in search of work, or of enterprise when they dress discarded brick and sell them. Yet a great gulf between my comfortable lifestyle and theirs; so I am rich? And Jesus said to the rich young man "Go and sell all you have and give to the poor". Ouch.

District Pilgrimage in The Golden Valley

This year's District Pilgrimage was led by our Chair, Rachel Parkinson, and Deacon Carys from Wem. There were eleven of us, gathered from Birmingham, West Bromwich, Stafford, Telford and from Bellevue, Leominster and Ludlow in our Circuit. Some had been on previous pilgrimages and some were new to the experience.

We started from St John's Methodist Church in Hereford. (They sent us off with a bacon sandwich breakfast!) thence to Hereford Cathedral where we had a short tour and a blessing. Our first day's walk took us to Madley via Belmont Abbey. Although we slept at the church, some of the party cosy in the crypt, Lynne and Cath welcomed us with tea and biscuits at the Chapel, and we all shared a couple of hymns and a prayer.

Next day we walked to Dorstone via Tyberton, Moccas and Bredwardine. This was the longest day with a good climb over Dorstone Hill. It was also the wettest! Next morning we set off for lunch at Peterchurch where the wonderful Norman Church now includes a café, public library and information point: a real community asset, then onto Michaelchurch Escley. There were no cooking facilities here so we ate in the pub. Then to Clodock where some of us had a dip in the River Monnow. On our last day we walked to Ewyas Harold where Rev Eric Locke gave us tea and coffee in his garden before we went onto Pontrilas to catch the bus to Hereford. (Most of us used our Bus Passes!)

Each day began and ended with a meditation centered round recognizing God through our senses. These were led by Deacon Carys. We sang a hymn in each church we visited and many of us said our individual, private prayers. Rachel celebrated Communion in a fields carpeted with celandines. It was a fine day and the sun was shining. God's presence was close and real, and not only in the natural world. I found some of my fellow travelers truly inspirational: the whole experience a great blessing.

Adrian Williams

The hymns of the Wesleys

The Church calendar celebrates the lives of John and Charles Wesley. John's great gift to the Christian cause was the little matter of founding the world-wide movement known as Methodism. His brother Charles had an equally profound impact through his hymns. He wrote over 6,000, most of which aren't sung nowadays, but among the ones we do still sing are all-time favourites – 'Love divine, all loves excelling', 'O for a thousand tongues to sing'. 'Jesu lover of my soul', 'Hark the herald angels sing' – and scores more.

40 years ago, almost everybody knew quite a lot of hymns, but sadly that's no longer true. Traditional hymns aren't usually sung at school assemblies, not even in church schools, and while the audience for 'Songs of Praise' on BBC TV is substantial, most of those watching are older people.

Nowadays, with only about five per cent of the population going to church, there is inevitably a lack of familiarity with hymns of any kind. Christmas carols are an exception, as is 'Jerusalem' and 'Amazing Grace', because they are frequently heard outside church.

Singing hymns is a wonderful experience at its best – just ask a Welsh rugby crowd singing 'Bread of heaven'! It seems a pity to lose it.

It's not a bad idea to take ten minutes and think about what is your favourite hymn – ancient or modern doesn't matter. Then try singing it in the bath or under the shower – a very purifying experience!

Thank you, Edith!

Many, many thanks, Edith, for 25 years of producing the church magazine, keeping us informed and up to date. It's been much appreciated.



Village Life & COVID-19

Having rampaged around our planet for over three years, causing much death, grief and devastation, coronavirus finally caught up with Ron and me during Holy Week. According to all the pundits, the current strain is nothing like the original – just a heavy cold, no problem! Oh really? Tell that to my aching chest muscles. Most likely, of course, in reading this, you will remember from your own experience.

So, what is my message today? One of recognition and gratitude for the help we received during our struggle. Jackie, receptionist at our doctors' surgery five doors down the main road, came away from her safe environment to place our normal prescriptions on the wall outside the front door for me to pick up. Before that, there was the other Barbara G who lives opposite, returning to her own front-door having collected her papers, spotted my be-masked face and hearing the resonance of the cough volunteered to collect the medication on our behalf. Friends rang to undertake shopping and offer succour - at a distance certainly, yet the sympathy expressed was gratefully received. The supermarket delivery chap who donned protective garb but didn't hesitate to carry the heavy crates to our threshold, contrary to set Covid procedure. Then there was bread – organised by Liz, who runs the village shop, who had a gluten-free loaf spare 'with my name on it!'. Even a neighbour, who is chair of the Parish Council and has far more important matters to deal with, rang to ask if we needed anything, then minutes later delivered a large, sliced loaf for Ron.

And the moral of this tale? God's spirit is all around us, and we can see and revel in it because of the many kindnesses we receive from the most unexpected sources – even in this sleepy North Herefordshire village of Orleton. And long may that last. God be praised.



BMG.

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