

# CHALLENGE



**The Parish Magazine of St Mary Sandbach**

February and March 2023

50p Volume 59 No 689



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# February and March 2023

Sunday 5th February	8.00 am	Holy Communion
3 before Lent	10.00 am	Family Worship
Sunday 12th February	8.00 am	Holy Communion
2 before Lent	10.00 am	Parish Eucharist
Sunday 19th February	8.00 am	Holy Communion
1 before Lent	10.00 am	Parish Eucharist
Wednesday 22nd February	6.30 pm	Service with
Ash Wednesday		Bishop Sam
Sunday 26th February	8.00 am	Holy Communion
Lent 1	10.00 am	Parish Eucharist
	3.30 pm	Christopher
		Chorale
		Evensong
Sunday 5th March	8.00 am	Holy Communion
Lent 2	10.00 am	Family Worship
	5.00 pm	World Day of
		Prayer Service
Sunday 12th March	8.00 am	Holy Communion
Lent 3	10.00 am	Parish Eucharist

Sunday 19th March	8.00 am	Holy Communion
Mothering Sunday	10.00 am	Parish Eucharist
Sunday 26th March	8.00 am	Holy Communion
Lent 5	10.00 am	Parish Eucharist
	3.30 pm	Choral Evensong
Sunday 2nd April	8.00 am	Holy Communion
Palm Sunday	10.00 am	Family Worship and Baptism

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## Registers

### Funerals

19th December Dennis Thorley  
 11th January Lena Jones  
 12th January Kevin Flowers  
 20th January Joan Stanway

## World Day of Prayer - 3rd MARCH

3rd March 2pm - Service at St Winefride's. Sandbach

5th March 4pm - Service at St Mary's, Sandbach

Prepared By The Christian Women of Taiwan

**Theme: I have heard about your faith**

St Mary's Church, High Street, Sandbach, CW11 1AN

**W**e have been going through a season of praying and dreaming with God about the kind of church and community that we think God would like us to be. Our church council went away together for a morning to chew over some of these questions, in order to help us have clarity.

What has struck me in the process is that we are part of a bigger story, a bigger picture if you like. We are not a bunch of individuals with our own calling, we are not even just a single church with its own calling, we are not just part of a diocese, we are all those things but we are much more; we are part of God's Kingdom and the wider body of Christ. We must know this and appreciate this to get the full view to understand the context of the questions in order to see the way ahead.

The important bit to hold onto is the part about the bigger picture.

It led me to thinking that everyone has a bigger story to our life and we may never see or know it. Whenever we meet someone new or build a new relationship with someone, we can choose to tell as little or as much about ourselves as we wish. Sometimes we make conscious decisions about what we divulge and other times, over the course of a friendship, more and more will be shared and discovered. What this means is that we never really know the bigger picture of other people's lives. What makes them who they are, what experiences they have had, what skills and knowledge they hold. Not only do we not know but often we can make assumptions or guess. I had a conversation with someone today, who in conversation told me what they did in their working life. I never would have guessed or imagined, and it enriched the picture I have created about them and what I know of them. Fascinating.

It's important that we remember what we don't know and remember that we never have the full picture. As we know from our own lives, there are always struggles and burdens amongst even the happiest of times. We must not forget that someone we meet could be holding something heavy or painful, they might not want to share it or talk about it, but it doesn't mean it's not there. Trying to remember what we don't know will help us to be more generous and compassionate in our interactions with people, particularly those we don't know so well.

However, we should also remember that God does know the bigger picture, he doesn't need to remember what he doesn't know. God has a full disclosure to the very depths of our lives. This is not to be seen as a threat but to be understood as a comfort. We can be completely ourselves and completely known as we are completely loved.

When we feel unknown by those around us, consider the words of this psalm. Let's also try to remember we can never know each other as God knows us but we can try to remember what we don't know.

### **Psalm 139: 1-5**

You have searched me, Lord,  
and you know me.

You know when I sit and when I rise;  
you perceive my thoughts from afar.

You discern my going out and my lying down;  
you are familiar with all my ways.

Before a word is on my tongue  
you, Lord, know it completely.

You hem me in behind and before,  
and you lay your hand upon me.

# From the Editor

Welcome to this bumper two month edition of Challenge. I hope you enjoy it. I would gladly welcome any feedback you have on the magazine.

Articles. I am grateful for the people who write regular articles for the magazine, it makes for a good read and makes my life a lot easier. If anyone wishes to write the odd article I will welcome it with open arms. This month David Ottley has started a 3 monthly series on “Human Power”.

Proof Reading. I would like to thank a couple of my proof readers who have now retired. I am looking for a couple of new volunteers to take it in turns. If you are interested please get in touch.

Advertisements. The advertisements will be up for renewal from the May edition. If you know of anyone who would like an advert on the cover (£27 small; £54 large - per year) or a one-off full page advert within the magazine (£12 per issue) than please let me know. From the May edition the advertisements can be produced in colour.

**The deadline for the next edition is  
Sunday 12th March**

## **In this Issue.....**

<b>Chalk</b>	<b>Fairtrade</b>	<b>Human Power</b>
<b>Prayers</b>	<b>Concerts</b>	<b>Bells</b>

<b>Regular events and services</b>		
<b>Tuesday and Thursday</b>	9.30 am	Morning Prayer
<b>Mondays</b>	9.00 am	Tiddlers - Praise & Play
<b>Tuesdays</b>	7.00 pm	Prayer Meeting in church
<b>Wednesdays</b>	11.00 am	Holy Communion
<b>Thursdays</b>	9.00 am	Thursday Teas (except first Thursday of month)
<b>Fridays NEW TIME</b>	6.15 pm	Choir Practice - contact Kevin for details (760778)
<b>First Thursday of month</b>	10.30 am	Bereavement Group - contact Bee for details
<b>First Sunday of the month</b>	9.15 am	Music group practice before Family Worship - contact Heather for details (768744)

<b>Coffee Rota</b>	
5th February	Janet Hides and Christine Hirst
12th February	Jim Thompson and Rosemary Wilkinson
19th February	Jean Richardson and Iris Kenilworth
26th February	Stella Craven and Angela Speedy
5th March	Kath Davies and Kath Beech
12th March	Janet Hides and Christine Hirst
19th March	Jim Thompson and Rosemary Wilkinson
26th March	Jean Richardson and Iris Kenilworth





# The gates of hell

**T**he Russian invasion of Ukraine has “opened the gates of hell” and unleashed evil around the world.

So said the Archbishop of Canterbury during a recent interview on BBC1’s *Sunday with Laura Kuennsberg*. He told of how, during his recent visit to Ukraine, he had seen the mass grave in Bucha, and heard of the massacres and torture carried out by the occupying Russian forces. The Russians are driven by “an ideology of conquest” he said, their only goal is “getting historic Ukraine back.”

Justin Welby said it was important for Britain to continue to support Ukrainian resistance, and to recognise that “you can’t talk about reconciliation when the guns are firing, because people are just concentrating on whether they’re alive for the next 20 minutes.”

He said how the Ukrainians had told him that “for us, that word (reconciliation) means surrender, and we’re not going to do that’.” There was a way forward, said the Archbishop: “and that’s withdrawal and ceasefire by Russian forces.”

## Children’s Society Boxes

**F**inal request.



Please could you bring your Children's Society boxes into church for counting.

If you need the box collecting please contact **Stella (763801)**.

**Dear Lord,**

Here we are in February – month of cold days, winter days, but days that promise hope and signs of Spring. Snowdrops and lengthening light; echoes of the hope and light that Jesus brought to Simeon and Anna all those years ago in the Temple.

Thank you, Lord, that you always bring light, you always bring hope and peace and joy when we put our trust in Jesus, our Saviour. Jesus, Lord of all our days and seasons. In His name we thank you, as we look to His Light. Amen.

**Daphne Kitching**

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## **Christmas services surge**

**A**t the end of last year, the number of Christmas services advertised on the Church of England's church-finding website were up by more than a quarter on pre-pandemic levels.

The *A Church Near You* website was advertising just over 23,850 services and other gatherings. And search engines saw a surge in people searching for phrases such as 'midnight mass'. All in all, an estimated 682,000 people visited *AChurchNearYou.com* in December, and around 80 per cent of these visitors were on the site for the first time.

The next Choral Evensongs are:

**Sunday 26th February and March 3.30 pm**

# Spotlight on a casualty buried in St Mary's churchyard

(by Pete Merrill)

Former veteran soldier Abraham Oakes died on 15th January 1918, aged 47. He is remembered on the Sandbach Cobbles and Brunner Mond War Memorials. He is registered with the Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC) as a war casualty and is buried in the south-west plot of St Mary's churchyard, Row 8, Grave 52.

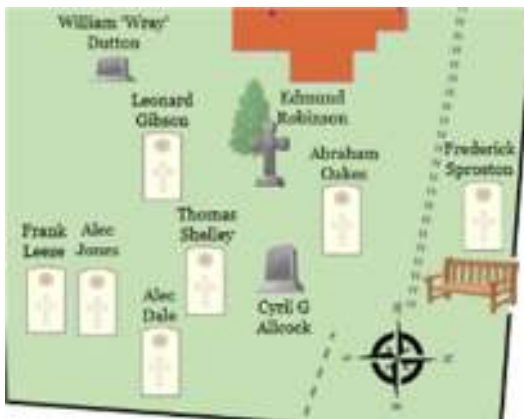
Abraham was born in Sandbach in 1870 to Elizabeth, née Bloor, and Thomas. He was the fourth of ten children and grew up in Back Street, Sandbach.

Aged 17, he joined the 5th (Congleton) Cheshire Rifle Volunteers and on 16th February 1891, aged 19, he enlist-

ed into the regular army, the 1st Battalion Cheshire Regiment and was allocated the service number 32445. He spent the first year of his military career stationed in England, promoted to the rank of Lance Corporal on 24th December 1891. However, on 2nd March 1892, the Battalion left for India and Abraham was demoted to a private soldier. He then spent almost seven years abroad before returning to England in January 1899.

Abraham's return was brief. He transferred to the 2nd Battalion Cheshire Regiment, and on 7th January 1900 he left England aboard HMT (Hired Military Transport) number 62 'Britannic', to fight in the Second Boer War (1899-1902), in South Africa. He saw action at Johannesburg, Cape Colony and the Orange Free State, for which he was awarded the Queen's South Africa Medal along with three clasps.

On his return home in 1902, Abraham was dis-



charged and on 15th February 1904, he married Mary Ellen Large (née Mellor), a widow with a four-year-old boy called Ambrose and they would go on to have four sons together. Although he had returned to a civilian life, he re-joined the Rifle Volunteers, which became the Territorials in 1908 following a defence reorganisation. It is reported that on 11th December 1909 he was a private 'trained man' serving in the 4th Reserve Battalion's G Company and he won a prize of 8s 6d in the annual shooting competition.

The 1911 census records show that he was living at 61 Sandbach Heath (later known as 61 Silver Terrace) and was employed as a Chemical Worker at Brunner Mond.

At the outbreak of WWI in September 1914, Abraham was mobilised as a Lance Corporal with the 7th Battalion Cheshire Regiment and in July 1915 he embarked from Devonport via Alexandria to Gallipoli, landing at Suvla Bay on 9th August 1915.

The Gallipoli campaign was a brief but bloody affair for the

battalion, which was evacuated on 12th December 1915 and relocated to Egypt, where it became a reserve unit and Abraham was eventually promoted to the rank of Sergeant.

It was here that Abraham caught malaria so severely that he was invalided back to England in the winter of 1917. He was admitted to the military hospital in Oswestry, but succumbed to the disease, which caused myelitis – inflammation in his spinal cord – on 15th January 1918. Four days later, he was buried with military honours at St Mary's Church.

In addition to his Queen's South Africa Medal, he was posthumously awarded the WWI Victory Medal, as well as the rarest of all war medals: the Territorial Force War Medal.

It is purely speculation, but there is also a possible link between this story and the church's bell tower. High on the inner reveal of the ringing room's southern window case is carved 'M Oakes 1892'.

Records indicated only one man (there are a few ladies) by that name in and around



and 1896 in the 1st Battalion Grenadier Guards and, like his brother, was recalled into service for South Africa in 1900. After the Boer War, he emigrat-

Sandbach over that period: Abraham's younger brother Moses (b. 1873).

ed to Canada, served in the Canadian Expeditionary Force (CEF) during WWI, and died in Toronto in 1958.

He first served between 1893

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## **Sandbach Food bank-10 years old**

**T**hank you to all who contributed to the food bank in the run up to Christmas. It is much busier now than it was pre-covid, as you will know if you saw the Sandbach Chronicle last week. Please do keep supporting it, it doesn't look as though the need is going away anytime soon. The people who started it thought it was going to be a short term effort and certainly didn't expect it to be needed more than ever all this time later!

Items always needed include tinned foods - meats, vegetables (including potatoes) and fruit, long-life milk and fruit juice. For further information look at the list on the collection box at the back of the church.

The recipients of the food are always very grateful and relieved. Thank you.

**Joan Plowman**

# Sandbach concert series

Tickets: Adults: £12.00  
Snr Citizens/  
Concessions: £11.00  
School Children: £3.00  
Family Ticket : £25.00  
Doors Open 6.30 pm

**Wednesday 22nd February 7 pm**

**Musical Beasts**

**Wednesday 29th March**

**Echea Quartet**

**St Mary's Church Hall**

and spotlight concert with local young musicians

**[www.sandbach-concert-series.co.uk](http://www.sandbach-concert-series.co.uk)**

All concerts at 7pm in **St Mary's Church Hall**

Tickets available on the door (cash only) or via WeGotTickets.

# Sandbach concert series

**YOUNG MUSICIAN  
OF THE YEAR**

**Saturday 4th February**

**1 pm**

**St Mary's Church**

**Annual youth music  
competition**

**Free entry**

# Why is my Bible different from yours?

*K V Beaumont.*

## Part 2 - The years of the Church Fathers

**T**he books that actually make up the Old and New Testament were fairly well agreed if not formally confirmed early in the Church's history. Indeed it is possible to argue that the books of the Old Testament had been set since the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Old Testament was first used several centuries before Jesus. It was certainly clear by the time of Jesus which books were in the Bible and which were not and when the Jews closed their scriptures after the fall of Jerusalem in 90AD they were only recognising the status quo. What you would not recognize, however, is the order of the books; to give two examples, 1 and 2 Kings were usually listed as one book and Jeremiah would include Lamentations.

The New Testament books quickly separated out into those that were valued and

those that were not. One person whose evidence is significant in this is the Bishop of Lyons Irenaeus. Irenaeus had been the student of Polycarp who himself had been a student of St John. His writings confirmed many of the present New Testament books were known and valued as important. When the Council of Hippo in AD393 confirmed the twenty seven books as we know them, "it did not confer on them any authority they did not already possess."

The one area of significant difference is in the books which we refer to as the Apocrypha. These 15 books are mentioned in article 6 of the thirty nine articles of the Church of England as "read (by the church) for example of life and instruction of manners but yet doth it not apply them to establish any doctrine."

The books were included in the Septuagint and as the Greek version of the Old Testament became the Old Testament of choice by many early

Christians especially those who spoke Greek then the books of the Apocrypha gained status by association.

One of the key early translations was to translate the texts into Latin, which was done by Jerome between 366 and 384.

Jerome translated the New Testament from the Greek and the Old Testament from the Septuagint. The Books of the Apocrypha were given a

higher status by association. It was during the time of the reformation that the issue was revisited. The Church of Rome held them canonical, the Lutheran and Anglican Church held them as important. Other reformed churches gave them no value above that of any other religious books. The first edition of the Authorised Version contained the Apocrypha but it was ruled inappropriate by the Parliament of 1644.

The Septuagint was also responsible for one other set of

differences, Hebrews 1v6 says “let all the Angels of God worship Him” which is a quote from Deuteronomy 32v43 yet, if you turn to the verse in Deuteronomy, it is not there. That is because the translators used the Hebrew text and the writer of Hebrews quoted the Septuagint.

The Latin version, or the Vulgate as it became known, demonstrates the difference between a primary translation

and a secondary one. In the New Testament it was a primary translation because it translated from the Greek. In the Old Testament it is a secondary translation as it was translated from Hebrew to Greek and then to Latin.

As the power of the Roman church grew and Latin became the dominant language of the church the position of the Vulgate was unchallenged in the West. It would be many centuries before this position would change.







# Tiddlers





@StMarySandbach

## Praise and Play



Mondays 9am - 10:30am  
Term time

Stories  Play  Refreshments

**Starts again Monday 9th January**



# Wonderful Things

Mister Carter  
And the Earl  
Went off to Egypt, hot  
Just as they'd planned  
They dug the sand –  
And look at what they got!

*Wonderful things, glorious things  
Of silver and of gold  
Marvellous things, beautiful things  
And very, very old!*

Mister Carter  
And the Earl  
They peered into the gloom  
And what they spied  
Deep inside  
Was Tutankhamun's tomb:

*Wonderful things, glorious things  
Of silver and of gold  
Marvellous things, beautiful things  
And very, very old!*

Mister Carter  
And the Earl  
They shouted out for glee!  
For twenty years  
Through lots of tears  
They'd hoped this sight to see:

*Wonderful things, glorious things  
Of silver and of gold  
Marvellous things, beautiful things  
And very, very old!*

Our treasure, too  
Is stored for us  
In Heav'n, not underground!  
And when we die  
Both you and I  
Will hear the angels' sound:

*Wonderful things, glorious things  
As promised by the Lord  
Marvellous things, beautiful things  
Our Father kept His Word!*

*By Nigel Beeton*





We believe in life before death

# **NORTH STAFFS CHRISTIAN AID SPONSORED WALK**

To be held at

## **TITTESWORTH WATER**

*(Three miles north of Leek, just off the A53)*

**SATURDAY 25<sup>th</sup> MARCH 2023**

**REGISTRATION FROM 9.15am**

**WALK STARTS AT 10.00am**

*The walk will be launched by*

*The Bishop of Stafford*

*and the*

*Lord Mayor of Stoke-on-Trent*

Sponsorship forms and more information from your local church or phone John Bamford (01782 516137) or contact Mike Willmot at [mwillmot@talktalk.net](mailto:mwillmot@talktalk.net)

By kind permission of Severn Trent Water

## For Whom the Bell Tolls by Bob Grandsire

*'We brought nothing into this world, it is certain we can carry nothing out... except our secrets.'*

A staple question asked by visitors to St Mary's bell tower during open days is, 'What is the origin of tolling the bells at funerals and what does it entail?' It's not an easy question to answer, but I will try to explain.

The ringing tradition apparently started many centuries ago, but not after someone had died; rather, when they were on their death bed. This is because it was believed that ringing the 'Passing Bell' would help protect the soul from the devil and evil spirits while on its journey.

This type of ringing was also once known as ringing the *Tellers* or *Tollers*, but at some stage it evolved into being called *Tailors*, possibly after the bell manufacturing foundry of the same name.

At some point, the tradition also changed from ringing prior to death to ringing after death, as an announcement to the community, which was performed using a special code and involved ringing the heaviest of the bells, known as the tenor.

The code has two parts.

First, the tenor bell indicates the gender of the deceased: six blows for a woman and nine for a man, rung in sets of three with a short pause between each set.

The ringing references for these is therefore either *Six Tailors* or *Nine Tailors*. Furthermore, in some communities, the death of a child is indicated by *Three Tailors*.

Once the gender has been established, after another brief pause the final phase is to toll the bell once for each year of their age. This is always a nervous time for any band, especially towards the



end of the ring and I find myself counting and holding my breath, hoping that whoever is ringing manages to stop and set the bell at the right number of blows.

It seems that once people started dying in hospitals rather than at home, and communities got larger, the tradition of ringing after death then transferred to just before or after the funeral service, and the custom of routinely ringing for all funerals at St Mary's appears to have stopped around 1918. However, ringing does still take place by request and the practice is still evolving. Today, ringing at funerals can take several different formats depending on the wishes of the family and the ability of the band.

At the funeral of a former bell ringer, it is traditional for the band to ring their favourite method. Also, as funerals have become services that 'celebrate the life' rather than

a service of remembrance, you will often hear the band performing in a similar way to any other call to service, except, on some occasions, for an appropriate *Tailors* and tolling whilst the coffin moves from hearse into church, only stopping once the deep shadows of the porch swallow up clergy, corpse and bearers.



Another tradition and my favourite, is the use of a 'muffle' fitted to the clapper of a bell, either completely covering the hammer or just half of it. The muffle is a pad made of leather or rubber that reduces the sound a bell makes, so rather than hearing a normal 'strike note' you hear a 'hum note' instead. Fully muffled ringing normally occurs when a monarch or an important national or local person dies. Half muffled is used in mourning or on solemn occasions such as funerals and Remembrance Day.

The sound of half muffled bells is unmistakable; the mixture of strike and hum notes produces an eerie echo that always sends a shiver down my spine.

It is worth mentioning that the bells once tolled for other now long-forgotten reasons. Before we had a clock, there was the 'Curfew Bell', which rang every morning and night followed by the tolling of the bell once for each day of the month. Another tradition was the tolling of the

'Pancake Bell' on Shrove Tuesday, which commenced at 10.55 am. The bell would stop promptly at 11 am, which was the cue for frying pans across Sandbach to be on the stoves making pancakes.

Finally, I must mention the weight of the tenor bell which is 604 kg, or just over half a ton of bronze, or, if you prefer, about the same weight as a Mini. (*Ed: Classic Mini as the modern much larger edition starts at a staggering 1250kg*)

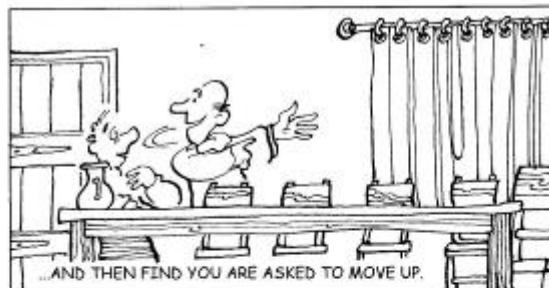
## **It's all in the VALENTINE**

For God so loVed the world,  
That He gAve  
His onLy  
BegottEn  
SoN  
That whosoever  
Believes In Him  
Should Not perish,  
But have Everlasting life."



*John 3:16*





the association for

# Church Editors

Member editor 2023

NANTWICH CONCERT BAND PRESENTS

# SONGS FROM THE SHOWS

**INCLUDING HIT SONGS FROM LES MIS,  
SOUND OF MUSIC AND HAMILTON**

SUNDAY 12TH FEBRUARY  
2PM  
ST MARYS CHURCH HALL, SANDBACH

**TICKETS £8**

UNDER 12'S FREE

PAYMENT ON THE DOOR | Y C A | D | R CASH





## Outreach

**D**uring the last few months we have been saving for The Donna Louise Hospice at Trentham. This hospice is run in conjunction with The Dougie Mac Hospice and concentrates on providing specialist care for young children with life limiting conditions. They are proud of their efficient organisation with 76p in every pound donated going directly to support the front line services. Thanks to your giving we have been able to send this week **£528.75** to the hospice.

Our next charity to be supported is WaterAid. This was a charity which we started to support just before the Covid shutdown. Based on the droughts affecting large parts of Somalia, this would seem a very appropriate charity. Last year we brushed past a drought in this country but apart from some very local water supplies most areas had sufficient water.



The inconvenience of a hose pipe ban is minimal compared with the lack of water in many areas that are helped by WaterAid. Water is often contaminated and for many a trek of several miles to fill a plastic container with a few litres of water and then carry it back to their home. The average household in the UK uses 345 litres a day which would be impossible if we also had to carry our water home in a plastic container.

We shall support this charity until the end of June. If anyone has a charity they would recommend we could support, please leave a note at the back of church for Brian Day.

# Christian Basics: How can I resist evil?

by Paul Hardingham  
(10th in the series)

Satan's existence is assumed throughout the Bible and Jesus prayed 'deliver us from the evil one' (Lord's Prayer). Paul adds: 'For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms' (Ephesians 6:12).

The spiritual world directly affects the physical, when evil powers oppose God's work. However, God is sovereign and evil can only operate as He permits. We cannot blame Satan for our own wrong choices! 'There are two equal and opposite errors into which our race can fall into about devils. One is to disbelieve in their existence. The other is to believe, and to feel an excessive and unhealthy interest in them.' (CS Lewis).

How does Satan operate in our lives?

By spoiling God's work in us  
(John 10:10)

By hindering our spiritual understanding (2 Corinthians 4:4)

By sowing doubts into our minds (Matthew 4:3,6)

By tempting us to break God's law (Genesis 3:6)

How do we resist evil? On the cross Jesus secured victory over Satan, 'And having disarmed the powers and authorities, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross' (Col 2:15). Although Satan is still active today, his power is broken and he will be destroyed when Jesus returns. In the present we should put God first in our lives: 'Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you' (James 4:7). Making Jesus our Lord, gets Satan on the run!!

'There is no neutral ground in the universe: every square inch, every split second, is claimed by God and counter-claimed by Satan' (CS Lewis).



SANDBACH  
CHORAL SOCIETY

**TICKETS: £10 per person incl. Fish & Chip Supper  
Teams of 6 max.**

# Quiz Night!

**FRIDAY 24TH FEBRUARY 2023**

**7.00pm**

**ST. MARY'S CHURCH HALL,  
SANDBACH**

**Contact: Jayne Bunn via email  
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# A Candlemas Prayer from HART

Lord, we remember before you those whom this world  
has taught to expect nothing.

We are astonished when we meet them by the grace and  
graciousness they can show.

May they share in your riches.

We pray for those told by the world that they are  
worthless.

May your love teach and reassure them that they are  
precious and priceless and loved.

We pray for those who are treated as expendable and  
forgettable.

May HART, by my small efforts and support, reach them  
with your Love.

And may they always be in our hearts as they are always  
in yours.

We offer this prayer through the Jesus who heard every  
cry. Amen.

*HART was founded by Baroness Caroline Cox (CEO of Hart), a cross-bench member of the UK House of Lords. It works with 14 partners in 8 countries and is involved in areas such as education, environment, health, human rights, and women's empowerment. Many of the communities it supports suffer from protracted conflict, oppression, human rights abuse and deeply entrenched poverty. More information from:*

**[www.hart-uk.org](http://www.hart-uk.org)**

God is there whenever a human heart welcomes  
him in

## Fair Trade Fortnight

This year Fair Trade Fortnight will run from February 27th to March 12th.

With the problems caused by the changing climate becoming bigger as time goes on, buying Fair Trade products is even more important. Farmers who struggle to earn enough even to feed their families are unable to adapt their farming methods to offset the effects of changing weather patterns.

Because of the increasing temperatures and reduced rainfall, or deluges which wash away the soil, cocoa, coffee and banana harvests are shrinking. The Fair trade foundation works with co-operatives, which are groups of farmers working together. With fair prices for their produce and the fair trade premium, they are able to learn and put into practice new ways of cultivation to increase their yields, and also improve the environment and reduce deforestation.

While coffee, bananas and chocolate are the main products we think of, there are now many more things available with a Fair Trade label, so do look out for them, or visit the Fair Trade foundation website:

**[www.fairtrade.org.uk](http://www.fairtrade.org.uk)**

**Joan Plowman**



The humanist's way leads to a hopeless end,  
but the way of Jesus leads to an endless hope

# Our use and abuse of human power.

The days between Christmas and New Year tend to merge together and for many of us are a strange time. Our daughter Cal this year taught me a new name (for me!) for them. She told me they are often called “betwixt and between days”. As a good Anglican I usually see them as part of the season of Christmas as we travel towards 12<sup>th</sup> night and the Feast of the Epiphany on January 6<sup>th</sup>.

I admit that this year I missed saying my daily prayers on December 28<sup>th</sup>. Obviously the post Christmas inertia had really got to me! This led to an interesting joining together the next day of the Feast of the Holy Innocents (remembering Herod’s massacre of the innocent male children of Bethlehem) set for the 28<sup>th</sup> with the Feast Day of Thomas a Becket the Archbishop of Canterbury murdered in Canterbury Cathe-

dral on the orders of King Henry 2<sup>nd</sup>.

Some question whether the Massacring of the Innocents which appears only in Matthew’s gospel is merely a mirroring of the attempt by Pharaoh in the Moses story to have the male Israelite children ethnically cleansed. But of course all genocides are crimes against humanity and the murder of children a particularly heinous example.

## Human Power

In a sense both these days enable us to ponder the use and abuse of human power. My inadvertent joining them together certainly gave me things to ponder. Obviously the male children massacred by Herod’s soldiers were victims. But of what and of whom was Thomas a Beckett a victim? His own ambition, the power of King Henry, or the power of the church; or was he just unlucky to be caught up in events beyond

his control?

We can believe that we have no power but in reality we all have some power. We all have influence to a certain extent. It is how we use our power and influence that challenges us as humans and as Christians. It is something these two days in the Christian calendar right at the end of December focus upon.

Over this year we are going to try and look at power and

how we use it (or abuse it) in our human relationships, in our churches and faith communities, in our activities within the wider world. We will have a series of articles appearing about every three months to engage with the question of the power we all have and how we use it for good or ill in God's world. Hope you find them useful.

**David Ottley**

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## **BRF**

**H**ow many bibles do you own? In this country, we often have several different versions (translations), but how regularly do you actually read one? It can be daunting; the books of the bible are of many different types, written for different reasons in cultures and ages very different from our own. So it can be useful to have expert help from Christians who have studied the history and culture of the times when the books were written.

An easy way to do this is by using a guide such as the Bible Reading Fellowship booklets. BRF do various day-by-day or week-by-week guides, which some of us already use and find very helpful. Joyce Griffith is our contact, and has got some samples for anyone to look at. We will shortly put out a display, but Joyce can give you all the information, and order the booklets. Do have a look.

# From the Archives



This month we continue in Wheelock looking at FastFit Tyres at the top of Wheelock Bank and in the lower image, we go back to 1987 when it was Tommy Hill's Battery Centre. Of course the building was originally part of Wheelock Station, originally being built in 1893 and finally closing its doors in 1971. **Stephen Minshull**

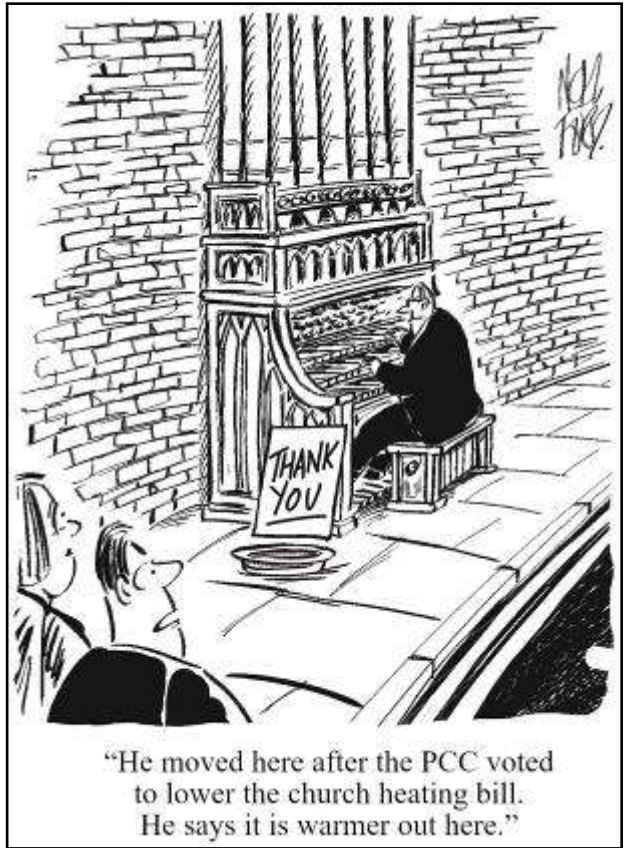




**Seen in a church pewsheet:**

For those of you who have children and don't know it, we have a crèche downstairs.

Next Friday the church will host an evening of fine dining, super entertainment and gracious hostility. Do come along!



**Valentine's Day? A group of 4-to-8-year-olds was once asked: 'What does love mean?' Some answers were:**

"When my grandmother got arthritis, she couldn't bend over and paint her toenails anymore. So my grandfather does it for her all the time, even when his hands got arthritis too.

"Love is when a girl puts on perfume and a boy puts on shaving cologne and they go out and smell each other."

"Love is when you kiss all the time. Then when you get tired of kissing, you still want to be together and you talk more. My Mum and Dad are like that. They look gross when they kiss."

## Church Contacts

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## Challenge

If you have any events or information that needs publicising, or you would like to write an article, please contact the editor.

Articles must be received by **Sunday 12th March**

**[www.stmaryschurchsandbach.org](http://www.stmaryschurchsandbach.org)**

## Donations

If you would like to donate funds for the running, repairs and mission of St Mary's then please use one of the following methods:

- Standing Order
- Contactless machine in church
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More details are available on the website:

**[www.stmaryschurchsandbach.org/donate](http://www.stmaryschurchsandbach.org/donate)**

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