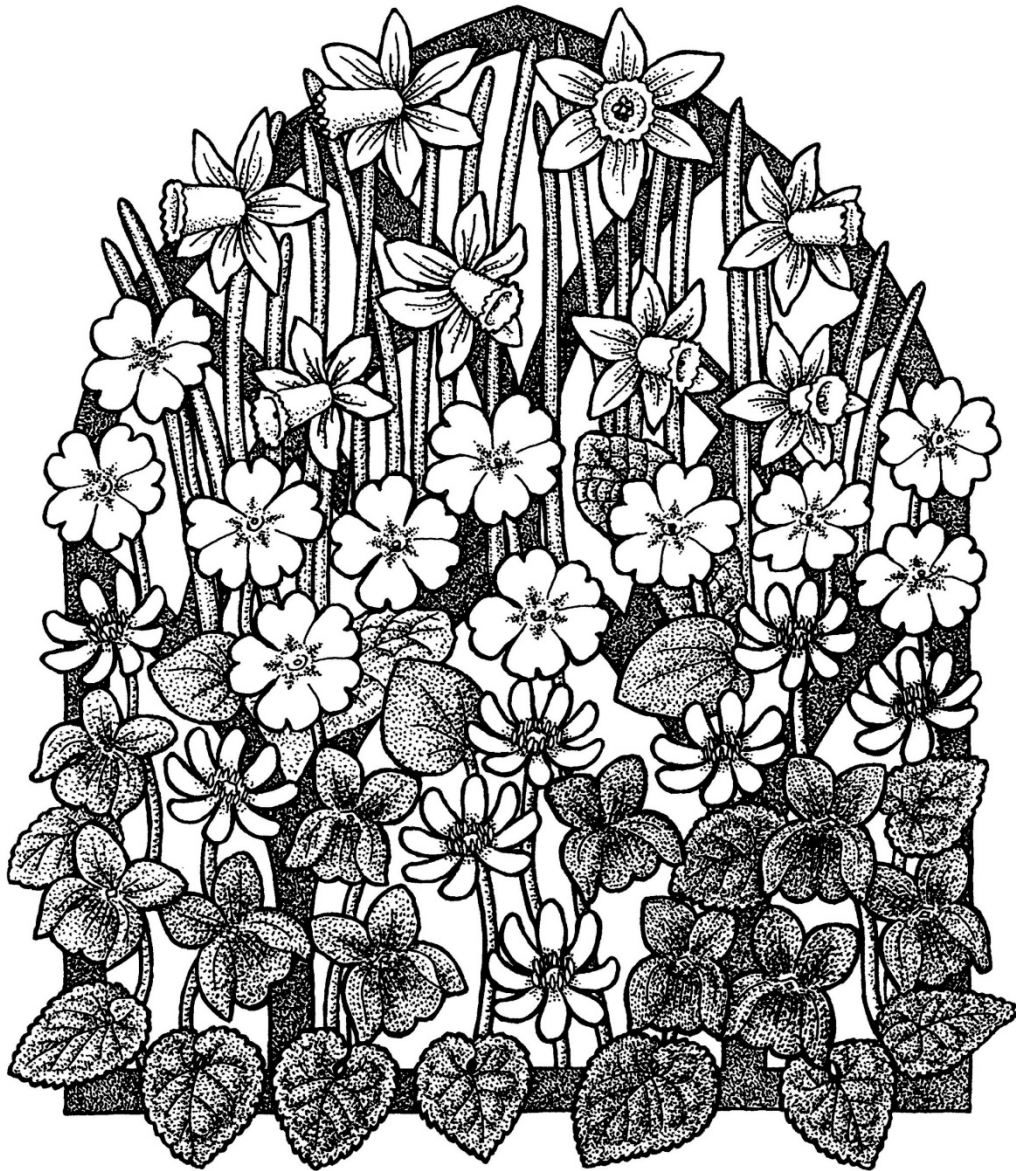


Parish Magazine

March 2022

30p



The flowers are blooming, the time of birdsong has come! Song of
Songs 2:12

St. John's Parish Church

Rufford Road, Crossens
(A member of the North Meols Team Ministry)

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The church will be open for regular services on Sunday and Wednesday. Service times:

Sunday:	10am	Holy Communion
Wednesday	10am	Holy Communion

For the time being, these will be spoken services, with a few hymns. We are slowly returning to more normal services.

Dear Friends,

I start this letter with a personal confession – I hate Lent!! Now before you all condemn me for being disrespectful, I will attempt to explain my feelings.

The reason I hate Lent is that it always seems to be a time when we, as a Church, are bereft of colour from the beautiful spring flowers which are starting to bloom. Our Team is blessed with a group of very talented ladies who always make our churches look so beautiful and it is that bareness and bleakness that affects me. Although, thinking about it, perhaps this is a good thing as it makes me realise that Lent is a time which should be different. It is a time when our lives should be as bare as our Churches. It is a time when we seriously look at our lives and “bare our souls” to God.

Sometimes reflection can be a painful exercise. It can be a bit like the answer the wicked queen gets in Snow White when she asks the mirror “Who is the fairest of them all?” However, unlike the wicked queen we have a loving and forgiving Father who always promises to forgive, but we have to be honest - as the words of v2 of Psalm 26 says “Examine me, O God, and search me, test my heart and mind”.

If we are honest with God in acknowledging our weakness and ugliness – if we ask for His help to face up to the way we really are – He will answer us and give a complete facelift of our lives. The big question is “Are we brave enough to do this?”

Let Lent be a time when we take a long, hard look at our lives. We all want the world to be a better place, so why not start with ourselves?

Jesus’s time in the wilderness was a time when He was completely on His own; a time when He could contemplate the mission ahead of Him. These 40 days of Lent could be our own personal wilderness when we try to forget the pressures of life and, like Jesus, just spend a little extra time in prayer being honest with ourselves and with God. We don’t have to make any travel arrangements to our own wilderness, it can just be our own personal quiet time – perhaps taking the dog for a walk or just sitting quietly waiting for the kettle to boil. We don’t need to make an appointment with God, He is there all day, every day.

Perhaps it is a good thing that I really “feel” the drabness of church during Lent, because it makes Easter so much more glorious. So let us all wear the bleakness of Lent and then we can truly enjoy Easter in all its radiance and wonderful truth,

Yours in Christ,

Karen



LENTEN SERIES

PEOPLE WHO JESUS MET

This year we will be looking at people Jesus met, those ordinary men and women, mostly unnamed, and not all followers of Jesus. However, they knew about Jesus and knew that he could help them.

March 9th 7.30pm St John's Church
Jesus and the Syrophenician Women

March 16th 7.30pm St Cuthbert's Church
Jesus and the centurion

March 23rd 7.30pm St Stephen's Church
Jesus and the Adulterous Women

March 30th 7.30pm St John's Church
Jesus and the leper who came back

April 6th 7.30pm St Cuthbert's Church
Jesus and the Emmaus Road Meeting

Each session will last 30 minutes and will include a reflection on these encounters with Jesus

Please tell as many people as you can. This is the first time in two years that we have been able to do a Lenten Series so let us try and make this an extra special time as we travel through Lent.

Chris

Farewell to Bishop Paul

Bishop Bev reflects on Bishop Paul's farewell service

The Bishop of Warrington has offered her thoughts on the farewell service to Bishop Paul as he and Kate head off to retirement.

Bishop Bev said:- "The service, with the laying down of the mantle of responsibility was both beautiful and painful as we said 'thank you' to a faithful friend and servant of Christ and were left wondering about the what next for Bishop Paul, his family and indeed for us.

We are a people of faith, hope, and love and so we can trust that for Paul and Kate, there are new adventures and joys with Christ as their companion.

And for us, as the door slammed on the solitary figure of the big man with a big heart who has led this diocese faithfully for over 7 years we know we are not abandoned!

In our diocese, we believe God has given us the vision to ask for a *bigger church to make a Bigger Difference, with more people knowing Jesus and more justice in the world*. We are aware of the enormous challenges that have and continue to face the church in our nation and from our vision, we believe God is giving us a way forward in Fit for Mission.

These are uncertain times, but in truth, every day has its degree of uncertainties. With God as our companion, our visionary and strategist and with God at the heart of our ministry and mission, we have the courage to step out in faith. And we shall do this together!

Towards the end of the service, Bishop Paul passed on the crozier to me as the Bishop of Warrington. This was a powerful moment to remind us that the gift of the office is God's and that a time comes when it is returned to God for God to give to another. I am holding the crozier and the responsibility that it represents only until such time we are no longer in vacancy when it will be passed back to the next Bishop of Liverpool. The responsibility that is shouldered is the care, well-being and discipleship of the people of this diocese.

Very soon we shall know whether the national church will support our plans for fit for mission - ours is a bold ask but I'm reminded of the words of God to Joshua, *'be bold, be strong, for the Lord your God is with you'*. Therefore with or without the funding, we shall continue to along this pathway.

I am so heartened by the clear focus of senior colleagues and by the way our deaneries, parishes, clergy, readers, wardens, and congregations are working together to build for the future. Please do keep our course and one another in your prayers.

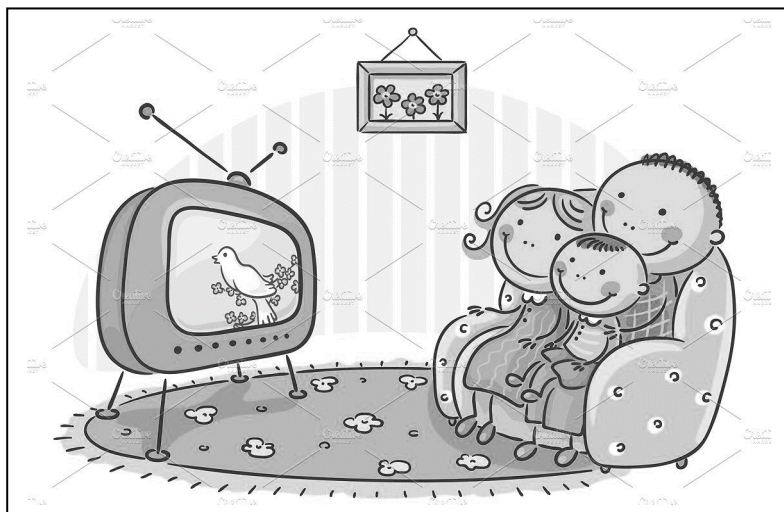
Bishop Paul, in his inspiring final address, has left us with the image of the table and the question, who is not at the table – and he's challenged us with a further image of a door made of people. Is the door open to all whom God is calling or is it shut – a barricade that excludes? I wonder if these are prophetic words for the church today.

Certainly, I pray that my ministry is grace-filled and that my missional heart is grace-inspired as I now lead us through the vacancy to a new appointment. Please pray for me as I pray for you, and be assured: in a little room somewhere in the South West, there'll be a big guy praying for us.

New ... New ... New

Coming to a
TV near you!

Our Team Ministry's
On-Line
Monthly Magazine



Check out the latest magazine
on our YouTube Channel
& the St. Cuthbert's Web Site

Church events...Local history...Interviews
Christian reflections
and Christian Action...Diocesan News...
Topical and Local Interest Items
and much more



YouTube Channel:
"North Meols Team Ministry Southport"

ROTAS

SUNDAY COFFEE ROTA

6 th March	Nicola & Chrissy
13 th March	Chris D & Eileen Baldwin
20 th March	Heather & Jenny
27 th March	Eileen Ball



WEDNESDAY COFFEE ROTA

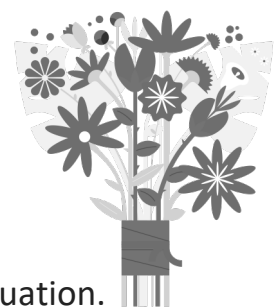
2 nd March	Brenda & June
16 th March	Jean & Mavis
23 rd March	Chris & Janet
30 th March	Brenda & June

Help is urgently needed to maintain a weekly rota. If you are willing to volunteer, please see me. Chris Jowett

Sanctuary Flowers

No flowers during Lent

We have fewer donors to our flower fund because of the Covid situation. Any donations, however small will be most welcome so that we can continue to provide fresh flowers for our church. ECB.



HOLY DAYS

19th March: St Joseph the Carpenter, gracious descendant of King David

Many people know that Joseph was the father of the most famous man who ever lived, but beyond that, we know very little about him. The Gospels name him as the 'father' of Jesus, while also asserting that the child was born of a virgin. Even if he wasn't what we call the 'biological' father, it was important to them that he was a distant descendant of the great King David - a necessary qualification for the Messiah.



It's obvious that Joseph (usually described as a 'carpenter') was not wealthy, because he was allowed to offer the poor man's sacrifice of two pigeons or turtle doves at the presentation of his infant son. No one expected eloquence or wisdom from this man's son. Jesus was born into an unremarkable family, with a doubtless hard-working artisan as His father. There would have been few luxuries in that little home at Nazareth.

Matthew begins his birth narrative with the bald statement that Mary was engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she became pregnant 'with child from the Holy Spirit'. Joseph was not apparently privy to the divine intervention in her life, and so drew the obvious conclusion: it was another man's child. However, he was not the sort of man who wished to disgrace her publicly, so he resolved to 'dismiss her quietly' - end their engagement without fuss, we might say.

However, at that point Joseph had a dream in which he was told by 'an angel of the Lord' not to hesitate to take Mary as his wife, because the child conceived in her was 'from the Holy Spirit', and that the baby was to be named 'Jesus' ('saviour') because He will 'save His people from their sins'. On waking, Joseph did as he had been instructed and took Mary as his wife.

So far as Joseph himself is concerned, we can be pretty sure of a few things. In human, legal terms he was the father of Jesus, he was a carpenter and he had probably died before Jesus began his public ministry. The little we are told suggests a devout, decent and sensitive man, one who shared Mary's anxiety when the 12-year-old Jesus went missing in Jerusalem, and who presumably taught his son the trade of a carpenter.

Joseph has become an icon of the working man - there are many churches nowadays dedicated to 'Joseph the Worker.' He can stand in the calendar of saints for the 'ordinary' person, a straight-forward craftsman who never expected or chose to be in the spotlight of history. He did what he could, and he was obedient to everything that he believed God required of him. To do the 'ordinary' thing well, to be kind, caring and open to guidance: these are great gifts, and Joseph seems to have had them in abundance.

PUZZLES - SUDOKU

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Easy

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Medium

Some colouring - for all ages...



WORDSEARCH

March brings us Lent and Mothering Sunday. Lent is a time of spiritual self-assessment as we prepare for Easter. It is a time to turn to God, and grow closer to him. Mothering Sunday reminds us of not only the mothers that have loved and raised us, but of Mother Church, who has spiritually loved and nurtured us throughout our Christian pilgrimage. How many words can you find on these themes in this month's Word Search?

lent
spiritual
easter
preparation

fasting
prayer
desert
selfdenial

repentance
seeking
finding
growing

mothers
love
care
nurture

learning
teaching
disciples
worldwide

flowers
thankyou
nursing
family



Editor: Nigel Beeton writes: "People are saying things like 'we've lost two years', but I don't agree. It's been a very bad time, and for those who've lost loved ones, a nightmare. But for those of us who have come through, we've had a glimpse of what generations before have come through. And, as the seasons turn, perhaps now at last we can look forward to warmth and summer again?"

The Vernal Equinox

In the season of the Spring
The day is equal to the night;
Summer's song we soon shall sing!
Evenings filled with summer light!

Winter's cares seem long ago
Mornings spiked by bitter frost
But we shall bask in summer glow
For the seasons have now crossed.

Thank you, Lord God, for the Spring
And for all the seasons, too,
Of life's rhythms we shall sing
Giving all the praise to You.

By Nigel Beeton



The gardener and the Vine



JESUS OFTEN TOLD STORIES WITH HIDDEN MEANINGS



ONCE HE TOLD HIS FRIENDS ALL ABOUT A GARDENER.

THE GARDENER'S JOB WAS TO CARE FOR THE VINES



HE WOULD LOOK AT EACH BRANCH CAREFULLY..

... AND IF IT WAS PRODUCING GOOD FRUIT, HE WOULD CARE FOR IT AND NOURISH IT.



IF IT WAS PRODUCING BAD FRUIT...

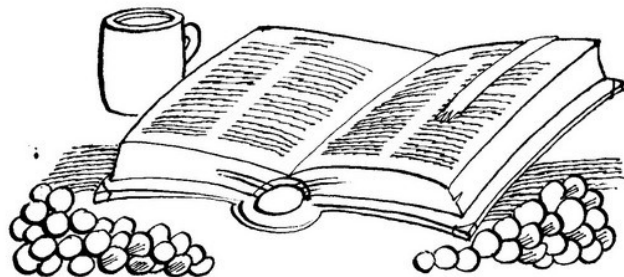


...OR NO FRUIT AT ALL...



...THEN THE GARDENER WOULD CHOP IT OFF, AND BURN IT IN THE FIRE!!

JESUS WANTED HIS FRIENDS TO SHARE THE GOOD NEWS - THAT'S LIKE THE VINE BEARING GOOD FRUIT.



YOU CAN READ THIS SPECIAL PARABLE IN JOHN'S GOSPEL, CHAPTER 15.

Bible Bite

A short story from the Bible

It can be read in the Bible in
Luke 15:11-32


Jesus told stories about a lost sheep and a lost coin, then one about a man with two sons. The younger son said to his father...

I want my share of what I'll inherit from you now!



So the father divided his property between his sons.

The younger son took his money and went to another country.



Then his money ran out and there was a famine.



The only job he could get was feeding pigs.

He was so hungry he would have eaten their food.



Then he came to his senses -

I'll go to my father, say sorry, and ask him for a job as a workman!



He set off for home.

His father saw him coming, ran to him and hugged him.



Father, I am so sorry. I am not good enough to be your son..



But his father sent servants to get clothes for his son and prepare a feast to celebrate his return.

The older son came back from work and heard the noise.



Your brother has returned and your father is having a feast

The older son was so angry he wouldn't go into the house..

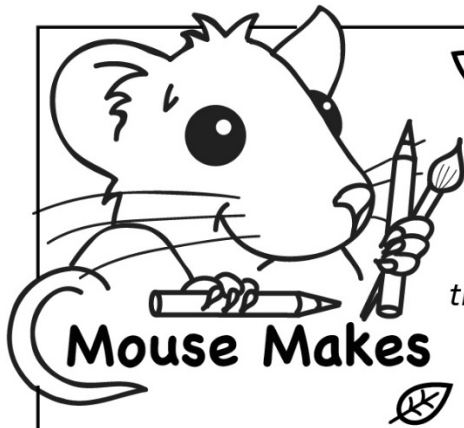


so his father came out to see him.

For years I've slaved for you and you've given me nothing. He returns after wasting your money and you give him a feast!



My son, all I have is yours, but we should celebrate because he was lost and now he has been found.



GOOD FRUIT OR BAD FRUIT?

Jesus said:

"No good tree does not produce bad fruit, nor does a bad tree produce good fruit. Each tree is known by its own fruit..."

...Good people bring good things out of the good they stored in their hearts. But evil people bring evil things out of the evil they stored in their hearts. People speak the things that are in their hearts."

- Luke 6: 43-45

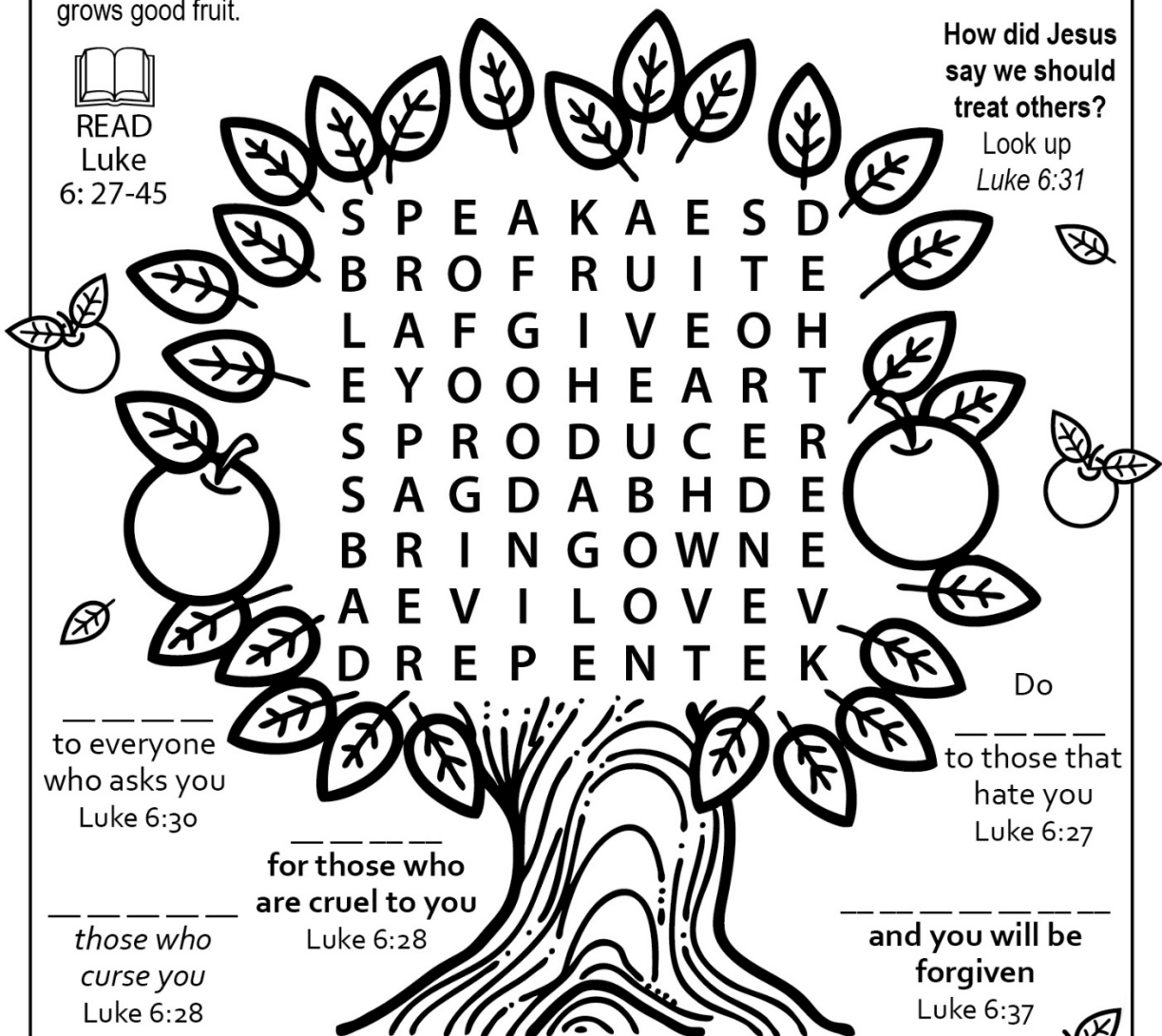
During LENT ask God to help you through His Holy Spirit to turn your hate to **love**, your impatience to **patience** and your unkindness to **kindness**, so we can be like a good tree that grows good fruit.



READ
Luke
6: 27-45

How did Jesus say we should treat others?

Look up
Luke 6:31



_____ to everyone who asks you
Luke 6:30

_____ to those that hate you
Luke 6:27

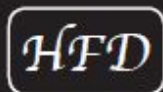
_____ for those who are cruel to you
Luke 6:28

_____ those who curse you
Luke 6:28

_____ and you will be forgiven
Luke 6:37

Find these words from **Luke 6** in the word search above.

GOOD • BAD • FRUIT • TREE • HEART • EVIL • EACH • OWN • STORED
PRODUCE • BRING • SPEAK • REPENT • FORGIVE • LOVE • BLESS • PRAY • GIVE



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