



February 2021

**SAINT
Barnabas
CLARKSFIELD**

medlockhead.co.uk

Services at St Barnabas' Church

Sunday	9:30 am	Parish Worship
Monday	2:30 pm	Prayers in the vestry
Tuesday	10:00 am	Holy Communion (said)

First Tuesday of each month: Service of Holy Communion at Moor Haven Nursing Home on Ripponden Road, starting at 2:00 pm.

Baptisms and marriages by arrangement with the Vicar.

Please submit items for the March 2020 magazine by 15 February. Please e-mail files to paulmonk111@gmail.com

People at St Barnabas' Church

Vicar

The Revd Dr Paul Monk
St Barnabas' Vicarage, Arundel Street, Clarksfield, Oldham OL4 1NL
Tel: (0161) 624 7708

Assistant Curates

The Revd Denise Owen (and Vicar of St Thomas' Church Moorside)

Tel: (0161) 652 0292 and E: therevd.dowen@yahoo.co.uk

The Revd Jane Hyde

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Lay Reader

and Warden

Mr Peter Haslam (0161) 345 0215

Administrator Miss Sarah Gura (07708) 714 813

Treasurer Ms Gisele Onwumere

Parish Hall bookings The Vicar (0161) 624 7708

Letter from the Vicar

We've entered another period of lockdown. We've started another period in which it feels like life itself is on hold. We stay indoors for safety but may feel imprisoned and uncertain. This way of thinking is quite common and is damaging a great many souls. We feel 'down' and want something that feels more lively and sociable.

Jesus tells us that he 'came to bring life and life in its fullness' (John 10:10). But the 'life in its fullness' that Jesus promised relates to God rather than shopping or socialising. Jesus came on a mission. In fact, he explained what he wants for our lives when he gave us the Lord's Prayer.

The prayer starts with God Himself, 'Our Father in Heaven ...' so the life Jesus wants for us also needs to place God centre stage. With God in pole position, the prayer then asks us to look at the world in God's way, and prompts us to work toward a better world, 'Your Kingdom come ...' This request is clearly both spiritual and physical. We work to better everything.

It's a big ask. We can't do these things on our own. We may even say, 'but I'm only human!' but Jesus has the remedy and tells us to ask God to deal with the many sins and imperfections that separate us from God. We should pray, 'Forgive us our sins ... leads us not into temptation.'

Anyone self-isolating or just worrying can do all these things. We can pray these familiar words with passion and determination.

Lent 2021 starts on Ash Wednesday, 17 February. We'll not be able to have pancake parties or traditional ways of doing Lent Groups. But all of us can plan for a holy Lent and then start that process of living life in its fullness.

Wishing you God's glory and His peace in these difficult days:

PAUL

2021 dates for your diary

The country is again in lockdown, probably until some time in Lent. The following events may or may not occur in the Church building. Consult the Church website for up-to-date information, at <http://www.medlockhead.co.uk/barnabas/events.htm>

Wednesday 17 February

Ash Wednesday

Sunday 21 March

Mothering Sunday

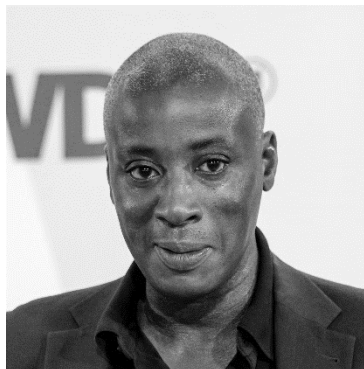
Sunday 4 April

Easter Day



Members' news

Congratulations to former member **Wayne Marshall**, son of John Marshall, who was awarded an OBE in the New Year's honours list. It was for services to music.



Bible readings for February

Sunday 31 January

Candlemas

First: Malachi 3:1-6

Epistle: Hebrews 2:14-end

Gospel: Luke 2:22-40

Sunday 14 February

Sunday before Lent

First: 2 Kings 2:1-12

Epistle: 2 Corinthians 4:3-6

Gospel: Mark 9:2-9

Sunday 21 February

First Sunday of Lent

First: Genesis 9:8-17

Epistle: 1 Peter 3:18-end

Gospel: Mark 1:9-15

Sunday 7 February

Second Sunday before Lent

First: Proverbs 8:1, 22-31

Epistle: Colossians 1:15-20

Gospel: John 1:1-14

Wednesday 17 February

Ash Wednesday

First: Isaiah 58:1-12

Epistle: 2 Corinthians 5:20b-6:10

Gospel: John 8:1-11

Sunday 28 February

Second Sunday of Lent

First: Genesis 17:1-7, 15-16

Epistle: Romans 4:13-end

Gospel: Mark 8:31-end



Jason's status as one of the best stumbling blocks in the business was credited largely to his exceptional ambushing skills.

(with apologies to Romans 14:13)



Nowhere is the sun visible in this sky yet it somehow manages to reflect (imperfectly) as a shimmer of gooseflesh gold on the water. In the same way, we cannot directly see the being of wonder we worship as Lord and God but we do see love and joy and the fruits of His indwelling Spirit in His disciples.

Jim McManus

With great sadness we announce the death of the Revd Jim McManus who died on Saturday 9 January. He was 87. Jim was Vicar of St Barnabas between 1979 and 84. He had been frail but was otherwise well. He died of a heart attack; it was not Covid related.

In many respects, Jim's time as Vicar of Clarksfield was a period of transition as the local cotton mills had already begun closing and local society was changing. He kept the Church as a bastion of stability and faithfulness to God.

We thank God for Jim's life and ministry and remember his family in our prayers.

Ash Wednesday

Receive this cross of ash upon your brow,
Brought from the burning of Palm Sunday's cross.
The forests of the world are burning now
And you make late repentance for the loss.

But all the trees of God would clap their hands
The very stones themselves would shout and sing
If you could covenant to love these lands
And recognise in Christ their Lord and king.

He sees the slow destruction of those trees,
He weeps to see the ancient places burn,
And still you make what purchases you please,
And still to dust and ashes you return.

But Hope could rise from ashes even now
Beginning with this sign upon your brow.

Malcolm Guite

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<https://malcolmguite.wordpress.com/2012/02/20/ash-wednesday>

The traditional purpose of Lent is to prepare ourselves to meet the risen Lord Jesus at Easter. We do so through prayer, penance, repentance of sins, almsgiving, and self-denial.

Lent is usually described as lasting for forty days in response to the forty days which, according to the Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke, Jesus spent in the wilderness before starting his public ministry.

Jesus fasted in the wilderness. Fasting—decreasing our food intake or going without food—is a way of heightening spiritual awareness. Jesus needed it because he knew he would be tempted by the Devil.

This season of Lent is always heavily penitential. Many people went to Church and said confession on the Tuesday before the formal start of Lent. In the language of the day, they went to be *shriven*. The word comes from the Old English *scrifan*, to impose a sentence, from which today's phrase 'given short shrift' also originates.

The medieval Church used this word and applied it to confession because a priest usually imposed a form of penance, a sentence, after hearing a penitent (so 'short shrift' implied the priest wasn't listening, wasn't being attentive to spiritual needs, wasn't doing his job properly).

'Shroved' was a form of dialect form of *shriven*. The day before Lent started therefore became *Shroved Tuesday*. This name later simplified to become the name we use today.

Because Jesus fasted in the wilderness, most people also fasted during Lent. It heightens spirituality and is also an act of solidarity with Jesus. Therefore, before Church and in preparation for fasting, a family would empty their kitchen cupboards of rich luxury foods such as eggs, lard, cream, and butter. They were avoiding the waste of precious food rather than buying in extra resources. A simple way to consume these foodstuffs together was to prepare a thick batter and fry it in a pan using the lard. The resulting food was topped with honey or other luxury sweeteners. Being sweet and baked, people called it a 'pan cake'—hence the custom of eating pancakes on Shrove Tuesday.

We too must prepare to meet with the risen Lord Jesus at Easter, which is why we also practise Lent. We're invited to meditate and pray, and also deny self by exercises of penitence and self-control. To all these ways we prepare our souls.

***Almighty God,
whose Son Jesus Christ fasted forty days in the
wilderness,
and was tempted as we are, yet without sin:
give us grace to discipline ourselves
in obedience to your Spirit;
and, as you know our weakness,
so may we know your power to save;
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.***

The Collect for Lent



Ash Wednesday is a principal service of the Church and, as such, its observance is recommended. Ash Wednesday occurs this year on 17 February. Unfortunately, it seems likely that we'll not be able to meet together for an Ashing service.

We will provide a great many resources:

- A special pdf with the full text of the Ash Wednesday service will be sent out.
- A special YouTube service will be published.

***As a sign of the spirit of penitence,
with which we shall keep this season
in preparation for Easter,
I invite you to receive on your head in ash
the sign of the cross,
the symbol of our salvation.***

Some people may wish to wear a cross on their forehead, either at home or outside. Sourcing the ash could be a problem. Alternatives could include,

- Rub a soft pencil onto coarse paper, then transfer the graphite powder with a finger-tip or thumb.
- Create a small amount of soot using a match, fire or hob. (Please take care!)
- Use cosmetics such as lipstick or eyeliner.

The pdf service for Ash Wednesday will contain both the prayer used to bless the ash and the prayer used when making the sign of the cross with the ash.

*Ash is usually prepared
by burning last-year's
left-over palm
crosses.*



Ash Wednesday

Letter from Moorside Church

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

A belated Happy New Year to you all

This isn't the beginning to the new year we were all hoping for, I'm sure, with numbers of infections still on the rise, hospitals struggling to cope and continuing restrictions on what we can and can't do. I pray for all of those who haven't been able to spend time with family members for such a long time, and those who are finding the current situation so challenging. As so many people have said recently, things don't seem to be getting better, if anything this seems worse.

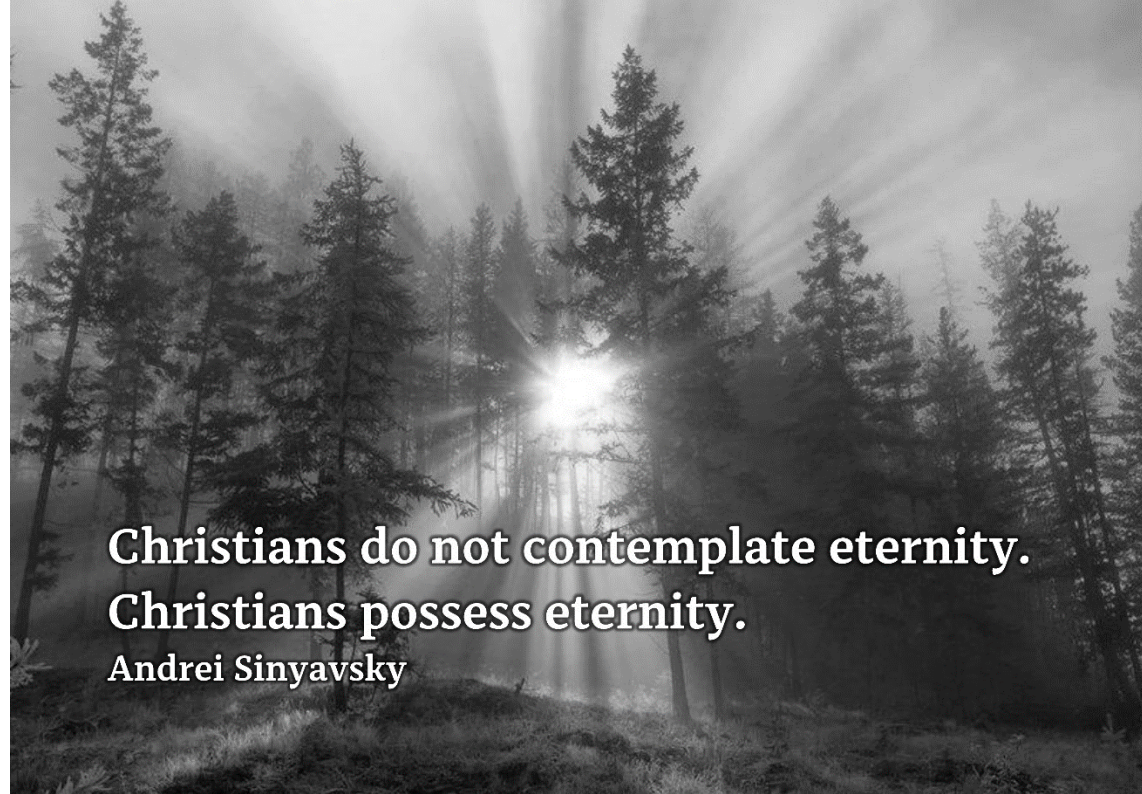
But, despite all this, I hope this year brings you and your families joy and hope; the joy and hope we find in Christ. I can say this because the joy offered by Jesus is not dependent on our situation or circumstances or what is going on around us.

There are, however, signs of hope and reasons to be joyful already. People are receiving the vaccine and over time we will all be offered the chance to be vaccinated. This comes after an amazing effort by researchers and pharmaceutical companies to develop and produce an effective vaccine. For this, we should all be grateful, and as Christians we should also be thankful for the God-given talents, intelligence and insight of all those who have been involved in this massive undertaking. We may be living with the current restrictions for some time to come, but we hold onto the hope of a return to 'normality' as soon as is safely possible.

As I've said many times in these letters over the past months, God is with us. God is with you and your family. This message is at the heart of the beautiful festival of Christmas that we've just celebrated; Emmanuel, God is with us.

May Emmanuel be with you and all those you love in 2021.

Yours in Christ,
Revd Denise



**Christians do not contemplate eternity.
Christians possess eternity.**
Andrei Sinyavsky

Thoughts on Lent

Lent is an old English word meaning 'lengthen': Lent is observed during the early days of spring when the days begin to get longer. It's a season of lengthening.

Different Christian denominations calculate the length of Lent in different ways. Generally, Lent is 46 days in length, meaning it's longer than Jesus' marathon fast in the wilderness. The discrepancy is best explained by noting how Fridays were, traditionally, already days of penitence (because Jesus was killed on a Friday). Lent therefore represents an *additional* forty days of penitence.

The idea of fasting on the 6 Sundays in Lent was quietly dropped in more recent traditions and by the twentieth century, there had arisen a new, different idea that fasting was not appropriate on the six Sundays of Lent. Only 40 of the 46 days in Lent were now fast days.

The Second Letter of Peter is a short, intense, and passionate letter addressed to a group of first-century Christians. Peter is probably addressing the same community he addressed in his first letter.

St Peter writes to urge his followers to grow in their faith; to remember that the promises of God (spoken by the prophets and apostles) are trustworthy; and to beware of anyone who teaches otherwise. The letter also operates as a farewell speech.

Authorship The letter claims to be from St Peter and its character is compatible with that claim: the author identifies himself as Simon Peter (1:1); he describes this letter as a successor to his first letter (3:1) and refers to Paul as 'our dear brother' (3:15); the passage in 1:12–15 is highly personal and claims to be an eyewitness account of the transfiguration (1:16–18; cf. Mt 17:1–5).

It was not ascribed to Peter until about 200 AD and some in the early Church doubted its authenticity. The first ever list of books to be included in the Bible questioned it. This letter has generally been accepted as scripture since about 250 AD. Its genuineness has been challenged by many interpreters in more recent centuries. One of the objections concerns differences between the literary styles of 1 and 2 Peter, but such stylistic features may simply reveal different secretaries—tradition says that Peter was illiterate.

Date Peter was martyred during the reign of the Roman Emperor Nero, so he died before 68 AD. It's therefore likely that Peter (if he did indeed write this letter) did so between 65 and 68 AD.

Purpose in writing This letter teaches the Church about how to deal with false teachers and evildoers who have come into the Church. Peter therefore challenges its members to continue growing in their faith, love and service to God. True followers of Jesus will continue to grow and develop God's divine character traits, including love that involves devotion to others regardless of cost.

Peter issues two warnings in the letter: avoid the corrupt teachers who were leading the Christian communities astray with their way of life and distorted theology. They despise God's authority and use their 'freedom in Christ' as permission to commit sin. They distort St Paul's teaching in Romans 6. Incidentally, verse 3:16 is the first

time anyone calls Paul's writing 'scripture'.

Peter also addressed objections to the reality of Jesus' resurrection and the last judgement. He reminded them that their hope is in God and not their present leaders. The letter ends with a challenge to hope for the Day of the Lord when Jesus will expose evil and create a new heaven and earth.

Particularly Important verses There are great similarities between 2 Peter and Jude (especially 2 Peter 2 and Jude 4–18) although other differences are clear. It has been suggested that one borrowed from the other or that they both drew on a common source.

Verse 1:4 is the letter's greatest legacy. It says, 'God has given us his very great and precious promises *so that through them you may participate in the divine nature*'. This verse dominates the theology of the Eastern Orthodox churches with the doctrine that we can grow so close to God that we start to share His character—an idea called *theosis*. It's impossible to over-emphasise the importance of this concept to Orthodox Christians.

For more information, please visit the following sites:

<https://www.biblestudytools.com/2-peter>

<https://bibleproject.com/learn/2-peter>

The Second Letter of St Peter

Margaret was born in York in 1556 as one of five children to Thomas and Jane Middleton. Her father was a respected businessman, candle-maker, and Sheriff. He died when Margaret was fourteen.

In 1571, Margaret married John Clitherow, a wealthy local butcher who was also a chamberlain of the city. They had three children. The family lived on the Shambles in the ancient city centre.

Margaret's father was a church warden of St Martin's church in Coney Street, York, so her upbringing was strictly Protestant.

Roman Catholicism was illegal at the time. In 1581, Parliament outlawed Catholic religious ceremonies and made sheltering a priest an offence punishable by death. But Margaret became a Roman Catholic in the early 1570s. She seems to have converted in response to her friendship with the wife of Dr Thomas Vavasour, at that time a prominent Catholic in York.

As a merchant in central York, Margaret's husband was obliged to report Catholic worshippers. It was the law. Margaret would be regarded as subverting the authorities and the official church.

In 1559, Queen Elizabeth imposed a fine for following the Roman Catholic Church at twelve pence. Margaret's husband often paid this fine for his wife's perceived misbehaviour. Margaret was imprisoned at York Castle in 1577 for failing to attend an Anglican Church. She was imprisoned twice more. The final term lasted 20 months. Margaret learned to read Latin during that last term, enabling her to read and speak the Latin mass as an act of Catholic observance.

Margaret allowed the celebration of Mass in her own home and concealed the identities of the priests who came to officiate. She claimed they were schoolmasters or music teachers for her children. And she made and concealed a tiny room in her home on the Shambles to hide priests, along with a secret cupboard in which she hid vestments, bread and equipment for the Mass. Its location was revealed when a young servant panicked when the authorities raided her home in March 1586. She was arrested for harbouring priests, which had been a capital offence since 1581.

Margaret was tried in the York Guildhall. She refused to be tried by a jury which was also an offence punishable by death. And Margaret refused to renounce her faith. She was sentenced to be 'pressed' to death. On 25 March 1586, she was taken to the toll-booth on Ouse Bridge in York and forced to lie 'facing upward toward the heaven that she had forfeit' on the pavement. A sharp rock was placed beneath her back. A board was placed over her head and weights totalling eight or nine hundred pounds loaded on its surface to cause suffocation. Her back broke. She died within fifteen minutes.

Local records suggest she said, 'The sheriffs have said that I am going to die this coming Friday; and I feel the weakness of my flesh which is troubled at this news, but my spirit rejoices greatly. For the love of God, pray for me and ask all good people to do likewise.'

Margaret's stepfather, Henry May was Lord Mayor of York that year. He felt forced to comment, and said she was committing suicide; others thought she was mad. But there was a great public outcry at the brutality of Margaret's sentence. It was so serious a public-relations disaster for the monarch that, unusually, Queen Elizabeth I herself publicly condemned the killing. She wrote to the people of York saying Margaret should have been spared such a gruesome fate owing to her gender.

Some time after Margaret's death, her son Henry Clitherow went abroad to train as a priest, hoping to return to England to serve the English Church. In fact, he never returned.

Margaret is revered today as 'the pearl of York' ('Margaret' means 'pearl'). She was canonised in 1970 as one of forty English martyrs. Her former house on the Shambles in York is now a shrine to her memory.

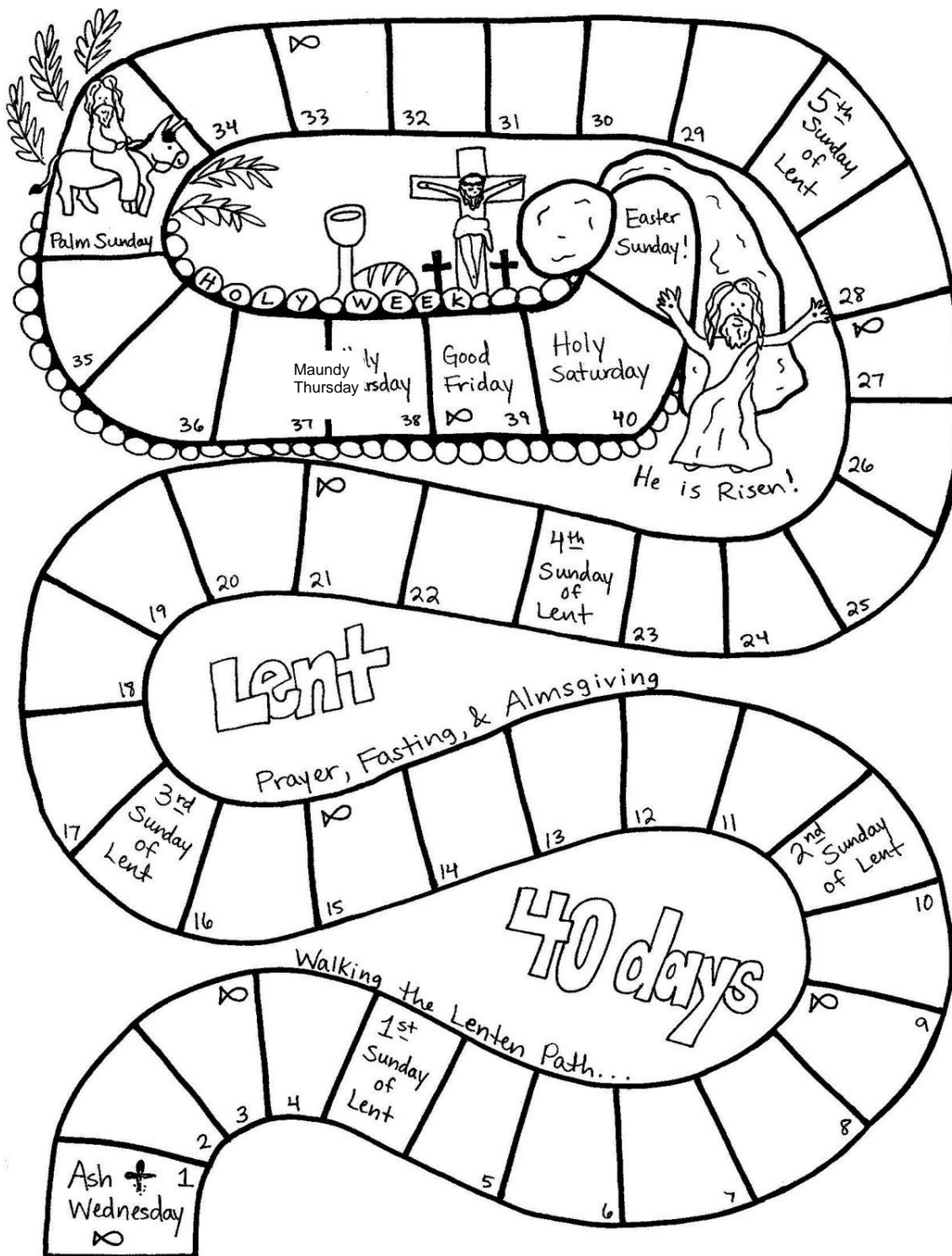
Margaret remains a beacon of dedicated faith from an era known for its bigotry and intolerance. Her ultimate legacy is a country in which all forms of Christianity are permitted, accepted and celebrated.



Margaret Clitherow

More information

<https://www.historic-uk.com/HistoryUK/HistoryofEngland/Margaret-Clitherow>
<http://www.historyofyork.org.uk/themes/tudor-stuart/margaret-clitherow>
https://www.catholic.org/saints/saint.php?saint_id=515
<http://www.stwilfridsyork.org.uk/shrine-st-margaret-clitherow.php>



Coronavirus (Covid-19)

Advice and resources

The Country is again in lockdown as a result of Covid. The Church Council decided to suspend worship as a necessary precaution against spreading the virus.

We will revisit this decision regularly as the situation evolves. Please consult the Church website, at www.medlockhead.co.uk/virus

From the Parish Registers

Christian funeral

Friday 18 January

Elijah Debnam at Oldham Crematorium.



Everyone else merely talks about surveying the wondrous Cross ... but he actually did it.

Every person’s life is a blend of body, mind and spirit. Each is interconnected. It’s important that we don’t concentrate on one aspect to the exclusion of the others.

Place the following in order of importance.

My family	<input type="text"/>
My job	<input type="text"/>
My faith	<input type="text"/>
My Church	<input type="text"/>
My hobbies	<input type="text"/>
My reputation	<input type="text"/>
My memories	<input type="text"/>

Every person’s spiritual life is unique. It’s important that we look at it fairly often. We should do lots of what makes us grow and avoid what prevents spiritual growth.

Place the following in order of importance.

Reading the Bible	<input type="text"/>
Praying in Church	<input type="text"/>
Praying at home	<input type="text"/>
Looking at nature	<input type="text"/>
Holy Communion	<input type="text"/>
Spiritual reading	<input type="text"/>
Singing hymns	<input type="text"/>
My memories	<input type="text"/>

Thinking about Lent

It’s tempting to think of Lent as a time to give something up. It isn’t. It’s better to think of Lent as a time for reflection and assessing our spiritual life.

Try these two simple exercises and see what they can tell us about ourselves.

In March this year I was out walking near my home when I caught sight of a teenage boy and girl running to catch a bus, each carrying a brightly-coloured homemade banner demanding action on climate change. On that day, thousands of young people skipped school to take part in protests across Britain. In the weeks and months that followed, *Extinction Rebellion* protests spread across the world. I was taken by the idealism of these two young people. Some might call it naivety, but I don't think so. The climate bus is leaving and, if we fail to catch it, it may be too late for the planet. This generation gets it. And they want justice.

I have been following the climate debate for over 30 years. When I was studying Environmental Science back in the 80s, the focus was on global warming and its impact. I can't remember the term 'climate justice' ever being used back then. Yet, climate change has always been an issue of justice—'distributive justice' (the equitable distribution of environmental benefits and burdens). The world's richer countries have gained vast political and economic gain through the exploitation of natural resources, leaving the poorer countries to suffer the worst consequences of environmental degradation.

Many economically rich countries still refuse to bear any responsibility for climate change, neither reducing carbon emissions sufficiently nor supporting lower-income countries in their fight against climate disasters.

The Christian idea of justice is rooted in Jesus' command that we love our neighbour. Climate justice is not only about the equitable distribution of environmental benefits and burdens, but also about the relationships between us and our global neighbours (including our descendants). The justice that Christians seek is one which restores both human relations as well as the relationship between humans and nature, distorted as they are by greed and oppression.

Biblically speaking, justice is related to how the oppressed are treated. It was former US President Jimmy Carter (himself a follower of Jesus) who said: 'The measure of a society is found in how it treats its weakest and most helpless citizens.'

Today's society is a global one. The way that so-called 'developed' countries (many of them culturally 'Christian') have ignored the negative impact climate changes have on their poorer neighbours is in direct contradiction to biblical justice and also a dereliction of our global responsibility.

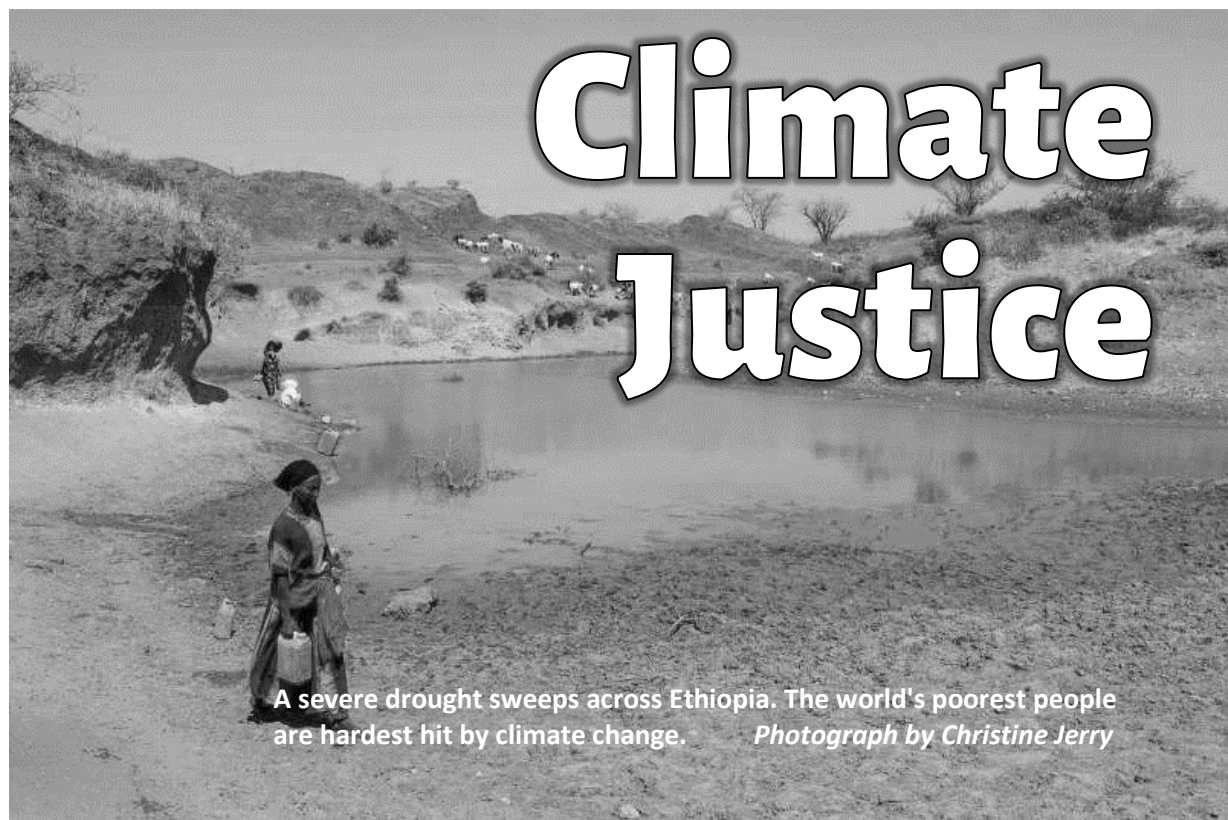
The Way of Jesus calls for love and compassion in the face of climate injustice. Our role as Jesus' followers is to expose the sins of climate change and the destruction of the planet. It is to view the world from the perspective of our neighbours—the poor and the powerless, calling on world leaders to work together to restore human relations and the relationship between humanity and creation.

Keith Hitchman is a vicar in the Anglican Diocese of Liverpool.

More information

<https://www.christianaid.org.uk/news/what-do-we-want-climate-justice>
(the *Christian Aid* website is the source of this article).

It contains more information about what all of us can do to help.



Climate Justice

A severe drought sweeps across Ethiopia. The world's poorest people are hardest hit by climate change. Photograph by Christine Jerry

Curate's Corner

I was half listening to an all-too-regular-these-days Covid item on the television news several weeks ago and something a woman interviewee said really stuck in my mind. She said that after all the terrible news of fatalities, the trials of lockdowns, the job losses, business failures, the curtailment of opportunities for socialising and family get-togethers that 'God owes us one!'

What a thing to say! What did she mean?

Logically, if she is talking about God, I suppose she must have some level of belief in God, but to my mind, she seems to have a far from perfect understanding of His purposes for this world. In one sense, to suggest that someone is in debt to you ... that they owe you something ... means that they have caused something to happen for which you require compensation or redress. Indeed some people have wondered if this pandemic is some sort of 'judgement' from God on the state of His creation and the evils of this modern world. I think ...

Firstly God promised, way back in Genesis in the story of Noah (8:20-22), that he would never again seek to destroy humankind. Secondly, in his new covenant in Jesus Christ, He sent His only Son to take away the sins of the world '... Christ ... offered for all time, a single sacrifice for sins' (Heb 10:12) so God does not visit punishment on us for our sins in this world.

Theories abound as to exactly what caused the Covid-19 virus to appear; the *World Health Organisation* is seeking answers. It is emerging as probable that the 'genesis' in this case is not godly but down to the actions of those who seek to exploit creation, particularly in relation to our treatment of animals. Our disregard for their welfare, the manner in which we come into contact with them and the ways they find their way into our food chain are all under close scrutiny as likely agents of the virus. There is no clearer example of how our own actions might be leading to our eventual extinction!

So, perhaps we need to turn the statement upside-down and think instead of what we owe to God...a serious commitment to be good stewards of the earthly home he gave us. For us to continue to flourish in creation, not 'God owes us one' but 'We owe God everything'.

Rev'd Jane

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

All the words in this month's Wordsearch relate to creation.

ANIMAL, BEGINNING, CREATION, DAY, EARTH, GENESIS, GOD, GOOD,
HEAVEN, LIGHT, MOON, NIGHT, SKY, SPIRIT, SUN, TREES

Wordsearch

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Lent course 2021

Stepping-stones for growth



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The pandemic prevents our holding a conventional Lent course. The lockdown-regulations won't allow us to come together in-person. We will therefore hold a discussion based on the Diocese's new course *Stepping Stones*, using the web-conferencing software called Zoom.

The rationale behind the course is Church growth—both an increase in the number of members but, just as important, growth in personal spirituality.

Each week, we will watch on the pre-prepared video clips. They vary from 6 to 16 minutes in length. The accompanying booklet is available to download. There's a link on the stepping stones webpage [here](#).

The video clips are available as both hi-resolution or low-resolution files. Please click [here](#).

Please speak to Vicar Paul if you'd like to attend and to receive the necessary pass codes to access Zoom.



Some recent cleans by OvenGleamers

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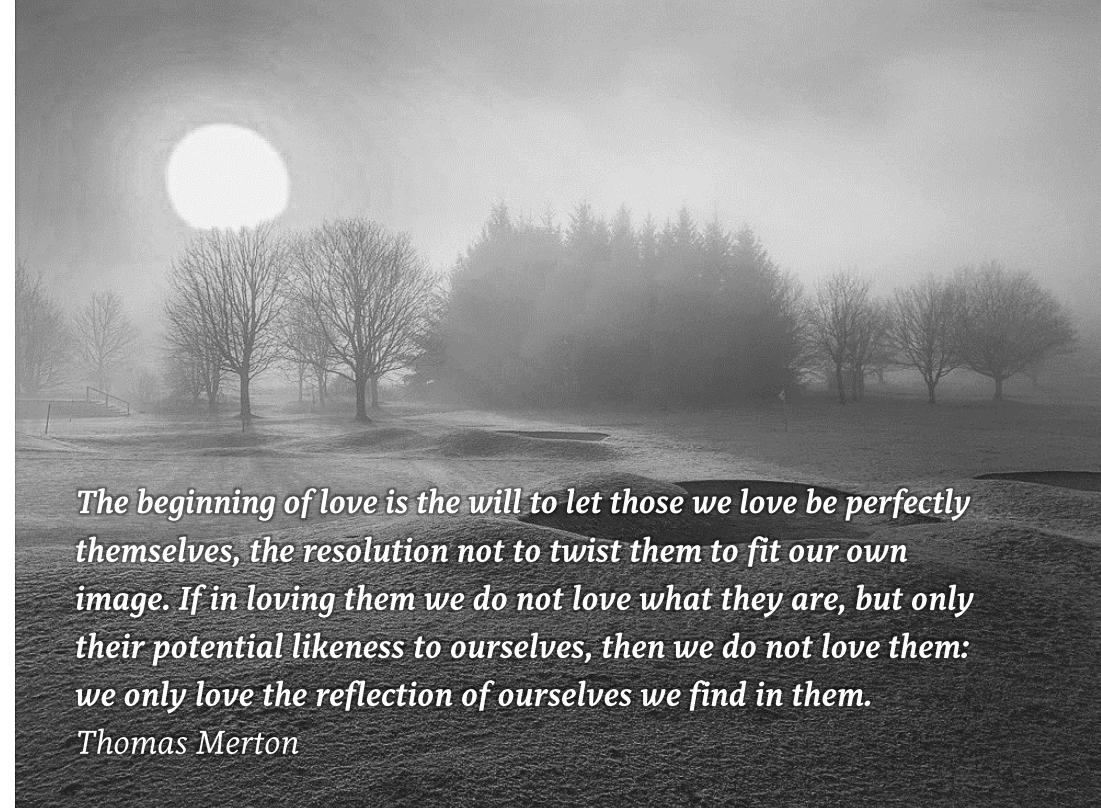
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The beginning of love is the will to let those we love be perfectly themselves, the resolution not to twist them to fit our own image. If in loving them we do not love what they are, but only their potential likeness to ourselves, then we do not love them: we only love the reflection of ourselves we find in them.
Thomas Merton



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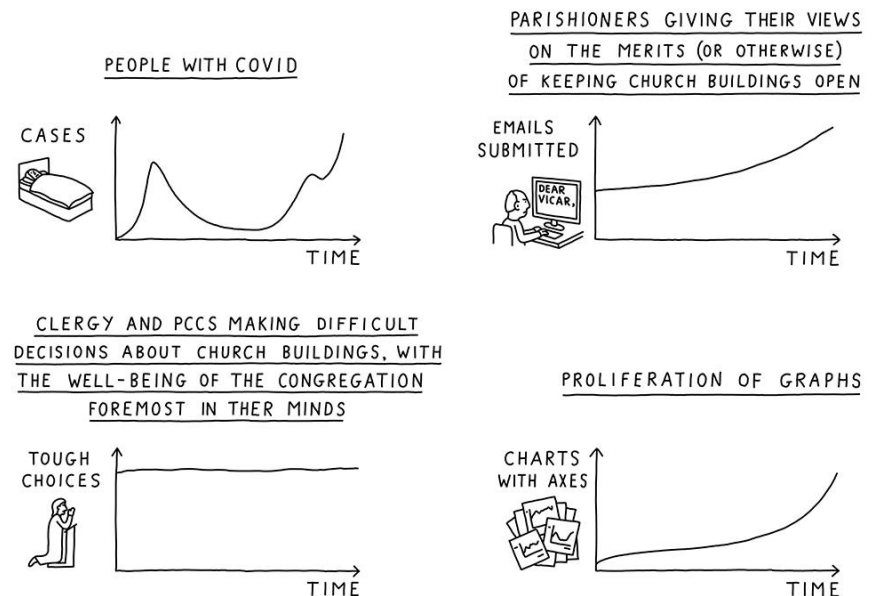
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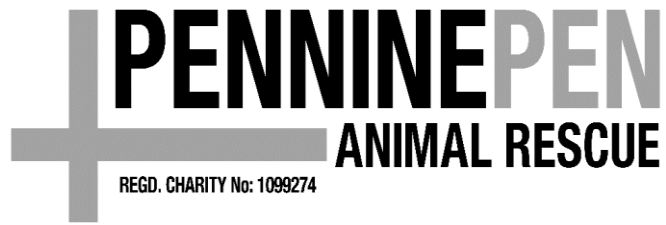
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This image is a little like a time bomb. It's so understated that you look at its perfect stillness, and then suddenly realise that a little bit of its peace has rubbed off. Reading the Scriptures can often act in much the same way: spiritual truths triggering a depth-charge deep in our soul.



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