



HOLY TRINITY

Waterhead
175 Years

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donation
50p

January 2022

holytrinitywaterhead.co.uk

Services at Holy Trinity Church

Sunday 11:00 am Parish Worship

Wednesday 7:00 pm Family Communion

Baptisms and marriages by arrangement with the Vicar.

Please submit items for the February magazine by 15 January. You can e-mail files to paulmonk111@gmail.com

People at Holy Trinity Church

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Parish Hall Manager	Naomi Parkes	(07907) 410 606
Sunday School	Yolanda Ryder	
Rainbows	Sarah Wilson and Natalie Morris	
Brownies	Val Lees and Moira Belcher	
Guides	Karen and Lisa Cannon	
Beavers and Cubs	Lee Thompson	(07907) 907 354
Scouts	Mark Dickinson	(07976) 666 512

Letter from the Vicar

We start another a New Year. Most of us were planning for 2021 to be the year in which we restarted life after the pandemic. It clearly wasn't. It might feel like our plans were wasted or maybe that we got it wrong. We may feel angry or just too exhausted to plan ahead for possibly yet more uncertainty.

Perhaps it's better to build our hopes for the future on a different kind of certainty that cannot depend on Covid, or politics, or health, or weather, or on anything capable of change. We need to build on *sure* foundations.

Christians are wise to build their lives on a relationship with God. They do so because He never changes. He does not age or stop being there for us. He loves us and His love will never diminish. He is always present when we speak to Him and will never put us off with phrases like, 'Speak later ...' or even 'Can't be bothered!'

We need to find sound foundations because we need to grow. We do so in order to build the Kingdom of God.

One word for wanting to build on a sure foundation is 'hope.' Christian hope is an action rather than a sentiment or idea. A true hope always wants to grow and express itself in works of love and charity. For a Christian, therefore, hope means something we work toward using God as a foundation. The phrase 'hope for salvation' means nothing out of this context.

Our hope in God needs to grow and develop. Perhaps that's why Jesus taught so many parables about growing. He certainly performed miracles involving growth like feeding thousands from a few loaves and fish and multiplying wine at a wedding party. These actions of growth fed and addressed need.

The best way for hope to grow is to ask God what it is that He wants us to do that improves the world. If the vision is genuine then He will help and, indeed, will supply the spiritual materials. So keep praying!

With prayers as we hope for a better world:

PAUL

2022 dates for your diary

Sunday 2 January	11:00 am: Annual Covenant service which occurs during the liturgy of the first Sunday of the year.
Saturday 5 March	10:00–11:00 am: Councillors' Surgery at St Barnabas' Church.

News and updates

Thanks to everyone's generous donations the 2021 Christmas raffles raised £165. Many thanks to everyone for their donations and to everyone bought tickets.

The *Manchester Guardian Society Charitable Trust* has awarded the Church £2000 to improve the kitchen in the Hall. Thank you!

Church year

(answers to the page below)

The Church of England describes most of the occasions in this list 'Principal feasts'. Palm Sunday and the Transfiguration are the two exceptions so they belong at the end of the list. The Church of England then ranks the feasts as follows, though some lists differ:

Easter Day > Good Friday > Pentecost > Maundy Thursday > Christmas Day > All Saints Day >> Palm Sunday = Transfiguration.

Vestments

(answers to the page below)

1 = Stole 2 = Alb
3 = Chasuble 4 = Cassock 5 = Surplice

A = Ascension Day (Jesus looks like he is floating above the ground).
B = Pentecost (also called 'Whit') because a dove is descending.
C = All Saints Day (it shows people from all ages and all backgrounds).

Bible readings for January

Sunday 2 January Covenant Service

First: Jeremiah 31:7–14
Epistle: Ephesians 1:3–14
Gospel: John 1:1, 10–18

Sunday 16 January Second Sunday of Epiphany

First: Isaiah 62:1–5
Epistle: 1 Corinthians 12:1–11
Gospel: John 2:1–11

Sunday 30 January Fourth Sunday of Epiphany

First: Ezekiel 43:27–44:4
Epistle: 1 Corinthians 13:1–13
Gospel: Luke 2:22–40

Sunday 9 January The Baptism of Christ

First: Isaiah 43:1–7
Epistle: Acts 8:14–17
Gospel: Luke 3:15–17, 21–22

Sunday 23 January Third Sunday of Epiphany

First: Nehemiah 8:1–3, 5–6, 8–10
Epistle: 1 Corinthians 12:12–31a
Gospel: Luke 4:14–21

Sunday 2 February Fourth Sunday before Lent

First: Isaiah 6:1–8
Epistle: 1 Corinthians 15:1–11
Gospel: Luke 5:1–11

From the Parish Registers

Christian funeral Thursday 16 December

Friday 17 December
Monday 20 December

Roy Hannan, at Waterhead Church followed by a committal at Greenacres Cemetery.
Phyllis Whitby, at Oldham Crematorium.
Michael Lloyd, at St Barnabas Church followed by a committal at Greenacres Cemetery.

I've begun to write this (my final) 'Curate's Corner' several times. How does one adequately sum up, in relatively few words, three and a half years as a member of the St Barnabas/Holy Trinity family?

As soon as I arrived, I knew I was going to find a happy home in Oldham; both churches had a warm and friendly atmosphere, and my new Training Incumbent was both welcoming and encouraging as I took my first steps in leading services, preaching and in pastoral ministry in the parishes.

I enjoyed the Sunday, Tuesday and Wednesday services, the visits to Moor Haven Care Home, the Scripture Breakfasts at St Barnabas and joining the 'Craft Clubbers' on Saturday mornings at Waterhead. I made bacon butties, helped at the Food Co-operative, joined the quiz nights at Waterhead (our team won twice!) and the various faith lunches at both churches. I was looking forward to developing new mission initiatives beginning with organising a 'School of Prayer' which some of you attended ... then everything stopped!

Obviously the last twenty two months have been difficult as many things have had to be scaled back. It's only relatively recently that I've been able to resume pastoral visiting but presently those are, again, on hold. But let's not dwell on the negatives ... being with you all has brought tremendous joys.

The privilege of sharing the Eucharist with you ... finding the words to tell you more about God's love for us ... praying with, and for you ... lending a listening ear in difficult times ... celebrating the joys and sorrows of life ... the fellowship ... the food ... and, not least, Paul's awfully corny jokes! Of course, I shall miss you all, but the time is right to move on; to try new things, with new people closer to home.

The parishes I go to are right in the centre of Middleton, where I live, and encompass two church primary schools, two non-denominational primary schools and a high school. Middleton shopping centre, the town's police station, Middleton Arena and a golf club are also within our boundaries. As I shop, stop for a coffee and generally go about my daily life (I call it 'pottering'), I'll be right in the midst of the folk I seek to serve and I hope there will be opportunities to forge new relationships 'on the hoof' so to speak.

In leaving, I have the pattern of St Barnabas before me (not that I am comparing!). He and his companions ... among them the great St Paul

... travelled from community to community, spreading the Gospel and overseeing Christian living wherever they went. They did not put roots down in any one place.

In years gone by, a minister may have stayed for many years at one church (this certainly happened in the past at Holy Trinity) but nowadays, clergy only exceptionally stay for a life-time.

Moving on can bring the impetus for change ... for a re-examination of the 'whats any whys' of a worshipping community ... for new eyes and perhaps a new vision ... new ways of 'being' church. I will be licensed alongside a new Vicar for the Middleton parishes. Together with those we serve, we can take a good look at how the churches might better serve the community within and without at a (hopefully soon) post-pandemic time and at the very dawn of a new era of local churches coming together as 'Mission Communities'. These new diocesan arrangements will be a new era for you too as you explore ways to be the people of God in a wider context; a lot of what we will be doing must be underpinned by a great deal of prayer and a willingness to be proactive and positive.

If I were able to have three wishes for your (and my) future they would be: for an even closer walk with God ... for us to be open to new and exciting opportunities to share the love of God with others ... and, with the involvement of more folk from the pews, for our churches to flourish and grow.

Thank you all for being part of my journey. All you are ... and have been ... are now safely part of my treasury of experience which will help me as I travel on. I wish you every joy and success for the future (and a happy 175th for Holy Trinity). Please remember me in your prayers ... you'll certainly be in mine.

Revd Jane

Curate's corner

Our curate, Jane Hyde

Our curate, Jane Hyde, joined us in the summer of 2018 and will leave us in the early days of 2022. She will serve two Churches in Middleton: All Saints Rhodes (top) and St Michael's Tonge-cum-Alkington (bottom).

We will of course miss her greatly, and wish her all God's blessings.

Jane's last Sunday with us will be Sunday 2 January. We are taking a collection to buy a gift by which she can remember us. Please give any monies to Paul or one of the Church Wardens, thank you.



Blessed are you
who bear the light
in unbearable times,
who testify
to its endurance
amid the unendurable,
who bear witness
to its persistence
when everything seems
in shadow
and grief.

Blessed are you
in whom
the light lives,
in whom
the brightness blazes—
your heart
a chapel,
an altar where
in the deepest night
can be seen
the fire that
shines forth in you
in unaccountable faith,
in stubborn hope,
in love that illumines
every broken thing
it finds.

Blessed are you

© Jan Richardson
from *Circle of Grace: A Book of Blessings for the Seasons*

The church has its own distinctive calendar, just like schools, tax authorities, governments, and businesses. We often call it 'the church year.' It starts on Advent Sunday, which occurs exactly four Sundays before Christmas. The last Sunday of the year is called 'Christ the King'.

Naming the festivals

We often give the name 'Festival' to the major occasions in the church year. In the past, the Church called them 'Feast Days,' because folk ate meat when it was otherwise too expensive.

The language of the church year governs much of the following discussion. For example, it is very common to add the syllable '-tide' to the name of a season named after a Feast Day.

- Christmastide is the time between Christmas Day and Epiphany.
- Eastertide is the forty-day period from Easter Day to Ascension Day.

In the context of church festivals and holy days, it is common to speak of an 'octave,' which means the eight days that start with a particular holy day. For example, the octave of Easter are the eight days bounded by Easter Day and the following Sunday.

Fixed feasts

Some events in the church year always occur on the same date each year. The obvious example is Christmas Day which always falls on 25 December, whatever the day of the week. The overwhelming majority of saints' days are fixed in the same way. Other examples include:

- Epiphany, celebrating the Wise Men seeing Jesus (6 January)
- The Feast of the Transfiguration (6 August)
- Holy Cross Day (14 September)
- All Saints' Day (1 November)

The principal feasts

We call the most important dates in the church year the 'principal feasts'. Some follow from others. For example, Pentecost always occurs ten days after Ascension Day, and fifty days after Easter.

While secular Britain may consider that Christmas is the most important day of the church year, in fact Christmas has never been the principal Christian feast.

Interestingly, this order has changed over the years ... and often. In

the earliest days of the Church, Epiphany was the most important day because it celebrates the sharing of the Gospel with Gentiles (non-Jews) and a great many of the first Christians converts were Gentiles.

It is also important to note how different Church denominations disagree over this list. The Greek Orthodox Church, for example, considers the Transfiguration as being vitally important ... more so than Christmas. The Roman Catholic Church, by contrast, celebrates the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary whereas many Anglicans do not even recognise it.

Look at the list on page 10 and decide what you think the order should be. The Anglican Church's interpretation appears on page 31.

The colours of the Church year

There are several seasons of the church year. From the earliest times, the church has followed the events of the Christian year with different outward expressions. One of the more conspicuous is the so-called liturgical colour: we use different colours on the altar frontal, lectern cloth and clergy robes. These colours are described on page 15.



The Church year

All Saints' Day

Ascension Day

Christmas Day

Easter Day

Good Friday

Maundy Thursday

Palm Sunday

Pentecost

The Transfiguration

Trinity Sunday

The church has its own calendar, just like schools, governments, and businesses. We call it the **Liturgical Year** or **Church Year**.

Arrange the following Church days in order of decreasing importance, from 1 to 10.

Colours of the Church year

WHITE or **GOLD** indicates joy and purity, and is worn for:-

- Christian festivals centred on Jesus such as Christmas, Easter, Ascension Day, and the Transfiguration.
- The festivals of the Blessed Virgin Mary.
- All Saints' Day (1 November) and Saints who were not martyred.

RED represents the colour of blood and flame. Red is the liturgical colour for,

- Martyrs — men and women who were killed for being a Christian.
- Festivals of the Holy Spirit, so Pentecost and confirmation.
- Festivals of the Cross such as Good Friday and Holy Cross Day.
- The feast of Christ the King (the last Sunday before Advent).

VIOLET is worn during Advent (and some churches use violet during Lent).

- Until recently, only royalty wore purple, so the use of this colour points toward the royalty of Jesus. The second coming of Jesus (as King) is emphasised at Advent.
- Violet / purple is sometimes worn at funerals because its use represents the colour of penitence and mourning.

GREEN for the rest of the year.

Green represents creation, reminding us that God made us ... and made us good.

Sack cloth Our churches use sack cloth during Lent, which is called 'Lent array.' It's a pale brown in colour, wide weave in texture, so it can feel itchy to wear.

Wordsearch for New Year

UCRCCWQCFD IMFWFESLNZYRXTAPYAPW
 NEGKJYTZAQNILPOTLQXRLORSUAAASU
 AAPANSYXTMXOPASWUGXBISSBDRSAEJ
 HCAFNOEATUIFIARASEWLEUANYSSNSJ
 OOSOO LIMDRBSETVOIANCMEURIBYNSY
 PICJIEPTINIFEUALPEMPBSCOHCAUAA
 SHHOTJVGPDUNOGTCZMTTTPNNHHDNMD
 ZDAUAJTMEEOSIPAWIIEISSMORRNCEN
 RQLXGMGAQSCUMTHXOFHTUILNLIOIVU
 MHTTIOASSLONBLYNEWINIYREDSIAIS
 CYICLHFCQEKYOLASESDRWJNHDTTTTR
 XADMBJJEAJLLRCEPUAQEUTMDCMAIOE
 NVEKOVYNDMFPYLERYNEIBPLCKAGOV
 PYURFLUSOZLNMRATIKDTNEVDASONUS
 JFRXOCEILCAROIARATEARXXRDTRPSA
 RHCSSDYOWHTSSGSIQLEQYBQNVIFWE
 CSVIYTKNPMASYAICRTUVIGILSDXSLE
 FTTWAZVIFRESAYCTOECCHQJLWEEEQM
 ZNPLDIPDYPYJDSLRSFNATWQTMTDYH
 VIAAYETOTAVOSHEBEISOAMRWGIIGG
 VAWDLOVUDPAUEXHVFD RSBSMXVZRTOF
 ISLPOBARBIRYNZSCAYHHAPEIVYENOC
 PLLKHGEWMIPTDTBUVTPECLZIGFLODZ
 RLWBEBNEUCYVEOPSEXCRASCGJPPIFH
 FAHSMEJZKTPZWNYQGGROBRUTERMRSR
 RGIEXFTTUDRRHPENTECOSTTPSISIL
 UMHOLYFAMILYSSSECONDCLASSRRSADM
 AQDOUBLERITEALJCGTJOXXWFHOIPAF
 YYCRUQUINQUAGESIMAOUVUXMIRCFYX
 MZXNSVXWRSCODBNYADSRUHTYLOHRHM

All these words relate to days and seasons in the Church year.

Advent, All Saints, Annunciation, Ascension, Ash Wednesday, Assumption, Christmas, Christmastide, Corpus Christi,. Double Rite, Easter Sunday, Ember Days, Epiphany, Feasts, Good Friday, Holy Family, Holy Thursday, Holy Week, Lent, Octaves, Palm Sunday, Passiontide, Pentecost, Purification, Qunquagesima, Rogation Days, Rosary, Second Class, Septuagesima, Sexagesima, Temporal, Trinity Sunday, Vigils, Whit Sunday.

Covenant

I made a covenant with my hands not to be reaching for love and praise which once were all my light. These are for Christ by the most utter right.

I made a covenant with my tongue not to be speaking of aught that draws me from the Word apart, much less to interpret Him in my heart.

I made a covenant with my eyes not to be watching to see what beauty might come down to me. Christ is my beauty; Him alone I see.

I made a covenant with my heart never and nowhere to be admitting any lover but Him. I take for witnesses the Seraphim.

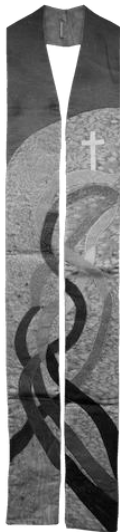
This is the document I have been writing in painful letters for these many years with shame and failure and a yield of tears.

I made two copies for my own protection: one to be carried, ready to unroll, one to post up on gates outside my soul.

Jessica Powers OCD



Special clothes used in Church



A-C What occasions in the Church year do these designs imply?



1

2

3

A

B

C



Can you name these clothes?

1-3 Vestments worn by a priest.

4-5 Vestments worn by priests, choirs, servers, Lay Readers

Answers on page 31



4

5

Imagine you've been asked to design a chasuble for celebrating Harvest Festival. Draw it here.

Dates Hebrews must have been written before the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple in 70 AD because:

1. If it had been written after this date, the author would surely have mentioned the Temple's destruction and the end of the Jewish sacrificial system. It would have proved his point if they *had* ceased
2. The author uses the present tense when speaking of the Temple and priestly activities..

This letter bore the title 'to the Hebrews' from the early second century because its authors wanted to address Jewish Christians.

As early as the end of the second century, the church in Alexandria in Egypt accepted Hebrews as a letter of Paul, and that became the view commonly held in the East.

Author unlike most of the letters in the New Testament, it has no address so no author is mentioned, although he was obviously well known to those first recipients. In Greek manuscripts, Hebrews was usually attached to collections of letters by St Paul, perhaps because the reference to Timothy (13:23) suggests connections to St Paul and his assistants.

The identity of the letter's audience, its author, and whether Hebrews is even a letter have long been disputed. There is no agreement on the suggested authors who include Barnabas, Apollos, Priscilla, and Aquila.

The Greek of the letter is in many ways the best in the New Testament, which might simply point to a supremely competent scribe.

Themes The author saw the addressees in danger of apostasy from their Christian faith. This danger was due not to any persecution from outsiders but to a weariness with the demands of Christian life and a growing indifference to their calling (2:1; 4:14; 6:1–12; 10:23–32).

The author's main theme is the priesthood and sacrifice of Jesus (chapters 3–10). The author does not develop this theme for its own sake but as a way of restoring the listeners' lost enthusiasm and strengthening them in their faith. This emphasis on Jesus' priestly mediation and statements on faith and the Law of Moses are not typical of other writings by St Paul.

The Letter lingers on the idea of Jesus' death as a perfect sacrifice which redeems humankind and establishes God's New Covenant. He took on flesh and blood to save humanity (2:14–17). Indeed, the Letter emphasises the everlasting priesthood of Christ as the fulfilment of Old Testament prophecy (7:1–8:12), and that he sacrificed himself once for our sins (7:27, 9:26–28, 10:12–14).

Next, the author describes the route to Heaven using a metaphor of God's people on pilgrimage to Jerusalem (11:10; 12:1–3, 18–29; 13:14). Jesus wins this spiritual goal for us through his ministry in the heavenly sanctuary (9:11–10:22).

In fact, this last theme permeates the whole book. For example, in order to emphasise how Jesus achieves our salvation, the author first rehearses how Jesus is unique (1:3) and is the peak of creation (1:1–3). He discusses how Jesus is superior to everything including even angels (1:4–2:2). Indeed, Jesus achieved salvation to the uttermost as demonstrated by his words and suffering (2:5–16). He says that Jesus' priesthood, being greater than anything predicted by Moses, is proof that Jesus was God's own Son (2:17–3:6).

The letter ends with a list of commandments (13:1–17) which the author uses to recall yet again the central theme of Jesus' sacrifice, adding that we will need courage if we truly want to associate ourselves with him in faith (13:9–16).

More information

<https://bible.usccb.org/bible/hebrews/0>

<https://biblescripture.net/Hebrews.html>

<https://www.biblestudytools.com/hebrews/>

<https://www.britannica.com/topic/Letter-to-the-Hebrews>

Letter to the Hebrews

Ken Leech was born into a secular working-class family in Ashton-under-Lyne, Greater Manchester, in 1939.

He became a Christian. A major inspiration occurred when, as a teenager in 1956, he heard Trevor Huddleston denouncing apartheid at an event in Manchester's Free Trade Hall. He said later, 'If this faith could drive this man to oppose racism with such passion, perhaps it could drive me too.' He soon felt called to the priesthood so read history and then theology in Oxford.

As a curate in London in the 1960s, he was confronted by homeless young people in Hoxton and Soho. In response, he founded *Centrepont*, which is still Britain's principal charity for the homeless. He pointedly named the charity after the 'Centrepont' high-rise building that had been standing empty for years on the edge of Soho while people nearby lived on the streets. He spent his nights among his homeless parishioners, many of them drug dealers and prostitutes. Without sentimentality, he studied the youth drug scene and wrote with clarity on how to help its victims. He set up the Soho Drug Group in 1967, which ministered to young addicts, many of whom had been drawn into prostitution.

He really felt called to ministry in the East End of London so, in 1974, he went to St Matthew's, Bethnal Green, to take up what turned out to be his only stint as Parish Priest. There, he played a crucial role in helping to mobilise East End communities and activists against the growing threat posed to Bangladeshis by the *National Front*. Three years later, he began a decade of work in race relations, first for the *British Council of Churches*, then at Church House Westminster and finally as director of the *Runnymede Trust*, dedicated to promoting ethnic diversity in British society. Ken received a bullet through the post for his troubles.

Ken was a prolific author, producing a new book every two years or so, alongside innumerable pamphlets and articles, most exploring his view that prayer and protest should go hand in hand. His most popular book was *Soul Friend* (1977) which helped those engaged in spiritual counselling. Later, *True God* explored the commitments of Christianity within the Anglo-Catholic tradition. He also wrote much about urban ministry and theological critiques of capitalism and social injustice.

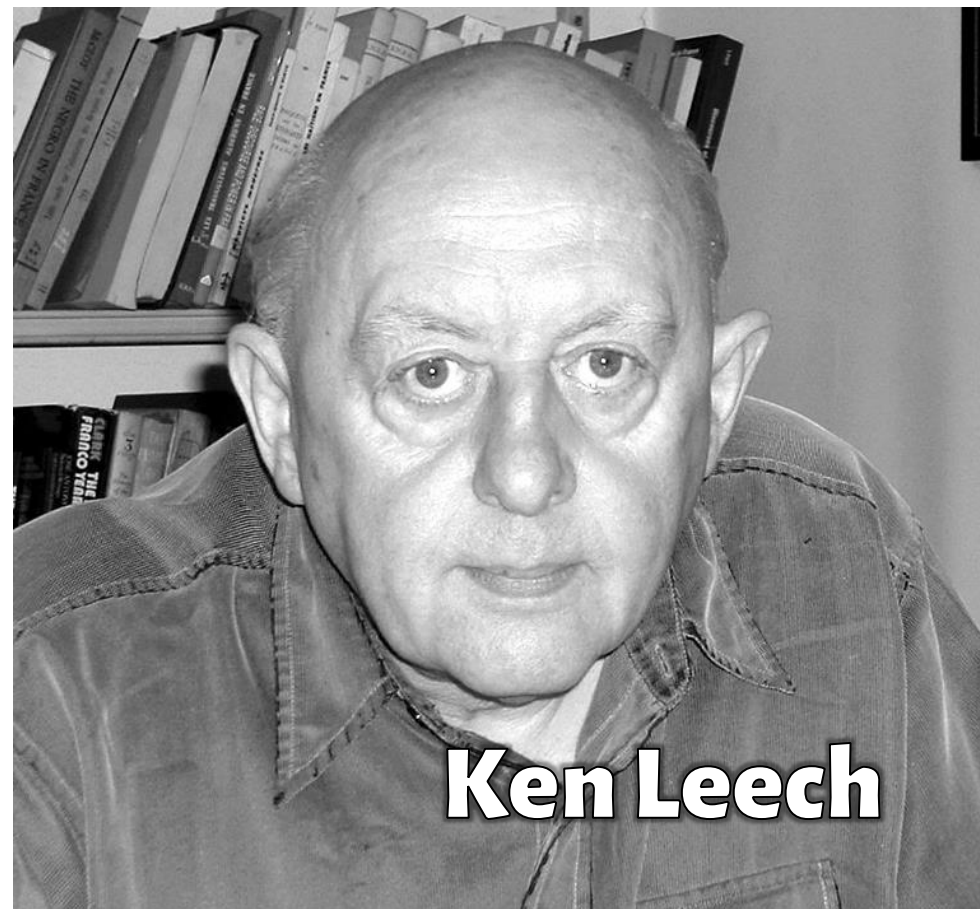
Ken resigned in 1990 and felt liberated from the constraints of institu-

tional religion. He moved to Whitechapel and called himself 'a community theologian' which was, then, an unknown title in the established Church. St Botolph's in Aldgate was his base and he worked there as an unpaid adviser. He lived from his writings, helped by the *Christendom Trust* and supported by personal allies, many of whom were in the Jubilee Group, a network of mainly Anglo-Catholic Christian Socialists that he co-founded in 1974. He later said, 'I went freelance.'

His faith centred on what he called 'subversive orthodoxy'—the union of contemplative spirituality, sacramental worship, orthodox doctrine and social action. He argued that the overlap of faith and the quest for justice, which points to the coming of the Kingdom of God on earth, is the essential mark of the Christian life and underlies all scripture.

Like many holy people, he was capable of great contradictions. For example, he was strongly critical of theological liberalism yet supported the ordination of women and LGBT rights. And while helping many people with addictions, he was fighting his own battle against alcohol.

Ken Leech died on 12 September 2015.



For more information, go to:

<https://www.theguardian.com/society/2015/sep/22/the-rev-ken-leech>

<https://sounds.bl.uk/Oral-history/Charity-and-social-welfare/021M-C1155X0011XX-0001V0>



Colour this page

The Church celebrates Epiphany on 6 January.

Epiphany

It might have been just someone else's story,
Some chosen people get a special king.
We leave them to their own peculiar glory,
We don't belong, it doesn't mean a thing.
But when these three arrive they bring us with them,
Gentiles like us, their wisdom might be ours;
A steady step that finds an inner rhythm,
A pilgrim's eye that sees beyond the stars.
They did not know his name but still they sought him,
They came from elsewhere but still they found;
In temples they found those who sold and bought him,
But in the filthy stable, hallowed ground.
Their courage gives our questing hearts a voice
To seek, to find, to worship, to rejoice.

Malcolm Guite

The Feast of the Epiphany celebrates the revelation of the Messiah to the Gentile world as represented by three mysterious wise men from the East. Who were they and how did they come to know that following a strange star would lead them to the Christ child and a king that is for them too? We don't know.

This poem invites us to share in their journey as those who are far from home, far from the familiar, making an arduous journey in search of something completely alien to everything they know.

Reproduced from <https://malcolmguite.wordpress.com> with permission

Being an eco-Church in January

- After Christmas, recycle your tree and Christmas wrapping paper.
- Many supermarkets have special recycling bins specifically for receiving Christmas cards. Please don't put cards or wrap with glitter on in the boxes: they cannot be recycled.
- Tesco on Huddersfield Road now recycles soft plastics, such as crisp packets and bread bags. Please take your items there.
- Take the *Worldwide Fund for Nature* (WWF) free quiz at <https://footprint.wwf.org.uk/#/> to find out what your environmental 'footprint is'. It will also suggest ways you can reduce the impact of your lifestyle on the environment. Every bit counts!

Did you know?

I know a man in Christ who (fourteen years ago) was caught up to the third heaven—whether in the body or out of the body I do not know; God knows. And I know that such a person—whether in the body or out of the body I do not know; God knows—was caught up into paradise and heard things that are not to be told, that no mortal is permitted to repeat. *2 Corinthians 12:2-4*

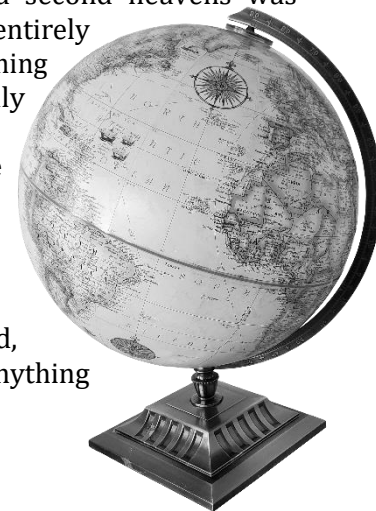
The ancient world liked to classify and label its ideas, so it compartmentalised and pigeon holed all experiences. It was therefore natural that they would think of stages between the physical world and Heaven. They believed there were three heavens arranged like spheres around spheres, a bit like onion skins, and with the earth at the centre.

The first heaven surrounding the ball of the earth was the sky. It was visible most of the time and was therefore amenable to study and hence prediction. The science of meteorology was advanced so Jesus himself taught parables about predicting the weather. The first heaven contained physical life which is why birds can fly through it. And it could be explored and described, for example by climbing a mountain.

The second heaven surrounding both the earth and the first heaven was what we call 'space.' This second heaven contained the sun, moon, and stars, but it contained no physical life. And as this region was invisible much of the time it was considered mysterious and perhaps scary. Describing it was difficult. And while the *study* of this heaven—astronomy—was allowed, using the second heaven for *prediction and prophecy*—astrology—was always utterly forbidden.

The third heaven encircling the first and second heavens was always invisible, completely inaccessible, and entirely unknown. It was beyond description. The only thing that could live there was God and His heavenly court. That's why He needed intermediaries such as angels to communicate with people on the Earth. God would be joined in the third Heaven by the spirits of the elect, but only at the end of time.

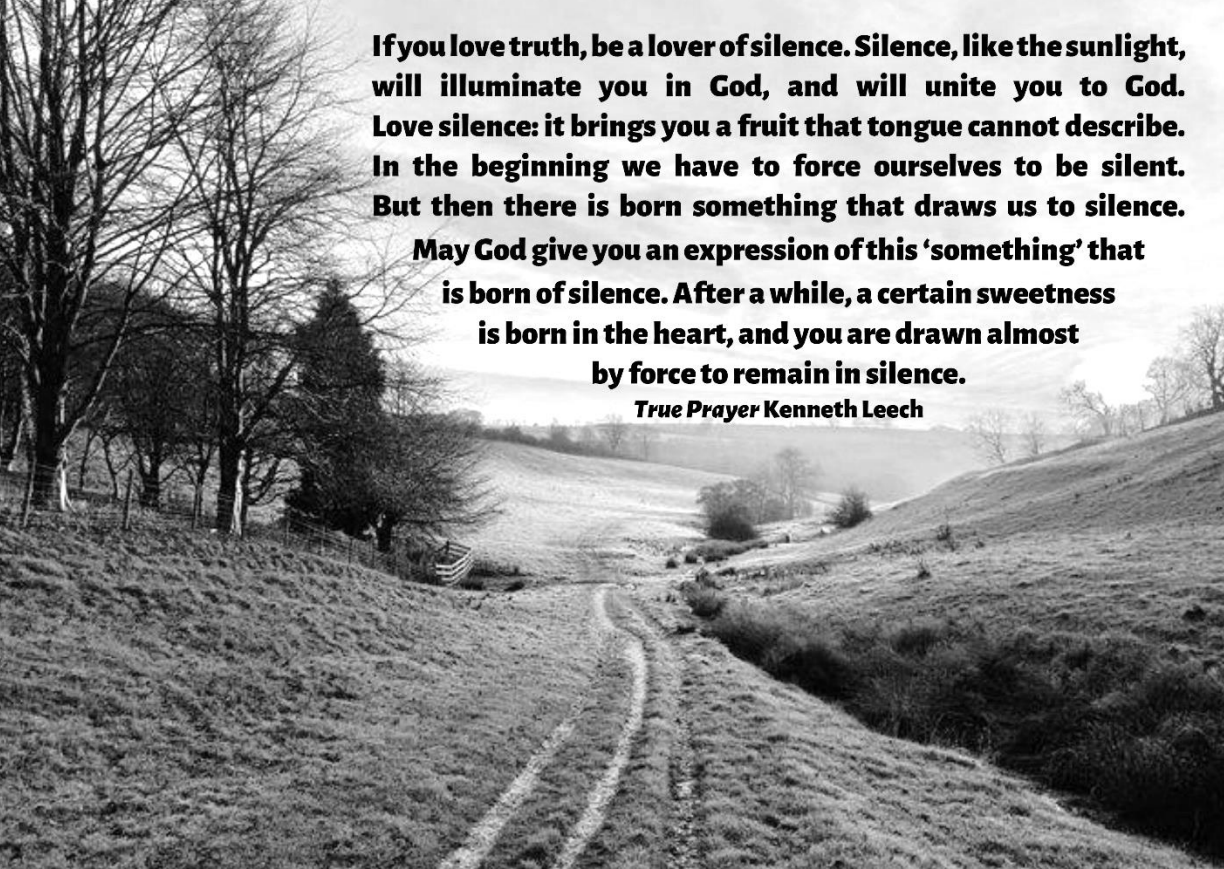
When St Paul had a vision of God, he interpreted it seeing the Jewish 'third Heaven.' And, naturally, he was entirely unable to describe anything about it.



If you love truth, be a lover of silence. Silence, like the sunlight, will illuminate you in God, and will unite you to God. Love silence: it brings you a fruit that tongue cannot describe. In the beginning we have to force ourselves to be silent. But then there is born something that draws us to silence.

May God give you an expression of this 'something' that is born of silence. After a while, a certain sweetness is born in the heart, and you are drawn almost by force to remain in silence.

True Prayer Kenneth Leech



'Can you scroll back, please?'

St Paul

An enemy whom God has made a friend,
A righteous man discounting righteousness,
Last to believe and first for God to send,
He found the fountain in the wilderness.
Thrown to the ground and raised at the same moment,
A prisoner who set his captors free,
A naked man with love his only garment,
A blinded man who helped the world to see,
A Jew who had been perfect in the law,
Blesses the flesh of every other race
And helps them see what the apostles saw;
The glory of the lord in Jesus' face.
Strong in his weakness, joyful in his pains,
And bound by love, he freed us from our chains.

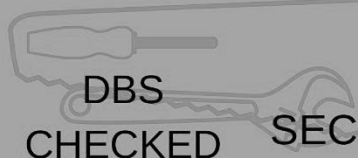
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**The Church remembers the Conversion of St Paul
on 25 January**



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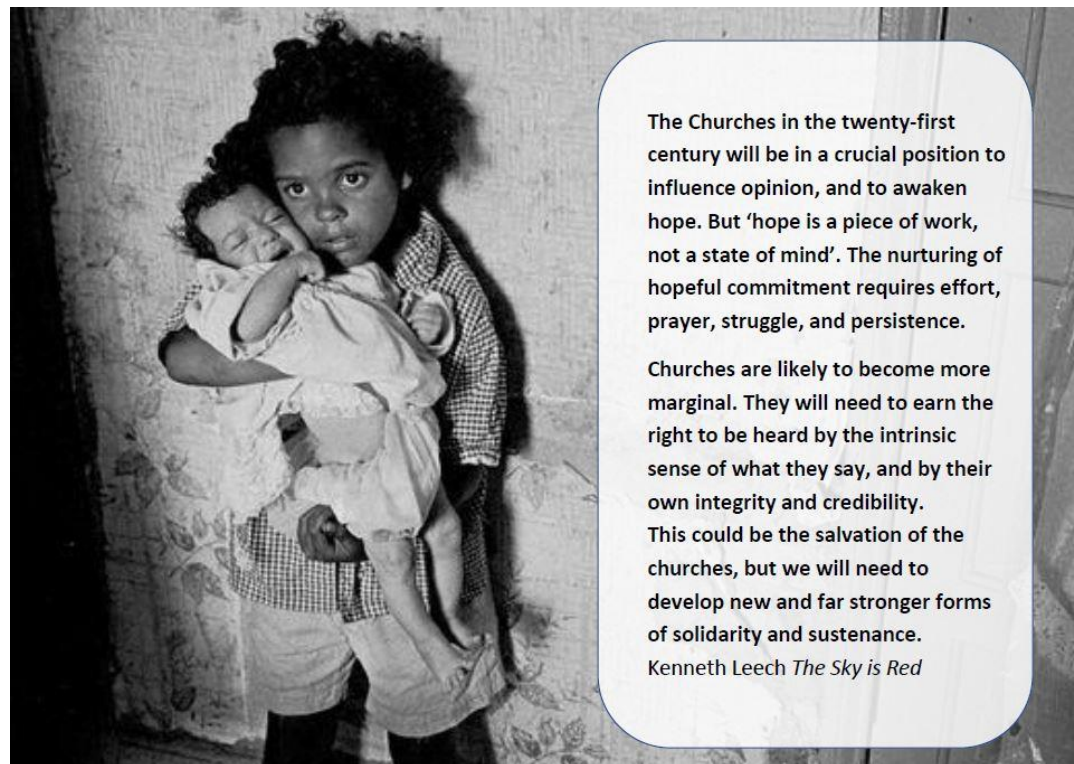
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The Churches in the twenty-first century will be in a crucial position to influence opinion, and to awaken hope. But 'hope is a piece of work, not a state of mind'. The nurturing of hopeful commitment requires effort, prayer, struggle, and persistence.

Churches are likely to become more marginal. They will need to earn the right to be heard by the intrinsic sense of what they say, and by their own integrity and credibility. This could be the salvation of the churches, but we will need to develop new and far stronger forms of solidarity and sustenance.

Kenneth Leech *The Sky is Red*

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Wednesday December 15th was characterised by some spells of sunshine made very welcome by the preceding storms, ice, snow and heavy rain. As I followed a local footpath that afternoon I was pleasantly surprised when a large and colourful bird alighted on a fence post a short distance ahead. A

Evidence

green woodpecker and a male in full adult plumage at that. Marvellous moss-green shades

coloured his back and vivid crimson tones shone from the head. Although noisy, announcing their presence with a laughing call that has great carrying

Green woodpecker



power, green woodpeckers are not often seen in our immediate area. The concise and useful book Bill Oddie's *Birds of Britain and Ireland* explains that they feed on the ground upon ants. To demonstrate this the bird obligingly flew down and, unconcerned about my presence, started chiselling into the sandy bank at the side of the path with a sturdy awl-like beak. Finally he took off in a powerful straight-ahead burst of flight.

When looking upwards at the golden steps I sometimes think that they deserve special heritage status. The slabs forming the steps are huge, the side walls precisely executed. Who quarried this masonry, or drove the heavy horses used to transport it to Strinesdale. Who were the craftsmen who laid the steps and constructed the walls and what were their stories? After prolonged rain the steps take an immense pounding yet do not appear to have significantly shifted during their many decades of service. My favourite birds, the dippers, nest in the tunnel beneath the car park and on Thursday December 16th a pair was on the steps confidently wading and pecking in a vigorous flow of water inaccessible to other small birds.

This was a dull day yet the late autumn light had a clear and soft quality as I walked to the upper reservoir where black-headed gulls and the occasional little grebe dotted the surface. A most beautiful autumn moon hung above the fields like a heavily-buffed old silver coin, the mountains, valleys and other geographic formations exquisitely pencilled in pale grey. I still find it a stretch to think that Earthlings have set foot there, and at this point in my reverie a large female sparrowhawk soared overhead on broad paddle-like wings. 'Does the hawk take flight by your wisdom and spread his wings towards the south?' Job 39:26.

In our age, we need more than almost anything else to restore the political dimensions of mystical vision and the visionary dimensions of political action. . . .

The vision of God and the identification of oppression [go] together. Out of the sense of divine holiness and justice [come] a sense of the viciousness of injustice and sin. Knowledge of God [leads] to a deeper knowledge of human realities.

Ken Leech

From the memorial book

- 1 **Clara Johnson** died 1998 aged 88 years. Remembered with love.
- 6 **John Murray**, loving husband, father and grandfather, died this day 1998 aged 71. Loved and remembered always
- 9 **Millicent Borrell** died this day in 1999. Time passes, memories stay. Loved and remembered every day.
- 11 **John Shaw Crossley** died this day 1990. Looking back as we always do, we will treasure the memories we have of you.
- 12 **Harry Watton** Beloved Husband and father. Died on this day 1983, aged 63 years.
- 15 **Elsie Kershaw**, died this day 2004. A loving mother, grandmother, sister and friend. 'Pal of my cradle days.'
- 18 **Alan Wolstencroft** died 2000 aged 68. Much loved Husband, Dad and Grandad.
Amy Wainwright died this day 2006 aged 91 years. A devoted mum and grandma, remembered every day with love and affection.
- 23 **Annie Chadwick** late of 560 Huddersfield Road. Born 29th October 1896 . Died this day 1995. 'In Heavenly Love Abiding.'
- 25 **Tom Slater Henthorn** died this day 1959. 'A Devout and Well Loved Church Worker.'
- 26 **Caroline Brooks** Beloved Mother and Grandmother. Died 1979. 'Reunited and sings in Heaven.'
Mrs Mary Robinson died this day 1989. 'A much loved Mother, Grandmother and Great Grandmother.'
Elsie Dearden nee Brooks, died this day 2002. Dearly loved daughter, wife and mother. Reunited with her loved ones.
- 29 **Wilfred George Graham** died 1979 aged 69. Treasured memories of a loving Dad and Grandad.
- 30 **Jane Ann Stott**. Died 1956. 'A muck loved Mother and Grandmother.'
- 31 **John Fletcher** died 1948. Always remembered.

Anniversary prayer

Eternal God, Father of us all,
as we celebrate 175 years
as your church in Waterhead,
we thank you for the generations
who have gone before us:
for the vision, the ministry, and the worship
that have sustained the life of this community
to the present time.

Help us to honour all that we have inherited
and to move forward with the confidence
that you hand will guide us

In seeking to be your faithful servants
and witnesses to the love of Christ
in this different world.

Keep us strong in the faith of our forebears,
and ready to serve our community
with renewed hope and commitment.

We ask this in the name of our Saviour

Jesus Christ
who is our living and life giving Lord.
Amen.



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