



# A MARTYR'S MESSAGE

A QUARTERLY MAGAZINE FROM ST. GEORGE'S PARISH CHURCH - NEW MILLS



PHOTO: LEON SHUFFLEBOTHAM | JANUARY 2021

*"Offering a welcoming, God-centred environment to the people of New Mills"*

## FROM THE VICARAGE



There once was a dark cave who lived deep down in the ground. Living so deep in the earth, the cave had never seen light. The word 'light' meant nothing to the cave. The cave couldn't imagine what 'light' might be until one day, the sun invited the cave to come up and visit. The cave was amazed and delighted because it never seen light before.

Feeling so grateful to the sun, the cave wanted to return the kindness, and so it invited the sun to come down to visit, because the sun had never seen darkness. As the sun entered the cave, it looked around with great interest, wondering what 'darkness' would be like. But the sun became puzzled, and asked the cave, 'Where is the darkness?'

The moral? Where there is light, darkness cannot exist. This is a story which resonates with the familiar Christmas passage, the Prologue of St. John's Gospel. In John's Prologue, we hear those wonderful words, 'The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.'

When we see so much illness, need and suffering in people's lives, it can feel like we live in a world filled with darkness. And yet, John tells us that darkness cannot overcome the light. The light which overcomes the darkness is, of course, found in God and through faith in His Son, Whose birth we celebrate during Christmastide. But light also comes through human care. We are so blessed that locally, so many work to bring light to those experiencing darkness in their lives.

And when darkness is touched with light, an amazing thing happens - people's lives are enriched; they begin to rediscover a sense of self-worth; they feel cared for; fears are calmed, suffering is eased and hope is restored.

God saw the darkness of the world... the suffering and pain people lived in, and He entered into the world in the Christ Child to demonstrate a better way of living. And so we thank all who imitate Christ's example and shine as lights in the darkness of the world. Thank you for all that you have done in the year past, and for all that you continue to do to ensure that light overcomes the darkness of life.

***"When the song of the angels is stilled, when the star in the sky is gone, when the kings and the princes are home, when the shepherds are back with their flocks, the work of Christmas begins: To find the lost; to heal the broken; to feed the hungry; to release the prisoner; to rebuild the nations; to bring peace among the people; to make music in the heart."*** (Howard Thurman).

Wishing you a merry Christmas and every blessing for 2022.

FATHER OWAIN MITCHELL | VICAR OF NEW MILLS

## DAILY HOPE PHONE LINE RECEIVES MORE THAN 550,000 CALLS

FROM THE PARISH PUMP



Daily Hope, a free phone line which offers prayers and support for callers, receives nearly 20,000 calls every month. The service, which was launched during the Covid-19 lockdown, has spent more than 7.15 million minutes on more than 550,000 calls.

The phone line originally launched in April 2020, only to continue in response to ongoing demand once restrictions were eased.

Daily Hope set up by the Church of England nationally, has also been supported by Connections, a Missional Programme to older people based at Holy Trinity Claygate in Surrey and the Christian charity Faith in Later Life.

Over the year and a half of service, Daily Hope has continued to encourage people across the country and beyond including Australia, Japan, and the United States.

Since the phone line launched, users have been able to listen to a range of audio, including the Church of England's national weekly service, hymns and daily prayer.

Many have messaged Lambeth Palace to express their thanks for the introduction of the phone line, particularly for elderly people.



Please submit your prayer requests to Fr. Owain by calling the vicarage on: (01663) 743225 or email: vicar@newmillschurch.co.uk

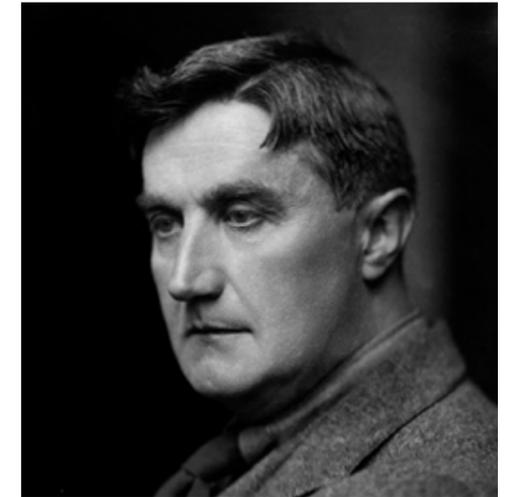
### A PRAYER FOR THE FUTURE

JOHN WESLEY

O my Father, my God, I am in Your hand;  
and may I rejoice above all things in being so.  
Do with me what seems good in Your sight;  
only let me love you with all mind, soul and strength.  
Amen.

## REMEMBERING RALPH VAUGHAN WILLIAMS

EDITOR: TIM LENTON



One hundred years ago, on 16th January 1922, Ralph Vaughan Williams' A Pastoral Symphony was performed for the first time, in London.

Later designated Symphony No. 3, it was said to be inspired by the composer hearing a bugler practising and is frequently thought of as a memorial for the fallen of the First World War, many of whom Vaughan Williams knew. He later said he saw music as an antidote to a war-torn world.

He had been born in 1872: his father was vicar at Down Ampney in Gloucestershire, but he died two years later. His mother, an evangelical Christian, was also the niece of Charles Darwin. This combination of events may have led to his uncertainty in questions of faith: his second wife Ursula said he "drifted into a cheerful agnosticism, but he was never a professing Christian".

Nevertheless, Vaughan Williams frequently attended church, where he found musical inspiration. His first job after graduation was as a church organist, and he wrote many compositions for the Anglican Church, including well known hymn tunes. He edited The English Hymnal in 1904 and wrote an opera of The Pilgrim's Progress. But he said there was "no reason why an atheist could not write a good Mass".

A Pastoral Symphony received some criticism at first but was later regarded as stunningly beautiful, combining the grace of the wildly popular The Lark Ascending with the deep sadness of war.

***"New Year's Day is a good time to fix one's eyes on the only One who knows what the year is to hold."***

# CHRISTMAS 2021

AT ST. GEORGE'S PARISH CHURCH  
-NEW MILLS-

A WARM WELCOME AWAITS YOU AT  
ST. GEORGE'S THIS CHRISTMAS.

## Sunday 19th December

6.30pm

### Carols by Candlelight

*A traditional festive service of nine lessons and carols amidst the candlelit church, led by the church choir.*

## Friday 24th December - Christmas Eve

5.30pm

### Children's Crib Service

*A popular service for all the family with christmas carols and stories.*

11.30pm

### Midnight Mass

*Join as we celebrate the first eucharist of Christmas.*

## Saturday 25th December - Christmas Day

8.00am

### Said Eucharist

10.00am

### Christmas Day Eucharist

WWW.NEWMILLSCHURCH.CO.UK



# “What a risk! What a triumph!”



LEON SHUFFLEBOTHAM | PRODUCTION MANAGER

REVIEW | PHILIP KENDALL ©

On Friday 26th and Saturday 27th of November 2021, the Martyr's Players performed their first ever play 'The Vicar of Dibley' and what a great success it was. A full house every night and lots of laughter from the pews.

Staging a play in church certainly had its challenges. There was church furniture to move so that the staging could be erected, the staging had to be transported from New Mills Art Theatre, the Lady Chapel and Choir Vestry had to be transformed in to temporary dressing rooms, a temporary lighting rig was constructed in the west gallery, stage wing panels had to be constructed to create wing space either side of the stage, festoon lighting was put up to create ambient house lighting. The play also required a lot of props and costumes and these were gathered from various peoples houses, charity shops and kindly borrowed from The Carver Theatre in Marple.

It was also a big challenge for the cast to learn their lines and rehearse in such a small period of time - just over two months! All the cast have said how special it was to be able to perform in such a wonderful space such as St. George's.

We are extremely grateful to Phil Gibbons our Director who had the vision of performing this play in our church and had the determination and faith in the cast to have the play ready on time!

Our audience loved it! We have had numerous messages from people who came to watch the play, many saying how great it was to be laughing out loud again and the warm welcome they received when entering the church by the front of house team

The Martyr's Players are now looking forward to 2022 and the productions we have planned. The first being a Musical Theatre cabaret in the Parish Hall on Saturday 12th February. We will also be holding our monthly play readings in church commencing in January. More details will be available on our Facebook page and website: [www.newmillschurch.co.uk/martyrsplayers](http://www.newmillschurch.co.uk/martyrsplayers).

**What a risk! What a triumph!** The recently formed Martyr's Players converted St George's Parish Church in New Mills into a mini theatre for two nights of performances of The Vicar of Dibley and played to packed houses. Inaugurated as a playreading group, they quickly stepped up to put on a two act play – and a technically demanding one at that!

There was lots of fun for the audience as familiar characters appeared at the Parish Council meetings and at Revd Geraldine Grainger's vicarage. All were well acted, with Kim Cooper helping shape the comedy as Revd Geraldine. There were many acknowledgements to the TV portrayals, though this production had its own stamp and flowed extremely smoothly, the scene transitions wonderfully linked by Carolyn Hawkins on the church organ. Lighting and sound were very demanding – but the whole presentation was seamless.

The story includes the longest stage snog in theatre history – between Alice and Hugo. It is central to the comedy before the interval; they are still clinched together when Act 2 commences! Well done to the pair of them. It was a production full of laughs as well as some surprises. Alice was wedded to Hugo complete with fairy lights headdress and accompanied by two cute teletubbies! They undertook a lightning costume change into matching snazzy Bermuda outfits for the honeymoon which saw only a brief dash across the stage ready for another set of costumes at the finale. All the supporting roles were confidently portrayed and the acts began and closed with a fully robed Dibley choir. Complicated props and costume changes were all well rehearsed; there was clearly a lot of hard work going on behind the scenes.

This was a brave venture. Trouble had been taken to create a welcoming atmosphere in the church. The Martyr Players are focused on St George's and though it may have seemed daunting at times, all their preparation came to fruition in a production to be proud of. The facilities are limited; the pews are hard; but everything came together to make a really enjoyable evening's entertainment. What next?

# WHAT A CHRISTMAS

EDITOR | BY THE VEN JOHN BARTON



The Bethlehem manger, shepherds, wise men, Jesus, Mary and Joseph – it's all so familiar to older people, who are shocked to hear that younger generations may be hazy or ignorant of them. Aren't they part of everyone's education?

Yet the first Christmas was restricted to just a few. What 21st Century Christians proclaim as the most significant event in history began in a remote corner of the Roman Empire, without the pomp and publicity we associate with kingship and power. What modern media have called 'The Greatest Story Ever Told', escaped everyone's attention in first century Palestine.

This year, Christmas is going to be a busier celebration than last year, but probably not yet back to the normal fuss we usually make each December. The streets will be crowded, but shops may struggle with supplies. Parties will take place, but many people will feel reluctant join in. Family gatherings are allowed again, but the vulnerable may hesitate. Christmas services will be held, but as singing has the potential for droplet and aerosol transmission, music will be muted this year. A Christmas without many carols!

Many will struggle to hold their 'usual' Christmas. Yet God does not neglect us. This may be the very opportunity to rekindle or deepen our faith in what really matters about Christmas. Away from the hordes, perhaps completely alone this Christmas, we may sit quietly and allow our heavenly Father to draw near to us. We may picture Mary inviting us to gaze with her at her Son, born to save us from our sins. In the silence of our imagination, we may join the chorus of angels announcing His birth to the shepherds:

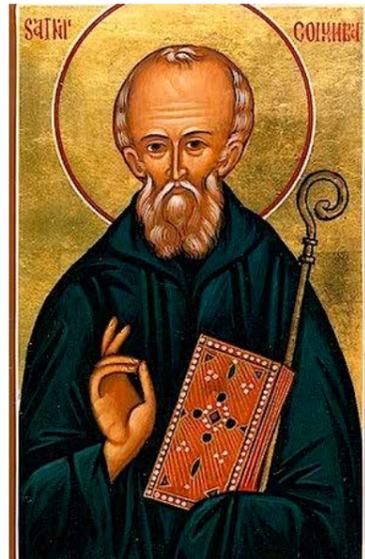
*"Glory to God in the highest heaven,  
and on earth peace to those on whom  
His favour rests."*

It was that chorus which inspired an American Minister, Edmund Sears, to write the Christmas hymn, 'It Came Upon a Midnight Clear'. Sears, troubled by the world's turbulent history and failure to hear the Christmas message, was himself recovering from a breakdown. Written in 1849, his words have a timeless ring about them:

*Yet with the woes of sin and strife  
The world has suffered long;  
Beneath the angel-strain have rolled  
Two thousand years of wrong;  
And man, at war with man, hears not  
The love-song which they bring;  
Oh, hush the noise, ye men of strife,  
And hear the angels sing.*

## THE GREAT WORK OF ST COLUMBA

EDITOR: TIM LENTON LOVED IRISH SAINT



It was 1500 years ago, on 7th December 521, that St Columba, an Irish missionary who spread Christianity in Scotland and the North of England, was born in what is now County Donegal.

Columba – also known as Columcille – was one of the Twelve Apostles of Ireland, who studied under St Finnian in his monastic school, Clonard Abbey. He was also a great-grandson of the Irish King Niall, and he was said to have left Ireland primarily because he had caused considerable bloodshed at a battle stemming from his illegal copying of the Gospels.

But he became a missionary after he landed on Iona – a tiny island off the west coast of Scotland – and, with his 12 followers, built a Celtic church and established a monastic community.

Iona quickly became known throughout Europe as a missionary centre and school: it turned into a place of pilgrimage for centuries to come – and still is, though none of Columba's original buildings have survived. His cell and outlines of the original monastery were uncovered by excavations in 1958 and 1959.

He spent much time in Scotland, but Columba's final years seem to have been spent mainly on Iona, where he was already revered as a saint. He is now the patron saint of Derry. He and those associated with him spread the gospel more than any other religious pioneers in Britain.

In the Irish language his name means "dove", which is the same as Jonah in Hebrew. The word 'columba' is also Latin for dove.

# DONATE TO ST. GEORGE'S PARISH CHURCH

## HERE



St. George's Parish Church relies entirely on the generosity of our regular congregation giving because we do not receive any funding from the government. The money we receive goes towards the community work, pastoral work, missionary and ministry work within the parish of New Mills.

We are also responsible for the upkeep of this beautiful and historic building of St. George's. The money that our regular congregation gives also has to cover the electric, lighting, heating and repairs. This special building is here as a place of prayer, sanctuary as well as being a useable space for the whole community.

For the work and life of St. George's to continue, we need your help.



Visit [www.newmillschurch.co.uk](http://www.newmillschurch.co.uk) for more information.

*giftaid it*



1. Scan the above code with your smart phone camera.
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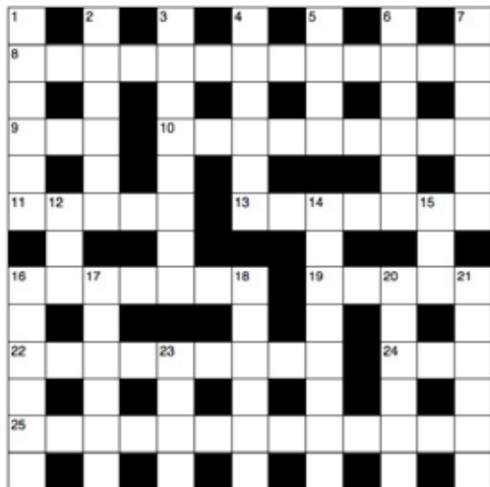
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## PUZZLE FROM THE PEWS



### Across

- 8 How the Abyss (NIV) is described in the Authorized Version (Revelation 9:1) (10,3)  
 9 Frozen water (Ezekiel 1:22) (3)  
 10 The Ten Commandments (9)  
 11 In Roman Catholic theology, neither heaven nor hell (5)  
 13 Des cons (anag.) (7)  
 16 'Though [your sins] are red as —, they shall be like wool' (Isaiah 1:18) (7)  
 19 Keen (Romans 1:15) (5)  
 22 Repugnant, loathsome (Jeremiah 24:9) (9)  
 24 Drink like an animal (Judges 7:5) (3)  
 25 First and last (Revelation 22:13) (5,3,5)

### Down

- 1 Father of Ahi, a Gadite (1 Chronicles 5:15) (6)  
 2 Where David found the stone with which he killed Goliath (1 Samuel 17:40) (6)  
 3 'Hour by hour fresh lips are making thy — doings heard on high' (8)  
 4 'And there were shepherds living out in the fields near by, keeping watch over their — at night' (Luke 2:8) (6)  
 5 United Society for Christian Literature (1,1,1,1)  
 6 'If he refuses to listen even to the church, treat him as you would — or a tax collector' (Matthew 18:17) (1,5)  
 7 Where Paul was taken when things became difficult for him in Berea (Acts 17:15) (6)  
 12 Istituto per le Opere di Religione (Vatican Bank) (1,1,1)  
 14 'Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new —; the old has gone, the new has come!' (2 Corinthians 5:17) (8)  
 15 Used to colour ram skins red for use in the tabernacle (Exodus 25:5) (3)  
 16 Vat car (anag.) (6)  
 17 'Be joyful —, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer' (Romans 12:12) (6)  
 18 'The parts that are unrepresentable are treated with special modesty, while our presentable parts — special treatment' (1 Corinthians 12:23) (4,2)  
 20 Ancient rowing boat (Isaiah 33:21) (6)  
 21 Say again (2 Corinthians 11:16) (6)  
 23 What Jesus did in the synagogue in Nazareth after he stood up (Luke 4:16) (4)

Answers on page 12.

## NEARLY 400 ORDINANDS ON COURSE TO TAKE UP STIPENDIARY CURACY POSTS IN 2022

FROM THE PARISH PUMP



Nearly 400 ordinands completing theological training next year are on course to take up stipendiary curacy posts in the Church of England after extra funds were allocated.

The Church of England has confirmed that 400 stipendiary curacy posts – both full and part time – will be available for ordinands expecting to take up stipendiary title posts from 2022 after leaving theological training.

Of these, 290 posts are fully funded by the dioceses while the Strategic Ministry Fund (SMF), administered by the Strategic Ministry Board, will support an additional 110 posts.

The SMF was set up in 2019 to help ensure that dioceses are able to support additional curate numbers as part of the drive to increase the number of candidates for ordained ministry.

The Bishop of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich, Martin Seeley, who is Chair of the Ministry Council, said: "Stipendiary ministry remains core to the work of the Church of England and our Vision and Strategy for the future.

"Once again, we are confident that in spite of the difficulties caused by the pandemic, there is capacity to ensure that those people who are offering themselves for stipendiary ordained ministry will be able to serve their curacy in a paid post."

The announcement of the funding for stipendiary posts comes after new figures were released showing that 501 people were recommended for training for ordained ministry this year.

Of these, 11.4% are people of UKME heritage, up from 10.9% last year, while once again, 54% are female. A growing number are young, with 26% of all recommended candidates aged under 32,

**Drive carefully this Christmas.  
 It's not only cars that can be recalled  
 by their maker.** - Anon



## NATIONWIDE DIGITAL CHURCHYARD MAPPING PROJECT BEGINS



The first few of 19,000 churchyards have been surveyed as part of a Church of England project to create a free digital map of every grave and feature in every churchyard in the country.

The ancient church of St Bega on the shores of Lake Bassenthwaite in the Diocese of Carlisle was the first churchyard to be scanned by the surveyors, using sophisticated laser equipment, as part of the national programme.

A new website will go online in the new year, giving free access to the map. It is expected to be of special interest to local community groups, conservationists, and those researching family history. The website will also enable the charting of biodiversity and green technology.

The Church of England has partnered with Cumbrian-based surveying company Atlantic Geomatics who will use back-pack mounted laser scanners to map churchyards. They will also photograph all the visible headstones.

There are around 19,000 Anglican burial grounds in England, and the ambitious scheme will aim to digitally survey the majority over the coming seven years. Data on burials will be combined with other information, such as the National Biodiversity Network Atlas, to present the most complete picture of churchyards to date.

The project will come at no cost to parishes or dioceses in the Church of England and parishes will have free access to the map through a new web-based record system which is set to launch in Spring 2022. There will also be the option to subscribe to additional services.

Substantial funding for the programme has been given by Historic England, with the National Lottery Heritage Fund and Caring for God's Acre supporting the pilot phase, as well as support from genealogy research websites.

As well as details of burials, the online interactive map will detail biodiversity in churchyards, including ancient trees and plant-life, as well as green technology such as solar panels.

**Come and join us!**  
**Call: 01663 746226**  
**Email: choir@newmillschurch.co.uk**





## - WEEKLY SERVICES -

### Wednesdays

9.15am - Said Holy Communion

### Sundays

8.00am - Holy Communion

10.00am - Sung Parish Holy Communion

6.30pm - Evening Prayer

*Please keep an eye on our website and Facebook pages for up-to-date information and events.*

*A warm welcome always awaits you at St. George's.*

Answers from page 8

ACROSS: 8, Bottomless pit. 9, Ice. 10, Decalogue. 11, Limbo. 13, Seconds. 16, Crimson. 19, Eager. 22, Abhorrent. 24, Lap. 25, Alpha and Omega.

DOWN: 1, Abdiel. 2, Stream. 3, Wondrous. 4, Flocks. 5, USCL. 6, A pagan. 7, Athens. 12, IOR. 14, Creation. 15, Dye. 16, Cravat. 17, In hope. 18, Need no. 20, Galley. 21, Repeat. 23, Read.



A new community amateur theatre group based at St. George's Church, New Mills

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All information in this magazine was correct at the time of going to print.

**The Deadline for the next issue of 'A Martyr's Message' is Friday 19th February 2022**

*This magazine is also available to download and view on our website.*