

**LITTLE S. MARY'S, CAMBRIDGE**

*August 2021: No. 553*

# NEWSLETTER



**This newsletter contains:**

**In Praise of Hymns; Updates from Helen Keller School and Sharpeville; Soil & Sacrament; Book Review; T is for Type; Ride & Stride; Garden News; plus the usual Vicar's letter, daily intentions for prayer and more...**

*(Cover illustration by Emma Bourne)*

## Highlights of August

Friday 6<sup>th</sup> August

**Feast of the Transfiguration of Christ**

**Low Mass 12.30pm, Sung Mass 7pm** *followed by refreshments*

*Preacher at 7pm Mass:* The Rev'd Dr Matthew Bullimore,  
*Chaplain of Corpus Christi College*

Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> August

**Memorial Mass for Fr Anthony Wibberley**

**2pm** *Followed by refreshments in the Parish Centre to which all are welcome.*

Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> August

**Healing Mass**

10am with the laying on of hands & anointing

Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> August

**Feast of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary**

**Little Saint Mary's Patronal Festival**

**9.30am & 11.30am Sung Masses**

*Preacher at both Masses:* The Rev'd Andrew Hammond,  
*Chaplain of S. John's College, Cambridge*

**Assumptiontide BBQ**

**2pm in the Vicarage garden**

Numbered tickets £10 available from Geoffrey Howe or Jo Wibberley. Proceeds to the Papua New Guinea Church Partnership.

Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> August

**Feast of S. Bartholomew, apostle**

**Low Mass 12.30pm, Sung Mass 7pm** *followed by refreshments.*

*Preacher* Fr Robert Mackley, *Vicar*

# From the Vicar

S. John Vianney, 2021

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

I write this amid encouraging news on Covid-19 and pray that infections and hospitalisations continue to decline. I'm proud that not a single case of the disease has been traced to our church and I hope that that gives you confidence to come to worship here. In addition to two Sunday morning Masses (therefore each with plenty of space) there are quiet said Masses every day of the week and Morning and Evening Prayer most days too. I look forward to sharing in worship with you, especially if you've not been to church for a long time.

I want to take this opportunity to note formally the death of the Rev'd Gordon Woolveridge, whose funeral was on 19<sup>th</sup> July, and who had become a much-loved member of our congregation since his retirement here four years ago. May he rest in peace. You'll see in the Highlights section that we are holding a Memorial Mass for Fr Anthony Wibberley later this month. His funeral last year was held amid scaffolding and pandemic restrictions and so this will be a new opportunity for people to gather to pray for him and give thanks for his life. Finally, I'm delighted to report that Janet and Chris Nevitt are both home together and making good progress after an incredibly difficult nine months. This is wonderful but there is still a way to go.

The temptation to hide away during the last 18 months has been considerable but as a church that is the last thing we should be doing. Being open and offering worship is vital and as we emerge I'm really excited to bring to your attention two things which will help us recover and grow:

1. Fiona Blake and Mary Ward are establishing the *Concordia Club* and you can read all about it later in the newsletter. It's a chance to meet and share and is a response to these harrowing months we've endured together. The PCC backed it enthusiastically and our prayer is that it will help us grow together again as a community and also be

of support to any currently beyond our community who need it. Come, and encourage others to come!

2. We made a provisional appointment, on 21<sup>st</sup> July, of a priest for our new position of Associate Vicar. There are various administrative things to deal with but I hope to be able to make an announcement soon. Thank you to those who prayed – I very much believe our prayers have been answered.

This second thing is going to need the continued support of our prayers and indeed our material resources. The wonderful bequest from Michael Waring will provide sufficient income to cover the cost of stipend, pension, tax and national insurance (c.£40,000). It will not cover the cost of accommodation, which is high in Cambridge. This is still being finalised but is unlikely to be much under £20,000 per annum in rent, council tax, water rates and any parking charges. I'll be writing in September to ask everyone prayerfully to consider their giving to the church and to see if we can meet this ambitious target. I hope that everyone who loves the Lord and desires to see His church grow and flourish will feel able to respond generously.

Now is the time to be bold, even if we don't feel like it. August sees both several weeks of Sunday Gospel readings where Jesus teaches us about Himself as the Bread of Life and also the great Feast of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary. God gives us food for our journey through life, and holds before us the glorious hope and home of heaven. Not only should this encourage us amid our present trials but it should also inspire us to draw others into the life of the church. Our Concordia Club and the arrival of an additional priest are two ways in which this can happen. Please pray for both and give both as much support as you are able as we look to what God will do with and for us in the years to come.

With love & prayers, I am,  
yours ever in Christ,

Fr Robert.

# In Praise of Hymns – the Writers of the Words: Catherine Winkworth

by Charles Moseley

In 1907, John Julian, in his *Dictionary of Hymnology*— a standard work of reference, with over 40,000 entries – remarked, ‘Miss Winkworth, although not the earliest of modern translators from the German into English, is certainly the foremost in rank and popularity. Her translations are the most widely used of any from that language, and have had more to do with the modern revival of the English use of German hymns than the versions of any other writer.’ One can only agree: and we often sing her versions of *Lobe den Herren* ‘(Praise to the Lord, the Almighty, the King of Creation’ NEH 440), *Nun Danket alle Gott* (‘Now thank we all our God’ NEH 313) and *Schmücke dich* (‘Deck thyself, my soul, with gladness’ NEH 280). And they have very good tunes that reach back deep into the wonderful Lutheran musical tradition. As will have been apparent in past notes, I have a strong interest in the Latin tradition, but the German is almost equally dear to my heart. The Lutheran impetus towards singing as *Gemeinschaft*, a community activity, encouraged hymns – chorales – which were didactic, memorable, as bond-building as football chants; and Luther, a master of the right word in the right place, had worthy followers in, for example, Philipp Nicolai (*Wachet auf!*) or Paul Gerhardt. And the melodies stick in the mind, whether plain or transfigured in the cantatas of Bach.



Catherine Winkworth was born in 1827 – she is the same generation, roughly, as Mrs Alexander - just off Holborn in Ely Place, then (and till much later) a ‘peculiar’ – with its own police - of the Bishopric of Ely. The house was near St Etheldreda’s church, and the delectable and diminutive Mitre pub where Oliver Goldsmith and Dr Johnson and James Boswell were frequent visitors, Goldsmith writing a charming poem to the pretty barmaid. (It is worth a visit, though

Goldsmith's barmaid lives only in neat verse. Our editor took me there.) Her father, Henry, from Alderley Edge, Cheshire was in the silk business – Macclesfield, nearby, and Manchester were the centres of silk weaving in England then – and Catherine and her sister Susanna (also a translator from German) grew up in Manchester. Their early education was given by their mother, but later Catherine studied under the Rev. William Gaskell, Unitarian Minister of Cross Street Chapel and husband of Elizabeth (Mrs) Gaskell the novelist, and under Dr James Martineau, brother of Harriet Martineau. These connections are important: in the first place, it is hard to overstate the influence of the Unitarian community in Manchester. It was the fountainhead of Manchester Liberalism, leading directly to the foundation of the *Manchester Guardian*; it advocated major social and economic reform - with which Mrs Gaskell's *Mary Barton* (1848) and *North and South* (1854) are also involved; and its thinking influenced the city, and the whole nation, for a generation. In the second place, the Martineau family was also at the forefront of social reform: Harriet (1802-1876) is often called the first female sociologist. She wrote copiously from a sociological, holistic, religious, domestic and feminine perspective, she translated works by the philosopher Auguste Comte, and her writing earned enough money to support her – rare for a woman of her time. Catherine Winkworth's association with this circle ensured that she would be well educated, and fully aware of the infant movement for the improvement in the legal and social status of women.

The Winkworths later moved to Clifton near Bristol. Besides her copious writing, Catherine came later to involve herself deeply in the campaign for women's education: she was the secretary of the Clifton Association for Higher Education for Women, and supported the Clifton High School for Girls: they named a school house after her. She also became a member of Cheltenham Ladies' College, and a Governor of the Red Maids' School in Westbury-on-Trym – founded 1634, it is the oldest girls' school in England.

In 1845, the 18-year-old Catherine and her sister spent a year with relatives in Dresden, a formative year for much of her later work. Here she began her exploration of the rich and vast corpus of German hymnody, using the large collection of hymnals owned by her friend Baron von Bunsen, who as well as being a busy diplomat was a scholar, a philologist, an historian and a theologian. (I often wonder, despairingly, how those Eminent ‘Victorians’ got through the amount of work they did with none of the aids we take for granted... there is perhaps another little article for Madam Editor on that.) The fruits of Catherine’s reading were:

- 1) *Lyra Germanica*, 1st Series, 1855;
- 2) *Lyra Germanica*, 2nd Series, 1858;
- 3) *The Chorale Book for England* where the hymns had the matching German tunes, as edited by William Sterndale Bennett and Otto Goldschmidt), 1863;
- 4) a biographical work, *The Christian Singers of Germany*, 1869.

She also translated biographies of two founders of sisterhoods for the poor and sick: *Life of Pastor Fliedner*, 1861, and *Life of Amelia Sieveking*, 1863.

In 1878, the year she died (in Geneva), the *Inquirer* carried an appreciation of her translations by her old mentor Dr Martineau: ‘The translations contained in these volumes are invariably faithful [which is not quite true, for she does sometimes edit. - CM] , and for the most part both terse and delicate; and an admirable art is applied to the management of complex and difficult versification. They have not quite the fire of John Wesley's versions of Moravian hymns, or the wonderful fusion and reproduction of thought which may be found in Coleridge. But if less flowing they are more conscientious than either, and attain a result as poetical as severe exactitude admits, being only a little short of “native music”’. It is a fair comment. Translation is a very difficult art, as anyone who has tried it knows, especially when you try to match form to form, or the words in a new language to a tune written for the old. She has not the verbal flair of

J. M. Neale, who sometimes went right away from his original and made something new, but she triumphantly kept the great virtue of the original: the singability of these hymns. And, most of all, she domesticated for us Anglophones the riches of the Lutheran congregational choral tradition. I'd miss not having *Vom Himmel hoch, da komm ich her* (Martin Luther, 1534: 'From Heaven above to earth I come'); *Wachet auf, ruft uns die Stimme* (Philipp Nicolai, 1599: Wake! O wake; with tidings thrilling'); *Wie schön leuchtet der Morgenstern* (Nicolai, 1597: 'How brightly shines the Morning Star'; and the Christmas hymn that always brings a wetness to my eyes: *Es ist ein' Ros' entsprungen* (anon., 1599: 'A spotless rose').

And finally: we owe to her one of the best and shrewdest puns in the language. In 1843, many were shocked by General Napier's unauthorised and ruthless annexation of the province of Sindh. His despatch to the Governor General of India was simply, smugly, 'I have Sindh'. Hearing of this, she remarked that it ought to have been in Latin: *Peccavi* – 'I have sinned.' She sent it to the new magazine *Punch*, which printed it in March 1844. Not bad for a 16-year-old!

## **Helen Keller stamp update**

*by Julia Norman and Bill de Quick*

Successive lockdowns have ensured a steady supply of used postage stamps in aid of the Helen Keller School for visually impaired children, east Jerusalem. Thanks to the support of LSM, family, friends and colleagues, we have accumulated 25,000 stamps ready to be delivered to Embrace the Middle East now that their Amersham office has reopened. Our current total stands at an amazing 119,800 over the course of 12 years, with plenty more in the pipeline to round this up to 125,000. This represents a huge outpouring of support and generosity, especially from those who have contributed their albums, first day covers and special stamps. We are immensely grateful.

But the time has come to conclude the stamp collection. Embrace the Middle East have advised us that their Stamp Fellowship volunteers,

who sort and sell the stamps to dealers, are elderly and are unlikely to be able to continue helping for much longer. Instead, they plan to look for new ways to "revitalise" their fund-raising efforts on behalf of the school. Given the volatile situation in east Jerusalem where the Helen Keller School is situated, we feared for the safety of staff and students. It was therefore a relief and a joy to receive this latest report from the HKS. It is very impressive that in spite of a number of significant hardships the school is not just surviving but flourishing:

"The 2019-20 grade twelve students were the first-ever students to graduate from Helen Keller School. The 12th graders passed their Bagrut exams and were all eligible for a Bagrut certificate. Their heads were held high during graduation after making the school and their families extremely proud. The student families lauded the school for not missing many days during the lockdowns. The academic process carried on regardless of the hardships the school faced that included infections among the staff, quarantine, travel restrictions and social distancing that was hard for most to understand and live with. The school currently has 34 special education students, 10 of whom are in the 12th grade 2020/21. The developing mainstream school on the HKS site and the connected kindergarten also both continue to grow, with a total of 225 mainstream students attending the 2020/21 school year."

Jamie Eyre, Director of Programmes & Engagement at Embrace adds: "I was there with colleagues just as the pandemic began to close everything down, and we were very impressed with the new administrator who runs the special education section. After some difficult and uncertain years it seems things are working well and while numbers remain small the challenges with the Israeli ministry of education appear to be under control at the moment. We've not been able to travel since March 2020 but I am hopeful that we'll be able to resume some travel, in a limited fashion, in the autumn and we're already beginning to plan how we support the school in 2022."

Thank you once again for your support.

# **Update on St Cyprian's Church, Sharpeville**

*from Fr David Mahlonoko*

This update comes from a very heavy heart during this difficult period of our lives. The country is going through the third wave of the Covid-19 pandemic. Many of our people are sick in spirit, body and mind; some are sadly succumbing to the pandemic and dying, and many have lost their jobs and other means of life. “In all their distress, God was distressed with them” (Isaiah 63:9a). This assurance gives us a wonderful picture of a God who is not just “remote controlling” our lives from a distance but is with us, beside us and in our midst.

This update also comes out during this time when our country is going through a difficult time politically owing to the arrest of the former State President, Mr Jacob Zuma, for defying the order of the court which summoned him to appear before the State Capture Commission which is investigating all scandals and allegations of corruption and fraud which happened during his nine years’ tenure as President. Many of his followers started to protest against his arrest, blocked the highways, vandalised properties and caused so much chaos and damage in most parts of Kwa Zulu Natal and Gauteng provinces since Friday last week. At the moment, there are a lot of law enforcement agencies in our different communities and it is very tense. As Christian people, we continue to pray for the Spirit of healing, peace, harmony and justice to prevail.

## **Worship**

At this moment, communal worship is closed owing to the third wave of the pandemic. The last service was on Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> June.

Daily (Monday to Friday) scripture reflection and prayer is sent to our parishioners via WhatsApp. Recorded homily and prayers are sent every Wednesday and Sunday, though such efforts are not reaching everyone, because we live in a context where not everyone has a smartphone, let alone access to the internet.

## **Pastoral Care**

The last time we did Ministry to the Sick (distribution of Holy Communion to the sick and aged) was on 6<sup>th</sup> June and we have decided to put it on hold at least until September. To date since the beginning of lockdown in March 2020, we have buried 68 people from the Parish – 28 of them confirmed cases of Covid-19. Journeying with these families during this difficult period has been so stressful and challenging.

Owing to the high rate of retrenchments and unemployment, many of our people are going through a difficult period emotionally and psychologically, and the Church has an enormous role to play. The rollout plan for the vaccine has been very slow. Latest reports suggest that only 4.8 million citizens (out of 53 million) have been vaccinated. We continue to pray for our government to have resources to fast track this process.

## **Outreach Ministry**

Our Outreach ministry team has been working tirelessly to engage with local supermarkets and business people to request donations of groceries and clothes towards this important ministry of the Church. Despite personal financial difficulties, we have managed as a Parish to continue supporting the 28 families under our care with food and clothes.

Our priority continues to be child-headed families and any other homes with children, the aged and people with disabilities. This is an enormous responsibility, especially at this time when movements are restricted but the Church Council is involved to support the Outreach ministry team with the “reaching out”. The “Blanket Drive” is very slow, but we continue to hope for a positive response.

## **Maintenance and Projects**

As reported previously, the project of extending the LSM building is completed and we are grateful for the generosity and support of LSM Cambridge and our Women’s ministry organisation. The last phase

will be to paint the interior and exterior of the entire building. Both our properties (Church and Rectory) are well kept and clean, thanks to the love and stewardship of our people. The Garden of Remembrance is still in the pipeline.

### **Finances**

We have a monthly budget of R 74,000 and it has not been easy to make it, especially when the community workshop is closed. The current economic climate which led to the increase of unemployment is a huge factor, and somehow it has got to the point where it has become very difficult to talk about giving. The Parish Finance Committee has agreed to meet fortnightly to assess and monitor the situation.

### **Conclusion**

We pray for the vaccine rollout programme to be quick and reach everyone, in order to preserve life. We pray for peace in the world, and healing. We pray for the economic revival of the world so that all God's people may live in peace and harmony with one another.

We continue to pray for all God's people at LSM Cambridge; may God continue to bind you together with cords that can never be broken. May all ministry that is undertaken in God's name be a true blessing to God's people. Blessings!

14th July 2021

# Calendar for August

<b>SUN</b>	<b>1<sup>st</sup></b>	<b>NINTH SUNDAY after TRINITY</b>
MON	2 <sup>nd</sup>	
TUE	3 <sup>rd</sup>	
WED	4 <sup>th</sup>	S. John Vianney, Curé d' Ars
THU	5 <sup>th</sup>	S. Oswald, king & martyr
<b>FRI</b>	<b>6<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>The Transfiguration of Our Lord</b>
SAT	7 <sup>th</sup>	John Mason Neale, priest
<b>SUN</b>	<b>8<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>TENTH SUNDAY after TRINITY</b>
MON	9 <sup>th</sup>	Mary Sumner, founder of the Mothers' Union
TUE	10 <sup>th</sup>	S. Laurence, deacon & martyr
WED	11 <sup>th</sup>	S. Clare of Assisi, religious
THU	12 <sup>th</sup>	
FRI	13 <sup>th</sup>	Jeremy Taylor. Bishop & doctor
SAT	14 <sup>th</sup>	<i>S. Maximilian Kolbe, religious &amp; martyr</i>
<b>SUN</b>	<b>15<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>ASSUMPTION of the BVM, PATRONAL FESTIVAL</b>
MON	16 <sup>th</sup>	of Requiem
TUE	17 <sup>th</sup>	
WED	18 <sup>th</sup>	
THU	19 <sup>th</sup>	
FRI	20 <sup>th</sup>	S. Bernard, abbot & doctor
SAT	21 <sup>st</sup>	<i>Richard Crashaw, priest</i>
<b>SUN</b>	<b>22<sup>nd</sup></b>	<b>TWELFTH SUNDAY after TRINITY</b>
MON	23 <sup>rd</sup>	
<b>TUE</b>	<b>24<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>S. Bartholomew, apostle</b>
WED	25 <sup>th</sup>	
THU	26 <sup>th</sup>	
FRI	27 <sup>th</sup>	S. Monica
SAT	28 <sup>th</sup>	S. Augustine of Hippo, bishop & doctor
<b>SUN</b>	<b>29<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>THIRTEENTH SUNDAY after TRINITY</b>
MON	30 <sup>th</sup>	John Bunyan, doctor
TUE	31 <sup>st</sup>	S. Aidan, bishop & missionary

# Daily Intentions & Anniversaries of death in August

## Our Parish & People 1<sup>st</sup>

Greater joy *Vera Harman* 2<sup>nd</sup>

Poets & hymn writers *Roma Gill* 3<sup>rd</sup>

Parish priests 4<sup>th</sup>

HM The Queen *Geoffrey Lampe, pr.* 5<sup>th</sup>

That we may be given a vision of glory 6<sup>th</sup>

Church musicians *Olive Robinson* 7<sup>th</sup>

## Our Parish & People 8<sup>th</sup>

The Mothers' Union *Irene Morris, Michael Cook* 9<sup>th</sup>

The sick *Eric Hindley, pr., Mary Hindley, Norman Clift, pr.* 10<sup>th</sup>

Those living in poverty *Arthur Dex, pr., Geoffry Smith* 11<sup>th</sup>

Deacons *Peter Chamier, pr., Susan Yealland* 12<sup>th</sup>

Bishops *Gwen Woolfenden* 13<sup>th</sup>

That Human Rights are upheld *David Paton, Adrian Martinez* 14<sup>th</sup>

## Our Parish & People *Anthony Wibberley, pr.* 15<sup>th</sup>

The faithful departed *Ella Cassell* 16<sup>th</sup>

Those going on holiday *Richard Wardill, Geoffrey Smart* 17<sup>th</sup>

Greater devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary 18<sup>th</sup>

Fathers *Eric Loinsworth, Blanche Poulter, Maurice Fretten, Edwin Windeatt* 19<sup>th</sup>

The Cistercian Order 20<sup>th</sup>

Poets *Richard Crashaw, pr.* 21<sup>st</sup>

## Our Parish & People *John Robinson* 22<sup>nd</sup>

Greater faithfulness 23<sup>rd</sup>

Christian fellowship *Margaret Hutchinson, Elizabeth Wyngard* 24<sup>th</sup>

Those struggling with their mental health *William Sanders* 25<sup>th</sup>

Thanksgiving for eternal life 26<sup>th</sup>

Christian mothers *Thomas Haynes, Robin Bishop* 27<sup>th</sup>

Theologians *Sybil Fleet, Patricia Fleet, Iona Spalding* 28<sup>th</sup>

## Our Parish & People 29<sup>th</sup>

Religious tolerance *Helen Culverwell, Tom Chalmers, David Hume* 30<sup>th</sup>

Missionaries 31<sup>st</sup>

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## **An A-Z of Interesting Things: T is for Typology**

In Christian theology, and in biblical exegesis, Typology concerns the relationship between the Old Testament and the New. People, events and words from the Old Testament are seen as ‘types’ prefiguring events or aspects of Christ and His teaching described in the New Testament. The theory began in the early church, was popular in Calvinism, and is still frequently used exegesis within the Eastern Orthodox church.

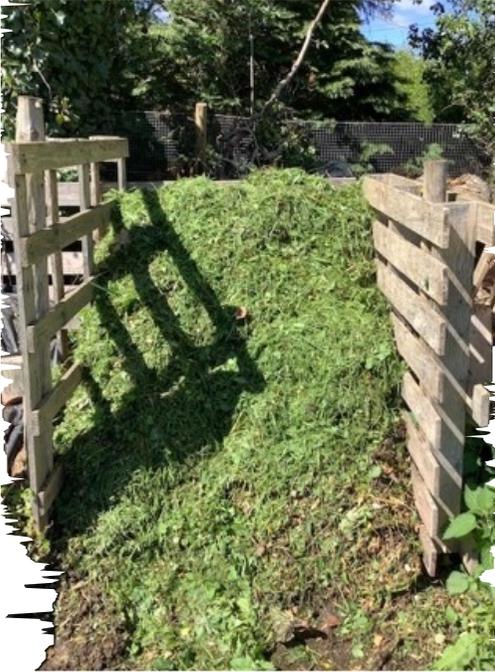
Examples of types include Adam being seen as a type of ‘the One who was to come’ by St Paul in Romans 5.14, and Jonah emerging from the whale’s belly being a type for Christ’s resurrection from the dead.

### **Soil and Sacrament**

*by Emma Bourne*

I have just done something I have never done before. I have just prayed a decade of the Rosary (since it is a Friday, it was the first of the Sorrowful Mysteries, appropriately enough ‘The Agony in the Garden’), for the soil, specifically the topsoil, of our land here at our convent smallholding at Tymawr. And I did it while sitting on the very soil itself, looking out through a haze of newly-planted trees into the Michaelgarth meadow beyond.

For those unfamiliar with the term (as I was until very recently), the topsoil is the part of the soil which we use for farming and growing: the part which is most vulnerable to damage and the part which gives the most abundance when treated well. It’s something that has come across my radar a lot recently. Yesterday, putting my temporary monastic obedience very much to the test, I was turning compost; forking one great mound from one compost bay, which I built back in May, into the compost bay beside it. This is to ensure that air



continues to circulate amid the mulch of decaying grass, roots and leaves, so that, eventually, a healthy, fertile humus is produced to return to the land. It occurred to me quite quickly that the best way to do this would be, like Moses at the burning bush, to remove my sandals. The bays are so deep that one is forced to climb into them if one is going to be able to get right to the back; and it soon became clear that to do this with any kind of shoes on would compress the very soil which I was trying to aerate. So the shoes came

off. Ants, worms, and woodlice tickled my toes as I went deeper (did Moses have this problem?!) but delightfully, my feet were cooled very comfortably from the burning, not of a bush, but of the heat of a July afternoon. It occurred to me that some people might pay a large sum for what felt quite like a spa-treatment, only of course in this case it was not in some luxury hotel in Kensington, but in a wooden compost bin atop a Welsh hillside.

But back to the topsoil itself. Wendell Berry wrote this about it:

‘The most exemplary nature is that of the topsoil. It is very Christ-like in its passivity and beneficence, and in the penetrating energy that issues out of its peaceableness. It increases by experience, by the passage of seasons over it, growth rising out of it and returning to it, not by ambition or aggressiveness. It is enriched by all things that die and enter into it. It keeps the past, not as history or as memory, but as richness, new possibility. Its fertility is always building up out of

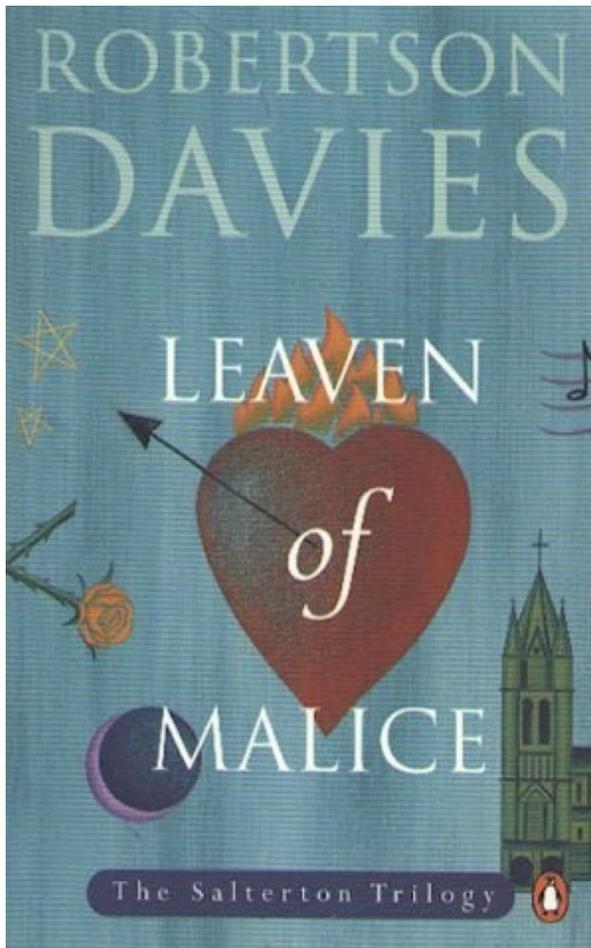
death into promise. Death is the bridge or the tunnel by which its past enters its future.'

Now we might take exception with Berry's idea of Christ's 'passivity', but he is surely spot on when it comes to likening topsoil to Christ's '*penetrating energy that issues out of its peaceableness.*' Indeed, it got me thinking about this as a description for the Sacraments of the Church. Are they not also 'peaceable' things, in water, oil, bread, wine, quiet words of absolution, from which issue 'penetrating energy', bestowed in the grace of the Holy Spirit? Do they not increase in us by our experience of them - in the sense that the more frequently we attend them, especially the Sacrament of the Eucharist, the more they grow and expand within us, breaking us open to receive more of that Spirit? And do they not also keep the past '*not as history or as memory, but as richness, new possibility?*' Our potential to engage with them, our willingness (dare I say it) to take our shoes off and bury our feet in them, is bound up with whether we think of them as archaic niceties to be tolerated and attended out of duty only, or whether we allow them to mulch our arid souls, to create new growth, new possibility.

To turn a convent compost heap, any compost heap, feels like a priestly task: to break open the topsoil, to feed the earth, and by it to enrich people, animals and plants which depend upon it. And they do depend upon it. Depletion of the quality of global topsoil is advancing at an alarming rate. Some estimates suggest that the world has perhaps 50 or 60 years of 'good' soil left, and environmentalists, scientists, conservationists are united in their recognition that over-exploitation, 'quick fixes' of industrial farming, climate change and destruction of forests are all to blame. To be making good soil is quite simply one of the most important things any human being can be doing. Wendell Berry was also adamant on this point: 'No use talking about getting enlightened or saving your soul,' he wrote to a friend in 1980, 'if you can't keep the topsoil from washing away.' As Christians, we do not have to choose between the salvation of our souls and the salvation of the soil; indeed, we must not and cannot

choose. Those peaceable acts and the things God gave us to perform them with - bread, wine, water, oil - cannot exist without soil. We cannot exist without soil. To save the soil is to save life, to save souls, our own and those of others. It is a sacramental act, from which comes the stuff of sacraments. Good soil is a sign of our salvation, as human beings and as Christians. Perhaps this is one place where the man or woman now stands in Pellam's land, guarding the 'signa' as David Jones put it - or, if she doesn't already, perhaps this is where she should stand: shoes off, at the altar of the wooden compost bay, on the burning bank of a Welsh valley - and to pray for it as well.

*Emma is currently working as an Alongsider at the Society of the Sacred Cross, a contemplative convent in south Wales. It has a strong focus on care for creation after the Cistercian model of monasticism, so everyone does a good deal of work on the land, and the convent sits in over 80 acres of farmland, vegetable gardens, orchards and meadows. Before this she worked in parishes in Sunderland and at LSM - which she still thinks of as her spiritual home and comes back to when she can- after studying at the University. The next step is either farming, priesthood, or a combination of the two...TBC!*



**Book Review:**  
***Leaven of Malice*** by  
**Robertson Davies**  
by Edmund Racher

Robertson Davies' *Leaven of Malice* sits as the second book of his *Salterton Trilogy* (*Tempest-Tost*, *Leaven of Malice*, *A Mixture of Frailties*). These were written and first published in Davies' native Canada between 1951 and 1958. Though all three sit in sequential order

and connect together, they stand independently - particularly *A Mixture of Frailties*, which changes setting and theme quite dramatically. Davies (1913-1995) would perhaps be best known for his *Deptford Trilogy*, but the earlier and lighter *Leaven of Malice* has been chosen in place of Jungian drama. The title, deriving from the Collect for the First Sunday after Easter in the *Book of Common Prayer*, was also somewhat appealing.

Salterton, scene of the action is a fictionalised version of Kingston, Ontario. Kingston, briefly, is a city on the side of Lake Ontario. It was, for a short span, the first capital of Canada and is the site of St

George's Cathedral, Queen's University and the Royal Military College of Canada - as well as a number of heritage sites. The reputation of the fictional Salterton is quaint and sleepy, 'the place where Anglican clergymen go when they die'. Davies' narrator certainly regards this as misleading - the outsider's perspective - but the sketches he gives us of Salterton and Saltertonians are sufficiently eccentric and comic to indicate that Davies is having his cake and eating it too. Certainly, the views one gets of Kingston from Google Maps don't quite tally with Salterton. However, the verisimilitude of the institutions listed on Wikipedia's fascinating *List of Fictional Cambridge Colleges* probably doesn't bear overmuch scrutiny either.

Context to one side, then, *Leaven of Malice* is about two young people from mutually suspicious academic families who are falsely proclaimed to be engaged in the pages of the Salterton *Evening Bellman* by an anonymous prankster. In the fashion of a classical comedy, troubles and drama ensue from this, involving the involuntary couple, their parents, their social circles, the editor and staff of the *Bellman*, the Dean of St Nicholas' Cathedral and several members of the legal profession.

There are two veins to tap into here. The first is the purely humorous. Davies provides us with a rather good set of comic characters and situations, the various eccentricities and human flaws of Salterton being on full display. The awkwardness and upset of the overall scenario is carried alongside sketches of contemporary hit novels, editorial waste paper baskets, and the appalling prospect of a 'Professional Recreationist'.

Secondly, one would note that although the premiss has a taste of the Victorian about it - a sensation magnified by the old-fashioned attitude of some of the characters - the consequences of shame, strife and family disputes are sufficiently unpleasant (and, as in the title, malicious) to make them seem quite contemporary. Age-old prohibitions against gossip, rumour and falsehood (Proverbs 11.9, Ecclesiasticus 28.14) do not lapse because those deeds are carried out

via fibre-optic cable. The business of winking out the perpetrator and establishing in the minds of all the truth is, as expected, thorny.

The combination of period Salterton with some of the foibles and sorrows mentioned make *Leaven of Malice* a sufficiently weighty amusement to merit my recommendation.

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## **The Concordia Club (Parish Centre Project)**

We would like to announce the opening of The Parish Centre Project, or **Concordia Club**. This creative gathering will take place on the first Tuesday of every month, beginning on 7<sup>th</sup> September from 10am to 12 noon at the Parish Centre. It is open to all. It grew out of discussions about our need for companionship and harmony (hence the name) in these times of transition out of the pandemic. It is true that even the most resilient have suffered grief and distress and have experienced times of real isolation. We all need mutual support and encouragement and we have much which we can share.

Every session will begin with coffee/tea /cake before moving into a themed creative activity, beginning with “Hope” on 7<sup>th</sup> September, when we will share poems and be guided by Fiona in an art activity.

If you are interested, please get in touch with Fiona or Mary and of course you will be most welcome simply to turn up on the 7<sup>th</sup>. We look forward to seeing you.

*Mary Ward*  
*Dr Fiona Blake*

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The logo for 'Ride + Strides for Churches 2021' features the words 'RIDE + STRIDES' in a large, orange, stylized font. The 'R' has a gear-like bottom edge, and the 'S' has a pointed top. Above the text are decorative elements: a blue chain of circles on the left and blue triangular flags on the right. Below the main text, 'for Churches 2021' is written in white on a green rectangular background.

# RIDE + STRIDES for Churches 2021

**Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> September 2021**

Ride and Stride is a sponsored event for cyclists, joggers, walkers and horse riders

Visit as many churches as you can and at the same time raise money to support the work of the Cambridgeshire Historic Churches Trust so that they may continue supporting buildings across the county with essential repairs and improvements, greatly needed as the pandemic has affected the finances of so many churches. Money raised is divided 50/50 between the Trust and LSM, so this is also a fundraiser for us.

The joy of this is that one can choose one's own route and do it in your own time between 10am and 6pm on the day. For those not able to participate, your sponsorship will be greatly appreciated. Further information and sponsorship form can be downloaded at <https://camhct.uk/ride-and-stride/>

or from *Mary Ward* [maryjward@btinternet.com](mailto:maryjward@btinternet.com) 01223 368946

## Garden News



Look! Our church garden has become a jungle! Wild flower gardens are often at their best in the spring and less varied in the summer when all the spring growth is over. And this year many plants have grown taller than ever before, hence the jungle appearance.

What is needed is a good deal of controlled cutting back and clearing, so help is now required please. Most Saturdays after 10am Mass a few of us stay to do work in the garden but our next **Garden Saturday** will be on **21<sup>st</sup> August** when coffee and cakes will be served. Please come if you would like to; gardening is never essential.

*Christine Tipple*  
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