

LITTLE S. MARY'S, CAMBRIDGE

January 2022: No. 577

NEWSLETTER



This newsletter contains:

In Praise of Hymns; The Lady Chapel; Garden News; Y is for Yahweh; Review of The Zeal of Thy House; 'My Ode to 2021'; plus the usual Vicar's letter, daily intentions for prayer and more...

Highlights of January

Saturday 1st January

The Naming & Circumcision of Jesus

10am Sung Mass

Thursday 6th January

Epiphany of Our Lord

7.45am Low Mass, 7pm High Mass – *Preacher: The Rev'd Dr*

Matthew Bullimore, Chaplain of Corpus Christi College

Monday 10th January

Silent Prayer – *Meet at 8pm in the Lady Chapel for Silent Prayer followed by optional refreshments*

Wednesday 12th January

10am Healing Mass – *with laying-on of hands and anointing with oil. This is preceded by a time of silent prayer for the sick at 9.45am. All welcome.*

Sunday 16th January

6pm Epiphanytide Carol Service & Benediction – *All are welcome to this beautiful opportunity to meditate on the themes, scriptures and music of the season of Epiphany.*

Monday 24th January

Food & Faith – *our Student Group meets at 7pm for drinks, 7.30pm Supper, 8pm talk, 9pm Compline*

Tuesday 25th January

Conversion of S. Paul

7.45am Low Mass, 7pm Sung Mass

Early date for the diary:

Wednesday 2nd February

Candlemas – the Presentation of Christ in the Temple

Completes our keeping of the forty days of Christmas and Epiphany and we're delighted to welcome as our preacher at the 7pm High Mass the Very Rev'd Mark Bonney, Dean of Ely.

From the Vicar

Eve of the Epiphany, 2022

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

A very happy New Year to all of you. I think I will find a lot of support for my primary prayer this January that 2022 will be a lot better than 2021! While almost 200,000 new Covid infections each day doesn't sound like a promising beginning to this new twelve months, the fact that we can still go about our business and that hospitals are – more or less – just about coping, is moderately encouraging. If the mildness of the Omicron variant is a sign of things to come as Covid becomes like the other Coronaviruses we deal with each year, then the most difficult thing for most people will be thinking about it differently: moving from quarantining deliveries and worrying about even vaguely catching it to taking our chances as we do with colds and flus. Looking at things differently is something that at least we have some practice at as Christians. We are in the business of seeing the world as charged with the grandeur of God, of seeing our enemies as children of God, of being able to face the worst the world can present us with because we believe the worst has already happened on Good Friday and that therefore there is always hope. May there be lots of chances for fresh perspectives in 2022.

The Greek word from which we get the word Church is *ecclesia*, which means 'gathered together' or 'gathered in'. The Church seeks to gather people in, gather them together for the Lord; and at Little Saint Mary's especially so because the vast majority of our congregation is not from within the geographical parish. We are a particularly gathered congregation – an intense Ecclesia! Covid, however, has dispersed us and a vital task for us in 2022 is to gather ourselves together again, no matter how hard this is given the difficulties of socialising and so on. Habits and disciplines have been broken by the pandemic and restoring these will be part of our general recovery. Fr Philip and I will be spending a good amount of the first few months of this year visiting those we've not seen for a long time. We are also in need of people to

fulfil vital ministries in the life of the church: assisting with children's group, as sidespeople, contributing towards refreshments and so on. Could this be part of your recovery of life-giving routines and patterns?

Our Confirmations on Advent III were a great encouragement and for every person we've not seen for almost two years there have been new faces. We have spent a significant proportion of our income on our home and overseas missions and social justice projects when they most needed it and taken the bold decision to invest in a second stipendiary priest. We have not been idle during the pandemic.

We certainly need to increase our income, therefore, and one of the ways we're doing that is installing a card machine at the back of church so that visitors can make donations more easily (especially in an era when so few people carry cash). Thank you to those of you who have increased your giving or made generous one-off payments recently; if you can, please do increase your giving to LSM or place it on a regular footing through a standing order or direct debit.

In a piece of personal news, I was appointed – well, elected unopposed – to the Bishop's Council (basically the Diocesan Standing Committee) for the next three years. Do pray for me that I might make a useful contribution to that body as the diocese faces multiple challenges, not least the absence of the Bishop as he takes on the role of acting Bishop of Lincoln for the next year. Do also please keep **Fr Mark** in your prayers: owing to his having several vulnerable family members Fr Mark has decided to step back from ministry for the time being. We wish him well and look forward to his return soon.

May God bless us and keep us this year.

With love & prayers, I am,
yours ever in Christ the beginning and the end,

Fr Robert.

The Lady Chapel

by Jeremy Musson



The Lady Chapel at Little St Mary's is a special place for our community, and has been since it was completed in 1931. As designed it was a confident and artistic statement by Cambridge architect and educator **Thomas Henry Lyon** (1869–1953), known as Harry. Its remarkable, if understated, qualities have been enhanced by the sensitive and tasteful restoration by Sarah Dani of Freeland Rees

Roberts and conservation carver and painter, Matthew Beesley, which was completed in 2018.

The original designer, Harry Lyon, was born in Ilsington in Devon, where his father, a former tea merchant, had acquired land. Educated at Trent School, Lyon was briefly apprenticed to an architect in Devon, and then studied theology and law at Corpus Christi, Cambridge. While he was at Cambridge, he became a close friend of John Cowper Powys (who later married Lyon's sister). He returned to architecture, training in the office of church architect William Douglas Carøe, and taking night classes at the Architectural Association. He founded his own practice in 1892. Lyon is known to have become a serious Anglo-Catholic from 1895.

His works in Cambridge were many. In 1910-12, Lyon enlarged the chapel at Sidney Sussex College, which was then a centre for Anglo-Catholic life in the University. His work there was in a neo-Wren style. In 1919 Lyon was appointed the director of design for the newly-formed architecture department of the University, under E.S. Prior. Lyon retained this role until his retirement in 1937. He had dining rights and rooms at Corpus Christi, and his portrait hangs in the Combination Room there today.

Lyon also designed the war memorial in Trinity College Chapel, as well as advising on colour schemes in historic college interiors. He published a rather pugnacious book called *Real Architecture: The Rights and Wrongs of Taste*, in 1932. Lyon had a strong interest in Italian art and architecture, and designed an admired Italian-style garden in Devon. One of his very last works was the red brick St George's Church, New Chesterton, completed in 1938 in an Italian basilican style.

The Lady Chapel at LSM may be regarded as a mature work of Lyon's and is beautifully detailed in its textured exterior treatment. It was built in 1931 and its handmade brick and tile detail has an Arts & Crafts feel that fits into the strip of space between the much-patched south wall of the 14th-century church and the ancient walls of

Peterhouse, Cambridge's first college. The Lady Chapel was much admired, and in 1932 permission was granted for a similar chapel on the north side, entered through the arch of the former chantry chapel on that side. Lyon designed a stone statue of Our Lady which would have been situated on the outside of that chapel, but when the north chapel was not built, the figure of Our Lady was given to nearby St Bene't's.



The south Lady Chapel is a handsome but intimate space, suitable for private prayer and small gatherings for weekday Masses. It is a simple design with a barrel-vaulted ceiling and single light round-arched windows which have a Romanesque feel. Overall, the Lady Chapel has an echo of the much admired Scrovegni Chapel in Padua (above), although on a much-reduced scale; the reredos was, however, drawn on a neo-Baroque theme, which was popular in those Anglo-Catholic circles who looked to European Catholic traditions and the leadership of Rome. This style is more often associated with the work of Martin Travers, who studied at the Royal College of Art from 1904-08 under Lethaby and Beresford Pite, but Lyon had been something of a pioneer in this himself.

Lyon's original design for the Lady Chapel had a distinctly dark midnight blue and silver theme on the reredos, with a coloured Persian

carpet in front of the altar and varnished timber floor – recorded in a watercolour which hangs in the Parish Centre (see below). In the 1990s a refurbishment of the Lady Chapel included the carpeting over of the wood block floor of the altar pace, and upholstered beechwood seating was added - replacing the simple rush-seated chairs specified by Lyon, some of which are still to be found in the Oratory Chapel in the crypt. The dark blue of the reredos was significantly lightened to a pale Capri Blue and the silver picking-out was replaced with gold. However, issues with settlement and heating, caused cracking on the ceiling.

When the repair and refurbishment became necessary, after much deliberation with the PCC and others including the Diocesan Advisory Committee, the decision was taken to readdress the colour scheme of the whole. Especially important was the consideration of a proposal that the ceiling should be painted blue and given gold star decoration, echoing the Lady Chapel tradition – reflecting Our Lady’s role as the Queen of Heaven and the cosmic aspect to the Eucharist being celebrated under it. This was not part of the original scheme, but was partly evoked by the example of the Scrovegni chapel ceiling.

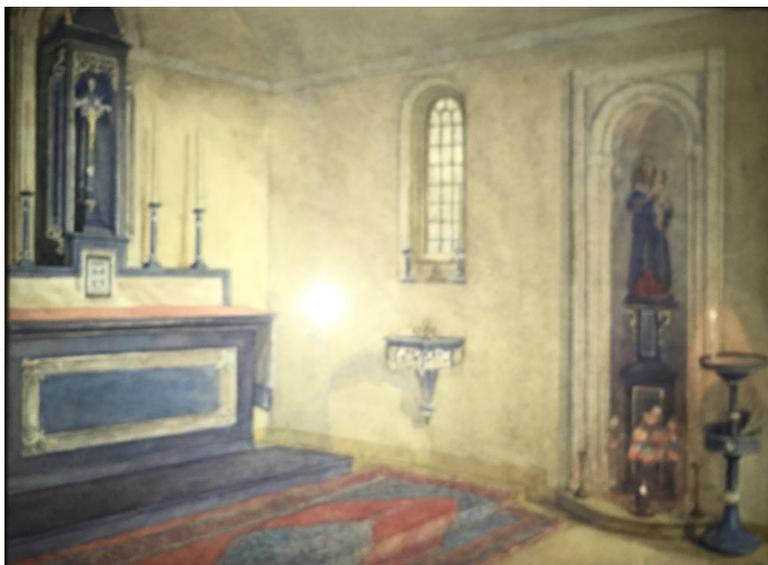
A carved figure of Our Lady and the child Jesus has been in the round-headed niche on the south wall for a number of years, but it is not certain that it was original to the scheme.

Initial ideas were explored by Matthew Beesley, a highly-experienced designer, carver and painter, who, referencing the darker blues of Lyon’s original scheme with the distinctive Mediterranean blue of Our Lady’s clothes, proposed a deep sapphire-like blue, that feels like the night sky. Mr Beesley also proposed that the stars should not be identical or too strictly aligned, but rather be of different scales and to be regularly spaced in a rhythmic pattern across the ceiling. This idea received the unanimous support of the PCC. A faculty was granted and the work completed in 2018.



The deep blue of the ceiling is based on earth pigments, and the same blue has been applied to the reredos and candles, but with areas of the altar and reredos painted in warm stone colour. The ceiling has been decorated with fine gold stars using traditional gilding techniques, of gesso base, gilding, tooling and burnishing. The original woodblock floor has been exposed and refinished, with a simple coloured Persian rug returned to the altar pace, while iron pendant lights with discreet LED bulbs replace fluorescent strip lights.

The whole project has been a considerable success, and indeed it is difficult to remember the interior before its current scheme, as the colours and the positioning of the stars on the ceiling, not part of Lyon's original vision, seem so natural and right. The painting and gilding expertly done by Mr Beesley have transformed the space. The 2017-18 scheme had helped to render the Lady Chapel a very special place for veneration of Our Lady, personal quiet and prayer, the lighting of candles, weekday masses and peaceful contemplation.



Watercolour of the original Lady Chapel design from the 1930s

In Praise of Hymns – the writers of the words: Bishop Reginald Heber

by Charles Moseley



Epiphany is almost upon us, when Christ is first shown forth to the Gentiles. ‘The kings of Tarshish and of the isles shall bring presents: the kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts.’ (Ps.72.10). Whom to choose as hymn-writer for this season when we ask the Brightest and Best of the Sons of the Morning to shine on our own darkness?

Reginald Heber (21st April 1783 – 3rd April 1826) came of a wealthy, well-connected, landed Shropshire family, armigerous since the time of the first Elizabeth. While at Brasenose, Oxford, he gained, if only moderate academic distinction, a reputation as a poet of fashionably Romantic cast in both Latin and English. His long poem *Palestine* won the Newdigate Prize with advice from a young Sir Walter Scott, a family friend – this was long before Scott was himself famous as poet and novelist. Heber read it to an enthusiastic audience at that year's Encaenia and it looked as if he might make a reputation as a poet. Later it was set to music by William Crotch (Professor of Music since 1797), and translated into Welsh by W. Owen Pughe in 1822. Heber's biographer, Arthur Montefiore, who himself later held the Bishopric of Calcutta in which office Heber died, called it ‘the most successful and popular piece of religious verse of the first half of the [19th] century’. A later biographer, Derrick Hughes (1986), however, finds this all puzzling: ‘It is not a good, not even a mediocre poem; it is leaden.’

Heber graduated in 1805, the year Napoleon won his greatest victory at Austerlitz in December, crushing the Russian and Austrian forces. A generation earlier it would have been normal for a new graduate to make the Grand Tour, but Napoleon's wars stopped that. Instead Heber and a friend made a 15-month-long journey through Scandinavia, to Russia and its Black Sea coast, and then home through Poland, Austria and several of the little German states that later made up the Germany we know. Travel for people of Heber's background was eased then by letters of introduction to influential people – he was able to see the Tsar's private apartment in the Winter Place in St Petersburg, for example – and even extended to coming home from Hamburg on Lord Morpeth's private yacht. Back in Oxford, he read for ordination, and was ordained in 1807. This was a time of increasingly bitter controversy between the Evangelical movement and the High Church, and it seems he had not really made up his own mind on this.

When he took over his late father's family living as rector of Hodnet in Shropshire – as he put it later, a role that was a ‘half-way station between a parson and a squire’ – he wrote to his friend and travelling companion John Thornton, ‘Pray for me, my dear friend, that I may have my eyes open to the truth ... and if it please God that I persevere in His ministry I may undertake the charge with a quiet mind and a good conscience.’ Though by upbringing High Church, he strongly opposed the bitter factional quarrelling, and eventually adopted an eirenic, *via media* position. Wealthy enough to pay a curate, he divided his time between Hodnet and All Souls’, Oxford, of which he had been made a Fellow, and was Bampton Lecturer to the University in 1815.

It was during his sixteen years as Rector of Hodnet, where he was loved as a careful and kindly parish priest, that he edited, in 15 volumes, the complete works of the 17th-century cleric Jeremy Taylor - whom Coleridge greatly admired - including *The Rule and Exercises of Holy Living* (1650) and *The Rule and Exercises of Holy Dying* (1651). The former is a manual of Christian practice, still read today: the title page offers ‘the means and instruments of obtaining every virtue, and remedies against every vice, and considerations serving to the resisting all temptations, together with prayers containing the whole Duty of a Christian’. *Holy Dying* was perhaps even more popular. Heber’s edition remained the standard one for the best part of a century.

He had strong links with the London literary scene – he was in the circle of Robert Southey, for example, on the original staff of *The Quarterly Review*, and in 1822 was elected as Preacher at Lincoln’s Inn, which required regular journeys to London. It was also during this time that he wrote his large output of 57 hymns, at a time when the established church looked somewhat askance at congregational singing of pretty well anything but metrical psalms. The Bishop of London was distinctly cool when Heber approached him for support in publishing a collection of hymns for congregational use, and suggested Heber publish it himself. Yet the *Olney Hymns* of William Cowper (1731-1800), and the hymns of the former slave ship captain John Newton – think of *Amazing Grace* and *Glorious things of thee are spoken* – (who served as Evangelical vicar of Cowper’s parish of Olney) were becoming almost as popular as those of Charles Wesley, and John Betjeman (*Sweet Songs of Zion*, 2008) recognised their influence in Heber’s work.

His style is, in the fashion of the day, consciously literary: as Betjeman put it, ‘with careful choices of adjectives and vivid figures of speech: poetic imagery was as important as didactic truth’. His hymns perhaps do not have the scriptural strength of, say, Wesley’s, nor the dogmatic force and succinctness of the best Latin ones. More recent responses (J. R. Watson, for example: *The English Hymn: a Critical and Historical Study*, Oxford, 1999), less indulgently, point out Heber's tendency to deliver a ‘rather obvious sermon’, and how he mixes sometimes powerful description with ‘a rather trite moralism’. Well, nobody’s perfect: and though most

of those 57 hymns now sound no more, in *NEH* we do have several, composed in somewhat unusual metres which makes the tunes which will fit (if you want to change the accustomed ones) something of a problem - e.g. 146, in 11.12.10.10, or 301 in 10.7.10.7. *NEH* includes the loved Epiphany hymn, 49, *Brightest and best of the sons of the morning*; 146, *Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty*, for Trinity; 187, *Virgin-born, we bow before Thee*, for feasts of the Blessed Virgin; Verse 1 of 245, *God that madest earth and heaven* – is it the words or the tune, *Ar hyd y nos* that makes that one so ineradicable in the memory?; 277, *Bread of the world in mercy broken*, and 301, *O most merciful, O most bountiful*. From my old *A&M* I recall with some affection *From Greenland's icy mountains*' (*A&M* 358) which is now not *at all* politically correct and to some lines of which Mahatma Gandhi himself objected. (Its splendid tune, 'Aurelia', which fits its unusual 7.6.7.6.7.6 metre, is now attached to *NEH* 167, a rather trite hymn for a most *un-trite* figure in Acts.)

But it was one of the first great missionary hymns, written when the newly founded Missionary Societies (the Church Missionary Society in 1799, the British and Foreign Bible Society, in 1804) were just beginning their efforts in the Empire that had just (1807) abolished slavery in all its dominions, thanks to the successful campaigns of British Christian abolitionists – the first formal abolition of slavery, backed by law (and the British Royal Navy), in the history of the world. Our culture may now think differently of missionary activity, and regret the mistakes our forebears made, but the goodwill and selfless, often courageous, work of so many of those dedicated men and women 'in the Mission field', as it was called, who saw themselves as obeying Christ's own command – not advice - in Mark 16.15-16 – deserve some honour and understanding from us.

Indeed, even at Oxford Heber had shown interest in the work of the missionary Societies, including the oldest of them all, the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts (Royal Charter, 1701). In September 1813 he preached a sermon in Shrewsbury to the British and Foreign Bible Society, which ended with an emphatic declaration of support for the work of overseas missions. Clearly, something was maturing in his mind. He could have followed a conventional career of the usual range of preferments, ultimately perhaps to a comfortable bishopric and a seat in the Lords. While he did accept a canonry at St Asaph, where his father-in-law was Bishop, he turned down the far more prestigious one, much better for a career, of Durham. Interestingly, while at Hodnet he made notes on a map of India outlining possible journeys long before any possibility of that was in the offing, and when he was offered preferment as only its second bishop to the quite new see of Calcutta (which also covered Ceylon and Australia!) Heber was cautious, enquiring whether there were not a more suitable local man, and expressing several doubts about the health of the climate for his family. But he did accept, and was consecrated Bishop in Oxford in October 1823. He travelled energetically, right across the subcontinent, and during that pastoral journey visited Benares, one of India's holiest cities, sacred to Hindus, Sikhs and Buddhists. He spent several weeks in what was a

THE CHRISTIAN YEAR

41

LIEBSTER IMMANUEL. (1110. 1110.)
Slow $\text{♩} = 72$.

Melody from 'Himmels-Lust', 1670.
Adapted by J. S. Bach.

NOTE.—A major tune for this hymn will be found in the Appendix.
Bishop R. Heber, 1788-1825.

BRIGHTEST and best of the sons of the morning,
Down on our darkness and lend us thine aid;
Star of the East, the horizon adorning,
Guide where our infant Redeemer is laid.

2 Cold on his cradle the dew-drops are shining,
Low lies his head with the beasts of the stall;
Angels adore him in slumber reclining,
Maker and Monarch and Saviour of all.

3 Say, shall we yield him, in costly devotion,
Odours of Edom and offerings divine?
Gems of the mountain and pearls of the ocean,
Myrrh from the forest or gold from the mine?

4 Vainly we offer each ample oblation,
Vainly with gifts would his favour secure;
Richer by far is the heart's adoration,
Dearer to God are the prayers of the poor.

Unison. 5. Brightest and best of the sons of the morning,
Down on our darkness and lend us thine aid;
Star of the East, the horizon adorning,
Guide where our infant Redeemer is laid.

wholly Indian city without any resident Europeans, but with a thriving CMS school and a substantial Christian community. He consecrated a new church, and when he conducted a Holy Communion in both English and Hindustani he attracted a large congregation of Hindus as well as Christians. His journeys were prodigious, and he wrote up extensive accounts of them in his *Narrative of a Journey through the Upper Provinces of India from Calcutta to Bombay 1824-1825 with Notes upon Ceylon and An Account of a Journey to Madras and the Southern Provinces, 1826*. He worked to improve the general living conditions of his people. He ordained the first Indian into Holy Orders. He was also highly critical of the way the East India Company managed its affairs there. He complained about the 'bullying, insolent manner' towards Indians which too many of the

Company's employees showed, and the paucity of Indians in senior roles. On this he got the ear of the Governor General, Lord Amherst, as well as writing to his old friend Charles Williams-Wynn, who was head of the Indian Board of Control in London. Heber was interested in all aspects of Indian life, busied himself supporting education and the preparation of a Hindustani dictionary. He quickly made friends, with the local people and with Hindu swamis (with one, Sahajanand Swami, he had a very cordial relationship) and with members of non-Anglican churches. Occasionally his affability and generous hospitality scandalised the more puritan and Evangelical of his clergy; one Isaac Wilson of the CMS directly attacked his bishop in a public sermon after what he considered excessive celebrations following a baptism. But arduous duties – including a gruelling 16-month visitation across the whole subcontinent - a taxing climate, and poor health, led to collapse and sudden death after less than three years in his bishopric. The novelist Charlotte M. Yonge spoke for many when she wrote in 1874, in a survey of *Recent Workers in the Mission Field*, 'Heber was one of the first English churchmen who perceived that to enlarge her borders and strengthen her stakes was the bounden duty of the living Church'.

Calendar for January

SAT 1st The Naming & Circumcision of Jesus

SUN 2nd 2ND SUNDAY after CHRISTMAS

MON 3rd

TUE 4th

WED 5th

THU 6th EPIPHANY OF OUR LORD

FRI 7th

SAT 8th

SUN 9th 1ST SUNDAY of EPIPHANY - Baptism of Our Lord

MON 10th *William Laud, archbishop*

TUE 11th

WED 12th S. Aelred of Hexham, abbot

THU 13th S. Hilary, bishop

FRI 14th

SAT 15th

SUN 16th 2ND SUNDAY of EPIPHANY

MON 17th S. Antony of Egypt, hermit & abbot

TUE 18th

WED 19th S. Wulfstan, bishop

THU 20th of Requiem

FRI 21st S. Agnes, virgin & martyr

SAT 22nd *S. Vincent, deacon & martyr*

SUN 23rd 3RD SUNDAY of EPIPHANY

MON 24th S. Francis de Sales, bishop & doctor

TUE 25th The Conversion of S. Paul

WED 26th Ss Timothy & Titus, bishops

THU 27th

FRI 28th S. Thomas Aquinas, priest & doctor

SAT 29th of the Blessed Virgin Mary

SUN 30th 4TH SUNDAY of EPIPHANY

MON 31st *S. John Bosco, priest*

Daily Intentions & Anniversaries of death

Peace of the world *Dorothy Ogden, Derek Williams* 1st

Our Parish & People *Daphne Peck, Janet Crozier* 2nd

PNGCP *Edward Maycock, Lena Wheatley, Arthur Clough, Cecilia Scott-Townsend* 3rd

S. Cyprian's, Sharpeville *Sheila Duffy* 4th

Vaccinations *Jennifer Williams, Joyce Day, Peter Dicken* 5th

That we may give our gifts to Christ *Maggie Hulyer, Ray Holland, Harry Stratton pr.* 6th

Married couples 7th

Those preparing for Holy Baptism 8th

Our Parish & People *Peter Gore* 9th

Charity *Silvia Skeil, Keith Chittenden, Erland Copeley Williams* 10th

Those who mourn *Geoffrey Baines* 11th

Vocations to the Religious Life 12th

Those preparing for Baptism and Confirmation 13th

CCHP *Aline Norman, Marjorie Shepherd, Elaine Wheatley, Timothy Cowell* 14th

The unemployed *Isabel Nourse* 15th

Our Parish & People *Marjorie Galletly* 16th

Christian holiness *Margaret Rowett* 17th

Christian Unity 18th

Roman Catholic Church *Daphne Clavy* 19th

Orthodox Churches *Pauline Martindale, Donald Harris pr., John Abraham* 20th

United Reformed & Methodist Church *Athelstane Furley* 21st

Pentecostal Churches 22nd

Our Parish & People *James Rigney pr.* 23rd

Baptist Churches *Robert Garrett pr., Peggy Hall, Marie Thomas* 24th

Christian Unity 25th

Bishops *Maurice Rayner, James Rone pr.* 26th

CamTrust *Sebastian Hawkes, Elsie Perrin, Peter Barnard* 27th

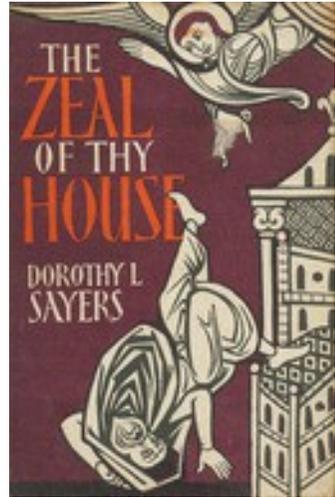
Theologians *Julia Wheatcroft* 28th

Shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham *Eric Furley, Beryl Goonetilleke* 29th

Our Parish & People *Mary Hammond* 30th

Church Schools *David Theobald* 31st

The Zeal of Thy House
by Dorothy L. Sayers
a review by Edmund Racher



For the zeal of Thy house hath eaten me up; and the reproaches of them that reproached Thee are fallen upon me.
Psalm 69.9, Coverdale translation

In 1170 Thomas a Becket was martyred in Canterbury Cathedral. In 1174 the choir of the Cathedral suffered damage from fire, and had to be repaired. In 1937 Dorothy L. Sayers wrote a play - *The Zeal of Thy House* - for the Canterbury Festival about the rebuilding (Becket had already been covered in 1935 by Eliot's *Murder in the Cathedral* - and by Tennyson in 1884).

The raising of a medieval cathedral is a perennial topic for authors - see for instance William Golding's 1964 novel *The Spire*, Ken Follett's 1989 *The Pillars of the Earth*, and Sylvia Townsend Warner's 1948 *The Corner that Held Them*. One might trace a line back from all to 1831, Victor Hugo and *Notre-Dame de Paris*, given the focus and exploration of the titular cathedral (even if we don't see it being built).

Of course, Sayers has the wisdom not to try and perform an entire 'architectural procedural' on stage. *The Zeal of thy House* concentrates on the appointment and crippling of the architect William of Sens (Sens being a French cathedral town 65 miles south-east of Paris). It is William's reflection on creative work that fills the play and his (literal) rise and fall that form the events of the plot.

This being a cathedral, and thus a very public enterprise, others than William of Sens wish to have their say. This includes the Prior of Christchurch and the members of the Cathedral Chapter, the potential donor Lady Ursula de Warbois - and the Archangels Michael, Raphael

and Gabriel. Unlike the novels above, the supernatural is very much at work in *The Zeal of thy House*. The *deus ex machina* is not kept for the last act, but instead we see the Archangels - working to God's plan - interfering throughout the narrative.

Throughout the four acts of the play, then, we see the proposed scheme of William, its execution and its final state when he must leave it aside. Each stage is accomplished with the cooperation, commentary and advice of the wider cast, human and angelic. A choir provides apt music: extracts from Ecclesiasticus, medieval hymns and portions of the Psalms. All this frames details of the construction, together with meditations on Christian creative labour, pride, love - and finally, a vision of the Trinity as seen in relation to these, bearing a resemblance to Sayers' own 1941 theological work *The Mind of the Maker*.

If that all sounds a trifle heavy, the play is smoothed by humour and everyday discourse. The workmen for the cathedral are aptly earthy, William himself shows a certain wry humour, the chapter enjoy a certain amount of interplay - even the archangels can be comic in their seriousness ('**Young Cherub:** Why did God create mankind in two different sorts, if it makes so much trouble? *The Angels are inexpressibly shocked.* **Raphael:** Hush! You mustn't ask why.')

The Zeal of thy House is an early dramatic effort by Sayers, and shows the advantages of a festival's resources in its intended scope, but this does not diminish the power that the tale of William of Sens can have.

[It has been some time since any performance I have heard of, but a radio broadcast of it may be found online, if the script will not suffice. <https://archive.org/details/the-zeal-of-thy-house-by-dorothy-l-sayers>]

The LSM Reading Group will be discussing *The Zeal of thy House* at their next Zoom meeting, 8pm on Sat 15th January 2022. New members are always welcome. Please contact the Editor for more details.

An A-Z of Interesting Things

Y is for Yahweh

Yahweh was the name given to the God of the Israelites. It is a representation of the Hebrew letters YHWH (Yod, Heh, Waw, Heh), which was the name for God revealed to Moses in the book of Exodus.

The four letters, known as the Tetragrammaton, had vowels added to them which came from the Hebrew words *Adonai* or *Elohim*. Early Christian scholars, writing in Latin, replaced the Y (non-existent in Latin) with I or J, and eventually the Tetragrammaton became the Latinised name Jehovah (JeHoWaH)

My Ode to 2021

by Chessie Nour

Demi Lovato sings to a ghost
The unspeakable trauma,
A burnt piece of toast!

NASA's rover lands on Mars,
Bounced twice and nearly fell!
Is there anything out there?
"Perseverance", pray, tell!

Same-sex couple on *Strictly*,
Johannes and John,
Rose stole the show
But, how times have moved on!

Dolphins spotted in Venice,
As less water pollution,
It's almost as if
They point out the solution!

We lost Bishop Tutu,
A true inspiration
Spreading faith, hope and love
From nation to nation.

Big Ben's face restored,
Well, ring my bell!
Will Boris lock down?
Only time will tell.

As with 2020
We've lost the ones we love,
And with no clear sign of finish
Our spark can be diminished.

But as I told you last year
And as I'll say again,
If we support each other
This fight won't be in vain.

Garden News



A few energetic people managed to clear the paths and leave the garden looking reasonably tidy for Christmas. As spring approaches we shall look forward to bulbs appearing - snowdrops, grape hyacinths, primroses, daffodils amongst others

If we can clear more of the ever-spreading ivy there will be space for other interesting plants to come up. More helpers would be most welcome. There is some light work to be done that does not even require bending!

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