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THE  WINDOW
News and Views from the Parish of Abingdon-on-Thames

Becoming a 'Weaver'

The Revd Dr Charles Miller

A few weeks ago I received an e-mail attachment from my sister in the States. It was an essay by the *New York Times* opinion columnist David Brooks, who covers what he calls 'the sociology beat'. His concern was something more and more pervasive throughout the 'global' twenty-first century but which is epidemic and acute across the United States: hyper-individualism and the resulting social isolation and fragmentation. Britain is perhaps not so sharply afflicted, but we know that a feeling of disconnect is the plight of many, not least the elderly.

But David Brooks has discovered a grass-roots reaction among everyday people who emphasize relationship over self, who recognize and act on the fact that 'we' precedes 'me'. He calls such people and their communities "weavers". 'They want to live', he says, 'in right relationship with others and to serve the community good.' The weaving he has identified is about loving across boundaries, listening patiently, seeing deeply and making someone feel known.'

That reminds me of Jesus. He loved across boundaries—think of his encounter with the Samaritan woman at the well; he listened patiently—think of his attentive silence throughout his trial and condemnation; he saw deeply—remember his conversation with the rich young man; he made people feel known—remember his calling out "Mary!" in the garden on the morning of the resurrection, and his calling of Peter on the shore of the Lake Galilee after the night of fruitless fishing.

The work of the risen Lord is the work of weaving the fabric of broken relationships so that they can become right relationships. And 'right relationship' is another name for righteousness, the gift of the risen Lord to all those who entrusts themselves him. That can happen, Christians believe, when a person receives the gift of forgiveness, and that gift of forgiveness remains the bedrock of whatever fabric of social relationship we are part of: a marriage, a family, a work cohort, a class, a church or faith community, a neighbourhood, a village or a town. In fact, the gift of forgiveness upholds the entire project of being human!

The Lord is risen so as to weave the gift of forgiveness into the fabric of every soul and every relationship. Baptism into the new life and Body of Christ is the preference of 'we' over 'me'; it's partnership in a community where the boundary of love is as wide as the cosmos. Hence Jesus' resurrection command, "Go forth to all the nations..." (Matthew 28.19), so that we might be his arms, hands and fingers weaving anew the garment of universal truth and love.

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The Window is available to
download from the
Churches' websites on the
back page

This month in *The Window*

There is a good deal of information about events in Holy Week and Easter, both the usual seasonal liturgies and special events such as the Passion Play and the devotional performance of J.S. Bach's *St John Passion*.

Read an account of a recent innovation at St Helen's – a contactless giving terminal. It is hoped that both regular members of the congregation and the many visitors expected over the summer will take advantage of the simple and effective way of making donations.

In next month's edition we will hear about Bishop Henry's recent locum chaplaincy in Spain, and an update on the work of the Dorothy Springer Trust supported by St Helen's.

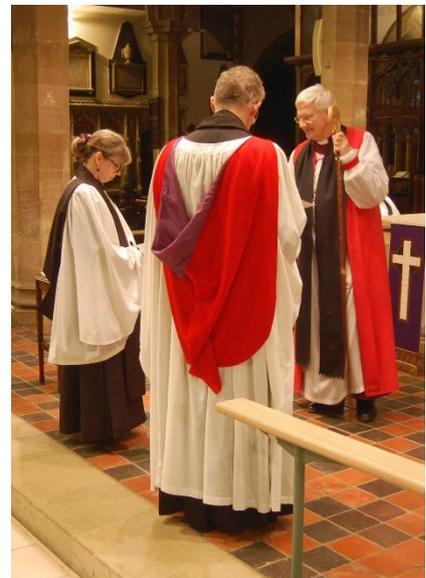
News from the Parish

Licensing of the Revd Jennifer Brown by the Bishop of Dorchester.

During Choral Evensong on Sunday 17 March, Colin, Bishop of Dorchester, licensed Jennifer Brown as a Self-supporting (non stipendiary) Associate Priest in the parish of Abingdon-on-Thames. We look forward to Jen and Chris being with us in the parish and to her ministry among us.

Please see last month's edition of *The Window* for a brief biography of Jen.

The photograph is thanks to Norman Dawson.



Stewarding

Every year we aim to keep St Helen's open from 11am - 1pm each day from Easter until September, to welcome the many visitors who come, some just out of curiosity, some to see the beautiful mediaeval painted ceiling in the Lady Chapel, and some to pray or sit quietly. Two stewards are needed each day and Elizabeth Simpson would welcome offers of help for this important and enjoyable ministry on a regular or occasional basis. Please consider whether this is something you would feel able to do and contact Elizabeth or the parish office for more details.

From *The Window* team

In April we will have the sad task of bidding farewell to Rachel Shearer who is relocating to Scotland. Rachel has contributed to parish life in so many ways, and at *The Window* we have appreciated her immense skill and patience as compositor for the magazine for a number of years. She has done a splendid job of 'making a silk purse out of a sow's ear' (her own words), having a great 'eye' for seeing how the often disparate contributions for the magazine can fit together and also spotting mistakes and inconsistencies. We wish Rachel and Marc 'god speed' as they move onto the next stage in their life and thank Rachel wholeheartedly for her contribution to *The Window*.

Contactless Giving at St Helen's

Roger Cox and Alex Titcombe, St Helen's DCC

Many people use contactless cards for making small payments in their daily lives, at the supermarket, going on a bus, buying a coffee... and why not also for just giving?!

With the encouragement of the DCC, St Helen's has installed a contactless donation station which will enable visitors to the church to donate to St Helen's General Fund in a simple and tax efficient way.

Users simply select how much to donate by pressing the appropriate 'button' (£2, £5 or £10) and applying a contactless debit or credit card to the contactless payment logo.

That's it! Users can also get a receipt sent to their email address or texted to their mobile phone number. The Church of England's 'TapGo' app linked with a SumUp contactless card reader sends the donation to St Helen's which collects gift aid on all such donations up to the value of £20.

The reader sits on top of a fine oak 'collection box' made by master carpenter Phil Dixey. Costs for the construction of the collection box and the contactless donation unit have been covered by private donation. There's also a slot just beneath the unit which will accept any cash or cheque donation.

We hope that this unit will encourage the many visitors to St Helen's to contribute generously towards the running and upkeep of the church.



Phil Dixey with the contactless unit

The St John Passion

Peter Foster

For a worshipper in the Lutheran Church about 300 years ago, Good Friday was the spiritual and musical heart of the church's year. Choirs would break into intensely expressive and complex musical depictions of the Passion of Christ. To assist believers in their contemplation, creative artists summoned all the emotional power of their craft in their responses to the Passion of Christ, from Rembrandt's paintings of the crucifixion to Passion Plays such as that enacted in Oberammergau. Musical Passion settings are plentiful among German composers of the era, but by common consent the greatest, both for the dramatic impact of their story-telling, and for the spiritual and emotional depth of their reflections on the narrative, are those by J. S. Bach. As part of our observation of Good Friday this year, St. Helen's is presenting a performance of Bach's *St. John Passion*, given mostly by musicians living in the local community. Modern audiences receive Bach's Passion settings in different ways: as an act of personal devotion, as an aesthetic experience of a great artwork, as both, or as something else. Whatever your take on the piece, please come and hear one of the most profound creations of the human imagination ever realised.

In order to make this accessible to all, there will be no charge for admission. However, since there are significant costs involved in putting on the performance, we will be inviting donations at the end. Singers from the local community are also very welcome to join in the chorales and some other choral sections; Rehearsals start at the end of March; please email Peter Foster, our Director of Music at peterfoster@googlemail.com if you would like to take part.

Pilate's wife

Susan Gee

Such dreams I've had,
 And they torment me still,
 Of beatings and bloodshed,
 Of crosses and crowns,
 And innocence crushed.
 You knew it was all a plot,
 You'd seen it all before,
 The political schemings and uprisings
 Upsetting the delicate balance of power.

Dear husband, have nothing to do with this just man.



He has got under your skin,
 Hasn't he, this gentle Galilean,
 With his enigmatic silences and
 His answers to the questions you didn't ask?
 He spoke of kingdoms and power
 But you didn't understand.
 You were puzzled by this Jesus, certainly
 Not your usual insurrectionist.
 There was something about him
 You couldn't pin down.
 He seemed to be gazing at
 Something you couldn't see.

Dear husband, have nothing to do with this just man.



You tried to accommodate him,
 Gave him a chance to explain, then,
 At a loss, sent him to Herod who
 Bounced him back again.
 You became friends with Herod that day,
 Though not with any-one else.
 You tried to turn the crowd.
 Those erstwhile Hosanna-shouters,
 But they had been turned already
 By fork-tongued priests.

Dear husband, have nothing to do with this just man.

And so your hands were tied,
 You were trapped like
 An almond in the jaws of a nut-cracker,
 Squeezed between the twin horns of
 Priestly power and the threat of Rome.
 What else to do but
 Wash your hands of the whole affair
 Not that that changed anything.
 You left an innocent man to die, and
 That is your epitaph.

I warned you, dear husband, but you didn't listen.



Services in Holy Week: 14 to 21 April 2019

| | | | |
|---|-------|--------------|---|
| | 08.00 | St Helen's | Holy Communion (1662) |
| | 09.15 | St Helen's | Morning Praise – a brief service of the Word including palms and thanksgiving for new births |
| Sunday 14th April – Palm Sunday | 09.30 | St Michael's | Sung Mass with Palm Procession and Passion reading |
| | 10.30 | St Helen's | Outdoor Palm Liturgy & Procession and Sung Eucharist |
| | 11.15 | St Nicolas' | Holy Communion for Palm Sunday with Junior Church |
| | 19.30 | St Michael's | Said Mass and Address - The Revd Paul Cowan, Chaplain to the Bishop of Oxford Addresses on <i>'The Last Words of Jesus'</i> |
| Monday 15th April, Tuesday 16th April, and Wednesday 17th April | 20.00 | St Helen's | Compline and Address - Mrs Gwen Bevington, Licensed Lay Minister in the Parish of Abingdon-on-Thames Addresses on <i>'Praise to the holiest'</i> |
| | 19.30 | St Nicolas' | Holy Communion |
| Thursday 18th April – Maundy Thursday | 20.00 | St Helen's | Sung Eucharist, with Foot-Washing followed by the Watch (in the Lady Chapel) until 12 midnight |
| | 20.00 | St Michael's | Mass of the Lord's Supper, Washing of Feet, Stripping of the Altar and Watch of the Passion until 12 midnight |
| | 10.00 | St Michael's | Children's Service with craft activities <i>followed by refreshments</i> |
| Friday 19th April – Good Friday | 10.00 | St Nicolas' | Morning Service for Good Friday |
| | 11.45 | | Good Friday procession from Abingdon Library |
| | 12.00 | St Nicolas' | Church-in-Abingdon Service of Witness <i>Ecumenical service suitable for all ages</i> |
| | 14.00 | St Helen's | The Liturgy of Good Friday <i>Followed by hot cross buns in the South Aisle</i> |
| | 14.00 | St Michael's | Liturgy of the Passion |
| | 19.00 | St Helen's | Devotional Concert: J.S. Bach <i>St John Passion</i> |
| Saturday 20th April – Easter Eve | 09.10 | St Helen's | Morning Prayer for Holy Saturday |
| | 20.00 | St Helen's | Lighting of the New Fire, Vigil and Renewal of Baptismal Vows |
| | 20.00 | St Michael's | Lighting of the New Fire, Vigil and Renewal of Baptismal Vows |
| Sunday 21st April – Easter Day – Christ is risen, Alleluia! | 08.00 | St Helen's | Holy Communion (1662) with hymns |
| | 09.30 | St Michael's | Sung Mass of the Resurrection |
| | 10.30 | St Helen's | Festival Eucharist of the Resurrection |
| | 11.15 | St Nicolas' | Holy Communion & Blessing of the Paschal Candle |

What's on in the Parish

Devotional

Tuesday 2 April
Mothers' Union
 Wave of Prayer
 10.30 - Parish Centre at St Helen's

Thursday 4 April
Moving into Stillness
Circle dancing to music from Taizé
 9.45 – 10.45 - St Michael and All Angels

Saturday 6 April
Abingdon Passion Play
 The Easter story retold for today in words and music by actors, singers and musicians, some professional, from the local churches.
 14.00 Abbey Grounds
 Part of the 'Big Easter Experience' which starts at 12.30 and includes activities, games, spring crafts and food.

Sunday 7 April
Faith Forum
 +TRADITIO+
 Personal testimonies of faith seeking understanding
Margaret Hoskins on John Hull
 9.15 – 10.00 Parish Hall at St Helen's
 Breakfast from 9.00 am

Friday 19 April
J.S. Bach: St John Passion
 19.00 St Helen's
 For more details see page 2.

Tuesday 30 April
Silent Reflections
 19.30 - St Michael and All Angels'
 Prayerful activities in the sanctuary with option of coming together to share your journey at the end of the session.

Social

Thursday 4, 11, 25 April
Circle Dancing
 11.00-12.00- St Michael's and All Angels
 Traditional folk dancing and modern steps in a circle to a variety of music. No prior experience or partner needed. Contact Mary 520608

Friday 5, 12, 26 April
Friday Morning Sale
 11.00-13.00 St Nicolas' Church Yard
 Produce, baked goods, plants and handicrafts

Wednesday 24 April
Lunch Club
 12.30 St Michael's Church Room
 Booking essential £5.50
 Contact Jane Duce 522591 to book

Thursday 25 April
St Helen's@lunch
 12.00 The Bay Tree, Denchworth Rd, Grove OX12 0AN
 No need to book, just turn up. Contact Susan Scott 522960 if you need or can offer a lift.

Annual Parish Church Meeting:

An opportunity for the whole Parish
 to reflect on the past year and
 consider the next.

Thursday 4 April
 7.45pm St Helen's

If you would like anything included in this Diary, please contact the editors through the email on the front page.

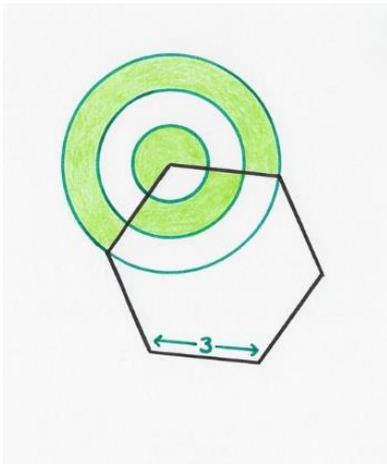
Puzzle Page

With thanks (and copyright) to Catriona Shearer:

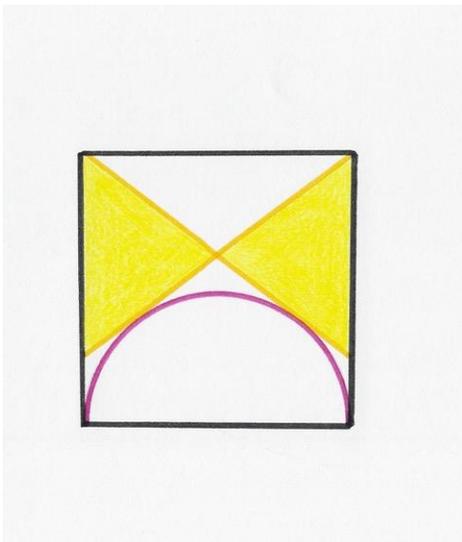
Catriona says try these!

easy: harder: hardest

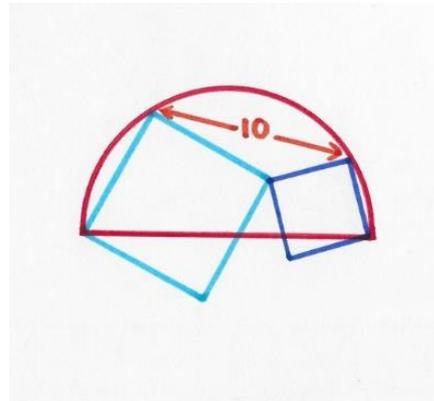
1. The regular hexagon has a side length of 3 and the rings are equally spaced. What is the total shaded area?



2. The yellow lines are tangents to the semicircle, What fraction of the square is shaded?



3. Find the area of the semicircle. The other shapes are squares.



See Catriona's twitter feed for solutions if you can't wait for next month!
@Cshearer41

Answers to the March Crossword by Eccles:

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| H | A | B | I | T | A | T | | T | W | I | S | T | E | R | |
| A | O | E | A | I | R | R | E | O | | | | | | | |
| T | R | A | I | N | E | R | | A | M | O | U | N | T | S | |
| C | | | T | N | | | | I | N | | | | | E | |
| H | O | M | E | | V | I | L | L | A | | S | P | I | T | |
| E | A | F | S | | | | | E | I | I | T | | | | |
| T | H | R | O | U | G | H | | R | E | G | A | T | T | A | |
| | | | | | | | | I | D | | | L | F | | |
| M | A | N | A | G | E | D | | | P | R | O | S | A | I | C |
| A | E | E | | | | | | | I | R | O | L | O | | |
| N | O | S | E | | C | A | B | I | N | | F | L | A | T | |
| S | | | | | M | | L | | N | E | | | | | T |
| I | N | I | T | I | A | L | | | T | A | P | I | O | C | A |
| O | C | | | | L | E | V | E | | I | V | G | | | |
| N | E | E | D | L | E | D | | | D | E | C | L | A | R | E |

Services in April 2019

Divine Service at St Helen's Church, West St Helen's St

For Holy Week services, see page 3. This table gives the normal pattern.

| | | |
|---------------------|-------|---|
| Holy Communion 1662 | 08.00 | Sundays in April (May at St Nicolas') |
| Morning Praise | 09.15 | Second Sunday with the opportunity to give thanks for new babies. |
| Sung Eucharist | 10.30 | Every Sunday with Junior Church |
| Morning Prayer | 09.10 | Monday to Friday (except Bank Holidays) |
| Evening Prayer | 17.10 | Monday to Friday (except Bank Holidays) |
| Junior Church | 10.30 | Sunday – starts in Church |
| Wednesday Church | 10.30 | Every Wednesday. Holy Communion in the Parish Centre Hall followed by refreshments. |

Sunday Evening Services 17.30 at St Helen's Church

| | |
|----------|----------------------------------|
| 7 April | Vespers |
| 14 April | Taizé |
| 21 April | No evening service |
| 28 April | Service of Wholeness and Healing |

For Holy Week evenings, see page 3

Divine Service at St Michael and All Angels', Park Road

For Holy Week services, see page 3. This table gives the normal pattern.

| | | |
|--------------------|-------|--|
| Family Mass | 09.30 | First Sunday of the month, with Thanksgiving and Welcome |
| Sung Mass | 09.30 | Every Sunday |
| Thursday Mass | 12.30 | Every Thursday followed by a light lunch |
| Tues Said Mass | 19.30 | Stations of the cross during Lent |
| Silent Reflections | 19.30 | The final Tuesday evening of the month |

Divine Service at St Nicolas' Church, Market Place

For Holy Week services, see page 3. This table gives the normal pattern.

| | | |
|----------------------|-------|--|
| Morning Prayer | 11.15 | (Matins) 1 st Sunday in the month |
| Holy Communion | 11.15 | 2 nd and 4 th Sundays with Junior Church |
| Third Sunday Service | 11.15 | A short, less formal Service on 3 rd Sundays |
| Family Communion | 11.15 | 5 th Sundays in the month |
| Junior Church | 11.15 | 2 nd and 4 th Sundays |

The services and events listed here are correct at the time of going to press – please consult the weekly Pewsheets or Newsletter if in doubt, or see the online version of The Window on the websites below.

To arrange baptisms, weddings and funerals contact the Parish Office.
Clergy are available in the Parish Office between 19.00 - 20.00 on Wednesdays.
Please call the office to book an appointment.

Team Rector: The Revd Dr Charles Miller

Team Vicar: The Revd Paul Smith

Associate Priests: The Revd Mary Williamson
The Revd Jennifer Brown

Directors of Music: Dr Peter Foster (St H), Glynne Butt, Graham Howell (St M)

Parish Administrator: Mrs Jenny Balshaw

Parish Office: St Helen's Court, Abingdon, OX14 5BS
01235 520144

Normal opening hours 10.00 to 13.00 weekdays, except Thursdays – closed

E-mail: administrator@sthelens-abingdon.org.uk

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