



**Shirley
Parish**

Christ the King
St James the Great
St John the Divine

February
2024

Magazine

Now these three continue . . .



Of these, the greatest is . . . 1 Cor 13:13

SHIRLEY PARISH GUIDE (see also inside the back cover)

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ST JOHN THE DIVINE CHURCH, Tilehouse Lane, Tidbury Green, Shirley B90 1PW

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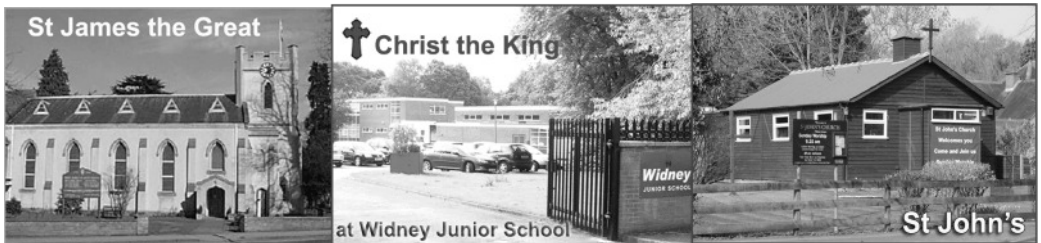
Deadline for information and articles for next month's magazine: 12th of the month

Whilst every care is taken to ensure that the contents of the magazine are correct, the Parish cannot be responsible for any errors that may occur in the editorial or advertisements, nor for the actions of the advertisers.

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OUR SERVICES IN FEBRUARY

Date	Time	Service	Venue
Thursday 1st	10.30am	Holy Communion	St James Church
Sunday 4th	10.30am	Parish Communion	St James Church
	3.30pm	Reflective Worship	St James Church
Thursday 8th	10.30am	Holy Communion	St James Church
Sunday 11th	8am	Holy Communion	St James Church
	9am	Holy Communion	St John's Church
	10.30am	Morning Worship	St James Church
	10.30am	Holy Communion	Christ the King Church
Wednesday 14th	7.30pm	Holy Communion with Imposition of Ashes	St James Church
Thursday 15th	10.30am	Holy Communion	St James Church
Saturday 17th	10am	Messy Church	St James Church
Sunday 18th	9am	Morning Worship	St John's Church
	10.30am	Holy Communion	St James Church
	10.30am	Morning Worship	Christ the King Church
Thursday 22nd	10.30am	Holy Communion	St James Church
Sunday 25th	8am	Holy Communion	St James Church
	9am	Holy Communion	St John's Church
	10.30am	Worship 4 Everyone	St James Church
	10.30am	Holy Communion	Christ the King Church
Thursday 29th	10.30am	Holy Communion	St James Church



*Copies of the sermons can be found on our website -
<https://www.shirleyparishb90.co.uk/download-a-sermon>*

**PLEASE CHECK FOR ANY CHANGES ON THE WEEKLY NOTICE SHEET, SOCIAL MEDIA
 OR ON OUR WEBSITE <https://www.shirleyparishb90.co.uk>**

FEBRUARY 'DATES'

I have always found February to be a month of transition. Traditionally we move from the Christmas blues (for some at least), from the colder weather and dark mornings and evenings of January, to March and the approach to Easter, to spring and to a lighter and warmer feel. Even with Climate change making weather patterns less traditional and more unpredictable, February still acts as a sort of pivot between winter and spring, Christmas and Easter – especially for those who keep their Christmas Trees up until Candlemas which falls on the 2nd February.

The Church's season of Lent bridges Christmas (and Epiphany) and Easter and begins on Ash Wednesday, which this year, falls on 14th February, which is also St Valentine's Day, for those who follow such things. At first there might seem to be an interesting paradox here: on the same day that love is joyfully celebrated, albeit in highly commercialised and sometimes showy ways in much of society; in the Church we somberly gather to begin a time of self-examination, reflecting on our sins and own mortality. For Valentine's Day we might send cards containing cryptic romantic messages expressing our affection for one another; in Church our foreheads are marked with ash as the words "You are but dust and to dust you shall return; turn away from your sin and be faithful to Christ" are said. An interesting comparison!

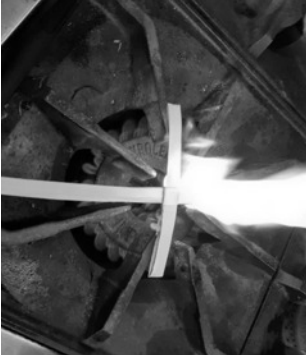
However, I think when we look a little deeper into the heart of both traditions, their respective roots are not so different. Love is at the heart of both Ash Wednesday and St Valentine's Day.

St Valentine

Not much is known about the original St Valentine except that there may have been two (or even three of them) that have, over time become remembered as one person, and who had nothing to do with romance. We know of Valentine of Tenri – a bishop of the early Church, and Valentine of Rome, a priest, both of whom were martyred in the Third Century. Both are remembered for the difficulties and dangers of living as a Christian, especially a Church leader, under persecution. There is however one legend that goes that one of the Valentines, imprisoned and reflecting earnestly no doubt about his mortality, wrote a farewell letter to his jailer's daughter, with whom he had become close. His signed it off "from your Valentine".

Ash Wednesday

The ash which we use to mark our foreheads with the sign of the cross is usually made by burning the palm crosses that had been blessed, and given out, on the previous year's Palm Sunday and adding some holy oil. The first time I did this was back in 2019 and had to resort to using the gas cooker in the vicarage to burn the palm crosses as time was getting on, and the other devices I had were proving unsuitable. Please, do not try this at home! There was always a fire blanket close by!



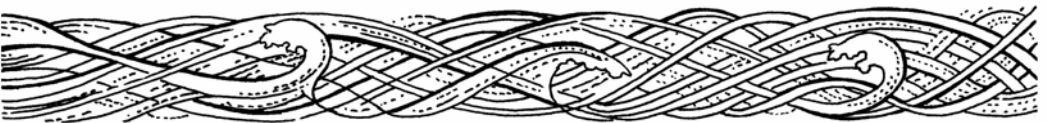
The vicarage, and my clothes, smelt of ash for a long time.

Love

So perhaps Ash Wednesday and St Valentine's Day (even in its modern expression) are not so different. What connects them, and lies at the heart of them, is love. Love gave the St Valentines determination and strength to live, and die, for Jesus and his church; God's love for us is contemplated through Lent as we examine ourselves and how we can respond to that love; and, of course, God's love was expressed ultimately on the cross, symbolised by those palm crosses and by the cross which will be marked on our foreheads.

So, whatever we choose to do in February, and in particular how we choose to mark the 14th, (and there will be a service in St James Church) we can be assured that the love of God will be present in a deep rooted and important way.

Reverend Richard Haynes



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A Quiet Day before Lent

An opportunity to come away to a quiet place and prepare ourselves for Lent.

Everyone is very welcome. No previous experience is necessary. No expectations of you. No cost. Just bring yourselves, a packed lunch, a notebook & pen. Refreshments provided.

I will introduce the sessions using Biblical Storytelling, Reflective Scripture reading, Art, Music & Poetry to aid our individual quiet times between the sessions, when we can just be - sit, pray, walk, write, read or use your own creative materials you have brought with you. St James Church will be available to use also.

We will talk over lunch but other times enable each other to enjoy the gift of silence and being present to God. We will conclude our day together by sharing the Eucharist.

Please book through the Parish Office and also let Belinda know if you can offer a lift or need a lift.

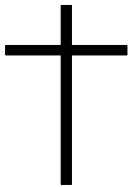
Any queries please don't hesitate to contact me.

I look forward to sharing this day with you.



Reverend Wendy Martin - 07543 829571 - wendy164@btinternet.com

Saturday 10th February - 10.30am until 3.30pm - in Church House



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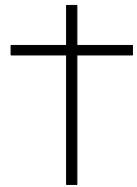
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Ash Wednesday marks the beginning of Lent which has always been seen as a period of preparation for Easter. The introductory words for the Ash Wednesday service – which this year will take place at 7.30pm on 14th February at St James Church – are these:

Brothers and sisters in Christ, since early days Christians have observed with great devotion the time of our Lord's passion and resurrection and prepared for this by a season of penitence and fasting.

By carefully keeping these days, Christians take to heart the call to repentance and the assurance of forgiveness proclaimed in the gospel, and so grow in faith and in devotion to our Lord.

I invite you, therefore, in the name of the Church, to the observance of a holy Lent, by self-examination and repentance; by prayer, fasting, and self-denial; and by reading and meditating on God's holy word.

To help us in this preparation and reflection this year we will be running a couple of Lent Conversation Groups to which everyone is invited. These will run on Wednesday evenings and Thursday afternoons in the five weeks of Lent. The Wednesday dates are February 21st, 28th and March 6th, 13th and 20th. The Thursday sessions will be on February 22nd, 29th and March 7th, 14th and 21st.

There will be more detail on content and timings at the beginning of February, but please do have a think about joining us!

Reverend Paul Day



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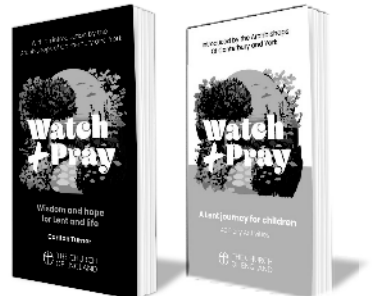
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LOOKING AFTER THOSE LESS FORTUNATE THAN OURSELVES

I used to think that it's the astonishing frequency of Bin Collection Day which alarmed me about the passing of time. Added to that it's now the speed at which the 12th of each month comes and some sort of article is required for the Parish Magazine. I sit at the computer (which has a mind of its own about whether it will even switch on!) waiting for inspiration - please, something new, something even the slightest bit interesting.

This month there might be something which will interest you. You will all be aware (if not I have wasted many, many years writing about it!) that "our" Food Bank hands out parcels of food according to prescribed lists, depending on how many folks are in the family, which can range from a single person to ten even twelve members, officially sufficient for three days. (Years ago we could err on the generous side but nowadays supplies force us to keep to the absolute minimum.)

However, from February we are going to try a new parallel scheme called 'The Pantry'. Folks will make a small payment each week and then they can choose items from boxes of various foods. The aim is that rather than being a handout as at present, there will be the gradual change to choosing and paying for food specific to their tastes/needs. The food for this Pantry will be sourced differently - not using our donations which we give via the supermarkets, and which will still be desperately needed. It will be held on a different day, with different volunteers. The one at St John's Church, Sparkhill will be run by The Springfield Trust which has experience of running Pantries in Birmingham already. We hope to start in the next month or so - watch this space.

FOOD BANK: the current needs are for UHT semi skimmed milk, meat soup and coffee.

NARTHEX: we are still on the hunt for warm jumpers for men, all sizes! Many thanks for men's gloves and hats.

GrowBaby: why are we donated so many more girls clothes than boys??? - warm jumpers and trousers for boys aged 3,4,5 please.

Your donations of mugs, plates and bowls were very generous, and are greatly appreciated by their new owners (even if the best they can sometimes manage is a glorified grunt!).

Best wishes for 2024, let it be much more peaceful,

Elizabeth Paice



PARISH BOOK CLUB'S BEST READS OF 2023

Despite every readers' need for a comfort read, it often proves impossible to enter the world of a book without having to think about our own individual reluctance to offer support to those who are most in need of it. This is particularly the case with quite a few of our 2023 choices. On the list there is forced migration, grief, knife crime, domestic trauma and the way the past haunts us. We don't set out to confront contemporary issues. They seem to track us down.

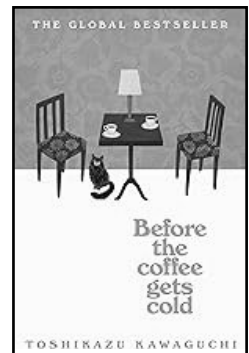
Every Book Club member gave each book a mark out of ten. The scores given here are an average of individual judgements and the books are listed from the most to the least popular - although it must be said that pretty well every book was a favourite for someone.

1	'American Dirt'	Jeanine Cummins	9.7
2	'Poetry and Pieces'	A collection of writings from our three congregations to raise funds for the Pod Project	9.6
3	'A Terrible Kindness'	Jo Browning Wroe	8.4
4	'Shakespeare's Mistress'	Karen Harper	8.0
5	'Longbourn'	Jo Baker	7.4
6	'Isaac and the Egg'	Bobby Palmer	7.3
7	'Pigeon English'	Stephen Kelman	6.5
8	'Neverwhere'	Neil Gaiman	6.1
9	'The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time'	Mark Haddon	5.7
10	'All the Pretty Horses'	Cormac McCarthy	4.2
11	'Making History'	Stephen Fry	2.5

Our current read is 'Before the Coffee Gets Cold' by Toshikazu Kawaguchi. A gripping read which reminds me of a Dylan Thomas poem about time tracking you down - a phrase also used in the most recent Cormoran Strike novel.

Happy reading in 2024.

Ray Speakman



LILLY'S GIFT TO THE CHRISTMAS APPEAL

I really enjoy being able to contribute to the church's Christmas toy appeal, last year was my first time, thanks to my friend Margaret who told me about it.

One of the presents I bought this year was a stroller for a little girl and when my granddaughter Sarah and my great granddaughter Lilly called in to see me I showed it to them. I told them about the children who would benefit from the collection and that I intended to buy a doll to go in the stroller.

"Don't do that nan", Lilly said, "I have a special doll, but I don't play with her now as I am too old for her. I would like the little girl to have her to put in her pushchair and I hope she enjoys playing with her".

When the doll arrived Sarah had also popped in a child's hat to go with it. Margaret took it when she collected the toys, so I hope that comes in handy for someone.

No one asked Lilly to volunteer her doll, she just did it and I think she showed the true spirit of Christmas. I am very proud of her.

I cannot stop writing before I tell everyone about the Bluebird Care Company. They are my carers and when I told Serena who works for them about the Christmas Tree appeal she immediately got to work. The result is a big table packed with toys, games, chocolate and books to donate to the appeal. The staff have done the appeal proud and some of the patients have joined in too. The Reverend Richard Haynes and I were invited to the office to see the collection and we were made most welcome.

I hope everyone who reads this enjoyed their festive season and I wish you all a happy and peaceful New Year.

Mary Hayes



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CHRISTMAS AT OUR WELCOME CAFE

The Welcome Cafe at Christmas was a joyous time with candy cane and gingerbread men tablecloths, not to mention the assortment of aprons worn by the volunteers. We had a lot of lovely cakes thanks to our regular cake makers. We would also like to thank Jane and Gill for opening up and running the café for us when we went away to Newquay for a short break - it was very much appreciated.

We want to thank you all and we hope that you will continue to support us and bring along your friends and neighbours as everyone is welcome.

Dee and Sarah



OUR 2023 CHRISTMAS TREE FESTIVAL



A big 'thank you' to all those who supported our Christmas Tree Festival and the Saturday morning activities in Church House.

The winner of the 'Vote for your favourite tree' competition was Tudor Grange Primary Academy St James. Their tree was wrapped in a peace chain - messages of peace had been written on each link by pupils and staff.



A total of £578.87 was raised, which was divided between the Pod Project and the Mothers' Union 'Away from it all' charity.

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WALKING CLUB - dates for your diary



11th February

9th June

13th October

17th March

14th July

17th November

14th April

11th August

8th December

12th May

8th September

Please contact 'the Friends' or the Parish Office for more information

CELEBRATING THE NOW AND FUTURE CREATION

I find that watching buds swelling on trees and plants during the winter months gives me a tremendous sense of hope. After creation's winter shutdown, the sight of tiny flowers poking out of brown earth may be more important than ever.

Getting outdoors during daylight hours, enjoying green spaces and getting some fresh air and exercise are great ways to keep ourselves healthy at any time of year. A psychologist colleague wrote, "Attending to the details of nature can also inspire awe, which has been linked to positive mood and increased life satisfaction." I expect it is this sense of awe that makes it easier for many of us to connect with God outdoors.

Helping ourselves and others to thrive is a good start to 2024, but it is also vital to have hope for the future. In the face of climate change, we urgently need to care for all of Creation, both human and everything else, with God's help.

So, one source of hope for 2024 is that we can enjoy both caring for and meeting God in Creation. But the parts of Creation that we find most beautiful, giving us a sense of awe and helping us to worship, are also a reminder that there is something much better to come.

Ruth Bancewicz, Church Engagement Director, The Faraday Institute for Science and Religion, Cambridge

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THIS MONTH'S CROSSWORD

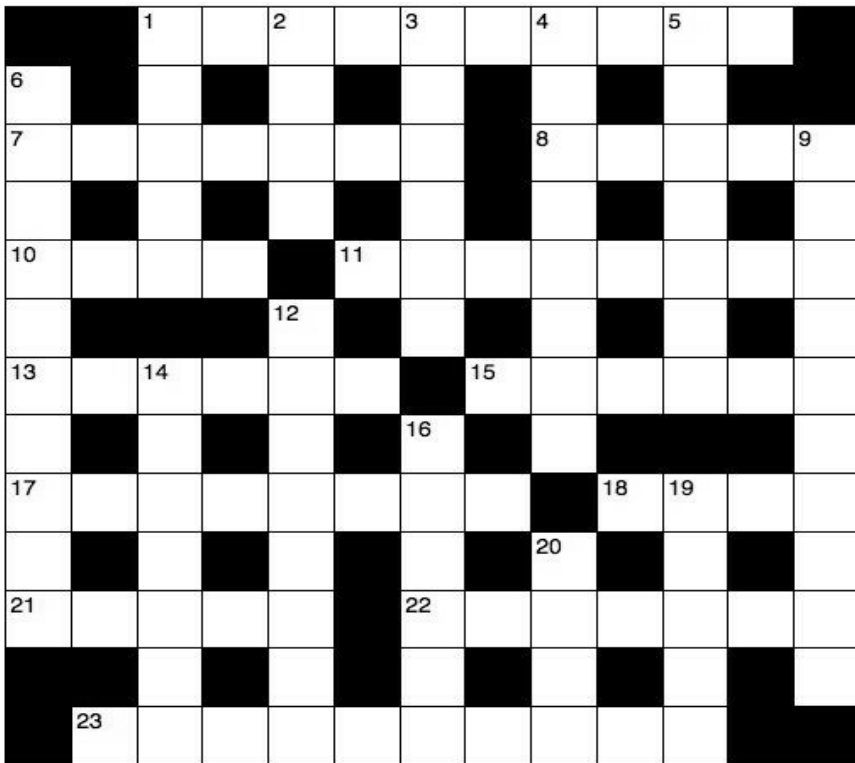
Across

- 1** Success or wealth (Deuteronomy 28:11) (10)
- 7** Forbidden fruit for Nazirites (Numbers 6:3) (7)
- 8** Concede (Job 27:5) (5)
- 10** Look at (Psalm 48:13) (4)
- 11** Much in evidence after weddings (8)
- 13** Condense (Job 36:27) (6)
- 15** Breakwater (6)
- 17** Give a tan (anag.) (8)
- 18** More usually now called Pentecost, — Sunday (4)
- 21** After living for 365 years, it was said of him that 'he walked with God'
(Genesis 5:23–24) (5)
- 22** Trampled (Judges 9:27) (7)
- 23** For example, Miriam, Deborah (Exodus 15:20; Judges 4:4) (10)

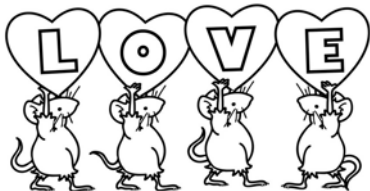
Down

- 1** Arrogance (Proverbs 8:13) (5)
- 2** Roman poet from first century BC (4)
- 3** So rapt (anag.) (6)
- 4** Declare again (2 Corinthians 2:8) (8)
- 5** Paul's 'fellow worker', to whom he sent two epistles (Romans 16:21) (7)
- 6** God's foreseeing care and protection (Job 10:12) (10)
- 9** Traditional form of Roman Catholic Mass (10)
- 12** 'The Lord... has given the — of Israel to David and his descendants for ever'
(2 Chronicles 13:5) (8)
- 14** 'My soul glorifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my — '
(Luke 1:46–47) (7)
- 16** The central element in Nebuchadnezzar's dream, identified and interpreted
by Daniel (Daniel 2:31) (6)
- 19** 'On this rock I will build my church, and the gates of — will not overcome it'
(Matthew 16:18) (5)
- 20** City where Paul was under house arrest for two years (Acts 28:16) (4)

THIS MONTH'S CROSSWORD & SUDOKU



Answers are on page 23



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- ✓ Back or pelvic pain in pregnancy
- ✓ Pelvic organ prolapse
- ✓ Chronic pelvic pain

I am also a fully certified matwork Pilates instructor and teach classes at The Shirley Institute. For more details or any questions please do get in touch by email: mgphysioandpilates@gmail.com

Or phone: **07753885320**



FEBRUARY WORDSEARCH

February is the month of romance. Millions of Valentine cards will be sent in the next week or two, as we celebrate our romantic love for that special person in our lives. But there are other kinds of love to celebrate: and on Candlemas we remember Mary and Joseph taking their baby son to the temple to present Him to God. Jesus' whole life was a loving present to us from God. Through His death for us on the cross, and His resurrection, His love can now transform anyone's life. Romances can die, but God's love for us is always there. But it won't do us much good – unless we accept it!

ANGELS

BABY

BOYFRIEND

CANDLEMAS

FIANCÉ

GIRLFRIEND

HEARTS

HUG

KISS

LOVE

MARY

PRESENT

PRESENTATION

REPENTANCE

RESTAURANT

ROMANCE

ROSE

TEMPLE

VALENTINE

WORSHIP

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



Answers are on page 23

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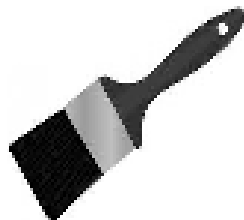


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PUZZLE ANSWERS

1	6	3	5	8	4	7	2	9
8	7	5	2	9	3	6	4	1
9	4	2	6	1	7	5	8	3
5	1	6	9	3	2	8	7	4
2	3	4	8	7	6	1	9	5
7	8	9	1	4	5	2	3	6
6	5	7	3	2	9	4	1	8
3	2	8	4	5	1	9	6	7
4	9	1	7	6	8	3	5	2

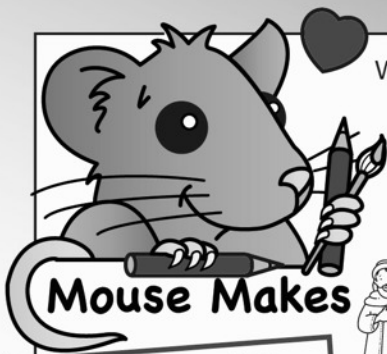


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Mouse Makes

Who were the first couple?
 _____ and _____

Genesis 2:22-25

Who's wife became a pillar of salt because she disobeyed the angel's warning?

Genesis 19:26



Which of Laban's daughters did Jacob love?

Genesis 29:18

Who was Moses' wife?

Exodus 2:21

Who married Boaz to become King David's great-grandmother and a distant relative of Jesus?

Matthew 1:5



FIND THE BIBLE VERSE

Change each letter in this bible verse to the letter **before** it in the alphabet.

XIBU HPE IBT
 KPJOFE UPHFUIFS,
 MFU OPU NBO
 TFQBSBUF.

NBSL
 UFO WFSTF
 OJOF

DID YOU KNOW?

King Solomon had **700** wives! They were princesses of royal birth and he loved them all, but his wives caused him to turn away from God
 See 1 Kings 11:1-3

CONNECT THE BIBLE COUPLES

- | | |
|-----------|-----------|
| ADAM | ELIZABETH |
| ABRAHAM | MARY |
| ISAAC | HANNAH |
| JACOB | PRISCILLA |
| BOAZ | EVE |
| ZECHARIAH | RUTH |
| ELKANAH | REBEKAH |
| AQUILA | RACHEL |
| JOSEPH | SARAH |

Which couple helped the Apostle Paul in his ministry?

and _____ Romans 16:3

E E Z R E E L I Z A B E T H R
 S V Q S L R Z J I B O A D A M
 R E B E K A H O J R A O Q N O
 U I S A A C A S A A Z P R N S
 T H A Q N H Z E C H A R I A H
 H R U T A E V P O A I E B H I
 S A R A H L T H B M A R Y S D
 P R I S C I L L A Q U I L A

- ABRAHAM
- ADAM • AQUILA
- BOAZ • ELKANAH
- ELIZABETH
- EVE • HANNAH
- ISAAC • JACOB
- JOSEPH • MARY
- PRISCILLA
- RACHEL
- REBEKAH • RUTH
- SARAH
- ZECHARIAH

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Give to us your people, living God,
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that we may proclaim
the Good News of your Son
with faith that your kingdom will come,
with hope for our community
and with love for Him
who died and rose again
to save us, Jesus Christ our Risen Lord
Amen

God of Mission, who alone brings growth to your Church,
send your Holy Spirit to give vision to our planning,
wisdom to our actions, and power to our witness.
Help our church to grow in numbers, in spiritual commitment to you,
and in service to our local community.
Through Jesus Christ, our Lord.
Amen

SHIRLEY PARISH GUIDE *continued*

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email: gill.hanton@btinternet.com

Deputy Wardens - St James the Great Church

Kate Crocker John Richards
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Deputy Warden - Christ the King Church

Denise Smith
Tel: 07815 193892

Deputy Warden - St John the Divine Church

Linda Alford
Tel: 0121 430 4785

SAFEGUARDING

Sue Harries
Tel: 07977 012753 or 0121 745 8896 (c/o Parish Office)

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***If anything is concerning you, please talk to Sue Harries, Safeguarding Co-ordinator,
or Paul Day, Vicar.***

We must all look after one another.



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