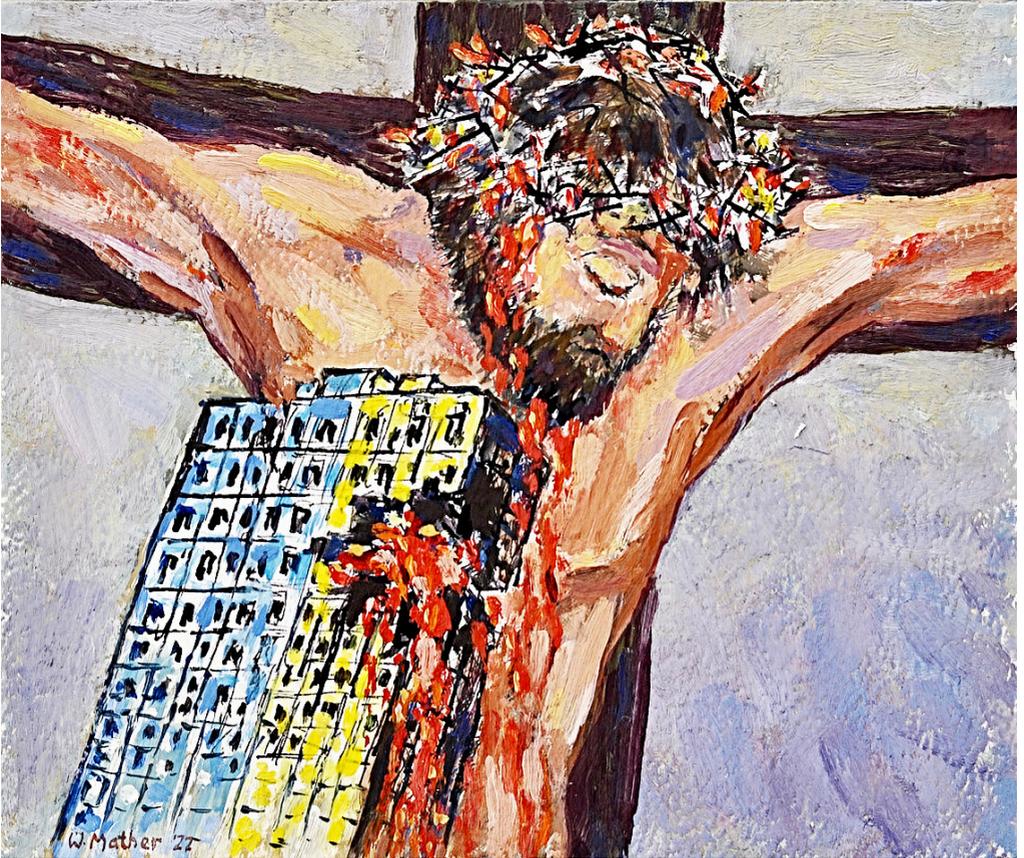


+ STOMP

SPRING 2022 MAGAZINE

ISSUE 54



THE PARISH OF ST MARY & ST PAUL
HEMEL HEMPSTEAD

STOMP MAGAZINE ISSUE 54
SPRING 2022

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Cover image: The Revd William Mather is a retired vicar and still a very active artist! He was moved to create this painting and wrote these words to accompany it.

The Pain of Ukraine

By William Mather

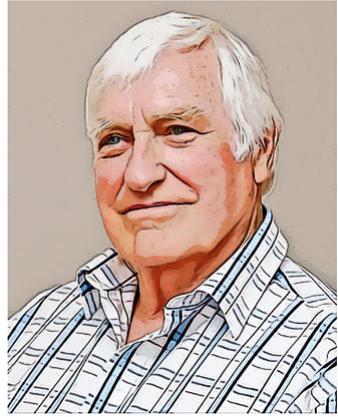
Ideas for paintings come in all sorts of ways. The awfulness of the Soviet aggression in Ukraine has been in all our thoughts and prayers. For me, it was that early image of the block of flats hit by a missile causing death, destruction and a gaping hole.

With it came a reminder of Jesus on the cross and a gaping hole in His side from the soldier's spear. The two came together in my mind and so a painting idea was born.

The Christian teaching is that Jesus died on the cross for our sin. None of us is blameless, not least the soldier with the spear or the Russians with the missile. But the poignant promise through the pain - even the pain of Ukraine - is that the message of the cross is more powerful than any tyrant.

Through it comes peace in the heart that lasts for ever.

FROM THE EDITOR



A Telling Sequence

My editorial in the previous edition of SToMP Magazine was headed, ‘The Universality of Goodness’ and the Issue’s cover showed St Michael’s Cathedral in Kyiv. Let us go back eighty years and in sequence move our minds forward to now, the same region, the same power struggle, the same wickedness.

The last paragraph in the Economist article on President Zelensky and the Ukraine, referenced below, ended: ‘Human history is not the battle of good struggling to overcome evil; it is a battle fought by a great evil struggling to crush a small kernel of human kindness. But if what is human in human beings has not been destroyed even now, then evil will never conquer’. This is a quotation from ‘Life and Fate’ written by Vasily Grossman following his experience as a Soviet war correspondent at the sieges of Moscow, Stalingrad, Kursk and Berlin and at the Nuremberg Trials. He was a Ukrainian of a Jewish background. His apartment raided by the KGB in 1960, his manuscript and all source materials taken, he was told that his book could not be published for 2 centuries as it would destroy the Soviet Union.

However, he had secreted copies separately with two friends and the book was eventually published in Switzerland in 1980.

What he saw and what he wrote resonate again today as do the final sentences on page 871 of his book. Life goes on in a cool forest, ‘in its silence you could hear both the lament of the dead and the furious joy of life itself. It is cold and dark but soon the shutters would be flung open. Soon the house would be full of the tears and laughter of children, with the hurried footsteps of a loved woman and the measured gait of the man of the house, as they stood there holding their bags in silence’.

Grossman’s mind tempered in the midst of evil and despair, still a note of optimism and hope for humanity with the renewal of life and the survival of goodness.

Reference: Economist 2 April 2022, ‘Confidence from the bunker, last para page 17.

This month we have postponed the final part of Canon John's series on Walsingham to reproduce the Clergy Charge to the 2022 Annual Parochial Church Meeting, pertinent as it is to current proposed changes that are being explored for our Team Ministry and the wider church.

THE CLERGY CHARGE TO ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING, 8TH MAY 2022

At the APCM in April 2021 we were hoping that very soon we would see the end of the Covid pandemic but it was not to be and, even now, we don't quite know what lies ahead although the hope is that things are going in the right direction.

Covid

In the last few days the WHO have said that there have been about 15m excess deaths worldwide from Covid, that's about three times the total previously thought. All of us will know someone who has died and many of us will have lost family members so with all around the world let us keep a moment of silence to remember them.

Rest eternal grant unto them O Lord,
and let light perpetual shine upon them.



Review

2021 was year of taking stock and slowly restarting events and services. We were hopeful that by the end of the year things would be back to normal. With this in mind services returned mostly to normal however the emphasis on zoom meetings and zooming a service every Sunday was now firmly entrenched in our way of operating. Indeed, this made it a priority of the PCC to look at the installation of streaming and AV services at both churches and by the year end we had instructed DM Music to undertake the work required. This was in the realisation that although the pandemic would come to an end the things we had learnt about supporting people to worship from home could, and should not, be undone. Now there was an opportunity to advance our offering to people who were housebound, sick or on holiday as well as those self-isolating or suffering from Covid ▷.

One of the few benefits to emerge from the pandemic was the bringing forward of things that would have eventually happened, in technology especially things quickly advanced ahead of time.

Another positive outcome last year was that we balanced our books and produced a slight surplus. This was due to a recovery in hall bookings, especially at St Paul's, and the remarkable generosity of the members of our congregations, for which – thank you. We shouldn't rest on these laurels however as challenging times are ahead of us for the economy and personal finances.

In November we finally launched our new children's offering at both churches. With Covid hitting older and more vulnerable people there was a reluctance from some to engage with the youngsters and so we waited until November for a very successful launch of the new format which sought to combine the advantages of a café church service with messy church. Sadly, soon after that the Omicron variant arrived and in December we had a poor turnout and so once again suspended the services pending an improvement in the Covid situation.

Churchwardens & Deputies

I am grateful to our Churchwardens who have served during the past year. Gordon and Rosina continue to look after St Paul's with a firm hand on the tiller and have navigated a sure path through Covid's rough waters. It is wonderful that the hall bookings there recovered so well and it is a great testament to their hard work, ably assisted by Malcolm – as deputy Warden - and the congregation, that the building is in such good condition and that – despite all the difficulties in the country and around the world - 2021 was such a solid year for St Paul's.

Emmeline continues to do sterling work supported by Rosamund at St Mary's and they have had great help from Andrew Darby and Norma Podmore as deputies. We are so sad that Andrew is moving away from his involvement in the parish and as our organist but we earnestly hope that we will continue to see him from time-to-time.

Thanks

Each of us – along with many who can't be with us in person today - contributes to the functioning of the parish and therefore helps Christ to be made known in this place. So thanks to you all also.

I now want to offer some specific words of thanks: ▷

The Treasury Team we thanked earlier when the accounts were approved but we owe them so much for keeping our finances straight.

PCC members Specifically, I want to thank those who served on the PCC during the last year (indeed the last number of years) especially Malcolm Taylor who is now standing down after the completion of his elected term. And to those who have been elected or re-elected for this year.

Final thanks

A big thanks to Jenny for acting as APCM Secretary and PCC Secretary, amongst a myriad of other things, she takes a huge burden of paperwork and stress off me, I'm most grateful.

Can I also personally acknowledge and thank my Team colleagues, Austin, Pete and Richard for their support along with the wonderful clergy of this parish: Luke, Diana and Richard who make the ministry here an even greater privilege and pleasure. Luke, Diana and Richard are much valued and wise colleagues helping out where they can and allowing me the opportunity to grab some holiday time as well. This year in the conducting of services they have been helped and supported by Team Colleagues, Revd Ian Ogilvie, the Churchwardens and Emmeline as our Lay Leader of Worship. Thanks to them all.

Most of all, Penny is my great support and anchor during the storms of life, I am so very lucky to have her love and support.

The Future

Finally, today I need to turn to the wider situation within our Team Ministry, the diocese and the Church of England.

In March I attended all four Team PCC's to discuss a paper from the diocese about the proposed reorganisation within the Hemel Team.

It stems from the fact that with the diocese running a deficit of about £400,000 last year urgent action is needed to make sure all parishes balance their books and contribute to the whole. In the last ten years the Parish of St Albans, Warners End and Gadebridge, has – for a number of complex reasons - only paid around 45% of their requested parish share contributions. The proposal from the diocese is that they move to join Boxmoor and lose their full time clergy. A possible alternative solution is that they remain in our Team but we have to cover their services with three – rather than the current four - full time clergy from the other three parishes.



Neither of these solutions is particularly palatable, especially for the congregation and Team Vicar at St Alban's church, and in the next few months we will all be invited to attend open meetings where we can explore other solutions and come to some consensus as to the way forward. I urge you to attend and engage with the debate. These discussions remind us that the future of the parochial system within the church as we know it today is precarious and we should fight to preserve it whilst encouraging the Bishop of St Albans, the House of Bishops' and General Synod to seek longer term changes to the way we operate .

Hemel Team Reorganisation - current position (June 2022)

Archdeacon Jane was grateful to all those who attended the Team open meeting on Saturday 28th May. She has asked that her email address, and that of Emma Critchley, be passed on to you in case of other questions or follow-up:

Archdeacon Jane: archd@stalbans.anglican.org,

Emma: ecritchley@stalbans.anglican.org

For those unable to be at the meeting, you may like to watch the zoom recording using the link and passcode below.

https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/play/GuLmpnmUeunKz2LeB79n5B12E30m6NsmQWNKvW_JNryZ3Azr6KyW_s4_Hh2dZ6Bsyopa46gHYwbjhgA.1JnDSHNP-P_CsWBw?autoplay=true&startTime=1653725794000

Passcode: n^1F0hD.

Exact code as above *including full stop* and no spaces before or after must be entered in the required box).

At the meeting, two consultation documents were circulated – pdf files of these are available through the parish web site:

<https://stmaryandstpaulhemel.org.uk/news/news-items/team-consultation.php>

(For the convenience of readers of the printed version of this magazine a clickable form of the meeting link above is also available on the web site) www.stmaryandstpaulhemel.org.uk

The Clergy charge continues below.

Today is the Feast Day of the saint most often quoted by my wife...Julian of Norwich. On this day in the year 1373, when Julian of Norwich was thirty years old and suffering from what was considered to be a terminal illness, she experienced a series of sixteen visions, which revealed aspects of the love of God. Following her recovery, she spent the next twenty years of her life pondering their meaning and recorded her conclusions in what became the first book written by a woman in English, "The Revelations of Divine Love". At an unknown point in her life, she became an anchoress attached to the Church of St Julian in Norwich. She died around the year 1417.

Julian has become something of a patron saint for this Covid pandemic probably because of her famous saying:

"In the end all shall be well, and all shall be well and all manner of thing shall be well."

This declaration that "all manner of thing shall be well" does not eliminate misfortune, sickness or death. It is pointing to what all the wise, respected spiritual leaders say about the ability to find peace, and even joy, in the eye of the storm — to come to trust that there is something that transcends chaos and impermanence and that is the love of the risen Christ.

Conclusion

Let us pray:

Most holy God, the ground of our beseeching,
who through your servant Julian
revealed the wonders of your love:
grant that as we are created in your nature
and restored by your grace,
our wills may be made one with yours,
that we may come to see you face to face
and gaze on you for ever;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever. Amen.

After a period of silence, the APCM concluded with the words of the Grace.

*The Revd Canon John Williams,
Team Rector in the Hemel Hempstead Team Ministry, 4th Sunday of Easter 8/05/22*

ST PAUL'S SUPPORT FOR CHRISTIAN AID IN NICARAGUA



The St Paul's initiative to support Christian Aid's Nicaragua initiative now has entered its 24th year. Loose change was collected and counted every two months for many years but latterly we have reduced this to a mid and end of year collection and count up.

We have had our highs and lows, the range being from the highest at £847 in 2010 and the lowest being at £236 in the first COVID year, with the median being £569.

There was a slight upturn to £272 in 2021. The idea at the start was for us to help Christian Aid water project in one of the world's poorest countries. This project which became more ambitious and successful as Christian Aid worked to improve economies from a subsistence to a market based approach, which significantly improved living standards for some people.

We have fewer donors these days and would be happy to welcome any new contributor.

Gordon Gaddes

VISITORS FROM UKRAINE

I can't be the only one in our parish who thought long and hard about the feasibility of offering temporary refuge to a Ukrainian family. In many ways the accommodation I could offer was ideal with the top floor of my house which is only used occasionally when my daughter and family come to stay. I had already begun to plan the little changes I could make to make the place even more suitable such as turning the landing into a mini kitchen.

But my family was concerned about how well I would cope over a period of six months and they could have been right. So, I decided to do what I could to help one of my neighbours who had offered accommodation to a Ukrainian mother and her twelve-year-old son. My neighbour's job takes her away from home frequently so there was ample scope there, particularly as her 'guests' are a mother, with reasonable English, and her 12-year-old son who has very little.

Hertfordshire County Council is supposed to be finding Alex a place in a local school but nothing has happened as yet. So, this is where I come in. I have teaching qualifications and when we went to Switzerland in the 1970's I took another diploma in teaching English as a foreign language. After teaching English in a private school for a while I transferred to a well-known Swiss engineering firm which had made



English the company language after amalgamating with a Swedish firm. The men — and they were mainly male employees — were offered English lessons for free and in the firm's time so this opportunity was very popular.

But how does this help Alex? I have no teaching material suitable for young people, and obviously no knowledge of Alex's mother tongue so I have to use my ingenuity, and his mobile phone to try to get him started. Pictures from newspapers, magazines and photographs are the most helpful teaching aids but it is hard work. Like many boys of his age, he isn't the most enthusiastic pupil — a shrug of his shoulders is often the response I get to a question. Alex has decided not to continue with his lessons for the time being.

Ena Hartland

DESIGNER'S INTERVIEW

GORDON GADDES

This edition of SToMP magazine unusually does not contain an Editor's interview – this time Gordon has moved to the other side of the notebook and I have interviewed him.

During the two hours I spent with him it soon became apparent that he has packed his life with so many roles and has so many stories to tell that this article can only give readers a glimpse of a few aspects of his busy life. I have written about his unusual school career, with just an overview of his time at university, his varied careers in further education, business and local politics and also the charities and church work that we know him for and which he continues to pursue with an energy and enthusiasm his 86 years have seemingly failed to diminish.

Jeff Wallis

My first encounter with Gordon was around 1998 when I offered to help with the organising of the Millennium celebrations at St Mary's, four series of junior school visits throughout the year to explore the various crafts that had been employed in the construction of St Mary's. At the first meeting I attended at Gordon's house he explained that minibuses were to be used to carry the children to and from their schools and it was soon realised that this alone would be quite a complex operation with buses throughout the day collecting and delivering children to the church and taking them back to their schools afterwards.

"What we need is a Gantt chart", I said, (a chart that plots events against time and highlights at a glance any potential clash or hiatus). Gordon turned to me and with his special charming and disarming

smile said, "Oh, could you organise that for us?" This was my first experience of Gordon's seemingly effortless ability to persuade people to get involved in whatever project he is planning or working on at the time.

Gordon was born in Carlisle Hospital, the first son of Graham and Irene Gaddes, live-in chef and housemaid at Crofton Hall, a large country estate near Carlisle. When the estate was sold in 1937 the family moved to the Bata Shoe Company's Estate near Tilbury in East Essex with a new job for Dad as chef in their Community House restaurant, but Gordon was soon back in Cumbria, sent to live with his grandparents in the village of Aspatria to escape the bombing of WW2 and joining his first primary school in 1941, Aspatria Council School. ▷



This was the first of 12 schools he was to attend over the next 14 years including one in Stamford Le-Hope in 1945, run on the lines of a Dame school, just two classrooms with a single teacher flitting between them, leaving one class unattended. This establishment provided not only opportunities for all sorts of high jinks but also an excellent collection of books to occupy the unsupervised class. Gordon became completely absorbed by these books from which he acquired a love of reading that has stood him in good stead ever since. In 1946 Gordon's Dad, feeling unsettled in his job and now with a second son, Bob, rejoined the RAF for

a third period of service and was posted to RAF Farnborough where Gordon began his secondary school journey at Farnborough Grammar School. After less than a year, a change of RAF posting resulted in his next school change to Andover Grammar School and two years later a complete change of lifestyle for the whole family. Dad was posted to Hong Kong where the family were to join him.

Turning down the opportunity to stay in the UK and attend a boarding school Gordon chose Hong Kong. The journey took 30 days on the troopship SS Devonshire which was also carrying British soldiers to Hong Kong on their way to fight in Korea. On the trip Gordon, with his mother and younger brother experienced many new sights and sounds and exotic foods. New on-board activities and games added to the excitement and visits to several ports en route provided further new experiences.

The next 18 months were spent living in two places, including RAF Kai Tak with Gordon enrolling at the co-educational King George V School where he was particularly happy with the school and the sport he was able to play and enjoyed the colonial life despite the political uncertainty of the time.

This all came to an end when to Gordon's huge disappointment his father was posted to Singapore. ▷

The second overseas school for Gordon was Raffles Institution in Singapore, a very large boys-only school where Gordon was far less happy than he had been in Hong Kong. Here work started in earnest for the Overseas School Certificate and the disruptive effect of his frequent changes of syllabus caught up with him – Gordon only managed two credits, the equivalent of just two GCE O Levels.

Returning to the UK in 1952 Gordon was fortunate to be enrolled in Carr's Grammar School, Sleaford, Lincs from which he emerged after four years with first class A-Levels earning him a place at Selwyn College, Cambridge to read Geography, provisional upon him adding O Levels in Maths and Latin which he was able to achieve in his third year in the Sixth Form when he also served as Head Prefect, School Librarian, magazine editor and Captain of Cricket.

However the RAF intervened for one last time in his life by calling him up for two years National Service. After basic training he was posted to the Joint Services School for Languages for a crash course in Russian and then on to a role as a Russian translator ending up in cold war Berlin.

Following National Service Gordon took up his place at Selwyn College, achieving an MA Degree in Geography. Later, in 1966 as an external student of the London School of Economics he added an upper second BSc in Modern Economic History and then in 2005 another MA (Philosophy & Religion) with Merit from Heythrop College, University of London.

Gordon started his long career in 1960 in the field of Further Education; four years as Assistant Lecturer for Business Studies at Peterborough Technical College followed by five years at Dacorum



*Basic training with the RAF at Hednesford, Cannock Chase.
Gordon is in the back row, centre with the glasses*



BEAMA Mission to Japan - Tokyo reception with HRH Duke of Kent

College of Further Education, successively Lecturer for Business Studies, Head of Business Studies and Vice-Principal. It is worth adding that prior to this, over all the school and university vacations he helped make ends meet working as a dustman, road builder, farm labourer, a film extra, a radio salesman, postman and Shoot beater.

In 1969 there was a change of direction lasting thirteen years when he was appointed Head of Export Services at the British Standards Institute in Maylands in Hemel Hempstead and eventually promotion to its Board of Directors in 1974.

Then followed 15 years as Director General of BEAMA (British Electrical & Allied Manufacturers' Association), a national trade body concerned with promoting and coordinating the interests of manufacturers in the electrical and technological fields and for the final six years of his career he was Secretary General and then Honorary President of the European Organisation for

Conformity Assessment (EOTC) in Brussels.

As well as a distinguished career in business and further education Gordon has been involved with many official UK Government and European Union Commissions and Committees and as a consultant to international bodies such as UNIDO'.

He has also been very active in local politics; he was elected Councillor for Highfield Ward in 1968 and in 1972 was elected Leader of Hemel Hempstead Borough Council. He has been involved with numerous local charities and public bodies including: Chairman of Highfield Nursery and Play Association, Chairman of HELP, Secretary of the United Nations Association, Chairman of Friends of St Mary's, Chairman of St Mary's Millennium Committee, Chairman of St Albans Diocesan Millennium Working Party, Chairman of DENS Ltd, Vice Chairman and Governor of Adeyfield School.



Local Elections 1968 - Gordon wins Highfield Ward by 33 votes

One of the big influences in Gordon's life has been the Scouts, joining the 6th Farnborough Group aged 11 which brought him into a whole range of new activities including weekend and Summer camps. "The sense of order and discipline and of both competition and comradeship in the age group 11-18 all under dedicated leadership were new to me". When the family moved to Andover Gordon was quick to continue his Scouting career and joined the 2nd Andover Sea Scouts. The group was run by 'Skipper' and 'Cappy', two former naval officers. "Working my way up the ranks I became patrol leader and gained various badges: First class, Cook, Firefighter, Seamanship, Bookman all come to mind. I grew increasingly confident as trust was put in me to run things and on reflection see my four

years of scouting to have been a real blessing and I thank Skipper and Cappy for their leadership, guidance and friendship."

Currently Gordon, though officially retired, still finds time for many other interests and activities; Chairman and Trustee of UK Langa Township Pre-School Trust, Church Warden in the Parish of St Mary & St Paul, and of course, Editor of this magazine. He has written two books and is a member of the Athenaeum Club in Pall Mall. He is a lifelong supporter of Carlisle United FC whose home matches he still sometimes attends and is a cricket lover. However, to the relief of his family and friends, he no longer pursues an erstwhile competitive schoolboy activity in the boxing ring!

YOU WAIT FOR US

You wait for us until we are open to You.
We wait for Your word
to make us receptive.
Attune us to Your voice,
to Your silence.
Speak and bring Your Son to us –
Jesus, the word of Your peace.

Your word is near, O Lord our God,
Your grace is near.
Come to us then, with mildness and power.
Do not let us be deaf to You,
but make us receptive and open
To Jesus Christ Your Son,
who will come to look for us and save us
Today and every day, for ever and ever.

By Huub Oosterhuis, (b 1933), is a Jesuit priest in Holland whose ministry has mainly been to the student community of Amsterdam. He has played a major role in the renewal of the Dutch liturgy.

REPORT ON THE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON MONDAY, 23 MAY 2022



One meeting has been held since the APCM, attended by 11 members. This article is a summary of the main items reviewed and decisions taken.

Appointments following the APCM

- Lay Co-Chair: Rosina Gaddes
- Deputy Warden for St Mary's: Norma Podmore
- Deputy Warden for St Paul's: Malcolm Taylor
- Representatives for the Team Council
Rosina Gaddes and Rosamund Russell
- Representatives for Friends of St Mary's
Roger Sygrave and Emmeline Lambert
- Representative for Churches Together Yemi Wilde-Halim

Hemel Hempstead Team Ministry

The Diocese has proposed a reorganisation of the Team Ministry, which will have an impact on St Albans Church, Warners End, and on our parish. A meeting will be held at St Albans Church on 28th May, and all PCC members have been encouraged to attend it.

Fencing at St Paul's

The PCC approved the installation of a fence at St Paul's, between the grass area behind the church and the car park.

Donations for Ukraine

£1,327 has been raised to support Ukrainian refugees. Initially we had expected more refugees and the money would have been used, but not as many refugees have settled in the area as we had expected. The PCC discussed how the money should be used, and agreed to keep it for the time being, and try to spend it on the local refugees if possible.

Jenny Bowes
PCC Secretary

ART IN THE NAVE FESTIVAL 2022



BANK HOLIDAY WEEKEND

August 27th - 29th 11am to 5pm

Arts show & sale



St Mary's Church, Hemel Hempstead
HPI 3AE



www.artinthenave.uk

Save the Dates - If possible for this year's Art in the Nave Exhibition.

If you would like to volunteer to help (and many helpers will be needed as always!) please email Brian Doran at artinthenave@gmail.com or phone on 07926027855.

Volunteers needed for:

- Setting up,
Wed 24th and Thurs 25th Aug 2-4 pm
- Helping Artists hang and display their work,
Fri 26th 10 am - 12.30pm and/or 2 pm to 4pm.
- Stewarding at the Preview evening,
Fri 26th Aug 7 - 9 pm
- Stewarding at the Exhibition,
Sat - Mon 28th-30th Aug 11am - 5pm. Any day/s or time/s that you can spare on these days would be much appreciated.

AV IN CHURCH

AV? Audio Visual, still no clearer? Well, something far more sophisticated than ‘streaming’ services on Zoom. For Audio, it’s a replacement of the current St Paul’s setup, and a reuse of the sound system at St Mary’s. The visual bit means a screen in both churches, a very large television in St Paul’s and a large retractable screen in St Mary’s. These can be used during services for sermons, talks, meetings, plus, the ability to record and ‘stream’ services real time to YouTube. Yes, we are moving away from Zoom but that is because of the better sound quality available.

This was all started back in March 2021 being one of the top ideas considered by the Salisbury Bequest committee. Whilst we were still in a form of lockdown, a small group convened to look at what we wanted to do, and then from that drew up a set of requirements. These were based on what we wanted to do rather than on any specific type of equipment. It particularly centred on simple operation rather than needing a complex control mechanism with lots of screens and gadgets, that ultimately few would be able to understand or use.

In July 2021 the PCC approved the Salisbury committee’s proposal to use DM Music Ltd who had installed the sound system at St Mary’s. ▷

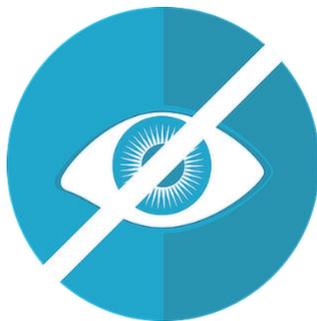
Along the way not surprisingly we came up against a number of issues, not always the ones you might have expected. At St Paul's, we have now established and have it documented that it's outside of the Diocesan Advisory Committee's process, thus removing those burdensome procedures. At St Mary's it was clarity around the rules for what constituted an approved electrician. It turned out that the diocese was asking us to use an outdated website. There was also debate around the boxing for the screen winch which was to be in the ringing room and how much space that would take up.

In late December the status of St Paul's having been confirmed, we were able to place their order in early February. Due to the simple nature of the installation DM were able to expedite it and it was completed in March. Since then, we have had a few teething issues, but hopefully we are now almost ready to stream to YouTube. So, watch out for the details in the bulletin and on the Website.

The faculty for St Mary's took rather a while, as it got stuck waiting for the PCC Policy on Streaming to be provided. In the last few days, we have asked DM for an updated quote and installation timescale. In parallel we will be enhancing the Wifi in St Mary's with a fixed wired internet connection and a set of boosters to ensure we have a signal throughout the church.

Brian Crawley

ON BLINDNESS



Disability is a funny thing. It is helpful to put out things like strips of tape on the edge of steps and spaces for wheel chairs but do you know what it is really like for me as a blind person?

It is very isolating and you lose a lot of detail about day to day living. For instance I did not understand why the rector kept on disappearing into the south transept during the Maundy service so I sat in the front pew thinking that the chapel of rest and the watch would take place in the north transept chapel.

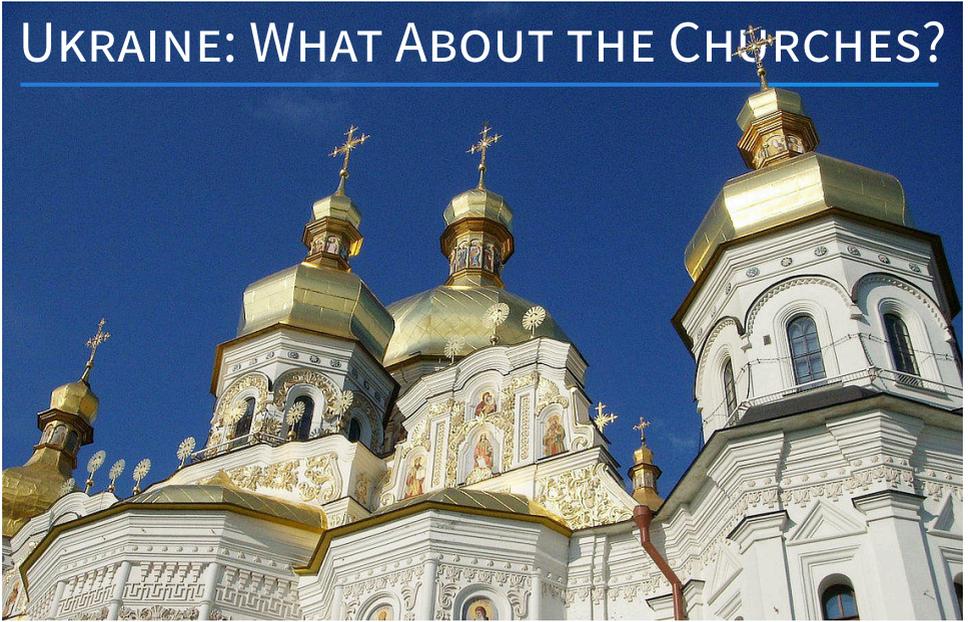
It is very helpful if people come up to me and say, e.g. 'Hello Marion it's Mary'

I suggest that people try covering their eyes to do even a simple job like squeezing the toothpaste out of the tube!

I would like to thank everyone for all the help that is offered to me. It sustains me greatly and I value all the love and support the people of St Mary's have always given me.

Marion Smith

UKRAINE: WHAT ABOUT THE CHURCHES?



Since the invasion of Ukraine on 24 Feb 2022, the media in the UK has focussed on the military conflict, the unfolding refugee tragedy, war crimes and the destruction of cities, culture, schools and hospitals. But where are the churches in this? Pretty central it turns out. My own reading of the circumstances is that the churches are involved both in practical work (sheltering and supporting refugees) and in bringing comfort to the injured and dying, both on the front-line and in the civilian population through prayer and an ever-increasing number of burials.

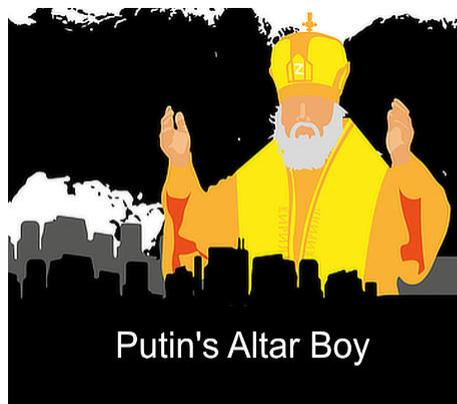
But it is also worth explaining the background of the main church in Ukraine and its relationship with the church in Russia and how this has been impacted by the war.

Like any other nation both countries have a range of Christian churches and denominations:

Roman Catholic, Protestant and the free churches. But the main church in Ukraine, as in Russia, is the Orthodox Church. Unlike the Roman Catholics, who look to the Pope for leadership, and the Anglicans who look to the Archbishop of Canterbury, Orthodox Christians look to their patriarch. In the Orthodox Church, there is ranking of patriarchs, and historically, the 'first among equals' is the Patriarch of Constantinople, the city we now know as Istanbul, in Turkey. The pre-eminent patriarch remains in Istanbul, and together with other senior patriarchs takes decisions that affect the whole Orthodox Church. ▷

The Russian Orthodox Church is part of God's church on earth. After some seventy years of the severest persecution under soviet communism, where churches were closed and demolished and many Christians, priests and monks were executed or sent to labour camps in Siberia and elsewhere, the church sprang back into life as communism collapsed in the former Soviet Union.

As an outsider, it seems that if the Russian Orthodox Church has had a problem it has been a tendency to get too close to the state power of the day. Before the Russian Revolution in 1917, Russian Orthodoxy seemed far too keen to prop up the status quo, and the power of the Czar. A similar problem seems to have been developing over recent years as the Russian Patriarch seems to have grown ever closer to President Putin.



A cartoon referring to Pope Francis' criticism of Patriarch Kirill, leader of the Russian Orthodox Church over over his support of the war in Ukraine.

The Ukrainian Orthodox Church, and their Patriarch, historically looked to the Russian Patriarch in Moscow for leadership. As tension grew between Russia and Ukraine, and Russia was actively involved in supporting armed revolt in the East of the Ukraine, there was increasing unhappiness about the failure of the Patriarch in Moscow to recognise and stand up against injustices carried out by the Russian State. Eventually, some time before the war, most of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church decided to look elsewhere for leadership and to split from the Church in Russia. The Orthodox Church in Russia resisted, whereupon the Ukrainian Orthodox Church appealed to the Patriarch in Istanbul, who upheld the cause of the Ukrainians.

This caused a major split between the Russian Orthodox and the Patriarch in Istanbul.

As the war started, the options for the Patriarch in Moscow were to have remained silent (there is a long tradition in Orthodoxy of ignoring what is going on in the outside world) or he could have condemned the invasion. Instead, he has doubled down on support for the war, calling it God's work, a blasphemy if ever there was one. Indeed, as I understand it the leadership of the church in Russia has now been declared 'anathema' (excommunicated) by the Patriarch in Istanbul. ▷

Our notion of excommunication is relatively tame – you simply cannot go to Church and receive the sacraments, anathema is much more extreme, it has notions of separation from God both in this world and the next, underscoring how the leadership of the Orthodox Church as a whole sees the behaviour of the Patriarch in Moscow.

Earlier I noted that most of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church had decided to split from the Russian Orthodox Church. Most but not all. Churches in the east of Ukraine had a stronger link to Russia, many of their congregations, for example, spoke Russian not Ukrainian. That was until Putin's war came to Eastern Ukraine, and Russian speaking Orthodox Christians were subject to mass bombing and atrocities visited on other parts of the Ukraine. In disgust, this element of the church has now also split from the Church in Russia.

What conclusions should we draw from this? The New Testament is full of the risks and realities of persecution by state authorities, references to the dangers of division within the church, generated by persecution, lies, false prophets and 'the powers of this world'. The civilian population of the UK has not directly experienced military conflict on its home soil since the blitz of World War 2, now some 80 years ago.

Where there are divisions in the Church, and while the issues that drive them are important, they are not life and death issues. In this context, the language of the New Testament seems extreme at best, maybe mentally deranged at worst. However, what we have seen in Ukraine underscores the reality and the importance of these teachings from the Bible. Lies abound in the conflict in Ukraine, for example, we are told by the Russian authorities that Ukraine is run by Nazis (even though the Ukrainian president is a Jew), there are no war crimes (even though we see them every night on our TV) and this propaganda is supported by the Patriarch of Russia who says this is God's work. This has caused schism across the Orthodox Church.

Our prayer can only be: Come Lord Jesus!

Luke Geoghegan May 2022



EXTRAVAGANZA '22

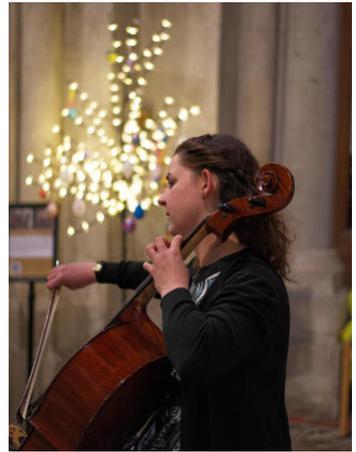


The Opening Ceremony - The Mayor of Dacorum cut the ribbon and John rode his Yamaha bike down the Nave with a running commentary from the pulpit by Reverend Austin and his irreverent friend.

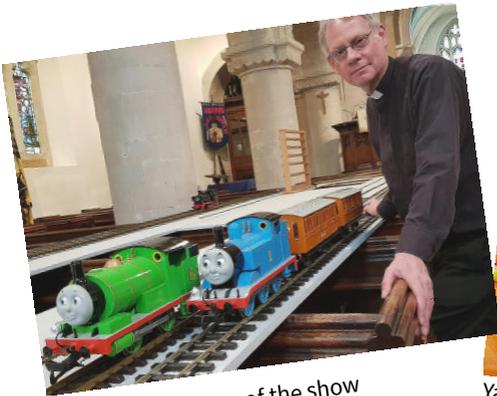
Photo Credits: Aaron Cooper, Jeff Wallis, Penny & John Williams



Austin's yo-yos were very popular with children



Preview music



The stars of the show



Yarnbombling - coming to a pillarbox top near you



Weaving in the South Transept



Roger with a section of his Hornby Dublo layout



Skill Cast Photography

The rule was 'No sitting on the bikes'.
But there's always one!



St Mary celebrities with Archdeacon Jane



Still Cast Photography



Creative bottles



One of the stall holders who had been to several churches in the past to display her beautiful crafts, said that she had never felt so welcomed before. She wasn't a Christian, but felt a very tangible atmosphere in the chapel.

I had some very meaningful conversations with so many people in my role as chaplain, particularly a Muslim lady with her small daughter and a lady and son from Ukraine with whom I prayed in the chapel.

Many candles were lit and I was pleased that the chapel had been used for private prayer and meditation.

Diana S

WHAT KIND OF QUEEN?

Traditional images of monarchy portray power, status, and superiority over other people. In biblical times, monarchs were to be feared. When teaching His disciples about leadership, Jesus said, “The kings of the Gentiles (pagans) lord it over them; and those in authority over them are called benefactors.”

This radical stance was by Her Majesty in 1952, when she promised, “I declare before you all that my whole life whether it be long or short shall be devoted to your service ...”. Queen Elizabeth has consciously and deliberately applied Christ’s teaching to her reign for 70 years. She has held before her the model of Christ, washing His disciples’ feet.

Those closest to her also speak of the Queen’s sense of humour. It emerged publicly at the opening ceremony of the 2012 Olympic Games in London, when she took part in a spoof scene with James Bond, before seemingly parachuting into the Stadium.

This year we celebrate her Majesty’s Platinum Jubilee.

From the northernmost tip of Scotland to the Channel Islands and beyond, 848 public events have been planned, plus 1,171 parties or private events.

This month we all sang, ‘God save the Queen’ with more gusto than ever.



Photo: Jacob King/PA Wire/PA Images.

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