

October 2025

PARISH MAGAZINE



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and Christchurch, Rhydygroesau **50p**



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All good gifts around us....

Of the two creation narratives in Genesis, the second (2:18-24) is both the oldest and to my mind, as human and earthy as the first is divine and majestic. According to this account, God fashioned the first human from the clay (*adama*) of earth and created a garden where the human was placed to 'till and keep' in order that the human might be fed.

At the end of the story of creation in Genesis 1, having completed the work, God '*saw everything he had made*', and declared it '*very good*'. However, within this second story, God realised that something was wrong... '*It is not good that the man should be alone.*' So, in an attempt to right that wrong, out of the same stuff that he made the human, God creates all kinds of creatures and presents them to the human who names them. Still aware that things aren't yet perfect, God creates from the man a helpmate. Sadly, as we know, this story of perfection soon turns sour.

There is much to be gleaned from this ancient story; that an omnipotent God didn't get it right first time; that in the midst of a wonderful garden and in the presence of all those animals, the human still felt very alone; that life and identity is received and found with, and from other people; that in partnership we make meaning of our world; that our ultimate destiny is that of union with all in God.

It's October and St Oswald's, along with many other churches and communities, offered a thanksgiving for harvest at the end of the growing season. Each year it's a momentary pause of thanksgiving that the vagaries of the weather have been overcome once again so that our larders and storehouses are filled.

Those of us who live in a rural context or keep a garden, know first-hand how precarious growing can be, despite scientific and technological progress, harvesting anything at all remains is a gift. Without doubt, science and technology have increased the quantity and availability of our food but have also resulted in many people losing touch with this great cycle of nature as we shop for our food on the shelves of seasonless supermarkets. A process which means that unlike previous generations, our food and its harvest now includes as many, if not more people in logistics as it does growers and producers. However, like the story of creation, this story is also turning sour.

Our food is increasingly processed and packaged in plastic which too often finds its way into the environment, forests are destroyed to grow plants, pesticides and nutrients pour into our oceans, and vast quantities of food

are thrown out and wasted every day. That in itself is shocking, but when you add in the fact that there are people going hungry in most of our towns and cities, including Oswestry, then 'shock' should become 'scandal'. So, this autumn, as you offer your thanks for *all good gifts around us*, spare a thought for those, who often through no fault of their own, find themselves on the wrong side of life's equation.

Food waste also feeds into (no pun intended but hey it works!) another pressing point concerning our food. It used to be called 'global warming', more recently 'climate change', it is now increasingly referred to as a 'climate emergency' or climate crisis'.

Most would agree that it has been another year of extraordinary weather around the world, with summer heat waves across Europe followed by torrential rain and wind towards the end of September. Parts of Canada are witnessing drought and wildfires, and the polar ice caps and Himalayan glaciers continue to retreat at ever increasing rates. Despite a well known and climate sceptic American politician making statements at the UN to the contrary, many scientists continue to warn us about increasing levels of CO₂ and other gases in our atmosphere. We are facing choices which will only become more difficult the longer we put off making them.

Despite all this, the food cycle continues. Due to the skill of farmers and growers most of the harvest has once again been safely gathered in and already many of next year's crops are in the ground. In the space of a few weeks, the cycle is completed in readiness for it to begin all over again, and the problems the world faces are put out of mind just for a while.

The world continues to be God's wonderful garden, tended and tilled by humans who continue to share a world with flora and fauna, and other humans. We continue to receive and create new identities along with our ongoing ones, but we seem to have lost the sense that our identity is both stronger and more sustainable when it is held in partnership with each other, and in unity with God.

We have much to be thankful for in Oswestry, so if you haven't already, during the next few weeks try to find a little time to pause and reflect on the world around us and to give thanks for the many gifts we have and enjoy. Let us strive to be generous in how we use our resources to the benefit of all God's people. After all, the old saying 'you are what you eat' has much truth in it, our changing climate now means that there has never been a more pressing time not just to feed the world... but to save it.

Harvey

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Christchurch Rhydygroesau

Harvest Festival Service

Friday 10th October at 6.30pm

Followed by

Harvest Supper in the Village Hall at 7.30pm (£10)

All Welcome!

Anyone wishing to come to the supper, please contact
Rosemary Davies (07813757498) or Elizabeth Stanley (676450)



RESOURCES FOR 10:30 SUNDAY EUCHARIST

If anyone reading this who is unable to get to church but follows the service online, we are able to send you the full service beforehand. This will enable you to follow the liturgy and join in the words of the hymns.

It is also useful if you want to re-read and ponder on the sermon or intercessions later in the week.

Anyone attending church who would benefit from this provision please contact Carron in the office—email stoswald.office@gmail.com

PRAYING FOR OUR WORLD



The Mission and Ministry Team ask you to join them in prayer in St. George's Chapel at 7 p.m. on the first Wednesday of each month. The next meeting is on October 1

Charity Concert The London Welsh Male Voice Choir

with Guest Soloist

Rhys Meirion

In Support of

**HOPE HOUSE CHILDREN'S HOSPICE
and
DAY CENTRE CLUB OSWESTRY**



7.00 p.m. Saturday 4th October 2025

St. Oswald's Church

Church Street, Oswestry, SY11 2SY

Tickets £25 and £10 for under 18

Tickets available from

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Male Voice Choir
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children's hospices

All Souls at St. Oswald's... *'Those we love but see no longer'*

Our annual service of thanksgiving and remembrance will be on 2nd November at 4pm. Following the pattern of recent years, we shall only read out the names of those who have died during the last twelve months. The names of loved ones who died prior to that will be remembered on the wall of remembrance which will be displayed in church. It will be possible to light a candle for both, before, during, and after the service.

If you would like the name of a loved one included on the Wall of Remembrance, please contact Carron either by phone or email (stoswald.office@gmail.com) or write their names clearly on a slip of paper which should be placed in the box provided in church.

MOTHERS' UNION FELLOWSHIP GROUP

A small group met for prayers and fellowship.

Next meeting is on 9th October at 2.15pm in the Parish Centre when our speaker will be Mrs Kate Donkin. ALL welcome.

Pam Musson

Cover: St Francis of Assisi



Detail from a window in the Rosslyn Chapel, Roslin, Midlothian.

St Francis' feast day is celebrated on 4th October. One of the best known Christian saints, Francis' story is well-known as are the legends and tales of the simplicity of his life and his love of creation. He founded the Franciscan Order and the women's order of St Clare (with St Clare of Assisi) and the Third Order for lay people. Pope John Paul II recognised him as the patron saint of ecology in 1979.

Frances Major

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A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE – 267

GLEANINGS FROM THE SHORT-LIVED OSWESTRY HERALD

Regular readers of this column will perhaps know that one of the sources that I use for historical material on our church is the local newspaper – reports in the *Advertiser*, and (particularly for the years before 1849, when the *Advertiser* was founded) reports from papers such as the *Shrewsbury Chronicle* and *Chester Courant*. For the *Advertiser*, copies have been digitised and are available at Oswestry Library. For the Shrewsbury and Chester journals, I rely on the online British Newspaper Archive. Readers of this column may also recall that, from time to time, I will complain that the British Newspaper Archive includes only a few, seemingly random, years of the *Advertiser*: for a number of years now it has provided access to only 8 years, between 1855 and 1892.

Therefore, I was very pleased to see that, in September, the Newspaper Archive extended its coverage of Shropshire by several steps – providing access to local ‘papers from Bishop’s Castle and Bridgnorth, to four more years of the *Oswestry Advertiser* (1882/3, 1898 and 1912), and also adding copies of the *Oswestry Herald*, which was published weekly from March 1820 to December 1822¹, for 1820 and for March to December 1822. Its founder was William Cathrall (c1794-1865), familiar to us as the author of his *History of Oswestry* (1855), a journalist who had moved from Chester to Oswestry to establish the *Herald*. By the mid-1820s he had moved on, to Manchester.

One of the advantages of the British Newspaper Archive, and one of the main reasons why I have a subscription to it, is that it is searchable – you can search for a name, or a term, specifying a time period, and it will do its best to take you straight to what you are seeking – if it is there – meaning that you don’t have to plough through copy after copy, page after page, in your search.

This month, then, I have taken a quick look at the *Oswestry Herald*, to see what it might say about our church, doing a very simple search for the word ‘church’. I was not expecting to find very much, as local newspapers at that time were short – initially the *Herald* was only four pages (one sheet folded) long, and filled largely with advertisements and national news stories taken from other papers and journals. That said, my time was not wasted, and I found a number of items of interest, some worth following up elsewhere.

¹Copies of the *Herald* are also available digitally at Oswestry Library

For example, I came across three reports, all very similar in content, of anniversary celebrations for local Friendly Societies – local clubs based at public houses, established to provide support in time of illness, accident or old age, to their members, who each paid a small subscription, in much the same way as the Buffaloes ('the Buffs') and the Oddfellows. On June 27th 1820, the *Herald* reported that the anniversary of the Friendly Society held at the Sun Tavern² had taken place. "The members walked in procession to church in the morning, preceded by a band of music. An excellent and appropriate sermon was preached by the Rev. J. Russell, from Proverbs, X, verse 4², after which the society returned to the Sun, where they partook of a sumptuous dinner. The toast and glass went briskly round, and hilarity reigned throughout the evening".

A month later, on July 25th, the *Herald* reported on the anniversary of the Sun Inn Friendly Society. Once again, readers were told that members had proceeded to church to hear divine service, with an "excellent sermon" by the Rev. J. Russell, "after which they returned to the [Sun] Inn, where an elegant dinner was provided for them. The sparkling glass went briskly round, and conviviality reigned at the festive board throughout the evening".

You might be thinking, 'can a society have two anniversaries in just two months?'. It seems unlikely – it is possible that there were two separate friendly societies based at the Sun – the public house almost opposite our church gates – or that the Sun Tavern was a different place to the Sun Inn. The fact that the procession from the Sun Tavern included a musical band might suggest that it was further away, and it was not unknown at that time to have more than one pub with the one name: at various times there were two pubs called the Cross Keys, the Swan and the White Lion.

And in the edition for August 20th 1822, there was a report of the anniversary of the Benefit Society based at the Star Inn, in Bailey Street. Once more the sermon was preached by the Rev. John Russell, described this time as "impressive and appropriate", and readers were told that the dinner at the Star was excellent, "the song and glass went briskly round", and "the greatest good fellowship prevailed throughout the evening". Consulting our parish registers, I find that John Russell was a curate at our parish church from 1815 to 1824.

Finally, I was interested in a notice placed in the *Herald* of June 20th 1820, advising that "persons willing to contract for rebuilding the tower of the

²"He becometh poor that dealeth with a slack hand: But the hand of the diligent maketh rich" (King James version)

Parish Church of Oswestry are requested to send in their proposals (sealed up) for executing the same to Mr Bentley, Vestry Clerk, on or before Saturday the 24th June. A Plan and specifications are left with Mr Thos. Jones, Architect, Oswestry". In the same issue there is a short report of a Vestry meeting, adjourned to Sunday next, "when the interesting subject of reinstating the venerable decorations of the old tower of our church is to be taken into consideration". I will need to follow this up: histories of the church are not entirely clear on the sequence, and the extent, of repairs and renovations carried out in the earlier part of the 19th century – before the major rebuilding of the early 1870s – and looking at Askew Roberts' writings on the subject, he refers to work carried out in 1830, but is silent on any work undertaken in 1820. Did it actually take place?

John Pryce-Jones

Parish Church of St. Oswald, King & Martyr, Oswestry

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**For further details contact Mike Donkin,
Director of Music
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or via email at michaeldonkin44@gmail.com**

A CONTRIBUTION FROM HAYDN JONES

Creator God

'In the beginning, God created the heaven and the earth'

Genesis 1 verse 1

'The heavens declare the Glory of God - the skies proclaim the work of his hands.' *Psalms 19-1.*

We are a tiny speck, a pale blue dot in this vast universe. There are about 100 thousand million stars in the Milky Way alone, and our galaxy is one of billions.

Thank you for this beautiful planet Earth and for the wonders of your creation - the amazing night sky on a clear winters night and the fantastic sunrises and sunsets.

Father God, you made everything and everyone - it is so wonderful that you know and love each one of us.

Every person who has ever lived has been unique with their own DNA and fingerprints.

The human brain has about 100 billion neurons each with up to 10,000 connections or synapses. It is the most complex object in the known universe.

The human heart beats about 100,000 times each day -

Thank you for the miracle of all life.

Each snowflake has six sides and is unique.

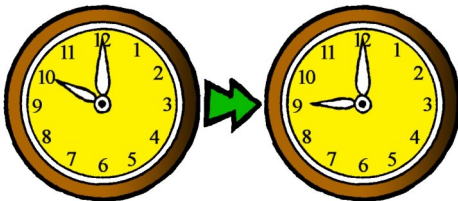
Swifts may fly over two million miles in their seven year life.

Father God - you love us so much that you sent your son Jesus Christ to be born in Bethlehem to be our Saviour.'

For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life'.

John 3 verse 16.

Haydn Jones



Clocks go back
October 26

ANGEL TREE AT HMP BERWYN

It's once again time to be thinking about the Angel Tree Christmas gifts scheme at HMP Berwyn in Wrexham and I shall be organising our participation again this year.

Angel Tree is a way of giving prisoners the opportunity to send a present to their children at Christmas. It helps families to stay connected and strengthens family relationships, and it provides these children with unexpected joy to receive a present from their father on Christmas Day.



For those who may not have supported the scheme before, the way it works is this. During October the men will be able to submit through the Prison Chaplaincy a request for gifts for their children. They give details of the child's name, girl or boy, age and the kinds of things the child particularly likes or is interested in. People who have offered to support the scheme will be asked to buy a gift for a particular named child, costing no more than £10. Chaplaincy volunteers then arrange for the present to be posted to the child. Each gift is sent as though it is from the father with a personal message written by him.

If you would like to share in this opportunity to show God's love by supporting these families, then be in touch with me during October, preferably by email. There will also be a sign-up sheet on the table at the back of church. You will be allocated your individual present by early November and the gifts will need to be bought, wrapped and dropped off with me before the end of the month. If you prefer, or perhaps find shopping difficult, then you can support the scheme by making a cash donation, which will be used either to buy presents or to help fund the postage.

The Prison Fellowship really values the support that comes each year from St Oswald's and I hope many of you will want to be involved again this year.

Elaine

Elaine Leek: e-mail leek1@btinternet.com Tel: 01691 778024





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ST. OSWALD'S LADIES GROUP

The Ladies Group met in the Parish Centre on Monday 1st September. June, our Chairman, led us in prayer especially remembering one of our founder members, Maureen Crosby, who had died. Our thoughts are with Paul, Heather and Andrew and families. Glenda introduced our speaker, Andrew Preston, to speak to us about the Shropshire Charity 'Climbing Out' that he has been involved in for several years.

'Climbing Out' was founded by Kelda Wood in 2010. Eight years earlier a freak accident left Kelda with an irreparable leg injury that had a huge impact on her life and ended her dreams of becoming an Olympic horse rider. After rebuilding her confidence, Kelda changed her focus and eventually retrained as an outdoor instructor. In 2010 she launched 'Climbing Out' to help people who have been through life changing mental or physical trauma or illness. Kelda and her colleagues use a combination of "Walk and Talks" and week-long activity events to help attendees.

Andrew, a military veteran injured on operations in Iraq 2009, has found the group an immense help. All events are open to veterans, blue light services, NHS and others. Referral is by GP or other clinicians though self-referral is permitted. He has met some inspirational friends and commends the charity in the strongest terms to those who have suffered trauma.

Andrew is now a military ambassador for the charity with a role of making people aware of how people can be helped. Kelda can be contacted on keldawood@climbingout.org.uk.

Andrew gave a most interesting talk which was greatly enjoyed by everyone.

Our next meeting will be on October 6th in the Parish Centre at 2.30 p.m. when Rev. Brian Thomas will give a - Reflection on Harvest. Linda Roberts will accompany us for some Harvest hymns.

If you would like further information about Ladies Group please do not hesitate to contact me:

tel: 01691-657903

email: ann_sagar@btinternet.com

or in Church.

Ann Sagar
Hon. Secretary

MUSIC NOTES - OCTOBER 2025

TIME TO SAY GOODBYE

After over fifty years, (25 of them in Oswestry) of training and conducting choirs I have come to the conclusion that it is time to hang up my cassock.

My last service will be on Christmas morning and I hope that I can step down in a blaze of wonderful Christmas music. It will be an appropriate time to hand over to someone younger with more stamina.

It has been a privilege to have worked with the Choir at St. Oswald's and to have seen the music develop to the point where we have an enviable reputation. It is my hope that St Oswald's reputation for great choral music will continue and indeed grow in the future.

In the meantime, there is plenty to get on with for the rest of this term. We have All Saints and All Souls on 2nd November and a week later we will be trying a new format on Remembrance Sunday when the choir and congregation will join the Act of Worship at the Park Gates and there will be a Civic Service in Church at 4.00pm. For those who wish there will be a said Eucharist at 9.30am on that day.

Then it's on to the much-loved Advent Carol Service on 30th November and the Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols on 21st December. This is always a wonderful occasion and I hope that people will forgive me if, on my last Nine Lessons and Carols as Director of Music, I choose some of my favourite pieces. I promise that they will be your favourites too.

If it's not too immodest, I will share some of my life in church music over the next couple of issues of the magazine.

Thank you all for the great support that you have given to the music throughout the time that I have been here.

A SPLENDID CHOIR WEDDING

On Sunday 5th October (yes, it is on a Sunday) Samantha Lewis will be getting married in St. Oswald's at 1.00pm.

I wrote about Sam in last month's magazine in relation to the Chorister Taster Day and if you haven't read it do have a look.

Sam, who served as chorister, Head Chorister and Assistant Choir Trainer over a period of 14 years and is now a professional singer and music

teacher, will be doing it in style with a Full Choir and a number of old choristers returning to swell the ranks as well as a group of Sam's operatic friends. There's even a dog involved but my lips are sealed on that one.

If you have the time, do come along to the service to support Sam as she enters the next stage of her life.

CHOIR VACANCIES

For the past couple of months, I have been advertising the fact that we are now accepting Adult Sopranos into the Choir. I am delighted to report that our first such new recruit is Chelsea Morris. As many of you will know Chelsea was, like Samantha, a chorister, Head Chorister and Assistant Choir Trainer in the Choir before leaving to study at the London College of Music, where she obtained her Honours Degree. She came back to us last month and we are delighted to welcome her again. We still have vacancies for one or two more adult sopranos and, if you are interested, please have a word with me.

Due to some of our young people moving on we also need some more tenors and basses. Again, have a word if you would like to try us out.

Mike Donkin
Director of Music

BONUS BALL

Congratulations to the August winners of the weekly Lotto Bonus Ball draw who will each receive £29. The winners were:

<u>Date</u>	<u>Ball Number</u>	<u>Winner</u>
2 Aug	56	Graham Roberts
9 Aug	23	Christine Townsend
16 Aug	37	Mike Peters
23 Aug	5	Bill Vine
30 Aug	16	Ann Ashworth

The new Bonus Ball year started at the beginning of March and the cost of joining is £13/quarter, collected either annually, half yearly or quarterly.

If you would like to join the St Oswald Bonus Ball please let me know.

Paul Crosby
658606

Services at S. Oswald's

October 5	08:00	Holy Communion
<i>Trinity 16</i>	10:30	Parish Eucharist with sung setting

October 12	10:30	Parish Eucharist with sung setting
<i>Trinity 17</i>	18:00	Evening Prayer

October 19	08:00	Holy Communion
<i>Trinity 18</i>	10:30	Parish Eucharist with sung setting
	18:00	Choral Evensong

October 26	10:30	Parish Eucharist with sung setting
<i>Trinity 19</i>	18:00	Reflective Space
<i>Bible Sunday</i>		

Every Thursday 10.30 Holy Communion (BCP)

MORNING PRAYER is streamed online through the church Facebook page at 9 o'clock on Wednesday and Friday. Sunday worship is on the YouTube page.

Enquires for Baptisms, Marriages etc should be made to the Parish Office. Please email the Parish Administrator (stoswald.office@gmail.com) for an appointment.

Services at Rhydycroesau

<i>First Sunday</i>	09:30	All Age Service
October 5		

Friday October 10	18:30	Harvest Festival Service, followed by Harvest Supper in the Village Hall
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<i>Second Sunday</i>	09:30	Holy Communion
October 12		

<i>Fourth Sunday</i>	09:30	Holy Communion
October 26		



Parish Church of St. Oswald, King & Martyr

Music List - October 2025

Sunday 5th October

Trinity 16

10.3am. Parish Eucharist (St. Oswald's Singers)
 Setting: Shephard - Addington Service
 Anthem: Steal away - Spiritual (arr: Tambling)

Sunday 12th October

Trinity 17

10.30am. Parish Eucharist
 Setting: Thorne - Mass of St. Thomas
 Anthem: Litany to the Holy Spirit - Hurford

Sunday 19th October

Trinity 18

10.30am. Parish Eucharist
 Setting: Mathias - Communion Service in C
 Anthem: Teach me O Lord the way of thy statutes Attwood
 6.00pm Choral Evensong
 Introit: Let thy merciful ears O Lord - Mudd
 Canticles: Harris in A minor
 Responses: Dowlen
 Anthem: O Lord the maker of al thing - Joubert

Sunday 26th October

Bible Sunday

10.30am. Parish Eucharist (St. Oswald's Singers)
 Setting: Shephard - Addington Service
 Anthem: View me Lord a work of thine - Lloyd

COFFEE ROTA FOR OCTOBER

5	Mary Jones	Natasha Bell	Sally Wright
12	Jane Mayne	Chris Abram	Jean Lawrence
19	Jane Wilkinson	Val Hamer	Carol Burke
26	Judi Neale	Babs Bone	Elaine Leek





CALENDAR



Wednesday 1	0830—0940 Oswestry School Assembly 1000 Under 5's Playgroup—Parish Centre 1900 <i>Praying for Our World</i> —St George's Chapel 1930 St Oswald's Book Club reading 'Chosen' by Giles Fraser. All are welcome to come along and discuss the book over coffee and cake. <i>Please note change of day.</i>
Friday 3	1000 Under 5's Playgroup—Parish Centre
Saturday 4	1900 The London Welsh Male Voice Choir Charity Concert
Monday 6	1000 Clergy Eucharist and Meeting 1000—1100 Oswestry Prep School Harvest Rehearsal 1430 Ladies Group—Parish Centre 1900 <i>Pilgrim</i> Course
Tuesday 7	0830—1100 Oswestry Prep School Harvest Service 1030—1230 Place of Welcome - Parish Centre
Wednesday 8	0830—0940 Oswestry School Assembly 1000 Under 5's Playgroup—Parish Centre
Thursday 9	1415—1600 Mothers' Union Fellowship Group
Friday 10	1000 Under 5's Playgroup—Parish Centre 1830 Christchurch, Rhydygroesau Harvest Festival followed by Harvest Supper in Village Hall
Monday 13	1900 <i>Pilgrim</i> Course
Tuesday 14	1030—1230 Place of Welcome - Parish Centre
Wednesday 15	1000 Under 5's Playgroup—Parish Centre 1930 St Oswald's Book Club reading 'Chosen' by Giles Fraser. All are welcome to come along and discuss the book over coffee and cake.
Friday 17	1000 Under 5's Playgroup—Parish Centre
Monday 20	1900 <i>Pilgrim</i> Course
Tuesday 21	1030—1230 Place of Welcome - Parish Centre
Wednesday 22	1000 Under 5's Playgroup—Parish Centre
Friday 24	1000 Under 5's Playgroup—Parish Centre
Monday 27	1000—1500 Charity Christmas Card Shop Opens see opposite page 1900 <i>Pilgrim</i> Course
Tuesday 28	1030—1230 Place of Welcome - Parish Centre
Wednesday 29	1000 Under 5's Playgroup—Parish Centre

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If money talks, let's listen together to what it's saying to Lichfield Diocese

Ever noticed? People who are at ease about big money talk about 'a sum north of ...'. Although confusingly mixing compass and currency, it reveals a deep truth: a large sum of money might bring a polar chill: the burden of choices and the risk of temptations and dissension. It needs skilled handling to bring blessing.

The additional £400 million extra over three years across 42 dioceses being released from the Church of England's historic assets, an amount of arctic proportions according to the popular yardstick, could, rather should, bless us. A good first response might be gratitude, caution and reaching for a calculator. Caution is valuable because it stops us from falling into two traps: imagining where we would spend the money for our own benefit rather than for the Kingdom, and, worse, imagining where we would spend the same sum twice. Thankfully, the calculations are being done by Lichfield Diocese's very skilled finance team.

Gratitude to God is the gateway to asking God what divine and loving purpose it is there to fulfil, because money calls us into a future plan. This money also comes with wonderful timing. The ten goals of Seeking the Kingdom can guide our efforts, there is the opportunity to use the extra money to fund new activities, especially in parishes where there are identifiable possibilities for growth but resources are short. Much of our focus in Seeking the Kingdom is rightly on our parishes.

We are relieved of some choices but have to make others. To ease the costs of a substantial 11.1% increase in clergy stipends to support the well-being of clergy and their families in every parish, part of the extra money is specifically for our 25% least well-off parishes. We can all warm to this proposal: well-being, financial and otherwise for clergy, is our collective responsibility. Better still, the whole church family and all those who contribute so generously the lion's share of the costs of clergy, buildings and mission will benefit too: more funding for less prosperous parts of the diocese gives us the opportunity to reduce the amount of mutual support needed. Well-being is at the heart of the direction and goals of Seeking the Kingdom, our plan for 2025-2030. Churches that flourish and people that flourish do so because they are immersed in the common activity of building the Kingdom of God and building the Kingdom brings more flourishing: it's a virtual circle.

Questions will arise about how the rest of the money that we will receive is

to be used and our diocesan decision-makers will be taking a look at next year's budget starting this Autumn with consultations in each Episcopal Area, taking proposals to Synod in October. The additional money over which we have a choice has the power to call us all into a new future. It is tapered over nine years, so we can't simply spend it on business as usual as it won't last. Can we all gather round the idea that it is there to give us hope in a sustainable future and to address the challenge posed afresh that we are sustaining ourselves at present using a diminishing pot of reserves?



Arun Kataria is the Diocesan Director of Communications, helping share news around the diocese and working closely with colleagues on staff and synods to promote our diocesan goals – www.lichfield.anglican.org/our-vision

Over the next few months, the whole diocese - parishes, clergy, lay leaders... everyone - is invited to explore attitudes to money together, looking at 'Gratitude, Opportunity and Hope'.

HARVEST OF THE DOVE

Down this paralleled sun varnished path,
the land heaves its golden bending burden,
bowing with silver headed meekness,
weighted by regal benevolence.

Beyond, statuesque cows appear eating;
like Wordsworth's stationary waterfall,
they defy logic's dead descriptive hand,
mounted upon their fertile food hill.

Overhead two buzzards circle as lovers,
taking a free aerial pleasure cruise,
and held this moment I see, join, know
the hidden inscaped pulse of mystery,
share the Dove's peace ordaining secret:
Why do we not learn better and see better?

August, 2025.

Mark Davis.

Note: Verse 3:4 "inscape" was an unexplained coinage of Gerard Manley Hopkins (19th century poet). I take it to refer to the creative life of grace, permeating the natural world.

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PUTTING YOUR MEADOW TO BED FOR THE WINTER!

It's often thought that encouraging wildlife into churchyards or cemeteries is a case of leaving them to go wild and stopping management. Actually, this is not the case. Many of the species and habitats found in burial grounds have been present for the decades or even centuries that this special place has been cared for. These plants, animals, birds and fungi will have been widespread in the farmed landscape of the past. If you want to maintain or increase wildlife in your local churchyard or cemetery then the best thing to do is to continue this traditional work rather than making a big change and leaving things unmanaged. Most churchyards are a mix of grassland with individual trees or groups of trees which can be thought of as small woodlands. There may well be some patches of scrub as well. It is the grassland that needs regular management if it is not to change its character and we can look to the history of churchyards for clues on how to do this.

We know that churchyards were kept open and accessible as they were always important community spaces, used for outdoor services, for archery practice, markets and fairs as well as for burial. There are records of a hay crop being taken which formed part of the vicar's stipend and of grazing after the hay was cut. For much of history, grass was an important energy crop, so a meadow would be cut at the height of its growth in summer, when the bulk of the nutrients are above ground, and any cut grass would be dried as hay, raked up and taken to feed animals in winter. Small patches of meadow, such as that found on verges and in churchyards, might not seem worth 'farming' now but would have had value back in the day. The wonderful shows of wildflowers that we see in our churchyard meadows are made of plants able to thrive in these conditions, able to survive cutting and grazing. Meadow plants tend to be perennial, these can survive the winter, often living for many years. Perennials do not actually need to flower or set seed although doing so will allow them to increase in number. There are a few meadow plants that are annuals and don't survive over winter but these, such as yellow rattle, tend to flower early prior to the hay cut, so can grow each year from the seed that has fallen.

Another difference between old fashioned systems and our modern world is mowing machines. These are relatively recent inventions and have become more efficient over the years, able to cut grass really short and very uniform. Again, if you want to increase the flowers, pollinators and wildlife generally, having a slightly longer sward, perhaps cut less often can make a big difference as short-stemmed plants like clovers, daisies, cat's ear and speedwells can then flower. Things were generally less tidy

in the past, as well as a more uneven sward, there would have been edges and corners that didn't get cut, so places for animals to withdraw to following grass cutting, and to shelter in over winter. Thinking in this way can help to make meadow management easy to understand.

Let the grass grow long for 3 or 4 months over the spring and summer, follow this by a summer cut and rake (you can make hay if you like or just remove the cut grass). Don't worry about cutting flowers, the plants will survive and some species may regrow and flower again. N.B. If you don't want to cut particularly late flowering species such as scabious or knapweed, then cut the bulk of the meadow and leave some flowery patches till later on.

Keep grass short over the autumn and winter, the time when it might have been grazed in the past. You'll probably use a mower for this. Again, do not leave grass cuttings *in situ*, try to collect them all up and remove for composting.

Remember that, as far as nature goes, we are now a bit too tidy! Set the mower blade high and leave some rough edges or corners. These tussocky corners will contain coarser grasses such as false oat grass and cocksfoot, plants with hollow stems such as hogweed and dead flower heads – all really good places for insects, amphibians, reptiles and small mammals to hide, hunt and hibernate over winter.

So what can you do in October? Not much actually, the hard work should be over! You can make sure that all meadow areas have been cut, raked and are now short, ready for the winter, and can leave any rough corners and dead flower stems as they are, rather than being messy they are a vital resource for the winter.

Harriet Carty,

Diocesan Churchyard Environmental Advisor. harriet@cfga.org.uk

www.caringforgodsacre.org.uk - individuals and groups in the diocese receive 20% members discount on all CfGA materials. Use the discount code diomem22

ALL IN THE MONTH OF OCTOBER

It was:

750 years ago, on 27th Oct 1275 that the city of Amsterdam in the Netherlands is traditionally considered to have been founded.

60 years ago, on 8th Oct 1965 that the Post Office Tower (now the BT Tower) in London was officially opened. It was the tallest building in the UK until 1980.

AUTUMN TERM OUTREACH ADVENT IN A BOX

This time last year, SCWP was busy fundraising for our *Christmas in a Box* workshop. Thanks to your incredible support, it was a great success.

This year, we're excited to launch a brand-new experience: **Advent in a Box**. Designed for primary school pupils, this interactive workshop explores the story of Jesus' birth through the Advent themes of **love, joy, peace, and hope**.

Through storytelling and reflection, children will meet the key characters of the Nativity and discover the heart of why Jesus came to earth. At the end of the session, each child will receive a special *take-home box* filled with creative activities to help them remember the message of Christmas long after the workshop ends.

We're aiming to raise **£2,000** to deliver *Advent in a Box* free of charge to **400 pupils** across local schools.

We'd love your help in spreading the word. Could you share this project with your church community and anyone who might be interested in sponsoring a child to take part? Every £5 donation brings this meaningful experience to one more child.

Together, we can share the true meaning of Christmas with the next generation.

Jane Webber

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Ref Advent in a Box

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To St Luke, whose feast-day is 18th October, we owe a beautifully written gospel as well as the Book of Acts. He was a Greek physician and faithful travelling companion to St Paul. Under house arrest near the end of his life Paul noted, 'only Luke is with me'. Luke's gospel focuses on the compassion of Christ, and offers us moving parables, such as the Good Samaritan and Prodigal Son. Women figure more prominently in Luke's gospel than in any other: look out for the extended story of the Virgin Birth, and stories of Mary, Elizabeth, and the woman who was a sinner. His gospel also features more poor people, more lepers, more 'sinners', who are all shown to be 'inside' the love of Christ. In Acts, Luke skilfully links sacred and profane history, as subsequent archaeology has shown. He tells of how the early Christians moved away from Jerusalem into the pagan world, and especially on to Rome.

Luke	L	P	F	Y	A	A	M	P	O	P	G	I	M	Y	Prodigal
Feast	P	P	A	R	A	B	L	E	S	O	J	A	A	I	Son
Day	N	T	I	G	T	G	O	S	P	E	L	P	N	N	Good
Written	C	C	T	S	A	E	F	R	R	L	U	E	H	I	Samaritan
Gospel	C	I	H	S	G	N	O	U	I	E	A	L	E	K	Women
Acts	L	O	F	R	N	D	S	P	R	R	P	I	E	L	Poor
Greek	E	G	U	E	I	A	A	H	L	P	S	E	U	M	Lepers
Physician	E	A	L	G	L	S	O	Y	O	G	R	K	L	N	Sinners
Travelling	N	S	A	E	L	R	T	S	G	G	E	O	C	P	Jerusalem
Faithful	S	L	M	N	E	T	T	I	R	W	N	A	O	E	Pagan
Paul	R	T	N	C	V	C	G	C	A	N	N	A	G	P	Rome
Compassion	C	O	M	P	A	S	S	I	O	N	I	P	O	W	Early
Parables	S	A	M	A	R	I	T	A	N	N	S	H	O	R	Christians
	E	L	C	E	T	L	A	N	E	M	O	W	D	A	

Answer on page 39

PLASTIC CARRIER BAGS

This year marks ten years since England introduced the 5p charge for single-use plastic carrier bags. The charge has had a dramatic effect – with a reduction of 98% in sales.

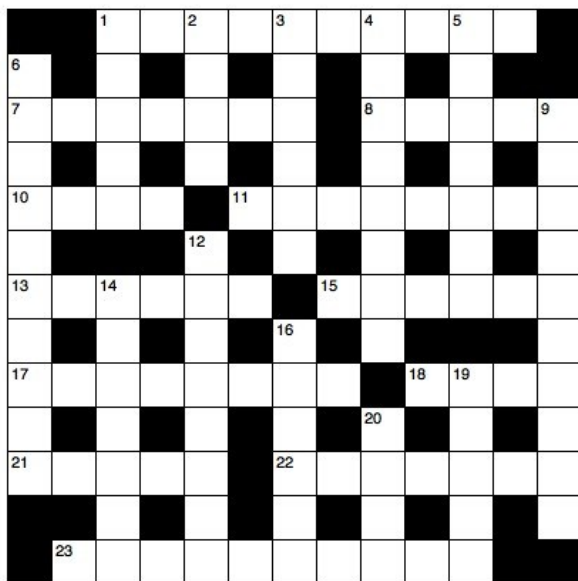
In 2014, 7.6 billion single-use plastic bags were sold in the UK. By 2023, 133 million single-use bags had been sold in the major supermarkets. The average person in the UK now buys only about two single-use plastic bags per year.

Across

- 1 He was replaced as king of Judah by his uncle Mattaniah (2 Kings 24:17) (10)
- 7 'Let us fix our eyes on Jesus... who for the joy set before him — the cross' (Hebrews 12:2) (7)
- 8 Relieved (5)
- 10 Impetuous (Acts 19:36) (4)
- 11 Surprised and alarmed (Luke 24:37) (8)
- 13 'It is — for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for the rich to enter the kingdom of God' (Mark 10:25) (6)
- 15 Directions for the conduct of a church service (6)
- 17 One of the acts of the sinful nature (Galatians 5:19) (8)
- 18 and 20 Down 'She began to wet his — with her tears. Then she wiped them with her —' (Luke 7:38) (4,4)
- 21 'We will all be changed, in a flash, in the twinkling of an —, — the last trumpet' (1 Corinthians 15:51–52) (3,2)
- 22 'But he replied, "Lord, I am — go with you to prison and to death"' (Luke 22:33) (5,2)
- 23 Third person of the Trinity (2 Corinthians 13:14) (4,6)

Down

- 1 He betrayed Jesus (Matthew 27:3) (5)
- 2 Paul's assurance to the Philippian jailer: 'Don't — yourself! We are all here!' (Acts 16:28) (4)
- 3 'Fear God and keep his commandments, for this — the whole — of man' (Ecclesiastes 12:13) (2,4)
- 4 The sort of giver God loves (2 Corinthians 9:7) (8)
- 5 Sun rail (anag.) (7)
- 6 Naboth, the ill-fated vineyard owner, was one (1 Kings 21:1) (10)
- 9 Paul said of young widows, 'When their sensual desires overcome their — to Christ, they want to marry' (1 Timothy 5:11) (10)
- 12 This was how Joseph of Arimathea practised his discipleship 'because he feared the Jews' (John 19:38) (8)



- 14 Mop ruse (anag.) (7)
 16 Foment (Philippians 1:17) (4,2)
 19 Where Joseph and Mary escaped to with the baby Jesus
 (Matthew 2:14) (5)
 20 See 18 Across

Sudoku

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

Easy

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

Medium

PUZ?LES

Answers
on page
39

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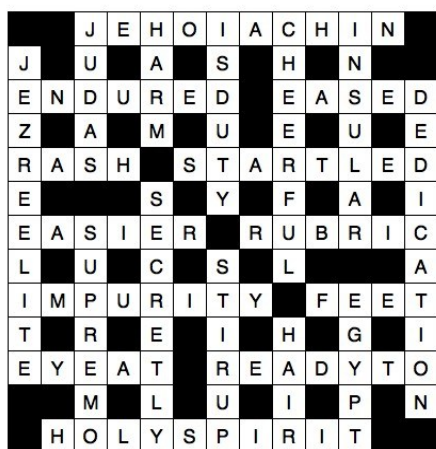
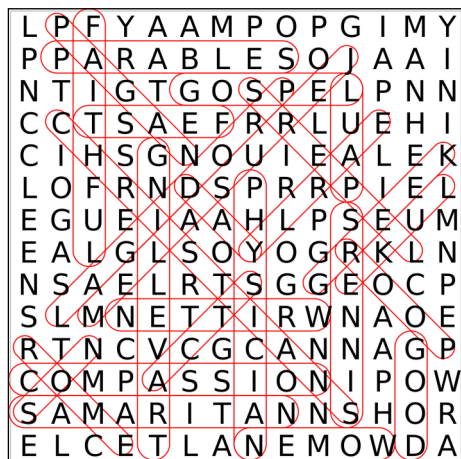
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Easy

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

Medium

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

ALL IN THE MONTH OF OCTOBER

It was:

20 years ago, on 18th to 26th Oct 2005 that Hurricane Wilma, the most intense Atlantic hurricane ever recorded, hit the Caribbean, Central America and the eastern USA. 63 people died. The storm caused £18.1 billion worth of damage.

15 years ago, on 13th Oct 2010 that 33 Chilean miners who had been trapped underground for 69 days following the collapse of the San Jose copper-gold mine were rescued. Around one billion TV viewers around the world watched them being pulled to the surface one-by-one, in a specially designed capsule.

REGISTERS



We welcome in HOLY BAPTISM

S Oswald's

July 6	Atlas Spaccesi Pau Davies
August 24	Jude John Andrew Arnold
	Jasmine Lee Jones
September 7	Hattie Jane Burgess
September 14	Theodore Radoslav Danailov

As God has lent them to us, so we say farewell and give back in HOLY DYING:

S Oswald's

August 28	Lazar Velichkov Lazarov, aged 61
September 9	Edna May Roberts, aged 95



Oswestry Parish Church exists to propagate and nurture the love of God through the teachings of Jesus Christ thereby serving the needs of the whole community and enriching everybody's lives, through worship and prayer.

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