

October 2021

Around Langley



St Francis Church

A FREE magazine published by the
Langley Churches for the people of Langley

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Beauty & Hope

Spring is supposedly the time of beauty and hope, bringing new life to plants and trees and hibernating animals. There is beauty to be found in autumn as well, with leaves turning colour and fruit and vegetables maturing to give the abundance of harvest. And here we are, entering another season of autumn, in October.

One of my favourite hymns starts with the words, O Worship the Lord in the Beauty of Holiness. Beauty of holiness is a phrase that I find hauntingly evocative, as I think of people whom the world would consider plain, or unattractive superficially and yet radiate holiness and goodness: 'with gold of obedience and incense of lowliness', as the hymn goes on continuing its theme of Epiphany. Alfred Agius writes about the Beauty of Jesus in this issue. I am sure we all know people whose inner beauty shines through, in their daily lives and interactions.

John Clare's poem on page 16 helps us reflect on the 'instinct of human hope', while we enter a season of hope, with the cautious opening up of society after the successful vaccination programme. And we hope for improvement in the mental health of all those who suffered during lockdowns, especially young people who have been affected. We hope that hospital beds would be freed up for the treatment of people who have been on long waiting lists. And above all, with COP26 we hope that steps will be taken to reverse global warming, so that the next generations can inherit a beautiful and bountiful earth as we have been fortunate enough to enjoy.

Anna Thomas-Betts

News from Around Langley

Langley Community Coffee Shop



After a slow start, numbers on the 14th of September were encouraging with 19 people attending. It was great to see people chatting about their experiences during lockdown and talking about difficulties they had faced, coping with loneliness or health issues.

It was decided to defer the coach outing until Spring next year when there would be more time to organise the outing and the weather would be more dependable compared to October.

We have been able to organise armchair exercises and these will be conducted by Slough Community Officers. As they are unable to pay the officers, participants will be asked for £1 donation.

On 7th December we will have our annual Christmas Lunch at Wexham Park Golf Club.

So if you would like to make new friends or volunteer to help why not come along to our coffee mornings, held every Tuesday between 10am and 11.30am in St Joseph's Hall. The hall is at the back of the Holy Family Catholic Church in Trelawney Ave.

Sheila Papali

Lighthouse Langley



Lighthouse Langley

is looking for enthusiastic Trustees to help organize and run the holiday club in 2022. Lighthouse is a Christian holiday club for all children between the ages of 3 and 11 years of any faith (<https://lighthousecentral.org/>). You would be joining a group of committed volunteers who want to serve the Langley community and its children and families. Please contact Anna San Jose:

anna@everynation.co.uk

University of the Third Age



You may have heard of the u3a, or to give it its full title, the University of the Third Age. Straight away people think that the u3a is an academic university. Well, I can assure you that it is not, although a lot of learning does go on. Let me explain...

The u3a is an international movement whose aims are to promote the education and stimulation of mainly retired or semi-retired members of the community – those in their third “age” of life. There is no universal model for the u3a, local groups shaping their activities.

Slough u3a is our local group with about 160 members. Members choose from a wide variety of groups and activities. and there is also a monthly meeting for all members, usually with a speaker and light refreshments. Membership costs just £15 a year.

The u3a motto is "learn, laugh, live" and members certainly have great fun learning and experiencing things together. Slough u3a is currently able to offer 21 different interest and activity groups such as Art Appreciation, Creative writing, Local History, Scrabble, Walking and Ukulele.

For a full list of activities and more information about joining Slough U3A, please contact Bob Pedley: 07903 021 711 or info@sloughu3a.com

Christine Isles

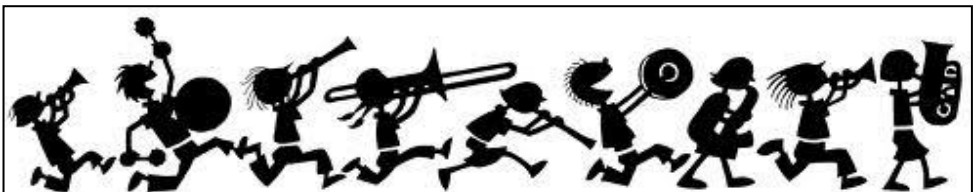
Memories of Teaching RE: by an Agnostic

I have always been interested in religions – different religions – and have read the Bible, both Old and New Testaments, from beginning to end a couple of times (which I bet is more than most of you). It was a bit of an effort and many bits skated over my eyeballs and were lost.

But the Old Testament always fascinated me, not the begats of Genesis but the wonderful stories. Indeed on one occasion when I was teaching first year junior children I was summoned to the headmaster's study and reprimanded for disturbing the whole school.

On that occasion, I was encouraging my class to pile up all the tables and chairs in a heap in the middle of our upstairs classroom and leading them round and round the pile blowing homemade trumpets and beating makeshift drums as loudly as possible to tear down the Walls of Jericho. Well it may have been welcomed by the other pupils, but it certainly wasn't by the rest of the staff!

That was 50 years ago. If I remember rightly there were only two things that by law had to be taught. Not reading, writing or arithmetic, but PE and RE, one lesson a week. I was the only agnostic member of staff then and as far as I could see I was the only one who bothered with the RE lesson. I always stuck to the Old Testament and as far as possible dramatised the wonderful stories. I did worry when I was summoned to the headmaster's study to be told there had been a complaint about me from a parent. Apparently my dramatic description of the Plagues in Egypt had



been responsible for a little boy having nightmares and wetting the bed.

Then – The Creation! Lots of pictures were produced about the happenings of each of the days. But a child asked when it had happened and I answered that some people who studied the bible thought it was 4,000 years ago, and some others thought it was 4.5 billion. Children age 7 find it very hard to visualise 100, no matter 1,000 or one million. So I had an idea and an RE lesson changed into a maths project. I happened to have a very large quantity of scrap Z fold printer paper from which each child cut themselves a 1 inch strip, and then a 10 inch long strip and then one of 100 inches. I cut one of 1,000 inches. One fine windless day I took my class of 30 children out to the playground bearing our highly decorated lengths of paper. We laid out the strips, counting as we did. First the ones, next the tens, and then the hundreds. Finally we unfolded the strip of 1,000 and the children added all theirs counting as they did. We eventually got to 4,330. with the strip was 360 feet long. Perhaps we did get a little excited and noisy, and it was unfortunate that the playground was overlooked by all the classrooms and all the children left their desks and crowded to the windows.

The headmaster was yet again displeased with Mrs S!

In the past 50 years, I hadn't given the Bible much thought. But several of the articles in *Around Langley* recently have

rekindled interest and made me reach for the Bible, the New Testament this time.

But it is unlikely that I will be annoying any more headmasters!

Eileen Stevenson

The new Rector of Langley Marish Introduces Himself ...



It is never easy to know what to say in these introductions as I am not sure that my life is very interesting! I will mention a few things which have had an impact on who I am and how they have shaped me as a person and as a disciple of Jesus.

I was born in Northern Ireland in the midst of the 'Troubles', living in Londonderry, and am familiar with the sight of armed soldiers and regular ID checks as we crossed the River Foyle. The

politics of Northern Ireland is complex, and it is essential to take seriously education and reconciliation as well as recognising within ourselves the deep-rooted prejudices which are damaging to our world.

In 1986 I moved to the Isle of Man; you could not get a bigger contrast! My parents opened a successful hotel business on the sea front and for 14 years we lived and worked in the hotel. The sheer variety of people we got to meet over years was quite overwhelming and memorable. I love the icon of the Trinity by Rublev, which is an invitation to share hospitality with God, oddly enough being brought up in a hotel has shaped how I understand how God extends hospitality to his broken world, and the importance of eating together, having proper rest and being aware of how people around us are feeling.

I went to university in Wales, at a little town in the middle of nowhere called Lampeter. I read Theology and was very much shaped by the Christian community and became very aware of the power of God's Spirit in our midst. I made many good friends there and we are still in touch years later.

I have worked for Marks and Spencer and have spent time in a L'Arche community where I met my wife, Hannah; we married in 2002. L'Arche is an international community which cares for learning disabled adults which began with a vision from Jean Vanier: an

amazing community in which you encounter the fragility of humanity and how we often choose to label others and hide behind masks. Also, that we see Jesus in the vulnerable, the outcast, the forgotten and the unwanted.

I trained for ordination at Trinity College, Bristol and was ordained in 2004. Samuel was born in 2006 and Sophie in 2008. Children have this fantastic gift of keeping one grounded for which I am grateful!

Ministry is transformative, and there are some experiences which have changed me forever, being a school chaplain in Hackney and taking the funerals of two of my pupils (one of whom was shot by her boyfriend) is one of the most formative. I have also been a school governor for both primary and secondary schools, and been responsible for a homeless night shelter as well as being a trustee for various charities for alms houses and education.

In my previous parish we hosted, (and I chaired) hustings for General Elections, local elections and the Referendum on the EU, all of which proved to be boisterous occasions.

I have a passion for building a cross-shaped church community where people of all ages are nurtured and loved, and where we recognise the teacher and learner in one another. I believe worship is where we encounter a God who can and does change lives. The church is a place where we can be a prophetic voice

calling a sinful world to repentance, a place where we can all find life in all its fullness.

You will hear more of my vision for the church and the community as you get to know me...

Father Chris Ferris

All Souls Service at St Mary

***Sunday 31st
October, at 6.30pm***



*A service remembering the departed.
Special invitations will be sent to families
of those who had funerals in the church
recently but everyone is welcome to join
this service which offers comfort, hope
and strength to the bereaved.*

*This service is likely to be streamed also.
Contact the Editor (P. 2) for information.*

Rotary 
Club of Langley & Iver

There's something in the air!
If you want to make a difference
come and see what Rotary is doing.

Coffee Morning

Friday 29th October 10.30-12.00
Christ The Worker Church
Parlaunt Road Langley SL3 8BB.
Contact Liz Jones for more details: 07930
310201

Carols and Readings for Advent at St Mary

*Sunday, 28th November, 6.30pm
(Contact the Editor, p.2, for
information about zooming)*



What did Dante ever do for us?

You may have heard on the media recently that Dante Alighieri, often acclaimed as the greatest Italian Poet, died 700 years ago. Most of us would associate the name Dante with *The Divine Comedy*, the 14,000+ lines of poetry describing the journey of a soul from Hell (infernò) through Purgatory to Paradiso (Heaven); a journey also considered an allegory of human life.

His most important contribution to (Italian) literature is probably that he wrote in vernacular Italian, rather than in Latin as was the practice until then, thus making his work accessible to the ordinary person and paving the way to modern literature.

Poets like Chaucer and Milton are said to have been influenced by Dante. TS Eliot says of him that there was only one other to share pre-eminence with Dante in the modern literary world—that was William Shakespeare.



Another puzzle from Angus MacKenzie

LANGLEY

IN

LEAF

According to the **Friends of Langley Park** website there are over **70** different tree species planted in the Temple Garden.



A



B



C

How many types of
tree can you name
from these
leaf silhouettes?



D



E



F



G



H



I



J

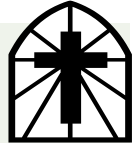


K

All these and more can be found in Langley Park

Answers on Page 13

Regular Weekly Service Times



Holy Family (Roman Catholic) (Trelawney Avenue)

In September we will be having Masses at 5pm on Saturdays and
9.30am and 11.30am on Sundays

The 9.30am Mass is live streamed on our YouTube Channel:
"HOLYFAMILYCHURCHLIVE"

Langley Free Church (Baptist) (Trelawney Avenue)

Please note that there will be services on all Sundays at 10.30am which will be live-streamed on Youtube under 'Langley free Church'; please click subscribe. Those attending church will be expected to wear a mask until seated. Some socially-distanced seating will be provided for those who wish. The pattern of services will be as follows:

First Sunday of the Month: All-age service
Second Sunday: Monthly Communion Service

The Anglican Churches

St Mary (St Mary's Road)

8am Holy Communion (BCP, said)

11am Family Communion

31st October, 6.30pm, All Souls Service

Christ the Worker (Parlaunt Road)

9.30am Holy Communion and Service of the Word, alternating

St Francis of Assisi (London Road)

Holy Communion (**9.30am**) and Service of the Word (**11am**) on alternate Sundays.

Regular Church Activities at Langley Free Church

Bible Study

The two Thursday Bible Study Groups of Langley Free Church have started meeting now. One group meets in the morning and the other in the evening. The sessions are based on Biblical text, Biblical characters or the Christian perspective on contemporary issues. All are welcome. For more, please email secretary@langleyfree.org.uk or phone the church number 01753 540771

Mondays at LFC

If it's company you're after, why not join us, at Langley Free Church on a Monday? We are open between 10.30am and 2.45pm. Enjoy a cuppa and a chat, or maybe play a board game, tackle a puzzle, or even bring your own hobby.

Come for an hour or two, or stay for longer. We'd love to see you. Please bring your own lunch with you. (There is an entry charge of £2.)

Chatcaf coffee morning @ LFC

The first and third Saturdays of the month, 10am-12noon



No charge! Feel free to drop in for coffee/tea and toast and a chat!

Oasis at Langley Free

Wednesdays from 1.30 to 3.30pm

A time of worship and speakers, and some informal time with refreshments, and occasional meals out.

Programme for October:

6th Favourite Parables; 13th John Bernard; 20th Yes and Sharing; 27th Thames Hospice

Contact: Ann Portsmouth on 01753 585845

Craft Afternoons at LFC



We are a friendly group who meet in Langley Free Church on the third Saturday of every month (except December), to enjoy a few hours together, (anytime between 12 and 4) crafting, including knitting, sewing, crochet, card making, jewellery making, cross stitch and colouring. And... if you want to learn a new craft, then we'll try to help you.

There is always plenty of tea/ coffee and cake on offer, not to mention a lot of chat! Do consider joining us. Suggested donation of £2 towards refreshments.

Possible dates for 2021 are 18th September, 16th October and 20th November. Contact: Chris Wheatley – 07789 838 500





Faith Matters

The Beauty of Jesus Christ

Many of us know the Anglican hymn: "All things bright and beautiful, ... the Lord God made them all". The first line of John Keats' *Endymion* I studied as a boy, comes to mind: "a thing of beauty is a joy forever." As we grow up however, we begin to realize that beauty is sometimes subjective. Hence the saying, "beauty is in the eye of the beholder". Moreover, beauty in nature is ephemeral. In the words of the Bible: "All people are like grass and their glory is like the flower of the fields; the grass withers and the flowers fall." (1Pet. 1:24-5). The evil spirit too, who is the "father of lies" (Jn 8:44) is a past master in disguising himself as the angel of light. This then begs the question: what is beauty?

It came as a revelation to me when in my metaphysics course in philosophy, I came across a thesis which purports to show that 'every being is beautiful'. Created beauty is an element of everything that exists reflecting the transcendental uncreated beauty of the Creator. There is beauty then in each one of us, reflecting, however faintly, the infinite beauty of God. Besides beautiful physical features, there is in us the beauty of human love, a kind gesture, an understanding and a

forgiving heart, intelligence, wisdom and much else. God sees in each one of us a reflection of Himself, no matter how disfigured by sin. In our human experience we can see the beauty of goodness, truth, love, justice and mercy in people. Though distinct one from the other in us, in God these attributes are all one in a way we cannot understand. I would like then to define beauty as whatever bears the imprint of God.

In Jesus Christ God has shown us his self-giving gratuitous love. The Church speaks of Jesus as "the image of the unseen God, the first born of all creation and the first born from the dead". But his appearance among us was like that of any other human being. The gospels were written decades after his ascension to heaven. We might wonder why, in becoming a human being, Jesus did not choose to be born in our digital age which would have told us exactly what he looked like as a man. The gospels tell us practically nothing about the physical features of Jesus though we might rightly assume that he was typically Jewish, probably taking after Maryam, his mother. His transfiguration on Mt Tabor was only a fleeting preview of his glorification. The radiant beauty of Jesus Christ lies not in what he looked like as a Jew but in what his personality showed

itself to be in his words and especially in his loving deeds.

To unveil the beauty aspect of Jesus' personality, rather than his physical appearance, the best we can do is to read St Augustine's "Exposition of the Psalms". Fr Gerald O'Collins, an Australian Jesuit theologian, has recently written a book entitled "The Beauty of Jesus Christ", apparently the first book on the subject since St Augustine in which he highlights and broadens Augustine's commentary. He takes the reader through the beauty aspect of Jesus from his birth through to his childhood, hidden life and public ministry. He dwells in some detail on some miracles, the encounters with individuals like Nicodemus and the Samaritan woman, raising up the dead, his parables notably that of the good Samaritan and that of the prodigal son in which his focus is the father rather than either of the two sons.

St Augustine also reflects on the passion and death of Jesus. In a bold statement, a daring paradox, he writes that Jesus was "beautiful on the cross". What looks like the ugliest moment of all, his tortured death on the cross is, to the one who truly knows Jesus, the evidence and the beauty of his infinite love. "No greater love does a man have than to lay down his life for his friend." (Jn15:13). The impending joy beyond belief for Jesus' friends,

unknown to them, was about to be experienced. Medieval English saints like St Anselm of Canterbury and the mystic Julian of Norwich recall the saying of Jesus: "So you have sorrow now, but I will see you again, and your hearts will rejoice, and no one will take your joy from you." (Jn16:20-2).

In his *Confessions* St Augustine describes God as the "Beauty of all things beautiful" poignantly adding later, "Late have I loved you, Beauty so ancient and so new." We too have to say this of Jesus who himself told Philip, "To see me is to see the Father." The Swiss theologian H.U. von Balthasar says of Jesus: "God's eternal beauty becomes a man."

Pope Francis stands out among the popes who spoke about the beauty of Jesus Christ. In his first encyclical letter "The Joy of the Gospel" he wrote: "To proclaim Christ means showing that to believe in and follow Him is not only something right and true but also something beautiful. Beauty is a means of touching the human heart and enabling the truth and goodness of the risen Christ to radiate within it. The incarnation is the revelation of infinite beauty." And only recently he said in a homily, "The Cross reveals to us the 'Beauty of God's love.'"

Alfred Agius

Answers to Puzzle on page 9

A: Silver Birch; B: Ash; C: Sycamore; D: Atlas Cedar; E: Oak; F: Tree of Heaven; G: Horse Chestnut; H: Beech; I: Field Maple J: Mountain Ash / Rowan; K: Scots Pine

The Creeds (4)

... was made Man

As we saw last month, we state our belief in the Son after our belief in God, the Father and Creator and that the Nicene Creed explains at length the nature of God Incarnate.

The rest of the summary of Jesus' life are not very different in the two Creeds. In the Apostles' Creed we have

*I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was **conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary**, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come to judge the living and the dead.*

And the Nicene Creed from Common Worship (Church of England) says: *We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God...*

For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven, was incarnate from the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary and was made man. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.

There are minor differences in the description of the conception of Jesus. It

is interesting to recall that the previous (Anglican) version was like the Roman Catholic version: *By the power of the Holy Spirit He was born of the Virgin Mary.* There were many hours of debate about the actual words approved for general use in Common Worship—does the '*power of the Holy Spirit*' imply less choice by free will on the part of Mary, for example; and what is the best translation to use for the word *ek* linking the Holy Spirit and Virgin Mary in the original Greek.

In this, the core belief in Jesus, that unites Christendom, one thing is clear: he **was made man**, as explicitly stated in the Nicene Creed and implied in the Apostles' Creed. We note again the economy of language about his life: what he did, what he said, why he was crucified and details of his life. There are just a few timelines for to believe in: birth, death, resurrection and ascension; then in the future, the second coming.

Both Muslims and Jews would profess faith in Jesus Christ, but what distinguishes Christian beliefs from that of the other Abrahamic faiths is precisely that: Jesus may have been a great prophet and hugely respected for that, but he was not divine, Son of God. Nor did he rise from the dead. But this is crucial for



A late 16th Century t
Met Museum



apestry illustrating the Apostles' Creed from the
m <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collectionsearch/468567>

that Christianity is not unique in believing in incarnation, or God coming into the world in the flesh. The word *avatar* (defined in the Oxford English Dictionary as 'A manifestation of a deity ... in bodily form') which is used commonly these days, originates in Hinduism. Hindus believe that there are ten avatars of God coming to earth in the form of living beings, in appropriate forms, to save the world from catastrophe. Nine already happened over many millennia in the past, and the tenth is awaited.

However, to the Christian, Incarnation is a unique event, faith in which, and the good works that should follow, has a redemptive value bringing the creature in union with the creator. The Nicene Creed makes this explicit in the statement, '*for us and our salvation he came down from heaven*'. This is the only reference we get in the creeds as to the purpose of the events (and persons) we believe in. That is, apart from the reference to the future, his second coming, when '*he will come to judge the living and the dead*'.

These two themes are linked, of course. He came down from heaven, was made man, for our salvation. But salvation is not something that is a one-off personal gift to us, but a dynamic, organic process. It should lead us to action that will ultimately result in our Lord saying to us at his Second Coming, 'What you did for the least of these my brethren, you did for me'.

Anna Thomas-Betts

Christians: there would be no Christianity without the resurrection and ascension.

The Creeds later affirm our faith in the resurrection of the body, but at this point, we acknowledge it indirectly. We believe that Jesus will come again (in glory) to judge the living and the dead. So without explicitly saying it, we acknowledge Jesus to be God, sitting at the right hand of the Father.

It is difficult to say those words without recalling the parable of the sheep and the goats, and what judgement means, although once again the Creeds do not force us to profess faith in the nature of the judgement or the consequences of it.

It is probably worth recalling at this stage

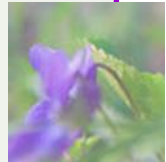
The Instinct of Hope

John Clare

*Is there another world for this frail dust
To warm with life and be itself again?
Something about me daily speaks there must,
And why should instinct nourish hopes in vain?*

*'Tis nature's prophesy that such will be,
And everything seems struggling to explain
The close sealed volume of its mystery.
Time wandering onward keeps its usual pace
As seeming anxious of eternity,
To meet that calm and find a resting place.*

*E'en the small violet feels a future power
And waits each year renewing blooms to bring,
And surely man is no inferior flower
To die unworthy of a second spring?*



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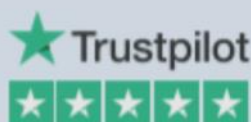
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Langley,
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Parish Directory

St Mary's Church

www.langleymarish.com/stmary

Team Rector: Rev. Chris Ferris 07910 077885 rectoroflangley@gmail.com

Hall Lettings: Simona de Gregorio. tel. 07968 408813
churchcentre@hotmail.com

Parish Administrator: Mrs Dalletta Reed 01753 541042 langleyymarish@gmail.com

St Francis Church

Rev. Chris Ferris 07910 077885 rectoroflangley@gmail.com

www.langleymarish.com/stfrancis

Hall Hire: Mrs Joy Raynor 01753 676011 joyraynor@aol.com

Licensed Lay Minister: Mr Bill Birmingham 01753 548646 billbirmingham@gmail.com

Christ the Worker Church

www.langleymarish.com/c-t-w/

Rev. Shola Aoko 01753 547025 shola_aoko@yahoo.co.uk

Hall Lettings: Simona de Gregorio. tel. 07968 408813 ctw.langley@gmail.com

Holy Family Catholic Church

www.holyfamily.co.uk

Parish Priest: Canon Kevin O'Driscoll

Deacon: Rev. Graham Jones

Hall Hire: Mrs Maria Boland

All above contactable at 01753 543770 holyfamilylangley@yahoo.co.uk

Parish Worker: Mr Kieran McKeown 01753 543770 kieranmckeown50@yahoo.co.uk

Langley Free Church

www.langleymfreechurch.org.uk

Pastor Rev. John Bernard 01753 473219 pastor@langleyfree.org.uk

Hall Hire: 01753 540771 bookings@langleyfree.org.uk

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