

February 2022

Around Langley



Canal Boats by Langley Railway Station

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

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Pilgrimage to the Holy Land, 2023



Rev. Chris Ferris, Rector of Langley Marish, will be leading a Pilgrimage to the Holy Land for 10 days, starting on January 30th.

We will spend time in Jerusalem as well as the towns around the Sea of Galilee. Cost is around £2,000, all inclusive.

For more information please contact Rev. Chris Ferris on 07910 077885



We are proposing to run a Youth Alpha course, starting Thursday 24th February at 7.15pm. This will probably be at St Mary's Rectory and is intended for all secondary school aged children. It is also a course to prepare those who wish to be Confirmed. (Food may be provided.)

For more information please contact Rev Chris Ferris on 07910 077885
Or email: rectoroflangley@gmail.com

A New Year, A New Beginning?

Not yet February as I write this, and the Prime Minister has abandoned 'Plan B' and lifted all Coronavirus-related restrictions. I have never envied the Government having to make decisions for the country—balancing the scientific evidence



Can spring be far behind?

to limit the infections against the other needs of the people. Now also there are strong voices condoning the lifting of restrictions as well as complaining that they shouldn't have been there in the first place. I guess many of us will continue to wear masks in public and avoid unnecessarily going into crowded places. Let us hope that most people will exercise their common sense and avoid unnecessary risks: for their own sakes as well as that of the public.

The death of Archbishop Tutu, although not too untimely in a sense, was a sad occasion and there has been many a reflection on his life and personality in the media. The past Archbishop of Canterbury commented on how comfortable Archbishop Tutu was in his own skin, as it were. But, being Rowan Williams, he put it a little differently. About such people he says, "That doesn't mean that they are arrogant or self-obsessed... They have learnt to sense some of the joy that God takes in them. In that sense, Desmond Tutu manifestly loved being Desmond Tutu. ... it makes me feel that just possibly, by God's infinite grace, I could love being Rowan Williams in the way Desmond loves being Desmond Tutu." Those of us who feel weighed down by our own inadequacies could usefully echo that sentiment!

We live in uncertain political times as 2022 begins to unfold! Who knows who will be our Prime Minister in a month's time; who knows what will happen in Ukraine.. All that on top of the fears about possible new variants of Covid-19. I guess I am not the only one to feel unsettled at the moment. But let us hope for a brighter and happier year to come.

Anna Thomas-Betts

News from Around Langley

Langley Community Coffee Shop



Last December returned to something near normal in the Coffee Shop, with our Christmas luncheon at Wexham Golf Course on 9th December actually taking place. Previous outings planned for October and November were cancelled due to the fear of Covid. The lunch was excellent, with hot food—and roast potatoes to everyone's satisfaction! The 31 people who attended all thoroughly enjoyed themselves. The end-of-year function the following week was also very enjoyable with Friends of Langley Park Bellringers providing tunes of carols to which we were all able to sing along. It was good to hear that the bellringers have recently contributed a defibrillator to Langley Park, and this is now situated outside the café.

The armchair exercise classes have proved to be very popular and Sam, the trainer, was able to resume classes on 11th January, having come down with Covid during the Christmas break. So we shall be continuing with these exercises every week except when we have speakers. This month's talk, on 15th February, will be given by Peter Dopson, on his and Linda's cruise to the Canary Islands.

If you would like to meet new people, have some exercise, or help on one of the teams with serving coffee and tea, please do come along. Also please remember if you have been among crowds or been to the shops, please take a lateral flow test when you come, in order to protect everyone in the group.

Sheila Papali

A Choir Waiting to Welcome You—in Slough!



When I was in the sixth form at a Langley School, many, many years ago, I was encouraged by my school music teacher to join Slough Philharmonic Chorus. It proved to be one of the best things that I have ever done; it launched me on a long journey of a love of choral music which is still with me and has brought much joy.

I sang with the choir for a few years, then headed off to Music College for professional study (important to say that I don't have a great voice!). My principal studies were piano and 'cello but I sought every opportunity to sing with choirs – experiences and places

that I will never forget, and friends made.

My teaching career followed, and choir training became my new passion; notably at Langley Parish Church. Singing is the most basic and natural form of music making. Leading people into this world has been both rewarding and fulfilling. There is so much music to explore that you can never get bored, but simply count the days until your favourite pieces come round again.

In August 2021, I was contacted by Slough Philharmonic Society as circumstances had meant that they needed a choral conductor to cover rehearsals in the Autumn Term. I agreed to help. This lovely choir that inspired me has been there all that time, decades of nurturing a love of singing, fellowship with like-minded people and concerts that excite singers and audiences alike. I am so pleased that I had the chance to be involved again. It was a great term.

Slough Philharmonic Choir has a very special advantage over many similar groups, as the Society has a Symphony Orchestra which is one of the best in the

South of England. So an 'oven ready', quality accompaniment is available to this choir for all performances. We are in a very special place.

We are longing to recruit new singers, to share our music. Everyone has a voice – come and meet us on any Monday evening in term time at Burnham Grammar School 7.30pm – 9.30pm and sing along. Parking is easy and it's a new and comfortable building. We will be ready to welcome you and this term our music will include some of the beautiful choruses from Haydn's Creation.

Thank you, Slough, for giving me my earliest musical experiences and Slough Philharmonic Society for helping to develop my passion, also to my music teacher who opened this door.

Gillian Dibden MBE

Archbishop Desmond Tutu (aka The Arch)

Archbishop Tutu of South Africa, a man of deep faith, Nobel Laureate (for Peace), freedom fighter against Apartheid, and an ardent peacemaker in post-Apartheid South Africa through his Truth and Reconciliation mission, died aged 90 in December 2021. The world lost a most remarkable person with tributes and messages of sadness and condolence coming from rulers of nations such as HM the Queen and President Joe Biden, as well as the humblest people from areas like Soweto.





He was the first Black African Bishop in Johannesburg and the first black person to head the Anglican Province of South Africa. He has said that his desire to become a priest dates back to a particular day in his childhood when Father Trevor Huddleston, a white priest, tipped his hat to his mother as he passed them on the street. Such a show of respect to a black woman by a white man was unheard of in the Apartheid era. Desmond was just a child and was profoundly affected by it.

As an Anglican Bishop his was fearless in his opposition to Apartheid, calling for economic boycott against the South African regime and supporting civil disobedience. He did not support violence, however, and it was for his advocacy of non-violence in the fight against the brutal Apartheid regime that he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize.

After the end of that struggle, and after Nelson Mandela became the first democratically elected president under full franchise, the Arch was appointed as head of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, reviewing all that happened under Apartheid.

The Commission brought together perpetrators and victims of racial violence so that there could be an acknowledgement of what it all meant to the nation as they moved forward together to forge the 'Rainbow Nation'. The whole process was a most painful experience for him, and he was often seen to be in tears during the hearings. It was through that experience that he was able to understand what forgiveness meant: "Forgiving is not forgetting– it is in fact, remembering. Remembering and not using your right to hit back. It is a second chance for a new beginning. Remembering is important, especially if you don't want to repeat it."

His laughter and dancing and *joie de vivre* was infectious. Probably the driving force for him was his belief that *all* were precious to God. That is what made him equally at home with poor people living in squalor amidst rubbish and broken glass as with high-powered international leaders.

Anna Thomas-Betts

"If you are neutral in situations of injustice, you have chosen the side of the oppressor. If an elephant has its foot on the tail of a mouse, and you say that you are neutral, the mouse will not appreciate your neutrality."
- Archbishop Desmond Tutu



Traidcraft Exchange are inviting us to join their Big Brew project during the fortnight 21st February to 6th March. Yes, as we have explained in this magazine before, 'Traid' is correctly spelt in this context and stands for 'Trade-Aid'. This is part of the campaign to help producers such as farmers and craft workers receive a fair price for their produce. Their aim is to fight back against Climate Change, invest in green technology and protect their land and livelihoods for generations to come.

The fairly-traded goods are sold online (<https://www.traidcraftshop.co.uk/>) as well as through the efforts of volunteers throughout the country. The products range widely – having started over forty years ago with tea and coffee, they have expanded into dried fruit, cookies, chocolates, olive oil ... and so forth, as well as clothes and general items for the home. The Langley churches hold Traidcraft Stalls regularly, selling a variety of fairly-traded goods for the food cupboard, and taking orders for other goods available in their interesting catalogue.

Apart from their sale of goods, they depend on voluntary contributions and

fundraising events such as Big Brew to carry on with their work. It is planned to have Big Brew events in various churches during the last week of February and first week of March. So, if you

fancy a cuppa and delicious home made cake,
knowing that you are helping to fight climate change
by raising funds for farmers who are regenerating their land with climate-resilient crops and renewable technologies
sustaining the earth for future generations and
funding a system which protects workers and the environment from exploitation,

do join in at one of our community Big Brew events. Details will be on the Langley Marish website and the parish Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/ParishofLangley>)



Look out for posters and also for Big Brew and sales of Fairtrade goods at the churches:

St Francis, Thursday 3rd March 2.30-4pm
Christ the Worker, Friday 4th March,
11am-12.30pm
St Mary, Sunday 6th March,
12.15-1.30pm

A Hymn for Everyone...

One of my favourite hymns starts 'Come Down O Love Divine'. It struck me recently that this hymn is a prayer that anyone could make their own, certainly if they believe in a loving God, whatever their faith.

The lyrics date back to an Italian poem by a mystic from Siena in the 14th Century. It was not translated into English until late 19th Century, but its popularity was assured only after it appeared in the first edition of English Hymnal at the turn of the 20th Century. In Churches it is sung quite often, but especially at festivals like Pentecost and special events like weddings, Baptisms and Confirmation.

The first verse is simply an invocation of the Divine Love to come into our hearts so that lit by it we may shine:

*Come down, O Love divine,
seek thou this soul of mine,
and visit it with thine own ardour
glowing;
O Comforter, draw near,
within my heart appear,
and kindle it, thy holy flame bestowing.*

It is the third verse that moves me most:

*Let holy charity
mine outward vesture be,
and lowliness become my inner clothing;
true lowliness of heart
which takes the humbler part,
and o'er its own shortcomings
weeps with loathing.*



The Village Church in Down Ampney

Charity, as in the King James Version of the Bible, I take to mean *agape*, love. The world needs people who are humble at heart, filled with love and willing to stand alongside the lowly and the oppressed. This is surely something that can inspire all human beings, irrespective of their faith.

The final verse represents the longing of the human soul for God.

*And so the yearning strong
with which the soul will long
shall far surpass the power of human
telling;
for none can guess its grace
till we become the place
wherein the Holy Spirit makes his
dwelling.*

Here there is a reference to the Holy Spirit, which has a special significance for Christians, but a yearning for the Divine Presence within us, is not a strange concept in other religions either. Mystics of most religions talk about the soul's longing for its Creator, or Source.

So, here we have a hymn, or poem, that helps us all to meditate on our calling to

become a place where God himself can 'make his dwelling'. The tune we sing it to is also interesting. It was composed by Ralph Vaughn Williams, for publication in the English Hymnal, and is known as Down Ampney.

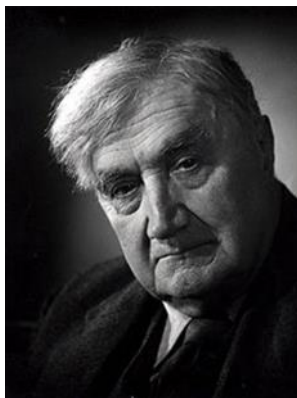
'Down Ampney'

The popular hymn Come Down O love Divine is usually sung to the tune called Down Ampney, composed by Ralph Vaugh Williams (RVW). Down Ampney is the name of a village in Gloucestershire, where RVW was born in 1872 and where his father was the Vicar. Educated at Trinity College, Cambridge, and Royal College of Music, he worked with many important composers of the 20th Century, including Maurice Ravel, Max Bruch, Gustav Holst, Hubert Parry, and Charles V. Stanford,

RVW became a prolific composer and wrote an enormous variety of musical works, from Symphonies to choral and solo vocal pieces, songs, motets, and even film music. Most of our readers will be familiar with the haunting music of 'The Lark Ascending', with the high-soaring violin part. He loved poetry and has set many poems to music.

He fought in the first World War and was deeply affected by his experiences. His major choral, anti-war work, 'Dona Nobis Pacem', has a section consisting of a Walt Whitman poem in its entirety.

Although a self-confessed agnostic, RVW has written a huge amount of religious music, including the motet 'O Taste and See how Gracious the Lord is', written for the coronation of HM Queen Elizabeth. It is said that RVW broke loose from the tight influence of Continental music on the music scene in England. He was



Ralph Vaughn Williams

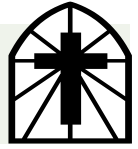
greatly influenced by English folk music, which he collected assiduously. So, for example, the well-loved Christmas carol, O Little Town of Bethlehem' was an English traditional melody, and the Easter hymn, 'Christ the Lord is Risen Again', a French medieval melody, both harmonised by him. .

As he was the co-editor of the first English Hymnal, he had plenty of opportunity to exercise his love of church music. Well worth a mention among the thirty or so attributions to him in the New English Hymnal are, 'I heard the voice of Jesus say, Come Unto me and Rest' with its unmistakably folksy lilts and Chesterton's poem 'O God of Earth and Altar' set to an 'English melody' that is both a lament and a cry for help.

October 2022 sees the 150th anniversary of the birth of Ralph Vaugh Williams. I suspect we shall be hearing a lot more about him and his work in the months to come.

Anna Thomas-Betts

Regular Weekly Service Times



Holy Family (Roman Catholic) (Trelawney Avenue)

In February 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. Those attending church will be expected to wear a mask until seated. Communion will be as normal, or using individual, disposable plastic cups. The pattern of services will be as follows:

- 6th All age service
- 13th Communion service
- 20th Ordinary service
- 27th Ordinary service

The Anglican Churches

St Mary (St Mary's Road)

8am Holy Communion (BCP, said)

11am Family Communion

Christ the Worker (Parlaunt Road)

9.30am Holy Communion on Second and Fourth Sundays

11am Service of the Word on First, Third and Fifth Sunday

St Francis of Assisi (London Road)

9.30am Holy Communion on First, Second and Third Sundays .

11am Service of the Word (all-age) on Fourth Sunday.

9.30am Fifth Sunday, no fixed format

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 information email secretary@langleyfree.org.uk or phone the church number 01753 540771

'MONDAYS'

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 2.30pm. Enjoy a cuppa and a chat, or maybe board games and table tennis; tackle a puzzle, or even bring your own craft or hobby.

Come for an hour or two, or stay for longer. Lunch is not provided, so **please bring your own lunch with you**. Optionally, there will be a Fish and Chips run on the first Monday of the month. Entry charge: £2.

Chatcaf coffee morning @ LFC



The first and third Saturdays (5th and 19th in February) 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, with refreshments, and occasional meals out.

Programme for February:

2nd Judy Brady 9th Previous Things

16th Tea and Sharing 23rd Speaker from

Embrace the Middle East

Contact: Ann Portsmouth on 01753 585845



Craft Afternoons 2022 at LFC 12—4pm

We meet on the third Saturday of every month (except December). We are a friendly group of people who enjoy getting together over a cup of tea and cake. Some bring knitting or sewing, others crochet, cards or jewellery to make. Colouring in and 5D diamond painting are also popular. But you don't need to bring anything, just come along for the company. (Suggested donation of £2 towards refreshments.)

Pop along anytime between 12 and 4pm to Langley Free Church, 100 Trelawney Avenue, SL3 8RW.

For more information, contact: Chris Wheatley – 07789 838 500



Faith Matters

Synodality

In Genesis, the first book of the Bible, we read: "God (*Elohim*, which is a plural form) said, 'let us make man, in the likeness of ourselves.' Later, God refers to the Jewish people collectively as "my son" in the singular: "When Israel was a child...I called my son out of Egypt (Hos.11.1). So God refers to Himself in the plural and to the Jewish people in the singular. On the face of it this seems somewhat puzzling. We too profess the Church to be One in our Creed and yet we know that in this One Church there is a great diversity of God's gifts and a diversity of people who receive them. Many Christians worship differently, have different rites and some are not fully in communion with each other. Yet all Christians together are one body, the Church. They all have the same one baptism, one profession of faith, one Spirit.

All Christians identify Pentecost as the birth of the Church when the One Spirit descended on a multiplicity of persons. The book of the Acts of the Apostles and the letters of St Paul are the main sources that tell us how the Church rapidly developed separate from Judaism. Faith in Jesus Christ and his message, the sharing of goods so that nobody was in need and praying together were among the first characteristics of this new, fast growing group of Jews. The Church was

soon called upon to make more decisions that would progressively mark its identity. The first was an internal problem, fairness in the distribution of food to the needy. Identifying the individuals who would see to this was down to the community but the mission was given to them by the Apostles. Fundamental to the future of the Church was the decision to open up the Church to non-Jews as Peter and other Jewish believers saw the Holy Spirit come down on non-Jews. Major decisions were taken collectively: "The apostles and the elders, with the consent of the whole church decided..." (Acts 15:22). Before being known as Christians, a name the people of Antioch gave them, the first believers were known as "followers of the Way". Did Jesus not refer to himself as The Way? It is from here that the word Synodality comes. It is made up of two Greek words, *syn* (together) + *odos* (way or journey). Christians are people who journey together on the same way or road, guided by the Spirit.



The collective nature of the Church, this plurality of persons held together as one by the Holy Spirit was from the start a shared awareness. However, the Church's collectiveness has over the years become understood differently by different groupings within Christianity. Roman Catholics base their stance on the words of Jesus "You are Peter and on this rock I will build my church". They hold that the Pope is the successor of Peter and that the Pope, although himself elected, is vested with the primacy which Jesus conferred on Peter. For Catholics, allegiance to the Pope is the sign of the unity of the Church which Jesus founded. For the Orthodox churches however, the supreme authority lies with the Holy Synod, the highest decision-making body. For Anglicans the General Synod of the Church of England formed of the House of Bishops, the House of Clergy and the House of Laity is the supreme governing body. Paradoxically but crucially, *all* Christians are baptised in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit and it is this baptism that makes them members of the body of Christ.

When I think of divisions among Christians, I look at the wound in the side of the crucified Christ and I think of the harm our forebears inflicted on his body, which is the Church. Yes, we pray, but do not do much else, to enjoy what Christ still wants and prayed for at the last supper "that they may all be one" (Jn 17:21). What priority do the Christian churches give to ecumenism, today?

In the Catholic Church the term and the exercise of synodality was not commonly used before the Vatican Council II. Since then, a limited form of it has been introduced to mean a number of high-ranking chosen clerics who meet every three years to focus on issues in the church e.g. the Family, Young People etc. After fifteen synods of this type, Pope Francis has now moved one step forward by convoking the next synod in 2023 calling it a "Synod on Synodality".

To set the ball rolling he has asked all the dioceses in the world to hold a synod each in their own diocese involving as many Catholics as possible, especially lay people. He has reminded Catholics that a 'Synod is not an investigation into opinions but an ecclesial moment whose protagonist is the Holy Spirit': 'Without the Holy Spirit, there is no Synod'.

In the exercise of synodality, he emphasises two things: (a) that in the synodal process Catholics should be wary of complacency, which he calls 'a poison in the Church' and (b) to look at the Church more as 'the People of God' rather than as an institution. In previous writings he has spoken of the Church as 'a field hospital'. Pope Francis encourages us to recall the words of Jesus to his disciples (Lk 12:32): "Do not be afraid little flock, for your Father has been pleased to give you the kingdom, a kingdom not of this world"

Alfred Agius

The Creeds (7)

... the Life to Come

In the earlier parts of the Creeds, we profess our belief in God, the Father and Creator, his only begotten Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit, the Counsellor who gives us life. We then go on to proclaim our faith in the Holy Catholic church, and finally to the means of grace that will sustain us to the end.

The last section in the Creeds deals with forgiveness of sins, resurrection of the body and the life hereafter. Apostles' Creed goes: *[I believe in...]*

*the communion of saints
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting*

while the Nicene Creed has:

*We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.
We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come.*

The 'communion of saints' is only mentioned in the Apostles' Creed. Of the several interpretations existing, the traditional one is that it means 'the spiritual union existing between Christ and every Christian, and therefore between Christians whether in Heaven or on earth. When I have lost someone special to me, who had a strong faith, the belief in the communion of saints has been a huge comfort to me. The knowledge that I am standing alongside the saints in worship and prayer, especially intercessory prayer, is most

valuable to me. It is not clear why it is not mentioned explicitly in the Nicene Creed.

As we have seen in earlier sections, the Nicene Creed is more expansive in general: so here we believe not just in the forgiveness of sins, but we 'acknowledge' that there is one baptism, through which comes forgiveness. What do we understand by the forgiveness of sins, I wonder. It is a concept Dr Rowan Williams described as equally difficult to believe in as the Virgin birth or Resurrection.

Baptism has been treated as the sacramental rite that admits believers to the Christian Church and practised since Apostles' time. The baptism of Jesus himself, and his conversation with Nicodemus about regeneration through water *and* the Spirit' was no doubt why it became an initiation rite in the early church. Acts of the Apostles cites several instances where the baptism was in the 'name of Jesus Christ', but by the Third Century when the Creeds were being formulated, baptismal vows included belief in Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The emphasis on 'one' baptism is also interesting and was historically significant because re-baptisms were occurring too often in the early church. Most mainline Christian churches now recognise each other's baptisms. So, while someone from one church might be inducted into another, there is no re-baptising.

There is another question about the phrase, 'one baptism for the forgiveness of sins'; and this is where the Nicene expansion of the concept can lead to more

confusion than clarity. Do we mean that once you are baptised, all your sins are forgiven for ever? To quote St Paul, "Shall we continue in sin so that grace may increase?" Paul answers the question himself: "Certainly not! How can we who died to sin [through baptism] live in it any longer?" The Apostles' Creed leaves us more room to interpret forgiveness as a gift of God given graciously to those who repent of their sin and seek his forgiveness.



We 'believe in the resurrection of the body' or 'We look to the resurrection of the dead': another fundamental part of our belief. Jesus' own message to his disciples was that he himself will rise from the dead, and that he is going to prepare a place for us also so that we could be with him. Indeed, the belief that at the "second coming of Christ" departed souls will be restored to a bodily life and the saved... will enter the life of heaven is a fundamental element in the Christian doctrine" (Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Faith, Ed. F. L. Cross).

Since we were created in the image of God, with body and soul, we could understand resurrection to mean a restoration of the body, although most people would wonder about how a reconstruction of the body might actually happen. Paul's first letter to the Corinthians (Ch 15) explains that in his view the resurrection will be new and

spiritual. The whole chapter is concerned with resurrection: of Christ, and its link with what is promised to us. This has resonances with Jesus' own retort to those who questioned him about a seven-times married woman and whose wife she

would be after resurrection: 'At the resurrection people will neither marry nor be given in marriage; they will be like the angels in heaven.'

Both Creeds conclude with our belief in the life to come—which we can lay claim to as believers in Christ. This has been alluded to already while confessing that 'he will come again to judge the living and the dead'. We hope that the judgement of God will be tempered with his infinite mercy. What 'life everlasting' means, we can barely imagine.

While we reflect on the Creeds that we use, it is striking that Holy Communion (or the Eucharist or the Lord's Supper), one of the central sacraments of the churches that say the Creed, does not get a mention in them.

So we come to the end of our look at the two most commonly used forms of the Creed, by which we remind ourselves about our core beliefs week by week. This is how we earth ourselves in our common beliefs which at least partly hold us together.

Anna Thomas-Betts

'Who Am I?'

I am not sure if I could cope with being a teenager again. Not that my own experience was particularly traumatic, but it is not something that I wish to repeat!

Experts tell us that the teenage years are a time when we ask that vital question, 'who am I?' While working as a school chaplain in a particularly difficult part of Hackney, I got to value greatly the wisdom of the many teenagers I encountered, who were wrestling with this question, and I learned a great deal from their world view.

Times of transition are times of discovery; and when such discovery is mastered with acute honesty; then we might just enter adulthood with our sanity reasonably intact(!) and with a sense of purpose.

I first became aware of a vocation to the priesthood in my school chapel when I had solemnly reached the conclusion that God did not in fact exist and that I had no interest in being a Christian at all. I can still hear God having a chuckle in the background! It is good to ask questions and to work out who we are whatever age we might be, whatever stage we might be at in life; for these fundamental questions are the stuff that gives us life and meaning.

Having survived Christmas and new year, we have begun our journey through 2022; who knows what this year will bring. Time goes quicker the older you get, yet I still want to ponder the question which makes

teenagers tick: 'who am I?' An ancient tribe of people asked the same question when they were in exile in Babylon (modern day Iraq) and came to the conclusion that we are made in the

sacred image of God, that we are created with purpose and that none of us is an accident. These people compiled a book known as Genesis in the Old Testament of the Bible. They took seriously the world around them and asked questions about evil, suffering, sin and human guilt and still came to the conclusion that God somehow held all things together. I believe the same, and as we see our world in a serious state of transition and uncertainty, and as our political discourse shows signs of real instability; it is the challenges of faith that help us to gain some perspective in this post-modern, post-Christian and post-secular world. Who or what gives us meaning? The answer to that question can change everything.



Rev. Chris Ferris

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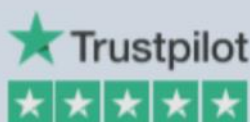
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More details are available on the church website. For an informal conversation about this post, please contact our Operations Manager, Markus Marshall on 0747 6228 227 or opsmanager@stpaulsslough.org.uk

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

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

St Francis Church

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

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

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

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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

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

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