

Parish Magazine for
Wem, Lee Brockhurst and Weston-under-Redcastle

February 2021



**In response to reaching the terrible milestone
of 100,000 deaths from COVID-19,
the Archbishops invite all to call on God in Prayer.
Starting on 1 February we invite you to
set aside time every evening to pray,
particularly at 6pm each day.
More than ever, this is a time when we need to
love each other.**

Prayer is an expression of love.

St Peter & St Paul's, Wem
St Peter's, Lee Brockhurst
St Luke's, Weston-under-Redcastle



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Preb Rob Haarhoff, Canon Dr William Price,
The Revd John Tye

Readers Emeriti:

Celia Camplin, Cathy Dibben



To the nation

26 January 2021

Dear friends

As we reach the terrible milestone of 100,000 deaths from COVID-19, we invite everyone in our nation to pause as we reflect on the enormity of this pandemic.

100,000 isn't just an abstract figure. Each number is a person: someone we loved and someone who loved us. We also believe that each of these people was known to God and cherished by God.

We write to you then in consolation, but also in encouragement, and ultimately in the hope of Jesus Christ. The God who comes to us in Jesus knew grief and suffering himself. On the cross, Jesus shares the weight of our sadness.

We therefore encourage everyone who is feeling scared, or lost or isolated to cast their fears on God. We also know that poorer communities, minority ethnic communities and those living with disabilities have been afflicted disproportionately and cry out for the healing of these inequalities. During this pandemic, we encourage everyone to do all they can to live within the guidelines and constraints given by government following the advice of the Chief Medical Officer and Chief Scientific Adviser. We show our commitment, care and love for one another by ensuring we do everything we can to stop the virus spreading.

None of this is easy. Very many of us are experiencing isolation, loneliness, anxiety and despondency like never before. Many people have lost their livelihoods. Our economy struggles. Also, the necessary restrictions we live with have also prevented us from being alongside loved ones as they died, or even at their graveside. All grief profoundly affects us, but this pandemic grief is so hard.

Therefore, we need to support each other. We do this by following the guidelines. But we also do it by reaching out to each other with care and kindness.

One thing we can all do is pray. We hope it is some consolation to know that the church prays for the life of our nation every day. Whether you're someone of faith, or not, we invite you to call on God in prayer. Starting on 1 February we

invite you to set aside time every evening to pray, particularly at 6pm each day. More than ever, this is a time when we need to love each other. Prayer is an expression of love. A number of resources will be made available at www.ChurchofEngland.org/PrayerForTheNation.

Finally, we write of hope. We are grateful for the hope we have because of the service of our NHS and social care staff. What a blessing and lifeline for our nation. We are grateful for the service given in local communities by clergy, other frontline workers and so many good neighbours. We are grateful for the hope of the vaccine. It is a testimony to the God-given wisdom and gifts of scientists and researchers. We urge everyone to take the vaccine as soon as it is offered to you.

Most of all, we have hope because God raised Jesus from the dead. This is the Christian hope that we will be celebrating at Easter. We live in the hope that we will share in his resurrection. Death doesn't have the last word. In God's kingdom every tear will be wiped away.

Please be assured of our prayers. Please join us.



The Most Revd & Rt Hon Justin Welby
Archbishop of Canterbury



The Most Revd & Rt Hon Stephen Cottrell
Archbishop of York

The next issue is scheduled to be prepared on **Thursday 18 February** and will be available on **Friday 26 February** after 4.15 pm if we are able to produce a physical magazine. Otherwise it will go out in an electronic version.

Items for the magazine can be left in the drawer at the back of the church in Wem (by 9 am Thursday) or sent to:

pamedgmond@hotmail.com

ST PETER AND ST PAUL'S CHURCH, WEM

Churchwardens:	Elaine Shaw	236575
	Chris Mellings	809521
PCC Lay Chair:	Sybil Farmer	232568
PCC Treasurer:	Caroline Sinclair	232626
Planned Giving Officer:	Bob Dibben	236178
Organist & Choir Master:	Rodney Bellamy	01630 652564
Deputy Captain of Bells:	Karen Compton	236561
Sacristans:	June Powell	234412
	& Kath Ridgway	290162
Church Flowers:	Olive Kenward	234774
	& Sybil Farmer	232568
Church Hall Bookings:	Elaine Shaw	07969 511590
Baby and Toddler Group:	Alison Hope	07526 757492

Further details are available on our website:
www.wemcofe.co.uk

Find us on 

@Wemparishchurch

**From the Registers of
St Peter and St Paul's Wem**

At Rest

DECEMBER

15 December Irene (Rene) Perks

17 December Sheila Kathleen Evans

23 December Eileen Jenkins

JANUARY

13 January Eluned Helen Wynn (Lyn) Ridgway

20 January Richard Clive Jones

21 January Elizabeth Mary Ford

25 January Cynthia Beryl Lea

26 January Mary Sarah Simes

**“Rest eternal grant unto them O Lord and let
light perpetual shine upon them.”**



Book of Remembrance for February

2 nd	Michael John Powell	13 th	Margaret Brown
4 th	Leslie Frank Hodson	14 th	Madeline Mary Cook
4 th	Stuart Arthur Starkey	14 th	Margaret Eirwen Price
5 th	Doreen Isabel Reeves	16 th	Mary Jane Magrath
6 th	Frederick Roy Reeves	17 th	John Keeling Roberts
6 th	Joyce Wilson	18 th	Dorothy Mary Sudlow
6 th	Denys William 'Dickie' Walker	20 th	Wallace George 'Wally' Johnson
7 th	Brenda Joan Spencer	20 th	Hinton Harry Stroud
7 th	George William Wallington	21 st	Peter Howard Godfrey
8 th	Winifred May Brookfield	21 st	Tom Womersley
8 th	Harry Tomlinson	22 nd	Harold Clarke
9 th	Louis Greenaway	22 nd	May Wheeldon
9 th	Lorna Jones	23 rd	Colin Barnes
10 th	Alice Margaret Ravenscroft	23 rd	Phyllis Saywell
10 th	Gwendoline Emily Barber	24 th	Godfrey John Fenn-Wiggin
11 th	James Anthony Davidson	24 th	Ivor Thomas
11 th	Ernest 'Ernie' John Jones	24 th	Stanley 'Stan' Walter Pye
11 th	Margaret Elizabeth Anne Bishop	25 th	Dorothy Marguerite Keeling Roberts
12 th	Alan Clive Jones	26 th	Elizabeth May Ridgway
12 th	Percy Edwards	29 th	Derek Robert Crangle

A Prayer for Light

Fountain of light, source of light,
Hear our prayer.
Drive away from us the shadow of sin.
Seek us, kindly light.
You, who created us in holiness,
Who condemned our sin,
Who redeemed us from our sin,
Sustain us by your power.
Pour your gentle light into our dull minds,
Filling our heads with holy thoughts.
Pour your glorious light into our cold breasts,
Kindling holy love within our hearts.
From horror, lust and fear,
Guard us while we sleep.
And if we cannot sleep,
Let our eyes behold your heavenly host.

By Alcuin of York, c. 735 – 804, was later abbot of Tours.

ST PETER'S, LEE BROCKHURST

Church Warden:	Val Lusby	235610
Church Warden and Treasurer:	Roger Ashton	232425
Secretary:	Phoebe Ashton	232425
Vice Chairman:	Tim Wilton-Morgan	235703
Warden Emeritus:	Robert Marsh	200641

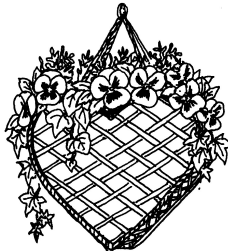
From the Registers of St Peter's Lee Brockhurst

14 January Catherine Bridget Mary Clarke

**“Rest eternal grant unto her O Lord and let
light perpetual shine upon her.”**

ST LUKE'S, WESTON-UNDER-REDCASTLE

Church Warden:	Arthur Fox	01630 685180
Church Warden:	Helen O'Neill	01939 200663
Church Warden (Deputy):	Sylvia Griffiths	01630 685204
Treasurer:	Colin Holloway	01939 200682



OUR CALENDAR FOR FEBRUARY

Whilst at the time of writing we have no idea if or when our services will resume. It is still appropriate to outline the Sundays for this month not least as amidst 'lockdown 3' and our voluntary suspension of Public Worship this may give a framework to our personal and on-line devotions and a pattern to the month. They are:

SUNDAY 7. SECOND SUNDAY BEFORE LENT

SUNDAY 14. SUNDAY BEFORE LENT

SUNDAY 21. FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT

SUNDAY 28. SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT

There are two significant Holy Days in our Calendar, one at the beginning of the month and one just after half-way through. The former marking the culmination/end of our Christmas and Epiphany season, the second of course the beginning of Lent.

TUESDAY 2 FEBRUARY. CANDLEMAS or The Presentation of Christ in The Temple

The marking of the completion of the 40 days since Jesus' birth. Mary and Joseph follow the religious law of their day taking Jesus to the Temple in Jerusalem as part of the rites of 'purification' for Mary following childbirth. In Luke's Gospel we read of Anna and Simeon (in the moving words of what we know as the Nunc Dimittis) giving thanks and proclaiming Jesus as the 'light to the nations'. As 'Exalting Holiness' expresses this: "The image of Christ as the Light has led to the celebration of light countering darkness, with candles often taking a central place in the observance of this festival." - Hence Candle Mass.

*Almighty Father,
whose Son Jesus Christ was presented in the Temple
and acclaimed the light of the nations:*

*grant that in him we may be presented to you
and in the world may reflect his glory;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God now and for ever.
Amen.*

WEDNESDAY 17 FEBRUARY. ASH WEDNESDAY

In the Order for the beginning of Lent at the start of the service the celebrant says the following:

“Brothers and sisters in Christ: since early days Christians have observed with great devotion the time of our Lord’s passion and resurrection. It became the custom of the Church to prepare for this by a season of penitence and fasting.....

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

Let us pray for grace to keep Lent faithfully.”

The Collect for Ash Wednesday

*Almighty and everlasting God
you hate nothing that you have made
and forgive the sins of those who are penitent.
Create and make in us new and contrite hearts,
that, lamenting our sins
and acknowledging our wretchedness,
we may obtain from you the God of all mercy,
perfect forgiveness and peace;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and forever.
Amen.*

UPDATE

Dear Friends,

As you have arrived at this page I trust you have already read our Archbishops' Letter to the Nation, if not *please do* turn back and read it. It says so much that I would wish to except that, as you would rightly expect, it does so considerably better than I ever could. Not one for unnecessary replication I'd prefer to now simply update on our local circumstances and our Diocesan Bishop's direction. Also so, so importantly to myself may I wish you personally all the very best during our now (just as I type) extended 'lockdown'. Do take every possible care both of yourselves and one another and stay safe.

Locally, in each parish in the Benefice, the Church Wardens/PCCs/myself as Rector have agreed that, heart-rending though it has been on one level, it is right to voluntarily and temporarily suspend Public Worship. We are, however, confident that the local rate of infections is such that this is, *pro tem*, the correct action and is borne out of nothing other than simple Christian love and care for one another. We are regularly reviewing when to recommence worship, amongst the factors are: as said, the local rate of infection; that rate in the surrounding areas in which many parishioners work, shop essentially or have an essential family bubble; the degree of parishioners' confidence in venturing out for worship; a witness to our communities of corporate vigilance. Against this is the well-being, wholeness and all round health supported by gathering to worship, the physical receiving of the sacrament (for those able) and the conviction of the tangible witness and importance of corporate worship. Too clearly whenever we resume we must be and will be absolutely meticulous and without deviation in our covid-precautions - these (ie. your safety as you attend) are non-negotiable, of that you can have every confidence.

From our Diocesan Bulletin:

*'Bishop Michael said: "With the Government still urging people to stay at home, the situation remains very serious and the communal nature of churches does make them vulnerable to the spread of the virus. Although the majority of churches in our diocese are closed for public worship, several are continuing to hold services in buildings. Those that are doing so are reminded that **risk assessments must be frequently checked and updated** during the current dispensation (whether opening for public*

worship or private prayer) and that it is vitally important that people disperse immediately at the end of services.”

Perhaps we should take a great deal of reassurance that our local decision has been mirrored in many other Lichfield settings. Bishop Michael also suggests:-

“Please also check the Government’s interactive map regularly to see how infection rates are changing in your area.”

And goes on to say: -

*“While the national Church has produced advance guidance for Lent, Holy Week and Easter, all of the above must be taken into account before any ‘in person’ services are held in these periods. Again, **there is no obligation to hold services in buildings** or to open churches for private prayer in this period; my general dispensation from canonical requirements for worship in any benefice currently runs until at least 31 March. I would like to again assure you of my gratitude for all you are doing, and my prayers for you, for your families and friends, and for all your people during these trying times.”*

The Covid section of our website is regularly updated with new guidance and developments as is the national Church of England website.

On the note of Lent may I draw your attention to the article later in this magazine on the Lent Discussion group being kindly convened on-line by Katherine Murray. All are most welcome to join in with this, as Katherine says, details may also be found on the C of E website.

You will by now have read Archbishops Justin and Stephen’s words:

“More than ever, this is a time when we need to love each other. Prayer is an expression of love.”

“Most of all, we have hope because God raised Jesus from the dead. This is the Christian hope that we will be celebrating at Easter. We live in the hope that we will share in his resurrection. Death doesn’t have the last word. In God’s kingdom every tear will be wiped away.

Please be assured of our prayers. Please join us.”

May we take these and all our Archbishops' words to heart and may they guide us further through this tragic time.

With every good wish, stay safe,
Nick

LENT 2021 - AN OPPORTUNITY TO MEET ONLINE

Lent has always been a time for us to reflect more deeply about our faith in and life with Christ, and often to meet with others to encourage one another and share what we are learning together. How to do this in present circumstances?

As usual, there is material to help. The *Live Lent – God's Story - Our Story* booklet offers brief reflections for each day of Lent. How does our faith story relate to the stories of God in the Bible? How can we understand the example of Jesus and follow him in the context of our daily lives? And how can we communicate our story to others?

The material is based on the Archbishops' Lent book for 2021 - *Living His Story* by Hannah Steele. You can find out more from the Church of England website.

The booklet can be followed individually but also offers opportunities to discuss and learn together. A weekly online meeting via Zoom has been proposed, hosted by Katharine Murray, for the 6 weeks of Lent. If you would like to join in, please get in touch with Nick and let him know which evening in the week you would prefer. Please also let Nick know if you would like a copy of the booklet to follow at home.

It has been so easy to begin to feel out of touch with others in the church over these past months. Here is an opportunity to reconnect.

We are so lucky ...

... to have the dedication of Fr Nick during the now ever extending COVID-19 Lockdown. Thank you, Fr Nick.

Week by week we wait in eager anticipation for Fr Nick's email with its attachments to enable us to follow services from far and wide by various forms of media. We also have the weekly readings from Redemptorist, the Prayer diaries for our Benefice and the Diocese and more recently the weekly "Live the Word" while not forgetting other items such as transcripts of sermons from our Bishops.

However, sometimes it is the Sunday Homily which sets one's concentration in the right direction and for example as I write this on the Second Sunday of Epiphany it is today's Homily that has deserved more than a first reading. Why? Because it explains that only in today's Gospel reading from John 1:43-51 does Nathanael receive mention and how he came to trust Jesus, just as Jesus instantly trusted him.

It is in the closing paragraph of the Homily that we are reminded that as Christians all we are required to do is to share our excitement about Jesus and invite our friends to come with us. There is no need to urge or cajole. Just set a fine example.

Again, our thanks to you, Fr Nick.

Bob Dibben

Any queries about searches in the Whitchurch Road
Cemetery or elsewhere

Please contact Mr Tom Edwards of 1 Eckford Park,
Wem, SY4 5HL or on 01939 233932

World Day of Prayer - Friday 5th March 2021

This year's 'guest' country is Vanuatu, the theme 'Building on a strong foundation'. Matthew 7:24-27.

Following discussion between the Wem WDP group (Methodist, Roman Catholic, Quaker & Anglican) we have decided, sadly due to Covid 19, our service which was due to take place in the Methodist Church this year will be cancelled.

Kath Shaw (RC) has booklets, posters etc., these will be distributed between the participating local churches. Although these publications are free, we have decided to send an appropriate donation (hopefully similar to donations from services in past years).

I am the group representative for St Peter & St Paul's, I will be submitting an update in next month's magazine. In the mean time if you are interested in the WDP (formally the Women's Day of Prayer), you can view/download all the information from the website www.wwdp.org.uk - I am happy to print copies for anyone who doesn't have access online.

Helen Hornsby - 01939 233683

Oswald of Worcester

There is a saint for Leap Year: he is St Oswald of Worcester, who died on 29th February 992. His family story was extraordinary, and full of some surprising 'leaps', all by itself. It provides a tantalising glimpse of what happened to at least one of those pagan Viking warriors who settled in Anglo-Saxon Britain.

For Oswald's great-uncle had come to England c 865, as part of the 'Great Heathen Army' of Viking invaders. But his son, Oswald's uncle, Oda, forsook paganism, and not only converted to Christianity, but actually ended up as Archbishop of Canterbury. From there, Oda was in a position to help his nephew, Oswald, which he did.

Oda sent young Oswald to be educated at the abbey of Fleury, then a great centre of learning. There Oswald absorbed the Benedictine ideals which would guide his later life and work. Back in England, he became bishop of Worcester in 961, and with the support of King Edgar, eagerly joined in major reforms of the Anglo-Saxon church. In 972 Oswald was made Archbishop of York, and seems to have taken a great interest in renewing the church in the Danelaw. He founded Ramsey Abbey, which became one of the great Fenland monasteries.

Oswald was popular as an archbishop, and always washed the feet of the poor every Lent. On 29th February 992 he had just completed this service at Worcester when he collapsed and died. In later years, Worcester adopted both him and Wulfstan to be its two chief saints: they flank the tomb of King John, which is before the high altar in the cathedral.

The next Leap Year is in 2024.

Wot no Carols! (or almost)

One of the things that I love about Christmas is singing, or in my case, playing carols so 2020 Christmas was a bit of a disappointment to me and I suspect to many. However, St Peter's congregation and Lee village residents were able to sing carols round the Christmas tree on a bright, not too chilly Sunday afternoon in December. I, of course, was in the church playing the organ as loudly as I could!

Through the wonders of modern technology we were also able to watch, and join in if we wished, a lovely videoed carol service from St Peter's and St Paul's church, Wem and also attend Midnight Mass in the comfort of our own homes but I certainly missed being in the choir with Roger Val, Alexandra and my niece and nephew Erica and Jason.

We were also able to log-on to YouTube and hear the Choir of Lichfield Cathedral taking part in a virtual reality nine lessons and carols, this was well produced but the choir members were all frozen with their mouths open which looked a little strange!

So, some Carols then but not my usual dose, let us hope that next year carol singing and indeed any singing will be allowed again.

Phoebe Ashton

A Franciscan Prayer

Often called a Franciscan Blessing but written by a Benedictine Sister, Sister Ruth Marlene Fox, from Sacred Heart Monastery in North Dakota and sent to us by Ruth Empson.

May God, who began his good work in you, carry it through to completion, enabling you to use your talents to the fullest. May God give you the grace to make wise choices and to be faithful to your commitments always confident in the support of those who love you.

May God bless you with discomfort at easy answers half-truths and superficial relationships, so that you will live deep within your heart.

May God bless you with anger at injustice, oppression and exploitation of people, so that you will work for justice, equality and peace.

May God bless you with tears to shed for those who suffer from pain, rejection, starvation and war, so that you will reach out your hand to comfort them, and change their pain into joy.

May God bless you with enough foolishness to think that you can make a difference in the world, so that you will do the things that others tell you cannot be done. May your integrity be a gift to the world, and may the Spirit of God be with you always.

These blessings are yours — not for the asking, but for the giving — from One who wants to be your companion, our God, who lives and reigns, forever and ever. Amen.

MAX UNGER Man with a mission

The Promotion & Conservation of Health Strength & Mental Energy

My father took a physical exercise course of instruction from this man in 1933 and I still have in my possession a pair of dumbbells that dad purchased from him at that time, and two of his promotional booklets. Hence I had some background knowledge of him. What I don't know is whether he was a committed Christian and church goer.

Born in Berlin in 1878 Max Unger developed into a very strong man having a naturally genetic gift, and developing his strength through a rigorous training course at a famous German institution as a young man of nineteen to become the perfect athlete.

He moved to New York to become a professional showman, travelling the USA and later Europe, and changed his name to Lionel Strongfort.

His feats of strength were legendary but what was so impressive was his development of the science of strongfortism which was based on a disciplined lifestyle with careful diet which did not include meat. He placed great importance on healthy nutrition, gut health and the strength of the inner core muscles.

He created a creed for living based on moral values and the laws of nature. It grew into the Strongfort Institute and his courses were famed worldwide in the early twentieth century. He brought out a booklet titled "The Promotion and Conservation of Health Strength and Mental Energy". In it he promotes and teaches, with sincere dedication, his ideas on how to live. Of course nature brings life and death however fit and healthy you are; the good news is that God and Jesus bring the amazing message that there is life after death. Max died aged 89 in 1967.

Roger Ashton

The Bible Reading Fellowship or BRF

I wish to thank Mavis Draper for being the BRF representative for St Peter & St Paul's Church, Wem for over 20 years. I have now officially taken on this task, we currently have 8 members. Mavis kept meticulous records, starting with 20 members in September 2000.

New Daylight (paperback book) provides 4 months of daily Bible readings and comment, with a regular team of contributors drawn from a range of church backgrounds. It is ideal for anybody wanting an accessible yet stimulating aid to spending time with God each day, deepening their faith and their knowledge of scripture.

New Daylight is issued 3 times a year, in January, May & September at a cost of £4.70p per copy (also available in Large Print £5.95p) surprisingly BRF only increase the price of each copy by 10p per year!

If anyone would like to subscribe to our BRF or have any questions, please contact me on 01939 233683.

Helen Hornsby

Lee Brockhurst WI

If ever there was a meeting to smash the stereotypical image of a prim WI, **Lee Brockhurst's February** meeting will be it!! ... but first I will let you know what we have been up to since our last report.

Our December zoom with the effervescent '**Ukulele Lady**' Gabriela La Foley was **huge fun** and attracted another **record beating attendance** (26). The time flew by as members joined in with Gabriela while she played, sang and danced to toe-tapping tunes which lifted everyone's spirits and left us all smiling – **a lovely end to the year!**

Early January saw us hold an extraordinary meeting to ratify proposed changes to the WI constitution enabling decisions taken at virtual meetings to be legally valid. Then, on 18th January, our **Book Club** members reviewed 'Why I'm no longer talking to White People about Race' by Reni Eddo-Lodge and then raised a celebratory glass to the **tenth anniversary** of our Book Club, with grateful thanks to our conscientious organiser **Helen James**. The following night we welcomed members from the **Wem Group of WIs** to our January meeting, as well as our newest member **Sue Roberts** who signed up three days before. Speaker **Faith Powell** told us about her experiences as a contestant on various TV shows, such as '**Going for Gold**' and '**Ready Steady Cook**', including the time when **Bob Monkhouse** whispered the answer to her to win the final of '**Wipeout**'!

'**Sex, Secrets and Salacious Gossip of the Royal Court 1160 – 1830**' is the topic of our meeting on Tuesday **16th February** at 7.30pm. **Hampton Court Palace Guide Sarah Slater** is zooming in to tell us all the **naughty bits** of history you probably would not have learnt about at school, including the sexual diseases of the time and the methods used to prevent them. **Warning**; this talk is not for the prude – it is fun but rude. On **March 1st**, our book worms will be discussing '**Lonely Londoners**' by **Samuel Selvon**, the final book of our Black Lives trilogy (which included Queenie by Candice Carty-Williams as well as Why I'm no longer talking to White People about Race).

We are delighted that our numbers continue to grow during the lockdowns. WI is a **welcome distraction** from the situation around us and a **warm welcome** is guaranteed. If you would like to know more, please contact our friendly secretary Julie on 01939 200237 or jjwoolfenden@gmail.com.

Whitchurch Foodbank

Helping local people in crisis

Whilst we are not meeting in our churches at present the needs of the Food Bank continue to be very pressing indeed.

The Shropshire Food Poverty Alliance recently highlighted that since March 2020 there has been an increase of 91% in Universal Credit caseload in North Shrophire.

Amongst the items they are particularly short of at present are:

Tins of corned beef Cereals Tins of Spaghetti hoops
Tinned pies Packets of mashed potato
Tins of rice pudding Tins of meat
Tins of custard Tins of fruit
Tins of peas Bottles of cordial/squash
Tins of carrots Jars of jam
Tins of sweetcorn Chocolate snack biscuits
Tins of tuna Sponge puddings

Non-perishable food of any description plus essential toiletries will always be gratefully received - an up to date list of specific shortages is always available on their website (underneath).

You can still support in the following three ways: -

The Food Bank is still open to accept donations at their base, Bargates Hall Whitchurch, in the usual way between 09.30-11.30 on Tuesdays & Fridays. Social Distancing will be maintained. There are two other alternatives:

The Wem Co-op will take donations, please ask staff for the exact location of the 'bin'.

Or via online giving, please go to their website - whitchurch.foodbank.org.uk where donations can be made on line.

'For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink'
Matthew 25.35a

“Knowing the price of everything but the value of nothing”

That's something to set the brain cells whirring when the depth of these few words is applied to our modern, throw-away society. We enter a shop or supermarket and immediately our eyes are focused by large, colourful banners inviting us to appreciate the price of this or that item on the shelves when compared to such another next to it or on a competitor's shelf.

The heading of this piece was a small quote that caught my eye when surfing the internet, in this case the BBC news pages, to catch up with anything that I might have missed or that was not reported in the main radio and TV News bulletins during the day.

The link below the quote took me to the main page for the Reith Lectures 2020 to be presented by Mark Carney, the previous Governor of the Bank of England. He would be assessing 'value' and asking why have financial values come to be considered more important than human ones.

Having worked in Banking for various banks, based in London and Leeds, across some 40 years, 'financial values' were a basic foundation of all that I encountered, from the early days of listing and processing paper vouchers and ensuring that the totals of these pieces of paper were correct at the end of each day, through to signing off million pound agreements to provide facilities to major customers in the last few years prior to my retirement. Financial values had to be sound, profit making and recoverable in the event of failure of the customer or a *force majeure*.

However, as with many aspects of one's early training, there was an acronym associated with the assessment of sound lending principles and one quickly learnt it – it is still “engraved on my heart” - and it put the personal qualities of the customer as the key aspects to be considered. These qualities had to be satisfied first and, if they were not, then any subsequent aspects of the assessment automatically failed and the customer's proposition became a 'non-starter'.

One could not overcome these key assessments of the prospective borrower, however much one might have wanted to do so.

As time went by much changed. Centralised computers were programmed to deliver results of propositions based on the inputs demanded by the programs and the inevitable central monitoring of results became more and more sophisticated. There followed those much hated “targets” for making profits and, worse still, targets for work done

where the success of the outputs could not be measured until some years had passed. Sadly, with certain individuals and later in greater numbers, opportunities were taken to massage short term performance by a little (or much) inventiveness in the recording of results against these targets. This was found to apply in various locations and various industries. What a turnaround for values, from personal attributes to numbers in a computer!

There was a time when I had responsibility for the performance of a number of modestly sized branches in the western segment of London, from the West End outwards. Targets for certain parts of the business were set on me and I had to use my knowledge and assessments of the people and the branches to fairly distribute these targets down the line. However, certain colleagues in similar situations were understood to have added a percentage to their own targets before passing them on to their branches in the hope that even if the branches failed to achieve then my colleagues' targets might be met with rewards for those "massaged" achievements. Dishonesty? Possibly. Probably. That was not my style.

Assessments of people in the mid 1960s were based on their characteristics of behaviour, appearance, attitude, etc. Subsequently numeric values became the leading criteria and, as already mentioned, opportunities for advancement were based on the short term financial results, whatever the quality of the staff member and their customers.

Gradually as we come up to date the prime assessment of an individual is again turning to his or her personal attributes and this is becoming apparent in the daily news reports on TV or in the papers. I advocate saying 'long may this change continue' and if there is a flaw in the character of a person then nothing should be allowed to override that, whatever his or her apparent financial profit capabilities. "Floreat the best qualities of the individual" one might exclaim, however important the individual in his or her country.

Surely, on hesitating here for a moment, one should be able to draw comfort and a strong example from our reading of the Bible and appreciating its most outstanding people – not the richest (far from it, usually) but those most valued as quality people, friends and colleagues and leaders. Consider particularly those who owned nothing of monetary value – from the blind beggar who needed money to pay for his small necessities of life; to Jesus himself and his apostles, the latter being sent out to spread the Good News and rely on the generosity of those whom they encountered for their food and lodging.

Jesus carried no purse, no wallet, no credit cards or even cash to sustain himself during his lifetime. Even the Roman soldiers could find only his clothing to be shared after his crucifixion. What was the true value in his clothing as they cast lots for it? Nothing of particular monetary value perhaps. Is that the greatest example of the value in an individual clad, however, in next to nothing?

Some readers would refer to the owner of a vineyard who, on leaving for a journey, left matters in the hands of three of his employees and handed to them money to be put to profitable purposes – here was an acknowledgement that in business the employer and the employees would readily recognise the monetary values being entrusted to them. However, each was first valued for their personal qualities otherwise they would not have been handed the money.

Next time you look at a price why not also consider the value to you? It might surprise you. Every item on the shelves of a supermarket might be attributed a price but only you can assess its value – to you.

Bob Dibben

The Church of England Diocese of Shrewsbury which never was

Between 1876 and 1927 the Church of England planned to create 20 new dioceses. Nineteen of them were successfully created, but one failed, and that was the proposed Diocese of Shrewsbury covering the whole of Shropshire with a cathedral, either the Abbey or St Mary's, in our county town. It failed by the narrowest possible margin, so Shropshire, unlike our four neighbouring English counties, has no Church of England cathedral, although there is a beautiful Roman Catholic Cathedral in Shrewsbury.

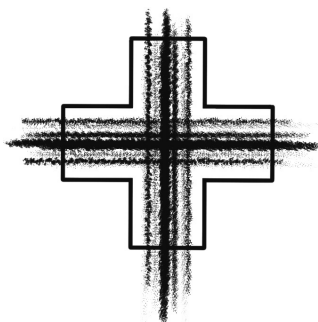
To set the scene. In the 1920s north Shropshire, together with almost the whole of Staffordshire, was in the Diocese of Lichfield and south Shropshire, together with almost the whole of Herefordshire was in the Diocese of Hereford. For much of its length the border was the River Severn. There was universal agreement that the Diocese of Lichfield was too large in both area and population. If it was reduced to just Staffordshire it would be manageable. On the other hand the Diocese of Hereford had the lowest population of any mainland diocese, and if it lost its part of Shropshire it would become even smaller in population.

But at that time the concept of ‘county dioceses’ (i.e. that apart from very small and very large counties a diocese and a county should be coterminous) was in vogue, and so the proposal to take north Shropshire from Lichfield and south Shropshire from Hereford to create a Shropshire Diocese passed the Church Assembly (the predecessor of the General Synod) by an overwhelming majority in 1925. Then the matter went to the House of Commons on 25 February 1926, where it was passed 57 for and 33 against. (The debate ended at 12.50 a.m. next morning, so perhaps the low numbers were understandable!)

A week later action moved to the House of Lords. After a long debate the motion was lost, 61 against and 60 for. There was to be no Anglican Diocese of Shrewsbury and no Anglican cathedral in Shrewsbury. And with that failure what was called ‘the extension of the home episcopate’ came to an end. There were to be no new dioceses in England after that, and indeed the process went into reverse, as it were, in 2014 when 3 dioceses in Yorkshire were combined as the new Diocese of Leeds. That might be called ‘the contraction of the home episcopate’.

There was a new proposal in the late 1980s to create a Diocese of Shrewsbury, but this time it would not include the whole of Shropshire, but only the north (the Lichfield part) and the 3 northern rural deaneries of the Diocese of Hereford, leaving the areas around Ludlow, Bridgnorth, and Bishop’s Castle in Hereford Diocese. This proposal did not get very far, and so Shropshire remains divided between the Dioceses of Hereford and Lichfield, far from the centre of either. If only one member of the House of Lords had voted differently in 1926!

William Price



Holy Days in the Church Calendar in February

1 st	Brigid, Abbess of Kildare, c525
2 nd	The Presentation of Christ in the Temple
3 rd	Anskar, Archbishop & Apostle to the North, 865
4 th	Gilbert of Sempringham, 1189
6 th	The Martyrs of Japan, 1597
10 th	Scholastica, sister of Benedict, c543
14 th	Cyril and Methodius, Missionaries to the Slavs, 869 & 885 Valentine, Martyr at Rome, c269
15 th	Sigfrid, Bishop, Apostle of Sweden, 1045 Thomas Bray, Priest, 1730
17 th	Janani Luwum, Archbishop of Uganda, 1977
23 rd	Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna, c155
27 th	George Herbert, Priest, Poet, 1633
29 th	Oswald, 992

In the wilderness

Christ of His gentleness
Thirsting and hungering
Walked in the wilderness.
Soft words of grace He spoke
Unto lost desert-folk
That listened wondering.
He heard the bitterns call
From ruined palace-wall,
Answered them brotherly....
And ever with Him went,
Of all His wanderings
Comrade, with ragged coat,
Gaunt ribs – poor innocent –
Bleeding foot, burning throat,
The guileless old scape-goat;
For forty nights and days
Followed in Jesus' ways,
Sure guard behind I'm kept,
Tears like a lover wept.

By Robert Graves 1895 – 1935